

## **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – 30**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELLENSBURG adopting the 2021 Ellensburg Housing Action Plan.

WHEREAS, there is a housing affordability crisis impacting the State of Washington as housing production between 2000-2015 was underproduced by approximately 225,000 units; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ellensburg is experiencing a housing affordability crisis with approximately 45% of all household between 2013 to 2017 either cost-burdened (paying more than 30% of their gross household income toward housing) or severely cost-burdened (paying more than 50% of their gross household income toward housing); and

WHEREAS, approximately 59% of renter households in Ellensburg were cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened as of 2017 and there are only 853 low-income rent-restricted units in Ellensburg, while there were 4,425 renter households at qualifying income levels; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ellensburg has seen an increase in home values where between 2000 and 2019 median sales prices increased 47%, and average rent increased by 24%, while the median family income increased by only 15% during the same period; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ellensburg housing stock has limited diversity with 78% of the housing stock consisting of either single family homes or units in multifamily buildings of five or more units, with limited housing units in the missing middle category; and

WHEREAS, in order to address the existing undersupply of units and the growth targets the City of Ellensburg needs to produce 281 housing units annually from 2020-2037 to address both the growth target and the undersupply of housing units, representing a 162% production increase over current annual net product of 107 units per year; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1923 during the 2019 legislative session to provide grant funds to cities for development of a Housing Action Plan (HAP); and

WHEREAS, the City of Ellensburg received a \$50,000 grant from the Department of Commerce for developing a Housing Action Plan which included completing an updated Housing Needs Assessment (HNA); and

WHEREAS, the Housing Action Plan, in accordance with HB 1923, accomplishes the following: 1) quantifies existing and projected housing needs for all income levels, including extremely low-income households; 2) develops strategies to increase the supply of housing, and variety of housing types; 3) analyzes population and employment trends, with documentation of projections; 4) considers strategies to minimize displacement of low-income residents resulting

from redevelopment; 5) reviews and evaluates the current housing policies; 6) provides for participation and input from community members, community groups, local builders, local realtors, and nonprofits housing advocates; and 7) includes a schedule of programs and actions to implement the recommendations of the housing action plan; and

WHEREAS, the development of the HAP involved public outreach that included stakeholder advisory group meetings, planning commission meetings, affordable housing commission meetings, city council meetings, an online survey, social media postings, and press releases on the City website and in the Daily Record, which allowed for continuous public participation and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Action Plan contains strategies and recommended action steps that can be taken to increase the diversity, availability, and production of affordable housing units; and

WHEREAS, the HAP will provide guidance to the City when planning for the present and future housing needs of the City, and will be instrumental when drafting future Comprehensive Plan updates (annual and periodic); and

WHEREAS, on October 4, 2021 the City's SEPA Responsible Official issued a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) for the Housing Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly advertised public hearing on September 23, 2021 on the Housing Action Plan and voted unanimously to recommended that the City Council adopt the HAP; and

WHEREAS, City Council held a study session on July 19, 2021 for a briefing on the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and the development of the Housing Action Plan, followed by an August 16, 2021 study session to review recommended implementation strategies; and

WHEREAS, following a duly advertised public hearing held during a regularly scheduled Ellensburg City Council Meeting on October 4, 2021, the City Council approved the Housing Action Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Ellensburg, Washington, as follows:

**Section 1.** The City Council hereby adopts the City of Ellensburg Housing Action Plan, 2021, attached hereto in Exhibit A.

**Section 2.** The Community Development Department is hereby directed to submit the adopted Housing Action Plan and all supporting documentation to the Washington State Department of Commerce.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Ellensburg this 4<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



# City of Ellensburg Housing Action Plan

**October 2021**

Prepared by:  
BERK Consulting



Many members of the community, as well as city staff, participated and contributed to the preparation of this Housing Action Plan. Their participation and contributions are appreciated.

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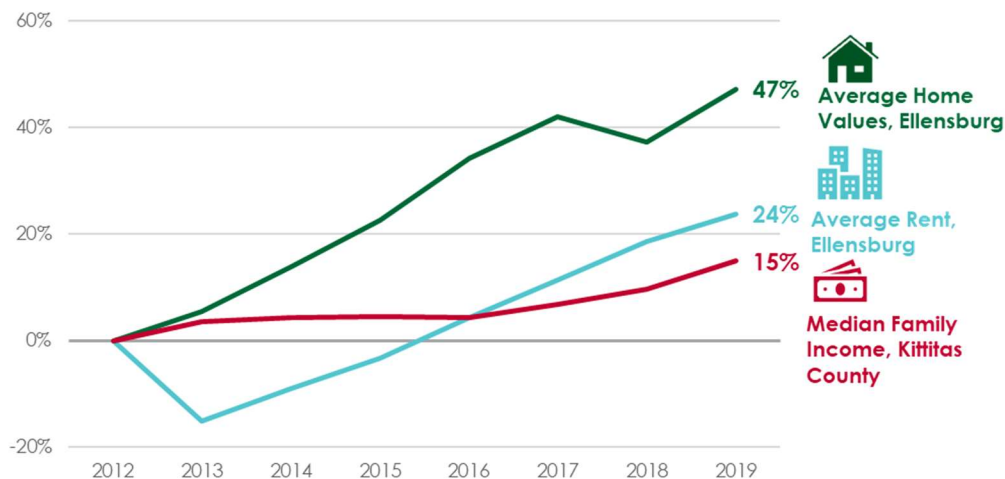
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# Executive Summary

This Housing Action Plan (HAP) is the City of Ellensburg's plan to support affordability and choice in housing for all community members. **The plan outlines strategies to address the need for more housing, more variety in housing types, and housing affordable to households at all income levels.** Housing costs are the largest component in most household budgets, and a growing number of households are experiencing cost burden in Ellensburg. Housing cost burden means that over 30% of income is spent on housing, resulting in difficult financial tradeoffs between priorities such as healthcare, transportation, food, and education. A welcoming, inclusive Ellensburg will offer housing options attainable for all household types and budgets.

## Percent Change from 2012 of Home Values, Rents, and Median Family Income in Ellensburg and Kittitas County.



Sources: Zillow, 2020; Washington Housing Finance Commission, 2020; BERK, 2021.

The process for creating this Housing Action Plan included a housing needs assessment, a city-level policy review, and a community engagement program. This three-tiered approach identified challenges, opportunities, and priorities for the goals and strategies of the HAP. Some key findings from the development phases include:

- Ellensburg is growing, and housing production is not keeping up. An additional 4,772 housing units are needed by 2037 to align with population targets.
- Ellensburg's housing stock lacks mid-sized options for smaller households. From 2016-2020, only 71 units of missing middle housing types were produced in Ellensburg.
- Housing affordability is a major concern across family types, particularly for moderate- and low-income households.
- Survey respondents were open to a variety of housing types and styles across residential neighborhoods.

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*Ellensburg's community engagement program included a 14-member stakeholder advisory group and 233 resident responses through a community-wide survey to incorporate priorities, preferences, and ideas from across the city.*

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*Detached accessory dwelling unit (photo SHKS Architects)*

## What is missing middle housing?

Missing middle housing refers to housing options that transition between single family homes and mid- or high-rise multifamily buildings. This includes a diversity of residential housing options, and this HAP identifies five types that align with Ellensburg's various housing needs: townhomes, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units, 2-3-4-plexes, and condominiums.

In response to the needs assessment, policy review, and community engagement process, Ellensburg developed three overarching goals for its housing program:

- 1. Produce more housing,**
- 2. Add variety to the housing stock, and**
- 3. Preserve and create income-restricted affordable housing units.**

Making progress toward these goals will require a multipronged approach. Fourteen action strategies have been identified to support the three goals of the HAP.

- 1. Encourage the production of townhouses.**
- 2. Encourage the production of cottage housing.**
- 3. Encourage the production of accessory dwelling units.**
- 4. Encourage the production of multiplex housing.**
- 5. Encourage the production of condominiums.**
- 6. Build added flexibility into the zoning code.**
- 7. Strategically rezone for more mixed-use development.**
- 8. Preserve income-restricted affordable housing developments.**
- 9. Update housing incentives to encourage production of missing middle housing units and income-restricted affordable units.**
- 10. Research and implement financial strategies that construct affordable housing units.**
- 11. Support relocation assistance for residents of manufactured home parks when parks are sold.**
- 12. Continue community outreach and education on housing needs and the existing systems that support access to housing.**
- 13. Build a partnership with Ellensburg Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission.**
- 14. Develop and support programs that minimize displacement.**

These strategies identify policy and program priorities to achieve Ellensburg's housing goals. This HAP includes an implementation schedule and identifies key indicators to track progress toward overarching goals. This plan is intended to serve as a living document, flexible and responsive to market conditions and community needs over time.

# Ellensburg Housing Action Plan

City of Ellensburg Housing Action Plan | October 2021

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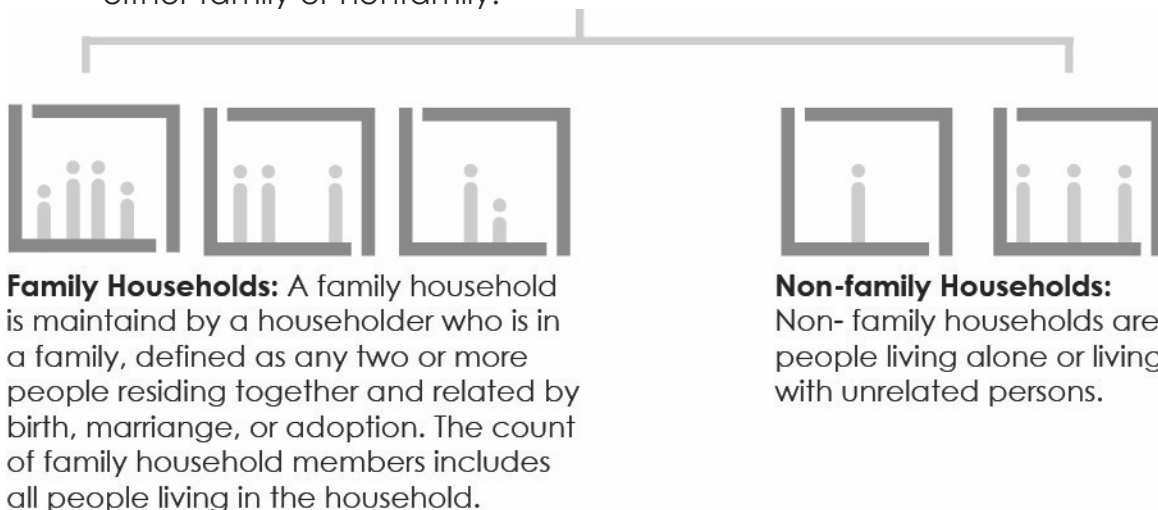


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# Glossary of Terms

- **Housing Affordability:** Broadly speaking, housing affordability speaks to the relationship between housing costs and income. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers housing to be affordable if the household is spending no more than 30% of its income on housing costs, including utilities. Income-restricted affordable housing is one method of achieving housing affordability that involves either publicly owned or publicly subsidized housing.
- **Cost-Burdened Household:** Households that pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing, including utilities. The 30% threshold is set by HUD. Rate of cost burden among households is a metric that gauges the intensity of housing affordability challenges within a community. Cost burden is most challenging for households at lower income levels who are more vulnerable to increasing housing costs and will have less money available for other essentials such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.
- **Severely Cost-Burdened Household:** Households that pay more than 50% of their gross income on housing costs, including utilities. This 50% threshold is set by HUD.
- **Household:** The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as a group of people living within the same housing unit. This can be a person living alone, a family, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit. Those living in group quarters, such as a college dormitory, military barrack, or nursing home, are not considered to be living in households. Households are further broken down as either family or nonfamily.



*\*Distance represents related individuals (clustered people are related; spaced people are not)*

- **HUD: The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** is responsible for federal housing assistance programs such as [Section 8 vouchers](#) for rental assistance. HUD sets income limits for metropolitan areas and counties across

the country which determine eligibility for income-restricted housing units. HUD also sets thresholds to define terms such as “affordable” and “cost burden”.

- **LIHTC: Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.** This is a federal program, administered by HUD, to expand the income-restricted affordable housing stock. Private or non-profit housing developers apply for these tax credits, which are used to help finance multifamily developments that set aside a minimum threshold of units as income restricted for a defined period, often 20 years. See [the program website](#) for more details.
- **Median Income:** The income level at which half of the group is above and half of the group is below. This calculation is often used instead of an average income to avoid skew by extremely high or extremely low values in the dataset.
  - **AMI: Area Median Income.** Most broadly used term for median income calculations. **In this report, AMI is used to represent the HUD-Area Median Family Income (HAMFI).** HAMFI calculates the median family income for metropolitan areas and counties nationwide. These income levels are adjusted based on household size and are used to determine eligibility for income-restricted housing units. Ellensburg, for example, is part of the Kittitas County metropolitan area.
- **Missing Middle Housing:** Housing types that fall in between detached single-family homes and mid- or high-rise multifamily buildings. This includes a diversity of residential housing options, such as townhouses, stacked or side-by-side multiplexes, or accessory dwelling units.

# Introduction

**This Housing Action Plan sets goals and strategies to address housing needs in Ellensburg.** Strategies outlined in this plan set priorities for City action and investment over the next five years. This Housing Action Plan (HAP) was created by analyzing available data, evaluating the City's ongoing policy efforts, and engaging with community members. To provide a range of ways to participate in the HAP process, public engagement included an online survey, virtual public meetings, and deeper conversation with committed stakeholders through an advisory group. Mailings, a project website, and social media provided project announcements and community outreach. These activities were conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, observing appropriate social distancing precautions.

## Exhibit 1: Housing Action Plan Process Diagram



Source: BERK, 2021.

**The HAP builds upon a solid foundation of education and action addressing housing challenges in Ellensburg.** The City maintains an interactive website displaying data and trends relevant to housing affordability and availability to provide public education on the community's housing needs.<sup>1</sup> In 2017, voters passed a 0.1% sales tax increase that enabled the City to establish a local housing fund. The fund contributes to affordable housing and related services in Ellensburg. This Housing Action Plan takes the next step in this journey, establishing policy priorities and identifying needs specific to many different housing types.

<sup>1</sup> [City of Ellensburg Housing Dashboard](#)

## DOCUMENT OUTLINE

This document first reviews key findings from Ellensburg's Housing Needs Assessment, Housing Policy Review, and Community Engagement plan. These findings shape the goals and strategies established in the body of the Housing Action Plan. Each strategy is tailored to address the specific context of Ellensburg and includes considerations for successful implementation. A monitoring and implementation section displays a timeline for action and establishes key metrics to monitor success across a longer-term horizon. Housing production is a long-term process, and a consistent progress check-in schedule will allow for Ellensburg's approach to adapt to changing conditions over time.

- Review of Key Findings from earlier project phases
  - **Housing Needs**
  - **Housing Policy Review**
  - **Community Engagement**
- Establish goals of the Housing Action Plan and detail strategies to achieve these goals
  - **Housing Action Plan Goals**
  - **Housing Action Plan Strategies**
- Set a framework for strategy implementation and outcomes-based progress monitoring over time
  - **Implementation & Monitoring**

Full reports from earlier project phases can be found in document appendices.



View across Central Washington in Ellensburg. Image source: City of Ellensburg.



# Housing Needs Assessment: Key Findings

A Needs Assessment gathers relevant data on community demographics, housing stock, and housing affordability in Ellensburg. The key findings from this report are listed below, with a full copy found in Appendix A: Housing Needs Assessment. These findings inform the goals and strategies identified in this Housing Action Plan.

## **Ellensburg is growing.**

Ellensburg's population increased by 14% from 2015 to 2020. Adopted population targets plan for an additional 9,661 people by 2037. Countywide trends suggest that an increasing proportion of these residents will be 65 and older.

## **Ellensburg's housing stock lacks midsize housing options for smaller households.**

Over three quarters of Ellensburg's housing stock is either single-family units or apartments in larger (five or more units) buildings. There is a lack of "missing middle" housing types such as townhouses, condominiums, and cottage housing, despite being a good match for many smaller households that live in Ellensburg.

## **There is a current undersupply of housing units, and new housing production is not pacing with population growth. Ellensburg needs to increase production from 107 to 281 units per year to accommodate expected population growth.**

Vacancy rates in Ellensburg are extremely low, demonstrating a shortage of housing compared to current demand. In addition to the increased rate of housing production needed to accommodate population growth targets, the City needs to add at least 441 total units to address this supply gap. To meet the diversity of current and future housing needs, new housing production should come in different formats including both ownership and rental housing types at various affordability levels.

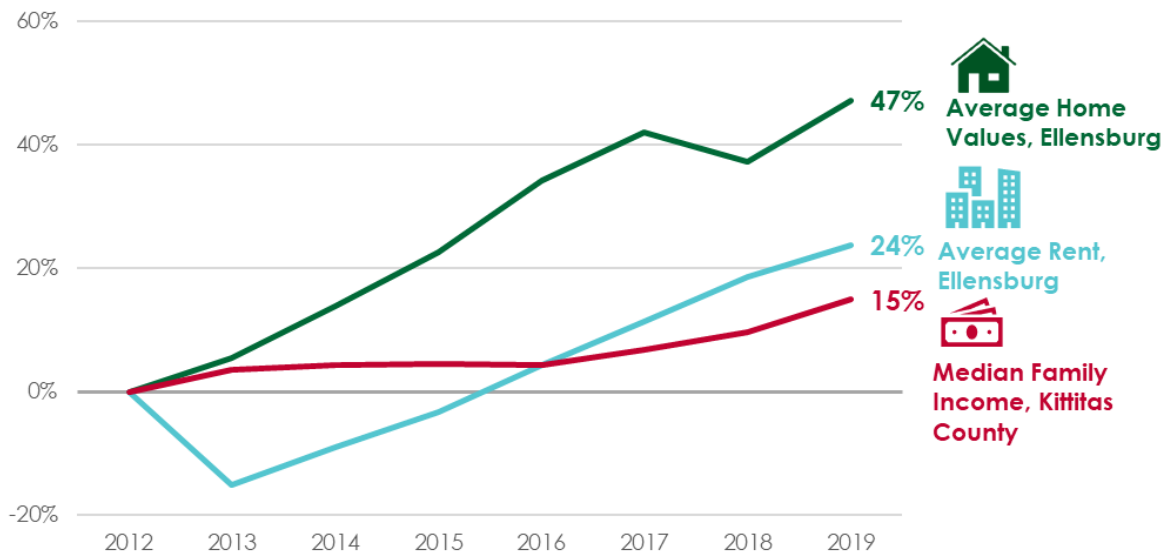
## **Ellensburg needs more income-restricted affordable housing.**

Many residents qualify for these units by income but do not have access to supply, resulting in cost burden. Over half (57%) of current income-restricted units have affordability covenants that will expire by 2030. Additionally, there is an undersupply of these units and low rates of production.

## **45% of Ellensburg's households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened.**

Cost-burdened households pay 30% or more of their incomes toward housing, and severely cost-burdened households pay 50% or more. These residents are likely to make difficult financial tradeoffs between competing priorities such as healthcare, transportation, and education. Cost-burdened renters are unlikely to accumulate enough savings to start meaningful down payment funds for future homeownership. In Ellensburg, many cost-burdened households are university students, older adults (62+) who live alone, and smaller families (two to four members).

## Exhibit 2: Percent Change from 2012 of Home Values, Rents, and Median Family Income in Ellensburg and Kittitas County.



Sources: Zillow, 2020; Washington Housing Finance Commission, 2020; BERK, 2021.

### Housing affordability is a barrier to home ownership.

While many renters in Ellensburg are university students who prefer the flexibility of rental housing, those who desire the stability of home ownership may face barriers of both supply and affordability. Home values are rising much faster than incomes, and this imbalance makes a home purchase less attainable.

## Housing Policy Review: Key Findings

A review of housing policies in Ellensburg uncovered opportunities for better alignment with the goals of this Housing Action Plan. This review analyzed the city's zoning code, design guidelines, and housing incentive programs to identify potential barriers to missing middle and income-restricted affordable housing production. Additionally, this study included an evaluation of policies in Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan for alignment with the goals of this Housing Action Plan to identify any challenges or competing priorities.

Key findings from the development code review can be found below, with full assessment located in Appendix B: Policy Review.

### RESIDENTIAL ZONING

Ellensburg's zoning code includes five residential districts, a manufactured home district, and three commercial districts that allow multifamily development. The review included a special focus on development standards for townhouses and cottage housing development, described below. Overall recommendations point to

opportunities for added flexibility to accommodate missing middle housing types across zones that allow residential development and modified regulations to improve the viability of these types on infill lots.

## Townhouses

Townhouses, or townhomes, are single-family units with at least two floors that share a wall with another unit. They are often sized with 1 to 3 bedrooms and are sold on individual lots. The Policy Review identifies the following barriers to townhouse construction within the parameters of Ellensburg's development regulations:

- **Special approval is needed for townhouses as infill development.** Townhouses are not allowed adjacent to single-family dwellings without individual site approval. This is a barrier to infill development within existing neighborhoods.
- **Density maximums are a barrier.** Typical townhouse densities are 13 – 30 units/acre. Within R-S and R-L zones, the maximum density is six and eight units per acre, respectively. The density bonus for alternative housing types does not kick in for developments under 5 acres and even with the 10% or 15% bonus, typical townhouse density is not permissible.
- **Parking and driveway regulations are restrictive.** Features such as street-facing garages and parking for only one vehicle per unit are common in townhouse developments. In Ellensburg, townhouse garages cannot face a public street and a minimum of 2 parking spaces per unit is required.
- **Landscaping plans are required.** In Ellensburg, planter strips of at least 4 feet are required at each townhouse entrance. In addition, units with garages require planting areas near pedestrian entries of at least 20 square feet with a combination of shrubs or ground cover and a tree. There are no landscaping requirements for single-family homes.
- **In general, Ellensburg's townhouse development code is challenging to interpret and included photos are not helpful.** No townhouse development applications have been submitted in Ellensburg, making this review a new exercise of putting code language to use. Planners note that the current regulations are confusing and difficult to apply. Simpler code language with fewer site constraints could improve the efficiency of the review process, in addition to initial site planning from developers.

## Cottage Housing

Cottage housing consists of small, usually single-level, detached units which can be on individual lots or clustered around common open space. Ellensburg's cottage housing standards were compared with those of two communities which have incorporated cottage housing into their housing stock, Kirkland and Poulsbo, for reference.

Takeaways from these comparisons include:

- **Ellensburg's current unit size maximums may be a barrier.** Maximum unit size could be increased from 1,200 SF to 1,500 SF. It could also be removed completely with site design and height constraints as the restricting factors for unit size.



- **Ellensburg's minimum parking requirements, 1.5 spaces per unit, are in line with requirements elsewhere.** The City could consider a tiered model, as in Kirkland, where smaller unit sizes are only required to provide one parking space. In Poulsbo, only one space needs to be provided near the unit and the second space can be provided in a shared lot.
- **Open space requirements may introduce too many site constraints.** The existing requirement of 400 SF/unit of private space and 200 SF/unit of common space is higher than Poulsbo (300 SF of common and 200 SF private) or Kirkland (400 SF common and no minimum for private). Modifications for flexibility in site design could increase project feasibility for more developments.
- **Lack of predictability for developers is a barrier.** Pilot programs to create demonstration projects can be an effective “proof of concept” approach for new development styles, such as cottage housing, within a community. These projects may demonstrate project feasibility or reveal which aspects of the development code need to be adjusted to avoid future problems.

## DENSITY BONUS PROGRAM

Ellensburg's R-S and R-L zones include density bonus incentives<sup>2</sup> for using energy efficient construction, adding to the mix of housing types, adding off-street trails, incorporating historic preservation, and including income-restricted affordable housing. Bonuses can be combined to a maximum of 12 units/acre in R-S and 14 units/acre in R-L. This review focused on the density bonus offered for adding to the mix of housing types (via adding missing middle housing types) and creating affordable housing.

- **Language regarding compounding benefits should be clarified.** The bonus description states that “Developments may use a combination of bonus elements provided they comply with the maximum density provisions set forth for the zone in Table 15.320.030.” The description should provide example calculations to demonstrate this methodology, particularly the combination of affordable housing with a greater mix of housing types.

### Incentive for adding to the mix of housing types

- **This incentive does not apply to infill housing development.** Removing the five-acre minimum lot size requirement would allow for infill housing of alternative types.
- **The requirement for incorporating multiple housing styles is unnecessary.** This adds a barrier of complexity to site development which can decrease project feasibility. Removing this requirement could help developers simplify site planning when applying for the bonus, and it better aligns with infill developments.
- **The current bonus level is too low to adequately encourage townhouse, duplex, or multifamily production.** Average site densities for these housing types are

<sup>2</sup> [ECC 15.330.020](#)

much higher than the permitted densities, even with the bonus incentive. Alternate bonus levels could be considered.

- A 50% bonus increases site density to nine and 12 units per acre. This could better accommodate small multifamily projects, such as 3- and 4-plex units.
- The maximum density limit for each zone, with density bonuses applied, is 12 units per acre in R-S and 14 units per acre in R-L. These densities represent the very low end of typical densities for many missing middle housing types.
- A 100% bonus, similar to that offered for LEED-platinum construction, would allow for 12 and 16 units per acre in R-S and R-L zones. This is better aligned with typical site densities for cottage housing, duplexes, or larger unit townhouse developments. Currently, however, the maximum density for the R-L zone is 14 units per acre, capping the ability to fully utilize this 100% bonus.
- **The added density bonus does not increase capacity for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), as they are already permitted in these two zones.** An allowance for two ADUs on a site would need to be incorporated for the density bonus to be effective at encouraging ADU construction.

### Incentive for income-restricted affordable housing units

- **Ellensburg may want to consider adjusting unit eligibility for households with incomes below 80% AMI, particularly for rental units using the density bonus.** Findings from the Housing Needs Assessment indicate that market rate rents are comparable to rent that meets the affordability requirement for Kittitas County's 80% median income thresholds. At the same time, the study identified a greater need for units affordable to households between 50–80% AMI. A tiered program could offer a greater density bonus for units available to lower income brackets.
- **Process improvements that promote the ease and efficiency of operating affordable housing could help address barriers of uncertainty and bureaucracy** for developers who typically construct market-rate housing.
- **Further financial analysis may be needed to better understand costs of construction and benefits of the density bonus** to attract new developers to the program.

## Community Engagement: Key Findings

This plan is informed by a community engagement effort that included an online survey, three meetings of a stakeholder advisory group, advertisement and discussion at public meetings, and communication through print and digital media. A full summary can be found in Appendix C: Community Engagement Summary.

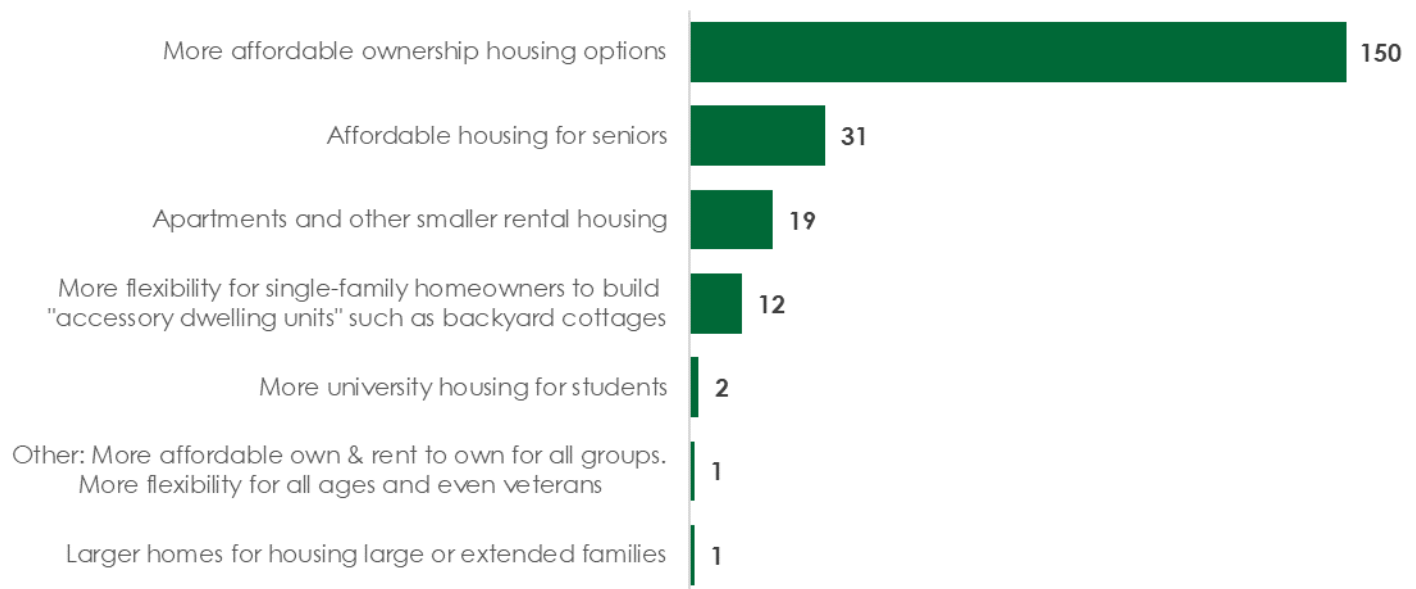
### COMMUNITY SURVEY

The City's visual preference survey gauged community response to various forms of

missing middle housing and allowed respondents to select preferences for where these types fit within existing neighborhoods. The survey included images of missing middle housing types grouped by potential areas for application in Ellensburg. The survey site received 850 visitors with 233 completed responses.

Survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that affordable homeownership opportunities are a priority need in Ellensburg. See Exhibit 3.

**Exhibit 3: What kind of housing options do you think are in greatest need in your community?**



Write-in responses emphasized community members' desire to maintain the character and small-town feel of Ellensburg and to address housing affordability. Many respondents mentioned a need for affordable rental housing and a desire for walkability and mixed-use neighborhoods, and emphasized a need to consider aging adults for both rental and ownership housing units. Many emphasized the importance of prioritizing the visual character of the city while it grows. A few samples of comments follow:

- **"There are not enough housing choices in Ellensburg.** There are very few vacancies, limited options, and the rental prices are not in line with the income of the majority of households."
- **"I am currently downsizing my single-family home to sell and seeking an affordable apartment, but none are available that match my income or are pet friendly.** Affordability is more important to me than pools, gyms, panoramic views, and other amenities that can inflate rent. Give me a one-bedroom with a washer/dryer, bath, and kitchen, and that is enough to live comfortably without sacrificing food, health care, or transportation. Priorities, please. Pools and treadmills are nice luxury items, but not if their inclusion prices us out of attaining basic needs. And thank you for doing all that you can to solve this housing shortage in ways that are practical for people with limited incomes."

- “I like the rural ‘train stop’ feel of the town. **I would love to live downtown, above a grocery store, with parks nearby.** I would love it if most of the mainstreet stretch was like the part of town between Panda Garden and The Porch. I don't like having to drive 15 minutes to reach food: more mixed zoning!”
- **“More duplexes would be so appreciated.** I would prefer duplexes over apartments but understand that so much of housing needs are for students. One could support more apartments for students and more duplexes for community members.”
- “No survey questions re: need for senior housing for people with income above poverty but below “wealthy” level. **Too rich for low-income & too poor for most everything else in Ellensburg.**”
- “I think what people desire most here are **modest, affordable single family homes with yard space.**”
- “I am a 55 year old male married but separated. **I’ve found that if you don’t wish to have a roommate in this town it extremely difficult to find housing.** I would also add that Ellensburg is worth the effort. A pretty great place to live.”
- “As a senior **I worry about finding a nice place to rent that I can afford to live in**”

In response to visual imagery of various missing middle and multifamily housing types, Ellensburg's community is generally supportive of variety across its different residential zones. For most images tested, respondents selected positive or neutral responses at rates over 50%.

- Some building types were consistently favored across multiple zones. The below images, of a duplex and a five-story multifamily building, represent housing types that received high positive response rates for multiple zones, as summarized. In general throughout the survey, missing middle housing types received more favorable responses than multifamily buildings.

- Description: Two attached units with modulated roofline/façade, separate covered entries, garages/driveways to the rear off alley.



**yes | neutral | no**

Single family areas: 72% | 9% | 19%

Transitional areas: 70% | 15% | 15%

Multifamily areas: 83% | 7% | 10%

- Description: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, balconies, façade modulation and mix of materials, widened sidewalk, underground parking.



**yes | neutral | no**

Downtown areas: 55% | 13% | 32%

Freeway Interchange areas: 56% | 20% | 35%

Commercial areas: 58% | 15% | 27%

- Some building types were tested across multiple areas with different results. For example, the 7-story building shown below was rated more acceptable in freeway interchange areas than downtown or commercial areas. Survey respondents were generally cautious toward taller buildings and buildings without brick façades in downtown areas, but demonstrated greater acceptance of these types in freeway interchange or commercial zones.
  - Description: Seven story apartment building(s) with internal courtyard, sky bridge, façade modulation, modern design, underground parking



	yes	neutral	no
Downtown areas:	24%	13%	63%
Freeway interchange areas:	37%	16%	46%
Commercial areas:	32%	15%	52%

## STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

Ellensburg's stakeholder advisory group included 14 members representing diverse interests related to housing in the community. Members include real estate professionals, affordable housing organizations, and university representatives, among others. A full list can be found below. This HAP would not have been possible without the input and participation from each member of this group.

### Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting series

- Meeting 1:** Introduce project, review Housing Needs Assessment, and discuss housing needs and priorities.
- Meeting 2:** Review and refine proposed strategies to address housing needs.
- Meeting 3:** Discuss engagement strategies and review and discuss HAP progress.

### Stakeholder Advisory Group members

**Sarah Bedsaul:** Affordable Housing Commission member and former director of local Community Land Trust

**Hongtao Dong:** Construction Management Professor at Central Washington University and Affordable Housing Commission member

**Steve Dupont:** Representative of CWU President's Office

**Jennifer Ellis:** Kittitas County Housing Authority Executive Director

**Tyler Glahn:** Local developer

**Landis Hanson:** CWU student and Ellensburg Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission member

**Jenna Hyatt:** CWU Associate Dean of Student Living



**Craig Kelly:** HopeSource, Director of Asset Management

**John Littel:** Kittitas County Housing Authority board member

**Amy McGuffin:** Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce, CEO

**Fred Padjen:** Local contractor and Ellensburg Planning Commission member

**Kelle Dvorak Vandenberg:** Kittitas Habitat for Humanity, Area Director

**Toby Williams:** Local real estate agent

**Rex Wirth:** APOYO Food Bank

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The City developed project materials, both print and digital, to communicate the goals of this project. The City's website serves as a repository for project information, including status updates, draft documents, schedules, and opportunities for involvement.

The ongoing interactive housing dashboard provides detailed information for community members interested in learning more about existing conditions in Ellensburg. Topics covered include population characteristics, the share of households that are cost-burdened, housing supply, housing affordability, and populations in Ellensburg with unique housing needs.

A project Fact Sheet provides an overview of the HAP, describes key issues, and shares ways to get involved. The content was developed based on the comments, questions, and issues raised by community members and stakeholders. The Fact Sheet is available in print form and on the Project Website.



Above: Ellensburg's Online Housing Dashboard



Right: The Housing Action Plan project fact sheet

# Goals and Strategies

This Housing Action Plan will guide Ellensburg's efforts over the next five years to support new housing units and encourage variety and affordability within the community's housing stock. By planning and acting now, Ellensburg can help ensure that future generations enjoy balanced neighborhoods, safe and healthy housing choices, and a more sustainable community. Three overarching goals guide this effort, and all selected strategies will contribute toward one or more of these goals:

1. Produce more housing.
2. Add variety to the housing stock.
3. Preserve and create income-restricted affordable housing units.

Some strategies in this Plan are broad initiatives which will benefit the community as a whole. Others are more targeted to serve certain household types better than others. The Housing Needs Assessment categorizes the household types present in Ellensburg, and the table in Exhibit 4 identifies four major demographic groups in Ellensburg. Strategies in this Plan identify which of these household types might be a good fit for its outcomes.

**Exhibit 4: Major Demographic Groups in Ellensburg, by Household Type**

Household Type	Description
<b>Older Adults</b>	Adults aged 65+ make up around 15% of Ellensburg's households. These residents may be retired and living on a fixed income. Many are looking to downsize from a single-family home to a smaller unit where they can age in place. Accessibility considerations may be prioritized in this group.
<b>Families with Children</b>	Families with children living at home are 15–20% of Ellensburg households. Families typically desire more than one bedroom in their home. They may be first-time home buyers, or they may be looking to expand their access to space and amenities with added family members.
<b>Working Adults (no children)</b>	Single adults and couples living in the city are approximately 15–30% of Ellensburg's households. They may work in the school system, at the hospital, or at a local restaurant. Some will be renters who prefer smaller unit types for lower maintenance and cost demands. Others will live in ownership housing or be looking for opportunities to become homeowners.
<b>University Students</b>	Non-parent, full-time students of Central Washington University comprise approximately 35–50% of Ellensburg's population. Many live in on-campus residence halls or student apartments. Others live as roommates or singles renting in the city. Students often prioritize lower-cost housing and live in smaller apartment units or group housing arrangements.

Ellensburg's housing network involves many players, and policy action is only one piece of the larger puzzle needed to address housing availability and affordability. It is important for the City to develop meaningful relationships with community organizations, housing providers, and residents for a collaborative effort toward achieving these goals. Housing challenges are regional by nature, and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, Kittitas County, and regional bodies such as the Kittitas County Conference of Governments will strengthen the impact of system-level changes. An important component of effective implementation of this HAP will be continued and strengthened partnership with regional entities for multi-jurisdictional efforts to address housing needs.



# HOUSING ACTION PLAN GOALS

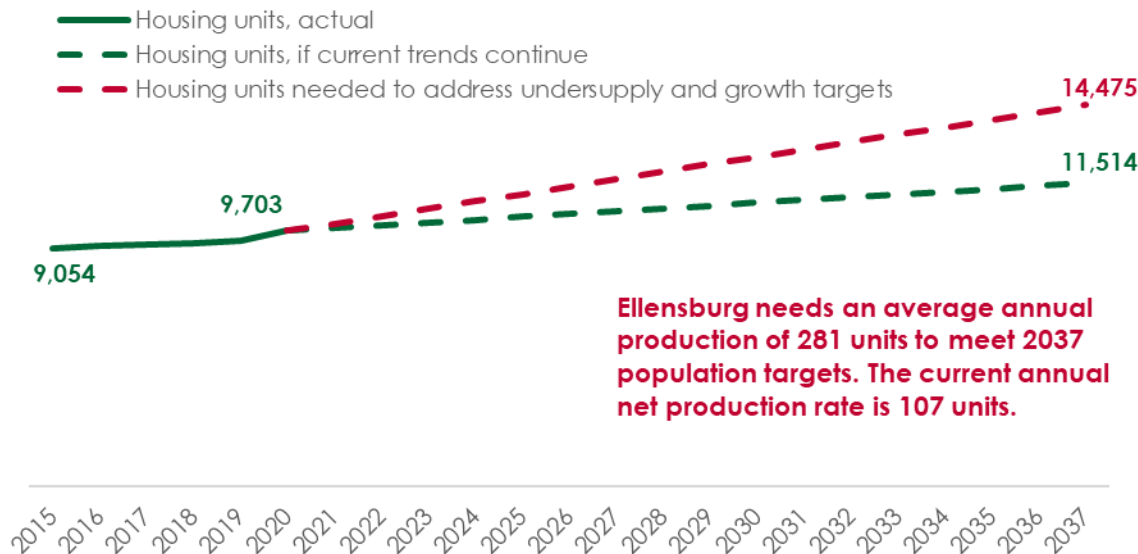
## 1. Produce more housing.

**More housing stock is needed to meet the needs of current and future residents in Ellensburg.** Ellensburg is a vibrant community which includes a large state university campus, a growing cohort of retirees, and residents of many linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Housing Needs Assessment identifies very low vacancy rates in Ellensburg, particularly for ownership housing, accompanied by a production rate which lags population growth targets. When supply is limited, competition for available units drives costs higher. This makes it harder for first-time homebuyers to break into the market, for university student renters to live comfortably, and for anyone feeling a crunch on household expenses to make ends meet. The current annual housing production rate is 107 units/year; to meet 2037 population targets this needs to increase to 281 units/year. Ellensburg is a growing community and increased production for housing of all types can help relieve some of its demand pressures.

*“There are not enough housing choices in Ellensburg. There are very few vacancies, limited options, and the rental prices are not in line with the income of the majority of households.”*

—Survey Respondent

**Exhibit 5: Ellensburg and Urban Growth Area (UGA) Housing Unit Production, Actual and Target, 2015–2037**



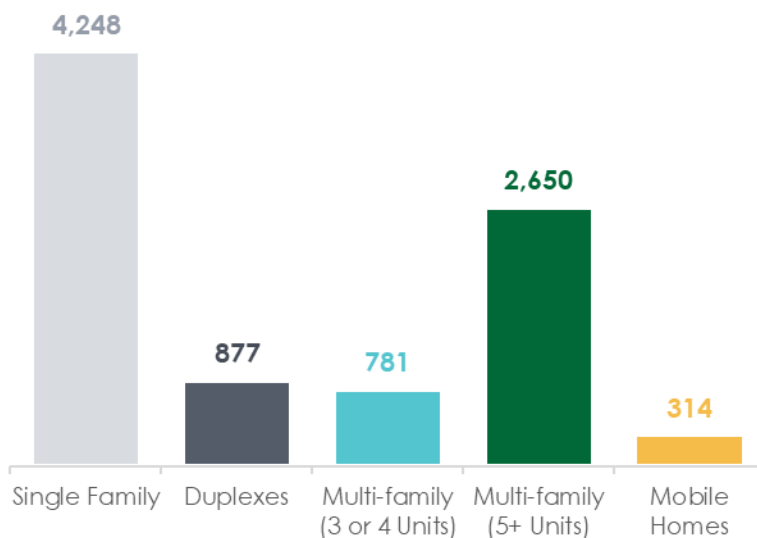
Note: Growth target translated to housing units based on 2020 average household size (2.2).

Sources: Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, 2017; Washington Office of Financial Management, 2021; BERK, 2021.

## 2. Add variety to the housing stock.

**Ellensburg lacks missing middle housing types, such as townhouses, cottage housing, 2-3-4-plexes, ADU/DADUs, and condominiums.** The local market in Ellensburg is heavily weighted toward detached single-family homes, followed by units in multifamily buildings of five or more units (see Exhibit 6). However, two-thirds (66%) of Ellensburg's households are one- and two-person in size, and these individuals and families are often well served by the smaller footprint of missing middle housing types.<sup>3</sup> The data show an imbalance between the size of housing units available and the size of households in the community, with 48% of housing units having three or more bedrooms.<sup>4</sup> The large student population in Ellensburg contributes to demand for smaller, affordable rental units. An increasing population of retirement age will include households looking to downsize into smaller units or rentals with fewer maintenance demands. The Housing Needs Assessment identifies a range of incomes offered by local employers, and housing options should reflect this with a range of price points to accommodate all residents.<sup>5</sup> A wider variety of unit types and sizes would benefit residents across different stages of life in Ellensburg.

**Exhibit 6: Ellensburg Housing Stock by Unit Type, 2020**



*Note: These estimates include on-campus student apartments but do not account for on-campus residence halls.*

*Sources: Washington Office of Financial Management, 2021; BERK, 2021.*

<sup>3</sup> ACS 5-year estimates, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2018.

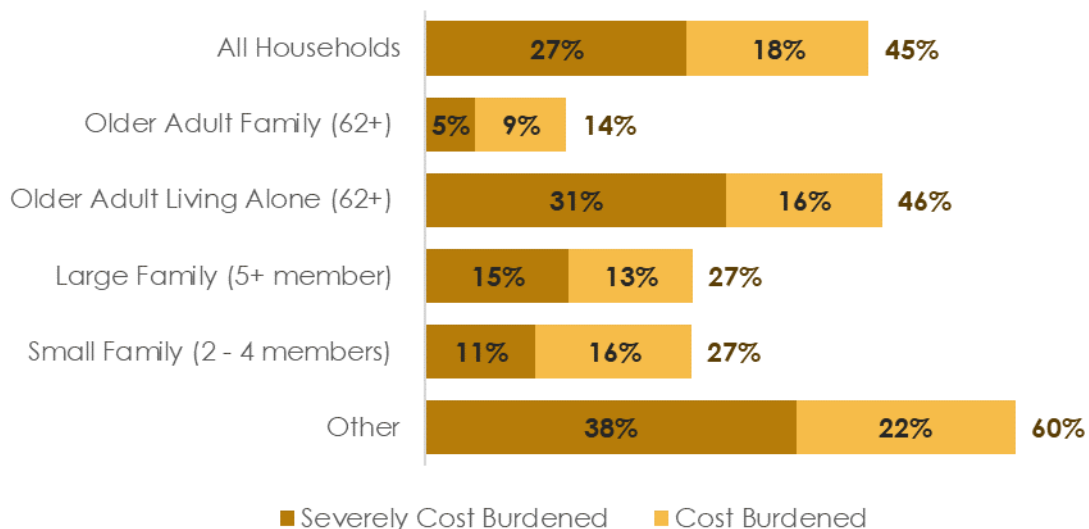
### 3. Preserve and create income-restricted affordable housing units.

**Housing affordability is a challenge for many residents in Ellensburg, where 45% of the population is cost-burdened.** This affects all household types. 27% of family households and 46% of older adults who live alone are cost-burdened.<sup>6</sup> Residents who have low, very low, or extremely low incomes feel the effects of rising costs of housing the hardest. These households are often forced to make difficult tradeoffs between essential needs such as food, transportation, and healthcare and safe, quality housing. The Needs Assessment identifies 464 units of income-restricted housing with covenants expiring before 2030 as well as 626 family households and 361 senior/disabled households who qualify for subsidized housing but do not have access. The preservation of existing income-restricted affordable units and addition of more of these units will lighten financial pressure for Ellensburg's households who most need support.

*"More affordable housing needed at all income levels, while maintaining the visual appeal of our small town. Thank you for making this a priority!"*

—Survey Respondent

**Exhibit 7: Cost Burden by Household Type in Ellensburg, 2017**



Note: "Other" household types include Census defined non-family, non-older adult households. In Ellensburg, this category is likely to include much of the Central Washington University student population who do not live in residence halls (dormitories).

Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Cost burden data as reported by HUD CHAS, based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

## HOUSING ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

**The strategies selected for this Housing Action Plan represent a flexible toolbox of solutions to address Ellensburg's housing needs.** The table in Exhibit 8 summarizes the 14 strategies and their connection to the three overarching plan goals. Each strategy is described with detail, context, and considerations that tailor the approach to Ellensburg. Some strategies are well suited to certain demographics, and tables next to the strategy draw the connection to household types identified as key demographic groups for focus within Ellensburg. Other strategies are community-wide in impact and less tailored toward specific demographics. Implementation of these strategies begins with the action steps identified in the implementation table in Exhibit 14. Some strategies are achieved through policy action at the City level, while others require coordination with community partners and regional housing stakeholders.

**Anti-displacement strategies are identified in this plan to proactively prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts from development.** Ellensburg recognizes the potential for displacement resulting from policy action that encourages increased housing production. While the larger picture impacts of increasing the housing stock and adding density are to improve affordability and availability of housing, new development can result in the displacement of individual households or cultural communities. Targeted efforts will address these concerns.



Downtown Ellensburg. Image Source: City of Ellensburg.

## Exhibit 8: Housing Action Plan Strategies

Strategy	Housing production	Housing variety	Income-restricted units	Anti-displacement
1. Encourage the construction of townhouses.	●	●		
2. Encourage the construction of cottage housing.	●	●		
3. Encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units.	●	●		
4. Encourage the construction of multiplex housing.	●	●		
5. Encourage the construction of condominiums.	●	●		
6. Build added flexibility into the zoning code.	●	●		
7. Strategically rezone for more mixed-use development.	●	●		
8. Preserve income-restricted affordable housing developments.			●	●
9. Update housing incentives to encourage production of missing middle housing units and income-restricted units.		●	●	
10. Research and implement financial strategies that construct new affordable housing units.			●	
11. Support relocation assistance for residents of manufactured home parks when parks are sold.				●
12. Continue community outreach and education on housing needs and the existing systems that support access to housing.	●	●	●	●
13. Build a partnership with Ellensburg Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission.		●		●
14. Develop and support programs that minimize displacement.				●



## 1. Encourage the construction of townhouses.

### Strategy is Well Suited for

**Families with children**

**Working Adults (no children)**

**Description:** Townhouses are built at a higher site density than detached single-family homes, yet offer many of the same benefits, such as homeownership opportunities, multiple bedrooms, and aesthetic integration into residential neighborhoods.

Appropriate design guidelines reinforce the desired characteristics of townhouse developments.

**Considerations:** Currently, townhouses are a permitted use throughout Ellensburg's residential zones. Regulatory restrictions within these zones, however, serve as barriers to their development. The Policy Review identifies opportunities to reduce regulatory barriers for townhouses as follows:

- Ensure that townhouse developments fit within the allowed densities of R-S and R-L zones.
- Remove the R-S restriction that townhouses can only be adjacent to single-family lots when approved on an individual plat basis.
- Reduce parking requirements to 1 or 1.5 parking spaces per unit, particularly for one- or two-bedroom townhouses.
- Revise standards that require alley-access parking and prohibit driveways that face a public street. While alleyways are preferred for townhouse developments, the requirement is prohibitive to infill opportunities within existing infrastructure.
- Remove landscaping requirements, consistent with detached single-family home design guidelines.
- Identify a development partner interested in constructing a pilot of this housing type to demonstrate its market feasibility and work through any regulatory barriers.

### Exhibit 9: New Townhouse-Style Construction in Ellensburg



Image Source: City of Ellensburg.

## 2. Encourage the construction of cottage housing.

### Strategy is Well Suited for

Older adults

Working Adults (no children)

**Description:** Cottage housing is a missing middle housing type that increases site density, provides shared open space and amenities for residents, and often offers homeownership opportunities. Cottage housing is typically single-story and can integrate

accessibility features, making it a great fit for older adults seeking independent living in a smaller space. Ellensburg's design standards for cottage housing reflect many aesthetic and practical considerations that are typical in the region, such as options for shared parking, a maximum of 12 units per cluster, and standards for both private and shared open space.

**Considerations:** Currently, cottage housing is permitted in Ellensburg's low- and medium-density residential zones and not permitted in the high-density residential zone or any commercial/mixed use zones. The Policy Review identifies opportunities to reduce regulatory barriers for this type of housing:

- Consider a maximum unit size of 1,500 square feet.
- Add flexibility in open space requirements.
- Identify a development partner interested in constructing a pilot of this housing type to demonstrate its market feasibility and work through any regulatory barriers.
- Adjust the density bonus to accommodate infill development opportunities. This is further described in Strategy 9 which includes considerations such as eliminating the 5-acre minimum and the requirement for a mix of housing types within a development.

### 3. Encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units.

Strategy is Well Suited for
Older adults
Working adults (no children)
College students

**Description:** Accessory dwelling units and detached accessory dwelling units (ADU/DADUs) are small, self-contained residential units located on the same lot as an existing single-family home. ADUs can be attached to the primary dwelling or detached in a separated building (DADU). In Ellensburg, ADUs are allowed in most residential zones: R-S, R-L, R-M, and

R-H as well as commercial zones C-C and C-C II. Current regulations set a maximum unit size of 1,000 square feet or 40% of the primary dwelling unit's size, whichever is smaller. Additional parking spaces are not required for ADUs.<sup>7</sup>

ADUs add capacity to residential neighborhoods by integrating small living spaces within existing lots. These units can be a good fit for intergenerational households or as an opportunity for supplemental income from a renter. The smaller unit sizes may appeal to singles or couples without children. In some cases, owners downsize to live in their ADU and rent their primary dwelling.

**Considerations:** From 2014 to 2020, an average of four ADUs were permitted per year in Ellensburg. This compares to an average of 53 single-family units constructed per year. Construction projects and the associated permitting process can be intimidating and expensive for homeowners. Additional work to demystify the process for interested residents is an important focus for this strategy.

- Ensure that the permitting process is streamlined and limits added impact fees.<sup>8</sup>
- Create “how to” guidelines for homeowners detailing the step-by-step process and providing cost estimates for municipal fees.<sup>9</sup>
- Work with local architects to produce pre-approved structure designs to reduce barriers of uncertainty for interested homeowners.<sup>10</sup>
- Partner with county for consistency of regulations across borders into the UGA.
- Conduct resident outreach to communicate the opportunities and risks involved and conduct retrospective conversation after completed projects to understand any barriers or challenges.
- Consider accommodating more than one ADU per property.
- Explore a program that would account for the number of existing ADUs within the housing stock that were built prior to the current ADU code standards/permitting requirements, including incentives or amnesty grace periods for self-reporting.

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<sup>7</sup> [ECC 15.550.040](#)

<sup>8</sup> Example legislation in [Bellingham](#) which cut park impact fees or eliminated them for attached units.

<sup>9</sup> Examples from [Bellingham](#) and [Tacoma](#).

<sup>10</sup> Example templates in [Seattle](#).



#### 4. Encourage the construction of multiplex housing.

Strategy is Well Suited for
Older adults
Families with children
Working Adults (no children)
College students

**Description:** Multiplex housing such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes are small multifamily structures that can integrate seamlessly with detached single-family housing in residential neighborhoods. Typically, each unit has its own entry and building design often reflects that of a single-family dwelling. These units can be a good fit for many household types, as they come in a wide range

of sizes and blend well with the aesthetics of many traditional neighborhoods. These adaptable unit types add density and are often rented as apartments.

In Ellensburg, duplexes are permitted in R-S, R-L, R-M, and R-O zones. There are 877 duplex units in the city, representing 10% of all housing units. Production of duplex units in R-S and R-L zones is very limited, however. Between 2012 and 2020, only two duplexes were constructed in R-S areas and one in R-L areas, compared to 52 in R-M areas. One potential barrier could be the density maximums in these two zones, compared to the other residential zones without maximums.

Triplexes and quadplexes are grouped with other multifamily housing types and are permitted in R-S, R-M, R-H, and R-O zones but not in the R-L zone. While triplexes and quadplexes are a permitted use in the R-S zone, the maximum density threshold of six units per acre serves as a de facto barrier to their production on most standard lots. The average lot size for new single-family homes in Ellensburg is 0.18 acres, but in the R-S zone a triplex could only be built on a lot almost three times as large as this average, 0.5 acres or higher.<sup>11</sup>

**Considerations:** Duplexes are a permitted use in Ellensburg's lower-density residential zones. The Policy Review identifies opportunities for updating the housing code to better accommodate 2-3-4-plexes:

- Allow triplexes and quadplexes in zones where duplexes are a permitted use.
- Adjust density maximums and/or density bonus regulations to make these unit types feasible on typical infill lots in R-S and R-L zones.
- To promote successful integration of 2-3-4-plexes into existing single-family zones, incorporate input from public engagement regarding residents' design preferences, interests, and concerns about these unit types.

<sup>11</sup> Based on Ellensburg housing permit data from 2012-2020.

## 5. Encourage the construction of condominiums.

### Strategy is Well Suited for

Older adults

Working Adults (no children)

**Description:** Condominiums are multifamily buildings where individual units are owned by occupants, but the exterior structure and land are held in common ownership by building residents. Additional shared amenities are sometimes included as well, such as

a fitness room or event space. Condos can be a good fit for older adults who appreciate owning their home without the burdens of yard maintenance. They can also be a good fit for individuals or couples without children who don't need a large home and are looking for stability and an opportunity to build equity.

Condos are a form of multifamily housing. In Ellensburg, multifamily units are permitted in all residential zones except R-L. From 2012 to 2020 most multifamily buildings in Ellensburg have been built in the R-M and R-H zones, as shown in Exhibit 10. Central neighborhoods covered by the C-C and C-C II zones have experienced lower rates of production, with no multifamily buildings added to the C-C II zone during this timeframe despite its proximity to the commercial corridors at Canyon Road and Main Street.

**Considerations:** Condominium construction in Washington is subject to liability regulations which some developers cite as a barrier to development. The state has been active in review and amendment of condo regulations in recent years (see [SB 5334](#)) and Ellensburg can work further with its residents and developers to understand needed policy reforms.

The Policy Review identifies opportunities for code adjustments that improve the feasibility for development of multifamily buildings in the zones where they are permitted. These include:

- Consider expanding the existing multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) zone from the C-C zone to include the C-C II zone.
- Revise density maximums and/or density bonus incentives to better accommodate multifamily buildings.
- Promote successful aesthetic integration by continued public engagement to learn about the design preferences, interests, and concerns that residents express for condos.

**Exhibit 10: Multifamily Production in Ellensburg by Zone, 2012–2020.**

Zone	Multifamily units	Multifamily buildings (3+ units)
R-S	0	0
R-M	101	7
R-H	312	10
R-O	0	0
C-C	95	7
C-C II	0	0

Sources: Ellensburg Permit Data, 2012-2020; BERK, 2021.

## 6. Build added flexibility into the zoning code.

### Community-level strategy

**Description:** The zoning code sets standards for building height and bulk, lot coverage, the quantity of units allowed in a given area, and the types of uses accepted in a district. These regulations influence the aesthetic character and market viability for various building types throughout Ellensburg. Current residential zones and regulations favor single-family housing in much of the city. A comprehensive update of design guidelines and zoning category descriptions could better align with more housing types consistent with the character and aesthetics desired by residents for different parts of the city.

Ellensburg's code includes five residential zones, a manufactured home park zone, and five commercial/mixed use zones. Added flexibility for missing middle housing types can be considered across these zones, particularly in areas with good access to public utilities, transportation, parks and open space, and employment opportunities.

As part of the Housing Action Plan, Ellensburg conducted a community survey to gauge preferences for the desired form and visual character of residential development across the city (See Appendix C: Community Engagement Summary). These results can help identify appropriate regulations for Ellensburg's residential zones.

#### Exhibit 11: Ellensburg Density Requirements for Residential Zones

Zone	Minimum Density	Maximum Density (Gross)
R-S	-	6 du/acre
R-L	6 du/acre	8 du/acre
R-M	8 du/acre	-
R-H	15 du/acre	-
R-O	8 du/acre	-

Ellensburg's zoning code includes five residential zones. Some of the zones are only differentiated by relatively minor distinctions. A simplified code with fewer zones helps housing developers and simplifies internal site plan review.

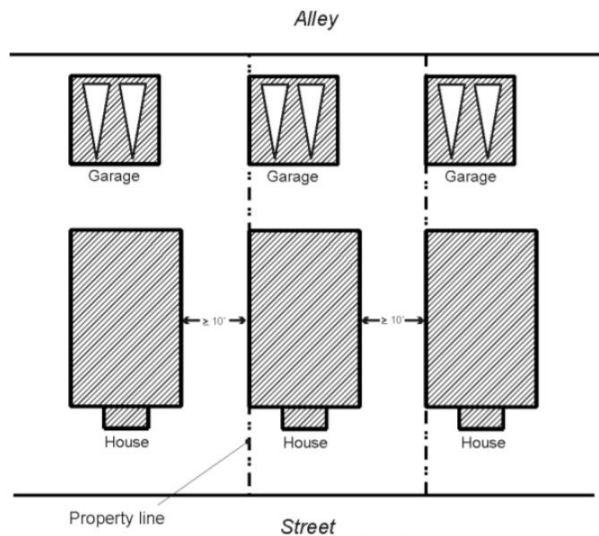
Sources: Ellensburg City Code, 2021; BERK, 2021.

**Considerations:** The Policy Review identifies opportunities for considering code updates that improve the market viability of various missing middle housing types. Recommendations include:

- Remove or revise density maximums in the R-S and R-L zones to accommodate more housing types, such as townhouses, multiplexes, and cottage housing.
- Consider zero lot line accommodations for smaller lot residential development (see example below in Exhibit 12), as well as flexible adjustments to open space requirements.

- Create a streamlined process for unit-lot subdivision<sup>12</sup> to ease the process of townhouse development as infill housing.
- Simplify code by consolidating some of Ellensburg's five residential zones (R-S, R-L, R-M, R-H, and R-O) to reduce complexity across the city.<sup>13</sup>
- Explore the option of integrating tiny home developments within the city.

#### Exhibit 12: Zero Lot Line Development Site Plan.



Source: "Guidance for Developing a Housing Action Plan" Department of Commerce, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Unit-lot subdivision is the process of dividing an existing lot into multiple lots. Many existing lots are geared toward single-family home development, and lot lines would need to be reconfigured to align with a townhouse development site design. A simple, streamlined process to redraw lot lines addresses an administrative barrier to this step in the process of townhouse development. See example from Anacortes [AMC 19.32.050\(D\)](#).

<sup>13</sup> See example in Walla Walla, with two residential districts: Neighborhood Residential and Multifamily Residential: [Walla Walla Municipal Code](#)

## 7. Strategically rezone for more mixed-use development.

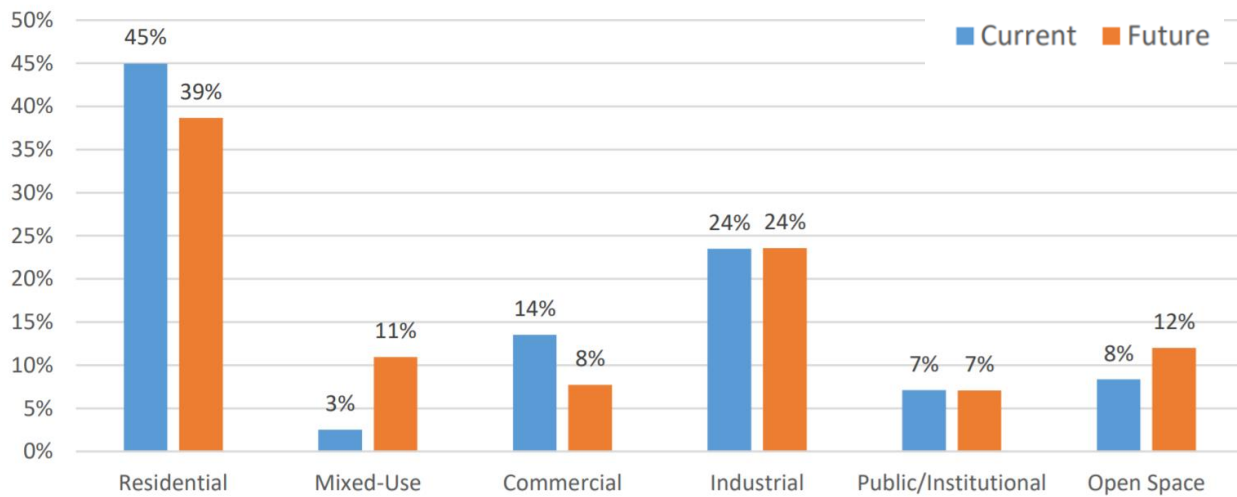
### Community-level strategy

**Description:** Ellensburg adopted a future land use map in its 2017 Comprehensive Plan that favors

increased designation of mixed-use zones, with corresponding decreases to residential and commercial zones. These changes promote livability and walkability by adding multifamily residential density, which can include rental units as well as condominiums, close to shopping areas.

The land use changes needed to implement this vision are in progress, and a continued effort with community support is needed to see these changes through to completion. Exhibit 13 shows the percent of total land zoned by use currently, compared to the designations in the future land use map. Small changes in zoning districts throughout the city combine to make this overall shift. Examples of mixed-use zones in Ellensburg include C-C, C-C II, and R-O.

**Exhibit 13: Comparison of Current and Future Land Use Designations**



Source: Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, 2017.

**Considerations:** Continued public engagement will be an important focus throughout implementation of this vision. Community support is key when proposing changes to zoning districts, and comments from the visual preference survey indicate that many residents appreciate and desire more mixed-used developments in Ellensburg.

- Consider protections for low-income renters authorized through [WAC 365-196-835](#) and detailed in [RCW 59.18.440](#) to minimize unintended displacement

*"I would love to live downtown, above a grocery store, with parks nearby... I don't like having to drive 15 minutes to reach food"*

*"We rent and want to continue to rent as we age (66 and retired now). Our personal dream location is downtown which allows access to all the amenities with ease of walking."*

—Survey Respondents

of households with low incomes. This displacement can be a consequence of land use changes that increase residential capacity. Incorporate special consideration for distinguishing the student population from the general population of households with low incomes.

- Housing Action Plan stakeholders express support for increased density in residential zones, above and beyond changes reflected in the future land use map. Encouraging missing middle housing types can be an effective approach for adding residential density while maintaining the aesthetic character in existing neighborhoods.
- Survey respondents speak about appreciating the convenience of walkable, mixed-use communities. Among the visual preference options, many appreciated multifamily styles that incorporate ground-floor commercial. This was found in downtown areas, freeway interchange areas, and commercial areas.

## 8. Preserve income-restricted affordable housing developments.

### Strategy is Well Suited for

Older adults

Families with children

Working Adults (no children)

**Description:** Income-restricted affordable housing refers to housing units in the community set aside for residents whose incomes fall within HUD-determined brackets as low-income (80% of AMI), very low-income (50% of AMI), and extremely low-income (30% of AMI or less). Residents who qualify for income-restricted affordable housing are

placed on lengthy waiting lists for units to become available, which can take years. Housing can be provided through rental vouchers for market-rate apartments, or through units in buildings built with low-income housing tax credits or designated as affordable units. Housing units are priced according to HUD's definition of "affordable", costing 30% or less of monthly household income.

Housing units owned by the City may remain affordable in perpetuity while units developed in the private market through the use of tax credits will be subject to covenant agreements for the number of years they must be set aside as income restricted.

Ellensburg's HNA identified both an existing shortage of income-restricted affordable housing units and 464 units of existing affordable units with covenants expiring by 2030. When affordability covenants expire and units return to market rate housing, tenants are often unable to afford the increased rent and are forced to move. Action is needed to minimize this kind of displacement and ensure that the local housing stock accommodates households at all income brackets within the community.

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*"[We] need to ensure housing options for low-income individuals and families, including those on fixed incomes."*

—Survey Respondent

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**Considerations:** There are several strategies to consider for the preservation of existing income-restricted affordable housing units within Ellensburg as well as the creation of additional subsidized housing.

- Maintain an inventory of existing income-restricted affordable housing stock. This list should be monitored to identify units with upcoming expiration dates for review and prioritization of need.
- Consider a "Notice of Intent to Sell" ordinance, which requires owners of multifamily buildings to notify tenants and local housing officials prior to the sale of property. This can help the City protect buildings prioritized for preservation. These notices can also prepare tenants for the potential need to move.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See example legislation in [Burien](#). Note that this ordinance applies to any multifamily building (5+ unit) with at least one unit that rents at an affordability level at or below 80% of AMI. The building does not need to have affordability covenant in place. It could be an older building with rents that are somewhat lower than prevailing market rents.

- Partner with non-profit affordable housing developers and Kittitas Housing Authority to leverage funds to strategically acquire existing affordable units.



## 9. Update housing incentives to encourage missing middle housing production and income-restricted affordable units.

### Community-level strategy

**Description:** Ellensburg's existing housing incentives include a density bonus in the R-S and R-L zones and a multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program in the Central Commercial (C-C) zone. These incentives remain largely unused. The MFTE program offers an 8-year option for any multifamily building with 4+ units and a 12-year option for buildings that incorporate 20% of units affordable to households at low- or moderate-income levels. Moderate income is defined as 80-115% AMI, and in Ellensburg the current average market rent is considered affordable to a household at 80% AMI. The qualifying income levels for an extended tax benefit could be changed to better incentivize units at price points that are harder to find in the local market.

The density bonus program incorporates incentives for missing middle housing, affordable housing units, energy efficient building practices, off-street trails, transfer of development right credits, and historic preservation. Bonuses for these various incentives can be combined, up to a maximum density in each zone. Maximum density restrictions in R-S and R-L zones restrict total density to 12 units/acre and 14 units/acre, respectively.

**Considerations:** The Policy Review, detailed in Appendix B: Policy Review, identifies opportunities for improving the effectiveness of existing incentive programs. Additional incentives could also be considered for incorporation.

- Currently, average market rate rents in Ellensburg are affordable for moderate-income households. Consider using the 12-year MFTE option to target lower income brackets unserved by market rate housing.
- Expand the MFTE program into the C-C II zone, as this commercial district experienced no multifamily development in the 2012–2020 time frame. See Exhibit 10.
- The maximum densities for R-S and R-L zones are lower than typical site densities for many missing middle housing types included in the “alternate housing types” density bonus. Realign the incentive to make included housing types feasible for development.
- Rethink constraints for use of the alternate housing types density bonus, such as the 5-acre minimum lot size and the requirement for multiple housing types to be incorporated into the site.
- Reduce parking requirements as an effective cost-reduction incentive for housing developments in areas within a quarter mile of transit or for units of income-restricted affordable housing.

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*“I think Ellensburg needs more affordable housing. We are in a pattern where market prices continue to raise despite no new housing or features within the community. It has become so young people cannot afford housing. We need to be able to support a growing university and provide better and more affordable housing for everybody.”*

---

—Survey Respondent

- Strengthen the existing density bonus for affordable housing, as noted in the Policy Review. This includes the need for added transparency to building owners about what is required to own and operate income-restricted housing within a mixed-income development.

## 10. Research and implement financial strategies that construct new affordable housing units.

### Community-level strategy

**Description:** Market rate housing is more expensive than some households can afford without assistance.

The Housing Needs Assessment estimates 626 families and 324 older adult renter households qualify for income-restricted housing but do not have access to these units, due to limited supply. Continued production of income-restricted affordable housing is an important component of meeting community housing needs.

**Considerations:** Affordable housing units can be constructed by private sector and non-profit developers or by public sector entities. The City should explore opportunities for the creation of these units by each of these modes.

- Research feasibility of Tax Increment Financing programs or land donation opportunities to support income-restricted affordable housing units.
- Build partnerships with private sector developers to build affordable housing units within market rate buildings.
- Identify non-profits, social service providers, and institutional partners who offer opportunities to integrate wraparound services in or near affordable housing developments.
- Identify opportunities for the City to construct or purchase affordable housing units.
- Continue using the existing Sales and Use Tax Credit program authorized through HB 1406, which establishes a revenue sharing program that allows cities to recapture a portion of sales and use tax to fund affordable or supportive housing.
- Use local housing funds, collected through the voter-approved 0.1% sales tax increase, toward affordable housing construction.

## 11. Support relocation assistance for residents of manufactured home parks when parks are sold.

Strategy is Well Suited for	Description:
Older adults	Residents of manufactured home parks are vulnerable to physical displacement, as they do not own the land where their homes are located. When park owners decide to sell to buyers with alternate land use plans for the property, residents are often abruptly asked to vacate their plats and many homes are not actually “mobile” for relocation.
Families with children	
Working adults (no children)	

State resources exist to support manufactured housing owners in these circumstances. For example, the Washington State Department of Commerce administers a Manufactured Home Relocation Assistance Program, offering residents from low-income households up to \$7,500 for a single-section home or \$12,000 for a multi-section home.<sup>15</sup> Funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis across Washington state. However, the amounts distributed through this program do not cover the full cost of relocation.

Some cities place a responsibility on park owners to connect residents with applications and resources to apply for such programs upon notice of park closure. The [City of Kent](#) offers an example for the owner relocation report and plan requirement.<sup>16</sup>

**Considerations:** Ellensburg has developed a Manufactured Home Park zone, which establishes longevity for this housing type in areas where it is implemented. This stability helps to protect the long-term interest of homeowners and acts as an anti-displacement measure for park residents. In some circumstances, tenant awareness of rights and protections is an important component of resident support.

- The Manufactured/Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act ([MHLTA](#)) requires a landlord who intends to permanently close a mobile home park to provide each homeowner with 12 months written notice and post a copy of the notice at all park entrances. The Northwest Justice Project provides a [summary of tenant's rights](#) to describe these protections.
- Add a requirement for park owners to submit a relocation report and plan when closing a park in the city.
- Raise awareness of existing programs for relocation assistance among tenants of manufactured home parks, such as funds offered through the Department of Commerce (referenced above in description). Consider supplementing these resources, when possible and appropriate.
- Identify areas of the City that would accommodate new Manufactured Housing (MH) zones.
- Revise the manufactured home park development standards to include clarity in procedural requirements, and review the standards for appropriateness of the

<sup>15</sup> [Washington State Department of Commerce Manufactured/Mobile Home Relocation Assistance.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Kent City Code, 12.05.330 Relocation report and plan.

site planning and design requirements for setbacks, open space, parking, walkability, safety, and aesthetics, etc.

## 12. Continue community outreach and education on housing needs and the existing systems that support access to housing.

### Community-level strategy

**Description:** Community outreach and engagement sets the foundation for successful policy action. A shared understanding of housing needs, challenges, and opportunities elevates public discourse around housing policy and can garner longer-term support for financial and political investments in housing. Clear and consistent communication can prepare neighborhoods for upcoming change and offer greater agency in proactive decision-making rather than reactive responses.

**Considerations:** Ellensburg has established a foundation for discussing housing topics at the community level. The recent passing of the increased sales tax for housing and related services demonstrates community support for addressing challenges of affordability. A continued conversation can keep a productive momentum among motivated residents.

- Continue to maintain and promote Ellensburg's virtual and interactive housing data dashboard.
- Leverage online engagement software to poll residents about important topics throughout the HAP implementation process.
- Keep the community informed with updates on progress toward achieving HAP goals, posting status updates on key indicators identified on page 43.
- Translate materials and build relationships with representatives from groups and institutions where English is not the first or primary language.
- Promote existing programs that supply down payment assistance and application support to first time homebuyers
- Promote opportunities for first-time homeowners, such as USDA rural home loan program.



### 13. Build a partnership with Ellensburg Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission.

#### Community-level strategy

**Description:** Ellensburg's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commission is a newly formed group of community members committed to making Ellensburg a welcoming community for all residents. City-wide data analysis gathers the large-scale trends but can miss nuance and smaller-scale challenges specific groups may face. Engaging with the DEI Commission members is a way for the City to further its understanding of the diverse range of housing needs in Ellensburg. Including an equity lens in policy development is an important shift in municipal process that can improve community outcomes.

**Considerations:** The connection between this Housing Action Plan and the DEI Commission should grow and evolve throughout the implementation of the strategies.

- Gather ongoing input from DEI Commission members, who may be particularly tuned into missing middle housing types that best meet the needs of residents facing unique or disproportionate barriers in the community.
- Develop a successful partnership with the DEI Commission to strengthen the engagement and community education components of the HAP.
- Partner with this commission to identify signals for areas where displacement may be a concern, with a particular focus on cultural displacement and communities of color.

## 14. Develop and support programs that minimize displacement.

### Community-level strategy

**Description:** The Housing Needs Assessment estimated over 3,000 renter households in Ellensburg are cost-burdened and could be vulnerable to displacement pressures. The City can take a proactive role to mitigate and avoid potential displacement that can occur with new development and rising costs of housing. This strategy identifies potential partnerships and programs that support both renters and homeowners in need of financial assistance.

**Considerations:** In some cases, local partners will be best suited to provide the services and resources needed to address displacement in the community.

- Partner with local affordable housing providers and servicers who have additional knowledge and resources that are not available to the city.
- Promote and support programs that minimize displacement such as foreclosure intervention counseling, home rehabilitation assistance, and credit counseling.
- Ensure that low-income homeowners faced with rising property taxes, seniors, and persons with disabilities are aware of the property tax exemptions and deferrals available through the county's Assessor's office.
- Continue to promote and support existing programs that provide emergency rental assistance for families facing homelessness due to temporary economic hardship.
- Support sweat equity programs and land trust options, and market these programs to at-risk households.
- Develop a system that monitors displacement risk associated with new development.

# Implementation & Monitoring

This plan is intended to serve as an active reference and guide for city staff in Ellensburg. This section presents an implementation plan for each strategy as well as an overall system for monitoring progress toward achieving project goals. Symbols in the table estimate relative investments in staff time and financial costs related to each strategy. Staff time could be associated with developing new programs, writing or editing sections of code, hosting events, creating media content for promotion, or developing partnerships with outside organizations. Direct financial costs might include paying for technical studies or consultant fees, printing and/or translating promotional materials, or contributing financial resources to programs or property acquisition. These are only estimates, and a detailed implementation plan should further refine the costs associated with strategy actions. In some cases, staff time could be converted to financial costs if third-party support is needed to supplement staff capacity.

**Exhibit 14: Housing Strategy Implementation Plan**

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	STAFF TIME			COST		
		●	●●	●●●	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$
	<b>* Partnership opportunity</b>				low	medium	high
<b>1. Encourage the construction of townhouses.</b>		●●			\$		
	Revise development standards and housing code for improved compatibility with infill development.						
	<b>* Identify a partner for a pilot demonstration site, infill or larger development.</b>						
<b>2. Encourage the construction of cottage housing.</b>		●●			\$		
	Revise code language for clarity and simplicity.						
	Review development standards for opportunities to add flexibility.						
<b>3. Encourage the construction of ADU/DADUs.</b>		●●●			\$\$		
	Create user-friendly development guide for transparency of associated fees and regulations.						
	<b>* Create pre-approved development templates.</b>						
	Coordinate development standards between city and county regulations in the UGA.						
<b>4. Encourage the construction of 2-3-4-plexes.</b>		●●			\$		

	Consider allowing triplexes and 4-plexes in areas where duplexes are allowed.		
	Review design guidelines for compatibility with preferences described in community survey.		
<b>5. Encourage the construction of condominiums.</b>		● ●	\$
	Consider expanding MFTE benefit (see Strategy 9).		
*	Work with state to identify legislative solutions to existing barriers.		
<b>6. Build added flexibility into the zoning code.</b>		● ● ●	\$
	Consider code updates that are more compatible with missing middle housing types. (See Strategies 1–5)		
*	Review proposed changes with local development community.		
<b>7. Strategically rezone.</b>		● ● ●	\$\$
	Continue to pass zoning amendments that support future land use map.		
*	Engage in community outreach to identify areas where additional density is supported (see Strategy 11).		
<b>8. Preservation of income-restricted affordable housing developments.</b>		● ●	\$\$\$
	Identify affordable housing units with upcoming expiration dates.		
*	Identify opportunities to maintain affordability in these units. This could include use of city funds to purchase units to set aside for affordable housing.		
<b>9. Update housing incentives to encourage missing middle housing production and income-restricted affordable units.</b>		● ● ●	\$\$
	Revise density bonus incentive for better compatibility with missing middle housing and infill development.		
	Study potential adjustments to the parameters of existing MFTE program.		
*	Clarify the administrative process for maintaining income-restricted units in mixed-income developments.		
<b>10. Research and implement financial strategies that construct new affordable housing units.</b>		● ● ●	\$\$\$
	Research opportunities for siting and constructing new affordable housing units.		

- \* Develop a financial plan for acquisition, construction, and ongoing maintenance of affordable housing units. Identify partnership opportunities where city resources are limited.

### 11. Support relocation assistance programs for manufactured home parks when sold.

● ● ●

\$\$

- \* Create easy to use reference materials for park residents, directing them to state relocation assistance funds and clear information on their rights and responsibilities. Translate into applicable languages.

- \* Require owners to create a relocation report and plan upon sale of the property.

Consider opportunities to supplement state-level financial resources for displaced tenants, particularly for low-income households.

### 12. Continued community outreach & education on housing needs.

● ● ●

\$\$

Conduct community surveys to gauge support and identify preferences for different housing types.

Maintain interactive dashboard with housing data.

- \* Develop multilingual engagement tools.

### 13. Build a partnership with Ellensburg Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission.

● ●

\$

- \* Continue conversation and relationship with this commission throughout strategy implementation and as part of engagement plan.

- \* Host joint work session to discuss a plan to identify areas of displacement risk in the community and methods to track and mitigate displacement associated with potential new development.

- \* Involve members in review of housing proposals and action steps, as appropriate.

### 14. Develop and support programs that minimize displacement.

● ●

\$\$

- \* Identify existing anti-displacement programs provided by affordable housing developers, credit and lending institutions, land trusts, and non-profit organizations.

- \* Apply for grants that fund emergency rental assistance, foreclosure counseling services, and down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers.

- \* Develop resources to connect service providers with eligible program participants.

## MEASURING PROGRESS

Ellensburg intends to monitor Housing Action Plan outcomes over time. This oversight will evaluate both follow-through on the identified strategies and progress toward goals. *Follow-through* can be tracked by identifying which strategies are successfully seen through to implementation. *Progress* will be tracked through key indicators, which correspond to the overarching goals of this plan. This tracking can add onto the city's existing interactive housing dashboard.

### Key Indicator 1: Housing production, broken out by unit type.

Ellensburg needs an average annual production rate of 281 units to reach 2037 population targets. This indicator tracks production rates each year. Breaking out by housing type allows for tracking of missing middle housing types and income-restricted affordable housing units, highlighted in blue below.

#### Exhibit 15: Tracking Annual Housing Production Rates.

Housing Types	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Single-family	77	84	30	41	40
ADU	5	6	6	4	1
Duplex	10	8	10	14	4
Multi-Family (3 or 4 unit)				3	
Multi-Family (5+ units)	15	159	184	49	36
Residence Hall			200		
Manufactured Home	8	8	5	2	2
Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Units					
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>83</b>

Sources: Ellensburg Permit Data, 2021; BERK, 2021.

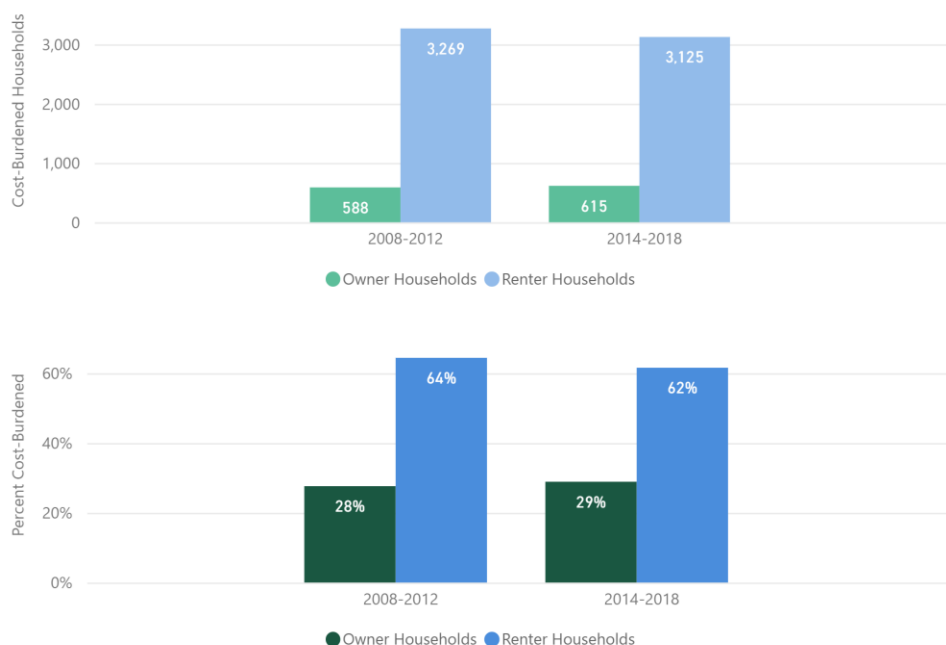
### Key Indicator 2: Rates of cost burden, broken out by household type.

Cost burden indicates that housing is not affordable for those who live within the community. Tracking this rate over time is one way to monitor that the housing needs of all types of residents and households are being addressed. Ellensburg already tracks overall rates of cost burden on its housing dashboard, allowing viewers to monitor raw numbers as well as percentage rates changing over time. Adding the ability to see percentage change across household types would help identify subgroups within the city which may need additional focus for policy initiatives.



## Exhibit 16: Ellensburg Housing Dashboard: Rates of Cost Burden, Change over Time.

Cost-Burdened Households, Change Over Time



Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2008-2012; 2014-2018.

Image source: City of Ellensburg Housing Dashboard, 2021.

## Exhibit 17: Tracking Rates of Cost Burden by Household Type.

Household Type	Cost-burdened
Elderly Family	14%
Elderly Living Alone	46%
Large Family	27%
Small Family	27%
Other	60%
<b>All Household Types</b>	<b>45%</b>

HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2021.

## Additional Tracking: Displacement and Neighborhood Change

Displacement is a challenging phenomenon to track, but Ellensburg will work to create a framework that explores this issue in its community. Potential indicators here might include evictions, foreclosures, or demolitions associated with new construction. A holistic look at neighborhood change would also evaluate units added and households served by new development within the community. Cultural displacement

can be indicated by business closures or dramatic shifts in race and ethnic demographics by neighborhood. Neighborhood-level demographic analysis could also consider income levels, age, and language diversity across households. Anti-displacement work is most effective when approached proactively, and this effort will identify opportunities to avoid and mitigate potential displacement within the community.

# Appendix A: Housing Needs Assessment

# Housing Needs Assessment

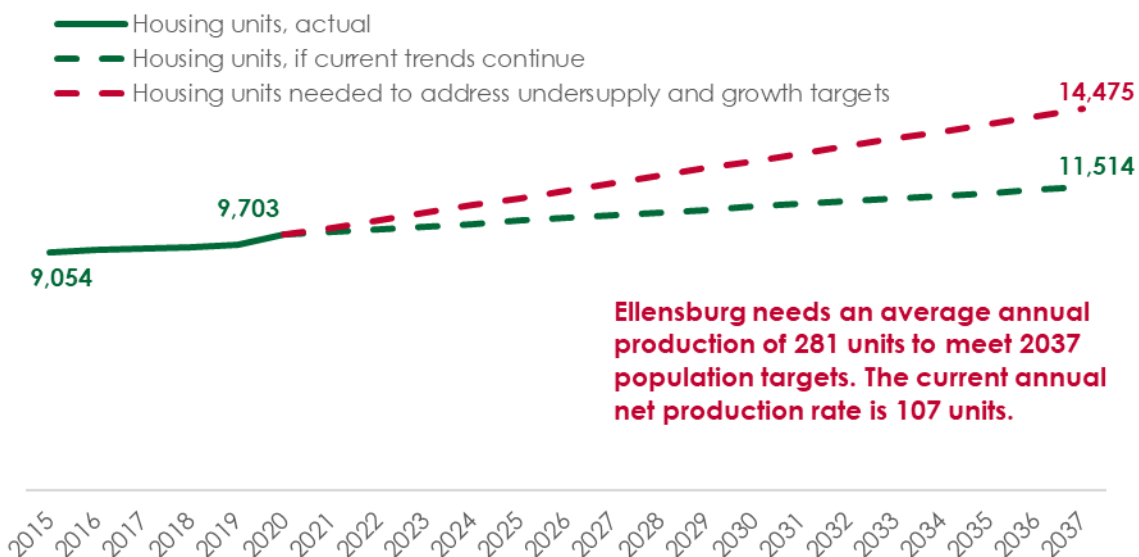
City of Ellensburg Housing Action Plan | June 2021

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# Key Findings

1. **Ellensburg is growing.** The population size has increased 14% from 2015 to 2020. Adopted population targets plan for an additional 9,661 people by 2037. Countywide trends suggest that an increasing proportion of those residents will be 65 and older.
2. **Ellensburg's housing stock lacks midsize housing options for smaller households.** Over three quarters of Ellensburg's housing stock is either single-family units or apartments in larger (5+ unit) buildings. There is also a shortage of smaller units compared to the number of 1- and 2-person households in Ellensburg. There is a lack of "missing middle" housing types such as townhomes, condominiums, and cottage housing, despite being a good match for many smaller households that live in Ellensburg.
3. **There is a current undersupply of housing units, and housing production is not pacing with population growth. The annual rate of production needs to increase from 107 to 281 units to accommodate the city's expected growth.** Vacancy rates in Ellensburg are incredibly low, demonstrating a shortage of housing compared to current demand. The City needs to add at least 441 units to address this supply gap. This is in addition to the increased rate of housing production needed to accommodate population growth targets. To meet the diversity of current and future housing needs, this new housing production should come in different formats including both ownership and rental housing types at various affordability levels.

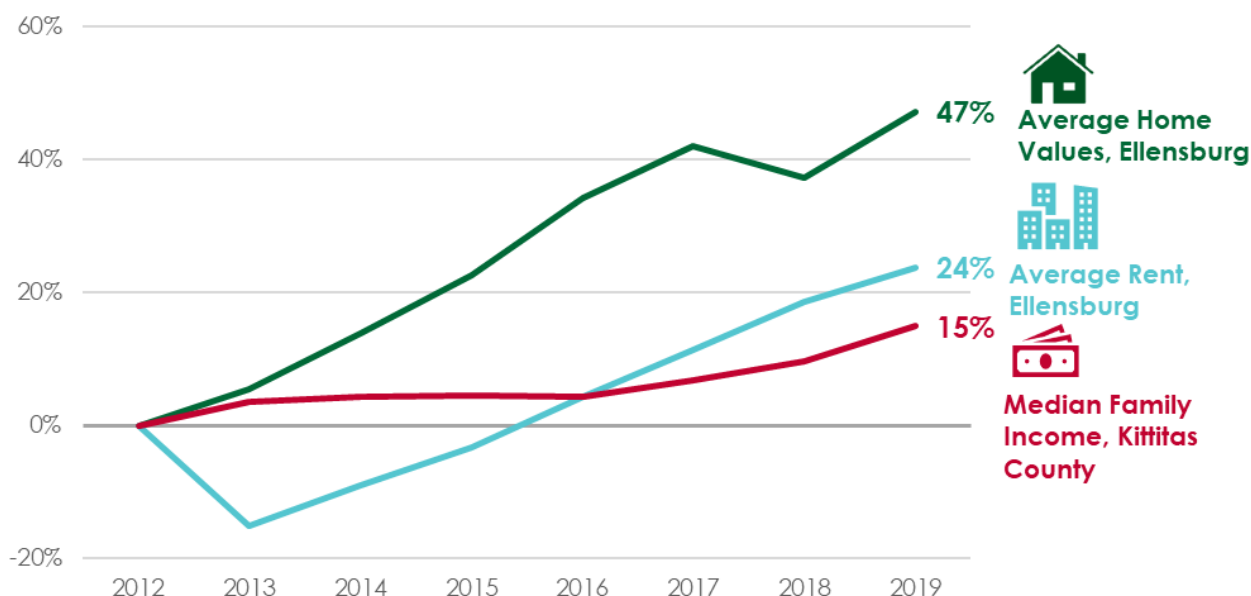
## Ellensburg and UGA Housing Unit Production, Actual and Target, 2015-2037.



Sources: Population growth target from Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, 2017; Growth target translated to housing units based on 2020 average household size (2.2) from Washington OFM, 2021; BERK, 2021.

4. **Ellensburg needs more income-restricted affordable housing.** Over half (57%) of the current income-restricted supply have affordability covenants that will expire by 2030. Additionally, there is an undersupply of these units and low rates of production. Many residents qualify for these units by income level but do not have access to supply, resulting in likely cost burden.
5. **45% of Ellensburg's households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened from housing.** This challenge is particularly notable for the city's college students, older adults (62+) who live alone, and small families (2 – 4 members). Cost-burdened households pay 30% or more of their incomes toward housing, and severely cost-burdened households pay 50% or more. These residents are likely to make difficult financial tradeoffs between competing priorities such as healthcare, transportation, and education. When they are renters, they are unlikely to accumulate enough savings to start meaningful down payment funds for future home ownership.

### Percent Change from 2012 for Home Values, Rents, and Median Family Income.



Sources: Home values and rents from Zillow, 2020; Median Family Income based on HUD-area Estimates as reported by the Washington Housing Finance Commission, 2020; BERK, 2021.

6. **Housing affordability is a barrier to home ownership.** While many renters in Ellensburg are college students who prefer the flexibility of rental housing, those who desire the stability of home ownership may face barriers of both supply and affordability. Home values are rising much faster than incomes, and this imbalance makes a home purchase less attainable.



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# Introduction

**The Housing Action Plan is Ellensburg's 5-year roadmap to address challenges in today's housing market.** This process will thoroughly analyze the housing market and set a vision for the future of housing in Ellensburg. The Housing Action Plan (HAP) will establish goals and strategies that respond to identified housing needs and set an action agenda to realize those strategies. Community members and industry stakeholders will be involved throughout the HAP process to ensure that the resulting plan responds to local priorities. The final Housing Action Plan will be presented to City Council for adoption in October 2021.

This document, the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), is the first step in this process. Rigorous data analysis sets a foundation for understanding the community's demographics, housing stock, and the current state of housing affordability in Ellensburg. The HNA will be supplemented by findings from a policy review effort and from ongoing community engagement. Findings from these 3 parallel efforts will combine to inform the overarching goals and individual strategies of Ellensburg's Housing Action Plan.

## Exhibit 1: Housing Action Plan Process Diagram



## DOCUMENT OUTLINE

The document includes the following elements:

- An overview of Ellensburg's **Population and Household Characteristics**.
- A **Workforce Profile**.
- A description of the existing **Housing Supply**.
- An analysis of **Housing Affordability** in the community.
- A **Gap Analysis** which identifies existing and anticipated future needs in Ellensburg.

## DATA SOURCES

Data in this report assumes current city boundaries and does not include any potential annexations. Population and employment targets include the Ellensburg UGA. The primary sources of data used for this Needs Assessment include:

**American Community Survey (ACS).** An ongoing survey distributed by the Census Bureau to collect important social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics of the American people. Each year, over 3.5 million households are contacted to respond to the ACS, contrasted with the Census which attempts a comprehensive population count once a decade. This report uses ACS estimates for demographic and economic indicators, primarily 5-year 2014-2018 data. These are the most recently published estimates available at the city level.

**City of Ellensburg permit data.** The City of Ellensburg provided data for residential permits, 2012-2020, used to establish construction trends. Ellensburg GIS layers were used to define subareas and the city boundary.

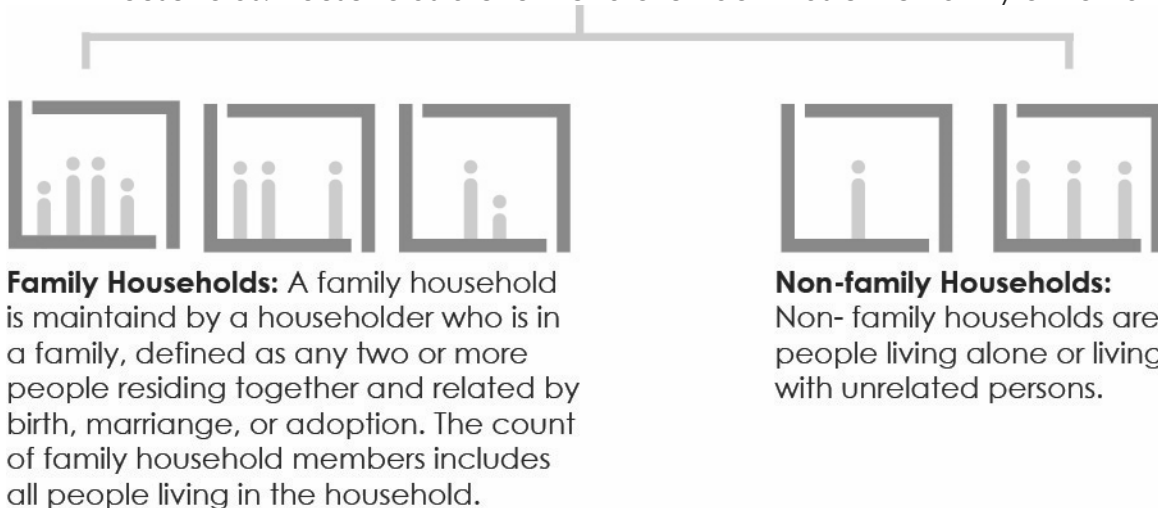
**HUD CHAS data.** The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data summarizes ACS 5-year estimates into datasets specifically focused on issues of housing affordability. These summaries identify rates of cost burden across household types and demographic groups in a community. They also categorize households by income bracket which corresponds to eligibility for housing subsidies: moderate-income, low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income.

**Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM).** OFM data is used for total housing stock by unit type, population estimates, and county-wide forecasts by age cohort.

**Zillow.** Zillow data is used to establish average housing prices and rents. Zillow, a private company, publishes monthly real estate metrics for every metropolitan area in the county. Their datasets are used by public agencies such as the Federal Reserve.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Housing Affordability:** Broadly speaking, housing affordability speaks to the relationship between housing costs and income. HUD considers housing to be affordable if the household is spending no more than 30% of its income on housing costs, including utilities. Income-restricted affordable housing is one method of achieving housing affordability that involves either publicly owned or publicly subsidized housing.
- **Cost-Burdened Household:** Households which pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing. This includes utilities. The 30% threshold is set by HUD. Rate of cost burden among households is a metric that gauges the intensity of housing affordability challenges within a community. Cost burden is most threatening for households at lower income levels who will have less money available for other essentials such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.
- **Severely Cost-Burdened Household:** Households that pay more than 50% of their gross income on housing costs, including utilities. This 50% threshold is set by HUD.
- **Household:** The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as a group of people living within the same housing unit. This can be a person living alone, a family, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit. Those living in group quarters, such as a college dormitory, military barrack, or nursing home, are not considered to be living in households. Households are further broken down as either family or nonfamily.



*\*Distance represents related individuals (clustered people are related; spaced people are not)*

- **HUD: The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** is responsible for federal housing assistance programs such as [Section 8 vouchers](#) for rental assistance. HUD sets income limits for metropolitan areas and counties across the country which determine eligibility for income-restricted housing units. HUD also sets thresholds to define terms such as “affordable” and “cost burden”.
- **LIHTC: Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.** This is a federal program, administered by HUD, to expand the income-restricted affordable housing stock. Private or non-profit housing developers apply for these tax credits, which are used to help finance multifamily developments that set aside a minimum threshold of units as income restricted for a



defined period of time, often 20 years. See [the program website](#) for more details.

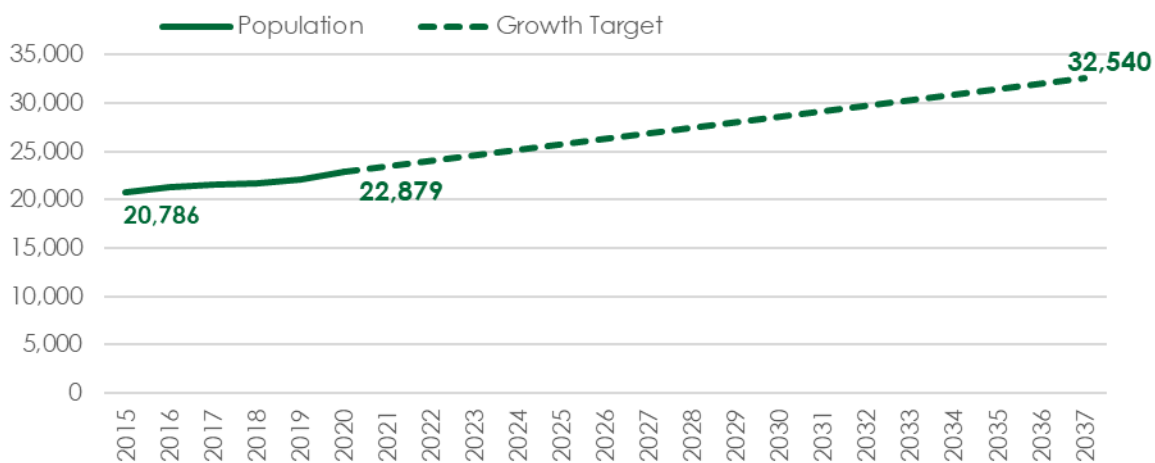
- **Median Income:** The income level at which half of the group is above and half of the group is below. This calculation is often used instead of an average income to avoid skew by extremely high or extremely low values in the dataset.
  - **AMI: Area Median Income.** Most broadly used term for median income calculations. **In this report, AMI is used to represent the HUD-Area Median Family Income (HAMFI).** HAMFI calculates the median family income for metropolitan areas and counties nationwide. These income levels are adjusted based on household size and are used to determine eligibility for income-restricted housing units. Ellensburg, for example, is part of the Kittitas County metropolitan area.
- **Missing Middle Housing:** Housing options that transition between single family homes and mid- or high-rise multifamily buildings. This includes a diversity of residential housing options, such as townhomes, stacked or side-by-side multiplexes, or accessory dwelling units.

# Population and Household Characteristics

## ELLENSBURG POPULATION

**Ellensburg is growing.** In 2020, the estimated population of the city with its urban growth area (UGA) was 22,879 people, representing a 14% increase from 2015 or an average of 1.9% annual growth. This population growth rate is slightly lower than anticipated in Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan, which accounts for a 2% annual growth rate. To achieve regional population growth targets, Ellensburg will need a 2.1% annual growth rate 2020-2037, targeting a total population of 32,540 by 2037.

**Exhibit 2: Ellensburg and UGA Population, Actual and Target Growth, 2010-2037.**



Sources: Washington OFM, 2021; Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, 2017; BERK, 2021.

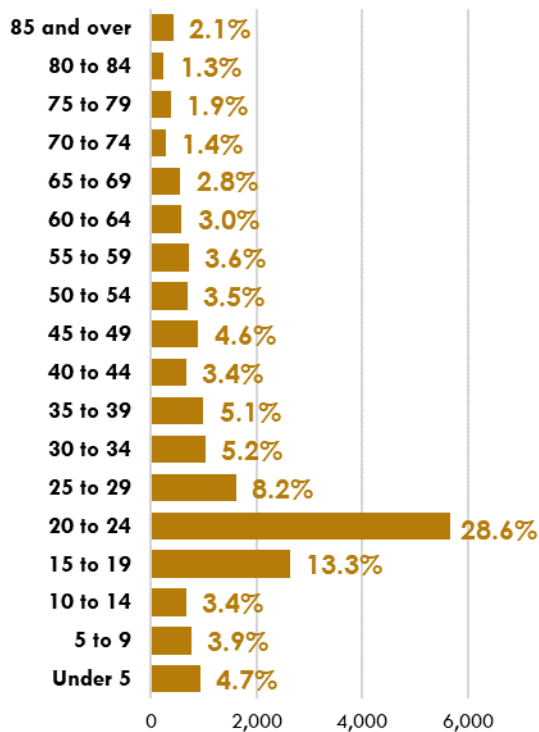
**County demographic projections anticipate an increase in older adults as a proportion of the total population.** This reflects the large baby boomer generation aging into retirement. At the same time, proportional decreases are expected for adults 45-64 and school-aged youth (5 to 19). Ellensburg has a high concentration of adults in their late teens and early 20s due to the student population at Central Washington University (CWU), as shown in Exhibit 3. A more detailed look into the student population can be found on page 8. Age cohort analysis is critical when planning for housing, as a balanced community will provide the size and type of housing appropriate for different life stages. For example:

- College students may desire smaller rental units, such as studios and one-bedroom apartments, or rental homes with multiple bedrooms for roommates.
- Professionals search at a slightly higher price point – seeking apartments separate from college living communities or starter homes.
- Families with children often expand into units with more bedrooms and amenities such as a yard.
- Adults aging into retirement or becoming “empty nesters” may downsize to smaller ownership units, sometimes seeking accessibility features.

Demographic shifts in Ellensburg will affect housing needs and impact the types of units most

suitable to accommodate future growth. See Exhibit 4.

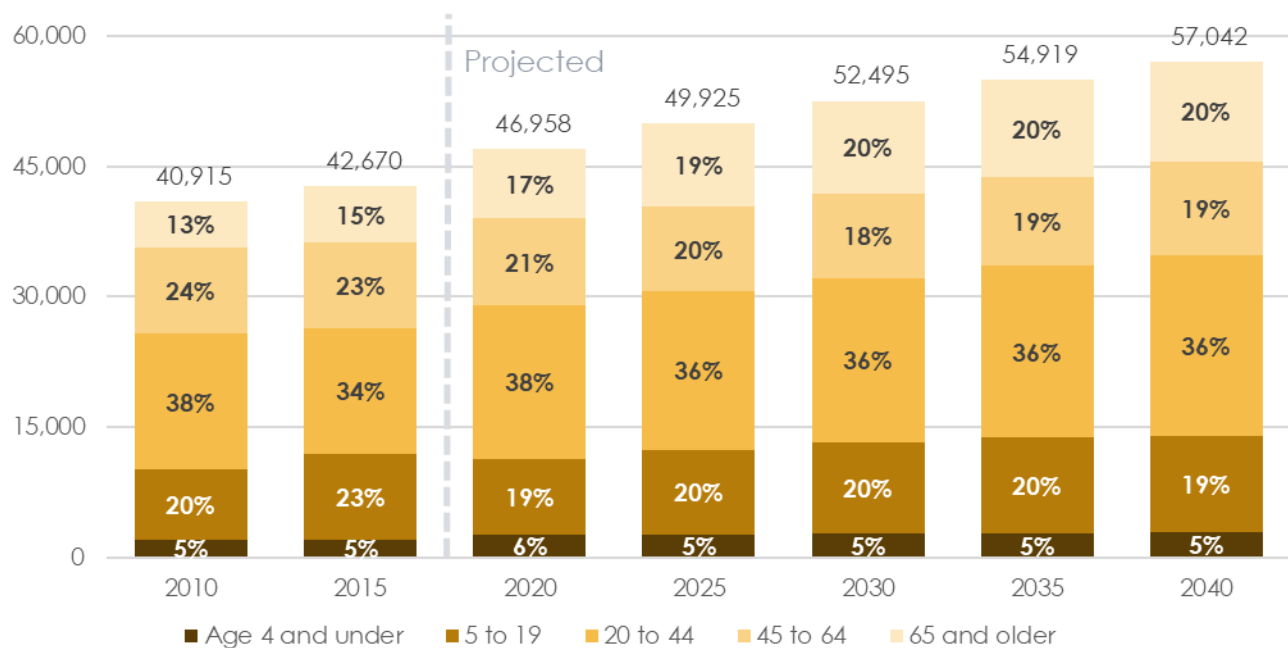
**Exhibit 3: Population by Age Range in Ellensburg, 2018.**



**In Ellensburg, 50% of the population falls between the ages of 15 and 30. This reflects the large student population at Central Washington University.** Students fit a unique demographic profile, as they often qualify as low-income or very low-income households in datasets, despite many students having alternate forms of income to rely on, such as family support or scholarships. This is not the case for all students, but it can be difficult to detangle issues of housing and income specific to students from trends affecting low-income residents in the workforce. In this report, data is disaggregated by household type where possible. Most college students will fall into the “Other (Non-family)” type.

Sources: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 4: Population by Age Cohort in Kittitas County, Actual and Projected, 2010-2040.**

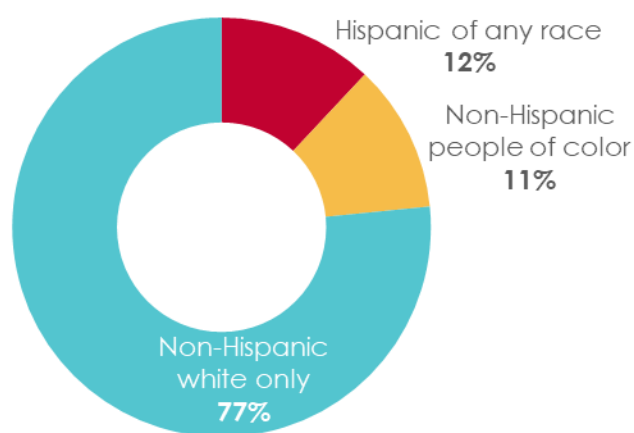


Sources: As directed by state statute, Washington OFM prepares a reasonable range of possible population growth for Washington counties participating in GMA. These estimates represent medium-series projections, 2017; BERK, 2021.

**In Ellensburg, 13% of the population speaks languages other than English, with Spanish spoken by 8% of the population.** Other top languages spoken include Arabic and Chinese.<sup>1</sup> While many of these individuals also speak English, 4% of Ellensburg's population reports speaking English less than "very well". This is important to keep in mind for outreach and engagement efforts in the community. Concerns about complex and personal subjects like housing affordability and availability may be difficult to accurately communicate outside of one's primary language.

**The Ellensburg community is majority White and non-Hispanic (77%) but is growing more ethnically and racially diverse.** The Census captures racial identity and Hispanic ethnic identity for respondents. These demographic factors are important to include in this housing study for the promotion of inclusive outreach and engagement and consideration for housing needs and barriers that might be unique in different cultural groups. From 2010 to 2018, Ellensburg's Hispanic population increased from 7% to 12% overall. Non-Hispanic people of color also increased over this time period, from 8% to 11%.

**Exhibit 5: Ellensburg Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2018.**



Sources: ACS 5-year B02001 estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE CENSUS

Race and ethnicity are distinct concepts. The Census asks individuals to select an identity for each.

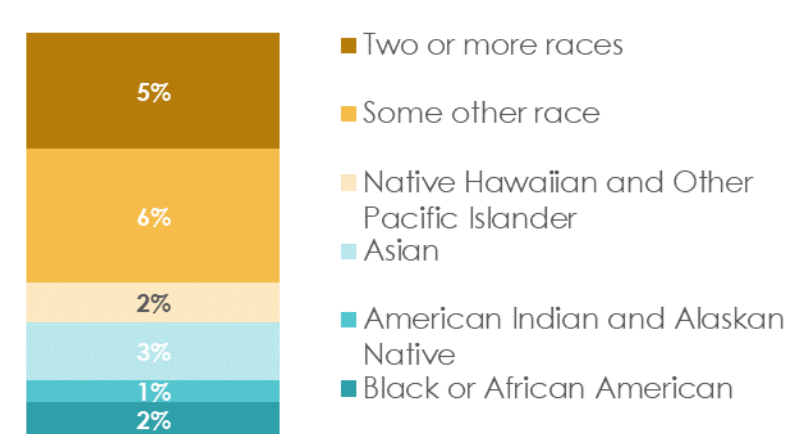
**Race** is a social identity, with history rooted in oppression and exploitation of non-White populations. The Census offers six racial identities, and people can choose one or more: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Other.

**Ethnicity** refers to groups of people who share common ancestry, language, or dialect. There is a wide range of ethnic identities, which may or may not tie to nationality. The Census asks respondents to identify as Hispanic or non-Hispanic.

-Sources: [Census Bureau](#), [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

<sup>1</sup> Languages spoken data from ACS 5-year C16001 estimates, 2018 and English proficiency data from ACS 5-year S1601 estimates, 2018.

**Exhibit 6: Ellensburg Population by Racial Identity for Non-White Alone Residents, 2018.**

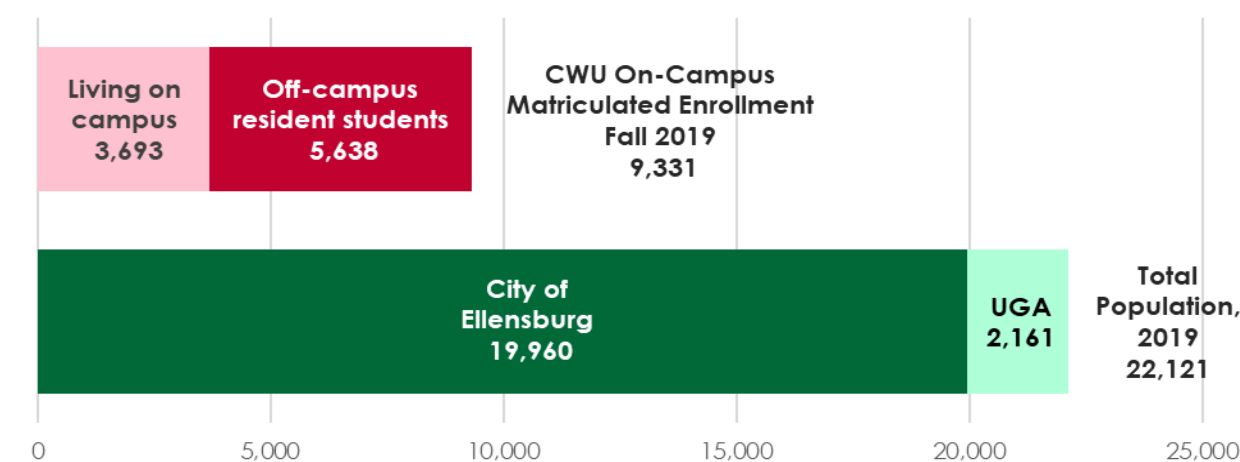


Sources: ACS 5-year B02001 estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

## STUDENT POPULATION

Central Washington University (CWU) is a big part of Ellensburg's character and population base. The 9,331 on-campus enrolled students include 40% students who live in on-campus housing and the remaining 60% who live in Ellensburg and its surrounding communities (off-campus resident students).<sup>2</sup> While it is unknown how many of these off-campus resident students live within Ellensburg and its UGA, if all 9,331 on-campus students lived in Ellensburg and its UGA, they would comprise 42% of the total population. See Exhibit 7.

**Exhibit 7: CWU Student Population and Total Population, 2018.**



Students living on campus represents the housing occupancy for Fall 2019. Programmed capacity is 3,918 and the full built capacity is 4,249.

Sources: Central Washington University – Ellensburg Campus, Fall 2019; Washington OFM, 2021; BERK, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Data provided by Central Washington University. Enrollment numbers represent Fall 2019.

Based on reported identity by race or ethnicity, CWU is a more racially and ethnically diverse subset of the City of Ellensburg's population as a whole. The university's method for collecting these figures is not synonymous with the Census approach – "Latino/Hispanic" is included as a mutually exclusive option for identity by race/ethnicity rather than the separate questions for race and ethnicity asked in ACS questionnaires. In addition, these counts include all Central Washington University enrollment, which includes satellite campuses. This difference makes the figures imperfect for direct comparison, but overall the White population of the student body is 53%, compared to 77% for the City of Ellensburg. 16% of students identify as Latino or Hispanic, 7% identify as multiracial, and 4% identify as Asian. See summary in Exhibit 8.

**Exhibit 8: CWU On-Campus Student Population by Race/Ethnicity, AY2019-2020.**

CWU On-Campus Students by Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent Total (%)
African American/Black	418	3%
Alaskan/Native American	95	1%
Asian	560	4%
European/Middle Eastern/White	7,780	53%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	122	1%
Latino/Hispanic	2,388	16%
Multiracial	1,018	7%
Non-Resident Alien	284	2%
Not Reported	1,944	13%

*Note: These figures represent total student enrollment at Central Washington University, which includes 8 satellite campuses in Des Moines, Lynnwood, Moses Lake, Pierce County, Wenatchee, Yakima, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and Sammamish.*

*Sources: Central Washington University, 2021; BERK, 2021.*

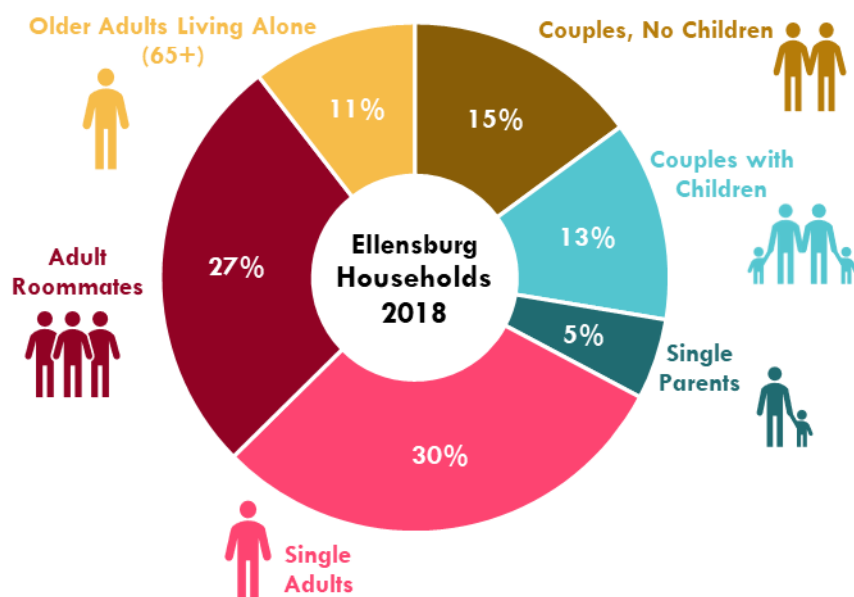
## HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

**Ellensburg is home to a diverse range of household types.** As discussed above, the university is a major driver of the local resident base. College students are a unique segment of the population and where possible, this assessment attempts to distinguish needs and trends affecting students from those impacting non-student household and family types.

Many university students live with roommates, either in single family homes or apartments. This household type makes up 27% of Ellensburg's households, as shown in Exhibit 9. While the

average household size in Ellensburg has remained relatively stable at 2.2 from 2010-2018, there has been a shift away from 2-person households toward both 1-person and 4 or more-person household sizes. See Exhibit 10. The trend toward single person households may reflect changes in construction trends – new multifamily buildings coming to market feature an average unit size of 1,500 or less square feet. The increase in 4 or more-person households may reflect increased roommate-style living with Ellensburg's decreased housing affordability. Trends in housing construction and affordability are explored further on pages 19 and 24.

**Exhibit 9: Ellensburg Households by Type, 2018.**

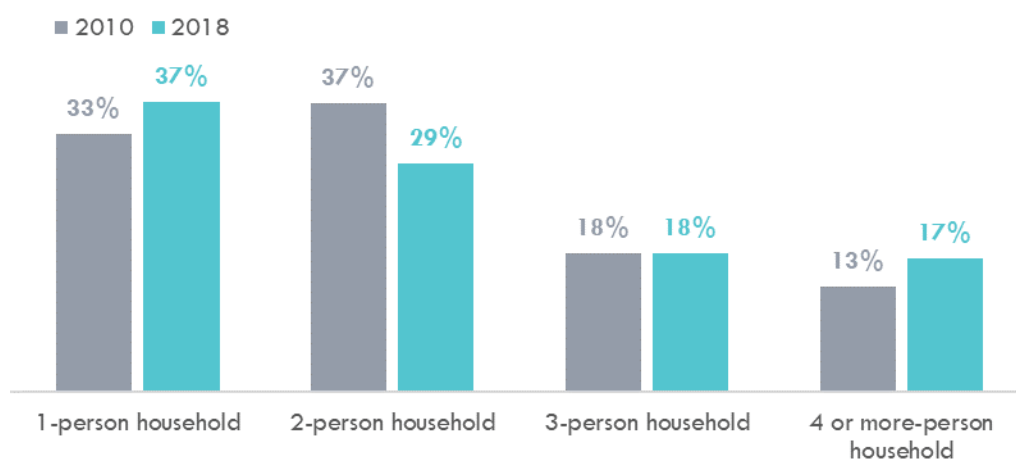


It is likely that Ellensburg's student population who do not live in dorms are largely represented in the single adult and adult roommate households, which combine to account for 57% of total households.

Citywide, 18% of households have one or more person over 65, and 19% of households have one or more person under 18. It is important to consider the distinct needs of different household types within Ellensburg's community.

Sources: ACS 5-year DP02 estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 10: Households by Size in Ellensburg, 2010 and 2018.**



Sources: ACS 5-year S2501 Estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

## Household Income

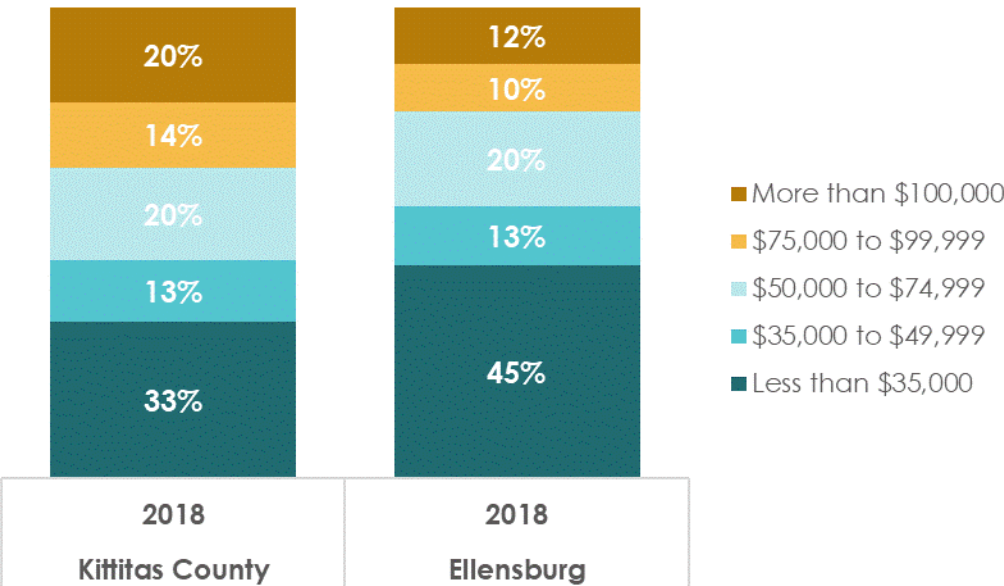
**The median household income in Ellensburg is \$40,126.** Household incomes in Ellensburg are



lower than in Kittitas County overall, likely influenced by the student population. Almost half (45%) of Ellensburg residents have an income of less than \$35,000 per year compared to just one-third in Kittitas County who have an income of less than \$35,000 per year. This income category is likely to include many of Ellensburg's college students. See Exhibit 11. A summary of households by type and income relative to AMI can be found in Exhibit 12 and Exhibit 13.

- 1. **College students** are likely a large proportion of the “other” household types and the renters who fall into low-income categories. “Other” households comprise 72% of extremely low-income households in Ellensburg.
- 2. **Renter households are much more likely to be low-income than owners.** 86% of low-, very low-, and extremely low-income households are renters.
- 3. **Family households** in Ellensburg have a median income of \$66,712, 8% less than the Kittitas County median family income of \$72,713. Family households, excluding older adult families, account for 19% of low-income households in Ellensburg.<sup>3</sup>
- 4. **Households with older adults (62+),** particularly those who live alone, account for 20% of low-income households in Ellensburg. Older residents who are retired may live on fixed incomes or require costly medical care and assistance.

**Exhibit 11: Ellensburg and Kittitas County Household Income Brackets, 2018.**

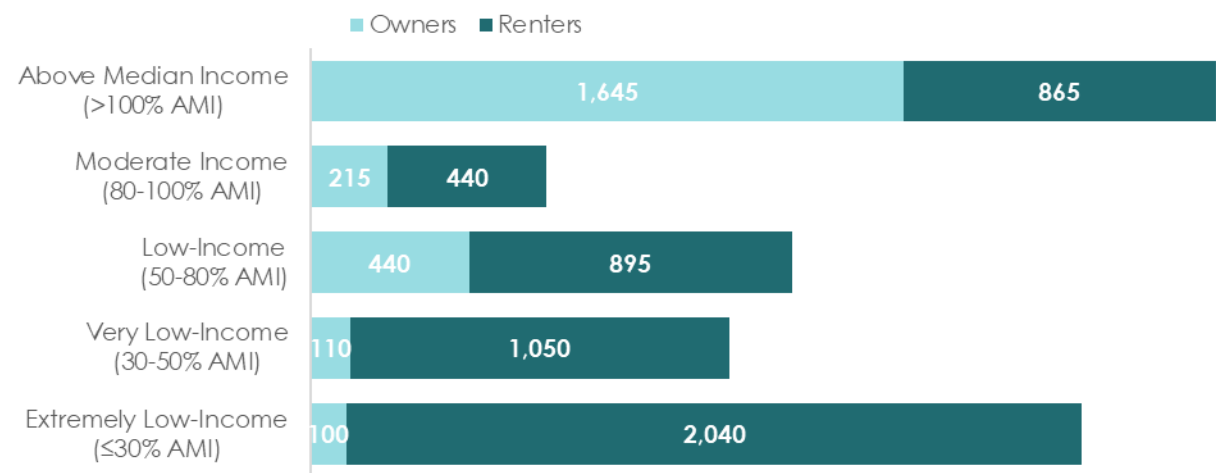


<sup>3</sup> Median income estimates from ACS 5-year DP-03 estimates, 2018. Rates of low-income households from UD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates).

Sources: ACS 5-year DP03 estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) establishes household thresholds for income-restricted housing eligibility based on classification as low-income (50-80% AMI), very low-income (30-50% AMI), or extremely low-income (below 30% AMI). AMI is calculated as the HUD-Area Median Family Income, and Ellensburg is part of the Kittitas County HUD area. For a full table of 2021 income eligibility by household size, see page 22.

**Exhibit 12: Households Relative to AMI, 2018.**



Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); AMI = HUD Area Median Family Income; BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 13: Ellensburg Low-Income Households by Type, 2017.**

Household Type	Extremely Low-Income (≤30% AMI)	Very Low-Income (30-50% AMI)	Low-Income (50-80% AMI)
Older Adult Family (62+)	1%	1%	7%
Older Adult Living Alone (62+)	14%	22%	17%
Large Family (5+ members)	2%	0%	2%
Small Family (2 – 4 members)	11%	19%	26%
Other (Non-family, non-older adult)	72%	58%	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>1,335</b>

Note: In Ellensburg, “Other” households are likely to capture much of the CWU student population who do not live in dorms.

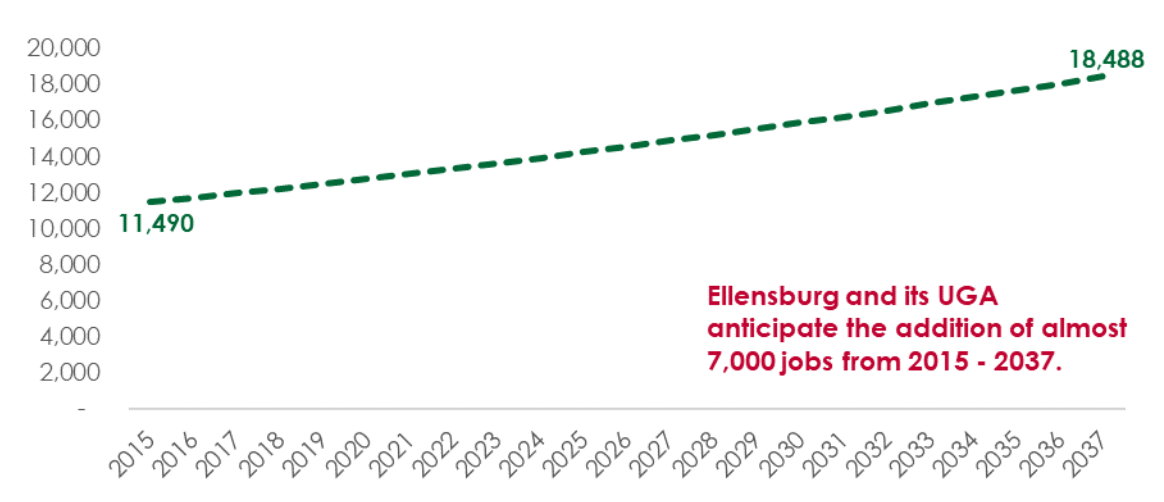
Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); AMI = HUD Area Median Family Income; BERK, 2021.

# Workforce Profile

Employment trends are important considerations when planning for housing in a community. Salaries earned in the local economy and the employment type of current residents can help a city understand and anticipate demand for various types of housing. Ellensburg, including its UGA, is home to approximately 12,000 jobs. The City is planning for growth at an average annual rate of 2% to reach 18,488 by 2037. See Exhibit 14.

Overall, there is a balance of lower, moderate, and higher wage jobs across commuters and workers who live in the city. This balance of earning levels between those who commute into and out of the city suggests that Ellensburg is a desirable location to live and to work, and that the housing market is meeting the needs of some – but not all – of the local employment base. See Exhibit 15. The Census tracks workers commuting in, out, and within cities by income categories. Their lowest income category, \$1,250 or less per month, earn \$15,000 or less per year which in Washington equates to a part-time minimum wage earner. The middle category of earnings tracked in Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, a project of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau, earns between \$1,251 and \$3,333 per month which corresponds with \$15,000 - \$40,000 in annual earnings. In Kittitas County, this reflects expected earnings for someone who works in food service, a retail salesperson, or a childcare worker. Employees earning more than \$3,333 per month (or \$40,000 per year) are the higher earning group being tracked. This is likely to include many of the university and healthcare employees found in Ellensburg.<sup>4</sup> Additional workforce housing for all these groups is needed.

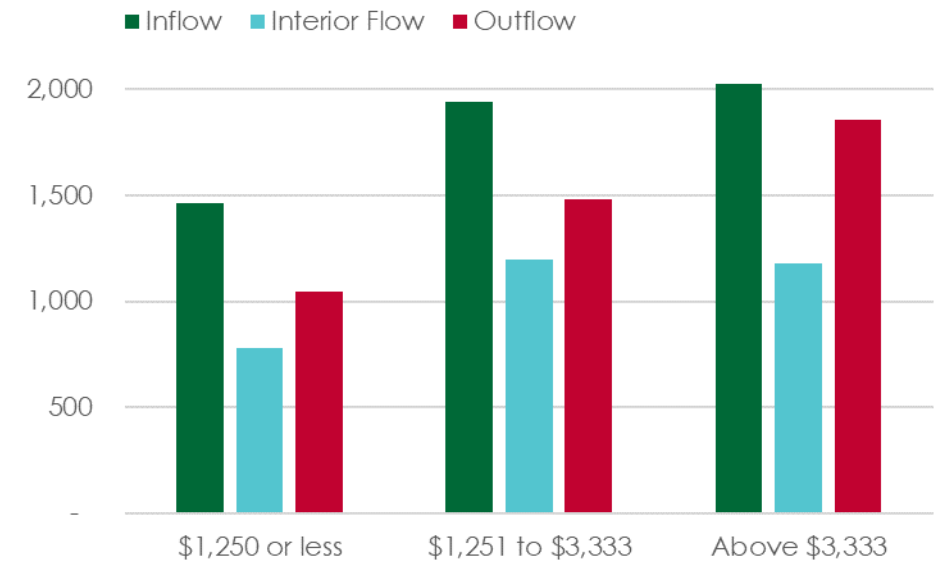
**Exhibit 14: Ellensburg and UGA Employment Targets, 2015-2037**



Sources: Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, 2017; BERK, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> [BLS estimates](#) for earnings by occupation in Eastern Washington, 2018.

**Exhibit 15: Count of Workers by Monthly Earnings, 2018.**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2018; BERK, 2021.

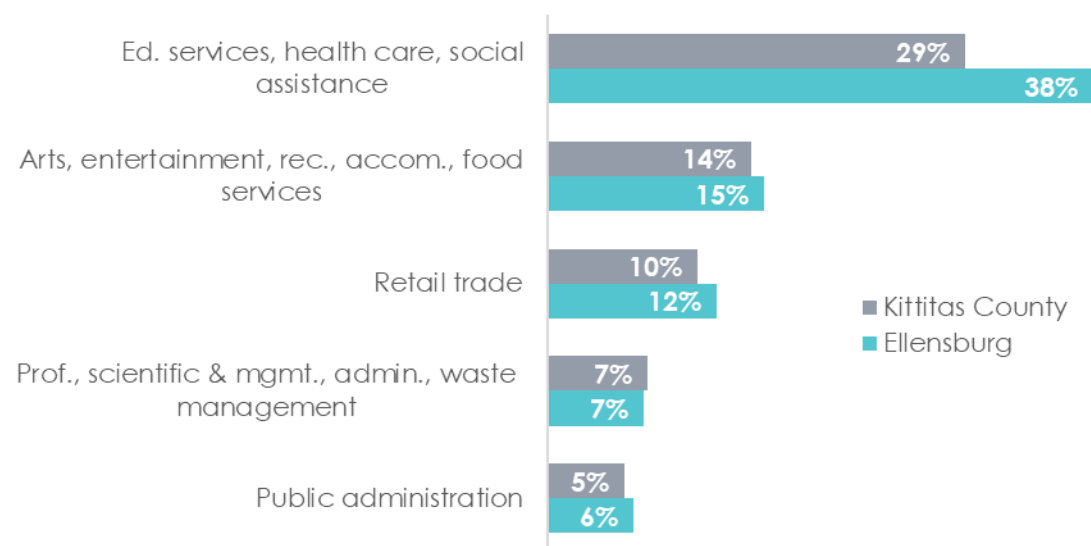
There is a balance of income levels across Ellensburg's employment groups: workers who commute into the city, residents who commute out of the city, and residents who work within the city. Communities with housing that serves higher-income residents but employment in service sectors and lower paying jobs will find outflow workers with high incomes, inflow workers with low incomes, and very little interior flow employment. The relative balance in Ellensburg suggests that the city is regionally attractive both as a place to live and as a place to work. Ellensburg could be doing more, however, to capture additional proportions of its workforce within its resident base.

**Employment in Ellensburg is concentrated in the educational services, healthcare, and social assistance sectors, capturing over one third of the city's workforce.**

See Exhibit 16. CWU is Ellensburg's largest employer, offering over 1,400 jobs in the area. Other large employers include the Kittitas Valley Healthcare, Ellensburg School District, and Kittitas County.<sup>5</sup> Employees at CWU fall into four main categories: adjunct quarterly, 9-month employees (aligning with the academic calendar), 12-month employees, and annual contract workers. Salary maximums for each of these employee types can be found in Exhibit 17. During interviews about housing needs in 2017, the Dean of Student Living noted that securing suitable housing is a challenge for non-tenure track faculty. These individuals are often looking for studio or 1-bedroom rental housing and find that most of the available apartments cater to students rather than working professionals.<sup>6</sup> While the cost of rent may be affordable at their salary ranges, the supply of units in Ellensburg does not meet these housing needs.

<sup>5</sup> Ellensburg Downtown Association, 2021.  
<sup>6</sup> Ellensburg Housing Needs Assessment, 2017.

**Exhibit 16: Workforce by Industry in Ellensburg and Kittitas County, 2018 (Top 5 Industries).**



Sources: ACS 5-Year C24040 Estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 17: Earnings by Employee Type at Central Washington University, 2020.**

Employee Type	Maximum Salary
Adjunct Quarterly	\$74,859
9-month Employees	\$269,924
12-month Employees	\$148,866
Annual contract employees	\$112,749

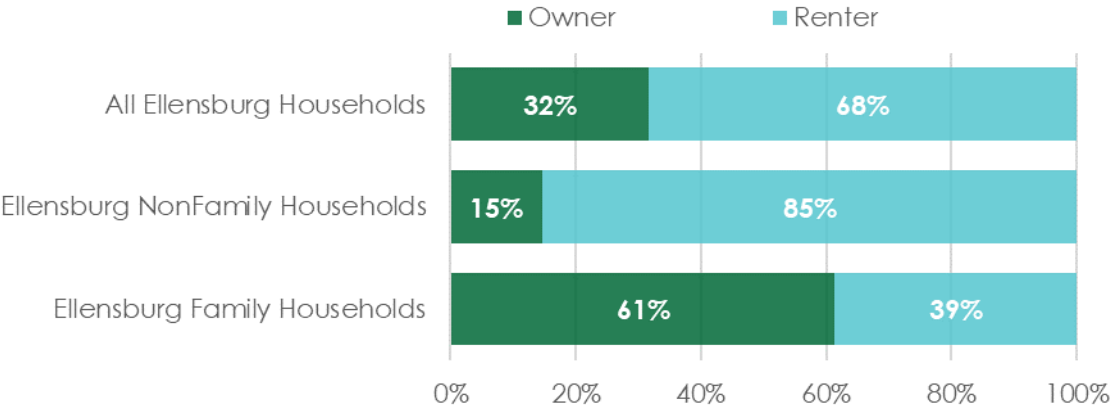
Sources: Central Washington University, 2021; BERK, 2021.

# Housing Supply

Ellensburg is a majority renter community, with 32% of households owning their home versus 68% of households renting. This compares to Kittitas County overall, where renters are only 38% of the population.<sup>7</sup> Family households in Ellensburg rent at a rate of 39%, much closer to countywide trends. See Exhibit 18. One key reason for the high percentage of renters is the large proportion of households that are CWU students. The high frequency of students renting together as roommates can be seen in Exhibit 19. In many communities, 3- and 4-person households are much more likely to own their housing than to rent, but in Ellensburg the percentage of renter households remains higher than homeowners for these households.

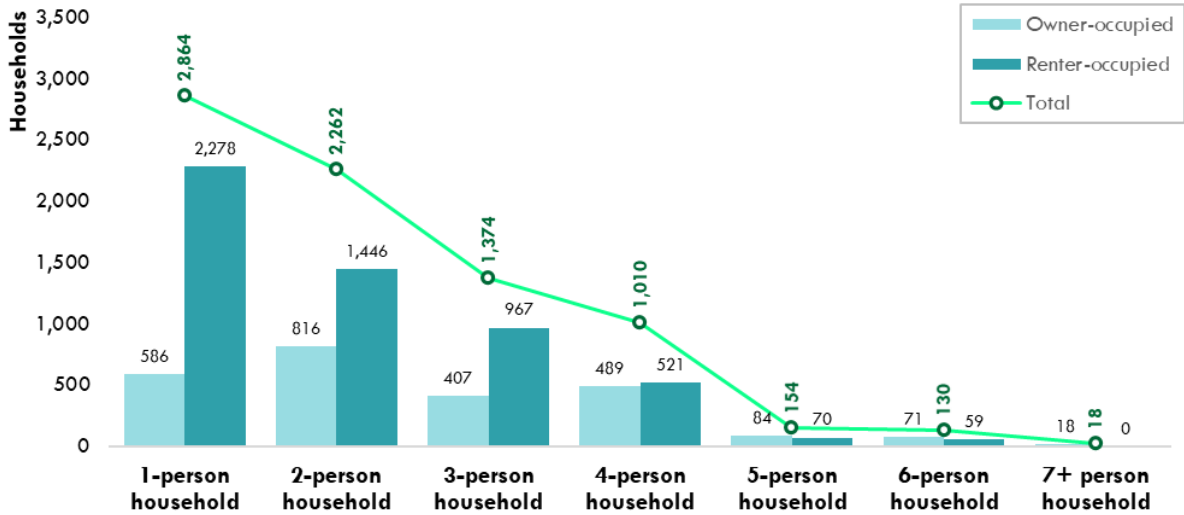
<sup>7</sup> ACS 5-year DP04 estimates, 2018

**Exhibit 18: Ellensburg Housing Tenure by Household Type, 2018.**



Sources: ACS 5-Year B25003 Estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 19: Ellensburg Housing Tenure by Household Size, 2018.**

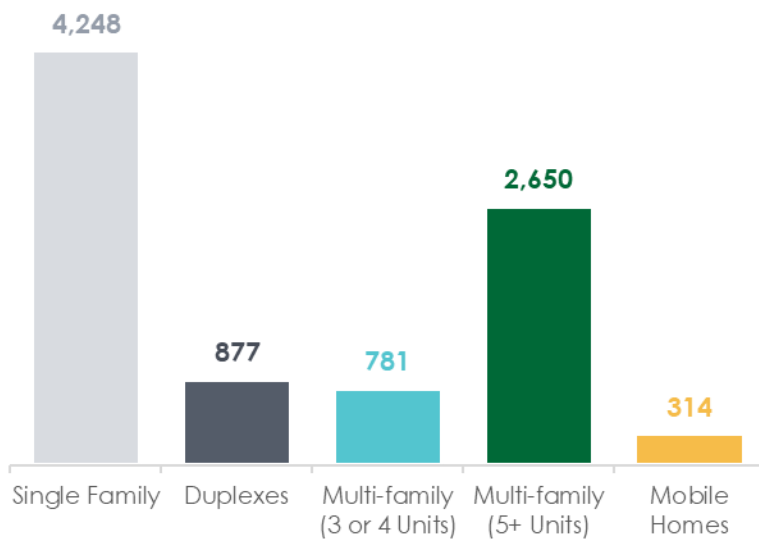


Sources: ACS 5-year B2509 estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

# HOUSING STOCK

**Ellensburg's housing inventory includes a blend of housing types but lacks missing middle styles, such as duplexes or townhomes.** Single family housing and units in multifamily buildings of 5 or more units comprise over three quarters of the housing stock (78%) in Ellensburg, as shown in Exhibit 20. Single family housing is typically the largest (both in interior square footage and lot size per unit) and most expensive housing type in a community. In Ellensburg, many of the units in multifamily buildings cater to student populations. There are few housing options for smaller and less expensive unit types that can meet the needs of moderate- and low-income families, single working professionals, and aging adults looking to downsize.

**Exhibit 20: Ellensburg Housing Stock by Unit Type, 2020.**



Sources: OFM, 2021; BERK, 2021. These estimates include on-campus student apartments but do not account for on-campus residence halls.

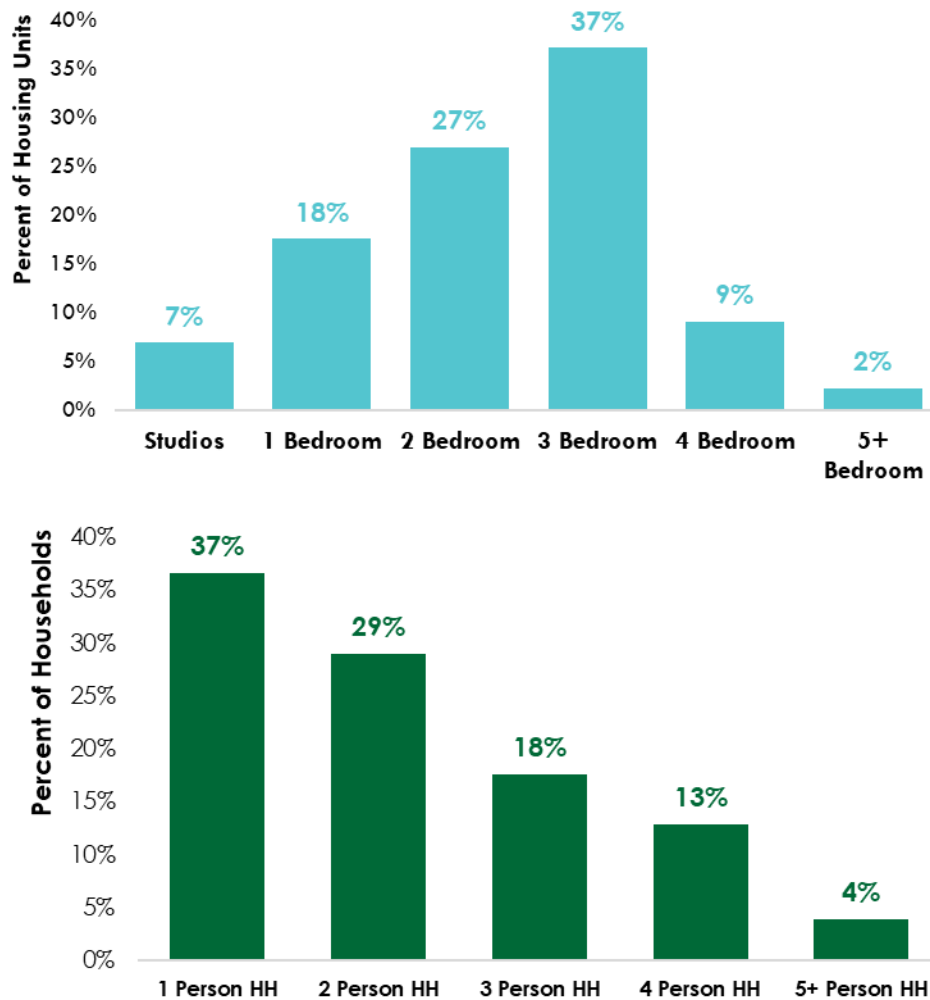
There is a mismatch in Ellensburg between the size of housing units and the size of households. See Exhibit 21. Housing units with 3+ bedrooms are oversupplied when compared to households with 3 or more people. The high quantity of 1- and 2-person households could be well-served by smaller housing types that are not currently being produced. These include many of the missing middle types identified in the sidebar: 2-3-4-plexes, cottage housing, courtyard apartments, and townhomes.

## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

"Missing middle" housing refers to housing formats offering smaller unit types than standard detached single family homes but in buildings smaller than multifamily apartment towers. Examples include 2-3-4-plexes, ADUs or DADUs, cottage housing, courtyard apartments, or townhomes. Integrating more of these types of housing stock to residential neighborhoods can increase the diversity of housing options available in existing neighborhoods and provide lower-cost options for first-time home buyers. Missing middle housing types offer added density without the height and bulk of larger buildings which might feel out of scale with lower density residential neighborhoods.



**Exhibit 21: Ellensburg Housing Unit Size and Household Size, 2018.**



Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

## STUDENT HOUSING

**CWU reports over 3,600 students, or 19% of the enrolled student population, living in on-campus housing.** The campus features 26 housing facilities, most in dormitory style with a few buildings styled as student apartments for students or student families. The total capacity of these facilities is just under 4,000. A new residence hall with 200 units (402 beds) was permitted in 2018. See Exhibit 22. There is no official faculty housing provided through the college. Interviews from Ellensburg's 2017 Needs Assessment process noted that this is a recruitment challenge for the university.

**Exhibit 22: Capacity of On-Campus Housing by Type, 2021.**

On-Campus Residence Type	Capacity
Student Apartments	921
Dormitories	3,112

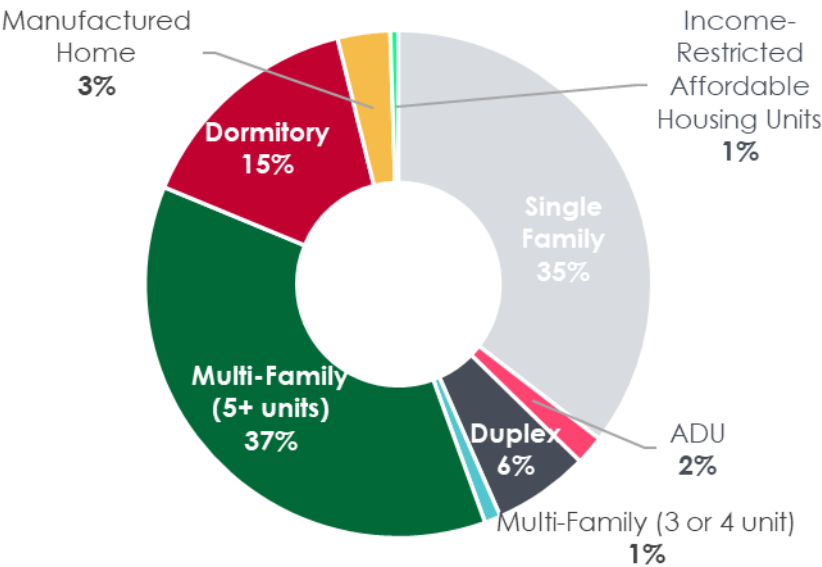
*Note: Student apartments are included in OFM’s housing unit counts as multifamily housing, while dormitories are not.*  
*Sources: CWU, 2021; BERK, 2021.*

**PRODUCTION TRENDS**

From 2012-2020, 1,343 housing units were permitted for construction in Ellensburg. This new construction has an equal ratio of single family units and multifamily units (5+ units per building). A large residence hall was permitted in 2018, and a small proportion of other housing types were also built: duplexes, 3 or 4-unit multifamily, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), manufactured housing, and affordable housing units. See Exhibit 23 and Exhibit 24.

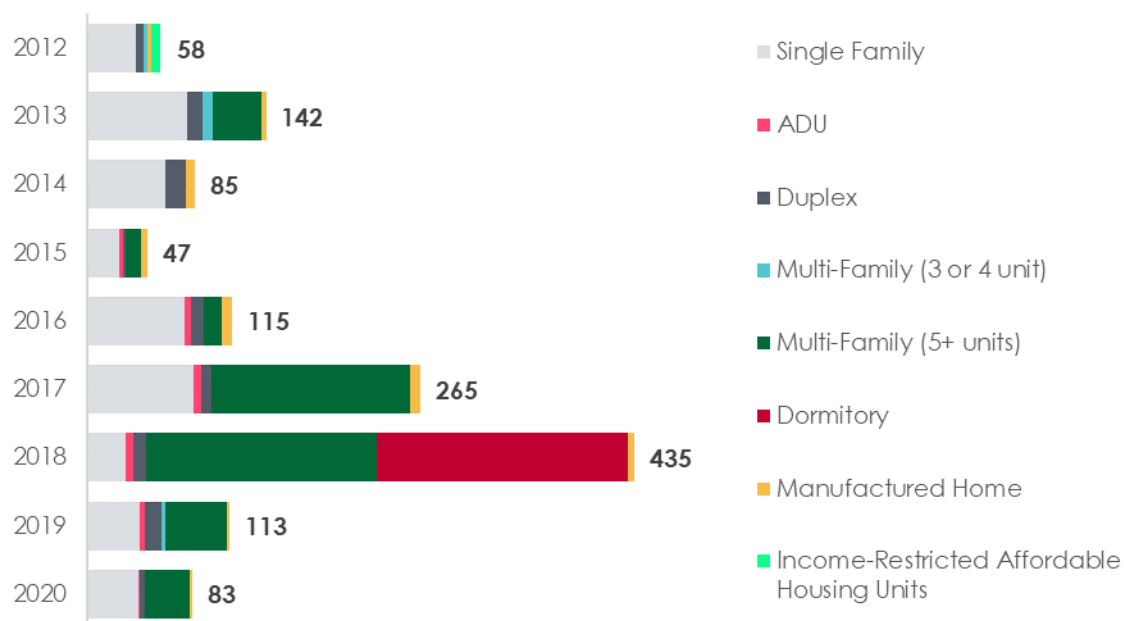
**In Ellensburg’s recent construction, average single family homes are 2 – 3 times larger than other unit types with lot sizes 2-5 times higher.** The table in Exhibit 25 summarizes these trends. An average of 53 new single family homes were constructed annually across the 2012-2020 time frame. Units average an interior size of 2,615 square feet and a lot size of 7,681 square feet. Duplex and 3 to 4-unit multifamily buildings average more than twice the site density of single family homes, and unit sizes averaging closer to 1,300 square feet. Multifamily construction (5+ units) in Ellensburg 2012-2020 averages 3 projects per year, with 25 units per project. The average unit size is 1,182 square feet and the site density is 5 times higher than single family construction.

**Exhibit 23: Ellensburg Housing Production by Unit Type, 2012-2020.**



*Note: Dormitories are counted here by rooms rather than ‘units’. Most rooms have two beds for two students.*  
*Sources: City of Ellensburg Permit Data, 2021; BERK, 2021.*

## Exhibit 24: Ellensburg Housing Production by Year, 2012-2020.



Note: Dormitories are counted here by rooms rather than 'units'. Most rooms have two beds for two students.

Sources: City of Ellensburg Permit Data, 2021; BERK, 2021.

## Exhibit 25: Average Unit Size, Lot Size, and Site Density for Construction in Ellensburg, 2012-2020.

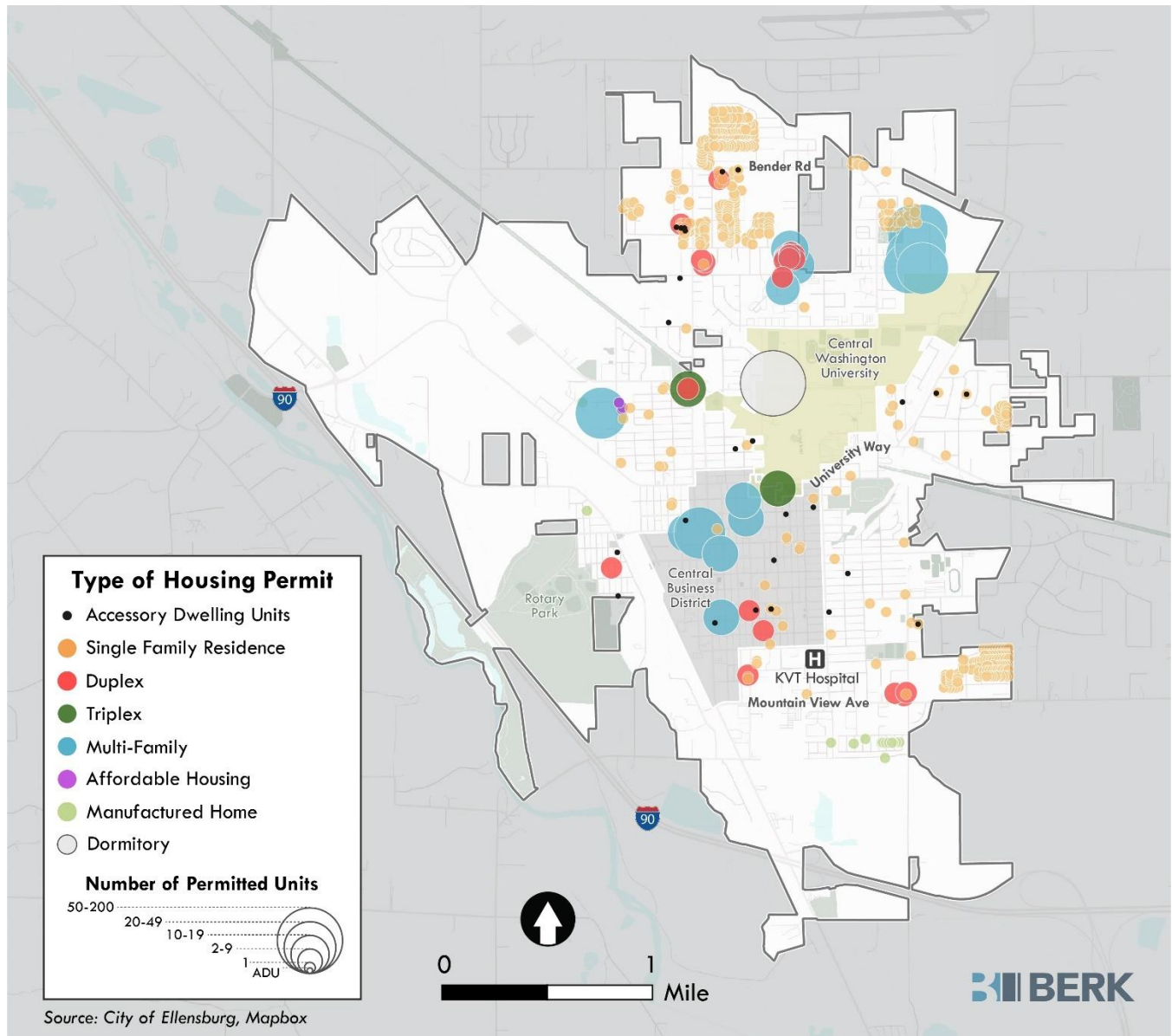
Housing Type	Average square feet per unit	Average lot size (acres)	Average site density (acres/unit)
Single Family Home	2,615	0.18	5.7
ADU	1,005	n/a	n/a
Duplex	1,296	0.07	13.6
Multi-Family (3 or 4 unit)	1,390	0.07	14.9
Multi-Family (5+ units)	1,182	0.04	25.6
Dormitory	510	0.01	73.5
Manufactured Home	718	n/a	n/a
Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Units	1,104	0.13	7.7

Sources: City of Ellensburg Permit Data, 2021; BERK, 2021.

## Geographic Trends

Housing production is distributed across Ellensburg, with particular concentration in the northern part of the city. These neighborhoods are anchored by the adjacent CWU campus and production includes a range of single family, duplex, triplex, and multifamily units. Additional multifamily construction can be found in and around the central business district. A sprinkling of ADUs are integrated throughout various residential neighborhoods. Manufactured housing production is concentrated in south Ellensburg. See map in Exhibit 26.

**Exhibit 26: Map of Ellensburg Housing Production Permits, 2012-2020.**



# Income-Restricted Affordable Housing

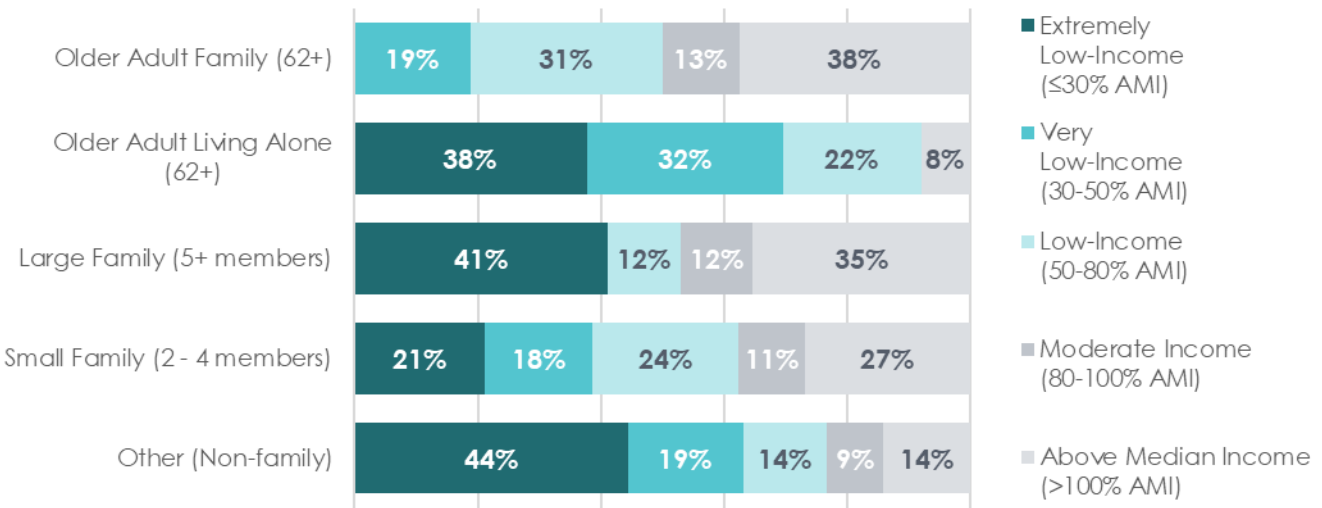
## Income Eligibility

Eligibility for income-restricted affordable housing is based on HUD's established thresholds for moderate-income, low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income households by family size. The HUD-area median family income (shortened to AMI in this report) is updated annually. Moderate-income households earn between 80% - 100% of AMI. Low-income households are those earning 50-80%, very low-income households earn 30-50%, and extremely low-income households earn 30% or less. In Ellensburg, the 2021 AMI for a household of four is \$76,000.

Summaries from 2017 identify 5,290 total Ellensburg households in moderate- and low-income categories. Renter households are typically the residents in search of income-restricted affordable units. **According to 2017 estimates, there are 4,425 renter households at qualifying income levels in Ellensburg.** Exhibit 27 breaks out this total by household type. Key takeaways from this summary include:

- 92% of older adult renters who live alone (62+), or 635 individuals, are categorized as low-, very low-, or extremely low-income.
- Over half (approximately 50) of large families who rent are moderate-, low-, or extremely low-income.
- 62% of small families who rent (approximately 605 families) are considered low-, very low-, or extremely low-income. The families likely represent most of Ellensburg's renters with young children.
- Nonfamily households represent the largest group of renter households in low-, very low-, and extremely low-income groups, with 2,660 households represented. This group likely includes many of CWU's student households.

**Exhibit 27: Ellensburg Renter Households by Type and Income Levels, 2017.**



*Note: Margin of error increases as group size decreases. These figures should be taken as reflective of general trends, but not exact calculations.*

*Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); AMI = HUD Area Median Family Income; BERK, 2021.*

### Income-Restricted Housing Supply

Ellensburg's housing stock includes 853 units of income-restricted affordable housing, in 15 different developments. A full list of this inventory can be found in Exhibit 28. These units serve residents from 95% AMI and below. Some housing serves specific household types, such as family households, singles, or senior/disabled residents, while others are open to a mix of household types.

The inventory of income-restricted housing supply in Exhibit 28 identifies a mix of public housing authorities, non-profit housing developers, and private companies among the ownership entities of these buildings. **Over half (57%) of these units have subsidy expirations before 2030.** This highlights the need for affordable housing preservation as well as additional subsidized housing stock.

#### Exhibit 28: Inventory of Income-Restricted Housing Units in Ellensburg, 2021.

Name	Owner	Total Subsidized Units	Population Served	Income Eligibility/ Preference	Subsidy Expiration*
Alder Terrace	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	51	Mixed	Between 40% and 95% AMI	2046
Briarwood Commons	Preferred Capital Mgmt, Inc	174	Senior/Disabled	Below 60% AMI	2027
Brookwood Apartment	Brookwood Assoc	40	Senior/Disabled	Below 50% AMI (<30% preference)	2033
Cherry Lane	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	9	Families	Below 80% AMI	None
Cascade Manor	HS II Rural Preservation	20	Senior/Disabled	Below 30% AMI	2056
Crestview Terrace Apartments	VBC Crestview Terrace Limited Partnership	168	Individual/Family	Below 50% AMI (<30% preference)	2022
Hampton Court	Windsor Park LLC	36	Senior/Disabled	Below 30% AMI	2040

Name	Owner	Total Subsidized Units	Population Served	Income Eligibility/ Preference	Subsidy Expiration*
Helena	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	5	Families	Below 80% AMI	None
Huntington Court	HS II Rural Preservation	24	Senior/Disabled	Below 30% AMI	2056
Trinal Manor	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	30	Senior/Disabled	Below 80% AMI	None
Mt Stuart Vista	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	30	Families	Below 80% AMI	None
Rodeo Apartments	<i>Data unavailable</i>	50	Mixed	Below 60% AMI	2027
Terrace Manor	VBC Crestview Terrace Limited Partnership	72	Low Income	Below 50% AMI	2029
Spurling Court	Hopesource	49			
Windsor Park	Windsor Park LLC	95	Families	Below 30% AMI	2040
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 developments</b>	<b>853 units</b>			

\* Expiration date for LIHTC units is the expiration date of the tax exemption. For rental assistance funding, the expiration date means the expiration of the rental assistance funding. For buildings with multiple subsidies, BERK presents the earliest subsidy expiration date unless additional information was provided by the housing provider. "None" indicates a permanent restriction is recorded on the property.

Sources: City of Ellensburg Housing Needs Assessment, 2017; Ellensburg permit data, 2021; BERK, 2021.

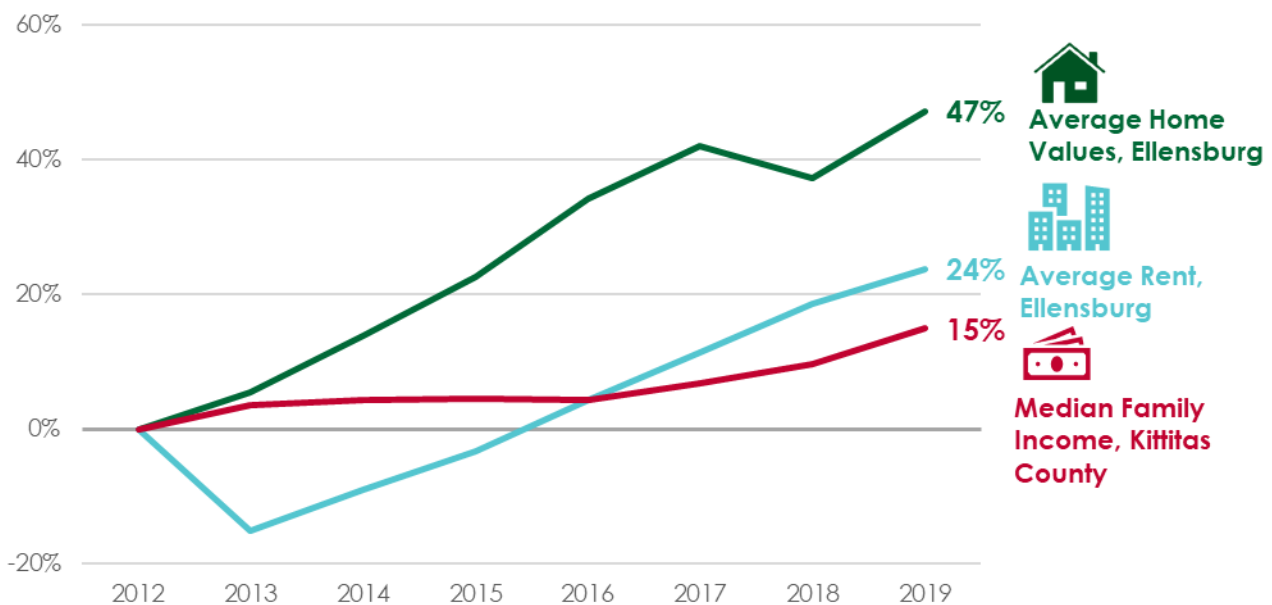


# Housing Affordability

**Home values in Ellensburg have risen 3 times as fast as regional incomes from 2012 to 2019.**

Rent increases have also outpaced income growth, though not as dramatically. See Exhibit 29. The average home value in Ellensburg in 2019 is \$316,743, and the average rent is \$1,442 per month.<sup>8</sup> The spike in home values can block families and young professionals from purchasing their first home or from upsizing with an expanded family size. When faced with these tradeoffs, households often choose to relocate in areas with lower costs of living or fall into cost burden and sacrifice other important spending categories to stay in their homes.

**Exhibit 29: Percent Change from 2012 for Home Values, Rental Rates, and HUD Area Median Family Income.**



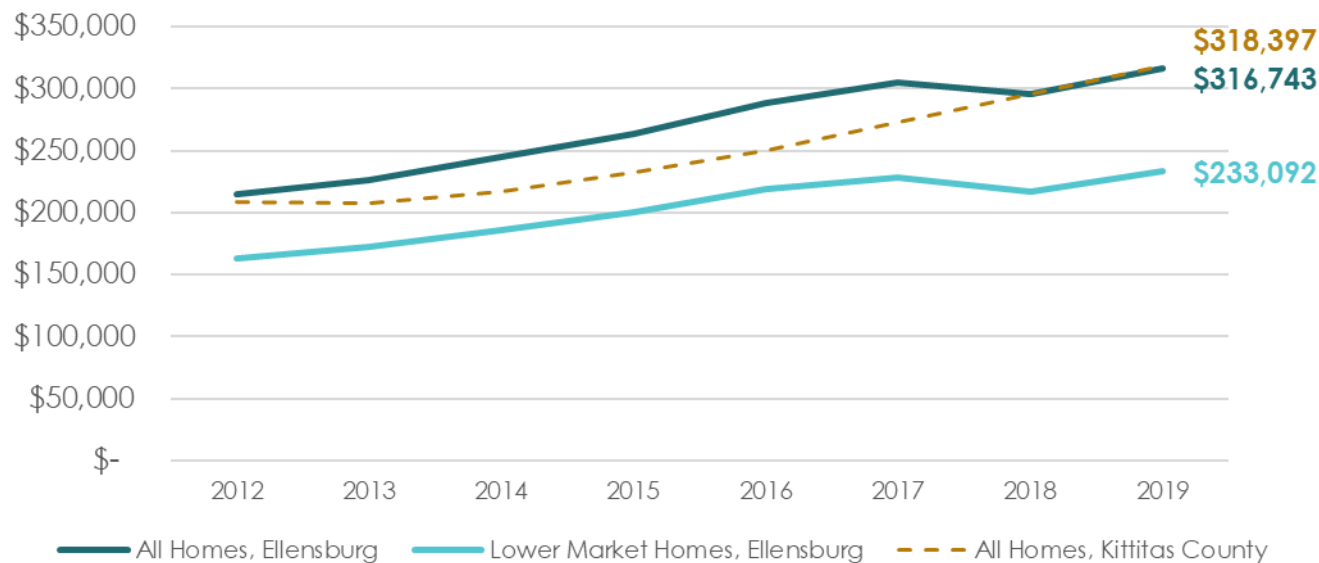
Sources: Zillow, 2020; HUD, 2020; BERK, 2021.

## Ownership Affordability

Home values in Ellensburg increased by 47% from 2012-2019. This contrasts with a 15% median income increase over the same time period, as established in Exhibit 29. Average home values in the city track closely with Kittitas County overall, despite lower household incomes in Ellensburg when compared to the county. See Exhibit 30. The 2019 average home value in Ellensburg is \$316,743. An estimated mortgage for this home value is affordable to homes above median income, earning 115% to 120% AMI, or approximately \$83,000 - \$86,500 annually. Lower market homes, estimated by Zillow as homes within the 5<sup>th</sup> to 35<sup>th</sup> percentile of values, average \$233,092 in Ellensburg. Payments for a mortgage on these homes is available to some moderate income households, starting around \$61,000 annually (85% AMI).

<sup>8</sup> Home value and rental rate estimates from Zillow, as of April 2020.

**Exhibit 30: Average Home Values in Ellensburg and Kittitas County, 2012-2019.**



Sources: Zillow, 2021; BERK, 2021.

**The ability to purchase a home also relies on the availability of housing stock and the ability to save for a down payment.** In Ellensburg, the data suggest that a lack of available housing stock might be the biggest hurdle to home ownership in the community. As explored with production trends, ACS estimates find very limited vacancy in the Ellensburg ownership housing market. This appears to be particularly true for units around the average home value range. A search for active home listings at \$350,000 or less in Ellensburg yields just 6 results: 3 single-family homes and 3 manufactured homes within the city boundary. Searching for units \$350,000 or more yields 26 results.<sup>9</sup> The monthly mortgage payment for average and lower market homes in Ellensburg is higher than average rents, and 59% of renter households are already cost-burdened. These households might not be approved for a mortgage or be able to save the necessary funds for a down payment.

<sup>9</sup> Zillow and Redfin searches on 5/7/2021

**Exhibit 31: Housing Affordability Calculations in Ellensburg, Median and Lower Market Home Prices, 2019.**

Monthly Mortgage - 10% down payment			
		Lower Market Home Price (2019)	Median Home Price (2019)
<b>Cost to Purchase</b>	Sales Price (\$)	233,092	316,743
	Assumed 20% down payment (\$)	23,309	31,674
	Mortgage amount (\$)	209,782	285,069
	Interest rate	4%	4%
	Monthly payments over course of loan	360	360
	Monthly mortgage payment (\$)	1,002	1,361
<b>Annual Housing Expenses</b>			
	Mortgage payments (\$)	12,018	16,332
	Property tax (\$)	3,030	4,118
	Private Mortgage Insurance (\$)	2,098	2,851
	Insurance (\$)	1,165	1,584
	Annual costs (\$)	18,312	24,884
	Monthly costs (\$)	1,526	2,074
<b>Affordability</b>			
	Annual income needed to afford	\$ 61,040	\$ 82,945
	% of AMI	84%	115%

Monthly Mortgage - 5% down payment			
		Lower Market Home Price (2019)	Median Home Price (2019)
<b>Cost to Purchase</b>	Sales Price (\$)	233,092	316,743
	Assumed 10% down payment (\$)	11,655	15,837
	Mortgage amount (\$)	221,437	300,906
	Interest rate	4%	4%
	Monthly payments over course of loan	360	360
	Monthly mortgage payment (\$)	1,057	1,437
<b>Annual Housing Expenses</b>			
	Mortgage payments (\$)	12,686	17,239
	Property tax (\$)	3,030	4,118
	Private Mortgage Insurance (\$)	2,214	3,009
	Home Insurance (\$)	1,165	1,584
	Annual costs (\$)	19,096	25,949
	Monthly costs (\$)	1,591	2,162
<b>Affordability</b>			
	Annual income needed to afford	\$ 63,654	\$ 86,498
	% of AMI	88%	120%

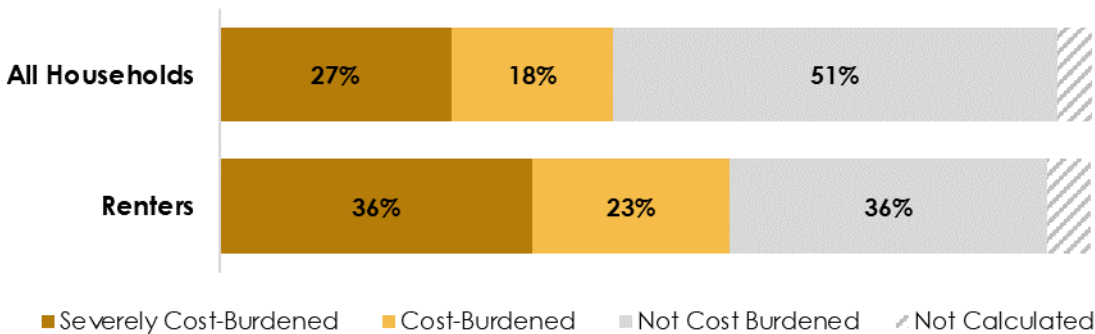
Sources: Home values from Zillow, 2021; AMI refers to HUD-Area MFI as reported by Washington Housing Finance Commission, 2019; Mortgage calculations and estimations from BERK, 2021.

# Rental Affordability

**In Ellensburg, 59% of renter households are considered cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. This represents over 3,000 renter households struggling with housing affordability.**

A summary of cost-burdened renter households by family type can be found in Exhibit 33. In Ellensburg, renter households are likely to include much of the CWU student population. These residents are likely reflected in the 2,240 “Other (non-family)” households. All other age cohorts are represented, however, among cost-burdened renter households. The next most prominent household types among cost-burdened renters are older adults living alone (430) and small family households (365). Variety in rental housing units is key to meeting the needs of these distinct demographic groups and varying household sizes.

**Exhibit 32: Cost Burden among Renter Households in Ellensburg, 2017.**



Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 33: Ellensburg Cost Burdened Renter Households by Type, 2017.**

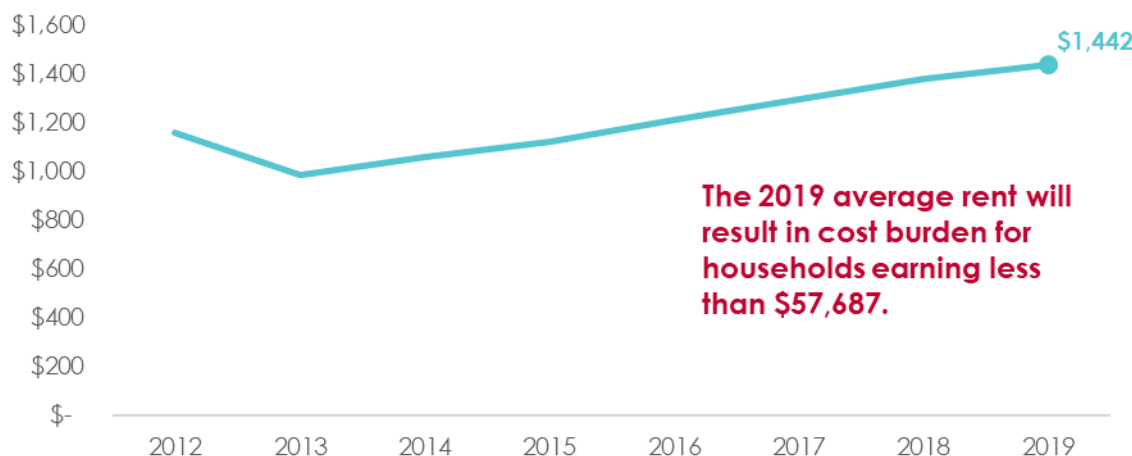
Household Type	Cost-Burdened Renter Households	% Total
Older Adult Family (62+)	10	0.3%
Older Adult Living Alone (62+)	430	14%
Large Family (5+ members)	45	1.5%
Small Family (2 – 4 members)	365	12%
Other (Non-family households)	2,240	72%
Total	3,090	

Note: Margin of error grows with smaller groups of household populations. These numbers should not be taken to reflect exact counts but to summarize community trends.

Sources: ACS 5-year S2502 estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

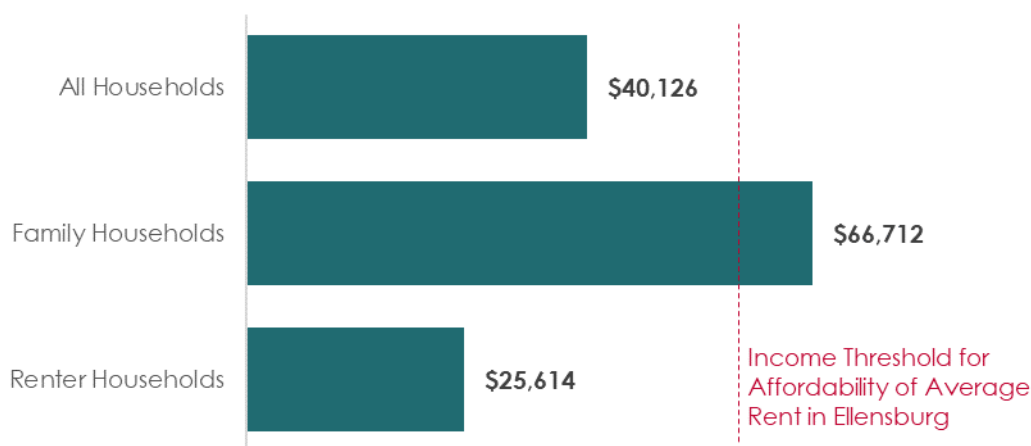
The average apartment rent in Ellensburg is \$1,442. See Exhibit 34. This represents a 24% increase from 2012 compared to a 15% income increase over the same period, as explored on page 25. This rate is considered affordable for households earning \$57,687 or higher annually. In Ellensburg, approximately 60% of households earn less than this amount (See Exhibit 11). Median household income for renter households, specifically, are less than half this amount.

**Exhibit 34: Ellensburg Average Rents, 2012-2019.**



Sources; Zillow, 2020; BERK, 2021.

**Exhibit 35: Ellensburg Median Household Income by Type, 2018.**



Sources: ACS 5-year S2503 Estimates, 2018; Income threshold for rental housing affordability based on average apartment rents from Zillow, 2019; BERK, 2021.

## Cost Burden

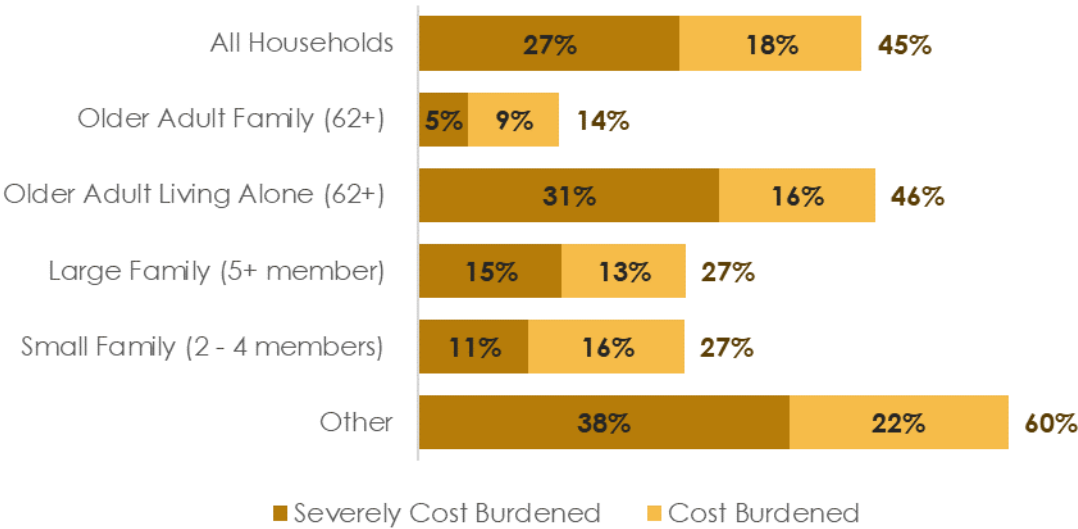
**In Ellensburg, 18% of the population is estimated to be cost-burdened and 27% of the population is estimated to be severely cost-burdened.** HUD defines housing cost burden as spending more than 30% of gross monthly income toward housing, including utility costs. A household is considered severely cost-burdened if they spend 50% or more of their income on housing. These households often are forced to make difficult tradeoffs with other life essentials

such as education, transportation, healthcare, or healthy food. Cost burden indicates a lack of affordability in the housing market.

Rates of cost burden are not equal across housing types. See Exhibit 36.

- 1. **Almost half (46%) of older adults who live alone are cost burdened.** This indicates a lack of affordable housing solutions available and suitable for these residents. Older adults (62+) while live in family households, defined as 2 or more related individuals living together, have a cost burden rate of 14%. Older adults may have accessibility concerns for housing design or require additional services for healthcare or household assistance.
- 2. **Families, both large and small, are cost-burdened at a rate of 27%.** These two household types are likely to include most of Ellensburg's children under the age of 19. High rates of housing cost burden for families and families with children may interfere with a family's ability to purchase a starter home, upsize into a larger home to accommodate a larger family size, or move to a neighborhood with desired amenities and access to opportunity.
- 3. **Non-family households in Ellensburg are cost-burdened at a rate of 60%.** This category, labeled as "other" in the exhibit, is likely to include many of the city's student population. It also includes working professionals who are single and living alone or with roommates. This household type has the highest rate of cost burden in Ellensburg.

**Exhibit 36: Cost Burden by Household Type in Ellensburg, 2017.**



Note: "Other" household types include Census defined non-family, non-older adult households. In Ellensburg, this category is likely to include much of the CWU student population.

Sources: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2021.

Displacement Risk

**Displacement refers to instances when a household is forced or pressured to move from their home against their will.** Displacement can be categorized into three types: physical displacement, economic displacement, and cultural displacement. These trends can be

difficult to capture with specificity in smaller communities like Ellensburg, but signals and risk factors can be identified.

**Direct, physical displacement** occurs in cases of eviction, the termination of a tenant's lease, or public land claims through eminent domain. Physical displacement can also occur when a property owner decides to renovate units to appeal to higher-income tenants or when buildings are sold for redevelopment. Additionally, the expiration of an affordability covenant can result conversion of the unit to market rate housing and the displacement of the current tenant. Mobile home or manufactured home park residents can be subject to displacement when property owners decide to sell park land for another use.

- In Ellensburg, 464 current income-restricted subsidized housing units have term expirations by 2030.<sup>10</sup>
- There are 8 mobile home parks with 314 housing units in Ellensburg.<sup>11</sup>

**Economic displacement** occurs when a household relocates due to the financial pressure of rising housing costs. Renters are more vulnerable to economic displacement, particularly those who are low-income, although some homeowners can experience this as well with significant increases to property tax bills.

- In Ellensburg, 3,090 renter households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened.<sup>12</sup>
- From 2012-2019, average rents in Ellensburg increased 24% while median income increased 15%.

**Cultural displacement** is the result of fractured social fabrics. When physical and/or economic displacement affects community businesses and a concentration of racial or ethnic minority households, other households who affiliate with the affected cultural group may begin to feel increased pressure or desire to relocate. This is difficult to track through available data for Ellensburg.

## Homelessness

Housing instability caused by cost burden can lead to periods of homelessness for economically vulnerable households. The count of individuals experiencing homelessness across Washington state increased 22% 2013-2019 as housing affordability concerns increased.<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to accurately track the exact quantity and makeup of individuals experiencing homelessness at any given time. The standard metric used statewide are Point-in-Time (PIT) counts, which are collected at the county level on a single night in January each year. These numbers do not completely capture the extent of homelessness in any given area but provide a consistent annual metric for gauging change in the number and demographics of individuals and households experiencing homelessness across the region. **Kititas County's 2019 PIT Count identified 39 individuals experiencing homelessness across the county. Seventeen (17) of these individuals were identified as chronically homeless and most of these individuals were sheltered and sleeping at emergency shelters.** This reporting demonstrates a

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<sup>10</sup> Ellensburg Housing Needs Assessment, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> City of Ellensburg reporting, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> HUD CHAS (based on 5-year ACS estimates), 2017

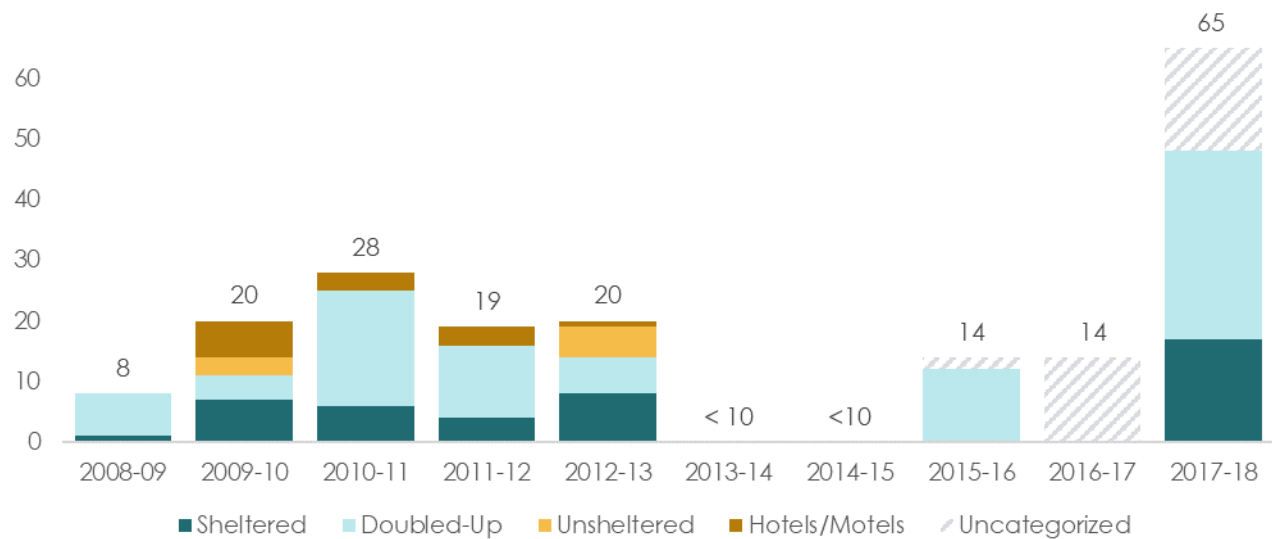
<sup>13</sup> Washington Department of Commerce [PIT Counts](#), 2013 and 2019



small but persistent need in the county.

School districts also report on homelessness among their student population. Students are reported on this list if they are homeless, doubling up with another family, or living in a hotel/motel. Being doubled up or living in a hotel/motel can be an intermediate step before or signal risk of homelessness. The count of students experiencing homelessness spiked in the 2017-2018 academic year, with 65 elementary school children reported. See Exhibit 37. This includes both sheltered homelessness and families doubling up. The increased rate of families doubling up could relate to increased housing costs over this time period. The 2020 PIT Count did not occur, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Exhibit 37: Homeless Student Count, Ellensburg School District, AY2008 - 2018**



*'Uncategorized' data represents fewer than 10 reported individuals per category. This practice was incorporated starting with the 2015 student data reporting.*

Sources: Washington OSPI, 2019; BERK, 2021.

# Gap Analysis

Ellensburg's housing market lacks adequate supply and affordability for residents. This section identifies needs and gaps in housing production specific to both rental and owner-occupied housing units in Ellensburg.

**Housing production rates are not keeping up with demand in Ellensburg.** The city has very low vacancy rates in its ownership housing supply. ACS estimates find almost no vacancy for ownership units, reporting 0.0% in 2018.<sup>14</sup> Given the quantity of ownership units in the market, Ellensburg needs to produce 130 units of housing to achieve a healthier market vacancy rate of 5%. While the ACS reports 6% vacancy for rental housing, the Washington Center for Real Estate Studies (WCRER), which applies a finer grain and twice-annual survey approach, finds just 0.5% vacancy in Kittitas County's rental market. Ellensburg is the biggest base for rental

<sup>14</sup> ACS 5-year DP04 estimates.

housing in the county, accounting for 70% of rental units, so it is likely that reported rental rates are closely tied to the trends in the city.<sup>15</sup> Using the same methodology for calculating market undersupply, Ellensburg needs an additional 311 units of rental housing to achieve 5% vacancy. See summary in Exhibit 38.

### Exhibit 38: Ellensburg Market Undersupply for Ownership Housing Units

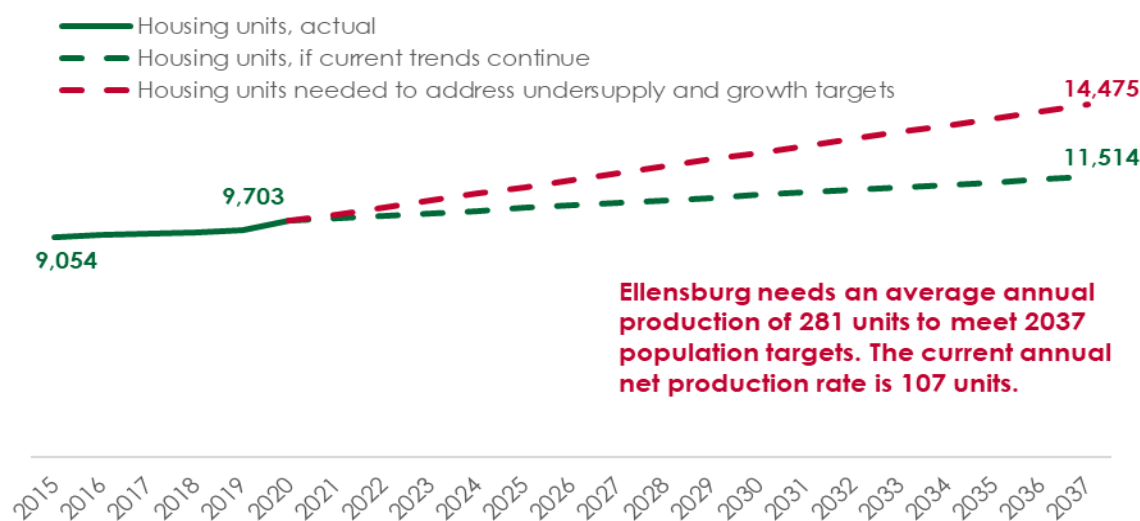
	Owner-Occupied	Rental Units
Occupied units	2,471	5,341
Vacancy rate	0.0%	0.5%
Units needed to achieve 5% vacancy	2,601	5,652
<b>Current market undersupply</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>311</b>

**An additional 441 units of housing are needed to address Ellensburg's current undersupply challenge.**

Sources: ACS 5-year DP04 Estimates, 2018; BERK, 2021.

This underproduction housing need is augmented with supply needs that align with population targets for Ellensburg and its UGA. Based on growth targets and an assumed consistent average household size, Ellensburg needs to produce 281 housing units annually from 2020-2037 to address both growth targets and undersupply. This represents a 162% production increase over current annual net production of 107 units per year.

### Exhibit 39: Ellensburg and UGA Housing Unit Production, Actual and Target, 2015-2037.



Sources: Current housing unit estimates and production rate from Washington OFM, 2021; Population growth target from Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, 2017; Growth target translated to households based on 2020 average household size (2.2) from Washington OFM, 2021; BERK, 2021.

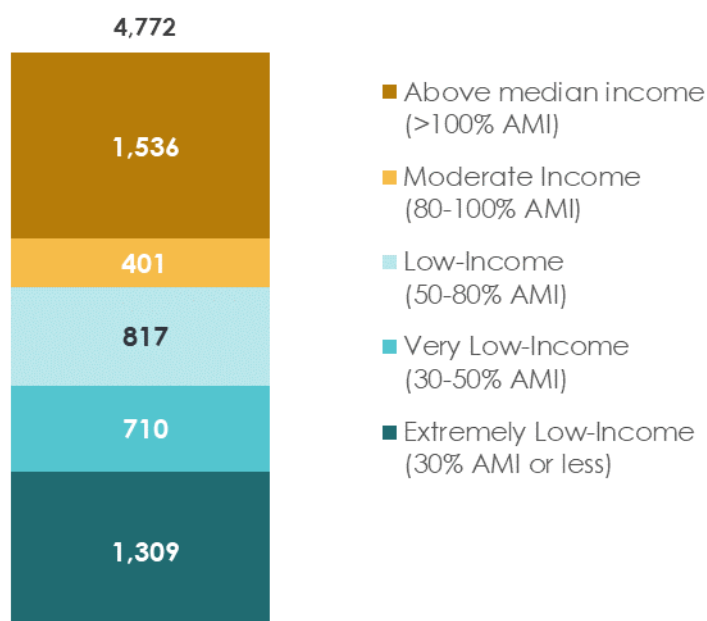
<sup>15</sup> ACS 5-year DP04 estimates

**Considering both the current undersupply and future production targets, Ellensburg (including its UGA) needs to produce 4,772 total units of housing 2020-2037, averaging 281 units annually.**

This represents a 162% increase over current production rates of 107 units per year. Future housing production in Ellensburg should include a diversity of different housing types and affordability levels to address both current shortages as well as anticipated future needs. Exhibit 40 presents targets for housing growth between 2020 and 2037 by affordability level. These targets are distributed according to current proportions across income levels in Ellensburg. Adding sufficient housing stock to address the current undersupply can help to free up rental units for lower-income households. Down-renting is a common phenomenon in tight housing markets that makes it challenging for lower-income households to find suitable housing: down renting is when moderate- and higher-income households that either cannot find or afford ownership housing occupy rental units that might otherwise serve low-income households. Moderate- and higher-income residents can create upward pressure on rents in a community when they choose to rent due to a lack of ownership supply that meets their needs.

Variety within the housing market is key to meeting the needs of different housing types across the income spectrum. Higher density housing, such as missing middle styles, can often be offered at lower costs due to lower land and construction costs per unit. Residents who are very low-income or extremely low-income are often best served by income-restricted affordable housing, as market rate options are less likely to be found in their affordability range. Housing oriented to students, whether it be on-campus residence halls or multifamily apartments throughout the city, may also address need at the lowest income levels in Ellensburg.

**Exhibit 40: Ellensburg Housing Unit Need, by Income Bracket, 2020-2037.**



Note: Income bracket ratios for housing unit need determined by proportionally distributing housing units needed according to current ratios of income groups.

Sources: Ratio of Income Brackets from HUD CHAS summaries, 2017; Total housing need as calculated based on OFM estimates and adopted growth targets, 2020-2037; BERK, 2021.

The 2015 Kittitas County Land Capacity Analysis identifies a residential capacity of 5,683 units within Ellensburg and its UGA. This aligns with a population capacity of 11,757. This capacity, as noted in the 2016 analysis, falls just below the OFM high growth estimates.<sup>16</sup> Further study in 2017 explored a future land use map which could increase capacity in Ellensburg for multifamily and townhome/duplex style units. Results of this analysis are shown in Exhibit 41. The proposed land use scenario offers an alternative growth pattern promoting greater variety in residential housing units. The proposed land use map was adopted with the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.<sup>17</sup> Ellensburg has begun adopting zoning changes reflected in the proposed land use scenario, and this effort continues.

#### Exhibit 41: Housing Growth Capacity Comparison in Ellensburg, 2017.



In this land use study, a “low” and “high” development scenario are tested against current land use regulations and a proposed alternative land use map. Low development estimates are based on existing achieved densities and high development estimates are based on examples of most intense development styles from recent construction trends.

Source: “Ellensburg Land Use Alternatives” BERK, 2017.

### Income-Restricted Affordable Housing

**There is a shortage of income-restricted affordable housing compared to the number of households that are eligible.** This is true across household types and moderate-, low-, very low-, and extremely low-income groups. Citywide, there are 4,425 renters whose incomes qualify for income-restricted housing by HUD standards but a total of 853 units of income-restricted units provided. While many of the residents who appear eligible by income thresholds may be students with alternate forms of financial support, there are also 626 families and 324 older adult households who qualify but are unable to receive subsidized housing based on limited availability. These income and supply gaps demonstrate the need for additional income-restricted housing units in Ellensburg. See Exhibit 42.

<sup>16</sup> Kittitas County [Land Capacity Analysis Memo](#), 2016.

<sup>17</sup> [Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan](#), 2018.

Production trends demonstrate the lack of income-restricted affordable units in Ellensburg's development pipeline. From 2012-2020, only 7 units of this type were added to the housing stock.<sup>18</sup> This is despite the incentive programs offered by the City of Ellensburg, including a Multifamily Tax Exemption program in the Central Business District and a density bonus in R-S and R-L zones. These policies may need further evaluation and refinement to respond to local needs and market conditions.

A summary of gaps by income bracket and by household type identify need across the spectrum with concentrations for extremely low-income households, older adults, and small families. See Exhibit 42.

**Exhibit 42: Ellensburg Income Eligible Renter Households and Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Units.**

		Qualifying Renter Households	Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Units	Difference
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,425</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>3,572</b>
<b>Targeted Income Bracket</b>	Extremely Low-Income Below 30% AMI	2,040	383	1,657
	Very Low-Income 30 - 50% AMI	1,050	345	705
	Low-Income 50 - 80% AMI	895	74	821
	Moderate Income 80 - 100% AMI	440	51	389
<b>Targeted Household Type</b>	Family Households	765	139	626
	Senior/Disabled Households*	685	324	361

\*Note: Total households shown only captures Senior households. Additional households will qualify, based on resident disability status.

Sources: Household figures from HUD CHAS (summarized from ACS 5-year estimates), 2017; Income-restricted units as reported in Exhibit 30; BERK, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Ellensburg Permit Data, 2012-2020

## Appendix B: Policy Review

# City of Ellensburg Policy Review

## ELLENSBURG HOUSING ACTION PLAN – October 2021

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### INTRODUCTION

The Ellensburg Policy Review includes an analysis of Ellensburg's existing residential zoning code, particularly in relation to missing middle housing types. This review assesses whether housing types such as townhouses, cottage housing, ADUs, and 2-3-4-plexes are permitted outright, if there is a need for zoning changes to encourage these housing types, and comparison with the regulations of other jurisdictions. Sample site plans for townhouse developments are used to identify development feasibility constraints within the existing code language for this housing type.

A special focus in the Policy Review is given to:

**Cottage Housing** – small and single-level units, detached and often clustered with multiple units sharing open space. Units are typically sized at a maximum of 1,200 or 1,500 interior square feet.



*Image Source: Sightline Institute*

**Townhouses** – single-family homes with at least two floors that share a wall with another home. Townhouses are often sized with 1 to 3 bedrooms and sold on individual lots.



*Image Source: BERK Consulting*



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## ZONING CODE REVIEW

The City of Ellensburg includes a variety of land uses that feature residential uses, which accommodate single family homes, townhouses, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units, and multi-dwelling developments. Title 15 (Land Development Code) of the Ellensburg City Code (ECC) regulates the city's land uses and includes descriptions of zoning districts and land uses, including what uses are allowed in specific zones, and in the context of residential or commercial development, what development and design standards may apply. As stated in ECC 15.110.020, the purpose of the Land Development Code (LDC) is to provide regulations which the city can utilize to guide development and maintain a quality environment which provides for conservation and protection efforts, and livability. The LDC is the implementing code of the goals and policies set forth in the Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan (2019); these goals and policies are implemented through zoning maps, regulations, procedures, and programs.<sup>1</sup>

Exhibit 1 includes an overview of all residential zones and commercial zones where residential uses are allowed. These zones include:

- **Residential Suburban Zone (R-S)** – Characterized as a single-family zone, which may include a mix of uses located in a walkable neighborhood setting. Provides for a minimum density standard to avoid large scale low-density sprawl and provides for a flexible bonus incentive system that allows for an increase in density in exchange for various community benefits, including mix of housing types,

<sup>1</sup> Ellensburg City Code 15.110.020.

affordable housing, transfer of development rights (TDR), and preservation of historic buildings, among others.

- **Residential Low-Density Zone (R-L)** – characterized as low-density residential neighborhoods, which allow for infill development via cottage housing, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Provides for a minimum density standard to avoid low-density sprawl and utilizes the bonus incentive program, and TDR.
- **Residential Medium-Density Zone (R-M)** – characterized as a medium density, walkable neighborhood setting where a mixture of housing types exists. A variety of housing types are allowed, including cottage housing, townhouses, and multifamily residential. Provides for minimum density standards, and standards that ensure infill development is compatible with existing development.
- **Residential High-Density Zone (R-H)** – characterized as a high-density area which includes multifamily residential development, near transit, and within walking distance of commercial services. Provides for a minimum density limit, and standards and guidelines that promote compact, walkable development patterns.
- **Residential Office Zone (R-O)** – characterized as a transition zone which separates more intensive uses from single-family residential districts; historic preservation and adaptive reuse of historic properties is encouraged. A variety of housing types are allowed, including single family dwellings, cottage housing, townhouses, and multifamily. Provides for standards and guidelines which allow infill development.
- **Manufactured Home Park Zone (MHP)** – characterized as areas developed, or suitable for development, as mobile/manufactured home parks. Regulations establish the residential character of the zone, regulate common open space requirements, and set standards for safe circulation.
- **Commercial Neighborhood Zone (C-N)** – characterized as small-scale shopping areas meant to serve outlying residential areas, that are pedestrian-oriented; residential is a secondary use as townhouses and multifamily uses are allowed.
- **Central Commerce Zone (C-C)** – characterized as an area that encourages and accommodates the development and redevelopment of a viable Central Business District (CBD); residential is a secondary use, and historic character is preserved and/or enhanced.
- **Central Commercial II Zone (C-C II)** – characterized as an orderly expansion of the downtown commercial core; residential is a secondary use, and historic character is preserved and/or enhanced.
- **Light Industrial Zone (I-L)** – characterized as an area which accommodates light

industrial uses; mixed use residential uses are promoted as a secondary use in areas identified as industrial residential.

- **Public Reserve Zone (P-R)** – characterized as a Special District where public uses operated by a public entity may be allowed to be developed. Residential uses are allowed as an accessory use.

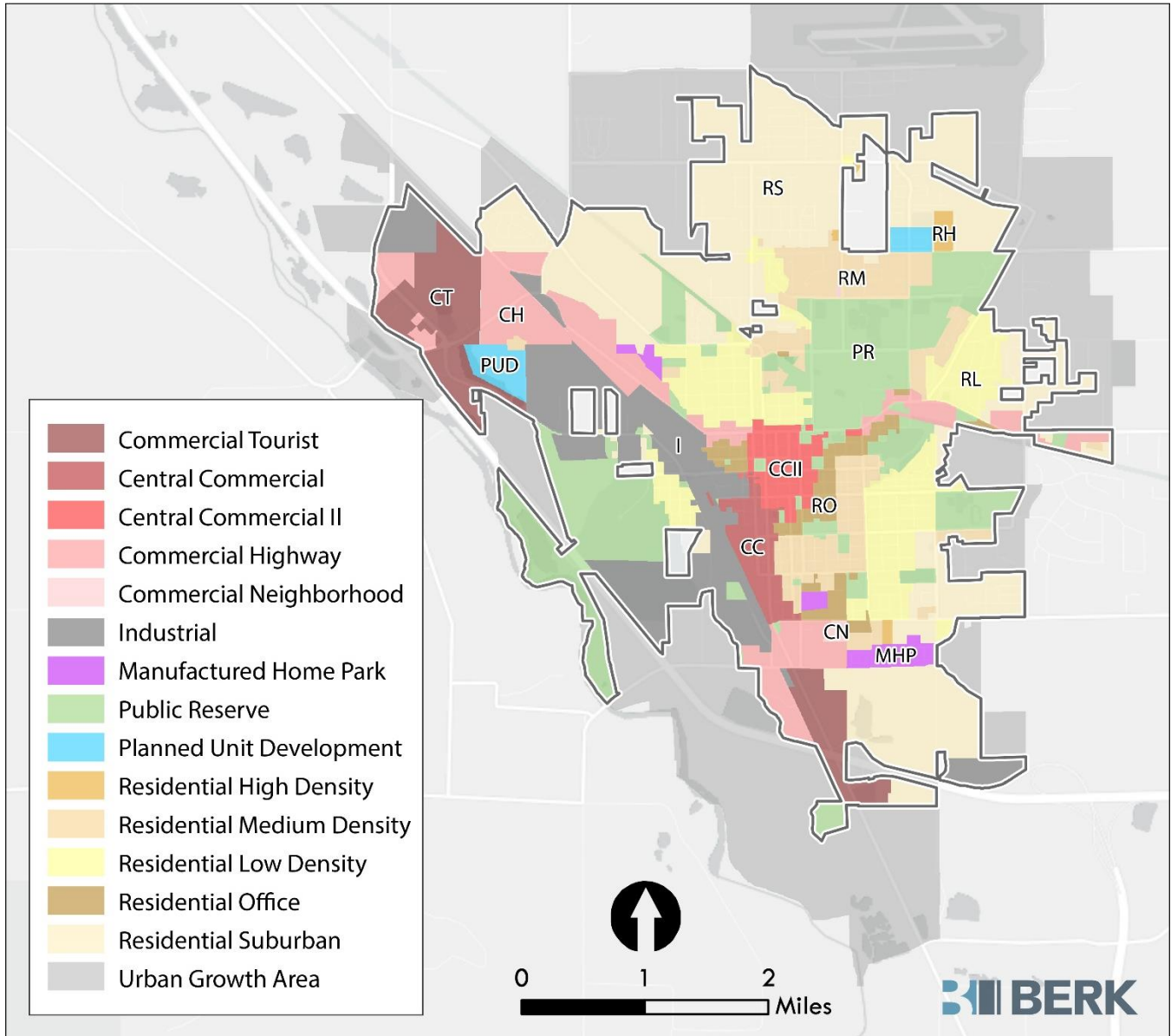
**Exhibit 1: Residential and Commercial/Mixed Use Zones in Ellensburg<sup>2</sup>**

		Housing Type						
Zone	Missing middle housing types	SFR	Duplex	Cottage	Townhouse	ADU <sup>3</sup>	Multifamily	Manufactured Home
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Permitted outright</li> <li>○ Conditional Use</li> </ul>							
	Residential Suburban Zone (R-S)	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	Residential Low-Density Zone (R-L)	●	●	●	●	●		
	Residential Medium Density Zone (R-M)	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
	Residential High-Density Zone (R-H)				●	●	●	●
	Residential Office Zone (R-O)	●	●	●	●		●	○
	Commercial Neighborhood Zone (C-N)				●		●	
	Central Commerce Zone (C-C)		●		●	●	●	
	Central Commercial II Zone (C-C II)		●		●	●	●	
	Manufactured Home Park (MHP)	●						●

<sup>2</sup> [ECC 15.310.040](#); ECC 15.300.050

<sup>3</sup> Accessory Dwelling Unit

## Exhibit 2: Ellensburg Zoning Map



Sources: City of Ellensburg, 2021; BERK, 2021.

## EXISTING HOUSING TYPES

In Ellensburg, 48% of housing units are single family homes and 30% of units are in multifamily buildings of 5 or more units.<sup>4</sup> The Ellensburg zoning code, however, allows for the development of missing middle housing types, such as:

- Cottage Housing
- Townhouses
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Duplexes

These four highlighted housing types can help accommodate population growth and address housing needs by adding density in residential zones while maintaining a familiar neighborhood character and design aesthetic. As shown in Exhibit 1, these housing types are permitted across all residential zones except manufactured home park zones. Cottage housing is allowed in all residential zones, except R-H and MHP. Townhouses are an allowed use in all residential and mixed use/non-residential zones, except the MHP zone. ADUs are allowed in all zones except R-O, C-N, and MHP zones.

Density requirements exist in residential zones as follows<sup>5</sup>:

**Exhibit 3: Ellensburg Density Requirements for Residential Zones**

Zone	Minimum Density	Maximum Density (Gross)
R-S	-	6 du/acre
R-L	6 du/acre	8 du/acre
R-M	8 du/acre	-
R-H	15 du/acre	-
R-O	8 du/acre	-
C-N	-	-
C-C	-	-
C-C II	-	-

Sources: Ellensburg City Code, 2021; BERK, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Washington OFM, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> MHP zone not included as a focus in this review.

## COTTAGE HOUSING

Cottage housing is small, single-level, detached residential units which can be on individual lots or clustered around common open space.<sup>6</sup> In Ellensburg, cottages are allowed in R-S, R-L, R-M, and R-O zones, and they are allowed as an accessory use in the P-R zone. This housing type is a good fit for smaller households, with one or two people, such as older adults looking to downsize or young adults searching for a starter home. Cottage housing integrates smoothly into existing single-family neighborhoods, due to small-scale footprints and its ability to function in odd-shaped lots. The incorporation of shared open space among clustered units can contribute toward environmental conservation goals and greenspace in a community.

Cottage housing developments in Ellensburg must comply with design standards as provided in ECC [15.540.050](#). Cottages can be configured as condominiums or fee-simple lots and each cottage is counted as one-half of a dwelling unit for density calculation purposes. Cottages have a maximum floor area of 1,200 square feet and must include common space and private open space per unit. The minimum parking requirement is 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit. Cottage housing developments are required to contain a minimum of four cottages, and could include as many as twelve cottages, clustered with common areas. More than one cottage housing development is allowed in a development site.

The table in Exhibit 4 compares Ellensburg's cottage housing standards with that of two peer communities for reference. Further detail and project case studies from each community follow. A few takeaways from these comparisons:

- **Ellensburg's maximum unit size could be increased** to 1,500 SF (see Kirkland) or removed with site design and height constraints as the restricting factors (see Poulsbo).
- Ellensburg's minimum parking requirements are in line with requirements elsewhere. The city could consider a tiered model, as in Kirkland, where smaller unit sizes are only required to provide one space. In Poulsbo, only one space needs to be provided near the unit and the second space can be provided in a shared lot.
- **Open space requirements are higher in Ellensburg than Kirkland or Poulsbo.** Modifications for flexibility in site design could increase project feasibility for more developments.
- **Pilot programs to create demonstration projects** can be an effective "proof of concept" approach for new development styles within a community.

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<sup>6</sup> "Housing Choices Guidebook: A visual Guide to Compact Housing Types in Northwest Oregon."  
[https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Publications/Housing-Choices-Booklet\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Publications/Housing-Choices-Booklet_DIGITAL.pdf)

#### Exhibit 4: Cottage Housing Policy Comparisons

	Ellensburg	Kirkland	Poulsbo
<b>Maximum Unit Size</b>	1,200 SF	1,500 SF	
<b>Maximum F.A.R.</b>		.35	
<b>Maximum Lot Coverage</b>		50% maximum lot coverage for impervious surfaces	50%-60% maximum building lot coverage
<b>Maximum Units Allowed</b>	12 cottages per cluster	24 units; 12 in a cluster	3 – 12 units per cluster
<b>Maximum Height</b>	26'	25'– 27' depending on zone	20', 25' with pitched roof
<b>Separation Requirements</b>	Minimum distance – 10 ft. between structures		n/a
<b>Minimum Quantity of Units</b>	4 cottages per cluster		3 cottages per cluster
<b>Maximum Density</b>	Each cottage unit considered ½ unit for density calculations. With the density bonus, an additional 15% density can be added to underlying zone.	2 times the max number of detached DUs allowed in underlying zone	Consistent with underlying zone.
<b>Parking Requirements</b>	1.5 per dwelling unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ &lt;700 SF: 1 space/unit</li> <li>▪ 700 SF - 1,000 SF: 1.5 spaces/unit</li> <li>▪ &gt;1,000 SF: 2 spaces/unit</li> </ul>	2 per dwelling unit – one can be in a shared lot
<b>Open Space Requirements</b>	<p>Minimum Common Space – 400 SF/unit</p> <p>Minimum Private Open Space – 200 SF/unit</p>	<p>400 SF/unit common open space</p> <p>Private open space encouraged</p>	<p>300 SF/unit minimum common open space</p> <p>200 SF/unit private open space</p>



## City of Kirkland

The City of Kirkland Cottage Housing Ordinance is highlighted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a best practice. Cottage housing was evaluated as part of the city's Innovative Housing Demonstration Project Ordinance, and one of two projects in the demonstration project was the Danielson Grove development project.<sup>7</sup> See Exhibit 5. The project was deemed a success in 2007, and as a result, the city passed the Cottage Housing Ordinance, which allows cottage housing in all low-density residential zones.

### Exhibit 5: Danielson Grove Site Plan – Kirkland, WA



Source: [The Cottage Company](#), 2021.

Kirkland has integrated an inclusionary zoning policy into its cottage housing program. The City uses an affordability criterion for cottage housing developments, whereby project consisting of more than 10 units are required to provide 10% of units as affordable to median income households; the more units there are, the lower the median income that must be met (between 10 and 19-unit developments). While the purpose of the Ordinance is to accommodate and provide cottage style housing,

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<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 3856.

[http://www.cottagecompany.com/files/Downloads/LandUse/KirklandOrdinance\\_3856.pdf](http://www.cottagecompany.com/files/Downloads/LandUse/KirklandOrdinance_3856.pdf)

other compact single-family homes, duplexes, and triplexes are also allowed through the ordinance.

### City of Poulsbo

Poulsbo allows cottage housing throughout its single family and multifamily residential districts. Building and lot standards are established in Chapter 18 of the municipal code, detailed in 18.70.070.I.<sup>8</sup> Poulsbo Place Cottages, a 45-unit development created in 2001, is featured in The Housing Partnership's "The Right Size Home: Housing Innovation in Washington". Residents are described as predominantly empty-nesters and retirees, with some young commuters. The site plan, shown in Exhibit 6, demonstrates how clusters can be situated in a contiguous fashion to create a larger subdivision. The project was built as a planned unit development on the site of a previous military housing development.

This style development is an example of a site not eligible for Ellensburg's current density bonus program, as only one type of alternate housing type is incorporated.

#### Exhibit 6: Poulsbo Place Cottages Site Plan.



#### SITE STATS

Total size: **17.3 acres**

Site density: **12  
units/acre**

Number of homes: **45**

Interior size of homes:  
**870 – 1,265 SF**

Source: [\*"The Right Size Home: Housing Innovation in Washington"\*](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Poulsbo City Code 18.70.070](#)

## TOWNHOUSES

Townhouses are currently the sole housing type that is permitted across all residential and non-residential zones in Ellensburg.<sup>9</sup> Design guidelines encourage aesthetic integration with single family areas while offering added density that can also work well in mixed use neighborhoods, near commercial services and transit. In the R-S zone, townhouses are not allowed to be located adjacent to single family dwellings, except where they are an approved use on an individual plat. Townhouses have a 2-space requirement for parking per dwelling unit, and if there are more than four bedrooms within a structure an additional parking space is required per bedroom. Landscaping requirements include planting strips at all entries and additional features such as trees and shrubs when alley access is not available for parking.

To test potential barriers in Ellensburg's development code for townhouses, sample townhouse site plans were reviewed with planning staff. The following barriers were discussed upon review of these site plans:

- **Special approval would be needed for any townhouse approval.** Townhouses are not allowed adjacent to single family dwellings without individual site approval. This is a barrier to infill development.
- **Density restrictions are a barrier.** Site plans demonstrated densities closer to 15 units/acre. Within the RS and RL zones, the maximum density is 6 and 8 units per acre, respectively. The density bonus for alternative housing types does not kick in for developments under 5 acres and even with the 10% or 15% bonus, typical townhouse densities would not be permissible.
- **Parking and driveway regulations are restrictive.** Site plan review identified features such as street-facing garages and parking for only one vehicle per unit. In Ellensburg, townhouse garages cannot face a public street and a minimum of 2 cars per unit is required.
- **Landscaping plans are required.** In Ellensburg, planter strips of at least 4 feet would be required at each home entrance. In addition, units with garages require planting areas near pedestrian entries of at least 20 square feet with a combination of shrubs or ground cover and a tree.
- **In general, Ellensburg's townhouse development code is challenging to interpret, and included photos are not helpful.** No townhouse development applications have been submitted in Ellensburg, making this review a new exercise of putting code language to use. Planners note that the current regulations are confusing and difficult to apply. Simpler code language with fewer site constraints could

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<sup>9</sup> [EMC 15.540.060](#)

improve the efficiency of the review process, in addition to initial site planning from developers.

## DENSITY BONUS INCENTIVE

Ellensburg's density bonus incentive<sup>10</sup> is allowed in its R-S and R-L zones. Bonuses are offered for energy efficient construction, adding to the mix of housing types, adding off-street trails, using the TDR program, incorporating historic preservation, and including income-restricted affordable housing. This review focuses on the density bonus offered for missing middle housing types ("greater mix of housing types") and affordable housing. Bonuses can be combined to a maximum of 12 units/acre in R-S and 14 units/acre in R-L.

- **Language regarding compounding benefits should be clarified.** The bonus description states that "Developments may use a combination of bonus elements provided they comply with the maximum density provisions set forth for the zone in Table 15.320.030." Provide example calculations to demonstrate this methodology, particularly the combination of affordable housing with a greater mix of housing types.

### Exhibit 7: Density Bonuses for R-S and R-L Zones in Ellensburg

Bonus element	Density bonus % increase
Energy efficient construction/Built Green, LEED or other similar environmental certification	25 – 150%
Greater mix of housing types	10 – 15%
Off-street trails	5 – 20%
Transfer of development rights (TDR)	Up to 50%
Historic preservation	15 to 50%
Affordable housing	15 to 50%

Source: ECC Table 15.330.020

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<sup>10</sup> [ECC 15.330.020](#)

## Missing Middle Housing

The **'greater mix of housing types' bonus** adds 10% to the base maximum density for developments with at least 50% alternative housing types (incorporating 2 styles) and 15% to the base density for developments with at least 67% of units of alternative housing types (incorporating 3 styles). This bonus includes a minimum lot size of 5 acres. The table in Exhibit 8 identifies the housing types eligible for this bonus, in addition to typical site densities associated with each style.

### Exhibit 8: Housing Types Eligible for Ellensburg Density Bonus, with Typical Site Densities

Unit Type	Typical Density*
ADUs	Doubles density of existing lot
Cottage housing	4 – 24 per acre
2-3-4-plexes	10 – 20 per acre
Townhouses	13 – 30 units/acre
Courtyard apartments	7 – 50 units/acre

\*Typical densities based on *Housing Choices Guidebook*, adjusting figures down by 67% to account for net- to gross-density calculations, as shown in [The Urbanist](#). Conversion will vary based on ROW dedications and infill versus subdivision development.

Source: ["Housing Choices Guidebook"](#) -Oregon Department of Transportation

A 10% density bonus creates a maximum density of 6.6 units/acre or 8.8 units/acre in the R-S and R-L zones, respectively. A 15% density bonus creates a maximum density of 6.9 units/acre and 9.2 units/acres in these zones. This bonus only applies to projects with development sites of at least 5 acres. A summary of options is demonstrated in Exhibit 9.



**Exhibit 9: Example Uses of Existing Density Bonus for 5-acre and 10-acre lot sizes**

	R-S Zone		R-L Zone	
	10% Bonus	15% Bonus	10% Bonus	15% Bonus
Max Density	6.6 units/acre	6.9 unit/acre	8.8 units/acre	9.2 units/acre
<b>5-acre site, mix of SFR and Townhouses</b>	15 SFR 15 Townhouses <b>+ 3 bonus units</b>	10 SFR 20 Townhouses <b>+5 bonus units</b>	20 SFR 20 Townhouses <b>+ 4 bonus units</b>	13 SFR 27 Townhouses <b>+6 bonus units</b>
<b>10-acre site, mix of SFR and cottage housing</b>	30 SFR 30 Cottage homes (in 3 clusters) <b>+6 bonus units</b>	20 SFR 40 Cottage homes (in 5 clusters) <b>+9 bonus units</b>	40 SFR 40 Cottage homes (in 4 clusters) <b>+8 bonus units</b>	27 SFR 53 Cottage homes (in 6 clusters) <b>+12 bonus units</b>

Sources: ECC 15.330.020; BERK, 2021

Ellensburg's density bonus for missing middle housing types has not been used since its introduction in 2013. Key takeaways identify potential barriers to the implementation of units which qualify for this program:

- **This incentive does not apply to infill housing development.** Removing the 5-acre minimum lot size requirement would allow for infill housing of alternative types.
- **The requirement for incorporating multiple housing styles is unnecessary.** This adds a barrier of complexity to site development which can decrease project feasibility. Removing this requirement could help developers simplify site planning when applying for the bonus, and it better aligns with infill developments.
- **The current bonus level is too low to adequately encourage townhouse, duplex, or multifamily production.** Average site densities for these housing types are much higher than the permitted densities, even with the bonus incentive.
  - A 50% bonus increases site density to 9 and 12 units per acre. This could better accommodate small multifamily projects, such as 3- and 4-plex units.
  - A 100% bonus, similar to that offered for LEED-platinum construction, would allow for 12 and 16 units per acre. This is better aligned with typical site densities for cottage housing, duplexes, or larger unit townhouse developments, although the current maximum density for the R-L zone is 14 units per acre.
  - The maximum densities for each zone, with density bonuses applied, is 12 units

per acre in R-S and 14 units per acre in R-L. As shown in the table in Exhibit 8, these densities represent the very low end of typical densities for many missing middle housing types.

- **The added density bonus does not increase capacity for ADUs, as they are already permitted in these two zones.** An allowance for two ADUs on a site would need to be incorporated for the density bonus to be effective at encouraging ADU construction.

## Affordable Housing

The density bonus for affordable housing is based on the percentage of income-restricted affordable housing units incorporated into the development, starting at 15% with a maximum of 50%. For example, a development with 60 units may reserve 18, or 30%, as affordable units. A density bonus of 30% would apply, adding another 18 units for a total of 78 total units in the development.

For purposes of the density bonus, income-restricted units must meet affordability requirements for the 80% median income in Kittitas County threshold or less. They must maintain income-restricted status for at least 25 years. Units can be either renter- or owner-occupied but must be the same as other market-rate units within the development.

Since its introduction in 2013, the affordable housing density bonus has only been used with developments of all income-restricted units. This program may want to consider a few adjustments moving forward:

- Findings from the Housing Needs Assessment indicate that market rate rents are comparable to rent that meets the affordability requirement for Kittitas County's 80% median income thresholds. At the same time, the study identified a greater need for units affordable to households between 50 – 80% AMI. **Ellensburg may want to consider adjusting unit eligibility for groups lower than 80% AMI, particularly for rental units using the density bonus.** A tiered program could offer a greater density bonus for units available to lower income brackets.
- **Process improvements** that can promote the ease and efficiency of operating affordable housing could help address barriers of programmatic uncertainty for developers who typically construct market rate housing.
- **Further financial analysis may be needed** to better understand costs of construction and benefits of the density bonus to attract new developers to the program.



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT REVIEW

## Introduction

The City of Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, amended in 2018, meets the regional responsibilities to manage urban growth for current and future residents through 2037. Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan lays out a road map for navigating 20 years of projected population and employment growth by articulating a vision and corresponding core values, goals to achieve the vision, and policies and programs to promote the core values. Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan includes eight primary plan elements, for the purposes of this Housing Action Plan, policy guidance within Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan Housing Element was reviewed.

The Housing Element goals, policies, and programs are assessed below in terms of progress of implementation as well as alignment with the Housing Needs Assessment. Each goal area is followed by an evaluation discussion that includes a summary of work done to date and considerations for future action. The City of Ellensburg faces growth pressures and various challenges and opportunities as it relates to housing development, this makes it important to review current conditions and progress towards achieving planning goals. As the City continues to grow, creative approaches might be needed to accommodate growth and support diverse community needs.

**TABLE 1. Evaluation Legend**

Evaluation by progress of implementation	Evaluation	Alignment with findings from Housing Needs Assessment:	Evaluation
<b>Not yet started</b>	Not started	The policy may challenge the City's ability to meet the needs identified in the HNA. The policy's benefits and consequences should be reviewed to optimize the ability to meet the policy's objectives while minimizing the negative impacts on meeting the housing needs of all community members.	Challenge
<b>Early/initiated</b>	Early	The policy is aligned to the needs identified in the HNA but may not be sufficient to meet those needs. The City may consider amending the policies to encourage the desired development.	Amend/Review
<b>Moderate progress through funding/code/program development</b>	Moderate	The policy is valid and helpful. There is continued need for the policy and it is likely to help the City meet the needs identified in the Housing Needs Assessment.	Valid
<b>Completed</b>	Completed	The policy does not impact the City's ability to meet the needs identified in the HNA.	Neutral

**TABLE 2. Goal H-1 – Preserve, protect, and strengthen the vitality and stability of existing neighborhoods**

Comprehensive Plan Policies, and Programs		Progress of implementation	Alignment with findings from Housing Needs Assessment
<b>Policy A</b>	<b>Encourage development of an appropriate mix of housing choices through innovative land use and well-crafted regulations.</b>	<b>Early</b>	<b>Amend/Review</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Integrate new development, with consideration to design and scale that complements existing neighborhoods and provides effective transitions between different uses and intensities.	Moderate	Valid
<b>Program 2</b>	Encourage infill development on vacant and underused sites.	Not started	Valid
<b>Policy B</b>	<b>Establish additional logical access routes outside of the existing street system for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Identify trail easements and develop an effective maintenance strategy.	Moderate	Neutral
<b>Policy C</b>	<b>Protect and connect residential neighborhoods so they retain identity and character and provide amenities that enhance quality of life.</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Amend/Review</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Encourage housing opportunities in mixed residential/commercial settings throughout the city.	Early	Valid
<b>Program 2</b>	Provide increased residential density and improve infrastructure along arterials and transit routes through redevelopment and retrofitting, such as sidewalks and stormwater treatment.	Moderate	Valid
<b>Program 3</b>	Assure that site, landscaping, building, and design regulations create effective transitions between different land uses and densities.	Early	Valid
<b>Policy D</b>	<b>Promote sense of place in neighborhoods.</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Valid</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Promote high quality design that is compatible with the overall style and character of established neighborhoods.	Moderate	Valid
<b>Program 2</b>	Support the preservation of Ellensburg's historically-significant housing through the City's historic preservation program, which maintains a list of historic properties and districts, and provides education and incentives.	Moderate	Amend/Review

<b>Program 3</b>	Encourage the use of long-lived, low-maintenance building materials; high-efficiency energy systems; and low impact development techniques that reduce housing life-cycle costs and provide better environmental performance.	Moderate	Challenge
<b>Program 4</b>	Foster innovative housing and mixtures of housing types that preserve natural resources and consolidate open space.	Early	Amend/Review

### *Evaluation Discussion*

Ellensburg's Land Development was comprehensively updated in 2013 and includes cottage housing standards, maximum block lengths, policies that promote connections between residential neighborhoods, landscaping standards, and open space requirements. In addition, the city adopts state building code standards that provide for high-energy efficiency standards.

The Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2018 to include goals and future land use designations that provide for increasing mixed commercial and residential use areas. The city is currently pursuing amendments to its Land Development Code and zoning maps that will implement comprehensive plan goals to increase allowed uses in certain zoning designations – including a wider variety of housing types, and zoning designation changes that will allow for more mixed-use development outside of the downtown core which will increase the available opportunities for more diverse housing types throughout Ellensburg.

Ellensburg passed a complete streets ordinance in 2016 to ensure that construction of city transportation improvement projects accounts for all users. Under this ordinance, the City is able to apply for grants that help to plan, operate, and maintain appropriate facilities for the safe accommodation of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, emergency responders, freight, and users of all ages and abilities in new construction, retrofit, or reconstruction projects.

Comprehensive Plan policies and programs for review and possible amendment to better align with this Housing Action Plan include: Policy A, Policy C, and Policy D – Programs 2 and 4.

Comprehensive Plan policies and programs that are aligned with this Housing Action Plan but have not begun implementation include: Policy A – Program 2. Other areas of focus for implementation of the City's comprehensive plan are policies and programs in early stages of implementation and evaluated as valid for alignment with this Housing Action Plan.

Under Comprehensive Plan Goal H-1, Policy D – Program 3 was the only policy or program considered to be a challenge in terms of alignment with this Housing Action Plan. At this time, implementation of this program is limited to adoption of state building code standards.

**TABLE 2. Goal H-2 – Allow and encourage a variety of housing types and densities to meet housing needs for all economic segments of the community.**

Comprehensive Plan Policies, and Programs		Progress of implementation	Alignment with findings from Housing Needs Assessment
<b>Policy A</b>	<b>Review the Land Development Code to allow for a wider variety of housing types.</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Amend/Review</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Review barriers to the development of denser housing types such as duplexes, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units.	Moderate	Valid
<b>Policy B</b>	<b>Encourage residential development in commercial and mixed-use zones, especially those within proximity to transit.</b>	<b>Early</b>	<b>Valid</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Expand the Multifamily Tax Exemption program beyond the downtown area to encourage multifamily housing in other areas where it is needed.	Early	Valid
<b>Program 2</b>	Evaluate, review, revise, and publicize the density bonus incentive program.	Not started	Amend/Review
<b>Program 3</b>	Work with Central Washington University and private developers to support on-campus housing for students and in transit-served residential/commercial settings throughout the city.	Not started	Amend/Review
<b>Policy C</b>	<b>Consider housing cost and supply implications of proposed regulations and procedures.</b>	<b>Not started</b>	<b>Valid</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Consider reducing parking requirements for mixed-use housing developments and affordable housing developments in closer proximity to jobs and transit.	Early	Amend/Review
<b>Policy D</b>	<b>Create and preserve ADA accessible and affordable housing opportunities locally and with a regional perspective.</b>	<b>Early</b>	<b>Valid</b>
<b>Program 1</b>	Promote working partnerships with public, private, non-profit groups, and developers to plan and develop a range of housing choices.	Moderate	Amend/Review
<b>Program 2</b>	Evaluate other housing affordability programs utilized in other communities that could be incorporated into the Land Development Code.	Early	Amend/Review
<b>Program 3</b>	Support the preservation, maintenance, and improvements of older/historic housing and	Not started	Valid

	assistance to low-income households who want to stay in their homes.		
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### Evaluation Discussion

The City is currently pursuing amendments to the Land Development Code and zoning maps that will allow duplexes and townhomes in zoning districts that previously have primarily only allowed for single family homes. The amendments will also create two new mixed-use zoning districts that will increase the available opportunities for more diverse housing types throughout Ellensburg.

Staff have compiled case studies of parking standards and City Council has had initial discussions related to initiating a citywide parking study to inform right-sized parking requirements. No additional implementation steps have been taken.

Voters passed a sales tax increase in 2018 for affordable housing and related services which has enabled the City to startup a housing fund. Using these funds and City surplus properties, the City has initiated partnerships with local housing organizations to provide affordable homeownership and rental housing for income qualified households.

City staff have taken initial steps to research steps needed to expand the Multifamily Tax Exemption program but have not begun the state process required for expansion.

Comprehensive Plan policies and programs for review and possible amendment to better align with this Housing Action Plan include: Policy A, Policy B – Programs 2 and 3, Policy C – Programs 1, and Policy D – Programs 1 and 2.

Comprehensive Plan policies and programs that are aligned with this Housing Action Plan but have not begun implementation include: Policy B – Program 2 and 3, and Policy D – Program 3. Other areas of focus for implementation of the City's comprehensive plan are policies and programs in early stages of implementation and evaluated as valid for alignment with this Housing Action Plan.

**TABLE 3. Comprehensive Plan Goal H-3 – Encourage and support a variety of housing opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities.**

Comprehensive Plan Policies, and Programs		Progress of implementation	Alignment with findings from Housing Needs Assessment
<b>Policy A</b>	<b>Collaborate with other jurisdictions, organizations, and private developers to meet special housing needs that address a broad spectrum of solutions.</b>	Early	Valid
<b>Program 1</b>	Promote accessible and affordable housing in areas that are close to services and the rest of the community.	Early	Valid

<b>Program 2</b>	Coordinate with local organizations and agencies to provide sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services.	Moderate	Valid
<b>Program 3</b>	Promote the use of universal design principles for new development or redevelopment housing projects.	Not started	Valid

### *Evaluation Discussion*

Voters passed a sales tax increase in 2018 for affordable housing and related services which has enabled the City to start up a housing fund. Using these funds and City surplus properties, the City has initiated partnerships with local housing organizations to provide affordable homeownership and rental housing for income qualified households.

The City provides a discounted utility rate for older adults, and also partners with the local Community Action Agency to provide utility assistance to income qualified households.

The City also partners with the local Community Action Agency to qualify community members for the City's utility assistance program, which is made available to low-income seniors and disabled at the 125% poverty level.

Comprehensive Plan policies and programs that are aligned with this Housing Action Plan but have not begun implementation include: Policy A – Program 3. Other areas of focus for implementation of the City's comprehensive plan are policies and programs in early stages of implementation and evaluated as valid for alignment with this Housing Action Plan.

# Appendix C: Community Engagement Summary



# Public Engagement Summary

City of Ellensburg Housing Action Plan | October 2021

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## Introduction

### WHAT IS THE HOUSING ACTION PLAN (HAP)?

The City of Ellensburg is creating a Housing Action Plan (HAP) to support and encourage new housing production to make sure a variety of housing is available and affordable for people of all incomes in Ellensburg. After adoption in October, the HAP will be a comprehensive tool that helps the City implement housing policies, programs, and strategies.

### WHAT IS THIS ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY?

In addition to data analysis and prior planning efforts, the HAP will be shaped by input from community members. This summary outlines the City's engagement and

communication efforts conducted during the development of the HAP as well as a summary of the community's input.

## What have we done to date?

### ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Visual Preference Survey

The City's visual preference survey gauged community response to various forms of missing middle housing and allowed respondents to select preferences for where these types fit within existing neighborhoods. The survey included images of 70+ different types of housing grouped by potential areas for application in Ellensburg, including single family areas, transitional areas, multifamily areas, downtown area, freeway interchange area, and commercial areas. For each area, respondents were asked to evaluate different housing types, including single-family, manufactured, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwelling units, apartments, condominiums, and university dormitories and family/adult housing.

Starting June 28, 2021, the survey was made available on the City's website, via the City's community engagement platform [Housing Action Plan | City of Ellensburg \(beheardburg.com\)](https://beheardburg.com). Advertisement began the same day with posts on the city's social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook). Additional weekly posts to social media ran through the month of July. On June 29, a Newsflash was posted on the City's homepage, and a press release was sent to the *Daily Record*. In addition, the survey was promoted via a flyer in the monthly utility bills during the month of July, and flyers were posted in each of the City's public buildings and on public billboards on the CWU campus. The survey was also promoted through partner networks via stakeholder advisory group members. A banner advertising the website BeHeardEburg.com hung above University Way for four weeks in August. The survey was open through August 8.

#### Stakeholder Advisory Group

A fourteen-member Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) met three times during the development of the HAP:

##### *Meeting 1: May 27, 2021*

Kick-off and Discussion of housing needs

##### *Meeting 2: June 17, 2021*

Review and refinement of housing strategies

### Meeting 3: August 5, 2021

#### Review of community engagement strategies

##### Stakeholder Advisory Group Members

**Sarah Bedsaul** serves on the Affordable Housing Commission and previously directed a local community land trust.

**Hongtao Dong** is an Assistant Professor in Construction Management at Central Washington University (CWU) and serves on the Affordable Housing Commission.

**Steve Dupont** is a professor of Government Affairs at CWU and represents CWU's President's Office.

**Jennifer Ellis** is the Executive Director for the Kittitas County Housing Authority.

**Tyler Glahn**, of Glahn Enterprises, is a local builder and developer.

**Landis Hanson** is a student at CWU and member of Ellensburg's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

**Jenna Hyatt** is CWU's Associate Dean of Student Living.

**Craig Kelly** is the Director of Assets for HopeSource.

**John Littel** is a board member of the Kittitas County Housing Authority.

**Amy McGuffin** is the CEO of the Kittitas Chamber of Commerce.

**Fred Padjen** is a long-time Ellensburg resident and custom home builder and designer who serves on Ellensburg's Planning Commission.

**Kelle Dvorak Vandenberg** is the Area Director for Kittitas Habitat for Humanity

**Rex Wirth** works with Oddfellows & APOYO and is a retired CWU professor.

**Toby Williams** is a local real estate agent with Remax Realty.

### Board and Commission Meetings

At key milestones in the planning process, the Planning Commission, City Council, and Affordable Housing Commission reviewed materials and provided feedback and guidance. The Planning Commission held a public hearing prior to making a recommendation on the Housing Action Plan to the City Council. The City Council received the Planning Commission's recommendation and took final action on the Housing Action Plan during a public hearing. The public was invited to attend and speak at all regular Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

During the Planning Commission's regular meeting of April 8, 2021, the Commission discussed the steps for developing the Housing Action Plan, and their role in that process. An update on the HAP was provided at the May 13 meeting, and key

findings from the Housing Needs Assessment were shared during the July 15 meeting. Additional meetings to discuss the HAP were held with the Commission on August 5 and August 26. A public hearing was held before the Commission on September 23, following which they forwarded a recommendation to adopt the HAP to City Council.

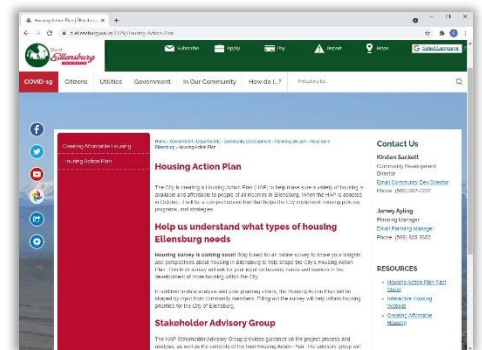
The Affordable Housing Commission (AHC) also reviewed the process for developing a Housing Action Plan during their regular meeting on April 7, at which two members of the AHC were assigned to be part of the HAP Stakeholder Advisory Group. A status update on the work of the HAP was provided by Staff at the May 5 meeting, with more in-depth commission discussion during the June 2 meeting. At the July 7 meeting, Staff shared key findings from the Housing Needs Assessment, followed by commission discussion about additional strategies for community engagement. The August 4 meeting was dedicated to a discussion on anti-displacement strategies that could be included in the HAP, and the September 1 meeting included a discussion and recommendations on the final 14 strategies recommended for inclusion in the HAP.

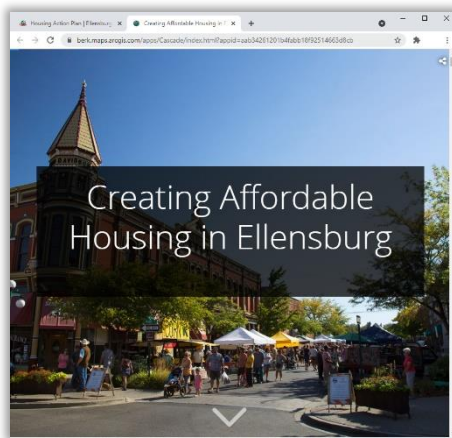
Leading up to adoption, City Council held three study sessions focused on Affordable Housing and the Housing Action Plan. During the June 28 meeting, Staff held a policy discussion about the purpose of the City's affordable housing programs. This included a review of events since 2016 taken by the City to combat the affordable housing issues in the community. During the July 19 study session Staff provided Council with a briefing about the background and purpose of the HAP, shared key findings from the Housing Needs Assessment, and discussed the strategies under consideration for inclusion in the HAP. At the August 16 study session staff provided a briefing on the additional anti-displacement strategies that were under consideration after discussion with the AHC, Planning Commission, and Stakeholder Advisory Group. The City Council public hearing to consider adoption of the HAP was scheduled for October 4, 2021. At the conclusion of the hearing, City Council adopted the 2021 Housing Action Plan for the City of Ellensburg.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTIFICATION

### City Project Website

The [City's website](#) serves as a repository for project information, including status updates, draft documents, schedules, and opportunities for involvement.





## Interactive Housing Dashboard

This [interactive housing dashboard](#) offers detailed information for community members interested in learning more about existing conditions in Ellensburg. Topics covered include population characteristics, the rate of households that are “cost-burdened,” housing supply, housing affordability, and special housing needs populations in Ellensburg.

## Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet provides an overview of the project, key issues, and ways to get involved. The content was developed based on the comments, questions, and issues raised by community members and stakeholders. The Fact Sheet was made available on the Project Website.

## Notifications in Utility Bills

A one-page insert advertising the online housing survey was included in every City utility bill that went out in the month of July. The flyer gave a brief description of the purpose of the Housing Action Plan and provided the URL link and QR code for taking the online survey. The flyer was double-sided, with content in English and in Spanish.



## What We Heard

Ellensburg's survey was released on June 28 and was made available through the City's online community engagement platform [Housing Action Plan | City of Ellensburg \(BeHeardEburg.com\)](#). Advertisement began the same day with posts on the city's social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook). Additional weekly posts to social media ran through the month of July. On June 29, a Newsflash was posted on the City's homepage, and a press release was sent to the *Daily Record*. In addition, the survey was promoted in the monthly utility bills during the month of July, and flyers were posted in each of the City's public buildings and on public billboards on the CWU campus. The survey was also promoted through partner networks via stakeholder advisory group members. A banner advertising the website BeHeardEburg.com hung above University Way August 2-27.

## VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

Visual questions in housing surveys help respondents understand housing terminology and respond accurately to questions about design preferences and existing housing types. Questions were asked about these various housing types across six different neighborhood types in the city: single family, transitional, multifamily, downtown, freeway interchange, and commercial areas.

Ellensburg's survey site received 850 visitors with 233 completed responses. Full results for visual preference questions can be found in Exhibit 3 through Exhibit 11. Respondents were given the selection between "Yes- enthusiastically!", "Yes – acceptable", "Neutral/unsure", "Probably not" and "Absolutely not!" when shown an image of a housing type with identified design features in reference to a certain area in the city. Responses are summarized below. Key findings include:

- Ellensburg's community is generally supportive of variety in housing types across its different zones. For most images tested, respondents selected positive or neutral responses at rates over 50%.
- Some building types were consistently favored across multiple zones.
  - Description: Two attached units with modulated roofline/façade, separate covered entries, garages/driveways to the rear off alley.



**yes | neutral | no**

*Single family areas: 72% | 9% | 19%*

*Transitional areas: 70% | 15% | 15%*

*Multifamily areas: 83% | 7% | 10%*

- Description: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, balconies, façade modulation and mix of materials, widened sidewalk, underground parking.



**yes | neutral | no**

*Downtown areas: 55% | 13% | 32%*

*Freeway Interchange areas: 56% | 20% | 35%*

*Commercial areas: 58% | 15% | 27%*

- Some building types were tested across multiple areas with different results. For example, the 7-story building, shown below, was rated more acceptable in freeway interchange areas than when polled for downtown or commercial areas.
  - Description: Seven story apartment building(s) with internal courtyard, sky bridge, façade modulation, modern design, underground parking





**yes | neutral | no**

Downtown areas: 24% | 13% | 63%

Freeway interchange areas: 37% | 16% | 46%

Commercial areas: 32% | 15% | 52%

- **All polled housing types received over 50% positive or neutral responses as being appropriate in single family areas.** Survey images included nine different design varieties of duplexes and triplexes. See Exhibit 3.
  - Currently, only duplexes are allowed in single family zones. These results indicate that triplexes could be acceptable in some of these areas, as long as design guidelines reflect community preferences.
  - The most popular housing types were units with pitched roofs and covered entries, and where garages do not dominate the ground level view. The three images receiving the highest percentage of supportive responses are shown below.



72% yes, 9% neutral



68% yes, 12% neutral



67% yes, 13% neutral

- **All polled housing types received over 50% positive or neutral responses as being appropriate in transitional areas.** Survey images included twelve different design varieties of duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and 3-4 story apartment buildings. See Exhibit 4.
  - Most popular housing types were duplexes, with the same three images rising to the top as found in the single family selections.
- **All polled housing types received over 60% positive or neutral responses as being appropriate in multifamily areas.** Survey images included twelve different design varieties of duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and 3-4 story apartment buildings. See Exhibit 6.
  - Most popular styles of apartment buildings were those featuring common courtyards.



54% yes, 15% neutral



52% yes, 13% neutral



- **Most polled housing types received over 50% positive or neutral responses as being appropriate in downtown areas.** Survey images included ten different design varieties of 5-7 story apartment buildings. Two styles polled with negative responses over 50%. See Exhibit 8. Comments emphasized the importance of maintaining the distinctive character and charm of Ellensburg's downtown as a defining feature of the city. Many residents mentioned that they would like to lived in mixed-use communities near downtown.

- Most popular styles of apartment buildings were 5-6 stories with underground parking, ground floor commercial and/or live-work units, and various forms of balconies. Currently, the maximum building height downtown is 45' – too low to accommodate any of these styles.



55% yes, 13% neutral



49% yes, 15% neutral



47% yes, 11% neutral

- The three styles with over 50% negative responses are shown below. The building to the left is the only 7-story building featured. The six-story building in the center lacks some of the design variety described for other building types. The five-story building to the right is the only building described with structured parking.



63% no



62% no

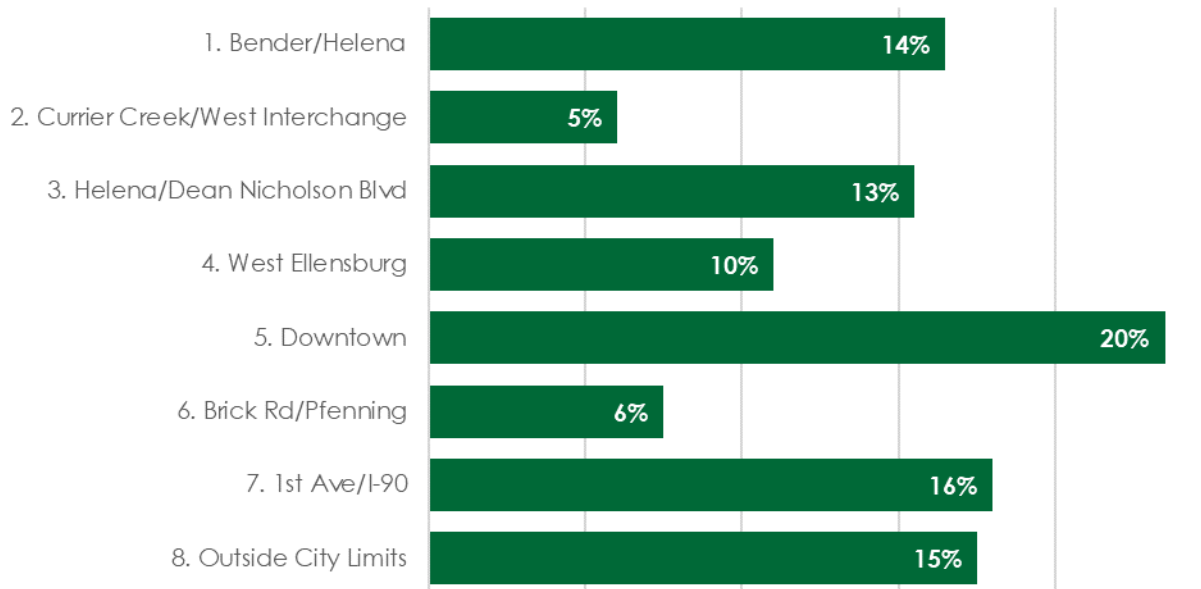


55% no

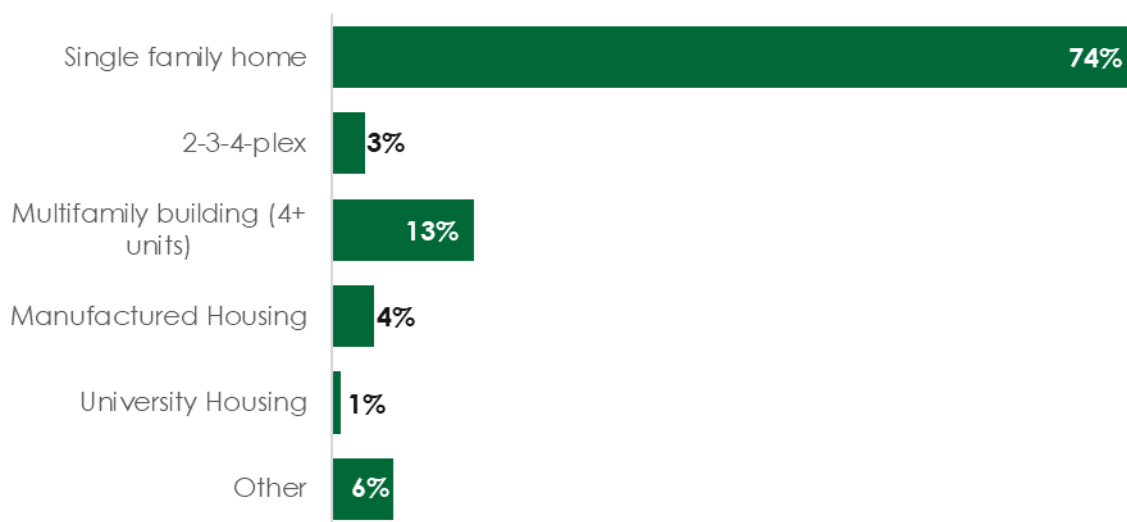
- **All polled housing types received over 50% positive or neutral responses as being appropriate in freeway interchange areas.** Survey images included ten different design varieties of 5-7 story apartment buildings. See Exhibit 10.
  - Most popular styles featured 5- and 6-story buildings with underground parking, ground floor commercial, modulated exterior designs, and a mix of façade materials. These results mirror those found in the downtown areas.
- **Most polled housing types received over 50% positive or neutral responses as being appropriate in commercial areas.** Survey images included ten different design varieties of 5-7 story apartment buildings. One style polled with negative responses over 50%. See Exhibit 11.

- Most popular styles 5-story buildings with ground floor commercial and underground parking. Again, these styles resemble those favored for downtown areas.
- The one style with over 50% negative responses was the 5-story building, which was also disliked in downtown areas.

#### Exhibit 1: Where do you live?



#### Exhibit 2: What type of housing do you currently live in?



### Exhibit 3: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for single family areas.

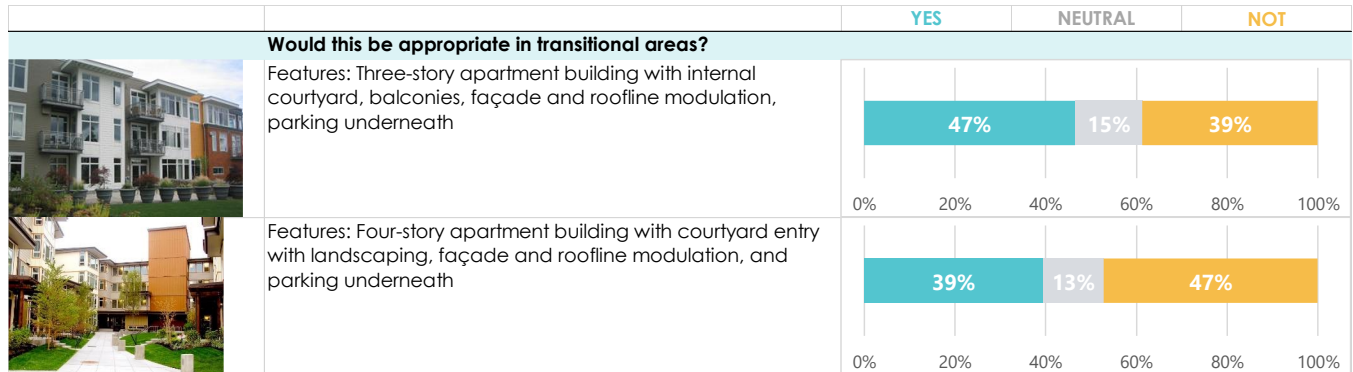
		YES	NEUTRAL	NOT
<b>Would this be appropriate in single family areas?</b>				
	Features: Corner duplex with garages/driveways and covered front entries on opposite streets, modulated façade and roofline	68%	12%	20%
	Features: Duplex with front driveways/garages and covered front entries (separated), modulated façade/roofline	61%	10%	29%
	Features: Duplex with separated garages/driveways and covered front entries, modulated façade and roofline	67%	13%	20%
	Features: Duplex with front driveway/garage and covered entries (separated)	50%	16%	34%
	Features: Duplex with modulated roofline/façade, separate covered entries, garages/driveways to the rear off alley	72%	9%	19%
	Features: Two stacked units (one unit over the other) with porches on first and second floors, driveway to side and garages in rear	52%	14%	34%
	Features: Triplex with modulated roofline/façade, separate covered entries, garages/driveways to the rear off alley	48%	17%	35%
	Features: Triplex with separated garages/driveways, modulated façade/roofline, separate covered entries	48%	16%	36%
	Features: Triplex with separated garages/driveways, modulated façade/roofline, separate covered entries	39%	18%	43%

## Exhibit 4: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for transitional areas, 1 of 2.

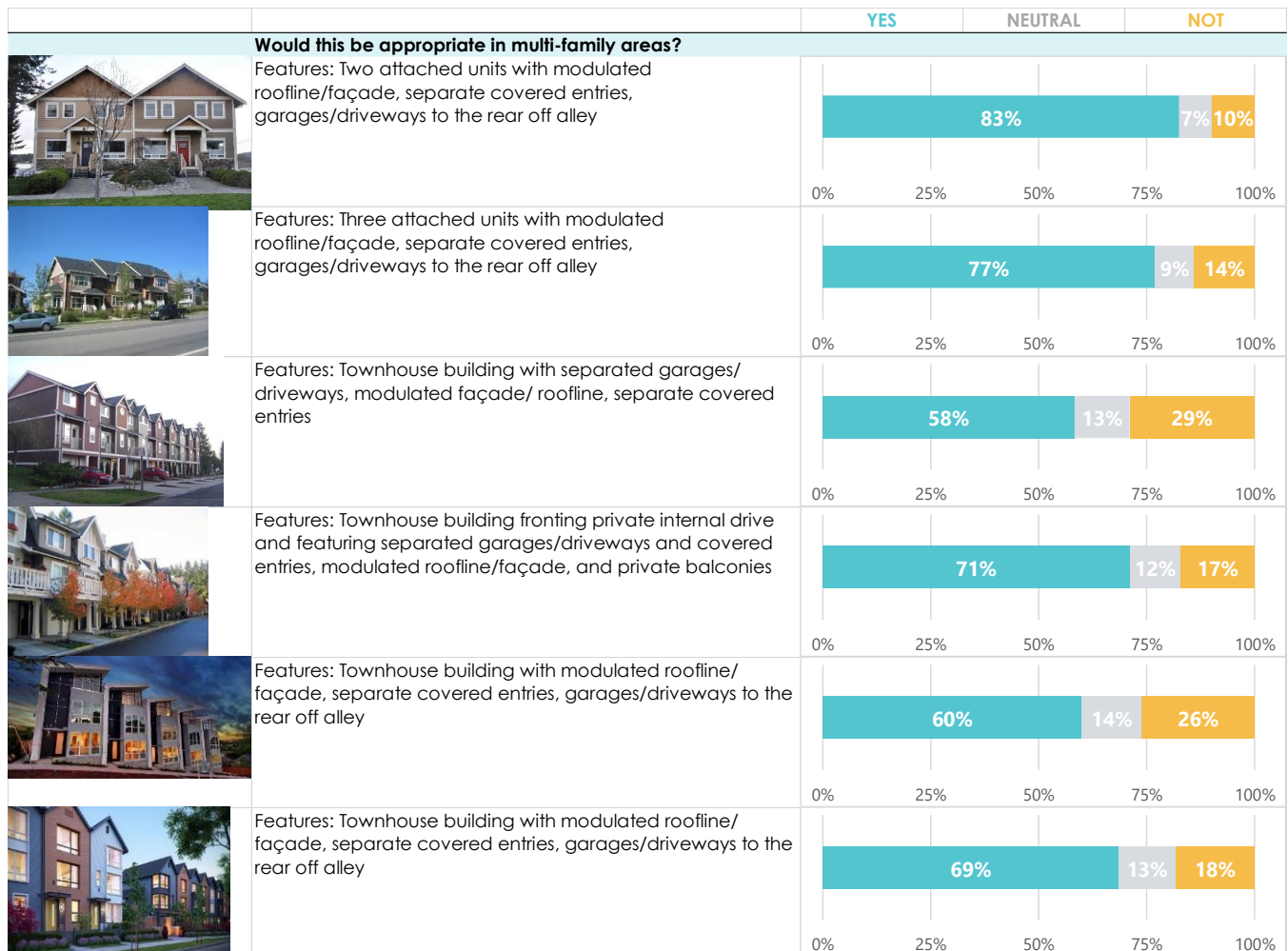




## Exhibit 5: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for transitional areas, 2 of 2.



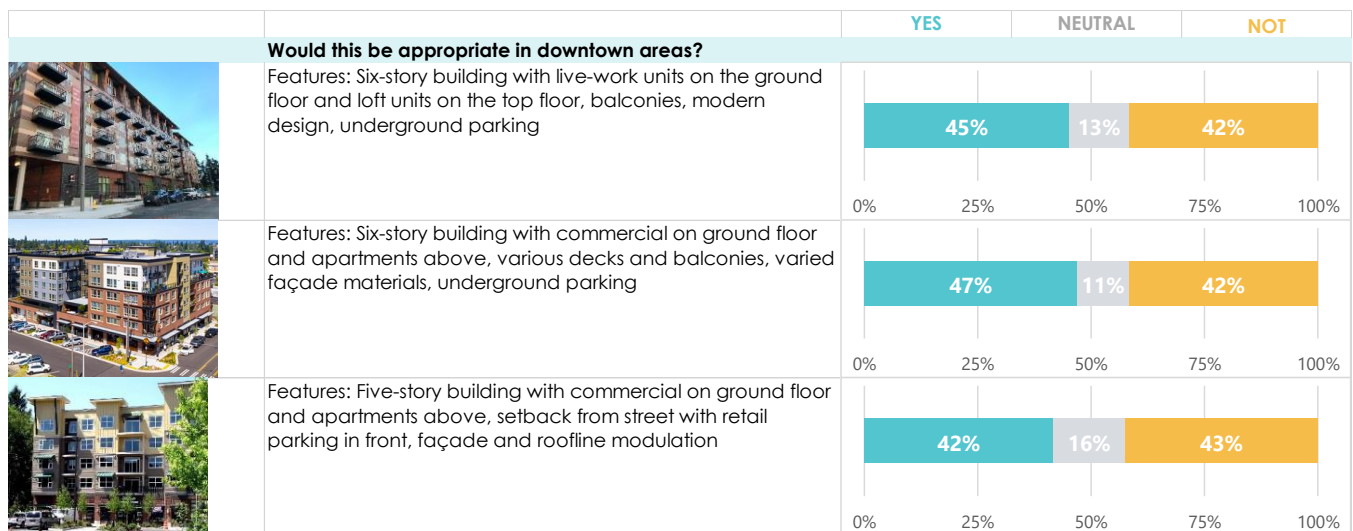
## Exhibit 6: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for multifamily areas, 1 of 2.



## Exhibit 7: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for multifamily areas, 2 of 2.



## Exhibit 8: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for downtown areas, 1 of 2.



## Exhibit 9: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for downtown areas, 2 of 2.





## Exhibit 10: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for freeway interchange areas.

		YES	NEUTRAL	NOT
<b>Would this be appropriate in freeway interchange areas?</b>				
	Features: Six-story building with live-work units on the ground floor and loft units on the top floor, balconies, modern design, underground parking	48%	16%	36%
	Features: Six-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, various decks and balconies, varied façade materials, underground parking	52%	17%	31%
	Features: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, setback from street with retail parking in front, façade and roofline modulation	57%	15%	28%
	Features: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, small corner open space, upper level building stepback, underground parking	57%	17%	26%
	Features: Six-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, balconies, modern design, underground parking	37%	16%	48%
	Features: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, balconies, façade modulation and mix of materials, widened sidewalk, underground parking.	56%	20%	25%
	Features: Five-story apartment building with elevated stoops on ground floor, mix of façade materials, underground parking	52%	17%	31%
	Features: Five-story apartment building with elevated stoops on ground floor, façade and roofline modulation, mix of façade materials, structured parking behind.	46%	21%	34%
	Features: Six-story apartment building with upper level deck for residents looking out over city plaza, façade modulation, modern design, underground parking	46%	14%	40%
	Features: Seven story apartment building(s) with internal courtyard, sky bridge, façade modulation, modern design, underground parking	37%	16%	46%

## Exhibit 11: Community survey results, housing types appropriate for commercial areas.

		YES	NEUTRAL	NOT
	<b>Would this be appropriate in commercial areas?</b>			
	Features: Six-story building with live-work units on the ground floor and loft units on the top floor, balconies, modern design, underground parking	49%	15%	36%
	Features: Six-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, various decks and balconies, varied façade materials, underground parking	49%	19%	32%
	Features: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, setback from street with retail parking in front, façade and roofline modulation	54%	17%	29%
	Features: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, small corner open space, upper level building stepback, underground parking	57%	17%	26%
	Features: Six-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, balconies, modern design, underground parking	34%	19%	47%
	Features: Five-story building with commercial on ground floor and apartments above, balconies, façade modulation and mix of materials, widened sidewalk, underground parking	58%	15%	27%
	Features: Five-story apartment building with elevated stoops on ground floor, mix of façade materials, underground parking	50%	18%	32%
	Features: Five-story apartment building with elevated stoops on ground floor, façade and roofline modulation, mix of façade materials, structured parking behind	42%	20%	38%
	Features: Six-story apartment building with upper level deck for residents looking out over city plaza, façade modulation, modern design, underground parking	37%	21%	43%
	Features: Seven story apartment building(s) with internal courtyard, sky bridge, façade modulation, modern design, underground parking	32%	15%	52%

## STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

### Meeting 1: May 27, 2021

This meeting introduced the Housing Action Plan project, the role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) and allowed members to meet each other. In addition to identifying members' questions, concerns, and beliefs about housing opportunities in Ellensburg, City staff shared findings from the Needs Assessment to "ground truth" the data and identify any gaps in analysis.

### Highest Priority Needs Poll

An in-meeting poll asked members to select the three findings that represent the highest priority needs for Ellensburg to address in the Housing Action Plan:

ANSWER CHOICES	▼	RESPONSES ▼
▼ CWU students makes up 55% of the population in Ellensburg		0.00% 0
▼ The majority (68%) of households in Ellensburg are renters		18.18% 2
▼ Ellensburg lacks missing middle housing		63.64% 7
▼ There is a mismatch between the size of housing units and size of households		18.18% 2
▼ Home values in Ellensburg have risen 3 times as fast as regional incomes		18.18% 2
▼ The average apartment rent in Ellensburg increased by 24% since 2012 compared to only a 15% income increase over the same time period		36.36% 4
▼ Almost half of older adults that live alone are cost burdened		45.45% 5
▼ 27% of families are cost burdened		27.27% 3
▼ To meet projected population growth Ellensburg needs to produce 281 housing units per year, current annual production is 107 housing units per year		90.91% 10
Total Respondents: 11		

### Key Discussion Takeaways

- **Housing development is not keeping pace with demand.** Consider how the City can reduce barriers or advertise needs to developers, such as changing density limits and parking requirements.
- **Developable land is limited.** Harder-to-develop land is more expensive to develop—consider building denser housing downtown area to meet housing needs.
- **Students at Central Washington University (CWU) are a large factor in understanding and addressing housing needs.**
  - Many students are cost-burdened, contributing to the high level of cost-burdened households in Ellensburg.
  - Students are typically renters interested in a wide range of housing types, such as ADUs. Consider separating students out in data analysis to get a better sense of student behavior and housing needs and help determine what types of housing CWU should to build.
  - Consider looking at comparable cities with large universities to better understand the relationship between student data and population numbers.

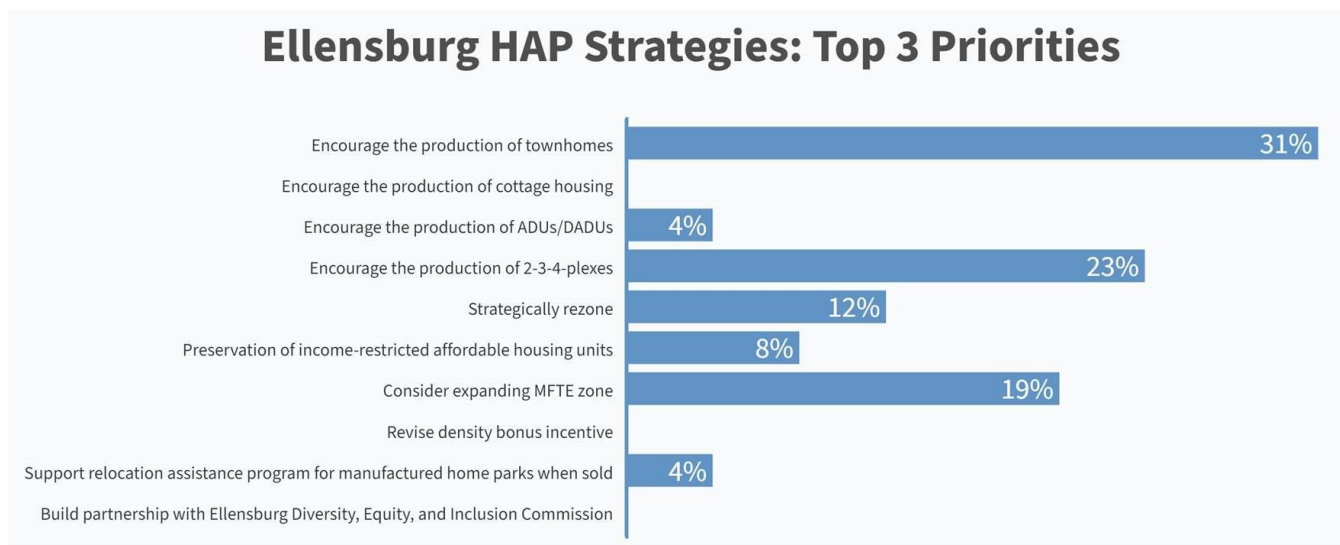
- Although access to a vehicle will affect housing choices, CWU does not have this data.
- CWU has limited faculty and staff housing—to make more housing available, it would be taken from student housing, pushing students into the private market.
- **Should the City leverage its own resources or aim to attract outside resources?**  
Ellensburg has historically been insular. Income data suggests that there are not a lot of wealthy investors, and this has somewhat restricted the development of multifamily and rental housing.

## Meeting 2: June 17, 2021

This workshopping session informed the strategy selection process for the HAP. The consultant presented potential housing strategies to the group before members identified and discussed preferences, priorities, and concerns for HAP strategies.

### HAP Strategies Poll

An in-meeting poll asked members to select the three strategies for inclusion in the Housing Action Plan:



### Key Discussion Takeaways

- **Affordable home ownership is a priority.** Home types such as townhomes and duplexes were highlighted as good fits. In addition, condominiums would be a good fit in Ellensburg and should be included for consideration. Barriers to affordability identified include state energy codes, condo liability laws, and firewalls at lot lines.
- **Added density in residential zones is important.** The City has existing plans to update zoning in certain areas, but more could be done to expand opportunities for denser housing types.

- **There is demand for intergenerational living.** Accommodating DADUs in addition to ADUs would help facilitate this arrangement for families. This may need to start with legislative change at the county, and the city could explore reductions for utility extension costs.
- **Community education is an important component to success with these strategies.** There is a lack in understanding about who is served by income-restricted affordable housing and why changes to the housing code and zoning districts are so important.
- Additional ideas and strategies discussed include: incorporating zero lot-line allowances, expanding relocation assistance to renters as well as manufactured home residents, and making sure that materials and services are offered in languages other than English. Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese were the top languages identified.

### Meeting 3: August 5, 2021

This meeting was an opportunity for SAG members to discuss opportunities to participate in the broader community engagement process, such as survey promotion. They also reviewed HAP strategies, as another opportunity to provide input prior to the release of the public draft HAP.

#### *Review of Survey Responses and Next Steps*

City staff provided a review of data collected to date from the visual preference survey, including an overview of responses, total number of people informed and engaged, and number of surveys completed. Current response count totals 160 completed surveys. Discussion points included respondent perception of survey questions, cost of elevators for buildings above certain heights, the parking implications of high rise buildings, and potential response bias in survey results.

The 'next steps' discussion discussed that implementation phases of the project will dive deeper into the details of some of the issues discussed, as well as continued community engagement. Interest was expressed in a continuation of the Stakeholder Advisory Group throughout implementation phases of the HAP.

#### *Review of Proposed Strategies*

City staff provided a review of currently selected HAP strategies, as well as potential considerations for additional strategies focused on anti-displacement. Discussion focused on opportunities to increase housing density, support tenants' rights, and facilitate smooth and efficient permitting.