



City of Seattle
Office of the Mayor
Mayor Katie B. Wilson

Executive Order 2026-04: Rapidly Accelerating the Production of All Kinds of Housing to Support Affordability

An Executive Order to identify immediate and longer-term actions to accelerate production across the housing spectrum, stabilize existing affordable housing, and anchor low-income residents, including Black, Indigenous and people of color communities at risk of displacement.

WHEREAS, Seattle is in an affordability crisis driven in large part by the high cost of housing; with housing as the largest single expense, cost burdened households are left with little to pay for other basic necessities like food, transportation, healthcare, and childcare; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle's 2025 Comprehensive Plan found that nearly one third of Seattle households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing and roughly 34,000 renter households pay more than 50 percent of their income toward housing; and

WHEREAS, strong evidence shows that ample housing supply—including long-term permanently affordable housing—lowers housing costs and reduces rates of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, permanent supportive housing, which combines housing with services that help residents remain housed and improve their quality of life, is a crucial part of the housing ecosystem that has been shown to benefit residents by reducing instances of medical emergency, homelessness, and incarceration; and

WHEREAS, permanent supportive housing is facing substantial capital, operating, maintenance, and services funding gaps; and

WHEREAS, affordable rental housing also plays a role in making homeownership a possibility for a greater diversity of households as people who are stretched to pay their rent will not be able to save for downpayment on purchase of a home; and

WHEREAS, owning a home is the most common way for households to build and pass on wealth and provide community stability; for example, in gentrifying areas, homeowners are about half as likely to be displaced as renters; and

WHEREAS, according to the Countywide Planning Policies, Seattle needs at least 112,000 net new housing units by 2044, with roughly 38% of those units needed for households with incomes at 30% of Area Median Income and below and 56% needed for households with incomes at or below 50% AMI; and

WHEREAS, families and large-sized households, especially renters, struggle to find housing suitable for them in Seattle as 61% of all rental housing units in Seattle are studio or 1-bedroom homes (according to

the King County Countywide Housing Needs Assessment 2025); relatedly, the share of Seattle's population under 18 years of age has declined in recent years to 14% which ranks near the bottom among large US cities; and

WHEREAS, community-driven affordable residential development is an effective method to bolster community connection, build spaces for social connection, prevent displacement, and expand the availability of affordable housing stock; and

WHEREAS, construction of new housing creates construction jobs, funds City programs, and drives Seattle's economy; and

WHEREAS, annual unit counts on building permit applications have declined by roughly 60% from a typical pre-pandemic year and have fallen year-over-year in four of the past five years; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle's 2025 Comprehensive Plan found that City-issued permits and requirements related to major infrastructure — public right-of-way, water, and utilities — can, in conjunction with other cost pressures like inflation and high interest rates, be a significant barrier to housing production, both affordable and market-rate;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Katie B. Wilson, Mayor of Seattle, order the following actions to build a city for everyone; where the people who wire our buildings, crew our ships, work in our restaurants, own our neighborhood businesses, and teach our children can not only afford to live here, but thrive here:

A. Immediate Actions.

Within existing resources, the City will take the following near-term actions:

1. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) shall assist community-led affordable housing permit applicants in navigating cross-department processes, with a focus on supporting community-driven development. Seattle City Light (SCL), the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) shall each designate a primary point of contact for interdepartmental coordination responsible for navigating their respective department's permitting systems and processes to quickly resolve permitting issues for applicants. The Mayor's Office proposes to support this work with proposed funding for an Affordable Housing Ombud in the 2027-28 Budget.
2. The Innovation and Performance Team, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, shall launch a Residential Permitting Interdepartmental Team to make permit timelines shorter and more predictable, across all regulatory departments involved in most housing construction projects: SCL, SDCI, SDOT, SFD, and SPU.

B. Establishing a Housing Production Task Force.

The Mayor's Office, the Office of Planning and Community Development, the Office of Housing, and SDCI shall establish an advisory group called the Housing Production Task Force. The Task Force will include

representatives from labor, affordable housing providers, community-driven organizations, and market rate developers. The Task Force will be charged with developing and advancing policies and actions that accelerate housing production to meet the growing and changing demand for housing in Seattle. To this end, this Task Force will identify shared, collaborative solutions to:

- 1) expedite and incentivize housing production
- 2) encourage and support community-driven development
- 3) support the critical affordable housing infrastructure our city and region need and
- 4) prevent displacement of low-income households, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities.

The Task Force will ground itself in existing housing needs and production data and bring critical housing production partners together to recommend policy and program changes on the topics that will make a difference, including:

- Identifying funding and other strategies to **increase the availability of housing affordable to households below 50% AMI and of affordable, two or more bedroom homes that support families and other large households.**
- Recommending **changes to the MHA program** that incorporate lessons from initial implementation.
- Shaping the future of the **Design Review program.**
- Ensuring a **robust pipeline of housing to serve people exiting homelessness**, including permanent supportive housing.
- Supporting **homeownership and anti-displacement strategies** that encourage community-led development and wealth building for low-income residents, including working class communities of color.
- Supporting **preservation of existing affordable housing stock** across the city.
- Informing the City's **2028 state legislative agenda.**

In partnership with the Mayor's Office and City Council, the Task Force shall work through key issues over a 12-month period and provide a status update with 2027 policy recommendations to the Mayor by no later than February 15, 2027. The final recommendations for 2028 and 2029 are due Sept 15, 2027. These recommendations should inform 1) policy and programmatic actions that can be taken in the next three years and 2) policy frameworks for agenda items to be introduced in 2027.

C. Aligned Department-led and Intergovernmental Work.

The actions above will be taken in concert with existing Department-led work to advance the housing our city needs and support community-driven development, including:

- Phase Three and Four of Comprehensive Plan zoning implementation
- Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) Strategic Planning

- Coordination of other City capital investments (like EDI) with housing development projects
- Cross-departmental Anti-displacement Working Group
- Office of Housing new capital, preservation, and operating investments
- Utilization of publicly owned land for affordable housing
- Streamlining right-of-way and utility permitting across departments
- Improving utility connection timelines
- Office-to-residential conversion program
- SDCI performance targets that provide predictability for construction permit applicants
- Incorporation of recent state law changes to advance middle housing and transit-oriented development and reform permitting
- Implementation of the interlocal agreement between the City of Seattle and the Social Housing Developer.

This work will also leverage work occurring at other levels of government, including:

- King County's Breaking the Cycle workgroup including the county-wide housing revenue table.
- Washington Accelerator for Residential Production

Questions about the implementation of this Executive Order should be directed to Nicole Vallesterio Soper, Director of Affordability, Housing and Economic Development.

Dated this 19th day of August, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie B. Wilson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katie B. Wilson
Mayor of Seattle