



Tacoma Housing Authority Executive Director Michael Mirra Announces His Retirement

Michael Mirra, executive director of the Tacoma Housing Authority, has announced his retirement from THA effective July 5th. Michael originally joined THA in 2002 as its general counsel. The Board appointed him as executive director in 2004. He has served in that position for the last 17 years. After Michael's departure, April Black, THA's deputy executive director, will serve as THA's interim executive director until the Board appoints Michael's successor.

"The Board of Commissioners of the Tacoma Housing Authority wishes to express its sincere and deep gratitude to Michael Mirra for his many years striving to maintain THA as a premier housing authority, ranking among the finest in the country," said Board Chair Stan Rumbaugh. "Michael provided us with calm during times of turbulence, energy and strength during times of challenge, and he consistently provided the highest quality leadership imaginable in the discharge of his obligations."

"It would be difficult to overstate the importance of Michael's dedication to THA's mission and values. The citizens of the City of Tacoma have benefitted in innumerable ways through his labors. It has been an honor to serve with Michael in his relentless pursuit of housing justice and social justice. Those of us serving THA as Commissioners and employees will miss his guidance and, though sadly, extend our warmest best wishes as he departs for wherever the journey takes him next."

During Michael's tenure as executive director, the accomplishments of THA's talented staff include:

- **New Salishan:** THA redeveloped its community of Salishan. This was a \$250 million reconstruction of 200 urban acres, the largest redevelopment in the city's history and the largest of its kind west of the Mississippi River. Using primarily private financing, with important assistance from the City, State, HUD, and Congress, the project elicited the confidence of lenders and investors over ten years of construction, even through the Great Recession. The project showed how to procure and hire equitably, how to incorporate environmentally innovative design, and how to build and then manage a mixed-income community of renters and homeowners that is the most economically, racially, and ethnically diverse neighborhood in the region.
- **Real Estate Development**
THA increased its portfolio's unit count by 29%. The portfolio's unit-year count increased by 840%, denoting an extensive reconstruction and a high standard of stewardship. In doing this work, THA also showed that affordable housing can, and should, look lovely.
- **THA Education Project**
THA created its nationally known Education Project. This project seeks ways to spend a housing dollar, not only to house people, but also to help them and their children succeed in school and help public schools and colleges educate homeless students. This work developed elaborate and elaborating partnership with the Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Community College, University of Washington – Tacoma, and private housing developers.
- **Innovative Rental Assistance**
THA created new ways to use rental assistance, not only to house people, but also to further other goals. THA seeks to strengthen other civic systems – the child welfare system, the judiciary, Medicaid-funded nursing homes, schools and colleges, and the county's homelessness assistance system. THA uses its rental assistance to finance the construction of new housing, to match its housing dollars with specialized supportive services provided by other organizations, and to help its nonprofit sister organizations develop and finance their

housing. THA invented new ways to use its dollars to enlist the willingness of private developers to house low-income households in market-rate developments.

- **THA as a Moving to Work Agency**

THA earned HUD’s designation as a Moving to Work (MTW) housing authority, one of only 39 in the country. This gave THA the financial and regulatory flexibility to do its best and most innovative work.

- **Arlington Drive Campus for Homeless Youth and Young Adults**

THA financed, designed, and built the Arlington Drive Campus for Homeless Youth and Young Adults – an innovative partnership of THA, Community Youth Services, Social Impact Center of the YMCA of Greater Seattle, the City of Tacoma, Pierce County, and the State of Washington. Arlington Drive is dedicated to the proposition that the homelessness of young people, alone without families, is both intolerable and solvable.

“Michael has worked tirelessly for the last 20 years to make THA an asset to our community,” said Deputy Executive Director April Black. “He has built a nationally recognized model for how a housing authority can have a social justice mission and leaves behind a very strong Board and staff committed to THA and its mission. No one can replace Michael, but together we can work to follow the path he has set for us.”

“THA’s Board and staff are among the nation’s finest. Working with them has been the privilege of my life. They have made the hard judgments. They have done the hard work of real estate development, property management, rental assistance, supportive services, program design, program evaluation, financial and accounting services, risk management, compliance, procurement, asset management, IT, business processes, communications, and reception. They have done this with innovation, focus, nerve, compassion, and good humor. Their work has distinguished THA among housing authorities. Yet, their main achievement might be the understanding that all this technical work unifies in service to a social justice mission, which gets still more urgent. I feel only optimism and excitement for what they – the Board and staff - will accomplish in the coming years.”

- Michael Mirra, THA Executive Director

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About Tacoma Housing Authority

Established in 1940, Tacoma Housing Authority provides high-quality, stable, and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need. It does this in ways that help them prosper and help our communities develop equitably. THA develops and manages real estate and provides rental housing. In partnership with thousands of private landlords, it helps families pay the rent in the private rental market. It delivers supportive services to help families succeed as “tenants, parents, students, wage earners and builders of assets who can live without assistance.” THA seeks to do its work in ways that help our community be an “attractive place to live, work, attend school, shop and play,” and that help Tacoma be “safe, vibrant, prosperous, attractive and just.” For more information about THA and its work, visit www.tacomahousing.net.