



GRACE

MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A parish for all people in the heart of the city.

1535 NE 17th Avenue Portland, Oregon 503-287-0418 www.grace-memorial.org

A Development Update



*Posted in Grace Notes
Friday, July 11, 2025*

Your Campus Development Team – Nancy Entrikin, Kevin Walsh, Andrew Eshleman, and Martin Elfert – have some significant news to share. We met with Northwest Housing Alternatives recently and we learned that NHA no longer believes that they can complete a financially viable affordable housing project here at Grace – at least not right now.

Your team does not have a full grasp of why a project at Grace appeared viable to NHA several years ago but does not appear viable today. Some factors NHA cited include: rising building costs; sustained high borrowing rates for developers; and regionally, more restricted access to public funds dedicated to affordable housing. At a future State of Grace meeting, we look forward to trying to address any questions you might have. If possible, we'll arrange for a rep from NHA to come to Grace to share their reasoning with us.

Though all the details are not yet clear, it felt important to share this news with you as soon as we could. This is both a surprise and a disappointment: as recently as this winter, NHA was advising us that there was a real scenario in which our project could begin in the first or second quarter of 2026.

While forward progress is now stalled, NHA is going to facilitate a Grace campus tour and conversation with some of our elected representatives in order to talk with them about (a) our vision for the campus and the ways that 17th and Weidler could become an even greater gift to our neighborhood; and (b) the considerable barriers that we have experienced to beginning such a project.

Simultaneously, we will be in conversation with the property team at the Diocese as well as with other faith-based organizations that are called to this work.

When we discussed this news at Vestry, your Vestry asked if there was a mistake or oversight that may have led our church to this moment. Grace has sought, received, and heeded expert advice throughout our work and we have remained in constant communication with the Diocese. Our work has been, and remains, prayerful and diligent. We will continue to reflect and listen with the goal of learning whether we may have made a misstep along the way.

We continue to hope and work for a completed housing project at Grace. Your Development Team is committed to, with God's help, making that vision a reality. The work of getting there has proved to be a longer walk in the wilderness than we first imagined. (Remember that the renovation of our beloved chapel was a project that was eighteen years in the making!) But our goal is to make it to the promised land yet!

Yours in Christ,

The Grace Campus Development Team