



B-Line Heights: At the Crossroads of Affordable Housing, Energy and Transportation



By **Teresa Turner**, Public Relations and Social Media Specialist

On a sunny day in September, a crowd gathered to celebrate the grand opening of B-Line Heights in Bloomington. B-Line Heights was the second Moving Forward development to break ground, and the first to be completed. The Moving Forward program was launched in 2015 as a way to create housing that increases quality of life while decreasing the cost of living for low to moderate income individuals and families by focusing on transportation costs as an integral part of housing affordability.

Energy Systems Network (ESN) has been a key partner who not only helped to conceptualize the program but assembled a remarkable team of subject matter experts including several Fortune 500 companies and Purdue University. These industry experts worked with the developers selected through the RFQ process to help them create innovative housing concepts that focus on transportation and sustainability. Pedcor was one of the first two developers selected.

Pedcor toured several cities with IHCDa in hopes of finding a community which would openly embrace the Moving Forward initiative. Mayor John Hamilton of Bloomington was new to his position, but Brandon Delk, Vice President of Development for Pedcor, said it was immediately clear that Mayor Hamilton had a desire to set the bar high for his city's affordable housing stock. "He embraced our concept with open arms," said Brandon.

Brandon said the city's planning department had compiled a list of a dozen potential sites that might be a good fit for a transportation-oriented development. They quickly narrowed it down to a piece of land owned by the Bloomington Redevelopment Commission (RDC) located in the city's Certified Technology Park, the Trades District; a developing, sustainability-focused job center situated in the heart of Bloomington's historic downtown. The site which cohesively fit with the Trades District's initiative, was walkable to many desirable amenities, had immediate

access to public transit (bus) and sat adjacent to the city's multiuse pathway, the B-Line Trail.

B-Line Heights satisfied the requirements for a silver certification under the National Green Building Standards, although the development was designed without any particular certification as the end-goal. Rather, Brandon said, the development team was given maximum flexibility to pull design ideas from a variety of programs such as the Living Building Institute, LEED, NGBS and Enterprise Green. In addition, the architect, MEP consultants, and the structural engineer were asked to maximize resources by reducing the structure's Energy Use Intensity ("EUI") level with as few dollars as possible. This resulted in an evolution of standardized construction techniques, such as the use of staggered stud framing with continuous insulation, rather than structural insulated panels.

The development provides tenants with opportunities to use public transportation or other modes of transit (walk, bike, car-share, etc.) in lieu of relying on individual car ownership. The reduction in transportation costs will allow for more discretionary spending or saving for each household. Brandon said the overwhelming response from the city, neighborhood and community has been very positive. "The look and fit of the building within the Trades District has certainly resonated with many. Most are simply pleased with the development's ability to meet a higher level of sustainable design which they hope will inspire future developments within the Trades District. Last but not least, we're excited to receive feedback from our future tenants in hopes that our concept resulted in a positive impact relative to their quality of life and household budget." 🏡



The development provides 34 units of affordable housing, with 32 units serving families at or below 60% of the area median income and 2 units serving families at or below 50% of the area median income.



B-Line Heights sits adjacent to the B-Line trail, which is the City of Bloomington's premier multi-use path with access to parks and recreational areas throughout the city. Area amenities include a public park, public library, a bank, restaurants, government offices, a school, post office, gym, supermarket, farmer's market, retailers, pharmacy and a hospital. In addition, the apartment community includes a community/multi-purpose room with TV, kitchen, sitting areas, internet café and on-site management.