

MILLENNIALS' DESIRE TO RENT CHANGING LOCAL LANDSCAPE

JENNIFER BROOKLAND LIVES IN ODENTON FOR ITS PROMIXITY TO THE MARC TRAIN. SHE HAS MOVED A NUMBER OF TIMES SINCE SHE GRADUATED FROM GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY AND SAID MULTIGENERATIONAL HOMES ARE A THING OF THE PAST.
Cindy Huang, chuang@capgaznews.com April 18, 2015



Jennifer Brookland lives in Odenton, works in Washington, D.C., and is planning to move to North Carolina next month for her husband's medical school residency. Mobility is important.

Brookland, 31, chose her apartment complex for its proximity to the [MARC](#) train, which she takes to work at her communications job in an international development organization. The four-minute walk to the MARC train from the apartment, where rent is about \$1,800 for a two-bedroom apartment, is "literally the reason we're here," she said.

Millennials, the generation that reached adulthood around the turn of the century, are boosting the popularity of rental multifamily housing, especially in the west county area. Many young professionals are renting apartments near public transportation, highways and major job centers.

These young people living in the county could transform the local scene, attracting hip clothing shops, trendy restaurants and bars along with more apartment complexes, said Mary Burkholder, the executive vice president of the Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corp. "They're desiring a certain type of housing and lifestyle," Burkholder said.

In the last five years, three major apartment developments have popped up in Odenton: a 369-unit apartment complex at Flats 170 at Academy Yard, a 252-unit rental development at The Haven at Odenton Gateway and the 235-unit apartment development at the Village at Odenton Station, according to the economic development corporation.

Three years ago, Brookland was one of the first residents at the Village at Odenton Station. Now, it's almost completely leased out.

"It was a ghost town. If I came across a resident, it would give me a scare," Brookland said. Two more apartment projects in the Odenton area will be open within the next two years, said Burkholder. Broadstone 32 West will have 212 rental units, and Novus at Odenton Town Center will have 244 rental units. And a 310-unit apartment project is planned by Trammell Crow Residential in Linthicum, off of Nursery Road and close to BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, Amtrak and the MARC train stations.

Burkholder said the rental options and growing employment opportunities around Fort George G. Meade have attracted a lot of young people to the Odenton area.

"Young people are everywhere," [Anirban Basu](#), CEO of the Baltimore-based Sage Policy Group Inc., told about 100 guests at a recent meeting of the Northern Anne Arundel County and West County chambers of commerce.

Mary Groven, who owns a property management business, said she's seeing young people rent in Odenton, Annapolis and Glen Burnie, particularly in areas close to the transportation or jobs. Groven said many of her renters stay for only a year to two years.

"Gone is the multigenerational home," Groven said. "Your young professionals like condos and townhomes with little to no maintenance, and they want to be a quick commute to somewhere vibrant."

Groven said many young graduates don't qualify for housing loans because of their student debt. But she also sees the millennials renting apartments even when they could afford a mortgage. "They're afraid of the market because of what they saw their parents go through," Groven said, referring to the housing market crash around 2008. And even in situations where "it makes more sense to buy, they don't seem to see that. They seem to be shy because of what the market had done before."

Walter Worley Jr, 27, rents an apartment in Annapolis and is hesitant to buy a home.

"As long as I'm renting, I'm OK. As soon as I buy, I'm anchored for about five years," Worley said. Worley said his peers share his preference for mobility and are slow to make big purchases like cars and homes. But he also sees young people struggling to make it.

"It's definitely been more difficult for this generation to get started than 30, 40 years ago," Worley said.

Brookland, a [Georgetown University](#) graduate who prefers to live in the city, hopes to return to Washington, D.C., at some point.

"I prefer to be where the action is," Brookland said. And even though she's moving to the Raleigh-Durham area for the next half-decade, she can't imagine settling there permanently.

"That's unfathomable to me ... staying in one place for a long time," Brookland said.

<http://www.capitalgazette.com/ph-ac-cn-young-economy-0408-20150418-story.html>