

Commercial Real Estate

GMH Communities chosen to develop UMass Lowell campus land



An aerial view of UMass Lowell's east campus. The Merrimack River is in the foreground and downtown Lowell in the background. The campus includes two athletic facilities, LeLacheur Park and the Tsongas Center.
JIM HIGGINS

A partner has been chosen to help develop 10 acres of land on the edge of UMass Lowell's east campus that could bring student housing, research and development or new development to a lower-income neighborhood in Lowell.

The developer is GMH Communities, a Pennsylvania firm whose portfolio includes apartments and retail space in a building that opened about five years ago off Commonwealth Avenue in Boston just off Boston University's campus. It has also helped build college-related developments in 10 other states.

The UMass Building Authority, the arm of UMass that helps build and renovate campus buildings, chose GMH Communities to help build out a 10-acre site at UMass Lowell's east campus, it announced Thursday. The land sits between downtown Lowell and UMass Lowell's two biggest athletics facilities, the Tsongas Center and LeLacheur Park.

GMH Communities will now work with UMass to figure out how to best develop the land, which UMass said could include office or research and development space, student housing, and residential, retail and hospitality uses. Those new buildings could include new student housing to replace some of UMass Lowell's aging dormitories.

Part of the site sits in a federally designated Opportunity Zone, which allows for tax benefits for those building new development.

No timetable is yet in place for construction to begin.