

7.0 Housing

Housing is one of the most critical elements in this General Plan because Mesa is closely identified with its residential neighborhoods and the feelings of pride and security that those neighborhoods create.

As the population of Mesa grows by an estimated 62% during the next 25 years, it is critical to assure that a safe, enjoyable, and affordable housing stock will be provided for this new population.



Along with this challenge, the City of Mesa and its residents need to address the condition of the existing housing stock and residential areas to minimize the impacts on the community of deteriorating and substandard housing.

It is also important to understand the needs of cost-burdened households throughout the City and encourage appropriate housing opportunities. This plan should be used to assure the effective development of new housing opportunities on vacant land, protection and enhancement of existing residential neighborhoods, and careful revitalization of deteriorating urbanized areas to better accommodate the housing needs of Mesa's citizens.

7.1 Background

As the City of Mesa matures, it will face challenges in maintaining the residential quality of life. The City must strive to maintain a healthy mix of housing and an available housing stock that is affordable and desirable for its citizens.

According to the 2000 Census, the City of Mesa has 175,701 total housing units, of which 83%, or 146,643 are occupied. The average household size is 2.68 persons per unit and the average family size is 3.20 persons per unit. Of these occupied housing units, 66.4% (97,308) are owner occupied and 33.6% are renter occupied.

As described in the Land Use Element of this Plan, the City of Mesa is expected to grow by approximately 237,325 persons for a total population of 633,700. This growth is expected within the 172 square mile municipal planning area in the next 25 years. In order to house this population, approximately 234,100 total housing units will be necessary, or an increase of about 33% (58,349) from the current housing stock.

To add further dimension to an understanding of the current conditions, it is helpful to look at the distribution of housing units in Mesa. From the list below, it is clear that of the overall housing and manufactured Home / RV sites combined,

the dominant type of housing provided in Mesa is Single-Residence. This listing refers to available multi-family and manufactured home/RV sites available, but does not address the numbers that are vacant.

According to a study prepared by Economics Research Associates for the Economic Development Element of this Plan, the current housing units distribution as of November 30, 2000 was estimated as follows in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Current Housing Units Distribution

TYPE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Single-Residence Detached	90,753	48%
Single –Residence Attached	9,259	5%
Multi-Residence Units	49,401	26%
Manufactured Home / RV Sites	39,369	21%
Total	188,782	

The presence of a diverse housing stock is critical in order to serve the needs of Mesa's population. Therefore, preserving and enhancing a variety of housing opportunities for Mesa's citizens is an essential component to this planning effort.

Substandard and neglected housing reduces property values of entire blocks and neighborhoods. Cost-burdened households, spending a high percentage of modest or low incomes on housing, lack the resources to buy retail goods offered for sale in the City, affecting all-important sales tax revenues. In addition, population loss caused by households moving outside of Mesa affects the collection of retail sales revenues because persons tend to shop in the City where they live. A viable housing market is also important for economic development reasons because prospective employers often choose to locate their enterprises where the workforce is growing.

7.1.1 Housing Principles

Upon consideration of all relevant social and land use attributes exhibited by the City of Mesa it has been determined that three fundamental housing principles must be addressed in order for the City of Mesa to achieve a healthy, vital residential environment that compliments the other commercial, industrial, and recreational areas of the City:

- Quality – Ensure that housing is safe, decent, and sanitary; encourage residential design that is community-friendly and compatible with the neighborhood character.
- Fairness – Promote the preservation and development of a wide range of housing choices that provide housing options for persons of all income levels throughout the City of Mesa.

- Location – Encourage the development of an appropriate mix of residential land uses throughout the City; protect and preserve existing, stable neighborhoods and new residential developments from incompatible adjacent land uses.

7.1.2 Existing Conditions

There are several major housing and neighborhood issues that Mesa must address as it continues to mature and grow. These issues are critical to the community's quality of life as well as its economic development efforts. Following is a discussion of these issues:

Executive and Professional Housing

Mesa has made great headway in attracting high-end housing through master planned communities and other new subdivisions that better meet the need of executives and professionals who have located in the East Valley. It is important for Mesa to continue to provide the types of housing that appeals to these individuals as part of an overall effort for economic improvement to facilitate and attract basic high tech and corporate employers. Such employers often locate in communities that provide appropriate housing opportunities for their executive and professional staff. Executive and professional housing could have significant implications for the economic well being of Mesa.

Manufactured Homes

Mesa's mobile home, manufactured housing, and recreational vehicle parks account for a large percentage of the City's housing stock. According to a recent study by the City of Mesa Neighborhood Services Department, Mesa has 63 manufactured home parks and approximately 13,785 manufactured homes. Of these parks, 45 are restricted to persons of 55 years of age or older. The average age of a manufactured home in Mesa is 24 years. The availability of these affordable properties is an asset to lower income households. However, older mobile homes may deteriorate physically faster than conventionally built housing and (at least in some areas within Mesa's planning area) sometimes lack the infrastructure of public streets, street lighting, and sidewalks that exist in conventional neighborhoods. These factors suggest that the City should carefully examine manufactured housing proposals.

Multiple Residence Housing

The City recognizes the need to provide adequate housing choices for all segments of its population. Multiple residence housing plays a critical role in accommodating persons of all economic classes, but is often a preferred housing option for those of moderate means. Multiple-residence housing plays an important role in the City's economic growth because it serves employees of hundreds of Mesa businesses who live and shop in Mesa. Such housing also plays

an important role in attracting new industry and retaining existing businesses in Mesa. However, these properties can deteriorate quickly without proper management and maintenance. The City requires new multiple residence communities to meet standards of quality and environmental design which will maintain the City's valuable rental housing stock for the future needs of Mesa citizens.

Maintenance of Existing Neighborhoods

Maintaining existing housing and neighborhoods in the best possible condition is a primary issue in Mesa. In March 2000, Mesa voters approved the "Property Maintenance and Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance" that requires property owners to keep buildings and landscaping clean and repaired. The goal is to keep Mesa neighborhoods safe and attractive, and maintain property values. The new ordinance applies to outside areas that can be seen from the public right-of-way and includes yards, fences, walls, paint, roofing, sheds, windows and doors. The older neighborhoods in the original downtown have already been designated for housing rehabilitation, as well as for upgrading of streets, lighting, sidewalks, and parks. However, some areas of the City are aging and showing signs of deterioration, such as houses needing painting and new roofs, landscaping in disrepair, and multiple cars parked on the property.

If the spiraling effect of this deterioration is not aggressively treated, whole neighborhoods will begin to experience declining values, high turnover of residents, increasing incidence of rental vs. owner-occupied housing, and an overall deterioration in security and the quality of life. These neighborhoods are the backbone of Mesa and home to a large portion of the City's population. Preserving this affordable housing stock is an important objective. Revitalization based on neighborhood plans, along with infill of vacant lands within the urban areas of Mesa, may provide new opportunities for economically sustaining existing neighborhoods as well as providing increased housing options.

Generally speaking, a majority of the existing housing stock is in good condition, although certain areas and neighborhoods are beginning to age. People continue to look to Mesa as a family-oriented, secure place to live. However, as the City matures, it can expect to face problems in maintaining the residential quality of life, as measured by the ratio of standard vs. declining vs. substandard housing. The City will also be faced with a loss of housing units over time through demolition or removal of substandard dwellings. It is important for the City to meet the needs associated with this loss of housing by providing new opportunities for residential development.

Workforce Housing

Workforce Housing is oriented toward the middle-income workforce that is employed in all employment sectors, but does not command the income of the executive and professional staff. It is important to recognize the need for this

more moderate cost, but safe and adequate housing to meet the needs of the workforce.

Mesa has traditionally provided a significant amount of housing for moderate-income households. It is important to continue to provide these opportunities, in safe neighborhoods, with excellent services and infrastructure. This type of housing often caters to families with budgetary constraints, but that do not qualify as low income.

Affordable Housing

Inherent in the concept of preserving existing neighborhoods is the preservation of an adequate supply of affordable housing -- that is, housing which can be purchased or rented and maintained to a reasonable standard by persons of low or moderate income. For illustrative purposes, affordable housing facilitates persons who make 80% or less of the area median income, and pay no more than 30% of their gross income for housing. It is possible to provide decent, Code-compliant housing for all residents of Mesa if all affected parties are willing to devote creative action and some funding to that end. This could mean continued rehabilitation of older single residence properties, encouragement for developers to renovate existing multiple residence housing stock, and/or incentives for developers to build on infill residential properties rather than on the undeveloped periphery of Mesa.

Transitional and Supportive Housing

Housing is needed in Mesa for persons who are temporarily homeless and are striving to get off the streets and back to self-sufficiency. The community should make temporary shelter available for those who are willing to improve their livelihood, but need respite from the streets while they gain/regain the ability to live as independently as possible. The need for geographic balance should be recognized in the location of group homes, halfway houses, and similar facilities. The City should consider the development of policies to address the issues of geographic balance and the potential neighborhood impacts of these facilities.

Master Planned Housing and Mixed Use Developments

Unlike adjoining communities, Mesa has not enjoyed the number and benefits of master planned developments. Master planned communities usually include large tracts of land that have special amenities that often appeal to higher income communities with extra privately operated amenities including parks, play areas, golf courses, and are often gated. Having master planned subdivisions is a major element in economic development, as they can be a primary means of providing the range of housing that suits the needs of the executive and higher income employees of existing and newly locating employers. Master planned communities tend to have higher value, on average, because of the amenities offered. The restrictions placed on property use and

maintenance keep the subdivisions in excellent physical condition. As Mesa continues to rapidly grow, opportunities to develop large, master planned areas are being lost.

7.2 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Housing Goals, Objectives, and Policies are designed to provide the City with guidance in the evaluation of residential development processes. As Mesa continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Therefore, creating policies that can accommodate both current and future housing needs allows the document to "live" and adapt to rapid and diverse change.

Goal H-1

Ensure that housing is safe, decent, and sanitary; encourage residential design that is community-friendly and compatible with the neighborhood character.

- Objective H-1.1** Identify and recognize the changing needs of the City's maturing neighborhoods and take steps to stabilize and upgrade these areas.
- Policy H-1.1a Create and ratify a Housing Master Plan, based on appropriate and correct data, in accordance with the Mesa General Plan Land Use Element to guide residential policy through the Year 2025.
 - Policy H-1.1b Identify and prioritize neighborhoods where reinvestment will result in net improvement.
 - Policy H-1.1c Encourage the creation of smaller area Neighborhood Plans throughout the City to implement the goals and policies of the Housing Master Plan.
 - Policy H-1.1d Endeavor to strengthen the residential character of the Mesa Grande, Central Broadway Corridor, Lehi, Citrus, and Desert Uplands sub-areas in the General Plan Land Use Element.
 - Policy H-1.1e Incorporate adequate provisions for functional parks and open space for all residential areas, both existing and new.
 - Policy H-1.1f Explore other alternative techniques for the stabilization of existing neighborhoods, including financial incentives and loan programs.
 - Policy H-1.1g Strongly encourage homeowners associations (HOA's), neighborhood associations, and/or crime prevention programs (as appropriate) for all residential developments.
- Objective H-1.2** Increase opportunities for the housing stock to be maintained in a safe and sanitary living condition.
- Policy H-1.2a Continue to maintain and enforce up-to-date housing and building codes.

- Policy H-1.2b Establish rehabilitation standards that facilitate an owner's ability to improve housing stock, specifically for historic housing, modular housing and mobile homes.
- Policy H-1.2c Periodically consider updating existing land use and housing codes and regulations to facilitate alternative housing types and land use arrangements.
- Policy H-1.2d Expand the City of Mesa Housing Code to include all occupied mobile homes and manufactured housing and develop standards to assure the maintenance of health, safety and welfare.

Objective H-1.3 Encourage development and revitalization projects in all areas of Mesa that provide a variety of housing types to meet the needs of the growing population.

- Policy H-1.3a Designate sites for master planned housing and mixed use communities and encourage developers to utilize the existing PAD, BIZ, and DMP overlay zoning districts where applicable.
- Policy H-1.3b Provide opportunities to allow the development of higher density housing at appropriate locations, dependent upon project quality and aesthetics, to ensure that a broad range of housing is available to accommodate an expanded employment base.

Objective H-1.4 Encourage redevelopment and/or renovation of substandard residential neighborhoods.

- Policy H-1.4a Consider devising and offering incentives to developers of housing for the low income workforce; such incentives will encourage the provision of this type of housing stock throughout the City.
- Policy H-1.4b Develop partnerships with lenders and foundations, which will make available affordable financing for improvement of structures in neighborhoods that may not meet established City standards.
- Policy H-1.4c Continue and expand the ongoing housing rehabilitation program which is designed to repair and upgrade older homes of disadvantaged individuals, and in so doing help to upgrade Mesa's older neighborhoods.

Goal H-2

Promote the preservation and development of high-quality, balanced, and diverse housing options for persons of all income levels throughout the City of Mesa.

Objective H-2.1 Encourage the creation of residential developments which provide housing opportunities for individuals and families of all socioeconomic levels

- Policy H-2.1a Promote measures that contribute to the reduction of initial and operating housing costs, where feasible.
- Policy H-2.1b Promote and encourage the use of innovative and contemporary building construction practices that increase overall housing efficiency while reducing overall construction and/or housing costs.
- Policy H-2.1c Monitor and implement as necessary alternative development/design standards that accomplish the intended purpose of providing affordable housing.
- Policy H-2.1d Prepare a plan, to include property owner involvement and citizen participation, prior to or concurrent with the designation of a redevelopment area.

Objective H-2.2 Establish a community-wide goal of adequate affordable housing, as defined by the Housing Master Plan. Affordability criteria for lower income groups should follow the most current Department of Housing and Urban Development definitions and guidelines.

- Policy H-2.2a Investigate the use of density bonuses or similar incentives as a means to facilitate the implementation of this provision.
- Policy H-2.2b Encourage a collaborative work effort with all applicable agencies such as housing organizations, lending institutions, and local governments to investigate opportunities through which provisions for affordable housing and the accomplishment of the affordable housing goal can be achieved.
- Policy H-2.2c Identify the number of housing units in the City of Mesa removed due to development or other means, and encourage new housing opportunities to meet the needs of those families that may be displaced.

Objective H-2.3 Provide a variety of housing opportunities that will satisfy the needs of existing and future households at diverse socioeconomic levels.

- Policy H-2.3a Follow the residential development ratio as identified in the Housing Master Plan when applicable developments are planned and established to facilitate the provision of an adequate housing supply.
- Policy H-2.3b Encourage the use of alternative housing types as a means of making available additional housing opportunities for those who may not otherwise obtain suitable housing through conventional means.
- Policy H-2.3c Encourage developers to take additional efforts such as disseminating the subject land use information in marketing brochures and other similar sources of information to ensure area residents are aware of proposed phasing/build-out.
- Policy H-2.3d Work with applicable agencies and organizations to collaboratively monitor housing trends and market demands to ensure that the housing

stock remains at levels suitable to support population increases and overall housing demand.

Policy H-2.3e Coordinate with citizens and among appropriate City departments to facilitate problem-solving, assist in resource identification, and promote positive, creative interaction leading to improvement of Mesa neighborhoods by the citizens who live there.

Policy H-2.3f Facilitate incentives to lenders that will encourage more opportunities to provide affordable housing.

Goal H-3

Encourage the development of an appropriate mix of residential land uses throughout the City. Protect and preserve existing, stable neighborhoods and new residential developments from incompatible adjacent land uses.

Objective H-3.1 Preserve and protect the City's neighborhoods by minimizing internal and external impacts that may detract from a neighborhood's ability to offer a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment.

Policy H-3.1a Ensure that residential areas are adequately buffered from incompatible uses through the use of zoning and development regulations

Policy H-3.1b Strive to preserve the physical and social stability of existing neighborhoods as freeway corridors are constructed through the use of various buffering techniques such as noise walls, landscape setbacks, earth berming, and trailway systems development.

Policy H-3.1c Encourage infill development based on compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Policy H-3.1d Prohibit residential development within the 65 DNL (Day-Night Average Sound Level) noise contour for Williams Gateway Airport and Falcon Field Airports.

Objective H-3.2 Encourage the development of neighborhoods that provide safe vehicular and non-vehicular access and mobility, as well as convenient access to community facilities and neighborhood services.

Policy H-3.2a Provide for neighborhood connections to commercial areas, as well as to each other, using roads, non-motorized bikeways, and pedestrian paths.

Policy H-3.2b Ensure that residential development is located where adequate infrastructure currently exists or is planned to be available in the near future.

Policy H-3.2c Preserve significant cultural, historical, or natural features and provide enhanced open space areas in residential development or redevelopment projects.

Policy H-3.2d Provide opportunities to ensure that residential neighborhoods may be served by and are in close proximity to services and facilities.