POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE
EDMONDS CITIZENS’ HOUSING COMMISSION

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To: Edmonds City Council and Mayor Mike Nelson

From: The Edmonds Citizens’ Housing Commission

RE: Submittal of Final Housing Policy Recommendations from the Edmonds Citizens’ Housing Commission

Council members and Mayor Nelson, you gave the Edmonds Citizens Housing Commission this mission:

“Develop diverse housing policy options for (City) Council consideration designed to expand the range of housing (including rental and owned) available in Edmonds; options that are irrespective of age, gender, race, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation” – City Council Resolution No. 1427

Our mission has set this Commission on extraordinary path. Our community has been through a pandemic and the Housing Commission has suffered the loss of one of our members. For the past 17-months, Commissioners have solicited public input from diverse communities throughout Edmonds; researched current, and future population growth and housing needs; examined city codes and state law; studied what works and why; and worked to create new opportunities for all residents. We believe our ideas can enhance our unique city to keep Edmonds a vibrant, diverse and welcoming community for all.

Community engagement has been a top priority. Early outreach included ‘in-person’ events. After COVID-19 struck, most events happened online. We live-streamed all our meetings and community outreach seminars with diverse groups city-wide. We have conducted online community surveys; sent out extensive news releases updating the community and flyers encouraging public involvement, as well as hundreds of post card notifications and survey invitations.

The Commission believes that the set of policy ideas we are submitting is consistent with your Resolution #1427. Additional support material is outlined in each proposal and the Commission would be happy to provide any further input required.

Each Commission member appreciates the opportunity to serve the people of Edmonds. Each member brought commitment, passion and vision to this process. We had frank and robust discussions among Commissioners that reflected our wide range of opinions. Our considerations included whether proposed ideas fit with our mission and whether they could achieve the intended results. We offer opportunities to a broad section of diverse groups. We believe this city and our city leaders can fulfill these proposals to benefit all of Edmonds. Attached to our report is a short list of proposals the Commission feels strongly about, but that we agreed did not seem to fit the mission we were given. We hope you give them the close scrutiny they deserve for the people of Edmonds.

We profoundly appreciate the expertise, the insight and the patience of Development Services Director Shane Hope, Associate Planner Brad Shipley, Planner Amber Groll and so many others on city staff who helped us navigate the complexities of Edmonds housing needs. Our grateful thanks to Councilmembers Vivian Olson and Luke Distelhorst, our Council liaisons, for their commitment and support. To Gretchen Muller and her colleagues at Cascadia Consulting, we are grateful you were our guides and helped to keep us on task and moving forward.
Our final Commission report is dedicated to the memory and public service of Commission member John Reed who passed away during his tenure on the Housing Commission. John was a friend and a public servant who gave himself, his ideas and his hard work to the efforts of this Commission. He cared passionately about the people of Edmonds and the city’s future.

The Housing Commission voted on each draft recommendation we developed. Those with majority approval are now brought together for your consideration. There remain many other ideas worthy of future discussion.

Submitted by all members of the Edmonds Citizens Housing Commission
Recommended Policies
of the
Edmonds Citizens’ Housing Commission

The following is a list (by title) of the policies recommended by the Citizens’ Housing Commission at its January 28, 2021 public meeting. Each policy recommendation is included in its full form in this section.*

1. **MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING in SINGLE FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS**
2. **EQUITY HOUSING INCENTIVES**
3. **MEDIUM-DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING (SR-MD)**
4. **NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE SUBAREA PLANNING**
5. **CLUSTER/COTTAGE HOUSING**
6. **DETACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**
7. **MULTI-FAMILY TAX EXEMPTION (MFTE)**
8. **INCLUSIONARY ZONING**
9. **USE of EXISTING SALES TAX REVENUE FOR AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**
10. **COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION OF SALES AND USE TAX FOR HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES**
11. **EDMONDS-HASCO INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT**
12. **DEVELOP COMMUNITY HOUSING PARTNERS**
13. **MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN STANDARDS**
14. **UPDATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO INCLUDE “PARKING SOLUTIONS” AS A GOAL IN TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT SECTION**
15. **ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS IN COVENANTS AND DEEDS**

*The Additional Information language for each policy was provided by the committee that initially developed the policy.*
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING IN SINGLE FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

Policy:

Develop design requirements and zoning changes that allow for home-ownership of two attached single family homes (duplex or two-unit townhouses) in single family residential areas and are compatible with those neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods with significant tree canopy (pocket forest) should be considered exempt from being included in SF zone augmentation (Pocket Forest could be identified by the Tree Board with help from the local Sierra Club and assimilated into this zoning recommendation).

Additional Information:

Two attached single family homes, otherwise known as duplexes or two-unit townhomes, offer an alternative to typical detached single family homes. They help to address the need for smaller, more affordable housing choices in neighborhoods characterized by single-family homes. Over the past fifty years, the median square footage of new single family units has increased from about 1600 to 3100. This policy would allow two units within the same square footage. Structures containing two dwelling units designed to look like a detached single family home can have the exact same footprint as one single family home, and isn’t much different than having a single family home with an attached accessory dwelling unit. More and more cities across the country are allowing two attached single family houses in traditional single family residential areas to address the need for more affordable housing. One example locally is the City of Kirkland.

This policy also helps to balance out the housing unit types available with the household size need. Data provided to the Housing Commission in its early days showed that one or two person households’ account for 69% of the households in the city, yet only 37% of the housing is one or two bedrooms. At the same time, four person households make up 12% of the households and 21% of the housing are four bedroom units. Only 2% of the available housing is duplexes. Scaling housing to the demographics offers more affordable options for those who want to own a smaller house, such as seniors who want to downsize and first time homeowners.

Allowing two attached single family homes in single family areas would be considered up zoning. That term, however, is often associated with the image of allowing large apartment buildings. The Housing Type Committee considered the possibility of including triplex and four-plexes in earlier versions of this policy, but we narrowed it to two units based on feedback from the commissioners and the community. This policy does not include more than two attached single family units like the ones in the photos below located in the Edmonds/Lynnwood area. Allowing smaller homes in our single family neighborhoods makes them more affordable and accessible to middle income households that are seeking the amenities that we enjoy in Edmonds, i.e. excellent public schools and low crime. Not allowing smaller homes into our neighborhoods helps to create housing scarcity which in turn contributes to the continued high cost of housing.
This policy represents incremental change to increase the stock of missing middle housing in our city to more closely align housing needs with household size. With appropriate design requirements we can increase housing availability and help stabilize housing prices with changing the character of single family neighborhoods. (See graphics below.)

In addition, in Years 1 through 5 only 25% of Single-family zones in Edmonds receive augmentation. Years 5-10, another 25% of Single-family zones receive augmentation. Each 5 year milestones public engagement anbd assessment is revisited, facilitated by City Council, Planning Department and maybe also the Planning Board to see if policy change has been well received by our community, successful and/or if adjustments or expansions of policy need to be made at those milestones.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: EQUITY HOUSING INCENTIVES

Policy:

Develop incentives that apply to “missing middle” housing types city-wide that allow home-ownership for those at or below average median family income.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. “Missing Middle Housing” types provide diverse housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and cottage courts. These house-scale buildings fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods.

2. This policy is designed to promote homeownership of smaller homes for people who would not otherwise be able to afford purchasing a home in Edmonds.

3. The policy encourages racial equity housing options by allowing ownership of smaller type housing in neighborhoods where households that may occupy those homes were excluded from in the past.

Additional material to be made available.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: MEDIUM-DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING (SR-MD)

Policy:
Establish a new zoning type of single-family housing that allows for construction of zero-lot line duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes of only 1- or 2-story height located in specified areas of Edmonds that are:

• Contiguous to or along high-volume transit routes, or
• Sited next to Neighborhood Business (BN) zoning districts, or
• Close to schools or medical complexes

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
This policy acknowledges the value of single-family housing in Edmonds and recognizes a lack of attainable single-family housing options across the city. By providing additional single-family housing types the policy aims to increase housing opportunities for a more diverse group of individuals and families within the community, while preserving the existing neighborhood characteristics.

• SR-MD Key Facts:
  o Opportunity for smaller attached single-family housing by removing side setbacks.
  o Houses would be on a separate lot with a zero-lot line construction but sharing a common wall
  o Each individual home would have a front and back yard

• SR-MD Key Features:
  o Locates single-family housing in a manner that increases access to essential services
  o Would create housing at a lower cost per square foot than an individual single-family home and likely at a lower expense than larger multi-family buildings.
  o Encourage new residents to utilize nearby transit options.
  o Level-entry single story homes increase the opportunity for active mobile seniors.
  o The combination of attached and individual single-story homes provides visual interest by modulation and flexibility for seniors and people with special needs.
  o An important purpose for attached single-family homes is to specifically offer “missing middle” housing options that foster community cohesion, livability, and character.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE SUBAREA PLANNING

Policy:

Develop subarea plans to rethink areas zoned “Business Neighborhood” such as 5 Corners, Perrinville, etc. The subarea plans should create unique, thriving neighborhoods and social gathering points with the surrounding properties to integrate community values including missing middle housing, business opportunity and environmental stewardship in these areas. Additional areas that could be intentionally rethought are Westgate area and Downtown Business (BD) areas.

Additional Information:

The Neighborhood Village [NV] concept includes key features:

1. A focal point of the village should be a plaza for socializing and promoting local community activities, creating a path to grow the city economically, environmentally, and residentially.
2. The NV concept includes small commercial and mixed-use [live-work] buildings, in designated neighborhoods, often in the current BN zoning.
3. NVs are accessible by vehicular traffic, bike lanes and connected walkways.
4. These NVs would offer unique areas of Edmonds that are on or close to transit lines.
5. NV areas would include a variety of housing option segments, such as Medium Density Single-Family, cluster housing and artist housing, apartments, or condominiums, creating diverse housing and business opportunities. Development of these segments could be incentivized so that nearby single-family neighborhoods have separation from thriving business hubs.
6. These NVs would have comprehensive design guidelines to ensure they are developed in a planned and disciplined manner to enhance and reinvigorate the surrounding communities.
7. Businesses should be clustered independently and on the ground floor of multiple residential buildings, with the following features:
   a. Multiple residential buildings may include duplex, triplex and four-plex buildings which would be limited to two stories above commercial spaces.
   b. Multiple residential units of larger capacity, not to exceed 20 units in two stories above commercial spaces could also be a part of the NV. Modulation of these buildings should meet current and revised design standards.¹
   c. Parking should be landscaped at the perimeter and between rows of parking. Capacity could be determined by a percentage of the total lot area. Parking for NVs could be separate from, but integrated into, the residential parking area.
   d. NV development should accommodate site conditions such as but not limited to site contours, existing natural vegetation such as large trees.

¹ Revised design standards are developed by the zoning committee as a separate standard summary.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: CLUSTER/COTTAGE HOUSING

Policy:

Add Cluster/Cottage housing as an option within single-family or multi-family housing in Edmonds.

Additional Information:

Cluster/Cottage housing is a flexible approach to land development that can provide more affordable homes, especially to those in middle-income ranges. Currently, for Edmonds, clustered or clustering of housing is mentioned primarily in ECDC 20.35 PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT [PRD]. The policy idea being proposed would allow Cluster/Cottage housing options within single-family or multi-family zones for certain Edmonds areas where site conditions permit.

1. Small homes are clustered together in ways that can maximize open space, create common areas, limit traffic flow to ensure safe play areas for children, and encourage the walkways through the cluster development. These walkways can link to off-site trails and walkways and to off-site activity centers. Cluster housing offers an alternative to conventional lot-by-lot development that is achieved by allowing departures from lot dimension and setback requirements.

2. Housing units are often one-story units, but can be two-story units, and are smaller in size (650 to 1500 sq. ft.). One-story units can also be developed in ways to support independent living for seniors or individuals with unique mobility needs.

3. Allowing site development in clusters may also allow for less infrastructure development thus lowering costs. This will minimize stormwater run-off and erosion which also lessens the burden on the City Storm Sewer system.

4. Offering the Cluster/Cottage housing option would allow developers a more direct permitting process rather than solely through the more costly PRD process. This may lower overall costs for the housing. Density bonuses could incentivize builders by allowing them to build more small and affordable homes in these cluster communities.

5. Additionally, cluster housing could be used in proximity to Neighborhood Villages to increase the housing capacity, enhance the livability, and encourage walking between the housing and the Neighborhood Village. As an example, cluster housing could be developed near Swedish Edmonds medical complex to offer smaller, relatively more affordable housing for seniors and/or employees.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: DETACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Policy:

Allow either one attached or detached accessory unit on a property in the SFR area, with clear and definitive development requirements such as size, ownership, and parking, under the standard permitting process and not require a conditional use permit.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. This policy does not limit the detached accessory dwelling to any specific zone(s) within the City.
2. This policy allows the City to generate its own development and design requirements, and codes. These can be guided by existing standard for ADU's in Edmonds and may reference the standards already adopted by other neighboring cities and redined as needed specifcally for the current needs of Edmonds based upon favorable community feedback. Examples of requirements include: limitations on floor area based on lot size, yard setbacks, height limitations, and off street parking specifications, and ownership stipulations are some of the requirements the City should consider.
3. This policy makes it possible to develop detached accessory dwelling units without the added expense and trouble of a conditional use permit.

Additional material to be made available.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Draft Policy: MULTI-FAMILY TAX EXEMPTION (MFTE)

Policy:

Make significant changes to the MFTE as it currently exists to:

- Create a third low income eligible category for tenants whose income is 60% of MFI or less*
- Mandate that developers set aside 25% of all units in a project for MFTE (currently it is 20%) *
- Construction incentives for additional units/floors, if builders reserve 25% of units for MFTE tenants*
- Require MFTE eligible projects to include some two-bedroom and larger units*
- Increase the number of ‘residential target/urban center areas’ for MFTE developments*
- Create incentives for developers to renovate existing multi-family apartments to become MFTE eligible*
- Ask the Legislature to extend the current MFTE limits beyond 12 years, to preserve affordable housing*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Increase affordable rental housing opportunities for low/moderate income tenants

- MFTE can increase low/moderate/missing-middle/senior and special needs housing in Edmonds.
- This can increase housing options for people discriminated against in the past.
- It will not reduce property values in the long term.
- It may or may not increase tax burden on residential and property owners for the term of the exemption.
- It may reduce tax revenues for the city for the period of years a property is certified as MFTE.
- It may increase business opportunity as commercial space (taxable) may be built on ground floors.
- These units, built in ‘residential target/urban zone areas’ take into account accessibility to transit, shopping, parks, the environment, parking and other services.
- In properly zoned areas, MFTE will not affect community livability or neighborhood character.
- The city has authority to offer MFTE to smaller developments (less than the 20 minimum now set.)
- Lynnwood, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace, Everett have MFTE programs.
- Affordable housing research urges that rental costs exceed 30% of a tenant’s monthly income.
- There are no 2-3-bedroom units in Edmonds only MFTE property at Westgate.
- 75% of all MFTE units built in the state are studios or 1-bedroom.
- Only two areas in Edmond (Westgate and the Highway 99 subareas) are designated for MFTE properties.
- State law already allows Edmonds to create incentives for renovation of existing properties for MFTE.

*For additional information on the citations above, please see these research reports:
- The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee – 2019 report on MFTE.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: INCLUSIONARY ZONING

Policy: Require new developments (above a certain size) in Edmonds to provide a percentage of affordable housing units or require in lieu of fees that will go towards funding affordable housing elsewhere in the city.

Additional Information:
Overall purpose of policy is to leverage profitability of new developments to increase supply of affordable housing units and funding for affordable housing development; to create more inclusive and economically diverse communities.

Specific policy proposal includes:

- Applicable to residential developments with more than 10 units and commercial spaces larger than 4,000 sf (chargeable at 5–10% of floor area based on location, zoning, etc.).
- Developments must provide 10-20% affordable units on site or pay an in lieu of fees.
- Rental units must serve households that earn below 60% AMI. Ownership units must serve households that earn 80-100% AMI. Units must remain affordable for 50 years.
- Projects that do not build affordable units on site must pay ‘In Lieu of’ fees that will go towards an Affordable housing fund. The ‘In Lieu of’ fees will be calculated based on the use and square footage of the building. The ‘in lieu of’ fees should be set high enough that motivates developers to build units on site.
- The Affordable Housing Fund can be used to build new affordable housing, renovate existing units, offer landlord protection or assurance, or used by the city to sub-contract with housing agencies, social service or religious agencies, or Community Land Trusts to build new affordable housing.
- Participation in this program would be mandatory and can be offered along with incentives such as density bonus increase, parking ratio reduction and expedited processing. It can be applied to geographically targeted areas within Edmonds, such as areas where zoning increase is proposed, or in transit-oriented areas.
- Inclusionary Zoning is a great tool to provide housing for the missing middle in Edmonds.
- Research shows that inclusion of mixed income housing can provide for increased community livability or neighborhood character and provide better outcomes for children and families.
- There are over 900 inclusionary housing programs in 25 states. Several of our neighboring cities such as Federal way, Redmond, Issaquah, Sammamish, Seattle and Portland utilize this program.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: USE OF EXISTING SALES TAX REVENUE FOR AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Policy:
Per RCW 82.14.540, use the City of Edmonds’ share of the existing state sales tax that is reserved for affordable housing:
  a. In the short term, to provide rental assistance to low-income households in Edmonds that have been impacted by the coronavirus
  b. In the longer term, to contribute to a regional organization, which could be the County, the Alliance for Housing Affordability (AHA), or a partnership of cities in southwest Snohomish County with the goal of the revenue going toward affordable housing in the sub-region.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Under RCW 82.14.540, housing and services may be provided only to persons whose income is at or below 60% of the median income of the city or county utilizing the tax revenue.

Counties over 400,000 population and cities over 100,000 population may use the revenue for only:
  a. Acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing affordable housing, which may include new units within an existing structure or facilities providing supportive housing services under RCW 71.24.385 (behavioral health organizations);
  b. Funding the operations and maintenance costs of new units of affordable or supportive housing.

For counties under 400,000 population and cities under 100,000 population, the revenue may be used for the purposes above AND for providing rental assistance to tenants. The estimated population is over 800,000 for Snohomish County, and 42,000 for City of Edmonds.

The bill sets a maximum tax rate of 0.0146%. The County is eligible to receive the maximum tax rate of the taxable retail sales (TRS) in unincorporated Snohomish County and could potentially receive 0.0073% or 0.0146% of TRS in individual Cities. The amount the County could potentially receive through TRS in Cities is dependent on each individual City and if they choose to participate or not. WA Department of Revenue currently sets maximum annual capacity at $1,343,274.79 for Snohomish County, and $71,931.05 for City of Edmonds.

Jurisdictions may bond against the revenue that would be produced over a period of 20 years to provide an up-front investment. Under this revenue source, Edmonds’ 20-year bond revenue would be $1,438,621.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION OF SALES AND USE TAX FOR HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES

Policy:
Advocate for Snohomish County Council to adopt the optional 0.1% sales tax as allowed by state law to provide affordable and supportive housing for low-income households.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[RCW 82.14.530](https:// laws.gov.wa.us/cwlaw/RCW82.14.530) (otherwise known as HB 1590) allows cities and counties to adopt a 0.1% sales tax (or 10 cents for every $100) for affordable and supportive housing, facilities, and services that benefit people earning less than 60% of the area median income of the county, and who are persons with behavioral disabilities, veterans, senior citizens, families who are homeless or at-risk of being homeless, unaccompanied homeless youth or young adults, persons with disabilities, or domestic violence survivors.

The Metropolitan King County Council voted on October 13, 2020 to implement a 0.1% sales tax to fund housing for people who have been chronically homeless.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy:  EDMONDS-HASCO INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

Policy:
Execute an interlocal agreement (ILA) with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO) allowing HASCO to operate within Edmonds geographic boundaries.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
The Housing Authority of Snohomish County is the public housing agency of Snohomish County and receives federal funding to acquire, develop, and operate low-income housing. To do so, HASCO must have an agreement with each city in which it operates.

HASCO owns three properties in Edmonds. Some areas of the city are not currently covered by an agreement with HASCO, so the agency cannot acquire property there without an extensive process involving the City Council. This policy would allow HASCO to better compete in the market to purchase property to build and preserve affordable homes in Edmonds.

While an ILA would reduce red tape and timelines for property acquisition, HASCO would still be required to meet all permitting and development requirements.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: DEVELOP COMMUNITY HOUSING PARTNERS

Policy:

- Edmonds needs more affordable housing options for:
  - low/moderate income residents (especially those who earn less than 50% of AMI.)
  - special needs residents
  - seniors
  - veterans
- Construction and land costs make building low income housing economically challenging.
- This policy establishes community partnerships with for-profit/non-profits to build affordable housing:
  - public agencies
  - neighboring communities
  - housing/for-profit/non-profit groups
  - community care providers (transitional housing for patients with ‘no safe place to go’ while recovering from hospitalization)
  - Edmonds would establish regulations for these partnerships
  - The city contract would contract with those partners to manage this housing

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Edmonds should develop community partners throughout South Snohomish County to create/build affordable housing options for low/moderate income residents.

- Potential partnerships already exist in South Snohomish County.
  - The cities of Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace, Brier
  - ‘Homes & Hope’ Community Land Trust in Lynnwood
  - Housing Authority of Snohomish County
  - The Alliance for Housing Affordability
  - Habitat for Humanity
- Partnerships can seek private grants/state/federal funding.
- Create incentive opportunities for land donation from private owners.
- Explore ‘surplus’ property of the School District, PUD, other entities.
- Existing agencies can be contracted to manage projects.
- Apply for Washington State Housing Trust Fund monies.
- Some funding from existing sales tax revenue is already dedicated for low income housing.
- Work with the county to create additional sales tax revenue as authorized by state law.
- Satisfy all zoning criteria for housing/apartments/MFTE renovation properties.
- Meet needs for services, parking, access to transit, green space, environmental impacts.
- Additional community resources available from Appendix E. Edmonds Housing Strategy (2018)
- **Our Community | Verdant** – representing Public Hospital District #2/Swedish-Edmonds
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN STANDARDS

Policy:

Enhance current design standards of new multi-family dwellings to maintain and enhance the unique characteristics of the Edmonds community. Building types would include mixed use buildings, small multi-family buildings and larger multi-family buildings.

Additional Information:

This policy creates design standards to achieve an end solution that is visually appealing and reflects a human scale, resulting in compatibility with the City of Edmonds neighborhoods. This summary is a supplement to current zoning design standards.

1. Building visual interest:
   a. Vertical and horizontal modulation. This condition is important for larger scale buildings.
   b. Site and building landscaping, ground level: At entry and in courtyards.
   c. Landscaping integrated into the building where stepped modulation on decks of units and common area decks occur shall be enhanced with free-standing or hanging pots and/or built-in platforms or planters.
   d. In common areas, roof decks and modulation step-back decks enhance livability.

2. Step-backs/Incentives: Street and alley sides
   a. Maintain the current 3-story height limit. Step-back the upper floors. Stepping back the 3rd Floor provides the developer the opportunity to increase income from creative use of space that may increase building costs. The higher income from the use of creative space will help offset affordable housing income on the lower floors.
   b. Further incentives would include a partial 4th Floor (not within view corridors). Step-back all sides to provide a combination of common and private areas for the 4th Floor. This 4th Floor reward provides a developer another opportunity to increase income from the above items that will result in building cost increases and to offset affordable housing loss of income.
   c. Height exception: Elevators and Stairwells
   d. Color and material variations should be used to complement modulation.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: UPDATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO INCLUDE "PARKING SOLUTIONS" AS A GOAL IN TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT SECTION

Policy:

Adopt LANGUAGE that includes Parking Solutions as a goal defined in our Transportation Element under the City of Edmonds Comprehensive Plan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Current traffic impact fees assessed by the City to new traffic contributing developments to our community currently do not allow these fees to be allocated to solve parking solutions in our community. The irony of imposing fees calculated on the anticipated traffic impact to our community by newly established development then consequently not allowing parking solutions to be one of current possible uses of these funds collected is a flawed policy. Simply updating language in our Comprehensive plan would allow flexibility for some of these traffic impact fees to be allocated for parking solutions more efficiently (examples of parking solutions: leasing parking lots, shuttle services, trolley services, purchasing land for parking lots, and low profile parking structures).
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy:

ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS IN CONVENANTS AND DEEDS

Policy:

Prior to the sale or transfer of any property in Edmonds, all discriminatory language in any associated covenants and/or deeds must be legally removed from said documents.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Historically, many parcels of property in Edmonds had legally binding language prohibiting the sale of said property to individuals based on their race, religion, sex or other discriminatory provisions. Covenants restricting ownership by race were ruled unenforceable by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948, and housing discrimination was made illegal by Congress in 1968 under the Fair Housing Law. While today enforcing these documents is illegal, none-the-less they still exist and are passed down to successive property owners at the time of sale. This policy is targeted to break that cycle. State legislation (SHB 2514) has recently been enacted with provisions to modify these documents through a “restrictive covenant modification” document filed with the county that legally strikes and voids the unenforceable provisions from the deed. This policy would mandate that property owners file a restrictive covenant modification document with the county (at no cost) prior to the sale or transfer of said property.

While this doesn’t erase history, it does provide a means to state our values for future Edmonds residents and property owners.
SUPPLEMENTAL SET OF POLICY PROPOSALS

This section provides a set of seven policy proposals that the Edmonds Citizens’ Housing Commission found worthy of the City Council’s consideration but that did not necessarily fit within the Commission’s specific mission, as identified in Resolution # 1427.

The policy ideas in this section have the following short titles:

- IMPROVED TENANT PROTECTIONS
- CHILDCARE VOUCHER PROGRAM
- RENTER’S CHOICE SECURITY DEPOSIT
- LOW-INCOME EMERGENCY REPAIR PROGRAM
- PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS
- SIMPLIFY ZONING CODE LANGUAGE
- STREAMLINE PERMITTING PROCESS

The City Council is encouraged to explore this supplemental set of policy ideas at the appropriate time.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: IMPROVED TENANT PROTECTIONS

Policy: Adopt measures to improve residential tenant protections, such as:

- Just Cause Eviction Ordinance: limiting the grounds upon which a landlord may evict a tenant to a “just cause” or valid business reason
- Prohibiting arbitrary or retaliatory evictions
- Prohibiting evictions based upon the tenant’s status as a member of the military, first responder, senior, family member, health care provider, or educator
- Prohibiting retaliation and discrimination in lease renewal actions
- Adopting penalties for violation and procedures to protect the rights of landlords and tenants

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Seattle has had a Just Cause Eviction Ordinance since 1980. Federal Way and Burien have more recently enacted eviction protection legislation, and a statewide bill was proposed in the 2019-2020 legislative session.

More information about just cause eviction protections can be found at Local Housing Solutions and PolicyLink’s All-In Cities Initiative

The City must determine what types of rental properties and landlords (e.g. small vs. large) should be regulated in this way. The City must also determine what reasons would constitute a just cause eviction. Examples can be found in the links to other communities’ approaches, above.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy:  CHILDcare Voucher PROGRAM UNDER THE DIRECTION OF NEWLY ESTABLISHED HUMAN SERVICE MANAGER

Policy:
Recommend Council explores Childcare Voucher program for people who work and/or live in Edmonds under the direction of the City’s newly established Human Services manager.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Not everyone who works in Edmonds can afford to live in Edmonds, that’s just the facts of life, and the geography constraints of a small seaside town of just 8 square miles. We as a community can be more creative and make Edmonds more desirable to work in and perhaps make it more achievable to afford to live in for some in Edmonds by offering Childcare subsidy voucher program.
Policy Recommendation

Short Title of Policy Proposal: RENTER’S CHOICE SECURITY DEPOSIT

Specific Policy Proposal: Reduce the up-front cost of security deposits for renters while keeping landlords whole for costs that are normally covered by such deposits. The policy may be implemented through the following steps:

- Allow tenants of all income levels choices in how to pay those security deposits.
- Allow tenant applicants to pay by:
  - Buying rental security insurance
  - Installment payment of security deposits - at least six equal monthly payments.
  - Pay ‘reduced’ security deposit of no more than 50% of one months’ rent.
- All rental properties of 25 or more units will offer the Renter’s Choice program.
- Before signing a rental agreement, the landlord provides tenant written notice of the Choice plan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Purpose of policy proposal: remove a rental barrier for all tenants regardless of income.

Key Factors Considered:
- Landlords charge prospective tenants security deposits which may be as high as two months’ rent.
- Renter’s Choice eliminates a barrier to rentals for all tenants regardless of income.
- It is likely to increase housing options for people who have been discriminated against in the past.
- Changing the way security deposit fees are paid can save significant money for all tenants.
- That puts money back into the local economy.
- Security Deposit insurance is available from a number of companies.
- The proposal is based on a unique policy developed for the city of Cincinnati, Ohio in 2020.
- Cincinnati got ‘buy in’ from landlords who helped develop the policy.
- It provides landlords with protection for any damage to their property.
- There are also legal remedies for landlords, if tenants violate the terms of the agreement.
- The policy can be expanded to cover all landlords, regardless of the number of units they control.
- Edmonds has the authority to regulate rental fees, though it has not done so in the past.
- State law recognizes that “…certain tenant application fees should be prohibited”. *
- State law recognizes that “…guidelines should be established for the imposition of other tenant fees”.


Additional research Information:
- Hard copy attached of City of Cincinnati Renter’s Choice Law.
- Hard copies attached of media articles on the Cincinnati Renter’s Choice Law.
- Virginia, New Hampshire, New York City and Atlanta are considering this policy.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy:  LOW-INCOME EMERGENCY HOME REPAIR PROGRAM

Policy:

Fund a program, or contribute funding to an existing program such as Homage, to assist low-income homeowners with emergency home repairs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Emergency home repair programs correct housing conditions that threaten low-income homeowners’ safety, such as failing plumbing or heating systems, rotten floors, or a leaking roof. Beyond home insurance coverage, home repair costs can typically be covered by a bank-issued home equity loan or line of credit. However, banks may reject loan applications due to bad credit or lack of income. With the assistance of these repairs, residents are better able to remain safely housed for as long as possible.

Other emergency home repair models offer financial assistance, in grants or below-market-rate loans, for emergency home repairs to low-income homeowners. Homage’s Minor Home Repair program serves low- and moderate-income elderly and special needs homeowners in Snohomish County. Funding for this program is provided by the Snohomish County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the City of Everett CDBG Program, the City of Marysville CDBG Program, city funding from City of Bothell, and other private donations. Edmonds’ participation could better fund this program, or potentially help expand it to serve more low-income homeowners.

Other local example programs may be seen in the following webpages:

- Sound Generations
- City of Renton
- Rebuilding Together
- City of Seattle
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Policy:
Extend the property tax exemption program currently available to seniors and the disabled to low income households.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
This policy would mirror the current property tax exemption available to qualifying seniors and disabled households. Those homeowners with an AMI below TBD would be eligible subject to a qualifying criteria similar to what’s currently defined in:

https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1387/Senior-Citizen-Disabled-Person-Exemption-Program-Publication?bidId=

This policy results in a direct benefit to qualifying households, thus fostering home ownership with its associated wealth creating opportunities.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: SIMPLIFY ZONING CODE LANGUAGE

Policy:
Use diagrams, pictures, and tables in place of text where applicable. Use plain language where text is necessary.
Policy Recommendation

Short Name of Policy: STREAMLINE PERMITTING PROCESS

Policy:
Reduce the number of conditional uses to streamline the permit process.