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Blighted Oakland motel becomes gem for seniors

Dimond district complex will accept applications

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Inside Bay Area

OAKLAND — Domus Development, builders of a new,

82-unit housing complex for low-income seniors in the Dimond district, has announced it soon will be accepting applications to rent the units.

The San Francisco-based company said interest in the Lincoln Courts Senior Apartments, which are to open in the spring, began growing shortly after construction started last year. It already has a waiting list of about 250 people who would like to apply for the Dimond housing.

"There is such a high demand for affordable housing, you always get a good response," said Sirena McCart, project manager for Lincoln Courts.

Twenty-nine of the apartments will be rented to seniors who earn 20 percent of the area median income, or \$11,600 per year for one person and

\$13,240 for two.

The remaining units will be rented to seniors who earn 50 percent of the area median income, or \$29,000 for one person and \$33,100 for two people.

Four of the units are designed specifically for people with disabilities, while all the other units can also accommodate those with disabilities, McCart said.

Meea Kang, founding partner of Domus, said she expects the company will receive several hundred applications to rent the units, if not thousands.

"We are hoping for a strong response," she said.

Applications for housing at Lincoln Courts will be available between Nov. 28 and Dec. 12 by calling 649-5915 or by downloading an application at <http://www.domusd.com/lincolncourt>. Applicants have until Jan. 9 to return applications.

Lincoln Courts, at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue, is a multilevel, mixed-use development that is replacing the former Hillcrest Motel, a Dimond district blight long despised by residents for attracting crime.

Owners of the Hillcrest decided to shutter the motel and put it on the market in 2003 after an administrative judge imposed 17 restrictions on the property to improve security and protect guests.

The new building not only will feature housing but also will be the future home of Self Help for the Elderly, a nonprofit organization that provides programs and social activities for seniors.

Lincoln Courts is one of two new projects in the Dimond district expected to bring dozens of seniors to the area. Earlier this month, construction also began on the first phase of the Altnheim project, a rehabilitation of the 90-year-old Altnheim retirement community on MacArthur Boulevard. When finished, the Altnheim will provide 175 affordable senior housing units.