

housing'. Understandably questions arise about affordable housing when it is proposed in a community. It is not uncommon for there to be a lack of information and sometimes misunderstandings about who lives in the housing, what the housing looks like and how it will affect property values. Fortunately the record and evidence shows housing that is designed for and affordable to employee in neighborhood businesses, working families and local residents is an asset for the community. Some of the common questions and concerns are:

Concern: People who live in affordable housing won't fit into my neighborhood.

Fact: Many are surprised to learn that people who need affordable housing are neighbors who already live and work in the community and are at risk of being priced out. According to the definition of affordable housing, it is housing where households should pay no more than 30% of their income to rent or mortgage payments. All "affordable housing" means is that the residents don't pay too large a share of their income on rent or mortgage. Using this definition many local workers such as teachers, librarians, police and many other vital members of communities qualify and need affordable housing.

Concern: Affordable housing means crime and drugs in the neighborhood

Fact: There is absolutely no evidence of an increase in crime resulting from the affordable housing in a neighborhood. Those who live in affordable housing - whether renter or owner - also value their homes and community too. They work, shop, raise families, worship and attend school in the community like everyone else. They want the same things everyone else does - to peacefully enjoy life in the surrounding community

Concern: Affordable housing is poorly maintained and lowers property values.

Fact: Study after study has shown that an affordable housing development does not affect property values. Precisely because the process of affordable housing development is so heavily scrutinized and must address these concerns in order to win approval, contemporary affordable housing is attractively designed, professionally managed, and well-maintained. In some cases, affordable housing is actually more attractive and better maintained than similar housing in the neighborhood. Consequently affordable housing maintains its good appearance and value over time. Remember: property values result primarily from neighborhood desirability, characteristics of comparable housing sales and the overall quality of a community.

Concern: Affordable housing represents just another government welfare handout.

Fact: Affordable housing is financed partially by mortgages from banks and other private sector lenders at market interest rates. Those who live in this housing do make rental or mortgage payments. Additional financing in the form of low interest loans and a limited amount of grant funding from government sources and charitable foundations is needed only to reduce the cost of building and operating the housing in order to make it affordable. It is important to remember that other homeowners benefit from federal housing subsidies in the form of income tax deduction for mortgage interest paid - the largest housing subsidy program in the U.S.