

CHAPTER 3

HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Winslow contains a broad mix of housing types, from manufactured homes to single-family detached dwellings to higher density, multi-story apartments and condominiums. Most of the City's multiple family housing is found within Winslow. This is due to the availability of appropriate zoning, the prevalence of goods and services and the close proximity to the ferry terminal, which allows people to commute easily to jobs in Seattle. As the lifestyle opportunities offered by Bainbridge Island have become increasingly more popular, various forms of new and less conventional housing have been developed. In recent years, a co-housing development has been built, duplexes and other attached housing have been developed, a project containing very small houses tightly arranged around narrow alleys has been completed, and a number of projects that mix residential and commercial uses have been developed. Recent projects are averaging 15 units per acre, with the highest density residential project at 44 units per acre.

While single-family detached housing has been the most prevalent form of residential use, rising land prices and diminishing land supply have caused property values to increase. Much of the new housing has attempted to reflect the established character of the Island, with stands of mature trees preserved, new landscaping added, and small scale proportions used in buildings. Winslow has seen only some of the large-sized, repetitive multiple family development that has been occurring elsewhere in the region.

Typically, denser forms of housing are developed where there are amenities close by. The town center contains many positive attributes, such as proximity to regional transportation, a waterfront, a friendly, small-town atmosphere, cultural facilities, good schools, and a sense of being an active, lively community. Nonetheless, it is relatively difficult and takes some extra effort to develop housing mixed (especially vertically mixed) with other uses because of the complexities of construction and operational impacts, parking, ownership, building codes, and financing. Accordingly, initial forms of higher density housing will likely be on sites where housing is the only use. As land values further increase and property is even more scarce, developers will begin to look at sites that can accommodate both housing and commercial. Winslow already has some examples of mixed use development that provide excellent models for this form of development.

As Winslow becomes a more mature community, it will need to accommodate a range of household types and incomes. Seniors, singles, and single-parent households all constitute the fastest growing segments of the population in the region. Many of these households cannot afford median-priced single-family housing. Fortunately, new forms of housing are being developed around the region that may meet the more modest incomes of these households, and the City continues to work on new housing programs and initiatives. However, left to its own, the market will tend to offer choices first to households with higher incomes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Comprehensive Plan contains policies that address the supply, type, and affordability of housing. Policies also indicate the role that Winslow will play in accommodating new growth.

Policies call for the city to provide a fair share of affordable housing in the county, using its regulatory process and ability to bring together a combination of public and private resources. Policies also recognize the need to maintain the existing stock of affordable housing, a portion of which consists of mobile homes that may be subject to redevelopment pressures. The Comprehensive Plan makes a commitment to increasing the supply of multiple family housing, both market-rate and rent-assisted, and indicates that affordable housing should be dispersed throughout the community. Policies also indicate that the City will streamline its regulatory process and facilitate the provision of housing for populations with special needs.

Within Winslow outside the Mixed-Use Town Center and High School Road Districts in the areas that are zoned for single family development, new housing will likely take the form of additional single family units and accessory dwelling units.

In theory, the amount of vacant and underdeveloped land should be sufficiently large to accommodate the projected growth in housing units, assuming that development will be built to the maximum permitted under City zoning. However, it is not certain that new development or redevelopment will be using the maximum densities permitted. Some developers may not wish to participate in the FAR bonusing system or provide additional affordable units. If most individual projects in the MUTC and High School Road Districts were built only to the basic allowable densities, then all vacant and underdeveloped land would have to be used to meet projected housing needs; this is not a likely prospect. To meet the demand for housing over the next fifteen years, there will need to be development that exceeds the base densities for those districts.

In order to facilitate this, the City has recognized the need to allow increased density within the Mixed-Use Town Center. This is accomplished by allowing density bonuses for various combinations of density transfers, provision of affordable housing, provision of infrastructure beyond what is required to mitigate a project's impacts, and provision of public amenities.

This concept of increasing housing density is intended to be a part of an overall set of techniques to encourage forms of housing that can provide options for various households in the town center. Other techniques permitted by the City include accessory dwellings, flexible lot design development, cluster development and mixed use.

MASTER PLAN HOUSING POLICIES

Housing Distribution

The Master Plan assumes the Comprehensive Plan target - that the Winslow study area will accommodate approximately 1,500 new housing units and the Master Plan establishes a subtarget that up to 50% of this new residential development will be concentrated within the Mixed-Use Town Center and the High School Road Districts. The change from dwelling units per acre to FAR could result in additional housing. The MUTC and High School Road Districts would be more dense than at present. The outer portions of Winslow would receive only modest increases through the affordable housing program and would not be likely to be perceived much differently than now since the increases would be distributed over a wider area.

As discussed in the Land Use Chapter, density bonuses will be offered in return for contributing to efforts that advance specific Comprehensive Plan policies and community values, including the provision of affordable housing.

Goal WMP 3-1: Promote and facilitate the provision of diverse and affordable housing choices in a manner that encourages socio-economic diversity.

Policy WMP 3-1.1: Through FAR levels, development standards and incentives, encourage a variety of housing sizes and types that meet the needs of a broad range of households, including smaller units suitable for small families, single individuals and senior citizens.

Policy WMP 3-1.2: The bonus FAR program established for the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road districts may include a provision that allows bonus FAR to be achieved in exchange for providing for-rental and for-purchase income-qualified housing.

Policy WMP 3-1.3: Recognizing that rental and homeownership opportunities are important components of a diverse community and healthy residential market, develop programs and incentives to encourage a healthy balance between and rental and owner-occupied units.

Mobile Home Park

Policy WMP 3-1.4: The existing mobile home park situated to the north of the BPA provides an existing source of affordable housing. Because the site is zoned for higher intensity residential/commercial use, it is possible that the housing could be lost. Several mechanisms should be established to encourage the preservation of affordable housing on the site: (1) the unused development potential from the parcels on which the mobile home park is located may be transferred to another parcel within the MUTC and (2) allow the permanent preservation of the mobile homes to be used as an affordable housing bonus on another parcel within the MUTC.

Navy Housing Site

Policy WMP 3-1.5: If the existing Naval housing area is surplus, that area should be considered as an additional appropriate site for affordable housing.

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