

## Redlands housing community demolition set

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REDLANDS - The demolition of a 70-year-old housing community will take place on Thursday.

Valencia Grove - at the corner of Orange Street and Lugonia Avenue - will be replaced with 228 units in a modern, energy efficient housing community that will offer townhomes and single-family homes once completed.

An estimated date of completion has yet to be determined.

The demolition will take place following a groundbreaking ceremony of the proposed project at 9:30 a.m., said Ana Gamiz, director of policy and community affairs for the Housing Authority of San Bernardino County.

"When you have a housing complex that old, it is really hard to do just renovations," Gamiz said about the decision to tear down the homes on the property. "It was in real need of having a major upgrade... and rebuilding would be more efficient, not only with the construction model, but also with space."

The space where the housing community is has a lot of open space. Construction plans are looking to accommodate more buildings and homes.

"After realizing you can only put so many Band-Aids on an old housing development, it was necessary and better for the residents to build something more modern and energy efficient that would maximize that space," Gamiz said.

Construction will be done in three phases, with the work being completed on- and off-site with the help of Clayton Homes.

"We are using a new, innovative construction method," Gamiz said. "Clayton Homes develops what they call 'modular construction,' so most of the construction of these units will take place off-site, and some construction will take place on-site with the assembling of these housing units.

"The new approach (will speed) up this construction," she added.

The first phase will take place on the block of Lugonia and Orange, up to Sixth Street and Delaware Avenue, and could take 16 to 18 months to complete.

Other phases will follow, Gamiz said.

Those who lived in the housing community have moved to other homes with the assistance of the housing authority and the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Housing authority staff worked with HUD to find and issue vouchers for residents to move and rent from private landlords, said Gamiz.

After each phase of the construction project is complete, families will be able to move back in, she said, adding that former tenants will have the first pick of residences.

The county owns the property where the housing community is located, and once the project is complete, Redlanders will see 228 mixed-income units, complete with a multi-use community center with a pool.

Tenants will also have the opportunity to purchase homes under a first-time buyer program.

"This project is a long time in coming," said Redlands Mayor Pete Aguilar, adding that it will help improve housing stock and the community. "The city is happy to have approved the plans."

The project was made possible through a partnership with the county housing authority, Chase Bank, PNC Bank, Clayton Homes, Perera Construction, the city of Redlands and the Redlands Unified School District.

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