



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY  
AND LIVABILITY AGENDA



April 2016 Update

[www.seattle.gov/HALA](http://www.seattle.gov/HALA)

# What is the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda?



## BACKGROUND

In September 2014, Mayor Murray and the City Council gathered leaders in our community to help develop a bold agenda for increasing the affordability of housing in our city by convening a Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) Advisory Committee.

The 28-member Committee included renters and homeowners, for-profit and non-profit developers, and other local housing experts. After months of deliberation, they reached consensus and published a report with over 60 recommendations to consider.

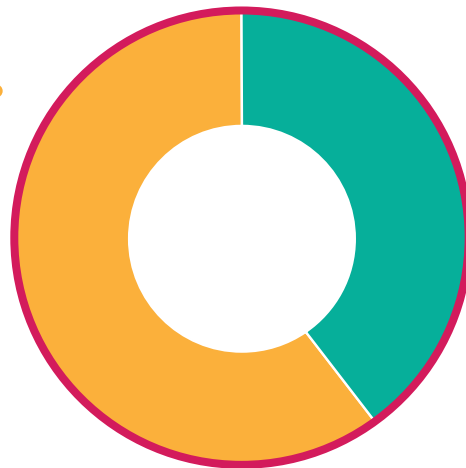
The Mayor's action plan calls for implementation of many of the Committee's recommendations through tenant protections, renewing and increasing the Housing Levy, requiring affordable housing with new multifamily and commercial development, and more.

## THE 10-YEAR GOAL

HALA is guided by an ambitious 10-year goal for producing both market-rate and guaranteed affordable housing. It will take a multi-pronged approach to meet these goals.

**+30,000**  
MARKET-RATE UNITS

These market-rate housing units will add to the overall supply of housing in Seattle, increasing the quantity and diversity of housing choices.



**+20,000**  
AFFORDABLE UNITS

These new or preserved affordable housing units will be reserved for low-income households. Creating this many affordable units will require tripling our historical annual production of affordable housing.

## Why do we need HALA?

### RESPONDING TO A CRITICAL NEED

- + Over 45,000 Seattle lower-income families spend more than half their income on housing.
- + 2,942 people are living without shelter in Seattle.
- + Rents are beyond the reach of many working families. Fewer homes are for sale today than at any time in the last 10 years.
- + Average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Seattle increased 29% in the last five years.
- + Even with a new \$15 minimum wage, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is out of reach for a single household minimum wage worker.



*When a household has to pay more than half its income on housing, little income remains for other basic necessities like food and transportation.*

# Accomplishments to date

## FIRST STEPS

Since the release of the Mayor's Action Plan in July, City staff and the City Council have laid the groundwork for implementing HALA. While these are important steps, much of the work lies ahead.



- + In September 2015, the City Council passed Resolution 31609 setting a work plan and directing City Departments to implement HALA recommendations.
- + In October 2015, the City Council passed Ordinance 118505 renewing and expanding the Multi Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program. MFTE incentivizes builders to set aside 20% of housing units in a new building as rent restricted.
- + In October 2015, the City Council passed Ordinance 124882 strengthening regulations for assistance to displaced tenants.

## What's happening now?

### UPCOMING ACTIONS

Right now, we are discussing the many HALA recommendations with the broader community. There are at least six upcoming action items we're working on now where we need your input:

See the following pages for information about these actions.

- + Strengthen tenant protections
- + Renew and increase the Seattle Housing Levy
- + Create the Fair Chance housing program
- + Pass a Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program for new development
- + Establish a Supportive Housing Medicaid Benefit

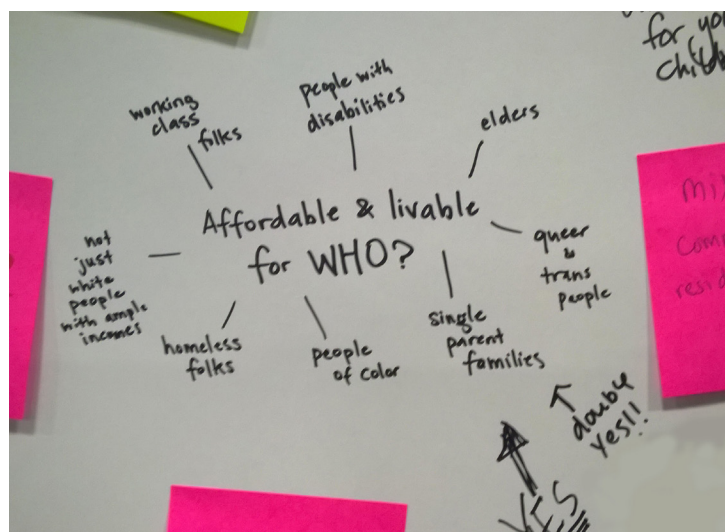
## Community engagement

### WE NEED YOUR HELP

In January 2016, an extensive public engagement process began, calling on the community at large to weigh in on the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda.

To address the housing crisis, stakeholders from all corners of our community are pitching in. We need your input and are looking for creative suggestions on how the HALA recommendations should be implemented. There are many options for how residents can give input on HALA.

Your ideas will shape how HALA recommendations are implemented, especially in neighborhood areas.



Community member comments from a HALA Open House meeting in November 2015.



# Seattle Housing Levy

## RENEW AND INCREASE THE HOUSING LEVY

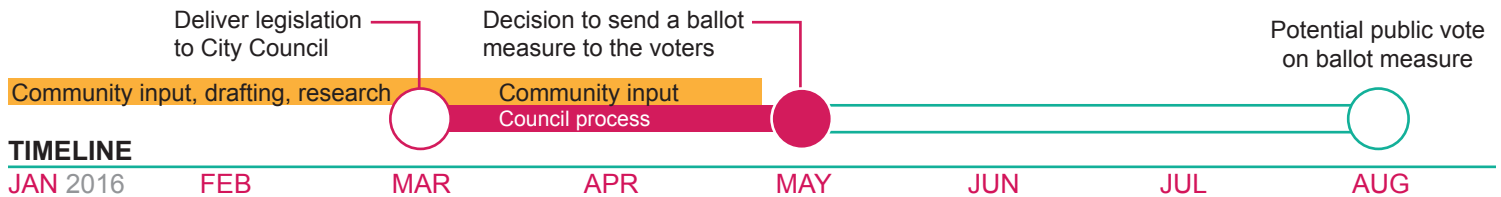
This innovative property tax levy has been approved four times by Seattle voters and is hailed as a national model. The Housing Levy has a 30-year track record of creating affordable housing with services to support at-risk families, seniors, and people with disabilities, providing rental assistance to prevent homelessness, and preserving housing to prevent displacement of long-term residents.

To date, the Housing Levy and other City funds have created and preserved over 12,500 affordable homes, helped 800 low-income families purchase their first home, and provided emergency rental assistance to 6,500 households. The Mayor has proposed to renew the Housing Levy in 2016, and increase it to \$290 million, to address the growing affordability crisis in our city.



*In 2015, the Office of Housing awarded a record \$57 million that will enable over 900 new affordable units for low-income households.*

**Contact:** [Todd.Burley@seattle.gov](mailto:Todd.Burley@seattle.gov)



# Strengthening Tenant Protections

The Mayor and Council are working together to strengthen protections for renter households that live in substandard dwelling units and/or experience other prohibited landlord-led actions.

Elements of the legislation may include:

- + Require minimum housing standards to be met when rent increases occur.
- + Enhance protections for tenants against prohibited landlord-led actions (e.g. retaliation for complaints).
- + Transfer primary City responsibility for enforcing against prohibited acts by landlords and tenants from the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to SDCI.
- + Enable enforcement action against landlords that do not provide 60 days' notice before applying a rent increase of 10% or more.
- + Streamline the penalty structure for violations of the Housing Code.



*Legislation would protect tenants from rent increases without adequate notice.*

**Contact:** [Geoff.Tallent@seattle.gov](mailto:Geoff.Tallent@seattle.gov)



# Fair Chance Housing

## ENSURING FAIR ACCESS TO HOUSING

An estimated one in every three adults in the United States has a criminal record, and nearly half of all children in the U.S. have one parent with a criminal record. Due to a rise in the use of criminal background checks during the tenant screening process, people with arrest and conviction records face major barriers to housing.

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights is bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders to provide input on a legislative strategy to address barriers faced by people with arrest and conviction records while balancing business and safety concerns.

**Contact:** [Loren.Othon@seattle.gov](mailto:Loren.Othon@seattle.gov)



### TIMELINE



# Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA)

## BUILDING AFFORDABILITY AS WE GROW

The proposed MHA program would ensure new commercial and multifamily buildings either include affordable housing units or pay a fee towards affordable housing, in exchange for increases in development capacity. MHA is part of the Grand Bargain struck in July 2015.

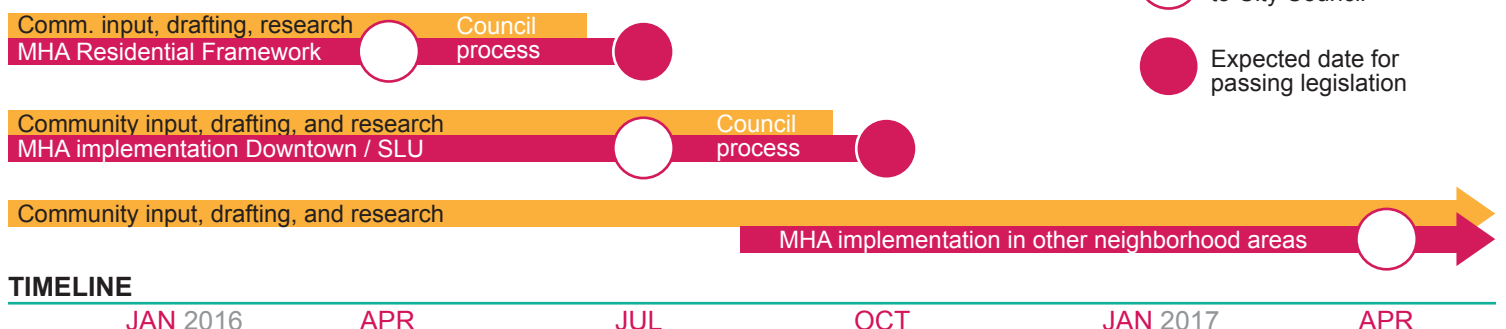
- + The City Council adopted a framework for the MHA-Commercial program in November 2015.
- + We are now working to develop a framework for the MHA-Residential program (see below).



*New development would be required to provide or help pay for affordable housing.*

These frameworks enable MHA — they do not implement the program. Throughout 2016, the City will craft zoning changes to implement MHA across the city. Extensive engagement with communities will occur before any such changes go into effect. The South Lake Union and Downtown neighborhoods are the first expected to have MHA. MHA is not expected for other neighborhood areas until 2017, after the community engagement process.

**Contact:** [Geoffrey.Wentlandt@seattle.gov](mailto:Geoffrey.Wentlandt@seattle.gov)



### TIMELINE

# Establish a Supportive Housing Medicaid Benefit

## PROVIDING SERVICES AND HOUSING FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Washington state is currently negotiating a new and groundbreaking Permanent Supportive Housing Services Medicaid benefit with the federal government. This new benefit is anticipated to be approved as early as Spring 2016 and will cover targeted supportive housing services for people experiencing chronic homelessness and people who are at risk of homelessness who have significant health care needs.

This benefit will help bring permanent supportive housing fully to scale in our state, and will help ensure that people who are homeless with significant disabilities and health care needs are able to access and retain housing and health care services.



Contact: [Robin.Koskey@seattle.gov](mailto:Robin.Koskey@seattle.gov)



## Transportation, Affordability and Livability

The average Seattle household spends 17% of its budget on transportation – the second largest monthly expense after housing – and long commutes to good jobs in Seattle impact our quality of life. For these reasons and many more, transportation plays a key role in the affordability and livability of our city. Prop. 1, approved by voters in November 2015, led to the largest increase in transit service in more than 40 years. Today, more than 70% of Seattle residents live within a short walk of frequent bus service.

Additionally, the Levy to Move Seattle passed by voters in 2015 provides funding to improve safety for all travelers, maintain our streets and bridges, and invest in reliable, affordable travel options for a growing city. And in March of 2016, Sound Transit opened U-Link Light Rail connecting the University District and Capitol Hill to the regional light rail network.

The Levy to

**MOVE SEATTLE**





# HALA Community Engagement Plan

This is an overview of how the community can give input on HALA over the next year. Other ideas for how to provide input are welcome.



## Ways to participate include:

- January 26 **Seattle at Work** Event
- Telephone Town Halls
- New HALA website
- Direct mail
- April 19 **Livability Night Out**
- Neighborhood blogs
- Social media
- E-mail newsletter
- Town hall style meetings
- Online surveys
- E-mail newsletter
- Others TBD...
- Neighborhood Night Out blitz
- Neighborhood blogs
- E-mail newsletter
- Others TBD
- Large summit style meeting
- E-mail newsletter
- Others TBD...

**Citywide Conversations**

At these times we will focus on reaching out to a broad public audience through a variety of tools. Citywide conversations are meant to:

- Get the word out about HALA
- Update the community at large on HALA progress and next steps
- Highlight current issues we are working on
- Listen to feedback from a broad public audience that will shape HALA actions

**Neighborhood Meetings**

Neighborhood meetings are existing meetings of local community organizations and groups. City staff will attend groups' regular meetings throughout the year in between citywide conversations. City staff will respond to requests for neighborhood meetings to the extent possible, and make efforts to reach areas throughout the city. The purpose of HALA participation at neighborhood meetings is to:

- Update local neighborhood areas on HALA progress and next steps
- Listen to feedback from local groups that will shape HALA actions
- Consider neighborhood preferences for how HALA actions fit local conditions

**Community Focus Groups**

Community Focus Groups consist of 4 - 6 representatives from each Urban Village and adjacent neighborhood area. The groups are a sounding board to give focused feedback - particularly on how the MHA program would be applied in neighborhood areas. More about focus groups:

- There are four focus groups, each comprised of about 40 community members
- Each reflects a broad range of perspectives
- Focus groups meet monthly starting in May, and are facilitated by an independent third party
- Groups conduct a detailed review of land use changes to implement the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program
- Meetings and conversations are transparent and open to the public
- Participants are encouraged to relay information to their home neighborhoods