



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Workforce Housing Project in Downtown Napa Approved by City Officials

Project is the first in Napa to gain expedited approval under California's Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act

October 30, 2024 – The Napa First United Methodist Church (NFUMC) and its partners have announced that the planning application submitted to the City of Napa for a new affordable workforce housing community at 629 Randolph Street in downtown Napa, has been approved, bringing the project one step closer to realization.

The approval process was expedited under the State's Affordable Housing on Faith Lands & Higher Education Lands Act (Senate Bill 4 or SB4), commonly known as "Yes in God's Backyard". Signed into law last October, and taking effect at the start of this year, the bill streamlines the approval process for qualifying projects, namely that the housing is built on land owned by a faith based or higher education organization, and 100% of the units of the project are affordable for lower income households. The new law shaved months off the approval process for the NFUMC housing community, reducing uncertainty and saving both time and money for the project. Actively tracking the bill's progress through the legislature enabled the project to be poised to be the first in Napa and one of the first in California to have an approved design plan that took advantage of the new law.

"We are excited to see this important 46-unit workforce affordable housing development move forward under California Senate Bill 4 – the first of its kind in Napa utilizing SB4. Senate Bill 4's streamlined approach for religious organizations to develop affordable housing aligns perfectly with our City's goals and provides a unique opportunity to provide much needed housing in the heart of downtown near transit, goods, services, and restaurants. Collaboration between the City, Burbank Housing Development Corporation, Napa Valley Community Housing, and the First United Methodist Church of Napa, reflects the shared commitment to addressing housing needs and supporting essential workers within our community."

The church's Transformation Team leader, Dave Whitmer commented: "The Napa First United Methodist Church could not be more grateful to the City of Napa for their approval and to our partners, Burbank Housing and Napa Valley Community Housing for their help and expertise to create such a meaningful project on our downtown property. The input our team received from our congregation, neighbors and the community helped us create a project of which we can all be proud."



The Downtown Napa project is a joint development between Santa Rosa-based Burbank Housing and local Napa affordable housing provider Napa Valley Community Housing. Burbank’s CEO Larry Florin cited the use of SB4 as a great way to keep momentum and the project on budget.

“SB4 creates another path forward in our efforts to meet the affordable housing demand in our communities. By streamlining the approval process, you keep predevelopment costs down which ultimately means cranes in the sky and people in their new homes faster.”

Erica R Sklar, CEO of Napa Valley Community Housing, agreed and added that “while expedited approvals significantly lower the cost of developing affordable housing, the commitment of church congregations and local nonprofits to their communities, ensures the community’s voice is heard throughout the process. This approach not only aligns new developments with the neighborhood’s character but also strengthens community bonds and engagement, resulting in housing that truly reflects and enriches our local spirit.”

With City approval in hand, the partners will now turn toward pursuing the public funds needed to construct the project, including fundraising to support its development.

To learn more about this important workforce housing project, go to:

- Project Website: <https://napaworkforcehousing.org/> for information.
- Send Inquiries to: NFUMCproject@burbankhousing.org.
- Join the Project Mailing List: <https://tinyurl.com/nfumc-housing-mailing-list>

About Napa First United Methodist Church (NFUMC)

Established in 1852, NFUMC is one of the oldest churches in Napa County. Their hearts, doors and minds are open to ALL and their vision is to Follow Jesus; Thrive in community; and Heal the world through service with their neighbors.

They invite others to join them by ministering to the homeless, uplifting the community’s poor, providing support to those in need and volunteering in the community. NFUMC has come to find more grace in the search for understanding and more value in questioning, than in absolutes. Wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome at NFUMC! (napamethodist.org)

About Burbank Housing (Burbank)

Since 1980, Burbank Housing has been building and maintaining high-quality, sustainable rental and homeownership communities that help their residents to thrive in the face of challenges. As the North Bay’s non-profit leader in affordable housing for more than 44 years, Burbank prides themselves in building welcoming, comfortable neighborhoods for people to call home. As a proven leader, Burbank has a successful track record of building strong private and public partnerships and enjoys a healthy balance sheet – all of which enables Burbank to be flexible and forward-thinking when meeting the needs of their residents and homebuyers. (www.burbankhousing.org)

About Napa Valley Community Housing (NVCH)

For nearly half a century, NVCH has developed, acquired, and rehabilitated over 900 apartments and homes, located within 24 properties, throughout Napa County. By providing safe, attractive, clean, and affordable homes for more than 1,700 children, families, individuals, agricultural workers, veterans, and seniors, NVCH is able to provide a foundation of health and well-being for Napa County’s citizens. (www.nvch.org)

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