



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Partners with Habitat for Humanity to Build 10 Cottages for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Mulberry Village tiny homes project will use volunteer labor to build 10 homes Oct. 1-2

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Riverside and the Downtown community will come together Friday and Saturday (10/1-2) for a “wall raising” event at 2825 Mulberry Street to kick off construction of 10 homes for individuals experiencing homelessness in Riverside.

The Mulberry Village “tiny cottages” effort will feature professional builders, sponsor groups and volunteers working side-by-side in a spirit of camaraderie to build safe, healthy, and affordable homes.

The project will provide stable and affordable housing; case management and supportive services based on clients’ needs; and an opportunity for homeless clients to graduate into permanent housing. The City Housing Authority will own and manage the project, which must remain affordable for 55 years and rented to persons earning at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or \$25,150 for one person in 2021.

The Project will utilize California Bungalow architecture to be consistent with the Downtown neighborhood and will offer efficiency and one-bedroom floor plans in approximately 400 square feet. The project template can be utilized elsewhere in Riverside to benefit other affordable housing clients.

“This is a fantastic example of the community coming together after a long period apart due to Covid-19 and making an immediate impact for Riverside’s most vulnerable residents.” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “I look forward to bringing my hammer and nails this Friday when I join our friends at Habitat for Humanity and volunteers from all across Riverside in building these homes.”

About 50 volunteers are expected to come out on both Friday and Saturday to raise five homes a day; constructing an entire structure from a pre-laid foundation to the roof over the course of a morning and afternoon. Community groups involved in Mulberry Village include the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce, Leadership Riverside, Riverside Rotary, Amazon Fulfillment, and the Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance, each of which are expected to build individual homes.

A growing number of California communities are exploring smaller cottage style and other alternate structure types as a viable option to create housing that creatively uses density in a built-out environment, appeals to younger buyers, and can be used for a variety of residential purposes (e.g., transitional housing, etc.). These structures range in size from 70 to 350 or more square feet, depending on their type and intended term of occupancy.

The Mulberry Village Project will produce ten small, self-contained homes including kitchens and sanitary facilities. The Project will be arranged as a “village” designed around a central green space. The homes have the potential to offer a design solution to issues like homelessness, the lack of affordable units, and the need for market-rate housing that appeals to all buyers.

“What has happened here is about strong community vision and community support,” said City Councilmember Erin Edwards, who represents the area. “Through these homes, the City of Riverside will impact the lives of homeless individuals in a way that has a profound impact on the economic and health outcomes for these residents. I am proud to support this truly game-changing project for the Downtown.”

The Habitat Home Build format allows builders to work with and develop partnerships with community stakeholders, leaders in the local housing community, state and local housing advocates, and housing industry professionals. The foundation is poured ahead of time, then electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and finishes are all completed on the day of the project build. About 40 people will collaborate on the house at the same time, including a mix of contractors and community volunteers.

Kathy Michalak, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Riverside, said the project is a major step forward for the region.

“To the credit and commitment of the various partners involved in this Project, Habitat Riverside would like to congratulate all parties involved with Mulberry Village,” Michalak said. “Mulberry Village is a great project template that will help elevate the quality of life for residents of the community. It’s also a great and joyous way for the community to come together in public-private partnerships and multi-agency/jurisdictional collaborations to build a very worthy housing project.”

For more information on City Homeless and housing programs, visit <https://www.riversideca.gov/homelessolutions/>.

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19