2016 Innovation in Affordable Housing
Student Design & Planning Competition

Second Place Winner
University of Maryland

Team Members
Nicole Akpedeye | David Brotman | Robert Grooms
Meghan Leahy | Oluwatobi Thomas

Project Overview

The team focused on preserving and creating affordable rental housing by providing a holistic haven that emphasizes lifestyle opportunities through community, health, affordability, and education. The proposed project builds on existing amenities, such as proximity to primary schools and college and/or university campuses, and the beachfront, as well as public transportation. The team also actively addressed existing site challenges, including poor aesthetic, lack of defensible space, and awkward site design.

The new construction comprises one 20-unit multifamily building and 26 townhomes, increasing the number of units by over 60%. The mix of unit types, along with parking located at the periphery, creates a safe, community-oriented design, promoting a sense of ownership. By locating the Family Opportunity Center (FOC) at the corner, and incorporating an on-site gym, a coffee shop, and a fresh food co-op, the project enhances interaction with the community at large. As a draw for students, seniors, and residents, the FOC will engender intergenerational connections, as well as revitalize the neighborhood. A car- and bike-share program will also be initiated in order to cut carbon emission, promote healthy living, and offer affordable transportation alternatives.

Financing relies on Low Income Housing Tax Credits and grants. The team proposed two financing options, which creatively addressed the challenges of developing affordable housing in today’s market.