

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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DATE: September 17, 2014

TO: Michael Drollinger, Planning Commission Chair  
Members of the Renton Planning Commission

CC: Chip Vincent, CED Administrator

FROM: Elizabeth Higgins, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update - Housing and Human Services  
Element**

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**ISSUE:**

By State of Washington mandate, the City of Renton Comprehensive Plan must be updated periodically. The current cycle of revisions requires adoption of an updated plan by June 2015.

The purpose of the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide guidance to the City as it creates opportunities for the physical development of housing in Renton. The Human Services aspect of the Element is intended to increase the social and economic well-being of individuals and families in the community.

As preparation for this work, the City commissioned a “Community Needs Assessment” (CNA), which has been recently completed. Although the existing Housing Element is the foundation for the updated Plan, the proposed revisions are based on the findings of the CNA.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve adoption of the proposed policies of the Housing Element which have been revised to reflect analysis of the Community Needs Assessment. The existing policies have also been simplified and reorganized to eliminate redundancy. Some existing policies have been either eliminated, due to changed conditions or concerns, or relocated to more appropriate Comprehensive Plan elements, such as Land Use.

**BACKGROUND SUMMARY:**

The Housing Element provides housing goals and policies intended to meet the Growth Management Act (GMA) housing goal to “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. RCW 36.70a.020(4).”

The Housing Element also needs to respond to the regional growth strategy in the Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2040 and the Countywide Planning Policies for King County.

#### PROPOSED GOALS AND POLICIES:

**Goal HHS-A:** Ensure a variety of residential densities and housing styles to accommodate the future needs of the community and to meet Renton’s share of forecasted growth, thereby ensuring that housing opportunities exist for all economic segments and all people, including those with special needs, seniors, people with disabilities, and the homeless, so that they may have the opportunity to meet their basic physical, economic, and social needs for the enhancement of their quality of life.

**Goal HHS-B:** Maintain, protect, and enhance the quality of life of Renton’s residents by promoting sustainable development practices and healthy housing options.

#### Housing Variety and Opportunity

**Goal HHS-C:** Provide the opportunity for a variety of single-family and multi-family housing styles, available for all economic segments of the community.

**Policy HHS-1:** Encourage home ownership by providing opportunities for clustered, small-, medium- and large-lot single-family housing developments and those incorporating innovative site plans, including varied lot sizes within a site.

**Policy HHS-2:** Allow multi-family and mixed-use development in order to accommodate demand for attached housing and other options, including reduced-size houses, large attached dwelling units, and innovative housing types, to meet regional Urban Center criteria.

#### Housing Preservation

**Goal HHS-D:** Preserve and protect the existing housing stock.

**Policy HHS-3:** Maintain the City’s Housing Repair Assistance Program for low- and moderate-income homeowners.

**Policy HHS-4:** Consider direct assistance and incentives for property owner investment in aging rental units to increase the life of the units and reduce energy costs, while reducing the potential for rent increases that could displace existing renter households.

**Policy HHS-5:** Require affordability covenants when affordable units are constructed through density bonuses, multi-family tax exemptions, or other means.

**Policy HHS-6:** Maintain amount of land zoned for manufactured housing where existing developments meet the following criteria:

- The development provides market rate housing alternatives for moderate- and low-income households.
- The housing is maintained and certified as built to the International Building Code and Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development standards.
- The development includes pedestrian amenities, landscaping, and a community facility.

**Policy HHS-7:** Use the existing housing stock to address changing population needs. Promote shared housing opportunities to provide affordable housing, relieve tax burdens, and maintain existing, stable neighborhoods.

**Policy HHS-8:** Preserve existing housing stock when meeting City standards for health, safety, and quality, but also target code enforcement efforts to correct health and safety violations.

### **Housing Affordability and Special Needs**

**Goal HHS-E:** Increase housing opportunities for very low-, low- and moderate-income households to meet Countywide and City housing needs.

**Goal HHS-F:** Accommodate Renton's fair share of affordable housing in the future to reduce the number of cost-burdened households.

**Goal HHS-G:** Increase the supply of special needs housing in Renton.

**Policy HHS-9:** Work in partnership with King County and other cities to reduce regulatory barriers and create opportunities for housing in order to address the need for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households at 12, 12, and 16 percent of the King County Area Median Income, respectively, and 15 percent of City households.

**Policy HHS-10:** Work with the Renton Housing Authority and other non-profit housing agencies to address the need for housing affordable to households at less than 30 percent AMI (very low-income), where the greatest need exists, where funding, such as Community Development Block Grants and HOME policies, and collaborative actions individually by Renton and collectively with other agencies are necessary.

**Policy HHS-11:** Support proposals for affordable assisted- and market-rate housing that is dispersed throughout the City; convenient to public transportation; includes a range of unit types; increases ownership opportunities; and maintains long-term affordability.

**Policy HHS-12:** Continue to provide incentives such as density bonuses for multi-family housing, including affordable housing.

**Policy HHS-13:** Consider inclusionary zoning provisions that require a range of housing prices in new developments of a certain size or when evaluating rezone requests.

**Policy HHS-14:** Create a dedicated housing fund through an interagency partnership, for example, or through cash mitigation from new development.

**Policy HHS-15:** Support proposals for special needs housing that is dispersed throughout the community, but is also accessible to shopping, health care, and public transportation systems.

**Policy HHS-16:** Use creative tools such as State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) exemption thresholds, infill and mixed-use exemptions, and Planned Actions to encourage affordable housing and streamline permitting.

**Policy HHS-17:** Consider requirements or incentives for housing developments exhibiting universal design principles to ensure housing is designed for all persons and abilities.

**Policy HHS-18:** Work in partnership with non-profit housing providers to identify how Renton and/or other non-profits can work collaboratively to meet Renton's housing needs.

### **Equitable Housing and Human Services**

**Goal HHS-H:** Foster a community that is free of discrimination and prejudice.

**Policy HHS-19:** Promote equal and fair access to housing.

**Policy HHS-20:** Disseminate information about and promote affordable and special needs housing and human services facilities and programs. Conduct early and ongoing public outreach and communication during program and/or project implementation.

**Policy HHS-21:** Retain and implement the City of Renton Fair Housing Ordinance to reflect the principles of the Federal Fair Housing Amendment Act.

### **Accessible and Effective Human Services**

**Goal HHS-I:** Support social services that allow individuals to not only meet their basic physical, economic, and social needs, but attain family sustainability.

**Goal HHS-J:** Make human services more accessible to the Renton community.

**Policy HHS-22:** Allocate City funding for services that adequately addresses the full spectrum of community social service needs.

**Policy HHS-23:** Through an organized community outreach program, build support for and awareness of human services to create a community that values diversity and equity, responds to the special needs of individuals and families, and shares the responsibilities and benefits of living in Renton.

**Policy HHS-24:** Consider human services objectives in developing City land use regulations and codes.

**Policy HHS-25:** Support programs that provide support to residents in training, obtaining, and retaining living-wage jobs, as well as allowing upward career advancement.

**Policy HHS-26:** Cooperate with the Renton School District to support its Cradle to College and Career programs.

### **Mobility**

**Goal HHS-K:** Improve mobility and efficient transportation options to increase access to jobs and services, reduce household costs, and improve environmental quality.

**Policy HHS-27:** Support services that link transportation and affordable childcare to jobs, to increase opportunities for people to obtain and retain employment.

**Policy HHS-28:** Recognize the impact of housing and transportation costs on cost-burdened households by promoting new public and private housing investments in neighborhoods with greater opportunities for transit and jobs and by adding housing density in appropriate locations to improve transit service delivery and reduce household costs.

**Policy HHS-29:** To encourage upward income mobility, use land development standards to make mixed-income neighborhoods feasible.

### **Sustainability, Health, and Wellness**

**Goal HHS-L:** Develop and maintain livable neighborhoods with a high quality of life, environmental sustainability, and opportunities for healthy, active living.

**Policy HHS-30:** Use the City's Neighborhood Program to strengthen neighbor-to-neighbor cohesiveness, address local conditions and concerns, provide neighborhood enhancements, and increase residential safety and residential security.

**Policy HHS-31:** Support Renton residents' cultural and ethnic diversity through park, recreation, education, the arts, and neighborhood planning.

**Policy HHS-32:** Promote safe, energy efficient, and healthy housing that is attainable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support measures to improve indoor air quality and foster construction methods that reduce indoor dust, mold and mildew, and other toxic air concentrations.

**Policy HHS-33:** Increase access to park and recreation facilities, community gardens, and to purveyors of healthy food and services in underserved neighborhoods.

**Policy HHS-34:** New subdivisions and site developments should provide pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjoining residential and commercial development, unless a determination is made that a physical feature of the site prevents practical implementation of this provision.

### **Funding & Partnerships**

**Goal HHS-M:** Participate in regional and local efforts that address human services needs in the region and in Renton.

**Policy HHS-35:** Support and actively coordinate with local, regional, and national efforts to address local human services needs and ensure that local programs complement programs provided at the state and federal level.

**Policy HHS-36:** Continue the City's active participation in the South King County Human Services Forum, the South King Council of Human Services, and other regional groups and form collaborative partnerships with local non-profits, religious groups, employers, businesses, and schools.

**Policy HHS-37:** Participate in interjurisdictional forums and funding opportunities, such as the King County Consortium Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan and collaborate in developing sub-regional and countywide housing resources and programs, including funding such as participating in a South County forum.

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**Policy HHS-38:** Partner with agencies and non-profits to make financial assistance programs available that provide direct monetary assistance to low-income renters, owners, and first-time homebuyers, such as grants and loans for down payment, closing costs, and mortgage assistance.

**Policy HHS-39:** Continue tax exemptions for development of multi-family residential projects in the Downtown Urban Center and Sunset Area. Consider expanding the tax exemptions to other locations in Renton, consistent with the land use vision and state legislation.

**Policy HHS-40:** Develop housing and human services indicators to continue to understand community needs and support grant and funding opportunities.