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Riverside Senior Care gets authority's OK

Northern Michigan developer wants to convert school into senior housing.

By [David Czurak](#)

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A Harbor Springs multi-family housing developer had its plan amendment approved by the Grand Rapids Brownfield Redevelopment Authority for a new senior living center on the city's northeast side.

G.A. Haan Development wants to turn the former Riverside Elementary School at 2420 Coit Ave. NE into an assisted living and memory care facility for up to 55 seniors. The Grand Rapids Public Schools system closed Riverside in 2010 and sold the 36,000-square-foot building and its site to Haan Development last year.

"The property qualifies as being functionally obsolete," said Jonathan Klooster of the brownfield authority.

"Total investment in the project is estimated to be \$6.8 million, resulting in 51 new jobs with wages ranging from \$11 to \$35 per hour," added Klooster.

Of that investment, a little more than \$1 million will be spent on brownfield-eligible activities such as demolition, asbestos removal, site preparation, public improvements, and the creation of a brownfield plan for what will be called Riverside Senior Care.

Post Associates, a local architectural firm, is designing the project, which includes a 15,000-square-foot addition.

"We're trying to maintain the existing architecture," said Mark Post. "We're adding a dining area, a new kitchen and maintaining a lobby area."

Post also said Haan Development is donating a portion of the 7.5-acre site to the city for a playground. Riverside Middle School is located near the site. Post added that Haan Development will maintain the neighborhood's existing walking path.

Right now, construction is set to begin late this year and likely will take a year to complete.

The developer's request now goes to the City Commission for review.

Haan Development has built multi-family housing units and senior-living facilities in northern Michigan, and has completed similar developments in Wyoming and North Dakota.

In addition to Riverside, GRPS sold three other elementary schools to developers last year.

The former Oakdale Elementary has been successfully turned into a charter school by National Heritage Academies. However, the brownfield authority reported no work has been done to Eastern or Lexington, schools that were purchased by GR School Lofts LLC of Berkley, Mich.

Both were residential projects and both were granted a brownfield last year.

Also, the authority reimbursed 21 developers a total of \$2.1 million for their brownfield projects over the first three quarters of the fiscal year. The payments ranged from a high of \$617,756 to a low of \$3,986.



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