



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS  
MAYOR MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU

Office of the Mayor  
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## BIENVILLE BASIN OPENS AT FORMER IBERVILLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITE

*Last Major Public Housing Development being Fully Transformed  
Through HUD's \$30.5 Million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative*

**NEW ORLEANS** – Today, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu was joined by HUD Secretary Julián Castro, OMB Director Shaun Donovan, the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) and City and State officials to celebrate the grand opening of the new mixed-income, mixed-use Bienville Basin community at the former Iberville Housing Development site.

Bienville Basin serves as the epicenter of a broad physical, social and economic neighborhood revitalization in the Iberville and Treme neighborhoods fueled by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) \$30.5 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI). New Orleans was one of five cities to receive an implementation grant in its inaugural round in 2011.

The New Orleans CNI Transformation Plan covers the one-for-one replacement of all 821 dwelling units at Iberville both on-site and in the surrounding CNI neighborhood and the revitalization of more than 300 blocks within the boundaries of Rampart Street, Tulane Avenue, Broad Street, and St. Bernard Avenue. The full plan costs an estimated \$600 million. The Iberville Housing Development was originally constructed in 1941 and is New Orleans' last standing conventional public housing development to be revitalized since Hurricane Katrina.

**Mayor Mitch Landrieu** said, "This development will re-energize Iberville and Treme. The construction of these new, affordable and market-rate apartments at Bienville Basin are important first steps forward in our goal of creating better housing, safer streets and thriving communities in the heart of our city. In addition to quality housing, we are ensuring wrap-around services like retail, education, workforce training, healthcare, transit and public space. This is a true place-based investment of local and federal dollars that will improve the quality of life of the Iberville and Treme neighborhoods. Together with our federal, state and local partners, New Orleans is a national model for redeveloping urban neighborhoods."

**United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro** said, "New Orleans' spirit of resilience is a testament to the rest of the nation on how to bounce back from unprecedented tragedy and loss. HUD's \$30.5 million Choice Neighborhoods grant will help transform the city's historic Iberville development into a thriving community where residents have greater access to opportunity. As long as there are people who want to come home and communities that need to be rebuilt, we will be by New Orleans' side."

**Shaun Donovan, Director of the Office of Management and Budget**, said, "New Orleans has turned a moment of devastation into a call for community action. Today's celebration is a reminder that when we take an all-of-Nation approach, working closely with and supporting the work of all of our partners, we can ensure that affected communities build back stronger and more resilient. The Federal government alone can't fix New Orleans or any city for its citizens, but President Obama has directed us to do everything we can to partner with state and local governments, tribal and volunteer organizations, the private sector, and families in helping communities working to create opportunity."

**United States Congressman Cedric Richmond** said, "Developing quality affordable housing is a critical component of our recovery. Housing is the bedrock of our community and paves the way for greater commerce and revitalization. The development of the Bienville Basin can serve as a model for future projects throughout New Orleans. The federal government must continue to take an active role in providing funding for projects that will bring more affordable housing to the city."

**Pat Forbes, Executive Director of the State of Louisiana Office of Community Development- Disaster Recovery Unit**, said, "Since Hurricane Katrina, the State has committed nearly \$135 million in disaster recovery money to restoring the communities at Iberville and the Big 4. But everyone knew they needed to be better than

before. Every level of government has partnered together to help transform these communities into high-quality, mixed-income developments; honoring their past with historic preservation efforts while moving into the future with modern housing and community models. The Bienville Basin Apartments, on the site of the old Iberville Housing Project, fulfills our pledge to the people of this community, to recover safer, stronger and smarter than before.”

**District C Councilmember Nadine M. Ramsey** said, “The long overdue redevelopment of the Iberville Housing Development site is a welcome addition to downtown New Orleans. This prime real estate had languished in disrepair for decades and its redevelopment as the Bienville Basin is bringing 880 new units to the New Orleans housing stock. This a great example of HUD’s Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Grant in partnership with HRI and the City of New Orleans providing much need quality housing in an urban setting.”

**Gregg Fortner, Executive Director of HANO** said, “HANO is committed to leveraging its resources to provide affordable housing opportunities for the City of New Orleans. The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative has allowed this agency to use a large public housing footprint as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization and community redevelopment through physical transformation and resident empowerment and enrichment.”

As part of this redevelopment effort, an Iberville Working Team (IWT) was organized and comprised of Iberville residents, HANO and City staff, developers HRI Properties and McCormack Baron Salazar, Urban Strategies, Inc. and community engagement consultants The Black Men of Labor Inc. In keeping with the objectives of the CNI grant, the IWT’s goal was to turn Iberville into a mixed-income, mixed-use community and to revitalize the surrounding CNI neighborhood by focusing on three main components: housing, people, and neighborhood.

**Esther Shin, Executive Vice President of Urban Strategies**, said, “Choice Neighborhoods has provided an opportunity for Iberville residents to utilize housing as a platform for improving their lives. Our organization has been privileged to provide comprehensive supportive services to former Iberville residents and assisting them throughout the entire redevelopment process. From helping newly relocated residents connect to services that reduce and remove barriers to supporting residents as they exercise their right to return to the new development, Urban Strategies has assisted residents from the beginning and we continue to provide individualized, family centered supports to ensure that our residents are best positioned to achieve success and self-sufficiency.”

Redevelopment of the Phases I and II of the Iberville Housing Development began in 2013, and includes the construction of 227 new apartments (81 public housing replacement; 53 affordable; 93 market rate). Leasing and occupancy of the first 103 units completed is underway, with 100 currently occupied. Sixteen former residential buildings have been preserved and are being renovated. Under Phase III, 105 mixed-income units and 4,000 square-feet of retail space are currently being constructed.

Extensive outreach was performed to ensure that the 413 former Iberville families were offered a preference to move into a new unit at Bienville Basin. In total, 53 families are moving into Phases I and II. Another 70 families have expressed a desire to move into future phases of the development.

**Pres Kabacoff, Chairman of HRI Properties**, said, “It’s been incredibly important to all of us at HRI Properties to build a vibrant community and connect it to the health of downtown New Orleans and Canal Street. Our focus on historic renovation and place making was put to the test and we are very proud of what Bienville Basin neighborhood has become.”

**Ellen Lee, City of New Orleans’ Director of Housing Policy and Community Development**, said, “It is exciting to witness the transformation of the Iberville and Treme neighborhoods as a community that brings quality housing and family supportive services to former residents while also welcoming new neighbors. The cross sector partnerships in place to make this project a reality affirms the recognition that it takes the commitment of the entire community to ensure that the opportunities to live, work, and play in New Orleans remain available to everyone.”

### **Bienville Basin Amenities**

The new Bienville Basin community will include 304 public housing units, 261 units for families earning less than 60 percent of the area median family income and 315 market-rate units. Community amenities include energy-efficient one, two and three bedroom apartments. Bienville Basin is just steps from the French Quarter with both the Canal Street and St. Charles Avenue streetcars running nearby and the Rampart Street expansion underway, providing access to all of New Orleans.

Residents at Bienville Basin will enjoy amenities such as a unique indoor/outdoor fitness center, a computer center with an outdoor technology patio, community rooms, classroom educational program spaces, a neighborhood library

and reading room, outdoor dining area including picnic benches, BBQ grills, food truck parking, four cultural gardens, playground with Tot Lot equipment and off-street, gated parking. The entire neighborhood is being wired for fiber optics, which will offer the fastest Internet and cable services in the city.

Apartment amenities include stainless steel kitchen appliances, oversized walk-in closets, full size washers and dryers, central air and heat with programmable thermostats, ceramic tile, custom carpets and hard wood flooring. Wrap around balconies and private porches are also available in select floor plans.

### **Bienville Basin Financing**

In addition to the CNI grant, the Bienville Basin community required a complex partnership and financing structure including public and private investments. Private investors in the initial two phases of Bienville Basin include: Cornerstone Permanent Mortgage Fund/Boston Capital Finance, U.S. Bank National Association, U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation, and Stonehenge Financial Services.

**Joh Lisella, Vice President of U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation**, which invested affordable-housing tax credit equity for this project, said “The rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Iberville site is very important to the neighborhood residents and the City of New Orleans. Providing residents with quality affordable housing is more than just having a home; it’s one of many steps we have been helping the Crescent City make along its march to recovery and beyond.”

Public partners on the Bienville Basin community include: HUD, Industrial Development Board of the City of New Orleans, Louisiana, Inc., Louisiana Housing Corporation, City of New Orleans Office of Community Development, State of Louisiana Office of Community Development, National Park Service and the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.