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First phase of 'affordable' apartment project to open

By Cheeto Barrera, summer intern for the Morgan Hill Times.

Affordable apartments will be ready for residents later this month at the Murphy Ranch Townhomes on East Dunne and Butterfield avenues.

A total of 64 apartments will open in the first phase of the project. The second, and final, phase will open 38 with apartments. Construction of that phase is slated to begin in May 2004.

Rents will be low with some units available for workers earning only 22 percent of Santa Clara County's median income -- \$16,896 for two people. Others will be marketed to renters earning up to 60 percent of the median -- \$46,080 for two people. Two- and three-bedroom units will cost \$1,383 to \$1,449 per month, compared to similar units renting at market rate of \$1,450 to \$1,750 per month.

The project is a working partnership between the Redevelopment Agency and the First Community Housing of San Jose.

First Community Housing of San Jose is a private, nonprofit developer, with a commitment to building affordable and green buildings that set well in the local environment. Its Executive Director, Jeff Oberdorfer is a licensed architect with more than 30 year's experience. //snip

The Townhomes, set on 7.2 acres, have two, three or four bedrooms, their own washer/dryer units and large and private backyards. Common areas include a solar-heated swimming pool, two tot lots and a recreation building with lounge and computer study lab.

The project is designed to be highly energy-efficient and "**green**", featuring vinyl energy-efficient windows, air conditioning and heating provided by a hydraulic system using hot water recirculated from the hot water heater, recycled non-formaldehyde battery insulation and fluorescent lighting throughout.

Residents will live within walking distance of stores, the Caltrain station and bus stops.

Eco-passes will be issued for free transportation on buses and light rail.

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SL note: 102 apartments on 7.2 acres equals 14.2 units (~36 persons) per net residential acre, about 7 units (~18 persons) per gross neighborhood acre. This is too low a density to support a high walk/bike mode share.