

Strategic Recommendations

OVERVIEW

The HAP provides six recommendations to achieve the housing goals. These recommendations represent a broad set of actions that the City can pursue during the plan's five-year implementation horizon. They also consider additional long-term recommendations for the City to review as part of the Comprehensive Plan update in 2024 and beyond.

The strategic recommendations include the following, and are not listed in order of importance:

1. **Support partnerships to meet housing goals** that the City cannot achieve alone.
2. **Promote diverse housing types and sizes in neighborhoods** to provide a greater supply and diversity of housing while managing the impacts of growth on current and future residents.
3. **Incentivize housing development** to improve housing project feasibility and encourage more housing units to be built in Renton.
4. **Promote affordable housing preservation and development** to maintain and enhance current inventories of affordable housing, especially subsidized and naturally occurring low-income housing.
5. **Use available land for affordable housing development**, including surplus government land and vacant or underutilized land managed by other organizations.
6. **Align Comprehensive Plan policies** to ensure that the City's high-level housing policies consider racial equity and social justice considerations in land use and provide guidance to address other housing needs discussed in this Plan.

The following details are provided for each of the strategic recommendations:

- **Summary.** A short discussion of the intent of the recommendation.
- **Rationale.** A review of the relevant housing trends and findings from the HNA and other sources.
- **Policy Principles.** How the intent and expected effects of these policies align with the Housing Action Plan Principles.
- **Implementation.** The steps to implement the recommendation. More detail is provided in the Implementation Plan included as part of this document.
- **Considerations.** Issues and risks that should be considered as part of implementation, including approaches to managing potential risks.

RECOMMENDATION 1: SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS TO MEET HOUSING GOALS

Summary

The City has been a proactive and effective partner in encouraging housing development that meets the housing needs of the community. This strategy aims to encourage future successes with housing policies and programs through new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships.

Rationale

Gaps between housing supply and demand are regional in nature. While the City manages development regulations, developers build housing. Likewise, the City does not build or manage low-income housing. Developers, local housing-related non-profits, and public housing authorities provide low-income housing. In Renton, the Renton Housing Authority has a primary role as the public housing authority responsible for affordable housing development. Considering the needs of these stakeholders is essential in determining the best approaches to address housing needs for current and future residents.

The City should continue working with developers and residents to identify challenges and barriers to local development and growth. This can include local housing affordability challenges, increases in development costs, changes in community demands for housing types, and other trends. Maintaining long-term engagement with the community can help guide what actions the City should take in addressing future housing needs and integrating new housing into existing neighborhoods.

Policy Principles

Collaboration with Partners. Maintaining existing partnerships and expanding efforts with other agencies and organizations will encourage collaboration towards providing housing options and meeting housing need.

Effective Policy. As noted above, the City does not build or manage affordable or market-rate housing. Coordination with partners is the City's best option to ensure that changes in the City's policies, plans, and programs can help to achieve local housing goals.

Implementation

1.1 Create a Housing Advisory Committee to coordinate housing efforts across stakeholders. Given the importance of stakeholders in meeting housing needs in Renton, the City should foster continued coordination with partners on major housing issues. A committee would help the City coordinate policy across services and housing on an ongoing basis with other organizations and agencies working in the housing market. The City may have an opportunity to expand the scope of an existing committee to consider housing issues and act as an advisory body for the Housing Action Plan. This may require broadening participation to affordable housing developers and other housing service providers.

1.2 Continue efforts with neighboring communities to address housing needs in South King County.

The City should continue its participation in the South King Housing and Homelessness Partners (SKHHP), the other South King Housing (SoKiHo) group cities (Auburn, Burien, Federal Way, Kent, and Tukwila), and the South King County Joint Planners and Developers (SKCJPD). Where possible, the City should continue active efforts to pursue joint efforts to fund affordable housing, monitor affordable housing, and align local incentives and regulations.

1.3 Continue to coordinate with county and regional agencies on needs for affordable housing. In addition to neighboring communities, the City should continue its advocacy and coordination with King County and associated entities with respect to developing more affordable housing. In particular, the City should focus on continuing collaboration with the County on planning in the unincorporated areas of the Renton Urban Growth Area, coordinating planning of extremely low-income housing development, and participating with the Affordable Housing Committee on regional solutions and accountability in King County.

1.4 Identify long-term funding sources for the Renton Housing Authority to promote the development of affordable housing options. The Renton Housing Authority (RHA) has been a critical partner of the City in providing affordable housing options in the community. The City has demonstrated success in coordinating and partnering with RHA in planning and neighborhood development in the Sunset Area. The City can expand its support for RHA by prioritizing significant funding sources to support RHA's development pipeline, including potential TOD projects near the new Renton Transit Center. Potential funding for RHA and other affordable housing developers is identified in Recommendation 4.4.

1.5 Regularly conduct community planning that integrates housing goals. Coordinating housing actions requires planning at the community level. The City should work to conduct planning processes in Community Planning Areas and designated neighborhoods that encourage collaboration with residents on solutions to increase density and diversity in neighborhoods while supporting neighborhood character, local environmental quality, and high-quality local services.

Considerations

Managing affordable housing at a regional level may require coordination across jurisdictions and organizations. Ongoing efforts to coordinate housing goals with other organizations may require the City to share burdens with its neighbors in the region. This will require that the City take on additional responsibilities beyond what would be required to address housing issues within Renton, and to contribute to joint efforts to address regional housing issues that extend across multiple cities.

Effective and consistent planning over the long term is essential. Although individual projects can benefit from one-time collaboration, the most effective means to maintain successful partnerships is to ensure coordination between the City's short- and long-term goals and partner agencies. The City should continue to coordinate long-term planning to align objectives with potential partners and engage in ongoing dialogue to determine other actions the City or partners can carry out to meet housing goals.

RECOMMENDATION 2: PROMOTE DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES AND SIZES IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Summary

Providing for a wide range of housing needs in Renton into the future will require different types and formats of housing. In addition to single-family detached housing, “missing middle” housing—townhomes, duplexes, and other single-family attached housing—will also be important in giving future residents different options of formats and sizes of housing. Allowing for additional housing types and sizes at appropriate densities in targeted areas of Renton can provide opportunities to build new housing at a faster rate and give choices that can be more affordable and accessible to a range of households.

Rationale

Zoning in the City of Renton as of July 2020 is provided in Exhibit 13, with details about the land uses allowed in residential and mixed-use zones included in Exhibit 14 and the total inventory of housing provided and recent housing production in Exhibit 15.

According to current zoning regulations, residential zoning that permits primarily single-family detached homes²¹ (R-C to R-8) amounts to almost 6,500 acres of land, or about 51% of the zoned area of Renton.²² However, as Renton grows, the need for broader housing options will increase, as will the need for additional locations for siting diverse types of housing.

Encouraging the development of “missing middle” housing and multifamily housing developed at higher densities that can provide less expensive options than single-family detached housing. At this time in Renton, this would be primarily with an expansion of duplexes on corner lots and potential rezones.

²¹ Note that single-family residential zones in Renton also permit ADUs, congregate residences, adult family homes, and assisted living facilities in addition to single-family detached housing.

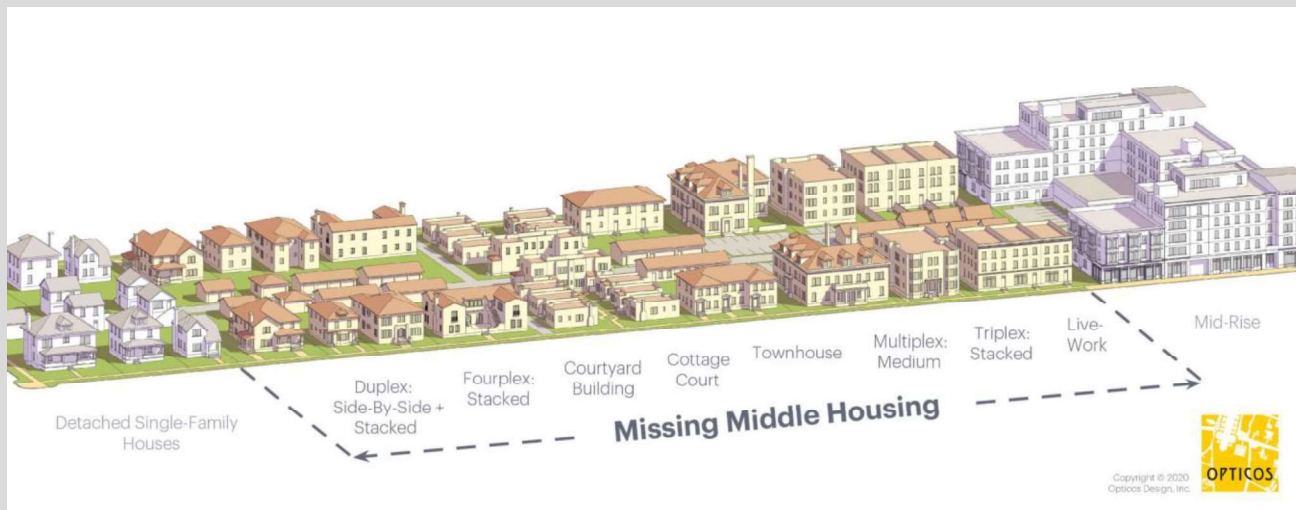
²² Note that much of the RC and R-1 zoned lands are constrained by critical areas and may not be suitable for development.

Missing Middle Housing

“Missing Middle” housing refers to housing that falls between single-family detached housing and mid-rise apartment buildings or condos in size. For example:

- Townhouses;
- Duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes (considered to be townhomes under the Renton Municipal Code);
- Courtyard apartments or cottages; and
- Stacked flats, among others.

These housing types, while common in older housing, have not been developed at the same volume as other types of housing in recent years. These building types are usually smaller and more affordable than single-family detached housing, while being more compatible with single-family detached housing than larger apartment buildings. Because of these advantages, incorporating missing middle housing can be an effective approach for creating housing options for low- and moderate-income households into existing neighborhoods that would otherwise be unavailable for lack of housing at the right size or at prices that they can afford. Additionally, promoting missing middle housing can also encourage greater densities and more efficient use of developable land to accommodate growth.



Source: Opticos Design, Inc.

There are important reasons for the City to consider expanding opportunities for housing beyond single-family detached homes:

- **Efficient use of available land supplies for development.** As noted previously, an estimate for the South King County subregion suggests that Renton will need to grow by at least 463 housing units per year to meet expected targets. Exhibit 16 provides estimates of capacity from the 2014 King County Buildable Land Report, compared with growth from 2014–2019. While overall supplies of developable land are expected to be sufficient for current projections, providing more options for locating a wider range of housing types and sizes can help to use these lands more efficiently, especially if Renton receives more growth than expected.
- **Provide more affordable options for homeownership.** Many developments in single-family neighborhoods maximize the home size and home price given land costs and may not provide affordable or attainable housing options for moderate-income households. Exhibits 17 and 18 show the distributions of new housing built since 2010 according to total living area (Exhibit 17) and assessed value (Exhibit 18). While it is expected that new housing will be more expensive in general, newer single-family homes are also larger than older houses. This may lock out moderate-income households who face greater cost burdens with homeownership (Exhibit 19).
- **Coordinate cost-efficient patterns of development.** Incorporating more density into the areas where the City of Renton is experiencing growth can increase the number of residents and improve access to transit and the ability of the City to provide more efficient services, such as utilities, and road maintenance.
- **Address historical patterns of inequity.** BIPOC households in Renton, primarily Black and Hispanic/Latino households, are more likely to be renters (Exhibit 20) and are more likely to be cost-burdened overall (Exhibit 21). Promoting greater production of new, lower-cost for-sale housing can provide more opportunities for moderate- and low-income households, including a greater proportion of Black and Hispanic/Latino households, to access homeownership.

Policy Principles

Equitable Outcomes. Affordable and attainable housing options are necessary to achieve equitable outcomes in the housing market. Smaller single-family attached housing and multifamily housing types can be less expensive to develop and reduce the costs of new housing on the market. This can allow more new housing to be accessed by households with lower incomes, including a disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic or Latino households.

Healthy Housing Ecosystems. Diverse housing leads to a mix of households with different incomes in a neighborhood. This not only supports diversity within a community, but it can also provide options for households with different lifestyles: first-time homebuyers, households with children, “empty-nesters”, and singles.

Household Prosperity. Providing more affordable housing opportunities for buyers can give households the ability to build their wealth in the homes they own. Allowing more diverse housing

types can facilitate the development of more affordable units, which permits a broader range of households to invest in the community and improve their economic mobility.

Implementation

2.1 Consider permitting additional housing types. The City’s current zoning regulations establish allowed uses in each zone. In recent years, the City has expanded areas in which ADUs and cottage housing are allowed, providing the opportunity for more diverse housing in single-family neighborhoods. The City can create further options through appropriate attached housing by allowing corner lot duplexes in residential zones that permit single-family housing. Further, the City can encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments to provide for alternative housing types in exchange for public benefits.

2.2 Evaluate minimum densities in R-10, R-14, and RMF zones. Areas identified for multifamily residential development include zones that allow for a maximum density of 10 to 20 dwelling units per acre. However, while these areas are classified as Residential High Density designations, new lower-density developments consisting of single-family housing or duplexes may also be sited in these locations, effectively reducing the amount of housing that can be built in these areas and the efficiency of the use of buildable lands in the City. To address this, the City should explore higher minimum density requirements for these areas, requiring that new projects result in densities of at least 50–75% of the maximum density in Residential High Density areas.

2.3 Add a second higher-density RMF zone to allow for greater flexibility. Currently, multifamily residential development in Renton outside commercial areas is limited to a maximum density of 20 units per acre under the Residential Multi-Family zone. While higher densities are allowed under density bonuses in exchange for assisted living units or affordable housing (RMC 4-9-065), more dense market-rate multifamily units must largely be sited as mixed-use projects in commercial areas. Creating separate RMF-20 and RMF-40 zones that allow for targeted locations in RMF zones to accommodate up to 40 units per acre can help to increase housing capacity in higher-density neighborhoods.

2.4 Evaluate areas for targeted rezoning to R-10, R-14, and RMF to encourage more density and diverse housing types. As Renton grows over time, portions of existing lower-density residential zones will be more suitable for higher density development and a wider range of housing types, especially as older housing units decline in value. The City should explore targeted upzoning that will allow for more intensive residential development, specifically with the goal of increasing infill and redevelopment in these neighborhoods where practical. These rezones should be based on the following considerations:

- Proximity to existing higher-density zones and neighborhood centers
- Current or planned infrastructure and services capacity to meet requirements for additional growth
- Proximity to high-frequency transit connections
- High potential for redevelopment within a 10- to 20-year timeframe

- Low potential or planned mitigation for displacing low-income households, considering the likely achieved densities of new affordable housing versus losses of existing naturally occurring units

2.5 Coordinate outreach to ensure residential design standards promote high-quality design and compatibility. If updates to zoning are expected to have substantial impacts on neighborhoods in the city, there may be concerns by current residents about possible impacts of these changes to their community. The City should engage community members in aligning design guidelines for form, style, and massing of new housing forms in infill and redevelopment projects to ensure that new development is consistent with neighborhood character.

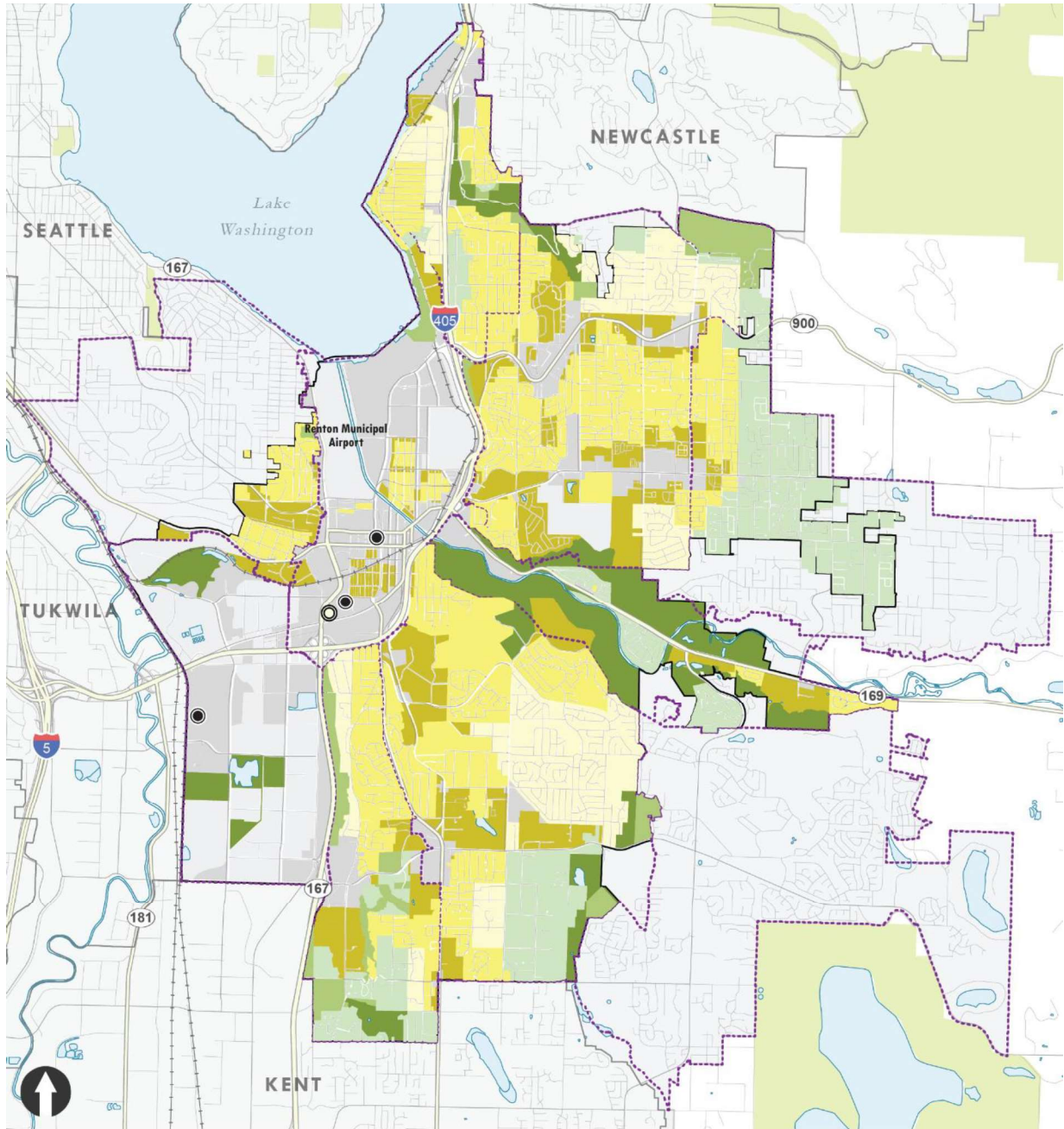
Considerations

Additional planning may be needed to accommodate potentially higher densities. Allowing for a greater variety of housing types and more households in a neighborhood may require conducting or updating community area plans if it results in higher demands for amenities and services. This may need to be supported by the tracking of achieved densities in neighborhoods and updating capital facilities and services planning to account for more households and greater needs than previously planned within an area.

Existing neighborhoods will require time for new infill development to occur. Accepting additional building types in existing neighborhoods that have already been built out will not result in significant short-term changes. Because of this, these recommendations will primarily result in slower and longer-term changes in housing types over time.

Neighborhood impacts will need to be considered through planning efforts. There are typically concerns from existing residents with incorporating other housing types in a neighborhood, especially as infill projects. Often these considerations involve concerns about height, massing, and style that may be addressed through design guidelines or development review. Communicating with residents about their concerns and collaborating through planning processes can help to achieve housing goals in ways that also protect neighborhood character, local services, and environmental quality.

Exhibit 13. City of Renton Residential Zoning.



LEGEND

Renton Zoning

- RC-Resource Conservation
- R1-Residential
- R4-Residential
- R6-Residential
- R8-Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Commercial Zoning (all)
- Industrial Zoning

- City of Renton
- Community Planning Areas
- Other cities
- Urban Growth Areas
- Public lands
- Water
- Highways/State Routes
- Arterials
- Rail
- Major Transit Stations
- Future Transit Center



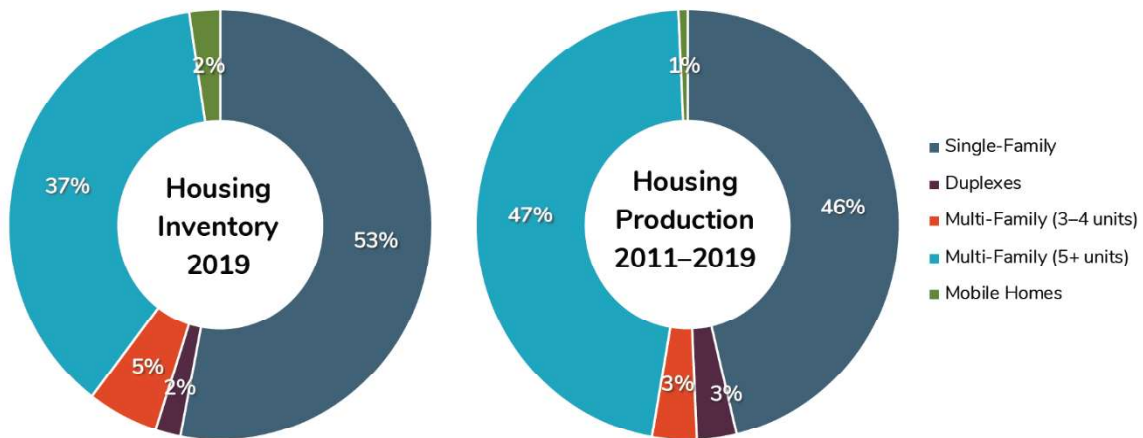
Sources: City of Renton, 2020; King County GIS, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 14. Allowable Housing Types by Zoning District, City of Renton.

	RESIDENTIAL ZONING DESIGNATIONS									COMMERCIAL ZONING DESIGNATIONS						
	RC	R-1	R-4	R-6	R-8	RMH	R-10	R-14	RMF	CN	CV	CA	CD	CO	COR	UC
Detached dwellings	P	P	P	P	P		P	P								
Attached dwellings																
Flats							P	P	P	P6	P6	P6	P6	P16	P6	P6
Garden style apartments									P	P6						
Townhouses							P	P	P13		P6	P6				
Carriage houses							P	P	P13	P6	P6					
Manufactured homes	P50	P50	P50	P50	P50	P	P50	P50								
Accessory dwelling units	AC7	AC7	AC7	AC7	AC7		AC7	AC7								
Live-work units								AD		AD		AD				

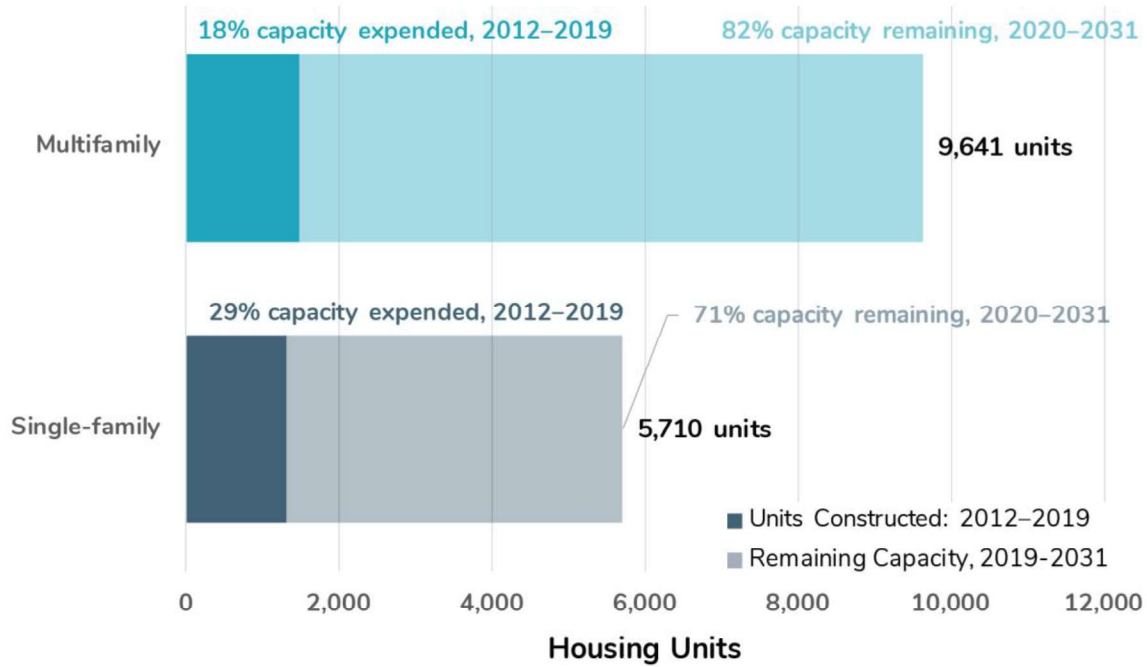
P: Permitted use
 AD: Administrative Conditional Use
 P#: Permitted use, subject to conditions under [RMC 4-2-080](#).
 AC#: Accessory use, subject to conditions under [RMC 4-2-080](#).
 Source: City of Renton [RMC 4-2-060](#), 2020.

Exhibit 15. Total Housing Inventory and Production in the Renton Market, 2011–2019.



Sources: WA OFM, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 16. 2014 Developable Land Capacity and Recent Development, City of Renton.



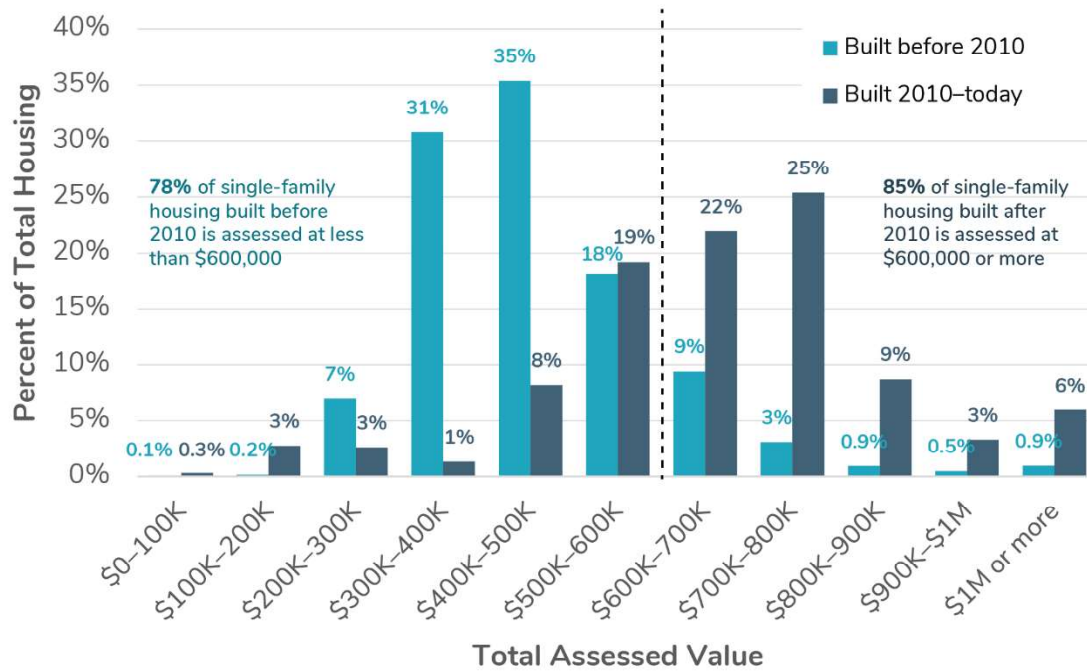
Source: King County Buildable Lands Report, 2014; WA OFM, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 17. Single-Family Housing Units by Total Living Area and Year Built, City of Renton.



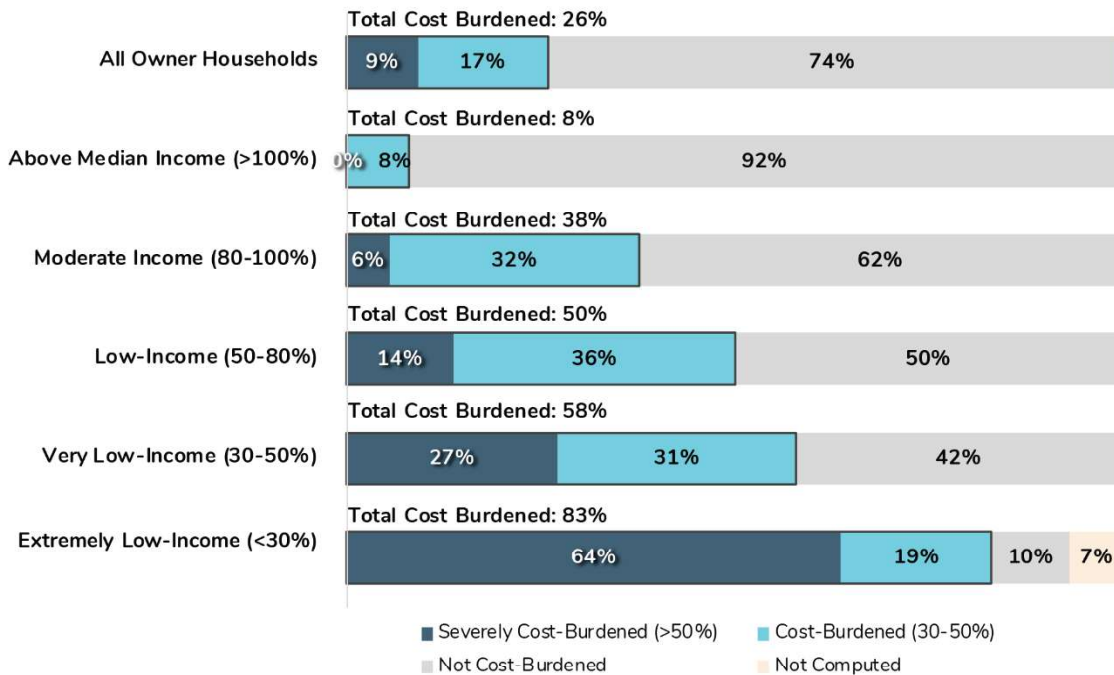
Source: King County Assessor, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 18. Single-Family Housing Units by Assessed Value and Year Built, City of Renton.



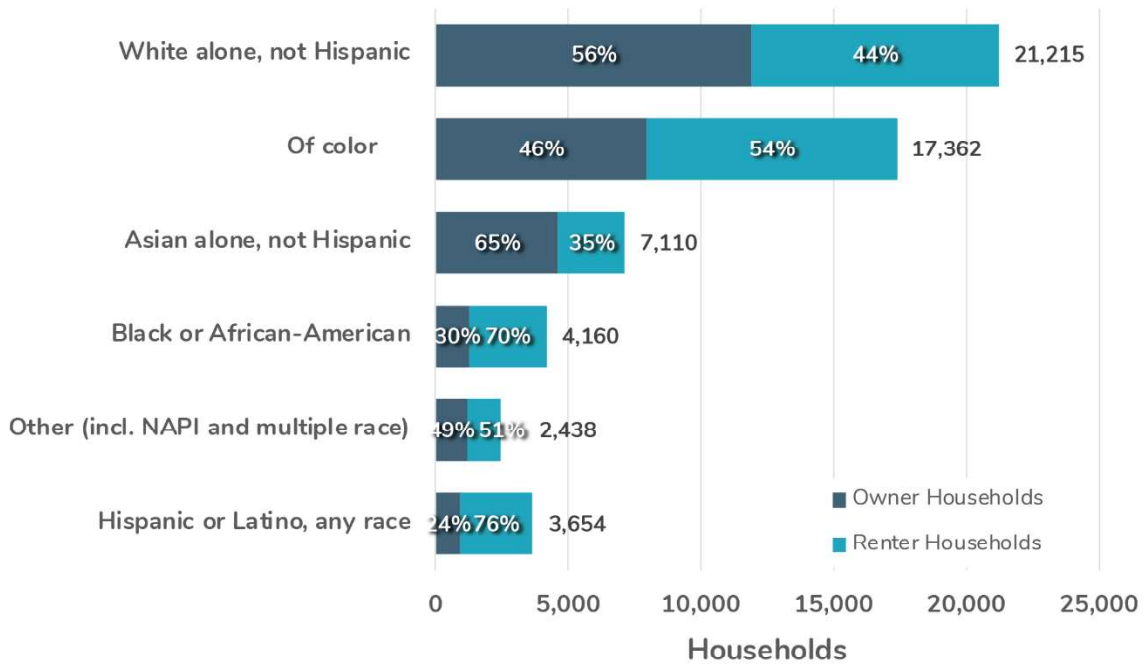
Source: King County Assessor, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 19. Cost Burden for Homeowners by Income Range, 2017 5-Year Estimates.



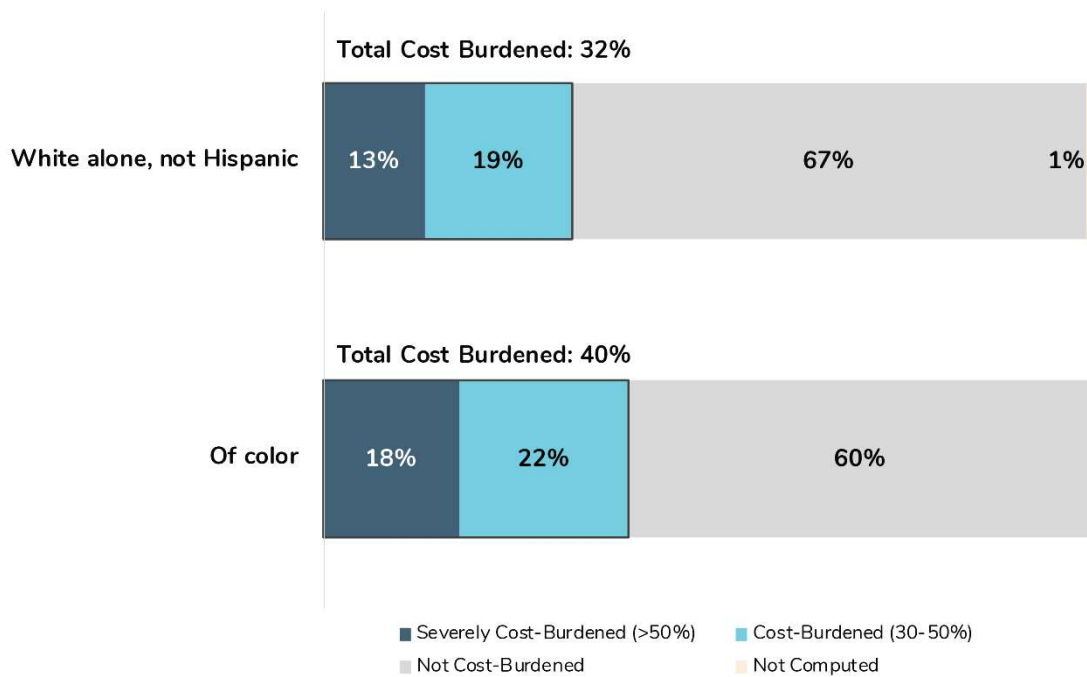
Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 20. Renton Households by Race and Tenure, 2017 5-Year Estimates.



Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 21. Cost Burden for Renton Households by Race, 2017 5-Year Estimates.



Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INCENTIVIZE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Summary

Renton is a desirable place to live and there is a strong market for new development. Given this strong demand, Renton has options to incentivize types of development through incentives and flexibility with requirements that will meet the community's current and future housing needs. Providing these considerations can help to promote the development of market-rate and affordable housing.

Rationale

Aside from changes related to the amount and type of housing that can be included in specific areas, housing development can also be promoted by targeted changes in City plans, policies, and code that can help reduce the costs of development. These can be wide-ranging, and include the following:

Parking Requirements

For developers, the cost of providing parking for residential projects can often be quite high, depending on the specific requirements and needs. For dense multifamily projects, providing parking within a parking garage (either above or below ground) can involve considerable costs. Providing flexible options with parking requirements can make a significant difference for housing affordability and project feasibility.

At present, the City of Renton has been strategic in minimizing the amount of parking required for new development, especially for affordable housing projects (which are only required at the rate of one space for every four affordable units). Under Comprehensive Plan Policy T-015, the City has expressed a clear need to “regularly review and refine parking ratios to account for existing parking supply, land use intensity, and access to transit.” The City also grants parking flexibility to developers that submit a supportive parking demand study. These efforts have allowed for effective management of parking requirements to date that have reduced costs of development.

Previous work from King County in 2015 determined Renton's parking requirements were below what was likely to be demanded by residents,²³ and minimum parking requirements are still lower than market expectations. However, ongoing efforts to keep parking costs minimized for developers could include the following considerations:

- Consider ongoing reductions in minimum parking requirements as part of regular reviews, if supported by increased transit access and development of walkable neighborhoods.

²³ VIA Architecture, Right Size Parking Final Report, August 2015. <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/programs-projects/right-size-parking/pdf/rsp-final-report-8-2015.pdf>. Also see the King County Multi-Family Residential Parking Calculator: <https://rightsizeparking.org/index.php>.

- Consider allowing internal parking to be converted to other spaces if parking demands decrease as neighborhoods develop over time. (Note that infill development is already allowed in surface parking lots).

Ground-Floor Commercial Space in Mixed-Use Buildings

High-density residential uses in Renton are typically mixed-use developments in commercial zones. Single-use residential buildings in these zones do not provide retail and service commercial spaces that support resident needs and promote walkability in neighborhoods. To that end, there are requirements under [RMC 4-4-150](#) for the CA, CN, and UC zones to accommodate commercial space in 50% of the gross square footage of the ground floor of mixed-use projects.

Ensuring walkability and neighborhood services is an important goal. However, some locations that are appropriate for residential development may not have sufficient demand to support these required commercial spaces. In these cases, commercial space may have a negative impact on the ability to finance or make returns on a project, especially those with affordability requirements.

To balance the short-term need for housing with the long-term need for affordable, walkable, complete urban neighborhoods, the City should consider reducing or waiving commercial space requirements in targeted locations or types.

Infrastructure and Stormwater Utilities

Development can also be constrained by the costs of providing services and infrastructure to support new projects. While a general review of the condition of Renton's infrastructure and planned investments under the Capital Facilities Plan did not suggest any specific limitations that would influence the overall rate of housing development, there may be case-by-case site limitations that may constrain development through the cost to extend utilities and provide services to development sites.

Stormwater infrastructure may benefit from greater coordination to help streamline development and reduce costs associated with projects. The City's surface water/drainage standards under [RMC 4-6-030](#) and the [2017 City of Renton Surface Water Design Manual](#) provide requirements for site drainage plans for almost all types of new residential development. These requirements address the mitigation necessary to comply with Renton's Phase II National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) municipal stormwater permit, with respect to both surface water runoff quantity and quality.

While a detailed analysis of stormwater management strategies and infrastructure is beyond the scope of this analysis, addressing requirements for conveyance, flow control, and water quality completely on-site can potentially be cost-prohibitive, especially for developments that may be otherwise constrained. An alternative approach that can take advantage of broader scales of management would be the development of a broader regional stormwater facility or stormwater park. Coordinating surface water management programs in this way can ensure that overall goals for stormwater management are achieved effectively and consistently. For housing development, this would allow the City to manage stormwater issues at broader scales, providing largely off-site solutions for drainage and

treatment in exchange for development charges and regular fees to support maintenance and upgrades. Waivers or reductions of these charges could also help to support affordable housing projects.

Policy Principles

Effective Policy. Being strategic and flexible with development requirements can help incentivize the types of housing that come to market. In terms of direct effects, this can reduce construction costs, improve development feasibility, and increase rates of development. More broadly, it can also support neighborhood livability, environmental protection, and associated goals in the city and neighborhood.

Equitable Outcomes. The market currently favors the development of more expensive housing. Flexibility in strategic areas of regulation can help reduce the costs for development, increase the feasibility of new development, and help to reduce the upward pressure on sale prices and rents. This can help to promote a more equitable and accessible housing market by maintaining options on the market for a broader range of renters and homebuyers.

Implementation

3.1 Maintain parking requirements and consider modified requirements in areas supported by frequent transit. The City of Renton has been strategic in minimizing the amount of parking required for new development, especially for affordable housing projects. The City should maintain current parking requirements to incentivize the development of housing that is affordable to moderate- and low-income households.

Under Policy T-15 of the Comprehensive Plan, the City sets a goal to carry out regular updates to minimum parking requirements to account for existing supplies, land use intensity, and access to transit. Future reviews of parking requirements should focus on mixed-use centers not currently zoned as Center Downtown. Areas currently or expected to be serviced with frequent transit should also be identified as potentially eligible for these lower parking minimums.

3.2 Allow flexibility in commercial space for affordability. Requirements for commercial space in mixed-use residential projects may potentially present unavoidable obstacles to development, especially for affordable housing. The City of Renton can use targeted flexibility in commercial space requirements to incentivize hard to develop sites or areas. This may be implemented by reducing or consider waiving commercial space requirements for affordable housing.

3.3 Explore the development of regional stormwater facilities to support residential development. The development of offsite regional stormwater facilities that can capture stormwater and/or provide water quality treatment to private development can reduce costs and preserve developable space on constrained sites. The City should study the creation of a regional stormwater facility or stormwater park that could be used to lower stormwater management costs associated with residential development projects. This evaluation should include an assessment of the impacts of one-time development charges, as well as ongoing utility charges necessary to support this facility.

3.4 Continue to encourage the use of innovative building techniques to reduce costs of construction.

While different building techniques are not directly associated with development regulations about density, the achieved density and development in an area can potentially be limited by the costs of construction. The use of innovative building techniques such as cross-laminated timber (CLT) and modular construction can potentially reduce costs and make projects feasible that use more of the development capacity of a site.

Considerations

Neighborhood impacts from changes in development requirements. Development requirements such as parking and commercial space could have an impact on the characteristics of a neighborhood, including other goals for developing walkable, complete communities. Coordinating changes to these requirements should endeavor to reduce costs for affordable housing projects where possible while supporting other goals and maintaining overall quality of life in these neighborhoods.

Needs for parking will change over time. The needs for parking in the city will not be the same in the future. As neighborhoods develop and more mixed-use and multifamily development is directed towards key centers and corridors, walkability and transit access will improve, potentially reducing the need for local vehicle trips. Similarly, a greater focus on attracting local employment can also support alternatives for commuting by Renton residents. As these changes can be expected to unfold over time, however, the demand for parking may also change over time. Reexamining parking over time can therefore be one way of keeping requirements reflective of current conditions and reducing developer's costs in providing parking.

Changing requirements for neighborhood-oriented commercial space could impact walkability. While reducing commercial space that may not be feasible to develop could move denser multifamily residential projects forward, a critical component to Renton's long-term planning is to encourage the development of walkable neighborhoods. Short-term flexibility with commercial requirements could potentially result in a loss of the spaces needed to serve the surrounding community, longer-term needs for growth must be considered or residents will need to rely on retail and services outside of the neighborhood increasing the communities dependency on cars.

RECOMMENDATION 4: PROMOTE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Summary

Trends in Renton’s housing costs and household income show that lower-income households in the community are facing affordability challenges. To help prevent these households from experiencing severe housing burdens and displacement, the City should work to preserve existing affordable housing and encourage new affordable housing development. The City is positioned to potentially provide funding for income-restricted units and incentivize property owners to maintain rents at affordable levels. The City can also support increased production of new income-restricted units, either as part of market-rate development or wholly affordable projects.

Rationale

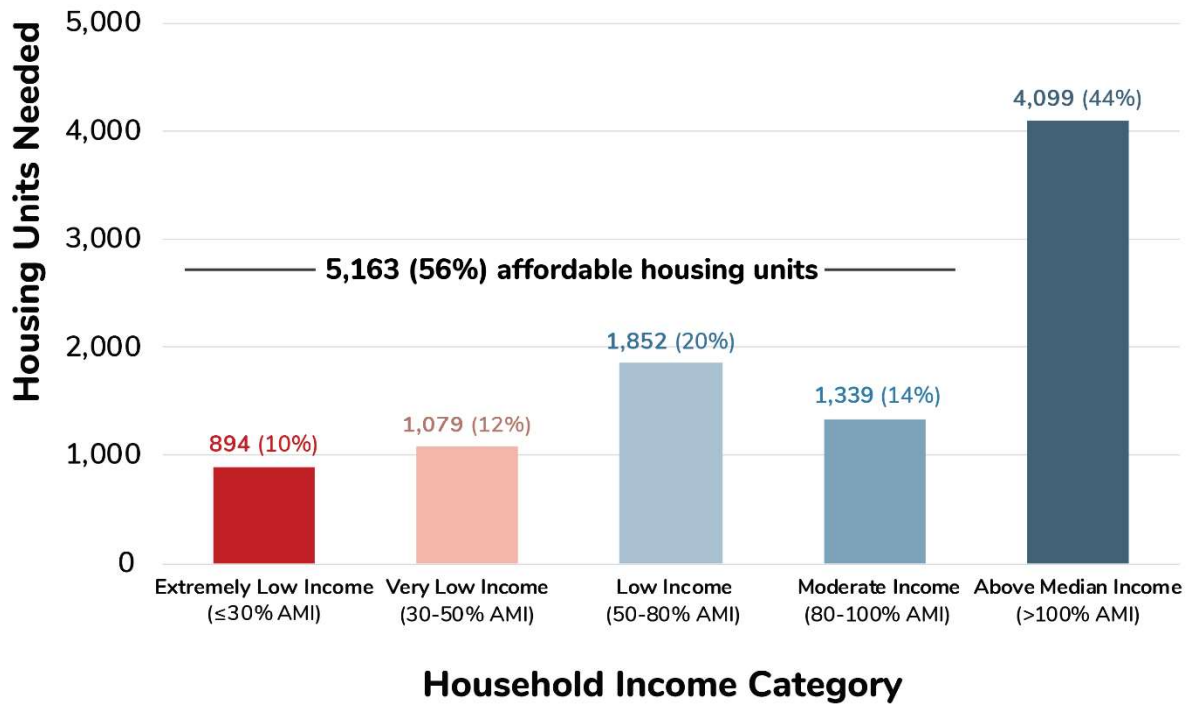
Increases in housing costs are a major challenge to many Renton residents and can mean being “priced out” of their community. This is particularly felt by renter and senior households. Community input reports that many people are leaving Renton to find housing that they can afford in other, further outlying, areas.

Exhibit 22 indicates the expected needs for housing over the next 20 years, divided by income category. Between expected growth and prior shortfalls, about 5,200 housing units, or 56% of total housing need, will be below median income, and 42% will be housing affordable to low-income households. As noted previously, the costs of building these units may vary depending on the availability of land and format of housing, but even addressing the needs for extremely low-income housing in Renton alone could amount to over \$250–300 million in today’s dollars.

Currently, there is a limited amount of housing available on the private market that is affordable to lower-income households. While affordable, this housing is often older and potentially in poor condition. As market pressures increase, increased rents can easily surpass the increased household incomes for current residents. With respect to displacement pressures, housing with lower rents can be either demolished for new projects or remodeled and rehabilitated so rents can be increased.

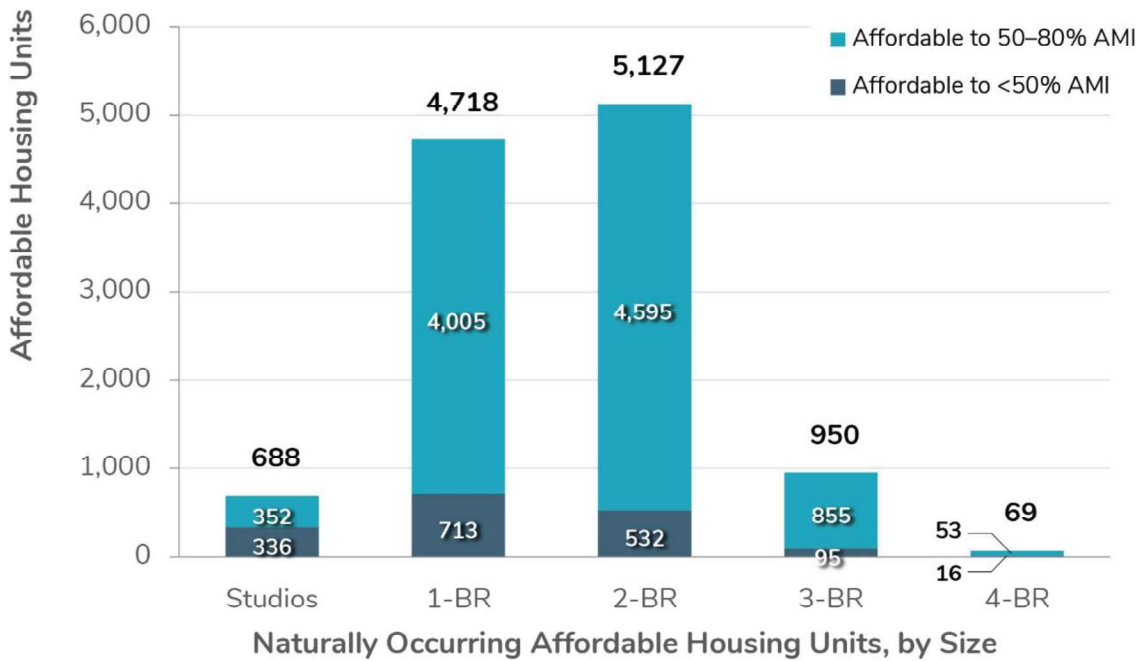
Many naturally occurring units also may not provide the types and amounts of housing that households in the market will need. Exhibit 23 provides an estimate of the current naturally occurring affordable housing in the Renton market, divided between units that are affordable to 50% AMI and below versus 50–80% AMI. This highlights that about 85% of the available low-income housing on the market is affordable only to households making 50% AMI or above, with only about 1,700 units available to very low- and extremely low-income households. Additionally, only about 7% of units affordable at 50% AMI or below and 9% of units affordable at 50–80% have three or more bedrooms, suggesting that there may be challenges with the availability of affordable housing for larger households, especially families with children.

Exhibit 22. Estimated Housing Needs by Income Category, 2020–2040.



Sources: EcoNorthwest, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 23. Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing by Size and Affordability, Renton.



Sources: EcoNorthwest, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Understanding risk of displacement can be difficult at the neighborhood level. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has developed a “displacement risk index”, shown in Exhibit 24, which combined data at the Census tract level about socio-demographics, transportation, neighborhood characteristics, housing, and civic engagement to determine areas that are likely to be the most vulnerable to displacement in the region. According to this regional measure, western portions of the city, the City Center, North Renton, and South Renton, as well as the Sunset neighborhood, all have aggregate data at the tract level that would suggest the households in these areas would be at a greater risk for displacement. When these areas with higher displacement risks are compared with the locations of housing with low improvement values that may be at risk for redevelopment, as shown in Exhibit 25, the City Center and Sunset neighborhoods are at particular risk for displacement. (Note that there are some areas identified in Exhibits 24 and 25 that include mainly industrial and other non-residential uses.)

Preservation

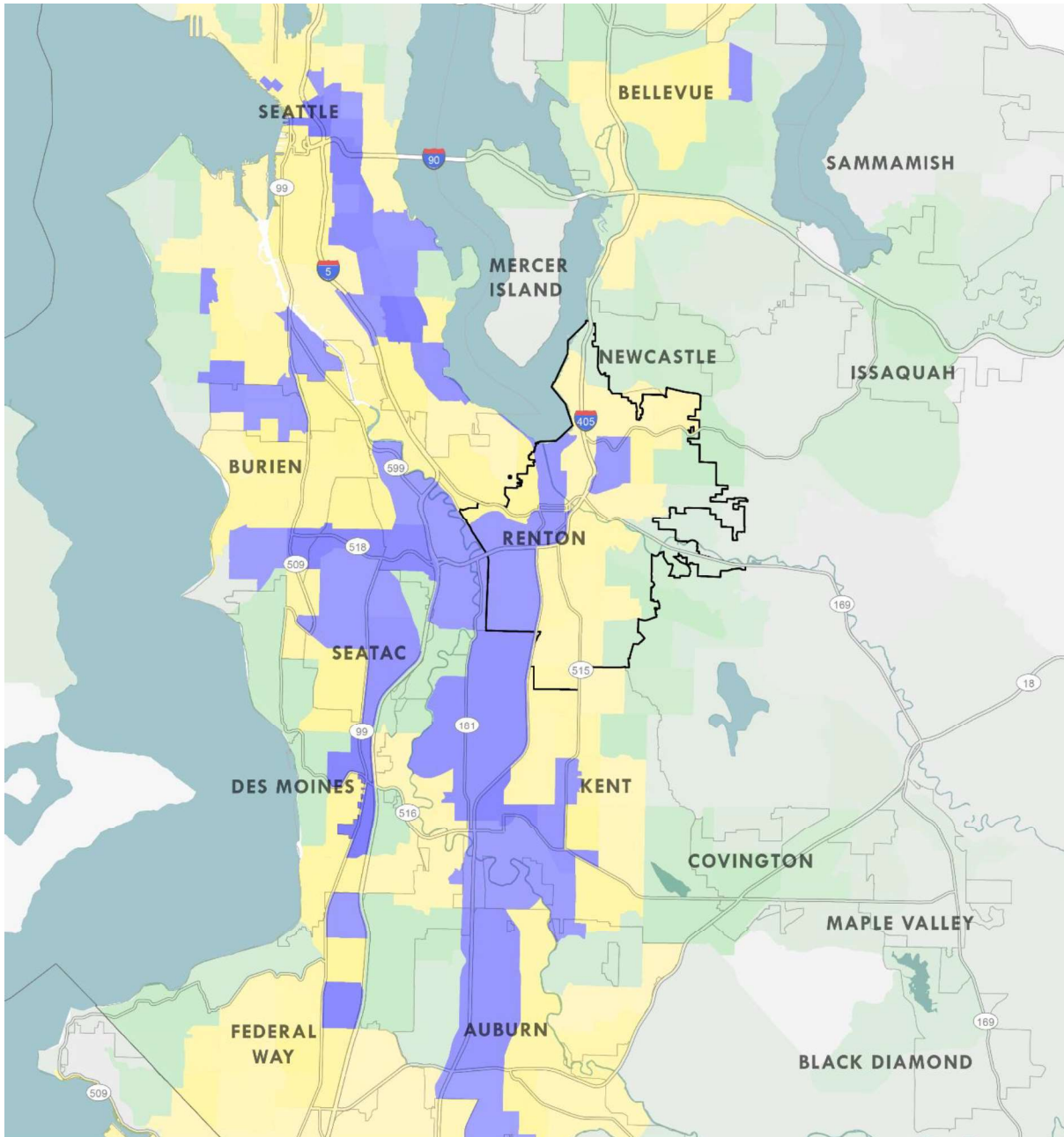
One solution to addressing housing affordability and potential displacement is to provide ways to preserve existing units. Preservation tactics include funding for acquisition of existing housing by non-profit developers and incentives to allow for the rehabilitation of existing housing in exchange for commitments to maintain these units as affordable housing into the future. Supporting efforts to acquire and restore these units can both increase the quality of these units for lower-income residents, as well as maintain their affordability and reduce displacement pressures.

This could be provided through four general approaches:

- Support **acquisition and rehabilitation** in a funding strategy by encouraging funding and support to RHA or other non-profit developers to provide for long-term affordability in existing apartment buildings.
- A **rotating loan fund** could be capitalized by the City, with loans provided for qualifying expenses to property owners, which would then be required to pay back the amount with low or zero interest, potentially with the option for loan forgiveness under certain conditions.
- A **grant program** could be regularly funded by the City to provide direct cash awards to property owners in exchange for agreements to keep a certain number of units affordable to lower-income households. This may require a covenant or other legal agreement to maintain over a fixed period, which would likely be calculated based on the value of the benefit received.
- **Property tax forgiveness** for the cost of residential improvements can also be provided through the City’s multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program. In addition to an MFTE program for new market-rate and affordable construction in the Sunset and Downtown areas, the City has also allowed a rehabilitation project in Downtown Renton that created new housing units to receive the MFTE for the new residential units. Extending eligibility to allow the 12-year MFTE to be used for rehabilitation of existing housing units if the project provides affordable housing and meets the required State laws could support additional preservation of affordable housing.

These types of incentive programs and funding can help keep lower-income households in their current homes, reduce displacement in neighborhoods, and protect certain types of units that may be rarer in newer housing (e.g., larger affordable family-sized apartment units).

Exhibit 24. Displacement Risk by Census Tract, City of Renton and Surrounding Area.

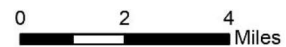


LEGEND

- City of Renton
- Other Cities
- Counties
- Highways/State Routes

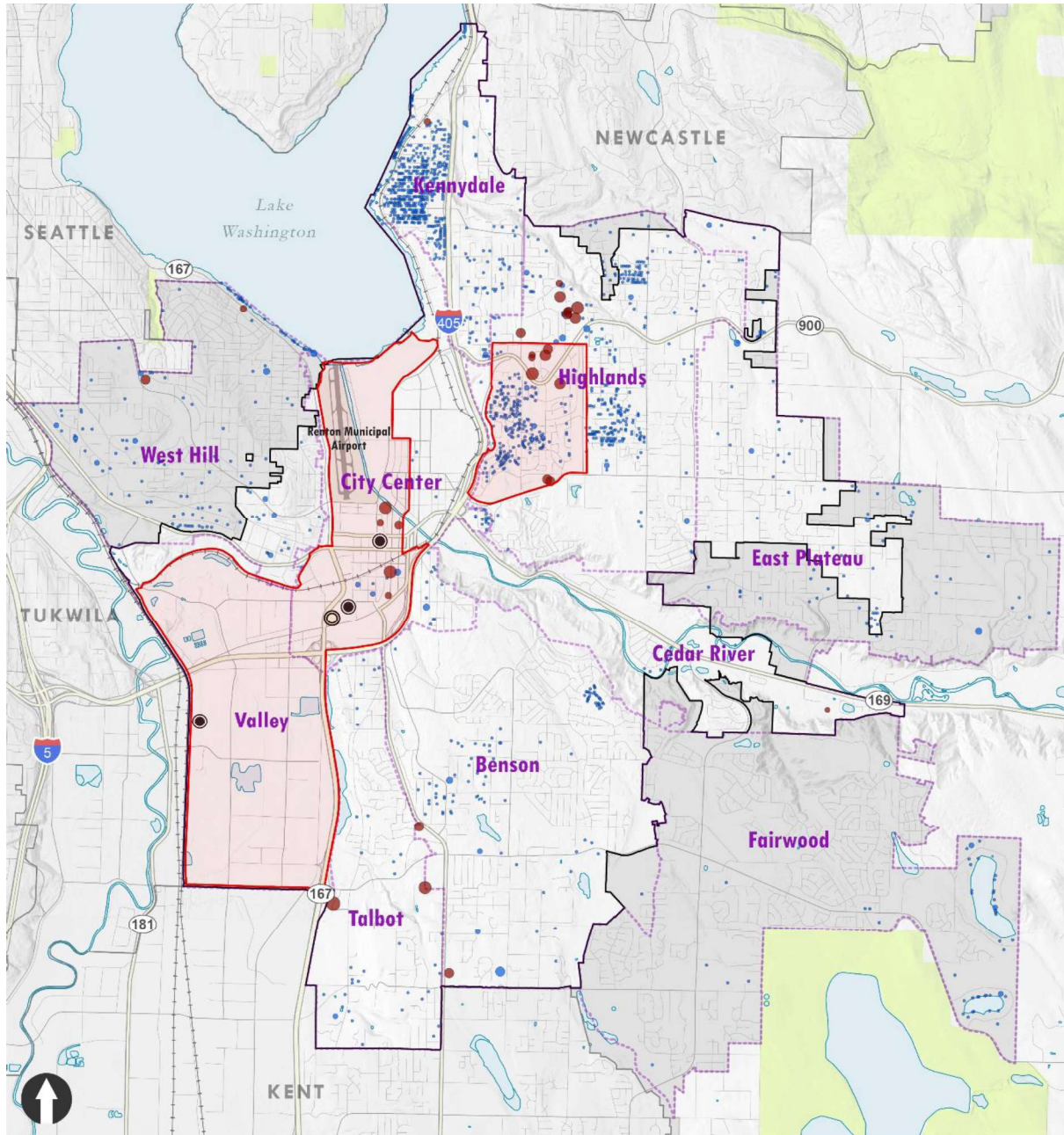
PSRC Displacement Risk Index

- Lower
- Moderate
- Higher



Sources: PSRC, 2019; King County GIS, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 25. Low Improvement Value Ratios and Higher Displacement Risk Areas, City of Renton.



LEGEND

Low Improvement/Land Value

- Units per Parcel**
- 1
 - 2
 - 3-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-20
 - 21-50
 - 51-100
 - 101-200

- Unit Types**
- Single-family, duplex, triplex, townhouse
 - Multifamily and condo

Higher Displacement Risk (PSRC Regional Displacement Index)

- City of Renton
- Community Planning Areas
- Other cities
- Urban Growth Areas
- Major Transit Stations
- Future Transit Center
- Highways/State Routes
- Arterials
- Other streets
- Public lands
- Water



Map Date: November 2020



Sources: PSRC, 2019; King County GIS, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Development

Building new affordable housing projects can be more challenging, as the costs of new construction are higher, and timelines are longer. Generally, new construction requires greater subsidy than preserving existing housing. However, there are cases where the City can provide ways to encourage the development of new income-restricted units:

- Current programs, including **density bonuses**, **fee waivers**, and the 12-year option for the **MFTE** require that income-restricted housing units be set aside in new projects for low-income households. Additionally, the State recently provided the option for a **20-year MFTE** for projects that sell at least 25% of their units to a government or nonprofit to ensure long-term affordability.²⁴
- **Direct funding** and cooperation with partners can help to support development of low-income housing by these external agencies.
- Releasing **surplus lands** can also provide a means of promoting the construction of affordable units through wholly affordable projects or even through agreements with private developers to provide mixed-income projects. (See Strategic Recommendation 5 for more details.)

Although some of these solutions such as density bonuses will not require outlays by the City, others will require indirect costs (e.g., loss of fees waived for eligible new affordable housing projects) or direct support (e.g., grants and loans). Sources of support for these programs will need to be coordinated appropriately to encourage sustainability of these resources.

Policy Principles

Equitable Outcomes. Affordable housing in the private market can often be challenging to develop and maintain when rents and demand in the community are rising. By providing support for new subsidized development and upgrades to naturally occurring affordable multifamily residential units, the City can maintain the housing that serves lower-income households. It can be especially important to support certain types of affordable housing that would address needs that are difficult to meet in the market, such as deeply affordable units or affordable units that can support larger households with children.

Collaboration with Partners. These policies provide an opportunity to work collaboratively with property owners on the private market to develop and preserve existing affordable units. By providing targeted support through these programs, the City can maintain affordable housing in the private real estate market by leveraging public funding. The City can also work through non-profit developers and the Renton Housing Authority to provide new income-restricted units or acquire and rehabilitate housing without the need for direct management by the City.

²⁴ See [Section 7, 5287-S2.SL](#)

Effective Policy. The use of funding to leverage the development and preservation of affordable units in cooperation with private owners, non-profit organizations, and local housing authorities can be a more effective way of promoting access to affordable housing than for the City to pursue these efforts directly.

Implementation

4.1 Pass requirements for the distribution of information to tenants. The City can create requirements for landlords to provide clear and consistent information to tenants about their rights under the lease to ensure that all tenants in the City are informed about ways that they can learn about and enforce their rights under the law. This legal provision can include requirements at discrete stages of a lease (e.g., signing, receiving deposits, rent increases, eviction/termination, etc.). The information provided can include a description of tenant and landlord rights under the law, current code enforcement actions on the property, resources for further information, and options for disputes.

4.2 Adjust the Renton MFTE program to further promote affordable housing. Under [Chapter 84.14 RCW](#), cities can provide property tax exemptions under an MFTE program for both new and rehabilitated properties in urban centers. Currently, the City's MFTE program permits tax exemptions for new market-rate and affordable construction in Sunset and Downtown.

The City also has precedent extending the tax exemption to rehabilitation projects adding new units in the Downtown. Extending MFTE eligibility to rehabilitation projects as allowed under State law for new *and* existing units while requiring the provision of affordable units can ensure there are incentives to upgrade the quality of older multifamily housing units while preserving units for low-income households.

In addition, recent changes to statutes regarding MFTE under [SB 5287](#) allow for a 20-year MFTE to be granted to projects where at least 25% of units are sold to a government or affordable housing organization to support long-term housing for low-income households. This would provide an even greater benefit for organizations such as religious organizations and non-profits interested in supporting affordable housing options.

Finally, the City can promote longer term affordability to allow for a 12 year MFTE extension for existing 8-year or 12-year MFTE projects if the owner commits to a minimum of 20% of the units in the project as affordable housing for 12 years as provided for in SB 5287.

4.3 Develop other property rehabilitation grants and loans. The City may work to provide opportunities to access funding through grants or loans for property rehabilitation. An application process should be developed for such programs, and this may be targeted to address housing in lower-income neighborhoods at risk for displacement, including those with higher proportions of Black and Hispanic/Latino households. This should also involve requiring covenants from landowners to ensure that affordable housing is maintained after renovations are complete. The City may consider administering this program in conjunction with the existing Housing Repair Assistance Program

(HRAP) available to low-income homeowners that need support to make necessary repairs and retrofits to their homes.

4.4 Coordinate sources of funding to address unmet needs. Although the City cannot be the only source of funding, dedicated local dollars can work as leverage for affordable housing projects. By coordinating funding sources and targeted dollars to address local needs, the City can effectively support the construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of affordable housing that cannot be met by the private market.

There are new sources of funding now available to the City of Renton through sales taxes that can be used for new construction or acquisition of existing affordable housing projects in the city. Other, new sources of funding may also provide resources for affordable housing development and preservation. By implementing a variety of revenue sources, consistency is built into the funding process for affordable housing to mitigate the impact of fluctuations in the economy.

Potential funding from the City may be provided to affordable housing projects from different possible sources, including:

- The Affordable Housing Tax Credit ([RCW 82.14.540](#))
- Increased sales taxes allowed under HB 1590 ([RCW 82.14.530](#))
- Additional funding committed to the Housing Opportunity Fund
- Linkage fees charged on new employment space
- A Housing Levy passed by ballot measure

4.5 Include affordable housing as a potential public benefit for a Planned Urban Development. Under [RMC 4-9-150](#), applicants interested in development projects not limited by the strict application of the City’s development, parking, street, and subdivision regulations may receive modifications to the regulations regarding allowable uses, urban design, street standards, and other requirements as part of a “planned urban development” or PUD. The proposed departures from regulations with a PUD design must be supported by a “public benefit”, which can include protection of critical areas and natural features, provision of public facilities, demonstration of sustainable development techniques, and application of superior urban design techniques (see RMC 4-9-150(D)2).

The City should specifically include affordable housing in the public benefits which can be provided as part of a PUD, which can provide these projects with additional flexibility with meeting regulations.

4.6 Explore increases to the density bonuses available for affordable housing. Under [RMC 4-9-060](#), density bonuses of up to 30% can be provided in CD, UC, CV, CO, COR, R-14, and RMF zones, with one bonus market-rate unit provided for each affordable dwelling unit constructed on-site (assumed to be 80% AMI for owner-occupied housing and 50% AMI for rental housing). The City should explore the following:

- Allowing bonusing in other zones allowing residential development, such as R-10 zoning

- Increasing the maximum density bonus provided beyond the existing 30% increase in exchange for targeting units for the lowest income households

These may be incorporated into a broader incentives report, and the recommendations should be used to evaluate potential changes to achieve greater affordable housing development through this program. This may require a longer-term approach and careful coordination with efforts to increase density in Strategic Recommendation 2.

Considerations

Preservation policies typically only maintain existing affordable units. Devoting resources to affordable housing preservation can be effective at maintaining the existing stock of affordable units on the market and preventing rehabilitation or redevelopment that would significantly increase rents. However, these approaches do not create new units or increase the available stock and need to be supplemented with other approaches to increase access to affordable housing.

The City cannot be the only source of funding. The City cannot be the only potential source of funding to support affordable housing development and preservation. Affordable housing developers and providers may look to access Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) through the Washington State Housing Finance Commission¹¹, Section 221(d)(4) mortgage insurance through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development,¹² and other federal, state, county, and even private sources of funding. The City can assist in providing information and application support to owners and managers with properties that may qualify for these programs to help layer incentives to make rehabilitation of existing affordable housing units more feasible.

Oversight is necessary to ensure that recipients comply with requirements. Ensuring that recipients of funding or incentives are complying with requirements for providing low-income housing will need oversight by the City. For new programs, this will require regular review processes that may need additional coordination, staffing, and overhead from the City for effective administration.

RECOMMENDATION 5: USE AVAILABLE LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Summary

For developers of affordable housing in Renton, competing with the private market in finding sites for projects can be challenging. Providing opportunities to dispose of unused public or quasi-public lands at reduced or no cost can be one way of addressing costs for affordable housing projects and increasing the rate of production of affordable units in the community.

Rationale

In many cases, the high cost of residential land can mean that affordable income-restricted housing projects will be more expensive, which both reduces the total number of units that can be built and can threaten the feasibility of individual projects. Efforts to reduce or eliminate the costs of land required for affordable housing projects can help facilitate new affordable housing by reducing total project costs by 10–20%.

In Renton, there are parcels of developable land available that are not owned by private interests, but instead by the municipal, county, state, and federal government agencies; religious organizations; and non-profit housing groups. Implementing policies that encourage the disposal of available land by the City or other entities or organizations for low-income housing can support new projects where the cost of land acquisition on the private market would make it more challenging.

State law provides specific requirements for the transfer, lease, or disposal of public property for affordable housing under [RCW 39.33.015](#). Under these requirements, any state agency, including cities and counties, can transfer, lease, or dispose of property for low- and very low-income housing (and related facilities) for no cost. These transfers must follow rules established to regulate the disposition of property for public benefit purposes and must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Other requirements exist under statute for general disposal of real property, including property acquired for public utilities.²⁵

The City of Renton follows an approach for managing surplus properties as outlined in [City Policy 100-12](#). This policy outlines a public process for transferring or selling these lands, which includes requirements for public hearings, property appraisal, and property sales. However, this policy does not explicitly mention the use of these properties for affordable housing purposes or include any policies

²⁵ For the general disposition of surplus real property, municipalities are allowed to sell, transfer, exchange, lease, or dispose of property under [RCW 39.33.010](#). Public hearing requirements for this process are provided under [RCW 39.33.020](#). The disposition of lands originally acquired for public utilities is empowered under [RCW 35.94.040](#), but note that these provisions are superseded when the process used to dispose of property for affordable housing is applied.

that align with the provisions of [RCW 39.33.015](#). Incorporating explicit statements in the policy about this priority can ensure that appropriate sites can be diverted for use in affordable housing.

Beyond surplusing City-owned land, there is an important role that the City can play in coordinating between other public entities and religious or non-profit organizations with available land that could be developed for affordable housing. By engaging early and linking sites with potential for housing development with organizations involved with affordable housing projects, the City can help to facilitate these projects moving forward.

Policy Principles

Equitable Outcomes. Reducing the costs of land can be a significant boost to the feasibility of development, especially in cases where high local land prices can impact residential project costs. Providing surplus land to developers of affordable housing can be an effective way of supporting the creation of income-restricted subsidized units.

Effective Policy. Encouraging the use of surplus land available at minimal cost for affordable housing can provide a strong incentive that can help partnering agencies move forward with projects. Although some costs may be associated with the City disposing of public land for these purposes, this can be more effective than providing direct funding, especially if available sites for affordable housing are scarce.

Collaboration with Partners. The development of available or surplus public lands would not typically be coordinated by the City directly but would instead be managed by a public housing authority or non-profit organization. As such, this policy would require significant collaboration with these types of organizations to ensure that the City's housing goals would be met.

Implementation

5.1 Develop a general inventory of available properties. To coordinate the use of available properties for housing, the City should develop a process to identify properties that may be available for reuse for affordable housing. In conjunction with key stakeholders, the City should work to develop criteria to inventory available lands and identify properties that have the potential to be used for affordable housing. The inventory could include City-owned properties that are vacant, underutilized, or could be vacated, as well as those owned by other public entities and religious or non-profit organizations.

Properties identified as suitable for affordable housing should have additional information compiled to support planning and coordination necessary to bring these sites into use for affordable housing. This information should highlight the likely timelines and steps necessary to bring these sites into use for affordable housing.

The final inventory and suitable properties should be presented to City Council for discussion and direction on how to bring surplus sites into use for affordable housing, and possible avenues for cooperation with other organizations. The final approach should be developed as a consistent work plan to bring these properties into use for housing.

5.2 Coordinate with property owners to use vacant and underutilized sites for affordable housing. For properties controlled by other agencies or organizations, the City should reach out early to coordinate efforts to use available and appropriate sites for affordable housing. This may require discussions to determine the current disposition of properties and the likely processes involved with each organization in releasing these sites for use at reduced or no cost.

5.3 Identify partners for development of these available sites. As the City of Renton is not likely to pursue development of these sites directly, these sites will need to be released to other organizations for development and long-term management. The City should create specific processes for soliciting agencies that may be interested in developing specific sites for affordable housing, as well as coordinating with key partners such as the Renton Housing Authority to determine how the use of surplus sites could align with their own planning.

5.4 Update the City’s real property disposal policy to explicitly consider the use of the City’s surplus properties for affordable housing. [City Policy 100-12](#) outlines the process necessary for the City to dispose of surplus properties. This Policy should be updated to prioritize the use of appropriate sites for affordable housing projects and allow the City to allocate real property to affordable housing as part of the process in accordance with [RCW 39.33.015](#). It should also incorporate findings and considerations from Recommendations 5.1 – 5.3 as needed to facilitate the use of these sites for affordable housing.

5.5 Coordinate land acquisition and banking to preserve land for affordable housing. The City should work to coordinate land acquisition, management, and surplus disposal policies with Sound Transit, King County Metro, non-profits, and other agencies to implement land banking for affordable housing in transit station areas. This should be coordinated specifically to acquire or preserve land ideal for mixed-use development and provide affordable housing options that can leverage access to high-frequency transit services.

Considerations

There are specific statutory conditions for the transfers of surplus lands owned by the City or other governments. Under State law, there are specific conditions that must be applied for the disposal of surplus property which may impact their use for affordable housing. Providing clear direction on how to keep in compliance with these requirements will be necessary when updating our City code and policy documents as suggested.

Efforts for the sale of public property should be transparent, especially if for-profit businesses are involved. The sale of surplus public properties can be contentious, especially in existing neighborhoods. State law and City of Renton policies require a public hearing where Council determines whether properties should be determined as surplus and transferred or sold. Providing an understanding of the expected use of surplus properties for affordable housing during this process can be essential to ensure that the public is confident that proper procedures are followed, especially if for-profit and market-rate interests are involved.

Sales of surplus lands by other agencies are not determined by the City. Surplus lands managed by federal, state, and county agencies, as well as other organizations such as religious groups, local school districts, and non-profits, can also play a role in supporting affordable housing. However, these groups may not follow the City's priorities with respect to specific housing goals. Proactively engaging these groups on key parcels will be necessary to capitalize on opportunities for affordable housing.

All surplus lands are not guaranteed to be appropriate for housing. While the property portfolio of the City and other government and non-profit agencies may be considerable, with potential sites for surplus available, many of these properties have been acquired for specific reasons and may not be useful for housing. This could include sites that are contaminated or have other development limitations like critical areas, properties that are located in industrial areas and not zoned for housing, parcels with geometries that are not suitable for development such as future road rights-of-way, and so on. A selective review of sites to determine whether they would be appropriate for use for affordable housing can be essential.

RECOMMENDATION 6: ALIGN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES AND OTHER PLANNING

Summary

The City's required update to its Comprehensive Plan, due in 2024, presents an opportunity to align the City's long-range vision, goals, and policies to the identified housing needs in a way that is aligned to the community's values and hopes for the future of Renton. This can include statements that support the goals identified in this set of policy recommendations, as well as more specific targets to assist in implementation. Overall, changes to the Comprehensive Plan can provide broad guidance to all City departments and other agencies about how to address housing issues in the community.

Rationale

As noted previously, the Renton Comprehensive Plan is the focus of local planning, and all development regulations, zoning, capital investments, and related policies of the City must conform to the Comprehensive Plan. The next update for the Renton Comprehensive Plan is expected to be complete for 2024, which will ensure that the Plan aligns with ongoing regional and countywide planning, including countywide growth targets for the city.

The structure of the Renton Comprehensive Plan includes topics under several major Elements, with the two most relevant to housing development being **Land Use** and **Housing and Human Services**. Both Elements include goals and policies directly relevant to housing, with the components describing housing affordability, equity, and access incorporated in the Housing and Human Services element.

One key housing policy in the Comprehensive Plan is the goal that at least 40% of all housing in Renton should be low-income housing (according to statewide definitions used), with:

- 16% low-income housing (50–80% AMI)
- 12% very low-income housing (30–50% AMI)
- 12% extremely low-income housing (0–30% AMI)²⁶

This goal is based on the 2012 King County Countywide Planning Policies and the distribution of household incomes in Renton and the County overall. For these discussions, this assumes that housing is affordable if housing costs amount to 30% of household income or less. For context, housing cost burdens for households in the city are provided in Exhibits 26 (by number in each income category) and 27 (by percent of each income category)

Although goals for housing affordability are important to include in the Comprehensive Plan, there are challenges with accommodating these types of goals overall:

²⁶ [Renton Comprehensive Plan](#), Policy HHS-10

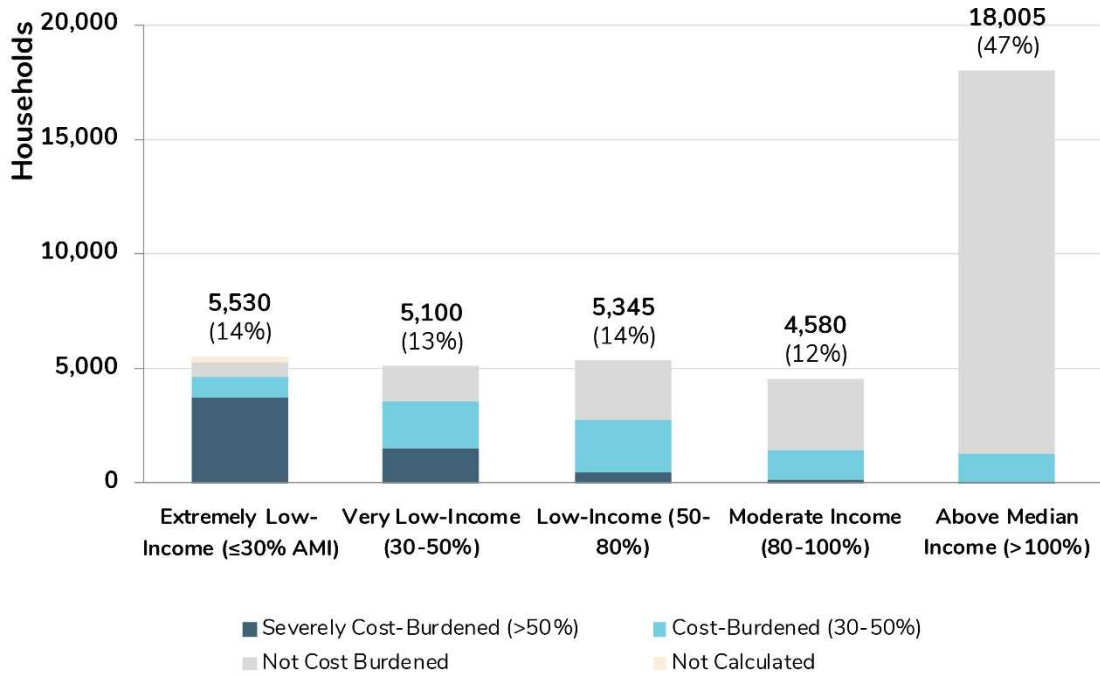
- The current policy sets goals based on the entire housing stock and does not provide information about the production of new housing or changes to existing housing needed to address these housing challenges.
- Households may choose to “downrent” and spend less of their income on housing, occupying housing that would otherwise be affordable to lower-income households. This means that naturally occurring affordable units may not actually be occupied by the population that needs affordable housing options.
- While rental costs are changing and impacting residents, increases in housing sale prices will reduce housing access for newcomers to the market but increase current homeowner wealth. Given that existing goals are set on overall shares of households by income, it does not consider households with low incomes but significant housing wealth.
- Households have other considerations for their housing choices beyond price, including accessibility for mobility-impaired householders, unit size/number of bedrooms in relation to household size, general condition and upkeep, and other factors.
- Other housing costs not related to rent or mortgage payments may be a greater source of financial uncertainty, such as property taxes or maintenance costs, especially for residents with fixed incomes, including seniors and residents with disabilities.

Exhibit 28 provides Renton’s overall projected housing need based on subregional modeling coordinated across south King County, which indicates that a total of around 9,300 new housing units will need to be constructed between 2020 and 2040. This estimate also assumes that 56% of these new units will need to be affordable to households below the median income, assuming current housing costs do not change.

These projections and estimates of housing need should be used in an expanded suite of indicators and aspirational goals under the Comprehensive Plan that address separate needs for housing in the community. This may include:

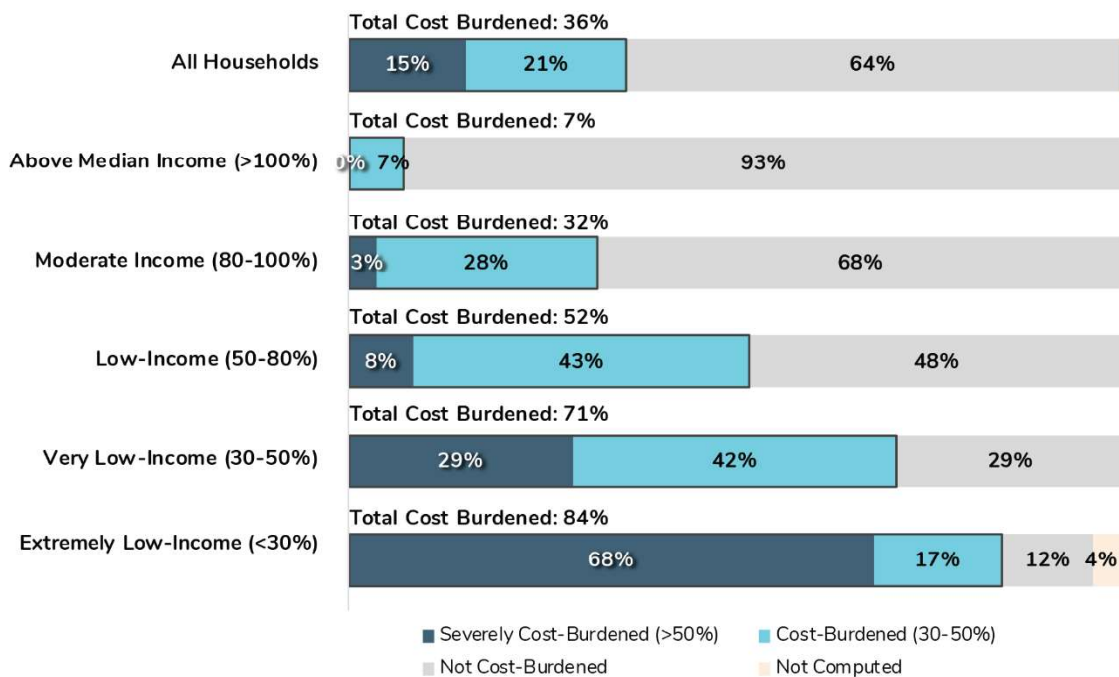
- Overall housing production rates and net change that can meet the goals as identified in this HAP and in the Countywide Planning Policies
- Overall aspirational goals for reducing housing cost burdens and inequity among households in the City.
- Production goals for subsidized income-restricted housing, with estimates for production as part of market-rate projects (likely at 50–80% AMI) versus subsidized affordable housing projects (at 50% AMI and below).
- Production goals for affordable family rental housing (e.g., affordable units with two or more bedrooms) and ADA-accessible units to meet expected needs across all income levels below the median.
- Production and net change in affordable owner-occupied units and change in homeownership rates for households below median income.

Exhibit 26. Housing Cost Burden, All Households by Income Range, 2017 5-Year Estimates.



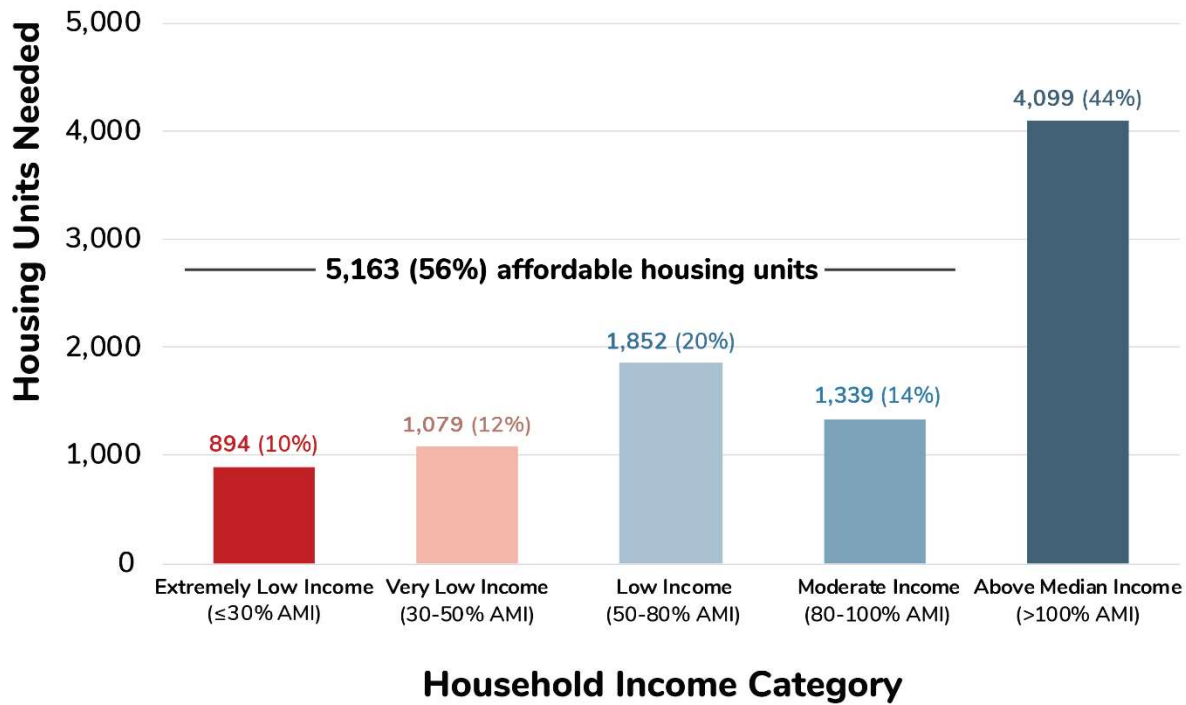
Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 27. Housing Cost Burden, Percent Households by Income Range, 2017 5-Year Estimates.



Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2020.

Exhibit 28. Estimated Base Housing Needs by Income Category, 2020–2040.



Sources: EcoNorthwest, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Aside from addressing affordability, there is also the need to make other targeted adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan to help meet the overall goals of the HAP. The Comprehensive Plan governs the actions the City takes with respect to planning and development regulations, and changes are needed to help to guide the City based on the findings and recommendations of this report. Other plans and policy documents may also need to be adjusted to address the materials included in this document.

Policy Principles

Equitable Outcomes. Increasing the emphasis on equity and explicitly stating goals for equitable housing outcomes in the Comprehensive Plan can help to center equity in future housing discussions. This can involve including explicit statements in the Comprehensive Plan about housing affordability and the need for diverse types of housing and increases to housing production rates as well.

Healthy Housing Ecosystems. The Comprehensive Plan includes policies focused on transportation, infrastructure, human services, and other city functions. Increasing the emphasis on improving the variety and affordability of housing can promote coordination with other policy objectives. This can promote policies and programs that holistically meet the needs of households of all income categories.

Effective Policy. Incorporating a greater emphasis on inclusive and affordable housing in the Comprehensive Plan ensures that these priorities become part of the on-going policy directives of the

City. Additionally, updates to the Comprehensive Plan will also be necessary to implement other recommendations noted in this document.

Implementation

6.1 Reinforce the commitment of the City to address racial equity in housing across the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan includes references to social equity in terms of its overall Vision and efforts to achieve broad sustainability. However, clear statements about addressing issues of racial equity in the Land Use and Housing and Human Services Elements (and elsewhere), can help to achieve housing outcomes in the City that manage long-term issues of access to the housing market.

6.2 Increase the emphasis on housing affordability and reducing displacement with goals and policies across the Comprehensive Plan. While the needs of low-income households in the community are highlighted in the Comprehensive Plan, the risks of displacement in the community may be high, especially among lower-income households renting in the city. Clear policy statements should be made to express support for the City's efforts to combat displacement, improve affordability for current and potential residents, and expand options for subsidized, income-restricted housing.

6.3 Amend the Land Use Element to accommodate more diversity and flexibility under residential land use designations. Under the Renton Comprehensive Plan, policies L-14 through L-16 manage the general types of housing allowed in areas under the three residential designations: Residential Low Density (RLD), Residential Medium Density (RMD), and Residential High Density (RHD). These policies and others should reflect a more flexible approach to the types of housing allowed as outlined in the HAP, especially with respect to achieving a more diverse range of housing options in RMD areas for households with different incomes and needs.

6.4 Update goals and identified needs for affordable housing. Needs for affordable units in Renton are described under Policy HHS-10 in the Comprehensive Plan. This policy should be refined to account for the availability of data, the intent of policies, and the findings of this Plan. While these should be based on meeting general estimated needs for housing growth, they should also clearly identify needs with respect to other aspects of the housing market, including the production of subsidized affordable housing projects, the production of affordable units in the private housing market, and maintenance of homeownership options for low- and moderate-income households.

6.5 Provide regular reporting on indicators to measure progress on housing goals in the Comprehensive Plan. As part of the implementation plan for the overall HAP, the City should commit to a monitoring and review process to track housing production compared to the identified need specified in 6.4 above. This tracking effort should be supported by expanded resources to the Department of Community and Economic Development, with the expectation of regular reporting to Council on progress towards housing goals.

Considerations

Certain Comprehensive Plan amendments should be managed as part of the upcoming update in 2024. Under the requirements of Washington’s *Growth Management Act*, the City of Renton and other communities in King County will be required to update their Comprehensive Plans in 2024. Although some updates to the Comprehensive Plan may be made between updates, the requirements for engagement and review, together with commitments by the City to consider racial and social equity concerns across the entire Comprehensive Plan, means that the identified changes in this section may be better to include as part of the broader updates.

There is a need for integration of housing goals into other Comprehensive Plan Elements.

Amendments to the Transportation, Utilities, Parks, and other elements should be coordinated with respect to increased rates of housing development and potential increases in density as discussed elsewhere in this Housing Action Plan. Local amenities and services supported by the City will also need to be considered. A full consideration of necessary changes is outside the scope of this Housing Action Plan but should be implemented to facilitate the goals outlined in this document.