

Region

City Gets Housing Grants For 2 Showcase Projects

By Charlene Prost
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

St. Louis has received federal grants of \$3.6 million that will allow developers to complete the last phases of two of the city's showcase housing projects — DeBaliviere Place in the West End and O'Fallon Place on the

Near North Side.

The two Urban Development Action Grants were approved by officials of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington.

The approval had been sought by U.S. Sen. John C. Danforth, R-Mo., U.S. Rep. Richard A. Gephardt, D-St. Louis, Mayor Vincent C. Schoemehl Jr. and developers of the project.

Danforth, who announced approval of the grants Wednesday, said in a statement:

"These action grants are a solid federal commitment of affordable housing, jobs and economic development for St. Louis."

Gephardt said completing the projects was important "not only for improving the housing stock in the city, but also for making significant contributions for revitalization of the city as a whole."

The city got a grant of \$1.8 million, which it will lend to the developers of DeBaliviere Place and a \$1.8 million grant, which it will lend to the O'Fallon Place developers.

Under the federal program, the city obtains the grants and the project developers are required to repay the money to the city.

The grant for DeBaliviere Place will assist the developer, the Pantheon Corp., to renovate 22 buildings in order to create 309 more units of rental apartments.

Frank Hamsher, the mayor's counsel for development, said completion of the final phase of the DeBaliviere Place project would bring the total number of buildings renovated in the area to 80. It will mean also about 1,200 units of rental apartments have been renovated there since Pantheon started the project in 1975.

When the project is completed, about one-third of the rental apartments will be for low- and moderate-income people.

The buildings being redeveloped in DeBaliviere Place are in an area roughly bounded by Delmar Boulevard on the north, the Forest Park Parkway on the south, Union Boulevard on the east and Skinker Boulevard on the west.

The O'Fallon Place project is a joint venture of the Carr Square Village and Cochran Gardens public housing tenant-management corporations, along with a group of minority housing developers and McCormack Baron & Associates.

The O'Fallon Place project is bounded by Cass Avenue on the north, O'Fallon Street on the south, Hogan Avenue on the west and 14th Street on the east.

Mayor Accused Of Trying To Demean Blacks

By George E. Curry
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

The national board chairman of the NAACP and the president of its St. Louis chapter have accused Mayor Vincent C. Schoemehl Jr. of trying to "undermine and discredit" the St. Louis Housing Authority and other city agencies headed by blacks.

Margaret Bush Wilson, national board chairwoman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and James A. DeClue, president of the St. Louis chapter, were among 10 black leaders who signed a letter to the mayor objecting to his criticism of the Housing Authority.

The letter was dated March 28. It says: "We have observed with increasing dismay what appears to be a concerted effort to undermine and discredit public institutions which are managed by or serve the needs of the black community. The latest targets are the St. Louis Housing Authority, the commission chairman and its executive director."

Schoemehl said that he had not received the letter and could not comment on it.

Earlier this month, U.S. Rep. William L. Clay, D-St. Louis, and eight political leaders from north St. Louis accused Schoemehl of trying to undermine the Housing Agency.

In 1981, Schoemehl called for the resignation of all of the Housing Authority commissioners, including Chairman William A. Pearson, because of their handling of a winter crisis that left many public housing residents without heat. The commissioners refused to resign.

Also signing the NAACP letter were Pearlle I. Evans, Clay's St. Louis district assistant; James E. Terry, Stephen Clark, Michael Williams, Charles R. McIntosh, Alice Windom, Nesby Moore and James Garner.