



Appendix A:

Summary of the Snohomish County Housing Affordability Taskforce (HART) Five-Year Housing Affordability Action Plan

HART's recommendations to all Snohomish County cities and Snohomish County government for responding to our housing affordability challenges are presented below. The Action Plan is based on **five framework goals**; three that focus on increasing housing affordability, and two goals that focus on how we propose to work together.





“Early Action” – Items that HART and its members will begin working on in early 2020 are presented first, followed by the **Framework Goals** with supporting **strategies** for each Goal. The strategies are divided into two types: **policy and regulatory strategies** and **funding strategies**.

“Joint Action” – Items we recommend involve a countywide unified strategy/action, or alignment of individual jurisdiction action—are indicated as follows:



indicates actions that we recommend be pursued in a **unified**, countywide approach.



indicates actions we see as best pursued by individual jurisdictions but with **alignment** in our approach.

Early Action Items

Early Action Items are strategies that HART and its members will begin working on in early 2020.

1. **Encourage cities to enter into cooperation agreements with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO) and Everett Housing Authority.**
2. **Implement the state sales tax shift to local governments for up to 20 years to fund low-income housing authorized by HB 1406, as adopted by Legislature in 2019.**
3. **Lobby for changes in state and federal law that will enable more consolidated and streamlined funding to support low-income housing.**
4. **Review and consider recommendations from existing toolkits to engage communities around the issue of housing affordability.**
5. **Foster community conversations about density.**
6. **Engage private sector stakeholders – large employers, others – in helping to find solutions to our housing affordability challenge.**
7. **Confirm and support an ongoing structure for regional collaboration around production of housing affordable across the income spectrum.**
8. **Track progress on the Action Plan.**



Five-Year Action Items

NOTE: Strategies are not presented in prioritized order. Please see Supplemental Report <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5560/> for additional information regarding each strategy.

GOAL 1: Promote greater housing growth and diversity of housing types at all levels of affordability and improve job/housing connections

SUB-GOAL A: Promote greater housing growth and diversity of housing types and job/housing connections at all levels of affordability

Policy and Regulatory Strategies:

- 1.A.1  Establish specific housing affordability goals in city and county comprehensive plans and provide more accurate information into the development of those plans.
- 1.A.2  Ensure adequate Buildable Land Supply for housing.
- 1.A.3  Increase SEPA³⁵ categorical exemption thresholds for housing developments.
- 1.A.4  Facilitate more efficient deal assembly and development timelines / promote cost-effectiveness through consolidation, coordination, and simplification.
- 1.A.5  Remove barriers by reducing construction costs and delays and expedite the permit process.
- 1.A.6  Increase housing variety allowed at a range of affordability levels in single-family zones, in areas with connections to jobs, and along transit corridors, including consideration of zoning for duplex, triplex, 4-plex, courtyard apartments, etc.

Funding Strategies:

- 1.A.7  Apply for state planning grants to develop housing elements of local comprehensive plans in connection with increasing density as authorized by HB1923 and adopted by Legislature in 2019. Apply alone or with other cities.
- 1.A.8  Implement Multi-Family Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) programs at local and county level.³⁶
- 1.A.9  Encourage banking and insurance industry support for condominium projects as homeownership solution.

³⁵ State Environmental Policy Act CH. 43.21C RCW.

³⁶ This strategy can be targeted to support housing at all income levels, or just lower income housing; see funding strategy 1.B.9.

SUB-GOAL B: Promote greater housing growth and diversity of housing types and job/housing connections for homes affordable to households at or below 60% AMI

Policy and Regulatory Strategies:

- 1.B.1 **Prioritize *affordability* and accessibility within a half mile walkshed of existing and planned frequent transit service, with particular priority near high-capacity transit stations. Require some amount of low-income housing in development near transit hubs.**
- 1.B.2 **Revise local zoning to encourage Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).**
- 1.B.3 **Encourage cities and the County to proactively develop programs for facilitating the granting of density bonuses for development on church-owned properties (implementing HB 1377, as authorized by Legislature in 2019).**
- 1.B.4 **Reduce short plat threshold for low-income housing projects.**
- 1.B.5 **Implement inclusionary zoning incentives to encourage developers to produce low-income housing.**
- 1.B.6 **Reduce parking requirements for low-income housing developments.**

Funding Strategies:

- 1.B.7  **Study funding mechanisms and pursue joint advocacy efforts.**
- 1.B.8 **Provide surplus and under-utilized publicly owned property for low-income housing.**
- 1.B.9 **Implement Multi-Family Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) programs at local and county level.**
- 1.B.10 **Waive or reduce fees and charges for low-income housing projects.**
- 1.B.11  **Establish a county growth fund for low-income housing by setting aside a portion of new construction property taxes.**
- 1.B.12 **Expand supports for low-income renters and people with disabilities; fund operating costs for housing service providers.**
- 1.B.13 **Support creation of Community Land Trusts (CLT).**
- 1.B.14 **Implement policy/zoning changes to increase Snohomish County/city projects' competitiveness for state and federal funding.**
- 1.B.15 **Target federal CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) and HOME (HOME Investment Partnerships Program) funds for low-income housing creation and rental assistance.**
- 1.B.16  **Advocate for expansion of funding of the state public works trust fund.**



GOAL 2: Identify and preserve existing housing at risk of rapid rent escalation or redevelopment, balancing this with the need for more density

Policy and Regulatory Strategies:

- 2.1 **Protect communities of color, historically underserved communities, and low-income communities from displacement by gentrification.**

Funding Strategies:

- 2.2 **Establish short term acquisition revolving loan fund to enable rapid response to preserve low-income housing developments when they are put on the market.**
- 2.3 **Increase investments in communities of color, historically underserved communities, and low-income communities by developing programs and policies that serve individuals and families at risk of displacement.**
- 2.4 **Provide low-income homeowners with low-interest/deferred payment to repair homes and/or fund home repair programs for households with lower incomes.**

Goal 3: Increase housing density along transit corridors and/or in job centers, while also working to create additional housing across the entire county

Policy and Regulatory Strategies:

- 3.1 **Prioritize affordability and accessibility within half a mile walkshed of existing and planned frequent transit service, placing particular priority on high-capacity transit stations. Require some amount of low-income housing in development near transit hubs.**
- 3.2 **Increase variety of housing types allowed at a range of affordability along transit corridors through increasing zone density and providing incentives to include low-income units.**
- 3.3 **Reduce parking requirements for multi-family projects located near transit.**
- 3.4 **Increase Snohomish County/city projects' competitiveness for state and federal funding by ensuring multi-family zoning near transit.**

Funding Strategies:

- 3.5 **Maximize resources available for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the near term.**

Goal 4: Implement outreach and education programs, countywide and within individual jurisdictions, to raise awareness of housing affordability challenges and support for action

Policy and Regulatory Strategies:

- 4.1 **Engage communities of color, historically underserved communities, and low-income communities in affordable housing development and policy decision.**
- 4.2 **Expand engagement of non-governmental partners to support efforts to build and site more affordable housing.**

GOAL 5: Track our progress and support ongoing regional collaborations

Two of our eight “Early Action” items are built around this goal. HART plans to spend time in 2020 to identify the key data we want to track and to create multi-jurisdictional workgroups to pursue and refine that data. We also plan to identify an ongoing “home” for this Action Plan, as it evolves over time and we continue to track our progress.

