

V. General Issues, Goals and Policies



This urban growth area subdivision by Gemini Development utilizes landscaping and innovative design to create an attractive water amenity from drainage.

Housing goals and policies that have been adopted by both the City and by Thurston County for the Urban Growth Area are indicated with an asterisk, “”.*

V. General Issues, Goals and Policies

A. Issue: Provide housing to accommodate anticipated population growth. A full range of housing types are required to provide diverse housing needs at costs all persons can afford.

Analysis: Analysis of census information and historical trends indicates that if the population continues at its present rate, significant impacts can be expected in the Thurston County area. The Washington State Office of Fiscal Management has provided population estimates indicating that population of Thurston County will be 334,260 by the year 2025. It is anticipated approximately 30,680 additional people will need to be accommodated within Lacey and Lacey’s Urban Growth Area by the year 2015.

It is assumed that significant increases in Lacey’s housing stock within all economic brackets will be required to meet this anticipated demand.

1. *Goal: Have a sufficient number of single family dwelling units, multifamily units, and group and special need housing to provide a selection of rental and home ownership affordable housing opportunities for all persons.

Policies:

*a. Provide opportunities for development of all housing types to accommodate future needs for each type of housing.

*b. Monitor the market and provide sufficient area zoned to meet the demand for various types of housing.

*c. Consider affordable housing program with a full range of techniques designed to target each income bracket.

*d. Encourage a wide variety of housing from extremely low to high income in range to allow mobility within the housing market.

*e. Promote a myriad of rental and homeownership opportunities in the manufactured and site built single-family and multifamily markets for all economic segments of the population.

*f. Promote preservation and improvement of existing single-family and multifamily units.

g. Support neighborhood revitalization through available grants from the State, Federal and local levels to maintain and improve infrastructure.

2. *Goal: Meet County wide planning policy requirements to distribute a fair share of affordable housing for extremely low to moderate income households throughout the growth area and other jurisdictions.

Policies:

a. Assume a “fair share” of affordable housing in cooperation with other Thurston County jurisdictions.

3. Goal: Achieve a balanced community, with each planning area accommodating a fair share of housing needs for all persons.

Policies:

a. Consider requirements and incentives designed to result in a balanced increased supply of affordable housing for extremely low, very low, low and moderate income households in all parts of the City.

b. Generally aggressive program techniques shall be used to target extremely low, very low, low and moderate income households. Other less aggressive techniques shall be used to target medium and high income households.

c. Programs may include mandatory requirements for new developments targeting individual planning areas until housing goals for target groups in each planning area is achieved.

4. Goal: Implement affordable housing techniques consistently and on a regional scale.

Policies:

*a. A myriad of affordable housing strategies should be implemented by all of the surrounding jurisdictions in Thurston County to meeting housing needs for extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income households on a regional scale.

*b. Public and nonprofit agencies with expertise in housing practices and special needs, such as the Housing Authority, should be a major partner in inclusionary programs.

*c. The Housing Authority or other agency should take a lead role where its expertise and function lends itself to best accomplish program objectives. Lead responsibility might include such tasks as qualifying households by income bracket, monitoring target objectives, overseeing and administration of an affordable housing trust, taking ownership of dedicated lots and units, contracting for the development of units, monitoring the sale and resale controls of designated public units, and other related tasks.

5. Goal: Explore a full range of techniques to accomplish affordable housing goals.

Policies:

a. Consider programs for higher densities and more lots in new subdivisions in exchange for dedication of some of the “extra” lots to the public to help achieve affordable housing goals. Requirements should be written to ensure houses built on the lots are of comparable quality and compatible with adjacent units. Covenants and restrictions should run with the properties

controlling sale and resale to ensure the properties stay affordable.

b. Consider a similar program for apartment unit projects as described in Policy a. above. Allow higher densities and more units in apartments in exchange for long term commitments on retaining some apartment units in a rate structure designed to serve target groups.

c. In programs developed under a. and b. above, consider a program to provide multifamily or single family units with less square footage than adjacent “market rate” units to allow for a natural integration of more affordable housing units throughout the growth area.

d. Lacey’s affordable housing strategy should include both rental components to target extremely low, very low, and low income households and “for sale” components to target moderate income households.

e. Consider allowing a percentage of development fees to be waived, including Planning, Public Works, and Building Department fees for those lots and units designated as fulfilling low income requirements.

f. Consider including standards allowing a percentage of impact fees to be waived for lots and units being dedicated to the Housing Authority.

g. Consider a program with alternatives for allowing fees in lieu of standards for dedication of lots to be paid into a housing trust fund, to meet a project’s requirements and overall goals of the affordable housing program, as it relates to balancing the location of the community’s housing needs.

B. Issue: Each planning area should provide a full range of housing choices for all persons.

Analysis: Housing opportunities for all persons should exist throughout the growth area. This is important to ensure that discrimination against

certain groups of persons or races does not occur.

Discussion with the school district also indicates that where a planning area is unevenly balanced considering the type of housing units available, school enrollments may also become unbalanced racially or socio-economically. This can create problems for the school district in trying to equitably distribute resources and to achieve the state requirements for avoiding racial imbalance within school enrollments. Each planning area should therefore provide opportunities for the development of different housing types and costs to provide opportunities for all persons to locate in the neighborhood area of their choice.

1. *Goal: Achieve a full range of housing opportunities for all persons throughout the growth area.

Policies:

*a. Promote opportunities in each planning area for development of a full range of housing types and costs.

b. As much as possible, each planning area should provide a balanced ratio of home ownership and rental housing consistent with the city-wide ratio to work towards equitable housing opportunities throughout the growth area.

C. Issue: All housing should be safe to provide for the health and welfare of all persons.

Analysis: The International Building Code provides minimum standards for the safety of structures. Various types of housing come under the jurisdiction of different standards. International Building Code standards cover any construction occurring on site. Federal standards (HUD) cover manufactured home construction.

1. *Goal: Provide housing meeting adequate safety standards for all persons.

Policies:

*a. Adopt the most up-to-date and safest building, housing, mechanical and other codes and standards available with respect to existing and new residential structures.

*b. Treat manufactured housing and homes built to the International Building-Code the same. Prohibit the location of “mobile homes” in Lacey. “Manufactured home” means a single-family dwelling built in accordance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act, which is a national, preemptive building code. “Mobile home” means a factory-built dwelling built prior to June 15, 1976, to standards other than the HUD code, and acceptable under applicable state codes in effect at the time of construction or introduction of the home into the state. Mobile homes have not been built since introduction of the HUD Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act. Mobile homes should not be permitted because of safety issues.

c. Encourage construction practices which exceed minimum standards. Support the use of safe, innovative alternative building designs and methods.

d. Encourage the maintenance of housing and seek to eliminate all sub-standard housing in the community. Encourage homeowners and renters to care for their property. Require owners of unsafe housing to either correct the problem or cease using the structure.

*e. Housing located in hazardous areas, such as floodplains and steep slopes presents a safety and economic risk to the occupants and to other members of the community. Housing will only be permitted in such areas if expertly designed to reduce that hazard and in compliance with Lacey’s Geologically Sensitive Areas Ordinance and Flood Hazard Protection Ordinance, for properties in the City, and with the Thurston County Critical Areas Ordinance, for properties

in the Urban Growth Area.

D. Issue: Housing should be compatible and harmonious with the neighborhood in which it is located. Innovative design should be encouraged to improve neighborhood appearance and provide for individual needs.

Analysis: One of the most difficult tasks in the coming years will be to provide for the number of housing units that must be accommodated within the urban growth management area while maintaining the quality of life that citizens will demand. High and medium density areas and projects maximizing density will need to be accommodated in all planning areas. Care needs to be taken in designation of these areas and in the design of projects that take place in these areas to ensure such projects are compatible and harmonious with the neighborhood in which they locate.

Many of the concerns heard from neighborhood groups involve development of multifamily projects that are out of character with the area and have significant impacts to the character and stability of a neighborhood considering appearance, land use impacts and social impacts.

Location and design of multifamily units needs to consider these impacts in promoting developments that are compatible and harmonious with neighborhood character.

Even projects proposing single family houses in established single family residential areas may have an impact if not properly designed. All projects should be required to consider neighborhood impacts and respond to legitimate concerns.

1. *Goal: Achieve housing that is compatible and harmonious with existing neighborhood character while allowing infill and providing for environmental sensitivity.

Policies:

*a. Provide housing with innovative design that enhances the function, appearance and quality of neighborhoods while attaining infill.

*b. Encourage innovation and variety in housing designs and structural components. Support efforts to build housing with unique individual character which is innovative and contributes to the attractiveness of the area.

*c. Continue to utilize design review guidelines for small lot developments.

*d. When designating areas for specific residential density and zoning classifications, consider the composition of the neighborhood and areas where such housing would be the most compatible, while promoting goals for infill.

e. When reviewing and acting upon residential projects, the city shall consider the architecture of multifamily projects and site design of all residential projects to promote compatibility with the scale and character of the neighborhood.

*f. To allow accessory dwelling units in all residential areas with adequate standards to satisfy parking and other land use concerns.

g. Minimize noise in residential areas. Residential areas should provide a quiet living environment, especially during the night. Encourage designs that minimize noise and will apply strict noise standards in residential areas.

*h. Require that all new residential development comply with stringent design standards relating to appearance, function and safety, such as:

Landscaping which enhances the appearance of each development from the viewpoint of the occupants and of neighbors and passersby;

Street lighting or security and safety that is appropriate to scale of the neighborhood along with design compatibility;

Development of planter strips between the street and sidewalks with street trees consistent with the City's development guidelines;

Curbs and gutters in all subdivisions;

Sidewalks, with extra-wide surfaces to accommodate bicyclists where providing direct access to schools;

Streets that meet the minimum standards set forth in the City's Development Guidelines or County road standards, as appropriate, and that are of a scale appropriate to emphasize local traffic, pedestrians, and neighborhood residential character. Residential paved street widths for local access streets should promote the "skinny street" concept for pedestrian comfort and should use wide planter strips and sidewalks to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment and attractive neighborhood character;

Emergency vehicle access to every home;

Buried utility lines and pipes;

Entry-point signs identifying all major residential developments by name;

Connection to the City's water supply system;

Promote and encourage connection to the City's sewage collection system;

Multiple access points from arterials to all major residential areas;

Street system designs which discourage through traffic, but allow convenient interconnection of local access roads for local traffic, from residents or adjacent developments and neighborhoods;

Open space and common areas which are appro-

priate to the type of housing development; and

Provisions to ensure maintenance of common areas and other facilities of local responsibility.

Allow flexibility from the above policies to provide for reduced impervious surfaces and innovative design related to low impact development.

i. Promote the improvement of existing residential areas by providing the means to add facilities comparable to those required in new housing developments. These improvements may include street lights, street trees, sidewalks, burial of utility lines, subdivision entry point signs, public water connections, connection to the public sewage treatment system, open space and common area development, and other features that enhance the neighborhood.

E. Issue: Housing should be energy efficient.

Analysis: Energy costs have risen, and it has become increasingly more difficult to provide the energy needs of the nation's growing population. Increasing costs, declining resources, and availability have illustrated the importance of energy conservation.

Energy resources can be conserved and energy costs reduced by more energy efficient housing designs and location consideration including proximity to transit routes and pedestrian facilities.

1. Goal: Promote energy efficient housing location and design.

Policies:

a. Require housing designs which minimize the consumption of fossil fuels and of electrical energy. Require that new structures be efficient to heat and to cool and will promote the use of solar heating in all types of housing. Promote improvement of existing structures to make them more efficient.

b. Promote residential subdivision designs which maximize solar heating opportunities. Many methods are available to make sure that a home has access to the winter sun. Encourage designs which provide the home builder and owner with the option of using this inexhaustible source of energy.

c. Encourage landscaping which increases compatibility with solar design for heating and cooling.

F. Issue: Provide a full range of housing for the anticipated population of persons with special needs.

Analysis: There is a large special needs population that exists within the Thurston County area. The role of the City and County in this arena may be one of offering support to human service organizations by helping them seek grants with State and Federal agencies.

In regards to public assistance received by the special needs population in Thurston County, assistance took the form of welfare, unemployment compensation and undesignated others. Entitlements, on the other hand, took the form of social security and retirement. There is also a large population that exists without any form of assistance.

Review of the surveys on the special needs population shows, that the highest need are those with mental illnesses, low to moderate income households and substance abusers.

It is anticipated that there will be a continuing need for group homes and special facilities to accommodate the needs of special populations. Federal legislation requires jurisdictions to accommodate the needs of the special populations and to eliminate any policies that discriminate against the special populations.

1. *Goal: To provide a variety of housing op-

portunities for those with special needs.

Policies:

*a. Provide opportunities for development of various types of group housing.

b. Ensure a full range of housing and facilities for the accommodation of persons with special needs exist within each planning area with consideration for promotion housing in those planning areas providing the most services for such individuals.

c. Design group homes and facilities for special populations so that they are integrated, compatible, and harmonious with surrounding land uses.

d. Enforce all requirements of the International Building Codes that includes requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing amendments.

e. Continue to maintain flexible zoning for the siting of facilities for special needs populations. This will encourage special need housing to be located throughout the City rather than in one concentrated area.

f. Assist human service organizations in their efforts to seek funds for the acquisition, rehabilitation, construction and operation of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing.

g. Encourage and support human service organizations which offer programs which allow individuals with special needs to remain in the community.

*h. Because special needs populations are often represented by households falling in the extremely low to moderate income brackets, affordable housing policies and standards for extremely low to moderate groups should be consistent and should be coordinated internally, as well as with other jurisdictions and agencies.