HOUSING DEVELOPMENT consortium

2021 Advocacy Agenda

The Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County (HDC) is the nonprofit membership association of 180+ private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public partners dedicated to the vision that all people live with dignity in safe, healthy, affordable homes in communities of opportunity. HDC invites you to join us as we advocate for the following policies in 2021.

FUND AFFORDABLE HOMES

Over the last decade our region's unprecedented economic growth has benefitted many, however, housing production has not kept pace with the growth, resulting in a market that leaves more and more people housing cost-burdened or homeless. The economic recession caused by COVID-19 may slow that growth, making a case for investing through a racial equity and social justice lens for a far more equitable future. It should be possible for everyone to live in a safe, healthy, and affordable home and still have enough money for basic expenses like groceries, transportation, and childcare.

It is essential that we utilize new, progressive revenue sources and equitably align current and future sources, not only to build the affordable homes our region needs, but ensure adequate education, mental health, and other services are available when they are needed. In times of uneven economic growth, robust public funding is critical. In 2021, HDC will work to:

- **Support federal funding advocacy including for LIHTC provisions in the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act**
- **Fund the State Housing Trust Fund at a historically high level in the biennial Capital Budget and establish a permanent funding source for the HTF**
- **Advocate for a state revenue stream for the preservation of naturally occurring and non-profit affordable housing in the Capital Budget**
- **Advocate for progressive revenue that will ease the burden on low-income and working households, adequately fund affordable housing and homelessness programs, and make our economy more resilient in the long-term**
- **Revise HB1590 and allow flexibility for acquisition costs with sales tax expenditures**
- **Increase revenue to support the goal of building or preserving 44,000 units over five years through a King Countywide revenue tool**
- **Increase funding for the East King County Housing Trust Fund**
- **Significantly increase capital and operating dollars to support the production of permanent housing options affordable to lower-income households in the City of Seattle**

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BUILD & MAINTAIN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

To promote equitable growth and prosperity for all, King County and our cities should implement best practices and policies that ensure low-income residents can live or remain in communities of opportunity near jobs, services, and access to transit. This must be accompanied by recognizing that housing segregation achieved by the government policies, such as redlining and other discriminatory practices, resulted in long-lasting racial inequities in housing. In 2021, HDC will advocate for:

- **Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) through the State Growth Management Act Housing Element Change**
- **Adopt legislation to change the range of households permitted by the State for the hotel-motel lodging tax TOD bond, and allow the use of the revenue at 0% to 30% AMI**
- **Advocate for giving authority to counties and cities to establish a housing benefit district (HBD) for affordable low-income and middle-income housing projects (HB 2898)**
- **Support the creation of a countywide Equitable Development Initiative fund to prevent and mitigate displacement within areas most at risk of experiencing physical, cultural, and economic displacement**
- **Advocate for policies that have direct and deep impact on historic, structural, and systemic racism namely single-family zoning reform to allow diverse housing choices**
- **Advance funding and policy solutions that reflect the role of affordable homeownership in ensuring wealth building for individuals and families affected by racial and ethnic segregation, marginalization, and discrimination (in compliance with the Fair Housing laws)**
- **Enact and implement appropriate, effective Inclusionary Housing tools across King County cities, with emphasis on advocating for mandatory inclusionary zoning in East and North King County cities**
- **Advocate for siting of permanent supportive housing as a proven solution for homelessness throughout King County**
- **Support local tools and policies that seek to reverse historic and current patterns of racial and ethnic segregation and prevent displacement particularly within areas most at risk of experiencing physical, cultural, and economic displacement through effective use of HDC's recommended Anti-Displacement Strategies like community ownership or preference, Just Cause eviction, right of first refusal, etc.**

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- **Advocate for King County to proactively utilize new tools and expanded authority to dispose of County-owned surplus or underutilized property at reduced or no cost when used for affordable housing**
- **Support the creation of a regional land and property acquisition strategy to acquire land, high vacancy hotels, motels, retail, and office spaces created by the pandemic as opportunities for adaptive reuse to affordable housing**

IMPROVE HEALTH, STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILTY OF HOUSING

Households faced with high-cost burdens, housing instability, and homelessness may see the impacts of those experiences on both their physical and mental health. In addition, housing quality can have significant impacts on health.

Too many homeowners and renters are currently living in unhealthy or substandard homes, particularly in areas of South King County. Renters in these homes may be unable or afraid to report their inadequate housing conditions. Affordable, safe, quality housing is a social determinant of health and a key element in creating an overall healthy community. In addition, the climate crisis' intersection with housing calls for a proactive approach to ensure a sustainable built environment for heathier and livable places. In 2021, HDC will:

- **Advocate for increase in funding for rental assistance for cities across the county**
- **In coalition with climate, health, and labor advocates promote policies, practices, funding, and incentives that accelerate the widespread development of Affordable Housing that aligns with state, county and local climate strategies by reducing energy and water use, utilizing renewable energy, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and optimizing the health and safety of residents**
- **Support state policies that address the arbitrary barriers that people exiting the criminal justice system face in acquiring rental housing**
- **Enact Just Cause Eviction Ordinances across the county and at state level**
- **Support the strategic acquisition of existing rental properties by non-profit and public entities by incentivizing such transfers through real estate excise tax exemptions and funding robust preservation and acquisition funds**
- **Implement local Rental Registration and Inspection programs, and support other local policies that promote healthy homes**

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HOUSING DEVELOPMENT consortium

2021 State Legislative Agenda

The Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County (HDC) is the nonprofit membership association of 180+ private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public partners dedicated to the vision that all people live with dignity in safe, healthy, affordable homes in communities of opportunity. HDC supports the following state legislative priorities for 2021.

FUND THE STATE HOUSING TRUST FUND & EXPAND FUNDING FOR HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

As the nation and our state face an economic downturn, austerity budget cuts are on the horizon. The Department of Commerce, which oversees our state homelessness programs, submitted a $16 million budget reduction to the Housing and Essential Needs rental assistance program. These losses will affect extremely low-income people with disabilities, people who rely on emergency shelter to remain safe throughout the pandemic, and those who are unstably housed. HDC will advocate to:

- **Fund the State Housing Trust Fund at a historically high level in the biennial Capital Budget and establish a permanent funding source for the HTF**
- **Advocate for a state revenue stream for the preservation of affordable housing in the Capital Budget**
- **Prevent drastic cuts to our state affordable housing, homelessness, and safety net programs**
- **Increase the document recording fee surcharge to increase funding for homelessness, with a portion dedicated to Operation & Maintenance and services for Permanent Supportive Housing and deeply affordable housing targeting Extremely Low-Income Households**
- **Revise the hotel-motel lodging tax income range to allow the use of revenue to include 0-30% AMI**
- **Advocate for giving authority to counties and cities to establish a housing benefit district (HBD) for affordable low-income and middle-income housing projects (HB 2898)**

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EXPAND HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Homeownership is a driver of both personal and community wellbeing. Owning a home offers stability and enables a household to build wealth, yet this opportunity has been increasingly difficult for many as median home sale prices around Washington State have increased more than 60 percent since 2012, and by even greater amounts in areas of concentrated growth like King County. HDC advocates for efforts to increase homeownership opportunities for low-income communities.

- **Support foreclosure prevention by advocating for funding for foreclosure counselors**
- **Advance policy solutions that reflect the role of affordable home ownership in ensuring wealth building for individuals and families affected by racial and ethnic segregation, marginalization, and discrimination in compliance with Fair Housing laws.**

PROGRESSIVELY INCREASE REVENUE TO FUND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Our state has an estimated $7 to $8 billion budget shortfall over the next 3 years. Even if the State used the entire budget stabilization account, projections show a dire need. We need progressive revenue that has a scale of investment that matches the scale of the need. HDC believes that the state is best positioned to address the needs of people with modest incomes when revenues are sourced equitably.

- **Adopt progressive revenue that will ease the burden on low-income and working households, adequately fund affordable housing and homelessness programs, and make our economy more resilient in the long-term. (payroll tax HB 2907, income tax etc.)**
- **Enact a state capital gains tax and dedicate a portion of the revenue stream to affordable housing**

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ENACT TENANT PROTECTIONS THAT INCORPORATE BROAD STAKEHOLDER VOICE

Once the governor ends the moratorium, thousands of residents could be facing eviction. The legislature should continue to work on ways to ensure that low-income people are not unfairly evicted from or denied housing. HDC encourages the legislature to incorporate views from a range of stakeholders (including non-profit/affordable housing landlords, tenants, private landlords, and legal aid organizations).

- **Support passage of a statewide Just Cause Eviction policy that protects tenants from unfair and arbitrary evictions**
- **Support state legislation that addresses the arbitrary barriers that people exiting the criminal justice system face in acquiring rental housing**
- **In coalition with climate, health, and labor advocates promote policies, practices, funding, and incentives that accelerate the widespread development of Affordable Housing that aligns with state, county and local climate strategies by reducing energy and water use, utilizing renewable energy, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and optimizing the health and safety of residents**

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