



Staff Report

April 20, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

Camas Housing Action Plan

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BACKGROUND

The City of Camas is creating a Housing Action Plan (HAP) to encourage diversity, affordability, and access to opportunity for people of all incomes. The goal of this plan is to further goals and policies of Camas 2035, the city’s comprehensive plan, to achieve a greater variety of housing types and costs to better meet the needs and desires of individuals and families. Funding for the project comes through a grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce.

The Housing Action Plan will:

- ❖ Rely on thorough data and an inclusive public participation process to understand current and future housing needs.
- ❖ Assess existing housing resources and policies and identify ways to build on or improve them.
- ❖ Outline strategies the City of Camas plans to take to meet the community’s housing needs over the next ten years and beyond.
- ❖ Further the city’s Comprehensive Plan housing goals and be adopted by City Council.

Public Engagement Activities & Results

<p>PUBLIC MEETINGS <i>[Note: Recordings of all meetings are available on the city’s website.]</i></p>	<p>Council Workshops 2/19/19; 6/3/19; 6/17/19; 7/1/19 Planning Commission 6/16/19; 10/20/20; 2/17/21 Open House (via Zoom) 9/16/20; 9/17/20; 3/18/21 Focus Group Meeting 3/16/21</p>
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The following is a summary of the outreach efforts conducted at this point in the project. A summary of public engagement findings was presented to City Council on December 7, 2020.

OPEN HOUSE WORKSHOPS

Two open houses open to the general public were held via Zoom on September 16 and 17, 2020. Eighteen people joined one of the meetings to discuss topics including: (1) need for

variety in housing prices and types; (2) housing types needed in Camas; and (3) residential development opportunities and barriers.

When asked if they agree with the statement “Camas needs greater variety in terms of housing types and prices,” most attendees said they strongly or somewhat agree (11 people or 61% of attendees). Three people said they strongly or somewhat disagree, and four neither agreed nor disagreed.

Attendees also identified housing types they would like to see more of in Camas, including:

- ❖ Starter homes
- ❖ Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- ❖ Apartments and condominiums
- ❖ Accessible housing
- ❖ Senior housing

The open houses and complete discussion notes are viewable at <https://letstalkcamashousing.us/community-meeting-march>.

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Targeted stakeholders representing a variety of viewpoints were invited to participate in a series of focus groups or interviews during September and October 2020. Twenty-nine people participated, including professionals in the fields of housing and homeless services, education, government, transportation, and urban planning and 9 high school students who joined a focus group during one of their classes.

Stakeholders discussed housing needs, affordability, development challenges, and potential ways to support a greater variety of housing types and price points. Challenges and opportunities discussed are summarized below.

Challenges to Housing Development	Opportunities to Support Housing Variety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land costs • Topography – steep slopes and wetlands • Developer caution due to limited history of housing types other than single-family homes • Potential difficulty with rezonings for multifamily projects • Limited encouragement of more varied housing types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address perceptions about multifamily and affordable housing • Try new strategies to encourage variety, such as zoning changes or outreach to developers • Consider workforce housing needs to reduce commute times and transportation costs • Address concerns about potential loss of character due to growth

ONLINE SURVEY

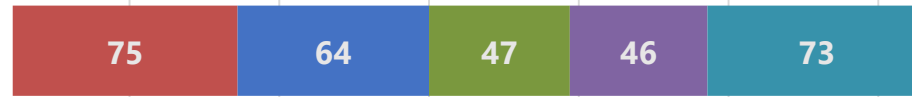
An online survey was available at www.letstalkcamashousing.us from mid-August to mid-November 2020 and received 307 responses. Demographic information for survey participants shows that:

- ❖ Most participants live in Camas (95%) and more than one-third (36%) work in Camas.
- ❖ Most participants own their homes (88%) and 9% are renters. The remaining 3% live with family or friends.
- ❖ The household income breakdown of survey participants is 31% with incomes under \$100,000, 29% with incomes from \$100,000 to \$149,000 and 40% with incomes over \$150,000.
- ❖ The racial and ethnic makeup of survey participants was 75% white, 5% Hispanic, 5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 2% Native American, 1% Black, and 1% Arab or Middle Eastern. About 12% of respondents selected "other" or declined to share their race/ethnicity.
- ❖ Participants come from throughout the city. The largest number of participants (59 people) live on or near NE Everett Street.

One survey question asked participants to rate how closely they agree or disagree with a series of statements about housing affordability and housing development in Camas. Responses are shown on the next page.

Number of Survey Takers that Agree or Disagree

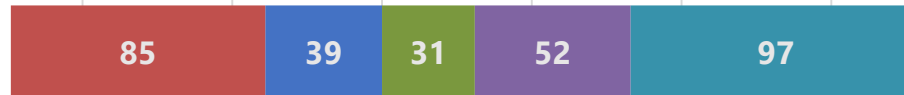
There's enough housing at appropriate sizes and costs to meet the residents' needs for the next 20 years.



Camas should be cautious about new residential development to preserve community character.



Lack of affordable housing is a serious issue in Camas.



Camas needs a greater variety in terms of housing types and prices.



People who work in Camas can find appropriate housing they can afford in Camas.



Seniors can find appropriate housing they can afford in Camas.



Young families can find appropriate housing they can afford in Camas.



Strongly Disagree

Somewhat Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Strongly Agree

Existing Conditions Review & Housing Needs Analysis

The Housing Action Plan consultant team prepared a draft Existing Conditions & Housing Needs Analysis available for public review from February through March. The HAP consultant presented key findings from the Existing Conditions Review & Housing Needs Analysis, including a summary of public engagement activities, existing conditions, and housing needs, to the Planning Commission on February 17.

Draft Housing Strategies

The HAP consultant presented initial strategies for enhancing housing diversity and affordability to City staff on January 14 and to the Planning Commission on February 17. The team revised initial strategies based on staff and Planning Commission input and presented the revised strategies to focus group participants and the public in virtual meetings held on March 16 and 18. The public virtual meeting and discussion notes are viewable at <https://letstalkcamashousing.us/community-meeting-sept>.

Draft Housing Action Plan

A complete draft Housing Action Plan is included with this staff report. Goals of the HAP include:

- ❖ Developing housing to accommodate projected growth;
- ❖ Diversifying the housing mix;
- ❖ Increasing housing affordability; and
- ❖ Preserving existing affordable housing.

Strategies related to each of these goals are shown below.

STRATEGY	GOALS			
	DEVELOP HOUSING	DIVERSIFY HOUSING MIX	INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Strategy 1: Increase minimum net density in R zones	◆			
Strategy 2: Diversify allowed housing types	◆	◆	◆	
Strategy 3: Expand housing opportunity in mixed use and downtown commercial districts	◆	◆		

STRATEGY	GOALS			
	DEVELOP HOUSING	DIVERSIFY HOUSING MIX	INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Strategy 4: Relax lot and dimensional standards that limit density and housing types	◆	◆		
Strategy 5: Develop an inclusionary housing policy			◆	
Strategy 6: Focus on key areas with residential development or redevelopment potential	◆	◆		
Strategy 7: Develop community conversations around housing and housing for all	◆	◆	◆	◆
Strategy 8: Communicate available affordable housing resources			◆	
Strategy 9: Build partnerships to develop and preserve affordable housing for individuals, families, and seniors			◆	◆
Strategy 10: Consider opportunities for supporting affordable homeownership			◆	◆
Strategy 11: Explore options for developing funding sources for affordable housing	◆	◆	◆	◆

Next Steps

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Housing Action Plan at their April 20 meeting. Following that meeting, it is anticipated that the draft Housing Action Plan will be presented at the City Council Work Session on May 3 and for a public hearing in front of City Council on May 17. The final Housing Action Plan will then be prepared in anticipation of adoption by City Council by June 2021.

Project Scope & Timeline

The Housing Action Plan includes the following steps and deliverables:

1. Existing conditions review and needs analysis – Complete
 - Gather and analyze trends in population, employment and income.
 - Quantify existing and projected housing needs for all income levels
 - Review existing programs and program success

- Create a housing inventory map
- 2. Public engagement – Public engagement plan complete (attached to this report); Complete
 - Develop stakeholder group to gather input from housing advocates, housing providers, social service organizations, developers, neighborhood leaders, tenants, and religious organizations.
 - Conduct public outreach (website and surveys)
 - Present progress throughout to City Council and commissions for feedback
- 3. Evaluation of policies for increasing housing diversity – Complete
 - Draft Housing Action Plan based on analysis from existing conditions data and community input
 - Develop strategies to increase the supply of housing and variety of housing types needed to serve the housing needs identified.
 - Provide a measurement of expected outcomes with various scenarios under consideration.
 - Develop an implementation plan to include proposed amendments to the zoning regulations.
- 4. Adopt Housing Action Plan – Preparation for adoption beginning in April; Adoption process April – June 2021.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS	FINDING
<i>What are the desired results and outcomes for this agenda item?</i>	Continued support from council on the path of this project, and ultimately, adoption of the plan.
<i>What's the data? What does the data tell us?</i>	Data is available on the website and will be shared throughout the project. LetsTalkCamasHousing.us
<i>How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?</i>	<p>Invitations to join the open houses and take the survey were broadly sent on social media, CSD parent newsletter, city newsletter, newspaper advertisements, yard signs, and to Vancouver Housing Authority residents in Camas.</p> <p>As the project progresses, we will utilize other strategies to hear from groups that have not responded to the outreach efforts to date.</p>
<i>Who will benefit from, or be burdened by this agenda item?</i>	The Camas Housing Action Plan will benefit our community by creating a future where more housing choices (size, type, price) will be available.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS	FINDING
<i>What are the strategies to mitigate any unintended consequences?</i>	The city can amend development regulations at any time that we become aware of an unintended consequence.
<i>Does this agenda item have a differential impact on underserved populations, people living with disabilities, and/or communities of color? Please provide available data to illustrate this impact.</i>	The goal of the initiative is to increase the availability of housing types, sizes, and costs. Greater housing variety and affordability has the potential to better serve residents with disabilities and communities of color.
<i>Will this agenda item improve ADA accessibilities for people with disabilities?</i>	The goal of the initiative is to increase the availability of housing types, sizes, and costs. This will include housing for the disabled and seniors in our city.
<i>What potential hurdles exists in implementing this proposal (include both operational and political)?</i>	We anticipate that a proposal to change development or zoning regulations will be met with an equal level of support and opposition.
<i>How will you ensure accountabilities, communicate, and evaluate results?</i>	We will continually update the website (letstalkcamashousing.us), utilize social media, and present draft policy recommendations at PC and Council workshops. All of the feedback received throughout the project will be incorporated in the draft Camas Housing Action Plan.
<i>How does this item support a comprehensive plan goal, policy or other adopted resolution?</i>	<p>Neighborhood LU-3.1 "Create vibrant, stable, and livable neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices that meet all stages in the life cycle and range of affordability."</p> <p>Citywide Housing H-1, "Maintain the strength, vitality, and stability of all neighborhoods and promote the development of a variety of housing choices that meet the needs of all members of the community."</p> <p>H-1.7, "Require all new housing developments to provide a range of housing types and sizes that are evaluated through the land use approval process and stipulated on the final plat."</p> <p>H-3, "Encourage and support a variety of housing opportunities for those with special needs, particularly</p>

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS	FINDING
	those with challenges relating to age, health, or disability.”
BUDGET IMPACT:	The city was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Department of Commerce.