

Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Standing Advisory Panel

The Standing Advisory Panel is made up of diverse housing experts selected to provide the Regional Affordable Housing Taskforce with counsel and to advise on a broad spectrum of topics. Drawn from a variety of housing and community backgrounds, the Standing Advisory Panel will participate in Task Force meetings on a regular basis. On occasion, the Standing Advisory Panel will meet independently to develop guidance and recommendations for the Task Force. They will provide the Task Force with independent perspectives on the causes of the affordable housing challenge and approaches to meet that challenge.

Additional panel members with particular expertise on specific topics will be identified and invited to provide input as needed.

	Category	Suggested Member	Affiliation	Title
1	Housing Authority	Stephen Norman	King County Housing Authority	Executive Director
2	Housing Authority	Andrew Lofton	Seattle Housing Authority	Executive Director
3	Housing Authority	Mark Gropper	Renton Housing Authority	Executive Director
4	Nonprofit Housing Developer	Villette Nolon	Imagine Housing	Executive Director
5	For Profit Housing Developer	Maria Barrientos	Barrientos & Ryan LLC	Managing Partner
6	Tenant Advocate	Merf Ehman	Columbia Legal Services	Executive Director
7	Tenant Advocate	Mónica Mendoza-Castrejón	Community Representative	Community Representative
8	Property Owner/Manager	Brett Waller	Washington Multi-Family Housing Association	Director of Government Affairs
9	Unincorporated Stakeholder	Chris Szala	Community House Mental Health/Vashon Household	Executive Director
10	Affordable Housing Advocate	Marty Kooistra	Housing Development Consortium	Executive Director
11	Homeownership	Tony To	HomeSight	Executive Director
12	Communities of Color	Hamdi Abdulle	Somali Youth and Family Club	Executive Director
13	Communities of Color	TBD		
14	Master Builders Association	Patricia Akiyama	Master Builders Association	External Relations Manager
15	Futurewise	Bryce Yadon	Futurewise	State Policy Director
16	Enterprise Community Partners	MA Leonard	Enterprise Community Partners	Vice President
17	Zillow	Racquel Russell	Zillow	VP of Government Relation & Public Affairs

Standing Advisory Panelist Biographies

Hamdi Abdulle, Executive Director, Somali Youth and Family Club

Born and raised in Somalia, Hamdi is the Executive Director and co-founder of Somali Youth and Family Club, which has grown into an organization serving families throughout South Seattle and cities in South King County. The Somali Youth and Family Club provides housing services, citizenship classes, employment training, and ELL and afterschool programs. Hamdi advocates for social change, ending homelessness and closing the disproportionality gap for the refugee community in King County. Hamdi is a board member on the Race to the Top (Executive Committee), All Home, and Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry/Center for Religious Wisdom & World Affairs, Puget Sound Interfaith Network.

Patricia Akiyama, External Relations Manager, Master Builders Association

Patricia is External Relations Manager for the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties. Patricia earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon, and is an alumna of the Senior Managers in Government Program at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She was recently appointed to Seattle's newly formed Community Involvement Commission, is Board Vice President of Leadership Tomorrow (class of 2002), and is on the emeritus board of the Seattle Public Library Foundation.

Maria Barrientos, Managing Partner, Barrientos & Ryan LLC

Maria is the Managing Partner at the firm she established in 1999. To date, Barrientos & Ryan has developed more than 30+ mixed use residential housing projects in Seattle- these projects include rental housing, condominiums, market rate housing and workforce housing. Maria is involved with the Urban Land Institute, Uptown Alliance, Pike Pine Urban Neighborhood Council, and the Seattle Center Advisory Committee. She has previously served on Seattle's Housing Affordability + Livability Committee, the International District Public Development Authority, the Capitol Hill 2020 Committee, the City of Seattle Transferred Development Rights Advisory Group, and the Central Youth and Family Services, among many others.

Merf Ehman, Executive Director, Columbia Legal Services

Merf is the Executive Director of Columbia Legal Services. She has deep experience with multi-disciplinary advocacy through partnerships with local universities, government agencies and national research groups to employ-cutting edge research in the quest for social justice. As a staff attorney with our Institutions Project, Merf focused on removing barriers to housing and employment for people with criminal records so they could successfully re-enter society.

Mark Gropper, Executive Director, Renton Housing Authority

Mark grew up in Woodinville and cares passionately about communities. He started his work in housing as a graveyard desk clerk at the Morrison Hotel while a student at the University of Washington. He began working at the Renton Housing Authority in 2001 and was named executive director in 2010. Mark leads the Sunset Revitalization Initiative. One of the first projects included the Kirkland Townhomes, a modular development, serving large families.

Marty Kooistra, Housing Development Consortium, Executive Director

Marty is a champion of place-based strategies for community revitalization and affordable housing in the U.S. and abroad for 27 years, Marty is recognized for progressive work in the areas of sustainable building practices, homebuyer financial readiness, community development, the rehabilitation and

preservation of foreclosed and distressed properties, as well as board development and strategic alliances. Marty moved to the Puget Sound region in 2008 serving as the CEO of Habitat for Humanity Seattle –South King County. The Housing Development Consortium conducts a special affinity group for the needs of seniors and is involved in the update to “The Quiet Crisis”.

M.A. Leonard, VP & Market Leader, Pacific Northwest Market, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

M.A. Leonard is vice president and Pacific Northwest market leader for Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. She leads the delivery of Enterprise’s product solutions, innovations, capital and policy efforts in the Pacific Northwest. Based in the Seattle office, M.A. works to build Enterprise’s core strengths in the region, and to evaluate regional needs to identify opportunities that are consistent with Enterprise’s mission.

M.A. joined Enterprise in 2010 with an extensive track record in affordable housing and community development. Most recently, she worked as an independent consultant providing strategic assistance to various community development organizations on their work with affordable housing development in Oregon and Washington.

M.A. is chair of the Washington State Affordable Housing Advisory Board, member of the Seattle Investment Fund’s investment committee, board member of the Washington Community Reinvestment Association and member of the State Housing Trust Fund’s policy advisory team. From 2007 to 2015, M.A. served on the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, and in 2014, she was appointed by Seattle Mayor Ed Murray to serve on the city’s Housing Affordability and Livability Advisory Committee. M.A. earned a bachelor’s degree in urban planning from the University of Illinois, and completed master’s level coursework at Cornell University.

Andrew Lofton, Executive Director, Seattle Housing Authority

Andrew was appointed Executive Director of the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) in 2012, and leads strategic planning and the day-to-day operations of the organization. Prior to his promotion to Executive Director, he held the position of Deputy Executive Director–Finance and Administration for more than eight years. As Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Lofton oversaw SHA’s Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance and Budget, and Housing Choice Voucher functions, including the development and management of the agency’s annual budget. He has also worked closely with representatives of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding the oversight of SHA’s Moving to Work agreement, regulatory reform, and funding issues. Seattle Housing Authority provides through the Seattle Senior Housing program, affordable housing for low-income older adults and individuals with disabilities, at 23 multi-family, low-rise buildings within the city of Seattle. Units are mostly one-bedroom, with a limited number of two-bedrooms. All buildings are owned by the Seattle Housing Authority. All units (approximately 1,000 total) are wheelchair accessible. SHA serves over 6,000 seniors.

Mónica Mendoza-Castrejón, DataSphere Technologies, Inc.

Monica was born and raised in South King County to Mexican, immigrant, farm working parents, later by her single mother under poverty. They went through the Section 8 process, and later the HEN (Housing and Essential Needs) program, up until Mónica graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in Law, Societies and Justice and Comparative History of Ideas. Mónica has worked with the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, organized for several Progressive candidates in the Seattle area, and worked for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute in DC, the Washington State Democrats, and the Tenants Union. Currently, she volunteers as a Board Member for Progreso: Latino Progress, focusing on housing issues. She speaks and writes Spanish fluently, and has been a renter for more than a decade.

Villette Nolon, Executive Director, Imagine Housing

Villette leads the staff and Imagine Housing's Board of Directors to set Imagine Housing's vision and execute our plans to bring high quality affordable housing with the best supportive services possible to our community. Villette comes to this role as a former Imagine Housing Board member and after serving as Interim Executive Director for several months. She is a dynamic executive with over 30 years' experience leading fast growth high tech companies. Her past roles have included CEO, VP Sales & Marketing and VP Strategic Partnerships. Since 2000, she has served on the boards of PONCHO, Washington Technology Industry Association, and the Global MIT Enterprise Forum.

Stephen Norman, Executive Director, King County Housing Authority

Stephen is the Executive Director of the King County Housing Authority (KCHA), serving all of King County outside of the cities of Seattle and Renton. The Authority owns over 9,500 units of housing and provides rental assistance for an additional 9,000 households renting on the private market. Stephen has an extensive background in community organizing, urban planning and affordable housing design, development and management. He currently serves as president of the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities and as Chair of the Corporation for Supportive Housing. Stephen served as co-chair of King County's Inter-agency Council on Homelessness from 2005 to 2014, as a Board Member of Building Changes (formerly AIDS Housing of Washington) for over a decade, and as a member of the Advisory Board for the Washington Families Fund. Stephen has extensive experience in the housing and service needs of seniors. KCHA participated in the development of "The Quiet Crisis" and is working with the team to update and expand that report now. KCHA owns and operates 34 senior housing properties and serves over 4,300 senior households.

Racquel Russell, Vice President of Government Relations and Public Affairs

Racquel Russell joined Zillow Group in January 2015 to create and lead the company's government relations, social impact and community engagement functions. In her current capacity as vice president, Racquel oversees Zillow Group's community and civic engagement, housing and economic policy thought leadership as well as external partnerships and collaborations with government and nonprofit organizations at the local, regional and national level. Previously, Racquel led the White House Office of Urban Affairs and Economic Mobility, serving as a senior advisor to President Obama on various issues including neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, economic opportunity, nutrition policy and women's health. Prior to joining the White House in September 2010, Racquel held leadership positions for U.S. Sens. Tom Carper and Bob Graham as well as for the National Governors Association. Racquel received her Juris Doctor from the George Washington University Law School and holds a Bachelor of Science in Communications from the University of Miami.

Chris Szala, Executive Director, Community House Mental Health/Vashon Household

As the Executive Director of Community House Mental Health and Vashon Household, Chris has a deep understanding of special needs populations and the community of Vashon and Maury Island. This includes a deep understanding of deal structuring and housing finance. Chris has extensive experience working on the needs of seniors, a prominently represented population group on Vashon Island.

Tony To, Executive Director, HomeSight

Tony is the Executive Director of HomeSight, a non-profit Community Development Corporation whose mission is “to promote equity by preserving and enhancing economically and culturally diverse communities through affordable homeownership, business development, and community advocacy”. Tony is a member of the Puget Sound Regional Council Economic Development District Board, a Co-Chair of the Regional Equity Network, and a member of the Race and Social Equity Taskforce who worked to include an Equity Development Implementation Plan in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan update. This year Tony served on the statewide Housing Affordability Response Team that created a list of 65 recommendations to the Governor to consider for future legislative action.

Brett Waller, Director of Government Affairs, Washington Multi-Family Housing Association

Brett joined WMFHA in early 2016 as the Director of Government Affairs. Brett works closely with Joe Puckett and lobbyist Kathryn Hedrick to represent WMFHA member’s interests in local municipalities and throughout the State. Brett is passionate about the multifamily industry and knows what an important part multifamily communities play in our growing region. Prior to joining WMFHA, Brett was a litigation attorney representing individual clients in contested family law issues in the Seattle area.

Bryce Yadon, State Policy Director, Futurewise

Biography forthcoming