

# The Village at Harmony Green

## **New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency**

Special Needs Housing: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

### **HFA Staff Contact**

Chris Ryan

[cryan@njhmfa.gov](mailto:cryan@njhmfa.gov)

## Overview

The Village at Harmony Garden project, a redevelopment initiative by NJHMFA, is being submitted for NCSHA's Award for Program Excellence for Special Needs Housing. The project aims to revitalize the site of the former 100% Public Housing development known as the "Ellis Street" projects. The new development is comprised 65 high-quality, affordable units, age-restricted for 55+. The units are affordable to residents at or below 60% of Area Median Income ("AMI"), with 17 units reserved for individuals with developmental disabilities. The project also includes adequate on-site parking, community space, laundry facilities, and management space, with every unit receiving Energy Star certification. The project is managed by Pennrose Management Company.

## Background

On this site, a former 100% Public Housing development, located at the corner of Lincoln Boulevard (Ellis Street) and Higgins Drive in Glassboro, Gloucester County, had been vacant for a half decade. As the buildings aged with diminishing government subsidies, the capital expenditure requirements necessary to maintain the twenty-eight (28) building complex became less feasible each year. In 2016, with the support of the Borough of Glassboro, Ellis Manor was remediated and demolished, leaving a vacant field ready to be developed. In order to revitalize this integral section of Glassboro, NJHMFA and Pennrose, with the tremendous support of the Borough of Glassboro, partnered to redevelop the site into 65 high-quality, affordable units age-restricted for 55+, with 17 units reserved for individuals with developmental disabilities. The project acts as a catalyst to provide quality affordable housing to members of the local community seeking to benefit from the expansion along Rowan Boulevard that aren't able to currently afford it.

## Methods and Results

The Village at Harmony Garden project is located at the corner of Lincoln Boulevard (Ellis Street) and Higgins Drive in Glassboro, Gloucester County. Once a severely blighted area affected by diminishing home values, in 2016, the Borough of Glassboro partnered with the Glassboro Housing Authority (GHA), NJHMFA, and Pennrose to redevelop the site of the former 100% Public Housing development, known locally as the "Ellis Street" projects, into a high-quality, affordable housing community for seniors, including 17 units set aside for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The project includes 65 high-quality, affordable cottage units, with 57 one-bedroom and 8 two-bedroom units. All 65 units are affordable to residents at or below 60% of Area Median Income ("AMI"). Additionally, 17 of the 65 units are set aside for individuals with developmental disabilities, and GHA is providing a project-based voucher commitment for 40 units, with 17 of those vouchers dedicated to the developmentally disabled supportive housing units so that 100% of the supportive housing units are covered with rental-based subsidy. Twenty-four units are covered by RAD vouchers.

Each unit is well appointed with amenities including Energy-Star appliances, central air conditioning and heating, cable/internet access, ceramic tile in the bathroom, and carpet with window treatments. At least 7 of the units are accessible to residents with physical disabilities, and at least 4 units are outfitted for residents with hearing and vision disabilities. Every unit in the Lincoln Boulevard Revitalization receives Energy Star certification.

The project also includes on-site parking, community space, laundry facilities, and management space. The development acts as a catalyst to provide quality affordable housing to members of the local community seeking to benefit from the expansion along Rowan Boulevard that are not currently able to afford it. Lincoln Senior Housing Urban Renewal Associates | LP entered into a long-term ground lease with the Glassboro Housing Authority. The new development is professionally managed by Pennrose Management Company.

## Discussion

The Village at Harmony Garden project is a remarkable example of how a partnership between local government, housing authorities, and private developers can revitalize and transform a blighted area into a thriving and affordable housing community. The project represents a significant investment in the local community, providing quality and affordable housing for seniors, including those with developmental disabilities.

The inclusion of 17 units set aside for individuals with developmental disabilities is particularly noteworthy. This commitment to providing supportive housing for this population aligns with the broader national goal of expanding housing options for people with disabilities. Additionally, the project-based voucher commitment for 40 units, with 17 of those vouchers dedicated to the developmentally disabled supportive housing units, ensures that 100% of the supportive housing units are covered with rental-based subsidy, making the housing even more affordable for those who need it most.

The project's emphasis on accessibility is also commendable, with at least 7 units designed to be accessible to residents with physical disabilities, and at least 4 units designed for those with hearing and vision disabilities. The inclusion of Energy Star appliances and Energy Star certification for every unit further underscores the commitment to sustainable and affordable housing.

Moreover, the project's location near Rowan University and the redevelopment on Rowan Boulevard makes it an ideal community for seniors looking to benefit from the expansion along the boulevard. The project serves as a catalyst for providing quality affordable housing to members of the local community who may not be able to afford it otherwise.

Overall, the Village at Harmony Garden project is a testament to the power of partnerships and investments in affordable housing. The project's commitment to accessibility, sustainability, and support for individuals with disabilities sets a high standard for future affordable housing projects.

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