



# City of Renton Housing Action Plan

## Community Housing Needs Summary

November 2020

One of the biggest issues in the Puget Sound region right now is housing. With rents at all-time highs and housing ownership out of reach of many, finding a stable, affordable, and appropriate place to live is a struggle for many households.

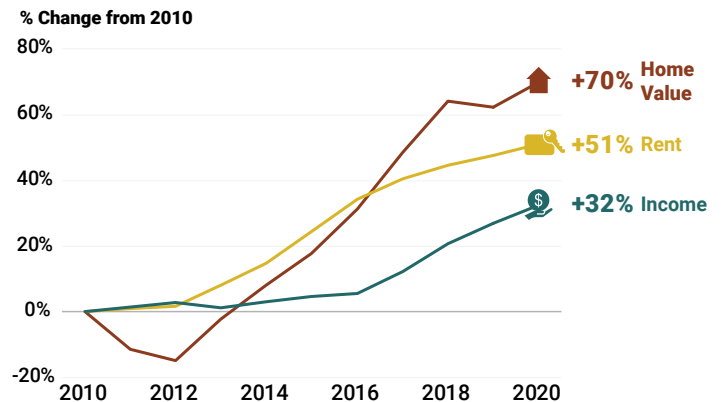
Rising housing costs in Renton impact everyone. The figure to the right shows that since 2010, incomes have increased by **32%**, but in that same time, rent has increased by **51%** and home values have increased by **70%**. In Renton, housing costs for both renters and new homebuyers are increasing rapidly.

This rise in costs affects our community. Households that have been in the city for years may need move elsewhere where housing is less expensive. Younger families may have a difficult time finding affordable options with enough room for children, and seniors may face mounting costs from property taxes. It may also become more difficult to recruit teachers, nurses, first responders, and other workers who want to live in the community they serve.

Right now, the City of Renton has been working to develop a “Housing Action Plan” (HAP) to guide policies related to housing issues. The full plan is expected in mid-2021, but we have completed a Housing Needs Assessment to evaluate the housing needs that Renton will have in the coming years:

**To keep pace with population and job growth, we will need to have a slight increase in the rate of new housing construction in Renton.** Even though housing development in Renton has largely kept pace with targets, we will need to grow further. Regional estimates suggest we will need about another **9,300**

### Changes in Housing Costs and Income, 2010–Present



Sources: BERK, 2020; Zillow, 2020; CoStar, 2020; US HUD, 2020.

**homes**, increasing the number of homes in our community by **22%**. This need for new housing may increase further—especially if local employers expand or if housing development doesn’t keep pace in other parts of the region.

**Renton has the land to accommodate needed housing growth, but infrastructure and services will need to expand to support additional housing.**

A challenge for many cities is the shortage of sites for new housing. In Renton, there is enough land to accommodate needed growth. However, transportation systems and infrastructure systems like water and sewer services will need to expand to use all this capacity. Existing constraints with these systems limit future development and will require investment to support needed growth.

**Many renters and homebuyers may not be able to find the types of housing that are right for them.**

Right now, many of the housing options being built in Renton are oriented to specific household types. For renters, new smaller studio and one-bedroom apart-

ments are the most common; while for homebuyers, new homes are typically larger and more expensive. There are many households that need housing types not currently being built in Renton, and these housing gaps are most significant for working households with more than two people.

**Renton also needs more subsidized housing for lower-income households that are not served by the private market.** For lower-income households in Renton, finding housing in their price range can be a significant struggle. The most recent data shows that about **74%** of low-income households making less than half of the Area Median Income (AMI) in King County are renters. For extremely low-income households, over **65%** pay more than half of their income on housing, which is a severe cost burden. Additionally, many homes affordable to these households can be unsuitable given their state of repair, size and number of bedrooms, or their location.

Without public commitment to increase housing options at this level of affordability, these households face potential displacement and homelessness. Regional and local housing authorities, nonprofit agencies, and the City of Renton must work together to address these needs.

**There are other housing needs that extend beyond housing production.** Community members may also face specific challenges to accessing and keeping affordable, appropriate housing. Seniors and people with



Photo credit: City of Renton.

disabilities may have additional requirements for housing to be accessible to their needs. Immigrants and people of color have strong support networks in our community, but are more likely to face challenges in finding appropriate housing at a reasonable cost. Disproportionate impacts in housing by race and ethnicity are national trends and reproduce historical discrimination in the housing market today.

**NEXT STEPS**

A Housing Action Plan to address these needs will be received by Renton City Council in mid-2021. Over the next few months, we will be coordinating an assessment of existing housing policies and programs, and developing recommendations for new approaches the City can take to encourage the development of housing needed by the community. We will continue to keep the public up to date.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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