

# Housing Element

## Introduction

The Housing Element addresses the preservation, improvement, and development of housing; identifies land to accommodate different housing types; and makes provisions for the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. Anacortes' housing element ensures that there will be enough housing to accommodate expected growth in the city, and the variety of housing necessary to accommodate a range of income levels, ages, and special needs. At the same time, the element seeks to preserve existing neighborhood character by including policies that will keep new development compatible. This is an element in which multiple interests need to be balanced, including community character, demographic characteristics, affordability, and others.

The Housing Element is supported by a housing needs analysis, which quantifies existing and projected housing needs and identifies the number of housing units necessary to accommodate projected growth. This analysis is contained in the Housing Element Background Information.

## Goals & Policies

**Goal H-1. Housing Supply and Variety. Provide a sufficient quantity and variety of housing to meet community needs.**

**Policy H-1.1.** Provide for an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land to accommodate the city's housing growth targets.

**Policy H-1.2.** Promote the variety of residential densities and housing types in all price ranges to meet a range of housing needs and respond to changing needs and preferences.

**Policy H-1.3.** Integrate smaller housing types, such as cottages, duplexes, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units, into residential neighborhoods.

**Policy H-1.4.** Consider the potential for development of tiny houses in selected areas of the city.

**Policy H-1.5.** Encourage infill development on vacant or under-utilized land.

**Policy H-1.6.** Evaluate barriers to achieve increased density in multifamily residential and mixed use zones and revise regulations if appropriate.

**Policy H-1.7.** Provide for development of multifamily housing in areas close to shopping, employment, services and public transportation.



*Tiny houses are often defined as houses of less than 400 square feet. Tiny houses can be more affordable and ecologically friendly than traditional larger houses and have been adopted as shelter for the homeless in some cities. A challenge to development of tiny houses is that building codes typically have a minimum size threshold above 400 square feet.*

**Policy H-1.8.** Provide for flexibility in subdivision development in order to promote environmental protection, encourage infill development, enhance neighborhood character, or other similar goals.

**Policy H-1.9.** Encourage demonstration projects of innovative housing types or programs, such as co-housing, tiny houses, or others.

**Policy H-1.10.** Permit manufactured homes on individual lots in residential zones in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law.

## **Goal H-2. Neighborhood Character. Promote the stability and vitality of residential and mixed use neighborhoods.**

**Policy H-2.1.** Encourage housing types and design that reinforce and enhance the character and scale of established neighborhood development patterns.

**Policy H-2.2.** Develop design guidelines, standards or other measures to achieve the following benefits:

- A. Allow growth without sacrificing Anacortes' unique small town character.
- B. Facilitate compatibility between existing and new housing.
- C. Integrate and connect multi-family developments with surrounding development to enhance a sense of neighborhoods.
- D. Allow for compatible integration of attached and detached accessory dwelling units in residential neighborhoods.

**Policy H-2.3.** Encourage rehabilitation and improvement programs to preserve the character and condition of existing housing.

## **Goal H-3. Housing Affordability. Provide for a range of housing opportunities to address the needs of all economic segments of the community.**

**Policy H-3.1.** Encourage preservation, maintenance of and improvements to existing affordable housing.

**Policy H-3.2.** Develop meaningful, measurable goals and strategies that promote the development of affordable workforce housing to meet local needs.

**Policy H-3.3.** Support non-profit agencies and public/private partnerships to preserve or develop additional housing for very low, low and moderate income households.

**Policy H-3.4.** Support both rental and ownership forms of affordable housing in a variety of types and sizes.

**Policy H-3.5.** Locate affordable housing throughout the city and especially in areas with good access to transit, employment, education, and shopping.

**Policy H-3.6.** Consider a housing levy to providing ongoing funding for affordable housing.

**Policy H-3.7.** Require that affordable housing achieved through public incentives or assistance remains affordable for the longest possible term.

**Policy H-3.8.** Evaluate surplus city-owned land for use for affordable housing.



*Co-housing is intentional, collaborative housing that includes private homes, shared activities and common facilities. Shared activities may include cooking, child care, gardening and community governance. Common facilities may include kitchen, dining room, child care area, offices, recreational facilities and others*

### **Possible Workforce Housing Strategies**

- **Incentive zoning.** Development incentives, such as increased height or floor area ratio, could be tied to the provision of affordable housing or payment of a fee-in-lieu to an affordable housing fund.
- **Inclusionary zoning.** Requires that a given share of new construction is set aside to be affordable to low to moderate income households. Typically applicable to larger scale development projects.
- **Multi-family Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program.** Washington state law authorizes this program, which offers a limited 12-year tax exemption from ad valorem property taxation if 20% of the housing is affordable.

**Policy H-3.9.** Establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and develop a detailed affordable housing program that identifies specific actions to increase the supply of housing that is affordable to low to middle-income individuals and families.

### **Goal H-4. Special Needs. Provide housing options for special needs populations, including independent living for seniors, assisted living, memory care, drug & alcohol rehab and mental health facilities.**

**Policy H-4.1.** Provide accommodation throughout the city for housing for people with special needs and avoid concentrations of such housing.

**Policy H-4.2.** Encourage the development of senior-friendly housing opportunities, particularly in areas near services and amenities.

**Policy H-4.3.** Promote a range of housing types for seniors; e.g., adult family homes, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, and independent living communities.

**Policy H-4.4.** Support ways for older adults and people with disabilities to remain in the community as their housing needs change by encouraging universal design or retrofitting homes for lifetime use.

**Policy H-4.5.** Promote the provision of support services, including transportation options, to allow seniors and those with special needs to remain in their own homes or non-institutional settings.

**Policy H-4.6.** Support public and private housing and services for people who are homeless

### **Goal H-5. Regional Collaboration. Actively participate and coordinate with other agencies in efforts to meet regional housing needs**

**Policy H-5.1.** Encourage local and regional affiliations and alliances to provide affordable housing.

**Policy H-5.2.** Explore local and regional funding options to support development of housing for low- and moderate-income households.

**Policy H-5.3.** Work with other jurisdictions and health and social service organizations to develop a coordinated, regional approach to homelessness.

### **Goal H-6. Monitoring. Implement Housing Element goals in a manner that is efficient and transparent.**

**Policy H-6.1.** Evaluate and report on how the goals and policies of this Housing Element are being achieved.

**Policy H-6.2.** Monitor housing supply, type and affordability, including progress toward meeting a proportionate share of the countywide need for affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

**Policy H-6.3.** On a regular basis, based on results of monitoring local data and effectiveness of local regulations and programs, reassess and adjust policies, strategies and regulations to meet local housing needs.

**Special Needs Housing** includes homes suitable for and occupied by people with one or more limitations, such as a physical or mental disability, long-term illness, or alcohol or drug issues. Examples include adult family homes, assisted living facilities, and group homes for people with developmental disabilities.

**Universal Design** describes of broad spectrum of products, buildings or other built features that are usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life. Wheelchair ramps, essential for people in wheelchairs, but also usable by all, are a common example. Cabinets with pull-out shelves, kitchen counters at several heights, are other examples.