

LAUNCH PRESS RELEASE

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Nonprofit agency publishes free construction plans for building small backyard homes

San Mateo, CA - HEART of San Mateo County (HEART) is excited to provide free construction plans to help homeowners build accessory dwelling units (ADUs), also known as granny units, in their backyards.

In collaboration with OpenScope Studio Architects and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, HEART produced four sets of ADU plans. Homeowners can choose between a studio unit, two unique one-bedroom options, and even a larger two-bedroom unit. Homeowners can also choose from a variety of architectural styles, including craftsman, modern, or post-war.

"We want to give homeowners an option to pick a style they like or to better match the ADU to their existing home," said Boris Vatkin, HEART's ADU Program Manager.

HEART believes the construction plans save homeowners not only tens of thousands of dollars in design costs but also months of design time as they do not have to produce their own designs. Because these designs are green, homeowners will be able to reinvest these savings to install customizable, energy efficient, decarbonized, sustainability options. These options help reduce greenhouse gas emissions while lowering utility bills.

"We are very excited to make building green ADUs easier and more affordable by removing these major early obstacles," Vatkin said.

Although the units were developed with San Mateo communities and aesthetics in mind, the designs can be used in any community as they were created in compliance with all recent California building codes and regulations.

"The plans are ready to be submitted to a city to obtain a building permit. In many cases, all the homeowner has to do is prepare a site plan showing where the unit will sit on their property," said Vatkin. To help homeowners through the process, HEART also provides an instructional handbook on their website.

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Five cities have taken it a step further by pre-reviewing the construction plans. The cities of South San Francisco, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, Daly City and Belmont will be able to provide quicker approvals to homeowners using HEART's plans.

"HEART's plans have been reviewed by our Planning and Building staff, and we support them 100%. We are thrilled to be working in partnership with HEART to make more ADUs happen in our community," said Alex Greenwood, South San Francisco's Community Development Director.

The plans, formally known as Green and Livable Accessory Dwelling Unit Resource (GLADUR), are available for download on HEART's website at heartofsmc.org. Also available on HEART's website is a comprehensive handbook highlighting extensive environmentally friendly options and links to existing ADU resources.

Serving the community since 2003, HEART of San Mateo County is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to create affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families.



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Housing Endowment and Regional Trust of San Mateo County

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