

VIBRANT VOICES



April 2013

Volume 5 Issue 1

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NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK

- Tuesday, April 2, 2013** – The City’s Department of Community Development (DCD) held the Official Kickoff of National Community Development Week at the Community Action Agency. This event showcased the partnership between the Blueprint for Success Program, the City of Cincinnati and the Home Builders Association.
- Thursday, April 4, 2013** – DCD hosted the Ribbon Cutting for Bakery Lofts. The \$2.4 million Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC) project features 9 new Over-the-Rhine condominiums with universal design and accessibility elements, elevator access, and energy efficient features. Units range in price from \$153,000 to \$346,900 and in size from 780

SPOTLIGHT’S ON VILLAGES OF ROLL HILL

U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary, Shaun Donovan (center, sidewalk) visited Cincinnati just to cut the ribbon on the Villages of Roll Hill, formerly the Fay Apartments. This \$36 million project is the largest green renovation of an affordable housing community in the nation! The rehabilitation plan included demolition of 17 buildings, apartment density reduction from 893 to 703, upgraded security, new landscaping, tree installations, and new playgrounds.

DCD’s director, Michael Cervay, accepted The National Community Development Association’s 2013 Audrey Nelson Community Development Achievement Award in February on behalf of the City for the Villages of Roll Hill. The award recognizes exemplary uses of CDBG, HOME and other community development funds with specific use toward neighborhoods and families.

Fay, Limited Partnership, City of Cincinnati, and HUD’s Office of Affordable Housing Preservation are the development partners for the Villages of Roll Hill. The developers are seeking U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED certification for the project.



VISION

MOVE IT!

MISSION

To work with diverse neighborhood partners to seek and leverage funding that enables us to develop and maintain quality housing, distinct commercial properties, small business opportunities, and community based programs.

Moving Ohio Forward Program (MOF) BOOSTS DEMOLITION PROGRESS IN NEIGHBORHOODS

On March 12, 2012, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine settled with five of the nation's largest mortgage servicers (Ally/GMAC, Bank of America, Citi, JPMorganChase, and Wells Fargo) over foreclosure abuses, fraud, and unfair and deceptive mortgage practices. The Attorney General received \$93 million directly to help with foreclosure prevention, assistance to individuals who have experienced foreclosure, and revitalizing neighborhoods by removing blighted properties. The total allocated to Hamilton County was \$5.8 Million Dollars. In order to receive the grant, match funding had to be pledged.

The City of Cincinnati pledged \$3,490,000.00, and will in turn receive a dollar for dollar match from the State for a total of \$6,980,000.00 in demolition funding for 2013. PMCE began immediately ranking and prioritizing over 1200 vacant blighted buildings for potential demolition under the program to help ensure demolition would be strategic. In addition to engaging the community for input on demolition priorities on several levels,



HAZARD- Refers to the degree of peril presented to the public due to threat of fire, conflagration, collapse of parts, target of potential collapse, dangerous interior or exterior, degree of attractive nuisance etc. (This factor is weighted)

BLIGHT- Refers to the degree of loss of neighboring property values, prominence of the location in the community, degradation of community morale and disinvestment caused by the building, and length of time building has been blighted.

INTRINSIC - Architecturally significant, contributing to the streetscape, historical value, and importance to the fabric of the neighborhood.

OBSOLETE - To what degree, if any, would the after rehab cost exceed the market value -"economic obsolescence", Is the building, due to antiquated or impractical design and character, "functionally obsolete." What kind of candidate for rehab, reuse and marketability does the building present?



PMCE is also working to help ensure that blighted buildings do not become blighted vacant lots after demolition is completed by creating a Natural Landscape program for demolition sites. The green initiative will provide employment and training opportunities while beautifying neighborhoods by installing a combination of low maintenance, formal and natural landscaping in focus areas on 150 to 200 lots. Working with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and Building Value, the City hopes to recycle some of the demolished building parts to be used as ground cover as part of the Natural Landscaping program. DCD is working with the Law Department and City Planning Commission to streamline the Land Reutilization Program to get the tax delinquent MOF demolition sites into the hands of developers and neighbors who will reutilize and maintain the lots and return them to productivity and the property tax rolls.

DCD has also reached out to demolition and asbestos abatement contractors to partner with Super Jobs to provide incentives to train and employ citizens who have received entry level construction job training with City partners from the Urban League and the Community Action Agency.

Though not required under Environmental Protection Agency rules, PMCE is working with the Health Department to look for ways through public education to inform the public to avoid dust and other materials that may be generated during demolition. The Health Department recommends the following for families living near demolitions: 1) do not stand or play near demolition sites; 2) remove shoes before entering the home; 3) wash hands before preparing food and eating; and, 4) wet wash floors, window wells and window sills frequently.

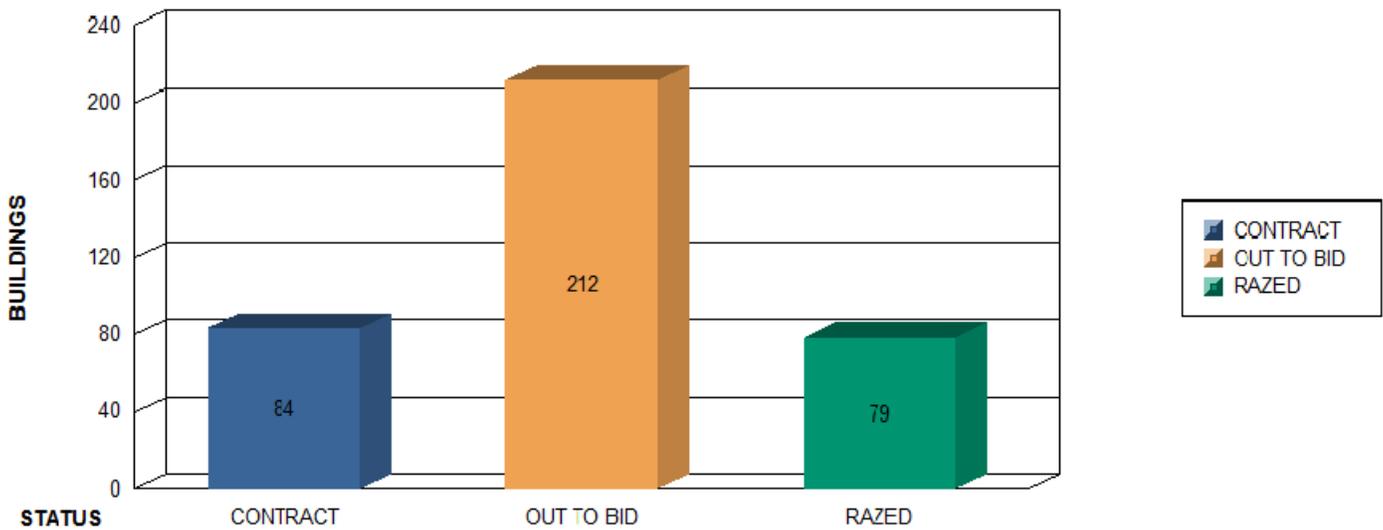
MOF continue on page 3

MOF Continued from page 2

The chart below shows the current status of the MOF demolition with 375 buildings out to bid, under contract, or already demolished for an estimated total of \$4.6 Million of the \$6.9 Million already encumbered. Additionally, 391 blighted buildings have gone through the public hearing process and are ready to put out to bid. Another 55 structures are scheduled for hearings. It is important to note that not all buildings undergoing the condemnation and hearing process will be demolished under MOF. The estimated cost to demolish all buildings currently in process would total more than \$9.9 million. The strategic use of demolition and MOF funding is essential to maximizing community benefit.

MOVING OHIO FORWARD

PROGRESS REPORT



Standardized Trash Carts Will Protect Workers, Save Taxpayer Money

As part of National Community Development Week, Mayor Mallory delivered the first new 65-gallon trash cart on April 3rd during National Community Development Week to a Cincinnati resident in West Price Hill during the official rollout of the City's new Trash Cart Program impacting approximately 90,000 households. The new carts will help protect workers, improve efficiency and save taxpayers money. The attached lids are wind resistance and will also help keep Cincinnati's neighborhoods cleaner. Cincinnati joins a host of other municipalities already providing the carts that use semi-automation like the City's current recycling carts. The metal lift bar eliminates the need for workers to lift cans, thus reducing the likelihood of injury.

The City's Department of Public Services states the cart rollout is scheduled to take approximately five months. Single-family homes and multi-family homes up to 4 units will receive carts, which have wheels and an attached lid. Each eligible household will receive only one cart. Commercial, mixed-use or multi-family structures with more than 5 units will no longer receive City trash service after October 7, 2013. Residents can request a change to a larger or smaller sized cart. However, Public Services recommends that citizens try their new cart for 2 weeks before swapping. The City also plans to have Trash Amnesty Weeks around certain holidays, so that citizens can set out more holiday-related trash than fits inside their cart without penalty.

City's Yard Waste Program Is Back!

The Yard Waste Program returned April 1, 2013. Service will be bi-weekly and collected with regularly scheduled recycling. Yard waste must be placed in biodegradable brown paper yard waste bags or clearly marked cans "Yard Waste." For more information on trash carts or yard waste, contact (513) 591-6000.

Vacant Foreclosed Property Registration Program (VFPR): Partnerships Ensure Success

DCD strives to build upon current technology and partnerships when implementing new programs. Such is the case when City Council enacted the Vacant Foreclosed Property Registration Program (VFPR) Ordinance in July 2012. The Ordinance directs any Mortgagee (holder of a mortgage) who files a foreclosure in the piloted neighborhoods of College Hill, East Price Hill, Madisonville, West Price Hill, and Westwood, to register the property when it becomes vacant and to pay a registration fee of \$500. Occupied properties in foreclosure status do not have to register into the program. To minimize blight in neighborhoods, the Ordinance also requires that foreclosed properties be maintained free of outward signs of foreclosure action. Mortgagees that install an alarm system in the property receive a reduced rate of \$50 per building. To date, no Mortgagee has applied for the reduction.

DCD's Property Maintenance Code Enforcement (PMCE) Division is in charge of the VFPR. PMCE sought the expertise of the Cincinnati Area Geographical Information System (CAGIS) to create a website to help identify VFPR properties. The partnership has made the VFPR implementation relatively straightforward. Here's the process:

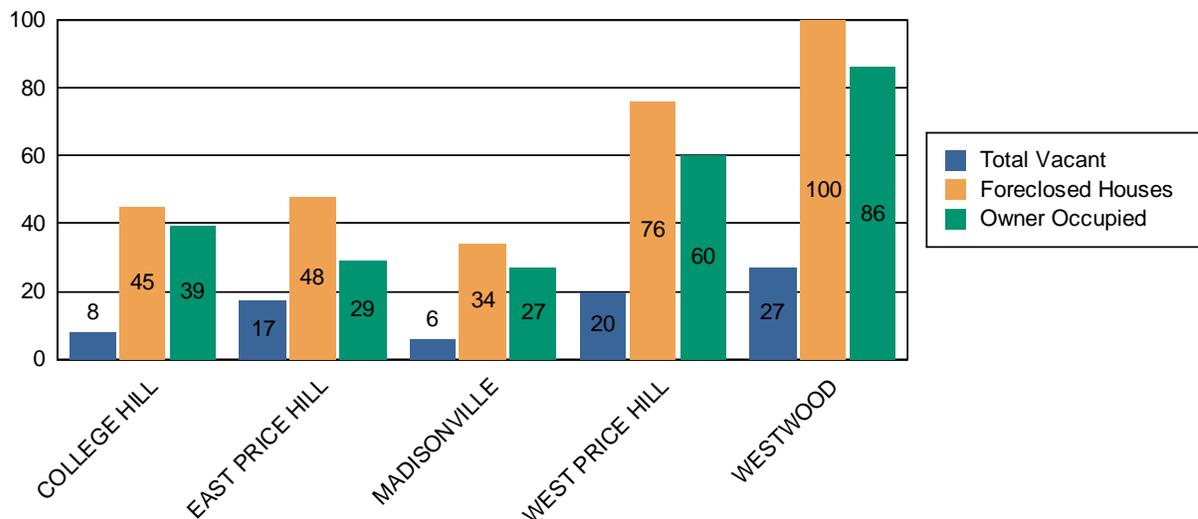
- PMCE issues a letter explaining the VFPR to the Mortgagee and the attorney filing the foreclosure on the day the foreclosure is filed.
- PMCE issues a letter to the homeowner(s) informing them of their right to stay in the property until it is sold. Homeowners who remain in the home reduce the likelihood of vandalism at the property due to abandonment.
- PMCE provides the homeowner no-cost information about foreclosure prevention assistance.
- Community members also have access to the system to e-mail the Mortgagee and the City when they notice property maintenance issues at foreclosed sites.

In addition to working with CAGIS, PMCE partnered with Legal Aid to create a dedicated phone line just for VFPR homeowners to call for foreclosure assistance. Based on PMCE's referrals, Legal Aid has saved several homeowners from foreclosure.

PMCE's partnerships have proven to be successful. The chart below shows 2012 statistics on the program:

VFPR STATISTICS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

303 Foreclosed properties · 73 of 78 Vacant properties registered in VFPR · \$36,500 collected in Registration Fees · 66 Fines totaling \$81,300 have been levied for failure to register or failure to maintain property



TAX ABATEMENT CHANGES COMING TO A PROPERTY NEAR YOU!

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification ratings standards are established by the U.S. Green Building Council, for commercial and residential projects. As an incentive for local developers to strive for higher LEED ratings, City Council passed Ordinance #502-2012 on December 19, 2012. The Ordinance amended property tax exemptions for newly constructed and remodeled residential and commercial properties within the City of Cincinnati. City Council's actions move the City closer to achieving its Green Cincinnati Plan goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining incentives for investment and growth in Cincinnati. The new maximum amounts and terms for the abatement are outlined below:

RESIDENTIAL TAX ABATEMENTS (1-3 Units)

A minimum of \$2,500 must be spent on eligible improvements for 1 and 2 unit structures and \$5,000 for 3 unit structures. The new Ordinance also eliminates the annual 3% increase in the maximum exemption for both LEED and non-LEED certified abatements.

	Renovation		New Construction	
	Maximum Abatement	Term	Maximum Abatement	Term
Non-LEED Certified	\$275,000	10	\$275,000	10
LEED Certified	\$275,000	10	\$275,000	15
LEED Silver	\$400,000	10	\$400,000	15
LEED Gold	\$562,000	10	\$562,000	15
LEED Platinum	No Limit	10	No Limit	15

COMMERCIAL TAX ABATEMENTS

A minimum of \$40,000 must be spent on renovation improvements. Multi-unit (4 or more units) structures are eligible for a maximum exemption of \$275,000 per dwelling unit of the market improved value. The abatement rate is up to 75% tax exemption on improvements in commercial/industrial/mixed-use projects, All commercial tax abatements qualify only on the basis of a financial gap analysis; however, LEED Silver, Gold, or Platinum projects are not subject to a financial gap analysis.

	Renovation		New Construction	
	Multi-Unit (4 or more units)	Commercial / Industrial / Mixed-Use	Multi-Unit (4 or more units)	Commercial / Industrial / Mixed-Use
Non-LEED Certified	8	12	8	15
LEED Certified	8	12	8	15
LEED Silver	12	12	15	15
LEED Gold	12	12	15	15
LEED Platinum	12	12	15	15

DCD recently conducted a survey of 255 Tax Abatement applicants processed in 2012. We discovered:

- 81% of owners of newly constructed homes said that the tax abatement impacted their decision to stay or move to the City.
- 40% of property owners said that the tax abatement allowed them to increase their original budget by at least \$50,000.
- 87% of owners of newly constructed homes who chose to build LEED-certified said that additional tax abatement was the determining factor that motivated them to pursue LEED certification.

MSD OPENS THE WAY FOR MORE DEVELOPMENT IN CINCINNATI

MSD recently announced that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) is no longer requiring the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) to use combined sewer overflow (CSO) connection credits to control new sanitary flow from new development projects in order to comply with the federal Consent Decree. As development and redevelopment occurs, MSD will still require sites to construct stormwater detention to reduce runoff, but a specific flow credit or off-set ratio will no longer be required as a result of continuing progress with Project Groundwork.

The City of Cincinnati’s sewers, which were built about 180 years ago, were designed to carry storm water away from populated areas during wet weather. When indoor plumbing was introduced, sanitary sewage was added into the system. Today, most of the sewers within the City transport both stormwater and sanitary sewage in the same pipe. Over time, continued growth and development around Cincinnati created conditions where some sewers can’t accommodate the amount of stormwater and wastewater directed into the system. As a result, the sewers were constructed to route the excess flow to area waterways. Sewer connection credits have been used to regulate capacity and reduce combined sewer overflows. Ohio EPA previously required MSD to remove four gallons of stormwater flow from the combined sewer system before one gallon of new sanitary flow could be added, so that the CSO system would not become overburdened, particularly during wet weather. This requirement tended to restrict development in the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

“MSD has made great strides to reduce combined and sanitary sewer overflows to create a cleaner, healthier and more environmentally and economically sustainable community. This is a win for the City and MSD,” said MSD’s Executive Director, Tony Parrott. “Development in Cincinnati will now be easier to facilitate and more affordable as we continue to improve the local economy and our environment.” added Parrott. “The decision by the Ohio EPA to lift the sewer credits requirement is a direct reflection of the great progress we’ve made under Project Groundwork.”

FUNDING CLIMATE CHANGES = NEW ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS!

HUD is currently reviewing the City of Cincinnati’s Department of Community Development (DCD) and the City’s Economic Development Division (EDD) joint Section 108 Loan application. The submission outlines the City’s goal to create a \$37 million Loan Pool with a 20-year repayment structure of principle and interest. HUD Entitlement Communities, like the City of Cincinnati, are allowed to borrow against future CDBG grants for eligible projects. The approval of a 108 Loan means that the City can move forward on important and significant large-scale community and economic development projects in the short-term, but pay for them on a long-term basis. HUD’s authorization will allow the City to provide affordable housing, promote economic development, and also provide better facilities and improved services specifically for a segment of our population dealing with homeless issues. When approved, the following projects will come to fruition:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Department</u>
Homeless to Homes Initiative	\$7,000,000	DCD
Tax Credit Bridge Loan	\$17,000,000	DCD
Community Development Loan Pool	\$2,000,000	DCD
Economic Development Loan Pool	\$11,000,000	EDD
Total	\$37,000,000	

All Section 108 projects, except the Homeless to Homes Initiative, will be underwritten to provide a source or repayment of the Section 108 loan principle and interest payments. Additional projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure the City’s pledged CDBG risk is minimal.

The City will continue to find creative solutions to meet the needs of our neighborhoods as the local, state, and federal funding climates shift. For more information on the new Section 108 Loan Pool, please contact DCD at communitydevelopment@cincinnati-oh.gov.

CINCINNATI RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE 2013 “COOL COMMUNITIES”

The City's Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) just received its 7th award since the initiative was created by the City Manager in 2008. This time, the honor came from “Cool Communities,” the national competition hosted by Transforming Local Government!

DCD coordinates the NEP partnerships among neighborhoods and nine City departments. NEP's Community/City partnership has been implemented in 14 neighborhoods. Cincinnati Representatives presented NEP as a case study on ways to transform local government at the *Cool Communities* Conference this month in Atlanta, Georgia. The Cincinnati contingent showcased this award-winning program to a national audience of municipal practitioners and elected officials throughout the country. GO TEAM!

DCD'S LATEST LEAD ABATEMENT GRANT HELPS CINCINNATI

DCD is actively implementing its latest \$3 million Lead Hazard Control Research Grant to abate lead issues in 240 units in 20 targeted neighborhoods. Below, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Midwest Regional Administrator, Antonio Riley, (4th from right) presented Mayor Mallory (2nd from right) with the check from HUD. Also in attendance was James Cunningham (3rd from right), local HUD official, DCD Director, Michael Cervay (5th from right), DCD Deputy Director, Dwendolyn Chester, and Lead staff, Aisha Tzillah and Dan Kalubi. The officials were joined by a number of guests and lead abatement contractors who help implement the grant within the neighborhoods.



CiTIRAMA® 2012 Successful @ Virginia Place...NEXT?

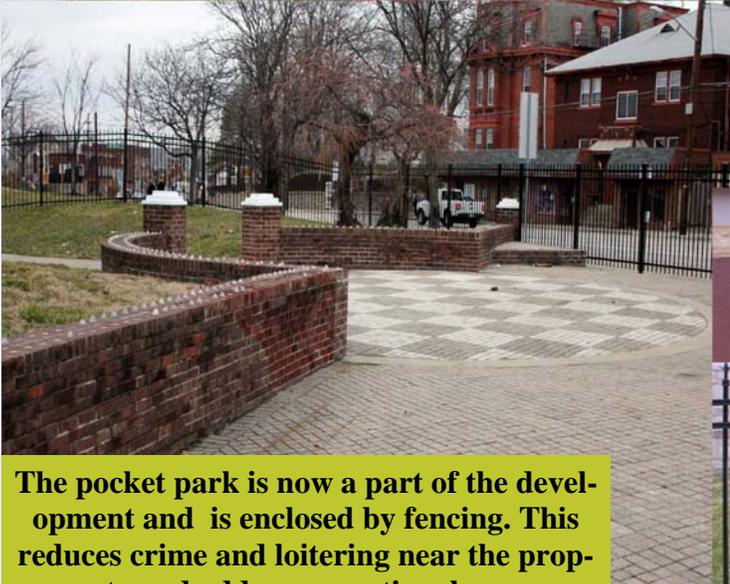
CiTIRAMA, the longest running partnership between a municipality and a Home Builders Association (HBA) in the United States, continued its success with an urban home show in the Northside neighborhood. The show, held in September 2012, included four builders: Potterhill Homes, The Drees Company, Maronda Homes, and Brookstone Homes. No surprise in this partnership! All 35 lots were under contract to purchase by the participating builders! DCD staff and the Home Builders Association are scouring neighborhoods for the 2014 location. More information will be forthcoming in future issues of Vibrant Voices.

MANY THANKS: WALNUT WOODS PROJECT A SUCCESS!

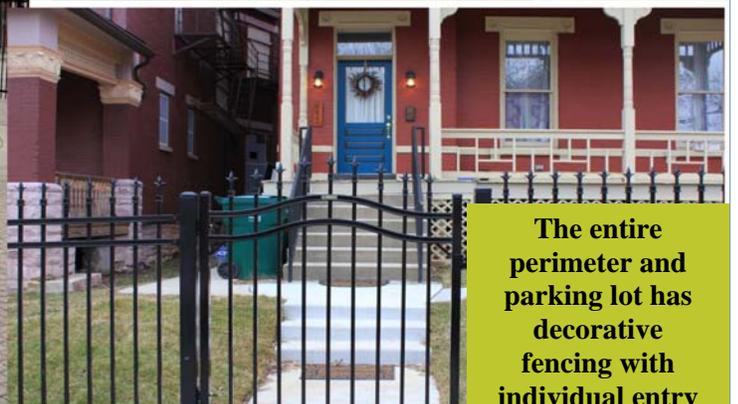


New Signage Marker

In the Right-of-Way, grass was added while brick pavers and trees were retained. Concrete was replaced on the sidewalks in the front and back walkways.



The pocket park is now a part of the development and is enclosed by fencing. This reduces crime and loitering near the property and adds a recreational area.



The entire perimeter and parking lot has decorative fencing with individual entry gates at each residence. New pavement and white lines mark parking spaces behind the residences. A security gate was installed to ensure only residents and their guests can access the property.



The Walnut Woods residents' provided ongoing suggestions and input. DCD received assistance from the following City Departments: Public Services, Law, and City Planning and Buildings. Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and Lawn Life assisted with beautification. The City's Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOT) led the project's contractors to completion. The results of teamwork are transformational!

AVONDALE: HUD'S "CHOICE" FOR MAJOR GRANT

DCD is excited for the Avondale neighborhood. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced that The Community Builders Inc. (TCB), received a five-year \$29.5 Choice Neighborhood Grant to renovate 5 distressed affordable housing apartment buildings on or near Reading Road. The complexes are: Crescent Court, 3719 Reading Road; Alameda Apartments, 3580-86 Reading; The Poinciana, 3522 Reading Road; Maple Apartments, 631 Maple Avenue; and Somerset Manor, 802-814 Blair Avenue. Each building will be renovated to preserve or create a total of 318 affordable housing units. TCB also plans to build new housing near the intersection of Burnet and Forest Avenues. HUD stated its federal investment of \$29.5 million generates an additional \$45 million in private and local investments.

HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan stated, "HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative supports local visions for how to transform high-poverty, distressed communities into neighborhoods of opportunity. We're emphasizing a comprehensive approach to revitalizing neighborhoods by considering the totality of a community with regard to health, safety, education, jobs and quality housing in mixed-income neighborhoods."

The City recently supported ten Low-Income Housing Tax Credits applications. Of the ten, two support development in Avondale. Specifically, the Avondale Phase 1 is a TCB project for 3719 and 3522 Reading Road. Total project costs are \$15,427,600 to provide 81 affordable rental units that replace troubled, vacant properties. The second Avondale project is the National Church Residences' The Commons at Alaska, which will offer 99 units of Permanent Supportive housing for formerly homeless and disabled residents. Total project costs are \$12,610,000.

The LIHTC Program is a federal income tax incentive program designed to increase the supply of quality affordable rental housing by assisting with the financing of development costs. Since 1987, Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) has used the LIHTC Program to facilitate the statewide development of more than 87,400 affordable rental units. OFHA is scheduled to make funding decisions in June 2013.

DCD'S NEW TV SHOW TAKES A LOOK *INSIDE Cincinnati*

DCD's monthly cable show, formerly known as *Gems of the Queen City*, has undergone a facelift! The show has been renamed *Inside Cincinnati* and touts a modern format that includes external "cut-aways" to news locations, a new set and furniture, along with a new host, Jerry Galvin in addition to Jeanne Golliher. Viewers should anticipate many new and exciting stories about Community Development who will be going "Inside Cincinnati" neighborhoods throughout the upcoming year! Many thanks to CitiCable and DCD staff for this collaboration!

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Community
Development's
Television Show

"Inside Cincinnati"

Time Warner Cable
Channel 23

Airtimes

Sunday - 7:00 am
Monday

2:00 am & 5:00 pm
Wednesday

9:00 am & 9:00 pm
Thursday - 6:00 am

Friday - 4:00 am