

# **The Riverside Neighborhood named as the 19th Purpose Built Community in the United States**

**The goal of this community-based effort is neighborhood revitalization in order to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by creating pathways out of poverty**

Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki today joined with Governor John Carney, County Executive Matthew Meyer, City Council Member Zanthia Oliver, the REACH Riverside Development Corporation (RRDC or REACH Riverside) and the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) for a major community redevelopment announcement. Expanding on the City's commitment to partner with local neighbors and community leaders to revitalize Wilmington's disadvantaged areas, the Mayor said he hopes today's announcement will bring renewed hope and opportunity to citizens who are living and working in and around the Riverside neighborhood in northeast Wilmington.

Nationally renowned Purpose Built Communities, a non-profit consulting firm that works side-by-side with community leaders, residents and others to plan and implement holistic community revitalization efforts, announced today that it has designated Wilmington's Riverside neighborhood as the 19th Purpose Built Community in the United States.

Under the Purpose Built model, REACH Riverside will work in partnership with community members and other partners to

develop and implement strategies for a cradle-to-college or career education pipeline, mixed-income housing, and a community health and wellness initiative. The goals for Riverside include the development of 400 new units of high-quality, mixed-income housing, the enhancement and expansion of Kingswood Community Center's Early Childhood education program, the addition of a high school to the East Side Charter School's current pre-K through grade 8, and the expansion of the Kingswood Community Center facility to greatly increase access by Riverside residents to health and wellness services. Working in close collaboration with REACH Riverside is The Teen Warehouse, a partnership of more than 50 teen-serving organizations that will provide school-day and after-school health and wellness programs and services to Wilmington youths between the ages of 13 and 19.

"Today's wonderful news follows years of research, planning and development by the City, WHA, community leaders and Riverside residents, all of whom recognize that it is time to invest in an inclusive, holistic manner to make Riverside a neighborhood of opportunity for all of its current and future residents." said **Mayor Purzycki**. "We are very excited about the prospects for the future of this neighborhood and this area of the City."

"The State of Delaware is proud to be partnering with Mayor Purzycki, other local officials, and community leaders to strengthen communities across the City of Wilmington, and ensure that resources are reaching economically-distressed communities that need those resources the most," said **Governor John Carney**. "We want to make sure that everyone in Wilmington and across our state has an opportunity to succeed, and contribute to Delaware's success. Investing in our communities will help us achieve that goal. I want to thank Mayor Purzycki and all of the community leaders involved for their leadership on this important initiative."

In thanking those who were instrumental in making the Purpose

Built Community dream become a reality, Charles McDowell, Chairman of the REACH Riverside Board of Directors, reflected on the project's history up to this point. "Five years ago, we visited the country's first Purpose Built Community in Atlanta and made a commitment on the spot to bring that level of progress to Wilmington," said McDowell. "We thank the Purpose Built organization for recognizing the hard work and commitment that has brought us together today, and the willingness and eagerness of countless partners and friends to walk beside us on this journey."

Purpose Built services, which are provided at no cost, are tailored to each community's needs and the dynamics of the neighborhood they are working to revitalize. With a goal of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, Purpose Built uses best practices to guide neighborhood revitalization by creating pathways out of poverty for the lowest-income residents, and building strong, economically diverse communities.

Mayor Purzycki praised the unique, multi-party public private partnership that is working together to implement the Purpose Built Communities model in Riverside. He said that although there will be numerous organizations, groups and individuals involved in completing the estimated ten-year Purpose Built process, four lead entities have entered into a formal agreement to represent what are referred to as the "four pillars" of the Purpose Built model—housing, education, community wellness and leadership by a community "quarterback." The entities are:

- The REACH Riverside Renaissance Development Corporation, branded as REACH Riverside (Redevelopment, Education And Community Health), which will take the lead on the project, serving as the "Community Quarterback." Comprised of community leaders who have the skills, connections and reputation to attract the necessary community partners and funding, their sole job is to

work with the community and partners to manage the overall process to ensure that all parties are pursuing common goals. Logan Herring, who currently serves as Executive Director of the Kingswood Community Center, will transition from his role at Kingswood to become the CEO of the REACH Riverside project.

- The Wilmington Housing Authority, which owns the existing Riverside public housing project, will work in partnership with Pennrose, LLC, a nationally recognized development company that specializes in mixed-income, affordable housing, to develop the high-quality mixed income housing in the Riverside neighborhood.
- Kingswood Community Center will play a central role as landowner for a portion of the new housing and the home of other project components, including early learning, senior services, and health and wellness services and other amenities needed to support a robust neighborhood.
- East Side Charter School, which borders the north end of Riverside, will be the foundation of the education pillar and will lead the establishment of a “cradle to college and career education pipeline” to serve the neighborhood children.

**John Hill, Executive Director of the Wilmington Housing Authority**, said the WHA is proud to be a partner in this effort. “The Riverside revitalization initiative provides the opportunity to reinvent this neighborhood with services that include mixed-income housing, livable space, high-quality education and health services,” said Hill. “What we achieve here can serve as a model for other distressed neighborhoods in our city.”

The Purpose Built Communities model, which emerged out of a neighborhood revitalization initiative in the late 1990’s in Atlanta, Georgia, has demonstrated the importance of private sector leadership in breaking the cycle of poverty in neighborhoods that have long suffered with low levels of

educational achievement, high unemployment, crime and blight. Purpose Built is currently working to achieve these goals with a total of 20 network member communities throughout the United States.

“We have been impressed with the effort underway in Wilmington ever since the Mayor, Charlie and their team first came to Atlanta,” said **Purpose Built Communities President Carol Naughton**. “Their commitment to understanding what works best for Riverside, its families, and its children, their willingness to partner with the community, and their ability to provide leadership to bring the necessary partners and resources to the table will make a great difference for the neighborhood and its residents.”