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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HOUSTON LAND BANK SELECTS BUILDERS,
PREPARES TO SELL PROPERTY
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES**

After qualifying 34 builders to acquire lots and construct affordable homes for low- and moderate-income Houstonians, the Houston Land Bank is starting its new Housing Initiative by making 26 lots from its inventory available for development.

The lots to be sold are in Houston's Sunnyside neighborhood located south of Houston. They are to be conveyed to selected builders at a discount from market prices. The builders must agree to construct a quality affordable home to be sold to an income-eligible homebuyer at or below a capped price. The new lots are being made available following a strong 2019 in which HLB saw 50 homes sold to qualified buyers.

"With this new homebuilding initiative, we're helping to fulfill the City's goal of ensuring that every Houstonian is able to live in a safe, quality home," noted HLB Builders Committee Chairman Curtis Lampley. "Beginning in Sunnyside, we expect to expand our work by acquiring lots in other neighborhoods where more affordable homes are needed. We believe our new approach will yield benefits for builders, homebuyers and the communities we serve."

The lots are to be conveyed to HLB Approved Builders selected through a recent qualification process. As lots to be conveyed are identified, HLB Approved Builders may submit competitive proposals to acquire and develop the lots with quality affordable homes. Proposals are to be evaluated on criteria including proposed sales price, fit with the neighborhood, and enhancements or features that improve the eventual homeowner's quality of life. HLB Approved Builders are expected to stay on schedule and within budget, and to keep open lines of communication with neighbors.

To purchase a home from an HLB Approved Builder, homebuyers may earn no more than 120 percent of the area's median income and be able to qualify for a traditional mortgage. Participating homebuyers may also be able to qualify for City down payment assistance to reduce their purchase cost.

HLB also markets homes through the City's New Home Development Program, which includes two options for homebuyers interested in purchasing the new homes. Qualified applicants can purchase the home with down payment assistance of up to \$39,000 from the City of Houston's Homeowner Assistance Program. Another option is engaging the new

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Houston Community Land Trust (hclt.org); this can reduce a home's price even more while helping protect against rising property tax bills later. All NHDP participants must have a gross household income of less than 80 percent of the area's median income (for example, a family of four would qualify if their income is less than \$61,050 a year), take a homebuyer education course, and be pre-approved by a lender. Details on how to apply are on all organizations' websites, and additional information can be found by calling 281-655-4600.

Houston Land Bank Background

HLB is a not-for-profit local government corporation incorporated in the State of Texas and is a component unit of the City of Houston. HLB is committed to be a strong, innovative partner in the equitable redevelopment of vacant, abandoned or damaged properties in Houston's neighborhoods, and a good neighbor to the communities in which we work to provide affordable homes for low- and moderate-income Houstonians.

HLB was established by the City of Houston in 1999 as the Land Assemblage and Redevelopment Authority (LARA), a local government corporation charged with facilitating redevelopment of vacant and/or tax-delinquent residential real estate in targeted Houston neighborhoods. In 2018, the organization realigned its strategic activities to better serve neighborhood revitalization activity in the City of Houston and changed its name to the Houston Land Bank to reflect its core function of affordable housing; its amended bylaws and articles of incorporation were passed by City Council in August 2018. HLB's 13-member Board of Directors includes representatives appointed by Houston's mayor and City Council, Harris County and the Houston Independent School District. HLB receives local funds from the City of Houston and anticipates additional revenue from the sale of lots and homes.

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