



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Christi Lanier Robinson  
502-609-9141

### **Mayor Fischer, Congressman Yarmuth and HUD representatives join Russell residents to break ground on first phase of new housing at Beecher Terrace**

*New building for residents 55 and older will emphasize healthy lifestyles*

(Louisville, Kentucky--) With Phase I of development now underway, Mayor Greg Fischer, Congressman John Yarmuth and representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) joined former and current residents of Beecher Terrace and other Russell residents to celebrate and break ground on the first new building at the redeveloped Beecher Terrace site. The new four-story structure will feature 117 energy-efficient one- and two-bedroom apartments that are designated exclusively for those age 55 and older.

“Today marks an important milestone for our entire community as we continue to work together to transform and revitalize the Russell neighborhood, including Beecher Terrace,” said Mayor Greg Fischer. “These apartments represent one of the first opportunities families will have to move to the redeveloped Beecher Terrace site and will further the momentum of new housing creation that has been underway in Russell the past several years.”

Infrastructure work and construction on the new building began after the completion of the first phase of demolition and is being overseen by St. Louis-based firm McCormack Baron Salazar, the developer for the on-site Beecher Terrace housing plan. The building is expected to be complete by Fall 2020 and will feature amenities that promote increased physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

“The housing we are developing incorporates many of the features residents identified as important to their vision for the Russell neighborhood and Beecher Terrace,” said Lisa Osanka, Executive Director for the Louisville Metro Housing Authority. “Once the redevelopment process is complete, the Beecher

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Terrace site will offer a variety of housing types that complement the many changes taking place throughout this historic neighborhood.”

This first phase of development is one of many goals outlined in the *Vision Russell Transformation Plan* – a roadmap guiding the neighborhood’s revitalization efforts. The plan was developed in conjunction with residents and community stakeholders during a two-year planning process that included a robust community engagement effort, and over 80 community and stakeholder meetings. The razing and redevelopment of the Beecher Terrace is being funded in part by a \$29.5 million Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) Implementation grant that was awarded to Louisville by HUD in December 2016.

Grant funds are also being used to relocate Beecher Terrace households and to provide comprehensive case management and support services, including financial literacy, savings and wealth building programs, job training and placement, higher education scholarship funds for residents and a variety of programs designed to improve educational outcomes including early learning opportunities, out-of-school time activities and computer training, transportation assistance, barrier removal and emergency assistance funds, homeownership counseling, a Section 8 Homeownership program, improved access to healthcare, and fitness and wellness programs, including those designed to improve the quality of life and health of senior adults. Highlights of resident accomplishments achieved through the redevelopment process include:

- 905 individuals are currently in case management services
- 2 Beecher Terrace residents have become homeowners
- 75 Beecher Terrace have received free laptop computers in an effort and been linked to low-cost internet services in effort to increase their computer literacy skills

Case managers have also helped Beecher Terrace residents secure or maintain employment with multiple organizations including several of our CNI partners. These include:

- The Smoketown Family Wellness Center,
- University of Louisville’s Physicians Group,
- Catholic Charities, and
- Louisville Metro Government

Case managers are also linking residents to construction training programs.

- Four young adults are currently participating in YouthBuild Louisville programs, and
- Several Beecher Terrace residents have graduated from the Louisville Urban League’s Construction Certification Program.

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The federal grant funding will leverage over \$200 million of additional public and private investment and created dozens of mainly construction, jobs. Under Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Beecher Terrace residents are given priority for training and employment on the Beecher Terrace transformation.

U.S. Representative John Yarmuth said that Louisville Metro's ability to engage stakeholders in developing a comprehensive transformation plan and its commitment to supporting residents who, as part of the redevelopment process were relocated, made Louisville a natural choice for the CNI grant.

"No other city that has a more successful track record of leveraging HUD funds to advance the needs of current residents while attracting additional investments to revitalize entire neighborhoods," said Yarmuth. "The housing we are breaking ground on today accomplishes both goals and is yet another reason why the redevelopment plans underway will again showcase Louisville as a national model."

As construction continues on Phase I, Mayor Fischer said Louisville Metro and LMHA will enlist the community in a fundamental step of the work taking place – identifying a name for the redeveloped site that reflects the past, present and future of Beecher Terrace and the Russell neighborhood. Beginning on April 15th, the public will have an opportunity to submit suggested names, as well as vote for their favorite, by visiting [www.visionrussell.org](http://www.visionrussell.org). Fischer believes that engaging the community in the naming process is consistent with the approach used throughout the planning and implementation stages of the plan.

"Sustained community engagement has been key to the transformation taking place in this historic neighborhood and I am confident that residents will remain engaged in the work taking place and look forward to the community identifying a name that speaks to those qualities that make this neighborhood a very special place", said Fischer.

"I would also like to thank our various community partners including Louisville Central Community Center's Mini-Versity Early Child Development center and Beecher Terrace residents for their patience during the demolition and construction process. Their on-going support has allowed us to continue to move forward."

Councilwoman Barbara Sexton Smith agreed.

"The transformation taking place in Russell is a testament to what we can accomplish when residents, government and community agencies join together and commit themselves to achieving a common goal," said Councilwoman Sexton Smith. "I am confident that when this transformation is complete, the Russell Neighborhood will become a national model for other communities looking to transform and revitalize their community."

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To date, over 400 households have moved from the Beecher Terrace site, and the 162 families still residing at Beecher Terrace are in the process of relocating. Those residents were moved to the top of LMHA's lists for Section 8 vouchers and placement in other public housing or scattered sites. LMHA also has been helping families who want to remain in the Russell neighborhood find appropriate housing.

All former Beecher Terrace households will have a lifetime preference to move into the newly developed housing created on-site, as well as the off-site replacement housing opportunities that are being created throughout the city.

A second phase of demolition is also currently underway on the Beecher site and is expected to be complete by Fall 2019. Once complete, construction on Phase II will begin, which will include 108 townhome-style apartments for families.

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