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POWAY: Council to consider proposal for apartment renovation, affordable housing conversion

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POWAY: Council to consider proposal for apartment renovation, affordable housing conversion

By ANDREA MOSS - amoss@nctimes.com North County Times - The Californian | Posted: Monday, January 17, 2011 6:41 pm | [No Comments Posted](#) | [Print](#)

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[Buy this photo](#) Orange Gardens Apartments in Poway will be remodeled and converted to affordable housing, pending approval by the Poway City Council. (Photo by Bill Wechter - Staff Photographer)





The city and a nonprofit developer are preparing to renovate and turn an Oak Knoll Road apartment complex into affordable housing for low-income residents.

The City Council is expected to sign off on the \$14.5 million project at Orange Gardens Apartments during a 7 p.m. meeting Tuesday at City Hall.

The council will also be asked to approve a \$7.6 million loan from the city's redevelopment agency for the conversion.

Poway has teamed up with nonprofit developers to build several new affordable-housing complexes over the years. But this is only the second acquisition, rehabilitation and conversion project the city has been involved in.

Poway Redevelopment Services Manager Ingrid Alverde said last week that conversions are an efficient, effective way for the city to meet multiple housing goals.

"We're able to satisfy the housing need with existing stock, and at the same time, we're revitalizing the neighborhood," she said. "And we're providing affordable housing for the families that are living there. So it's a triplicate bottom line."

Extensive improvements planned

The previous conversion project was at Oak Knoll Villas. Like Orange Gardens Apartments, Oak Knoll Villas is along a stretch of Oak Knoll Road and was densely packed with aging and, in some cases, dilapidated apartment complexes.

Escondido-based nonprofit Community HousingWorks bought Oak Knoll Villas and fixed it up with financial and logistical help from Poway's redevelopment agency.

Completed in 2009, the project increased the city's supply of affordable-housing units by 52. Community HousingWorks continues to own and oversee the property, whose residents pay less than market-rate rents.

Poway teamed up with the nonprofit Foundation for Affordable Housing and nonprofit developer Affirmed Housing Group for the Orange Gardens Apartments project shortly after the one at Oak Knoll

Villas was completed.

Built in 1976, Orange Gardens Apartments is a 2-acre, six-building complex at 12510 Oak Knoll Road. Foundation for Affordable Housing and nonprofit developer Affirmed Housing Group created a legal entity called Poway Family Housing Partners, which bought the property with the help of a \$1.3 million loan from the city's redevelopment agency.

A renovation plan Affirmed Housing created with input from the city said the developer will remodel the complex inside and out. The work will include exterior stucco work, an overall paint job and the installation of a solar water heating system, energy-efficient doors and windows, and drought-tolerant landscaping, according to the plan.

A 1,800-square-foot community room and a large tot lot will also be added to Orange Gardens Apartments. And individual units in the complex will get new appliances, new flooring and other improvements and upgrades, the plan states.

Deed to limit rents

Existing Orange Gardens residents whose incomes fall below federally set limits for low- and very low-income tenants will be allowed to continue living at the complex. The maximum income for a family of four wanting to qualify is \$47,100.

Tenants with higher incomes will have to move out. State law requires that nonprofit developers provide such tenants with financial and logistical help with their relocations.

Affirmed Housing hired San Diego-based Prince Business Management Systems, which specializes in relocation plans, to assist Orange Gardens tenants who will be forced out by the renovation and conversion project.

Affirmed Housing President Jim Silverwood could not be reached for comment. Alverde said all tenants involved have met with a relocation specialist who told them how much money they can expect to receive, though no one will be asked to move unless the council approves the project.

In some cases, the amounts involved will be enough to cover the down payment on a home, she said.

The new loan the council will be asked to approve Tuesday will bring the city's total investment in the project to about \$8.9 million. In exchange for the help, the nonprofit agreed to a deed restriction that will keep Orange Gardens' rents affordable.

The city launched its own \$10 million improvement project along Oak Knoll Road in 2008. That work, which is still under way, includes major upgrades to the road and a sewer line that runs beneath it, the undergrounding of utilities, and the installation of sidewalks, decorative lights and landscaping. It's expected to be finished in the spring.

Call staff writer Andrea Moss at 760-739-6654.

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