

# CHAPTER NINE - HOUSING ELEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

*In a community, buildings and transportation systems define the appearance; but it's the people living there and how they live there that gives that community an identity or a sense of character. Quality, safe, healthy and well-designed housing must be a high priority for the City. (Restated from the Citizens' Ad hoc Sub-committee, 2006)*

The City of Sequim is required to continually update its goals, policies and objectives for the preservation, improvement and development of housing, including affordable housing. An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs will need to be reviewed more frequently as the community's growth continues. The identification of sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing for low-income families; manufactured housing; multi-family housing; and group homes and foster care facilities is required by the Growth Management Act.

### **Adequacy**

Adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community must be addressed. The current Optimum Land Use Map designates adequate lands to accommodate the projected residential growth in the City of Sequim and the Sequim Urban Growth Area for the updated twenty-year planning horizon.

### **Market Factor**

The City, with concurrence from the County continues to use the "50% market factor" provision in determining the adequacy of land zoned for residential development. This "Market Factor" was established and ratified in the County-Wide Planning Policies, which guides the County and City in inter-jurisdictional matters. It is premised on the fact that there will always be **at least 50%** of marketable lands available for future growth based on residential demand in the Urban Growth Area.

### **Affordability**

Affordable housing is a term that applies to the adequacy of housing stocks to fulfill the housing needs of all economic segments of the community's population. The underlying assumption is that the marketplace will assure adequate housing for those in the upper economic brackets. However, a combination of appropriately-zoned land, regulatory incentives, financial subsidies, and innovative planning techniques will be necessary to make adequate provisions for the needs of middle and lower income persons.

The first eight years since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted and implemented has experienced explosive growth in the number of single-family lots on residentially-zoned lands within the City of Sequim, and its UGA. Several multi-family projects are underway for senior housing and some levels of assisted living and congregate care. The City still

supports all efforts to accommodate a “fair-share” of these residentially-zoned parcels for the “affordable housing” demands of its lower income community members.

The City continues to address affordability by reducing any exclusionary regulatory barriers, encouraging development of the amount of land available for multi-family development, allowing new manufactured housing in all residential zoning districts (consistent with design standards), and by considering developer incentives. Recently, the City Council had an affordable housing task force reconvened to address and develop new approaches to this decades-long problem.

Where the term affordable is used it refers to the federal definition of affordability in place up to the year 2002: annual housing costs shall not exceed one third of a family’s annual income. When establishing affordability standards for moderate to extremely low income families and individuals the latest median income levels established for Clallam County by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development continue to be used.

**Under the definition of “affordable,” the following categories would apply:**

- Extremely Low: 0-30% of area median income (AMI)
- Very Low: 31-50% of AMI
- Low and Moderate: 51-80% of AMI
- Moderate: 81-120% of AMI

**Availability of Specialty Housing**

In addition, the City has recognized that group homes and foster care facilities can be successfully integrated into certain neighborhoods consistent with applicable design standards. Extended care facilities and longer term nursing facilities have been accommodated through identification and designation of certain lands appropriately zoned for these uses.

Land that is currently provided with urban services, including adequate transportation infrastructure and utilities, close to parks, and within walking distance to shopping and public services, continues to be given highest priority for multi-family zoning designation.

**Implementation:**

The housing element includes implementing strategies that address implementation of its goals and policies through the use of the development regulations, design standards and streamlined permit processing. A newly-formed standing committee for affordable housing and City staff continue to explore a range of innovative land use techniques, financing options, grant availability and educational opportunities to reduce costs and provide additional affordable housing.

The City of Sequim shall maintain an Affordable Housing Committee to track the availability of housing options in the City of Sequim and surrounding UGA and to develop financing, grant options and educational solution options for the local affordable housing needs.

The City of Sequim's Affordable Housing Committee shall establish and define a range for the levels of need for local affordable housing solutions. The City of Sequim's Affordable Housing Committee shall support State level legislative initiatives regarding affordable housing options, and shall encourage, foster and support the development of affordable housing solutions.

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## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **HOUSING ELEMENT GOALS**

“Goals” are measurable and observable outcomes that the *Comprehensive Plan* anticipates in conformance with the Growth Management Act.

#### **HUG-1**

Preserve the small town community character of Sequim and encourage quality development.

#### **HUG-2**

Provide opportunities for adequate housing supply for residents of all income groups.

#### **HUG-3**

Provide the means to ensure solutions within the full range of affordable housing needs, including rental and ownership options.

#### **HUG-4**

Support affordable housing solutions in all residential zones within the City’s urban growth area boundary.

#### **HUG-5**

Provide a variety of mixed-use residential and commercial development in the downtown area for a range of homeowners and tenants.

#### **HUG-6**

Support educational programs to promote community acceptance of extremely low to moderate income housing within existing neighborhoods.

#### **HUG-7**

Monitor development standards consistent with State and Federal law, which ensure that the size (number of residents and staff) and design of a “group home” is compatible with zoned densities and available transportation and services.

#### **HUG-8**

Provide incentives, when determined to be appropriate, to developers of affordable housing solutions, including, but not limited to: density bonus; reductions in road pavement and rights-of-way widths; elimination of curb & gutters; emergency access; flexible lot shapes and setbacks; reduction or waiver of PUD fees; reduction or waiver of permit fees; relaxation of open space requirements; financial assistance to offset the cost of producing affordable units.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **HOUSING ELEMENT POLICIES**

“Policies” are the guidelines as to how the staff and the readers of the *Comprehensive Plan* shall achieve the goals of the Housing Element of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **HUP-1**

Continue to allow the establishment of zoning districts where higher density residential use is the only permitted use.

#### **HUP-2**

Consider proposals for affordable housing solutions in all residential zones as described in HUP-7.

#### **HUP-3**

Permit in all residential zones of the community, in conformance with the Sequim Municipal Code, group homes, established consistent with the requirements of the 1988 Federal Fair Housing Act.

#### **HUP-4**

Permit home businesses, which are compatible with the neighborhood, and meet bulk and dimensional, parking, and the sign code ordinances, and limit disruption of residential neighborhood character.

#### **HUP-5**

Facilitate limited employee housing on premises for reasons of security, and which is integrated into commercial and industrial projects, through the development regulation process.

#### **HUP-6**

Encourage affordable housing through the redevelopment of non-residential buildings, such as public buildings, farmsteads and commercial buildings, in locations suitable for housing and in ways that preserve significant historic features where appropriate.

#### **HUP-7**

Encourage new high-density development to occur in areas which would provide extremely low to moderate income residents with convenient access to community facilities and services.

#### **HUP-8**

Permit the establishment of manufactured housing in all residentially-zoned areas of the community in conformance with the Sequim Municipal Code

**HUP-9**

Advocate the development of cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive alternative technologies and energy resources to be used in residential construction.

**HUP-10**

Provide a range of lot sizes, development densities, and housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population, throughout its residential zones.

**HUP-11**

Encourage well-designed residential infill development to increase the housing supply while protecting and enhancing existing neighborhood character and affordable housing opportunities.

**HUP-12**

Support higher-density residential development where services already exist to support such development.