

GENERAL HOUSING POLICY AND FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS FOR EACH SITE FROM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2010 Update Chapter 1: Goals, Policies, & Strategies Approved 4/19/2011

To access the entire Comprehensive Plan click the following link:

http://www.auburnmaine.gov/CMSContent/Planning/Comprehensive_Plan_FINALE_Approved_4_19_11.pdf

H.2 HOUSING

Goal H.2: Promote various housing options to meet the needs of Auburn residents and support neighborhood stability.

Objective H. 2. 1:

Maintain and enhance the existing housing stock throughout Auburn's neighborhoods.

Many of Auburn's well-established neighborhoods include older homes and multi-family buildings. These add historic charm and provide for a variety of owner and renter housing options. However, many older properties are in need of maintenance and upgrading in order to meet code standards, increase energy efficiency, and ensure health and safety. Investment by property owners, with assistance from the City, provides the best opportunity to maintain and enhance these unique properties and ensure that they remain a positive part of Auburn's neighborhoods.

Strategies to achieve this objective:

Strategy H. 2. 1. a:

Maintain the quality of the older owner-occupied housing stock.

- i. Continue to provide financial assistance to qualified property owners to maintain and improve their homes, with a particular attention to energy efficiency, using Community Development loans and other similar funding sources.
- ii. Work with local, regional, and state agencies (including the Community Development

Housing Policies and Proposed Housing Developments at 62 Spring Street and 37 Loring Avenue

Department, Auburn Housing Authority, Community Concepts, and Maine State Housing Authority) to provide qualified homeowners with property maintenance assistance.

Strategy H. 2. 1. b:

Assure that the existing rental housing stock is maintained and well-managed.

i. Consider adopting a property maintenance code for multifamily housing that focuses primarily on issues related to public health and safety.

ii. Adopt a renovation code as part of the building code to allow some flexibility in the repair or renovation of existing structures.

iii. Review and revise the City's fire code to remove unreasonable barriers to the renovation of older properties.

iv. Conduct a regular, on-going program of code enforcement inspection to assure that multifamily housing is being maintained and properly managed.

v. Continue to provide rehabilitation assistance to the owners of rental property who provide affordable apartments, with a particular attention to energy efficiency, using Community Development loans and other similar funding sources.

vi. Promote owner-occupied multifamily housing by working with the City of Auburn Community Development Department, Auburn Housing Authority, and Maine State Housing, to provide funding for people to buy and upgrade small multifamily properties.

Objective H. 2. 2: Maintain and enhance established single family neighborhoods as safe, desirable, attractive areas for a range of residents.

The City has a number of urban and suburban single family neighborhoods that provide a range of safe and attractive housing opportunities for Auburn families. The well-established urban neighborhoods offer a wide range of modest single family homes. These neighborhoods include a large number of elderly homeowners, many of whom might be looking to downsize.

Such properties have the potential to provide an excellent stock of affordable homes, well suited to young first-time homebuyers. The newer single family homes in more “suburbanstyle” neighborhoods provide housing opportunities for middle-income households.

Strategies to achieve this objective:

Strategy H.2.2.a: Assure that the City’s zoning and land use regulations allow private owners to improve properties in these neighborhoods.

i. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow existing homes to be improved and expanded as long as they maintain the character of the neighborhood in terms of setbacks, building height, lot coverage and similar factors.

ii. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow for redevelopment and infill development on vacant lots that is in character with the neighborhood in terms of lot sizes and density, frontage, setbacks, and similar dimensional requirements (see Chapter 2. Future Land Use Plan).

iii. Update and expand the existing “two-family conversion” provision for older homes to include standards to assure that such conversions are compatible with the neighborhood. Include provisions for the establishment of accessory apartments in existing single family homes that are not covered by the conversion provision.

Strategy H.2.2.b: Develop a coordinated community program to provide for the gradual transition of urban single family neighborhoods to a younger cohort.

i. Work with community groups and senior agencies to develop a community-based program to help senior citizens who are interested in moving from their home to explore housing alternatives.

ii. Develop a program, in conjunction with local real estate interests and housing organizations, to promote the desirability of these neighborhoods as places for young families to live.

iii. Work with the Auburn Housing Authority, Maine State Housing, and other housing

finance organizations to make mortgage financing available to younger households, especially families with children, to buy homes in these neighborhoods.

iv. Assure that City's zoning allows for the development of a range of senior housing in other areas of the city, in order to provide appropriate housing options for older residents who need or want to downsize.

v. Enhance the quality of the City's public school system, especially elementary schools located within and serving these neighborhoods.

Objective H. 2. 3: Improve existing urban family neighborhoods that have a mix of single family and multifamily units, to enhance them as safe, desirable, attractive neighborhoods.

The City has a number of urban family neighborhoods with a mixture of small multi-family buildings, duplexes, and single family housing, which together provide a range of owner and renter housing options. Stabilizing and maintaining such neighborhoods as desirable and attractive places to live is important to the City. While some of the issues in these neighborhoods are similar to those in existing single family neighborhoods, the presence of rental housing adds a new dimension to the challenge. The goal in these areas is to upgrade the condition of multi-family buildings, and to encourage higher levels of owner occupancy within them. Owner-occupied multi-unit buildings help to stabilize the neighborhood, while at the same time providing supplemental income opportunities for first-time homebuyers. Multi-unit buildings also provide home and condominium ownership opportunities for young professionals, empty nesters, and retirees who want to live in a more urban environment; and rental opportunities for individuals and small families.

Strategies to achieve this objective:

Strategy H. 2. 3. a: Assure that the City's zoning and land use regulations allow private owners to improve property in these neighborhoods.

i. Review and revise zoning requirements, as needed, to allow existing buildings to be improved and expanded as long as they maintain the character of the neighborhood in terms of setbacks, building height, lot coverage and similar factors.

ii. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow for redevelopment and infill development on vacant lots that is in character with the neighborhood in terms of lot sizes and density, frontage, setbacks, and similar dimensional requirements (see Chapter 2. Future Land Use Plan).

iii. Update and expand the existing “two-family conversion” provision for older homes to include standards to assure that these conversions are compatible with the neighborhood. Include provisions for the establishment of accessory apartments in existing single family homes for homes not covered by the conversion provision.

Objective H. 2. 4: Encourage investment in higher - density downtown multi - family and mixed - use neighborhoods to develop a balance of rental and ownership options that serve a wide range of households.

Auburn’s downtown multi-family neighborhoods increasingly supply housing for low and moderate income households. In the short term, the City’s objective is to maintain and upgrade the existing housing stock. Many of the issues in these areas are similar to the multi-family issues in the urban family neighborhoods. Over the long term, the City’s objective is for these areas to evolve into more of a mixed-income character. This is achieved through the development of new or renovated housing that capitalizes on the amenities in these areas, and that appeal to different groups and income segments. In some areas there are opportunities to provide moderate-rate rental housing for young adults and students. In others, particularly along the River, there are opportunities for higher-cost apartments and condominiums suitable for young professionals and empty-nesters seeking an urban lifestyle.

Strategies to achieve this objective:

Strategy H. 2. 4. a: Assure that the City’s zoning and land use regulations allow for private investments to improve property in these neighborhoods.

i. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow existing buildings to be improved and expanded as long as they maintain the character of the neighborhood in terms of setbacks, building height, lot coverage and similar factors.

ii. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow for redevelopment and

infill development on vacant lots that is in character with the neighborhood in terms of lot sizes and density, frontage, setbacks, and similar dimension.

iii. Create flexible zoning provisions such as variable density requirements (bedroom based density or building envelope provisions) that allow for the coordinated reuse or rehabilitation of a series of adjacent buildings in order to create expanded housing opportunities.

Objective H. 2. 5: Create opportunities for the private development of a range of new housing outside of the existing built - up areas to meet the needs of a variety of groups.

Outside of the built-up area of Auburn, the role of the private development community is to build new housing to address the various housing needs of the City's residents. The City's role is primarily as an enabler – to assure that the City's development requirements, zoning regulations, and infrastructure give the private sector the opportunity to produce the types of housing desired to achieve the community's housing goals.

Strategies to achieve this objective:

Strategy H. 2. 5. a: Revise zoning and other land use requirements to allow for the development of a wide range of housing outside of the built-up area of the City to meet the housing needs of various segments of the population. (See Chapter 2. Future Land Use Plan)

i. Create both rental and homeownership opportunities for singles and young families by allowing relatively high-density multifamily housing, including apartments and townhouse style developments, at densities up to 12-18 units per acre in areas served by public sewerage and water.

ii. Create senior and empty-nester housing opportunities by allowing medium density housing such as townhouses (condominiums and rental), "housominiums", and small homes to be constructed at densities up to 10-12 units per acre, with house lots as small as 5,000 square feet, in areas that can be served by public sewerage and water.

iii. Create the opportunity for the development of moderate-density single family housing at densities up to 4-6 units per acre, with house lots as small as 7,500-10,000 square feet,

in areas that can be served with public sewerage.

iv. Create the opportunity to develop low-density single family housing at a density of 1-2 units per acre, with individual lots as small as 12,000-15,000 square feet as part of a conservation subdivision, or 20,000 square feet in a conventional subdivision, in areas that are not served by public sewerage.

Strategy H. 2. 5. b: Review and revise, as needed, regulations for the expansion and establishment mobile home parks in accordance with state law.

i. Identify, as necessary, appropriate new locations for mobile home parks that can be served by public sewerage and water.

ii. Ensure the adequate ability for existing mobile home parks to expand as appropriate.

Strategy H. 2. 5. c: Reduce the cost of new residential development by reviewing and revising the City's development standards to allow the use of private roads with reduced design standards subject to appropriate review and to use more of a performance-based approach based on density to provide flexibility in the layout and design of projects. (See Transportation and other Land Use Policy sections)

Objective H. 2. 6: Provide adequate housing assistance and services. There is a range of people with special housing needs, due to disability or abuse or economic circumstances. They can be helped through such programs as subsidized rental housing, homelessness services, and homeownership assistance.

Strategies to achieve this objective:

Strategy H. 2. 6. a: Support efforts to develop a continuum of housing for homeless residents and for people with special needs and circumstances. The continuum would range from emergency shelters, to transitional housing, to permanent housing, with support services as needed.

i. Implement the recommendations of the LAASH *Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*

ii. Review and revise the City's zoning requirements to remove any unreasonable barriers to the development of special needs housing.

Strategy H. 2. 6. b: Support the continued development of subsidized and other affordable housing to meet the needs of low-income individuals and families.

Strategy H. 2. 6c: Encourage the inclusion of affordable units within new housing projects by including provisions for significant density bonuses and reduced infrastructure requirements for developments in which at least twenty percent of the units will be affordable to low- or moderate-income households.

Strategy H. 2. 6. d: Establish a housing advocacy committee that includes representation from local, regional, and state housing agencies, as well as affiliated lenders, to develop housing-related recommendations.

i. Develop a homebuyer resource guide that educates potential homebuyers about local ownership programs and incentives.

ii. Develop a homeownership resource guide that educates local homeowners about local housing programs that help with property maintenance and renovation.

Strategy H. 2. 6. e: Continue to use the Community Development program to purchase and invest in foreclosed properties.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES FROM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The property at **37 Loring Avenue** is located in the Moderate Density Neighborhood Conservation District (MoDNC) as designated by the City Comprehensive Plan. The description of that district is as follows:

Objective - Stabilize and promote continued investment in the City's moderate density single and two-family neighborhoods to assure that they remain safe, attractive areas in which residents want to live (see Figures 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7). To this end, the district should allow property owners to upgrade their properties and for infill development to occur on vacant lots

as long as it is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Allowed Uses – The allowed uses in the Moderate Density Neighborhood Conservation District should be limited to the following types of uses:

- single and two-family homes
- townhouse style attached single family units
- home occupations
- community services and municipal use and facilities
- agriculture

Development Standards - The basic density requirement should be up to 4-6 units per acre for single family and two-family homes and up to 6-8 units per acre for townhouse style units. The minimum lot size for single family house lots should be 7,500 to 10,000 SF, with 75 to 100 feet of lot width or frontage. The other development standards should be similar to the standards for existing Urban Residential District. The development standards should include provisions to allow infill development on existing lots of record, regardless of their size, if they meet stringent design and environmental standards that ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

The property at **62 Spring Street** is located in the Traditional Downtown Business District (DTB) as designated by the City Comprehensive Plan. The description of that district is as follows:

Objective - Maintain the character and overall development pattern of the historic downtown area while allowing for the creative use, reuse and redevelopment of property within the district (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4).

Allowed Uses – The following general types of uses should be allowed within the Traditional Downtown Business District:

- small to moderate size retail uses
- personal and business services
- restaurants and cafes
- office uses including business and professional offices
- hotel, motels, inns, and bed & breakfast establishments

- fully enclosed light manufacturing
- community services and facilities
- recreational facilities
- a wide range of residential uses including housing on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings and senior housing

Development Standards – The development standards in the Traditional Downtown Business District should require that alterations to existing buildings and new buildings maintain the established pattern of development, including the placement of the building on the lot. Where there is an established pattern with respect to the front setback of buildings, a new or altered building should be required to conform to the established pattern. Any area between the front of the building and the street should be required to be used for pedestrian purposes, including outdoor spaces; vehicle use should be prohibited. Parking should be required to be located at the side or rear of the building, but the minimum parking requirement should be reduced, and new or redeveloped properties should be allowed to count the use of shared or public parking to meet the standard.

Residential development and redevelopment should be allowed at a maximum density of 18-24 units per acre, with a provision that small units or units for the elderly be treated as a fraction of a unit based on the size of the unit or the number of bedrooms in the unit. The reuse/reconfiguration of the space within existing buildings for residential purposes should be allowed without consideration of the density/lot size requirements, provided that the building will be renovated, be compatible with the neighborhood, and meet the City's requirements for residential units including the provision of appropriate parking and green space. Buildings with both residential and nonresidential uses should be allowed to consider shared parking to meet their parking requirements.