



Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco and Ladera Community Church Partner to Build Affordable Homes in Portola Valley

Portola Valley Church steps up as role model for other churches to bring much-needed affordable homeownership to San Mateo County

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif, (April 30, 2026) - [Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco](#) (Habitat Greater San Francisco) is partnering with Ladera Community Church to build two affordable homes on church-owned land in Portola Valley, creating rare homeownership opportunities in one of the most expensive housing markets in the country.

The project *is inspired by California's Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act*, widely known as the "Yes in God's Backyard" law, which allows faith institutions to build 100% affordable housing on their property by right. The law enables affordable housing projects to move forward without the lengthy rezoning and discretionary approval processes that often delay housing development.

These two 3 bedroom-2 bath homes will be available to families earning 70% to 80% of the area median income (AMI). Habitat Greater San Francisco will ground-lease the site from the church.

Homeownership is completely out of reach for low- and middle-income residents in Portola Valley, where [the average home price exceeds \\$4 million and has risen nearly 10% in the past year](#). Many people who work in the community, including teachers at local schools, the Ladera Shopping Center, and The Sequoias retirement community, commute from cities in the East Bay, often traveling more than an hour each way. The town currently has just one affordable housing development.

"We all benefit when the people who work here and contribute to our community every day have the opportunity to live here," said Portola Valley Town Manager Darcy Smith. "Portola Valley needs more affordable housing options, and we're grateful to Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco and the church congregation for helping lead the way."

Members of Ladera Community Church have supported Habitat's work for decades, volunteering on projects across the region since the 1990s. In 2020, the church formed an Affordable Housing Task Force to explore how its property could help address the region's housing shortage and ultimately partnered with Habitat Greater San Francisco to develop the project.

"At Ladera Community Church, many of our members feel a deep responsibility to help address the housing crisis affecting our community," said Tim Clark, a member of the church's Affordable Housing Task Force. "We're excited to move this project forward and to welcome new families to Portola Valley."



The Yes in God’s Backyard law is designed to expand affordable housing by allowing faith communities to use their land for housing without competing with market-rate developers for expensive sites. According to research from the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at University of California, Berkeley, [roughly 171,000 acres of land across California could potentially be made available for affordable housing under the law.](#)

“Having Ladera Church as leaders to build housing on their property allows projects to happen that would otherwise be unavailable for affordable housing,” said Maureen Sedonaen, CEO of Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco. “Affordable homeownership is one of the most powerful tools we have to help families build stability and long-term financial security. In communities like Portola Valley, where homeownership has been out of reach for most working families for decades, partnerships with faith communities like Ladera can ensure pathways to homeownership that simply didn’t exist before.”

This partnership *is a model for other faith communities* looking to use their land to help address California’s housing shortage. Habitat Greater San Francisco welcomes their partnership to follow Ladera’s lead.

Construction on the project is expected to begin next year, expanding Habitat Greater San Francisco’s growing portfolio of affordable homeownership projects now underway across all three counties served. For more information on how to support this project and bring more affordable homeownership to Portola Valley, email Habitat Greater San Francisco at info@habitatgsf.org.

About Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco

Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco (Habitat Greater San Francisco) builds homes and community in partnership with thousands of annual volunteers, working families, donors, civic leaders and other engaged community members in Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties. The work supporters help us do provides a critical path to financial security for families who live and work here and strengthens neighborhoods across the Bay Area. Habitat Greater San Francisco has built more than 280 affordable homes in the Bay Area. More information can be found at www.habitatgsf.org.

Media Contact: Jennifer Hayes
Phone: 510-325-5622
Email: jhayes@habitatgsf.org

####