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Resolution Supporting Saving Lora Lake Apartments as Affordable Housing

WHEREAS, the Lora Lake Apartments have provided high quality affordable workforce housing¹ for low and moderate income residents in Burien for the past seven years under a cooperative agreement between the City of Burien, the Port of Seattle, and the King County Housing Authority (KCHA); and

WHEREAS the above contract has come to an end and the residents of Lora Lake Apartments are currently being evicted; and

WHEREAS the Port of Seattle owns the Lora Lake Apartments and property and plans to tear down all of these apartments this August; and

WHEREAS the Lora Lake Apartments contain 234 units, only 72 of which are in the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) and need to be torn down before the 3rd Runway becomes operational in late 2008; and

WHEREAS, during the seven years that the KCHA has operated the Lora Lake Apartments, the KCHA has generated revenue in the amount of \$3.7 million for the Port of Seattle and \$1.4 million for City of Burien; and

WHEREAS, it is common knowledge that there is a shortage of affordable housing in the region; and

WHEREAS, the City of Burien's Comprehensive Plan states "the City should encourage multi-family residential uses in appropriate commercial land use districts" and "the City's affordable housing strategy shall place a high priority on conserving and improving the City's existing housing stock,"² and

WHEREAS, the Lora Lake Apartments are currently zoned multi-family residential³ they are included the boundary of Burien's Northeast Redevelopment Area (NERA), which is a yet-to-be-developed area that will be solely for commercial businesses; and

WHEREAS, on May 7, 2007, the Burien City Council voted to reaffirm that the NERA be only used for commercial development, resulting in that all of the Lora Lake Apartments be torn down in hopes that a "big box" store will eventually locate there even though the City of Burien has no commitments from any retailer or commercial developer interested in building at the Lora Lake site; and

WHEREAS, the City of Burien's policies regarding they type of commercial businesses allowed to build in the NERA includes that the businesses "should support family-wage jobs,"⁴ and

WHEREAS, most "big box" retailers are known to not pay their employees wages that could support a family, and

47 **WHEREAS**, the King County Housing Authority, the League of Women Voters of South King
48 County , the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, the Seattle King County Coalition
49 for the Homeless, the Church Council of Greater Seattle, Puget Sound SAGE, the Washington State
50 Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now (ACORN), and the Seattle-King County
51 Building and Construction Trades Council⁵ all strongly support retaining the 162 Lora Lake
52 apartments that are west of RPZ as affordable housing; and
53

54 **WHEREAS**, the Executive Board of the 34th Legislative District Democrats concurs with the above
55 organizations that this affordable housing should be saved and believes that the vacating of the Lora
56 Lake Apartments should stop immediately and that there should not be any vacating or destruction
57 of the 162 units to the west of the RPZ until the planes start flying on the 3rd Runway; and
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59 **WHEREAS**, the 34th Legislative District Democrats' Platform states, "We believe the government
60 and private sectors should address the needs of homeless individuals, families, and children by
61 funding housing", that "we deplore and will work to reverse the growing gap between rich and
62 poor, and the downward trend in American wages" and "we support economic policies and business
63 practices that promote the creation of family wage jobs,"⁶
64

65 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Executive Board of the 34th Legislative District
66 Democrats urges the Seattle Port Commissioners to immediately cease their plans to tear down the
67 162 units of the Lora Lake apartments that are west of the RPZ and work with the Burien City
68 Council to ensure that the KCHA is able to continue to operate these apartments as affordable
69 housing until the 3rd Runway becomes operational; and
70

71 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Executive Board of the 34th Legislative District
72 Democrats urges the Burien City Council members to work with the Port of Seattle to ensure that
73 the KCHA is able to continue to operate the 162 units of the Lora Lake Apartments that are west of
74 the RPZ as affordable housing until the 3rd Runway becomes operational.
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78 Submitted to the Executive Board of the 34th Legislative District Democrats for consideration on
79 May 16, 2007, by PCO Cherrisse Luxa, King County Committeewoman Alternate.
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References

¹ King County Housing Authority Fact Sheet-Lora Lake Apartments
<http://www.kcha.org/lookingforhousing/propertyfactsheet.aspx?pfid=107>

² Cit of Burien Comprehensive Plan: Chapter 2.4 Housing Element
<http://www.ci.burien.wa.us/commdvlpmt/compplan/2.4.pdf>

³ Burien City Manager Mike Martin stated at the May 7, 2007, Burien Council meeting that the Lora Lake apartments are currently zoned RM-24 (24 residential units per acre) which is verified in the Burien zoning maps
<http://www.ci.burien.wa.us/commdvlpmt/zoningmap.pdf>

⁴ Burien Comprehensive Plan Polities Relating to Northeast Redevelopment Area
<http://ci.burien.wa.us/commdvlpmt/compplan/NERA%20Comprehensive%20Plan%20Policies.pdf>

⁵ At the May 7, 2007, Burien City Council meeting the following individuals spoke on behalf of their organizations and asked that the Burien City Council save Lora Lake as affordable housing:
Stephen Norman, Executive Director – King County Housing Authority
Becky Cox, President – League of Women Voters of South King County
Bill Block, Project Director – Committee to End Homelessness in King County
Rev. Sandy Brown, Executive Director – Church Council of Greater Seattle. Also see press release and letter to the Burien City Council from Rev. Brown <http://www.ci.burien.wa.us/Packets2007/050707corrSandyBrown.pdf>
Linda Van Eck – Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless
Mitch Seaman – Puget Sound SAGE (Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and Housing for Everyone)
John Robert Jones, Chair – WA State ACORN

The Seattle-King County Building and Construction Trades Council passed a resolution in support of saving Lora Lake Apartments as affordable housing.

⁶ 34th Legislative District Democrats Platform http://www.34dems.org/platform_34th_2006.htm