

# PORTSMOUTH

## REDEVELOPMENT & HOUSING AUTHORITY

For immediate release  
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### HUD Awards \$20 Million HOPE VI Grant to Portsmouth

Portsmouth, Va. – Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority (PRHA) has been awarded a \$20 million HOPE VI grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to redevelop the Jeffry Wilson public housing community in Midtown. City and state officials, along with Jeffry Wilson residents, will gather across from the community at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1, for a check presentation ceremony. *(See media advisory below.)*

HUD had set aside only \$136 million for the HOPE VI program this year, making Portsmouth's \$20 million grant extremely significant. It was one of only seven HOPE VI grants awarded this year by HUD.

The Jeffry Wilson community, built in 1953, now houses 400 families. The city and PRHA will work with these families on relocation, following the same successful process used for families who lived in the Ida Barbour public housing community before its redevelopment into Westbury, through a 1997 HOPE VI grant. Also, an additional \$8.1 million, from HOPE VI and other funding sources, will pay for a range of self-sufficiency programs for the Jeffry Wilson families, as was done with the Ida Barbour families.

The 27-acre Jeffry Wilson community will be redeveloped into a mixed-income neighborhood with homes for sale and rental housing, similar to Westbury. The redevelopment effort will include about 500 replacement units, both on-site and off-site.

"This is a great day for Portsmouth," said the city's mayor, Dr. James W. Holley III. "The awarding of this grant by HUD is a tribute to the sensitive and successful transformation of Ida Barbour into Westbury. This is perhaps the strongest endorsement the city could hope for to validate its efforts in not only transforming communities but transforming lives."

PRHA executive director Danny E. Cruce agreed. "HUD officials have not only signaled their satisfaction with how our previous HOPE VI funds have been used," Cruce said, "they were clearly impressed by how we plan to leverage their \$20 million grant into a total public/private investment of \$120 million."

The result of that investment will be a new gateway into the city's Midtown area. Combined with the Wal-Mart Supercenter to be built on Frederick Boulevard, city officials now expect Midtown's revitalization to attract more retail investment.

HUD's HOPE VI Program was developed in 1993 as a result of recommendations by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, which was charged with proposing a national action plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing. The acronym HOPE stands for Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere.

#### **Media Advisory:**

*City and state officials, along with Jeffry Wilson residents, will gather at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1, on the site of the former I.C. Norcom High School across from the Jeffry Wilson community for a check presentation ceremony. The site is near the intersection of Frederick Boulevard and Turnpike Road in Portsmouth. For event details, call Kathy Warren at 757.391.2903 or Nancy Chapman at 757.332.8980.*