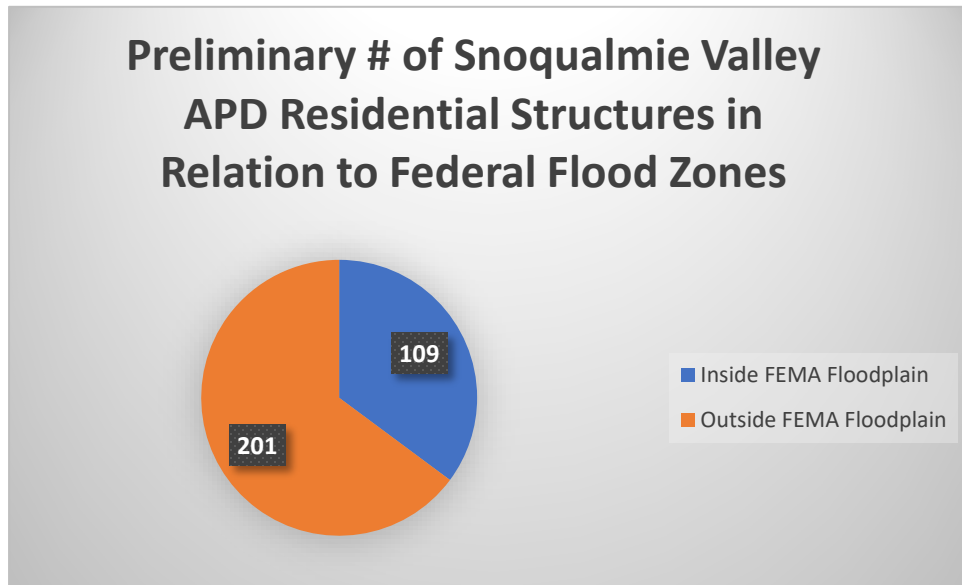


1.2.8 Home Preservation in the APD

Current Condition

Desired Condition by 2048

Figure 16. Preliminary # of Snoqualmie Valley APD Residential Structures in Relation to Federal Flood Zones



Homes in the SVAPD are an important and limited public resource for the agriculture sector. Escalating real estate values, flood safety, and competing uses are three significant challenges to securing and maintaining home infrastructure in the SVAPD for farming operations. With 214 commercial farm operations in the SVAPD, many farmers prefer to live on or near their farm, but do not or are unable to live in one of the 310 homes in the SVAPD.

Real estate values for farmland and homes in the SVAPD are increasing. In 2022, based on the last three years of home sales for the eighteen homes with no farmable acreage, the median home value in the SVAPD was \$699,900 and the mean was \$686,603.¹ Many of these homes are too expensive for new and beginning as well as historically underserved farmers to buy. Since 2020, several larger farms (more than 50 acres in size) in the SVAPD have been on the market for many months at costs exceeding \$2M. This value increase also creates challenges given speculation of increased prices, thereby driving up easement costs. Proposed King County legislation concerning zoning and requirements for wineries, breweries, and distilleries (WBDs) would not allow WBDs in APDs to further protect APDs from these impacts. This may help stabilize some of the real estate speculation that has plagued farmable land values in APDs. However, there is a real need to push for further protections in the Farmland Preservation Program such as option to purchase at agricultural value (OPAV)² easements and pilot land tenure alternatives that would grant long-term (20–99-year leases), allow more farmers on a parcel, or allow for cooperative ownership, in order to keep the homes on or near SVAPD farms affordable for farmers.

Flooding impacts put at risk up to an estimated 109 homes located in the FEMA floodplain including about 91 in the FEMA floodway³. See Map 12. To protect homes from flooding, King County offers the King County Flood Buyout and Elevation Program⁴.

19 of the homes in the floodplain have been elevated since 1999 through the home elevation program, with 15 of those completed since 2007 (see Figure 17). Three homes are now in the planning phase for elevation. While 22 homeowners have or are pursuing home elevations, this means that roughly 87⁵ homes in the 100-year floodplain need to be

Every home in the APD is protected from other uses, is made affordable to farmers and farm employees, and is elevated in the floodplain to support commercial farm operations.

Timeline

2025

- King County DNRP (Parks, WLRD, etc.) and DLS (Roads) ag land acquisitions with homes added into WLRD acquisition review
- Study home removal from floodplain and the impact (potential increase) on comprehensive storage. If capacity is gained, allot only to farm pad program

2026

- Home elevations - Conduct needs assessment, create priority implementation structure for home elevations
- When a home is removed from the APD, including flooding tributaries, invest in low-income/affordable farmworker housing within 5 miles of APD for farm housing

2027

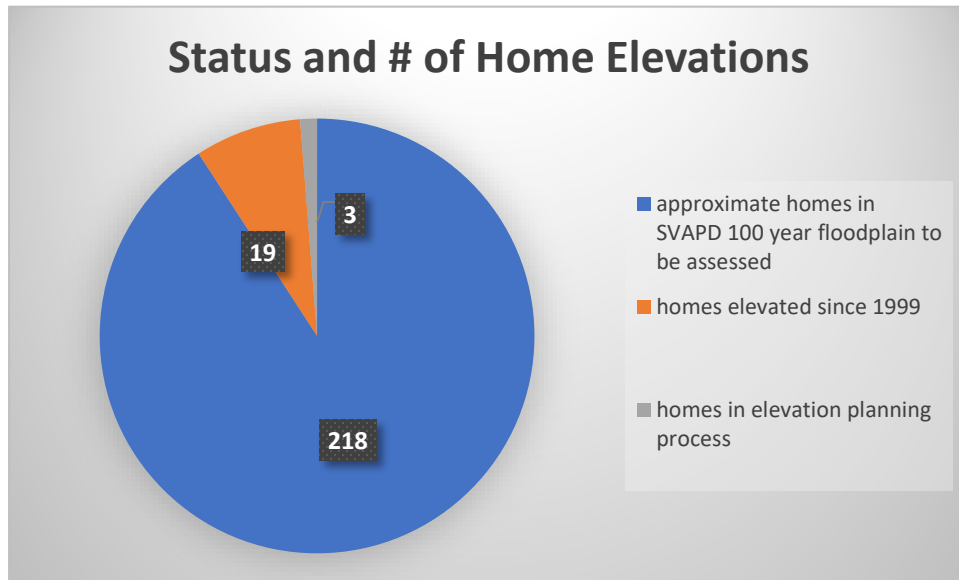
- Launch improved home elevation program - Increase participation, outreach and partnerships, improve process, increase funding for technical support staff
- King County adopts policies to preserve homes in SVAPD from competitive uses

2029

- Increase pace of home elevations to 4-10/year
- Restore the Barn Elevation Pilot Project and utilize home elevation strategies to structure a permanent

assessed for elevation. However, the exact number of homes needing elevation or mitigation to be safe in floods, is unknown until a new assessment is completed. The pace of home elevations over 22 years has been nearly 1/year.

Figure 17. Status and # of Home Elevations to Date



In addition, five homes have been acquired by the Flood Control District for flood safety purposes within the APD since 2008. While these homes were surplus to move to new locations, there were no viable bids, resulting in the homes being demolished. As of 2019, all such acquisitions are first assessed to ensure homes remain in the APD to support agriculture whenever it is safe enough to do so.

Competing uses to farming in the APD, as well as utility infrastructure and habitat projects has resulted in losing homes in the APD for farming. Uses such as recreation for duck clubs and parks (Snoqualmie trail extension north of Duvall), habitat, water pipeline projects, means additional APD homes have been purchased or removed. King County Agriculture Program and SnoValley Tilth are now planning to improve the elevated home at the County owned Snoqualmie River Farm to support farm uses.

Home preservation in the SVAPD is critical for farm operations. Because homes may no longer be built in the floodway due to FEMA regulations, any home that comes out of the floodway, may not be replaced, and that option is lost forever. With climate change impacting flood patterns and existing homes in the floodplain, real estate values skyrocketing and not reflecting agricultural land value, and competing land uses in the APD, there is a housing crisis for farmers.

agricultural building elevation program

2030

- Increase succession planning resources and funding to assist current landowners to transition their businesses to new farmers and keep homes occupied and livable
- Conduct outreach about creative financing and business ownership models for farm and home transition

2030, 2035, 2040, 2045

- Survey SVAPD farm operations every 3-5 years to evaluate the challenges and cost of housing

2048

- Complete 100 elevations (87 homes + 13 farm buildings)

Background	Service Providers	Priority
<p>The success of a farming business in the SVAPD is reduced when it does not have a home as part of its infrastructure. Managing day-to-day and emergency operations⁶ on a farm, including weather conditions, deliveries, staff, wildlife, invasive species, security, and more, requires residence on the farm (most desired) or close by (alternatively). Farmers who have to commute to the farm are at an extreme disadvantage and may not be able to farm viably or respond to flood safety or security emergencies such as fuel spillage, contamination, theft, or animal abuse.</p> <p>Affordable housing is required in surrounding towns to support the farm sector, especially year-round farmers, and farm employees. On-farm, seasonal farmworker housing⁷ is also needed. Many farm employees used to live in Seattle and commute to work in the valley, but</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o King County DNRP River and Floodplain Management Section (RFMS) <p>Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o SVPA o SnoValley Tilth o WA Farm Bureau 	<p>HIGH</p>

<p>higher housing costs in the city, cost of living increases for utilities and food, and fuel hikes, as well as competitive employment opportunities in the region, make this a less feasible option for farm employees, causing farmers increased difficulty for securing and retaining farm employees.</p> <p>Home elevations (see Figures 18-21) began in 1999 to ensure floodplain residents could more safely survive and recover from flood impacts. Due to the nature of upheaval and expense even with the technical assistance and cost-share of the King County Home Elevation program⁸ funded by the King County Flood Control District, the planning, permitting, expense, and contractor services to lift, landscape, and reconnect services to a home, can be daunting.</p> <p>In addition to the home elevation program, in 2012 there was also a Barn Elevation Pilot Project⁹ that elevated a 4,000 square foot livestock barn and a 1,250 square foot elevated farm platform in the SVAPD. See Figures 20 and 21.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Local Housing Organizations 	
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Strategies

- Home Elevations
 - o Examine infrastructure vulnerability, especially from increased flooding (SCAP).
 - o Conduct needs assessment for home elevations; survey all homes in the APD for eligibility, including flooding tributaries, and include external agriculture input in the process.
 - o From needs assessment, utilize 2D modeling overlay, including climate change models, to help create priority implementation for home elevations and/or re-elevations.
 - o Increase participation in home elevation program through outreach and partnerships.
 - o Improve home elevation process for homeowners through increased cost-share, sliding scale option that offers payments up front or directly pays service providers, and list of service providers including architects and contractors.
 - o Further incentivize landowners in the SVAPD to do a home elevation by increasing the cost-share allowance to include reimbursement to landowners for hours logged in managing the project and contractors, as well as for required accessories such as on-site or off-site storage rentals, temporary housing, etc.
 - o Increase funding for technical support staff to do outreach and education to landowners in APD about the program.
 - o Increase funding to increase pace of home elevations to 4-10/year so that 100 more homes are protected in the next 25 years.
- Barn and Agricultural Building Elevations
 - o Restore the Barn Elevation Pilot Project and utilize home elevation strategies to structure a permanent agricultural building elevation program.
- Flood Home Buyouts
 - o Purchases shall not be made within an APD without King County DNRP WLRD acquisition decision memo process (in place since 2019).
 - o Study home removal from floodplain and the impact (potential increase) on comprehensive storage. If capacity is gained, allot only to farm pad program.
 - o When a home is removed from the APD, invest in low-income/affordable, long-term farmer and farmworker housing within 5 miles of APD for farm housing because short-term rentals versus long-term ownership of housing limits long term investment in the land.
- King County adopts policies to preserve homes in SVAPD from competitive uses
 - o King County Departments and Divisions must protect farming by participating in the DNRP WLRD land acquisition decision memo process for approval prior to purchase of a home or property with a home in the APD.
 - o Work cooperatively with Land Trusts, King County and NGOs to find long-term solutions such as multi-generational leases for farmland and homes in the APD.
 - o For homes in the floodplain owned by King County, convert to rental homes through third party for farmers and farm employees for the public benefit of food security.
 - o Utilize strategic boundary line adjustments to preserve affordable homes for agriculture in SVAPD.
 - o Research, test and trial additional public/private partnerships, including tax incentives or rebates to homeowners to offer homes for rent to farm employers and farm employees.
 - o Ensure Farmland Preservation Program offers protections that preserve affordable homes.
 - o Support pilot projects to explore new land tenure models.

- In code, require the primary use of APD properties to be farming before secondary use of recreation, such as hunting/duck clubs.
- Increase succession planning resources and funding to assist current landowners to transition their businesses to new farmers and keep homes occupied and livable.
- Conduct outreach about creative financing and business ownership models for farm and home transition.
- Survey SVAPD farm operations every 3-5 years to evaluate the challenges and cost of housing.
- Strategically capture and share surveying monuments and benchmarks to support efforts regarding road flooding, home and barn elevations and Floodzilla monitoring system.

Map 12. Residential Structures Snoqualmie Valley APD

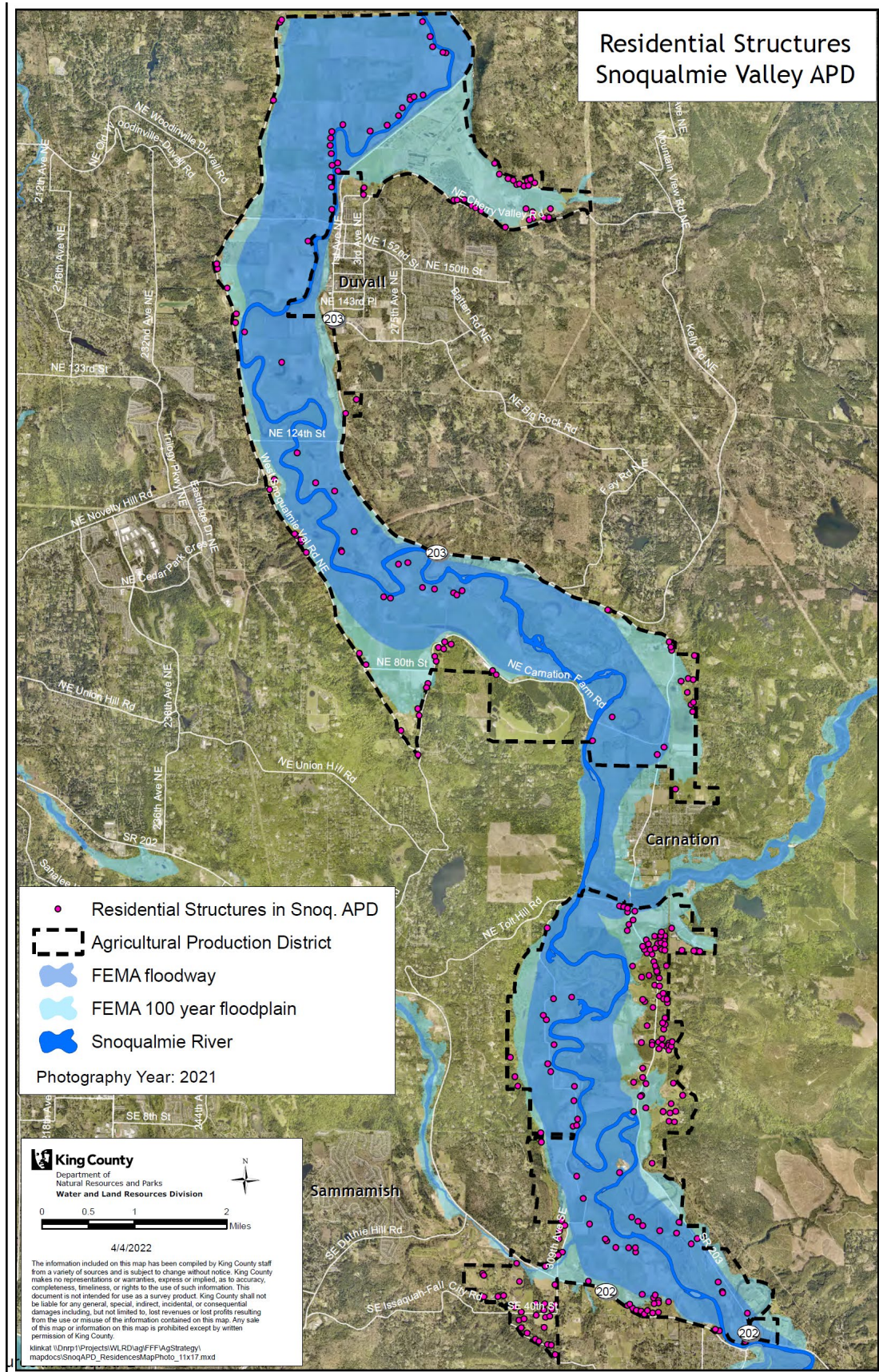


Figure 18. Before Home Elevation, 2015



Figure 19. After Home Elevation, 2017



Figure 20. Elevated Home with Flooding, Nov. 2006



Figure 21. Home Elevation Project During Construction



Figure 22. Barn Elevation Pilot Project Platform



Figure 23. Barn Elevation Pilot Project Livestock Barn



¹ King County Farmland Preservation Program, Unpublished Report, October 2022. The analysis is based on aggregated mean sales price/acre and median sales price/acre from the last 3 years of sales, March 2019-2022, in the SVAPD. Accessed March 2022 from King County's iMAP, "last three years of sales" layer.

²Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School, Farmland Access Legal Toolkit, "What Is an OPAV?". [\[LINK\]](#) Accessed 5.20.22

³ Preliminary numbers based on 2021 GIS aerial analysis conducted in 2022; new assessment needed by DNRP WLRD RFMS as noted in strategies.

⁴ King County Flood Buyout and Elevation Program. Last Updated September 24, 2015. [\[LINK\]](#) Accessed 5/2/2022.

⁵ GIS analysis shows 109 homes in floodway, minus 19 already elevated, minus 3 in process of being elevated by KC Home elevation program = 87 remaining to be assessed for elevation.

⁶ Emergency operations refers to flood safety and security events in regard to spillage and contamination, as well as to extreme weather events and other types of emergencies.

⁷ See Farm King County's, "Farmworker Housing" last updated 2022 for more information on farmworker housing options and required licenses and permitting. [\[LINK\]](#). Accessed 3/21/22.

⁸ King County Flood Buyout and Elevation Program. Last Updated September 24, 2015. [\[LINK\]](#) Accessed 5/2/2022.

⁹ King County Flood Control District Annual Report 2012 and 2013 First Quarter Performance Report, April 2013. [\[LINK\]](#) Page 6 [7]. Accessed 5.20.22