home in the pines —
my neighbor waves
cross the fence

Painting by Anna Macrae
Haiku by Michael Dylan Welch
Introduction

The Housing Element addresses the preservation, improvement, and development of housing; identifies land to accommodate different housing types; and makes provisions for the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. Sammamish’s housing element ensures that there will be enough housing to accommodate expected growth in the city, and the variety of housing necessary to accommodate a range of income levels, ages, and special needs. At the same time, the element seeks to preserve existing neighborhood character by including policies that will keep new development compatible.

The Housing Element is supported by a housing needs analysis, which quantifies existing and projected housing needs and identifies the number of housing units necessary to accommodate projected growth. This analysis prompts the City to consider what current and future residents will need, and this in turn informs policies that shape the zoning and development standards in place today and planned for the future. This is an element in which multiple interests need to be balanced, including community character, demographic characteristics, affordability, and others. This analysis is contained in the Housing Element Supporting Analysis.
To accomplish aims of this Element, the City will develop a shorter range Strategy Plan that lists potential strategies to implement various goals and policies and their relative priority for consideration. In addition, the results of activities undertaken through the Strategy Plan will facilitate performance monitoring, evaluation, and future planning updates.

Goals and policies that support housing sustainability and healthy communities address energy efficiency.

**Goals and Policies**

**Goal H.1 Neighborhood Vitality and Character**
Promote safe, attractive, and vibrant residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

**Policy H.1.1** Ensure that new development and redevelopment are compatible with existing and planned neighborhood character.

**Policy H.1.2** Support investment in existing neighborhoods and housing in order to preserve the character and condition of neighborhoods and housing.

**Policy H.1.3** Support the preservation of the city’s historically significant housing.

**Policy H.1.4** Foster public awareness and participation in decisions affecting neighborhoods.

**Goal H.2 Housing Supply and Variety**
Ensure that Sammamish has a sufficient quantity and variety of housing to meet projected growth and needs of the community.

**Policy H.2.1** Maintain an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land to accommodate the city’s housing growth targets.

**Policy H.2.2** Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types to meet a range of housing needs.
Policy H.2.3  Consider the impacts on citywide housing capacity and diversity when making land use policy decisions or code amendments.

Policy H.2.4  Promote residential and mixed use development in Town Center and other commercial areas where combining such uses would promote the vitality and economic viability of the area.

Policy H.2.5  Permit and promote smaller housing types (e.g. cottages, duplexes, efficiency studios, and townhouses).

Policy H.2.6  Promote the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Policy H.2.7  Permit manufactured homes on individual lots in residential zones in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law.

Policy H.2.8  Avoid creating regulations and procedures that discourage the housing industry’s ability to respond to market needs or unnecessarily increase the costs of developing housing.

Policy H.2.9  Encourage infill development on vacant or underutilized land.

Policy H.2.10  Permit and promote residential clustering as a means of protecting environmentally sensitive areas and encouraging infill development.

Policy H.2.11  Require minimum densities for housing in medium- and higher-density residential areas and commercial zones that allow housing.

Policy H.2.12  Ensure fair and legal housing practices throughout the city.

Policy H.2.13  Promote location- and energy-efficient housing choices through incentives and other means.

Fair Housing is the ability for all people to choose where they live without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, family status, or disability—these are the “protected classes” under state and federal law. (Some places also protect age, sexual orientation, or having a Section 8 voucher). Cities may not make zoning or land use decisions or implement policies that exclude or otherwise discriminate against protected persons, including individuals with disabilities. Sammamish’s fair housing practices are evaluated periodically by King County as part of a countywide report to the federal government.

Urban infill is defined as new development that is sited on vacant or undeveloped land within an existing community, and that is enclosed by other types of development. The term “urban infill” itself implies that existing land is mostly built-out and what is being built is in effect “filling in” the gaps. The term most commonly refers to building single-family homes in existing neighborhoods but may also be used to describe new development in commercial, office or mixed-use areas.
Goal H.3  Housing Affordability
Provide for a range of housing opportunities to address the needs of all economic segments of the community.

Policy H.3.1  Develop plans and strategies that promote a proportionate amount of the countywide need for housing affordable to households with moderate, low and very low incomes, including those with special needs.

Policy H.3.2  Encourage preservation of existing affordable housing stock.

Policy H.3.3  Consider requiring or incentivizing affordable housing when evaluating rezones and other land use regulation modifications, especially when resulting in increases in development capacity.

Housing Affordability Standards establish the greatest out-of-pocket expense that households at given income levels should pay for housing (including utilities). The generally accepted standard, especially for lower-income households, is 30% of gross income. The affordability standards used by the city of Sammamish (and all members of A Regional Coalition for Housing [ARCH]), for purposes of planning and housing programs are as follows:

Affordability Standards for a family of four in 2014

- **Very Low-Income (30% of AMI)**
  - Maximum Income: $36,460
  - Maximum Housing Cost: $662

- **Low-Income (30 - 50% of AMI)**
  - Maximum Income: $44,100
  - Maximum Housing Cost: $1,103

- **Moderate-Income (50 - 80% of AMI)**
  - Maximum Income: $70,560
  - Maximum Housing Cost: $1,764

AMI = Area Median Income

Countywide Need (of total housing supply)
- 12%
- 16%
- 12%

Each of these standards is adjusted for different family sizes. Information will be updated annually after the first of the year on the ARCH website, http://www.archhousing.org/.
Policy H.3.4  Offer regulatory incentives such as priority processing of permits, fee waivers or reductions, and/or property tax relief for builders who provide very low-, low- or moderate-income housing.

Policy H.3.5  Offer financial aid and/or technical assistance to organizations that provide affordable housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income households.

Policy H.3.6  Encourage and support non-profit agencies, public-private partnerships, and housing authorities to preserve or build new, sustainable housing affordable for very low-, low- and moderate-income households.

Policy H.3.7  Address the need for housing affordable to households at less than 30% of area median income (very low-income), and given the unique challenges of serving this need, local efforts will require collaboration with other jurisdictions and funders.

Policy H.3.8  Support affordable housing throughout the city especially in areas with good access to transit, employment, education, and shopping.

Policy H.3.9  Support both rental and ownership forms of affordable housing, in a variety of locations, types, and sizes.

Policy H.3.10  Ensure that affordable housing achieved through public incentives or assistance remains affordable for the longest possible term.

Policy H.3.11  Maintain a record of publicly owned land, and if land is determined to be surplus for public purposes and is suitable for housing, give priority for its use to affordable housing with a preference for housing for low-income and very-low income households.

Location-efficient Housing refers to homes that have easy or inexpensive access to workplaces, schools, shopping, and other necessary destinations. Housing locations are efficient to the most people when the ways to these destinations are easily walkable, don’t require the resident to own an automobile, and can be reached in 20 minutes or less.
Goal H.4  Housing for People with Special Needs
Support a variety of housing opportunities to serve those with special needs.

Policy H.4.1  Ensure development regulations allow for and have suitable provisions to accommodate housing opportunities for special needs populations in Sammamish.

Policy H.4.2  Encourage the geographic distribution of special needs housing throughout the city, understanding that some clustering of such housing may be appropriate if proximity to public transportation, medical facilities or other services is necessary.

Policy H.4.3  Support ways for older adults and people with disabilities to remain in the community as their housing needs change by encouraging universal design or retrofitting homes for lifetime use.

Policy H.4.4  Promote a range of housing types for seniors; e.g., adult family homes, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, and independent living communities.

Policy H.4.5  Support public and private housing and services for people who are homeless.

Goal H.5  Regional Collaboration
Actively participate and coordinate with other agencies in efforts to meet regional housing needs.

Policy H.5.1  Collaborate with other local governments and the Suburban Cities Association (SCA) and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) on regional housing strategies, especially related to providing low- and very low-income housing.

Policy H.5.2  Work with other jurisdictions and health and social service organizations to develop a coordinated, regional approach to homelessness.

Policy H.5.3  Maintain membership in inter-jurisdictional agencies to promote affordable housing on the Eastside.

Policy H.5.4  Support and encourage housing legislation at the county, state, and federal levels, which would promote the City’s housing goals and policies.
Goal H.6  Monitoring
Implement Housing Element goals in a manner that is efficient and transparent.

Policy H.6.1  Adopt a Housing Strategy Plan to outline steps toward implementation of this Housing Element.

Policy H.6.2  Monitor housing supply, type and affordability, including progress toward meeting a significant share of the countywide need for affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

Policy H.6.3  Evaluate and report on how the goals and policies of this Housing Element are being achieved.

Policy H.6.4  On a regular basis, based on results of monitoring local data and effectiveness of local regulations and programs, reassess and adjust policies and strategies to meet local housing needs.