



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY GOOGLE MAP | Annadale Commons is located on East Annadale Avenue west of Elm Avenue, where two affordable housing projects are being developed.

## Affordable senior, family housing projects break ground in Fresno

David Castellon — STAFF WRITER

Some people don't realize the shortage of affordable housing here in the Valley is a real issue for many, Jim Collishaw recently told a small crowd gathered on a six-acre empty lot in southwest Fresno.

"We have a housing crisis that's significant in California, here in the Central Valley, and sometimes it gets underplayed here because we're relatively affordable, even though affordability is a really personal matter, right," said Collishaw, president of Visalia-based nonprofit Self-Help Enterprises, ahead of a groundbreaking ceremony at the site on East Annadale Avenue west of Elm Avenue, where his organization is developing two affordable housing projects.

The first will be to construct — at a cost of

about \$8 million — 10 four-plex apartment buildings that will be rented to seniors on low, fixed incomes.

Phase 2, which still is in the planning stages and doesn't yet have significant funding, will involve the construction of 20 detached, single-family homes, each 1,400-1500 square feet in size.

Part of the deal for low-income families to buy the homes is they will have to do some of the construction work — along with friends and family, if they're willing to help — and how much work they put in will reduce the sale prices of each house, said Collishaw, whose organization is a developer of affordable housing from Kern to Stanislaus counties.

He said work on developing

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PHOTO BY DAVID CASTELLON | A groundbreaking was held April 12 for Annadale Commons, a planned 40-unit affordable apartment community in southwest Fresno.

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the Annadale Avenue land actually began years ago with the Fresno Redevelopment Agency obtaining the parcel with an eye toward developing affordable housing there. But California phased out all redevelopment agencies back in 2016, and successor agencies were established to finish out their works and progress and distribute their assets.

Collishaw said the Fresno successor agency approached Self-Help about two-and-a-half years ago to inquire if his organization might develop affordable homes for sale on part of the land, with hopes of the rest going to another developer to build affordable senior rental apartments.

"They didn't realize Self-Help could do both," and Collishaw said his staff created a proposal to do both projects.

The successor agency agreed and

transferred the land to Self-Help.

Fresno also is putting some monetary skin in the game, providing about \$600,000 for both projects and another \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME Investment Partnerships allocated to the city.

The latter amount is earmarked just for developing the senior rental community, which have been named "Annadale Commons." No name has been selected for the individual home community.

Speaking on the need for affordable housing in the Fresno area, Collishaw said, "It's off the chart, as far as we are concerned. Waiting lists are in the thousands for every one of the projects that we have developed, including single-family housing and rental housing of the sort we're building here for seniors. We can't keep up with the demand, and it's going to take more than our organization to solve some of these housing problems."

A day before the April 12 groundbreaking, real estate broker Robin Kane told an audience in Fresno gathered for the Fresno Economic Development Corporation's 2019 Real Estate Forecast that construction of multi-family units has picked up to a pace not seen here in 30 years, driven largely by higher rental rates.

But Kane, senior vice president for

the Fresno office of The Mogharebi Group, noted that much of the new apartments are being built for renters with high incomes, with little being developed for those in the mid- to low-income range.

"With all this new construction, I still believe the demand will still not be met," he said, adding that "what we need to be thinking about as a community is finding a way to lower the cost of housing so we can [serve] the people who really need to find affordable housing. We need to find solutions for them."

Collishaw agreed that not enough new affordable housing is being built locally.

"What's being built on the market is \$1,200 to \$1,800 a month, and so to afford an \$1,800 a month rent, you've got to earn close to \$60,000 a year," he said, adding that many seniors living off social security make only \$12,000-\$14,000 a year, the people for which Annadale Commons is being built.

"I mean, if you get \$1,000 a month in a Social Security check, \$300 [rent] is affordable to you. And that's who we're trying to serve here," Collishaw said.

"We know we can't solve all of those problems, but this is a pretty darn, good start."

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