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## Lack of Land Still Thwarts Affordable

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Archuleta: “A partnership with a private land owner allows you to reuse existing land for a better purpose.”

IRVINE, CA—While one of the obstacles to developing affordable housing is the difficulty in securing funding, by far the biggest obstacle is the lack of available land, Jamboree Housing’s president [Laura Archuleta](#) tells GlobeSt.com. Jamboree and the Garden Grove United Methodist Church recently broke ground on Wesley Village, an innovative, multi-use urban campus in Garden Grove, CA, encompassing multigenerational affordable housing as well as educational, social and health services that will be available to the larger community. A public/private venture, the campus is being developed on 2.2 acres of the church’s excess parking space and vacant land that, together, create the site for two three-

story multifamily buildings that will include 47 affordable apartments for 31 working families and 16 senior households. We spoke exclusively with Archuleta about public/private partnerships, lack of land and mixed-use campuses.

GlobeSt.com: How could public/private partnerships like Wesley Village help with the lack of land for affordable housing?

Archuleta: While one of the obstacles to developing affordable housing is the difficulty in securing funding, by far the biggest obstacle is the lack of available land. Without land, affordable housing can't be built regardless of the amount of funding that might be available. In more mature cities, infill sites are often the only option available to a developer. A partnership with a private land owner allows you to reuse existing land for a better purpose.



## SENIOR BUILDING

Wesley Village's senior building will be part of a unique mixed-use complex that was the result of a collaboration between three separate entities, both public and private.

GlobeSt.com: Where is the land for affordable housing?

Archuleta: In my mind, I can see affordable housing on most residential sites, but the best locations are near jobs, transportation and schools, in urban areas near public transit and community/retail services where market-rate builders are concentrating their land-acquisition efforts. They want to acquire much of the same land that could be used for—and once was used for—affordable-housing development. This competition further constrains the supply and increases the price. Affordable-housing developers simply can't compete against market-rate developers with a lot more money for increasingly costly land.

What makes the Wesley Village concept different is that the land is owned by Garden Grove United Methodist Church, a public-serving entity that shares many of the same social principles as Jamboree and the City of Garden Grove. This sharing of purpose allowed for an arm's-length deal without the pressure of increasing competition from market-rate developers that creates an uneven playing field with affordable-housing developers at the low end. If any one of the three entities—the church, Jamboree, the

City—did not participate in this unique development, Wesley Village would most likely not have happened.

GlobeSt.com: How did the concept of mixed-use campuses like this, which offers affordable housing as well as social, health and educational services, emerge?

Archuleta: Over the years, Jamboree has grown from a local developer of affordable housing to a community developer creating private/public partnerships that embrace the concept of using housing as a platform to create a ripple effect that impacts the larger community surrounding our developments. One of the important benefits of affordable-housing communities is that in many cases the property owners/managers such as Jamboree offer a property's residents a variety of free social, educational and health programming to help improve their lives and lifestyle. There is a growing understanding nationwide that affordable housing—while providing shelter for families, seniors, veterans and people with mental disabilities—can do much more by partnering with local service organizations to extend resident programming into the larger community, helping to create stronger, healthier communities. Jamboree advanced this concept with the launch last year of its Community Impact Initiative that is designed to extend these valuable programs into the surrounding neighborhoods and by doing so bring additional valuable community benefits to the communities in which the company has properties.

GlobeSt.com: Why are mixed-use campuses becoming a trend now?

Archuleta: Mixed-use communities that include housing and commercial uses such as retail are not a new concept. But a mixed-use, socially based campus like that being created with the development of Wesley Village—which combines multigenerational housing with a Head Start learning center and facilities for other service providers—is a progressive concept. In step with Jamboree's mission to deliver quality affordable housing and services that transform lives and strengthen communities, Wesley Village will offer Garden Grove residents a spectrum of life-enhancing benefits that would otherwise not be available in the community.

GlobeSt.com: What else should our readers know about projects like Wesley Village?

Archuleta: There may be land for affordable housing in unlikely places. California is in dire need of more affordable housing; it is estimated that the state is at least one million units short of the demand for affordable housing. A solution may be found in adaptive reuse of idle facilities such as vacant big-box stores in shopping centers, empty employee parking lots, churches and schools with large underused campuses. In any case, these institutions and businesses have land available that either lies fallow or the owners are seeking use of that land that will generate income that they can use for purposes such as improvement of existing facilities or charitable activities. As a developer of affordable housing, we can't think of a better use for that land, especially in today's land-constrained urban areas, than for creation of affordable housing that is so badly needed in California today.

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