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Construction underway for affordable apartments long-slated for Sonoma

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By MARTIN ESPINOZA | The Press Democrat | February 23, 2020 at 4:27PM

Plumbing trenches are now being dug at the Broadway and Clay Street construction site in Sonoma where 48 apartments aimed at housing low-income residents are expected to be completed by next summer.

Site clearing and preparation for Altamira Apartments, constructed by Berkeley-based

Satellite Affordable Housing Associates, has been underway since November.

But the sorely needed housing project will get an official groundbreaking Monday.

"It's a full-on construction site at the moment," said Adam Kuperman, senior project manager with the company.

Kuperman said Altamira will provide much-needed affordable rentals and support services to families and formerly homeless veterans earning 30% to 60% of the median income in Sonoma County. Monthly rents will range from \$464 to \$1,542, he said.

"The targeted affordability is what makes it help solve a big gap in what's available in the market today versus what's needed," he said.

Sonoma Mayor Logan Harvey said the project addresses the needs of city residents with "very low" incomes, many of them working families forming the backbone of the local community.

"We talk a lot about how we're going to get people out of situations of homelessness — this is how we prevent them from ever getting there," Harvey said. "This is housing for people who work in our hotels, who work in our restaurants, are working in our kitchen, work in our schools, who provide services as home care nurses."

Harvey said many of these workers are actually driving to Sonoma from communities where housing is more affordable. That type of commuting contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, he said.

"When you work in a community, you deserve to live there," he said.

Harvey said the project was approved by City Council members and the Planning Commission before he joined the council, but he remembers attending public meetings and voicing his support for the project.

The Altamira complex will be designed as a family-oriented environment, with eight residential buildings and one community building surrounding a central courtyard, as well as picnic and children's play areas, Kuperman said.

Ten of the 48 apartments will be set aside for formerly homeless families, he said. Satellite Affordable Housing Associates is planning to partner with La Luz Center to provide on-site services for Altamira residents.

The Berkeley affordable housing developer and property manager has been doing business for more than 50 years and has 75 properties, predominantly in the East Bay and North Bay.

Funding for the \$29 million project came from a number of sources, including the city of Sonoma, the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, the Santa Rosa and Sonoma County housing authorities, California Community Reinvestment Corp., California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, Federal Home Loan Bank San Francisco and Wells Fargo Bank.

Sonoma Vice Mayor Rachel Hundley said she's supported the project since it first started making its way through the city review and entitlement process. Hundley said rents in Sonoma

are prohibitive for many residents, and nowhere near as low as what will be offered at Altamira.

?There is absolutely nothing close to those prices and it?s certainly needed,? she said.
?There are a lot of people who work in the city who cannot afford to live in the city. Now, they will have an opportunity to do so.?

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