

# THE FRESNO BEE

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## Clovis set for low-income apartments to help homeless. How much will it cost to build?

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An empty lot in Clovis could be the new site of a low-income apartment complex that would help also house homeless residents.

The Butterfly Gardens project from the Illinois-based developer group UPholdings could begin construction by March 2021. But the developer still needs to secure funding.

It got one boost Monday night from the city when the council voted unanimously to approve a resolution that allows the developer to seek tax-exempt state bonds of up to \$30 million.

The project is not expected to cost that much, UPholdings project manager Ryan Wilson said, but getting the council's approval is crucial to financing the project. The whole project could cost \$21 million.

Wilson said funding could come from the county, state, or a combination of state and federal funding. He said applications are pending.

### **LOW-INCOME HOUSING IN CLOVIS?**

The three-story housing project is expected to provide 75 one-bedroom furnished units at the corner of Willow and Holland avenues in southwest Clovis.

The lot has remained vacant for many years, according to Clovis Community & Economic Development Director Andrew Haussler.

But the Butterfly Gardens project has been in the works for about a year now.

Haussler on Monday told the city council the project obtained \$9 million from the state and about \$3.5 million from the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health. It has also received support from the Fresno Housing Authority.

"We always have households, especially in the very low and extremely low income (group) that struggle in our community," Haussler said in an interview.

Under the funding model being used to build the housing project, the Clovis has no legal or financial obligations since the project is by the private firm, and the city is not paying for the project. Self-Help Enterprises has partnered with UPholdings for the project.

Before voting, councilmembers questioned the proposed location. Some councilmembers referred to that area of Clovis as the older side of town, which at least one councilmember said has had more frequent calls to police.

They also noted the area already has several apartment complexes.

Wilson said the developer group is working within the city's zoning rules, and the area was chosen because it is near bus lines and grocery stores.

At the same time, Clovis has been in the crosshairs of groups who say the city isn't doing enough to provide affordable housing. A lawsuit filed last year by Central California Legal Services accused the city of not complying with housing laws to make space for low-income residents.



A "For Sale" sign stands in a barren field in southwest Clovis. The lot will be the site of a 75-unit housing project which will serve homeless and very poor residents.