

## **VII. THE HOUSING ELEMENT**

### **A. INTRODUCTION AND GOALS**

Housing is a vital element of any community. In the City of Tonasket, housing is an economic good that is provided by the private sector. The City does have options available to encourage the provision of housing through land use and capital facility planning. The City can also cooperate with the Okanogan County Housing Authority to take advantage of grant programs that assist in the provision of affordable housing and the renovation of existing substandard housing. If a significant need is identified, the City should develop strategies to fulfill that need within the capabilities of a municipality.

#### **1. GOALS**

- # Ensure that adequate and affordable housing is not a restraint to achieving the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.
- # Ensure that the land use designations in this Comprehensive Plan provide for a variety of housing styles, types, densities and locations.

### **B. NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The most recent housing needs assessment was completed in 1987 when a housing needs study was commissioned by Crest Construction of Ferndale, WA, conducted by Charles K. Just. The report entitled A Study of Housing Needs in Tonasket, Washington subsequently released by Just that incorporated data gathered from the 1980 census, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Department of Employment Security, Urban Decisions projections, local newspapers and interviews with local individuals. That study addressed housing needs for a ten mile radius around and including the City and resulted in the construction of 30 units in the Hillside Apartments in 1990.

Since the completion of the study and construction of new units, the need for twenty additional units identified in the Just study remains unfilled. The indicated housing shortage in the Tonasket area leaves local government with a decision as to how involved it will be in the housing issue and by what means it will use to play out its role once identified.

Some alternatives for action by City government include the following:

- # Simply do nothing more than implement the land use plan as a tool for guiding development proposed by the private sector, allowing the housing market to stand alone in reaction to need.
- # Pursue outside funding to ensure that the necessary services and infrastructure are available to make construction and rehabilitation of housing a feasible endeavor by the private sector.
- # Create a committee of the City Council; or further yet, develop a relationship with the Okanogan County Housing Authority or create a Tonasket Housing Authority that is

responsible for analyzing and addressing housing needs.