

# Perception Survey of Nonprofit Housing Prepared for HDC by Evergreen Research Group

## Overview of Key Findings

July 2004

N = 400 King County voters who read newspaper (+/- 4.9%)

- Initially, over two-thirds of respondents did not think they themselves can do anything about King County's shortage of affordable housing.
- When asked what kind of housing respondents would support in their neighborhoods, respondents expressed a preference for nonprofit housing and low income housing (60% and 52% would support) over more market-rate condominiums and apartments.
- General attitudes about nonprofit and low income housing were positive, with at least 70 percent of respondents in agreement that this kind of development "helps people become self sufficient." A majority of respondents also agreed that nonprofit housing in particular "fits with other buildings in a neighborhood" (55%).
- The sample was split, with half asked about "nonprofit housing" and half asked about "low income housing." Overall, respondents have a better impression of nonprofit housing than they do of low-income housing. Nonprofit housing was perceived to be better maintained, while low income housing was considered less attractive and less likely to fit in with other buildings in the neighborhood.
- Almost half of the respondents (47%) reported that they have heard or seen information about nonprofits that develop housing in King County. Habitat for Humanity was the organization most often cited in this category, while numerous other nonprofits were mentioned by much smaller percentages of respondents. Twenty-two percent of respondents had seen information about the Housing Development Consortium.
- Messages intended to increase support for nonprofit housing tested well. In particular, respondents were moved by reminders that "Seniors and persons with disabilities living on fixed incomes need an affordable place to live" and "When people have a place to live, they are more likely to be healthy, find a job, and be better parents to their children." After hearing these messages, over 50% of respondents said they were extremely persuasive.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents to our poll indicated they had given money to a nonprofit in the past year. Twenty-four percent also said they gave money specifically to a nonprofit housing organization.
- Finally, the last question of the survey asked respondents how communities should address the need to help people who need a place to live. **Almost half of all respondents (48%) thought it was their responsibility through higher taxes to help.** Almost 30 percent said it was their responsibility by donating to charity.
- Regional differences were also collected and analyzed where statistically relevant throughout the survey. Overall, we found a number of parallels between Seattle and Eastside residents and also similarities between North and South King County residents. Both Seattle and East King County respondents thought they could do more about the County's shortage of affordable housing, they were more supportive of non-profit housing in their communities, and were more likely to think it was their responsibility as citizens to help people who need a place to live by paying more in taxes. South and North County respondents were alike in their aversion to higher taxes, their reluctance to support more non-profit housing in their communities, and subsequently their belief that nonprofit housing does not fit in well with other buildings in their neighborhoods and induces crime.