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FEATURED

New affordable housing development opens in Burlingame: Eucalyptus Grove boasts 69 new units, 18 reserved for homeless veterans

By Holly Rusch, Daily Journal staff
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A new affordable housing development dubbed Eucalyptus Grove is now open in Burlingame, offering 69 units to low-income households, with 18 of those apartments reserved for formerly homeless veterans.

There's a mosaic of organizations that came together to make the Eucalyptus Grove build a reality from financing to construction, including the city of Burlingame, San Mateo County, and co-developers Abode Housing Development and CRP Affordable housing.

For Burlingame Mayor Michael Brownrigg, who spoke during the apartment complex's grand opening May 15, tackling the affordable housing crisis in California is about reinstating the American dream for residents — fundamentally, the idea that “we can do better than our parents, our kids can do better than us.”

“If you're a veteran and serve this country and you're living outside in the streets, do you think you're doing better than your parents? No, you are not. That's the American dream denied. If you're a young family and you have kids and you want to put them through Burlingame's great public schools, but you can't afford to live here, that's the American dream denied,” he said. “We want to make the American dream a reality for everybody in our community, and people who are not in our community yet.”



The Eucalyptus Grove affordable housing complex.

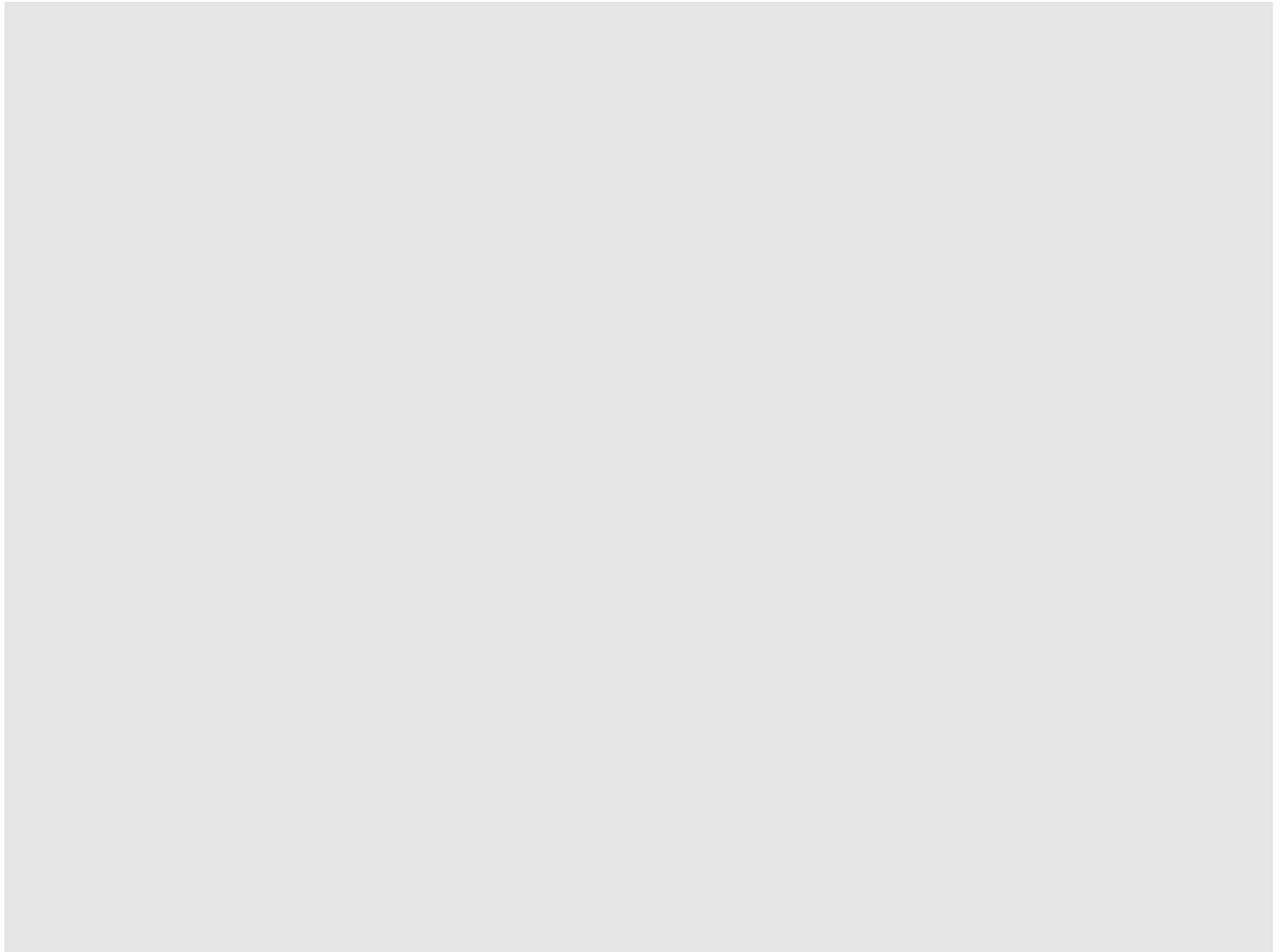
Holly Rusch/Daily Journal

Eucalyptus Grove, which is located at 1875 California Drive and is a short walk from the Millbrae BART and Caltrain stations, offers unique, veteran-specific housing opportunities. Aside from 25% of apartments being set aside for veterans, Abode Housing development is also offering a slew of on-site services for veterans, including case management, therapy and connection to resources like food pantries, job training and financial literacy.

The ability to provide those services is also due to contributions from the state, including the California Department of Veteran Affairs. The fact that Eucalyptus Grove is able to offer specialized housing as well as overall affordable units is a testament to private-public partnerships, Roberto Herrera, Department of Veterans Affairs veterans' services deputy secretary, said.

“Projects such as this, as we’ve clearly heard this afternoon, are a fantastic, fantastic example of how community-based organizations and private industry working closely with local and state government can collaborate to address veteran

homelessness and homelessness overall, all while tackling the needs of specialized populations,” he said.



Abode CEO Vivian Wan cuts the ribbon on the Eucalyptus Grove apartments alongside state and local officials and public sector representatives.

Photo courtesy of Abode Housing Development

Eucalyptus Grove offers housing options to households between 20% to 50% of the area median income, a press release from Abode said. For those families that have already moved in or are just moving in, an affordable place to live will become the launch point for a more stable life, Abode Services CEO Vivian Wan said.

“We’re changing lives together. Housing ends homelessness, and with a stable place to call home, absolutely anything is possible,” she said. “And that’s why we’re in it.”

In an area where individuals need to earn more than \$100,000 a year to comfortably afford a one-bedroom apartment, it can be difficult to feel that progress on the affordability front is being made. But projects like Eucalyptus Grove show it's possible, former San Mateo County Supervisor Dave Pine said.

"Many people really doubt whether you can move the needle in big, great, affordable housing in San Mateo County, but a project like this shows that it really can be done, that people in goodwill come together in building great housing in the most expensive place on the planet, practically," he said.

holly@smdailyjournal.com

(650) 344-5200 ext. 105



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