

Community Partners Table

Of the King County Affordable Housing Committee

Background

People all over King County are struggling to find and keep a home they can afford and yet the affordable housing crisis has not affected all households evenly. Data shows that no- and low-income Black, Indigenous and other communities of color, particularly renters, are disproportionately likely to be severely cost burdened, paying more than half of their income towards housing costs.¹ Communities of color and cultural communities suffer disproportionate rates of displacement, often have no or limited access to opportunity, and may be forced to live in substandard housing as a result of systemic inequities. Many of these communities are organizing to raise awareness of these issues and take steps to shape what happens in their communities. The Community Partners Table provides a space for historically underrepresented communities to advise on policies and programs regarding housing issues that impact them the most.

Participating on the Community Partners Table is an opportunity to influence long range housing policy such as land use, zoning, and revenue policy decisions upstream to help mitigate negative impacts, and to strengthen short-term equitable development strategies and policies addressing displacement. Members will engage in high-level discussions about plans, policies, and special projects related to the production and preservation of affordable housing units throughout the county, anti-displacement strategies, transit-oriented development, and equitable community engagement. The Community Partners Table will advise County staff and help develop recommendations for elected officials and other key decision-makers, specifically the Affordable Housing Committee.

The Affordable Housing Committee was created in 2019 with the overarching goal to ensure no low-income person in King County is housing cost-burdened by 2040. To achieve that goal, the Committee will drive towards implementing strategies ranging from increasing affordable housing production to supporting tenant protections for the purpose of increasing housing stability. In partnership with the Community Partners Table, the Committee strives to take a more thoughtful approach for strategy implementation, rooted in the equity principle that communities who are historically excluded and most negatively affected have the right to influence and define decisions.

¹ Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Final Report and Recommendations, December 2018

Community Partners Table

The Community Partners Table is a work in progress that strives to authentically embed a race and social equity-based approach into the work of the Affordable Housing Committee and advise King County on broader anti-displacement efforts.

The Table's purpose is to:

1. Surface and strategize around housing issues of importance to the communities that members are connected to and recommend items for inclusion in the Affordable Housing Committee annual work plan
2. Develop and review policy recommendations and advise on anti-displacement strategies with King County staff
3. Collaborate with the Affordable Housing Committee in reducing the disproportionate impacts of housing affordability challenges, including displacement, on communities impacted by racism, colonization, and oppression as identified by the Community Partners Table
4. Advise the Affordable Housing Committee and King County staff on how to best engage communities most impacted by the housing crisis in affordable housing planning and equitable development plans and policies

In order to support the success of this new body, King County staff will commit to:

1. Provide technical assistance and training to build the capacity and knowledge base of participating organizations specifically around land use planning and housing policy
2. Provide open and transparent communication about upcoming policy recommendations, planning processes, or special projects that are relevant to the purpose of Community Partners Table
3. Be open to feedback from the Community Partner's Table in the spirit of cross stakeholder collaboration and trust building while also being clear and direct about potential barriers, limitations, and/or differences of opinion

Potential Projects

The Community Partners Table will work in collaboration with King County staff, the Housing Interjurisdictional Team, and the Affordable Housing Committee to:

Implement the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Action Plan.² Strategies within the Action Plan that may be areas of interest include:

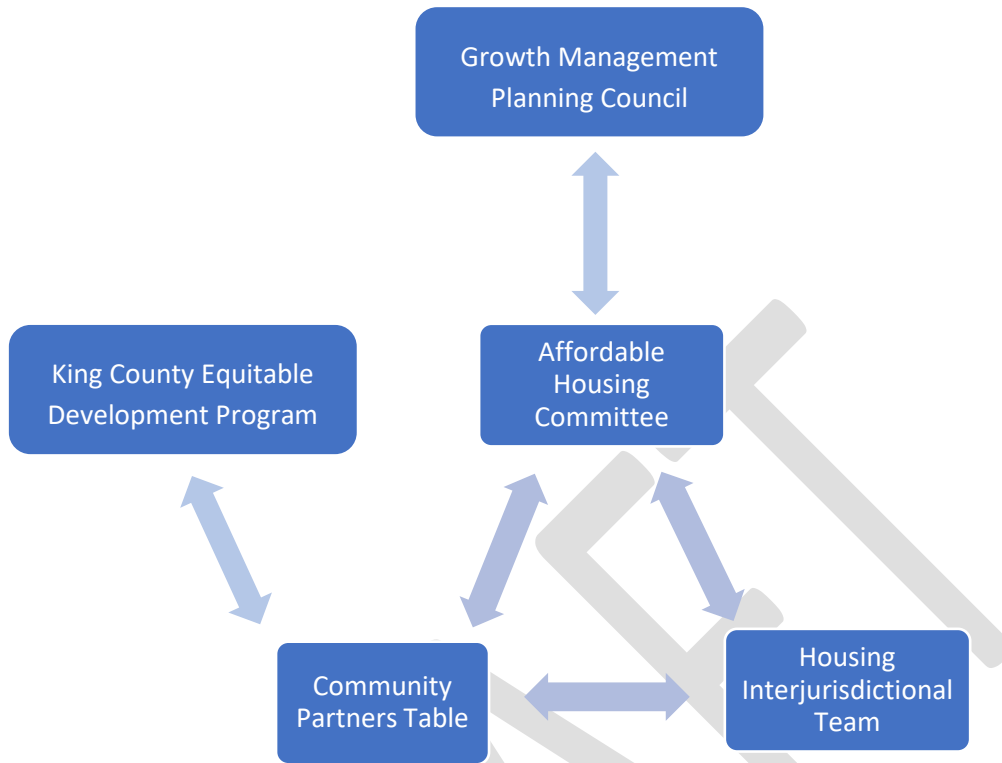
- Authentically engage Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, including low-income communities and immigrants and refugees, in affordable housing development and policy decisions
- Promote more equitable engagement of local communities and residents in planning efforts regarding zoning and location of affordable housing.
- Propose and support legislation and statewide policies related to tenant protections in coordination with the King County Renters' Commission
- Expand supports for low-income renters and people with disabilities
- Adopt programs and policies to improve the quality of housing
- Expand and preserve homeownership opportunities for low-income households
- Strengthen and support policies and strategies that prioritize affordable housing near frequent transit service
- Increase investments in communities of color and low-income communities by developing programs and policies that serve individuals and families at risk of displacement and promote community-driven development projects

Governance

The Community Partners Table will be staffed by King County employees. The goal is for the Community Partners Table to collaborate with a work group of the Affordable Housing Committee called the Housing Interjurisdictional Team. Together, they would form recommendations to the Affordable Housing Committee, which is a committee of the Growth Management Planning Council. Additionally, the Community Partner's table would work directly with the Equitable Development Program within King County's Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development Division. See Figure A for a visual.

² Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Final Report and Recommendations, December 2018

Figure A



Membership

The Table will have up to ten members, starting with a minimum of five members in the first year. Members will be identified through a screening process that seeks to balance geographical representation with diversity of race, ethnicity, age, ability, and housing and equity expertise. Non-profit organizations, including those with 501 (c)(3) or 501 (c)(4) statuses, are eligible to serve on the Community Partners Table. Priority will be given to grassroots community organizations led by and for the communities they represent. The organizations, rather than the member, will receive a stipend. Members are encouraged to represent the views of the communities they serve and seek ways to engage them on Community Partner Table matters. Organizations must represent no- and low- income communities, including but not limited to the following:

- Black, Indigenous and People of color
- Immigrants and refugees
- People living with disabilities
- Low-income seniors
- Cost-burdened renters
- LGBTQ+ people
- People with criminal records

- People who have experienced homelessness

Benefits of Participation

- Build collective power and work regionally on land use, planning, housing policy, and anti-displacement strategies
- Collaborate with key decision makers from the Affordable Housing Committee to inform their affordable housing priorities in King County
- Influence long range housing policies to mitigate downstream impacts such as displacement, cost burden, and tenant protections, and nearer-term strategies related to equitable development and anti-displacement
- Be involved in decision-making processes around the production, preservation, access to, and location of affordable housing in King County
- Strengthen relationships, build new connections and network with other community leaders
- Learn more about affordable housing planning and policies

Support for Member Organizations

Pending the number of workgroup members and full participation, member organizations will sign a participation agreement and receive an organizational stipend (in installments) of up to \$_____ per member organization for contributing their time and expertise over a 12-month period, starting in Summer/Fall 2020.

Commitment

In conjunction with King County staff, and potentially a consultant, the Community Partners Table will determine what meeting length and frequency works best to achieve their goals. At the minimum, staff recommend:

- Quarterly meetings to review the work of the Affordable Housing Committee and develop recommendations
- Additional consultation over email, phone calls, or 1:1 meetings with individual members on an as-needed basis
- Attendance at monthly Housing Interjurisdictional Team meetings or every-other-month Affordable Housing Committee meetings on an as-needed basis