



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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April 28, 2025

City Council
C/O Andy Williamson
City of Black Diamond
Economic Development Director

Sent via electronic mail: awilliamson@blackdiamondwa.gov

Re: Review of City of Black Diamond Draft 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of Black Diamond's draft 2025 comprehensive plan. Growth Management Services received the proposed amendments on February 27, 2025, and processed them with material identification number 2025-S-8131.

Our review is focused on the comprehensive plan elements listed below, and we have included some line items and corresponding citations from the [periodic update](#) and [expanded housing checklists](#) (in *italics*) as support for our comments and recommendations that follow.

1. Housing Element

- a. *An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs over the planning period, by income band, consistent with the jurisdiction's share of countywide housing need, as provided by Commerce. RCW 36.70A.070(2)(a)*

The inventory of existing and projected housing needs is included on page 100, but we did not find information regarding emergency housing needs in the draft housing element. We recommend adding information on the projected housing needs for emergency housing to better align with the requirements in RCW 36.70A.070(2)(a).

- b. *Identification of capacity of land for housing including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, foster care facilities, emergency housing, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing. [RCW 36.70A.070\(2\)\(c\)](#) amended in 2021, [WAC 365-196-410\(e\)](#) and [\(f\)](#).*

The land capacity analysis does not clearly identify sufficient capacity to accommodate projected housing needs for all income segments, as required by [RCW 36.70A.070\(2\)\(c\)](#), because there are

no numeric values presented as support for estimated capacity. We recommend the land capacity analysis include an estimate of the number of units necessary to manage projected growth, and demonstrate capacity is higher than or equal to projected targets. At present, the analysis insufficiently concludes, “surplus is likely.” Please see chapter 3 of [Guidance for Updating Your Housing Element - Book 2](#) for further information about completing the land capacity analysis requirement.

Additionally, we recommend estimating the total number of permanent supportive housing (PSH) and emergency housing units necessary to manage projected growth based on planned development regulation updates which will be adopted as part of the periodic update, to demonstrate the city can accommodate these projected housing needs as required by [RCW 36.70A.070\(2\)\(c\)](#). Please see comments 3 and 4 below, which identify what we believe are deficiencies in the city’s existing development regulations for these housing types.

- c. *Identify local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing, including:*
- *Zoning that may have a discriminatory effect;*
 - *Disinvestment; and*
 - *Infrastructure availability. [RCW 36.70A.070\(e\)](#)*

In our review of the draft housing element, we did not find identification of local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, or exclusion in housing, as required by [RCW 36.70A.070\(e\)](#). We suggest adding an analysis regarding the impact of local policies on racially disparate impacts and exclusion to the discussion of housing cost burden by race on (pg. 105) or including a discussion of conditions contributing to racially disparate impacts or exclusion in order to fulfill this requirement.

Additional guidance can be found in [Guidance to Address Racially Disparate Impacts](#), see Steps 3 and 4 on pages 33-40.

2. Transportation Element

- a. *If probable funding falls short of meeting identified needs of the transportation system, including state transportation facilities, a discussion of how additional funds will be raised, or how land use assumptions will be reassessed to ensure that LOS standards will be met. [RCW 36.70A.070\(6\)\(a\)\(iv\)\(C\)](#) amended in 2023, [WAC 365-196-430\(2\)\(l\)\(iii\)](#)*

During our review we did not find language addressing actions taken if probable funding falls short. Specifically, the transportation element shall include a discussion of how funds will be raised or how land use assumptions potentially reassessed to ensure LOS standards are met. We recommend modifying the transportation element to include this discussion, as required by statute, prior to final adoption of the comprehensive plan.

We encourage you to consider the following as you continue to work on updates to your development regulations as part of the 2024 periodic update:

3. PSH and transitional housing do not appear to be specified as allowed uses in any zones in your existing development regulations. Taking this into consideration, the city does not likely have sufficient land capacity to accommodate projected PSH across the 20-year horizon. We recommend updating your code to reflect that PSH and transitional housing are allowed in all zones that allow residential uses or hotels, as required in [RCW 35A.21.430](#), then reassessing the land capacity for PSH to ensure there is not a deficit for these housing types. Additional guidance on incorporating statutory requirements for PSH and transitional housing into your code can be found in the [STEP Model Ordinance and User Guide](#).
4. Indoor emergency shelters and indoor emergency housing do not appear to be specified as allowed uses in any zones in your existing development regulations. Taking this into consideration, the city does not likely have sufficient land capacity to accommodate projected emergency shelter and housing needs across the 20-year horizon. We recommend updating your code to reflect that these housing types are allowed in all zones that allow hotels or a majority of zones within one mile of transit, as required in [RCW 35A.21.430](#), then reassessing the land capacity to ensure there is not a deficit for these housing types. Additional guidance on incorporating statutory requirements for emergency housing and shelter into your code can be found in the [STEP Model Ordinance and User Guide](#).

As a friendly reminder, notification and copies of adopted plans shall be submitted to Commerce within ten days after final adoption ([RCW 36.70A.106\(2\)](#)).

Again, we appreciate the work your proposed amendments represent, and we wish you success in meeting the goals of the Growth Management Act. We are available for technical assistance and, if requested, can attend upcoming meetings with your Planning Commission and/or Council. If you wish to discuss these comments, you may reach me at ted.vanegas@commerce.wa.gov or 360-280-0320.

Sincerely,

Ted Vanegas

Ted Vanegas
Senior Planner
Growth Management Services

cc: David Andersen, AICP, Managing Director, Growth Management Services
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