

Housing News

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Housing News is a publication of the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle - King County
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“The Voice for Low Income Housing in King County”



Photo by Eduardo Calderon

Security House

Security House – Section 8 Saved

On November 16, Seattle’s **Housing Resources Group** (HRG) celebrated the preservation of Security House, located at 2225 Fourth Avenue, Seattle. The 22-year-old building is home to 107 low income seniors and disabled people. Built under the Section 8 program on a prime downtown site, Security House was in disrepair, leaking, and tenants were concerned about the possibility of losing their rent subsidies when the owner offered the property for sale. HRG purchased the project as low income housing and promised current tenants that they could remain in the building with affordable rents. At first HRG was not sure about keeping the property as Section 8; however, due to tenants’ concerns they decided to renew the HUD Section 8 contract. Rather than the typical one-year renewals HUD was offering, HRG was able to negotiate a five-year contract with HUD (subject to Congressional appropriations). Residents’ rents remain affordable (\$30 to \$458 a month based on income).

HRG has done extensive repairs on the building including a new roof and new windows. They have also worked to make the building more accessible and easier for their elderly tenants to use.

The building now features doors that open with push levers, and top-loading washers and dryers. The building has a community room where HRG provides organized activities for the residents including exercise programs, art classes and field trips. In keeping with its downtown location, Security House is a mixed-use building. The ground floor features office space for the manager, a deli, a hair salon and two levels of law offices above.

“We are very happy to preserve this building as a haven for our senior citizens. The spirit of cooperation with both local government and local business helped us to make life better for those who live in Security House,” said **Jim Ferris**, executive director of HRG.

HRG received funding and support on the project from the Washington State Office of Community Development, HUD, US Bank, Washington Mutual Bank, Impact Capital and Seattle Housing Authority. The architect was GGLO Architects and the contractor was RAFN Construction.

For more information on Security House and HRG, contact Jim Ferris at 206/623-0506.

Right of First Refusal Struck Down

On November 9, the State Supreme Court struck down a 1993 state law giving mobile home owners a right of first refusal on purchasing their parks. Housing advocates are very concerned about the implications of this, not only for mobile home park residents, but also for preservation of Section 8 projects.

Mobile home owners, who are often low-income or elderly, are in a peculiar position – they own their home but not the land under it. As the Puget Sound becomes more urbanized, mobile home parks are prime targets for redevelopment. When a park closes, often there is not another park in the area where residents can move. The State Right of First Refusal Law allowed mobile home park residents the chance to buy their parks at market prices, before the park owners offered them for sale to others. This law has already saved several mobile home parks.

The courts decision rests on the portion of the law that requires the park owner to cede their property rights to a “private party,” i.e. the mobile home residents. In a split decision the court ruled that this was an unconstitutional taking. The fact that residents were low-income was not deemed a sufficient “public purpose.” The ruling may leave an opening for a “right of first refusal” to be granted to public entities or quasi-public agencies.

This court decision also affects a hoped-for tool to preserve federally assisted Section 8 projects. Pending this decision, the Seattle City Council last year tabled passage of an ordinance that would have given tenants a right of first refusal where the owner of their project wanted to opt out of the Section 8 program and sell the property.

Housing advocates have vowed to return to Olympia and seek revisions to the law in order to work around the decision.

Infrastructure: Are we suckers?

Building infrastructure is a huge expense. So it's no surprise that tension between local jurisdictions and housing developers is high over who should pay for it. The EPA's new standards for storm water systems to protect salmon and rivers means that the cost of infrastructure will be even higher. This makes it a good time to look at ways to more evenly spread the cost of infrastructure. With that in mind both for-profit and non-profit developers of housing recently held a brown-bag workshop at the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce to look at how to mitigate infrastructure costs.

State law limits what a city or county can charge developers for infrastructure – the requirements should be proportional to the impact of the development. Yet many developers feel that they end up paying more than their fair share. Larger developers can hire lawyers to fight the local permitting authority on a case-by-case basis (often winning), but smaller groups and non-profits rarely have the resources for this. As one large developer put it, “You are either a fighter or a sucker.” It seems clear that as long as developers fight project-by-project, change will never come. It is time for all housing developers (for- and non-profits) to work on a new and better plan.

Bob Johns, a land use attorney, proposed several simple mechanisms for reducing the burden of infrastructure costs to developers.

Latecomer agreements – Under this plan the first developer would pay for the needed infrastructure. Developers that come to the area later on would pay infrastructure fees which would be passed back to the first developer. Although this plan makes sense, it is not as easy as it seems. The state limits latecomer agreements to 15 years. This means future developers can avoid fees by waiting out the time period. If the site is in a low growth

area there maybe no “latecomers” and the original developer would shoulder all the costs. Even when other development does occur, the first developer rarely recoups more than 50% of their infrastructure investment.

Award credits against impact fees and connection fees – In this scenario the jurisdiction requires the developer to pay for infrastructure improvements but then gives them a credit against other costs such as user or hook-up fees. This system is more practical but it depends upon the different utilities coordinating their efforts, and for this reason, often works best in small jurisdictions.

Local Impact Districts – This spreads the costs of infrastructure over everyone in an area. This is perhaps the fairest plan. Unfortunately, since it is time consuming and challenging to establish and requires strong local support, it is the least feasible.

New Goals for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition

HUD has published a Final Rule that establishes new affordable housing goals for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. This rule recognizes that both Fannie and Freddie should be leading the effort to buy mortgages of low and moderate income families and minorities. The changes include:

- Increasing the low and moderate income housing goal from 42% to 50% of all mortgages purchased.
- Increasing the goal for housing in underserved areas from 24% to 31% of all mortgages purchased.
- Increasing the goal for very low and low income families in low income areas from 14% to 20% of all mortgages purchased, including multifamily.

HUD estimates that over the next decade the new goals will provide an additional 28.1 million low and moderate income families with housing. HUD also used the new goals to address the problem of “predatory” lending. Any loans with characteristics indicating predatory lending will not count toward the goals.

Democracy?

Voter participation in the 1998 presidential election:

People with an income of \$50,000 + : **65.7%**
People with an income \$10,000 or less: **28.6%**

Source: “Cutting out of Prosperity, Cutting out at the Polls,” Dale Russakoff. Washington Post (10/24/00)

Federal Legislative Update

Sources: National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Center for Community Change

The Congress has postponed their lame duck session until after Thanksgiving in hopes that the Presidential election will be resolved. The unusual developments in the election have only increased the partisan politics already facing the House and Senate. When the Congress does return it will be to wrap up the five remaining appropriations bills. These updates pre-date the election recess.

- **H.R. 4635, HUD Appropriations.** President Clinton signed this bill into law on October 27th. The bill funds HUD at \$30.6 million and includes 79,000 vouchers.
- **S. 1452** The House passed S. 1452 on October 24th. The bill includes changes to the elderly (Section 202) and disabled (Section 811) housing programs, allowing projects to leverage private funds and to compete for low income housing tax credits. The bill also includes reduced downpayment loans for municipal workers and a pilot program to help law enforcement officers buy homes in high crime areas. Although the bill passed the House with bi-partisan support, Senator Gramm has indicated that he will not move the bill forward in the Senate because he is opposed to the reduced down payments. It is unlikely that this bill will move forward during the lame duck session.

Text of these and other bills are available at <http://thomas.loc.gov>

State Legislature Calendar

January 8 - Session starts. This year is a long session. The biennial budget will be adopted.

January 25 – Housing Advocacy Day. Make appointments to meet your legislators in Olympia. Send residents, staff and board members to learn what Olympia is all about. Remember any time in January is a good month to brief your legislator!

February 19 – Human Services Day. Rally on the Capitol Step, Noon-1p.m. .

April 23 - Session scheduled to end.

Project Open Houses & Events

Lakeview Apartments Open House, Dec. 14, 10:30am-12:00noon, Seattle. Help the Low Income Housing Institute celebrate the opening of Lakeview Apartments at 1170 Harrison St, in the Cascade neighborhood. Speakers will include State Representative Frank Chopp, and Office of Housing Director Cynthia Parker. For more information contact Karen Savage at 206/ 443-9935.

Workshops, Seminars & Conferences

Parking: Curbing a Housing Cost Driver, Nov. 29, 8:00am-12:00noon, Union Square Boardroom, Seattle. The purpose of this event is to build consensus around a series of actions that can make parking less of a cost factor in housing development while not compromising the functionality or investment quality of that housing. Cost: \$30. To register call the Housing Partnership at 425/ 453-5123.

Facilitating Difficult Situations, Dec. 2, 9:00am -12:30 pm, Town Hall, Seattle. There are times when disagreement, criticism, polarization, and debate are necessary and helpful. This workshop will give participants the skills to transform conflict into creativity, innovation, and positive change. Presented by City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. Free. To register call 206/ 684-0719 or email sandy.brooks@ci.seattle.wa.us.

Working with the City, Dec. 11, 6:00pm -9:30 pm, Town Hall, Seattle. This workshop will help you work productively with city departments, the Mayor, and the City Council. Through discussion and presentations, you will come away with effective techniques for getting what you need from city government. Presented by City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. Free. To register call 206/ 684-0719 or email sandy.brooks@ci.seattle.wa.us.

Introduction to Project Management, Dec. 16, 9:00am -12:30 pm, Town Hall, Seattle. This workshop will introduce the basic techniques for managing successful projects: defining the project scope, developing a project plan and budget, gaining community support, working with contractors and measuring results. Presented by City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. Free. To register call 206/ 684-0719 or email sandy.brooks@ci.seattle.wa.us.

Human Service Day, Rally on the Capital Steps, Feb. 19, 2001, Noon-1pm, Olympia. Join together to demonstrate to legislators that there is wide support for investment in Human Services. Ask the Legislator to "Step Up For Human Services." For more information or to get involved in organizing this event contact Sarah McPhee at 206/ 242-1698 ext. 144 or hsday@rdcc.org.

Lead Paint Inspector/ Risk Assessor / Abatement Worker Training, Winter 2000, Bellevue WA. For more information on these

trainings please contact Ann Kimerling, Department of Civil Engineering at 541/ 737-6839

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, March 7-9, 2001, Washington DC. Save The Date! For more information visit www.nchv.org .

National Low Income Housing Coalition Annual Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day, March 26-27, 2001, Washington DC. Registration materials will be available in January. For more information call 202/662-1530 or visit www.nlihc.org .

Washington State Council for Affordable and Rural Housing Thirteenth Annual Meeting / Conference, April 16-19 2001, WestCoast Wenatchee Hotel. Save the Date! Program will be finalized pending the official publication of the 1930-C Regulations. For more information call Joe Diehl at 425/454-6836.

Housing Washington 2001, October 15-17, Sheraton Tacoma Hotel, Tacoma. Save the Date.

*****Employment Opportunities*****

See www.HDC-KingCounty.org for up-to-date job announcements!

Accountant I, Low Income Housing Institute. Seattle nonprofit housing agency seeks individual with minimum of 2 years experience to process A/P, payroll, reconcile bank statements, and other admin. duties as needed. 40 hrs/wk. Salary \$26,072 - \$30,418 DOE plus excellent benefits. Submit letter, resume and 3 professional references to 2407 First Ave, Suite 200, Seattle WA, 98121. Or fax to 206/443-9851. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

Accounting Assistant, Community Psychiatric Clinic. Full-time position with nonprofit community mental health clinic. Calculate tenant rents, oversee housing data for a variety of funding sources. Knowledge of HUD guidelines a plus. \$10+/hr. DOE. Excellent benefit package including employer paid med/dental/life plans and 3 weeks vacation first year. Send resume and cover letter identifying position to: HR, Community Psychiatric Clinic, 4319 Stone Way N., Seattle, WA 98103 or hr@cpcwa.org. EOE. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED.**

Associate Director of Housing Management, Low Income Housing Institute. Management level position for nonprofit housing provider to supervise 5+ staff, monitor contract compliance and

budgets, asset management. Exp. with Section 8, property management, social services, and supervision. Competitive salary + excellent benefits. See www.lihi.org for more details, or send letter and resume to 2407 First Ave, Suite 200, Seattle WA, 98121. Or fax to 206/443-9851. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

Deputy Director, Southeast Effective Development (SEED). SEED is seeking a dynamic individual to serve as a full-time Deputy Director of SEED's operations. This position will report to and assist the Executive Director, work with the Board of Directors on specific projects and oversee fiscal management, asset and property management and administration. Qualifications: BA in Business Administration or related fields or managerial and administrative experience, preferably in a non-profit organization. Direct experience with financial and asset management is essential. Salary: \$52,000 with full medical and dental coverage. For more information call 206/760-4252. Send resume and cover letter to Earl Richardson, Executive Director, SEED, 5117 Rainer Ave South, Seattle, WA 98118-1928 or by email to erichardson@seed22.org. **CLOSES DECEMBER 22.**

Director of Finance, Low Income Housing Institute. Lead finance and accounting department, manage deadlines, supervise staff. CPA preferred. Salary DOE. Letter and resume to 2407 1st Ave, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98121. Or fax to 206/ 443-9851. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

Housing Development Consultant, Common Ground. Join a team of experienced housing professionals in providing technical assistance and development services to non-profits, housing authorities, and local governments in the State of Washington, Non-profit consulting agency seeks an experienced housing development professional with strong skills in project planning, financial analysis, development, and project management. Experience with public funding required. Excellent salary and benefits package. Send resume and cover letter to: Housing Developer Position, Attn Mike Shafer, Common Ground, 110 Prefontaine Pl. S., Suite 504, Seattle, WA 98104. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED.**

Housing Program Clinical Supervisor, Community Psychiatric Clinic. Full-time position providing administrative and clinical supervision to CPC's Housing program. Requires MA

or supervisory experience in housing programs for person with chronic disabilities and two years' relevant experience. Must be able to handle a fast-paced work environment and multi-task. Excellent benefits package including employer paid med/dental/life plans and 3 weeks vacation 1st year. Send resume and cover letter identifying position to HR, CPC, 4319 Stone Way N, Seattle WA 98103.

Program Manager, The Wintonia, Archdiocesan Housing Authority. This position will manage the Wintonia Apartments, a 92-unit services-enriched subsidized housing program for homeless men and women. Responsibilities include overseeing a staff of 10, ensuring grant compliance, managing service contracts, and developing budgets. Qualifications include: BA in relevant field, two years experience with homeless and/or special need populations and knowledge of alcoholism's effects. Beginning Salary: \$2,775/month. Send resume and cover letter to : HR-WPM, Office of Human Resources, AHA, 1902 Second Ave, Seattle, WA 98101. For more information contact 206/ 728-4292. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

Women's Advocate, Noel House Shelter, Women's Referral Center, St. Mark's Shelter (3 Positions). Women's Advocates are responsible for providing direct service to the women, as well as fostering a team environment among shelter staff and volunteers. Qualifications include six months of social service experience, knowledge of women's issues, homelessness, mental illness and addictions, and experience with crisis intervention. Salary starts at \$10.53 per hour plus benefits. 32 - 37.5 hrs/wk. For more information contact Gilliam Parke 206/ 441-3210. Send resume and cover letter to AHA, HR-NOELWAG, 1902 Second Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

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| <p>DEADLINE FOR NEWS ITEMS IS THE 12th OF EVERY MONTH.</p> |
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