



NEWS UPDATE 02-18-2011

AHC 1st Quarter Public Forum →

Land Conservation & Affordable Housing – The Connection

Panelists: Gene Duvernoy, President, Cascade Land Conservancy

Michael Mirra, Executive Director, Tacoma Housing Authority

Ian Munce, Long Range Planner, City of Tacoma

Wednesday March 9, 7:45 – 9:30 am – Evergreen Tacoma Campus, 1210 6TH Av, Tacoma

Washington State Census Data → Washington is among eight states that will receive numbers counts from the 2010 Census next week. The data to be released by the Census Bureau will aid a commission appointed by the Legislature in redrawing legislative districts according to population.

It also will begin painting a rich portrait of the state, how it's grown and its people. We'll know how and where growth took place in the state, in your county, in your city, on your block. We'll be able to show you an interactive map with population statistics. And we'll know, once again, whether Tacoma is still No. 3, behind Seattle and Spokane in city population in the state.

Already, we know, based on figures released by the Census Bureau in December, that Washington's population - according to the 2010 Census count - is 6,753,369. That's up 14.1 percent, or more than 830,000 people, over the past 10 years. Washington is the fastest growing state on the West coast and numerically was the eighth fastest-growing in the nation between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census.

The Census Bureau released those basic numbers in December, along with news thajt Washington will gain a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives - its 10th -due to population shifts. You can read reporter Les Blumenthal's story on the issue [here](#). Included in the data to be released next week will be breakdowns of the population by race and ethnicity.

The Census Bureau isn't giving a specific date on which the information will be available, only that it will be released next week. The bureau is rolling out 2010 Census data to several states each week in February and March. Under law, all states must have their first round of information by April 1. The News Tribune 02-17-2011.

Foreclosure bill creates mediation process → The Washington Legislature this week moved forward on two bills meant to reduce foreclosure rates in the state and offer more guidance to indebted homeowners. After some changes, House and Senate proposals to set up a foreclosure mediation process passed out of committee, picking up support from bankers and anti-poverty advocates alike.

"We're joining a handful of states that have done mediation and had a lot of success," said Rep. Tina Orwall, a Normandy Park Democrat and the primary sponsor of House Bill 1362. "I think it will help a lot of homeowners who are frustrated with the process."

Both Orwall and Sen. Adam Kline, sponsor of Senate Bill 5275, introduced substitute bills to the ones originally heard in committee. Orwall said the substitutes were the product of negotiations with banks, anti-poverty advocates and others over the bill's third-party mediation provisions, one of its most controversial elements.

Under the substitute bills an attorney or housing counselor could refer a homeowner to mediation, which would mean that the lender and borrower would meet with a third party to try to work out an alternative to foreclosure. The original bills would have allowed a homeowner to request mediation without a referral.

The substitute bills would also require banks to pay a \$250 fee per property they foreclose on, which would fund additional housing counselors in the state.

Washington Bankers Association lobbyist Denny Eliason, who opposed the mediation provisions in the original bills, said he was satisfied with the substitutes and the negotiation process that the measures had gone through. "I think everyone pushed away from the table with the understanding that we're substantially there," Eliason said of the talks. "The bill is probably 98 percent acceptable to all parties."

Danielle Friedman of the Poverty Action Network said her organization also supported the substitute bills. She said she was pleased that everyone in the negotiations recognized the need to do something about foreclosure rates in Washington and she thought the mediation provisions in the substitute bills were still strong enough to make a difference for Washington homeowners.

According to RealtyTrac, a website that tracks foreclosure rates by state, there were 4,981 new foreclosures in January in Washington, mostly in King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

Katie Schmidt: 360-786-1826 katie.schmidt@thenewstribune.com

AHC Note: The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance helped develop these bills, and AHC strongly supported them in Olympia.

Housing-related Jobs on AHC website → <http://www.affordablehousingconsortium.org/index.php/Jobs/>