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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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Contact: Dan Keashen

Phone: (856) 225-5431

Cell: (856) 816-1374

E-mail: [dan.keashen@camdencounty.com](mailto:dan.keashen@camdencounty.com)

### **Largest investment in housing in Camden City history by a partnership of entities including the CCIA, CCP, Cooper Foundation, Norcross Foundation and Rowan-Rutgers Joint Board of Governors**

(Camden, NJ) – Seeing the overwhelming need for new and renovated affordable, accessible housing options in the City of Camden, the Board of Commissioners has come together with the Camden County Improvement Authority (CCIA), the Norcross Foundation and the Cooper Foundation to launch the Camden Community Housing Collaborative (CCHC) a transformative, initiative that focuses on developing inclusive housing options and communities across Camden City. CCHC will implement several strategies to boost the redevelopment of underutilized lots and properties in Camden City to transform them into mixed-income and mixed-use housing communities. The new program will be managed as a public-private partnership by the CCIA and the Camden Community Partnership.

Chief Executive Officer for the Camden Community Partnership, Dana Redd, talked about the initiative being unprecedented for the housing stock of the city.

“We are rolling up our sleeves to create a new generation of housing for residents, families and seniors in the city,” Redd said. “I know how hard it can be to get projects from a vision to brick and sticks and based on that experience I believe my team can create a one stop shop for our partners to lean on and work with to deliver for our residents.”

CCHC will award grants to established nonprofit organizations and developers thanks to \$7.5 million of funds from the Camden County Improvement Authority’s revolving housing fund and \$5.5 million contribution from Rowan-Rutgers Joint Board of Governors and several million from the Cooper Foundation. The total contribution to the fund will be about \$16 million.

Chairman of Cooper University Health Care and MD Anderson Camden Cancer Center, George Norcross, joined with elected officials, stakeholders and community members to talk about the importance of the Cooper Foundation’s allocation to the housing collaborative.

“Camden is increasingly a place people want to live because it’s close to new jobs, the schools are dramatically improving, and there are more things to do for families – everything from sports for children to a growing number of places to eat and shop,” said Norcross today. “That’s why this new program is so important: current and new residents need a variety of safe, high quality and affordable housing options. Expanding housing options are an important ‘next step’ in Camden’s transformation from the country’s poorest, most violent city into a nationally recognized example of how a city can rebuild.”

The city has several community development corporations that are doing great work to revitalize different neighborhoods that include, St. Joe’s Carpenter’s Society, Habitat for Humanity, Heart of Camden, Parkside Business and Community in Partnership and Camden Lutheran Housing. These nonprofits are already

engaged in several projects throughout the city and through this new stream of revenue, will now have the ability to bring many of them from design to construction.

Mayor Victor Carstarphen talked about the need for financial and technical support for the community development corporations in the city.

“Housing has been a main priority for my administration throughout my tenure as mayor and I believe this new fund will jumpstart so many projects that need a small financial lift to get moving,” Carstarphen said. “Our nonprofit partners have worked long and hard on designing state of the art housing that will benefit our residents. This plan will deliver the housing stock that the residents of Camden deserve, and we need to build a better city.”

Camden Community Partnership (CCP) will help run the program and house the collaborative within its organization. In addition, CCP will provide logistical support and assist the community development corporations in permitting and cutting through the red tape that has sidelined organizations that want to put a shovel in the ground to build and create new, quality housing in the city.

Chief Executive Officer of the Rowan University Rutgers Camden Joint Board of Governors, Jeffrey Nash, talked about the program and its benefits for housing in the city.

“Housing is one of the most important pieces to the social fabric of our community,” Nash said. “Quality housing makes a significant difference to the residents of Cadmen who should have the same equity in housing stock as anywhere else in the region. This seed money is the first step in making that dream a reality.”

The collaborative will also be utilizing other tools to help achieve its goals, these include:

- Utilizing the NJEDA’s ASPIRE program to close gaps on new projects that meet the organization’s goals.
- Leveraging the NJHMFA’s 4% low-income housing tax credit program as a complimentary financing source with the ASPIRE program.
- Applying for Camden City HOME Investment Partnership Loan Funds.
- Targeting properties in the city’s opportunity zones to be prioritized locations.
- Utilizing the CCIA’s demolition resources and potential to offer bridge loan financing for the ASPIRE program.

Commissioner Director, Louis Cappelli Jr., who is the liaison to the Camden County Improvement Authority, talked about the impact of the initiative.

“The need for affordable, quality housing is not a problem that is unique to Camden, we are seeing communities across the country grapple with this issue,” Commissioner Director Louis Cappelli Jr. said. “We came together with our community partners to brainstorm how we could deliver real solutions to this problem, and that is when the Camden Community Housing Collaborative was born. This nonprofit organization will act as a catalyst and a facilitator to the widespread redevelopment of locations around the city so that our residents can have easier and more affordable access to housing no matter what neighborhood they live in.”

Congressman Donald Norcross spoke about how local non-profits and government are working together to create lasting change in Camden.

“Every family deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, and Camden City’s progress shows that teamwork can continue to make that possible. With this collaboration of our local non-profits and government at every level, Camden is transforming vacant lots into homes and new opportunities,” said Congressman

Donald Norcross. “Camden City’s comeback proves what’s possible when we invest in community safety, housing, quality education, and good-paying jobs.”

Brandi Johnson, Executive Director of Camden Lutheran Housing, emphasized the role that affordable, stable housing has in creating a thriving community.

“Camden Lutheran Housing, Inc. has long believed that stable, dignified housing is the foundation for thriving communities,” said Brandi Johnson, Executive Director of Camden Lutheran Housing. “We are honored to join Mayor Carstarphen in launching this important initiative, which strengthens the city’s commitment to inclusive growth and long-term investment in its residents. By focusing on permanent housing solutions and neighborhood-driven strategies, this effort builds on years of local momentum and deepens our collective impact across Camden.”

Pilar Hogan, Executive Director of Saint Joseph’s Carpenter Society, discussed the long-term impact this initiative will have on the City of Camden.

“Saint Joseph's Carpenter Society has worked for 40 years on creating homes for Camden's families. We are excited to partner with the mayor on his housing initiative to invest in Camden’s neighborhoods, offering opportunities for households to invest in their own futures through homeownership while also playing a part in Camden’s revitalization,” said Pilar Hogan, Executive Director of Saint Joseph’s Carpenter Society. “Working in partnership with resident-driven neighborhood plans, this initiative will continue the upward trajectory of the City and continue this growth in our neighborhoods.”

Bridget Phifer, CEO of Parkside Business & Community in Partnership, highlighted the commitment of the involved organizations to establish affordable housing in Camden.

“We are excited to collaborate with Camden Community Partnership and the City of Camden to advance the expansion of affordable and emerging market housing, with a special focus on Parkside and its neighboring communities,” said Bridget Phifer, CEO of Parkside Business & Community in Partnership (PBCIP). These developments highlight PBCIP’s steadfast commitment to creating safe, high-quality homes where families can thrive. Realizing this vision requires more than construction—it calls for the continued support and partnership of local leaders, community organizations, investment and residents working together to build stronger, healthier, and more inclusive neighborhoods.”

Carlos Morales, Executive Director of Heart of Camden commended Mayor Carstarphen on his leadership, and dedication to the city.

“Heart of Camden is proud to have a mayor who champions both our work and the people of Camden,” said Carlos Morales, Executive Director of Heart of Camden. “His leadership sends a clear message: when we invest in neighborhoods, we invest in families, and when we invest in families, we invest in Camden’s future.”

Lori Leonard, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of South Central New Jersey underscored the impact that the funding will have on local nonprofits who work directly with Camden residents.

"We're incredibly grateful to Mayor Carstarphen and the City of Camden for their continued commitment to strengthening our communities," said Lori Leonard, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of South Central New Jersey. "This new funding will allow us and other local nonprofits to expand our impact, build more affordable homes, and help more Camden families live in safe, stable housing."

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