

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHALLENGES

Seattle City Council

Housing and Human Services Committee

July 10, 2024

AFFORDABLE, SAFE & HEALTHY HOMES

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AFFORDABLE

- The cost of housing is a crisis – too many people can't afford to rent.
- Affordable housing provides a safety net and a spring board for low-income families.
- Our ability to provide affordable, safe, and healthy homes is under threat.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Since Covid-19, we have seen compounding effects of the fentanyl and opioid crises.
 - More drugs are being used in our buildings – creating health risks for residents and staff.
 - Increases in violent and criminal behavior in our buildings put the whole community at risk.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- In some cases, this behavior causes neighbors to flee, displacing families.
- In other cases, this behavior requires leaving units vacant, to repair significant damage and to avoid moving families into harms way.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Property managers and maintenance increasingly serve as crisis responders.
- When staff call 911, they often receive no response or severely delayed response.
- It takes 6-12 months to remove someone from a building, even in the case of violent behavior.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- The lack of a comprehensive behavioral health system is leaving some of our residents without the care and support they need.
- The lack of a responsive legal system is leaving our residents to bear the consequences of the health and safety crisis.

A COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE AT RISK OF BREAKING

MICHAEL SEIWERATH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SOUTHEAST EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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INVESTING IN STRONG COMMUNITIES

- Home is the foundation from which people thrive
- Urgently need collaborative solutions that braid together our public health, affordable housing and homelessness systems.
- All residents have an appropriate, safe, and stable place to live.

A CHALLENGED SECTOR

- Major increases in operating costs for increased repairs and workforce.
- Insurance costs rising 30% - 200% *each year*.
- Costs have not come down since pandemic.

SYSTEMS FAILING THE VULNERABLE

- Same building, much more challenged population.
- Serving some of the most vulnerable, without the sufficient funding or options.
- Dire need for more options to serve untreated mental illness, substance abuse and family needs.

RENT COLLECTIONS NOT COVERING COSTS

- Non-payment of rent remains unprecedented.
- Under funded and aging properties.
- Jeopardizing public investments and the creation of more affordable housing.
- Non-profits deferring maintenance and selling buildings.

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

- Complex financing for new projects.
- Critical partnership with City and County to close gaps and make projects viable.
- Significant risk for organization in developing new projects; changing market conditions can make lease up and conversion to perm financing challenging.
- Need more financial tools and resources to support new development and maintenance of existing portfolio, including strategic dispositions.

WHAT'S NEEDED

- More coordination among first responders, elected officials, and the courts to address these challenges.
- Behavioral health system coordinating with the affordable housing sector to help residents.
- Compassionate and easily connection of residents to the type of housing that best supports their needs.

WHAT'S NEEDED

- Better tools to open a dialogue with residents who have stopped paying rent.
- Swift eviction proceedings for individual engaging in violent behavior and threatening the well-being of their neighbors.

SAFETY AND HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL

- Supporting the most marginalized- those suffering from severe trauma, mental illness and substance abuse.
- Dignified and compassionate response that meets residents needs.
- City, County and State collaboration to scale up investments in behavioral health, housing and homelessness services.