

## AIA Seattle HALA Endorsement

### Issue

Seattle is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. The city's population is projected to increase by 120,000 in the next twenty years with an additional 50,000 units of housing needed the next ten.

Land area for close-in housing is limited by Seattle's physical geography and more than half of the city's developable land is currently zoned for single-family dwellings. This limited supply, coupled with sky-rocketing demand, creates housing scarcity, inflates land and housing prices, and limits the city's ability to accommodate the diversity of families and individuals that want to remain here or move to our city. Housing affordable to people at low or lower middle incomes is particularly limited. Seattle has one of the largest homeless populations in the United States, exceeding New York City in the absolute number of people who sleep on the street each night.

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To equitably meet the needs of our rapidly changing city, Seattle must rethink its housing policies at all levels of affordability, invent new models for housing at all scales, and publicly invest in housing for those most at risk of displacement. Increased housing supply must go hand in hand with a vision of vibrant and livable city and we endorse increased density as a means of achieving both of these goals. The quality of housing options and investment in community amenities, services and transit, are critical if Seattle is to remain a great and welcoming place for all to live.

### Endorsement

AIA Seattle endorses Mayor Murray's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) as a bold, aspirational, comprehensive and timely response to the issue of housing affordability outlined above. At the same time, we recognize that HALA is a list of 65 recommendations, not legislation, and that any such proposal is an imperfect and controversial work in progress. Much remains to be done in order to implement these recommendations in a way that is effective and fair. We recommend the following in this effort:

- Demand good design and planning that supports it to enhance the quality of the city's urban fabric and public realm. Many agree that some recent development is substandard.
- Ensure that the HALA recommendations are applied within each neighborhood in a way that recognizes and enhances individual neighborhood character – a one size fits all strategy will not suffice.
- Ensure that concurrency, or the underlying infrastructure and amenities needed to support the city's quality of life as it grows, keeps pace with development throughout the city. This includes parks and open space, schools, access to transportation alternatives and the like.
- Expand the engagement of citizens (homeowners and renters alike) in neighborhoods throughout the city in an open and democratic dialogue regarding HALA and its potential impacts and opportunities.



- Ensure that a variety of affordable housing types are created such as larger, ground related units for families with children.

### **Involvement**

AIA Seattle embraces a vision of Seattle as an equitable, livable and sustainable city for all of its citizens. We are committed to the goals outlined in HALA, qualified to assist the city and its citizens navigate their complexities and stand ready to offer our professional skills and expertise through engagement, education and facilitation. While the city faces daunting challenges, we believe that Seattle's best times lie ahead of us and we strive to convey this optimism through advocacy and action.

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