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ALERT

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Ward Plaza redevelopment cleared to resume

By BRIAN BREHM The Winchester Star

Oct 15, 2026



The construction site where the former Ward Plaza shopping center is being redeveloped on Valley Avenue in Winchester.

Jeff Taylor/The Winchester Star

The redevelopment of Ward Plaza is back on track.

Jeff Buettner, executive director of the Winchester Economic Development Authority (EDA), said on Thursday evening that a \$3.5 million mechanic's lien filed by LCS Site Services LLC of Springfield has been satisfied and will be recorded on Friday morning in the Winchester Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

LCS issued the lien against general contractor Chesapeake Contracting Group Inc. in mid-September, claiming Chesapeake had not paid the subcontractor for its site development services at a mixed-use development being prepared on the former Ward Plaza property called Cedar Valley Square.

Buettner also said that a Publix grocery store is still on track to be built at Cedar Valley Square and construction should begin in the next few months.

Cedar Valley Square is a project being funded by Winchester Acquisition Partners LLC, an investment group headed by John Wesley Gray Jr. of McLean.

To help launch the redevelopment of the former Ward Plaza property, the city's EDA obtained a \$4 million loan for Winchester Acquisition Partners. Buettner said on Thursday that loan payments to the EDA have been made on time and Winchester Acquisition Partners' debt has been reduced so far by about \$500,000.

Winchester's City Council also issued \$29 million in bonds to improve infrastructure and amenities in the area around the Cedar Valley Square site, but Buettner said that debt belongs to the city, not Winchester Acquisition Partners.

Buettner said the city and its EDA did not spend or lose any money due to the conflict regarding the mechanic's lien.

For a full story on the resumption of the Cedar Valley Square project, visit winchesterstar.com on Friday afternoon or read Monday's print edition of The Winchester Star.

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