



NORTHSIDE LOFTS

Redeveloping and Reimagining the former Aledo Junior High School

205 N College Avenue
Aledo, Illinois

Developer: Economic Growth Corporation

General Contractor: Growth General Contracting, LLC

Architect: Baranski Hammer Moretta & Sheehy Architects and Planners

Legal Counsel: Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen

Property Manager: Home Base Property Management, LLC

Community Champions: City of Aledo and Windborn Development (Windborn)



Introduction

Economic Growth Corporation (GROWTH), a non-profit development organization, is working to redevelop and reimagine the former Aledo Junior High School at 205 N College Avenue, Aledo, IL. The Northside Lofts development merges adaptive-reuse and new construction within a historic, former school, featuring 24 units within the existing structure and 6 units in a newly constructed wing. It emphasizes green building practices for energy efficiency and sustainability and offers a mix of studios, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom apartments. Repurposing the historic gymnasium will provide essential community amenities based on community input, surpassing current offerings in Aledo. Amenities include co-workspace, fitness area, bike share, gaming lounge, and more. Exterior amenities feature playgrounds, basketball/pickleball court, and a community garden. With a \$16.4 million total investment, GROWTH aims to provide affordable, high-quality, new housing opportunities, fostering community growth and vitality.

Since 2021, GROWTH has been actively collaborating with the City of Aledo and Windborn, a local community champion. Windborn took the proactive step of acquiring the former school property and strategically held the historic community asset until December 2023. At that point, GROWTH acquired the property from Windborn at a substantial discount, underscoring our shared commitment to a unified community vision. This shared vision is rooted in revitalizing and repurposing the historic school into an affordable, high-quality multifamily development tailored to the needs of residents and the local workforce.

Overview

Northside Lofts is positioned as a transformative and comprehensive development that not only addresses unmet housing needs but also prioritizes historical preservation, community engagement, and sustainable living practices.

Historical Adaptive Reuse with New Construction

- Adaptive Reuse- 24 Units
- New Construction- 6 Units

Unit Mix

- Studio
- 1-bedroom
- 2-bedroom

Timeline



KEY FEATURES



New, Affordable Housing Units

GROWTH is introducing a range of new construction housing options, including studio, one-, and two-bedroom rental units tailored to the needs of the local workforce. Rents will span from \$520 to \$1,050 per month, with unit sizes ranging from 425 to 965 square feet.

Historic Preservation

Situated in the Downtown Aledo Historic District, GROWTH embraces the building's historic significance. With an allocation awarded of both Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, GROWTH is committed to preserving and highlighting the historical features of the former Aledo Junior High School, fostering a sense of pride among former students, faculty, and parents, and will contribute to the area's unique historical identity. All work will be restored in accordance with US Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Historic Preservation.

Accessibility Features

The Northside Lofts will be redeveloped with accessibility in mind, with a portion of housing units and all common areas accommodating individuals with disabilities and promoting inclusivity.

Sustainability

GROWTH prioritizes environmental responsibility and will be integrating green building practices into the Northside Lofts redevelopment to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability. This encompasses the utilization of energy-efficient appliances, installation of solar panels, and adoption of other energy-saving technologies and practices.

INTERIOR AMENITIES

Historic Gym Conversion

The historic gymnasium will be transformed into a multi-use center filled with innovative amenities to foster a sense of community among residents, surpassing what is currently available in the market. These innovative amenities will be enclosed within the gymnasium by glass walls, offering an open atmosphere while adhering to historic rehabilitation standards, and include:

Co-Work Space

Dedicated communal workspaces to support remote work and productivity.

Indoor Fitness

A designated space within the development where residents can engage in various fitness activities indoors.

Bike Share Program & Dedicated Bike Storage

A bike-sharing program will be implemented where residents can access and return bikes conveniently for short trips around the community while providing secure storage for personal bikes.

Gaming Lounge

Catering to diverse gaming interests with areas for traditional board games and tabletop gaming involving card, dice, or tile-based games.

Property Management Office

An onsite office where residents can visit for inquiries, assistance, and serving as a central point of contact for residents and property management staff.

Tenant Supportive Services

Offering comprehensive support through HUD-certified housing counseling, including financial literacy, budgeting, credit, and goal setting initiatives to empower residents.



Historic Gym Conversion



Co-Workspace



Bike Share Program & Bike Storage



Gaming Lounge



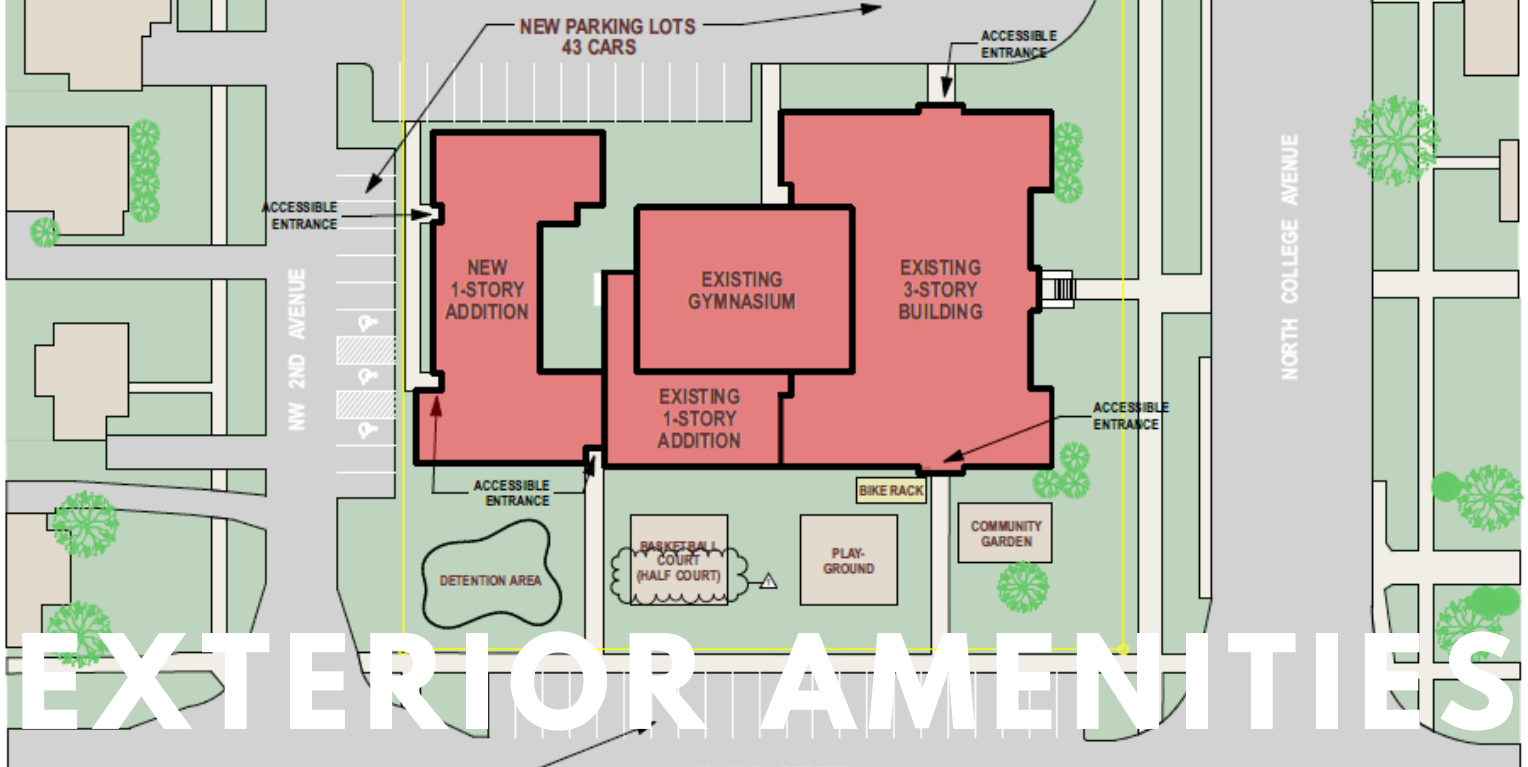
Resident Communal Area



Fitness Area



Property Management Office & Tenant Support Services



EXTERIOR AMENITIES

Exterior Amenities

In addition to the interior amenities within the historic gym, the redevelopment project enhances outdoor spaces with a children's playground, versatile basketball/pickleball court, community garden, and bike rack. These amenities promote physical activity, sustainability, and community interaction.

Playground

A designated area equipped with a playground, providing a safe and enjoyable space for residents and families to add engagement and socialization.

Basketball/Pickleball Court

A versatile on-site court will serve for both basketball and pickleball, where residents can stay active and socialize.

Community Garden

A community garden will create a communal green space inviting residents to cultivate plants, foster community, and embrace sustainable living.

Bike Rack

The on-site bike rack will provide a designated area for residents to store bicycles, promoting cycling as an eco-friendly transportation option and reducing reliance on cars.

Community Alignment

The redevelopment site, nestled in Aledo Downtown Historic District in downtown Aledo, is strategically located on College Avenue at the heart of the city. It's becoming a vibrant center for commerce, transportation, education, and recreation, with recent years witnessing a surge of revitalization. Historic buildings are coming to life, attracting small business growth, and nurturing a thriving community atmosphere. In 2024, construction will commence on major downtown revitalization initiatives, including a new aquatic center, creation of a new market area and pedestrian plaza, and similar further enhancing the area's appeal and amenities.

Community Involvement

As a community-based development organization, GROWTH is deeply committed to revitalizing and fostering resilient, mixed-use communities. Our focus lies in creating affordable housing options and nurturing business opportunities to ensure long-term sustainability and prosperity for all residents.

Since 2021, GROWTH has been actively involved in understanding and addressing community housing needs through extensive input sessions, culminating in the upcoming Northside Lofts project. This initiative underscores GROWTH's commitment to sustainable community development, facilitated through collaborations with partners like Windborn Development, Aledo Main Street, and the City of Aledo. By leveraging resources and expertise, these partnerships amplify the impact of Northside Lofts, ensuring its alignment with community goals and preservation efforts while meeting current and future workforce housing needs.



GROWTH and Growth General Contracting, LLC continues to work closely with Aledo Main Street to help develop best practices to nurture local entrepreneurs and innovative business ideas. Andy Fisher, Construction Director for GROWTH and Growth General Contracting, LLC joined Aledo Main Street's Economic Vitality Committee and has been an active participant, demonstrating best practices to advance its mission while providing insight on the how to maximize the opportunities created through Northside Lofts redevelopment.

In October 2023, Aledo Main Street's Economic Vitality Committee took the initiative to tour GROWTH's developments in Rock Island. Staff toured the Committee to various developments and provided valuable insights and opportunities for members to speak one-on-one with business owners located in GROWTH's mixed-use developments. Best practices were shared along with providing information on innovative loan programs available through CDFI lender, Bridge Investment Community Development Corporation, that can provide the much-needed loan capital to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses open, sustain, and grow.

In November 2023, Brian Hollenback, President/CEO of Economic Growth Corporation, and Andrew Fisher, Construction Director for Growth General Contracting, LLC, highlighted these collaborative efforts in an interview with Aledo Radio Station WRMJ. They discussed initiatives to support Aledo Main Street and secure financing from the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) for the redevelopment of the historic Aledo Junior High, aiming to provide high-quality rental apartments that meet community housing needs.

GROWTH continues to seek community input on its Northside Lofts redevelopment effort, along with encouraging any resident interested in living at the Northside Lofts to submit their contact information: <https://www.economicgrowthcorporation.com/northside-lofts.html>.

Contribution to Aledo Main Street

Growth General Contracting, LLC (GGC) provided a \$2,500 contribution to Aledo Main Street to assist with revitalization efforts. “When we identify a development within the community, that community then gets full access to the innovative resources that come by and through GROWTH. While we work diligently to advance our efforts at Northside Lofts, we want the Aledo community to know we are fully committed to playing a vital role in their community revitalization efforts, specifically within our Northside Lofts redevelopment effort” says Brian Hollenback, President/CEO.



“Playing a role in advancing development opportunities is a key component of Growth General Contracting, LLC,” remarked Andrew Fisher, Construction Director for Growth General Contracting, LLC. “GROWTH and GGC both have years of experience advancing community development through livable, sustainable, artist-inspired development that result in an increase in residents and businesses. I am happy to provide that insight for Aledo Main Street through my role within the Economic Vitality Committee and by providing a contribution towards their efforts.”

