

Beyond Gentrification: Strategies for Guiding the Conversation and Redirecting the Outcomes of Community Transition

A paper submitted to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies
and NeighborWorks America

Stephanie Brown

July 2014



Joint Center for Housing Studies
of Harvard University

Working Together for Strong Communities



**Joint Center for Housing Studies
Harvard University**

**Beyond Gentrification: Strategies for Guiding the Conversation and
Redirecting the Outcomes of Community Transition**

Stephanie Brown

July 2014

W14-12

© 2014 by Stephanie Brown. All rights reserved. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission provided that full credit, including © notice, is given to the source.

Any opinions expressed are those of the author and not those of the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University or of any of the persons or organizations providing support to the Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Overview of the Problem

Gentrification has become the sticking point for many urban revitalization efforts – the specter which hangs over the efforts of community organizations, the rallying point for apprehensive community members, and the dubious label for new residents. Gentrification, or the perception thereof, has been a source of conflict, confusion, and seemingly competing value systems for transitioning communities. It pits community members against each other and generates dissension amongst leadership. Yet for a word which means so much, too often it is a process poorly defined and poorly understood.

In order to manage this type of community transition well, community organizations and leaders must be able to identify and understand the forces at work and develop a new level of engagement with the broader transition process. A complex and contradictory set of costs and benefits for the community are subsumed under the term “gentrification.” This paper sets out to provide a framework for understanding those costs and benefits and the processes that produce them. Building on this framework, the paper then provides recommendations for how community leaders in the public and private sectors can begin to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs. In particular, it seeks to:

- **Understand challenges** to partnerships in mixed-income, multi-cultural communities.
- **Identify strategies** to build community and forge alliances between disparate populations in distressed neighborhoods experiencing an influx of higher-income residents.
- **Develop replicable guidelines** for neighborhoods approaching or undergoing such a period of transition.

Methodology

This research took a case study approach, relying primarily on in-depth interviews with various stakeholders in two communities, supplemented by less extensive interviews in communities around the country to provide broader perspective. This research was supported by a literature review and additional academic interviews. The two primary case studies took place in transitioning urban neighborhoods: Jamaica Plain in Boston, MA and Columbia Heights in Washington, DC.

The Jamaica Plain and Columbia Heights neighborhoods are similarly situated. Both are long-standing neighborhoods annexed by their central cities just over a century ago. Both were initially wealthier neighborhoods on the edge of the city; due to this position between the early suburbs and a central city that underwent economic decline in the mid-twentieth century, both have historically contained an economically and racially diverse population. Both currently have a relatively high percentage of affordable housing and active community groups. In recent decades, public transportation lines have been extended through both communities, catalyzing further development. Most importantly, both have recently experienced dramatic social and demographic changes leading to a community-wide conversation about gentrification.

There are differences as well. Columbia Heights experienced a sudden and dramatic decline in the wake of the 1968 riots. Its turnaround was also quite sudden, spurred by significant public-private investment, in a process I describe as “accelerated” transformation. Jamaica Plain, on the other hand, experienced a gradual decline followed by a gradual renewal, which I describe as “organic” transformation. Jamaica Plain, as a geographically larger neighborhood than Columbia Heights, also never quite experienced the full-scale decline of Columbia Heights, with the worst of its physical and social distress confined to limited areas. Research in these two neighborhoods drew on a combination of stakeholder interviews, archival documents, demographic data, and community observation.

Stakeholder Interviews

Approximately a dozen interviews were conducted in each neighborhood. Interview subjects included community development corporation (CDC) leaders, community organizers, elected officials, city planners, youth workers, local historians, bloggers, business owners, nonprofit social service organizations, church coalitions, long-term residents, transition residents, artists, and students. These interviews were disproportionately drawn from community leadership and the nonprofit community. The chain of interviews was frequently self-perpetuating, with one source directing the research towards another organization and community figure, and with regular checks to make sure that no active segment of the community was excluded. Additionally, I conducted another dozen interviews with community leaders around the country. These interviewees were selected for excellent track records in

community transition, and these discussions focused on the challenges and successes they had experienced in their own communities. They were drawn from a variety of regions and neighborhood types in order to help analyze which trends from my own case studies resulted from historical or geographical factors specific to the Boston or Washington markets, and which had broader implications for neighborhoods throughout the country. A full list of interview subjects is found at the end of this paper.

Archival and Statistical Research

Newspaper articles, photographs and blogs contributed to my understanding of the history of both neighborhoods, and of how community debates played out in the public eye. Annual reports from nonprofits and meeting minutes from community groups provided additional insights on community discourse. To understand longer-run changes in a community, I analyzed population and housing data going back for a period of forty years. I used normalized census data provided by the National Communities Database for 1970-2000, and the 2010 Census and ACS datasets for the past decade. Data on housing values was more limited and compiled from a variety of real estate and property databases as well as census data.

Community Observation

I spent a period of slightly less than a month in each neighborhood, frequenting local shops, attending community meetings, and speaking with residents. These discussions and interactions were casual and largely unstructured, but shed light on the landscape of the community, highlighting patterns which were less obvious in demographic research, and generated questions and topics of discussion further pursued in the formal interviews. Additionally, these informal conversations helped me to balance the perspectives of community leadership against those of typical residents.

Theoretical Framework

At the start of this discussion, it is vital to acknowledge that gentrification is not a value-neutral term, and the frame in which it is generally discussed reflects the concerns with the phenomenon. Those who have a more positive view of neighborhood transition persistently refer to this transformation as revitalization, reinvestment, development, or any other carefully selected phrase which avoids the dreaded “g-word.”

In its recommendations, this paper attempts to move beyond that connotation-heavy debate over “gentrification” versus “revitalization” and acknowledge that community transformation, neither entirely bad nor wholly welcome, brings with it positive and negative developments. Because the word gentrification can so instantly polarize a discussion, its use limits the ability of a community to reshape itself in a thoughtful and unified manner. Those seeking to strategically manage neighborhood change for the benefit of both long-term and incoming residents should be judicious in their use of the phrase and strongly consider eliminating it from their vocabulary altogether. With a view towards moving in that direction, this paper will largely leave the term gentrification to the side. I choose instead to speak in terms of transforming communities, acknowledging that such transformations have both positive and negative elements.

Nonetheless, the depth of academic examination of gentrification and its social prevalence warrants a more thorough discussion of the term’s varying definitions, its use, and its implications. The concept of gentrification has a long history in popular and academic discourse. The word itself dates back to Ruth Glass, a British sociologist who coined the term in 1964 in a discussion of urban transformation in the London neighborhood of North Kensington. The phrase rose to prominence in the academic community in the late 1970s and 1980s, yet despite its long usage, definitions of the term remain imprecise and varied. In its most simplistic definition, gentrification involves significant numbers of the “gentry,” a broadly-defined wealthier class, moving into a poorer community and converting it for their own use. The process is also overwhelmingly associated with an increase of property values and the threat of displacement for poorer residents.

Definitions of gentrification do vary as to the specifics of the process and the degree of impact on vulnerable community residents. Traditional definitions often focus exclusively on physical displacement and discuss only the physical upgrading of a neighborhood. I believe it is also important to consider a type of social displacement, wherein residents no longer feel at home in their own community, due to either subtle cultural and demographic shifts or legal changes (such as those governing the use of public space) which may disrupt neighborhood rhythms. Additionally, while the commercial component of gentrification is frequently discussed in sociological literature and on an anecdotal level, it is a difficult aspect to measure and so has been minimized in definitions of the term. An influential Brookings Institute study

(Kennedy and Leonard 2001), maintains that the difference between gentrification and revitalization lies in the physical displacement of low-income residents. In light of more recent research which challenges the magnitude of displacement in such communities, this distinction has become rather blurry.

The definition of gentrification has also become muddled by contemporary attempts to define subsets of the phenomenon. These include, but are not limited to, rural gentrification; super-gentrification (a similar process but carried out in a relatively higher-income area which then becomes even more elite); immigrant enclaves (wherein the character of a neighborhood shifts more in cultural than in economic terms); student-ification (primarily limited to college towns, where local neighborhoods are flooded with and fundamentally changed by students); and new build gentrification (where the population shift is sparked by a significant investment of public or private funds rather than by a succession of small-scale private investments) (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008). No one definition could fairly encompass all of these phenomena, and the players and models vary so greatly that a shared definition may not even be helpful. It is, however, useful to acknowledge the varieties of neighborhood change. This research gathers components of these new subsets into the case study work. In particular, Jamaica Plain demonstrates aspects of super-gentrification and Columbia Heights is a powerful example of new build gentrification. Emerging research has identified additional nuances of gentrification, including social identification of newcomers with historic neighborhood identities, minority gentrification of places of ethnic historical significance, and the power of anti-gentrification as a political tool.

Gentrification, as opposed to revitalization, is a term widely used by those who are concerned about the negative impacts of this trend and frequently becomes a rallying cry to resist the change or advocate for policies which mitigate its costs. In Washington, DC, messages such as “gentrification kills” are graffitied across construction sites, and in the Lower East Side of New York, protests feature signs reading, “Gentrification is class war! Fight back” and “Stop gentrification & Save our 'Hood.” Gentrification becomes a term loaded with the fears and frustrations of the original residents of inner-city neighborhoods who feel threatened by the influx of new residents. Even on the institutional side, among city and civic leaders working to preserve communities from a distance, it can also serve as a blanket descriptor of community challenges and thereby obscure important local nuances. It is my contention that those local nuances provide the necessary ingredients for developing a more balanced and healthy model for change.

I will therefore now leave overt discussions of gentrification behind. For those interested in further research on gentrification, there are many excellent scholars on the subject, but I would recommend in particular Lance Freeman, Japonica Brown-Sarancino, and

Derek Hyra for their work in this sphere. While they each have several excellent relevant works, I have particularly recommended a few in the bibliography.

In the context of this paper, the following type of transitioning or transforming community will be examined:

communities experiencing a physical, economic, and cultural process wherein the population of a neighborhood shifts towards wealthier and more educated residents, potentially leading to the physical and/or social displacement of lower-income residents and businesses

The paper's findings have implications for multiple types of community transformation, but the analysis will consistently focus on communities where the shift is towards increasing wealth, neighborhoods many would consider to be gentrifying.

Indicators

While an increase in personal incomes is the most common indicator that a neighborhood may be transitioning, several other key descriptions often separate in-movers from long-term residents. New residents are more likely to have college (or even postgraduate) degrees. They are more likely to be between the ages of 25-40 and are less likely to have children. Beyond changes in population, other transition indicators include an increase in property values disproportionate to that of adjacent neighborhoods. As a precursor to shifts in property values, building permit applications may also increase as people begin to rehab old homes.

Racial demographics are often a key indicator of emerging neighborhood change. In the traditional model, this often occurs as significant numbers of white residents move into a minority neighborhood. This is not necessarily the case, and new studies are beginning to look at influxes of wealthier residents of color as well (Hyra 2008; Freeman 2006). The racial overtones of this transition are its most obvious and often most troubling aspect. Lance Freeman's work, *There Goes the 'Hood*, observes that even in neighborhoods such as Harlem, where much of the neighborhood demographic change has come from nonwhite residents, it is the presence of the emerging white minority that is most noted in the community conversation. At times, the presence of white residents becomes the symbol, or very definition, of gentrification and changes to come.

Race flows through both case studies as an undercurrent requiring careful navigation. It becomes particularly salient when long-term residents largely of one race must negotiate control over a community's future with newcomers who are largely of another race. Arguably,

this tension is at its peak when majority-black neighborhoods see large numbers of new white residents. Other minority groups may experience similar tensions, both when people of another race move into their community and when they move into a community primarily populated by another race, but the peculiar history of black-white race relations in America intensifies that particular dynamic. Some historically black communities in America have recently seen a significant upward socioeconomic shift in their residents through the influx of upper middle class African Americans. While these transitions have not been tension-free, they have been characterized by significantly less fear and hostility (Hyra 2008; Freeman 2006; Wilson 2006).

Both of the communities explored here also saw a significant influx of Latino residents in the 1970s and 1980s. Because lower-income black and Latino residents retain very distinct identities but are often targeted by the same community organizations, these organizations experienced some resulting friction in both Jamaica Plain and Columbia Heights. Many community organizations eventually settled along one racial line or the other, remaining welcome to all but targeting a particular racial or ethnic group. The exception to this is in communities with high rates of immigration from around the world, where each ethnic group remains too small to justify its own social service structure.

Racial dynamics are discussed in the case studies and addressed in the recommendations, but are treated as one element of many. And, indeed, there is no monolithic view of racial dynamics in neighborhood transformation that can be easily summarized. While nearly every interview I conducted touched on race in some capacity, the vast majority spoke of race as a relevant and obvious factor of change in the community but stopped far short of describing the dynamic as hostile. Community and nonprofit leaders were generally quite politic about race relations, but were able to recount several specific examples of misunderstandings, stereotypes, and deep frustrations. Residents I spoke with often spoke in terms of an unspecified “they” which had clear racial connotations. Overall, relations were characterized as cautious and guarded on the part of some and welcoming on the part of many. Most problems related to race were attributed by interviewees to either one or two vocal residents or trouble-making youth. So while there was fairly universal agreement that racial dynamics were a relevant part of community change – particularly in Columbia Heights – opinions were inconsistent as to its manner and degree.

Root Causes

Transforming neighborhoods are likely to share several characteristics – they often have older homes with higher quality architecture, they are proximate to the central city, and often have access to public transportation. From these commonalities and the trends identified above, two primary theories have risen as to the cause of such change. In 1987, Neil Smith

developed the supply-side theory of the “rent gap.” This theory argues that in certain communities, the exchange value of the structures and/or the actual rent received begins to fall far below the potential value of that piece of land. Once the potential of the ground rent increases sufficiently above the value of the sale price of the structure on it, a “rent gap” emerges so that it becomes a profitable investment for someone to come in and purchase or flip the property. This trend can be particularly potent in those neighborhoods with unique or high-quality architecture which are well-situated in regards to the downtown core. This potential attracts investors, but also may make a neighborhood appealing for someone who desires a certain type or size of home and would be unable to afford it in a wealthier district.

Another theory, popularized by Richard Florida, looks instead to the demand side of the equation and argues that the type of creative, entrepreneurial professionals who are emerging today want to live closer to urban centers and are more open and attracted to “edgy” environments which have a diverse, funky vibe (Florida 2002). Additionally, these individuals are often at the early stages of their career and so may initially need lower-rent housing options, yet are on track to quickly increase their income and disposable cash. This group often has a higher risk tolerance, stemming from a greater sense of invulnerability and belief that they have the resources to easily rebound should problems emerge. Young professionals are also less likely to have children, making the condition of local schools irrelevant; in fact, many of these early movers may see this neighborhood as a place they can live now, but which they will need to leave once they have school-age children and education, public safety, and even private yards become greater concerns. This makes distressed communities with high investment potential ideal for them. In this explanation, the lower price of property may only be a secondary benefit to a more social or lifestyle goal. These two theories are not mutually exclusive and are often both at play, with the combination being particularly powerful. Young, creative professionals often see in these neighborhoods an opportunity to live a more exciting lifestyle while still achieving financial gains: renters are able to divert money otherwise spent on housing to savings or other priorities, and owners are able to purchase cheaply and turn around an investment in a relatively compressed time period when they are ready to move on to a neighborhood considered more family-friendly.

Finally, neighborhood transformation is increasingly triggered by large-scale investment projects. In many cases, as will be seen in Columbia Heights, this takes the form of a city-driven revitalization effort which has a transformative impact for the community. These efforts can also be public-private partnerships, or, somewhat more rarely, purely private developments. Oftentimes these investments are coordinated with work in adjacent neighborhoods or new public transit or infrastructure investment. In these instances, the threat of displacement comes not only from increasing property values, but through the potential use of eminent domain to group properties into large enough parcels for significant development projects. In some instances, these communities may even see a decline in the neighborhood in the years

preceding the development because parcels are held vacant as they are assembled. The decision to make such a large-scale investment may be triggered by either of the causes identified above, but the decision-making process is more explicit and the impact more immediate.

Controversies

Three aspects of this transformation in particular can be alarming, the first being the potential displacement of long-term or original residents. Based primarily on a literature of sociological case studies, researchers have long assumed that the physical, in many cases involuntary, displacement of original residents was a clear consequence of this type of community transition, and many use that criterion in defining gentrification. Given the very visible shift in the neighborhood's character, verifiable changes in socioeconomic and racial demographics, and increases in home prices and rents, it seemed fair to assume that original residents were being displaced. The displacement argument asserts that such relocation is involuntary and results from being priced out of a community or potentially forced out by profit-seeking landlords. This argument leads to understandable concerns that long-term residents who have lived through the worst periods of a neighborhood are then forced out just before new services and amenities arrive. Not only are they excluded from the potential benefits of new investment, but they are also forced to leave their homes and communities and start over in new neighborhoods which may be even further from jobs and public transportation than the places from which they came.

Two recent studies, however, have called the displacement argument into question (Vigdor 2002; Freeman and Braconi 2004). Both studies found only inconclusive evidence of displacement, challenging past studies for examining primarily the difference between in-movers and out-movers, rather than the movement of all long-term residents. By tracking household mobility, Freeman and Braconi found that, all other factors held constant, low-income individuals in upwardly transitioning census tracts were actually 19 percent less likely to move than poor residents elsewhere. This is particularly notable because low-income households average shorter lengths of tenure in one residence than other Americans. While this apparent stability runs counter to most anecdotal evidence concerning displacement, the finding can be partially explained by in-movers filling vacancies and building new housing units, thereby shifting the overall balance of the neighborhood without displacing residents. Additionally, original residents may be more likely to stay because they are drawn to new community amenities, are inspired by renewed neighborhood pride, or benefit from reduced crime rates. Finally, while higher prices may prevent low-income or immigrant households from moving into the community in the same numbers as before, they may not have a direct impact on existing households.

The question of displacement is not merely physical, however. Even if these new findings are correct, one should not discount the psychological impact of displacement. Long-term residents may feel culturally displaced as community norms change and the physical environment shifts. People begin to feel less comfortable in their own homes. Lance Freeman's *There Goes the 'Hood* explores the complexity of the displacement debate, recounting interviews with long-term residents of transitioning neighborhoods. While he finds the attitudes of many residents to be somewhat positive, or at worst neutral, to the changing face of their neighborhood, the specter of displacement continues to loom, accompanied by stories of friends who have moved and rumors of new buyouts and development (Freeman 2006). This occurs on an intergenerational level as well, with grown children of long-term residents unable to return to the neighborhood because of prohibitively high rents and house prices. These sorts of anecdotes frequently appeared in my own interviews in both sites. In the face of these changes, many residents who have long been frustrated by the distressed conditions of the community take buy-out opportunities that have immediate financial advantages, but which are not in their long-term interest. For both residents and local businesses, particularly renters, the psychological threat of displacement looms large *even if* the physical threat remains minimal.

The second category of debate concerns the relative merits of economic and racial diversity. In an era where diversity has become an all-purpose cultural buzzword and social housing efforts focus on the development of mixed-income communities, community transformation may perhaps seem a boon to neighborhoods. Particularly if the displacement risk is lessened, the influx of new residents can serve as a counter to concentrated poverty, increasing exposure to opportunity and providing a more powerful political coalition to fight the social and physical costs of economic disinvestment. The isolation of the inner city will be reduced, lowering the barriers to transitioning from ghetto-like conditions to a more equitable and prosperous community. In reality, these expectations have run up against results demonstrating that economic and racial diversity does not automatically produce trust and community (Chaskin and Joseph 2010). Additionally, recent research by Robert Putnam found that people in more diverse communities tend to be more socially withdrawn, less politically involved, and less trusting of their neighbors (of all races) than those in less diverse communities. While Putnam goes out of his way to state that this does not mean we should avoid the creation of diverse communities, it does drive home the point that creating such a community is incredibly difficult, fraught with tensions and outright failures (Putnam 2007).

There is an additional concern that an influx of new residents – often white, with more power and privilege – undermines the cultural and community strength of a minority-majority community and leads to the further marginalization and/or oppression of people of color. Many transitioning communities – Harlem in New York, Bronzeville in Chicago, U Street in Washington – are cultural icons of the African-American community whose black majority is the

bearer of a distinctive history, identity, and energy which could be jeopardized by a dramatic racial shift (Hyra 2008). This is the concern in places such as Washington, DC, once known as “Chocolate City,” where many wonder what the political cost of losing minority-majority status will be. Past studies have shown that white residents are more likely to support black candidates in communities with white minorities (Vanderleeuw 2004). This is not to say that only black elected officials or businesspeople can effectively represent black communities, nor that only Latino leaders can speak for Latino neighborhoods. Community goals – good schools, safe streets, job opportunities, affordable housing, and transportation – are largely universal and can effectively bridge racial divides. Nonetheless, the simple math of democracy gives power to the majority and can unintentionally yet systematically marginalize entire populations. Beyond elections, Freeman found that the presence of in-moving whites in these communities is simply “felt” much more than that of high income in-moving minority residents, and is often accompanied by mistrust or hostility (Freeman 2006). The diversity debate places the benefits of exposure to opportunity and capital against the costs of further racial polarization and potential political marginalization; the results of the calculation are unclear.

Finally, a third question concerns the real benefits of increased urban development. These benefits come in many forms, including safer streets, better access to resources, better transportation, greater convenience, cleaner parks and streets, and potentially better schools. For the city coffers, another undeniable benefit is the increased property taxes collected as assessed value rises. These benefits are juxtaposed, however, with the challenges of affordability in these communities. Affordability challenges come primarily in the form of increased rents, but can also be seen in the prices of local goods and services. (Admittedly, this can work both ways, with higher-priced restaurants and services but also lower prices for groceries and other staples as major chains with better deals replace small corner stores.) Residents may be forced to downsize their housing situation in order to continue paying rent; recipients of subsidies in the form of housing vouchers may find fewer properties open to them. As in the debate over displacement, a question arises about whether the people paying the costs for the new development, in this case through increased prices, are receiving equivalent benefits in the form of important neighborhood amenities. This balance plays out differently in each community, but it is vital to acknowledge that the perspective of the resident may differ dramatically from the balance sheets of the city.

Process Models

Having looked at the indicators and causes of community transition, it is also important to understand the different stages of the process. After analyzing the two primary case studies in depth and looking at other examples in the literature and through national interviews, I have identified two models to explain the primary types of community transition occurring today, which I call “organic” and “accelerated.” The **organic model** more closely mirrors the traditional understanding of gentrification rooted in sociological studies from the 1980s. The **accelerated model** blends traditional gentrification with new build gentrification and looks at how the process shifts when there is a significant infusion of public or private funds for development purposes (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008). Finally, I also offer a third model, the **inclusionary model**, as an ideal prototype. This model seeks to avoid the traditional endpoint of community transition in a homogeneously upper middle class urban neighborhood and instead redirect the culmination towards a diverse community which preserves affordable housing and retains neighborhood amenities. The aims and processes of this model will be further fleshed out in the final recommendations.

Organic Model

The organic process of transition, as its name implies, is slow and subtle, and its tipping points can be very difficult to discern. The four steps of the organic model—start-up, buy-in, take-off, and fill-in—frame the general process but often overlap in communities. This model originates with Wanda Coston’s delineation of the stages in her Columbus, Ohio case study, *Stages of Gentrification and Neighborhood Revitalization* (1984), but also relies on the work of Phillip Clay (1979) and contains aspects of later work on the “third wave of gentrification” by scholars such as Neil Smith (1987). Generally speaking, the organic model is more dependent on the typical set of pre-conditions (high quality architecture, proximity to the urban core, and access to public transportation) than its accelerated counterpart. Buildings are often in deteriorating condition but have the potential for rehabilitation, either as single family homes or as an industrial-residential conversion.

I. Start-up

Changes begin small, and are often not readily visible, consisting primarily of small scale interior rehabs. Incoming residents, often fairly low-income themselves, handle renovations themselves. In industrial areas, this may take the form of loft conversions in industrial buildings, occasionally illegal. These first movers are either oblivious or indifferent to the safety risks of the community and may embrace the “edgy” nature of the experience. Historically, artists and clusters of the gay and lesbian community, seeking alternative physical or social spaces, have been the first

movers. While there may be some engagement with long-term residents, the social life of the new residents generally exists either outside the immediate neighborhood or primarily with the small number of other newcomers. This stage may continue for many years before progressing.

II. Buy-in

In the second stage, enough of the newcomers have gathered that their own social space becomes evident. New businesses, often started by recent residents, are created to cater to this emerging community. While still few, newcomers have organized sufficiently to become a noticeable subset of the community, and their voice becomes a part of the community conversation. As a result, internal discussion of the transition becomes common among longstanding residents and tensions begin to emerge. The neighborhood gains a reputation in the city, though still one passed casually and by word of mouth, with little attention in the mainstream media. Physically, the pace and caliber of renovations increases. Vacancies decrease as entrepreneurs and speculators begin to bet on a continuing transformation. Homeownership begins to increase discernibly in the community.

III. Take-off

The quiet nature of the transition disappears in the third stage, as major media attention begins to focus on the community. Community tensions increase, often rapidly, as fault lines emerge regarding community ownership and vision. Many new residents, increasingly protective of their home values, begin to actively resist the development or preservation of affordable housing even as local activists increasingly seek to preserve affordability. As wealthier, more highly educated people continue to move into the neighborhood, the distinction between new and old residents becomes increasingly apparent, as does the line between businesses catering to the respective groups. More established developers and investors proliferate in the neighborhood and begin to invest in high-end housing developments (still rehabs) and retail establishments. Vacancies decrease dramatically and retail and residential rents increase significantly, putting not only long-term residents but also first comers at risk. The neighborhood is now discussed throughout the city as one “on the rise,” though an element of hesitancy, centered on public safety, remains.

IV. Fill-in

By the final stage of the process, major chains and risk-averse residents move freely into the community. Home values in the neighborhood meet and may even

exceed community averages, leading to a tax burden which may disrupt or displace longtime community property owners. Many long-term residents, particularly retirees, will take advantage of the increase in home values and sell, but others may struggle to keep up with increasing taxes and property management expectations. New in-fill developments occur, as by this point there are few vacancies and a dwindling number of properties worth renovating. Property owners are increasingly disinclined to rent to voucher holders. Affordable housing advocates and community groups which developed or were strengthened during the take-off phase now press for public legal controls on housing prices or new development. Regardless of their success or failure, the transition is complete, and the lower-income residents who remain are largely confined to subsidized housing units. Low-income homeowners may also remain, but increased home values often provide significant financial incentive for these owners to sell during the earlier stages.

Accelerated Model

The accelerated model of transition occurs when a significant infusion of new development dramatically and rapidly alters the landscape of the neighborhood. Development may take the form of a large-scale mixed used development, a new transit line, or perhaps even the demolition of a significant area to make way for new development. This model shares a number of features with the organic model, but differs in the main driver of change. The speed of transformation certainly changes, but so too do key stakeholders: local government and/or large developers emerge as the key players in the process. Indications of this change are more apparent in city planning documents, municipal conversations, and quiet real estate accumulation than on the streets of the neighborhood. The results of the accelerated and organic models, however, are remarkably similar.

I. Small-scale

The initial start-up wave of small-scale rehabs and investment seen in the organic model may still occur. Accelerated transformation occurs independently of this development, but its likelihood could be heightened by the presence of first movers. Potentially, the first movers in these circumstances may be those in a position to have early knowledge of the development rumors described in stage two, rather than the more avant garde first movers in the organic model.

II. Pre-development

The second stage is characterized by pre-development efforts, both subtle and obvious. Initial rumors may be hard to distinguish from the typical wishful hopes for improvement, but these rumors are later supported by second and third steps by key drivers. Strictly private development is harder to detect, but also more rare. Most accelerated development efforts are driven by public investment or a public-private partnership. When the local government is involved, the pre-development process will likely involve some sort of public engagement process such as a community design process bolstered by a significant formal planning effort. This process does take some time, but even in its early stages can begin to spur speculative investment and land assembly. This may galvanize additional small-scale private investment.

III. Large-scale

This third stage is highly visible and concentrated. Most often, it involves demolition in order to facilitate new construction, rather than being limited to rehabilitation or in-fill. These projects are often concentrated around transportation nodes and may be spurred by new transit extensions. Typically, they are intentionally mixed-used and mixed-income developments geared towards changing the neighborhood trajectory, though they may take different attitudes towards neighborhood character. Large-scale projects often make a feint in the direction of respecting community heritage or tradition, but the depth and sincerity of that respect varies. At this point, with the backing of the government and major investors, the community is considered an economically safe bet, though it may still be plagued by concerns about public safety. As a result, major chains, large investors, and wealthy residents move in much more quickly than in the organic model. New middle class families are still slow to arrive, often reflecting the caliber of local schools and perceptions of safety.

IV. Fill-in

In keeping with the speed of the change, both residential and commercial prices rise quickly as the physical landscape changes, causing the same displacement concerns and issues and the same neighborhood polarization seen in the organic model. That polarization generally happens somewhat further along in the process, in part a reflection of reduced lead-in time, but also indicative of public efforts to consider the community's wishes in the initial development proposal. As a result, local residents may be quite favorably disposed towards the first large-scale investment but deeply resentful of the later waves. Because of the relative safety of

investment, legal affordability protections may be easier to achieve in this model, but a general resistance to affordable housing on the part of newcomers is no less likely. This fill-in period involves more tension over the neighborhood identity than in the organic model (where the fill-in is primarily completing a pre-determined trajectory).

Inclusionary Model

The inclusionary model aims at capturing the benefits of increased investment in the neighborhood—safer streets, better schools, more shopping options, fewer vacancies—while mitigating the potential for harm done through physical and psychological displacement of the existing population. It acknowledges that many of these long-term residents *want* these benefits, in many cases have actively worked to bring them about, but do not want them at all costs. In order to incorporate the positive and mitigate the negative consequences of neighborhood transition, the inclusionary model overlays both the organic and accelerated models with a focused “moment of intervention” during stage two, when the pending change becomes more evident. From that point it seeks to redirect outcomes, using a series of tactics identified later in this paper, and move towards a new framework for healthier transitions.

I. Early Changes (start-up and small-scale)

During the earliest phases of either model, it is impossible to tell whether these small steps will lead to wholesale community transformation. Community leaders and organizations should carefully monitor the developments. Additionally, there are valuable community stabilization steps which community leaders may be pursuing in a general community development context, such as well-managed housing developments, investment funds for micro-businesses, and the development of other public amenities. The implications of these steps should be carefully considered – not to prevent further action, but to develop a long-term strategy which feeds into the next three stages.

II. Moment for Intervention (buy-in and pre-development)

During the second stages of both models, it becomes clearer that the community is headed for a significant change. It is crucial that long-term residents prepare for this change and lay the groundwork for how they would like to see it come about. If this sort of community vision work does not happen until stage three or four of the organic and accelerated models, then it is simply too late to be effective in any but very small battles. Instead, community leadership—political, non-profit, business, and resident—should come together to the fullest extent possible to craft a new

vision for the neighborhood. This often involves community planning and design brainstorming sessions (often called charrettes), neighborhood surveys, and community meetings. The core purpose of this effort is to walk the community through a discussion of what they want to preserve, what they would like to discard, and what they want to gain. This not only serves as a platform for guidance of the community transformation, it also makes current residents active participants in the process and helps distinguish between coming changes.

III. Community Participation in Development

The initial intervention focuses on setting the vision for a place, but during stage three the community must begin to enact it. This may involve solidifying the community identity through local events, branding efforts, or design steps to emphasize history and character. It should also serve as a period of momentum for positive community change, potentially taking advantage of new investment in the neighborhood to advocate for public spaces, safety improvements, affordable housing mechanisms, and other amenities. Ultimately, the hope is that long-term residents interact with newer residents by welcoming them, but welcoming them into a community which has been defined and prioritized around the agenda of long-term residents and is therefore less malleable to new forces. The community is not a blank slate to rewrite, but a home to be joined. This welcoming posture is particularly important; if community visioning is conducted with a defensive attitude, as though preparing for a siege, then the community is likely to run into the same tensions found in the other two models.

IV. Inclusive Stabilization

Not all negative ramifications can be avoided, and as the neighborhood transitions, rents will inevitably increase as well, causing problems for some businesses and residents. Nonetheless, both Jamaica Plain and Columbia Heights provide (admittedly imperfect) examples of how a mixed-income, multiracial community can begin to stabilize. Early, intentional consolidation of a value system and a community identity which celebrates those characteristics provides transitioning neighborhoods with a new model for the future. Creating and sustaining such a community requires hard work and careful attention. In many cases it may be an unachievable ideal, but the strategies outlined in this paper are designed to bring reality more closely in line with that ideal.

These models are, of course, generalizations derived from the process of community transition in neighborhoods throughout the United States. Reality is less linear, more fraught with tension, and generally messier in most every respect. Nonetheless, understanding the overall process and being attentive to the signals allows for earlier and more strategic interventions to influence the course of neighborhood development. To understand more of how these models play out on the ground in communities, we turn to case studies of Jamaica Plain, more in accordance with the organic model, and Columbia Heights, which followed an accelerated process.

Summary Table – Community Transition Process Models:

	Organic	Inclusive	Accelerated
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Small scale rehabs with sweat labor › Low-income, risk oblivious newcomers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Initial market or investment signs appear › Adjacent neighborhoods shift › <i>Track neighborhood change</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Small scale investments may be occurring, but are not necessary to trigger the investment in the next state
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Subtle promotion and internal discussion › Entrepreneurs and speculators reduce vacancies 	<p>BEST MOMENT FOR INTERVENTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Beginning of community ‘visioning’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Rumors of pending development › Land assembled and held › Formal planning effort and/or design charrettes
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Major media interest develops › Established developers and investors proliferate › Tensions increase and affordable housing resisted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › New development occurs with active community participation › Affordable housing policies enacted › Community activities build upon renewed local identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Large-scale public/private investment occurs › Highly visible and concentrated redevelopment › Neighborhood seen as safe investment option
IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Rents and property taxes spike › Public legal controls on properties sought › Risk-oblivious and major chains move in freely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Community stabilizes with economic and racial mix › Cohesive identity promotes diversity › Increased neighborhood amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Prices rise rapidly as physical landscape changes › Neighborhood may polarize

Case Studies

Jamaica Plain, Boston

In mid-January 2011, the property owners of Hi-Lo Foods, a major Latino grocery store in the center of Hyde Square in the Jamaica Plain (JP) neighborhood, announced that the store would be closed and replaced with a new Whole Foods. Management of Hi-Lo was retiring, and with no one in the wings to take over, the owners wanted to look for a more profitable option. This announcement was met with a swift and fierce community response.

From community email lists to *Boston Globe* articles, residents argued that the loss of Hi-Lo Foods was only a symbol of a much greater loss: the loss of Jamaica Plain's unique, diverse, and affordable community to sterile corporate forces catering to new residents. Some residents organized more formally, creating a group called "Whose Foods?" which went on to organize a rally, protest meetings, and a campaign against Whole Foods. Sentiment in the community was far from universal in its opposition, but it was the critics of Whole Foods who were by far the most vocal. Absent from this crowd, however, were Jamaica Plain's vibrant community development organizations, which largely chose to remain silent in the debate. In an interesting twist, while the website to save the Latino grocery store was bilingual and Hispanic residents were prominently featured in opposition rallies, the majority of the protestors seemed more readily described as hipsters.

The language "Whose Foods?" used reflected this blend as well. They called themselves "a multicultural, intergenerational group of JP residents and natives," and the argument they made could have been lifted from the pages of an anti-gentrification primer. Their website boldly declared, "Whole Foods is a business that will lead to increased real estate and commercial prices in Hyde Square, which will displace even more low- and moderate- income families—many of the same people who made [Jamaica Plain] the great place it is today." But it is not this classic argument that makes the Whole Foods debate such an intriguing illustration of the type of neighborhood Jamaica Plain is. The illustration's power is instead in the strange mix of people who made the case against Whole Foods. They were not necessarily reflective of the entire population and they lacked the support of many prominent community leaders. Moreover, they were ultimately unsuccessful, and after multiple community negotiations, Whole Foods finalized the deal to obtain the property. Nonetheless, their narrative and justifications spoke precisely to what type of neighborhood Jamaica Plain claimed to be. As they wrote:

For over 30 years, JP residents have fought to preserve the cultural and socio-economic diversity of this community. We stopped a highway in the 1970s. We stopped Kmart in the 1990s. We built parks and schools and housing and small businesses...If you love JP for its diversity, for being a welcoming place for all

families, for its support of locally-owned business, we ask you to join us. (“Whose Foods?” website)

Though Jamaica Plain was divided on the fate of Hi-Lo, it is united in the sentiments expressed above. In my research, the word most frequently used to describe Jamaica Plain was “activist.” The second was “diverse.” As I approached this case, I sought to answer how it came to be that, in a transitioning community, the first words used to describe the neighborhood were not words of division or upheaval but of inclusion and history.

Jamaica Plain – or JP, as it’s affectionately known – has a well-remembered history. Originally part of the town of Roxbury, just outside Boston, Jamaica Plain from an early age housed a combination of agricultural, industrial (particularly brewing) and commercial interests. It was annexed by Boston in 1874. Many wealthy residents were drawn to the area surrounding the pond and other remarkable green spaces, and constructed mansions there. Even when JP had more of a reputation for crime, these sorts of large, beautiful homes kept a fairly wealthy subset of the population intact. At the same time, beginning with the early factories and breweries in the area, several companies provided worker housing, establishing a range of building types: single- and multi-family, in varying sizes. In the 1960s, several large public housing projects were built near transit lines in the community, further diversifying the housing stock and population.

Jamaica Plain’s activist history got its landmark start in the early 1970s, when plans were released to route a highway through the center of the district, replacing the elevated train line. Local residents successfully rallied to prevent construction of the highway. Land had already been seized and properties demolished to make way for the highway construction before the project was halted. Later, this land was reallocated towards a new public transportation (or “T”) line and a wide public park. Neighborhood residents continue to point, decades later, to this experience as an affirmation of what it means to be a resident of Jamaica Plain, a community which rallied in defense of its own and fought against the forces of development. Around this same time, two community organizations rose to prominence: Urban Edge and City Life/Vida Urbana. Urban Edge focused on fighting redlining (the practice of limiting access to home loans in neighborhoods deemed too poor or risky, often with a significant racial component) and promoting the development of affordable housing, and City Life worked on tenant organizing and awareness campaigns. Both are still active today.

During the 1970s, Jamaica Plain saw a great influx of immigrants, primarily from Latin America. JP is a large community – nearly three square miles – with several subdistricts. Hyde Square in particular became the focal point of the Latino immigration into the community. The Hispanic population swelled to 20 percent by 1980 and continued to hover between 20 and 30 percent from that point forward. This same period also saw a decline in JP’s commercial corridor, though the neighborhood continued to sustain a number of retail venues. While

housing prices were not significantly higher than throughout the city, a tight Boston housing market continued to make affordable housing an issue even during this low point in JP's housing market. Immigrants were often living in overcrowded conditions to reduce the cost of housing. In response to these conditions, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC) was created in 1977 to focus on affordable housing and economic development.

In 1987, a rail line returned to Jamaica Plain with the development of the Orange Line. The line went through the land once set aside for highway construction and placed three stations in JP. With this new accessibility to the city, housing prices began to rise yet again. Vacant properties and undeveloped land were increasingly acquired by developers. By the mid-to-late 1990s, Jamaica Plain's community development corporations (CDCs) were working to acquire land at a faster rate than market-rate developers in hopes of keeping properties affordable. In one of the more dramatic fights in this contest, in 1999 local community groups split on the issue of a proposed K-mart near the Jackson Square T stop. Urban Edge generally favored the potential development for the jobs it would bring to the community, while JPNDC and the Hyde Square Task Force, an emerging youth advocacy group, opposed the development because of K-mart's labor record and a sense that the large store was out of keeping with the goals and character of the neighborhood. In another landmark victory for JP's activist community, the K-mart was eventually defeated, and Urban Edge, JPNDC, and the Hyde Square Task Force came together with a private developer to propose and develop a new project consisting of affordable and market-rate housing and a significant youth center. While the current economy has slowed the project somewhat, it is underway.

The most recent major victory for affordable housing occurred when JPNDC obtained the land of the recently-closed Blessed Sacrement parish in 2006. In order to make their case to both the church and the city, JPNDC conducted community charrettes, or planning and design meetings, to consider what could be done with the property. This community input was then given back to the city in order to strengthen the case for a mixed-income development on the property.

Jamaica Plain provides a fascinating study for the dynamics of development and diversity. In many ways, the neighborhood has done an exemplary job of preserving affordability and diversity, as indicated by the fervor with which people of all types rallied in support of both during the Whole Foods debate. Jamaica Plain boasts numerous active CDCs and other advocacy groups which frequently work in coordination. While a considerable stock of affordable housing has been developed, there are few vacant or undeveloped properties in the community, so housing advocates in and outside of the community are on alert to monitor developments whose affordability clauses may soon expire.

JP has been one of only two neighborhoods in the city to retain its elected Neighborhood Council, and while this body has only advisory power, it has continued to wield considerable influence on city plans. JP's neighborhood groups are also well-respected by the city and often consulted regarding plans for the neighborhood. Three "Main Streets" associations bolster the commercial life of Jamaica Plain, and while they vary in purpose and theme, they have made a valuable contribution to the preservation of small and ethnic businesses. The community has a flourishing and well-sponsored network of parks and a growing arts community.

So, in a community with so much energy expended on affordable housing, where people walk around wearing t-shirts proclaiming "I support a diverse and affordable JP," how is it that there is still so much concern and tension around the issue of community transition? Housing prices have certainly been increasing, caught in the increasingly tight Boston housing market. The end of rent control in 1994 only added to the situation, and even with inclusionary zoning laws and a Boston housing trust fund, rent increases are outpacing personal income gains. On the other hand, the racial breakdown of the community has remained fairly constant over the past four decades, with the population around 50 percent white and 50 percent non-white, mostly black and Hispanic. Additionally, the poverty rate in the community has also remained consistently around 20 percent of the population.

Beyond these statistics, however, the neighborhood seems to be experiencing a polarization in wealth, where the middle tier of households, those whose incomes are too high to qualify for subsidy, have left the community. In racial terms, minority populations have become more geographically concentrated, often due to correlations with income. Statistically, perhaps the most dramatic swing has been in a sharp uptick in owner-occupied housing. While a majority of residents continue to rent, the proportion of the population living in owner-occupied housing has risen from 22 percent in 1970 to 37 percent in 2010. In essence, as more rental housing is converted into condos, an increasing proportion of the low-income residents able to remain in JP consists of those able to find a spot in one of the public or subsidized units. Despite the relatively high percentage of subsidized housing in JP, waiting lists for those properties are incredibly long, often reaching fifty applications for just one available unit. Rental prices are also increasing as large numbers of students from one of the nearby colleges move into the area and push up rent values by combining several incomes in one household. Generational displacement was a particularly common topic of discussion in JP – long-term residents who managed to avoid displacement have seen their grown children unable to afford to return to their childhood neighborhood to raise their own families. Therefore, while the changes in Jamaica Plain have not appeared dramatic, over thirty years, observers have seen considerable change – vacancies have declined dramatically, new development has occurred, prices have risen, boutique stores have replaced bodegas. Throughout, however, the active

community life and shared sense of identity have equipped JP residents to address these concerns with impressive vigor.

Columbia Heights, DC

Just over half a century after becoming the nation's first African-American majority city, Washington, DC saw its black population slip below 50 percent in February 2011. Conversation in the capital city, carried out in bars and blogs and street corners, centered on one word: gentrification. A steady wave of physical upgrades and racial and socioeconomic demographic changes has swept across the District from northwest to southeast over the past two and a half decades, provoking headlines asking what the change means for the city; politicians have sniped back and forth over the merits and pitfalls these changes. Of all of the District's neighborhoods, few have experienced this upheaval to the same degree as Columbia Heights, where in just ten years the population has doubled, the number of white residents has increased ten-fold, rates of homeownership have doubled, and the median value of a single-family home has nearly quadrupled.

Perhaps it is for this reason that Columbia Heights, despite having an increasingly robust (positively so) reputation around the city, does not have the same cohesive internal identity as Jamaica Plain. An old-timer or two will call it the Heights, but there's no one nickname, no clear descriptor, and not even particularly definite boundary lines. When I asked Columbia Heights residents what Columbia Heights was all about, or what it meant to live there, the general reaction was to stumble about or ask me to rephrase the question. That is not to say these residents do not enjoy living in Columbia Heights – to a person, they did – but there was an overarching sense that Columbia Heights could be many things, all of them in flux, and it was unclear that it had a specific identity grounded either in its history or in shared goals for the future. If Columbia Heights residents had one word in common, it was “change.”

Columbia Heights sits on a rise in the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia, just outside the original boundary for the city of Washington. Before the Civil War and the subsequent upsurge in Washington's population, the area was primarily farmland. Like Jamaica Plain, it was first populated by wealthy residents looking to live apart from the noise and filth of the nineteenth-century city. The architecture of the community reflects this heritage, with Victorian row houses lining quiet residential streets. While primarily a residential community, the spine of Columbia Heights is the 14th Street retail corridor, traversing the entire neighborhood. Columbia Heights, at present, has a population similar to that of Jamaica Plain, but housed in less than one-fifth the land area. As a result, Columbia Heights is much more deeply meshed with the surrounding fabric of the city, having never sustained its own industry and sharing many of its major resources, from parks to shopping districts, with bordering neighborhoods.

A century ago, Columbia Heights was a primarily white, upper middle class community. The neighborhood provided ready access to downtown through several streetcar lines, and local shops provided significant amenities. As the population of the city grew in the early decades of the twentieth century, apartment buildings and denser residential typologies began to gradually add more working class residents to the community, though a significant contingent of wealthy residents remained. Many households took advantage of the large homes to add boarders, increasing the economic diversity of the community. Columbia Heights also saw a significant influx of black residents, largely due to its proximity to the U Street and Shaw neighborhoods, which were the hub of Washington's black middle and upper middle class. Nearing the middle of the century, the racial character of the community was increasingly African American, though Columbia Heights retained a much larger white community than either Shaw or U Street.

In April 1968, five days of rioting followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., devastating Columbia Heights and much of Washington. The rioting began along 14th Street, just blocks south of Columbia Heights. By the time it ended, more than 80 percent of the businesses along the 14th Street corridor, from Thomas Circle to Park Street, had been gutted, with damage estimates exceeding \$13 million (von Hoffman 2001; Gilbert 1968). After the riots, the damage remained as a physical and social scar, with many residents leaving the District entirely. From 1960 to 1970, Washington lost nearly half of its white population. In the following decades, major construction projects in the area were limited to several large public housing developments. Further demographic changes occurred in the 1980s and 1990s when a significant Hispanic immigrant population began to move into Columbia Heights. Again, Columbia Heights was not the epicenter of this demographic shift, but the spillover location from the adjacent Mt. Pleasant neighborhood. As a result, Columbia Heights gained more racial diversity than many adjoining neighborhoods.

In 1991, plans were announced to extend construction of the beleaguered Green Line of the city's subway system to a Columbia Heights Metro station. The route and funding for the line had been debated for decades, but with stations opening in adjacent neighborhoods later that year, it seemed feasible that the subway system would finally extend to Columbia Heights, replacing the long-defunct street car lines. In anticipation of the station's opening, the city initiated a community planning charrette in November 1997. The charrette focused on the future of several empty or dilapidated parcels of land above the planned station. Much of the land was publicly controlled, increasing the impact of such a gathering. The Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH) and the DC chapter of the American Institute of Architects partnered with the city for the weekend-long charrette, where nearly two hundred residents participated. The resulting publication provided a strong community vision framework for the coming development, and many aspects of that initial proposal are evident in the neighborhood today.

Once the new subway station finally opened in September 1999, development accelerated dramatically. Most prominently, a large shopping center, DC USA, opened in 2008, boasting a Target, Best Buy, and several other large chain stores. A block away, a new grocery store opened, and all around high-end apartment buildings began to rise. Centered immediately above the Metro stop, a new residential, retail, and dining district sprang up in just a few short years. From vegan bakeries to upscale wine bars, many of the businesses contributing to Columbia Heights' newfound economic vibrancy draw little clientele from long-term area residents. While much of the new development took place within a radius of a few blocks, the physical effects were felt in other parts of the community as well. The old Victorian mansions and row homes of Columbia Heights were purchased, renovated, and resold. Smaller commercial nodes developed off the main 14th Street corridor. In just ten years, from 2000 to 2010, average household incomes in Columbia Heights nearly tripled, far outpacing even the significant growth in Washington as a whole. The change was equally drastic in racial terms. According to the Census, in 2000, there were only 1,950 residents in Columbia Heights who identified only as white. In 2010, the number was nearly six times as high, at 11,239. In just a decade, the neighborhood's white population rose from just over 6 percent to a share larger than that of Hispanic residents and nearly equaling that of the black population. During roughly the same period, select public housing complexes in the area went through renovations and conversions, scattering their residents.

The results of this dramatic upheaval have been mixed. Beginning with the community charrette, city leadership made a notable effort to reach out to the community about coming changes, and much of the development has happened in conjunction with those plans. Additionally, the increased public transportation access and new sources of jobs in the community have boosted the local economy for long-term residents. Inside the DC USA complex, minority business owners are given preferential and discounted retail rents in an effort to increase opportunities. From a policy perspective, Washington has many protections in place for low-income residents. From property tax abatement to tenant opportunity to purchase legislation, city policies are designed to provide opportunities for low-income homeowners and renters to remain in the neighborhood if they choose. There are, of course, limitations to the effectiveness of these policies, but multifaceted efforts of this sort are uncommon. While there has been a tremendous economic and racial shift in the community, this does not necessarily mean there has been an equally considerable displacement. New housing units have been constructed and the overall population has increased, exacerbating the proportional changes in the population. Many of the low-income homeowners in the community were elderly, and took advantage of the increased property values to sell their houses and retire. The decline in the Hispanic community can largely be attributed to a reduction in the inflow of new immigrants, as many immigrant communities now exist in the Washington suburbs instead of in the city itself.

But even as much of this transition has been handled well, numerous conflicts remain. According to residents, the roughest periods of conflict were in the early 2000s, at the first pangs of transition. Now, many sources of tension are relatively small-scale – the location of a makeshift dog park in an abandoned lot, the potential of a twenty-four hour diner in the neighborhood, the opening of an upscale wine bar – but the struggles over them are symbolic of the changing culture of the community. In public forums and through community email lists, residents debate the type of neighborhood they wish to be. “Gentrification” is a common word in these conflicts. The lines between old and new are more defined in Columbia Heights than in Jamaica Plain. The focus of different community groups can serve to exacerbate this. Two of the longest-standing community organizations are the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH) and the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC). Both serve discrete groups of long-term residents and have little interaction with newer residents. This is, in many ways, a natural outflow of the work of the two organizations, but it does not foster a new definition of what Columbia Heights will be and has led to a fragmentation of community leadership. In turn, many of the newly-arrived young professionals in the neighborhood have formed their own community groups. From civic organizations to local festivals, these groups have developed partnerships with each other, but remain largely separate from the longer-standing, service-oriented organizations. Two particular exceptions are worth noting. First, Community Heights Day is a neighborhood-wide celebration founded largely by new residents which has, after several years, truly become a community gathering, drawing significant support from residents and businesses across the spectrum. Second, a neighborhood arts venue and nonprofit, BloomBars, has created a uniquely multicultural atmosphere and consequently made inroads throughout the area. There are other examples of integration, and many residents speak highly of Columbia Heights as a diverse community, but as rapid change continues, the neighborhood retains a somewhat unsettled air.

Steps for Pursuing the Inclusionary Model

Jamaica Plain and Columbia Heights illustrate two different causes of and responses to community transformation. However, both communities have acknowledged and accommodated these changes in thoughtful ways. Both have successfully endeavored to preserve considerable affordable housing. Members and leaders of both communities now express a desire that their community stabilize into one that is both racially and economically diverse. In several respects, they exemplify the community ambitions of the inclusionary model, and a hoped-for path for a distressed community which allows for new growth and financial infusions without causing the mistrust and other negative consequences of gentrification.

The following five recommendations are offered as guidelines for action in communities which are experiencing community transformation or for those which believe that this type of transition may lie in their future. Derived from both communities, as well as from other successful neighborhoods around the country, they provide a menu of options for promoting the inclusionary model of transformation.

The applicability of these recommendations will vary by both timing and actor. For example, for communities lacking a robust nonprofit network, it will be particularly important for city officials to diligently monitor the pace and nature of community change, and it may be more appropriate to pursue policy-based and top-down solutions. Many of these recommendations are targeted to nonprofits such as community development corporations rather than to direct service organizations, but case studies have repeatedly revealed that nonprofits and organizations of all types need to actively intervene in community transformation in order to ensure a balanced development path. Timing also matters when implementing these recommendations: policies designed to increase the availability of affordable housing may have a detrimental impact on a community's economic development prospects if pursued too early. More details on timing and actors are discussed in the context of the following recommendations.

1.) Anticipate and proactively respond to change.

Though residents and observers often experience neighborhood change as a sudden event, it never actually takes place overnight. While every neighborhood possesses unique characteristics, many aspects of this transition are identifiable and generalizable, as described earlier in the paper. Even in the context of Columbia Heights' rapid transformation, plans were made well in advance for the extension of the Metro line and the surrounding development. Keeping abreast of current and pending community developments allows for proactive

engagement to protect affordability and impact the future shape of the neighborhood. For Jamaica Plain, the early efforts by community groups to lock in affordable properties allowed the community to sustain a greater balance of incomes than would have occurred without such a large supply of subsidized housing. In Columbia Heights, residents and community leaders became actively involved in their neighborhood's coming development through the 1997 charrette, and this instilled in them a sense of ownership and control which are so often lacking in community transition. Design elements from this initial charrette – created before the opening of the Metro and the main influx of newcomers – are clearly present in contemporary Columbia Heights. In both cases, long-term residents are able to see their own imprint on the community.

The intense and urgent nature of service delivery in low-income communities can cause community organizations to focus so narrowly on delivering quality and targeted services to their residents that they may miss the broader picture of local trends. As a result, they can become trapped in a reactive mode, at a loss to respond to the changes they experience. The goal, however, is for local residents and their advocates, both public and private, to be drivers of the change, not responders to it. As described in the inclusionary model, the key for any community organization is to seize the moment at the beginning of the transformation, before prices have already edged up and properties have been bought up for development. While it can be difficult to separate rumor from real change, careful monitoring can clarify neighborhood trends. Much of this monitoring can most readily be done by city officials, who have the greatest access to both statistical data and pending development proposals. City planning departments in particular possess the necessary information, as well as conduits to the public which can help to promote a new community consensus on the path forward. At the same time, local organizations should not rely blindly on the city to monitor such plans, nor should they implicitly trust that city-wide goals line up with local neighborhood priorities. As a result, local organizations, too, should carefully monitor key indicators. Active communication between local organizations and city officials increases both parties' understanding of the ongoing changes. The following tactics are useful in monitoring early trends so as to spur the necessary early intervention:

- *Conduct physical surveys of neighborhood properties.*

Some changes will not appear readily in data analysis. It is therefore important to recognize physical upgrades in the neighborhood and conduct brief surveys of the neighborhood on an annual basis. This allows community leaders to remain systematically informed of whether new homeowners are upgrading their properties considerably, vacancies are declining, and unused properties are being purchased. None of these changes are inherently problematic and may in fact be quite welcome.

Combined with other indicators, however, they can foretell a transformation which should be strategically approached.

- *Stay informed of city plans, including city and neighborhood master plans, transportation proposals and funding requests, and requests for proposals (RFPs) related to development opportunities.*

Most of this information is readily available online and oftentimes conscientiously distributed to the neighborhood. However, sometimes that distribution comes at too late a point in the process to effect significant change. Particularly in communities where the city has not built trust with their community planning efforts, many interviewees spoke of the importance of proactively seeking out information from city officials. The leaders who felt the most comfortable in their understanding of neighborhood trajectory had regularly had staff attend city-sponsored community meetings and even city-wide meetings during the earliest stages of the process, so as to learn how their community was likely to be impacted. This can be expanded to other levels of government as well. While RFPs and planning documents are generally issued by the city, transportation planning more often takes place at a state or regional level. Personal relationships with city officials can provide an additional layer of insight into pending developments.

- *Use ACS and other data to monitor demographic changes.*

The American Communities Survey provides new data on neighborhood demographics more frequently than the traditional census. Local governments may distribute this information, but it can also be obtained directly on the Census website. Key trends to look for include: increased rates of homeownership, an increase of personal incomes which outpaces metro-area growth, and increased proportions of residents with a college degree. There are also often state and local sources of demographic data, such as annual censuses done for purposes of tracking school enrollment and voter registration, that are valuable indicators of neighborhood change.

- *Monitor trends in adjacent communities.*

New research has shown that the communities most likely to experience housing price shocks are those directly adjacent to communities where prices have recently risen (Guerrieri, Hartley, and Hurst 2010). This spillover effect is common enough to be one of the strongest indicators of change. In Boston, this flow went from the South End, through Jamaica Plain, and is now extending into Roxbury. In Washington, the Metro

extension on U Street provided a template for how Columbia Heights would look only a few years out.

2.) Develop a shared narrative around which the community can coalesce.

Internal community narratives offer the basis for stability and self-policing. Local mores and norms help guide and protect a community, but a shared identity also offers an invitation to newcomers. As in Richard Florida's theory of the "creative class", many new residents may be coming to a community looking for a unique experience (Florida 2002). Those residents tend to welcome and embrace the history and character of a community. Because of this, residents who might otherwise only serve to drive up rent prices can also be mobilized to preserve and protect the neighborhood's traditional character or identity. For example, in Jamaica Plain, even while JPNDC did not embrace the fight against Whole Foods, staff members did try to make contact with the individuals supporting the "Whose Foods?" campaign in order to bring them in on affordable housing campaigns, appealing to the same values they had just expressed. In crafting a clear vision for the community, long-term residents can articulate what they enjoy about their neighborhood, what they wish to preserve, and what they wish to change; they can then share that vision with newcomers and establish a common vocabulary for talking about the community.

This narrative-crafting can be bottom-up or top-down. In Columbia Heights, most of the visioning work for the neighborhood was initiated by the local government. For Jamaica Plain, while the government certainly played a role in the process of land disposition and transportation planning, the momentum came more from local nonprofits and community leaders. Nonprofits held design charrettes and then brought that information back to the city to strengthen the case for their proposed land use. Intermediaries such as Washington's Neighborhood Advisory Boards and the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Council possessed sufficient gravitas to shift or stymie city strategies for the community. This power has its roots in community unity. When a neighborhood is riven by internal debates, it cannot properly mobilize to protect its interests against external forces. It is important that this conversation about identity, whether initiated by government or nonprofits, should expand beyond the most active and accessible stakeholders so as to include a broad swath of the public.

While the heart of this work lies in fostering conversations and relationships, outward symbols are also important in emphasizing the character and values of an area. These symbols may be developed at a later stage in the process. The conversations behind them, however, must come at the beginning of the transition period, when a community is most cohesive and has the most power to shape approaching changes. The following tools are useful in developing the shared narrative:

➤ *Community visioning or planning meetings.*

Community planning meetings may be initiated by local government or a socially-minded developer, but as in the case of Jamaica Plain, community groups can conduct their own planning meetings as well. CDCs and nonprofits have had success with this model in many communities, either in coordination with the city or as a means of spurring a response from city officials. Rather than merely imparting information about new developments to community members, these meetings should foster discussions of what the community could be. Sometimes, as with Columbia Heights, these meetings have involved a full weekend of work which strongly emphasizes design, the look and feel of a place. These meetings are highly interactive and often festive. While the free flow of ideas should be a primary goal at these meetings, it is important to acknowledge that they remain ideas – organizers need to be careful not to overpromise and leave attendees with the impression that everything will be executed as dreamt. Additionally, it is important to ensure that a diverse cross-section of the community is represented. This may involve hosting meetings at different times and locations, ensuring translation services are available, and employing careful moderation to bring in a variety of voices. The ideas generated by these meetings should also be published or distributed in some form, both to show attendees that their ideas have been heard and to share these ideas with residents who did not attend the meeting.

➤ *Neighborhood gatherings: block parties, festivals, community events.*

It is always helpful to remind a neighborhood that it is, in fact, a community, and celebratory events are an excellent way of doing so. In Columbia Heights, the creation of Columbia Heights Day has been a triumphant example of such a gathering. In part because the event was initiated by newcomers, many long-term residents and business owners were initially skeptical, but have increasingly been won over and participate in large numbers. Not only does this event bring people together inside the community and highlight local businesses, but it also attracts people from around the city and emphasizes the positive narrative of Columbia Heights. It is worth noting that Columbia Heights Day was not initiated by an existing organization at all, but came about through the efforts of individual community members who later created an organization solely to host the event, collaborating with other community groups and the city as the event progressed. In Jamaica Plain, the regular Youth Night Out events conducted by the Hyde Square Task Force serve a similar purpose, though on a smaller scale. Community organizations can not only create their own events but also facilitate them by lending

block party supplies and encouraging their clients to take advantage of the opportunity to gather neighbors.

➤ *History trails, markers, and tours.*

While history trails and similar efforts are generally the purview of specialized groups rather than of community development organizations, they can play a vital role in crafting a shared community narrative. In Columbia Heights, the history trail which now winds through the neighborhood explicitly emphasizes diversity. In Jamaica Plain, regular neighborhood tours conducted by the historical society herald the activist history of the neighborhood dating back to the 1970s. All of these efforts contribute to the shared vocabulary of events, values, and locations which define a community. This type of narrative-building is often initiated by historical interest groups with a narrow focus, and yet it plays perfectly into the broader work of community building and should be actively encouraged and incorporated.

3.) Forge active partnerships.

Strong collaboration between community organizations was one of the greatest strengths of Jamaica Plain. These organizations did not always share the same priorities and sometimes disagreed with one another, but more often than not they were able to work together productively. In Columbia Heights, long-established community groups such as the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH) and Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) have operated at more of a distance from the newly emerging civic associations and social action groups. The absence of closer partnerships may have inadvertently reinforced stereotypes of both long-term and new residents. Building partnerships across social issues and organizations can strengthen the shared vision described above and enable more concerted action. New organizations are often more eager than their well-established counterparts to initiate such partnerships; an organization's responsiveness to such overtures, however, is at least as important as the overture itself. The city, too, can play a unique role in fostering partnerships, thanks to its inherent authority to call parties to the table. Local grant-writing efforts may also serve as a catalyst for the city to bring a coalition to the table. In the process of developing such partnerships, the following guidelines are recommended:

➤ *Keep the focus local and specific.*

Partnerships are difficult to build and to manage, but the more targeted in scope they are, the more successful they will be. For all the differences we see across communities, there are certain universal desires – basic safety, opportunities for kids, and convenient

access to needed amenities – which will pull together disparate parties. In both case studies, public safety was an excellent initial driver for bringing individuals and organizations together. In Jamaica Plain, residents collectively patrolled a park which served as a frequent haven for drug dealers. By focusing on an immediate problem quite literally out their front door, neighborhood organizers were able to involve new players and provide a tangible demonstration of change – their actions brought the attention of the police and elected officials, and the dealers were quickly forced out of the park.

➤ *Be open to temporary and non-traditional partnerships.*

While strong, lasting partnerships certainly have a place in community development, the firm ideological alignment they require is somewhat rare; openness to looser partnerships creates more frequent opportunities to benefit from them. Partnered organizations need not agree on all parts of a community's development. In Jamaica Plain, community development organizations would clash on one issue and join forces on the next, and this fluidity allowed coalitions to mobilize even when participants had imperfectly aligned values. Moreover, all community members – residents, workers, businesses, and government – can be considered as potential partners; more narrowly focused goals for partnership actually broaden the pool of potential partners. For such partnerships, churches and other faith-based organizations can be particularly fertile grounds. Temporary, targeted partnerships can be as valuable as long-term alliances; the wider array of participants they attract can also facilitate longer-term alliances that may not otherwise have formed.

➤ *Ensure blended representation on committees and boards of directors.*

A board of directors requires a combination of technical and issue-based expertise, fundraising prowess, and community representation; a deficit in any of these three areas will weaken the organization. The organizations I spoke with faced challenges not only in blending the representation on their boards, but also in ensuring that all parties actively participated in conversations. Even when they have valuable or superior insights, community members may be intimidated into silence by the greater education or confidence of other board members, or by a real or perceived deficit in technical expertise, particularly in legal and financial matters. Yet despite the challenges, engaging both long-term and new community residents in leadership matters is an essential ingredient for success. City officials trying to form a steering committee or solicit public opinion should therefore also strive for blended representation. This will

likely require using several mechanisms for outreach, offering a variety of meeting times, and allowing for varying but equally valued degrees and methods of participation.

➤ *Invest actively in business alliances.*

Community transformation is not simply a question of housing, though many of the preservation recommendations focus on affordable housing. Businesses have a stake in this transition as well. JPNDC provides a wonderful model for fostering the development of small businesses launched by long-term residents. JPNDC owns and operates The Brewery, a landmark building which now houses their own offices, additional community programming space, and retail and back-office space for small businesses. Community organizations can also contribute to community transformation through a combination of technical assistance and micro-lending, which are relevant to both emerging and established businesses (Morgan 2012). Façade improvement can be particularly important when small businesses need to expand their client base.

➤ *Recruit locally for donors and volunteers.*

Oftentimes, the wellsprings for both donors and volunteers lie outside the community. In both Jamaica Plain and Columbia Heights, universities located beyond the neighborhood boundaries provided excellent recruitment grounds. This is natural, efficient, and effective outreach. At the same time, alongside such efforts, it is also advisable to recruit within the community from across the socioeconomic and racial spectrum. While the number of donors and volunteers may be lower as a result, it will enhance efforts to build community cohesion and place community members in a position to interact with others from outside their typical sphere. It is important to be sensitive to the potential for one segment of the population to become the financiers and another to become the workers. In both fundraising efforts and hands-on projects, organizers should consciously avoid this sort of informal division of labor.

4.) Develop conflict mediation mechanisms.

Community transformation is rarely bloodless. Racial and socioeconomic tensions go to the heart of embedded narratives far broader and deeper than the story of any one community. When local change rubs against this nerve, tensions can flare quickly. These conflicts are deep and important, and should not be ignored. At the same time, they can obfuscate the particular nuances of the local issues at hand.

Community conflict, however, is not limited to issues of deep moral or social significance. Small squabbles, old grudges, and personal conflict can spill over to an entire community and

disrupt a multitude of neighborhood projects. None of this is news to community leaders and organizers, but it remains difficult to push through the noise of conflict, meaningfully address the core issues, and move forward with the task at hand. In Columbia Heights, many of these conflicts have flared on a personal, rather than institutional level, slugged out on email listserves and in community meetings. From the fate of an informal dog park to the appropriateness of a wine bar and a 24-hour diner, residents have battled over the community's character. In one particularly significant debate, the redesign of a local park became a symbolic fight for ownership because of plans to fence and gate the park. Jamaica Plain has seen such fights as well, and community leaders spoke of an increasing resistance to their affordable housing efforts, and of the challenges of managing mixed-income communities.

Because simmering tensions can come to a boil so rapidly, successful intervention requires a history of trust as well as a more formal approach to conflict resolution. The best strategies seek to build trust early and resolve tensions before they become full-blown conflicts, but also include mechanisms to deal with conflicts when they erupt:

➤ *Open avenues of communication through facilitated, friendly discussions.*

Conflict mediation begins with positive, cooperative conversations that happen well in advance of specific troubles, so that residents and leaders have relationships in place to fall back upon in moments of strife. One of the most promising models of such pre-emptive mediation is the "Neighbor Circle," a community-building strategy which relies on small groups of neighbors meeting in casual settings to build relationships that can be mobilized for further action if needed. Hosted in local homes, groups of approximately ten neighbors meet for a series of three dinners aimed at answering three questions: (1) How did you get here and why do you stay?, (2) What do you like and dislike about your neighborhood/community? (3) Is there something we want to try and act on as a group after these dinners?

While the dinners are hosted in local homes, community organizations can facilitate them, ideally only through a background support role. At Lawrence Community Works, which pioneered reliance on Neighbor Circles as an organizing principle, the CDC contributes financially to the cost of dinners and provides childcare if needed. They also train neighborhood facilitators and pay a small stipend to hosts/organizers. In JP, the Urban Edge CDC made limited use of this approach, but it has been successfully implemented on a broader scale in several other cities across the country. Several of the communities which have seen the greatest benefits from Neighbor Circles have had high immigration rates. In these communities, cultural differences can draw particularly strong lines between neighbors – lines that can be rapidly blurred through a few

conversations on a personal level. In Massachusetts, along with Lawrence Community Works, the Chelsea Neighborhood Development Cooperation has seen Neighbor Circles successfully clear up several fairly egregious misunderstandings between neighbors. Neighbor Circles have also provided a pool of active, energized volunteers for future events and projects.

➤ *Train leaders and foster political participation.*

Training local leaders is a crucial aspect of community development for several reasons. Strong conflict mediation and cross-cultural communication components make such training particularly beneficial. While staff members for nonprofits and other community or service organizations can at times provide a “neutral” perspective which is both objective and trusted, such neutrality can be detrimental if perceived as an obstacle to understanding the community. Community leaders can provide leadership by helping bridge this gulf between organization staff members and residents. Among other national training opportunities, NeighborWorks’ Community Leadership Institutes are geared towards enhancing the resident and volunteer leadership capacity of member organizations and provide an excellent opportunity to advance in this sphere.

In addition to in-house training opportunities, community organizations of all types can look towards broader political engagement as an opportunity to develop both leaders and allies. Many communities, including the two studied in this research, have local political bodies where elections can be run in a very low-budget and targeted manner, yet still give the leaders elected a potent voice in the city’s political conversation. These sorts of formal leadership positions provide another legitimate venue for people to intervene in tense situations from a position of authority. City governments which do not already have some sort of local elected boards should consider forming them, or should develop local leadership in other ways. Mayors should also consider appointments to city boards and committees as a mechanism for developing leaders throughout the city.

➤ *Designate a point person or create a formal plan in mixed-income developments.*

For organizations concerned with affordable housing, the development of mixed-income communities provides a different type of space for conflict mediation. Emerging research by Robert Chaskin and Mark Joseph in the Hope VI neighborhoods of Chicago demonstrates the ways in which the structure of mixed-income communities can explicitly, if unintentionally, keep residents apart, such as different management

structures for residents of different tenure types, and also offers strategies for new structures and engagement mechanisms moving forward (Chaskin and Joseph 2010). In Jamaica Plain, the Urban Edge CDC has found that, in the context of mixed-income developments, stereotypes can quickly escalate into neighborhood-wide conflict and misunderstanding. By designating staff or management with explicit authority to engage in that space and facilitate mediation exercises when conflicts arise, they have been able to defuse tense situations. Because such situations can escalate rapidly, having such structures and practices formally in place is crucial for a correspondingly rapid and clear response.

➤ *Understand the role of social media.*

Social media also contributes to the speed at which conflicts can spread. The added buffer provided by impersonal mediums such as email lists and message boards can also increase the vitriol of such conversations. Columbia Heights has several very active community email groups which allow for wide and rapid dissemination of information. These groups have also, from time to time, played host to very public, fierce debates between individuals who dominate the conversation and escalate hostilities. Because these listserves and Facebook groups exist in a non-traditional realm, even community organizations engaged in online platforms of their own may miss these conversations, but tensions there often spread to community meetings and beyond, so it is important that community leaders remain engaged in the conversation both on and offline. In both case study sites, blogging has become increasingly important, and bloggers can exert great influence on the community conversation, particularly because few communities will sustain more than a handful of active blogs. Social media can facilitate cross-cultural communication; more fundamentally, they are an important arena for community discourse to which community organizations and leaders should pay careful attention.

5.) Advocate for legal tools to preserve affordability.

Using different tactics, both Columbia Heights and Jamaica Plain were able to preserve a considerable supply of affordable housing in the face of price increases. Though researchers continue to debate the particular degree of active displacement which occurs in transitioning communities, it is indisputable that price increases make it difficult for low-income individuals to rent or own in the community in the future. Even if no one is displaced, it may be incredibly difficult for low- and moderate-income families to move into the area. Immigrant neighborhoods, marked by more continual household turnover, may change character quickly if potential new entrants begin to look at other neighborhoods for their first home in the United

States. All communities and neighborhood populations change over time, and this change is not necessarily problematic, but it is unfortunate for an entire segment of the population to no longer have the option of living in a particular neighborhood. This is especially true when that same population once had no choice but to live in the neighborhood while it was in a period of decline. The goal of the inclusionary model of transformation is for long-term residents and new residents of all types to be able to enjoy some of the increased amenities of revitalization, from safer streets and better schools to an increased selection of retail establishments, without being priced out of the neighborhood.

Several policy tools, described below, are available to communities to preserve affordability. Some of these policies require legal action at the state or local level and are best used in cooperation with local elected officials or even other communities across the region. Others can be implemented more easily by local groups acting independently. Still others may already exist in the community, but may be poorly enforced or underutilized. For these tools to be effective, each must be used at the proper time. For example, homeownership counseling is an especially valuable tool for neighborhoods which remain quite affordable, since it can help local homeowners to be more secure in the event of a later rise in prices. Inclusionary zoning, on the other hand, is best for neighborhoods experiencing development pressures; used too early, though, it could backfire and squelch development altogether. In addition to making use of these tools, CDCs and others who develop and retain affordable housing should choose which sites to develop strategically, on the basis of emerging trends.

➤ *Tax abatement*

Tax abatement policies are undertaken at the local level and can be written in a variety of ways. In each case, however, the goal is to reduce the property tax burden experienced when housing values rise. This financial burden can become too much for homeowners or can spur landlords to increase rent prices. While most tax abatement policies are written solely for owners, there are ways to carefully shape such legislation for landlords as well. Tax abatement policies are most frequently offered for elderly residents who live on fixed incomes, but have also been developed for low-income residents and for those who invest in remodeling. From an affordability perspective, tax abatement attached to remodeled homes is the least helpful, as it only reinforces the stability of households with sufficient disposable income to fund renovations. This may be a useful tool towards community stabilization very early on, when trying to promote or trigger development. Community organizations can advocate for these policies on a local level, but the work should not stop there. In order to take advantage of the abatement, residents need to be informed about it and instructed on how to file an application. While both Boston and Washington have tax abatement policies in place,

neither city has a strategy for informing the public about them, nor have community groups been active in this regard. A clear campaign to increase utilization rates would extend the impact of this policy.

➤ *Tenant opportunity to purchase*

Legislation in both Boston and Washington give building tenants the first right of refusal to purchase their building collectively before it is sold to a private developer. The opportunity to purchase can be crucial when owners of low-rent apartment buildings look to sell their buildings for conversion to more expensive condo properties. At the same time, however, most tenants do not have the capital or credit-rating to make such a purchase, and they can be given a further incentive to move if a potential market-rate buyer offers them a relatively high lump sum of money to forego their right to purchase. It may genuinely be in the residents' best interest to take the lump sum payment if it allows them to settle elsewhere in a more beneficial situation. However, the long-term financial benefits of owning a property in a rising market may be worth more. Such a purchase requires considerable coordination among tenants and is most effectively done with the guidance of tenant organizers. The legal complexity often prevents truly grassroots attempts from being successful. In both cities, tenant organizers work on a city-wide level rather than just in one neighborhood, so community groups in transitioning neighborhoods may need to look outside their own boundaries for assistance in this regard. Such efforts are overwhelmingly more successful when supported by city officials and staff.

➤ *Inclusionary zoning*

Affordable housing legislation can be instituted on the state and local level, and local governments can create a similar impact through housing trust funds and other developer exactions. On the state level, Massachusetts has instituted a regulation that allows developers to overcome local zoning restrictions to construct affordable housing in communities where less than 10 percent of housing units are affordable to residents earning less than area median incomes (specific income requirements vary by subsidy). Locally, Boston's inclusionary zoning regulations require any developer building a complex of ten or more units to make at least 13 percent of those units affordable. Boston's generally tight housing market supports this approach, although other cities may not have this luxury and so are less likely to institute such policies. Even Washington, DC, which has an incredibly robust market, has not yet enacted inclusionary zoning, though they have considered the policy. While a challenge to pass,

this legislation can ensure that new construction does not completely skew the balance of affordability in a community.

➤ *Homeownership counseling and assistance*

The best time for low and moderate income individuals to purchase property is right at the beginning of a neighborhood transition. As home values rise, low-income families will likely be unable to purchase and may also find it more difficult to rent. Those who own homes at the beginning of the rise, however, are not only spared from the price increase but can also benefit from significant increases in home equity. Homeownership counseling should be part of more comprehensive financial awareness training aimed at helping potential owners accurately assess benefits and risks. Counseling can help potential homeowners to determine whether purchasing is appropriate for them at this point, and to identify resources which may be available for first-time homebuyers. In Washington, DC, an affordable home organization called Manna offers a particularly excellent example of how to counsel and support first-time homebuyers. Individual development accounts (IDAs) and other asset-building approaches can help households save for a purchase down the road. City governments can also offer financial assistance to help low-income households amass a down payment. Washington, DC, at a point when the city possessed an overabundance of vacant housing, took the even more dramatic step of raffling off properties to residents under terms which would require a stable residence in the community. Here, again, is an opportunity for partnership between city governments and local organizations: the local ties and training capabilities of the latter can be vital to the efficient and successful allocation of the city's resources for financial assistance.

➤ *Awareness campaigns*

Finally, community organizations can increase support for affordable housing policies through awareness campaigns. Because many of the above policies require direct political action and public support, their effective implementation requires broad-based coalition building. Awareness campaigns should therefore build on the community's shared narrative (discussed above) in order to mobilize people to action. Such campaigns have a long history in Jamaica Plain. Back in the 1970s, City Life/Vida Urbana sent organizers door to door to generate awareness of the potential affordability crisis in the community. Additionally, they took pledges from landlords to not raise rates beyond a cost-of-living increase. While the pledge effort received only a modest response, it raised awareness of the issue of affordable housing throughout the community. More recently, the Boston Tenant Coalition and JPNDP have partnered to

launch a campaign in support of affordable housing using newspaper articles and posters throughout the community. Efforts such as these mitigate the stereotypes surrounding affordable housing and can therefore not only increase explicit support for such developments but, importantly, diminish opposition efforts.

Conclusion

I began this paper arguing against the use of “gentrification” as a rhetorical tool to warn long-term residents of the changes brought on by their newer, wealthier neighbors. Such a strategy – no matter how effective politically in the short term – serves to categorize community members and create walls between neighbors. Yet in arguing against the use of this divisive term, I do not want to downplay the challenges faced by lower-income residents face during community transitions. I want to be very clear – the pangs of community transition are real and deep. Residents may be financially unable to stay in their own homes or feel so disconnected from new trends that they are left adrift and are uninterested in staying. Our efforts to promote equitable, prosperous, sustainable communities are rooted in the hope that all residents will have a stake in their neighborhoods, and full access to their amenities. To exclude those long-term residents who have borne the worst of times in inner-city neighborhoods from new opportunities and resources in these communities would be the height of injustice.

And, yet, neighborhoods change. This is an inevitable facet of the urban experience, and the neighborhoods now wrapped up in the gentrification debate have seen several distinct permutations of community life in prior generations, across both ethnic and economic divisions. This is the lifeblood of cities, the mechanism for their growth, and their hope for the future. A community preservation strategy which aims to freeze demographics in place is neither realistic nor desirable. Moreover, long-term residents in disadvantaged communities are often the very people fighting the hardest for change – improved public safety, better local schools, more transit options, increased retail availability. New attention and new residents, particularly ones with more disposable income, bring the resources needed to accomplish just such goals.

We need a third way. This paper has sought to identify tested strategies which mitigate transition costs to long-term residents while still capturing the fiscal and political benefits for the broader community. These strategies are a menu of options rather than a fixed path, and should be used in the combination most sensible for each distinct neighborhood. Despite their diversity, the strategies on this menu share the goal of forging a new, blended community in the midst of transition. Achieving that goal requires conflict, compromise, and conciliation. It is neither an easy nor a swift path, and there will always be individuals, both long-term residents and newcomers, who dismiss or resist their neighbors. The vast majority of residents, however, simply want a secure and sustaining *home*. That’s a fight no one has to lose for everyone to win.

Works Consulted

- Allis, Sam. 2011. "Change Has Long Helped Spice the Broth in JP." *Boston Globe*, February 19 (www.boston.com/yourtown/boston/jamaicaplain/articles/2011/02/19/changes_add_flavor_to_jamaica_plain/).
- Boyd, Michelle. 2000. "Reconstructing Bronzeville: Racial Nostalgia and Neighborhood Redevelopment." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 22, no. 2: 107-22.
- Chaskin, Robert, and Mark Joseph. 2010. "Building 'Community' in Mixed-Income Developments: Assumptions, Approaches, and Early Experiences." *Urban Affairs Review* 45, no. 3: 299-330.
- Clay, Phillip L. 1979. *Neighborhood Renewal: Middle-class Resettlement and Incumbent Upgrading in American Neighborhoods*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Coston, Wanda Brendette. 1984. *The Stages of Gentrification and Neighborhood Revitalization: A Case Study of the Dennison Place and Victorian Village Neighborhoods, the Near North Side Community, Columbus, Ohio*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Cowley, John. 1977. *Community or Class Struggle?* London: Stage 1.
- Florida, Richard. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books.
- Freeman, Lance. 2005. "Displacement or Succession?: Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods." *Urban Affairs Review* 40, no. 4: 463-91.
- . 2006. *There Goes the 'Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Freeman, Lance, and Frank Braconi. 2004. "Gentrification and Displacement: New York City in the 1990s." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70, no. 1: 39-52. Glass, Ruth. *London; Aspects of Change*. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964.
- Gilbert, Ben W. 1968. *Ten Blocks from the White House: Anatomy of the Washington Riots of 1968*. New York: F.A. Praeger.
- Guerrieri, Veronica, Daniel Hartley, and Erik Hurst. 2010. "Endogenous Gentrification and Housing Price Dynamics." University of Chicago and NBER, May 6 (http://popcenter.uchicago.edu/pdf/housing_stanford_final_erik.pdf).

- Hill, Kelly, and Colette Pozzo. 2005. "Managing Neighborhood Change: Best Practices for Communities Undergoing Gentrification." *NeighborWorks America*, April 20 (www.community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/paper-hill-pozzo.pdf).
- Hyra, Derek S. 2008. *The New Urban Renewal: The Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Irons, Meghan. 2011. "A Market Goes Upscale, as Does Jamaica Plain Itself." *Boston Globe*, January 20 (www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/01/20/a_market_goes_upscale_as_does_jamaica_plain_itself/).
- Kennedy, Maureen, and Paul Leonard. 2001. *Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices*. Discussion Paper. Prepared for the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and PolicyLink.
- Krueckeberg, Donald. 1995. "The Difficult Character of Property: To Whom Do Things Belong?" *Journal of the American Planning Association* 61, no. 3: 301-9.
- Lees, Loretta, Tom Slater, and Elvin K. Wily. 2008. *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ley, David. 1996. *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, Myron A. 2004. "Government Policy, the Local State, and Gentrification: The Case of Prenzlauer Berg (Berlin), Germany." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26, no. 1: 89-108.
- Merry, Sally Engle. 1981. *Urban Danger: Life in a Neighborhood of Strangers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Morgan, Jeffrey. 2011. "(Re)vitalizing Inner-City Neighborhood Business Districts." Working Paper. Cambridge, MA: Joint Center for Housing Studies, February 6 (www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/w12-1_morgan.pdf).
- Most, Doug. 2006. "Anything but Plain." *Boston Globe*, January 8 (www.boston.com/news/globe/magazine/articles/2006/01/08/anything_but_plain/).
- Pattillo, Mary E. 2007. *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Putnam, R. D. 2007, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture." *Scandinavian Political Studies*, no. 30: 137–174.
- Quillian, Lincoln. 1999. "Migration Patterns and the Growth of High-Poverty Neighborhoods, 1970-1990." *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 1: 1-37.
- Schwartzman, Paul. 2008. "A Rapid Renaissance in Columbia Heights." *Washington Post*, March 4 (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/03/AR2008030303278.html).
- Smith, Neil. 1987. "Gentrification and the Rent Gap." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, no. 3: 462-5.
- Sumka, Howard. 1979. "Neighborhood Revitalization and Displacement A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, no. 4: 480-7.
- Vanderleeuw, J., Liu, B. and Marsh, G. 2004. "Applying Black Threat Theory, Urban Regime Theory, and Deracialization: The Memphis Mayoral Elections of 1991, 1995, and 1999." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, no. 26: 505–519
- Vigdor, Jacob L. 2002. "Does Gentrification Harm the Poor?" *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs (2002)*, pp. 133-182
- von Hoffman, Alexander. 1994. *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 2001. "A Burdensome Gift: 1200 Irving Street and the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights, Washington, DC." Washington: Fannie Mae Corporation (www.community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/report-vh_case-studies.pdf).
- Walks, A., and M. August. 2008. "The Factors Inhibiting Gentrification in Areas with Little Non-market Housing: Policy Lessons from the Toronto Experience." *Urban Studies* 45, no. 12: 2594-625.
- "Whose Foods? / Whose Community?" The Coalition for an Affordable & Diverse JP (<http://boycottjpwholefoods.org/>).
- Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: Norton.
- Wilson, William Julius, and Richard P. Taub. 2006. *There Goes the Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic and Class Tensions in Four Chicago Neighborhoods and Their Meaning for America*. New York: Knopf.

Zukin, Sharon. 1982. *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Interviews

Mary Ann Bibbs

Columbia Heights resident
Washington, DC

Kathy Brown

Boston Tenants Coalition
Boston, MA

Katherine Carter

Columbia Heights resident
Washington, DC

John R. Chambers

BloomBars
Washington, DC

Alma Couverthie

Lawrence CommunityWorks, Inc.
Lawrence, MA

Thomas Dawes Jr

Business Development Director
Development Corporation of Columbia Heights
Washington, DC

Leila Finucane Edmonds

Director of National Initiatives and Applied Research, NeighborWorks America
Former Director, DC Department of Housing and Community Development
Washington, DC

Jeanne Fekade-Sellassie

Director, National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling Program,
NeighborWorks America
Washington, DC

Mossik Hacobian

Executive Director, Higher Ground
Former President and Executive Director, Urban Edge
Boston, MA

Sergio L. Herrera
President, Columbia Heights Day
Washington, DC

Kelly Hill
Principal, Nexus Research Group
Atlanta, GA

Ann Houston
Executive Director, The Neighborhood Developers
Chelsea, MA

Young T. Hughley, Jr.
CEO, Resources for Residents and Communities
Atlanta, GA

Kristen Hunter
Jamaica Plain resident
Boston, MA

Derek Hyra
Associate Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech
Washington, DC

Lori M. Kaplan
President & CEO, Latin American Youth Center
Washington, DC

Lisa Kralovic
ANC 1A01 Representative
Washington, DC

Andrew Krieger
Columbia Heights resident
Washington, DC

Chrystal Kornegay
President and CEO, Urban Edge
Boston, MA

Nancy McArdle
Civil Rights Project of Harvard University
Boston, MA

Erik Nordbye
Research Associate
Emmanuel Gospel Center

Ines Palmarin
Senior Planner, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Boston, MA

Julie Polter
Associate Editor, Sojourners Magazine
Washington, DC

Colette Pozzo
Impact Analyst, NeighborWorks America Field Operations
Atlanta, GA

David Reiersen
Senior Project Manager, Homeport
Columbus, OH

Kyle Robidoux
Associate Director of Community Organizing
Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation
Boston, MA

George Rothman
President & CEO, Manna, Inc.
Washington, DC

Robert Schubert
Columbia Heights Community Marketplace
Washington, DC

Ruth Sparks
Columbia Heights resident
Washington, DC

Ken Tangvik
Director of Program Development, The Hyde Square Task Force
Boston, MA

Brett Theodos
Research Associate, Urban Institute
Washington, DC

Alexander von Hoffman
Senior Research Fellow, Joint Center for Housing Studies
Boston, MA

Anthony Williams
Mayor of Washington, DC (1999-2007)
Washington, DC

Jeff Zeeman
North Columbia Heights Civic Association
Washington, DC