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## 6.0 HOUSING

Irving is a community of people who care about their homes and their neighborhoods. The maintenance and quality of housing in neighborhoods is a primary reflection of the attitudes of the people towards their community. In a community-wide survey conducted in June 1996, preserving and improving the character of existing residential neighborhoods ranked as one of the important issues in the community. Over 55 percent of all respondents answered that preserving and improving the character of residential neighborhoods was very important. Consequently, a major objective of the City should be to retain, and where necessary improve, as much existing single-family housing as possible. Although neglect and disinterest are two factors causing deteriorated areas and poor housing, incompatible land uses can also negatively affect neighborhoods. Economic ability to provide and maintain reasonable housing and the adequacy of housing in terms of space and facilities also have an influence on community quality and environment. Where the private citizens of the municipality join in the overall community interest, substantial improvement and enhancement of the existing housing and neighborhoods can be achieved, the quality of existing housing can be maintained, and a good standard of future housing can be assured. This section of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to focus on the present and future environmental character of neighborhoods and housing within the existing and future residential areas of Irving.

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### 6.1 SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS

The area unit of urban residential development is usually considered to be the neighborhood. Varied definitions of a neighborhood exist, and there have been questions raised as to whether the neighborhood concept is viable in our current highly mobile society. There are strong reasons for dividing an urban area into units or areas for evaluation and for functional planning and organization purposes. The attachment or identity of an individual and a family to their place of residence is universal. Likewise, a long-term, healthy community, and the quality of the place of residence, is the result of the relationship of a wide variety of factors which are not necessarily directly part of the individual dwelling unit.

The delineation of neighborhoods also provides a basis for planning of strategies for the remaining housing areas to be developed with housing while protecting existing homes. For planning purposes, the neighborhood unit is considered to be an area of the community which is predominantly residential in development and is bounded by major thoroughfares or some other natural or manmade feature such as a railroad, creek, nonresidential land use, or topographic feature. Map 5 in the Urban Design Element shows the various neighborhoods in Irving. The area encompassed by a neighborhood may vary from about



100 or 200 acres to over 700 acres. A neighborhood unit should contain or be in close proximity to some park, playground or recreational features and be served by schools. Some convenient shopping and various public facilities such as churches are also appropriately part of a normal neighborhood unit. Changes in school service concepts do not recognize the neighborhood as an urban unit, but despite such concepts, the neighborhood unit still provides the most logical basis for planning and studying the housing needs of the community. Several areas of Irving have developed probably by coincidence in this manner, while others have developed, and are obviously not part of, a neighborhood unit in concept.

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### **6.1.1 Housing Strategies**

In Irving, the major thoroughfares, areas of nonresidential use, and other physical features of the community were used to create or define neighborhood areas. Each of the existing neighborhood areas has its own specific character, conditions, and problems. The existing character and structural condition of single-family houses were documented and analyzed in the housing section of the Baseline Analysis report. It is in the broad public interest to maintain the highest possible housing quality and good environmental character in each neighborhood area. Cooperative action by property owners, tenants, landlords, the municipality, and others will be required to maintain and upgrade the housing quality in Irving. To achieve improvement in community housing, four forms of housing action are considered appropriate: (1) conservation; (2) rehabilitation/maintenance; (3) redevelopment or clearance; and (4) development guidance. One or more of these forms of action will be appropriate for almost every neighborhood area in Irving. The following summarizes each form of housing strategy:

1. **Conservation:** Where areas of sound housing exist and where a reasonable complement of community facilities are available, a conservation-type of housing strategy is appropriate. The fundamental purpose of the conservation action or strategy is to preserve and protect the existing desirable conditions by upholding local regulations such as the zoning ordinance, building code, and other health and safety ordinances. The conservation strategy also involves the securing and maintenance of adequate utilities and community facilities, parks, playgrounds, schools and street paving. A conservation strategy, if closely followed, should eliminate the necessity for a future rehabilitation program, as will be discussed in 2 below. This program is one with which the municipal government can implement and carry out as part of their code enforcement and planning processes.



2. **Rehabilitation/Maintenance:** This type of action is appropriate when a substantial number of housing units in areas are structurally sound (Type 2 structural condition; see Baseline Analysis report for discussion of the four types of housing structure conditions), but are in need of the type of repairs which can be done without excessive cost to the property owners. As noted in the Baseline Analysis housing survey, much of Irving's housing is within the Type 2 category. Within an area appropriate for rehabilitation/maintenance, some units may be such that major rehabilitation is necessary, but only on a relatively low percentage of the parcels. Several areas in which this housing strategy is recommended have special needs requiring different approaches. Since rehabilitation/maintenance action should be conducted as an area-wide program, basic considerations to the program are necessary prior to initiation. Community support must be given to the program by: (1) establishing an organized structure to accomplish program goals; (2) making financial assistance available at a reasonable interest rate, preferably from local sources; (3) consulting with property owners requiring help to organize their individual programs; and (4) establishing a means by which continued contact with area owners can be maintained to further educate them in code enforcement and methods of conservation.
3. **Redevelopment or Clearance:** Whenever housing units reach an advanced stage of deterioration and obsolescence which makes it impractical and uneconomical to attempt to rehabilitate them, the redevelopment strategy becomes necessary. Redevelopment is the removal of a structure or structures from the land, and preparing it for use in constructing new facilities in place of those previously existing. Through the redevelopment action, the same type of land use generally replaces former uses; however, in some cases, other forms of use could be located on the redeveloped parcel. The removal of obsolete or deteriorated structures can be accomplished most easily by code enforcement. It has been indicated by the housing survey that some obsolete dwelling units do exist in Irving. As of the date of the housing survey, about 100 structures were identified for this housing strategy, indicating that there is a need for housing strategies to address these types of structures, but that the need will be limited to only a few areas in Irving.
4. **Development Guidance:** Future residential growth in Irving will bring about new areas of residential construction, as well as improvements to vacant lots and tracts within presently developed areas. The standards for new housing construction should be maintained at a level whereby it will not be necessary to require other forms of corrective housing strategies other than to encourage proper maintenance of the structures and the preservation of neighborhood amenities. Proper application of the subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, building codes, and minimum housing standards, and the encouragement of good housing and neighbor-



hood design, will result in the creation of residential neighborhoods of lasting value with a good physical environment. Each new residential area recommended on the Future Land Use Plan which is now vacant should receive careful development guidance consideration. Each subdivision submitted within the future land use context should be considered as an element of the neighborhood, and not simply as a vacant parcel of land on which buildings are constructed. All land subject to development guidance by the City at the time of any request of zoning change or subdivision approval provides a basis for initiating good neighborhood design and assuring the continuity and quality of the neighborhood.

The map entitled “Recommended Housing Strategies” (Map 1) shows the strategies for various geographic areas of Irving. Each area has been delineated based on one of the four suggested strategies for housing listed above. As previously noted (see Baseline Analysis report), most of the structures in Irving are of the Type 1 or Type 2 condition, so severe housing strategies based on redevelopment or clearance are not necessary. It is important to recognize that many areas of varying sizes have been recommended for the rehabilitation/maintenance type housing strategy.

Irving has limited areas left for the development of new single-family neighborhoods. Consequently, the character of the neighborhoods that presently exist will determine, to a large degree, the long-term desirability of Irving as a place to reside. **Since most of the existing housing stock is structurally sound, it is recommended that the primary housing strategy emphasize programs that focus on maintenance and, to some extent, rehabilitation.** Housing areas, in general, evolve over many years to the character or state of their present condition. Similarly, to effect change in a housing area takes many years. It is imperative that Irving develop a maintenance program designed to improve existing housing areas, specifically housing classified as Type 2 (structures needing minor maintenance now). Housing in these categories, left unattended, can sometimes evolve into areas with more significant structural problems. The City should concentrate on these types of structures for several reasons.

1. These areas can, over a period of years, progress into a deteriorated state (Type 3 condition) where this recommended housing strategy will be hard to achieve.
2. The longer these areas are allowed to exist without attention, the more difficult it will be to implement programs to reverse the trend.
3. Some of the programs necessary to address these areas can be coordinated by the City, but implemented by volunteers or other civic organizations.
4. The housing in these areas will represent a major contribution to affordable housing in the future and should be protected for future resi-



dents. New housing can never be built within the price ranges of the units that exist in these areas today.

5. If not addressed, negative conditions that prevail in these areas can proliferate to surrounding areas that currently do not have a substantial number of these types of dwellings.
6. The overall image or “quality of life” of the community can be enhanced by addressing these areas.

**It is recommended that the City consider establishing a program designed to improve a specific number of single-family homes per year.** The program would be coordinated and initially funded by the City. The City would identify the structures needing attention and provide the administrative framework (applications, etc.). The City may also initially provide labor for “fix-ups,” but the long-range goal should be to provide a framework for volunteers and civic organizations to provide much of the labor. The City would identify structures and provide all materials (paint, ladders, brushes, etc.) for the program while volunteer organizations would provide the labor.

Several areas contain housing in need of major rehabilitation and some removal. The Bear Creek neighborhood and neighborhoods north of the Rock Island Railroad west of Loop 12 are examples. It is recommended that these areas receive more intensified housing strategies. These strategies involve major improvements to existing houses and demolition of others. Approximately 12 to 18 homes in the Bear Creek neighborhood are of the Type 4 category condition; many others are Type 3 category. The primary strategy should be to rehabilitate and replace a structure only when the existing structure cannot be economically rehabilitated. Any new housing should be replaced with housing similar in character with existing homes and neighborhood objectives. Creating programs for this strategy requires specific organizations (private or public) to facilitate implementation. Several non-profit organizations already exist in Irving which could manage and implement such programs.

Approximately 300 to 400 vacant single-family lots exist in areas already substantially developed. These lots, termed “infill” lots, offer an opportunity to add new single-family units to Irving’s overall housing inventory. While the opportunity does exist for new homes, the reason many of these lots are not used is because they have certain constraints or limitations making them “unprofitable” to build on. It is suggested the City develop policy or ordinance changes to encourage development of these types of lots. The non-profit organizations mentioned above would be well suited to facilitate development on infill lots.



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### **6.1.2 Neighborhood Environment**

The environment or “setting” in which homes exist affect their quality and desirability as places to reside. The City should attempt to minimize negative or adverse impacts on residential areas in general. One issue is environmental noise. Noise is a part of everyday life and certainly Irving exists within a regional context containing a full complement of activities creating noise. Airports, highways, freeways and other roadways, railroads, and nonresidential land uses, among others, are all sources of noise. The ideal solution to any noise problem, albeit difficult and often impractical to achieve, is to reduce the noise being produced at the source. The most practical solution is to make sure that noise sensitive uses (i.e. residential) are located where they will not be exposed to high noise levels. High noise levels, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are those activities which exceed 65 decibels.

The City should strive, where possible, to minimize the impact of noise sources on all new residential development.

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### **6.1.3 Neighborhood Integrity**

Another important issue identified in neighborhood workshops is the integrity of the neighborhood. Although sometimes broadly defined, it essentially means the quality of the physical appearance of neighborhoods. Sometimes these qualities are termed “liveable neighborhoods,” but the important point is that people want their neighborhood to be a quality environment in which to reside. Citizens commented on a number of ways this could be achieved. The following are some examples of comments made at public workshops:

1. Trim trees which block sidewalks.
2. Repair sidewalks and other infrastructure.
3. Provide more “bike” and “pedestrian” oriented routes or trails.
4. Provide more recreation spaces in areas which are deficient.
5. Provide more landscape corridors.
6. Prepare a directory of homeowners associations or other mechanisms to convey information and communicate with neighborhoods.
7. Increase code enforcement efforts and be more proactive.
8. Continue and encourage neighborhood awareness programs (e.g., neighborhood watch programs).
9. Address vagrancy and loitering in residential neighborhoods.



While some of these suggestions require substantial capital reinvestment, some do not. It is recommended the City create a more comprehensive neighborhood program to address issues similar to those listed above. The City should begin allocating additional capital and maintenance funds as part of a reinvestment program in older neighborhoods. A gradual but sustained program of this nature will help preserve and enhance neighborhoods for future generations.

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## **6.2 MULTI-FAMILY STRUCTURES**

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### **6.2.1 Existing Structures**

Although multi-family units comprise a greater percentage of the City's total housing stock, the land use (acreage) consumed by multi-family complexes is far less than consumed by single-family development. Consequently, the types of housing strategy needed may require different approaches. According to the City of Irving Building Inspection Department, approximately 676 multi-family units are in the Type 4 condition category (the categories for rating multi-family are different than for single-family; see the Baseline Analysis report for more detailed discussion), but are located in less than 15 structures. Although these complexes are generally structurally sound, they are in need of rehabilitation. Often, it is the grounds and/or landscaping that is unsightly. The City has recently formulated a community-wide action team to address code enforcement and other issues relating to multi-family units. This team has already facilitated the upgrade of a number of Type 4 multi-family complexes. It is suggested an overall maintenance strategy be used similar to that recommended for single-family houses (except it will be necessary for a non-profit agency to administer it) for all multi-family structures identified as Type 3 or 4 in the building inspection rating system.

The number of multi-family complexes which need significant (demolition) attention are relatively few compared to the overall inventory. Approximately 32 units adjacent to Twin Wells Golf Course are recommended to be removed. It is important to realize that the overall strategy should be to preserve as many multi-family units as possible, and not remove them.

Many smaller apartment complexes were developed in south Irving during the 1950's and 1960's. These complexes, some approaching 40 years old, will need specific attention. Most of these complexes are structurally sound, but exterior appearance and grounds maintenance are showing signs of deterioration or neglect. The City must address these complexes within the next five to ten years or risk further deterioration of these neighborhoods. These units, although modest when



compared to recent construction practice, provide important housing opportunities within the City. They are also dispersed through much of the neighborhood fabric, which makes the alternative of other commercial uses (if they were removed) impractical.

This issue can be addressed with two basic but important strategies:

1. Renovation of the surrounding grounds (i.e. landscaping, play areas, sitting and visiting areas, parking areas, etc.); and
2. Maintenance (painting) and general upkeep of the physical exterior of the structure.

It is recommended that the City establish a rehabilitation program to assist in addressing older (30 or 40 years old) multi-family complexes.

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### **6.2.2 New Structures**

The City has made significant strides in improving multi-development standards in the last several years. Many of the changes (some as a result of the Multi-Family Development Study, September, 1991) can be seen in recent multi-family developments. While many changes have been positive, the recent high demand for more multi-family units has caused more intense use of multi-family development sites. Many of the recent concerns regarding multi-family have been related to compatibility issues with single-family homes. It is recommended that all new multi-family development (except in the Urban Center) occur under the following criteria:

1. **Setbacks:** Increase minimum setback from single-family and roadways, especially where grade or terrain characteristics influence adjacent views and privacy.
2. **Landscaping and Open Space:** Increase the amount of landscaped areas in and adjacent to multi-family projects. Also, increase the amount of “usable” open space in each complex.
3. **Height:** Limit the height to two stories above the natural grade. Three stories may be permitted by using graduated setbacks from single-family areas.
4. **Density:** Reduce the maximum density to 18 dwelling units per acre. Twenty units per acre would be permitted if certain incentives were met, such as the provision of extra site amenities (e.g., covered or enclosed parking areas).



5. **Materials and Design:** Decrease the amount of exterior wood, require high definition (dimensioned) 25-year shingles or equivalent material, and develop better site design and circulation standards.
6. **Parking:** Limit “tandem” type parking.
7. **Process:** Simplify and redesign the approval process to eliminate ambiguities and provide better guidance for the applicant.

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### **6.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Housing affordability is a key issue within the Dallas-Fort Worth region, and nationwide as well. As noted in the Baseline Analysis and companion reports (by Myers and Thibodeau), Irving’s housing units are already generally affordable in a variety of types. The current affordability of housing in the City of Irving is as follows:

#### ***Affordability of Rental Housing***

- 95% of Irving’s multi-family rental stock is affordable to moderate income households (>50% but <80% of Dallas County median family income) compared to 97% for Dallas County and 97% for Dallas.
- 86% of Irving’s single-family rental stock is affordable to moderate income households compared to 86% for Dallas County and 88% for Dallas.
- 40% of Irving’s multi-family rental stock is affordable to low income households (<50% of Dallas County median family income) compared to 66% for Dallas County and 75% for Dallas.
- 27% of Irving’s single-family rental stock is affordable to low income households compared to 33% for Dallas County and 40% for Dallas.

#### ***General Household Characteristics***

- Fewer households in Irving own their own residences than in Dallas County or the City of Dallas. A total of 36.6% of Irving’s occupied housing stock is owner occupied compared to 51.5% for Dallas County and 44.9% for Dallas.
- 36.7% of Irving’s households are lower income (low and moderate income categories combined) compared to 39.1% for Dallas County and 46% for Dallas.



- 39.3% of all lower income households in Irving live in two bedroom rented multi-family units compared to 27.6% for Dallas County and 29.9% for Dallas. A larger share of Irving’s lower income households live in apartments because a larger proportion of Irving’s housing stock is multi-family.
- 20.1% of all lower income households in Irving own single-family properties compared to 30.3% for Dallas County and 28.3% for Dallas.
- The household income thresholds defining low and moderate income (lower-income) households for the Dallas area in 1990 were as follows:

<b>Number of Persons in Household</b>	<b>Moderate Income Threshold</b>	<b>Low-Income Threshold</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>\$21,710</b>	<b>\$12,944</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$23,668</b>	<b>\$14,944</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$26,628</b>	<b>\$16,641</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$29,586</b>	<b>\$18,491</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>\$31,952</b>	<b>\$19,970</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>\$34,319</b>	<b>\$21,449</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>\$36,686</b>	<b>\$22,928</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>\$39,053</b>	<b>\$24,408</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>\$41,422</b>	<b>\$25,889</b>

Lower-income housing availability in the City of Irving is as follows:

***Trajectories of Lower-Income Housing Opportunities***

Based on recent trends and a build-out scenario of single-family units and multi-family units, the following projections of lower-income opportunities can be made:

***Multi-family (Apartments) Units***

- Between 1990 and 2000, opportunities for lower-income households in rented multi-family stock are expected to increase by 6,783 units. 70% of these households will live in existing stock during the 1990’s. 30% will live in new housing units.
- Between 2000 and 2010, opportunities for lower-income households in rented multi-family stock are expected to increase by 6,024 units. 66% of these households will live in existing stock in the 2000’s. 34% will live in new housing units.



### ***Single-Family Units***

- Between 1990 and 2000, opportunities for lower-income households in owned single-family stock are expected to increase by 478. Between 2000 and 2010, opportunities for lower-income households in owned single-family stock are expected to increase by 296. Roughly 1/2 to 2/3 of these expected increases will be in existing stock during the next two decades.
- About 300 net additional opportunities will exist for single-family rental units for lower-income households in both the 1990's and 2000's.

### ***Total Units***

- Between 1990 and 2010, a total of 13,881 additional lower-income units will be available through multi-family and single-family new construction and existing units.

### ***Irving's Fair Share of Dallas County's Lower-Income Housing Needs***

- Based on projected household growth, the City's fair share of Dallas County's lower-income housing needs between 1990 and 1999 is provision for 6,141 additional households. Irving's fair share between 1990 and 2009 is provision for 12,281 additional households.
- Based on projected job growth, the City's fair share of Dallas County's lower-income housing needs between 1990 and 1999 is provision for 3,556 additional households. Irving's fair share between 1990 and 2009 is provision for 7,112 additional households.
- Under either projection (12,281, based on household growth, or 7,112, based on job growth), the opportunities for lower-income households (13,881) exceed the City's fair share.

General statistics regarding lower income households in Irving are as follows:

### ***Growth in Lower Income Households***

- In 1990, 36.86% of Irving's households were lower-income (defined as moderate and low income combined) compared to 36.01% in 1980. In Dallas County, 39.3% of all households were lower-income in 1990 and 39.9% in 1980.
- Overall, between 1980 and 1990 the number of lower income households in Irving increased by 60.7% (out pacing that of all households in Irving (57%)) compared to 19.7% for Dallas County.



As new development occurs, affordability should be maintained or improved. While the new units may not be as affordable as existing units, families vacating existing units to purchase a new unit will make the existing unit available to one of the incoming families upgrading from another area. The Comprehensive Plan supports continued provision of affordable housing by identifying locations for a variety of housing types and densities. As projected in the companion housing reports, lower-income households will be able to afford housing in over 95% of the existing rental units in Irving. Housing for single working parents and lower income workers is a concern for businesses that rely on this segment of the labor force. In addition, senior citizens on fixed incomes are affected by increasing housing costs. Housing for such households is supported through the Comprehensive Plan policies for low, medium and high density development and other actions designed to create opportunities for private provision for affordable housing.

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#### **6.4 RECOMMENDED HOUSING POLICIES**

The following are the recommended housing policies for the City of Irving:

1. The Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Plan should designate sufficient land for residential uses to meet the needs of the community's projected population.
2. The Comprehensive Plan should designate land for residential use in areas where adequate services are presently available to meet the needs of the population growth.
3. The City should identify existing substandard housing units and encourage the revitalization and rehabilitation of the structures. The City should develop a framework for a volunteer housing maintenance program for areas identified for rehabilitation.
4. Based on the areas identified on the Recommended Housing Strategies map, the City should develop maintenance programs based on the recommended strategy. Maintenance and rehabilitation programs should be administered by the City.
5. Rehabilitation and new infill housing construction should be initially undertaken by non-profit agencies, but gradually supported by the City through additional funding.
6. The City should plan locations appropriate for a diverse range of housing types including conventional single-family homes, patio homes,



townhomes, manufactured housing, and multiple-family units to provide a range of housing alternatives for future residents.

7. The City should ensure that development within existing neighborhoods is compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood in terms of general housing types and densities.
8. The City should promote housing compatibility between adjacent residential areas developed at different residential densities with different unit types, and should encourage the use of design techniques and revised multi-family development standards to minimize the impacts between these areas.
9. The City's development regulations should provide mechanisms to permit flexibility and innovation in residential project design to promote land use efficiency (infill) and environmental protection.
10. Multi-family complexes in areas designated for maintenance or rehabilitation should be ranked in order of importance and receive a combination of external building maintenance and site improvement/maintenance.
11. The City's zoning ordinance should include appropriate zoning districts to implement the residential density classifications as suggested on the Future Land Use Plan.