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**What Affordable Housing Means To Me…. The Native New Yorker, now Atlantan**

My name is Tristan Ethan Davis, son of Nicole and Melvin Davis Jr. Born and raised the first 10 years of my life in New York City, the City that never sleeps, moving to Atlanta was a major change for me and my younger sister. Summer of 2018, after graduating 5th grade, we traded in our Big City lights, walks to the playground and neighborhood stores, for the southern hospitality of Atlanta, Ga, where you mostly drive everywhere.

Affordable housing is the foundation of a healthy, functional inner city. It allows cities to remain inclusive, modern, and economically strong, not just for the wealthy, but for everyone. In today’s world of rising rents, uncertain wages, and growing social inequality, “affordable housing” has become a buzzword in the real estate game. I’ve now lived in 2 major cities and although I’m still learning, I think affordable housing should be a civil right.

In spite of the crippling COVID era, Atlanta is a great city, still on the rise. An amazing place for culture and aspiring business owners and growth. But with that growth, can every Atlantan, not just the fortunate few, afford to live and thrive in the communities they love?

Real Estate investors, developers, and civic leaders hold valuable keys because they help shape buildings and futures. Affordable housing influences where people live, how they raise their families, and whether or not they can stay in the neighborhoods they’ve called home for generations. Without affordable options, families face housing instability, overcrowding, and even homelessness.

Today’s Atlanta is challenged by a shrinking supply of affordable housing. Since 2018, metro Atlanta has lost more than 200,000 affordable units, while the number of high-end rentals has surged. Nearly one-third of our renters are now spending over 50% of their income on housing. A scary outlook for a family of 2 or more planning for college.

The City of Atlanta has proposed to create or preserve 20,000 affordable housing units by 2030. Progress may be underway but in order to meet the needs of this growing city, solid investments cannot disappear.

I believe affordable housing is an economic opportunity that provides stable workforce for businesses and essential workers; it helps consumer spending power, revives neighborhoods, and avoids the displacement of families. I was shocked to learn that both students and teachers are often faced with a challenging commute to school every day.

During my studies at Morehouse College, I will continue to develop my interest in Real Estate by way of internships and part time employment. I believe the provision of affordable housing and communities that work for everyone is a sure way to help protect and build Atlanta’s future. I imagine an Atlanta where investment does not mean displacement. Rising skylines should include families of every income level not just the wealthiest. I aspire to be a part of those discussions and development. I’m excited to see how the Mayor’s Office continues to roll out his proposal of affordable housing units over the next five years. Perhaps there will be new funding opportunities available to assist.