



Creating & Preserving Affordable Housing

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Resources for Community Development (RCD) plans to develop 120 affordable homes at 3550 El Camino Real in Santa Clara. Clara Gardens will provide 120 new deeply affordable rental homes for families and individuals. For more information, please contact Randi Gerson at rgerson@rcdhousing.org or (510) 984-2101.

Who is Resources for Community Development (RCD)?

For 37 years, RCD has created and preserved affordable housing for those with the fewest options to build community and enrich lives. We have developed 61 communities and 2,434 homes since 1984. We have properties in 24 cities and 5 counties. We value our neighbors and the communities that are properties are in.

Who will live on the property?

30% of the apartments will house formerly homeless residents. 50% of apartments will house low-income families. Maximum incomes for the apartments will range between 20% and 60% of area median income (please see the table below for detailed income and rent ranges). Property management staff will live on-site in one of the two-bedroom apartments.

What are you building on the site and what will happen to the motel?

There will be approximately 120 rental apartments: 27 studios, 29 one-bedroom units, 34 two-bedroom units, and 30 three-bedroom units. We will reuse approximately 50 motel units and build a new 70-unit housing development that will be five stories over a two-story ground floor podium. There will be approximately a 1,225 square foot ground floor commercial space on El Camino Real, 93 parking spaces, two community rooms, several common outdoor spaces, including a roof deck, and onsite property management and support service offices.

What will happen to the site after the acquisition but before the new construction begins?

It will be a HomeKey project. Under the Homekey program the state has provided funds to buy underutilized existing buildings, including motels, to establish housing for people experiencing homelessness. In partnership with Santa Clara County, we will use the existing motel as transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness or people at risk for experiencing homelessness. There will be onsite support services and property management.

Who will manage the property?

The John Stewart Company (JSCO). They were founded in 1978 to provide high quality property management services for affordable housing in the bay area. Their diverse management portfolio includes affordable and market rate housing. JSCO is the largest affordable housing manager in Ca. and the 6th largest in the nation. Their goal is to provide secure, service oriented, well-maintained, and professionally managed housing.

Who is the architect?

Good design matters to RCD. The award-winning firm, Van Meter Pollack Williams (VMPW) is the architect. They are committed to environmentally intelligent design, planning and building. Check out their work at <https://www.vmwp.com>.

Site Selection

How did this area/property get on your radar? Can you explain how RCD learned of the property and decided to target this project there?

As a developer of affordable housing, our mission is to address the need for affordable housing by providing high quality, sustainable housing to families and neighborhoods most in need. Consistent with this mission we

are continually searching for new affordable housing development sites especially in communities like Santa Clara that have prioritized investing in affordable housing. This site caught our eye due to its proximity to transportation, which will provide residents with access to a variety of local and regional amenities and work opportunities. Additionally, because this site is underutilized, it is a great candidate for redevelopment, which can bring vibrancy back to this area and provide much needed affordable housing in Santa Clara.

Can the seller still sell to somebody else or are they in contract with RCD?

The seller is in contract to sell to RCD and cannot sell to someone else. RCD, in collaboration with Santa Clara County, expects to acquire the site January 2022.

Rent and Income Limits

What are the rent and income limits for eligible households?

The following household income limits are based on the City of Santa Clara 2020 income and rent limits. These limits are subject to annual adjustment. See below for a link to the City's website.

<https://www.santaclaraca.gov/home/showdocument?id=67437>

% of Area Median Income (AMI)	Number of Units	Income Limits	Rent by Unit Type
20% - 30% AMI	60	\$21,760-\$44,800	Studio: \$544-835 2-BD: \$1061 3-BD: \$1220
50% AMI	30	\$56,600-\$83,280	Studio: \$1415 2-BD: \$1807 3-BD: \$2082
60% AMI	29	\$87,160-\$100,480	2-BD: \$2179 3-BD: \$2512

Will the property ALWAYS be affordable housing or does that designation expire after a certain number of years?

Generally, the designation expires after about 55 years. However, RCD owns and operates its affordable housing for the long-term and intends to operate this community as affordable housing indefinitely.

Parking

If there are 120 rental homes and 89 parking spaces, some tenants will not have parking spaces, correct?

That's correct. Generally, low-income households tend to own fewer vehicles, especially formerly homeless households. Only one in three formerly homeless households require parking for their household. Additionally, the project's proximity to transit, and the availability of bicycle parking will encourage residents to walk, bike and take transit to their destination, thereby reducing automobile dependency, as well as impacts to traffic in the neighborhood. All 2- and 3-bedroom apartments will be offered a parking space. RCD will continue to analyze the demand for parking generated by the project, and explore opportunities to increase parking, if physically and financially feasible.

Are you providing guest parking so that individuals who come to visit will not need to park on the street?

We plan to provide guest parking for caretakers and social workers. No additional guest parking is anticipated at this time.

Traffic and Circulation

How will the project address traffic impacts to the neighborhood?

This project is located near major transit stops, a grocery store, pharmacy, and restaurants. When located near public transportation, new housing developments have been shown to reduce dependence on driving. As a result, neighborhood impacts to traffic are much less than other project types, as residents are more likely to walk, bike and take transit to work than commute by automobile. Additionally, we will explore the potential to provide transit passes to residents, which can further encourage residents to reduce their dependence on driving.

Maintenance and Security

How often and who will maintain the cleanliness of apartments and surrounding building?

The housing development will be staffed with a full-time maintenance lead, as well as a full-time janitorial staff person. In coordination with the property manager and assistant property manager, they will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the common areas, open space and exterior areas of the building. Residents will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of their individual rental home. Property management also conducts annual inspections of each unit.

Response to Community Concerns

Concern: How was the Bella Vista Inn site chosen?

Truth: As a developer of affordable housing, RCD's mission is to address the need for affordable housing by providing high quality, sustainable housing to families and neighborhoods most in need. Consistent with this mission, we are continually searching for new affordable housing development sites especially in communities like Santa Clara that have prioritized investing in affordable housing. This site caught our eye due to its proximity to transportation, which will provide residents with access to a variety of local and regional amenities and work opportunities. Additionally, because this site is underutilized, it is a great candidate for redevelopment, which can bring vibrancy back to this area and provide much needed affordable housing in Santa Clara.

Concern: Is it better to choose other sites far away from residential areas?

Truth: People experiencing homelessness need the same amenities as housed people – such as access to grocery stores, jobs, and transit – so residential neighborhoods are well-suited to supporting unhoused individuals and families to stabilizing and rebuilding their lives. Isolated sites make it more difficult for people experiencing homelessness to connect with the resources they need to achieve their health and economic goals.

Concern: The proposed sites are near elementary schools, preschools/daycares, playgrounds, and parks, in residential neighborhoods with small children.

Truth: Yes, that's exactly why 3550 El Camino Real is such a great site for more people to live. The residents of the interim housing are individuals and small families currently living unhoused in the city and county of Santa Clara. Providing safe, healthy homes with on-site supportive services gives neighbors in need the dignity, space, and foundation they need to address any other issues in their lives and be ready to move into stable permanent homes.

Concern: This is not an appropriate place for interim housing.

Truth: Currently, many inexpensive motels provide housing of last resort for residents who are priced out of the local rental market and would otherwise be homeless. The Bella Vista Inn is one such place that has already been providing this kind of unofficial temporary housing for some guests. The County has applied for state Homekey funds to make safety improvements to the motel and to operate the interim housing as affordable, safe housing where experienced service providers will respond to resident needs and offer a range of services.

Concern: The Bella Vista Inn site, on a major road/intersection, is unsafe for the homeless, especially for people who are disabled by serious mental illness, chronic alcohol and drug problems.

Truth: The Bella Vista Inn is located at a four-way stop intersection controlled by traffic lights where El Camino Real and Flora Vista intersect. The Inn is an actively used motel with current residents, bordered by another motel on one side, townhomes on the rear, and a restaurant on the other side. In other words, residents and travelers already live here some of whom have physical disabilities and, like society at large, may have other conditions or challenges.

Concern: The proposed interim housing will be homeless shelter units.



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Truth: The Bella Vista Inn Interim Housing will adapt current motel rooms to provide transitional homes with supportive services where residents in good standing can stay until construction starts for the permanent use of the site: 100% permanent affordable housing. Construction is expected to begin in about two - three years.

Concern: This was planned in secret.

Truth: No, Resources for Community Development (RCD), the County's partner on 3550 El Camino Real, has completed a significant amount of community outreach and plans to continue our efforts throughout the development process. Over the last four months, RCD spoke one-on-one with half a dozen local stakeholders and nine community organizations. RCD knocked on the doors of all the single-family homes that share a property line with the Bella Vista Inn, speaking to the several owners who were home and leaving development information and contacts for the others. We have also reached out to all of the City of Santa Clara Councilmembers and met with several of them and worked with City staff on the planning submissions.

In mid-August, RCD mailed over 2,300 postcards to all owners and tenants in a 1000-foot radius from the site to invite the neighborhood to a virtual informational meeting held on August 30, attended by 30 participants. The August 30 meeting information was available on the City of Santa Clara's website in advance. RCD shared the development proposal and heard feedback at a meeting with the neighboring homeowner association. RCD and its relocation consultant visited and spoke one-on-one with long-term guests at the Bella Vista Inn twice so far.

Concern: No neighborhood voices were heard in the planning for this site.

Truth: Based upon the feedback we received from all the meetings; RCD has already made changes to the design. We heard concerns regarding privacy, traffic, bike parking, car parking (too much and too little), and security. We also heard excitement about creating more affordable housing and the need for all types of affordable housing, including family housing and accessible housing. We heard that this location is rich with amenities, transit, and is a great place to locate the housing as well as excitement about changing the current use of the site. Some neighbors were excited about having a more engaged property management team that will address security concerns.

Concern: This is the last chance to have your voice heard.

Truth: RCD intends to continue discussing the development with the neighbors and local stakeholders. RCD will also hold another community meeting early next year.

Concern: I am surprised that no public hearing is being held for this proposal.

Truth: The Bella Vista Inn was on the agenda at three County Board of Supervisors meetings. The Notice of Intent and the Homekey strategy went to the Board on 10/5, the Homekey resolution was heard on 10/19 and the action to acquire is on the agenda for 11/2. The permanent housing planned for the Bella Vista Inn site is eligible for streamlined administrative approval under Senate Bill 35, since it conforms to all local objective design and zoning standards and the City hasn't met its Regional Housing Needs Assessment production allocations for low-income housing.

Concern: Who is qualified to apply to live there? I know that lots of homeless are drug abusers and have mental illness.



Truth: Santa Clara County's Coordinated Entry System will refer individuals and couples for Bella Vista Inn Interim Housing. All 64 Project Homekey units will be occupied by residents experiencing chronic or literal homelessness and were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is not a requirement that residents have substance abuse or mental illnesses.

Concern: What services will the Bella Vista Inn site provide to homeless people?

Truth: Abode Services' resident services team will focus on creating a welcoming environment that supports and celebrates residents' moves to permanent supportive housing. The site team will be located at the site and as often as possible, services will be provided on-site. Abode will provide three resident service coordinators, led by a program manager, who will support households by providing referrals and linkages to appropriate and pertinent services such as: transportation, workforce development, medical/dental services, and many other resources that promote self-sufficiency and skill building. The service coordinators will work closely with community-based service providers to create partnerships to provide wraparound services to residents. The service coordination staff will be on-site and available five days a week for forty hours. All service team members will have a flexible schedule to accommodate activities held after typical business hours.

Concern: Crime is already an issue here; this will make it worse.

Truth: We have heard that crime is an issue in this neighborhood now. This interim housing proposal provides an increased level of staffing, funding, services, and structure to support and protect the residents of the Bella Vista Inn and its neighbors. The housing development will be staffed with a full-time maintenance lead, as well as a full-time janitorial staff person. In coordination with the property manager and assistant property manager, they will be responsible for maintaining the security of the common areas, open space, and exterior areas of the building. Property management also conducts annual inspections inside each apartment.

Additionally, two of the motel rooms will be converted to resident services offices for Abode Services, a service provider with over 30 years of experience in the Bay Area. Abode Services will provide support, counseling, case management, and referrals to residents so they can achieve their health, safety, and economic stability goals.

Concern: Homeless people will bring drug addicts, crime, rape, needles, and trash to the neighborhood.

Truth: The Bella Vista Inn currently faces challenges with safety, trash, and crime. Under the interim housing plan, professional property management, new occupancy agreements, and on-site supportive services will improve the safety and cleanliness of the site. People experiencing homelessness are already living and working in our community. Providing affordable, supportive housing is the best way to help them address their physical and mental health, addictions, and poverty. This is called the "housing first" model.

The interim housing will be staffed with a full-time maintenance lead, as well as a full-time janitorial staff person. In coordination with the property manager and assistant property manager, they will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the common areas, open space and exterior areas of the building. Residents will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of their individual rental home. Property management also conducts annual inspections of each unit. The on-site property manager and resident services staff will help residents understand and abide by the occupancy agreements and good-neighbor expectations as they adjust to living inside apartments.



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Concern: We need better solutions to help the homeless.

Truth: Actually, providing housing as the first step is the best way to help people experiencing homelessness. The National Alliance to End Homelessness states: "Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life."

Concern: We have a right to protect our community; you cannot do this to our community.

Truth: Our city, our county and our state are experiencing a homeless crisis. We need to do more to protect the vulnerable in our communities because everyone deserves a safe and stable place to live. Across California, communities are stepping forward to address the homeless crisis and our community is no different. California created the Homekey program in 2020 to protect unhoused citizens from the Coronavirus by helping local governments buy motels and quickly convert them into housing. This proposal is doing our part to take care of our unhoused neighbors and contribute to ending homelessness in our city, county, and state.

Concern: What can a neighbor do if neighbors have a concern about the interim housing or a specific resident?

Truth: Neighbors with concerns can contact the on-site property manager. In case of a crime that has been committed, please call the police