

Bond money to provide housing opportunities

By Lori Weisberg

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More than \$36 million in state bond money has been awarded to San Diego County projects that will eventually provide affordable housing opportunities for 1,019 households from Escondido to Lemon Grove.

The money, which comes from a 2006 voter-approved bond issue, is specifically earmarked for infill and transit-friendly projects that are also affordable to lower income households.

One pot of the money is specifically set aside for infrastructure projects that are necessary to make the affordable housing developments possible.

Improvements such as streets, parks, parking structures and traffic mitigation facilities are among the projects that qualify for the money. Yet another pool of funds is dedicated strictly to high-density projects designed to encourage increased public transit ridership.

Receiving the lion's share of the San Diego money – nearly \$27 million – is a development known as the Commercial and 22nd Street Mixed-Use Project, a 235-unit San Diego development, of which 197 units are affordable. The \$83.5 million project includes 17 for-sale row homes and 38 market-rate rental lofts.

Of the \$27 million, \$6 million was allocated for infrastructure improvements, including relocation of a 60-inch storm drain, design and construction of new water and sewer service and remediation of contaminated soil.

The project also received an \$11 million transit-oriented development loan because of its proximity to shopping, major transportation and schools.

“The purpose of this money is to spur housing development at transit-oriented locations and on parcels that the market couldn't deliver because there is an inordinate amount of infrastructure needed or there are brownfields,” said Brad Wiblin of BRIDGE Housing Corp., one of the developers.

“Our project is on a school district site, and there had been a maintenance facility there for years, but there was infrastructure that hadn't been touched for decades.”

Also collaborating on the development are the MAAC Project and Bronze Triangle Community Development Corp.

Wiblin expects the project to be under way by early next year, with completion targeted for 2011. For more information, see comm22.com.

Other San Diego County projects that received bond money were:

Mobile Haven, a 61-unit seniors complex planned for East Washington Avenue in Escondido. The infrastructure improvements include the widening of Juniper Street to the east of the project, reconstruction of Waverly Place to the west and a new storm-water catch basin. Developing the nearly \$16 million project is National Community Renaissance of

California, a nonprofit specializing in affordable housing.

Citronica, a mixed-use development on 3.8 acres in downtown Lemon Grove. The nearly \$32 million two-phase project, which received a \$4.8 million grant, calls for a 52-unit affordable housing complex and 190 units of market-rate rentals and for-sale housing. It will be the first large-scale mixed-use redevelopment effort in Lemon Grove.

The affordable housing phase will include underground parking, 5,000 square feet of ground-level commercial space and three or four stories of residential space.

The bond money will help finance a realignment of the Highway 94 off-ramp and widening of North Avenue; the installation of new traffic signals; replacement of deteriorated sewer and storm drain systems; new curbs, gutters and sidewalks; and construction of medians and installation of landscaping.

Ten Fifty B, a 226-unit downtown high-rise that will include rentals affordable to very-low-income households. The \$90 million project, which is being developed by Affirmed Housing, will be the tallest affordable-housing project in the county. Monthly rents will range from \$379 for a one-bedroom apartment to \$1,066 for a three-bedroom apartment.

The \$4 million grant it received is on top of \$10 million in bond money it was awarded earlier this year. The project is expected to be completed in 2010.