

Webster Village Overview

Project Summary – Webster Village Housing Partnership Jackson County, North Carolina

Project Participants:

- Development Partners
 - Mountain Projects, Inc.
 - Givens Communities
 - Western Carolina University
- Additional Partners
 - Dogwood Health Trust
 - Jackson County
 - Tuckaseegee Water and Sewer Authority

Project Overview: The three named development partners intend to construct a master-planned, multi-income housing community that will yield between 210-235 new housing units, targeting multiple income sectors in a challenging housing environment. Those sectors include accommodations for low-income senior living, adult working professionals, and low-to-moderate income single-family homes targeting first-time home buyers.

Based on respective housing studies compiled by Jackson County, the Southwestern Commission Council of Government, and Dogwood Health Trust, Webster Village will target three identified sectors that are experiencing significant shortages of affordable and available housing, to include low-income senior citizens, low-to-moderate income families, and adult, working professionals.

In addition to new housing units, the potential exists to include an on-site childcare center for up to 100 children, as well as an EMS Base Station.

Project Site: 48.13+- acres, previously owned by Harris Regional Hospital and their parent company, Duke LifePoint (DLP), and is located at 137 Little Savannah Road adjacent to the Webster community. Mountain Projects Inc. acquired the property from DLP. Funding for the purchase amount and preliminary engineering costs was generously provided by the Dogwood Health Trust as a show of support for this unique project.

Necessary utilities, including public water and sewer, fiber-optic network, and natural gas are located in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

Current Proposed Development Plan: Plan calls for the site to be sub-divided into pre-determined parcels, specific to each project component within the overall master plan. Each partner would retain ownership of respective sub-divided acreage and develop accordingly.

1. **Givens Communities** – Project includes the construction, ownership, and operation of 120 senior living apartments that will serve households at or below 60% area median income. The total project will inhabit 6+- acres. Construction financing will be a HUD 202 capital advance, paired with 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Givens will raise the remaining capital through fundraising, grant writing and a permanent loan. The Southwestern HOME Consortium has committed \$350,000 of their region's HOME funds to the project.

In addition to 120 apartments, the community will have amenities to serve the residents. There will be a raised garden bed area, food pantry, clinic space, fitness center, multi-purpose room with a kitchen, library and computer area, and laundry room. Residents will have access to Givens' supportive services program, in which a social worker and community nurse work in tandem to help residents age well in a community setting. The goal is to create communities in which older adults are healthier and thrive by overcoming social isolation, rediscovering interests, contributing, learning, and playing. Givens believes that finding ways to help seniors age well in a community setting will reduce hospital admissions and readmissions, lower healthcare costs, minimize time spent in expensive skilled nursing facilities, and improve quality of life.

This project will also present numerous applied learning opportunities for students at Western Carolina University, to include Health and Life Sciences, Engineering and Construction Management.

2. **Mountain Projects** – Project to develop 32 single family homes for low-to-moderate income families, encompassing 11+- acres. Applicants will receive pre and post housing counseling by HUD Certified Housing Counselors. Qualified applicants could benefit from USDA mortgages which offers a fixed rate 30-to-38-year mortgage, dependent upon individual circumstances. In most cases no downpayment is required which removes the obstacles for working families to achieve the American dream of homeownership. Some families who want to have more equity in their homes

may choose to participate in the Self-Help housing program which requires their participation in the construction process as “sweat equity”.

3. **Western Carolina University** – Project includes an RFQ process to identify a 3rd party developer, and to cause to be built approximately 56-84 adult professional one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, encompassing 2-3 buildings (TBD) on 5+- acres. The targeted tenants are working professionals from the greater Jackson County vicinity, that could include local health care professionals and first-responders, faculty and staff from Jackson County schools, Southwestern Community College and WCU, and other working professionals.

The identified developer would enter into an agreement with the WCU Endowment Fund Board of Trustees for a nominal-sum ground lease, whereby stipulations of the agreement would require some modicum of affordable lease rates for tenants, to be accomplished by lowering the cost of development and by limiting the escalation on future rents. The goal is to minimize developer costs by initial investments in infrastructure and site preparation, and by providing the nominal-sum ground-lease.

Project Site Preparation and Infrastructure Needs: The Partnership knows that the projects will benefit greatly by minimizing the necessary investment for site preparation and infrastructure, thereby acting as a catalyst for more affordable adult professional living.

The engineering firm of Civil Design Concepts (CDC) has provided the partners of Webster Village with a preliminary master plan, engineering, and infrastructure cost estimate documents for each project component. The Partnership is currently seeking grant-funding from multiple sources to meet these infrastructure needs. In 2024-2026, Jackson County committed \$1.5 million toward this need.

Summary: This is a unique and creative housing development opportunity that will have benefit to the economic condition of Jackson County and surrounding areas. Addressing these housing needs across multiple income sectors will provide stability for the region’s workforce, create a safe and caring environment for senior living, and will provide valuable applied learning opportunities for students at Western Carolina University and Southwestern Community College in the fields of Health and Human Sciences (Nursing, physical and recreational therapy, social work, emergency medical care, and nutrition and dietetics), engineering, construction management and trades, and interior design.