

THE SUN-GAZETTE

Affordable rental housing in Farmersville begins to build

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Next phase of Self Help Enterprises' Los Arroyos project is about to kick off, bringing more affordable housing units to Farmersville

FARMERSVILLE – The first phase of the Los Arroyos project, a project that will bring more affordable housing units to Farmersville in the form of a new apartment complex, is ready to hit the ground and get operations running.

Once open a new apartment complex will bring 108 units of affordable rental housing for low-income residents and farmworkers in Farmersville. The Los Arroyos project is split into two phases, with phase one encompassing the southern side of the complex and phase two encompassing the northern side. The northern side of the complex is specifically for applicants who are low-income farmworkers, according to project manager Jose Flores.

“There are 54 units for low-income households that are farmworkers,” Flores said. “So in our affirmative fair housing marketing plan, we will be reaching out to residents of Farmersville during that process, to see who qualifies as a farmworker who is low-income.”

Construction for the southern side is set to start on Nov. 1 and be completed by next year on the same day. The project is already underway with the construction on the northern side being on schedule at 36% completion and an expected completion date set for May 16, 2023.

An update of the project was presented to Farmersville City Council at their Oct. 10 meeting by Flores and Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) director of asset management Patrick Isherwood, who is also a Tulare City Council member. According to Flores, there have been no changes in the project's ultimate plan design.

According to Isherwood, the project targets housing for extremely low to very low income families. He said the apartment complex does not have a type of rental assistance but low-income applicants under Section 8, which is a federal program that assists low-income families as well as disabled and elderly communities, are encouraged and welcome to submit applications.

Also according to Isherwood, applications for the apartments in the northern side, phase two, will be available January 2023 and applications for the southern apartments, phase one, will not be available until August 2023. This is due to income housing tax credit applications not being accepted after being submitted for over 120 days.

The apartment complex will be located at 135 E. Walnut Ave. with 108 units. The second phase of the project designates 54 units for farmworker families. The complex will have 36 one, two and three-bedroom units each amongst 18 residential buildings. It will also feature a playground, open space for residents and a 3,000 square-foot community building. The community building will include a computer lab, which will be available to adults and children for schoolwork and educational activities.

SHE will offer residents of Los Arroyos an onsite resident services program that will include job training, health and wellness services, financial training, homebuyer education and a variety of after-school activities for youth. The project will include a vanpool program in partnership with the California Vanpool Authority that will transport residents and the surrounding community to and from work. Monthly rent payments could range from \$392 to \$906 but will ultimately be determined based on unit size and income.

Los Arroyos will also be highly energy-efficient, with sustainable features including solar panels, water conservation and a gray water recycling system. The project's solar panel system will offset the power used in the common area, residential loads and community center, making it a grid neutral zero net energy project.

Phase one of Los Arroyos is being financed through a combination of Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program funds through California's Cap-and-Trade proceeds, Infill Infrastructure Grant Program, and Competitive Permanent Local Housing Allocation funding from the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), and private equity raised through the federal low-income housing tax credit program. The AHSC program is administered through a partnership between the Strategic Growth Council and HCD. This phase is scheduled to begin construction in November 2022 and be complete in November 2023.

The second phase of the project is being financed through a combination of Rural Housing 514 loans (USDA), the Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program (FWHG) from HCD, Non-Competitive Permanent Local Housing Allocation funds provided by City of Farmersville and Tulare County and private equity raised through the federal low-income housing tax credit program.