



PATH Helps Bring Affordable, Sustainable Multi-Family Housing to the Capital Region

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WASHINGTON, DC Washington is known for its many historic landmarks, museums, and institutions, and as the locus of power for the federal government. To the people who live and work within the District’s borders, it’s also a collection of overlapping neighborhoods, each with its own unique personality and sense of place. Takoma Village, a new Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH) demonstration project located in the Takoma section of upper northwest Washington, is changing the fabric of one such neighborhood with a 43-unit cohousing development that serves as a model of energy and resource-efficient multi-family construction. Finish work on the project is now substantially complete, and a ribbon cutting event will take place on May 4.



The event will show builders, developers, and home buyers how new building technologies and design strategies are making ownership more affordable, while providing an attractive – and rapid – return on investment. Indeed, many of Takoma Village’s 43 one- two-, and three-bedroom units were sold long before construction even began (the development is now completely sold out and a waiting list has been established). That’s a significant departure from the standard formula for multi-family housing, which is largely speculative in nature and involves a measure of investor risk – even during times of high housing demand.

To help create the kind of sustainable/affordable housing that savvy homebuyers are looking for, PATH and the building systems consulting firm Steven Winter Associates, Inc. worked closely with project architect Don Tucker to ensure that energy performance, occupant comfort, and green building materials all received priority attention during the process of design development. PATH also worked with the builder to help ease the transition to new system and material installation procedures, such as those required for ground source (also known as geothermal) heat pumps and blown-in cellulose insulation.

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Technology Making a Difference Where Americans Live

Other PATH-evaluated buildings materials and technologies featured in Takoma Village include:

- ↻ Fiber cement siding;
- ↻ Renewable framing materials (engineered wood, steel, or combinations thereof);
- ↻ Low-emissivity, aluminum-framed windows with thermal breaks;
- ↻ Horizontal-access clothes washers (located in the Common House);
- ↻ Tubular skylights;
- ↻ HVAC ductwork installed predominantly within conditioned space;
- ↻ Programmable thermostats;
- ↻ Recycled content carpeting; and
- ↻ Low toxicity wood preservative.

Augmented by the highly efficient geothermal heating and cooling system, these integrated building strategies result in a thermally efficient structure that contributes as much to the residents' comfort as it does to reducing their monthly utility bills.

During the design process, energy analyses were performed to ensure that insulation levels and glazing would be optimized in the finished product. Post-construction diagnostic testing will be performed to qualify the project under EPA's ENERGY STAR Homes program. In advance of testing, PATH has worked closely with EPA to develop a Builder Option Package specifically geared for Takoma Village. An alternate means of securing an ENERGY STAR rating, the Builder Option Package takes into account the project's higher levels of insulation, use of ground source heat pumps, and overall HVAC system performance.

"Takoma Village is a group of people creating a community," said local cohousing leader Ann Zabaldo, who worked closely with PATH throughout project design and construction. "Cities are often places where people feel isolated, despite the high population density. We've set out to change that by consciously forming a community that's willing to work a little harder to reach out to their neighbors, and to lend a hand when opportunities arise. Our members really responded to the homes' energy-saving, environmentally friendly features, which I credit with helping us reach full capacity long before the work crews left the site."

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PATH is a joint public-private partnership that improves the quality and cost of America's homes using innovative technologies. Visit PATH on the web at www.PATHNET.org

To learn about the Takoma Village Cohousing Project, visit www.takomavillage.org

Media representatives interested in attending the ribbon cutting event are encouraged to contact Will Zachmann at 202-628-6100 x 201; high-resolution in-construction and as-built photos of this project are available in electronic (jpg) format.