

Appendix B

Stakeholder and Public Input to the 2005-2009 Consolidated Plan

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Introduction

In 2003-2004, the King County Housing and Community Development Program (“HCD”) contracted with Clegg & Associates to work with the HCD staff to conduct stakeholder and public input processes that would inform the development of King County’s Consolidated Plan for 2005-2009.

The stakeholder and public input processes consisted of *four components*:

- ♦ A series of meetings with King County Housing and Community Development Program (HCD) staff members to frame the process;
- ♦ Five focus groups held with providers, policy makers, and consumers throughout King County;
- ♦ An online survey of stakeholders who were unable to attend the smaller focus groups that concentrated on issues of interest raised in the focus groups;
- ♦ A public input balloting process for members of the general public, primarily low- to moderate-income citizens, conducted at seven sites across King County.

This report highlights the findings from the stakeholder and public input processes. A methodology section provides detailed information about how each of the activities listed above was conducted. The findings section directly follows the methodology section. Results from the public input balloting process are presented first, followed by findings from provider groups and policy makers generated through the small focus groups and the online stakeholder survey.

Methodology

Public input for the 2005–2009 Consolidated Plan included displays in public places offering participants the opportunity to “vote” for community priorities, a series of small focus groups, and an on-line survey.

Displays for Public Input

As a part of the public input process, HCD staff wanted to encourage input from those residents most likely to benefit from the housing and community development programs guided by the Consolidated Plan, i.e. very low- and moderate-income individuals and families. Rather than trying to attract potential

program beneficiaries from all over the County to one public meeting, HCD staff went out into the community where low- and moderate-income individuals and families were already receiving services. This strategy also allowed the staff to gather input from some areas of the County that face significant transportation obstacles to participating in public meetings.

An informational display was designed to attract attention and direct readers to express their opinion on the most pressing housing and community development needs in their community. The display traveled to seven locations throughout the County: Bellevue, Black Diamond, Burien, Kent, Shoreline, Snoqualmie Valley, and Vashon Island. Locations included a food bank, a multi-service center, a public benefits "Community Services Office", a Community Council meeting, community centers and a thrift store. Each of the County's geographic areas (North Urban, East Urban, South Urban, South Small Cities, and East Small Cities) was included.

The display was at a location for one to three days, scheduled to coincide with each location's busiest days of the week, allowing for the public to come to the display at a convenient time, according to their schedule. The display locations were published in local newspapers, on the King County web site, and via flyers distributed to service providers

A King County staff member was available to answer questions and solicit participation at each location during the first three to four hours. The remainder of the time the display was un-staffed, however service providers at most locations pointed out the display to clients and asked them to participate in the balloting.

People viewing the display were asked to fill out a one-page, five question "ballot." The ballot presented "voters" with eleven types of housing and community development projects and asked them to choose the *top five* needs for their community. All of the information on the displays and the ballots were presented in four languages: English, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese. Information on the poverty levels and housing cost burden specific to each area was presented through maps and graphics which were also translated. A child's table with paper and coloring crayons was provided to allow parents uninterrupted time to complete the ballots.

Focus Groups

In February and March of 2004, Clegg & Associates met with staff from each program area of HCD to design customized focus group agendas and questions that would be most likely to generate discussion that would be helpful in developing the Consolidated Plan. Focus groups covering the following five topic areas were designed: Affordable Housing, Community Development - Public

Infrastructure and Economic Development, Community Development - Facilities and Human Services, Homelessness, and Housing Repair.

Program coordinators each identified 10-15 key stakeholders to be invited to participate in the focus groups. A total of 39 stakeholders participated in the five focus groups. Stakeholders included housing providers, service providers, policy makers, and some consumers.

On-Line Survey

Based on the focus group findings, an online survey for providers and other stakeholders was developed by King County staff with the assistance of Clegg & Associates. Questions were developed for each of five sections of the survey to allow respondents to provide input in one or more of the Consolidated Plan program areas. Each section provided the opportunity to rate the need for key services or program activities and to rank these same services/activities as to their priority. Each section also posed specific questions to guide the Consortium's decision-making related to proposed changes to the plan, new strategies to consider, or issues of current relevance in the program area. These questions were prefaced with background information to provide respondents with pertinent data or current practice/policy information to assist them in understanding the choices or issues. Finally, each section included selection of potential outcome measures for the program area and the opportunity for respondents to provide additional comments relevant to the program area. To identify possible regional differences, the survey asked respondents to identify the geographic sub-area of King County they represented.

City staff and policy makers, housing developers and providers, service providers, and other key informants were invited to participate in and access the survey online through e-mail invitations. Approximately 250 individuals received the request to participate. The survey was open and accessible to these individuals for 14 days. One hundred individuals responded to the online survey from across King County, a return rate of 40 percent.

Sixty percent of these respondents indicated that they provide services throughout King County or in more than one sub-region. Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that they provide services *only* in South Urban King County, and 11 percent indicated that they provide services *only* in East Urban King County. The remaining seven percent of respondents provide services in the other sub-regions of the county.

Findings

Public Balloting

A total of 218 responses were received at the seven ballot distribution sites located across King County (Table 1). Eleven percent (11%) of the responses were in languages other than English. HCD staff were interested in examining *geographic differences*, if any, in the responses to the public input ballots. Respondents were, therefore, asked to provide the name of the city in which they live (Table 2).

TABLE 1		
Location	% of Ballots Received	No. of Respondents
Burien	20%	44
Shoreline	20%	32
Kent	15%	26
Black Diamond	13%	16
SnoValley	12%	43
Bellevue	10%	29
Vashon	7%	22
<i>Non-response</i>	3%	6
TOTAL	100%	218

TABLE 2	
City	No. of Respondents
Bellevue	27
Seattle	20
North Bend	19
Kent, Shoreline, Vashon	16 each
Burien	15
Snoqualmie	13
Des Moines	12
Black Diamond	9
Fall City, SeaTac	6 each
Renton	5
Auburn, Maple Valley	4 each
Federal Way, Mercer Island, Sammamish, Tukwila	2 each
Bothell, Carnation, Covington, Enumclaw, Kirkland, Newcastle, Ravensdale, Redmond	1 each
<i>Non-response</i>	14
TOTAL	218

Respondents were asked three questions, the last one being optional.

- ♦ What do you think are the **five most important things** your community needs? (11 need areas were listed to select from.)
- ♦ If King County ran a self-repair workshop in communities and made tools and materials available for people to do their own small home repairs, would you be interested in participating in such a program?
- ♦ If you use the services of payday lenders, would you please share what needs you have that are met by these services. Would you like to have a less costly option available?

The 11 need areas are categorized below, according to HCD program areas:

Affordable Housing

- ♦ Repair existing low-rent apartments
- ♦ Create new low-rent apartments
- ♦ Help low-income people buy homes

Homeless Housing

- ♦ Emergency housing assistance (homeless prevention - help to pay rent or mortgage payment in an emergency, help to pay a security deposit)
- ♦ Shelter and short-term housing for homeless people

Housing Repair

- ♦ Help low-income people repair their homes

Community Development: Facilities and Services

- ♦ Food banks, health clinics, and alcohol and drug abuse services
- ♦ Community centers for families, seniors, and teens

Community Development: Economic Development and Infrastructure

- ♦ Help small businesses create jobs
- ♦ Safer sidewalks, street lighting, and sewers
- ♦ Job training and job counseling

Ballot Results – Most Important Community Needs

Across all sites, the *four most important community needs* identified by respondents were:

- ♦ Food banks, health clinics, and alcohol and drug abuse services
- ♦ Emergency housing assistance (homeless prevention - help to pay rent or mortgage in an emergency, help to pay a security deposit)
- ♦ Help low-income people buy homes
- ♦ Job training and job counseling opportunities

Emergency housing assistance was a top priority in 50 percent of the communities. In the South Urban Sub-Area emergency housing assistance was the number one priority.

Affordable home ownership opportunities were highly valued by respondents at 50 percent of the sites.

Across the sub-areas of the County, access to services and economic development activities were the most commonly cited community development needs.

Public infrastructure was identified as a more significant need in rural areas of the county.

Housing repair services were identified as a significant need in the community of Black Diamond.

Ballot Results by Urban Sub Regions

South Urban Sub Region:

- 1) emergency housing assistance (68.5%)
- 2) help low-income households buy a home (65.7%)
- 3) job training and counseling (62.8%)
- 4) create new low-rent apartments (60%)

East Urban Sub Region:

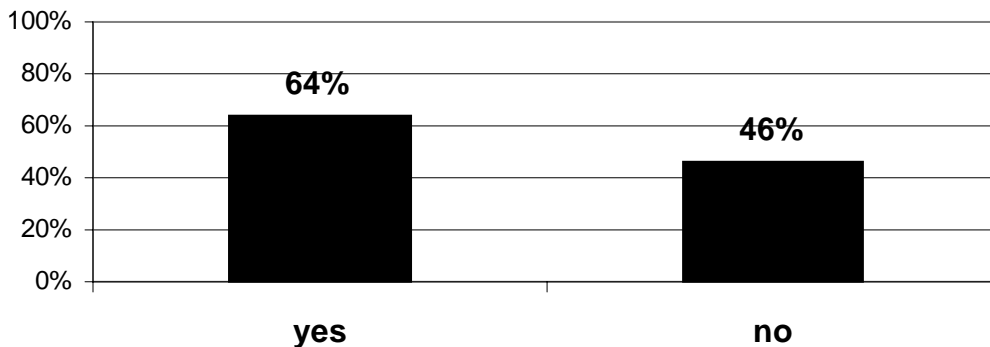
- 1) create new low-rent apartments (58%)
- 2) job training and counseling (55%)
- 3) community centers (55%)
- 4) human services¹ (55%)

Ballot Results – Home Repair Workshops

Public respondents were asked the following question: “If our housing repair program ran self-repair workshops in communities and made tools and materials available for people to do their own small home repairs, would you be interested in participating in such a program?”

Over half of the respondents (64%) indicated that they would be interested in home repair workshops (see Chart below).

Interest in home repair workshops, all public ballot respondents



Interest in self-repair workshops was particularly strong at the Sno Valley, Cascade (Kent) and Burien sites, and was fairly strong at the Shoreline and Hopelink (Bellevue) sites.

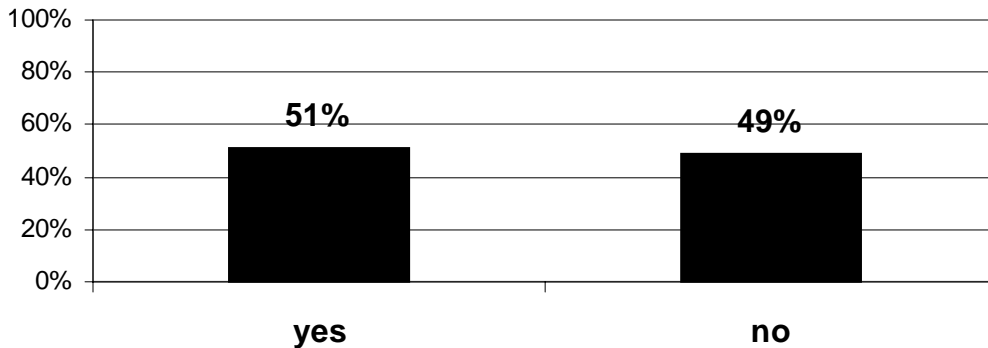
¹ Human services includes food banks, health clinics and alcohol/drug abuse services.

Ballot Results – Pay Day Lenders

There was a high non-response rate to the optional payday lender question (41%). With the exception of the Burien site (11%), the non-response rate at the individual sites for this question ranged from 31 percent to 81 percent. Of those who answered the question, 51% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in less costly options to payday lenders and check cashers.

Those who shared information about how they use such services indicated that they use them primarily for bill paying and check cashing. Bills listed included essential needs, such as rent, power, food, medical bills, housing supplies and items for a baby. Some respondents noted that they need the payday loans to pay the bills on time and some noted that they need the loan to get through since TANF only comes once per month. Others noted emergency needs. Several respondents noted that they thought that pay day loans take advantage of people in need.

Interest in options to payday lenders and check cashers, all public ballot respondents



Focus Groups and Online Provider Survey

Clegg & Associates conducted five focus groups with housing and community development providers, policy makers, and consumers in the spring of 2004. A total of 39 stakeholders participated. Each group focused on a specific topic, based upon the King County Housing and Community Development programs. *Topic areas* for the focus groups were:

- ♦ Affordable Housing Development
- ♦ Housing Repair (repair of existing ownership housing)
- ♦ Homelessness
- ♦ Community Development – Facilities and Human Services
- ♦ Community Development – Public Infrastructure and Economic Development

For those who were unable to attend the small focus groups, an online survey was designed to elicit their feedback and comments.

In completing the online survey, respondents could select the order in which they answered questions in each of the five areas listed above. A majority of respondents chose to answer the questions in the following order: Affordable Housing, Homelessness, Housing Repair, CD - Facilities and Services, and CD-Infrastructure and Economic Development , perhaps indicating their level of interest in or sense of import of each of the program areas. It should be noted that, as respondents worked their way through the survey, the response rate to the various sections was substantially lower than the overall response rate. While approximately half of respondents completed the affordable housing section, slightly less than half of respondents completed the homelessness section. Approximately a quarter of respondents completed the housing repair section and the two community development sections, respectively.

Because the Committee to End Homelessness has become a major effort in the region and the economic development program is a relatively small portion of the Housing and Community Development Program's overall activities, HCD staff asked respondents whether they would support a change in the overall goals from:

- ♦ Decent affordable housing
- ♦ A suitable living environment

- ♦ Expanding economic opportunities

to the following set of goals:

- ♦ Increase the supply and availability of decent, affordable housing
- ♦ End homelessness
- ♦ Establish and maintain a suitable living environment and economic opportunities

When asked whether or not they agreed with the proposed change, 81% of survey respondents indicated that they agreed with the revised goals as proposed.

The findings from the focus groups and online survey are provided below by topic area.

Affordable Housing Development

Focus Group Results

Participants in the Affordable Housing and Finance Focus Group were asked to imagine King County in 2020 and to describe their vision for how the affordable housing environment will have changed. They were asked the following questions:

- ♦ How will Consolidated Plan dollars have made an impact?
- ♦ How will the impact of the Consolidated Plan funds have been measured?
- ♦ What role will the private sector have played?
- ♦ What obstacles will have been encountered in improving housing affordability and how will they have been overcome?
- ♦ How should Consolidated Plan funding be used to produce more affordable housing?
- ♦ What obstacles exist in using Consolidated Plan resources effectively?

The resulting participants' vision for 2020 focused on **three goals**:

- 1) Ensuring that there is an adequate affordable housing continuum available in all sub-regions of the County
- 2) Ensuring that services are either attached to housing or are broadly available throughout the County

3) Helping individuals move through a housing continuum towards permanent housing stability

They emphasized the need to connect services to housing to create an integrated housing continuum. Participants stated that people continue the cycle of homelessness when services are unavailable or difficult to access. The affordable housing at all income levels needs to be distributed equitably throughout the county and jobs need to be located closer to affordable housing. Focus group and survey respondents stressed the need for housing and services for the lowest-income residents

Four primary systemic challenges to providing affordable housing were identified by the participants: Funding cycles, regulatory burdens, lack of operating money and program rules.

Participants recommended that King County have *more frequent* funding cycles, pointing out that a single funding cycle in the fall can be a barrier to affordable housing developers who want to take advantage of an available property in order to develop an affordable housing project in King County, outside the City of Seattle. This barrier can put non-profit housing developers at a competitive disadvantage with private developers.

They also contended that regulatory issues can be obstacles to the development of affordable housing. For example, environmental review requirements can be especially problematic during the pre-development phase. Participants stated that it costs between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to meet environmental regulations during pre-development. This high cost is a disincentive for those interested in investigating new affordable housing opportunities.

Other obstacles include:

- ♦ Program rules that create a “cliff” in the amount of rent payment as people move from one income level to another
- ♦ Issues relating to the State’s scoring system
- ♦ HUD restrictions on directing federal dollars to services and operations costs
- ♦ Lack of funding sources for operations

Participants emphasized the need to leverage a wider range of funding sources to support pre-development, operations, and services. Participants encouraged the Consortium to be flexible about the need for affordable housing developers to have “development reserves” that are adequate to cover pre-development costs. Participants also encouraged the Consortium to have underwriting policies that allow projects to survive in difficult economic cycles and that allow projects to be

high in quality from the start so that capital expenses will be minimized down the road, allowing the project to have reserves adequate to get the project through the entire period of commitment. Participants stressed that more supportive services are needed for the lowest income households in order to help them be successful in housing.

Participants also emphasized the need for communication and collaboration among nonprofit organizations, service providers, suburban cities, and King County to make the most of the limited funds available and to lobby for policy changes at the state and federal levels. A futuristic orientation was recommended, including preserving the existing housing stock as land costs increase, land banking for affordable housing in areas targeted for future transportation and development, and considering potential changes needed in neighborhoods, such as infrastructure development. For example, if a light rail system is created, some areas that are now affordable will no longer be affordable. It would, therefore, be wise to acquire some properties in these areas now for future use as affordable housing.

Online Survey Results

To gauge the priorities of other providers throughout the County, respondents to the online survey were asked to rank the need for various affordable housing activities in their area and then to rank their priorities for action by King County. Survey respondents were also asked three questions related to issues that arose in the focus group discussion:

- ♦ Should King County seek to acquire property for affordable housing that is slated for future transit or higher density development?
- ♦ Should King County switch to two funding rounds per year rather than one, even if the resources available to affordable housing capital costs would need to be reduced to cover administrative costs?
- ♦ Should King County assist a few households each year that are victims of a loan scam or predatory lending scheme in refinancing their homes in order to prevent the loss of their home?

Finally, respondents were asked to prioritize possible outcomes for measuring the performance of affordable housing capital funds managed by the King County Consortium.

Respondents to the online survey overwhelmingly (82%) identified permanent housing for special needs populations and homeless households as a high need in their communities. Like the focus group participants, these providers prioritized the acquisition and rehabilitation of market rate rental units to result in units affordable to households at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI) and the *preservation* of existing affordable housing.

➤ **Top Six Rating of Affordable Housing Activities by Stakeholders Consortium-wide (in rank order preference)**

- #1 Acquisition and rehabilitation of market rate rental housing to result in units affordable to households at or below 30% of AMI
- #2 Permanent housing for special needs populations including the elderly, frail elderly, households with disabilities and homeless households
- #3 Acquisition and rehabilitation of market rate rental housing to result in units affordable to households from 31% to 50% of AMI
- #4 New construction of rental housing for households at or below 30% of AMI
- #5 Preservation of existing affordable housing at risk of conversion to market rate housing
- #6 Mixed-income and/or mixed-use housing projects that complement local redevelopment plans

➤ **Top Six Ratings by Sub Area²**

- The South Urban Sub-Area had the same ratings as above with the following exception: Acquisition and rehabilitation of market rate rental housing to result in units affordable to households from 51% to 80% of AMI was rated in the top 6 and “mixed income and or mixed-use housing” was not.
- The East Urban Sub-Area had the same ratings as above with the following exception: Home ownership housing for households at or below 80% of AMI was rated in the top 6 and “new construction” was not.

In response to the other affordable housing questions:

² An adequate number of responses to determine sub-area ratings was only received from the East and South Urban Sub-Areas.

Nearly 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the King County Consortium should seek to acquire property for affordable housing located in areas targeted for future transit or higher density development.

Slightly more East Urban Cities respondents agreed or strongly agreed (88%) than South Urban Cities respondents (79%).

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents indicated a preference for two funding rounds per year, although the percentage of those supporting this change dropped to 55% if it would mean that administrative costs would detract from the funding available to support affordable housing.³ Finally, 71% of respondents were supportive of a new initiative to assist a few households per year that are victims of predatory lending.

On-line Survey Question	Yes	No
Should King County seek to acquire property that is slated for future transit or higher density development?	88%	12%
Should King County switch from one funding round to two?	69%	31%
Should King County assist victims of loan scams or predatory lending schemes?	71%	29%

Respondents were asked to identify their preferences, with regard to outcomes, for long-term measures of affordable rental housing and affordable home ownership. Given a choice among market, census, and data-based measures or tenant-based measures of affordable rental housing, respondents indicated a preference for the market, census and data-based measures. In selecting those outcome measures that should be considered by King County, the following measures ranked highest:

- ♦ Net decrease in the number of low- or moderate-income households that are burdened by housing costs (paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing) within each sub-area, adjusted for population growth (85%).

³ A majority of East Urban Cities respondents (63 %), however, did not prefer two funding rounds per year.

- ♦ Net change in the number of units that are affordable to the various income levels from 80 percent of AMI and below within each sub-area (82%).
- ♦ Affordability of a funded housing project in comparison to the average housing in the area (81%).

The highest rated tenant-based measure was whether households feel that their housing is more stable and that their overall quality of life has improved (80%).

More than 70% of respondents selected two proposed affordable home ownership measures for consideration by King County. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents preferred a market, census, or data-based measure that would determine the increase in the home ownership rate for the various income levels at 80 percent of AMI or below, across the various sub-areas. Seventy-two percent (72%) indicated a preference for an owner-based measure that would assess whether assisted buyers were able to secure ownership housing in the community of their choice.

When respondents were asked to rate their top preferences for home ownership outcome measures, the preferred method (63%) was to assess whether individual new home owners experience an increase in housing quality and satisfaction from owning a home.

Survey participants also had the opportunity to provide their comments related to affordable housing. Echoing the public input results, one individual cited the need for affordable housing across the housing continuum on Vashon Island. Respondents also suggested that special needs housing be located in close proximity to transportation and stores and that co-ops might be a means of encouraging a greater sense of ownership and greater participation in housing communities. Another individual encouraged King County to consider the degree to which the housing continuum is maintained or strengthened in measuring outcomes, and lastly, one respondent suggested that the County consider Built Green and American Lung Association Healthy Home standards in the construction of new units.

Homelessness

Focus Group Results

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions related to trends in homelessness and what types of impacts they would like to see Consolidated Plan dollars produce. Respondents were asked the following questions:

- ♦ What are the trends relating to the reasons for individuals becoming or remaining homeless?

- ♦ How have the needs of homeless individuals in King County changed?
- ♦ By 2010, what impacts would you like to see Consolidated Plan funds produce?
- ♦ How will we know we have achieved the impacts we hope for?
- ♦ What obstacles exist in achieving these outcomes?
- ♦ What are recent funding trends, in public and private foundation support?
- ♦ How are homeless housing programs faring financially?
- ♦ What policy-level changes should be made in how funds are used?

Participants cited five primary reasons to explain why individuals are becoming or remaining homeless:

- ♦ **Housing market factors**
- ♦ **Labor market factors**
- ♦ **Inadequate housing continuum in every community**
- ♦ **Screening practices**
- ♦ **Inadequate safety net**

Due to the tremendous increase in rental and home prices in recent years, combined with the economic downturn and the shortage of blue-collar jobs, particularly for older workers, housing is increasingly unaffordable to low-income individuals throughout King County. For those who do secure housing, they often have to choose between paying rent and meeting other basic needs. In addition, there is not enough Section 8 housing available, and there is a limited stock of housing that is affordable to people with fixed incomes.

Participants expressed the need for affordable housing distributed throughout King County that enables residents to live and work in the *same* community. There is also a growing need for supported housing units and communities. Similar to comments made by online survey respondents, focus group participants stated that co-op housing models might be a means of increasing the co-location of services, containing costs, and creating a sense of community and ownership.

They stated that there is a need for affordable housing located near services, housing options for specific populations (e.g., single fathers), and more permanent housing that is affordable to very low-income households. According

to participants, housing in South King County tends to be more affordable but most of supportive services are located in Seattle. As a result, individuals and families either go without the services they need to achieve and maintain housing stability or they suffer undue hardship in accessing these services. Participants believe there are very few housing units or emergency shelters available to single men with children and two-parent families. Finally, they stated that homeless individuals and families are “cycling” between emergency shelters and transitional housing without moving into permanent housing and towards housing stability.

Participants noted that screening practices by landlords and providers can have a detrimental impact on homeless individuals and families. While landlords erect barriers to permanent housing through extensive background checks, housing providers sometimes face the pressure to “cream” in order to ensure stronger programmatic outcomes. Finally, budget cuts and programmatic rules (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) have weakened the safety net for many individuals and families.

In regard to programmatic and policy strategies for addressing the needs of homeless individuals and families in King County, participants spoke of the need to place a greater emphasis on homelessness prevention and to create strong links between affordable housing and supportive services. To support these strategies, participants urged greater communication and collaboration among housing and service providers to increase sufficient funding for services and operations. Participants suggested spending more money on prevention services, perhaps by covering moving costs, helping to pay a household’s rent for six months to get stabilized, increasing eviction prevention money, providing down payment assistance, etc. While emergency shelters will continue to be needed, participants agreed that funds should be targeted towards prevention activities.

Online Survey Results

Based on the focus group discussion, the online survey questions delved further into two areas related to homelessness activities.

- ♦ Should a higher priority be placed on homelessness services as opposed to other types of human services?
- ♦ Should a higher proportion of available funds be directed to homelessness prevention as opposed to operating funds and support services funds for existing shelters and transitional housing?

A majority of respondents consortium-wide either agreed or strongly agreed that a higher priority should be placed on homelessness services,

and that a higher proportion of homelessness services funds should be directed to prevention.

Results from the South Urban Area and East Urban Area differed on the first proposal above. While 60% of South Urban Cities' respondents agreed or strongly agreed, only 28% of East Urban Cities' respondents agreed or strongly agreed. However, on the second proposal both the South Urban Area and East Urban Area agreed or strongly agreed that homelessness prevention should be prioritized over other homelessness services.

On-line Survey Question	Yes	No
Should homelessness services be given priority over other human services?	57%	43%
Should funds be prioritized for homelessness prevention as opposed to emergency shelters and transitional housing?	58%	42%

A follow-up question asked the respondents to rank three types of homelessness prevention services in order of priority. Respondents ranked as follows:

#1 - grants and/or loans to income-eligible households for rent or mortgage due to an emergent problem, in order to prevent eviction or foreclosure;

#2 - grants and/or loans to income-eligible households who cannot afford the security deposit to move into permanent housing;

#3 - case management and counseling services for income-eligible households at risk of eviction/foreclosure.

Finally, respondents were asked about long-term homelessness outcomes.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed (78%) that distinctions should be made between different types of emergency shelter in measuring outcomes.

Respondents agreed that shelters that house an individual or household for one to three months should be held to the same expectations for promoting housing stability that apply to transitional housing, i.e. the shelter should be held accountable for trying to move the individual or household into a more stable housing arrangement.

Open – ended Comments

In the open-ended comments, one individual emphasized the need for case management to support housing stability. Other comments included the need to prioritize services (e.g., health care) for homeless households and to conduct greater outreach, particularly in South Urban King County. Two individuals emphasized the need to forge stronger partnerships between the homeless and domestic violence communities. They pointed out that the options presented in the survey for homelessness prevention did not address the needs of domestic violence victims - emergency and transitional housing will continue to be needed within this population.

Housing Repair

Focus Group Results

Housing Repair Focus Group participants were asked a series of questions relating to trends in general home and mobile home repair needs.

- ♦ What are current needs for home repair services?
- ♦ What needs are increasing or emerging?
- ♦ What obstacles exist to meeting needs?
- ♦ How might the needs be addressed?
- ♦ What performance measures might be developed to indicate progress towards meeting these needs?
- ♦ Provide your perspective on replacement and abatement as an option.

In regards to general home and mobile home repair needs, water penetration, electrical and plumbing issues, mold, and energy conservation/weatherization issues are at the top of the list.

Participants noted that condominiums, particularly older condominiums, have become one of the more affordable housing options in recent years, and many condominium complexes have had problems with water penetration. Aggravating the problem is the fact that condo owners are only eligible for home repair assistance inside their own units under the federal rules, and cannot receive federal assistance for “common area” rehabilitation and/or improvements. Several low-income condo owners have received large bills for their share of “common area” rehabilitation work that they cannot afford to pay.

Water penetration issues also plague mobile homes, as a result of roof failure. In older mobile homes, electrical and plumbing problems, failed plumbing in particular, are common issues.

Participants noted that increased public awareness of mold and energy conservation and weatherization issues has resulted in a surge of interest in these areas. With greater public awareness of these issues, there may be an increased demand for services that cannot be met with the limited funds available.

As the population ages, service providers are seeing a greater need for assistance to modify homes for accessibility. With a growing immigrant population, there is also a need for better ventilation in home design due to different cooking styles. There is similarly a need for improved public education

efforts, particularly targeted to immigrant communities, who are often unaware of available services or who face difficulties in accessing programs and navigating the system.

Participants in the focus group questioned whether the Consortium and other entities serving the housing needs of the public should consider how we market home ownership programs. They stated that there is often not enough education regarding what it costs to maintain a home over the long run. Some people may be buying homes that they cannot afford to maintain. Participants stated that this can be a particular problem with renters who have little experience in doing home repair themselves and who do not have sufficient awareness of home repair and maintenance needs.

Participants spoke of the need to preserve existing mobile home parks.

Although some cities will allow new mobile home parks, there are fewer regulations associated with the preservation of older parks. Since newer parks have more requirements relating to density and set-backs, they are not a particularly good option for affordable housing. Preserving older parks that have been grandfathered in under older regulations is much more cost effective. Participants agreed that the Consortium should pursue a program to replace mobile homes, and that criteria are needed regarding when a mobile home is too old to warrant repair and should be replaced.

Participants suggested a number of strategies to address the needs and issues they identified. They recommended offering community-based training programs to train younger residents how to do home repair themselves. They also suggested a tool/supplies loan or rental program as a way to encourage self-repair. Participants discussed a possible shift in program focus from individual home repair projects to a community-based approach. They suggested that the advantages of such an approach might include getting more residents involved in doing repairs themselves, fostering a broader sense of community, and raising awareness of the availability of assistance through “word-of-mouth” in a community.

In regard to condominium repair, participants suggested that the definition of eligible condominium repairs be expanded to include those things that residents have little control over (e.g., water penetration from faulty construction), whether or not they are “common area” repairs. A policy distinction between essential common area repairs and beautification improvements would make more condominium owners eligible for home repair assistance and would make the ownership of older condo units more of an affordable housing option.

Online Survey Results

Prioritizing home repair activities

Following up on some of the issues raised in the focus group, the online survey asked respondents to *prioritize housing repair program activities* and to *provide feedback on proposed program changes* to the housing repair program.

When asked to rank the need for various home repair program activities, respondents prioritized:

#1 - zero interest, deferred mortgage loans for major home repairs;

#2 - small grants to address emergency health, safety, and life threatening repair needs in owner-occupied homes;

#3 - a program to help disabled renters make necessary accessibility modification(s) to their rental housing;

#4 - grants for mobile home owners who do not own the land on which the home is located (not eligible for a major home repair loan).

A few people in the focus group and in the open-ended comments of the online survey suggested that some home owners would likely be unwilling to accept a major home repair loan because of a general inclination to avoid debt accumulation on the home.

Housing Repair Program Funding Limits

Respondents were then asked a series of questions about funding provisions for a number of housing repair services:

1. Should the current \$20,000 per project/household limit for zero interest, deferred loans be maintained, increased, or de-funded?
 - ♦ Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents stated that the current housing repair loan limit should be increased. A majority of those respondents felt that the new range should be from \$20,000 to \$40,000 per household/project.
 - ♦ Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents said that the current level of \$20,000 should be maintained.

2. Should the current \$3,000 per project/household limit for emergency health and safety repair grants be maintained, increased, or de-funded?
 - ♦ Seventy-six percent (76%) stated that the current limit should be increased.
 - ♦ Forty-three percent (43%) of those respondents thought the limit should be increased to between \$3,000 and \$5,000.
 - ♦ Nearly a third (30%) of those respondents and 57% of South Urban Cities' respondents, however, suggested that the limit be increased even further, to between \$5,000 and \$10,000.
3. Should a limit be placed on home accessibility modification grants, even though such limits have not been previously imposed?
 - ♦ An overwhelming majority (86%) stated that a limit should be placed on home accessibility modification grants.
 - ♦ Fifty-eight percent (58%) of those suggesting a limit on the home accessibility modification grants specified that the limit should be in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Mobile Home Repair Program

Respondents were provided with a short background reading before the questions. This background information gave an overview of the mobile home repair program, which serves mobile home owners who rent the space under the home. Owners of both the land and the home are eligible for the major home repair program. The background information explained the rationale for the current limit of \$5,000 per owner for mobile home repairs. It also explained that King County has entered into long-term (50 year) agreements with non-profit organizations to preserve four (4) mobile home parks in King County as parks that will provide a decent, affordable housing option for the long term. These parks were referred to as "Agreement Parks", and all other parks were referred to as "Non-agreement Parks".

Respondents were asked to make choices about the best course of action for the mobile home repair program.

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents thought that mobile homes in Agreement Parks should be treated differently than mobile homes in Non-agreement Parks.
- Of those respondents, 72% of them thought that mobile home repair assistance should remain at \$5,000 grants in "Non-agreement Parks", and should become loans in "Agreement Parks" of at least \$5,000 or more.

About half of these respondents thought the \$5,000 limit should be increased for homes in “Agreement Parks”

In a follow-up question of those who thought the repair limits should be increased in “Agreement Parks”, the majority (57%) thought the limit should be increased to a range from \$7,000 to \$10,000 per owner.

In the next question in this section, respondents were asked whether the Consortium should seek to replace functionally and/or economically obsolete mobile homes in Agreement Parks, and use HOME and/or American Dream Downpayment Initiative funds (ADDI) funds to help first-time homebuyers purchase new mobile/manufactured homes in Agreement Parks.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (91%) agreed that the Consortium should pursue a replacement program for obsolete mobile homes. This sentiment held up for the respondents from the South and East Urban Sub-Areas.

Repondents were next asked whether the Consortium should explore a comprehensive strategy to ensure the long-term affordability of the “Agreement Parks” beyond the current 50 year periods, including strategies to have parks owned by park residents.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) agreed that the Consortium should pursue strategies for ensuring the long-term viability of “Agreement Parks”, including ownership by the park residents. This sentiment did not hold up for the East Urban Sub-Area where only 33% of the respondents agreed with this proposition.

Condominium “Common Area” Repairs

Finally, respondents were asked questions related to working for a regulatory waiver or amendment to allow condominium “common area” repair assistance, as suggested in the focus group. A slight majority (52%) of respondents favored the provision of funds to low-income condo owners to pay assessments for common area repairs, if regulations that currently prohibit this practice were waived or amended. In the South Urban Sub-Area a larger majority (67%) favored this type of assistance.

Of the slight majority who favored this expansion of assistance, 82 % agreed that the Consortium should adopt a strategy to work towards a regulatory waiver and/or amendment in order to be able to assist low- to moderate-income condo owners with “common area” repairs, regardless of the overall percentage of low- to moderate owners that reside in their condo complex.

On-line Survey Question	Yes	No
Should King County seek to replace obsolete mobile homes in Agreement Parks?	81%	19%
Should HOME and/or ADDI funds be used to help first-time homebuyers purchase new mobile/manufactured homes in Agreement Parks?	92%	8%
Should King County explore strategies to ensure the long-term affordability of Agreement Parks beyond the agreement periods?	84%	16%
Should funds be provided to low-income condominium owners to pay assessments for common area repairs, if regulations that currently prohibit this practice were amended or waived?	52%	48%

Community Development – Public Services and Community Facilities

Focus Group Results

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions about non-housing community facilities and human services needs, trends, and obstacles.

Questions included:

- ♦ How are needs changing and what new needs have emerged?
- ♦ What obstacles exist in meeting those needs?
- ♦ What should funding priorities be?
- ♦ What criteria should guide decision making?
- ♦ How should the long-term impact of providing facilities and human services be measured?
- ♦ What should be the Consortium's strategy for the use of capital dollars?

Many of the service-related issues identified by focus group participants echoed those mentioned by participants in other focus groups – an increasingly diverse population, an increasingly complex special needs population, an inadequate safety net, more newly poor people as a result of economic and employment trends, and a lack of county-wide access to affordable housing. As in other groups, participants cited the increasing need for operating funds and the need to link affordable housing to services and facilities across King County. Some of the participants in this focus group emphasized the need to shift scarce CDBG resources away from seniors and other special needs populations, citing the rationale that other systems provide substantial resources for seniors and special needs populations. These participants stated that the needs of young children are going unmet and that the majority of the population does not fall into a special needs category.

The discussion of the Consortium's use of capital funds for community facilities focused primarily on instituting regional approaches. There was a sentiment in the group that some method to pool funding would be a useful strategy. Participants noted, however, that although many services can be delivered in a way that meets the needs of multiple jurisdictions, it is more difficult for jurisdictions to see that a particular capital project can meet the needs of multiple communities. Some jurisdictions, therefore, may be less willing to pay for regional facilities.

Online Survey Results

Human Services

Online survey respondents were asked to rank public services needs and community facility needs, as well as needs specific to the respondents' agencies anticipated needs over the next five years.

- Top Six (6) Rating of Human Services Needs by Stakeholders Consortium-wide (in rank order)

- #1 Homelessness prevention
- #2 Emergency food/food banks, including non-food needs such as diapers
- #3 Health
- #4 Persons with disabilities
- #5 Seniors
- #6 Households in shelters and transitional housing

- In the South Urban Sub-Area, the rating for services was similar (in rank order):

- #1 Homeless Prevention
- #2 Emergency Food/Food Bank
- #3 Seniors
- #4 Youth
- #5 Households in shelters and transitional housing
- #6 Persons with disabilities

- In the East Urban Sub-Area, the rating for services was also similar (in rank order):

- #1 Homeless Prevention
- #2 Child Care
- #3 Seniors
- #4 Emergency Food/Food Bank
- #5 Persons with disabilities
- #6 Employment Training/Counseling

Open-ended responses identified health insurance, mental health services, case management, and culturally-appropriate services as other important public service needs.

Community Facilities

Among community facility needs, respondents ranked neighborhood centers (multi-purpose centers, including food banks and other community services) as the greatest need (66%).

- Top Four (4) Rating of Community Facility Needs by Stakeholders Consortium-wide (in rank order):
 - #1 Neighborhood Multi-purpose Facilities (including food banks and other community services)
 - #2 Health Facilities
 - #3 Youth Facilities
 - #4 Facilities that serve Persons with Disabilities

- In the South Sub-Area, the rating for community facilities was similar (in rank order):
 - #1 Neighborhood Multi-purpose Facilities
 - #2 Youth Facilities
 - #3 Senior Facilities
 - #4 Facilities that serve Persons with Disabilities

- In the East Sub-Area, the rating for community facilities was somewhat different (in rank order):
 - #1 Child Care Facilities
 - #2 Facilities that serve Persons with Disabilities
 - #3 Neighborhood Multi-purpose Facilities
 - #4 Health Facilities

Community Facility Needs Over the Next Five Years

When asked what needs respondents' agencies anticipate over the next five years, nearly all (93% of 15 agencies) identified a need for additional operating funds.

Other responses from 15 agencies garnered 40 percent or more related to anticipated needs to acquire new space, add, reconfigure, renovate, or upgrade facility spaces.

Based on the discussion regarding distribution of resources to meet community facility development needs that emerged from the focus group discussion, online survey respondents were asked whether they would support a strategy to coordinate funding for regional or sub-regional community facilities. Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this idea.

Finally, respondents were asked for feedback relating to outcomes for measuring the effectiveness of community facility projects. When asked to rate those outcome measures that should be considered by King County, 86% of respondents selected what is essentially a client satisfaction measure – a person/organization-based measure of the perception of the quality of the facility and its services and activities by members of the community that use the facility. Seventy-six percent (76%) of respondents specified a person/organization-based measure that would determine whether there was an increase in the services or quality of services available to the community as a result of the community facility.

Community Development – Public Infrastructure and Economic Development

Focus Group Results

In addition to questions relating to current needs and trends in public infrastructure and economic development, focus group participants were also asked:

- ♦ What obstacles exist to meeting identified needs?
- ♦ What are the most important objectives that need to be achieved and how will we know if we have achieved these objectives?
- ♦ What should be given priority in making funding decisions and how should competing priorities be addressed?
- ♦ With regard to infrastructure, how can the Consolidated Plan help support local Comprehensive Plans and/or CIPs?
- ♦ With regard to economic development, are there areas that should be targeted for a neighborhood revitalization strategy? How can/should local planning include eligible populations and areas?

Participants identified sewers and sewer assessments as the greatest public infrastructure need.

Participants noted that there are large pockets of King County that lack sewers or that have older sewer systems that need to be replaced. The cost of updating or

repairing older sewer and septic systems is an impediment to infrastructure development. Some low-income homeowners lose their homes because of the costs associated with sewer and septic upgrades. The lack of sewer capacity also prevents some business owners from getting the permits they need to expand their buildings/businesses.

Participants mentioned a number of other infrastructure needs, including aging water systems, storm drainage systems, and streets. Sidewalks and lighting are necessary components of the infrastructure system that are inadequate in many areas. Façade improvement is required to support and sustain development in older business districts, and an effective transportation system that connects homes to jobs is essential to sustainable economic development. Participants identified quality education – not just what is taught in the classroom but also the condition of school buildings – as a foundation of economic development. School maintenance and upgrade projects are overdue in many areas of the county.

Two priority objectives were identified by participants: Improving sewer systems in King County, including instituting a tiered assessment system related to sewer system installation that will limit the impact on low-income residents, and improving the business climate. In meeting these objectives, participants noted many of the same obstacles identified by participants in other focus groups: regulatory burdens; inadequate communication, collaboration, and coordination; and insufficient resources.

When asked about potential neighborhood revitalization strategies, participants agreed that it makes sense to start with the areas with the highest poverty index. They noted that many areas have groups that are already active in local government or planning, whether through community councils, business groups, or special service districts, and that these groups would be good contacts for such neighborhood strategies and would be more likely to result in progress than strategies aimed at broad-based community input.

Online Survey Results

Online survey respondents were asked to rank public infrastructure and economic development activities in the same way as in the other program areas.

Public Infrastructure

As in the focus group, survey respondents identified the replacement or improvement of septic and sewer systems as the highest need (46%).

This result was consistent when respondents were asked to rank the top two priorities for infrastructure activities. The development or improvement of streets and sidewalks ranked as the second highest priority.

- Rating of Public Infrastructure Needs by Stakeholders Consortium-wide (in rank order):
 - #1 Replacement and/or improvement of failing septic & sewer systems, including paying assessments for low- to moderate-income households.
 - #2 Development and/or improvement of street and sidewalks including accessibility improvements and safety improvements.
 - #3 (tie) Replacement and/or improvement of water systems and/or water treatment systems.
 - #3 (tie) Acquisition of park land and development of park property for recreational activities such as ball fields, playgrounds, shelters, tables, benches and skateboard ramp facilities.
- South Urban Sub-Area Rating of Public Infrastructure was the Same as Above
- East Sub-Area Rating (in rank order):
 - #1 Development and/or improvement of street and sidewalks including accessibility improvements and safety improvements.
 - #2 Acquisition of park land and development of park property for recreational activities.
 - #3 Replacement and/or improvement of failing septic & sewer systems, including paying assessments for low- to moderate-income households.

Economic Development

In ranking economic development activities, a significant majority of respondents (83%) ranked job counseling and training opportunities as a high community need. This result was consistent when respondents were asked to rank the top three priorities for economic development strategies.

- Top Three (3) Rating of Economic Development Needs by Stakeholders Consortium-wide:
 - #1 Assistance to increase job counseling and job training opportunities.

- #2 Direct economic development assistance to for-profit businesses, including small businesses, to create jobs.
 - #3 Rehabilitation and/or improvements of publicly- or privately-owned commercial property.
- South Urban Sub-Area rating is the same as above.
- East Urban Sub-Area rating:
- #1 Assistance to increase job counseling and job training opportunities.
 - #2 Rehabilitation and/or improvements of publicly- or privately-owned commercial property.
 - #3 Direct economic development assistance to for-profit businesses, including small businesses, to create jobs.

Following up on the recommendation of focus group participants, survey respondents were asked whether the Consortium should pursue neighborhood revitalization strategies in high poverty neighborhoods. A strong majority (70%) agreed or strongly agreed with this proposition. With regard to the proposal of involving existing community organizations in revitalization planning, however, one individual noted that many low-income people do not currently participate in community council structures. S/he suggested instead involving community, ethnic, and grassroots organizations in building the resources and small businesses of the community.