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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **GARY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION HOSTS CITY CHURCH RUINS GARDEN PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

**Gary, Indiana** –The Gary Redevelopment Commission (GRC) will host an interactive and informative workshop unveiling the findings of the recent architectural/engineering study of the former City Methodist Church completed by Bailey Edward and ARSEE Engineers.

As part of its winning bid to the 2017 Knight Cities Challenge, the GRC contracted a team of consultants led by Bailey Edward for a structural engineering and architectural report on City Methodist Church, which has been abandoned since 1975. The report provides a detailed assessment of the current condition of the church, and outlines a scalable approach to stabilizing the sanctuary, bell tower, and a portion of the façade of the fellowship hall. These sections of the church are still salvageable, and their stabilization would enable the GRC to safely demolish the auditorium and administration block, which are threatened by collapse and are too costly to restore. The end product will be a unique ruins garden park, transforming a blighted, hazardous building into a safe, aesthetically unique public space, with potential for private programming like weddings, reunions, art performances, and other special events.

The workshop will take place on Thursday, March 22, 2018, 504 Broadway (Centier Bank building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor) from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. CST and will seek input from residents about the project's form and function. The workshop will additionally solicit concept and design ideas from workshop participants, inform residents about the church's structural condition and about the GRC's strategy for subsequent funding and phasing. The event is free, open to the public, and has activities for all ages.

Different from a charrette or a formal presentation, the workshop is designed as an open house featuring interactive exhibits and visioning activities. An informational presentation will play throughout the workshop on loop, allowing residents to engage with the topic and materials at their own pace. GRC staff, community partners from the Field Museum and Legacy Foundation, and representatives from Bailey Edward's architecture and engineering team will be on hand to explain concepts, provide information, and answer any questions.

Workshop participants will also be able to draw or write out their visions for the ruins garden on blank floor, review site plans, examine photos and documents from the former City Methodist Church that will help to illuminate the project's historical context.

Residents desiring to stay engaged, to learn more about future opportunities and activities or inclined to volunteer for projects will be encouraged to share their contact information. Upcoming events like the second annual Gary Preservation Tour and open house will be held this summer.

“The structural survey report from Bailey Edward was our first step toward making the ruins garden idea a reality. It outlines what elements of the structure can be saved, what elements are dangerous and need to be demolished, and a step-by-step process for realistically accomplishing our goals,” said Sarah Kobetis, Deputy Director of Planning for the City of Gary. “The workshop will give us the opportunity to show residents what’s possible and what’s not, so we can figure out the next steps for the project as a community.”

For more information, contact the Gary Redevelopment Commission at (219) 886-1531.

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