

Housing seen as boost for Rosedale

Mark Wiebe, *The Kansas City Star*

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It has barbecue, a war memorial and scores of winding streets. But for years the Rosedale area of Kansas City, Kan., hasn't had a developer willing to invest millions of dollars to build scores of homes in a blighted area. Until now.

On Saturday morning, dignitaries including U.S. Rep. Dennis Moore and Mayor Carol Marinovich of the Unified Board of Commissioners of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., gathered to break ground on the first phase of a \$20 million development near KU Med and the 39th Street corridor. That phase, with 10 single-family homes, will serve as the gateway to the second phase – a development of 92 single-family homes and town homes called Mission Cliffs.

The second phase, atop a bluff between Mission Road and Rainbow Boulevard, is scheduled to begin next spring. When completed, it will be one of the largest urban-core housing developments in Kansas City, Kan.

"This is a lot of homes for that area," said John Harvey, executive director of City Vision Ministries, a nonprofit community development corporation that is tackling the project with Rosedale Development Association, another nonprofit organization, and Urban Coeur Development, a for-profit developer.

"Rosedale doesn't really have too many post-World War II subdivisions," Harvey said.

The 12 acre development site currently is a mix of woods, blight and empty dead-end streets that looks as if they were laid out years ago with hopes of attracting new homes.

Plans call for houses and town homes that will complement the neighborhood's surrounding architecture, complete with covered porches. The dwellings, built on small lots, will surround a triangular park. New roads, curbs, gutters and sewers will be built as part of the project.

"In the last five years, people have been dreaming, working and waiting for this day and wondering if it would become a reality," Moore said at the ceremony. "Today, it's becoming a reality."

The houses in the first phase will range in price from \$128,000 to \$142,000. The second phase will feature homes priced between \$150,000 and \$180,000.

The developers hope to give low- to moderate-income working families a shot at home ownership in a neighborhood that has a large percentage of rental housing. The Unified Governments will subsidize housing for those who qualify. Developers are also counting on attracting employees from KU Med, some of whom participated in a market study conducted by Rosedale Development two years ago. In April, the Unified Board of Commissioners approved the creation of a 25-acre TIF district for the project. That area has 53 houses in it, but only 11 houses are inside the boundaries of the 12-acre development site. Two of those are unoccupied.

Developers have said the families in the occupied houses would have to be relocated for the project to move forward. So far, they say, most of the families have supported the project.

Count Marjorie Harrill, 67, among them.

Harrill, who grew up in the neighborhood, will have to find new housing because of the project but she said she was happy about the development.

"The new housing is going to be really nice," Harrill said at the groundbreaking ceremony. "I'm thinking about moving into one."

Although the TIF process would allow the government to condemn the homes for the development, officials don't expect to have to do so.