

West Side Sites to Get U. S. Funds

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State and city housing officials were to announce today the release of federal funds that will enable construction on two long-planned sites in the West Side Urban Renewal Area.

The move will have a major impact on that renewal project, originally considered one of the most innovative in the country because of its economic integration of new apartment buildings. First planned in the late 1960s, with construction begun in the early 1970s, the entire 20-block program has been bogged down during the last three years because of community conflicts.

HDA Administrator Roger Starr and State Housing Commissioner Lee Godwin announced jointly that federal, moderate-income housing funds allotted to the state agency will be used for the city project that runs from 87th to 89th Sts. between Central Park W. and Amsterdam Avs.

Starr and Godwin signed a "general memorandum of understanding," they told a press conference at HDA headquarters, 100 Gold St., that the state would immediately begin relocating 48 families on the renewal site.

More than \$50 million in federal, state and city funds already has been plugged into the project and housing officials estimated that another \$25 million is needed to complete it.

Some 500 new housing units are to be built on the initial sites. Commissioner Godwin predicted that ground-breaking on the project will take place "before this time next year."

Only recently has the state agency agreed to use its federal allotments to complete at least six of the remaining undeveloped sites. The buildings will be constructed under the state Mitchell-Lama program, with the federal subsidy added to provide for 70 per cent moderate income units and 30 per cent low income units.

Although the state is reportedly committed to building on several sites, today's announcement includes only two—one on the west side of Columbus Av. between 87th and 89th Sts. and the other on the East Side of Columbus Av. between 88th and 89th Sts.

There are more than 2000 planned units still to be built but complicated community controversies and the freeze on federal housing funds stalled construction.

Debate over the percentage of low-income units, the use of moderate income apartments for welfare families, relocation problems, the renting of large apartments primarily to low-income families and the building of two additional all-low-income public housing buildings are among the issues that have made the project a political hot potato.

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