

# Laurel Village

Bellingham, Wash.



**Developer/Sponsor** Bellingham Housing Authority / Beacon Development Group

**Units** 51 apartments, including one manager's unit

**Description** This project involves the new construction of 51 units of housing in downtown Bellingham, Wash., in Whatcom County. The county's population has increased by 50,000 people, or 39 percent, since 1990. The project is on the site of an old railroad roundhouse and repair shop on a bluff overlooking Bellingham Bay. It is a half-block west of State Street, a major street that runs into a historic district undergoing major residential and commercial development, including a large condominium project and 9,400 square feet of commercial space. With population growth expected to continue in the next five years, though at a slower rate, Laurel Village will provide much needed affordable housing in the downtown area. It will include 24 one-bedroom, 15 two-bedroom and 12 three-bedroom apartments in three buildings with underground parking. Fourteen of the two- and three-bedrooms will be two-story townhouses.



## Project Financing

City of Bellingham	\$450,000
State of Washington	\$1,500,000
LIHTC Equity – Enterprise	\$6,355,359
Green Communities Grant	\$50,000
Permanent Loan – Washington Community Reinvestment Association	\$1,300,000

**The Green Advantage** Project plans will meet Green Communities criteria. Examples of green features include:

- Project is located on site with access to existing roads, water, sewers and other infrastructure.
- Appliances and plumbing fixtures will meet water conservation and energy efficiency requirements.
- Project meets green density requirements for new construction with 30 units per acre.
- Project is located on an adaptive reuse, urban infill site that has had environmental clean-up.
- Project will include appropriate sidewalks and pathways within the site and connecting to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Trees and plants will be appropriate to the climate.
- Efficient irrigation will be installed.

**Rents** Laurel Village will have 25 apartments that will serve residents at 30 percent of AMI, 13 at 40 percent of AMI, and 12 at 50 percent of AMI. Thirty-two apartments will benefit from project-based Section 8 administered by BHA through a 10-year contract subject to annual appropriations. Ten will serve formerly homeless households.

**Amenities** Laurel Village includes a community room, computer room and open space with a playground. A hiking and biking trail that runs across the site is being relocated to the western side of the property on the edge of the bluff. The main city pedestrian and bicycle path is also located on the eastern edge of the site. The project has excellent access to public transportation, employment centers, shopping and services. Laurel Village is served by a bus route and there are several supermarkets and smaller groceries, including a food coop, in downtown Bellingham. Several schools and a park are within walking distance and the site is within a mile of Western Washington University.

**Social Services** Lydia Place, a local shelter and supportive service program, will provide services to the residents in the 10 apartments designated for previously homeless. Services include parenting classes, income and budgeting classes, nutritional classes, employment support, advocacy and child care referrals.

**Developer** Bellingham Housing Authority is the public housing agency for the city of Bellingham. Its staff and board also operate the Whatcom County Housing Authority. In addition to 600 public housing units in the city and county, BHA has developed or acquired some 800 nonpublic housing multifamily units including workforce housing and Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects. BHA has received high scores from HUD for its Section 8 and public housing portfolio, and two of its LIHTC projects have earned awards of excellence from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). For Laurel Village, BHA has engaged Beacon Development Group, a Seattle-based consulting firm formed in 1998 to develop affordable housing throughout Washington State and to provide development and consulting services to nonprofit housing sponsors and public housing authorities.

**Architect** The architect for the project was the Bellingham-based firm of Zervas Group Architects.



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Through innovative new initiatives, Enterprise is providing the vision, the energy, and the resources to effect measurable change in the lives of low-income Americans. Green Communities™ is one such example of Enterprise's work. Enterprise and the Natural Resources Defense Council have joined together to transform the way communities think about, design, and build affordable housing. Green Communities will provide \$555 million of financing, equity, and grants to developers to build more than 8,500 rental and for-sale homes that promote health, conserve energy and natural resources, and enhance access to jobs, schools, and services.