

Countywide Planning Policies on Housing

Countywide Planning Policies of Snohomish County¹²⁴

As adopted Feb. 4, 1993, and amended through Mar. 31, 2004
Effective date Apr. 23, 2004

The goal is to provide a variety of decent, safe, and affordable housing opportunities to all segments of the county's population.

The countywide housing goals and planning policies that follow are intended to provide a framework for local jurisdictions to meet the county's housing needs in a consistent and coordinated way. The housing policies strive towards meeting the county's housing needs by a variety of means, including new and redeveloped mixed-use projects in urban activity centers that are complemented by an infrastructure of schools, parks, shopping areas, and work places. These urban activity centers should be interconnected by a network of walkways, bikeways, and readily accessible transit stops.

HO-1. Ensure that fair and equal access to housing is available to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, familial status, source of income, or disability.

HO-2. Make adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the county.

HO-3. Strengthen interjurisdictional cooperative efforts to ensure an adequate supply of housing is available to all economic segments of the county.

HO-4. Adopt and implement a fair share distribution of low-income and special needs housing so as to prevent further concentration of such housing into only a few areas. The county and cities will collaborate in formulating a methodology to assess existing and projected housing needs of the county's population and a fair share housing allocation methodology.

HO-5. Each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan housing element will include strategies to attain the jurisdiction's fair share housing objectives. Jurisdictions will consider as appropriate the strategies for achieving affordable housing as described in OD-13. (Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-6. Production of an adequate supply of low and moderate income housing will be encouraged by exploring the establishment of interjurisdictional private/public financing programs which involve local lenders and foster cooperative efforts with non-profit housing developers. (Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-7. Encourage the availability of adequate affordable housing in designated urban growth areas by implementing land use and density incentives as provided in RCW 36.70A.090 and in rural areas by means of cluster housing that minimizes infrastructure costs. (Amended Feb. 2, 1994 - Ord. 94-002; Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-8. Implement policies and programs that encourage the upgrading of neighborhoods and the rehabilitation and preservation of the supply of existing affordable housing, including but not limited to mobile home park housing, single room occupancy (SRO) housing, and manufactured housing.

HO-9. Implement a coordinated monitoring program to evaluate progress towards achieving housing goals and objectives on a countywide and jurisdictional level. Such a monitoring program shall entail the preparation of a housing monitoring report every five years or more frequently if housing conditions and data availability warrant. The housing report will include an assessment of the adequacy of the jurisdictions' supply of undeveloped, partially used and redevelopable residential land and applications/permits for residential development, the jurisdictions' supply of land for non-residential land uses, the location of urban growth boundaries, and an assessment of the jurisdictions' strategies for achieving their housing objectives. The preparation of the housing report may be combined with the review and evaluation program required by UG-14. (Amended

¹²⁴ The complete Countywide Planning Policies of Snohomish County may be found online at www.snoco.org. Type “CPP” in the keyword search box.

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Feb. 16, 2000 – Amended Ord. 99-121; Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-10. Ensure consistent application of county-wide housing planning policies by adopting definitions of affordable housing, extremely low-income housing, very low-income housing, low and moderate-income housing, and middle income housing as established in the Snohomish County Tomorrow growth monitoring system. These definitions may be periodically revised based on consideration of local demographic data and the definitions used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The generally accepted definition of housing affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing (HUD). The following definition of special needs housing shall be adopted:

Affordable housing for persons that require special assistance or supportive care to subsist or achieve independent living, including but not limited to persons that are frail, elderly, developmentally disabled, chronically mentally ill, physically handicapped, homeless, persons participating in substance abuse programs, persons with AIDS, and youth at risk.

(Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-11. Adopt a local planning process that reconciles the need to encourage and respect the vitality of established residential neighborhoods with the need to identify and site essential public residential facilities for special needs populations, including those mandated under RCW 36.70A.200.

HO-12. Encourage a variety of housing types and densities that allow for infill using innovative urban design techniques to foster broad community acceptance. (Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-13. Provide adequate, affordable housing choices for all segments of the County's work force within close proximity or adequate access to the respective places of work.

HO-14. Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive housing development practices in order to minimize the impacts of growth on the county's natural resource systems.

HO-15. Consider the economic implications of proposed building and land use regulations so that the broader public benefit they serve is achieved with the least additional cost to housing.

HO-16. Ensure the expeditious and efficient processing of development applications by endeavoring to process complete development applications consistent with the timelines established in state law and local ordinances. The jurisdictions shall maintain clear and specific submittal standards and the most current available information on wetlands, geologic hazardous areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. The expeditious processing of development applications shall not result in the lowering of environmental and land use standards. (Amended Mar. 31, 2004 – Amended Ord. 04-007)

HO-17. Minimize housing production costs by considering the use of a variety of infrastructure funding methods, including but not limited to existing revenue sources, impact fees, local improvement districts, and general obligation bonds.

HO-18. Ensure that each jurisdiction's impact fee program adds no more to the cost of each housing unit produced than a fairly-derived proportionate share of the cost of new public facilities needed to accommodate the housing unit as determined by the impact fee provisions of the Growth Management Act cited in RCW 82.02.

HO-19. Require that adequate quantities of affordable housing for a broad range of income levels are provided in fully contained communities concurrent with the development of jobs, services, and other publicly-approved project improvements. (This would be applicable only if the County has made provision for new fully contained communities.)

HO-20. Require that adequate quantities of affordable housing for support staff are provided in new master planned resort developments concurrent with the development of other publicly-approved project improvements. (This would be applicable only if the County has made provision for new master planned resort developments.)

HO-21. Encourage local jurisdictions to implement housing relocation programs as provided under chapter 59.18 RCW.