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Sacramento to renovate oldest public housing complex near railyard

Federal government awards Sacramento housing officials \$30 million
Award will start renovation of Twin Rivers site



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The federal government has awarded Sacramento housing officials \$30 million to jump-start the renovation of the county's oldest public housing complex.

The money will more than double the size of the Twin Rivers housing development north of downtown and will revitalize a neighborhood that was built in 1940, officials announced Monday at a festive press conference in the neighborhood.

La Shelle Dozier, executive director of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, said the first phase of construction will begin within 18 months.

The existing 218 units of public housing will be replaced and current residents will be placed in the new, more modern units. Another 134 units of affordable housing and 135 "market rate" units will be

constructed. Mayor Kevin Johnson has set a goal of adding 10,000 homes to the downtown area by 2025, including 2,500 affordable units.

Housing officials said they are working with private developers and will seek state cap-and-trade funds to round out an expected price tag of roughly \$100 million for the work. Improved health and social services will also be provided in the neighborhood.

Twin Rivers – also known as Dos Rios – sits on a small triangle-shaped plot off Richards Boulevard and North 12th Street. The area around the neighborhood has been the focus of a revitalization effort, as city planners seek to redevelop the nearby downtown railyard and construct the Township 9 neighborhood.

“Folks who have lived here have been disconnected and kind of left behind,” Johnson said. “We’re going to be able to connect this community in a real way.”

The funding is coming from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) choice neighborhood initiative. Atlanta, Kansas City, Mo., Memphis, Tenn., and Milwaukee also received large grants.

Lourdes Castro Ramirez, a principal deputy assistant secretary with HUD, said the grants target areas of major cities that have been neglected.

“This area was critical to the growth of our country,” she said, referring to the railyard. “Unfortunately, like many communities, this area saw tremendous decline.”

DeCoe Gilmore, a 15-year resident of Twin Rivers, said local and federal housing officials were receptive to neighbors’ ideas, from increasing the neighborhood’s access to downtown to providing better shower heads in residents’ bathrooms.

“We can’t wait for the first knock-down day,” she said.

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