

COMMUNITY PARTNERS TABLE TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

December 2022 Recommendations Report

This report shares feedback from the Community Partners Table (Table) about their experience this past year and recommendations for how to continue to center community perspectives in the activities of the Affordable Housing Committee.

Background

The Community Partners Table met 11 times in 2022 in order to support the activities of the Affordable Housing Committee (Committee) and reflect to the Committee a representative perspective on how housing cost burden is being experienced and must be addressed. Member organizations represent cost-burdened Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and worked to inform Committee efforts to eliminate housing cost burden among low-income households in King County.

The Table provided community members a space to come together, build trust with each other, deepen their knowledge of technical topics, develop recommendations to the AHC, and increase awareness and support for potential housing solutions in the most impacted communities. In partnership with the Table, the Committee made great strides to take a more thoughtful approach for strategy implementation that is rooted in the equity principle that communities who are historically excluded and most negatively affected have the right to influence and define decisions.

The research and recommendations shared by the Community Partners Table documents housing disparities and how they are experienced by different populations, and uplifts what communities have shared with these trusted community-based organizations.

Recommendations by the Table uplifted strategic solutions and suggested how to repair the harm created by systems of oppression that have led to disparities in how low-income and communities of color access affordable housing. Recommendations challenged the Affordable Housing Committee to be bolder and braver and support systems change for housing affordability and ownership for low-income BIPOC communities in the region. The Table helped to inform the standards jurisdictions are held to as part of a region wide effort to increase housing affordability and access.

The Community Partners Table worked to understand housing needs of people who are low-income, BIPOC, gender diverse, experiencing homelessness, have developmental / intellectual and physical disabilities, aging adults, elders, LGBTQIA+, youth, families, cost-burdened renters, immigrants, refugees, and undocumented individuals. Solutions for BIPOC communities are beyond just providing shelter; it takes a community and services to ensure everyone is healthy, honored, healing, and housed.

Included on page 7 is a list of the Table members and the missions of their organizations. For Table reflections on ideal housing options for the communities they serve, reference page 8.

Table Retreat Reflections

The following questions were discussed at the October 24 Table Retreat held in person and with a hybrid Zoom meeting room available. The Table's recommendations are listed below.

1. What went well this year? What is something to keep if the Community Partners Table were to continue in some capacity?

- The Table appreciated the open process at the start because it allowed room for shared learning to occur so they can be effective, have time to relationship build, and identify their priorities as a Table; “we don’t know what we don’t know.”
- The Table shared appreciation for the support and connection they received and felt from the incredible County staff. The County staff didn’t simplify the information and answered the Table’s questions throughout the entire process.

- When Table meetings focused on where change can occur, the Table felt really good while providing their recommendations. The Table recommends that discussions start with identifying where things can be leveraged and resourced so that change can occur.
- The Table appreciated a dedicated platform at AHC meetings to offer reflections and recommendations.
- The Table recommends continuing using a non-governmental, community-based facilitator like Headwater People.
 - The Table shared that having a facilitator, or guide, throughout the process helps them connect their vision and recommendations to the County system and AHC processes to have the greatest impact. Table members shared that they felt they were able to show up as themselves and not code switch because they were receiving support from another community member who they could trust. Trust was built by maintaining connection throughout the process, which included having multiple communication channels between the Table facilitator and Table members. Table members shared that this helps their ability to participate and meets them where they are (phone, text, email, weekly check-ins).

2. *Do you have Ideas for change?*

- In person quarterly meetings (meeting at least once or twice a year).
- Table members were open to having seats on the Committee, as long a separate Table space remains
- Implement using alternates as a standard practice.
- The Table should continue collaborating with County staff to explore whether to continue advising to the AHC or advise another body like the GMPC or King County comprehensive or strategic planning processes.
 - There were ideas about governance. What if the Community Partners Table advised the Growth Management Planning Council?
 - Housing is often one part of what the Community Partners Table wants to focus on. It's not always the only issue, and there was an

observation that the Growth Management Planning Council is stewarding all of the Countywide Planning Policies which focus on a wide range of topics. This might be a better body in order to be able to advance intersectional issues of interest to the Community Partners Table.

- Identify what voices are missing, and Table members can bring partners into meetings with those perspectives.
- The Table could choose who the facilitator/liaison is.
- Set definitions for community-centered principles for engagement. Identify the Table values/guiding principles for the AHC or GMPC to reference during decision-making. This will help the Table influence AHC/GMPC work without staff having to go back to the Table each time.

Sharing Gratitude:

- The Community Partners Table members shared that they felt heard through this process with the Affordable Housing Committee and County staff and observed that Table feedback was received in an open and comprehensive way. This process experienced in 2022 felt like more of a holistic approach to address the issues facing each of the communities they serve, which includes access to affordable housing and many more intersectional issues. The Table members shared that they were able to share recommendations that reflected the intersectional lens from which they operate through the Table recommendations to the AHC.
- The Table shared appreciation in being a part of the process that led to jurisdictional permanent housing need Option 3 moving forward as the preferred allocation method. Option 3 strongly addresses the current inequities and deficiencies in each jurisdiction's housing options available to community members when trying to look for a place to live. The Table shared appreciation in partnering with the Affordable Housing Committee to work towards a more equitable future together.

- Appreciation was shared for King County data staff because collecting and analyzing data is not easy. Table members reflected on their own experiences with collecting data and showed appreciation for staff only collecting it, but also sharing it with them in a way that it is digestible. For example, staff presented data on different weighting factors for jurisdictional permanent housing needs which helped Table members understand the nuances of the methodology and ultimately make an option recommendation.

Table Recommendations:

- Continue convening the Table in 2023 and beyond to inform the activities of the Affordable Housing Committee, and/or inform King County comprehensive planning efforts or King County Equity and Social Justice strategic planning processes. A gap in convening would slow down momentum and require a ramp-up period to effectively engage again.
- Continue AHC staff and Table coordination to determine how the Table can advise on intersectional issues without having to be a member of multiple groups. Table members identified a challenge in having to prioritize which spaces they have capacity to engage in. The goal is to break down silos, not create more.
 - The silos between the different tables working with different county departments are actually creating barriers for community members when they have a need. They have to go to five people / departments to address the issue. This Table is a model of what we've all experienced in this year for how community perspectives are brought to these activities and discussions.
 - Housing is a key and central component for building a thriving community. When issues emerge from the Table that are more holistic or more intersectional, finding avenues for the recommendations to filter into the silos that the government has created rather than funneling the Community Partners Table into a new silo would be helpful.
- Explore Work Plan topics of interest which include:
 - Affordable Housing Committee

- Table Role: Support identifying measures of success and review plans and share recommendations about AHC work to:
 - Develop and approve a process for assessing jurisdictional planning performance mid-way through a comprehensive plan cycle. Includes defining what constitutes a significant shortfall in planning for and accommodating housing needs and how jurisdictions could address significant shortfalls.
 - Assess and monitor jurisdictional progress to plan for and accommodate housing needs.
 - Review and issue comments on housing-related components of draft comprehensive plans.
 - Table members shared that a priority they have is knowing what and how the cities are doing what they say they were going to do, and how more importantly, can they share out with our communities for transparency. Next year and on, the Table members are interested in being able to report back to their communities about what is happening in each city's comprehensive plan to account for more affordable housing.
- King County Comprehensive Planning
 - The Table is considering informing the King County comprehensive plan and shaping where homes can be built.
 - Table Role: Support identifying measures of success, review plan and share recommendations.
- King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan
 - The Table could share feedback and direction for how the County could advance equity policies and goals.
 - Table Role: Support identifying measures of success, review plan and share recommendations.

Attachments:

- Community Partners Table Membership (page 7)
- Housing For Us All – Exhibit from April 2022 Recommendations Report (page 8)

TABLE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- **African Community Housing & Development / Partner: Bree Nicoletto, Community Development/Special Projects Director**, their mission is to provide opportunities for African Diaspora immigrant and refugee communities, families, and individuals in King County to attain health and housing stability, economic development, high-quality education, and referrals to legal services.
- **Centro Cultural Mexicano / Partner: Angie Hinojos, Executive Director**, strives to inspire inclusive participation by the community in all aspects of education, culture, and society by providing opportunities to create a positive future. They work to build a vibrant community of empowered individuals through art and culture.
- **Indian American Community Services / Partners: Nanda Tewari and Dr. Pran Wahi, Seniors Program**, is committed to supporting the local Indian community with critical programs and services, especially for those most at-risk members of our community. They seek to work together to increase the well-being of the community by addressing individual needs ranging from healthcare, financial assistance, family assistance, mental health and counseling.
- **Lavender Rights Project / Partner: Ebo Barton, Director of Housing Services**, elevates the power, autonomy, and leadership of the Black intersex & gender diverse community through intersectional legal and social services. We utilize the law as an organizing principle to affirm our civil rights and self-determination. The organization disrupts oppressive systems that target Black gender diverse and intersex communities of color and lead to disproportionate levels of poverty, housing disparities, and gender-based violence, especially among Black and Indigenous people.
- **Lived Experience Coalition / Partner: Harold Odom, Director of Policy and Outreach**, is a diverse group of people who are coming together to lift each other up, advocate for themselves and others, and advance race and social justice.
- **Open Doors for Multicultural Families / Partner: Ginger Kwan, Executive Director**, engages and partners with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities and their families. We use a cultural brokerage model to navigate services, provide specialized programming, and advocate for systems change. Open Doors for Multicultural Families envisions a world where all culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities and their families thrive in an inclusive society of their design.
- **Sound Generations / Partner: Brittany Blue, Chief Marketing & Philanthropy Officer** supports people on their aging journey through community connections and accessible services. They envision a just society where aging adults, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them can live their best lives in a supportive and caring community.

HOUSING FOR US ALL

Includes Options For:

- *Multi-generational and multi-family households with over four-persons.*
- *People who want single-occupancy rooms in community integrated housing with private bathrooms and 24-hour staff.*
- *Owner-occupied housing.*
- *Community centered programming and easy access to amenities and services.*
- *Training and financing for developers of color to implement a community vision.*
- *Mentorship/partnership opportunities*
- *People who need living assistance professional support.*
- *Addressing the substandard safety and quality of some housing options.*
- *Intentionally designed communal spaces for all abilities to enjoy, including spaces for fitness and physical health, healthy foods (garden and grocery store), near transit and jobs, childcare, cultural centers, and eldercare.*
- *Behavioral health crisis response that is community-informed, powered and educated.*
- *Long-term stability.*
- *Safer spaces for people who are gender diverse.*
- *Continued pandemic response and relief.*
- *In-language outreach to increase access to opportunities.*
- *Leasing to own.*
- *Opportunities that are not dependent on credit scores.*
- *Decolonizing systems of care.*
- *More dense housing by changing zoning requirements.*
- *Recognizing cultural history of place to support the mental health of all.*
- *The communities that are coming out of homelessness and who need true wraparound services on site, supporting restorative justice and a housing first model.*
- *People on a fixed income.*
- *People who cannot provide documentation required in many relief applications.*
- *People who lost the ability to afford mortgage and rent due to incarceration of a family member.*
- *Households who have multiple members living with a disability, reflecting the multigenerational nature of their family structure.*
- *Removing discriminatory occupancy limit rules and regulations on unrelated persons.*
- *Communities in which accommodations for disabled individuals are integrated with others for authentic connections.*
- *Tribal recognition and benefits as a part of a housing development.*
- *Low-income housing developments and housing vouchers (increase income eligibility).*
- *Co-housing, such as co-ops, trusts, Public Development Authorities (PDAs), etc.*