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## 75 UNITS OF 'SUPPORTIVE' HOUSING IN CLOVIS BREAKS GROUND

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By: Breanna Hardy



Clovis Mayor Jose Flores speaks at the Friday groundbreaking of Butterfly Gardens, a 75-unit residence off of Willow and Ashlan avenues available for people at risk of homelessness. Photo by Breanna Hardy

Heralded as a county-wide partnership, the first affordable housing project for at-risk populations is coming to the City of Clovis.

Butterfly Gardens, the 75-unit residence off of Willow and Ashlan avenues, will accommodate those who are at risk for homelessness. Two units will be occupied by community development workers who will live onsite. Jessica Hoff Berzac, president and principal of real estate development company UPHoldings, said that this region requires about 35,000 affordable housing units.

In partnership with the county, there will be onsite case managers to work with people finding jobs or making sure rent is paid on time.

Hoff Berzac said those at-risk numbers have most likely been exacerbated since the data surfaced due to job loss during the pandemic. She estimates it will grow worse because time is running out on the eviction moratorium.

"While this is only 73 units, it means a lot and we're thankful to be able to have a small part in solving those numbers. And the more we create, the more the entire continuum opens and we give opportunities for all people," she said.

Units are one bedroom between 650 and 685 square feet, setting the city up to respond to the most vulnerable people in need. Leasing starts as early as next summer. The project is slated for completion October 2022.

Because the cost of construction materials like steel and lumber have increased, the project has had to absorb some of those rising costs. The construction will cost \$18 million, and \$30 million total over the course of the 20-year commitment Fresno County is making to Butterfly Gardens.

“The goal is to keep people housed. As long as people can stay housed, we can stop the influx of the homeless crisis. Otherwise as we house people we’re evicting people, and it’s a never ending cycle,” she said.

The location was one that had been vacant for about 20 years, Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig said. It had previously had problems with homeless camps and litter.

When completed, Butterfly Gardens will serve those making 15% to 30% of area median income.

“We’re very proud of this groundbreaking today and what this project represents,” Magsig said.

The project is in partnership with Self Help Enterprises, a low-income housing developer based in Visalia.

“A lot of people say, ‘What do we do? What do we do?’ And at the end, they do nothing. But these organizations partnering with government organizations...come together. They have a vision,” said Clovis Mayor Jose Flores.