



HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT
consortium

HDC Position on Comprehensive Plan Updates

Local Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) Housing Elements, required under the state Growth Management Act (GMA), establish cities' visions for housing development, preservation and new construction over the proceeding 20 years. Strong Housing Elements call attention to local affordable housing needs, and they establish a work plan of the policy and land-use tools that the city commits to considering, analyzing, and implementing over the next two decades to address those needs. The Housing Development Consortium (HDC) has engaged in Comp Plan advocacy over many years with success in advocating for strong affordable housing policies. Future advocacy will still be needed to implement the policies adopted in Comp Plans since the GMA lacks a strong enforcement mechanism.

HDC's Position on Comprehensive Plan Updates¹ is:

- **HDC supports policies that create safe, healthy, affordable housing choices in equitable communities of opportunity.** *For example, cities should encourage preservation and new development of housing throughout the city that addresses the needs of all economic segments, including underserved populations such as households earning less than 30% of the area median income, older adults, and homeless individuals and families.*
- **HDC supports policies that create partnerships across sector (public, private, and non-profit), across jurisdiction, and across level of government (local, state, and federal).** *For example, cities should collaborate with other jurisdictions and organizations to assess housing needs, coordinate funding, and preserve and create affordable housing opportunities.*
- **HDC supports policies that increase public funding for affordable housing development and preservation.** *For example, cities should explore all options for locally financing affordable housing.*
- **HDC supports policies that provide development incentives to leverage the power of the private market to meet the house needs of modest wage workers.** *For example, cities should provide density bonuses, parking reductions, multi-family tax exemptions, fee waivers and permit expediting to encourage the development of housing affordable at below market-rate, for the greatest number of homes at the deepest level of affordability possible.*
- **HDC supports policies that improve measurement, monitoring and reporting activities to track progress in addressing affordable housing needs and provide accountability.**
- **HDC will advocate for these policies at every opportunity and will mobilize its member organizations, local residents and others in support.**

¹ The following policies are further explained on Page 2.

HDC Supports Policies That...

Create Safe, Healthy, Affordable Housing Choices in Equitable Communities of Opportunity: *All people should be able to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home in a community of opportunity.*

- Promote equitable downtowns, growth centers, transit stations, and other neighborhoods of opportunity that include a mix of transportation, employment, and housing opportunities for people of all income levels;
- Promote a variety of housing types and options in all neighborhoods in the city, particularly in proximity to transit, employment, and educational opportunities;
- Encourage preservation AND new development of housing throughout the city that addresses the needs of all economic segments, including underserved populations such as households earning less than 30% of the area median income, older adults, and homeless individuals;
- Encourage homeownership choices affordable to households earning less than 80% AMI;
- In all neighborhoods, particularly near employment, education, and transit opportunities, encourage and support funding and permitting for the development of housing affordable to low-income households;
- Promote use of vacant, surplus land for affordable housing, particularly near transit, employment, and education opportunities.

Create Partnerships: *Providing safe, healthy, affordable housing for all people requires working across sector (public, private, and non-profit), across jurisdiction, and across level of government (local, state, and federal)*

- Encourage, assist, and partner with non-profit organizations that construct, manage, and provide emergency, transitional, and permanent affordable housing and related services;
- Support public and private funding for affordable housing at the local, state, and federal level;
- Collaborate with other jurisdictions and organizations to assess housing needs, coordinate funding, and preserve and create affordable housing opportunities;
- Develop relationships with owners of privately owned multi-family housing; encourage their participation in voucher programs; and partner with them to preserve and enhance safe, healthy, affordable housing options;
- Support and encourage legislation at the county, state, and federal level that promotes affordable housing goals;
- Work regionally to increase availability of public and private resources for affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

Increase Public Funding of Affordable Housing Development & Preservation: *Providing safe, healthy, affordable housing for all households, particularly those with special needs and those earning the lowest incomes (less than 30% of the area median income), requires public subsidies.*

- Explore the feasibility of creating a City or regional housing trust fund (*non-East*);
- Explore all options for locally financing affordable housing (*non-East*);
- Increase funding for affordable housing;
- Create a new, dedicated funding source for affordable housing trust fund (*East*);
- Work with other jurisdictions to jointly fund affordable housing (*South*);
- Require long-term affordability (at least 50 years) for any housing publicly supported.

Provide Development Incentives: *With appropriately crafted development incentives, the private market can meet the affordable housing needs of modest wage, working families without public dollars.*

- Explore the use of (*South*) or Provide (*East*) density bonuses, parking reductions, multi-family tax exemptions, fee waivers and permit expediting to encourage the development of housing affordable at below market-rate, for the greatest number of homes at the deepest level of affordability possible;
- Review and expand existing incentives;
- Consider mandating provision of affordable housing in light rail station areas and when providing increased development potential (*Light Rail stations*).

Other:

- Recognize the needs of homeless families and individuals in the Comprehensive Plan Housing Analysis and Inventory;
- Avoid maximum densities;
- Minimize zoning and other regulations that support high-end, single-family detached housing;
- Avoid expensive design regulations that increase the cost of housing construction;
- Sponsor and/or promote public education on low-income and special needs housing in order to engender community awareness and support.
- Measure, Monitor, and Report progress in addressing affordable housing needs.