

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL



The Importance of Community Building

Naturally, the successful development of mixed-income housing requires expertise in the complexities of multi-family housing finance – achieving target bond ratings, mortgage terms, tax credits, subsidy layers, and underwriting for longer term affordability, among other technicalities.

Yet this sophisticated aspect of the mixed-income housing development may be eclipsed, in terms of complexity, by the nuanced and less-understood world of community building,

which is essential to the long-term viability of mixed-income neighborhoods. As Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Board Commissioner and long-time public housing resident Sandra Young explains, “Ultimately, the future of the new mixed-income communities depends on the ability of all our kids to understand, respect and support each other – so this next generation helps *us* grow out of our own segregated past and succeed in a diverse society.” How do communities intentionally go about fostering such lofty goals?

“Ultimately, the future of the new mixed-income communities depends on the ability of all our kids to understand, respect and support each other – so this next generation helps *us* grow out of our own segregated past and succeed in a diverse society.”

- long-time public housing resident leader

MPC’s November 2005 Update on the CHA Plan for Transformation focused on efforts to develop and finance moderate and market-rate homes alongside those priced for public housing residents within new mixed-income communities. This update examines efforts to build healthy community connections among the diverse residents – current and future – who will call these neighborhoods home.

Mixed-income communities, in various stages of completion, across Chicago are expected to provide new homes for approximately 15,000 households. Six years into the Plan, they are already occupied by more than 2,000 economically diverse families. In these revitalizing neighborhoods, long-time public housing residents are returning to new and redeveloped homes and sharing common spaces, house rules, and, increasingly, activities with other new residents moving into the affordable and market-rate rental or for-sale homes.

As the first phases of mixed-income housing come on line and families start settling (the so-called “post-occupancy phase”), the same developers and government agencies responsible for construction and relocation efforts are now shifting their focus. Now, they are tasked with developing human capital, building community, ensuring proper site management, fostering social cohesion among different economic backgrounds, and coordinating supportive services, governance, and links to surrounding resources.¹ A “resident services coordinator” is being hired at many sites to bridge all of these elements.

**CHA Plan for Transformation
Update**

August 2006

What's Underway

Although the breadth of Chicago's Plan dwarfs most national comparisons, experiences across the country underscore that viable communities require more than quality housing and a mix of incomes.² Professional, engaged property management is vital. Intentional efforts to provide a variety of activities and amenities that appeal to the diversity of residents are needed. Promoting paths to increased economic stability for low-income families also is key. Creative community engagement and governance strategies must be put in place. And reconnecting the new communities to the fabric of their surrounding neighborhoods and the city at large should be one of the ultimate goals.

Developers and managers at these Chicago sites are still testing newly designed post-occupancy strategies to address these issues, so the lessons are limited. As of mid-2006, most sites have completed only the initial rental phases, with for-sale phases still under construction or just coming on line. Although the number of homeowners living in these communities is still small, positive signs can be easily seen. Occupancy rates in existing rental units are high at all income levels, and sales at most sites show healthy trends. Indicators of community revitalization beyond the "bricks

and mortar" component also are evident. A number of property managers and resident service coordinators report significant improvements in overall safety in comparison with pre-Plan levels. They also report, in most cases, sustained resident participation in programmed activities and successful adoption by residents of the new names of the communities, a sign that the new community identities are taking root.

Public and civic entities are working in coordination with CHA and its developers and social service providers, contributing to the momentum of community renewal in these neighborhoods. Initiatives such as the Civic Committee-led Renaissance 2010 already are having an impact: one example is Donoghue School, created under the leadership of the University of Chicago's Center for School Improvement in the vicinity of Oakwood Shores, a new mixed-income community located near the lakefront between 35th Street and Pershing Road. The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and the Chicago Department of Human Services also are contributing significant resources in support of the "human side" of the Plan. Other public and sister agencies such as the departments of Planning and Development and Housing, as well as

the Chicago Park District, also are aligning resources to guarantee the housing development component of the Plan is complemented by spaces and activities for neighbors to share and enjoy. The Chicago/LISC New Communities program is investing millions of dollars in almost all of the neighborhoods where mixed-income communities are being developed, making sure all residents have a voice in the community planning process, offering technical assistance, promoting knowledge exchange among local organizations, and creating partnerships to attract new resources into these areas.

As CHA continues its internal transformation into an asset manager and as the development teams assume new roles, many questions remain:

- What are the necessary ingredients to build community among such a wide mix of residents?
- Who is responsible for providing those ingredients?
- How can we gauge success?

Following an examination of the status of post-occupancy efforts at selected mixed-income communities, the Metropolitan Planning Council proposes some policy recommendations based on the early experiences.

Hilliard Towers Apartments

OCCUPANCY BEGAN OCTOBER 2004	CHA homes		Affordable homes		Total
	Family	Senior	Family	Senior	
Occupied as of July 2006	57	124	87	100	368
To be developed by end of Plan	305		349		654

SOURCE: HOLSTEN AND CHA

The rehabilitation of the Hilliard Homes, a rental community located on the Near South Side adjacent to Chinatown, includes homes for seniors and affordable apartments for families. This redevelopment effort is being led by Holsten, a Chicago-based company that provides development, property management, and supportive services.

Holsten has a Human Capital Development (HCD) office on-site to provide resident transition/social services, workforce development, and community building. Services include needs assessments; employment assessments; and social service referrals, including health care,

mental health and wellness, education, financial literacy, job training, child care assistance, and counseling. HCD also employs resident outreach workers to assist with reaching out to CHA residents eligible for housing.

HCD works to foster and build community interaction through such recreational and social events as resident meetings, health and wellness seminars, job seeker meetings, children’s recreational and educational events, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) sign-ups, and health fairs. A health consortium and a community mural have been created. A monthly calendar and quarterly newsletter

keep residents informed of events and services available through the office, as well as in the greater community through Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) and local boards and organizations.

Participation in community activities is higher among seniors than families. An important physical feature of Hilliard contributing to a healthy community is its 12 acres of grounds, which include an outdoor amphitheater, basketball courts, and playground areas.

Holsten complements funding from CHA with its own resources.

Jazz on the Boulevard

OCCUPANCY BEGAN NOVEMBER 2005	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	19	9	20	0	21	60
To be developed by end of Plan	30	36		71		137

SOURCE: HEARTLAND HOUSING AND CHA

The Jazz on the Boulevard community is located between 41st and 43rd streets, along Drexel Boulevard. One of the members of the development team, Heartland Housing, is joining efforts with a sister organization, Heartland Human Care Services, to establish a Resident Success Housing model in this community.

Heartland focuses on three coordinated components: property management, resident services, and community leadership. This comprehensive approach has been proven to help decrease resident turnover within developments, increase community involvement by residents, increase self-worth for residents who have unstable housing histories, increase visibility of the

development in the neighborhood, and create powerful community organizations.

One significant component of this model is the Community Building-Ambassadors for Change program. The Ambassadors for Change organization was started by former CHA residents to promote community building activities and programs (social events, youth-centered activities, neighborhood gatherings, etc.); strengthen leadership (defined as actions residents do for the neighborhood at large); and reach out to current CHA residents to support them and guide them through the transformation process. A Community Leadership Coordinator, hired and supervised by Heartland, has begun planning social and

educational events that bring residents together. To date, Ambassadors for Change is comprised primarily of residents who formerly lived in public housing, but its vision is being redesigned to include residents living in non-CHA rental units and condos. Currently, the group has planned a summer picnic and is considering launching a community watch program. A 75 percent turnout rate among renters is usual at events and activities.

Funding for post-occupancy strategies at Jazz on the Boulevard comes from CHA, with contributions from Citibank and the University of Chicago.

Lake Park Crescent

OCCUPANCY BEGAN OCTOBER 2004	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	60	59	0	36	0	145
To be developed by end of Plan	TBD	TBD		TBD		TBD

SOURCE: DRAPER & KRAMER AND CHA

At Lake Park Crescent, located between 40th and 42nd streets along Lake Michigan, a collaborative including Draper & Kramer (the developer/property manager), Abraham Lincoln Center (ALC), and the Field Museum, has been set in motion.

Around 10 staff members from Draper & Kramer, ALC, and the Field Museum work on post-occupancy at Lake Park Crescent (LPC), two of them exclusively focused on community building and services. CHA funds one of these full-time positions, which provides social services strictly to public housing residents.

A variety of programs are offered, some more focused on promoting individual self-sufficiency and others oriented toward community building. Activities include resident groups around poetry, arts, walking, and cooking. Residents also receive discounts on trips to the Field Museum, Joffrey Ballet, and Chicago Culinary Institute. Some activities are not limited to the LPC community and include residents from the surrounding area. There's also an effort to connect LPC with a nearby mixed-income development, Lake Park Place, by sharing resources.

Regular Town Hall meetings address such topics as safety, grocery stores, development updates, parking issues, and governance, with a typical attendance of 30 to 40 residents.

Apart from CHA dollars, Lake Park Crescent is using a MacArthur Foundation grant of \$250,000 per year. The foundation recently awarded an additional \$750,000 over three years. ALC leverages other grants thanks to those dollars.

Legends South

OCCUPANCY BEGAN JULY 2005	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	54	44	0	12	0	110
To be developed by end of Plan	851	1,013		832		2,696

SOURCE: MICHAELS DEVELOPMENT AND CHA

The redevelopment of the Robert Taylor Homes, located along State Street between 39th and 54th streets, is known as Legends South. Its first phase, Mahalia Place, is being served by Changing Patterns for Families, a nonprofit agency contracted by the development team, Brinshore/Michaels. A Community and Supportive Services Coordinator is in charge of orchestrating social services within the Legend South community, developing relationships with community-based organizations and resources, and coordinat-

ing residential programming and events in conjunction with the property manager.

Activities that have been scheduled for residents include festivals and financial literacy workshops, as well as periodic building meetings, employment orientation sessions, and safety meetings. After School Matters offers summer youth activities including a DJ program and Mural program that employs up to 20 youth between the ages of 14 and 17. Future programming plans include continued residential meetings,

development of residential team leaders, and youth programming.

Most of the funding is being provided through a contract with CHA. Some funding has been allocated by the After School Matters program to connect youth with jobs.

North Town Village

OCCUPANCY BEGAN APRIL 2001	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	78	39	11	38	94	260
To be developed by end of Plan	79	50		132		261

SOURCE: HOLSTEN AND CHA

As is the case with Hilliard Homes, Holsten manages post-occupancy services and activities in North Town Village (NTV). The community occupies seven acres near the former Cabrini-Green and was one of the first mixed-income communities to be developed as part of the Plan for Transformation. Holsten’s Human Capital Development team reports an increase in resident participation at NTV and is optimistic about the future, as residents have

become more comfortable with new staff over the past year.

Resident services are self-funded and include supportive services and a jobs program. Holsten does needs assessment, helps families develop five-year plans, and serves as the service connector through a Resident Transition Program, which builds on the CHA Good Neighbor program and provides assistance in finding schools and connecting residents with surrounding institutions.

Parties are held every quarter, with healthy participation rates. Holsten encourages new families to introduce themselves to the families already living in their buildings.

At North Town Village, there is currently a condo association and a shared area committee. The shared area committee has owners and renters who jointly tackle common area issues.

Oakwood Shores

OCCUPANCY BEGAN NOVEMBER 2004	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	77	69	0	66	0	212
To be developed by end of Plan	1,000*	680		1,320		3,000

(*) includes 100 for sale homes

SOURCE: THE COMMUNITY BUILDERS AND CHA

The Community Builders (TCB) is the main entity responsible for post-occupancy strategies at Oakwood Shores, on the former site of the Madden/Wells CHA development (bounded by 35th Street, Pershing Road, Ellis Avenue, and Martin Luther King Drive). Staff includes a program manager, resident services manager, and four resident service coordinators. Resident service coordinators primarily work with CHA residents to assist in the relocation process, engage youth in productive activities, and help access amenities in the community, such as educational services at Donoghue or Pershing schools. They also collaborate closely with Ujima – a word that means “collective work and responsibility” – an organization founded in 2001 to assess resident needs and monitor community progress. Ujima focuses on employment, lease compliance, family stability, and community integration and is made up of former Madden/Wells residents.

Services and programs provided directly by resident services staff include asset building, voter registration drives, and employment services. Funding from CHA is combined with an initial \$250,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation, which also has awarded an additional \$1 million over three years to support this effort. A Center for Working Families is being funded by the Partnership for New Communities via LISC. The Center helps community residents, regardless of income, build household financial strength by accessing public benefits for which community residents may qualify; providing money management advice; building and overseeing partnerships with banks and credit unions; encouraging savings for education, home ownership, etc.; and providing job placement, retention, re-placement, and career advancement services. TCB also leverages programs of other community organizations and works with partners such as Abraham Lincoln Center (ALC), Chicago Youth Center, Little Black Pearl Workshop,

and SGA Youth & Family Services. TCB partners with Michael Reese Hospital to work with seniors and transport them to the hospital for medical assistance. Child care services in the area are provided primarily by ALC and Centers for New Horizons.

Residents meet monthly with management and resident services staff to discuss property management concerns, youth activities, the community calendar, and other projects such as an initiative to bring Wi-Fi to the community. There are plans for future community events and fundraisers such as a jazz fest and spoken word contest.

Plans are being discussed a resident association all residents. The goal is to provide a forum for both renters and owners to come together. Strategies for community building activities are in the works, as more owners move in to the community.

Park Boulevard

OCCUPANCY BEGAN NOVEMBER 2005	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	27	53	0	0	0	80
To be developed by end of Plan	439	438		439		1,316

SOURCE: PARK BOULEVARD AND CHA

Park Boulevard is being developed on 37 acres located along State Street between 35th Street and Pershing Road, on the former site of Stateway Gardens. A nonprofit organization, Stateway Community Partners (SCP), was formed in 2005 to manage community supportive services for returning residents. SCP contracted with the Family Institute at Northwestern University (TFI) to provide resident services at Park Boulevard. The vision is for SCP to be around to provide services to resident families long after the development team is gone. Currently, SCP’s eight board members include representatives from the developer, Stateway Associates; the Local Advisory Council (the public housing residents council); Centers

for New Horizons; and Illinois Institute of Technology, which is located directly to the north of Park Boulevard. SCP is working to expand its staff and board.

TFI is providing post-occupancy supportive services for the 27 public housing residents who reside in Pershing Courts, the first phase of redevelopment at Park Boulevard (located off site). Services include educational opportunities, workforce development, childcare information, financial literacy, and individual and family counseling. To accommodate residents, most services are provided in residents’ homes or wherever residents choose and are most comfortable, which might include schools, restaurants, or TFI offices. The

long-term goals of the TFI program are self-sufficiency, physical and emotional well-being, and community integration.

The majority of residents engaged in services are CHA residents, but plans to promote community building and additional services in the later phases of development are in the works.

CHA funding for the services is being combined with a grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

Roosevelt Square

OCCUPANCY BEGAN AUGUST 2005	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	125	56	49	N/A	45	275
To be developed by end of Plan	755	335	300	1,051		2,441

SOURCE: LR DEVELOPMENT AND CHA

Roosevelt Square is the name of the redevelopment currently under construction at the ABLA Homes site. The development site consists of over 100 acres covering approximately 37 blocks, generally bounded by Cabrini Street, Racine and Blue Island avenues, 15th Street and Ashland Avenue, on the Near West Side.

At Roosevelt Square, the development team – LR Development Company LLC, Quest Development, and Heartland Housing – is planning to contribute approximately \$4 million to fund a community-based, 501(c)3 nonprofit entity called Roosevelt Square Community Partners (RSCP). The mission of RSCP is to assist in the development of individual capacity and self-sufficiency and promote economic independ-

ence of Roosevelt Square residents; develop and manage a network of supportive institutions and organizations; provide tracking and data reporting of improved outcomes; and contribute to a prosperous future for the community.

RSCP will act as community advocate, catalyst, and program coordinator. In addition to funds received by the Roosevelt Square development team, RSCP will seek additional or “matching” funding from local foundations, philanthropists and corporate donors, and niche governmental funding to address continued gaps in social services delivery. A board of directors currently comprised of members of the development team is governing the operations of RSCP.

To date, the development team has contributed over \$450,000 dollars to fund RSCP programs, including employment-related services such as construction training and placement; Wi-Fi and technology planning; supportive services for women and minority business owners; and resident outreach and communications.

Some of the partners of RSCP include Westside 2000 and Heartland Human Care Services, Small Contractors Network, ABLA Local Advisory Council, and Hispanic American Construction Industry Association.

Funding from CHA is complementing the dollars contributed by the development team.

West End

OCCUPANCY BEGAN NOVEMBER 2004	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	14	18	0	10	0	42
To be developed by end of Plan	264	265		326		855

SOURCE: EASTLAKE DEVELOPMENT AND CHA

Located at Madison and Western avenues, the first redevelopment phase of West End (formerly known as Rockwell Gardens) is a rental community located off site. To promote community building and resident engagement, Eastlake Development employs as part of its regular budget a resident services manager. The manager visits every public housing family at least monthly, providing assistance in utility bill payment and jobs searches, referrals for children’s activities, and counseling about neighborly conduct. The manager also helps prepare resumes, escorts residents to interviews, and performs interview coaching.

A significant role of the resident services manager is connecting residents to local resources. The Salvation Army offers after-school programs, summer vacation camps, Head Start, and has a computer lab, gym and billiards. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boys and Girls Club provides after-school and teen programs, vacation camps, computer classes, an indoor pool, swim lessons, dance lessons, mentoring, Head Start, Family Fun Nights, and other programs. Mt. Vernon Baptist Church Community Center will open in the fall of 2007, offering day care for infants and toddlers, including Head Start, and primary school age children, such as after-school care and vacation camps. The Center will also offer teen programs. The Center’s facilities will include a

fitness center, credit union, gymnasium, computer lab, bookstore, and dental clinic; it’s auditorium will be available for community meetings.

Activities sponsored by management include a barbecue for residents, which police, faith-based organizations, and service providers also attend. Families receive vouchers to cover their costs.

Funding for some of these efforts comes from a CHA contract covering services for public housing residents and community-building activities for one year. Other funding comes from the regular management budget for the development.

West Haven Park

OCCUPANCY BEGAN NOVEMBER 2003	CHA homes	Affordable homes		Market-rate homes		Total
		For rent	For sale	For rent	For sale	
Occupied as of July 2006	104	31	0	39	30	204
To be developed by end of Plan	271	133		360		764

SOURCE: MICHAELS DEVELOPMENT AND CHA

Westhaven Park is located between Lake and Washington streets, on the Near West Side, and is part of a larger effort to revitalize the old Governor Henry Horner Homes. This effort started before the Plan began and includes, along with Westhaven Park, 553 new public housing homes located in the vicinity of the old site.

Close relations have been established between the property manager, Interstate Realty Management Co., and community-based partners such as Project Match, TASC, and Near West Side CDC. These entities provide both direct services and referrals to other social service agencies in response to residents needs. One of the most innovative programs is Pathways to Rewards, an initiative that awards “points” to low-income families that take positive steps toward improving their circumstances. The points can be exchanged for

free Internet and cable service, utility bill payments, gift certificates, and other benefits. A customized version of Pathways to Rewards targets youth ages 13 to 17, and aims to improve the teens’ self-image and relationships with their families and the community at large.

A number of activities are available to the entire community, such as financial planning workshops, exercise groups, dance classes, and cookouts. There is also an effort to link residents to volunteering opportunities in the neighborhood. The Center for Working Families, which provides similar services to its counterpart in Oakwood Shores, is open for families of all incomes to benefit from its programs. Also, a Home Visitors Program assists former residents of the Henry Horner Homes to make the transition from high-rise public housing to the Westhaven Park mixed-income development. The program pro-

vides in-home support to help residents maintain their new homes, comply with lease requirements, and link to other community resources to achieve self-sufficiency and integration into the broader community.

As a way to start expanding participation in the community’s decision-making process, an Activities Committee is being set in motion that will include residents from across the development. Interaction among residents is being promoted also by hosting events at an existing condominium building open to families renting in buildings nearby.

Key funders of post-occupancy services and activities include CHA, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Partnership for New Communities.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND ONGOING QUESTIONS

While each of these mixed-income sites is addressing community building differently, with partners and strategies based on local character and strengths, several common challenges face all locations. Solutions must be informed by national best practices, but respond to the specific conditions and realities at each local site.

Long-Term Funding Sustainability

Using federal funding, the CHA typically offers developers post-occupancy dollars that cover only the first year of residency for public housing families (with the possibility to renew funding for one or two more years). The city is working to ensure that funding is available to cover the costs when mixed-income community residents are referred to citywide supportive services, employment services, and community integration. But the sustainability of funding beyond those initial years is uncertain. The need for comprehensive longer-term strategies is clear, since neighborhood renewal takes time and very-low-income residents likely will need supportive services for more than a year

or two. Since these communities include not only public housing residents, but also low-income families living in non-CHA units (and thus ineligible for CHA-funded services), developer funds are currently being combined with contributions from foundations, banks, and community-based organizations. Creative formulas need to be devised to guarantee that the high costs of operating these communities and providing appropriate services are covered in the long-term, as pointed out in previous MPC updates.³

Children and Youth

Another common challenge relates to the creation of spaces and programs for teens and children. Typically, most children within a development are living in subsidized housing, creating a difficult dynamic as many of the market-rate renters and owners strive for more quiet, “adult living” environments. Solutions must be in place to help bridge the “divide” between families with children and teenagers and households without them. To ensure children and youth are engaged in constructive activity, much of the focus is on providing after-school programming, which provides options for children and their parents. As one service coordinator pointed out, “Kids are key. Where kids coalesce, adults coalesce.

“Kids are key. Where kids coalesce, adults coalesce. You have to build community through the kids.”

- service coordinator

Early experiences indicate the most successful mixed-income sites are those in which residents actively participate and feel “ownership” of their community.

“People in the community have lots to offer, and tapping into those resources and nurturing this inside talent is as important as bringing outside resources into the community.”

- developer

You have to build community through the kids.” Partnerships with local organizations such as YMCAs, YWCAs, and Boys and Girls Clubs can offer young children and teens activities and places to gather after school. Quality spaces for such activities, whether in the developments or the surrounding community, are essential.

Inclusive Community Engagement and Governance Models

Early experiences indicate the most successful mixed-income sites are those in which residents actively participate and feel “ownership” of their community. Several sites are providing much-needed training opportunities to strengthen resident leadership skills. Said one developer, “People in the community have lots to offer, and tapping into those resources and nurturing this inside talent is as important as bringing outside resources into the community.” Across developments, practitioners recommend involving residents not only in development planning and outreach, but also in post-occupancy community activities and marketing the new communities to prospective residents.

Community engagement and governance are also important issues facing these communities. The old model,

based on Local Advisory Councils of CHA residents, no longer suffices. A new model that reflects the diversity of these communities and the need for connections to the broader neighborhood is required. In most communities, the majority of existing housing is rental, but homeowners will be moving in soon, and more innovative governance strategies will be essential to realizing neighborhood revitalization goals.

Aligning Resources and Tracking Progress

Resident service coordinators and property managers must work in tandem, sharing responsibilities for reporting and troubleshooting community issues. Although experience indicates this is easier when one organization covers all components (such as in the case of The Community Builders at Oakwood Shores or Holsten at Hilliard Homes and North Town Village), it is also feasible through solid partnerships, clear communication among staff and, ideally, single-contact points for residents.

While this update contains site-specific information, promoting best practices warrants some common indicators of success and transparency. To make the case for sustainable funding, it will be essential to estab-

lish quantifiable indicators for measuring success in community building across all sites. Once such indicators are established, it will be imperative to align public and philanthropic commitments to ensure the financial resources are there to support community building, both as part of “post-occupancy work” and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Jobs and Workforce Development

One distinguishing feature of the Plan for Transformation communities is the emphasis on employment. Workforce development is fundamental during the “post-occupancy stage,” especially since most mixed-income communities require renters between 18 and 61 years old to work 30 hours per week or be involved in appropriate jobs training, self-sufficiency programs, or education.⁴ Monitoring work requirements and determining how to proceed when a resident loses his or her job and stays unemployed for a long time, are big issues for property managers. CHA contracts with developers include benchmarks regarding job placement and training, in line with those of the Service Connector program.⁵ The Partnership for New Communities recently launched a major workforce initiative to strengthen and improve CHA’s approach, including increased

emphasis on literacy, transitional jobs, and bridge training programs offered in collaboration with the City Colleges of Chicago and other providers. To ensure overall community stability, strong connections with the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development and expert organizations must be in place, along with flexible approaches to the 30-hour work requirement.

CONCLUSIONS

Building community in a mixed-income development requires attention to an array of issues, including supportive services; social, cultural, and civic activities; community governance; and connections to surrounding resources. In Chicago, different sites are experimenting with different models. No single formula can be applied to every mixed-income site: each community has different resources, historical backgrounds, demographics, and priorities.

The city is working to reverse trends suggesting that moderate income neighborhoods are shrinking while very low and very high-income neighborhoods continue to increase, a dynamic that is affecting large central cities across the country.⁶ Chicago

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“A lot of people are scared by things that are new or different, but they get used to them and see that what they feared wasn’t scary at all.”

- resident of the Ida B. Wells community

is learning from the lessons of public housing transformation how to foster inclusive and accessible mixed-income neighborhoods, including how to identify goals and measure progress.

The challenges outlined in this update are not only affecting Chicago. There is a national dialogue on community building with questions ranging from how to structure housing financing to include resident services, to how to underwrite those services and measure outcomes via performance indicators.⁷ The question of how to leverage public, philanthropic and private dollars is a critical one across the country, at a time when federal support for public housing and its associated services is dwindling. Our local dialogue around these issues must be connected to efforts at the national level.

Just as housing finance has its experts, similar expertise needs to be established in the community building arena. While solutions must be localized, there are many lessons from developers, property managers, community and service partners, and CHA to be shared with one another and with the field at large.

Creating new and diverse communities and providing the means to make them sustainable over time are proba-

bly the most challenging tasks of the Plan for Transformation. As a young resident of the Ida B. Wells community (now being transformed into Oakwood Shores) wrote when describing the transformation of the neighborhood, “A lot of people are scared by things that are new or different, but they get used to them and see that what they feared wasn’t scary at all.”⁸ After all, the new communities being created by the Plan should not be different from other Chicago neighborhoods, where a diversity of residents live, work, play, and share experiences.

For a more comprehensive analysis of CHA's historic Plan for Transformation, visit MPC's Web site at www.metroplanning.org. MPC Fact Sheets and other research papers that examine various components of the Plan are available.

For more information about MPC's Public Housing in the Public Interest program, contact Robin Snyderman, housing director, at 312.863.6007 or rsnyderman@metroplanning.org; or Roberto Requejo, housing associate, at 312.863.6015 or rrequejo@metroplanning.org.

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Endnotes

- 1 See Patrick Costigan and Leo Quigley (2006), "Resident Success in Economically Integrated, Socially Diverse Housing" at www.tcbinc.org/what_we_do/resident_success/Ford_MIMR_Resident_Success_without_Att.pdf
- 2 See Paul Brophy and Rhonda Smith (1997), "Mixed-Income Housing: Factors for Success" in *Cityscape*, vol. 3, no. 2 or <http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/cityscpe/vol3num2/success.pdf> or Mindy Turbov and Valerie Piper (2005), "HOPE VI and Mixed-Finance Redevelopments: A Catalyst for Neighborhood Renewal," published by The Brookings Institution and available at www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20050913_hopevi.pdf
- 3 See Transformation Update – July 2005 by MPC available at www.metroplanning.org/ourwork/articleDetail.asp?pageID=3&objectID=2829&categoryID=2
- 4 For details on work requirements and other tenant selection and occupancy criteria, see MPC's CHA Plan for Transformation Update – July 2005 cited above.
- 5 The Service Connector program is provided by the Chicago Dept. of Human Services to link families relocated due to the Plan for Transformation and other public housing residents not living in mixed-income communities to supportive services and workforce development programs. For more information see: www.metroplanning.org/articleDetail.asp?objectID=3252
- 6 See Jason Booza, Jackie Cutsinger, and George Galster (2006), "Where Did They Go? The Decline of Middle-Income Neighborhoods in Metropolitan America" published by the Brookings Institution and available at www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060622_middleclass.pdf
- 7 In 2005, the Enterprise Foundation and NeighborWorks co-hosted the symposium "Resident Services: Linking Affordable Housing and Opportunities for Families" in Washington, D.C. For more information, see the Web article "Footing the bill for vital services for affordable workforce housing residents" at www.metroplanning.org/articleDetail.asp?objectID=2747
- 8 In "The Other Side of the Fence: A Cultural Antology," created by young residents of Ida B. Wells in collaboration with the Local Advisory Council and AfterSchool Matters.