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Community Leaders Gather for Unveiling of Cabrini-Green Redevelopment Model

Elected officials and community leaders from the Cabrini-Green public housing development joined Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) officials today to unveil a model showing the next phases of redevelopment in the near north side neighborhood and to highlight the overall progress in redeveloping the area.

CHA Chief Executive Officer Terry Peterson described the model saying, "Our vision for Cabrini-Green is similar to our vision for every other neighborhood in Chicago. We want a strong, healthy mixed-income community where public housing residents live side-by-side with working families and professionals."

The model, which is on display at the Near North Library, 310 West Division Street, shows a new community called ParkSide of Old Town. It will eventually have 215 public housing units, 144 affordable units and 359 market-rate units.

ParkSide of Old Town, a joint venture of the Local Advisory Council and developer Peter Holsten, is located on the site of five former high-rise buildings that were part of the Cabrini, Extension North. Those high-rises, on the south side of Division Street between Sedgwick and Cleveland, came down in 1996, 2001 and 2002.

Pastor Walter Johnson of the Wayman A.M.E. Church, 509 W. Elm called the ongoing redevelopment of Cabrini-Green "long overdue," adding, "We're at a turning point in the lives of the residents and the Plan for Transformation is moving in the right direction."

Also in attendance were Secretary of State Jesse White, 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, and Cabrini-Green Local Advisory Council President Kelvin Cannon.

Cannon, the elected representative for Cabrini-Green residents said, "The CHA and the LAC are working in good faith so that the families who want to enjoy the benefits of living in new mixed-income developments can do that."

In the last six years, eight separate mixed-income developments have been built in the Cabrini-Green area, providing approximately 300 public housing units and hundreds of affordable and market-rate units. Several CHA families living in the mixed-income communities also attended the press conference and spoke in support of the plan.

(more)

ParkSide Model

June 20, 2005

Page 2

All told, Cabrini-Green comprises four separate housing developments: Cabrini Extension South; Cabrini Extension North; William Green Homes; Cabrini Row Houses.

Of the original 23 high-rise and mid-rise buildings at the site, five have been demolished, six are vacant and the other 12 are partially occupied by a total of 547 families. 466 families live in the Row Houses, which will be rehabbed as part of the Plan for Transformation.

Under the Plan, all of the high-rises are slated to come down and be replaced by thousands of new mixed-income housing units. Demolition of two vacant high-rises, 630 West Evergreen and 1340 North Larrabee, is scheduled to begin this week. The CHA and residents are working to finalize a redevelopment plan for this site.

Peterson also pointed out that the entire neighborhood has benefited from other public as well as private investments, including a new shopping mall on Division Street, a new library, a rehabbed Seward Park, a new police station and a firehouse.

“This is a proud and vibrant community today and it will be even more proud and more vibrant tomorrow – as we continue to work together,” Peterson said.

Under the Plan for Transformation, the CHA is rebuilding or rehabbing approximately 25,000 public housing units for families and seniors, both on site and off-site in neighborhoods throughout Chicago. To date, more than 14,000 units are complete, most of which are for seniors or families off-site. The agency has also entered into 30 separate redevelopment agreements for CHA properties throughout the City of Chicago.

To facilitate the rebuilding process, over 3,500 families have successfully relocated into new communities throughout Chicago or into other CHA units. Approximately 1,000 of those families have moved back into rehabbed or rebuilt CHA properties.

In addition, since the start of the plan in 1999, the CHA has helped more than 5,000 families find work. Lastly, CHA currently invests approximately \$25 million annually to link CHA residents to job-training, substance abuse counseling, relocation counseling and other social services needed to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency.

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