

Port Orchard Housing Action Plan

Public Engagement Plan

Version: July 20, 2022

Project Introduction

The City of Port Orchard is developing a Housing Action Plan (HAP) to address the increase in housing costs and the relatively limited diversity of housing available in Port Orchard. In recent years significant strides have been made to improve the local housing situation, including an updated Comprehensive Plan, development regulations update, and zoning policy changes that allow missing middle housing types.

Despite these efforts, low-income housing and affordable housing supplies are limited. The variety of housing types being developed remain low, rents are high and rental choices are limited, and there is a lack of group housing and special needs housing for seniors and people with disabilities. Port Orchard was awarded a grant from the Department of Commerce to create a HAP to encourage construction of additional affordable and market housing in a greater variety of housing types and at prices that are accessible to greater variety of incomes. The HAP will be developed with robust public engagement.

Public Engagement Purpose and Approach

This Public Engagement Plan provides a framework for the project team to organize HAP engagement efforts. It outlines the purpose and objectives of engagement, key stakeholders, and methods. As the project progresses, the team will use this Public Engagement Plan to design activities that are aligned with the project schedule and respond to community needs. The plan will be revisited throughout the process to reflect accomplished activities and address emerging needs.

The Public Engagement Plan identifies a range of engagement options that meet the needs of the people, businesses, and agencies affected by the HAP planning effort.

Housing is deeply personal, and a good engagement process builds community advocates and may reduce political tensions. To that end, the general approach for public engagement in this project includes:

- Clearly communicate the housing challenges in Port Orchard and the sources of those challenges, along with the project's purpose, process, timeline, and final recommendations, so the community is well-informed.
- Given the robust public engagement planned for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan periodic update, the HAP will focus on individual/targeted stakeholder outreach instead of large public events. One-on-one outreach for technical topics like housing regulations and finance is often more effective and encourages more frank and constructive input.
- Effectively solicit valuable feedback from key stakeholders and community participants by arranging appropriate meeting environments and asking the right questions.
- Use accessible engagement methods to address common barriers across time constraints, transportation, internet access, physical accessibility, and comfort level.

- Avoid engagement fatigue by drawing on past work, setting realistic expectations about what the HAP can accomplish, asking for referrals for new community leaders, reporting what we have heard and how it is being used, and visibly implementing the HAP. When people do not see results from past plans, they are less likely to engage in the future.

Public Engagement Goals

The Public Engagement Plan is designed to reach the following goals:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of local housing needs and affordability issues (e.g., specific demographic group needs and qualitative knowledge the numbers do not capture or are out-of-date). For example, changes in Navy staffing at the Bremerton shipyard can occur with short notice and affect the housing market across the region.
2. Build a groundswell of community support and consensus on Port Orchard's approach to housing and associated infrastructure planning, which will affect community sentiments for specific housing developments.
3. Share data, local knowledge, and stories to increase shared understanding of housing issues and solutions and develop a data-informed plan. Avoid jargon and use normal language that people can understand.
4. Gain local insight on development potential, e.g., site-specific characteristics, local barriers, and opportunities. Some issues are identifying barriers to missing middle residential projects and diversifying the apartment styles being developed.
5. Build ownership of the HAP by bringing viewpoints together. This means understanding people's values and shared community goals and may mean using quantitative and qualitative data to sensitively bust myths about housing.
6. Build trust between community, stakeholders, City planning staff, City Council, Planning Commission, and other local agencies through an open, transparent process, by setting realistic expectations for the HAP and identifying who has decision-making power at different points in the process.
7. Build advocates who help communicate and solve problems with their community and shepherd the plan through adoption and implementation.
8. Ensure that the HAP represents the Port Orchard's full range of demographic cohorts (e.g., income levels, household size, race, ethnicity, disability) to meet existing needs, build community ownership of the HAP, and respond to grant requirements for representative community engagement.

Public Health Considerations

While the COVID-19 pandemic moved most engagement online, as of July 2022 public health guidelines are relaxed for in-person activities. Some stakeholder interviews are expected to take place in-person as allowed under health guidelines for the project team and other stakeholder interviews will be conducted remotely or in a hybrid format. City council also meets in a hybrid format.

Who To Engage

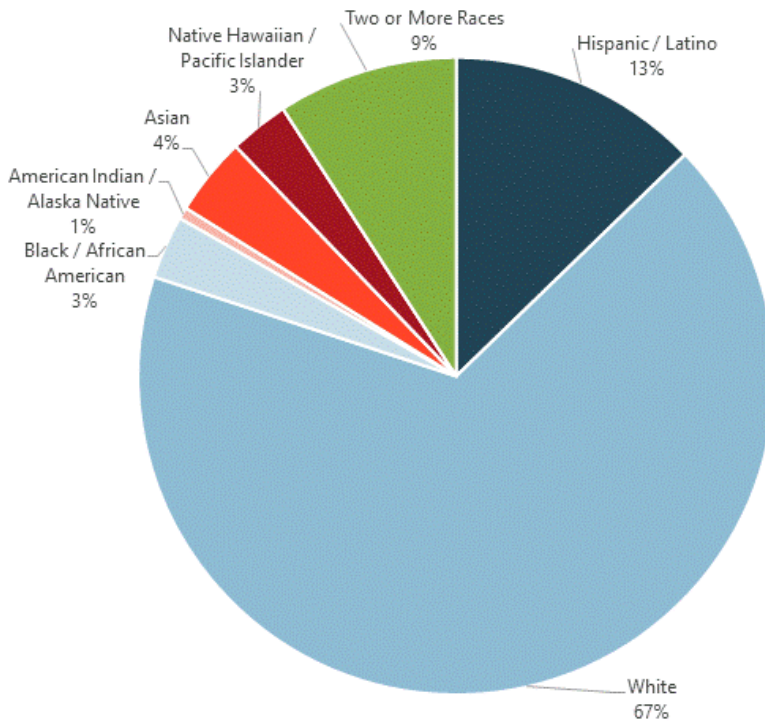
While baseline community engagement activities are guided by Department of Commerce grant requirements, we will seek to engage with all of Port Orchard's populations to the extent allowed by the project timeline and budget. Representative engagement enables the HAP to respond to current needs for housing variety and options. Considerations for representative engagement include race and ethnicity, origin and language, income, household tenure, age, and families.

Port Orchard grew at a very high rate of 4% per year between 2010 and 2020. The 2022 population estimate is 16,400 people. The charts below show relevant demographic information.

In summary:

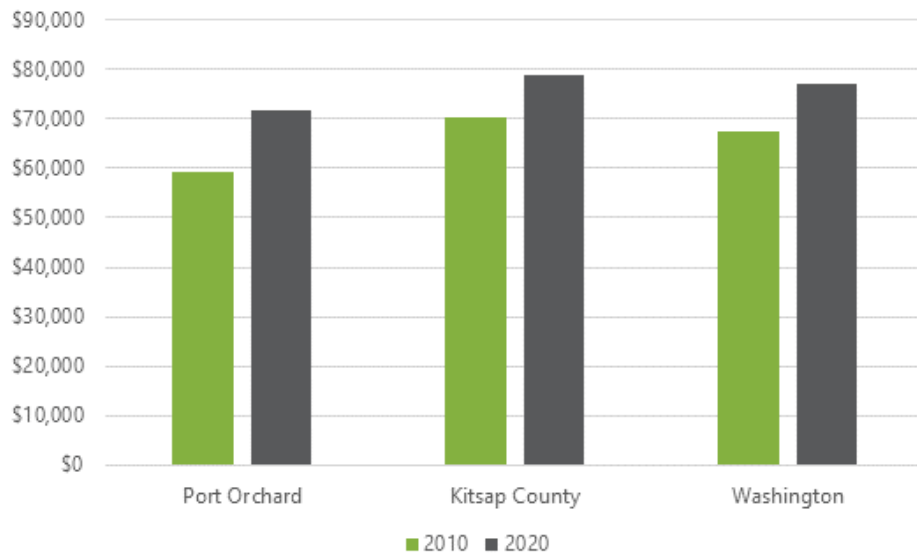
- The racial and ethnic breakdown of Port Orchard’s population is similar to Washington as a whole, but with a higher share of mixed-race residents and a lower share of Asian residents. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) populations make up a third of Port Orchard residents.
- 40% of homes are renter-occupied, which is a higher share than the state and the county.
- The median household earns \$71,700 in Port Orchard, which is slightly lower than the county and the state. Ownership households have much higher earnings, at \$97,500, more than double the median income of rental households, \$46,200.

Port Orchard Race and Ethnicity



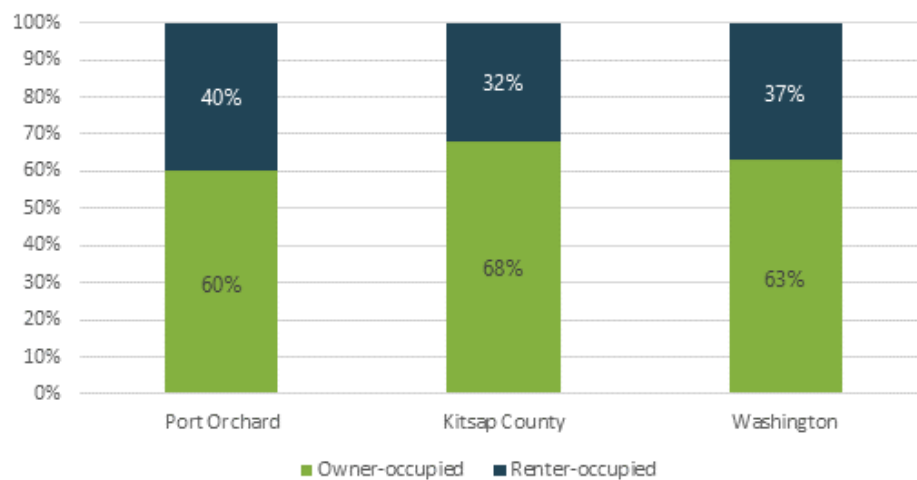
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Income



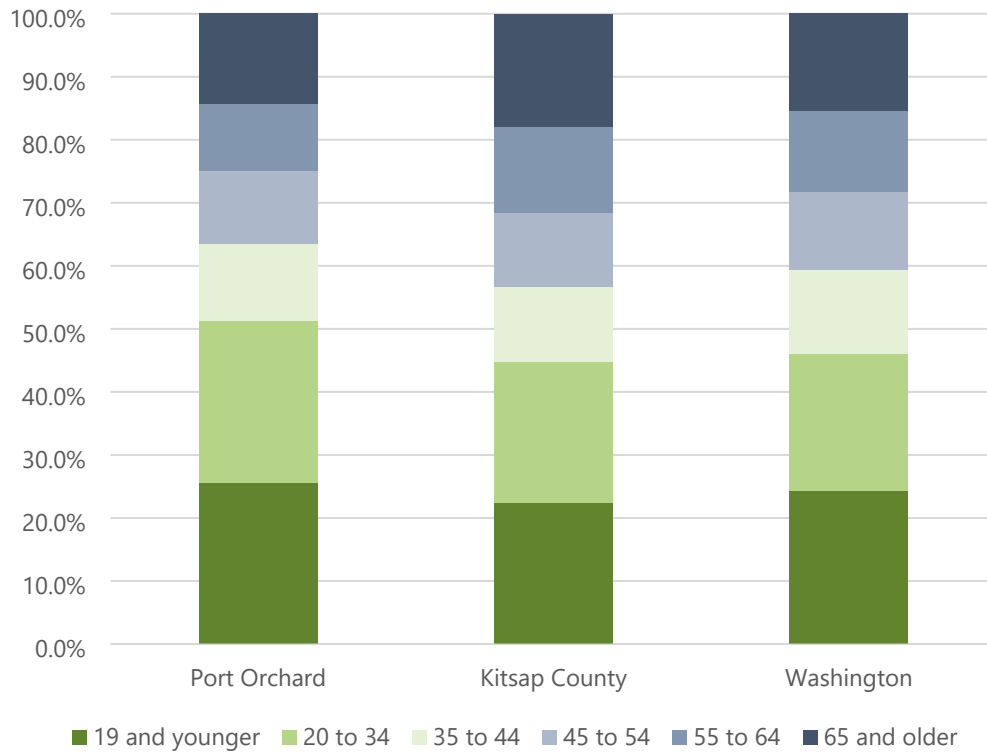
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S2503

Household Tenure



Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

Age Distribution



Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Focused Engagement

Focusing engagement efforts on those most impacted ensures a timely, budget-efficient, and equitable process and responds to guidance issued by the Washington Department of Commerce [Guidance for Developing a Housing Action Plan](#). The Commerce grant guidance recommends using the chart below to identify the stakeholders that this planning process should engage. It suggests prioritizing the top two quadrants to invest planning resources effectively and efficiently.

<p>More impacted by housing issues</p>	<p>PRIORITIZE At-risk communities</p> <p>Requires significant collaboration or HAP may not meet community needs. Focus on empowering these voices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renters • People experiencing housing cost burdens • Seniors • People of color impacted by historic lending practices (redlining), displacement pressures, and/or biases • People with special needs • Immigrants • Youth/families/multigenerational families • People experiencing homelessness • Mom-and-pop landlords • Mom-and-pop developers • People and businesses at risk of displacement • Social services 	<p>COLLABORATE Influencers</p> <p>Requires significant collaboration or HAP adoption and implementation could stall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeowners experiencing change • Housing providers/authorities/consortiums • Real estate developers • Construction industry • “Big” landlords • Property owners • School districts • Small business owners
	<p>INVOLVE Concerned residents or bystanders</p> <p>Inform and consult to confirm baseline conditions and community interests and values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents experiencing stability • Community-based organizations/non-profits (non-housing related) 	<p>LEVERAGE Potential advocates</p> <p>Inform and consult as needed to build and maintain HAP advocates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeowners experiencing stability • Major employers • Transportation providers
	<p>Less Influence on housing issues</p>	<p>More Influence on housing issues</p>

Communication Mediums

Updates to the public on the HAP and engagement opportunities will be communicated through the City's existing communication channels. These include:

- City website news items and meetings/events calendar
- City e-updates email list
- Press releases; the *Port Orchard Independent* is the local paper of record (weekly publication deadline is Friday at noon)
- City social media presence on Facebook and YouTube
- City utility bills
- Connections with local advocacy and business organizations (City staff could ask information to be distributed to memberships; this is particularly helpful for hard-to-reach groups)

Methods and Tools

This plan outlines a variety of communication and engagement tools to be used as appropriate during this project. It is meant to act as a flexible guide to reach stakeholders and interested groups; the team may adjust engagement approaches if some methods prove more successful than others.

The following engagement methods are proposed for this project:

Stakeholder Interviews/Focus Groups

Stakeholder interviews are helpful as a two-way communication tool: The project team learns from the unique perspectives and expertise of local people, and stakeholders learn more about the project and its process so they can be ready to engage further.

Based on the project resources, about 12-15 interviews/focus group meetings are anticipated. The scope of work and consultant team have developed an initial list of possible interview candidates, including:

- City Mayor and Councilmembers
- Residents and especially renters
- Other local housing advocates
- For-profit and non-profit housing providers, e.g. Housing Kitsap, Habitat for Humanity
- Developers and builders
- Civic/community groups
- Major employers such as the County, school district, or Navy

Stakeholder interviews can be flexible scheduled as one-on-one or group meetings. Several interviews are anticipated to occur with an in-person site visit by the consultant team in July 2022, and others will occur online via Zoom or phone calls.

Community Survey

The scope of work provides for one survey. This will be a community survey to identify demand for housing types among the current population, with a focus on special needs housing, supportive housing, and the challenges for cost-burdened residents. Because most housing data is available from official sources, the survey could focus on collecting qualitative information and be designed as a story-collection tool.

The survey will primarily be distributed online. Targeted efforts can help aim for demographic representation, including: word of mouth; City and community group email listservs; and social media boosts to targeted populations. Incentives like prizes or gift cards from local businesses could also help increase response rates.

If resources allow, the City will use a utility bill mailing to send paper copies of the survey to all Port Orchard customers to ensure at least a representative population is reached. Paper copies of the survey should also be made available at community hubs such as City Hall, library, post office, and medical center. The paper copy should have a link/QR code to the online version in case recipients prefer that method.

Public Meetings

City staff and consultants will provide periodic updates to elected and appointed decision-makers throughout the project. These updates may be done remotely if public health concerns limit travel and/or in-person meetings. Anticipated public meetings include the following.

Public Meeting	Date	Description
Kickoff with City Councilmembers	July 26, 6:30 PM	The consultant team presents an overview of the project, asks the city councilmembers for their project priorities and top housing concerns, and leads a discussion on community engagement methods.
Check-in with City Councilmembers	Date TBD	Present the Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Analysis Report
Planning Commission meeting	Date TBD	Present draft HAP
City Council public hearing	Date TBD	Present draft HAP
City Council meeting	Date TBD	Present final HAP

Project Webpage

The City will host and maintain a webpage on the City’s main website that will serve as a repository for HAP information, including status updates, draft documents, schedules, official notices, and links to partner agencies. Consultants may provide specialized content, such as links to surveys and case studies.