



Planning and Community Development Department
City of Bellingham

2020-2021 Docket Proposal:

In 2019 the Bellingham City Council adopted amendments to the 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan (Ord. 2019-12-044) that added a goal and policy relating to the preservation of existing mobile / manufacture home parks (MHPs). The specific comprehensive plan goal, policy, and text included:

Goal H-5 Existing manufactured home parks (MHPs) should be preserved.

Policy H-55 Identify and evaluate methods to encourage the preservation of existing manufactured home parks to ensure their continued provision of affordable housing.

There are ten manufactured home parks in Bellingham with a total of about 900 spaces. The parks are located in a number of different neighborhoods. All have residential comprehensive plan and zoning designations except Samish Court, located in the Samish Way urban village. These parks, and the units they contain, are some of the most affordable housing in the city. Therefore, it is appropriate to try to preserve some or all of them.

Mobile and manufactured home parks are located various neighborhoods with various zoning classifications. The proposed amendment includes potential changes to the comprehensive plan and/or zoning that implement the comprehensive plan as well as address the City Council's direction to investigate ways to preserve the existing manufactured home parks in Bellingham. Other supporting comprehensive plan goals and policies relating to this proposal include:

Goal H-1 Ensure that Bellingham has a sufficient quantity and variety of housing types ...

Goal H-2 Foster housing that is safe, healthy, livable and affordable for all income levels in all neighborhoods.

Goal H-4 Support housing options for special needs populations.

Policy H-12 Continue permitting manufactured homes in residential zones in accordance with state and federal laws.

Policy H-13 Consider the impacts on citywide housing capacity, affordability and diversity when making land use policy decisions and code amendments.



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Policy H-15 Support fair and equal access to housing for all persons, regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, age, household composition or size, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or economic circumstances.

Policy H-34 Encourage the rehabilitation, relocation and reuse, rather than demolition, of existing housing.

Policy H-35 Continue programs that support the maintenance of older/historic housing and assistance to lower income households

Policy H-46 Work with agencies, developers, nonprofits to locate housing to serve special needs populations, particularly those with challenges related to age

One possible method to implement Council's direction is a new zoning overlay or other designation to be applied to one or more of the existing mobile home parks. This would require an amendment to the comprehensive plan. A new zone or overlay could potentially restrict the land use to primarily a manufactured home community. This restriction could be permanent or for some period of time. A similar approach has been used in a number of Washington jurisdictions.

A second outcome of this process could be to designate additional areas as appropriate for the establishment of new manufactured home communities.

This is a timely issue, and it responds to the City Council's direction to PCD staff. The MHPs provide some of the most affordable housing in the city. Preserving the MHPs is consistent with comprehensive plan goals and policies promoting a variety of housing options at different price ranges. The increasing cost of housing in Bellingham represents changed circumstances requiring a number of solutions.

In light of these factors it is appropriate to place a potential amendment to the comprehensive plan on the 2020-2021 docket.