

Bel Aire Apartments – a collaboration to help end homelessness

Frequently Asked Questions

The Champlain Housing Trust purchased the Bel Aire Motel in December, 2016 and converted the building to eight apartments. The University of Vermont Medical Center funded the entire purchase and renovations, and will support its operations. Rental assistance will come from the Burlington Housing Authority and on-site resident services are provided by the Community Health Centers of Burlington. These “Frequently Asked Questions” are meant to give you an overview of the property but are certainly not meant to be an exhaustive description.

What have you done to the property?

The existing foot print did not change, and there were no additional buildings constructed. The vast majority of the renovation was interior. There have been accessibility upgrades and kitchens added. The motel will be converted into eight apartments for twelve residents: six one-bedroom or efficiencies, one two-bedroom, and one four-bedroom.

Did CHT get a permit?

Yes, CHT obtained a permit to convert the motel to apartments. Interestingly, the use of the property as a motel was a non-conforming use under Burlington’s zoning regulations and converting to residential conforms with current zoning.

Who will live there?

The twelve (or more) residents will be members of our community who may have been experiencing homelessness and who have medical vulnerabilities which could be exacerbated by not having a safe home or apartment. Some of the residents require medical respite care – meaning they no longer need to stay at the hospital, but are too frail to recover from their illness living on the streets, in a makeshift lodging, or in a tent. These apartments will help stabilize the tenants at a critical time to avoid further illness or medical complications.

How are tenants chosen?

The UVM Medical Center will fill three apartments to people for whom continued hospital stay is not necessary. The remaining five apartments will be rented by people identified by the community as most in need and likely to succeed in an apartment, as determined by an ongoing assessment coordinated by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance.

Will there be services on-site?

The Community Health Centers of Burlington’s Homeless Healthcare Program will have a dedicated social worker who will be on-site during regular business hours, as well as support staff covering evening and overnight hours. Additional services from organizations such as the VNA or Meals on Wheels will also serve the residents of the apartments.

Is this transitional housing?

No, terms like “transitional housing,” “shelter,” or “group home” have specific definitions. The Bel Aire Apartments are apartments, and like many rentals in our community people will

live in them for varying amounts of time. Some renters may live in their apartments shorter terms (less than a month), but others will live there for a year or more.

Who will manage the apartments?

Three of the apartments will be managed by the UVM Medical Center under a master lease agreement with CHT for people who need medical respite. The remaining five apartments will be managed by CHT.

What impact will this have on the neighborhood?

We believe it will have little to no impact on the surrounding neighbors. The Bel Aire as a motel had guests coming and going frequently. There should be less vehicle traffic overall at the property. There likely will be an occasional ambulance service to the apartments.

How can I help?

Glad you asked! These new neighbors don't have a lot. Items like pots, pans and other kitchen supplies would be greatly appreciated, as would bedding in good condition. Please visit <https://www.chcb.org/donate/make-a-donation/> for a full list of desired donated items and information regarding drop-off with the Community Health Centers of Burlington. Please respect the privacy of our new neighbors and refrain from arriving unannounced at the Bel Aire. We welcome other ideas you have, please contact Chris Donnelly at CHT (chris@champlainhousingtrust.org or 861-7305) if you have any thoughts or want to be kept apprised of future needs. All the partners are nonprofits and welcome cash donations of any size.

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