

# HOUSING ELEMENT

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# **HOUSING ELEMENT**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Growth Management Act Requirements**

The Growth Management Act (GMA) states that the housing element of the comprehensive plan must include the following features:

- 1.) An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs. (This inventory of housing needs must include the number of housing units necessary to manage projected population growth.)
- 2.) A statement of goals, policies and objectives for the preservation, improvement and development of housing;
- 3.) Identification of sufficient land for housing, including but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, and group homes and foster care facilities.
- 4.) Adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

### **2. Purpose of Housing Element**

This Housing Element considers the inventory and condition of existing housing stock and future housing needs. It addresses the provision of housing types to accommodate the lifestyles and economic needs of the community. The City's housing policies and development regulations (zoning, building codes, etc.) establish how the development and construction of housing will take place in the community. However, unlike the other services discussed in this comprehensive plan, the City does not directly provide housing. The Housing Element sets the conditions under which the private housing industry will operate, and establishes goals and policies to meet the community's housing needs and to achieve the community's goals.

## **II. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **1. Historic Background**

The following information on housing in Brier is taken from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and updated with data from the 2010 U.S. Census, Washington State's Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Snohomish County Tomorrow documents. It provides background material and information on historic trends.

Housing in the Brier City Planning or Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA) is primarily single family residential. Some multi-family and mobile home units are located in the City but not in significant numbers. There are no mobile home parks located in Brier or in the MUGA.

In 2000, the City of Brier had 2,115 housing units. Approximately 97% of these were one-unit detached structures, approximately 1% were one-unit attached, approximately 1% were multi-family (3-9 unit structures) and approximately 1% were mobile homes.<sup>1</sup> The vacancy rate for the City was 0.9% (20 units). Of the occupied units, 91.9% (1,926) were occupied by owners, and 8.1% (169) were occupied by renters.<sup>2</sup>

In 2010, the City of Brier had 2,220 housing units. Approximately 97% of these were one-unit detached structures, approximately 1% were one-unit attached, approximately 1% were multi-family (3-9 unit structures) and approximately 1% were mobile homes. The vacancy rate for the City was 5.3% (74 units). Of the occupied units, 90.8% (1,949) were occupied by owners and 9.1% (196) were occupied by renters.

**TABLE 1**  
**Housing Units**  
**Snohomish County, Brier MUGA, City of Brier**  
**(1980 - 2010)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Snohomish County</u>	<u>MUGA</u>	<u>City of Brier</u>
1980	131,206	6,001	946
2000	236,205	Not Available	2,115
2010	293,077	Not Available	2,220

Sources: PSCOG, March 1984, OFM, August 1985, U.S. Census 2000 Census 2010

## **2. Demographic Information**

The 2010 Census provides a range of demographic data (population, number of households and their characteristics, number of housing units and their condition, etc.) at various levels of detail. (See Appendix A for more detailed information and references.) The State of Washington’s Office of Financial Management synthesizes some of this data and reports local trends. The 2010 Census and the State of Washington report the following for the City of Brier:

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-4, “Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000.” Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF-3) – Sample Data. The estimate of housing units in each type of structure is based on sampling. When the Census Bureau applies statistical procedures such as sampling, it introduces some uncertainty into the data for smaller areas such as the City of Brier, resulting in sampling error. Consequently, this section discusses the proportion of units in each type of structure rather than reporting absolute numbers. The data used here is assumed to be an accurate portrayal of the overall characteristics and trends in the City.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, Quick Facts

### Households and Family Characteristics<sup>3</sup>

Total Persons	6,087
Total Households	2,220
Average Household Size	2.89

### Housing Unit Characteristics and Tenure<sup>4</sup>

Total Housing Units	2,115	
Occupied Units	2,095	(99.1%)
Vacant Units	20	(.9%)
(For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use)	2	(.1%)
Total Occupied Units	2095	
Owner Occupied Units	1,926	(91.9%)
Renter Occupied Units	169	(8.1%)

### Housing Unit Structural Characteristics<sup>5</sup>

Total Housing Units	2,115	
Single Family/one-unit	2,067	(97.7%)
Two or more units	29	(1.4%)
Mobile home/Trailer/Special Housing Units	19	(0.8%)

### Condition of Housing

Of the housing units in the City, approximately 15.2% were built in 1959 or earlier. Approximately 69% of the units were built between 1960 and 1989. All units have complete plumbing and kitchens.<sup>6</sup> Since 2010, 67 single family attached housing units have been built and 1 attached accessory dwelling unit has been built within the footprint of an existing home.

## **III.AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

### **1. Introduction**

This section provides background and analysis information for the City to address GMA requirements for affordable housing. The GMA requires jurisdictions to consider provisions for affordable housing, though it does not specify implementation measures. The Snohomish County Tomorrow's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) has developed a methodology to guide the jurisdictions in evaluating affordable housing needs for their comprehensive plan housing elements. That methodology is used in this section. This section uses housing and household data from the 2007 – 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) that produces an annual update to the Census achieved through a percent survey of the population. Other data sources include Dupre and Scott rental housing data, subsidized housing information from the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO), and Snohomish County Buildable Lands Report.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, Quick Facts

<sup>4</sup> IBID.

<sup>5</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management, (April 1,2000), "Housing Units by Structure, Type for Cities, Towns and Counties,"

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Quick Facts

## **2. Policy Context**

As discussed above, the Growth Management Act requires jurisdictions to prepare a housing element that:

*Includes an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth...*

*...identifies sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to...housing for low income families...*

*...makes adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.<sup>7</sup>*

The GMA also requires the adoption of countywide planning policies that:

*“...consider the need for affordable housing, such as housing for all economic segments of the population and parameters for its distribution...”<sup>8</sup>*

As part of the collaborative countywide planning process adopted to implement the GMA, the PAC approved the following countywide planning policies regarding the distribution of housing for all economic segments of the population throughout the County:<sup>9</sup>

The goal is to provide a variety of decent, safe, and affordable housing opportunities to all segments of the county’s population:

*Ensure that fair and equal access to housing is available to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, familial status, source of income, or disability.*

*Make adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the county.*

*Strengthen interjurisdictional cooperative efforts to ensure an adequate supply of housing is available to all economic segments of the county.*

*Adopt and implement a fair share distribution of low-income and special needs housing so as to prevent further concentration of such housing into only a few areas, The county and cities will collaborate in formulating a methodology to assess existing and projected housing needs of the county’s population and a fair share housing allocation methodology.*

*Each jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan housing element will include strategies to attain the jurisdiction’s fair housing objectives. Jurisdictions will consider as appropriate the strategies for achieving affordable housing as described in OD 13. (Amended Mar. 31, 2004 -Amended Ord. 04-007)*

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<sup>7</sup> RCW 36.70A.070 (2)

<sup>8</sup> RCW 36.70A.210(3)(e)

<sup>9</sup> See Snohomish County Ordinance Number 93-004, adopted February 4, 1993.

*Production of an adequate supply of low and moderate income housing will be encouraged by exploring the establishment of interjurisdictional private/public financing programs which involve local lenders and foster cooperative efforts with non-profit housing developers.*

*Implement policies and programs that encourage the upgrading of neighborhoods and the rehabilitation and preservation of the supply of existing affordable housing, including but not limited to mobile home park housing, single room occupancy (SRO) housing, and manufactured housing.*

In addition, the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Puget Sound Regional Council have a role in overseeing the consistency of Comprehensive Plans with GMA. In reviewing Brier’s previous Comprehensive Plan, these agencies pointed out the need to include provisions for affordable housing for a greater variety of households, including as part of the 2015 update.

When evaluating affordable housing, the city must also consider the special needs population. Some have special housing needs due to their impairments, disabilities, or unique special circumstances. This population may require special assistance or supportive care to subsist or achieve independent living. Within Brier, there are approximately 994 people (9.916%) with a special need. Many people with special needs are in the lower income categories, so not only do they require housing that accommodates their needs, it also need to be affordable.

**3. Estimating existing housing needs for all economic segments**

**Cost Burdened”**

Housing affordability is based on the County’s area median income (AMI) of \$67,777 as calculated by the American Community Survey, 2011 5-year estimates. It is a measure of a housing unit’s cost relative to income. A household 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. There are approximately 44 cost burdened rental households in the City of Brier. This equals 16.5% of households who rent homes in the city. There are approximately 529 cost burdened owner households in the city. This equals 34.2% of household who own homes in the city.

Below are calculations showing affordable rents and mortgages for households making 80 percent, 50 percent, and 30 percent of the AMI of \$67,777.

**Maximum Affordable Monthly Rent**

80% (\$54,221)	50% (\$33,888)	30% (\$20,333)
\$1,356/mo maximum rent	\$847/mo maximum rent	\$508/mo maximum rent

**Maximum Affordable Monthly Mortgage**

80% (\$54,221)	50% (\$33,888)	30% (\$20,333)
\$1,265/mo maximum mort.	\$791/mo maximum mort.	\$474/mo maximum mort.

## **Brier's Existing Housing Stock**

The supply of low and moderate income housing stock available to meet the demand discussed above is determined by the rent and home values that are considered affordable to households making less than the AMI of \$67,777 per year.

According to the ACS, 2011 5-year estimates for Brier, there are a total of approximately 267 rental units. From these, 59 (29%) are affordable to those making 51-80% of the AMI. 13 (7%) of these are affordable to those making 31-50% of the AMI, and 0 (0%) are affordable to those making 30%. There are a total of 1,548 mortgaged units in the city. Of these 165 (11%) are affordable to those making 51-80% of the AMI, 25 (2%) are affordable to those making 31-50% of the AMI, and 0 (0%) are affordable to those making 30% of the AMI.

For comparison with Snohomish County, there are a total of approximately 82,980 rental units. From these, 35,670(43%) are affordable to those making 51-80% of the AMI. 17,912(22%) of these are affordable to those making 31-50% of the AMI, and 5,255 (6%) are affordable to those making 30%. There are a total of 143,315 mortgaged units in the county. Of these 21,427 (15%) are affordable to those making 51-80% of the AMI, 5,970 (4%) are affordable to those making 31-50% of the AMI, and 1,181 (1%) are affordable to those making 30% of the AMI.

## **Comparison of Existing Housing Need with Existing Supply of Affordable Housing Stock**

Comparing the housing target with the actual number of housing units affordable to cost burdened households, Brier had a total of 44 (16.5%) cost burdened renter households, and 529 (34.2%) cost burdened owner households. Two assisted-housing voucher recipients have located in Brier. There appears to be an imbalance in the City of Brier *currently* between the need for affordable housing and the supply of affordable housing.

## **4. Estimating Brier's Projected Housing Needs for all Economic Segments**

### Definition of Need

In looking at the need for affordable housing in the next 20 years, projected "need" is defined in the same way as existing housing need. It is defined as a cost burdened household whose income is less than and the Area Median Income pays more than 30% or more of its gross income for gross household costs. For projecting 2035 households with need, however, the PAC assumes that 128 additional affordable housing units will be needed by 2035.

### Projected Housing Need

As discussed above, there is a current need for housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households (573 units). As the City grows in the next 20 years that need for affordable units is expected to increase. Brier's 2035 projected households with need would be 701.

## **5. Strategies to Achieve Affordable Housing Objectives**

The GMA requires jurisdictions to share in the responsibility for achieving a reasonable and equitable distribution of affordable housing. However, it does not prescribe specific

implementation strategies for achieving affordable housing objectives. Generally, attention should be given to removing regulatory barriers to affordable housing. Strategies for the City to consider may include a combination of:

1. Zoning land appropriately;
2. Providing regulatory incentives;
3. Providing financial subsidies;
4. Using innovative planning techniques;
5. Achieving and maintaining a high quality residential housing stock(City Goal H-1)
6. Conserve the city's existing housing through code enforcement, and participation in rehabilitation programs. (City Policy H-1.1)
7. Preserve existing housing stock (City Goal H-2)
8. Endorse private sector efforts to secure federal and/or state funds to provide housing for elderly and disabled citizens. (City Policy H-4.1)
9. Encourage local participation in state programs, such as the Housing Assistance Program and the State Housing Finance Commission's homeownership loan program, that facilitate home ownership by low and moderate income families. (City Policy H-4.2)
10. Explore strategies to promote the development of non-assisted housing by the private sector. (City Policy H-4.3)
11. Evaluate local development standards and regulations for effects on housing costs. Modify development regulations that may unnecessarily add to the cost of housing. (City Policy H-4.4)
12. Participate in efforts to equitably distribute and provide for a fair share of housing for special populations including the mentally ill, people with developmental disabilities, alcohol and substance abusers, domestic violence victims, people with AIDS, and runaway youth. (City Policy H-5.1)
13. Increasing allowable residential densities through measures such as those discussed in Countywide Planning Policy UG-14 and associated Appendix C, including:
  - Encouraging infill and redevelopment;
  - Permitting Secondary Dwelling Units (SDUs) in single family zones;
  - Allowing Clustered Residential Development;
  - Planning and zoning for affordable manufactured housing development; and,
  - Allowing mixed uses development in the neighborhood business zone.

#### **IV. HOUSING ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

##### **Goal H-1**

Ensure adequate housing for all current and future residents of Brier by achieving and maintaining a high quality residential housing stock.

Policy H-1.1- Conserve the city's existing housing through code enforcement, and participation in rehabilitation programs.

##### **Goal H-2**

Encourage the preservation of existing housing stock.

Policy H-2.1- Encourage individual homeowners to reinvest in their homes by providing information, technical assistance, and referrals to other appropriate agencies.

### **Goal H-3**

Promote strong residential neighborhoods through public investments in physical improvements and through public policy decisions intended to protect and preserve existing neighborhoods.

Policy H-3.1- Maintain infrastructure in residential areas to preserve the character and vitality of existing neighborhoods.

### **Goal H-4**

Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of the City.

Policy H-4.1- Endorse private sector efforts to secure federal and/or state funds to provide housing for elderly and disabled citizens.

Policy H-4.2- Encourage local participation in state programs, such as the Housing Assistance Program and the State Housing Finance Commission's homeownership loan program, that facilitate home ownership by low and moderate income families.

Policy H-4.3- Explore strategies to promote the development of non-assisted housing by the private sector.

Policy H-4.4- Evaluate local development standards and regulations for effects on housing costs. Modify development regulations which may unnecessarily add to the cost of housing.

Policy H-4.5 – In order to respond to changing household sizes and ages, to provide opportunities for ownership of more affordable, smaller homes, and in order to support the GMA goals of allowing urban densities and affordable housing, permit development of “cottage housing” for residents 55 years and older that may exceed densities of 4 units per acre. Such housing should be small, detached units adjacent to a common area such as a garden or courtyard.

Policy H-4.6- Ensure that manufactured housing is allowed within the city the same as site built housing.

### **Goal H-5**

To promote fair and equal access to housing for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, family status, source of income or disability.

Policy H-5.1- Participate in efforts to equitably distribute and provide for a fair share of housing for special populations including the mentally ill, people with developmental disabilities, alcohol and substance abusers, domestic violence victims, people with AIDS, and runaway youth.

Policy H-5.2- Implement non-discriminatory zoning regulations for group homes, consistent with the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Policy H-5.3 Consider the development of policies to address the needs of the elderly housing in the community (e.g. housing for persons over 55 years old, handicapped, etc.)

Policy H-5.4 Consider the need in the community for elderly housing (i.e. Handicapped and Elderly) and their provision by Conditional Use permit in the Zoning Code.

Policy H-5.5 -- Encourage assisted living facilities (particularly facilities for disabled and senior adult living) that increase the population while resulting in low impact on community resources.

Policy H-5.6 -- Encourage “mother-in-law units” in all residential zones provided that the underlying lot meets the minimum size required by the applicable zone. Permit leasing these units to the general population.