

## ELEMENT 9: HOUSING

**VISION** Housing in our region traditionally has been shaped by market factors, including consumer preferences, land availability, and household size. In the future, the same housing issues which historically have concerned the nation will present both a challenge and opportunity for our region.



*Single-family homes offer mountain vistas and spaciousness.*

The history of the region has been influenced by Spanish, Mexican, and Territorial periods, each adding its own flavor to the local architecture. All of the local jurisdictions encourage appropriate southwestern architectural styles and materials best suited to the unique natural setting of the region. New and existing technologies and site design will be encouraged to promote energy efficiency. The *Regional Vision* incorporates high quality design which evokes a sense of place, displays an appropriate scale and intensity, and creates a positive visual identity and image for each community.



*Apartments are convenient to employment centers, shopping, and recreation.*

The *Regional Vision* promotes and encourages healthy, identifiable neighborhoods whose character and lifestyle are strengthened by infill and rehabilitation measures and by preservation of the existing housing stock. Public programs and policies in the region focus on the protection of vital historic neighborhoods. Opportunities for the conversion of vacant and underutilized structures to viable dwellings will be created. Additional opportunities and incentives for well-designed infill development of all densities, appropriately integrated with compatible land uses, will be encouraged. Infill strategies will complement the vision of preserving open spaces throughout the metropolitan area.



*Clustered town homes conserve natural open space and offer carefree lifestyles.*

The *Regional Vision* plans and provides for safe, affordable housing which meets the needs of the communities which comprise the region. These communities are committed to accomplishing all they reasonably can to ensure an ample mixture of available housing and to address the special housing needs of the elderly, people with physical and emotional disabilities, the homeless, and those requiring group and foster care. The local governments, in partnership with the private sector, will work toward the provision of assisted housing for persons and families of low and moderate income within the region.

### **Livable Tucson Goals**

#### **Infill and Reinvestment, Not Urban Sprawl**

Includes well-planned growth, the management of sprawl, and development in the city's core, rather than on the periphery.

### **People-Oriented Neighborhoods**

Includes designing new neighborhoods and investing in old neighborhoods to promote a mix of commercial and residential uses, a pedestrian focus, landscaping and aesthetics, and interaction among residents.

### **Reduced Poverty and Greater Equality of Opportunity**

Includes the fair distribution of resources, creating opportunities to overcome poverty, and reducing social and economic inequality.

### **Safe Neighborhoods**

Includes how safe people feel in their neighborhoods, crime, policing, and risk perceptions.

**Introduction** The Housing Element identifies policies that Tucson uses, along with the *Consolidated Plan*, to address and prioritize all of the housing needs and issues in the community.

In 1990, the federal government adopted the National Affordable Housing Act. This legislation created some new federal housing programs and consolidated planning and reporting requirements for several programs which are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Beginning in 1995, cities, counties, and states were required to develop a five-year *Consolidated Plan* and update it each year with an annual strategy for investing funds. The five-year *Plan* contains a description of community needs, goals, and priorities in the areas of affordable housing, human services, public facilities, and other programs designed to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents of the community.

The basic premises that led to the *Consolidated Plan* also form the basis for most of the policies in the Housing Element of the *General Plan*. While the *Consolidated Plan* is updated annually, the Housing Element is intended to provide long-term guidance for meeting the city's housing needs.

The policies in the Housing Element focus on supporting effective programs that develop and/or maintain housing in the community and enlisting diverse funding sources to promote an adequate supply of affordable housing. Implementation of the policies in this element and the strategies laid out in the *Consolidated Plan* would expand affordable housing opportunities and encourage development that benefits the community as a whole.

Most of the policies within the Housing Element are derived from the overarching themes of the *Consolidated Plan*. The element also includes policies that were adopted as part of other *General Plan* elements, such as the Land Use Element and the Community Character and Design Element. These policies were included to establish consistency throughout the document. The element also contains new policies that are not included in other adopted City policy documents. The new policies include CP 15.3.3.A (provision of alternative transportation in

low-income areas); CP 15.3.3.B (provision of safety services in low-income areas); CP 15.6 and CP 15.6.4 (designation of new units as affordable housing); CP 15.3.3 (planning and upgrade of affordable developments); and CP 15.5 and supporting policies (home ownership).

**Background** Providing safe, decent housing that is not overcrowded and will not overburden a household financially is critical for the well-being of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and the community as a whole. Tucson's growing population will require an increased emphasis on affordable housing in the future. A number of factors will combine in the coming years to increase demand for affordable housing: 1) approximately one-half of Tucson's households are by definition low income; 2) almost one-half of housing units in Tucson will be 50 years old or older by the year 2010; 3) Tucson is experiencing a high rate of population growth; 4) Tucson's economy is and will continue to be primarily based in trade and services, which are associated with lower-wage jobs; and 5) housing needs for the elderly will increase tremendously over the next several decades as the baby boom generation moves into the retirement years.

Population trends are important indicators of future housing needs. Some important population trends include increases over time in target subpopulations, including the elderly, near homeless, single-parent households, and nonfamily households. These growing population segments, which have historically used affordable housing, show the need for a variety of affordable housing options.

Approximately 56,000 housing units in Tucson (26 percent of total housing stock) are 50 years old or older. Many are in need of maintenance and plumbing and electrical upgrades. By 2010, the number of units 50 years old or older is expected to top 87,000. These units are of concern because they were constructed in the post-war years when the housing boom resulted in modest housing construction quality that does not meet today's building standards and because older housing units fall in the affordable housing range. Increasing the value of these housing units by upgrading them could price them out of the affordable housing range.

Affordable housing is defined as housing that does not overburden a family financially and that is safe, decent, and not crowded. A family is considered housing cost burdened when housing costs exceed 30 percent of their annual income and is considered severely burdened when housing costs exceed 50 percent of their annual income. Many families that spend more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing must sacrifice basic goods and services, such as food, clothing, utilities, transportation, health care, or child care. Providing affordable housing options frees up resources that families can use to improve their lives through better nutrition, health care, job training, and education.

The following policies support standards and programs for: elimination of substandard dwelling conditions; improvement of housing quality, variety, and affordability; and provision of identification, analysis, and forecasts of current and future housing needs to promote adequate sites for housing. This element makes equal provision for the housing needs

of all segments of the community, regardless of race, color, creed, or economic level.

## ***Decent, Safe, Sanitary Housing***

***Background*** An adequate supply of decent, safe, and sanitary housing is necessary for the well-being of the community. A number of factors can cause residential units to become unsafe or unhealthy to live in. Examples include lack of maintenance, unsafe electrical wiring, fire, flooding, and severe infestation. Preventing these problems from occurring and addressing them when they do occur protect the safety and welfare of the residents and assist in meeting housing needs throughout the city.

### ***Policy 1: Promote housing that is decent, safe, and sanitary.***

#### ***Supporting Policies***

1.1 Continue to maintain an up-to-date building code that is consistent with the national uniform building codes.

1.2 Enforce applicable building and safety codes.

1.3 Devise strategies for ensuring that mobile homes, including rentals and owner-occupied units, are in compliance with applicable building and safety codes.

1.4 Explore funding sources to assist property owners in bringing housing units into compliance with applicable building and safety codes, so that the costs of upgrades do not price the units out of the range of current residents.

1.5 Seek out programs that will assist low- and moderate-income residents transition to a safer unit when rehabilitation of the existing unit is not feasible or when rehabilitation will make the unit unaffordable to the current residents.

## ***Existing Housing Stock***

***Background*** About a quarter of the city's housing stock is more than 50 years old. Many of these units were built to modest standards in the post-war housing boom. Maintenance of housing units is crucial, particularly with so many housing units about to reach the end of their period of planned economic usefulness. It is also important that housing improvements, such as additions, comply with applicable code requirements to ensure their safety and habitability.

### ***Policy 2: Maximize existing housing resources in the community.***

#### ***Supporting Policies***

2.1 Encourage and support federal, state, local, and private programs that provide resources for those in need of safe affordable housing.

2.2 Strive to eliminate substandard housing units by conserving and upgrading the existing housing stock.

**Actions**

2.2.A Continue the City's program to identify, inventory, and monitor substandard rental units and expand the program to include owner-occupied units.

2.2.B In order to maintain existing housing stock in a safe and habitable condition, enforce compliance where code violations exist in residential structures.

2.2.C Encourage the continuation and expansion of programs that provide funds, labor, and/or materials for the upgrade of deteriorating housing units and for the maintenance of units at risk for deterioration.

2.2.D Promote the continued maintenance and enhancement of residential areas, in terms of housing and public facilities, and develop new sources of funding to meet these needs.

2.2.E Seek cooperation from local lending institutions in pursuing low-interest loan programs targeted to rehabilitation of and improvements to older residential structures.

**Supporting Policy**

2.3 Continue to work with a variety of entities in the community, including Pima County, state and federal government, nonprofit organizations, private developers, and lending institutions, to increase affordable housing opportunities. Acknowledge that these partnerships, and the role of each partner, are vital to a healthy community.

**Housing Assistance  
Prioritization**

**Background**

The housing assistance needs of the community change over time. Periodic reevaluation of housing assistance needs ensures that the City's efforts are targeted to meet desired outcomes. In addition to reassessing community needs, periodic reevaluations present the opportunity to explore additional funding mechanisms for new programs as well as those that are being continued.

**Policy 3: Prioritize housing assistance needs based on factors such as the needs of the community, the availability of funding, ongoing housing programs that already have funding, and market conditions.**

**Supporting Policies**

3.1 Aim resources toward meeting the needs determined most vital in the community, as detailed in the most recently updated version of the *Consolidated Plan*.

3.2 Reevaluate the priorities of housing assistance needs periodically and redirect funding as appropriate, based on any changes in prioritization.

3.3 Seek funding for nonhousing community development needs, such as public facilities, infrastructure improvements, public service, accessibility, etc., when such projects/programs would make the affected neighborhood a safer and more affordable area in which to live.

**Actions**

3.3.A Increase alternative transportation opportunities and encourage alternative transportation opportunities in new affordable housing developments.

3.3.B Encourage the use of energy efficient design in new affordable housing and support programs to increase the energy efficiency of older residential units.

3.3.C Provide increased opportunities for the development of accessible housing in order to provide a balanced supply of accessible housing units.

3.3.D Provide appropriate incentives for infill development.

**Housing Mix and Services**

**Background** Tucson is a diverse community. Housing stock and related services should reflect this diversity so that suitable housing and support services are available to all segments of Tucson’s population.

**Policy 4: Continue to coordinate plans for the provision of a variety of types of quality housing and related services that include neighborhood revitalization, owner-occupied rehabilitation, home buyer opportunities, rental housing, transitional housing, and emergency housing.**

**Supporting Policies**

4.1 Continue to direct funding for affordable housing and related programs toward the prioritized needs as identified in the most recently updated version of the Five-Year Strategy of the *Consolidated Plan*.

4.2 Continue to direct funding for affordable housing and related programs toward the specific programs/projects as identified in the most recently updated version of the Annual Plan of the *Consolidated Plan*.

4.3 Maintain and expand the City’s consortium relationship with Pima County.

4.4 Continue to coordinate with other jurisdictions within the region to implement these plans, as appropriate.

4.5 Support a mix of housing types and opportunities throughout the city to meet the diverse needs of residents.

**Actions**

4.5.A Encourage housing as one of the uses in and adjacent to regional and community activity centers in

*order to support nonresidential activities and minimize auto use and air pollution.*

*4.5.B Promote increased housing density and compatible residential infill in a range of prices and housing products to accommodate changing family arrangements, market conditions, and demographics.*

*4.5.C Revise, as appropriate, zoning, building, and housing codes to reduce development costs not associated with public health, safety, or environmental protection and community design compatibility.*

*4.5.D Encourage developments to provide a mix of residential densities and housing types, provided the overall density meets applicable criteria.*

*4.5.E Investigate ways to apply density bonuses and other development incentives for residential development or redevelopment projects that preserve significant cultural or natural features and provide enhanced open space areas.*

**Supporting Policy** 4.6 Support new residential development and conservation/rehabilitation efforts that are in conformance with and further the goals and objectives of the City's specific and Planned Area Development plans (see Specific Plan Map).

### Home Ownership

**Background** Home ownership plays a significant role in developing strong neighborhoods and a sense of community pride. The City currently supports programs that make purchasing a home a realistic option for low- and moderate-income residents, including those with a fixed income.

**Policy 5: Promote home ownership opportunities for all economic sectors of the population.**

**Supporting Policies**

5.1 Support financial assistance programs that serve to increase home ownership for low- and moderate-income residents.

5.2 Promote programs that offer counseling on the responsibility of home ownership and debt management, home loan information, and technical assistance to potential home owners from all segments of the population.

5.3 Encourage and support programs that provide a mix of services to elderly residents, including, but not limited to, assistance with financial, transportation, and social/isolation issues, to enable them to remain in their homes.

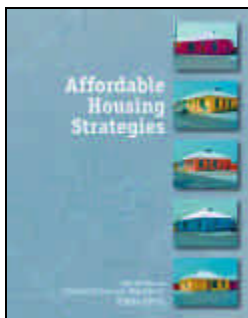
5.4 Provide appropriate incentives for infill development.

**Affordable Housing**

**Background** Providing affordable housing is essential for a healthy community. In addition to a diverse mix of housing types, it is necessary to make available housing for residents of all income levels. Seeking funding from varied sources increases the opportunities for development of affordable housing units.

**Policy 6: Establish a community-wide goal that 10 percent of the City's housing stock is affordable to families who are low income.**

**Supporting Policies**



6.1 Devise strategies for the provision of housing that is affordable to all segments of the population.

6.2 Consider current conditions and long-term trends in population and housing characteristics, the housing market, and construction trends when determining the types of affordable housing to be provided.

6.3 Continue to support the development and maintenance of a menu of strategies that can be used to meet the needs for various types of affordable housing and related services.

**Actions**

*6.3.A Explore options that present a continuum of target population, funding sources, levels of funding, and time horizons, to address needs over time as funding fluctuates.*

*6.3.B Affordable housing programs considered for funding should adhere to planning requirements, environmental reviews, fair housing and accessibility reviews, and labor laws.*

**Supporting Policy**

6.4 Encourage developers to designate at least 15 percent of all new units (rental or owner-occupied) specifically as affordable housing.

**Action**

*6.4.A Encourage development of an ordinance or other mechanism to implement a developer participation plan that designates a set-aside of affordable units in all new housing or establishes a fee contribution in lieu of a set-aside of units.*

**Supporting Policy**

6.5 Encourage development of a local housing fund and seek funding from diverse sources, including federal, state, local, and private, to continue and expand current programs and to provide alternate sources to be tapped in the event that current funding decreases.



## **Evaluation Programs**

**Background** The City supports a wide variety of programs that focus on housing and related services. Performing periodic evaluations of the programs gives the City valuable information about which needs are being met, which programs merit continued support, and which programs need to be improved or replaced.

**Policy 7: Support the implementation of an evaluation program for affordable housing and for providers of related services to determine if the desired results are being achieved.**

**Supporting Policies**

7.1 Identify goals and desired results for affordable housing programs.

7.2 Encourage development of a system of program evaluation with subrecipients of funds to provide them with the tools to implement successful projects.

**Actions**

7.2.A *Incorporate program evaluation into the application process.*

7.2.B *Provide technical assistance to subrecipients, as appropriate.*

7.2.C *Incorporate program evaluation into contracting.*

**Supporting Policies**

7.3 Monitor programs to determine actual results and establish whether the goals and desired results are being achieved.

7.4 Evaluate programs that are not meeting established goals and producing the desired results to determine whether changes to the program can be made to improve effectiveness.

7.5 Promote direct funding to programs that address prioritized needs and are able to demonstrate that goals and desired results are being achieved.