

'Bay Vista Commons Coming Into View'

By Tracy Cooper

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The first jewel in the New Westpark's crown has emerged from the dirt at Kitsap Way and Oyster Bay Road.

Bay Vista Commons (formerly called The Firs II), a 72-unit assisted living facility is scheduled to be completed in mid-June. The \$12 million facility, officials believe, will be one of the nicest in the state if not the country.

On a tour this week, representatives from Marathon Development, Inc. and the Bremerton Housing Authority got a glimpse of a place where people can get the help they need and feel at home.

On Monday morning construction crews worked on the site's final grading. The project also includes moving the intersection of Russell Road 300 feet to the south, which cost about \$2 million.

Bay Vista Commons is the first of a five-phase plan to turn Westpark into a multi-faceted housing and commercial development. The "New Westpark" will include single family housing, town homes, apartments and 190 public housing units.

The seven-member group made its way from the Housing Authority's administrative offices on Russell Road down the hill to the site. The asphalt road leading to the back of the new building has a three-year life and provides better access to the site and temporary parking for the Firs residents.

Jim Cave, Marathon's vice president for senior housing development, lead the tour that began steps outside the chain-linked fence surrounding the site. Cave pointed to a mammoth mound of dirt saying that 30,000 yards of soil were already removed from the area to make way for the project.

The building's three-story frame is up and its windows are in. Inside, work is full-speed ahead and the group heads downstairs to what will be a 12-unit memory care ward. People with dementia or Alzheimer's disease have a propensity to move so hallway loops and an enclosed courtyard are part of the building's design, Cave explained. A centrally-located nurses station will aid patients there.

Assisted-living residents apartments are on the main and second floor. About 90 percent of the rooms are for Medicaid and public-housing-eligible-seniors. Fifty-four

units will be earmarked for public housing, but based on the amenities, it would be hard for people to tell.

The majority of the rooms are 325-square-foot studio apartments. Cave said the apartments, all with views, are "rather modest compared with the houses we live in." But for residents there they will be top of the line. The rooms have a space for a bed, sitting area and a kitchenette. They are wired for cable TV and Internet access. The bathrooms feature a 5-foot long roll in shower.

Common areas are plentiful and filled with homey touches such as soffits on the bookshelves. The main dining room on the main floor will have a fireplace and panoramic views of the city. An outdoor eating area is also attached. Each floor has an activity area or library with some of the best views.

"The nicest views of the building are shared by everyone," Cave said.

Measures have been taken to ensure a certain level of privacy. Sound battery insulation and resilient channels in the walls help to disperse sound. The upper floors have an inch and a half of concrete on them to block sounds from people above. "They won't hear anything, it will be nice and quiet," Cave said.

Wendy Priest, Bremerton city councilwoman and consultant for Rice Fergus Miller did the interior design, which strives for a Northwest feel. Colors include barks, blues and greens she said, which help "bring the outdoors in."

A custom carpet with stylized leaves will be installed in the common areas, while the rooms themselves will be hues of vanilla and taupe Priest said. The carpet is vinyl backed, meaning it can be pulled apart and recycled rather than deposited in a landfill.

The property will be managed by the Tacoma-based Senior Services of America which operates senior housing complexes in several states.

Those interested in submitting an application can call (360) 377-8300.