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Officials tour Sunnyvale senior housing project during Affordable Housing Week

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Posted: 05/12/2011 08:01:23 PM PDT

In conjunction with Affordable Housing Week, city and county officials were given a construction tour May 3 of the nearly completed 124-unit senior housing complex at 660 Fair Oaks Ave. set to open by the end of the year.

Silicon Valley nonprofit Mid-Peninsula Housing invited about 20 people to the event, including key players involved in making the \$40 million project a reality.

MidPen partnered with the city of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara County to create the Fair Oaks Plaza, which sits directly next to Valley Health Center and is a half-mile from the Sunnyvale Senior Center. Funding came from Google, Union Bank, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara, the city of Sunnyvale and others.

"We really want to highlight the importance of affordable housing, because right now affordable housing funding is under attack at all levels," said Kevin Zwick, executive director of the Housing Trust of Santa Clara County. "At the federal level, through the [housing and urban development] budget and [community development block grant] funding, and at the state level with redevelopment agencies, which actually provide \$1 billion in affordable housing statewide every year.

"As redevelopment areas go, so does affordable housing."

After donning hard hats, visitors got an up-close look at the bedrooms and areas that will include a community center, computer lab, fitness center, and courtyards. The plaza is the

largest seniors-only affordable housing complex to

be built in Sunnyvale in the past 20 years.

"We spent a lot of time on this design to try to make a truly livable site, one that will encourage community and will have enough space for folks to come together as a community, so we can provide services to all the residences," MidPen President Matthew O. Franklin said. "About 18 units will be for folks with mental health challenges deemed by the county capable of independent living but still in need of a lot of support services."

MidPen will provide three full-time employees to help residents obtain any outside resources they may need to get, including the right referral agencies. In addition to the 18 units for residents with mental health challenges, the complex also reserved space for 93 Section 8 vouchers through the Housing Authority.

The lease-up process began April 13 and in two weeks MidPen staff received 800 applications. It expects to receive a total of between 2,500 and 3,000 applications for the 124 units.

Seniors with incomes between 25 and 50 percent of the area median income, or roughly \$21,225 to \$42,450 for a household of two, are eligible to apply. Rents will range from \$498 for the least expensive one bedroom unit to \$1,193 for the most expensive two bedroom unit.

"There's a desperate need of this form of housing," Sunnyvale Mayor Melinda Hamilton said. "It's important to be able to provide people affordable space in our community, especially folks who have o

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wned a home here, raised children here; the whole concept of aging in place, I think can be really beneficial to people's health as they get older.

"If you can be part of something that is really designed to be a community but also there's health services across the street, I think that's a huge benefit for not just people who live here, but the community as a whole."



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