

# Residents stress inclusion, diversity as contractors chosen for West Louisville YMCA

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LOUISVILLE, KY (WAVE) - Decisions on which contractors will build the new YMCA on West Broadway are being finalized, according to WEHR Construction and Harmon Construction, who are managing the project.

The new YMCA, scheduled to open in 2019, is a \$28 million dollar investment in West Louisville.

The first round of selecting contractors to work on the project drew mixed reactions from neighborhood residents.

A total of 27 bids were submitted from companies within a 10 mile radius of the construction site at 17th & Broadway.

Even with those numbers, some who live in the community are concerned about who will be included in the work to complete the 77,500 square foot facility.

"We want to make sure that the community gets a good share of working - and helping - to build this YMCA," Reverend of King Solomon Missionary Church Dr. Charles Elliot said.

The reverend and dozens of other community members said they welcome the investment, but pray the workforce will be inclusive.

"We really want to ensure that this project is reflective of the community," CEO of TKT and Associates Tierra Kavanaugh-Wayne said.

Kavanaugh-Wayne is the CEO of TKT and Associates, a diversity and inclusion company. Along with the two local construction management groups, TKT was hired to make sure at least 20% of the contracts will go to minority owned businesses, and that at least 5% of contracts will go to businesses owned by women.

"This wasn't about setting a goal so low that it could be achieved, but ensuring that the goals were competitive with other projects around the city," Kavanaugh-Wayne said.

Sadiqa Reynolds, President and CEO of the Louisville Urban League, said while she understands the community's concerns, she would like to see all opportunities open to diverse applicants.

"Black people in this community have been red lined out of opportunities for so long that we are suspicious of anything that is happening in our community and around us," Reynolds said.

WEHR Construction and Harmon Construction, who are managing the project, are in the process of finalizing contractors.

Kavanaugh-Wayne said a preliminary decision has been made on 20 bidders. Half of them are minority and women owned businesses.

The construction management group hopes to announce the contractors selected for the first tier of bids by February 15th.

The West Louisville YMCA is expected to open in mid-2019.