



Making Room for All

City agency presses on to increase affordability in the nation's most expensive major city

A city agency in the country's most competitive and expensive housing market is working with community groups and developers to create long-term affordable housing solutions.

The San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development has been tasked with delivering affordable solutions in a highly congested and infamously pricy housing market.

"We are a city department that reports directly to the mayor, as opposed to other city departments that have a commission, for example, or that are enterprise departments," says Kate Hartley, Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development.

The agency is more than halfway through a two-phase revitalization of the city's current affordable housing through HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

"All of the RAD buildings in Phase I of our plan are done," Hartley says. "We've been going to grand opening after grand opening, which has been really exciting."

The second round of RAD redevelopments is now underway. The agency expects to complete all of its ongoing RAD redevelopments by the end of 2019.

"It is historic and transformative for both our housing portfolio and housing for the city," Hartley says. "The average income of people who live in our RAD buildings is around \$20,000 a year. To live on \$20,000 a year in San Francisco is pretty tough."

227 BAY STREET

One of these RAD efforts is 227 Bay Street, which serves seniors and people with disabilities. The redeveloped property features 50 units of high-quality housing located in the North Beach neighborhood, just blocks away from San Francisco's iconic urban waterfront.



San Francisco Mayor's
Office of Housing and
Community Development

Director :: Kate Hartley | Location :: San Francisco, California

The redevelopment of 227 Bay Street represents a robust and comprehensive approach to serving the city's most vulnerable residents. It's a diverse range of people, many of whom might otherwise be homeless as they struggle to get by due to high housing costs throughout the city.

"At the time of our last count, there were 7,500 homeless people in the city," Hartley says. "That includes seniors, veterans and kids aging out of foster care."

According to Hartley, the erosion of social safety nets means that increasing numbers of people are struggling with a lack of access to safe and stable housing.

"In any given year, there are about 20,000 people who cycle in and out of homelessness in San Francisco, and we're really facing a crisis of people who are living on the edge," she says.

The knowledgeable and well-equipped staff of the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development continues to find solutions to the ever-present problem.

"We are so lucky in San Francisco to have a staff that is very skilled. In fact, many of our staff were once developers," Hartley says. "There is a high level of financial and transactional sophistication on our staff, and we are quite grateful for that."

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Under the new leadership of recently elected San Francisco Mayor London Breed, the agency is continuing its mission of developing and preserving high-quality housing that meets the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

"We have a pipeline of more than 4,000 units of new housing that we're working on," Hartley says. "This includes housing for people experiencing homelessness, it includes the rebuilding of distressed public housing and it includes housing for seniors and working families."

London Breed assumed office in July 2018. Her election followed the death of the late mayor Ed Lee, an early icon of San Francisco's civil rights struggle. Hartley accepted the directorship of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development last year, following the retirement of 5-year incumbent Olson Lee.


The office functions as a lending partner to affordable housing developers interested in increasing the city's affordable and workforce housing.

"We function mainly as a lender," Hartley says. "We partner with affordable housing developers, who are the owners and managers of the properties."

The agency maintains land ownership to preserve the long-term affordability of each development in which it is involved.

"We typically execute the transaction with a long-term ground lease," Hartley says. "We retain land ownership just in case an owner-operator ever gets in trouble. We want to be there at the table to ensure that the housing remains permanently affordable."

One of the agency's most notable ongoing new construction efforts is at 4840-4950 Mission Street. The development will bring 426 units of housing and commercial space to the Excelsior District.

At 88 Broadway and 735 Davis, the agency is facilitating the redevelopment of two parking lots. There, its development partners are replacing the parking lots with two six-story mixed-use buildings that will add 178 residences to the city's affordable housing supply. 



Kate Hartley

GELFAND PARTNERS ARCHITECTS

Gelfand Partners Architects is a woman-led, full service San Francisco architecture and landscape architecture firm. Our integrated approach to site and building design reflects the strengths of our community-based practice in housing, education and community services. We create vital places for these vital activities. We are leaders in sustainable design, design for the social life of communities, education, affordable and special needs housing, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Our cost effective, sustainable design solutions save owners tens of thousands of dollars of operating funds each year and have been recognized for their excellence at local, state and national levels.



ARBORS APTS COMMUNITY BUILDING



GELFAND
PARTNERS
ARCHITECTS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING | SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

415-346-4040 | GELFAND-PARTNERS.COM





Published by **Affordable Housing News** - FALL 2018 ©2018 Avenir Publishing, Inc.
For information on ordering Avenir reprints visit us at www.avenirpublishing.com
or email us at reprints@avenirpublishing.com