



CHAPTER THREE

HOUSING ELEMENT

What you will find in this chapter:

- An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs;
- A statement of goals, policies and objectives for the preservation, improvement and development of housing;
- Identification of sufficient land for housing, including but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes and foster care facilities; and
- Adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

Purpose Statement:

Encourage diverse housing opportunities that are affordable to all income levels and household needs.

Purpose

Healthy and strong neighborhoods with an adequate supply of quality and affordable housing are fundamental to the well-being of Kent and its residents. Beyond simply fulfilling a basic need for shelter, adequate and affordable housing provides many more benefits. Studies show that children in stable housing do better in school and are less likely to experience disruption in their education due to moves. Living in decent, affordable housing also provides individuals and families with a sense of economic security and the ability to focus on their needs. There needs to be a wide range of housing types to make housing affordable for every household in Kent regardless of income.

An adequate supply of a variety of housing types and prices is also important to Kent's employment base and its economic vitality. A mix of homes affordable to a range of income levels can attract and help retain a diverse employment base in the community, support the local workforce so they can live close to their jobs and support economic development objectives. Shorter commutes allow workers to spend more time with their families while benefiting from reductions in traffic congestion, air pollution and expenditures on roads.

The Housing Element considers the inventory and condition of existing housing stock and future housing needs. It addresses the provision of housing types to accommodate the lifestyles and economic needs of the community. The term affordable housing as used in this document refers to housing that places a cost burden on the resident regardless of household income. The City's housing policies and development regulations (zoning, building codes, etc.) establish how the development and construction of housing will take place in the community. However, unlike the other services discussed in this Comprehensive Plan, the City does not directly provide housing. The Housing Element sets the conditions under which the private housing industry will operate, and establishes goals and policies to meet the community's housing needs and to achieve the community's goals.

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and zoning code provide for a variety of residential land uses to accommodate the City's targets as adopted in the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The zoning code includes provisions for flexible lot sizes, Planned Unit Development incentives, accessory dwelling units city-wide, as well as transit-oriented development standards for the Midway and Downtown Subareas. Housing-related issues are also addressed in the City's 2013-2018 Human Services Master Plan and the Consolidated Plan, providing a framework for implementing housing, human services and community development activities. Additionally, the City maintains a Subsidized Housing Inventory that is periodically updated. It is a moment in time count of the various types of subsidized units within the City. The number and type of dwelling are established by the owners and the data are subject to change at any given time. At any given time, roughly 25 percent of Kent's rental housing units are subsidized. As of 2014 there were a total of 3,094 subsidized units in the City.

Issues

Demographics, Economics and Special Needs

A mix of homes affordable to a range of income levels, ages, lifestyles and special needs can attract and help retain a diverse employment base in the community, support the local workforce so they can live close to their jobs and support economic development objectives.

Housing Stock

Aging housing stock can be an important source of affordable housing for low-income families.

Community Context

Age distribution is an important indicator for determining the future demand for housing types in the City. Traditional assumptions are that the young adult population (20 to 34 years old) has a propensity for choosing apartments, low to moderate priced condominiums, and smaller single-family units. The adult population (35 to 65 years old) is the primary market for moderate to high-end apartments, condominiums and larger single-family homes. This age group traditionally has higher incomes and larger household sizes. The senior population (65 years and older) generates demand for low to moderate cost apartments and condominiums, group quarters and mobile homes.

Table H.1**SEX AND AGE**

KENT, WA	ESTIMATE
SEX AND AGE	
Total population	124,410
Male	62,995
Female	61,415
Under 5 years	7,530
5 to 9 years	9,374
10 to 14 years	7,412
15 to 19 years	8,642
20 to 24 years	8,557
25 to 34 years	22,300
35 to 44 years	15,601
45 to 54 years	18,512
55 to 59 years	7,543
60 to 64 years	6,820
65 to 74 years	7,526
75 to 84 years	2,721
85 years and over	1,872
Median age (years)	34.3

2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates



Demographics

The City's population growth over the past 25 years has been primarily a result of annexations but the number of new housing units has also contributed to population growth. The forecast for 2035 is for a 25 percent increase in the number of households in Kent resulting in an additional 20,000 residents from the 2014 State OFM population estimate. Significant changes include an increase in the number of family households in the City and the racial composition of the City shifting from a non-Hispanic white majority to a majority minority community. Over 27 percent of the population is foreign born. A large proportion of residents living in Kent are young, middle class families that seek a variety of housing options that are affordable and located strategically to access the region. As noted in the Land Use Element as well as the 2012 Buildable Lands Report, the City has sufficient capacity to accommodate the growth targets for 2035.

Household Characteristics

In 2012, there were a total of 41,481 dwelling units in the city, an increase of a little over 5,000 units due primarily to the Panther Lake annexation. Kent's housing stock is comprised of approximately 50% single-family and 50% multi-family housing. It should be noted that over 40% of the housing stock is more than 30 years old and may be in need of repair or rehabilitation.

The Midway Subarea Plan and the Downtown Subarea Action Plan both encourage transit-oriented development. The Downtown Planned Action Ordinance proposes new SEPA threshold levels below which no SEPA review is required. Kent has also adopted increased SEPA thresholds for the rest of the City, providing categorical exemptions to the maximum allowed by the State.

According to the King County Countywide Planning Policies Goal CPP-H-1, there is a countywide need for housing supply as follows: 16 percent for those earning 50-80 percent of Area Median Income, or AMI (moderate), 12 percent for those earning 30-50 percent of AMI (low), and 12 percent for those earning 30 percent and below AMI (very-low). Kent will focus on preserving and enhancing existing housing to maintain the affordability while encouraging development of housing for residents at 120 percent + of median income. Additionally the City will continue to collaborate with other partners to construct housing affordable to those making less than 30 percent AMI. Currently approximately 50 percent of households are paying less than 30 percent of their income for housing resulting in the more affordable housing being occupied by households that could afford to pay a greater percentage of their income toward housing costs. This forces households with lower incomes into overcrowding, overpayment or substandard housing. These housing problems are defined and shown below.

Overcrowding refers to a household where there are more members than habitable rooms in a home. Overcrowding falls into two groups: moderate (1.0 to 1.5 person per room) and severe (more than 1.5 persons per room).

Overburdened refers to a household that pays more than 30 percent of household income towards housing. According to federal definitions, overburdened falls into two categories: moderate (pays 30-50 percent) and severe (pays more than 50 percent of income) toward housing.

Substandard Housing refers to a home with significant need to replace or repair utilities (plumbing, electrical, heating, etc.) or make major structural repairs to roofing, walls, foundations, and other major components.

TABLE H.2
AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS

HOUSING OCCUPANCY IN KENT		
Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Renter Occupied Housing Units
36,379	34,060	17,011

NUMBER OF RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS BY GROSS RENT					
% of Area Median Income (AMI)	< 30% AMI	31-50% AMI	51-80% AMI	81-120% AMI	Over 120% AMI
Monthly Rent	\$0-\$500	\$500-\$849	\$850-\$1370	\$1370-\$1999	\$2000 or more
Renter-Occupied Units	1,660	4,898	7,690	2,339	424

PERCENT OF RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS BY GROSS RENT						
% of Area Median Income (AMI)	< 30% AMI	31-50% AMI	All Units Under 50% AMI	51-80% AMI	81-120% AMI	Over 120% AMI
Monthly Rent	\$0-\$500	\$500-\$849	\$850	\$850-1370	\$1370-\$1999	\$2000 or more
% of Total Renter-Occupied Units	9.8%	28.8%	38.5%	45.2%	13.8%	2.5%

Data Source: 2006-2010 ACS Data

TABLE H.3

HOUSING NEEDS SUMMARY TABLES

H3.1. Housing Problems (Households with only one of the problems defined above)

	RENTER OCCUPIED					OWNER OCCUPIED				
	≤ 30% OF HAMFI*	> 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	> 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	> 80% BUT ≤ 100% OF HAMFI	TOTAL	≤ 30% OF HAMFI	> 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	> 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	> 80% BUT ≤ 100% OF HAMFI	TOTAL
Substandard Housing	50	105	-	-	155	15	-	55	-	70
Overcrowded - Severe	305	240	65	40	650	55	-	20	50	125
Overcrowded - Moderate	580	605	275	45	1,505	-	50	35	55	140
Overburdened - Severe	3,300	775	155	-	4,230	850	765	610	250	2,475
Overburdened - Moderate	655	1,960	960	225	3,800	180	525	830	1,245	2,780
Zero/negative income – Housing burden not computed	295	-	-	-	295	85	-	-	-	85

Data Source: 2009-2013 CHAS *Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Median Family Income

H3.2 Housing Problems (Households with one or more housing problems in table H3.1)

	RENTER OCCUPIED					OWNER OCCUPIED				
	≤ 30% OF HAMFI*	> 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	> 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	> 80% BUT ≤ 100% OF HAMFI	TOTAL	≤ 30% OF HAMFI	> 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	> 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	> 80% BUT ≤ 100% OF HAMFI	TOTAL
At least one of the four severe housing problems in table H3.1.	4,235	1,725	500	90	6,550	920	815	720	355	2,810
None of the four severe housing problems in table H3.1.	1,240	2,530	2,555	1,965	8,290	350	1,075	1,850	2,660	5,935
Zero/negative income – Housing burden not computed.	295	-	-	-	295	85	-	-	-	85

Data Source: 2009-2013 CHAS

H3.3 Housing Cost Burden > 30% HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI)

	RENTER OCCUPIED				OWNER OCCUPIED			
	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME IS ≤ 30% OF HAMFI	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME IS > 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME IS > 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	TOTAL	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME IS ≤ 30% OF HAMFI	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME IS > 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME IS > 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	TOTAL
Small Family (2 persons, neither person 62 years or over, or 3 or 4 persons)	2,310	1,475	435	4,220	275	435	720	1,430
Large Family (5 or more persons)	680	515	135	1,330	125	230	155	510
Elderly Family (2 persons, with either or both age 62 or over)	135	115	45	295	115	130	145	-
Elderly non-family	760	385	50	1,195	300	295	160	755
Other household type (non-elderly nonfamily)	1,005	1,075	460	2,540	290	240	300	830
Total need by income	4,890	3,565	1,125	9,580	1,105	1,330	1,480	3,525

Data Source: 2009-2013 CHAS

TABLE H.4
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS TABLE

	≤ 30% OF HAMFI	> 30% BUT ≤ 50% OF HAMFI	> 50% BUT ≤ 80% OF HAMFI	> 80% BUT ≤ 100% OF HAMFI	> 100% OF HAMFI
Total Households	7,130	6,145	5,620	5,070	16,220
Small Family (2 persons, neither person 62 years or over, or 3 or 4 persons)	3,020	2,260	2,020	2,080	8,745
Large Family (5 or more persons)	895	880	850	840	1,825
Household with at least 1 person age 62-74 but no one age 75+	1,195	980	950	995	2,495
Household with at least 1 person age 75+	730	700	385	425	690
Household with 1 or more children age 6 or younger	2,119	1,540	1,170	840	2,585

Homelessness

The City has recognized for many years the impact of homelessness on the community and its residents. Homelessness impacts individuals, families, children and youth. The reasons for and causes of homelessness are numerous. Nationally there has been an emphasis on addressing chronic homelessness particularly for single adults. 2012 saw a call from national leaders to focus on the plight of homeless veterans, particularly those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The recent recession has created an increasing number of homeless in Kent as well as in the balance of the county. Unemployment coupled with the high cost of rent, utilities and food in the region made it difficult for some families to maintain their housing. The difficulty in determining accurate numbers rests in the fact that many families share housing, double up with grandparents or couch surf with family and friends.

An increased focus on homeless prevention, including activities such as partnerships with landlords, eviction prevention education and funding for emergency rental assistance can help prevent homelessness. While short-term emergency and transitional housing will continue to be a necessary service for people in need in our community, prevention of homelessness is less traumatic for people in crisis and less costly for funders.

The recession also caused a decrease in funding levels. The decreased funding coupled with the increased need resulted in a more visual presence of the homeless particularly in urban centers. Kent, like its neighbors, saw more street homeless in the downtown area. Addressing the needs of the chronically homeless who struggle with mental health or addiction issues is difficult. Best practices, such as Housing First, are expensive programs. These types of programs offer the best results with positive long term outcomes.

Economic Characteristics

Assessing income groups is a major component of evaluating housing affordability.

According to the American Community Survey 2010-2012, the median household income in Kent was \$55,244 per year. The Median Family Income (MFI) is established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- Very Low-Income: 50 percent or less of the area MFI;
- Low-Income: between 51 and 80 percent of the area MFI;
- Moderate-Income: between 81 and 120 percent of the area MFI;
- Upper-Income: greater than 120 percent of the area MFI.

The income distribution of the City of Kent based on 2010-2012 ACS Survey 3-Year Estimates is presented in *Table H.5*. In 2010, it is estimated that:

- Thirteen percent of the households earned less than 30 percent of AMI annually;
- Twelve percent earned less than 50 percent of AMI annually;
- Nineteen percent earned less than 80 percent of AMI annually;
- Eight percent earned less than 100 percent of AMI;
- Twelve percent earned less than 120 percent of AMI;
- Thirty-five percent of households earned over 120 percent of AMI.

TABLE H.5
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

INCOME AND BENEFITS (IN 2012 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)		
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	41,854	41,854
Less than \$10,000	2,470	5.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,757	4.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,706	11.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4,112	9.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,815	13.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8,134	19.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	5,681	13.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6,138	14.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2,095	5.0%
\$200,000 or more	946	2.3%
Median household income (dollars)	55,244	(X)
Mean household income (dollars)	67,853	(X)

With earnings	34,809	83.2%
Mean earnings (dollars)	68,397	(X)
With Social Security	8,814	21.1%
Mean Social Security income (dollars)	17,378	(X)
With retirement income	5,891	14.1%
Mean retirement income (dollars)	19,937	(X)
With Supplemental Security Income	2,409	5.8%
Mean Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	9,250	(X)
With cash public assistance income	2,442	5.8%
Mean cash public assistance income (dollars)	4,262	(X)
With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	8,571	20.5%
FAMILIES	27,902	27,902
Less than \$10,000	1,678	6.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	882	3.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2,712	9.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,047	7.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3,640	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,295	19.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	4,323	15.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	4,903	17.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,684	6.0%
\$200,000 or more	738	2.6%
Median family income (dollars)	63,523	(X)
Mean family income (dollars)	73,640	(X)
Per capita income (dollars)	24,206	(X)
NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS	13,952	13,952
Median nonfamily income (dollars)	39,174	(X)
Mean nonfamily income (dollars)	51,256	(X)
Median earnings for workers (dollars)	30,858	(X)
Median earnings for male full-time, year-round workers (dollars)	50,006	(X)
Median earnings for female full-time, year-round workers (dollars)	39,117	(X)

Data Source: ACS 2010-2012.

An (X) means that the estimate is not applicable or not available.

An (X) means that the estimate is not applicable or not available.

Goals and Policies

Goal H-1

Preserve and improve existing housing.

Policy H-1.1: Monitor and enforce building and property maintenance code standards in residential neighborhoods.

Policy H-1.2: Promote the repair, revitalization and rehabilitation of residential structures that have fallen into disrepair.

Policy H-1.3: Promote increased awareness among property owners and residents of the importance of property maintenance to long-term housing values and neighborhood quality.

Policy H-1.4: Provide a high quality of services to maintain the appearance of neighborhoods and quality of life of residents.

Policy H-1.5: Pursue comprehensive neighborhood preservation strategies for portions of the community that need reinvestment.

Policy H 1.6: Promote additional funding for rehabilitation, energy efficiency and weatherization by supporting legislation at the state and federal level to expand these programs.

Program 1 - Code Enforcement

The enforcement of existing property maintenance codes is a primary means to preserve housing and the quality of neighborhoods. The Code Enforcement Program is responsible for enforcing City ordinances affecting property maintenance, building conditions and other housing and neighborhood issues. The Code Enforcement Program handles approximately 65 complaints a month for these types of violations.

Program Objective: Continue to conduct inspections on a complaint basis through the City's Code Enforcement Program and increase outreach to homeowners and renters to work towards greater understanding of the importance of code compliance.

Program 2 - The Home Repair Program

The Home Repair Program will offer homeowners the opportunity to apply for small grants to complete improvement projects on their properties. The program provides assistance for very low income households, offering grants up to \$10,000 to allow residents to address code enforcement violations, health and safety concerns and energy efficiency. The grant program also provides funding to residents to complete exterior and interior home repairs as well as perform architectural modifications to achieve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance or reasonable accommodation for residents with disabilities.

Program Objective: Address property, structural and energy/water conservation improvements for low income homeowners in the City. The City anticipates that 80 projects will be assisted annually based on funding availability.

Program 3 - Monitor and Preserve Affordable Housing

The City will continue to keep an inventory of affordable housing units and promote, through the Housing and Human Services Division, the use of additional affordable housing assistance programs, as appropriate, to preserve existing affordable units that are at risk of converting to market-rate. The City will facilitate discussions between developers and local banks to meet their obligations pursuant to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) providing favorable financing to developers involved in projects designed to provide lower and moderate-income housing opportunities. Additionally the City will advocate for developers interested in rehabilitating affordable housing units with the Housing Finance Commission and King County Housing Finance program.

Program Objective: Maintain a list of affordable units throughout the City. The Housing and Human Services Division

will continue to pursue partnership opportunities with nonprofits to preserve and expand affordable housing in the City.

Program 4 – Energy Efficient Design

The City will review ordinances and recommend changes where necessary to encourage energy efficient housing design and practices that are consistent with state regulations. The City provides information on their website and will continue to periodically update their literature regarding energy conservation, including solar power, energy efficient insulation and subsidies available from utility companies, and encourage homeowners and landlords to incorporate these features into construction and remodeling projects. When possible the City will encourage energy conservation devices including, but not limited to lighting, water heater treatments and solar energy systems for all new and existing residential projects. The City will encourage maximum utilization of federal, state and local government programs, including the King County Home Weatherization Program and the City of Kent Energy Efficiency Program that are intended to help homeowners implement energy conservation measures. As part of the Home Repair Program, outlined above, residents can apply for loans to increase the energy efficiency of their home.

Program Objective: Maintain and distribute literature on energy conservation, including solar power, additional insulation and subsidies available from utility companies, and encourage homeowners and landlords to incorporate these features into construction and remodeling projects. Encourage energy conservation devices, including but not limited to lighting, water heater treatments and solar energy systems for all residential projects. Encourage maximum utilization of federal, state, and local government programs, such as the King County Weatherization Program, that assist homeowners in providing energy conservation measures. Continue to provide information on grant programs available through the City and encourage residents to use the programs to implement energy efficient design.

Goal H-2

Encourage a variety of housing types.

Policy H-2.1: Provide adequate sites and zoning to encourage and facilitate a range of housing to address the regional fair share allocation.

Policy H-2.2: Encourage infill development and recycling of land to provide adequate residential sites.

Policy H-2.3: Facilitate and encourage the development of affordable housing for seniors, large families and other identified special housing needs.

Policy H-2.4: Assist private and nonprofit developers in providing affordable housing to low-income residents and special needs groups.

Program 5 – Housing Opportunity Sites

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and zoning code provide for a variety of residential land uses to accommodate the City's targets as adopted in the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The zoning code includes provisions for flexible lot sizes, Planned Unit Development incentives, accessory dwelling units city-wide, as well as transit-oriented development standards for the Midway and Downtown Subareas. To encourage and facilitate the development of a variety of housing types, the City will provide information on housing opportunity sites identified in the Housing Element and any additional areas of the City to interested developers.

Program Objective: Continue to facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized sites through various outreach methods

to the development community. Provide information to interested developers and on the City's website about potential residential opportunity sites.

Goal H-3

Provide housing assistance where needed.

Policy H-3.1: Use public financial resources, as feasible, to support the provision of housing for lower income households, seniors and special needs groups.

Policy H-3.2: Provide rental assistance to address existing housing problems and provide homeownership assistance to expand housing opportunities.

Policy H-3.3: Support the preservation of multi-family units, government subsidized housing and other sources of affordable housing.

Policy H-3.4: Further public-private partnerships to develop, rehabilitate and maintain affordable housing.

Policy H-3.5: Consider investments in capital infrastructure projects that reduce private costs for the construction of affordable housing by nonprofit housing providers targeted to those making less than 30 percent AMI.

Program 6 - Section 8 Rental Assistance

The Section 8 program provides rent subsidies to very-low-income households who overpay for housing. Prospective renters secure housing from HUD-registered apartments that accept the certificates. HUD then pays the landlords the difference between what the tenant can afford (30 percent of their income) and the payment standard negotiated for the community. The City's Housing and Human Services Division keeps records on the number of households in Kent that participate in the Section 8 program either through project-based housing or the housing vouchers. On average, there are approximately 1,300 vouchers used in Kent and 757 project-based units. The Housing and Human Services Division regularly refers and provides general qualification and program information to interested individuals. While the City is not directly responsible for the administration of this program, staff can direct residents to the King County Housing Authority website and provide information on the program on the City website.

Program Objective: Continue to provide assistance to households through continued participation in the Section 8 program and encourage rental property owners to register their units with the Housing Authority. The Housing and Human Services Division will continue to monitor the number of residents accessing the program and units available for rent.

Goal H-4

Remove governmental constraints.

Policy H-4.1: Review development fees annually to ensure that fees and exactions do not unduly constrain the production and maintenance of housing.

Policy H-4.2: Provide for streamlined, timely and coordinated processing of residential projects to minimize holding costs and encourage housing production.

Policy H-4.3: Utilize density bonuses, fee reductions or other regulatory incentives to minimize the effect of governmental constraints on housing affordability, particularly in neighborhoods with proximity to transit, employment or educational opportunities.

Policy H-4.4: Utilize the Housing Authority as a tool to provide sites and assist in the development of affordable housing.

Policy H-4.5: Explore collaborations with other South King County jurisdictions to assess housing needs, coordinate funding, increase capacity and find cost efficiencies.

Program 7 - Remove Development Constraints

City staff will periodically review the development standards for residential zones to identify standards that may constrain the development of housing opportunities for all income levels and housing for special groups, such as disabled individuals. The City of Kent is committed to working with developers to build diverse housing, which may require modifications to constraining standards. Staff will continue to, on a case by case basis, identify ways that standards can be relaxed if it is determined that such requirements are in any way impeding the development of affordable housing or housing for disabled residents. The City will also continue to provide development standard modifications, streamlined processing for applications related to the creation of housing opportunities for all income levels and will offer fee modifications for projects proposing affordable units that are required to apply for variations to the existing development standards.

Program Objective: Review development standards annually, to ensure that the development of lower income housing can occur.

Program 8 - Planned Unit Developments

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process provides developers with the opportunity to plan creative projects that are not constrained by the literal application of zoning codes. The PUD application process allows for flexibility in site development standards and encourages innovative and imaginative land use concepts. The standards of the base zone apply in Planned Unit Developments; however, density, setbacks and open space requirements are calculated on a project-wide basis.

Program Objective: Continue to encourage Planned Unit Developments as a means to provide affordable housing through creative land use techniques. Inform developers of the density incentives under the program.

Program 9 - Streamline Processing

The City continues to monitor permit processing times to ensure the fastest possible turnaround for applications. The City modified the application packet to simplify and streamline the application process. The City has also been digitizing property data to provide more reliable information to the public in a more cost-effective manner using KIVA permit software. This includes zoning, general plan, land use, property owner information, prior planning cases, county assessor maps and digital aerial photographs for each parcel. The City's Comprehensive Plan Land Use map and Zoning Districts map have also been digitized using enhanced geographic information system technology.

Program Objective: Continue to monitor permit processing times and investigate ways to streamline the process. Continue to digitize information including building permits and the zoning code.

Program 10 - Prioritize Housing Program Activities

The City prioritizes housing program activities to address identified housing needs. Specifically, priority has been given to use of rehabilitation grant monies to maintain Kent's stable yet aging housing stock. The City uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to assist in improvements to the City's existing housing stock. The City recognizes that housing priorities shift over time as housing needs change. The characteristics of the City's current housing need have been identified through the housing needs assessment, specifically the analysis of the special needs groups. Based on the needs analysis in the Housing Element, there is a need to provide affordable rental units for large families and housing for those at or above 120 percent of the median income. The City will also prioritize its program activities to meet the needs of other special needs groups, including extremely-low-income households and people with disabilities including developmental disabilities.

Program Objective: Identify housing needs and prioritize housing program activities to meet those needs through annual updates to the City's Consolidated Plan.

Program 11 - Planning and Development Fees

The City conducts annual internal reviews of planning and development fees to ensure that the fees are not excessive and are appropriate to cover the cost of services provided. Kent also streamlines the permitting process for residential projects, to minimize the holding and labor costs assumed by the project applicant.

Program Objective: Continue to conduct annual reviews of planning and development fees.

Goal H-5

Promote equal housing opportunities.

Policy H-5.1: Encourage the use of barrier-free architecture in new housing developments.

Program 12 - Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities

Pursuant to the Washington Law Against Discrimination, RCW 49.60.030, the City of Kent is obligated to remove potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement or development of housing for all income levels and for persons with disabilities. The Fair Housing Act, as amended in 1988, requires that cities and counties provide reasonable accommodation to rules, policies, practices and procedures where such accommodation may be necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal housing opportunities. Reasonable accommodation provides a basis for residents with disabilities to request flexibility in the application of land use and zoning regulations or, in some instances, even a waiver from the local government of certain restrictions or requirements to ensure equal access to housing opportunities. Cities and counties are required to consider requests for accommodations related to housing for people with disabilities and provide the accommodation when it is determined to be “reasonable” based on fair housing laws and case law interpreting the statutes.

The City of Kent encourages and promotes accessible housing for persons with disabilities. This includes the retrofitting of existing dwelling units and enforcement of the State accessibility standards for new residential construction. The City is committed to assisting residents in need of reasonable accommodation and offers financial assistance through the Home Repair Program, and will continue to direct eligible residents to apply for ADA services.

Applicants can apply for grants to complete improvement projects that remove constraints to their living facilities. In general, City staff takes into account the provisions of the ADA in the review and approval of housing projects and grants modifications and deviations from the Municipal Code to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

Program Objective: Administer the Home Repair Program to assist disabled households with architectural modifications to their homes and continue to implement the provisions of the ADA.

Related Information:

Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development

