

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

KING COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

The Affordable Housing Committee (AHC or Committee) is a group of 19 regional leaders, including elected officials and nonprofit and business representatives, working together to advance regional solutions that address the growing affordable housing crisis in King County. For more information about the AHC, including membership and meeting information, please visit kingcounty.gov/ahc.

A Message from the Chair

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the work of the Affordable Housing Committee, as it did everything else on the globe.

In addition to creating an immediate and urgent housing crisis, COVID-19 made the AHC's goal of building or preserving 44,000 affordable units by 2024 more critical and challenging as housing prices continued to rise in the face of massive job loss and economic uncertainty. The pandemic also demonstrated what we can do when we work together and act with urgency as governments at all levels stepped up to provide rental assistance and keep people in their homes. While the immediacy of the pandemic was undeniable, the inequities and housing instability it laid bare underscored the need for the long-term work of the AHC. As a region,

we need to build the knowledge and political will to make difficult decisions around funding and zoning and create the community support needed to ensure people are safely and affordably housed across King County.

In 2020, the AHC continued this foundational work by updating the housing chapter of the Countywide Planning Policies; adopting Shared Revenue Principles, which put a number to the cost of 44,000 affordable homes; and building a new [Regional Affordable Housing Dashboard](#), which will serve a central role in regional coordination and transparency.

The most current available data from the dashboard shows that only 1,595 units affordable at or below 50 percent of area median income (AMI) were built or preserved in 2019, demonstrating a tremendous challenge for the region. Our work in 2020 shows our commitment to collaboration and transparency, both of which are essential to our long-term success.



King County Council Chair Claudia Balducci,
Affordable Housing Committee Chair

REGIONAL PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTION PLAN

In 2020, the Committee established a database to track new units of income-restricted affordable housing created since the adoption of the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Five Year Action Plan in December 2018.

1,595

Type of Housing Unit ■ 0-30 AMI Units ■ 31-50 AMI Units

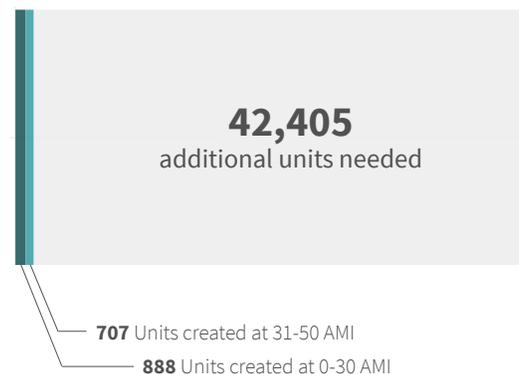


\$18B

The region needs to invest \$18 billion in public capital to meet its 2024 goal. In 2020, the Committee adopted [Shared Revenue Principles](#) to guide future decisions to pursue and implement new revenue sources.

3.6%

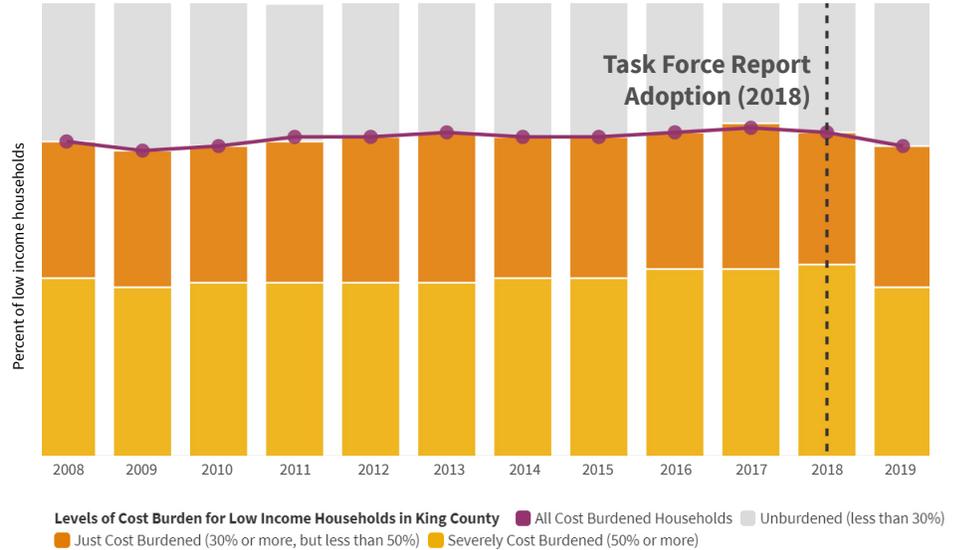
In 2019, 1,595 units, or 3.6 percent of the goal, were created, leaving a gap of 42,405 units to build or preserve to meet the 2024 goal for homes affordable at or below 50 percent of AMI.



Source (All graphics): [Regional Affordable Housing Dashboard \(2020\)](#)

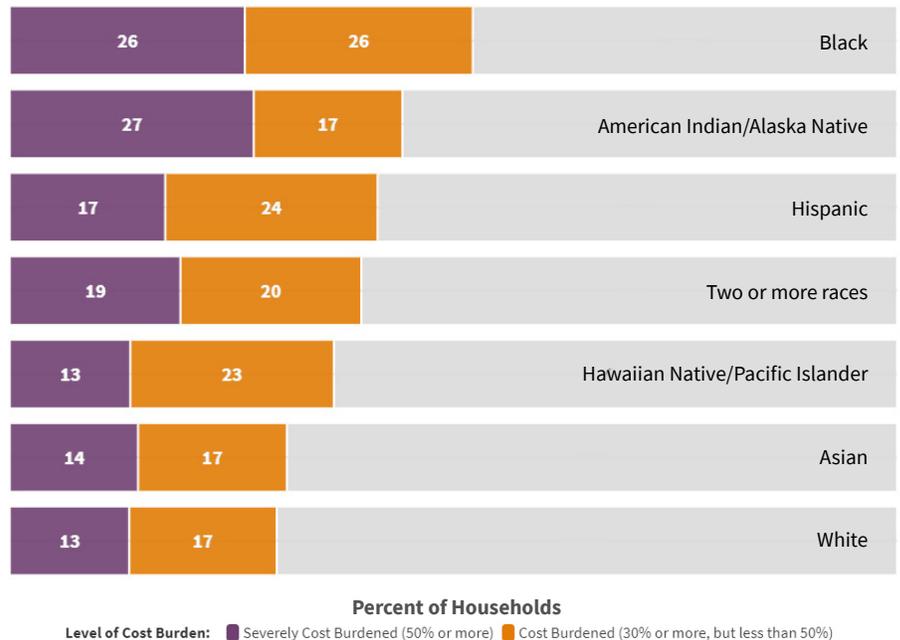
68%

In 2019, 68 percent of low-income households in King County were housing cost burdened meaning they spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing and likely struggled to afford other necessities.



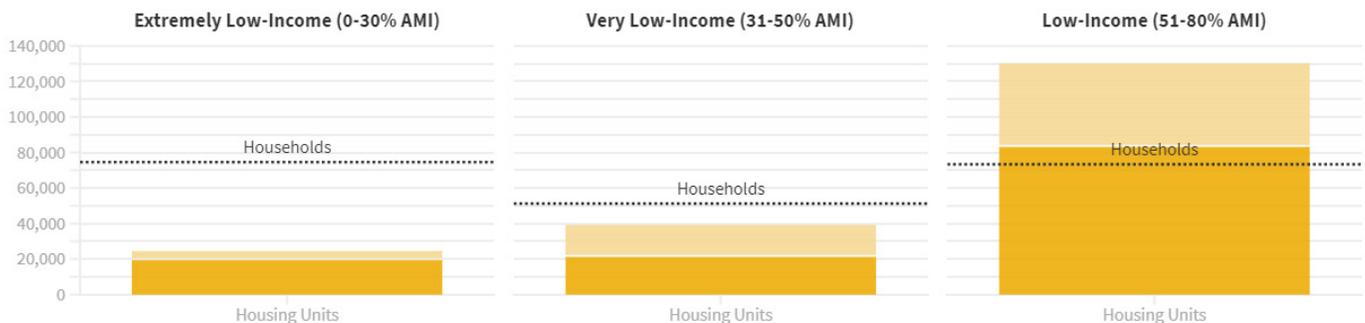
Black, Indigenous, and People of Color households are more likely than white households to live in unaffordable homes.

An equitable approach to addressing the housing crisis will reduce disparities where the need is the greatest. For example, King County’s [Health Through Housing](#) program, established in 2020, creates housing opportunities for people experiencing or at risk of chronic homelessness while reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality.



There aren’t enough affordable and available rental homes to meet the need.

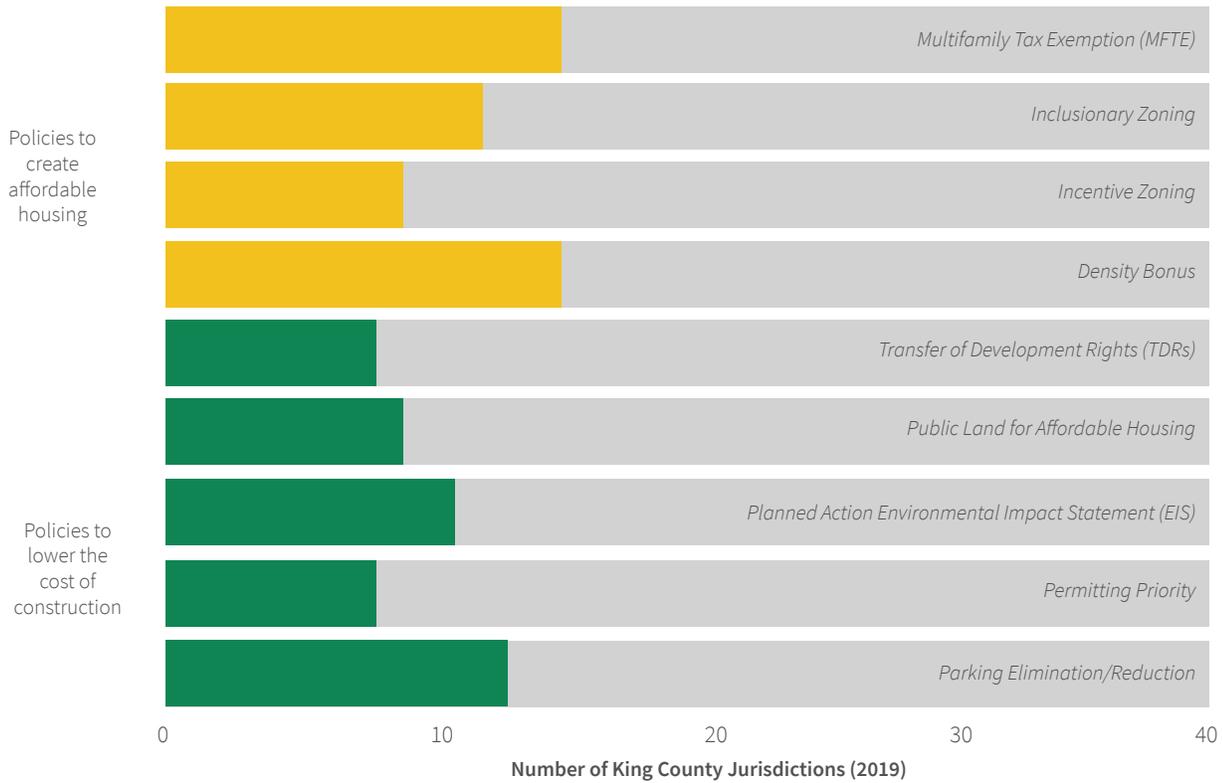
Only 19,986 affordable and available rental homes exist for extremely low-income households (0-30 percent of AMI), leaving a shortage of nearly 54,600 affordable units.



Availability of Rental Housing Unit Affordable and Available Affordable, but not Available **Source (All graphics):** [Regional Affordable Housing Dashboard \(2020\)](#)

Local policies spur the creation of affordable homes and reduce development costs for affordable housing.

For example, in 2020, [Bothell](#) required builders to set aside 10 percent of units in the Canyon Park regional center as affordable at 70 percent of AMI. [Renton](#) passed legislation allowing exemptions to the owner occupancy requirement for accessory dwelling units in new construction, provided the primary or accessory dwelling unit remains affordable at or below 60 percent AMI and a maintenance bond is retained. Despite activity such as this, more work remains to increase the number of jurisdictions boosting affordable housing production and reducing costs.



In King County, most affordable units within walking distance of high-capacity or frequent transit exist in Seattle’s city center, the hub of the region’s transit system.

[State legislation adopted in 2015](#) paved the way for additional affordable housing near transit in more areas of the county. The legislation requires Sound Transit to give away or sell deeply discounted land to qualifying affordable housing developers. As a result, in 2020, [Sound Transit approved the transfer of multiple vacant parcels](#) within walking distance of light rail at no cost to Seattle, reducing the cost to build new affordable homeownership projects. As Sound Transit continues to expand throughout the region, transit agencies will offer no or low-cost surplus land for affordable housing development in more areas of the county, expanding opportunities for low-income households to live near transit.

Source (All graphics): [Regional Affordable Housing Dashboard \(2020\)](#)

