

# Land Use Patterns, Built Form, Housing, and Employment

# 5



# Chapter 5 – Land Use Patterns, Urban Form Housing, and Employment

## Introduction

This chapter describes the City of Shoreline’s land use patterns, built form, and housing environment. The three growth alternatives compare how development of different intensities might impact these topic areas.

## Affected Environment

The affected environment in this section describes existing land use patterns, comprehensive plan and zoning designations, housing needs, employment, and other related information.

### Existing Land Use Patterns

Land use patterns refer to the distribution and arrangement of different types of land uses within urban areas, such as residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational activities. These patterns describe how land is utilized and developed for various purposes. Land use patterns can vary based on factors such as economic activities, demographic trends, and cultural preferences. Examples of land use patterns include the concentration of residential developments in certain neighborhoods, the clustering of commercial activities along main thoroughfares, and the separation of industrial areas from residential areas to mitigate land use conflicts. See **Table 5-1** for a listing of land use types in the City. Refer to **Figure 5.1** for the Shoreline Land Use Map and **Figure 5.2** for the Shoreline Zoning Map.

Low Density Residential development accounts for approximately 55% of land use in the community. As the most prominent land use, these parcels are distributed throughout all but a few areas in the City. There are significantly less parcels designated as Medium Density Residential, and these are situated primarily as a buffer between higher-intensity development from Low Density Residential. High Density Residential, approximately 4% of land use, is primarily located near the commercial areas along Aurora Avenue N and in neighborhood centers. These land uses are often paired with Mixed Use designations.

Mixed Uses are allowed in a few scattered places throughout the City. A significant portion of this land is located along Aurora Avenue N, stretching from the north to south border of the City. There are numerous other pockets of Mixed Use land, often paired with High Density Residential areas. These partnered land uses are seen on NW 196<sup>th</sup> St in the Richmond Beach neighborhood, and at the intersection of NW Richmond Beach Road and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, for example. Another area with a considerable amount of Mixed Use and High Density Residential designations is in the North City neighborhood along 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NE.

Commercial development accounts for approximately 8% of land use in the community. Large commercial uses within the city are located primarily along Aurora Avenue N. Smaller commercial centers are located throughout the city. Four percent of Shoreline’s land area is comprised of the Shoreline Community College, Fircrest, CRISTA Ministries and King’s Schools, and the Washington State Public Health Lab. These areas are designated as Institution/Campus. Private and Public open space, along with Public Facility designations are distributed similarly throughout the City.

The light rail stations along I-5 have land use designations that intend to create a transition area between the new transit facilities, housing, and commercial development from existing low-intensity areas. There are three land use designations, named Station Area 1, Station Area 2, and Station Area 3, in the surrounding vicinity of both station areas.

**Table 5-1 Land Use Designations**

Land Use Type	Acres	% Total
Single-Family	4,061	55
Multi-Family	235	4
Commercial	536	8
Institution	224	3
Parks & Recreation	365	5
Private Open Space/ Water	342	5
Public Facilities	632	9
Right-of-way	797	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,192</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: City of Shoreline GIS Department 2012

## Countywide Centers and Related Provisions

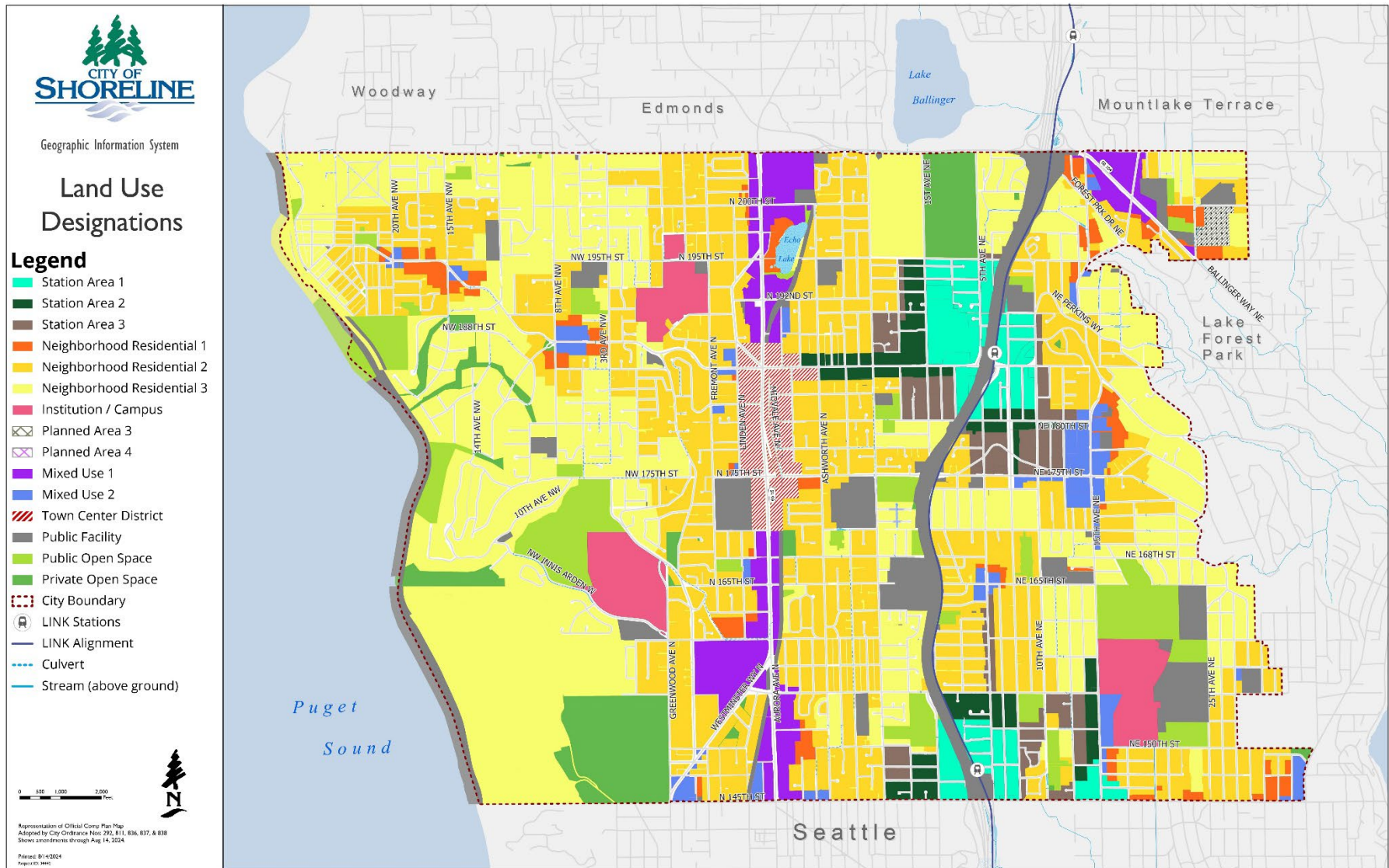
As of 2021, Shoreline has four candidate countywide centers. These are the areas anticipated to experience the most growth and change through 2044. The purpose of center is described as follows:

*Countywide growth centers serve important roles as places for equitably concentrating jobs, housing, shopping, and recreational opportunities. These are often smaller downtowns, high-capacity transit station areas, or neighborhood centers that are linked by transit, provide a mix of housing and services, and serve as focal points for local and county investment.*<sup>1</sup>

The Candidate Countywide Centers are the 145<sup>th</sup> St. Station Subarea, 185<sup>th</sup> St. Station Subarea, Shoreline Place, and the Town Center. To understand the intent of the centers, some of the key criteria are as follows:

- An assessment of housing need and cultural assets, including displacement of residents and businesses are required as part of a subarea plan.
- Documentation of tools to provide a range of affordable and fair housing are required as part of a subarea plan.
- Centers must support multi-modal transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities.
- Planning for at least 20% residential and 20% employment in these Center areas.
- Has frequent, all-day, fixed route bus service (16 hours, 15-minute headways)
- Has transit supportive infrastructure. Supports connection/transfers between routes and other modes.
- Market studies are encouraged to support target and planned densities.

Figure 5.1 Shoreline Land Use Map





## Neighborhoods

Shoreline is comprised of 14 neighborhoods that include homes, schools, parks and other public facilities, and commercial and public centers that provide a variety of shopping and services. Neighborhood design policies can maintain and strengthen the more private qualities of residential areas, while encouraging commercial and public centers to attract people and provide services and jobs to nearby residents.

A few neighborhoods are expected to change more than others over the coming years, as growth will be consolidated to the Countywide Centers described above. The neighborhoods associated with these areas are as follows: Echo Lake, North City, Meridian Park, Parkwood, Ridgecrest, Briarcrest, and Ballinger. See **Figure 5.3**.

## Built Form and Community Design

Built form refers to the physical layout and structure of the setting/study area, including the arrangement of buildings, streets, public spaces, and infrastructure. It encompasses the spatial configuration, density, shape, and design of the built environment. Urban form can vary widely from one place to another and can be influenced by factors such as historical development, topography, zoning regulations, and transportation networks.

Examples of urban forms include compact, high-density downtown cores with mixed land uses, sprawling suburban developments characterized by low-density housing and separated land uses, and traditional gridiron street patterns versus curvilinear suburban street patterns.

The Shoreline Municipal Code and various design guidelines documents provide guidance for design. Key provisions of the SMC include:

- Title 20 Development Code, Division I Unified Development Code
- Title 15 Buildings and Construction—references various building codes and construction provisions applicable in Shoreline
- Title 12 Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places

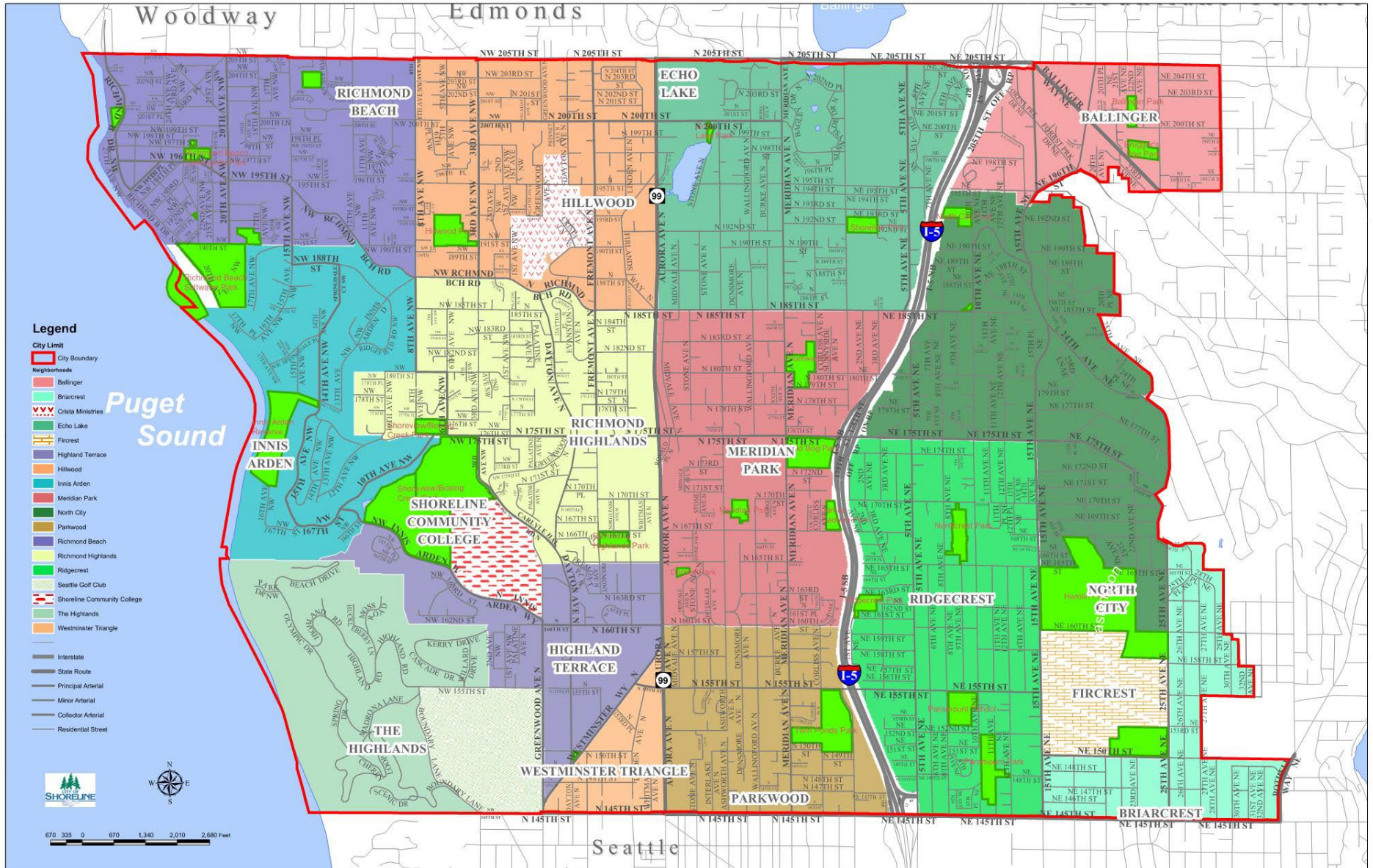
Various other design standards and guidelines also are available to guide design in the City. The code requirements include integrated provisions related to transitions between zoning of varying heights and densities, as well as setbacks, landscaping, and other provisions. More information can be found here:

<https://www.shorelinewa.gov/government/departments/city-clerk-s-office/codes>

and

<https://www.shorelinewa.gov/government/departments/planning-community-development/codes-and-guidelines/codes-governing-shoreline-development>.

Figure 5.3 Neighborhoods Map



## Shoreline Master Program

The Washington State Shoreline Management Act (SMA) requires all counties and most towns and cities to plan for how shorelines in their jurisdiction will develop through a Shoreline Master Program (SMP). SMPs are local land use policies and regulations that guide the public and private use of Washington shorelines. These policies and regulations provide for public access to public waters and shorelines, protect natural resources, and plan for water-dependent uses. SMP's are subject to the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58) and the goals and policies of the SMP are included in comprehensive plans under the GMA (RCW 36.70A).

The SMA applies to all "shorelines of the state". Shorelines of the state include all "shorelines" and "shorelines of statewide significance" within Washington. Shorelines, as defined by the SMA are all water areas together with the lands underlying them, which meet certain flow or acreage criteria. Shorelines of statewide significance are certain water areas that the Legislation has determined to have a unique character warranting special status and protection. Within the City of Shoreline, there are only shorelines of statewide significance-the approximately 3.5 miles of Puget Sound coastline. No other water areas within Shoreline meet the criteria set forth in the SMA. The City of Shoreline uses the SMP and comprehensive plan to manage this area.

## Housing Conditions and Needs

### Background and Context

The Housing Element requirements of the Growth Management Act were substantially amended in 2021 by House Bill 1220, requiring a much more detailed analysis of future housing needs by income level as well as considerations of racially disparate impacts, exclusion, and displacement in housing. As outlined in the Department of Commerce's *Guidance for Updating Your Housing Element*, the updated requirements for a housing element include the following:

1. **Housing needs assessment (HNA):** An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs by income level as provided by the Department of Commerce that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth.
2. **Goals, policies and objectives:** A statement of goals, policies, objectives and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement and development of housing, including policies for moderate density housing options in urban growth areas.
3. **Residential land capacity analysis:** Analysis to identify sufficient land to accommodate projected housing needs by income level.
4. **Provisions for all economic segments:** Adequate provisions to address existing and projected needs of households at all income levels, including documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability, consideration of housing locations in relation to employment locations and consideration of the role of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in meeting housing needs.
5. **Address racially disparate impacts, exclusion, displacement and displacement risk:** Identify policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement and exclusion, and implement policies and regulations that begin to undo these impacts. Also, identify areas that may be at higher risk of displacement and establish anti-displacement policies.



## **PSRC VISION 2050 and King County Countywide Planning Policies Related to Housing**

The housing element must also be consistent with PSRC Vision 2050 and King County's Countywide Planning Policies. Some key themes incorporated in the new goals and policies to better align with PSRC and King County policies include:

- Specifics of planning for future housing unit targets by income band.
- Additions of specific middle housing types and ADUs, and policies to allow more housing types in neighborhoods.
- Discussion of racially disparate impacts in past housing policy and future policies to address these historic inequities and mitigate future displacement risk.

Adjustments of language to acknowledge the need for some changes in housing types and locations, such as near future high-capacity transit.

### **Definition and Measure of Housing Affordability**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. When discussing levels of affordability, households are characterized by their income as a percent of their area's Area Median Income (AMI).

The 2024 AMI for King County (including Shoreline) was \$147,400. Therefore, a household with that income would be making 100% AMI; a household that made \$75,350 would be classified at 50% AMI; a household making \$45,200 would be classified at 30% AMI. Households who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered "cost-burdened" and may have difficulty affording necessities, such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. The median household income in Shoreline as of 2022 was \$106,184.

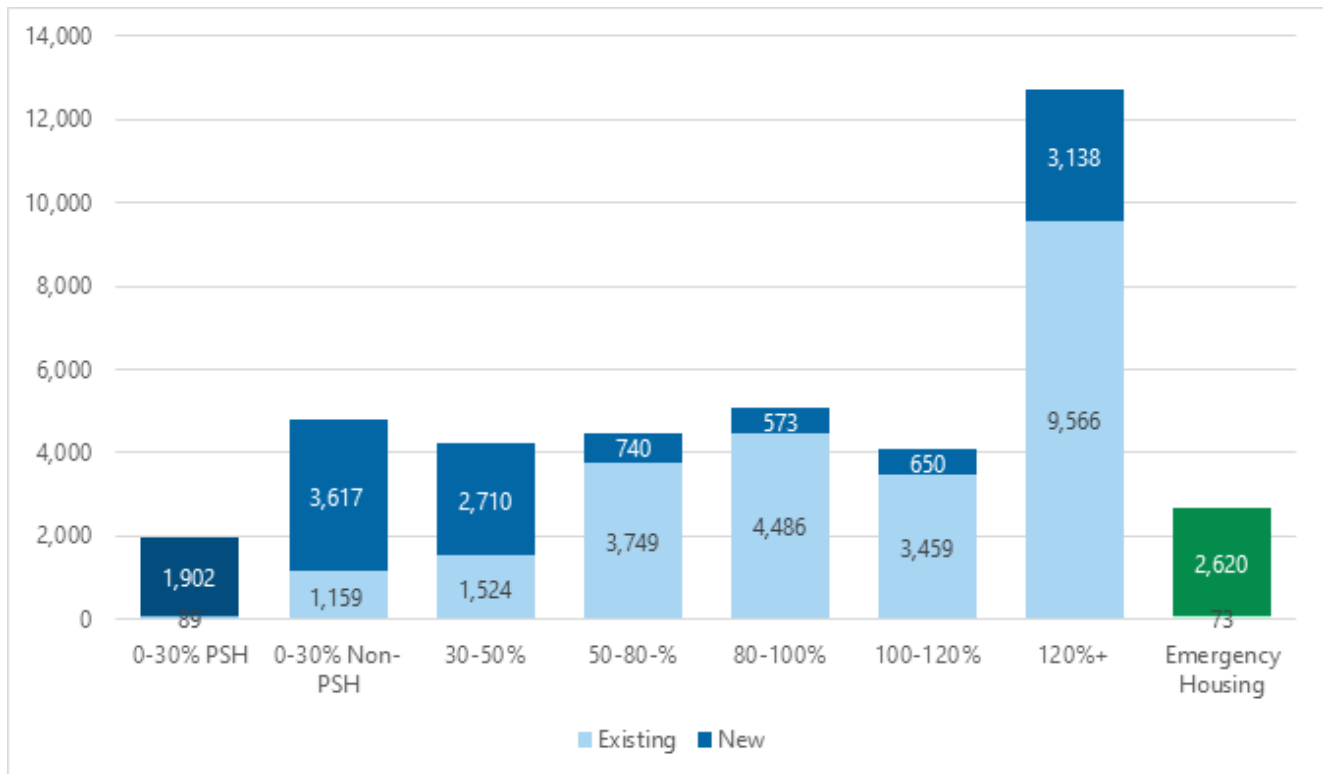
### **Growth Targets and Land Capacity**

The growth targets for the Shoreline 2044 Comprehensive Plan update are summarized below. A full reporting on the City's land capacity to meet these targets can be found in the Appendix.

The City's 2044 growth target is 37,372 total housing units total, which requires a net new capacity of 13,330 housing units above 2019 baseline figures for population and housing.

The City also has targets for housing units by income band set by King County. These targets are set based on the city's allocation of countywide need for housing that can serve all economic segments of the population, as determined by the Department of Commerce. **Figure 5.4** shows the 2044 housing targets by income band, as well as the number of existing (baseline) units in each category. Shoreline shows a need for additional housing units across all income categories. The greatest needs are for housing affordable to those making less than 30 percent of the AMI.

**Figure 5.4 Shoreline Housing Unit Targets by Income, 2019-2044**



## Housing Needs Assessment

### Housing Inventory

Shoreline can be classified as a historically suburban community that is maturing into a more self-sustaining urban environment. Approximately 54% of the current housing stock was built before 1970. Just 14% of homes (both single family detached and multifamily) were constructed after 1999.

Over the last decade, there has been significant new multifamily construction adjacent to the future light rail station areas within the City’s mixed-use residential zones (MUR) and along Aurora Avenue within the Town Center (TC) and Mixed Business (MB) zones. New townhome construction has also occurred, particularly along N 185<sup>th</sup> St between Town Center and the Shoreline North/185<sup>th</sup> light rail station.

Single-family homes are the predominant type of existing housing in Shoreline and encompass a wide range of options, which range from older homes built prior to WWII to new homes that are certified through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Styles range from expansive homes on large view lots to modest homes on lots less than a 1/4 acre in size.

## Housing Types

As of 2022, there are 23,505 housing units within the City of Shoreline. About 70% of these housing units are single-family homes. Compared to King County as a whole, Shoreline has a higher percentage of its housing stock in single-family homes (see **Table 5-2**).

**Table 5-2 Number and Share of Dwellings by Type, 2022**

Type of Housing	Shoreline (units)	Shoreline (percent)	King County (units)	King County (percent)
Single-family	16,567	70%	552,291	57%
Duplex	373	2%	16,366	2%
Triplex/4-plex	675	3%	37,768	4%
Multifamily (5+ units)	5,781	25%	350,776	36%
Mobile Homes	109	0.5%	14,820	2%
Other (boat, RV, van, etc.)	0	0%	800	0.1%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-Year Estimate, Table DP04

## Housing Size

In Shoreline, the average number of bedrooms per unit is 2.8. Only 15% of housing units have less than two bedrooms. This compares with nearly 25% of housing units in King County with less than two bedrooms. With larger housing units and a stable population, overcrowding has not been a problem in Shoreline, though it is becoming more common. The US Census reported 2.7% of housing units have an average of more than one occupant per room as of 2022.

## Household Characteristics

As of 2022, there were 22,706 households in Shoreline, up from around 21,218 in 2012 (an increase of just over 7%). The majority of households in Shoreline (65%) are family households. Of these, just over half are married couples. About 27% of Shoreline households have children under 18. The city has a higher share of family households than King County, but the share of family households and families with children under 18 is similar to the statewide figures. See **Table 5-3**.

The other 35% of Shoreline households are non-family households, which includes individuals living alone or any arrangement of unrelated residents. The majority of these households (77%) are residents living alone. Of these, 2,844 households are individuals over 65 living alone. This is a smaller share of older householders living alone than the county but is in line with the state. The average household size in the city is 2.58, higher than the King County average of 2.44 and a slight increase from Shoreline's 2012 average household size of 2.51.

This data shows a need in Shoreline for both larger units to accommodate families and smaller units to accommodate residents living alone.

## Household Size

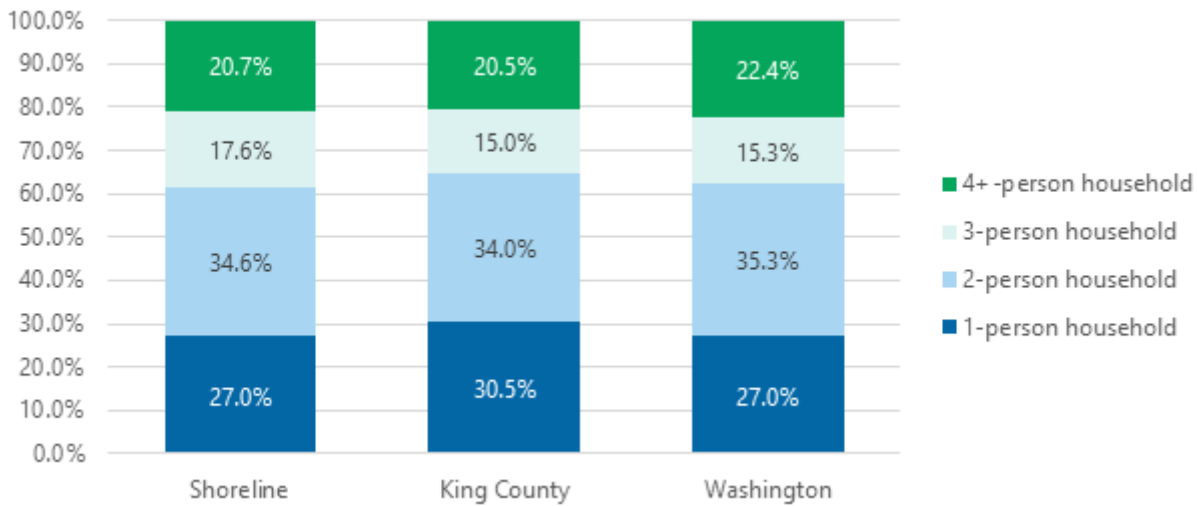
Shoreline's households are similar in size to county and statewide averages. There is a slightly smaller share of one-person households than the county. Overall, the largest number of households are two-person households, at nearly 35%. Shoreline also has a higher share of three-person households than the county or state. See **Figure 5.5**.

**Table 5-3 Selected Household Characteristics in Shoreline, King County, and Washington, 2022**

	Shoreline		King County		Washington	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Total Households</b>	22,706		916,270		2,979,272	
<b>Family Households</b>	14,770	65%	537,292	59%	1,910,770	64%
<i>Married-couple family</i>	11,871	52%	429,956	47%	1,482,230	50%
<i>Other family</i>	2,899	13%	107,336	12%	428,540	14%
<i>With own children under 18 years</i>	6,028	27%	238,482	26%	814,890	27%
<b>Nonfamily households</b>	7,936	35%	378,978	41%	1,068,502	36%
<i>Households living alone</i>	6,125	27%	279,263	30%	803,383	27%
<i>Householder 65 years and over</i>	2,844	13%	81,239	9%	313,547	11%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

**Figure 5.5 Share of Households by Size in Shoreline, King County, and Washington, 2022**

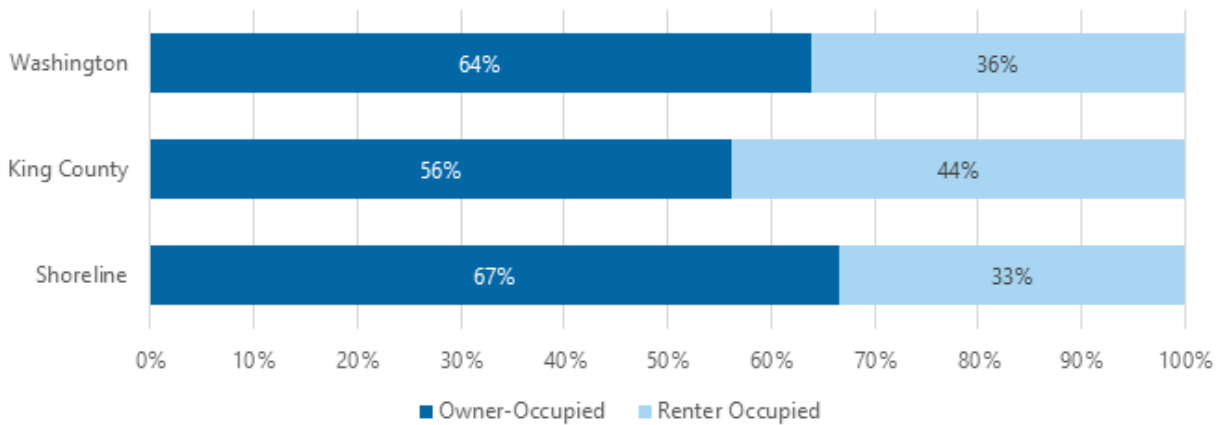


Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

### Household Tenure

Approximately two thirds of Shoreline households are homeowners, a larger share than King County and the state overall, as shown below. This is consistent with current zoning in the city, in which 77% of the land is zoned for single-family residential development. See **Figure 5.6**.

**Figure 5.6 Housing Unit Tenure in Shoreline, King County, and Washington, 2022**

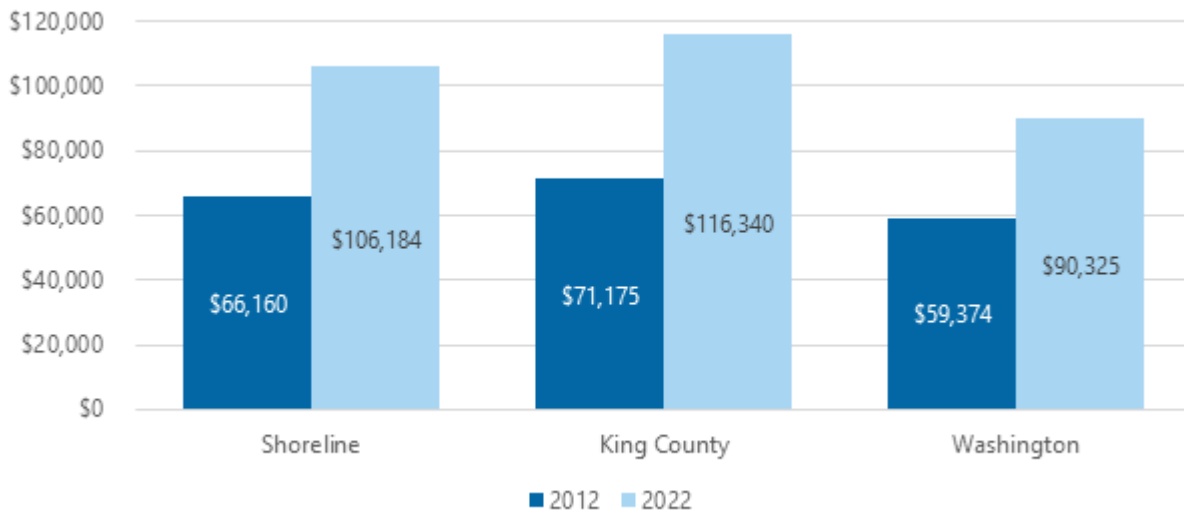


Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

**Household Income**

The median household income in Shoreline is below the King County median, but higher than the median statewide. The 2022 median household income as reported by the Census is \$106,184, up from \$66,160 in 2012. This represents a 60% increase over that time. See **Figure 5.7**.

**Figure 5.7 Median Household Income in Shoreline, King County, and Washington, 2012-2022**



Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S1901

**Households by Income Band**

The chart in **Figure 5.8** shows the breakdown of household incomes in Shoreline by income bands, compared with King County. While there is a higher share of King County households making over \$200,000, over one fifth of Shoreline households are in that top income bracket. In Shoreline, nearly 65% of households make \$75,000 per year or more while just 23% make less than \$50,000.

An analysis of household income required to afford housing at various price points is found later in this report, in the Housing Affordability section.

**Figure 5.8 Household Income Bands in Shoreline and King County, 2022**



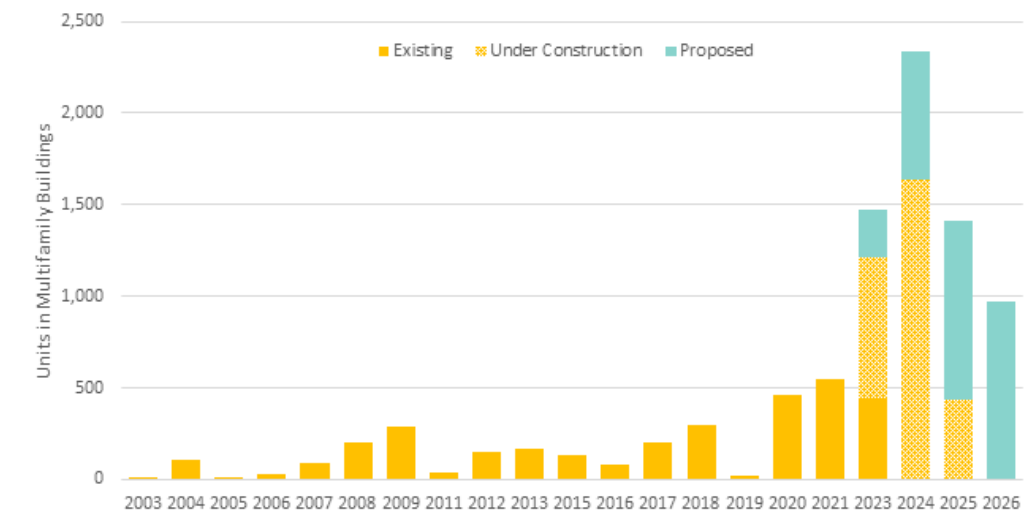
Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S1901

## Housing Market Conditions

### Multifamily Rental Housing Trends

Since 2003, 3,264 new multifamily housing units have been built in Shoreline. There are currently 2,839 units under construction and 2,904 proposed units expected to be completed by 2026. In total, there are approximately 6,650 multifamily units in Shoreline, nearly half of which have been built since 2003. See **Figure 5.9**.

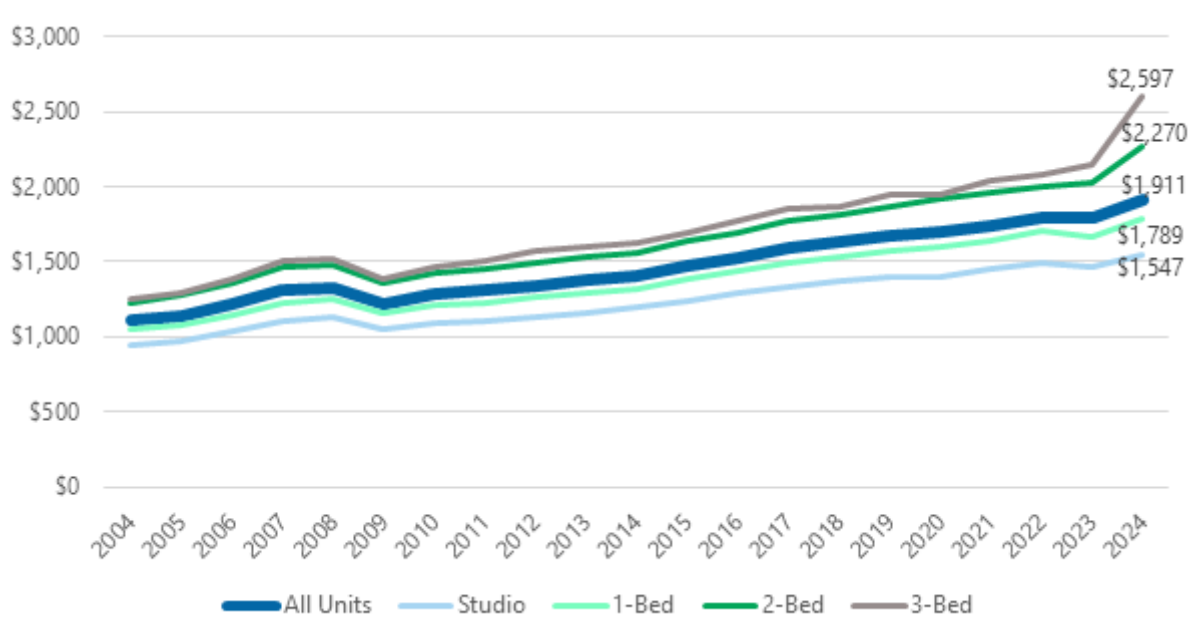
**Figure 5.9 Multifamily Construction and Development Pipeline, 2003-2026**



Source: CoStar

Rents have risen consistently in Shoreline over the past several years, reaching an average of \$1,911 per unit in 2024. Rents vary by the number of bedrooms, with studios renting on average for \$1,547 and three-bedroom units for \$2,597. Between 2004 and 2024, rent grew by nearly 73% in Shoreline – an average of 2.8% per year. See **Figure 5.10**.

**Figure 5.10 Market Asking Rent by Unit Type in Shoreline, 2004-2024**



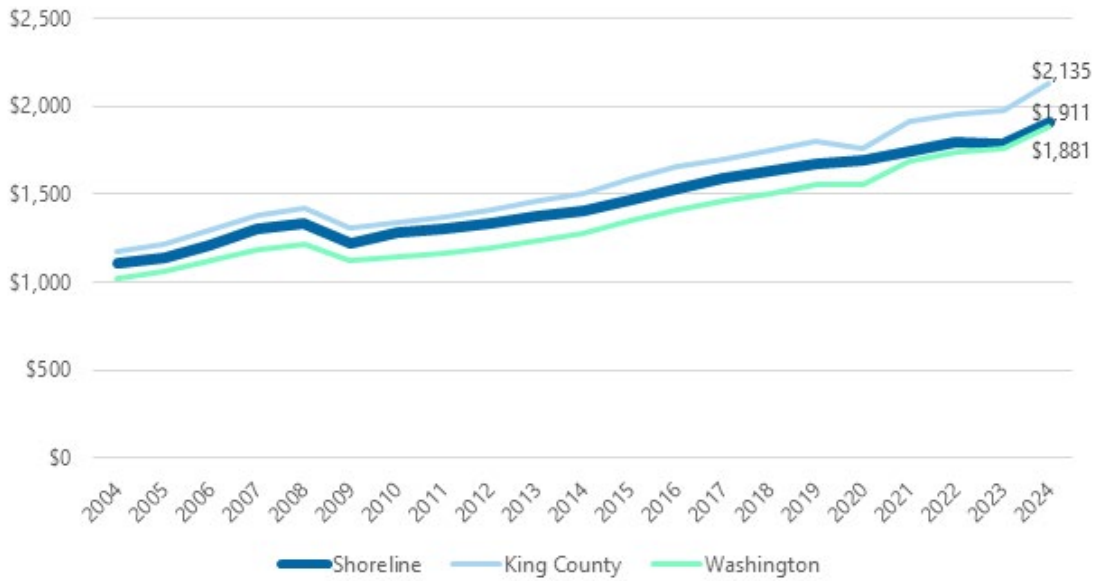
Source: CoStar

Market asking rents in Shoreline are similar to statewide rents but below the rents in King County, on average. Rents in Shoreline were relatively static between 2022 and 2023 as county- and state-wide rents continued to grow. Historically, rents in Shoreline have been higher than rent statewide. Since 2004, rents in King County have grown by 81% while rents statewide grew by 83.5%. See **Figure 5.11**.

Since 2004, the vacancy rate in Shoreline has been a bit more volatile than the vacancy rate in King County and Washington, likely due to the fact that it is a smaller housing market. The construction of new housing units since 2017 has also likely resulted in spikes in the vacancy rate.

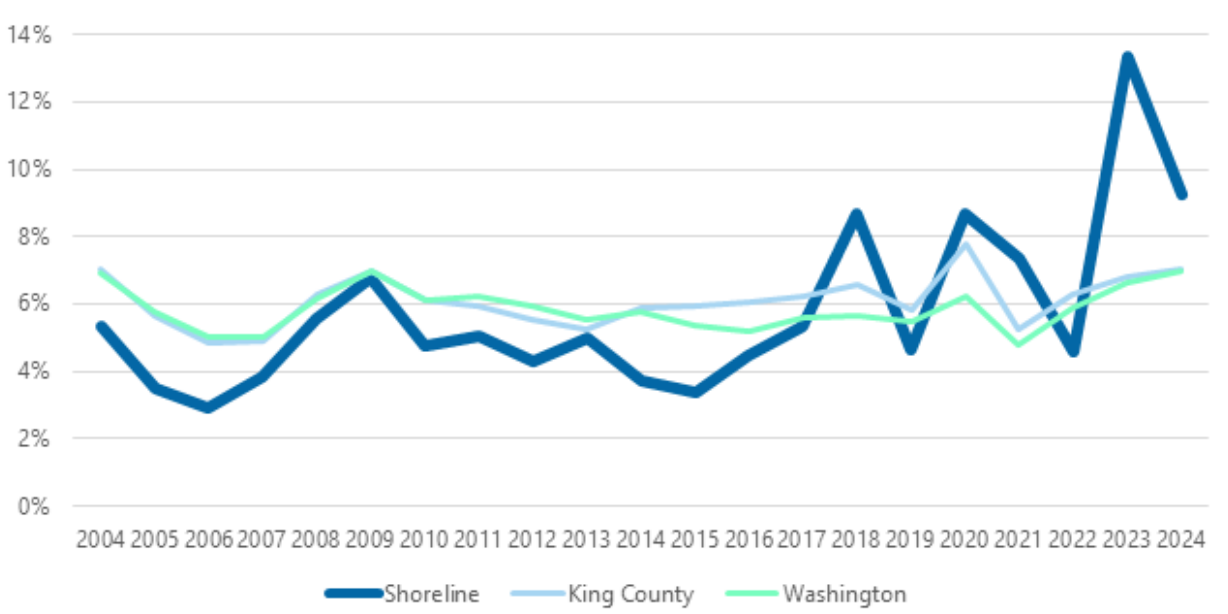
In 2023, when the vacancy rate in Shoreline reached 13%, 1,022 new multifamily units were added to the city’s housing market. As these new units get absorbed, the vacancy rate is likely to settle to a level closer to the county and statewide rates. A vacancy rate of 5-6% percent typically indicates a balanced rental market, with enough vacant units to enable tenants’ freedom of movement. See **Figure 5.12**.

**Figure 5.11 Market Asking Rent per Unit in Shoreline, King County, and Washington, 2004-2024**



Source: CoStar

**Figure 5.12 Multifamily Vacancy Rates in Shoreline, King County, and Washington, 2004-2024**



Source: CoStar



## Workforce Profile

### Local Workforce Characteristics

According to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) covered employment estimate, as of 2022 there were 15,851 jobs in Shoreline, with the highest concentration of jobs in the high-level industries of services, retail, and education. Shoreline employment has remained relatively flat over the past two decades before declining at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, with some recovery shown through 2022. See **Figure 5.13** for covered employment by sector.

As of 2021, just under 30 percent of jobs in Shoreline required at least a bachelor's degree, while 18 percent required just a high school degree (or equivalent). Nearly 59 percent of jobs paid at least \$3,333 per month (approximately \$40,000 per year), an income far below the median household income required to afford (rent or own) most homes in Shoreline.

### Jobs to Housing Ratio

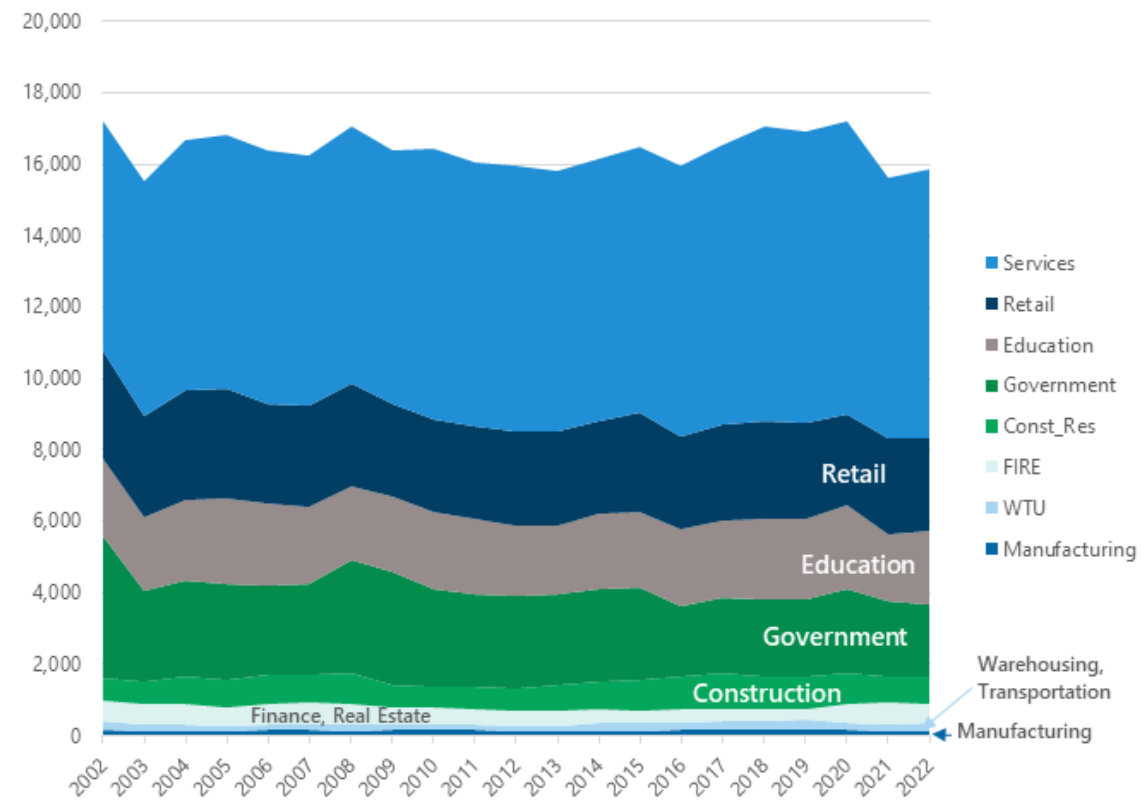
As of 2022, there were 23,505 housing units and 15,851 jobs in Shoreline, a ratio of 0.67 jobs per housing unit. PSRC has stated a region goal for cities to move towards a ratio of 1.0. This indicates that in order to align with regional policy goals, Shoreline should focus on increasing the number of jobs in the city. Shoreline's proximity to Seattle will likely make it challenging for the city to maintain a one-to-one ratio of jobs and housing, as regional unemployment is low and the demand for new housing is high. In addition, developers and investors have significantly slowed down new office construction in reaction to the increase in hybrid and remote work. However, two new LINK light rail stations planned for Shoreline could make it an attractive location for business growth.

## Potential Impacts

The analysis of potential impacts evaluates land use patterns and timing of growth and related development under each of the alternatives and the potential of each alternative to accommodate housing units and jobs growth targets allocated to Shoreline. The purpose of the DEIS is to study and anticipate these potential changes, so that they City can proactively plan for the future and put measures in place to support the community's vision for growth.

Analysis of a "no action" alternative is required under SEPA. Under Alternative 1, the "no action" alternative, the analysis in this DEIS assumes that an updated comprehensive plan would *not* be adopted. The City would continue implementing its current comprehensive plan, code requirements, functional plans, and development regulations. Code updates that the City is completely concurrently to the comprehensive plan update would likely still be adopted, especially those required by state law related to Middle Housing, Accessory Dwelling Units, and other requirements.

**Figure 5.13 Covered Employment in Shoreline by Sector, 2002-2022**



Source: PSRC Covered Employment Estimate

If the proposed action of adopting the updated comprehensive plan does not occur, there could be potential outcomes and disadvantages that would affect Shoreline’s future. If adoption of the updated comprehensive plan does not occur, growth would still continue (under the previously adopted plan and current zoning and code provisions). However, under Alternative 1—No Action, future growth would not be aligned with an up-to-date comprehensive plan with correlating policies under all elements that align with up-to-date state, regional, and county policies and provisions. Growth and development would continue without this alignment and could result conditions that are inconsistent with the community’s updated vision, policies, and general preferences as determined through this planning process.

As addressed in this DEIS, not taking action to adopt the updated comprehensive plan creates a gap in the coordination of land use and capital facility planning that is required by GMA. There would not be an adopted plan that complies with the latest requirements of the GMA, as well as regional and countywide planning. The comprehensive plan would not receive current/up-to-date certification by the state or endorsement by the region or county, which could have adverse legal and financial consequences for the City, such as the inability to apply for grant funding for various types of capital projects.

Building heights, densities, and other metrics would be limited to those allowed within the current code regulations unless other changes are adopted in the future.

Increased growth and change would occur under all alternatives. The most notable impacts will be to the transition in scale. Just as Shoreline has changed dramatically over the past 20 years, the next 20 years also would bring significant changes. Under all alternatives, as new development and redevelopment occurs across the city some inconsistencies in built form may occur over time until the zoning builds out. However, the City has implemented transitional zoning designations and provisions related to allowed heights, setbacks, landscaping, and other requirements that would help to transition between more intensive uses and less intensive uses. It also important to note that built conditions would be realized over time, incrementally.

## **Mitigation Measures**

To mitigate the impacts of projected growth, the City would continue to require adherence to design standards and development regulations. These design standards and development regulations would ensure continuity between varying land use intensities. Allowed heights, uses, integrated public spaces along frontages and parcel edges, streetscapes, setback requirements, and landscaping are all elements that can help ease the transition of development intensities.

## **Significant, Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

Implementation under any of the alternatives would result in growth and changes across the city. From public engagement efforts conducted to date, the community appears to be embracing the potential opportunities and amenities that would come with growth, change, new development, and redevelopment. Ensuring that projects comply with the City's code provisions and design standards will be an important action in mitigating future new development and redevelopment to avoid significant adverse impacts.