

HOUSING ELEMENT

CP.215. Issues and Conclusions.

1. Vacancy Rates.

Astoria's housing vacancy rates are at an extremely low level. Real estate agents and others with insight into local housing conditions cite the following factors as at least partially causing the lack of housing starts in the 1980's and resulting "tight housing market":

- a. Economic trends and governmental policies on national, regional, and local levels.
- b. The high cost of land and construction relative to market values for both sales and rentals.

Other factors contributing to the low vacancy rate include a shift in household size, resulting in more single-person and single-parent households; the conversion of older houses occupied by several persons or families into single-family housing; an upswing in the economy and modest population growth; the demolition of deteriorating rental housing; and a succession of "boom bust" employers.

Smaller households, older households, and higher housing costs are expanding markets for "alternative housing types" and reducing the demand for traditional large-lot, single-family development. Housing types which will see greater demand include smaller-lot, single-family developments, manufactured housing, clustered single-family housing, two-family housing, condominiums, and zero-lot line houses. Some of these trends are already evident in the form of development and development proposals in Astoria such as the Mill Pond residential development.

North coast trends in second homes and short term rentals reached an average of 20.5% in 2007 with a State average of 2.5%. Astoria was well below this with 1.9%; however, this number is expected to increase over the next 20 years. Housing stock needed to accommodate this trend could change the amount of residentially zoned land needed to accommodate growth through 2027. The Buildable Lands Inventory dated April 2011 addresses this issue in depth and recommends that the City review and revise the assumptions made in the Inventory after the 2010 US Census results are finalized.

[CP.215.1 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]2.

Demolition Versus Rehabilitation.

Approximately 75% of Astoria's housing stock was built prior to 1959, according to the 2000 US Census of Population. Many of these dwellings have been restored; however, there is still a substantial number that are in disrepair. In the past, the City conducted a demolition program to remove dangerous and dilapidated buildings. Several buildings were renovated because of the threat of demolition, which would probably have been allowed to deteriorate otherwise. In the 1980's and 1990's, the Public Works Department managed the demolition program which was ultimately suspended. In July 1994, the City of Astoria, Community Development Department, assumed the administration and enforcement of the building inspection program for property within the City limits of Astoria, excluding the electrical permits program. The City has continued with the program since that date. Management of the dangerous buildings/demolition program is conducted through the building inspection program. In 2011, the City adopted a Property Maintenance/Derelict Building Code to address the problem.

[CP.215.2 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

3. Rehabilitation Program.

A housing rehabilitation program is needed to provide low and moderate income homeowners and landlords with funds to renovate older structures. Grant funds are available through the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department for rehabilitation of low and moderate income units. The City has established a revolving loan fund which continues to provide low cost monies to low income property owners in targeted areas, such as historic districts, or areas with a high incidence of older housing.

[CP.215.3 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

4. Housing for the Elderly.

As Astoria's elderly population grows, it is likely that additional housing designed for older people will be needed. This includes subsidized apartment projects, such as the John Jacob Astor Apartments (342 14th Street), Owens-Adair Apartments (1508 Exchange Street), Astoria Gateway Apartments (2775 Steam Whistle Way), and Meriwether Village (101 Madison Avenue) projects, small residential care facilities throughout the community, and larger congregate care housing projects. The Northwest Oregon Housing Authority is the agency designated to provide HUD Section 8 subsidies and administer other housing support programs. However, other organizations, including the Clatsop County Housing Authority, the Clatsop Community Action Agency, and for-profit corporations, have been involved in providing low cost housing in Clatsop County. Astoria's topography makes development of housing for the elderly difficult, because of the need for stairs and elevators. It is likely that elderly housing development will be concentrated in proximity to the downtown area

where services are available within walking distance, and where the terrain is relatively flat.

[CP.215.4 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

5. Low and Moderate Income Housing.

Because of the large number of older buildings in Astoria, there is great potential for reuse of existing structures for housing. The John Jacob Astor Apartments and Owens-Adair Apartments projects are both examples of successful renovations. The City could encourage this trend by working with developers, applying for grant funds, and looking for ways of fostering both historic preservation and provision of low cost housing. Organizations, including the Clatsop County Housing Authority, the Clatsop Community Action Agency, Northwest Oregon Housing Authority, for-profit corporations, and other local and regional non-profit groups and public agencies have been involved in providing low cost housing in Clatsop County. County-wide efforts are being made to address the need for workforce housing on the entire North coast.

[CP.215.5 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

6. Manufactured Housing.

The City is required by ORS 197.202 to plan for manufactured homes on individual lots in areas planned and zoned for single-family use. The City has allowed manufactured dwellings in all residential neighborhoods under certain criteria.

[CP.215.6 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

7. Deficit of Residential Buildable Lands.

The Buildable Lands Inventory completed in April 2011 identified a deficit of 15.54 net acres of residential buildable lands. In order to address this deficit, OAR 660-24-0050 requires that the City amend the Plan to satisfy the need deficiency, either by increasing the development capacity of land already inside the boundary or by expanding the UGB, or both.

[CP.215.7 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

[Section CP.215 deleted and amended by Ordinance 91-12, 6-17-91]

CP.218. Housing Goals.

1. Provide opportunities for development of a wide variety of housing types and price ranges within the Urban Growth Boundary.

2. Maintain and rehabilitate the community's existing housing stock.
3. Develop housing efficiently to minimize environmental impacts and provide public services in a cost effective manner.

[CP.218.1 to CP.218.3 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

CP.220. Housing Policies.

1. Maintain attractive and livable residential neighborhoods, for all types of housing.

[CP.220.1 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

2. Provide residential areas with services and facilities necessary for safe, healthful, and convenient urban living.

[CP.220.2 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

3. Develop residential areas in ways which are consistent with the geographic features so as not to create or trigger geologic hazards. New subdivisions or housing developments should cause minimal earth disturbances and removal of trees.

[CP.220.3 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

4. Encourage planned unit and clustered developments that preserve open space, reduce infrastructure and construction costs, and promote variety in neighborhoods.

[CP.220.4 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

5. Encourage low and moderate income housing throughout the City, not concentrated in one area.

[CP.220.5 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

6. Protect neighborhoods from incompatible uses, including large scale commercial, industrial, and public uses or activities.

[CP.220.6 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

7. Permit home occupations which generate minimal impacts as an outright use in most cases.

City of Astoria
Comprehensive Plan

CP.220

[CP.220.7 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

8. Protect Astoria's historic neighborhoods as significant assets of the City through the Historic Preservation Ordinance, and other City actions that protect individual structures and neighborhoods. Wherever possible, renovate existing structures in lieu of demolition or new construction.

[CP.220.8 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

9. Protect buildings recognized by the Historic Landmarks Commission as having historic significance. Balance this goal with the City's ability and authority to demolish dangerous buildings through its nuisance abatement ordinance.

[CP.220.9 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

10. *[Section CP.220.10 deleted by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]*

11. Support the efforts of the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority (NOHA), Clatsop County Housing Authority, Clatsop Community Action, and other local and regional nonprofit groups and public agencies to provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income persons in the community, and for special needs groups such as the elderly and handicapped.

[CP.220.11 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

12. Encourage the development of the elderly and handicapped housing in the Downtown area, where the terrain is level and services are available within walking distance. Encourage renovation of the second floors of commercial buildings in the Downtown.

[CP.220.12 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

13. In accordance with State law, make special efforts to find areas for manufactured dwellings, possibly through the sale of publicly owned land.

[CP.220.13 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

14. Nonresidential uses, such as public works, churches, schools and fire stations should recognize and respect the character and quality of the area in which they are located and be so designed. Explore alternative sites when such a use places a significant impact on the area.

[CP.220.14 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

15. Ensure that multi-family developments in primarily single-family neighborhoods are designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, in terms of scale, bulk, use of materials and landscaping.

- [CP.220.15 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]*
16. Place public utilities such as power, cable TV, and telephone underground in new housing developments. Design above ground facilities such as transformer yards, sewer pumping stations and similar activities to blend in with the residential areas in which they are located.

[CP.220.16 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

17. *[Section CP.220.17 amended by Ordinance 98-04, 5-4-98; deleted by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]*

18. Zone adequate land to meet identified future housing needs for a broad range of housing types, including single-family attached and detached homes, manufactured homes, two-family dwellings, and multi-family dwellings.

[CP.220.18 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

19. Encourage the use of sustainable development and building materials including use of energy efficient materials and design principles.

[CP.220.19 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

20. Allow for, encourage, and support the development of housing units in conjunction with commercial development (e.g. housing located above commercial uses) to provide diversity and security in commercial areas and a range of housing options.

[CP.220.20 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

21. Regularly update the City's inventory of buildable land (ideally every five years) and use it to both identify housing development opportunities and assess the ability to meet future housing needs. If growth is occurring at a different rate than previously predicted, work with the County to update the County's coordinated population forecast and the City's housing needs analysis.

[CP.220.21 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

22. Implement strategies to reduce over-dependence or reliance on a small number of lots or landowners to meet the majority of the City's residential land needs.

[CP.220.22 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

[Section CP.220 deleted and amended by Ordinance 91-12, 6-17-91]

CP.223. Housing Tools and Actions.

1. The City should apply for Community Development Block Grant funds to continue the housing renovation program for low and moderate income households, both for homeowners and renters. A portion of these funds could be targeted toward historic districts.
2. Work with the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) or an interested developer to identify funding and location for manufactured home development.
3. After the 2010 US Census data is complete, and periodically thereafter, review and revise assumptions made in the housing needs analysis and resulting projections based on updated data.
4. Explore opportunities to exchange large parcels within the UGB for equivalent, alternative areas outside the UGB if areas within the current UGB are not practical future development areas.
5. Revise zoning requirements to accommodate a variety of housing types as identified in the City's Housing Needs Analysis.
6. Explore and provide information about opportunities to consolidate buildable land where it will promote more efficient development.
7. Work with the development community to ensure creation of new housing that meets identified future needs through the policies and strategies identified in this Plan.
8. Monitor public facility capacity to ensure that proposed new residential developments can be adequately served by water, sewer, transportation, drainage and other public facilities and services, including police, fire and parks.
9. Update the City's Development Code to expand provisions for accessory dwelling units.
10. Consider waiving or deferring City fees such as development fees or system development charges for affordable housing projects that meet defined criteria and result in permanently affordable housing.
11. Support mechanisms and organizations that help reduce the cost of or leverage other monies to develop affordable housing such as community land trusts, housing trust funds or similar entities.
12. Consider the use of density bonuses or other incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing, consistent with other housing and community goals.

13. Work with other public agencies and/or other organizations to provide or assist in paying for technical assistance for housing projects targeted to households with low or moderate incomes developed by nonprofit organizations.
14. Work with State and Federal agencies, County and local government, as well as other organizations to acquire and bank vacant or underutilized properties, including urban reserve lands, for the future development of housing affordable to households with low and very low incomes.
15. Consider adopting an ordinance requiring replacement of affordable housing in conjunction with closure of manufactured home parks.
16. Negotiate agreements to develop housing affordable to residents with low or moderate incomes on lands to be annexed.
17. Advocate for National and State funding from the National Housing Trust Fund, Oregon Housing Trust Fund, and Lenders Tax Credit.
18. Work proactively with owners of large vacant or underutilized properties to identify opportunities and develop plans to meet future housing needs, including provisions for ensuring a mix of housing types and price ranges in these areas.
19. Conduct sub-area, neighborhood or specific area planning processes to identify opportunities to meet future housing needs.

[CP.223.1 to CP.223.19 added by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

CP.225. Housing Implementation Recommendations.

1. Building Inspection/Code Enforcement.

The City has contracted with an independent firm to act as the City's Building Official. The City should have a Building official who could serve as both the Building Official and the Code Enforcement Officer. This person could be responsible for the enforcement of all building related City Ordinances, including a housing code, a dangerous buildings ordinance, nuisance ordinance, and certain aspects of the Development Code, such as signs and flood hazards. A Building official could also administer the Property Maintenance/Derelict Building program, and any City-sponsored rehabilitation or receivership programs.

In 2011, the City hired a full-time employee as Building Official to administer the programs as noted above.

[CP.225.1 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

2. Housing Rehabilitation Program.

The City should apply for housing rehabilitation funds from the State of Oregon Community Development block Grant Program, in order to continue the revolving loan fund for low and moderate income homeowners whose structures are in need of repair. These loans are typically \$10,000 to \$12,500, with no interest, and are made available to low and moderate income home owners. This revolving loan fund could be administered by the City or could be contracted to another agency, or a private lending institution. Currently in 2011, the City contracts with Community Action Team to administer the program. These programs sometimes are designed to provide low cost rehabilitation funds to rental properties. An agreement must be signed by the rental property owner that would commit them to maintaining rents at an affordable level for low and moderate income renters for a certain period of time. The State provides funding for administration of the program.

[CP.225.2 amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]

3. Historic Properties Rehabilitation Program.

The City should establish a revolving loan fund for historic properties which would provide low cost funds for the restoration of the exterior of historic properties, possibly using a portion of the revolving loan fund. This could be available for both residential and commercial properties in historic districts and for individually designated historic structures. Funds for this program could possibly come from the State Historic Preservation Office, under its Certified Local Government program, foundations, or local lending institutions. The Oregon Downtown Development Association has provided assistance to some cities for similar programs in downtown areas. This type of program should involve the Astoria Downtown Development Association. One focus of a downtown program could be to renovate the unused second floors of commercial buildings for residential units. A substantial amount of second floor space in the downtown is currently unused. The State has a Rental Rehabilitation Program which could fund renovation of this space for low and moderate cost housing. If subsidies were targeted to this area, building owners could be convinced to invest in renovation and restoration. This would be particularly beneficial if the downtown area receives Historic District status.

4. South Slope Housing Development Program.

The City should plan and develop City-owned property in the south slope area. This should be done with substantial thought given to the density, type, and mixture of housing, including the possibility of multi-family and mobile home development. The infrastructure could be installed through the use of a Local Improvement District (LID) or a loan from the Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA). Alternatively, the City could contract with a development firm, who would be responsible for the planning and development based on City

City of Astoria
Comprehensive Plan

CP.230

specifications. Any development in the area should be carried out with respect for the terrain, and should provide substantial amounts of open space. A complete geologic analysis should be done prior to planning and development.

[Section CP.225 deleted and amended by Ordinance 91-12, 6-17-91]

CP.230. Conclusion.

In summary, Astoria is in a position to undertake a comprehensive housing program with the steps outlined above. However, it will require a coordinating staff person and the cooperation of the Public Works/Engineering, Community Development, and Finance Departments. The Historic landmarks Commission should also take an active role in the program. If adopted, the City should form a working group composed of staff members of each affected department to coordinate the program. Administration of a new housing program could be effectively coordinated by the group.

[Section CP.230 deleted and amended by Ordinance 91-12, 6-17-91; amended by Ordinance 11-07, 7-5-11]