

Can Nashville Close Its Affordable Housing Gap?

Jared Bradley of The Bradley Projects takes a deep dive into the metro's housing landscape, highlighting best practices to create financially accessible housing in urban areas.

By Evelyn Jozsa



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Before the health crisis, approximately 44 percent of rental households in Nashville, Tenn., were cost-burdened, but the housing shortage has worsened due to pandemic-related relocations and [supply chain bottlenecks](#), according to a recent report from Nashville's Affordable Housing Task Force.

The same document revealed that the metro creates and preserves access to roughly 1,350 affordable housing units a year, although it would need 5,250 units per year to prevent a 50,000-unit housing shortage by 2030.



Jared Bradley, Founder & President, The Bradley Projects. Image courtesy of The Bradley Projects

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To better understand the housing landscape in Nashville, *Multi-Housing News* reached out to Jared Bradley, president & founder of The Bradley Projects. He has an extensive background in design, urban planning and development, so we asked him to comment on the city's housing needs and reveal details about his company's projects in the metro.

In your opinion, how serious is the affordable housing crisis in Nashville?

Bradley: The affordable housing crisis in Nashville isn't just a catchphrase, it's an actual crisis. Reports from the Mayor's Office predict the affordable housing shortage will rise to nearly 31,000 units by 2025. The issue often gets brushed under the rug because the city is expanding at incredible rates and layering new urban design over an older southern city that lacks the proper infrastructure for such growth.

The middle class is a vital infrastructural element and is the engine of Nashville's economy, but home prices are forcing more and more families to the suburbs. Like many growing cities, this migration increases traffic volume immensely, turning rush hour into rush *hours*, and reducing the foot traffic that supports all our shops, restaurants and local retailers.



Clay Street Commons. Rendering courtesy of The Bradley Projects

What would be the simplest way to effectively counter the city's housing crisis?

Bradley: Local and state subsidies and development programs could effectively counter this crisis and push Nashville even further to the front stage in leading the nation in development. These kinds of subsidies, in addition to other creative programs for developers, could help the city close the gap on this crisis and help reduce rent costs to so many in need.

What can you tell us about housing supply and demand dynamics when it comes to workforce housing in Nashville?

Bradley: As Nashville is growing, job opportunities are increasing exponentially. While this is exciting, it also presents a challenge because we need to find more people to work in the city.

We're currently in the process of developing the Ritz Carlton in downtown Nashville. This project is a two-tower, mixed-use building with one tower housing the luxury brand hotel and residences, while the other tower will be a progressive Ritz Carlton-branded multifamily rental building. All three uses have various amenities and cater to a large sector of our downtown.

One of the partners in our group has posed the counterintuitive but sobering question of “how are we going to find employees to run these facilities?” She has challenged the team to push forward and identify a nearby site to develop affordable housing specifically for future employees. While at first glance this may seem obvious, it is rarely considered on projects such as this.

In addition, the team is looking to get an employee shuttle that transports staff members from their homes to work and back. These additions will help with employee retention, traffic problems and the greater affordable housing crisis.



Clay Street Commons. Rendering courtesy of The Bradley Projects

How will your Clay Street Commons project in Buena Vista impact the region’s affordable housing market?

Bradley: Every human deserves quality, progressive architecture and it should never be reserved for only the wealthy. Clay Street Commons is a project that we are passionate about and believe will provide an alternative to the rising prices of the Buena Vista community.

Understandably, the [high cost of construction and materials](#), unfortunately, trickle down to rent costs. We don't only believe in urban redevelopment but also in the communities and people within our city fabric. We believe that our smaller, inner-city developments are equally important as the higher-end luxury developments. We implement the same care, compassion, thoughtfulness and creativity to every development, regardless of the physical location or demographic market.

How did the pandemic impact the design of Clay Street Commons?

Bradley: Thinking about the recent pandemic from a development point of view, it really boils down to the overall health of a space or building environment. Being trained in modern architecture on the West Coast, our designs have always embraced open-air environments by bringing the outdoors in and indoors out.

Progressive architecture by nature is healthy architecture and we have always pushed to be more progressive in the way we approach each new project. Clay Street Commons features outdoor circulation patterns for residents throughout the property, providing fresh air and open spaces throughout the development. No matter the income level, residents are now more than ever looking for buildings that provide healthy lifestyles that allow them to engage with their natural environment.

READ ALSO: [Taking Stock of Nashville's Strengths](#)

What are some of the best practices you're implementing when it comes to creating financially accessible housing in urban areas?

Bradley: There are still opportunities to acquire land at a good value. Our architectural background helps us envision successful projects on sites that are currently underserved, underutilized or that have challenging topography or shapes. We generally avoid highly advertised properties or high-end brokers because they often don't represent sites that provide real value.

The fact that our business is vertically integrated with developers, general contractors, architects and design specialists, also helps us cut costs and time on projects through the availability of expertise, resources and creativity.

What are your predictions for Nashville's housing market?

Bradley: By allowing people to work from home, the pandemic has made it less important to live in metropolitan cities like New York City and Los Angeles—residents are now more attracted to exciting yet [lower-cost cities like Nashville](#). While the acceleration of Nashville's popularity is probably not going to last, developers' continued investment in new housing developments is likely to be sustainable for quite some time.

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