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A \$200 million project would convert two apartment towers and a townhouse-style office park into a mixed-use community with affordable units near the downtown Silver Spring Metro station.

Silver Spring-based Lee Development Group and the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County plan to transform the Elizabeth House and Alexander House apartment towers and Fenwick Professional Park into a cohesive development bounded by Fenwick Lane, Second Avenue, Apple Avenue and the Metro rail line.

HOC owns and operates the apartment communities, while Lee Development owns the office park.

The community will be attractive to retailers, residents and the surrounding neighborhood, while addressing the need for more affordable housing, Bruce H. Lee, president of Lee Development, said Monday.

"It will be great for the neighborhood," he said.

Planners are designing the Elizabeth Square development around the themes of health, wellness and art, offering a more inviting style to the public.

Fenwick Professional Park, which dates to the 1950s, will be torn down to make way for a larger, more modern Elizabeth House, which is a 160-unit, 14-story complex for low-income seniors built in the 1960s.

The new complex will house 277 units, with about half of the additional apartments dedicated as affordable.

Fenwick Park, the home of tenants such as Del. Heather Mizeur's political consulting firm and the American Hiking Society, has reached the end of its lifespan, Lee said.

A senior wellness center that Holy Cross Hospital now operates in Elizabeth House will be expanded at the new complex.

Plans also call for a street-level cafe, a central public plaza and an indoor pool and fitness facility, as well as a partnership with artists and a possible county-run recreation center.

Alexander House — a 312-unit, 16-story, mixed-income complex built in 1992 — will undergo some renovations. About 40 percent of the apartments will be dedicated as affordable. Ten studio lofts for artists are planned.

In addition, a new multi-family building for multiple age groups is planned on the site of the existing Elizabeth House. The finished buildings will total about 771,000 square feet, an increase of about 314,000 square feet from the present.

If all goes well with the approval process, renovations on Alexander House could start next year and ground could be broken on the new Elizabeth House in 2016, Lee said.

HOC, which administers federal, state, county and private affordable housing programs, hopes to change "the paradigm of how we connect clients to high-quality, amenity-rich housing," said Stacy L. Spann, the agency's executive director.