$145 Million Seattle Housing Levy on November Ballot

By Sharon Lee

On June 15 the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to place a $145 million housing levy on the November ballot with the goal of producing 1,670 rental units and 180 home ownership units for low-income families and individuals. The city's current $86 million property-tax levy for housing, passed in 2002, expires at the end of this year.

In May, Mayor Greg Nickels announced his proposal to renew Seattle's housing levy. He proposed a seven-year, $145 million package that would go toward building and preserving affordable housing in the city for renters and first-time home buyers. Low-income residents at risk of losing their housing or homelessness because of economic conditions would also be able to access temporary and short-term rental assistance.

Mayor Nickels proposed his levy package to City Council after receiving recommendations from a citizen's advisory committee co-chaired by former mayors Norm Rice and Charles Royer. The advisory committee had originally recommended a larger levy at $167 million, but this was cut back by the mayor. During testimony before City Council, housing advocates including the Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH), Displacement Coalition, Low Income Housing Institute, Real Change and others also urged the council to consider a larger package. SKCCH noted that: "At least 8,961 people were counted during the 2009 One Night Count of people who are homeless in King County."

The levy requires a simple majority of Seattle voters for passage. The cost to an average homeowner would be about $79 per year, or $6.60 per month. The seven year levy is estimated to cost $0.17 per $1,000 assessed valuation and will cost $30 more compared with the 2002 Levy at $49 per year. The increase cost for the 2009 levy takes into consideration inflation and the significantly higher costs for land, development and construction compared with the 2002 levy.

Councilman Richard McIver, chair of the City Council’s Housing and Economic Development Committee, led the effort to place the levy on the ballot.

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“The levy is proven as an effective tool for stabilizing families, individuals and neighborhoods,” noted McIver.

The housing levy funds would be allocated as follows:

- **Rental Housing** – $104 million for rental production and preservation, creating or preserving 1,670 units. After listening to testimony from housing advocates, the City Council voted to increase the number of units serving extremely low-income households. The mayor proposed that at least 55% of the capital funds would be reserved for renters making less than 30% of the area median income ($20,250 per year for a two-person household). The remaining funds would be reserved for people making between 30% and 80% of the area median income. The Council voted to increase housing to those most in need by requiring that at least 60% of the funds would benefit households at or below 30% of area median income. Furthermore, the Council voted that no more than 10% of the funds should serve households between 61% and 80% of area median income.

- **Homebuyer Assistance** – $9.1 million to assist first-time homebuyers in purchasing 180 homes. This funding would be used to make loans to first-time homebuyers with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income ($51,200 for a two-person household). The Council adopted language to ensure long-term (50 years) affordability in homeownership programs through community land trusts or deed restrictions.

- **Operating and Maintenance (O & M)** – $7.9 million to help operate and maintain about 220 levy-funded units for 20 years and to supplement rent for residents who are very low-income, including seniors, people who are disabled, and people transitioning from homelessness.

- **Acquisition and Opportunity Loan Fund** – $6.5 million in levy funds can be used to buy land or buildings that would be developed into affordable housing.

- **Rental Assistance** – $4.2 million in short-term rental assistance for 550 low-income households (up to 50% of area median income) to help preserve their housing, preventing eviction and homelessness.

- **Administration** – The remaining $13.2 million would go to administer the levy programs.

Seattle voters are generous and caring. Since 1981, the citizens of Seattle have approved four ballot measures to subsidize affordable housing. In 1981, a $48.2 million bond was passed to build 1,000 units for low-income seniors. Three Seattle housing levies were passed in 1986, 1995 and 2002. The most recent 2002 housing levy was passed with 54% voter approval and generated $86 million over seven years.

For every levy dollar spent, the city estimates that about $3 is leveraged from other sources, including HUD, the State Housing Trust Fund and private investor tax credits. The 2009 levy is estimated to create 3,140 jobs and generate $189 million in construction and other economic activity.

The 2002 levy has produced or preserved 2,011 apartments; helped homebuyers purchase 211 houses or condos; and provided rent assistance to 4,144 households, according to the Seattle Office of Housing. A survey of 800 people conducted in March showed that 73% of those surveyed believe that in this economic downturn, it is more important than ever to keep investing in low-income housing programs.

Sharon Lee is the Executive Director of the Low Income Housing Institute. For more information on the Seattle Housing Levy, visit the City of Seattle website at www.seattle.gov/housing/levy.

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**Housing Washington** newsletter is published quarterly by the Low Income Housing Institute. The newsletter is available to individuals and organizations concerned with increasing the supply of affordable, low-income housing for residents of Washington state.

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**
Sharon Lee

**EDITOR**
Joshua Okrent

**CONTRIBUTORS**
Donald Chamberlain, Lynette S. Grubbs, Alexandra Ingram, Sharon Lee, and Aaron Long

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**
Ray Braun Design

Housing Washington welcomes news items and written contributions. Please send information of interest to:

**Housing Washington**
Low Income Housing Institute
2407 1st Avenue, Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98121-1311
Phone: (206) 443-9935, ext. 156
Fax: (206) 443-9851
E-mail: housinginfo@lihi.org
By Donald Chamberlain

I own a small and lovely home in the Judkins Park neighborhood of Seattle. It’s a 1904 house on a double lot, which I purchased 17 years ago for the now unbelievable price of $110,000. As a young professional in a nonprofit organization, I had nearly given up on homeownership. Instead I can look back on 17 years of joy resulting from a great location, affordable monthly payments and stable housing. And as I approach 60, I look forward to continued housing security and ready access to arts, entertainment and the medical and social supports that living in Central Seattle offers.

My neighborhood has greatly improved over the past 17 years, and much of that improvement has stemmed from the previous housing levies:

- Homesight has offered dozens of affordable first-time homebuyer opportunities
- Housing Resources Group, along with my employer Building Changes, developed Judkins Park Apartments – right across the park from me – for low-income and disabled families, including people living with HIV/AIDS
- Cross 23rd Avenue and you’ll find the beautifully redeveloped Colman School with more rental housing created by the Urban League
- And down the hill, by Rainier Avenue, sit the Hiawatha Artists Lofts, built by ArtSpace, with 80 new condos by Homesight under construction next door

None of those projects, representing more than 200 units of housing for low-income Seattleites could have been developed without the seed funding provided by the housing levy.

Building Changes has created more than 160 units of permanent supportive housing in Seattle and King County. Several of our projects have received national recognition. All of them required levy funds to get built.

Our most recent development, Kenyon Housing, resulted from a collaboration with Housing Resources Group and Sound Mental Health. It provides 18 apartments, with on- and off-site services, for individuals living with HIV/AIDS who have been homeless and struggle with mental health and chemical addiction issues, typically with past criminal involvement as well. No levy funds – no housing for them: an inhuman proposition!

I don’t approve every ballot issue, every levy or every bond measure. Yet I pay my taxes cheerfully, and I am proud of Seattle for supporting people and parks and light rail and housing! I sit on the board of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, so I routinely come in contact with peers from across the country. I assure you that Seattle is looked to as a beacon of wisdom for investing in the prevention of homelessness through creating and sustaining affordable housing. Home is the foundation! Children need a home in order to succeed in school, and parents need affordable rents so that they can pay for groceries, gas, insurance and childcare, too!

Skipping 2 lattes ($6.60) a month for seven years is worth it, when you consider all the seniors and children, low-income families and disabled individuals who will have a place to call home. And every levy dollar invested in housing will be matched by at least $3 more from other sources. I ask to city of Seattle and Seattle voters to support the levy at $145 million or more. We need that much just to maintain our current level of investing – investing in our children, our community and our prosperity.

Seattle taxpayers want this levy. Don’t let us down! Maintain the focus on helping those with the fewest resources in our community. It just plain makes sense.

Donald Chamberlain is Research, Evaluation, and Policy Strategist at Building Changes (formerly AIDS Housing of Washington). This testimony was presented by Mr. Chamberlain at a meeting of the Seattle City Council on May 12, 2009.
2009 Legislative Action on Housing Issues

By Joshua Okrent and Alexandra Ingram

Washington state’s 2009 legislative session adjourned on April 26. The 105-day session was notable for finding multiple ways to cut expenses in order to deal with a $9 billion budget shortfall. Unquestionably, the budget cuts included in the 2009-2011 state budget will increase financial pressure on both service providers and the low-income families they work with. However, there was also some cause for optimism. Despite multiple proposals to cut social service funding even more drastically, by the end of the session many legislators came to the realization that this was not the moment to reduce help for people who are struggling the most.

Speaker of the House Frank Chopp said that although the final state budget makes many cuts to education and health programs, it did preserve the most crucial aspects of the social safety net. Chopp credited the Democrats with adding $45 a week to unemployment benefits, protecting the General Assistance program for those who are unable to work and job-creating construction projects for those who can work.

Among the most important changes enacted during this session:

**The Housing Trust Fund**: The Housing Trust Fund was cut in half, from $200 to $100 million, for the 2009-2011 biennium. This cut will certainly delay the efforts of housing developers to ensure to build and preserve much needed safe and affordable homes in our state, but until the final days legislators were considering a much larger cut. Housing advocates mounted a strong effort to pressure legislators in the House and Senate, and were generally relieved to maintain the Trust Fund at a reasonable level. Advocates have promised to work throughout the legislative interim to restore full funding in future sessions.

**GA-U**: Saving General Assistance-Unemployable was one of the biggest victories of the session. At one point during the session the Governor had completely eliminated the cash grants and severely cut the medical benefits. The $339 a month grant to people temporarily disabled remained intact and health benefits will continue with an estimated savings of $38 million by switching assets to managed care. Additionally, for the first time mental health coverage will be included in the GAU medical benefit.

**ESAP**: The Emergency Shelter Assistance Program was fully funded at current levels of $10 million which will allow the 200 agencies across the state that operate through ESAP to provide temporary short-term emergency shelter and related interventions to people and families who lack funds to rent or purchase lodging.

**THOR**: The Transitional Housing Operating and Rent Program was preserved and slightly increased to $10 million. The THOR program provides homeless families with children with up to two years of rental assistance, transitional facility operating subsidies, and case management to help them transition to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

**The Independent Youth Housing and Foster Care to 21 programs**, which help prevent homelessness among young adults, were preserved. The Foster Care to 21 program even received a small increase to serve more young adults.

GA-U, ESAP, the Independent Youth Housing Program and several other programs which are dedicated to ending homelessness were funding by the passage of HB 2331 which increases local real estate document recording fee by $20, with all proceeds devoted to ending homelessness. 60% of the revenues would be kept at the county level to help implement local ten year plans to end homelessness, and the other 40% would be used to maintain existing funding levels as much as possible for homelessness prevention programs.

**IYHP**, the Independent Youth Housing Program was funded by HB 1492, and signed into law on April 24. The Independent Youth Housing Program was created as a pilot program by the 2006 legislature to provide rental assistance and case management to eligible youth aging out of the state foster care system.

**HB 1227**, which affects manufactured home communities, says that cities and counties may not have an ordinance that prevents the entry or requires the removal of a recreational vehicle used as a primary residence in manufactured/mobile home communities.

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President Obama Enacts the HEARTH Act

By Alexandra Ingram

The comprehensive housing bill, S. 896, which contains the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH Act), passed overwhelmingly in the U.S. House and Senate, and was signed into law by President Obama on May 20th. Introduced in the House and Senate on April 2, 2009, the HEARTH Act is a long sought amendment to the HUD McKinney-Vento programs that will streamline the programs and increase their flexibility to meet the needs of communities. The amendment, offered by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Christopher Bond (R-MO), would consolidate the separate McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs into a single Continuum of Care Program. The bill will also call for the development of a national plan to end homelessness and establish a nationwide goal of ensuring that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days.

The McKinney-Vento homeless assistance program, created in 1987, funds programs that provide emergency shelter, connect homeless people to needed services, and help to move homeless families and individuals back into safe, decent, and affordable housing. The HEARTH Act will make numerous changes to HUD’s homeless assistance programs including:

• Homelessness prevention would be significantly expanded.
• New incentives would place more emphasis on rapid rehousing, especially for homeless families.
• The existing emphasis on creating permanent supportive housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness would continue, although families could also be considered chronically homeless.
• Rural communities would have the option of applying under a different set of guidelines that offer more flexibility and more assistance with capacity building.

The HEARTH Act provides $2.2 billion for targeted homelessness assistance grant programs, increases current levels of funding for homelessness assistance grants by $600 million, and allocates up to $440 million for homelessness prevention initiatives. HUD’s homeless assistance programs will continue to provide incentives for the development of permanent supportive housing and provide dedicated funding for permanent housing renewals.

“The HEARTH Act encourages permanent supportive housing for those most in need; by focusing on getting families quickly back into housing; and by preventing homelessness in the first place.”

Since the inception of the McKinney Act we have learned a lot about what works to end homelessness. Such activities should not only be allowed, but should be incentivized. The HEARTH Act does this by encouraging permanent supportive housing for those most in need; by focusing on getting families quickly back into housing; and by preventing homelessness in the first place,” said Nan Roman, President and CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

A full summary of the HEARTH act, including a detailed history of the bill, is available at the National Alliance to End Homelessness website, www.endhomelessness.org.
Obama’s FY 2010 Budget Increases HUD Funding

By Joshua Okrent

On May 7, U.S. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced HUD’s budget for Fiscal Year 2010. The budget includes measures to increase funding for Section 8 tenant-based rental vouchers, increase and fully fund the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and contribute $1 billion towards the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF).

The Obama Administration is requesting a gross budget of $46.344 billion for HUD in fiscal year 2010, an increase of 10.8% over the fiscal year 2009 budget. The increase in funding should allow HUD to aggressively respond to the housing crisis as well as contribute to broader national priorities on poverty alleviation, sustainable growth, community revitalization and energy. The 2010 budget also takes steps to simplify and streamline the agency’s activities by consolidating or eliminating 27 separate programs and activities.

Secretary Donovan said “This budget addresses the nation’s current housing crisis by finding savings and making targeted investments to help grow the economy and keep people in their homes. I look forward to the consideration and approval of this budget in Congress.” Housing advocates seem hopeful about the increase in HUD funding. Officials at the National Low Income Housing Coalition said the proposal “signals a refreshing and much-needed change of direction for the country’s housing policy.”

Highlights from HUD’s FY2010 proposed budget include:

- An increase in funding for the Community Development Block Grant by $550 million to continue the CDBG program and reform the program’s formula to better target economically distressed communities.
- Increased funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program and legislative reforms to increase efficiencies for this program, which helps over 2 million very low- and low-income families with rental assistance in neighborhoods of their choice.
- Increased funding for the Project-Based Rental Assistance program, which enables HUD to preserve about 1.3 million affordable rental units.
- New funds to address mortgage fraud and predatory practices including increased funding for fair housing enforcement, mortgage disclosure, and settlement requirements.
- A new $250 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative to make a range of transformative investments in high-poverty neighborhoods where public and assisted housing is concentrated.

For more information about HUD’s fiscal year 2010 budget proposal, please visit www.hud.gov.

Photo by G. Suszek. Courtesy of Creative Commons
Administration Announces Housing Renovation and Green Jobs Program

By Joshua Okrent

On May 28, the Obama administration announced a $4 billion plan to upgrade low-income housing nationwide as part of an ambitious green job-creation project.

Obama sent members of his “Middle Class Task Force” – including Vice-President Joe Biden, Housing Secretary Shaun Donovan and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis – to Denver for a formal announcement of the renovation program. Secretary Donovan said that the investment in public housing will help meet several goals: improving the quality of public housing, reducing energy costs for residents and the government, and creating jobs for people who live in the units and in the surrounding community. Some of the money for public housing also would be used for basic repairs and maintenance.

“A whole set of things can repay investments in a short period of time,” Donovan said. Replacing windows, insulation, appliances and even light bulbs are among the possible energy-efficient renovations.

Labor Secretary Hilda Solis announced that $500 million from the stimulus is available to train workers for these jobs. That sum includes $50 million for communities battered by job losses and restructuring in the auto industry.

Both Donovan and Solis also announced that their departments are working together to make it easier for unemployed low-income housing residents to find education opportunities, training programs and green jobs.

The Middle Class Task Force, which includes several other Cabinet secretaries, has been working since January to highlight policies and practices to help improve the standard of living of the middle class, an income group that has been suffering as the national economy falters. The meeting at the Denver Science Museum, where Obama signed the stimulus plan into law three months ago, was being held to outline different ways government departments are working together to steer the middle class toward green jobs.

These jobs, broadly defined as related to helping the environment, pay up to 20 percent more than other jobs, are more likely to be union jobs and are more likely to be held by men, less so by minorities and people who live in cities, according to a report the task force issued in February. These jobs also are ones that cannot be easily transferred overseas.

Obama has pushed greening the economy – reducing dependence on foreign energy sources, developing domestic alternatives and easing the effects of climate change – as ways to help pull the economy out of its worst downturn since the Great Depression.

The $4 billion being allocated is part of the $787 billion economic stimulus bill passed in January, and a component of Obama’s national focus on restoring federal funding to cities and metropolitan areas.

Tacoma’s Adams Square Family Center for Homeless Families Breaks Ground

By Lynette S. Grubbs

On April 14th, builders broke ground on Adams Square Family Center in Tacoma, a 36-unit facility developed by the Tacoma Rescue Mission at 2909 S. Adams St. This facility will serve homeless women and families with children, providing them with safe and secure shelter, meals, case management, youth activities, education, and life skills.

Adams Square Family Center will provide homeless families in Pierce County with 20 units of emergency shelter, each of which will house a family of four or four unaccompanied women. In addition, there will be five apartments for women in the Mission’s New Life Program, and eleven transitional housing apartments for families addressing addiction issues. On-site facilities will include a Learning Center and a Parenting Skills and Education Center. Classrooms will be provided for basic adult education, inspiration, and life skills such as finance, parenting, nutrition, and cooking on a small budget.

Adams Square Family Center fills a gap in the continuum of care for homeless families in Pierce County by serving a challenging subpopulation of homeless women and families with children. This subpopulation is often evicted from transitional housing because they relapse into addiction. Most transitional housing programs do not have the intensive services necessary to help someone who has relapsed. Adams Square Family Center will have an addiction recovery program onsite, so clients will be able to continue in transitional housing while in addiction recovery treatment. In addition, children will be able to remain with their parents, keeping the family intact while parents participate in residential addiction recovery.

Governor Chris Gregoire traveled to Tacoma to help break ground on the new project. “I’m very touched to be part of this wonderful occasion,” Gregoire said. “There is no greater calling than what you do – provide women and families with kids a place to be safe, warm and fed when there is no alternative but the streets.”

Once construction is complete in spring 2010, Adams Square will replace and significantly expand the Tacoma Rescue Mission’s family shelter on 15th Street. That shelter has become cramped and inadequate to serve the needs of Tacoma’s and Pierce County’s homeless families, particularly those with members who have physical disabilities.

“The issues related to homelessness, domestic violence and at-risk families are great, and our ability to confront these issues has limits,” said David Curry, Tacoma Rescue Mission chief executive officer. “Adams Square will greatly expand our efforts to give needy women and families an opportunity to live happy, productive lives.”

Curry said that every month, the Rescue Mission must turn down nine requests for shelter for every request it is able to accommodate. Each month, the shelter must deny an average of 85 requests for shelter from homeless families with children.

Adams Square Family Center will allow Tacoma Rescue Mission staff to address all factors of homelessness, not just the lack of housing. Issues such as trauma, domestic violence, chemical dependency, mental health challenges, limited education, lack of vocational skills, and low social capital will be evaluated and addressed. The objective is to end homelessness for each family served.

Adams Square Family Center will be built on 3.5 secluded acres in the Oakland Madrona neighborhood of Tacoma. The project will consist of a new 28,500 sq ft building and

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By Joshua Okrent

On Friday May 22, the Seattle City Club hosted a forum which asked a number of very difficult questions about housing and homelessness in and around Seattle. The well-attended forum was moderated by former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, who currently serves as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Enterprise Community Partners. The panel consisted of 5 passionate and knowledgeable local leaders including City of Seattle Office of Housing Director Adrian Quinn, Linda Hall of the YWCA of Seattle/King County, Executive Director Betsy Lieberman of the Seattle nonprofit Building Changes, Heyward Watson, chief executive of Impact Capital, and David McCracken, a retired University of Washington English professor whose congregation, University Congregational United Church of Christ, recently hosted the “Nickelsville” tent city.

Mr. Rice opened the panel on a somber and serious tone. “By far, housing and shelter are among the most important elements of a human being’s life. Without housing the ability to find a job or educate our children seems to just slip away.” He asked the panelists a series of questions centered on Seattle’s affordable-housing problem, from both social and financial perspectives, with the biggest question being “how are we going to address the biggest challenges and opportunities for housing in the coming decade?” The answers the panelists gave to these questions ranged from concerned but predictable to truly radical.

Ms. Quinn, director of the Seattle Office of Housing, took a broad view of the question. “Seattle continues to be one of the most expensive housing markets in the entire country, but housing really is a symptom of a larger problem.” she said. “It’s a symptom of a collapsing mental health system, a symptom of insufficient wages to afford safe and decent housing, and a symptom of people falling through cracks in our healthcare system. We need a much more integrated solution.”

Betsy Lieberman of Building Changes noted that “We have a need for help at all income levels. We are at a time in the history of our country when homelessness has touched each one of our lives. There’s not a person that I know that doesn’t have some degree of fear and uncertainty. All the data demonstrates that housing works for people. Our biggest challenge is seizing the moment and using our limited resources in the most efficient way. We need to create a systematic change.”

The economic downturn also means public funding for new housing is dwindling, noted Heyward Watson. “Public funding is shrinking, and the creation of affordable housing is slowing down. It’s taking a lot longer to get projects in the pipeline and out the pipeline at the other end.”

Mr. Rice then asked how municipalities and organizations can be strategic about the dwindling resources available for affordable housing. He asked “what are we doing in the city and in our partnerships to make sure that we are still encouraging the creation of low income housing?”

Mr. Watson said that building coalitions and partnerships is the single most important tool for using financial resources effectively. He noted that different pools of federal money are distributed with a wide array of restrictions and regulations. His insight was that organizations and developers are much better off working together to recognize and use different sources well, rather than competing against other for the same limited funding pool.

Ms. Quinn mentioned that while the federal government is now making stimulus funding available, Seattle has a relatively tough time getting federal dollars for housing because its rate of foreclosure, while rising, is much lower than most other American cities. The other side of the same coin is that the city’s strong philanthropic community and its housing levy help it to continually invest in housing, and the relatively strong economic base make low income housing tax credits very useful and available.

According to David McCracken, tent cities provide the most rapid and cost effective means of getting low-income individuals into shelter. “It’s far from a perfect solution, but it’s a very good temporary solution and it’s cheap.

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HB 2331 Signed on May 12

Governor Gregoire signed HB 2331 on May 12, ensuring that programs like THOR, ESAP, and Independent Youth Housing will continue to provide emergency aid and stability to at-risk families and individuals. HB 2331 adds an additional fee of $20 to each document recorded by the county auditor in order to maintain funding for state and county homelessness programs. Without this revenue, programs like ESAP and THOR would have been eliminated and many people in need of emergency aid and short-term stability would have no option other than homelessness.

The measure, which will go into effect at the end of July, was introduced by Rep. Jeannie Darneille, (D-Tacoma) on April 1, 2009, and sponsored by Representatives Dickerson, Pettigrew, Kenney, Williams, Simpson, Nelson and Ormsby.

In 2005 the legislature enacted the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act, with the goal of reducing homelessness by 50% statewide and in each county by 2015. Through the department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), 37 counties participate in the program statewide, as well as the state and several cities. The programs are funded by a $10 surcharge on documents recorded by the county auditor, including real estate documents.

HB 2331 increases the local document recording fee from $10 to $30, with all proceeds devoted to ending homelessness. After the county auditor retains 2% of the revenues for collecting the fee, 60% will be kept at the county level for homeless programs, and 6% for the counties to administer the programs. All remaining revenues will be used to maintain existing funding levels for state homeless programs such as THOR, ESAP, and Independent Youth Housing.

For more information on HB 2331 and on all of the bills passed this session visit http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/.

Tacoma’s Adams Square Family Center Breaks Ground

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the remodel of 4000 sq ft of existing structures. The location is a few blocks north of Center Street, not far from Tacoma Rescue Mission’s beautiful Tyler Square transitional housing complex.

During the design and pre-construction process, the Tacoma Rescue Mission worked closely with the architectural firm of BCRA and contractors CE&C. The team also worked closely with Greg Black of the Washington Trust Fund to ensure that the project met Evergreen Sustainable Development Standards. The largest funding sources for Adams Square Family Center are the City of Tacoma, the Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation, a FHLB SF Affordable Housing Project grant, and funding from Pierce County. Other contributions include capital grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates’ Sound Families program and the Forest Foundation, and contributions from the Nordlife Foundation, the Medina Foundation, the Ben B. Cheney Foundation, Boeing Company, Rainier Pacific Bank, Key Bank, the Puyallup Tribe, anonymous contributors, and individual donors.

Lynette Grubs is a grant writer for the Tacoma Rescue Mission.

For more information on the Adams Square project, visit the Tacoma Rescue Mission website at www.trm.org.

City Club of Seattle Hosts Forum on “Hard Questions about Housing” continued from page 9

Quinn also noted that the City Council has recently enacted a policy to require affordable housing when approving significant rezones. She said the city could encourage developers to build affordable housing by allowing projects with affordable units to get quicker permitting and eliminating time consuming steps such as heavy design review requirements.

David McCracken, the self-described amateur on the panel, said that in his experience tent cities provide the most rapid and cost effective means of getting low-income individuals into shelter. “It’s far from a perfect solution, but it’s a very good temporary solution and it’s cheap.” McCracken pointed out that the city charged $3,550 for permits and threatened to fine his church $500 a day for hosting Nicklesville. “We need a greater level of cooperation from city officials for this very practical approach to the homeless crisis.”

Betsy Lieberman pointed out that organized advocacy is a key part of any systematic change. “We need to shape a new Federal agenda,” she said. By being organized, we can really shape how resources come into our community and the kind of work we can do. The question we need to ask ourselves is how do we use our resources to create some long term permanent solutions?”

Mr. Rice, in concluding the forum, said that the panelists did a remarkable job of presenting a measured and reasonable view of the huge problems before the housing community, and he then demanded that banks which get bailouts simply must be required to use some of the funds to build more housing and shelter.

“It’s time for a little outrage and anger,” he said.

The entire “Hard Questions” forum is available for streaming at www.seattlecityclub.org.
New Law Gives Renters Protection During Foreclosure

On May 20 President Obama signed into law important new protections for tenants living in foreclosed properties. The renter protection provisions took effect immediately and expire at the end of 2012.

S. 896 contains key renter protections, including:
- 90-day pre-eviction notice to tenants whose homes have gone into foreclosure.
- The rights of tenants to remain in their homes for the terms of their leases.
- Tenants with Section 8 vouchers able to remain with both their lease and rental assistance payments intact, subject to the rights of the purchaser at foreclosure who wants to occupy the home after 90 days notice.

Currently, in most states, renters get little or no notice to vacate their homes upon their landlords’ foreclosures. The new federal law will not preempt state laws that provide a greater level of renter protections at foreclosure.

Spokane County One Day Count Reveals Decrease in Homelessness

The annual Spokane County One Day Count of homeless citizens, conducted in January, revealed that 1,229 persons, including 383 children, were homeless – living on the streets, in emergency shelter or transitional housing. An additional 424 persons, including 92 children, were doubled up – staying with friends or family, with no permanent residence of their own. The data indicates a 23.9% reduction in the homeless population in Spokane County from 1,592 to 1,229 in the three years since 2006 when the first County-wide Count was conducted. Organizers credit the Spokane County Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and Washington State legislation, passed in 2005, which requires that homelessness in Spokane County be reduced by 50% by 2015. The One Day Count reflects the number of homeless people at a point in time. On an annual basis, approximately 7,000 persons experience homelessness in Spokane County.

For more information visit the Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium at www.slihc.org.

Federal Stimulus Money for Washington Housing

Millions of dollars in federal stimulus money specific to housing is now available through Washington State CTED. For more details regarding the programs listed, including application deadlines, please contact the CTED employees listed below.

The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) will award $11 million in grants to rural area homelessness prevention providers who will provide direct emergency rental assistance to individuals and families at risk of homelessness or to help them move from emergency shelter into stable housing.

Contact Annie Conant Managing Director, Housing Assistance Unit, anniec@cted.wa.gov.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is distributing $3 million to help reduce the risk of lead exposure for people living in low-income housing units.

Contact Cynthia Sanderson, Lead Hazard Reduction Program, cynthia@cted.wa.gov.

The Violence Against Women Act Transitional Housing Program provides transitional and short-term housing and related support services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Contact Bev Emery, Managing Director, Office of Crime Victims at BevE@cted.wa.gov.

AHA Farmworker Housing Pilot Project

The Seattle Archdiocesan Housing Authority (AHA) will soon break ground on a new Farmworker Housing pilot project which hopes to provide affordable housing for farmworkers and their families. With a grant from Enterprise Community Partners, AHA commissioned a design and construction team at Mithun Architects in Seattle to create a new type of green seasonal housing that meets Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust’s goals for livability and employs environmentally sustainable methods and materials.

The pilot project consists of designing and constructing three different types of prefabricated modules: light green, green, and bright green. All three are 580 square feet in size, while their amenities and green features vary. The bright green unit is designed to have include solar power and hot water for net zero energy use, use advanced framing techniques for a more efficient envelope, have ultra-low flow plumbing fixtures and FSC certified wood. All three module types are designed to be family-friendly, with flexible indoor and outdoor living areas for up to four people.

The first constructed units will be located on two farms in Skagit Valley. These prototypes will be occupied upon delivery, but open to the public by appointment.

More about the project at http://mithun.com/
National Alliance to End Homelessness Annual Conference July 2009
July 29 - 31, 2009
The Alliance’s Annual Conference will be held on July 28-30, 2008 at the Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel. This is a must attend conference for anyone involved in ending homelessness.
Register Online at www.naeh.org.

2009 National Cohousing Conference in Seattle
The 1st Annual Conference of the Cohousing Association of the United States will be held at University of Washington in Seattle, Washington June 24-28, 2009. This conference is THE venue for those who already live in cohousing, who are currently seeking a community, and professionals serving cohousing communities to learn new ways to “grow community.”

Farmworker Housing Asset & Property Management Conference in Redmond, OR.
Community and Shelter Assistance Corp of Oregon (CASA) partners with Washington's Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing (ORFH) to hold a biennial training conference for property managers, owners, asset managers, maintenance personnel and service providers. This year, at the Eagle Crest Resort in Redmond, OR. Conference Topics include: green building maintenance and finance; funding for multifamily rural housing; and key issues for year 15 and RD preservation.
More information, including registration, at www.casaoforegon.org.

Green Broker Conference 2009 in Seattle
September 17, 2009
Green Broker is an introductory level green building conference, perfect for anyone interested in knowing more about the fast paced green building industry including architects, engineers, product manufacturers, developers and builders. At this conference attendees will receive: a solid grounding in the basics of green design; Presentations on green building marketing and finance; An overview of LEED and other Green Building rating systems; Key networking opportunities; Access to Green Building experts from across the region. At Seattle Center.
For more info, visit www.cascadiagbc.org/greenbroker.

Impact Capital Trainings
Impact Capital provides high-quality trainings to help community development specialists in the Northwest gain the knowledge and skills they need to have maximum impact. Trainings are open to the public, with priority given to staff from non-profit organizations, local and state government, foundations and financial institutions. 2009 trainings include Budgeting and Financial Forecasting for Non-Profit Affordable Housing Organizations on September 17; Negotiating Commercial Leases & Evaluating Commercial Tenants on October 15 and 16; Nuts & Bolts of Asset Management on November 3 and 4.
For more information visit www.impactcapital.org.