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\$250K grant sought for safety upgrades at San Bernardino's Waterman Gardens

By Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

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SAN BERNARDINO >> The county housing authority has applied for a \$250,000 grant to increase security and help protect residents of Waterman Gardens.

The grant request comes on the heels of a recent spate of crime in San Bernardino, that [includes 25 homicide deaths](#) since the start of the year, the most recent on Thursday night. San Bernardino police were also ambushed by three gunmen just minutes before that homicide.

“More security would be a really good idea because I don’t think the security we have now patrols as much as they should.” said Nancy Brito, who lives in the 252-unit complex with her two children.

The grant would provide funding for security fencing, lighting and surveillance equipment at the large complex at Base Line and Waterman Avenue.

“We want to let those families know that we are there for them, to make the site safer for them,” said Ana Gamiz, spokeswoman for the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino. “And I think this gives reassurance to the residents that their safety is a priority for us.”

The killings was part of the organization’s push to apply for the grant, but HACSB Executive Director Daniel Nackerman said they would’ve asked for the grant money eventually.

“This is us being proactive,” Nackerman said.

According to both Gamiz and Nackerman, the housing authority has had success in minimizing criminal activities on site in the past by deploying armed security guards and by using the city’s Crime-Free Multi-Housing program.

Approval for the grant could take a few months, and in the meantime, the HACSB will be installing temporary fencing and lighting, welcome news to Idalia Rosales-Arrevalo who’s lived at Waterman Gardens for 16 years.

“It gets really dark down this street at night,” she said. “When my daughters come home from school, they call me from the little parking lot and I meet them so they don’t have to walk alone. Yes, putting up lights would be a very good thing.”

In her 16 years at the complex, Rosales-Arrevalo has seen residents come and go and she has seen the area go through many changes.

“Honestly, I think it’s been getting better lately,” she said. “It used to be really bad, but it’s getting better, but it can always be better than that.”

Brito agreed, adding that in the three years she’s lived there she’s been happy with her neighbors and the management of the property.

Waterman Gardens — a mix of stand-alone duplexes and apartment-style units — was built in 1943.

In 2014, the City Council approved a [revitalization plan](#) which would be completed in phases over six to eight years.

Last June, ground was broken on the first phase of the Waterman Gardens \$200 million redevelopment project. The second phase is expected to begin this summer, Nackerman said.

Rancho Cucamonga’s National Community Renaissance is the master developer of the project.

Councilwoman Virginia Marquez, who represents the area where the complex is located, said she fully supported the grant application.

“I know the residents there quite well, and they’re always expressing their concerns on crime,” she said. “If they become recipients of this grant, it will be very good for the residents.”

Staff Writer Ryan Hagen contributed to this report.

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