

DATE: January 5, 2021
TO: City of Ashland Planning Commission and Housing and Human Services Commission
CC: Brandon Goldman, City of Ashland
FROM: Beth Goodman and Sadie DiNatale, ECONorthwest
SUBJECT: Summary of Ashland's Housing Needs

This memorandum summarizes Ashland's housing needs. ECONorthwest identified these needs using findings from Ashland's 2021-2041 Housing Capacity Analysis¹ which, among other topics, analyzed the local housing market, socio-economic characteristics of Ashland's residents, housing affordability factors, and a forecast of housing demand.

Ashland's Key Housing Needs

The purpose of Ashland's Housing Capacity Analysis is to provide background on the kinds of factors that influence housing choice and needs. Generalizations about housing choice are difficult to make and prone to inaccuracies, however, it is a crucial step to informing the types of housing that will be needed in the future. Ashland's key housing needs are:

- **Housing for Seniors.** Ashland, like the region, has a growing share of seniors. From 2000–2018, Ashland residents aged 60+ grew by nearly 3,000 people. Between 2020–2040, the County's population aged 60+ will grow by over 18,000 people.

Research shows that seniors prefer to live in a familiar environment as long as possible (i.e., growing old in their own homes or in their current community). While many seniors will stay in their homes as long as they are able, some will downsize into smaller housing products before they move into to a dependent living facility or into a familial home. As the population ages, the percent of single-person households in Ashland may grow, increasing demand for a wider range of smaller housing types such as cottages, townhomes, multifamily housing, as well as age-restricted housing communities, and housing products that enable multigenerational living (larger units and accessory dwelling units).

- **Housing for Families.** About 53% of Ashland's households are non-family households and 75% of Ashland's households are one- or two-person households. While these figures suggest a need for smaller units, Ashland also has need for housing for families with children. Ashland's ability to attract and retain families will depend, in large part, on whether the city has opportunities for housing that both appeals to and are affordable to families, as well as jobs that allow younger people to live and work in Ashland.

¹ ECONorthwest prepared this memorandum for the City of Ashland, as part of the larger Housing Capacity Analysis project. This project is funded by Oregon general fund dollars through the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the State of Oregon.

- **Housing that is Affordable for all Income Levels.** Ashland has a median household income that is about \$8,800 less than Oregon’s median income. However, the city has some of the highest housing costs in the region. The median sales price in Ashland is \$434,438, compared with Medford subarea median prices ranging from \$229,500 to \$299,750. About 31% of homeowners and 63% of renters are cost burdened in Ashland.

One approach to increasing affordability of housing is building a wider range of housing. Under current conditions, 3,395 of Ashland’s households have incomes of \$33,000 or less. These households cannot typically afford market-rate housing without government subsidy. Another 3,103 households have incomes between \$33,000 and \$78,000. As Ashland grows, demand for housing affordable to low-and moderate-income households will also grow. These households will all need access to relatively affordable housing, such as smaller single-family detached housing, townhouses, duplexes, tri- and quad-plexes, and apartments/condominiums. To support development of housing affordable to these households, Ashland will need to take actions in addition to diversifying the housing types allowed in the city, as described in the Housing Capacity Analysis.

The kinds of housing that Ashland needs, includes:

- Broader range of single-family housing, including small-lot single-family, cottages, ADUs, tiny homes, manufactured housing on lots, and other more “traditional” forms.
- “Middle-housing” products, including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes.
- Larger multifamily housing for rent (apartments) and ownership (condominiums), including mixed-use housing.



Small-lot Single-Family



Accessory Dwelling Unit



Manufactured Dwelling



Triplex



Duplex



Townhomes



Cottage Cluster (Photo by Ross Chapin)



Multifamily Apartment Complex



Mixed-Use Residential