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HOUSING

Applications pour in for senior homes

■ Fremont assisted-living facility to offer 20 units at below-market rates

By Linh Tat
STAFF WRITER

FREMONT – More than 200 people already have inquired about moving into the Tri-City’s first affordable assisted-living senior facility, Fremont Vista Retirement Homes, which still is under construction.

The complex, on Mission Boulevard at the base of the Niles foothills, will provide services for frail seniors who do not have to be in a nursing home but still require assistance in dressing, bathing, housekeeping and meal preparation. Transportation and organized social activities also will be provided.

The 62,000 square-foot retirement home has a target completion date of May, said the facility’s executive director, Joan Bettencourt Newman.

But it now is accepting applications from those wishing to move into the 100-unit complex.

Those hoping to be selected for one of the 20 below-market-rate studios have until Feb. 28 to apply. Applications postmarked after that date will be considered only for market-rate rentals, which include standard or deluxe studios and one-bedroom apartments.

Monthly rental rates of \$2,888 to \$3,888 would decrease to somewhere between \$1,636 and \$2,500 for qualifying low-income seniors. Those seniors must have an annual income of no more than \$37,500, or 70 percent of the area’s median income.

All applicants, whether low-income or not, must be at least 62 years old.

The city of Fremont kicked in \$2.38 million to subsidize the affordable housing units, said Bill Cooper, the city’s housing project manager.

“This is a special development,” he said. “To have an affordable housing complex for assisted living is ... rare in the Bay Area.”

Senior focus-group meetings conducted by the city in 2000 illuminated the need for affordable housing among seniors, said Mary Anne Mendall, administrator for aging and family services in Fremont.

“It’s a major problem, particularly for seniors on a fixed income,” she said.

Selection of individuals for the below-market-rate units will be based on a point system, with priority given first to those who live in Fremont, then those living within the Tri-City area, and finally to seniors elsewhere in the county.

Seniors living far from family members also will be given greater preference.

Applicants with the most points will move forward to the next round and be chosen based on a lottery system, said developer Jerry Chen.

The 2.82-acre property on Mission originally was zoned as a low-density residential area, but Chen pushed for a zoning amendment in order to provide an affordable assisted-living facility.

“Nobody in Fremont has done this before, so why not?” he said. “Somebody’s going to do it sometime. Why not us? Why not now? Why not here?”

To apply to live at Fremont Vista, call Joan Bettencourt Newman at (510) 468-2227 or Emily Yang at (510) 468-2521. A three-dimensional model of the housing complex can be seen at the Fremont Senior Center, 40086 Paseo Padre Parkway

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