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Organizing for Community Benefit: Anti-Gentrification Effort in Providence, RI

Advisor: Professor McIntyre, Economics & Director of Honors Program

Katuska Pérez

When thinking about what I would be doing for my senior honors project I was faced with a challenge. There were so many things that I have wanted to learn in more detail while attending the University of Rhode Island but due to time constraints I was not able to. It was in the honors colloquium that I kept hearing about the lack of participation by young students in social issues today. I agreed with the arguments of the guest speakers of the colloquium and pretty much felt the same as they did in that students today did not participate in political or social issues as we had seen through history, especially during the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement.

I agreed with our guests who participated in the colloquium but I didn't know the answer as to why there was this lack of involvement by young Americans today. I knew it wasn't really due to lack of effort because I was around students who cared about change and were willing to help. I began to think about what was personally holding me back from participating or beginning an effort to change something for the better. I realized I had no knowledge in organization and mobilization of people. Throughout my college experience I didn't really gain any basic foundation on how to organize and work with a group of people in a collective effort.

I thought the best way to learn these skills in such a short amount of time would be to work with an organization that has been campaigning for positive social change for many years. I was referred to DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality) in Providence. I approached the director of the organization, Sara Mersha, and shared with her what I wanted to gain from a

possible internship in her organization. She gave me a brief overview of the different campaigns the organization was working on as well as past projects.

Coming into this project I had many expectations. They consisted of learning in detail how to motivate people who want to participate in their community. I felt this was important because it is the key ingredient when attempting to organize. I also wanted to learn different techniques in keeping people interested in a certain issue and how to work with so many different personalities.

DARE goes back to 1986 when five people around a kitchen table decided to form a community based organization. They developed a strategy for teaching organizing techniques that focused on increasing leadership development and handling direct confrontation with institutions. In the time DARE has worked in the community it has led many victories. Some of these victories included making Rhode Island the first state in the country to offer health insurance for family childcare providers in the state subsidy program, helping to reduce the threat of environmental hazards through land reform policies that take land from speculators and gives it to neighbors, and they helped organize a youth-driven campaign that forced the Providence School Department to adopt a multicultural curriculum. The organization is made up of about 800 dues paying members 45% African American, 35% Latino, 10% White, 5% Native American and 5% Asian. The ages range from youth to elder and the majority of the members are women.

One of the first steps in leading a community and attempting to make change is that you must know what you are fighting against. Gentrification became important to the organization because a few members and organizers of DARE have had experience with displacement. Some were displaced from areas of Warwick and they were beginning to see the same trends in

Providence. This is the main reason the members of DARE have become concerned with the housing problem in the city of Providence. There has been an increase in the construction of new condos, which are not affordable and the members of the community who are involved with DARE felt it was important to address this issue because there is a great possibility people may be displaced.

The first thing I did while at DARE was to educate myself on the issue of gentrification. I read many different articles of different organizations around the United States that were attempting to prevent it from happening. Many of the readings involved personal experiences from people who had been displaced because of “development” in the areas.

The first organized attempt I personally became aware of was called “The Right to the City”. In January of this year DARE along with many other organizations attended a national conference in which various organizations learned and shared with each other their experiences, failures and success. Some of these organizations came from Los Angeles, Miami, New York and New Orleans. The goal was to build a national urban movement for the improvement of housing, education, health, racial justice and democracy. Speaking with the members from DARE who attended I found it to be useful to have so many different organizations with different backgrounds to come together and share what they consider important.

Over the past five years, working class urban communities in the United States have experienced displacement at a scale not seen since the 1960s, when Urban Renewal programs basically destroyed 1,600 Black neighborhoods¹. This unified effort called The Right to the City was organized by three organizations, the Miami Workers Center, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, and Tenants and Workers United. The objective of this conference was to initiate a

¹ The Right to the City Packet. *Gentrification, Displacement and the Right to the City*. January 2007.

community based fight against gentrification. This comes after many years of “Urban Renewal” projects in the United States.

Urban renewal was one of several processes that contributed to de-urbanization of American cities in the second half of the 20th century². Before Urban renewal many low income Americans migrated to cities throughout the country and established functioning communities, although they were confined to “ghettos”. In an attempt to “rebuild” these neighborhoods urban renewal projects were on the rise. The deconstruction of ghetto communities took three principal forms: urban renewal, planned shrinkage and contagious housing destruction secondary to disinvestment³.

Mindy Thompson Fullilove gave a short history of the growth of urban ghettos. She began by explaining how Jim Crow policies restricted African Americans to limited areas of real estate and used exclusionary clauses in their choices of settlement. The communities which were predominantly occupied by African Americans were usually over-crowded and were usually torn down. In spite of these horrible conditions the members of the community were able to build their neighborhood and took advantage of their new freedoms. Fullilove explains how residents of the area developed artistic forms of expression; a good example of this was the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem also saw growth in business and organizations. Up until the 1950s these communities, although not blind to the many problems they faced, were developing in many ways.

² Fullilove, Mindy Thompson, *Root Shock: The Consequences of African American Dispossession* (New York, NY: The New York Academy of Medicine, 2001) 72.

³ Fullilove, Mindy Thompson, *Root Shock: The Consequences of African American Dispossession* (New York, NY: The New York Academy of Medicine, 2001) 72.

The Urban Renewal Act of 1949 really set in motion urban renewal projects in cities across the United States⁴. The goal of these projects was to clear the areas of “slum” to make space for modern developments. Fullilove goes on to explain that these areas were designed to extend the central business district or to attract middle income residents. As a result the original members of the communities up for remodeling were forced to move outside of the areas. Renewed projects included the Lincoln Center in New York City, the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh, PA and the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry in Newark, NJ. Some of the projects replaced these “slums” with low-income projects that became worse centers of delinquency and general social hopelessness, middle-income housing projects which were not at all designed for the lower income population, luxury housing projects and commercial centers filled with chain store shopping⁵. The Urban Renewal projects disproportionately affected the African American communities around the nation. As Fullilove points out in 1961 African Americans made up 10% of the United States population but 66% of residents of areas slated for urban renewal.

A great example used by Fullilove occurred in Roanoke, Virginia. Two communities were selected under the federal renewal program, which were Gainsborough and Northeast. Before the program was implemented many of the community residents had lived in their areas for many generations and as in many other communities, had developed strong social and political organizations. These small cities were considered ghettos and were mostly populated by African Americans. The first community chosen to be renewed was Northeast. The residents of the city were lead to believe the remodeling of their community would benefit them and they gladly accepted small payments for their homes. In the end the land was used for a post office, a

⁴ Fullilove, Mindy Thompson, *Root Shock: The Consequences of African American Dispossession* (New York, NY: The New York Academy of Medicine, 2001) 73.

⁵ Jane, Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Random House (New York, NY 1961) 4.

civic center and a Ford dealership⁶. Slowly the close community was dissolved and many residents lost contact with each other and never returned. Watching the negative results of the urban renewal program in Northeast caused the residents of Gainsborough to oppose the same thing happening in their area with not much success. The urban renewal effort took the majority of the community but many residents refused to sell their property. In the end many of the businesses and homes that were not sold were lost because the residents stopped investing in the properties based on fears the government would force them out. Much of the community was replaced by road building and a Coca-Cola bottling plant⁷, which in no way benefited the community residents.

Reading about these cases of displacement that have been occurring since the 1950s made me very interested in whether this was happening in my community, Providence, RI. The Federal government has developed an estimate of how much a person should spend in housing in order for their household to be considered affordable. The estimate for affordable housing means spending no more than 30% of a household's income on housing costs. In Providence there are 14,982 households who use more than half their income to cover housing costs and the numbers are rising⁸. The organization Housing Works RI has presented astounding numbers that reflect the horrendous housing problem in Providence. Since 1999 home prices have risen 14% annually and rent has obviously been affected by the housing increase. Each year residents of Providence and the state are affording less and less housing but there doesn't seem to be much concern from the state. There are numerous problems that have caused the lack of housing affordability besides the increase in home value. For one the population has increased much quicker than the production of affordable homes. Another major problem is the increase in low-wage jobs in

⁶ Fullilove, Mandy pp.75

⁷ Fullilove, Mandy pp75

⁸ Housing Works RI <http://www.housingworksri.org/matriarch/documents/Providence.pdf>

Providence. More than half the jobs in Rhode Island do not pay enough to afford the average rent on a two bedroom apartment⁹. There doesn't seem to be much hope for the future. It is estimated that about 24,000 new jobs by 2010 will pay wages too low to pay the state average rent for a two bedroom apartment.

As a result of the increasing difficulties in obtaining affordable housing Rhode Island has seen an increase in the amount of the homeless. From 2004-2005 Rhode Island homeless shelters provided 217,871 beds for the night, the third year at an all time high¹⁰. Housing Works RI reported that 20% of the people who resided in RI homeless shelters were employed but could not find affordable housing. The availability of subsidized housing is extremely limited and the wait time for Section 8 vouchers is a minimum of 5 years¹¹. The numbers are horrifying and there is no doubt that Rhode Island has a serious housing problem. Although we know there is a major housing issue it seems like the state government is not as worried as its residents. The amount spent on subsidized housing has been reduced but we have seen an increase in construction of luxury condos, especially in the downtown area and in old run down mills. What we have been seeing are increases in subsidies given by the state to outside developers who remodel the old mills.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a growing interest in the city of Providence in remodeling old mills and it has helped private companies such as Struever Brothers and Eccles and Rouse to remodel the old mills. These companies have received millions of dollars in tax breaks and they have been able to build luxury residential areas such as Rising Sun Mills and most recently Calendar Mills. Struever Brothers pledged four years back to build 30 units of

⁹ Housing Works RI

http://www.housingworksri.org/matriarch/MultiPiecePage.asp_Q_PageID_E_13_A_PageName_E_everythingstats

¹⁰ Crossroads RI <http://www.crossroadsri.org/stats.htm>

¹¹ Housing Works RI

http://www.housingworksri.org/matriarch/MultiPiecePage.asp_Q_PageID_E_13_A_PageName_E_everythingstats

affordable housing but in reality have only built 16, of which the majority are one bedroom apartments that are not accessible to families¹². More recently there has been much controversy in the area of Olneyville in Providence. This area of Providence has a poverty rate of about 40% and barely 18% of households own their own homes¹³. The problem that arises with the remodeling of the low income areas is that the community who lives there will, in the end, be forced out because of higher property taxes which will increase rent in the area as well. This is an obvious problem and the question is where the residents of the area will move if there is less and less housing. These private companies pretend to build affordable housing but are only looking for tax breaks in order to maximize their profits. Providence has great potential and it's obvious that private investors have noticed this but there is great disregard for the people who already live in the area. The job market is not favoring the local workers, real estate has skyrocketed and affordable housing is no where to be found.

This problem the city of Providence is facing is quite dangerous especially for the low-income portion of the population. A basic necessity for living is to have a home and employment. While beginning my project at DARE I was able to learn about the current housing situation and controversial issues in the area. I was also able to do some research on different organizations and efforts that have attempted to fight displacement. As I mentioned above, one of the first projects against gentrification I became aware of is called "The Right to the City", which also was the name of the conference attended by DARE organizers. This concept was originally developed by a French urbanist, Henri Lefebvre. He argued that "the organization of urban time and space to fit the lived experience of its citizens and residents could become the

¹² Hernandez, Cynthia. The Providence Journal, 2007.

¹³ <http://rifuture.org/blog/category/housing/>

focus for a renewal of direct domestic relationships in modern society”¹⁴. In an information packet distributed at the conference, the project organizers mentioned the political, economic and demographic shift over the past 50 years, which has redefined urban communities. The broad trends specified in the packet include:

Deindustrialization: Basic industry including unionized jobs have relocated out of major US cities.

A New Urban Class: Into these new de-industrialized cities have flown in new high-paid workers

Command, Control and Capital:

-Investing in War and Police: A decrease in urban social programs and an increase in defense and homeland security has changed the urban context.

- New Urban Working Classes: New flow of employers into cities is highly privatized who provide decent salaries with no civil service protection for the new urban class.

- Global Real Estate Markets: Gentrification is a global strategy for accumulation. Fueled to gain profit, real estate has become a secure investment and has led to the replacement of the working class homes with condominiums and big retailers.

The City as a Business: Decline in public urban funding has forced city managers to become entrepreneurs and generate income for the city

The Policed City: Urban policing has expanded in the government by increasing both staffing and technology in the area of security.

Decline of Urban Democracy: Elite and money centered urban democracy characterized by

- High Cost Elections: Millions going into campaigns for political positions

¹⁴ The Right to the City Packet. Gentrification, Displacement and the Right to the City. January 2007.

- Pay to Play Planning: High prices lawyers debating amongst themselves regarding land use instead of the local government
- Allocation of Bureaucracy: Decisions made by local governments are guided by the municipal budget, with preference to paid administrators and a few elected officials.

These are serious problems and they should be dealt with. Fortunately there has been a rise in consciousness about this and many attempts have been made to correct them. One attempt is called the World Charter on the Right to the City. The World Charter outlines a range of rights that directly affect urban housing and land justice in the United States. This is the new urban framework that the organization feels should be provided to each person because it is a human right. They include the right to:

- Participate in the control, planning and governance of cities, including the planning, layout, control, management and rehabilitation and improvement of cities.
- Participate in the ownership of urban territory based on democratic parameters, on ideals of social justice and under sustainable environmental conditions
- Public information
- Participate in local political life, including urban design, development, management, renovation and improvement of neighborhoods
- Urban public space, including informal meeting and gathering space
- Domestic and urban public services
- Public transportation
- Cost of adequate housing is compatible with people's incomes- i.e. right to affordable housing
- Norms and regulations for the equitable distribution of the expenses and benefits generated by the urbanization process
- Protection from arbitrary eviction and usury- i.e. right to regulated rental housing

The goal of this movement is to *build a national infrastructure of organizing methods, policy, and communication that will reframe how capital shapes communities, and to do so*

through the broad democratic engagement of the grassroots. The objective of the conference was to establish networks that would assist them in making progress in order to:

- Build a constituency- establish programs that will
 - Eliminate slum housing
 - Expand tenants’ rights
 - Expand immigrants’ rights
 - Reform and restructure redevelopment
 - Increase popular control over land
 - Institutionalize participatory government processes
- Build Capacity on a national basis to
 - Capture disparate efforts around the country into a common network to combat gentrification and create the necessary conditions and tools for an urban land reform practice
- Collect, enhance, adapt and adopt best practices to strengthen local action and campaigns and provide technical support for effective local implementation
- Coordinate and consolidate strategic capacity across the Alliance through:
 - Base-building and Leadership Development
 - A Shared Media Framework
 - Research and Development

Just as “The Right to the City” developed its framework for change, DARE had done the same previously. DARE along with its members came up with Principles for People-Centered, Community Controlled Development in Providence. The purpose of these principles was similar to the goals of “The Right to the City”. The Principles are a framework for the members of DARE and for the community of Providence and they include the following:

- Community members should have decision making power about the neighborhoods in which they live
- Development should not fuel gentrification and displacement of existing residents or small locally-owned businesses: too often “development” projects profit the rich at the expense of working class families
- Development should be about people: People should be able to live, work, and improve their lives in Providence and the city should increase investment in:
 - Real affordable housing: Meaning affordable to the people in the city of Providence
 - Real living wages
 - Quality education
 - Good, family supporting living wage jobs

- Local Hiring
- Investment in the public transportation infrastructure
- Libraries and other places of learning
- Removing obstacles to jobs and housing for people with a criminal record
- Ample positive programs for all young people
- Equal access to green space
- Historic preservation: Not just of buildings but of the history of the people
- Rational use of public tax money: public spending for the public good, not for private profit
- Public Compliance and Monitoring Practices

In the beginning stages of my project I became familiar with these principles and began to pick up on some organizational tactics. It was fundamental to keep these principles in mind because they present what the community feels is important and how their community should be lead. One of the first steps in organizing was learning how to attract members to the information sessions on gentrification and group studies. The goal was to educate as many members as possible on what exactly gentrification is and present them with the different ways organizations all over the country are fighting it. I was able to assist Sara Mersha in preparing these membership meetings. It was a bit difficult getting many people to the meetings because of time conflicts but DARE does a good job for its members by arranging the meetings in the evenings, providing free child care and transportation. I was able assist in the meetings and I found them to be very powerful. Although not many members attended the meeting, each member that participated had a strong opinion and expressed it well. Attached is an agenda of one of the meetings DARE held on gentrification. The purpose of this meeting was to advise the members of the Comprehensive Plan on how it may be beneficial or detrimental to the anti-gentrification effort. Explanation of the Comprehensive Plan was needed because the city unexpectedly began to put on workshops, which required community participation. In order to increase the amount of participation DARE wanted to inform its members what the workshops were for and provided information on the problem of gentrification.

The city of Providence began the development of the new city plan back in May of 2006. The project was named Providence Tomorrow and was initiated by the mayor of Providence, David Cicilline, and the city council. The city hired an outside company to help with the process. At the moment I am not sure if there was a necessity to hire an outside company to help redo our city plan. There are many capable people within the city who are professionals in the area of planning, as is the case in many cities. The method used to involve the community was through a number of week long charrettes. This was a good method because it allowed the community members to participate but I still feel that bringing someone else to lead our community changes is not beneficial because they do not know exactly what the different problems are precisely because they are not from the area. Each charrette included creative, intense work sessions in which the members of the community added what they felt was important in their neighborhood. The weeklong process allowed ideas to develop and be implemented in the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan was completed and was posted on the city planning's website. Everyone is able to read through the draft and submit any comments or corrections they would like to see added or changed in the final copy.

About a month after the draft of the Comprehensive Plan was completed the city began to hold charrettes in each neighborhood of the city. The first area chosen was my community, which is the Washington Park and South Elmwood area. The charrettes were held for about a week long and were open to everyone in the community. I was able to attend one of the final charrettes for my neighborhood and I found it to be interesting. The workshops were designed as activities, which were good because it kept people interested. However, it was difficult to comprehend just how serious a city's plan may be because of the child like activities. The activities consisted of drawing on a map of the area exactly what you wanted or didn't want. The

workshop didn't really cover the housing problem and the issue regarding the enormous tax breaks private companies are receiving for building luxury condos in Providence. The community members were involved in the planning process but not as many as there should have been. The Comprehensive Plan is a key step in preventing gentrification in the city especially since the city is openly encouraging its residents to participate in the plan. The only difficulty we face is implementing what we suggest in the plan itself. Although the city has been encouraging participation it does not mean they will consider it and as residents of our city we should be completely involved to make sure what we feel is important is added or changed in the plan.

I was able to read through the draft of the Comprehensive Plan and have a few concerns. For one the plan was not very specific as to how it will change any areas but leaves a lot of open ended questions. For example in the attached map there are different areas that are highlighted which have different meanings. The description of how these highlighted areas will change is very vague and can really mean anything. Also, the plan does not address the massive housing problem. It seems to be promoting "growth" and sustainability but again it does not go into details of how the city plans to follow this. This lack of detail is not at all comforting because it seems as though the city is attempting to promise its residents great progress but seemed not to consider the budget problem of the city by not giving the slightest idea of where the money will come from to make these changes. Some of the members from DARE made suggestions and submitted them to the city planning website. Some members acknowledge the city was accepting there was a housing problem. However, the members pointed out that the city has different criteria for affordable housing than what is actually affordable to the members of the community. They suggested the City of Providence should take a look at the current median income and consider updating it so it may more accurately reflect the City today. Overall the draft gives a

few explanations of some changes the city needs to make but they are not at very clear and leave a lot of open ended questions.

Working with DARE in these past few months was a great experience. Although my time was limited I feel I learned quite a lot about many different problems my community is facing and about organizing in general. Now more than ever there is no doubt in my mind that the involvement of the community in any issue is extremely important and can play a major role in the outcomes. There were many things that needed to be done and many topics to be researched but due to the time constraints and the Comprehensive Plan charrettes they were postponed. I was able to gain experience in leadership, organizing, research and networking. Although I have a lot to learn I feel this short experience was a great step into a world of great promise. Although change is difficult, it can be accomplished with unity and hard work. The key to organizing is getting many people involved. The more people the more others will listen. As in any effort many challenges were faced. In my case since I did not have much experience it was a bit difficult to adjust to the environment. However, it was great to be surrounded by people who care and are working hard for their neighborhood. I learned a great deal but as I have mentioned above there is still much more to learn. The only way to keep learning is by acting and participating in efforts and informing oneself of the problems that are being faced. It's important to act on what is unfair and should be changed. It's important for all of us to have input on what our cities do.

As for the future, this effort will not end with this project. Attached is a brief outline of key dates and months in which DARE will continue to work on reaching our Right to the City. I will continue working with DARE up until the end of June 2007 and I hope to continue learning as much as I have up to this point. Making sure our input is implemented in the Comprehensive

Plan is just the first step to preventing gentrification in Providence. There is a lot of work to be done but after this experience I feel many things can be changed. It's obvious to me that not everything will be full of glory because all struggles are difficult but just making an effort to change something is a great step. In the process of attempting to make a difference others will notice your effort and in turn you will have sparked thought in many people. This on its own is a great success and hopefully more people will begin to act.

During this project I learned many things and the experience was very helpful. I must admit in the beginning I was a bit reserved because I was in an environment where the people were all about taking action. From my experience in the classroom all I have been used to is talking about the problem. Going into the project I didn't expect to change the world but I did have certain expectations that were probably unrealistic considering the time limit. There were many things I wanted to do, such as door knocking, that I didn't get a chance to but hopefully will sometime soon.

In this type of project and "job" a person must have a lot of patience and persistence. I learned that although the issues are extremely important not everyone makes time to participate. You will find many times when you think a person is motivated to take action but in the end they do not. I don't think that the problem with this is that people do not care. I think it's just how society has shaped us, to focus on ourselves and family first. This I think is normal but I feel that just caring, as most people do, is a major first step. When working with people and attempting to change the "status quo" you must be prepared for many failures, although I do not consider them failures but lessons learned. The biggest advice I can give anyone who is considering participating in a project of this nature, is to think positive and they should expect many disappointments. It's important that you feel you are doing something important even if you do

not have many people by your side. Eventually one person will notice you and they will begin to question. Just by simply causing someone to think is a great achievement.

The final pages of this paper consist of what I planned to do throughout my participation. The first sheet describes the first responsibilities and my goals. This is followed by a future outline of important events that will take place and my potential participation.

Appendix I

This is one of the first steps we took in developing a strategy for the beginning stages of this project. It points out different events which would have been beneficial to attend as well as

different organizations to meet with. The second section address the Comprehensive Plan planning process and how we were considering getting involved in the process.

Ideas for Katuska's Internship with DARE

January 30, 2007

Engaging Members in the "Right to the City" Framework

- (optional – this Saturday, Feb. 3 at 1:30pm meeting with a group from Boston doing Anti-Gentrification work)
- Help prepare for presentation to Membership (Feb. 8) about the Right to the City
- Read articles and help organize the study group about the Right to the City (with other DARE and ONA members and staff – such as Judith Reilly, Ray Watson, Mary Kay, Mimi, Gladys, Rachel, Jeannine, Shannah, Norman, etc.)
- Help with followup work around this framework. This could include:
 - Possible meeting with Rene Poitevan from NYU
 - Research with St. Peter's Housing project in San Francisco, about their success with their neighborhood planning process
 - Research with Chinese Progressive Association in Boston about their alternative planning process
 - Helping do research on other possible long-term campaign demands (such as rent control or other possibilities)

Connecting our Right to the City to the City Comprehensive Planning Process

- Research with the Department of Planning to get a copy of the draft Interim Comprehensive Plan that they will be presenting to the City Plan Commission and to the City Council, and start an analysis breaking down what's good and bad with this proposal
- Research on the city's timeline for getting the Interim Plan approved, and for neighborhood planning to begin
- One-on-one visits with members who participated in the TIF workshops and in the City Plan Commission process, to find out what they think about the city's Interim Comprehensive Plan Proposal
- Working with leaders and staff to help figure out an organizing plan around the Interim Plan and the Neighborhood Plans. This could include:
 - Organizing people to turnout and testify at a public hearing with the City Plan Commission
 - Organizing people to turnout and testify at a public hearing with the City Council
 - Developing a way to engage our members and other community residents in a powerful, creative way, to get our principles and rights included through the upcoming neighborhood plan workshops (and/or do our own alternative process?)

Appendix II

This document presents the future of the DARE Anti-gentrification effort. It provided a list of proposed objectives as well as a possible plan of implementation. The different objectives have

assigned names of people who may possible complete that objective followed by and estimate date.

Gentrification/ Right to the City

What do we do now? Proposal for the future

Proposed Objectives

1. Analyze Providence’s Draft Interim Comprehensive Plan and push for public awareness and support/inclusion for our Principles for People-Centered Community-Controlled Development
2. Organize members who live in each Providence neighborhood to build power around our principles, for inclusion in Neighborhood Plans (possibly through creation of our own plans) – collaborate with Olneyville Neighborhood Association
3. Bring pressure on the city to amend the final Comprehensive Plan as necessary, to include our principles fully
4. Win an open nominations process for the City Plan Commission
5. Participate in Regional and National Right the City network, to learn from other organizations’ work around gentrification and to help build a national movement
6. Conduct research (along with ONA?) to determine other long-term goals for our anti-gentrification/ Right to the City campaign (just cause evictions, rent control, tenant organizing for collective bargaining, etc.)

Proposed Implementation Plan

Objective	Activity	Who will do it?	When?
Analyze Providence’s Draft Interim Comprehensive Plan and push for our Principles	Attend City Plan Commission’s special meeting on the draft Comprehensive Plan, get copies	Katiuska, Judith, Sara, and other interested members	February 27, 2007
	Conduct a workshop with DARE members to break down the city’s proposal and create our response	Katiuska, Sara, Judith, and interested members (from TIF workshops)	March 14 or 15 2007
	Write up our response/ alternative plan, and deliver it to the city	Katiuska, Sara, Judith	March 19-31, 2007
	Prepare members to testify at public hearings with the City Plan Commission and City Council, get media coverage of our response	Katiuska, Sara, Judith, and interested members	April-June 2007
	Bring our response/alternative plan to Mayor’s “Poverty Task Force”	Same rep as above	March – June 2007

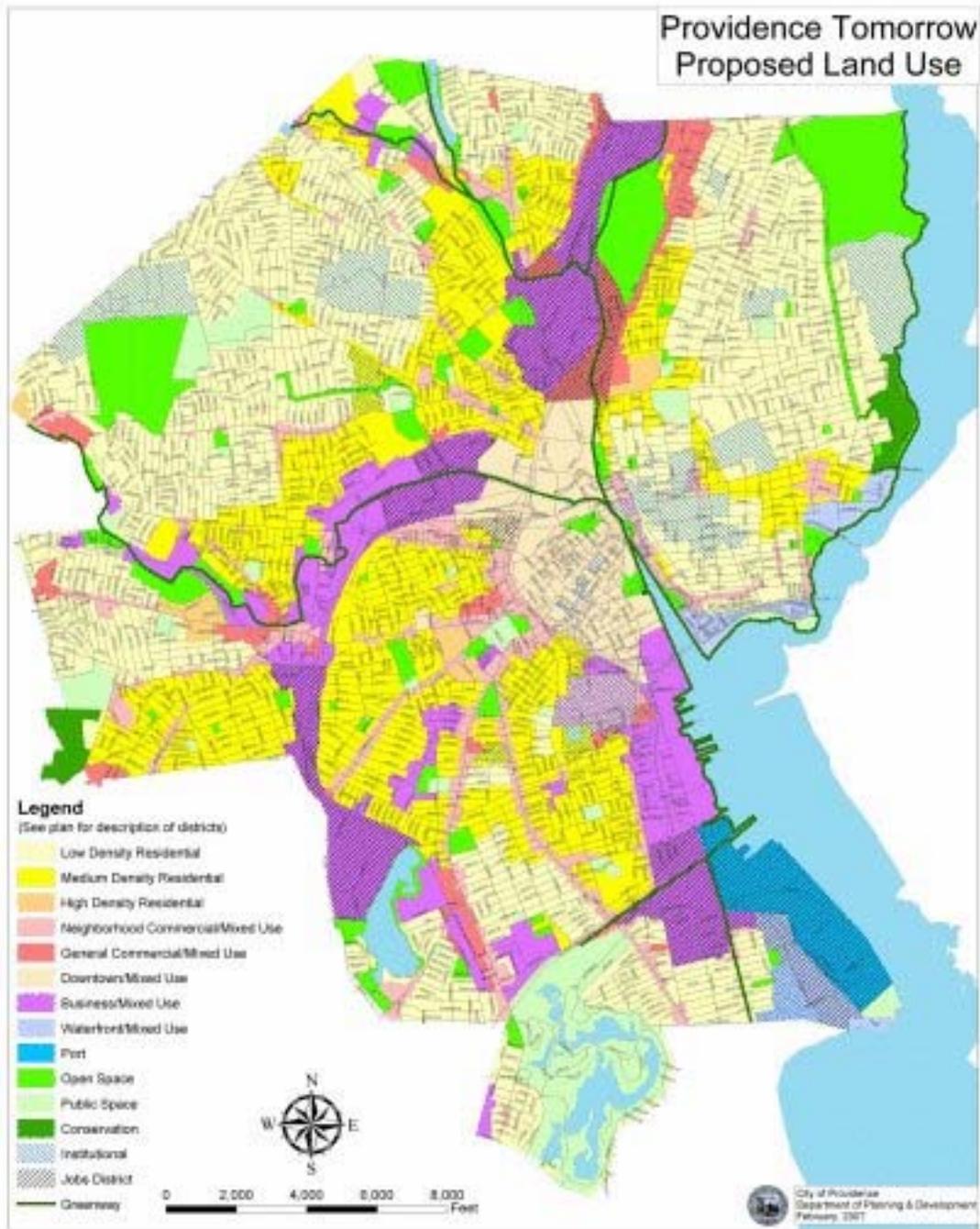
Proposed Right to the City Implementation Plan (page 2)

Objective	Activity	Who will do it?	When?
Organize members who live in each Providence neighborhood for Neighborhood Planning process	Housevisits with members and people from last year's voter database who live in Washington Park, to get them involved in Washington Park planning process	Katuska, Sara, and committee	Spring-Summer 2007
	Conduct workshops with these members to develop our own ideas/plan for Washington Park, according to our principles Housevisits with members and people from last year's voter database who live in other Southside and West End neighborhoods, to get them involved in their planning process	Katuska, Sara, and committee Sara, Committee leaders, and possibly other staff (if we raise money)	Spring-Summer 2007 Fall 2007 – Spring 2008
	Conduct workshops with these members to develop our own ideas/plan for those neighborhoods, according to our principles	Sara, Committee leaders, and possibly other staff (if we raise money)	Fall 2007 – Spring 2008
Bring pressure on the city to amend the final Comprehensive Plan as necessary, to include our principles fully	Written comment, public testimony, and actions as necessary	Sara, Committee leaders, and possibly other staff (if we raise money)	Spring-Summer 2008
Win an open nominations process for the City Plan Commission	Followup with Miguel Luna re: his commitment to introduce a resolution to City Council for this	Judith, other members	Spring 2007
Participate in Right the City network	Start Right to the City Study Group, with ONA Continue participation on R2C New Orleans working group; help organize technical assistance training for New Orleans group	Katuska, Judith, Sara, other interested staff and members Sara, Mary Kay, Judith, other interested members	March 16, 2007? March – June 2007

Proposed Right to the City Implementation Plan (page 3)

Objective	Activity	Who will do it?	When?
	<p>Conduct research on other Right to the City groups' best practices</p> <p>Help organize Regional Right to the City gathering</p> <p>Participate in National convening</p> <p>Continue participation out of national convening</p>	<p>Katiuska</p> <p>Sara, Mary Kay, Judith</p> <p>Staff and members who go to USSF</p>	<p>February – May 2007</p> <p>May 2007</p> <p>June/July 2007</p> <p>August 2007 on</p>
<p>Conduct research to determine other long-term goals for our the campaign</p>	<p>Research on just cause evictions, rent control, tenant organizing for collective bargaining, etc.</p> <p>Doorknocking and surveys to ask community members about biggest needs/interests</p> <p>Based on research and community input, decide on policy campaign</p> <p>Make a campaign plan and carry it out</p>	<p>Judith, Sara</p> <p>Judith, Sara, other committee members – AMMO if we have the money</p> <p>Committee</p> <p>Staff (hired) and committee</p>	<p>Summer 2007</p> <p>Summer – Fall 2007</p> <p>Winter 2007 – 2008</p> <p>2008 on</p>

Map of the proposed land use of the Providence area. Copied from the draft Comprehensive Plan



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW: THE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Vision for Providence

*A dynamic city with dynamic people; a green city that realizes the value of a healthy environment; a historic city that capitalizes on its distinctive character and world class design; a thriving city with abundant business and employment opportunities; a livable city with neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing choices; a compact city with strong connections that promote walking, biking and transit; a culturally rich city with an array of arts and entertainment opportunities; an active city with a variety of places for people to gather and experience nature; an efficient city that meets the needs of residents with high-quality, cost-effective services; a sustainable city with healthy neighborhoods and a vibrant downtown combining to create a highly livable urban environment.
In short, a great city!*

WHAT IS PROVIDENCE TOMORROW?

Providence Tomorrow is the interim comprehensive plan that will serve as the City's guiding document while detailed discussions of where and how we grow as a city are held in the neighborhoods over the next two years. Amendments to this plan will be made, as needed, through the neighborhood planning process. Once all of the neighborhood plans have been completed, this Plan will be re-worked again to guide growth and development in the coming years.

WHY DO WE NEED A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

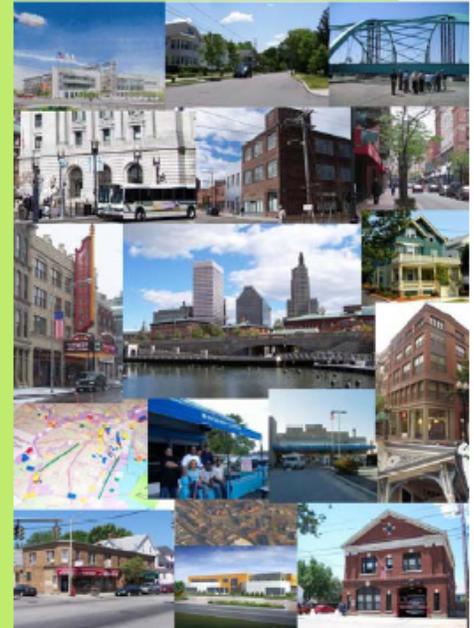
The State of Rhode Island requires all cities and towns to adopt a comprehensive plan to guide development decisions and establish the basis for its zoning ordinance and other land use regulation tools. In addition, the plan is intended to be the framework for addressing other community concerns such as housing, parks, transportation, and community services, among others.

HOW WAS THE PLAN CREATED?

This interim plan was created based on the extensive public input we received at a series of citywide discussions that took place in the fall of 2006 on how and where the city should direct growth and the other key issues that this plan addresses.

WHAT DOES THE PLAN INCLUDE?

The plan identifies the city's goals and strategies for the natural environment, the built environment, housing, economic development, mobility, community services, parks, and land use.



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW: THE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



HOW IS THE PLAN ORGANIZED?

The Plan is organized to facilitate ease of use by the reader. Detailed information has been placed in the appendix, with highlights summarized in the main text of the Plan. The following outline provides a summary of each chapter.

Introduction

Provides an overview of the planning process, explains the organization of the Plan, and establishes the following guiding principle:

- Sustainability
- Equity
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Engagement

Chapter 1: A Rich History

Provides a brief history of Providence, including past planning efforts.

Chapter 2: Moving Forward

Provides an overview of the changes, challenges and opportunities facing the city over the coming years.

Chapter 3: Sustainability and the Environment

Provides guidance on issues related to the protection of the natural environment and identifies objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of making Providence a “green,” sustainable city.

Chapter 4: The Built Environment

Provides guidance on issues related to urban design and historic preservation and identifies objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of protecting and promoting a high-quality built environment.

Chapter 5: Business and Jobs

Provides guidance on issues related to economic development and identifies objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of growing the Providence economy.

Chapter 6: Housing

Provides guidance on issues related to housing, identifying objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of creating, revitalizing and preserving housing in Providence.

Chapter 7: Mobility

Provides guidance on issues related to a variety of transportation options and identifies objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of meeting transportation needs.

PROVIDENCE TOMORROW: THE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 8: Arts and Cultural Resources

Provides guidance on issues related to the continued growth of arts and cultural opportunities in the city and identifies objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of sustaining an active arts and cultural community.

Chapter 9: People and Public Spaces

Provides guidance on issues related to parks and recreation and identifies objectives and strategies to achieve the goal of a high-quality, sustainable parks and recreation system.

Chapter 10: Community Services and Facilities

Provides guidance on issues related to the provision of services such as education, public safety, and utilities, with a distinction being made between services provided by the city and services provided by others. Objectives and strategies are identified to achieve the goal of providing efficient, cost-effective services.

Chapter 11: Land Use

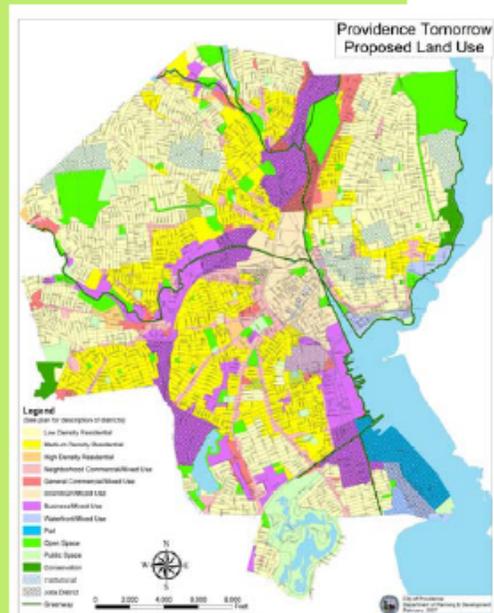
Provides guidance on where and how we should grow in the future by defining areas of stability and change and identifying objectives and strategies for each land use designation, as well as strategies for how to implement the goals contained in other elements through land use regulation.

Chapter 12: Implementing the Plan

Provides a framework for continually monitoring implementation progress to ensure effective implementation of Providence Tomorrow as the guiding document for the city.

Appendices:

- A. Existing Conditions—Summarizes demographic information and inventories existing conditions and resources for each element of the Plan.
- B. Compliance with City and State Regulations: Provides an overview of applicable comprehensive planning regulations and summarizes the planning process for Providence Tomorrow.
- C. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Overview—Provides a summary of the CIP process.
- D. Parties Responsible for Implementing Providence Tomorrow: Provides an overview of the responsibilities of various City departments and commissions related to the implementation of the Plan.



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW: THE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHANGES FROM THE EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Value Based

The previous comprehensive plan was organized by geography: citywide, downtown, neighborhood, and waterfront. The draft interim plan focuses on values such as resource conservation, design excellence and diverse transportation options instead of trying to identify strategies for different geographies.

Expanded Focus

The draft plan greatly expands focus and attention on key topic areas such as the natural environment, urban design, and arts and culture, which were lightly touched upon in the previous plan. Each of the other elements has also been significantly updated to focus on more sustainable approaches to development and city-building.

Framework for Development

One of the key concerns in recent years has been the impact of intense development interest on the character of the city and its neighborhoods. The draft plan establishes a framework for identifying potential areas for growth, while maintaining the stability of residential neighborhoods. This framework will be further refined through the neighborhood planning process.

Implementation

The interim plan establishes a foundation for continually monitoring progress in achieving the goals of the Plan. The implementation chapter identifies objectives for annually tracking progress to identify potential issues as they arise instead of every five years.

HOW DOES THE PLAN GET ADOPTED?

Comprehensive Plans must be adopted by both the City Plan Commission (CPC) and City Council before they become effective. The City Plan Commission will hold two public hearings on the draft plan on April 11th and 12th, 2007 to take public comment on the plan. In the weeks following the public hearings, the plan will be placed on a meeting agenda for adoption. The CPC can adopt the plan in its original form or adopt it with changes.



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW: THE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following CPC adoption of the Plan, it will be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration. The City Council will hold another public hearing on the Plan, followed by a series of votes to adopt the Plan. Once the Plan is adopted, it will take effect and become the guiding plan for the city, even while State certification is pending.

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC PROVIDE INPUT?

Feedback on the draft plan is extremely important to the ultimate success of the Plan itself. To facilitate public input, copies of the plan are being made available in several locations:

Paper Copies

Paper copies will be available for review in the following locations.

- Providence Public Libraries
- Providence Community Centers
- Department of Planning and Development (400 Westminster Street)

On-Line Access

The City of Providence is pleased to announce that the draft plan will also be available on-line in both a pdf version for downloading and an interactive version that will allow people to make and view comments on-line. To access the on-line versions of the document, visit www.providencetomorrow.org. For those people that do not have access to a computer, there will be a computer terminal set up in the Department of Planning and Development to access the interactive version of the document.

Deadline for Written Comments

Residents and other interested parties can submit written comments on the draft plan between February 28, 2007 and March 30, 2007. These comments will be provided in a written report to the City Plan Commission for its consideration.

A second comment period will be announced in May 2007 to get feedback on the version of the Plan adopted by the City Plan Commission. These comments will be provided to the City Council as part of its consideration.

Public Hearings

In addition to written comments, people may provide comments at the public hearings held by the City Plan Commission and City Council.

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