



Director’s Rule 2026-02

Program or Policy Community Preference for Roots to Roofs Bonus Pilot program	Code and Section Reference Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.40.090	Supersedes Not applicable
Subject Community Preference implementation for Roots to Roofs Bonus Pilot Program projects	Publication Date May 1, 2026	Effective Date

Approved:

Andréa Akita, Interim Director Date signed

Purpose

This Director’s Rule (hereafter referred to as “Rule”) satisfies the directive, per Section 3 of Ordinance 127308, for the Office of Housing to publish a Director’s Rule “requiring participation for qualifying development in census tracts identified by the Office of Housing for the community preference policy for participation in the Community Preference Program.”

Background

In September 2025, City Council passed Ordinance 127308 establishing the Roots to Roofs Bonus Pilot Program. The purpose of the program is to demonstrate the social benefits of equitable development, including community-serving uses and housing available to a spectrum of household incomes by setting onsite affordability standards and incentives for development of housing and equitable development uses through partnerships between public, private, and community-based organizations.

Community preference is a housing development policy designed to help address displacement, provide access to opportunity, and promote racial equity in Seattle’s neighborhoods most at risk. It prioritizes housing opportunities for residents at risk of displacement or those seeking to return to neighborhoods they have ties to.

In February 2019, Mayor Durkan issued Executive Order 2019-02: Actions to Increase Affordability and Address Residential Displacement, which included a policy to allow community preference in high risk of

displacement neighborhoods. The 2019-2020 OH Administrative & Financial Plan further outlined the permissive community preference policy for City-funded rental and homeownership housing located in high risk of displacement areas. In 2020, the Office of Housing developed an implementation guideline. As of April 2026, Community Preference remains a permissive policy and is not a program.

Applicability

All Roots to Roofs Bonus Pilot Program projects in eligible Census tracts are required to implement Community Preference if the project provides restricted units for income-eligible households.

Rule

All Roots to Roofs Bonus Pilot Program projects with restricted units for income-eligible households that are in high-risk of displacement areas and eligible to implement Seattle’s Community Preference policy must do so. Project sponsors must comply with all policy implementation practices outlined on the [Office of Housing Community Preference website](#), including affirmative marketing. All project sponsors must connect with the appropriate Office of Housing staff for implementation details.

Geographic Boundaries

Project sponsors with projects located within Census tracts identified as a ‘high risk of displacement area’ must implement a community preference policy to help address displacement. Please see the [OH Community Preference website](#) for the current map and list of high displacement risk Census tracts.

Prepare a Community Preference Plan

Project sponsors should submit a detailed plan to the Seattle Office of Housing using the Community Preference Plan template available on the OH Community Preference website. The Plan should include the geographic boundaries of the preference, the preference types utilized, how to qualify, and additional details.

Implementation of Community Preference must comply with federal, state, and local fair housing laws. Selected preference types should be inclusive and should not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, disability, or other protected characteristics. Project sponsors should also ensure they are consistent with Seattle Open Housing Ordinance (SMC 14.08) and Fair Chance Housing (SMC 14.09).

Develop an Affirmative Marketing Plan

Sponsors are required to submit an Affirmative Marketing Plan for the project. Affirmative marketing promotes diverse and inclusive communities by identifying groups that are least likely to apply and affirmatively marketing to these populations. More information about Affirmative Marketing is available on the [Office of Housing website](#).

Plan Submission and Review

Project sponsors will submit the Community Preference Plan template, Affirmative Marketing Plan, and any additional documents to the Office of Housing for review. Additional documents include analysis to

expand the Census tracts used in implementation, if desired. The Office of Housing will review the submission and contact the project sponsor if the proposal does not satisfy requirements of the Community Preference policy and this Rule.