



## BACKGROUND

King County is experiencing a crisis in equitable access to housing that is safe, healthy, and affordable. At first glance, the response seems simple: create more housing faster. But a response is only a true solution if it doesn't sacrifice quality for quantity, ignore sustainability mandates, or increase the already high cost of housing in our region.

King County's unprecedented and growing crisis calls us to bring fresh eyes and robust, current data to the inherent challenges of affordable housing development. Modular and other offsite methods are a case in point. Technological advances in those methodologies offer us the potential to deliver safe, healthy, sustainable homes with **both** greater efficiency **and** greater affordability. And unlike other delivery methods, those single-project improvements can scale, ultimately producing homes at a reduced overall cost.

Motivated by the urgency of the crisis and the possibilities of these methods, the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County (HDC) formed the Offsite Construction Task Force (OCTF). This is a powerful collaboration of both experience and passion, merging the expertise of both market-rate and affordable housing developers who, until now, have tackled these projects independently of each other. OCTF provides these collaborators with both industry and research support and equips them to address permitting and construction, financing and procurement, municipal codes, and public myths.

## OBJECTIVE, TARGETS, AND OUTPUTS

OCTF's Project LIFT targets the completion of five "open-source" affordable housing demonstration projects—totaling 500 homes ("units")—in five years. This five-project pilot will utilize modular and offsite construction strategies and will develop and distribute a scalable open-source housing development model for our region.

Project LIFT is structured as a data-based R&D project with constant report-out of success, failures, opportunities, and needs. The open-source affordable housing development model produced at the end of the pilot will document the design, construction, financing, and municipal participation needed for teams to develop successful modular affordable housing at scale in the Seattle-King County region.

**The pilot's five demonstration projects will be built in series, with some overlap, to ensure constant application of lessons learned and progress toward the ultimate targets for the fifth and final project:**

- 100-unit multi-family apartment designed with a diverse unit size mix.
- \$150K average per-unit cost.
- Net-zero energy sustainability performance.
- One-year total project timeline, including design, permitting, and construction.

## **KEY AREAS OF WORK FOR OCTF**

- Clearly define all impediments limiting interest in, and uptake of, offsite residential construction methods.
- Assemble work groups to address the impediments.
- Build incentives package that addresses feasibility and encourages participation.
- Identify and support demonstration pilot projects.
- Continuously report design & permitting hurdles and successes (via blog & whitepapers).
- Collect data and document learning; use to inform improvements on the next projects.

## **RESEARCH**

While the projects are moving through the permit and construction process, the OCTF team will gather data and promising practices for the current conditions in the modular housing space. For example, whereas the Bay Area set over 1,000 boxes of modular housing in the summer of 2019, Seattle set 70. OCTF's research team will document and illuminate Bay Area practices and policies that are applicable to and scalable in King County.

## **PROJECT SUPPORTERS TO DATE**



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The Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County (HDC) envisions a community where all people live with dignity in safe, healthy, and affordable homes within communities of opportunity. HDC's diverse membership strives not only to house our growing population, but to do so in healthy, efficient, and safe homes. HDC balances this vision with other pressures on our housing system.