

Gallup Housing Authority seeks input for repairs

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent
Friday, 21 April 2023 03:35



Public hearing announced to share ideas

The Gallup Housing Authority is looking toward the future as they update their five-year Capital Fund Program. The plan lays out the housing agency's expected expenses for the next five years, and it focuses on repairs and improvements to hardscape and dwellings, especially after tenants move out.

GHA is looking for the community's input on the plan and is holding a public hearing April 21 at 9 am. Tenants or other interested parties are invited to make comments at the hearing, but they need to be on point: the hearing is not a grievance session and does not address policy. It's strictly about what repairs are needed and residents' wish list items such as speed bumps, fences, lighting or parking spaces.

GHA Executive Director Richard Kontz said residents often mention parking when they're talking about their concerns. Most of the housing units in Gallup were built in the '60s and '70s, and only one parking space is assigned for each unit. The houses weren't designed for families with multiple cars, Kontz said.

On that score there is little the GHA can do. Sometimes it's possible to lay gravel or pave an open area, and the agency can repair patios and put up fencing, or put up matching funds to help the city repair and replace deteriorating sidewalks, curbs and gutters.

"The residents appreciate the improvements. When we fenced the properties the residents liked that because transients were just walking through the development stealing things or breaking things," Kontz said.

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Some of the looming needs include replacing equipment, roofing and appliances such as ranges and furnaces, all of which are hitting their replacement cycle.

The CFP plan will be submitted to the federal Housing and Urban Development department and will guide that agency's funding decisions.

"We're getting more money each year than we used to because our performance is better than other organizations," Kontz said. He noted that despite this, nobody gets the full amount they request.

GHA has 15 lots upon which it hopes to start building new homes over the next year, and is also planning to start selling some of the units at Sunshine Canyon within two years.

The housing program is designed to help people experiencing financial difficulties get an economic toehold that will lead to home ownership, so the program requires residents who have stabilized their income and other circumstances to progress out of the public assistance housing system.

"There may be a need for more homes [coming up]. People are supposed to be moving through to market-rate housing," Kontz said.

That means the tenant would either move out or buy the home within two years of reaching income targets. But building can be tricky.

"If you have land that is near something that has already been developed, infrastructure is already in place," Kontz said. "If not, you are stuck with the high cost of installing utilities and infrastructure."

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GHA's board of directors will address written or verbal comments at the meeting.

The proposed plan, along with supporting documentation, is available for review at the Administrative Offices of the GHA at 203 Debra Dr. through April 21. Written comments or questions may be addressed to Kontz. The hearing will also be held there.

By Holly J. Wagner
Sun Correspondent