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OZ Navigator plans 396 units near Judkins Park Station in Rainier Valley

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Jackson Main Architecture is designing the workforce apartment project planned by local venture OZ Navigator LLC at 900 Rainier Ave. S.

The complex will replace an old garage structure and some small old commercial buildings, and recently entered administrative design review.

About 396 affordable and workforce units are planned in an eight-story building (or buildings). Also included is about 7,439 square feet of retail/commercial space. About 138 stacked parking stalls are planned on one underground level, to be accessed from the sunken alley to the east, with no ramp required. There would also be multiple bike rooms.



Rendering by Jackson Main Architecture [\[enlarge\]](#)

The affordable and workforce apartments will be built just north of the landmarked Black Manufacturing Building.

The architect may target LEED Silver certification.

The unnamed project is on the north end of the half block, at South Charles Street, that OZ Navigator acquired in February for about \$30 million. That deal also included the landmarked former Black Manufacturing Building to the south, at South Bush Place. The approximately 1.5-acre property is in a federally tax favored Opportunity Zone. It is about an eight-minute walk south to Judkins Park Station, where light-rail service will begin in 2023.

Jackson Main's preferred design, dubbed "unfolded," has four courtyards facing Rainier — like an E-shape with extra arms. The building's south end will step down in height to better fit with the landmarked neighbor.

Units will run from around 382 square feet to 920 square feet for a two-bedroom loft. Some will be live/work units at grade.

The building will probably end up with two addresses for the two lobbies: 900 Rainier for the northwest corner entrance; and 912 Rainier for the mid-building entry. Four distinct elevator banks are planned in a building that will be about 386 feet long.

Total project is about 262,000 square feet. The team also includes Karen Kiest Landscape Architect.

Peter Nitze, of OZ Navigator (and Nitze-Stagen), says the optimistic timeline is to break ground on 900 Rainier late next year or in early 2022, with completion in two years or less. His firm and workforce housing specialist Housing Diversity Corp., also local, are the principals behind the OZ Navigator fund.

Nitze says that the Black Manufacturing Building, at 1130 Rainier, is now about one-third leased to engineering firm Gray & Osborne. Another 41,800 square feet are available on the lower two floors. The brokers are Cavan O'Keefe and Daniel Seger of NKF.

Other projects

That duo is also leasing Nitze-Stagen's separate boutique office project planned at 760 Aloha St. in South Lake Union. Nitze said that six-story renovation/addition, with about 41,500 square feet, will proceed on spec once permits are in place.

OZ Navigator also has an industrial investment at 650 S. Industrial Way. About half the building is leased to two tenants, says Nitze, who may soon be selecting a broker to market the roughly 16,000 square feet remaining.

The fund also has a 151-unit workforce housing project planned in Los Angeles, in the South Park neighborhood near Staples Center.

A separate Nitze-Stagen project, but also in an Opportunity Zone, is the 80-unit Canton Lofts under construction at 224 S. Washington St. Though work briefly paused early in the coronavirus outbreak, safety measures are now fully in place, and the Pioneer Square site is active again.

“It is proceeding,” says Nitze. “We’re finishing the pours” — meaning concrete. With two levels now aboveground, a crane should go up soon, and Nitze is now choosing among potential future apartment managers. He hopes to open the building to workforce tenants next March.

As for OZ Navigator LLC’s next investment, he says it’s looking at workforce housing sites along the light rail line in South Seattle. “We think that’s where the growth will be. We’re optimistic long-term on that kind of housing.” But, alluding to his firm’s long history in Georgetown, SoDo and the Duwamish, he added, “We’re always interested in industrial.”

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