



**TO:** Mayor Marchione and City Council

**FROM:** Rob Odle, Planning Director, 425-556-2417  
Lori Peckol, AICP, Policy Planning Manager, 425-556-2411  
Sarah Stiteler, AICP, Senior Planner, 425-556-2469

**DATE:** April 17, 2012

**SUBJECT: STAFF REPORT: REDMOND HOUSING STRATEGY PLAN**

The Planning Commission completed a recommendation regarding the Housing Strategy Plan on March 28, 2012. City Council received the Planning Commission report and recommended Housing Strategy Plan on March 30, 2012. In addition, staff briefed the Parks and Human Services Committee at their meeting on April 3, 2012.

#### **REQUESTED DIRECTION**

At City Council's April 17, 2012, meeting, staff will ask if there are particular issues Council members would like to discuss at a study session on April 24, 2012. To facilitate discussion, staff requests that any issues for discussion be raised either at the Council meeting on April 17, 2012, or by contacting Sarah Stiteler by April 20, 2012. Council members attending the Parks and Human Services Committee meeting requested information regarding the role of the Housing Strategy Plan within the context of the City's Comprehensive Plan and in regional planning for affordable housing. Additional income data as compared to housing prices was also requested.

#### **OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND**

The updated Comprehensive Plan Housing Element directs the City for the first time to establish a Housing Strategy Plan to identify actions that will implement the City's housing goals and policies. The purpose of the Housing Strategy Plan is to: 1) identify a wide range of potential strategies for the City to consider; and 2) prioritize in what order specific strategies will be evaluated and potentially implemented over the next few years. The Strategy Plan establishes the strategies to consider and prioritize for consideration, although it does not determine the action to be taken on any specific strategy. Whether to pursue a strategy after it is considered in more detail is a subsequent decision that is ultimately made by City Council or City Administration.

In addition to the City's housing policies, the Strategy Plan considered:

- Local and regional housing data contained in the 2011 Housing Needs Analysis
- Other jurisdictions' housing strategy plans
- Recommendations made by ARCH members and others at their prioritization workshops

The Strategy Plan includes actions that the City has in place currently and strategies to consider for future action. As the proposed Plan indicates, Redmond has taken many actions over the past 15 plus years to improve the supply and diversity of housing in Redmond and to support additional improved housing supply and diversity in East King County.

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft Housing Strategy Plan to determine if strategies should be added or clarified and then prioritized the strategies. The Plan is divided into two broad categories: I. Land Use Regulations and Incentives and II. Direct and Indirect Forms of Assistance. The top priorities (those ranked H for high priority) are recommended to be considered for current or future work programs. A high priority was given primarily to:

- Strategies that the Planning Commission determined were important or timely to consider
- Strategies that addressed an identified need
- Cost/benefit: Strategies that the Planning Commission anticipated would result in high benefit relative to the expenditure in resources

In general, the Planning Commission reserved high priorities for new strategies, reasoning that the City should undertake additional actions to promote housing supply and affordability. A medium priority was given to strategies that currently are working and may need to be reevaluated in the future. A low priority was given to strategies that are essentially completed or ongoing strategies that may be worth reconsidering in the future depending on resources or the effectiveness of other strategies.

The Planning Commission identified the following *new* strategies which were also identified as *high priority (in no rank order)*:

- Consider Multifamily Property Tax Exemption
- Focus on providing a dedicated revenue source that could be targeted toward affordable housing
- Create and develop investment and other strategies that could include public/private partnerships including planning and existing infrastructure in Urban Centers
- Consider programs that offset loss of housing through conversion
- Promote programs to retrofit existing housing to improve energy efficiency and reduce long-term operating and maintenance costs
- Encourage employer assistance for employee housing
- Seek and participate as appropriate in other forums such as faith-based groups, business or other nongovernmental groups
- Create user guides to assist users in understanding affordable programs and City requirements

## **SCHEDULE**

The staff report to City Council is scheduled for the April 17, 2012, meeting, at which time Council members may indicate issues or areas for additional information prior to the study session on April 24, 2012. The Council is scheduled to adopt the Housing Strategy Plan on May 15, 2012.

Once the Council adopts the Housing Strategy Plan, it becomes an advisory document that creates a framework for the City's efforts to implement its Housing Element. Further, it will assist the City's Budgeting by Priorities process by identifying the highest priority actions to undertake in the delivery of high-quality housing programs and services.