

Landscape of Affordable Housing in Snohomish County

Housing Needs in Snohomish County

The term “affordable housing” is used in different ways and can have different meanings in a variety of settings. For the purposes of this report, housing is considered affordable if a household can live in it without sacrificing essentials such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Therefore, affordable housing includes not just subsidized or income-restricted housing units, but all private and public housing units that are affordable for low- and moderate-income families.

Snohomish County Tomorrow recognizes the national standard for housing affordability as described by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): “The generally accepted definition of housing affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing.”² Families who earn less than the county median income (approximately \$65,000 in 2008 for a family of four) and who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered “cost-burdened” and may have difficulty affording basic necessities.

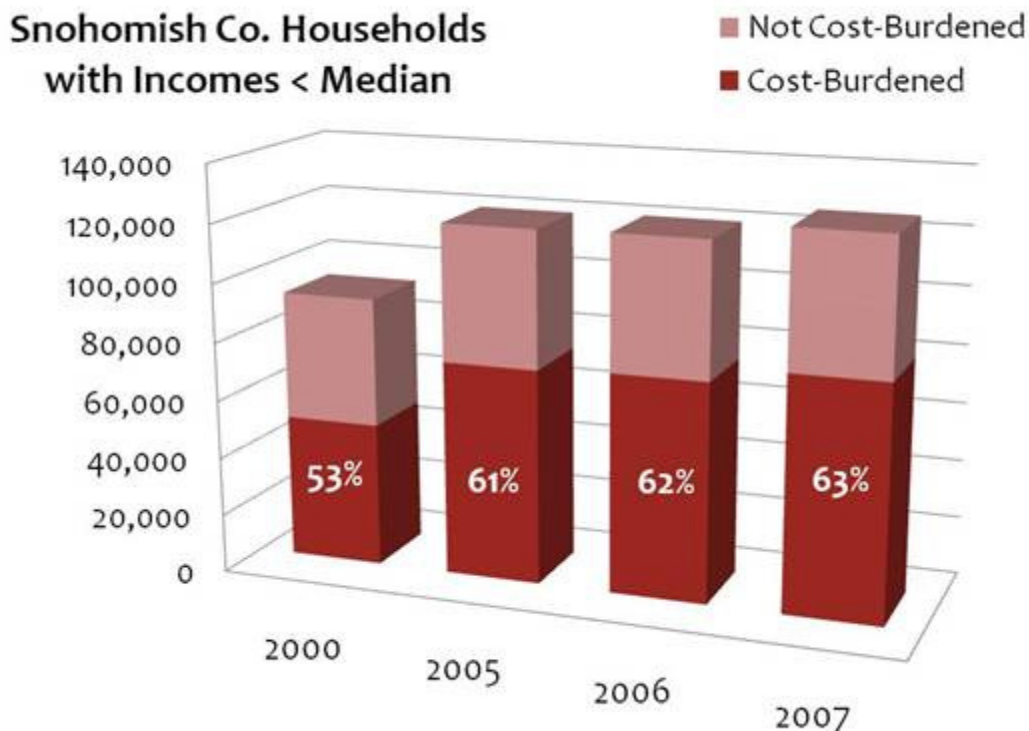
The need for affordable housing is growing rapidly in Snohomish County. In 2000, more than 49,000 households were cost-burdened, which represented more than half (53 percent) of the 93,000 households earning incomes below the county median income. By 2007, 80,000 households were cost-burdened, representing 63% of the 126,000 total households earning less than the median income. There are cost-burdened families in *every jurisdiction* in Snohomish County.³

² Snohomish County Tomorrow. “Housing Evaluation Report 2007.” Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Information/Plans/SCT+Reports/HER07.htm (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

³ Snohomish County PDS data presented at SCT Steering Committee on January 28, 2009.

Figure 1 shows that over the past several years, an increasing percentage of low- and moderate-income households need affordable housing opportunities.

Figure 1:



Housing needs are different across a range of incomes. Households earning between 80 and 100 percent of the median income are more likely able to find affordable rental units, but many first-time homebuyers in this income range cannot afford homeownership. Households earning between 30 and 80 percent of the median income are unlikely able to afford home ownership or recently built rental units, but may be able to afford the limited supply of older rental housing stock, which typically has lower rents. At the lowest end of the income spectrum, Snohomish County Tomorrow recently reported that “virtually no market-rate housing is affordable to those making 30 percent of the county’s median household income or less.”⁴

Although the housing prices in Snohomish County have declined a bit since reaching their peak in late 2007, the need for affordable housing remains very real. The long-term trend continues to show home appreciation rising much faster than incomes, and that disparity between what people earn and what type of home they can afford continues in the current economic climate. In fact, the lack of affordability may be exacerbated by rising

⁴ Snohomish County Tomorrow. “Housing Evaluation Report 2007.” Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Information/Plans/SCT+Reports/HER07.htm (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

unemployment and lower income growth during the current economic conditions. In addition, fallout from the mortgage lending crisis has resulted in credit standards tightening such that only people with unblemished credit histories are able to get home loans.

The impacts on the rental market have likewise not improved the affordability of housing. The overwhelming majority of building permits issued in the county during the past decade have been for single family homes, and the small amount of new multifamily rental buildings have primarily focused on luxury apartments. Even though home prices are falling, they remain out of reach for the vast majority of families earning less than the median income, so there has in fact been an increase in demand for rental housing that is not met by the current supply.⁵

The lack of affordable housing contributes to the challenges facing homeless families and individuals in Snohomish County. The 2009

Snohomish County point-in-time count of homeless persons identified 2,202 homeless people. This total includes a point-in-time count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people on one night in January 2009, but does not capture the whole population of people who experience homelessness at some point during the year.⁶ Respondents to a survey of homeless persons in 2007 identified affordable housing as their number-one service need.⁷ Turn-away data from homeless shelters suggest that more than 70 percent of homeless people are members of homeless families with children.⁸

Profile: A Typical Family that needs Affordable Housing

Sandra is a single mother with three children, and she works as an elementary school teacher in Snohomish County. She earns \$41,000 per year, or less than 50 percent of the county median income for a family of four. The average rent in the city where she teaches is \$1,395 for a three-bedroom apartment, but the maximum rent she can afford is \$1,025. Her family cannot afford to pay rent and utilities, as well as the basic necessities of food, clothing, health care, and school supplies. Sandra and her family must choose between sacrificing the basic necessities, living in unsafe or substandard housing, or commuting great distances between her job and more affordable housing that is available in another part of the county or even outside the county.

(Notes: This profile is not an actual family, but is based on many families in need of housing in Snohomish County. Sandra's income is based on entry-level salaries at Everett Public Schools, and her rent is based on the Fair Market Rents established by HUD for 2009.)

⁵ Central Puget Sound Real Estate Research Committee, Real Estate Research Report, Fall 2008, v.59 n.2 p.46-47.

⁶ Snohomish County Executive's Office. Available online: http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us/documents/Departments/Executive/News/NR_HomelessCount_1.30.09.pdf (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

⁷ Snohomish County Office of Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development. 2007 Point in Time Count. http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Human_Services/Divisions/OHHCD/ (Accessed: December 21, 2007).

⁸ Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County. "Housing within Reach." Available online: <http://www.housingsnohomish.org/advocacy.html> (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

As described further in the section below on “Existing Housing Plans and Reports,” there are several recent plans and reports that identify housing needs countywide and set targets for meeting an increasing amount of those families in need. For example, the 2008 Housing

Note on the Fair Share Housing Allocation

Several discussions during the stakeholder input process—in particular, at the SCT Steering Committee—raised the question of whether the Fair Share Housing Allocation would or should be addressed in an inter-jurisdictional affordable housing program. While both the Fair Share Housing Allocation report and any future inter-jurisdictional affordable housing program address the issue of affordable housing, it is important to realize that these reports/programs are separate and distinct from each other and have different purposes.

SCT develops the Fair Share Housing Allocation Report to estimate the affordable housing needs countywide over the next twenty years and each community’s fair share toward meeting that need. The report was last adopted in 2005 and is scheduled to be updated by SCT during the 2013-2015 period. Both the 2005 report and its predecessor (in 1995) urged the county’s jurisdictions to collaborate with resources and other efforts. As noted above, this feasibility study has grown, in part, out of that suggestion, as well as recognition that previous efforts have not achieved sufficient gains toward Fair Share objectives.

The inter-jurisdictional affordable housing program discussed in this report may be one means by which participating communities address fair share issues. Choosing to participate (or not) in a multi-jurisdictional program will not affect a jurisdiction’s responsibility for meeting its fair share of affordable housing needs. For this reason, it is not appropriate for this report to serve as the forum for discussing the fair share allocation itself.

within Reach plan projected that 73,400 households countywide would be cost-burdened by 2017, and set a goal of increasing the supply of affordable housing opportunities from 14,000 to 32,630 households over the next ten years. The Fair Share Housing Allocation Report also describes the number of cost-burdened households in each jurisdiction, and sets goals for each jurisdiction to meet those growing needs over the next twenty years.

Based on interviews and discussions with stakeholders and Snohomish County Tomorrow members, it is clear specific housing targets for a new inter-jurisdictional program should be developed by the jurisdictions that choose to participate in the program. The participating programs may choose to create housing goals that incorporate a portion of the targets set by other plans and reports in the county, and that relate specifically to the activities of the new program.

Existing Affordable Housing in Snohomish County

Affordable housing comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, from studio rental apartments up to single family homes. Some of these homes are provided through the private market, while others have been created by nonprofit agencies or housing authorities and dedicated for low- and moderate-income families.

Housing provided by the private market

The private market provides the vast majority of the housing supply, but in Snohomish County, the need for homes that are available at affordable rents or purchase prices greatly outweighs the supply for families below the median income. One of the main reasons that

the number of cost-burdened families has increased over the past several years is that the new housing being built in the county is much less affordable than the older, existing housing stock. This can be seen in both the rental and for-sale housing markets.

According to data from Dupre+Scott, the average monthly rent for two-bedroom apartments built from 2000 to 2007 was \$1,200 in 2007; or more than \$300 higher than the average rent for two-bedroom units built before 2000. Families earning less than 50 percent of the median income (\$32,000) can afford rents of about \$800 per month. While the older housing stock of rental units does provide some affordable opportunities, new private market apartments are not adding a significant number of affordable units to the community, and the older housing stock is decreasing due to condo conversions and unit replacements.

Data from the home sales market show an even starker lack of affordable home ownership opportunities in Snohomish County. Of all new homes sold from 2005 to 2006, only 200 homes (just two percent of nearly 10,000 new home sales) were affordable to households earning the median income.⁹ From 2000 to 2008, the median home price increased by 77 percent in Snohomish County, while the median income increased by only 20 percent. Homeownership is increasingly out of the reach of moderate-income families and first-time homebuyers in Snohomish County.^{10 11}

Housing provided by nonprofit agencies and public housing authorities

Nonprofit agencies and public housing authorities provide a range of housing assistance, including rental subsidies, first-time homebuyer assistance, emergency home repair, emergency shelter, weatherization services, and the development and management of new affordable housing units. Housing provided by nonprofits and housing authorities are dedicated for low- and moderate-income families, and frequently have affordability requirements through the sources of funding (particularly federal and state housing funds).

The total number of low- and moderate-income households served by nonprofits and housing authorities is 14,000 households countywide. The inventory of existing assisted housing for low-income households includes dedicated housing units (often called “project-based” assistance), and assistance made to households that then must find rental housing in the private market (often called “tenant-based,” or “voucher” programs).

Snohomish County Tomorrow estimates that as of February 2008, there are 8,869 units of project-based housing dedicated to people with low incomes (this includes both nonprofit- and housing authority-owned units), and 5,131 tenant-based vouchers. The vouchers principally include the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, a federally-funded

⁹ Snohomish County Tomorrow. “Housing Evaluation Report 2007.” Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Information/Plans/SCT+Reports/HER07.htm (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

¹⁰ Washington Center for Real Estate Research. Available online: <http://www.wcrer.wsu.edu/WSHM/WSHM.html> (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

¹¹ Office of Financial Management. Available online: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/gma/pugetsound.pdf> (Accessed: April 19, 2008).

program that is administered in Snohomish County by the two public housing authorities, the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO) and the Everett Housing Authority (EHA).¹²

¹² Snohomish County Tomorrow. "Housing Evaluation Report 2007." Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Information/Plans/SCT+Reports/HER07.htm (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

Table 1 summarizes the 14,000 dedicated affordable units in the county. The site-specific assisted housing units are listed by jurisdiction and broken down by the type of housing unit. The tenant-based vouchers are available for use throughout the county and can rent a range of unit sizes based on household size and composition.

Table 1:
Distribution of Dedicated Affordable Units by Jurisdiction and Housing Unit Type, as of February 2008

Jurisdiction	Units for Seniors	Units for Families	Units for Individuals	Total Units
Arlington	320	180	7	507
Darrington	20	–	–	20
Edmonds	178	120	31	329
Everett	744	1,484	437	2,665
Granite Falls	30	–	–	30
Lake Stevens	112	55	–	167
Lynnwood	485	753	21	1,259
Marysville	338	470	176	984
Mill Creek	45	277	–	322
Monroe	124	52	3	179
Mountlake Terrace	–	113	2	115
Mukilteo	–	–	61	61
Snohomish City	144	96	14	254
Stanwood	144	46	32	222
Sultan	26	7	7	40
Non-SW Unincorporated UGA	–	109	6	115
Rural Unincorporated	68	128	–	196
SW Unincorporated UGA	326	774	27	1,127
Unidentified Location	–	257	20	277
Totals for Project-Based Units	3,104	4,921	844	8,869
Countywide Total Number of Tenant-Based Rental Subsidies				5,131
Countywide Total of Project-Based and Tenant-Based Units				14,000

Source: Snohomish County Tomorrow. “2007 Housing Evaluation Report.”

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of *both* project-based assisted housing units and tenant-based vouchers by jurisdiction in Snohomish County, as of February 2008. Since tenant-based vouchers may be used across jurisdictions, this table shows only a point-in-time distribution of the use of these rental vouchers.

Table 2:
**Distribution of Dedicated Affordable Units by
 Jurisdiction, including Vouchers**

Jurisdiction	Total Units
Arlington	625
Bothell (Snohomish Co. portion)	17
Brier	1
Darrington	29
Edmonds	337
Everett	4,291
Gold Bar	5
Granite Falls	61
Index	2
Lake Stevens	267
Lynnwood	1,822
Marysville	1,324
Mill Creek	457
Monroe	236
Mountlake Terrace	236
Mukilteo	121
Snohomish City	334
Stanwood	268
Sultan	69
Woodway	1
Unincorporated County (Urban)	2,718
Unincorporated County (Rural)	871
Unidentified location	492
Total	14,000

Source: Snohomish County PDS data presented at SCT Steering Committee on January 28, 2009.

The unmet need for housing assistance can be seen in the high demand for existing resources. HASCO maintains a wait list that includes over 4,000 households, with estimated waits as long as five years, while EHA has closed its wait list and is not currently accepting applications.

While there is a network of capable, experienced affordable housing providers in Snohomish County, the production of new affordable housing opportunities has not kept pace with the growing need. Since 2002, nonprofits and housing authorities have added 2,019 affordable housing units in Snohomish County, which is a substantial amount relative to the private market, which produced just 2,023 apartments in same period at *all* income levels. However, this production cannot keep pace with the more than 4,000 additional households that become cost-burdened each year, according to Snohomish County Tomorrow estimates.¹³

The Snohomish County Consolidated Plan identifies three main barriers to creating affordable housing in the county: increasing housing demand due to fast population growth, high costs of housing and land, and limited funding for affordable housing.¹⁴ The first two barriers apply to the private market as well as to dedicated affordable housing. The third factor, limited funding for affordable housing, is a particularly serious challenge for nonprofits and housing authorities. The creation of new, dedicated affordable housing most often requires a complex financing package that includes many sources of public funding and private investment. Most housing developments require several successful applications through competitive federal, state, and local funding processes, each with compliance requirements lasting as long as 50 years.

Existing Funding Mechanisms in Snohomish County

The majority of funding for affordable housing in Snohomish County comes from federal, state, and private sources, including federal Section 8 vouchers, the state Housing Trust Fund, and private equity investment in projects receiving federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Local funding for affordable housing in Snohomish County usually provides a modest portion of the overall funding for affordable housing development (less than 10 percent of the total)¹⁵, and the primary sources for locally-administered funding are federal and state pass-through funding for housing programs. The principal local funding processes in Snohomish County include the inter-jurisdictional Urban County Consortium, the City of Everett's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME allocation, and the County's administration of state Homeless Housing Assistance Act funding.

Urban County Consortium

The Snohomish County Urban County Consortium is a partnership between the County and 19 of the cities and towns within Snohomish County. The Urban County Consortium administers federal and state pass-through funding for housing, support services, and non-housing capital projects. On behalf of the Urban County Consortium, Snohomish County

¹³ Snohomish County PDS data presented at SCT Steering Committee on January 28, 2009.

¹⁴ Snohomish County Office of Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development. Consolidated Plan. Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Human_Services/Divisions/OHHCD/Consolidated_Plan/ (Accessed: March 27, 2008).

¹⁵ Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County. "Housing within Reach." Available online: <http://www.housingsnohomish.org/advocacy.html> (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

receives entitlement formula funds from HUD and through the Washington State SHB 2060 document recording fee. The HUD funding sources include the HOME, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) programs.

For CDBG and ESG funds, the Consortium includes the unincorporated areas of the county and all the cities and towns except for the City of Bothell (which partners with King County) and the City of Everett (which receives its CDBG directly from HUD and its share of ESG from the balance of state funds administered by the State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED)). For HOME, ADDI, and 2060 funds, the Consortium includes the City of Everett as well as the same 18 cities and towns, and unincorporated areas as for the CDBG and ESG funds. Through the inter-local agreement, Everett receives a 21 percent set-aside of the Consortium's HOME, ADDI, and 2060 funds, and conducts its own project selection process.

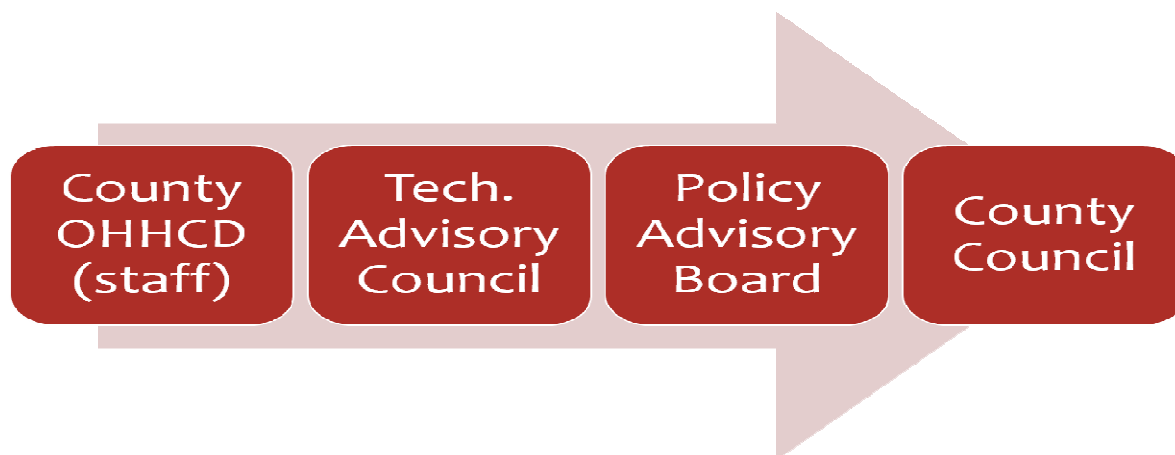
Besides the set-asides for Everett, the remaining funds are allocated through the Urban County Consortium's application processes. Funding applications are reviewed in three stages, first by the Snohomish County Office of Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development (OHHCD), then by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and finally by the Policy Advisory Board (PAB). OHHCD provides staffing for the Urban County Consortium, manages the application processes, and is responsible for contracting with grantees, monitoring funded programs, and compliance and reporting procedures. OHHCD releases the Notice of Funding Availability and reviews applications for consistency with the county's Consolidated Plan and with the requirements of the grant sources.

The TAC is comprised of 29 members, including one representative from each member city and town, two selected by the County Executive, one representative from HASCO, and seven citizens that are selected by the PAB to represent low-income households, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities, minority persons, and homeless or formerly homeless households. The TAC reviews project proposals and makes recommendations on project selection to the PAB.

The PAB includes three members of the County Council, a representative of the County Executive, representatives of four of the participating cities, and a ninth member that is selected "at-large" by the other eight members and only votes in cases of ties. The PAB reviews the recommended projects and makes funding recommendations to the County Council, which makes the final approval.

Figure 2 shows the sequence of review and approval of funding decisions by participating jurisdictions and citizen members.

Figure 2:
Urban County Consortium Process for Funding Decisions



The Urban County Consortium is expected to award about \$6 million of federal and state “pass through” funds for fiscal year 2009, of which about \$3 million will be available for affordable housing programs, including housing development, preservation, and support services. From 2000 to 2008, CDBG funding awards were made for public facilities or infrastructure in 14 of the 18 member cities (not including Everett); and housing developments were funded in 12 of the 19 participating cities.

Other local funding mechanisms

Through inter-local agreement, the City of Everett receives a 21 percent set aside of HOME funds from OHHCD to allocate to eligible housing activities within the city limits. Everett is also a CDBG entitlement community and receives a direct allocation from HUD. Everett allocates funding for housing and public facilities separately from other jurisdictions in the county.

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature passed ESSHB 2163, the Homeless and Housing Assistance Act, which established an ongoing funding source collected through a document recording fee (primarily on mortgage documents). Counties are required to use these funds to support activities that prevent and reduce homelessness, as described in each county’s 10-Year Plan to end homelessness. Snohomish County OHHCD administers the 2163 funds through its Ending Homelessness Program, which expects to allocate between \$1.5 million and \$2 million annually (revenue projections are being revised due to the slow down in the economy and in home sales). OHHCD currently uses this funding source to support operating and services activities, and not new capital housing projects.

Existing Housing Plans and Policies

This feasibility study seeks to align with existing affordable housing plans and policies in Snohomish County, including reports produced by Snohomish County Tomorrow, the Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County, Snohomish County, the Homeless Policy Task Force, and Puget Sound Regional Council.

Snohomish County Tomorrow Housing Planning

Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) is responsible for developing and updating the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), which provide a guiding framework for the comprehensive plans of the County and cities. CPPs are designed to ensure that city and County comprehensive plans are consistent and fulfill the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

The CPPs currently include 21 policies specifically related to housing. Most of these policies would be relevant to the activities and objectives of an inter-jurisdictional housing collaboration, and five policies in particular are essential to the creation and implementation of such a program. These CPPs clearly demonstrate the commitment of cities and the County to seek ways to increase the supply of affordable housing, and to work inter-jurisdictionally on meeting these goals:

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

HO-3: Strengthen inter-jurisdictional 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.

HO-5: Each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan housing element will include strategies to attain the jurisdiction's fair share housing objectives.

HO-6: Production of an adequate supply of low and moderate income housing will be encouraged by exploring the establishment of inter-jurisdictional private/public financing programs which involve local lenders and foster cooperative efforts with non-profit housing developers.¹⁶

The intent of the CPPs is that each jurisdiction incorporates these policies into their comprehensive plans. For example, the County Comprehensive Plan includes several strategies related to the provision of affordable housing, including encouraging building the

¹⁶ Snohomish County Tomorrow. Countywide Planning Policies. Available online: <http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us/documents/Departments/Council/Agendas/CURRENTCountywidePlanningPolicies.pdf> (Accessed: February 12, 2009).

capacity of nonprofit housing developers; analyzing alternative funding for low-income housing, such as bond levies and partnerships with housing authorities and providers; and revising density and zoning regulations to increase land capacity.

The County Comprehensive Plan also includes the objective to, “Strengthen inter-jurisdictional cooperative efforts to ensure an adequate supply of housing is available to all economic segments of the county.” In order to meet this objective, the County recommends this policy: “Snohomish County in cooperation with cities, public housing agencies, and other public, non-profit and private housing developers shall continue to strive to meet its fair-share housing allocations based on recommendations in the most recent Housing Evaluation Report as provided in the 2025 Fair Share Housing Allocation Report and Documentation.”¹⁷

An inter-jurisdictional program to increase the provision of affordable housing across a range of income levels is encouraged by the CPPs and therefore should align with the comprehensive plans of participating member jurisdictions.

Based on CPP HO-4, SCT is also responsible for developing the *Fair Share Housing Allocation* report. The object of this report is to inform all jurisdictions of their “fair share” of housing for the number of low- and moderate-income households who are projected to be cost-burdened by 2025. In other words, the model describes the “fair share” of housing need for which each jurisdiction should plan, and includes both existing and projected housing needs.¹⁸

SCT also produces the *Housing Evaluation Report*, which analyzes the efforts made to achieve countywide and local housing goals, as set forth in the Countywide Planning Policies. The 2007 Housing Evaluation Report describes tools and strategies that each jurisdiction has implemented to support affordable housing. However, the report found that:

“Our CPPs also call for inter-jurisdictional effort to achieve affordable housing goals and objectives. Unfortunately, little of this nature has occurred. Likewise, little action has been taken on the ‘recommendations for working together’ of the 2002 Housing Evaluation Report.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Snohomish County Planning and Development Services. Comprehensive Plan. Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Projects_Programs/Comprehensive_Plan/General_Policy_Plan.htm (Accessed: February 12, 2009).

¹⁸ Snohomish County Tomorrow. Fair Share Housing Allocation. http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Information/Plans/SCT+Reports/FSHousing.htm (Accessed: February 13, 2009).

¹⁹ Snohomish County Tomorrow. “Housing Evaluation Report 2007.” Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Information/Plans/SCT+Reports/HER07.htm (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

Both of these reports would be extremely relevant to a new inter-jurisdictional housing program, which should seek to implement recommendations from both reports when appropriate.

Housing within Reach Report

In 2008, the Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County developed a report that included strategies to more than triple the rate of housing production and double the number of affordable housing opportunities in Snohomish County by 2017. The Housing within Reach plan was sponsored in part by Snohomish County and the City of Everett, and was led by a committee of public, private, and nonprofit leaders.

The plan includes several recommendations for ways that jurisdictions could support housing by working together. The following recommendations for action present possible opportunities for collaboration among cities and/or the County:

- **Urban Mixed-use Demonstration Project:** recruit a nonprofit and a for-profit developer to collaborate on a demonstration project that includes both affordable and market-rate housing
- **Incentive Zoning in Urban Areas:** develop incentives to incorporate affordable housing within designated Urban Centers throughout the county
- **Preservation of Manufactured Housing Communities:** explore strategies to preserve manufactured housing that is at risk of closure or sale
- **Waiver of Construction Sales Tax:** advocate the State legislature to waive the State portion of sales tax for affordable housing²⁰
- **New Dedicated Local Revenue Sources:** create new local funding for affordable housing, such as through a levy, bonds, or combination of public and private sources
- **Homeless Initiative Partnerships:** partner with new and existing State and philanthropic initiatives to end homelessness

The Housing within Reach plan estimated that the total costs of meeting its goal of serving over 32,000 households would be about \$1.03 billion over ten years, including both existing (55 percent) and new (45 percent) resources. The proposed new resources include new sources of direct public financial assistance; increased leveraging of state, federal, and private loans and investment; and the value of development incentives for new affordable housing.

The implementation of a new inter-jurisdictional housing program could potentially overlap with some of the Housing within Reach strategies. The participating jurisdictions can use the financial modeling in the plan to inform the development of the program's strategies and goals. The Housing within Reach plan specifically includes the following recommendation:

²⁰ Efforts to pass state legislation in 2009 were not successful; there may be efforts to pass similar legislation in future sessions.

“Challenge each municipal jurisdiction in Snohomish County to generate a plan that will contribute \$5 per capita of new value annually toward affordable housing solutions from fee waivers/discounts, surplus land donations/discounts, cash contributions (levy, bonds, or other new sources), land use designations, and policy changes. One way of implementing this would be for the Snohomish County Tomorrow Steering Committee to adopt a list of "ways and means" that would qualify, and later to evaluate and report each jurisdiction's contributions. In addition, a template and other technical assistance tools for implementing affordable housing production policies should be developed and disseminated. Snohomish County Tomorrow should study this recommendation as part of the current feasibility study of inter-jurisdictional programs to promote affordable housing.”²¹

More information on the housing goals and financial estimates from this report is found in the annotated bibliography in Appendix 5, as well as in the Housing within Reach report itself, especially in the sections on “Strategies to Support Housing Stability” and “Funding Projections.”

Other Housing and Homelessness Planning in Snohomish County

In 2007, the Snohomish County Office of Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development (OHHCD) developed its Affordable Housing Production Plan. That plan set a housing goal of ensuring housing affordability for 6,025 additional households from 2007-2017, through a variety of types of housing assistance, using existing housing resources. The recommendations of the AHPP provided the foundation for the Housing within Reach report.

As described in the funding mechanism section, the Snohomish County Consolidated Plan describes the housing conditions in Snohomish County and provides funding priorities for the federal HOME and CDBG funds administered by the Urban County Consortium. If it is decided that a portion the Urban County Consortium funding processes are integrated into a new inter-jurisdictional housing program, the program will incorporate the funding priorities in the Consolidated Plan.²²

In Snohomish County and Washington State, the issues of affordable housing and homelessness have significant overlap. In 2006, the Snohomish County Homeless Policy Task Force led the development of Everyone at Home Now, the countywide 10-year plan to end homelessness. That plan focuses on addressing both the housing and services needs for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with a goal to increase homeless housing by at least 2,500 units over ten years.

²¹ Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County. *Housing within Reach*. Available online: <http://www.housingsnohomish.org/advocacy.html> (Accessed: February 11, 2009).

²² Snohomish County Office of Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development. Consolidated Plan. Available online: http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Human_Services/Divisions/OHHCD/Consolidated_Plan/ (Accessed: March 27, 2008).

In January 2008, Executive Aaron Reardon convened the Housing and Homelessness Policy Oversight Committee to focus on strategies for increasing affordable housing and ending homelessness. The Oversight Committee will review the recommendations and progress on the Housing within Reach plan in spring 2009, and develop recommendations by this summer.

In early 2009, a new initiative to improve housing and services for homeless families – tentatively called “Investing in Families” -- will be led by the County, the Workforce Development Council, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Building Changes. These planning efforts may influence an inter-jurisdictional housing program, particularly if the member cities prioritize housing for homeless populations or households earning below 50 percent of the median income.