ABSTRACT

Many public housing developments have become infamous places of extreme racial violence; troubled housing developments have been physically designed to separate races, classes and incomes. The social image and design of public housing have to change. They have to change in the minds of policy makers, city planners and American citizens. Developments in the city of Boston, Massachusetts show current examples of physical decay of poor and mismanaged public housing.

One dramatic and extraordinary effort to change the image and design of public housing occurred at the Dorchester development formerly known as Columbia Point. Built in 1954, Columbia Point was once a stable community of low-income working families. Ten years later, this stability began to declined due to poor management, inadequate public housing policy and finance, and a troubled Boston Public Housing Authority. By 1979, the development was a haven for drug dealers, vandals and criminals. Concentrated with the very poor, a third of Columbia Point families remained only to be neglected by police and deprived of other basic services. Physically, it was in great disrepair. Most of the buildings were boarded up. Columbia Point became the “housing of last resort.”

Through the redevelopment efforts of residents and a private development firm, Columbia Point was transformed into the Harbor Point Apartment Community. Completed in April 1990, it is 45 acre site that offers 1,283 mixed-income units, 400 of which are reserved for low-income residents. Harbor Point offers low income and market-rate persons an alternative to the social space, image and design of public housing. This thesis investigates residents’ perceptions of a redeveloped community. From a sample of 85 residents which includes former Columbia Point and Harbor Point residents, respondents were asked to provide viewpoints on community services, indoor and outdoor spaces, and their experiences in a racially and economically mixed community. The author concludes that despite residents’ satisfaction of the Harbor Point Apartment Community and support of the concept of mixing incomes, new subsidized and market rate respondents still have negative perceptions of public housing, and of low-income minorities who live at Harbor Point. Former Columbia Point respondents also believe that mixing incomes benefits a community, but although residents are partners in the development, management unfairly treats subsidized residents in terms of leasing and in other management rules.

Thesis Supervisor: Lawrence J. Vale
Title: Professor of Urban Studies and Planning
PREFACE

This master’s thesis is just one critical step in the journey to understanding my life, passion and professional career in transforming America’s public housing into a vital resource for low-income families. For nearly 15 years I have lived in New York City public housing. Growing up in the “ghetto” was one of the most challenging and valuable experiences of my life. I was not only blessed with both a mother and father who helped raise me, but family members and extended family and friends that lived in and adjacent to my home. In my younger years, I lived in a place that was secure and comforting, and that was part of a larger community of small retail shops, warehouses, public schools, bus stops and train stations, churches and community centers.

My community did have its problems. Occasionally, gangs of youth from one development would terrorize youth of another. Police would raid the house of a nearby neighbor, arresting Mr. Jones because Ms. Jones would allege that her husband had physically abused her. Mr. Smith in Building 456 had been stabbed by some young 16 year old criminal who had robbed him for only $10. These were just some of the vivid pictures I remember seeing while living in public housing, but despite these random incidents, the community was in good physical condition. My family and I also enjoyed the hospitality and fellowship of our neighbors and we always looked forward to daily gatherings during summertime cookouts, block parties, and holidays. These events symbolized a cohesive community and we certainly took pride in where we lived.

In the early 1980's, the epidemic of crack cocaine struck my home turning a promising community, into a haven for crack dealers, crack users and ruthless criminals. Within two years, my family and I lived in one of the most infamous crack houses in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Every day, new faces would come into our building buying and selling crack. It would be heavily vandalized with graffiti, urine and garbage. The elevator would be inoperable for days and even weeks. One neighbor who was a
single mother of three, got addicted to crack. Within two years, her appearance changed from a healthy, full-figured African-American woman to a sickly crack addict. Seeing these painful experiences of a decaying neighborhood and of people falling prey to drug addiction, I was determined to not lower myself to the using of drugs, or committing any crime or act of vandalism. Although I was greatly angered by the changes, I was also very afraid; I was afraid that my life and the lives of my family and friends were in jeopardy. After school, I would sit outside on a wooden bench looking at my building’s hallway window and waiting for the drug users to leave the floor so I could safely enter my apartment. At 14 years of age, I was no longer safe and secure in my community. I was no longer happy and I knew that there were better places than this.

In my sophomore year of high school, my family and I moved out of public housing and bought a home in the Hollis section of Queens, N.Y. Nevertheless, the memories that I had had of public housing were unforgettable. Even after graduating from high school and pursuing college at the University of Virginia, I still recalled my life experiences in the “projects”. Four years ago, the anger, pain, and emotion influenced me to pursue a career in the field of City Planning. For the first time, I was able to study the dynamics of the city--its built form, social ideologies, policy and politics, economics and community development. Moreover, it gave me an opportunity to contribute to it. It gave me an opportunity to be part of the solution in aiding urban communities. Thus, city planning became a platform for addressing the needs of public housing residents. As a planner, I would not be only able to provide personal insight on the problems facing these communities, but also be actively engaged in reevaluating and reinventing public housing in the context of larger communities.

My last two years which were spent at Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been a rewarding experience. I am challenged, however with the task of addressing public housing redevelopment which is currently being reevaluated as part of our nation’s housing agenda. Moreover, I currently live at Harbor Point, which was once the state of Massachusetts’ most infamous public housing development. Seeing the results of
this transformation and researching its history has provided much reflection on envisioning what public housing communities could become in the next 20 years. I have talked to former Columbia Point residents who provided vivid descriptions about Columbia Point. I could relate to them because I have had similar experiences as a former public housing resident. I have talked to Harbor Point residents, both market rate and subsidized, and understand that they value safety and security, and appreciate the diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds. I have been able to talk to the developers, managers, and activists who have similar passions for helping low-income communities.

So in light of my experiences, both as a resident of public housing and as a planner, the study and work that I have done with residents at Harbor Point stands as a testament for those who feel passionately and honestly about their careers and pursuits. Public housing is a part of me, just as I am a part of it. Seeing young children at Harbor Point play on the grassy Mall and in the small playgrounds, seeing people sit on their front steps having conversations, and seeing an attractive waterfront is pleasurable and comforting. It comforts me to know that places can change, albeit only if we truly desire it. If we as planners, architects, teachers, professors, and residents only realize that people can make a difference, we solve half of our problems. Public housing developments around the country including my home, can only change if we truly conceptualize it. Thus, the future of public housing is near, and I am determined to help reshape it for the lives of low-income families and children.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST for bringing me this far and never leaving me in a time of need. I would like to thank my family: my mother and father for their love, my sisters and brother-in-laws for their support. My nephews for their energy and spirit. My aunts and God mother for their kind words. I would like to thank LaCreis for her devotion and commitment and Nayla Christine for her beauty, laugh and smile.
I would like to give special thanks to Roderick Gittens, who has been my mentor for over 6 years. You have been there for me from the time my college career began and you have given me so much professionally, emotionally and spiritually.

I would like to thank my advisor Larry Vale for all of his support and encouragement. Congratulations on receiving tenure and the best of luck. I would like to thank Melvin King. Your spirit, kindness and true leadership are those exact same qualities that I aspire to have. I would like to thank Tom Lisco at the Central Transportation Planning Staff for helping me to edit my thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank the task force and residents of Harbor Point. Without your insight, this thesis would truly have not been possible.
In Loving Memory of:
Lamont Frank Daniels
July 25, 1979-October 28, 1996
I am home in Heaven, dear ones:
Oh, so happy and so bright!
There is perfect joy and beauty
In this everlasting light.

All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed:
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in Heaven at last.
Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. ROMAN 15:13
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................. ii
Preface .................................................................. iii
Dedication ................................................................. vii
Tables and Figures ...................................................... xi
Timeline .................................................................. xii

## PART 1

1. **INTRODUCTION** ............................................. 1
   1.1 The State of American Public Housing ............... 2
   1.2 Literature Review. ........................................... 6
   1.3 Outline of Thesis ............................................. 8

2. **HISTORY AND LITERATURE** ............................... 11
   2.1 Concept of Public Housing ................................. 12
      2.1.1 Post Industrialization and the Working Poor .... 13
      2.1.2 Urban Renewal and Public Housing .............. 17
      2.1.3 Race, Class and Public Housing ................. 20
      2.1.4 Public Housing Moratorium, Public Subsidies and Housing Allowances ........................................... 25
   2.2 Projects and Public Housing Tenants ..................... 33
      2.2.1 Case of the Boston Housing Authority .......... 39

3. **REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS** ............................... 47
   3.1 Housing and Urban Development’s Vision for Public Housing. 48
   3.2 Alternatives to Public Redevelopment .................. 59
   3.3 Public or Private Redevelopment: Measures of Success . 63

## PART 2 ........................................................................ 73

4. **THE COLUMBIA POINT EXPERIENCE** ................. 74
   4.1 Social and Developmental History of Columbia Point 75
      4.1.1 People and Community .............................. 75
      4.1.2 Privatization and Visions for Economic Integration . 80
      4.1.3 White Flight, Busing and Columbia Point 83
      4.1.4 Columbia Point and Potential for Redevelopment Analysis of Findings ........................................... 89
4.2 Point of Change: Interpretations of Columbia Point’s Transformation
  4.2.1 Initial Interpretations
  4.2.2 Criticism
  4.2.3 Recognition and Support

5. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES.
  5.1 Methodology
  5.2 Respondents’ Characteristics
  5.3 Survey Results
    5.3.1 Resident Satisfaction
    5.3.2 Public Housing Image
    5.3.3 Resident Participation and Management
    5.3.4 Resident Perception of Household and Income
    5.3.5 Low-Income Housing Stock
    5.3.6 Safety and Security
    5.3.7 Resident Perception of Neighborhood
  5.4 Reflections.
    5.4.1 Mixed Emotions
    5.4.2 Reaching Common Ground

6. HARBOR POINT REVISITED
  6.1 Values Gained from Experience
  6.2 Implications on Public Housing Redevelopment
  6.3 Implications on Race, Class and Housing

Appendix
Bibliography
Tables and Figures

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

Figure 1.1 City Population as a Percentage of U.S. Population and Percent Minority Population ................................. 2
Figure 1.2 Employment Rate and Percentage of Persons Who did not Graduate from H.S ........................................ 3
Figure 1.3 Percentage of Families in Poverty and Percentage of Female-Headed Households with Children ............. 4
Figure 1.4 Households in Public Housing .................................. 5
Figure 1.5 Percentage of Poverty and Location of Public Housing Units ................................................................. 6

4. THE COLUMBIA POINT EXPERIENCE .................................. 74

Table 4.1 Building Types and Number of Units ............................ 98
Figure 4.2a Columbia Point before Redevelopment .................. 104
Figure 4.2b Columbia Point after Redevelopment ..................... 105
Figure 4.3 Diagram of Major Street Network and Harbor Point .... 106
Figure 4.4 Site Plan of Harbor Point ....................................... 107

5. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES ...................................................... 108

Table 5.1 Race and Ethnicity .................................................. 110
Table 5.2a Length of Residence: Harbor Point ............................ 111
Table 5.2b Length of Residence: Columbia Point ....................... 111
Table 5.3b Age of Respondent ............................................... 112
Table 5.4 Building Type ....................................................... 113
Table 5.5 Number of Bedrooms ............................................. 113
Table 5.6 Education ............................................................ 114
Table 5.7 Marital Status ....................................................... 114
Table 5.8 Respondent’s Satisfaction ....................................... 117
Table 5.9a-b Response to Physical and Social Characteristics .......... 119
Table 5.10 Public Housing Image ........................................... 124
Table 5.11a-b Perceptions of Household and Income .................. 129
Table 5.12 Perceptions on Low-income Housing Stock ............... 132
Table 5.13a-b Perceptions of Safety and Security ....................... 136
Table 5.14a-b Perceptions on the Drug Problem ......................... 145
Figure 5.1 Location of Survey Responses ................................. 149

6. CONCLUSION ...................................................................... 150

Table 6.1 Racial Composition 1993 and 1997 ............................... 159
Columbia Point Timeline

The large area of land south and west of Columbia Circle was originally known as Calf Pasture. Prior to 1945, the city used it primarily as a dump site and waste pumping station.

1945
The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is interested in developing the waterfront areas between Mt. Vernon Street and Dorchester Bay.

1951-54
At a cost of $20,191,513, M.A. Dyer Company develops the Columbia Point housing development (Project Mass. 2-20), a federally aided low-rent public housing development located in the North Dorchester section of the city. In April, on approximately 35 acres, 1504 dwelling units in 27 buildings are completed to accommodate 6,000 persons.

1959
Columbia Point houses 241 minority families. 99 percent of the four and five bedroom units are occupied by white families.

1962-64
Vacancy Rate as of May 31, 1963 -- 2.3 percent

Boston Housing Authority in conjunction with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and firm of Adams, Howard and Greenly of Cambridge forms a contract to discuss the improvement of the Columbia Point housing development.

On April 11, 1962, the Department of Public Health of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issues regulations designed to end the burning and dumping of refuse in these areas.

On April 23, 1962 a young child residing in the development is killed by a rubbish truck entering route to the dump.

Residents' opposition and protest causes the city of Boston to close its dump site on July 19. State legislation, which also becomes effective on the same date, applies to the privately owned dump.

A restraining order issued by the court as a result of an private firm's appeal, results in the opening of the Mile Road Dump.

Residents challenge appeal and in February 1963, the Massachusetts Supreme Court rules against the operation of the privately-owned dump. Clean fill only is only allowed to be trucked to the area.

1969-71
Vacancy rate as of 1971--44 percent

BHA assigns "problem" families to Columbia Point. Health Center and other social service agencies begin to locate at Columbia Point.

In 1969, plans to discuss the University of Massachusetts are underway.

1973-74
Vacancy rate as of 1974--29 percent
In 1974, University of Massachusetts Boston opens and Mayor White announces a $150 million revitalization plan for Columbia Point, the development’s first proposal for change.

Columbia Point’s Demographics
- 23 percent white
- 64 percent African-American
- 13 percent other households
- 66 percent of the households under the age of 20
- 9 percent over the age of 65
- 77 percent of the households on public assistance
- 62 percent receive AFDC

1975-76
Vacancy rate as of 1975-45 percent

Through modernization funds, BHA consolidates residents in better maintained structures. This results in full occupancy of 16 of the 27 buildings. 11 buildings are boarded up and welded shut.

In 1976, commitments to build the John F. Kennedy Library are made.

1978-79
Vacancy rate as of 1979--77 percent

In 1978, the Columbia Point Community Task Force is incorporated and serves as non-profit social service organization for Columbia Point residents.

Task Force begins to work with BHA and BRA on plans to redevelop Columbia Point.

In 1978, the Task force, the BHA and the BRA sign a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to redevelop Columbia Point with 400 subsidized units. The department of Housing and Urban Development assures Columbia Point residents that they will not be displaced by the redevelopment.

In 1979, 350 families including 70 elderly live in 300 of the 1504 units of the development.

1982-83
Request For Proposal (RFP) issued by the BRA.

Columbia Point Community Task force selects Corcoran Mullins and Jennison (CMJ) as developer of the project. CMJ proposes a mixed income development of market, moderate and subsided residents. Total development costs are $250 million. Massachusetts Housing Finance Association (MHFA) contributes $151 million in loans.

1984
Private management of Columbia Point begins.

1986
Land lease is signed in December.

1987
Demolition and construction starts in January. Housing Opportunities Unlimited assists Columbia Point residents with relocation during the reconstruction.

1988-89
Leasing starts. Due to a poor housing market, vacancy remains at about 20 percent.
Dispute emerges among former Columbia Point residents, the Massachusetts Tenant Association and Task Force over evictions and the leasing policy.

1990

Columbia Point redevelopment is completed in April. On a 45 acre site, 1283 units are constructed with 20 acres of landscaped and recreational areas, and 15 acres of driveways and parking.

Seventeen of the 27 buildings are demolished. Development now is made up of 214 new low-rise units, 760 new mid-rise units and 309 residential rehabs. Development is renamed the Harbor Point Apartment Community.

Development begins to attract interested market-rate families, professional and students.

1993

Vacancy Rate--10 percent

Harbor Point Demographics
   33 percent of households White
   47 percent of household African-American
   10 percent of households Hispanic
   10 percent of households Asian

Harbor Point is awarded the Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence In the Urban Environment.

1997

Vacancy Rate--1 percent

Harbor Point Demographics
   30 percent of households were White
   32 percent of household were African-American
   12 percent of households were Hispanic
   19 percent of households were Asian
   9 percent other households

Harbor Point is recognized again by the Bruner Foundation for continued success and sustainability.

sources:
Project Reference File, Urban Land Institute
Rebuilding Communities: Recreating Urban Excellence, The Bruner Foundation
Columbia Point Fact Sheet, 1963 BHA Central Files
Redeveloping or Preserving Public Housing: The Future of Columbia Point, Sharon Hsueh-Jen Lee
INTRODUCTION

The face of public housing is changing. Public housing developments in places such as Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta are undergoing substantial redevelopment by either public housing authorities, private firms or private/public partnerships. The efforts to change the face of public housing has now become the task of many different forces. It has become an effort of professionals to remodel the physical shells of massive buildings ranging in heights from 3 stories to 24 stories. It has also been an effort to remove the stigma that has existed in public housing for the last 30 years and recover memories of what public housing meant for the poor.

Conversely, there are other persons who are now just as influential in public housing’s redesign and redevelopment: they are public housing residents. Public housing residents are people who will live in the development, thus they are the ones who must walk through entrances of buildings during the day or evening, live in the apartment units, and ultimately witness its progress or failure. Furthermore, public housing redevelopment is evolving towards different planning techniques which involve low-density development, empowerment and training courses, income and racial mixing and homeownership. Gaining residents’ insight on the consequences of these changes is crucial to assuring the success of these new developments. Residents’ insight provides thought-provoking and significant information to planners and professionals on changing perceptions of public housing’s image, efficiency and management.
1.1 The State Of American Public Housing

Public Housing serves as a housing resource for very poor, female-headed households and families of color. Vital statistics of U.S. Cities from 1960-1990 show that our nation’s cities are heavily populated by the poor who have few economic opportunities and little support.

Figure 1.1
City Population as a Percentage of U.S. Population and Percent Minority Population


Figure 1.1 illustrates that families are steadily moving away from large cities, and that persons of color account for more than 40 percent of the population in cities. Cities have become home to large number of African-American, Hispanic and other ethnic groups from the Jamaica, Haiti and other Caribbean countries. One can also claim that the families who are economically mobile have moved out of the larger cities to live in smaller cities, suburban and town areas.
The unemployment rate of cities has increased from about 7 percent in 1980 to about 8 percent in 1990. The percentage of those without high school degrees has decreased to more than 40 percent within the last 30 years which in 1990. Although it has decreased, persons who lack high school degrees may account for high unemployment in U.S. cities. Although training and GED programs have increased, cities are becoming service and technologically-oriented and companies are competitively seeking persons with college and graduate level degrees.
Between 1960 to 1970, the percentage of families in poverty decreased from 17 percent to about 11 percent, but by 1990, the percentage had increased to about 15 percent. Furthermore, for the past 30 years, the percentage of single mother in urban communities has substantially increased to about 15 percent. Thus, urban communities are increasingly becoming populated by poor female-headed households with children.

*Public Housing’s Demographics and Location*

In urban communities, public housing serves these most vulnerable households. It is home to 1.2 million households whose average incomes are about $6400 per year. Residents pay 30 percent of their income for rent and the average rent payment is
currently about $169 per month. Figure 1.4 shows the demographics of populations who live in public housing.

![Figure 1.4](image)

**Figure 1.4**

Households in Public Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elderly/ no dependent children</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families w/ 1 child</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families w/ 2 children</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families w/ 3 or more children</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled/ no dependent children</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Public and Indian Housing, 1995

Elderly persons and families with three or more children account for more than half of the residents who live in public housing. Nearly half of all residents who live in public housing are African-American, followed by about 37 percent White, and 13 percent Hispanic. Moreover, about 51 percent of households in public housing are on public assistance receiving support from welfare programs and AFDC.²

---

² Ibid. p. 2-3.
Figure 1.5 illustrates that most of America's public housing is located in highly segregated and very poor neighborhoods. HUD reports that almost 30 percent of public housing residents live in tracts where fewer than 10 percent of the population is African-American, but more than 40 percent live in a majority African-American neighborhoods. In other words, public housing developments are located in the poorest and most racially segregated communities in the country. HUD concludes that most predictors of segregation are those associated with the demography and racial distribution of the surrounding metropolitan region rather than with the characteristics of the public
housing authority. In sum, African-American public housing residents continue to live in disproportionately minority neighborhoods.³

1.2 Literature Review on Public Housing and Columbia Point

Columbia Point, as Rachel F. Garshick puts it, made a 180 degree turn around. From 1979 to 1991, Columbia Point’s reconstruction transformed it into Harbor Point, a mixed income community that offers 400 units for subsidized tenant including former Columbia Point residents. Garshick’s study on Columbia Point’s redevelopment and tenant-management partnerships is part of a series of work that examines residents’ involvement during the process of public housing redevelopment.

There has also been research on residents’ satisfaction of public housing, public housing image and redesign, and privatization of public housing. Master’s candidate Sharon Hseuh-Jen Lee in her 1979 2-volume document, Preserving or Redeveloping Columbia Point argued that Columbia Point should be preserved and that income mixing would disrupt the needed housing stock for low-income people. Sharon Greenburger, Carolyn Brown, and others have explored homeownership opportunities and residents’ perception of community and space in current public housing redevelopments in Boston’s West Broadway and Bromley-Heath. Professor Lawrence Vale of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has extensively surveyed residents in comprehensive redevelopment projects in Franklin Park, Commonwealth and West Broadway, investigating issues of space, safety and security, and design. His qualitative interviews with residents has provided the framework for this study at Harbor Point.

Harbor Point is now made up of African-American, White and Hispanic families, as well as with families from 20 different countries. Although the majority of households are persons of color, demographically it is racially mixed. An African-American family

can live next door to a working class Indian family and a subsidized white single
mother. Former Columbia Point residents also live in the development making Harbor
Point economically diverse.

The survey poses questions to residents from different racial and economic
backgrounds. Initially there are key questions that I wanted to obtain from this research.
These are listed below:

1. How satisfied are market rate residents compared to new subsidized and former Columbia
Point residents?
2. Do all residents in the sample share some common problems at Harbor Point?
3. Does it still seem like public housing?
4. Who benefits most from the redevelopment: subsidized or market rate?
5. Can residents tell who is market rate and who is subsidized?
6. Do residents think Harbor Point is a good place to raise children?
7. What do they like most or like least about Harbor Point?
8. What are the three most common and serious problems at Harbor Point today?
9. Are residents comfortable with living in a racially and economic mixed environment?

1.3 Outline Of Thesis

This thesis is divided into two parts: Part one focuses on the history, literature
and projects involving public housing and redevelopment efforts. Cases in this section
are based upon both academic and professional accounts of public housing
developments that have undergone both physical and social change. Part two explores
one seminal case: the Columbia Point housing project. A sample of market rate and
subsidized tenants which includes former Columbia Point residents answers questions
concerning their experience in a private mixed income development.

Chapter 2 addresses the problems of public housing and the current
alternatives used by federal, local and private agencies to development public housing.
Housing acts of 1937, 1949 and 68, and the Brooks Amendment were used to increase the housing opportunities for the very poor. During the 1960’s and 70’s, decreased federal appropriations and Public Housing Authorities’ (PHA) manipulation of tenant selection policies and shortages of social services for low-income residents caused a decline in the maintenance of public housing. In this chapter, the Boston Housing Authority will be highlighted as a case for public housing’s decline and neglect.

Chapter 3 highlights several redevelopment efforts in the country. What are the pros and cons of public and private redevelopment efforts? Private redevelopment offers the alternative of mixing income, while local public housing authorities continue to push for the preservation of public housing. Does private redevelopment offer new and innovative approaches to community design and planning? Does a racial and social mixing environment solve the physical and social stigma of public housing? Redevelopment plans and current projects are discussed as well as current housing policy and HUD’s proposals for public housing.

Chapter 4 examines the history of the Columbia Point housing project. The birth, decline and rebirth of Columbia Point is told through the words of former tenants, archival documents and images. Oral and written accounts of the Columbia Point are addressed from as early as 1955 to its transformation into Harbor Point.

Chapter 5 explores contemporary issues facing Harbor Point’s redevelopment. This section provides general profiles and demographic information on residents, offers statistical analysis of residents’ responses, and correlates different opinions among former Columbia Point, market rate and subsidized tenants. Experiences of tenants are emphasized in this chapter to offer both quantitative and qualitative accounts of living in a mixed income environment.

Chapter 6 evaluates Harbor Point’s success in the context of future public housing redevelopment. Suggestions are based heavily upon residents-professional
relationships in urban and social design and the need for continual sampling and research on public housing residents’ perception of the urban space. What are the implications on public housing redevelopment? What are the implications on ideologies of race, class and housing? While answering these questions is difficult, the fifth and sixth chapters provide a preliminary set of issues and answers.
HISTORY AND LITERATURE
Since 1937, the federal government has sought progressive methods of assisting the housing needs of 'deserving poor.' The construction of publicly owned housing was intended to eradicate the slums in major cities such as New York, Boston and Chicago, reduce delinquency and supply jobs for a growing industrial country.

While projects were initially established by the federal government, power was often relinquished to local authorities which maintained their own management practices, finance and maintenance. During the 1950's and 1960's, public housing, managed under public housing authorities, became the victim of politics, segregation and poor social services. Public housing development lacked programs to support residents. Developments became places where divisions among race, class and income were a way of life for many residents. Divisions escalated with white flight into the suburbs, race riots, and busing laws making public housing more prone to neglect, disrepair and social problems.

This chapter explores the historical dimensions of public housing policy, design, and tenant occupation in the United States. Specifically, it addresses the numerous effects that changing demographics, federal policy and local politics have had on the physical and social conditions of public housing developments and their residents.

2.1 Concept of Public Housing

In the beginning, public housing was highly sought after because it was new and more desirable than slum housing. The federal government established programs to be used to eradicate communities that were in poor physical condition.
2.1.1 Post Industrialization and the Working Poor

Two major programs were established to supply housing needs for war veterans and families: the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932 and the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. Under the Emergency Relief Act, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was authorized to advance funds to limited-dividend corporations for housing. Its provisions were to “make loans to corporations wholly for the purpose of providing housing for families of low-income for reconstruction of slum areas. . .”1 Under this Act, it placed regulation of the corporation to state and municipalities and not the federal agency governing the loan. As a result only one state, New York, passed the necessary legislation to benefit from it. By 1933, the National Recovery Act was created to provide a broader objective to housing construction. With authorization by the President of the United States, a Federal Emergency Administration of the Public Works Administration (PWA) was headed by an Administrator to primarily “deal with the unemployment situation and by giving employment to workers in the building and industrial trade.”2 The Administration’s four other objectives were to furnish sanitary living conditions, eradicate or rehabilitate slum areas, demonstrate to builders, planners and the public the practicality of large-scale communities and to encourage decentralization of construction and operation of public housing. Under the exercise of eminent domain, which was used to take land for compensation, the federal government prescribed grants to municipalities for construction and repair.

---

2 Ibid; p 83.
Within three and a half years, the PWA's Housing division undertook 51 projects in 36 cities within 20 states. Nearly 22,000 units were constructed starting with over $36 million in funds provided by the 1933 Act and later by the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935. Average length of completion varied from 12 to 32 months depending on the project. Projects ranged in size from 1,622 units in New York City's Williamsburg (initially named Ten Eyck) Houses to 50 in Highland Houses in Wayne Pennsylvania. The average size of a development was about 442 units.³

Early on, most projects were built on slum clearance sites, yet the National Recovery Act of 1933 was challenged in a 1935 court decision in the case of United States v. Certain Lands in the City of Louisville (Kentucky), that stated that the federal government cannot use the power of eminent domain to for slum clearance and low-income housing. This influenced the Housing Division to develop on vacant land, but by the time of this decision more than 10,000 units of "substandard" housing had been demolished. Shortly after, a New York Court in New York City Housing Authority v. Muller allowed local authorities to exercise eminent domain, thus influencing local agencies to engage in selection of clearance areas and projects.⁴ The experiences of the PWA helped to set the stage for the National Housing Act of 1937 that helped to further reinstate the missions of its predecessors in generating economic development and public housing.

The Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937 (which was later called the National Housing Act of 1937) established provisions for adequate housing and employment in the United States. Introduced in both the House and Senate, the final draft of the bill justified the country's mission of supporting low-income families. On February 24, 1937, the final draft of the bill stated:

³ Ibid; p. 87.
There exists in urban and rural communities throughout the United States slums, blighted areas, or unsafe, insanitary, or overcrowded dwellings, or a combination of these conditions, accompanied and aggravated by an acute shortage of decent, safe and sanitary dwellings within the financial reach of families of low-income.

These conditions are inimical to the general welfare of the Nation by (a) encouraging the spread of disease and lowering the level of health, morale and vitality of large portions of American people; (b) increasing hazards of fire, accidents and natural calamities; (c) subjecting the moral standards of the young to bad influences; (d) increasing the violations of criminal laws of the United States and several states; (e) impairing industrial and agricultural productive efficiency; (f) lowering the standards of living of a large portion of the American people; (g) necessitating a vast and extraordinary expenditure of public funds, Federal, State and local, for crime prevention, punishment and correction, fire prevention, public health service and relief.  

During the Great Depression, development including housing construction was stagnant. While America as a whole suffered economically, the poor received the greatest burden. The seven conditions were the federal government’s means of influencing the social stigma and culture of poverty that was pervasive in poor housing. Housing was a means of eliminating one’s inability to live and work successfully and it was a means of changing adverse morals of a poor class American family. Yet at the same time it was a means of finding support for those families who had well-deserved values in valueless conditions.

The bill went further to state that the private industries alone cannot help to alleviate the problems of housing. The private industry which were suppliers of housing in the urban communities were seen as being too profit-driven to provide public housing for low-income families. Public housing was new and different. It was socially motivated and established a public agenda. Private industry, including conservatives who were opposed to public housing construction concluded that it jeopardizes private enterprise and the views of homebuilding. It was thus “contrary to the genius of the American people and the ideals they have established that government become landlord to its

---

1 Ibid; p. 89.
2 Ibid; p. 9.
citizens.” Public housing proponents prevailed with the intentions of helping families who were incapable of competing in a private market. They were uncompetitive and built to support deserving and promising families.

In the National Housing Act of 1937, the federal government set preferences on what types of persons would live in public housing. Catering exclusively to families, the amended act defined “families” as “consisting of two or more persons [ordinarily related by blood, marriage, or adoption] a single person sixty-five years of age or older, or the remaining member of a tenant family.] Families who qualified under that category were given a 5 to 1 or 6 to 1 income-rent ratio which stated that gross income at the time of the admission, less allowable deductions and exemptions, did not exceed five or six times the annual rent (including utilities) of the accommodations furnished to them. Although suited for low-income people, the Act set conditions that would attract working class families with low- to modest incomes, thus making public housing communities attractive and stable. These residents were considered desirable because they had stable salaries and were able to pay public housing’s minimum rent. Moreover, the guidelines were set to determine what was an appropriate standard dwelling unit as opposed to substandard living. For example, a standard unit is undilapidated when it has a toilet and bath inside the structure for the unit’s exclusive use as well as hot and cold running water. Conversely, a “substandard” unit had inadequate toilet and bath facilities and was in poor physical condition.

The 1937 act also created the United States Housing Authority (USHA) to establish public corporations or local authorities to develop and administer public housing. The federal government was in part active in the financial and carefully defined contractual agreements with local authorities. Projects were produced and

---

managed by the local authorities and the USHA. The USHA's primary goal was to make loans at a going rate of interest and annual contributions or one-time capital grants for acquisition, slum clearance and development. Since that act, a top-down approach to housing initiated public corporations and large scale developments. In 1949, an amended act was established to further the goals of local slum clearance, urban renewal and public housing construction.

2.1.2 Urban Renewal and Public Housing

The question of housing the poor was addressed towards the end of World War II. New York Senator Robert Wagner, again adamantly supportive of public housing programs, approached the Senate with new provisions for public housing reconstruction. This new program, unlike the Act of 1937, was given less favorable support. When the 80th Congress assembled, Jesse Wolcott who was a long time friend of private housing groups and who headed the House Banking and Currency Committee postponed looking at the bill until 1947. He was not supported by his committee to reject; one year later the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill was approved by both the House and Senate.

The bill received public support only in its general purpose to continue "housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shorted and clear blighted areas." It's success, however, were short-lived. Approved in July of 1949, the Housing Act of 1949 received more support because of its inclusion of private industry to clear blighted areas and develop properties. More than ten years later, building the economy of local cities was seen as just as desirable and more feasible than replenishing housing for the poor. Cities used urban renewal to promote

economic development. Private industry was reaching its boom, the economy was in full swing and cities were still a desired asset to the country. Subsequently, Congress made three motions to delete public housing from the act entirely—one motion was defeated by five votes, the second by only one vote and the third made by three votes. Public housing barely survived. Over the next ten years, public housing production would be a continuous battle between its defenders, Congress and private enterprise.\(^8\)

In the Housing Act of 1949, 810,000 units of public housing were to be constructed in a six year period. Despite the figure proposed for public housing, less than one quarter of these had been built by 1954. Much of the dissent and poor commitments to public housing construction were because of several players. The House Appropriations Committee originally was given little control over the authorization of funds for construction. The 1949 act declared:

The faith of the United States is solemnly pledged to the payment of all annual contributions contracted for pursuant to this section and hereby authorized to appropriate in each fiscal year, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the amounts necessary to provide for such payments.\(^9\)

Annual authorizations for 135,000 units per year were not to exceed $85,000,000 rising eventually to $336,000,000. These figures were based on long term contracts between the federal government and the local authority. Although there was some variation in Congress gaining control over the financial payments, the President had the right to approve fluctuations of public housing units from year to year. Figures for appropriation and construction could vary from 200,000 units to as low as 50,000.

Nevertheless, the House Appropriations Committee succeeded in controlling appropriations for public housing, and in a 1951 approval, the minimum standard of

---


\(^8\) Ibid; 19.

\(^9\) Section 305(a), amending Section 10(e), United States Housing Act of 1937.
50,000 units became the maximum number per year. For several years after, appropriations were retained at the 50,000 unit maximum with Congress proposing numbers of units as low as 5000 in one year.10

Under the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower, the demise of public housing continued. Eisenhower was unsupportive of the public housing programs but had little reason to eliminate it. Under his presidency, the Interstate Highway Act of 1953 was proposed for the construction of freeways that connected urban centers across the country. This initiated the clearance of areas or the urban renewal of areas that were related to government programs. As a result of such actions, his 1953 advisory committee recommended that public housing which at time was being scaled down in production, should be used for “families who have been displaced by urban redevelopment, rehabilitation and law-enforcement programs.”11 It was the only suggestion for public housing that the Eisenhower administration later advocated for displaced residents in the Housing Act of 1954.

Public housing advocates argued for a comprehensive process in urban renewal that linked development with local community plans. Senator Herbert Lehman complained, “you cannot have public housing unless you have slum clearance. Chances are you cannot get a slum clearance project in much less than two years, whereas the authority for public housing runs out in one years”12 Still, others argued that slum clearance exterminated the original ideals of public housing as means of supporting the deserving poor. Public housing was a means for locating the poor not by choice, but by direct upheaval of urban communities. The terms “blighted and slum” were subjectively used to define places which professional developers and local authorities saw as a nuisance

10 Ibid.; 23-25.
11 President’s advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs, 1954. p. 261.
to the economic progress of the city. In his book *Federal Government and Urban Housing*, R. Allan Hays explains:

*The struggles surrounding relocation tended to focus on the individual problems of displaced households in finding a new place to live. Yet these individual struggles often took place in the context of a neighborhood which was being destroyed by the renewal process. Not only were families uprooted, but a whole fabric of economic, social and political relationships was permanently disrupted. Families reacted differently to separation from their neighborhood. Some grieved in the manner described by Marc Fried. Others were glad to escape to better areas. But regardless of individual reactions, the urban renewal program was increasingly confronted with neighborhoods as organized entities fighting for their collective existence.*

Since the late 40’s, public housing had become an old and unfavorably viewed solution to poverty. With little federal support, and at the discretion of local authorities and city officials, residents were displaced by both private and public redevelopment projects. Finally, urban renewal was sometimes called “Negro Removal” since it disproportionately affected African-American families in communities that had been functional and stable. Destroying communities of color was a profitable venture that ignored the area's existing culture differences and housing conditions. Ultimately, public housing became exclusively for the poor.

### 2.1.3 Race, Class and Public Housing

Race and class were quite relevant to the transformation of public housing policy and the housing market in the United States. As a single complex ideology, housing was seen as means of eradicating slums, while promoting American values of home ownership and private enterprise. In turn, the federal government established housing provisions to provide citizens with safe and decent housing conditions. Contradicting this ideology, America was accustomed to maintaining racial segregation as an accepted way of life. In the 1960’s, most private housing markets explicitly

---

excluded persons of color from taking part in housing selections. Public housing authorities were similar in that their missions were not built upon mixing races, but creating “black projects” and “white projects”.

Race, Class and Housing as Ideologies

As ideologies, these three characteristics although separate in nature, have been connected to define a practice of racism and discrimination most evident in housing, community development and employment. With massive migrations of African-American and Hispanics to the north, employment discrimination led to urban populations that were severely lacking in employment, economic development and opportunities that supplied stable incomes and skills. R. Allen Hays asserts a similar argument and concludes:

> Discrimination of employment leads to disproportional concentrations of Blacks and Hispanics among the poor which leads, in turn, to an association between the characteristics attributed to the poor. This association leads to further discrimination since it reinforces the belief that such groups lack the character or intelligence for higher occupations. It also intensifies demands for geographical and social isolation of poor persons who are members of racial and ethnic minorities, and the notion of providing services to the poor in general becomes associated with racial integration of services.  

It was a vicious cycle that linked race with one’s income. Persons of color, particularly African-American were “risks” when considered for employment, services and other opportunities. Furthermore, the prospects of offering job opportunities to persons of color were slim to nothing. In many respects, providing adequate housing opportunities to families of color was also disproportional.

The private housing market had intentions on excluding persons of color from seeking housing opportunities, specifically in new suburban communities. Despite the efforts of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) which overturned the

---

11 Ibid. p. 27.
“separate but equal” policy, the Civil Rights Commission declared that “housing... seems to be the one commodity in the American market that is not freely available on equal terms to everyone who can afford to pay it.” White middle-class communities including working-class areas were unwilling to consider African-American and Hispanics as their neighbors. Private housing groups had reinforced and institutionalized these attitudes. Until 1950, it was part of National Association of Real Estate Board’s (NAREB) “Code of Ethics” to discourage integration. In article 34 of the code it stated:

A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in the neighborhood.

Even after deletion of this article, members of the board were sometimes expelled when they sold property to persons of color. Moreover, the NAREB’s Property Owner’s Bill of Rights gave them the right to not sell property to persons of color. Lack of home ownership opportunities and housing that was not insured or “redlined” by bank and insurance lenders, persons of color were undesirable and high risks in many communities. If you were African-American and poor, society placed two strikes against you. Thus, while some middle-class families of color were successful in obtaining adequate housing, a majority found themselves seeking housing opportunities in whatever areas they could obtain it. Because of urban renewal, displacement, and lack of economic opportunities, public housing became a refuge for those in desperate need of housing. African-Americans and other persons of color were denied equal access to housing because the private market acted from racial prejudices that were conditioned on assumptions of the threats to property values.

What this meant for public housing

Public housing received the aftershocks of private housing market trends. Built with a mission to provide housing opportunities for persons of color in the public sector, the Public Housing Administration was unsuccessful influencing total integration in projects. President Kennedy, in a 1962 executive order on housing, forbade discrimination of all FHA or VA-insured housing in federally owned or operated housing and in housing constructed with federal loans. Public housing’s lack of integration was unchanged even after the 1964 Civil Rights Act under Title VI, barred discrimination under any program receiving federal funding.

Still the PHA worked diligently to improve race relations in developments. They insisted that housing units be made available to African-American in proportion to their needs as compared with other groups, and that the housing be proximate to schools and physical facilities. They also continued research on finding success stories of racial integration. Several cities reported their success, namely New York, Los Angeles, Seattle and Newark, but the pattern was limited and racial segregation prevailed in local communities. Projects were mostly African-American or White. Furthermore, the numbers of African-American and Hispanics who applied to public housing increased. In 1952, persons of color comprised 38 percent of all residents. By 1961 it was up to 46 percent. By 1965, persons of color in public housing was slightly more than half of that population. Moreover, they were mostly poor, unskilled and service-less. Writing in his 1958 book, Shook-Up Generation, Harrison Salisbury concludes that despite the demographic changes in projects, conflicts still continued:

Before Red Hook Houses were built about twenty years ago, this was an Irish-Italian neighborhood with a long record of combat among street gangs of the same ethnic composition. The first tenants of Red Hook Houses were mostly Jewish. Conflicts broke out between native Irish and Italians and the incoming Jewish residents. Hostility was common among adults. There was gang fighting between adolescents.
Private housing was similar to public housing developments in that housing was strategically located and housed certain populations. In one example, Chicago's aldermen favored new construction of public housing in 1950s and 1960s, but disfavored the incursion of poor African-Americans in their wards. Local Jewish and African-American aldermen, fearing opposition from their middle-class supporters, rejected having public housing and a 'culture of poverty' placed in their areas. And on some occasions, projects were used by some aldermen as political tools against their enemies. Housing authorities in cities took different approaches to resolve racial problems in public housing. New York City's Public Housing Authority explicitly restricted numbers of Whites and persons of color in projects as a means to control the housing mix of racial groups. Race superseded residents' need for housing. Priority to projects was given to certain groups despite other residents desire to live in that particular project. Yet, even with the options of moving into a "black project" or white project" persons were still reluctant to live in these areas because of fear, security or comfort.

Moreover, land use law decisions that mandated provisions of public housing and other subsidized housing were strongly resisted by local officials in cities. Successful land use cases made clear links between cities' zoning regulations of minimum acreage standards and other regulatory bylaws to restrict subsidized housing. In such places as Lackawanna, Pennsylvania and Black Jack, Missouri, the court ruled that HUD has to take into account the racial and economic composition where subsidized housing will be built and that further segregation is impermissible. In

---

the Gautreaux v. Hills case, Chicago was most resistant to changing racial segregation. This case charged the Chicago Housing Authority and the City Council with racially motivated site selection practices. The Court ordered several steps to reverse the pattern.18

In events following the case, Mayor Richard Daley and the Chicago City Council repeatedly refused to approve public housing in white areas. The result was a virtual halt to public housing development in Chicago for several years until a further ruling was obtained. HUD’s ineffectiveness in creating public housing in Chicago was similar to the problems it faced in the nation. Despite the good intentions of federal law and federal policy, enforcing them was difficult. Strong local resident and local governments continued to make an impact on communities.

2.1.4 Public Housing Moratorium, Public Subsidies and Housing Allowances

Between 1939 and 1943, 160,801 public housing units were completed. In the early 50’s, production reached its peak at more than 58,000 units annually. In the early to mid sixties, local resistance influenced public housing construction with average production decreased to about 28,000 units annually. From 1968 to 1972, and following the enactment of the Housing and Urban Development act of 1968, nearly 375,000 units were constructed in the country. Seemingly, public housing production was at its greatest point, but expectations for its continual support ended. In January of 1973, President Richard Nixon declared a moratorium on all federally subsidized housing programs. Thus, housing that was in the pipeline to be completed would be the government’s final effort to create public housing. Its alternatives were a series of

---

housing supplements and subsidies for private development suited for low-income families.

The Section 235 Program

This program was established under the Housing Act of 1968 to assist families who were interested in ownership opportunities, but lacked suitable incomes to qualify for a mortgage. Supporters of Section 235 advocated homeownership as means of providing more stable communities and to cure the insurance lenders’ practices of “redlining”. They argued that public housing generated substandard living conditions and residents who had few incentives to improved their financial situations. The subsidy which covered the difference of the mortgage payment at the regular FHA interests rate, sought the help of the private sector rather than public authorities to support low-income families.

In one journalist’s expose, “Cities Destroyed for Cash” was a lurid title related to Section 235 program in Detroit, Michigan. Other critics claimed similar arguments stating that these programs did not serve the interests of the community, but the private interest of realtors, builders and mortgage bankers. One case summarized the abuse of the program in a home ownership purchase:

In a typical case, the real estate operator would buy up a number of rundown or abandoned buildings in an inner city slum. He would make sufficient cosmetic repairs to make the buildings temporarily presentable. An FHA appraiser - often a fee appraiser - would inflate the appraisal value, occasionally for an illegal kickback. The operator would find an aspiring low-income family with little knowledge of the responsibilities of home ownership. The bank would make the loan, knowing, of course, that FHA would step in, in case of default. The operator would take his money and disappear. Later the homeowner would discover that his home had many substandard conditions, conditions more expensive to correct than his limited budget permitted. Having only $200 in the deal, and facing huge expenses and protracted wrangling, the homeowner would
abandon the property and disappear. And another problems home went into the FHA inventory. ¹⁹

Each player led to the problem portrayed in this example. The FHA was willing to relaxed its standards. This allowed realtors to do little renovation of the property and earn quick profit. Low income residents had no training in owning or managing a home and made down payments as low as $200, which in some cases were paid by the realtor. Although inspired by the opportunities of homeownership, the necessary and costly home expenses exceeded their limited budgets. Many families opted to abandon the properties.

Another analyst reported that over a 10 year period, the rate of foreclosures rose at a rate of 15,000 per year between 1971 and 1975, but thereafter declined rapidly at a yearly rate of 4900. As of 1979, about 80 percent of the foreclosures occurred early in the life of mortgages. This analyst concluded that in later years FHA placed more emphasis on screening of low-income applicants, and in most cases families were either able to maintain their payments or sell to others who could. ²⁰

The Section 236 Program

As a counterpart to Section 235, this program was authorized to provide annual subsidies to private lenders rather than government loans. This was used to reduce budgetary impacts. Subsidies were not paid as direct rent supplements to residents but developers were granted loans at markets rates plus 1 percent interest. The government made up the difference in payments to the lender. Tenants were allowed to pay basic rents based on the 1 percent interest. Families for whom 25 percent of their income was less than or equal to the fair market rent were ineligible for

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 113-14.
the program. In 1972, the Surveys and Investigation Staff of the House Appropriations Committee investigated the Section 236 program finding flaws in it operation. These were: (1) the problems of site selection; (2) problems related to motivation and qualification; and (3) problems of excessive costs and rents.

Local communities showed much opposition to Section 236 multifamily programs mainly because it generated negative attitudes similar to those related to public housing. In 1960’s, Section 236 was used to allow public housing authorities to select and relocate public housing projects in certain neighborhoods. Given past stigmas of older projects and their impact on neighborhood residents, Section 236 was considered a revival of the original and unaccepted public housing program. Thus, projects were further concentrated in central or inner city areas.

Section 236 was sponsored by three types of organizations; non-profit corporations, limited dividends, and profit making corporations and partnerships. The attempts of non-profit organizations, sometimes supported by local churches, were quite altruistic, but these persons lacked expertise in housing construction and marketing. Limited dividends and for profit companies, who made up the majority of the developers, used multifamily development not as a mean of getting a return on rental income, but as a means of sheltering income from taxation. These properties declined in value much faster than other market and conventional properties, allowing developers to recover losses for tax purposes. Developers also enjoyed tax-free shelter income during the time the property was held.21

The third problem was the costs and operating escalations of Section 236. Developers sought to inflate construction cost to gain maximum subsidy payments on projects. With lack of local data and laxity from administrative offices, HUD was

---

20 Ibid. p. 120-21.
unable to efficiently regulate these costs. Developers also manipulated HUD offices by obtaining low-estimates of operating cost. When approved, developers would insert higher cost that were later supplemented by higher rents. With the steadily rising costs, low-income tenant’s incomes were short of keeping up with expenses. As a result, Section 236 excluded a market of eligible families, and families already in the program lacked sufficient maintenance and services. Given the expectation of providing adequate housing through the private sector, this program required large public subsidies that placed large sums of public dollars into the pockets of wealthy investors.

Housing Allowances And the Section 8 Program

In 1970, President Nixon granted research funds to determine the success of housing allowances. This legislation marked the beginning of the Experimental Allowance Program (EHAP), which was considered one of the most expensive and longest experimental programs in the country. Raymond Struyk, member of the appointed HUD team stated that there were three different experiments in housing allowance programs: These were:

1. The Demand Experiment, in which the responses of low-income clients to alternative payment formulas, levels of payment, and minimum housing standards were measured in terms of participation levels, mobility, and level of housing consumption;

2. The Supply experiment, in which the response of housing markets in two communities, rapidly increases due to large scale participation in the program;

3. The Administrative Agency Experiment, in which the impact of various administrative structures and various levels of client services were tested in a number of locations.

Both conservatives and liberals viewed housing allowances as a way of spreading subsidies to very low-income persons who were initially excluded from other subsidies.

programs. Secondly, it was seen as a way of deconcentrating the poor in urban areas. Large public housing and other low-income developments created much hostility whereas housing allowances were seen as minimizing concentrations of poor and allowing them to reap the services of middle-class communities. Assimilation of low-income tenants in selected housing would detract from current residents detecting subsidized units. Finally, with direct cash payments, low-income families had the ability to select market housing of their choice--this minimized the government's active involvement and accountability in housing selections and made the assumption that low-income persons were quite capable of finding suitable housing.

During his presidency, Nixon was pressured to resolve the housing crisis. With the imminent fear of impeachment because of the Watergate scandal, Nixon rescinded the Moratorium as a last hope to salvage his presidency. The upcoming impeachment trial sped the process of a housing bill that would expand the Sections 23 program (Section 8 of the new law), dissolve Section 235 and 236, and provide HUD with a $400 million contract that the Moratorium had left unused. Nine days after Nixon's resignation, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 was signed into law by the new President, Gerald Ford. 22

Section 8 replaced low-income and moderate income subsidy programs making eligibility requirements quite broad. The income maximum was set at 80% of the localities median family income based on a family of four and with high income limits permitted for larger families. This program also attempted to eliminate the exclusion of very low-income persons and required that 30% of those assisted in the program earn less than 50 percent of the localities' median income. In general section 8 was designed

22 Ibid. p. 148-49.
to meet the needs of families considered moderate income who were incapable of finding market rate housing.

Availability of Section 8 housing was determined by the level of congressional appropriation. Based upon a Housing Assistance Plan (HAP), allocations of funding to regional offices were passed to local area offices and designated in categories of new construction, rehabilitation and existing housing.

Section 8 received much attention in its selection of tenants and costs. Section 8 New Construction was geared more for elderly tenants. The elderly were considered the “deserving poor” because they were perceived to be less dangerous than families who might show anti-social behaviors and have disruptive children. Persons of color were also underrepresented in the programming. Section 8 New Construction was seen as providing a better record than public housing, yet it was renewing a similar agenda that public housing authorized it to do - in this case poor, white and elderly tenants were considered “safe” risks.

The Section 8 existing housing program involved less cost and financial risk than Section 8 new construction and it had more representation of families of color. HUD also reported that the quality of housing improved, but raised the question of whether the subsidy was paying for the overconsumption of a few rather than for all other eligible persons without assistance. It is true, that only a fraction of eligible families were assisted in the program. As a result, an improved level of service was denied to those in need while a small percentage gained the advantages of better housing. Moreover, EHAP’s demand experiment gave a direct payments to tenants granting them the choice to spend how much they wished on housing and the rest on other items of consumption. Given the choice, many tenants, (including landlords), opted to spend
on minimal repairs needed to comply with physical standards. When repairs were too expensive, both the tenant and landlord withdrew from the program. 23

Public Housing’s Survival

Federal subsidies and housing allowances were compared to public housing in terms of costs. In a 1980 study, Mayo et. al estimated that the annual per-unit cost of new public housing or Section 236 was 82 percent higher than the per-unit cost for housing allowances. Urban Systems Research and Engineering, Inc., used actual program data to conclude that the total per unit development cost for conventional public housing was about $10,000 more than for other subsidized new construction programs. Despite criticism, public housing advocates still suggested that public housing was a guaranteed resource for low-income people in the midst of national housing cuts. Public housing’s survival was in part due to local authorities’ ownership of a public asset in the community. It provided units and services to suit low income families over a long period of time. Private subsidizes did not guarantee this commitment. It was also claimed that private housing subsidies attracted families who were far more affluent than public housing tenants. Regardless of income, it was stated that entitled homeowners are intitled to low interest mortgages and property-tax benefits from their income, and these benefits of subsidies to program recipients far exceeded the benefits to public housing tenants, while taking nearly $50 billion in tax revenues from the federal government. In sum, those who studied public housing noted that there were inherent problems with public housing, yet it remained a refuge for low-income families.

2.2 Projects and Public Housing Tenants

The success of local developments was mixed. According to HUD, less than 75 of the 3400 public housing authorities in the United States were designated as “troubled”. A majority of developments were still in good condition. But, despite their success, many projects and local authorities exhibited problems ranging from high crime and substandard conditions to problems of financing basic maintenance repairs. How were housing policies interpreted? How were public housing tenants affected by these policies? What factors led to its physical decline and social stigma? This section addresses components that were influential in public housing’s evolution and discusses the impact on the residents, management and local conditions.

Fiscal and Political Issues

Many of the initial problems in public housing’s finance stem from the federal government’s lack of commitment to public housing and the actual appropriation of funds, to policies initiating tenant’s income requirements and attitudes of local management.

The question of financing public housing became a political battle between conservatives and liberals, pro-housing advocates and private enterprise. Critics effectively dismantled the program leaving its under-financed and morally unacceptable. Eugene Meehan, in his book The Rise and Fall of Public Housing, argued that public housing’s widespread failure was partially due to the financial starvation brought on by Congress. Specifically he targeted Congress’ appropriation for public housing construction. Congress consistently funded fewer units than authorized; the largest gap of funds was in the 1950’s. The Housing Act of 1949 authorized 135,000 units every year for six years, but actually appropriations reach a peak of 90,000 in 1950 and
reach a low point of zero in 1954. Five years after the target date, only about 200,000 units or a quarter of the projected total units were built. 24

Political configurations within Congress were responsible for the changing financial support of public housing construction. Pro-housing senators and representatives gained lasting ties with NAREB and other anti-public housing groups who persistently targeted public housing as a threat to national housing. Through these ties, which lasted for more than 20 years, anti-public housing groups built a level of trust and sympathy from congressmen. In the 1950’s, the Independent Offices Subcommittee of the House Appropriation Committee which was made up of both conservative Democrats and Republicans controlled public housing finances and was hostile to the concept of public housing. NAREB and others persuaded them to pull back on their commitments, knowing their wariness about the program and its affects on communities.

The political environment of the 60’s and 70’s, urban riots and the civil right movement pushed Congress to try to seek better and more innovative ways of housing the poor. Housing allowances programs, which were seen by some as a replacement for public housing, dismantled the program even further.

In the original 1937 Act, the federal government funded only the capital cost of housing; this included the principal and interests on bonds issued by local authorities to finance construction. Operation and maintenance which were supplied by rent and any surplus rental income, had to be applied towards debt repayment. 25 During the 1930’s and 40’s, poor working families were able to support the operating and maintenance costs, however, in the 50’s and 60’s, inflation, aging buildings, and

25 Ibid. p. 97.
populations of non-working poor contributed to the public housing’s maintenance and operation difficulties. Moreover, the cost squeeze occurred for the most part because Congress felt that less monetary support would give local agencies the incentive to operate efficiently. Unfortunately, this was not the case and many agencies in the 60’s and 70’s continued to have persisting fiscal problems.

Local authorities responded with rent increases which later led to strikes in places such as Newark, New Jersey and St. Louis. In 1969, in response to the outbreaks, the Brooke Amendment, which was authored by African-American and Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke, restricted rent to no more than 25 percent of tenant income and proposed appropriations of $75 million for operating funds. The Brooke Amendment ultimately allocated only $33 million of those funds disregarding the high maintenance costs and accumulation of other social problems. Furthermore, local authorities interpreted the 25 percent of income restrictions literally, evicting working tenants and replacing them with financially poorer tenants.

**Impact of Management and Physical Design**

The quality of management since public housing’s conceptions in the 1930’s had declined dramatically. Local managers interpreted government public housing strategy by placing greater emphasis on screening of applicants and eviction of tenants who did not comply with the development’s rules. Managers often evicted women for having children out of wedlock. Other local authorities were politically motivated to accept certain families in developments while denying others. Tenants were often fined for the damages to property.
In the 1960's, management's firm and authoritative role was targeted and pressured by tenant associations as being paternalistic, thus local authorities loosened their rules. Still, the growing number of problem families and social problems of the 60's placed greater pressures on local authorities to house problem families. Housing reformers argued for equity and fairness and they pushed the need for housing those that were seen as the neglected poor--unwed single mothers, families with drug and alcohol addicted parents. Local authorities prioritized problem families over working poor. Many reformers and public housing authorities faced dilemmas of concentrating the poor amid the needed social services. This made public housing more troubling, and less desirable from the outside and from within.

In the 1930's, Congress which was influenced by private enterprise had condescending viewpoints on public housing’s physical design and its impact on low-income residents. The housing quality that was to be enjoyed by tenants was standard, however, the per unit costs of public housing and tight limits prevented building and units from ever being compared to the “luxury” private housing of that time. The poor, in their opinion should not live in luxurious conditions because such conditions would discourage them from ever wanting to achieve the “American Dream” of owning a home in the private market. Although the construction of these buildings was sound, and analysts found that units did comply with the government’s Minimum Property Standards (MPS), basic elements such as doors, windows, plumbing and heating equipment were in shoddy conditions.

Public housing of the 60’s and 70’s was designed to minimize basic social amenities for residents. Floor and hall plans were reduced to minimize cost but they subsequently increased security problems. Total absence of recreational facilities created eighteen to twenty story buildings with empty concrete spaces, and poorly
structured jungle gyms. Elevators were designed to stop on every other floor. Health and social programs for youth were dismantled. In sum, Congress’s efforts to save short-term cost, affected the long term conditions on housing developments making them unsafe and some unlivable.

Public housing was often criticized for its lack of human scale and aesthetic contribution to the fabric of the community. Jane Jacobs, argues that it did not have constant interaction, and “eyes on the street”. Oscar Newman contends that public housing was indefensible through its site and design layout, thus lacking protection from outside predators, vandals and other criminals.

Tenants and Tenant’s Perceptions

Public housing tenants have been reproached for having little desire for mobility and for contributing to the physical demise of public housing and adjacent communities. Historically, American culture placed higher expectations on post-war Americans who lived in these development than on those that live in it today. For many citizens it was and still is simpler to point the finger at the tenants rather than the government. They are the ones who live in the poorly neglected property, thus they are the ones who caused it to be in poor condition. Neighborhood’s perception of public housing tenants and the tenant’s actual involvement in public housing were two different things. Tenants were content with their conditions, but quite willing to change them. Their activism helped initiate public housing modernization and redevelopment.

In a 1975 study, Eugene Meehan analyzed why households moved away from the St. Louis housing authority’s projects between 1954 and 1969. About 20 percent who moved found better alternatives, while nearly half of the resident who left were not dissatisfied with the development. Meehan concluded:
The point that emerges most strongly from an examination of the tenants in the public housing program... is that conventional public housing, for all its inadequacies and faults, served a real and important human need that would not otherwise have been served. Had the alternative been significantly superior, the occupants would have voted with their feet and done so willingly and openly, recording their dissatisfaction for all to see... .

The author noted that even though public housing has its faults, his results compelled policy makers to maintain the program for low-income persons. In another study, researchers interviewed 2,000 public housing residents in Wilmington, Delaware and found that residents complained mainly about the desire for more safety and police protection, but still wanted to live in their developments:

... even as the image of public housing steadily deteriorates and its few remaining supporters speak in softer tones, tenants keep clamoring to get in. Is it not ironical that people should want to move into this housing of last resort? And that people in public housing don’t want to leave? Even some tenants who can afford better alternatives in the private housing market don’t want to go. Every year public housing authorities have to evict people who exceed the income limitations of the program but who would stay if permitted. We have, in short, a paradox: Nobody likes public housing except the people who live there and those who want to get in. (Rabushka and Weissert, 1977, xvi)

For the most part, public housing was accepted by tenants and studies conducted nationwide continued to advocate public housing programs through resident’s concerns and support for their projects.

Since the 1970’s, programs have been established to provide better training for managers, organize tenant associations and initiate planning practices that use the residents as resources in creating safer communities. HUD, with the assistance of the Ford foundation conducted a National Tenant Management demonstration program,

---

27 Ibid. p. 343.
modeled after St. Louis’, Newark’s and several other cities’ tenant-initiated
management corporations. In a three year project:

_The National Tenant Management demonstration has shown that management by
tenants is a feasible alternative to conventional public housing management under
certain conditions. In the majority of the demonstration sites, the tenant participants,
all long time residents of low-income public housing, most unemployed and the
majority black and female family heads mastered in three years, the skills necessary to
assume management responsibility for the housing development in which they lived._

The evaluation of tenant management of a series of measured standard
performance indicators such as rent collection and the quality and timeliness in
maintenance, shows that the residents were able to manage their developments as well as
prior management had and, in so doing, to provide employment for some tenants and
increase the overall satisfaction of the general resident population (Manpower
Demonstration Research Corporation, 1981)²⁸

The success of this project was not influential in shaping the destiny of all public
housing developments in the country. In part, it did demonstrate that given the
adequate resources, tenant groups and management can accomplish measurable goals
of resident training, safer communities and better amenities. But the success of tenant
management demonstrations was mixed and further federal opposition, cutbacks and
physical problems continued.

### 2.2.1 Case of the Boston Housing Authority

Historically, the Boston Housing authority (BHA) was one of many housing
agencies that were poorly managed, suffered financial strains and created largely
segregated developments. It has greatly impacted physical and social conditions of
projects such as Columbia Point, West Broadway, Mission Main and others.

**Politics and the Emergence of Rules**

Created in 1937, the Boston housing authority was controlled by the interests of
local politicians who based board membership on staggered terms and loyal political

²⁸ Ibid. p. 348.
support. Originally, the board controlled the substantial number of jobs, contracts and housing units. The emergence of rules was as one commentator thought “happy years” of public housing when the authority selected tenants with a free hand. Evictions were implemented as related to excessive use of alcohol, unmarried couples, out-of-wedlock children, unsanitary housekeeping and obnoxious conduct or behavior. BHA’s governance of developments was similar to that of many of the developments in the 1930’s. They desired model families and used intensive screening methods to achieve their goals. In turn, the rules and political patronage led to explicit racist practices of creating “white” and “black” projects in Boston.

Unlike other large cities, development of public housing projects in Boston was associated with little resistance from neighbors. Large projects could be found in places such as Columbia Point peninsula, Roxbury, the South End, South Boston and Jamaica Plain. During the 1940’s, White residents didn’t fear the encroachment of African-Americans due to the city’s small Black population and accepted segregation. But as the population of African-Americans increased in the 1950s and 1960s, the Boston Housing Authority adjusted with the demographic changes, thus expanding the “black ghetto” in certain developments:

[Thirteen] of the 25 projects were more than 96 percent white; of these, 7 were exclusively occupied by whites. Of the 1,733 Negro families in 15 federally aided projects, 98.6 percent were in 7 projects, two of which were entirely black. Discrimination was even more evident in the ten state-aided projects—3.6 percent of the 3,675 units were occupied by Negroes. Of these, 122 Negro families were concentrated in 4 projects, one of which was entirely Negro. That the pattern of segregation was neither accidental nor a matter of location is vividly evidenced by two projects across the street from each other—Mission Hill is 100 percent white while Mission Hill Extension is 80 percent Negro.  

---

BHA's placement of tenants was under scrutiny from the National Association of the Advancement of Color People (NAACP), Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, all of these organizations alleging that BHA's policy showed apparent patterns of discrimination. These organizations, in light of urban renewal practices and dislocation of poor African-American families, proposed more housing opportunities for families affected by such changes. Agencies still resisted prioritizing African-American persons over others, fearing that such integration would stir up problems in developments.

Housing reformers even asked for the support of local Catholic churches that served white communities. In one example, Cardinal Cushing was unwilling to issue a statement asking his pastors to back integration on the premise that he might lose one-half of his parishioners. Other churches advocated integration, but according to one BHA staff member, the prevailing feeling "seemed to be like something from a white Citizens
Council in the South: They[the blacks] have their project, why do they want ours?\textsuperscript{31} Despite the efforts of pro-integrationalist, developments persistently resisted the changes.

\textit{Federal Intervention and Interpretations}

The federal government continued its push towards desegregating the projects. Civil Rights cases such as \textit{Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954} and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 were motivations for the federal government to impose standards on local authorities like the BHA.

HUD, under the direction of African-American, Robert Weaver devised the 1-2-3 rule as a means of desegregating housing and expanding opportunities for African-American families. The program stated:

\begin{quote}
Applicants will be assigned in numerical order, on the basis of date of application, need and family size. Any suitable vacancy in the locality’s public housing stock will be offered to an applicant. Where there are vacancies in several projects, projects with the largest number of vacancies will be preferred. If after three offers, the applicant declines to accept any of them, he will go to the bottom of the list of eligibles.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

Weaver and HUD accepted reports that “free choice” had failed and promoted greater discrimination, however other agencies including the Boston Housing Authority claimed that the 1-2-3 policy would cause white flight out of projects and intrude on accepted decisions by tenants and disrupt local communities. BHA was asked to adjust to standards that they felt were inapplicable and disruptive to the current accepted system. Sticking to the old methods however would be a violation of federal law.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. 23.
\textsuperscript{32} Weaver, Robert. Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Statement” February 8, 1967).
Local boards were losing the battle with HUD, and in years following the 1-2-3 policy, the BHA was undergoing organizational changes of its own. Following the election of Mayor Kevin White, Julius Bernstein, a long time civil rights and reform activist was appointed to fill BHA's board with more progressive membership. By 1970, the new board was created with the full intention of advocating fair and equitable housing in the face of the housing crisis in Boston. The test was on how the new board and the BHA would effectively implement the new rules.

Breakdown of Rules, BHA failure and Receivership

The 1-2-3 rule did not reach the goals intended by Robert Weaver and HUD. In theory, the goal was to promote integration and decrease vacancy in developments, but in actuality, it turned out to be unworkable. Of the 3,280 applicants who were assigned between June 1969 and September 1970, 724 or 22 percent (most of whom were nonwhite) accepted assignments consistent with the 1-2-3 rule. Another 926 applicants, or 28 percent (most of whom were white), turned down all three assignments, were not given apartments and went down to the bottom of the waiting list. The remaining 1,630, or 49 percent, obtained housing even though they refused to accept housing in the developments with the highest vacancies.33

One BHA staff person, when asked about the problems with the 1-2-3 program concluded:

The basic problem with the 1-2-3 rule and tenant selection in general is its humanity. There is no effort to find out what people's problems are. For example a woman comes in who lives in Dorchester. Her children use the Harvard Street Clinic there and go to the neighborhood public school. As a family with many problems they are probably doing an adequate job. So we say to them, do you want to go to a 1-2-3 project. We don't try to find out what their background is. And so, by putting them out there, we disrupt their health services, their education, their whole life style. It makes you wonder.34

33 Ibid. p. 53.
34 Ibid. p. 64.
The inherent problem was that local tenants knew what the particular projects were regardless of the vacancies and often chose not to live in certain developments because of their perceptions and dissatisfaction. Moreover, BHA staff members were consistently bombarded with resident transfers making it more difficult to keep vacancies. Some projects were just undesirable physically and socially, while others were undesirable because of internal and personal problems. Finally, residents were not given the development of their choice which caused further dissatisfaction of the program. Thus, the local conditions and bureaucracy both helped to create more segregation of Boston neighbors.

The emergence of rules and their subsequent breakdown affected BHA’s competency in keeping up with tenants’ needs, management and maintenance of local developments. Audits were poorly recorded, residents were poorly informed of the selection process and generally placed in housing developments without records of crimes and drug problems. Files were misplaced, and eligible candidate who were waiting for housing subsequently gave up. Aggressive applicants regardless of their ability to pay the rent, were placed ahead of others. With the breakdown of rules came the breakdown of the BHA’s policy; a first come, first serve basis was imposed on many projects despite the local manager’s resistance to undesirable tenants.

Interventions by the federal government were furthered by the courts in 1975. Armando and eight other tenants filed suit against the BHA for widespread violations of the state sanitary code. As a result, Housing Court Chief Judge Garrity who toured several housing developments concluded:

*that in every building almost every pane of glass joining common area stairways was broken out from the first floor to the roof, that most incinerators were erupting flames a few feet into the open air of the height of small children, that smoke and soot from*
incineration permeated the air, that sidewalks and streets were cracked with entire sections missing, that automobiles were speeding through play areas set aside for children. . . . and. . . most apartment were without shades.\textsuperscript{35}

In March, 1975, Judge Garrity issued an order requiring the State of Massachusetts to correct substandard conditions totally $105 million. In July 1975, the Massachusetts Judicial Court reversed the decision stating that Judge Garrity had overstepped his authority in naming defendants other than the BHA. They remanded the case back to Garrity for further proceedings against the Authority as deemed appropriate.

Released in July 1976, a 1500 page report, Garrity and his analysts advocated sweeping reforms of the BHA. These included (1) improving the tenant selection, assignment and transfer system, (2) improving efficiency, (3) desegregating developments, (4) marketing public housing, (5) increasing managerial discretion, and (6) increasing screening. These reforms failed to satisfy the plaintiff, and in August, 1976, the court moved to place the BHA under general receivership. After lengthy negotiations, a consent decree was established but that too, fell short of the plaintiffs’ and his lawyers’ push for equity. During fourteen months of an eighteen month receivership, the BHA had only an acting administrator and in 1979, Judge Garrity concluded that “throughout the four year history of this case, the BHA has shown itself to be capable of nothing more than gross mismanagement.”\textsuperscript{36}

In 1980, the State Supreme Court upheld Garrity’s order for the receivership and Lewis (Harry) Spence, a graduate of Harvard Law and former administrator of Cambridge and Somerville Housing Authorities, was appointed as receiver to administer the agency. For the next four years, Spence and BHA underwent intensive reorganization that focused on effective rehabilitation of units and programs for public

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. p. 158.
housing tenants through the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. Spence also advocated tenant empowerment and the dismantling of bureaucratic rules clearly established by BHA administrators.

On October 18, 1984, Judge Garrity ended the receivership claiming that the BHA’s turnaround was a huge success. Also, his friendship with the newly elected Mayor, Raymond Flynn influenced him to establish a new plan that would allow the BHA administration to report directly to the mayor and have a nine-member board in which five public housing tenants would hold seats.

CONCLUSIONS

National urban policy influenced by accepted racial notions, private enterprise and local resistance changed the perceptions of public housing. What was once considered a desirable home for the poor, became a disgrace and embarrassment to the integrity of American communities. In conclusion, the residents and projects around the country still existed; some having vibrant and innovative programs for youth and families, while others were barely holding ground. Nevertheless, policy analyst and planners argued that the physical conditions of these projects remained questionable. Who would finance redevelopment and rehabilitation? How would they be managed?

There is no question that local residents, activists and political leaders saw a national agenda for improving the public housing stock in this country. Chapter 3 documents some of the more recent visions and projects that have taken place, addresses issues of mixing incomes and federal deregulation, as well as discuss the criticisms and support for public housing redevelopment and its alternatives.
REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS
REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Nationwide, public housing developments are being developed and managed through the efforts of both the private and public sectors. Both sectors address physical and functional determination as detrimental to future public housing, but devise different approaches and solutions to achieving public housing goals.

This chapter focuses on private and public redevelopment efforts in the United States that have helped to reshape the future of public housing. It also presents significant examples and addresses the issues related to both public redevelopment and alternatives.

3.1 Housing and Urban Development’s Vision for Public Housing

"Transforming Public Housing” and “Building Community Pride” are key visions of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Under the former leadership of Henry Cisneros, HUD proposed four main objectives: (1) demolish or rehabilitate public housing developments that are dilapidated and vacant; (2) deregulate to give local public housing authorities (PHAs) the ability to manage developments effectively, (3) support currently “troubled” PHAs that have severe management and functional deficiencies, and (4) infuse positive incentives for public housing residents. With these objectives, Cisneros suggested that public housing developments incorporate Oscar Newman’s concept of defensible space; residents and their PHAs should create design strategies that deter criminal activity, and instill strong and cohesive communities.
Demolition and Rehabilitation

One-hundred thousand units out of the more than one million units (less than 10 percent) are considered "severely distressed." by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (1992). These units are mostly located in urban areas and their degradation is the result of both social and economic factors. The initial "one for one" method of replacing demolished developments and Congressional provisions to maintain affordable housing stock were repealed by Congress in the summer of 1996. Nevertheless, in 1995, HUD proposed to partially or fully demolish 32 developments around the country without equal number of replacement units. The following paragraphs present examples of activities that are currently underway in places such as St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Atlanta.¹

In St. Louis' Vaughn Apartments, 656 units are to be demolished and replaced by 222 units under the Section 8 program. The 224 elderly households that lived in the apartments prior to its demolition are to be re-housed on the original site. The new site plan creates townhouses with a low-density atmosphere and smaller "resident-friendly" street grids. The new Vaughn apartments will have both private parking and entrances, day care, a Community center, and a basketball court that can be converted into meeting rooms. Total development costs are more than $50 million with leveraging $30 million in Federal grant funds.

In April 1995 in Philadelphia, 510 units in five high rise buildings which had been totally vacant were torn down. The demolition of the 40 year old Raymond Rosen Apartments demonstrates HUD's commitment to eradicate substandard housing. Three-hundred and eight existing low-rise row houses, which are currently occupied, however will be substantially renovated with new roofing, doors, double insulated

windows, new walls as well as modernized kitchens. Three-hundred nineteen new
townhouses will be built in the surrounding community to enhance the neighborhood
countet.

**Techwood Clark-Howell Homes**, the oldest public housing development in the
country, located on 21.6 acres of land was scheduled for demolition in May, 1995. The
Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta (HACA) has proposed that a total of 1,081
units will be razed and replaced with a mixture of both on site and off-site units. The
guiding principle for this development will be to create a mixed income community.
Located in midtown Atlanta, near the City’s central business district, the development
is adjacent to the Georgia Institute of Technology, Coca-Cola World headquarters and
the Georgia World Congress Center. Techwood Clark-Howell Homes is also adjacent to
housing that was used for the 1996 U.S. Olympics. On the site, 900 units of public
housing, tax credit and market-rate units will be built. The City of Atlanta proposes to
create a broad-based community that will have no more than 30 percent public housing
and at least 50 percent market rate housing.

**Cabrini-Green** is one of Chicago’s largest and most infamous public housing
developments. Built in three phases, the first phase, built in 1941-42 consisted of two
and three story buildings. In 1958, another 1,925 units were added to 581 row houses,
creating a single complex of more than 2,500 units. The final component was
constructed in 1962 consisting of 1,096 units in eight buildings, fifteen and sixteen
stories tall. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) plans to demolish 660 units and
rehabilitate 60 units. They also plan to build 642 conventional and 167 Section 8 units.
The city plans to spend nearly $1 billion to renovate Cabrini-Green and other
developments such as the Robert Taylor Homes, and Henry Horner Homes. Modeled
after Lake Parc place, public housing that has been transformed into a mix-income
community, the CHA wants to create defensible communities through design and residents’ involvement.

The Parkside development located in Detroit, Michigan consists of Parkside Homes and Parkside Addition. From a total of 1,064 units, the Housing Department plans to demolish 510 units and reconfigure the remaining 554 units into 345 larger units. They also plan to construct 504 new units. These homes will be made available for sale to public housing residents at deeply subsidized prices. Through new street and open space design, the area will have four village centers. These village centers are designed to cure the “ghetto-like” appearance of Parkside.

Cotter and Lang Homes are located in the DuValle neighborhood of Louisville’s West End. The Park DuValle plan calls for the demolition of 1,116 units in Cotter and Lang replacing it with 599 units of public housing, 451 units of tax-credit rental housing, 175 units of market rate rentals, and 350 homeownership units in Park DuValle. Finally, 360 scattersite public housing units will be replaced off site with priority given to the elderly.

One of New Jersey’s largest public housing high-rises, Christopher Columbus Homes was built in 1955 on 14.6 acres of land. Suffering extreme levels of high population density--106 families per acre--and being poorly sited and designed, it became a place of high crime and vandalism. Since 1990, all of its 1556 units have stood vacant. In 1995, the Newark Housing Authority planned to demolish the 1556 units building 1,777 new units over the next several years. The Newark Housing Authority has already constructed 659 new townhouse apartments. Moreover, 74 new homes have been build over the demolition site creating low-density and family-centered communities. Residents will also take advantage of the city’s job training and social services.
Implementing “Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere” (HOPE) VI: Since 1993, HUD has allocated more than $1.4 billion in HOPE VI grants, an initiative that provides PHAs and their private partners with the funding and flexibility to remake public housing neighborhoods. Grants and technical assistance of more than $50 million are being used to provide services to public housing tenants in need. These include, education, and job training. One distinctive feature with HOPE VI grants is that HOPE VI developments contain fewer housing units than the projects they replace. Two-thirds of all replacement units are either scattered-site public housing or are supported by tenant based assistance for units located away from the site. In communities in Atlanta and Chicago, HOPE VI grants help create K-5 magnet schools and community’s reinvestment in retail and small businesses.²

The FY 1998 Budget requests a total of $524 million for HOPE VI programs to revitalize severely distressed public housing. Out of that total, $421 million in HOPE VI funds would pay for demolition, site restoration, and on- and off- site replacement of obsolete public housing units. The remaining $103 million in HOPE VI funds would pay for Section 8 rental certificates to relocate 10,000 families whose obsolete units are scheduled for demolition. In addition to funding HOPE VI, the FY 1998 budget requests a total of $5.4 billion to fund modernization and operating needs of PHAs across the country.³

Deregulation

Through the Public Housing Reform and Empowerment Act of 1995, which was approved by the Senate in January, 1996, HUD has proposed deregulation measures to

³ Budget for the HUD. http://www.hud.gov/budsum1.html#sec-II.
grant local agencies the task of effectively managing the maintenance and operational needs of their developments. In the past, officials argued that increasing statutory imperatives and bureaucratic red tape hindered the progress of authorities from conducting service-driven tasks. Since then, HUD regulators and PHA leaders have conducted regulatory review processes that have eliminated unnecessary regulations imposed on local management. For example, PHAs are no longer required to submit annual operating budgets and supporting schedules to HUD for pre-approval. A HUD review of actual income and spending and the annual audit will suffice as adequate measures of the public housing program. HUD claims that this new policy reduces the amount of paper work as well as allow employees to deal with managing and maintaining buildings.4

HUD has also created the Public Housing Management Assessment Program (PHMAP) which gives each PHA a yearly report card on operational indices and assesses PHA’s performance based on private rather than public sector standards. HUD insists on various accountability measures as tests for PHAs. Objectives include reducing vacancies, collecting rents, making renovations, conserving energy and managing finances effectively. Three-quarters of HUD’s Annual Contribution Contract (ACC) document, which governs HUD’s direct relationship with PHAs, has been eliminated and several changes have been introduced. For example, local authorities have the autonomy to pay their employees based upon productivity rather than local wage rates. HUD insists that this policy may encourage employees to work more efficiently in providing the best service possible to public housing tenants.5 Using

---

5 Ibid. p. 9.
private-driven strategies may help to maintain the quality and service of the units, buildings and grounds.

Finally, HUD has changed its former Monitoring Handbook with a completely rewritten and rethought approach. Calendar-driven monitoring has been replaced by risk-based monitoring. Through risk-based monitoring, local authorities that are performing well will not have to undergo time-consuming procedures. HUD suggests that this allows PHA to continue services, while targeting troubled authorities that need technical and administrative support.

Assisting Troubled PHAs

HUD defines a PHA as “troubled” if it scores less than 60 points of a possible 100 on the Public Housing Assistance Program (PHMAP). HUD uses criteria such as the authority’s ability to maintain their development’s overall physical conditions, collect rents, avoid lengthy vacancies, and work jointly with residents to create a safe and drug-free community. Through its Office of Distressed and Troubled Housing Recovery, HUD has committed some $50 million in technical assistance. Local agencies in Chicago and New Orleans have been troubled for more than 30 years. Today, HUD and local leaders have cut the number of troubled agencies among the nation’s 40 largest PHAs by more than half—from 19 to 8. Their solution is outlined in two main strategies:

Gaining Control over the Worst Performing PHAs: HUD has created specific recovery partnerships with eight of the most troubled housing authorities in the country. These are: New Orleans, Washington D.C., Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta, Pittsburgh and San Juan. For example, instead of attempting a piecemeal approach to improving the Chicago Housing Authority, former HUD secretary Joseph
Shuldiner, who is its new director, has laid out a firm foundation for CHA’s administrators. This not only includes the demolition of projects in Chicago, but strict enforcement of policy involving leases, evictions, and finances to tenant and management services. A team of HUD expects, known as the Recovery Council, has been created to oversee the partnership between the local agency and HUD.

Creating Innovative Partnerships to Stabilize Troubled PHAs: HUD has effectively used creative partnerships that not only address the local needs of the PHAs, but provide new directions for PHAs and their cities to reevaluate distressed public housing in the context of the urban environment. In Atlanta, public-private partnerships are used to stimulate economic development in addition to housing. The Atlanta Olympic Legacy Program dictates Atlanta’s efforts to educate and train urban youth.

In Detroit, a three month partnership between Mayor Dennis Archer and HUD will lead to the abolition of the Detroit Housing Department and the creation of an independent Housing Commission. This agency has taken crucial steps to reducing several thousand vacancies and supporting four troubled developments. In Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry and HUD helped negotiate a court order that took management control away from the District of Columbia by putting it into the hands of Receiver David Gilmore who has made some progress.

Infuse Positive Incentives into Public Housing

HUD asserts that self-sufficiency and economic diversity are the ultimate tools needed for residents of public housing. These characteristic are obtained by fostering cohesion between universities and public housing residents, improving access to supportive services and even encouraging homeownership opportunities for residents.
In 1993, Cisneros proposed to create 2,500 homeownership opportunities for public housing families by the year 2000. In another example, public housing residents in South Bend, Indiana have created Housing University, which became a model for HUD’s Campus of Learners. Through the financial assistance of private firms, Housing University includes services such as: the Community Learning and Information Network, leadership training with Indiana University, the Indiana Technical College which provides basic computer training, and Technology Lab 2000, a program that provides video training.

As of May, 1996, Congress has allowed PHAs to set rent ceilings that cap public housing rents at levels competitive with the private market. Families who have increased their income and have the desire to stay in public housing will allowed to retain housing. HUD is adopting other reforms that will help increase the number of working families and stabilize housing developments. Finally, Congress has suspended federal preferences allowing local authorities to set preferences designed particularly for their low-income and very low-income persons.

HUD with the help of tenants and police have created the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) bringing stricter community policing in public housing developments and programs for drug users. HUD’s Operation Safe Home Initiative provides the support of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to stamp out gangs, drugs and violent crimes in public housing. For example, Operation Safe Home in Washington, D.C.’s Kelly Miller Homes broke up violent gangs in their surrounding neighborhood. In Worcester, Mass, HUD’s Office of the Inspector General, state and local police, and the local authority have successfully concluded a 6-month undercover drug operation with the arrest of 35 public housing residents.
Finally, through both federal and local initiatives, PHA’s are requiring that all children in public housing be fully immunized against measles, mumps, polio and other preventable diseases. Although 75 percent of all children are fully vaccinated, the rates for children in public housing are significantly lower. Vaccination programs will become part of the annual recertification of public housing tenants, thus obliging parents to take responsibility for their children’s health.

Addressing Public Housing Policy for the Future

Current HUD Secretary Andrew M. Cuomo, in his March 6, 1997 statement to the House Banking and Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, argued that public housing must be included in a city’s community development process. Furthermore, he states that HUD will continue its contribution to ensuring that the country’s low and very low-income citizens are guaranteed adequate housing. In his address, he was asked to testify on the Housing Opportunity and Responsibility Act of 1997, and important issues on public housing reform. In his statement he supported the continuity and strength of several reforms. These include:

1. The suspension of the “one for one” replacement rule that is allowing PHAs to demolish the worst of their stock. To date, 23,000 units have been brought down nationwide;

2. Implementation of HOPE VI program, not only to rebuild dilapidated public housing, but revitalize whole communities;

3. Vigorous HUD intervention to turn around several large troubled PHA;

4. Adoption of “One Strike” to clean up crime and drugs in public housing.

He continued stating that:

---


Redevelopment Efforts
the question of who will be served is largely determined by income targeting. For public housing, I would support the current law eligibility ceiling of eighty percent of median, with the requirements that forty percent of new admissions have incomes below thirty percent of median income. . . H.R. 2 goes too far away from admission of households with the most substantial unmet housing needs. The income targeting proposed by H.R. 2 for public housing, that thirty-five percent of units be filled at all times by households with incomes under thirty percent of median, would mean that there is no effective income targeting with respect to new public housing admissions. In most communities, the percentage of households in public housing with income under thirty percent of median is far more than thirty five percent, and thus these communities would be free to admit households up to the program eligibility limit-eighty percent of the area median, or about $32,000 on average. . .

Cuomo suggest that H.R. 2 and HUD must strike a better balance at broadening the income mix of residents because tight restriction and open-ended policies could lead to bring in back past problems of concentrating the poor in public housing. He concludes that HUD's position of mixing income and strategically targeting progressively working class families will guarantee stabilized public housing stock.

Cuomo also asserts that the H.R. 2 act must continue to recognize improvements in the evaluation system of PHAs, "particularly regarding certainty and effectiveness of enforcement. H.R. 2 however prematurely discards the current system for identifying problem." He states further:

Most of the prior PHA accreditation proposals, such as that contained in the Final Report of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing in 1992, called for accreditation to be a private peer review function undertaken by a non-profit entity rather than the federal government. Such an endeavor might not necessarily replace PHMAP. Even that proposal raises questions that need exploring, including whether any increase it would bring in the accuracy of evaluations would merit additional administrative effort and what the proper role of HUD would be. I would favor HUD participation and funding if necessary for an industry-led study regarding the merits of such a peer review approach. I would not favor a law that presumes the results of a study. 8

HUD's active engagement through effective monitoring rather than through restrictions and review is tantamount to establishing long term accountability with PHAs.

---

7 Ibid. p. 3-4.
8 Ibid. p. 6-7.
Notwithstanding private involvement in the process, the public sector should remain committed to transforming public housing authorities and their developments. In conclusion, Cuomo suggests that public housing and other Section 8 tenant based programs require bi-partisan efforts that provide new and better thinking about public housing and low-income residents.

3.2 Alternatives to Public Redevelopment

The private sector has taken advantage of public housing’s transformation by being active developers, managers and owners of formerly distressed projects. Cisneros, Cuomo and other officials in the public sector all agree that the private sector “can do it” as well as the public sector, because the private sector has broadened the marketing of public housing to include a range of innovative and cost effective projects and tenant-based programs, has tapped into a new clientele of market rate customers, and has improved its physical conditions creating attractive developments with “curb appeal”. The following paragraphs document some of the most successful projects and companies that have engaged in public housing redevelopment.

The King’s Lynne Experience, Corcoran Mullins Jennison and Private Developers

Private developer, Corcoran Jennison (CJ) has diligently pursued a career of transforming troubled public housing developments. Joe Corcoran, a former resident of Savin Hill in Dorchester, grew up in a economically mixed community. When he formed Corcoran Mullins Jennison, he used his past experiences as way of supporting his campaign for mixed income communities:

“When I started the company in 1971, my objective was to house poor people better as far as in mixed income housing. You would mix them with different types of families. If you were poor, nobody knew you were poor when you lived in the community. With different various people, you wouldn’t be labeled a public housing project. The families
would see other families who were working. Going to school and going to college. It was a better way to help the poor families. Get them to move to the main stream rather than being with all people that are on welfare. . .which I think happened to public housing. So I had that feeling when I started the country. We were like the pioneers of the mixed income which was 25 percent low, and we built a number of them up in suburbia. We would actually recruit for minority families and get them to suburbia. We’ve done a number of them down in Massachusetts.9

In the early 70’s, CMJ redeveloped Lynn’s America Park public housing development which the state of Massachusetts built in the late 1940’s. Similar to dilapidated projects around the country, America Park was seen as an eyesore and housing of last resort. One-hundred of the original 408 units were boarded up and condemned and most vendors refused to serve tenants without a police escort.10

In 1970, the tenants who were determined to improve their conditions, created a plan that would replace the public project with privately owned mixed income housing. In August, 1974, they formed the Kings Lynne Apartment Community (KLAC) which became a partnership with the tenant association and CMJ. Nine years after their struggle, the tenants became part owners of a $21 million mixed income rental community creating 441 new units on a 58 acre site. Known as King’s Lynne, the development has a mixture of two garden buildings, four mid rise elevator buildings and 168 town houses.11

The original America Park families were given priority in selecting their units. This included the 166 units set aside for low-income people under the state’s 707 housing program. The remaining 275 units were to be occupied by both moderate and market rate residents who either get support of the state’s 13-A program or pay the

---

9 Corcoran, Joe. Interview. March 28, 1997
11 Ibid. p. 1.
market price for a unit. The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) provided an estimated $130 million in loan guarantees.

CMJ’s success with the King’s Lynne development led to the redevelopment of Dorchester’s Columbia Point. Columbia Point’s transformation into Harbor Point, which will be discussed further in part two of this thesis, was the result of the efforts of active residents and a developer who reshaped a notorious project into a “luxury” development for former Columbia Point and market rate tenants. Costing more than $250 million, the creation of Harbor Point was a turning point in both large scale public housing redevelopment and in reevaluation of troubled authorities such as the Boston Housing Authority. In an interview, Joe Corcoran asserts his experiences with the Lynn and Boston developments and the concept of mixed income housing:

“They were both in desperate physical conditions. They were inhabitable. There was abandonment of some 400 units [in Lynne] and only 150 occupied and people were pretty depressed and upset with the housing authority. . . . The Lynne Housing Authority. We came in there and basically took over the management of the existing housing even though we didn’t own. But we managed it for two years before we owned it. What we did was we improved the old housing to the point where. . . I always remember the fellow from the state, that came out to give us the funding. He came out when we were there for 8 months and he had never been to the development before. He said this place doesn’t look so bad. Why are we tearing it down. He was a new guy on the job, but we had been in there and may have gotten all the graffiti off the buildings, but the projects itself, the plumbing was all gone. It was neglected and in terrible shape.

So we came to the same situation. . . racially it was different [from Columbia Point.] It was probably like a 70/30 mix. . . . Maybe 65/35, 35 percent minority. So it[King’s Lynne] was different in that respect and it still has that same racial mix. But now the racial mix is along all income line. We had three income levels, 1/3 market rate, 1/3 moderate, 1/3 low. So we responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP), by the state that was actually drafted by your department (Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT) and Langley Keyes. He was working for a non-profit consultant.12

CMJ’s private redevelopment effort has influenced other proposals in places across the United States. For example CMJ has teamed up with Beacon Construction

12 Corcoran, Joe. Interview. March 28, 1997
using HOPE VI funds to redevelop one public housing development near the University of Pittsburgh and plans to redevelop and manage another project in New Haven, Connecticut, adjacent to Yale University. Other private redevelopment efforts and private ownerships are currently being planned for Boston’s Mission Main and Orchard Park costing a total of $80 million.

Non-profits and Public Housing Redevelopment

The non-profit private sector is also actively engaged in reshaping America’s public housing. Providing similar platforms for strengthening management and mixing market rate incomes, non-profits have the agenda of strengthening public housing communities within their neighborhoods. This means providing more social services, job training, and leadership sessions to stimulate self-sufficiency in public housing residents. Fueled mostly by Community Development Block Grants, non-profits are service-minded organizations arguing that local grassroots organizing and federal funding should work hand in hand to empower low-income persons and their communities.

Pat Clancy of Community Builders believes that:

our work emerges from the dynamic engagement with many people, residents, neighborhood organizations, public officials, merchants, service agencies, universities, employers, hospital and schools. The tasks we take on are some of our nation’s greatest challenges--the revitalization of neighborhoods, the transformation of public housing, helping poor families to achieve economic independence. . .”

For more than 32 years, The Community Builders (TCB) has formed an alliance with organizations creating developments such as the Villa Victoria and Tent City in the

---

South End, Plumley Village in Worcester, Massachusetts, and West Village in New Haven, Connecticut. After helping the Boston Housing Authority receive a HOPE VI award in 1995, TCB is currently securing grants for public housing and neighborhood revitalization in Pittsburgh and in Holyoke, MA. TCB will soon begin development work on these projects and on the Park DuValle neighborhood in Louisville, KY.

Raising more than $700 million of public and private money to develop affordable housing, TCB has had a significant impact on addressing the needs of public housing residents. In conclusion TCB and non-profit community corporations are clear participants in marketing housing of last resort.

3.3 Public or Private Redevelopment: Measures of Success

Both the private and public sectors have made improvements in the quality of lives of residents, both have focused on organizing and empowering tenants and both have tried to change the face that public housing presents to its surrounding neighborhood. Moreover, the process of public housing redevelopment has generated various public and private partnerships. Creating better images of public housing and its residents in the context of the larger community has been the agenda of city, and its for-profit and non-profits corporations who have made active partnerships with HUD. Success comes in many forms and it is difficult to determine the extent to which the private sector’s involvement makes a substantially greater difference than the public sector or whether there is a need for both entities.

In his essay, Seven Kinds of Success, professor Larry Vale suggested that seven measures such as (1) budget timeliness, (2) design quality, (3) tenant organization, (4) management performance, (5) improved neighborhood relations, (6) resident
satisfaction and (7) progress on public policy redevelopment, must work collectively to achieve successful results in public housing.\textsuperscript{14} Adding to this, two main questions are relevant to his argument concerning public or private redevelopment. Can these measures be used to determine whether a failing public housing project needs either public or private ownership? Are the problems of failed public housing caused by of its low-income residents, poor management, poor site planning and design or lack of economic support?

There is a clear need to have both the private and public sector in the planning and redevelopment of public housing, but in addressing public housing’s success, one must look at the possible implications on public housing’s physical design and management, tenant mix, and housing policy. These three features included in Vale’s seven kinds of measures will also be instrumental in the success of public housing redevelopment. In sum, using Vale’s guides for success as related to on management, design, tenant type and policy, the following paragraphs help to explore the consequences of private or public redevelopment.

\textit{Physical Design and Management}

Analyzing redevelopment efforts across the country, it is clear that the development’s levels of physical disrepair determines whether it is in need of low or moderate rehabilitation, rehabilitation and demolition or total demolition. Physical condition is also related to the level of private involvement. New physical design of public housing that takes an approach using small scale and low density buildings helps to remove the stigma of public housing. In most cases, projects have remained under public authority control of low and moderate rehabilitation efforts, where as in

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{14} Vale, Lawrence. "Seven Kinds of Success: Assessing Public Housing Comprehensive Redevelopment"
\end{footnote}
the last two cases, the public and private sectors have been heavily involved, sometimes resulting in private ownership or management.

Low and moderate rehabilitation usually involve a PHA’s use of modernization funds to change the facades and entrances of public housing buildings, modernization of hallways and units, creating more open space and play areas, and providing better lighting for residents. For example, the Cambridge Housing and Boston Housing Authority have partially redevelop places such as Newtowne Court and West Broadway and have gained much satisfaction for residents. These developments are in need of repair, but are under the authority’s control. The amenities and improvements involved in low and moderate rehabilitation make projects more attractive to residents and the community. It is also true that in these cases, the objectives of PHAs are to strengthen community through better security, and available training and social services.

HUD and its local partners have made efforts to evaluate projects and determine the necessary extent of both rehabilitation and demolition. Rehabilitation and demolition includes buildings that are substandard but occupied by current residents, and buildings that are inhabitable or boarded-up. Relevant cases involve the redevelopment of Columbia Point, current redevelopments of Cabrini Green in Chicago and Techwood Clark-Howell Homes in Atlanta. In these circumstances, rehabilitation and demolition offer both rental and homeownership opportunities that decrease the density and size of buildings.

In total demolition projects, there is a greater interest in private ownership of the public housing. For private developers, a failing development may be considered to be the result of a failing agency. In this instance, total demolition which implies the idea of

---

“starting from a clean slate”, suggests a substantial need for private innovation that will weave the new development into the fabric of its adjoining neighborhood. The demolition of St. Louis’ Pruitt Igoe Homes completed in 1976, reminds planners and architects that changing demographics, poor leadership and neglect can be a great disadvantage to the design of public housing.

The private sector sees management as an efficient tool for a development’s success. HUD’s secretaries have even recommended that local PHAs link wage increases to productivity rather than to prevailing wage rates, and that they gain the support of the non-profit sector in evaluating PHA’s performances on the PHMAP. The private sector also claims that they can better grasp the concept of residents’ partnerships in property management. David Connelly of Housing Opportunities Unlimited asserted in an interview that:

“I see management working far effectively for a number of reasons. I think it can’t work everywhere. . . I think there are some places, some situations where the housing is so entrenched in a neighborhood that is also in great difficulty. This may not be the place for private mixed income. It could still be the place for private management. I believe in the partnership. I really like this model [Harbor Point], with resident ownership, where residents are in charged. I really believe in private management as opposed to public, but even more than that is the resident piece . . .”

The private sector, Connelly and others supporters believe, can understand the dynamics of a neighborhood’s social and economic decline, and therefore be better suited than the public sector in acknowledging that low-income residents truly want to have decision-making power. Corcoran also has a firm belief in the private rather than the public sector:

“In some situations [in public housing] with elderly, it works pretty well. I think that instead of public housing authority being developers of housing and managers of housing, they should be asset managers, meaning they would be the conduit of the funding to oversee, but put management through private developers and non-profits, and set the guidelines . . . not being in the job and actually managing it, because they

---

Local authorities have lost accountability and trust with public housing residents; private developers' solution to past conflicts is to switch accountability, from the public to local tenant residing in the community, thus making the resident and the developer accountable for the developments success or failure. As a result, the private sector believes that residents will be more active in achieving their objectives of safety, security, and physical maintenance in the community.

HUD still insists on having an active role in the management of public housing. They claims that the public sector has always been committed to serving the poor, and argue that public housing as remained an asset for low- and very low-income persons and should remain in the hands of local public housing managers. At the same time, HUD has been criticized for producing minimal standards and not supplying full

---

support for low-income people. Critics have argued that the minimalist standard is no longer suitable for the poor, because it perpetuates poverty, it does not help people to get out of poverty. In an interview with Harry Spence, he stated that there are problems of managing public housing, but he still supports public sector:

“New York City has probably today, the most successful public housing in the country. Public housing in New York is by enlarge most stable than the surrounding neighborhood. In almost every other city in the country, public housing is less stable than the surrounding neighborhood. It pulls it down and make it even more unstable. New York succeeded in that because it resisted for years the push to have an admissions policy that only took in the most desperate. And they insisted on maintaining some working poor and non-working poor. . .”

“The evidence that the public can still run things effectively well. . . one person just pointed out. The private sector has managed all of our atomic energy and power plants and they have had a terrible record. The United States navy runs atomic plants under water, inside boats and has a better record than the private sector. So when there is a genuine will to do it, the public sector can do a superb job. The problem has to do with will. And the desperation of public housing has to do with the fact that when you isolate non-working people who are already desperately economically isolated, also very quickly politically isolated, the political power to hold the system accountable is next to zero. And then the public walks away.”

Spence and other public officials believe that in order for public housing to change, the public sector must redefine their mission. For public housing redevelopment, this will mean restructuring their mission to include public housing residents as a part of the entire community and not as a separate class of low-income people.

Tenant Mix

Is mixing incomes a solution to transforming public housing? Harbor Point, King’s Lynne, Renaissance Park and others have included moderate and market tenants in the community to strengthen the idea that the mixing of incomes eradicates concentrations of poor and self-destructive communities. Public housing supporters,
argued that mixing incomes is not necessarily a clear answer to public housing redevelopment; market rate inclusion in the development minimizes the available housing stock for low-income people and in some cases low-income residents are discriminated against due to the limit of affordable housing.

In one example, the King’s Lynne development was accused of refusing to take Section 8 recipients because of their commitment to rent only one-third of their units to subsidized tenants. Dan Landrigan in one article states:

“So when a family with a Section 8 voucher applies for an apartment, their income would normally limit them to the low-income waiting list. But because they have the voucher, they could afford the higher rents. . .Wessell and other residents of King’s Lynne say admitting low-income tenants to the market rate units would throw off the balance of the complex, which is about 40 percent low-income now. And they fear that would start it on a slide. . .But refusing to accept more Section 8 tenants is illegal discrimination, no matter what the motive.”

Public officials may argue that redevelopment and economic integration may be a new form of excluding certain poor through more screening, and limitations on the number of low-income residents. Public redevelopment retains units for former tenants and new subsidized residents. Corcoran argued that the mixture is part of a “real estate formula” designed to attract a market rate clientele. Spence and others believe that what is desired is not necessarily a market rate clientele but rather working class people living in the community with the very poor. Spence concluded:

“The reasons you need working people is a whole set of reasons, but one of them is. . .the sense of efficacy that come from going out into the world do a job, learning that, even if I’m working as an orderly in a hospital, I know I learn something about organizational life. And as I learn about organizational life I become confident. When we used to hold meetings in for example Franklin Field, we were trying to form a tenant association. Our first meetings were stunning to me. Ten percent of the population was working at that time. I swear more than half of the people in the room were working class people. Of that tiny portion of the population, they were the ones who came to the meeting. Why, not because working people are better than non-working people, but from their

---

work there was sense of efficacy. Collectively people can do more than they can, than individually. And they have some sense of participation from the larger society.”

*Future of Housing Policy*

Housing policy and housing assistance programs will determine the financial destiny of public housing redevelopment. The necessary funding for public housing will be part of HUD’s commitment of restoring the public trust and reestablishing some accountability in the affordable housing arena. In the FY 1998 Budget of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the federal agency proposes to balance the budget while helping communities meet their most pressing needs. They emphasize four core challenges for the coming years:

1. **Averting a Section 8 Housing Crisis;**
2. **Expanding Affordable Housing Opportunities;**
3. **Making Welfare Reform Work;**
4. **Restoring the Public Trust;**

In an effort to meet the challenges of all four goals, HUD is expected to supply housing assistance to nearly 4.4 million people, 90 percent of whom are elderly, disabled or families with children. Secondly, they plan to expand affordable housing opportunities by not only replacing 100,000 of the nation’s worst public housing units, but creating 50,000 new rental (Section 8) certificates, rehabilitating 400,000 units through HOME, CDBG and other special grants, and financing $50 million in Homeownership zones for first time buyers.

Congress proposed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, that will create good jobs through the Economic Development Initiative (EDI) program and contribute $100 million to the President Clinton’s Empowerment

---

Zone/Enterprise Community, use tenant-based rental assistance to link welfare recipients to jobs in the growing economy and provide leverage services to assist welfare recipients in public housing make the transition to work.

Finally, HUD wants to restore the public trust by “borrowing” senior business executives from lending private sector institution to assist in aggressive implementation of public housing management reforms and advancing HUD’s adoption of world class strategies and techniques. Moreover, they are committed to expanding Operation Safe Home to prosecute violent crime and white collar fraud in public and assisted housing as well as invest in improved technology that will restructure the Department’s financial management systems.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a renewed interest in accepting the expertise of the private sector. HUD concludes that the private sector in conjunction with local officials, and backed by federal grants, has the ingenuity to turn around troubled public housing in the midst of troubled and economically deprived communities. The “devolution revolution” as M.I.T. professor Langley Keyes calls it, is the elimination of strict federal regulations combined with putting more accountability into the efforts of local institutions. HUD, however, has not forgotten their role in the reshaping of public housing. Some local PHAs are still capable and have become role models for developments and authorities that are currently troubled. The commitment is a commitment for the supply and rejuvenation of affordable housing stock for poor people. The private sector has become a resourceful ally. The public sector remains a loyal advocate.

Part 1 of this report has addressed the conditions of public housing and its future through the eyes of architects, planners, policy analysts and professionals. In

Redevelopment Efforts
Part 2, residents of Harbor Point provide different and personal viewpoints on public housing, community and redevelopment. Both former Columbia Point and Harbor Point residents share their experiences of living in a mixed racial and income community. From their experiences which the reader may gain a new insight into the implications for public housing redevelopments.
PART 2
THE COLUMBIA POINT EXPERIENCE
THE COLUMBIA POINT EXPERIENCE

Communities can and have experienced incredible and sometimes permanent physical and social changes. These changes can be voluntary or sometimes influenced by economic forces such as changing market conditions, increased services, and new adjacent developments. Columbia Point was built with the notion of housing low-income families with middle class aspirations, but it’s physical isolation latter led it to become an isolated island unto itself. Just one street provides access: Monticello Ave, leads to the development.

Columbia Point’s experiences are the experiences of individuals who have lived in this neighborhood all of their lives. They are the individuals who have had the ‘best of times and worst of times’ at Columbia Point. Experiences were shared by persons who were participants in its redevelopment and current state. They are the developers, low-income housing advocates, social organizers and currently the market rate and subsidized tenants of Harbor Point. Harbor Point and former Columbia Point tenants agree that the transformation of Columbia Point has provided an alternative to its previously poor physical condition and to the community’s social problems.

This section begins the second of a two part thesis providing a brief history of Columbia Point, from its beginning in the 1950’s, to its decline in the 1960’s and 70’s and finally to Colombia Point redevelopment in the 1980’s and 90’s. Insights on Columbia Point’s history are drawn from news articles, and academic reports, and from interviews with residents and professionals.
4.1 Social and Developmental History of Columbia Point

4.1.1 People and Community

Visions for developing a community in the Columbia Point peninsula date back as early as 1945. The Boston Housing Authority’s vision turned into a reality in the early 1950’s. Columbia Point’s initial groundbreaking began on July 12, 1951. Designed by M.A. Dyer Company, the Columbia Peninsula which had formerly been used as a calf pasture and World War II camp for Italian prisoners, was financed by the Boston Housing Authority and the Public Housing Administration at a total development cost of approximately $20 million. Design and construction of the area was difficult, mainly because of its poor conditions for building and its existing surrounding uses such as the pumping station and dumping sites. In a letter from John P. Kane, Director of Housing and Home Finance, he stated that the “present practice of dumping garbage and general waste was dangerous to the Columbia Point construction in that it “attracts rodents in dangerous numbers and the material which is burned creates a definitely undesirable atmosphere” and that “Dumping should be limited to unburnable fill and local health authorities should be requested to undertake abatement of the existing rat problem in this area”. Despite initial concern by local officials regarding the stench and fill that existing on the peninsula, the dumping practices of the city and private agency continued. One former Columbia Point resident commented that:

“We had a dump site, across the street where the school is, this little girl named WariAnn... she was about seven years old, got hit by Dewey’s dump truck. It killed her instantly, she died. I must have been about sixteen or seventeen years old. I just graduated from High School. As the residents, decided we were not going to let the dump truck dump any more trash. There were a lot of families who agreed that there was a lot stuff that was right. Mothers, fathers, teenagers boycotted, and as long as we

1 Kane, John P. Letter to Boston Housing Authority and Housing and Finance Agency. March 13, 1951, Massachusetts State Archives.
were moving police can't do nothing to you. That was it, we walked and walked. We went to politicians and went to people.”

The death of a young child from a speeding dump truck sparked a 1962 protest, after which Columbia Point residents began to take legal action related to such practices and gained a decisive victory over these uses in a Massachusetts Supreme Court.⁵

Columbia Point was completed and occupied in April 1954 with the mission of providing federally-aided low-rent public housing for tenants in Boston. The site encompassed nearly 35 acres with a waterfront view facing Dorchester Bay. Buildings covered one-fourth of the land open space, streets, roads, parking and play areas covered the remaining three-fourths.⁴

Columbia Point’s housing stock as compared to other public housing developments in Boston was distinctive in that it had larger unit sizes than most developments in Boston (i.e. 5, 6 or 7 bedroom units). Of the 1504 dwelling units in 27 residential buildings, 15 percent or 228 units were six or seven room apartments. The were designed to accommodate approximately in total 6,000 persons. Table 4.1 shows the building types and the breakdown of units and rooms.

Table 4.1 Building Types and Units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF ROOMS</th>
<th>15 SEVEN STORY ELEVATOR BUILDINGS</th>
<th>12 THREE STORY WALK-UP BUILDINGS</th>
<th>TOTAL UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Resident Interview. February, 1997
³ Boston Housing Authority, Central Files: Columbia Point Fact Sheet. Revised August 1, 1963; Massachusetts State Archives. p.2.
⁴ Ibid. p. 1.
After its completion in the late 1950's, the Columbia Point development had a vacancy rate of approximately 1.0 percent. Many of the families were Irish and had the typical nuclear family with mother staying at home and the father working. As of 1959, 241 minority families lived at the development while the rest were White families. High turnover rates existed at the development due in part to the large number of veterans who were financially able and federally supported to relocate out of Columbia Point into homes in Boston, and elsewhere. Ownership was the next and final step for most of these families. To these residents, having house and home was both a benefit and private investment. Left behind were families of modestly low incomes, but the development was still quite stable as a working class community.\(^5\)

Although physically isolated from Boston and parts of South Boston and Dorchester, Columbia Point and its residents were supported within the development and by agencies around the city. For example, in the 1960's, a resident task force was established. Community and administrative services were conducted at 270 Mt. Vernon. The development had four and one-half acres of outdoor recreation which included a baseball field, tennis courts, basketball courts, a pool and a roller skating rink. Recreational activities were sponsored by organizations such as the Boston YMCA, and the Boston Department of Parks and Recreation. In addition to recreational activities, Columbia Point residents were active members of the Columbia Point Inter-Agency Council whose main purpose was to “to bring together representatives of the many public and private agencies working in the area of the Columbia Point Housing development to see how they can work cooperatively in providing maximum services to

---

all residents of the Columbia Point project.”6 Under a lease agreement with the Boston Housing Authority, the council arranged for numerous services such as home medical care with Tufts University School of Medicine, and a temporary medical care office under the Boston Department of Preventive Medicine. They provided an on-site welfare department that emphasized economic and social rehabilitation. Finally, the council made possible a clinic and day care facilities for working parents.

Profiles of Columbia Point Residents and their Experiences

In a interview, Dorothy Harris, an African-American and resident at Columbia Point for more than 30 years talked about her experiences at Columbia Point:

“I came from a house in East Boston. When I came here at the age of ten I hated it. All the buildings looked alike. They were ugly. Outside of the fact they had numbers on the doors it was horrible. It was very clean and each family had cleaning responsibility. There were four apartments to a floor and each family had to clean the hallway once a month. . . for a month. I didn’t have to start doing that until I was twelve. Wipe down the stairs and wipe down the walls. And each family had a month. So I think we had three months per year.

There were very few black families here. It was fine because from where I came from, there were no black people there. That’s the first time I had ever been called a nigger in Boston. It wasn’t that bad, the kids were friendly. I made friends. We went to South Boston. My brother went to Dean High, my Sister Linda went to the Tuckerman, and Christine and I went to the Gaston. All in South Boston. We didn’t have any problems. On Thursday we’d go to the school, where we had religious instruction. We never had any problems.

We didn’t have a youth center. We had the CYO. Catholic Youth Organization. You would have meetings there, dances and parties and things like that. In Columbia Point, everyone was like family. We had one Chinese family here. And there was a lot more respect here then. If someone’s mother told me or asked me not to do something, I didn’t. We had two police officers. Their names were Obrieze and Connelly. And when you saw them coming you ran. You knew you weren’t supposed to hand in the hallways. You weren’t supposed to do any of that stuff.

We had gangs, but they’re not considered the gangs we have today. The white people had a group called the Knockers and the Knockeretts. Ours was the Gems and the Junior Gems. There were no shooting, murdering, killing stuff like they’re doing now. We went to party together, we went to dances. And growing up wasn’t that bad. Everybody knew everybody. If my mother was gone away to do someone. . . I had eight

6 Ibid. p. 5.
younger than myself] to take of and support when she was out. The woman next store, Ms. Steward, she was black, and we had the lady beside us, they were white. So if we had any problems with the kids or an emergency, they still were both right there. It was kind a like we were one big family on an island isolated. When my mother and father went to the store they took Ms. Mavis[neighbor] to the store. When we did go to church up the street, my father, [neighbor] kids wanted to go to church with us. Three buses went to South Boston on Saturday and Sunday all day. The people...were nicer to each other, black white green and purple. Today its; like they are horrible to each other. I found that it was a great place to grow up.”

A White resident who moved to Columbia Point in 1954 shared her first impressions of the development:

“It was a brand new development. Very very nice. It was for low-income, middle income families and it was controlled by the Boston Housing Authority and the Federal Housing Authority.

I moved here in 1954. It was brand new. Everything was new and really nice and they rented according to you husband’s salary and I brought up six children down here. It was a community. The school was built. We had Saint Christopher’s Church across the street. and the Administration Building which is now the Community Center. That’s on Mount Vernon street. It’s part of our complex here at Harbor Point, but back then it was also part of Columbia Point. It wasn’t a community center, but it was where all types of functions took place. They had a daycare facility-pre-school facility...there were things that were needed down here, because we were more or less isolated on the peninsula.

There wasn’t a Kennedy library, Bayside expo or any of that type. So if the family did not have a car, it was difficult for shopping. But we did have Boston doctors who donated services— they came down to help families if you were ill. You can call the police for any services thing. Everybody was more or less in the same category. But I mean we were young couples. The husband worked and the wife stayed home and we were raising families. The husbands were in some wage category. So there wasn’t much conflict...something that rises out of envy and jealousy. And we did have mixed races down here, but the greater percentage I believe was Caucasian. But then as the years went on, it sort of leveled out. It was really mixed income Asian Afro-American and Caucasians. We were all mixed in together and we all got along fine.”

Finally, Doris, an elderly African-American resident, recalled having some trouble in the beginning, but decided to stay at Columbia Point:

“I moved in here in the 1960’s. I didn’t know anything about Columbia Point. I lived in apartment [private] housing. We had our own store, our own sink. We had our own apartment, we had our own stove. I moved out here in 1965. Columbia Point was the first place I moved out to...When I came out here I had trouble. Some of the teenage

boys. . . between seven and eight years old and my daughter. They all went to school over here. I had to be the one to protect them (refers to her children) because they all made trouble for them.

When I came here to old Columbia Point, I thought the place was nice. I didn't think they made trouble. Start fights with your children, make things wrong and say things to you that you don't say back to them. I had more trouble than the Lord now, believe me and I wanted to move out, cause if I knew all this was going to happen to the old Columbia Point. I would have never moved out there.

I lived in 33 Montpelier Road at Columbia Point in 1965. I lived on the second floor in 33 Montpelier. Then I moved to the third floor of Montpelier road. I've been up there until 1972. And they transferred me from 33 to 15 Brandon Ave. Lived there about 10 years and I've been there ever since they built this place and then I had to move here. I had trouble every where I went, there was always trouble.”

Even with their problems, former Columbia Point tenants believed that the development was still a community and a viable resource for them and their children. Former residents established long-lasting friendships that provided a social and cohesive network among single mothers, working class families, African-American and white tenants. Family and friends were necessary support systems for Columbia Point’s community which was isolated from other residential and commercial areas.

Despite Columbia Point’s well-established resources, its physical isolation and poor physical appearance became questioned by local residents, housing and community development corporations and public agencies. Moreover, about eight years after Columbia Point’s opening, the peninsula which was once considered a wasteland of accumulated rubbish was going through development changes of its own.

4.1.2 Privatization and Initial Visions for Economic Integration

In the early 1960’s, Boston College High School was exploring plans for constructing a fourth building on its current site which was a quarter mile from Columbia Point. The cost for this project was $2 million. Both the Boston Globe and

---
Station WHDH (radio and television station) had relocated their plants to nearby Morrissey Blvd. In April, 1962, plans for the Bayside Shopping Mall were underway and its location would be southwest of the development. The first National Bank of Boston erected a $5 million ultra modern electronics data processing center on six acres at the junction of Mt. Vernon Street and Morrissey Blvd. This center would employ nearly 500 employees and allocate parking space for them and the bank’s customers. Private plans for the peninsula were clear: the Columbia Point peninsula was becoming a major manufacturing and technical service area for the City of Boston. The peninsula was generating not only employment opportunities, but a development potential. What then was to become of the Columbia Point housing project?9

Responsive to private interest in the peninsula, public agencies took action and focused their attention on the imposing Columbia Point development. In December of 1962, the Boston Housing Authority began exploring ways and means of improving the Columbia Point area. Seeking the help of Action for Boston Community Development, they developed a comprehensive program and identified community and social services in public housing developments and surrounding areas. Columbia Point became the focus for their study.

In a July 1964 report, Action for Boston Community Development stated their findings in their case. They asserted:

_The human problems and the day to day problems of managing the housing development are inseparable. A family with an alcoholic parent, legal problem, high medical expenses, or intermittent employment is unlikely to pay rent regularly. A family with emotional problems or a sick mother is likely to evidence poor housekeeping practices, which will lead to deterioration of the apartment. Tenants may not cooperate in cleaning the staircase, or restraining children from damaging the property because they quarrel with neighbors or dislike the housing project. Many of the families and individuals at Columbia Point have few or no friends among their neighbors. Severely limited by the lack of time, trained staff and referral resources, the present manager of_  

---

9 Ibid. p. 9.
Columbia Point does what he can to cope with the problems of tenants who come to him for assistance.

While most other housing projects in Boston are located in or close to private residential area and shopping facilities and are near public transportation, Columbia Point is not.10

The Inter-Agency Council in rebuttal to ABCD’s analysis, responded with this:

The survey conducted by ABCD at Columbia Point did not provide conclusive evidence of tenants attitudes about their placement at Columbia Point. However civic groups have recommended modification of the selection procedures of the BHA. Theses relate to the accordance of (1) racial segregation by developments, by section or within buildings of developments and (2) the placement of a large proportion of families with serious social problems in any one development or concentrated in one section of a single development. If total integration is to be achieved, a plan should maintain racial balance on a city wide basis. Desegregation must be developed by the Boston Housing Authority and a policy adopted to support it.11

While agencies contended on larger issues of race and integration in public housing developments, Columbia Point residents were contending with dilemmas of inadequate and unreliable services that were beginning to fall short of its original expectations. Racially, Columbia Point was still majority White-American, yet BHA’s policy of locating the troubled poor was having its toll on the stable families. The Inter-Agency’s desire for integration was just one of most critical arguments concerning the improvement of Columbia Point. It was quite certain, however, that the troubled poor should not live in physical and social isolation.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority had alternative plans for Columbia Point. Just two years after becoming development director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1962, Edward Logue proposed to designate the Columbia Point peninsula as an urban renewal area. The Department of Housing and Urban Development turned down the request as Columbia Point was not a slum, not blighted, and not a developed

---

10 Report by Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. in cooperation with United Community Services of Metropolitan Boston and Boston Housing Authority. July 1964. Massachusetts State Archives. p. 10
11 ABCD. Tenant Selection and Placement. July 1964. p. 64

The Columbia Point Experience 82
area in need of renewal.\textsuperscript{12} Although this was the city’s first attempt to redevelop Columbia Point, the development was continually targeted by public agencies. On the other hand, private developments were still being planned.

In the mid 1960’s, the city was proposing development plans for the UMass Boston campus. In the 70’s, plans for the John F. Kennedy library were being made. Standing in the shadows was Columbia Point. Fortified yet aged, great in size yet in needed services. For the private sector, this would be like capturing the king and calling checkmate.

The development of the UMass Campus and JFK stimulated renewed interest in the peninsula on the part of the city, UMass Boston and Columbia Point residents. Residents were skeptical of the new development fearing the possibility of Columbia Points demolition for student and market-rate housing. Mayor White and the City of Boston created new proposals for Columbia Points redevelopment, but its future was still to be determined.

4.1.3 White Flight, Busing and Columbia Point

By 1974 and 1975, Columbia Point’s vacancy rate rose to 29 percent or 425 units. The remaining 1021 units housed nearly 5,000 residents. During this period, the project’s population was mostly African-American at 64 percent, followed by 23 percent white and 13 percent other races.\textsuperscript{13} Compared to the City of Boston the population of African-Americans was four times as great. The unemployment rate at Columbia Point was about 10 percent, compared to 4.3 percent in the city of Boston. Moreover, Columbia Point housed a large majority of persons under 20; the median age was 14 years. By 1975, almost 75.6 percent of families were on welfare and 76 percent

\textsuperscript{12} Lee, Sharon Hsueh-Jen. Redeveloping or Preserving Public Housing: The Future of Columbia Point.. Master’s Thesis. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. p. 156.
were female-headed. What was once mostly housed by white-Americans, became the home for minorities and the extremely poor.\(^\text{14}\)

Local public housing authorities such as Boston's were managing local developments by meeting the housing needs of low-income and very low-income people. Section 8 subsidies which started in 1974 and other housing subsidy programs remained but with high waiting lists. For those that applied, public housing was one the oldest form of support for the very poor. In the 1960's and 1970's, agencies such as the Boston Housing Authority started to supply the housing needs of the non-working and troubled poor.-- drug addicted persons, young women with children, welfare families. Thus, public housing in Boston became the housing of last resort for many families. Successful families who provided a stable base for Columbia Point were in turn, evicted by the Boston housing authority because of excess income. Fore-warned of the effect of segregating the poor and minorities, the Boston Housing Authority nonetheless selected Columbia Point as a place for the poor, with nonexistent support services.

Ester Santos, former Columbia Point tenant and Task Force member recollected problems with BHA and Columbia Point:

"At that time, BHA, didn't really start to go down. We had some problems of course. . . maintenance problems, those kinds of things. When we needed repairs, they came whenever they wanted to, not when you called them or anything. It didn't take long, you keep that up long enough, thing do go down.

I think it was in the seventies. Drugs, crime... it really began taking its toll. And people began moving out. If you were able to move out, you ran out. Those of us who had kids could not financially. Not that we didn't pay rent, not like it would be out there... and light and gas. We only paid rent. It began taking it's toll on the buildings, the buildings started going down. And then your unit began to fall apart. If you needed...

\(^{13}\) Ibid.; p. 143.
Still other families who saw the changes occurring at the development voluntarily left. Seeing the occurring problems, they sought opportunities whenever possible to move into other public housing developments or seek home ownership opportunity. Crime and drug use were becoming rampant in the development. Vandalism was a daily occurrences causing Columbia Point’s open space and hallways to be littered with broken glass, chicken bones and rats. The development, the largest in New England was becoming difficult to maintain. It had an operating cost of more than $800,000 in 1975, but with the high number of vacancies, and continued population loss, the needed amounts of revenue and rental income were unavailable.

Prior to the busing of American public school children, African-American and white-American families lived in mostly segregated public housing developments. However the children of these families were now grown and quite resistant to racial changes in American schools and their social ways of life. White persons, particularly men between the ages of 20 and 30 who lived in the majority white public housing developments, were angered by the integration of African-Americans and Hispanics into schools because they felt integration of public school would mean full integration of public housing. Thus, some perceived that they would eventually lose their homes, and neighborhoods to minority families. Projects such as West Broadway known as the “D” street project had incidents of white youth gangs who terrorized “black” projects. The same became true of black gangs terrorizing “white projects.” In Boston public housing development expressions of racial hatred were open forms of anger that some Americans felt but dared not to express publicly: they became vigilant zones of racial

---

turf and violence. Columbia Point had experiences of the racial and social violence that were prevalent in Boston. Outsider’s acts of vandalism in public buildings and sidewalks were the norm for many of these residents.

Currently at the age of 23, one African-American male reflected on the conditions of Columbia Point when he was growing up:

“It was dirty. It was ridiculous. It was the projects. You had rats, roaches... It was the projects. It wasn’t no good. This is better, housing wise this is better. After school, we go to the teen center. See our mother was real strict because she knew everything that was going on. She grew up here. She knew everything. She knew the violence and she didn’t want us outside too late. After we got out at the club, we usually came to the house. Before it got real dark, we would be in the house. It was around the 1980’s.”

Dorothy Harris remembered when the community began to change in the 1970s and when local residents cared less about their buildings and their neighbors:

“A pregnant girl and a guy moved in next door to me. And one day when I went to work, I came back home they stole my rug and my vacuum cleaner. When I knocked on their door to see, she said she didn’t see anything. So then I called the police and they came and boarded up the window and doors. It was kind of like nobody cared anymore. I had hot water, but no cold water. Then I had cold water, and no hot water. It was a horrible, horrible time to live in. The roaches were unbelievable. When you walked the streets, especially at night... the rats were as big as some cats. It was a horrible, horrible place to be and then the youth center came. My kids were old enough to go there. I worked and they went there after school. A lot of the friend and things that I had grown up with, they weren’t here for my kids. The kids were horrible and they always wanted to fight. So my kids played softball, basketball, and my youngest played little league baseball. But everything was outside of the community...

It got worse and worse... at one time, my brother and family was living here... they all moved out. But where was I to go, Roxbury was no piece of cake to me. And those that moved, like my brothers, they moved to where they had a fence around them... in Medford and Malden. One brother lived in Brockton, the Madrid apartments. So there was no place for me to go. At least here there were some good people still here that I knew and my kids were here...”

Columbia Point was abused by many and left abandoned on the peninsula. From 1975 to 1979, 510 families moved out of the development leaving 340 families. Due to the

---

17 Harris. Dorothy. Interview. February 1997
poor conditions of the buildings near the waterfront, all the residents relocated into 12 of the 27 buildings near Monticello Ave on the western part of the site. The rest of the buildings were boarded up.

Another African-American woman talked about one family that controlled and terrorized Columbia Point. She and her children were harassed:

“I wasn’t harassed as much as my kids were...I was afraid of specific families who used to control this community. The father or mother didn’t have any control over their kids. It was like they got into an incident...instead of them coming to you as a parent, they would tell their kids to do devious things...it was impounded in them from their parents. One lived at 19 Brandon Ave. It was a big family, that was in control of this development at that time.

My apartment was kept up, but the outside was trashed. BHA didn’t care. I felt like the BHA didn’t care. The management didn’t care how the people lived and who came out here. They weren’t in control like it is now. Any one could come here and be squatters. We tried to control the building. We had good families in there. It was 12 of us in that building in 30 Monticello after I moved out of 104 Monticello. It was more good people in that building. We monitored the first and third floor. We kept it clean. We took turns once a month. Each person took three months out of the year to do the hallways. So we were in control of the buildings...but all the buildings were totally different. You’d be scared to go into some of these buildings. Because you don’t know if you would come back out there.”

In an interview with Miles Bryne, property administrator of Harbor Point Apartments, he talked about his experiences as a youth worker working with young children at Columbia Point:

“I had a little Toyota pickup truck back then and I had to get it jump started on cold days...to get out of here at night. On many occasions I would lift it up, there would be little bones in my engine. I was just astounded...what was I to think...squirrels or something...until an old seasoned veteran said the rats like to keep warm on cold days. When you park they have the sense that there’s heat up there so they climb right under. That is Columbia Point. And I will never forget it. There were sewer systems here that when it rained, did not have the capacity to drain the water. With X amount of buildings on a fifty acre site and water came down off an ocean, that water settles, and you hope that you got a couple of days of sunshine, because in a little time it will evaporate, but if it doesn’t...it will sit with these chicken bones and trash and diapers that have been thrown out of the seven floor and for days, that water is rank and filthy. You can’t image how a child didn’t die of horrible diseases here. And that was Columbia Point. I will never forget.”
I was actually hired for the relocation effort, and I was getting my Master’s at UMass Boston. But there was such a delay in this process. There were forces that didn’t want it to go forward. One of the better learning experiences for me, because you only enter into these experiences with your own expectations.

There was this incredible field out here, incredible park they bulldozed, I would say it was six acres. I cut the grass and then went to the city of Boston and said, I want you to turn on all the lights and they said that they have never turned it on in ten years. I found somebody who was sympathetic to me, "Boy, I don’t know what you’re doing out there!", so he gave me the key. All you have to do is shut them off. I turned on these incredible lights so that people would come out. The kids were playing ball and really taking advantage of it. It was great for them. They couldn’t believe it. It was like a carnival atmosphere. Something neat happen. A field that hasn’t been cut for years. It was 1984 or 1985. It was very simple, but it was a huge success for me. So I played baseball ever night with the kids.

One night, Friday night, I left and I typically work until nine. I forgot to shut off all the lights. I came in on a Monday morning and these small kids about ten years old couldn’t wait to see me, "Miles...that was so cool, we were playing basketball until four in the morning...[Miles was surprised that the kids spent the entire night unsupervised by their parents]”

Only 25 years old, Columbia Point had transformed from a stable fully occupied development to an “eyesore” on the peninsula, but the people, who were mostly African-American and single females with children were still hanging around.

Columbia Point’s reputation was spoiled, but the reliable, working class families were still existent. They were overshadowed by the crime, drug activity and most importantly, the physical disrepair. Living at Columbia Point meant living in substandard housing. It was undesirable for residents seeking public housing because in some cases people decided they would rather live in homeless shelters. “The Point” was the Vietnam of housing. But it was reaching its most critical stage: physical redevelopment.

---

18 Byrne, Miles. Interview. February, 1997
4.1.4 Columbia Point and the Potential for Redevelopment: Analysis of Findings

In a 1974 letter, Samuel Thompson, Administrator of the Boston Housing Authority, addressed Sirrouko Howard of the Department of Housing and Urban development on his goals for the Columbia Point development. He stated:

As we recently discussed with you, the Boston Housing Authority's role in the redevelopment of the Columbia Point peninsula is critical to the success of the entire undertaking now being studied by the coalition of the city, state, and federal agencies and the community groups comprising the Columbia Point Peninsula Restudy Committee.

The Authority is currently studying a variety of ways in which it can fulfill its critical role in the rejuvenation of the peninsula. Our studies involve everything from the issues of mixing incomes in the existing project through a variation of the leased housing program to securing the estimated $30 million needed to completely refurbish the project, upgrading it to a level where mixing incomes becomes a real possibility. 19

The letter also stated that new units would be available for low and moderate income tenants, but said nothing on assuring housing for then current Columbia Point residents. The Columbia Point Task Force which was adamant about representing tenants at Columbia Point after its proposed redevelopment, began proactively organizing tenants. Residents made evaluative studies on the local impact that UMass Boston would have on the housing stock in Dorchester and Columbia Point. They posed clear opposition to Samuel Thompson's and Mayor Whites' redevelopment plans for Columbia Point, because of its intent to exclude residents from the redevelopment and redesign process. Even with much support from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and architect-professor Jan Wampler, the Task Force's efforts were underrepresented in the planning process. 20 On February 26, 1974, Mass Media, UMass Boston's local newsletter stated concerns about the redevelopment:

The $150 million development plan for Columbia Point was officially unveiled at Boston City Hall last month. After the show, several Columbia Point residents asked

---
that the model be taken to the Columbia Point project so that the people who would be most affected by it would have a chance to see what had been planned for them. They were told that the project residents would have to come down to City Hall because the model couldn’t be moved. As the Columbia Point people left City Hall, they noticed that the model was being taken apart so that it could be moved to another location in City Hall. A week later, the model was disassembled again and this time transferred to Cambridge to the office of Benjamin Thompson and Associates.21

Following the $150 million proposal for Columbia Point’s redevelopment, public agencies were continually pressured to change the development. Moreover, the Boston Housing Authority was undergoing pressure from the Housing and Urban Development department and from the citywide case Perez et al. v. BHA that subsequently led to its appointment of a Court-Appointed Master and greater pressure to gain tenant participation, more effective management and efficient allocation of public money.

Through a modernization program, HUD allocated $8.4 million through the Target Projects Program (TPP) and the Boston Housing Authority prepared a $10 million proposal which eventually lead to the Urban Initiative Grant. Columbia Point received one of the 10 awards made to major cities during its first year of the program’s fruition. Development of plans was poorly managed, targeted to actual buildings and failed to address concerns of the residents. The Target Projects program was designed to provide management assistance for staff training, development of a security program, physical improvements and improved tenant services and communication. The TPP director lacked accountability in employing the resources and was relieved of his position. His replacement, the Deputy Administrator at Central Office, was rarely available on site at the development and was awaiting retirement. By the end of the first phase of modernization, all of the elderly and only 96 family units were completed leaving 156 occupied family units unrehabilitated. To Columbia Point

21 Ibid. p 188-189.
residents, constant delay of action and resources was a sign that the intent of the BHA to communicate and work with residents was clearly articulated in documents, yet not necessarily what they actually intended on doing. Even after the modernization referendum in 1977, architects proposing plans to redevelop and redesign Columbia Point were "unimaginative and incompetent" and "somewhere along the line the architects became confused." Modernization funds were not the remedy to Columbia Point's redevelopment. Residents wanted to be actual participants in the change.

A new Task Force was incorporated in 1978. Under the leadership of Terry L. Mair, they addressed a series of concerns to the BHA and Board of Commissioners. It was in a December 18, 1978 letter, in which the task force began exploring the public and private partnership of mixing incomes at Columbia Point. He stated:

Because most of our members are new to the Task Force, we spent a substantial amount of time over our first several months developing an understanding and a participation in ongoing management, security and social services and the modernization program, the Target Projects program and in planning for the Urban Initiative program. At the time of the Urban Initiative application, we supported that application on the condition that we maintain the right to approve decisions on actual expenditures of funds provided...

Several BHA Commissioners and senior staff have developed a notion that Columbia Point should become a mixed income publicly and privately owned housing complex operated by a joint venture between its tenants and a private developer. We find hard to believe that, while supporting a concept that involves a substantial tenant role, the BHA has refused to work with this Task Force, an arrangement that will enable tenants to develop positions on the major issues and an understanding of their implications before the major decisions affecting the future of Columbia Point are made. We are seriously concerned that BHA wants the form of tenant role but its not prepared to live with the substance of that tenant involvement.

The Task Force was losing faith in the Boston Housing Authority. Channeling their efforts to other agencies such as the Boston Redevelopment Authority and HUD, the Boston Housing Authority was becoming less accountable for the changes that were

22 Ibid. p. 192-205.
23 Mair, Terry Letter to BHA and Board of Commissioners. December 18, 1978.
occurring on the peninsula. Ester Santos commented on the Task Force’s work with the BHA and problems with modernization funding:

"The Boston Housing Authority was not doing [anything] for its people. Whatever we did in our homes, we repaired it. We paid somebody to come in and repair something. We did the best we could. It’s not that they didn’t try. They didn’t have that kind of money. But when they [BHA] started going down, that was it. A notice came out one day that HUD was having a meeting in the development for people that are interested in sitting down and discussing the problems of Columbia Point. We had a hall full of people. From that, they offered a small group who would be really interested in working for some kind of solutions. I got in their group.

We began talking to people. . . [people were saying] nothing ever going to happen, it’s a waste of time. We’re knocking our heads against the wall, so forget it. We got eight people that would be elected to this board of directors work with the Boston Housing Authority. We found out much later when we campaigned ourselves that we were elected and we were eight board members that began working with BHA holding meetings. We found out later that the reason HUD did that because they had money, that they wanted to allocate to all the developments, but that they didn’t want it in the Boston Housing Authorities hands. Nobody ever really thought anything about that, we would oversee, and we were the group . . . we were the ones that would oversee it and okay it. That process . . . we thought the BHA was working in good faith. We found that they had taken money allocated to Columbia Point and putting it somewhere else. They reimbursed us. We called HUD and stopped it altogether. [We stopped] everybody’s money until we worked out a solution to what was going on.

When we did that, Boston Housing really began to work, because the moneys were frozen. Somewhere, something turned around. We got security screens, we got repairs done that were badly needed, we got some kitchens redone, not like this(at Harbor Point), but they did do some amount of repair. . . I think I had my dues. So that’s how it (redevelopment) started. With the way it was looking --no way, no more, we want something better. We can do it." 24

In 1980, when the BHA which was under receivership, the board became quite willing to negotiate its part in the process. Granted future cash flow on a 99 year lease, the agency was relieved to give up the financial and managerial burden of maintaining one of the largest public housing developments in Massachusetts. The leasing agreement also ensured that after 99 years, the land would return to the BHA. Originally the tenants pushed for a 25 percent low and 50 percent moderate and 25 percent market

mix, later negotiated to a one-third composition of each income group that was mandated by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). In 1981, a memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed by the BHA, BRA and the Columbia Point Community Task Force that ensured the private redevelopment of Columbia Point, that former tenants would not be displaced by the redevelopment and that there would be available low-income housing stock in the new development.

The concept was achieved, but a greater effort to ensure housing for former tenants was pledge by HUD in March of 1982. Four months following the commitments, the City Council wishing to ratify the BRA’s promises for funding, amended the city’s $25 million UDAG application for Columbia Point’s redevelopment and guarantee 400 units for low-income housing and housing for former Columbia Point tenants. That August the commitment was ratified and the BRA formally approved plans for a mixed income development at Columbia Point with 400 units for low-income people. 25

The tenant Task Force, the BHA under the receivership of Harry L. Spence, and the BRA, began discussing developers’ proposals in February 1983, narrowing the choices down to Corcoran Mullins Jennison (CMJ) and Columbia Associates. Spence chose Columbia Associates based upon its financial resources available for maintaining 400 low-income units during the lifetime of the development. But the tenants were discussing the mixed income option with CMJ for several years and supported them, and their commitment to a tenant-private company partnership. Dorothy Harris, who went on television with Joe Corcoran, stated that she expressed her doubt, but was later convinced by the CMJ and the Task Force:

"I went on TV with Joe Corcoran in 1986, and I said "How are you going to put rich people and poor people together?" There's nobody better than me. If you put the rich people here and the poor there, you're going to build an invisible wall. I don't think it's going to work. I really don't. This part wasn't going to be for market and this part for subsidize. It was going to be mixed, they were going to be mixed. And that part did take place. On our block we have Catherine and few other people who were market rate.

It was a partnership...CMJ and the residents. If you think you own something you come to take better care of it. But a lot of the residents don't feel that. They don't like it just theirs. Now we are never going to buy it. We are never going to own it. But as a partner, I have a share in it." 26

Mayor White appointed Arthur Winn to mediate the proposals and in September, 1983 he announced a limited partnership known as the Peninsula Partners as the development team. This was made up of CMJ, the National Housing Partnership, Peabody Construction Co. Cruz Construction, Housing Opportunities Unlimited (HOU) and the Columbia Point Community Task Force (CPCTF).27 Joe Corcoran, the principal developer of the plan, teamed up with Goody Clancy and Associates, an architectural firm that has had success with low-income housing design, to develop a plan for Columbia Point.

The result was a "marriage" that led to a financial package totaling $250 million, of which approximately 60 percent was insured by a loan through the Massachusetts Housing Finance Association (MHFA). (See Appendix for economic information.)28 In 1986, the state and the BHA gained Section 8 certificates for 30 years to subsidize 350 low-income tenants in addition to 50 additional certificates from Massachusetts Chapter 707 program. Plans to subsidize the 400 moderate income units never materialized, but the state contributed $37.5 million in state subsidies over a 15 year period. Thus, Harbor Point became the first development in the country to

26 Harris, Dorothy. Interview. February, 1997.
27 Ibid. p. 23.
use both tax depreciation from the 1981 tax act and low-income housing tax credits to attract investors. At one point, when the development was at risk of going bankrupt, private companies buttressed the development from failure. Companies such as the Chevron Corporation invested half of the $75 million in private equity. Thirty-five other companies provide the remaining half of the investment.

By 1988, when the private management’s leasing of the Columbia Point began, the vision that residents fought for was becoming a reality. The development became known as Harbor Point. (Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5) While the residents and the developer aimed at altering the physical and social image of the place, ensuring homes for former tenants and creating a safe and diverse community, there were certainly more obstacles to overcome in the next few years and beyond. Would diversity be achieved or would the development place ‘invisible’ walls between subsidized and market rate residents? The task of redeveloping and managing such a large scale development was also at risk. Would the management-resident partnership ensure equal treatment and equal placement?

4.2 Point of Change: Interpretations of Columbia Point’s Transformation.

The Harbor Point Apartment Community has been criticized and supported by numerous persons. The following paragraphs provide examples of different viewpoints about Harbor Point within the last 10 years. The media, Task Force members, administrators and former Columbia Point residents give their impressions about the Harbor Point Apartment community.

4.2.1 Initial Interpretations
In a 1971 article, Boston Globe columnist David B. Wilson, who supported the development potential of the peninsula as a means of eliminating the stigma of public housing, stated his thoughts on the future of Columbia Point and its residents, “It can be said that the project has severe problems which have defied the best efforts of public and private agencies. People do not live there by choice, generally speaking, but through necessity.” And in his view, “What would be lost? Columbia Point Housing Project. Too bad.” The columnist suggested selling the development and giving some of the money to residents to get them out of poverty.

Ruby Jaundoo, member of the Harbor Point Community Task Force recalls that the Boston Globe, which was located on the peninsula “kicked us whenever they could” and states further that, “People did not know what we had in our souls. They just looked at you as poor people. Poor people. . . put them in the dumpster and forget about them.”

The media examined the success of Harbor Point from many positions. Some supported this transformation as a means to eliminate image of public housing and poverty, while others began to challenge whether mixing incomes could be successful.

Columbia Point’s redesign and redevelopment were considered monumental to the eyes of the media in that it planned to destroy what was seen as a public disgrace to the American people. Public housing was seen as representing a culture of poverty that was uneducated, underprivileged, highly problematic. It contained a social malaise that was destroying itself from within. To the media it was quite simple: demolish public housing and demolish what has become a threat to the fabric of urban communities—more specifically a threat to neighboring communities, businesses and the new developments. At least in their minds, the change would definitely make every one feel better and sleep peacefully at night.
Progress for the completed Harbor Point development was quite slow in its first few months. Because of a poor housing market in the late 1980’s, the development was at an occupancy rate of about 40 percent. Rental rates were slashed by 35 percent in order to attract affluent customers to Harbor Point. It was becoming questionable as to whether the development could attract an affluent group of people. The recession brought a troubling period for the development, but with the early 1990’s, there came a gradual mix of student population, and market rate residents from the Boston and Massachusetts area.

4.2.2 Criticisms

Harbor Point’s new governing structure and rules had been attacked by the media, local housing advocates and former Columbia Point tenants. Although the rules were made up from all the former BHA rules and regulations, several residents feared that through new rules enforcement, Columbia Point tenants would be slowly phased out of the development. And in several cases, new rules determined whether some of the families would stay here or move out.

Ester Santos, giving an estimate of the number of families who were evicted concluded that the Tasks force’s mission was to insure that Harbor Point wouldn’t turn into another Columbia Point:

“We have 350 families and the other 50 came from outside. They all stayed, but there were families that were evicted for reasons, that we have in place, part of the ground lease of the governing board that makes the policy. Management can’t evict everybody—they have to come to the governing board. State their case. You were given the opportunity to state your case... with your lawyer. And then a decision was made. The management based their decision that the resident can take the older teen, 18, 19 years old off their lease. It depended on what they did serious. Guns, drugs, fighting... And they would have a trespass put on them. Some parents were definitely afraid of their kids. They were taken off the lease. If some --mothers, didn’t want to take their kid off the lease, I think we ended up with about 325 or 327, out of that 350. Between 325 and 330.
There's a lot to it. Some didn't pay rent because with the BHA, they didn't pay rent. Management in this case can take them directly to court. We worked on a rehousing guarantee, that every resident that lived in Columbia Point will be rehoused. Every family was rehoused if they decided not to live here after the redevelopment. They signed the document and they were rehoused.”

Former residents who were promised housing at Harbor Point were either evicted because of drug selling, nonpayment of rent, or from failing to comply with the new rules of Harbor Point. Parents of children who had been dealing drugs at Columbia Point were now asked to either take their children off their leases or be removed from Harbor Point. Advocates for these families, mainly the press and the Massachusetts Tenant Association thought the evictions were unfair. For a mother who abided by the rules and who had struggled at Columbia Point, taking her 16 year old son off the lease, would be destroying a family. To the Task Force, getting rid of the drug problem and other problems meant dire approaches, even if those approaches removed members’ neighbors. Ruby Jaundoo commented:

“I sit on the governing board that hears management’s request to evict somebody. You have somebody dealing drugs, destroying the property, broke every rule there is to break and then when they come to the governing board, they come here and say to me, Miss Jaundoo, you’ve known me for a certain amount of years--that ain’t got nothing to do with the cost of Tea in China. So I’m not that popular here, in the eyes of that handful. I’m going to be as fair to anyone as I possibly can. But I am not going to sit back and let them put this place to the way it was, if I have anything to do with it. Why should we let a handful people turn this place upside down? I get an anonymous letter saying “Will the real Ruby Jaundoo stand up? Where are you?” I’m right here, but your kid can’t sell crack on the corner. I got grandkids who walk these streets here. So kids can’t sell crack on these corners. I don’t have to apologize to anyone for being a good neighbor. You’ve done every good thing that you can to help them maintain their tenancy here, except for raising their children. And I’m not here to raise anyone’s children.”

29 Santos, Ester. Interview. March 1997
30 Ibid.
The Task Force with cooperation with the community police and the CMJ was committed to enforcing the rules at a cost of removing some of the families. Unapologetic and steadfast, animosity and conflict between the Massachusetts Tenant Association and Harbor Point Task Force were slowly resolved. The Task Force’s rules prevailed.

Still, there was much skepticism about the difference in treatment of market rate, subsidized and Columbia Point tenants. In early 1990’s, Task Force meetings generated much discussion amongst residents about community police harassing young African-American and Hispanic youth, and management prohibiting low-income residents from placing plants and personal belonging on windows, but allowing market rate residents to do the same. One Hispanic woman who lived at Columbia Point all her life talked about the redevelopment and the struggle that exists between management and former Columbia Point residents and Harbor Point residents:

“To tell you the truth I sort of miss Columbia Point. Not the bad experience, but the few people that looked out for each other. A lot of tenants were wrongly evicted. They were evicted because of their children’s action. They shouldn’t have been evicted because of that. If their kids are old enough to leave than they should. We had a neighbor who was up stairs and she was evicted and her son didn’t even live with her. And I thought that that was unfair. They [management] would give everybody a hard time.

The redevelopment did change a lot of people. It used to be more interactive. Now everybody is divided. You can feel a little tension between market and subsidize. They [market] get better treatment. Its been getting territorial. There’s not as many fights as it used to be but, the young people are angry. They probably didn’t want it to change, they wanted it to be the same. When they see a white or Chinese family move in, they see all that and think this was ours [Columbia Point]first. Or my family has been here longer. We should have everything.

I was frightened (when I moved into the new development) It was a different environment. I didn’t know if I would feel safe. My perceptions-its changed. There’s still division, but not to the extreme. We don’t have too much power. ..its not like its our property.

They [management] know that there are no pets allowed, but if they see [market rate] people with pets they don’t say anything. ..we tell them, they have a pet and they
'don't check for weeks. . .It's a power struggle, residents and residents, management and residents, how ever you look at it.'

Ester Santos remembered an incident she saw with a man and a former Harbor Point officer:

"Security was getting information from management about families. Some of the families' kids have been in trouble. They have a different perspective than what was going on. There have been arrests, some of them legitimate. There was a drunk man outside, he kept coming back to his girlfriend. She'd let him in. He brings her money. . .but when she doesn't want him there any more, she called security to have him put out. Two guys came, arrested him, laid him on the ground. I was standing right here (by the window) They put handcuffs on him.

Another cop came. He was a hul burly guy and mean. He ran over and said what's going on. The other cop said everything is under control. Big as he was, the man laid his knee on the him. . .the guy [that was arrested] was no bigger than 5 feet 3, 100 pounds. . .he was screaming. The other police took him off the cop off him and said, "I got it under control" I was just standing there. . .I couldn't believe what I saw. So I called management. And they told me, that there was nothing in the security report about that. For a long time I kept on management about that guy.'

Columbia Point residents protested that the dream of fair housing did not mean fair and equitable support from the management. For some of them, whether they lived in a townhouse or a 3 story apartment complex, they were still low-income. Harbor Point is now a market driven and private development. Columbia Point residents perceived that management treated low-income people here as if living at Harbor Point was a privilege rather than a choice. Currently, old disputes have settled with the new police force and change in management, but resident perceptions have not disappeared.

Miles Byrne was certain that Columbia Point's change has been an improvement for all residents including former Columbia Point tenants. Harbor Point complies with federal standards accepting low-income tenants who are earning $10,000, $7,000 or

---

$6,000, but he insisted that good management practices, greater screening of low-income tenants are the best tool for creating a stable community:

“I think there are only a handful of public housing authorities that really have taken that model and were a success. I consider Cambridge clearly as one of the success. The major difference and if the public sector could emulate it, then there wouldn’t be these problems. I know it because I worked for ten years at Cambridge. I learned a lot to bring to this experience. This is the largest rental property in New England.

For example. . .If there was an ice slick out there in front of those cars long rain and cold for two hours . . . as a manager of the Cambridge Housing Authority, I would call in my employee, 'please just salt it down' and scrape it up. And there is a good likely hood that the person that I needed to speak with either one, doesn’t do it. In which case, I have to write them up, but it gets lost. Two, [maintenance man would say] “it’s not my job, that’s a laborer’s job you get a laborer to do it.” And in which case you say, “I asked you to do it because I’m afraid that some kid going to walk across the street, some car is going to hit the breaks and kill this kid.” You sit there and you go (Banging table) Where are the laborers, my laborer’s don’t have beepers. I have to go out into the development, find my laborer, who may be working very hard, but I don’t know where he is.

Now here [at Harbor Point], it doesn’t matter who I talk to, I can talk to the woman next door, my administrative assistant and say ‘I am as busier than a dog right now’, but I’m afraid that somebody is going to get killed. . . can you go out and throw sand on that thing, and she will do it. Because in essence, her job is not unreasonable and still there are laws that protect her, but if I were ever called . . . I can defend that this was an emergency. That’s not a small thing. It’s exactly those types of things that make the management better here.

Private management firms, the whole concept is that you are my customer, that in essence really is our concept. When you come in and complain, I drop what I’m doing, I get a survey from someone who said my worker went in bedroom, went into the bathroom and repaired a leak and used the toilet. I am furious and I called my worker and I said, you are not allowed to touch anybody’s personal belongings, you’re not allowed to use the toilet. You got to used the toilet you get out, politely excuse yourself lock the room up and go back to the shop and used the toilet. This guy said to me, “I didn’t used the toilet.” But, the resident said you used the toilet, I’m going to respond to the resident. They are the ones who are paying our bills.

The maintenance man said he went to repair a leak and had trouble seeing the faucet was leaking. He put a little tissue paper to see if it got wet, and then he put it in the toilet. And I said, (hunmed), that is different. But you know what, we don’t use tissue paper, we have tissue paper. I had the impression that you peed in it. He said 'I’m sorry, I won’t do it again.' I sent the resident a letter saying that it will not happen again I didn’t try to mitigate that he didn’t pee. I did admit that he did dispose something in there.
That would never happen at the Cambridge Housing Authority. There is a service presence right here where surveys are left to your apartment when things have been repaired and when surveys come back we are judged according. If we get too many that say we are not doing our job, from the residents who are paying our bills, . . . I'm not fantasizing. . . we're gone. It's an interesting concept and these guys know it well. And they kind of like it. At the Cambridge Housing Authority, to think that I couldn't tell my workers not to use the bathrooms, they'll go in there with a cigarette and they would say that “yes but it's Mrs. Jones, she's crazy. . .” But wait a minute, Mrs. Jones is paying rent. She is not so crazy that you can walk in there with a cigarette. . . so you're negotiating everything, but here I negotiate nothing. Is this fair, is this what our standard are. Abide by them or leave. . . No.”

4.2.3 Support and Recognition

Harbor Point Apartment Community has been awarded by the Urban Land Institute, International Design competitions and foundations as a success both in its design and mixing incomes. In 1993 it was awarded the Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment. The selection committee provided 7 review measures in awarding Harbor Point: (1) is this really an economically mixed development, (2) how and how often are the parks and open spaces used, (3) do people feel safe, (4) who initiated the project, (5) are the original tenants still here, (6) is there a control on continued affordability and (7) what are the residents’ role in the management? With these conditions, the committee stated that they were:

greatly impressed by the ability of the Harbor Point Apartment Community to create an attractive community for both subsidized and market rate tenants. They praised the provision of construction jobs for people from the original Columbia Point and social services for current tenants. Most impressive, however, was the partnership between the developer and the tenant group. Harbor Point would not have been created had it not been for the efforts of Columbia Point tenants. ‘They did a marvelous job and showed great tenacity’ and continued to have a real voice in decisions and to share ownership in the project. 34

33 Byrne, Miles. Interview. February 1997.
There is no doubt that Harbor Point is still evolving today, and that conflicts, doubt and success continually test the community’s leadership and environment. In 1997, almost 10 years after its opening, Harbor Point has again received recognition from the Bruner Foundation in *Sustaining Urban Excellence: Learning from the Rudy Bruner Award 1987-1993*. In its “Lesson’s Learned” section site visitors recognized on their March 1996 visit that the place seems to be well-maintained and attractive and the reception person at the gate operated as a symbol of control and organization. The security and Community police are amenities to Harbor Point that former Columbia Point residents proposed in their redevelopment strategy. Today, nearly 99 percent of Harbor Point is occupied and its resident composition is still quite heterogeneous mixed with Asian, African-American, White and families of 20 nationalities. In the next chapter, residents will provide their viewpoints on what Harbor Point is like today. Their experiences will both contradict and strengthen Harbor Point’s vision for a safe, cohesive racial and mixed income community.
Figure 4.2a
Figure 4.2b
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
The Harbor Point Apartment Community is representative of different racial, ethnic and social backgrounds. Moreover, Corcoran Jennison state that the transformation of Columbia Point offers a unique partnership that has a resident Task force and a management company that strives to promote better housing for both low-income and market rate residents. Race or income does not determine a family’s location in the development nor what type of housing they may live in.

For the purposes of this section, residents of Harbor Point, which include former Columbia Point tenants, new subsidized and market rate tenants provide insight to their experiences at Harbor Point and discuss contemporary issues facing the development today. They provide viewpoints on issues such as the effects of physical redevelopment, outdoor and indoor spaces, and management practices.

5.1 Methodology

Between the months of February and March 1997, a total of 196 residents of the Harbor Point Community, were asked to respond to a survey. The survey contained 72 questions relating to their viewpoints on the current physical and social conditions. Former Columbia Point residents were asked to respond to questions concerning the history of Columbia Point and current issues at Harbor Point. The surveys were distributed widely throughout the entire development and residents contributed to the survey through the following methods:

1. Through personal contacts, residents were informed by telephone and later visited in person to determine interest in the conducting the survey;
2. Homes and apartments were randomly selected and formally visited to determine interest in conducting the survey;

3. Letters of intent which informed residents of the survey's purpose were placed randomly on residents' front door, followed by a visit which was two to three days after placement of letter. Residents were then asked if they were interested in conducting the interview.

Of the 196 surveys that were distributed in Harbor Point, 88 residents (45%) responded to the survey. Of the 88 respondents, 28 respondents (31%) conducted taped recorded interviews and 60 respondents (69%) provided written information.

Geographically, the residents' responses are fairly distributed around Harbor Point. Taped recorded and written responses are representative of different races, ethnic groups, and building types. The following tables show a breakdown of the respondents' characteristic. In some tables, data was categorized among former Columbia Point and Harbor Point tenants. Market rate and new subsidized respondents were categorized as Harbor Point residents. While Columbia Point respondents could be subsidized or market rate, these respondents were characterized in the data analysis as former Columbia Point residents.¹

5.2 Respondents' Characteristics

Race, Ethnicity and Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Columbia Point</th>
<th>Harbor Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market Rate</td>
<td>New Subsidized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>69% (11)</td>
<td>17% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13% (2)</td>
<td>17% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>19% (3)</td>
<td>50% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other²</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Two (13%) of the 16 Columbia Point residents surveyed are currently living in market rate units.
² Other includes African, Indian, Kuwaiti, Thai, Turkish and Cape Verdean Nationalities.
Sixteen (18%) of the respondents were former Columbia Point residents. Eleven (69%) were African-American, two (13%) were White, and three (19%) were Hispanic. Two (13%) of the former Columbia Point residents who are African-American were paying market rents at Harbor Point.

Harbor Point's market rate respondents represent about three-quarters of the respondents in this survey. Compared to the demographics of former Columbia Point respondents, the majority of these respondents were White: Thirty-one (47%) were white, eleven (16%) were African-American, seven were Hispanic (11%), six (10%) were Asian and ten (16%) were classified as other Ethnic group.

Hispanics (50%) represented about one-half of the new subsidized tenants in the survey. One African-American (17%) respondent, one White (17%) respondent and one Asian (17%) respondent were classified as new subsidized residents in the sample.

**Length of Residence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT (MARKET)</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT (NEW SUBSIDIZED)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>56%(35)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>19%(12)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 to 3 years</td>
<td>13%(8)</td>
<td>33%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 to 4 years</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 to 5 years</td>
<td>5%(3)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
<td>0%(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(68)</td>
<td>100%(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 years</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 15 years</td>
<td>13%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1 and 5.2 show the respondents’ length of residence. A majority of market rate respondents \( [n=68] \) lived at Harbor Point for less than a year (56%), while two (33%) new subsidized respondents \( [n=6] \) lived at Harbor Point between 2.1 and 3 years. These results are consistent with the turnover rates at Harbor Point which are about 50 percent for market rate tenants and 5 percent for subsidized tenants.

Most of the former Columbia Point respondents lived at Columbia Point for more than 16 years. Only 3 (19%) respondents \( [n=16] \) were residents for 15 years or less. Most of the respondents in the survey represented the original families who stayed at Columbia Point during its redevelopment. Some respondents who were interviewed, noted that they moved out of Columbia Point before it was redeveloped but returned one or two years later.

**Age of Respondent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>COLUMBIA</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No age listed</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>8%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>36%(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 31</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>29%(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 to 38</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>14%(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 to 45</td>
<td>13%(2)</td>
<td>5%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 52</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 to 59</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 59</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>1%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(16)</td>
<td>100%(72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents in Table 5.3 \( [n=88] \) range between the ages of 18 and 38 years of age (64%). Conversely, nine (11%) of the respondents were over 55 years of age. Harbor Point respondents (36%) were mostly represented between the ages of 18
and 24 years of age. The development has attracted a number of college students, young couples and professionals. Through observations these tenants can be easily seen during the day and evening. Former Columbia Point respondents were fairly distributed among the different age groups. Twelve respondents were distributed equally in the following categories: 18 to 24 years of age, 32 to 38 years of age, 53 to 59 years of age, and more than 59 years of age.

### Building Type

**Table 5.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT TYPE</th>
<th>COLUMBIA</th>
<th>HARBOR (MARKET)</th>
<th>HARBOR (NEW SUBSIDIZED)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment unit</td>
<td>31%(5)</td>
<td>79%(52)</td>
<td>16%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>44%(7)</td>
<td>12%(8)</td>
<td>83%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehab Townhouse</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(16)</td>
<td>100%(66)</td>
<td>100%(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents lived in various building types within the development. Market rate (79%) respondents were found to live in apartment units. Five (83%) of the new subsidized respondents lived in townhouses and a majority of former Columbia Point respondents (63%) lived in both rehab townhouses and new townhouses. **Figure 5.1** shows the study area’s distribution of surveys and responses.

### Number of Bedrooms

**Table 5.5** How many bedrooms does this apartment have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF BEDROOMS</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom</td>
<td>25%(4)</td>
<td>13%(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>63%(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>56%(9)</td>
<td>14%(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bedrooms</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>8%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(16)</td>
<td>100%(72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the former Columbia Point respondents lived in 3 bedrooms, while four (25%) had one bedroom apartments. Conversely, most of the Harbor Point respondents occupied 2 bedroom apartments. Two (3%) of the Harbor Point respondents, one market rate and the other a new subsidized resident, lived in 4 bedroom units.

**Education**

Table 5.6  What was the last year of school you completed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior H.S.</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>1%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>13%(2)</td>
<td>1%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed H.S.</td>
<td>25%(4)</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>31%(5)</td>
<td>26%(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed College</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Professional School</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>25%(4)</td>
<td>4%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(16)</td>
<td>100%(72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four (25%) of the former Columbia Point respondents completed High school and about five (31%) have had some College. The majority of the Harbor Point respondents (88%) completed graduate school, professional school, college or have had some college experience.

**Gender and Marital Status**

Table 5.7  Gender and Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>75%(3)</td>
<td>36%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>25%(1)</td>
<td>36%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(4)</td>
<td>100%(12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forty-one (50%) men and forty women (50%) responded to the survey. Twelve (75%) former Columbia Point respondents were women, while four (25%) were men. The majority of these women were either divorced (36%) or single (36%). All but one of the former Columbia Point men were single. In the Harbor Point category, the male respondent size was slightly larger (53%) than the female sample size (47%). High percentages of both male (61%) and female (62%) respondents were single. Twelve (32%) of male respondents and eight (24%) of the female respondents were married.

Research Design and Data Analysis

In written responses, residents were asked to complete a survey and provide as much detailed information on their experiences at Harbor Point. Former Columbia Point and Harbor Point residents were asked to provide a rating for certain questions. In other questions, respondents were asked to give a rating with a written explanation. Questions concerning Columbia Point and its redevelopment required written responses rather than a rating. (See Appendix for Surveys)

Oral interviews were conducted in various methods. In some cases, two or three persons were interviewed in focus groups. Both respondents were asked to answer questions and one survey was substituted for that focus group. In some cases, residents were not asked to answer all questions, or did not choose to complete a full interview. Former Columbia Point respondents were asked questions concerning Columbia Point and its redevelopment as well as questions concerning Harbor Point.

This sample provides essential information and a list of issues and problems involving Harbor Point. Written responses and standardized questionnaires provide a greater field of inquiry and analysis that can be reinforced by oral interviews. Used
together with observation and interviewing, the written responses are particularly useful in gathering information about people’s perceptions, their attitudes, values and the meaning their environment holds for them.

For certain questions, residents were allowed to provide more than one answer. In this instance, percentages are not percentages of the sample size, but percentage of pooled responses for a particular question. Pooled responses were calculated based on the number of respondents in the survey. In short, pooled responses were either based either divided by the number of former Columbia Point respondents [n=16], market rate respondents [n=66], new subsidized respondents [n=6] or the total of all three categories. Questions # 14, 15, 30, 38 and 41 are all pooled responses. (See Appendix for Surveys)

5.3 Survey Results

The surveys provide both quantitative and qualitative responses from residents at Harbor Point. Several issues were highlighted because of their relevance to the redevelopment of Columbia Point, and current living and social conditions at Harbor Point.

5.3.1 Resident Satisfaction

In this category, residents were asked a central question “How satisfied are you at Harbor Point?”. Table 5.8 shows the percentages of former Columbia Point respondents, and Harbor Point respondents. More than 90% of the respondents [n=73] were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with living at Harbor Point. Satisfaction is also very consistent among the three categories listed below.
How satisfied are you living at Harbor Point?

Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>57%(4)</td>
<td>25%(15)</td>
<td>83%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>43%(3)</td>
<td>63%(38)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Dissatisfied</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%(6)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%(1)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(7)</td>
<td>100%(60)</td>
<td>100%(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents provided some insight on why they were satisfied at Harbor Point:

"Harbor Point is more convenient and it seems safer."

"Harbor Point is more of a mixed income community than the previous dwellings (which) was primarily college student."

"More ethnically and financially diverse. It seems more like living in a suburb--yet close enough to everything I need to get to."

"Harbor Point virtually has no problems and it's very healthy compared to my last apartment. My last apartment was supposed to be supplied with heat and healthy conditions. We had rodents and it was 45 degrees in the apartment."

"A large racial mix than my hometown."

"I attended a private school in Springfield and lived in a small city population about 15,000 to 20,000 people. The culture of the city and the environment of the big city are not comparable."

Of those who expressed dissatisfaction, several reasons emerged. Personal preference of one's social arrangement or several incidences with other tenants at Harbor Point could have caused some respondents to feel uncomfortable with their surroundings. Most of these comments were based on the development's physical features, racial and economic diversity, safety and security:
“There is little or no sense of neighborhood. People of different racial, financial and educational backgrounds do not even speak to each other. No one cares what’s going on unless it’s inside their apartment.”

“Class issues were never a problem in other places.”

“Has characteristics of ‘urban’ living-noisy, loud music, people and attitude.”

Has Respondents’ Impressions about Harbor Point change?

Nearly half (48%) of the Harbor Point respondents [n=67] found out about Harbor Point through a friend or relative. This shows that Harbor Point has gained recognition and interest from prospective tenants in the Boston area. Through first impressions, they found it to be well-kept, friendly and sociable. However, based on these initial responses, residents were asked: “Have your impressions changed sense you moved into Harbor Point?” One white resident commented:

“There seems to be a decline in the quality of people around the center of the community. The streets are filled with more trash and ‘troubled’ people from outside the community are allowed to hang around and harass the residents.”

An African-American resident who has lived at Harbor Point for about a year criticized the facades of the buildings:

“The architecture in some parts is questionable . . . Screens falling off from windows and doors, molding porches and crooked columns. . . like the townhouses the four and five bedroom townhouses, it seems like they were hand painted. With an architectural eye, I can pick these things up.”

Other respondents claimed that residents’ attitudes towards other residents have changed:

“Yes, living here so far away from downtown isolates me and has affected my social life. The people here have been affecting me also. I was told by friends, ‘Just be cool and they won’t mess with you,’ that type of thing. I didn’t want to live in a place like that.”

“Yes it has changed in terms of the people. It seems that there is a general disrespect for the apartment building and grounds: furniture in lobbies disappear, holes in walls
appear overnight, garbage/litter collects on the grounds despite apparent efforts by ground crews to keep this to a minimum."

When asked what they found most attractive, Harbor Point's location was selected most often, followed by physical and open space, and secure and safe environment. A question concerning their dislikes was also asked in a similar format. Affordability was ranked first. Secure and safe environment was ranked second and location was the third most selected characteristic. Tables 5.9a and 5.9b shows what respondents found most attractive and least attractive about Harbor Point.

What attracted you to live at Harbor Point?
Table 5.9a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th># OF RESPONSES [N=88]</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT [N=16]</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT [N=66]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>59%(52)</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>68%(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>22%(19)</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>25%(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>6%(5)</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>26%(23)</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>31%(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Open Space</td>
<td>35%(31)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43%(31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Mix</td>
<td>16%(14)</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>15%(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure and Safe Environment</td>
<td>28%(25)</td>
<td>19%(3)</td>
<td>31%(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>9%(8)</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>10%(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Conditions</td>
<td>19%(17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>24%(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%(6)</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>7%(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you like the least at Harbor Point?
Table 5.9b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th># OF RESPONSES [N=88]</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT [N=16]</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT [N=66]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>13%(10)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>18%(14)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19%(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>12%(9)</td>
<td>13%(2)</td>
<td>10%(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>4%(3)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Open Space</td>
<td>5%(4)</td>
<td>13%(2)</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Mix</td>
<td>5%(4)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure and Safe Environment</td>
<td>17%(13)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>7%(5)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Conditions</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
<td>6%(1)</td>
<td>1%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17%(13)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%(13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Reactions from Former Columbia Point respondents

Former Columbia Point respondents [n=16] believed that location (19%), its racial mix (19%) and its safe and secure environment (19%) are Harbor Point’s most attractive qualities. One resident who lived at Columbia Point’s for thirty years never realized how beautiful the water was until Columbia Point was redeveloped. Others commented that the new designed edge of the waterfront park is an enjoyable place to have family and community events. Harbor Point Day, which is an annual event that occurs every summer is successful in part because of the numerous events and contests that are held along the waterfront. For former Columbia Point respondents, Harbor Point’s location is a great asset to the community.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s mostly Hispanics and African-Americans lived in Columbia Point. Although several White families remained, they were definitely part of Columbia Point’s minority. Respondents may have welcomed the fact that having a better mix of racial and ethnic backgrounds helps to enhance the social qualities of Harbor Point. The racial composition of minorities to White Columbia Point was disproportional. Redevelopment helped to provide a balance that most of the respondents felt was greatly needed.

Respondents asserted that safety and security is definitely a viable resource for the development. Former Columbia Point respondents recalled the sense of disorder that occurred at Columbia Point and acknowledge that community policing, a security gate and resident surveillance helps to bring order and control back into the hands of the residents and management. When asked whether their values about place and
community changed since the redevelopment, one former Columbia Point woman claimed:

"They [Harbor Point and Columbia Point] are not alike at all. Values have definitely changed. When a place was a dilapidated eyesore, everyone closed their doors to the problems of the community. Values now are that most of us are proud and happy to be part of a better community."

Conversely, the two characteristics that were the least desired are the development’s physical and open space (13%) and management (13%). These are small percentages, but may infer that some of the former Columbia Point respondents have had some problems with their units and least disliked the qualities of the rugs, the thin walls, heating and air conditioning systems:

"The apartment is not insulated... you pay $300 to $400 a month, but if you sit here long enough, you feel the draft... the heat goes right through the window..."

Furthermore, respondents commented on their problems with management’s treatment of former Columbia Point tenants compared to Harbor Point tenants and their policy on evictions. They felt that management does not treat all tenants equally; some rules seem to be more enforced on some tenants rather than others. (i.e. prohibiting pets)

Respondents also felt that management provides better services to market rate residents than to former Columbia Point residents.

**Harbor Point respondents**

Forty-nine (68%) Harbor Point respondents [n=66] believed that Harbor Point’s location (68%), and its safety and security (31%) are the most attractive parts of Harbor

---

3 Most of the respondents who least liked these amenities lived in the new townhouses
Point. Respondents also believed that the physical and open spaces (43%), and the development’s appearance (31%) are very appealing.

For Harbor Point respondents, specifically market rate respondents, location may have been most attractive because of Harbor Point’s accessibility to the T. Walking time from the Red Line T-station varies from about 10 to 15 minutes and the train travel from the JFK/UMass station to Downtown Crossing station is about 7 minutes. Moreover, UMass Boston’s campus is about 10 minutes away, thus Harbor Point provides housing benefits to students in the Boston area. Ten (14%) respondents, \[n=66\] however selected location as Harbor Point’s least attractive quality. These persons may have had some reservations about the development’s isolation from other neighborhoods in Dorchester and Boston and the lack of 24-hour convenience stores, and restaurants.

Twenty-two (31%) respondents \[n=66\] believed that safety and security was most attractive while thirteen (18%) replied that it was least attractive. Respondents in the latter category may have felt that even though security does exist and helps to protect the community, it needs to be strengthened and improved through stricter screening at the gate and a larger staff of community police officers. In one community meeting, a young African-American student who works very late at night, claimed that she is dissatisfied with security. In an angered tone, she stated that after 1 O’clock in the morning, the gate keepers go to sleep and leave the gate barrier up. In an interview, one female respondent recalled seeing more and better policing, when she first moved to Harbor Point in 1988. Other respondent who recently moved to Harbor Point in 1997, noted that they rarely saw Harbor Point police patrolling the development.
Affordability was also a relevant issue for Harbor Point respondents. Eighteen (25%) thought that it was most attractive while fourteen (19%) believed that it was Harbor Point’s least attractive characteristics. Harbor Point is made up of both students and professionals. In some interviews, students stated that many of them share apartments with friends at Harbor Point. This is quite typical for Boston’s student housing market. On the other hand Working class tenants believed that Harbor Point’s rent is comparatively better than other housing opportunities in Boston. Based on their income, these respondents could afford the rent.

Thirty-one (43%) of the Harbor Point respondents [n=66] were most attracted by the physical and open space qualities and twenty-two respondents (31%) found the appearance of their units and the general surroundings to be very appealing. While only two Harbor Point respondents (3%) found it to be unattractive. Some respondents commented that their apartments are simple, and spacious with modern convenience:

“The apartment-[good] appearance and comfort”

“Newer facilities--I was renting part of an old house before.”

“Harbor Point virtually has no problems and its healthy compared to my last apartment. My last apartment was supposed to be supplied with heat and healthy conditions. We had rodents and it was 45 degrees in the apartment.”

CONCLUSIONS

When asked to describe their units’ general condition, close to 80 percent [n=8] of former Columbia Point respondents believed that the conditions were “excellent” or “good”. Similarly, nearly 75 percent [n=66] of Harbor Point respondents believed that the general conditions were “excellent” or “good”. Only one former Columbia Point respondent (13%) and eleven Harbor Point respondents (17%) rated their general living
conditions as "fair". None of the respondents stated that the general living conditions were poor.

Respondents show a diverse groups of people who have either lived on college campuses or in communities having one predominate racial and income group. Respondents who lived in homogeneous communities did not differ in comfort compared to those who lived in a mixed racial and income community. In most cases however, Harbor Point’s diversity offers a unique experience much different from most of respondents’ previous housing.

Both former Columbia Point and Harbor Point respondents are generally satisfied with their living environment because it is quite affordable compared to other 'luxury' housing, yet not totally displaced from the city of Boston. Some of Harbor Point views, the Prudential and John Hancock buildings allow residents to gain a sense of city life, while not being directly in it. These are some the qualities that respondents found physically appealing.

5.3.2 Public housing Image

Does Harbor Point still seem like public housing? Thirty (48%) respondents or nearly half [n=62] felt that it does not look seem like public housing. Eighteen respondents (29%) thought that it seemed like public housing and fourteen respondents (22%) who suggested that Harbor Point has some if not all features that make it seem like public housing. Table 5.10 illustrates the responses by resident type.
Does it still seem like public housing?

Table 5.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Market Rate</td>
<td>New Subsidized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>63%(5)</td>
<td>22%(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%(3)</td>
<td>52%(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>28%(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%(8)</td>
<td>100%(50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Former Columbia Point Respondents

More than 62 percent of Former Columbia Point respondents [n=8] thought that Harbor Point still feels like public housing. Close to 38 percent felt that it doesn’t seem like public housing. Respondents who believe that it still seems like public housing claimed that it was not the physical characteristics of the buildings, but rather family and community ties to other former Columbia Point residents. In one focus group, two young African-American males talked about the “good and bad times” they had at the “Point”. They reminisced, and reflected on the violence and poor living conditions with other youth who still live at Harbor Point, and talked about lasting friendships that supported them through the hard times:

“It still seems like the ‘Point’, because people from Columbia Point still live here. Things they were trying to get rid of... thing the security, [was trying to get rid of] like the drug dealers. To me it’s still the old Columbia Point. The only thing you really don’t see in the old Point, are bodies floating in the water. That’s much different. Now we have 24 hour security. That’s what made a big difference.”

A 58 year old African-American resident concluded that design provides a different and better quality than the original public housing buildings:

“At Columbia Point...there were too many high rise buildings...you’d be afraid to let you kid walk around those buildings...anything could have happened around those tall buildings. I like the way it is designed now. ...some of these buildings are designed better than others.”
**Harbor Point Respondents**

Two (33%) new subsidized residents [n=6] and eleven (23%) market rate respondents [n=50] felt that Harbor Point still seemed like public housing. Physical characteristic such as the brick-work of the buildings, and the perception of African-Americans families and children were all indicators of a public housing image:

“It does seem like public housing because the current management allows clothing sheets, blankets etc. to be hung on windows or false balconies.”

“The area towards the road tends to look rundown. I was not aware however, of the former status of Harbor Point.”

“It looks as if it has aged, but not been destroyed or neglected as most public housing.”

Looks like public housing because the percentage of the population that is minority, especially African-American is much higher than the percentage in the Boston area as a whole.”

On the contrary, three (50%) new subsidized and twenty-nine (52%) market rate respondents thought that Harbor Point does not seemed like public housing. They argued that maintenance, its racial diversity, and enforcement of tenant rules provokes a private community that is absent of public housing’s stigma:

“I don’t think it seems like public housing at all. I think of the 2 or 3 housing towers, landscaping measures, a grocery store, a clubhouse, or a pool, nice waterfront, that destroys the whole stigma of public housing.”

“It is racially diverse.”

“It’s by the ocean. It’s properly maintained. The lawns, the ducks, the flowers.”

“It doesn’t look like public housing because it is clean and well-kept. Streets are plowed of snow reasonably quickly. There are guards at the entrances to the community, which is gated. There are convenience stores on the community property.”

“The area is well planned and built. Tenant rules and regulations keep the area relatively uniform and clean.”
Conversely, one white female resident concluded that despite its diversity, all residents including former Columbia Point residents need to appreciate the physical qualities of Harbor Point and put aside past ideologies of public housing:

"There is an attitude—people seem as if it [public housing] is owed to them. There is a middle ground we need to get to. Look at this neighborhood, you’re living in compared to McCormack or Orchard Park. This is beautiful.

CONCLUSIONS

Most respondents were aware that despite the redevelopment of Columbia Point, perception of Harbor Point’s public housing image is more mental than physical. Former Columbia Point respondents have had close friendships with other tenants that instill memories of the old development. They continually reflected on what “the Point” used to be. Through community functions, meetings with friends and family, Columbia Point’s memory continues to “live” at Harbor Point.

5.3.3 Resident Participation and Management

A majority of the respondents who responded to the written survey answered some or none of the questions pertaining to the management and resident services. It is my conclusion that a large portion of the population that includes students and market rate residents who are often transient and are less likely to stay at Harbor Point for more than 2 years. In sum, they have little or no knowledge of the political and social activities at Harbor Point. Other respondents may have been hesitant in answering these questions because they may believe that response to the management section could jeopardize their tenancy.

On the contrary, responses which were mostly from former Columbia Point tenants, did express interest in the governing and management structure at Harbor
Point. In many of the interviews and in several of the written questionnaires, residents addressed their concerns with rules, and management' enforcement of them:

"The rules are not enforced fairly because tenants who were here when it was Columbia Point are treated differently. [Management administered harsher rules on Columbia Point tenants and less strict rules for Harbor Point tenants] There are two schools of thought. (Imagined and Real) Some feel that they and their families are being harassed by security and management."

"Those on the task force seem to feel that they know the right ways to run this place!"

"I think the management is not paying attention to the appearance especially the carpet in the corridors are very old."

"I believe in rules, but I also believe the rules must apply to all, not a select few."

Some former Columbia Point respondents were angered about the management's eviction policy which led to the eviction of several Columbia Point families. Some accused the management for targeting low-income residents for suspicion of drugs in their possession. In one focus group, two African-American males who are former Columbia Point residents, commented:

"They tried to evict someone we know, they [and police] went into her house, and her cousin had a trespass. They went into her house and they didn't find her cousin, but her boyfriend was there so they searched him and they found a couple of bags of marijuana on him. And they are trying to evict her now. But how can you walk into somebody's house and search somebody who hasn't committed a crime. If the guy was there and he searched and found drugs, then search everybody. But if she's not there, then why would you search somebody that doesn't have anything to do with the problem."

The eviction policy and perceived actions of the management were most important to the problem, and both former Columbia Point and Harbor Point respondents gave mixed views on whether the Tasks Force's partnership helps to improve it, worsen it or provides no support:
"I would hope it improves management because people actually have a stake in living here, that they would work to improve the community. Theoretically, it could work for the community...and I think having the community actively involved."

"Improves management because sometimes management doesn’t explain things to the residents the right way and that’s where the task force comes in to let residents know their rights."

"Does not help to improve management because they appear to have no power."

"Improves management. They don’t have sole control of the daily operations."

CONCLUSIONS

Whether the lack of answers to these questions suggests that residents are not interested in the organizational and governance structure can be debated, but in my opinion market rate respondents wanted to maintain their privacy rather than become active in the community. Having decent housing where they can live comfortably could seem more important than having to continually question and change it. For many of the market rate respondents, Harbor Point is temporary housing rather than a future home or community. The willingness to change Harbor Point may rest more on a persons’ investment and commitment to living and staying in that community.

5.3.4 Resident Perception of Household and Income

Forty-five respondents [n=70] or sixty-four percent revealed that they could always or sometimes tell which residents were subsidized and market rate. Of those respondents [n=56] thirteen (15%) based their answers on resident’s behavior, eleven (13%) stated that they could tell by the living area and nine (10%) saw family composition as a indicator of one’s income. Tables 5.11a and 5.11b illustrate the results and the characteristics that each resident type used to describe one’s income category.
Table 5.11a:
Can you tell which residents are paying subsidized rents and which are paying market rate rent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24%(17)</td>
<td>25%(2)</td>
<td>24%(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>40%(28)</td>
<td>38%(3)</td>
<td>40%(23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36%(25)</td>
<td>38%(3)</td>
<td>36%(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(70)</td>
<td>100%(8)</td>
<td>100%(58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What things led you to make that statement?

Table 5.11b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>MARKET RATE</th>
<th>NEW SUBSIDIZED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>N=16</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>17%(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%(2)</td>
<td>8%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Area</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>14%(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Residence</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>5%(3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Former Columbia Point respondents

Five (63%) respondents [n=8] stated that they could tell if someone was subsidized or market rate. Only 3 persons (38%) felt that they could not distinguish between market rate and subsidized.

Four (17%) respondents [n=16] gave four different answers when they were asked to determine how they could distinguished market Rate or subsidized residents. These were behavior, living area family composition and "other". Other could be interpreted in many ways, but this resident may have selected it based upon his experiences with residents at Harbor. Two respondents who stated that they could
sometimes tell based their answers on clothing. In this case respondents may have distinguished residents who wear suits, dresses or other “expensive looking” clothing as a market rate person.

*Harbor Point Respondents*

Eleven (17%) market rate persons who responded “yes” \[n=66\] and fourteen (21%) who responded “sometimes” felt that they could tell who was subsidized based on behavior. The other most selected characteristics for both responses was living area. Nine (14%) market rate respondents stated “yes” and eleven (17%) stated “sometimes”. New subsidized respondents \[n=6\] revealed similar responses. Behavior (50%) and living area (33%) were the two most selected characteristics.

In one example, a new subsidized person explained his reasoning on how he distinguished market rate from subsidized:

“My perception is that people living in the townhouses, the grey buildings...to me they seem like they are subsidized, by the fact that they have doors falling off and porches leaning. They just look more substandard than the new buildings. It seems like they spend more money on those building where people are paying more money, than the subsidized ones.”

Another market rates resident who mentioned that at one time was he subsidized explained that he could sometimes tell by the “mannerisms” of certain tenants. Whether it is perceived as being negative, he asserted that through experience, low-income people certainly reveal their status by their actions, education and appearance.

Sixteen respondents believed that family composition and size (12%) and race (12%) are strong indicators of ones’ income. Conclusively, these respondents commented that the number of African-Americans and small children are disproportional to the surrounding Boston area.
CONCLUSIONS

Based on my analysis of surveys and interviews, respondents provided mixed viewpoints on their perception of one’s incomes, however revealed that former Columbia Point, market rate and new subsidized persons mostly classified subsidized or market rate persons by their behavior and actions, and least likely by physical appearance. It also revealed that ideologies of race, ethnicity, and family are still commonly used to determine one’s status.

5.3.5 Low Income Housing Stock

Residents were asked if the remaining 400 units of subsidized housing is too much, too few or just enough. Thirty-four persons, which were more than half (54%) of the respondents [n=62] felt that 400 units was “just enough”. Eighteen (29%) respondents felt than Harbor Point has too few low-income units, while ten (16%) respondents felt that it was too much. Table 5.12 reveals the percentages of each resident type.

Table 5.12:
Is that too few or too much?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Market Rate</td>
<td>New Subsidized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Few</td>
<td>29%(18)</td>
<td>78%(7)</td>
<td>17%(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>16%(10)</td>
<td>11%(1)</td>
<td>19%(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Enough</td>
<td>55%(34)</td>
<td>11%(1)</td>
<td>64%(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(62)</td>
<td>100%(9)</td>
<td>100%(47)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents Reactions
Seven (78%) of former Columbia Point respondents [n=9] felt that Harbor Point should have more units available for low-income residents, three (50%) of the new subsidized respondents [n=6] and eight (17%) market rate respondents [n=47] felt that there is a need for more low-income housing at Harbor Point. In one example, a former Columbia Point respondent made assertions based on the history of Columbia Point:

“People who live through the bad times are not rewarded. Now when money is made, who cares about the past.”

“This is the last waterfront and they [developers and market rate persons] are coming back here. There was one member of the task force who even worked for CMJ for a couple of years, at one they got rid of him...and now he’s having a hard time getting back in here.”

Market rate respondents argued that there is a general need to house low-income people and that vacant units at Harbor Point should be given to those in need:

“There are more low-income people in need of housing”

“I heard that the intent of the redevelopment was not to improve standards of living or create a more diverse community, but essentially to change the population. I think that view is biased though.”

“I know people are waiting on the lists and I see so many vacant units.”

“There are so many homeless people also, there are people whom pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent.”

“They do not have a voice or support systems...they are often exploited.”

One former Columbia Point resident and nine (19%) market rate respondents thought that the low-income housing stock was “too much”. None of the new subsidized respondents felt that there was too much low-income housing. Some of these respondents believed more low-income housing may cause social conflicts among market rate and subsidized tenants, while other claimed that it would place a greater
financial burden on rents paid market rate residents. Still others perceived low-income persons as a “problem”:

“I think that low-income people should work harder to pay bills. I work two jobs.”

“The non-subsidized residents may be paying increased rent so that the management can still make money.”

“Low-income residents or lower income people in general tend to commit a higher proportion of crimes.”

“That’s like setting your community up for failure. It’s like having a town where 30 percent of your population is not even on the same page as far as standards go.”

“Discourages others from coming here to live.”

“People who work very hard should not be subject to people who do not work and share in the community. People who do not work should not live in market conditions and I think that destroys the possible beauty of Harbor Point.”

A majority of Market Rate respondents felt that 400 units provides a correct “formula” for a successful mixed income development:

“They have better living conditions too. They are in a safe environment. Their kids see people going to work/school each day.”

“I remember what was here before Harbor Point is 100% better than what was here. The old Columbia Point was a neglected area with crime, poverty and was urban disgrace.”

“No development or no area can survive with poor or low-income families only. Also, I believe it gives people an incentive to care about their community.”

“Nicer place to live just like market rate residents.”

“They have decent apartments to live in compared to before.”

“The former Columbia point was a bad deliberating place and the BHA was just letting fall apart.”

“It brought a different level of income—brings up the entire neighborhood.”

“They have a chance to change the way they were living and get a fresh start.”
CONCLUSION

Most respondents agreed that the Harbor Point was successfully redeveloped and provided opportunities for low-income families. Although the original unit size housed more than 6,000 low-income persons, respondents concluded that concentrating the poor in public housing would destroy any social or economic future for low-income tenants.

5.3.6 Safety and Security

Tables 5.13a and 5.13b illustrate each resident type and their comfort at Harbor Point, outside Harbor Point\(^4\) and walking to and from the Redline (T) train station. Both former Columbia Point and Harbor Point respondents felt safe during the daytime and in the evening. Sixty-eight (97%) of all respondents [n=70] were very safe or somewhat safe at Harbor Point. Compared to other neighborhoods outside of the development, Harbor Point was considered much safer than most other places. In spite of their comfort within the development, fewer respondents felt safe walking to and from the Red Line train station at night than during the day. During the day, Fifty nine (86%) of the respondents[n=69] were either very safe or somewhat safe walking to and from the T and 10 (14%) respondents were either somewhat unsafe or very unsafe. In the evening, twenty-seven persons (38%) felt somewhat unsafe or very unsafe walking to the T where as thirty-seven (48%) felt safe or somewhat safe.

\(^4\) Outside Harbor Point refers to neighborhoods which are in the vicinity of the Dorchester, South Boston area
The results varied differently among men and women. More than 60 percent of female respondents \( [n=34] \) and more than 55 percent of male respondents \( [n=36] \) were very safe at Harbor Point. Comparatively, during the day, female respondents were more comfortable walking to and from the T than male respondents. Nineteen female \( (58\%) \) \( [n=33] \) and thirteen male respondents \( (36\%) \) \( [n=36] \) felt very safe. In the evening, however, seven \( (22\%) \) of the male respondents \( [n=32] \) compared to three \( (9\%) \) female respondents \( [n=32] \) were very safe. This concludes that female respondents felt very confident walking to and from the Redline T station during the day, but felt very uncomfortable at night. Male respondents were comfortable both during the day and evening. The percentage of male respondents only dropped slightly in the evening time.

Please rate how you feel in the following places during the daytime.

**Table 5.13a**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>VERY SAFE</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT SAFE</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT UNSAFE</th>
<th>VERY UNSAFE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLUMBIA POINT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Point</td>
<td>86%(6)</td>
<td>14%(1)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Harbor Point</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>50%(3)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%(2)</td>
<td>100%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to/from T</td>
<td>86%(6)</td>
<td>14%(1)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARBOR POINT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Point</td>
<td>57%(36)</td>
<td>40%(25)</td>
<td>2%(1)</td>
<td>2%(1)</td>
<td>100%(63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Harbor Point</td>
<td>29%(18)</td>
<td>53%(33)</td>
<td>13%(8)</td>
<td>5%(3)</td>
<td>100%(62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to/from T</td>
<td>42%(26)</td>
<td>42%(26)</td>
<td>13%(8)</td>
<td>3%(2)</td>
<td>100%(62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate how you feel in the following places during the evening.

**Table 5.13b**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>VERY SAFE</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT SAFE</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT UNSAFE</th>
<th>VERY UNSAFE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLUMBIA POINT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Point</td>
<td>83%(5)</td>
<td>17%(1)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Harbor Point</td>
<td>20%(1)</td>
<td>40%(2)</td>
<td>20%(1)</td>
<td>20%(1)</td>
<td>100%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to/from T</td>
<td>40%(2)</td>
<td>60%(3)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARBOR POINT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Point</td>
<td>37%(23)</td>
<td>49%(31)</td>
<td>13%(8)</td>
<td>2%(1)</td>
<td>100%(63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Harbor Point</td>
<td>6%(4)</td>
<td>44%(27)</td>
<td>39%(24)</td>
<td>11%(7)</td>
<td>100%(62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to/from T</td>
<td>14%(8)</td>
<td>41%(24)</td>
<td>34%(20)</td>
<td>12%(7)</td>
<td>100%(59)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparisons

During the day and evening, former Columbia Point respondents were more comfortable at Harbor Point and its adjacent surroundings than Harbor Point respondents. For example, all of the former Columbia Point respondents \( n=7 \) stated that they were either somewhat safe or very safe at Harbor Point during the day and evening. Comparatively, 97 percent of Harbor Point respondents \( n=63 \) felt comfortable at Harbor Point during the day, but during the evening it dropped to 87 percent \( n=62 \). All of the former Columbia Point respondents felt very safe and somewhat safe walking to and from the T during the day \( n=7 \) and evening \( n=5 \). Harbor Point responses declined from about 84 percent during the day \( n=62 \) to about 55 percent in the evening \( n=59 \).

CONCLUSIONS

Former Columbia Point respondents could be more comfortable with the surrounding areas for a number of reason. Compared to Harbor Point respondents who may have lived at Harbor Point on an average of four years, they have been residents on the peninsula for more than 10 years and has witnessed the physical and social transformation of Columbia Point. Their length of residency and experiences may have contributed to their greater level of comfort.

Much of the concern about resident safety near Harbor Point has to do with adjacent surroundings near the entrances. For example, tenants who live near the Bayside parking lot could have concerns about accessibility; this area can be either quite congested with cars and trucks during the Expo’s events or secluded and dimly lighted
at night with neither cars nor people. Respondents concluded that walking through the parking lot is much more convenient, but have argued that in both instances, it is not pedestrian friendly. In some instances, they have to avoid moving cars and buses loading and unloading passengers. At other times in the late evening, the lot is deserted with a fewer cars and people dispersed in the parking area. Other entrances are along Mt. Vernon street. These areas were also considered less populated in the evening, thus problematic with Harbor Point residents.

Qualities that help Residents feel Comfortable

What are the kinds of amenities that make residents feel safer? Fifty-nine respondents \([n=88]\) felt that private security (67\%) made them feel safe. About thirty-six (41\%) felt that keeping doors locked made them feel better and thirty-two (36\%) believed that better lighting helped to make Harbor Point safe.

Both groups agreed that having security makes them feel most comfortable, however a quarter of former Columbia Point respondents \([n=16]\) believed that a stronger community is most necessary in making Harbor Point safe. Thirty-five (39\%) Harbor Point respondents believed that keeping one’s doors locked makes then feel safe.

5.3.7 Resident Perception of Neighborhood

With Columbia Point’s transformation into a privately managed community, residents were asked their impressions on the neighborhood and the quality of living there. Only 4 percent of the respondents \([n=72]\) felt that Harbor Point was “very public” whereas close to 17 percent concluded that it was “very private”. Most of the
respondents (63%) claimed that Harbor Point was somewhat private. These figures were slightly different among former Columbia Point and Harbor Point respondents. Forty-two (64%) Harbor Point [n=66] and three (50%) former Columbia Point respondents [n=6] felt that Harbor Point was somewhat private.

Many believed it was somewhat private because of its physical isolation and ‘gatedness’ from other developments or high commercial activity that is typical in the South End, Downtown or Dorchester. These areas have had bad social influences on children and place them at greater risks into crime, violence, and drug activity. UMass at Boston, Boston College High School, and the McKinley Junior H.S. School were recognizable as viable and cohesive resources for Harbor Point’s secure and safe environment. Others stated that the network of buildings, presence of families and familiarity with everyday faces around their neighborhood promotes a semi-private neighborhood. To them, similar faces are commonly seen in and around the development:

“The environment is safe--security is always around-schools are just right here and a college too.”

“There is plenty of open spaces with proper adult supervision--compared to most places in Boston.”

“Other families raising children--play area near residences that are easily supervised.”

“It’s closer in and safer in the sense that your kids play within the community.”

“They have a big playing area and they can have friends from all ethnic backgrounds which lead them to be more logical in the future.”

“Harbor Point is a clean quiet community with strict access control and high security visibility.”
About three-quarters of the Harbor Point and former Columbia Point respondents [n=62] felt that it was important to call Harbor Point a community. However, in several of my interviews, residents raised doubts to whether residents’ conception of Harbor Point as community-centered place has really ever been achieved. An elderly resident who was a former Columbia Point tenant replied:

"Community is the people in the community. The community can’t do things for itself. We keep to ourselves. This community here is alight, but the people are ignorant. You speak to them [Harbor Point and former Columbia Point residents] and they look at you like you’re nothing. Some of them, not all of them. Every time I go out, I see people in the lobby, I say Hi to them and they don’t say nothing. I say nothing more to them. I just pass them outside, like they weren’t even there. See I never been in trouble with any of these people. And I wasn’t attempting to get into any. As long as they don’t bother me. As long as I mind my business. This community is okay. Some people are alight, but some of the people you just got to look over them."

An eighteen year old and former Columbia Point resident asserted:

Community to me is people, all the people that live here together. And if you asked me, I do think that people need to get together and do something for the little kids, for the young kids. I know little kids that are ten, eleven or twelve smoking weed. What are they doing? I know I do it, but I’m 18 years old. These little kids shouldn’t be doing that. . .

CONCLUSIONS

Respondents supported the idea that Harbor Point is a good place to raise children and better than most places. All of the former Columbia Point respondents [n=7] felt that it is a good place to raise children. Of the 70 percent [n=54] who said that Harbor Point is a good place to raise children, nearly 57 percent [n=30] said it is better than most places, 7 percent said that Harbor Point is worse, and 37 percent said it is about the same. Four (67%) of the former Columbia Point respondents [n=6] thought that Harbor Point is better than most places while two (33%) stated that it is about the same. Thirteen (54%) Harbor Point respondents [n=24] claimed that Harbor Point is better than most places, two (8%) thought it is worse, and nine (38%) felt that it is about
the same. Conclusively, respondents strongly felt and repeatedly claimed that security
and Harbor Point’s enclosed conditions were suitable for making it a safe and an
enjoyable place for children to play.

5.4 Reflections

5.4.1 Mixed Emotions

The sample statistics showed that respondents believed that Harbor is a suitable
place for families of different races, ethnicity and income. While the sentiments of many
found it comfortable, respondents gave mixed opinions on Harbor Point’s success in
many of the oral interviews and open ended comments. Respondents stated that the
Harbor Point Task Force has not addressed issues of security and vandalism and some
have generated animosity towards the management, resident leaders and CMJ. This
section provides specific sets of issues that were most relevant to the respondents’
opinion.

Race and Class Issues

Race and class issues has been greatly connected to one’s behavior and
association with others in the development. When asked, “Does physically mixing
people of another race and income benefit a community?”, about 60 percent [n=63] said
“yes” 30 percent said “sometimes” and about 10 percent said “No.” All of the former
Columbia Point [n=4], five (83%) of the new subsidized [n=6] and thirty-eight (60%) of
the market rate respondents [n=61] felt that physically mixing different races and
incomes benefits a community. On the contrary, some respondents had different
opinions. A security guard who works at Harbor Point and was a former resident at
Columbia, recalled that in the 1950’s, Columbia Point was racially mixed and everyone got along fine. Reflecting on the Harbor Point community she had a somewhat different opinion:

“It seems like it was going to work. Maybe five years ago. It might accidentally be slipping back into a bad area. When it first opened, it seemed like it was great, but in the past few years... I've been down here for 10 years. I don't know about it lately. I hope not. ... Harbor Point has received a lot of awards. But there's an undercurrent here. I can see on the other side of the fence looking over. People are being harassed. I see racism and there's not a darn thing I can do.”

Respondents, both African-American and white, have mentioned that they have been harassed by young African-American children or young adults from the development. Other African-American and Hispanic respondents stated that they have been harassed by security. One white resident recalled an African-American throwing a beer bottle at his car when he had asked him to move his car to the side of the street. A former Columbia Point resident was embarrassed when he and his younger brother, who at the time was visiting, were questioned by security and asked to show identification. In each of these situations, respondents felt that they were harassed based on either their race or perceived income status. Although these incidences are random, they felt that in an environment of the “have’s vs. the have-nots”, racial, and interrogation of residents have become verbal and physical expressions of economic and racial divisions.

Respondents may also see problems with the community police, because they too are human and have biases, racial beliefs and perceptions of people. In one example Chief Mahoney, former head of the Harbor Point security was accused of having racist motives because of his harsh treatment of African-American and Hispanic youth. In this instance, residents’ opinion and anger of the unfair treatment lead to his removal. From this experience, residents are now aware of community policing and its possible
danger to the stability of a community. One former Boston police officer who moved to Harbor Point in 1988 commented:

“To be honest I think Harbor Point... the current owners of management are not so much interested in mixing races and income. They want to get the highest market value for the property. Maybe they went with that idea to BHA and whomever else they wanted to, to get public lands for their ownership and management. They had to say the right things to get that. They probably think in the back of their minds and even today... they are interested in market value... Are we getting the top dollar for the real estate market?”

Still, some respondents felt that there aren’t racial problems at Harbor Point, but problems with one’s cultural background and different ways of communicating. Persons who never lived in a racially and income mix environments felt that informal greetings and hello’s were not quite recognized amongst neighbors at Harbor Point.

One resident even characterized Boston’s cold weather with its people:

“Some people who are not used to living in a mixed community, racially and ethnically seem to gravitate on the most part on their own. Some of them have even had management give them a list of others like themselves. How do I know? I found a note and list from management to neighbors left in my door by accident.”

“We don’t mix with other races and ethnic groups as much. We mingle within Harbor Point with our own ethnic group. But we do live with other groups peacefully.”

“It seems like a good idea, but I have not seen any benefits yet.”

“It’s obviously not working. If people would just smile at least maybe. But if two people of two different races and two financial backgrounds meet, there is no basis for friendly relations. I always hear racial slurs. “White boy, chink, nigger”

“I am the minority in this community when I walk outside or drive to my building. I have been called a white-ass mother f**ker on several occasions when I stop my car at a sign or walking to the store...”

**Columbia Point residents v. Harbor Point residents**

In interviews, some former Columbia Point tenants expressed their anger and frustration at Harbor Point tenants. Confrontations concerning evictions of former
Columbia Point residents and problems with management policies and community policing are indicators of that hostility. These respondents felt that Harbor Point tenants have encroached upon social values of what Columbia Point used to be leaving little memory of a that community. Amid the poor physical conditions of Columbia Point, residents recalled that the development was still a community where residents looked out for each other.

With the enforced policies and rules, former Columbia Point respondents felt that the deconcentration of former Columbia Point residents have severed physical ties of friendship that kept former tenants actively engaged. The number and density of buildings, new street layout and new residents all contribute to a mixed income community in which former Columbia Point residents could live next door to new residents. Former Columbia Point residents however are least likely to live next door to each other. In sum, some respondents believed that living next door to a new neighbor may sometimes be comforting and at other times uneasy.

Harbor Point respondents seemed more conditioned on maintaining the quality of privacy and maximizing the physical amenities of Harbor Point. Few if not many did not know anything about the Task force, but were content about what had attracted to Harbor Point them when they first moved. They enjoy the waterfront views, the gym and tennis court. Keeping to themselves or with people whom they know or having exclusive relationships at Harbor Point is more comforting than building long term relationships with in a community. To many, Harbor Point's diversity and population makes it discouraging and difficult for residents to built new relationships.

5.4.2 Reaching Common Ground
Respondents at Harbor Point agreed that Harbor Point needs to strengthen its involvement with youth, issue with drugs and provide a stronger sense of community. These three issues have been addressed below:

The Drug Problem

Nearly half of the respondents [n=41] believed that the drug problem in American is getting worse than it was a couple of years ago, but only 22 percent [n=32] felt that the drug problem at Harbor Point is getting worse. Respondents felt that the drug problem at Harbor Point has improved and that it has been addressed at Harbor Point. Sixty percent [n=5] of former Columbia Point respondents stated that the drug problem at Harbor Point is getting better than it was two years ago while 33 percent [n=27] of Harbor Point respondents thought that the drug problem is getting better.

Tables 5.13a and 5.13b illustrates this below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>COLUMBIA POINT</th>
<th>HARBOR POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>20%(8)</td>
<td>29%(92)</td>
<td>18%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>46%(19)</td>
<td>42%(3)</td>
<td>47%(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>34%(14)</td>
<td>29%(2)</td>
<td>35%(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%(41)</td>
<td>100%(7)</td>
<td>100%(34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the Drug Problem at Harbor Point getting better or worse or is it about the same then it was a couple of years ago?

Table 5.15b
All Respondents mention that drug selling was a major problem, but that there needs to be more national involvement in rehabilitating drug users, education and drug prevention:

Police involvement in education.

Economics—what comes with selling drugs—money and material goods.

Educating children.

Availability, Affordability, lack of spirituality.

Too lenient on criminals.

At Harbor Point evictions are forms of intolerance.

While some respondents felt that the drug problem can be solved by good parenting, others recognized the security, and the Boston Police for their initial efforts in eliminating the drug problem after the redevelopment. One former Columbia Point woman clearly saw a difference in drug enforcement at Harbor Point. She recalled one instance which police cars arrested criminals at Harbor Point:

They [Drug Enforcement Administration] were getting this chick next door... They pulled up right there and open the trunk and seat cover and went rushing into the house on the corner. They opened the trunk and everything came out... Then there was one time at the gate. There were like 15 cars. It was 4:30 or 5 O’clock in the morning. So I know they got everybody. I was not ashamed or embarrassed. I was extremely grateful. That was about 2 years ago.

In conclusion, respondents believed that although the drug problem can not be totally resolved, Harbor Point’s community of market and subsidize tenants are protected by the gate, security and outside support from city, state and federal law enforcement.
Youth and Vandalism

About 800 children, aged 5 and under, live at Harbor Point, according to management’s demographic figures. Miles Byrne, property manager of Harbor Point believed that this figure is underestimated and that youth are Harbor Point residents’ greatest problem and promise.  

When asked what were the three most common and serious problems existing today at Harbor Point, “Raising Children” (25%) [n=88], “Vandalism” (23%) and Lack of Community” (15%), were the three most selected problems. From interviews, former Columbia Point and Harbor Point respondents felt that there is a need for more services for children and young adults in the development. Seeing the youth “hang out on the street corners”, get into fights, vandalize cars and property were quite problematic despite the development’s efforts to provide youth programs at its Walter Denny Youth center and summer athletic programs at UMass. Conversely, respondents claimed that the problem with troubled kids at Harbor Point doesn’t start with the community. It starts at home. Physical redevelopment changed the face of Columbia, but the social dilemmas have not been resolved by several families. Those unresolved problems impacted the children of these parents. One former Columbia Point woman who works as youth counselor asserted:

“Kids, Kids, Kids. . .some of them, the only thing you can do now is send them to a military academy. But the younger teenagers, we need to get them before they become one of them older teenagers, the drug dealers, the troublemakers. We have a family here, the lady, she was a horrible person, and then she got reformed, but because of all that time they[her and her children] weren’t together as a family. We don’t know where they are or what they are experiencing as a family, now they’re derelicts.”

---

5 Byrne, Miles. Interview. February, 1997.
One Hispanic Harbor Point resident who is a maintenance employee for the development thought:

"Some parents don’t keep a close eye on their kids. The biggest problem is vandalism. . .The administration should support the youth, making a basketball team, something to keep them active. They should be more careful though, because people that weren’t allowed to come in are coming back. That’s not good. A fight had occurred when somebody had a weapon. There was one person from the outside. It was just an incident but there are some things that security should do more."

For respondents, keeping youth actively involved in their community, prevents them from getting into harm or trouble. Residents believed that marketing more events and long term activities in the summer will help to keep them off the streets.

**Safety and Security Revisited:**

Respondents were attracted to Harbor Point because it “feels” safe. They found that its enclosure and definition, schools and other buildings were quite favorable. They also believed that safety can be attributed to its cleanliness, as well as to its continual and diverse presence of young professionals, working class families and students. Collectively, they all add to the formula for making Harbor Point a viable, healthy and safe community. Both former Columbia Point and Harbor Point respondents have their own experiences that justify their comfort at Harbor Point. Former Columbia Point respondents reflected on what Columbia Point was like before the redevelopment:

“It got worse and worse. . .It was kind of like nobody cared anymore. I had hot water, but no cold water. Then I had cold water and no hot water. It was horrible, horrible time to live in. The roaches were unbelievable. When you walked the streets, especially at night, the rats were as big as cats. It was a horrible place to be…”

“It wasn’t the best place to be. I lived in fear when I first moved in. The people kept to themselves even though everybody knew everyone. . .People would hang in the hallways, vacant units were vandalized, creating a situation of drugs.”
“I lived here for 20 years. I was scared to death. Kids used to stand on the roof and throw bottles.”

Harbor Point respondents looked at current conditions:

“I met fellow handicap persons, a Mormon law student, an elderly black lady and an Asian programmer.”

“The diversity-the grounds were well kept and the few people I met were very friendly. I like that there were a lot of families here.”

“I was and still am impressed with the upkeep of the property. I felt really safe.”

“Different, exciting, I enjoyed the fact that it was cheap-looking nice and I had an ocean view.”

“I like Harbor Point for the economics and convenience to work/school. I was fortunate to find a place such as Harbor Point.”

Given the history of Columbia Point, its rise, its death and its rebirth, respondents concluded that all communities have problems that can not be totally resolved, but families who desire comfort and security in their own homes, can relate other families regardless of their race, ethnicity and income. Simply, what one family desires for their children is what all families should desire for the community’s children. The final chapter will provide my conclusions concerning the future of Harbor Point and public housing redevelopment.
Figure 5.1
6.1 Values Gained from the Experience

*Organized Resident partnership*

Resident-management partnership sparked the efforts of the redevelopment of Columbia Point and the current management of Harbor Point. Without the initial political involvement and active commitment of residents who desired a new community, the development could have been susceptible to other economic and development forces.

Historically, places such as the West End, (now Charles River Park), and the South End displaced working class and low-income residents with upper income residents; urban renewal and gentrification had negative effects on working and low-income tenants in the Boston area. Columbia Point, however was an exception. It declined physically and in population, to a point where the majority of the buildings were boarded up and where 350 families remained. Some stayed by choice, others because of need and still some with the belief that it will change and that it will be improved someday. It does not matter what one’s reasoning was for staying. What matters is that all residents were committed to staying.

Through a concerted effort between the developer and the residents, a marriage of opportunity occurred in which residents have decision making power in design, development and management. Explicitly these powers and experiences are:

1. Residents' involvement becomes credible with support from development, design and administrative team who represents the residents and creates a legal
agreement. Advocates address alternative strategies for residents which help to review plans that were historically done without resident input;

2. Three Sub-Committees--Partnership committee which deals with Management, Leasing, Security, Outreach Committee which supports volunteer services, and Community Services Committee which deal with youth services, housing support services, health and outside affiliations;

Redevelopment as means of Reforming Social Behavior

Public housing redevelopment can effectively change the way socially at risk tenants think about housing and their tenancy. Housing Opportunities Unlimited (HOU) works with the Task force to help identify persons and families may have alcohol or drug problems, housekeeping practices or trouble paying rent. Residents are identified by HOU and approached with the commitment to help tenants identify their problems, address it and maintain their tenancy at Harbor Point. To some, changing social habits of living, or solving an abusive condition can make the difference between living in a new development with social amenities, or having housing with little or support.

In an interview with David Connelly, president of HOU, he asserted that at Columbia Point:

"You would go into their homes and that was their area. The front door and the back end of the house. The outside wasn’t a place they had any control over. . .its a problem getting them to change that way of thinking, and really look at things that they can do and in ways they can change it. . .its still critical."\(^1\)

Many respondents were unconvinced of their “ownership” rights of Harbor Point. For some former Columbia Point respondents, “real” ownership may mean actual

\(^1\) Connelly, David. Interview. March 1997.
entitlement to land and property. Its symbolism has not persuaded most residents to engage in actual involvement, but it has been effective in reaching some of Harbor Point’s most active, experienced and talented residents.

Gated Communities

The development has been transformed from a unprotected, unsafe haven for outside vandals and drug sellers to a well-defined gated community. Persons in cars must identify themselves at the gate and the community police force provides 24 hour surveillance. Creating what Oscar Newman calls “defensible space” makes Harbor Point one of the most attractive and safest developments in the Boston. Moreover, resident organizing effectively dictated the removal of former chief Mahoney with a new police chief and staff. Harbor Point’s “gatedness” and grid network of small community spaces within a large development bring a new message to outsiders that vandalism, drug activity and violence is not welcomed.

Marketing Housing of Last Resort

Harbor Point’s success lies in it innovative marketing strategies: These are: New name, new design, new management, greater accessibility to transit, UMass, JFK, and adjacent development potential, waterfront view and Boston skyline, and security.

Redevelopment as a means of Changing Perceptions of Race, Class and Housing

Can public housing redevelopment help to change negative perceptions of low-income people and public housing residents? Public agencies have promoted the preservation of public housing units that are physically appealing and have more self-
help and training programs. Public agencies are looking from the “inside out”, integrating low-income through social strategies other than housing. Private firms argue that private redevelopment and mix income developments integrate disinvested communities and low-income residents with adjacent and economically resourceful communities. Private enterprise is looking from the “outside in” integrating the public housing development with market rate and working class residents.

In interviews, respondents were very supportive of a mixed income community, but made assumptions about tenants’ income and class based upon their residents’ behaviors. Respondents accepted and valued mixed racial and income communities, but revealed their own biases about market rate and subsidized persons and families. If redevelopment and income-mixing are to be socially sustainable, communities must resourcefully get the support of pro-active low-income or market rate residents in their community. Resident leaders must establish forum of communication and establish networks that eliminate the stigma of public housing and public housing residents.

6.2 Implications on Public Housing Redevelopment

Several factors should be considered collectively when examining Columbia Point’s transformation with future public housing redevelopments. Five measures determine the success of Harbor Point, therefore these measures should be applied to future projects:

Location

Public housing that is located in undesirable areas where there is little or no economic development initiative has little potential for housing redevelopment. Harbor Point was located where both commercial and industrial activities actively present in the late 1950’s and 1960’s. Its physical isolation which was once considered a problem
helped to attract tenants who desired its “close isolation” from other communities. It takes just 7 to 10 minutes to get to downtown Boston. Just across Interstate 93, there is Upham’s Corner, Dorchester’s retail district and an adjacent residential community. Moreover, academic institutions and resource centers such as UMass and JFK help to support a sustainable economic and social mix of residents and supply a greater racial mix.

Public finance and Private management

Conceivably, the private sector can not redevelop public housing on its own. There is need for continual public and private partnership that will help to effectively finance projects and supply high quality management. Columbia Point received approximately $250 million, mostly from MHFA loans, Urban Initiative loan, UDAG loan and state grants. The amount of subsidy placed into this project was very ambitious, and currently financing of redevelopments of this size and density are becoming scarce.

Scale of Project and Support Systems

Columbia Point which was originally 1500 units, was scaled down to 1283 units. Despite its reduction, the project is still conceivably large in scale and complex to manage. Nearly 3,000 residents (a quarter are under the age of 18 years), live at Harbor Point; maintaining minor problems such as vandalism and noise are just as difficult as trying to keep tenants happy, supporting “at risk tenants”, resolving youth conflicts and racial situations. Harbor Point’s management and Task force have generated strong support systems such as HOU, UMass Daycare, UMass Boston, the Youth Center, and the Geiger Gibson Community Health Center to help sustain social needs.
Resident empowerment

Persistent resident involvement and effective leadership during and after the redevelopment of Columbia Point created a partnership in development project. Harbor Point’s active resident partnership includes ownership and profits rather than just tenant involvement, allows residents to be more engaged in management practices, financial investments, services and tenant’s. Thus, the Task Force has an investment in the project’s financial stability. Current public housing developments are maintained and controlled by housing authorities. Although residents are influential in decision making processes, they are not active partners in the process and potential of the development. Current authorities are not resistant to resident input, however actual and legal partnerships may disrupt local authorities’ long standing role in maintaining their projects.

Duration of Decline and Loss of Low-income units

Public Housing developments which suffer high vacancies and physical problems are at risk and must be carefully analyzed to determine the social and economic cost of the redevelopment. Currently only 400 units are available for low-income residents. From resident interviews, it is believed that 325 Columbia Point families still live at Harbor Point. Although there were only 350 families at Columbia Point at the time of the redevelopment, housing for about 1150 low-income families was lost. For more than 20 years, Columbia Point decline in population and in physical disrepair making its conditions unlivable; it was denied of all basic services that were vital to its sustainability. Thus, Columbia Point’s decline was slow and gradual; in the early 1960’s, it began to decline in social services. In the early 1970’s it suffered a population loss and financial difficulties and in the late 1970’s it reached its worse
state of substandard living conditions and abandonment. The loss of low-income units was brought about by a collective set of factors ranging from tenant income standards set by the Boston Housing Authority to mismanagement of federal money and resident needs.

6.3 Implications on Race, Class and Housing

The future of Harbor Point is promising, yet one can only predict its evolution in the next five to ten years. Columbia Point was once an eyesore to many. Feared, pushed aside and forgotten it showed America what can happen to communities when people stop caring. The media, planning and architectural critics and professionals recognize the development’s accomplishments. The Columbia Peninsula is also undergoing major development changes of its own. Corcoran Jennison are proposing a new hotel west of Harbor Point that will house corporate executives, firms and business who are visiting the area or the city. Just 100 feet from the JFK/UMass station and only 15 minutes walking distance from Harbor Point, a new Star Market will be built. Mt. Vernon Ave is currently under renovation to support the increase traffic that will use the supermarket.

Between 1993 and 1997, Harbor Point’s Asian population has increased while the percentage of African-American population dropped. While other racial groups have increased or decreased slightly, Harbor Point’s has definitely become more racially diverse. In my conclusions, I suggest four critical issues based upon respondents’ surveys.

The Physical State of Housing

Respondents claimed that the new townhouses are in need of repair, from the interior spaces, (i.e., walls, cabinet doors, carpet) to the exterior and house supports (i.e. building facade, window screens, house buttress, doors). The townhouses which
are prefabricated went through much wear and tear because of the harsh New England weather. Winds, rain and snow are greatly enhanced because of Harbor Point's location at Dorchester Bay. Within seven years, the townhouses have been repainted twice. Chipped paint and cracked supports are quite visible.

Affordability Issue

During the housing recession of the late 1980's, Harbor Point's rents were cut by 30 percent. Since that time, rents have steadily increased with a stable housing market and the peninsula's current reconstruction and economic potential placed greater value on the land area. Although Harbor Point is committed to supplying both subsidize and market units, some respondents argued that market rate residents' salaries may not be able to afford the rent. One resident who currently works at the youth center loved Harbor Point, but her without a roommate the increased rent forced her to move out of the development. Others argued that increasing rents will be comparable only to upper-income professionals.

In an interview with Miles Byrne, property manager at Harbor Point, he asserted that Harbor Point "doesn't work yet and its not financially viable". He stated further:

"We get $6.7 million a year in what we call a sharp subsidy and the programs in addition to our subsidy under Section 8. The whole concept is that for an amount of years, market rate will increase at such a point, it will help to subsidize the rest of the development. We got 4 to 5 years to find that $6.7 million. And we don't know how the hell we are going to do it. It's threatening the life of the MHFA. They are our banker. They have laid off 25 percent of their employees. They are incredibly exposed to this sharp concept. So the question is how did it happen. It happened because this thing was on the books and ready to go in 1985. In 1986, the housing market crashed. We could not rebound again to somewhere until the mid 90's. Those rents that were projected to increase each month never did. We went 80 percent unoccupied. We don't know whether we failed to recognize the market out here or there was no market in Boston at that time. It was very bad timing to put something so extraordinary on the book. It is because of these projections, that we are in a pickle now."  

2 Byrne, Miles. Interview. February 1997.
Current market rates are helping to sustain the development, but at the cost of losing residents who may have had the desire to stay longer. These residents have been replaced by tenants who can afford higher rents. The development’s high turnover rate may supply higher and short-term rents for units making it affordable to exclusive class of market rate customers.

_Racial Integration or A New Form of Segregation?_

Table 6.1 shows the percent change in the different races at Harbor Point.

African-Americans still make up the majority of the residents in the development but only 2 percentage points more than whites. The Asian population has a percent change of more than 46 percent and “Other” which includes Native American and other nationalities has steadily increased on average about 2 percent per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1 Racial Composition: 1993-1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents, particularly former Columbia Point residents, are troubled by the racial influx of Asians and Other nationalities and are skeptical that Harbor Point will continue to have a large majority of African-American families. They believe that the development will be increasing made up of white persons while former Columbia Point tenants will eventually move out. In sum, they felt that physical redevelopment, current construction and planning could be used as motives to increase rent and displace former tenants.
The Future of Tenant Representation

Attracting a younger population to Harbor Point has succeeded, but their mobility and lack of desire to stay will critically affect the future management practices of the development. As analyzed in Chapter 5, a large majority of residents did not respond to question's involving management's practices and resident involvement. Thus, the current task force's must devise strategies to help to counterbalance market forces and social characteristics of upwardly mobile residents.

CONCLUSION

Columbia Point's redevelopment has truly made a mark on our nation's public housing stock, showing that resident determination does not always succumb to market forces and social forces. This also demonstrates that active leadership does exist within each public housing community, and as planners and designers we must be actively engaged with residents in order to gain the best results of planning and redevelopment. Qualitative studies in public housing redevelopment projects provides a wealth of knowledge. It provides knowledge about planning, architecture and design. Conclusively, it helps to reveal our own perceptions about race, housing and class.
Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Michael G. Johnson and I am a resident at Harbor Point. Currently, I am pursuing my Master’s Degree in City Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the field of Urban Studies and Planning. This is my last year of academic study at MIT, and to finish work towards my degree, I must submit a thesis on a topic of interest to me.

I am very much interested in community development issues, and residents’ involvement and views of their living environment. Specifically, I am pursuing my thesis on Residents’ views of an urban neighborhood and investigating residents’ opinions on such issues as safety, community, racial/social relations, living area and neighborhood services. Through questionnaires, I have been able to gain a total of 62 respondents. In order to continue my study and obtain a larger representative sample of Harbor Point residents, I ask that you help me by participating in the survey. Your anonymous response and the responses of others will be very important in contributing to my Master’s thesis. The responses will voice your concerns, thoughts and insights on community development and race relations and will provide critical information related to field of city planning. Moreover, it will guide me in my professional career, so that I can help contribute in addressing the general interest of urban and residential communities in America.

In the next few days I will be returning to you residence to introduce myself and distribute the surveys. Again, I ask that you offer your viewpoint. The surveys will take 30 minutes to an hour of your time. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at 288-5544.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Johnson
Questions for Task Force

PRE-REDEVELOPMENT

1. What event can you remember that sparked Columbia Point’s redevelopment? Can you be specific to what persons, what place or time?

   What were the physical conditions like in 1979 or just before the redevelopment?

   What were the social conditions like in 1979 or just before the redevelopment?

   Did someone, something inspire you? What was it that led you to get involved in the redevelopment?

2. Who were your supporters, who doubted you or who worked against you?

   What were your first feelings about the architect and the developers?

   Did you doubt them from the beginning or did they have to gain your trust? How did they do that?

   Did you have any doubt that this redevelopment might not happen? How was that confidence restored?

REDEVELOPMENT

3. If there were an award for the Community Activist of the decade, who would that person be and why?

4. In the task force documents, residents pushed for a private mixed income development. Other public housing projects were owned by the Boston Housing Authority and were being redeveloped as well.

   Why did the task force push for a private mixed-income development? What were the task force members feeling about the Boston Housing Authority’s role in the planning and design? What were their goal and strategies for changing it?
5. Who conducted the design meetings? Did you attend the meetings? What was your role in the meetings? How long were they? Did you feel that in each meeting the redevelopment process was getting better, worse or not changing at all?

Were there conflict among residents’ needs? Or were there similarities? What suggestion did Goody Clancy have in the decision process? How were final design decisions made?

POST-REDEVELOPMENT

6. After experiencing the redevelopment of Columbia Point, have your feelings about the redesign and redevelopment process changed or remained the same? Has your feelings about architects, planners and developers change or remain the same?

7. Looking back at the redevelopment process, what would be some of the things you or your task force would have done differently in the design process and the redevelopment process?

8. As you know, the neighborhood is continually changing, new and old residents are moving in and out. This year marks the 7th anniversary of the Harbor Point’s construction. In those seven years have the issues concerning your community changed? Are there issues that your task force have trouble dealing with?

Are you faced with the same problems or completely new problems?

Have your values about community at Harbor Point change or has it remained the same? Do you see Harbor Point as a good place to raise children?

9. Are single-parent households still an important issue at Harbor Point? In what ways?

10. What is the biggest problem that the task force deals with at Harbor Point today?
Are you faced with issues involving race and income?

11. What advice would you tell a resident task force whose just about to redevelop and redesign their community?

12. Has your definition of community changed since redevelopment process began in 1978? Was Columbia Point a community in your mind? Did anyone see it as a community?

Now that it is redeveloped and called Harbor Point, has your perceptions about what makes a community changed? Is Harbor Point a community in your mind? Do you think the surrounding neighborhood now sees it as a community?

Has your definition of community changed? Why did it or why didn’t it change?

Do you have memories about the people at Columbia Point that you can share?

Is there anything that I have not mentioned that you would like to add at this time?
Post Redevelopment Questions for Former Columbia Point Tenants

PRE-DEVELOPMENT

1. Can you remember what Columbia Point was like when you first moved in? What were your impressions about the place?
   What were the people like then?
   What were the physical conditions like then?

2. How did you come to selecting Columbia Point as a place to live?

3. In what ways was Columbia Point different from where you lived before?

4. Do you have any experiences about the place or people that you can remember?

5. What were the living conditions like just before the redevelopment began in the early 1980’s? How was it in your apartment, in your building, outside, in the surrounding area?

PROCESS

6. Did you take part in any of the decisions about what should happen in the redevelopment at Columbia Point? What part did you play? Did you attend the meetings? What were the meetings like?

7. What was the process like with the developers? Who led the meetings? Was there much agreement at the meeting was there much disagreement?
8. Who do you think played the most important part in the redevelopment process?

< > Tenant leaders/Task Force __________________________________________ (name of individual)
< > All of the residents
< > Everyone
< > BHA
< > On site management
< > Architects/Designers/Developers
< > Don’t know
< > Other ____________________________

9. Where did you locate during the redevelopment process?

Who helped you to locate?

10. What kinds of changes did you want to see happen? Were there some specific things you felt strongly about changing?

11. Which of these changes happened, and which did not happen?

12. Did most residents agree about the changes that were needed, or were there disagreements or misunderstandings?

13. Can you recall the day when the bulldozers first started to knock down the buildings? What was that experience like?

14. What do you feel were the most important changes in the design of the apartments, buildings or outdoor areas that occurred during the redevelopment?

HARBOR POINT EXPERIENCES

15. Now that Columbia point has changed, has your feeling about the community changed?

16. Are there things about the development that has not changed? Were there things gained and things lost after redevelopment.

17. Do you see Harbor Point as a community? Did you see Columbia point as a community? Are they alike or different values?
Survey Questions:

These questions are being asked as part of a survey of residents at Harbor Point, including those who have experienced the redevelopment of Columbia Point, or currently live in subsidized or market-rate housing. My goal is to understand residents' views on perceptions of public housing in the city of Boston, Harbor Point's social and built environment and the Harbor Point Community Task Force’s efforts to help manage the development. As part of my Master's thesis in City Planning, these surveys will provide important information on how residents can influence the development, design and management of their neighborhood.

These surveys are anonymous: your response will be kept completely private and your name will not be used. Nothing you say here will not be shared with Corcoran Jennison management, Harbor Point Community Task Force or anyone else in the development. Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not need to answer any question if you do not want to. To insure accuracy, I will tape our conversation. The interview should not take more than an hour.

This project is organized by Michael G. Johnson, graduate student in the Urban Studies and Planning program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. If you have any other questions now or during our interview please feel to stop me.

1. How long have you lived at Harbor Point?
   Since____________________(year) or ______________________(how many years?)
   (If was here before redevelopment, skip to redevelopment Survey #2)

2. Where did you live before coming to Harbor point?
   < > Lived in Boston____________________(specify neighborhood)
   < > Lived elsewhere____________________(specify where)

3. What type of housing did you live in?
   < > Rented an apartment or house
   < > Owned an apartment or house
   < > Lived in public housing
   < > Homeless/lived in shelter
   < > Other

4. How did you learn of Harbor Point?
   < > Advertisement
   < > Friend or relative
   < > Government or housing services

Appendix A
5. What was Harbor Point like when you first moved in?

What do you remember most about your first impressions of Harbor Point?
What were the physical conditions?
What were the people like?

6. Has your impression of Harbor Point change since you moved in, in terms of both physical conditions and people?

7. In what ways was Harbor Point different from where you lived before?

8. Are you aware that Harbor Point was once public housing? Are there things about Harbor Point that make it seem like public housing? (What kinds of things? Can you be more specific?)

< > looks like public housing because
< > does not look like public housing because

9. Do you have family or relatives living in other apartments at Harbor Point?

< > Yes < > No
(If yes ask who?)

10. How important is it to have close friends or relatives living at Harbor Point?

Appendix A
< > Very important
< > Somewhat important
< > Somewhat unimportant
< > Very unimportant

Why?

11. How satisfied are you living at Harbor Point?
Would you say you are...

< > Very satisfied
< > Somewhat satisfied
< > Somewhat dissatisfied
< > Very dissatisfied

Why?

12. What attracted you to live at Harbor Point? What do you like most about the development?

< > Location
< > Affordability
< > Management
< > Appearance
< > Physical and open space
< > Racial mix
< > Secure and safe environment
< > Good support services
< > Like nothing
< > Living conditions
< > Other

13. What do you like least about Harbor Point?

< > Location
< > Affordability
< > Management
< > Appearance
< > Physical and open space
< > Racial mix
< > Unsafe environment
< > Support services
< > Nothing
< > Living conditions
< > Other

Appendix A
MANAGEMENT

14. Have you participated in any of the community meetings? What kinds?

(If haven’t participated go to question 20)
- Harbor Point Community Task Force meeting
- Holiday and special occasions
- Youth programs
- Other

15. Are there services that you wish the Harbor Point community task force would provide?
Are there services that used to be here that you think should be restored?
What kinds? Why do you think it is needed?

16. Do you feel that management rules for conduct in the development are fair? Why?
   - Yes
   - No

Do you think they are enforced and applied fairly?
   - Yes
   - No

Do you think most tenants know what the rules are?
   - Yes
   - No

Are there any rules and regulations you wish could be changed?
   - Yes
   - No
17. The Harbor Point community task force helps manage the development. The task force is made up of residents who live at Harbor Point. Do you feel that the task force’s management of the development helps to improves management, worsens management or is management about the same?

< > Improves management, because______________________________
< > Worsens management, because______________________________
< > Management about the same, because______________________________

Why or Why not?

TENANT RELATIONSHIPS

18. Do you have friendships with other residents in the development?

< > Yes
< > No
< > Sometimes
< > Other

(If you do) How often do you talk and meet?

(If you don’t) Is there some reasons why you don’t have friendships with other people in the development.

19. Does Harbor Point provide a suitable environment for residents to meet and talk?

< > Yes < > No

How? Where and what contributes to this?

Appendix A
20. Do you feel comfortable talking to other races at the development?
< > Yes
< > No
< > Sometimes
< > Other

21. Have you ever lived in a racially and income-mixed environment before?
Is so, where did you live before?
< > Lived in Boston_________________________ (specify neighborhood)
< > Lived elsewhere_________________________ (specify place)

22. What experiences with other tenants have you had at Harbor Point?

23. Has Harbor Point’s efforts to mix races, ethnic groups and incomes been successful?
< > Yes < > No
Explain?

24. Do you feel that residents are comfortable with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?
< > Yes
< > No
< > Some are; some are not
< > Other

25. What about people in the surrounding area. Do you think that they tend to be more comfortable with people from different racial and ethnic background?
< > Yes
< > No
< > Some are; some are not
< > Other

Appendix A
26. Have you had any problems at Harbor Point because of your race and ethnic background?

27. Can you tell which residents are paying subsidize rents and which residents are paying market rent?
   < > Yes
   < > No
   < > Sometimes
   < > Other

28. What things led you to make that statement?
   < > Race
   < > Behavior
   < > Clothing
   < > Vehicle
   < > Living area
   < > Family Composition
   < > Length of Residence
   < > Other ____________________________

29. Does physically mixing people of another race, ethnic background or income benefit the community? Why?
   < > Yes
   < > No
   < > Sometimes
   < > Other

LOW-INCOME HOUSING STOCK

30. Columbia Point supplied housing needs of low-income people. After redevelopment, Harbor Point offers 400 out of the 1283 units for low-income residents? Is that too few or too much?
   < > Too few, because __________________________________________________________

Appendix A
31. With Columbia point’s redevelopment, are market rate residents better off or worse off?

< > Better off, because
< > Worse off, because

32. With Columbia Point’s redevelopment, is the peninsula better off or worse off?

< > Better off, because
< > Worse off, because

33. With Columbia Point’s redevelopment are low-income residents better off or worse off?

< > Better off, because
< > Worse off, because

SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES

34. Please rate how you feel in the following locations during the day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Somewhat safe</th>
<th>Somewhat unsafe</th>
<th>Very Unsafe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Harbor Point</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Harbor Point</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Front door</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your apartment</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Hallways</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to/from T</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Please rate how you feel in the following locations at night.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Somewhat safe</th>
<th>Somewhat unsafe</th>
<th>Very Unsafe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Harbor Point</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Harbor Point</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Front door</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your apartment</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Hallways</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to/from T</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix A
36. What kinds of things do make you feel safer at Harbor Point?

- Private security force
- Video Cameras
- Surveillance by residents
- Stronger community
- Better Lighting
- Owning a gun
- Keeping doors locks
- Joint management by tenants and private company

37. Do you feel that the drug problem (indicate abuse, selling drugs) is getting better or worse or is it about the same than it was a couple of years ago? Why?

- Getting better
- Getting worse
- About the same

38. Do you feel that drug problem (indicate abuse, selling drugs) is better, worse or about the same at Harbor Point than it was a couple of years ago? Why?

- Getting better
- Getting worse
- About the same

39. All communities have problems. What do you think are the three most common and serious problems at Harbor Point today?

- No problems
- Lack of money/poverty
- Marital or family conflict
- Divorce
- No child support/Delinquent dads
- Rape
- Gangs
- Racial/Ethnic problems
- Problems of raising children
- Crime__________ (type of crime)
- Language barriers
- Lack of community unity
- Other__________________
- No response

NEIGHBORHOOD

Appendix A
40. How would you describe your neighborhood? Would it be described as...
   < > Very private
   < > Somewhat private
   < > Somewhat public
   < > Very public
   Why?

41. How important is it to call Harbor Point a community?
   Is it...
   < > Very important
   < > Somewhat important
   < > Somewhat unimportant
   < > Very unimportant
   Why?

FOOD SHOPPING AND OUTSIDE SERVICES

42. What about other shopping? Where do you tend to do most of your shopping? (List stores and areas mentioned.)

   How do you get there?
   < > Walk
   < > Bus
   < > T-line
   < > Car
   < > Cab
   < > Other________________________

43. Do you own or have access to a car?
   < > Own a car
   < > Have access to a car
   < > No car
   < > Used to own a car, but no more
   < > Can’t drive

44. How do you feel about the availability of public transportation here? Would you say it is
   < > very good
   < > good
   < > not good
   < > poor
   Why?

Appendix A
45. Have you ever gone to events or used any of the following buildings in the neighborhood area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used once</th>
<th>Used more than once</th>
<th>Never used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayside Expo center</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMass Campus facilities</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy Library</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Archives Building</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Christopher’s Church</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APARTMENT

46. What do you like best about your living area? Why?

47. What do you like least? Why?

How would you describe the general condition of your living area? Would you say it is in...

< > Excellent condition
< > Good condition
< > Fair condition
< > Poor condition

48. Is there privacy from your neighbors?

< > Yes, because
< > No, because

(If yes) What is it about your place that allows for privacy?

(If no) What kinds of problems do you have?
49. Is there enough privacy for each member in your place?
   < > Yes, because______________________________________________________________
   < > No, because______________________________________________________________

(If yes)
What is it about your place that allows for privacy?

(If no)
What kinds of problems do you have?

OUTDOOR SPACE

50. Do you feel that you have your own outdoor space?
   < > Yes
   < > No
   < > Not applicable

51. Are there outdoor places at Harbor Point where you go outside to sit? Where?
   < > Yes,______________________________________________________________
   < > No.

52. Is Harbor Point a safe or unsafe place for children to play?
   < > Safe
   < > Unsafe
   < > Don’t know
   < > Other

53. Are there outdoor spaces for teenagers to meet and sit? Where?
   < > Yes,______________________________________________________________
54. Does Harbor Point have outdoor spaces that all age groups can share? Where?
   < > Yes, ____________________________________________
   < > No
   < > Some places.

55. Do you think that Harbor Point is a good place to raise children? Explain?
   < > A good place, because ____________________________________________
   < > Not a good place, because ____________________________________________

56. Do you think that Harbor Point is a better than most places to raise children worse or is it about the same as anyplace else? Why or Why not?
   < > A better place, because ____________________________________________
   < > A worse place because ____________________________________________
   < > About the same, because ____________________________________________
   < > Don’t know

EMPLOYMENT

57. Do you currently work? If so, what kind of work do you do?
   (If no, skip to question )

58. Do you work in this neighborhood or elsewhere?

59. Would you like to be working?
    < > Yes
    < > No

60. What would your ideal job be? Why?
61. In what location would you most like to work? Why?

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

62. Would you ever want to own your own home? Why or Why not?
< > Yes, would want to, because ________________________________
< > No, would not want to, because ________________________________

63. How likely do you think you are to ever owning your own home?
< > Very likely
< > Somewhat likely
< > Somewhat unlikely
< > Very unlikely

64. Do you think you will ever move away from Harbor Point?
< > Very likely
< > Somewhat likely
< > Somewhat unlikely
< > Very unlikely

65. Do you have specific plans for moving on?

66. If you move again, would you like to live in another development like this?
    < > Yes
    < > No

67. If you didn’t have to worry about money, what would be the ideal type of place you’d like to live in? Please describe.

68. If you moved out of Harbor Point tomorrow, what would you be most pleased about leaving behind?

Appendix A
69. What would you miss most?

70. Are there any issues that we haven't talked about that you think need mentioning?

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

< > Female
< > Male

Age__________________

Martial status. Are you . . .
< > Single
< > Married
< > Divorced
< > Widowed

Family primary source of income:

Is you family's current primary source of income from employment, from government assistance programs, or something else?
< > Salaries, Wages, Employment
< > Government Assistance/Pensions
< > Social Security
< > Other

Language:

What is the primary language spoken in your household?
< > English
< > Spanish
< > Other

Educational level

What was the last year of school you completed?
< > Elementary

Appendix A
Junior High School
Some high school
Completed high school
Some college
Completed college
Graduate/professional school

Race/Ethnicity

How would you describe your racial or ethnic background?

White (not Hispanic); ethnic origins
Hispanic/Latino; nationality
US African-American (not Hispanic)
Non-US black (non-Hispanic); nationality
Native American or Alaskan native; nation
Asian or Pacific Islander; nationality
Other (explain)
African
Caribbean

APARTMENT

How many bedrooms does this apartment have? How many bathrooms?

number of bedrooms
number of bathrooms

Building Address

Appendix A
HARBOR POINT
Harbor Point Apartments Co.
Corcoran Jennison, Co., Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts

TYPE OF PROJECT:

Through creative urban planning and architectural design, New England’s largest distressed public housing project was transformed into an elegant, mixed income community on Boston’s Harbor. Harbor Point’s 1283 units of housing recreation and community facilities were designed to take advantage of the waterfront site.

Pre-Existing conditions

51+ acres on the Columbia Point Peninsula
One half mile of waterfront property
Views of Downtown skyline and Harbor
30 buildings on the property
13 buildings in use

Revitalization Concept

A new planned neighborhood on Boston’s waterfront Privately-owned rental community 1282 units for a mixture of income groups, plus 6.5 acres waterfront park

STATUS: Completed 1990

CONSTRUCTION COST: $140,000,000

FEE: $1,400,000

TEAM:
Joan Goody
Roger Goldstein
Leigh H. Smith
Bernard Dooley
Jean Lawrence

ACRES/DENSITY: 50 acres at 29 units/acre

826 Elevator Apartment Units
198 New Townhouse Units
258 Garden Apartment Units

1282 Total Units
RESIDENTIAL INFORMATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>FLOOR AREA (Square Feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>625-670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
<td>815-980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom</td>
<td>1,250-1,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bedroom</td>
<td>1,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 bedroom</td>
<td>1,770-1,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 bedroom</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provides housing for 400 low-income families
Clubhouse, Retail Store on site for convenient shopping
Restaurant, serving breakfast and lunch
Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center (12,000 SF)
Youth Center
Daycare Center
Community Building with Auditorium
“Elderly” Building for ages 55 and over

COORDINATING ARCH: Russell & Scott, Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts

OTHER ARCH: Mintz Associates Architects/Planners, Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts
(for rehab, community and elderly buildings only)

CONTRACTOR: Vernon Construction Co. (Peabody, Cruz, CMJ Builders)

CONSULTANTS:
- David M. Berg, Inc.
- C.A. Crowley Engineering, Inc.
- Verne G. Norman Associates, Inc.
- Carol R. Johnson & Associates
- Bryant Associates
- Housing Opportunities Unlimited
- H.W. Moore Associates
- Geotechnical Consultants of MA
- ADB Consultants
- Comunitas
- Technology Integration
- Shawmut Hardware
- Architectural Model Constr.
- Models, Inc.
- Stockard & Engler
- Structural
- Mechanical
- Electrical
- Landscape
- Surveyor
- Relocation
- Civil
- Geotechnical
- Affirmative Action
- Design Advocate for Tenant
- Wind Tunnel Study
- Hardware
- Models
- Social Services

AWARDS: FIABI, Prix D’ Excellence Award for Best Overall Project, 1996
Bruner Foundation Inc., Rudy Bruner Award in Urban Excellence, 1993
Urban Land Institute, Special Award for Excellence, 1992.

Appendix B
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONSTRUCTION BUDGET</th>
<th>GROSS PROJECT AREA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schematic Design</td>
<td>Nov-84</td>
<td>$139,789,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bids</td>
<td>Dec-85</td>
<td>$130,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Project</td>
<td>Dec-89</td>
<td>$134,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SCHEDULE:** Enormous size of project demanded long construction period, sequential occupancy, etc. Total 53 buildings, new and renovated plus sitework in several contract

**LANDUSE PLAN:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE</th>
<th>ACRES</th>
<th>PERCENT OF SITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driveways and parking</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and recreational areas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ECONOMIC INFORMATION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</th>
<th>FINANCING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT PROJECT</td>
<td>COSTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>$5,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building construction</td>
<td>106,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Work/Landscaping</td>
<td>12,740,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthwork/plies</td>
<td>7,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Contracting</td>
<td>9,535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys, permits, testing</td>
<td>3,155,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, engineering</td>
<td>5,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction interest</td>
<td>29,655,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes/insurance</td>
<td>1,490,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing Fees</td>
<td>2,065,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal/title</td>
<td>2,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocation/Social Services</td>
<td>3,495,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>2,340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating reserve account</td>
<td>57,525,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$250,000,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Boston Housing Authority, Central Files: Columbia Point Fact Sheet. Revised August 1, 1963; Massachusetts State Archives.


Byrne, Miles. Interview. February, 1997.


Harris, Dorothy. Interview. February 1997.


HUD. Budget web site: http://www.hud.gov/budsum1.html#sec-II.


Kane, John P. Letter to Boston Housing Authority and Housing and Finance Agency. March 13, 1951, Massachusetts State Archives.


Loustau, Jeffrey. How Expensive is Affordable Housing? A Comparative Analysis of Three Affordable Housing Developments in Boston. Prepared for the Harbor Point Apartment Co.


President's Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs Washington: GPO, 1954.


Report by Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. in cooperation with United Community Services of Metropolitan Boston and Boston Housing Authority. July 1964. Massachusetts State Archives.


Section 305(a), amending Section 10(e), United States Housing Act of 1937


Bibliography