

Spillover investment pegged at \$45 million

The large grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will go primarily to renovate 318 units of affordable housing on Reading Road and wrap social supports around the people living there.

Federal officials expect the grant to spur an additional \$45 million in private and local government investment in Avondale.

Among the five affordable housing complexes slated for overhaul by the Community Builders, two - the Poinciana at 3522 Reading Road and Somerset Manor, 802-814 Blair Ave. - rank among the city's most notorious addresses. Firefighters and police don't even like going in.

"Our message to the residents in those five buildings is, 'You are the change,'" Davis said.

Those five properties aren't the only housing changes coming to Avondale.

The Community Builders has its sights set on some vacant land at Burnet and Rockdale avenues for new housing. Planners envision market-rate housing that attracts employees of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and University of Cincinnati Medical Center, major employers within walking distance.

De'Angelo Boynton, 43, owns Stag's Barbershop and Beauty Salon on Burnet, directly across from the lots where new housing would rise.

"New business," said Boynton, an Avondale resident, father of five and founder 10 years ago of the Avondale Angels youth sports program. On April 1, he will open Stag's Day Spa next door to the barbershop.

"People here are talking about how Avondale is like a puzzle where the pieces are coming back together," he said. "A while back, people would have written off Avondale because of the crime and the (abandoned) buildings."

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