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On the Block: Here's how to build affordable housing on a brownfield site in Rainier Valley

Three years ago, **Mt. Baker Housing Association** paid about \$2.8 million for two corner sites on the north and south sides of South McClellan Street, where it intersects with Martin Luther King Jr. Way South.

The nonprofit is planning a \$56 million project there. It was previously called Mt. Baker Gateway, and now is called **The Maddux** (we'll explain below).

The sites are just east of **Lowe's**, and about two blocks east of **Mount Baker Station**. They're also just west of **Mt. Baker Village**, the 156-unit, nine-building complex that MBH also owns and operates on McClellan.

The Maddux will have 166 affordable units in two buildings. **Mithun** is the architect for the project, which assumes an upzone from 40 to 75 feet. **Maddux North** has its first administrative design review tomorrow, which also includes details for **Maddux South**.

But did we mention two small problems with the property?

The larger Maddux North site, at 2802 S. McClellan St., has soil contamination from a dry cleaner.

The smaller Maddux South site, at 2800 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, has soil contamination from a former gas station and auto repair shop.

Thanks to the state **Department of Ecology**, the costly site cleanup — now underway — is being substantially underwritten with public funds.

According to MBH and Ecology, the state has thus far provided about \$6.6 million above the overall project budget. (Funding also includes federal sources and an unspecified amount from the city **Office of Housing**, via the Seattle Housing Levy.)

The cleanup is the first partnership of its kind between Ecology and MBH, in what the state calls its **Healthy Housing Remediation Program**.

MBH hopes to break ground in early 2020, after the cleanup is done. Completion is slated for 2021. MBH hasn't said if the two buildings will be phased, or proceed in tandem.

The Maddux team also includes **Aspect Consulting**, environmental engineer; **Perkins Coie**, legal; **Impact Capital**, acquisition lender; and **Beacon Development Group**, development



[\[enlarge\]](#)

The two sites are being cleaned up under the state's **Healthy Housing Remediation Program**. Mt. Baker Housing hopes to start construction in 2020.

consultant. No general contractor has been announced.

The specs look like this:

- **Maddux North:** A seven-story, C-shaped building with 81 units above 5,210 square feet of offices for MBH. One level of structured parking on the second floor will have 18 stalls. A roof deck is also planned. The site totals almost 18,000 square feet. Total project size is about 98,000 square feet.
- **Maddux South:** A six-story, L-shaped building with 85 units above 3,560 square feet of commercial space, for which **Rainier Valley Food Bank** has been mentioned as a possible tenant. No parking, but a large bike room at grade. The site totals 10,800 square feet. Total project size is about 49,000 square feet. No roof deck is indicated, but there will be an interior terrace on the second floor.

In 2017, the city designated the two sites a Redevelopment Opportunity Zone, or RDZ. That designation allowed early funds from Ecology to flow directly to MBH for site assessment, cleanup and remediation.

Rents at The Maddux will be restricted to people earning 60 percent of area median income. MBH estimates that half the units will be two- and three-bedrooms suitable for families.

And about that name: Baseball scholars will say, “He threw a Maddux” about a pitcher who completes a game with no runs scored on 100 or fewer pitches. The namesake is **Greg Maddux**, who played in the major leagues from 1986 through 2008, but never for Seattle. In Seattle, yes.

MBH says the moniker is a nod to the former **Sick's Stadium**, once home to the **Pilots** and **Rainiers**, which was demolished in 1979 and replaced by Eagle Hardware, now Lowe's. If that seems like a convoluted reach into obscure sports metaphors, MBH says, “The name ... symbolizes the extremely rare achievement that has been accomplished thus far, and the tone Mt. Baker Housing wanted to set moving forward. The name reflects the innovation, near impossible acquisition, and first of its kind agreement with the Department of Ecology which makes it both unique and extraordinary.”



[\[enlarge\]](#)

Whatever. I liked Mt. Baker Gateway better, but I guess The Maddux is catchier than Formerly Toxic Vista View Estates, or No Longer Hazardous Manor, or Brownfields Belle Garden Apartments.

The Maddux will have 166 affordable units in two buildings on either side of South McClellan Street.

Oh, you know who *else* played baseball at Sick's Stadium for their one and only 1946 season in the negro leagues? The **Seattle Steelheads**. There's a little history worth commemorating.

Mt. Baker Housing was founded in 1988, with Mt. Baker Village its initial property, and now has around 400 units, mostly in seven communities from Renton to Mt. Baker.

Further ahead, and about a mile to the north, MBH is partnering on **Grand Street Commons** with **Lake Union Partners** and **HAL Real Estate**. That 3.2-acre property sold last year for \$20 million. Three facing sites near the intersection of Rainier Avenue South and South Grand Street will end up with roughly 850 units, about 300 of which will be affordable.

Grand Street Commons is also another brownfield cleanup where Ecology cleanup funds will be deployed. Aspect and Perkins Coie are also on the team there; no architect or general contractor have been announced. Three or more buildings are likely; none has yet entered design review. The site is a few blocks south of **Judkins Park Station**, at Interstate 90, where light rail service will begin in 2023.

The plan is for Grand Street Commons to break ground in 2021, with completion also in 2023.

Got a tip? Contact DJC real estate reporter Brian Miller at brian.miller@djc.com or call him at (206) 219-6517.

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