



Chapter Eight: Housing

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Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this Chapter is to analyze the supply, condition, characteristics, occupancy and affordability of the existing housing in Airway Heights. The intent is to determine the constraints for housing development, determine the future needs of housing including potential location, type, and amount. The primary focus of the Chapter is on the provision and type, location, and amount of housing in the community.

Available, affordable, and safe housing is a vital ingredient to the success of accommodating growth in a community. The GMA provides the following goal for housing:

“Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.”

Housing Issues and Goals

The City’s goal is to provide affordable housing stock according to the requirements of the GMA.

Table 8.1
Housing Goals and Policies

Goal	Policy	Implementing Program
Provide a variety of densities and housing types, providing housing opportunities to satisfy a variety of residents.	Actively mix housing and commercial uses in and near the commercial center to provide higher quality, lower cost housing.	Revise development regulations to encourage mixed uses.
		Coordinate with local lenders to verify mixed use developments can be financed.
	Reduce parking requirements for mixed uses, especially those designed to serve low income or senior citizen residents.	
	Use market forces to promote housing variety.	Prepare design standards to illustrate how housing variety can be accomplished in conformance with this plan.
Resolve safety and noise concerns in areas now impacted by flight operations at Spokane International Airport and Fairchild Air Force Base.	Reduce risk of injury or property loss to residents in areas impacted by flight operations.	Update AICUZ and airport overlay zones as necessary to reflect current and proposed base operations.
		Study housing options for other areas in the community where these residents may live.
		Prohibit new residential development in airport overlay zones.

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Goal	Policy	Implementing Program
		Research mitigation strategies designed to alleviate non-conforming housing conflicts near air installations.
		Coordinate with Fairchild Air Force Base to address possible Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) criteria.
	Assist residents wishing to relocate to other areas of the community.	Inventory available residential land not within air impact areas.
		Study housing options for other areas in the community where these residents may live.
		Identify possible pilot housing projects for public/private partnerships.
		Coordinate with Fairchild Air Force Base and others for funding or other support to make relocation attractive to residents.
		Identify available grants and possible development partners.
Provide a broad range of healthy, social and low-cost housing opportunities for senior citizens, individuals with disabilities and low-income families.	Use market forces to provide more special needs housing.	Create partnerships to provide special needs housing.
		Work with business community and housing community to figure out ways to build better connections to benefit both.
		Apply for streetscape improvement funds.
		Consider density bonuses and financial methods to encourage mixed use housing.
		Coordinate with business to site special needs housing close to relevant business.
Rehabilitate housing units ensuring adequate living conditions for every community resident.	Consider City assisted house rehab program (i.e. new insulation, windows, heaters, etc.)	Coordinate with organizations that train people on housing upkeep.
	Work with County to set up low-income housing incentives.	Coordinate with housing non profits for development incentives.
Investigate historic properties for possible historic designation.	Coordinate with county offices for standards.	Investigate historic housing design regulations.

Existing Housing Inventory

To understand the future of housing opportunities in Airway Heights, it is important to first look at the existing conditions of the community's housing stock. This section focuses on those aspects, as well as other characteristics relating to housing and its impacts on the community. Some of these aspects include occupancy and vacancy rates, general household and housing characteristics, and ownership and renter characteristics.

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The tables in this section examine the various aspects of housing by looking at 1990 and 2000 census information. This information will help identify the existing conditions in Airway Heights. Additionally, the tables examine how Airway Heights compares in a regional and state scale.

In 2000 the total number of housing units was estimated at 1,095 with 87.5 percent, or 958, of those units occupied. This was a 4.5 percent increase from the previous decade (see Table 8.2). The 2000 housing statistics also estimate that of the 958 occupied housing units 55.9 percent are owner-occupied which is a 4.9 percent increase since 1990. This trend of reduced vacancy and increases in owner-occupied housing units is closer to regional and state figures.

Table 8.2

Housing Unit Characteristics, 1990 and 2000

Housing Units	1990			2000			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%	%	#	%		
Occupied	742	83.0	94.3	958	87.5	93.5	92.7
Vacant	153	17.0	5.7	137	12.5	6.5	7.3
TOTAL UNITS	895	100.0		1,095	100.0		
Owner-Occupied	378	51.0	63.7	536	55.9	65.5	64.6
Renter-Occupied	364	49.0	36.3	422	44.1	34.5	35.4
TOTAL OCCUPIED	742	100.0		958	100.0		
Source: U.S. Census							

In 2000, mobile homes were the dominant housing type comprising 41.8 percent of all housing stock, followed by single family at 41.6 percent, multi-family housing at 11.4 percent, duplexes at 4.9 percent and the remainder belonging to RV, boat, or van (see Table 8.3).

Most housing types saw a proportional decrease in their share of the housing stock at a 4 percent decrease for mobile homes, a 5 percent decrease for multi-family and a 1.8 percent decrease for RV, boats and vans.

The increase of single-family housing units coupled with the increase in owner-occupied housing units most likely means that the new housing in Airway Heights is owner-occupied single-family dwelling units.

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Table 8.3
Housing Units by Type, 1990 and 2000

Housing Units by Type	1990			2000			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%		#	%		
Single-Family	274	30.6	69.5	453	41.6	68.9	65.4
Two-Family/Duplex	194	21.7	7.6	53	4.9	3.6	2.8
Multiple-Family			15.0	124	11.4	20.5	22.8
Mobile Home	408	45.6	7.3	455	41.8	6.9	8.5
Boat/RV/Van	19	2.1	0.7	4	0.4	0.1	0.5
TOTAL UNITS	895	100.0		1,089	100.0		
Source: U.S. Census							

The average household size for Airway Heights has changed little over the past decade but it is still larger than the State or County average. Owner occupied households are decreasing and renter occupied households are increasing.

Table 8.4
Household Characteristics Comparison, 1990 and 2000

Households by Type	1990			2000			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%		#	%		
Families	543	70.6	66.4	656	68.5	64.8	66.0
Non-Families	226	29.4	33.6	302	31.5	35.2	34.0
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	769	100.0		958	100.0		
Average Household Size	2.56 people		2.47 people	2.55 people		2.46 people	2.53 people
Average Family Size	no data		no data	3.02 people		3.02 people	3.07 people
Average Household Size, Owner-Occupied	2.64 people		2.64 people	2.50 people		2.61 people	2.65 people
Average Household Size, Renter-Occupied	2.48 people		2.19 people	2.61 people		2.19 people	2.32 people
Source: U.S. Census							

Over the past 60 years, approximately 1,089 housing units have been built. Of all the current housing stock 36.5 percent were built between 1970 and 1979. The next largest period of growth occurred in the 1990s with 20 percent of the housing units built (see Table 8.5 and Figure 8.1). These recent increase in new housing starts reflect the 657 person increase in population in the 1990s. The 20 percent of 1990s built housing is a faster rate of new housing growth than the county.

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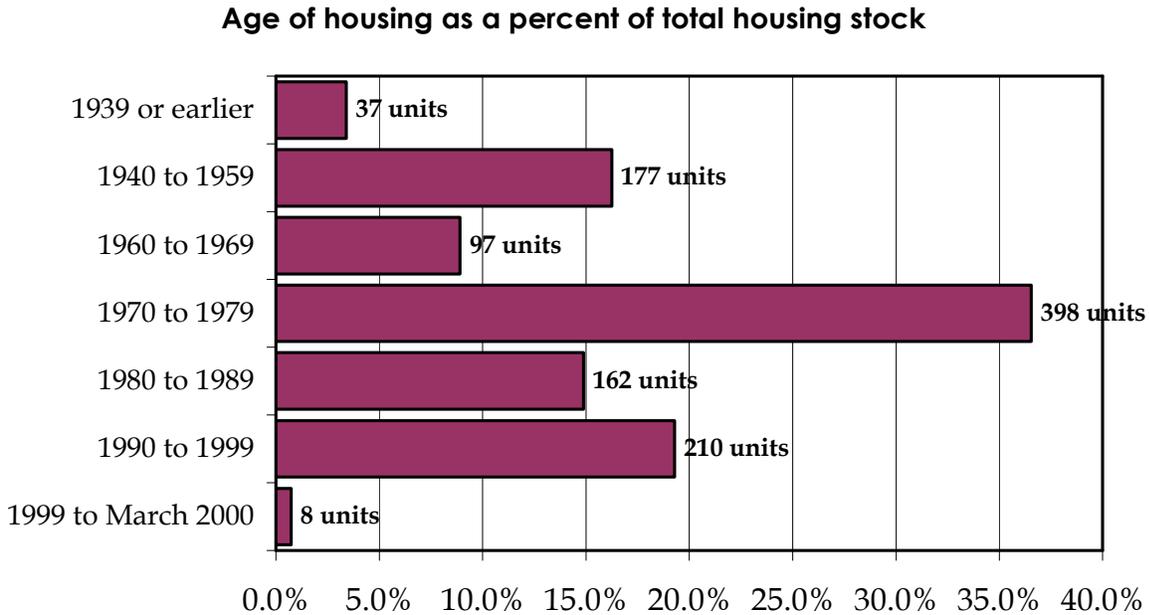
While the 20 percent increase in new housing built in the 1990s is dramatic, it does not match the 79.2 percent increase in housing units occupied during the same period. In other words, 80 percent of the households in Airway Heights have been new residents in the last decade. The increase is likely a result of the combination of new residents to the community and moving within the community (see Table 8.5 and Figure 8.1).

Table 8.5
Number of Residential Units Built and When Occupied by Residents

Year	Units Built			Units Occupied		
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County
	#	%		#	%	
1999 to 2000	8	0.7	1.7	236	24.7	22.9
1990 to 1998	210	19.3	15.6	526	54.5	46.2
1980 to 1989	162	14.9	10.8	85	8.9	14.1
1970 to 1979	398	36.5	21.3	81	8.5	8.9
1960 to 1969	97	8.9	9.4	28	2.9	7.9
1940 to 1959	177	16.8	23.2			
pre-1939	37	3.4	18.1			
TOTAL	1,089	100.0		956	100.0	

Source: OFM, 2002.

Figure 8.1
Age of housing stock by percentage of total



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Most Recent Activity

Within the last 3-4 years, Airway Heights has experienced growth within their housing market. The City's has issued 32 building permits for additional housing units in 2004, 138 permits in 2005, and at the time of plan completion, 131 permits have been issued in 2006. At this time the City does not have a comprehensive look at whether or not these new units are owner occupied or rentals.

Existing Conditions Summary

Examining the existing housing information shows that housing in Airway Heights is predominately owner occupied single-family residential that was built in the 1970s. The information also indicates housing is less expensive than the state or county; however, many people pay more than 30 percent of their income to a mortgage. This exceeds the amount that mortgage lending guidelines recommend.

The likely result is that many people have less disposable income. The existing conditions also indicate a limited supply of available multi-family housing units. This combined with the majority of renters paying either more than 30 or less than 20 percent of their income indicates that rental market housing is not as diverse as Airway Heights' residents' incomes. This likely means there is a demand for mid-range rental housing, and this housing would be appropriately built as multi-family.

Housing Demands and Needs Assessment

Airway Heights has a current population of 4,840 with 2,140 of the current population housed at the Airway Heights Correctional Facility. Population growth within the City requires additional housing to be constructed. Population forecasts indicate that the City's residential population for 2026 will be 9,906. This forecast does not take into account the number of residents housed within the Airway Heights Correctional Facility. Currently the percentage of the population that is housed within the Correction Facility is 44 percent. Based on information provided to the City, the correction facility is at it maximum capacity, therefore, it can be concluded that the City population growth will require housing outside the correction facility.

Currently there are 1,306 residential units within the City limits. To meet the needs of the forecasted population, the City will have to accommodate another 1,987 units. After reviewing the land use quantity analysis it has been determined that the city will be able to accommodate the projected number of homes. This can be accomplished by reassessing the density levels found within the development regulations. In the past, emphasis has been placed on the construction of single family homes, but there has been an emerging need and emphasis on the construction of duplexes and multi family housing.

The existing conditions data indicates it would be appropriate for the City to promote alternative housing types in addition to single-family dwellings. There are significant opportunities for duplexes, townhouses, cottage housing and accessory dwelling units. All these are appropriate for the community because they provide affordable housing options while meeting the goals of the GMA and comprehensive plan. To create additional dwellings for the anticipated population, the City is committed to increased housing density. Increased density tends to reduce the cost of housing and should have a positive impact upon the construction of government assisted housing, housing for low-income families and the general residential market. Further, with the expansion of commercial and industrial facilities within and adjacent to the City, it is likely that people will relocate to the City or its adjacent areas in pursuit of these employment opportunities. The City is committed to making available reasonable and affordable housing.

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The land use element of the plan identifies the land available for residential purposes. As stated throughout this plan, the City will develop zoning regulations that permit sufficient land to be used for purposes consistent with the GMA and this housing element. Consistently, the City, through its land development in the past and future, will make adequate provisions for all economic segments of the community. This includes a multitude of housing opportunities which are further defined in the City Development Code.

Rentals and Manufactured Housing

An obstacle for the City is the existing condition of housing in the community. Many rental properties are in poor condition including aging mobile homes. The City's challenge is to convince and provide incentives to property owners in order to make the necessary investment in repairing and enhancing their properties. Investment will benefit the overall community and reduce the demand upon certain governmental services.

A preferred approach may be to develop a combination of laws and voluntary programs designed to address these appearance and maintenance issues. Airway Heights may consider instituting design and maintenance standards to address the community's need to upgrade rental and manufactured housing. Zoning standards and public works specifications can clarify certain development requirements and the appropriate uses of rights of way, requiring compliance under the force of law. Additionally, public health and safety standards, which are usually codified as nuisance laws, establish a relationship between property maintenance and the well-being of the community. Enforcing nuisance laws is often difficult, time consuming and expensive in terms of police and legal resources. While the laws ultimately provide for an adequate remedy, the City will attempt to develop policy that avoids property owner resentment and spotty compliance. Such policy could include community cleanup efforts, rehabilitation programs and other community-building opportunities.