

Patuxent Commons



6441 Freetown Road, Columbia, MD 21044



Project Description and Background

Mission First Housing Development Corporation (Mission First), a 501(c3) nonprofit developer based in Washington, DC, is proposing a 76-unit new construction project at the NE intersection of Cedar Lane and Freetown Road in Columbia, MD, to be known as Patuxent Commons.

The concept for Patuxent Commons was developed by the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) and its Housing Task Force to help address the housing needs of adults with disabilities through a supportive community for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. HCAS continues to be actively involved in supporting Mission First's development of the project.



Patuxent Commons has four primary objectives:

- Address housing instability faced by low-income adults with disabilities, older adults, and younger adults/families
- Enhance social connectedness through building of relationships and community engagement, and reciprocal sharing of social support by neighbors
- Use housing as a springboard to maximize individual potential and facilitate community integration for people of all ages, abilities and incomes
- Pioneer a viable, innovative solution to the growing housing crisis facing adults with disabilities that can be adapted elsewhere in Maryland and serve as a model for similar housing developments throughout the United States.

The project site, across the street from the Hickory Ridge Village Center, provides an ideal location for this development concept, with shopping, employment, recreation, and transit opportunities in close proximity.

Planning and Precedents

To develop the Patuxent Commons concept, HCAS undertook an extensive, community-driven planning process that engaged input and expertise from disability self-advocates and stakeholders, public and private sector leaders, experts in aging and services, and leading housing innovators from across the country. A 12-member HCAS Task Force assembled a project prospectus containing detailed program information, preliminary market research, financial modeling, and design criteria. The resulting Patuxent Commons concept being developed by Mission First draws directly from successful housing projects across the US that affordably house and provide supportive community for people of different ages, abilities and strengths.



Main Street is an affordable, accessible and inclusive 70-unit apartment complex and community center steps from a Metro stop and adjacent to the town center in Rockville, Maryland. At Main Street, 25% of the units are deeply affordable (30% AMI) and set aside for adults with disabilities. Another 50% of the units provide affordable workforce housing and the remaining 25% are market rate. By fostering a culture of inclusion, Main Street bridges abilities, age and socioeconomic factors, allowing residents to connect through everyday social encounters and structured activities and programs provided by trained staff and community partners. Main Street received thousands of inquiries from prospective residents when it began its leasing process and currently has a multi-year waiting list for available units.

Portland, Oregon's **Bridge Meadows** is a small, robust "pocket neighborhood" that is fully integrated into the fabric of the surrounding community. Bridge Meadows provides affordable, supportive housing for families adopting youth formerly in foster care and for older adults. The older adults serve as mentors, friends, and caregivers to the youth and each other, forming a safety net of care and interdependence that demonstrably increases resiliency and sense of purpose across the generations. Bridge Meadows' success has spawned three additional communities in Oregon with more in development.



In New Orleans, **Bastion** addresses the unique challenges faced by wounded warrior veterans with life-long rehabilitative needs by leveraging the social capital of supportive neighbors in an affordable housing development. Since its launch in 2017, the community has earned national media recognition and awards from organizations as diverse as the Aspen Institute, the George W. Bush Institute, and the Affordability Tax Credit Coalition. Bastion is currently completing a five-year evaluation study to measure resident wellbeing longitudinally through quantitative and qualitative assessments. Most notable findings reported to date include increased housing stability, social connectedness and purpose, and decreased loneliness.

Project Summary

Patuxent Commons will set aside 25% of its units for adults with disabilities, or 19 units. The remaining units will be targeted to older adults, families and younger adults.

Unit Type	Total Units	Percentage
Disability	19	25%
Individual/Family	27	35%
Senior*	30	40%
TOTAL	76	

* To comply with Fair Housing, Senior Units will be a "Preference" and cannot exclude seniors with minor children.

The development is proposed to be 90% affordable and 10% market rate. The disability units will be deeply affordable for very low income adults, while the other affordable units will be workforce housing. A mix of one, two, and three bedroom units is proposed.

Bedroom Size	Total Units	Percentage
1BR	43	57%
2BR	27	35%
3BR	6	8%
TOTAL	76	



The building will be three stories at street level, with underground parking. There will be a design focus on the pedestrian experience, since many of the residents will use public transit, and will not drive. The building will have a green buffer along the street frontage, and will meet all County-required setbacks. A minimum of 122 parking spaces are proposed –1 space per unit for the disability units, and 1.8 spaces per unit for the non-disability units.

The project site's excellent location and proximity to services and innovative, neighbor-to-neighbor social engagement program will facilitate the integration of residents with disabilities into the surrounding community and promote the ability of residents of all abilities to thrive in a supportive, inclusive community setting.

Financing

Mission First has assembled financing for the development from a variety of private, County, State, and Federal sources.

Developers: Mission First Housing Development Corporation

Architect: Moseley Architects

HCAS Consultant: Mark Dunham, Kindred Strategies

Civil Engineer: Gutschik Little and Weber (GLW)

Land Use Counsel: Bill Erskine with Offit Kurman

General Contractors: Harkins Builders

Property Management: Columbus Property Management

