

Affordable-housing plan now aimed at seniors

By [Andrew Gomes](#)

Posted January 09, 2018

January 9, 2018

Updated January 9, 2018 12:24am

A state agency has again scaled back a plan to build affordable housing on the Kalihi-Palama headquarters of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

The authority has settled on developing 800 rental apartments for seniors on its 6-acre property, according to a draft environmental impact statement published Monday with the state Office of Environmental Quality Control.

A private, nonprofit developer would build the homes over eight years at an estimated cost of \$370 million.

The number of homes, the target market, the timetable and cost are all new details of the plan that has been taking shape over the last three years.

HPHA identified its headquarters containing 13 outdated one-story office buildings at 1002 N. School St. as an inefficient use of state land that could help address a critical need for affordable housing.

In January 2015 the agency sought competitive proposals from developers, and in June that year selected California-based Retirement Housing Foundation with a goal of producing as many as 2,000 rental homes.

But after hearing community concerns, the maximum was cut to 1,000 homes.

In a notice published in August, HPHA said it was considering mixes that included 600 homes for families and 400 for seniors, as well as the inverse. Another option was 800 senior rentals, which is what the agency settled on after its two most recent public meetings in October and November.

The agency said in its new report that all 800 senior rentals, a mix of studio and one-bedroom apartments, will be affordable and primarily serve households with incomes between 30 and 60 percent of Honolulu's annual median income.

If the rentals were available now, the income limits would be \$21,990 for a single person or \$25,110 for a couple at the lower limit, and \$43,980 for a single person or \$50,220 for a couple at the higher limit. Maximum monthly rents for a studio and one-bedroom unit would be \$549 and \$588, respectively, at the lower limit and \$1,099 and \$1,177 at the higher limit.

Providing 800 affordable rentals for seniors will help the state get closer to meeting a legislative goal of delivering 22,500 new affordable rental homes between 2017 and 2026, according to the report.

"The delivery of new, affordable rental housing units throughout the state of Hawaii is critical," the report said.

HPHA noted that as of October it had 763 people on a waiting list for senior housing at two existing projects across from the redevelopment site. The agency also referenced a 2015 Center for Housing Policy report that ranked Honolulu the second most expensive residential rental market in the nation.

Community feedback

Building fewer homes at the HPHA site was decided after receiving community feedback, the state report said.

Some neighbors opposed the project over concerns that traffic congestion would increase along with demand for parking on surrounding streets. Concerns were also raised over views being blocked by tall buildings, the adequacy of sewer infrastructure and a fear that adding more public housing to the neighborhood would hurt property values and increase crime.

HPHA said in its report that the senior rentals aren't public housing and that reserving homes for seniors will reduce traffic and parking impacts.

Under city requirements an 800-unit senior rental would require 400 parking stalls, compared with 1,200 to 1,600 for regular housing depending on the size of apartments.

City building height limits for the site are 25 feet for most of the property and 150 feet on one large portion, though exceptions can be made by the City Council for affordable housing.

HPHA's plan calls for three apartment buildings rising around 150 feet among other buildings rising around 70 to 100 feet, with parking, new office space for the agency and some commercial tenant spaces. The tall buildings would be set back from the streets with their narrow sides facing the mountains and ocean to minimize impacts to mauka-makai views.

Additionally, HPHA said the project will have internal streets and open spaces including community gardens and miniparks that will help reinvigorate the community.

"The proposed project's unique mixed-use character and high-quality design will create a new community with comfortable streets for walking or biking, and a mix of uses complementary to the surrounding neighborhood," the report said.

There are existing sewer capacity inadequacies, but HPHA said in its report that sewer infrastructure improvements in the area are scheduled for completion in 2020.

Delivering the 800 planned new homes could take a decade. The report did not give an estimated time for starting construction because that's dependent on permits, financing and other factors. HPHA in August estimated that construction was at least 15 months away

Kevin D. Auger
Housing Development Specialist
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
1002 North School Street
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 832-4672, Fax (808) 832-4679

NOTICE: This information and attachments are intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged and/or confidential. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited and may be punishable under state and federal law. If you have received this communication and/or attachments in error, please notify the sender via email immediately and destroy all electronic and paper copies.