

A Journey of Faith: St. Paul's Commons

A Dynamic Partnership

The Commons represents a successful collaboration between a faith community, community service agencies, affordable housing leaders and the City of Walnut Creek.



St Paul's Commons will be a mixed-use, transit-oriented development with 45 affordable apartments operated by Resources for Community Development (RCD). Its community spaces will be operated by St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Located on the grounds of St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 1860 Trinity Avenue, the project aims to provide space for St. Paul's ministries as well as crucial affordable housing for the neighborhood. Workers in the retail, restaurant, and services industries in Walnut Creek have faced a lot of difficulty finding housing they can afford. That's why the Commons team chose the Trinity Center, a non-residential program serving the

unhoused and working poor in Walnut Creek and Contra Costa County, as a key partner.

A Community Comes Together

The Commons represents a successful collaboration between a faith community, community service agencies, affordable housing leaders and the City of Walnut Creek. In 2014, a small group of passionate church and community leaders gathered to seek advice from the City of Walnut Creek, EBHO and Community Economics. They wanted to solve multiple problems: the need for community housing and services as well as aging church infrastructure. After an extensive evaluation process, Resources for

Community Development (RCD) was chosen to develop the St Paul's Commons project. RCD was a great fit: It's well known as one of the top affordable housing developers in the country, with a mission to create and preserve affordable housing for people with the fewest options, build community and enrich lives.

RCD and St. Paul's worked with PYATOK Architects from Oakland to achieve a high-quality urban design that enhances the neighborhood and builds a strong sense of community. The PYATOK team brought 30-plus years of experience to the table, and their work on the City of Walnut Creek's West Downtown Specific Plan has helped inform the design process. Along the way, City of Walnut Creek leaders, the city's planning department and affordable housing staff helped break down barriers. This inspiring project finally broke ground in May 2018, during Affordable Housing Week, and is on target to be completed in October of 2019.

A Journey of Faith

In support of this project, the Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus of the Episcopal Diocese of California said, "St. Paul's Commons/ Trinity Center is the first program of its kind in the Diocese of California. It's a public/private/faith community partnership that brings together affordable housing plus the social services and resources needed to raise individuals and families out of poverty, homelessness and hopelessness to a life of dignity, safety and opportunity. It's a model of how we can respond as a Bay Area community of faith to help those who are eager to help themselves."

This has truly been a journey of faith:

- Faith in St Paul's community and leadership to support the project vision and approve the steps to make it happen
- Faith that our developer partner, RCD, could find solutions to the challenges we faced
- Faith that the neighbors would recognize what a great asset this project will be to the community
- Faith that PYATOK Architects would help design a beautiful building that would meet everyone's needs
- Faith in the affordable housing community and organizations like

EBHO that stepped up, educated us, provided unbiased advice and reviewed proposals

- Faith that Walnut Creek leadership would help gain the approvals needed to build and operate the Commons
- Faith that the Episcopal Diocese of California would support this prototype project and hold it up as an example to other faith communities

Thanks to all these important partners, the dream is becoming a reality!

By St. Paul's Commons Team



RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Walnut Creek



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