

# Housing

## Introduction

The Housing chapter assesses the City of Monroe's current and future housing needs. It includes a detailed inventory and analysis of the existing housing stock and existing housing conditions followed by strategies to meet future needs.

This chapter's strategies recognize that housing costs and housing quality are affected by many issues. Household income, demographics, and the local and national economy are examples of factors influencing the housing market and housing affordability. The Housing chapter, together with the policies and action items in Chapter 2, seek to ensure that the quality, type and availability of housing provided in Monroe meet the community's future housing needs and objectives.

## Purpose & Relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA)

This chapter has been developed in accordance with the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements to address housing issues within Monroe's city limits and the Urban Growth Area (UGA) over the next 20 years.



**Figure 6.01** - Monroe's development patterns provide for a wide range of housing types - but housing and services aren't always within walking distance of each other, and housing types that suit downtown and close-in neighborhoods remain uncommon. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

The GMA requires jurisdictions provide housing to ensure the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods. Making adequate provisions for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community is also a GMA requirement. Providing a wide range of housing types is basic to meeting this requirement.

The inventory and analysis of the existing housing stock, the assessment of current and future housing and the housing strategies will help city officials and the general public make informed decisions that will implement GMA requirements.



**Figure 6.02** - Most of Monroe's housing stock - old and newer - enjoys close proximity to parks and open space areas. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

## Inventory & Analysis

### Household Size

Although the nation as a whole and Snohomish County have seen a trend toward smaller household sizes over the last decade, Monroe has seen a trend towards larger household sizes. In 2000, the average household size in Snohomish County was 2.65 persons per household (PPH) and 2.83 PPH in Monroe. In 2013, the County had decreased to 2.61 PPH, but Monroe had increased to 2.97.

Other county and national trends may impact household size in Monroe. For instance, data show that renter households are generally smaller than owner households, including Monroe. But trends toward more single-family home rentals and households consisting of multi-generational families may soon become a trend in Monroe, increasing the size of renter households.

### Housing Inventory

Housing in Monroe is predominantly comprised of single-family homes. Table 6.01 shows the types of housing in the city as of 2011, and includes the percent change by housing type between 2000 and 2011. In 2011, single-family homes represented approximately 75 percent of the housing stock in Monroe, with most of this housing in detached units. The remaining 25 percent of the housing was multifamily and mobile homes. The majority of these were multifamily structures of three to 19 units.

Between 2000 and 2011, the largest growth in Monroe's housing was in attached single-family units, although all types of single and multifamily housing increased during this time. Overall, there was roughly a 28 percent increase in housing in Monroe during this span, much lower than growth the city experienced between 1990 and 2000.

### Housing Age

In 2011, there were 5,577 homes in Monroe, with 41 percent of these being built between 1990 and 1999. (See Table 6.02) Approximately 15 percent of Monroe's housing stock is 50 years old or older. Most newer construction has occurred north of US-2, but there has been some rehabilitation in the downtown and older areas. Generally, Monroe offers high-quality homes.

### Housing Tenure

Housing tenure describes the rate of owner occupancy. In 2013, Monroe had 5,084 occupied units. Of these, approximately 67 percent were owner-occupied, a slightly higher percentage than that of Snohomish County (68 percent). (reference Table 6.03).

As of 2013, the largest percent -13 percent - of owner occupied households that were considered cost burdened earned between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per year; whereas, for rental occupied households, 25 percent of households that earned between \$20,000 - to \$35,000 were considered cost burdened (reference Table 6.05).

### Housing Cost & Affordability

One of the goals of the GMA is to provide Washington residents with affordable housing options. According to federal and state guidelines, a household is considered cost-burdened when 30 percent or more of its gross

**Table 6.01 - Housing Units in Monroe - 2011**

Type of Structure	Total Units	% Of Total Units	% Change from 2000
Single Family (SF): Detached	3,653	65.5%	29.4%
SF: Attached	338	6.1%	97.7%
SF: Duplex	172	3.1%	37.6%
Multi Family (MF): 3-19 units	867	15.5%	15.0%
MF: 20+ Units	478	8.6%	19.7%
Mobile Home	69	1.2%	(67.0%)
Other	0	0.0	(0.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,577</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28%</b>

City of Monroe, 2013 Comprehensive Plan; brackets ( ) indicate negative figures

income is spent on housing (including rent or mortgage and utility costs).

From 2009 to 2013, the percentage of households considered cost-burdened in Snohomish County increased from approximately 26 percent to 46 percent. In 2011, almost half of all Monroe households were regarded as cost-burdened (reference Table 6.04).

Median housing prices have been rising in Monroe over the last few years. Access to affordable housing is determined based on the Area Median Income (AMI), defined as the midpoint income for an area. AMI is determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)<sup>1</sup>, and is the point at which half the households in an area make less and half make more. HUD adjusts these numbers based on family size and calculates annually for every regional area and county. In 2011, the median income in Snohomish County was \$67,777, while in Monroe it was \$69,278. The following are the income categories for Monroe households based on this median income:

- *Extremely Low Income (<30% of AMI): \$20,333 or less*
- *Very Low Income (31-50% of AMI): \$20,334 – 33,889*
- *Low Income (51-80% of AMI): \$33,890 – 54,222*

<sup>1</sup> For Snohomish County the Area Median Income is calculated using 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) data.

**Table 6.02 - Housing Age in Monroe - 2013**

Year Built	No. Units	% of Total
Built 2010 or later	11	.2
2000-2009	1,129	20.4
1990-1999	2,437	44.1
1980-1989	402	7.3
1970-1979	434	7.9
1960-1969	300	5.4
1950-1959	112	2.0
1940-1949	88	1.6
1939 or earlier	608	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,521</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 6.03 - Housing Tenure in Monroe - 2013**

Housing Tenure 2011	No. Occupied Units	% of Units
City of Monroe		
Owner-Occupied Units	3,430	67%
Renter-Occupied Units	1,654	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,084</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 6.04 - Cost-Burdened Households in Monroe - 2013<sup>1</sup>**

Housing Tenure	Occupied Units	Cost-Burdened	% of Total Occupied
Owner-Occupied Units	2,907	1,224	42%
Renter-Occupied Units	1,635	887	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,542</b>	<b>2,111</b>	<b>46%</b>

**1 Number of Cost Burdened households exclude units where ownership or rental costs could not be computed.**

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 6.05 - Monroe Housing Costs by Tenures - 2013**

	Occupied Households		Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$20,000	336	7%	106	3%	230	14%
Less than 20 percent	25	1%	0	0%	25	2%
20 to 29 percent	56	1%	7	0%	49	3%
30 percent or more	255	5%	99	3%	156	9%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	692	14%	238	7%	454	27%
Less than 20 percent	15	0%	15	0%	0	0%
20 to 29 percent	97	2%	58	2%	39	2%
30 percent or more	580	11%	165	5%	415	25%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	636	13%	398	12%	238	14%
Less than 20 percent	122	2%	122	4%	0	0%
20 to 29 percent	71	1%	15	0%	56	3%
30 percent or more	443	9%	261	8%	182	11%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,053	21%	705	21%	348	21%
Less than 20 percent	193	4%	82	2%	111	7%
20 to 29 percent	305	6%	192	6%	113	7%
30 percent or more	555	11%	431	13%	124	8%
\$75,000 or more	2,322	46%	1,958	57%	364	22%
Less than 20 percent	1,049	21%	861	25%	188	11%
20 to 29 percent	957	19%	793	23%	164	10%
30 percent or more	316	6%	304	9%	12	1%
Zero or negative income	25	1%	25	1%	0	0%
No cash rent	20	0%	0		20	1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,084</b>		<b>3,430</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>1,654</b>	<b>33%</b>

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

- Moderate Income (81-100% of AMI): \$54,222 – 67,772
- Middle Income (100-120% of AMI): \$67,778 – 81,332
- High Income (121% > of AMI): \$81,333 or higher.

In 2011, about 38 percent of the rental housing units in Monroe were affordable to Low-Income households; 15 percent were affordable to Very Low-Income households; and 12 percent were affordable to Extremely Low-Income households. Affordability of rental units in Monroe was lower than in Snohomish County for Very Low-Income households (15 percent in Monroe versus 22 percent in Snohomish County) and Low-Income households (38 percent in Monroe versus 43 percent in Snohomish County)

(reference Figure 6.03). However, the availability of affordable rental units for Extremely Low-Income households was higher in Monroe than in the county overall (12 percent in Monroe versus six percent in Snohomish County). Affordable mortgage unit counts were nearly the same in Monroe and Snohomish County.

Monroe also contains assisted housing.<sup>2</sup> In Monroe, affordable housing includes housing programs administered by HUD, such as Section 202 housing for senior citizens, Section 811 housing for mentally disabled households, and Section 8 subsidized housing (reference Table 6.06). In Monroe, the Section 8 voucher program

<sup>2</sup> Generally, any housing constructed with government support or assistance with the intention of providing housing for low income households that may have difficulty finding housing that is clean and affordable.

**Table 6.06 - Subsidized Housing in Monroe - 2011**

Facility	Facility Type	Units	Subsidy
Athena I & II	Family	28	Section 8 Contract
Fairview	Family	24	Section 8 Contract
Friendship House I & II	Seniors and Disabled	64	Rental Assistance contract through Rural Development
Harmony House East	Mentally III	5 beds	HUD Section 811
Monroe Villa	Seniors	22	Rental Assistance contract through Rural Development
Village East	Seniors	38	HUD Section 202

*Source: Monroe Comprehensive Plan 2005-2025, Land Use Element*

is the primary form of assisted housing; vouchers are provided to low-income residents as a way to supplement rent to private landlords. Typically, residents in these programs may pay up to 30 percent of their income in rent, with the voucher accounting for the difference between this 30 percent and the market rate.

Estimates of assisted housing in Monroe from the 2013 Housing Needs and Characteristics in Snohomish County report indicate that Monroe has 187 assisted units, and 51 households receiving housing vouchers, for a total of 238 households receiving assistance. This represents approximately four percent of the total housing stock in the City of Monroe, as compared to approximately five percent of the housing stock in Snohomish County.<sup>3</sup>

## Forecast Conditions

Monroe and its UGA is forecast to grow by approximately 1,690 households between 2015 and 2035. Under this plan, future housing would be accommodated using the following land use designations:

- *Low Density SFR (3–5 units per gross acre)*
- *Medium Density SFR (5–7 units per gross acre)*

<sup>3</sup> City of Monroe 2005-2025 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element, amended in 2013.

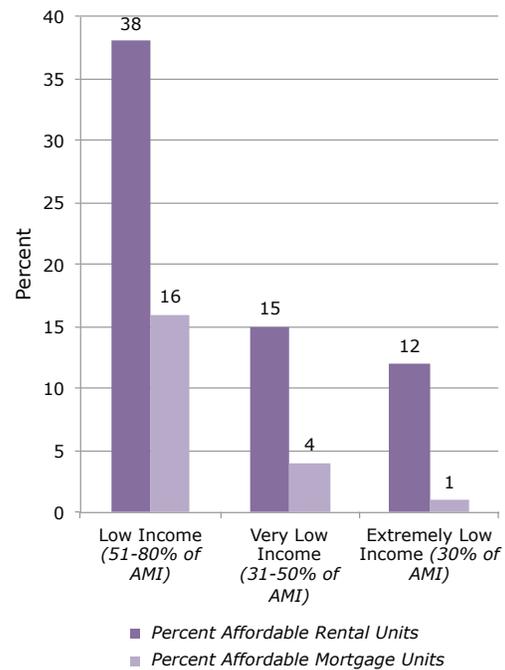


Figure 6.03 - Housing affordability in Monroe, 2011. (Source: American Community Survey)

- *High Density SFR (1 unit per 3,000 sq. ft. of lot area)*
- *Multifamily (12–20 units per gross acre)*
- *Mixed Use (12–20 units per gross acre).*

As detailed in the Land Use Element, the City of Monroe can accommodate the full 20-year forecast within its incorporated limits and UGA.

In terms of housing, at least three demographic shifts projected for Snohomish County are also expected to affect Monroe. Between 2015 and 2035:

- *Significantly more older residents are expected - around double the number of 65-or-older aged persons by 2035 compared to 2010. This is a significant change from past growth, which was concentrated among those between 20 and 65*
- *Countywide population is expected to grow more slowly, down from its peak years in the 1980s and 1990s*

**Table 6.07 - Household by Type 2000 and 2011**

Household Type	% Total, 2000	% Total, 2011
Family	73.3%	73.3%
Married Couple	57.8%	53.8%
Female Householder, No Husband	10.5%	14.6%
Non-Family	26.7%	26.7%
Living Alone	20.6%	21.8%

*100 percent of the total households are calculated by adding the Family + Non-family categories together; the remaining categories are subsets of the Family and Non-family Types.  
Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000; American Community Survey 2011*

- *More households will be smaller and "non-traditional." This is related to an aging population (since older households are typically smaller) and expectations for the number of small household types - including singles, couples, single parents with children, and "non-family households" - to increase.*

Historically, the majority of the units developed in the city have been single-family structures, but more recent trends (2012 and 2013) show gains in multifamily housing.

Monroe is also expected to see slight increases in persons per household, coupled with an increase in single-occupant households. The latter household type would likely take a large share of housing units in forecast multi-family and mixed-use development (see Table 6.07).

Demographic data show expected growth in the number of older, smaller households as well as younger families willing to forgo single-family housing in favor of cost and lifestyle advantages for multi-family units. For this reason, and because higher-density housing helps achieve goals of downtown vitality, Main Street growth and GMA-supported infill, policies supporting housing variety are a good fit for Monroe.

### **Low to Moderate Income Housing Needs**

As of 2011, almost half of all Monroe households were regarded as cost-burdened, that is, spending more than 30% of income on housing. Forecasting housing needs for specific populations and income ranges is difficult, but the City assumes the targets for low-moderate

income housing needs provided in the 2013 Housing Characteristics Report, which are:

- *134 Extremely Low-Income units (<30% of AMI)*
- *134 Very Low-Income units (31-50% of AMI)*
- *207 Low-Income units (51-80% of AMI).*

These housing unit numbers are not considered binding, but indicate a generalized target. While strategies are adopted as part of this plan to reach these targets, it's possible that not all the units will be constructed by the year 2035.

## Land Use Assumptions

The following land use strategies are assumed to accommodate the City's housing unit needs through 2035:

- *Re-designation of areas for mixed-use development, primarily south of Main Street and within the SR 522/US 2 interchange area may accommodate additional multi-family dwelling units*
- *Vacant or partially-developed lands (single-family homes on large lots that can be further subdivided) may accommodate additional single-family dwellings*
- *Portions of the Foothills / Roosevelt Road, and Roosevelt Ridge areas would change from Low Density Residential (2-5 units per acre) to Medium Density SFR (5-7 units per acre)*
- *Properties in the vicinity of the Tester Road / Highway 522 interchange and those east of SR 522 currently designated Medium-Density Residential would be re-designated to High-Density SFR (one unit per 3,000 SF).*

## Housing Strategies

The following strategies should be considered to provide various types of affordable housing within the Monroe planning area. In addition to the following strategies, the city should protect those areas identified for larger lots, which are

typically more expensive, for persons wishing to move up in the housing market without having to move outside the city limits:

- *Consider inclusionary zoning, which requires a single development project to include housing for a variety of income levels*
- *Encourage mixed-use developments in all commercial zoning districts*
- *Work with federal, state, and county agencies and the larger community to provide housing services for special populations such as those living in poverty, the elderly, disabled, and mentally ill*
- *Amend existing codes to increase density by creating flexibility in street widths and sidewalks*
- *Amend existing codes to reduce impact fees for low-income or smaller unit (one bedroom or studio) projects*
- *Allowing manufactured home parks at a density of up to eight units per acre, through a special approval process similar to a PRD*
- *Continue the promotion of affordable housing within the Planned Residential Development ordinance*
- *Continue the implementing adopted affordable housing development incentives in the municipal code.*
- *Continue to require mixed use development within the downtown area and consider providing additional density or increased building height*

The housing-related policies and action items in Chapter 2 address topics and objectives including:

- *Improving the vitality of Monroe's neighborhoods*
- *Growing the number of mixed-use units along Main Street, north of US 2, and in the Downtown area*
- *Encouraging infill opportunities within existing City limits*
- *Fostering the growth of mixed-use areas that connect neighborhoods with nearby services and activities*
- *Improving the walkability of Monroe*
- *Encouraging the provision of diverse housing types in all areas of Monroe*
- *Encouraging housing growth near existing services, including park facilities*

The policies and action items in Chapter 2 present a wide range of measures that can be taken to improve housing affordability for all economic segments of the community.

## Policy Overview

Housing production and costs are effected by various market factors. Local jurisdictions have limited direct control over housing production, but can ensure adequate land and infrastructure is available to accommodate residential growth. Local governments can also ensure development regulations allow for various housing types within their community.