Emerging Best Practices in Siting Housing First

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For additional copies of this report as well as video and powerpoint presentations of this material in Boulder CO in May,
2012, please go to: www.YourHousingFirst.weebly.com

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Bringing Housing First to Your Community
Executive Summary and World Cafe

Why Housing First?

Housing First was developed in the early 1990s in New York as an alternative to the traditional "continuum of care" approach. Instead of requiring the chronically homeless to go through rigorous tiers of treatment and a series of temporary shelters, Housing First places clients directly into permanent housing, with few if any requirements for counseling or treatment. Research continues to demonstrate that Housing First is a highly effective and cost-efficient way to move chronically homeless individuals from the street and help them improve their lives. Unlike homeless shelters, Housing First facilities are usually not subject to formal public review by Planning Board or elected officials, so developers have responded in different ways to local neighborhood concern that often arises when siting new facilities.

Housing First Case Study Cities

Responding to a Housing First Dispute

In response to a 2011-12 dispute over siting a Housing First facility in Boulder, Colorado, a team of graduate students in the Urban and Regional Planning Program at the University of Colorado Denver, led by Professor Bruce Goldstein, researched Housing First programs in six other cities. The team distilled best practices for siting new facilities, and presented the findings to the Boulder community in May of 2012. PLAN-Boulder County (http://planboulder.org), a citizen's action organization that seeks to ensure environmental sustainability in the City of Boulder and around Boulder County, sponsored the event.

Results

Analysis of siting of Housing First facilities in the six cities portrayed above – Portland, Ore.; Denver, Colo.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Cleveland, Ohio; Worcester, Mass.; and Portland, Maine – resulted in the following 5 "best practice" principles:

Win Friends and Influence People

It is essential to involve all stakeholders in the siting process, including developers, service providers, other non-profits and public entities. In Minneapolis, the Housing First initiative was initiated by a non-profit affiliated with religious groups, whose members were crucial in supporting the development and constructing a broad community coalition. In both Worcester and Cleveland, the largest service providers in the community came together to form an enduring coalition to develop multiple Housing First sites. Political support is also essential - a councilperson, mayor, or even state representative may provide critical support to obtain funding and assure

neighbor communities that the Housing First facility reflects community values and concerns.

Location, Location, Location

Three strategies have proven effective: 1) distribute Housing First sites throughout the region, as in Cleveland, so that no neighborhood can claim it bears an unequal burden; 2) concentrate services in low income areas with deteriorated infrastructure where the homeless are traditionally concentrated, as in Portland, Ore.; or 3) build facilities at an isolated site, as in Portland, Maine, so that the perceived impact is lessened. After choosing a location, consider design strategies that build a broad coalition for the facility, such as adaptive reuse, "hip" architecture, commercial establishments on the ground floor, or sustainable technologies.

Go Slow to Go Fast

Since community engagement process will take a long time, it's never too early to begin engaging and collaborating with neighbor groups – and if these groups don't exist, the Housing First developer should make an effort to support their creation. These community engagement processes should be as inclusive and transparent as possible. Housing first developers must actively listen to the community members, directly and publicly address each of their concerns, following up throughout the siting process. Key steps in the process include 1) identifying champions, such as politicians or neighborhood groups with a charitable mission; 2) identifying your opposition; and, most importantly, 3) identifying "fence-sitters" whose support can be won by addressing their specific concerns and including them in tours of other Housing First facilities.

Maximize Face Time

Central to winning neighbor support is respecting and utilizing local knowledge. This requires extensive engagement with the community. Before siting, successful organizations work with politicians and community leaders or groups to identify appropriate neighborhoods (see locational criteria above). During design, community advisory boards are often established to gather input. After construction, the community continues to be involved both formally and informally.

Make New Friends but Keep the Old

A good-faith "Good Neighbor Agreement" (GNA) or legally-binding "Community Benefit Agreement" (CBA) can ensure long-term support for a Housing First facility. Such agreements often are the culmination of a long, collaborative process between developers, city representatives, and active community members, and should represent a consensus among all the stakeholders. A CBA may include financial guarantees. Both CBAs and GNAs specify communication processes, property maintenance, safety issues, and neighborhood engagement, and often outline future collaborative structures or establish standing advisory committees.

World Cafe

Following the graduate student presentation of our findings to Plan Boulder, a "World Café" facilitated small-group dialogue was held in which the 40+ attendees discussed how these best practices might be implemented in Boulder in the future." Each table addressed a different questions, and participants moved between tables during an hour of engaged discussion. A summary of each table's recommendations follows:

Table 1
What would enable you to support placing a Housing First facility in your own neighborhood?

- Transparency. Public meetings need to be easily accessible to all members in the community. Community members should see a credible, transparent and objective site selection process that points to why their neighborhood is the most suitable for such a facility. A Good Neighbor Agreement would help, as would collaboration early in the process.

- Story telling. More than just informational meetings, the community should get a taste of how it will interact with residents. They want to be told stories about people, not just given statistics. One good way to show the rehabilitation that Housing First can offer is to show a job training or service learning program, something similar to Pizza Fusion, a restaurant staffed by residents at a Housing First facility in Denver.

- Good facility management. How facilities manage mental illnesses, supervise the facility, and regulate uses are key issues for potential neighbors.

Table 2

What roles should city planning and housing staff and City Council play in locating housing first facilities in Boulder?

- Transparency. Discussants agreed that most of the tension around the proposed facility in Boulder had come from a lack of information available to the public during the planning process. City planning staff and City Council have the responsibility to maintain transparency with the public. Planning staff must be an objective decision maker and recognize interests of all parties involved.

- Community visioning. In order to avoid future conflicts, a complete city vision for homelessness must be addressed in the Boulder Comprehensive Plan and policy must be built around this vision.

- Community collaboration. Organization would benefit both the community and city planning staff. In areas that lack a strong community coalition, city planning staff should assist to create groups to organize the community.

Table 3
What criteria should be used when choosing a site to locate future Housing First facilities in Boulder?

- Access to Services. When a facility is located, residents agreed the facility must have access to a transit line (i.e., bus or light rail). Access to public transportation will ease ability to receive mental and health services, along with providing residents with access to employment and commerce.

- Engagement with the Community. Prior to purchase of the land, the community would like to have a meeting with the developer. Through public meetings the community can help create a clear management model, and create more trust with the developer.

- Clear Discussion of Impact on Residents. Residents want opportunity to suggest criteria for residents who move into the facility, or which population will be targeted for this facility. Residents moving into facility should be strongly encouraged to receive counseling, even if it not required.

- Decentralization. Neighbors would like to feel they are not "carrying an undue burden." They also do not want to create an institutional setting where many facilities are located near one another.

Table 4
If you were the developer for a housing first facility in Boulder, how would you organize the siting process?

- Thoroughly Research the Site. The developer needs to work with a community to come up with criteria for an appropriate site. These criteria would include access to transit, jobs, and services. A developer must work to avoid a concentration of facilities and services in any area, and work to integrate residents with the community.

- Identify and Engage Stakeholders. Business owners, churches, schools, neighborhood organizations, and advocacy groups have needs and concerns that may need to be reconciled with the needs and concerns of the homeless. The developer needs to provide opportunities for the community to interact with the homeless.

- Take Time to Ensure Community Engagement Happens. Just holding meetings is not sufficient. The developer needs to play an active role in getting the community to attend and participate at community meetings. A developer may identify certain individuals in the community that can advocate on behalf of the project (i.e. champion building). Door-to-door advocacy and education on behalf of a Housing First facility is one idea for encouraging community participation. By having a longer timeframe a developer can take the time to educate the public about the project, adjust the project to address concerns and in the long run build trust by showing a willingness to work with the community.

- Be Sensitive to Economic Factors. In Boulder, real estate prices are high and the availability of land is limited. Therefore, social service facilities in Boulder have been located in the northern part of the city where real estate prices are more affordable and land is more available. Developers need to consider the unintended consequences of this concentration.

Siting Housing First:
Guidance From National Groups and Leaders in the Field
Phillip Supino

Abstract

The scope of this memorandum is limited to groups providing national, industry-standard best practices for housing first facility siting and opposition mitigation techniques and a compilation of best practices common to the relevant documents. Despite some constraints, there are a variety of generally accepted best-practice resources available to housing first proponents. Within this body of research, there are some recommendations common to each document that amount to consensus-based best practices. These resources may serve as a template for groups nation-wide who seek to establish housing first facilities.

This memorandum will demonstrate that there are best practice resources available to housing first proponents who wish to develop facilities while avoiding organized opposition to their projects. The available resources are produced by private and government organizations and are typically made available to the public on the organizations' websites in on-line resource libraries containing a wide variety of other materials related to the organizations' mission. The resources are typically free documents geared toward industry professionals and academics. The assistance provided is limited in scope and coordination. But the body of research from the numerous housing first facilities in operation around the county, as well as outside groups advocating for housing first, is growing and informative. The resources provided by housing first organizations are similar in scope and methodology while lacking in coordination. Taken together, the body of research and guidelines provides a useful set of tools for housing first proponents to avoid locational disputes.

Discussion

Researching online resources, non-profit organizations, public agencies and personal interviews, it is clear that despite the presence of some useful resources, there is not an industry standard set of best-practices for siting housing first facilities in urban and suburban areas. The resources that may be called best practices guides to establishing housing first facilities are useful but uncoordinated with similar documents produced by other organizations, despite covering the same topics and providing comparable recommendations. Despite this lack of coordination, close examination of the relevant documents reveals some essential common themes and practices. The industry would be well served to coordinate these findings and proven techniques and compile a housing first development guide to assist in future projects nation wide.

There are a number of government agencies and private organizations engaged in establishment of housing first facilities or providing consultative services to housing first proponents. The relevant federal government agencies include: The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Relevant national level private and non-profit organizations include: The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Pathways to Housing (PH), The Supportive Housing Network (SHN), The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) and the Homeless Resource Center (HRC). While these lists are not comprehensive, the agencies and groups included are among the most active in establishing housing first facilities or providing consultation and information to housing first proponents around the country. In addition to these groups, there are

countless State and Local agencies and organizations that participate in the development, funding, establishment and management of housing first facilities but fall outside of the scope of this memorandum.

In interviews and internet-based research, groups engaged in the creation of housing first facilities reported some formal coordination or consultation with like groups during the planning and implementation phases of their projects.[1] Despite strong national organizations lobbying for the funding and establishment of housing first programs and facilities, there is relatively little in the way of coordinated planning, assistance or literature regarding best practices for community engagement, site selection and mitigation of NIMBY opposition.

The most common technique used by housing first groups to obtain information and best practice guidance for establishing facilities is through discussion with similar groups already involved in these activities. In an interview with Bill Hobson, Executive Director of the Seattle-based Downtown Emercengy Services Center (DESC), he indicated that as an industry leader in housing first projects, he regularly consults groups seeking to establish facilities in other jurisdictions.[2] While he provides verbal consultation, the DESC does not provide a set of comprehensive best practices to those seeking assistance. Additionally, Mr. Hobson was unaware of any nationally known guide to facility establishment or mitigating locational opposition.[3]

The national organization that provides a close equivalent to best practice guidelines and consultations is the Corporation for Supportive Housing. The CSH maintains an extensive database of resources for housing first groups. The materials cover a wide range of topics related to housing first development issues. The wide range of resources made available on the CSH website provide a comprehensive guide to the myriad community engagement, siting and establishment issues faced by housing first proponents.[4] These documents provide some basic tools and techniques for siting a housing first development while minimizing opposition, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Jordan Press, Director of Federal Policy for the CSH, indicated that he was unaware of nationally accepted best practices.[5] He went on to say that the consultation services provided by his and other organizations are meant to be best-practices guidance tailored to the unique needs of their clients. Mr. Press also indicated that there are a handful of national housing first conferences held annually, where industry professionals from the public and private sector exchange ideas and information. The Pathways to Housing Conference is the largest of these, and locational disputes and community engagement are topics covered regularly at the conference.[6]

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[1] McDivitt, Kay Moshier. Personal Interview, 25 April, 2012

[2] Hobson, Bill. Personal Interview, 16 April, 2012

[3] Hobson, Bill. Personal Interview, 16 April, 2012

[4] McDivitt, Kay Moshier. Personal Interview, 25 April, 2012

[5] Press, Jordan. Personal Interview, 13 April, 2012

[6] Press, Jordan. Personal Interview, 13 April, 2012

However, materials and transcripts from that conference are not yet available.

The federal Interagency Council on Homelessness coordinates between various federal agencies including HUD, HHS and the VA. The Council maintains an extensive database of resources for housing first and similar homeless advocacy groups. The database includes primers for housing first proponents on topics such as community engagement, combating NIMBY-ism and site selection for facilities. While the documents do not represent an attempt to compile or recommend industry best practices, the resource database provided by the ICH is an excellent starting place for proponent groups seeking to establish housing first facilities.[7]

The HUD website offers another federal government level online guide for groups seeking to establish housing first facilities. Called the Homelessness Resource Exchange, the guide differs from other online resources in that it is a step-by-step guide rather than a database of collected resources from other sources. The guide directly addresses citing conflict and NIMBY-opposition mitigation, as well as guidelines for financing and management of housing first facilities.[8] While the depth of the material is limited, the assistance provided by the Homelessness Resource Exchange is an effective primer for those engaging housing first development and management.

The most comprehensive guides for housing first proponents is "Building Support for Supportive Housing" and the "Supportive Housing Toolkit" provided by the New York City-based Supportive Housing Network. The private organization maintains a number of supportive housing properties in the New York metro area. The guide and toolkit break down the best practices for establishing facilities and techniques for mitigating opposition. The step-by-step guide directly addresses issues like combating NIMBY-ism, media and public outreach techniques, facility management, good neighbor policies, messaging and other methods for building community support for facilities. The toolkit provides literature, case studies and scripts meant to supplement the guide and provide useful tools for housing first proponents.

Both documents are made available on the group's website. The Network offers consulting services to other organizations, and like Seattle's DESC, the group engages in informal consultations at the request of other groups. The guide and toolkit are a strong attempt by the Network to provide a comprehensive best-practices guide, and the documents could serve as a model for a national effort in the future. Any group engaged in the development of housing first facilities should consult the Network and their online resources early in the development process.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness coordinates with other national-level advocacy groups and local-level facility proponents to promote supportive housing models nation-wide. In a discussion of the utility of national policy and best practices for supportive housing, Kay Moshier McDivitt, Capacity Building Director for the NAEH, stated: "The NAEH does not support a unified national policy for the development of supportive housing facilities. Development policy should be tailor to site-specific circumstances."[9] However, she went on to say that there are general best practices, accepted industry wide,

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[7] Interagency Council on Homelessness, Home Page: http://www.usich.gov/

[8] Department of Housing and Urban Development, Home Page: www.hudhre.info/

[9] McDivitt, Kay Moshier. Personal Interview, 25 April, 2012

that are essential for housing first proponents to incorporate into their development plans. She cited the CSH and SHN guides as being good starting points for potential proponents of new facilities.

While there is no singular best practices guide nationally available and widely accepted as the go-to guide for housing first proponents, there are a number of useful tools available from both public and private sources. Groups interested in establishing housing first facilities are well served to conduct internet-based research to discover the relevant agencies and groups included in this memorandum. Between the publications made available on the groups' websites and through consultation with housing first proponents in other areas, a consensus on some of the essential best practices emerges.

Through analysis of the relevant publications and online resources, a consensus emerges among the various groups as to the best practices for development and mitigation of NIMBY opposition. Some of the common techniques and recommendations among the various resources include:

- Avoid selecting locations where the primary land use type is well-established residences;
- Avoid clustering projects in areas with existing homeless facilities;
- Engage the impacted public early and often;
- Identify key political, social, financial and technical stakeholders;
- Seek to build a coalition of supportive community leaders, residents and stakeholders;
- Keep the coalition engaged and empowered to ensure it works in concert with project proponents;

- Create a draft plan, vetted by all relevant stakeholders, before engaging the public to ensure the project appears well organized to the concerned public;
- Educate supportive and interested parties and isolate the opposition;
- Consult attorneys and government administrators to gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal landscape before proceeding with a selected location;
- Avoid selecting locations that require use or zoning variances and thus, public hearings;

The housing first community would benefit from development of a comprehensive guide for proponents' future use.[10] This effort would ensure that groups seeking to establish housing first facilities utilize proven, effective practices for community engagement, location selection and mitigation of NIMBY opposition to their projects. Until that effort is completed, the resources and recommendations outlined in this memorandum provide a useful starting point for future housing first developments nation wide.

Conclusion

There are organizations that provide literature and consulting on community engagement, siting and mitigating NIMBY locational disputes over housing first facilities. There are relatively few industry-wide best practice resources to help proponents and organizations effectively plan for community engagement, siting and mitigation of locational disputes related to Housing First facilities. However, the available resources share a number of commonalities that amount to a consensus on development best practices. Collectively, the available

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[10] Bauman, Tristia: Attorney, National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty. Personal Interview, 24 April, 2012

resources are useful tools for housing first proponents who seek to establish facilities accepted by the surrounding community.

The Bud Clark Commons
Portland, Oregon

Kara Silbernagel

Abstract

On June 2, 2011, Portland, Oregon opened a multi-faceted homeless facility in the heart of the city. The Bud Clark Commons, the cornerstone of Portland's 10-year plan to end homelessness, provides tiered services to people experiencing homelessness (Home Again, 2005). Within the 10-year plan, Portland identified three critical services that helps individuals achieve stability and end homelessness; shelter services, access to resources, and most importantly, stable housing. The Bud Clark Commons is the linchpin of the plan by providing all three services to individuals within the same building. The facility is a LEED-Platinum building that houses a resource day center, men's shelter and 130 studio apartments. These apartments provide permanent housing to the most vulnerable, chronically homeless populations under the Housing First model.   The following case study looks at the innovative partnerships between the City of Portland, Multnomah County, service providers, business associations and citizen groups to successfully site and design the facility while keeping sight of the overarching goal: helping individuals overcome personal and social barriers to achieve stability.

Discussion

In 2005, the City of Portland, Oregon and Multnomah County developed "Home Again – A 10-year plan to end homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County." The 10-year plan addresses several issues throughout Portland and Multnomah County, highlighting three key goals:

1. Focus on the most chronically homeless populations.
2. Streamline access to existing services in order to prevent and reduce other homelessness.
3. Concentrate resources on programs that offer measurable results.

Inherent within the Home Again plan, as outlined with these three key principles, is a "housing first" methodology to end homelessness and develop a comprehensive homeless facility. At the cornerstone of the plan was the Bud Clark Commons (BCC), originally known as the Resource Access Center. The BCC was developed from an innovative partnership with the City of Portland's Housing Bureau, Multnomah County, Home Forward (previously the Housing Authority of Portland) and local service provider, Transition Projects, Inc. While Portland Housing Bureau, Multnomah County were key players in siting the facility, Home Forward and Transition Projects are instrumental in the management and day-to-day operations of the facility.

The first floor of the building houses a 90-bed men's shelter, with the second and third floors hosting a Resource Day Center. The Day Center provides resources such as mental health, veteran services, eye care and social security services to anyone in the community seeking assistance. The remainder of the building is made up of 130 Housing First studio apartments that provides permanent housing to chronically homeless individuals who suffer from personal barriers such as mental illness or drug abuse. See Appendix A for a layout of the facility.

Appetite for Collaboration

Portland has a strong history for collaboration and civic engagement. Critical to these civic engagement efforts is the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, a bureau within city government. In Portland there are 95 distinct neighborhood associations recognized by the City and actively involved

community government. Whether private or public, any new development, deed or permit must notify and engage with appropriate neighborhood association(s) prior to receiving approval from City Council.[1] This process allows community members to voice their concerns and provide valuable feedback to City officials to better shape development in Portland.

The Bud Clark Commons is sited at the juncture of Old Town China Town Neighborhood and Pearl District in downtown Portland. Historically known as the "skid row" of Portland, Old Town Chinatown (OTCT) is the common gathering location for people suffering from homelessness, mental illnesses, drug addition and other illnesses. In an effort to help individuals overcome such barriers, several human service providers have located to the neighborhood over the years. Local service providers, such as Transition Projects have been providing men's and women's shelters, meals and social services to the homeless in OTCT for years. As a staple fixture in the community, many of these service providers are not only businesses, but they are also active, engaged community members participating in neighborhood associations.

Approximately 30 years ago, the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association adopted a Vision Plan for the community. Due to the neighborhood's longstanding reputation as "skid row" residents were determined to address the issues facing the area and develop a plan to create a vibrant, safe, and healthy community. Rather than try to clean-up and eradicate the neighborhood of its nuisances, OTCT embraced and integrated the diversity of the area in their plan. The Vision Plan set out goals to balance low-income, poverty residences with market rate and above housing. Residents of low-income

housing typically do not have the means to support businesses and retail. Without a balanced housing market, the community could not sustain a vibrant business district. Owners would leave the neighborhood, creating a windfall for the community.[2]

At the onset of the siting process, members of the community, specifically OTCT were unhappy with the location and many argued the City ignored the Vision Plan and its goals for balance in the community. Members felt the City was placing an unjust burden on the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood. While residents and business owners accepted that the community needed to provide services to the homeless, they felt adding additional low-income housing was shifting the balance and creating an unsustainable community.

In addition, OTCT Vice Chair, Nancy Stowell recalls at the beginning of the siting process that the Bud Clark Commons was not the only development being proposed. There were multiple low-income and affordable housing developments under consideration which only increased the community's concern about an unbalanced neighborhood. Through the siting and design process, the City and project partners actively engaged with residents and businesses to address their concerns and ensure the facility would not inhibit the value of the neighborhood, but rather sustain and contribute to a safe, healthy community.

Case Study
Phase I: Location

The Bud Clark Commons facility is located in OTCT, just south of the Portland Union Station, and borders the Pearl District neighborhood – a historically higher income,

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[1] Office of Neighborhood Involvement (http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/)

[2] Stowell, Nancy. Vice Chair of Old Town China Town Neighborhood Association. Interviewed 4.17.12

destination neighborhood. The specific space was a vacant lot owned by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the urban renewal agency for the City charged with developing projects to meet the City's housing, economic and redevelopment priorities. In 2008, City Council transferred the block from the PDC to the Portland Housing Authority to develop the site for the Bud Clark Commons.[3] The siting resolution outlines an alternative block if the NW Irving block is deemed inadequate, due to an environmental assessment or cost. This alternative block is still located within OTCT neighborhood – demonstrating the City's plan to develop the facility that is the cornerstone of the 10-year plan within OTCT. The resolution also outlines that the Office of Neighborhood Involvement must help facilitate a good neighborhood agreement between all agencies and neighbors, "as required by City Policy."

As mentioned above, there was high interest from community members in the siting of the facility. To address community concerns, the Old Town Chinatown Visions committee hosted twelve meetings between 2007 and 2008. One of the top concerns from these meetings was the housing imbalance it would create in the neighborhood, as well as that the siting may impede future redevelopment of the Broadway Corridor – a significant city project to promote redevelopment in downtown Portland.[4] As a compromise for both resident and business concerns, the PDC and Portland Housing Bureau agreed the facility would only be on half of PDC-owned urban

renewal block. The other half of the block would be set aside for redevelopment and market-rate housing. This resolution, coupled with the fact that the intent of the 10-year Home Again homeless plan was always intended to site the facility in Old Town Chinatown, helped to alleviate tensions between community members and service providers. Citizens moved beyond opposition and entered into a collaborative decision making process with the site developers to ensure the facility simultaneously addressed homeless needs in the neighborhood, as well as community member concerns.

Phase II: Design

The Portland Housing Board and Home Forward created a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to participate in the development and design of the facility. Local residents from neighborhood associations, business association representatives, service providers and individuals who had previously been homeless and could speak on behalf of those currently suffering from homelessness served on the CAC. For two years, the advisory committee, with leadership from Home Forward, worked with the designers and architects to create an engaging design that reflected the values of the community.[5]

The advisory committee provided crucial perspectives on pieces ranging from exterior design, aesthetics to overall community impacts. For example, the CAC helped problem solve a common concern, queuing. Oftentimes, individuals queue in front of facilities, blocking sidewalks, littering and in

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[3] Resource Access Center (RAC) Resolution, 2008. http://www.homeforward.org/system/files/docs/developments/RAC-sitingresolution.pdf

[4] Portland Development Commission Resolution, 2008. http://www.homeforward.org/system/files/docs/developments/RAC-PDC-resolutionblockU.pdf

[5] Allen, Kate. Senior Policy Advisor, Portland Housing Bureau. Interviewed 3.31.12

some instances, exhibiting disruptive behavior. To resolve queuing tensions, the Bud Clark Commons only allows individuals to queue within the facilities courtyard. Not only does this provide a safer, cleaner environment for the community, it also provides a safe, protected environment for the homeless, especially during times of bad weather when lines are the longest.[6] CAC members were also concerned about how the design of the facility may impede future redevelopment on the remainder of the block. This was agreed upon by all parties and helped foster the design of the ground floor in ways that supported the functionality of the building without creating problems for residents or the Portland Police Bureau."[7] Through two design workshops multiple Community Advisory Committee meetings, the architects were able to incorporate the needs and concerns of all the stakeholders into the facility.

Additionally, the Community Advisory Committee also played vital roles in securing permits, receiving authorization and financing for the facility. Representatives from the CAC provided vital testimony for City Council throughout the process, including the Resolution process transferring ownership of the block, approving the design of the facility and eventual development. Again, reiterating the collaborative decision framework.

Good Neighbor Agreement Development Process

Once the Bud Clark Commons secured funding and began to move forward with building the facility, the Portland Housing Bureau initiated a community engagement process to develop a Good Neighbor Agreement. When asked what

sparked the idea for the Good Neighbor Agreement, Kate Allen, Senior Policy Advisor stated it is a common practice in Portland and required by City policy for certain developments, such as this one.[8] While neighborhood agreements and processes differ depending on circumstances, it is common for the City's Neighborhood Involvement Bureau to facilitate neighborhood agreements, oftentimes between business development and neighborhoods. The idea to develop a neighborhood agreement was always planned to be a part of the siting process.

Many of the stakeholders that participated in the Community Advisory Council were the same as those that participated in the Good Neighborhood Agreement (GNA) negotiations. However, GNA stakeholders represented a larger congregation of community stakeholders than those that participated in the CAC. In addition, Transition Projects identified homeless representatives to also participate in the process. As part of the GNA negotiations, future Bud Clark Commons residence were engaged in the process to build community and help residents take responsibility for their home. The impact from their participation can be seen in the GNA. When neighbors saw that residents were engaged and taking a stake in their combined community, there was a large shift from an "us versus them" to an "us" mantra.5

To effectively enter into a neighborhood agreement, the City paid for a professional facilitator to manage the discussions. This allowed representatives from the Portland Housing Bureau, Home Forward and Transitions Project to participate as stakeholders, rather than a facilitator. Representatives of these agencies were largely leadership and

[6] Home Forward (www.homeforward.org)

[7] Design Workshop Notes, 2008. http://www.homeforward.org/system/files/docs/developments/RAC-DesignWorkshop-SummaryNotes053108.pdf

[8] Allen, Kate. Senior Policy Advisor, Portland Housing Bureau. Interviewed 3.31.12

Board Members. Staff from these agencies served mostly as resources to address questions, rather than participate in the Siting Committee.

As a staff resource present at these GNA negotiations, Ms. Allen lauded the role of the facilitator. The facilitator was critical in rephrasing comments and concerns into constructive criticisms and a common platform. This helped mitigate the role of emotions and allowed the stakeholders to effectively and efficiently address concerns. It created a comfortable, safe environment, free to be critical while remaining respectful of others.[9] In the end, the stakeholders were working towards a common goal, rather than complete opposition.

As part of the GNA negotiations, the Portland Housing Bureau developed an outreach and communication plan to effectively engage as many residents, business owners and other stakeholders as possible. It is clear that Portland Housing Authority went beyond generally accepted engagement for this process. Rather than simply posting public meetings in legal sections of newspapers, PHA compiled a complete PowerPoint presentation that was available on their website, went into the community, and hosted a GNA signature party once the negotiations were complete. This outreach fostered the idea that negotiations were not a one-step process that ended at a one-time meeting. Rather, it was an iterative process that depended on the stakeholders to carry-out the GNA once the facility was built. For a complete list of stakeholders see the Good Neighborhood Agreement, Appendix B.

Good Neighbor Agreement Impacts

In the end, the Good Neighbor Agreement is simply not just a paper of signatures. Rather it outlines, in detail, how the community, businesses, and Bud Clark residents can mitigate concerns and conflicts moving forward.[10] The GNA provides protocols for addressing any safety or disturbance concerns.

Rather than allowing any circumstance to escalate, the Good Neighbor Agreement encourages any persons with a concern to call representatives. This helps to address concerns immediately and proactively respond. The GNA also includes a detailed call list of stakeholders which, according to Ms. Allen, has been instrumental in the operations of the facility. This allows person-to-person connections, rather than simply feeling that a concern may not be addressed.

Another aspect of the Good Neighbor Agreement also includes the Operating Rules for Bud Clark Commons residents. This inclusion into the Agreement allows community members to see that BCC residents are also held to a high safety standard and they are responsible for maintaining a safe and clean neighborhood as well. This helps ensure the weight of the community is equally dispersed among neighborhood residents and businesses, agency partners and Bud Clark Commons residents.

In efforts to continue community development with all the stakeholders, neighborhood associations invite residents to participate in their quarterly meetings. In addition, service provider representatives also participate in meetings. As both Ms. Allen and Ms. Stowell reiterated to me, the residents at the Bud Clark Commons are not isolated, but rather part of a

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[9] Allen, Kate. Senior Policy Advisor, Portland Housing Bureau. Interviewed 3.31.12

[10] Good Neighbor Agreement – Appendix B

community, which can be just as vital to attaining housing stability as housing itself.

Conclusion

While the Bud Clark Commons Housing Facility initially received community push back, through a comprehensive community engagement process and collaborative decision making, the facility was successfully sited in its intended location. While some of the efforts from the project partners were innovative and transparent, such as the Community Advisory Committee that was involved from the beginning, the City of Portland has historically fostered a transparent, collaborative process between city government and residents. For over thirty years, Portland has officially recognized neighborhood associations and created policies and regulations that regularly involve community members. This environment for collaboration and transparency created a high level of expectations on part of both residents and project partners to ensure the Bud Clark Commons met the needs and concerns of stakeholders.

In looking at the Bud Clark Commons process, we can learn from their community engagement to ensure successful housing services in the City of Boulder. While common opposition to the Boulder Housing First facility is that one community is bearing the burden of services for the entire city, the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood association accepted this role within Portland. In addition, several years prior to developing the facility, the City highlighted that the cornerstone to ending homelessness would be providing services within Old Town Chinatown. Guided by a decades-old Vision Plan that is formally recognized by City Council, OTCT addressed the issue head-on. Community Advisory Committee members addressed specific concerns related to business sustainability and a balances housing market. Through thoughtful and articulate meetings, project partners and community stakeholders were able to site, design and operate a facility to tackle homelessness and provide a value-added benefit to the neighborhood.

What lessons can North Boulder Alliance and Boulder Housing Partners learn from the Bud Clark Commons? It is evident that community engagement is embedded in the City of Portland. There were strong expectations that community members would be integrated into the process. But is that not so different from the culture in Boulder? Boulder also has a strong tradition of transparency and engagement that is often correlated to Portland. Moving forward the City of Boulder may develop regulated procedures that foster a civil civic engagement process. Provide a platform for neighborhood associations to be heard, such as a Neighborhood Involvement Bureau. This not only benefits community members, but it also outlines a process for all developers. Planners and developers can plan for methods to alleviate opposition and conflicts, rather than address more common claims, which is that the community wasn't heard. Boulder Housing Alliance can learn from Old Town Chinatown and adopt a vision plan for the community. The homeless providers are not leaving the neighborhood. The facility is going to be built. It is time to work with the city, engage with the homeless population so they are also part of the community, and adopt policies for future development so the burden can be address immediately.

The Renaissance
Denver, Colorado
Dylan Grabowski

Abstract

      In 2004 Denver, Colorado adopted a ten-year plan to end homelessness in order to receive federal fiscal aid, and further fund a permanent housing model initiated by Denver Housing First Collaborative (est. 2001). Following the model Denver pioneered in the early 2000's, multiple Housing First facilities have since been developed using the federal aid. Housing First is a form of permanent housing that removes the chronically homeless from living on the streets, regardless of substance abuse or mental health issues. This case study will look at the relationship between the developer and neighborhood communities. It will entail the siting process of these types of facilities, how the communities were engaged, and the success of said relationships and facilities.

Background

      Denver's Road Home (DRH) is the result of a collaborative effort to stop and prevent homelessness, as well as the author of the goals set in Denver's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. A few of the eight goals in the ten year plan include 1.) providing permanent and transitional housing, 2.) providing better services, and 3.) enhancing community awareness and coordinated response. (Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, 2006) Since 2005, DRH has provided nearly 2,000 units of housing, prevented 5,500 individuals from becoming homeless, and placed 5,200 individuals in part or full-time jobs. (Denver's Road Home Funder Collaborative, 2011) Housing First is one of the initiatives that was detailed within the ten year plan and provides permanent housing solutions.

      Housing First is "a model under which hard-core homeless people were placed in housing and immediately steered into treatment for mental illness and substance abuse."[1] A Cost-Benefit Analysis and Program Report created by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) on December 11, 2006, portrays the positive economic associations attached to Denver's Housing First program. The study was conducted over a 24-month period, and found that compared to the investment costs of providing temporary or transitional housing and supportive services, there is a net cost savings to tax-payers of $4,745 per homeless person in a Housing First facility.

      Renaissance at Civic Center is Denver's first Housing First facility. There have since been multiple facilities developed throughout the immediate metropolitan region. Such facilities include Renaissance 88 in Thornton, CO, as well as, Off Broadway Lofts and Renaissance Uptown in Denver, CO. The Housing First model has been successful for Denver, and has decreased the amount of money taxpayers spend on social services used by the chronically homeless. Post-entry into the Housing First program, rates in detox, incarceration, emergency room visits, inpatient, and shelter costs have all decreased for the formerly homeless residents.

Discussion

      Denver's first Housing First facility, Renaissance Civic Center, is located on the eastern periphery of Denver's central business district. Surrounding the neighborhood is an array of office buildings and parking lots, which made this siting process unique. With a small amount of neighbors to oppose its

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[1] Denver Commission to End Homelessness. (2006) Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness: A Report to the Citizens of Denver. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from "http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/659"

siting,there was little need for community engagement. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless purchased the building from the YMCA in 2001 with minimal opposition as the 167 units were facing the risk of loss.[2] Today, it is a 216 unit residence that shares the first floor with the YMCA, where summer camps are held seasonally. An effort to gather information about the siting process from the director of the 16th Street Housing First program, James Ginsburg, was stunted as he was unable to be reached. Typically, Housing First facilities are not sited in areas with business and parking lots as the predominant neighbors. Thus, there was no 'community benefit' or 'good neighbor' agreement found on record. The next case will demonstrate how dynamics change when a facility is sited in an established neighborhood.

Case: The Renaissance Uptown

The siting process for Renaissance Uptown began in June of 2008 with the first community meeting led by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. In January of 2011 the doors for this LEED certified facility, located on Colfax Ave. and Pearl St., were opened to new residents. It's a 98-unit residential facility, with commercial/retail space on the first floor that provides job training for residents.[3]

A location for permanent housing is chosen based on the needs of the population being addressed. The chronically homeless will likely be placed in an urban setting, where access

to other services is available. The largest factor in siting a facility is access to health and mental services, public transportation, jobs, and retail. Renaissance Uptown's location is ideal due to its proximity to the Stout Street Clinic, which is CCH's most visited homeless clinic service.

The role of urban planners in the siting was minimal. City Councilwoman Jeanne Robb of District 6 noted in a Capitol Hill Newsletter that "MS-3 zoning is in place for the site, it is unlikely that City Council will be called to take any action on the project. Only design review by the Planning Department should be necessary."[4]

The Developer and Property Acquisition

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is a non-profit organization established in 1984, their aim is to end and prevent homelessness. When purchasing sites for permanent housing, CCH will use zoning rights that allow for dense, mixed-use living situations. The properties are acquired upfront prior to gaining approval from the neighborhood. Economically, this is the best method for purchasing land. If an entity in the neighborhood discovers details of the purchase, a second buyer may potentially be offered who would be willing to purchase the site for more money. After the land has been purchased, the developer creates blueprints and plans for the building and presents the information in tangible displays to the community.[5] Once the community has been informed to CCH's plans for a

[2] What We Do: Renaissance at Civic Center Apartments. (n.d.). Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Retrieved from "http://www.coloradocoalition.org/what_we_do/what_we_do_housing/what_we_do_civic_center.aspx

[3] Martin, Vanessa. "CCH details 'Renaissance Uptown Lofts.'" Life on Capitol Hill [Denver] n.d. 2. Web. <http://www.lifeoncaphill.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6&Itemid=6>

[4] Martin, Vanessa. "CCH details 'Renaissance Uptown Lofts.'" Life on Capitol Hill [Denver] n.d. 2. Web. <http://www.lifeoncaphill.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6&Itemid=6>

[5] Windsor Interview, 2012

development, the developer asks for an invitation to neighborhood and community organizations monthly meetings. The Neighborhood Association: Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (CHUN).

CHUN is a neighborhood association that has been representing Capitol Hill and its residents for over 31 years. As a registered neighborhood association, they act democratically to involve all who care and will participate to improve the quality of life in greater Capitol Hill. Acting as a neighborhood advocate, CHUN will represent its resident's ideas to City Council, State Legislature, and administrative agencies. The group is important to mention because they were a key stakeholder in the development of the Renaissance Uptown. The neighborhood associations Executive Director is Roger Armstrong.

Engaging the Community

Community engagement is an important aspect in siting a facility, and should be done early in the process for optimal results. Typically supporters of permanent housing facilities within communities are the businesses and business organizations. In an interview Bill Windsor, Housing Director for CCH, made the statement, "good partners who usually support permanent housing facilities are businesses… [they] realize that development of [Housing First] facilities brings commercial activity to the area, and enhances economic

activity."[6] In the instance of the Renaissance Uptown, the Colfax BID held no objection to the development proposal and no businesses vociferously objected the facility. Attempts made to interview the executive director of CBID were met with no success.

The main opponents of a Housing First facility will usually be the neighbors or neighborhood associations in close proximity to the permanent housing facility. While Roger Armstrong stated, "CHUN's mission is to support diverse housing opportunities,"[7] neighbors and Councilwoman Madison were concerned about the concentration of the 1,000 already existing low-income units within a quarter-mile radius of the site.[8] Other concerns involved the physical aspect of the new facility, such as building design, proper zoning, retail spaces, parking spaces, and number of units. A key issue for the neighborhood regarding development was the building's façade, as it was labeled a historic site by CHUN's Historic Preservation Committee.[9] The best way to address fears community members may have about negative externalities associated with a Housing First facility in their neighborhood is to take them on a tour of an already existing facility.

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless' Housing Direct, Bill Windsor, uses the Renaissance at Civic Center facility as the primary example for community members who may express concern for having such a facility located in the vicinity. The Coalition will provide uneasy community members tours of this

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[6] Windsor Interview, 2012

[7] Armstrong Interview, 2012

[8] Martin, Vanessa. "CCH details 'Renaissance Uptown Lofts.'" Life on Capitol Hill [Denver] n.d. 2. Web. <http://www.lifeoncaphill.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6&Itemid=6>

[9] Martin, Vanessa. "CCH details 'Renaissance Uptown Lofts.'" Life on Capitol Hill [Denver] n.d. 2. Web. <http://www.lifeoncaphill.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6&Itemid=6>

facility, as well as, introduce them to neighbors of the existing facility to quell fears. Windsor was pleased to highlight the fact that the YMCA serves as a children's camp during the summer, and that no child has ever been harmed by the residents living above.[10]

To address the variety of concerns held by neighbors, the Colorado Coalition for Homeless held a community meeting June 24, 2008 regarding the development of Renaissance Uptown. Parties at the table included City Councilwomen Jeanne Robb and Carla Madison, CHUN, The Unsinkables (an anti-crime community group in Capitol Hill), and CCH. The meeting served as an opportunity for all parties to provide input into the buildings development.

Outcome

The outcome of the community meeting held in 2008 lead to a good neighbor agreement held between the developer and the neighborhood. The agreement was constructed by CCH and addresses the community's specific concerns regarding Renaissance Uptown.

First, concerns of the historic façade were addressed by the architect, Humphries Poli Architects. The firm constructed a building model that replicated and would still maintain the 1923 façade. Second, requirements were made for the addition of retail spaces on the first floor. CCH relayed the task of parking spaces and type of business to those who bought their way into the units. Major commercial activity that bought into

the retail space were a 7/11, and Pizza Fusion, a pizzeria. Pizza Fusion is owned by a subsidiary of CCH, and is a place Housing First residents are able to receive job training. Third, an Advisory Panel was created for on-going communication between the developer and neighborhood. "After meeting with local associations during the development phase, CCH will offer an invitation to join an advisory group. The advisory group is a collaboration of community members, neighborhood associations, and the developer that meets regularly after the Housing First facility is developed and is fully functioning."[11]

Armstrong thought the developer had properly addressed the neighborhood and community in development of Renaissance Uptown. During the siting process, "CHUN worked with developers and the community, to bring both together what the developer wanted to do and address the neighborhood's concerns."[12] The community did not oppose the project. In fact, John Parvensky, Executive Director of CCH received a "Homelessness and Affordable Housing Good Neighbor Award" from CHUN in January of 2011. Armstrong was quoted, "You and your organization have been pioneers in creating affordable housing and services to the homeless that sensitively integrate into and compliment the communities they are located in."[13]

Construction of Good Neighbor Agreements

For construction of a good neighbor agreement the developer and community representatives (neighborhood

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[10] Windsor Interview, 2012

[11] Windsor Interview, 2012

[12] Armstrong Interview, 2012

[13] Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (CHUN) Honors Colorado Coalition for the Homeless During Annual Awards Dinner. (2011, January 6). Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Retrieved from "http://www.coloradocoalition.org/media/news_releases/chun-award.aspx"

association) need to engage in a discussion, reciprocating equal and respectful communication. DenverINC is a neighborhood association comprised of over 100 neighborhoods whose mission is "to advocate for Denver citizens by bringing together, informing and empowering Denver neighborhood organizations to actively engage in addressing City issues."[14] Michael Henry, Chair on the Zoning and Planning Committee of DenverINC, urged enhancing developer and neighborhood association's relations through a good neighbor agreement. "Good Neighbor Agreements are instruments that provide a vehicle for community organizations and a [developer] to recognize and formalize their roles within a locality. The purpose of these agreements is to foster sustainable development in a community by reconciling economic development with the community's welfare, including the health of its environment and its individual members."[15] Henry told a story of a siting process gone awry in a siting of a Five Points neighborhood permanent housing facility. The developer didn't initially engage the community and used an authoritative tone when discussing the plans for the facility's development. The relationship was later salvaged after six to eight months of battling by entering into a good neighbor agreement. Outlined below are Henry's steps to success for good neighbor relations in affordable housing communities:

1. Early contact with immediate neighbors and adjacent neighborhood organizations. Usually a city or county planning department will be able to identify key contact persons for neighborhood groups. The first contact should be well before the design plans are finalized. Neighbors are resentful if developers unveil final plans, which is a signal that any neighborhood input is irrelevant. Neighbors generally oppose any projects that they perceive are "sneaking in," even if no contact is legally required. Early contact disarms much opposition.

2. Honest communication. Misleading statements or partial truths poison relationships with neighbors.

3. Thoughtful explanation of the need for such a development in this neighborhood, the type of persons targeted to be served and the general size of the development

4. Recognition that some neighborhoods rightfully believe that they are over-saturated with housing for special populations, coupled with a genuine effort to locate in areas that are not over-saturated.

5. Continuing contact with immediate neighbors and neighborhood groups as plans and construction progress. If plans change, that should be discussed with neighbors.

6. Genuine attempt to work with entire community and not try to pit one community group against another.

7. Willingness to enter into a written "good neighbor agreement" with immediate neighbors and neighborhood groups. The most frequent and legitimate subjects of such an agreement are:

a) description and/or drawings of the form and architecture of the building. Obviously, neighbors want a development that is attractive and that generally fits into the context of the neighborhood.

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[14] INC Mission Statement. (n.d.). DenverINC. Retrieved from "http://www.denverinc.org/about-us/mission/"

[15] Lewis, Sanford, and Diane Henkels. 1996. Good neighbor agreements: A tool for environmental and social justice. Social Justice 23 (4): 134-51.

b) description of the income-level and/or type of individuals to be served. (Note that most neighborhoods much prefer mixed-income persons or families)

c) description of how residents will be selected and/or screened

d) description of how the property will be maintained, landscaped, etc

e) description of level of staffing for the project. Generally, neighbors prefer at least one resident manager or staff at all times.

f) description of how security will be maintained

g) description of what controls will be in place to remove a dangerous or disruptive tenant – such as a no-crime lease agreement

h) agreement to meet every few months after the opening to discuss any possible issues – possibly through a designated neighborhood advisory group

i) communication to neighbors of contact information for the manager in case issues arise

8. Open house for neighbors soon after the facility opens

9. Participation by the manager and residents in neighborhood association meetings and activities.

Conclusion

CCH, the developer, engaged the community after the site had been purchased and had developed a plan for a Housing First facility. The community was introduced to the development plans during a community meeting, and was provided the opportunity to express their thoughts. Success came from the fact that residents of Capitol Hill were engaged in the development process very early on. The developer was open to hearing their insights into physical design and operations of the facility. This process allowed residents to accept the facility, as they were given the amount of engagement necessary to locate permanent housing their community. To address the fears a community may have in regards to this type of development, provide tours of existing facilities and arrange meetings with that facility's neighbors to better understand some fears may be unfounded. These scheduled visits will provide opportunity to show worried residents that Housing First facilities, indeed, are not going to degrade the neighborhood.

Opportunities for open discussion must be available as exhibited in the Renaissance Uptown case, via community meetings and the induction of an advisory panel. Another important factor for communities facing a new permanent housing facility is the perception of social enhancement. This idea is illustrated when residents are able to understand, "[a] benefit to the community is that these permanent housing facilities are addressing the roots of homelessness. By providing a place for people to live, there will be fewer homeless folks sleeping in the neighborhoods, alleys, and in front of businesses. Also, by providing help for the homeless, fewer tax payer dollars will be spent on police, court costs, jail, mental health services, and negative externalities associated with homelessness."[16] If a community is heard, and in return are able to understand such housing facilities can be a win-win situation, they will be more likely to work alongside the developer.

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[16] Windsor Interview, 2012

Emerson North
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Annalisa McDaniel
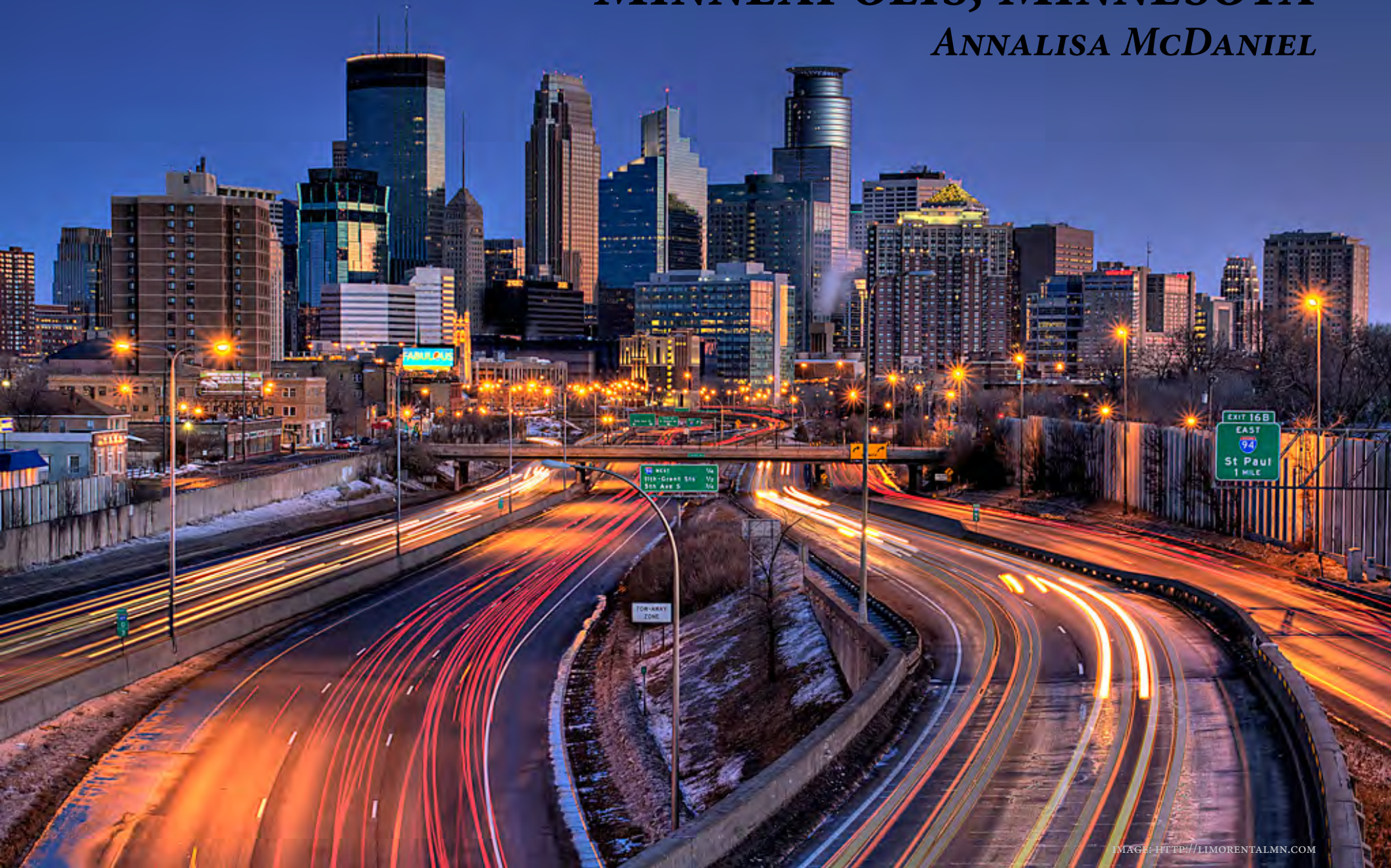
Abstract

The following report provides an account of a recent site location dispute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The report provides examples of strategies that have eased local opposition to a proposed multifamily development that includes Housing First units. This paper analyzes the actions of the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation (PCNF), a nonprofit developer, and the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC), the Near North/Willard-Hay neighborhood organization, during the beginning phases of the Emerson North multifamily development. PCNF has proactively engaged the community from the beginning, and as a result the developer has received community support for their project despite initial pushback from some community members.

Discussion

In 2006 the state of Minnesota, along with over 300 states, cities, and counties throughout the Nation, created a ten-year plan to end homelessness.[1] Heading Home Hennepin is a component of the statewide plan that is specifically focused on Hennepin County and Minneapolis, its largest city. Housing First is a cornerstone of the ten-year plan. Prevention, outreach, service delivery improvement, self-support capacity building, and systems improvements are additional strategies to address homelessness emphasized in the plan.[2]

The ambitious plan puts Hennepin County at the forefront of the movement to end homelessness. The State of Minnesota, as well as the counties and local municipalities within the state, are creatively seeking solutions to end homelessness in their jurisdictions. Hennepin County is following the Housing First strategy provide safe homes for chronically homeless individuals and families. In Minneapolis, Housing First units are located in developments that include a combination of supportive housing, workforce or market rate units.

Unlike other areas throughout the country, neither Hennepin County nor Minneapolis Housing Authority constructs Housing First facilities. The County partners with housing service providers, community landlords, business, faith and advocacy leaders to provide housing first units for individuals and families .[3]

Under Minnesota's Group Residential Housing (GRH) Statute, the State subsidizes, or often times fully covers, rent payments for chronically homeless individuals. Individuals qualify for support due to metal health issues, disabilities, addiction, Native American heritage, or are single women with children. Many nonprofit and religious organizations that provide housing for the homeless and develop Housing First facilities receive their tenants' monthly rent payments directly from the State of Minnesota.

Construction of new housing units is absolutely essential because the state is actively trying to address homelessness and move homeless individuals and families in to safe, clean, and well-kept housing. Despite the demand, affordable/workforce housing facilities, homeless shelters, and Housing First facilities

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[1] Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis Commission to End Homelessness. (2006). Heading Home Hennepin: The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

[2] Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis Commission to End Homelessness. (2006). Heading Home Hennepin: The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

[3] Hennepin County. (2012). Hennepin County Fact Sheet, Housing First Partnership.

are invariably magnets for controversy and are often difficult to site.

On May 22, 2011 a tornado damaged 500 units of affordable housing stock in the North Minneapolis neighborhood. The damaged housing units were predominantly older, inefficient duplex and multiunit houses. The Emerson North development was proposed in June 2011 as a direct response to the loss of affordable housing units in the neighborhood. Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation owns a parcel of land at 1800-1826 Emerson Avenue North in the neighborhood damaged by the tornado. An old grocery store is currently located on the project site and houses an operating day center for homeless families.

Emerson North was initially proposed as a 48-unit apartment complex, the number of units has since been reduced to 41. Twelve units are reserved for formerly homeless families and preference will be given to families affected by the tornado.[4] In Minneapolis, approval for supportive housing requires only a conditional use permit. Supportive housing is a use by right in the majority of residential and commercial districts including the area where Emerson North is proposed.[5] The parcels are currently zoned for moderate density housing and the day center is therefore a nonconforming use. (A nonconforming use is a use that is not allowed by right and requires a zoning variance or a special use permit to operate.)

PCNF viewed their property as an ideal location for a development that combined the existing day center, permanent housing units for formerly homeless families using the day center, and workforce housing to help those affect by the tornado. The site is surrounded by residential land uses and is located a block from West Broadway Avenue, a major commercial corridor.

The development is located in the Near North Minneapolis neighborhood, which is racially and ethnically diverse. Near North Minneapolis has traditionally been a working class neighborhood. Residents have a lower average household income than the City of Minneapolis as a whole.
The residents of the Old Highland neighborhood directly surrounding the Emerson North development site are more affluent compared to the larger neighborhood and are predominantly white. Homeowners in Old Highland have invested significantly in renovating their large Victorian homes. The residents are well organized and many are active in the Democratic Party.[6] Democratic U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison is a resident of the neighborhood and a supporter of the project.
PCNF's Community Engagement Strategy

Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation is a nonprofit faith based housing developer. Through its work, PCNF has gained the support of many congregations in the Twin Cities area. Because PCNF is well connected with churches, the first stages of community outreach began with Near North neighborhood congregations. After initial outreach was conducted, six churches came together to create a task-force dedicated to moving the Emerson North project forward. The participating congregations were multi-racial and multi-faith and included a Catholic Church, an African American Mosque, an African American Pentecostal Church, a Missionary Baptist Church, and a Presbyterian Church. PCNF made an effort to

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[4] PCNF. (2012). Emerson North. Retrieved April 1, 2012, from Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation: http://plymouthfoundation.org/housing/emerson-north

[5] Smoley, J. (2012, April 13). City Planner, City of Minneapolis. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

[6] Israel, I. (2012, April 17). Interim Director, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

gain the support of congregations that reflected the diversity of the neighborhood. Later in the process, local church leaders helped encourage greater community participation. Church leaders were able to convey to their congregations the importance of attending community meetings in support of Emerson North.

PCNF approached the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council in August 2011 and asked the group to submit a letter of support for Emerson North to the City of Minneapolis. A letter of support was needed to receive grants from the City and Low Income Housing Tax Credits allocated by Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. NRRC arranged a community meeting in September 2011 to assess support for the project. Residents of the Old Highland neighborhood voted 44 to 11 in opposition to the project.[7] According to Ishmael Israel, the Interim Director of NRRC, the residents nearest to the project were the least supportive and the most organized. Residents of the larger neighborhood voted 85 to 20 in support of the development.[8]

The vocal minority skewed the broader neighborhood's position on the project. The opposition group suggested that new owner-occupied units should be developed instead of rental units. Many residents of Old Highland believed that their neighborhood was home to more than their fair share of social services and Emerson North would further burden the neighborhood. The addition of over 200 new tenants was also concerning to existing residents of the neighborhood, they viewed the development as too large.[9]

After receiving opposition from the nearest residents and support from the overall neighborhood, the NRRC Board decided to neither support nor oppose the development. The Board took a neutral stance with the caveat that they would support the project if PCNF would enter into a legally binding Community Benefits Agreement (CBA). As PCNF is committed to constructing housing to help end homelessness, the developer agreed to negotiate with NRRC in order to gain the neighborhood organization's support.

According to Allison Johnson, Congregational Partnership Organizer with PCNF, a subcommittee was formed to negotiate the CBA. The subcommittee held over ten meetings and dedicated hundreds of hours to the negotiation process.[10] The CBA was negotiated with the help of a third party, the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability promotes local participation in development and helps communities link development with localizes benefits.[11] The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability has advised other nonprofit groups, and a facilitator from the

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[7] Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. (2011, October 3). September Board Meeting Minutes (unofficial). Retrieved April 13, 2011, from Northside Residents Redevelopment Council website: http://nrrc.org/2011/10/04/september-board- meeting-minutes-unofficial/

[8] Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. (2011, October 3). September Board Meeting Minutes (unofficial). Retrieved April 13, 2011, from Northside Residents Redevelopment Council website: http://nrrc.org/2011/10/04/september-board- meeting-minutes-unofficial/

[9] Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. (2011, October 3). September Board Meeting Minutes (unofficial). Retrieved April 13, 2011, from Northside Residents Redevelopment Council website: http://nrrc.org/2011/10/04/september-board- meeting-minutes-unofficial/

[10] Johnson, A. (2012, April 18). Congregational Partnership Organizer, Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

[11] Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. (2008, October 10). Community Benefit Agreements. Retrieved April 18, 2012, from Alliance for Metropolitan Stability website: http://www.metrostability.org/campaigns/article.php?sid=Test

organization guided NRRC and PCNF through the CBA negotiation process.

The developer's willingness to negotiate a CBA has been the key factor in garnering neighborhood support for the project. A draft of the Community Benefits Agreement is attached in the Appendix. Several items were negotiated during the process. The number of units was reduced from 48 to 41 to better integrate with the neighborhood's exiting character. Minority and women owned business requirements for construction and operation of Emerson North were increased.

The CBA contains more than developer concessions, NRRC has a responsibility to maintain engagement with the developer and identify potential tenants that were displaced by the tornado. A lasting affect of the CBA is the creation of an Advisory Group to include representation from NRRC, a neighbor at large, a PCNF staff person, the property manager, and a tenant. Maintaining a relationship between all parties is critical to the project's long-term success and acceptance. The Advisory Group is required to meet at least once a year for thirty years.

The process of negotiating the CBA helped change the opinion of some community members and NRRC Board members. One particular board member was initially very vocally opposed to the development. Participating in the negotiation process and building trust with the developer through communication changed this particular individual's stance from opposed to the project to in favor of the project.[12]

In the end, the board member's vote in support of Emerson North was needed for NRRC to accept the CBA.

A draft of the Community Benefits Agreement was accepted by the NRRC Board at a meeting that took place on April 16, 2012. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting, and the majority of attendants supported the development.[13]

Minneapolis Ward 6 City Councilman Robert Lilligren is an important stakeholder that was absent during the negotiation process. U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison was a vocal supporter of Emerson North, but the NRRC felt it needed the support of their councilperson as well. Alliance Housing Incorporated Director Herb Frey stated outright in an interview that a councilperson's support can make or break a project.[14] Cultivating support in City Council is critical for the success of both nonprofit housing developers and neighborhood associations.

Conclusion

PCNF's approach to community engagement is what helped them gain neighborhood support for their project. Engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders was a successful strategy for the developer. The support of local religious leaders helped increase the number of residents that attended public meetings in support of the project. Continuing the existing relationship with local congregations will also help the developer maintain contact with the neighborhood after the project is completed.

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[12] Israel, I. (2012, April 17). Interim Director, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

[13] Johnson, A. (2012, April 18). Congregational Partnership Organizer, Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

[14] Frey, H. (2012, April 10). Director, Alliance Housing Incorporated. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

While some developers prefer to fly under the radar and site supportive housing and Housing First units in neighborhoods with low property values and concentrated poverty, PCNF makes it a priority to place affordable and supportive housing units in all neighborhoods.[15] This strategy, which mirrors the City of Minneapolis' overall strategy, requires PCNF to have a clearly articulated response to objections regarding increased concentration of poverty. Congressman Ellison addressed this concern at a public meeting held about Emerson North. By supporting housing for the homeless and providing safe places for homeless families to live, the community is helping to break the cycle of poverty and ultimately de-concentrating poverty. When the homeless have a place to live, they are taken off the street and have the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty. When people are safely housed, they are no longer homeless; therefore they do not increase the concentration of homelessness.

This concept should be communicated effectively to the community at the beginning of any siting process, and the importance of messaging should not be understated. Individuals are not destined to always be poor or homeless, individuals are experiencing homelessness and poverty. PCNF admitted this message was overlooked and undervalued even though they believe they tried to explain it to neighborhood residents.[16] The more time that passed, the harder the message was to convey. PCNF had to make a concerted effort to explain this mission to the community.

A final factor that contributed to neighborhood acceptance of Emerson North was the willingness of the developer to negotiate with the community. PCNF likely did not need full community support to move the project through the entitlement process. Nevertheless, the developer was willing to dedicate significant resources to the negotiation process. PCNF did not have to reduce the number of units in the building, but they did so to appease the public. Meaningful engagement between the developer and the neighborhood organization created a beneficial result for both parties. This will not be a one-off success for the community; rather the neighborhood organization is now more empowered to participate in the development process. NRRC is in the process of creating statewide Community Benefits Agreement Council to aid other nonprofit neighborhood associations in Minnesota. By creating a framework for Community Benefits Agreements, NRRC hopes to empower other community groups and help them understand that they can play a meaningful role in development that occurs in their neighborhoods.

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[15] Johnson, A. (2012, April 18). Congregational Partnership Organizer, Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

[16] Johnson, A. (2012, April 18). Congregational Partnership Organizer, Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation. (A. McDaniel, Interviewer)

The Cuyahoga County Housing First Initiative
Cleveland, Ohio
Evan Carver

Abstract

Ralph DePalma poses in front of his modest kitchen, a few photos of family members tacked to the cabinets behind him. His close-cropped beard and plain t-shirt betray a modest self-confidence. During a prior economic downturn, Ralph lost his job and then his suburban home, and wound up on the streets. For three years, Ralph was homeless. But now he lives in this studio apartment at South Pointe Commons, an 82-unit building that is part of Cleveland's Housing First Initiative. Housing First literally "saved my life," says Ralph. And the effects on the neighborhood of this $12.2 million investment are visibly evident everywhere, in the new South Pointe Commons complex itself, a combination of rehabilitated townhouses and a brand new building with a café on the ground floor, and in the surrounding area where neighbors have improved their own homes in response.[1]

A few miles away, in the diverse Ohio City neighborhood, former councilwoman Helen Smith does not like the idea of a facility like South Pointe moving in. Ohio City already has its share of homeless services, and it is revitalizing on its own, she claims. Other locals point out that homeless people already congregate in Frank Novak Park; bringing more to the area would only exacerbate the problem.[2]

This tension – with success stories like South Pointe on one side, and resistance from local residents on the other – has arisen repeatedly across Cleveland and across the country as cities and charitable organizations try to deal with the ever-increasing problem of chronic homelessness. While many people can agree that their fellow citizens should have shelter, it is much more difficult to agree on how and especially where to provide this shelter. This paper attempts to shed more light on the Housing First Initiative in Cleveland, both its successes and failures, and to focus on the process of intelligently choosing sites, winning political support, and engaging neighbors. It is hoped that other communities will look to Cleveland, where successes outnumber failures, and take useful lessons in order to avoid conflict and further their efforts to end chronic homelessness.

Discussion

The public housing movement in the United States dates to the 1920s and 1930s. Ohio, especially Cleveland, with its dense population of vulnerable industrial workers, was among the first places to recognize the need for public housing. In 1933, Cleveland hosted the first national conference on housing, and Ohio state representative Ernest Bohn was named the first President of the National Association of Housing Officials. The same year, the Cleveland Housing Authority was created, the first of its kind in the nation.[3] Throughout the subsequent decades, the Cleveland remained both a place with serious public housing needs as well as test case for new approaches to address those needs. Many mayors, including notably Carl

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[1] Joe Frolik. 22 August 2011. "Permanent supportive housing is more than a place for people to live; it's a chance to reconnect." Cleveland Plain Dealer. Accessed online: http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2011/08/permanent_supportive_housing_i.html

[2] Joe Frolik. 22 August 2011. "Permanent supportive housing is more than a place for people to live; it's a chance to reconnect." Cleveland Plain Dealer. Accessed online: http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2011/08/permanent_supportive_housing_i.html

[3] William Donahue Ellis. 1998. The Cuyahoga. Cleveland, Ohio: MSL Academic.

Stokes, Cleveland's first black mayor, and current mayor Frank G. Jackson, have made urban revitalization central to their campaigns and tenures.[4] Equally important is Cleveland's long history of grass roots, neighborhood-level social justice activism, most obvious in block groups, which can focus on issues like living conditions, housing, community organization, and safety. Especially since the 1960s, inspired by the election of Mayor Stokes and the world-wide social movements of the time, this kind of highly localized involvement in neighborhood social issues has characterized the city's struggle against postindustrial urban decay. It is against this 80-year history of activism and political involvement that the "Housing First" concept came to Cleveland.

The Housing First Initiative in Cleveland: A Robust Coalition

Following years of research nationwide on permanent supportive housing (PSH), the first efforts to implement a similar model in Cleveland began in 2001. Enterprise Housing Solutions, Inc., a national non-profit dedicated to housing, partnered with the Sisters of Charity Foundation to explore the feasibility of a program that placed chronically homeless individuals directly into a permanent apartment space. At the same time, research specific to Cleveland demonstrated the value of housing individuals directly, prior to any temporary housing or the mental or substance interventions commonly required.[5] (Because of the way it gives primacy to shelter above

treatment, PSH is colloquially called housing first.) Enterprise brought together a coalition of several large, well-established charitable service organizations in the area. The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Greater Cleveland would provide most of the initial funding; the Cleveland Housing Network (CHN) would serve as lead property developer; EDEN, Inc., would be co-developer and would manage the property; Mental Health Services, Inc. (MHS), would be the in-house service provider. Since 2003, the coalition, known as the Housing First Initiative, has built seven facilities, housing over 500 residents, and plans to house a total of 1,000 within the next few years.

The nature of this coalition is central to what is now among the most successful PSH programs in the country. Each of the partners has a history of successful work in the region, and each has a degree of prestige in the public eye because of this. By demonstrating that the best organizations would be involved, and that each would focus on its specialty, funding sources and the public could be reassured of performance and accountability. Most importantly in terms of public engagement was the presence of Enterprise as organizer. Kate Monter Durban of CHN explains, "The beauty of having Enterprise take the lead, is that they would be on doing the research, the evidence-based practice, the public outreach, taking people to Chicago and New York [to tour similar facilities]. It helped to have some breathing room".[6]

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[4] Case Western Reserve University. 1997. Encyclopedia of Cleveland History. Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western Reserve University. Accessed online: http://ech.case.edu/ech-cgi/article.pl?id=BEJ1

[5] Susan Hertzler Burkholder and Kathryn Wertheim Hexter. 2002. "Housing first: Demonstrating the need for permanent supportive housing." Cleveland State University. (unpublished).

[6] interview, 16 April 2012

Choosing the Right Site: Three Cases and Many Lessons
3010 Euclid Avenue

The first site targeted by the Housing First Initiative was at 3010 Euclid Avenue, close to the campuses of Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College as well as the Sisters of Charity Hospital. Opposition quickly surfaced. The Initiative did not have support from the local councilperson, and thus had trouble gaining the support of the local community.[7] The site had to be abandoned.

The Initiative had not recognized how important the local councilperson's influence is in Cleveland. While block groups and other neighborhood organizations have tremendous organizational capacity, the ward representative on the city council wields great power of the pulpit. With his or her endorsement, residents, businesses, and other political representatives tend to fall in line behind a project or initiative. In the future, the Initiative would have to work harder to ensure the backing of the councilperson.

Emerald Commons

A second targeted site, in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood on Cleveland's west side, became the first facility to be successfully realized. The Initiative hired a consulting team, lead by Andy Goodman and Edge Research, which determined that while some council members already supported the idea of PSH, they were leery of hosting a facility in their own ward. Goodman conducted focus groups with community members on messaging, and helped the Initiative develop marketing materials to help convince both citizens and representatives of the value of a local PSH facility.

For the council members, the Initiative would emphasize economic benefits. A new building is often an investment of at least $10 million, an undeniable anchor development in any neighborhood, and even more so in a neighborhood like Detroit Shoreway. Some neighborhoods do not have other compelling options for revitalization. As much as some locals might rather have a luxury residential building, as CHN representative Kate Monter Durban put it, "The condo people just aren't coming." Councilman Matt Zone was won over by these arguments and preceded to help the Initiative with its community outreach.

For community members, the focus was education about PSH. Community meetings and block group meetings were primary occasions for presenting information, but door-to-door canvassing was also important. The Initiative educated locals about the efficacy of the PSH approach, but also emphasized the reliability and accountability of the service providers. Entrance to the building is tightly controlled, staff is on-site 24 hours a day, and there is always someone to answer a call from a concerned neighbor. The Initiative also emphasized the peripheral safety improvements for the neighborhood, such as the benefits of having exterior cameras that would help cut down on any unwanted street activity around the rest of the block where the facility is located. It was also important that the facility itself fit in as much as possible, both in terms of usage and architectural context; the Initiative therefore took to involving the community in the design process, informally at first but through a community advisory committee in siting subsequent facilities in other neighborhoods.

[7] Tom Albanese, Judith Feins, Nichole Fiore, and Emily Holt (Abt Associates, Inc.). 2010. "Phase One Process Evaluation of the Cuyahoga County Housing First Initiative." Bethesda, Md.

Ohio City

Since Emerald Commons opened in 2003, the Housing First Initiative opened six other facilities and provided stable housing to nearly 500 formerly homeless Clevelanders. With this sterling track record, in late 2011 they targeted a location in Ohio City, a diverse, gentrifying area in central Cleveland. Ohio City has a long history of both inadequate housing and mission-driven, social justice advocates migrating from other parts of the city.[8] But it also has seen less altruistic gentrification, and there is a sense among some that "they're doing the city a huge favor by bringing themselves and their money into a community, and they believe they should be able to say who their neighbors are."

The specific location was to be on the site of a derelict Hollywood Video building. Not only is the building unoccupied, its suburban style is out of context with the mixed-use buildings on the main streets and the row houses that characterize the rest of the neighborhood. In short, the location was ripe for intelligent reuse. The proposed site was close to the boundary between two council wards. While both Councilman Zone, whose ward closely bordered the proposed site and who by now had become among the city's most outspoken PSH advocates, and Councilman Joe Cimperman, in whose ward the facility would actually be located, were strongly in support of the facility, it met heavy local resistance. For one, there happened to be some former statewide elected office holders on the board of Ohio City, Inc., the most powerful neighborhood organization, and they sided with the opposition. There was some unfortunate timing to the proposal, as well. Only a few weeks before the Initiative announced its intention to develop

the site, the city had held a design charette to get public input on the revitalization of the neighborhood. Since no mention was made of the PSH facility, which had not been optioned by CHN, some community members felt "the charette had been a charade."[9] Following the formal announcement, the Initiative only had several weeks to rally support before the proposal would go to the state housing board, which would decide whether to grant the project the essential federal low income housing tax credit.

Despite this inauspicious start, the Initiative and Ohio City, Inc., whose leadership wanted the facility, undertook the same community outreach tactics as employed at prior sites in Cleveland: orchestrating tours of existing facilities, convening with local business owners, visiting block club meetings to talk one-on-one, engaging locals in the design process. According to Luis Hernandez, this outreach was quite successful. "A lot of residents changed their mind once they toured a facility and got to know what it was. We would talk to occupants, have these really awesome encounters, and hear these really awesome stories." The opposition maintained that the street was too busy; that Ohio City already had its fair share of supportive services; that the area was already improving on its own and did not need this investment. Even the collaborative design process was fraught. "The problem is they have a lot of architects in Ohio City!" explains Joe Frolik. Ultimately, the Ohio City, Inc., board voted narrowly in support of the facility.

Yet when the proposal went before the state board, it was denied funding. The board is not required to explain its reasoning, so it will never be entirely clear why this proposal failed. Proponents suspect the decision had more to do with the

[8] Luis Hernandez, interview, 11 April 2012

[9] Joe Frolik, interview, 11 April 2012

fact that Cleveland has gotten a lot of federal money in recent years and the board wanted to distribute future funds more evenly throughout the state. Despite support from local politicians and a majority of the neighbors, there will be no new housing first facility in Ohio City in the near future.

The Dynamics of Engagement

The numerous successful facilities built by the Cuyahoga County Housing First Initiative, along with a couple notable failures, describe together a compelling strategy for siting and developing PSH in complex neighborhood situations. This strategy has four key components: the coalition and its leadership; securing political support; intelligent site selection; community education and engagement; and timing.

Coalition and Leadership

The importance of a strong coalition was mentioned above, but it is worth reemphasizing. In order to present a compelling case to a public that is not familiar with PSH, it is important that recognizable and respected existing partners be involved. But is essential to first get these partners on board. Since the PSH approach is still relatively new, many service providers will need to be convinced of its efficacy. In Cleveland, Enterprise brought in specialists from other cities like New York and Chicago to hold forums with stakeholders. Written research is important to educating potential coalition members, but so is the opportunity for direct dialogue.

Political Support

Potentially the most important factor then becomes getting the support of the council person. Cleveland's recent mayors have all been advocates of PSH as part of city health, but the mayor is less important in specific site selection. Cleveland has a ward-based governance structure, which, in contrast to cities with at-large representatives, confers tremendous power over neighborhood political discourse to the ward representative. This power is both pulpit power, to set the agenda, but is also real in that the council has ultimate say over issues like rezoning. As Monter Durban put it, "Until we have local support from the council person, we don't have anything." While other cities may not have the same power dynamics at play, there is no question that strong political support is necessary for successful citation – and that having a politician against a project kills it immediately. And it is not necessary a simple matter, even in a city with a climate as favorable to PSH as Cleveland has become. Each case will require a council person seriously considering the implications of bringing even a proposal for a facility to the public. "The political capital each of these guys was willing to put on the line was incredible," says Monter Durban.

Intelligent Site Selection

Early on, the Initiative developed relatively strict criteria for its sites in order to assure the best outcomes for occupants: there must be public transit very close, all necessary services must be on-site or very close, all necessary amenities like grocery stores must be within a short bus ride, other housing facilities should not be too close yet it should be in a part of town where potential occupants want to live, to name only a few examples. Beyond these basic criteria, the Initiative takes a more sophisticated approach to picking a site for development. Given the importance of the ward-based governance, the Initiative usually begins the site selection process with the council member. Sometimes the Initiative identifies a general area where a facility is desired, other times a council member approaches Enterprise requesting a facility for his ward. This is

in accord with PSH as being a part of neighborhood improvement. "The best places tend to be areas where this investment will make a positive difference," explains Monter Durban. "We look for the upward [-moving] areas, those in-between areas. We can't go to the best areas, and we won't go to the worst."

Typically four or five sites rise to the top very quickly, after which the developer begins seriously exploring the real estate options. Only when an option is secured on a specific site, will it be announced publicly. And given the importance of maintaining the performance record of PSH, it is essential not to compromise on location. Each location will serve as an advertisement for future locations, so it is essential that each be held to the highest standards.

Community Engagement

Once a specific site is optioned and a proposal announced, the community engagement process begins in earnest. While the council member will be essential to this process, the Initiative and, in the case of Ohio City, supportive local groups will do most of the leg work. This includes the facility tours described above as well as strategic hand selling techniques. Ohio City Inc.'s Luis Hernandez visited the smaller block club meetings "to meet people where they are" and have a real conversation. Avoiding the rancor of a large public meeting is key. Hernandez distributed further educational materials directly to influential community figures. These materials tend to take a casual, FAQ-style format and focus on addressing a citizen's potential concerns about effects on the neighborhood.

The community engagement process does not end with approval of a facility, and it is important to emphasize this

during the initial outreach phase. The situation is different at each location, but at one the Initiative helped build a community garden near the facility and continues to help maintain it; at another, they orchestrate programming for a nearby park (e.g., volley ball games).[10] Housing programs in other parts of the country have used binding "good neighbor" agreements, but these have never been necessary in Cleveland. Coalition members feel this is because the outreach and education measures have been so effective that a lasting trust, one that does not need to be formalized in writing, has been built between the providers and neighbors.

Timing

Given how sensitive the "optics" of a PSH facility proposal are, and how long it takes to cultivate political and community support, timing is a central consideration for the Initiative. Knowing a neighborhood's current economic situation is crucial. "Five years ago this project would not have seen the light of day in Ohio City," said Hernandez, explaining that during that boom, the neighborhood was adding lots of market-rate housing and would have seen a PSH facility as detrimental to growth. As also evident in the case of Ohio City, the developer needs to know what else has been going on in neighborhood visioning recently, in order to avoid the appearance of back-room dealing or conspiracy. And the developer needs to allow sufficient time to do all the legwork involved in education: holding private meetings with business people, leading facility tours, going to each block group meeting in person. Enterprise's Jennifer Eppich says that, in the future, all their projects will require at least six to nine months lead time before the final funding application made the state.

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[10] Frolik and Eppich interviews

Conclusion

The four lessons for engagement distilled from the case study of Cleveland and outlined above share a unifying theme: context. The developer of a permanent supportive housing facility must know, and be willing to work with, the local context. Everything from the economic climate to political power dynamics to neighborhood physical and demographic characteristics will impact how – or if – a facility is built.

The interview subjects from the Cuyahoga County case study offered further examples of context, as well as specific advice for other communities looking to expand a PSH program. The Plain Dealer's Joe Frolik recommends both knowing your community and having a vision for how you are going to help energize it, such as with the previously mentioned park activities. Kate Monter Durban, of the Cleveland Housing Network, stresses the importance of having an elected official in support. Since there will always be some pushback from some vocal minority, you need to know that someone in the public realm will support you. Ohio City Inc.'s Luis Hernandez recommends being very attentive to who in the community you engage and how. There will always be a handful of people who are adamantly opposed to any kind of facility; "do not waste your time" attempting to convert people who will never be converted. Instead focus on the larger group of people that is merely uninformed and therefore slightly uneasy. Meet those people face-to-face and explain to them how good it is for the neighborhood and show that housing prices do not drop. Take them to visit a facility and have them talk to occupants about their positive experiences. After the tours, sit down with the neighbors for a discussion to show them that you want to answer their questions and that there will always be someone there to address their concerns. Jennifer Eppich, of Enterprise Solutions, Inc., sums it all by saying that engagement matters more than anything. "Don't get caught up in design," she says. "Make sure you can educate your local business community, your local investment community, and your political leadership. Get a champion on board as early as possible."

These lessons in contextual engagement are of course difficult to apply; each context is different. But differences may not be impossible to overcome. Boulder has a different history with housing needs, but definitely has an activist community. North Boulder may not be as ripe for revitalization as parts of Cleveland, but certain arguments about the stability of housing prices and the peripheral affects of increased security are relevant to any community. Boulder's governing structure may not place as much power in city council members, but this does not mean that political support will not be essential to bringing permanent supportive housing to Boulder. Given the undeniable success of the model in treating chronic homelessness, permanent supportive housing will most likely come to Boulder at some point. There are certainly individuals in Boulder like Rafael DePalma, the resident of Cleveland's South Pointe Commons, individuals who have tripped on one of the cracks of the modern economy, but who, with a little stability in the form of a proper home, will pick themselves up again. With some coordination and collaboration, a city with as much social and economic strength as Boulder should be able to construct permanent supportive housing facilities and, in doing so, give its most vulnerable citizens a chance to lead better lives.

Home Again
Worcester, Massachusetts
Dan Ben-Horin

Abstract

Home Again is a Housing First project based in Worcester, MA, that emerged from a collaboration of five established homeless services providers. The five organizations, Community Healthlink (CHL), Disma's House, the Henry Lee Willis Center, Jeremiah's Inn and the People in Peril Shelter, created a Steering Committee in late 2006 to address increasing homelessness in the area. Through their initial meetings, they determined that rather than remedy the area's homeless problem with isolated services, they should seek out a solution. This solution takes a systematic approach, by providing chronically homeless individuals with homes first, then addressing the specific issues that lead to homelessness.

Home Again is a network of supportive housing units utilizing a Housing First Model. This model provides chronically homeless individuals with permanent homes and support services with the goals of achieving housing stability and improving the health and welfare of their clients. Because the clients of Housing First projects are the homeless, siting of such facilities are often met with community resistance due to the stigmatization of these individuals as dangerous or undesirable, as local communities feel their quality of life would be diminished. The Steering Committee was aware that obtaining community support would be difficult, and therefore set forth a plan that centered around comprehensive project transparency. Opposition was channeled through a local community group, the Nob Hill Neighborhood Association, who openly voiced their concerns regarding the project. The Association felt that the siting of a Housing First facility in their community presents a risk to their quality of life and levels of safety.[1]

Discussion

Home Again states that "only a home ends homelessness." This is a simple vision of the program which aims to end chronic homelessness in the Worcester area by providing housing utilizing a housing first model. In January of 2007, the collaboration of five area homeless service providers submitted a grant proposal to the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts (HCFM). The group, adopted the name Comprehensive Homeless Assessment and Intervention Network (CHAIN), crafted a mission statement: to work to reduce and prevent homelessness in Greater Worcester by offering chronically homeless people, and those at-risk of becoming chronically homeless, permanent homes and community-based support services.

During this time, Worcester's City Manager's Task Force on Homelessness was charged with developing a plan to end homelessness in the city. The Home Again project addressed many of the goals outlined in this plan. Home Again was approved for funding, for both the planning phase and an 18-month model program through HFCM. These key elements allowed the Home Again program to open its doors as planned in 2008. The project consists of one aggregate housing facility, named the Spencer House, and several scattered sites throughout the city.

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[1] Glista, Kelly. (2008). No welcome mat on Nob Hill. Residents: "Too many unknowns." Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/June-3-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/555.

Community Profile

    In 2006, the collaborative group, CHAIN, identified 120 individuals in Worcester that can be characterized as chronically homeless. Prior to Home Again, if an individual in Worcester looked to end his or her homelessness, they would seek assistance from Community Healthlink (CHL). CHL is a Worcester-based homeless services provider with a proud history of providing quality services, as well as one of the key organizers in the Home Again planning and siting process. Their program, the Homeless Outreach and Advisory Project (HOAP), assesses the individual's needs and offers Standard Care services. Standard Care services consist of outreach, case management, emergency shelters, and possibly temporary housing.[2] Recognizing that the root cause of homelessness is the lack of a stable home, CHAIN looked to create a Housing First program in Worcester based on other successful programs nationwide. Home Again was the first Housing First Program to be installed in Worcester, but there have been other similar facilities located in the city. As part of the plan outlined by CHAIN, full implementation of Home Again was to alleviate some of the occupancy of the local homeless shelter, the People in Peril (PIP) Shelter. An objective outlined in the City Manager's Three Year Plan to End Homelessness was to phase the PIP Shelter within three years of the implementation, and transition clients of the shelter to programs using a Housing First Model.[3]

Existing Legislation

    Home Again cited specific state and federal regulations that allowed them to successfully develop their project. These regulations prohibit discrimination against the siting of facilities such as Home Again. The Federal Fair Housing Act as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination in housing against the disabled. Moreover, the Dover Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution states that: "Imposing land-use requirements on congregate living arrangements among non-related persons with disabilities shall constitute discrimination."[4] Through the Home Again siting process, CHAIN believed that the Spencer House would fall under these protections.

Neighborhood Resistance

    Local resistance was channeled through the Nob Hill Neighborhood Association, who opposed the Home Again project because of the unnecessary risk that it would bring to the community. Susan McCool, President of the Nob Hill

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[2] Baughman, Allyson, & Rothman, Emily F. (2009). Evaluation Report. Home Again 21-Month Outcome Evaluation (January 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009). Retrieved April 16, 2012 from http://www.homeagaincentralma.org/CMS/Images/Home%20Again

[3] City Manager's Task Force on Homelessness. (2008). Three Year Plan to End Homelessness in Worcester. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http:// www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/ c4/58/c45857c1c7f6591de58ac372a5c7eb3c/three- year-plan.pdf.

[4] The 187th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. General Laws. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/ Chapter40a/Section3.

Association during the opening of Home Again, stated that the problem with the plan set forth by CHL was that there were too many unknowns.[5] The neighborhood association did not oppose the project, but they did feel that it would be better suited in a different community." Among the association's top concerns was that residents of the Spencer House would be allowed to drink alcohol in their apartments. Some of the group's other concerns included the introduction of "unsympathetic homeless" individuals into the neighborhood. Local resident and Nob Hill Association spokesperson Jim Savage writes: "We don't know if potential residents will beg, drink, burn cigarettes, or urinate and vomit in public."[6] Residents also voiced concerns over the inclusion of Level 2 and Level 3 sex offenders in the Spencer House and the lack of an employee resident in the facility 24 hours a day. Some of the Association's claims were unjustified, and due to intense publicity surrounding the project, there may have been a large amount of incorrect information circulating among the public.

The Home Again team claimed to maintain complete transparency throughout the planning process, but how did they fail to relay accurate information to the only neighborhood group in which the Spencer House was to be sited? One of pitfalls in CHAIN's community strategy may have been their reluctance to engage in large community meetings. Deborah Ekstrom, Director of CHL, said that she was not willing to meet with groups larger than 15. She reasoned that these large meetings created hostile conditions which were counterproductive. Many community members were disturbed by this policy.

Home Again officials were absent from most of the Nob Hill Association community meetings. Jim Savage stated after one such meeting: "Community Healthlink prefers to meet with a handful of residents at a time. Our meeting was open to all."[7] Community meetings provide an avenue for both opponents and proponents to relay pertinent project information. While CHL did not see benefit from large community meetings, these meetings were still occurring without their presence. The lack of a voice for Home Again at these meetings created an environment that may have fostered the distribution of misinformation regarding the Housing First project.

A Lack of Early Political Support

Early in the planning process, Home Again did not have the support of the City Manager, even though he was developing a plan to end homelessness at the same time. The Task Force on Homelessness filed the Three-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Worcester in November of 2007, but failed to establish the Commission on Homeless until July 1, 2008. It was during this lag that community opposition against Home Again

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[5] Glista, Kelly. (2008). No welcome mat on Nob Hill. Residents: "Too many unknowns." Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/June-3-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/555.

[6] Carmark, Grace, & Savage, Jim. (2008). Housing First: An effective fix...or an invitation for trouble? Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-4-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/545.

[7] Carmark, Grace, & Savage, Jim. (2008). Housing First: An effective fix...or an invitation for trouble? Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-4-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/545.

was greatest, and a lack of political support may have increased opponent resistance. Michael Gilleberto, the City Manager's Staff Assistant for Operations, spoke at a gathering in April of 2008 and stated that due to lacking information, the city cannot support the project. He went on to express his regrets about the Home Again project, noting that it went ahead before recommendations of the City Manager's Task Force on Homelessness have been implemented. The City Manager also claimed that they were unsure if the Spencer House will have any effect on the homeless population of the city. Amid these hesitations, the City Manager never did oppose the Home Again project formally, and stated that "[they] were unable to do so because of provisions of the Dover Amendment and the Federal Fair Housing Act."[8]

Location is Key

The success of the Home Again project may be attributed to location. It is sited in a previously vacant building in a middle class residential neighborhood of Lincoln Estates/Elm Park in Worcester. The neighborhood does have a historic district and an esteemed history within Worcester, but due to economic conditions, many of the larger homes became too expensive to afford as single family homes. Some of these houses have been converted to apartments or businesses. The Spencer House itself was a defunct group home that was vacant at the time of siting. Although empty, the building maintained its identity in the community as a social services facility, and neighbors often referred to the building as "The Group Home."

Several factors contributed to promoting the Spencer House location. The location was already zoned appropriately for its use as a Housing First complex, so there was no need for any variances or special permits. Also, there were no conflicting facilities that may cause siting issues, such as schools or bars nearby that can cause additional community opposition. Nob Hill Association member Jim Savage even stated that it was fortunate that CHL chose to restore the historic building, but he did feel it needed to be for a more worthy cause.[9] Deb Ekstrom remarked that the most important factor contributing to the success of the project was the location.[10]

[8] Hammel, Lee. (2008). Home meets resistance: Neighbors oppose group home plan. Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-3-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette--544.

[9] 7 Carmark, Grace, & Savage, Jim. (2008). Housing First: An effective fix...or an invitation for trouble? Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-4-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/545.

[10] personal communication, 04/24/2012

Home Again Community Strategy

At the core of Home Again's community strategy was a communication plan based on a set of principles created during the initial planning phase (See Appendix 2). The goal of these principles is to "provide the community with the factual information needed to understand the project, while simultaneously limiting the spread of misinformation, political grandstanding and abusive remarks."[11] As expected, the Home Again project was met with community resistance. Opposition peaked soon after the 18-month assessment completed, before Home Again was to admit residents. Deborah Ekstrom described the scene as "ugly," and stated: "People are always going to be afraid of these projects."[12] Home Again felt that the best way to counter resistance was through education, and Ms. Ekstrom remarked, "It's an open door communication policy."[13] Grace Carmark, executive director of the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance stated: "We need to change the existing paradigm for communications with the community."[14] The team felt that by remaining open and honest about the program's goals and intentions, will they begin to generate community support.

Early in the planning and siting process, Home Again concluded that success depended upon the effective delivery of their project's goals. Home Again contracted a Boston-based public relations firm Denterlein in December of 2006, with the hope of increasing public awareness and gaining support with the local community. One of their first tasks was the completion of a website on which concerned citizens could learn facts regarding the Housing First process. Denterlein continued to conduct area-wide studies to discover community acceptance of Housing First and increase awareness about the effectiveness of such programs. Denterlein officials remarked, that once the Worcester area had adequate information about Home Again, they grew more supportive of the program. Denterlein's staff implemented a series of community gatherings to communicate project details and answer questions. The intention of these gatherings was to inform local citizens of not only the benefits of Housing First to the Home Again clients, but to provide citizens with information distinguishing programs like Home Again from traditional homeless services. Case studies were highlighted that show the net cost savings of Housing First. One specific study highlighted was conducted by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, and shows a cost savings of $31,545 per person over a 24 month period in a Housing First Program.

Home Again also recognized that in order to receive community acceptance, they needed to gain the support of local

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[11] Carmark, Grace, & Savage, Jim. (2008). Housing First: An effective fix...or an invitation for trouble? Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-4-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/545.

[12] personal communication, 04/09/2012

[13] Glista, Kelly. (2008). No welcome mat on Nob Hill. Residents: "Too many unknowns." Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/June-3-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/555.

[14] Carmark, Grace, & Savage, Jim. (2008). Housing First: An effective fix...or an invitation for trouble? Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-4-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette/545.

business and political leaders. The Steering Committee aimed to identify local "do-gooders." The strategy was to inform these individuals first about the project's vision and goals. As these individuals became more aware of all the benefits of Home Again, they were able to communicate with others, increasing overall community acceptance. As Deborah Ekstrom explained: "It was our general habit to let our local leaders know specific details first. These individuals became our strongest advocates."[15] "Once leaders in the Worcester area had access to more information about Home Again, and saw the efforts made to be as informative and transparent as possible, they grew more supportive of the project."[16] The Home Again team was quick to support the use of Good Neighbor Agreements as a tool to display professionalism within the community (See Appendix 3). These agreements serve as a non-binding contract between the site developer and the community organization. From a developer's perspective, the paramount goals of these agreements are to show community groups that the developer is committed to maintain complete transparency throughout the process, ensure the safety of all community residents and ensure that facility residents behave appropriately.

Community Negotiations

After several months of community meetings and negotiations, Home Again opened in November of 2008. Three men initially moved in, with two to three additional tenants to be introduced each month following. Home Again did need to

recognize some of the neighborhood's concerns in order to open as planned. City Councilor Barbara G. Haller stated: "The neighborhood seems to feel they got the consideration they have been looking for."[17] Through the months of negotiations, the two sides agreed that the facility should ban all sex offenders and have staff available on premises at the Spencer House 24 hours a day, at least until the City declares the program stable. Additionally, regulations were added to ban drinking in all common areas of the facility, and possession of any illegal substances is grounds for immediate removal from the program.

Conclusion

The successful siting of the Home Again project can be attributed to the several factors, but those factors may not have been in alignment with what the developer initially thought. Home Again hoped that a communication plan outlined by their guiding principles would allow for a smooth siting of the facility. This strategy showed that the developer was willing share all project plans with the community, but nowhere in their strategy was there any recognition of community desires. Once the Home Again team acknowledged the community requests, the project began to move forward. Developers cannot merely be transparent with project goals and objectives, they must be willing to listen to the concerns of the local community and accommodate those concerns if possible.

It may be difficult for a developer to find the balance between appeasing the wishes of the local community and

[15] personal communication, 04/09/2012

[16] Home Again Project Case Study. (2008) Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http:// www.denterlein.com/site/study/home-again-project-2/.

[17] Hammel, Lee. (2008). Spencer House opens its doors. Worcester Telegram & Gazette. Retrieved April 23, 2012 from http://www.telegram.com/article/20081128/NEWS/811280619.

building a facility as initially intended. Too much recognition of community desires can cause projects to be unfeasible. To little recognition and a project would never break ground. Each individual case requires individual attention. Home Again gave in to certain requests and remained resolute on others. All committee decisions needed to be agreed upon collectively. Ms. Ekstrom noted that a firm resolve among the Steering Committee contributed to a successful siting. Developers need to be prepared and willing to withstand local opposition.[18]

It was not only firm resolve and careful negotiations that contributed to a successful siting, as existing legislation allowed for protections to be placed on the facility. Moreover, an intelligent placement of the Spencer House facility did not give the community much leverage for opposition. Often times zoning or permitting restrictions can add significant delays to the siting process.

As neighbors became more aware of the goals and benefits of the program, they became more supportive, but memories of the conflict are still fresh. Since the Home Again Program began admitting residents in 2008, there has only been one reported incident at the Spencer House involving neighbors, and this incident fueled neighborhood opposition to the facility. Opposition was met swiftly with an immediate resolution by Home Again staff. Local Councilwoman Barbara Haller said that the community is beginning to show signs of optimism towards their new neighbors.[19] In the years since, Home Again has made significant improvements to the issues of homelessness in Worcester, but the community may never completely embrace the facility's presence.

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[18] personal communication, 04/24/2012

[19] Hammel, Lee. (2008). Home meets resistance: Neighbors oppose group home plan. Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from http://www.hfcm.org/April-3-2008--Worcester-Telegram--Gazette--544

LOGAN PLACE
PORTLAND, MAINE
MATTHEW FARRAR

Abstract

Housing First is an innovative approach aimed at bringing an end to homelessness in the United States. The fundamental concept of Housing First is to provide permanent, supportive housing for the "chronically homeless," defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as "…unaccompanied disabled individual[s] who [have] been continuously homeless for over one year." Unlike traditional homeless shelters, which only offer temporary housing solution, Housing First facilities provide homeless individuals with an opportunity for permanent residency. In addition, Housing First facilities typically offer on-site, social services to residents. These services may include substance abuse counseling or mental health services.

In some community's Housing First facilities have been a source of "NIMBY" (Not in My Backyard) conflict. Members of the local community express concerns over the implications of siting these types of facilities in their neighborhood. The Housing First project proposed by Boulder Housing Partners at 1175 Lee Hill Drive in Boulder, Colorado is an example of a facility that faced an unfavorable response from the local community. Neighbors raised concerns over the proposed location and what they perceived as a concentration of homeless facilities in their neighborhood. In addition, the community criticized the community outreach that Boulder Housing Partners conducted during the project.

The following case study provides an analysis of Logan Place, the first Housing First project in Maine. The case study offers insight into different characteristics of a Housing First siting that led to a successful outcome. The discussion of Logan Place is intended to offer Boulder Housing Partners with ideas for the siting of future Housing First projects in Boulder.

Discussion

The City of Portland, Maine is a community of 66,194 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) people located along the coast of the Atlantic ocean, in the southern tip of Maine. Portland is a fairly well-educated community. 43.2 % of the City's residents, 25 and older, have received a Bachelor's degree of higher.[1] The average per capita income in Portland, from 2006-2010, was $27,794.[2]

Logan Place (located at 52 Fredric Street, Portland, Maine) was the first Housing First project in the state of Maine. Logan Place was developed by Avesta Housing (non-profit development agency that has worked in Maine since 1972). Avesta Housing worked in collaboration with Preble Street (non-profit supportive service provider that has worked in Maine since 1975) on the project. Once the facility was constructed, Preble Street was to take on the responsibility of operating the facility and providing on-site, supportive services to residents of the facility. Logan Place first opened its doors on March 24, 2005 and offered 30 single occupancy apartments to homeless individuals in the City of Portland. Logan Place continues to operate successfully to this day.

Location

Avesta Housing and Preble Street searched the City of Portland for over a year to identify a site that they felt was appropriate for a Housing First facility. Key elements in their

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[1] U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). "Selected Social Characteristics in the United States. 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates." Retrieved April 26, 2012, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_DP02.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). "Selected Social Characteristics in the United States. 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates." Retrieved April 26, 2012, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_DP02.

search for a site included: finding a location that was within walking distance of existing services (i.e. public bus service and local grocery stores); finding a neighborhood that was compatible with a multi-unit project; and finding a location that was away from Portland's downtown, where existing homeless facilities were located. In an interview with Jon Bradley, Associate Director of Preble Street, it was stated that Logan Place had to be located within walking distance of existing services otherwise individuals from Portland's homeless community would not live there. In another interview, Debora Keller, Director of Programs – Development Division at Avesta Housing, explained that the site for Logan Place had to be located in a neighborhood that was compatible with a multi-family development. Locating the facility in a single family neighborhood would have been inappropriate. Ms. Keller also explained that Avesta Housing wanted to avoid a further concentration of homeless facilities in the City's downtown area. The site that Avesta Housing and Preble Street chose for Logan Place was an underutilized parcel, which had historically been used as a homeless encampment site, at the end of a dead end street. The site was within walking distance of both local bus routes and retail opportunities.

Community Engagement

At the time Logan Place was proposed, the Land Use code for the City of Portland had zoning, which permitted emergency homeless shelters. However, because Logan Place was a permanent housing facility that zoning was not applicable to the project. The City of Portland addressed Logan Place as a multi-family development but required that the project meet certain criteria under the City's "Conditional or Contract Zoning" regulations before the project would be approved. The City did not have any conditions that required special community outreach outside of the standard site plan review and public hearing process.

Although the City did not have special requirements for community outreach, Avesta Housing and Preble Street felt that it was important to encourage active, public participation and have a neighborhood oriented siting process for the Logan Place project. To ensure transparency, the community was provided with accurate information early on, as well as throughout the siting process. Avesta Housing and Preble Street took on the responsibility of organizing and running numerous neighborhood meetings. These meetings served as opportunities for the community to bring up concerns or issues they had with the project. These meetings also served as an opportunity for Avesta Housing and Preble Street to educate the community about Housing First and the Logan Place project. Pizza was offered as an added bonus for those who attended these meetings. In addition to neighborhood meetings, a phone service was set up so that community members had another opportunity to express concerns or have any additional questions answered.

Avesta Housing and Preble Street made a point of responding to concerns brought up during the community outreach process. It was important that the community felt that Avesta Housing and Preble Street valued their opinions and that they were willing to work with the community to address their concerns. Avesta Housing and Preble Street didn't want it to seem as if they were holding meetings just for the sake of holding meetings. An example of a concern the community raised was the potential impact Logan Place would have on local traffic. Avesta Housing and Preble Street had a traffic study prepared in order to respond to this concern.

Community outreach for Logan Place also included working to bolster the Libbytown neighborhood association

(Libbytown is the neighborhood that Logan Place is located in). Staff members from both Avesta Housing and Preble Street served on the association. The goal of serving on the neighborhood association was to organize and strengthen the association. These efforts exhibited Avesta Housing and Preble Street's investment in making the neighborhood a better place for all residents.

Key Partnerships

During the interview with Debora Keller, she emphasized the importance of the partnership between Avesta Housing and Preble Street. This partnership was instrumental in the successful outcome of the Logan Place project. Both organizations had a long history (roughly thirty years) of working with Portland's community. Given their history with the local community, both organizations had a large group of core supporters, who advocated on their behalf. Supporters advocated that both Avesta Housing and Preble Street were good organizations to work with.

During the siting process for Logan Place, the police chief in Portland expressed skepticism about the project. The police chief was concerned that the facility would increase criminal activity in the neighborhood. A study was conducted that followed residents of Logan Place for a year before and a year after they were housed at Logan Place. "The study showed a 70% decrease in health care costs, a 74% decrease in costs related to emergency room visits, and an 88% decrease in jail time." [3] The police chief's skepticism quickly turned to advocacy once he was presented with the data highlighting the benefits of Logan Place. "…the very vocal police chief at the time initially raised major concerns about the project, concerns that changed to support when he reviewed statistics regarding police contacts with tenants at the new 30 unit project."[4] The support from the local police department has played an important role in the continued success at Logan Place. In addition, advocacy on behalf of the Portland police department had a significant impact during the siting of Florence House, another Housing First facility that was recently developed in Portland by Avesta Housing and Preble Street.

As was mentioned previously, Logan Place was built on a parcel that had been historically used as a homeless encampment site. Residents in the neighborhood witnessed firsthand the benefits of taking homeless individuals off the street and providing them with permanent, supportive housing. Observing the benefits of Housing First has turned neighbors of Logan Place into advocates for Housing First projects in Portland. Much like the advocacy on behalf of the police department, neighborhood testimony was an important component of the siting of Florence House. "At Planning Board Hearings, opposition from potential neighbors was countered by neighbors of Logan Place…"[5]

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[3] Fannie Mae Foundation. (2007). "Avesta Housing Development Corporation. Portland, Maine." Retrieved March 30, 2012, from http://funderstogether.org/downloads/docs/2007_maxwell_awards/avesta.pdf.

[4] McLaughlin, T. C., & Bradley, J. "Preble Street's Florence House: How Research and Advocacy Made it Possible." Housing First Partners Conference, March 2012, New Orleans, Louisiana. Unpublished conference paper, 2012.

[5] McLaughlin, T. C., & Bradley, J. "Preble Street's Florence House: How Research and Advocacy Made it Possible." Housing First Partners Conference, March 2012, New Orleans, Louisiana. Unpublished conference paper, 2012.

Continued Success

The goal of Logan Place was to work with the local community to make the neighborhood a better place to live. The success of Logan Place relies on maintaining a good relationship with residents in the neighborhood.

After Logan Place opened in 2005, Avesta Housing and Preble Street found that certain aspects of the facility's operation had to be modified in order to maintain good standing with neighbors. Initially, residents of Logan Place had the ability to "buzz" visitors in through the building's security doors. It was found that visitors were causing issues at the facility, as well as within the neighborhood. Residents had difficulty turning away visitors so they approached the staff at Logan Place and requested that the staff take over the responsibility of "buzzing" visitors into Logan Place. Modification of the facility's visitation policy made a significant impact on the problems that the facility, as well as the local community, had been dealing with. Paying attention to issues and tweaking procedures and policies, as needed, is important to the continued success of Logan Place.

Engagement with neighbors is another way in which residents and staff at Logan Place are working to maintain a good relationship with Portland's community. It is important for tenants to have opportunities to become familiar and potentially establish relationships with residents in the neighborhood. Logan Place will hold community cookouts and plant flowers along the local streets in an effort to show their commitment to making the neighborhood a nice place to live. Residents have been encouraged to attend neighborhood association meetings and some have even joined the association. "Some residents have already joined the fledgling Libbytown Neighborhood Association."[6] Staff at Logan Place helps to keep an eye on activity in the neighborhood and will report any suspicious behavior to the Portland police department. In addition, Avesta Housing and Preble Street have set up a phone line for neighbors of Logan Place to call with any concerns or issues they have with the facility.

Conclusion

The analysis of Logan Place in Portland, Maine provides some useful insights into an approach to Housing First siting. Finding an appropriate location for a facility, early community engagement, utilizing studies regarding the benefits of Housing First and continued outreach in the neighborhood are some of the key components that led to a successful outcome in Portland, Maine.

Avesta Housing and Preble Street worked very hard to find an appropriate site for the facility. Avoiding further concentration of homeless facilities in Portland's downtown, finding a location that was accessible to existing services and finding a neighborhood with a similar, multi-family context were essential to the selection of a site for Logan Place. In addition, the site for the facility had an existing homeless population. Placing the facility in an area where homeless individuals already resided offered an opportunity to take these individuals off of the street and provide them with permanent housing.

Engaging the community from the beginning of a siting process is another key takeaway from the Logan Place siting process. If an organization waits to engage the community, the community may feel that the project is too far along and be upset that their input was ignored during the early stages of the siting process. In addition, if a project is too far along,

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[6] Bouchard, K. (2005, May 23). "Unruly new neighbors." Portland Press Herald. Retrieved March 30, 2012, from http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1408614/posts.

community members may feel that even if they have an opportunity to offer feedback it will be ignored because the project is too close to completion. Along those same lines, the organization developing a Housing First project has to be willing to negotiate with a community and tailor aspects of the project to address community input. This demonstrates that the developer values the community's input.

Studies are available that explain the benefits of Housing First projects. In Portland, data regarding the direct benefits from Logan Place helped to change the mind of the police chief. Through this process, Avesta Housing and Preble Street gained a powerful advocate for future Housing First projects. A developer considering a Housing First project should utilize existing Housing First to help reinforce the argument that these types of facilities are beneficial, not only to residents of the facility, but the community as a whole.

Continued community outreach after a facility is constructed is another important component of a successful Housing First project. Organizations should continue to actively engage the local community and provide opportunities for neighbors to interact with residents of a facility. Providing opportunities for neighbors and facility residents to develop relationships provides residents of the facility with the ability to integrate into the local community. Instead of having being labeled as a homeless individual living at a facility, residents will be recognized as member of a community, someone with a name and a face.