

CHAPTER FOUR -- HOUSING

I. INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that a Housing Element be included in Comprehensive Plans. This chapter is composed of language extracted from the Housing and Residential Development goals and policies section of the 1988 Comprehensive Plan, which was updated in 1995 to meet the requirements of the GMA, and further updated to meet the requirements of the GMA 2004 Update.

Growth Management Act: The Growth Management Act established the following housing planning goals:

- Encourage affordable housing for all economic segments of the population;
- Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types; and
- Encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

The Act further requires inter-jurisdictional coordination and development of county-wide policies for affordable housing and its distribution regionally.

These goals are accomplished by determining and making adequate provisions for existing and projected housing need, by preserving and improving the current inventory of affordable housing, and by identifying sufficient land for housing.

County-Wide Planning Policies: The County-Wide Planning Policies, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in August 1993, state that all jurisdictions within the County shall institute measures to encourage the availability of affordable housing for all incomes and needs and ensure that each community includes a fair share of housing for all economic segments of the population by:

- Establishing a process for fair share distribution of affordable housing.
- Working through public/private partnerships and with affected citizens, facilitate the development of low- and moderate-income housing appropriate for existing neighborhoods and accessible to transportation, commerce, and services.
- Exploring ways to reduce costs and modifying current policies that provide barriers to affordable housing.
- Accommodating affordable housing throughout jurisdictions, rather than in isolated areas.
- Encouraging diversity in housing types and costs.

- Providing assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance, where possible, to establish affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households.

The goals and policies set out in this chapter incorporate the State GMA Goals and County-Wide Planning Policies.

Growth Expectations: Thurston County is expected to grow by 119,460 people (55.6 percent) to 334,260 by the year 2025. Most of this growth will be absorbed by the county's cities and towns and their surrounding Urban Growth Areas. However, the rural county will be accommodating some of this population growth.

Therefore, a continuing demand is expected for new housing units in rural areas. The anticipated growth translates into the need to provide for approximately 14,046 new households in unincorporated areas by the year 2025. Of these, a certain proportion can be expected to be low- and moderate-income households and special needs households, as discussed later in this chapter.

This demand for housing will, in turn, result in increased demands for public services (e.g., social, housing assistance, and health services; police and fire protection, schools, roads, utilities, and parks) and increased pressure on aquifers, wetlands, and other natural systems. This demand for new housing will have to be balanced with other GMA and County requirements to reduce urban sprawl, use land more efficiently than in the past, concentrate growth within Urban Growth Areas, and preserve rural areas for the full range of rural land uses. The following table illustrates Thurston County's estimated population increase until the year 2025:

**Table 4-1
Thurston County Estimated Population Increase¹**

Jurisdictional Area	2003 Population	2025 Population Projection ²	22 Year Population Increase	Percent (%) Increase	New Households ⁵
Urban Total ⁴	139,846	223,280	83,434	59.7%	33,974
Small Towns Total ³	3,979	4,900	921	23.1%	368
Unincorporated County ⁴	70,976	106,090	35,114	49.4%	14,046
County Grand Total	214,800	334,260	119,460	55.6%	47,784

1 Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC). Figures have been rounded for clarity.

2 Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Yelm and their respective Urban Growth Areas.

3 Rainier, Tenino, Bucoda.

4 Unincorporated rural lands, Chehalis Reservation, Nisqually Reservation, and Rochester-Grand Mound Urban Growth Area.

5 New households based on 2000 U.S. Census median household size for incorporated areas of 2.5 persons, except where assumptions differ in adopted joint plans.

Joint Plans: Joint Plans, developed cooperatively by Thurston County and its cities and towns, except the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area, provide the goals and policies for meeting housing needs for the unincorporated county within Urban Growth Areas.

2004 Update: This Comprehensive Plan update is geared to meeting the requirements of the GMA. It also reflects the recognition that most new housing, and particularly affordable housing, will be focused towards the Urban Growth Areas surrounding the county's cities and towns.

New housing development should be directed into the most suitable areas. The most intensive, for example, should be located where public facilities and services can be provided most economically and where rural and sensitive areas will be least impacted. There is also a need for a variety of housing types to meet the requirements of special needs populations such as low income, elderly and handicapped residents, while generally providing a broad range of units for family sizes, age groups, and income levels characteristic of the county.

Examples of the topics addressed in this 2004 update are:

- Population and housing needs projections;
- Fair Share Housing targets; and
- Special needs housing.

II. MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

The goal of adequate housing for all income groups is not easy to achieve especially in areas designated, appropriately, for rural land uses and densities. Hence, a higher percentage of future populations and housing units will be focused into urban areas. It is in the county's urban areas that one finds more social, health, and housing services; more transportation services and alternatives; closer proximity to jobs, shopping, and businesses; and a greater variety of housing options than would be available in more isolated rural areas.

Housing Need: Thurston County (unincorporated areas) needs to accommodate nearly 35,100 new people in the next 22 years. As noted in the previous table, that amounts to approximately 14,050 new households. Based on current levels, we can expect that 47.1 percent, or 6,616 of these households will fall into the low- and moderate-income categories.

One issue relating to the need for future housing in Thurston County is the amount of developable property left to accommodate an increasing population. Thurston Regional Planning Council has examined the amount of buildable land supply in the GMA mandated Buildable Lands Report. The report found that "...land supply versus demand for a 25-year planning horizon for Thurston County, show(s) that sufficient land supply exists for residential development if development occurs at rates equal or less than those forecast by

the State Office of Financial Management and the Population and Employment Forecast of Thurston County provided by the Thurston Regional Planning Council. This analysis takes into account not only current zoning regulations, but also forecast changes in zoning as annexation occurs and urban services are extended to the urban growth areas of Tenino, Rainier, and Yelm, as agreed upon in inter-jurisdictional agreements between the cities and towns of south Thurston County and Thurston County. The forecast also examines changes in housing needs related to demographic trends, and rates of infill development in urban cores.” The following table illustrates the amount of residential land and supply until the year 2025:

Table 4-2¹
Residential Land Supply and Demand, Thurston County

Jurisdiction	2000 Residential Land Supply (acres)	2020 Residential Land Demand (acres)	Percent Remaining in 2020	2025 Residential Land Demand (acres)	Percent Remaining in 2025
		20-Year Forecast		25-Year Forecast	
Bucoda	81	26	67%	30	63%
Lacey & Lacey UGA	5,697	3,583	37%	4,106	28%
Olympia & Olympia UGA	4,192	2,305	45%	2,713	35%
Rainier & Rainier UGA	554	322	42%	360	35%
Tenino & Tenino UGA	505	319	37%	353	30%
Tumwater & Tumwater UGA	4,459	1,788	60%	2,340	48%
Yelm & Yelm UGA	3,144	1,365	57%	1,594	49%
Grand Mound UGA	158	76	52%	87	45%
Total Urban Areas	18,789	9,785	48%	11,582	38%
Rural Unincorporated County	145,553	56,900	61%	67,733	53%
Thurston County Total	164,343	66,685	59%	79,314	52%

¹ Source: Buildable Lands Work Program, TRPC; Forecast of Land Demand – Population and Employment Forecast for Thurston County, 1999, TRPC

Included in the Buildable Lands Report is discussion regarding residential densities within Thurston County. In accommodating an increasing population, the county needs to ensure that its projected residential densities are being met. The following table outlines the overall achieved densities in each of the county's residential zoning districts:

Table 4-3¹
Average Achieved Density by Generalized Density Category, Residential and Mixed Use Zoning

Density Category	Net Achieved Density (du/acre)	Permitted Dwellings 1996-2000	Acres Developed	Total Zoned Residential Acres	Buildable Acres
1-High Multifamily (15-30+ du/acre)	71.75	353	4.9	686	223
Moderate Multifamily (8-20 du/acre)	11.06	855	77.3	2,989	1,745
Mixed Residential (6-12 du/acre)	6.76	1,242	183.7	5,769	2,296
Medium (3-8 du/acre)	2.88	2,351	815.0	18,137	8,417
Low (1-4 du/acre)	3.32	1,598	480.7	14,322	4,730
Very Low (0-4 du/acre)	1.04	876	843.2	9,487	3,683
Rural-1du/2acres	0.47	348	737.2	12,236	5,027
Rural-1du/5acres	0.23	2,260	9,932.4	206,538	131,119
Rural-1du/20acres	0.04	18	476.0	11,729	7,101

¹ Source: Buildable Lands Work Program, TRPC.

As the previous tables show there is sufficient land within the rural county and to accommodate the expected population increases through 2025. Land, however, is not the only consideration. The challenge lies in adequately providing for the low- and moderate-income households. For these households, location; social, health, transportation, and housing services; and proximity to jobs, shopping, and businesses, become much more integral to determining housing affordability. For example, it costs approximately \$6,000 yearly to own and operate a vehicle. If a household's gross annual income is \$19,300 (see

Table 4-4), this cost for transportation becomes prohibitive. If a household is able to reduce this cost, more money is available for housing and other essentials. When located in or near town, a household is able to avail itself more easily of transportation alternatives and subsidized housing. This can reduce the need for an automobile, or at least, multiple vehicles. Necessarily, more housing is being focused into the urban areas (which also addresses other GMA requirements, such as containing urban sprawl) where public services and facilities can more cost-effectively be provided.

Affordability: According to federal guidelines, housing is affordable when it costs no more than 30 percent of gross household income, including the cost of utilities. Finding affordable housing is not a problem when income levels are substantially higher than average. However, low- and moderate-income households are increasingly challenged to find housing within their budgets.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established national definitions of low- and moderate-income levels. They are based on percentages of county median incomes. People most likely to have difficulty finding housing are within the following income ranges:

Extremely Low:	0 percent to 30 percent of the median income
Very Low:	31 percent to 50 percent of the median income
Low:	51 percent to 80 percent of the median income
Moderate:	81 percent to 95 percent of the median income

The median Thurston County income determined by the 2000 census was \$46,975. An extremely low-income household (at 30 percent of Thurston County median income) would earn at most \$1,174 per month and would have only \$352 to spend for housing and utilities.

The following table outlines the percentage spent on housing within Thurston County in order to make housing affordable based on the median household income in 2000:

**Table 4-4
Thurston County Median Income¹**

Thurston County Median = \$64,300			30% of Gross for Housing
Income Ranges	Gross Annual Income	Gross Monthly Income	
30%/median	\$14,093	\$1,174	\$352
50%/median	\$23,488	\$1,957	\$587
80%/median	\$37,580	\$3,132	\$939
95%/median	\$44,626	\$3,719	\$1,116
120%/median	\$56,370	\$4,698	\$1,409
150%/median	\$70,463	\$5,872	\$1,762
200%/median	\$93,950	\$7,829	\$2,349
300%/median	\$140,925	\$11,744	\$3,523

¹ Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council

The following table illustrates the income thresholds in Thurston County between 1990 and 2000 for housing to be affordable. For instance, if a household in Thurston County was to make \$1,957 in a month in 2000, in order for their housing to be affordable they cannot spend more than \$587 on housing in the month. The home ownership tables show how much the house would be worth if that same household owned their house and were not renting.

**Table 4-5
Income Thresholds Used in Affordable Housing Needs Assessment,
Thurston County, 2000 and 1990¹**

Thurston County Median Household Income in 1999 was \$46,975				Home Ownership	
2000 HUD Income Ranges	Household Income	Gross Monthly Income	30% of Gross for Housing	Cash on Hand	House Value
30 % of median	\$14,093	\$1,174	\$352	\$4,000	\$39,081
50% of median	\$23,488	\$1,957	\$587	\$6,000	\$61,723
80% of median	\$37,580	\$3,3132	\$940	\$10,000	\$99,484
95% of median	\$44,626	\$3,719	\$1,116	\$10,000	\$116,709

Thurston County Median Household Income in 1989 was \$30,976				Home Ownership	
1990 HUD Income Ranges	Household Income	Gross Monthly Income	30% of Gross for Housing	Cash on Hand	House Value
30 % of median	\$9,293	\$774	\$232	\$2,500	\$24,125
50% of median	\$15,488	\$1,291	\$387	\$4,000	\$40,511
80% of median	\$24,781	\$2,065	\$620	\$6,000	\$64,885
95% of median	\$29,427	\$2,452	\$736	\$8,000	\$77,898

¹ Source: 1990 and 2000 Census Buildable Lands Work Program, TRPC.

Affordable housing, especially housing affordable to the lowest income households, may not meet the household's needs. It may be too small or too far away from jobs. At the bottom end of the market we start having problems with substandard housing. Furthermore, lower income households are also faced with the impacts of the "buy down" effect. Just because a person or household with a higher income can afford more for housing, doesn't mean they are paying up to what they can afford. Understandably, they will often move down the ladder of available units to rent something cheaper, further reducing the number of low cost units available to those most needing them. The following table illustrates housing cost comparison between 1970 and 2000 and has been adjusted for inflation:

**Table 4-6
Thurston County Housing Cost Comparison, 1970 – 2000¹**

	Housing Value ²		Average Apartment Rent	
	Average Value	Adjusted for Inflation³	Average Rent	Adjusted for Inflation
1970	\$16,153	\$73,277	\$83	\$377
1980	\$58,700	\$134,239	\$216	\$494
1990	\$81,388	\$109,003	\$448	\$600
2000	\$145,200	N/A	\$578	N/A

¹ Source: Housing Data Document For Affordable Housing Planning and Growth Management, Thurston Regional Planning Council, May 1993. The Profile, TRPC.

² House value is determined by the homeowner in U.S. Census data.

³ Adjusted for inflation, converted to constant 2000 dollars. The pre-1975 data are the Consumer Price Index statistics from Historical Statistics of the United States (USGPO, 1975). All data since then are from the annual Statistical Abstracts of the United States.

Substandard housing is a large consideration when discussing affordable housing. Typically, as housing costs go down so do amenities and basic features. Housing may be affordable to someone but may be lacking basic features (complete kitchen or plumbing) or may be overcrowded. The following table shows those housing units that are lacking basic features or are of substandard condition:

**Table 4-7
Thurston County Housing Units by Indicators of Substandard Conditions¹**

Total # of Units	Lack Complete Plumbing		Lack Complete Kitchen Facilities		Overcrowded (>1.5 Persons/Room)	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
86,652	362	0.4%	408	0.5%	971	1.1%

¹ Source: 2003-2007 Thurston County Consolidated Plan, Thurston County HOME Consortium, July 15, 2003. Census 2000.

Fair Share Housing: The Fair Share Housing targets, required by the County-Wide Planning Policies, were adopted January 31, 1994. The Urban Growth Management Committee of the Thurston Regional Planning Council established these regional numbers prescribing the amount of low-income housing the County and its jurisdictions would need to provide through the year 2015. The categories are based on the HUD income levels discussed above.

The following table estimates the needs for affordable housing which have been unmet but the current housing stock. As shown, there is still a lack of affordable housing units for Thurston County residents who make below 50% of the median household income.

**Table 4-8
Estimate of Affordable Housing Needs, 2000¹**

Thurston County Total	Minimum Unmet Need for Affordable Housing	
	Dwellings	% of Households
30% or less of Median	4,121	46%
50% or less of Median	2,036	12%
80% or less of Median	0	0%
95% or less of Median	0	0%

¹ Source: 2000 Census, TRPC.

Although County land use designations and zoning regulations provide for a diversity of housing types, the county's rural areas do have limitations when it comes to providing affordable housing, especially to lower income households. These limitations, which are recognized in the GMA, include lower levels of public services and facilities than in urban growth areas; the need to maintain a balance between human uses and the natural environment to preserve environmental quality; and the need to keep residential densities low in order to maximize opportunities for continued farming, forestry, and other natural resource-based activities.

This being the case, it is very likely that the county will not be able to accommodate its full share of the Fair Share Housing targets within the rural area. Therefore, the county will need to identify any potential shortfalls and work with the cities and towns to explore ways to accommodate a portion of the county's targeted share within urban growth areas. The Goals, Objectives, and Policies section below outlines ways to accomplish this.

A monitoring system will need to be instituted to determine the success of efforts to provide housing for people in the low- and moderate-income brackets. Since all cities and towns will need to do the same, a regional approach to monitoring the provision of Fair Share Housing is recommended.

Regional Approach: It is important to take a coordinated regional approach using consistent modeling, assumptions, and techniques. Cooperation reduces costs and creates a partnership approach to an issue that connects the different jurisdictions. No one jurisdiction is independent of the others when it comes to housing and the problems related to providing adequate housing to a growing population. As mentioned earlier, housing issues cut across all jurisdictions. Although each jurisdiction is taking steps to provide housing for future growth, regional coordination is needed. The actions of each jurisdiction in the county affect the others. What's more, people move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. People seeking lower rents move to the south county towns, their housing cost savings often offset by increased transportation costs. The regionally developed Fair Share Housing targets are the first step towards a more coordinated regional approach to housing issues. Additional interjurisdictional coordination opportunities abound: regional housing strategies, regional funding for low- and moderate-income housing, etc.

III. HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

Diversity: Variation in the type, location, and cost of housing increases housing choices for citizens. Access to transportation, jobs, and services is critical, particularly for low-income persons or households. Therefore, some limitations exist in the types of housing that can be provided in rural areas. However, housing diversity is still achieved in the rural areas (e.g., manufactured housing, rental units, clustered housing, farm housing). This diversity, especially in combination with the even greater housing diversity in urban areas, will address the changing housing requirements associated with changing demographics.

For example, households are getting smaller; more people live alone. More and more jobs are in the service sector, with lower salaries. Lifestyles are fluctuating and with them the expectations for what constitutes desirable housing. More frequently now, people are pursuing alternatives to the traditional single-family detached house. The size of the average household has been shrinking in recent years and the trend promises to continue. There are more single parents with children. People are also living longer and experience changing housing needs with age.

Sufficient land has been allocated throughout Thurston County to accommodate the anticipated population growth. The County (including the urban growth areas) allows a wide range of housing types including:

- Single family
- Manufactured housing
- Duplex
- Mixed residential/commercial
- Special needs housing
- Family member units
- Farm housing
- Group homes
- Subsidized housing
- Foster care facilities
- Transitional housing
- Accessory dwelling units


Additional types of housing, such as accessory dwelling units, are also allowed within urban growth areas around cities and towns. Co-housing, community land trusts, and other housing alternatives are not precluded in the rural area. At the same time, the Joint Plans provide more housing diversity near services in the urban growth areas.



The following land use designations, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map (M-15), allow one or more of the housing types listed above:


- All five Rural Residential categories;
- McAllister Geologically Sensitive Area;
- Neighborhood Convenience Commercial; and
- Mixed Use - Rochester-Grand Mound Area.

Manufactured Housing: Manufactured housing, constructed in a factory with construction standards set and enforced by HUD, contributes to the diversity of housing opportunities and can be more affordable than site built homes since it takes advantage of mass-production economies. The County permits manufactured housing on individual residential lots where site-built houses are permitted. Generally speaking, and for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the term manufactured housing will be used as defined in the following table. This table illustrates the distinction between the variety of single-family housing types that are often confused.

**Table 4-9
Single Family Housing Types and Construction¹**

Housing Type	Definition	Construction Code	Illustration
MANUFACTURED HOUSING			
Mobile Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built on permanent, internal chassis in one or more pieces and moved to dwelling site • Built for use with or without a permanent foundation • Towed to building site on its internal chassis • Also known as Non-Insignia/Pre-HUD Home • Constructed prior to 1974 MHC&SSA2 • Not bearing HUD insignia 	Labor & Industries staff are unaware of any government construction standards that applied prior to the 1974 MHC&SSA	
Manufactured Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built on permanent, internal chassis in one or more pieces and moved to dwelling site • Built for use with or without a permanent foundation • Towed to building site on its internal chassis • Constructed after 1974 MHC&SSA 	HUD	Same as mobile home
Designated Manufactured Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined in State RCW 35.63.160 • Constructed after June 15, 1976 • At least 2 fully enclosed parallel sections, each at least 12' wide x 36' long • Not less than 3:12 roof pitch of composition, wood shake, coated metal, or similar roof 	HUD	Same as mobile home

Housing Type	Definition	Construction Code	Illustration
	material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exterior siding similar in appearance to conventional site-built houses • Also built on permanent, internal chassis and moved to dwelling site 		
FACTORY-BUILT HOUSING			
Modular Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No chassis • Must be mounted on permanent foundation prior to occupancy • Entirely or substantially prefabricated or assembled in modules away from building site • Modules are commonly transported to final building assembly site by separate vehicle (i.e., flat bed truck) • Typically indistinguishable from site-built houses once installed 	State Building Code	
Panelized, Log, Prefab, or Kit Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No chassis • Must be mounted on permanent foundation prior to occupancy • Entirely or substantially prefabricated or assembled away from building site • Sections commonly transported to final building assembly site by separate vehicle (i.e., flat bed truck) • Typically indistinguishable from site-built houses 	State Building Code	

Housing Type	Definition	Construction Code	Illustration
	once installed		
SITE-BUILT HOUSING			
Stick or Site-Built Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No chassis Assembled at the permanent dwelling site on a permanent foundation Materials brought to permanent building site in substantially unassembled form, typically raw materials 	State Building Code	

¹ Source: Governor's Manufactured Housing Task Force Final Report, House Housing Committee and Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, December 1992; 1991-1992 Quick Facts, Manufactured Housing Institute; Title 35 RCW: Cities and Towns.

² Federal Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974; Passed in 1974; Enacted in 1976. It was this law that changed the name of mobile homes to manufactured homes, even though the terms are often casually used interchangeably to this day.

Accessory Dwelling Units: RCW 43.63A.215 requires accessory dwelling units to be allowed in counties that are planning under the GMA. An accessory dwelling unit, or ADU, is a permanent dwelling unit, subordinate in size and intensity of use to the primary dwelling on a property. It may include the conversion of an appropriately sized existing accessory structure on the lot, an addition to the existing house, or a conversion of part of the existing house. It does not, however, include recreation vehicles. These do not have permanent water, sewerage, and utility services nor does HUD certify them for permanent residential use.

Two forms of accessory dwelling units are already allowed in rural parts of the county: farm housing associated with agricultural uses and temporary family member units within most rural residential zoning districts. Permanent accessory dwelling units are permitted in Urban Growth Areas surrounding the cities and towns where urban level public services and facilities are available to serve them.

IV. SPECIAL NEEDS

Special needs populations include low-income households, people with developmental disabilities, the homeless, the frail elderly, and others who have particular difficulty securing housing due to unusual circumstances (i.e., single parents, HIV/AIDS infected citizens, battered women, etc.). Rising costs and limited housing choices are especially hard on low-income households and other people with special needs.

The Housing Authority of Thurston County, and other public and private social service groups, have long served special needs households. A 1992 survey indicated that for the year 1991, 11,935 special needs clients were provided a variety of services. These services included transportation, housing (subsidized, transitional, etc.), vocational training, substance abuse treatment, counseling, medical services, and more. But Federal and State housing assistance funds are diminishing. At the same time, more people, including families with children, are homeless. Waiting lists for housing assistance are already long and growing longer. Not surprisingly, the need far exceeds the County's ability to provide services or assistance and the challenges are worsening. The same survey indicated that 8,854 special needs clients, some needing multiple services, were turned away because the resources available were insufficient. The following table outlines the number of subsidized housing units managed by the Housing Authority of Thurston as of June 2004:

Table 4-10¹
Subsidized Housing Units in the Thurston County Region as of 2004¹

Complex	Location	Total Number of units	Nature of Subsidy	Limitations
Casa Madrona	Olympia	70 one bedroom	Public Housing - King County Housing Authority	Elderly or disabled
Deschutes Cove	Tumwater	44 two and three bedroom units	FmHA	Primarily families
Evergreen Villages	Olympia	180 one, two, three and four bedroom	S8 Project based subsidy	Families, elderly or disabled
Fleetwood Apts	Olympia	43 studio apts	SRO subsidy administered by HATC	Single Homeless individuals
Killion Court	Yelm	20 - primarily one bedroom	FmHA	Elderly
Magnolia Villa	Lacey	21 two, three and four bedroom	S8 Project based subsidy	Primarily families
Martin Terrace	County	43 one and two bedroom	S8 Mod Rehab-subsidy administered by HATC	Elderly, disabled and small families
Olympia Villages	Olympia	48 one bedroom	S8 Project based subsidy	Elderly and disabled needing accessible units
The Olympian	Olympia	50 studio and one bedroom units	S8 Project based subsidy	Elderly or disabled
Providence St Francis House	Olympia	60 one bedroom	HUD 202 project	Elderly
Rainier Apartments	Yelm	22 one and two bedroom	FmHA	Elderly or disabled

Complex	Location	Total Number of units	Nature of Subsidy	Limitations
Sandstone Apts	Tenino	30 one and two bedroom	FmHA	Elderly or disabled
South Sound Villa	Lacey	70 one bedroom	S8 Project based subsidy	Elderly or disabled
Tolmie Cove	County	44 two and three bedroom units	FmHA	Primarily families
Tumwater Apts	Tumwater	50 studio and one bedroom units	HUD 202 project	Elderly
Uhler	Olympia	40 one bedroom	S8 Mod Rehab-subsidy administered by HATC	Elderly, disabled and small families
Yelm Cove	Yelm	32 two and three bedroom units	FmHA	Primarily families
Tenant Based Voucher Program	County-wide	1,894 vouchers unit sizes	All HUD Subsidy administered by HATC	Near elderly, elderly, disabled and families

Source: Housing Authority of Thurston County

Special needs housing is often located in more urban areas with better access to social and support services, transportation, shopping, jobs, and other essential services. Lacey, Tumwater, and Olympia are the primary locations for this type of housing and their related support services. Those in the rural areas with special needs migrate to the urban areas where the resources are centrally located. It would be unrealistic to think that the bulk of these resources and facilities could be located in more isolated rural areas. This further reinforces the need for a regional approach to strategies and funding.

One funding concept that takes this regional approach is multi-jurisdictional backing of Housing Authority of Thurston County (HATC) bond sales. HATC is a separate municipal corporation. Therefore, the County's bonding capacity is not affected by this technique. HATC bonds are tax-exempt revenue bonds. The HATC holds in reserve one full year of revenues as a buffer against default. Rent revenues pay off the bonds and HATC properties would have to be virtually vacant to cause the reserves to be tapped. Housing authorities statewide have been selling bonds with jurisdictional backing for 8-10 years. None have defaulted. The benefit of local jurisdictional backing of HATC bonds is that the

Authority can use the County's bond rating which reduces the interest rate paid by 1-1.5 percent.

V. PRESERVATION

The demand for affordable housing, especially for low- and moderate-income households, inevitably outstrips the supply. Further exacerbating the problem is the fact that much of the county's housing stock is old. For example, 10,144 units were built prior to 1950 and of those, 6,386 units were constructed prior to 1940. It is, therefore, all the more important to maintain and preserve the housing stock resources we already have. Keeping and maintaining this existing affordable housing is generally a more effective strategy than trying to create an equivalent quantity of comparably priced new housing while trying to simultaneously expand the inventory. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are used to rehabilitate deteriorating housing units in the rural county and south county towns. The need exceeds the available federal funding.

**Table 4-11
Housing Unit Age in Thurston County¹**

Year Structure Built							
1999- Mar 2000	1990- 1998	1980- 1989	1970- 1979	1960- 1969	1950- 1959	1940- 1949	Prior- 1939
2,052	20,257	16,369	20,249	8,758	4,906	3,171	5,863

¹ Source: Census 2000.

Here is another opportunity where a regional approach to housing strategies may be fruitful. Perhaps certain geographical areas can be identified as targets or priorities for housing-related funding, activities, and program allocations. In fact, targeting subsidized buildings which are at risk of conversion to market rate status due to owner pre-payment of HUD mortgages could be considered. The Housing Authority of Thurston County or other non-profits have the first right of refusal to buy these properties before they are moved onto the open market. This requires some sort of purchasing capacity but does not commit the county to funding. Approximately 737 units are anticipated to be at risk for conversion in the next several years.

VI. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: ENOUGH HOUSING SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO MEET THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE EXISTING AND PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE COUNTY INCLUDING RENTAL AND PURCHASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL INCOME LEVELS.

OBJECTIVE A: Adequate residential land is needed to meet existing and projected housing needs for all income levels.

POLICIES:

1. The county should identify sufficient land for existing and projected residential needs including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, single family housing, manufactured housing, and residential care facilities.
2. The county should encourage housing opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap disability, economic status, familial status, age, sexual orientation, or other arbitrary factors.

OBJECTIVE B: The adopted Fair Share Affordable Housing targets need to be implemented to ensure adequate housing opportunities for the county's low- and moderate-income households.

POLICIES:

1. The county should work with the cities and towns to accommodate part of the county's Fair Share Affordable Housing target within the Urban Growth Areas. The county should develop incentives (such as acquiring land for affordable housing, land trades, supporting grants, or paying for density transfers) for the cities and towns, recognizing that affordable housing is best located within urban areas due to the greater accessibility to transportation systems, jobs, support services, shopping, and businesses.
2. The county should coordinate with the cities, towns and the Housing Authority of Thurston County to develop and implement a regional process to monitor achieving the Fair Share Affordable Housing targets throughout the county. Regional modeling and assumptions should be used to ensure consistent analysis and record keeping.
3. As stated in the County-Wide Planning Policies, when possible, the county should provide assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance for the expansion or establishment of low cost affordable housing for low-, moderate- and fixed-income individuals and families.
4. The county should participate in a multi-jurisdictional public/private task force to develop proposals for expanded low- and moderate-income housing funding and services. Techniques for consideration include, but are not limited to:
 - a. A regional affordable housing trust fund, and
 - b. A regional affordable housing strategy.

OBJECTIVE C: The County should work to reduce barriers to affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households.

POLICIES:

1. The county should reduce, where appropriate, regulatory barriers and other requirements which add unnecessary costs and thereby discourage affordable housing construction. The following are strategies for consideration:
 - a. Review regulations to find those that cause much higher costs than originally expected and determine if they can be revised, replaced, or eliminated.
 - b. Make regulations and permit processing more predictable, to remove some uncertainty for both builders and lenders.
2. The county should encourage home ownership opportunities for county residents. This can involve, but is not limited to:
 - a. Coordinating with and referring to state home ownership programs; and
 - b. Identifying, developing, and initiating educational programs, such as, forums, classes, public presentations, TCTV slide shows or videos, tying in with SPSCC or other home ownership/housing classes.
3. The county should work with the private sector, Housing Authority of Thurston County, neighborhood groups, and other affected citizens to facilitate the development of attractive, quality low- and moderate-income housing that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and located with easy access to public transportation, commercial areas, and employment centers.
4. The county should encourage applications (for example, with letters of support) from eligible non-profits to Federal and State funding sources to build new or rehabilitate existing housing to meet low-income housing needs.
5. The county should evaluate the viability of integrating low- and moderate-income housing efforts with public purpose lands planning. Especially within Urban Growth Areas, there may be opportunities for providing land for housing as an incentive to cities and towns in Thurston County for accommodating portions of the County Fair Share Affordable Housing target.
6. The county should develop a table that compares the various residential densities and their definitions for the county and all cities and towns to help clarify the differences and similarities for the public.

GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE SAFE AND DECENT HOUSING ALTERNATIVES THAT MEET THE CHANGING POPULATION NEEDS AND ARE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO JOBS, TRANSPORTATION, AND DAILY ACTIVITIES.

OBJECTIVE A: A variety of housing types, neighborhood settings, price ranges, amenities, natural settings, and proximity to transportation, employment, shopping, and other daily activities, should be available within the framework of established urban-rural land use policies.

POLICIES:

1. The county should encourage that within rural areas, a variety of residential development types and housing mixtures should be available, such as detached single family housing, cluster housing, duplexes, and a residence in conjunction with commercial uses in neighborhood convenience centers.
2. The county should permit accessory dwelling units in all residential zones within Urban Growth Areas around cities and towns provided that development standards and design criteria are satisfied. Accessory units do not include recreational vehicles of any kind because they are not served by private utilities nor are they certified for full-time residency by HUD. Joint plans for the urban growth areas around cities and towns further address this accessory dwelling unit policy.
3. The county should permit manufactured housing in the same locations and at the same density as other housing, not just in mobile home parks. Development and design standards in each residential zoning district apply equally to manufactured homes and other residences.
4. The county should permit in agricultural areas and on working farms (as defined in RCW 84.34.020) in rural residential/resource-1 unit/5 acre areas, farm housing units for farm employees and their families over and above the maximum number of units permitted on a lot by zoning.
5. The county should allow one additional temporary dwelling unit, over and above the maximum number of units permitted on a lot by zoning, for family members within the lower density rural areas (i.e., outside UGA's) of the county. Family member units should be removed after they are no longer used by family members.

GOAL 3: TO MEET THE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE A: Ensure sufficient land area is available for special needs housing.

POLICIES:

1. The county should allow residential care facilities (such as group homes) in residential areas through the special permit process, with public review that considers the adequacy of public services, parking, and impacts on adjacent properties. Occupancy and staffing levels should be compatible with zoned densities and the availability of transportation and services.

2. The county should encourage rural housing affordable to low- and moderate-income citizens to be located near public transit routes to provide alternative transportation opportunities to those with more limited incomes.
3. The county should encourage social, housing, and health service organizations which offer support programs for those with special needs, particularly those programs that help people remain in the community by providing technical assistance, when possible, and assisting in efforts to seek funds or coordinate between agencies and groups.
4. The county should encourage social, housing, and health service providers by providing technical assistance, when possible, and assisting in efforts to seek funds for construction and operation of emergency housing.
5. The county should promote regionally coordinated provision of low-income housing by working closely with the Housing Authority of Thurston County.
6. The county should encourage low-income and special needs housing, by considering techniques such as:
 - a. Developing an inventory of publicly held land within urban growth areas and make suitable parcels available (sale, lease, donation) for low-income housing and housing for special needs populations, where appropriate.
 - b. Promote the use of surplus public facilities within urban growth areas (buildings, land, and fixtures) for special needs housing or transitional housing, where appropriate.
7. The county should encourage self-help housing efforts and promote programs (i.e., Habitat for Humanity) in which people gain home equity in exchange for work performed in renovation or construction. The County should consider participating in efforts to revise legislation that discourages use of "sweat equity," volunteer, and self-help programs.
8. The county should consider participating in a regional housing trust fund or other county-wide funding source. The trust fund, which could be administered by the Housing Authority of Thurston County or other non-profit agency, may be used for several purposes including, but not limited to:
 - a. Providing "gap" financing to promote home ownership for low-income households. ("Gap" is the difference between what the purchaser can afford and what the market can produce.)
 - b. Establishing a revolving loan fund for property purchase or renovation.
 - c. As a leverage for obtaining additional public funds.

9. The county should participate in multi-jurisdictional backing for Housing Authority of Thurston County bond sales.
10. The county should consider participating in partnerships between public and private nonprofit organizations to create increased housing and home ownership opportunities for households with special needs and for low- and moderate-income households.
11. The county should encourage other home ownership approaches, which promote low- and moderate-income and special needs housing. This could be in the form of education, technical support, and working with financial institutions to determine how to make these options financially viable.
12. The county should develop an inventory of surplus public land and facilities, which may be used for low- and moderate-income housing within urban growth areas. Determine if this can be integrated with public purpose lands planning activities.
13. The county should work with cities, towns, and the Housing Authority of Thurston County to establish a regional funding program for low-income, moderate-income, and special needs housing. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. A regional housing trust fund,
 - b. Multi-jurisdictional backing for Housing Authority of Thurston County bond sales, and
 - c. Public/private partnerships.

OBJECTIVE B: Ensure that adequate provisions are in place so that special needs populations are not discriminated against in choice of housing.

1. The county should direct treatment of a residential structure occupied by persons with handicaps the same as a similar residential structure occupied by a family or other unrelated individuals.
2. The county should direct treatment of a residential structure occupied by group care for children that meets the definition of “familial status” (as defined in the Washington Laws Against Discrimination, RCW 49.60.222-225) the same as a similar residential structure occupied by a family or other unrelated individuals.

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING, AND TO PROVIDE DECENT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THURSTON COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE A: The County finds it desirable to support efforts to preserve, maintain, rehabilitate, and/or expand the supply of affordable housing in the county.

POLICIES:

1. The county should work with all jurisdictions to create an inventory of existing subsidized and low-cost non-subsidized housing and identify housing that may be lost due to redevelopment, deteriorating housing conditions, or public policies and actions.
2. The county should encourage the rehabilitation of substandard housing and maintenance of older housing. Consider identifying geographic target areas or a series of priority areas for focused attention and resources.
3. The County should consider participating in efforts to retain existing subsidized housing, such as:
 - a. Encouraging the extension of existing contracts to avoid conversion of subsidized housing to market-rate units (for example, letters of support to landlords),
 - b. When appropriate, the County should work with the Housing Authority of Thurston County and non-profits to develop sources of funding and strategies to enable the Housing Authority or nonprofit housing groups to buy projects.
4. The county should seek opportunities to identify, protect, and rehabilitate historic properties to meet housing goals.