



Joint Statement: Gault Middle School Transfer

September 24, 2020 - After careful study and consultation, the Tacoma Housing Authority has decided not to pursue acquiring the Gault Middle School property from Tacoma Public Schools.

A main reason for Tacoma Housing Authority's decision is the large cost of responsibly securing and protecting the property while it awaited full redevelopment. These costs would have included demolishing the auxiliary buildings, "buttoning up" the original Gault School to prevent its further deterioration, and keeping it and the neighborhood safe. The COVID-19 pandemic has diminished the normal sources of financing for such work. The pandemic also would have delayed the financing for the full redevelopment. We are disappointed by this well-informed decision.

Background

This process began January 7, 2020. On that date, THA and TPS signed a non-binding letter of intent that contemplated the transfer of the property to THA. That letter permitted THA a "due diligence" period to inspect the buildings and the property, including environmental and engineering reviews. Those reviews allowed THA to fully appreciate the costs of acquiring the property and being a responsible steward of it.

THA and TPS also underwent a robust consultation effort. The community responses reflected impressive interest and insight into the value of the Gault School property, all informed by an evident care and love for the neighborhood. Those sentiments make this decision to forego further work to acquire the property especially disappointing. Tacoma Housing Authority is disappointed to have to forego the chance to do that, at least for now.

Moving forward

While Tacoma Public Schools was excited about the potential community benefits offered by the Tacoma Housing Authority's vision, the district remains hopeful about finding a solution that benefits our community.

Tacoma Public Schools will work closely with the City of Tacoma to identify next steps to further secure the site and determine an action plan for this property.

We are both grateful for the continuing partnership between TPS and THA. We are also grateful to the many Eastside community leaders and residents who helped us with their advice and views.

Together, we are heavily invested in the Eastside and its well-being. We will remain alert for other chances to partner together in East Tacoma to help create safe, prosperous, and equitable communities.

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