

IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW

BSU to Build Dorm, 175 Apts.

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By Steven Anderson

Boise State University last week unveiled plans for two student housing projects - a residence hall and an apartment complex - that will total around \$30 million in cost and are slated for completion in mid-2004.

Larry Blake, BSU director of Facilities Administration, said the 340room residence hall, planned on a 1.3-acre site between Morrison and Driscoll halls, is to be built with Construction Management Co. Inc., Boise, as construction manager.

The \$14.2 million structure is to be designed by a team composed of Hummel Architects, Boise, and Anderson Mason Dale Architects, Denver, which were among firms that submitted competitive team proposals, Blake said. A tentative schedule calls for putting the project out for bid in May 2003.

The height of the building depends on whether the site is expanded toward the BSU Pavilion, which is under consideration. "If we're limited to the current site, it may be five stories," Blake said. "If we can add some, we may be able to keep it down to three levels."

While the design is yet to be drawn, Blake said the building will contain two- and four-bedroom suites. Each resident student will have his or her own bedroom and there will be a bathroom for every two residents. Each bedroom will be wired for high-speed Internet access.

A "wish list" of other facilities includes a computer lab, laundry facilities, a lounge on the first floor and a study / lounge area on each level, perhaps with a kitchenette. No kitchens per se are planned because residents are expected to participate in the BSU meal plan, which serves meals at the Student Union Building, said Blake.

Greg Blaesing, BSU director of auxiliary services, was quoted in the university's Focus magazine as saying: "We are basically a one-year-in -and-out housing program ... we hope to change that by providing students with more choice and variety. "

Blaesing could not immediately be reached regarding bonds sold to finance the project plus the \$15.5 million University Courts apartment complex, which is to replace an aging complex of the same name.

The planned 175-unit apartment project, south of University Drive and the new BSU parking garage near the west end of the campus, would be constructed on a design-build basis, with completion targeted for July 1, 2004, Blake said.

The new complex would more than double the existing, 83-unit University Courts setup, which dates from the 1940s, according to Focus.

Eight additional parcels are to be acquired, of which six are rental houses, two owner-occupied houses and one a former house used by a religious entity, The Cornerstone.

Blake said contracts were pending last week on several of the properties and negotiations were continuing on the others, including the Cornerstone parcel.

A report in the Arbiter, the BSU student newspaper, last month indicated the operator of The Cornerstone, Steve Barry, was unwilling to surrender the property to BSU.

"I believe God has a higher purpose," Barry was quoted as saying.

The student paper quoted Blake as saying the university would condemn the property if necessary.

However, last week Blake said BSU hoped to avoid invoking eminent domain, and would continue negotiating with the building's owners.

"We don't want to go to court," he said, adding that doing so would delay the project.

An architectural consulting team, composed of Brailsford & Dunlavey and Hanbury Evans, of the Washington, D.C., area, are to develop a request for qualifications, to be used for soliciting design-build teams for the project in August, Blake said.

Applicant teams will be narrowed to three semifinalists, who will be asked to submit proposals, and "a selection should be made by the end of this year, so they'll have the next 19 months or so to do the project," he said.

Focus quoted Blaesing as saying a recently completed Master Plan for Housing points to a pent-up demand for housing, especially among sophomores and juniors.

"We don't have residence hall rooms or starter apartments tailored to the needs of sophomores and juniors, who prefer more privacy," Blaesing said.

An Arbiter article in January said BSU provides only about 900 oncampus dorm rooms, and that the new residential units are needed to serve an expected enrollment surge in about six years.