

**King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force  
Meeting Summary  
Kickoff July 14, 2017**

**Renton Community Center, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Task Force Participants**

- David Baker, Mayor of Kenmore (Co-Chair)
- Claudia Balducci, King County Council Member (Co-Chair)
- Dow Constantine, King County Executive
- Jeanne Kohl-Welles, King County Council Member
- Larry Gossett, King County Council Member
- Ken Hearing, Mayor of North Bend
- Ryan McIrvin, Renton City Councilmember
- John Stokes, Mayor of Bellevue
- Rob Johnson, Seattle City Councilmember
- Rod Dembowski, King County Council Member
- Adrienne Quinn, Director, King County Department of Community Services (ex officio)
- Steve Walker, Director Seattle Office of Housing for Mayor Ed Murray

**Welcoming Remarks**

- Dow Constantine gave opening remarks discussing the need for bold action to address the affordable housing crisis.
- Claudia Balducci gave remarks that provided context and background for how the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force was formed and its purpose.

**Task Force Actions**

- Unanimously approved Mayor David Baker and Councilmember Claudia Balducci as Co-Chairs for the Task Force.

## Project Overview

- Facilitator Chris Mefford from Community Attributes Inc. provided an overview of the purpose of the Task Force based on Motion 14873, which Council approved in May to form the body.
- Mefford reviewed the [project schedule](#) and scope.
- **ACTION: The Task Force unanimously selected Claudia Balducci and David Baker as Co-Chairs.**

## Task Force Introductory Statements

- Task Force members introduced themselves and explained their priorities for affordable housing and what they hope to accomplish through the Task Force.

## Data and Analysis Overview

- Mefford walked the Task Force through a [data outline](#) to provide the members with an idea of the types of data and topics they will explore.
- Mefford provided the Task Force with a [series of maps](#) to highlight the variation among subregions in King County in terms of affordable housing and demographic factors. It was noted that the maps should be updated to include on about race.

## Field Experts Perspectives

- **Tony To, Executive Director of HomeSight**, provided an overview of HomeSight and its accomplishments in helping low-income people purchase homes. He explained the benefit of homeownership for low-income people and the stability it brings to their lives, as well as the opportunity to build wealth.
- **Robin Corak, Chief Executive Office of the Multi-Service Center**, talked about the services her organization provides and the housing challenges facing her clients.
- **Marty Kooistra, Executive Director of the Housing Development Consortium**, encouraged the Task Force to be bold and to think big because the problem facing the region will require new, creative thinking. He emphasized the need for collective political will to make hard decisions to address the affordable housing crisis in a substantive way.

## Small Group Discussion and Report Out

- Meeting participants were organized into tables to discuss responses to three questions:

### **Question 1: What does the housing affordability problem look like in your community?**

- Communities and neighborhoods are being dispersed, especially communities of color and LGBTQ, which means historic connections, services and support networks are lost and they are not being regenerated because the communities are dispersed throughout the region.
- Rents are dramatically increasing, without notice
- The stock of affordable housing is declining as the cost for purchasing homes increases
- There is a stigma associated with affordable housing and people do not understand what it means and its benefits
- Affordable housing is not near major transit hubs
- Planned low-income housing comes at the end of major development projects, which delays its availability
- In east King County there is little to no support for low-income housing and while there is an interest in racial diversity, there is a lack of interest in economic diversity
- There is a mismatch between the housing being built and what people can afford
- Lowest income workers have the longest commutes to work
- Infrastructure burdened to meet the growing need
- The needs of immigrants and refugees are not adequately addressed
- Low cost housing is low quality and unsafe in some places and families often double or triple up, which causes overcrowding and poor health outcomes
- People are being priced out of Seattle and the Eastside and are migrating to South King County.

### **Question 2: What are the big causes, or root causes, or biggest pressing issues for housing affordability?**

- The support network for people with special needs is lacking
- Gentrification is pushing out low and moderate income people, especially seniors
- Home building is not keeping pace with rapid population growth and the market is skewed to build higher end unit, which moderate income people cannot afford
- The benefits of the economic boom are not shared equitably, some people are losing out. Housing costs are increasing faster than wages
- Move in fees and lack of credit are barriers to low-income people renting or buying quality, affordable homes
- Lack of coordination across jurisdictions leaves funding on the table, new initiatives are in silos

- Not every community sees the need for affordable housing in their community, assume it will go elsewhere
- Foreign investors are driving up prices and are leaving properties vacant
- The tax system is broken and places too heavy a burden on property taxes, which can push people out of their homes
- There are too many steps and complicated regulations to building affordable housing, which means small non-profits cannot do it without partners and developers find it easier to build for the market
- King County has a legacy of exclusionary zoning and institutional racism
- Services are Seattle centric and people living outside Seattle have challenges accessing services that will help them manage mental health, substance use or other problems that are barriers finding housing.

**Question 3: What is your vision of the future of housing for affordable living in our region? How does that look in your community?**

- Mixed income and use developments
- Housing is accessible for people with special needs
- Decision makers look long term and have the political will to affect positive change
- Developers and landlords are partners in the effort to build and maintain affordable housing, rather than being seen as an obstacle to a solution
- People can afford to live where they work, which means more workforce housing
- No family is paying more than 1/3 its income for housing
- Increasing home ownership rates
- Employers are involved in finding solutions to insure their employees can live near work
- We are creative about using government land for affordable housing
- Holistic communities
- Jurisdictions communicate and coordinate regularly
- Diverse housing stock is built, including homes with three or more bedrooms. The middle of the market (condos) are not being built
- Walkable neighborhoods with amenities
- People live where they want through the stages of their lives
- Cultural communities are kept intact
- Communities are involved in developing solutions that meet their needs
- How do we increase access to wealth and opportunity and avoid displacement and gentrification? Development without displacement
- Dense urban areas near transit
- Affordable housing is integrated with new commercial developments, such as the Convention Center
- People have a high quality of life, which means they have access to efficient transportation, they can live near where they work, they earn wages that sufficient to afford safe and comfortable homes, live in neighborhoods with amenities and support services, and communities have a voice in how they are developed.