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LIHI to build housing for seniors in Ballard

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The Low Income Housing Institute plans to start construction late next year on a 51-unit apartment complex for seniors in Ballard that will include an Urban Rest Stop hygiene center for homeless people.



The six-story complex for low-income people age 62 and older is being designed by GGLO. It will be on a vacant lot at 2014 N.W. 57th St., and is expected to cost \$12.5 million, including the land.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently awarded LIHI, a nonprofit housing developer, \$7.6 million for the project.

LIHI Executive Director Sharon Lee said it was the only HUD Section 202 senior housing grant awarded in Seattle this year.

She said her organization is concerned because Congress has been cutting HUD's budget for the elderly. "This might be the last allocation of (Section 202) senior housing funds (in Seattle) for awhile," she said.

Residents in LIHI's Ballard project can't make more than 50 percent of area median income, which for a household of two is \$34,750. They will pay 30 percent of their income in rent.

Lee said in recent years affordable housing has been lost to new development in Ballard. The new housing is either luxury or market-rate, and rents in Ballard are rising.

“We plan to make sure that we do extensive outreach in the Ballard community because there's not a lot of affordable housing in Ballard, and seniors need affordable housing,” she said.

LIHI will advertise for people to get on a waiting list to rent when the project nears completion, she said.

King County has about 6,700 seniors on a waiting list for low-income rental housing, according to LIHI. Lee said that as of 2008, there were an estimated 20,660 very low-income elderly households in Seattle, based on information from the city, and that an estimated 44.3 percent of the city's senior population lived on less than 50 percent of median income.

The Ballard apartment complex will be near the library, shopping and Ballard Commons Park. It will be built to meet the Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard.

Half the apartments will be studios and half one-bedrooms. The building will have community meeting space, a library, computer room, social service office, garden terrace, P-patch, manager's apartment, parking and LIHI's second Urban Rest Stop. That includes a laundry, showers and restroom for homeless men, women and families.

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