



Office of the Mayor

Katherine Ross

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July 16, 2024

Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 5th Ave #800
Seattle, WA 98104

SENT VIA EMAIL

RE: City of Snoqualmie Request for Reconciliation of 2044 Housing Target

Dear Executive Constantine,

On [March 7, 2024](#), the City of Snoqualmie formally requested that King County Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) proceed forward with the establishment of a reconciliation process and King County docket request to amend the King County Countywide Planning Policy D-14, Table DP-1 to housing growth target 719. This letter serves to elaborate on why Snoqualmie cannot meet the housing growth target of 1500 units.

The City of Snoqualmie did not ratify the King County housing growth targets due to the land use constraints identified during the Comprehensive Plan update. Based on the studies, the Snoqualmie City Council passed [Resolution No. 1680](#) declaring a revised 2044 housing growth target of 719.

The Interjurisdictional Team (IJT) recommended draft guiding principles to support decision making about reconciliation. Such a process may be pursued when significant changes to the planning framework or local circumstances have occurred since target adoption. In Snoqualmie there is insufficient source of water to serve growth. Just this year it was determined that the City Water System Plan (WSP) cannot be reconciled with the City's 2044 Growth Target due to insufficient water availability. The WSP was reviewed by the King County Utilities Technical Review Committee (UTRC). The UTRC determined no recommendation to the King County Council would occur without a revised 2044 growth target because the water available under the WSP is incapable of serving the total units identified in the adopted growth target.

The City conducted numerous land use and housing [studies](#) including a Snoqualmie Valley Regional Housing Needs Analysis, Citywide Housing Needs Assessment, Middle Housing Analysis, Housing Strategy Plan, and Buildable Lands Capacity. These studies were performed

as part of the comprehensive plan update and were completed after receiving the King County housing growth target. The reports conclude that there is insufficient land to accommodate a housing target of 1,500.

- **Floodplain and Presence of Critical Areas:** The City’s analysis found that approximately 49% of land in the City is impacted by local regulations governing and protecting environmentally sensitive areas, and 21% of land is in the floodway.
- **Urban Growth Area (UGA):** A considerable amount of the developable land in the UGA has been purchased by the Snoqualmie Tribe, which has stated their goal of preserving these lands for cultural reasons. Most of the remaining acres are associated with steep slopes, landslide, wetlands, and streams. Approximately 14% of the UGA is buildable and a portion is designated for commercial use.
- **Presence of Homeowners Association and Mixed-Use Plan Permitted Communities:** The City’s master planned communities of Snoqualmie Ridge (SR) I and II consist of nearly half of the City’s geographic area. Approximately 86% of single-family lots within the City are in SR I and II. These completed master plan communities are permitted under Mixed-Use Final Plan Permits and are unlikely to see changes to the conditions of approval regulating these permits. The Homeowners Association regulates such additional units like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), as set forth in the Association’s Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs).
- **Inability to Adjust UGA Boundary:** The [City petitioned King County](#) for an amendment to the CPP’s to include provisions of the Urban Growth Boundary Revisions (ESSB 5593) as well as revisions that would allow for the expansion of the UGA through the Four-to-One Program and the subsequent annexation of that land to potentially achieve the housing growth target. This petition was rejected.

In addition to land deficiency, there are other unique circumstances prohibiting expansion in the City, these include:

- **Snoqualmie Tribe’s purchase of Salish Lodge:** The Snoqualmie Tribe’s purchase of Salish Lodge and surrounding parcels resulted in the cancellation of the Salish Lodge expansion, a City Council-approved project intending to provide up to 150 homes and hundreds of new jobs.
- **Snoqualmie Valley Mayors’ concerns:** The Snoqualmie Valley Mayors of Carnation, Duvall, North Bend and Snoqualmie sent a letter to Department of Commerce on [November 10, 2022](#), sharing concerns regarding affordable projected housing needs and housing growth targets concerns:
 - a. Transportation – need investment in road infrastructure and transit services.
 - b. Land/urban services – geographical and natural constraints; limited water and sewer infrastructure to support development projected needs.

- c. Local needs – need local wrap around services.
- **Exceeded Previous Growth Target.** By 2018, the City met and exceeded its 2035 housing target of 1,873 units, with an estimated 2,087 units completed at final build-out of SR II. Snoqualmie was one of six cities out of a total of 39 cities to achieve their target.

The Interjurisdictional Team (IJT) recommended that guiding principles should limit reconciliation to only jurisdictions requesting amended targets. Therefore, the City is requesting the GMPC to authorize a reconciliation process by permitting Black Diamond, which has indicated interest in increasing its growth target, to absorb the 781 units that Snoqualmie is requesting to release.

Following this, the City asks the GMPC to recommend to the King County Council that they amend Table DP-14 by the conclusion of 2024 to reflect the redistribution of units among jurisdictions.

If you have questions or would like to discuss the contents of this letter, including any technical reports or studies, please feel free to contact me.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Best regards,



Katherine Ross
Mayor

CC:

GMPC

Sound Cities Association, Policy Director and David Hoffman, Executive Director

Ivan Miller, Principal Planner, KC Executive Department Performance, Strategy, and Budget

Carol Benson, Mayor of Black Diamond