

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

2026 Sale of Land for Affordable Housing

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who is our development, construction and manager partner?

DevCo Residential Group is a development and investment company focused on multi-family communities. Founded in 1994, the company and its affiliates develop, own and manage over 10,000 affordable and market rate apartment units throughout the USA. More information about DevCo can be found on Our Redeemer's website under the Property Development section and at devcous.com.

How many units are you projecting you would put on the site?

Based upon the sale of 9.76 acres, DevCo would construct 185-220 apartment units. The project will include 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units. It will be very similar to the affordable housing property they recently completed in Bozeman, <https://westlakeheightsmt.com/>. The number of bedroom units will depend on DevCo's Helena-area market study. The buildings will be ADA-compliant as required by HUD and the City of Helena.

How many floors will be necessary for the proposed number of units?

Based upon the City's approved zoning and unit size, 3-4 floors.

What will the development look like?

Click on the following links to see similar building profiles of DevCo's affordable housing projects, <https://devcous.com/>, and, <https://westlakeheightsmt.com>

Will there be open spaces as part of the project?

Yes, please review the amenities listed on the Westlake Heights website. Our project will be similar. DevCo understands the open space (park) concept that is traditional to Montana and will try to tie in with the open space across Benton Avenue, as well as landscaping the gas line easement bordering the sale property and Our Redeemer's property. Perhaps we can jointly create open spaces on the gas line easement as well as the acre of undevelopable land in the southeast corner of our property. The City of Helena will also require public park areas.

Will there be adequate parking for the proposed units? What are the plans for parking and increased traffic?

These issues will be subject to the City of Helena zoning and building requirements for this type of housing.

Would all the units be available to low-income families?

Yes, all the units will be available to low-income families based on an income qualification of less than 80% of the Area Median Income for Lewis & Clark County, adjusted for family size. The Department of Housing and Urban Development annually determines what the Area Median Income is for Lewis and Clark County. Using a calculation method known only to them, determines what the annual rent will be for an individual or family. There are restrictions on the percentage of rent that can be charged based on the tenant's annual income. This annual certification by HUD is intended to prevent fraudulent rental activity. This is a very confidential process.

Who will be managing the units?

DevCo will contract with an experienced management firm for on-site administration and supervision. The management firm will have oversight by DevCo's housing management division.

Will Our Redeemer's have any role in the design and construction of the buildings and campus?

DevCo has offered to give us periodic plans and progress reports. We have offered to assist them with the design and development phases.

Will there be any covenants for DevCo and the residents?

Since this is a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Financing (LIHTC) project, DevCo will be subject to federal regulations which include: 1) maintaining the project as affordable for the commitment period which for Our Redeemer's could be as many as 50 years, 2) certain occupancy and tenant restrictions, 3) Energy and Green Building requirements, and numerous other covenants that run with the land for the agreed upon commitment period as well as binding upon any subsequent owners. DevCo has represented that the tenant covenants will be standard market-based covenants and include background and credit checks. We have requested a copy of the existing resident covenants, but DevCo has represented that they differ by project and may not apply to this project. However, DevCo represented that they are similar to a standard lease, including conduct/behavior codes.

What are the congregation's next steps?

Once a Purchase and Sale Agreement has been agreed upon by DevCo and Our Redeemer's attorney/Property Development Committee, the church council will call a congregational meeting to vote upon the sale of the property. Prior to that, opportunities will be offered to members of Our Redeemer's to ask questions and explore the Purchase and Sale Agreement. On April 12 and April 19, members of the Property Development Committee will be available between services (9:45-10:45 am) to entertain questions about the project in the Great Room. The congregation will vote on the sale of the property at 9:45 am on Sunday, April 26.

How long will it take before we close on the sale?

The purchaser has a 180-day Feasibility Contingency period during which they will investigate the property, conduct any required testing, initiate subdivision and rezoning work, and begin planning and design work. With notice, they also have three options to extend the contingency period by 30 days each time.

What is the likely timeline for the project? How long will it take to get the project built?

The Purchase and Sale Agreement will provide 18-24 months for DevCo to conduct a financial feasibility analysis and a physical evaluation of the proposed project. If satisfactory, we will close on the sale. Thereafter, DevCo estimates that construction will take two years, contingent on Montana weather.

How will neighbors and the community be informed of the project?

Over the years, Our Redeemer's has held public conversations with our neighbors about our intent to use our property for an affordable housing ministry project. It has also received substantial news coverage from area media outlets. As DevCo submits its zoning and subdivision plans to the City, the neighborhood and community will have ample public opportunities to gather information and weigh in on its plans for the property.

Will DevCo use local contractors and put things out for local bid, or bring in their own people?

DevCo will contract with local consultants/contractors to provide certain services which may or may not be bid out; however, they will bring their own construction team.

What happens if DevCo finds that the project is not financially feasible or there are physical or legal reasons for not continuing with the project?

The Purchase and Sale Agreement will provide for Our Redeemer's to receive certain payments during the course of the due diligence period. These payments are made to an independent escrow agent. If DevCo determines the project is not feasible, it will notify Our Redeemer's, and the escrow agent will forward the progress payments to Our Redeemer's. Our Redeemer's will incur certain legal costs, recording and administrative fees, which will be paid from its own funds.

I saw in the paper that DevCo is also doing an affordable housing project near Costco. How does this impact our project?

DevCo plans to do two projects in Helena, ours and the one proposed near Costco. They have determined that Helena has a significant need for affordable housing and would benefit from the additional 150 units proposed for that project. The projects will not compete for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Financing mentioned above, as there is ample funding available.