

REGION

Groundswell builds for workforce-wage housing outside cities

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Placing a business in the right location is important, but equally important is the placement of employees and customers to fill those businesses. In Manheim Township and other parts of the region, there is an effort to bridge the gap between development and the need for affordable housing.

In places such as Lancaster and York, most workers earning a workforce wage live in the city. Workforce wage is between 40 percent and 60 percent of a region's median income. In Lancaster, the range is between \$18,000 and \$45,000 per household. These earners often depend on public transportation or their feet to get to work, grocery stores, schools, doctors' offices and other essential places.

In December, the Golden Triangle Apartments opened in Manheim Township. Community Basics, a Lancaster-based nonprofit home-development organization, teamed with CAP Housing Corp. of Lancaster, an arm of the Community Action Commission, to build the 58-unit workforce rental complex.

"We have a steak-and-caviar market. New apartments are running between \$1,200 and \$1,500 per month. The workforce-income group is not being served and they cannot afford to buy a new house."

**Kenneth Smith,
Community Basics**

The apartments represent \$9.4 million in affordable-housing construction on 8.4 acres. Rental prices range from \$575 to \$850 per month. The three buildings in the complex are behind the Golden Triangle Shopping Center on Roosevelt Boulevard.

"We looked for an area with amenities close by. There is a bus stop at the site, Lancaster General Hospital is within a mile, there are parks nearby and an elementary school across the street," said Kenneth Smith, executive director of



Fruitville Pike
MANHEIM TOWNSHIP
Lancaster Boulevard
N
Pike
Oregon
Pike

Golden Triangle Apartments

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Community Basics.

CAP Housing wanted to team with Community Basics to create an affordable-housing opportunity for individuals outside the city. CAP previously worked with Community Basics on a similar project in the borough of Lititz.

"Our main goal was to produce these apartments for people outside the city, so you wouldn't concentrate one lower-income (group) in one area," said Michael Goldberg, president of CAP Housing's board of directors. "Several reports showed there was a need for (suburban) housing."

There is a shortage of affordable housing for workforce earners

across the region, Smith said.

"We have a steak-and-caviar market," Smith said. "New apartments are running between \$1,200 and \$1,500 per month. The workforce-income group is not being served, and they cannot afford to buy a new house."

Prior to developing Golden Triangle Apartments, Community Basics took on workforce-housing projects in New Holland, Lititz and Maytown, all in Lancaster County, and Springettsbury Township, York County.

Each project was supported with county and state funds. Waverly Court, a 46-apartment complex in Springettsbury Township, received more than \$1.5 million from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, \$920,000 from York County and \$20,000 from the York County Housing Authority. An additional \$3.6 million came from an equity investor who earned federal tax credits by backing the project, at 120 Valleybrook Drive.

The last unit was rented at Waverly Court in September. The county planning commission backed the project to ensure that the 46 apartments remained affordable-housing units for the next 30

years. Each year, the county verifies that Waverly Court residents are below the 60 percent median-income threshold, said Karen Hynd, housing coordinator for the York County Planning Commission.

Like Golden Triangle Apartments, Waverly Court was built in a strategic location, close to retail centers, a school and a bus stop. Stores and other companies nearby provide jobs that pay rent-supporting wages, Hynd said.

Land is scarce in York, she said. And when the property became available, Creating Opportunities in Neighborhood Environments — the York Housing Authority entity that helped develop Waverly Court — climbed on board with Community Basics.

"The market study showed there wouldn't be a problem leasing the site," said Debbie Loucks, executive director of York Housing Authority. "There is a long waiting list for the apartments."

Projects such as Waverly Court and Golden Triangle Apartments are steps in the right direction, Loucks said, but more complexes are needed.

"It's all over the place. There is a lack of affordable housing everywhere," Loucks said. ■