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June 11, 2024

Ms. Liz Stead
Community Development Director
City of Burien
400 SW 152nd St, Suite 300,
Burien, WA 98166

Dear Ms. Stead,

Thank you for submitting the City of Burien's draft comprehensive plan to the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) for review on March 7, 2024. On behalf of the AHC, I am sending you this summary of our review and recommendations.

Background

The AHC is a subcommittee of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC), consisting of representatives of King County and its cities, housing providers, area employers, and others. By direction of the GMPC, the AHC now conducts a housing-focused review of all King County jurisdictions' draft periodic comprehensive plan updates, assessing the draft plans for alignment with the [King County Countywide Planning Policies](#) (CPP) Housing Chapter goals and policies prior to plan adoption.

As you know, our county is experiencing a deep and persistent housing shortage. In 2021 the State of Washington adopted [House Bill 1220](#), which amended the Growth Management Act, requiring local governments to plan for and accommodate housing that is affordable to all income levels, including emergency housing. In response to this state mandate and local interest in improving the effectiveness of local housing plans and policies, the AHC led a two-year process to amend the King County CPPs.

The result was a significant update to the CPP Housing Chapter, which was recommended by the GMPC, adopted by the King County Council, and ratified by the cities in 2023. The goals of both the statute and this implementation work are to encourage cities and King County to work together to provide a full range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident in King County.

This review is guided by Housing-Focused Comprehensive Plan Review Standards, as adopted by [GMPC Motion 23-2](#). In summary, the AHC review seeks to determine whether each jurisdiction's draft plan and submission materials:

1. Address all CPP Housing Chapter policies;
2. Articulate implementation strategies for relevant CPP Housing Chapter Policies; and
3. Lay out meaningful policies that, taken together, support the jurisdiction's ability to equitably meet housing needs.

AHC members appreciate Burien being one of the first jurisdictions to submit to the program in 2024. This program is still relatively new and evolving, and your engagement helped the AHC understand how jurisdictions are seeking to address their housing needs while aligning with the recent changes at the state, regional, and county levels.

The AHC acknowledges the substantial amount of time and effort that went into Burien’s draft comprehensive plan. Many of Burien’s plans policies, analyses, and implementation strategies align well with CPP Housing Chapter policies. In particular,

1. The new Community Health and Well-being Chapter is a creative planning approach that includes housing-related policies that will help ensure new development is focused in areas that promote community health and well-being and mitigate noise, air, and other hazards.
2. Burien’s Affordable Housing Demonstration Program is a strong example of a jurisdiction proactively partnering with housing providers to understand how the jurisdiction can provide flexibility in its code to reduce costs and create more affordable housing. This resulted in moving forward three affordable housing projects, totaling 162 units affordable to households with incomes at or below 50 percent AMI. The AHC looks forward to reviewing the lessons learned and the permanent code changes Burien proposed adopting in 2024 as part of the implementation strategies submitted to the AHC.
3. If adopted, the anti-displacement measures identified in Section 3.5.3.3 in Burien’s draft environmental impact statement would be a meaningful response to mitigating displacement risk throughout Burien. This is particularly important in the Ambaum Boulevard subarea, where Rapid Ride H, a major investment that can increase the risk of displacement, recently opened.

Below, the AHC includes recommendations necessary to align with the CPP Housing Chapter policies.

Recommendations to Align with the CPP Housing Chapter

Burien needs to take the following actions to align its comprehensive plan with CPP Housing Chapter polices and goals.

1. Prioritize extremely low-income households (CPP H-2)

Relevant Countywide Planning Policies

CPP H-2 requires jurisdictions prioritize the need for housing affordable to households with incomes less than or equal to 30 percent of area median income (AMI).

Burien’s Proposal and AHC Findings

Burien’s submission to the AHC identifies its existing Rental Housing Inspection Program, Affordable Housing Demonstration Program, code incentives, and Fair Housing Rental Housing Policy as responsive to CPP H-2. While these programs likely serve extremely low-income households (households with incomes at or below 30 percent of AMI), they do not explicitly prioritize this population. Burien’s submission also identifies many policies as responsive to CPP H-2 that use the term “low-income,” which includes, but is not limited to, extremely low-income households. Additionally, proposed Housing Chapter policy 4.2-2 states Burien will provide opportunities for an economically diversified housing supply, including the needs for extremely low-income households. However, based on the materials Burien submitted, the AHC does not see a clear *prioritization* for the housing needs of 0 to 30 percent AMI households.

Recommendation 1: Burien should amend its Housing Element and the implementation strategies submitted to the AHC to more explicitly demonstrate how its policies and strategies prioritize the housing needs of 0 to 30 percent AMI households to align with CPP H-2. For examples of strategies jurisdictions could use to align with CPP H-2, see the CPP Housing Chapter Technical Appendix.¹

2. Complete the housing inventory and analysis (CPP H-3)

Relevant Countywide Planning Policies

CPP H-3 directs jurisdictions to conduct a housing inventory and analysis to help identify and address the greatest needs as well as summarize the findings in the Housing Element.

Burien's Proposal and AHC Findings

While Burien's submission includes many data points and substantive analysis, the AHC could not find all of the specific information required by H-3(d), (e), (g), and (j). This includes:

- d. percentage and geographic distribution of residential land zoned for moderate- and high-density housing and accessory dwelling units in the jurisdiction;
- e. number of income-restricted units and, where feasible, total number of units, within a half-mile walkshed of high-capacity or frequent transit service where applicable and regional and countywide centers;
- g. current population characteristics by age by race/ethnicity; and
- j. ratio of housing to jobs in the jurisdiction.

This additional analysis should inform additional comprehensive plan policy responses and strategies. For example, analysis responsive to CPP H-3(e) could help inform future efforts to provide income-restricted affordable housing in close proximity to transit where there currently is none, in alignment with CPP H-17.

Recommendation 2: Burien should include all inventory and analysis components as required by CPP H-3 in the comprehensive plan and summarize the findings in the Housing Element. This additional analysis should inform additional comprehensive plan policy responses and strategies.

3. Address gaps in emergency housing (CPPs H-1, H-4, H-9, H-11, and H-12)

Relevant Countywide Planning Policies

CPP H-1 requires all jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate emergency housing and allocates a need of 1,433 beds to Burien. CPP H-4 directs jurisdictions to evaluate the effectiveness of existing housing policies and strategies and identify gaps for meeting housing needs and eliminating racial and other disparities in access to housing and neighborhoods of choice. CPP H-9 requires jurisdictions adopt intentional, targeted actions that repair harms to BIPOC households from identified past and current racially exclusive and discriminatory land use and housing practices. The

¹ See King County Countywide Planning Policies Appendix 4: Housing Technical Appendix, pp.82 [[link](#)]

King County Regional Homelessness Authority’s findings on racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness highlight the importance of addressing a jurisdiction’s emergency housing needs as part of aligning with CPP H-9.² CPP H-11 directs jurisdictions to identify sufficient capacity of land for housing, including but not limited to emergency housing and shelters. Finally, CPP H-12 directs jurisdictions to adopt and implement policies that improve the effectiveness and address gaps to meet the jurisdiction’s housing needs.

Burien’s Proposal and AHC Findings

The draft Homeless Shelters and Permanent Supportive Housing section of the Housing identifies a gap that Burien does not have designated emergency housing spaces for single men, youth, or couples (pp.4-12). Identifying this gap is consistent with CPP H-4 and a critical step in Burien meaningfully addressing its emergency housing needs. While the submission did include a tiny home implementation strategy for 2024, it is not clear if Burien expects this strategy to meet the full identified need to provide emergency housing spaces for single men, youth, or couples.

Burien’s draft Housing Element policy 4.2-2 directs Burien to provide land use and zoning opportunities consistent with its allocated need, and Burien submitted an implementation strategy to allow for emergency housing in all zones allowing residential development and hotels. However, Burien did not provide supporting documentation demonstrating that they:

- have one or more zones that allow hotels, all of which allow for emergency housing by right or allow emergency housing by right in a majority of zones within a one-mile proximity to transit and
- have no regulations that limit the occupancy, spacing or intensity of emergency housing.

According to Washington State Department of Commerce guidance,³ Burien must either demonstrate it meets the conditions above or conduct an emergency housing capacity analysis to show sufficient capacity for its emergency housing needs prior to adoption of its comprehensive plan and include it in their plan. Without sufficient documentation of compliance with state requirements or an emergency housing capacity analysis, the AHC cannot determine if this implementation strategy will provide sufficient capacity as required in CPP H-11.

To ensure Burien is consistent with the CPPs identified in this recommendation, as well as Burien’s proposed draft Human Services Element policy 5.1.6 to “make Burien a welcoming and just community marked by fairness and equity provided to those disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, and victimization,” Burien must plan for and accommodate emergency housing needs for all populations experiencing homelessness. To do so, Burien must state a clear policy of active city involvement and implementation strategy that outlines the city’s actions to address the emergency housing gap for single men, youth, and couples. In absence of such a policy and implementation strategy, it does not appear that Burien’s plan will meaningfully plan for and accommodate its emergency housing need (CPP H-1).

² King County Regional Homelessness Authority. *Data Overview*. [\[link\]](#)

³ Washington State Department of Commerce. *Guidance for Updating your Housing element (Book 2)*. [\[link\]](#)

Recommendation 3: To meaningfully plan for and accommodate emergency housing needs consistent with CPP H-1, be responsive to the findings in CPP H-4, and align with CPPs H-9, H-11, and H-12, Burien should demonstrate that its proposed land use and zoning changes provide sufficient capacity for emergency housing, consistent with guidance from the Washington State Department of Commerce. Burien should also provide the AHC with complete and meaningful implementation strategies to address its gap of having no emergency housing designated for single men, youth, and couples. Burien can wait until after comprehensive plan adoption to submit the implementation strategies but must conduct and document the land capacity analysis within the adopted comprehensive plan. Although we understand that work is ongoing, based on the publicly available information about the interim ordinance under consideration for transitional housing, that ordinance would not provide sufficient capacity in the city for emergency housing set out in the CPPs.

4. Explicitly plan for and prioritize income-restricted housing (CPPs H-10, H-14, and H-17)

Relevant Countywide Planning Policies

CPPs H-10, H-14, and H-17 address the need for “income-restricted housing.” CPP H-10 requires jurisdictions to adopt policies, incentives, strategies, actions, and regulations that increase the supply of long-term income-restricted housing for extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households and households with special needs. CPP H-14 requires jurisdictions to prioritize resources for income-restricted housing, particularly for extremely low-income households, populations with special needs, and others with disproportionately greater housing needs. CPP H-17 requires jurisdictions to support the development and preservation of income-restricted affordable housing that is within walking distance to planned or existing high-capacity and frequent transit.

Burien’s Proposal and AHC Findings

Burien’s draft plan proposes policies and implementation strategies that frequently use the term “affordable housing” and will likely support development of income-restricted affordable housing. Income-restricted housing is guaranteed to provide lower-income people with an affordable place to live through a regulatory restriction. The term “affordable housing” includes income-restricted affordable housing, but also naturally occurring affordable housing, which is not guaranteed to remain affordable. Burien’s Housing Chapter policy 4.1.1 also identifies protecting naturally occurring affordable housing through the use of long-term affordability covenants. However, the CPP Housing Chapter’s requirements related to income-restricted housing are broader than policy 4.1.1 as drafted, and use of the term “affordable housing” does not necessarily align with “income-restricted.”

Recommendation 4: To align with CPPs H-10, H-14, and H-17, Burien should include policies, incentives, strategies, actions, and regulations in its plan and/or implementation strategies that explicitly increase the supply of long-term income-restricted housing. Burien should also include policies that prioritize resources for this housing need and support the development and preservation of income-restricted affordable housing within walking distance to transit. For examples of strategies jurisdictions may use to align with these CPPs, see the CPP Housing Chapter Technical Appendix.

5. Increase housing choice near employment opportunities (CPP H-15)

Relevant Countywide Planning Policies

CPP H-15 requires jurisdictions to increase housing choices for everyone, particularly those earning lower wages within a reasonable commute to employment centers and affordable at all income levels.

Burien's Proposal and AHC Findings

Burien's draft plan proposes policies that increase housing choice in areas throughout the jurisdiction and appear to demonstrate an intent in alignment with CPP H-15. However, the AHC did not identify a policy that explicitly links increasing housing choice affordable to everyone with employment opportunities.

Recommendation 5: To align with CPP H-15, Burien should include a policy in their comprehensive plan that states their intent to increase housing choices affordable to everyone within a reasonable commute to employment centers.

Conclusion and AHC Resources

Thank you again for your submission to the Committee's housing-focused comprehensive plan review program. AHC members valued the opportunity to review Burien's January 2024 Draft Burien 2044: Our Comprehensive Plan and related submission materials. Burien's participation in the plan review program is instrumental in the broader work of the Committee to empower local jurisdictions to address the affordable housing crisis in King County.

AHC staff are happy to assist Burien in addressing these recommendations. For immediate resources and guidance on aligning with the CPP Housing Chapter, refer to the

- [Engrossed 2021 King County CPPs](#);
- [AHC Housing-focused Draft Comprehensive Plan Review Program Guide](#); and
- [King County Resources for Documenting the Local History of Racially Exclusive and Discriminatory Land Use and Housing Practices](#).

If you have questions or need additional information regarding aligning with the CPP Housing Chapter, please contact lead staff for the AHC plan review program, Isaac Horwith, at AHCplanreview@kingcounty.gov or at 206-477-7813.

Sincerely,



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Plan Review Team
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