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CAMDEN PROMISE ZONE CONVENING RESPONDS TO CITY'S PRIORITIES

Local, state, and federal leaders continue work on improving opportunities in education, economic development, housing, wellness, and reducing crime

CAMDEN, NJ – Today, Mayor Dana Redd, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, state and federal partners came together to discuss coordinated interagency support for Camden's Promise Zone initiative, a federal designation that addresses multiple community revitalization challenges and provides resources to assist in meeting Camden's goals.

The Promise Zone designation by the Obama Administration brings local leaders and multiple federal agencies together to collaborate in improving community revitalization challenges. The Promise Zone designation come with a range of benefits, including a fulltime federal liaison from HUD to help the community navigate federal programs; preferences for certain competitive grants and technical assistance from participating federal agencies, and an opportunity to engage five AmeriCorps VISTA members in the Promise Zone's work.

"I am honored and excited that our efforts have garnered national attention with the designation of Camden being named a Promise Zone," said Camden Mayor Dana Redd. "We are at a pivotal moment in this city's history. As a Promise Zone, the City of Camden and its partners will take what we have accomplished to the next level. We will build on the revitalization of this city that has begun to take shape over the last few years. The designation will help ensure that all Camden children, youth, and families, no matter their zip code, have a chance at success and the opportunity to reach their full potential."

Promise Zone federal partners represented at today's convening included the U.S. Department of Labor, Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Commerce, Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Corporation for National & Community Service. State of New Jersey partners present included the Department of Environmental Protection and the Economic Development Authority.

Through the Promise Zone, the City of Camden is striving to meet five goals: Increased Economic Activity, Improved Educational Opportunities, Reduced Violent Crime, Improved Health & Wellness, and Increased Affordable Housing. Today's convening continues the important work of moving forward to achieve these goals and improve the quality of life of Camden residents.

"Today we strengthen our commitment to the City of Camden as a Promise zone and I am pleased to see so many federal, state, and city partners ready to take the challenge of moving

Camden forward,” said HUD Region II Deputy Regional Administrator Mirza Orriols. “HUD is here to support the City of Camden in achieving its goals of improving the quality of life and the future of Camden residents.”

“The U.S. Small Business Administration is no stranger to the City of Camden,” said SBA Regional Administrator Kellie LeDet. “SBA has had a footprint in Camden for quite some time. Our longstanding relationship with Rutgers University Camden Small Business Development Center provides the necessary business counseling and training needed to launch or expand businesses in Camden. In addition, our partnership with Camden-based Cooperative Business Assistance Corporation and many other commercial lenders shows our commitment to making major capital investments in small businesses throughout the city. However, we know that in order to transform neighborhoods and a city of this size that it is going to take a collective effort from all of us to make it happen. We see the same vision that President Obama sees for Camden and why it is important for us all of here today to pledge our support and commit our resources to strengthen and grow our footprint throughout Camden.”

Local partners in today’s convening included: Cooper’s Ferry Partnership, the Camden Board of Education, Center for Family Services, Camden Metro Police, Campbell’s Soup Company, YMCA, the Camden Housing Authority, and the Camden Redevelopment Authority.

“I look forward to our continued relationship with the City of Camden, as well as working with the federal liaison and volunteers provided by the Promise Zone designation to assist in advancing its goals in education, health, economic development, housing, and crime prevention,” said Maria Maio-Messano, HUD NJ Field Office Director. “HUD will provide continued support and the technical assistance necessary to achieve the outcomes so many are striving for.”

The various partners went on to outline the City’s priorities and discuss plans for Camden’s Promise Zone initiative in the form of enhanced housing options through a targeted rehabilitation effort of existing single and multi-family housing units, improved evidenced-based early education programs, an expansion of innovative food access projects like Camden Healthy Corner Store Network and expanded violence reduction programs such as Cure4Camden to name a few. Ultimately, the federal designation will enable the city to align its existing resources and apply for new federal funding as they building on efforts already at work

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