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SB COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY



At Culson Staff Photographer
Gustav Joslin, deputy executive director for the San Bernardino County Housing Authority, walks through a vacant apartment in the Waterman Gardens housing community off Waterman Avenue in San Bernardino.

Revitalization in works

Waterman Gardens upgrade part of \$100M area project

By Josh Duhaney
Staff Writer

SAN BERNARDINO — One of the region's oldest public housing projects is in line to get a major makeover.

Officials with the San Bernardino County Housing

Authority aim to revitalize the Waterman Gardens Housing Community, an eastside development built in 1943, through a \$100 million effort to add mixed-income housing and more community services in the area.

HOUSING A4



The San Bernardino County Housing Authority is looking to upgrade an existing housing development at the intersection of Waterman Avenue and Base Line. The plan is to transform the development, which has been around since 1943, with mixed-income housing and additional community services.

Upgrading housing development

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Gustav Joslin, deputy executive director for the Housing Authority of San Bernardino County, shows where the HACSB plans on transforming the Waterman Gardens housing community to provide mixed-income housing and community services to residents.

HOUSING

From A1

"The main difference is, it won't be this kind of institutional housing anymore," said Gustav Joslin, deputy executive director of the Housing Authority.

Located at the southeast corner of Waterman Avenue and Base Line, the subsidized housing project originally contained 270 units, including temporary war housing.

Today it has 252 family units in 114 buildings — 87 single-story duplexes, 24 multifamily town houses, a Head Start facility, a maintenance facility and a management office building.

The development has received upgrades over the years, but Joslin said a community like Waterman Gardens should have been overhauled about 20 years ago.

Revitalization efforts will expand the development, which has about 775 residents, to around 400 mixed-income units and

roughly 1,400 residents.

The development will consist of apartments and townhomes with one to four bedrooms, and a portion of them will be set aside for seniors.

"The majority of residents we serve are seniors, children and the disabled," said Ana Ganiz, the Housing Authority's director of policy and community affairs. Indeed, those three groups make up about 67 percent of Waterman Gardens' residents, she said.

So in addition to designating some housing for seniors, the Housing Authority also is expanding the child care services that are provided on the 38-acre site.

Plans are in the works for a bigger community center for after-school, day care and early childhood development services.

There also will be more room for adult education programs and a computer lab.

That was especially good news for Ricardo Alvarez, who has lived at Waterman Gardens for about four years. "I

think people would want to see more help for jobs training," he said.

Alvarez, 29, lives in Waterman Gardens with his 8-year-old daughter.

The community has a reputation for violence, but Alvarez said it has become safer under Nancy Finch, a property manager for the Housing Authority. "Management has done a good job," he said. "It's a good community. I feel comfortable about letting my daughter out (to play). She's safe."

She might also have more options for play. The Housing Authority has plans for more green space, basketball courts and soccer fields.

Waterman Gardens is the second-oldest and second-largest of the Housing Authority's six public housing developments, officials said. The Housing Authority has a 20-year plan to revamp all the developments.

Officials said federal dollars are difficult to come by because the competition is intense among urban centers through-

out the country.

The Housing Authority therefore will have to scratch for funding wherever they can find it, including from nonprofit groups, and private investors who get low-income housing tax credits.

"It's a long-term process," said Susan Benner, executive director for the Housing Authority. "A lot of it is going to (have to) do with our (efforts) to get funding for these projects." The Housing Authority anticipates breaking ground at Waterman Gardens in late 2012. Build-out could take between four and eight years, officials said.

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