

Affordable Housing and Smart Growth

Arlington Heights' Multifamily Affordable Housing Policy

Arlington Heights, Cook County

Arlington Heights establishes high expectations for affordable units in new developments with a policy requiring developers to explain how their projects will address village affordable housing goals.

Since Arlington Heights established its Housing Commission in the 1970s, access to affordable housing has been one of the Village Board's top goals. In 1998, to encourage affordable housing construction, the board enacted the Affordable Multifamily Housing Policy, which states:

It is the policy of the Village of Arlington Heights to promote adequate housing for all the community's people; to create and/or maintain sound viable neighborhoods; to meet the needs for housing by increasing the number of housing units for low and moderate income families and individuals; and to expand housing opportunities for all members of the community.

To implement this policy, which is intended to promote both affordable homeownership and rental opportunities, the Village Board amended the application developers of multifamily residential housing must submit to the Arlington Heights Plan Commission, to include a description of how they intend to address the village's goal to promote affordable housing. As in many other parts of the Chicago region, since 2000, it has become considerably more expensive to live in Arlington Heights, as the village has experienced an increase in both new construction and condominium conversions. Its policy elevates the importance of affordable housing in the decision-making process for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), making the village more directly involved. It also encourages developers to include affordable homes in their developments.

How It Works

All Plan Commission applications for multifamily residential PUDs must include an assessment of the development's affordability, details about the inclusion of affordable homes, and an additional explanation of how the developer will respond to the village's policy. Developers are required to submit this information for both new PUDs and amendments to existing PUDs. The policy states affordable homes must be dispersed among the market rate units, should have the same exterior and

Goal

To promote affordable homeownership and rental opportunities, especially in Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

Target

Low and moderate-income families at or below 80% AMI for the Chicago region (\$60,300 for a family of four in 2009).

Financing

No costs associated with this policy.

Success

The Timber Court Condominiums development was the first larger-scale application to this policy. Of the development's three proposed buildings, the first two were completed in 2008, and contain eight one-bedroom and six two-bedroom affordable units. After the third building is built, in which the developer has planned four one-bedroom and three two-bedroom affordable units, Timber Court will have 21 affordable units (20% of the total development).

Lessons Learned

The affordable two-bedroom condominiums at Timber Court sold quickly, while it was much more difficult to find interested eligible homebuyers for the affordable one-bedroom condominiums. Therefore, in the future, the Village will ask that all affordable housing units have at least two bedrooms.

interior appearance, and should not differ in terms of finishes or internal mechanical systems, unless otherwise approved.

While the policy is not a mandate, it does help the village take affordable housing into consideration when reviewing a PUD. The number of affordable homes recommended by the village is dependent on zoning, site planning, and other site-specific considerations.



Affordable Housing and Smart Growth

Arlington Heights' Multifamily Affordable Housing Policy

Arlington Heights, Cook County

The village does provide guidelines for an acceptable percentage of affordable homes within different sized developments. Arlington Heights recommends that 12 percent of homes within developments of 11-50 units be affordable, 15 percent of developments with 51-100 units, and 20 percent in developments with more than 101 units.

Buyers are eligible to purchase affordable homes in Arlington Heights if their annual household incomes are at or below 80 percent of area median income (AMI) for the Chicago region (\$60,300 for a family of four in 2009). Prices are set so buyers spend no more than 30 percent of their gross annual incomes on housing costs, which include principal and interest (on an adjusted average 30-year fixed rate mortgage), association dues, taxes, and insurance. The appropriate number of occu-

pants for a unit is defined as one more than the number of bedrooms, and prices are set based on this standard. For instance, the price of a two-bedroom home is set to be affordable for a three-person household.

To support this policy and its overall affordable housing goals, the Village of Arlington Heights has put in place several tools to support developments that include an affordable component. The village provides its own financial assistance to purchasers, maintains a waiting list of ready and qualified buyers, and has developed several legal documents and measures to maintain affordability permanently, including provisions of the Declaration of Condominium, Development Agreement, and Buyer's Occupancy and Resale Restriction Agreement signed by the homeowners.



**Contact
Phone
Email**

Nora Boyer, Housing Planner, Village of Arlington Heights
847.368.5214
nboyer@vah.com

As of February 2010