

# **Chapter 6: Housing Element**

## 6.1 PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

One of society's most basic needs is shelter. How we, as a society, preserve the housing stock we have and how we plan to accommodate our future housing needs reflects upon the quality of life we enjoy or want to enjoy. It is important to consider where we locate new residential areas, for this decision will drive the determination as to where public infrastructure (roads, utilities, parks, and schools) will be located.

As communities update their 2005 plans, they are instructed to consider several issues affecting housing:

1. Inventory of existing housing and projected housing needs using latest population projections.
2. Goals, policies for housing.
3. Location of sufficient land for housing.
4. Provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

This Chapter has been developed in accordance with these measures, with the Countywide Planning Policies, and has been integrated with all other planning elements to ensure consistency throughout the comprehensive plan. In January 2014, the County issued the 2013 Housing Characteristics and Needs Report, which implements Countywide Planning Policy HO-5. The Policy called for a detailed analysis of current housing characteristics and a forecast of future needs in each jurisdiction. The Housing Report ("HO-5 Report") is a compilation and analysis of information and is not a directive on what each community should do to address future needs or estimates. It did, however, play a significant role in the development of the City's Housing Element. In November 2016, the County adopted Ordinance 16-077 which updated the population, housing and employment targets for Snohomish County cities. The Ordinance made the following finding regarding Arlington:

*“ Based on information provided by the City of Arlington subsequent to its request on May 10, 2016, to withdraw its ARL3 proposal from the county's Final Docket XVII, the GPP 10 proposal includes capacity revisions from the City of Arlington which indicate that the city and its unincorporated UGA could accommodate the 2035*

*population and housing targets currently adopted in Appendix D of the county's GPP within the current Arlington UGA boundaries through consideration of reasonable measures to increase capacity within the city.”*

-- Finding “0” -- Ordinance 16-077

The Housing Element is intended to provide City officials and the general public with the information necessary to guide housing growth in the direction that best addresses the desires of not only Arlington's existing and anticipated residents, but those with special housing needs as well. The Housing Policies (See Chapter 3) will guide decision-making to achieve the community's goals as articulated in the Vision Statement. The City's development regulations (zoning, building codes, etc.) direct the private sector with regards to housing. The Housing Element will set the conditions under which the private housing industry will operate, and establishes both long-term and short-term policies to meet the community's housing needs and achieve the community goals.

Several goals and policies at the State and County level give direction for this element including the GMA:

- (4) *Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.<sup>1</sup>*

The GMA describes what a housing element should include:

- (2) A housing element ensuring the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods that: (a) Includes an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth; (b) includes a statement of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single-family residences; (c) identifies sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, and group

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 30.70A.020

homes and foster care facilities; and (d) makes adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.<sup>2</sup>

## 6.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

A 2014 report<sup>3</sup> by Snohomish County to the Planning Advisory Committee listed several trends that will affect future housing needs:

- Population growth at a slower rate than in the past.
- A significant aging of the county’s population.
- Greater participation by older citizens in the labor force .
- More demand for housing in urban/central residential locations.
- Household types in Snohomish County less dominated by married-couple families with children.
- Less demand for single family detached housing development than in the past.
- More multi-family and rental demand.
- More reliance on non-automobile modes of transport.

**Figure 6-1 Median Income**

Arlington grew by about 6,000 residents between 2000 and 2010 and added only another 350 through 2013. About 220 housing units were added 2010-2013. Owner-occupied dwellings grew from 62% to 64%, a slightly different trend than outlined in the County report. Arlington in 2011 still had a lower percentage of home ownership than its peer “Large Cities” (68.9%) or the County (67.9%).

Arlington	\$59,698
County	\$67,777
Larger Cities	\$72,443

The median income was also lower. There was a higher ratio of “cost burdened households”.

**Figure 6-2 Cost Burdened Households**

Cost Burdened Households	Arlington	Large Cities	County
Owner	51.3%	45.8%	45.7%
Renter	54.3%	49.0%	50.2%

<sup>2</sup> RCW 30.70A.070

<sup>3</sup> Snohomish County Demographic Trends & Initial Growth Targets, Briefing to County Planning Commission, February 25, 2014

*“A household (rental or with mortgage) is ‘burdened’ when it spends 30 percent or more of its gross income on housing costs...Severe housing cost burden occurs when a household must pay more than 50 percent of income on rent and utilities.”*

--Housing Report. Page 36

### 6.3 FUTURE NEEDS

Arlington’s housing situation appears to show growth occurring in proportion to population growth with a likely upward pressure for more owner-occupied housing, but with a need for more affordable housing in the owner and rental markets.

In May, 2013 each jurisdiction was asked by the County to report on how current its plan was regarding housing strategies. Each was asked to re-cap the strategies within the housing element of its 2005 comprehensive plan. Arlington reported as follows:

1. The overall emphasis in City of Arlington’s housing element is to:
  - A. Encourage the development of a range of housing types.
  - B. Provide fair and equal access to housing.
  - C. Ensure strong, stable neighborhoods through infrastructure investment and housing preservation.
2. Possible mechanisms or strategies to achieve their housing element include:
  - A. Preserving the “old-town” area.
  - B. Encouraging high density housing in areas currently moving in that direction.
  - C. Utilizing regional and federal funding programs to encourage housing ownership.
  - D. Locating housing development in areas within existing sewer service areas.
3. Implementation. The focus of Arlington’s housing element is on diversity, access, affordability and preservation. Implementing strategies for these focal points include:
  - A. Regulate housing by building type instead of use.
  - B. Allow for Mixed Use projects in commercial centers.
  - C. Permit infill development that is compatible with existing neighborhoods.
  - D. Regulate density by using parameters other than by dwelling units per acre.
  - E. Reduce on-site parking requirements for residential developments.
4. Future Housing Issues. The City will continue to work toward encouraging the development of a variety of housing types in order to accommodate niches in the market that aren’t currently being served.

As part of the GMA plan updates, Snohomish County communities must address implementation of the Vision 2040 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) in 2008. The 2008 RGS called for proportionately more growth

toward cities within regional growth centers – metropolitan (Everett) and core cities (Lynnwood, Bothell) – and away from the unincorporated UGA.

**Figure 6-3 Area Median Income -- 2014**

	30% AMI	31-50% AMI	51%-80% AMI	Market Rate
Owner	17	51	288	1339
Rental	65	167	282	212
Total	82	218	571	1550

Based on the 2014 HO-5 report, the City’s analysis suggested that Arlington needs to find room for about 2,421 more units by 2035. It suggests that about 871 of those units need to be in the “affordable” range with the balance priced at “market rate”.

The County, in its 2016 reconciliation report (Ordinance 16-077) now estimates a need for 2890 additional housing units in 2035. Applying the HO-5 ratio from 2014, 1040 of those units should be in the “affordable” range.

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**Figure 6-4 Household Size 2014**

	Arlington	County
Owner	2.76	2.71
Renter	2.36	2.39
Total Households	2.62	2.61

The average household size in Arlington is 2.62<sup>4</sup>, a decline from 2.72 in 2005. Owner-occupied units had 2.76 persons, down from 2.82 persons. Renter-occupied declined from 2.54 to 2.36. The 2005 estimate for 2025 average household size was 2.54 which has proven to be very accurate. The County’s

estimated household size for 2035 in Arlington is forecasted to be 2.7, which will be used for this Plan at a rate of 2.84 for owner-occupied units and 2.4 for renter units.

**6.4 ALTERNATIVE HOUSING TYPES**

Special needs housing includes both the elderly and those with disabilities. In 2011 about 16.1% of the population was included in this category. Pro-rating those numbers to the 2035 population, of the 2,890 future housing units needed, about 465 would fall into the special needs category, with 13.3% (384) serving the elderly and the balance (81) other special need individuals.

<sup>4</sup> *2013 Housing Characteristics and Needs Report*, Snohomish County, 2014

Arlington allows for adult family homes housing up to six people needing special care, defined as “a regular family abode in which a person or persons provides personal care, special care, room, and board to more than one but not more than six adults who are not related by blood or marriage to the person or persons providing the services”.

### **6.5 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**

To assist affordable housing efforts and to provide for density infill, the City allows Accessory Dwelling Units under City Code 20.44.042. ADUs can be a part of or separate from the principal residence, can be no larger than 800 square feet and must comply with certain design requirements to ensure its “secondary” relationship to the main residence.

### **6.6 MOBILE AND MODULAR DWELLINGS**

Mobile homes and mobile home parks are allowed within the Suburban Residential, Residential Low/Moderate Density, Residential Moderate Density, and Residential High Density zones of the City. Modular homes are allowed only in the RHD zone, but can be grouped in subdivision-like settings with a land-use permit.

### **6.7 AFFORDABLE HOUSING TYPES**

The percentage of cost-burdened homes, as highlighted in Figure 6-2, illustrates the serious need for affordable housing options within the City. While Arlington has no housing authority of its own, the City can work to ensure its policies, development regulations, fees, and permitting processes recognize and incentivize (and in some instances require) affordable housing developments.