



## **Our Valley, Our Future Regional Housing Survey Personal stories written by residents**

More than 600 residents wrote personal stories about their housing experiences and observations in the Our Valley, Our Future regional survey conducted in July 2017. Here are some of them:

- “I recently relocated to Wenatchee and am considering leaving again due to the lack of housing. The only available housing is one to two bedrooms at ridiculous prices for run-down, poor conditions. Most houses sell the same day they are listed. Most apartments have waiting lists. It's costly to apply for all of them, pay waiting-list fees, just to be declined.”
- “I am forced to live 30 minutes away from my job in East Wenatchee due to lack of affordable housing, especially ones that accept my dog. This is a major problem for many people. I am tired of commuting so far every day, but have no other choice financially.”
- “Due to lack of affordable housing and access for pets, we have a family of three relatives living in our basement. We have also had adult children living with siblings to make renting affordable.”
- “The rising cost of taxes through repeated reassessments and the rising cost of insurance is making owning a home more and more difficult as we grow closer to retirement. I now understand why retirees sell and just rent rather than continue to own here.”
- “I am a Realtor and I am also a landlord so I am on the frontlines of this every day. The rental market is so tight, and because of the high demand and low supply, prices are skyrocketing. This also holds true for starter homes.”
- “I am a single mother with no help or child support. I currently have a 3-year-old and a place to ourselves that is \$1,000 (a month). I cannot afford to pay this and

daycare. If I do not have daycare, then I am unable to work. If I am unable to work, then I am unable to pay rent. It is a never-ending cycle. I have graduated from college and I still am barely scrapping by check to check. The living cost in our valley is RIDICULOUS.”

- “My family of four just moved to the area because of a new job. We are from Walla Walla, where I thought housing was rough to find, but I was definitely wrong. Walla Walla, for being a tourist town and the land of millionaires, definitely was much easier to find a house in than it has been here. It's been by the grace of God we were able to find a rental living in a basement of a family.”
- “The cost of building supplies and construction costs are way too high for our city. Contractors that will build 1,200- to 1,600-square-foot homes are extremely difficult to find.”
- “My husband is an agricultural worker and we had the opportunity to buy a home in Cashmere. The 900-square-foot home was \$160,000. We decided that it was too expensive for us. My husband makes \$32,000 a year, and we have 5 kids too. Owning a home in the Valley seems like it will never be a possibility.”
- “I am a mortgage professional and it's extremely challenging for borrowers to find a home and get it under contract in a price range under \$300,000. There is just not enough availability in our area.”
- “I work for the medical center. We have had difficulty placing students we bring in due to housing, and difficulty hiring nurses due to the lack of housing. We have lost several job candidates due to the lack of housing. This hurts our community when a hospital has vacant positions and must divert crisis patients to Seattle due to lack of staffing.”
- “When (we) moved into the area, (we) had to live in hotel for one month before finding a rental unit that suited our family. We considered buying land and building a tiny home, but problems with sewer and electric hook-up and costs made it not possible.”
- “I work with mentally ill individuals and many of them are homeless because of the cost of housing. With such a low vacancy rate in the area, landlords are not willing to rent to someone that struggles over someone with better income and who can represent themselves better.”
- “As a teacher at a school hovering at 90 percent poverty, I see the impact that lack of safe, adequate, and affordable housing has on students and their families. Students' families are forced move from school to school/district to district

because of these problems. It takes an incredible toll on children emotionally and academically.”

- “My business is hampered in hiring. We hire the gamut — from those just starting in a position to salaried, well-paid professionals. All are having challenges finding the housing they need. External candidates are very surprised to see our cost of housing and dearth of rentals. On a personal note, there is nowhere to downsize to. We lack creative infill for those seeking the core and we lack smaller homes of a different style. Over 55 active living communities and cottage living will be sorely needed.”
- “There are limited housing options for aging parents who did not want to live in a 55+ mobile home park or senior housing. They want to maintain independence with some support services. It would be ideal to have 55+ mix of condos, patio homes/attached home with some senior services and open spaces. With such high rates of Alzheimer's/Dementia in our region and the aging population, addressing senior residential needs is important.”
- “My family relocated here from Spokane. My wages are 10 to 20 percent lower here than what I could've earned in Spokane. I would have expected this to translate into more affordable living, but rent is roughly 30 percent higher and the cost to purchase a home is double.”
- “Rent is outrageous. I spend \$1,000 a month just to live somewhere. Utilities not included.”
- “I'm a landlord and I own and manage two 2-bedroom rentals in a triplex. These rentals are constantly in demand, despite that they are quite outdated. When I recently put one on Craigslist, I had more 20 responses in the first day or so. Most of the people were looking for anywhere at all to live. The lack of affordable housing (or housing at all) is truly one of the biggest issues to face our valley, and it will take an understanding of that from developers, jurisdictions, nonprofits, citizens and places of worship for anything to change. It's everyone's problem.”
- “I believe the cost of government-related fees and requirements attribute greatly to the cost of housing. Denser land-use options and more land available for development can lower the cost of housing.”
- “We are in the process of building. The cost to bring in power, water, etc., has been really ridiculous and we haven't even broken ground yet.”
- “Our town of Leavenworth has been hit really hard by the overnight commercial home renting craze. Homes and apartments that were always available for our

"worker bees" have been converted to the overnight market — many illegally for the past 10 years now."

- "I may have to move to another town to find a home that I can afford to purchase. I recently relocated here from Colorado for employment, but I am having a tough time finding a home. The market is too expensive for my single income here as a RN."
- "I was living in a homeless shelter, working minimum wage. I had (and still have) very bad credit. It took me a long time to find a small apartment to rent. I lucked out in that my landlady is a family friend."
- "There are no houses to rent or buy in my price range. I currently rent from my mother in Leavenworth. Without her, I would not be able to afford or locate a rental in this area. A lady lives in a tent on the property. It has been over a year and she is still unable to find a rental she can afford, being on disability."
- "The valley is full of homeless young adults who couch surf. I am very concerned with this population."
- "I am not interested in staying in the area if the costs keep increasing. You will see an exodus of citizens. You will continue to have a high need for professionals whose jobs cannot be filled due to the high cost of living."
- "I fear that much of this area will end up becoming a breakfast community for Puget Sound and locals that work here will not be able to afford to buy homes."
- "I am a single mom and to rent anything that is a 3-bedroom takes over one of my two paychecks for the month. I use to be able to afford rent. Now, even with having a good job and a college education, I struggle."
- "I am being forced to move due to not being able to afford the outrageous rent of \$900 a month for a mother-in-law studio apartment above a garage. I only took it initially because they accepted my dog. I won't be staying in the valley anymore."
- "Earning \$1,500 a month, with \$900 for a two-bedroom, plus first and last monthly rents, plus a deposit, and you're looking at \$2,600 to move in. And your rent is 70 percent of your income."
- "I work with homeless individuals every day. Shelter clients have no place to go. The shelter is good for 90 days, then transitional housing up to a year. These people have no place to go, which further jams up shelter for those needing it."

We have been waiting for the market rate new builds in the area to provide access for low-income folks with lower rents. That simply has not happened.”

- “We are currently buying a home in Waterville because we cannot afford the homes in Wenatchee.”
- “I was homeless for two years with three children. I couldn't find anyone to rent to me. I couldn't go to a shelter because my oldest son was over the age of 12. We slept in our van, at my friend’s house, and in the homes of different families. The low-income housing had a wait list. As a mother the thought of giving my kids up just so they had a home crossed my mind. No loving mother should ever have to feel this. I'm in a better place now. I have a rental. I'd like to buy a home someday, but it feels like a pipe dream.”
- “I am a lender for USDA. We will approve someone for an affordable loan, but they can't find anything in their price range.”
- “I recently graduated college and work in education. Even with my degree, as a single parent I am unable to find a home within my budget. I am seeking a second job in order to be able to afford housing. I can't imagine how people working lower-wage jobs are surviving right now when my family isn't.”
- “We are new to the community and our rent is three times what our mortgage was. It has been a very difficult year trying to pay bills because we are spending two-thirds of our income on rent. Unfortunately, the jobs available do not offer a wage that can keep up with housing in this area.”
- “We found a home in Wenatchee. We knew it would be tough to get what we wanted, but we were on the ball, and got in a bid within hours of the house entering the market.”
- “We moved from Seattle after selling our home. We grew up in the valley and came back to have kids and be closer to family. We found that while we have a good income for this area (\$85,000 to \$120,000) that finding a reasonably priced home is very difficult. We are currently in a rental ... but have considered moving out of the area to find single-family homes that are priced more in-line with median incomes.”
- “My family relocated from Indiana three years ago to be closer to family. We decided to rent for a year while looking for a home to purchase. In our search for a home or land for new construction, we have been astounded by the cost, especially when compared to areas like Quincy, Ephrata, and even Moses Lake. I fully understand the issue of supply and demand, but the fees to build and even find a home that is in reasonable living condition is difficult enough for a family

with an average income, let alone those who make less. This valley has such an opportunity to draw more people to not only visit but live in this area, increasing commerce and hopefully benefiting the community. But with this road block for many people, this is unlikely to become a reality.”

- “I'm a 26-year-old college graduate. I landed a job in Wenatchee, but cannot afford to live here, so I have had to move back to my parents’ house in Manson.”
- “I would like to buy a home and cannot afford the prices in this valley even for an older modest home. I am looking to moving out of the area to find what I'm looking for. Possibly the Spokane area because pricing is considerably better.”
- “My mom is a single mom and a teacher. She pays about 70 percent of her income on rent in East Wenatchee.”
- “This valley makes it way too hard to make it.”