

**Oct. 17, 2019**

## **Santa Clara County Housing Authority Updates Community on Stabilization of Buena Vista Mobile Home Park in Palo Alto**

**SAN JOSE, Calif. – Oct. 17, 2019** – The Santa Clara County Housing Authority (SCCHA) and residents of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park in Palo Alto met yesterday to share milestones in park improvements and resident services and to discuss next steps as the Housing Authority begins work on redevelopment strategies.

The Housing Authority purchased the mobile home park in September 2017 following a two-year, communitywide effort to preserve the property for affordable housing while preventing the displacement of about 400 residents. Funding for the park's purchase and redevelopment came from a three-way partnership between Santa Clara County, city of Palo Alto and the Housing Authority. The city and county each committed \$14.5 million in dedicated affordable housing funds for acquisition and rehabilitation, and the Housing Authority contributed an additional \$26 million in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A tri-party regulatory agreement restricts the use of the property for affordable housing for 75 years.

The Caritas Corporation, a nonprofit that specializes in preserving and improving affordable mobile home communities throughout California, became the park's first operator and day-to-day manager under the new ownership.

At yesterday's meeting, the Housing Authority applauded Caritas' good work as an essential and primary player in stabilizing the park (by bringing it up to basic health and safety standards) and making improvements after years of disinvestment.

Now that the park is stabilized, the Housing Authority is taking the lead on planning, redevelopment strategy and improvements to the park's infrastructure. The John Stewart Company will come on as the park's new operator and day-to-day manager, with oversight by the Housing Authority. John Stewart is well-versed in affordable housing property management and compliance matters as they currently manage a large share of the Housing Authority's 2,200-unit housing portfolio.

The Housing Authority will begin to explore redevelopment strategies in coming months. Park residents were encouraged to participate in future meetings throughout the redevelopment process which will kick off in the next 90 days.

"Caritas cares deeply about the long-term stability and well-being of the residents, and I am proud of what we have accomplished together," said Randy Redwitz, CEO of the nonprofit The Caritas Corporation. "Now that we are at the redevelopment phase, Caritas is handing off this next stage to the Housing Authority whose ability to access a broader range of housing finance sources will maximize the redevelopment options. We know Buena Vista is in good hands and its residents will continue to thrive." Caritas owns and operates 24 affordable housing communities with over 3,800 units housing approximately 15,000 residents throughout California. Caritas is well underway in developing two new affordable housing communities in the city of Napa.

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“We’re grateful for Caritas’ good work as an essential and primary player in stabilizing the park,” said SCCHA Executive Director Katherine Harasz. “We are pleased to have John Stewart join our team at this juncture and look forward to working together to make certain this affordable housing asset will continue serving low-income Palo Altans for generations.”

“Our effort to save the Buena Vista simply would not have been possible without Caritas,” said Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, president of the Board of Supervisors. “Caritas was an early and essential partner. They’ve made sure that the Buena Vista will both survive and thrive in the years to come. Our community, and I personally, are deeply grateful for all they’ve done.”

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**About SCCHA**

SCCHA is the largest provider of affordable housing assistance in Santa Clara County, helping make rental housing safe and affordable for low-income families through Section 8 voucher programs and below-market rental properties. Designated a Moving to Work agency by Congress, it has the capacity to assist nearly 18,000 households through innovative policies for the delivery of assisted housing. For more information, visit [www.scchousingauthority.org](http://www.scchousingauthority.org).

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