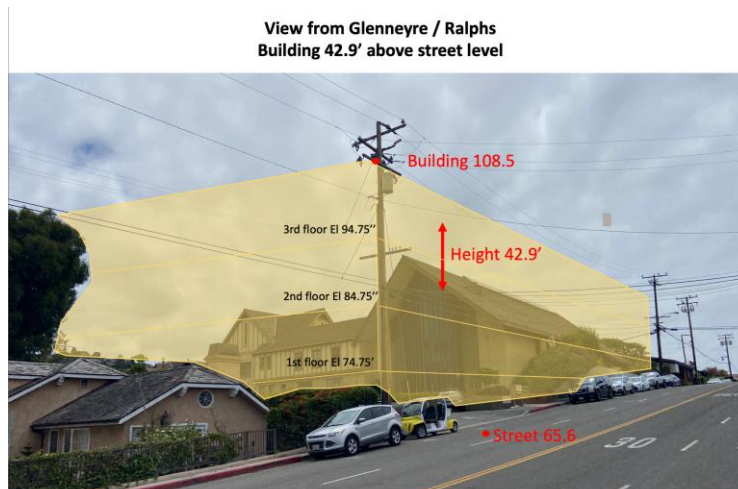


# DID YOU KNOW?

**THERE IS A MASSIVE 72-unit 'DESIGN CONCEPT' and application for funding submitted by the Neighborhood Congregational Church (NCC) at 340 St. Anns and their partner - Related California**

On May 7, 2024, Bill Witte, CEO of Related California, a developer who lives in Laguna Beach, signed and submitted an application, in the public record, in response to the City of Laguna Beach's Notice of Funding Availability. The objective is for this partnership to seek matching funds (taxpayer money) from the City of Laguna Beach and the State of California for a project that would remove the existing Montessori school and displace 75 families who presently have children attending the school, demolish the existing Church and historic Bridge Hall designed by iconic architect Aubrey St. Clair at 340 St. Anns, and replace it with a spiritual center along with a massive 72-unit affordable housing complex in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

The partnership is anticipating receiving an award by the Laguna Beach Local Housing Trust Fund as part of their proposed timeline (as stated on page 42 of their application). Their 'design concept' on page 37, shows a proposed height of 3-stories and a subterranean parking garage for 108 parking stalls. This would comprise 19 three-bedroom units, 19 two-bedroom units, 30 one-bedroom units, and 4 studios. To visualize what the proposed 72-unit, 4-story structure would look like on the available plot of land (using standard building heights and including their parking garage), here is an estimation below. To better understand this impact, the proposed project would be the equivalent of 2 HOTEL LAGUNAs inside the existing Church lot.



Page 42 of their application shows the intent to leverage Senate Bill 4 (SB-4) that provides a streamlined process for religious institutions to develop affordable housing on their property. And with SB-4, this project would be exempt from CEQA and a proper design review. In fact, on June 11, 2024, the City of Laguna Beach revised the General Plan 'Housing Element' document on page 85, which notes:

*"If this development is pursued, the City would work diligently with the Neighborhood Congregational Church to facilitate a rezoning of the parking lot parcel from R-2, Residential Medium Density to LBP, Local Business Professional in an expeditious manner."*

This of course, allows for 'maximum density' in an already congested neighborhood.

The residents of the neighborhood are in favor of responsible development and finding suitable locations for affordable housing projects. This project sets a dangerous precedent and should never be at the expense of one neighborhood shouldering the burden. The size of the scope of this project is simply incompatible with the charm and culture of the specific neighborhood and Laguna Beach. The impacts will be felt far and wide by all residents of Laguna Beach as an enormous number of parking spots will now be eliminated with an incredible increase in congestion with 200 additional people and 108 additional cars, living in one complex at 340 St. Anns. Safety is a major factor with increased density and Glenneyre, which serves as a fire evacuation route, and which will be even further congested. We strongly urge the City Council, NCC, and Related California to consider a much smaller footprint that will be compatible with Laguna Beach as well as not destroying existing mountain and coastal ocean views (which is an important selling point for living in a coastal community).

Please digitally sign the PETITION here for 'responsible development'.

