

## **Section 2**

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# **Residential Land Use Element**

# RESIDENTIAL LAND USE ELEMENT SECTION TWO CONTENTS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This element of the Sacramento General Plan discusses residential land uses. A complete discussion of housing can be found in the next section. Other land use element sections in this Plan discuss commerce and industry land uses and public facility and service land uses.

## **OVERALL GOALS**

The following goals summarize the general direction in meeting the residential land use and housing needs for the 1986 General Plan:

### **Goal A**

**Maintain and improve the quality and character of residential neighborhoods in the City.**

### **Goal B**

**Provide affordable housing for all income groups.**

### **Goal C**

**Meet the fair share regional housing needs for all economic segments within the City.**

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **PATTERN AND IMPORTANCE OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Residential land use accounts for approximately 37 percent or 32,270 acres of the existing and designated land area in the City of Sacramento. Since residential uses consume a significant portion of the land use in the City, its location and character help define the form of the total urban environment. Existing residential development has been accomplished by locating higher densities within the Central City and along major streets. Single family uses and lower densities have generally been located in a manner that minimizes intrusion from more intensive development. At the present time, residential development is occurring on the urban fringe and through redevelopment efforts within the core area.

### **TYPE OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT**

Residential development in Sacramento consists of a variety of housing types and styles. The types of housing development consist of single-family detached dwellings in rural, suburban and urban settings, multiple family complexes, high-rise residential structures and group quarters. The style and character of housing development on Sacramento is diverse and varies from one community to another depending on the era in which the development occurred and the economic conditions affecting the property at that time. Figure 1 illustrates the variety of residential developments found in the City.

Figure 1



TOWNHOUSE CONDOMINIUM



MOBILE HOME PARK



VICTORIAN



GARDEN APARTMENTS



MIXED RESIDENTIAL OFFICE



PERIOD SINGLE FAMILY



HIGH-RISE MULTIFAMILY



CONVENTIONAL SINGLE FAMILY

**VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS  
WITHIN THE CITY**

## **RESIDENTIAL AGE AND DETERIORATION**

The age of the housing stock provides one indicator of the condition of the housing available. Over 50% of the City's housing was built prior to 1960. Many of these older units have been well maintained and are in prime residential areas. Other older and new units have not been well maintained and are in need of rehabilitation or replacement.

Year Unit Built	Number of Units Built	% of Total Housing Stock
1970 to 1980	28,829	23.4%
1960 to 1970	25,240	20.5%
1950 to 1960	26,557	21.5%
1949 - earlier	42,630	34.6%

SOURCE: 1980 CENSUS

Some older neighborhoods are experiencing blighting influences which distract from the overall residential character of the City. Some of the housing stock in these areas is either substandard or in need of rehabilitation. According to the 1980 Census, there were 4,390 substandard residential units Citywide. Increased code enforcement and progress to assist in rehabilitation efforts have helped subdue the growing incidence of neighborhood deterioration. Some older neighborhoods are, however, still experiencing the adverse effects of blighting conditions which hamper development in these areas.

## **PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The redevelopment of the Railyards/Richards will eventually transition 236 acres of non-residential land to residential uses. Table 1a-1 identifies the redevelopment potential of developed non-residential land to residential use. The potential development capacity of the Railyards/Richards area will add approximately 6,660 units to the Central City Plan area.

Community Plan Area	Rural Estates 0-4 du/ac	Low Density 4-15 du/ac	Medium Density 15-29 du/ac	High Density 29+ du/ac	Area Total
Central City	0	0	14	222	236

Note: These figures represent gross acres in the Railyards/Richards Redevelopment Project area.  
Source: Draft EIR Railyards Specific Plan/Richards Boulevard Area Plan and ROMA Design Group.

## **RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES**

Residential land use categories have been structured to provide consistency between the General Plan, community plans, and zoning. The Implementation Section explains the relationship of these General Plan categories to the community plan categories and zoning. A range of residential categories is identified on the General Plan Land Use Map. The minimum size use shown is five or more acres. Smaller residential developments may exist while not shown on the map. (A set of larger scale maps showing smaller residential developments is available for public review in the City's Planning Division.) The intensity of residential developments is determined by the City's Zoning Ordinance which regulates the height of buildings, building setbacks, and lot coverage for each residential use.

The residential categories provide information and guidance for the development community in determining how to use land, and provide for market adjustments to changing consumer needs. The following land use designations are used for General Plan purposes:

### **Rural Estates**

This designation is intended for property with environmentally sensitive conditions or where more varied housing types are needed to balance residential opportunities within a community. The density ranges for this designation are from unit per 0.5 to 4 net acres. Typical development on these sites consists of small ranchettes or single family homes in rural settings (see Figure 2B).

### **Low Density Residential**

This designation allows residential uses within densities from 4-15 dwelling units per net acre. Typical development in these areas will consist of single family detached units, duplexes, halfplexes, townhouses, condominiums, zero lot line units and cluster houses. Since General Plan designations include large areas of land, other related neighborhood uses and specific residential densities may be indicated in community plans (see Figure 2A). The low density residential land use designation in North Natomas allows for densities as low as three dwelling units per net acre. Within the Jacinto Creek Planning Area the Low Density Residential General Plan designation allows residential uses with densities from 4-20 dwelling units per net acre. Minimum average target density within ¼ mile of a light rail transit station is 12 dwelling units per net acre.

### **Medium Density Residential**

This designation will generally consist of multiple family dwellings with densities ranging from 16-29 dwelling units per net acre. Development under this designation will consist of condominiums, garden apartments and light density apartment uses. Some commercial or office use may be located within multiple family districts since an overlap of land uses is expected in higher density residential districts which are located along major streets. Specific land use designations for each parcel may be indicated in community plans (see Figure 2B). North Natomas areas designated on the General Plan as medium density residential and located within 1/4 mile of a light rail station or bus transit center are allowed to exceed the maximum density range of 29 dwelling units per net acre. Minimum average target density within ¼ mile of a light rail transit station is 22 dwelling units per net acre.

### High Density Residential

This designation refers to areas planned for development that consists of a mixture of residential densities along with limited commercial or office use. The density range for this residential category is from 30 to 156 units per net acre. This type of development is most commonly found within the Central City and in select areas along major streets and transit corridors in other portions of the City. Although this designation indicates predominantly residential uses, other uses may be allowed as indicated in community plans. An example of an area appropriate for this type of mixed residential and commercial or office development would be “R” Street and the Southern Pacific Railyards site within the Central City. The mixed use concept provides for close in living which will help reduce transportation needs for those living close to major employment center (see Figure 2B). Minimum target density within ¼ mile of a light rail transit station is 30 dwelling units per net acre.

### Mixed Use

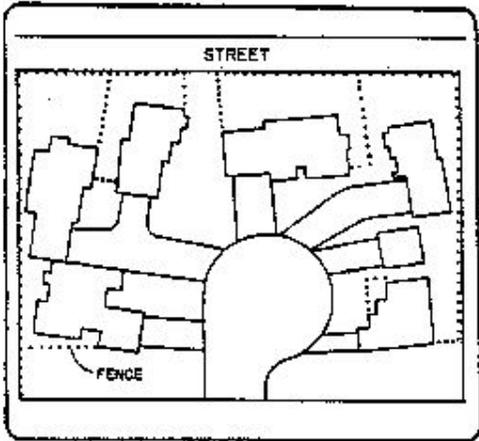
Includes a mixture of office, commercial, open space, and medium and high density residential uses. In some larger, more intense development, light manufacturing and research oriented activities may be appropriate. These uses are more ideally suited for land within the Central City, or adjacent to a high activity node along a light rail transit line or freeway corridor. The Southern Pacific Railyards site, within the Central City, and the Employment Center areas designated in North Natomas are examples of mixed use development. Minimum average target density for mixed use projects with housing within ¼ mile of a light rail transit station is 22 dwelling units per net acre.

### Residential Mixed Use

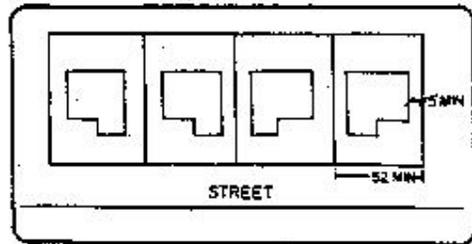
This designation refers to areas planned for development that consists of a mixture of residential densities, commercial and or office use. This designation is different from the High Density Residential designation which is a residential designation. The Residential Mixed Use designation is intended for Mixed Use development with both Residential and commercial uses. Minimum average target density within ¼ mile of a light rail transit station is 22 dwelling units per net acre.

Figure 2-A

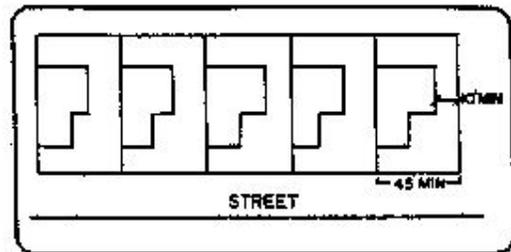
Single Family-  
Patio Homes



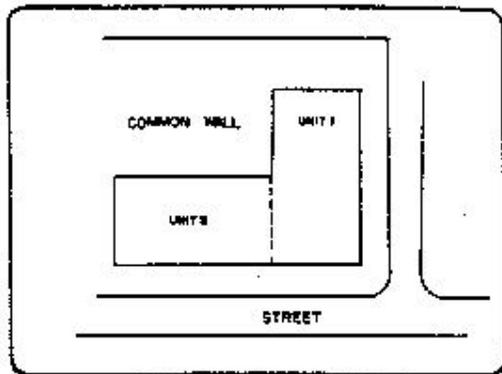
Single Family Detached



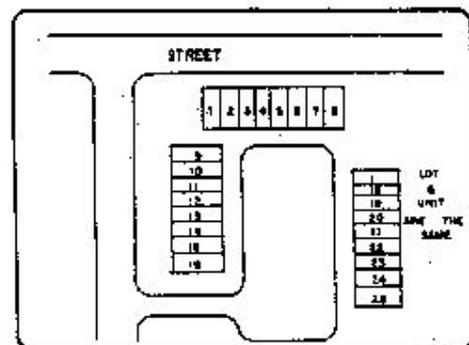
Single Family - Zero Lot line



Duplex



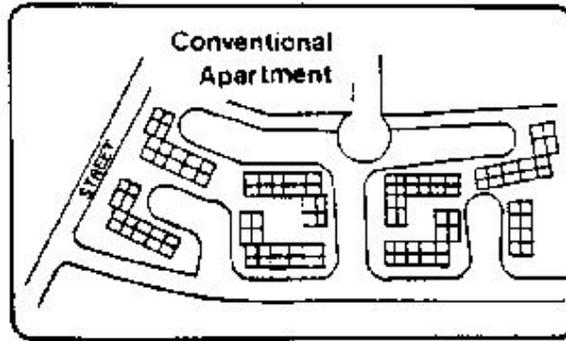
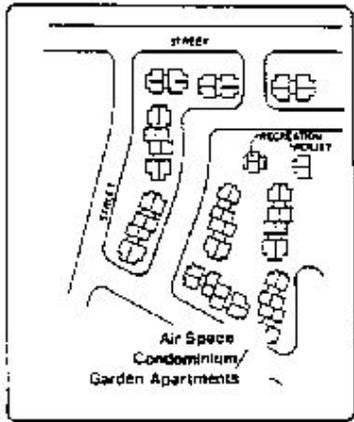
Townhouse-  
Condominium



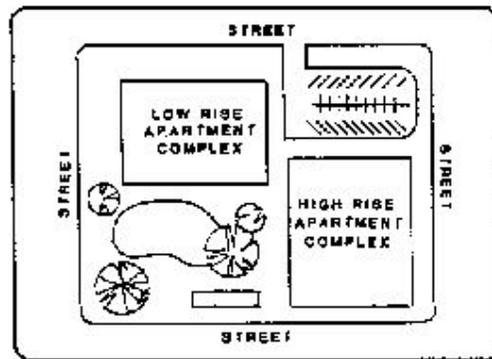
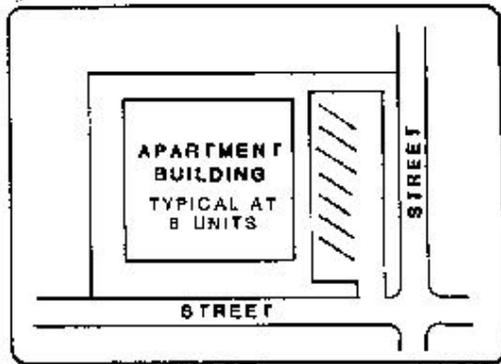
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

EXAMPLES OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
FOR EACH RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORY

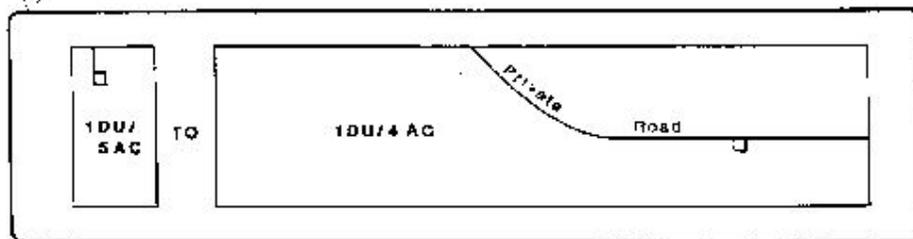
Figure 2-B



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



RURAL ESTATES

EXAMPLES OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
FOR EACH RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORY

Planning and Building Department  
City of Sacramento

GP

GENERAL PLAN  
update 1995-2008

## **SPECIFIC GOALS, POLICIES, ACTIONS**

### **Goal A**

**Improve the quality of residential neighborhoods Citywide by protecting, preserving and enhancing their character.**

- Neighborhood character and identity are important qualities in the urban environment. These qualities help define the parameters of each neighborhood and distinguish each sub-community from another. The preservation and maintenance of neighborhood character and identity is an essential factor to consider when new development proposed in an existing community.
- There are currently a number of programs available in the City to assist in redevelopment, preservation and rehabilitation efforts. These programs have been beneficial in eliminating blight and upgrading the quality of targeted areas (see Section 1 of the General Plan). Some areas are still experiencing the adverse effects of blight and additional efforts may be necessary in these locations.
- Certain areas in the City are subject to design standards that control the quality of development. Development in some newer communities is guided by Planned Unit Development criteria, design standards set forth in new Community Plans, and in Design Review Districts. Yet, areas which are substantially developed and where zoning is in place are generally provided only minimum standards to guide residential development. Measures designed to improve the overall design standards could improve the quality of new residential development and the total urban environment.
- Improper land use mixes such as nonconforming commercial and industrial uses in residential neighborhoods distract from the residential character of the neighborhood and add to its decline. In addition, debris, outdoor storage and signs associated with these activities create a poor environment for residential use.
- One of the first signs of neighborhood decline is poor maintenance. Broken fences, windows and porch railings in addition to faded paint can have an adverse effect on the quality of a neighborhood. Limited rehabilitation efforts in these areas would go a long way in improving the quality of Sacramento's housing stock. Some older neighborhoods experience the adverse effect of deteriorating infrastructure such as sidewalks, streets, and public places adding further to their decline. A concerted effort to direct funding for improvement in these neighborhoods is essential in improving neighborhood quality.

### **Policy 1**

**Continue to target code enforcement efforts by identifying and prioritizing neighborhoods experiencing code violations.**

### **Policy 2**

**Actively promote the following existing City programs that provide assistance and information on maintenance and beautification for residential development:**

- Code enforcement programs and information.

- Rehabilitation programs available through the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency for single family development.
- Rental rehabilitation program.

Policy 3

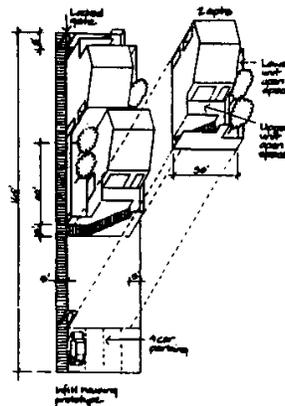
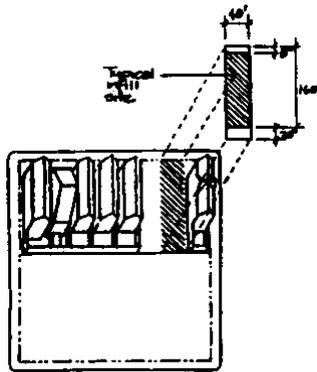
**Utilize established Multiple Family Design Guidelines in reviewing multiple family development on a Citywide basis.**

Policy 4

**Promote the reuse of abandoned structures which are sound or can be renovated for residential use to ensure neighborhood vitality.**

Adjacent to McClellan Air Force Base the following criteria will be used when reviewing residential infill development projects:

- The proposal is consistent with General Plan and Community Plan land use policies;
- The proposal is permitted under the zoning designation for the property;
- The proposal is located within 1,000 feet of surrounding development of similar uses;



- The development project is compatible with surrounding residential development;
- The proposed project will not expand the perimeter of the developed area;
- Projects developed under infill provisions will be eligible for certain incentives other than a density bonus which will not be appropriate in this specific location due to factors affecting this property.

Policy 5

**Continue redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts in existing target areas and identify other areas experiencing blighting conditions. Explore methods to expand public or**

**private rehabilitation efforts in potential improvement areas and in areas of opportunity or reuse identified in the General Plan (see exhibits located elsewhere in the General Plan).**

Policy 6

**Prohibit the intrusion of incompatible uses into residential neighborhoods through adequate buffers, screening and zoning practices that do not preclude pedestrian access to arterials that may serve as transit corridors.**

Policy 7

**Protect and preserve architectural, cultural, and historic structures through the existing preservation program.**

Policy 8

**Support efforts to develop established guidelines for residential development fronting on a major street.**

**Goal B**

**Provide affordable housing opportunities for all income household categories throughout the City.**

- Overall the City provides a diverse selection of residential uses which help meet the housing needs of a varied population. Although a variety of housing type, price range, and style are available within the City, some of the individual communities are in need of more diverse residential opportunities. This imbalance in housing opportunities creates disparity between communities, may impede planned development, and restricts locational opportunities for lower income persons. The City supports efforts to provide affordable housing opportunities in all of its` communities.
- As with other major urban areas in the United States, there continues to be a shortage of affordable housing in Sacramento for lower income households. The need can be expected to increase as additional low paying jobs are created in new commercial and industrial developments accompanying economic growth. The City has participated in a number of programs to assist in providing such housing. This is a problem that requires continued attention and new solutions.

Policy 1

**Establish methods to provide more balanced housing opportunities in communities that lack a full range of housing opportunities.**

### Policy 2

**Support existing programs which provide affordable housing opportunities for lower income households and seek new ways to increase this housing type.**

**Action a)** Direct the Housing and Redevelopment Agency to explore local funding methods to assist in providing housing affordable to lower income households to meet current and future needs.

### Policy 3

**Develop a monitoring system to track residential development in each Community Plan area and to determine build out of each type of residential use category.**

### Policy 3a

**Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a monitoring system on housing development will help in meeting needs for child care facilities in growing communities and recommend methods to meet these child care needs.**

### Policy 4

**Continue to regulate the conversion of rental housing into condominiums in Community Plan areas to ensure maintenance of an adequate supply of rental housing.**

### Goal C

**Develop residential land uses in a manner that is efficient and utilizes existing and planned urban resources.**

- Approximately 55,184 new residential units are projected for the next 20 years to house the growing population in Sacramento. The timing, density and location of residential development is important in ensuring efficient utilization of existing urban resources.
- There are currently 10,950 acres of vacant land designated for residential use in the City. Underutilized land or infill sites total 1,560 acres. Development potential of this land varies depending on densities used and the percentage of available infill sites that are utilized for this purpose. Some neighborhoods are also capable of supporting more intensive development than currently exists due to recent changes in service capacities and access. Utilization of these existing resources will help revitalization efforts and ensure efficient use of urban land.
- The redevelopment of the Railyards/Richards area provides opportunities for the conversion of 232 acres of non-residential land to residential uses. The development capacity of this area adds 6,660 residential units to the Central City Plan area.

### Policy 1

**Identify areas where increased densities, land use changes or mixed uses would help support existing services, transportation facilities, transit, and light rail. Then proceed with necessary General Plan land use changes for property with service capacities adequate to support more intensive residential development.**

### Policy 2

**Identify areas of potential change where density development would be appropriate along major thoroughfares, commercial strips and near light rail stations, and modify plans to accommodate this change.**

### Policy 3

**Modify the Subdivision Ordinance to accommodate smaller lot sizes for single family development.**

### Policy 4

**Promote infill development as a means to meet future housing needs by expanding the benefits for this type of development and actively promote infill development in identified infill areas through outreach programs designed to inform the development community and property owners of this program.**

- The infill designation applies to all commercially designated property in the Alhambra Corridor for residential development;
- The infill designation applies to all medium and high density residential designated property in the Alhambra Corridor;
- The infill designation applies to all Low Density Residential Designations provided that increased densities are not part of the use of this designation.

Adjacent to McClellan Air Force Base the following criteria will be used when reviewing residential infill development projects:

- The proposal is consistent with General Plan and Community Plan land use policies;
- The proposal is permitted under the zoning designation for the property;
- The property is located within 1,000 feet of surrounding development of similar uses;
- The development project is compatible with surrounding residential development;
- The proposed project will not expand the perimeter of the development area;
- Projects developed under infill provisions will be eligible for certain incentives other than a density bonus which will not be appropriate in this specific location due to factors affecting this property.

#### Policy 5

**Continue to support existing efforts to provide varied housing opportunities by allowing secondary units on single family lots (Granny Flat Ordinance) and deep lot provisions which allows further development of excessively large lots.**

#### Policy 6

**Continue to support redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts that add new and reconditioned units to the housing stock while eliminating neighborhood blight and deterioration.**

#### Policy 7

**Continue to support energy conservation measures incorporated in the subdivision ordinance and during the review of building permits.**

#### Goal D

**Maintain orderly residential growth in areas where urban services are readily available or can be provided in an efficient cost effective manner.**

- Constraints on local government's taxing ability have greatly affected the City's ability to provide basic infrastructure and services for newly developing areas. Until adequate infrastructure funding is available for outward expansion, projected housing needs can be more efficiently met in areas with existing services or where services can be logically extended in a cost effective manner.
- Existing land designated for residential uses provides adequate development potential to meet housing projections for the next year 20 year period.
- Development outside of the City can greatly influence development pressures and future land use decisions within the City boundary. Efforts to coordinate land use decisions with neighboring jurisdictions could help eliminate improper land uses adjacent to residential development

#### Policy 1

**Consider a joint task force comprised of council members and supervisors from the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento and from the counties of Yolo and Sacramento to develop an effective process to ensure coordinated planning efforts between the City and neighboring jurisdictions.**

#### Policy 2

**Approve residential development only where City services are provided in a manner which meet the needs of the proposed development.**

## **Goal E**

**Provide appropriate residential opportunities to meet the City's required fair share of the regions housing needs.**

- The Sacramento Area Council of Governments has developed a Regional Fair Share Housing Allocations Plan as required by State law. This plan allocates a fair share of projected household population growth by income category to the City and surrounding jurisdictions.
- The City through provisions of this General Plan, specifically the Housing Element, accommodates the fair share allocations.

### **Policy 1**

**Provide housing opportunities in newly developing communities and in large mixed use developments in an effort to reduce travel time to and from employment centers.**

### **Policy 2**

**Use mixed use housing and employment centers to help meet housing needs and reduce traffic in new development within the City.**

### **Policy 3**

**Establish guidelines for mixed use projects and allow these uses in urbanized areas of the City where intensive development is planned.**

- Since the City is a major regional employment center, it is expected that housing for many of the workers will not be located within the City. In an effort to minimize commute time, efforts to provide housing opportunities within a reasonable distance of employment centers should be considered.
- One way to ensure that needed housing opportunities are provided within highly urbanized newly developing areas is to encourage the use of varied residential densities and to allow for mixed residential and commercial uses. In addition to these housing opportunities, the encouragement of infill development will help in the City's efforts to meet regional housing needs for future growth.
- Residential and non-residential land uses, such as industrial projects, adjacent to one another sometimes are a source of pollution, congestion, and visual problems for those residing in a neighborhood. Guidelines should be established which address these