

# Blue Sky plans to bring more affordable housing



Published on March 23, 2023

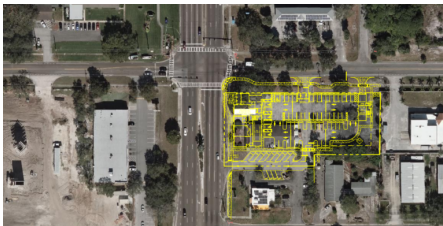
By **Veronica Brezina**



*The Skyway Lofts I complex. Rendering provided.*

St. Petersburg-based Blue Sky Communities, which built Skyway Lofts, the Skyway Marina District's first affordable housing complex, will be expanding the number of units with a new building. "The Phase 1 complex has an extensive year-long waiting list. By delivering Phase 2, it is going to provide an immediate source of affordable housing for some people who are already in an underpaying," Blue Sky Communities President Shawn Wilson said.

The project, dubbed Skyway Lofts II, will be bounded by 34th Street South to the west and 38th Avenue South to the north, and will be directly across from the existing 65-unit Skyway Lofts. The proposed development entails constructing a four-story building with 66 units and 65 on-site surface parking spaces, including 34 parking spaces on the ground floor, and a stormwater



The site for Skyway Lofts II at 3800 34th St. South, St. Petersburg. Image: Blue Sky Communities.

The site was previously developed with a one-story restaurant with surface parking, which was demolished late 2020, according to a stormwater permit.

The Skyway Lofts development across the street has two buildings with one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments for working families and persons on fixed incomes. All of the apartment household income is far less than the area's median income.

Wilson said the leases will be consistent with Skyway Lofts. The rents range from \$315 a month for a one-bedroom unit for a tenant whose income is 30% of the AMI to \$1,160 a month for a two-bedroom unit making 80% of the AMI. The majority of the units are priced at \$762 per month for a one-bedroom apartment and \$901 per month for a two-bedroom apartment.

When Phase 1 debuted a year ago, county commissioners commended the developers for including high-end fixtures and offerings that other affordable housing complexes do not offer.

“The Skyway Marina corridor is undergoing a big transformation that city leaders have tried to incentivize for decades,” Wilson said.

He explained the business model of building roughly 60 units per acre in a corridor with no excessive parking is a model he encourages all local governments to try to duplicate.

The county has ownership of the properties, ensuring they will permanently stay affordable.

Wilson said construction for Skyway Lofts II is expected to commence by the end of the year and will take 14 months to complete.

Pre-leasing will open 60 days before the opening. The people who are on the current waiting list for the existing Skyway Lofts complex will automatically be included on the waiting list for I

The project team for the new building includes St. Petersburg-based Place Architecture, Tampa-based High Point Engineering and Clearwater-based general contractor Park and Eleazer Cor

The city has committed \$6.5 million toward the Phase 2 project, and Blue Sky Communities has a pending application to secure \$3.4 million through the county’s Penny for Pinellas fund.

Blue Sky Communities has other affordable projects within its portfolio. Duval Park in Lealman was the developer’s first project, which has 88 units for veterans and working families.

The developer is also in the process of building Bear Creek Commons, an 85-unit affordable housing complex for seniors at 635 64th St. S. at the former site of the Grace Connection Church. St. Petersburg’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund the project.