



**The Consulting Party Feedback was collected from December 11 to January 17. They are in response to Louisville Metro Housing Authority's and Louisville Metro Government's Historic Section 106 review for the redevelopment of the Beecher Terrace public housing site.**

**1. What mitigation activities would you like to see Louisville Metro perform to celebrate and acknowledge the legacy of Beecher Terrace and the Russell neighborhood? What new resources would you like to see created from this process?**

- Appropriate marker at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway (NE corner). Commemoration is applicable, preservation is not. \*
- In-depth engagement with Beecher Terrace/ Russell residents (and people with strong ties to the community. To develop a book, film, or exhibit documenting the rich legacy of history in the community.
- Mitigation activities should focus on the social and cultural significance of historic resources throughout the Russell neighborhood, rather than relying solely on the high standards of physical, material integrity that are often central to traditional historic preservation practices. Based on my understanding of the Russell neighborhood, there may be fewer buildings with high architectural value and material integrity, but there are likely vast resources that reflect the neighborhoods broader heritage and cultural significance. In other words, mitigation activities should apply a broad understanding of heritage and historic resources and should actively work towards minimizing architectural bias.

Understanding the specifics of the social and cultural significance must come from residents of Beecher Terrace and the larger Russell neighborhood. Engaging the community and asking these questions should extend beyond the Section 106 consulting parties' process. Metro should support and facilitate continued engagement around the historic, social, and cultural heritage within the neighborhood and should bring these questions/concerns to the community (through existing local organizations/initiatives), in addition to the ongoing section 106 process (where the onus is on residents to come to meetings and voice their opinion). Rather than relying on traditional windshield survey methods that require trained experts, resources identification should be rooted in community-based identification processes. Some potential models for this type of approach include the Detroit Historic Resources Survey (<https://datadrivendetroit.org/detroit/2613/>), Scout Muncie (<https://scoutmuncie.wordpress.com/>), and PlaceEconomic's ReLocal field survey tool (<http://www.placeeconomics.com/resources/a-way-forward-strategies-and-tools-for-addressing-vacancy-in-little-rock/>). In terms of new resources, I would also advocate for

an extensive oral history project to gather information from neighborhood residents about important social and cultural heritage in Russell and understand how the process of preservation should be carried out in Russell to meet the specific needs of this neighborhood.

- **Western Archives Digitization**

To have all loose items digitized and made accessible to the public via a website dedicated to the Archives specifically and updated when new materials are added. This would require special equipment, such as a large scanner and possible computer software to scan each item that is currently stored in the Western Archives.

To help with the upkeep of the Archives, such as materials needed to use for the protection of items stored and to preserve them for future use.

**Beecher Terrace Collection**

To add information that is being collected currently during the Beecher Terrace project, to the archives, given that it is close proximity to the Western Library and is a part of its history as well.

**Traveling or Remote Exhibits**

To have a small collection of items from the archives that can be used for outreach purposes when speaking to others about what Western has to offer and to help advertise the existence of the Archives to the public.

- Since "mitigation activities" are invariably compromised and not delivered as intended in West Louisville, a better course would be to engage local expertise to preserve, update and re-use what exists. Instead of "new resources" how about focusing on empty lots in Russell to re-build the commercial capacity for local entrepreneurs that has eroded with each wave of "urban renewal"? How about committing resources to help home-owners stay in and improve their properties? These represent ways to rebuild the community, revive and support the old Russell spirit. Offering frills that has no relationship to the community's heritage and promise is an empty gesture to the residents who will be disrupted for years, uprooted and unlikely to be able to return.

## **2. What can Louisville Metro do to improve how we involve the community in historic preservation activities related to Beecher Terrace and the Russell neighborhood?**

- Requesting community input is a good start.
- I think it would be really exciting to have any cultural/ historical mitigation products (books, exhibits, etc.) to be developed by residents of the community. I also think it would be great to identify and document sites that could be overlooked.
- Nationally, historic sites related to African Americans and other marginalized groups are underrepresented. A potential model for documenting and prioritizing historic sites in African American communities is the Durham Documentation of African-American Historic Sites (<http://preservationdurham.org/index.php/durham/african-american-heritage/>). Los Angeles' SurveyLA project (<https://preservation.lacity.org/survey>) is

another potential model, which highlights important thematic events that connect to African American history and culture.

This Section 106 review process is an important opportunity to begin to think about how these sites are preserved, acknowledged, and celebrated in Russell, West Louisville, and Louisville Metro. Ideally, this preservation work in Russell, along with the work of other recent preservation initiatives in Louisville, could serve as a launching point for a broad-based initiative that prioritizes the preservation of black history and culture, and does so in a way that meaningfully engages residents of historically disenfranchised neighborhoods.

- Invest in making the Western Archives more accessible to the public in different formats. Also, taking data collected from Beecher Terrace and adding to the Western Archives to help make it accessible to the general public.
- The better question would be, what does the community have to teach Louisville Metro about historic preservation related to Beecher Terrace and the Russell neighborhood? Obviously a lot. Promoting Center for Neighborhood (employees? associates?) as the leaders for neighborhoods --that have long had their own-- is an insult to the community. Russell's own historic preservation efforts were never really respected by Louisville Metro--this administration nor the last. A flurry of hastily composed books at the 9th hour and photos of structures that have LONG needed care---is no substitute for the genuine support this community-- whose history speaks for itself-- has deserved but NOT had to date.

**3. You may share insights, comments or make suggestions on anything related to preserving the history and culture of Beecher Terrace or the Russell neighborhood.**

- The Western Archives are currently underutilized and I would like to see the profile raised and used more by the community at large. I look forward to discussing these items further at the next consulting meeting.
- Everyone agrees that Beecher Terrace needs improvements. Having relative that grew up there, I have spent considerable time chatting to current and past residents. In fact, most of the signatures on NPP's petition to save the Water Company Building came from Beecher Terrace, Smoketown and other parts of Russell/Portland. This project frequently came up. No one we encountered favored tearing Beecher Terrace down. The historic significance of public housing in the black community as a positive is poorly understood outside the community.
- The feeling that Vision Russell is being rammed through is prevalent. That being said, people in the area care about their neighborhood, its legacy . They are critical about the onslaught of downtown development that will not only continue to ignore their needs, but will now uproot them. They have Clarksdale, Iroquois, Park DuValle and Shepherd's Square as recent examples. In each case, the loss of history and culture was not satisfactorily 'mitigated' by changing street names, promising a pool or erecting a new

building. It is ongoing sensitivity, community support and respect that helps preserve the history and culture.

\* *There's No Way Like the American Way: The Creation of an Iconic Image*

In 1937, newspapers described important events primarily by textual means. Photographs, for most newspapers, served as ancillary material to illustrate the text and accentuate its dramatic features. The emerging medium of the news magazine, however, gave the visual aspect of communication a role equal to that of the text. This movement was led by *Life*, a magazine that published its inaugural issue only a few months before the flood.

On February 1, 1937, after the floodwaters subsided and relief efforts began in earnest, *Life* sent Margaret Bourke-White, the first photographer the magazine had hired, to Louisville to cover the devastation in the flood's aftermath. Some of Bourke-White's photos appeared in a feature story in the magazine's February 15, 1937 issue. Leading off the story was a photo of African American residents waiting in line at Broadway Liquors, 1133 West Broadway (northeast corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and Broadway), for assistance. Directly behind the line of applicants was a billboard showing a happy, apparently well-to-do, Caucasian family riding in a well-appointed vehicle. Above the family appeared the following caption: *World's highest standard of living: There's no way like the American way.* By the mid 1970's, this photo had become one of the most recognizable images of the twentieth century.

The image that eventually became famous was not Bourke-White's initial photo of the scene at Broadway Liquors. The three views available to me suggest that the image represents the culmination of a series of photos. The positions of the lady with a rectangular, wicker basket in two of the photos indicate that Bourke-White was driven westbound on the north side of Broadway. When her vehicle stopped on the 1100 block, she disembarked, walked westward along Broadway to a position roughly parallel to the store's corner post, and shot her first image (2/1/37-1). She then proceeded northbound on Twelfth Street and shot the famous photo with the billboard directly in the background (2/1/37-2). The next day, according to Getty Images' files, she returned and shot the same scene from a point in the intersection, placing the billboard in the background diagonally (2/2/37). The famous photo appears in the *Life* magazine on display, and the final one with the billboard in the background diagonally is exhibited on the wall.

On February 8, 1937, a local photographer with the surname Bailey, possibly *Courier-Journal* photographer George Bailey, shot a wide-angle view of the relief line (2/8/37) from the southwest corner. Bailey evidently approached the scene from a different direction, either northbound along 12<sup>th</sup> Street or eastbound along the south side of Broadway. This photo, exhibited here as well, provides a larger visual context for Bourke-White's closely framed images.

We thank the following organizations for their assistance with the Broadway Liquors portion of the exhibit:

- **Filson Historical Society**, which preserved the wide-angle image, made it available for display, and provided the tentative identification of George Bailey as the photographer,
- **Getty Images**, which preserved three of Bourke-White's images and made the 2/2/1937 photo available for display, and

- **YouthBuild Louisville**, which made its faculty and students available for the replication of the Broadway Liquors images at a building situated similarly on the northwest corner of College and Preston Streets.

Location: 12<sup>th</sup> Street/ Broadway (NE corner)

Historic importance: Site of one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most recognizable photos (Breadline, Margaret Bourke-White, *Life*, 02/15/1937)

Current status: Stewart's Pawn Shop parking lot

Preservation: Not applicable. Broadway Liquors building is no longer standing.

Commemoration possibilities:

1. Historic Marker
2. Reproduction of the billboard on the side of Stewart's Pawn Shop (with owner's consent).

Caveat: Check for any changes in location of 12<sup>th</sup> Street/ Broadway intersection since 1937.

