

## The Bridge Housing Project Breaks Ground for Families of the Disabled

On Friday, July 23, Mayor Rob Drake joined Families For Independent Living (FFIL), Tualatin Valley Housing Partners (TVHP), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and potential residents in a groundbreaking ceremony for The Bridge, the long-awaited apartment project for the developmentally disabled. Despite the 103 degree weather, the buoyant spirit of those assembled and HUD's formal commitment of financing made for a festive mood as the City officially celebrated a welcome addition to the affordable housing available to some of Beaverton's most vulnerable residents.

TVHP, a non-profit community development corporation located here in Beaverton, and FFIL, a non-profit parent group which was formed in 1996, have been working on the concept since 1998. The plan was to develop a project where higher functioning developmentally disabled adults could live independently in an atmosphere supportive of their needs.

Persons with disabilities face tremendous housing challenges, and parents of those with developmental disabilities have struggled to find suitable places for their adult children to live. "First of all it has to be affordable," says Barbara Forrer, president of FFIL, "which usually means a subsidy like a Section 8 voucher. But our daughter, who's 33 now, was on the waiting list for a voucher for 12 years before she actually got one. Then it's got to be safe, and in a location that works for the residents and the family. The Bridge is so exciting because all those things will come together there."

The Bridge will be a 15-unit apartment project with 14 one-bedroom units designed around a courtyard intended to build a sense of community among the residents and to provide them with a safe living environment. The project also includes a community room and an apartment for a resident manager.

The project is targeted to developmentally disabled individuals with Social Security Disability as their major source of income. It is funded through a number of sources, including a grant from HUD's Section 811 program and HUD rent subsidies, HOME program funds

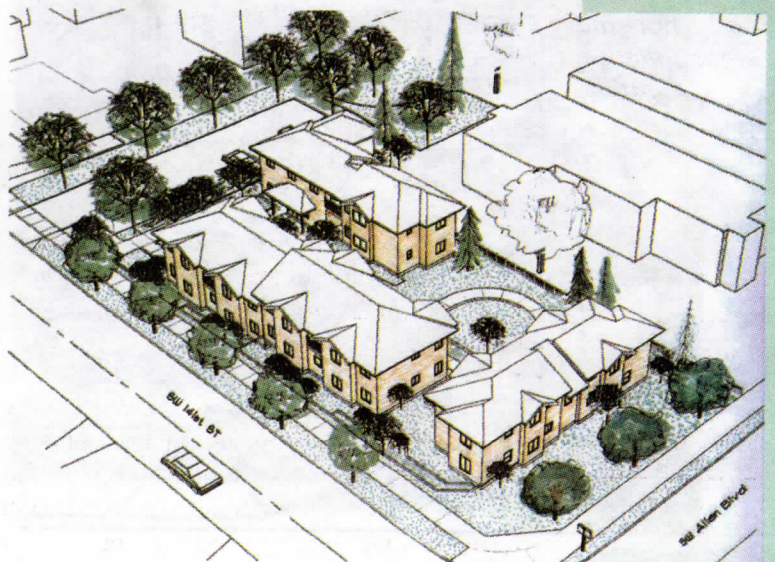
from both the City of Beaverton and Washington County, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the City. All told, the City has contributed nearly \$500,000 to the project, including purchase of the land.

Most of the eligible population receives substantial support services through the County and Self Determination Resources, Inc. Other community organizations like Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District also provide a number of programs.

In late 1999, TVHP and FFIL approached the City with their concept and requested help in locating a suitable site. A parcel was identified at SW Allen Boulevard and 141st Avenue that was a good fit for this project because of its access to transit, services, and shopping. The property was purchased by the City in 2000.

TVHP, as project sponsor, then submitted an application to HUD in early June 2002 and received notice of award in November of that year. TVHP and the City have now completed the design and permit approval process and hope to begin construction by October 1.

The project will be owned by a new non-profit, The Bridge Housing Corporation, but will be directly managed by staff of TVHP. During this development TVHP, has fronted more than \$120,000 for costs of the application and design.



The Bridge