



City of  
**OAKLAND**  
California



OFFICE OF THE TREASURER  
AND TAX COLLECTOR



**Coordinated Media  
Contact:**

Karen Boyd  
City of Oakland  
Communications Director  
(510) 449-4401  
[kboyd@oaklandnet.com](mailto:kboyd@oaklandnet.com)

News from: **City of Oakland, Alameda County Treasurer-  
Tax Collector & Hello Housing**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 18, 2017

**Oakland and Alameda County Transform 26  
Abandoned Lots into Affordable Housing**

*Oakland, CA* – In a first-of-its-kind program, Mayor Libby Schaaf and Treasurer-Tax Collector Henry C. Levy teamed with the non-profit Hello Housing to transform 26 vacant properties into permanently affordable housing for low-and-moderate income residents. The City of Oakland’s Department of Housing and Community Development, Hello Housing and the Office of the Treasurer-Tax Collector have worked for over two years to develop a novel process to acquire formerly blighted and tax-defaulted properties for affordable housing.

“We are chipping away at the cost of living crisis one innovative idea at a time,” said Mayor Libby Schaaf. “Tax-defaulted properties are a major source of blight in Oakland, depressing neighborhood vitality while draining public resources. Our work with Alameda County and Hello Housing has unlocked a unique tool to address our housing crisis and transform blighted lots into housing that is safe, healthy, and affordable for low-income residents.”

Earlier this year, in partnership with the City of Oakland’s Department of Housing and Community Development, affordable housing nonprofit organization Hello Housing purchased 26 abandoned, tax-defaulted residential properties in Oakland. This Oakland Tax-Defaulted Properties Pilot has multiple goals:

- (1) Create new affordable housing units in the face of an escalating County-wide housing crisis.
- (2) Return abandoned properties to the tax rolls.
- (3) Curb excessive and continuous City clean-up costs associated with blight and illegal dumping on these lots.
- (4) Enhance the vitality of Oakland neighborhoods long impacted by blight and vacancy.

A key innovation in the “Oakland Pilot” program has been the ongoing collaboration amongst the City of Oakland, the Treasurer-Tax Collector and mission-oriented developer partners to wield an existing but underutilized tool, the Chapter 8 Tax Sale, to facilitate affordable housing development. The Oakland Pilot began when the City of Oakland and the Alameda County Tax Collector entered a unique partnership, mutually agreeing to release un-collectable public liens on abandoned properties, enabling these properties to become economically viable for development. Working closely with the City and Tax Collector, Hello Housing identified abandoned properties that could be transformed into new affordable housing for Oakland residents at risk of displacement from their communities.

The outcome of the Oakland Pilot will be 24 single-family homes sold to low-and-moderate income homebuyers earning a maximum of 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and two affordable multifamily rental properties housing approximately 14-19 low-income renters. Design and permitting activities are now well under way with the goal of initial occupancy for many of these properties taking place in late 2018.

“Our department is proud to assist in the creation of affordable housing through the sale of tax-defaulted properties under Chapter 8,” said Treasurer-Tax Collector Henry C. Levy. “We welcome the opportunity to work with other eligible nonprofit organizations that wish to use Chapter 8 to develop low-income housing or dedicate vacant land for open space or public use.”

With state-level support from the State Controller’s Office and California Strategic Growth Council, the Oakland Pilot creates an innovative but replicable model for how cities and counties can collaborate with the private sector to implement creative solutions to address housing affordability challenges.

“We could not have done this without the financial support of Enterprise Community Partners, Bank of the West and MidPen Housing,” said Jennifer Duffy, Vice President of Hello Housing. We are grateful to these funders for envisioning the Pilot as an innovation for affordable housing, and we are pleased that Hello Housing can now offer a roadmap to our peers – in Oakland and throughout California – who wish to expand their affordable housing toolkit.”

###