



Mutual Housing California Finishes Green Renovation in Sacramento Development

Sacramento-based nonprofit [Mutual Housing California](#) recently completed an \$8.6 million green renovation of one of their affordable housing developments. The upgrades should increase the energy efficiency of the complex by 10 percent, an estimated savings of 34,462 kWh per year.

As a result, Mutual Housing at Foothill Farms became the nonprofit's first existing community to receive a green-point rated whole-house label from Build It Green, the Oakland-based nonprofit that uses higher California energy standards as a the basis of its rating system.

"We're very proud to have received the designation on this renovation that not only adds to the environmental sustainability of the development—but of the neighborhood," said Rachel Iskow, Mutual Housing California chief executive officer.

Predevelopment began in March 2014, construction in October 2015. Construction took more than a year because the 98 apartments were fully occupied in use. Mutual Housing had to stagger the renovation so that residents could be moved off-site as their apartments were worked on.

"When they returned to their new homes, everyone was delighted to see what looked like brand new apartments," said Vanessa Guerra, Mutual Housing senior project manager.

Originally built in the 1970s, more than \$500,000 was used to replace 3,500 linear feet of hot-water distribution lines. Ductless, mini-split heat pumps rated 12.5 HSPF, 27.2 SEE and 15.0 EER were installed instead of gas furnaces and air conditioners. The boiler for the central water heating system was replaced with one that offers a 94 percent recovery rate.

The green upgrades should lower resident utility bills.

When [Mutual Housing](#) staff surveyed potential residents, they found that for low- and moderate-income people, being able to pay utility bills was second only to paying rent were their top concerns.

"Making these systems more energy efficient also adds to the financial stability of our residents," said Iskow.

At least 25 percent of the construction and demolition waste was recycled. New flooring contains 75 percent post-consumer recycled materials. Materials with reduced formaldehyde levels replaced interior doors, cabinets

Founded in 1988, Mutual Housing California develops sustainable housing that is affordable to a diversity of households. Our housing builds strong and stable communities through resident participation and leadership development. For more information, call (916) 453-8400 or visit our website at [mutualhousing.com](#).

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and trim in the buildings. Zero- to low-paint stains and adhesives also were used throughout to create a healthier living space for the occupants.

“These changes also add to the residents’ positive health outcomes,” said Iskow.

Two-thirds of the landscaped beds were designed with drought-tolerant plants instead of the original water-thirsty turf. The new “smart” irrigation system measures soil moisture for the low-flow drip sprinklers.

“There have been so many environmentally friendly improvements in building products and technologies that it was a good time to take advantage of them,” said Guerra.

Tricorp Group, Inc. served as the general contractor; the engineers were Stanton Engineering, Cunningham Engineering and Harris and Sloan Consulting Group. Ellis Architects designed the upgrades.

Mutual Housing received \$10,806,073 in tax credit investments from Merritt Community Capital Corporation and \$790,000 in permanent loans from Chase Bank N.A.

Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank, U.S. Bank, Cathay Bank, Umpqua Bank, River City Bank, Sacramento Bank of Commerce and BBVA Compass donated charitable grants to preserve this inventory of affordable housing.

Grants were leveraged through funding from NeighborWorks America. Chase Bank is the lender.

To date, 15 of Mutual Housing’s 19 communities have been built or renovated with green features that create a better quality of life for 80 percent of the nonprofit’s residents.