

## **AL – BIRMINGHAM -- 'A GLORIOUS DAY FOR TITUSVILLE:' RESIDENTS CELEBRATE \$80 MILLION LOVEMAN VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT**

AL.com – 6/20/2016 – by Kelly Poe



Loveman village

The plan for the Loveman Village redevelopment includes tearing down the 500 high-density units in the Titusville neighborhood, shown here on Monday, June 20, 2016, and replacing them with lower density units.



The proposed master plan for the Loveland Village redevelopment. Courtesy HABD

When the Birmingham Housing Authority told a packed house Monday that it got the funding that will allow it to rebuild one of the oldest and largest public housing projects in the city, the room broke out in applause.

A packed house at the Loveman Village Community Center buzzed with residents waiting to hear details of how their home would be transformed from a high-density housing project to a modern, lower density community in Birmingham's Titusville neighborhood.

"This is just a glorious day for Loveman Village. It's a glorious day for Titusville. It's a glorious day for the city of Birmingham," said Cardell Davis, a commissioner of the Board of the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District. "The time has come: we are going to revitalize Loveman Village."

The 500 units in Loveman Village are stacked on top of each other, with little green space and their 61 years of age showing. Many windows are boarded up - but unlike other parts of the city where it's a sign of neglect, in Loveman Village, it's a sign of progress. The housing authority has stopped leasing these units as it prepares to demolish the barracks-style units in a \$79.6 million redevelopment.

All 500 units will be demolished, and 220 units will be built on site. The idea is that lower concentrations of poverty will lead to better outcomes for residents.

Jessica Wilburn, 29, grew up spending time in Loveman Village - her grandmother lived there - and now she lives there herself with her three children. She said the renovation is needed because the neighborhood has changed since she was a kid.

"I have three kids, and I don't feel comfortable with them playing at the park now, or if they do, I need to be there with them," Wilburn said.

She said she also hopes the community will work to sustain a safe neighborhood, and having a nicer place to live will help give people some pride in their neighborhood to do just that.

"I support it, and I also support us doing right by it," Wilburn said.

The federal Rental Assistance Demonstration, or RAD, is financing the project. The program allows housing authorities to mortgage its properties or use conventional private loans to finance redevelopments.

RAD requires replacing each unit, so the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District plans to add units to several existing sites, including 120 units off Sydney Drive in the Oxmoor Valley neighborhood. Some homeowners in the area have opposed adding more public housing.

Hollyhand Development of Northport is developing the project.