

# Developers plan "riverfront village" next to new downtown Wichita ballpark

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A group of developers announced Monday they have plans to turn the area north of soon-to-be-razed Lawrence-Dumont Stadium into a 'riverfront village.'

In a news release, a group called Riverfront Partners LLC — consisting of George Laham of Laham Development, Dave Burk of Marketplace Properties, Dave Wells of Key Construction and Jerry Jones of Jones Commercial Development — said it plans to develop residential, restaurant, entertainment, retail and office space in the area where the Metropolitan Baptist Church sits.

While it was unclear Monday evening exactly that means for the church, the release stated that it "will retain a presence within the development."

The Rev. Mason Lampkin, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist, said the process to the announcement started about three years ago.

"George (Laham) reached out to us about the possibility of redeveloping our church site," said Lampkin in the release. "From the beginning, George and his team could see our vision for the congregation remaining on a portion of the property."

Lampkin said the church fielded inquiries from developers from "across the country" after last month's announcement that Triple-A baseball would be coming to Wichita once a new ballpark is built on the Lawrence-Dumont site.

"We chose George and his team because we know they want to do what's best for our city as is evident by all of the energy and resources they have already invested in our town," Lampkin said. "This land is important to our congregation and we wanted to do what is best for us and our city."

According to the release, the development will be called riverfront village.

"We are grateful that the church has entrusted us to be stewards of their property and are excited about this opportunity to further develop our riverfront for Wichita," Laham said in the release.



COURTESY IMAGE (SPT ARCHITECTURE)

A planned new downtown development, announced Monday, would add residential, retail and restaurant space to the area just north of Lawrence-Dumont Stadium, which is scheduled to be razed soon to make way for a new minor league ballpark.

The plans are just the latest in a series of big announcements for the city's Delano District and its riverfront area downtown. Wichita Mayor Jeff Longwell called it a "generational" development.

"We are not just building a baseball stadium, we are building a gathering place for the community that will draw visitors from across the region," Longwell said. "This will be part of a master plan that will be put together probably in the next couple of months."

The group's vision also calls for improvements from Maple north to Douglas, which could look very similar to the layout around the River Vista Apartments complex.

"Imagine a beautiful promenade along the river connecting the stadium, the village, and Delano through public plazas, bike and walking paths," said Laham. "We will be working closely with the city and the baseball development team over the next few months to coordinate our efforts. We get one chance to do this right."

The city recently put out a request for proposals for the design of the planned new ballpark. Proposals are due on Wednesday.

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