



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 25, 2023

CONTACT:

Sherrana Kildun
Chief Philanthropy Officer
(253)222-6250
skildun@tpc-habitat.org

Jim Stretz
Executive Director
(253)377-7414
jstretz@pchawa.org

Washington Legislature Provides Affordable Housing Opportunities in a Year of Housing

TACOMA, WA (April 25, 2023) – The 2023 Legislative Session has been a year of unprecedented investment in housing, with the Washington State Legislature championing the preservation and growth of affordable housing in varying markets. Notably, the Washington State Capital Budget included a direct allocation of \$14 million to Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity to fund a time-bound, limited opportunity to potentially preserve and create over 350 affordable housing opportunities with the Pierce County Housing Authority (PCHA).

Five years ago, PCHA set out a plan to sell its single-family Low-Income Public Housing (LIPH) portfolio consisting of 124 single-family homes and leverage proceeds to expand its affordable rental housing. The multi-staged repositioning plan is unique in that PCHA is not only preserving the units' affordability, but is also extending homeownership opportunities to its tenants. Through the repositioning, all properties will first be offered to existing tenants for purchase and then any qualified voucher program participant will have the chance to purchase from the LIPH portfolio. Following PCHA tenants, the next preferred sales priority will go to affordable housing organizations like Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity.

As one of the region's leading affordable housing developers with over 35 years' experience, Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity is well-positioned to preserve the homes in PCHA's LIPH portfolio. The organization was named a preferred bidder through an open application process. Habitat plans to purchase, rehabilitate and sell up to 80 of the repositioned homes to income-qualified buyers between 60-80% of the Area Median Income (maximum of \$81,200 for a family of four). By selling these homes under their restricted resale model, Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity will ensure the ongoing and permanent affordability of the homes.

Speaker of the House Laurie Jinkins (27th LD) said of the project, "We need more housing of all kinds in Pierce County and across our state, especially for families with middle- and low-income struggling to find affordable housing options. I'm thrilled that Legislature is making this significant investment in the work of Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity, an effective and trusted housing non-profit. I'm excited that Habitat will use these investments from our state capital budget to provide more homes for people in our community and keep them permanently affordable."

PCHA will leverage revenue from the LIPH home sales and the new rental vouchers to generate up to \$200,000,000 more affordable housing and eventually place an additional 150 households on rental subsidies, all while removing the fewest possible units from the County's affordable housing stock.

Mark Martinez, Chairperson of the PCHA Board of Commissioners, said of Habitat's inclusion on the Negotiated Sale Bidders List, "The Board and PCHA staff have been working diligently for many years to serve more households more efficiently and equitably. The HUD approval of our plan validates our efforts, and the State's contribution to an organization such as Habitat, which has a model that will keep these homes affordable, decent, and in service to our community, moves us all closer to serving the extraordinary need faced by low-income households in our county."

In preparation for the repositioning of PCHA's portfolio, Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity has been working with local and state governments to secure funding for this acquisition. The \$14 million allocation from the State's capital budget is key in leveraging other funding for this project. The organization extends special thanks to Speaker of the House Laurie Jinkins (27th LD), Senator Chris Gildon (25th LD), Representative Mari Leavitt (28th LD), and Senator Mark Mullet (5th LD), and Representative Steve Tharinger (24th LD) Senator Mark Schoesler (9th LD), and Representative Mike Steele (12) for their collective leadership on affordable housing strategy across the housing spectrum.

"To have our elected leaders endorse Tacoma Habitat's big dream with an investment of this size is overwhelming in the best ways. With the support of the Washington State Legislature, not only will 80 Pierce County residents achieve the stability of homeownership, but those homes' affordability will be protected and continue to offer accessible, entry-level ownership opportunities for generations to come. We are thrilled to have the 'Community's trust as we begin this project of a lifetime," said Maureen Fife, CEO of Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity.

Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity's total investment to preserve up to 80 units will be about \$43 million over three years. A community-wide philanthropic campaign to help reach that goal will be forthcoming.

The homes in question are primarily located in Spanaway and Parkland, with additional small clusters in Bonney Lake, Elk Plain, Graham, and the Peninsula. The repositioning project is projected to start in the spring of 2023 and continue through June 2025.

###

About Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity

As a nonprofit leader in the region, Tacoma Habitat is an experienced land developer, builder, mortgage lender, and advocate for housing affordability. A neighborhood builder since 1985, Tacoma Habitat serves households with income at/below 80 percent of the area median income. While continuing to build new homes and revitalize neighborhoods, Tacoma Habitat is also developing new initiatives to address the dynamic needs of our community and now offers free HUD-approved housing counseling to all Pierce County residents and low-cost home repair and modifications to senior citizens and disabled Veterans. To learn more, visit tpc-habitat.org.

About Pierce County Housing Authority

A public body, corporate and politic, created by Pierce County in 1978 under State statute to provide affordable housing for low-income families, the Pierce County Housing Authority provides safe, decent, affordable housing and economic opportunity free from discrimination. For more information about the repositioning, please visit <https://www.pchawa.org/community/section-18>.