

Ohlone Gardens

57 homes with access to transit, retail, and services in El Cerrito

Ohlone Gardens is a new multi-family development that offers 57 units of affordable housing within a 4-story mixed-use development in a smart growth location in the City of El Cerrito. It revitalizes what was an underused 0.94-acre transit-oriented site that is surrounded by large-scale commercial and residential development.

The ground floor space provides 3,189 square feet of commercial space for a retail or community-serving tenant. The residential component includes a mix of 18 one-bedroom units, 21 two-bedroom units, and 18 three-bedroom units. Ten units are reserved for special needs residents, including households living with HIV/AIDS and mental health care consumers. Low-income households with incomes from 30 to 50 percent of Area Median Income occupy the remaining 46 affordable units.



LEED Platinum Certification (projected)
Completed: 2015

All of the units are designed to be adapted to the needs of residents with disabilities, including three that are currently fully accessible. Onsite amenities include a community room with a full kitchen, Resident Services and Property Management offices, a learning lab and meeting space, a fitness center, a central laundry room, and secure parking for cars and bicycles.

RCD provides an on-site Resident Services Manager to work with residents to obtain access to local social services, organize community meetings and events, and provide classes on financial literacy and other topics. Services will also include adult educational workshops, with direct case management and services provided by Contra Costa County for the residents of the special needs units.

The building's design features thoughtful elements intended to promote quality of life. All of the units surround a large, landscaped interior courtyard that features a playground area for children and outdoor seating. The community and laundry rooms open to the courtyard, connecting the inside and outdoor spaces. Substantial acoustic measures dampen noise from the adjacent BART tracks, including a hallway with triple-pane windows that buffers the eastern exterior of the building, mechanical ventilation, and increased sound insulation.

The building has a controlled, central entrance with a key fob entry system, security cameras, and centrally located offices and community spaces near the main entry. The design and construction incorporate sustainable green features and renewable technologies, including solar assisted hot water, energy-efficient windows and appliances, low-VOC paints and adhesives, and environmentally preferable materials for interior finishes. It is expected to achieve the US Green Building Council's LEED Platinum certification for energy and resource efficiency.

Unit Type and Rent Range

Size/Type	Rent Range at Completion in 2015	% of Area Median Income*	Number of Units	Average Square Footage
1 BR	\$484-\$832	30-50%	18	621 sf
2 BR	\$575-\$994	30-50%	21	867 sf
3 BR	\$660-\$1,105	30-50%	18	1,053 sf

* Based on Area Median Income in 2015 of \$92,900 for a four-person household, a qualifying household of four could have income up to \$46,450.

Project Amenities

- Community room with kitchen, multimedia equipment, and space for meetings and events
- Meeting room and learning center
- Fitness center
- On site resident support services, such as educational workshops and youth activities
- Lushly landscaped courtyard with outdoor seating and a children's playground
- Secured on-site parking for cars and bicycles
- Convenient, walkable access to BART, AC Transit bus lines, restaurants, retail, and other services, the Ohlone Greenway, the El Cerrito Swim Center, several playgrounds, and K-12 schools
- Training sessions for residents on green features and recycling

Green Building Features

- Construction waste recycling plan that diverted 70% of construction waste from landfills
- Panelized, pre-fab framing construction
- Exceeds Title 24 energy efficiency standards by over 32%
- Solar thermal systems for hot water pre-heating
- ENERGY STAR appliances in all units
- LED lighting in the garage
- Double-paned, triple-paned, and double glazed low E windows
- Durable, low maintenance finishes
- Recycled content carpet and flooring
- Low VOC paints and adhesives
- 100% non-smoking building
- Formaldehyde-free cabinet boxes, counter top substrates, and building insulation
- Drought tolerant landscaping, bioswale drainage and filtration, water permeable pavement
- High-efficiency faucets, toilets, and showers
- Blower door testing and air sealing of units

Sources of Funding

City of El Cerrito	\$3,500,000
Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development	\$2,190,000
California Department of Housing and Community Development	\$2,860,000
MUFG Union Bank Tax Credit Equity	\$17,417,530
California Housing Finance Agency	\$562,430
Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco Affordable Housing Program	\$560,000
MUFG Union Bank Permanent Loan	\$934,288
Total Development and Financing Costs:	\$28,024,248

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) provided by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee.
Construction financing provided by MUFG Union Bank.

Development Team

Developer: Resources for Community Development
Architect: Van Meter Williams Pollack
General Contractor: Nibbi Brothers General Contractors