



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sharon Lee: (206) 571-5730

John Brown: (206) 945-2201

Aspen Court

Former Comfort Inn

Grand Opening Press Event

Monday, December 13, 3:00pm at 8620 S. Hosmer St., Tacoma



TACOMA (December 10) – The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) will host a press event and tour on **Monday December 13, 3pm at 8620 S. Hosmer St., Tacoma** to celebrate the opening of Aspen Court, a new enhanced shelter in the former Comfort Inn. The first guests will move into Aspen Court on December 15.

The Low Income Housing Institute purchased the 94-room hotel on October 29. The purchase was made with capital investment contributions from Pierce County, City of Tacoma and City of Lakewood for \$8.8 million.

The acquisition of the Comfort Inn is part of a bold initiative of Pierce County, Tacoma and Lakewood and housing advocates to address the needs of people living unsheltered in tents and cars. In Pierce County 10,858 individuals experienced homelessness over the course of the year in 2020. The 2020 point-in-time count recorded 1,897 homeless people, with 544 from Tacoma.

“We are grateful to Pierce County and the cities of Tacoma and Lakewood for their foresight and compassion to help our unhoused neighbors. With the purchase of this building we have the opportunity to provide 120 people this winter with a safe, warm place to get out of the cold and improve their lives,” said LIHI Executive Director Sharon Lee. “We applaud the county and cities for using federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address homelessness.”

Building tours will be led by LIHI staff. Speakers and invited officials at the press event include Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier, Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards, Lakewood Mayor Don Anderson, Pierce County Councilmembers Ryan Mello and Jani Hitchen, and Tacoma City Councilmember Kristina Walker.

For the first two years LIHI will operate Aspen Court as an enhanced shelter to address the region's growing homeless crisis. Guests will be able to stay 24/7 and will be referred by the City of Tacoma's Housing Outreach Team (HOT) and social service agencies. In the past few weeks, outreach workers have already identified people sleeping outside to refer, including seniors, pregnant women and people who are frail and in poor health. This is not a drop-in or overnight shelter. Guests must abide by a code of conduct. They will not have to leave during the day, thereby enabling them to achieve stability, regain their health, and engage with on-site case managers and supportive services. The City of Tacoma has committed to two years of operating and services funding.

Aspen Court will serve up to 120 men, women, and couples, including people with pets. Twelve beds will be reserved for homeless people from Lakewood. The purchase of a motel enables the community to expand "non-congregate" shelter to people who are otherwise at risk of severe consequences from Covid-19 during the pandemic. People will be eligible to stay at Aspen Court for three to six months. LIHI staff will be on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The on-site case managers will help residents with housing and employment applications, healthcare, transportation, counseling and help with re-connecting with family or friends. Staff will assist people in obtaining their identification cards, income support, and address other service needs.

After the initial two years, the property will be repositioned and renovated to provide permanent supportive housing (PSH). Kitchenettes will be added. LIHI has applied for additional financing from the State Department of Commerce.

The hotel has spacious hotel rooms, generously sized common spaces, and room for management offices and counseling offices. Each unit has a refrigerator, microwave, TV, WiFi, closet, private bath and A/C. The building has sprinklers, elevator, laundry room, double paned windows, security cameras, and parking. The three-story building was built in 2000. The site is 54,014 square feet. A community meeting hosted by Safe Streets was held on November 22.

The Low Income Housing Institute is a nonprofit housing organization that operates 3,000 affordable housing units and 16 tiny house villages in the Puget Sound region. Three tiny house villages are located in Tacoma. For information about LIHI, please visit

www.LIHI.org.



