

Project proposed for former Aurora Sinai site

By [Tom Daykin](#) of the Journal Sentinel

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The former Aurora Sinai Medical Center's western campus, where 150 apartments have been developed in recent years, could be getting additional housing under a new proposal.

City on a Hill, a church group that has led the former hospital's redevelopment, wants to build up to 36 townhouse and duplex rental units on a 2.4-acre parking lot between N. 23 and N. 24th streets, south of W. State St.

The units would be rented to lower income families, with the idea of eventually selling the homes, said Diane De La Santos, City on a Hill executive director. The development would include a community center and outdoor play areas for children, she said.

"We're trying to create a sense of community," De La Santos said.

City on a Hill is seeking Common Council zoning approval for the project and will apply for federal affordable housing tax credits to help finance it. City on a Hill's partner on the proposal is Wisconsin Redevelopment LLC, a firm led by Robert Lemke and Todd Hutchison.

The tax credits are given to developers in an annual competitive process.

Developers that receive the credits agree to provide apartments at below-market rents to people earning no more than 60% of the area's median income. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority usually announces in April which developers receive credits from that year's allocation.

Two other apartment developments at the former Sinai complex were partly financed with the credits.

This summer, the 51-unit William A. Passavant Apartments, targeted to seniors, opened at 2195 W. State St., with rents ranging from \$350 to \$665 per month.

A former hospital building was remodeled and expanded to accommodate the apartments, which were developed by Fond du Lac-based the Commonwealth Cos. and City on a Hill. Those units were quickly leased, De La Santos said.

Also, Oregon, Wis.-based Gorman & Co. in 2005 converted another former hospital building, at 2200 W. Kilbourn Ave., into the 99-unit Historic Lofts on Kilbourn.

The hospital buildings became vacant in 1998, after Aurora Sinai consolidated at its eastern campus at 945 N. 12th St. The 18.5-acre former western hospital complex, which is west of N. 20th St. between W. Kilbourn Ave. and W. State St., has buildings totaling around 700,000 square feet.

A large portion was sold to the operators of a charter school, Milwaukee Academy of Science, 2000 W. Kilbourn Ave.

City on a Hill, sponsored by the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God, bought the other former hospital buildings, totaling 321,000 square feet, in December 2000.

The group operates its ministry, education, health and mission programs at 2224 W. Kilbourn Ave. and also leases space to other community organizations.

While City on a Hill is a nonprofit group, it is required to pay property taxes on its apartment buildings.

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