

EXCLUSIVE: Avondale housing rehab will start on Maple Avenue

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Nov. 16, 2013 10:27 PM |

cincinnati.com



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Contractors meeting for The Community Builders' Avondale project will be held Monday, Nov. 18, at 11:30 a.m. at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center MERC Center, 620 Oak St., Avondale.

AVONDALE

— The

large-scale makeover of affordable housing in this east-central city neighborhood will begin on Maple Avenue in April.

The work is part of a multiyear, multimillion dollar plan that will create new jobs and add more than 200 new and renovated affordable apartments in Avondale, fueling a neighborhood rebirth already underway.

Two apartment buildings will be torn down on the block of Maple just west of Reading Road as part of a \$29.5 million, five-year federal Choice Neighborhoods grant.

The Community Builders will announce two phases of residential development plans Monday morning at an event for prospective contractors. The nonprofit developer and project co-sponsor, the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky African-American Chamber of Commerce, will provide information to contractors interested in bidding on the two phases of the project, which are estimated at \$17 million.

The Community Builders hope to have bids before Christmas, said Lou Mitsch, senior project manager.

Plans obtained by The Enquirer call for a new 18-unit apartment building at the corner of Maple and Reading in a vacant lot next to the now-vacant St. Andrew Catholic Church. The adjacent buildings at 631 Maple and 615 Maple will be razed, and seven townhouses will be built along the south side of Maple. A

three-story house across the street, currently vacant, will be converted to four apartments.

The first two phases of residential development will rehabilitate 140 occupied units of housing and create 25 new units. In all, 200 units of new or renovated housing – which includes rehabbing three now-vacant buildings – are expected to be completed by the end of 2015.

The developer is working with the African-American chamber to ensure that goals of including at least 30 percent minority-owned businesses, 10 percent women-owned businesses and 5 percent disabled business enterprise are reached, Mitsch said.

“The scale of this project work and trades represented are a match with many of our contractors and a ready-and-willing workforce found within our community,” said Sean Rugless, president and chief executive of the African-American chamber.

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