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New community is part of improvements to neighborhood in transition

Ashland area residents benefit from housing and services

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Berkeley, CA...Resources for Community Development (RCD) announces completion of 85 units of new affordable apartments at Ashland Place. Located in an unincorporated area of Alameda County, Ashland Place adds much needed multi-family housing for low-income families and new retail space to help revitalize the area. A public grand opening and tour will be held on Friday, March 11, 2016 from 2:30 to 4:00 pm at 16385 East 14th Street, in the unincorporated community of Ashland.

Alameda County is a major partner in the project, providing some of the last available Redevelopment Agency Funds to ensure that the project moved into construction without delay. Construction included a realignment of the intersection of East 14th Street and Kent Avenue to improve safety and make it more pedestrian-friendly.

President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors Scott Haggerty said, "The Board of Supervisors is proud to have been able to secure \$16.6 million in former Redevelopment Agency funding to deliver this important project to Alameda County families and young people in need of affordable housing."

Supervisor Nate Miley adds, "Ashland Place shows the catalyst impact that the REACH Ashland Youth Center has had on this community. This project reinforces the County's substantial investment in the community despite the loss of redevelopment funds and represents the best of smart, public investment."

Ashland Place intentionally draws attention to this busy intersection at East 14th and Kent Avenue, announcing changes to a neighborhood in transition. It includes 2,000 square feet of retail space expected to open in 2017 that will provide a market and café.

Residents are welcomed at the main entry by a warm wood slat arch that continues to form a sloped ceiling inside the main lobby. The main entry glass door is etched with a circular pattern that is echoed in a backlit wood panel over the mail area. Details like these extend into the central courtyard beyond and throughout the 85-unit complex. The combination of concrete, wood, and steel, along with punctuations of brightly colored panels, express energy and vitality and make for a rich and varied experience of the space.

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Vibrant, contemporary design by Kava Massih Architects features projecting bay windows and colored panels on the E. 14th Street façade, topped by a dramatic projecting roof. As the building turns the corner onto Kent Avenue, the building gently curves away and lowers in height in deference to the neighboring single-family homes.

Three other off street buildings complete the development. Parking rings the perimeter of the site, leaving space for a large inner courtyard with a tree lined central green, built-in barbecue, a children's play area, and a sculptural wood and steel canopy. A community garden is nestled in a sunny patch just behind one of the buildings, easily accessed by residents. A large community room located in the main building opens out onto the courtyard space for indoor/outdoor gatherings. Just adjacent and fronting the lobby, the property management and resident services offices provide convenient access to on-site staff.

Fifteen of the units at Ashland Place are reserved for young adults who are at risk of homelessness. First Place for Youth offers a program of intensive support to help these young people, who don't have the usual family support, often because they have left the foster care system, a group home, or are homeless. The program helps them build self-sufficiency and resiliency. RCD also offers services available to all residents, including computer access and training, workshops, and community-wide activities.

Residents' household income does not exceed 50 percent of the area median income (or \$46,500 for a family of four.) Rents for a three-bedroom unit start at \$701. This deep affordability plus a set aside of 15 units for young adults 18-24 who are at risk of homeless are the result of RCD's engagement with Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley and other members of the community to complement services available at the adjacent REACH Ashland Youth Center. Early in the property development process, the development team worked with members of REACH to incorporate ideas that address the needs of young people living in the area.

Resident Ashley L. expressed her feelings about Ashland Place, saying, "The day I learned that I would get an apartment, I felt so great and blessed. This is an opportunity to be stable so my daughter and I can finally start to enjoy life and live it normally instead of moving around house to house. It was so stressful before when I didn't always know if I could find a place to stay for the night. I was speechless the first day I walked into my new apartment."

RCD will host a grand opening tour and reception for the public on Friday, March 11, 2016 from 2:30 to 4:00 pm at 16385 East 14th Street, in the community of Ashland. Confirmed speakers include President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors Scott Haggerty, Alameda County District 4 Supervisor Nate Miley, Chris Bazar, director of the Alameda County Community Development Agency, Jake Brymner of Congressman Erick Swalwell's office, and Dan Sawislak, executive director of RCD.

About Resources for Community Development

RCD develops housing that creates community assets, enhances surrounding neighborhoods, and provides housing and amenities that also improve the quality of living for residents. RCD has

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developed more than 2,200 affordable housing units that serve over 4,000 residents in Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano counties. RCD's mission is to create and preserve affordable housing for those with the fewest options, to build community and enrich lives. For more information, visit www.rcdhousing.org



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