



## Puget Sound Regional Council

### 2024 FHWA REGIONAL COMPETITION: PROJECT SPONSOR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

AGENCY: Snohomish County

PROJECT: Poplar Way: Larch Way to Lynnwood City Limits

**Question #1:** In your application, you shared a plan for future outreach, but can you provide more information on how past outreach efforts helped shape the project? More specifically, can you share what you heard from members of the EFAs?

**Answer #1:**

There was no feedback from community outreach and engagement efforts that was specific to the Poplar Way project. However, improving bike and pedestrian facilities throughout the county was a key theme from the public generally and populations of focus.

As background context:

Snohomish County Planning and Development Services (PDS) conducted outreach for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update which includes the Transportation Element and Urban Core Subarea Plan Element. The Poplar Way project location is within the Urban Core Subarea.

The outreach included activities that are included as best practices in PSRC's Equitable Engagement Guidance. To enhance accessibility, the county translates crucial documents into multiple languages. Demographic analysis identified Spanish as the second most spoken language at home, with Korean and Vietnamese also added to the translation list due to significant speakers with limited English proficiency (LEP). Additionally, event schedules were diversified, with tabling events held on both weekdays and weekend and incorporating childcare to help reduce barriers for families to participate. Another priority was to reach community members who might not have previously interacted with Snohomish County or related to Updates for the Comprehensive Plan. Efforts were made to engage historically underserved communities, such as BIPOC, LEP individuals, renters, and youth. District 3, with its high population density and proximity to proposed light rail stations in the southwest urban growth area (SWUGA), received special emphasis, hosting two events.

In 2023, PDS staff organized tabling events across unincorporated Snohomish County. Overall, there were 10 pop up events. All events were advertised on the Comprehensive Plan Update project website and within newsletters sent to key parties throughout the county in English, Spanish, Korean, and recently Vietnamese.

More recently, in- person events for 2024 summer outreach by PDS kicked off last weekend with the Earth Day event at the Fairgrounds where we had pamphlets translated into multiple languages and a focus on the Climate Change and Resiliency Element, and the Urban Core Subarea Plan.

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**Question #2:** Please identify the HOP typology associated with your project's location along with the policies that currently exist that fall under the 3 categories (Supply, Stability, and Subsidy) for this typology.

**Answer #2:**

The Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP) typology associated with the project is: Improve Access & Housing Choices.

These communities are considered to have lower access to opportunity and moderate displacement risk.

The Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan ("Plan") provides policy direction for ongoing and future county planning efforts and development regulations. This direction comes from the county's Vision Statement; the goals, objectives, and policies; the level of service and other programming; and maps such as the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The Snohomish County Vision Statement guides the development of the Comprehensive Plan and is informed by the regional vision - VISION 2050 - and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The Plan also implements the general policy guidance of the multicounty planning policies (MPPs) and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) that represent regional and countywide priorities. The MPPs are found within VISION 2050, adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and the CPPs are guided by Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) and adopted by County Council.

The Plan is composed of 12 elements that together meet the requirements of a GMA comprehensive plan and guide population and employment growth for the county. The 12 elements include: Population and Employment, Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Capital Facilities and Utilities, Economic Development, Natural Environment, Interjurisdictional Coordination, Climate Change, Urban Core Subarea Plan, and Tribal Coordination. Per the Growth Management Act (GMA) (chapter 36.70A RCW), the county is required to comprehensively review and update the Plan as needed every 10 years. The planning horizon for the Plan is between 2024 and 2044 and review of the draft Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Commission is underway.

Demographics of note that inform strategies and policies as it relates to housing:

- Between 2010 and 2020, the population of Snohomish County increased by 17 percent and the demographics indicate that the county became more diverse. More specifically, the White population decreased from 74 to 64 percent of the overall county population between 2010 and 2020, whereas the population of Black or African American residents in the county increased by

64 percent, the percentage of Asian residents increased by 60 percent, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander residents increased by 62 percent, and the Latino or Hispanic residents increased by 49 percent (see Figure 4). The biggest increase was in the category of residents identifying as two or more races, which increased by 123 percent between 2010 and 2020. The percentage of residents identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native decreased by 5 percent between 2010 and 2020.

- Access to safe and affordable housing is fundamental to the success of our communities, and Snohomish County is in an affordability crisis. The median home price in the County increased by 117 percent between 2000 and 2021, whereas the median household income only increased by 9 percent. One major contributor to the rising cost of housing in Snohomish County is a shortage in supply. The PSRC estimates that the region (Snohomish, King, Kitsap, and Pierce counties) currently needs an additional 50,000 homes, and that by 2050 Snohomish County alone will have a deficit of 187,000 homes if the county does not plan for an increased supply of housing. The Housing and Land Use Elements aim to address the affordability crisis by incentivizing a wide variety of housing types and densities in the urban areas.

Two elements of the Comprehensive Plan – Housing and Land Use - are specifically relevant to ensuring increased housing opportunity while preserving affordability and expanding housing access and opportunities within the Poplar Way: Larch Way to Lynnwood City Limits project area. These are contained within existing policies with amendments under present consideration.

Snohomish County policy aligns with “encourage development of moderate density (“missing middle”) housing types in residential areas throughout your city to increase housing choices” given its reliance on a variety of housing types that can be introduced into predominantly single-family residential areas. Snohomish County policy encourages the development of missing middle housing due to several benefits:

**Increased Housing Choices:** By offering a wider range of housing options, cities can accommodate different household sizes, lifestyles, and income levels. This helps create more inclusive and diverse communities.

**Affordability:** Missing middle housing tends to be more affordable than single-family homes or large apartment complexes. This affordability can increase housing opportunities for individuals and families who might otherwise be priced out of desirable neighborhoods.

**Walkable Communities:** Higher densities created by missing middle housing can support walkable neighborhoods with access to local amenities, services, and public transit. This can reduce dependence on cars and promote a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle.

**Preservation of Neighborhood Character:** By integrating missing middle housing into existing single-family neighborhoods, cities can maintain the overall character and scale of the area while still accommodating growth and demand for housing.

**Reduced Displacement:** Allowing for a mix of housing types within single-family neighborhoods can help prevent displacement by providing housing options for residents at different income levels. This is especially important in areas experiencing rising home prices.

