

# Housing projects will go

## Jacob Price residents to be moved this year

BY CINDY SCHROEDER | ENQUIRER STAFF WRITER

**COVINGTON** - The demolition of Covington's Jacob Price housing projects will begin by year's end, the lawyer for the Housing Authority of Covington said Wednesday. Residents will be relocated.

Federal officials told the housing authority's board of directors last week that they've approved tearing down three buildings housing 24 units on Robbins Street, Housing Authority Attorney Steve McMurtry said. Those residents will be moved to vacant apartments within the 163-unit, rent-subsidized complex on Covington's Eastside.

The Housing Authority of Covington plans to make an announcement on the future of Jacob Price this afternoon.

The housing authority's plan calls for tearing down all 23 buildings in the Jacob Price complex at Prospect Avenue and Robbins Street, McMurtry said. The demolition would be done in four phases.

Although the housing authority has estimated it will take about five years to demolish the complex, the timetable will be largely determined by funding, McMurtry said. The full plan has yet to be approved by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, but HUD's regional office in Louisville has given its blessing, he said.

Once approval is granted, the next step would be securing low-cost housing tax credits from the Kentucky Housing Corp.

The housing authority will work with developer Model Management to develop new or renovated rent-subsidized housing on Covington's Eastside. Before any apartments at Jacob Price are razed, the housing authority must have other housing for those residents if it wants to continue its annual contributions contract from HUD at the current rate, McMurtry said.

"Please stress that we're not going to throw anybody out on the street," McMurtry said.

The housing authority has estimated it would cost between \$13 million and \$16 million to renovate Jacob Price, which was built almost 70 years ago.

McMurtry said the housing authority hopes the project will act as a catalyst for redevelopment on the Eastside and ease the segregation that exists at the predominantly black Jacob Price complex.

In recent years, HUD has encouraged local governments to scatter low-income housing throughout communities, instead of concentrating it in one area. The goal is to reduce crime and encourage the construction of affordable housing.

"It's not so much the tenants of Jacob Price that cause problems," McMurtry said. "It's the people who come from outside the area and use it as a place for drug dealing. We screen our tenants pretty carefully, and if they use or deal drugs, they're evicted."

Bennie Doggett, president of the Eastside Neighborhood Association, has repeatedly expressed concerns about where Jacob Price residents would live if their apartments are demolished.

"I'm still opposed to the tearing down of Jacob Price," Doggett said Wednesday. "One of the reasons is that we have never seen an actual plan on what the housing authority really is going to do with the Jacob Price site. There have been some rumors that they're going to leave it vacant for a developer. We also haven't seen any plans for where Jacob Price (residents) would be relocated."

Doggett said moving Jacob Price residents to another subsidized housing complex such as City Heights or Latonia Terrace "wouldn't be a good fit."

As part of HUD's approval of any demolition plan, the housing authority must meet with Jacob Price tenants and other stakeholders to keep them informed, McMurtry said.

*E-mail [cschroeder@nky.com](mailto:cschroeder@nky.com)*