

***Welcome Home:***  
**Addressing Racially Disparate Impacts, Exclusion, & Displacement in  
the Puget Sound Region**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Executive Summary

This project uses a comparative process to analyze municipalities' incorporation of Washington State's historic House Bill (HB) 1220. HB 1220 mandates that cities address displacement, exclusion, and racially disparate impacts (RDI) in their comprehensive plans. This legislation is a response to the unprecedented housing crisis in Washington, and is an important step towards ensuring that Washingtonians of all socioeconomic statuses have their housing needs met. This is the first time any state in the United States has required cities to conduct an RDI analysis of their housing and land use policies to identify and rectify policies that perpetuate exclusion, displacement, and racially disparate impacts.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) partnered with the authors, who are graduate students at the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Policy, to analyze the implementation of HB 1220 by conducting a comparative process analysis. By comparing comprehensive plans from multiple cities in the Puget Sound Region, the authors were able to identify strategies that will inform future municipal housing policy. This work aims to assist PSRC and cities in the region as they fulfill their commitment to housing policy that addresses and begins to undo displacement, RDI, and exclusion.

The authors reviewed the 2044 comprehensive plans of nine cities within the Puget Sound Region and conducted interviews with their respective city planners. This process allowed the authors to understand municipalities' planning process for incorporating HB 1220 requirements, and allowed us to evaluate policy alignment with evidence-based strategies for addressing displacement, RDI, and exclusion. **Kent, Kirkland, Lakewood, Lynnwood, Marysville, Port Orchard, Tacoma, Tukwila, and University Place** were selected to capture a sample of cities from all four Puget Sound counties while representing varying population sizes, racial/ethnic diversity, and displacement risk levels. The literature review identified evidence-based practices for addressing housing displacement, exclusion, and RDI, and also included examples of how other cities outside of Washington are addressing these issues. The analysis looked at:

- **Municipal processes** for incorporating data, information, and community feedback when writing the housing elements of their comprehensive plans.
- **Comprehensive plan policies** cities included to address HB 1220 requirements, whether they included evidence-based strategies, and how the policies were framed (i.e. level of accountability, orientation of the policy, and level of detail).

## Findings

Upon analyzing the processes and policies used to incorporate HB 1220, the authors identified the following:

- **Population size, racial/ethnic diversity, and displacement risk level do not appear to explain variation in policies and their framing across cities:** The level of accountability, orientation, level of detail, and alignment with HB 1220 vary widely throughout cities and policy areas. However, few overarching patterns in variation were apparent based on level differences in population, racial/ethnic diversity, or displacement risk. Therefore, a city's size, racial/ethnic makeup, and displacement risk are not the only factors that inform how cities address racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion.

- **Targeted community engagement is associated with strong policies and accessible plans:** Cities that had well-written policies that addressed RDI, exclusion, and displacement engaged with underrepresented citizens in nontraditional ways and by forming strategic partnerships, demonstrating a growth mindset, and reinforcing connection through repeated touches.
- **All cities experience challenges in funding affordable housing at all income levels:** Despite cities' varying levels of economic activity and prior housing work, all cities experience barriers to funding affordable housing at all income levels, particularly for very-low-income households.
- **A broad spectrum of policy tools was used to address HB 1220:** Due to the complexity of the current housing crisis, historic housing inequities, and the impact that neighboring municipalities have on one another, cities used multiple policy tools to address exclusion, displacement, and racially disparate impacts.
- **Varying understandings of RDI, displacement, and exclusion resulted in different ways of meeting the HB 1220 requirements:** Because it was the first time municipalities had to conduct an RDI analysis and explicitly address RDI, displacement, and exclusion in their comprehensive plans, expertise and knowledge gaps existed between different municipalities. Municipalities with more understanding of these issues created more tailored policies to address them.

## Recommendations for Planners

- **Write Detailed, Specific, and Actionable Policies:** Policies that use detailed, specific, and actionable language assert the city will actually implement the policy fully to address racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion. Whereas vague and unactionable policies imply goals and aspirations of cities but do not direct the city to make tangible changes to address these issues.
- **Make Comprehensive Plans Accessible to All Community Members:** Making comprehensive plans more accessible to all community members helps to address barriers marginalized communities face to engaging in the planning and implementation processes that directly impact them. Design comprehensive plans using visuals with clear descriptors, navigable table of contents and webpages and non-jargon language. Additionally, plans should be available in the most common languages spoken in the respective municipality. Finally, the planners should maintain the cohesiveness of the entire plan.
- **Conduct nontraditional, targeted community engagement:** The authors' analysis and research showed that comprehensive plans benefit from nontraditional community engagement strategies targeted towards historically marginalized and underrepresented communities. These strategies include forming strategic partnerships, demonstrating a growth mindset, and reinforcing connection through repeated touches. Centering people in the planning process facilitates housing policy that serves the people who will live, work, and thrive in their homes and communities.

## Recommendations for Elected Officials

- **Support Planners and Other Municipal Employees Through Collaborative Governance:** Due to the capacity constraints planners experienced when drafting their comprehensive plans

with the multitude of new state law requirements, planners need more support from city, county, regional, and state leaders. Providing opportunities for planners to directly engage with policy makers, empowering other departments to work with planners when developing the comprehensive plans, giving timely informational resources for planners, and identifying as many funding opportunities as possible to develop the plans would help address the capacity constraints planners face in developing and implementing policies.

- **Develop a shared understanding of displacement, RDI, and exclusion:** Due to the innovative nature of HB 1220, it is unsurprising that cities varied in their understanding of these issues and how best to address them. Those with the largest knowledge gap will have a greater amount of work and need a greater amount of time in the future to undo displacement, exclusion, and RDI in the future. Interactive training, a community of practice, and nontraditional community engagement opportunities should be made available to city planners to develop a more holistic view of the historic and current policies that are perpetuating RDI, displacement, and exclusion.
- **Monitor Impact of HB 1220:** Comprehensive plans can address RDI, displacement, and exclusion through policymaking, but more needs to be done to begin to undo historic inequities in housing. Cities must continue to monitor the impact of these groundbreaking policies shaped by HB 1220 to achieve meaningful, sustainable change in RDI, displacement, and exclusion.

## Appendix A

## Simplified Policy Analysis Matrix

Dark Green means "Good Practice". Light Green means "Can improve". White means "Not Identified".

	Dimensions	Kent	Kirkland	Lakewood	Lynnwood	Marysville	Port Orchard	Tacoma	Tukwila	University Place
People	Tenant Protection									
	Homeownership Rates									
	Exclusion									
	Racially Disparate Impacts									
	Emergency Housing									
	Emergency Shelters									
Production	Regulatory Barriers									
	Alternative Housing Models									
	Affordable Housing Requirements									
	Tax Incentive Programs									
	Mixed-Income Housing									
	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)									
Preservation	Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing)									
	Mobile Home Parks /Manufactured Homes									