



**LANCASTER CITY
HOUSING AUTHORITY**
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Housing & Community Development Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
106 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202096
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2096

Subject: Testimony for Housing Development Investments

Dear Members of the Housing & Community Development Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Lancaster City Housing Authority to provide testimony supporting crucial housing development initiatives currently under consideration. As a representative of Public Housing Authorities, residents, and staff teams, it is imperative that we acknowledge the significance of affordable housing in Pennsylvania and the role that public housing plays in addressing this critical issue. I also want to extend deep gratitude to those who work within Public Housing Authorities to care for our residents and aged buildings. It is often a thankless job and we wouldn't be able to achieve our mission without each and every one of them.

Public housing has long been a vital component of Pennsylvania's social infrastructure, providing safe, affordable, and stable housing options to thousands of low-income families, seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. *It has been instrumental in alleviating poverty and homelessness, fostering community development, and promoting economic stability.* We believe that investing in preserving and expanding public housing will have far-reaching benefits for our state and its residents.

- Operating Through Challenges: Public Housing Authorities confront significant challenges when it comes to securing adequate funding; one of the most pressing issues is chronic underfunding. This national shortfall in federal funding has resulted in maintenance backlogs, deterioration of aged infrastructure, and a lack of resources to

address pressing community needs. *We currently provide housing for over 3,100 individuals in Lancaster City; which includes 879 children.* However, the demand for such housing continues to outstrip the supply. Within the last five years we have been able to offset the federal funding gaps, with additional funding through State and local funding resources. Because of the additional funding through PHARE funds and PHFA, we can combat critical infrastructure needs of our aging portfolio. We urge the legislature to continue to advocate and allocate these types of resources to assist in the preservation of public housing infrastructure.

- **Growth Opportunities:** Public Housing Authorities employ various strategies to develop new housing units that meet the growing demand for affordable housing. One approach is through public-private partnerships, collaborating with developers and investors to construct new housing projects. *The Lancaster City Housing Authority is actively working to develop two sites that would create 70 additional units of affordable housing.* Another approach is creating entities to bolster funding opportunities, preserve existing units, and acquire properties to transform into affordable homes. *In partnership with our nonprofit entity, Partners With Purpose, we have secured and preserved 95 single-family homes in Lancaster City to remain affordable.*
- **Economic Stability:** Public housing not only offers affordable housing options but also plays a vital role in stabilizing the financial situation of low-income households. *Over 77% of our residents have an annual gross income of less than \$25,000.* When individuals have access to affordable housing, they can allocate more of their income toward other essentials such as healthcare, education, and food. This, in turn, strengthens our communities and contributes to economic growth.
- **Community Development:** Public housing has proven to be a catalyst for community development. It fosters diverse and vibrant neighborhoods, promotes civic engagement, and gives residents a sense of belonging. *The majority of our community is comprised of individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, including those who identify as Black, Indian, Asian, and Hispanic.* Investment in public housing has the potential to revitalize communities and bolster economic empowerment.
- **Safe and Healthy Housing:** Public Housing Authorities are committed to maintaining safe and healthy living conditions for their residents. *We are one of the only affordable housing providers who are held to strict, thorough, and regulated safety standards.* Investments in modernizing and preserving public housing infrastructure are necessary to ensure residents have access to housing that meets contemporary health and safety standards.

In light of these considerations, we urge the state legislature to:

- Increased funding sources to preserve, renovate, and repair the supply of Public Housing Authority's affordable units.
- Provide incentives for public-private/nonprofit partnerships to develop affordable housing solutions.
- Encourage Redevelopment Authorities and other appropriate agencies to work with Public Housing Authorities to provide technical assistance in accessing tax credits and bond financing.
- Support legislation that strengthens tenant protections and ensures the availability of affordable housing for generations to come.

We understand the challenges faced by the state in balancing budgets and priorities, but we firmly believe that investing in public housing is not just a moral imperative; it is an investment in the future well-being and prosperity of our state and its residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working collaboratively to address the critical issue of affordable housing and make a positive impact on the lives of our fellow citizens.

Sincerely,
Barbara Ellis Wilson
Executive Director



**LANCASTER CITY
HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Serving the Lancaster community since 1949



Presented By:

Barbara Ellis Wilson, Executive Director



OUR MISSION & PROGRAMS

The mission of the Lancaster City Housing Authority is to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals and families.

PUBLIC HOUSING

- OWN & OPERATE 469 UNITS
- HOUSING 1,200+ INDIVIDUALS

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (SECTION 8)

- ADMINISTER 1,003 VOUCHERS
- HOUSING 1,900+ INDIVIDUALS

OUR PROPERTIES





OUR PROPERTIES

PUBLIC HOUSING

SUSQUEHANNA COURT: 75 UNITS

FRANKLIN TERRACE : 124 UNITS

CHURCH STREET TOWERS: 101 UNITS

FARNUM STREET EAST: 169 UNITS

CENTRAL OFFICE

OUR RESIDENTS



WE HOUSE OVER 3,100 PEOPLE
RESIDENTS ARE INCOME QUALIFIED

% of Area Median Income	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons
30%	\$20,100	\$22,950	\$25,800	\$30,000	\$35,140	\$40,280	\$45,420	\$50,560
50%	\$33,450	\$38,200	\$43,000	\$47,750	\$51,600	\$55,400	\$59,250	\$63,050

OUR RESIDENTS



DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS

AVERAGE GROSS INCOME: \$20,837

CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS: 283

LIVING WITH DISABILITIES: 27%

OVER 50% OF OUR COMMUNITY IS COMPRISED OF INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS BLACK, INDIAN, ASIAN, AND HISPANIC.

OUR RESIDENTS



DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER RESIDENTS

AVERAGE GROSS INCOME: \$17,443

CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS: 879

LIVING WITH DISABILITIES: 26%

OVER 50% OF OUR COMMUNITY IS COMPRISED OF INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS BLACK, INDIAN, ASIAN, AND HISPANIC.

RESIDENT SERVICES



The Lancaster City Housing Authority is fully committed to offering our residents support as they seek increased economic independence, improved mental and physical health and an overall better quality of life.

PROGRAMS

- Lancaster Neighborhood Senior Center
- Envision Center
- ROSS (Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency) Program
- FSS (Family Self-Sufficiency) Program
- Resident Councils

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC IMPACT



For every \$1 invested in public housing preservation,
there is a \$3 infusion into local economies

STAFFING

35 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

DISBURSEMENTS TO LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

\$10,562,000

PAYMENTS TO LOCAL LANDLORDS, SUPPLIERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND CONSTRUCTION PURVEYORS – RANGING FROM LARGE SCALE BUSINESS OPERATIONS TO INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS



OUR BUSINESS MODEL

A QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

- NOT CITY OWNED
- NOT A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

FUNDING FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

- FUNDING IS DECLINING
- FUNDING IS RESTRICTED & LIMITED
- UNABLE TO ACCESS MOST FEDERAL/STATE/LOCAL FUNDING PROGRAMS

EXPANSION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING



NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SUSQUEHANNA COURT & SOUTH LIME STREET HOMES

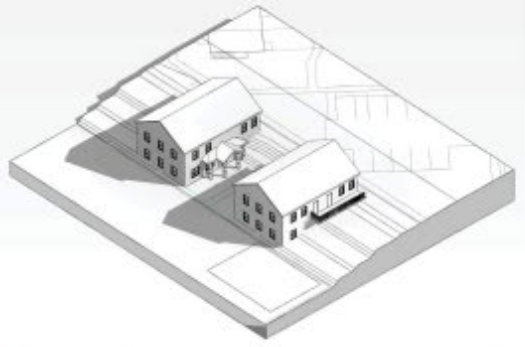
14 UNITS (1BR & 4/5BR)

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \$5,000,000

FRANKLIN TERRACE

56 UNITS (1BR)

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \$20,000,000



A:



A: (PER BUILDING)	B:
FIRST FLOOR:	FIRST FLOOR:
(1) 4-5 BEDROOM UNITS (2 TOTAL)	(4) 1-BEDROOM UNITS
SECOND FLOOR:	SECOND FLOOR:
(2) 1-BEDROOM UNITS (4 TOTAL)	(4) 1-BEDROOM UNITS

B:









YOUR SUPPORT

PARTNER

Connect with our residents to provide programs, services, information, and opportunities.

INVEST

To expand our services, we need investments and funding programs to rehabilitate, preserve, and expand our housing stock.

ADVOCATE

Adopt policies to support affordable housing initiatives that include Public Housing Authorities, non-profit developers, and incentive public/private partnerships

MEET WITH OUR RESIDENTS

Come visit us!



A NEW APPROACH

Created in 2019, Partners With Purpose is a nonprofit organization created to work in partnership with the Lancaster City Housing Authority.

Currently owns 95 scattered-site single family properties throughout Lancaster City which provide homes for Housing Choice Voucher recipients.



STRUCTURE: Nonprofit, 501c3 organization

MISSION: Preserve and expand affordable rental housing in Lancaster

STRENGTHS:

- Increased access to federal/state/local funding programs & philanthropic dollars
- Established and experienced maintenance and management services

OUTCOMES:

- Increased availability of affordable rental housing options
- Streamlined referral source for voucher holders
- Positive landlord and tenant relationships



OUR THANKS!

BARBARA ELLIS WILSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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