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New LIHI project will give homeless vets place to live

By [LYNN PORTER](#)
Journal Real Estate Editor

The Low Income Housing Institute plans to begin construction on a project in Lake City next summer that will give homeless veterans a place to live.

The Seattle-based nonprofit will build the mixed-use Lake City Court at 12730 33rd Ave. N.E. The six-story building will have 75 studio apartments for homeless people, half of them veterans.

“There’s a huge need,” said Karen Anderson-Bittenbender, LIHI deputy director. “Unfortunately a lot of the homeless are veterans.”

The Associated Press reported this month that veterans make up one in four homeless people in the United States, though they are only 11 percent of the general adult population. The AP cited the figures from a report by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, a public education nonprofit.

LIHI will use the King County Veterans Levy and money from the city of Seattle and other sources to build the complex, which is across from an express bus stop to Northgate and downtown. “It’s a great location for people who don’t have cars, who need services. The hope is to get (residents) into employment,” Anderson-Bittenbender said.

The architects are Runberg Architecture Group and **Schemata** Workshop. The contractor is Walsh Construction Co. Work is set to begin around June 1, 2008, and be completed in the summer of 2009.

The North Helpline Food Bank will occupy 6,000 square feet on the first floor. It will be open to the public.

Sound Mental Health and RotaCare, a medical and dental clinic operated by local Rotary clubs, will be on the second floor, along with some apartments. The complex will also have a community room with a kitchen, computers, counseling offices and an outdoor terrace.

Sound Mental Health will use a holistic approach in providing services, said Trish



Image courtesy of **Schemata** Workshop [enlarge](#)

The six-story Lake City Court will have 75 studio apartments for homeless people, half of them veterans. It will also house a food bank, medical and dental clinic, and mental health services.

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Blanchard, chief clinical officer. Services will include mental health and substance abuse counseling, employment readiness programs, and peers as coaches and mentors. It also will partner with RotaCare as homeless people tend to have significant health issues, Blanchard said.

“We know that offering services to people in real time where they live helps,” she said.

RotaCare plans to operate the medical clinic three days a week and the dental clinic two days, both open to the public, said Director Roger Bouck.

Sound Mental Health is in the planning stages of offering services at the site to the community, too, said Blanchard.

Sharon Lee, LIHI executive director, said some veterans need mental health services to help them deal with post traumatic stress syndrome. Others may be injured.

“You're seeing much younger veterans who need services” because of both Gulf wars, she said.

There's a large unserved population of veterans in north Seattle, said Lee, citing information from the King County Veterans Program.

Lee said homeless people won't have to meet certain criteria, such as demonstrating they are hooked up with services or are in a job program, to live in the Lake City complex.

“Often it's difficult to address a homeless person's service needs when they're living on the streets,” she said. “So it makes sense to get them housed and make sure they are then able to access the services.”

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