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## **Demolition makes way for new housing**

By Rick Yencer  
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The downtown "Mystery district" began to be cleared last week.

MUNCIE -- The downtown landscape continues to clear for new, affordable housing on the horizon. Demolition of the so-called 'mystery district' east of the Muncie YMCA began last week to build new affordable townhouses for senior citizens. The area consists of rundown apartment buildings and vacant homes. Meanwhile, demolition was recently finished on a portion of Munsyana Homes along South Madison Street, where single- and multi-family housing for low- and moderate-income people will be built. Flaherty & Collins, an Indianapolis real estate service, is developer for the proposed Howard Square senior project and Millennium Place, the successor to Munsyana.

Duane Miller, F&C vice president, anticipated that construction of the senior housing project could begin next summer. The developer plans to finance the project with state tax credits and federal housing funds. The need for affordable senior housing is great, according to Muncie's Community Development agency. 'There is a lot of senior housing, but not a lot of affordable senior housing,' said Jerry Thornburg, development director. The development agency's consolidated plan shows the need for more than 1,500 units of affordable housing for very low- and low-income seniors.

The city eventually will tear down other commercial buildings along South Walnut and East Seymour streets, where a new downtown park and traffic roundabout will be built. The Muncie Housing Authority recently began work to install utilities and build other sidewalks and drives for the first portion of Millennium Place, where more than 100 Munsyana apartments once stood. F&C recently took bids for the \$2.5-million housing project, Miller said, and is currently negotiating with J.G. Case Construction. 'We are shooting for an October start,' Miller said. MHA Director Charles Weatherly said construction could start earlier, if the developer obtains interim financing. F&C is awaiting U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approval on a portion of Millennium financing.

About 35 Munsyana residents displaced by the project could have first chance to occupy the new apartments and homes also built on scattered sites in the Industry neighborhood. The MHA wants eventually to replace all of Munsyana with new housing.

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