

Housing availability & affordability

2023



The complex nature of Washington's housing crises requires holistic state action.

Background:

Despite an impressive list of policy advancements and record investments in housing by state and local governments, Washington state still faces a complex constellation of interrelated housing challenges.

This unhealthy housing market:

- Contributes to our homelessness crisis;
- Creates an economic burden on those who *can* secure housing;
- Deepens racial disparities in homeownership; and
- Reduces our competitiveness in attracting new hires and economic development.

The challenge is daunting and will worsen as more people relocate to the Pacific Northwest to escape extreme climate conditions. We need holistic policy and revenue proposals that are scaled to the size of the need and will provide a sustainable solution for the future.

Proactive housing solutions

Cities spent the legislative interim working through a facilitated process across legislative stakeholder groups to identify key areas that will proactively begin to address the housing crisis—in a systemwide approach—funding, zoning, and regulatory streamlining. Addressing only one or two of these needs without the others will not address the full scope of the problem. Cities ask the Legislature to pass a comprehensive housing policy package that addresses low-income affordability, permanently affordable homeownership opportunities, necessary infrastructure upgrades to support private and nonprofit development, and measures to ensure that all communities have the means to address our housing crises.





Strong cities need:

- **Investments** of at least \$1 billion annually to support housing for the lowest income levels (**HB 1149/SB 5202**);
- **Infrastructure investments** that support housing (**HB 1147/SB 5200**);
- **New local options** to increase resources to build affordable housing—including a new local option real estate excise tax, and more flexible authority with existing lodging taxes (**HB 1628**);
- **Regulatory streamlining** to reduce barriers and increase efficiencies—eliminate design review boards and duplicative SEPA review, and reform building code (**HB 1026, HB 1167***, **HB 1293, HB 1296*/SB 5290***, **SB 5412, SB 5491**); and
- **Minimum zoning standards** to maximize the benefit of public investments in transit and community amenities.

**Contains a provision that AWC supports.*

One-size-fits-all policies will not address a problem caused by multiple factors spanning more than a decade. There is no silver bullet, nor a quick fix. Cities stand ready to partner with the state to pass a suite of policies that represent sustainable change and which will ease the strain on housing for all Washingtonians.

For every 100 housing permits issued in Washington...

In 2005	In 2021
 78 were detached	 44 were detached
 22 were multifamily	 56 were multifamily

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Washington has a profound need for housing— much of which the private market cannot deliver.

**Total= Total housing
units needed by 2044**

Affordability level=%
of Area Median Income
(AMI)

County	Total	0-50% AMI	50-80% AMI	80+% AMI	Shelter beds
Adams	1,924	715	368	841	37
Asotin	1,507	453	220	833	43
Benton	26,577	11,130	2,989	12,458	68
Chelan	8,424	3,916	1,354	3,154	459
Clallam	4,155	3,692	390	73	450
Clark	88,532	32,782	13,221	42,529	3,408
Columbia	20	20	0	0	1
Cowlitz	5,993	5,862	118	14	278
Douglas	6,818	1,749	1,105	3,964	77
Ferry	653	207	127	319	24
Franklin	28,233	7,489	5,277	15,467	401
Garfield	11	11	0	0	2
Grant	20,331	5,625	3,611	11,096	141
Grays Harbor	4,158	4,100	41	18	288
Island	5,518	3,059	1,036	1,422	310
Jefferson	3,823	2,360	420	1,043	602
King	282,132	171,910	18,904	91,318	57,327
Kitsap	29,130	13,998	3,881	11,252	1,598
Kittitas	5,814	3,612	439	1,763	64
Klickitat	1,022	910	89	23	75
Lewis	4,525	3,692	392	441	477
Lincoln	197	192	0	6	9
Mason	9,385	3,816	1,242	4,327	274
Okanogan	2,143	1,684	191	268	133
Pacific	1,419	1,371	47	0	223
Pend Oreille	541	364	75	102	12
Pierce	169,347	66,103	25,590	77,654	8,036
San Juan	1,074	785	91	198	29
Skagit	20,398	7,879	2,984	9,536	489
Skamania	1,437	749	150	538	83
Snohomish	139,844	58,789	14,162	66,894	9,773
Spokane	49,126	33,462	4,453	11,211	2,717
Stevens	2,593	1,579	230	784	80
Thurston	49,327	19,896	7,492	21,940	1,238
Wahkiakum	61	61	0	0	15
Walla Walla	2,750	2,643	43	65	0
Whatcom	36,722	18,548	4,158	14,016	774
Whitman	3,600	3,600	0	0	38
Yakima	29,549	14,722	3,883	10,944	1,653
Total by 2044	1,048,812	513,534	118,770	416,507	91,706

Source: Draft Housing For All Planning Tool, Dept. of Commerce, 10/11/22

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