

**Date:** January 31, 2014  
**To:** Council Member Sally Clark, Chair, Housing Affordability, Human Services and Economic Resiliency Committee  
**From:** Steve Walker, Director, Office of Housing  
**Subject:** Monthly Report

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## Office of Housing – Programs and Activities

### Department Overview

The mission of the Office of Housing (OH) is to invest in and promote the development and preservation of housing so that all Seattle residents have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. To accomplish this mission, OH has five program areas:

- 1. Rental Housing Production and Preservation;**
- 2. Homeowner Assistance;**
- 3. Energy Efficiency;**
- 4. Policy and Program Development; and**
- 5. Administration and Management.**

The **Rental Housing Production and Preservation** program:

- *Provides funding to housing developers, who are generally nonprofit, to create long-term (50+ years) affordable rental housing.*
- *City funding sources include Housing Levy, federal HOME, and Incentive Zoning fee-in-lieu payments.*
- *Outcomes include housing for people who are homeless, seniors, people with disabilities, and low-wage workers.*
- *Awards \$20-25 million each year to projects containing 375 to 450 units, leveraging \$3 or more dollars for every \$1 in City funding (total of \$100 million capital investment each year).*
- *Leverages significant operating subsidies and services funding, including Section 8 rental subsidies from Seattle Housing Authority, to enable housing to serve extremely low income, homeless and special needs residents.*
- *Promotes public private partnerships through participation in the Federal Housing Credit Program generating approximately \$50 million of private investor equity.*
- *Oversees asset management of a project portfolio that includes nearly 300 developments with more than 12,000 units, representing a nearly \$1.5 billion investment of City and other funding in affordable housing over 30 years.*
- *Provides thousands of jobs including construction, architects/engineers, and property management/maintenance staff.*

The **Homeowner Assistance** program:

- *Makes loans to first-time homebuyers, utilizing Housing Levy and federal HOME funding.*
- *Awards approximately \$3 million to assist approximately 45 homebuyers annually with 30 year deferred low-interest down payment assistance loans.*
- *Makes home repair loans to low income homeowners to address critical health and safety issues and structural deficiencies, awards \$500k annually to assist approximately 30 homeowners.*
- *Works with nonprofit partners to address foreclosure issues through programs including foreclosure prevention loans and blight abatement through the purchase of Real Estate Owned properties which are rehabilitated and sold to low-income homebuyers.*

The **Energy Efficiency** program:

- *Provides energy audits, project management services, and funding for weatherization retrofits to low-income homeowners and tenants.*
- *Utilizes \$5-6 million in annual funding provided by City Light and Washington State Department of Commerce (major sources).*
- *Outcomes include saving energy and reducing household energy costs.*
- *Serves both single family and multifamily properties comprising about 1,000 units each year.*
- *Provides energy audits and project management services to single family and multifamily properties.*

The **Policy and Program Development** program:

- *Identifies housing and land use policy objectives; drafts supporting code changes and designs related to housing programs.*
- *Administers Incentive Zoning programs – focus on affordable housing production through use of Bonus and TDR resources.*
- *Coordinates with DPD and DON on review of other land use proposals.*
- *Administers the Multifamily Property Tax Exemption program –32 projects containing 3,000 total units (of which 653 will be rent-restricted) approved so far in 2013.*
- *Creates/revises housing policies contained in the Housing Levy Administrative and Financial Plan, Seattle Consolidated Plan, and the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Staffs the Housing Levy Oversight Committee and reports on levy performance to the Mayor, Council and the public.*
- *Coordinates disposition of publicly owned surplus land for redevelopment purposes to increase housing opportunities for Seattle residents.*
- *Works with Intergovernmental staff to propose City’s legislative agenda for housing and to advocate for housing funding and policy at the state and federal level.*
- *Assists Mayor’s office and Councilmembers on many affordable housing issues that arise.*

The **Administration and Management** program:

- *Provides financial management and budgeting services for OH programs.*
- *Manages and processes tens of thousands of transactions annually, including loan disbursements, grant reimbursements, and vendor payments.*
- *Designs and administers several program-specific databases.*
- *Provides IT services, in coordination with DoIT.*

- *Provides human resource assistance/liaison with FAS personnel staff.*

### **Other activities, memberships and ongoing engagements:**

- Staff public funders group- body of public sector housing funders working on streamlining, coordination and policy alignment of collective funding processes
- Staff Interagency Council – IAC (Policy body of the Committee the End Homelessness in King County- CEH)
- Low Income Housing Alliance (Board member, Legislative Committee)
- Housing Development Consortium of King County-HDC (Board member, serve on various topical affinity groups)
- State Policy Advisory Team (Policy advisory body to State Housing Trust Fund)
- Downtown Seattle Association
- Urban Land Institute
- National High Cost Cities Forum

### **Specific policy and program issues on our 2014 work plan for the year:**

- Multifamily Property Tax Exemption Program (MFTE)
  - Council review underway
  - Staff review is also underway
- Incentive Zoning Program
  - Incentive Zoning Advisory Committee
  - Consultant work
- Homeownership
  - Staffing Foreclosure Interdepartmental Team (IDT)
  - Evaluation of impacts of Dodd Frank regulations
  - Evaluate lessons learned from foreclosure crisis.
- Ft. Lawton
  - The Plan for Ft. Lawton redevelopment, drawn up in 2008, will need to be reviewed by Mayor and then City Council towards the end of first quarter.
  - Staff is actively meeting
- Homeless Housing
  - Work with HSD and community partners to help long-term shelter stayers move into housing, freeing up shelter capacity for people on the street. (This is linked to both CEH and the Center Cities Initiative)
- Race and Social Justice
  - Work with the County and Office of Civil Rights to reduce barriers for homeless families and youth through fair housing training and technical assistance for housing and services providers.
  - Work on equitable development in SE Seattle, including Community Cornerstones.
  - Work with advocates and housing providers to reduce barriers to housing for people with criminal records.
- Housing Levy
  - Initiate planning of renewal of the Housing Levy in 2016
  - Technical analysis and community outreach