

Stimulus boosts eight projects for \$18 million

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Eight St. Louis-area housing developments were awarded a portion of \$38 million in gap funding available in Missouri through the federal stimulus, jump-starting the construction of 427 senior or affordable housing units.

The Missouri Housing Development Commission approved funding July 31 for 23 housing projects statewide to receive the funds, which were made available by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Thirty developers applied for the available funds.

To be eligible for funding, the projects had to be previously approved for funding by the MHDC for low-income housing tax credits and not yet started construction.

Area projects that received a total of \$18 million in funding include:

- \$2,295,000 for **North Tower Group's** Water Tower Village at 4518 Blair Ave., St. Louis. The development will have 77 units in rehabs of existing buildings.
- \$2.2 million for **Robert Wood Realty Co.'s** proposed renovation of a vacant building at 1900 Washington Ave., in downtown St. Louis. The development will have 34 residential units and commercial space.
- \$750,000 for **North Newstead Association's** development of the North Newstead V project located in the 4100 block of Newstead and the 4400 block of Lee in St. Louis, which will have 31 rehabbed units.
- \$800,000 for the **Jennings Senior Apartments**, formerly called **Corpus Christi Apartments**, at 8449 Jennings Station Road in Jennings. The project is being developed in a joint venture partnership with Alexian Bros. and the **Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance**. The development will have 50 newly constructed units built on a site that formerly housed Corpus Christi grade school, which closed in 2005.
- \$7,875,000 for the **Dick Gregory Place Apartments**, located in the 1500 to 1900 blocks of Dick Gregory Place, the 4600 block of Aldine, and the 4600 block of Martin Luther King Drive in St. Louis. The project is being developed by two community organizations — **Northside Community Housing Inc.** and the **Greater Ville Neighborhood Preservation Commission**. The development will have a mix of 40 newly constructed and renovated units.

- \$750,000 for Salisbury Park III, which is located on scattered sites in the Hyde Park neighborhood. It is being developed by Better Living Communities, a ministry of **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**, located in Hyde Park. The development will have 18 newly constructed units.
- \$1 million for an expansion of Cambridge Heights at 1435 N. Eighth St., developed by McCormack Baron Salazar. The development will have 117 newly constructed units.
- \$2,775,000 for **Eliot School** at 4242 Grove in St. Louis. The project is being jointly developed by ND Consulting, led by Ken Nuernberger, and Patrick Development, led by Tim Wolf.

“We have taken seriously ARRA’s intent to address developments that are ‘shovel-ready’ yet stalled due to insufficient credit pricing,” Janell Thome, MHDC director of rental properties, wrote in the MHDC staff’s recommendation to approve the projects.

Bob Wood, the developer of 1900 Washington, said the funds are necessary to proceed with his development due to lack of buyers in the market for low-income housing tax credits. “The market for those tax credits fell apart when **Fannie Mae** and **Freddie Mac** and most other institutional buyers stopped buying the tax credits,” Wood said. “Pricing got so low, you couldn’t do these deals. This funding bridges the gap.”

Wood said he has tapped Paric as the general contractor for 1900 Washington. Construction is set to begin in October.

Stephen Acree, executive director and president of the RHCDA, said the funding will allow the stalled projects to proceed. The RHCDA is a consultant or developer on three projects: North Newstead V, Jennings Senior Apartments and Dick Gregory Place Apartments. Construction on those three will start this year.

“There has been a lot of contractors waiting for this to happen,” Acree said. “These deals are ready to close.”

Thome said there may be additional funds available through the federal program. “There is the potential that we can utilize additional funds for future application rounds subject to need and to federal requirements,” she said.

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