

# Meeting a Great Need

In-Fill Housing leverages partnerships to complete challenging affordable housing efforts in Macon and beyond



A nonprofit developer created by the Macon (Georgia) Housing Authority, In-Fill Housing, Inc. now serves a great need for communities throughout Georgia. Such is the spread of its influence, one of its most recent efforts of note will be a historic rehab at Greystone Apartments in Rome, a city located about 150 miles to the northwest of Macon.

"In-Fill Housing looks first to development opportunities here in Macon and the outlying areas that meet our mission, but there are not always those opportunities," says Bruce Gerwig, CEO of the organization. "At time we work in other parts of Georgia where we are invited in, and where we can make something better. The Greystone Apartments is a classic example of that."

The historic rehab effort includes 71 units. In-Fill is working on the community development through a joint venture with Tapestry Development Group, another nonprofit organization in the state. The team just closed on its financing and the renovation work will begin in November.

"We were asked to joint venture with Tapestry and had worked with them in the past," Gerwig says. "We applied for tax credits in 2013 and received an allocation from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs [DCA]. We also received an allocation of historic tax credits because Greystone Apartments is on the National Register of Historic Places."

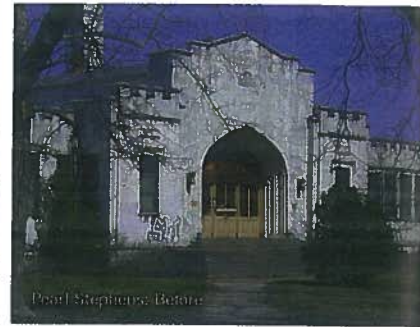


**In-Fill Housing, Inc.**

CEO :: Bruce Gerwig | Location :: Macon, Georgia



Pearl Stephens After



Pearl Stephens Before

Greystone Apartments, located in downtown Rome, was originally constructed in the 1930s. There used to be a hotel and apartment building on the site, but in 1990 the two were combined to form an affordable housing rental community through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. After the compliance period expired, the owner wanted to sell the property.

Gerwig says that working on the effort has been a positive experience for In-Fill Housing, especially because of the residents served and the various partners contributing to the community's ultimate success.

"The residents are a mix of low income elderly and others who are disabled, so it's a population that needs a lot of help with housing assistance," he says. "Fortunately, we have a number of excellent partners involved, including the Northwest Georgia Housing Authority, which is providing Section 8 housing subsidies, and Highland Rivers Health, the local community services board, which is providing mental health support for a number of residents. It's a partnership with many different [people and organizations] involved."

#### CONTINUING TO PROVIDE VALUABLE ASSISTANCE

In-Fill Housing is also about to wrap up work at the Village at Blackshear, which includes 64 units of Section 8 housing. The community, located in southeast Georgia, includes a community center, pavilion, activities room and a number of key supportive services from local partners.

"This was a very tired, worn out property built in the early 1980s with Section 8 rental assistance for all of the residents," Gerwig says. "We acquired it from the previous owner in 2013 and were able to keep the Section 8 rental subsidies. The Atlanta HUD Office has been very encouraging and supportive, and with an allocation of tax credits from DCA, we are doing a total gut rehab and have added 154 square feet to each unit."

According to Gerwig, the community has had a positive reception.

"The residents have responded very well — of course, they love their new home and we now have a waiting list," he says. "It has been another really good partnership with the DCA and Tapestry Development."

#### BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

Founded in 2001, In-Fill Housing has completed some impressive development and redevelopment efforts across the state since its inception.

"We were created because the Macon Housing Authority correctly identified the looming cutbacks at HUD," Gerwig says. "We thought we could do well while doing good and it was at least worth the effort for us to consider new opportunities. We really hit our stride in the affordable multifamily housing market in 2000-2001, and since then we have been fortunate to develop a number of affordable housing communities, many with a very special "wow factor".

#### MIZE & MIZE

Mize & Mize is pleased to be part of the development team with In-Fill Housing, Inc. The relationship between our principals goes back almost 15 years, back to their first developments in Macon, Georgia. We have provided In-Fill with strategic and professional financial and LIHTC consulting services in all of its public housing replacement and redevelopment, seniors housing properties, general multifamily, and special needs projects, in Macon and throughout the State of Georgia.

#### SYNERGY HOME ADVANTAGE

Synergy Home Advantage is honored to have a 5+ year partnership with In-Fill Housing. During that time, we have completed and certified two multifamily renovation projects, one multifamily new construction project, and one 75 unit single family project. Each of these projects were certified under the EarthCraft program (regional green building program). Synergy's primary goal is to assure that all its partners succeed in their project certifications. When our clients succeed, the residents at their properties reap wonderful benefits.

Like many developers in the affordable housing arena, In-Fill Housing is working with challenging public funding paired with increases in construction costs, creating some new challenges for its team.

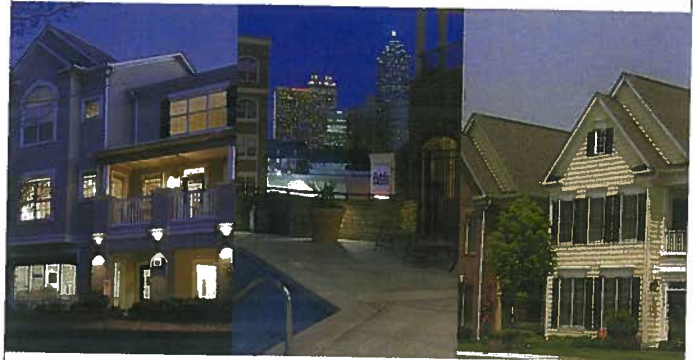
"The pendulum is swinging the other way after the 2008 recession," Gerwig says. "Bringing construction costs in at budget and how we find the sources of revenues to keep up with construction is probably the most pressing issue for us right now."

Earlier this year, the City of Macon merged with Bibb County to form a joint governmental unit in an effort to attain greater efficiency with local municipal programs and services. According to Gerwig, the team at In-Fill Housing is looking forward to continuing the great relationships it has formed through this new structure.

"We are very proud of what we have done in Macon," he says. "Our Board is very forward thinking and rightfully, never satisfied with the status quo. We have a pending application with DCA for a property called Hunt School Village, which would include the acquisition and renovation of a former elementary school that has been vacant and boarded up for more than 10 years. The new government of Macon-Bibb County has approved an allocation of \$450,000 for the project, if we are funded. It would serve a very important need in the east Macon community." 📍



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