



SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sound Cities Association (SCA) Commits to Addressing Lack of Middle-Income Affordable Housing

The Sound Cities Association (SCA) has announced its support for creating and preserving middle-income affordable housing, with local leaders committing to taking up policy reforms needed to pave the way for more affordable housing in the region. The announcement marks a vital show of support by local cities to address the “invisible crisis” of a lack of middle-income affordable housing in King County and the Puget Sound region. SCA represents 38 cities and more than a million people in King County.

The [statement](#) provides:

SCA believes that healthy, vibrant communities are ones that offer affordable housing options for families and individuals all along the income spectrum. In recent years, the speed of economic and population growth in our region has outpaced the growth in housing supply, creating a shortage of affordable housing—pricing out too many households and threatening the fabric of our community.

We will continue our work to address homelessness and low-income housing and we will also work to address the growing crisis of the lack of affordability of middle-income housing in the area. Too many nurses, teachers, police and other first responders are moving out of the communities they serve to find homes they can reasonably afford. Homelessness continues to rise, and our local workforce is commuting from farther and farther away – worsening congestion and eroding our sense of community.

To address this problem, we intend to do our part to break down barriers and provide incentives to substantially increase the supply of quality housing for all households in our community.

SCA members agreed to consider policies to advance housing affordability in the region, including increasing density around transit, reducing parking requirements, streamlining permitting, and making public land available for affordable housing.

The announcement is part of a growing public-private effort to address housing affordability in the region. In January, Microsoft committed [\\$500 million](#) to advance regional affordable housing solutions. Later that month, 17 CEOs represented by Challenge Seattle issued a [report](#) on the crisis of middle-income housing affordability and the need for a coordinated public- and private-sector response.

“Our Board and the elected officials in our cities recognize that affordable housing, including housing that is affordable for middle-income individuals and families, is integral to our mission of creating vital, livable communities,” said SCA Executive Director Deanna Dawson. “To that end, the SCA Board adopted this statement with great enthusiasm, and with a desire to lead boldly. Our elected officials are hopeful that their leadership on the public sector side will inspire similar bold leadership from the private sector, as they realize that this is a challenge that can be tackled only through public/private partnership.”

Challenge Seattle CEO Chris Gregoire hailed the announcement as “exciting and unique,” noting that “Challenge Seattle has studied the efforts of regions across the world to address affordable housing. Public policy was identified as the biggest barrier to success, from Sydney to London to Los Angeles. With this bold commitment from our cities in King County, we are confident that we can show the way to successfully address this crisis. This public/private partnership will be key to our success.”

SCA Past President David Baker, Mayor of Kenmore, co-chaired King County’s Regional Affordable Housing Task Force. He noted that 244,000 additional, affordable homes are needed in King County by 2040 so that no household earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) and below is cost burdened. “Our cities are stepping up to the plate to address this need. We owe it to our seniors, our kids, and our working families to lead the way, and to address public policy barriers to the creation of affordable housing.”

SCA President Leanne Guier, who serves as Mayor of Pacific said that “Even communities like mine that are affordable today are rapidly becoming unaffordable.” Guier, who also works as a steamfitter and organizer for the Washington State Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, noted that “It is critical that working families can afford to work in our communities. We need to take bold action as elected leaders to ensure that working families can afford to call King County home.”

Councilmember Ed Prince of Renton, who Chairs SCA’s Public Issues Committee said, “Our region’s beauty and opportunity used to be affordable, which led to the popularity of this area to raise a family. As our housing becomes less attainable it is going to take leaders from all sectors in the region to work together so our children and grandchildren are able to enjoy the beauty of the Puget Sound.”

SCA Vice President Dana Ralph, Mayor of Kent, said “There is a lack of middle-income housing county wide. It will take a combination of policy change and capital investment to make a difference. It is great to see leaders from across the county willing to work on this important issue.”

SCA Board Member Hank Margeson, a councilmember in Redmond stated, “Now is the time for local leaders to step up and ensure that future generations are able to enjoy a high quality of life where they can live, work, play and learn in a variety of safe neighborhoods.”

Jane Broom Davidson, Microsoft Philanthropies Senior Director said, “We depend on nurses, police, firefighters and teachers to make our communities great, but they are among the many people who struggle to afford housing within the cities they work. SCA’s announcement demonstrates recognition of the ongoing affordable housing crisis, and a broad commitment to work on regional solutions.”

For Further Information:

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About the Sound Cities Association:

SCA was founded to help cities in King County act locally and partner regionally to create vital, livable communities through advocacy, education, leadership, mutual support, and networking. Collectively, our 38 member cities represent over one million constituents in King County. Together we are capitalizing on the diversity of our cities to lead policy change to make the Puget Sound region the best in the world.