

City of Carnation
2024 Comprehensive Plan
DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

CHAPTER 2 – DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING AREA

City of Carnation. The City of Carnation is northeast of the Snoqualmie and Tolt Rivers confluence. The incorporated area includes approximately 1.1 square miles, or approximately 730 acres. The City is responsible for all municipal services within the city limits, and either provides the services directly, or through agreements with other public agencies or private parties. Land within this area is subject to the City's ordinances, resolutions, and official policies. Other agencies with limited jurisdiction in Carnation include: the Riverview School District #407, Eastside Fire & Rescue, King County Sheriff, the Seattle and King County Public Health Department, the King County Library System and all state and federal agencies.

History of Carnation. The name "Carnation" has been on town records from the year 1917. The surveyor general's map of Washington Territory in 1857 names the area Tolthue, a name that derives from the Native Americans that inhabited this area. The town site was the principal home of Chief Patkanim of the Snoqualmie Tribe, and later the town name was given the pronunciation of Tolt. The largest industry in the area then was the Carnation Milk Farms, a large dairy visited by thousands over the years and known throughout the world for research on breeding and feeding of Holsteins and for condensed milk.

In 1917 the State Legislature authorized the change of name from Tolt to Carnation. This was a very controversial subject to the people of the area and there are many stories about Carnation's name.

Early settlement of Carnation plays an important role in defining Carnation's identity and much of its development pattern. For additional information, historical resources are available at City Hall and through the Tolt Historical Society.

Carnation's Urban Growth Area/Potential Annexation Area.

Carnation's Urban Growth Area (UGA) comprises the area within the current City limits as well as the Potential Annexation Area (PAA).

The Potential Annexation Area (PAA) constitutes Carnation's future growth area and includes the lands to which Carnation may feasibly provide urban services and those surrounding areas which directly impact conditions within the City Limits. The current

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PAA consists of approximately 178 acres, or 0.31 square miles. Under the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA), the City and County coordinated their activities in identifying and providing services within the Potential Annexation Area.

Per GMA, the boundary of the Potential Annexation Area is based on 20-year population forecasts, environmental constraints, the concentrations of existing development, locations of the existing infrastructure and services, the location of existing and/or planned transportation corridors, and where the City could logically and economically extend and provide urban services.

The Urban Growth Area (UGA) is generally bound by the Snoqualmie River to the west, NE 60th Street to the north, the Tolt Highlands to the east, and NE 32nd Street and Tolt River to the south. Any potential expansion of the UGA is constrained by several factors, including geographic features, geologic hazard areas, and King County's land use controls that limit density in rural areas. The Snoqualmie and Tolt Rivers form a natural boundary to the west and south, respectively, and the areas surrounding these river corridors are prone to flooding and provide ecological habitat that are not well suited for development. To the east in the Tolt Highlands, there are geologic hazard areas that feature steep slopes and/or potential landslide hazard areas that severely limit development. King County has implemented land use controls in unincorporated areas to the north and south of the UGA that are intended to protect farmland and maintain low densities in these rural areas.

It can be expected that within the 20-year timeframe of the Comprehensive Plan that the City may annex portions of the Potential Annexation Area and provide municipal services to those areas, including utilities, streets, and other infrastructures.

City Government. The City of Carnation was incorporated in 1912 and is currently a non-charter code city under Washington's municipal designations. The City is under a council-manager form of government. The five (5) member city council positions are elected for staggered four (4) year terms. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are appointed by the council from their own members. The only official State mandated board of the City is the Planning Board, which is now a combined Planning and Parks Board.

The Planning and Parks Board consists of seven (7) members appointed by the City Council. Members serve four (4) year terms.

The City uses a Hearing Examiner to review certain land use applications.

Population. Two years after incorporation, the 1914-1915 King County Directory listed Carnation (Tolt) population at 1,000. The 1980 Census of Population credited Carnation

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with 951 residents. The population at the 1990 Census was 1,243. The 2000 US Census put the Carnation City population at 1,893 residents. A loss of population was reflected in the 2010 Census, with a population of 1,786. In 2024, the US Census has Carnation's population as 2,199.

Land Use. Carnation is in the middle of the Snoqualmie Valley and is an incorporated city and urban area, surrounded by rural lands and at the confluence of the Tolt and Snoqualmie Rivers. State Route 203 (Tolt Avenue), which provides access to the City runs in a north-south direction through the City and forms the spine of more intense development. Carnation's Town Center consists of the commercial core with surrounding mixed use and higher density residential development. Lower density residential development is mainly further east and west but in close proximity. Carnation's compact form creates excellent opportunity for a walkable community, and the city's policies promote connectivity between neighborhoods and the commercial center. Industrial land uses existing parallel to SR2003 west of the commercial zone along SR203. The City has ample park land within the UGA, much of which is in King County's Tolt MacDonald Park.

Economy. Carnation is a jobs poor/housing rich community, providing more housing than jobs. Most of Carnation's residents commute to nearby regional job centers. Given its location mid-valley and the distance to the Interstate highway system, Carnation's ability to support larger industrial and commercial development is limited. Employment opportunities include retail, public sector and some industrial jobs. The economic viability of Carnation's retail center will rely on increasing the population base as well as efforts to draw visitors to the City.

Housing. Carnation's housing stock is predominantly single-family homes. Mobile homes and multi-family duplexes and apartments are also present but represent a small percentage of the total housing stock. Carnation's housing stock is aging; approximately half was built prior to 1990, although the City is currently experiencing substantial development and will have a larger supply of newer homes in the near future. Current development will also provide a greater diversity of housing stock with townhomes and duplexes in construction. Housing prices in Carnation are slightly lower than is typical for eastern King County, although there is still a "housing gap" in that housing costs are not typically affordable to low- and moderate-income households. According to the 2020 Census, approximately 25% of Carnation's home owning households pay more than 30% of their income on housing. More information is available in the Housing Action Plan developed in 2023.

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Sno-Valley Senior Housing is currently developing a 15-unit affordable housing project. Preserving existing housing stock that is more affordable is a priority for the City of Carnation.

Parks and Recreation. Carnation is a City with abundant parklands, trails and recreational opportunities. Tolt MacDonald Park, a 500-acre park operated by King County is located on the city border, with approximately 50 acres within city limits. Important City parks include pocket parks such as the well-loved Fred Hockert Park (“Yellow Park”), and Neighborhood parks such as Valley Memorial and Nick Loutsis Park. The Snoqualmie Valley Trail, a regional facility also operated by King County, bisects the City, and there are linkages including trails along the Tolt River. Recreation opportunities include biking, hiking, disc golf, tennis, tot lots, ballfields, skatebowl, BMX track, etc. While Carnation has adequate park lands to serve present and future citizens and visitors, many park facilities need improvement. The City imposes an impact fee on new development to pay for a share of the improvements made necessary by projected build-out of the Future Land Use. Recent projects include paving the parking lots at Valley Memorial Park and Nick Loutsis Park and resurfacing and updating the basketball court at Valley Memorial Park. A current project is a phased development of River’s Edge Park with playground and covered pavilion.

Transportation. State Route (SR) 203 provides the only roadway access to Carnation from the region. SR203 is known as Tolt Avenue within Carnation city limits and is the City’s main commercial street. Entwistle provides east-west access from SR203 and is the other main arterial. The intersection of SR203 and Entwistle is the City’s only traffic signal. In general, levels of service (LOS) currently meet the adopted standard for SR203 as adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council, which is LOS D. However, traffic system improvements including several signalization projects and expanded roadway segments will be necessary to maintain adopted levels of service in the future given traffic generated by new development. A major safety infrastructure improvement needed, with the help of state and regional partners, is a traffic circle at SR203 and Tolt Hill Road. Although outside of City limits, this intersection is an important entry point to the City which would benefit from safety and traffic flow improvements.

The City imposes an impact fee on new development to pay a share of the improvements made necessary by projected building-out of the Future Land Use Map. More information can be found in the Transportation Element.

Utilities. The City is the purveyor of water and sewer service. Other service partners provide solid waste collection and disposal, electricity, natural gas and telecommunications. The City has its own source of water, which is a spring source

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southeast of the City limits supplemented by a well located in Nick Loutsis Park. The Water Service Area includes all the UGA plus some areas outside the UGA. The City's sewer collection system is a vacuum system. Wastewater treatment is provided by King County. Wastewater is treated to the highest standard, and the outfall is used to enhance a wetland north of the City. Public sewer service is only provided within City limits but will be extended upon annexation within the UGA. Development within the City must treat and infiltrate stormwater, in accordance with the adopted Department of Ecology Manual for stormwater management. All services are projected to be adequate to serve future development as allowed by the Future Land Use Map. More information can be found in the Utilities Element.

Capital Facilities. The Capital Facilities Element includes an evaluation of existing conditions and future capacity to meet projected growth consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map. Capital projects that are required to maintain adopted levels of service for each type of facility are summarized in this Element. The City provides water, sewer, parks and transportation. The Riverview School District provides public schools to serve Carnation's citizens. Capital improvement plans including funding sources are discussed for each of the above services, with the Riverview School District's Capital Facilities Plan adopted by reference. In addition to the impact fees for transportation and parks as discussed above, the City collects a school impact fee on behalf of the Riverview School District, based on an Inter-local Agreement. More information can be found in the Capital Facilities Element.

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Map of the Planning Area:

