

# Housing Incentives & Tools Survey

*PSRC is fielding a survey to local jurisdictions to gain a better understanding of how tools and incentives are used to promote housing development and affordability.*

Housing affordability continues to be a major challenge for local governments throughout the region. PSRC is conducting a housing survey to better understand how housing tools and incentives are being used today to help support regional and local housing planning efforts. Responses to the survey will help inform work on a regional housing strategy, PSRC technical assistance, and information for local governments on locally-adopted housing tools.

PSRC last surveyed local governments in 2009, as part of the Housing Innovations Program (HIP), to gain a better understanding of how tools and incentives are used to promote housing development and affordability.

**We appreciate your review and completion of the survey by Wednesday, July 31.** Please let us know if this timeline does not work with your schedule. The survey asks questions that will likely involve additional research. In a pilot survey, local government staff estimated that it took approximately an hour to complete, though this may vary based on jurisdiction and the number of housing tools you have in use. Survey responses can be submitted through the online survey tool or completing the attached PDF and returning via email, fax, or USPS. The survey is available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/soundregion> and provided in the attached PDF. We recommend reading the following guide which includes information on how to complete the survey – paper version and online – and a glossary of terms.

Thank you for your time and participation. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Ben Kahn, Assistant Planner at (206) 464-6172 or [bkahn@psrc.org](mailto:bkahn@psrc.org).

## Instructions for Filling Out Paper Survey

The survey has two pages, beginning on page 3 of this PDF. The first page is a matrix with two sections to indicate which housing tools and incentives, and housing types are allowed by code. The second page has multiple choice and open-ended questions. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. Non-responses will be assumed to mean “don’t know” or “does not apply.”

The matrix on page one has two sections. The first asks you to mark the incentives, exemptions, and tools allowed by your jurisdiction’s code with an “X” in the appropriate cell, as well as their geographic, affordability, and population characteristics, where possible. Please also indicate an approximate number of projects and housing units created and/or fees collected as a result of each incentive since 2010, where possible. The second section asks you to identify the housing types allowed by your code and their geographic characteristics. Gray cells do not require a response.

The second page contains seven questions, including five open-ended questions. When you have completed the survey, please email a copy to Ben Kahn at [bkahn@psrc.org](mailto:bkahn@psrc.org), or send a hardcopy in the mail to PSRC, 1011 Western Ave, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98104-1035, Attn: Housing Incentives & Tools Survey.

## Instructions for Filling Out Online Survey

1. Proceed to SurveyMonkey using this link:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/soundregion>
2. The intro page asks for the name of your jurisdiction and a staff contact. The second page contains five questions asking about the incentives and tools allowed by code and the number of projects, units, and in-lieu fees collected that have utilized these tools and incentives in the past 10 years. Question 2 contains a matrix of common tools and exemptions with color-coded categories to identify geographic, affordability, and population constraints. Please check all that apply. Question 6 offers a chance to describe the use of an incentive not listed.

2. Are any of the following incentives, exemptions, or tools allowed by your code? If so, indicate if they are limited to specific geographies and/or populations. Check all that apply. Non-answers are assumed to mean "don't know" or does not apply."

	Allowed by code?	Color-coded categories				POPULATION	
		Regional Center	Local Center	Other locations	AFFORDABILITY Below 80% AMI	AFFORDABILITY Market-rate	POPULATION Senior
Density Bonus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incentive Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusionary zoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MFTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking requirement reduction/elimination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permitting priority/Fee reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planned action EIS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public land for affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transfer of development rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe in Q5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. The third page contains two questions on housing types allowed by code. Question 7 asks you to identify housing types allowed and if they are limited to certain geographies. Question 8 provides space to describe housing types not listed.
4. The fourth page contains questions 9 through 16 and includes open-ended questions which provide opportunities to discuss the successes, challenges, and other thoughts in more detail.

### \*IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT SAVING PROGRESS\*

- The questions may be answered in any order and the survey can be completed in more than one sitting as long as cookies are enabled on your browser. Check if cookie are enabled [here](#). If cookies are not enabled, follow the instructions [here](#) to turn them on.
- The same browser and device must be used if you intend to complete the survey in more than one sitting.
- Click the "next" button at the bottom of the page prior to closing the browser to save progress

6. If you have a tool or incentive not listed in questions 2-5, please describe how it is used and the number of units, projects, and/or funding built or resulting from it.

[Prev](#)
[Next](#)

Click "next" button at bottom of screen to save

	Check box if yes	# of projects	# of units	\$ in-lieu fees collected	Is the housing incentive or type limited to specific populations or geographies?							
					Location specific?			Tied to affordability?			Targeted to specific populations?	
					Regional Center	Local Subarea	Other locations	Below 80% AMI	Market-rate	Both	Seniors	Family-size units (3 or more bedrooms)
<b>Are any of the following incentives, exemptions, or tools allowed by your code?</b>												
Density Bonus												
Incentive Zoning												
Inclusionary zoning												
Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE)												
Parking requirement reduction/elimination												
Permitting priority/Fee reduction												
Planned action EIS												
Public land for affordable housing												
Transfer of development rights												
Other _____												
<b>Are the following housing types allowed by your code?</b>												
ADUs (attached)												
ADUs (detached)												
Cluster developments												
Cottage housing												
Duplexes/Triplexes												
Mixed-use (groundfloor retail, res above)												
Mobile home parks												
Multifamily – low-rise (up to 3 stories)												
Multifamily – mid-rise (4 to 6 stories)												
Multifamily – high-rise (7+ stories)												
Planned unit development												
Micro Units												
Townhomes/Zero lot line												
Other _____												

**Jurisdiction:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. How is your community working to mitigate displacement? (check all that apply)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Data monitoring             | <input type="radio"/> Renter protections           |
| <input type="radio"/> Relocation assistance       | <input type="radio"/> Mobile home park protections |
| <input type="radio"/> Staying in place assistance | <input type="radio"/> Other _____                  |
| <input type="radio"/> Foreclosure resources       | <input type="radio"/> None                         |

**2. Does your community implement one or more of the following inclusionary zoning tools? Please cite the applicable code.**

- ☐ Voluntary: Provide affordable homes in exchange for density bonuses or other incentives.
- ☐ Rezone – Voluntary: Adopted zoning changes are linked to a developer providing affordable housing to receive additional development capacity.
- ☐ Rezone – Mandatory: Requiring all development in areas that have been rezoned to include affordable housing or in-lieu fees.

**2a. Code citation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Does your community offer resources or programs for below market-rate homeownership? Please provide detail.**

---

---

---

---

**4. Which of these tools or zoning types are particularly effective or successful? Why do you think they have been effective?**

---

---

---

---

**5. Which of these tools or zoning types are particularly ineffective or unsuccessful? Why do you think these tools have not been as successful?**

---

---

---

---

**6. Are there tools your jurisdiction may be considering but present challenges for implementation? Please provide detail.**

---

---

---

---

**7. Are there any additional thoughts or comments you would like us to know?**

---

---

---

---

**Accessory dwelling units (ADUs):** An ADU is a small, self-contained residential unit built on the same lot as an existing single-family home. ADUs may be built within a primary residence or detached from the primary residence.

**Cluster developments:** Cluster subdivisions or developments confine development to the most suitable portion of a building site in compact layouts, e.g. smaller lots. This can lead to greater land efficiency, lower infrastructure development and maintenance costs, lower site grading and drainage costs, and greater preservation of open space and natural features.

**Cottage housing:** This refers to a grouping of small, single-family dwelling units clustered around a common area and developed with a coherent plan for the entire site.

**Below market-rate:** Below market-rate housing units are subject to rental price limits imposed by state or local affordable housing programs or incentives. For example, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development publishes rent limits for its affordable housing programs based on the household income that the units serve.

**Data Monitoring:** This refers to compiling and analyzing data to better understand where displacement is occurring and tailor strategies to prevent displacement. Some cities do this by creating a displacement risk index or identifying areas that are losing low-income households or people of color.

**Density bonus:** These are voluntary incentives that allow developers to build at higher than allowed densities if a specified number or percentage of affordable units is included in the development. Such a program may be designed to allow developers to contribute to an affordable housing fund in lieu of building the affordable units.

**Displacement mitigation:** Housing demolition, conversion of apartments to condominiums, and closure of mobile home parks may displace low income residents. Displacement resources could include, but are not limited to, providing relocation advisory services, reimbursement for moving expenses, payments for the added cost of renting or purchasing comparable replacement housing, or others.

**Foreclosure resources:** This displacement mitigation strategy provides resources to homeowners that are at risk of displacement due to foreclosure of the property. This could include foreclosure counseling or emergency financial assistance programs for homeowners.

**Incentive zoning:** A broad regulatory framework for encouraging and stimulating development that provides a desired public benefit as established in adopted planning goals.

**Inclusionary zoning:** Ordinances may require developers to set aside a percentage of the units in housing developments for low- and moderate-income residents. Most inclusionary housing programs offer density bonuses or other incentives to offset the developer's project costs and compensate for providing affordable units, which may otherwise yield reduced profits. This approach enlists private sector help in contributing to the affordable housing supply and reduces segregation of affordable and market-rate housing.

**Local centers:** These include locally designated downtowns, transit station areas, or other mixed-use areas.

**Market-rate:** Market-rate housing units are those whose price is determined by market factors like supply and demand, as opposed to price limits imposed by state or local affordable housing programs.

**Micro units:** Micro units or apodments are small housing units that typically feature a sleeping rooms (usually under 300 square feet) with a private bathroom. The units grouped together in arrangements of up to 8, with a shared kitchen or common area.

**Mixed-use:** Mixed-use development is an example of flexible zoning where various land uses are combined within a single building, development or district. For example, residential dwellings may be located vertically above retail stores, or located horizontally on the same site as commercial uses.

**Mobile homes:** The supply of mobile home park housing has declined in some jurisdictions as a result of redevelopment pressures. Jurisdictions may protect mobile home housing by zoning classifications or standards, enacting mobile home park conversion ordinances, or exempting mobile homes relocated due to park closures from having to comply with new building regulations. Jurisdictions can also allow for individual manufactured homes on single-family lots along with appropriate design standards.

**Multifamily tax exemption (MFTE):** RCW 84.14 provides for special valuations in residentially deficient urban centers for eligible improvements associated with multifamily housing, which includes affordable housing. When a city defines residential target areas within an urban center, and allows for applications for the exemption, approved project sites are exempt from ad valorem property taxation for a period of eight to 12 years. A greater number of exempt years is possible where a certain percentage of low-income housing is provided.

**Permitting priority/Fee reduction:** These are administrative tools to reduce the cost or time of development. Impact, mitigation or other permitting fees, along with lengthy permit processing times, can have a negative effect on the construction of affordable housing, so some jurisdictions have enacted measures to reduce or waive such fees or give priority processing to projects that include affordable housing units or provide other needed housing types.

**Planned unit development (PUD):** PUD regulations allow for flexibility in design of residential communities in exchange for public benefits. PUDs may offer a mix of dwelling types (detached, duplex, or multifamily), mix of land uses (residential and neighborhood commercial), and density bonuses to help underwrite the cost of low-income housing.

**Planned Action EIS:** The goal of a Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is to simplify and expedite review of individual projects. By doing an environmental review for an entire neighborhood, individual projects consistent with the neighborhood plan would not need separate environmental review. Planned Action EIS's are typically more detailed and seek to streamline environmental review for development consistent with a Planned Action Ordinance and EIS. Planned actions would not require additional SEPA review, nor be subject to SEPA appeal procedures.

**Preservation of existing affordable units:** Preserving and enhancing existing dwellings allows a community to retain its most affordable housing. Preservation programs can address housing repair needs and weatherization, among others.

**Public land for affordable housing:** This strategy encourages public land grants or sale of parcels at below market value to developers of affordable projects. Parcels may include surplus or underutilized public properties, as well as vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent private properties acquired through purchase or tax foreclosure.

**Reduced parking requirements:** Jurisdictions can minimize the cost of parking requirements by adjusting stall sizes, by allowing tandem parking, by tying parking requirements by the number of bedrooms per unit, and by reducing requirements for housing types with less need for parking, such as lower income, elderly households, housing complexes which have transportation demand management programs (e.g., bus passes, shuttle bus service, etc.), or housing served by frequent transit.

**Regional Centers:** These are PSRC-designated regional growth centers. These are areas that contain a mix of housing, employment, and services and are planning for significant regional growth.

**Relocation assistance:** This is a displacement mitigation strategy that provides resources for households that are being displaced to enable them to find a new place of residence. Relocation assistance often includes financial compensation paid by the property owner and/or the city.

**Renter protections:** This is a displacement mitigation strategy provides greater protections to tenants than required under existing state or federal law. This could include increasing the requirements for notice of eviction or rent increases, requiring that the property owner provide a cause for evictions, or providing legal assistance to tenants being evicted.

**Staying in place assistance:** This displacement mitigation strategy provides resources to help vulnerable households remain in their home. This could include emergency financial assistance or home repair programs.

**Transfer of development rights (TDR):** A TDR program relocates development potential from one property to another. Buying these rights generally allows the owner of the receiving site to build at a higher density or height than ordinarily permitted by the base zoning. These transactions can also be used to help preserve affordable housing on the sending site.

**Townhouse/Zero lot line:** A townhouse is a single-family home that shares one or more walls with other independently-owned units. Zero lot line development is a related approach to site units the lot line to maximize the available property.

*Glossary Sources: The following agencies and their various reports were consulted for the glossary: A Regional Coalition for Housing; Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington; PSRC, Regional Housing Strategy Working Group; Snohomish County Tomorrow; and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*