

April 21, 2009

## SHA set to start stimulus projects

### New funding will let the agency continue renovating its housing stock

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The Seattle Housing Authority is hoping to get competitive stimulus funds for the \$15 million renovation of Jefferson Terrace and Denny Terrace. The projects would be a continuation of HomeWorks, SHA's \$93 million effort to renovate its old building stock, which is just nearing completion.

SHA released a request for qualifications for architectural and engineering services for Jefferson and Denny in February. The 1960s-era buildings need major infrastructure rehabilitation.

Sven Koehler, SHA resident communications liaison, said the authority is getting prepared.

"(We're) getting it kind of ready for when the gun goes off and we get funding," he said. "We're chomping at the bit waiting for a better idea of what we can fund."

Virginia Felton, spokesperson for SHA, said it is unclear whether the Jefferson and Denny projects would be bid separately or together. That would likely depend on stimulus money. Jefferson is SHA's largest building with 289 units. Denny is also among the largest of SHA's building stock.

SHA has already received \$17 million from the stimulus through the U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development based on national formulas. About \$3.5 million of that is going to rehabilitate Bell Tower, an 118-unit apartment building on First Avenue in downtown Seattle. It will be used for new windows, exterior waterproofing and correcting water line problems. It will also create 15 apartments that meet federal standards for accessibility.

Work on Bell Tower should start in July and take about six months. DKA is project architect. Bids will go out in the beginning of May for a general contractor. Bell Tower, together with Jefferson and Denny if they get funding, will be the fourth phase of HomeWorks.

HomeWorks began in 2005 and consisted of repairing the infrastructure on 22 high-rise buildings. It was carried out in three phases, and 2,079 units were improved. The first and second phases were finished ahead of time, and costs were lower than originally estimated, allowing SHA to do more work on each phase. The third phase is also on track to finish early.

Koehler said this will keep buildings up to date for the next 40 years. "We were trying hard to preserve what we invested in years ago, and this will allow



them to serve as public housing in the future,” he said. “Without it, they would have slowly become nonfunctional.”

The improvements also allowed a number of unusable units to be rented. Previously about 100 units had water intrusion problems.

Improvements varied from building to building. They included replacing galvanized steel water supply lines with copper pipes, replacing windows and boilers, upgrading insulation, and repairing or replacing roofs. Some of the work will also improve the energy efficiency of buildings. SHA is waiting to see whether the upgrades improve operating costs.

The architect for each phase of HomeWorks was DKA. The contractor was WG Clark.

In total, HomeWorks repaired or replaced over 4.5 acres of roofing, replaced almost 900 windows, and replaced over 44 miles of window and masonry caulking.

HomeWorks was funded through SHA’s capital budget, tax credits and housing bonds. Felton said SHA was one of the first housing authorities to use tax credits to do capital improvements. Koehler said the financing flexibility allowed SHA to work more comprehensively. Previously, he said, SHA would take on projects as money trickled in. Having the money up front, he said, allowed SHA to “really tackle a wide variety of capital improvements in one compressed time.”

Doing multiple improvements at one time also made it easier for occupants, he said, many of whom do not speak English as a first language. On average, renovations took about three months per building.

SHA is funding projects with its \$17 million of stimulus funding that are not part of the HomeWorks program. Projects to be funded include the construction of Tamarack Place at Rainier Vista and infrastructure upgrades at Rainier Vista.

Tamarack Place is an 86-unit low income apartment building that will be built next to the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club on the east side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S. It will get more than \$7 million from stimulus funds. Construction could start this summer and building permits are already in place.

About \$6.5 million of stimulus funds will be used for infrastructure work at Rainier Vista north of Oregon Street. It will help build sewers, electrical systems, streets and sidewalks.

Eventually, SHA hopes to sell home sites on a portion of the space receiving the infrastructure work. Felton said SHA’s model is to take what was once exclusively low income housing, and to turn it into mixed-use by selling space to builders. This brings additional capital to the project and creates a more diverse neighborhood. “We’re hoping by the time we’re through this recession, we can sell home sites again... that we’ll be ready to go there.”

SHA is also waiting to sell home lots at High Point. Any funding remaining after the completion of the three projects will go toward creating new parks at High Point.

SHA will be targeting a number of other areas for stimulus funds. Felton said it will be looking at energy efficiency, green building, fleet upgrades and at technology opportunities.

Koehler said the stimulus funds are a boon. “We kind of feel like the fuel tank, which has been running near empty for decades, has been kind of topped off.”