

June 6, 2024

To: Markiea Carter, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development

From: Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director, Department of City Planning & Engagement

Subject: Community Engagement Meeting Summary – Blair Lofts II Housing Development

On Monday, June 3rd, 2024, the Department of City Planning & Engagement (DCPE) hosted a community engagement meeting regarding the proposed use of Tax Increment Financing funds (TIF) for the Blair Lofts II housing development. The subject properties include 548 Blair Avenue (107-0008-123-00) and 588 Blair Avenue (107-0008-150-00) in Avondale.

Mailed notices were sent to property owners within 400-feet of the subject properties and the Avondale Community Council. The DCPE Community Engagement Specialist posted a physical notice in the form of a yard sign on the subject properties and notices were emailed to seven local churches near the impacted areas to notify additional community members. Yard signs and flyers included a link to the DCPE website where additional information about the proposed project could be found: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/community-engagement/upcoming-community-engagement-meetings/proposed-tif-funds-for-the-blair-lofts-phase-ii-in-avondale/>. Several social media posts were also posted on DCPE's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The meeting was conducted virtually on Zoom at 5:00 p.m. Staff from DCPE and the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) were present. The facilitation of the meeting was carried out by Community Engagement Specialists in DCPE.

A total of eight community members attended the meeting. All attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions of DCED staff and the applicant. For detailed questions and concerns raised during the meeting, please refer to Attachment 1, labeled as Additional Information. Additionally, the PowerPoint presentation used during the meeting is included as Attachment 2 and the items submitted by community members in Attachment 3.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Additional Information
- Attachment 2: PowerPoint Presentation
- Attachment 3: Materials Submitted from the Community Engagement Meeting

Proposed use of TIF Funds for the Blair Lofts II Housing Development

This document outlines information shared during the community engagement meeting held on Monday, June 3, 2024, and comments received through written submission. This document is intended as a summary and not as meeting minutes.

Background

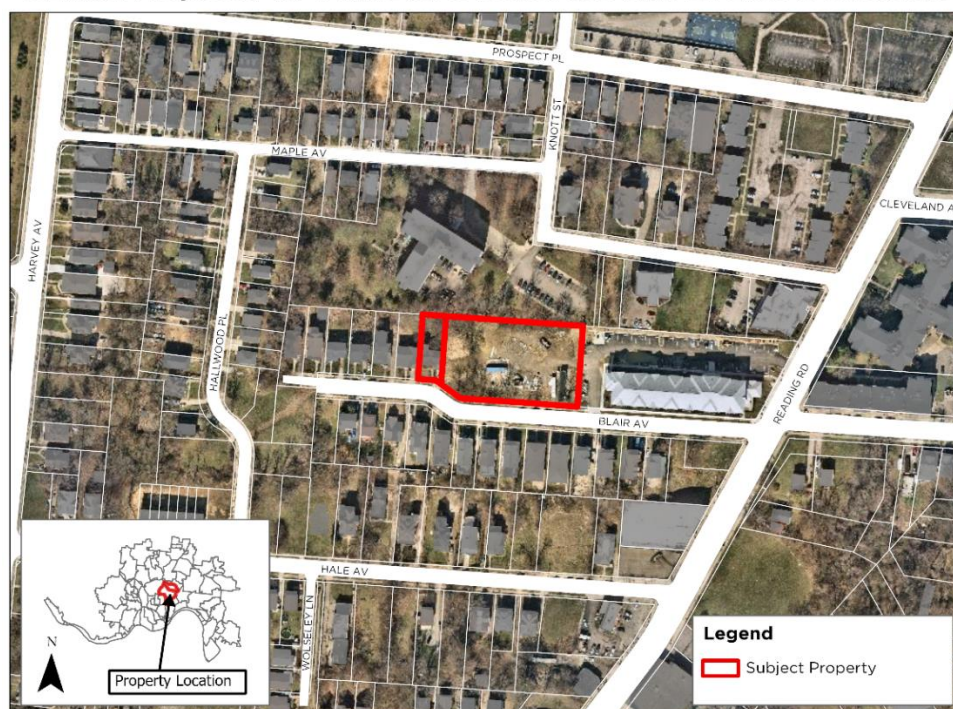
Blair Lofts Phase II is a proposed new construction, affordable housing development in the Avondale neighborhood. The project will create 48 affordable housing units located on a 24-hour bus route within a 1/2 mile of the Avondale Town Center and a short distance from major institutions such as the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

The project will create a mix of units serving various area median income (AMI) levels. The project will consist of one-, two, and three-bedroom units targeting households between 30-80% AMI. Rents range from \$522 - \$1,506 for a one bedroom, \$622-\$1,802 for a two-bedroom, and \$715- \$2,078 for a three-bedroom. The developer intends to start construction in late summer/early fall of 2024. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$15.4 million, with construction costs at approximately \$10 million. Construction is projected to take approximately 14 months. The project is estimated to support the creation of 100 temporary construction jobs with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$6.5 million and 2 full-time permanent jobs with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$120,000.

Blair Lofts Phase II is being developed by Kingsley + Co. and the Avondale Development Corporation. Kingsley + Co. has developed more than \$100 million in real estate, including properties in Cincinnati and Columbus, OH. The projects include a mix of market rate and affordable residential units, commercial real estate, and a parking garage.

Location and Existing Site

CEM for Proposed TIF Funds for 548 and 588 Blair Avenue in Avondale



Engagement

The developer, Kingsley & Co., has presented the proposed Blair Lofts II plans to the Avondale Community Council as a continuation of providing affordable housing in Avondale. With the success of Blair Lofts I, being 100% leased with a waiting list, the Avondale Community Council is confident Blair Lofts II will continue to fill the gap of affordable housing in Avondale. The Avondale Community Council has submitted a letter of support for Phase II of Blair Lofts.

Meeting Attendance

Six people requested the meeting link for the June 3, 2024 community engagement meeting with eight people in attendance. Demographic data was captured for three registrants using an online QR code to request the meeting link.

4. Please select an option below that best describes your preferred identity

[More Details](#)

Woman	2
Man	0
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	1



5. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or other Spanish ancestry?

[More Details](#)

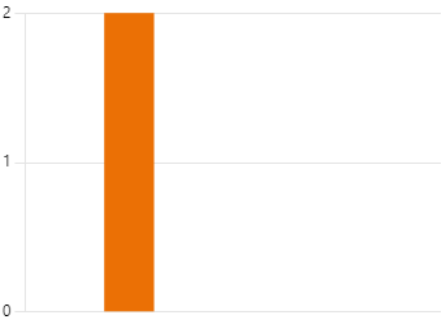
Yes	0
No	3



6. Which of the following best describe your race/ethnicity

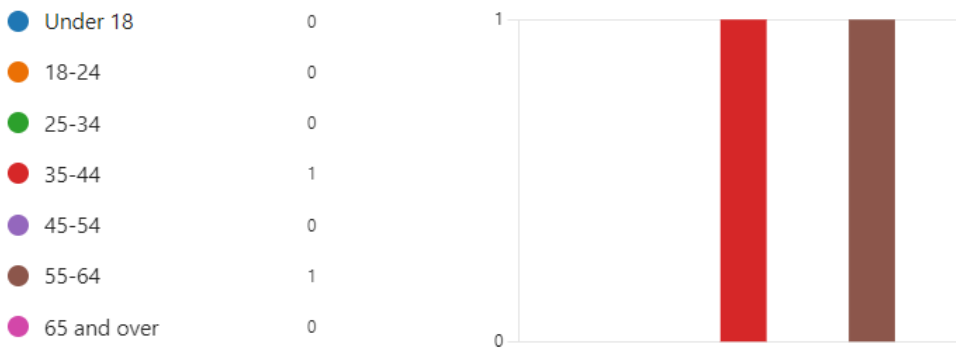
[More Details](#)

Asian	0
Black/African American	2
American Indian/Alaska ...	0
White/Caucasian	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific I...	0
Hispanic/Latinx	0



7. Please select the age range below that best describes your current age.

[More Details](#)



Questions and Answers:

- **Which way is the new building oriented and where is the access point going to be?**
There will be two entrances on Blair Avenue. They tried to utilize the Phase I Blair lofts parking lot for an exit on Reading Road, but the slope of the land made that difficult. The developer apologized for any disturbances caused by construction and stated they would continue to work with the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) and the community to address potential safety concerns.
- **Will the existing house next to the proposed building be demolished?**
The vacant house will be demolished, and the land will be part of the project.
- **Is there anything for the children to do on the property? Basketball court, etc.?**
The developer stated that there are no plans for such assets on site, but shared their partnership with Cincinnati Children's Hospital to provide resources to residents for recreation opportunities. They also referenced the newly renovated park in proximity of the property.

Concerns:

- Dissatisfied with construction cleanup/remaining debris from the Blair Lofts Phase I development.
- Flow of traffic on Blair Avenue as it is a dead-end street.

Additional Comments:

- Very supportive; this is an opportunity to grow Avondale and make sure residents have a nice, safe place to live.
- The project is in alignment with the *Avondale Quality of Life Plan*.
- Blair Lofts Phase I has a waiting list and this phase is an example of how development works with the community to support the residents.
- Desire to engage with the youth to see why they don't feel comfortable going further down the street to the park.

Welcome & Housekeeping

- Please remain muted. City staff will unmute during the open feedback portion of the meeting.
- Chat Bar
 - Use the chat bar for tech-related issues or questions
 - Do not use the chat bar to ask project-specific questions

Purpose of Meeting

This is a public meeting to discuss the proposed use of TIF funds for the development of Blair Lofts II in Avondale.

- Eunique Avery is here to facilitate the meeting
- Emily Burns is here to capture notes/comments brought up during the meeting
- Nyemah Stark from the Department of Community and Economic Development is here to answer any TIF related questions.
- Avondale Development Corporation and Kingsley + Co are here to answer any project related questions.

No decisions are being made at this meeting

Avondale Blair Lofts II

Community Engagement Meeting | June 3rd, 2024

Welcome & Housekeeping

1. Welcome & Housekeeping
2. Brief presentation
3. Question & Answer
 - Please save all questions/comments until Q&A
 - Staff will unmute each participant one at a time
 - You may use "raise hand" function in the chat bar if you have a follow-up question



Eunique Avery- Community Engagement Specialist

Presentation

KINGSLEY + CO.
Building to **INSPIRE**.™

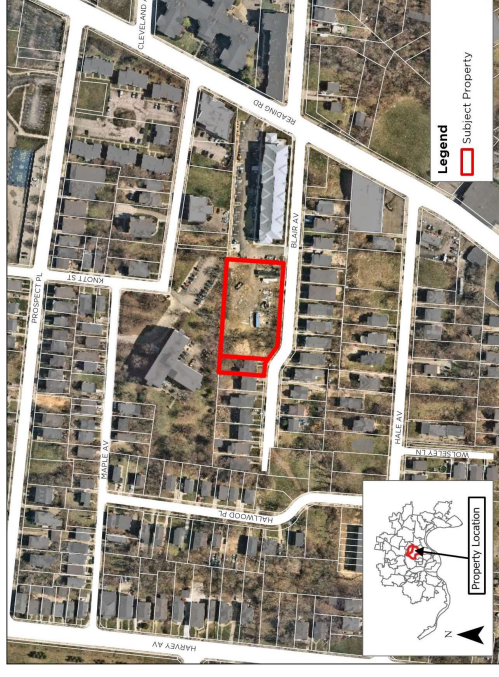
Q&A

Reminder

Everyone will be unmuted one-at-a-time. Due to the number of speakers, please limit your time to two (2) minutes. There will be time at the end for any questions/concerns that were not addressed

- Use “raise hand” function if you have a follow-up question following your initial question
- Do not use the chat bar for project-related questions (tech issues only)

CEM for Proposed TIF Funds for 548 and 588 Blair Avenue in Avondale



Background

Blair Lofts Phase II is a proposed new construction, affordable housing development in the Avondale neighborhood. The project will create 48 affordable housing units located on a 24-hour bus route within a 1/2 mile of the Avondale Town Center and a short distance from major institutions such as the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The project will create a mix of units serving various area median income (AMI) levels. The project will consist of one-, two, and three-bedroom units targeting households between 30-80% AMI. Rents range from \$522 - \$1,506 for a one bedroom, \$622-\$1,802 for a two-bedroom, and \$715-\$2,078 for a three-bedroom. The developer intends to start construction in late summer/early fall of 2024. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$15.4 million, with construction costs at approximately \$10 million. Construction is projected to take approximately 14 months. The project is estimated to support the creation of 100 temporary construction jobs with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$6.5 million and 2 full-time permanent jobs with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$120,000.

Contact

Department of City Planning & Engagement

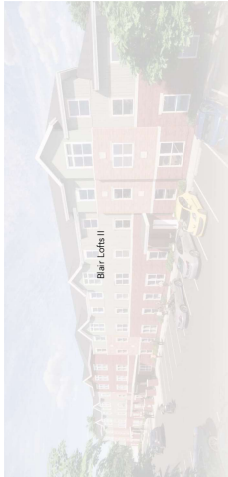
Eunique Avery, Community Engagement Specialist

eunique.avery@cincinnati-oh.gov

*Written comment must be submitted by 5pm on Wednesday, June 5th
for inclusion in the public engagement summary.*

Thank you for coming!



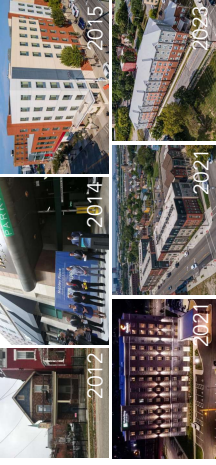


588 Bar Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45229
48 units consisting of the first and second floors with accessible units on the second floor. The building features a fitness center, on-site management, and secured building access.

Blair Lofts II Community Engagement Timeline

- 11/07/2023: Kingsley + Co. presented in front of the Avondale Community Council
- 11/21/2023: Kingsley + Co. presented in front of the Avondale Community Council general body
- 11/28/2023: Kingsley + Co. received letter of support from Avondale Community Council

Capacity + Experience



Tower Place Mill Conversion

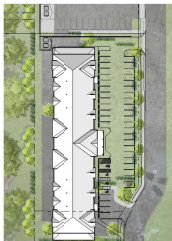
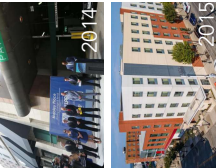
Converted a vacant industrial building into a mixed-use retail and 775 space parking garage

Total Project: 7.5 Million

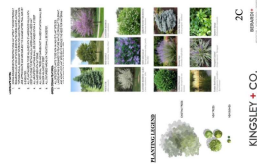
Marriott Hotel, Fairfield Inn & Suites at U. Square
Negotiated purchase and sale agreement with University of Cincinnati and Towne Properties to successfully acquire land and build a 150-room hotel

Total Project: 13.5 Million

Blair Lofts II



LANDSCAPE PLAN 1"=60'0"



Comfort Mainstay Suites

Secured hotel flag to build a 113-room Comfort Mainstay Suites
Negotiated purchase and sale agreement of site and facilitated capital stock for the project

Total Project: 17 Million



Adelphi Quarter
Secured master lease for apartment use, site parcel near K&R Food Theatre in Columbus, Ohio
Proposed mixed-use development includes market-rate apartments and retail.

Total Project: 18 Million

Blair Lofts Phase I

Located and negotiated purchase for site to build a 64-unit affordable housing development in Avondale
Awarded \$1 million in 10-year federal housing tax credits from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency

Total Project: 18.8 Million



Victory Vistas
50-unit senior affordable housing development in Paducah Hills broke ground fall 2023
Awarded \$1 million in 10-year federal housing tax credits from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency
Scheduled to open fall 2024

Partnerships





SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PLAN

Blair Lofts I, Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

Blair Lofts is a 64-unit, new construction project, developed by Kingsley + Co. in partnership with Fairfield Homes and Avondale Development Corporation as a co-developer, located in Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio. The community is comprised of 22 one-bedroom, 31 two-bedroom, 11 three-bedroom units. The units are set-aside for families with incomes at or below 60% of the area median income.

Avondale Development Corporation (ADC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2011 to help improve the quality of life for residents of Avondale, the largest African American neighborhood in Cincinnati. ADC directs the revitalization of Avondale by developing housing, real estate, and economic initiatives while working collaboratively with residents and partners to address priorities that promote the well-being of Avondale residents as recommended in the [Avondale Quality of Life Plan](#). ADC works with the area's leading businesses and organizations to create jobs and economic opportunities for Avondale residents, and lead organizing, engagement, and advocacy efforts to foster a community of neighbors who know each other and work together for common goals.

Matching funds have been made available via support from Fifth Third Bank and the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCIC) in amount of \$40,000.00. Our plans are to look at additional funding opportunities to sustain the program for 2-3 years. Although this supportive service plan has been agreed to in principle, we need to go back and review the specific components based on the number of participants in each program.

ADC recommends the following six components of supportive services to be provided on-site. These services should be managed by a Community Resource Navigator, who would be primarily responsible for connecting residents with the numerous programs and resources available in Avondale.

- Financial Literacy
- Employment Services
- College Access Programs
- Family Support & Resources for Better Living
- Early Childhood Education
- Community Engagement

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Avondale Development Corporation (ADC) will initiate the supportive services plan until a Community Resource Navigator (CRN) is identified/hired. ADC will initiate an individualized care management process that follows a series of phases for children and their families that have complex needs. ADC will assist in delivery of the services utilizing the following phases:

Phase 1 - Engagement & Preparation

ADC will work with Blair Lofts Property Management to formalize a resident association and determine intake procedures for the implementation strategy. ADC will provide an overview of the supportive service process.

Phase 2 – Initial Plan Development

Outline an initial plan identifying each family's strengths, needs, vision, strategies, and action steps to create each individual supportive service plan.

Phase 3 – Plan Implementation

ADC will establish a regular meeting scheduling to discuss milestones and assess if the supportive services plan is working to achieve each family's goals.

Phase 4 - Transition

As each family nears its goals, preparations are made by ADC to transition each family out of formal supportive assistance. Options that will help support the family to succeed outside of the formal supportive structure are brainstormed and a transition plan is developed.

ANNUAL BUDGET & TERM

Fairfield Homes, Avondale Development Corporation, Cincinnati Children's Hospital & Medical Center, and the Empowering Black Futures program (sponsored by Fifth Third Bank) will fund the Supportive Services Plan for Blair Lofts Phase I, for a three-year term.

Expenses	Costs (w/o CRN)
Community Resource Navigator Consultant (Part-time)	\$25,000.00*
Computers & Equipment (5 desktop computers; software)	\$20,000.00
Marketing & Print	\$15,000.00
Youth Education & Enrichment	\$15,000.00
Digital Skills Training	\$5,000.00
Financial Literacy services	\$10,000.00
Employment & Workforce services	\$15,000.00
Early Childhood Education & Daycare services	\$15,000.00
Transportations	\$10,000.00
Residents Association Supplies & Materials (furniture, refreshments, etc.)	\$15,000.00
Miscellaneous programming (ex. Wi-Fi/Digital Equity services)	\$20,000.00
Total Expenses =	\$140,000.00

**These funds still need to be identified*

TARGET POPULATIONS AND SERVICE NEEDS

The Blair Loft units are income-restricted between 30% and 60% AMI. The services identified as a need in the Avondale community, apart from continued affordable housing, include:

- Access to quality education
 - Early childhood
 - High School diploma
 - College Access and Career Readiness
- Financial Literacy
- Assistance and support for better living
- Affordable food/food security
- Employment and access to opportunities

Upon initial lease-up an individual evaluation and discussion will take place with the new residents to identify their unique service needs within the needs of the community. The service coordinator will then establish the best form of services for the population while continuously identifying and evaluating the effectiveness through resident outcomes, open-door resident feedback, and continuous communication with residents.

COMMUNICATIONS

ADC will provide a mailing and/or direct written communication to residents within Blair Lofts 66 residences. These meetings will also be advertised via flyers, and community engagement facilitated by ADC & Fairfield Homes property management.

The advertisements will also include:

- Information about public and community council meetings
- Updates from MOU partners
- Frequently asked questions existing supportive service opportunities.
- Text/SMS messaging: Alerts on supportive services and community engagement opportunities.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES DESIGN

Financial Literacy – Provided by Fifth Third Bank

- Budgeting, saving, and strategies to eliminate debt
- Assist in credit counseling and boosting your credit score
- Protecting your identity
- Basic estate planning
- Preparing for homeownership
- Health Savings accounts and college saving
- Investment and planning
- Performance Metrics:
 - # of residents complete financial literacy training opportunities.

Employment Services – Provided by Greater Cincinnati Urban League

- Employment and skills training
- Support to address barriers to employment
- Training for individuals aspiring to enter the healthcare industry.
- Training for individuals interested in construction careers
- Job placement
- Performance Metrics:
 - # of residents enrolled in trained in workforce training opportunities.
 - # of residents completing workforce training opportunities
 - # of new job placements

Community Engagement – Provided by Avondale Development Corporation

- Connect residents in your community leadership/councils
- Work with community partners and engage residents with other educational and recreational programs
- Assist in the development of a resident association
- Engage in residents in neighborhood safety, health and enrichment programming.
- Connect residents with trauma counseling services.
- Performance Metrics:
 - # of new members in the Avondale Community Council
 - # of residents completing community leadership trainings
 - # of resident participants in Blair Lofts resident association

College Access Programs – Provided by Cincinnati State Technical College

- Provide academic assistance and assessment
- Provide admission assistance
- Provide financial aid advising
- Provide career assessment
- Performance Metrics:
 - # of new students enrolled
 - # of students complete career assessments
 - # of students completing a program

Early Childhood Education – Provided by Wesley Education Services

- Provide education services for infants/toddlers
- Provide education services for pre-school and pre-kindergarten
- Nutritional services
- Family support services
- Performance Metrics:
 - # of infants/toddlers enrolled
 - # of parents supported

Family Support & Resources for Better Living – Provided by Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency

- Assist in connection to mobile and community food pantries
- Home energy assistance
- Rental and eviction prevention assistance
- Utility bill assistance
- Multilevel IT training
- Performance Metrics
 - # of residents supported with rental/eviction prevention or utility bill assistance
 - # of residents supported by food pantries
 - # of residents completing IT training

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Hairston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Russell Hairston
Executive Director
Avondale Development Corporation

May 31, 2024

Avondale Development Corporation
3635 Reading Road #200, Cincinnati, Ohio 45229

Subject: Letter of Support: Blair Lofts Phase II

Dear Members of the Cincinnati Planning Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the Avondale Development Corporation (ADC) to express our strong support for the proposed zone change for 548-588 Blair Avenue, developed by Kingsley & Co. This project represents Phase II of a LIHTC multi-family development, which was presented to the Avondale Community Council on November 7th & 21st, 2023.

The preliminary plan for this development includes 44 one, two, and three-bedroom apartments in a walk-up style construction, complemented by 65 parking spaces. This project aligns with our community's vision for growth and revitalization, providing much-needed affordable housing options for residents in Avondale.

We believe that the addition of these apartments will greatly benefit the neighborhood by offering diverse housing opportunities and contributing to the overall economic and social vitality of Avondale. The thoughtful design and adequate parking provisions further demonstrate the developer's commitment to addressing the needs of our community.

The Avondale Development Corporation fully supports this zone change request and looks forward to the positive impact this development will bring to our neighborhood. We urge the Cincinnati Planning Commission to approve the zone change for 548-588 Blair Avenue, facilitating the continued growth and improvement of Avondale.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Russell Hairston
Executive Director
Avondale Development Corporation

Blair Lofts

Proposal of Community Outreach for Blair Lofts Phase II

Updated 5/1/24

Community Outreach Plan

The following is a summary of organizations, partners and broad engagement strategies to be implemented as we create awareness and engagement regarding the plans for new construction according to the Blair Lofts specified geography.

The Avondale Development Corporation will provide digital communications to the following community forums, meetings and boards as follows:

- Avondale Community Council Board (ACC), General Body, and Avondale Business Association
- Avondale Development Corporation Board
- Rockdale Academy leadership
- South Avondale Elementary leadership
- Local Safety Officials
 - Cincinnati Police Department – District #4
 - Cincinnati Fire Department
- Local Nonprofits
 - Urban League of Southwest Ohio & Greater Cincinnati
 - Cincinnati Children’s Hospital & Medical Center
 - UC Health
 - Cincinnati Zoo
 - Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Cincinnati
 - The Community Builders, Inc.
 - Cincinnati Recreation Commission & Hirsch Recreation Center
 - Uptown Consortium, Inc.

Community Meetings

ADC engaged the ACC Board on Tuesday November 7, 2023; and the ACC General Body on Tuesday November 21, 2023, on the details of a Phase II of a LIHTC multi-family development their firm is pursuing at 548-588 Blair Avenue. The Avondale Community Council fully supports the intended use and strongly believes additional residents will have a positive impact on our community.

The Avondale Council voted in support of a zone map amendment for this project. The project has been submitted to the City for Coordinated Site Review with specific request for a zone change that would allow for Multi-Family Development on the site. The ACC requests the Planning Commission and City Council vote to approve this transformative development. Kingsley has agreed to Avondale Community Council’s request to expand their community engagement with the Avondale Development Corporation to include current residents

on Blair Avenue and surrounding areas impacted by the development. We are pleased to have Kingsley & Co. working with us to improve our community. Contact us if you need additional information.

Additional community meetings will be organized as requested by residents and/or the Avondale Community Council.

Marketing

ADC will provide a mailing and/or direct written communication to property owners and residents within defined Avondale Blair Lofts II geography. This information will also be advertised via flyers, social media, public announcements, and community engagement facilitated by ADC.

Website: www.growavondale.org/blair-lofts is live development updates and open questionnaire to collect resident feedback.

Flyers:

- Information about the potential community meetings will be posted on Inside Avondale Facebook and X channels.
- Street outreach to residents on Blair Avenue with flyer for community meeting.
- Information about the community meeting will be shared via Inside Avondale e-newsletter, to our 1675 resident subscribers.

Social media: Information about construction, information sessions, community investment, employment opportunities, etc. will be published via Avondale Facebook (www.facebook.com/insideavondale) and X/Twitter (www.twitter.com/insideavondale) channels. This also offers additional Avondale residents and stakeholders, not already included in the redevelopment process, a chance to provide comments and suggestions.

Marketing Materials (Example)



BLAIR LOFTS

This is a public meeting to discuss the proposed use of Avondale TIF District funds for the Blair Lofts Phase II project and for staff to obtain community feedback about the project.

Contact Patrick Cartier at pcartier@growavondale.org or visit www.growavondale.org/blair-lofts for more information.

JOIN OUR VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING
ADD URL

  **KINGSLEY + CO.** 

Avondale Community Council
Vision.Plan.Implement.Impact

3635 Reading Road Suite 100 Cincinnati, OH 45229 513.281.5999
avondalecouncil5@gmail.com www.avondalecommunitycouncil.org

Byron Stallworth
Chair Planning Commission
City of Cincinnati
Two Centennial Plaza
805 Central Avenue, Seventh Floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

RE: Avondale support for Zone Change 548-588 Blair Avenue

Dear Mr. Stallworth,

Kingsley & Co. presented the details of a Phase II of a LIHTC multi-family development their firm is pursuing at 548-588 Blair Avenue during Avondale Community Council Board Meeting on September 1, 2020. The preliminary plan includes 44 one, two and three bedroom apartments in a walk-up style construction with 65 parking spaces. The Avondale Community Council fully supports the intended use and strongly believes additional residents will have a positive impact on our community.

The Avondale Council voted in support of a zone map amendment for this project. The project has been submitted to the City for Coordinated Site Review with specific request for a zone change that would allow for Multi-Family Development on the site. The ACC requests the Planning Commission and City Council vote to approve this transformative development. Kingsley has agreed to Avondale Community Council's request to expand their community engagement with the Avondale Development Corporation to include current residents on Blair Avenue and surrounding areas impacted by the development. We are pleased to have Kingsley & Co. working with us to improve our community. Contact us if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



Sandra Jones

President
Avondale Community Council