Chapter 6

HOUSING



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INTRODUCTION

From Sequim's inception as a community, the city's housing stock has been predominantly single-story, single family homes. Residents describe Sequim as "small-town" and "friendly," and to some extent these qualities derive from the city's built form. Existing low-density neighborhoods are strengthened through infill development and upkeep of existing properties. New types of housing accommodate the needs of young adults, families and seniors alike, and new low-density housing reflects the development character of the existing neighborhood.

Residents describe Sequim as "small-town" and "friendly," and to some extent these qualities derive from the city's built form.

The Housing Chapter outlines housing variety, affordable housing, senior housing, and housing quality. As Sequim's population increases by a projected 40% or more by 2035 with a broader demographic profile of more families and young professionals, changes to current housing and subdivision patterns are needed.

Housing to accommodate affordable and low-income needs is encouraged through accessory dwelling units (ADU), affordable homes in new development projects, and single-room living quarters. Assisted-living, group home and other special needs housing is needed in every community and is best located where residents' needs are best met.

Variety in housing options offers choice to citizens and attracts a diverse range of home owners and renters. Townhomes, cottage housing, ADUs and live/work units offer housing choices that are rare or non-existent. Infill in existing neighborhoods and slightly higher density in new low-density neighborhoods creates new choices in living but also help the affordability of utilities and other city services.

The percentage of senior citizens in Sequim is well above the national average for cities. People come from all corners of the country to retire here, and over the next 20 years the senior population here is expected to grow at much higher than national rates. Seniors have specific needs in housing and amenities. The Lifestyle District (LD) is a neighborhood designated for senior living today and for continued development of additional senior living facilities, conveniences and amenities. The District is intended as the area best connected to health and medical services, shopping conveniences and transit for seniors of all ages and abilities.

Part of the housing needs spectrum includes the opportunity to rejuvenate older neighborhoods through incremental redevelopment of properties that have outlived their current use, as well as remodeling existing homes. These opportunities are market-driven and reflect the cost of property acquisition and redevelopment versus the cost of new lots and new construction. Piecemeal efforts such as buying one low-value house within an older, central neighborhood are unlikely to attract financing or buyers – instead, a



Typical-size houses on smaller lots—one of the new housing options for retirees in the Lifestyle District.

The City's 50% senior demographic occupies five types of housing spread throughout the community: designated planned retirement communities such as the Sherwood complex, freestanding retirement buildings such as the Vintage, modular / mobile home communities, assisted-living facilities of various types, and single-family homes. The city's existing capacity to accommodate a wide range of lifestyles and demographic change even as the absorption of vested single-family lots continues for at least two decades.

VISION

Parts of the Vision guide the city's response to meeting the Housing needs of the community:

- Greater diversity in age, household type, ethnicity, income, lifestyle, housing, mobility and economic activity will increase community opportunities, variety, and interst;
- Downtown will grow in activity and purpose not only to serve as the heart of the city and surrounding Valley but also to function as the core of a residential neighborhood that is a setting of multifamily development;
- a wide variety of housing types will serve all lifestyles, ranging from single-family homes on large lots to cottage housing, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, multiplexes, assisted living and apartments and condominiums;
- higher density housing will be encouraged to locate where services, convenience and amenities make it an attractive lifestyle choice; and
- Sequim will grow as a community of all ages, from families with children, to your adults, to singles of all ages, to empty-nesters, to active seniors, to those needing specialized care, and to those nearing end-of-life.

HOUSING VARIETY

H GOAL 6.1 HOUSING FOR A DIVERSE COMMUNITY Increase the number of housing options and opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse, growing community.

POLICIES

H 6.1.1 VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Promote a variety of housing types affordable to all segments of the population.

Discussion: Sequim maintains a healthy detached single family housing stock with senior living facilities, assisted living and apartments. As the community changes over the next 20 years, a wide variety of housing options to accommodate the demographic changes and lifestyle preferences are needed. A range of price, lot sizes and styles not fully experienced in Sequim but fitting the needs of the community includes cottage housing, higher-density, attached housing in targeted districts, small lot development, attached housing, accessory dwelling units (ADU) and townhomes.

Varied home styles and price ranges support the needs of Sequim residents. The Downtown Plan calls for a mix of uses within single buildings – retail on the first floor and residential or office uses above.

Live/work units are another option including retail, office or residential on the first floor and residential above.

Varied home styles and price ranges support the needs of Sequim residents.



Large front porches and reduced front yard setbacks.



Garages located in the rear accessed by alleys.

Within the area of single family homes, design that encourages "small-town and friendly" experiences include homes with substantial front porches, garages in the rear accessed from alleys and reduced front yard setbacks. These homes accommodate a range of residential needs for young adults, families and senior citizens.

H 6.1.2 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Allow one accessory dwelling unit as a supplementary use to single-family homes in all designated residential areas.

Discussion: ADUs are small, ancillary living units, including bathrooms and kitchens, on a single family lot. These structures may be attached to the primary structure, attached to a detached garage, or detached on the lot. Common ADUs attached to the primary home include daylight basements and conversions over attached garages. Detached garages are also converted to accommodate another living unit. A fully functional pool house is an example of a detached ADU.

ADUs provide affordable living options in neighborhoods often times for seniors and young adults. Affordability is a concern in Sequim for the older generation, young families and young adults. This option allows separate living or supervised options depending on the relationship of the occupants. Utilities and living costs may also be split among occupants, creating financial benefits.

ADUs increase the density and fit into the neighborhood without disrupting the single-family neighborhood setting. Specific standards and design guidelines assure that ADUs are secondary to the primary structure and fit within the neighborhood. These structures also have setback, height, design, area, and parking standards that provide direction for the location of such units.

ADU's provide affordable living options in neighborhoods often times for seniors and young adults.



Accessory dwelling unit located above a garage. It matches the same character and design of the primary structure.

H 6.1.3 COTTAGE HOUSING

Introduce "cottage housing" to Sequim as a new lifestyle option that offers greater social interaction with neighbors and fewer demands on property maintenance while retaining the independence and privacy of single-family, detached housing.

Discussion: Cottage housing is a grouping of small, single family dwelling units clustered around a common area and developed with a coherent plan for the entire site. Unit floor area typically ranges from 500 to 1,200 square feet, sometimes larger with a partial second floor. The structures exhibit finely-detailed exteriors with front porches oriented to a common space within the site's center. The homes aren't large, but the quality of the homes, landscaping, shared common area, reduced maintenance and site design



Craftsman-style cottage housing, a community building and center common area.

are the appeal. Cottage housing developments maintain a common architectural style within the project that can vary by the market, local context or developer's preference. The range of styles covers a wide range with each motif dependent on extraordinary detail, consistent form, and complementary colors for a successful project. Parking is arrayed around the site perimeter with walkways connecting to individual homes. There is often a small community building to host neighbors for casual social interactions – people choose cottage housing to develop close relations with their neighbors. The central space can be designed for the targeted homeowner market: a big toy playground for young families, a community garden for empty-nesters and singles, lawn bowling and sport court for active seniors. Generally, individual homeowners maintain the area immediately around the homes, but the surrounding grounds and common facilities are maintained in common. Development codes usually specify staff design review and approval to ensure a high-level design quality for the development as well as good fit for the surrounding neighborhood.

Cottage housing developments maintain a common architectural style within the project that can vary by market, local context or developer's preference.

Cottage style housing developments as a residential

H 6.1.4 SINGLE-ROOM OCCUPANCY HOUSING

Endorse housing for affordable, single-room occupancy (SRO) housing in the Downtown District where services and transportation choices are most available to low-income residents without a car.

Discussion: SROs are small in size with a small bathroom and kitchenette designed to accommodate one person. Typically these accommodations are affordable and helpful to serve the low-income population. SROs allow for density in the downtown and the tenants are close to services, shopping and transit.

H 6.1.5 LIVE-WORK UNITS

Allow live-work units in Downtown to accommodate home ownership and commercial viability for shop owners and artists.



Live-work units with first floor businesses and residential living above.

Discussion: Live-work units allow residential and non-residential space to occur under one ownership. Generally, live-work units allow commercial space on the bottom floor and living space above. The owner may use the commercial space or rent it out for income. This is a land use that is appropriate in the Downtown District or in the area directly surrounding the urban core. Density is needed to support the retail or service business located in the bottom floor. Parking for live-work units is on-street for patrons. Grid pattern streets with alley access allow for resident parking in the rear.

H 6.1.6 TOWNHOMES

Encourage townhomes in the Downtown District, the Lifestyle District and in other areas near Sequim's Downtown such as the downtown mixed-use districts and the community mixed use district.

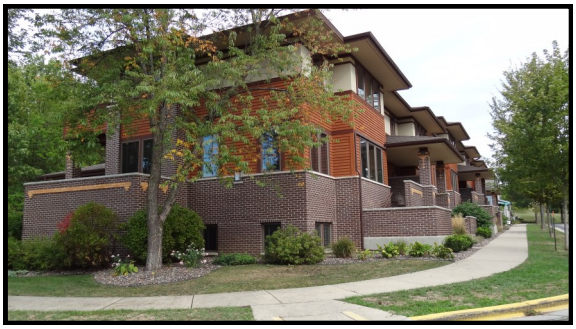


Three-story townhomes with reduced front setbacks, small lots and similar style facades.

Discussion: Townhomes are a low-density attached residential option that work well for young professionals and seniors alike. These units are typically two to three-story, attached, with repeated façade design and with smaller yards for lower maintenance requirements. When locating the two-story townhomes in the LD, elevators are an option for low mobility. Townhomes work best with reduced front yard setbacks and parking in the rear off alleys.

H 6.1.7 LOW-RISE MULTI-FAMILY

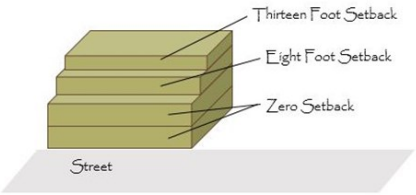
Promote low-rise apartments in the Downtown District the Lifestyle District and the Community Commercial District to provide access to services, shopping, and transit.



Two to three story multi-family buildings are good neighbors to single family residences.

Discussion: Apartments are types of higher density residential uses that Sequim residents prefer to see only in the Downtown District and the LD. Views, along with "small-town" and "friendly" are reasons to keep a low profile skyline.

Height restrictions in downtown allow buildings to go as high as four stories. In the LD, buildings are limited to three stories. To keep with the low profile of Downtown, setbacks from the street may increase the higher the story of the building. In the example, the first two stories may be at a zero setback from the front property line but the third story must step back 8 feet, and the fourth story must setback 13 feet from the front setback line. This allows more light in to the street and gives the appearance of lower profile buildings.



Apartments in the Downtown District or in the LD may be located over first story commercial or office space. Pedestrian space and public areas are encouraged on the ground floor.

H 6.1.8 SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Include opportunities for housing for special needs, group homes and assisted living in all residential zones in settings close to services and transportation

Discussion: Special needs and assisted living residents need options for equitably distributed affordable housing. The GMA specifies the fair distribution of housing options for the physically disabled, developmentally disabled, and chronically mentally ill patients, and State law precludes instituting regulatory barriers to this housing in residential zones. Instead, the surrounding neighborhood is protected from adverse operational impacts – primarily, noise, traffic, glare and privacy issues – through a permitting process in which impacts are mitigated by conditions of approval.

While traffic and noise may be issues in some neighborhoods, providing services and transportation options to special needs housing, group homes and assisted living facilities are also important. The issue is heightened because not everyone who needs group or multi-family housing can afford to live within the districts in which multi-family development is planned with services nearby and transit or alternative transportation is readily available.

Residential use in the Downtown District and Living District that includes the major health care facilities have to compete with the market value of non-residential uses and consequently support only higher value multi-family development. However, the housing needs of special populations are also not well met where land – and rent – is least expensive at the urban edge, where access to needed services is difficult and transportation choices are fewer. Making provision for subsidized and special needs housing in single-family districts near the City Center that otherwise preclude multi-family developments is a matter of addressing the requisites of neighborhood "fit" and mitigating operational impacts.

Special needs and assisted living residents need options for equitably distributed affordable housing.

These are within the core functions of conditional use permitting that is common to development codes. The conditional use permit reviews how the development fits the character of the neighborhood. Information about height, noise, noxious or offensive emissions, availability of public services and distance to other amenities, services and facilities, setbacks, landscaping, parking, safety and traffic impact is information provided when reviewing conditional use permits.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

H GOAL 6.2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING :Allow for affordable, safe and appropriate housing options in all residential zoning districts, for all ages and income levels to serve the needs and preferences of a diverse population.

POLICIES

H 6.2.1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS

Endorse affordable housing efforts with other jurisdictions, public and private organizations to address needs.

Discussion: Affordable housing programs provided through the Peninsula Housing Authority (PHA) are supported by the City of Sequim. PHA supplies Section 8 Housing, mutual self-help building, and maintenance opportunities for those in need in Clallam County. Sequim continues to endorse PHA's efforts in funding assistance and educational outreach.

As the community changes, Sequim may encourage affordable housing in areas where there is a deficiency.



Manufactured homes can be an affordable housing option.

H 6.2.2 MANUFACTURED HOMES

Allow new manufactured homes, under the same regulation applied to site built housing, on lots in residential zoning districts.

Discussion: In residential districts, new manufactured homes are allowed under the same regulations as site built housing. National standards for manufactured housing are directed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Development and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Local Sequim Municipal Code standards ensure that manufactured homes result in a complimentary addition to the neighborhood character. Examples of standards that may apply to manufactured homes as well as stick-built homes are setback requirements, lot standards such as sidewalks and curb cut requirements, roof pitch and building materials.

H 6.2.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

In new major housing developments, promote partnerships with affordable housing providers to include affordable housing within the project.

Discussion: New housing development integrating low-income housing creates greater diversity in the neighborhood. Varying affordable housing options include but are not limited to smaller lot development, attached housing, townhomes and accessory dwelling units.

H 6.2.4 SITING SUBSIDIZED LOW-INCOME AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Establish, define and follow criteria for siting housing for low income and special needs populations to minimize the concentration of projects in one neighborhood or area of the City.

Discussion: Dispersing housing for low-income and special needs residents throughout the community contributes to neighborhood "normalcy" and avoids demographic concentrations that are detrimental to residential life. For example, allowing low-income, special needs and group home housing units through a conditional use permit process in all districts helps insure that all areas share in the responsibility to meet community housing needs and are protected from the impacts of group housing and increased traffic. Within single-family Low Density Residential neighborhoods, conditions of project approval commonly include spacing requirements between homes, proximity to needed services and amenities, and availability of transit.

SENIOR SUPPORT

H GOAL 6.3 HOUSING FOR SENIORS: Meet the housing related needs of the aging population in Sequim.

POLICIES

H 6.3.1 VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

In development codes, provide a variety of housing options for senior citizens to age in place or remain in their neighborhood.

Discussion: According to the Center for Housing Policy, nine out of ten adults wish to age in place. Seniors, on average, also spend a greater portion of income on housing. Sequim's future includes options for senior citizens to remain in their home or to relocate within their neighborhood. Complete senior living complexes such as Sherwood Village offer a variety of housing options from fully self-sufficient homeowners to those needing full-time care. The Village and nearby medical facilities create the core of the Lifestyle District which is planned to grow geographically and fill in with additional housing types for senior living. Accessory dwelling units, co-housing, ADA-compliant home remodels, cottage housing, townhomes, and Universal Design projects are rare or non-existent in the city and expand options for independent living. Other options for seniors include senior living group facilities that include a range of housing types and a graduated level of assisted living options. While the Lifestyle District is hoped to meet the needs of a growing senior demographic and, in particular, to provide accessible services to seniors living independently, group facilities for assisted living or other senior care needs are included in the District concept as well as allowed in most residential settings if there is a good fit in facility scale and operations.



The condos at Sherwood Village are one of many housing options available for seniors at the complex.

HOUSING QUALITY/QUANTITY

H GOAL 6.4 ADEQUATE SHELTER FOR ALL CITIZENS: Ensure adequate land and opportunity to meet the shelter needs of all citizens in housing that is safe, affordable, and accessible .

POLICIES

H GOAL 6.4.1 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Promote community pride by monitoring public and private property maintenance and maintaining a program to attain compliance with property maintenance codes.

Discussion: It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain their property, whether they or others occupy it. Property maintenance regulations set the minimum standards for upkeep to ensure safety and avoid appearances of blight; however, just meeting minimum standards does not fully respect the rights (or investments) of neighbors to live within pleasant surroundings nor does it demonstrate community pride.

There are no simple answers to chronic property maintenance issues. Usually violations occur on rental properties and sometimes house ownership is mired in legal proceedings. Often, the owner has moved out of area and rents a home that has not found a buyer. Tenants who are good neighbors and respect the neighborhood's right to peace and safety also tend to take care of their rental property. Those who are not good neighbors exhibit a range of behaviors that affect adjoining properties. Accumulation of trash and junk, lack of yard maintenance, and visual structural deterioration pose highly visible impacts to other properties and the community as a whole.

These are the focus of property maintenance codes and nuisance abatement procedures that the City utilizes to correct violations.

H GOAL 6.4.2 HOUSING PRESERVATION

Evaluate Sequim's housing stock and preserve viable housing and historic homes for the economic value they represent in lieu of new construction.

Discussion: To be considered for the National Park's list of National Register Historic Places, the age, integrity and significance of the home is evaluated. Typically, homes must be over 50 years old to be considered for this designation. Sequim's housing stock is aging and nearly half will be over 50-years-old before 2035. To preserve local history, significant homes are to be evaluated for recognition by city, state and in the national programs. One solution to identifying preservation opportunities is to create a volunteer program to conduct an inventory of existing structures using locally-established assessment criteria.

As houses in Sequim get older, they become more susceptible to consequences of aging. Viable housing should be conserved through maintenance and upkeep. Education, programs and assistance listed above helps Sequim preserve housing and character.

H GOAL 6.4.3 RESIDENTIAL LAND SUPPLY FOR ALL NEEDS

Ensure availability of lands for residential development, including facilities to meet special housing needs throughout the City.

Discussion: Relying on historical population growth rates, Sequim will grow approximately 2% annually, an estimated population of 10,400 in 2035. The land capacity within the urban growth area accommodates the residential housing needs for the estimated 2035 population. The vision for inward growth and a variety of housing types encourages higher density and a slower consumption of land over the next 20 years. The future land use map indicates that the majority of land available for development sits within areas designated for residential use. Sufficient land exists throughout the city for the development of group homes, assisted living facilities, government assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing and foster care facilities.

H GOAL 6.4.4 UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Promote the use of Universal Design elements in the development of new homes and in remodel projects that are usable by all people without adaptation or specialization.

Discussion: Every day until 2031, 10,000 baby boomers in America will turn 65. Sequim attracts retirees at a higher rate than the national average, a pattern expected to continue due to national exposure and reputation. Even with a more diverse demographic profile, Sequim's median age is expected to remain around 60. Many of these seniors are retirees with set incomes and unique housing needs. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) defines Universal Design (UD), a concept that allows seniors and others to prepare for the future and age in place, as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." There are many ways to incorporate UD into homes but examples of these concepts include: zero-step entrance at front or back door (or both), changing out the type of door knobs in a home, toilet seats with adjustable height, low slip flooring, allowing for wider door openings with a minimum of 32 inches in width, locating a half bath or full bath on the main floor, considering the senses and intuitive use when adding thermostats and designing single-story homes with no stairs.



Vasey home in Myrtle Beach, S.C. built with Universal Design features, including zero-step entry and multiple smooth surface paths, lower windows and French doors.

Universal Design standards emerge as a result of the market and through promotion by groups such as the NAHB and the American Association of Retired People (AARP). Regulatory changes to the Sequim Municipal Code to heighten the awareness of UD and promotional materials provided to home builder publicizes the ideas.