

# High Point

Seattle, Washington

## PROJECT DATA

### LOCATION

6558 35TH AVENUE SW  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

### PROJECT STATUS

BROKE GROUND IN 2004;  
COMPLETION PLANNED IN 2018

### PROJECT TYPE

MIXED-INCOME HOUSING,  
REDEVELOPMENT

### PROJECT SIZE

129 ACRES

### BUILDING SIZE

1,700 UNITS PLANNED; 1,529  
UNITS COMPLETE AS OF 2016 (798  
MARKET RATE, 731 AFFORDABLE)

### PROJECT COST

\$550 MILLION

### DEVELOPMENT TEAM

SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY,  
VARIOUS PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERS

### DESIGN TEAM

MITHUN, SVR DESIGN, AND  
NAKANO ASSOCIATES

### FINANCING

HOPE VI, PRIVATE INVESTMENT,  
TAX CREDIT EQUITY, TAX-EXEMPT  
BORROWING

### MENTAL HEALTH FEATURES

MEETING AND PERFORMANCE  
SPACES, EMPLOYMENT  
COUNSELING, PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
YOUTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS,  
PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS, AND  
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### PHYSICAL HEALTH FEATURES

BREATHE EASY HOMES,  
COMMUNITY CLINIC,  
PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY  
AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN,  
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT  
FEATURES

**HIGH POINT** is a 129-acre (52 ha) mixed-income redevelopment project in Seattle focused on resident well-being and an enhanced quality of life in the surrounding area.

Health-promoting features at High Point include a community clinic, pedestrian-friendly design, and homes designed to reduce the risk and severity of asthma.



As of 2016, the Seattle Housing Authority had led the creation of more than 1,500 market-rate and affordable homes at High Point.

*(Photo © Juan Hernandez for Mithun)*

## Context for Development

High Point, which broke ground in 2004 with completion planned in 2018, is located on the former site of a World War II-era public housing complex in one of Seattle's most demographically diverse areas.

As of 2016, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) had led the creation of more than 1,500 market-rate and affordable homes at High Point, with 48 percent of units available for purchase or rent by low-income households (earning 80 percent of the area median income [AMI] or less) and very-low-income households (earning 50 percent of AMI or less).

The development has been lauded for its success in engaging residents, private developers, and government agencies in efforts to create a sustainable, health-focused, inclusive community.

## Health-Promoting Features

Features at High Point that promote the physical and mental health of residents and the broader community include the following:

- \* **A community clinic.** The Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers offer medical and dental care on site.
- \* **A public library.** The library has more than 27,000 books and magazines, as well as computers, meeting rooms, and a bilingual staff.
- \* **Community programs.** Programs for families and teens (including youth tutoring and job connection services), child care, summer camps, programs for seniors, and arts and crafts events are offered by the Neighborhood House, an organization that promotes community health, education, and self-sufficiency.
- \* **Pedestrian-friendly design.** Narrowed streets, shortened blocks, hidden parking lots, landscaped sidewalks, a quarter-mile (0.4 km) walking trail, and walking groups promote physical activity.
- \* **Breathe Easy homes.** Sixty Breathe Easy homes include features to reduce the risk and severity of asthma for residents, including positive input ventilation, which removes stale air and filters incoming fresh air.
- \* **Sustainable landscaping.** Organic landscaping methods are employed on more than 20 acres (8.1 ha) of open space; more than 100 mature trees were saved at High Point, and 2,600 trees were added.

- \* **Green building standards.** The Built Green certification program guided the incorporation into development of recycled building materials, as well as energy-efficient appliances, windows, doors, and insulation.
- \* **Stormwater management.** Parking lots, sidewalks, and streets feature porous pavement; four miles (6.4 km) of vegetated bioswales naturally manage stormwater, improving on-site water quality.

## Health Outcomes

During the first phase of development, SHA constructed community facilities, including a library, a clinic, meeting rooms, and open spaces, facing 35th Avenue SW, a major arterial roadway that previously had acted as a barrier between High Point and the surrounding area. Prioritizing these facilities has promoted broader community social interaction.

SHA also focused on minimizing displacement of existing residents by implementing a relocation counseling program, replacing the original 716 public housing units, and adding 291 units for very-low-income residents.

Targeted investments in improved public health outcomes at High Point have already shown success, says George Nemeth, senior housing developer at SHA. "A modest investment into the construction and design of our Breathe Easy homes—just under \$6,000 per unit, or a 5 percent or less incremental cost—resulted in a two-thirds decrease in the number of days missed from school or work, fewer visits to emergency rooms, and improved health outcomes across the board," he says.

In addition, a 2014 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that High Point's walking groups reported improved mental and physical health and a 20 percent increase in moderate physical activity over a three-month period.

High Point's healthy, equitable, and environmentally friendly design has contributed to faster-than-anticipated sales and lease-up rates for both affordable and market-rate units. "There was a magical match between people who embraced the ideals and virtues of green living and those who desired to live in a community that looked like America—not segregated, not one color, but a real mix of peoples, cultures, backgrounds, and income levels," Nemeth says.