

On gentrification in los angeles

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The poor condition and high crime rate have caused nearly unanimous support from the residents for some form of government intervention in the area, though the extremity of the proposed redevelopment has community members uneasy about their future. In an article titled America's Worst Housing Project is Being Gentrified by Mike Pearl via internet-based fringe media outlet Vice the author argues that gentrification's benefits only extend to those who can afford the rent hikes that inevitably accompany redevelopment.

As Pearl sees it, " history teaches us that when your dilapidated housing project gets revalidated, you do not get to stay unless you stop being very poor". The City of Los Angeles currently maintains a required ratio of one subsidized housing unit for each that is rented at market value, however the prominent real estate blog Curbed LA questions this statement, asserting that " This isn't the first effort to tear down and fancily a crumbling housing project, but it is the first time such a large project has been undertaken without kicking all of the current residents out first".

With understandable skepticism many residents of Jordan Downs believe that the gentrification may drive the low income inhabitants out of the area with no alternative options for housing. This was the case in Chicago Cabin Green district, in which 80% of low income residents were driven out by more affluent residents willing to pay high prices for the land. Jordan Downs native Juanita Sims, a four decade long resident of the projects, commented " I'm not afraid to move, but what my fear really is is: Where"?

The Housing Authority for the City of Los Angeles (HACK) attempted to quell the fears of Jordan Downs occupants by stating that all residents "in good standing" would be allowed to remain in their units until the day that they were relocated to an apartment in the new buildings. The extremely vague wording of this decree did little to placate the uneasy residents, as the term "in good standing" places a huge amount of discretion in the hands of the housing authority.

Community outreach group SHIELDS for Families has been on site in Jordan Downs recently to prevent abusive renting policies. In their words, the city has begun "a new enforcement of old rules", recently evicting several people for violations that they had been committing for the entire p of their occupancy at the complex. Things that previously had gone unnoticed such as bad housekeeping, or violations of the no pet policy have recently landed several people with evictions.

LA Times author Jessica Garrison commented in her article Bumptious Makeover Planned for Old Housing Project "It will be an enormous challenge, with success likely to be measured in tiny increments," further noting that "only 47% of adults at Jordan reported any wages to the housing authority last year". Though the challenges of this project are numerous, however the benefits to the community may be equally great in magnitude, provided that students are given fair opportunities to remain in the area at affordable prices.

Between the initial stages of planning the project Jordan Downs has seen a 53% drop in violent crime and zero homicides in the past 18 months. To

further assist in transitioning from dilapidated urban decay to the " Vibrant Urban Village" that the redevelopment's Faceable page promotes, the LA Housing Authority has begun funding community growth by hosting classes at the Jordan Downs Community Center.

These courses include computer skills, financing parenting and even high school equivalency adult education. Career counseling has also been available to residents like Cynthia Gill who told Nap's All Things Considered that [after receiving career counseling] " When go to an interview, know how to present myself, how - what to say, what questions to ask and to know to ask questions and how to dress and how to carry you resell".

The Los Angeles Housing Authority bolstering of community development funds in recent months has assisted the redevelopment's goal to gain favor from the residents, however many outside parties remain staunchly opposed to the gentrification. The comment section on Vice's article generated an outcry of opposition to the redevelopment. One commenter named James Knowles asserted that " LA. is going to lie to the residents of Jordan Downs just like every other city lied to its residents with promises of a better life.

More or less it will go like this... 'Here is a section 8 voucher now, go find somewhere to live". Knowles has good reasons to suspect that this outcome is a possibility. Atlanta has had many similar problems with gentrification in recent years. In a publication by notable sociology professors Leslie Williams Reid and Robert M. Dolman, the authors observe that " Without question, rising property values have displaced older, long-term black residents as middle- and upper-income whites bid up property values [in Atlanta)".

The professors then refer to the Atlanta neighborhoods Kirkwood, East Lake and East Atlanta which are widely considered one of the clearest examples of gentrification in American history. The change in property value and economic status of the people these neighborhoods is believed to be caused in part by the aging local population (allowing for an abundance of vacancies), lose proximity to downtown, opening opportunities for new development and the desirability of the surrounding metropolitan area. Jordan Downs has each of these factors in common with Atlanta.

At this point it is too late for the residents of the Jordan Downs Housing projects to Stop the redevelopment from happening the developer has applied to the federal government for a \$30 Million loan for seedmoneyto fund the project, and the HACK has approved the plans to begin construction. Despite the best efforts of people on all sides of the issue to reverent massive gentrification from consuming the area, it is impossible to ignore the tell tale signs that the poor residents will be shunned and driven out as the desire for economic growth continues.