

Enterprise Green Communities, the standard for sustainable futures, is the only national green building program designed explicitly for affordable housing construction. Green building practices lead to healthy, efficient and environmentally responsible affordable homes, and promote equitable development by giving residents a voice in creating their communities.

Project Overview

26th & Clarksville - Phase III in Nashville, Tennessee is a new low-rise affordable senior apartment building that received low-income housing tax credits allocated through an innovation pool by the state housing finance agency, THDA. This building is phase three of four and is part of an intergenerational community. Upon completion, the site will have 168 affordable units. The project team certified the property to the Enterprise Green Communities 2015 Criteria, earning a total of 72 points.

Improving Resident Well Being

Urban Housing Solutions (UHS) recognized that the residents they serve are not only in need of stable, affordable housing, but also need to remain healthy once housed. To that end, they work closely with a variety of service providers to meet the varying health needs of residents.

For 26th & Clarksville - Phase III, UHS determined that they had a unique opportunity to test a new process of integrating health into their design and development activities. The project team pursued Criteria 1.2b Health Action Plan (HAP) and worked together with future residents, community partners and the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing to complete the process. The partnerships and results from HAP allowed the project team to better understand which design decisions to implement and which residential services to provide.

The project team prioritized in-unit and common space design solutions that addressed health needs that arose through the process. Specifically, the building and units were designed to minimize floor transitions, bathrooms have additional grab bars, and handrails in common areas to reduce tripping hazards and falls. Aimed at reducing social isolation for older adult residents, common areas were designed at different scales and privacy levels to accommodate gatherings of different sizes and functions. Lastly, the project team determined that residents wanted different options for bathing; to that end, there are units that have roll-in showers and others with bathtubs.

For common spaces, the project team identified opportunities to address other social determinants of public health across the site. The central community building provides space for intergenerational programming with community partners, and the Phase II building on site is home to a new community health clinic staffed by the Vanderbilt School of Nursing.



View of 26th & Clarksville - Phase III entrance with zero-entry and handicap-accessible parking.

Project Information

Location: Nashville, Tennessee

Project Type: New Construction

Construction Cost: \$11,100,000

Property Information: 55 apartments; 53 one-bedroom apartments, 2 two-bedroom apartments; 64,800 SF.

Project Team

Property Owner: Urban Housing Solutions

Architect: Danelian Associates

Engineer: Genesis Engineering

General Contractor: Avenue Construction

Green Building Consultant: E3 Innovate

Photovoltaic Installer: Lightwave Solar

Public Health Professional: Dr. Maxwell, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing



The project team preserved a central accessible outdoor space for residents to gather and enjoy.

The Path to Zero Energy

26th & Clarksville demonstrates that it is possible for affordable housing to pursue the path to zero energy, which involves reducing energy use, considering renewables and electrification.

The project team prioritized reducing energy usage by exceeding the minimum energy efficiency requirements and pursuing optional criteria. Through compliance with the ENERGY STAR program and installation of energy saving features like an ENERGY STAR–certified roof, improved insulation and air sealing, and efficient heating and cooling equipment, the building will be saving approximately 25% in energy costs over a new code-compliant building, and even more so compared to existing housing.

“We committed to Enterprise Green Communities because it aligned with how we select sites and design our buildings. The Criteria helped us consider ideas we hadn’t thought about before.”

Kelsey Oesmann, Urban Housing Solutions

Also, this building, along with all new UHS buildings, is all electric. The switch has a positive health impact: the elimination of combustion appliances removes the possibility of negative resident and staff health impacts due to exposure to combustion byproducts. It also puts 26th & Clarksville on the path to access cleaner energy. As the electricity grid gets cleaner, this property will see a decrease in carbon emissions.

In addition to energy efficiency and electrification, the team took steps to install renewables on the building. The project was originally designed to only be photovoltaic (PV) ready; however, UHS received incentives¹ to pursue installation of a 50 kW rooftop PV system. The power generated from the system will generate UHS approximately \$4,700 annually, which they will use to offset building operation costs, including resident services. To date, the system has produced environmental savings equivalent to planting over 800 trees. The project team established a real-time monitoring system that can be found [here](#).

¹ UHS offset the costs of the PV installation through a grant from a local Fifth Third bank and by partnering with an investor interested in federal renewable energy tax credits.



The 50kW rooftop photovoltaic system will generate about \$4,700 annually for UHS.

Implemented Optional Criteria

- 1.2b Health Action Plan
- 2.4 Compact Development
- 2.8 Access to Public Transportation
- 3.6 Surface Stormwater Management
- 5.7a Photovoltaic / Solar Hot Water Ready
- 5.7b Renewable Energy
- 6.10 Asthagen-free Materials
- 6.11 Reduced Heat-Island Effect: Roofing
- 7.4 Elimination of Combustion within the Conditioned Space
- 7.11a Beyond ADA: Universal Design



Aerial view of the 26th & Clarksville. Phase III is located on the left portion of the site.