

North American Edition

TIME FOR

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Featured Research:

Affordable Housing in a Rural, Tourism-Based Community

From: PD&R Edge



OVERVIEW

Rural, tourism-dependent communities often face challenges with affordable housing. Finding ways to support low-wage earning tourism workforce members with adequate housing is critical to ensuring that tourists have memorable and satisfying experiences. The case study of the Cinema Court development in Moab, Utah is used in a [PD&R Edge article](#) to demonstrate how rural, tourism-dependent communities can overcome these challenges.

THE CASE OF CINEMA COURT

Cinema Court was originally slated to be a single-family affordable housing development. Due to several external factors, the focus shifted to a multi-family affordable housing development. The apartment complex offers housing to residents earning up to fifty (50) percent of the median income. Rental rates depend on factors such as household size, income, and unit size. In addition to including wireless internet access, community amenities also focus on providing residents with education on topics such as life skills, budgeting, and resume writing. A concerted effort was made for Cinema Court to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient. Mitigating the environmental impacts of the development through xeriscaping, triple-pane windows, Energy Star appliances, and other strategies, has resulted in cost-savings for residents (e.g., lower utility bills).

LESSONS LEARNED

According to Marci Milligan, president and chief operating officer of Lotus Community Development Institute (LCDI) and a consultant on the project, the case of Cinema Court provides the following two (2) valuable lessons for rural destinations facing similar challenges with affordable housing supply:

1

- **The importance of proactive planning** – Since Moab had an up-to-date affordable housing plan, Moab received priority consideration for a low-interest loan from Utah's Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund, which was critical to the project's success.

2

- **The value of bringing in outside technical assistance** – "Most rural communities don't have the qualified staff or qualified agencies to do it alone anymore; so regionally partnering with larger entities is also one of the things . . . that made [the project] work. Those partners are harder to get but essential to do business anymore."

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