



Habitat receives PUD approval for \$400 million redevelopment of Marine Drive Apartments

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Buffalo, NY Habitat's \$400 million redevelopment of Marine Drive Apartments has received planned unit development (PUD) approval by the Buffalo Common Council, paving the way for the affordable housing project to become reality. The equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD), a joint venture with real estate firm Duvernay + Brooks and the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BHMA), will include 700 apartment units across multiple buildings, making it one of the largest affordable redevelopments in the city's history.

Located along the city's waterfront and near the Erie Canal Harbor Metro Rail station, the current community at 205 Marine Dr. comprises 616 units across seven 12-story towers. Built more than 70 years ago, the complex has fallen into disrepair in recent years, necessitating replacement of the structures. Phase one of redeveloping Marine Drive Apartments includes building a mix of new towers on the surface parking lot adjacent to its current buildings. The 300,000 s/f phase one complex will comprise low-, mid- and high-rise buildings, a parking garage and commercial space. The phased development approach will allow residents to move directly into the new properties from their current apartments without being displaced. Phase one is expected to break ground in late 2024.

"We have been overwhelmed by the tremendous support citywide for a new Marine Dr., which expands much-needed affordable housing in the area and keeps current residents in the place many have called home for several decades," said Jeff Head, vice president of development, Habitat Affordable Group. "The site has historic significance dating back to Buffalo's earliest days as a commercial center and offers convenience to employment, recreation and entertainment options

downtown and easy access to other parts of the city via the light rail and interstate.”

An exhaustive feasibility study of the current Marine Dr. towers, which were completed in 1952, determined that replacing the existing buildings with new, modern housing made the most economic sense as it would be less expensive than a complete rehab of the current structures, which are all in need of new building systems, windows, facades and roofs.

“From its inception, we have purposely relied on a resident-driven design process for this once-in-a-lifetime redevelopment project that will preserve and expand affordable housing on Buffalo’s waterfront,” said BMHA executive director Gillian Brown. “The extremely positive reaction residents have had to the designs, which they’ve seen throughout the process, reinforced our mission to create a new Marine Dr. that will not only make residents proud of where they live, but also build housing that truly fits the burgeoning Canalside neighborhood.”

To help inform decisions about the new Marine Dr., the property’s current residents were heavily involved in the community feedback process through a series of private planning meetings and town hall forums with the developers. Habitat recently released two videos, “Community Interaction” and “Rebuild Over Rehab,” highlighting the project scope and community involvement that helped bring the project to fruition.

“I am extremely excited, especially for the fact that the new Marine Dr. buildings will be ADA accessible, which will greatly improve the quality of life for my daughter who is living with a disability,” said Barbara Aviles, who has been a Marine Dr. resident since 2007. “The neighborhood is a beautiful place to live, with so much to do in the area like restaurants, roller skating, the waterfront, and it’s convenient to get to work using the bus system and train. I am grateful the developers and BMHA took feedback from residents, as it feels like we are getting a lot of what we asked for, especially in the layouts of our living room and bedrooms.”

With the PUD now approved, the Marine Dr. development team is focused on getting final design approval from the city and filing financing applications with the state of New York by the end of 2023. The project is anticipated to be completed by 2029.

Habitat is working on a similar ETOD in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood called 43 Green. The first of three mixed-use, mixed-income properties, which are adjacent to the Chicago Transit Authority’s 43rd St. Green Line L station, opened to residents this past summer, with 43 Green’s second building expected to top off by the end of the year. Upon completion, the \$100 million project will bring 300 new apartments to the area.