



"We Have
Tomorrow –
Bright Before
Us, Like A
Flame."

Langston Hughes

City of Lawrence

The Flame | September 2022

City donates nearly five acres of land for affordable housing

With donation, City has surpassed five-year affordable housing goal set in 2019

The City of Lawrence is donating 4.64 acres of city-owned land to Tenants to Homeowners, Inc. for use in developing affordable housing units. The land, located at the corner of K-10 highway and Bob Billings Parkway, is directly adjacent to a parcel of land that Tenants to Homeowners already owns.

With the donation, the City has now surpassed a five-year goal set in 2019 to fund the development of 200 new affordable housing units. Since 2019, the City has leveraged \$1.8 million in Affordable Housing Trust Funds for the development of 233 new affordable units.

"Affordable housing is one of our biggest priorities and we are thrilled to announce the progress we are making in this area," said Lea Roselyn, affordable housing administrator, City of Lawrence. "Our commitment to affordable housing is real, and we look forward to continuing this work with the help of our community partners."

Tenants to Homeowners plans to build 78 affordable housing units on the donated land and 44 units on the land they already owned, creating a total of 122 new affordable housing units – with 236 total bedrooms – on the combined parcel. Of the new units, they plan to have 110 rentals and 12 for ownership.

"Our goal is that anyone who sees this development will think of it not as affordable housing, but rather as a

well-designed community that serves people with different housing needs, of different generations, and with different income levels," said Rebecca Buford, executive director, Tenants to Homeowners. "Our community builds strength in our neighborhoods, and our best neighborhoods are robust and strong because they have a mixture of housing options that support a diverse population of people living within them."

One of the priorities of affordable housing initiatives in Lawrence has been ensuring there is scattered affordable

housing sites across the City. This new development at K-10 and Bob Billings Parkway will be the first large-scale affordable housing development in West Lawrence, which will increase neighborhood diversity and allow for greater housing and neighborhood choice for all residents regardless of income.

The 2022 appraised value of the donated land is \$374,430. Tenants to Homeowners plans to begin dirt work in 2023 with infrastructure and construction to occur in 2024-2025.



Pictured: Rebecca Buford, executive director of Tenants to Homeowners, Inc., in front of their completed affordable housing project at Beatnik Ct. The project created a new permanently affordable home and was funded through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in 2019.

East 23rd Street reconstruction and water main replacement

The City of Lawrence has started work on the East 23rd Street reconstruction and water main replacement project. This is a complete reconstruction of East 23rd St. from the Haskell Bridge to about 600 feet east of Anderson Rd.

The scope of the project includes new concrete pavement, curbs and gutters, storm sewer, traffic signals, and shared-use paths on both sides of 23rd St. It will also include improved transit facilities, an added signal for pedestrian crossings at Ponderosa Dr., and the replacement of three water mains.

The reconstruction is part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP includes any projects that involve needed repairs or improvements to the City's existing infrastructure (streets, parks, sewers, etc.) or the acquisition or construction of new infrastructure (fire stations, traffic signals, etc.).

To be part of the CIP, projects must have an estimated cost of \$100,000 or more and be useful for more than two years. Each year, a five-year CIP is adopted as part of the budget process.

The entire project is anticipated to be completed in December 2023 and, as many residents have noticed, it will have ongoing traffic impacts as work continues. To prepare our community for the work ahead, here is the current construction timeline.

Phase One

The first phase consists of a full closure of the eastbound lanes of 23rd St. This will move all two-way traffic to the westbound lanes of 23rd St.

Crews will maintain access to all properties, but left turns will only be allowed at the Haskell Ave. and Harper St. intersections.

The first phase is expected to conclude in January 2023.

Phase Two

The second phase will consist of a full closure of the westbound lanes of 23rd St. This will move all two-way traffic to the recently completed eastbound lanes of 23rd St.

Just like in phase one, crews will maintain access to all properties during the work, but left turns will only be allowed at the Haskell Ave. and Harper St. intersections.

The second and final phase is expected to conclude in December 2023.

End Result

At the end of this work, East 23rd St. will be a welcoming eastern entrance to our community with improvements to the bicycle, pedestrian and transit amenities as well as to access management, safety measures and the aesthetics of the area.

New bicycle and pedestrian amenities will include an eight-foot shared-use path from the Haskell Bridge to Harper St. and a 10-foot shared-use path from Harper St. to the eastern project limits.

New shelters and passenger-friendly amenities will be added to the existing Lawrence Transit stops at Haskell Ave., Ponderosa Dr., and Harper St.

Access management improvements refer to vehicle access points to destinations adjacent to 23rd St. This can include driveway spacing, which means having fewer driveways spaced further apart, and the addition of safe turning lanes to keep through-traffic flowing.

Finally, while East 23rd St. reconstruction is focused primarily on roadway and multi-modal accessibility and functionality, aesthetics is also an important component to updating the corridor. Aesthetic enhancements to this area will include improvements to signage and street lighting and adding low-maintenance native plants and more than 150 trees to medians and in the right-of-way.

The 23rd St. reconstruction project was planned with the input of our community, and the City is excited to ultimately reveal a newly designed corridor that meets the needs of Lawrence. Everyone's patience is appreciated as the work continues.

Donate to the Utility Assistance Program

The City of Lawrence created the Utility Assistance Program to be a resource to households who are behind on City utility payments and are experiencing financial hardship. The program is the first of its kind for the City of Lawrence, and it is supported entirely by donations from our community.

There is no set amount to donate, you can give as much or as little as you're able. If you are a Lawrence utility customer, donations can be made as monthly contributions added to your utility bill. One-time contributions are also an option.

To donate, fill out the online form at lawrenceks.org/utility-billing/donate. We appreciate any and all support!



Pictured: In August, the City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department joined River Rat to host a skate park open house at Centennial Park Skate Park. The kids in attendance had a great time learning the basics of how to ride a skateboard!

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We create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home.