

---

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan looks at existing housing stock, and uses projections of future needs to assess the number, type, and location of houses within Blaine over the next twenty years.

Blaine’s Urban Growth Area (UGA) has been determined to be able to accommodate an additional 6,634 persons. With a predicted 4,414 additional persons locating within Blaine by 2036, Blaine is able to accommodate the predicted amount of growth. The UGA has been determined to accommodate approximately 2,301 new single family housing units, and 1,072 multifamily units.

During a 2013 study, it was found that 60 percent of Blaine’s current housing stock is comprised of single family residences, with almost a third of those residences located within the Semiahmoo area.

Blaine can be separated into four distinct districts. The four districts are Central Blaine, East Blaine, West Blaine, and the Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Central Blaine is the largest subarea and has the most diverse and greatest number of residential units. This area contains a mixture of single-family and multi-family residences with variation in age and price of homes.

West Blaine was annexed into Blaine city limits in 1974 adding more than 800 acres. Semiahmoo is comprised of a luxury resort, County Park, and private single-family and multi-family residential developments. All homes are relatively new with the first phase of Semiahmoo built in 1985.

Annexed into the City in 1996, East Blaine is largely undeveloped but has 1,500 parcels approved for developed.

Blaine’s UGA is currently comprised of 171 housing units, with approximately 400 residential lots approved for development. City water is available along the major roads within the UGA, but sewer is not available in most of this area.

The majority of Blaine’s housing stock was built prior to 1959; however, no homes are on the National or State Registers of Historic Places. Structures more than 50 years old are eligible for listing.

As of 2013 the median household income in Blaine was estimated to be about \$51,463. The median value of a single-family residence in Blaine was estimated to be about \$286,200, which is slightly above what is considered to be an affordable housing unit.

Blaine currently has 106 housing units serving low income individuals and families, with 57 units designed for senior citizens or disabled. The community is also served by one nursing home with a 65 bed capacity.

Overall, data indicated that Blaine has enough land zoned for residential development to accommodate predicted residential growth within the City. However due to the aging “baby boomer” population, the increasing price of homes within Whatcom County may continue to impact housing affordability.

---

**ACRONYMS USED IN THIS CHAPTER**

ACS	American Community Survey
BMC	Blaine Municipal Code
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
DU	Dwelling Unit
PUD	Planned Unit Development
UGA	Urban Growth Area
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WSH	Whatcom Skagit Housing

## CHAPTER 2 - HOUSING

The Blaine Housing Element has been developed in accordance with the Growth Management Act and the Whatcom County, County-Wide Planning Policies to address the housing needs of the City of Blaine. This chapter includes an inventory and analysis of the existing housing stock; a projection of future needs; and goals, policies and actions to meet these housing needs for the next 20 years.

### EXISTING HOUSING

According to data provided by the U.S. Census' 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) and the City of Blaine Community Development Services data, as of April 1, 2013<sup>1</sup>, there were a total of 2,684 residential units within the Blaine UGA. Of a total of 4,546 acres within the Blaine Urban Growth Area (UGA), 3,321 were zoned for residential uses. Table 2.1 summarizes housing data within the city, its three subareas, and the unincorporated portions of the UGA (Shipyard and Pipeline).

**TABLE 2.1. RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE WITHIN BLAINE UGA.**

	<b>Blaine UGA</b>	<b>Blaine City Limits</b>	<b>Pipeline/ Shipyard UGAs</b>	<b>Central Blaine</b>	<b>East Blaine</b>	<b>West Blaine</b>
Housing Units	2684	2513	171	1424	161	595
Multifamily Units	139	139	-	139	-	-
Single-family Units	1648	1498	150	928	155	415
Single-family attached (Duplex or townhouse)	137	134	3	129	5	-
Mobile homes	57	39	18	39	-	-
Condominiums	269	269	-	90	-	179
Area (acres)	4546	4043	503		1215	962
Area zoned residential	3321	2818	503	603	1204	962

### Central Blaine

<sup>1</sup> The Whatcom County Land Capacity Analysis methodology uses April 1, 2013 as the point in time to analyze built capacity and future capacity, as noted in section 2.1 Base Point in Time:

*"The City and County Planner Group, selected a base point in time, April 1, 2013, from which the developable lands inventory was measured. For the LCA, all structures existing as of April 1, 2013 will be considered developed, while everything else proposed, built or occupied after that date will be counted as future capacity. The Whatcom County Assessor's data used by the County will be taken from the same point in time. This common parameter ensures consistency across jurisdictions in processing property and building activity data. Significant changes in the data (i.e. new pending projects, revised development status of large parcels) may be incorporated into future iterations of the LCA up to adoption of the Comprehensive Plan update in 2016."*

---

Central Blaine is the largest subarea of the city and contains the greatest number of residential units and greatest diversity of housing types. It is the only area of the city that contains non-condominium multifamily units.

Lot sizes vary from plat to plat. Many of the original plats have lots as small as 3,000 square feet. In those areas, most of the houses are built on two or more lots. Density allowed by zoning ranges from four units per acre in the Residential Low Density Zone to 24 units per acre by conditional use in the Residential High Density.

Central Blaine also contains four hotels or motels with a total of 99 rooms. Some of these rooms are used as long-term residences.

Most of the neighborhoods in Central Blaine are within one mile of the school (K-12), public and private services, restaurants, and retail shops in the Central Business Zone as well as the International Marketplace Mall located east of State Route 543.

### **Semiahmoo**

In 1974, the City of Blaine annexed 800 acres that make up The Resort Semiahmoo site. The Resort Semiahmoo is a planned resort community located across Drayton Harbor from Central Blaine. The 20-acre Semiahmoo Park and former City sewage treatment facility separate the spit development from the uplands.

The Semiahmoo Uplands include approximately 735 acres zoned Residential Planned Recreation. The golf course, club house, and the residential neighborhood developments are located within the Upland area. The Master Development Plan for Semiahmoo anticipated that up to 2,079 housing units would be built on the Uplands. Single-family residential housing is planned on 287 acres, and there are 124 acres planned for townhouse and multi-family uses. To date, development has occurred at lower densities than planned, with average lot sizes ranging from one unit per acre to six units per acre for single-family lots and 10 to 12 units per acre for multi-family lots. The Resort Semiahmoo 10-year Milestone Report projects that 994 to 1,187 units will be built on the Uplands and Spit at full build-out.

Currently 415 single-family residential units have been built in all of Semiahmoo, as well as 179 condominium units.

### **East Blaine**

In February 1996, the City of Blaine annexed 1,182 acres east of the former City Limits and north of H Street. Currently there are 155 single-family residential units in East Blaine. Most of the residences are located on platted parcels in the

western portion of the East Blaine planning area and are served by City water. The City is currently expanding sewer to serve the area, but some properties remain on septic tanks. There are approximately 1,500 additional parcels which have been platted or are approved for platting. These are undeveloped at this time, but they represent the majority of the City’s growth area. The remainder of the land is in five to 10-acre tracts or larger parcels.

### **Unincorporated Urban Growth Area**

There are approximately 171 housing units in the unincorporated portions of the UGA, which includes the Shipyard area and the Pipeline area east of the current City Limits. Most of the Pipeline area is forested or developed for rural residential use on five-acre or larger tracts with some pasture land, livestock and agriculture. Within this area, several plats were approved prior to the adoption of County UR4 zoning, creating approximately 400 residential lots. Some of these lots have been developed with road access and houses, but many remain undeveloped. City water is available along the major roads within this area. Sewer service is not available. The Shipyard UGA is served by water from Birch Bay Water and Sewer District. Sewer is available to many lots through the Harborshores Sewer Association.

### **Mobile/Manufactured Home Parks**

Bel-Air Trailer Park is the only mobile home park in Blaine and is located at the south end of Central Blaine on Peace Portal Drive and Bell Road. Bel-Air Trailer Park has 39 mobile home units and is over capacity by current zoning standards, but is considered a legal non-conforming use. There are 18 mobile homes on single-family lots scattered throughout the residential neighborhoods in Central Blaine.

### **Historic Housing**

At present, Blaine does not have any homes on the National or State Registers of Historic Places, although there are some homes in Blaine that may be eligible. According to the 2013 ACS, 24.6% of the City of Blaine’s housing stock was built prior to 1959. Structures more than 50 years old (i.e., those built prior to 1966) are eligible for listing, if they exhibit historical and/or architectural significance.

**TABLE 2.2 - AGE OF HOUSING STOCK**

<b>Year Built</b>	<b>% of Housing Stock</b>
2010 or later	0.8%
2000 to 2010	21.6%
1980 to 1999	29.7%
1960 to 1979	23.3%
1940 to 1959	4.1%
Before 1939	20.5%

---

## Occupancy Rates

Occupancy rates are useful when determining the relationship of supply and demand for different types of dwellings. According to the 2013 ACS, the City of Blaine had an overall occupancy rate of 85%. The owner-occupied vacancy rate is 3.9%, while the renter-occupied vacancy rate is 6.8%<sup>2</sup>.

Vacancy rates in Blaine are heavily impacted by the seasonal nature of our economy and the high percentage of Canadian ownership. Houses which appear to be vacant may be seasonally occupied. The 2013 ACS notes that of the 15% of housing units that classify as vacant, 7.7% of those are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

## PROJECTED FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

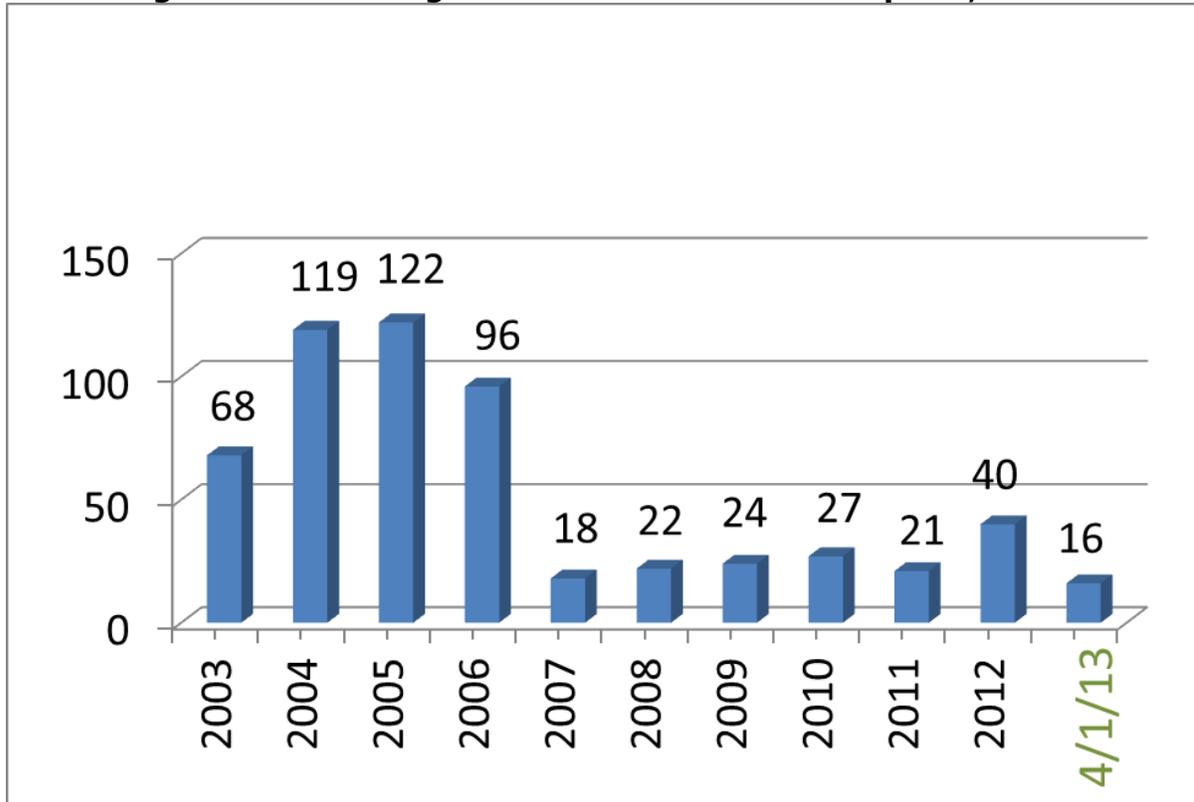
The Whatcom County Land Capacity Analysis predicts that by 2036, the population within the Blaine UGA will grow by an additional 4,414 persons. Given existing development and current zoning within the UGA, the analysis predicts a housing capacity sufficient to accommodate an additional 6,634 persons within 2,301 new single-family units and 1,072 multifamily units.

## Housing Trends

Figure 2.1 below shows the number of building permits issued between 2004 and April 1, 2013. Building permits give an indication of housing development trends. Blaine experienced a significant spike in housing starts during the early 2000's "housing bubble." Housing numbers have not recovered to near the levels seen during the spike; however, the numbers seen in 2012 and 2013 are close to the level seen prior to 2003 when typical housing starts were 40-45 units per year.

---

<sup>2</sup> The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of the homeowner inventory that is vacant "for sale." It is computed by dividing the total number of vacant units "for sale only" by the sum of owner-occupied units, vacant units that are "for sale only," and vacant units that have been sold but not yet occupied; and then multiplying by 100. The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant "for rent." It is computed by dividing the total number of vacant units "for rent" by the sum of the renter-occupied units, vacant units that are "for rent," and vacant units that have been rented but not yet occupied; and then multiplying by 100

**Figure 2.1. Building Permits Issued: 2004 to April 1, 2013.**

A 2013 study prepared by Berk, Whatcom County Urban Growth Area Review: Background Research on Selected Economic, Demographic, and Housing Trends, notes several national and Whatcom County housing trends that affect future housing needs within the Blaine UGA.

Relevant conclusions of the study include:

- A decrease in the national homeownership rate from 66.1% in 2004 to 65.4% in 2012.
- Growth in senior households as Baby Boomers age.
- Continued preference among seniors for single-family home ownership; however, the proportion of senior renters is increasing as many seniors prefer to age in place and seek less expensive housing options that require less maintenance.
- First time homeownership is becoming more challenging for young adults, driving the rental market.
- Decrease in affordable housing options, as 17.9% of all U.S. households devote more than 50% of their income to housing.

The study notes several conclusions specific to Whatcom County, including:

- Relatively high housing prices and low housing affordability in Whatcom County compared to other Washington Counties. Whatcom County's affordability index (as calculated by the Whatcom County Real Estate

Research Report, 2012) is on par with King County as Washington’s least affordable county.

- Increases in rent and decreases in apartment vacancies, indicating growing demand for multifamily housing types.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

An affordable home is generally defined as a home that can be rented or purchased using no more than 30% of the total household gross income to pay rent or the mortgage payment, insurance, and property taxes. As noted in Chapter 1, the ACS estimates that the median income in Blaine is \$51,463. Table 2.4 summarizes home values in the city, noting a median home value of \$286,200.

**Table 2.4. Home Values in the City of Blaine.**

	Estimate	Percent
Owner-occupied units	1,479	1,479
Less than \$50,000	34	2.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	26	1.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	86	5.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	235	15.9%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	396	26.8%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	421	28.5%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	230	15.6%
\$1,000,000 or more	51	3.4%
Median (dollars)	286,200	(X)

Table 2.5 below summarizes data from the 2013 ACS regarding household incomes versus housing costs within the City of Blaine.

The data indicate several things, including:

- Those households with lower incomes tend to comprise a greater percentage of the renter-occupied housing units, whereas higher earning households tend more toward homeownership.
- Overall monthly housing costs tend to be above \$1,000; however, renter-occupied housing units represent a greater percentage of available units at monthly costs less than \$1,000.
- Those households spending more than 30% of their income on housing tend to be at the low end of the income scale and tend to be renters.

One conclusion from this data may be that an increase in the availability of rental units would serve to increase housing affordability for lower income households.

**Table 2.5. Housing Costs Compared to Household Incomes in the City of Blaine.**

	<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>Owner- occupied housing units</b>	<b>Renter- occupied housing units</b>
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Occupied housing units	2,130	1,479	651
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
Less than \$5,000	6.9%	2.2%	17.7%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	2.3%	1.0%	5.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.5%	2.6%	12.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	5.2%	2.6%	10.9%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	3.1%	2.3%	4.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	17.0%	13.2%	25.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5.1%	7.4%	0.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.4%	15.3%	18.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.4%	13.6%	0.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.7%	23.3%	4.9%
\$150,000 or more	11.4%	16.4%	0.0%
Median household income (dollars)	53,669	82,270	24,453
<b>MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS</b>			
Less than \$100	0.7%	1.0%	0.0%
\$100 to \$199	1.8%	2.6%	0.0%
\$200 to \$299	7.7%	3.3%	17.7%
\$300 to \$399	6.2%	8.9%	0.0%
\$400 to \$499	6.2%	0.7%	18.6%
\$500 to \$599	5.2%	5.6%	4.3%
\$600 to \$699	5.1%	1.0%	14.4%
\$700 to \$799	6.2%	7.9%	2.3%
\$800 to \$899	7.4%	8.0%	6.0%
\$900 to \$999	7.4%	6.4%	9.7%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	16.1%	15.0%	18.4%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	17.4%	22.5%	5.7%
\$2,000 or more	12.7%	17.0%	2.9%
No cash rent	0.0%	(X)	0.0%
Median (dollars)	947	1,210	683
<b>MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
Less than \$20,000	17.4%	6.3%	42.7%
Less than 20 percent	3.7%	1.8%	8.0%
20 to 29 percent	4.6%	3.5%	7.2%
30 percent or more	9.1%	1.0%	27.5%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	20.0%	15.5%	30.4%
Less than 20 percent	4.8%	6.9%	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	1.2%	0.9%	1.8%
30 percent or more	14.1%	7.7%	28.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5.1%	7.4%	0.0%

Less than 20 percent	2.1%	3.0%	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	0.5%	0.7%	0.0%
30 percent or more	2.5%	3.7%	0.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.4%	15.3%	18.9%
Less than 20 percent	6.3%	4.1%	11.4%
20 to 29 percent	4.1%	5.1%	1.8%
30 percent or more	6.0%	6.2%	5.7%
\$75,000 or more	38.5%	53.3%	4.9%
Less than 20 percent	26.9%	37.9%	2.0%
20 to 29 percent	8.6%	12.4%	0.0%
30 percent or more	3.0%	3.0%	2.9%
Zero or negative income	2.5%	2.2%	3.1%
No cash rent	0.0%	(X)	0.0%

Source: 2013 American Community Survey, U.S. Census.

### LOW INCOME/SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Currently, Blaine has 106 housing units designated as lower income housing. Seamist, "E" Street and Seabreeze Townhouses, Bayview Plaza, and Blaine Manor are all located close to the Central Business Zone and the Senior Center/Community Center site. Fifty-seven of these units are designed for senior citizens or disabled residents. In addition, the community is served by a 65-bed capacity nursing home.

**Seamist and "E" Street Townhouses** - The Bellingham/Whatcom County Housing Authority completed three four-plex units on Mary Street and a triplex on "E" Street in the spring 1995. These units are three-bedroom apartments for low and moderate income residents. One unit is handicapped accessible. Rent is based on the income level of the residents, not to exceed 30% of the monthly income level.

**Seabreeze Townhouses** - In January 1993, the Bellingham/Whatcom County Housing Authorities completed construction of the Seabreeze Townhouses, an 11-unit apartment complex at the corner of 8th and "F" Streets. Potential applicants for housing at Seabreeze Townhouses are primarily evaluated by annual income. Income criteria are based on the number of people who will be living in the unit.

Financing for the construction of these units was provided through the sale of tax credits acquired under a State Housing Finance Commission sponsored program, along with a taxable bond issue. The property was acquired by the Housing Authority in 1982 with Community Development Block Grant funds.

**Bayview Plaza** - Bayview Plaza has two apartment buildings, one 18-unit and one 12-unit located on 7th and "G" Streets. Constructed in 1982, Bayview Plaza is designed for elderly and disabled residents.

The property manager for Bayview Plaza runs ads semi-annually in the local newspapers advertising its facility. Applicants must fit the qualifications of being senior citizens and/or disabled. Once the applicant is qualified, housing is awarded in an order prioritized by financial need. The manager reported that they are able to keep up with the current demand for lower income housing for qualified elderly and disabled residents.

**Blaine Manor** - Blaine Manor, a two-building, 26-unit apartment complex located at 2nd and "B" Streets, was constructed in 1972. This apartment complex is designed for senior citizens and disabled residents.

**Boundary Village** - Boundary Village is a two-building, 24-unit apartment complex located at 7th and "A" Streets. Many of the residents have lived at Boundary Village for as many as 10 years, and there is a significant waiting list to obtain residency.

**Stafholt Good Samaritan Center** - Stafholt Good Samaritan Center is a private, nonprofit nursing home with a capacity of 65 residents. Located at 4th and "C" Streets, Stafholt is within a half mile of the Blaine Senior Center at 7th and "G" Streets as well as the downtown business district.

## **HOUSING FINANCE PROGRAMS**

Blaine does not offer housing assistance programs. Federal and state programs are available in the City, and other private, non-profit programs are also available. The City works to cooperate with housing providers so as to facilitate affordable housing and to preserve affordable housing stock.

**Section 8 Existing Housing Program** - The Section 8 existing housing certificate and voucher programs enable very low income people to rent privately-owned, unsubsidized housing at a cost that they can afford. Under this program, the tenant's share of the fair market rent, including a reasonable amount for utilities, is set at 30% of the tenant's income. The balance of the fair market rent is paid directly to the owner in the form of a housing assistance payment. The program is administered by the State Department of Commerce. Bayview Plaza, Blaine Manor and Boundary Village are subsidized through vouchers from the Section 8 Existing Housing Program.

**Whatcom Skagit Housing (WSH)** - The WSH program is a federally-subsidized housing program administered by Rural Development through the Department of Agriculture. It allows individuals to participate in the construction of their own homes to reduce cost. Eleven homes were built in Blaine under this program during the late 1970s. WSH is currently involved in assisting approximately 40 families/owners to construct homes in the Montfort Park neighborhood over the next 3-5 years.

---

**USDA Rural Development** – Rural Development also has subsidized low interest loan programs to assist low income families in purchasing homes. A number of homes in Blaine were built or purchased under this program.

**Veterans Administration** - The Veterans Administration has loan programs to assist veterans in purchasing homes at subsidized interest rates.

**Community Development Block Grants** - This program offers grants and low interest loans to municipalities to develop infrastructure and provide maintenance and repairs to housing for low and moderate income residents. In the early 1980s, the City obtained a grant which repaired a number of homes in Central Blaine.

### **ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

The Conservation Program sponsored by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is the only residential assistance program offered by the City to aid developers and homeowners to upgrade the energy efficiency of new and existing homes. This includes insulation, windows, shower heads, water heaters, lighting and appliances. The programs are as follows:

The **Weatherwise Program** is designed to improve the energy efficiency of existing electrically-heated mobile and site-built homes. BPA provides incentives for homeowners who install energy conservation measures.

The **Residential Conservation Agreement** includes a variety of programs designed to improve current building practices and to promote greater efficiency in the home. Consumers, builders and others involved in the construction of new on-site and manufactured homes are eligible for conservation incentives.

**Super Good Cents** provides financial incentives for the installation of energy efficiency measures such as insulation, air sealing and energy efficient windows in new homes and multi-family buildings.

The **Appliance Efficiency Program** provides incentives for energy efficient appliances and fixtures such as water heaters, efficient lighting and low-flow shower heads.

### **HOUSING REGULATORY PROGRAMS**

The City of Blaine has several zoning or development code guidelines aimed at increasing the availability or affordability of housing. Regulatory approaches in Blaine include the recent addition of Adult Care Facilities to the Blaine Municipal Code (BMC), the addition of accessory apartments to the Single/Duplex Residential zoning text, and the density increases allowed within Planned Unit Development (PUDs) Districts.

**Adult Care Facilities** - Recently the Blaine City Council approved an amendment to the BMC to allow Adult Family Care Facilities as accessory uses in each of the residential zones (Residential/Office, Residential High Density, Residential Medium Density, Residential Low Density, Rural, and Residential Planned Recreation). These facilities could provide housing for up to six elderly or disabled adults per residence in family home settings.

**Accessory Units** - The City permits attached and detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in most residential zones. They are permitted by right in the SF-1 and SF-2 zoning districts. They are permitted in the PR and RPR zoning districts if planned as part of a Planned Unit Development.

**Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)** - The PUD Ordinance encourages developers to maintain open space and preserve critical areas by allowing density bonuses and siting flexibility in return for meeting certain design criteria.

## **HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

***GOAL 1: To encourage the development of a variety of housing types and prices, including an adequate supply of housing in a price range affordable to employees at available jobs in Blaine and housing which meets the needs of senior citizens.***

### ***POLICIES:***

- 1.1 Residential zoning should provide for a range of allowable uses and densities including medium or high density multi-family units, townhouses, mobile homes, or accessory dwelling units in order to meet the growing needs of seniors, young adults, minorities, immigrants, and low-income households.
- 1.2 High and medium density residential areas should be dispersed throughout the City and Urban Growth Area (UGA) in areas which are accessible to shopping and public services and can be adequately served by arterial or collector roads, transit and utilities.
- 1.3 The City encourages aging citizens to remain in the community and the City should support efforts to develop assisted living facilities, smaller-sized housing units near services, and other housing which accommodates the needs of senior citizens.

### ***ACTIONS:***

- A. The City should encourage the development of multi-family dwellings above the first floor of businesses within the Central Business District.

- Where determined appropriate, buildings exclusively used for multi-family housing units should be permitted to mix within the Central Business District.
- B. The Planning Commission should develop criteria for density bonuses in multi-family residential zones where open space, landscaping, innovative design or other amenities are provided.
  - C. The Planning Commission should develop a density bonus program for housing projects where a portion of the units constructed in the Residential Medium (RM), Residential High (RH), Residential/Office (R/O), Planned Commercial Zone (PC) or Highway Commercial (HC) Zones are set aside to be affordable to low and moderate income renters or home buyers.
  - D. The City should work with the Whatcom Housing Authority to encourage the development of housing programs for low income and senior citizens.

***GOAL 2: To preserve and enhance the housing and residential neighborhoods which currently exist within the City.***

***POLICIES:***

- 2.1 In established residential areas, the City should encourage infill of vacant land with housing which is compatible with existing residences.
- 2.2 Landscaping or other buffers should be required in areas where commercial or higher density residential development projects are proposed adjacent to established residential neighborhoods.
- 2.3 The City should encourage programs to assist residents in maintaining, rehabilitating and weatherizing existing residences.

***GOAL 3: To beautify and improve the livability of residential neighborhoods in the city.***

***POLICIES:***

- 3.1 The City should work toward improving and maintaining neighborhood parks, sidewalks, bike paths, street lights and landscaping along public rights-of-way in residential areas.
- 3.2 The City should encourage maintenance of private property in residential areas.

- 
- 3.3 The City should develop an adequate transportation system and enforcement program to avoid through-traffic and control traffic speed in residential areas.
- 3.4 The City should continue the Yard of the Week program to recognize property owners for contributing to the beautification of the City.

***ACTIONS:***

- A. The City should maintain and improve existing parks, install signage marking each park, and work toward developing additional parks or open space in new housing areas.
- B. The City should support neighborhood clean up programs using volunteers and donations or grant funding if City budgets cannot continue to support this program.
- C. The City should enforce ordinances dealing with garbage collection, junk removal and lot maintenance to streamline the process for cleaning up problem lots or residences.
- D. The City should encourage the development of a community compost area for disposal of yard waste, with a chipper for branches so these items do not collect in yards, alleys and drainage ditches.

***GOAL 4: To encourage the preservation of historic homes.***

***POLICY:***

- 4.1 The City supports the efforts of individuals and private organizations to preserve historic homes.

***ACTIONS:***

- A. The City encourages the formation of a local historical society or review board to inventory historic properties, recommend properties for listing in the Local Register of Historic Places, and determine eligibility for “Special Valuation” tax breaks.
- B. If there is sufficient interest from owners of historical properties, the City will work with the Whatcom County Assessor’s Office to adopt local ordinances and procedures which allow tax breaks for historic properties which are eligible for special valuation in accordance with Title 254 WAC.

***GOAL 5: To maintain an acceptable standard of development beyond the City Limits in areas likely to be annexed in the future.***

**POLICY:**

- 5.1 Development within the Blaine UGA should be consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan and meet City development standards.

**ACTION:**

- A. Coordinate with Whatcom County to enforce the existing Interlocal Agreement on planning and annexation.

**GOAL 6: To assist the homeless in finding adequate shelter.****POLICY:**

- 6.1 The City of Blaine should work with other agencies and organizations to explore options for providing shelter for the homeless.

**ACTION:**

- A. Work with Whatcom County, the City of Bellingham and private organizations to explore regional solutions.

**GOAL 7: To encourage the development of affordable housing within the City without sacrificing public safety or the ability to provide needed public services and utilities.****POLICY:**

- 7.1 The City should establish and maintain permit requirements, fees and standards which encourage the development of affordable housing.

**ACTIONS:**

- A. Where off-site road improvements are required to mitigate traffic impact of housing projects, the City should develop agreements which allow the construction of these improvements to be phased along with the development of the housing units.
- B. The City should maintain adequate staff in the Building Division to allow timely processing of building permits.