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News Release

For Immediate Release

EDC of Wayne County Initiates Revitalization of Historic Starr Neighborhood

RICHMOND, Ind. (January 12, 2026) — The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of Wayne County is spearheading a major effort to breathe new life into Richmond's historic Starr Neighborhood. Once a thriving area celebrated for its architectural charm and strong community pride, it has landed on Indiana Landmarks' list of the 10 Most Endangered Neighborhoods.

Through the state's Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) 2.0, supported by Lilly Endowment Inc., the EDC has secured $5.1 million to reduce blight, expand housing opportunities, and revitalize neighborhoods across Richmond and Wayne County. This initiative will utilize $976,000 of that award to fund the acquisition of up to 22 historic homes in the Starr District.

"With more than $100 million in new downtown investment planned, restoring the Starr Neighborhood is vital to keeping nearby areas vibrant and connected," said Sarah Mitchell, Economic Development Manager for the EDC of Wayne County. "This effort strengthens the heart of Richmond and expands quality housing near shops, restaurants, and amenities. Places where people want to live and belong."

As part of a broader, strategic vision for community revitalization, the EDC is partnering with Interurban, a center within the Sagamore Institute. Interurban will develop a comprehensive revitalization plan for the Starr Neighborhood. This planning effort, funded by the Richmond Redevelopment Commission, will guide future revitalization projects within the area. The first major initiative outlined in the plan will be supported by funding through READI 2.0 and Lilly Endowment Inc.

Interurban will be gathering input from Starr neighborhood residents, nearby organizations, and local real estate and housing experts to guide their creation of a revitalization strategy. This plan will guide efforts to restore homes in the neighborhood to their historic glory in order to return its homeownership and rental market to vibrancy. This plan will assess the scope of repairs needed, how to finance and implement renovations, and how to market the neighborhood to new residents. Interurban Director Bill Taft stated "our team has led revitalization work across the region but has never seen a neighborhood with more untapped

potential to be a great place to live than the Starr District. We look forward to supporting local organizations and investors in achieving this potential."

Additionally, Wayne County's effort to establish a land bank will be central to advancing the project. The land bank will acquire and manage distressed properties, preparing them for redevelopment by qualified developers. A proven method across the country, land banks promote homeownership, attract private investment, and help revitalize neighborhoods like Starr.

Renovation work is expected to begin in early 2026, with completion of the first phase of houses anticipated by July 2028. Once complete, the Starr Neighborhood Revitalization will stand as a cornerstone of Richmond's downtown renewal. The project will preserve the neighborhood's historic charm, strengthen community pride, and showcase Wayne County's continued commitment to creating vibrant, livable spaces where people want to live, work, and invest.

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: $4,880,000
LEI Funds: $976,000
Local Government Match: $980,000
Private Match: $2,924,000

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