

February 27, 2024

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

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

Subject: Community Engagement Meeting Summary – "The Bridge" Mixed Income Housing

On Monday, February 5th, 2024 the Department of City Planning & Engagement hosted a community engagement meeting regarding the proposed use of TIF financing for "The Bridge" Mixed Income Housing. The areas impacted by the plan include 1740 Brewster Avenue (058-0004-0044-00), 3570 Montgomery Road (058-0004-0102-00), and 3604-3608 Montgomery Road (058-0004-0024-00) all located in Evanston.

Mailed notices were sent to 77 property owners within the impacted area and the respective Community Council. The Department of City Planning and Engagement (DCPE) Community Engagement Specialist posted a physical notice in the form of a yard sign near the proposed sites and flyers were posted throughout parts of the impacted areas to notify additional community members. Yard signs and flyers included a link to the Planning website where additional information about the proposed project could be found: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/community-engagement/past-community-engagement-meetings/proposed-tif-funds-for-the-bridge-in-evanston/>. Several social media posts were posted on the Department of City Planning and Engagement's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The meeting was conducted virtually on Zoom at 6:00 p.m. Staff from the Department of City Planning & Engagement 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 nineteen community members attended the meeting. All attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions to DCED staff and the applicant. For detailed questions and concerns raised during the meeting, please refer to Attachment 1, labeled as Additional Information. Additionally, you can find the PowerPoint presentation used during the meeting and the items submitted by community members in Attachment 2.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Additional Information
- Attachment 2: PowerPoint Presentation and submitted materials from the Community Engagement Meeting

Proposed use of TIF financing for “The Bridge” Mixed Income Housing

This document outlines information shared during the public engagement meeting on Monday, February 5th, 2024, and questions received through written comment. This document is intended as a summary and not as meeting minutes.

Background Info:

“The Bridge” represents the proposed redevelopment of three (3) historic buildings within both the Evanston Business District and the recently designated Evanston National Historic District. The subject properties consist of 1740 Brewster Avenue, 3570 Montgomery Road, and 3604-3608 Montgomery Road.

Between 2015 and 2019, the Hamilton County Landbank and Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, with the support of the Evanston Community Council, purchased and stabilized the subject properties. At that time, acquisition and stabilization funding was provided by the City of Cincinnati.

In 2019, the Hamilton County Landbank and the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation issued an Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking proposals from developers for the redevelopment of the site, and ultimately selected 8K Development Company, LLC to serve as the project developer.

The project will produce 27 mixed-income, affordable residential units. It will consist of six (6) studio apartments, eight (8) one-bedroom apartments, eleven (11) two-bedroom apartments, and two (2) three-bedroom apartments. All 27 units are proposed to have rents that will not exceed what is affordable to 60%-80% of the Average Median Income (AMI), and residential rents will range from \$1,003 to \$1,600 per month.

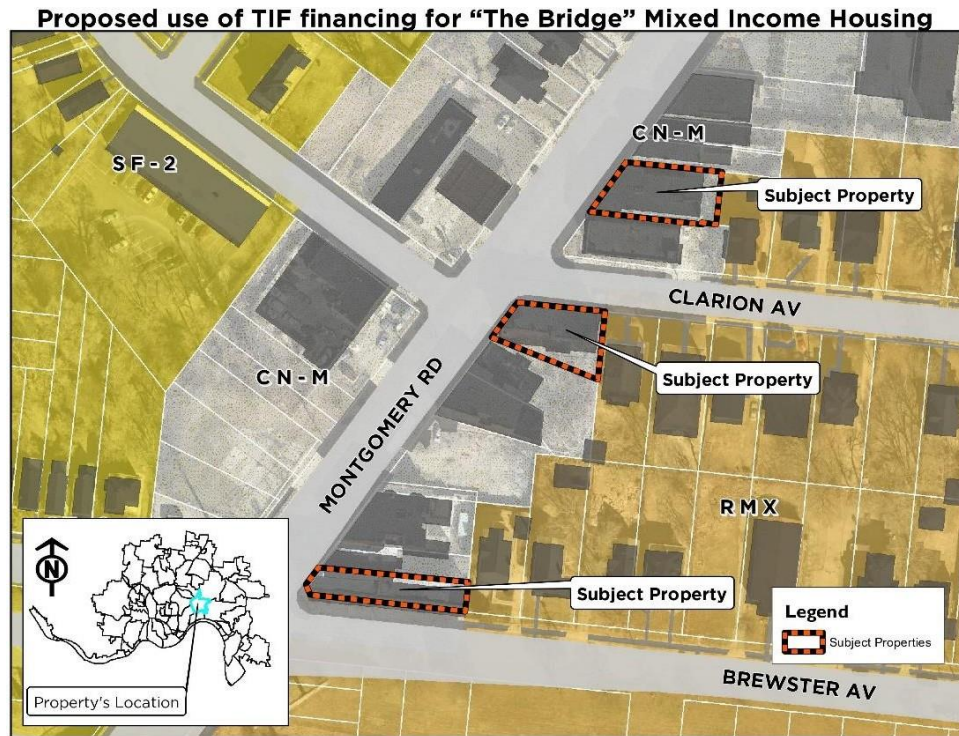
The project includes approximately 6,319 square feet of commercial space. The one currently occupied commercial space will be improved, and four (4) new commercial spaces will be produced.

The total project cost is projected to be approximately \$8.5M, with construction costs at approximately \$6.9M. The project is estimated to take 18 months to complete and is projected to support the creation of 28 temporary construction jobs with a total annual payroll of approximately \$2M and 18 full-time, permanent jobs with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$561,000. The developer intends to begin construction in Spring 2024.

The project was awarded \$1M in Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) funding by the City in 2022. In addition, the Department of Community and Economic Development is proposing a 15-year, net 67% Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax exemption in addition to up to \$800,000 in direct financial assistance from the Evanston Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District. Approximately \$350,000 would come from the affordable set-a-side and the remaining balance from the base TIF. This would be contingent on community support and a funding award from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) via Cincinnati Development Fund.

Location and Existing Site:

The subject properties consist of 1740 Brewster Avenue (058-0004-0044-00), 3570 Montgomery Road (058-0004-0102-00), and 3604-3608 Montgomery Road (058-0004-0024-00). These properties are adjacent to a 24-hour bus route and are within both the Evanston Business District and the recently designated Evanston National Historic District.



Engagement:

The project received a letter of support from the Evanston Community Council in 2021 and 2022. 8k held multiple community input sessions during 2022, attended multiple Evanston Business Association meetings, and created www.thebridgeevanston.com to collect community input.

The applicant will be presenting the project again to the Evanston Community Council in January 2024 to request support and solicit additional input and feedback.

Notice:

The Department of City Planning and Engagement sent out notices to 77 property owners within the impacted area. Several social media posts were posted on the Department of City Planning and Engagements Facebook and Twitter. One Community Engagement meeting yard sign was placed near the proposed site and a Community Engagement Specialist posted flyers throughout parts of the impacted areas to notify additional community members.

Meeting requests and day of attendance:

22 people requested the meeting link for the February 5th, Community Engagement Meeting with 19 people in attendance. Demographic data was captured for 12 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](#)

[Insights](#)

Woman	4
Man	8
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	0



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

[More Details](#)

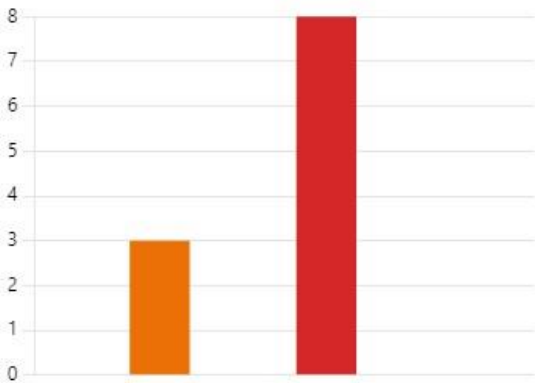
Yes	0
No	12



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

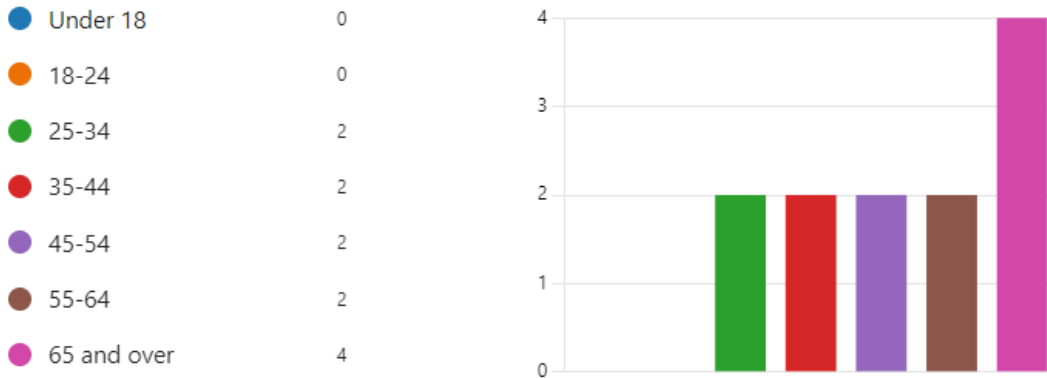
[More Details](#)

Asian	0
Black/African American	3
American Indian/Alaska ...	0
White/Caucasian	8
Native Hawaiian/Pacific I...	0
Hispanic/Latinx	0



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

[More Details](#)



Questions/Comments:

- **What does economic opportunity and inclusion look like for this project?**
- o **Answered by applicant:** Explained inclusion goals of the project both during and after construction.
- What will rent look like for Cream and Sugar after the 15 years is up.
- o **Answered by applicant:** Not arbitrary number – tied to tax abatement. Will reevaluate in 15 years.
- **Will minority contractors be used in the building process?**
- **Where will the parking spots be?**
- o **Answered by applicant.**
- **How much will this project deplete the Evanston TIF fund? How much would be available afterwards?**
- o **Answered by DCED:** Intent for Bridge to use entire amount set aside for affordable development in the Evanston TIF. Remainder will come out of general cash available. Information is also available on Cincy Insights.
- o **DCED follow-up:** \$1.8 million balance in Evanston TIF, \$1.4 available to use for projects, approx. \$400,000 must be used for affordable housing development (60% AMI or below) per City Council policy. (Double-check these numbers.)
- **What are the commercial spaces projected to rent for?**
- o **Answered by applicant:** Applicant is focused on making sure businesses help the community be healthy and viable. Because it's an affordable project, they don't need a certain rent to recover costs.
- **How much did the developer pay for the buildings themselves?**
- o **Answer:** Developer is currently acquiring the buildings. Planning to buy them for a total of \$85,000.
- **How much of a personal investment will the developers have in this project?**
- o **Answer:** \$700K equity line item

Attachment 1:

- **Were they able to achieve the 30% inclusion goal in their other projects?**
- o **Answer:** Developer doesn't always hit 30%. Officially, they are typically under. Unofficially, they hire minority businesses that are not certified.
- **Do they ever see what kind of expertise exists in a community before deciding to do work in the community?**
- o **Answer:** Developer created website with an opportunities tab that encourages community members to reach out and offer their services.
- **Has there been any conversation or thought about putting together a Community Benefits Agreement?**
- o **Answered by applicant:** Applicant has been engaged with community for 4 years, this is the first time an economic agreement has been brought up. Cited the existing financial gap in the project – an economic-based CBA would increase the gap

Other Comments:

Some community members expressed support for the project for the following reasons:

- Appreciation of how the project seems aligned with Connected Communities plan.
- The redevelopment of the three buildings will change the fabric of Evanston, which is the purpose of TIF funds. Thinks this is the highest and best use of TIF funds.
- In 2018, Evanston Community Council launched a work plan. This proposal is in line with the work plan. Put out RFP. Very supportive of developer's plan. Believes it will stabilize the neighborhood, reduce crime, fill office and retail spaces.
- **Herbert Hood On Evanston Community Council:** Wants to assist in the development from a public perspective. Sees the potential in the neighborhood as a main attraction to the city. Excited about having a developer interested in doing this, and he believes this is a great opportunity for Evanston. Supportive if things work out with the funding and asks developer to work with Evanston council to procure local minority contractors. Would like the community to be able to see "royalties" from the project (gives example of advertising).

There were concerns noted about the following:

- **Concerned about giving away the buildings for "dirt cheap."**
- o **Answered by representative from the Port:** Talked about how they tried to subsidize projects that would have a large financial gap. Trying to make real estate projects work that the normal private market would not work for. Haven't seen much interest in these properties from developers around the region so they are subsidizing the acquisition price.

Written Comments:

All written comments received are included as attachments.

"The Bridge" Mixed Income Housing in Evanston

Community Engagement Meeting | February 5th, 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

Welcome & Housekeeping

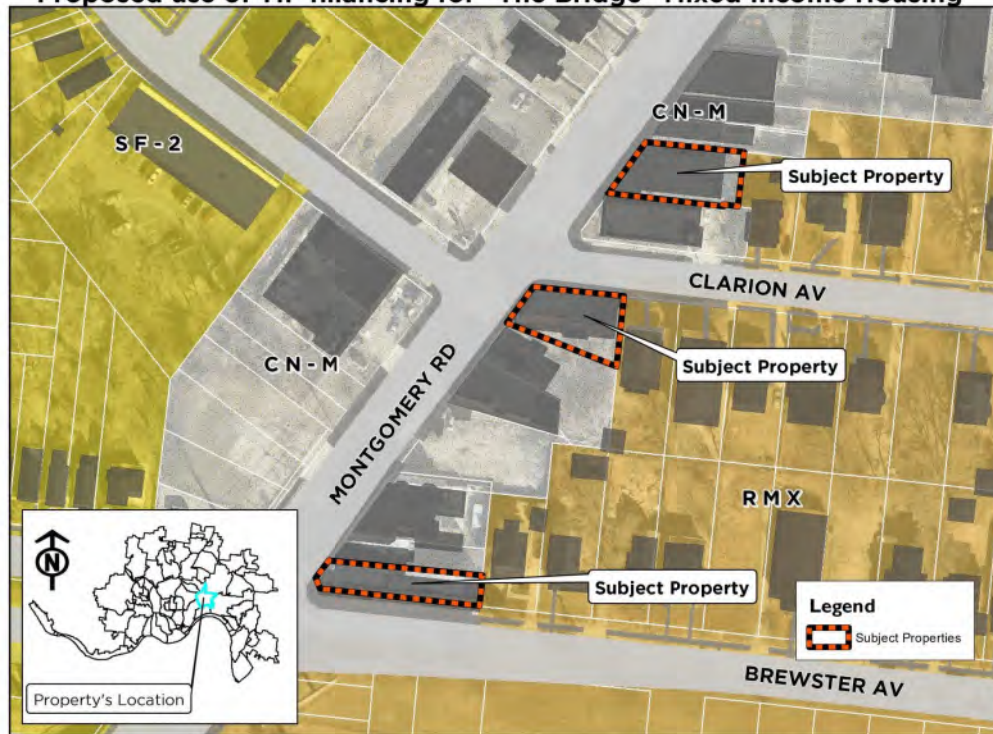
- Please remain muted. City staff will unmute during the open feedback portion of the meeting.
- Chat Bar
 - Use the chat bar for tech-related issues or questions
 - Do not use the chat bar to ask project-specific questions

Purpose of Meeting

This is a public meeting to discuss the proposed use of TIF financing for "The Bridge" mixed income housing.

- Eunique Avery is here to facilitate the meeting
- Morgan Rhae and Greg Koehler from the Department of Community and Economic Development is here to answer questions.
- Michael Chewning from 8K Constructions is here to present information regarding the proposed project and answer questions.
- **No decisions are being made at this meeting**

Proposed use of TIF financing for “The Bridge” Mixed Income Housing



Background

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The project will produce 27 mixed-income, affordable residential units. It will consist of six (6) studio apartments, eight (8) one-bedroom apartments, eleven (11) two-bedroom apartments, and two (2) three-bedroom apartments. All 27 units are proposed to have rents that will not exceed what is affordable to 60%-80% of the Average Median Income (AMI, and residential rents will range from \$1,003 to \$1,600 per month.

The project includes approximately 6,319 square feet of commercial space. The one currently occupied commercial space will be improved, and four (4) new commercial spaces will be produced.

Background

The total project cost is projected to be approximately \$8.5M, with construction costs at approximately \$6.9M. The project is estimated to take 18 months to complete and is projected to support the creation of 28 temporary construction jobs with a total annual payroll of approximately \$2M and 18 full-time, permanent jobs with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$561,000. The developer intends to begin construction in Spring 2024.

The project was awarded \$1M in Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) funding by the City in 2022. In addition, the Department of Community and Economic Development is proposing a 15-year, net 67% Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax exemption in addition to up to \$800,000 in direct financial assistance from the Evanston Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District.

Approximately \$350,000 would come from the affordable set-a-side and the remaining balance from the base TIF. This would be contingent on community support and a funding award from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) via Cincinnati Development Fund.

Presentation

8K Construction

Feedback

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)

Next Steps

Proposal would be sent to City Council Budget and Finance Committee.

At this time, there is no scheduled date for this item to be reviewed during the Budget & Finance Committee.

Contact

Department of City Planning & Engagement

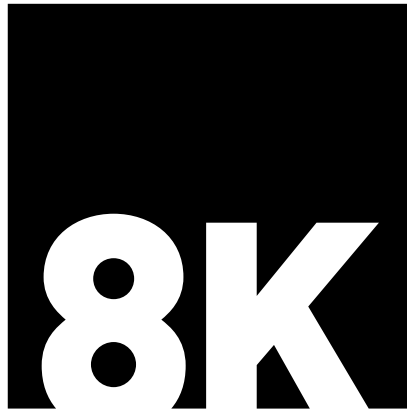
Eunique Avery, Community Engagement Specialist

eunique.avery@cincinnati-oh.gov

Written comment must be submitted by 9 a.m. on Wednesday, February 14th for inclusion in the public engagement summary.

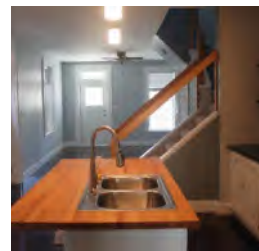
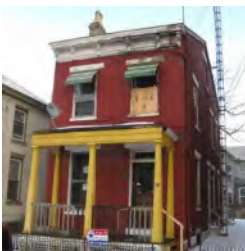


Thank you for coming!



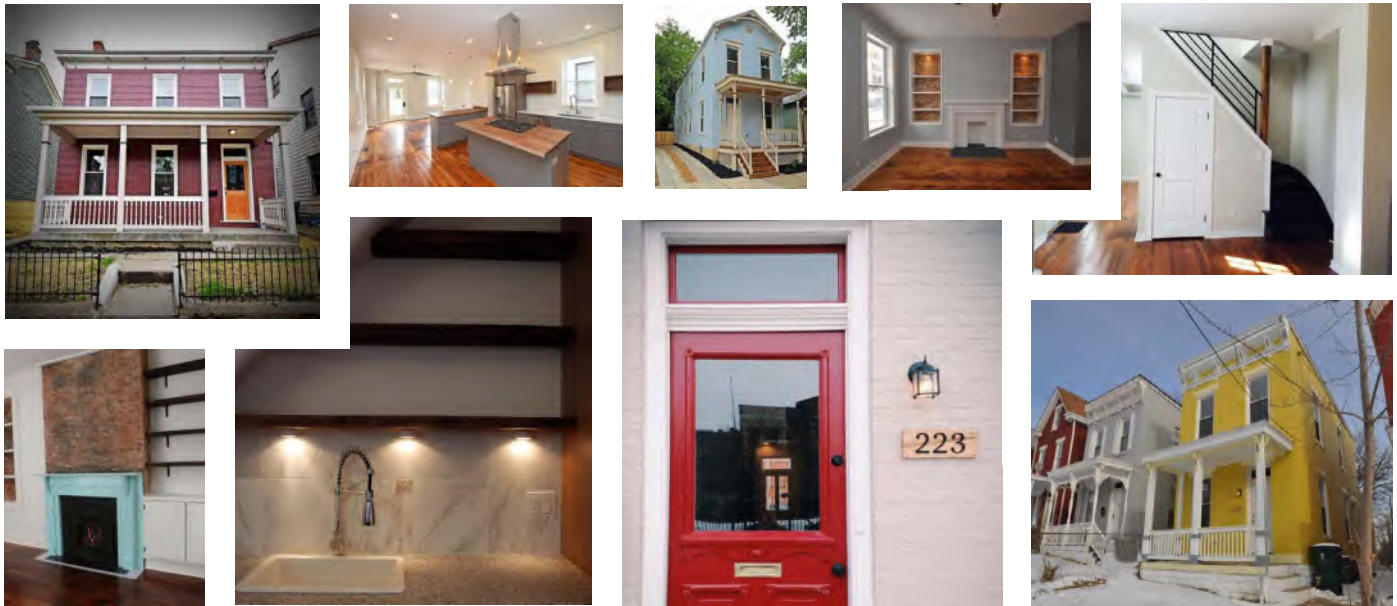
The Bridge

Capacity & Experience

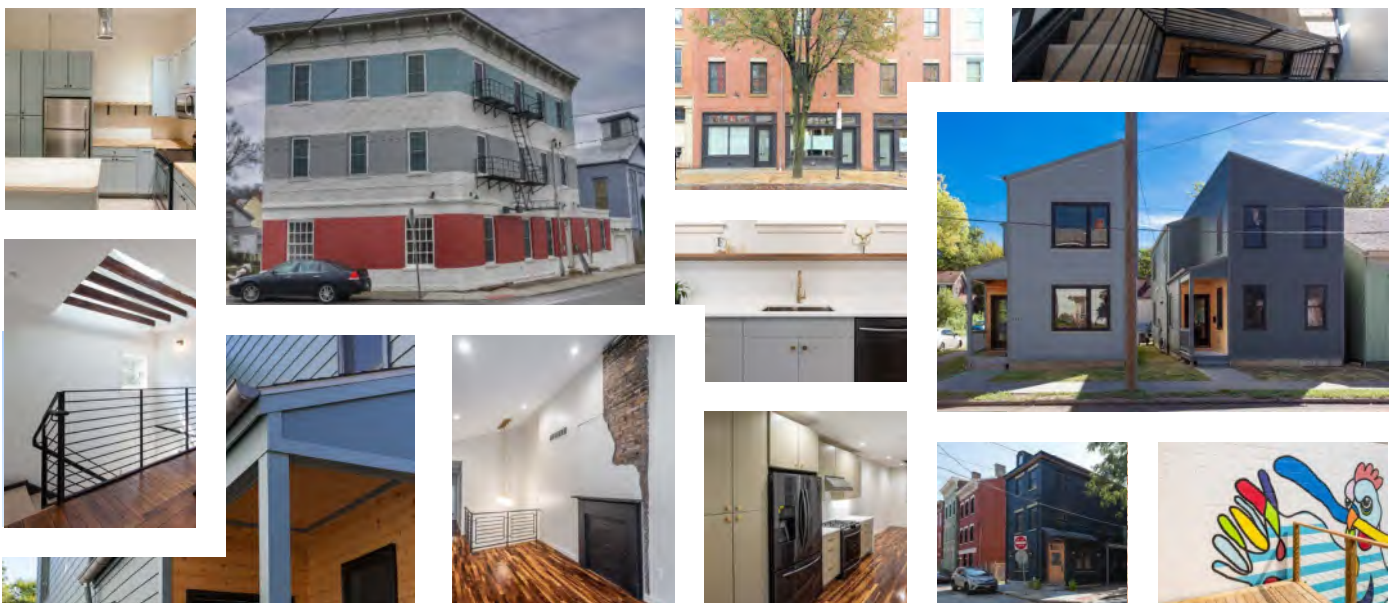


Since 2009

Capacity & Experience 2009 - 2016



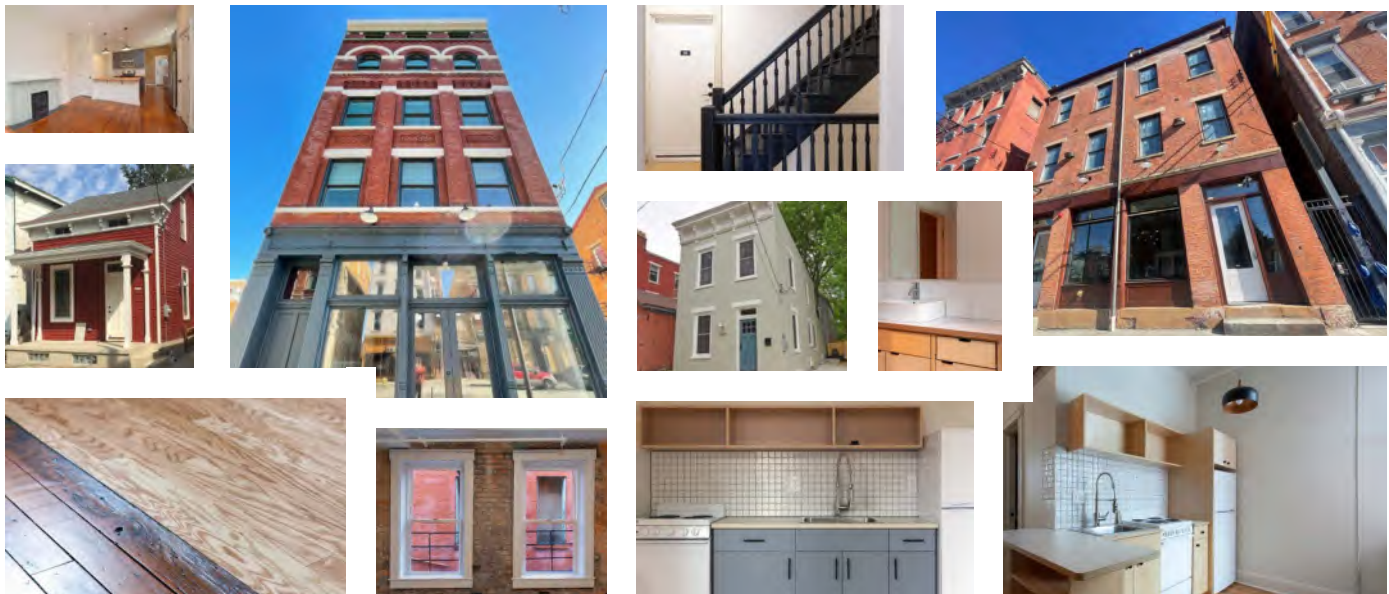
Capacity & Experience 2016 - 2023: Market-Rate Housing



Capacity & Experience 2016 - 2023: Commercial



Capacity & Experience 2016 - 2023: Affordable Housing



Capacity & Experience Partnerships



Capacity & Experience 2016 - 2023



26 Units (100% affordable)
Total Residential: 19,468 Sq Ft

5 Commercial Spaces
Total Commercial: 11,330 Sq Ft

71 Space Parking Lot

KeyMark
College Hill



8K

Capacity & Experience Beyond 2023



Glenway
West Price Hill



Phase 1:
2 Apartments
2 Commercial Spaces
30 Space Parking Lot

Phase 2:
TBD



8K

The Bridge Evanston

8K



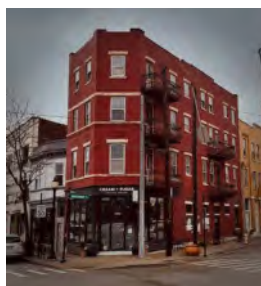
27 Units (100% affordable)
Total Residential: 27,300 Sq Ft

5 Commercial Spaces
Total Commercial: 7,400 Sq Ft

12 Space Parking Lot



 **THE PORT**
Making Real Estate Work



The Bridge is a Community Driven Project

8K

2016-2017

Evanston Community Council (ECC) was awarded \$200K from the city's NBDIP fund to acquire 1740 Brewster in order to save Community Blends and prevent further disrepair to the building.

2017-2018

3570 Montgomery (Perkins) donated the property to the Port, after the ECC called on them to save the property from demolition.

2017-2018

ECC was awarded \$236K from the city was used to fund stabilization efforts at all three project buildings.

2019

ECC approved the Evanston Work Plan 2019, which listed developing the Northern Business District as a priority.

2020

An RFP was issued requesting developers to submit proposals for redevelopment of the three properties. The selection committee, which was comprised of representatives from the ECC, chose 8K Development as project developer.



Community Engagement

2021

8K Development presented to the ECC and received a letter of support in May 2021

2022

8K Development re-engaged with the community and started the rubric/equitable development process in February 2022.

+ Held three community input sessions

- April 11th, 2022, cream + sugar

- April 18th, 2022, cream + sugar

- April 25th, 2022, ZOOM

+ Attended multiple Evanston Business Association meetings

+ Created thebridgeevanston.com to collect community input

2022

ECC provided 8K with a second letter of support in May 2022



Major Development Milestones

2021

Received ECC Letter of Support

2022

Created the Evanston Historic District

2022

Secured \$1M in city of Cincinnati NOFA funding

2023

Secured \$750K of State Historic Tax Credits

2023

Obtained all necessary building permits



Affordability As Established By HUD

Defined as when housing costs is no more than 30% of income

	Count of 60% units	Count of 80% units	60% Household income limit	80% Household income limit	60% Maximum Housing Costs (includes utilities)	80% Maximum Housing Costs (includes utilities)
Efficiency	6	0	\$42,280	\$56,373	\$1,062	\$1,416
1 Bedroom Units	8	0	\$42,280	\$56,373	\$1,137	\$1,516
2 Bedroom Units	9	2	\$48,540	\$64,720	\$1,365	\$1,820
3 Bedroom Units	1	1	\$54,600	\$72,800	\$1,577	\$2,102
Totals	24	3				

Project will be deed-restricted for a 15-year period

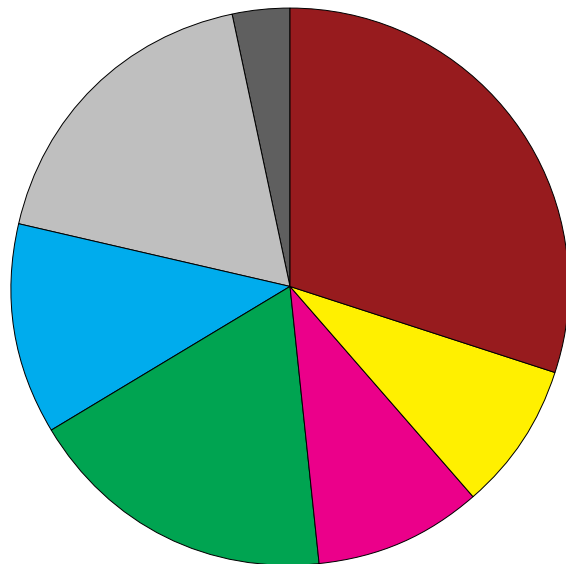


The Bridge New Commercial Units

	Units	Size	Move-in Ready
1740 Brewster	1	1,368 sf	Yes
3570 Montgomery	1	1,185 sf	Yes
3604-3608 Montgomery	2	2,078 sf	Yes

Cream and Sugar will be retained at their current rent for 15 years.

The Bridge Financing Plan



Total Project Cost - Approximately \$8.2MM

- Loan - \$2,450,000*
- ARPA - \$1,475,000
- HTC Equity - \$1,475,000
- NOFA - \$1,000,000
- Evanston TIF - \$800,000
- Developer Equity - \$700,000
- PORT Contribution - \$250,000

***67% 15-year Tax Abatement
Required to Service Debt**

The Bridge Construction Costs



**Total Construction Cost:
\$6,900,000**

**Cost per Square Foot:
\$205/SF**

Buildings require comprehensive gut-renovations

- All new MEPs and Life Safety
- All new flooring, framing and walls
- Restoration or replacement of all finishes & fixtures
- Exterior renovations include lighting, storefronts painting, new windows, masonry repair



Total Development Costs - Approximately \$1.3MM



Commercial Leasing: 8K will make direct marketing efforts to Mortar Cincinnati and the African American Chamber of commerce to help raise awareness of available commercial spaces.

Inclusion Goals: The project will have the goal of awarding subcontracts to small, minority and women-owned companies. We will have the following participation goals in all of our spending: **30% SBE, 25% MBE, 7% WBE**

- **Blight Elimination**
 - **Revitalization of Historic Evanston Business District**
 - **27 New Affordable Apartments**
 - **4 New Commercial Spaces**
 - **12 Public Parking Spaces**
 - **Retaining Cream + Sugar**
 - **Economic Opportunity + Inclusion**
 - **Execution of Evanston Work Plan**
-

**We are seeking support for the
current City requests of \$800,000 in TIF Funding
and the approval of a 67% 15-year CRA**

Thank You For Your Consideration!

Ms. Keough-Jurs
Director
City of Cincinnati | Department of City Planning and Engagement
Two Centennial Plaza
805 Central Avenue, Suite 720
Cincinnati, OH 45202

February 14, 2024

Dear Ms. Keough-Jurs and City Councilmembers:

I am writing to express my support for the use of TIF funding to support the renovation of 3 historic buildings in Evanston's North Business District by 8K. The "Bridge" Evanston represents the culmination of over 8 years of work by the Evanston Community Council, the Evanston Business Association, and many other partners including the Port and the Department of Community and Economic Development. The project is the result of truly community driven efforts to acquire and stabilize critical assets in Evanston's historic business district and bring life back to the business district. This project represents the opportunity to harness the recent investments of Cream and Sugar Coffee House, 316 Beauty Salon, Hood Estates LLC, and RESLV, and create a safe, walkable, neighborhood serving business district for both Evanston residents and visitors from throughout the area.

I had the pleasure of working with the Evanston Community Council and Business Association for almost 10 years in my former role at the Community Building Institute at Xavier University. I worked with the community, and their partners, to complete the Evanston Work Plan in 2019 and am confident that the "Bridge" is a critical opportunity for Evanston to achieve many of the goals set forth in their plan, including bringing small and minority businesses back to the community and adding diverse housing to maintain mixed-income Community. As Evanston faces strong housing market pressures this project represents a critical and possibly fleeting opportunity to preserve affordability in the community. Furthermore, this project aligns with the City's goals to increase mid-density or "Middle Housing" in our historic neighborhoods as called for by Connected Communities.

As a resident of College Hill, I have seen first-hand the work that 8K has completed as a part of the Keymark project, a project very similar to the Bridge, and the positive impact that their investment has made on the Hamilton Avenue business district. 8K's commitment to working with the community to find the right commercial tenants is a critical opportunity for Evanston. Like other current owners in Evanston's North Business District, I am confident in 8K's commitment to think critically about their commercial tenants and work with regional partners to identify small and minority owned businesses to fill the 5 store fronts in the Bridge.

I feel strongly that this project will directly contribute to improved walkability, safety, and quality of life in the North Business District and the broader Evanston community and ask for your support of the allocation of TIF funds to this effort.

Respectfully,

Emma Shirey-McNamara
513-478-6110 | Emmashirey9@gmail.com



February 9, 2024

City of Cincinnati
c/o Eunice Avery
Via email

Re: Support for TIF request for The Bridge

Cincinnati Preservation Association writes in support of the Bridge Project presented by 8K development in Evanston and their request for TIF funding to help with the funding for the project.

Since 2018 Cincinnati Preservation Association has had a Revolving Loan Fund which has helped support saving several buildings within the Greater Cincinnati Region. A unique model that we have created partners our funding with Cincinnati Development Fund to provide a first-out loan to be stacked with their loan to provide more funding and a better interest rate. The Bridge has received an allocation of \$70,000 from our Revolving Loan Fund to support the project.

Through evaluating the project, we have seen how tight the numbers are for this project, and fully support the TIF funding request. This project will be catalytic for the Evanston Business District and it is a major goal in the Evanston Work Plan to "Revive Evanston's Business District to preserve the rich culture and history of the community...." This project is doing exactly that through a very strong preservation project that is not only rehabilitating 3 buildings to put them into productive use but also is providing affordable housing options which is also a goal of the Evanston Work Plan.

This project represents how the community adopted a vision for the community, and then partners with the Port and 8K development are honoring that plan through the work to first create a National Register Historic District in the Evanston Business District and now the Bridge Project to bring a project that is bringing the vision to life.

Cincinnati Preservation Association is in full support of the request for TIF funding and encourages The City of Cincinnati to approve this request.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Beth Johnson".

Beth Johnson, AICP
Executive Director

Subject: Endorsement for The Bridge Project in Evanston, Ohio
Scott Thompson
RESLV, Founder
3600 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, OH 45207
scott@reslv.com
513-259-2381
2/2/2024

Eunique Avery, Community Engagement Specialist
Department of City Planning and Engagement
805 Central Avenue, Suite 720, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Eunique.Avery@cincinnati-oh.gov | 513-713-8982

Dear Eunique Avery,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for The Bridge Project, a transformative initiative that promises to usher in a new era of progress and prosperity in Evanston. I am the Founder of RESLV, located at 3600 Montgomery Road, our building sits between two of the buildings that will be renovated as part of the Bridge. I am inspired by the vision and commitment of The Bridge Project to revitalize our community.

My decision to invest in this neighborhood in 2021 was not taken lightly, and the prospect of breathing new life into blighted buildings surrounding RESLV is truly an exciting and pivotal moment for Evanston. I believe that The Bridge Project represents a beacon of hope, offering the potential to address critical issues facing our community, such as affordable housing, job creation, and overall economic development.

Affordable housing is a cornerstone of vibrant and inclusive communities. The Bridge Project's dedication to providing affordable housing options aligns perfectly with the pressing need for accessible living spaces in Evanston. By addressing this crucial aspect, The Bridge Project not only meets a fundamental human need but also fosters a sense of community and belonging.

Moreover, the project's commitment to job creation is commendable. In a time when economic stability is paramount, the prospect of new employment opportunities within our community is a welcome prospect. The Bridge Project's focus on creating jobs will undoubtedly contribute to the growth of local businesses and the overall economic health of Evanston.

As we stand at the cusp of change, The Bridge Project represents a catalyst for economic development. The investment in the old firehouse at 3600 Montgomery Road housed by RESLV is committed to doing our part to revitalize the entire area, attracting further investments,

businesses, and residents. This domino effect will hopefully create a positive cycle of growth that can uplift Evanston for generations to come.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse The Bridge Project and urge you to support this transformative initiative. Together, let us embrace the promise of affordable housing, job creation, and economic development, ensuring a brighter future for Evanston, Ohio. The time is now to build bridges to progress, and The Bridge Project is poised to be the architect of positive change in our beloved community.

Thank you for your dedication to Evanston's future. I look forward to witnessing the positive impact of The Bridge Project on our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ST' followed by a stylized flourish.

Scott Thompson