

HomeTown Aurora 1672 Plum Tree Lane Aurora, Illinois

When Bigelow Homes designed HomeTown Aurora, they wanted to re-create a pre-WWII, small, Midwestern town, with cultural and economic sustainability and diversity. HomeTown Aurora is a 1,288-unit development that includes single-family detached, single-family attached, and loft-style homes. Of the total, 1,000 homes are now built, and around 600 of them are affordable to families earning below the area median income. Half of the homes are two-bedroom, 40 percent are three-bedroom, and the rest are four-bedroom. Hometown Aurora is located on the east side of Aurora, in an area targeted for residential growth. The development aims to create a sense of community, enhance the environment, provide housing options, and build the local tax base.



HomeTown Aurora includes a diversity of housing types that appeal to all demographic and economic segments of the market. The development has eight pedestrian-friendly, compact, traffic-calmed neighborhoods, with a commercially and socially viable town center. HomeTown demonstrates that it is possible to develop new neighborhoods that offer diverse housing and have less impact on the natural environment, less traffic, and less need for municipal services. Because of its compact design, assessed valuation per acre is \$396,258, more than twice that of other new subdivisions in the area. Furthermore, due to narrower streets, there is much less public street per million of assessed valuation. When built, HomeTown Aurora's town center created more than 150 jobs, and, because of its mixed-use compact design, the development preserved 273 acres of open space.

This groundbreaking development balances common open space with smaller private lots, allowing for a range of housing types and price points. The homes appeal to singles, empty-nesters, and young couples without children. Most (76%) of the residents do not have children, creating less of a demand on local schools. HomeTown's affordability is strictly related to the variety of housing products it offers and its more compact, energy-efficient design. There are no subsidies or long-term pricing restrictions associated with these homes.

Much of the challenge in building HomeTown was that this model of development does not fit with traditional city codes and zoning practices. Many of the aspects that contributed to HomeTown's affordability and sustainability (i.e. narrow streets and lot size) required negotiations between Bigelow Homes and city representatives. This entitlement process took two years to complete. Now that HomeTown is up and running, with hundreds of homes built and the town center completed, the City of Aurora just recently approved an extension of the development.

Bigelow Homes' HomeTown Aurora

Total Units: 1,288
Total Affordable Units: 600
Type: Single family detached,
single family attached & loft
Price Points:
▪ Range from \$150,000-
\$300,000
Funding Sources:
▪ Standard FHA Loan

Woodstock Commons 1420 Commons Drive Woodstock, Illinois



Woodstock Commons is a newly constructed, 170-unit multifamily rental housing development located in the Village of Woodstock in McHenry County. The site is located on the corner of Castle Road and Cobble Stone Way, one block east of Route 47 and south of Route 14. Currently, Woodstock Commons provides 153 affordable and 17 market-rate rental homes. These 170 homes were constructed within eight buildings and include one, two and three-bedroom homes designed for families. The development has an additional 100 dwelling units available for permitting. The Pickus Companies constructed the development in just 10 months and completed leasing in seven, largely due to a strict village timeline. The development includes such luxury amenities as a pond, lighted exercise path, children's playground, tennis court, pool, club house, and responsive, on-site management.

As the development is federally financed, families living in the affordable homes earn at or below 50 percent of the area median income, which ranges between \$31,680 for a single-person household to \$45,240 for a family of four. Through Low Income Tax Credits (LIHTC) and a U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) First Mortgage, 90 percent of the homes in Woodstock Commons will be affordably priced for 31 years.

The site was originally zoned for multifamily development, but was previously being used for crop production. The Pickus Companies purchased the property after the initial review process was completed. The original development plans called for owner-occupied market rate condominiums. Because of this, affordability was not an issue in the approval process, which was overseen by the village's Plan Commission and included an architectural review, landscape review, and public hearing on the preliminary plan submittal. It wasn't until Pickus Companies purchased the site, and the necessary approvals were in place, that the development was changed to a rental property, financed through LIHTCs and HUD.

In addition to providing much need below-market priced rental homes, Pickus Companies also donated park and open space land. The site is conveniently located near several retail and industrial sites, effectively linking residents to local job opportunities. The Village of Woodstock is also serviced by the Metra Union Pacific Northwest Line, which is only five minutes away from the site.

The Pickus Companies Woodstock Commons

Total Units: 170

Total Affordable Units: 153

Type: Rental

Affordable Price Points:

- 1-bedroom: \$475-\$815
- 2-bedroom: \$573-\$910
- 3-bedroom: \$659-\$990

Funding Sources:

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit \$13.1 Mil.
- HUD First Mortgage

Timber Court 3400 North Old Arlington Heights Road Arlington Heights, Illinois



Timber Court is a 108-unit condominium development located in the Village of Arlington Heights, just east of Route 53 and Dundee Rd. When completed, Timber Court will provide Arlington Heights and the neighboring area with 21 (20 percent of the total development) affordable homes, bringing much needed diversity to the current housing stock. The affordable homes will be priced to be attainable to households at or below 80 percent of area median income, and will remain affordable in perpetuity through a deed restriction. The remaining one-bedroom condominiums will be priced

from the low \$200s and the remaining two-bedroom condominiums in the mid \$200s. There will be no design or material differentiation between market rate and affordable homes.

The affordability component of the development was a requirement of the village as part of its Planned Unit Development entitlement process. There was voluble community opposition towards Tandem's Realty Corp.'s proposal, mainly centering on concerns about the developer's request for an increase in density. The village held three grueling late-night meetings, and heard 12 hours of testimony. Tandem worked closely with the community and village, appearing at the public hearings and working with village staff, to make the necessary changes to the plan to make it more palatable. Arlington Height's decision to approve the development was based on the fact that Timber Court complies with village efforts to increase housing affordability and support sensible growth and innovative community development and design. A density bonus of 28 homes was awarded to Tandem for the purpose of creating affordability within the development. Other zoning variations included an increase in building height, a lot area, and set back minimum reduction.

Tandem Realty's Timber Court Condominiums

Total Units: 108
Total Affordable Units: 21
Type: Condominium
Affordable Price Points:

- 1-bedroom: \$129,250
- 2-bedroom: \$140,000

Funding Sources:

- Private financing
- \$100,000 grant from Village for road improvements

Arlington Heights has demonstrated great leadership on the issue of workforce housing in many ways, including adopting the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Housing Endorsement Criteria in 2002. These criteria support economic development and sustainability, improved housing options, and quality community design and construction near transit and employment. Tandem Realty was one of the first developers to submit a proposal of this size that meets the village's new criteria. The proposed site is surrounded by varying uses, including office, commercial, multi-family and single family houses. The location is accessible to transportation, just three miles north of the Arlington Heights train station and near three major highways.

The Timber Court experience proved invaluable to the village even though re-zoning posed an obstacle and took a great deal of time to iron out internally, with the main issue being that Arlington Heights wanted truly affordable price points. While this process took a long period of time, and community resistance also caused delays, the village was able to create a whole new skills set and have a better understanding of the process and thinking involved in the creation of a mixed-income development. Arlington Heights approved plans for the development in May of 2005. Construction is currently awaiting building permits and is expected to be completed in 2008.