

## Is it time to tear down Jacob Price?

*By Jeanne Houck*  
*Post staff reporter*

Residents of Jacob Price Homes will be asked during a survey beginning today what they think of plans to raze the subsidized-housing community in the Eastside and relocate residents in homes scattered throughout the city.

Members of the Jacob Price Residents Council oppose plans by the Housing Authority of Covington to demolish Jacob Price.

But residents council President Vivian Cook said Wednesday that members will help distribute the survey written with the help of consultants hired by the housing authority.

Residents who want to complete a survey form can find them today in Apt. 3, an empty apartment near the Jacob Price office often used for residents council meetings, she said.

Cook said the apartment will open at 3 p.m. and stay open as long as people show up.

"If people don't show up, we will go door-to-door over the weekend and try to survey as many people as possible," she said.

The survey will ask more than whether residents support or oppose demolishing Jacob Price, a 66-year-old complex of 163 apartments off Greenup Street.

It also will ask residents what they think should be done for displaced residents and with the five-acre site if Jacob Price is razed.

The housing authority contends that Jacob Price is becoming too difficult and too expensive to maintain.

Earlier this week, Bill Simon, executive director of the housing authority, said the agency stands by earlier announced plans to apply by December for permission to tear it down. The application will go to the Chicago office of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

But the residents council and other groups such as the Eastside Neighborhood Association remain equally committed in their opposition to the proposal.

"I believe it's important to keep Jacob Price for the historical value of it," Cook said.

"The residents that are here are long-time residents of the community and that's an important factor in itself. They are kind of like the fabric of the community.

"And Jacob Price just happens to be a site that is one of the only African-American housing developments in the city of Covington's Eastside."

Representatives of the residents council, Eastside neighborhood group and housing authority are serving on a planning committee the housing authority established last November.

The committee also includes representatives of the city of Covington, the Northern Kentucky Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Ninth Street Baptist Church, the Legal Aid Society and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, a national group with an office in downtown Cincinnati that offers technical and financial help to nonprofit groups trying to turn around distressed communities.

In deference to those who oppose razing Jacob Price, Simon said, the housing authority is doing more than required as it proceeds with the project.

"HUD essentially requires housing authorities to meet with the residents and inform the residents of its plans," he said.

"In our situation, what we're doing is seeking residents' input and residents' recommendations in our planning process."

Cook has a different take on the matter.

She believes federal law actually mandates that the housing authority have the support of the community before it tears down Jacob Price.

"We're trying to get them to honor the law," Cook said.

If HUD does allow the housing authority to tear down Jacob Price, the housing authority will have a year from the approval date to begin demolition, Simon said.

Simon said the agency wants to tear down Jacob Price in four phases, allowing enough time to rehab rental apartments and multi-family houses throughout Covington to house residents as they are displaced. The housing authority would offer rehabbers federal tax credits to participate.

And what would be done with the Jacob Price site?

"We haven't arrived at any decision at this point in time," Simon said.