



The red brick building post-rehab



129 newly installed rooftop solar panels

Enterprise Green Communities | 2020 Criteria Aspen Street Cooperative, Washington, D.C.

Enterprise Green Communities, the standard for sustainable futures, is the only national green building program designed specifically 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.

CHALLENGE: PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO COUNTER DISPLACEMENT

- Between 2008-2012 and 2016-2020, the greater Washington, DC region lost over 86,000 low-cost units (with rents under \$1,600) as both new market and existing rent prices continue to rise across the region. When the owner decided to sell the property to a developer, these longtime naturally affordable rental homes were suddenly at risk of becoming vastly unaffordable. However, developers weren't the only ones who wanted to buy the building. So, too, did the residents themselves.
- Upon forming the 1400 Aspen Street Tenants Association and beginning the process to take ownership of their building under D.C.'s Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), the residents' legal battle for homeownership began. After fighting for over 5 years, on February 19, 2020, the Association officially took over the building as a limited equity cooperative, ensuring community agency over decisions impacting the building and residents.
- Shortly after, the Association's democratically elected Cooperative Board worked together with residents to make their homes more efficient, healthy, and affordable through Green Communities certification.

APPROACH: PROMOTING RESIDENT HEALTH AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

- The project team earned criterion 7.7 'Ventilation' by installing ENERGY STAR bathroom exhaust fans with timed moisture sensors and ENERGY STAR kitchen exhaust hoods ducted through exterior walls; comprised as a whole-house mechanical exhaust system to mitigate mold and moisture concerns and improve air quality.
- Aspen Street Cooperative gained 8 points for 5.3b 'Moving to Zero Energy: Renewable Energy' by installing 129 solar panels on the rooftop, providing approximately 50% of the building's energy. In addition to generating clean energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, solar lowers energy costs for the entire cooperative.
- Blown electrical fuses were once commonplace, but no longer. The project team modernized the building's electrical system, replacing old fuse boxes with 60-amp circuit breakers that reduce the risk of fire, minimize power transfer inefficiencies, and accommodate the building's new photovoltaic panels.

“Now they begin a new stage – as owners of a fully renovated cooperative in the heart of a transformed neighborhood in the nation’s capital.”

Ramon Jacobson

Executive Director, LISC Washington, D.C.

Learn more about the journey of the 1400 Aspen Street Tenants Association [here](#).

IMPACT: REDUCING CONSUMPTION, ADVANCING RESILIENCE

- Energy efficiency was prioritized both to address the risks of climate change and reduce operating costs for the co-op. The project team installed highly efficient 8,000 BTU window air conditioning units, replaced old windows with high-performance ENERGY STAR windows, and replaced lighting in all common spaces with LED lighting.
- The reliable, highly efficient HVAC systems are a vital resiliency measure for the homeowners in Washington, DC, where extreme heat that disproportionately affects low-income communities is the new normal.
- New energy-efficient features have decreased summertime electricity usage by nearly 20% from years prior.

NEW FEATURES, NEW HOMEOWNERS, SAME AFFORDABILITY

- Nearly a decade ago, after learning that their building was up for sale, residents came together to discuss forming a co-op in the building’s only communal space: the laundry room. Today, they come together in their brand-new community room, a space with community-controlled use that earned criterion 7.13 ‘Healing-Centered Design.’
- The team also fulfilled criterion 7.13 ‘Healing-Centered Design’ by replacing doors in all 30 homes and adding LED lighting to the exterior, aimed at providing a safe and comfortable environment for residents.
- The project’s successful certification was supported by the building’s location and surroundings. The team earned 25 points from category 2 of the Green Communities criteria, ‘Location + Neighborhood Fabric,’ earning points for the building’s density (2.4), access to open space (2.7), access to transit (2.8), and access to fresh, local foods (2.12). Through Green Communities, all building and project types can similarly earn points for existing features.
- Because of their dedicated journey towards ownership and green living, the homeowners at 1400 Aspen Street enjoy long-term affordability in efficient, healthy, and comfortable homes.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Green Points: 47 (35 min required) • Project Type: Moderate Rehabilitation • Construction Cost: \$6,992,012 • Year Completed: 2023 • AMI: 30 units, 15 units at 50%, 15 units at 60% • Property Developer/Owner: 1400 Aspen Street Tenants Association • Architect/Green Building: Martha Davis & Stoiber and Associates • Funder: D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development 	<p>OPTIONAL GREEN COMMUNITIES CRITERIA ACHIEVED</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2.4 Increased Compact Development</td> <td>2.7 Preservation of and Access to Open Space</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.8 Access to Transit</td> <td>2.12 Access to Fresh, Local Foods</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.3b Moving to Zero Energy: Renewable Energy</td> <td>7.7 Ventilation</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">7.13 Healing-Centered Design</td> </tr> </table>	2.4 Increased Compact Development	2.7 Preservation of and Access to Open Space	2.8 Access to Transit	2.12 Access to Fresh, Local Foods	5.3b Moving to Zero Energy: Renewable Energy	7.7 Ventilation	7.13 Healing-Centered Design	
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