

Whittier Community Housing Renovation and Phase II Addition – Project Summary

CommonBond Communities is proposing a new construction project just to the south of its Whittier Community Housing project at 2609 Blaisdell Avenue. It will conduct a moderate rehab of the existing community at the same time.

CommonBond Communities has been a developer and long-term owner of affordable housing in the region since 1971. Currently CommonBond owns and/or operates roughly 120 properties in MN, WI, and IA. Included in this, are two properties in the Whittier neighborhood; City Flats (2633 First Ave S), and Whittier Community Housing (2609 Blaisdell Ave S), with the latter of those two being the subject of this proposal for support.

This project will combine the moderate rehabilitation of the existing Whittier Community Housing property with a new construction affordable, multi-family development on the excess land that sits directly to the south of the existing building. Whittier Community Housing provides 45 units (2 studios; 7 one bedrooms; 26 two bedrooms; 10 three bedrooms) to the community. This is a 100% project based voucher property, meaning residents only pay 30% of their income up to 50% AMI. This property has 45 parking spots available. The current plan for the newly constructed building will contain roughly 41 units (7 one bedrooms; 23 two bedrooms; 11 three bedrooms), at 4 stories, however these numbers are subject to change. The new construction project will be a low income housing tax credit property with all units below 60% AMI. CommonBond plans to apply to the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority for more project based vouchers for this site. This property is planned to have between 34 and 40 parking spaces, with the majority being underground and access to the parking ramp off the back alley.

CommonBond is working with LHB Architects now on the exterior façade and final massing. At 4 stories, we believe the massing will fit into the context of the neighborhood given that nearly all properties nearby are at least 3 stories, and the new Simpson Housing Services is 5 stories. We will work with the architect to ensure that the eventual building aesthetic does not look out of place in the neighborhood and will reference the Whittier Design Guidelines. In addition to this existing asset, we are currently hoping to build out small entrance plazas with public bench seating, bollard lighting, and bike racks along Blaisdell Ave, budget permitting. We will be returning to the Whittier Alliance a second time when more architectural details are fleshed out to get feedback.

Pending the assembling of appropriate financing, the construction period is anticipated to begin in Spring/Summer of 2021 and will finish roughly one year later during Spring/Summer of 2022. We will work with our selected General Contractor (TBD) to set-up a phasing plan for construction and they will identify the need for temporary street closures, bollards, etc. and will make sure to coordinate with the community on access needs.

CommonBond will ensure that Whittier Alliance is kept up to date on project progress and major milestones and will return to gather more feedback when architectural details are in place.

FEEDBACK

- Design/Aesthetic of the New Construction
- Exterior amenities

REQUEST

- Letter of Support from Whittier Alliance to assist with assembling financing for project completion