

THE SUN-GAZETTE

Tulare County applies for millions to build up Fort Visalia housing

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By: Paul Myers

Supervisors agree to apply for \$3.5 million in state affordable housing funding with Self-Help Enterprises for The Lofts at Fort Visalia

VISALIA – The Lofts at Fort Visalia is ready to receive another influx of money after the Tulare County Board of Supervisors voted to apply for millions in public housing dollars for the project's construction.

The affordable housing project would construct three three-story buildings to house 81 apartments overlooking seven artist lofts on the ground floor at the former Copeland Lumberyard, 300 E. Oak Ave. During their July 21 meeting the board agreed to apply for \$3.5 million in Community Development Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) money from the state.

The application will be in conjunction with Self-Help Enterprises who is spearheading The Lofts at Fort Visalia project. Money from the PLHA program is for development costs related to construction. The money could also go toward secondary financing for the Goshen Village East single-family subdivision.

The Lofts at Fort Visalia units would face a proposed plaza allowing art events to be staged there along Oak Street, and include space for a large, 3,500-square foot art gallery. The interior gallery will become the new home of the Visalia Arts Consortium and its current building at the corner of Garden Street and Oak Avenue will be demolished.

The Visalia City Council provided \$750,000 to the project in February which will be taken from the city's share of Trail Expenditure Plan funds through Measure R, the half-cent transportation sales tax approved by voters in 2006. Staff said the money for the Santa Fe extension will be appropriated from the \$1.7