

# Housing Element

## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER:

- Estimates of current and future housing needs;
- Policies to preserve and improve the existing housing stock; encourage new housing that meets the full spectrum of the community's needs; and develop thriving, equitable neighborhoods; and
- Strategies to encourage housing that is affordable to all income levels and provides for the needs of all current and future residents of Tukwila.

## Purpose

This Housing element describes how Tukwila's housing needs will be satisfied through 2044. This element is based on a detailed analysis of Tukwila's housing needs contained in the [Housing Background Report](#); housing projections determined by a joint committee including King County and its cities; and community engagement input.

The goals and policies seek to guide City actions related to housing, including decisions related to development regulations, affordable housing, and other programs. In the coming years, the City will need to plan for growth while ensuring the existing and future housing stock serves the changing needs of Tukwila's population, reducing barriers that prevent low- and moderate-income households from living near their work or transit, and preserving housing that is affordably priced. Tukwila's future must include thriving, equitable neighborhoods where everyone has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, and affordable home in the "City of opportunity and the community of choice".

## Issues

In developing the goals and policies for Tukwila's Housing Element, these issues were identified.

### Housing Stock

- **Building age:** Almost half of Tukwila housing units are more than fifty years old, and most units were constructed between 1960 and 1980. As of 2023, only a tenth of the existing units were constructed since 2000. Older buildings can be more expensive to maintain, especially for cost-burdened residents. That said, if well-maintained and protected from displacement, these units offer a naturally-occurring affordable housing reservoir.

- **Housing size:** Housing units available for rent tend to consist of studios and 1- and 2-bedroom units, while ownership units tend to have 3- or 4-bedrooms. However, renter households tend to be larger than homeowner households, creating a mismatch between need and availability.
- **Vacancy rates:** Tukwila has very low vacancy rates. In 2021, the rental vacancy rate was 1.3% and the ownership vacancy rate was 1.4%. Low vacancy rates indicate a lack of housing supply, which makes it more difficult for existing residents and prospective renters and buyers to identify housing that might best suit them.



*Figure 1. Housing of different designs, ownership arrangements, and prices help meet the diverse needs of Tukwila residents.*

## **Home Ownership Options and Middle Housing**

Having a range of housing types to choose from facilitates home ownership among a wider range of households. Homeownership can offer greater stability and the opportunity to build wealth, as well as strengthen resilience against displacement.

Currently, most of Tukwila’s housing stock consists of older single-family homes, and apartments in large multi-family developments. These limited options do not accommodate residents in all stages of life, including young adults, multigenerational families, older adults hoping to “age in place,” and older adults looking to downsize. Single family houses, the only housing type allowed on most residential lots in Tukwila, are also generally the most expensive type of housing to purchase, and develop per unit, meaning new units are financially out of reach for many households.

“Middle housing” includes duplexes, townhouses, cottages, courtyard apartments, and other building types that fall between single family detached houses and high-density apartments. Middle housing tends to be more affordable to build and offers a greater variety of layouts and sizes that are better suited to the range of household types in Tukwila. Expanding the areas in which middle housing is allowed could help create new “starter homes” and offer the advantages of homeownership to a new generation.



Figure 2. Middle housing illustrations.

## Housing Projections

The Puget Sound Regional Council – the regional planning organization that develops growth projections – estimates that Tukwila will need a total of 14,239 housing units by 2044, or 5,045 more than the City’s current stock (9,194 units). To achieve this growth, roughly 240 new units will need to be developed every year. Historically, there has been a large gap between the City’s growth target and number of housing units actually constructed in the target period, although housing production increased since 2018, partly due to modified development regulations in the Southcenter urban center, and new development along Tukwila International Boulevard. Due to the slow growth, the City is recommended to adopt “reasonable measures” to accelerate housing production, potentially including changes to zoning, permitting procedures, or other measures.

Analysis of Tukwila’s current zoning shows that the City has a total capacity for 7,475 new housing units within its zones that allow residential development and from anticipated housing units from projects in the development pipeline. However antiquated development regulations and extended permitting timelines have created barriers to new construction.

## Affordable Housing Targets and Anti-Displacement Concerns

Under the Growth Management Act, cities and counties work together to plan for a sufficient supply of housing affordable to all income levels. Since 2021, cities and counties have coordinated to identify equitable individual housing targets that will meet regional housing needs. Tukwila’s targets are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Tukwila Housing Supply and Need by Income

Income band	Share of Existing Units	Share of Existing Households	New Unit Target Share	Needed Housing Units
Extremely low (0-30% AMI)	4%	23%	21%	1367*
Very low (30-50% AMI)	26%	19%	4%	274
Low (50-80% AMI)	35%	16%	3%	214
Moderate (80-100% AMI)	18%	12%	19%	610
Higher (100-120% AMI)	10%	30%	11%	692
High (> 120% AMI)	7%		51%	3,343

\* Includes 471 needed permanent supportive housing units

With a significant supply of relatively affordable housing present in Tukwila, the City is already contributing significantly to countywide affordability. It is important to note that newly developed units lower than 120% AMI can be allocated to the >120% AMI level for target purposes.

As new homes are created, it will be important to act to reduce impacts on vulnerable communities in Tukwila. These impacts may include displacement of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAHs) and cultural anchors, such as businesses and places of worship. Displacement is most likely to occur in areas where zoning allows higher intensity development relative to other parts of the City (e.g., along Tukwila International Boulevard), and where vulnerable communities such as low-income residents, recent immigrants, or non-White communities are present.

This element includes policies intended to prevent displacement, preserve and maintain older, more affordable housing, and strengthen links with members of vulnerable communities.

## **Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies**

The following goals and policies intend to help Tukwila establish vibrant neighborhoods and encourage new housing, while maintaining affordable housing and meeting the needs of low-income and special-needs households. Each goal is followed by a list of related policies. Implementation strategies are included in three groups; for Goals 3.1 and 3.2, Goals 3.3 and 3.4, and Goal 3.5.

[[[changes to policies in the 2015 plan are noted in this draft]]]

### **GOAL 3.1 – Support housing growth** consistent with regional targets. (Revised 3.1)

- 3.1.1 Ensure zoned capacity is sufficient and encourages housing construction sufficient to meet the regional growth target of at least 5,045 additional housing units by 2044. (Revised 3.1.1)
- 3.1.2 Identify and remove excessive regulatory barriers to housing production. (Revised 3.1.2)
- 3.1.3 Modify residential zoning designations and development standards to align with city goals, and periodically assess the amount of housing produced under these standards. (New policy)
- 3.1.4 Encourage housing growth near major transit stops, especially high-capacity transit nodes and in Southcenter/Tukwila Urban Center. (New Policy)
- 3.1.5 Align development regulations to market conditions to reduce reliance on time- and funding-intensive development agreements. (New Policy)

**GOAL 3.2 – Promote safe, healthy, and affordable housing choices**  
for residents of all income levels. (Revised 3.2)

- 3.2.1 Encourage production in all neighborhoods of diverse housing types that are appropriate for residents in all stages of life and all household sizes. (Revised 3.2.1)
- 3.2.2 Encourage housing development affordable to all income segments sufficient to meet needs consistent with adopted targets.
- 3.2.3 Encourage the creation of housing for different income levels in residential areas throughout the city (Revised 3.2.2).
- 3.2.4 Support the development of emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing sufficient to meet adopted targets, and ensure that City regulations guiding such development are consistent with state and regional guidance. (Revised 3.2.3)
- 3.2.5 Support siting of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing in any zones in which residential dwelling units or hotels are allowed, and siting of indoor emergency shelters and indoor emergency housing in any zone where hotels are allowed in accordance with state law. (New Policy)
- 3.2.6 Expand capacity for moderate density housing, i.e., “missing middle housing”, in residential areas with low-density zoning throughout the city to increase home ownership and rental housing options. (New Policy)
- 3.2.7 Work with the owners and managers of Tukwila’s new and existing permanent or long-term low-income housing to maximize housing desirability, protect long-term affordability, and strengthen community connections. (Revised 3.2.4)
- 3.2.8 Strive to make alternative and affordable housing options available for residents currently living in substandard housing, such as pre-HUD code mobile homes. (No change; formerly 3.2.6)
- 3.2.9 Encourage housing design that improves resilience in the face of climate-change driven extreme weather events, such as flooding and extreme heat. (New policy)

**Implementation Strategies – Goals 3.1 and 3.2**

- Update zoning to allow at least two detached accessory dwelling units in Low-Density Residential zones.
- Update Low-Density Residential zones to allow at least two units per lot and allow for middle housing building types.
- Reduce residential parking requirements around transit, current and future growth centers like Tukwila International Boulevard (TIB) District, and other public amenities where denser housing is desired.

- Ensure zoning rules allow transitional housing and permanent housing in all areas where dwelling units or hotels are permitted, as required by state law.
- Ensure zoning rules allow indoor emergency shelter and indoor emergency housing in all areas where hotels are permitted, as required by state law.
- Explore developing a similar limited demonstration projects program for innovative housing types that accommodate multigenerational and immigrant household family structures not allowed under current zoning. (See Policy 3.5.7 below)
- Establish and maintain a 12-year multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program throughout different areas of the City.
- Increase maximum heights throughout zones allowing residential use.
- Remove upper floor step-backs in Medium-Density and High-Density Residential zones to reduce barriers to new construction.
- Adjust recreation space requirements in residential zones to reduce barriers to new construction.
- Review and consider building code changes and align them with zoning code updates.
- Significantly increase building capacity in areas supported by transit, in proximity to high-employment areas, and in proximity to other public amenities.
- Identify specific publicly-owned land for affordable housing development.
- Explore acquiring property to land bank (acquiring land and holding it for future development) for affordable housing.
- Develop affordable housing density bonuses or development code for faith-based institutions/religious organizations that want to build affordable housing on their property.
- Remove or reduce impact fees for affordable housing projects.
- Transition the municipal code to a searchable, online platform to increase transparency and accessibility, and align with industry best practices.
- Create and hire a South King County Housing and Neighborhood Planner position to work collaboratively with the Planning, Code Enforcement, and Human Services Divisions. This position would aid in the achievement of identified housing needs. Responsibilities could include pursuing and overseeing grant opportunities, developing relationships with for-profit and non-profit stakeholders for City and regional affordable housing development, increasing representation in regional efforts to fund affordable housing, supporting land use and rental housing programs to improve the condition of affordable housing for Tukwila's residents, and exploring establishing a neighborhood council/liaison program.

### **Sidebar: RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM**

Implemented in 2011, the Tukwila Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program requires all rental unit owners to obtain an annual residential rental business license and complete an inspection every four years. The inspection may be conducted by a City inspector or a pre-

approved private inspector. Rental units must meet code standards, and violations must be addressed within 30 days. The program seeks to improve substandard and unsanitary residential buildings that do not meet State and local housing and technical codes.

As of November 2023, 114 rental licenses (895 rental units) were due for inspection; in 2024, 180 rental licenses (1,570 units) are due.

**GOAL 3.3 - Support collaborative efforts** with other jurisdictions and organizations to assess housing needs, coordinate funding, and preserve and create **affordable housing opportunities**.

- 3.3.1 Support the equitable distribution of regional funds, such as Community Development Block Grants, interlocal-agreement sales taxes revenue, and other federal, State and County funding, for needed affordable housing. (Revised 3.3.1)
- 3.3.2 Play an active role in regional efforts to meet the needs of low-income community members, including monitoring of housing needs and updating city policies and regulations to align with regional goals. (Revised 3.3.2; removed preservation clause)
- 3.3.3 Continue to work closely with South King Housing and Homelessness Partnership (SKHHP) and other partners to achieve development of subsidized affordable housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income households. (Revised 3.3.3)

**GOAL 3.4 – Limit displacement** impacts to vulnerable and historically underserved populations.

- 3.4.1 Identify and take action to remove City policies, rules, and programs that exacerbate racially disparate impacts. (New policy)
- 3.4.2 Develop and implement strategies to reduce displacement of low-income households in areas of redevelopment. (Relocated and revised 3.2.5)
- 3.4.3 Evaluate City actions for potential to increase displacement risk for naturally occurring affordable housing and vulnerable communities and mitigate or avoid taking actions that significantly increase this risk. (New policy)
- 3.4.4 Support the long-term preservation of existing naturally occurring affordable housing developments by acting as a facilitator between affordable housing groups interested in purchasing units and property owners. (Relocated and revised 3.2.7)
- 3.4.5 Continue to improve the condition of rental housing through administration of the Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program. (Relocated 3.4.1)

- 3.4.6 Continue to support the maintenance, weatherization, rehabilitation, and long-term preservation or replacement of existing housing for low- and moderate-income residents. (Relocated 3.4.2, also covers 7.5.8)
- 3.4.7 Continue to develop relationships with populations that have been historically underserved and are at risk of displacement to better understand needs and risks. (Relocated and revised 3.5.3)
- 3.4.8 Support programs and City actions that increase homeownership opportunities for vulnerable populations. (New policy)
- 3.4.9 Adopt renter protections to ensure stable housing for Tukwila Renters.

### **Sidebar: MINOR HOME REPAIR PROGRAM**

The City administers the Minor Home Repair Program, which provides and promotes the repair and maintenance of housing for low- and moderate- income homeowners. The program is funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The City receives approximately \$25,000 in annual funding.

This program is a valuable resource for residents, however Tukwila Human Services estimates the program meets a fraction of the existing need for home repair and maintenance. Additional funding and partnerships can help to improve the look and quality of housing throughout the City.

### ***Implementation Strategies – Goals 3.3 and 3.4***

- Establish an equity review process of proposed zoning changes that assesses potential benefits compared to displacement risks and environmental justice concerns. Address policies and programs that result in racially disparate impacts as identified in the housing background report, including over reliance on single-family zoning, overly subjective design guidelines, and inequitable distribution of infrastructure for safe walking conditions.
- Monitor naturally occurring affordable housing and housing with expiring affordability requirements for potential sales and opportunities to preserve affordability.
- Partner with non-profit organizations and for-profit developers to acquire, rehabilitate, construct, preserve and maintain permanent affordable housing and support services.
- Review siting decisions for city facilities to avoid displacement of cultural anchors such as businesses and churches that serve vulnerable communities.
- Develop mechanisms for enforcing the International Property Maintenance Code.
- Continue investing in the Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program and engage with inspectors, property owners, and tenants to incrementally improve the program.
- Use the Rental Housing Inspection Program to encourage rehabilitation and weatherization programs for rental units.



- Work with neighbor jurisdictions to establish a revolving loan fund for development or preservation of affordable housing.
- Explore adoption and enforcement of the National Healthy Housing Standard through the Rental Housing Inspection Program.
- Educate property owners about available resources they can access to improve their rental housing.
- Explore strategies like a Housing Trust Fund to provide assistance to low-income homeowners for connecting to sewer service.
- Establish City/Department wide outreach program to engage with, collaborate with, and work to build capacity of organizations that work with diverse and historically underserved populations.
- Increase funding for the minor home repair program to serve more households per year.
- Encourage Council consideration of renter protections.

**GOAL 3.5 – Promote housing options that support **personal fulfillment and a healthy social life** and are appropriate for people **in all stages of life**.**

- 3.5.1 Encourage development of housing that is appropriate for multi-generational families, including the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), middle housing, and family-sized apartments. (New policy)
- 3.5.2 Review and update development code to support production of housing types that provide relatively affordable homeownership options, such as middle housing (including townhouses) and condominiums. (New policy)
- 3.5.3 Encourage use of universal design principles in new housing development. (Revised 3.5.1)
- 3.5.4 Assist in providing residents with the human services, economic development, and transportation needed to increase access to housing options. (Relocated and revised 3.5.2)
- 3.5.5 Support community groups that actively work to improve neighborhood quality and strengthen sense of community. (Relocated and revised 3.6.3, also covers 7.5.1)
- 3.5.6 Encourage site and building design that helps reduce social isolation and supports active lifestyles. (New policy)
- 3.5.7 Support the creation of co-housing, housing cooperatives, co-living buildings, and other types of housing that provide community-oriented housing alternatives for families, seniors, young singles, religious communities, or other groups with specific needs. (New policy)

### **Sidebar: Family-sized housing**

Family-sized, family-friendly housing units contain at least two bedrooms and include features such as areas where family members can gather for meals and other activities, sufficient storage space, a spot for children to do homework, and easy access to outdoor play and recreation space. Due to various factors related to building design, market demand, and building code stipulations, apartment buildings are rarely constructed with family-sized units with more than two bedrooms and associated spaces. While these elements are historically available in single family detached homes, middle housing types of development, such as duplexes and townhomes, can be well-suited to providing more spacious family-sized housing. Encouraging new family-sized housing in areas with access to transit and proximity to schools, parks, low-traffic streets, and other family-friendly elements will make it easier for families to find their home in Tukwila.



*Figure 3. Examples of housing with a common open space to strengthen relationships between neighbors and create safe outdoor play areas for children.*

### **Implementation Strategies – Goal 3.5**

- Encourage and help market private and public assistance and education programs for first-time homebuyers.
- Develop small neighborhood grants for cleanup and community-building events.
- Explore creating and supporting a neighborhood liaison program to help develop neighborhood associations.
- Develop relationships with existing homeowner and neighborhood associations.
- Include shared public spaces in new public buildings in neighborhoods that allow neighborhood gatherings.
- Work with school districts serving Tukwila students to help identify resources for families with children experiencing homelessness.
- When updating design standards for higher density housing include design strategies that encourage healthy social interaction, such as porches, street-oriented buildings, and small clusters of units with shared semiprivate open space.
- Encourage senior housing developers to employ universal design principles

## Sidebar: What is Universal Design?

Universal design is an approach to designing buildings, products, and the built environment to be easily usable by the broadest possible range of people, regardless of age or ability. The approach centers convenience and accessibility for the benefits of all users.

As the population changes over time, family structures gradually transform as well. Many homes are designed around the concept of the nuclear family, typically two adults tied by partnership or marriage, with their minor children. This arrangement once represented a majority of households. Today there is a wider variety of households than in the mid-twentieth century; for example, adults living without children, single adults, and multigenerational families. Universal design helps to support aging in place and multigenerational families by applying design principles that emphasize flexibility, intuitive design, and variations in size and space for different users ([Center for Excellence in Universal Design](#)). One example is a home that includes wide hallways and doorways to ease wheelchair user navigation, tiered or height-adjustable countertops to accommodate more than one height, and a bathroom shower that is spacious and flush with the floor. Through home modifications or retrofitting, barriers that limit a home's accessibility can be eliminated, and families can be better prepared for a lifetime of changing needs.



Figure 4. Bathroom with universal design principles. Source: US HUD

## Resources

- Housing Background Report
- [Tukwila Transit Oriented Development Housing Action Plan 2020](#)
- [Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2050](#)
- [King County Countywide Planning Policies 2021](#)
- Regional South King County Housing Action Framework 2020:
  - [Housing Strategies Framework](#)
  - [Housing Context Assessment Methods](#)
  - [Housing Policy Assessment](#)
- [Regional Affordable Housing Task Force 2018 Report](#)
- [Tukwila 2012 Strategic Plan](#)



# CHAPTER THREE HOUSING

TUKWILA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



# HOUSING

## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER:

- Estimates of current and future housing needs,
- Policies to preserve and improve the existing housing stock; encourage new housing that meets the community's needs; and develop thriving, equitable neighborhoods; and
- Strategies to encourage housing that is affordable to all income levels and for all current and projected residents in our community.

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## PURPOSE

This Housing element describes how Tukwila's housing needs will be satisfied through 2031. Projected housing needs were determined by a joint committee of cities and the County, as required by State law. The importance of these needs was highlighted in the development of the City's 2012 [Strategic Plan](#) and guided by the [Community Conversations](#) outreach efforts of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update. This element is based on a detailed analysis of Tukwila's housing needs contained in the [Housing Background Report](#).

Tukwila will continue to grow over the next twenty years, projected to accommodate an additional 4,800 households and 15,500 new jobs by 2031. By 2035, Tukwila is projected to accommodate an additional 768 households and 2,480 new jobs, for a total of 5,568 new households and 17,980 new jobs over the next twenty years. Tukwila's zoning can accommodate this projected growth as the City has capacity for over 6,000 new housing units. The goals and policies presented here identify the steps the City of Tukwila can take in response to the housing issues found within our community. These steps are necessary to plan for growth that will ensure the sustainability and vitality of the existing housing stock, to reduce barriers that prevent low- and moderate-income households from living near their work or transit, and to preserve housing that is affordably priced for all households, including low-income households. Tukwila's growth and future must include policies that create thriving, equitable neighborhoods where everyone has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy and affordable home in the city of opportunity and the community of choice.

### WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Total housing expenditures in excess of 30% of household income is considered “excessive” and viewed as an indicator of a housing affordability problem. This definition of affordability was established under the United States National Housing Act of 1937.

Average housing costs in Tukwila – \$1,191 for monthly rent or \$992 for monthly housing payments for a three-bedroom unit – are affordable to households making at least 50-80% AMI, about \$33,120 annually or \$16.56 per hour.

Many of the common occupations in Tukwila pay less than \$16.56 per hour; these include cashiers, \$13.55; childcare workers, \$11.59; food service workers, \$12.25; and retail salesperson: \$15.28.

Occupations that provide a wage needed to afford market rate housing include bookkeeping clerk, \$20.53; medical assistant, \$18.75; machinist, \$25.82; and painter, \$19.86.

(Washington State Employment Security Department, 2013)

## ISSUES

In developing the goals and policies for Tukwila’s Housing Element, these issues were identified.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

While Tukwila continues to have affordable units for those at 50–80% of area median income (AMI), more and more households are struggling to meet their housing costs. Community poverty has tripled in Tukwila over the past ten years as evidenced in Census figures and Tukwila School District demographics (*see the Housing Background Report for more information*). Almost half of City residents are burdened by housing costs, paying more than 30% of their income for housing. In particular, households who make 30% or less of the AMI face the greatest struggle to find affordable housing.

The majority of Tukwila’s affordable housing is ‘naturally occurring,’ meaning that factors such as location and age of the home result in below regional average costs. Because future housing development will likely include redevelopment of existing affordable housing and the development of new higher cost housing in the Urban Center, efforts to address the lack of affordable housing for residents earning less than 30% AMI will most likely require subsidized housing through partnerships with non-profit housing groups and other housing stakeholders. Relying on market forces to provide affordable housing for very low-income residents will not provide an adequate quantity, as defined by King County affordable housing targets, of quality affordable housing.

## HOUSING CONDITION

Most existing single-family homes in Tukwila were constructed before 1970 and the majority of multi-family homes were constructed between the 1960s–1980s. Aging housing stock typically requires more money for maintenance, which can be difficult for residents who are already burdened by other economic stressors such as paying more than 30% of their income for housing. Condition is also linked to affordability. Naturally occurring affordable housing (housing with market prices that meet affordability metrics without policies or accompanying subsidies) is often a result of deteriorating and substandard housing conditions, smaller home size, and older housing stock.

## HOME OWNERSHIP OPTIONS

Having a range of housing types to choose from encourages home ownership. This in turn supports longer term residency and neighborhood stability. Based on 2010 US Census data, home ownership is relatively low among Tukwila residents, and is decreasing. While less than half of the housing units in Tukwila are apartments, almost 60% of housing units in the City are renter-occupied. The majority of the City's housing stock consists of older two-bedroom single-family homes and apartments in large multi-family developments. This range of housing options does not accommodate residents in all stages of life, including young adults, multigenerational families, older adults hoping to “age in place,” and older adults looking to downsize.

### COUNTYWIDE AFFORDABILITY TARGETS

King County's Countywide Planning Policies recognize there is an unmet need for housing that is affordable to households earning less than 80% area median income (AMI), with the greatest need for households earning 50% or less of the AMI. According to the Countywide Planning Policies, the Countywide need for housing by percentage of AMI is:

50–80% AMI (moderate income) .....	16% of total housing supply
30–50% AMI (low income).....	12% of total housing supply
Less than 30% AMI (very low income) .....	12% of total housing supply



## HOUSING PROJECTIONS

The Puget Sound Regional Council – the regional planning organization that develops growth projections – estimates that Tukwila will need 4,800 new homes by 2031, and a total of 5,568 new homes by 2035. Historically, there has been a large gap between the City’s growth target and number of housing units constructed. Since the last Comprehensive Plan update, the City adopted a new plan and development regulations for its Southcenter urban center, and new development regulations in the City’s redevelopment area on Tukwila International Boulevard. Over the next five years, approved projects in these two areas are expected to create over 700 new housing units. This development activity suggests the City will make substantial progress toward meeting the housing target of 2035.

# GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and policies guide Tukwila’s approach to meeting the challenge of revitalizing residential neighborhoods and encouraging new housing development, while maintaining affordable housing and meeting the needs of low-income and special-needs households.

## GOAL 3.1

*The City of Tukwila provides the City’s fair share of regional housing.*

## POLICIES

- 3.1.1 Provide sufficient zoned housing potential to accommodate future single- and multi-family households to meet the regional growth target of 4,800 new housing units by 2031.
- 3.1.2 Work with residents and property owners to consider housing options that meet current and future needs.

### *Implementation Strategies*

- n With Council feedback, develop and implement a neighborhood outreach process to receive public input from residents and property owners regarding housing development in residential neighborhoods. Outreach may include but is not limited to: Citywide and neighborhood-specific mailings, online and in-person surveys, fliers, open houses and other events.
- n Following the neighborhood outreach process, consider flexible zoning standards to promote housing options that meet current and future needs. Establish parameters for design characteristics such as height, lot coverage, home design features and setbacks.

## GOAL 3.2

*The City of Tukwila has safe, healthy and affordable homes for all residents in Tukwila.*

### POLICIES

- 3.2.1** Provide zoning that allows a variety of housing throughout the City to allow for diverse, equitable neighborhoods.
- 3.2.2** Encourage a full range of housing opportunities for all population segments, including very low-income households earning less than 30% AMI, through actions including, but not limited to, revising the Tukwila's zoning map and development codes as appropriate, which would enable a wide variety of housing types to be built.
- 3.2.3** Provide sufficient appropriate zoning for housing of all types, including government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multi-family housing, and group homes and foster care facilities, subject to conditions that appropriately integrate them into existing neighborhoods.
- 3.2.4** Work with the owners and managers of Tukwila's new and existing permanent or long-term low-income housing to maximize desirability, long-term affordability, and connection with the community.
- 3.2.5** Develop affordable housing preservation programs and strategies, including prevention of the displacement of low-income households in areas of redevelopment.
- 3.2.6** Strive to make alternative and affordable housing options available for residents currently living in substandard housing, such as pre-HUD code mobile homes.
- 3.2.7** Support the acquisition of housing developments by private and public affordable housing groups, by acting as a facilitator between affordable housing groups and property owners to aid in the preservation of affordable housing.





### *Implementation Strategies*

- n Following the neighborhood outreach process, consider allowing a detached accessory dwelling unit in the Low-Density Residential zone on all lots that meet the minimum lot area, when various appearance and performance criteria related to impacts on adjacent properties are satisfied.
- n Promote mixed-use developments with ground-level commercial space and residences, at and above the street level in specified areas.
- n Using lessons learned and input from the neighborhood outreach process, consider reinstating the limited demonstration projects for clustered or cottage housing, and allow limited demonstration projects for innovative housing types not currently supported in the Zoning Code.
- n Using input from the neighborhood outreach process, explore increasing density in areas supported by transit to enhance transit-oriented development, and/or in proximity to high-employment areas.
- n Identify specific publically-owned land for affordable housing development.
- n Explore acquiring property to land bank (acquiring land and holding it for future development) for affordable housing.
- n Develop specific statements regarding location, type and characteristics of desired housing affordable to a variety of incomes, for presenting to local for-profit and non-profit developers.
- n Include supportive services, such as employment training and/or other economic development services, in affordable housing programs.
- n Partner with non-profit organizations and for-profit developers to acquire, rehabilitate, construct, preserve and maintain permanent affordable housing and support services.

- n Explore and develop incentive zoning, a housing trust fund, density bonuses, parking exemptions, deferred or reduced payment of impact fees, multi-family tax exemptions, and/or other tools to develop or maintain affordable housing that meets the needs of the community, specifically units sized and priced for low- and very-low-income residents.
- n Participate at the regional level, by supporting a South King County Housing and Neighborhood Planner position to work collaboratively with the Planning, Code Enforcement, and Human



Services Divisions. This position would aid in the achievement of identified housing needs. Responsibilities could include pursuing and overseeing grant opportunities, developing relationships with for-profit and non-profit stakeholders for City and regional affordable housing development, increasing representation in regional efforts to fund affordable housing, supporting land use and rental housing programs to improve the condition of affordable housing for Tukwila's residents, and exploring establishing a neighborhood council/liaison program.

## GOAL 3.3

*The City of Tukwila supports and collaborates with other jurisdictions and organizations to assess housing needs, coordinate funding, and preserve and create affordable housing opportunities.*

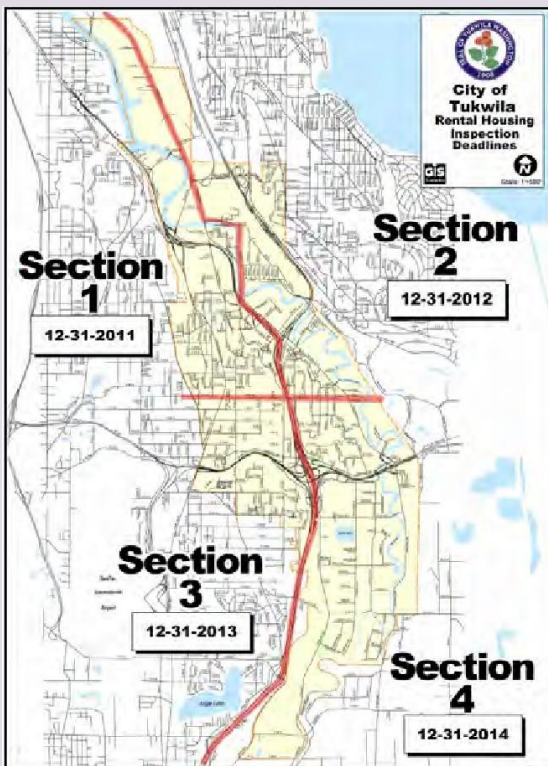
### POLICIES

- 3.3.1 Support the equitable distribution of regional funds, such as Community Development Block Grants and other federal, State and County funding, to support needed affordable housing.
- 3.3.2 In a "State of Housing" report, periodically review regional low-income housing goals to evaluate the City's compliance with regional standards and to ensure that the City's affordable housing units are being preserved and maintained. Adjust policies as needed if affordable housing goals are not being met.
- 3.3.3 Continue supporting very low-, low- and moderate-income housing as defined by King County income levels, to address the Countywide need by supporting regional affordable housing development and preservation efforts.

## RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM

Implemented in 2011, the Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program requires all rental unit owners to obtain an annual residential rental business license and complete an inspection every four years. Rental units must meet code standards, and violations must be addressed within 30 days. The program seeks to improve substandard and unsanitary residential buildings that do not meet State and local housing and technical codes.

The end of 2014 marked the completion of the first four-year cycle of inspections, meaning that inspections were completed for rentals in each quadrant of the City. A total of 3,641 inspections were conducted during this period, 148 of which failed and were brought into compliance to pass a subsequent inspection.



### Implementation Strategies

- n Partner with other jurisdictions to support regional funding for affordable housing that serves homeless individuals and families, and those earning less than 30% of the area median income.
- n Engage with non-profit developers and King County to pursue federal and philanthropic funds for affordable housing.
- n Enhance and encourage effective partnerships between land use planners and human service planners.
- n Foster relationships with owners of privately-owned multi-family housing to encourage their participation in voucher programs, and partner with them to preserve and enhance safe, healthy and affordable housing options.
- n Support and encourage legislation at the County, State, and federal level that promotes affordable housing goals.

## GOAL 3.4

*The City of Tukwila has an improved and continually improving housing stock in support of enhanced neighborhood quality.*

### POLICIES

- 3.4.1 Continue to improve the condition of rental housing through administration of the Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program.
- 3.4.2 Continue to support the maintenance, weatherization, rehabilitation, and long-term preservation or replacement of existing housing for low- and moderate-income residents.

### *Implementation Strategies*

- n Enforce the International Property Maintenance Code.
- n Advocate for rehabilitation and weatherization programs for rental units.
- n Continue the Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program.
- n Explore adoption and enforcement of the National Healthy Housing Standard.
- n Explore partnerships with non-profits to facilitate the purchase and upgrade of poorly maintained rental housing.
- n Support the education of tenants about cost-efficient choices they can make to improve the health of their housing.
- n Educate property owners about available resources they can access to improve their rental housing.
- n Explore establishing a Housing Trust Fund to provide assistance to low-income homeowners for connecting to sewer service.

## **GOAL 3.5**

*The City of Tukwila includes a full range of housing for persons in all stages of life and for all members of our community.*

### **POLICIES**

- 3.5.1 Adapt housing design standards to address the needs of all populations.
- 3.5.2 Assist in providing residents of the community with the human services, economic development and transportation needed to increase access to housing options.
- 3.5.3 Continue to develop relationships with populations that have been historically underserved, and continue to support investment to better serve their needs.

#### **MINOR HOME REPAIR PROGRAM**



The City administers the Minor Home Repair Program, which provides and promotes the repair and maintenance of housing for low- and moderate-income homeowners. The program is funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The City receives approximately \$25,000 in annual funding, and 20–25 homeowners use the program every year. While this program is a great resource for residents, Tukwila Human Services estimates the program only meets about 10% of existing need for home repair and maintenance. Additional funding and partnerships can help to improve the look and quality of housing throughout the City.

### *Implementation Strategies*

- n Continue to support and expand the Community Connector/Community Liaison program.
- n Pursue collaborations and meaningful dialogue with organizations that work with diverse and historically underserved populations.
- n Continue to coordinate City planning and programming among departments as related to housing options and access.

## **GOAL 3.6**

*Increase long-term residency in the City.*

### **POLICIES**

- 3.6.1** Encourage long-term residency by improving neighborhood quality, health and safety.
- 3.6.2** Encourage long-term residency by providing a range of home ownership options for persons in all stages of life.
- 3.6.3** Support neighborhood associations and groups that actively work to improve neighborhood quality and strengthen sense of community within the neighborhood.
- 3.6.4** Continue and expand partnerships with the school districts serving Tukwila students, in support of programs that seek to improve school performance and student success.



### *Implementation Strategies*

- n Encourage and help market private and public assistance and education programs for first-time homebuyers.
- n Continue applying design guidelines.
- n Continue applying development regulations.
- n Develop small neighborhood grants for cleanup and community-building events.
- n Explore creating and supporting a neighborhood liaison program to help develop neighborhood associations.



### FAMILY SIZED HOUSING

A city that is good for children is good for all. Family-sized, family-friendly housing units contain more than two bedrooms and include features critical for families, such as areas where family members can gather for meals and other activities, sufficient storage space, a spot for children to do homework, and easy access to outdoor play and recreation space. Many types of low-density housing, such as cottage or clustered housing and duplexes, provide compatible, attractive and affordable alternatives to traditional single-family homes. Allowing a broader mix of housing in single-family neighborhoods – with access to transit and proximity to schools, parks, and other child-oriented infrastructure – can enable and attract a larger number of families with a wider range of incomes to live in Tukwila.



- n Develop relationships with existing homeowner and neighborhood associations.
- n Include shared public spaces in new public buildings in neighborhoods that allow neighborhood gatherings.
- n Develop a program that allows street closures for block parties.
- n Develop a neighborhood block party “kit” for community use to encourage neighborhood interaction.
- n Work with school districts serving Tukwila students to promote a positive image and reputation of Tukwila’s schools and educational programs.



**RELATED INFORMATION**

[Washington State Housing Needs Assessment](#)

[VISION 2040](#)

[King County Countywide Planning Policies](#)

[Tukwila Strategic Plan](#)

[Community Conversations](#)

[Housing Background Report](#)