

The Leader

Ground breaks on affordable homes

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Years of planning move 32 affordable apartments toward reality

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Jefferson County's housing network includes emergency shelters and temporary places for people to land during a crisis. But those options are only part of the path toward stable housing.

On Aug. 14, Bayside Housing & Services broke ground on Vince's Village, a 32-unit development that will add permanent affordable and supportive housing in Port Townsend.

Vince's Village, at 1777 10th St. in Port Townsend, will provide long-term homes for people whose incomes or support needs leave them with few options in the conventional rental market.

"Today, we are not simply turning over a patch of soil," Bayside Executive Director Gary Keister said at the groundbreaking Aug. 14. "We are laying the foundation for opportunity, stability and hope."

Of the 32 apartments, 19 will be reserved for households that include one or more people with multiple special needs. The remaining 13 will serve households earning between 31% and 50% of the area median income.

Building those homes has required years of work and millions in public investment.

The Washington State Department of Commerce awarded Bayside \$8.69 million from the Housing Trust Fund for Vince's Village in 2024. At the time, the project called for 23 apartments — 19 for households that include someone with multiple special needs and four for households earning between 31% and 50% of area median income.

The plans have since grown.

The Housing Trust Fund award is not necessarily the project's total development cost. When Commerce announced the funding in 2024, they said its awards were intended to leverage additional local, state, nonprofit and other sources of money.

Vince's Village was one of three Jefferson County projects awarded more than \$10 million through that round of state funding.

Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County received two awards totaling nearly \$1.45 million for affordability subsidies and down-payment assistance for 19 homes in Port Townsend and Port Hadlock. Olympic Housing Trust received \$500,000 for Dundee Hill, a five-townhome project in Port Townsend.

Commerce awarded \$312.6 million statewide for affordable housing and homeownership projects in that funding round. The projects were expected to produce 3,913 multifamily rental units and new homes for low-income buyers.

The agency estimated at the time that Washington would need more than 1.1 million additional homes over the following 20 years to meet projected demand across income levels.

Gov. Ferguson said housing was the issue he heard most consistently while visiting all 39 Washington counties during his campaign for governor.

“Big towns, small towns, red jurisdictions, blue jurisdictions, purple jurisdictions, eastern Washington, western Washington, didn't matter,” Ferguson said. “Housing,

housing, housing. And housing of all kinds.”

Gov. Ferguson spoke Aug. 15 at Bayside’s 10th anniversary gala, one day after the groundbreaking. He put Vince’s Village in the same category within that larger housing shortage.

The state’s Housing Trust Fund provided the largest identified public investment in Vince’s Village. Ferguson said projects such as it depend on more than one source of support.

“That’s what it takes to build that housing, right?” Ferguson said. “Partners who bring different pieces to the table.”

He emphasized that a groundbreaking goes well beyond funding. Projects like Vince’s Village need to clear hurdles involving permitting, fundraising, financing and coordination with the people and agencies

“There are lots and lots and lots of people who aren’t giving a speech at a podium, but who are behind the scenes doing a lot of the work,” Ferguson said. “They’re making a donation, they’re doing the work, they’re doing the permitting, they’re raising the money, they’re bringing the partners together.”

Keister credited city staff, funding partners, contractors, elected officials and Bayside employees with bringing Vince’s Village “from an idea to reality.”

While Keister celebrated the groundbreaking, acknowledging a growing waitlist, he said the work is never done.