

Mixing it Up: Public Housing Redevelopment in Chicago

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Paper presented at the conference
Area-based initiatives in contemporary urban policy
Danish Building and Urban Research and European Urban Research
Association Copenhagen 17-19 May 2001

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Abstract

The current trend in US public housing redevelopment is to replace existing high-rise, high density 'projects' with new lower density, mixed-income communities. The underlying assumption is that mixing together market rate and public housing units will result in social interaction of low-income and middle-income families, which in turn is to provide greater opportunities and reduce social isolation of the poor. While there is little empirical evidence that this will actually occur public housing authorities are making and implementing plans to transform existing developments into lower density, higher quality housing that can attract higher income families to both rent and purchase.

As cities press forward with their plans, a key concern is getting the right blend of low, middle and high-income households. Federal policy does not mandate the mix, leaving this to the discretion of local actors involved in the redevelopment process, including local government, public housing authorities, planning consultants, for-profit developers, and to a lesser degree, public housing tenants and community residents. A challenge nationwide is how to balance the needs of public housing residents and the market interests of developers when determining this mix. The evidence to date in Chicago suggests that the proportion of permanent housing for very low-income renters is going to decrease. While some simply attribute this outcome to the Mayor's 'growth machine' approach to transformation (i.e. decrease the number of units to satisfy landowners wanting to protect property values and government wanting to increase tax base), these power relations are only a partial factor in shaping the mix. Even more constraining, however, is new national law that encourages higher numbers of market rate units by giving more control to private sector investors.

The argument made here is that even when given more opportunity to participate in the planning process, public housing tenants cannot control the outcome because the mix is effectively pre-determined by national policy requirements. Using a redevelopment site in Chicago as an example, this paper examines how strategies used to 'up the number' of public housing in the mix can be institutionalized in order to give tenants more opportunity to control the outcome of the planning process. Three interrelated components are proposed for the plan. First, outcomes for redevelopment need to be driven by residents of public housing rather than by returns to investment. Second, the scale and scope of transformation must expand beyond the public housing site to produce these outcomes. Third, strategies to limit land speculation must be used to keep public housing in the public domain. All three fit into a community-based approach to redevelopment that aims to give residents real power.

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Introduction

The question that we should have asked in 1949, when the federal urban renewal program started, is long overdue now: Is it right to deliberately hurt people, to push around those who are least able to defend themselves, to spend billions of dollars of the taxpayers money, so that some people might be able to enjoy a prettier city?

Martin Anderson, The Federal Bulldozer, 1966

Public housing is being transformed in the US. High-rise buildings in large 'tower-in-the-park' developments -- home to thousands of families -- are being demolished and replaced with smaller scale, lower density developments. Since 1996, nearly 100,000 units have been razed, with more expected as local public housing authorities (PHAs) around the country are mandated by law to remove 'non-viable' developments and either replace them with new units or with housing assistance vouchers for tenants to use in the private sector. While the projected loss of units represents less than 10% of the total inventory, its symbolic loss is monumental, especially during a time when the US has an estimated 5.4 million families with 'worst case' housing needs (US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000).ⁱ

Even more challenging is the fact that not all the replacement housing will be for very low-income families. National policy now encourages and supports "the intentional mixing of incomes and working status of residents" on the grounds that it will "enhance the quality of life for residents while improving the economic viability of multifamily developments, particularly former public housing developments, and strengthen neighborhoods" (USDHUD 1997, p.1). The underlying assumption is that mixing together market rate and public housing units will "promote the economic and social interaction of low-income families within the broader community, thereby providing greater opportunities for the upward mobility of such families" (Federal Register May 2, 1996). Trying to make-up for previous mistakes in the design and development of public housing, the intent is to undo the social isolation of very low-income families, mostly African American, and to redress the negative externalities produced in surrounding communities.

The transformation of public housing is promising, because it provides an opportunity to really improve abhorrent conditions many public residents live in. However, it is also very controversial because redevelopment relies heavily on the private sector, which is expected to significantly reduce the number of permanent public housing units nationwide. In Chicago, where a substantial number of public housing units are slated for demolition, a similar question to the one posed above by Martin Anderson is being asked about public housing transformation today. However, the table is turned: Privatists are finally getting "the economic system of free enterprise as a viable alternative to the government program" (1966, p. viii) while public housing proponents are trying to figure out how the current government program to transform public housing is different from urban renewal efforts in the 1960s that destroyed communities and failed to produce sufficient replacement housing (e.g. see Bennett and Reed, 1999; Betancur 2000; Smith 1999; Wright and Ranney 2000). Especially disconcerting is evidence that the

redevelopment process has adapted the 'growth coalition' model described by Logan and Molotch (1987); private sector actors with a fixed relationship to the area, particularly real estate developers and local business leaders have aligned with government to assure plans will maximize return and minimize risk on these large scale development projects. At the same time, public housing residents are struggling to get a seat at the table, and are now relying on legal intervention to get information from the housing authority on redevelopment plans.

While there is great concern that *those who are least able to defend themselves* are at a disadvantage in Chicago, this paper challenges the premise that opening up the process to residents will actually improve the likelihood that more public housing will be added to the mix as sites are redeveloped. Despite a recent glowing report on community building in several 'worst case' public housing redevelopment sites (Naperstek, et al, 2000), incorporating principles of collaboration, inclusion, communication and participation can only have limited success in affecting the income mix. A critical factor in the US is the degree to which expanded participation actually 'empowers' residents in a process where the outcomes are predetermined by national policy that restricts how much public housing can be built back on-site. As Arnstein (1969) describes, real citizen control occurs only when there is real transfer of power from government to citizens-anything less than this is non-participation or tokenism. A real transfer of power occurs through partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. Partnerships share power while delegated power means citizens have control over some of the process. Citizen control means residents have complete control over the process and the conditions shaping that process. Using Arnstein's scale, public housing resident involvement in the planning process can be at best tokenism; even when residents go into partnership with public officials, they remain the lesser partner because the outcome prescribed by national policy guidelines favors private sector interests over public housing.

Reliance on the market to redevelop public housing is a significant point of contention in this paper; however, not simply on the principle that private sector interests are generally counter to public housing development. Rather, because relatively nothing is being done to *really* transform the space of public housing other than quickly 'building over' the existing sites. If transformation is really intended to benefit low-income families and not repeat the mistakes of the past, then the planning process needs to address head on difficult issues around race and class and perhaps the most intractable in the US: the right to housing. Proposed here is an area-based approach that builds on the 'lessons learned' from recent redevelopment efforts in Chicago on how to expand resident control; however, not through usual planning processes that increase participation but rather through a set of outcomes measures that the redevelopment plan must include before it can be implemented. While a specific guide for Chicago, the proposal deals with common constraints created by national law that affect all communities redeveloping public housing in the US.

Section 1 briefly reviews national policy, to illustrate how a market approach to 'transform' public housing came to be developed and codified through recent national policy that minimizes the number of public housing units that can be built back on-site. Section 2 outlines specific strategies used in Chicago by tenants and their advocates to maximize public housing units on redevelopment sites when traditional planning processes have failed to generate full replacement housing. Section 3 concludes with a proposal to expand the 'space of transformation' beyond the public housing site in Chicago, to shift the participation process from tokenism to real control and to assure public housing residents get mixed in rather than out of public housing.

1. The New Frontier of US Public Housing Policy

The concept of mixed-income communities has long been a goal of progressive planners and housers in the US (see Bauer, 1951; Jacobs 1961) seeking to promote a range of housing options in a single community. Contrary to this model, land use planning and zoning have contributed to income segregation as different types of housing have been coded and separated as urban areas developed over the past century. Recent interest in New Urbanism, which promotes a mixing of land uses, tenure and income groups (e.g. see Duany, 2000), has become a model for public housing transformation (Congress for New Urbanism, 1996).

Historically, scholars and policy makers have questioned the viability of 'mixed neighborhoods' on the grounds that they are highly unusual and therefore most likely unstable (see Smith 1998). The overwhelming evidence of spatial segregation by income as well as race and ethnicity in urban areas does raise questions about the extent to which different groups of people are willing and able to mix (Massey and Denton, 1993).ⁱⁱ However, we also need to look more closely at the role of public lawmakers in producing the spatial patterns we see. This includes national government, which has historically not been willing to (or able to) insure or underwrite 'mixed-income' developments, and until introduction of Fair Housing laws in 1968, had been one of many proponents of racial and ethnic segregation (Squires, 1996; Judd, 1999). An added dimension shaping these spatial patterns is the development early on of a 'two-tier' system that distinguished types of housing assistance by income (Bradford 1996). Broadly stated, national housing policy in the US has been based on two strategies since the 1930s: providing public housing for low-income households to rent and long-term financing for middle-income households to purchase private housing in the market. Together, these strategies reinforced economic spatial segregation as the majority of public housing got built in central cities and the majority of private sector middle-income housing was built in the surrounding suburbs.

The past few years have seen what appears to be a paradigm shift in the US—bringing together the two tiers of the system by mixing income groups (and potentially race) in public housing redevelopment. As presented in policy rhetoric, mixed-income housing is expected to help break the cycle of poverty by reconnecting public housing tenants to the middle-class and their values/ethics about work, as well as their network in the labor force (Khadduri and Martin, 1997). As scholars have pointed out, we have no real evidence in which to ground these assumptions (Schill, 1997; Schwartz and Tajbakhsh, 1997). Equally important, public housing proponents point out that we do have good reason for keeping the private sector out of the process—the point of public housing is to keep housing and the land it occupies out of speculative hands (Bauer 1951; Stone 1993; Hartman 1998). As with other efforts to foster public-private partnerships, we need to proceed with caution to assure the social goals are not subordinate to the fiscal goals.

Fitting into a broader trend in housing and community development, which Carmon (1997) refers to as 'a businesslike approach' to revitalization, this approach relies on free market enterprise to remedy urban deterioration through *public-individual partnerships* and *public-private partnerships*. Public-individual partnerships form when the public sector supplements investment by households and businesses through subsidies, low-interest loans, infrastructure improvements, relaxing regulations, etc. Public-private partnerships are formed when private investors and public agencies work

cooperatively on a large-scale project, generally with a consumption orientation (e.g. shopping centers). Both encourage the middle-class to spend money in the city, which in turn raises the tax base and therefore justifies the investment of public dollars. The HOPE VI program introduced during the Clinton administration facilitated both types of partnerships to transform public housing into mixed-income developments.

Creating HOPE

Following the trend started by the previous Republican administrations, the 'new Democrats' were seeking ways to bring private money into the community development arena without raising taxes (Lemann, 1994). In the case of public housing, there clearly was a need to leverage private sector resources to offset decreased federal outlays (see Federal Register 1996) and to encourage non-governmental actors to get more involved in funding revitalization activities. After 12 years of budget cuts during the Reagan and Bush administrations, public housing was both under-funded and under scrutiny. The HOPE VI program (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere), announced soon after former President Clinton took office in 1992, offered PHAs through a competitive grant process up to \$50 million to 'turn around' worst case developments. These funds could be used to rehabilitate, raze and rebuild units in order to produce lower density high quality public housing. HOPE VI grew out of the work of the National Commission on Severally Distressed Public Housing, a congressional committee formed in 1989 to "explore the factors contributing to structural, economic, and social distress; identify strategies for remediation; and propose a national action plan to eradicate distressed conditions by the year 2000" (USGAO 1998: 3).

Beyond improving housing quality, social services were proposed to help transform the occupants of public housing. As former Secretary of HUD Andrew Cuomo described, there was a broader agenda for HOPE VI: "This program is about much more than rebuilding housing...We will give them the chance to work their way out of poverty and out of public housing" (Cuomo, 1998). Equally important was the aspiration to redevelop how the public views public housing itself. From this vantage point, the modern high-rise 'projects' built in the 1950s and 60s was a logical target for redevelopment. Emblematic of a long-running failed urban housing policy that has negatively impacted communities, the HOPE VI demonstration program was designed to help PHAs tear down large scale 'projects' that had high vacancy rates and potentially high rehabilitation costs, and replace them with small scale mixed-income developments.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 1998, after five rounds of funding and spending more than \$3 billion dollars of public and private resources to redevelop 81 sites in 55 cities, the HOPE VI program was reviewed by the US Government Accounting Office (1998) "because of the significant level of federal investment and questions about progress in the program" (p.1). Included is a report on the status of HOPE VI projects, reasons why progress may be slow, and the degree to which federal funds are being used to leverage other resources. In brief, progress was generally slow. The USGAO attributed this to a wide range of "structural, social and management issues specific to each site" (p.2). For grantees that planned to reduce density and subsequently the number of public housing units rehabbed or built back on-site, delays were attributed to major opposition among groups of residents. This included two HOPE VI projects in Chicago, which had lawsuits filed on behalf of residents pending at the time.

The report also found that PHAs were using fewer HOPE VI dollars to leverage more non-public housing funds when compared to the first two

years of the grant (US GAO 1998). During this time, there also was an overall reduction in the proportion of public housing units being built back on-site. Redevelopment plans funded between 1993 and 1997 indicated an almost one-to-one match between public housing units demolished and new units to be built; however, only three-fourths of the total were public housing. It is important to put these findings into the context of new legislation introduced that made mixed-income developments easier to produce and public housing easier to remove.

First, the 1995 repeal of the one-for-one replacement rule now makes it possible for PHAs to tear down units without being obligated to produce replacement units. This eliminated a major contradiction found in the original HOPE VI program, which required PHAs to reduce density but also build replacement units on-site to re-house existing tenants. Many advocates saw this as a major blow to a long-term national commitment to public housing. Others, however--local PHAs and government in particular--welcomed the change since it effectively eliminated one of the major barriers holding back redevelopment efforts in the past. Vouchers freed them up from having to deal with siting issues, pushing the challenge on to tenants being displaced to find other communities in which to mix.

Second, partnering with private developers was made easier for PHAs with passage of 'Public/Private Partnerships for the Mixed-Finance Development of Public Housing Units' (Federal Register, May 2, 1996). A key feature of this legislation was the expanded flexibility it gave PHAs in the financing and development of units. This included allowing PHAs to use qualifications-based criteria to procure a partner and to choose from a range of ownership scenarios (0-100% interest). Once selected, the partner is given the 'freedom' to choose the best approach, site and financing strategy as long as the minimum number of units are built and it complies with total development cost (TDC) requirements.^{iv}

Third, new legislation in 1997 significantly re-wrote federal underwriting criteria to accommodate the production of 'mixed-income' developments. The following guidelines were recommended to assure the successful development of viable mixed-income housing:

- While there is no standard ratio for the mix of income and housing types/tenure, the surrounding income mix will help determine the ratio of market-rate to low-income units. In general, it is assumed that a higher proportion of market-rate units is needed in a predominantly low-income neighborhood to 'successfully attract' the market rate tenants.
- Mixed-income developments need to have adequate amenities and good design in order to 'compete against' conventional market rate units, and the prices must be "very competitive with or, at least initially, even below what the competition is offering for the same level quality and amenities" (p.2).
- Successful marketing requires careful screening of all tenants, and successful projects will have strong 'even-handed' management that is 'customer driven'.

When combined, all these changes give a PHA more reason to reduce the number of public housing units in the redevelopment mix on fiscal and social grounds (i.e. preventing social isolation), and funders the opportunity to demand more higher income housing to assure the project is financially viable. It also means that PHAs need non-public housing resources if they want to expand public housing in the mix. While relatively new to PHAs, local government and non-profit organizations have developed creative strategies to get the private sector to do affordable housing development and to work in lower-income neighborhoods to counter cutbacks in federal funds that began in the 1980s (Goetz 1993).

A particular strategy used in Chicago is the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, which is a means to target a stagnant or no growth area for the

purposes of spurring private investment and development through an infusion of public funds. The amount of funding is based on an estimate of future taxes that new development will produce known as the 'increment', because it is the additional increase or incremental change in the tax base from the beginning to the end of the district's life (usually 23 years). TIFs are especially powerful since they require a comprehensive plan for the district and they provide the revenue for government to jumpstart revitalization efforts to better assure the plan gets implemented. TIFs also can be controversial, since they cannot be used to directly produce housing and instead rely on individuals and business to invest, which may and can produce gentrification effects including displacement of families due to increased rents, tenure conversion, and higher property taxes for low and fixed income homeowners (see Weber 2000). Recent changes in public housing policy make these kinds of strategies necessary in the eyes of PHAs, local government and developers.

The Fiscal Imperative—Keeping HOPE Alive

HOPE VI program was made permanent in US housing law with the passage of the Quality Work and Housing Responsibility Act of 1998 (QWHRA). The QWHRA is a culmination of various strategies to 'change public housing as we know it' in a very short period of time. The new law gives local housing authorities and government more flexibility in redevelopment of public housing. Building on the original HOPE VI concept, the QWHRA requires all PHAs to develop a 'transformation plan' that can be implemented and if possible completed within five years. It also requires all PHAs to assess the feasibility of keeping buildings in service based on cost-efficiency. PHAs are now required to evaluate which is cheaper: the cost of maintaining buildings over a period of time or the cost of giving tenants housing assistance vouchers to use in the private sector. Finally, the QWHRA restricts the PHA from building public housing back on site unless the number is "significantly fewer than the number of units demolished" (Hunt, Schulhof, Holmquist, 1998, p.11).

As with the criteria developed for mixed-income sites, the law does not provide a firm number for what constitutes 'significantly fewer' units. However, income-targeting guidelines for new tenants in the QWHRA provide some insight on what the rule of thumb might be. The 1998 Act requires that not less than 40% of new families be very low-income (incomes at or below 30% of area median income (AMI)). The remaining admissions can be higher income (up to 80% of AMI).^v A PHA can reduce the number of very low-income residents in a development, but only if it admits an equal proportion (up to 10%) of very low-income households into the tenant-based voucher program (referred to as 'fungibility'). These formulas are intended to provide for de-concentration of poverty and to promote income mixing. Furthermore, PHAs can offer incentives to higher income families to move into buildings that are predominantly lower income. The reciprocal is that they can also offer units to lower income families in predominantly higher income developments.

When looking at mixed-income developments from the point of view of a developer or funder, the primary concern is making sure the project does not lose money and that risk is minimized. Traditional development practices have not produced mixed-income or mixed tenure housing (i.e. both rental and owner occupied) for many reasons, but a key reason is the conservative nature of underwriting criteria. Even with changes in federal guidelines, the general rule is to 'over produce' market rate housing in risky areas in order to 'create a market' for something other than public housing. Of the relatively

few developments built in the past, the mix has been 80% market rate units and 20% public housing.

The different housing products being produced and different forms of tenure also make it more difficult to assess risk. For example, recent research on mixed use developments based on New Urbanist principles suggests that lenders and underwriters are not yet comfortable with mixed use developments that will require different time periods to service debt (Gyourka and Rybczynski, 2000). Generally, the logic is to begin with the product that will allow quick debt retirement (e.g. for-sale housing) and then focus on longer term risk including rental property that can take many years to pay off. This also aligns with evidence of what is likely to happen with public housing redevelopment. For example, Vale (1996) describes how large-scale developments often do not have the funding available all at once, and therefore has to be completed in phases. The risk, of course, is that funding will not come through for later phases, leaving a development unfinished. This can be especially detrimental if the later phases include rental housing and/or commercial development, since both are presumed to be critical to the success of public housing transformation.

The next section looks at HOPE VI projects in Chicago to illustrate the challenges of doing mixed financed, private sector driven redevelopment given the nexus of national policy constraints and local conditions.

2. Mixed Hopes: Redevelopment Strategies in Chicago

Public housing in Chicago stands as a physical testimony to a range of national and local policy decisions made since the mid-1930s. Early public housing sites were small in scale with low-rise townhouse style units reflecting similar housing being built by the private sector. After World War II, the scale and dimensions changed dramatically with construction of the large, high-density 'tower in the park' superblock that embraced the ideas of modernist architecture and new building technology. Beyond the aesthetic arguments for this new style of development, this site design was considered by some to be a more efficient and effective use of space, because it produced more units in the same amount of land than in lower density configurations while retaining open public space (vonHoffman, 1997). Today, high-rise public housing developments are viewed by many as failed attempts at social engineering through design. The stories behind these sites, however, illustrate a more complex set of conditions at work, including the effects of political disagreements at both the local and national level, which helped determine the spatial form and location of public housing. At the national level, the FHA sanctioned the view that the presence of poor minorities devalued or at least stagnated property values through its underwriting criteria. Drawing on empirical evidence presented in Hoyt's *One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago* (1933) differential rates in rents and land values across the city were linked to race and ethnicity, privileging 'whites' over non-whites. Choosing to 'stay out' of local issues around segregation, the National Housing Agency's "deference to the principle of residential segregation" in the 1940s allowed local preferences and practices, such as restrictive covenants and the general aversion to integration to shape the siting process (Hirsch 1998).

In Chicago, this meant reproducing the existing settlement patterns with little exception, so that any public housing being built for African Americans was located primarily south of the downtown in the 'Black Belt' and on the near west side (Hirsch, 1998). To counter this in the 1960s, residents filed a class-action lawsuit on the grounds that the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) site selection and tenant-assignment processes were discriminatory. The landmark case, *Gautreaux vs. Chicago Housing Authority* (1969), was decided in favor of residents and required the CHA to remedy the discrimination. This included providing rental assistance vouchers to help approximately 7,100 families relocate into less segregated, primarily suburban locations, and mandating future development of public housing be more integrated.^{vi}

After 30 years, *Gautreaux* continues to shape public housing in Chicago, creating new challenges for public housing residents and advocates acting on their behalf (Wilén and Stasell 2000). For example, research on the families that relocated through the *Gautreaux* program (Rosenbaum 1995) suggest that dispersal via people-based strategies that provide housing assistance vouchers can benefit very low-income households, especially if they can move into lower poverty and less segregated communities. In turn, policy makers have held the data from this case up as evidence that 'mixed-income' communities will benefit all public housing residents (USDHUD, 1996). This case has also proven challenging to advocates acting on behalf of residents who want to be sure they can relocate back to redeveloped sites. The court has had some difficulty with the revitalizing area concept

and the extent to which public housing redevelopment will become racially integrated. In some cases, *Gautreaux* has restricted the number of public housing units that can be built back on site in order to fulfill the court's requirement that the CHA not concentrate and segregate African Americans (see Wilen and Stasell, 2000).

Transforming public housing in Chicago into mixed-income communities requires working within and often against these conditions. HOPE VI sites provide insight into how a 'businesslike approach' has worked so far. As Table 1 illustrates, these developments represented 9,470 units of public housing, or approximately one-fourth of the stock in Chicago.^{vii} When completed, the total units with rent levels meeting income eligibility criteria for public housing will be reduced to about one-third. The number is effectively reduced further when considering HUD's goal of bringing higher income tenants into the mix (i.e. families with incomes closer to ceiling rather than that floor). As in many cities, most of the current residents of public housing in Chicago have income levels well below the 80% AMI threshold. Based on 1999 estimates, CHA residents have an average income of less than \$10,000 (about 15% of AMI).

Table 1. Summary of HOPE VI sites funded in Chicago ¹

HOPE VI SITE	Original units	HOPE VI units (net loss)	Proposed mix by income as percent of Area Median Income (AMI)	Total development cost by HUD and non-HUD funds
Cabrini Green ²	3,600	2,300 (1,300)	0-80% AMI 1,300(57%) 81-120% AMI (0%) above 120%AMI 1,000(43%)	Total \$ 331,000,000 HUD 50,000,000 Non-HUD 281,000,000 Leverage \$5.62
Robert Taylor ³	790	250 (540)	0-80% AMI 250 (100%)	Total \$ 29,982,280 HUD 25,000,000 Non-HUD 4,982,280 Leverage \$0.20
ABLA ⁴	3,500	2,643 (857)	0-35% AMI 1,084 (37%) 36-60% AMI 391 (13%) 61-80% AMI 202 (7%) 81-120% AMI 252 (9%) above 120%AMI 966 (33%)	Total \$431,000,000 HUD 59,500,000 Non-HUD 371,500,000 Leverage \$6.24
Madden Park ⁵	1,580	1,133 (447)	0-80% AMI 423 (37%) 81-120% AMI 294 (26%) above 120%AMI 416 (37%)	Total \$368,716,108 HUD 51,008,500 Non-HUD 317,707,608 Leverage \$6.23
Total	9,470	6,578 (2,892)	0-80% AMI 3,650 (55%) 81-120% AMI 546 (8%) above 120%AMI 2,382 (37%)	Total \$1,160,698,388 HUD 185,508,500 Non-HUD 975,189,888 Leverage \$5.26

¹ A fifth HOPE VI site, Henry Horner Homes, is not included here since it is a peculiar case. Following a lawsuit against the CHA on behalf of residents claiming de facto demolition, the court ordered the development of new housing for all residents. HOPE VI funds were used for a small section of the larger site. See Popkin et al (2001) for more detail.

² See the case details in the next section, which explain these ratios and numbers.

³ Robert Taylor is the large development in Chicago with 4,231 units. HOPE VI money is being used for only half of the development area (approximately 2,400 units, most of which are or will be demolished) and for only the cost of demolishing only 790 units.

⁴ ABLA stands for Jane Addams Homes, Brooks Homes, Loomis Courts, and Abbot Homes. While developed separately and representing different styles of architecture, their proximity make it possible to combine all into one development area.

⁵ Madden Park is a combined site consisting of four different developments: Ida B. Wells, Wells Extension, Clarence Darrow Homes and Madden Park Homes.

Each site has its own particular challenges. All provide evidence of how different strategies have been combined to induce public-individual partnerships (e.g. new construction of market rate and affordable housing units to rent or sell) and public-private partnerships (e.g. implementing a TIF to improve infrastructure) to produce the economic and tenure mix of the housing. For example, Cabrini Green and ABLA are using a TIF district to help offset costs of constructing new roads, putting in new sewer and drainage systems and building a new school. In turn these public resources also will benefit new individual homeowners. While not subsidized directly for the purchase of their homes, the cost of these units should reflect savings to developers who do not have to pay for infrastructure improvements associated with the development. In this sense, the public-individual partnerships are quite significant since, with exception of Robert Taylor Homes, approximately 37% of the new units will be market rate housing, all of which will be for-sale. Additionally, some of the affordable housing, and in the case of ABLA some lower income units, will be ownership as well.

At this time, most sites are in the pre-development stage and the number of public housing units is not expected to change dramatically since the proposed mix was used to calculate budget, funding needs and how different sources of funding will be used. This last point is important since each project will require the typical 'layer cake' of financing needed to develop most affordable housing in the US today. This includes leveraging state and federal funds that normally come through the City of Chicago that had rarely if ever been used for public housing development. Channeling of funds from citywide efforts has raised particular concerns about the real benefits of these new partnerships. For example, in ABLA the financial package includes using Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to subsidize development of units in the 36-60% AMI income bracket (generally referred to as the 'working poor'). The LIHTC, which generates private equity for development by giving a dollar-for-dollar credit to the investor for 10-15 years, is the largest pool of money available to non-profit and private developers working to stabilize and/or improve lower income communities. For housing advocates in Chicago, this raises concerns that public housing transformation will not only take affordable housing funds away from developers citywide, but also that it will inhibit the ability of non-profits working in declining areas to make improvements and in gentrifying areas to stave off displacement (Chicago Rehab Network, 2000).

These numbers are best understood in the context and in relationship to the processes that produced them. The first HOPE VI grant, which was implemented at Cabrini Green, is a particularly interesting case given the site's notoriety as one of the worst in the country, coupled with the fact that it is located within walking distance of some of the most expensive real estate in the city. It also is useful to look at since the CHA has nearly finished the first phase of mixed income housing development and many lessons have been learned. A range of spatial strategies has been employed by different stakeholders to control the outcome, including the use of TIFs and lawsuits to shape the mix. While procedurally problematic to institutionalize, the outcome of these strategies point to possibilities for a spatial approach that looks beyond the original site to produce the mix.

Redeveloping Cabrini Green

When the original 586 Cabrini Green row houses were built in 1948, the development was a welcome site to a community that had long been known as 'Hell's Kitchen' (see Zorbaugh, 1929). Within the next 20 years, however, as the total increased to 3,600 units of housing on less than 60 acres of land, most in mid and high-rise buildings, Cabrini Green became an example of

everything wrong with public housing. The combination of drug dealing, gun violence, high vacancy rates and no grass, made this site an obsolete 'tower in the park' disaster and clearly qualified as 'worst case' public housing under HUD guidelines.

Cabrini Green received a \$50 million HOPE VI grant in 1994 to redevelop a portion of the site. Initially the CHA had made an agreement with the Local Advisory Council (LAC)—the elected leadership for tenants—to demolish 660 units, build 493 new units of public housing and issue 167 housing assistance vouchers for the remaining. However, soon after the plan was approved, the federal government took over the CHA. Two buildings containing 398 units were demolished and no replacement units were provided. A Request For Proposals was issued to replace what was going to be torn down. None of the responses fully met the minimum criteria of reducing density and providing the appropriate number of replacement units on site (Metropolitan Planning Commission 1996). The City of Chicago declared all the plans inappropriate, showing an "inability to identify sufficient land and the private financing sources for the market rate component of the proposed mixed income development" (City of Chicago 1996).

Soon afterward, the City and CHA entered into 'private' meetings to compose an alternative strategy, producing the *Near North Redevelopment Plan*. The plan was to demolish 1,300 public housing units and produce 2,300 new units in a larger geographic area (90 acres compared to 10 acres in the original proposal). Only 700 would be public housing and half of those were for 'working poor' (Voorhees 1997). In response to this plan, residents filed a lawsuit against both the City and the CHA on the grounds that the plan was prejudicial to their interests. Besides violating the previous development agreement with the LAC, residents were outraged because the plan was to demolish more buildings and move more residents permanently off-site (Voorhees 1997). In the spring of 1997, a Federal judge stopped CHA from demolishing anything more until this conflict was resolved.

Around the same time, a report was released examining the likely effects of "vouchering out" public housing tenants from Cabrini (see Voorhees 1997). Among the many findings, perhaps the most striking was a map showing where households currently using Section 8 tenant-based assistance lived. Most were concentrated in three regions of the City where poverty and crime rates were relatively high, reinforcing a concern among tenants that vouchers would not necessarily improve their opportunities. Along with this data were stories from residents relocated from the two demolished Cabrini buildings explaining how difficult it had been to find an apartment with their voucher (Voorhees 1997).

While these events have been documented in a report to HUD (see USGAO 1998: 56-60), little attention was given to the greatly expanded role played by the City of Chicago in the process. A key strategy was the City's decision to 'expand the development site' by creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district that included nine times more land. As noted previously, TIFs are controversial. In order to get a TIF district approved, a review of the proposed area must show that it meets the 'slum and blight' requirements. In addition to public housing tenants being upset with the city, the TIF did not please residents living near Cabrini in new homes priced at the prevailing market rate (\$300,000-\$400,000) because being included in the TIF boundaries meant they were part of slum and blight.

The TIF also formally changed the dynamics for how decisions could be made regarding future use of land in the area. The *Near North Redevelopment Plan* provided a set of guidelines for future development in the entire district in terms of density and land use. Development and approval of the TIF by the City effectively removed the CHA and residents from the primary decision making position. At the same time, this effort greatly expanded the company of 'residents' from the original Cabrini Green tenants to now include occupants of the homes and future housing to be built

in the area. Despite this newly expanded community, the TIF process itself did not necessarily allow for meaningful community involvement in the planning or implementation phases. As with many planning exercises, the TIF district proposal had little community input, and relied on a public hearing as its formal citizen participation (see City of Chicago 1998). Furthermore, even if citizens want to participate, the TIF review process in Chicago does not have effective mechanisms for citizens to reject the plan or propose changes to it. Rather, opponents are allowed only to react and provide feedback that is then taken under advisement of the panel reporting to the City Council.

As the City continued to push forward once the TIF was approved, there still remained the issue of the tenants and their lawsuit. The court finally ruled in July 1998 to give the LAC control in the process and the outcome of the demolition of the remaining six buildings. First, the court ordered the CHA to build 895 public housing eligible units in the *HOPE VI planning area*, which is defined now by the boundaries of the TIF. Furthermore, demolition cannot begin until at least a third of the replacement units are underway, funds and the site for another 400 are secured, and an RFP has been issued and proposal(s) accepted for the rebuilding on the CHA land (*Cabrini Green LAC v. CHA and City of Chicago*, 1998). With regard to the new construction on CHA property (20 of the 60 acres), there is to be 923 units of which about half will be public housing eligible. This larger number was achieved by reducing the income levels that 'affordable housing' could accommodate down to 40% of AMI, which some of the current residents are eligible. The LAC will serve as co-developer of the site, and shall comprise half of the review panel. While the consent decree was appealed and later revised to reduce resident control from 51% to 50%, the final settlement still was considered a victory by tenants since it maintained the policy that units had to be built prior to demolition and it gave them substantial although not sole control over the redevelopment process (*Cabrini Green LAC v. CHA and City of Chicago*, 2000).

To date, the TIF has been used to improve roads, produce a shopping center on an old industrial site, revamp a park, and to develop a new school, enclosed swimming pool, library, police station and fire station. It has also been used to assemble public and private land to produce the first mixed income development, North Town Village, on nine acres of land. The North Town Village contains 271 units of which 135 are market rate and 54 are affordable (some rental). The for-sale units were put on the market and within two weeks all but two had been sold. The highest price paid for a four-bedroom townhouse was \$515,000. The developers, who had been selected by the community--residents of Cabrini and the surrounding community--are now trying to get public housing residents to move back into the rental units to be completed soon. A lottery was held and of the more than 100 finalists, very few had submitted applications. A front-page story in the *Chicago Tribune* (February 27, 2001) illustrated the challenges of getting residents to apply. Some changed their minds after hearing about the mandatory drug tests, especially since this wasn't required of their future non-public housing neighbors. Others were tired of moving and did not want to move again. Some were afraid that if they did move in, then they would be scrutinized even more than in their current housing, and therefore might get evicted, lose their privilege to live in subsidized housing and become homeless.

Finally, residents living in a Cabrini high-rise next door to North Town Village not originally slated for demolition are trying to secure funds to convert the building into a limited equity cooperative. The Mutual Housing Corporation--a network of cooperatives in Chicago--worked with tenants to organize and developed a strategy, and to get approval from the different parties involved. Now working with the same developer that produced North

Town Village, the group is trying to secure funding to begin the rehabilitation and conversion process.

Cabrini Green illustrates the effects past and current practices shaping the location of public housing have on its redevelopment. It also provides several 'lessons learned' that can be of use in developing a more effective area-based approach to public housing transformation in Chicago.

- *Process matters*: Local housing authorities and government cannot exclude public housing residents from important decisions regarding the number of units and having some level of control over the redevelopment process. While not an immediate lesson learned, the CHA and the City did come to understand this over time. As with Cabrini Green, for example, ABLA residents sought legal counsel to defend their rights as they were being relocated and to assure they can return. While Robert Taylor had small participation, residents continued to fight and at times with great publicity to stay in their housing when CHA tried to move people without sufficient notice. In contrast, Madden Park, which was ranked the top application in 2000, involved a lengthy planning process that brought hundreds of people together. However, while residents sought to maximize the number of public housing units to be included in the mix, in the end, they did not get the mix they wanted. Regardless, resident leadership and most residents are now working relatively well together to implement the plan.
- *Race (still) matters*: While unique to Chicago, the *Gautreaux* case has created a tension among advocates who find that despite the good intentions it has become a destructive tool in the fight to increase the number of public housing units built back on site. During the appeal in the Cabrini Green case, for example, *Gautreaux* was used by the CHA and the City to justify reducing the number of public housing units on site. Residents intervened, claiming that the goal here was not racial integration but rather to maximize the number of residents that could return to the site. The judge, however, sided with the defendants and forced the case back to court. In somewhat similar reasoning, ABLA residents were blocked from fighting the low number of public housing units approved in the plan, and are now unable to intervene (see Wilen and Stasell, 2000).
- *Location matters*: The US GAO raised a warning flag when it concluded that "the current HOPE VI funding model may not be adequate to revitalize some of the nation's more severely distressed sites" (1998), which includes sites like Robert Taylor Homes on the south side of Chicago. While the other HOPE VI sites in Chicago are in economically viable locations, many of the public housing sites slated for demolition in the future are *not* geographically advantaged to warrant higher numbers of public housing. This raises questions about what will drive the mix and how will decisions be made about who can return to the site. For example, since Robert Taylor is in a less marketable location, the plan is to convert some land to light industrial use to "provide real jobs for [remaining] Taylor residents" (HOPE VI application) and to build relatively few units back on site. While the plan was supposedly 'resident driven',^{viii} most Taylor residents are not pleased with this outcome. Residents are now making sure they get on the list to move back when units are built, especially as more buildings are demolished. As one woman said: "I want to enjoy all the things they are going to build here."
- *Scale matters*: The ability to maximize public housing units built back on site while also producing a viable mixed-income development requires expanding the redevelopment plan beyond the original site. Clearly, Cabrini Green could not be redeveloped with as many public housing units as it is getting and with the density required without expanding beyond the public housing site. While still not as many units as residents would have liked, it did give more potential to make the case for

'development first' to assure residents have a place to move to when being relocated. It also assures that mixing happens outside the boundaries of the public housing site, creating potential to scatter public housing in the neighborhood.

- *Outcomes matter (more)*: While clearly the process is important to residents, to assure they have a role in making decisions, the outcomes are equally if not more important in the long run. Perhaps contrary to much of the literature on mainstream planning in the US, it is not so in advocacy planning (Davidoff, 1965) or equity planning (Krumholz 1982; Krumholz and Forester, 1990), or conflict resolution, where each party brings to the table their expectations framed as low (reserve) and high (target) values. However, unlike a negotiation, where there is presumed goal of reaching a compromise between parties and their expectations, the stakes in public housing redevelopment for residents are more intractable than not. Cabrini residents—both those being displaced and those not affected—wanted to make sure all displaced tenants were accommodated in the redevelopment plan, or at least given the opportunity to return to a new or rehabbed unit. Similarly, they wanted to be assured that there were really going to be units for them prior to moving out. In part, this reflects long-standing mistrust between tenants and CHA officials. However, it also acknowledges the fact that temporary relocation is disruptive and increases the likelihood that tenants may not return. This is the challenge now with North Town Village.

Building on these lessons, the next section examines strategies that, in light of current local and national conditions, could change the scale and scope of public housing redevelopment in the future.

3. Mixing it up: Transforming the Space of Public Housing in Chicago

The Chicago Housing Authority is now implementing its *Plan for Transformation* (approved February 2000). The plan calls for reducing the total number of public housing units from 38,000 to 25,000. Nearly all the high-rise developments (a total of 51 buildings) will be demolished and replaced with mixed-income lower density communities. Based on the income ratios set at earlier HOPE VI sites, it is assumed that future sites will have no more than 35-40% public housing. The remaining units will be market rate and affordable housing. The entire capital budget for redevelopment is in excess of \$3 billion with an anticipated outlay of around \$1.6 billion from the federal government over 10 years. Based on current development costs (between \$175,000-200,000 per unit), capital needs are likely to increase. At the same time, the 2002 budget for HUD shows a cut in capital funds, raising serious concerns about how much more money local actors will need to commit to helping implement the CHA plan. Add to this the challenge of not having enough land to build replacement housing to meet the goal of 25,000 units of public housing in lower density developments. Current estimates show a serious shortage of public housing land to build on (at least 100 acres). Another concern is the expanded role of community in the planning process mandated by the QWHRA, which now consists of residents in the vicinity and the developers as well as tenants. Based on anecdotal evidence, non-public housing residents favor reducing rather than to increasing the number of public housing units on sites.^{ix}

All these factors suggest that a broader coalition of supporters and funders of public housing is going to be needed if the plan is going to produce the maximum number of public housing units proposed. Equally if not more important, a bigger vision of transformation is needed to really change public housing as we know it in Chicago. Public and private partners need to focus on broader factors that are expected to hinder the plan's outcome, including the time it takes to effectively relocate residents and the spatial limitations created by a long history of segregation by race, ethnicity and income (Smith, 2000). Proposed here is a three-pronged approach to mixed-income *public* housing that expands on and modifies the current set of public-private and public-individual strategies encouraged by national policy by adding several requirements to the plan. The premise here is that as has been observed at other HOPE VI sites, residents generally want to return to the site once it is redeveloped; however, even if residents do not, the assumption is that given the shortage of affordable housing, particularly for very low-income renters, the goal should always be to maximize the number of public housing.

Outcomes: Adding an 'outcomes' component similar to what was negotiated in the Cabrini Green case will assure that all residents are provided a unit if they choose to return, as well as meet future needs for affordable housing. While not quite a fixed number for each site, the CHA has a baseline occupancy for each development at the time the transformation plan was developed, which could then serve as the *minimum* number of public housing units that need to be in the redevelopment plan. Additionally, while not easily prescribed in universal terms, relocation, demolition and redevelopment need to be planned so that the process minimizes the number of times residents move. While seemingly logical, this has not been the case in the past, and now creates a potential problem as

units become available for tenants' return. While not legally binding, these outcomes can then function as guiding principles for negotiating how, when and where units will be built.

Space: expanding the 'space' of public housing means changing the scale of redevelopment, which is especially critical given federal limits on building back on site. More importantly, it is a means to open up adjacent communities, especially in those locations like Cabrini Green where the housing development outside public housing was also income segregated. This is not to go so far as to require private development outside the site to include public housing. While this can be done through inclusionary zoning, which requires a proportion of development be affordable housing and linkage programs, which generate funds to produce affordable housing from development exactions (see Keating 1990; Coles 1999), it takes much more political will to implement, often requiring state legislation in addition to local mandate. However, a 'spatial' component similar to the TIF plan could be required—and in many cases will also be needed to provide funding—in order to force redevelopment to include the space outside the site. While a practical way to provide the space so that enough public housing units can be built, it is also a means to actually protect residents and units in Chicago. Recent legislation passed in the State of Illinois requires any new TIF plan to include a determination of what impact if any development will have on affordable housing, and if there is impact, then how many units are to be affected. This aspect of TIFs provides a means to intervene on behalf of affordable housing preservation if a development project of any kind is going to exceed the allowable units to be demolished.

Control: A 'public control' component is proposed to assure that once built, public housing will stay public. Many different strategies can be considered to keep public investment accessible and affordable to low-income families: land trusts to keep the land in the public domain; reciprocal agreements requiring developers to keep housing affordable for a long period time—a method already used in public housing; and limited equity cooperatives, such as what is being pursued by tenants in Cabrini, to help very low-income tenants become owners and keep property out speculation. These strategies aim to empower residents; however, not simply by making tenants property owners. As Peterson (1996) describes, making people property owners is a conservative view of empowerment—a progressive view of empowerment focuses on political control, and therefore making sure residents are given the power to make decisions about the future of their developments and control over the resources needed to implement them, which may include resident management since this assures tenants also control the property.

All these methods aim to control public-private and individual-private relationships. Since these partnerships are clearly the sanctioned and needed means to fund neighborhood revitalization and community development in the US these days, the challenge is to determine how best to keep this control without discouraging private investment. While challenging, scholars and practitioners have found ways to promote both development and equity (e.g. see Krumholz, 1982; Krumholz and Forestor, 1990; Clavel and Krumholz, 1997). The key is demonstrating the return to the investment. Clearly, the assumption here is that quality, durable public housing is a good investment, because it provides housing for those that the market would not produce otherwise unless without public incentive. The components described here should not be compromised if the goal is to maximize the number of public housing units in the mix. While process clearly does matter it is critical that the outcome be fixed and set at a high target level. If public dollars are being used to leverage private resources, then the public goals of the program need to lead rather than follow investment decisions, especially if the goal is to mix residents in rather than out of public housing.

Endnotes

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- ⁱ Worst case means an unassisted renter with income below 50% of the area median pays more than half of the household income for rent or lives in severely substandard housing. Generally, most worst case renters are paying too much of their income for housing.
- ⁱⁱ Preliminary data from the 2000 US Census indicates that Chicago still remains highly segregated by race, ethnicity and income.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See <http://www.housingresearch.org/> for more detail about projects.
- ^{iv} TDC is based on a formula pre-determined by HUD; the ceiling or maximum TDC only applies to public housing units in the development and is exclusive of demolition costs.
- ^v Current requirements for public housing allow income levels up to 80% of AMI.
- ^{vi} Cook County was divided into two types of space: 'general' (70% or more white) and 'limited' (30% or more African American). For every unit of new public housing developed in a limited area, the CHA had to develop 3 units in a general area. Over time this has changed to simply a 1-for-1 requirement, given the difficulty in meeting the three-unit goal. In addition, a new category has been added: revitalizing areas, which are neighborhoods with high concentrations of non-white/minorities that are undergoing redevelopment and are therefore expected to become integrated. Units built here do not have to be matched elsewhere, since this type of neighborhood is presumed to be "the most promising neighborhoods for racial and economic integration" (*Gautreaux vs. Landrieu*, 1981).
- ^{vii} While not all units are occupied, it is not due to a lack of demand but rather the quality of supply. The argument can be made for more public housing based on 1999 estimates of there being a 'gap' of approximately 153,000 units of low cost affordable units for very low-income people in the Chicago area (see Smith and Lenz, 1999).
- ^{viii} Based on sign-in sheets for meetings with planners, less than 20 residents participated in any given meeting.
- ^{ix} In ABLA, for example, members of the University Village Association, which is adjacent to the site, submitted a formal report in support of the redevelopment plan in principle, but requested a reduction in the overall number of units being developed and an increase in the proportion of for-sale units.

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