

Vergennes Apartments Combine Energy Efficiency and Affordability

By Greg Dennis

At a time when Vermont continues to struggle with the climate crisis and a shortage of affordable housing, new apartments in Vergennes are emphatically part of the solution.



Vergennes Community Apartments is a project of two nonprofits: Addison County Community Trust ([ACCT](#)) and [Evernorth](#). It encompasses 24 highly energy-efficient, multi-family units close to downtown Vergennes.

Among features of the mixed-income development are solar panels, open space, community gardens, a playground and charging for electric vehicles.

“This new mixed-income property will help alleviate Addison County’s serious affordable housing shortage,” said Elise Shanbacker, Executive Director of ACCT.

The 15 kW of solar on the roof helps power the centralized ventilation system, which also provides air tempering (some winter heat and some summer dehumidification). Architect Jean Terwilliger puts it, “A highly air-tight building with efficient heat recovery ventilation is one of the most cost-effective ways to save energy, with a much better return than just adding more insulation. We also managed to get triple glazed windows in this project, which is unusual for multi-family and should provide additional comfort and energy savings.”

Over \$7 million for the project was raised from government, banking and nonprofit sources, including the city of Vergennes and Efficiency Vermont. Rents are targeted to be affordable to a range of incomes.

The apartments in the 6.5 acre location are near schools, a supermarket and other shopping. That centralization of services for lower- and

moderate-income residents is an important part of reducing transportation emissions as we reenvision our downtowns.

“The apartment is quiet and warm, with no drafts, thanks to the tight envelope of the building,” one resident reports. “It’s a great feeling to know that the building is energy efficient and not wasteful of our natural resources. Perhaps this building could be a model for President Biden’s plan to build energy efficient, affordable housing across our country.”

Neagley and Chase was the construction manager, and Vermont Integrated Architecture was the architect. VIA notes that the building is “an extremely airtight, efficient structure” that references the historic character of downtown Vergennes.

“VIA architects Andrea Murray and Jean Terwilliger really took the time to get to know our goals, and their understanding of our community was an asset throughout the process,” Shanbacker said. “The result is a beautiful, energy efficient building that both stands out and fits right into the fabric of Vergennes, a place that 24 families now call home.”

For more information on renting at Vergennes Community Apartments and other ACCT locations, visit [the ACCT website](#) or call (802) 877-2626 ext. 100.