



A REGIONAL COALITION FOR HOUSING

STRATEGIC PLAN

BUILDING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FASTER
- ADOPTED MARCH 2024 -



YWCA FAMILY VILLAGE, ISSAQUAH

MISSION:

To preserve and increase housing for low- and moderate-income households in East King County.



TOGETHER CENTER, REDMOND

MEMBER JURISDICTIONS

- Beaux Arts Village
- Bellevue
- Bothell
- Clyde Hill
- Hunts Point
- Issaquah
- Kenmore
- King County
- Kirkland
- Medina
- Mercer Island
- Newcastle
- Redmond
- Sammamish
- Woodinville
- Yarrow Point



VISION: East King County is a thriving, inclusive community where the housing needs of people of all income levels are met.



2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

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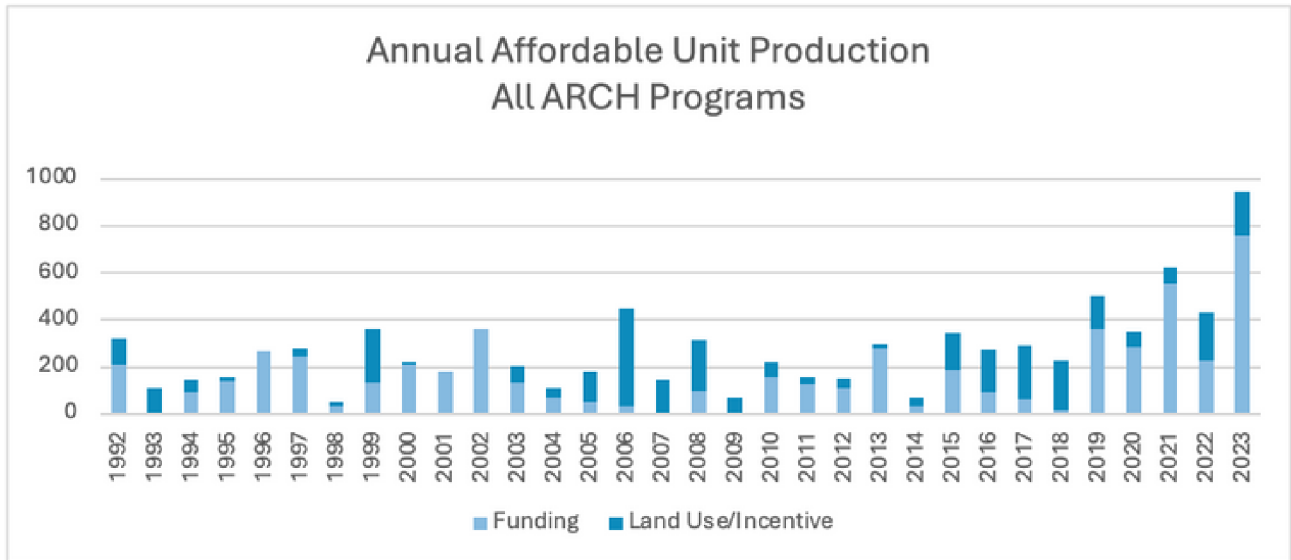
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Acknowledgments

This Strategic Plan is the result of collaboration and leadership by the ARCH Planning Committee, ARCH Executive Board, ARCH staff and consultant partners from LPA.

BACKGROUND

A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) was founded in 1992 as a joint undertaking of local jurisdictions to address the growing need for affordable housing in East King County. In the last three decades, ARCH has expanded its membership and established a successful model for bringing cities together along with private sector and nonprofit partners to take cooperative action on affordable housing policies, programs, development and investments, resulting in the creation or preservation of over 9,000 units of housing dedicated for low- and moderate-income households.



During this period, the dramatic growth in need for affordable housing has created greater pressure on ARCH’s efforts and a widening gap in resources to effectively meet that need. Recent changes to the state’s Growth Management Act have created responsibilities for local jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all income levels, with future housing needs quantified by income level and allocated across all counties and local jurisdictions. Currently, ARCH member jurisdictions are responsible for planning for over 80,000 additional homes affordable to low-income households by 2044.

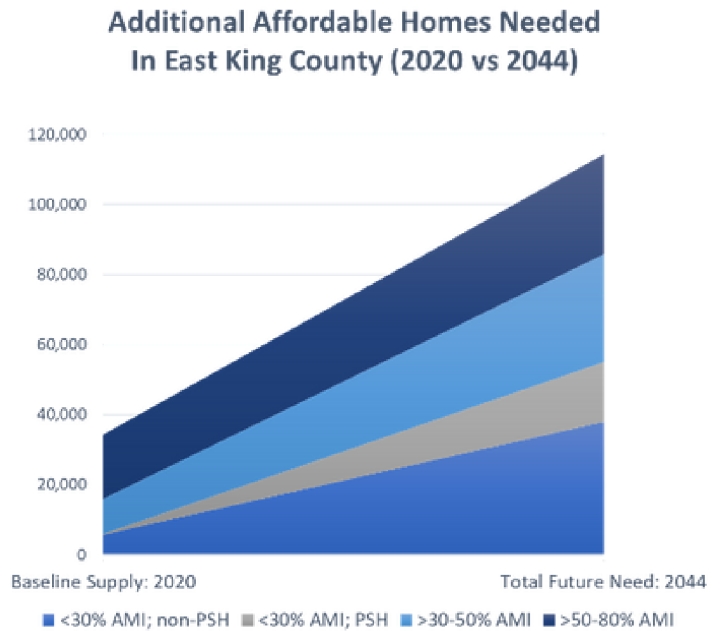
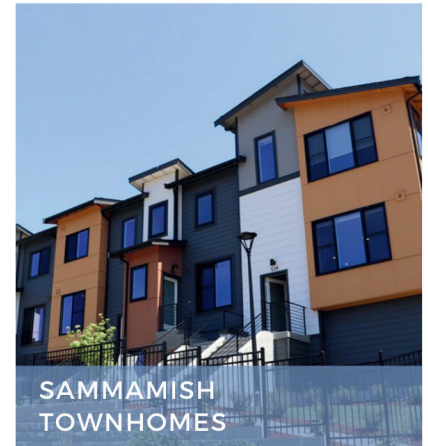


FIGURE 1. ARCH CITIES HOUSING NEED ALLOCATIONS BY INCOME BAND

In 2023, the ARCH Executive Board initiated a strategic planning process that builds on recent organizational assessments and examines broader organizational challenges and opportunities. Many stakeholders were invited to provide input during development of the plan, including elected officials, planning commissioners and staff from member jurisdictions; for-profit and nonprofit housing developers, operators and service providers; advocacy organizations and others. The ARCH Executive Board held two extended planning workshops with a Planning Committee working before and after these workshops. The resulting Strategic Plan creates a framework to align and guide the Board in advancing several key strategies over the coming years. These strategies are organized as follows:

- **Governance and Administration:** Pursuing organizational and governance changes that streamline decision-making, empower the coalition to tackle major policy challenges, and increase and education and engagement of elected officials from member jurisdictions
- **State and Regional Policy and Funding Engagement:** Focusing on targeted state and regional policy efforts that increase funding and reduce barriers that contribute to the cost of affordable housing development
- **Local Policy and Planning:** Maintaining support for individual planning efforts at the local level while increasing support for high impact special projects and strategies that result in creating more affordable housing faster
- **Program Implementation: Housing Investments and Incentives, Preservation and Stewardship:** Continuing to provide an efficient, cost-effective vehicle for implementing local funding and incentive programs and stewarding the affordable housing assets created through those programs, while relying on partners to meet the broader set of needs of low- and moderate-income renters and homeowners



In addition to these strategies, the planning process has helped to refine and strengthen ARCH's identity and intended role, and establish key criteria for future decisions. These elements will assist the ARCH Executive Board as it continually evaluates and adjusts strategies over time.

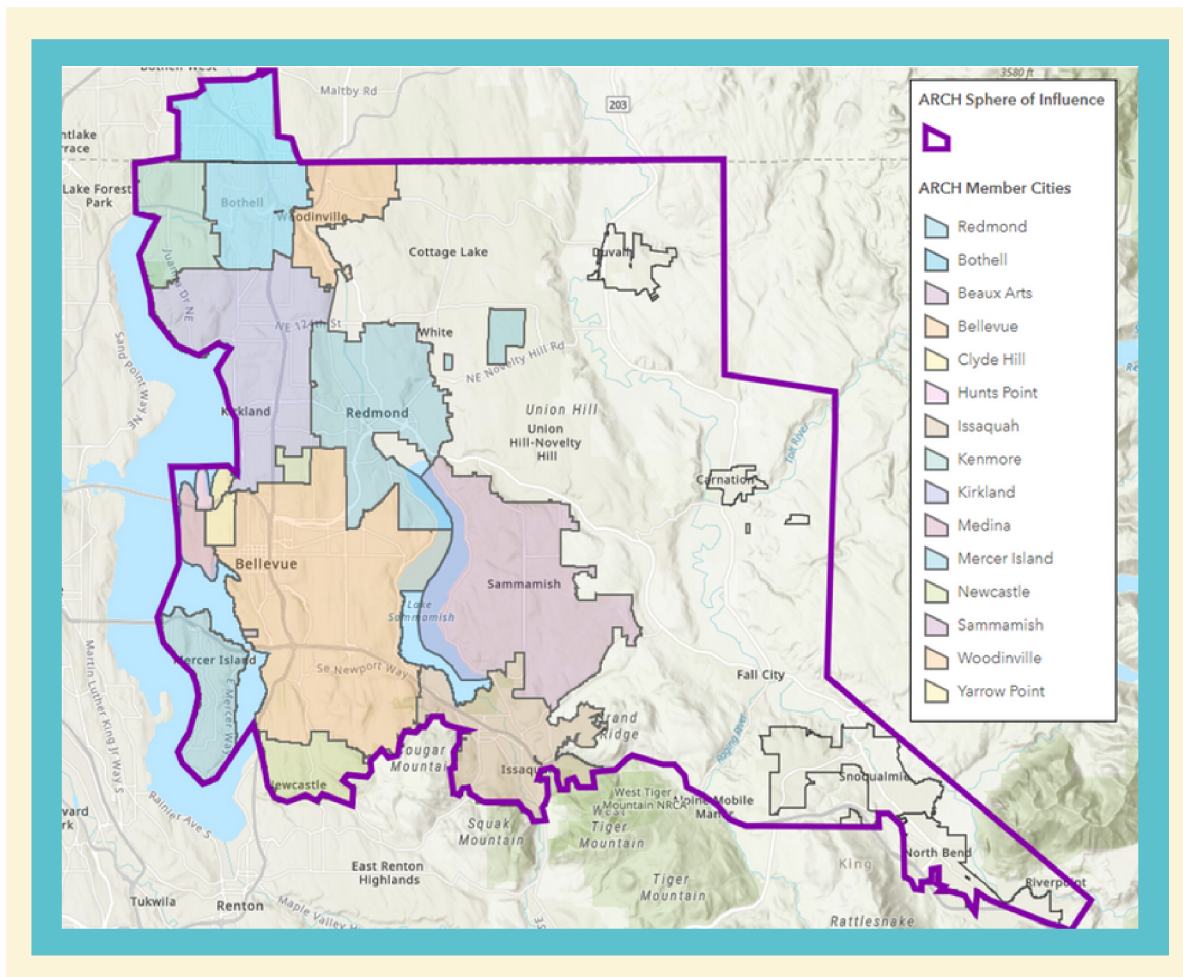
ARCH MISSION & IDENTITY

ARCH's Mission is to preserve and increase housing for low- and moderate-income households in East King County.

ARCH members work to achieve this mission by collaborating on shared goals, policies, and strategies, including:

- Coordinating public resources and attracting greater private investment into affordable housing;
- Sharing technical resources and staff between jurisdictions to create a sound base of housing policies and programs;
- Effectively stewarding affordable housing created through local policies and investment;
- Providing one clear point of contact for affordable housing development;
- Directly engaging the community with information and expertise; and
- Advancing policies that will help create more affordable housing faster.

Who We Serve: Our mission supports **people who need affordable housing** on behalf of the sixteen member jurisdictions that ARCH represents.



ARCH'S STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES

To assess where ARCH is uniquely positioned to carry out our mission, we examined the landscape of similar organizations and providers and asked for input from our partners and stakeholders. The following strategic advantages help define who ARCH is and where we can deliver superior programs and services to achieve our mission.



We are a unique coalition of East King County jurisdictions that can address issues, leverage opportunities, and allocate resources more effectively than any single jurisdiction.



We provide expertise on all facets of affordable housing – including complex data analysis, policy, planning, financing, development, and operations.



We have earned credibility and trust through our sustained and focused commitment to the preservation, development, and operations of affordable housing.

Decision Criteria:

We use the following questions to evaluate our strategies:

Is our role clear?

Does it align with our mission and interlocal agreement?

Are we best positioned to lead, support, or amplify?

Have we identified, and are we prepared to, address the potential political roadblocks?

Do we have the capacity at this time to be effective?

Is it supported by data and are the proposed outcomes measurable and sustainable?

Will this reduce our ability to be effective with current strategies?

Is it financially viable now and/ or in the future?

Have we evaluated the return on investment?

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

ARCH carries out its mission by collaborating with many diverse stakeholders, including key leaders and decision-makers within member jurisdictions; development partners that acquire, build and operate affordable housing; public and private funders that finance the construction and operations of affordable housing; and community leaders and organizations that create a supportive environment for affordable housing efforts. In developing this Strategic Plan, ARCH asked its stakeholders to share their views about ARCH's mission, strategic advantages, and where ARCH should invest more capacity and resources.

Views on the most important affordable housing strategies varied widely, even among similar stakeholders, but overall survey responses showed greater support for ARCH to invest in:

- Advocating for greater public and private investments in affordable housing through new funding sources or increases in existing sources;
- Supporting the preservation and operations of existing affordable housing;
- Identifying and advocating for the removal of barriers to affordable housing development and preservation at the local level; and
- Collecting and analyzing data to inform member jurisdictions and measure results.



Relatively few stakeholders expressed an interest in ARCH expanding services to additional local jurisdictions at this time, while views were mixed on whether ARCH should expand to provide more direct services for low- and moderate-income households, such as housing navigation, resource referrals or foreclosure prevention. Additional comments suggested ARCH should maintain a limited policy focus aimed at facilitating housing production.

In the last year, ARCH has also conducted significant outreach efforts to hear from people living in or seeking affordable housing in East King County. These perspectives will be important as ARCH considers not only how best to produce more affordable housing, but also how to create projects that will best serve its residents and remain sustainable community assets over the long-term.

Continued engagement with ARCH's diverse stakeholders and partners will be an important component of ARCH's ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan, as described under Strategic Plan Implementation.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FASTER

The following framework sets out a series of high-level strategies aimed at the challenge of **building more affordable housing faster**. The strategies were developed taking into account ARCH's mission and identity, the decision criteria listed above, input from stakeholders and an assessment of the key barriers to increasing our impact as a coalition.

These strategies are designed to be implemented through the ongoing work of the ARCH Executive Board and staff, member councils and other key partners. Specific action steps and success measures will be developed by the Board, in tandem with the development of ARCH's annual work program and budget.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

ARCH has served as a successful national model for over 30 years, with a governance model designed to mirror the structure and decision-making within local jurisdictions. This model has yielded significant achievements through voluntary efforts as individual jurisdictions have been ready to make investments and adopt supportive policies.

To keep pace with the current and increasing affordable housing need, **ARCH will pursue organizational and governance changes that streamline decision-making, empower the coalition to tackle major policy challenges, and increase education and engagement with elected officials from member jurisdictions on affordable housing.**

Strategies:

- **Elected Official Education and Engagement**
Engage with elected officials from member jurisdictions to build deeper understanding and support for affordable housing, key policy and funding tools, and ARCH's role in meeting the needs of low-income households.
- **Governance Change Analysis**
Evaluate and pursue long-term changes to ARCH's legal and governance structure that better advance its mission - including exploring the role of elected officials.
- **Streamline Decision-Making and Approval Processes**
Implement streamlined approvals consistent with ARCH's current Interlocal Agreement (e.g., Board approval of biennial budget and work plan, placement of council approvals on consent, etc.).
- **Organizational Values / DEI**
Establish values that incorporate how ARCH furthers diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in the work it does.



STATE AND REGIONAL POLICY AND FUNDING ENGAGEMENT

In recent years, state legislation has been the impetus for major policy shifts on affordable housing. New legislation has resulted in local governments having greater responsibility to plan for and accommodate housing affordable at all income levels, while specific state mandates are increasingly driving local policy and planning decisions. At the same time, significant funding and policy barriers continue to create challenges for communities to be successful in the creation of more affordable housing.

To respond to these challenges and build on a long and successful track record of pooling and leveraging local investments into affordable housing, **ARCH will focus on targeted state and regional policy efforts that increase funding and reduce barriers that contribute to the cost of affordable housing development.**

Strategies:

- **Targeted State and Regional Legislation and Funding**
Support cooperative efforts across the coalition on select, targeted state and regional legislation and funding focused on creating more housing faster.
- **Policy and Data Resource**
Serve as a policy resource, connecting members with data and other key information that elevates the need for funding and reducing policy barriers that slow down or increase the cost of development.
- **Coordination of Legislative Advocacy**
Support coordination of legislative advocacy in areas supported by members and pursue opportunities to advocate as a coalition.



LOCAL POLICY AND PLANNING

ARCH's involvement in local planning has enabled cities to advance common affordable housing policies, strategies and code provisions over time while recognizing that individual cities may be ready to move policies forward at different times. This approach has resulted in ten ARCH member jurisdictions adopting local affordable housing incentives, with ongoing support available to evaluate and update policies over time. ARCH has also played an instrumental role in advancing special projects that require unique financing, land use or partnership strategies to leverage significant development opportunities, including projects on underutilized public, nonprofit or faith community property.

ARCH will continue to serve as a resource for individual members in planning for affordable housing and **dedicate new capacity to supporting important local policy priorities that are applicable to a majority of its membership, and high impact special projects that result in creating more affordable housing faster.**

Strategies:

- **Support Member Requests and Convene on Key Issues.**
Evaluate member requests using ARCH's strategy screen and determine which to support; add capacity if priority needs continue to grow.
- **Advice on Surplus Land and Other Local Strategies.**
Provide specialized expertise in affordable housing development and financing to inform evaluation of surplus land, feasibility studies, RFP development, zoning/incentive strategies, and other local strategies to advance affordable housing.



PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING INVESTMENTS AND INCENTIVES, PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP



ARCH's coordinated approach to local housing investment and program implementation has led to the successful expansion of affordable housing incentives across ARCH members and created an efficient model for shared administration, with common code provisions and templates for affordable housing agreements, a streamlined process to access capital funding, and a centralized system for monitoring and stewardship. These accomplishments are core to ARCH's work, with many benefits including: staffing efficiencies for members; maximizing leverage of local resources; consistency and predictability for developers and property managers; flexibility to accommodate diverse housing across jurisdictions; and a shared pool of institutional knowledge on policy and implementation.

To build on this foundation, ARCH will continue to be an efficient, cost-effective vehicle for members to implement local funding and developer incentive programs and steward the affordable housing assets created through those programs. With limited resources available, ARCH will focus on partnerships to streamline its work and support the broader range of needs of low-income renters and homeowners.

Strategies:

- **Capital Investments, Developer Incentives**

Continue to serve as the central point of contact for capital funding applications and affordable housing incentives, and provide technical assistance for affordable housing developers in East King County.

Encourage collective increases in local contributions to affordable housing through ongoing guidance on parity goals.

- **Preservation and Stewardship**

Maintain and improve essential monitoring and stewardship functions unlikely to be taken on by others and partner to accomplish other functions wherever possible.

Continue to develop and modernize data systems to streamline operations.

- **Affirmative marketing**

Foster inclusive communities through promoting affirmative marketing and community partnerships, including developing a toolkit / best practices for a range of projects and programs.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The first year of the proposed Strategic Plan is focused on investigating and preparing to launch specific strategies. This will include further work by the ARCH Executive Board to develop specific budget and work plan proposals for 2025-26, with ultimate approval required by member councils, as well as action steps and success measures for each strategy. Additional staffing or consultant capacity is expected to support areas where ARCH plans to invest more energy—particularly government affairs and education, as well as specialized expertise to advance local affordable housing strategies and projects. These efforts are intended to help us tackle major state and regional policy issues that will create the tools and conditions for our collective success, as well as provide targeted local support that results in building more affordable housing faster.



Monitoring Progress and Adjusting

Strategic thinking and planning are ongoing. The Board will continue to review this Plan and make adjustments each year to respond to new conditions and opportunities. Here is how ARCH will maintain ongoing strategic thinking.

6 Areas of Attention	With the Staff Team	With the Executive Board	With Stakeholders
1. Review success of our strategies so far	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Annually</i>
2. Determine adjustments, what needs to be revised or reinvented	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Annually</i>
3. Invite, determine and address <u>new big</u> questions as they emerge	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	
4. Remain current on trends facing our community	<i>Annually</i>	<i>Annually</i>	
5. Decide what and how we should communicate progress	<i>Annually</i>	<i>Annually</i>	
6. Refresh the plan	<i>Biannually</i>	<i>Biannually</i>	<i>Biannually</i>

While we know this work will entail significant challenges, we believe that through the collaborative efforts of ARCH’s member jurisdictions, East King County can be a thriving, inclusive community where the housing needs of people of all income levels are met.