

VISALIA TIMES-DELTA

Dinuba moves toward a sustainable future

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Sierra Village in Dinuba (Photo: Submitted)

This time next year, Dinuba residents will begin moving into the city's first sustainable, affordable apartment complex — Sierra Village.

On Monday, construction crews broke ground on the 44-unit housing development on the corner of East Davis Drive and North Crawford Avenue.

The project is an energy-efficient and transit-friendly development, said Betsy McGovern Garcia, Self-Help real estate development program director.

"We realized the demand for high-quality, affordable housing in Dinuba," Garcia said. "We're really excited to bring this project to the city."

The development is being built through Self-Help, which secured financing for the project through the state's cap-and-trade program.

Recently, Gov. Jerry Brown extended California's Cap-and-Trade program until 2030. Cap-and-trade funds the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program.

"We think this is a great example of how cap-and-trade funding is being invested in Tulare County," Garcia said.

AHSC grants are provided to fund affordable housing loans for transit-oriented developments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"Self-Help Enterprises would like to thank the state for their commitment to providing affordable housing, and ensuring that cap-and-trade investments reach rural California," said Tom Collishaw, president of Self-Help. "As a result of the HOME and AHSC programs, Self-High Enterprises will provide high-quality affordable housing to low-income working families in the rural community of Dinuba."

Sustainable homes feature solar, water conservation measures, and a vanpool program in partnership with the California Vanpool Authority that will transport residents from Sierra Village.

The solar panel system will offset the power used in the common area, residential loads and community center, making the complex a grid neutral Zero Net Energy project. The utility bills will be reduced for residents and the property, while also decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, Garcia said.

"The Sierra Village development embodies the goals of the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, combining energy-efficient affordable housing, access to clean and shared transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and direct benefits to residents and community members," said Randall Winston, executive director of the Strategic Growth Council.

Sierra Village will include one-, two-, and three-bedroom units with a 3,027-square-foot community building, playground and open space for residents. The community building will serve as a computer lab that adults and children can use for school, work and educational activities.

Dinuba is a community with many families working in the fields and packing plants, officials said.

"Many of these families often live in overcrowded conditions and in substandard housing, not earning enough to afford market-rate housing" said Sonia Sanchez, spokeswoman for Self-Help. "Sierra Village will supply much-needed affordable housing to these hardworking families."