

Office of the Mayors

**City of Carnation, City of Duvall, City of North Bend,
City of Snoqualmie**



Thursday, November 10, 2022

Laura Hodgson, Senior Planner
Washington State Department of Commerce
1011 Plum Street SE
P.O. Box 42525
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Snoqualmie Valley Comment for Projected Housing Need- Draft Methodology & Numbers

Dear Ms. Hodgson,

Collectively the Snoqualmie Valley cities of Carnation, Duvall, North Bend, and Snoqualmie are making efforts to plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments. As a part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update, our cities are jointly preparing Housing Needs Assessments and Action Plans for the Valley, through our coordinated Housing Action Plan Implementation (HAPI) grant. However, we struggle with projected needs and growth targets as follows:

- Affordable Projected Need: The draft methodology would allocate 129,541 new affordable housing units at 0-30% Area Median Income (AMI) to King County, and over 308,000 total units to King County. The Valley's share of projected housing is approximately 1.6% (see Option 1: Focus on New Growth graphic below). As such the Valley would need to plan for over 2,000 housing units at 0-30% AMI by 2044, including a recently added 800 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH).
- Growth Targets: The Valley already has a deficit of 420 housing units from the adopted 2044 growth target of 2,656 units (*King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, June 2021*). Planning to accommodate this target would require tradeoffs and adjustments to the respective city comprehensive plans. This doesn't account for a substantial projected affordable housing need.

The Valley cities share similar concerns regarding King County Projected Housing Needs and growth targets for the following three reasons:

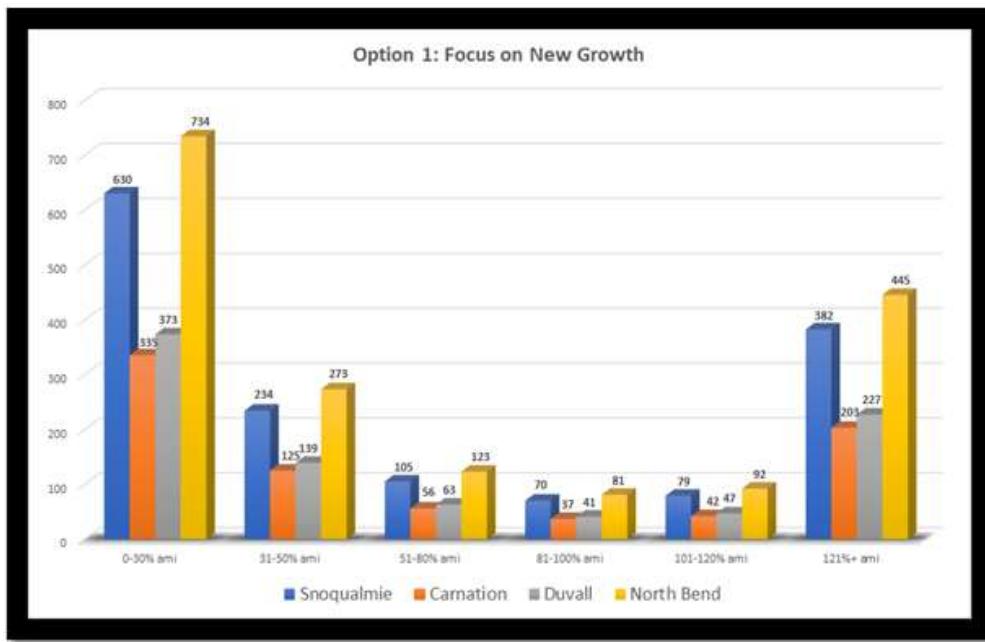
1. **Transportation:** Snoqualmie Valley cities lack good transportation connections to the rest of King County. The Valley relies on connections from Interstate 90, State Route 18, State Route 202, State Route 203, and several smaller and congested County roads including NE Tolt Hill Road, Woodinville-Duvall Road, NE 124th Street, Novelty Hill Road, and Duthie Hill Road. This congestion impacts police response times, especially for the City of Duvall where nearly 70% of all traffic funnels from the north to the south along State Route 203 as well as from the west to east along NE Novelty Hill Road and Woodinville Duvall Road. Furthermore, the Valley lacks public transit. Today only three King County Metro routes serve the Valley. The two all-day routes operate at frequencies of every 90-120 minutes and do not provide useful transit service. Metro's long-range plan ("Metro Connects") shows increased bus service into and through the Valley by 2050. This unfunded plan would likely take many years to implement.
2. **Land/Urban Services:** The Valley has significant geographical and natural constraints. Much of the Valley is within a floodplain, including approximately 50% of the corporate city limits of Snoqualmie. The areas within the UGA includes protected farms and natural resources acquired through Conservations Futures and other preservation funding sources. In some annexation areas less than 16% remains buildable.

Commerce's draft methodology shows a total allocation of over 308,000 housing units for King County, of which over 198,000 need to be affordable at the 80% AMI level or below. Requiring nearly 65% of the housing targets to be affordable is challenging. The Valley has limited funding tools and water and sewer infrastructure to support development of projected needs. Non-market-rate housing has had limited success (i.e., Multi-Family Tax Exemption). It is less profitable and could contribute to the increasing cost of market rate housing.

3. **Local Need:** It's important that our local context be considered in the regional planning efforts such that we collectively meet shared regional and state goals for the needs of all current and future residents. The allocation process was done prior to HB1220. The cities and King County negotiated in good faith using information available at the time. Valley growth targets may have been different had our cities considered projected affordable needs at the time of allocation.

Considering our collective concerns to solve projected affordable needs, we ask the Department of Commerce to commit to:

- Financial resources and tools; including near-term transportation studies.
- Investments in Valley County and State infrastructure.
- 5-year periodic reevaluation of projected housing needs.
- Non-PSH and PSH social and wrap around services.



As a follow up we respectfully request an opportunity to discuss our concerns with the Department directly. With your support the Valley can plan for growth and affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jim Ribail, City of Carnation

Mayor Rob McFarland, City of North Bend

Mayor Amy Ockerlander, City of Duvall

Mayor Katherine Ross, City of Snoqualmie