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Riverfront site for senior living project

By [Sherri Welch](#)

A senior community in the works near Detroit's east riverfront will not only keep the residents living in their home neighborhoods but will also bring new construction and health care jobs to the city.

Presbyterian Villages of Michigan and **United Methodist Retirement Communities Inc.** plan before the end of the year to begin work on the East Jefferson Neighborhood Project, a \$30 million senior living project that will include the city's first affordable assisted living development.

The project is Presbyterian Villages' seventh in the city and its largest. It also marks the latest example of 13 years of senior housing development in Detroit by the organization, totaling more than \$67 million in investment. Located two blocks off the Detroit River, the development is the second of five pilot sites across the state selected for affordable assisted living funding by the **Michigan State Housing Development Authority**, following another built by **Genesis Nonprofit Housing Corp.** in Grand Rapids.

It is part of a larger senior community planned by Presbyterian Villages that when complete will offer affordable assisted living, independent living, residential nursing home units, an adult day center, senior health and wellness services, recreation spaces and a community café. Presbyterian Villages expects the development to provide for 750 residential and nonresidential seniors from surrounding neighborhoods.

"There's (an) extremely high concentration of seniors in the east Detroit/East Jefferson area," said PVM CEO Roger Myers. "As they become increasingly frail ... without an option like what we are doing, they would likely be forced to move out of the city."

Aside from construction jobs, the first phase of the project is expected to create nearly 150 health-related jobs, Myers said.

It's also expected to draw youths from surrounding neighborhoods and the nearby University Prep Math and Science High School opening this fall to visit the planned café or to volunteer or do internships, he said.



JEFF JOHNSTON/CDB

The East Jefferson Neighborhood Project location and five nearby reference points: 1. University Prep Math and Science High School (opening this fall) 2. Garden Court Condominiums 3. Rattlesnake Club 4. UAW/GM Center for Human Resources 5. Harbortown Shopping Center

PVM is finalizing a purchase agreement with the **UAW/GM Center for Human Resources** to buy 1.78 acres and two former **Parke-Davis** buildings there for \$700,000, said Myers. The organization expects to close on the site within two months.

The property is bounded by Franklin to the north, Wight to the south, McDougall to the west and Walker to the east.

After being selected as one of five grantees by MSHDA, Chelsea-based United Methodist Retirement Communities asked PVM to work together on the project. Presbyterian Villages is the developer and United Methodist will be part of the ownership group in providing services.

“PVM brought strengths we did not have,” said Marie Seddon, executive director of the **United Methodist Retirement Communities Heritage Foundation**. “PVM has a long and successful history of developing senior housing projects, particularly in Detroit.”

UMRC posted just over \$41 million in revenue and a net loss of \$783,447 in 2008, the year of its latest tax filing.

On the first phase of the East Jefferson project, redevelopment work on the larger, 78,000-square-foot building will start by the end of the year, Myers said.

Floors two through four will be retrofitted for one-bedroom apartments of affordable assisted living. The first floor will be converted to an adult day center and space for physical therapy, occupational health services and other senior health and wellness services.

Presbyterian Villages and **Henry Ford Health System** are discussing the health care services to be in the first building, Myers said. The first phase of the community, which should take 12-14 months to complete, will also include apartment balconies, rooftop gardens and green space, said Brian Carnaghi, senior vice president of finance and business development at Presbyterian Villages.

It is expected to create 118 health-related jobs for the adult day center in areas such as nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy and social services, Carnaghi said, with another 28 home health care jobs for the affordable assisted living.

PVM and United Methodist have rounded up about \$15 million in funding toward the project. So far, that includes principally low-income housing tax credits, and money from the **U.S. Department of Urban Development and Housing** passed through the city, through MSDHA and directly from the federal agency, Carnaghi said. There is adequate funding to begin construction, but funding for the second phase is still needed.

SENIOR HOUSING PROJECTS

The East Jefferson Neighborhood Project will cap nearly 13 years of senior housing development in Detroit for **Presbyterian Villages of Michigan**, totaling over \$67 million in investment and 409 units of housing:

- **1997:Village of Bethany Manor**, off 14th Street between Gladstone and Blaine streets, 52 units
- **2001:Village of Brush Park Manor Paradise Valley**, off Brush Street between Edmund Place and Alfred Street, 113 units
- **2005:Village of Harmony Manor**, off Birwood Avenue between Fenkell and Chalfonte streets, 43 units
- **2005:Village of Woodbridge Manor**, off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard between Gibson Street and Mirades Boulevard, 100 units
- **2007:Village of Oakman Manor**, off Woodrow Wilson Street between Kendall and LaBelle streets, 55 units
- **2009:Village of St. Martha's**, off Joy Road between Mansfield Street and Prevost Avenue, 46 units

That work, on the 8,000-square-foot building, has a less-specific timeline tied to PVM's ability to secure additional funding, Carnaghi said, but it is likely to be a year or more out.

PVM plans to add two upper floors and 16,000 square feet to the building that would be environmentally friendly and have rooms and communal spaces for 24 seniors in home-like settings.

On the ground floor, it plans a community café that has computers and offers programs for exercise, arts and other activities. The development will have other green features, such as a rooftop garden, and a connection to the UAW campus.

A third component planned for the community is construction of a building with 40 units of independent affordable housing. PVM plans to apply for a capital advance from HUD to construct the building as soon as this year, Myers said.

The East Jefferson Neighborhood Project “will be far and away the largest we have done in the city,” Myers said.

The obligated group, which includes PVM, the PVM Foundation and three of its villages — in Chesterfield Township, Redford Township and Westland — reported \$35 million in operating revenue for 2009 and net loss from operations of \$778,488.

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<http://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20100822/SUB01/308229954/riverfront-site-for-senior-living-project>