



**KING COUNTY
REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASKFORCE**

**POLICY PRIORITIES
2018**

In May 2018, faith communities across King County are meeting with their local members of the Regional Affordable Housing Taskforce to discuss their experiences of the crises of homelessness and housing affordability, and to share their policy priorities for the Taskforce with their local elected representatives.

Churches and other faith communities are first responders to homelessness. Through hosting rotational shelters, vehicle residency programs, meals and food banks, direct financial assistance and other support projects, faith communities fill a critical gap in our social safety net left by decades of disinvestment in federal and state programs. The work of the faith community is often under-reported, as much of this assistance happens outside of the formal human services system. For more detail, see our 'Faith Communities Survey Report'.

This document details our **5 top policy priorities** for the Taskforce.

We ask that as a member of this body, you actively advocate for these policies in your ongoing deliberations, and continue to engage with the faith community as a crucial sector in our regional approach to this critical issue.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TASKFORCE

(a) prioritize the use of surplus and underutilized public land owned by cities, the county and the state for affordable housing

Publicly owned land belongs to us all and needs to be utilized for the common good.

The most pressing issue we have in this region is the lack of affordable housing - we support the development of policies by the county and the cities in King County that – similar to those developed by Sound Transit – give affordable housing developers top priority in considering the sale or reuse of surplus land.

(b) invest in public, deeply subsidized and permanent supportive housing, not solely ‘Rapid Rehousing’ models

These services form a community foundation that needs to be provided consistently across the region, to prevent a ‘race to the bottom’ that sees cities competing with one another to drive the homeless community away from their city.

Rapid Rehousing – providing three months of market-rate rent to homeless community members – is the dominant model that the county and cities are using to respond to the crisis of homelessness. We believe that this should be one tool among many. For many individuals who experience homelessness, services and support are required on an ongoing basis for them to move out of homelessness.

(c) streamline and support the process of development of available faith-owned land for affordable housing

Many faith communities have the single most valuable ingredient necessary to develop more affordable housing in our rapidly growing community: land. A large number of faith communities in King County are ready to move forward in developing affordable housing on-site, but are prevented from doing so by onerous city processes, local opposition to such developments, or lack of technical capacity.

We ask that the county consider the ways that it can help to streamline the process of developing affordable housing on faith land, including through offering cities incentives, offering technical support to cities and faith communities, and funding for projects that will be developed on faith land.

(d) support progressive revenue sources for affordable housing

The burden of funding affordable housing ought not to be carried disproportionately by low-income communities.

As our region has prospered, income inequality, rent burden, and homelessness have also grown significantly. We support the development of new, local, and progressive revenue sources to fund affordable housing, especially to fund the development of housing for very low income families at 0-30% and 30-60% AMI.

(e) require the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new market-rate housing developments

It is important that these policies be developed in each city in the county in order to establish common market conditions for development around the county.

We cannot respond to this crisis without the private sector. We support the development of policies in every city in King County that mandate the inclusion of deeply affordable units as a proportion of all new housing developments.