Snoqualmie Land Capacity Findings and Options

July 20, 2026

Land Capacity Analysis Preliminary Findings

King County has adopted housing targets for Snoqualmie for 2020-2044 for which the City must demonstrate sufficient land capacity in order to meet state requirements. Targets were determined through an allocation process that was conducted in 2021 and later adjusted (see King County GMPC Motion 25-1). The allocation process is based on guidance from the Washington State Department of Commerce and is determined in part by each city's share of total countywide housing stock in 2020.

These housing targets are broken into needs for different income bands. As shown in Exhibit 1: Housing Targets and Capacity, the City's housing target of 751 units is entirely for households making incomes under 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) and mostly for households making incomes under 50% AMI.

A Land Capacity Analysis was completed in 2024 to understand the City's capacity to meet its housing targets. This analysis has since been updated and the preliminary 2026 Land Capacity Analysis has found that Snoqualmie has a capacity deficit of approximately **579 units for incomes between 0-50% Area Median Income** (AMI) (see Exhibit 1) under the existing zoning. Because of zoning, most of the city's capacity is available for unit types such as single-family homes and duplexes, which are considered by the Washington State Department of Commerce to be affordable to higher income bands. Apartments, for which there is minimal zoned capacity, have potential to serve the 0-80% AMI income band. Accessory dwelling units have potential to serve only 50-80% AMI, so apartments are still the main housing type that the City needs more capacity for given that most of the gap is in the 0-50% AMI range.

BERK reviewed various options to add capacity for new apartment construction within the city limits discussed under the section Other Options Considered. Most of these options showed limitations such as areas being built out, or too little land inventory in certain zones. Therefore, to address the deficit, the City is required by the State to consider options for updated zoning designations and development regulations. After considering feasible changes in the city limits, the City will need to plan for the future land uses and pre-annexation zoning in the Snoqualmie potential annexation area (PAA), in consultation with King County, to add capacity for apartments if there is still a gap in meeting the city's target.

Exhibit 1: City of Snoqualmie Housing Targets and Capacity, 2020 - 2044

Income Bands	Housing Types	Growth Target (2020-2044)	Buildable Land Capacity (2026)	Net new permitted and completed units 2020-2026	Surplus or Deficit
0-50% AMI	Apartments*	735	156	0	-579
50-80% AMI	Apartments*, ADUs	16	0	165	149
80-120% AMI	Multiplexes	0	1,426	15	1,441
120%+ AMI	Single-family detached	0	10	65	75

*Apartments that have already been permitted are not subsidized and therefore are not expected to serve below 50% AMI. Capacity for future apartment development is included under Buildable Land Capacity for the 0-50% AMI band based on its potential to serve this group.
Source: King County, 2025; BERK Consulting, 2026.

Options for Adding Capacity

Potential Rezones

Current City zones that allow apartments include R-3 (which is in the City's code but is not yet applied anywhere on the zoning map), Form Based Mixed Use (which is applied to an area near the historic downtown), and business zones including Business General, Business Office, and Business Retail 1 and 2. Exhibit 2 shows existing zoning designations and housing types allowed in assumed affordability levels.

Exhibit 2: Residential and Mixed Use Zoning Designations

Zone	Description	Housing Types Allowed	Assumed Affordability Level
Residential Constrained	Large parcels with significant environmental constraints (Note that not all parcels with this designation are fully covered by critical areas)	Single family homes Accessory dwelling units	120%+ AMI
R-1	Single-family detached district	Single family homes Accessory dwelling units	120%+ AMI
R-2	Two and three family districts	Single family homes	80-120% AMI

		Accessory dwelling units Duplexes/multiplexes	
R-3	Multiple family district (Note that this district is not applied anywhere on the zoning map)	Three-and fourplexes Townhouses **Low-rise apartments**	0-80% AMI
Planned Residential	Master planned primarily residential district	Range of housing types depending on master plan	80-120% AMI
Form-Based Mixed Use	Mix of uses with various intensities and walkable development	**Upper story apartment residential**	0-50% AMI
Mixed Use	Mix of uses, applied to Snoqualmie Ridge area	Single family homes Accessory dwelling units Duplexes/multiplexes and other **multifamily** in some areas per Snoqualmie Ridge final plan (expired)	80-120% AMI
Business General, Business Office, Business Retail 1, Business Retail 2	Commercial district but allows upper story residential	**Upper story apartment residential**	0-50% AMI

Note: **Bold and purple** indicates housing types that serve the 0-50% AMI income band. Accessory dwelling units only serve 50-80% AMI.
Source: City of Snoqualmie, 2026; BERK, 2026.

The following parcels shown in Exhibit 3 can be considered for rezoning. Based on the land capacity analysis assumptions in Exhibit 7, this will add capacity for apartment units. The total capacity after rezoning these parcels will be approximately 113 units. Site-specific constraints would be identified in more detail at the time of a development proposal so actual capacity could change.

Exhibit 3: Potential Capacity with Zoning Changes

Map Label	**Parcel Number**	Ownership	Description	Proposed Change	Potential Capacity	Notes
A	2524079033 / 3024089092	City	South of Snoqualmie Parkway	MU to R-3	1.0 acre ~22 units	Considered for R-2 rezone in previous 2024 analysis. Site-specific wetland inventory found only one acre is developable.
B	3024089017 / 3024089100 / 3024089106	City	Between Snoqualmie Parkway and Railroad Ave SE, just south of Gateway Park	MU to BG	9.1 acres ~91 units	Some of the site is encumbered by wetland buffers, but a large portion to the south and east is not. Critical areas would buffer around existing single family uses in area for the north portion of the site.

Source: BERK Consulting, 2026.

Exhibit 4: Potential Rezone Areas

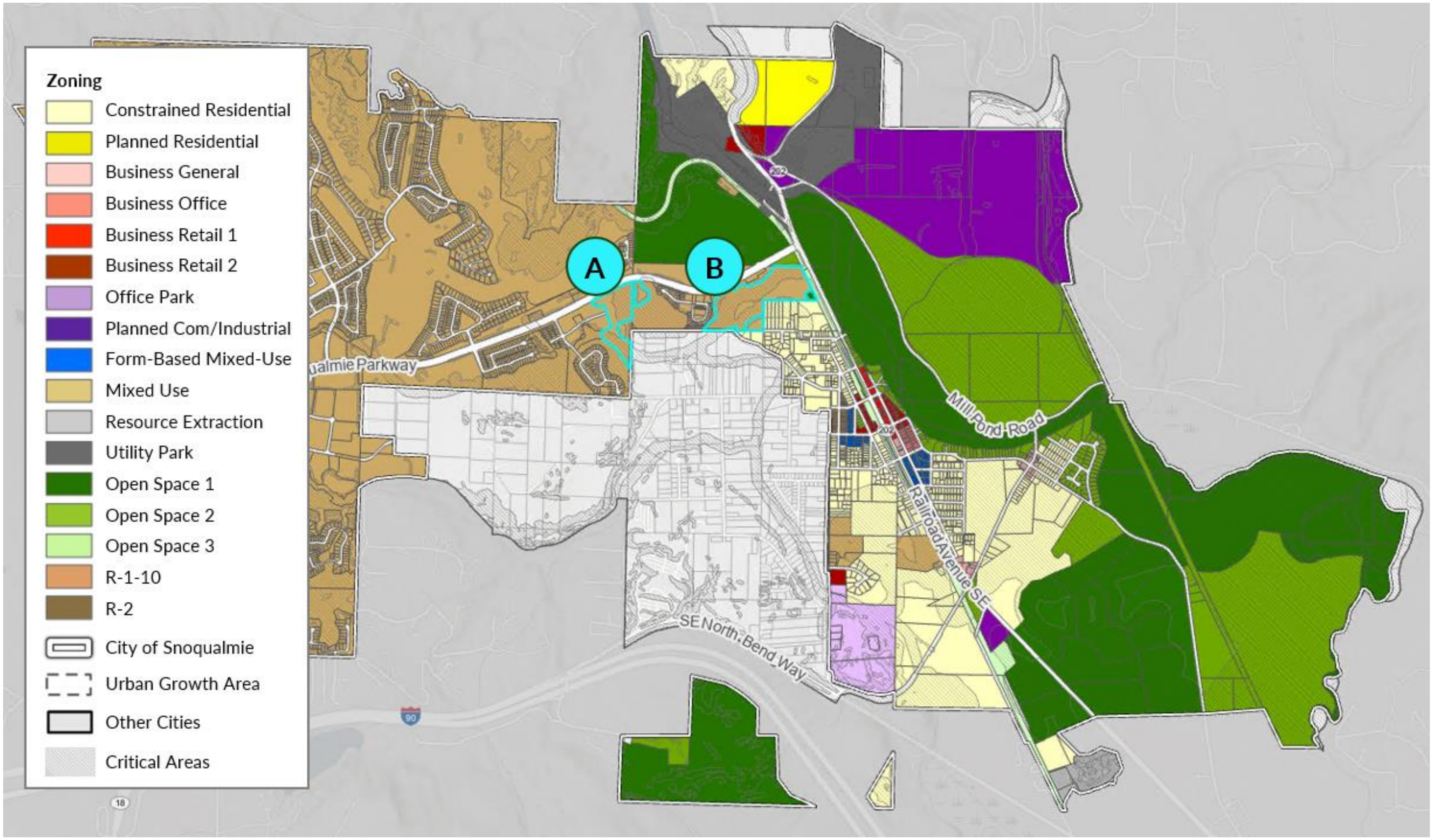
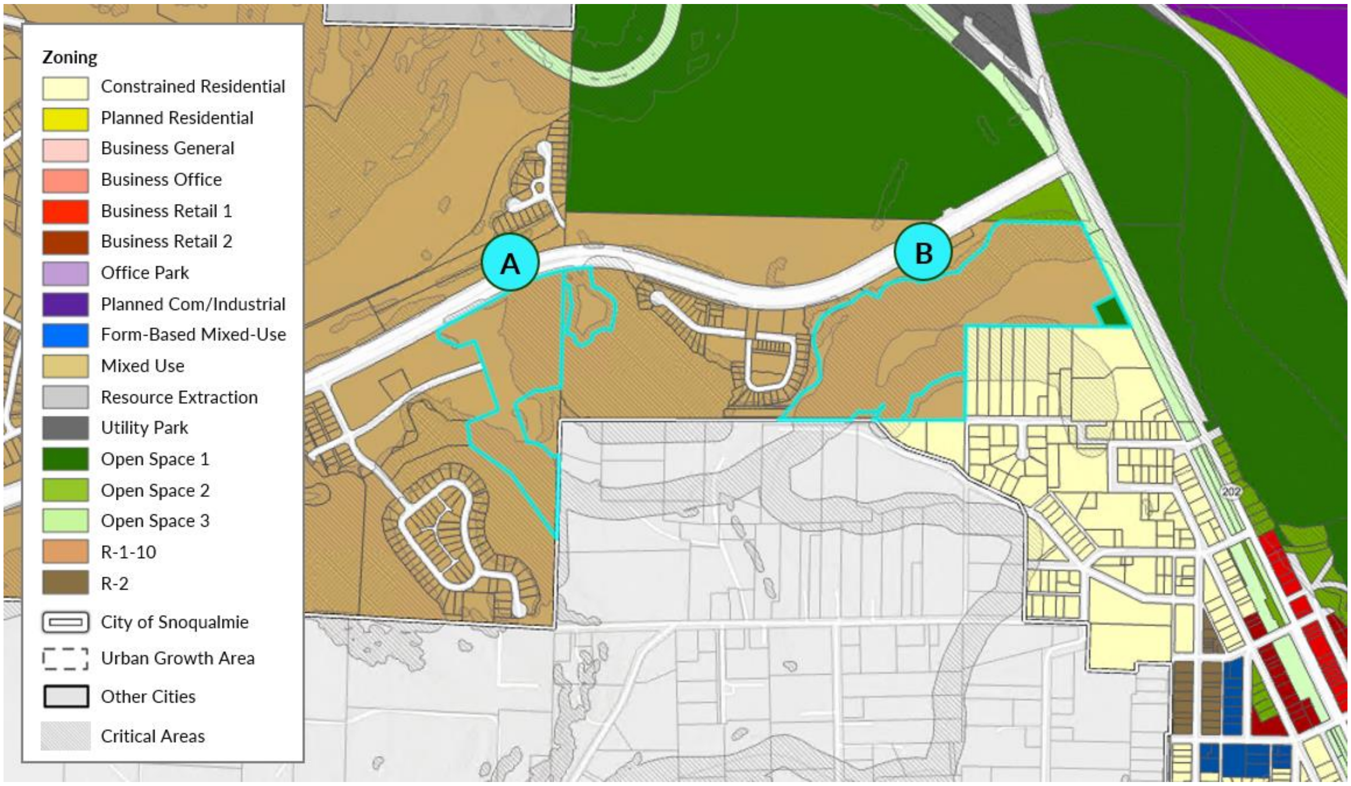


Exhibit 5: Areas A and B



Other Strategies[1]

The City could also pursue the following strategies to increase capacity and address the deficit.

Increased Heights

If heights were increased in the FBMU, BR, BG, and BO zones to 45-50 feet to make a four-story building possible, approximately 75-100 units of multifamily capacity could be added.

Zoning and ADU Changes to Snoqualmie Ridge

Snoqualmie Ridge is currently zoned Mixed Use. The City is updating zoning to be more specific in alignment with existing land uses. Minimal capacity is expected to be added through this process as most of Snoqualmie Ridge is built out.

Increased allowances for ADUs in Snoqualmie Ridge could add some capacity but this increase is not expected to be significant, due to HOA deed restrictions and available area.

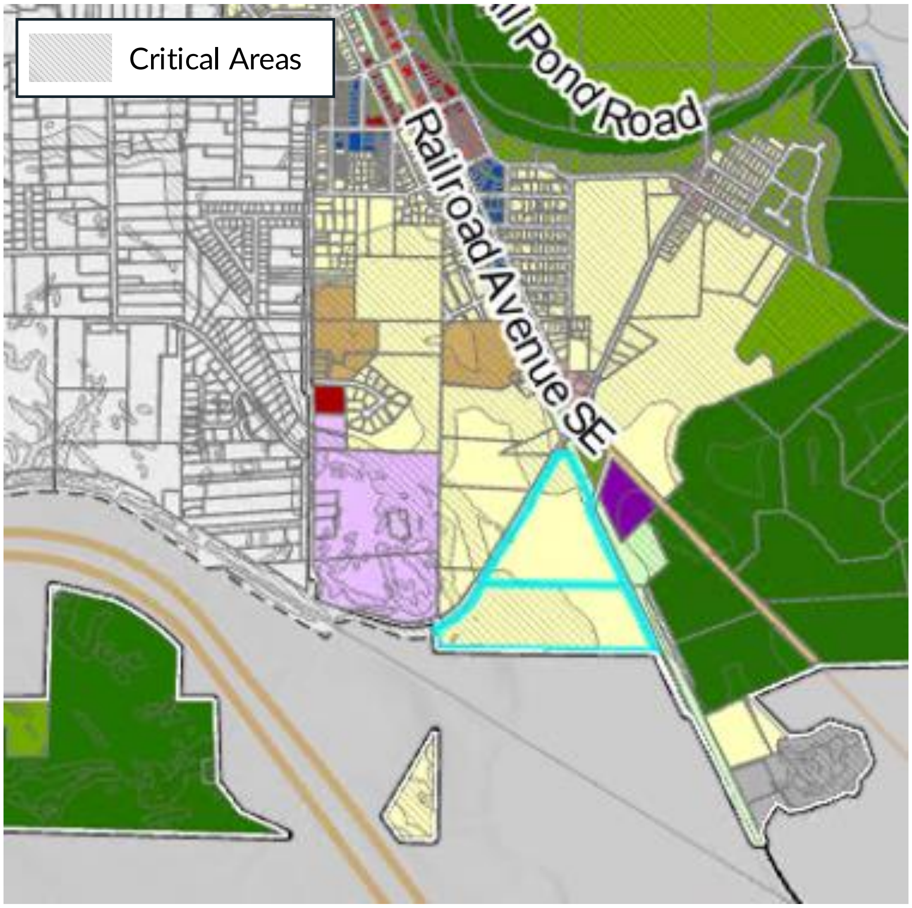
Consider Changes to Residential Constrained Zoning

The Residential Constrained (RC) zone is applied to much of the west half of the city. This area is within the floodplain and some sites also have critical areas such as steep slopes or wetlands. The RC zone allows very limited residential development, including single-family homes and accessory dwelling units. However, other zones in the floodplain allow more intense development and upper story residential, including Business Retail, Business Office, Business General, and Form-Based Mixed Use.

Some sites in the RC zone may be suitable for innovative approaches to multifamily residential development, where the buildings could be sited to avoid critical areas and be designed for flood resiliency. Any site with critical areas will need to develop under the City's critical areas regulations. The parcels shown below in Exhibit 6, for example, are likely only partially covered by wetlands and other critical areas according to best available City data. While the rest of the site is still in the floodplain, there could theoretically be capacity for more housing if rezoned to a higher density.

[1] Note that mandatory affordability is not considered here as an option for addressing the capacity gap. This is because capacity for low-rise apartments is already assumed to potentially serve the 0-50% AMI range. However, there are other reasons the City may pursue this or other affordability measures, including to address barriers to housing affordability and "adequate provisions" (another State and King County requirement). **Pros of mandatory affordability:** dedicated affordable units, affordable units get distributed across multiple sites citywide. **Cons:** May not "pencil" for developers and could create barriers to developing multifamily at all, could result in higher rents for non-affordable units in same development. The City could consider incentives for affordable units as an alternative.

Exhibit 6: Example of sites with potential capacity



Annexation of Unincorporated Urban Growth Area

The City must first review options for adding housing capacity within city limits before considering annexation as a strategy. Since the current analysis indicates limited capacity within the city limits, an annexation planning would provide options for additional housing capacity. Some capacity for multifamily units is expected to be available in the unincorporated urban growth area (UGA) if the City were to annex it and apply zoning aligned with the 2024 Future Land Use Map. The land use designation "Innovative Mixed Use" in the unincorporated UGA may have capacity for housing. A land capacity analysis for the UGA is under development.

Other Options Considered

These additional options were considered and analyzed but ultimately not included as feasible options:

- **Review of all vacant sites near public facilities unencumbered by critical areas.** Although this showed potential at the beginning, a further review identified future housing development infeasible due to land ownership (e.g. conservation easement, future school and hospital sites, lack of access, etc.).

- **Density bonus for religious organizations.** This strategy does not appear to work well in Snoqualmie because the church sites with vacant property are also in critical areas or are too small for multifamily development.
- **Expanded FBMU zoning near the existing zone.** Properties in this area appear to be too small or too built out to add significant capacity.
- **Other rezones.** Analysis was performed for additional properties but was ultimately excluded due to access concerns, critical areas, parcel sizes, and land use transition concerns.

Land Capacity Analysis Assumptions

The following assumptions in Exhibit 6 underpin the 2026 Land Capacity Analysis.

Exhibit 8: Land Capacity Assumptions

Topic	2024 LCA	2026 Baseline LCA
Accessory Dwelling Units	8% participation rate, 1.25 ADUs per eligible lot. Not including on parcels with an ROA.	8% participation rate, 1.25 ADUs per eligible lot. Not including on parcels with an ROA. Adjusted method to account for lot sizes (only applicable to lots greater than the minimum, but less than double the minimum).
Public Parcels	Analyzed but not included in LCA calculations	Identify public parcels with housing capacity (based on zoning)
Religious Organizations	Not analyzed	Not analyzed
Tribal Owned Properties	Not analyzed	Exclude properties in trust from capacity calculations
Form Based Mixed Use Zone	130 dua maximum density	~25 dua maximum density, before applying the mixed use split of 70% residential (only three story multifamily is allowed)
Business General, Business Office, and Business Retail	Not analyzed for housing capacity	25 dua maximum density, before applying a mixed use split of 50% residential (upper story residential is allowed in these zones)
Snoqualmie Ridge/Mixed Use Zone	Middle housing allowed ("moderate density" / moderate income capacity)	Middle housing allowed ("moderate density" / moderate income capacity)
Permit Pipeline	Through 2023 (not specified but assumed)	Through May 2026
2026 Comprehensive Plan Docket	N/A	N/A (the City has not received any requests)
Other	Existing zoning	Existing zoning

Topic	2024 LCA	2026 Baseline LCA
UGA	Translated UGA zones to City zoning	Using match of likely City zone to City future land use map (taking lower density where there is a range)
Critical Areas Reduction	Excluded wetlands, streams, steep slopes, channel migration zones, and floodway (but not floodplain)	Excluded wetlands, streams, steep slopes, channel migration zones, and floodway (but not floodplain)
Public Purpose Discount	5% for Constrained Residential, Planned Residential, R-1-10, R2 10% for SRI, SRII, FBMU	5% for Constrained Residential, Planned Residential, R-1-10, R2 10% for SRI, SRII, FBMU, BG, BO, BR
Market Factor Discount	Constrained residential – 75% Planned residential and R2 – 1% R-1-10 – 35% SRI, SRII and FBMU: 5%	Constrained residential – 75% Planned residential and R2 – 10% BG, BO – 15% BR 1 – 25% BR 2 - 15% R-1-10 – 35% SRI, SRII and FBMU: 10%