

# Resolving the affordable housing crisis requires broad cooperation

As discussions begin again in redeveloping the Concord Naval Weapons Station, what can we learn from what went wrong and how can we adapt the way important regional decisions about affordable housing are made?

**Summary:** In March the Concord City Council voted to let the agreement with Lennar expire, stopping the creation of 12,000 new homes, almost 3,000 of them affordable to people with low incomes, near a BART station. By rejecting the option to extend negotiations between Lennar & the Contra Costa Building Trades Council in a 2-3 vote, Concord City Council allowed more than a decade of planning for the Concord Naval Weapons Station Development to lapse on March 31st as Lennar's Exclusive Negotiating Agreement expired. Meanwhile, the number of people needing stable affordable homes grows as the pandemic intensifies.

When the city commits to a transit-oriented, multi-use design including parks and open space, local job creation, and an investment of affordable homes sited near transit to address the affordable housing crisis, the community benefit will endure for generations. As the council begins to discuss plans for development at the base going forward, key opportunities to leverage publicly held land for maximum impact must be built with proactive collaboration.

## Upcoming Concord Naval Weapons Station Meetings before Council:

December 10th, 6:30 pm Special Meeting of the [Council Sitting As the Local Reuse Authority](#)

January 7th, 6pm: [Council Study Session, Base Reuse Project](#)

*See the City's Project Restart Analysis, which includes a timeline of events, attached.*

## Stakeholder perspectives:

"The Concord Naval Weapons Station reuse project presents an opportunity to do something great for the citizens of Concord, Contra Costa County, and the entire Bay Area. The reuse project should not be used as a political football. Families in Contra Costa are facing real housing insecurity. Not just in production, but affordability as well. I believe the Concord City Council owed it to Contra Costa County, and indeed the Bay Area in general, to go further, and ensure the developer and labor unions stayed at the bargaining table. Maybe even going so far as to bring in an impartial 3rd party arbitration process when they reached an impasse. However, on the bright side, maybe this exercise was a blessing in disguise. Because now the search for a new Master Developer perhaps will lead us to a developer committed to building not just market-rate housing, but workforce housing, and traditional affordable housing. After all, we are not just building housing, we are building communities." - *William Goodwin, Hope Solutions and EBHO's Board of Directors*



“Concord has an important opportunity to apply lessons learned from the work with the former master developer by ensuring that the community is engaged throughout the restart of the Concord Naval Weapons Station reuse project: from the selection of a new master developer to finalizing community benefits. We support the goal of building 25% affordable housing especially considering how the ongoing housing crisis left Concord unprepared to fully stabilize housing for low-income residents during COVID-19. Simply put, we must commit to building more affordable housing.”- *Debra Ballinger, Executive Director, [Monument Impact](#)*

“The Bay Area’s housing crisis was in full effect before the pandemic and we know that it has only been exacerbated. In January 2020, the Bay Area region as a whole lost 15 years of progress at the Concord Naval Weapons Station and will now need to begin from scratch. Simply stated, military bases are extraordinarily complicated and challenging to develop. Given the level of housing need in the city of Concord, Contra Costa County and the Bay Area region, the loss of 3,000 new affordable and 12,000 new total homes is a significant blow to our region.

The Concord Naval Weapons project had and still has enormous potential but it will likely take decades longer to realize it. If my experience working with local base reuse processes at both Alameda and Treasure Island Naval Weapons Stations is a guide, we will be lucky to see the first vertical construction commence in 20 years. As the process restarts, I think stakeholders need to prioritize the end goals of community benefits for affordable housing and economic opportunity and build flexibility into the planning process. How do we work with our allies in the most efficient way possible and hold each other and our electeds accountable?” - Natalie Bonnewit, [Bonnewit Development Services](#) and EBHO’s Board of Directors

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