A RADical Departure? The Redevelopment of Glendale Townhomes

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Introduction

- Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) accounts for nearly 7,000 public housing units and 5,000 Section 8 voucher certificates.
- Glendale Townhomes is a project-based public housing development with 184 residential units in 28 buildings proposed for redevelopment in 2017.
- MPHA and the Development Committee Board will utilize the new Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program passed by Congress in 2012 as a pilot program intended to preserve public housing.
- Comparable to HOPE VI in 1992–2009, RAD creates a private-public partnership by redeveloping public housing units and integrating them with the private sector.
- Our research will do the following:
  1. Follow residents throughout their relocation process for the duration of the redevelopment.
  2. Assess the RAD program designed by HUD and the federal government.

Statement of Problems & Objectives

Problems

- Previous programs like RAD (such as HOPE VI) were known for privatizing public housing, leaving it vulnerable to foreclosure, and converting affordable housing to market rate rentals.
- Creating a public-private partnership may increase the desirability of the area resulting in gentrification.
- MPHA and the Development Committee Board on the Glendale redevelopment plan have inconsistent communication with the tenant council and residents.

Objectives

- Address the challenges public housing authorities face while providing accessible, sustainable, and affordable housing to low-income residents.
- Assess resident participation in the redevelopment process and a variety of resident outcomes associated with the redevelopment.
- Contribute to the minimal research that exists on RAD.

Research Questions

- To what extent do existing residents shape the planning process and eventual design of a RAD redevelopment?
- In what ways and to what extent are existing residents of the Glendale townhomes supportive or critical of the redevelopment process?
- How is length of residence in the housing, race and nativity status associated with levels of support for the redevelopment?
- How do the answers to each of the previous three questions change over time as the redevelopment moves through the planning, implementation, and repopulation stages?

Location of Glendale Townhomes

- Using both quantitative and qualitative data, this research will follow residents throughout their relocation process for the duration of redevelopment (~5 years).
- Research team will do the following:
  - Gather observational data from monthly public meetings.
  - Collect public documents related to the redevelopment process.
- Data will be collected from Glendale residents, community residents, and the public housing authorities using the following methods:
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
- Surveys and interviews will be provided in English, Somali, Hmong, and Oromo to collect demographic information, resident’s history, language, and length of residency, in addition to resident experience with the redevelopment process.

Discussion

- Properties approved to participate in RAD have two options:
  1. Enroll in a Project Based Voucher Program (PBV) with a 15 year subsidy contract.
  2. Enroll in Project Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) with a 20 year subsidy contract.
- HOPE VI redevelopment partnered with the private sector institutions that agreed to maintain affordable housing. However, HOPE VI programs often resulted in displacement of existing residents.
- Past criticisms includes failure to meet expectations set prior to redevelopment; improper relocation, inadequate communication, and unauthorized payment requirements.
- Glendale residents are concerned about the outcome of public housing units after the 15 or 20-year subsidy contract ends.
- MPHA postponed the timeline for the redevelopment planning by approximately 6 months as a result of resident criticisms.
- MPHA seeks to incorporate residents in monthly meetings and to assure residents that all public housing units in Glendale will be preserved.
- RAD’s policy also requires property owners/private sector to allow residents to renew their PBV or PBRA contract.

Future Direction

This research follows residents throughout the redevelopment process by documenting their experience through surveys, interviews, and focus groups for the following time periods:

- Pre-redevelopment
- Duration of redevelopment
- Post-redevelopment

Reference

Anne Marie Smetak, Private Funding, Public Housing: The Devil in the Details, 21 VA. J. SOC. POL’Y & L. 1, 18–29 (2014).


Photo credit: Minneapolis Public Housing Authority – HUD