

Before the Bowery redevelopment in downtown Akron becomes livable, parts of the row of decaying, empty buildings along South Main Street have to come down — a process going on now.

At any one time, 30 to 50 people are working inside and outside the buildings, including running heavy machinery that this past week has been tearing down unneeded outbuildings on the back of the six-building row that faces Lock 4 and the Ohio & Erie Canal.

The \$42 million project is still in the early stages of a race to make a tax-credit imposed Nov. 29 deadline — just a little over a year from the official 2018 groundbreaking.

It's a race that Dave Pyott, senior project manager for general contractor Welty Building Co., is confident will be done on time. Pyott, whose experience includes overseeing the renovation of the former Goodyear Hall on East Market Street into the East End apartments, recently gave the Beacon Journal a guided tour of the Bowery buildings.

“We’ve started construction down here. We have a number of contractors doing demolition,” Pyott said. “We’ve taken off the back of three of the buildings.”

The 12-story Landmark building at the corner of South Main and Bowery is serving as Welty’s project headquarters and it is where the first apartments will be built in former office space as part of the completed project’s envisioned work-play-live environment. Plumbers and electricians are among the crew members prepping ahead of drywall installation, Pyott said.

“In the next couple of weeks, we’re going to be framing walls, framing apartments starting from the 12th floor down,” he said. “We’re moving right along and looking for a completion by the end of November.”