

News Release

Modernization Plans for Affordable Senior Housing at Cobbs Hill Village Updated to Reflect Extensive Public Input

-- Nonprofit affordable housing agency to incorporate \$2.5 million in changes based on comments and requests from current residents of the 60-year-old complex and members of the community --

ROCHESTER, N.Y., April 3, 2017 – One year after an initial proposal for modernizing the Cobbs Hill Village affordable senior housing complex was submitted to the City of Rochester, [updated plans](#) were released today to reflect extensive input provided by current residents and members of the community, increasing the project’s cost by \$2.5 million and pushing its completion date back by one year.

New architectural designs reduced the number of units to 98 from 104 and eliminated an entire floor of apartments, lowering the maximum height to two uphill-facing stories, or three downhill-facing stories. In addition, new exterior-finish materials and colors, new landscape design, and supplementing traditional apartments with townhome-style units are among the changes reflected in the updated plans, which may be viewed at www.housingupstate.org.

All of these changes were requested during 17 meetings with neighborhood and other community groups, current residents and city officials in less than 12 months, in keeping with Mayor Lovely A. Warren’s June 2016 direction that new designs be developed in consultation with community stakeholders. In addition, one-on-one meetings were offered to current residents of every one of Cobbs Hill Village’s 60 existing apartments.

“We appreciate the direction Mayor Warren gave after the initial proposal’s submission, the participation by a number of city departments, and the input provided by members of the wider community,” said Howard Konar, Chair of the Rochester Management Board, the non-profit agency that built and has managed the complex since its construction in 1957. “Most especially, we are grateful for the ideas and patience of current Cobbs Hill Village residents, who are living longer and more active lives than the seniors who first moved into the community 60 years ago. Economic status should not prevent our senior residents from aging in place with basic comforts and safety in this or any other neighborhood.”

While structurally sound, the current “motel-style” apartments at Cobbs Hill Village open directly onto sidewalks and parking lots, offering little sense of privacy or security. Cinder block interior walls, tiny kitchenettes, little room for visitors and aging mechanicals are some of the outdated elements which cannot be addressed through renovation.

The new Cobbs Hill Village is designed to help seniors age in place, including a variety of apartment sizes and layouts, each equipped with full-size kitchen appliances, energy efficient HVAC systems and private outdoor spaces. While not luxurious, the addition of more accessible laundry rooms, a small fitness room, a computer lab and an indoor community space will allow senior residents to avoid isolation, having places to enjoy the company of neighbors, friends and family year-round, whenever they choose.

The total budget for the Cobbs Hill Village modernization project is currently estimated to be about \$25 million, \$2.5 million of which includes the costs of changes made based on extensive input provided by current residents and members of the community since last year.

Incorporating these changes will also push completion of the project back by 12 months, making winter 2021 the earliest that the project could be completed. Any delay is consequential, considering residents' average age of 72 years old.

Undertaking the project in three phases will allow current residents to move directly from existing units into newly constructed homes, without ever leaving Cobbs Hill Village.

Current Residents

“We are pleased to reaffirm our longstanding commitment to ensuring that every current Cobbs Hill Village resident who wishes to remain in the affordable housing community can do so,” said Peggy Hill, chief executive officer of Rochester Management. “Current residents of the community will continue to pay the same rent, including existing utilities, if they choose to move into a new unit in the modernized Cobbs Hill Village.”

This commitment was made to current residents at the outset of the project, reiterated throughout the process and documented in writing in December 2016 for each Cobbs Hill Village resident. Voucher and other programs will be leveraged to enable any and all current residents to stay in the neighborhood many of them have called home for years.

The nonprofit agency will also assist residents with packing and will move their furniture and other belongings to the new units at no cost to the seniors. The majority of Cobbs Hill Village will remain below-market-rate affordable senior housing.

Cobbs Hill Park

One of the greatest amenities Cobbs Hill Village residents have enjoyed for many decades is proximity to the adjacent Cobbs Hill Park. The Norris Drive complex will continue to be out of sight from Reservoir Road, Monroe Avenue, Highland Avenue and Cobbs Hill Drive. It will also remain less visible from Lake Riley than adjacent private retail development along Culver Road.

Existing structures will be replaced by new buildings on the same land that has been dedicated to affordable senior housing since 1957, in no way encroaching on the park's boundaries. Rochester Management is committed to preserving the natural beauty of the surrounding area, including the majority of the mature trees on the site.

Rochester's Affordable Housing Shortage

“Rochester Management sees the effects of our community’s affordable housing shortage on a daily basis,” Hill said. “Our more than 3,500 low- and middle-income units are fully occupied, with more than 300 seniors on waiting lists for our Monroe County apartments. With an aging population that continues to grow, it’s critical that we work together as a community to consider how best to expand, rather than limit, Rochester’s affordable housing options. We look forward to continuing to work with current residents, their neighbors and the city to preserve and enhance Cobbs Hill Village as an affordable housing asset for Rochester’s seniors.”

Rochester Management expects to submit its revised plans for Cobbs Hill Village to the City later this month.

About Rochester Management

With roots dating back to the 1940s, Rochester Management has long been committed to providing quality, affordable housing to those in need, including senior citizens, veterans, students and low-income individuals. The nonprofit was founded by citizens in partnership with local government in order to meet the affordable housing needs of our community, and that continues to be our focus today. Today Rochester Management manages more than 3,500 residential units for low- and middle-income individuals, many of whom have spent many years in these homes. Through its talented team of dedicated professionals, Rochester Management is committed to providing outstanding service to the residents of its stable, vibrant and well-maintained communities throughout Upstate New York.

More information on the Cobbs Hill Village modernization project and Rochester Management is available at www.housingupstate.org.

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