



In the wake of a booming economic recovery, King County residents are struggling more than ever to find safe, healthy, affordable homes near work, school, and other opportunities for success. Particularly in communities of color, the economic recovery has resulted in greater gaps in wealth, income, and access to opportunity for low income and underserved communities. School districts across King County reported **7,260** homeless students in the 2014-15 school year, and more than **4,500** people in King County are sleeping outside on any given night. Nearly **127,000** households are spending more than half their income on housing, placing them at very real risk for homelessness. Many other households are being pushed beyond our borders in their search for affordable housing, forced to endure long, expensive and polluting commutes.

As we begin planning for the 2017 Veterans & Human Services Levy renewal, it is important to recognize the many changes and uncertainties, at all government levels, that affect the Levy's role in addressing housing & homelessness. Because the below resources are uncertain, to varying degrees, we don't yet know what gaps will exist in serving the housing continuum and how the Levy can best leverage and complement other resources.

- ✓ Federal funding for housing across the spectrum has declined dramatically over the past decade. This affects both capital and operating funding, and creates a significant obstacle for securing operating dollars for extremely low-income housing. If anything, uncertainty has only grown regarding federal funding opportunities.
- ✓ Despite strong efforts from our legislative champions, partners, and members, the State Housing Trust Fund has declined significantly and the allocation process has changed substantially since the 2011 Veterans & Human Services renewal. However, new state laws have the potential to dedicate significant new funding for a range of housing and housing-related service. We are excited for the opportunities related to **Sound Transit 3** authorization, a state **Medicaid Waiver**, renewal and permanency of the **Document Recording Fees**, and the potential for a new local-option **Real Estate Excise Tax**. However, the status or implementation of these tools also remains unclear.
- ✓ At the local level, cities across King County are finding new ways to collaborate, creating housing strategy plans, adopting new legislation to improve affordable housing access, and pursuing new and increased funding for affordable homes. However, much of this work is still in the infancy stages.
- ✓ Philanthropic funders have also begun shifting funds away from housing services that are crucial to maintain resident stability and at a time when service costs are increasing due to minimum wage increases, leaving gaps in some current program finances.

HDC BELIEVES WE MUST...

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## Veterans & Human Services Levy HDC Principles

1. **SIGNIFICANTLY EXPAND THE LEVY:** As our community grows, too many of our region's workers and current residents are being left behind. While some in our region are benefiting from robust economic growth, others are struggling to meet their basic needs and maintain an affordable home in the face of rising rents and vast income disparities. In order to ensure everyone in King County has the opportunity to thrive, we believe the size of the Veterans & Human Services Levy should be **significantly expanded** to ensure we can address our growing needs.
2. **INCREASE SUPPORT FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES:** We believe the Veterans & Human Services Levy should significantly **increase the number of permanently affordable homes** available in our region. Given the current affordable housing crisis in our region, we believe **a more substantial portion of the Levy should fund affordable housing.**
3. **ADDRESS THE FULL CONTINUUM OF NEEDS:** We believe the Veterans & Human Services Levy should provide the flexibility to address the **entire housing continuum**, from supporting people experiencing homelessness to promoting homeownership. This includes serving: homeless youth, older adults, low-income workers, people with disabilities, veterans, and large families. **The Levy should also support the full array of services needed to stably house individuals and families, including homelessness outreach & engagement, housing referral, and 24 hour shelter services, and supplement gaps in state funding for mental and behavioral health care and services that help older adults stay in their homes.**
4. **SERVE VULNERABLE FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS:** The Levy is a key tool to address the needs of people across King County who are experiencing homelessness or struggling to remain housed. Over the life of the levy, we believe the **majority of housing funds should support households earning 30% AMI and below.** This priority aligns well with the current Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) which state that serving very-low income households cannot be met solely through the private market and will require collective action and support from the county. Achieving the CPP goals (H-1 & H-2) for this income group would require an additional 82,000 housing units between now and 2031.
5. **FLEXIBLY FUND HOUSING CAPITAL, RENTAL ASSISTANCE & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:** County housing dollars are most productive when they leverage and integrate with other public and private investment tools, including LIHTC equity investments, the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, Mental Illness & Drug Dependency funding, TOD Affordable Housing Bonds, and city sources. In order to ensure the entire spectrum of housing needs is served, we support a flexible levy that is nimble enough to leverage new and existing resources and to fill gaps of capital and operating resources when other resources are not available.
6. **RESPOND TO DIVERSE GEOGRAPHIC NEEDS AND POPULATION DISPARITIES:** Communities' housing and homelessness issues continue to present themselves in disparate ways across our region, but they are more acute now than ever before. King County and local cities have been working hard to address today's affordable housing crisis from a variety of angles. Unfortunately, cities across the region have varying capacity to implement, enforce, and fund local housing efforts, and gaps persist in our current strategies to address these challenges. HDC believes the Levy should remain flexible enough to respond to these gaps as market and funding conditions change.

7. **PREVENT DISPLACEMENT & PROMOTE HEALTHY HOUSING:** While some in King County are benefiting from a surging economic recovery, too many low-income people are being displaced from their communities due to rising rents or are forced to live in unhealthy or unsafe conditions in order to find an affordable home. **We believe the County should consider funding programs that address these needs and help cities address these challenges by supporting cities with data analysis, technical assistance, and support for local ordinance implementation and enforcement, reflecting CPP H-16. The County should also consider funding innovative programs like Code Enforcement Loans and Community Health Promoters to improve the health of residents and housing.** This aligns with CPP H-6 and H-11 which outline the need to preserve existing affordable homes and encourage maintenance of existing homes.
8. **PROMOTE RACIAL EQUITY:** We all must work together to overcome institutional racism and eliminate racial disparities in our neighborhoods and among our communities. We believe levy investments, including Levy-funded homes, should **promote racial equity and align with King County's Equity & Social Justice Initiative.**
9. **SHORTEN THE LEVY:** To better align with future levy considerations, we believe the Levy should be **renewed until 2022.**
10. **ENSURE VOTER SUPPORT:** The Veterans & Human Services Levy is critical for ensuring all people have a safe, healthy, affordable home. We believe the Levy must be designed to **be politically supportable** by King County voters.

Veterans & Human Services Levy Task Force, Invited Parties

Marty Kooistra	HDC	Ken Taylor	Valley Cities
Paul Lambros	Plymouth	Rebecca Laszlo	Valley Cities
Kelli Larsen	Plymouth	Robin Corak	MSC
Daniel Malone	DESC	Manuela Ginnett	MSC
Graydon Andrus	DESC	Mark Gropper	RHA
Margaret King	DESC	Arthur Sullivan	ARCH
Mona Tschurwald	YWCA	Miriam Roskin	Seattle Office of Housing
Matt King	YWCA	Leo Flor	King County
Patricia Hayden	YWCA	Mark Ellerbrook	King County
Janet Pope	Compass		MLK Seattle Black
Ryan Mielcarek	Compass		Veterans Housing &
Flo Beauman	CCS	Robert Stephens	Human Services Group
Rob Van Tassell	CCS	Susan Vaughn	YouthCare
Bill Hallerman	CCS	Melinda Giovengo	YouthCare
Colin Morgan-Cross	Mercy	Terry Pottmeyer	Friends of Youth
Susan Boyd	Bellwether	Kira Zylstra	All Home
Jill Fleming	Capitol Hill Housing	Gail Luxenberg	Habitat for Humanity
M.A. Leonard	Enterprise	Michael Majeed	Skyway Solutions
Tony To	Homesight	Estela Ortega	El Centro de la Raza
Leslie Morishita	InterIm		
Pradeepta Upadhyay	InterIm		
Maiko Winkler-Chin	SCIPda		
Lisa Wolters	SHA		
Brian Lloyd	Beacon		
Beth Boram	Beacon		
Sharon Lee	LIHI		
Aaron Long	LIHI		
Robin Amadon	LIHI		
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Miriam Roskin	Seattle Office of Housing		
Sibyl Glasby	Imagine Housing		
Rachel Mathison	Imagine Housing		
Christy Becker	Hopelink		
Meghan Altimore	Hopelink		
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Dan Watson	KCHA		
Daniel Landes	KCHA		
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