

# Developer intends to build apartments off Salem Ave. for seniors

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*Apartments are proposed featuring units on both sides of Dartmouth Drive west of Salem Avenue. Dartmouth Drive is in the center of the photograph off of Salem Ave. JIM NOELKER / STAFF*

BY CORNELIUS FROLIK - STAFF WRITER

One of the nation's largest nonprofit providers of senior housing wants to build more than 180 new apartments along Salem Avenue in northwest Dayton and renovate dozens of existing rental housing units and former ground-floor commercial space.

"Having these options in northwest Dayton helps to ensure that seniors, at varying income levels, are not priced out of the community as it continues to develop, and are not forced out the community due to a lack of housing that can meet the changing needs of aging residents," said Shawna Jones, senior project leader with National Church Residences.

National Church Residences proposes a two-phase senior housing project

for a 4.5-acre site near Salem Avenue and Dartmouth Drive in the University Row area of Dayton, according to documents submitted to the city ahead of a Dayton Plan Board work session later this month.

The first phase would create a four-story building with 115 units offering a mix of one and two-bedroom apartments.

A second phase would create another four-story building with about 68 units.

A conceptual site plan shows new apartment buildings, green space and a courtyard near Salem Avenue and Dartmouth Drive. The proposed site plan indicates that Dartmouth Drive would be vacated.

The project has been recommended to receive \$2 million of Dayton's \$138 million in federal COVID relief funds.

The nonprofit was awarded funding for a "middle-income" senior community to be built in northwest Dayton, Todd Hutchins, the group's director of public relations, told this newspaper last year.

"This new community will offer housing to an underserved market of middle-income seniors, who have higher income and therefore do not qualify for government assistance, but they also can't afford a typical market rate offering," he said last year.

National Church Residences manages more than 1,000 senior housing units at 14 senior communities across southwest Ohio.

National Church Residences also plans to spend more than \$14 million rehabbing and modernizing 64 senior housing units at Grand Place.

Grand Place, located at 729 W. Grand Ave., was constructed nearly a century ago, and the apartments were most recently rehabbed in 2001, said Sarah Geist, Dayton's community development supervisor.

National Church Residences acquired Grand Place in 2017, and it expects to complete a renovation of the property in April 2024, Geist said.

The Dayton City Commission on Wednesday approved a development agreement that will provide National Church Residences with \$2.5 million of

the city's federal HOME funds to support the renovation project.

Grand Place has some street-level apartments along Salem Avenue that from the outside look like commercial storefronts because they were once used by businesses, including a jewelry shop.

National Church Residences plans to convert these apartments into about 6,300 square feet of commercial space.

Jones, the senior project leader, said the historic Grand Place building needs to be modernized and repaired to fix issues with the roof, elevators, windows and heating and cooling systems.

Affordable senior housing is key because older Ohioans have a higher risk of becoming homeless than other age groups, she said.

Studies show that preserving amenity-rich housing options along a main corridor with access to public transit, grocery and light retail helps seniors live independently for longer, Jones said.

The Grand Place units will be affordable to residents who have incomes at or below 50% or 60% of the area median income, she said.

Grand Place is a block from the Gem City Market and the vacant Longfellow school campus, which is being converted into new senior housing units and other amenities.

The proposed housing at Dartmouth Drive is less than three-fourths of a mile north these properties.

Contact this reporter at [Cory.Frolik@coxinc.com](mailto:Cory.Frolik@coxinc.com).