



## 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# COVID-19 HOUSING RECOVERY

Strong residential construction builds strong economies. The residential construction industry contributed \$1.9 billion in taxable retail sales in Q2 2020, despite the COVID-19 shutdown and the current slow pace of construction. [Employment in residential building construction](#) increased to 33,500 in October 2020, slightly higher than October 2019. Construction matters. Washington can't afford to slow down construction recovery.

Extending, modernizing, and simplifying the home building process helps all types of residential construction lead the way for Washington's economic recovery—creating family-wage jobs and affordable homes across our state. Simple **no-cost solutions** can and will make a difference in our housing stock and spur on economic healing.

### Extend

Extend permit and plat approvals | COVID-19 shutdown and safety requirements slowed progress on homes resulting in looming permit expiration dates. Homebuilders need one-year extensions on these expiring permits to allow projects to keep moving. Now is not the time to require reapplications for the same project. Extending approvals that have already been vetted will save time and money for everyone.

### Modernize

Modernize state and local processes (inspections and public hearings for land use decisions) | Embrace technology for inspections and required public hearings for land use decisions through permanent adoption of virtual processes. COVID has taught us it is possible to conduct inspections and land use public hearings efficiently, timely, and cost-effectively for both homebuilders and jurisdictions through virtual means.

### Simplify

Simplify impact fee deferral procedures | Washington needs programs created to encourage construction that are accessible and practicably useable for builders. Hard-to-find and complicated processes defeat the purpose of impact fee deferrals. Impact fees will be paid. Washington needs a consistent deferral process—easy for builders and easy for jurisdictions.

Simplify permit applications for properly and swiftly built homes |

- *Three reviews for permit applications* | Permit applications are either reasonably close to complete or they require a complete do-over. Endless permit reviews and remits rack up time and cost. Allow only three permit reviews with clear upfront direction for the changes needed.
- *Reestablish a real 120-day timeline for permit approvals* | Builders and permit counters need clear standards about existing required timelines. Clarifying how these timelines work is critical for predictability for consistent building momentum and finished homes. A permit should not take 32 weeks.
- *Accept professional stamps as proof of compliance* | Professional architects and engineers are liable for design flaws. Why does Washington require their legal certification to be questioned? Accepting these stamps as compliant decreases local government staff demands and provides real predictability for all.