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Sonoma County moving ahead on affordable housing project in Sonoma

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Rising rents and a shortage in housing stock continue to put a squeeze on Sonoma, a community where the majority of its workforce lives outside the city limits.

Sonoma County officials are now moving ahead with plans for a housing project that will

provide some much-needed relief to the city of 11,000. It's expected to bring 49 apartment units for very low- to moderate-income families on the corner of Broadway and Clay Street.

"This is a project that has been a long time coming," City Manager Carol Giovanatto said. "We're really thrilled that it is moving forward."

The city's community development agency initially purchased the site at 20269 Broadway for about \$2.5 million in 2007. It used redevelopment dollars to buy the nearly 2-acre plot, which it earmarked for affordable housing. When Gov. Jerry Brown and state legislators did away with redevelopment agencies five years later, though, the city turned over the property to the Sonoma County Housing Authority, operated by the Community Development Commission.

The commission continued the city's mission to find a developer to build the affordable housing units on the site. Earlier this month, it selected Satellite Affordable Housing Associates as its top recommendation, a choice they plan to take to county supervisors today.

"I would imagine they're going to do a great job," said County Supervisor Susan Gorin, who doesn't expect any challenges to the commission's recommendation. "We have great respect and admiration for our appointees on the CDC and our staff to go through the details of potential projects."

Satellite, one of seven developers to apply for the project, received unanimous support from staff and a community development advisory committee, said Jim Leddy, the commission's special projects director. He said another public hearing will be held in a few months to discuss the transfer of the property and the developer's timeline and funding for the \$20.5 million project, as well as seek county supervisors' final approval.

Eve Stewart, housing development director at Satellite, which is working with Oakland-based architectural firm, Pyatok, said they're looking at various funding sources for the project, including state and federal dollars allocated through the county. They hope to break ground by the end of next year. It would take a little more than a year to complete, Stewart said.

Satellite is looking to build 19 one-bedroom, 15 two-bedroom and 15 three-bedroom units on the Broadway site. Ten apartments would be set aside for disabled and homeless veterans. And 16 units would be dedicated to extremely low-income individuals. The site also will include a picnic area, playground, raised garden beds and a community room. They also plan to work with La Luz Center to provide residents with services, such as nutrition and economic literacy education, Stewart said.

"People are depending on this (project)," Sonoma Mayor Laurie Gallian said.

Stewart said they'll be working closely with neighbors, holding public meetings and assembling an advisory committee to ensure the site plan blends "beautifully with the rest of the community." They've already met with residents to discuss their concerns, including the impact the project could have on parking and traffic in the area, she said.

Satellite isn't new to Sonoma. It built the 43-unit Valley Oak subdivision on 2 acres off Highway 12 on the northwest side of town. It was the last affordable housing complex to be constructed in the city, officials said. [Read the article here.](#) ^[3]

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