



Affordable housing development breaks ground in east Phoenix

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By Emma Lockhart

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PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5) -- The developer Greenlight Communities broke ground Tuesday on new affordable housing units in east Phoenix. The developers hope it keeps rent prices more attainable for the middle class. "Downtown has been one of our highest growing rental markets," said Phoenix Councilwoman Kesha Hodge-Washington.

The new development sits in Hodge-Washington's district. Greenlight Communities said the average price for a unit is \$1,250 a month compared to the market price of more than \$2,000. Partner Rob Lyles said people who make around \$40,000 a year can afford to live here, and they have found ways to keep rent prices low. "We don't have big parking structures, we don't have multiple amenities and interior hallways to cut our costs back," said Lyles.

The apartments are being built at 16th and Polk streets, just a few miles from 'The Zone,' the largest homeless encampment in the state that shows the glaring reality of the housing crisis. "Housing really is the solution to addressing homelessness," said Katie Gentry with the Maricopa Association of Governments.

According to the recent homeless count, homelessness in Maricopa County doubled over the past decade. While they saw a 2% decrease in people living on the streets this year compared to last, there was an 18% increase in people living in temporary housing, like shelters. "The numbers show we did a see large amount of people become homeless for the first time because of rent increases," said Gentry. "So the more affordable housing that we can build across the region is critical."