



**SEATTLE
SOCIAL
HOUSING**

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2028

INTRODUCTION

Seattle Social Housing (SSHD) is a new, innovative public development authority created through the passage of I-135 in 2023. Our mission is to develop, own, lease, and maintain mixed-income housing that is permanently affordable, owned as a public asset forever, and designed for people priced out of market-rate housing. We aim to provide housing to low-income households and those who can't afford market rate housing but earn too much to qualify for affordable housing. These are the people who power our economy: teachers, firefighters, service workers, and many others who are rent burdened and increasingly displaced from Seattle.

In January of 2025, Seattle Social Housing undertook a strategic planning process to chart a course for success. On February 11th, 63% of Seattle voters supported an excess compensation tax that will scale up affordable housing in this city. Its clear residents are ready to make social housing a reality, and so are we.

The Strategic Planning Taskforce identified four key areas of focus:

- 1 Secure Properties and Plan for Growth
- 2 Forge Connections and Build Community
- 3 Build a Strong, Experienced Staff and Board
- 4 Build a Diverse and Sustainable Financial Foundation

What follows is a strategy-driven 3-year plan that prioritizes the Needs, Voices, and Diverse Preferences of Residents.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE MEMBERS

- Roberto Jimenez, CEO
- Kaileah Baldwin, Board Member
- Tom Barnard, Board Member
- Suresh Chanmugam, Community Member
- Mike Eliason, Board Member

-
-
- Karen Estevenin, Board Member
 - Julie Howe, Board Member
 - Judie Messier, Community Member

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

PILLAR 1 7
Secure Properties and Plan for Growth

PILLAR 2 11
Forge Connections and Build Community

PILLAR 3 16

PILLAR 4 23

APPENDIX 26
 Needs Assessment Report 27
 Environmental Scan Of Seattle’s Housing Landscape 31

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 36

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NORTH STAR FOR SEATTLE SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO,
WE PRIORITIZE THE DIVERSE NEEDS, VOICES,
AND PREFERENCES OF RESIDENTS.

Through inclusive engagement and a collaborative approach to design and decision-making, we strive to create spaces that empower residents, foster connection, and promote overall well-being. Our goal is to build environments where residents feel safe, supported, and valued—enabling them to thrive within a nurturing and vibrant community.

PILLARS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1 SECURE PROPERTIES AND PLAN FOR GROWTH

Through a targeted acquisition strategy, achieve site control for one strategically located property by the end of 2025, marking a pivotal step toward building a dynamic, high-quality portfolio. This acquisition will lay the groundwork for an expanded pipeline of at least two additional acquisitions in 2026. With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and equitable access, SSHD aims to scale operations to ultimately acquire and/or build up to 380 housing units annually. By achieving this, SSHD will become a valuable partner in the affordable housing landscape, providing long-term stability and high-quality living environments for individuals and families in need.

2 FORGE CONNECTIONS AND BUILD COMMUNITY

Within our portfolio of buildings, we aim to foster partnerships that promote the stability and well-being of our residents, creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. Externally, we strive to build a robust

network of support that strengthens our initiatives, enabling us to expand our impact. By engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders, we will build widespread understanding and advocacy for the concept of social housing, ensuring the long-term success and growth of our mission.

3 BUILD A STRONG, EXPERIENCED STAFF AND BOARD

As a newly established public entity, SSHD has been navigating the dual challenge of learning and practicing community governance while building our organization from the ground up. With the recent addition of our CEO and plans to expand our dedicated staff, our focus now is on strengthening our board's capacity to govern while growing SSHD's impact by recruiting skilled, values-aligned team members. This pillar ensures we have the leadership, expertise, and infrastructure needed to develop and sustain social housing in Seattle.

4 BUILD A DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

SSHD's goal for financial sustainability is to create a multi-faceted funding strategy that leverages both public and private resources to ensure long-term success. With the passage of Prop 1A, a measure expected to generate about \$50 million per year for social housing, SSHD is positioned to strengthen its financial base and increase its impact. SSHD intends to pursue bonding authority and develop a revolving loan fund. The organization will also blend diverse revenue streams, including public funding from Prop 1A, private investments, and philanthropic support, to create a strong foundation for sustainable growth.

PILLAR 1

SECURE PROPERTIES AND PLAN FOR GROWTH

GOAL

Through a targeted acquisition strategy, achieve site control for one strategically located property by the end of 2025, marking a pivotal step toward building a dynamic, high-quality portfolio. This acquisition will lay the groundwork for an expanded pipeline of at least two additional acquisitions in 2026. With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and equitable access, SSHD aims to scale operations to ultimately acquire and/or build up to 380 housing units annually. By achieving this, SSHD will become a valuable partner in the affordable housing landscape, providing long-term stability and high-quality living environments for individuals and families in need.

OUR VISION FOR PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

The Seattle Social Housing Developer (SSHD) will pioneer a portfolio of socially equitable, sustainable, and livable housing. To the extent possible, we will utilize innovative design and construction models, such as Point Access Blocks and Passive House standards. When feasible, our properties will emphasize environmental sustainability, prioritizing low-carbon building technologies and nature-based solutions, while ensuring accessibility to opportunity-rich neighborhoods and reducing the need for car ownership. By focusing on human-centered design, high-performance buildings, and inclusive community planning, SSHD will create diverse, climate-adaptive homes that foster resident well-being and contribute to a more equitable housing landscape in Seattle.

OUR APPROACH TO PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

PRIORITIZE INNOVATIVE HOUSING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- Leverage Point Access Blocks and other innovative housing models to create small to medium-sized, high-quality buildings with a focus on livability, climate adaptation, and sustainability. Explore Passive House standards and low-carbon construction techniques such as prefabricated mass timber and panelized wood-framed systems to reduce the environmental footprint and enhance building performance. Where Point Access Blocks are not feasible, utilize single-loaded corridors to maintain a high quality of life for residents. Additionally, incorporate universal design principles in all building layouts to ensure accessibility for individuals of all abilities. This approach will allow us to create inclusive, adaptable spaces that meet the needs of diverse residents, including those with mobility challenges, while still prioritizing energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. By integrating features such as wider doorways, step-free entryways, and accessible kitchens and bathrooms, we will provide a higher level of comfort and independence for all residents, enhancing overall livability and long-term community resilience.
- **Outcome:** Establish a portfolio of high-performance, adaptable, and sustainable housing that stands out in Seattle's housing ecosystem. This will result in buildings that are livable, energy-efficient, and climate-resilient, meeting both the social and environmental needs of the community.

FOCUS ON STRATEGIC LOCATION AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

- **Action:** Select sites that prioritize access to urban amenities, green space, and community resources while ensuring proximity to public transit and bike infrastructure to minimize car ownership. Focus on redeveloping properties in Urban Villages, Residential Villages, and the forthcoming Neighborhood Centers identified in the city's Comprehensive Plan update. Integrate public health considerations

by avoiding locations near main arterials, freight routes, highways, and areas with potential toxic soil contamination.

- **Outcome:** Develop projects in areas that promote walkability, reduce environmental and transportation costs for residents, and provide direct access to community amenities. This strategy will also foster social equity and improve public health outcomes by prioritizing clean, green environments for residents.

EMBRACE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

- **Action:** Incorporate nature-based solutions such as de-paving, bioswales, and maximizing existing tree canopy to reduce urban heat island effect and enhance the natural environment. Utilize climate-adaptive building strategies to protect residents from extreme weather events and mitigate the impact of climate change. Prioritize energy-efficient designs, including the use of Passive House construction standards to reduce energy consumption and environmental impact.
- **Outcome:** Create housing that is climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable, supporting long-term health and well-being for residents. These strategies will also contribute to the broader goal of reducing carbon emissions in the city while creating a healthy, thriving environment.

INCORPORATE RESIDENT-CENTERED DESIGN AND FEEDBACK

- **Action:** Incorporate a comprehensive resident engagement process from the early planning stages through ongoing feedback during and after construction. Leverage Governance Councils to ensure resident input on design, amenities, and living conditions, focusing on ensuring the housing meets the specific needs of diverse residents. Create design guidelines that prioritize high-quality, livable spaces with ample daylight, natural ventilation, and multi-bedroom configurations that accommodate a range of family sizes.
- **Outcome:** Ensure that SSHD's housing projects meet the needs of residents, empowering them with a voice in the design and

management of their homes. This will foster a sense of ownership, community engagement, and satisfaction with their living spaces.

EXPLORE INNOVATIVE DELIVERY AND PROCUREMENT MODELS

- **Action:** Use integrative project delivery models, such as General Contractor/Construction Manager (GC/CM), to engage contractors early in the design process, allowing for better project optimization, cost estimating, and constructability reviews.
- **Outcome:** Streamline project delivery processes, ensuring projects are completed on time and within budget, while also meeting high standards of design and quality. This strategy will promote innovation and reduce costs.

PILLAR 2

FORGE CONNECTIONS AND BUILD COMMUNITY

GOAL

Within our portfolio of buildings, we aim to foster partnerships that promote the stability and well-being of our residents, creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. Externally, we strive to build a robust network of support that strengthens our initiatives, enabling us to expand our impact. By engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders, we will build widespread understanding and advocacy for the concept of social housing, ensuring the long-term success and growth of our mission.

OUR VISION FOR FORGING CONNECTIONS AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

At Seattle Social Housing Developer, we envision a future where residents thrive in their homes, supported by stable, nurturing environments.

We also envision a future where resident input is at the heart of our housing communities. We will establish a governance council that shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

- (a) Host regular meetings to gather feedback and perspective of residents.
- (b) Provide the resident perspective to property management.
- (c) Represent the interests of the development in biannual meetings with the board.
- (d) Determine how to spend the building or development's allotted annual budget for common room amenities and social events.
- (e) Participate in the approval of renovation projects.

- (f) Other responsibilities as determined by the Board.

Key to our success will be strategic, collaborative partnerships with public agencies, community organizations and financial institutions. By leveraging collective expertise and resources, we will scale our impact and build vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities. These partnerships will be grounded in shared values of equity, sustainability, and social justice, promoting transparency, trust, and accountability, and setting the stage for scalable, replicable housing solutions nationwide.

OUR STRATEGY FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY WITHIN OUR BUILDINGS

Per Article VIII, Section 4 of the PDA Charter, Create and Support a Residence Governance Council to Represent the Voices of People Who Live and Work in SSHD Properties Upon Acquisition of First Property

- **Action:** Each multifamily social housing development owned by the Public Developer will establish a governance council.
- **Outcome:** Residents have a voice and input in the development and management of their communities, as well as a sense of ownership and belonging, ensuring SSHD remains responsive to their needs and improving community well-being.

Charter a Board-level committee to research and assemble the partnerships that will enhance the stability and well-being of the residents of Seattle Social Housing developments

TBD- Budget reliant

- **Action:** Collaborate with the Real Estate Development team to design social housing developments that incorporate Universal Design features, dedicated common areas, and space for embedded Resident and Community Services, to the extent possible, recognizing that property acquisitions and economic factors may limit our ability to fully integrate Universal Design. This includes researching and integrating services such as Service Coordinators, Child Care, Wellness, Early Childhood Education, Health Care, Home

Care, and Peer Mediation Programs to enhance the well-being and stability of residents.

- **Outcome:** A comprehensive framework of services readily available for the Resident Council of each social housing building to utilize, ensuring support.

OUR STRATEGY FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY BEYOND OUR WALLS

Engage in Community-Based Planning and Decision-Making

Ongoing

- **Action:** Expand SSHD's community engagement efforts by regularly holding town halls, focus groups, and workshops with residents, community groups, allies and stakeholders to ensure delivery on our core mission: to develop, own, and maintain social housing developments, as well as lease units of said development.
- **Outcome:** A community-based approach will ensure that SSHD's housing solutions are not only affordable but support the long-term social and economic outcomes for residents.

Develop Strategic Relationships with Employers

Ongoing

- **Action:** Build partnerships with regional employers, including schools, healthcare organizations, and small independent businesses, to support workforce housing initiatives. Advocate for policies and programs that reduce barriers to affordable housing for employees in essential industries such as education, healthcare, and the service sector.

Recognize that small businesses, which already face high labor and operational costs, bear an unfair burden in attracting and retaining workers due to the region's housing affordability crisis. Collaborate with policymakers to explore employer-supported housing solutions, including tax incentives and zoning adjustments that help alleviate these pressures.

-
-
- **Outcome:** By forging strong partnerships with employers, SSHD will create a mutually beneficial ecosystem where businesses can retain a stable, local workforce while employees have access to affordable housing near their jobs. Addressing the disproportionate burden on small businesses will help sustain vibrant local economies and strengthen the link between housing and economic stability, ensuring a more equitable and resilient community.

Strengthen Partnerships with Unions

Ongoing

- **Action:** Collaborate with local unions, particularly the Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council, to ensure fair labor practices and strong workforce development in housing projects. Develop agreements that prioritize unionized labor for construction, maintenance, and resident services roles.
- **Outcome:** By building strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with unions, SSHD will ensure high-quality labor standards and provide employment opportunities for union members, fostering economic stability for working families.

Engage Public Leaders and Advocate for Policy Changes to Support Affordable and Collaborative Housing

Ongoing

- **Action:** Work with elected officials, including the Seattle City Council, King County Council, the Mayor's office, and relevant legislators, alongside regional policymakers, public leaders, and housing advocacy groups, to advocate for policies that support affordable and collaborative housing models. This includes density policies, inclusionary zoning, tax incentives for affordable housing development, and funding for community land trusts.

Host regular meetings with public leaders to align SSHD's projects with city and regional policies, ensuring they realistically address the growing need for affordable housing. Collaborate with unions and employers to promote workplace housing benefits that support working families.

-
-
- **Outcome:** By strengthening relationships with policymakers and advocating for forward-thinking policies, SSHD will help create a policy environment that fosters affordable and collaborative housing development. This will ensure resources are available for future projects, protect the interests of low-income residents, and position SSHD as a key partner in advancing equitable housing solutions.

PILLAR 3

BUILD A STRONG, EXPERIENCED STAFF AND BOARD

As a newly established public entity, SSHD has been navigating the dual challenge of learning and practicing community governance while building our organization from the ground up. With the recent addition of our CEO and plans to expand our dedicated staff, our focus now is on strengthening our board's capacity to govern while growing SSHD's impact by recruiting skilled, values-aligned team members. This pillar ensures we have the leadership, expertise, and infrastructure needed to develop and sustain social housing in Seattle.

GOAL

Assemble a skilled team to drive the organization's vision and support key roles in housing development, finance, and community engagement.

Assemble a high-performing, skilled team that can move the organization's mission forward and execute the Strategic Plan. This team will support key roles in housing development, finance, and community engagement, with a strong focus on people-centered approaches. Staff will embody the values of our charter, work meaningfully and collaboratively with residents, and uphold professionalism in all interactions. We will prioritize results-driven efforts, with an expectation for staff and board to be prepared, organized, and committed.

STAFF

OUR VISION FOR WORKPLACE CULTURE

At Seattle Social Housing Developer, we are leading a movement to transform the landscape of affordable housing. We envision a staff that is not only skilled and dedicated but also deeply committed to driving innovation in housing solutions. Our work goes beyond traditional

methods—we are constantly seeking new, creative ways to tackle challenges and push the boundaries of what’s possible in social housing.

We are dedicated to cultivating a workplace culture that embodies our core values of solidarity, respect, and inclusivity. Our culture is founded on collaboration, diversity, and mutual empowerment, where every team member’s unique perspective is valued and heard. We prioritize the well-being of staff and foster a supportive, people-first environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and personal growth.

Staff are committed to housing solutions that prioritize people’s needs and affordability over profit, ensuring that our work consistently reflects our core values and mission.

OUR STAFFING STRATEGY

Staffing Needs & Timeline: 2025

To achieve our strategic objectives and sustain our growth, we must build a strong, high-functioning team with the right expertise. Each of the following roles is critical to advancing our mission:

- **Executive Assistant** – To support executive leadership in managing operations efficiently, improving internal coordination, and ensuring seamless execution of high-priority initiatives.
- **Social Media & Marketing Manager** – To elevate our public presence, engage partners, and strengthen messaging that drives awareness and community support.
- **Real Estate Development Director** – To lead the planning, financing, and execution of our real estate initiatives, ensuring alignment with our long-term housing and development goals.
- **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** – To provide financial oversight, secure sustainable funding, and guide fiscal strategy as we scale operations.
- **Community Outreach Program Manager** – To deepen community engagement, foster partnerships, and ensure our programs reflect and respond to local needs.

With these roles in place, we will be well-positioned to advance our initiatives effectively. Our hiring timeline prioritizes filling these positions in alignment with our strategic growth phases.

Future Roles for Years 2026 and 2027

SSHD has identified several key roles to add in years two and three. These roles and their timing may shift depending on the pace of our portfolio growth. As we continue to scale, we will remain flexible in adjusting our staffing needs to align with the evolving demands of our projects and the organization's overall trajectory. This adaptability will ensure that we have the right expertise in place to support our long-term success.

- Property Management Director
- Communications Director
- Fund Development Director
- Resident Services Coordinator
- Director of Facilities Management
- Controller
- Director of Information Technology
- Asset Management
- Director of Leasing and Compliance
- Administrative Assistant for PM & Compliance

DEVELOPING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES - 2025

- SOPs for Onboarding: Create standard operating procedures for new hires.
- Performance Management: Develop KPIs and evaluation systems.
- HR Policies: Finalize policies on vacation, sick leave, and performance reviews.

-
-
- Technology/Tools: Implement project management and document-sharing tools.

BOARD

GOAL

Cultivate a diverse and experienced board that provides strategic direction, ensures responsible stewardship of public funds, and advocates for the organization's mission. The board will transition from performing staff-like duties to fully embracing its governance role in collaboration with the Resident Governance Councils, empowering staff to take the lead in operational work while the board focuses on high-level oversight and policy development.

At the core of this governance model is a commitment to renter rights and resident leadership. Our board is intentionally structured so that half of its members are renters—ensuring that those who live in social housing have direct influence over decisions that shape their homes and communities. In partnership with the Governance Council, the board will:

- Uphold the fundamental principle that residents should have a say in their living conditions.
- Ensure that residents have meaningful decision-making power in areas such as budget priorities, renovation projects, and operational policies.
- Embed resident feedback into the governance structure, reinforcing a model where those impacted by decisions have a central role in shaping them.
- Prioritize fiscal responsibility and long-term sustainability, while ensuring policies reflect the needs and priorities of the communities we serve.

This governance approach strengthens the organization’s accountability to residents, fosters shared leadership, and ensures that social housing remains by the people, for the people.

OUR VISION FOR OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At Seattle Social Housing Developer, we honor the unique makeup of the entire board of directors. The board of directors includes individuals with lived experience of housing insecurity and displacement – a perspective which is essential to our work and enriches the decision-making process. We are committed to ensuring that our board members have the knowledge and skills necessary to serve effectively. To support this, we will create time and space for continual learning, helping all board members—resident and non-resident alike—develop the expertise to contribute meaningfully to the organization’s mission.

While respect and trust are areas of growth, our board is dedicated to fostering a culture rooted in accountability, transparency, and shared responsibility. Effective governance requires open communication and a collective commitment to the integrity of our mission. By valuing diverse perspectives and encouraging ongoing learning, we aim to build stronger relationships and empower each board member to engage thoughtfully in decision-making.

Through mutual respect and a focus on continual growth, our board is equipped to guide the organization toward its goals, uphold its values, and enhance its impact on the community. Together, we are committed to driving positive change with unwavering dedication to our mission, working towards a future where every voice is heard and respected.

OUR STRATEGY FOR BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Develop Meaningful Opportunities for Board Members to Participate in Portfolio Development

Ongoing

- **Action:** Ensure that the board reflects a diversity of lived experiences, expertise, and professional backgrounds, as required by the charter. Develop a framework to guide the Seattle Renters' Commission, City

Council, Mayor, and external organizations in selecting board members based on specific expertise and lived experiences. This could include areas such as housing policy, public finance, urban planning, social justice, and sustainability, alongside the mandated representation from different income brackets and lived experiences.

- **Outcome:** Creates a comprehensive and intentional approach to board member selection, ensuring alignment with the organization's mission while meeting the diversity criteria set out by the charter.

Strengthen Board Composition, Collaboration, and Effectiveness

Q1 - Ongoing

- **Action:** Develop a clear framework for board member selection that ensures diverse lived experiences, expertise, and professional backgrounds in alignment with the charter. This will guide external organizations like the Seattle Renters' Commission and City Council in selecting members with expertise in housing policy, public finance, urban planning, social justice, and sustainability, alongside representation from diverse income levels. Implement a robust onboarding and education program to ensure all board members understand SSHD's mission, governance processes, and principles. Foster an inclusive, collaborative board culture by creating opportunities for members from varied backgrounds (e.g., individuals with housing insecurity, union members, and experts in green development) to share perspectives and engage in open dialogue. Additionally, establish an annual board self-assessment process to evaluate individual and collective performance, incorporating feedback into nomination and reappointment to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with strategic goals.
- **Outcome:** Builds a diverse, collaborative, and informed board that works effectively to guide SSHD's mission and strategy. This approach ensures inclusive decision-making, encourages diverse viewpoints, and strengthens SSHD's capacity to navigate complex housing issues while ensuring the board remains dynamic and aligned with the organization's long-term goals.

Engage with External Appointing Organizations Regularly

Q1 2025 - Ongoing

- **Action:** Regularly engage with the Seattle Renters' Commission, Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council, City Council, Mayor's office, and the Green New Deal Oversight Board to ensure they understand SSHD's evolving needs, and advocate for the appointment of members with complementary skills to the organization's mission. Highlight the importance of strategic diversity, including expertise in housing development, finance, sustainability, and representation from those directly impacted by housing issues.
- **Outcome:** Strengthens partnerships with appointing bodies and aligns the selection process with SSHD's long-term goals and mission, ensuring that board members bring the right mix of experience and expertise to drive organizational success.

Create Pathways for Resident Engagement in Board Selection

2026

- **Action:** Once SSDH begins operating social housing, the resident constituency will take on the responsibility of selecting board members. In preparation for this transition, develop systems and processes that empower residents to participate meaningfully in the selection and governance process. This could include establishing advisory committees, resident-led selection panels, or training programs that build leadership skills among social housing residents.
- **Outcome:** Prepares SSHD for the transition to a resident-appointed board while ensuring that residents are equipped to make informed and strategic decisions for the organization's future.

PILLAR 4

BUILD A DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

GOAL

SSHD's goal for financial sustainability is to create a multi-faceted funding strategy that leverages both public and private resources to ensure long-term success. With the passage of Prop 1A, a measure expected to generate about \$50 million per year for social housing, SSHD is positioned to strengthen its financial base and increase its impact. SSHD intends to pursue bonding authority and develop a revolving loan fund. The organization will also blend diverse revenue streams, including public funding from Prop 1A, private investments, and philanthropic support, to create a strong foundation for sustainable growth.

OUR APPROACH TO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Pursue Municipal Bonding Authority

- **Action:** Develop and present a comprehensive proposal to municipal leaders, showcasing the benefits of municipal bonding authority for financing social housing projects. This proposal will include detailed financial modeling, a track record of SSHD's success in housing development, and alignment with local government priorities such as affordability, economic growth, and sustainability. Additionally, explore the establishment of a revolving loan fund that will allow SSHD to reinvest repayments from previous loans into future housing projects. Engage with local financial institutions, bond rating agencies, and legal experts to ensure the proposal is feasible and well-supported. The revolving loan fund will be designed to support ongoing development and ensure a continuous pipeline of projects that address the affordable housing shortage.

-
-
- **Outcome:** Successfully secure municipal bonding authority and establish a revolving loan fund, providing SSHD with access to lower-cost capital and a sustainable funding source for future social housing developments. The bond issuance will enable SSHD to fast-track large-scale housing projects, while the revolving loan fund will allow SSHD to recycle capital for ongoing development, creating a self-sustaining financial model. This approach will significantly increase the number of affordable units available to low-income residents, contribute to long-term community stability, and position SSHD as a leader in innovative housing finance. The revolving loan fund will also strengthen SSHD's financial resilience, ensuring the organization's ability to continue scaling its impact over time.

Seek Federal, State, County and City Funding Opportunities

- **Action:** Proactively research and apply for funding opportunities that are available to SSHD as a Public Development Authority (PDA). We will focus on identifying funding sources that complement, rather than compete with, other affordable housing providers. These resources will bolster our capacity to develop new projects without displacing or disrupting existing programs.
- **Outcome:** Enhanced financial support through targeted government funding sources, complementing and expanding existing nonprofit affordable housing resources.

Build Legislative Partnerships to Advocate for Social Housing

- **Action:** Develop partnerships with advocacy organizations, lobbyists, and key stakeholders to champion the inclusion of social housing in the broader affordable housing legislative agenda at the state and local levels. Work closely with legislators to introduce policies that recognize and promote the role of social housing in meeting the housing needs of vulnerable populations.
- **Outcome:** New legislation that increases funding opportunities for social housing, helping to ensure its place in the affordable housing ecosystem and enabling SSHD to expand its impact on a larger scale.

Develop Partnerships for Financial Sustainability

- **Action:** Cultivate relationships with private foundations, philanthropic organizations, and impact investors who share our mission and understand the unique value of social housing. Use these relationships to diversify funding sources and ensure financial resilience for SSHD. This partnership approach will enable SSHD to adapt to changing funding landscapes while staying true to our mission.
- **Outcome:** A stable and diverse set of funding partners that supports SSHD's long-term financial health, empowering us to continually address housing needs and expand operations.

Create a 501(c)3 to Secure Additional Funding

- **Action:** Work closely with legal advisors, community partners, and board members to establish a new 501(c)3 organization under SSHD's umbrella. This entity will allow us to tap into additional philanthropic and foundation-based funding streams, and attract funders seeking tax-exempt avenues to support social housing initiatives.
- **Outcome:** A legally sound, tax-exempt entity that strengthens SSHD's ability to attract funding from a wide range of charitable foundations, enhancing financial stability and providing legitimacy for further fundraising efforts.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Seattle's housing market continues to face significant challenges, with rising affordability issues, increasing homelessness, and an insufficient housing supply. The city's rapid growth and high demand for housing, coupled with growing displacement among low- and middle-income residents, have highlighted the urgency of addressing these challenges.

In response, the Seattle Social Housing Developer (SSHD) is positioned to be an innovative solution in the city's affordable housing crisis, aiming to create long-term, stable housing options through the social housing model. This needs assessment explores the current housing environment, outlines key challenges, and identifies opportunities to guide SSHD's strategic planning.

ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEEDS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE

Seattle is experiencing a severe shortage of affordable housing, exacerbated by the increasing population, rising construction costs, and a lack of available land. The city has a projected shortfall of over 20,000 affordable housing units (Seattle Office of Housing, 2024), making it increasingly difficult for low- and middle-income households to find adequate shelter. As of 2023, the median home price in Seattle reached approximately \$800,000, while median rents for apartments in Seattle are well above \$2,200 per month for a one-bedroom (Redfin, 2024). These rising costs have led to a growing number of rent-burdened households, with 40% of Seattle renters spending more than 30% of their income on housing, a key indicator of housing instability.

HOMELESSNESS

Increased housing costs have also been directly tied to Seattle's homelessness crisis. As of 2024, the number of homeless individuals in King County is estimated to be over 12,000 (King County Regional Homelessness Authority, 2024). The rise in displacement, particularly among low- and middle-income households, has led to more individuals and families being at risk of homelessness. The scarcity of affordable housing options for vulnerable populations, combined with insufficient supportive services, has created a feedback loop where the housing crisis continues to fuel the homelessness crisis.

Rent Burden & Middle-Class Impact: While affordable housing challenges are often associated with the lowest income brackets, the middle class in Seattle is also facing increasing strain. The middle-class in Seattle typically earns between 80% and 120% of the area median income (AMI), which translates to about \$80,000 to \$120,000 per year for a single person and up to \$170,000 for a family of four. However, as rents and home prices rise, even these households are being pushed out of the city. Many have already been displaced to suburban areas, like Kent, Renton, and Tukwila, where housing is comparatively cheaper, yet still escalating in cost.

STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

COMMUNITY AND TENANT NEEDS

Low- and middle-income residents are in urgent need of affordable, stable housing options that will not be subject to market volatility or gentrification. Many residents are concerned with displacement and housing security, particularly as rents continue to outpace wage growth. SSHD's approach to social housing will help meet the need for affordable units by ensuring long-term affordability, offering stability to vulnerable populations, and mitigating the risk of future displacement.

POLICY AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

While housing is a priority for Seattle, there is uncertainty around the level of support from city leadership, including the City Council and the Mayor's

Office, particularly with regard to social housing models. Proponents of social housing face resistance from some elected officials and members of the business community. However, increasing public awareness of the housing crisis and homelessness is creating an opening for alternative housing solutions like SSHD's social housing model.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

SOCIAL HOUSING AS A SOLUTION

With the rise of the social housing model in other cities, SSHD can leverage this opportunity to introduce this solution in Seattle. Cities like Atlanta are already expanding social housing programs, which could provide a framework for SSHD to follow. By offering an alternative to traditional market-driven housing, SSHD can address affordability gaps, prevent displacement, and provide housing options that are not susceptible to rent fluctuations.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating with local governments, community organizations, and housing developers is crucial for SSHD's success. The King County Workforce Housing Initiative and the Comprehensive Plan Update (2024), which calls for expanding urban villages and increasing density around transit hubs, provide opportunities for SSHD to partner with these entities and contribute to the city's growth while ensuring equitable access to housing.

POLICY ADVOCACY

Given the city's ongoing housing challenges and its efforts to explore alternative housing models, SSHD has the opportunity to advocate for policies that support social housing and ensure alignment with Seattle's long-term housing strategy. By engaging with city policymakers and offering data-driven solutions, SSHD can help shape a policy environment that encourages the development of affordable, socially responsible housing.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

Rising construction costs, combined with economic fluctuations, pose a significant challenge to SSHD's ability to fund and deliver projects. The current economic climate, with high interest rates and potential budget cuts at the state and federal levels, could hinder SSHD's capacity to attract necessary investment for new housing developments. These constraints will require SSHD to explore diverse funding models, including public-private partnerships and advocacy for state-level housing investments.

ZONING AND POLICY CONSTRAINTS

Seattle's zoning laws, which are a critical part of the Comprehensive Plan, often pose barriers to new development. Density bonuses and other incentives under the current zoning code are often inadequate to cover the costs of affordable housing production. Developers face significant barriers in navigating the PDA requirements, which could delay or limit the construction of new housing that meets the needs of the growing population.

COMMUNITY BUY-IN AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Though affordable housing is a stated priority, there is a need to secure strong political backing for social housing initiatives. With opposition from segments of the business community, lack of support from certain members of the City Council, and challenges in public perception, SSHD will need to engage in robust advocacy efforts to ensure that social housing becomes a recognized and viable solution in Seattle's housing landscape.

CONCLUSION

This needs assessment highlights both the urgent demand for affordable housing in Seattle and the gaps in current housing solutions. The city is experiencing a housing crisis that affects not only low-income individuals but also middle-class families who are being priced out of the market. As Seattle Social Housing Developer (SSHD) prepares to engage with these challenges, the need for social housing and innovative policy solutions is clear.

SSHD will leverage the insights from this assessment to guide its strategic planning, focusing on advocacy, collaboration, and innovative housing models to ensure that affordable housing becomes a reality for more residents. By aligning with city policies, advocating for changes in the zoning code, and creating strong community partnerships, SSHD can position itself as a leader in addressing Seattle's ongoing housing crisis.

APPENDIX 2

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF SEATTLE'S HOUSING LANDSCAPE

Seattle's housing market continues to grapple with affordability challenges, homelessness, and supply constraints. Below is an overview of key trends and data shaping the housing landscape. Given these pressing issues, Seattle Social Housing will leverage these trends to inform its strategic planning by prioritizing innovative, scalable housing solutions that address the gaps left by traditional market-driven approaches. The organization plans to focus on social housing models that directly combat displacement and provide affordable housing options for vulnerable communities, aligning with city efforts to expand density, combat homelessness, and navigate funding shortfalls.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & AVAILABILITY

RISING HOME PRICES & RENT COSTS

The median home price in Seattle has remained high (\$848,982), making homeownership unattainable for many. Home prices in Seattle have increased by 3.1% over the past year, driven by low inventory and strong demand.

AVERAGE RENT COSTS & INCREASES

The median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Seattle is \$2,200 per month, while a two-bedroom costs \$2,600 per month as of late 2023. Rental prices have increased by about 7% year-over-year, continuing an upward trend due to high demand and limited supply.

MIDDLE-CLASS DISPLACEMENT IN SEATTLE

Approximately 40% of renters in Seattle are considered rent-burdened, meaning they spend over 30% of their income on housing costs. This situation has left more than 124,000 low- and middle-income households across King County vulnerable to displacement. In Seattle, the middle class typically includes households earning between 80% and 120% of the area median income (AMI)—roughly \$80,000 to \$120,000 per year for individuals and up to \$170,000 for a family of four. Many of the professions that fall within this range—such as teachers, nurses, and firefighters—are essential to the city's functioning. However, the increasing cost of housing is making it difficult for these critical workers to remain in Seattle, further fueling the displacement of the middle class.

HOUSING SUPPLY SHORTAGE

Despite efforts to increase density, Seattle is not producing enough housing to meet demand. Seattle produced 12,853 new housing units in 2023, which was a 21% increase from 2022 and the highest production level in at least 20 years. However, the city's housing permit applications have fallen by 71% since 2020, raising concerns about a slowdown in future housing development. Seattle's comprehensive housing needs analysis

estimates that the city needs to add approximately 112,000 housing units by 2044 to keep up with population growth. This means Seattle should be producing around 5,600 units per year, but recent years have shown higher demand than projected, likely making this number insufficient.

ZONING CONSTRAINTS

ZONING

Seattle's zoning regulations have significantly contributed to the housing crisis by limiting the types of housing that can be built and where they can be located. The city's Comprehensive Plan and zoning policies primarily favor single-family residential zones, which cover over 70% of Seattle's land area. These zones restrict the development of denser, more affordable housing options, such as multi-family units or townhomes, by limiting density and height in key areas. As a result, housing supply has struggled to keep pace with rising demand, particularly for the middle class and those seeking affordable housing.

DENSITY BONUSES

The Comprehensive Plan includes density bonuses aimed at encouraging affordable housing development, but these bonuses are underutilized due to stringent land use rules that still make it difficult to build large-scale housing projects in key neighborhoods. Additionally, zoning laws impose restrictions on the types of developments that can be constructed near transit hubs or job centers, often leading to long commutes for low- and middle-income workers and creating further economic inequality.

LAND USE

Seattle's land-use code largely excludes the construction of affordable housing in many areas where it could be most beneficial, which is exacerbated by the city's high-cost environment. This has left Seattle increasingly reliant on high-cost luxury developments, while affordable housing has not been adequately prioritized. In response, housing advocates and policymakers are calling for zoning reforms, such as increasing allowable density, upzoning in residential areas, and revisiting

the Comprehensive Plan to make way for more inclusive housing solutions. These changes would enable greater flexibility for affordable housing development, particularly in high-demand areas close to transportation and employment hubs. There are ongoing discussions around zoning changes to allow more middle-density housing, such as sixplexes and courtyard apartments, in historically single-family zones to address the crisis.

MANDATORY HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (MHA) CONTRIBUTIONS

Policies aimed at increasing affordable housing through developer contributions remain a critical tool, but they alone are insufficient to meet the scale of the need. While MHA allows for increased density in exchange for affordable housing, these zoning bonuses are often seen as insufficient to cover the additional costs of including affordable units. Developers may find that the increased height or density allowances don't fully offset the costs of construction or other fees, making the density bonus less appealing than anticipated.

POLICY & LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (2024)

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is currently under review, with a focus on identifying growth strategies to address the city's housing crisis. Proposals include expanding urban villages, increasing density around transit hubs, and introducing anti-displacement measures to ensure affordable housing options remain accessible as the city grows. The plan's success hinges on the implementation of these strategies, which could help alleviate pressure on the housing market. However, some of the proposed density increases and zoning reforms could face resistance from homeowners in established neighborhoods, potentially slowing progress.

PROJECTED BUDGET SHORTFALLS

Despite the city's efforts, budget shortfalls in the coming years may complicate funding for affordable housing. Seattle's Office of Housing estimates a \$500 million annual funding gap for affordable housing

development and maintenance through 2030. In light of declining revenues and uncertainty surrounding federal and state budgets, the city may face even larger gaps. This shortfall could limit the scope of housing initiatives like those outlined in the Comprehensive Plan Update, unless alternative funding sources or tax strategies are pursued.

POTENTIAL CUTS TO FEDERAL & STATE FUNDING

Federal and state budget cuts could significantly impact housing support. For instance, the 2024 federal budget proposals include reductions in funding for Housing Trust Funds and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, which are crucial for financing affordable housing development. In Washington State, the potential cutbacks in affordable housing allocations from the state could leave local governments with insufficient resources to fund critical housing projects. The decreased federal and state funding, paired with local budget constraints, raises concerns about Seattle's ability to meet its housing needs without increased investments or new funding mechanisms.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Housing continues to be a priority for Seattle's local government; however, concerns remain about the level of commitment from the Seattle City Council and Mayor's Office regarding alternative housing models, like social housing. Although there is broad recognition of the housing crisis, funding and political support for non-market-driven housing options remain limited. The city's focus on traditional market-based solutions, such as the housing levy and incentives for private developers, may not be sufficient to address the housing needs of low- and middle-income residents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Seattle Social Housing Developer extends its sincere gratitude to the following community members for reviewing and providing valuable feedback on this strategic plan. Your thoughtful insights and perspectives have meaningfully shaped and strengthened our work.

Monty Anderson – Seattle Business Trades

Max Benson – Crux Community Development

Nicole Grant – IVEW Local

Gabe Grant – Spectrum Development Solutions

Katie Garrow – MLK Labor

Camille Gix – Public Policy Analyst

Esther Handy – Handy Consulting

Billy Heatherington – Laborers Local Union 242

Eliana Horn – Puget Sound Sage

Levin Kim – UAW

Violet Lavatai and T'naya Ramirez – TOA Strong

Faviola Lopez – UFWC

Patience Malaba – HDC

Ann Melone – US Bank

Tiffany McCoy – House Our Neighbors

Lauren McGowan – LISC

Nelson Shuheng Nui – UAW

Tricia Schroeder – SEIU925

Linny & Barnaby Simpkin – Simpkin Search

Katie Wilson – Transit Riders Union