



HOUSING  
DEVELOPMENT  
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**30 YEARS**

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Regional Affordable Housing Task Force  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Be bold with Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Recommendations

Dear Members of the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force,

The Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County (HDC) thanks you for your leadership in addressing our region's urgent affordable housing needs. We are grateful that HDC staff and member organizations have been at the table from the beginning, and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft recommendations before you,

HDC is a nonprofit membership association representing 165 nonprofit housing organizations, private businesses, and public partners who are working to develop affordable housing and provide housing-related services in King County. Each of HDC's members are dedicated to the vision that all people should be able to live in a safe, healthy, and affordable home within a community of opportunity.

As task force members, we know you share this vision as well as an understanding that for too long, too many King County residents have struggled with rising housing costs. Our region's uneven economic growth has benefited some while pushing many others into housing insecurity or homelessness. The number of people experiencing homelessness in King County has risen over 9% per year since 2007; nearly five times the rate of the population as a whole. The market has placed increasing pressure on households with modest incomes while funding, and thus production, of affordable housing has not kept pace.

It is time for local governments to scale up the response. The draft recommendations before you provide multiple paths forward, but we encourage you to act boldly by taking the following approaches;

**Use the most realistic assessment of need: Number of cost burdened households**

The first stated goal of the Regional Affordable Housing Task force is to eliminate cost burden for households at or below 80% area median income (\$82,700 for a family of four or \$57,900 for an individual.) HDC applauds the task force for adopting this goal, and encourages you measure success against the third option for determining countywide need, which is the only option that directly reflects the reality of cost burden in our county. It is experienced by more people than Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) plan for, and the needs are greatest for lower income people. No other method captures this reality, and any other method will lead to inequitable distribution of resources

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### **Allocate new resources to the households who need them most**

New resources must be targeted for households who have least benefited from the uneven economic growth our region has experienced. Newly available funding as well as public land can be used in a way that brings balance to our region if they are used to benefit as many cost burdened households as possible. For this reason, we urge you to recommend that 80% of station areas be affordable to households at or below 80% AMI. This recommendation aligns with the equitable transit-oriented development policies of Sound Transit, while ensuring that households with the broadest range of incomes can share space near a valuable community benefit.

### **Adopt a strong governance model that compels scaled action**

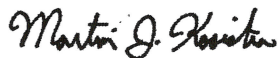
Cities that plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA) are currently already required to plan for their housing needs at various income levels, and the CPPs were adopted as a way to help cities meet the housing affordability needs for households in each income range, especially at or below 80% AMI. This requirement comes with neither carrots nor sticks and arguably has not been effective. HDC encourages the task force to be bold and select option 1- adopting a Sound Transit-like entity specifically dedicated to affordable housing. This model would provide needed technical support to cities and the county, ensure accountability in meeting affordable housing goals, and generate critically needed revenue. The aligned efforts created by this model will clearly demonstrate to the state and federal government that our region is serious about addressing our affordable housing crisis and invite them to join us at a new level of scale.

We recognize that not every city is adequately equipped to meet their own affordable housing needs, and in fact can be most effective if they can leverage their efforts against others through collaborative models like ARCH. Diverse East King County cities have benefited from their participation in ARCH, and for that reason HDC has sought to help South King County cities organize in a similar manner through an interlocal agreement to be signed this year.

Sub-regional coalitions are a vital path to bring existing solutions to scale and provide an excellent path for local engagement in broader regional work. We urge you to select a governance model that fosters sub-regional efforts in service to the unique needs of each corner of our county, which we believe can inform and strengthen a regional, single-purpose government for housing.

HDC recognizes that the crafting a regional plan is an enormous undertaking, and we applaud you for dedicating your time and energy to this important work. We urge you to use targets that are most reflective of community need so that you may allocate resources to those with the most need and select a governance model that will bring our region's local successes to scale. HDC staff, members, stand by you in support of that effort.

Thank you,



Marty Kooistra  
Executive Director



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