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Parishioners, council discuss need for affordable housing

Group calls for council members to once again renew its affordable housing plan for at least 1,300 units.

By **THERESA CISNEROS**

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ANAHEIM – About 100 people gathered today at San Antonio de Padua Catholic Church for a two-hour forum on affordable housing, the latest event in a grass-roots campaign designed to highlight the need for more affordable units in the city.

In 2005, the City Council approved a four-year strategic plan which established affordable housing as a priority and called for the construction of 1,328 affordable family rental units. The council reviews the plan annually and is expected to vote on a

new one in August.

Orange County Congregation Community Organization (OCCCO) – a faith-based group that represents the interests of 48,000 people from 22 congregations – is urging council members to renew the initiative and is trying to keep the issue in the limelight by holding petition drives, public events and prayer services.

Today's gathering was organized by parishioners of St. Boniface and San Antonio de Padua, with the assistance of OCCCO. The program included a presentation on the benefits of affordable housing, testimony from supporters and responses from City Council members.

"Our faith moves us to look after the most vulnerable in our community," said organizer Freddy Hernandez, who attends St. Boniface. "That's what we're doing here today."

Participants kicked off the event by applauding the city's efforts thus far, but adding that more affordable units are needed to accommodate low, very low and extremely low income residents.

According to the statistics presented, there are 12,009 low-income families in town making between \$35,000 and \$44,000 a year; 18,755 very low income families bringing in \$20,000 to \$34,000 a year; and

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