

South King County Housing & Homelessness Goals

The South King Housing & Homelessness Partnership (SKHHP) is a network of municipal land use and human services staff, non-profit housing and homelessness organizations and others working to address affordable housing and homelessness needs in South King County (SKC). The Partnership has identified these priorities* for 2016 through participation in the Joint South King County Planners/Developers meetings:

MAINTAIN & IMPROVE HEALTHY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Everyone deserves the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home. Unfortunately, many families in South King County, in order to find an affordable home, live in poor or substandard housing conditions. Often, this occurs because building owners may not have the incentive or resources necessary to spur improvements. In order to maintain and improve SKC's market-rate affordable housing stock, we need policies and programs that help ensure housing in the private market remains affordable long-term while requiring healthy housing conditions. Cities in South King County can preserve the robust stock of affordable housing already in their communities through:

- ❖ Rental Inspection Programs
 - ❖ Acquisition & Code-Compliance Loans
 - ❖ Supporting State Authority for a Preservation Property Tax Exemption
 - ❖ Relocation Assistance Requirements
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INCREASE FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL)

The development of affordable housing can be a strong economic catalyst in SKC and can result in reduced spending on public safety and emergency services. Yet, limited local funding in South King County restricts the ability of the region to attract investment from other public and private funders. Cities can work together in SKC to increase local and regional funding in order to help meet local needs, stimulate economic development, and leverage dollars from external sources by:

- ❖ Supporting State Authority for an affordable housing REET
 - ❖ Exploring opportunities to attract private and foundation dollars to SKC
 - ❖ Exploring various financing mechanisms and frameworks for pooling regional funds
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ADDRESS BARRIERS TO HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Barriers to housing development can drive up the cost of housing and limit housing providers' ability to address local housing needs. Many factors influence developers' decision to build housing, but cities can make development more attractive to build in SKC through:

- ❖ Public investments in infrastructure in residential neighborhoods
- ❖ Identifying and discounting public surplus property for affordable housing
- ❖ Increasing and diversifying zoning to help accommodate growth

PROVIDE EMERGENCY HOMELESS SERVICES

Everyone should have a warm, safe place to sleep at night. Unfortunately, rapidly rising rents and economic insecurity are accelerating the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in South King County. Over 600 individuals were found sleeping outside in South King County during the latest One Night Count. SKC cities can address these growing needs by supporting and coordinating emergency homelessness services, in the following ways:

- ❖ Hygiene centers
- ❖ Safe parking
- ❖ Severe weather shelters
- ❖ Mapping available emergency services throughout the region

BUILD PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TO ADDRESS HOUSING AND HOMELESS NEEDS

Affordable housing and homelessness needs look different in South King County than in Seattle, East King County or the rest of the state, but they are just as critical to address. In order to identify and implement appropriate local and regional solutions, regional stakeholders need to raise the profile of these needs and make them part of the regional policy agenda. SKC stakeholders can support this process at the local, regional, and state level through:

- ❖ Council & Commission Briefings
- ❖ Community Outreach
- ❖ State Legislative Advocacy
- ❖ Inter-City Support

IMPROVE AWARENESS AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HOUSING AND OTHER KEY ISSUES

Hard-working people should be able to afford housing and still have enough left over for other basics like gas, groceries, and child care. Unfortunately, high housing, transportation, and healthcare costs are stretching families' budgets too far, leaving them vulnerable to homelessness. The national trend toward suburban poverty, increasing rents, population growth, and growing income inequality have made it exponentially harder to address local housing needs. By building connections between housing needs and intersections with other sectors (such as physical and mental health care, education, public safety, and transportation), SKC can break down silos and increase cross-system opportunities for family success. SKC cities can leverage these intersections by supporting:

- ❖ Funding for Mental Health Services
- ❖ Housing Wage Jobs
- ❖ Criminal Justice Reintegration Supports
- ❖ Regional Discussions on Poverty

** This is not a comprehensive list of all strategies South King County may implement to address affordable housing & homelessness needs.*

Updated: January 29, 2016

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