



## "Lofts on Lemon" Expected to Relieve Affordability and Traffic Issues

[http://www.mysuncoast.com/news/local/lofts-on-lemon-expected-to-relieve-affordability-and-traffic-issues/article\\_993a0c1a-65cf-11e8-a86c-ef2d964c8c11.html](http://www.mysuncoast.com/news/local/lofts-on-lemon-expected-to-relieve-affordability-and-traffic-issues/article_993a0c1a-65cf-11e8-a86c-ef2d964c8c11.html)

"Lofts on Lemon" are expected to be built on 3 acres of land off 9th Street between Lemon Avenue and Cohen Way in Sarasota.

SARASOTA, FL (WWSB) - "I love living downtown without a car. What a bonus that is," said Jude Levy, of living in the Rosemary District.

Levy just moved into the district one year ago and loves its accessibility to downtown Sarasota. The former Sarasota Housing Authority Board Member recognizes the city and the district have a major problem. "We have put off building affordable housing," explained Levy, who is also a Board Member of the Rosemary District Association.

"The city has basically promoted builders that are building condominiums and high priced apartments and haven't done enough to allow for the affordable apartments," said Harvey Vengroff, developer and affordable housing advocate.

City leaders say their sights are set on a not-for-profit construction project called "Lofts on Lemon," after receiving \$14 million in tax credits from the state, and another \$3 million investment from the city. Now, the Sarasota Housing Authority is looking to raise another \$4 million to support the cause of the 130 units.

"The need for affordable and low income housing and workforce housing is critical," said John Colon, Chairman of the Sarasota Housing Authority. According to the Sarasota Housing Authority, 51.8% of renters in Sarasota, North Port and Bradenton are cost burdened. 27.3% are severely cost burdened.

The project includes 80 affordable housing units; a family of three earning just under \$38,000 would pay \$949 monthly for a two bedroom apartment. 50 separate units fall under the "workforce housing" category; a family of three earning about \$50,000 would pay \$1,266 for a two bedroom apartment. The Sarasota Housing Authority reports the median renter's income is \$40,000 annually.

City Commissioner Hagen Brody says affordable housing is a quality of life issue and believes the project will help relieve traffic in the area.

"We have so many people that are commuting to downtown and the city of Sarasota from surrounding and more affordable communities," stated Brody.

A portion of the units will be set aside for hometown heroes like first responders, teachers, and nurses so they can live closer to the community they serve.

"We have to take real and concrete steps forward to allow people to live closer to where they work and play," said Brody.

The Sarasota Housing Authority and developers want to begin the design phase as soon as possible then go through the city approval process. The group hopes to break ground sometime in 2019 then will start accepting resident applications approximately 6-9 months after construction begins.