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## City breaks ground on \$16 million affordable senior housing apartment

Posted On: March 1st, 2016

BY ROANN PAO | STAFF | The Daily Californian

Several city officials and community-based developers broke ground Tuesday on a \$16 million affordable senior housing facility in South Berkeley's Adeline Corridor, making it one of few located in the area.

Located at 3132 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Harper Crossing ? managed by Satellite

Affordable Housing Associates, or SAHA ? will provide 42 units for low-income seniors.

According to Susan Friedland, executive director of SAHA, Harper Crossing is expected to finish construction in summer 2017, with applications opening in spring 2017. Seniors aged 62 and above with less than half the city?s median income level will be eligible to apply. Selection will be based on a lottery system, Friedland said.

SAHA was formed in 2013 as a merger between Satellite Housing and Affordable Housing Associates to provide quality affordable homes and strengthen neighborhoods.

Mayor Tom Bates, who was also present at the groundbreaking, noted that the status of the property had been ambiguous for 20 years because of problems with legal ownership and funding. The city was on the verge of abandoning the project and had considered using the property for market-rate housing because the site was close to the Ashby BART station.

After assembling the necessary financing, however, the city eventually brought on SAHA in 2013 to manage the project.

?Harper Crossing is a big step towards satisfying the needs of an aging senior population for safe and secure housing,? said Councilmember Max Anderson, whose district oversees the property. ?We?re very glad to see it for our community.?

But Eleanor Walden ? who lives in another SAHA-managed affordable senior housing building, Redwood Gardens ? said affordable housing is still one of the most neglected aspects of living in the city.

?Berkeley, before its progressive image, has been way behind in pushing for affordable housing,? Walden said. ?It has given way to the developers who are gouging people in this area for extraordinarily high rents.?

Councilmember Kriss Worthington, noting the city?s need for more affordable housing, said the city is awaiting the status of nine pending affordable housing proposals submitted by SAHA and the Northern California Land Trust, among others.

With UC Berkeley expecting additional enrollment in coming years, student housing will be another major problem up for consideration, Bates added.

According to Worthington, other proposals have been made to obtain more funding for affordable housing. Berkeley City Council has been considering a proposed \$1 million loan to the city?s Housing Trust Fund ? authored by Worthington ? as a possible measure to support more city housing developments for low-income individuals.

But for Friedland, who noted that there has not been any new large-scale affordable housing construction since 2011 because of a lack of local resources, the opening of Harper Crossing may be able to spearhead similar projects in the city.

?I?m really, really happy to see this project in construction,? Friedland said.

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3132 MLK Jr. Way

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