

To: Laura Fischer, General Manager, Heber Public Utility District
From: George Galvan, Principal Planner
Date: February 11, 2022
Subject: **Miraluz Affordable Housing / Tentative Tract Map #00992**

Background

Heber Meadows Subdivision (Tract Map# 956) was approved by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors on August 3, 2004. The southern two-thirds of Heber Meadows was subsequently developed into single-family homes. Approximately 10 acres was developed as a stormwater retention basin and “Jiggs” Johnson Park. The remaining 16.22 acres, known as Lot D, is located on Correll Road between Bloomfield Street and Pitzer Road was set aside for multi-family residential development. The site is zone R3 Medium-High Density Residential which allows a maximum of 29 dwelling units per net acre.

Project Description

Heber Meadows I, LP (otherwise known as Chelsea Homes) intends to develop Lot D into multi-family homes as allowed by the Zoning Code. In order to develop the site into multiple phases, the 16.22-acre site is being subdivided in five lots. The first phase, Lot 1, 2.95 acres and will result in the construction of 64 apartments for low-income families at a density of 21.7 dwelling units per acre. The following is a brief summary of the 64-unit Miraluz Apartments:

- 4 separate buildings;
- 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom units;
- Community building;
- Tot lot playground;
- Half-court basketball; and
- Buildings are approximately 75’ away from rear property line.

Subsequent phases would follow based on funding availability and market demand. Subsequent phases will likely follow the same layout configuration and density as Miraluz Apartments.

The project will also result in roadway improvements to the intersection of Pitzer Road and Highway 86. The County of Imperial, along with Chelsea Homes, was able to secure grant funding through the Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Program from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The purpose of the IIG Program is to promote infill housing development by providing gap funding for infrastructure improvements that are necessary to facilitate the development of residential projects. The \$2,315,268 grant will pay for the signalized intersection, as well as a sidewalk from the project site to Dogwood Elementary School. Improvements to the Pitzer-Highway 86 intersection

include the traffic signal, crosswalk, and roadway widening to include turn lanes on Pitzer and on Highway 86.

HPUD's Role

Heber Public Utility District's (HPUD's) powers and authority are governed by the California Public Utilities Code and is limited to only those necessary for the provision of water and wastewater. The project site is located in an unincorporated area under the jurisdiction of the County of Imperial. As such, the authority for discretionary approvals and permitting lie with the County of Imperial. HPUD's role is limited to verifying the availability of water and wastewater. Sufficient capacity exists within HPUD's Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants to service Miraluz and subsequent phases of the project. HPUD is requiring some improvements to existing pipelines along Bloomfield to ensure proper sizing of the pipelines.

HPUD is also responsible for the stormwater collection for the project and provision of recreational amenities. HPUD is requiring the project to pay its fair share of certain infrastructure facilities that were built as part of the Heber Meadows Subdivision. The Heber Meadows Community Facilities District (CFD) is to be updated and revised levy fees on the project to offset the infrastructure that was previously financed by the CFD and to collect annual maintenance fees.

Next Steps

HPUD received a Request for Comments from the Imperial County Planning and Development Services Department regarding the proposed subdivision of Heber Meadows Lot D to accommodate the development of multi-family housing. The Holt Group, Inc. prepared a letter on behalf of HPUD addressing various concerns related to water, wastewater, stormwater, and parks. The Developer appears to be amenable to HPUD's request with regards to water and wastewater issues and the payment of fair share fees.

The County of Imperial conducted an Environmental Evaluation Committee (EEC) on January 27, 2022. The purpose of the EEC is to review any potential impacts that a project may have on the environment (and other related categories such as public services and cultural/historical resources). The EEC does not have approval authority. The EEC reviewed the project and recommended that the County adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project which requires that mitigation measures be implemented to ensure that impacts to the environment are minimized. The MND is currently being circulated for a period of 30 days ending on February 28, 2022.

The Imperial County Planning Commission will be conducting a public hearing on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 9:00 AM. The Planning Commission's review will be limited to the issue of whether the proposed subdivision complies with the County's Zoning Code (Land Use Ordinance) and the County General Plan which show that the project site is intended for the development of multi-family housing. After the Planning Commission conducts their public hearing, the matter is then forwarded to the County Board of Supervisors for approval.