

City of Sammamish Housing Action Plan

Potential Housing Action For Discussion
December 8, 2022

The City of Sammamish seeks resident feedback on potential housing and planning actions as a part of its forthcoming Housing Action Plan. This brochure provides information and context for housing actions that will be discussed in depth at a community engagement event to solicit resident feedback on each.

This brochure was developed as supplemental materials for community engagement. If you are unable to attend and would like to provide your feedback, please visit [Envision Sammamish 2044](#).

You can also reference the [Housing Needs Assessment](#) completed as a part of the Housing Action Plan.

The themes at right were developed in conjunction with City staff and reflective of key findings from the Housing Needs Assessment and community engagement to date. **You can let the City know how you feel about each theme's strategy by following the links at right and filling out a short survey.**



Theme 1: Addressing State, Regional, & County Affordable Housing Requirements

The City is undertaking the development of the Housing Action Plan to fulfill some of the planning requirements of the Growth Management Act. In addition, King County is in the process of adopting an allocation of projected housing growth by income level to

each of its municipalities. This theme includes strategies to support Sammamish in meeting the housing and planning requirements laid out by the State of Washington and King County.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 1.](#)

Theme 2: Increasing Housing Opportunities for Those Who Work in Sammamish

This theme is a result of findings from a landscape assessment of Sammamish's current housing and socio-economic conditions as well as survey responses from Sammamish residents. Access to living in Sammamish and experiencing its quality of life is increasingly out of reach for Sammamish's workforce - those who work as teachers, firefighters, police, utility engineers,

maintenance workers, service workers, and other essential members of Sammamish's community. The strategies outlined below aim to foster housing choice and opportunity for Sammamish's workforce.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 2.](#)

Theme 3: Accommodating Changing Demographics & Resident Housing Need

Theme 3 is a result of data analysis and resident survey responses that indicate that Sammamish's population is aging and diversifying, while household sizes are both growing from an influx of young families and shrinking as a result of

empty nesters and retirees. These strategies are intended to help fill gaps in the Sammamish housing stock for these changing resident groups and their needs.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 3.](#)

Theme 4: Maintain Sammamish's Sense of Place

Sammamish is known for a high quality of life and sense of place. Maintaining this sense of place is crucial to fulfill Sammamish's housing goals while preserving what makes the

community special. The strategies below include ways to preserve and protect Sammamish's architectural style and community fabric.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 4.](#)

Theme 1: Addressing State, Regional, & County Affordable Housing Requirements

Development Agreements. Development agreements are voluntary, negotiated contracts between the City and developer establishing standards and public benefits the development will provide. These can be used to encourage development of more affordable units or mitigate displacement.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs. TDR programs are a common market-based program that preserves open space or low-density land by redirecting development that could happen there to another, more suitable location. The current program is underutilized and limited to increasing development in Town Center. Potential program modifications can be to expand the area in which the program can be used, increase the number of units that can be traded between sites, or add in affordability requirements to new units.

Multi-Family Density Bonuses. The City currently offers density bonuses on certain multi-family developments that include affordable units or other public benefits. This program could be further leveraged and more actively advertised to encourage higher density housing with affordable units in parts of Sammamish or combined with other programs like MFTE. Potential modifications could be to expand benefits to more multi-family zones, increase the permitted density, or increase the incentives on higher densities.

Single-Family Density Bonuses. Density bonuses on large single-family lots would permit an additional, separate living unit (not an ADU) to qualifying lots in certain residential zones. The City can expand its existing significant density bonus for duplexes to include additional housing types.

Inclusionary Zoning. Inclusionary zoning requires developers to either provide affordable units within a development or provide an in-lieu fee. This is currently in effect in Town Center. Potential modifications could include expanding the program outside of Town Center, increasing the required number of affordable

units, or requiring units to be affordable at lower-income brackets.

Surplus Land Program. The City is allowed to lease or sell underutilized publicly owned land to developers for affordable housing. It can begin inventorying potentially available land across all city departments (including utility districts, County-owned land, school districts), identifying its readiness for development, and ranking for potential future development.

Town Center Density. The City can strategically accommodate expected population growth by increasing the allowable density in Town Center. This minimizes the impact of new development in other parts of Sammamish. It would require passing a code amendment to modify allowable density or create minimum density.

Concomitant Agreements. These agreements can help mitigate potential impacts of rezoning or development by requiring development conditions in exchange for permitting or zoning departures. Sammamish does not currently utilize this type of agreement.

Affordable Housing Levy. Voters can authorize a local affordable housing levy that could help low-income households purchase or repair a home or prevent foreclosure. A levy of this type can also support a wider homeowner stability program.

Real Estate Excise Tax 2 (REET 2). A REET 2 is an additional 0.25% tax on home sales, which could be put toward affordable housing development and incentives, as well as certain capital projects.

Permit Fee Waivers. The City can waive permit fees for affordable housing for low-income units or in certain areas of Sammamish.

Sales and Use Tax Credit. A sales and use tax credit would impose a minimal charge on certain purchases and provide funds that can be used to finance affordable housing or other services for residents.

Area Median Income (AMI) is the household income level of the median, or middle, household in a given region.

Moderate-income households: Households are considered moderate-income if they earn between 50% and 100% of AMI.

Low-income households: Households are considered low-income if they earn less than 50% AMI.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are housing units that share a lot with another housing structure, typically a single family detached home.

Tiny Houses typically range from 100 to 800 sq. ft. and can be designed as clusters, stand-alone structures, or ADUs.

Short-Term Rentals are a furnished living space available for short periods of time, from a few days to weeks. Any type of housing units can be rented as a short-term rental.

Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE). MFTE is a program used by Washington cities that are designated as Urban Centers that gives developers a property tax break for projects that rent at least 20% of their units to low-income households for 12 years or in perpetuity. In order to implement its own MFTE program, the City of Sammamish would need to seek special designation with King County or designation as an Urban Center by the state.

Contract Rezoning. This is a process in which the City can grant rezoning requests in exchange for certain concessions from a landowner. This type of rezoning provides the City with more flexibility to encourage housing and affordable housing development.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 1.](#)

Theme 2: Increasing Housing Opportunities for Those Who Work in Sammamish

Homeowner and Rental Stability Program. The City could minimize displacement with a Homeowner and Rental Stability Program, which could include foreclosure intervention counseling, home rehabilitation assistance, and mobile home relocation assistance.

Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Short-term rentals are sometimes perceived to have a negative impact on the availability of housing for full-time residents, as investors may purchase properties to rent them to visitors and others will short-term needs. The City can pursue a short-term rental ordinance that limits the number, location, or duration of short-term rental properties in Sammamish.

Housing Repair and Preservation Program. This type of program could provide technical or financial support for income-qualified homeowners to maintain critical health, safety, and structural issues of single-family residences.

Missing Middle-Friendly Zoning. Zoning amendments would modify current zones or create new ones that are more permissive of Missing Middle housing types. This could be structured to expand the zoning districts in Sammamish that allow moderate density or changing zoning requirements to allow additional forms of Missing Middle Housing.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Up to four ADUs are currently permitted in residential zones, and additional regulations to increase the production of ADUs could include easing parking requirements, eliminating the owner-occupancy requirement, creating pre-approved ADU designs, and expanding homeowner awareness.

Tiny Houses. Tiny houses add to housing supply and variety, and are typically relatively affordable and potentially a good fit for young singles or downsizing seniors. The City can include tiny houses in its zoning code or create incentives to encourage developers to build tiny homes.

Design Guidelines. Town Center has established mixed-use design guidelines. The City could scale these or new guidelines to the city or designated sub-areas to help guide the character of future mixed use development.

Allowable Multi-Family Density. One way to accommodate projected population and housing growth is to increase the allowable density for development in multi-family residential zones. This would require the City to amend its zoning code to increase the current allowable densities in multi-family zoning districts.

Minimum Density Requirements. Another way to increase density in multi-family zones is to adopt a minimum density policy, which can ensure an efficient use of land in multi-family and mixed-use zones. This maximizes the development potential in areas that can accommodate higher density while reducing the need for higher density in other residential zones.

Mandatory Mixed-Use Zoning. The City can amend the zoning code to include mandatory mixed-use zoning in certain commercial and office zones. This would require the development of housing in other zoning districts that typically have the appropriate and necessary infrastructure and capacity for residential density.

Parking Reductions. The City offers parking reductions in Town Center, but not as a part of incentivizing affordable housing development. Parking reductions can be an effective tool to incentivize affordable housing that also offers a public benefit or is located in proximity to public transit. The City can use the existing parking incentive as a template to write an ordinance that would extend parking reduction incentives for developments with housing units and, specifically, affordable housing units.

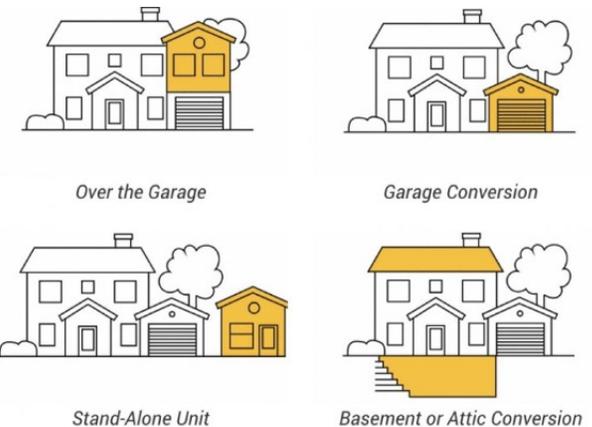
Supporting City Staff. The City can address development within Sammamish by directing resources to staff and programming to support affordable housing

production. Investment in staffing, programming and coordination within the City can support increased development of new and retention of existing affordable housing units.

Housing Incentive Marketing Program. The City can amplify its existing housing incentives with a marketing program which advertises and educates developers about how to develop housing, particularly affordable housing, within Sammamish. This can also be a mechanism to evaluate the efficacy of the City's housing programs and pilot or gain feedback on reforms or new programs.

Consolidated Utility Connections. Connecting to local infrastructure can be a costly part of development, particularly for affordable housing developments. Consolidating utilities for multiple units or properties can alleviate development costs by sharing the initial stand up costs and improving the efficiency of that initial set up. It can also help future residents of affordable units reduce their spending on energy and other utilities.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 2.](#)



Types of ADUs, City of Tigard.

Theme 3: Accommodating Changing Demographics and Resident Housing

Cottage Housing. The City could permit cottage housing beyond the current portions of Town Center in which it is allowed. It can also modify the zoning requirements for developers seeking to build cottage housing or increase incentives for this type of development.

Small-Lot Single-Family Homes. Small-lot single-family homes are another type of missing middle housing that is essentially a compact version of a single-family detached home. They need smaller lots and require smaller building footprints. The City can amend its current zoning to eliminate minimum lot widths to encourage this type of housing, incentivize developers and landowners to subdivide existing lots suitable for this type of housing, or create other incentives for this type of development.

Senior Housing. Sammamish's population is aging, and the City may face a shortage of suitable senior housing. There are two ways in which the City can address senior housing needs: encourage the development of additional assisted or group homes or by pursuing policies and programs that encourage the development of housing types that can support the needs of an aging population.

Attached Housing. Attached homes are currently an allowable use in the City's residential zones, but development of attached housing is encouraged only surrounding Town Center. An attached housing overlay zoning distinction can encourage development of this housing type in transition areas between predominantly residential and commercial zones. The City can also modify zoning requirements to encourage the development of attached homes.

Leverage Existing Infrastructure. The City can undertake an analysis to determine areas in which development can be encouraged where there is existing adequate infrastructure capacity, less infrastructure investment needed, or ability to add density at low cost.

Aging in Place Program. As a resident population ages, an Aging in Place Program can be developed to educate and assist residents in ways they can modify their homes or connect with in-home health care as their health and mobility changes.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 3.](#)

Missing Middle Housing is denser than single family detached housing but smaller than four story apartment buildings.

Cottage housing is a type of missing middle housing that generally allows for small 1 or 2 story houses that may be attached or detached that may not have a backyard but instead are arranged around a common interior courtyard.

Attached homes are two or more single-family units on a single lot attached by a common wall at a shared property line, like a townhome.



Above: Townhomes are a form of attached housing, City of Sammamish. Below: A cottage court around a central courtyard, City of Kirkland.



Source: Opticos, 2020.

Theme 4: Maintain Sammamish's Sense of Place

Maintain Partnerships. The City is a partner in a number of existing partnerships, and continued partnerships with ARCH, support services and providers, and inter-jurisdictional memberships can supplement City initiatives and programs.

Not-For-Profit Builders. The City can also pursue new partnerships and partnership models. Creating partnerships with not-for-profit builders gives the City a way to support and incentivize housing development that also provides a public benefit.

Community Land Trusts and Co-ops. Supporting community land trusts and co-ops are a way in which the City can help offer alternative forms of affordable home ownership. The City can provide technical or regulatory assistance or provide financial incentives or assist with land acquisitions.

Affordable Housing Providers. The City may establish partnerships with local and regional affordable housing providers that are best suited to address the housing needs of low- and extremely low-income individuals and households.

Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). A UGA may be an appropriate mechanism for the City of Sammamish to target areas suitable for growth while maintaining the existing development character elsewhere. In particular, a UGA in Sammamish can be planned around current public transportation access and encourage more transit-oriented development.

Tree Canopy Policy. Many residents surveyed as a part of this project note that Sammamish's tree canopy is an essential part of the community's character and that development in many areas puts this at risk. The City can develop a tree canopy policy that protects existing mature trees and requires new tree plantings as a part of the development process.

Sub-Area Plans (SAPs). SAPs are a planning mecha-

nism in which the City establishes districts and undertake planning efforts applicable only to these districts. For example, the City could designate Inglewood, Pine Lake Centers, and Sammamish Commons as sub-areas and then create unique development standards and examine the impact of different development types.

Sensitive Design Guidelines. Locally sensitive design guidelines can be applied to sub-areas or city-wide and provide developers with options for design variety while maintaining distinctive local character.

Growth Phasing. Strategic phasing for future growth can also be developed for a sub-area or city-wide and provide a strategic blueprint for how developers and the City (infrastructure and services) will absorb anticipated growth.

Surplus Land Inventory. A surplus land inventory, undertaken by the City or in partnership with regional planning organizations, would help identify land suitable for affordable housing development and other public benefits.

Infrastructure Capacity Analysis. In conjunction with sub-area planning or city-wide, the City can undertake an infrastructure capacity analysis to identify what parts of the city are most prepared to accommodate anticipated growth, are not suitable to accommodate future growth, and how the City can plan for or finance additional infrastructure capacity.

Investment Property Database. An investment property database is a mechanism to track the short-term rentals or other investment properties in Sammamish. This is a tool that the City can use to understand the impacts of short-term rentals on Sammamish's housing market and can be done in conjunction with developing a short-term rental regulation ordinance.

Criteria for Added Density. The City can prepare

for appropriate development by developing a set of criteria to allow for rezoning for added density. These criteria could include adequacy of infrastructure, appropriateness and completeness of zoning controls and development regulations, and an established public process for rezoning.

Contingency Planning. Housing and market conditions, trends, and needs are evolving and always subject to significant change. Contingency planning can be a tool to monitor these trends. The City would need to add a contingency element to its Comprehensive Plan, which would allow the City to respond to any changes in conditions from the current baseline assumptions, state law or regional planning efforts, market, or community need.

[Click HERE to provide input on Theme 4.](#)



Sammamish Town Center, Issaquah Reporter.

Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) are a planning mechanism under the Growth Management Act that allows a city to designate a UGA in which it encourages growth while limited urban growth outside of it.