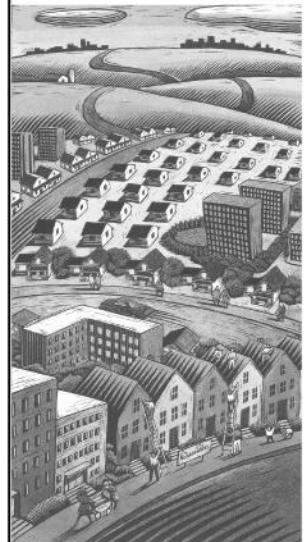


Managing Neighborhood Change: Best Practices for Communities Undergoing Gentrification

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Executive Summary

Gentrification, while holding many definitions, is commonly understood as a change process in historically low-wealth communities that results in rising real estate values coupled with shifts in the economic, social and cultural demographics and feel of the communities. While gentrification's causes and effects are often debated, most agree that when a low-wealth neighborhood sees dramatic increases in property values over a short period of time, gentrification is at play. Many gentrifying communities are neighborhoods that community development corporations (CDCs) have revitalized. When market forces have capitalized on such progress, the results sometimes have been unintended and produced tension in the neighborhood.

Most research on gentrification focuses on the real estate dynamics and how to preserve affordable housing amid rising values. There is little documentation of residents' responses to these conditions, and how changing market forces affect the social fabric of the community. Even less is understood about particular sources of conflict – and potential for cooperation – within these communities, as well as the roles of community-based organizations (CBOs) and CDCs in helping to manage change.

This report, commissioned by NeighborWorks[®] America, in partnership with the Atlanta Alliance for Community Development Investment, explores the impact of gentrification on the residents, CBOs and CDCs of three Atlanta neighborhoods in varying stages of gentrification, and their capacity to manage this change. The selected communities are MLK Historic District, Mechanicsville, and Reynoldstown.

Additionally, in order to understand factors at play in gentrified communities that have experienced a high level of success in managing change, the research was supplemented with information from two neighborhoods outside Atlanta, the Shaw community in Washington, D.C., and Jamaica Plain in Boston. The data-collection methodology, relying on highly qualitative data collection techniques, generated emerging but not conclusive results, and included interviews with key stakeholders and CBO leaders; facilitated focus groups of community members; and, door-to-door resident surveys.

Mechanicsville was selected as a community with the lowest degree of gentrification. It might be more accurately described as a community at threat of gentrification in the near future, due in part to the planned replacement of a deteriorated public housing complex under the Hope VI program and in part to the neighborhood's proximity to downtown Atlanta. Mechanicsville is often characterized by the lack of cohesiveness among its CBOs – a CDC engaged in housing and economic development and a civic association – which seem to work distinctly from one another.

Long-term Mechanicsville residents seem less concerned about the potential for gentrification and its impact in their neighborhood than do outsiders. Perhaps this is due to a lack of knowledge about the market or to more immediate concerns about the short-term impacts of relocation on those living in the threatened public housing. In direct contrast, newer residents purchasing higher-end condominium housing at the edge of the neighborhood are anxious to realize more services and an upgrade of overall neighborhood conditions. Neither resident group seems active with, nor confident in, the civic association, which often produces tension when discussing neighborhood issues and solutions. There also is a lack of knowledge about the CDC's efforts on behalf of the community.

Reynoldstown, by contrast, is in the midst of rapid gentrification. Change is apparent daily as more and more homes are undergoing renovation, and new, high-end houses are constructed on vacant lots. Reynoldstown has a highly engaged civic league, and a CDC that plays an active role in real estate development, delivering community programs and services, and facilitating opportunities to build community cohesiveness. The civic league and CDC work closely with one another. Long-term and newly arrived residents are aware of the up and down side of the changes taking place, feel integrated into the neighborhood decision-making process, and have a high level of confidence in the neighborhood CBOs. The community's annual Wheelbarrow Summer Theater Festival, a three-day musical event, plays an important role in unifying the community.

The MLK Historic District is more at the end stage of residential gentrification, although about to undergo significant development along its commercial corridor. Privately developed, high-end homes are a frequent occurrence, and the local CDC, a victim of its own success, struggles to find reasonably priced lots to continue to provide affordable housing options for lower-income residents. The CDC consciously and strategically navigated gentrification's real estate pressures over the years. It revitalized the community for an income-diverse population in what once was considered a high-crime, severely deteriorated area. The Historic District lacks a civic group, and the local CDC, though development driven, tries to fill the gap, without specific resources to do so systematically. There has been renewed interest in community-building activities in recent months, and residents like living here, but the district is not characterized by wide-spread community engagement or neighborly feel.

In Boston and Washington, the Jamaica Plain and Shaw communities are already gentrified for the most part. Both have active organizing and development CBOs that work together not only to realize a shared vision of the community, but also to address community issues. Because of the market conditions in both cities, and the location of Jamaica Plain and Shaw within their cities, many of their "success-story" strategies revolve around affordable housing preservation, made possible by ensuring financial resources are available through successful community collaborations outside their neighborhoods. They also illustrate how community organizing and community building have resulted in a highly engaged citizenry, individually and collectively capable of addressing neighborhood concerns – from public land use to job and life skill development. When conflicts arise in these communities, existing mechanisms help channel tension proactively and keep conflict to a minimum.

Not surprisingly, communities that understand, address, and manage the potential for and effects of gentrification are better able to contain some of gentrification's negative consequences. Research also suggests that such communities may have less conflict among newer and older residents; and that sources of conflict have less to do with changes in race and age and more with differences in income and lifestyle between older and newer residents. Four key determinants emerged that influence neighborhood capacity to manage gentrification. They include community cohesiveness, community collaboration, community building and organizing, and an articulated response to gentrification. In the cases where these four factors were present, the community was better able to manage social issues that arose from gentrification. When these factors were absent, the community's capacity to manage gentrification appears to be significantly less.

Tension, which did emerge in the communities, frequently resulted from differences in expectations about the future of the neighborhood, or in how that future was to be managed. Sometimes this resulted in direct interpersonal conflict, but more frequently emerged in strained relationships between individuals and institutions, and amongst organizations vested in the community. That's not to say that person to person conflicts around issues related to the changing neighborhood didn't occur, but were often embedded within larger situations and relayed as such. The potential for serious disagreement and divergence, rather than the realization of actual conflict, was often noted.

Successfully managing neighborhood change requires communities to build their social capacity and find ways to address the interpersonal interests and individual needs of residents living in their neighborhoods. Techniques the CBOs used to do this generally fell into three categories: (1) techniques that help residents understand gentrification and how to navigate accompanying opportunities as well as threats, such as organizing residents to participate in the development of community plans or to negotiate benefits for the community from large scale developments impacting the neighborhood; (2) techniques that enhance cohesiveness and create neighborhood pride such as community fairs or regular community-wide social gatherings; and (3) techniques that build individual skills of community members such as job training and financial literacy education.

Communities that understand and respond to the threat of gentrification are better positioned to proactively address it. While much is known about tools and techniques that can be used to confront market conditions in gentrifying communities, lessons still are being learned about the social implications of gentrification. However, neighborhoods can take actions to help their residents get along, and pursue certain techniques which will build social capacity and directly deal with some of the challenges resulting from this change.

DEFINITION OF GENTRIFICATION

Urban blight and disinvestment are two of the most salient challenges facing American cities. In the decades following World War II, metropolitan centers that were once bustling with industry and commerce began to face severe economic decline. Enabled by newly launched federal programs that facilitated flight, many urban dwellers fled for newer, cleaner, more inviting suburban neighborhoods, which consequently resulted in the exodus of many of the businesses that had sustained these urban economies for decades. And it is due to this urban depopulation that many American cities found their residents primarily consisting of low-income and minority individuals.¹

By the 1970's, certain pockets of neighborhoods throughout the country began experiencing sporadic revitalization projects that introduced new, more affluent residents to these previously economically devastated communities. Gentrification simply defined, is the process by which socially marginal and working-class areas of the central city are converted to middle-class residential use.² The term "gentrification" was coined in 1964 by English sociologist Ruth Glass, whose research documented demographic shifts in some of London's more modest neighborhoods. She concluded that the increased number of "gentry" moving into the neighborhood was effectively minimizing the amount of rental housing in lower income neighborhoods.³

Over the last three decades, gentrification has affected dozens of cities in the United States and while suburbanization remains the dominant housing trend, gentrification continues to be one of the most controversial.⁴ Gentrification is not occurring in every urban neighborhood; however, it is becoming increasingly more common. While there is no single cause of gentrification, researchers agree that

¹ Brian J. L. Berry, "Islands of Renewal in Seas of Decay", in *The New Urban Reality*, Paul E. Peterson, ed. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1985.

² Sharon Zukin, "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core." *Annual Review of Sociology* 13:129-147, 1987.

³ Robert Fulford, "Gentrification", *National Post*, January 10, 2004.

⁴ Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard, "Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices", Brookings Institution, 2001.

certain factors make a neighborhood more or less likely to undergo such sporadic and extensive change. Therefore, the debate surrounding gentrification has produced two competing theories concerning the causes of this type of neighborhood change.

Production-side arguments, which are primarily associated with the work of Neil Smith, attempt to explain the phenomenon of gentrification via the relationship between capital flows and urban space. Advocates of this perspective suggest that due to the disinvestment experienced by urban neighborhoods in the decades following World War II, “devalorization”⁵ has occurred resulting in a rent gap. According to Smith’s rent gap theory, a rent gap occurs when a disparity exists between “the actual capitalized ground rent of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a ‘higher and better’ use”.⁶ Therefore, it is Smith’s assertion that once the rent gap in a particular location becomes large enough, speculators and landlords will seek to redevelop those properties and thus gentrification will occur.

Over the years there have been numerous critiques of production-side theories. Many researchers rejected these arguments because they placed little or no emphasis on the people who were actually gentrifying these inner-city neighborhoods. The result of this debate has been the introduction of consumption-side explanations for gentrification. The scholar most associated with this school of thought is geographer David Ley, whose theory focuses on the characteristics of the gentrifiers. According to Ley, the phenomenon of gentrification is largely a result of factors such as the growth of the white-collar

⁵ According to Neil Smith, the scholar most associated with this argument, devalorization occurs when the inner-city property is devalued through the following mechanisms: 1) the movement of capital from the cities to the suburbs; 2) the shift towards a higher level of rental property 3) potential blockbusting which occurs when real estate professionals purchase homes at a low cost and then sell them to minorities at a substantial markup; 4) redlining which occurs when private banks and funding institutions cease to provide mortgages to individuals living in certain neighborhoods; and 5) the abandonment of inner-city dwellings. Smith, Neil, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, Rutledge, London, 1996.

⁶ Neil Smith, “Gentrification and the Rent Gap”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77, 1987.

employment sector, a growing percentage of 25- to 35-year-olds in the city, and people waiting longer to have children.⁷

Recent scholarship finds that the most comprehensive explanations for gentrification tend to synthesize both arguments. In a recent Policy Link and the Brookings Institution joint publication, Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard suggest some of the key causes behind gentrification to be rapid job growth, tight housing markets, preference for city amenities, increased traffic congestion, lengthening commutes, and targeted public sector policies.⁸ Suffice it to say, both threads of literature have contributed vastly to our current understanding of the causal mechanisms behind gentrification.

As the causes of gentrification vary across cases, so do the effects. Central to the notion of gentrification is revitalization. For most, revitalization of inner-city communities is by all means desirable. In some cities, neighborhoods that were once plagued with crime, condemned houses, dilapidated structures and vacant lots are now attractive, well-manicured, tree lined communities that in no way resemble the neighborhoods they once were.

For most city governments, revitalization has become a welcomed phenomenon. Many cities find themselves desperate to reduce high levels of concentrated poverty, which has been empirically linked to high levels of crime.⁹ Municipal governments are direct beneficiaries of increased tax revenues that result from rising property values. In cities like Cleveland and San Francisco, tax credits and abatements have lured countless would-be suburbanites into newly revitalized inner-city communities. As middle- and upper-class individuals flood gentrifying communities, the businesses they tend to patronize follow them, creating additional streams of revenue for local government coffers.¹⁰

⁷ David Ley, *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1996.

⁸ Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard, "Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices", Brookings Institute, 2001.

⁹ Bruce Katz, "Reviving Cities: Think Metropolitan", Brookings Institute, June 1998.

¹⁰ Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard, "Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices", Brookings Institute, 2001.

The benefits of gentrification may seem extensive in terms of their financial and aesthetic impacts; however, it is by no means considered a win-win situation for all involved. Most people who understand gentrification to be problematic identify the displacement of original residents as being its most egregious repercussion. In fact, the idea of displacement has become so key to the debate on gentrification that some researchers have suggested that gentrification without displacement is not gentrification at all. Kennedy and Leonard define gentrification as “the process by which higher income households displace lower-income residents of a neighborhood, changing the essential character and flavor of that neighborhood”¹¹. As property values rise, original homeowners are often unable to afford the subsequent increases in property taxes. Sometimes original residents (more frequently elderly homeowners) are hounded by crafty real estate investors looking to purchase their homes in order to turn a quick profit.

Gentrification also presents renters with significant financial challenges as well. Because homeowners own their property, they maintain the right to “cash out” their equity in order to make needed repairs or outright sell their property and move on to neighborhoods they otherwise would not be able to afford. Renters on the other hand, have far fewer options. Tenants are often pushed out by landlords seeking to monopolize on increased property values, making them vulnerable to rent hikes and even evictions.¹²

Displacement is arguably the most unfortunate result of gentrification, however, other issues also manifest as communities undergo neighborhood change. In instances where original residents have not been completely pushed out, conflicts rooted in race and class tend to emerge as both new and old residents vie for control over the future of the community. Often, original leadership is challenged by newcomers whose plans for the neighborhood do not always correspond.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Benjamin Grant, “What is Gentrification?” www.pbs.org, June 17, 2003.

While gentrifying neighborhoods are sometimes racially homogenous (i.e. middle-class blacks moving into traditionally lower-class black neighborhoods), the typical gentrifying community has an indigenous minority population, with the new middle- and upper-class residents being white. As a result, many of these debates on gentrification have centered on the racial implications of urban revitalization. In some neighborhoods, new and old residents have even gone to war over lifestyle differences. In the case of the Kirkwood community in Atlanta, original residents led by the African-American religious leadership within the community have mobilized against their new openly homosexual neighbors.¹³ In neighborhoods in Harlem and San Francisco, opposition to gentrification has been so strong that communities have actually mobilized to stop businesses that have attempted to set up shop within revitalizing communities.¹⁴ Therefore, while gentrification can bring significant financial and aesthetic benefits, the social ramifications of neighborhood change are often considerable.

The debate on gentrification tends to focus on the housing piece, though commercial districts also undergo significant transformations as a result of gentrification. Often neighborhoods whose flavor was once characterized by long standing mom-and-pop businesses are overrun by major retailers and service providers. Such changes often compromise the diversity of communities and stifle entrepreneurial spirit.

¹³ Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard, "Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices", Brookings Institute, 2001.

¹⁴ Ibid.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM

Because gentrification has become such a controversial source of debate, both researchers and practitioners alike have concentrated on the ways in which cities can more equitably pursue revitalization. Some cities have even chartered task forces mandated to make policy recommendations that could serve to stem some of the adverse affects of rapid development.¹⁵ Such recommendations include enacting ordinances or statutes that prohibit predatory lending, increasing the basic homestead exemption for owner-occupied elderly and low-income residents, and supporting nonprofit agencies that seek to educate residents on the consequences of gentrification.¹⁶

While there have been numerous studies that document the ways that local governments have responded to gentrification, there has been very little research that examines the ways that residents and community organizations have responded to various aspects of neighborhood change. Furthermore, the literature on gentrification is deficient in that there is little research that focuses on the affects of gentrification on residents and the perceptions of both new and long-term residents concerning that change. Without such research, it is difficult to draw conclusions concerning some of the more social dynamics of neighborhood change. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to:

- 1. Identify sources of conflict within gentrifying communities.*
- 2. Identify factors - key determinants that enhance and or inhibit neighborhood-level cooperation.*
- 3. Document techniques that have proven successful in helping neighborhood organizations facilitate social change and mitigate conflict.*

¹⁵ “A City for All: Report of the Gentrification Task Force”, September 17, 2001 and Development Without Displacement Task Force Background Paper, The Chicago Rehab Network, The Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement, Chicago, June, 1995.

¹⁶ “A City for All: Report of the Gentrification Task Force”, City of Atlanta, September 17, 2001.

Gentrification is not a phenomenon specific to any one region or locality. Often the concerns surrounding gentrification in one place reflect the same issues facing in-town communities and suburbs throughout the country. Therefore, the hope is that the findings from this study can be generalized beyond the context of this paper and built upon in later research.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines five case neighborhoods: three Atlanta neighborhoods and two national communities. The three Atlanta cases were selected somewhat randomly, with the only conditions being that: 1) they are undergoing some level of gentrification; and, 2) an active community development corporation exists in that neighborhood.

Because of the random nature in which the Atlanta cases were selected, it was also important that there be two national cases that, based on preliminary research, had experienced a high level of success in managing neighborhood change. The two national cases that were selected for this study were the Shaw community in Washington, D.C., and the Jamaica Plain neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts.

The study employs three different methodological approaches: interviews, focus groups, and resident surveys. Because the primary goal of this study is to document best practices by community organizations in managing social change, all of the research methods focused on those individuals living or working within the target neighborhoods. Each aspect of the inquiry was designed to capture a different perspective of the community's experience with neighborhood change.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in all five of the target communities. Examples of key community stakeholders included community development corporation staff and board members, neighborhood organization officers and leadership as well as community activists and advocates. These interviews provided an introduction to the communities and helped in identifying some of the nuanced concerns and issues specific to each neighborhood. This phase of the study was especially important in the two national cases where neither focus groups nor resident surveys were used to gather information.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted in each of the three Atlanta communities. In each focus group meeting, an average of six people were gathered together to discuss the ways in which they were affected by the changes occurring in their neighborhoods. As a result of the focus group sessions, data was collected from both old and new residents, regardless of their level of community involvement.

Resident Surveys

The administration of a resident survey was the most comprehensive methodological technique used in this study. Seventy door-to-door surveys were conducted in the Atlanta community of Reynoldstown. The questionnaire asked nearly 50 questions that attempted to measure the residents' perceptions and reactions to neighborhood change.

THE ROLE of CBOs and CDCs in REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES

Community-based organizations or CBOs are essential in maintaining a healthy and viable community. CBOs act in all types of capacities and functions, however, the primary role of the community-based organization is to provide much needed services and/or resources to the community or communities in which it serves. In communities throughout the country, community based organizations do everything from neighborhood clean-ups to lobbying local government to enforce zoning ordinances.

Research also indicates that CBOs serve a purpose beyond that of community watchdog and service provider. Often communities with very active CBOs tend to be more politically active and more civically inclined.¹⁷ However, this is by no means a blanket assumption. CBOs vary, not only in their level of effectiveness, but in the degree to which they are willing and able to mobilize both residents and resources on behalf of community concerns¹⁸

A CDC is a distinct type of CBO. Community development corporations or CDCs are nonprofit organizations that work with communities to improve the quality of life within a specific locality, primarily through affordable housing and economic development. The very first CDC was created in the New York City neighborhood of Bedford Stuyvesant by community residents and activists who had watched their community deteriorate during the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁹ The Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (BSRC) was chartered in 1967 with the mandate of implementing community development programs that would restore the community to the vibrant district it once was.²⁰

¹⁷ Nicole Marwell, "Social Networks and Social Capital as Resources for Community Revitalization", unpublished dissertation, 1997.

¹⁸ Richard Rich, "A Political Economy Approach to the Study of Neighborhood Organizations", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 24, November, 1980.

¹⁹ Anonymous, "Community Development Corporation Oral History Project", The Pratt Institute, <http://www.picced.org/cdc-bsrc.php>.

²⁰ Ibid.

As conditions in America's cities continued to degenerate, more and more communities saw CDCs as grassroots mechanisms to combat urban blight. During the early years of the CDC movement, the primary goal of the indigenous organization was to combat urban poverty. As a result much of the work of the early community development corporations centered on grassroots advocacy and organizing.²¹ However as a result of numerous factors, that focus has shifted over the years.

The CDC movement was strengthened during the Johnson Administration as a result of that administration's War on Poverty. Consequently, the first generation of CDCs was supported through federally funded programs geared specifically towards fighting poverty.²² During the 1970s, there was a national push by both government and private foundations to do more community work geared towards affordable housing.²³ Because many CDCs had already been successful in spearheading other community development projects, it was only natural that they be the most likely benefactors of these funds. During the 1980s, however, much of the anti-poverty funding supported by the Johnson Administration was repealed during the Reagan Administration, causing CDCs to become significantly more reliant on private funding sources.

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on some of the more grassroots and holistic approaches to community development. Because CDCs are often found in otherwise neglected communities, the need for effective social programs is a clear and present reality. Furthermore, revitalization is futile if the people in the community don't have the resources to maintain much needed home improvements or the skills to improve their life chances. As a result, many CDCs have launched

²¹ Marilyn Gittell, Isolda Otega-Bustamante and Tracy Steffy, "Women Creating Social Capital and Social Change: A Study of Women-Led Community Development Organizations", *Howard Samuels State and Policy Center*, 1999.

²² Neil R. Pierce and Carol F. Steinbach, *Corrective Capitalism: A Report to the Ford Foundation*. New York: Ford Foundation. 1987.

²³ Marilyn Gittell, Isolda Otega-Bustamante and Tracy Steffy, "Women Creating Social Capital and Social Change: A Study of Women-Led Community Development Organizations", *Howard Samuels State and Policy Center*, 1999.

community building²⁴ programs that enhance life skills and increase human capacity within their neighborhoods.

While administering social programs and building human capital may seem as much a part of community development as the physical revitalization of a community, these goals don't always intersect. CDCs primarily receive a bulk of their funding based on their affordable housing initiatives, and find it difficult to convince funders on the importance of developing the people within the community. Furthermore, building houses is far more quantifiable than building human capital, which many CDCs agree is difficult to measure. This often leaves CDCs challenged with establishing a balance between what the funders expect and what the community needs.

²⁴ Community building as defined by the United Way of America is, “the process of engaging residents and other stakeholders in sustained collaborative efforts to strengthen and improve conditions in a defined geographic area.

ATLANTA

Numerous factors make Atlanta the ideal city to explore some of the more social dynamics of gentrification. For nearly 20 years, the Atlanta metropolitan area has ranked high nationally in both population growth and job creation.²⁵ As a result, Atlanta has become the poster child for urban sprawl with four of its metropolitan counties recently ranking in the top 10 fastest growing counties in the country.²⁶ Atlanta also has one of the longest commute times in the country, with average travel time equaling more than 30 minutes.²⁷ Likewise, in-town home values located in middle- and upper-class enclaves have skyrocketed in recent years, making living in those more established in-town communities a virtual impossibility for many middle class Atlantans. Conversely, Atlanta also has one of the highest poverty rates in the country with a majority of Atlanta's poor concentrated in high poverty areas.²⁸ The result is clusters of very cheap housing stock in neighborhoods seemingly ripe for gentrification.

Atlanta is an interesting place politically. Atlanta's governing system is best described by Clarence Stone, in his seminal work on urban governance, as a "long-lasting biracial coalition (that) has rested on the congruent goals of economic growth and racial change."²⁹ Prior to the Civil Rights

Community building strengthens communities and develops healthy children and families."

<http://www.uwcc.net/home%20links/communityimpact-home.php>.

²⁵ Michael Leo Owens and Michael Rich, "Is Strong Incorporation Enough? Black Empowerment and the Fate of Atlanta's Low-Income Blacks", *Racial Politics in America 3rd Edition*, ed. Browning, Marshall and Tabb, 2003.

²⁶ The Brookings Institute, "Moving Beyond Sprawl: The Challenge for Metropolitan Atlanta", Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2000.

²⁷ This average is for the year 2000, which was the most recent estimate available. "Average Travel Time to Work Comparison in Minutes for Atlanta vs. Total U.S.", Arbitron, http://www.arbitron.com/outdoor_companies/travel.asp.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta. 1946-1988*, Lawrence University Press of Kansas, 1989.

movement of the 1960s, Atlanta had been characterized as a city jointly run by the city government and downtown business elites. However, in the years immediately following the Civil Rights movement, new grassroots interests were introduced into the city's agenda, primarily through the election of African-Americans to city government. By 1974, blacks had achieved majority representation at both the executive and legislative levels of Atlanta municipal government as well as obtaining major leadership positions on the city's school board and housing authority.³⁰

Initially this power shift presented a major challenge for the established business interests in the city, which had been afforded a lead role in the creation of local level policy for more than a half-century.³¹ Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, entered office with a fairly progressive policy agenda. He campaigned on issues of resident empowerment and won with the support of numerous neighborhood organizations whose primary objective was to halt the construction of a highway through the center of the city. Unfortunately, Jackson's office lacked the capacity to work completely outside of the previously established status quo, which made downtown business elites an indispensable part of the governing process. In the end, Jackson, like the administrations that followed, had to find a way to balance neighborhood-level interests with the demands of local elites who ultimately controlled the flow of investment capital into the city.

Since Jackson's first mayoral tenure, the city of Atlanta has undergone extensive developmental projects. The most notable of these include the creation and construction of MARTA (Metro Atlanta Regional Transit Authority), the expansion of the city's international airport and the construction and development surrounding Atlanta's hosting of 1996 Olympic Games. While these projects have successfully aided in transforming the South's central hub into an international city of sorts, they have not always coincided with neighborhood concerns. Atlanta mayors have been criticized for selling-out local

³⁰ Adolf Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

³¹ Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*, Lawrence University Press of Kansas, 1989.

interests and when neighborhood level interests have been pitted against developmental agendas, the neighborhoods have often lost out.

The city of Atlanta has also been criticized for its failure to properly allocate funds that have been specifically earmarked for neighborhood revitalization and regeneration. In 1995, the federal government designated the city of Atlanta an Empowerment Zone. The designation came with a \$100 million federal grant, which was intended to improve the lives of Atlanta residents living in the cities 34 poorest neighborhoods.³² The funds were to be dispersed to small business and grassroots organizations to provide affordable housing, job creation and social service delivery. However the city, under the leadership of Mayor Bill Campbell, has been criticized for grossly mismanaging the more than \$42 million that the city spent. The remaining money has been transferred to a new program entitled The Renewal Community; however the impact of the newly created initiative is still being determined. The mishandling of the Empowerment Zone funding has only served to validate many neighborhood advocates argument that Atlanta city government has yet to make neighborhood-level interests a public policy priority.

Neighborhood Level Politics in Atlanta

In 1972, the city of Atlanta created a formal neighborhood-level political mechanism which allowed for citizen involvement in planning decisions.³³ The city created 24 planning units — known as NPUs — which were made up of several adjoining neighborhoods throughout the city. The city of Atlanta's primary reason for creating the NPU system was to allow citizens to actively participate in the crafting of the city's annual budget as well as Atlanta's Comprehensive Development Plan. However, over the years, that role has diminished significantly. Today, the primary function of NPUs throughout

³² Mara Shalhoup, "Atlanta Housing Authority Shell Game"

³³ Leslie Martin, "Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood? Mobilizing in Response to Gentrification in Atlanta". Submitted dissertation, Emory University, 2003.

the city is to review and respond to proposals concerning city functions such as public safety, municipal services and zoning.

Overall the effectiveness and strength of the system varies among NPUs. While certain NPUs are extremely active, others barely meet. The governing structures also vary across NPUs. Each NPU has an elected chair and vice-chair. However some operate in town hall fashion, while others only allow a single representative from each neighborhood to participate in the monthly meetings. Although the local NPU system has been effective in allowing residents to impede unwanted changes in their community, the system as a whole has done little to encourage residents to spearhead their own community development initiatives.

Gentrification in Atlanta

According to the city of Atlanta Gentrification Task Force, the city has experienced two distinct types of gentrification over the last three decades. The gentrification that occurred in Northeastern Atlanta communities like Inman Park and Virginia Highlands in the '70s and '80s was a slow gentrification where middle- and upper-class whites slowly replaced working class African-Americans without noticeable tension. However, much of the gentrification that took place in the 1990s in communities like East Lake and Cabbagetown happened rapidly with a significant degree of conflict.³⁴

Currently, more than a dozen of Atlanta's in-town neighborhoods are experiencing some level of gentrification. While there are many local factors that have served to spur such widespread revitalization, the changes have also been a result of federal initiatives like Hope VI and the Empowerment Zone that have undoubtedly served to peak the interest of would be gentrifiers.

³⁴ "A City for All: Report of the Gentrification Task Force", City of Atlanta, September 17, 2001.

MECHANICSVILLE

History of Mechanicsville

Mechanicsville is easily one of Atlanta's oldest communities. Settled in the mid 1800s, it was coined Mechanicsville because of the large number of railroad mechanics who lived along its Pegran Rail Yards.³⁵ As time progressed, Mechanicsville became increasingly more socially and ethnically diverse. Once an extension of Atlanta's downtown district, Mechanicsville experienced a very vibrant commercial life and consequently became home to some of Atlanta's most notable entrepreneurs and businessmen.³⁶

The Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s had an especially detrimental affect on the community of Mechanicsville. Following World War II, more affluent residents in most of Atlanta's inner-city neighborhoods, including Mechanicsville, began to move to surrounding suburbs leaving an influx of available and affordable housing for many working class blacks. Many of the beautiful Queen Ann and Victorian style homes were converted into boarding houses or duplexes to accommodate the new population and by the early 1970s Mechanicsville primarily consisted of low-income African-American households.³⁷ The flight out of the community was so severe that between 1960 and 1990, the population in Mechanicsville declined by more than 70 percent, from 10,530 to 3,899.³⁸

³⁵ M.M. Harper, "Brief History of Mechanicsville", 1998.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Atlanta and the Games, "Stories Worth Sharing", Georgia Tech, <http://www.arch.gatech.edu/imagine/Atlanta96/documents/city/atlantia/n-mv.htm#history>.

With the 1990s came preparation for quite possibly, the world's largest event, the Summer Olympics. Atlanta had won the bid for the 1996 Olympic Games against five other cities and as a result the Games quickly became Atlanta's top priority. The pressure of the Games was felt throughout all of metropolitan Atlanta, however the focus was primarily placed on those in-town neighborhoods surrounding the various venues. Such was the case for Mechanicsville.

In many ways, the '96 Olympics was a mixed blessing for Mechanicsville. The community is located directly adjacent to Turner Field, one of the main Olympic arenas. In preparation for the Games, the city added new attractive sidewalks and lighting fixtures to the community's main corridors. In addition, Mechanicsville along with other neighboring communities received municipal and private funds, totaling more than \$10 million for an array of community development housing projects.³⁹ Spurred on by the rare focus on their community, the residents of Mechanicsville helped to draft the Mechanicsville Community Redevelopment Plan. While the city eventually codified the plan, they failed to provide the resources needed for initial land acquisition and subsequent revitalization. Not long after the Olympics, revitalization in Mechanicsville came to a virtual halt, leaving many of the residents bitter and frustrated with the city's half-hearted attempt to bring about serious change in the otherwise neglected community.

Community Institutions

Mechanicsville is a relatively small community with fewer than 4,000 residents. Besides the half dozen convenience stores/liquor stores that spot the neighborhood, there is no commercial activity to speak of.

The Mechanicsville Civic Association (MCA) is the primary neighborhood organization in Mechanicsville and was created in the late 1980s. The MCA functions as do many neighborhood associations, holding monthly meetings where residents are able to address common issues affecting the

³⁹ "Olympics Spur Revitalization Efforts" American City & County, May 1, 1995.

community. The association also makes recommendations to the city NPU in reference to proposed development projects.

Over the last 10 years, there have been a number of large projects that have been sanctioned by the organization including a youth juvenile justice center and a medical examiner's office. Negotiations with the city around these projects resulted in a brand new library for the community with a community room. Conversely, the organization has not been as successful in negotiating in favor of residential or economic development in the community. Since the Olympics, only one private developer has been successful in building a large-scale housing development in Mechanicsville.

Likewise, the relationship between the civic association and its local NPU is somewhat tenuous. Mechanicsville is part of one of Atlanta's most active planning units NPU V, which has been "adopted"⁴⁰ by the Annie Casey Foundation to implement much needed social service programs in a number of NPU V neighborhoods.⁴¹ While the association seems to follow through on basic expectations, it has been characterized by certain community leaders as being "weak and unorganized", especially in comparison to the other NPU V neighborhoods.⁴²

SUMMECH: Mechanicsville's CDC

SUMMECH is the community development corporation in Mechanicsville. SUMMECH⁴³, initially a private land trust, was created by one of the community's most prominent businessmen, J. Lowell Ware.⁴⁴ The organization was later transformed into a CDC with its defining mission being "to provide affordable housing, to promote home ownership and to encourage economic development in the

⁴⁰ Interview with community leader.

⁴¹ Interview with community leader.

⁴² Interview with community leader.

⁴³ The name SUMMECH is made up of the two communities which were the focus of the initial land trust, Summerhill and Mechanicsville. However, the actual CDC birthed out of the land trust services Mechanicsville exclusively.

⁴⁴ J. Lowell Ware and Rosa Burney have been credited with creating both SUMMECH and the Mechanicsville Civic Association. J. Lowell Ware was the founder of the Atlanta Voice Newspaper whose office is still housed in Mechanicsville today and Ms. Rosa Burney was a community activist in Mechanicsville for a number of decades.

Mechanicsville community for present and future residents”.⁴⁵ In efforts to fulfill that mission, SUMMECH has engaged in numerous projects throughout the Mechanicsville community with its most ambitious project being Ware Estates.

Ware Estates, a three-phase townhome development, has added an impressive 69 new housing units to the neighborhood. The building of this townhome development was the first time that new units had been added to the communities housing stock in more than 50 years. In addition to Ware Estates, SUMMECH has also successfully completed more than \$2 million in renovations to the Rosa Burney Manor Apartments and in doing so, modernized more than 54 units.⁴⁶ Despite the extensive costs of both ventures, SUMMECH has maintained its commitment to affordable housing. Following the construction of Ware Estates, all units sold from \$95,000 to \$189,000, ensuring affordability for residents already living in the community. Likewise, the rents for the Rosa Burney Manor remained affordable (under \$500) following the extensive renovation of the property.⁴⁷

While SUMMECH has undoubtedly been responsible for changing the face of this small community, its role within the neighborhood is somewhat undefined and not clearly understood by many of Mechanicsville’s residents. In the past, SUMMECH has found itself at odds with developers who invested in the community on the heels of the Olympics. Currently much of SUMMECH’s purchased land remains undeveloped, leading some to suggest that the CDC has chosen to sit on the land that they’ve acquired despite serious need for development. However others have insisted that SUMMECH’s decision to pace development projects has slowed gentrification and significantly minimized residential displacement, helping to ensure that current residents are able to benefit from future revitalization efforts as well as new residents.

SUMMECH has worked hard to broaden its role in the community in recent years. In 2003, the community partnered with a more mature CDC in Atlanta, which served as project manager for its then,

⁴⁵ SUMMECH, Annual Report 2003.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

current housing projects. SUMMECH executive director Janis Ware saw the partnership as an opportunity to build greater staff capacity for the organization which had just lost its development director in 2003.⁴⁸ Likewise, the organization has developed a fairly detailed plan for greater economic development in Mechanicsville that will hopefully bring much needed businesses back to the community.

New Hope for McDaniel Glen

Whether or not Mechanicsville is currently undergoing gentrification is debatable. According to the most recent census, the median household income was less than \$10,000 in the year 2000. Likewise, the community remains racially homogenous with African-Americans representing more than 90 percent of the population. However, all of this may change very soon.

In July of 2004, the Atlanta Housing Authority announced that it had received HOPE VI⁴⁹ funding to demolish Mechanicsville's massive 40-acre public housing facility McDaniel Glen. The complex lies in the heart of Mechanicsville and has long been the epicenter of crime and drug activity in the community. The housing authority will use the \$20 million grant to turn the 588 public housing units into 907 rehabilitated mixed income units, reintroducing middle- and upper-class residents back into a community that has been experiencing economic decline for more than a half century.

The benefits of HOPE VI have been well documented. The program has directed millions of dollars to distressed public housing developments throughout the country. However, the program has also received its fair amount of criticism, particularly in its failure to successfully relocate previous public housing residents. It is common knowledge that once the renovations are completed, only a small portion of the original residents are permitted to return to the new housing facility. Consequently HOPE VI has

⁴⁸ Protip Biswas, "Strategies for Survival" *Shelterforce Online*, Issue #132, November/December 2003.

⁴⁹ HOPE VI grants are funded by The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to demolish and/or revitalize severely distressed public housing facilities.

been identified by a number of scholars as a major contributing factor to gentrification.⁵⁰ The extent to which this will be true in Mechanicsville remains to be seen. However if gentrification is afoot in Mechanicsville, these new developments will undoubtedly serve to accelerate the process.

Residents' Response to Neighborhood Change

Mechanicsville is by far the least gentrified community in this study. As a result, the community still primarily consists of low-income residents, many of whom live in McDaniel Glen. Consequently, the HOPE VI grant was the dominant concern among the long-time residents. Many recalled horror stories they had heard from friends, relatives and acquaintances who had lived in other housing projects rehabbed by HOPE VI grants. They expressed fears of not receiving vouchers in time to make the necessary moving arrangements or being placed in other housing facilities far from relatives and friends. Others were significantly more optimistic about the changes and confident that the housing authority was adequately preparing residents for the changes by conducting credit counseling seminars and other transition-centered workshops.

When asked about the neighborhood institutions and organizations, long-time residents seemed ambivalent. Their primary concern was the lack of neighborhood programs and activities for the community's youth. Though the community center is a major part of the Mechanicsville community, many of the residents stated that they refused to send their children to the center citing it to be a hangout for the neighborhood drug dealers and thugs. When they were asked about the civic association, they complained of favoritism towards certain people within the community. Likewise, many of the public

⁵⁰ Elvin K. Wyly, and Daniel J. Hammel, "Islands of Decay in Seas of Renewal: Housing Policy and the Resurgence of Gentrification," *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 711-771.

housing residents indicated that they often felt marginalized by the association and excluded from the decision making process within the community.

The new residents on the other hand were hardly concerned about the demolition of the public housing facility. Most were not even aware of the HOPE VI funding or the housing project specifically. When asked why they moved to the neighborhood, most cited the creation of Mechanicsville's only condominium development City Side Lofts, which sits on the northern edge of the neighborhood. Being that the gated community lies on the border of Mechanicsville and downtown Atlanta, many of the newer residents admitted that they did not venture too far into the neighborhood and could not really identify with the concerns of other long-term residents.

These residents were primarily concerned with the seemingly sluggish development within the community. When many of the City Side residents purchased their units, they expected that further development would not be far behind. That was three years ago. Since that time, the face of the community has all but stayed the same. Many of the residents directly attributed this deferment to what they believe to be an obstructionist stance taken by the civic association. Many of the condominium residents also feel that they have inherited — just by the fact that they live at City Side — a fairly adversarial relationship that developed between the condo developers and MCA during the course of the condo project's construction. This has played out in a number of ways with the most recent conflict surrounding the civic association's decision to restrict parking on the side street of the condominiums. Because the builders only allotted one space per unit, many residents are forced to park their cars on the side streets. Consequently, the new residents perceive this decision to restrict parking on the condo's side streets to be somewhat malicious on the part of association. In response, the association has blamed the builders for only allotting one spot per unit in the first place.

While the concerns of the residents varied significantly according to their length of time in the community, they were fairly uniformed in their unawareness of the neighborhood CDC, SUMMECH. While some were aware of the SUMMECH projects themselves, they were unable to differentiate

between SUMMECH's mission of community development with that of a private developer. As one long-time resident stated, "the people ask me, 'who is doing that (building) over there?' When I say SUMMECH, they ask me, 'who is that?' I mean, they just don't know what they do".⁵¹

Managing Neighborhood Change in Mechanicsville

For whatever reasons, there is no aggressive attempt to manage neighborhood change in Mechanicsville. Much of the facilitation of change by the key stakeholders within the community has been passive at best. This is not to say that the residents of Mechanicsville have not made efforts to dictate the terms of change within the community. On the contrary, this is evidenced in SUMMECH's apparent commitment to developing and maintaining truly affordable housing within the neighborhood. Furthermore, it could be argued that SUMMECH's decision to hold onto its land has been a strategic decision by the CDC to minimize some of the more negative outcomes of rapid revitalization, specifically residential displacement. Another example would be the resident inspired Mechanicsville Redevelopment Plan, which demonstrated the community's desire to establish a strong foundation for growth early on in the redevelopment of Mechanicsville. However, in the years since the tabling of that plan, the community has failed to develop a comprehensive strategy that would ensure strong, aggressive revitalization of the community.

It is also important to note that based on the interviews with leaders within the community, there appears to be fairly weak and informal interaction between the key institutions in Mechanicsville concerning issues of change and redevelopment. As a result, no formal programs or mechanisms have

⁵¹ Interview with community leader.

been put in place to ensure that all of the stakeholders within the community are committed to the equitable development of the neighborhood.

Finally, it appears that community residents, both new and old, feel somewhat marginalized by leaders within Mechanicsville. One Ware Estates resident recalled having to “prove herself” by attending civic association meetings for more than a year before her input was considered legitimate. Other new residents have cited similar experiences.

While the community of Mechanicsville has by no means been faced with the high levels of conflict experienced by other gentrifying communities throughout the country, the potential for severe conflict does exist. However, increased communication and cooperation amongst the organizations could possibly serve to curve such negative outcomes. Likewise, the neighborhood organizations must make a more concentrated effort to incorporate community residents into the decision making process. Without extensive resident participation, community organizations become social clubs, where power is retained in the hands of a few. At this phase of gentrification, it is imperative that the residents of Mechanicsville create a united vision for the future of the neighborhood before market forces overcome the small community. With the razing and revitalization of McDaniel Glen, change is on its way, and it’s in the fast lane. The addition of this new mixed income housing facility is far more likely to increase gentrification pressures than minimize them. As to whether or not Mechanicsville is up to the challenge remains to be seen.

MLK HISTORIC DISTRICT

The History of the MLK Historic District

Atlanta's MLK Historic District is home to two of the country's most frequented historic sites: the King Center and the birth home of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Running through the heart of the Historic District is Auburn Avenue, a street that — at its peak — served as the hub for black business and culture in the Southeast. During the 1920s and 1930s, Sweet Auburn⁵² was home to the first black owned life insurance company Atlanta Life, as well as the first black daily newspaper, and first black owned radio station in the United States.

The Historic District continued to thrive throughout the Civil Rights movement. The community's Butler Street YMCA served as a quasi "city hall" for local civil-rights organizers. Because of the Historic District's connection with the black elite, it often served as a meeting place to discuss movement strategies. Therefore, it is truly ironic that Sweet Auburn⁵³ was probably one of the first communities to experience some of the movement's more unexpected consequences.

As a result of much of the desegregation legislation passed during the 1950s and 1960s, blacks were no longer required to live in self-sufficient communities like the Historic District. Consequently,

⁵² The name Sweet Auburn was coined by John Wesley Dobbs, the maternal grandfather of Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson. It was a term of endearment that many who lived and worked in the community used to describe what was also known as the "Black Peachtree". Sweet Auburn, Soul of America, www.soulofamerica.com.

⁵³ Throughout the paper "Historic District" and "Sweet Auburn" are used interchangeably.

many of the community's most notable businesses and families began to exit the Historic District for Atlanta suburbs. By the 1990s, many of the historic homes and buildings had deteriorated significantly and the community that had once nurtured such leaders as Martin Luther King Jr. and John Wesley Dobbs had become yet another victim of inner-city disinvestment.

Today, the Historic District consists of a small but flourishing residential neighborhood⁵⁴, and a fledgling, two-corridor business district. While few would argue that significant change has not taken place over the years, the course of change within this community has been somewhat unique to Sweet Auburn.

Community Institutions

The MLK Historic District is used to describe a general area, which is primarily made up of two adjoining neighborhoods: Old Fourth Ward⁵⁵ and Butler Street. When the NPU system was created, it segmented the city into dozens of neighborhoods whose boundaries had previously been informal. Perhaps this would explain why the Historic District has no functioning neighborhood or civic association, despite its rather active role in the civil rights movement. Consequently, the local NPU operates as the primary neighborhood level organization. Residents who desire to lend their voice to community issues are often directed to attend the NPU M meetings.

While the Historic District, like Mechanicsville, belongs to one of the more active NPUs in the city, the structure of the neighborhood planning unit is not conducive to addressing the concerns of one neighborhood. Therefore due to the limited scope and capacity of the NPU, there is a litany of neighborhood-level issues that have no official forum in which to be resolved.

⁵⁴ This is the area where Dr. King grew up. It is made up of about a dozen blocks of residential housing on the end of the community located farthest from downtown Atlanta.

⁵⁵ The Historic District encompasses the Southeastern half of Fourth Ward and all of Butler Street.

While there is no working neighborhood association, there are a number of other active institutions within the Historic District that carry out a variety of functions. For instance, there are three very active churches, which have all been in the neighborhood for more than a century and own a significant amount of the land.⁵⁶ Throughout the years, these three institutions have brought numerous social service programs into the community that have assisted many of the low income residents that had flooded the neighborhood during the '70s and '80s. Another powerful player within the neighborhood is the National Parks Service which oversees the King Center and much of the property surrounding Dr. King's birth home. Additionally, there are numerous other organizations and individuals throughout the community who all have a vested interest in the future of the changing neighborhood.

HDCC: Historic District's CDC

The active community development corporation in the neighborhood is the Historic District Development Corporation, which was co-founded in 1980 by the widow of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta Scott King and community activist Valena Henderson with the goal of rehabilitating homes in the area surrounding the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. During the early years, the organization would take on modest projects, working with the National Park Service⁵⁷ to renovate homes in the closest proximity to the King birth home.

In the early 1990s, under new leadership, HDCC began to pursue both private and public monies in order to expand the vision of the organization. Since that time, their approach to community development has emphasized three principles; historic preservation, non-displacement and sustainability. In seeking out a strategy for comprehensive revitalization, the leadership of HDCC decided that they

⁵⁶ The three churches are 1) Ebenezer Baptist Church, the church home of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his father Dr. Martin Luther King Sr. 2) Big Bethel AME Church which is the oldest predominately African-American congregation in the Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area and 3) Wheat Street Baptist which has been in the community since 1869.

⁵⁷ Because the King Center is registered as a national historic landmark, much of land surrounding the King Center is owned by the National Park Service. This has presented a unique challenge for HDCC in that they often have to

would engage in a “block by block” approach which would ensure that they would, in some way touch every unit on a block before they moved on to the next street. If this involved finding city funds to rehab an elderly person’s home or reporting a code violation in order to force an absentee landlord to respond to tenants, then that is what was done. In implementing this “block by block” strategy, HDDC also worked to ensure that no long-term residents would be displaced as a result of revitalization. To this day, HDDC asserts that they have not experienced any displacement of long-term residents in the more than 20 years they have been in the community development business.

In recent years HDDC has moved far beyond its one house at a time strategy to include both extensive residential and commercial development. In many instances, the organization has partnered with private developers to bring major development projects to the community. One of its most ambitious undertakings has been Studioplex on Auburn, an \$18 million dollar mixed-use facility that includes both residential space as well as retail and gallery space. HDDC’s current projects include two mixed-use developments, Dynamic Metals Lofts and Auburn Glen, which combined will bring 320 additional residential units to the Historic District.⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, they have managed to undertake these large-scale projects while still directing considerable resources towards housing rehabilitation. As a result of these continued efforts, some would assert that HDDC has been responsible for single handedly revitalizing the residential portion of the Historic District. And naturally, with that revitalization has come an increased interest in the up and coming area. In recent years, the community has seen a fairly significant influx of new residents from outside of Historic District, which has altered the demographic composition of neighborhood.

Because the Historic District lacks a sanctioned neighborhood association, HDDC often serves as a proxy. Though the residential district has undergone some major transformations, the surrounding neighborhood has not. The long standing drug problem has not yet been eradicated from the community

pursue revitalization while maintaining historic preservation. Often, adhering to historic preservation guidelines can significantly increase the costs of renovations.

⁵⁸ HDDC official website, www.hddc.net.

nor is it uncommon for Historic District residents to be solicited by local homeless people. Therefore many of the immediate community needs in this portion of the neighborhood are routed to the neighborhood community development corporation.

HDDC has not taken this role lightly. They are one of only a few community development corporations in the city that have brought on a staff person to handle community relations and programming. This has increased the organization's capacity to provide much needed services to the community, and as a result the organization has developed a greater degree of legitimacy among many of the residents both old and new. Currently the organization conducts monthly networking sessions that allow residents to engage and interact with neighbors they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet.

In an interview with HDDC's current board president, she likened the current role of community development corporations to a three-legged stool, with the primary functions being 1) affordable housing development 2) human development and 3) economic development. While she suggests that the organization has worked hard at the first two legs, she admits that they need to commit more aggressively to the economic development of the community.⁵⁹

As a result, HDDC is currently spearheading a master development plan that may serve to direct the revitalization effort on Auburn Avenue. However, this may turn out to be an uphill battle. The plan being championed by HDDC would not be the community's first attempt at creating a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the Auburn business district. Both the community and the city have previously attempted to implement similar plans over the years. Unfortunately, there has never been enough synergy between the stakeholders to establish a united vision for future of the community. According to one long-time community resident, "the community has done this numerous times and usually the leaders are just in it to get what they can get for their church or their organization. So each time someone got a

⁵⁹ Interview community leader.

little piece of the money, but nothing came of it for the community.”⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the various failed attempts of the last two or three decades have left many Historic District residents and business owners pessimistic concerning the community’s ability to come to a consensus concerning the Sweet Auburn business district.

Big Bethel’s Big Plans

Over the years, various parties other than the CDC have attempted to initiate change in Atlanta’s Historic District, however none of these plans have come as close to execution as the Village at Auburn Avenue. The Village at Auburn Avenue is a \$45 million dollar redevelopment plan that has been proposed by Big Bethel AME, one of the community’s biggest property owners.⁶¹

The project will include more than 150 condominiums and 27,000 square feet of retail space with an adjoining parking lot. While this project could very well be the economic stimulus that the Sweet Auburn district needs, numerous individuals throughout the community have found issue with parts of the plan that allow for the demolition of what some consider historic buildings. Despite some neighborhood opposition, the demolition and subsequent development of the Sweet Auburn Village appears to be moving full steam ahead.

Resident Response to Neighborhood Change

⁶⁰ Interview with community resident.

⁶¹ Scott Henry, “Auburn Avenue Redrawn”, *Creative Loafing Atlanta Magazine*, September 2, 2004.

Because of the make-up of the Historic District, the focus group participants included both community residents and business owners. All of the residents came from the residential section of the community and their length of residency ranged from 45 years to less than three years.⁶²

There were a number of issues that appeared to be consistent among the residents. When asked about the degree to which people in the neighborhood got along, the respondents were somewhat tentative. Unlike in the case of Mechanicsville, there has been no real perceivable conflict between old and new residents. Perhaps this is due to the fact that there is no neighborhood organization where conflicts can formally play out. However, many residents did complain that the community lacked that neighborly quality. Many of the residents had lived in the small community for years and had never met.

When asked whether racial tensions had surfaced in the community, the dominant response was that they hadn't manifested in any obvious way. One resident suggested that because the change has been so gradual, there have not been any real tensions surrounding race. Furthermore, they felt that the social tensions may have been somewhat neutralized because a certain level of affordability had been maintained in the community. It is also important to note that while many of the residents appreciated the role that HDDC had played in managing neighborhood concerns, many of the residents identified a strong need for a neighborhood organization.

Other issues that concerned residents included the ending of local tax abatements for neighborhood residents, loitering, homeless vagrants and petty crime. However, the primary concern among most of the residents in both focus groups was the lack of economic development in the Historic District. Many complained that they had to go to neighboring communities because the Sweet Auburn market (a collection of small mom and pop food and sundry stores) was inadequate. Likewise, a number of the residents appeared frustrated because based on the history of the area, the lack of commercial activity seemed to be a prime example of opportunity lost. However, for the most part, the residents

⁶² It is important to note that there is some residential housing in the business district, however the concerns of those residents were not captured in the focus groups. Those residents of Historic District are significantly removed from the change taking place in the residential portion of the neighborhood.

seemed to like where they lived. In both focus groups, there appeared to be an underlying excitement amongst the residents concerning the community's potential to experience a revival.

Managing Neighborhood Change in Historic District

While there has been very significant neighborhood change within the community, redevelopment has been quite uneven. As Historic District's residential section has experienced a gradual revitalization, the commercial activity in the business district has been stagnant. Therefore, the community's ability to manage change is twofold.

On the one hand, HDDC started with a goal of development without displacement. They created a strategy that allowed them to control the pace of change in the section of the community that has been most directly affected by gentrification. Some would argue that these approaches and revitalization strategies have served to minimize conflict significantly in this small community.

On the other hand, the community has done a poor job at managing the change within the neighborhood's business district. Because of weak collaboration and poor planning, the community has been unable to develop the business sector with the same rigor as the residential area. This is not to say that certain efforts have not been made to push the district forward, however there has been no comprehensive plan that has been successfully employed by community stakeholders.

Gentrification manifests on a number of fronts. Communities often focus on maintaining affordability while leaving economic development to market forces. Research on gentrification has indicated that as change continues to happen, the businesses will come. But it is up to the community to ensure that when the businesses do come, the community can influence the types of businesses they want in their neighborhood. Otherwise, all other efforts to manage the negative consequences of gentrification in the areas of affordable housing and community relations can be overrun by businesses outside of the community looking to capitalize on a demographic shift.

To the extent that gentrification is taking place in Historic District is debatable, however further change is definitely on the horizon. The seemingly imminent development of the Sweet Auburn Village has forced people to realize the potential of such impact. Hopefully, those vested in the community will be able to come to a consensus about the future of the neighborhood; otherwise, the elaborate history of the Sweet Auburn District may continue to be a matter of history.

REYNOLDSTOWN

History of Reynoldstown

Unlike both the Historic District and Mechanicsville, Reynoldstown has historically been a working class African-American community. The neighborhood was first settled by blacks seeking work in the local saw mill following the abolition of slavery, and is characteristic of the larger pattern of African-American settlements within the city of Atlanta. In numerous locations throughout the neighborhood, one can still see the grossly small shotgun homes, tucked away on dirt paths, not quite official enough to be accorded street names. While the neighborhood has historically had some light industry, it has remained primarily residential with the only commercial activity being a handful of convenience stores along the main thoroughfares.

Though the community of Reynoldstown had always been primarily African-American, it was quite economically diverse. Following desegregation, however, many of the middle-class blacks moved out of Reynoldstown to the suburbs and as a result of the increase of affordable housing options, the neighborhood began receiving an influx of low income residents. The result was concentrated poverty and all of the social ills that are often associated with economically depressed areas. By the late 1980s,

the community abounded with drug peddlers and prostitutes. Vacant lots served as miniature trash dumps and much of the original character of the neighborhood had diminished significantly.

Community Institutions

Reynoldstown is a relatively small community with less than 800 households. While still close to down town, the community is comparatively more isolated than both Mechanicsville and the Historic District. There are a number of small churches whose parishioners primarily live outside of the community and while many of the churches have resided in the community for decades, their activity within the neighborhood has been fairly limited.

The NPU system in Reynoldstown operates significantly different than it does in the other two Atlanta cases. In both Mechanicsville and Historic District, the NPU meetings are open to all community residents. Likewise, all attending residents receive voting power on whatever issues and concerns come before the NPU. Conversely, Reynoldstown's NPU has taken on a completely different organizational structure.

In NPU N, there are only 10 representatives that are able to vote on any of the numerous issues that come before the body. Seven of the delegates represent the seven neighborhoods and the remaining three delegates represent other powerful CBOs throughout the NPU. While a majority of the NPUs throughout the city are structured like NPU M (Historic District) and NPU V (Mechanicsville), NPU N works well for the community of Reynoldstown. Because each community has one representative, the decisions concerning NPU issues are usually decided by the neighborhood association and then articulated by the neighborhood representative at the actual NPU meeting. The other neighborhood representatives then support the neighborhood delegate in their decision. This is done to ensure that residents from other neighborhoods aren't able to circumvent the desires of a given neighborhood, even if that particular neighborhood is outnumbered. Therefore, to a large extent, nearly all NPU issues are decided upon in individual neighborhood association meetings.

The Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League (RCIL) is the community's sanctioned neighborhood organization. It was created in 1952 and traces its activism to the years pre-dating the Civil Rights movement. At that time, African-Americans were unable to vote. Consequently, the primary purpose of the organization became to educate and mobilize residents to participate in the political process.⁶³ The organization also worked towards a number of goals and projects in the neighborhood, with their greatest success being reflected in the creation of the I.P. Reynolds School, which opened in 1958 as a result of pressure placed on the Atlanta Board of Education to bring a school into the neighborhood.

In 1974, the association reorganized its focus under very strong community leadership which mostly consisted of residents who had lived in the neighborhood for most of their lives. During this period, RCIL began successfully petitioning the city for much needed neighborhood enhancements such as traffic lights and playground equipment. They also formed a weekly senior's Bible study which, to this day, is faithfully attended by many of the community's elderly residents.⁶⁴ These accomplishments served to solidify the association's role within the community of Reynoldstown. The year 1974 also brought the association, and the larger community, one of their most formidable challenges.

The Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, commonly known as MARTA had planned to erect a transit station and parking facility on the edge of the neighborhood. The community adamantly opposed the project and began to engage both the city and the transit authority in negotiations over the development of the station. RCIL championed the cause and began to aggressively mobilize the residents against what they perceived to be an external threat to the character of their neighborhood. The organization was also successful in garnering a significant amount of media attention for their cause. Despite these extensive efforts, the community was unable to withstand the political will of the transit authority and both the train station and parking lots were constructed, resulting in a small but significant

⁶³ Leslie Martin, "Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood? Mobilizing in Response to Gentrification in Atlanta". Submitted dissertation, Emory University, 2003.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

loss of housing stock.⁶⁵ While the MARTA defeat served a stiff blow to the community and the association, the experience showed the community that they could affectively mount a resistance to external pressures on their neighborhood.

The Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League continued throughout the '70s and '80s to work towards the further improvement of their community. Nearly ten years following the development of the transit station, they once again rallied to oppose the creation of an unwanted loading dock in their backyard. Due to effective resident mobilization and collaboration with the neighboring community of Cabbagetown, the two neighborhoods were able to receive certain concessions in return for allowing the loading dock to be placed in their community.⁶⁶

While RCIL had experienced a significant level of success in bettering the community of Reynoldstown, they realized that their capacity was especially limited when dealing with certain developmental issues. Therefore, in 1989, the civic league created the Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation or RRC. Since the creation of RRC, the two organizations have worked in tandem to continually change the community from the inside out.

Reynoldstown's CDC: Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation

Since the creation of Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation (RRC), the organization has been committed to a holistic approach to community development, incorporating economic development and leadership development into their community revitalization strategy. During the early days of the organization, the primary goal was to stabilize the neighborhood by focusing their revitalization efforts on the seniors in the community. The leadership wanted to ensure that the seniors would be insulated from the almost inevitable change down the road. Simultaneously the organization began to quietly buy up the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ These concessions included funds towards community projects and initiatives, as well as a promise to employ a certain number of neighborhood residents at the loading facility.

vacant lots in the neighborhood. The goal was to acquire the land while it was cheap before the speculators would get wind of the real estate activity.⁶⁷

Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation has also worked closely with its parent organization Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League to further enhance the appearance of the community. Years before the neighborhood began to experience any significant revitalization, RRC resident board members would engage in monthly lot cleanups.⁶⁸ For years people had dumped everything from tires to pay phones in those lots, causing certain pockets of the community to become rat infested eye soars. The neighborhood clean-ups significantly minimized the rodent problem and helped to establish a greater sense of neighborhood pride amongst the residents. In the late 1990's, RRC and RCIL partnered together and with the City of Atlanta to create Reynoldstown's Master Plan, which was then integrated into the City of Atlanta's Comprehensive Development Plan. This effort helped bring residents together to formally solidify their vision for the future. And most recently, in light of the development of a large, new, commercial parcel on the edge of the neighborhood, the organizations came together again with other partners to host a series of job fairs to bolster the community's image and connect community residents to potential employment opportunities. Yet, no single neighborhood activity has been more effective at fostering strong community relations than Reynoldstown's Wheelbarrow Festival.

The Wheelbarrow Summer Theater Festival was created by RRC in 1996 as a vehicle for economic activity within the community and to provide resources for some of Reynoldstown's much needed social programs.⁶⁹ In addition to generating much needed revenue, the community-organized event continues to draw larger crowds each consecutive year. The Wheelbarrow Festival has showcased the unique strengths and talents of Reynoldstown residents and consequently, reinforced the sense of unity that had been characteristic of this small, intimate community over the years.

⁶⁷ Interview with community leader.

⁶⁸ Interview with community leader.

⁶⁹ Wendy Bowman-Littler, "Reynoldstown Raises Curtain for Theater's Second Season", *The Atlanta Business Chronicle*, March 28, 1997. <http://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/stories/1997/03/31/newscolumn9.html>.

To further improve upon community relations in the neighborhood, RRC has dedicated a staff person to the development and management of community programs, one of which is a computer center for local residents. The program director also serves as somewhat of a one-man community resource center providing everything from social service referrals to job placement assistance.

The work that Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation has done to enhance the community both socially and economically is undeniable, however, the center-piece of RRC's work is the creation and preservation of affordable housing. The organization has worked hard to maintain a mix of both home ownership and rental housing. It owns the largest rental property in the community, Amber Woods Village and has rehabbed more than 250 homes.⁷⁰ Recently they have partnered with one of Atlanta's most well respected private developers to create Reynoldstown Square, a community of 40 affordable town homes and condominiums on the edge of the neighborhood. They are also currently slated to build a 32 unit low-income rental project on the eastern end of the community as well as other smaller projects that are sure to increase the attractiveness of the in-town community.

Like HDDC in the Historic District, RRC has in many ways acted as a catalyst for development in the small community. In recent years, the community has seen a significant increase in new residents. Today, change is a constant theme in Reynoldstown. The community where homes went unsold because banks refused to finance them is now the same community where homes are being sold for more than \$300,000. Some might say that gentrification has arrived.

Resident's Response to Neighborhood Change

Out of all five of the case studies for this report, the most extensive residential data was collected in Reynoldstown. In addition to the two focus groups, door-to-door resident surveys were administered

⁷⁰ Brenda Berry, "Reynoldstown is on the Rise in a Holistic Approach to Revitalization", *Bright Ideas*, Summer, 2002.

that questioned residents on their perception of the changes taking place in their community.⁷¹

Reynoldstown was selected for a number of factors with the primary reasons being 1) it was the most navigable Atlanta community and 2) it had the best mix of both old and new residents. The surveys allowed us to confirm information derived from the focus groups as well as identify any other concerns or issues that were not represented through the two less extensive methodological approaches.

The focus group participants were made up of both new and old residents.⁷² A number of the participants had been born in Reynoldstown, while others had lived in the neighborhood for less than a year. There were a number of themes that seemed to resonate in the Reynoldstown focus groups. First, there was a very strong sense of community among the participants. While not all of the residents were acquainted with each other, the older residents especially tended to know each other on a first name basis. When asked about the strengths of the community, one neighbor immediately responded “the people”. It was fairly apparent that, at least among the long-term residents, there was a very strong family-like connection.

The community organizations also were a topic of discussion during the focus groups. All of the residents except for one had some type of previous interaction with the civic improvement league. The one participant that did not said that she was aware of the association but that she “didn’t get out that much”. All residents were pleased with the work of the civic improvement league and a few even shared memories of their involvement with the organization. It is also important to point out that many of the respondents were aware of RRC and were able to identify them as a community organization that built affordable housing.

When asked about the extent to which issues of race and class spurred conflict in the neighborhood, the general consensus was that they didn’t factor into the community’s ability to get along.

⁷¹ Seventy surveys were conducted over a one week period. Volunteers primarily canvassed the streets of Reynoldstown and went from door to door. According to the 2000 Census block data, there are some 830 households in Reynoldstown, therefore, a little less than 10% of the households were surveyed.

⁷² All the participants at the Reynoldstown Focus Groups had received flyers that had been dispersed during the conducting of the door-to-door surveys.

This is not to say that the demographic shifts in the community have gone unnoticed. One participant who was very proud of the history of civicness in the community resented the idea that many new, white residents to the community had been credited for the positive changes in the neighborhood, when in actuality; the revitalization had been initiated by an indigenous organization. In a similar vein a number of residents agreed that many of the businesses began to “fix up” their stores with the arrival of new white residents.

Finally, most of the participants, when asked if they believed that revitalization could be good for all involved, responded that they did not. Some suggested that the neighborhood had already experienced a significant amount of displacement. One resident in particular articulated that her rent had increased drastically over the last few years. Most residents concurred that displacement of renters in the community especially, was an almost inevitable outcome of neighborhood change.

Resident Survey

The resident surveys assisted in further clarifying the data collected during the focus group sessions. It also allowed for the collection of current demographic information on the neighborhood. Out of all of the people interviewed, percent had lived in the community for three years or less. Eighty five percent of the remaining respondents had lived in the community for more than ten years. When asked the primary reason they moved to Reynoldstown, most people identified the location of the community to be a primary cause.

The importance of location was echoed when residents were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the community. Approximately 45 percent of the residents identified proximity to downtown to be one of the positive attributes of the area. Numerous residents commented that they considered the neighborhood to be quiet and rather friendly with more than half of the residents identifying their neighbors and a “sense of community” to be a positive attribute of the neighborhood.

Negative aspects of the community included petty crime, bad sidewalks and some lingering drug traffic. The most frequent complaint was loitering or what some termed “too much traffic”.

When asked about neighborhood change, 80 percent of the residents who responded to the question perceived the change taking place in the community to be a positive change while 16 percent said that it had stayed the same and 4 percent that it had changed for the worse. Most residents cited the reduction in crime and the revitalization as key examples of the change. For the most part, this was consistent across both blacks and whites, as well as new and old residents, however blacks were more likely to say that the neighborhood had stayed the same over the past five years. When asked how they and their neighbors had responded to the change, more than 79 percent of those who responded to the question said that, 1) they responded positively or 2) the changes had caused residents to become significantly more involved.

When respondents were asked if they were personally affected by the change, 53 percent of the residents responded they had not. Forty-four percent of the residents who said that they had been personally affected by the changes cited the rise in property taxes. Only one resident said that they had experienced a rent increase as a result of the changes.

While the survey was primarily concerned with the affects that gentrification had had on residents thus far, we were also concerned with how the residents perceived the changes to affect Reynoldstown in the future. Out of 70 respondents, only three respondents said that they believed that the community would change for the worst as a result of revitalization.

When asked to what degree certain factors such as race, age, income, lifestyle and length of residency matter in affecting community relations, income and lifestyle⁷³ appeared to be the most significant variables, while race and age appeared to be the most insignificant factors. This is interesting in light of much of the gentrification literature which asserts race to be one of the dominant sources of conflict in neighborhoods undergoing gentrification.

Another objective of conducting these surveys was to 1) identify the degree to which residents were aware of the various CBOs within the community and 2) document how effective they believed those organizations to be. The results indicated that more than 65 percent of the residents surveyed could identify at least one community based organization. Of those residents who were unable to identify a neighborhood organization, most said that they had been contacted at one time or another concerning a meeting or gathering by one of the Reynoldstown community based organizations. Surprisingly, the results did not differ significantly among new residents and long-time residents. Ninety-five percent of those who could identify at least one organization within the community were either satisfied or very satisfied with the work of that organization.

Residents were also asked if they could identify specific leaders within the neighborhood. The results found that 49 percent of the residents surveyed were able to identify at least one leader and approximately one-third of the respondents were able to name more than one leader in the community. All together, 15 community leaders were identified and 90 percent of the leaders mentioned were either affiliated with Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League or Reynoldstown Redevelopment Corporation. It is also important to note that a significant number of the leadership identified were residents who had lived in the community for less than five years. When asked if the leaders had represented their concerns only 10 percent said that they had not.

Managing Neighborhood Change in Reynoldstown

“Reynoldstown Rising” is the neighborhood motto, and like a phoenix, the community of Reynoldstown has emerged out of the ashes of disinvestment and economic decline. Today, Reynoldstown is quickly becoming one of metro Atlanta’s up and coming neighborhoods with signs of change at every turn.

⁷³ Respondents interpretation of the lifestyle variable seemed to vary and was not necessarily perceived as having to do with sexual orientation even though that was the intention.

In many ways, Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League laid much of the foundation for Reynoldstown Redevelopment Corporation. The earlier struggles of the civic league helped to establish a strong sense of community among the residents. Earlier instances when the civic league mobilized the community against external threats helped to solidify the neighborhood and establish a sense of community that had not yet been created in the other two Atlanta cases.

The level of community collaboration within Reynoldstown is also very strong. Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League and Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation have partnered on numerous projects over the years including the annual Wheelbarrow Festivals and the community clean ups. The two CBOs also share resources, including the community center where the RRC is housed and RCIL holds its meetings. Similarly, they constantly reinforce the idea of Reynoldstown being one community, with one shared vision and future. This is evidenced by the “Reynoldstown Rising” community website, which the organizations share.

Vital to Reynoldstown’s ability to manage neighborhood change is its continued commitment to address both the physical needs of the community and the human needs of its residents. This commitment to comprehensive community development can be traced back to the beginnings of the civic league, which was initially created to increase political participation within the neighborhood. Today in Reynoldstown, this is exemplified through the Wheelbarrow Festival, and the various other community based programs that have been implemented and administered by RRC.

Finally, the data gathered from the resident surveys indicate that the organizations in Reynoldstown have done an exceptional job at minimizing conflict that often arises as a result of gentrification. The surveys show that both new and old residents feel integrated into the decision making process. As a result, there are numerous new residents in leadership positions. Furthermore, both new and old residents felt that their interests were reflected in the current leadership. This would suggest that the organizations in Reynoldstown have embraced new residents while supporting long-term residents in an effort to unify the community. Overall, it appears that Reynoldstown’s formula for incorporating

community building initiatives and smart, focused revitalization have somewhat insulated the community from the more negative outcomes of gentrification.

NATIONAL CASES

The national cases are significantly different than the Atlanta neighborhoods in a number of contextual ways. Both Washington, D.C., and Boston, MA, are significantly older cities than Atlanta. And because Atlanta became a major metropolitan area much later than the other two, it developed in very different ways. For instance, while both Washington, D.C and Boston have very dense urban populations, Atlanta is characterized by urban sprawl. Such differences have affected the ways that cities have approached issues surrounding development and revitalization.

It is also important to note that both Shaw and Jamaica Plain are significantly more gentrified than the Atlanta neighborhoods. As a result the issues surrounding gentrification in Shaw and Jamaica Plain differ considerably from the concerns faced by the Atlanta neighborhoods in this study. However there is still much to be gathered from a cross case analysis of these five communities and their responses to gentrification.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - THE SHAW NEIGHBORHOOD

Washington D.C. and the Affordable Housing Crisis

Washington, D.C. is politically unique in many respects. Not quite a city and not quite a state, the District of Columbia is governed from Capital Hill. Although Congress granted the district limited home rule authority in 1973, Washington, D.C. maintains no legislative, judicial or budgetary autonomy.⁷⁴ Furthermore, because D.C. does not fall under any state jurisdiction there is no true congressional representation for D.C. residents within the U.S. Congress. As a result, local government in D.C. is comparatively constrained.

The District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act of 1973 significantly altered the political power dynamic in Washington, D.C. The legislation allowed for a popularly elected mayor and a 13-member district council.⁷⁵ The act gave the new local elected officials

⁷⁴ Steven Diner, *Democracy, Federalism and Governance in the Nation's Capital*, Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy, University of District of Columbia, 1987.

⁷⁵ Washington D.C. is treated like a state in over 500 federal laws and has its own legal codes as do states. Mark David Richards, "Ten Myths About the District of Columbia", <http://www.dcdemocracyfund.org/10myths.doc>.

power over a number of local matters including setting the budget⁷⁶ and the administration of municipal services.

Like many cities during the 1980s and early 1990s, years of inner city economic decline took its toll on the district. With a shrinking tax base and diminishing streams of revenue, the city began to sink further and further into debt. In 1997, after years of local deficits, the federal government stepped in and stripped the elected officials of all authority, transferring the day to day control of nine of the 12 local agencies to appointed board control⁷⁷ However, following four years of balanced budgets, the elected officials were able to regain the authority that they had obtained through the Self-Government Act.

Since that time, the District of Columbia has made aggressive steps towards strengthening the local economy. One major element of that strategy has been to reintroduce 100,000 new residents to Washington, D.C. The result of this initiative has been concentrated revitalization efforts throughout the city. In the housing sector alone, new homebuilding in the District of Columbia has risen for the last six consecutive years.⁷⁸ While this housing boom has not impacted all D.C. neighborhoods equally, there are a significant number of economically depressed communities that appear to be attracting substantial investment.

While these revitalization efforts have resuscitated numerous inner-city communities, the rapid development has placed significant pressures on neighborhoods that have traditionally provided low-cost housing options to many of D.C.'s long-term residents. Therefore, as in many urban areas, rapid in-town development has created an undeniable affordable housing crisis.⁷⁹ According to the District's Office of Planning, there are about approximately 265,000 low-income households which have unaffordable

⁷⁶ The District of Columbia collects more than \$500 billion in "state-like" taxes each year which is sent to Congress and then appropriated back to the local government. Though the local government is able to set the budget, Congress retains the authority not only to review the budget but amend it as well. Ibid.

⁷⁷ Richards, Mark David, "History of Local Government in Washington D.C." DC Empower.

⁷⁸ "Housing in the Nation's Capital", District of Columbia's Office of Planning, Executive Summary, 2003.

⁷⁹ Other factors that have contributed to the affordable housing crisis are federal HUD programs such as HOPE VI that often do not replace unit for unit the affordable units that are demolished as well as the lack in interest of private development owners to renew long-term government contracts for subsidized housing.

housing cost burdens in the Washington Metropolitan area.⁸⁰ The effects of rising housing costs has made living in the district a financial impossibility for many, resulting in the displacement of countless D.C. long-term residents.

The city has taken numerous steps towards addressing the shortage of affordable housing in the city, with its most notable affordable housing mechanism being the District's Housing Production Trust Fund, which was resurrected by the district's mayor in 2001. The city agreed to redirect 15 percent of tax revenue from building sales to fund affordable housing initiatives throughout the city.

D.C. Government at the Neighborhood Level.

When Congress enacted the Self-Government Act in 1974, it also created the Advisory Neighborhood Councils (later changed to the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions), which were designed to provide neighborhood-level representation for D.C. residents.

The District of Columbia is broken down into eight wards and each ward consists of four to six smaller neighborhoods, each having its own ANC. Similar to many neighborhood level political mechanisms, advisory neighborhood councils review a wide range of policies and programs proposed within their communities. Such concerns include zoning, sanitation and trash collection. The councils are also expected to review and comment on the District's annual budget. While the degree to which the councils are active varies from council to council, the ANC system has proven to be a valuable tool for a constituency whose means for political recourse is limited.

History of Shaw

The neighborhood of Shaw has a similar history as Atlanta's Historic District. It was the birthplace of legendary jazz musician Duke Ellington and home to the renowned Howard Theatre which

⁸⁰ According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, housing affordability is defined as a problem if a household is paying 30 percent or more of its income in housing. "Housing in the Nation's Capital", District of Columbia's Office of Planning, Executive Summary, 2003.

some suggest was the first real theatre for blacks in the country. Through the center of the neighborhood runs U Street, and during the 1920s and 1930s the U Street District developed a reputation for being the black cultural center of the D.C. area.

Also, like MLK Historic District, desegregation had a similar affect on the community of Shaw. The exodus of many of its long-time residents resulted in the community's sudden yet precipitous decline. Throughout the '70s and '80s, Shaw was the prototypical example of inner-city blight and economic collapse. However during the early 1990's the community began to show signs of recovery. Stimulated by the construction of a major city government building in the heart of Shaw, the community began to undergo a true transformation. Restaurants and jazz clubs began to reopen and many of the older historical buildings were restored to former glory.

Today, Shaw is one of the Washington, D.C.'s most desirable communities. However, desirability has its consequences. In recent years, the community of Shaw has experienced "both a physical upgrading of the housing and commercial buildings as well as a change in the resident population demographics".⁸¹ While these changes have increased the attractiveness of the neighborhood to those looking to relocate, these changes have significantly increased the cost of living for the community's indigenous population.

The impact of gentrification on the affordable housing market in Shaw has been substantial. For example, the rent for a typical one bedroom apartment averages more than one thousand dollars, while the median amount that a renter household in Shaw can afford is a little more than six hundred dollars per month. To make matters worse, only 847 subsidized housing units remain in the community. Likewise gentrification pressures have been significantly increased with the construction of the new convention center in the southern portion of the Shaw neighborhood. This has exacerbated fears among long-term residents that they will inevitably be pushed out. However, the affects of gentrification on the low to

⁸¹ Martha Davis, "The Changing Face of Shaw: Stories from the Frontline", MANNA CDC, June 2003.

moderate income family within the community has not gone unnoticed. Numerous stakeholders within Shaw have mobilized to ensure that affordability does not become a casualty of revitalization.

Shaw Responds to Gentrification: Advisory Neighborhood Council

At the forefront of the battle for affordable housing is Shaw's advisory neighborhood council. ANC2C has become one of the most vocal supporters of affordable housing. With the election of a new commissioner in 2002, the council has attacked the issues surrounding gentrification head-on. In recent months the council has organized protests against a local church that has decided to raze its 54 unit subsidized apartment complex. Currently the council is helping the tenants to try and purchase the building to ensure that the property continues to be designated as affordable housing.⁸²

In addition to working towards the retention of affordable housing, ANC2C has also been very active in bringing more commercial activity to the U Street corridor. One of its most laudable accomplishments towards this goal has been the acquirement of a half-million dollar grant that will bring D.C. main streets⁸³ to the Shaw community.

MANNA CDC and the Power of Organizing

MANNA CDC is the largest and most influential community development corporation in the Shaw area. It was created by MANNA Inc., a nonprofit developer that has been building affordable housing in Shaw since 1982. When MANNA Inc. decided to branch out and move its headquarters to another part of the city, it decided to create MANNA CDC to maintain a presence in the community and ensure that rapid development wouldn't result in the complete and total displacement of Shaw's low income residents.⁸⁴

⁸² Dakarai Aaronjs, "Church's Plan to Raze Housing Protested", *Washington Post*, Monday, July 12, 2004, Metro Section.

⁸³ Main Streets or the National Main Street Center is an organization that works with communities throughout the country to revitalize and preserve their traditional commercial areas.

⁸⁴ Nicole Brown, "Dominic Moulden", *Shelterforce Online*, Issue #135, May/June 2004.

Key to the philosophy of MANNA CDC is the importance of community organizing. In many ways, MANNA is reminiscent of the old school CDCs that worked to eradicate poverty, with the primary mission at MANNA CDC being the promotion of social change. According to MANNA's executive director, a holistic approach to community development doesn't stop at community building. Rather, Moulden asserts that the root of change lies in organizing, because through organizing, residents are able to effectively challenge the balance of power within their communities.

To further educate and engage residents on issues surrounding the affordable housing crisis, MANNA CDC has implemented Shaw Education for Action or SEA. The primary purpose of SEA is to bring about awareness and induce action among residents in relation to issues surrounding gentrification. There are numerous components of the movement which all address concerns of long-term residents. These include leadership development, tenant organizing, life skill development and affordable housing. Through the SEA initiative, residents in Shaw have successfully built a coalition of over 15 community-based organizations to join in a livable wage campaign for Shaw residents at the future Convention Center Hotel. Likewise, they have lobbied city hall to maintain more than 100 units of affordable housing in the neighborhood.

MANNA CDC has also asserted itself in the areas of economic development. MANNA CDC owns a number of businesses including a temporary agency and an ice cream parlor franchise. According to the leadership at MANNA CDC, the primary purpose of these initiatives is to empower Shaw residents.

While the leadership at MANNA CDC has been dedicated in the mission of bringing more affordable housing to the community of Shaw, there has been some stiff opposition to their projected developments. For instance, Temperance Row, a 10-unit row-house development of affordable housing has remained on the drawing board for years. The development has been rejected by many of the neighborhood's newer residents who fear that more affordable housing will bring some of the more "undesirable" elements into their posh newly gentrified neighborhoods.

Moving Beyond Neighborhood Collaborations - The Affordable Housing Alliance

While the affordable housing crisis has been a major challenge for organizations within Shaw, it continues to be a district-wide dilemma. Perhaps this explains recent district-wide opposition to cutting funding to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Based on the administration's modest assessment, they anticipated the fund to earn a little more than \$10 million the first year. To the surprise of the mayor's office, the fund accrued \$15 million the first year. When the city began to feel the fiscal crunch, it decided it wanted to cut the trust fund budget in half in order to meet its budgetary goals.

This threw the activist community into an uproar and the CBOs in Shaw united with other advocacy groups across the District to create the Affordable Housing Alliance in order to save the fund. After nearly a year of protest, the city backed down from the budget cut and decided to fully fund the Housing Trust Fund for the year 2005, which has collected more than 40 million dollars.⁸⁵ As a result of this aggressive advocacy by the CBOs in Shaw and throughout D.C., the District is now committed to providing more than 4,000 units of affordable housing for moderate income D.C. residents.

The work of the Alliance hasn't stopped with the trust fund victory. Currently they have adopted the issue of inclusionary zoning, a policy practice that has been proposed by PolicyLink to address the housing crisis in the D.C. area. With inclusionary zoning developers will be required to make a certain percentage of their new residential housing available to low and moderate income households. In return, developers would receive some type of non-monetary compensation.⁸⁶

Managing Neighborhood Change in Shaw

The affordable housing crisis in Washington, D.C. has caused numerous communities in D.C. to reevaluate their commitment to affordable housing. In no other place is this truer than in Shaw.

⁸⁵ Debbie Wilgoren, "Redirection of Housing Trust Fund Criticized", *Washington Post*, Sunday, April 4, 2004.

⁸⁶ Examples of non-monetary compensation would be zoning variances, density bonuses, or expedited permits that reduce construction costs. Fox, Radhika and Kalima Rose, "Expanding Housing Opportunity in Washington D.C.: The Case for Inclusionary Zoning", Policy Link, Fall 2003.

Gentrification has squeezed out countless Shaw long-term residents; however it appears that neighborhood institutions in the Shaw community have been able to effectively stop the bleeding.

Through the SEA initiative, MANNA CDC has used community organizing to address the many concerns and issues of its long term residents. And through collaborations both inside and outside of the community, the community of Shaw has been able to mount a formidable resistance to the market pressures of neighborhood change.

BOSTON: JAMAICA PLAIN

The City of Boston and the Affordable Housing Crisis

As in many cities across the country, living in the city has become cost prohibitive for most working people. This is especially the case in the city of Boston, which, in 2003, was tagged the third most expensive city to purchase a home. According to Coldwell Banker's Home Price Comparison Index, the average sales price for a four bedroom home in Boston in 2003 was more than \$700,000.

Over the years, the local government in Boston has shown some level of commitment to the affordable housing crisis. Recently, the mayor's office has agreed to use \$6.2 million dollars of municipal funds to build more than 702 new affordable housing units in the city. While this offer is nowhere near as generous as the funding being offered by the mayor's office in Washington, D.C., it does indicate a tangible response to the affordable housing crisis by the local government.

Gentrification and Rent Control

Gentrification has been afoot in Boston for more than 30 years. Communities like East Boston and South Boston were among the first neighborhoods to undergo such rapid revitalization. It was these

early threats of gentrification that helped spark Boston's affordable housing movement. In 1970, the state of Massachusetts passed a law allowing cities with populations of 50,000 or more to institute rent control and the city of Boston immediately adopted the provision.⁸⁷ While community activists rejoiced, property owners within Massachusetts' largest cities were livid. They organized and mounted a movement over a period of 20 years and in 1994, rent control was offered up as a state-wide ballot referendum and rejected. This dealt a harsh blow to those advocating for affordable housing.

History of Jamaica Plain

Located just west of downtown Boston, Jamaica Plain is one of the city's most diverse communities. JP as it is affectionately referred to by its residents, dates back to the 18th century, prior to the forming of the United States government. The community's most well-known attraction is Jamaica Pond; one of five parks that make up the famed "Emerald Necklace", Boston's largest extended linear park, designed by Frederick Law Olmstead during the late 1800's.⁸⁸

Jamaica Plain's story of economic decline began during the late 1960s when the state underwent plans to reroute Interstate 95 through part of the neighborhood. In preparation for the highway, many pre-existing buildings were demolished and much of the land was cleared. However, as a result of extensive community pressure by the residents of Jamaica Plain and neighboring communities of Roxbury and South End, the governor decided to stop the project in its tracks. This was the first time that grassroots activism had effectively thwarted such a project in the state, and it was then that the residents of Jamaica Plain realized the power that lay within their Boston neighborhood.

During the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the real estate market in Jamaica Plain experienced a boom and bust cycle, which "resulted in the displacement of many low-income families and the

⁸⁷ Patricia Cantor, "Massachusetts Rent Control" *Shelterforce Online*, March/April 1995.

⁸⁸ Frederick Law Olmstead is quite possibly most known for designing New York City's Central Park. The Emerald Necklace is the only remaining intact linear park designed by the artist.

conversion of more than 10 percent of Jamaica Plain's housing stock into condominiums.”⁸⁹ In the years to follow Jamaica Plain became increasingly more appealing to young urban professionals seeking in-town living. This new interest in JP accompanied by the state-wide repeal of rent control created a crisis of affordable housing for many low-income to moderate income families who had long made Jamaica Plain their home.

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council and Inclusionary Zoning

The community of Jamaica Plain is significantly larger than the Atlanta neighborhoods with nearly 10 times more residents than the largest Atlanta case study. Yet despite its significantly larger number of residents, it is a highly organized community with a very active neighborhood council. The Neighborhood Council System in Boston was created in 1986 to offer residents a mechanism to voice their concerns in relationship to neighborhood development. The Neighborhood Council System is similar to the Washington, D.C. ANC system. They are both neighborhood-level elected bodies that are responsible for such things as public safety, zoning variances, and licensing. And like ANC2C in Shaw, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council has also been a very vocal proponent of affordable housing.

In addition to providing a forum for many of the neighborhoods concerns around neighborhood change, the council has become very active in trying to influence city-wide development policy. Specifically, the council has advocated for greater inclusionary zoning provisions. The city of Boston has already implemented inclusionary zoning which stipulates that any developer building 10 units or more must designate 13 percent of those units to affordable housing. However the leaders on the council are working to increase that number to 25 percent. In addition to pushing the envelope on inclusionary

⁸⁹ Kalilah Barnett and Harry Smith, “Laying Down a Speed Bump on the Gentrification Superhighway: The Anatomy of a Campaign”, *Journal of Community Power Building*, Ricanne Hadriane Initiative for Community Organizing, May 2004.

zoning, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council has also been working with other neighborhoods in attempts to bring rent-control back to the city.

Jamaica Plain CBOs – A Holistic Approach to Community Development

Jamaica Plain is one of those rare places where civic activism has become of way of life. Collective bargaining and collective action are constant themes amongst the organizations in Jamaica Plain. Consequently, many of the CBOs within Jamaica Plain have used community organizing and community building as strategies for combating gentrification.

Community development has become a dominant concern in Jamaica Plain, and while there are numerous organizations in the community of Jamaica Plain, there are two major players in the area of community development. Urban Edge and JPNDC are the principal CDCs in Jamaica Plain, with Urban Edge being the senior organization. Urban Edge was established in 1974 by ESAC⁹⁰ a social service provider in the community to “fight redlining and combat the effects of real estate speculation”.⁹¹ Today Urban Edge is a community development powerhouse. Their portfolio includes rehab, new construction, property management, home buyers assistance and training, community organizing as well as a micro-loan program. Their property management division alone oversees more than 900 units, including Academy Homes I. What is fascinating about this development is that the 202 unit apartment complex is co-owned by the Academy Homes Tenants’ Council. Such an example of social ownership serves as a model for innovation and collaboration in rental housing.

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC) is the other CDC in Jamaica Plain. While JPNDC may not have the unit count of an Urban Edge, some would say that it has crafted one of the most effective models for fusing affordable housing, economic development and community building. Since their inception in 1977, JPNDC has built more than 400 units of affordable housing in Jamaica Plain. What is even more impressive is that their current projects are estimated to add an

⁹⁰ ESAC stands for the Ecumenical Social Action Committee.

⁹¹ Urban Edge, “30 Years of Building Possibilities”, Spring 2004 Newsletter.

additional 137 units to the community. These projects include a ten unit new development for first time homeowners and a 56-unit housing complex for elderly residents.⁹²

Central to JPNDC's work in Jamaica Plain is their relationship with City Life/Vida Urbana. City Life/ Vida Urbana is the primary tenant advocacy group in JP that works to ensure that renters and those on subsidized housing are not displaced as a result of neighborhood changes. The organization engages in true grassroots organizing using door-to-door tactics to assess the concerns of Jamaica Plains' renters. Many of JPNDC's most successful housing projects have been connected to some level of community organizing done on the part of City Life/Vida Urbana.

Quite possibly the most significant outgrowth of the relationship between JPNDC and City Life/Vida Urbana has been the Campaign of Consciousness for Housing Justice. The Campaign of Consciousness is a grassroots campaign that seeks to mobilize residents to combat gentrification and displacement. The goal of the campaign is to first, bring awareness to JP residents concerning the housing crisis in Jamaica Plain and second, empower low-income residents and people of color to create strategies that would effectively minimize the negative outcomes of neighborhood change. The Campaign of Consciousness was successful in mobilizing hundreds of residents around the issue of affordable housing, cultivating new leadership throughout the community and for "taking nearly 100 units of private housing out of the market and creating another 100 units (of affordable housing)".⁹³

JPNDC has also launched numerous programs that address the economic development of the community. In 2003 they partnered with the Fenway CDC and the Boston Health Care and Research Institute to provide additional training to health-care employees in attempts to help them improve their wage earning potential. Their staple economic development program, Jobs for Jamaica Plain helps lower income residents in the community obtain the job skills to actively seek gainful employment. In 2003

⁹² Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation official website, <http://www.jpndc.org/housing/development.html>.

⁹³ Kalilah Barnett and Harry Smith, "Laying Down a Speed Bump on the Gentrification Superhighway: The Anatomy of a Campaign", *Journal of Community Power Building*, Ricanne Hadriane Initiative for Community Organizing, May 2004.

alone, the organization provided over 300 people with individual job training and employment counseling. They've also made a similar attempt at assisting community employers. Their Small Business Development Program has helped more than 400 local businesses with technical assistance since its creation in 1996. JPNDC has also helped these businesses secure more than 70 small business loans, totaling more than \$4.6 million in funding. These are just a few of the programs that have established JPNDC as one of the cutting-edge organizations in providing holistic community development.

Debates around community development in Jamaica Plain don't always center on issues of affordable housing. One of the most contentious debates in Jamaica Plain in recent years has had nothing to do with housing, but everything to do with community development. Gentrification has been taking place in Jamaica Plain for almost 20 years. As a result, there is very little vacant land that is either not developed or affordable. One of the last pieces of available public land is located at Jackson Square; the same place the community had converged more than 20 years ago to protest the building of the highway. The land that was razed for the construction of that highway has recently become the subject of one of Jamaica Plain's most contentious debates.

In 1999, the K-Mart Corporation informed the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) that it was considering developing new K-Mart stores in the city of Boston. The BRA referred K-Mart to Urban Edge, which was running a community planning initiative called the Egleston-Jackson Development Strategy. Urban Edge informed K-Mart that it should bring its ideas directly to the community, and invited K-Mart representatives to present at an upcoming Egleston-Jackson community forum. Urban Edge had previously informed K-Mart that the community was unlikely to favor a "big box" retail store with lots of surface parking, and that instead K-Mart should think about a more urban model.⁹⁴ While the K-Mart's interest in Jackson Square was viewed as a great opportunity from a number of the residents in the community,⁹⁵ most of the organizations in the community adamantly opposed the

⁹⁴ Interview with Urban Edge staff member

⁹⁵ Urban Edge conducted a 456 person survey to assess people's shopping patterns concerning the project but some of the community leaders argued that the survey was misleading.

idea. Some residents didn't like the idea of a "superstore" entering the community while others argued that it would bring unwanted traffic congestion into the area. Quite possibly the most compelling argument came from the youth organizers at the Hyde Square Task Force.

Hyde Square Task Force is a youth advocacy group that provides programs and outreach to young people in Jamaica Plain. While the organization does provide traditional youth programs such as mentoring and after school programs, the task force also has a youth organizing component as well. This organizing arm of the organization has been so successful that the youth activists of Jamaica Plain have successfully lobbied to reduce the voting age in the local neighborhood council from 18 to 16. Through Hyde Square Task Force, the youth of Jamaica Plain have sounded off on a number of issues and in the case of Jackson Square, they demanded that the land be used for a community center.⁹⁶ The Hyde Square Business Association, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, and the Jamaica Plains Neighborhood Development Corporation all sided with Hyde Square Task Force in opposition of the Super K.

In mid-1999, the city stepped in and created the Jackson Square Coordinating Group to oversee the development of Jackson Square. Since then there has been an extensive public deliberation process, drawing on input from both residents and neighborhood leadership. Today, Urban Edge and JPNDC have joined forces to prepare a response to a request for proposal that will create a mixed use development plan, including affordable housing, retail and commercial space, and new youth and community facilities in attempts to present the best possible outcome for all involved.

Managing Neighborhood Change in Jamaica Plain

The community of Jamaica Plain is exceptional in many respects. Their history of grassroots activism has really set the stage for their current battle against gentrification. They have used this social capital to implement effective strategies to combat gentrification in the market as well as with the local government. These varying strategies have allowed the residents of JP to maintain a high level of control

⁹⁶ Interview with community leader.

over the various dynamics of neighborhood change. Even though these strategies have not always coincided, the CBOs of Jamaica Plain have worked diligently to find solutions that benefit as many residents as possible.

In none of the other cases has there been a more comprehensive approach to community development than in Jamaica Plain. The organizations use community building and community organizing to create greater community cohesiveness, develop and train community leaders as well as give residents a voice in areas that they may have otherwise been silent.

CONFLICT IN GENTRIFYING COMMUNITIES

Because gentrification is such a controversial topic, it is often assumed that where there is gentrification, there is conflict. Gentrification by its definition is often described in terms which highlight the clashing of interests among people of varying social statuses, race and even lifestyle. However, the findings from this paper have indicated that while gentrification might be controversial, it is not always contentious. Like any other form of social interaction, there are conditions that make conflict more or less likely. While the evidence from this paper could only be used to speculate as to why that is, it would be safe to say that the emergence of conflict is in part determined by the quality (and even quantity) of the community-based institutions within a given neighborhood.

In the five communities researched in this paper, conflict arose around a number of issues and concerns. In many cases the nature and intensity of the conflict depended on how far along in the gentrification process the community had come. Discontent around issues of gentrification was more full blown in the two national cases than in the three Atlanta cases. Both Shaw and Jamaica Plain have experienced severe displacement, which has resulted in a massive backlash by community organizations seeking to stabilize the situation for long-term moderate-income residents. And while gentrification is arguably afoot in each of the Atlanta cases, the affordability issue has yet to create separate and distinct factions among neighborhood residents.

Conflict in the Atlanta cases centered on issues of neighborhood control and balanced development. In the case of Mechanicsville, there appears to be an underlying resentment of new residents by old residents, which has manifested itself in a power play over parking spaces. In both Mechanicsville and the MLK Historic District, newer residents are somewhat concerned about the seemingly slow or unbalanced pace of development. Again, while these concerns have not exploded into all out conflict of new resident against old resident, the potential does exist.

The findings also show that conflict within gentrifying neighborhoods is not only found among old and new residents. Often conflict develops among institutions, which see a different vision for the community at large or for a part or aspect of the neighborhood more specifically. In Jamaica Plain, the battle over the K-Mart was not necessarily one that developed along lines of residential tenure, but rather among separate institutions, which held differing philosophies concerning community development.

Not every gentrifying community is going to experience extensive conflict but there are many communities that will. While the neighborhoods in this study tended to illustrate low to moderate levels of community conflict, the larger body of research suggests that the rapid and comprehensive change that gentrification brings can often trigger major discord within a community. Sometimes these tensions are full blown and exhibit themselves in campaigns or neighborhood stand-offs and at other times are more latent – embedded in issues of perception, space and control.

Community based institutions can play a critical role in managing conflict when it arises in gentrifying community. Battles that do develop can often lead to consensus despite the presence of varying interests. With the proper resources, community organizations can develop strategies that minimize conflict and facilitate cooperation, regardless of the level of controversy.

KEY DETERMINANTS OF A COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO MANAGE NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

For many communities, the forces that drive gentrification often seem far too powerful to withstand. However, communities can be, and have been effective in minimizing some of the negative outcomes of rapid revitalization and gentrification. It is important to recognize that in every one of the case study communities there were contextual factors, beyond the control of each specific neighborhood, which affected that community's ability (or inability) to manage change. Often these factors were either political or cultural in nature. For instance, governmental commitments to issues surrounding rapid neighborhood change varied significantly from case to case. This was especially evident in the two national studies where both cities were facing severe affordable housing crisis. While both local governments had dedicated money to the creation and maintenance of affordable housing, the level of commitment varied significantly.

Because it is difficult for individual communities to alter their larger political environment, the results from this study will focus on the key factors, internal to a community, that affect that neighborhood's ability to manage change. These factors are community attributes or strategies that have been primarily determined by neighborhood-level decisions and experiences.

Evidence from the five cases in this study indicates that there are four key determinants that affect a community's ability to effectively manage neighborhood change: 1) *community cohesiveness*, 2) *community collaborations*, 3) *community building and organizing* and 4) *an articulated response to gentrification*. In the cases where these four factors were present or high, the community was better able to manage issues that arose as a result of gentrification. However, when these factors were low or absent, the community's capacity to manage gentrification appears to be significantly less.

Community Cohesiveness

Community cohesiveness occurs when a neighborhood develops a level of unity and equity among the residents. Community cohesiveness generally develops over time, as residents come to know and trust one another in how they relate to community issues. Cohesiveness doesn't mean that everyone agrees with everyone else, but that there is a climate of respect, and a common interest in and connection around neighborhood issues. Cohesiveness, a feeling within and about the community, can develop through community organizing and building activities, but it is also dependent upon very individualized civic engagement that doesn't require a specific issue to activate.

Over a period of more than 50 years, the community of Reynoldstown has been able to establish a level of trust that allows them to efficiently mobilize for the good of the community. As a result of this community cohesiveness there is also a trust in reference to the motives of the organizations as well as the leadership.

In the case of Jamaica Plain, community cohesiveness has been nurtured by numerous experiences and events that have happened within the community over the last few decades. When the residents were confronted with the threat of a K-Mart in their backyard, they were able to draw on the victory of Jackson Square years before. Based on previous neighborhood experiences, the community has become more cohesive and more active in determining the future of their neighborhood.

In the case of Mechanicsville, it is not evident that community cohesiveness has developed. There is no one experience where the neighborhood was mobilized effectively to oppose a common foe. Consequently, the research indicates that there is no widespread support of the community organizations or leadership.

Community Collaboration

Building strong community collaborations within the immediate neighborhood, as well as with stakeholders in the larger community, is critical to managing gentrification. Collaborative relationships - both formal and informal - bring the varying perspectives and resources which can help a community to determine and realize its' vision. It could be argued that all of the communities in this study had established some level of community collaboration. However, the strength and purpose of those collaborations varied significantly across the cases.

In Reynoldstown, the Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League and the Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation have worked almost seamlessly, since the creation of RRC in 1989 to create a unified vision for the community of Reynoldstown. They've not only joined forces to increase the aesthetic appeal of the community, but they have also worked together to sponsor the annual Wheelbarrow Festival which raises funds for local programs. Over the years they have supported each other in various other community initiatives and have collectively sparked a renewed interest in the small neighborhood.

Conversely, while HDDC has been extremely effective in renovating the residential area of Historic District, the community has been somewhat ineffective in forging strong community collaborations. As a result, little progress has been made in reference to much needed economic development in the business corridor of the community. Because there are so many powerful stakeholders in that community, building strong community collaborations will be essential in helping the Historic District to realize wide-spread as well as strategic commercial growth.

Community Building and Community Organizing

Community building and community organizing, the process of bringing together community residents through specific activities, are absolutely vital to communities undergoing neighborhood

change. Community organizing is often issue focused; the process of rallying around a challenge impacting the neighborhood on a wide spread scale such as an unwanted development or the eradication of drug activity. Community building is more day to day in its efforts, bringing people together around similar interests over time such as a garden club or a neighborhood park improvement committee. In many of these inner-city communities where residents have been virtually ignored, such initiatives are vital to raising the level of efficacy among residents whose previous experiences may have left them rather hopeless.

In Jamaica Plain, community organizing has not only fostered community relations, but it has also empowered the residents to do things in their communities that the CBOs alone would never have been able to accomplish. In the case of Hyde Square Task Force, the youth were mobilized to change the power dynamics of the neighborhood political institution. In both Shaw and Jamaica Plain, tenants have been mobilized by CBOs to purchase their apartment buildings, increasing the tenant's level of power within the community.

Articulated Response to Gentrification

It is very important to specify that communities in this study that were most effective at managing neighborhood change implemented strategies to impede some of the negative outcomes of neighborhood change.

One of the guiding principles of HDDC in Historic District has been non-displacement of original residents. In Reynoldstown, the leaders at RRC decided early on that their first goal would be to rehab the homes of elderly residents to ensure that those who were most vulnerable to displacement would be insulated. JPNDC and City Life/Vida Urbana joined forces to create the Campaign for Consciousness which worked to inform and energize the residents of Jamaica Plain about the more adverse affects of gentrification. And one of the main reasons behind the creation of MANNA CDC was to ensure that affordable housing remained a reality in the Shaw community.

These examples demonstrate how the organizations within these neighborhoods were able to identify negative aspects of change and respond in such a way that certain characteristics of the original community would not be compromised by that change.

TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

Successfully managing neighborhood change requires communities to specifically focus energy and resources on building the community's social capacity. This includes developing strategies that are wide-spread, impacting many residents at once, as well as those that are highly individualized, reaching residents one on one. While the key determinants section highlights community attributes and conditions which affect a community's ability to manage change, specific techniques for implementing strategies to deal with the change also emerged. These techniques fell into three categories, and included those that 1) helped residents understand and navigate gentrification; 2) enhanced cohesiveness and created neighborhood pride; and, 3) built individual skills of community members.

Helping Residents Understand and Navigate Gentrification

Residents who live in gentrifying neighborhoods don't always understand the changes taking place in their community and accompanying opportunities and threats this change can bring. It is therefore important that CBOs address this and look for ways to engage community residents to proactively influence their collective and individual future. Techniques commonly used in neighborhoods discussed in this study center around information sharing – through community meetings, door to door organizing, and neighborhood planning sessions. Specific examples include:

- MANNA CDC's Shaw Education for Action (SEA) which was designed to educate and create awareness around gentrification. SEA's efforts resulted in a livable wage campaign directed towards the new Convention Center Hotel being built in their neighborhood.
- Reynoldstown's community planning efforts illustrate how to harness residents' interests to create a community development blue print. This process helped the community think through on how to use design standards, zoning and land use restrictions, and other resources to articulate and codify the community's vision before market forces dictated it for them.

Enhancing Cohesiveness and Creating Neighborhood Pride

Connecting residents, to each other and to the community, is critical in order to help neighbors come together in ways that celebrate their common interests. This helps build bridges between community members that can be activated when serious issues need to be addressed, or interpersonal problems resolved. This can often be accomplished using very simple techniques, such as:

- HDDC's Coffees on the Corner which invites community residents to join one another for coffee and pastry in the park on Saturday mornings.
- Reynoldstown's Wheelbarrow Festival annually celebrates the neighborhood and the skills and talents of community residents through music, dance and other performing arts.

Building Individual Skills of Community Members

Many of the CBOs featured in this study articulated the clear need to employ techniques to build individual capacity of residents in their neighborhoods in order to improve these residents' chances of staying in the neighborhood as change unfolded. Along these lines:

- MANNA CDC owns a number of businesses whose purpose are to empower Shaw residents.
- In Jamaica Plain, the Jobs for Jamaica Plain assists lower income residents with job training and employment counseling. Jamaica Plain's Small Business Development Program also helps small business stay in the community.
- RRC has partnered with other agencies to host a series of job fairs to introduce new employers, located in a massive new commercial development adjacent to the neighborhood, to potential employees—Reynoldstown residents.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Neighborhoods are constantly undergoing some level of change. However for those communities facing gentrification, there are a number of factors that determine a neighborhoods capacity to manage that change. Often neighborhoods feel overwhelmed when faced with market forces that have the power to completely transform an entire community. While gentrification can't always be avoided, the negative effects of rapid neighborhood change can be significantly minimized when a community is organized and focused.

The preliminary research for this study indicates that the literature on gentrification lacks a comprehensive assessment of the ways in which residents have responded to neighborhood change. While the findings from this study are not conclusive, they offer some insight into some of the factors that may increase a community's capacity to better manage change. However further research is necessary.

Particularly, there needs to be additional research done that assesses both long-term and new resident experiences and perceptions concerning gentrification. While the evidence from the Reynoldstown survey seems to support the general findings of this study, it is difficult to make a conclusion without additional cases. Without a comprehensive understanding of resident perceptions concerning gentrification, neither scholars nor practitioners will ever truly understand the varying impacts, both good and bad, of neighborhood change.

APPENDIX

Possible Sources of Conflict in Neighborhoods Undergoing Gentrification

Mechanicsville	Tensions between institutions Tensions between old and new residents Stagnant development/pace of change
Historic District	Uneven development Lack of commercial services supporting revitalized residential area
Shaw	Affordable housing Displacement of residents due to large scale non-housing projects Shifts towards NIMBYism
Jamaica Plain	Affordable housing Best uses of community space Gentrification of commercial opportunities

Table 1

Key Determinants of Managing Neighborhood Change

	Mechanicsville	Historic District	Reynoldstown	Jamaica Plain	Shaw
Community Cohesiveness	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strong Community Collaborations	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
CDC Community Building	Low	Medium	High	High	High
Articulated Response to Gentrification	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2

Reynoldstown Survey Demographic Results

Race and Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	2000 Census*
Blacks	42	60%	81%
Whites	17	24%	15%
Hispanic or Latino	3	4%	4%
Mixed or Biracial	3	4%	2%
Other	1	2%	2%
No Response	4	6%	-
Length of Residency	Frequency	Percent	Not Available
Less than 1 year	18	26%	-
1-3 years	14	20%	-
4-6 years	7	10%	-
7-10 years	4	6%	-
More than 10 years	27	39%	-
Income	Frequency	Percent	2000 Census**
Below \$25,000	25	36%	41%
\$25,001-\$40,000	16	23%	20%
\$40,001-\$50,000	7	10%	10%
\$50,001-\$60,000	5	7%	9%
More than \$60,000	10	14%	20%
No Response	7	10%	-
Renters to Homeowners	Frequency	Percent	Census 2000
Rent	22	31%	58%
Own	48	69%	42%
Education	Frequency	Percent	Census 2000*
Less than high school	14	20%	27%
High school grad or GED	14	20%	30%
Technical or Vocational School Graduate	3	4%	-
Some college	11	16%	19%
Four year college grad	15	21%	18%
Post college graduate or professional degree	9	13%	7%
No Response	4	6%	-
Age	Frequency	Percent	Census 2000* †
16-19	2	3%	6%
20-24	3	4%	9%
25-34	22	31%	17%
35-44	11	16%	17%
45-54	9	13%	15%
55-64	9	13%	3%
Older than 65	9	13%	11%
No Response	5	7%	-

* Census results do not always add up to 100%

** Estimation was used when survey categories did not respond to the Census 2000 categories.

†No surveys were conducted with individuals under 16 years of age.

Table 3

Atlanta Neighborhood Gentrification Demographics					
		Mechanicsville	Reynoldstown	Historic District	Atlanta
Total Population (10-year Percent Change)	1970	5407 (N/A)	4420 (N/A)	5662 (N/A)	496973 (N/A)
	1980	3770 (-30.3%)	3019 (-31.7%)	3706 (-34.6%)	425022 (-14.5%)
	1990	3192 (-15.3%)	2463 (-18.4%)	3099 (-16.4%)	394017 (-7.3%)
	2000	2894 (-9.3%)	2422 (-1.7%)	3901 (25.9%)	416474 (5.7%)
Median Family Income (10-year Percent Change)	1970	N/A	N/A	N/A	8168 (N/A)
	1980	N/A	N/A	N/A	13275 (63%)
	1990	14346 (N/A)	27381 (N/A)	25787 (N/A)	25173 (90%)
	2000	22871 (59.4)	41038 (49.9)	48069 (86.4)	37231 (48%)
Owner Occupied Housing (10-year Percent Change)	1970	253 (N/A)	461 (N/A)	184 (N/A)	66789 (N/A)
	1980	92 (-63.9%)	420 (-8.9%)	269 (46.4%)	67057 (1%)
	1990	98 (7.3%)	386 (-8.2%)	210 (-21.8%)	67126 (1%)
	2000	136 (38.9%)	466 (20.6%)	220 (4.4%)	175991 (162%)
Median Rent (10-year Percent Change)	1970	N/A	N/A	N/A	81.5
	1980	208 (N/A)	244 (N/A)	238 (N/A)	145 (78%)
	1990	397 (78.6%)	565 (131.6%)	540 (126.8%)	422 (191%)
	2000	505 (27.2%)	840 (48.7%)	780 (44.4%)	518 (22.7%)
White population (10-year Percent Change)	1970	79 (N/A)	1408 (N/A)	510 (N/A)	240503 (N/A)
	1980	53 (49.1%)	809 (-57.4%)	352 (69.0%)	137879 (-57.3%)
	1990	101 (90.6%)	577 (-71.3%)	172 (48.9%)	122327 (-88.7%)
	2000	154 (52.5%)	817 (41.6%)	484 (182%)	138352 (13.1%)
College Education and above (10-year Percent Change)	1970	23 (N/A)	38 (N/A)	161 (N/A)	34495 (N/A)
	1980	25 (8.7%)	76 (100%)	219 (36.0%)	50652 (46.8%)
	1990	28 (12%)	155 (103.9%)	162 (-73.9%)	41123 (-81.2%)
	2000	44 (57.1%)	451 (190.9%)	495 (205%)	92929 (125.9%)

*Statistics based on Census tract data from 1970-2000.

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Kalilah Burnette, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation
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Marie Cowser, Historic District Development Corporation
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List Acronyms

<i>ANC</i>	Advisory Neighborhood Council
<i>CBO</i>	Community Based Organization
<i>CDC</i>	Community Development Corporation
<i>HDDC</i>	Historic District Development Corporation
<i>JP</i>	Jamaica Plain
<i>JPNDC</i>	Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation
<i>MARTA</i>	Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
<i>MCA</i>	Mechanicsville Civic Association
<i>NPU</i>	Neighborhood Planning Unit
<i>RCIL</i>	Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League
<i>RRC</i>	Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation
<i>SEA</i>	Shaw Residents for Action