

The University of Chicago

On the Verge of Homelessness: Historical and Sociological Cross Examination of  
Public Housing Residents and the Unhoused Before and After the Chicago  
Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation

By

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August 2025

A paper submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Master  
of Arts Program in the Social Sciences

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**Abstract:**

The following accumulated work is an attempt to combine historical and sociological study of the unhoused and the residents of public housing in Chicago within the context of an increasingly diminished market for affordable housing throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Discussions of these two segments of low-income city residents are often seen as separate because of their possession or lack thereof of housing. This difference is an understandable epistemological consideration as to why the study of these two groups are kept separate. However, the circumstances of Chicago's redevelopment which had a direct affect on the contraction of the affordable housing market and the subsequent exacerbation of housing insecurity in Chicago during this time directly implicates both the population of unhoused people and public housing residents. The effects on both populations are evidenced by a comparative examination of two alternative media sources, *Homeward Bound* and the *Residents' Journal*, which acted as outlets for activists for the unhoused and public housing residents in Chicago respectively. Through this examination, and with partnered consideration of mainstream Chicago news, the story of the modern affordability crisis in Chicago is informed by looking at two populations affected by the peripherization of poverty from the center of the city. The combined study of homelessness and public housing with its implicit considerations, not limited to the idea that a government ought to provide housing for its population, substantiates further inquiry into comparative qualitative studies of the unhoused and public housing residents and encourages new conversations on housing as a human right.

In 1997, Helen Finner was the Resident Advisory Council President for the Ida B. Wells Homes. Resident Advisory Councils and their elected officials were empowered residents within the Chicago Housing Authority who that assisted residents with a variety of issues, including welfare and employment assistance, relocation assistance, and maintenance issues. Finner was one of many impassioned for residents throughout the history of the CHA, and her commitment and care for residents in the late 1990s caught the attention of filmmaker Fredrick Wiseman, who produced a film about Chicago's Ida B. Wells Homes. In the film, Finner talked exasperatedly with a CHA representative on the phone, pleading to set a screening meeting for a young, unhoused woman and her one-year-old son to move into one of the over 200 vacant units in the Ida B. Wells Extension. Finner, raising her voice, said:

Joy, if people could go around the city and see how many homeless people there are, how many vacancies....No I was at the county hospital Monday and honestly my heart was just aching to see people, women and men laying around in the lobby of the hospital in the waiting room and all of these vacancies in public housing that are being tore up, for the lack of people living in them, that's ridiculous. [She continues] Nobody under the sun should be homeless with all of these units vacant in public housing.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wiseman, Frederick, Housing Film, and Zipporah Films. *Public Housing*. Cambridge, MA: Zipporah Films, 1997, 02:31-03:07 and 04:36-04:45.

Public housing from its inception has historically been municipal- and federal-led ventures to house working class people, not the unhoused. In the post-war context, these massive city infrastructure projects were a means of providing affordable housing for families and working-class people, predominately people of color. The Chicago Housing Authority was no exception to this phenomenon, and in fact, many argue that the reason for organization specifically of the CHA was to deal with the ‘urban blight’ of the black slums of Chicago.<sup>2</sup> As time passed the projects of the CHA became synonymous with concentrations of black urban poverty.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in the 1990s Chicago, among other American cities, was undergoing mass change in the makeup of its built environment, specifically concerning affordable housing. With significant decreases in median income, restructuring welfare spending, and absent federal funds for urban centers beginning in the 70s and continuing on into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city of Chicago had less financial incentive and ability to adequately support its public initiatives.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>2</sup> Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 68. Hunt contends that though the CHA had post-war progressive inclinations of mass housing, it was also undeniably fueled by “racist efforts of white to contain blacks.” It is further important to note that the public housing boom of the post-war period, was happening concurrently with the provisioning of easily attainable homeownership mortgages for white veterans and their families in the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, commonly known as the GI Bill. These two simultaneous housing initiatives should not be seen as separate, but rather parallel government ventures that ensured differing levels of housing security for different segments of the population. Lastly, these ventures substantiated an urban/suburban divide whereas the years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century passed, and public housing steadily decayed, the urban form had racialized connotations of degeneracy and decay. And see Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, 15.

<sup>3</sup> The history of decline in the CHA’s infrastructure, resident health and ability to pay rent, and security, though important for context, do obfuscate from the main focus of this project. History of the CHA and Chicago housing policy more broadly, are referenced throughout this paper using some of the classic academic works of Chicago historical and sociological urban study. Their citations in this sense can be understood as suggestions for further reading outside of the focal point of this paper.

<sup>4</sup> Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 184-185. See appendix tables 1 and 2 for decline in median income of CHA families and sources of income for CHA families respectively. For decreases in federal housing funds, see Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, 116-118. Furthermore, the passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act significantly shifted the burden of public welfare onto the states and their cities. Public housing residents were heavily dependent on government assistance for a variety of services, and after the passage of 1996 welfare reform, welfare recipients were increasingly burdened with intersecting costs of housing, healthcare, childcare, and other basic needs.

housing, a transition was taking place to shift public housing residents onto the private market using Section 8 vouchers, and, from this point forward municipal neglect of the “hard-units” left the conditions of the various housing projects around the city in tatters.<sup>5</sup> Eventually public housing infrastructure, mostly the high- and mid-rise style buildings were deemed incongruous with Chicago’s desired municipal image for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, were vacated and demolished beginning in the 1990s and ending in the late 2000s.<sup>6</sup>

Simultaneously, beginning in the 1980s, the unhoused population saw steady increases partnered with two significant changes from the country’s experience with homelessness.<sup>7</sup> For one, the unhoused population was becoming increasingly African American, female, and included more children in comparison to past unhoused populations.<sup>8</sup> Second, the unhoused

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<sup>5</sup> Goetz, Edward G. *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 49-50.

<sup>6</sup> Austen, Ben, and Robert Philip Gordon. *High-risers: Cabrini-Green and the Fate of American Public Housing*. First edition. New York, NY: Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2018, 254-255. Mayor Daley on redevelopment and reimagining of Chicago through the destruction of high-rise public housing and enveloping its residents: “I want to rebuild their souls.”

<sup>7</sup> To define the variety of terms relating to this social issue, I would like to quickly explain homelessness terminology and its uses in this paper. Much of the source material consulted in this paper uses the term homeless to refer to people on the street and in shelters. ‘Homeless’ has had derogatory connotations throughout the history of homelessness, though it should be noted that in the plethora of terms used for people experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity, ‘homeless’ does not come close to the level of bigotry attached to older terms. In this paper the terminology of choice is unhoused or people experiencing homelessness. When I address the issue overall, the preferred choice is housing insecurity or homelessness, emphasizing a societal phenomenon and its dependent relationship to the conditions of the U.S. housing market. For an exploration of terms for the unhoused and their cultural associations, see DePastino, Todd. *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Beck, Elizabeth, and Pamela Twiss. *The Homelessness Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2018, 9 and 24-25. Beck and Twiss contend that the feminization of the unhoused population in-part revolves around gendered expectations of women being homemakers. With rising housing cost, decreasing wages, and the hollowing out of America’s industrial sector (eliminating good paying, union jobs for men) women had no other choice but to find employment to contribute to the household and seek out government assistance. Concurrently however, the racialization of welfare recipients in terms of who was seeking out assistance and the responses of conservative ideology to contract welfare spending, saw an increased amount of people of color, particularly women that because of these combined factors were facing increasing threats of homelessness. And. Blau, Joel. *The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 25-26. According to Blau’s citations of the National Conference of U.S. Mayor’s *Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness* and HUD’s 1989 *National Survey of Shelters for the Homeless*, though men dominate single-unaccompanied status within the demographics of the unhoused population, women had a disproportionate representation of the “caretaker” status, single and with children in a variety of shelters across the United States. There is a deeper conversation to be had here about the inadequacies of shelter stock and its restrictive terms of conditions related to demographic intake. The prominence of women and children in shelters compared to single

population during this time saw increasing visibility on the streets given limited shelter space and not enough low-income housing to go around.<sup>9</sup> Chicago has a rich history of single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels because of its dependency on migratory labor populations, but the hotels fell victim to a wave of redevelopment that substantially decreased the general affordable housing stock in the city.<sup>10</sup>

The parallel timelines of these transformations of available services and housing stock for low-income people point to a need for further inquiry into Helen Finner's comments connecting the rise of the unhoused to the destruction of public housing. Were these two groups of low-income Americans that much different from each other? Were they interrelated in their plight of dealing with increased housing costs, scarce low-income housing, and decreasing availability of government assistance? How did these groups differ in their approaches to these issues and where was public consciousness in relation to the assaults on low-income people in Chicago? Was their community, a sense of solidarity, and or kinship between these two groups of people? These are questions this thesis explores.

Sociological and historical literature seems to place these topics and their respective populations in different categories of study, despite the intermingling of the unhoused and public housing populations in activism and in their relevancy within the context of transformations of

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men, can partially be explained by the disproportionate effect of intersecting social issues that women and children experience (sexual assault for instance) and the stock of shelters that cater specifically to children and women. For demographic breakdowns of Chicago's homeless population see the appendix, Table 3. Rossi, Peter H. *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 123.

<sup>9</sup> Blau, Joel. *The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Historical reference for Chicago's single room occupancy hotels, flophouses, and skid rows can be found in Bogue, Donald J and Gerald S. Newman. *The Homeless Man on Skid Row*. Chicago Tenants Relocation Bureau. Chicago, 1961. For trends of SRO redevelopment and destruction Community Emergency Shelter Organization and Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. *SROs, an Endangered Species: Chicago's Single Room Occupancy Hotels*. Chicago: Community Emergency Shelter Organization, 1985, 48.

municipal governance around the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup> However, the conversation between public housing and the unhoused may allow for a more informed understanding of root causes of general housing insecurity and how to address the issue itself. Discussions within this project operate on the combination of activist literature, namely the *Residents' Journal*, a publication by and for the residents of the CHA, as well as the *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. The synthesis between these two publications is grounded using secondary historical and sociological literature as well as mainstream Chicago newspapers including the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Defender*. The procedures of this project place the histories of homelessness and public housing roughly between 1990-2010, when these two groups simultaneously dealt with the transformations in the built environment of Chicago and its changes in municipal governance and responsibility. Together the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> can be considered a pivotal moment in the history of social welfare and municipal responsibility in the United States', but more specifically Chicago's history.

### **Social Spending and Welfare Before the Plan for Transformation 1990-2000**

The CHA's \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation, announced in 1999, is used in this project as a halfway point in the chronological historical analysis of these intermingling segments of Chicago's history. The first section proceeds with the dramatic changes to welfare and social spending prior to the pivotal moment of the Plan for Transformation.

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<sup>11</sup> Noteworthy exceptions to this characteristic of housing and homelessness literature are Ben Austen, Bradford Hunt, Talmadge Wright, and Sudhir Venkatesh, though they do not directly juxtapose the experiences of the unhoused and public housing residents as separate but interrelated groups in the experience of redevelopment, welfare reform, and displacement in the city of Chicago. Mentions of homelessness in public housing literature is more tangential than a focus of the research. Likewise, in literature on homelessness, like that of Talmadge Wright, researchers in homelessness tangentially relate public housing to the primary focus of studying homelessness through housing insecurity, substance abuse, transformations of government approaches to the problem of homelessness, and a plethora of other issues.

A withdrawal from social spending throughout municipal, state, and federal bureaucracies was devastating to low-income Chicagoans. Proceeding source material will historicize the conditions that exacerbated the severity of housing insecurity in the city of Chicago. Those conditions affected, most likely not equally, both public housing residents and the precariously housed.

In discussion of federal neglect of public expenditures, *Tribune* reporting conducted by Reardon found that- “—in the mid-1980s, when the CHA had detailed nearly \$1 billion in repair needs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gave the agency just \$24 million, of which nearly \$9 million was earmarked solely for asbestos removal. That left just \$15 million for repair work.”<sup>12</sup> Federal withdrawal from the CHA amounted to deplorable conditions across public housing complexes in Chicago, though the maintenance neglect in the Henry Horner Homes was particularly egregious.<sup>13</sup> “For example, the population of the Henry Horner Homes on the West Side was cut in half between 1984 and 1991, due mainly to the deterioration of its apartments. Forty-five percent of the units are now vacant, according to the CHA numbers, compared with 8 percent in 1984.”<sup>14</sup> The *Tribune*’s consideration of federal responsibility is crucial to understanding the fall of public housing and inevitably the creation of the modern affordability crisis. By allowing these levels of disrepair, the CHA was signaling to residents that the city was soon enough no longer to be in the business of housing its residents.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Reardon, Patrick T, Urban affairs writer. 1992, Nov 02 "CHA Reeling from Years of Maintenance Neglect" [NORTH SPORTS FINAL, C Edition]. *Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Full text)*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/cha-reeling-years-maintenance-neglect/docview/283444423/se-2>.

<sup>13</sup> Popkin, Susan J., Victoria E. Gwiasda, Lynn M. Olson, et. al. *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000, 94-102. Blank and Popkin’s exploration of the conditions of the Henry Horner Homes, showcase the failure of the federal government, the CHA, as well as resident initiatives to shore up maintenance and crime issues in the public housing complex.

<sup>14</sup> Reardon, Patrick T. *Chicago Tribune*.

<sup>15</sup> Popkin, Susan J., Victoria E. Gwiasda, Lynn M. Olson, et. al, *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000, 93-94. The Henry Horner Mother’s Guild



A couple years after Reardon's article, the *Tribune* reported that the city of Chicago was to receive \$31 million of \$900 million in federal grants for addressing the issue of homelessness nationally.<sup>16</sup> This budget allocation is important for two reasons. First, it should be acknowledged that this congressional allocation deviates from a trend of federal withdrawal in social welfare spending as it relates to homelessness.<sup>17</sup> Second, the increases were announced by the *Tribune* within the broader context of public housing redevelopment and SRO housing demolitions in Chicago.<sup>18</sup> Cuts in public housing funds coinciding with an increase in funding needs for homelessness point to the fact that these two issues may be intertwined.

While federal allocations for grants addressing homelessness were increasing and public housing stock was deteriorating, staff writers at the *Homeward Bound* publication reported on the state allocations for punitive expenses. The Spring 1996 edition of *The Facts Behind the Faces*, a repeated issue section, featured a story titled, "Prisons: The Latest in Low-Income

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was but one example of resident initiative that pronounced concern for the deterioration of public housing in Chicago and blamed federal and municipal officials for the level of neglect. In 1991 the Guild sued the CHA and HUD for their unofficial policy of "de-facto demolition." Essentially, this is the willful inattention to, what photography and residents would argue was, glaring infrastructural deterioration. The deterioration included inoperable elevators, large amounts of graffiti, vermin infestations, trash not being properly disposed of outside or inside, and wide-spread blackouts in the buildings to the point where interior hallways would be near pitch black.  
<sup>16</sup> Kilian, Michael. 1995, Jul 11 "FUNDS EARMARKED FOR HOMELESS U.S. GRANTS TOTAL \$900 MILLION, \$31 MILLION FOR CHICAGO" [NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Full text)*, 8. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/funds-earmarked-homeless-u-s-grants-total-900/docview/283971217/se-2>.

<sup>17</sup> Congress.gov. "The HUD Homeless Assistance Grants: Programs Authorized by the HEARTH Act." July 23, 2025. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33764>. Table 3 indicates fiscal year congressional allocations for HUD Homeless Assistance Grants from 1987-2017. Notably the increase in total funds for HUD Homeless Programs from 1993 to 1994 was roughly \$300 million. The increases from 1987 to 2017 in total will be addressed throughout the source examination, as it is clear that the budget allocations diverge from the wholesale prognosis that the federal government withdrew from social welfare and grants to address homelessness. Where they made cuts is the key to this argument. The trend of withdrawal and eventual cancellation of federal grants for SRO housing in 2011 is but one key figure, and it will be referenced again.

<sup>18</sup> Community Emergency Shelter Organization and Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. *SROs, an Endangered Species: Chicago's Single Room Occupancy Hotels*. Chicago: Community Emergency Shelter Organization, 1985, 48. According to a study conducted by the Department of Planning of the City of Chicago, the total loss of SRO units between 1973 and 1984 amounted to 22,603. The Community Emergency Shelter Organization's projections for the fate of SRO units state that at the loss rate of 1,000 units per (the current trend in 1984-1985), virtually all of the SRO establishments would disappear by 1994. Further investigation below proves this projected trend to not be entirely off its mark.

Housing,” by Matt McDermott. McDermott reported that, the state budget “clearly reflects the priority prisons have become; the Department of Corrections (DOC) budget is nearly four times that of the Department of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) and more than fifty times that of the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund.” The Trust Fund during this time had a fluctuating amount of low-interest development loans between \$12 and \$18 million. In comparison to state allocations for the DOC, it is clear why the staff at *Homeward Bound* believe that low-income housing is not only low on the state of Illinois’ list of priorities, but that the expense on the Illinois DOC in a roundabout way is expense for housing. According to McDermott, it cost nearly \$30,000 annually to imprison just one person, with a steady flow of offenders. McDermott found through a study by the Washington-based Sentencing Project, that from 1983 to 1993, the number of incarcerated drug offenders rose by 510 percent. In the context of the War on Drugs, launched in the 80s, the increases in drug offense arrests and the state of Illinois’ allocations for their DOC are understandable. From the perspective of advocates for the unhoused, the state of Illinois is but one figure in the perpetuation of a twisted form of social housing. Less punitive measures and substance abuse counseling would be better housing initiatives, McDermott argued.<sup>19</sup>

In the Fall of 1996, *Homeward Bound*’s study of governmental withdrawals from welfare and housing continued. In an editorial titled, “Where Are We – The Struggle Against Homelessness,” Coalition Director Donahue criticized the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s initiatives to divest from public housing:

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<sup>19</sup> McDermott, Matt. “The Facts Behind the Faces: Prisons: The Latest in Low-Income Housing,” Spring 1996, *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Found in the Chicago History Museum’s Abakanowicz Research Center Archive. HV4506.C4 H6 OVERSIZE. This is the first citation of *Homeward Bound*, which is why it has the call number and place of inventory. All subsequent issues were found in the same place and correspond to the same call number.

HUD itself has introduced several proposals to recognize its programs and change its priorities. Rather than preserving affordable housing, HUD now has the goal of destroying 100,000 units of public housing per year. HUD has just started another program to sell off 25,000 units of public housing.<sup>20</sup>

Contextually, HUD's destruction of public housing, outlined by Donahue, came slightly before the federal housing viability test established in the 1996 annual spending bill for the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The bill "mandated the Chicago Housing Authority to hire a private consultant to do a viability test for all of its developments which have a vacancy rate higher than 10% and more than 350 units."<sup>21</sup> Following the viability test, public housing units would be slated for substantial renovation, or in most cases, demolition. Donahue saw this development as a substantial cut in the funding and maintenance of a large low-income housing stock in Chicago. Its defunding and literal physical destruction would only exacerbate a housing insecurity crisis. Donahue's concern, as well as HUD and the CHA's plans for demolition, demonstrate the links between the unhoused and public housing communities of Chicago. The connection between homelessness and cuts to public housing is indicative of the broader neoliberal approaches to governance in this era. Cities across the country were the fronts of this assault on public financing of social welfare and housing and Chicago was far from being an exception to this historical moment.

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<sup>20</sup> Donahue, John. "Where Are We in the Struggle Against Homelessness." Fall 1996. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, Patricia A., Yittayih Zelalem, Julie DeGraff, Linda Roman. "The Plan To Voucher Out Public Housing: An Analysis of the Chicago Experience and A Case Study of the Proposal to Redevelop the Cabrini Green-Public Housing Area." May 1997. National P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Development. University of Illinois-Chicago, 1. <https://voorheescenter.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2017/10/1997-Voucher-out-public-housing-analysis-of-the-chicago-experience.pdf> Citing statistical profile of vacancy rates from 1991-1992 collected by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, the project found that in those years 7 CHA sites had vacancy of over 10 percent, all of which had well over 350 units. The projects listed were the ABLA Homes, Cabrini Green, Henry Horner Homes, Rockwell Gardens, Scattered Sites, Stateway Gardens and the Robert Taylor Homes. Besides the CHA's senior housing stock, all of these projects listed were among the largest in the CHA's housing stock.

A separate article of the same issue of *Homeward Bound* point out, this effort could be seen in the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill, which ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The author, Julie Dworkin, argued the action would, cause an increased threat of housing insecurity for families. According to the Urban Institute, 55,860 more children will be at a poverty level because of this cut. The provisions of the bill, operate on the idea of transferring welfare recipients to gainful employment. Furthermore, the bill ends the federal guarantee of cash assistance and was replaced with block grants to the states, giving them discretion to create their own welfare programs. Welfare recipients were required to work after two years or lose their benefits and the bill enforced a five year lifetime limit on benefits. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) was limited to 300,000 children with disabilities. Legal immigrants were dented from receiving SSI, food stamps, and in some cases Medicaid. Lastly, it reduced food stamp benefits to all households, limited food stamp benefits to single, able-bodied adults who are not working to 3 months in a 3 year period, and it ended the entitlement to child care for families on welfare who are working or in an educational program.<sup>22</sup> The cost may be more than simply losing benefits for food, healthcare, and childcare. These cutbacks had factor into low-income families' budgets, and therefore, housing costs, or other life-sustaining expenses for that matter, would have inevitably been more of a burden on a family's budget. Low-income families, in shelters, on the streets, or in public housing were directly threatened with the possibility of deeper housing insecurity because of these cuts.

While *Homeward Bound* staff recognized the dangers of welfare reform in its implications for housing insecurity, the *Chicago Tribune* likewise recognized potential pitfalls of

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<sup>22</sup> Dworkin, Julie. "The Facts Behind the Faces: From Bad to Worse: The Impact of Welfare Reform on Homelessness. Fall 1996. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

the legislation. Rebecca Blank called the Welfare Reform Act part of a “two-decade trend in this country” of scaling back publicly financed cash assistance for the poor. Under the bill, Assistance for Dependent Children (AFDC) is abolished and is replaced under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), with an emphasis on ‘temporary’.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the legislation operates on the idea that welfare recipients would undergo a welfare-to-work transition. Federal and state initiatives would theoretically encourage and assist welfare recipients in finding and maintaining gainful employment. Most of these initiatives were to be led by state authority because under the 1996 legislation, state governments, instead of being allocated funds for specific expenditures relating to social welfare, would receive block grants to create their own welfare infrastructures. To curb the consequences of these cuts, Blank offered four suggestions that would be needed to make this transfer of societal and fiduciary responsibility to the states work successfully:

- 1) The establishment of welfare-to-work programs, which emphasize the importance of permanent employment (with the private sector’s cooperation) in weaning welfare recipients off public assistance; 2) State governments need to compile a list of those that cannot solely be weaned off welfare through gainful employment. The prominence of health issues or other social/domestic circumstances would qualify some welfare recipients to stay receiving public assistance; 3) Ensuring success of welfare-to-work transfers by including, “...a major public information campaign informing low-wage workers about tax subsidies available through the Earned Income Tax Credit, which provides subsidies to low-income earners, and the creation of low-cost state run health insurance programs for families no longer eligible for Medicaid.” 4) The federal government should contribute more funds to permanent job programs and should eliminate the five-year limit on welfare provisions for those still receiving assistance.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Beck, Elizabeth, and Pamela Twiss. *The Homelessness Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2018, 38. AFDC has been consistently cited by homeless and housing scholars as being a safety pin preventing further deprivation and poverty. Indicative of a neoliberal shift in approaches to welfare spending in America, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 changed eligibility standards for AFDC. As a result, nearly 408,000 people were removed from the rolls. Beck and Twiss also examine the changes in Medicaid eligibility and a reduction in General Assistance happening simultaneously to AFDC cuts throughout the 80s, a part of Reagan’s efforts to account for “welfare queens.” Clinton’s, in partnership with GOP Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, welfare reform of the 90s can be seen as a continuation of this trend that Rebecca Blank identifies.

<sup>24</sup> Rebecca M. Blank. 1997, Jan 12, "WELFARE RECIPIENTS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WITH PLENTY OF HARD WORK AHEAD: CHICAGOLAND FINAL, C EDITION." *Chicago Tribune*, 1-2, 1:1.

. As an important sidenote, the job market at this time was increasingly becoming dominated by service work. Service work, while always available in some respects, does not carry the same security in payment, benefits, or time off as jobs in alternative employment sectors.<sup>25</sup> Thus with growth in jobs without livable wages and no assurances from the state authorities for job security, the conditions creating the possibility of housing insecurity and exacerbating homelessness were worsening.

Amid these existential cuts in social spending Barbara Reynolds of the *Chicago Defender* declared that black leaders should be cautious in standing with President Clinton on issues of Welfare Reform in 1999.<sup>26</sup> To provide updates in the welfare reform rollout since 1996, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that, “From August 1996—when welfare legislation was passed—to July 1998, caseloads have dropped from 4.4 million to 3 million families, 1.4 million fewer families or a decline of 31 percent. Also, the number of individuals has dropped from 12.2 million to 8.4 million, a fall of 3.9 million or 32 percent.” A vital justification for removing welfare recipients from the rolls was that gainful employment would be the ultimate solution. However, as Reynolds pointed out, there was no sure way of knowing if these former welfare recipients landed on their feet, as the legislation does not include “adequate tracking measures” for these people. Luckily, representatives of non-profit organizations have

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<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/welfare-recipients-arent-only-ones-with-plenty/docview/418280304/se-2>.

<sup>25</sup> See appendix for the picture of a table detailing the fastest growing jobs in Illinois Pay Below A Livable Wage, obtained in “The Facts Behind the Faces: The Current Economy Boom or Bust.” Winter 1998/1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Data from the National Priorities Project analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that 51 percent of job growth in Illinois was in occupations that pay wages below a livable wage.

<sup>26</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. 1999, Feb 15. "Think Welfare Reform is Working.." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 10. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/think-welfare-reform-is-working/docview/2573848688/se-2>.

banded together in an attempt to ascertain what these former welfare recipients are doing and how they are doing off of government assistance. Reynolds quoted Reverend Jim Wallis, leader of the coalition of more than 500 religious organizations concerned with fixing welfare reform, who estimated that, “only about half of all welfare recipients losing benefits are getting jobs, which means the other half are not. And, of those getting work, most are stuck in very low-paying jobs that don’t begin to provide adequate family income.” Wallis tied the changes in welfare directly to a shift in the demographics of the unhoused, noting a decrease in single men with substance abuse and an increase in women with children seeking housing in shelters. This may reveal the outcomes of some former welfare recipients’ unsuccessful attempts to transition from welfare-to-work. Moreover, Reynolds founds that, “The U.S. Conference of Mayors reports that families with children now make up 38 percent of the homeless population.” It is important to note here that without causal data, a clear shift of former welfare recipients to shelters and or other forms of homelessness connection is perhaps conjectural.<sup>27</sup> The statistics showcasing the loss of affordable housing, including SRO hotels and public housing, are more likely direct causes of this population change. However, given that a national to municipal reduction social welfare spending, alongside a national and municipal withdrawal from public housing spending cannot be overlooked when discussing the roots of housing insecurity in Chicago, and it provokes further inquiry.

### **Redevelopment Prior to the Plan for Transformation (1990-2000)**

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<sup>27</sup> Kleinpeter, Wateka. “Welfare to Work – People in Transition: The Road To Self-Sufficiency,” June 1999, *Residents’ Journal*, Volume 3. Number 5. *Residents’ Journal* can be accessed through the Chicago Public Library’s Digital Collections. All issues were found there. Kleinpeter, demonstrates the state of ignorance advocates, policy makers, and welfare recipients were in regarding the relationship between welfare cuts and housing insecurity. “No one really knows how many welfare recipients who are hired for jobs work a few months and then lose or leave that job. These people may go back to welfare or disappear from the system, sometimes slipping into homelessness or worse.”

Examination of the connections between the unhoused and public housing residents now shift from economic considerations to a discussion of how city-wide redevelopment with the context of economic reorganization, affected these two intermingling populations.

Redevelopment is defined here as municipal and federal initiatives that permanently altered the built environment of the city of Chicago. These alterations were primarily targeted at low-income housing stock and had drastic ramifications for low-income people.

The *Tribune*'s Patrick T. Reardon, building off on his previous reporting of the state of public housing covered the (re)development plans for the South Loop.<sup>28</sup> Historically, the South Loop neighborhood has been a prominent location of low-income housing stock, particularly SRO hotels.<sup>29</sup> Development plans particularly leave out the St. James Hotel, one of the most historic of the SRO hotels in the South Loop neighborhood, despite the historic building's level of disrepair. For example, the St. James Hotel had at the time of publication of this article, 52 fire code violations.<sup>30</sup> The St. James Hotel is one of the few remaining SRO hotels in the South

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<sup>28</sup> Reardon, Patrick T. Tribune Urban Affairs Writer. 1993, Oct 20 "SOUTH LOOP SRO BEING EDGED OUT": [NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Full text)*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/south-loop-sro-being-edged-out/docview/283572819/se-2>.

<sup>29</sup> Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 137-153. Wright's extensive examination of redevelopment in the South Loop includes, but is not limited to, the shift in racial and socio-economic demographics, the physical destruction of low-income housing SROs with the parallel development of luxury lofts, and the establishment of a municipal TIF (tax increment financing) area to discuss the current (1990s) trends for the South Loop. These developments in tandem with a significant "increase in rents and a decline in income" threaten the low-income South Loop residents, whom Wright claims, "are a paycheck away from homelessness." It is important to get a visual sense of what these neighborhoods looked like before wide-sweeping development. Therefore, in the appendix I have included a picture of the South Loop SRO hotels along South Wabash from page 47 of Wright's work.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 150-151. The St. James Hotel falls directly within the parameters of the city's area under a TIF. TIFs allow for the subsidizing of commercial and typically upper-income housing development projects giving the city expendable capital for its own construction and development. With this in mind, the St. James Hotel should fall into the city's SRO rehabilitation, especially because of its fire code violations. However, it is explicitly left out of redevelopment plans according to *Tribune* coverage of the neighborhood. This is markedly similar to the process of de-facto demolition, in which municipal development authorities purposefully leave out the rehabilitation of dilapidated housing despite blatant infrastructure issues.



Loop, which leaves housing activists and neighborhood advocates worried amid city plans for redevelopment of the South Loop. In response to concerns,

Marina Carrott, the city's housing commissioner, wrote back earlier this month to say that the city wouldn't help with the rehabilitation of the St. James "because it is located in the midst of a strategic block which has been targeted for large-scale development." Carrott said Tuesday that the city would like to work with the religious leaders to develop SRO housing elsewhere in Chicago. "There are lots of buildings in the city," she said.

Carrott, speaking on behalf of the city in its plans for the South Loop, essentially gave the green light for displacement. Low-income residents' homes would be removed from the South Loop neighborhood to make room for the target audience of a more affluent socio-economic makeup.

In addition to the threats of redevelopment to the St. James Hotel, the New Jackson Hotel, a now permanently closed SRO hotel in the West Loop neighborhood, had been increasingly threatened amid combined plans of low-income housing redevelopment in the South and West Loop. *Tribune* staff writer Steve Mills reported on the West Side/West Loop story, using resident testimony and non-profit studies of the neighborhood.<sup>31</sup> "An advocacy group's new report on single room occupancy, or SRO hotels in Chicago details two decades of shrinking housing for low- and fixed-income people like Brooks [a current resident] who depend on the New Jackson and places like it, and it forecasts dire problems if the trend is not halted." The trend of SRO Hotel and low-income housing stock destruction is part of a trend identified by the report, which found that, "From 1973-1994, according to the report, SRO housing fell from 52,130 units to 13,554." The advocacy group responsible for the report was the Lakefront SRO Corporation, headed by executive director Jean Butzen. According to Butzen, the SRO hotels

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<sup>31</sup> Mills, Steve. 1994, Jul 25 "SRO HOTELS CONTINUE TO DWINDLE INEXPENSIVE HOUSING BEING LOST TO DEMOLITION AND DEVELOPMENT": [NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Full text)*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/sro-hotels-continue-dwindle-inexpensive-housing/docview/283848493/se-2>.

and other low-income housing stock were a critical part of Chicago's built environment. Despite the assumption that these housing options were temporary Butzen stated, "This is permanent housing, not transient housing like the Hilton Hotel is." "What we're trying to get people to see is that a problem is waiting to happen if places like that get torn down. Those people are literally one crisis away from homelessness."<sup>32</sup> Not only did the availability of these housing options provide housing security to low-income individuals, they were also safeguards against a more severe form of housing insecurity. They were often the last vestiges of low-rent housing in areas where rent increases outright excluded working-class people. Parallel to the destruction and redevelopment of SRO hotels across the city, the destruction and redevelopment of CHA was happening simultaneously. Together these two developments culminated in a two-pronged assault on affordable housing stock in Chicago.<sup>33</sup>

In the Summer of 1996, *Homeward Bound* staff continued their coverage of the redevelopment of the South Loop and the consequences of SRO destruction. In this issue's editorial section Donahue expanded on the potential dangers of redevelopment of the South Loop at a time when real estate companies and developers were interested in transforming the

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<sup>32</sup> The notion of transience was stereotypically attached to places like SRO hotels because of Chicago's long standing use of migratory labor. Many of these migrant laborers lived in places like SROs, flophouses, and low-rent skid row housing on the Near North Side, West Side (near Madison), and in neighborhoods in and south of the Loop. Community Emergency Shelter Organization and Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. *SROs, an Endangered Species: Chicago's Single Room Occupancy Hotels*. Chicago: Community Emergency Shelter Organization, 1985, 4. Though residents of SROs do tend to move more frequently, the Community Emergency Shelter Organization found that nearly aa half of respondent residents lived in their present SRO for 2 years or more, while 29 percent had lived in their present unit for four years or more.

<sup>33</sup> As the redevelopment process ebbed on, morphing into the CHA's Plan for Transformation, the position of CHA property as housing of last resort for low-income Chicagoans materialized. One example of this is Wright's classification of the CHA as "housing of last resort for Chicago's poor." In his examination of "Tranquility City," an unhoused encampment under the Halsted St. Bridge (crossing the South Branch of the Chicago River), Wright found that, "All "Tranquility City" residents were able to secure housing in the CHA buildings after they were forced from their encampments by the city of Chicago." Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 134, and 248 for locations.

neighborhood into a mixed-income community.<sup>34</sup> He stated that despite development and real estate interests, “—many poor people continue to live in the South Loop because walking to work is just as convenient for dishwashers as it is for stockbrokers.” Donahue discussed the ongoing campaign to protect the South Loop as a neighborhood of income diversity as the area is host to many of Chicago’s SRO hotels. The CCH’s plan, counter to the municipal government’s interest in redevelopment, would “...protect the area’s 1,000 units of SRO housing, set aside 20% of new housing for low-income people, and reserve 50% of jobs for low income and homeless residents.” Similar to the development language around neighborhoods containing public housing, the notion of the mixed income community is notably pushed into discussion of redeveloping areas with SRO hotels. The intrusion of the mixed-income community has historically come at the cost of housing stock for low-income and precariously housed/unhoused individuals. Implicitly, and in some cases explicitly, the city of Chicago’s development schemes have associated public housing and other low-income areas, specifically the built structures that support these social initiatives, as hinderances to profitability and investment. This notion carries racialized and classist assumptions about the structures of a built environment that supports social housing initiatives and subsequently about the residents as well. SRO hotels are important stopgaps to continued exposure to unhoused life on the street . They are cheap and typically do not have long-term contracts which for better or worse emphasizes a resident preference in where to live and responsibility in altering their situations

Departing from the grim stories regarding SRO destruction in the previous issue of *Homeward Bound*, staff writers covered a story involving a new city initiative in partnership with the Central City Housing Ventures (a consortium of 16 churches and synagogues). The

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<sup>34</sup> Donahue, John. “CCH, The South Loop & The Democratic National Convention.” Summer 1996. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

consortium planned to open a new 170-unit single room occupancy hotel for unhoused individuals.<sup>35</sup> The facility was to be located at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> St. and Wabash Ave. and would replace the St. James Hotel at 1234 South Wabash, an SRO initiative that the city withdrew a rehabilitation project from. Additionally, the new housing venture for precariously housed South Loop residents was an \$11.5 million project with medical referral services, drug and mental health counseling, and job training. The SRO initiatives in the South Loop came from the efforts of housing activist organizations including the Lakefront SRO Incorporated and the South Loop Campaign for Development Without Displacement. The interesting part about this story is that despite a continued municipal led campaign limiting the amount of SRO housing in the South Loop and throughout the city, an initiative to house up to 170 people was approved. Furthermore, unlike other SRO initiatives, the proposed SRO hotel would include comprehensive services for unhoused and extremely low-income people. This inclusion operates on the idea that homelessness is not simply an issue of people having insufficient or inadequate shelter but rather that homelessness is often a condition that intersects with a variety of other socio-economic and health related problems. From the perspective of the city, the inclusion of additional services may have been their way of emphasizing temporary stays in SROs, a way of obscuring from a conversation on permanent solutions to the housing affordability crisis forming in Chicago at this time.

In a move that can be considered counteraction to this developing housing affordability and insecurity crisis, representatives of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing (CPPH) and Cabrini Green residents Carol Steele and Wardell Yotaghan organized a march to protect public housing. The CPPH and a consortium of 70 other organizations marched in solidarity on June 19,

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<sup>35</sup> Homeward Bound Staff Writers, "New SROs in the South Loop," Fall 1996. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

1997.<sup>36</sup> The CPPH, “...was founded in late 1996 because we became concerned about the actions of the City of Chicago, CHA, and HUD were taking in redeveloping public housing communities,” the Coalition stated. With the planned demolition of up to 20,000 public housing units and establishment of middle to upper income communities in place of public housing sites, the CPPH fears a blotting out of low-income residents in the city and a worsening of the “homelessness problem.” Alternative to the city’s vision for redevelopment, the “CPPH believes that public housing communities should be redeveloped, not to attract tourists and people of higher incomes back to the city, but to improve the quality of public housing residents and to alleviate homelessness.” The inclusion of the real threat of homelessness in the CPPH’s call for an alternative redevelopment plan is noteworthy by the fact that it establishes the public housing communities as activists fighting homelessness. Though the activism may be different in the sense that their advocacy is on their own behalf (they are the low-income residents facing imminent homelessness) rather than the CCH’s advocacy on behalf of unhoused people, their campaigns against displacement and the peripherization of low-income people in Chicago were two movements happening simultaneously with similar messaging. Furthermore, similar to the CCH’s messaging relating to preserving SRO housing in the South Loop and Near West Side, the CPPH’s messaging likewise concerns a preservation and investment in residents that had lived in these areas, marked by the city for redevelopment ultimately benefitting Chicagoans that had no connection to the neighborhoods.

*Residents’ Journal* staff member Dan Adams wrote about pitfalls of the mixed-income community plan at the Henry Horner housing complex, one of the first public housing

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<sup>36</sup> Steele, Carol and Wardell Yotaghan. “A March, A first Step,” Summer 1997. *Residents’ Journal*, Volume 1. Number 4, 8.

communities to be slated for redevelopment.<sup>37</sup> Although Henry Horner residents had some assurance of being relocated into the West Haven community [mixed-income community replacing Henry Horner] the redevelopment operates on a lottery system under which only lease-compliant former residents have a chance for a spot in the new development.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, the city was contemplating that some residents were going to be displaced. Moreover, Adams reported “Another major problem that now looms over Horner residents is that some units are now being withheld from transfer to Horner residents by Earnest Gates, the president of the Near West Development Corporation....Some residents of Horner feel that Gates is not trying to create a mixed community but rather trying to replace residents that now reside in the area with more affluent people.”

Adams’ article concerning the redevelopment of the Henry Horner homes is one of the earliest instances in the *Residents’ Journal* collection that somewhat explicitly suggests that the CHA’s redevelopment plans were indeed land grabs. Redevelopment would inherently limit the amount of space reserved for public housing residents but even the lucky former residents that had secured a spot through Section 8 or otherwise were fundamentally incongruous with the ideal demographic or income level of the community that was replacing the public housing community.<sup>39</sup> The ultimate destiny of these former public housing residents, even those that had been successfully relocated, was still to be determined. Former residents were in a housing insecurity limbo.

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<sup>37</sup> Adams, Dan. “Replacing Housing or Replacing People.” Summer 1997. *Residents’ Journal*, Volume 1. Number 4, 8.

<sup>38</sup> As of 1998, “168 new townhomes had been in and around Horner, and 98 of these new units were occupied, about half with former Horner residents.” Popkin, Susan J., Victoria E. Gwiasda, Lynn M. Olson, et. al., *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000, 131.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 131-137.

Though violence is not the primary concern of this paper, it would be a detriment not to include some aspects of it in discussion of public housing redevelopment and displacement.<sup>40</sup>

*Chicago Defender* reporter Chinta Strausberg reported on a meeting between city officials regarding a recent bout of violence at schools near the Robert Taylor Homes.<sup>41</sup> Paul Vallas, Chicago Public Schools CEO, emerged from meeting with Mayor Daley and was quoted saying, “You need more visibility on the part of the police because there are a lot of police resources in and out of the area. You need greater coordination between the police and the CHA, and we talked about a lot of things to how you can enhance that coordination.” Vallas’ open-ended comments were qualified by Daley’s comments saying he promised to “snuff out” the gangs. Strausberg’s reporting also included by Alderman Dorothy Tillman:

We had shootings on the South end... but all over this city. Tillman said she wants to make sure the residents are protected. “They’re not second-class citizens. I think we’ve blown these shootings out of proportion.” “Everybody’s looking for reason for dumping on CHA,” she said, warning Shuldiner [Joe Shuldiner executive director of the CHA at the time of this article’s publication] “not to use this to expedite the demolishing of CHA. They just started calling this area the State Street Corridor when there was a move to take down the high-rises. What is the corridor to?”

Tillman’s consideration of the expediting of demolition amid violence represents resident concerns over violence and the threat of worsening housing insecurity. Her question as to the referral of the redevelopment area as the State Street Corridor is equally significant. Where was this development heading? And furthermore, why was the city hyper-fixating on violence within

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<sup>40</sup> An examination of violence and crime in public housing juxtaposed with a discussion of redevelopment merits a project of its own. Perhaps considerations within homelessness, housing insecurity, and the transformation of punitive policies across the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the neoliberal moment would also be valuable in said discussion. I have included aspects of Susan J. Popkin’s and Sudhir Venkatesh’s works which deal more explicitly with crime and violence in public housing, but I have purposefully excluded aspects of their primary research goals for the benefit of this paper.

<sup>41</sup> Strausberg, Chinta. 1997, Dec 18 "Daley Vows to End Taylor Violence: Mayor Hosts High-Level Summit Meeting at City Hall." *Chicago Defender* (Daily Edition) (1973-), 4.  
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/daley-vows-end-taylor-violence/docview/2557676303/se-2>.

public housing communities when there was evidence of violence all over the city? The questioning as to what purpose is behind not only the naming of this area as the State Street Corridor, but also as to the interests that would be influencing the tenor of redevelopment, voices resident concerns of land grabs.

Following commentary from public officials on crime and its relationship to redevelopment at the Robert Taylor Homes, Taylor residents voiced their concerns about development in interviews conducted by *Residents' Journal* staff writer Marsha Smallwood. Smallwood quoted an anonymous Taylor Homes resident reasserted the possibility of the land grab: "You and I both know once all of these buildings on the State Street corridor are torn down, all the rich white people will move in. If you don't have a decent job and cannot afford to pay the rent you can forget it."<sup>42</sup> The demolitions of public housing along State Street were considered by residents to be a massive dislocation of low-income Chicagoans. The project in that sense was essentially a convenience for the city, by which the built environment for poor Chicagoans would be replaced by an environment purporting a new (profitable/investable) face of the South and Near South Side of the city.<sup>43</sup> Resident and community organizer Joseph Saunders states:

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<sup>42</sup> The resident refers to the State Street corridor. The corridor along State Street, one of Chicago's busiest streets and a prime target of redevelopment, formerly hosted the Robert Taylor, Harold Ickes, Stateway Gardens, and portions of the Ida B. Wells Homes. Parts of these projects and a number of smaller complexes still stand along the corridor today.

<sup>43</sup> This concern over opportunity for investment in this part of the city is not without precedent. Mayor Richard Daley expressed concern over the concentration of public housing along State Street back in 1956 when he categorized public housing as a "threat" to private redevelopment. Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 113. AND Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 85-117. As a part of his broader considerations of the relationship between redevelopment and the unhoused, Wright examines the defining and restricting of space as it relates to human use. A city, through its development schemes, municipal ordinances, and even architecture, instills an image through which proper or appropriate use is propagated. Because these redevelopment schemes are often done in partnership with private entities, exclusion of city dwellers and the forceful imposition of a target audience (usually with attached racial and socio-economic connotations) is inherent in their initiation. By physically removing public housing and its residents from the South/Near South Side, Chicago alters, or replaces rather, the spatial use and culture of these areas.



As much as I know about the annihilation of the Robert Taylor Homes, all in all, I believe it will do more destruction than construction. The cancellation of welfare recipients, the Bronzeville redevelopment the beautification of King Drive and State—this was a beautification not to the good of the community but only for the convention in August....There's enough money to invest in flowerpots on the sidewalks rather than homeless in vacant lots. Now this with the Taylor Homes.

Sanders and the anonymous resident identified two key problems in connection with the Robert Taylor redevelopment plan. They understood this redevelopment as part of a larger initiative to depopulate the South and Near South Side of predominantly African American and low-income Chicagoans. Simultaneously, this redevelopment was occurring while welfare reform was happening on a nationwide scale. Lastly, redevelopment was also happening at the same time of a decline of employment that paid living wages.

Although the CHA's redevelopment plans were not explicitly stated as displacement campaigns. The effort of displacement was implicit within the tenor of redevelopment which operated on the idea of creating mixed-income communities. The *Tribune* reported on one such community on the North Side.<sup>44</sup> Mohawk North is a mixed-income apartment complex bordering the Cabrini Green public housing complex. The CHA has placed 16 former Cabrini families alongside 49 market-rate condominium owners to showcase the value of mixed-income developments as a transition out of publicly subsidized housing. The mixed-income initiative was heralded by CHA officials early in the process of public housing overhaul.<sup>45</sup> The placement of former public housing tenants in Mohawk North quickly gained skepticism from market-rate

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<sup>44</sup> McRoberts, Flynn and Abdon M. Pallasch. 1998, Oct 08, "A NEW WORLD--DOWN THE BLOCK" Series: ODYSSEY. RESETTLING THE CITY'S POOR. Third in an Occasional Series: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/new-world-down-block-series-odyssey-resettling/docview/418694219/se-2>.

<sup>45</sup> Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 268-271. Vincent Lane was one of the CHA's early (within the context of this paper, since the notion of mixed-income developments goes back to the foundation of the CHA itself) proponents of mixed-income developments, starting at Lake Parc Place in the late 80s. The idea was simply that deconcentrating poverty by integrating a variety of socio-economic classes would not create further poverty and ensure the longevity of subsidized affordable housing.

tenants. During a September meeting of the Mohawk North Homeowners Associations the *Tribune* found that, “One white man wanted to know if there was any cap on family size.

Another homeowner, a black female, wondered whether the Cabrini residents, all single mothers, would be allowed to have adult male visitors.” Compounding tenants racist and classist assumptions about former public housing residents McRoberts and Pallasch reported that,

Moorehead [William Moorehead, real estate developer of Mohawk North] hoped to head off homeowners’ concerns by showing them the list of house rules for the public housing tenants. Those tenants can be fined at least \$50 for cycling, roller skating or skateboarding on the sidewalk; ball playing on the property; walking or playing on the grass; conversing loudly through windows; and for washing, repairing, playing loud music, or congregating in vehicles among others.

Management, real estate developer, and market rate tenants’ concerns about the viability of the mixed-income experiment at Mohawk North are but one instance of the problems with the mixed-income idea as a catchall solution for housing redevelopment. More affluent people were vocally and actively resistant to public housing relocation within redevelopments. The placement of public housing residents in mixed-income communities, while a notable attempt to integrate Chicago housing, can also be seen as a form of forced integration assuming post-class and post-racial conditions.<sup>46</sup> This doesn’t begin to address the fact that former public housing tenants were aware that the conditions of their housing insecurity were created in part by the affluent people who were replacing their neighbors. Neighbors with considerable disposable income and suspicion of others outside their income bracket and racial background are contributors to housing insecurity.

In the story of redevelopment before the Plan for Transformation, Andre Robinson of the *Resident’ Journal* reported on changes in the CHA’s expenses in preparation for an enhanced

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<sup>46</sup> The issue of integration in mixed-income communities and (of public housing residents) in relocation communities across the city will be examined in greater detail later. The relevance of this issue is more appropriately discussed after the launch of the Plan for Transformation.

level of redevelopment.<sup>47</sup> The plan called for the demolition of 15,000 CHA units, during which residents would receive relocation assistance to move into newly rehabbed CHA properties or Section 8 housing.<sup>48</sup> Robinson reported, “After redevelopment, residents will get first preference to return to their current developments.” In addition to structural changes, the budget announcement called for the privatization of all management and resident programs. In preparation for these changes, the CHA was to spend \$28 million to link residents to community-based services such as drug treatment, job training and day care. Additionally, \$25 million was to be spent to train and place 3,000 CHA residents in jobs and \$20 million more will be allocated to residents for construction apprenticeships. The fiduciary, resident program, and managerial changes previously outlined represent a discontinuation of publicly funded housing-based welfare. This should be recognized as an indicator of links between the changes in housing and welfare policy, as they were moved to the private sector in concert. Furthermore, budget cuts forced a reduction of CHA staff from 2,455 current staff positions to 700 by July 2000. This is a substantial defunding of the CHA and a decoupling of the city’s role in housing its citizens.

Mary C. Johns of the *Residents’ Journal* provided more context as to how the plan would change the housing market in Chicago.<sup>49</sup> In a letter to the editor, the CHA chairman Sharon Gist Gilliam claimed, “The plan [5-year transformative plan] includes an investment that will produce 24,000 new and or rehabbed public housing units over the next five years, enough for every current, lease-compliant resident.” This commentary from the then CHA chairman Gilliam is crucial when comparing the city’s hopeful prognosis for public housing to the anxiety coming

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<sup>47</sup> Robinson, Andre. “A New Day for CHA?: Budget Cuts at the Chicago Housing Authority,” October 1999. *Residents’ Journal*, Volume 4. Number 1.

<sup>48</sup> Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 279. There are a variety of figures quoted around the announcement of the plan. Hunt’s research found that initial planning called for the demolition of 18,500 of the CHA’s existing 29,300 family units. More details of the plan will be discussed following further consultation of sources.

<sup>49</sup> Gilliam, Sharon Gist, “Letter to the Editor,” *Residents’ Journal*, December 1999. Volume 4, Number 2, 22.

from homeless advocates and current and former housing residents. The unanswered question was who exactly was qualified for lease-compliance? Moreover, was the Plan for Transformation going to accommodate all displaced residents, considering that relocations were already off to a haphazard start? The figure of 24,000 new and rehabbed units is important to keep in mind in connection to these questions. It also important when historicizing the initiation of the Plan using resident testimony and the context of the status of displacement and homelessness in Chicago. Therefore, discussions of the CHA's Plan for Transformation and the effects of redevelopment on residents and the status of housing insecurity and affordability are going to be examined further following a transition in discussion to displacement and then the state of homelessness leading up to the initiation of the Plan.

### **Displacement and Relocation Before the Plan for Transformation 1990-2000**

Discussions of displacement and relocation in this section, as with all other points of connection between public housing and homelessness, is not limited to a study of public housing. To understand the substantial changes in Chicago's built environment, specifically its affects on the residents of Chicago, the study of displacement of low-income people in general is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of this historic moment. Furthermore, by combining the analysis of displacement of both public housing residents and the unhoused, understandings of what displacement means beyond the physical relocation from one space to another, expand to include less tangible conceptualizations of displacement, namely displacement of kinship and community. As with previous sections listed under the pre-Plan for Transformation half of this paper, the following material reverts back to the early 1990s to historicize the process of displacement.

The first story places the history of displacement and relocation in Chicago's underbelly of Lower Wacker. The story was reported on in *Homeward Bound*, and is a follow up on a story about clearances of homeless encampments on Lower Wacker in Dec. 1994.<sup>50</sup> Chicago sweep crews (most likely contracted garbage and recycling companies or Dept. of Sanitation) destroyed personal property including identifying documentation of unhoused individuals living on Lower Wacker. In a subsequent lawsuit the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (now the Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness) "...alleges that the City's "sweeps" violate the rights of the homeless by seizing and/or destroying their personal property." The destruction of personal identification further perpetuates the state of homelessness for these individuals, as ID documents are necessary for secure and sustained employment, sustained housing, and financial tools like bank accounts. Displacing the unhoused has become policy of municipal governments with inadequate affordable housing stock or shelter infrastructure. The displacement does nothing to alter the conditions that create homelessness and force people to live in inhumane living conditions like in the dark and smelly depths of Lower Wacker. Even among residents of Lower Wacker, arguably a representative of the most stereotypical and down and out form of unhoused street life, the city of Chicago's policy is not integration with permanent or even temporary housing solutions. It is simply displacement for convenience.

How does one end up living on Lower Wacker? What are the conditions that create that level of housing insecurity? Lisa Parsons-Chadha's reporting in *Homeward Bound*, addressed

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<sup>50</sup> Homeward Bound Staff, Spring 1996. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Volume 1. Unfortunately, I could not find any earlier reporting on Lower Wacker from *Homeward Bound* collection at the Chicago History Museum. Upon asking staff if 1996 was the first year of publication, and they were unsure. I then sent the Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness emails asking if they had an archive or records of earlier publications. I did not receive any reply.

one contributing factor describing the judicial bias against renters in Chicago.<sup>51</sup> According to, “...a recent study [conducted by the Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Better Housing] of Cook County Forcible (Eviction) Court found that thousands of tenants are unlawfully evicted and that the court system overwhelmingly favors landlords at the expense of tenants.” The report also found that approximately 40,000 eviction cases were filed every year in Chicago and tenants in only 5% of cases (approx. 2,000 cases) had legal representation while 70% of landlords had legal counsel. Tenants’ rights were routinely ignored in eviction court cases on top of this severe handicap in not having legal counsel. Common tenant defenses coalesce around the inadequacy of appliances and utilities, amenities (factored into the rent) that were typically taken care of by management and maintenance staff. However, “For example, among the 108 *pro se* [on behalf of oneself/without representation] who asserted substandard conditions/failure-to-repair as a defense, only 2 tenants were awarded possession of the premises pursuant to such a defense, only 2 tenants secured a repair order and 1 tenant succeeded in having the landlord’s cases involuntarily dismissed.” The bias in eviction was court directly tied to the threat of being put out on the street. For instance, “...in 1994, the second leading cause of homelessness cited by persons in Chicago’s shelters was eviction.” Parsons-Chadha asserted that even in cases where families and individuals may be lucky enough to avoid homelessness, their rental history and credit will contain demerits because of their legal eviction from their residences, which in turn threatens them with housing insecurity.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Parsons-Chadha, Lisa. “The Facts Behind the Faces – Chicago’s Eviction Engine: The Courts Cause Homelessness.” Spring 1997. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

<sup>52</sup> The connections between rental history, including evictions and late rent payments, and demerits on credit for future rentals is markedly similar to the issue of lease compliance during CHA relocations. Though the lease-compliance of former public housing residents were much more stringent, and frankly discriminatory, the legal maintenance of a landlord bias in Chicago courts is one side of the same coin of ensuring housing insecurity among low-income people.

In addition to a court ruling or exaggerated rental history, outright redevelopment and the pricing out of one's neighborhood could also force people into spaces like Lower Wacker. Chinta Strausberg of the *Chicago Defender*, reported on the ongoing process of redevelopment of Cabrini Green public housing. In the latest redevelopment news, a proposal to establish the area of and around Cabrini as a Tax Increment Financing district was announced.<sup>53</sup> Alderman Walter Burnett, a former Cabrini Green resident himself, was front and center throughout the redevelopment of Cabrini Green public housing.<sup>54</sup> In this article, Burnett rules out that possibility of former and current public housing residents living on the street. In response Cabrini Green residents and advocates Carol Steele and Cora Moore stated, "They want to move the people off the land and we feel we'll end up on Wacker Drive, homeless. Why would they impose a TIF in that area where development is already going on?" Steele asked. It's to displace the residents from that area." In the exchange between Burnett, Moore, and Steele the relationship between homelessness (the threat of it rather) and the plight of public housing residents is revealed. It is further interesting considering the naming of Wacker Drive as the filler location and representation of the lowest form of poverty and housing insecurity in the city. Public housing residents like Moore and Steele saw this location as a likely place of residency if redevelopment

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<sup>53</sup> Strausberg, Chinta. 1997, May 29 "Burnett Denies City Plan Will make Cabrini Tenants Homeless." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 4.  
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/burnett-denies-city-plan-will-make-cabrini/docview/2565194875/se-2>.

<sup>54</sup> Bezael, Ronit, New Day Films, and Kanopy. *70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green*. [San Francisco, California, USA]: Kanopy Streaming, 2018, 14:48-15:55. In the documentary Ald. Burnett is seen alongside other public officials, namely Mayor Daley, encouraging the redevelopment of Cabrini Green, an initiative that placed the importance of private equity and real estate over CG residents' concerns continuously. One notable moment involving Burnett during the documentary shows him talking with kids from the CG complex confronted with inevitable displacement. When asked if residents would be allowed to return to the redevelopment, he points to the fact that former residents must be lease compliant, reinforcing certain classist assumptions made about public housing residents at this time in Chicago. Former CG residents would face the danger of priced out by development with the city's new TIF proposal and they would have to contend with the discrimination of lease compliance, both of which are machinations of displacement.

schemes continued. Wacker Drive, well known among public officials and advocates for the unhoused and public housing residents, becomes in this instance, a place to fear, a symbol of the deepest depth of spatial discrimination in the city.<sup>55</sup> When low-income Chicagoans are displaced and have exhausted all other options, they descend to Lower Wacker or some other notorious location where the unhoused congregate.

The options preventing housing insecurity of public housing residents were limited to relocation within yet to be determined CHA units, relocation to scattered site housing, or the acceptance of Section 8 vouchers for private-market use. Anne R. Smith of the *Residents' Journal* reported on HUD's 1995 initiative which contracted the Quadel Consulting Corporation to manage the CHA's Section 8 voucher initiative and provide rental assistance for former public housing residents in the private rental market.<sup>56</sup> The 1997 update to the CHAC (a subsidiary of the Quadel corporation, a company contracted by the CHA to run the Section 8 program for Chicago) program, covered by Smith, stated that in February the CHAC (ceased issuing vouchers in the private market, following continued building violations at Section 8 housing sites (particularly on the North side). CHAC voucher policy provided that inspections must take place

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<sup>55</sup> Blau, Joel. *The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 4. Visibility is a key concept in Blau's work. Visibility related to homelessness, Blau contends, is dependent on the current state of the social issue. In agreement with other homelessness and housing scholars, homelessness in its demographics and severity has evolved over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Blau's contribution, though he is not the originator of this idea, to this discussion is that homelessness has taken on new form in the sense of its blatant visibility on the street. He states, "Visible poverty disrupts the ordinary rhythms of public life. It undermines the rules governing the use of public space." He continues, "Witnesses to homelessness then become the unwilling spectators of an intimate domestic quarrel. They know these things occur, but firmly believe they should be kept private if it is at all possible." The presence of Chicagoans on Lower Wacker complicates our understand of visibility. Lower Wacker is place obscured from public view unless you have a reason to be down there or are passing through. It is notorious for being difficult to navigate and typically avoided if possible. The presence of the unhoused there suggest that perhaps these residents understand the public view of Lower Wacker. Perhaps they choose to obfuscate themselves from public view. More likely, it is a place of shelter from the elements. Simultaneously, the unhoused presence despite being out of obvious view is still widely known among public officials, housing advocates, and residents of the CHA. Yet little is done to alleviate the conditions that allow such a blatant example of street life. CHA residents invoking Lower Wacker and its infamous yet unimportant place in the psyche of Chicago, suggests that they were close to being all but forgotten and thrown away by a city that was arguably planning their displacement.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, Annie R., "Focus on Section 8," *Residents' Journal*, Summer 1997. Volume 1, Number 4.



ensure property management compliance in living conditions and amenities. This also ensures that landlords are not enriching themselves with federal finance by providing substandard housing to low-income renters. This update of building violations is particularly concerning considering the beginning of the CHAC's contracting by the federal government when large numbers of public housing residents, confronted with the news that redevelopment was taking place across the city, sought Section 8 relocation. "In December 1995, CHAC Inc. [CHA subsidiary for Quadel] started with 47,000 names on the list. By Sept 2, 1996, 32,000 were purged from that list for non-compliance. Non-compliance relates to inadequate income information, no birth certificates or social security cards, or not responding to notification letters." By CHAC's justification this purge was done so out of the interest of weeding out "undesirable" tenants and that the CHAC would have a manageable waiting list in which all will be relocated with Section 8 by August 1997. As these former public housing residents are housed, the waitlist will gradually "randomly" select more residents for Section 8 applications. Longevity for federal funding of the program and landlord compliance are the two issues of Section 8 that are at this point (1997) in question. "And that damn Section 8 is only good for two years. What you goanna do when your two years is up? You know you can't afford to pay \$500 or \$600 dollars for rent. The government must think we're stupid," a former resident and Section 8 hopeful said. What many residents given the option of Section 8 vouchers may have assumed, was that the CHA was in a hurry to demolish and redevelop. Vouchers in this sense were a quick fix for the CHA in resolving the issue of the thousands of families still living in dilapidated housing. However, further examination of resident testimony of Section 8 (later Housing Choice Voucher) relocation show that their experiences were anything but a resolution to displacement and further housing insecurity.

Cecilia Clark documented one particularly troubling Section 8 relocation story in *Residents Journal*.<sup>57</sup> Henry Horner resident Ann is a perfect example of the publication's plethora of failed relocation stories, and her experience is exemplary of the class and racial divisions crossed by former public housing residents during their displacement. Ann was relocated to scattered housing site in Humboldt Park with assistance from Lutheran Social Services. Unfortunately, her move was anything but smooth, and from the beginning Ann recounted that, "It was worse than Henry Horner, Rockwell, Cabrini and Robert Taylor all together." She detailed the large gang presence in the Humboldt Park neighborhood and on one occasion her brother was beaten and threatened with murder after briefly interacting with two local women. "They asked, How do n-----s out of the neighborhood just move in and get a new house and we live here all our lives.' They said this was their turf; any trouble from us and they would bomb our house."

Though Ann's experience could be considered an extreme case, the accounts of discrimination and violence following the relocation of former public housing residents to scattered site areas and to Section 8 housing reveal a disturbing pattern. In addition to displacing people from public housing, the residents themselves bring with them the perceived stain of living in government assisted housing.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, due to Chicago's history of street gangs and clear boundaries of racial and socio-economic segregation, the destruction of public housing complexes and the subsequent displacement not only led to outright housing insecurity, but it

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<sup>57</sup> Clark, Cecelia A. "From the Frying Pan to the Fire: A Relocation Story." *Residents' Journal*, May 1998. Volume 2, Number 3, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Austen, Ben, and Robert Philip Gordon. *High-risers: Cabrini-Green and the Fate of American Public Housing*. First edition. New York, NY: Harper, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2018, 310. The story of Annie Ricks, a former Cabrini Green resident relocated to Wentworth Gardens, includes her and her family's experiences of stigma coming from Cabrini. Even though this stigma came from other public housing residents, Ricks and her family were still stigmatized because they crossed neighborhood lines and Cabrini among other public housing complexes was more infamously known due to a high amount of crime coverage the complex received.

created new means by which housing insecurity could be fabricated; namely the breaking of certain social barriers by integrating groups of people kept historically segregated in Chicago.<sup>59</sup>

In spite of these fears of relocation, the crossing of social and racial boundaries, and the seemingly permanent displacement from community, many residents were determined to fight the imminent displacement. Following earlier reporting on political organizing of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, Cecilia Clark detailed a resident meeting at Cabrini Green called by the Coalition.<sup>60</sup> The Coalition called on HUD for a “time out” on demolitions. Their complaints not limited to the call for a stoppage on additional demolitions, asserted that strategic planning for redevelopment didn’t afford enough participation of resident input and detailed the inadequacy of Section 8 relocation. “The Coalition said the HUD plans would leave many people homeless. There’s not enough low-income housing in Chicago, at least not to accommodate all the public housing residents that would be moved out.”<sup>61</sup> The Coalition stated that as many as

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<sup>59</sup> Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi, and Larry Kamerman. *Dislocation*. [S.I.]: Alladi Group, 2005, 10:18-11:02. Willie Kyles was a resident of Robert Taylor of over 30 years and was self-described as one of the first residents to move into the 4524 S. Federal building of the Robert Taylor Homes. When asked by Venkatesh where she wanted to move Kyles declares that anywhere that she could see State St. After a brief silent pause, Kyles recalls that when she first came to Chicago the neighborhood lines of no return were clear. “That’s when colored folks couldn’t cross Kedzie., no more than going out there with an apron on and wash the ceiling and clean them windows. Better not be caught across Kedzie at dark, and you aint come from Ms. so and so’s house. You wouldn’t see daylight no more.” The level of outright violence described by Kyles may not have been parallel to the violence that relocated public housing residents faced. However, the memory of Kyles is but one example of the fears and anxieties that many public housing residents felt leaving a community that they had some familiarity and sense of place in that would not be easily replicated after moving. For a deeper look into the history of racial and class violence attached to neighborhoods of Chicago, a good starting place would be Sandburg, Carl. *The Chicago Race Riots, July, 1919*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1919.

<sup>60</sup> Clark, Cecilia A. “Cabrini Green News.” *Residents’ Journal*, May 1998. Volume 2, Number 3, 20..

<sup>61</sup> Smith, Annie R. “A Decree to What Degree.” *Residents’ Journal*, Fall 1997. Volume 2, Number 1, 4 and 11. Annie R. Smith in an article historicizing the Gautreaux Decree, explains that strategic planning, a method of resident inclusion in redevelopment plans, stated that if a public housing building has 10% or more vacant units, then residents must come up with a plan outlining redevelopment, revitalization, or demolition. As time went on, the inclusion of resident opinion was diminished. Residents were clear from the beginning of the process as Smith states, “If CHA s to construct housing, it should be put into existing developments. Residents don’t want to move and ones who wanted to move are gone or going.” As an side, yet important contextual detail to relocation, Alexander Polikoff was an attorney for residents (Dorothy Gautreaux) in the landmark Gautreaux case in which the integration of public housing residents to suburbs and white neighborhoods was officially decreed in a class action lawsuit and then by the Supreme Court in 1976. Their integration was filtrated through Section 8 vouchers. The decision made sense in light of a post-Civil Rights era United States in which integration in housing, education, and more was claimed to be the key to solving the country’s racial tensions. Though Polikoff’s representation of tenants

42,000 people would be potentially displaced. The current rental market in Chicago then could not handle such a large immediate influx of residents. The Coalition's complaints further emphasized what many CHA residents feared redevelopment meant for their homes, a land grab, and a significant reduction in low-income housing in an already tight rental market. Without consistent inclusion of resident opinion and the CHA and HUD's continued disregard for the pleas of the Coalition and other resident advocacy organizations, many tenants realized that exacerbated forms of housing insecurity like homelessness were increasing in likelihood.<sup>62</sup>

Unfortunately, the anxieties relating to displacement would not be abated; neither would the continuation of stories portraying the failures of relocation. Flynn McRoberts and Linnet Myers of the *Chicago Tribune* added to the history of these experiences. Gladys McLaurien, a Robert Taylor Homes resident at 5326 S. State St., received a Section 8 voucher and moved out of public housing following her building's failure of the federal viability test. McLaurien's new apartment was burglarized soon after relocation, and she was forced to move a second time.<sup>63</sup> Nearly 100,000 units in public housing complexes were tested for infrastructural longevity. Chicago was hit the hardest, losing 19,000 units, 4,400 of which happened to be in the Robert

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was justified by eliminating the discriminatory practices of placing predominantly people of color on public housing 'reservations,' the process of moving residents via Section 8 housing vouchers and scattered site initiatives has had consistent issues with longevity. Ann's story among others is one such example of the misapplication of the Gautreaux decree and the problems that ensue with a kind of forced integration (though with Ann's story the presence of non-white neighbors differs from past integration history) housing policy.

<sup>62</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. "Public Housing Residents Win Time-Out Oversight." Summer 1998. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Though the reporting was not substantially different, I think it is crucial noting when there is reporting crossover between *Homeward Bound* and the *Residents' Journal*. Crossover between these publications showcases the solidarity between these two associations of activists, academics, and most importantly the residents of public housing and those living in shelters and on the street. Despite a perception of difference between these two groups' level of poverty, it is clear that they were of the same mind in their concern for housing insecurity.

<sup>63</sup> Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi, and Larry Kamerman. *Dislocation*. [S.l.]: Alladi Group, 2005. McLaurien's second relocation is not an anomaly. Robert Taylor residents of 4525 S. Federal were moved several times following displacement on September 30, 2002. Venkatesh's final credits state that residents Chuck, a single man with a number of physical and mental illnesses, and Lee Lee Henderson, a single mom with kids, were moved several times. Chuck, failing to find a private apartment using Section 8 was initially relocated to the Dearborn Homes. Lee Lee found a house in the Englewood neighborhood but had to move more than once due to Section 8 inspection failures.

Taylor Homes. This makes the discussion of housing insecurity and homelessness in Chicago particularly significant to examine. Hundreds if not thousands of other former public housing residents took Section 8 vouchers hoping to find better circumstances in new housing but reporting in the *Residents' Journal* more than accounts for the discrimination, further depths of poverty, and crime that former public housing tenants experienced following their displacement. This fundamentally questions the validity of the anti-concentration of poverty and crime ideology behind public housing destruction and redevelopment, which McRoberts and Myers state, "The CHA's stated goals have been to see residents end up in economically thriving neighborhoods. But the experience of McLaurien and others in the first wave of families to relocate—more than 1,500 since January 1996—suggest that the CHA is simply reshuffled the city's poorest from one segregated community to another."<sup>64</sup>

To qualify resident testimony in the Odyssey Series, reporting in the *Tribune* offered perspective from the CHA's relocation assistance staff.<sup>65</sup> This edition in the Odyssey Series followed a CHA Relocation Specialist named Norm Pettis, who discussed the difficulties but reassured *Tribune* staff that the CHA was more than willing to help former tenants through the process. His assurance was juxtaposed with accounts of multiple tenants and their less than easy transition out of public housing. McRoberts found that, "Trying to fit into their neighborhoods, these and other residents have struggled to adjust, sometimes being scorned for having come from the projects, and for the color of their skin. Others have faced outright violence." Similar to

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<sup>64</sup> McRoberts, Flynn and Linnet Myers. 1998., Aug 23 "OUT OF THE HOLE, INTO ANOTHER Series: ODYSSEY. RESETTLING THE CITY'S POOR." First in an Occasional Series: [CHICAGOLAND FINAL Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/out-hole-into-another-series-odyssey-resettling/docview/418638684/se-2>.

<sup>65</sup> Flynn McRoberts. 1998, Sep 02 "MOVE FROM CHA HIGH-RISE CAN INVOLVE A LEAP OF FAITH" Series: ODYSSEY. RESETTLING THE CITY'S POOR. Second in an Occasional Series: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/move-cha-high-rise-can-involve-leap-faith-series/docview/418683523/se-2>.

the Fall 1999 story about Ann's relocation to Humboldt Park, the story of Katrina Beck, unfortunately played out in a similar fashion.

There's a reason why a resident of Henry Horner such as Beck wound up in a dangerous part of Humboldt Park. As the CHA tears down thousands of units, families can move to private housing with a federal rent subsidy, transfer within CHA developments, or resettle in scattered-site units, which are apartments owned by the CHA but run by private managers. Of these options, many residents have chosen scattered sites, which are covered by the landmark Gautreaux decree. While the decree requires that new public housing be built outside black neighborhoods, it does not prohibit construction of such units in lower-income Latino communities. And that's where most of the scattered sites have been located.

Private management, the *Tribune* added, including the likes of the Habitat Corporation, a private firm charged with managing scattered sites, has consistently maintained that building units in white, more affluent neighborhoods has been difficult because of higher land prices and absence of vacant lots. The combination of factors including a pattern of settlement of former public housing residents in unfamiliar neighborhoods and the unwillingness of private management to diversify low-income housing stock throughout the city regardless of neighborhood income makeup only solidifies the substantiation of spatial discrimination driven by race and income-level in Chicago. Furthermore, this dynamic complicates the creation of the affordability crisis and adds new social and racial dimensions to the housing insecurity issue following the initiation of CHA redevelopment and demolition.<sup>66</sup>

In an attempt to address the fundamental question as to why scattered site and Section 8 housing relocations are concentrated in low-income parts of the city, *Tribune* journalists investigated federal and private partners' responsibility in housing redevelopment.<sup>67</sup> Their

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<sup>66</sup> It is outside the purview of this project, but an exploration of Latino low-income and public housing residents in Chicago does warrant further research. An attachment to neighborhood community and knowing one's sense of place in a socially and racially segregated city must permeate in the spatial culture and configuration of Latino communities in Chicago.

<sup>67</sup> Martin, Andrew and Flynn McRoberts. 1998, Dec 08 "SCATTERED CHA SITES? HARDLY" Series: ODESSEY. RESETTLING THE CITY'S POOR. Sixth in an Occasional Series: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL

investigation found that the program to scatter low-income housing throughout the city had been dominated by political factors including race and money, trends that have defined CHA practice since the authority's inception.<sup>68</sup> "Government limits on how much can be spent to build new public housing and where it can be located have virtually excluded most of the city's affluent white communities, such as Lincoln Park, Sauganash and Beverly, along with the working-class white areas such as Bridgeport and the communities west of Midway Airport." For a concrete example, "Habitat [Habitat Corporation] tried to build units at 76<sup>th</sup> St. and Cole's Avenue, said Ald. William Beavers (7<sup>th</sup>), describing with relish how he earlier this year whittled its plans to just three single-family homes. "I wouldn't let them. I changed the zoning on them so they couldn't. I gave them a message that I never want them coming this way again."<sup>69</sup> The *Tribune* continued, "Habitat has long claimed it has been handcuffed by federal governing where it can locate scattered sites. For instance, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allows Habitat to spend about \$110,000 for a new three-bedroom walkup, making many of the city's most affluent off limits." The above facts implicate federal housing officials in a new light. Perhaps in the interest of saving money in federal housing development loans, HUD put these limitations in place. On the streets of Chicago however, the implications of this limitation fed into the continued segregation and peripherization of former public housing residents.

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Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/scattered-cha-sites-hardly-series-odessey/docview/418739503/se-2>.

<sup>68</sup> Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Hunt explains this two-pronged practice in the introduction of his work.

<sup>69</sup> For a more detailed history and discussion of exclusionary zoning practices, see Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. First edition. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017. Rothstein's cross-examination of legislation and private developer practices in city planning and zoning sheds light on the many tools of spatial segregation in America's cities and the longevity of their use. Many of these practices still permeate development and legislative zoning policy. For a more current and sociological examination of zoning policy as it relates to realizing affordable housing policy see Gray, M. Nolan. *Arbitrary Lines: How Zoning Broke the American City and How to Fix It*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2022.

The story of segregation and peripherization inevitably calls into question the reactions of those neighborhoods receiving public housing residents. Humboldt Park and the various scattered site housing located throughout the city were not the only neighborhoods of relocation. According to a 1998 *Tribune* article, 96 public housing families had been relocated to South Shore since 1996.<sup>70</sup> This relocation was not welcome by those already living in South Shore however. In an open letter South Shore resident Hattie Wilburn stated, “It is as if the gates of hell...opened and these people were let out,” the letter read. “I had to ask again, where did these people come from? And, lo, I was told they came from the projects, the CHA. And as they tear down more projects, we can expect more of these people to be relocated in our neighborhoods.” Though the *Tribune* found that South Shore is one of Chicago’s neighborhoods that has received the largest amount of former public housing residents following CHA developments, investigative reporters also included the fact that without holistic tracking of former residents on the part of the CHA, the effects of former public housing resident migration into other neighborhoods was yet to be determined. Furthermore, law enforcement officials in South Shore added that, “they don’t hear residents complaining much about new families coming from public housing.” In connection with similar articles, the investigation of resident suspicion of public housing residents further substantiates the story of general discrimination inherent in the relocation process. Despite unclear connections between crime and tenant relocation, fears of crime and of course declining property values still permeated the minds of non-public housing

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<sup>70</sup> McRoberts, Flynn and Abdon M. Pallasch. 1998, Dec 28 “NEIGHBORS WARY OF NEW ARRIVALS” Series: ODYSSEY. RESETTLING THE CITY'S POOR. Seventh in an Occasional Series: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1.  
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/neighbors-wary-new-arrivals-series-odyssey/docview/418735236/se-2>.



Chicagoans. As has been established previously, such discrimination and distrust certainly added less tangible aspects of housing insecurity for former public housing residents.

While the haphazard relocation process of public housing residents was unfolding, blatant exclusion of the unhoused was happening downtown. Following up on earlier *Homeward Bound* reporting about the encampments on Lower Wacker, the city's new solution to the issue "...was to build wrought iron fences—which cut off access to the publicly owned service drives and displaced the residents of these areas."<sup>71</sup> The author of the article John Donahue wrote, "City officials believe that removing homeless people from the eyes of the public will make homelessness go away." In January 1999, the residents of the homeless encampments of Lower Wacker were locked out.<sup>72</sup> A man identified as Lieutenant Smith III, 29 years old, was one of the displaced residents. According to *Homeward Bound*, Smith had been in and out of various housing throughout Chicago including being intermittently housed in the Washington Park Homes. He had lived on Lower Wacker for a year. Smith's story is illustrative for many reasons but mainly of his fluctuating housing status as an unhoused person on the street and as a former CHA resident in the Washington Park Homes. His experiences show the intermingling between the public housing and unhoused populations and the city's failure to prevent housing insecurity on multiple fronts.

In a related up article in the same issue, the attitude of the city toward the unhoused residents of Lower Wacker shifted to new lows by revealing a parallel relationship between the city and private interests in the overall story of perpetuated housing insecurity for low-income

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<sup>71</sup> Donahue, John. "Do Fences Make Us Good Neighbors?" Winter 1998-1999 *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

<sup>72</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. "Hope Rises from Lower Wacker." Spring 1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

people.<sup>73</sup> Investigative reporting found that an ordinance passed by the Chicago City Council allowed business owners with property on Lower Wacker to buy permits from the city to erect fences, previously showcased in *Homeward Bound* reporting, along public sidewalks, preventing the building of encampments and displacing 80 people.<sup>74</sup> In discussions with the city for a resolution over the displacement, the Coalition to End Homelessness offered three stipulations: provision of up to \$80,000 in rental assistance with 3 months of temporary housing, a request of Lower Wacker building owners to provide 15 jobs for displaced residents, and that the gates not be locked until an agreement between the Coalition, the residents, the city, and property owners could be reached. According to Paul Cogan, spokesperson for the Chicago Building Owners Association that represented the Lower Wacker businesses, more than 70 of the estimated 80 people had been put in shelter. However, for whatever reason this number could not be confirmed and, further, the estimate was disputed by the CCH.<sup>75</sup> The city's complacency in aggravating conditions on the street for the unhoused are not without precedent nor did it occur in isolation.<sup>76</sup> The combination of public housing and homelessness publications has thus far

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<sup>73</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. "Homeless Locked Out From Lower Wacker." Spring 1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

<sup>74</sup> Richards, Cindy and Diane Struzzi, Tribune Staff Writers. 1999, Jan 29. "LOWER WACKER TO SHUT ITS GATES ON HOMELESS FENCES TO BE LOCKED; OPPONENTS PLAN VIGIL": [NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/lower-wacker-shut-gates-on-homeless-fences-be/docview/418759088/se-2>. Reporting from the *Tribune* confirmed that business owners had paid the city from \$500 to \$7,000 in property allocation permits, granting them legal authority to remove the residents from the sidewalks on Lower Wacker.

<sup>75</sup> Anthony Burke Boylan, Tribune Staff Writer. 1999, Jan 3. "LOWER WACKER LOCKOUT BEGINS; HOMELESS LEAVE": [NORTHWEST FINAL, NW EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune*, 3. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/lower-wacker-lockout-begins-homeless-leave/docview/418671141/se-2>.

<sup>76</sup> Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 242-248. The displacement of Tranquility City occurred during the early 90s. Encampment residents were relocated to the Lathrop Homes, Rockwell Gardens, Washington Park Homes, Wicker Park Apartments. Unfortunately, I could not find any mention of this relocation in public resident publications. This relocation of Tranquility City residents raises the need for further inquiry into the relationships forged or hindered between relocated unhoused residents of Tranquility City and public housing residents on the verge of the CHA's redevelopment. This inquiry would require reexamining the landscape of CHA resident material including earlier publications (in comparison to the *Residents' Journal* which according to the CPL has not been fully digitized nor does the extent of the paper go further back than 1997), Chicago news articles, interviews with veteran activists, and

revealed that these two populations, knew of each other's plight as the city's campaigns continued. Often their resistance to and knowledge of the city's redevelopment schemes was done so in solidarity.

Mary C. Johns offered further insight into the parallel relationship between unhoused people, and the displacement of public housing residents.<sup>77</sup> Johns detailed the complaints of Cabrini residents regarding the vacancies at the property and the presence of unhoused former residents that were doubling-up during the redevelopment crisis. Following a meeting between Cabrini Green residents and the new CHA CEO Phillip Jackson, a resident confronted him. "She said that she was homeless with two children living in someone else's apartment and that she knew of other single parent women with children that were also homeless and living in some of the vacant apartments. She questioned Jackson, as to why apartments were not being leased out." In response, Jackson stated, "My goal is to have no ready apartment sitting vacant for more than a week." The meaning of vacancy is obscured by the accounts of current Cabrini tenants who knew that there were people (former residents and likely people that had not been CHA tenants) squatting in vacant units. Therefore, the true number of vacant units at this time can't be officially determined. Vacancy is further complicated by the fact that CHA relocation policy included the temporary relocation of public housing residents from other sites into vacant units.<sup>78</sup>

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if available CHA records and press releases related to their involvement in the negotiation process between the city of Chicago and Tranquility City.

<sup>77</sup> Johns, Mary C. "The New CHA Board." *Residents' Journal*, August 1999. Volume 3, Number 6.

<sup>78</sup> An example of this can be seen in the accounts of residents of the 4525 S. Federal building in the Robert Taylor Homes. Though this example is later in the history of CHA redevelopment (post-Plan for Transformation), its relevance is appropriate to note here. Joyce Smothers was a resident in this particular building of Robert Taylor and she was told that if she did not qualify for Section 8 and or could find a suitable property on the private rental market, that she and similar residents would be relocated to the Hilliard or Dearborn Homes as a temporary relocation. Upon visiting the Hilliard Homes with Venkatesh and *Residents' Journal* reporter Beauty Turner (also a resident of Robert Taylor), the façade of the building was marked with busted windows and obvious signs of general disrepair and vacancy. At this time, the relocation was set to take place in a month, with little information on CHA efforts to rehabilitate vacant property. Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi, and Larry Kamerman. *Dislocation*. [S.I.]: Alladi Group, 2005, 41:38-42:35.

Essentially, the CHA was not addressing the total summation of vacancies and their state of disrepair and was rather shifting a population of their tenants around the city for their convenience, keeping public housing residents in a constant state of housing insecurity.

### **State of Homelessness Before the Plan for Transformation 1990-2000**

To refocus and transition this discussion, the following material concerns the state of homelessness within the context of the conditions of social spending, redevelopment, and displacement before the Plan for Transformation.

U.S. House Representative Charles Hayes cited a 1991 report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors that found that more and more municipal governments across the country recognize homelessness as a growing problem.<sup>79</sup> Hayes questioned the culpability of the federal government in the alleviation of this issue. Federal policy during the early 90s and continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed a shift that included the scaling back of social welfare with a concurrent reduction of the governmental role in housing citizens. Critiquing conservative administrations, Hayes stated, “Instead of approaching this crisis head on providing adequate funding and direct assistance, the president and the secretary of housing and urban development are trying to “empower” public housing residents through tenant management and home ownership enticements.” Though the empowerment of public housing residents may be a justified cause on its own, the initiation of later redevelopment schemes and the subsequent creation of the housing affordability belies this call to action. During the early and middle 1980s, “...there was a 5.5 percent reduction in the number of dwellings renting from under \$200. Additionally, the proportion of households paying at least 60 percent of their income for rent

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<sup>79</sup> Roig, Carlos. 2006, Apr 17 "Last of Robert Taylor Homes to Come Down." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 3. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/last-robert-taylor-homes-come-down/docview/2577495318/se-2>.

increased from about 13.6 percent to 22.2 percent.”<sup>80</sup> The disproportionate amount of income eaten up by rent also indicates changes in the availability of secure employment, meaning livable wages, provision of benefits, and even union representation. Because of these factors the amount of expendable cash for sustained housing security diminished.<sup>81</sup> Inflation of housing costs partnered with stagnation of wages are two prefaces to the creation of homelessness as an increasingly visible municipal phenomenon.

In an effort to define the severity of homelessness, *Defender* reporter Chinta Strausberg detailed an announcement of a municipal hearing on homelessness through an interview with homeless advocate Reverend Derby Tillis.<sup>82</sup> Tillis disputed the city’s estimate of 5,000 unhoused Chicagoans. Strausberg did not provide any sense of the methodology undertaken by the city to count the unhoused, a problem that permeates socio-historical research of the unhoused even today. Furthermore definitions and demographics of homelessness were not clearly defined, meaning that public officials, academics, and advocates may come to different conclusions about the severity of the problem.<sup>83</sup> Tillis demonstrated his own skepticism at the city of Chicago’s

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<sup>80</sup> According to housing surveys conducted in Chicago by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the median gross rents for household renters in metropolitan Chicago was \$506 a month. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1993. *American housing survey for the Chicago Metropolitan Area in 1991*. Current Housing Reports.

<sup>81</sup> Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 130.

<sup>82</sup> Strausberg, Chinta. 1994, Jan 17 "Up to 40,000 Homeless in City?" *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 22. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/up-40-000-homeless-city/docview/2545674000/se-2>.

<sup>83</sup> The flawed but widely cited HUD Point-In-Time Count was not a statistical measurement for the unhoused until 2005. Until that point researchers and advocates were relying on their own methodology and foci to isolate certain sections of the unhoused population. The following studies were conducted roughly around the time of Strausberg’s article, and they provide a sense of context for the city and Tillis’ estimations. These studies have their own flaws but present two attempts to estimate the severity of the unhoused population. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Youth Committee. *Alone After Dark: A Survey of Homeless Youth in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 1993, 3. The CCH conducted this study in 1993. The summary findings operate on independent research and interviews of nearly 200 unhoused children experiencing different levels of housing security. Included in their consideration is the fact that in 1993 there were over 32,000 children in foster care contextualized by decreases in funding for the Department of Children and Family Services, which suggest that without continued federal funding, many of these children may age out and be on the street. For additional estimations of the unhoused population, see Rossi, Peter H. *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

count “I know it is more than 5,000 because who knows how to find all of them?” Though counting the unhoused is a difficult undertaking which may inherently leave out a variety of contributing factors, Tillis suggested that the city was not accounting for a number of locations where the unhoused congregate, including abandoned buildings and suburban locations. Regardless of the methods of ascertaining the gravity of the issue, Tillis and the city both realized that visibility of the unhoused was becoming an issue worth further consideration.

Lower Wacker has consistently been an indicator of the prominence of homelessness in Chicago and it should be understood as a sign of the increased visibility of the unhoused in this period. Ethan Michaeli, a staff writer for the *Defender* before his time at the *Residents' Journal* sought to humanize the residents of Lower Wacker.<sup>84</sup> Michaeli put forth the account of Calvin Hill, a former Lower Wacker resident that found solace and a sense of freedom on the streets, as opposed to the controlling environments of shelter life. “You live in a controlled environment where you’re told to use personal initiative to get yourself on your feet but someone is telling you when to eat, when to sleep and when to go to the bathroom.” Hill explained.” The experience of living on Lower Wacker may seem intolerable to many, but to others like Hill, Lower Wacker instilled a sense of refuge:

The homeless men on Lower Wacker, Hill learned, gathered well-organized bands: individuals were assigned to stand watch while the others slept; others retrieved surplus food from pizza shops or fast-food restaurants; still others took responsibility for the mentally ill and calmed them down, as well as protected them from those who might take advantage of their disability.

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1989, 65. Two figures are cited using Rossi’s methodology for estimating prevalence and incidence for 1985 and 1986. “Average nightly number of Chicago homeless – 2,020-2,722. Estimate annual number ever homeless – 4,624-6,962. Contextually, Rossi’s study falls outside of the timeline of this paper which may suggest an undercount of where the unhoused was in the early 90s.

<sup>84</sup> Michaeli, Ethan. 1995, Feb 11 "Up from Down Under: After Living on these very Streets, an Outreach Worker shows that a Descent into Lower Wacker Need Not be a One-Way Trip." *Weekend Chicago Defender (1980-2008)*, 5. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/up-down-under/docview/2564557238/se-2>.

Personal accounts of shelter life in comparison to street life are important when considering the creation of the affordability crisis of this historical moment.<sup>85</sup> Community, kinship, and care for a neighbor extend beyond a built structure that defines someone's housing status. Calvin Hill's description of the controlling nature of shelter life complicate understandings of homelessness and street life in this way. Additionally, accounts like this also counter organizations like shelters and the CCH that understandably see the reduction of funding towards shelters and the closing of SRO hotels as the primary base of activism for preventing homelessness and more generally housing insecurity. The accounts of communal organizing on Lower Wacker and in Tranquility City are notably comparable to the resident organizing against public housing displacement in the sense of community building that exists beyond built structures. This phenomenon is explored throughout this discussion.

*Homeward Bound* staff turned this discussion back to the data displaying the intersection of the unhoused and public housing residents in their struggle against housing insecurity, citing the top causes of homelessness as a lack of affordable housing, a lack of decent jobs or sufficient income, and a lack of adequate health and supportive services.<sup>86</sup> Building on Donahue's commentary on the SRO hotels CCH the article stated, "In Chicago, 259,600 low-income renters compete for 142,000 low-income apartments. 117,200 renters cannot find an affordable place to

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<sup>85</sup> Beck, Elizabeth, and Pamela Twiss. *The Homelessness Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2018, 61-62. Difficulties of shelter life do not come solely from the sense of being constantly monitored. They also point out the flaws of street life. With some unhoused people dealing with a plethora of physical and mental health complications, shelter can be difficult, but the streets may be worse. Beck was a shelter volunteer for the Community for Creative Non-Violence and worked with a woman named Ann. Ann had a particular case of Tourette's syndrome which made longer stays in shelters difficult. However, Beck cannot help but imagine the conditions of street life for a woman with consistent uncontrolled vocal outbursts. Alternatively, the experience of Calvin Hill finding refuge on the street is not without precedent.

<sup>86</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. "The Facts Behind the Faces – Homelessness: The Causes and the Facts." Summer 1996. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

live.”<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, SRO hotels in Chicago, “...are being destroyed at a rate of 700 units per year. The total number of units currently available is 13,554 compared to the 52,130 units available in 1973. Within 20 years, the entire stock of SROs will be eliminated if this rate of loss continues.”<sup>88</sup> In addition to reduction in SRO unit stock, CCH staff writers emphasized compound the fact that the current (1996) waiting period for CHA housing was 5 ½ years – 10 years for Section 8 vouchers. The combination of these factors underscores the city of Chicago’s lack of interest in providing affordable housing in the mid-late 90s, indicative of a previously mentioned trend of de-populating low-income people from Chicago. Real estate and developers sought to capitalize on the city’s desire to make the built environment a space of investment by replacing SROs and public housing with unaffordable housing marketed as mixed-income communities. The CCH, though a non-profit activist organization dedicated to advocating for the unhoused, saw this combined assault as a looming threat that could see the unhoused population balloon with the addition of displaced public housing residents.

The envelopment of public housing residents into the unhoused population is not simply a matter of residents losing their housing. This process also had profound implications for the demographics of the unhoused population. Julie Dworkin’s issue of *The Facts Behind the Faces* acted as an advocate’s commentary on the sociological trend in unhoused populations toward the end of the century, noting transitions towards a homeless population that features a younger

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<sup>87</sup> A footnote on this statistic is provided in the citation section of this issue in the *Facts Behind the Faces* series. This measure was gathered from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 1995. Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 282. Tranquility City hut dweller Howard recounted about disagreements and threats of violence in the encampment, “If I was in my hut and I was having problems, like for example someone was talking about pouring gasoline on my hut. I started whistling for Jim and Jim will come and assist me along with the other sixteen or seventeen other brothers and we would deal with that problem right then and there.”

<sup>88</sup> Homeward Bound staff cite these measures from a report titled, “SRO Loss in Chicago 1973-1994,” Lakefront SRO Corp.



group of people as well as a group that includes an increasing number of families.<sup>89</sup> Despite a noteworthy difference in the visibility of these unhoused families on the street, Dworkin stated, “40% (32,000) of people who are homeless in Chicago are members of a family. A recent survey in Chicago showed that the average homeless family has 3.81 members.<sup>90</sup> This means that there are 8,400 homeless families with 23,600 children in Chicago. The average length of their homelessness was six months, and 47% had been homeless more than once.” Further Coalition reporting found similar demographic trends in homelessness youth statewide.<sup>91</sup> In addition to the identification of an increase in families and young people within the unhoused population, Dworkin also noted an important nuance to studying housing precarity. That is homelessness that counter to stereotyped perceptions of it, is by no means always a permanent state of presence on the street. It is often a state of housing insecurity that individuals and families fluctuate in and out of. This is due primarily to the availability of shelter space, the luxury of friends and family with extra space (doubling up), and of course the possibility of reentering the private rental market by finding a steady flow of income. Concurrent with this increase in the prominence of unhoused families in Chicago is of course the slated demolitions of public housing complexes throughout the city. “Currently, 18,000 units of public housing are slated for demolition in Chicago, most of which house women and children. There are no reliable plans to either rebuild

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<sup>89</sup> Dworkin, Julie. “The Facts Behind the Faces – It Takes A Home to Raise a Child: The Tragedy of Family Homelessness in Chicago.” Fall 1998. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. For additional consideration of the new face of homelessness, see DePastino, Todd. *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 256-262. Rossi, Peter H. *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 17-34.

<sup>90</sup> Homeward Bound cites a study titled, “Ten Cities: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America,” a survey done by Homes for the Homeless and the Institute for Children and Poverty, 1998.

<sup>91</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. “It Takes A Home to Raise a Child.” Winter 1998-1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. “Due to a marked increase in family homelessness, the average age of a homeless person in the U.S. today is estimated to be just nine years old. Sadly, Illinois has not been spared from this trend, with more than 8,000 homeless families served in state-funded shelters during FY 1997.”

the units or relocate the 42,000 people that are afflicted.” These facts hint at how the demographics of the unhoused population (on the street, in shelters, and doubling-up) likely changed following the last demolitions of Chicago public housing stock that took place in the mid-late 2000s.

Investigative reporting by the *Chicago Tribune* around that time found that shelters in the suburbs were encountering an “—increasing demand for their services.”<sup>92</sup> Suzy Frisch reported that activism addressing homelessness in the Northwest suburbs had been predominately based on a temporary-fix basis, typically a hot meal and a bed for the night. However, shifts in the severity of homelessness encouraged one organization, the Northwest Suburban Public Action to Deliver Shelter, which coordinates 23 emergency shelters, to change their focus. The Northwest Suburban Public Action to Deliver Shelter’s justification for transitioning into more permanent solutions to homelessness culminated in plans for opening temporary housing shelters emphasizing social services, including child care, job training, and referrals for medical care. “The impact of welfare reform, a lack of affordable housing, and few jobs that provide a livable wage keep the pool of the homeless people growing, according to Les Brown, policy director of Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness.” Activists’ transition into more permanent solutions aligned with the growth in severity and visibility of unhoused people on the street and in the shelters in Chicago. This development was therefore a response to a broader withdrawal of public support for the needy on a multitude of fronts, and in Chicago this development had particular significance.

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<sup>92</sup> Frisch, Suzy. 1999, Jan 19 "NORTHWEST SUBURBS TAKE ON HOMELESSNESS GROUPS ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR PERMANENT SOLUTIONS": [NORTHWEST SPORTS FINAL, NW EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/northwest-suburbs-take-on-homelessness-groups/docview/418787526/se-2>.

It is important at this juncture, to describe the shelter stock in the city of Chicago, especially considering that suburban shelters and non-profit organizations were seeing increasing demand for their services, perhaps suggesting that there were inadequacies with inner-city homelessness services.

*Homeward Bound* addressed this issue in the summer 1999 edition of the Facts Behind the Faces, in its discussion of the faults of shelter housing in Chicago.<sup>93</sup> First, it is important to clarify that there is not a universal type of shelter, but rather four distinct shelter types:

- 1) Overnight shelters: are only open at night, serve immediate needs of the homeless; 2) Warming centers: similar to overnight shelters, but these are only open in Chicago between October and April; 3) Transitional shelters are often geared to a specific subgroup within the homeless population (battered women for instance); 4) Second-stage housing provides alternative low-income housing in individual apartments, usually for up to two years. Additionally, social services and case management are provided to help people make a transition to more stable permanent housing. Housing fees are often charged at about one-third of the person's income.

The shelter system is a temporary fix to housing insecurity. For one, this makes sense because of the varied situation and intermittent experience a family or individual may have with homelessness. Furthermore, some of the shelter types include assistance programs that encourage the unhoused to better their socio-economic statuses, which could prevent future bouts of homelessness. Alternatively, however, the shelter infrastructure can still be viewed as inadequate. In Chicago, 15,361 people with duplications were denied shelter because of a lack of bed space. 9,874 people who were denied shelter were individuals in families (the largest percentage of people turned away). Annually in Chicago between April and October the shelter system loses 770 beds due to the closing of winter warming centers.<sup>94</sup> Specific limitations on

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<sup>93</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. "The Facts Behind the Faces – Homelessness: The Causes and Facts." Summer 1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

<sup>94</sup> Figures in this issue of *Homeward Bound* were cited from the Chicago Department of Human Services FY1998, Homeless Services Program Annual Report.

shelter types are in fact a detriment to the unhoused population. Furthermore, with the destruction of public housing and SRO hotels the unhoused population will only grow as the low-income housing stock is drastically reduced. This leaves the city of Chicago and other municipal governments with a critical decision. Does the city organize to cease redevelopment schemes that reduce the housing stock available to low and extremely low-income residents potentially exposing them to homelessness? Or does the city make much needed improvements to an inadequate shelter system?<sup>95</sup>

Where were the unhoused to safely reside if shelters were inadequate (not permanent) and the reduction in low-income housing substantially squeezed the rental market? The safety of the unhoused on the street was a consistent issue, despite community and solidarity that forms among the unhoused, for example the experiences of Calvin Hill on Lower Wacker or Howard in Tranquility City. Not only were the conditions of living on the streets of Chicago unforgiving, especially in the colder months and during the city's infamous heat waves, but broader housed society could also be unforgiving. John Donahue reported on violent crimes committed against the unhoused in a piece titled "Burning Bridges."<sup>96</sup> Cleotha Mitchell "...fell asleep on a park bench on the northwest side of Chicago. While he slept, someone doused him with a flammable chemical and set him on fire." Donahue presents the question of whether this was an isolated incident or part of a more disturbing societal disregard for those sleeping on the street. The attack

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<sup>95</sup> Beck, Elizabeth, and Pamela Twiss. *The Homelessness Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2018, 209-211. Critiques from policy officials, advocates, academics emerged in the early 90s within the context of the new Clinton administration. Shelters were expensive to maintain from the standpoint of policy makers. From the perspective of academics at this time, including Dennis P. Culhane (lead researcher involved in the launch of HUDs Annual Homelessness Assessment Report in 2007), shelters were seen as temporary fixes to broader intersectional socio-economic issues. Culhane further questioned their efficacy, wondering if they played a role in "ending, promoting or reproducing residential instability." Culhane, Dennis P. "The Organization and Utilization of the Shelter System in Philadelphia: Estimating Length of Stay and Turnover." *Journal of Health and Social Policy* 4(4), 55-78.

<sup>96</sup> Donahue, John. "Burning Bridges." Fall 1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

on Mitchell was not committed in isolation. In a *Chicago Tribune* article, Doreen Meneely a resident near the area where Mitchell was attacked claimed that she had heard of similar attacks before.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, according to earlier reporting done by *Homeward Bound*, another unhoused man by the name of Joseph Gould, a *Streetwise* vendor died after being shot by CPD officer Gregory Becker in 1997.<sup>98</sup> Such violence callous violence against the unhoused was certainly related to the condition of street homelessness and the sense of ‘placelessness’ inherently attached to unhoused city dwellers. If you do not belong here, why should we care about you? And, though contexts are different, the threat of housing insecurity that public housing residents faced following displacement, was fueled on racial and class-based stigma that in the cases of Ann and her family and Annie Ricks, were life-threatening.<sup>99</sup>

Homeward Bound staff in fall 1999 discussed the city’s role in stigmatizing the unhoused, continuing the examination of neglect and stigma against housing insecure people.<sup>100</sup> The article cited some popular means of criminalizing behaviors associated with homelessness:

- 1) Enacting and/or enforcing restrictions on homeless people’s use of public space for activities such as sleeping or sitting; 2) Enacting and/or enforcing restrictions on panhandling; 3) Conducting police sweeps to remove homeless people from specific areas; 4) Targeting homeless people for selective enforcement of generally applicable laws.

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<sup>97</sup> Wilson, Terry and Ashley Bach. 1999, Jul 15 "SLEEPING MAN IS SET AFIRE ON WEST SIDE PARK BENCH," *Chicago Tribune*, 2.  
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/sleeping-man-is-set-afire-on-west-side-park-bench/docview/418790814/se-2>.

<sup>98</sup> Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 248. The story of Joseph Gould was mentioned in conversation with the death of one of the Tranquility City leaders Dwayne Snyder.

<sup>99</sup> For further reading on violence and relocation, see the *Residents’ Journal* series “Violent Moves,” Mary C. Johns and Beauty Turner.

<sup>100</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. “The Facts Behind the Faces – The Criminalization of Homelessness: When Survival Becomes a Crime.” Fall 1999. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

The “concerted effort” to decrease the visibility of the unhoused manifests also in the application of municipal law.<sup>101</sup> For example, the Chicago Municipal Vagrancy Ordinance 8-4-100, defined “—all persons lodging in or found in the right-time in sheds, barns, or unoccupied buildings or lodging in the open-air, and not giving a good account of themselves” as “vagabonds” subject to a misdemeanor.” This section of the Municipal Code was repealed following controversy and activism by advocates for the unhoused. However, restrictive spatial policy and practice by Chicago law enforcement has not subsided.<sup>102</sup>

At a pivotal moment in Chicago’s redevelopment of its built environment, *Residents’ Journal* reporting refocused the discussion of spatial discrimination and displacement amid the looming Plan for Transformation.<sup>103</sup> Andre Robinson converged the plight of homelessness and public housing by combining discussions among activists and public housing residents. Robinson stated that throughout the city of Chicago there are approximately 15,000 homeless people in various locations including temporary housing in vacant CHA units. Citing the same report included in *Homeward Bound* article, Robinson noted the massive shortage of 4.4 million affordable housing units nationwide.<sup>104</sup> In an effort to respond to the CHA’s proposed Plan for Transformation which outlined the demolition of thousands of public housing units, administrator of Catholic Charities Michael M. Boland, stated that the destruction of public

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<sup>101</sup> See appendix for data gathered from the Out of Sight Out of Mind Study by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty for a list of illegal behaviors of homelessness in American cities, image 3.

<sup>102</sup> Lebrun, Sylvan and Alice Yin. 2024, Jul 18 "City Clears Major Homeless Camp Ahead of Convention: Many Residents at Dan Ryan Site Left with Nowhere to Turn." *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/city-clears-major-homeless-camp-ahead-convention/docview/3082111533/se-2>. I wanted to include a reference to this story as it is one of the most recent instances of unhoused displacement and criminalizing homelessness in the city of Chicago in addition to the Fall 2024 displacement campaigns of unhoused encampments in Humboldt Park. What is vitally important about these stories goes beyond a simple criminalizing of survival strategies of the unhoused but also the spontaneous application and convenience of municipal authority to move the unhoused when they please.

<sup>103</sup> Robinson, Andre. “CHA in Transition – Catholic Church to CHA: Be Careful.” *Residents’ Journal*. December 1999. Volume 4, Number 2.

<sup>104</sup> “In Search of Shelter,” a report from the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities.

housing had “made affordable housing a crisis.” Notably both the *Residents Journal* and *Homeward Bound* cited the statistics and included opinions of Catholic Charities’ representatives in their reporting. Catholic Charities had been a long time representative in issues of inequality, and the organization’s arguments demonstrate the linkages between the plight of public housing residents during the initiation of the Plan for Transformation and the plight of the homelessness as the affordability crisis is being created. The threat of displacement and deeper forms of housing insecurity brought by redevelopment for these two groups of Chicagoans only increased in intensity following the Plan for Transformation’s launch.

The following section seeks first to historicize the conditions of social spending and welfare, redevelopment, displacement, and the resulting status of homelessness after the Plan for Transformations began. Second, through this examination comparative analysis can be drawn by identifying continuations, alleviations, or exacerbations of the conditions identified in the previous section.

### **Social Spending and State of Welfare Following the Launch of the Plan for Transformation 2000-2010**

The transfer of money formerly in the CHA budget to other municipal programs is an important consideration in this period. As Mary C. Johns reported in *Residents’ Journal* in 2001: “Since 1999, CHA has been transitioning funds for its public, educational, sports and recreational, and job-training programs to the Chicago Police Department, Chicago Department on Aging, the Chicago Board of Education, the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) and the Chicago Park District.”<sup>105</sup> Budget diversification, in a manner of speaking, was happening not only locally but nationally as well. The 1996 Welfare Bill discussed by

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<sup>105</sup> Johns, Mary C. “City Gets CHA Funds.” June-July 2001. *Residents Journal*. Volume 5. Number 5.

*Homeward Bound* and *Residents' Journal* staff, for instance, marked a significant scaling back of federal expenditures allotted for social welfare. The justification for this decrease was that the financial slack would be absorbed by welfare recipients' efforts to gain permanent and sustainable employment, among other avenues including encouraging municipal and state responsibility for welfare spending with block grants. However, an obvious result was that there was inherently less capital available for public housing maintenance, community programs, and perhaps even tenant relocation – a example of the city's decoupling from the provision of housing security for low-income residents.

While the CHA was diversifying its budgets and shifting funds to city expenses external to housing, a synchronous development of transferring welfare services outside of CHA developments was taking place. Mary C. Johns reported that services including employment agencies, relocation assistance including Section 8 application assistance, childcare, GED classes, after school programs and drug and alcohol abuse assistance were going to be physically clustered in six geographic clusters servicing 27 CHA properties.<sup>106</sup> The clusters were operated by CHA residents themselves in partnership with a variety of organizations including non-profits, notably UJIMA and United Way. From the outset this effort seemed beneficial in that residents were getting services that they were not receiving before, either through ill-funded/equipped municipal lead ventures or lack of qualification. Alternatively, within the context of the Plan for Transformation and the welfare-to-work initiatives, the concentration of social and relocation services can be interpreted as a preliminary step in weaning CHA residents off the welfare rolls. Concentrated service would entail longer wait times and limited resources.

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<sup>106</sup> Johns, Mary C. "CHA Family Service Connectors." August-September 2001. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 5. Number 5.



Outside of the CHA, welfare agency caseloads across seven states in the Midwest decreased significantly following the welfare reform bill of 1996, according to the study by the Joyce Foundation in Chicago. Furthermore, of the 112 agencies included in the study, \$2.5 billion dollars had been cut from their state budgets.”<sup>107</sup> But a decrease in caseloads did not automatically mean successful transitions of former welfare recipients to gainful employment, Johns asserted. In a *Residents’ Journal* article, she further contextualized the decrease in welfare cases, citing an Illinois Poverty Summit Report finding while the Chicago poverty level had decreased, poverty had increased in surrounding suburbs and throughout the rest of the state of Illinois.<sup>108</sup> Welfare reform, increasing rents, and stagnating wages with decreases in gainful employment had created an urban periphery that was increasingly restricting access in and around the center of the city to the urban poor.<sup>109</sup> The other half of this equation was the city of Chicago’s redevelopment schemes, which increased rents and ensured the demolition of the last vestiges of affordable housing. In an interview with Johns, Sid Mohn, president of the Heartland Alliance, argued that “—the relocation of residents under the Chicago Housing Authority’s \$1.5 billion, 10-year Plan for Transformation also contributes to the increase of poverty in some

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<sup>107</sup> Joyce Foundation, “Effects of Welfare Reform in Seven Midwest States,” April 24, 2002 in Johns, Mary C. “Welfare Reform: Lost in Space.” June-July 2002. *Residents’ Journal*. Volume 6. Number 4.

<sup>108</sup> Frisch, Suzy. 1999, Jan 19 “NORTHWEST SUBURBS TAKE ON HOMELESSNESS GROUPS ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR PERMANENT SOLUTIONS”: [NORTHWEST SPORTS FINAL, NW EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/northwest-suburbs-take-on-homelessness-groups/docview/418787526/se-2>. It’s appropriate to turn back to this previous article identifying increasing demands for services at shelters serving the unhoused.

<sup>109</sup> Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 177-178. In his examination of redevelopment and low-income population displacement, Wright states, “The production of officially defined pleasure and refuse spaces is contingent upon the spatial dispersion and concentration of poor populations and the privileging of wealthier, employed segments of society. In this manner city development is not development for all citizens, but only for those who know their place, those who are part of the market economy. To be homeless in the new hypermodern city is to be both “no place” and to be forced into a refuse place.” Wright’s research primarily deals with the (lack of) place of the unhoused in the built environment. However, within the context of Chicago, the lack of place of public housing residents, or rather the manipulation of place and its use in redevelopment renders those not fitting the mold, as useless in the reconceptualized built environment.

suburban areas. But he said there was no data to date as to how much of a factor the CHA Transformation really is.” The amalgamated factors of changing socio-spatial and worsening economic conditions relating to public assistance in the city of Chicago were creating the precursors for mass peripherization of the poor by reimagining who the city should be for. Redevelopment had not quite made its mark on the built environment. The result of the Plan for Transformation had yet to be fully realized. However, fears like Mohn’s – that a decentralization of poverty and perhaps a permanent state of housing insecurity was at the plan’s core – permeated through the minds of advocates and public housing residents.

### **Redevelopment Following the Launch of the Plan for Transformation 2000-2010**

Despite consistent resistance to planned demolitions and resident concerns that redevelopment was a proxy term for displacement, the CHA announced a massive overhaul of public housing with the Plan for Transformation. “The city is guaranteeing new or rehabbed housing for every current lease compliant resident and is seeking to institute tougher lease policies to make public housing safer.”<sup>110</sup> Facing skepticism and mistrust from organizations like the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, CHA Chairperson Sharon Gist Gilliam responded – “At some point folks will have to listen to their resident leadership. At some point folks will have to read stuff we send them where we point out the choices [replacement housing options]. We cannot continue to be everyone’s mother and father.” Gilliam’s infantilizing comments minimized almost a decade of haphazard management in the CHA and less than satisfactory relocation experiences from former tenants prior to the announcement of the plan. Assurances for

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<sup>110</sup> Garza, Melita Marie. 2000, Jan 07 "CHA GIVES GO-AHEAD TO \$1.5 BILLION OVERHAUL OF PUBLIC HOUSING": [CHICAGO SPORTS FINAL EDITION]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1-2, C.1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/cha-gives-go-ahead-1-5-billion-overhaul-public/docview/419057342/se-2>.

relocation assistance and prevention of homelessness were made previous to the plan. Why would residents trust the CHA now?

Housing advocates like Reverend Calvin Morris countered Gilliam's downplaying of residents' mistrust of the CHA, telling the *Chicago Tribune*: To believe the housing authority will now take into consideration the concerns of residents when it has not done so in 50 years is straining the imagination, he said."<sup>111</sup> The *Tribune's* story came after the ouster of CHA CEO Phillip Jackson, who came under fire from multiple organizations for the structure and launch of the Plan for Transformation. Morris noting the high value of property where most of the public housing was located, was skeptical that former public housing residents would receive better replacement housing. "There is no way for those persons now residing in public housing to get one for one housing. The figures don't add up," he said. His skepticism is further validated by the proportions of new and rehabilitated units that were afforded for former public housing residents in new developments. To accommodate market-rate tenants in mixed-income communities, public housing resident makeup was in some cases scaled back to 30 percent while other developments were fortunate to have a 50 public housing percent makeup with 30 percent market-rate and 20 percent "affordable."<sup>112</sup> Therefore, displacement of public housing residents was inevitable. Seeing the writing on the wall regarding the depopulation of low-income Chicagoans, housing advocate and Cabrini Green resident Dierdre Brewster stated, "We're no

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<sup>111</sup> Ruklick, Joe. 2000, May 08 "Opponents Dissect CHA Plan." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 3. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/opponents-dissect-cha-plan/docview/2570942880/se-2>.

<sup>112</sup> "The new developments are designed for mixed-income residents. Only about a third of the residents will be public housing tenants from current CHA projects. Another third will be subsidized, moderate-income residents and the remaining third will be market-rate buyers or renters." Figures quoted from Handley, John. 2004, Aug 22 "Redeveloping Public Housing ; CHA Aims for Integration, Not Isolation, in Demolishing and Replacing High-Rises: [Chicago Final Edition]." *Chicago Tribune*, 1-16.1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/redeveloping-public-housing-cha-aims-integration/docview/420298051/se-2>.

longer talking about the middle and low-income residents of Chicago. Chicago's interest now is higher income people. The city is now turning into a place for the rich. It's a land grab." Morris and Brewster were but two voices of many who saw the threat the plan implied. Amid a tight rental market and decreasing stock of affordable housing all over the city, the possibility of homelessness was real for critics of the Plan for Transformation.

However, not all Chicagoans shared Morris' or Brewster's critique of the CHA nor their alarm toward the implications of the Plan for Transformation. It is important to contrast the critiques of the CHA and its redevelopment initiatives with Chicago voices that supported the CHA's plans, particularly the Plan for Transformation because of its fiduciary and destructive scale. Dr. Leon Finney Jr., pastor of the Metropolitan Apostolic Community Church and public housing developer, echoed Gilliam's calls for a redevelopment of character of public housing residents. Finney was quoted on tenant relocations by the *Defender*:

Many of these families are now living in clean, efficient gang- and drug-free homes. We know from this experience, that the private housing market is receptive to renting to "good tenants" and has done so without "fanfare." We also know that no property owner in his or her right mind is going to, knowingly, rent to a family of gang bangers and dope dealers.<sup>113</sup>

In terms of follow-through of the Plan for Transformation, Finney emphasizes the responsibility that residents had to undertake for this transformation to be successful. The transformation cannot be simply an alteration of the physical buildings, but it also inherently required an alteration in tenant behavior that Finney Jr. assumed to be incongruous with the CHA's hopes. "Clean up your act, get rid of the drugs, pay your bills, get a job, go to school, get good grades, get out of the gangs, and be a good neighbor; the free ride is over!," Finney concluded. Such

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<sup>113</sup> Ruklick, Joe. 2000, May 08 "Opponents Dissect CHA Plan." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 3. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/opponents-dissect-cha-plan/docview/2570942880/se-2>

blanket assumptive statements about the lives and criminal nature of public housing residents are deeply problematic. Moreover, the estimations of public housing residents' lifestyles, or perhaps 'habits,' run parallel to landlord and neighbor discrimination toward these people.<sup>114</sup> The market-rate resident testimony in the documentary film *70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green* provides more concrete examples of the assumptions about former public housing residents' behavior. Jeff Brewster was one of many residents who expressed similar thoughts similar to those of Finney:

As far as you know, market rate people you know understanding what the whole idea of this project is which is to help diversify the neighborhood and bring up the people who are on welfare by seeing what people who aren't on welfare live like, and what the goals are. Uh, some people get it. Some people really understand that they have to set an example for people who don't know what it's like to earn a living and to be proud of yourself and be proud of what you have.<sup>115</sup>

The redevelopment of public housing, specifically the intrusion of market-rate residents into communities of lower-income Chicagoans, was a moralized socio-economic uplift. The redevelopment would reshape the citizens, black and low-income, into an image that the city wanted to present. Any former public housing residents who couldn't fit that mold or deviated slightly from it, or the sensibilities of market rate residents, would ultimately be forced to leave, either to suburbs or perhaps face homelessness.

Before the establishment of these restrictive neighborhoods, however, the CHA was still in the demolition stage for several public housing properties, many of which were still occupied.

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<sup>114</sup> An exploration of landlord discrimination is more appropriate in the displacement section. However, as a brief reference, see Popkin, Susan J and Mary K. Cunningham. "CHAC Section 8 Program: Barriers to Successful Leasing Up." April 1999. The Urban Institute. Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, 23-26. Even prior to the Plan for Transformation, former CHA tenants were discriminated for family size and age makeup, race (though Popkin and Cunningham's study did not find large/disproportionate amounts of overt racial discrimination, I think that statistical proof of racism potentially misses the mark in the sense that it is difficult to quantitatively show. Furthermore, landlords already had an easy discriminatory lever to pull on public housing residents, which was the very fact that they lived in CHA property, which in and of itself has inherent racial overtones.), and discrimination on the basis that former residents had Section 8 (government backed) vouchers.

<sup>115</sup> Bezalel, Ronit, New Day Films, and Kanopy. *70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green*. [San Francisco, California, USA]: Kanopy Streaming, 2018, 44:55-45:22.

Mary C. Johns gave voice to residents' complaints about a lack of follow-through with the Plan for Transformation's promise to provide steady maintenance on remaining occupied units.<sup>116</sup> The complaints amounted to a threat of litigation against the CHA by the Central Advisory Council and *Dorothy Gautreaux vs. The Chicago Housing Authority* attorney Alexander Polikoff. Despite CHA reassurances that expenditures on maintaining "occupied" units will continue,

We [CAC and Polikoff] are concerned that in its understandable desire to preserve scarce capital dollars, CHA may be consolidating buildings too rapidly and may be pushing buildings too rapidly and may be pushing buildings to emergency status prematurely by 'starving' them of maintenance, before CHA is truly prepared to provide compassionate relocation for all the families forced to move, they wrote.

Understandable desire to preserve capital dollars aside, the CHA had made promises per the Plan for Transformation and earlier redevelopment initiatives to keep CHA units to code and provide relocation assistance in others.<sup>117</sup> Now after the launch of the plan the CHA reneged on that promise in an effort to encourage moves by essentially testing the tolerance of residents to live in conditions of disrepair and neglect. Thus not only was CHA resistant to maintaining occupied units, but development of replacement housing was also behind schedule.

In March of 2003, *Chicago Defender* reporter Thomas Picou provided an overview of city discussion on the progress of the Plan for Transformation, citing construction figures, CHA officials' statements, and critical residents.<sup>118</sup> According to CHA construction figures for 2002, the CHA fell short of its construction and rehabilitation goal (set at 6,193 units) and completed only 4,605. However, the CHA had completed nearly 78 percent of its goal for rehabilitation of 9,400 senior living units. Despite some success, critics "—say rebuilding isn't adequate, the

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<sup>116</sup> Johns, Mary C. "Transforming CHA: Leaders Demand Changes to CHA Plan." April 2001. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 5. Number 2.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. In a letter sent to the CHA by the Central Advisory Council and Polikoff, they reiterate the CHA's declared commitment "to maintain units and relocate residents in a reasonable manner."

<sup>118</sup> Picou, Thomas. "CHA Residents Need Update on Rebuilding Progress." 2003, Mar 18. *Chicago Defender*, 7. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/cha-residents-need-update-on-rebuilding-progress/docview/247086599/se-2>.

tracking system through which CHA follows residents isn't working, city all wants gentrified neighborhoods so middle and upper-income residents are lured to town and that we're in crisis." In response to criticism, CHA Executive Director Terry Peterson stated, "Its [CHA] plan is indeed a bold one. The city and private developers are working together, creating exciting new neighborhoods." But, as Picou noted, "Many of these developers are profiting handsomely." Picou argued that residents should be "reassured" consistently as the plan develops. But if the previous *Residents' Journal* article proved anything in the context of tenant reassurance, it was that the CHA did not care that it was not abiding by legal obligations it had negotiated with tenants. The implementation of the plan was to take preference over concern for former public housing residents' susceptibility to housing insecurity.

Though the CHA seemed unconcerned with resident anxiety, private developers may have foreseen the outcome of the continuing disregard of residents amid the plan. *Tribune* reporter Tara Deering reported on the planned construction of a shelter for displaced Cabrini Green residents and the unhoused.<sup>119</sup> Architect Helmut was approached by the non-profit housing organization Lakefront Supportive Housing to build low-income housing bordering the Cabrini Green public housing complex. Jahn, a visionary architect, can be seen as part of a larger city agenda that sees architecture and aesthetic to be key in neighborhood revitalization. Ald. Walter Burnett was quoted in the *Tribune* supporting the project, saying, "It will attract more developers to the area because they will want to be close to the featured architecture." Whether or not the architecture would be enough to assuage investors from financing development next to

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<sup>119</sup> Deering, Tara. 2004, Jan 14 "World-Class Look for North Side Shelter; Architect Helmut Jahn is Lending His Modernist Vision to a Proposal that would House Former Cabrini-Green Residents and the Homeless": [Chicago Final Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1-1.1.  
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/world-class-look-north-side-shelter-architect/docview/420134844/se-2>.

a low-income housing shelter is uncertain, considering the previous material describing redevelopment as Chicago's reimagining (cleaning up) of its built environment. In addition to architecture, city leaders' hope that a shelter designed by a star architect and located in an up-and-coming neighborhood could erase stigma against the homeless and low-income residents. The plan affords that "Half of the units will go to the city's homeless while the other half will be reserved for public housing residents, many of whom will be residents displaced by the demolition of much of the Chicago Housing Authority's Cabrini Green development." This article is significant in a number of ways. For one, the combination of former public housing residents and the unhoused living in the same shelter is primary evidence demonstrating that although these two groups only dissimilar, the city viewed them as similar, perhaps some sort of mendicant population that needed to be warehoused. Moreover, the setting aside of space for Cabrini residents was particularly disturbing in that the justification for the shelter was in part planning on permanent displacement of former residents. Additionally, the idea that this shelter was to be built on the Near North side, nearby the developing neighborhoods replacing Cabrini Green, signified that developers and the city saw the issue of housing first as an issue of integration and aesthetic. In this process, unsightly and crime filled public housing high rise structures had to be torn down. In their stead, mixed income communities were to be established, drawing in middle- and upper-income residents while still affording a portion of the new development and rehabilitated units to displaced public housing residents. As a final addition, in the face of criticism and activist outrage, more housing explicitly for low-income people would need to be established, but without any physical/visual demonstration of it being housing for low-income residents to keep a neighborhood aesthetic that had been propagated since the launch



of redevelopment of public housing areas. This was not confined to shelters as supplementary housing but also to the physical design of buildings within mixed income communities.<sup>120</sup>

While private developers and star architects were designing shelters for the unhoused and displaced public housing residents, two overarching questions continued to surround the procedure of the Plan for Transformation, namely will public housing residents ever return and what was causing delays in the plan's initiation? The *Tribune* found that, "By 2010 – the original target date for the Plan for Transformation – fewer than half of the 7,500 public housing units to be built in mixed-income developments throughout the city will be finished."<sup>121</sup> Following this article's publication, an article in the *Defender*, voiced CHA's official explanation for delays: "In the annual plan's introductory letter, CHA chairperson Sharon Gist Gilliam and CEO Terry Peterson cite dwindling federal funds, increased construction and labor costs. And the involvement of a larger cast of "public and private partners" as reasons for pushing back the completion date."<sup>122</sup> Plan delays, which according to Gilliam were partially to blame on a

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<sup>120</sup> Roig, Carlos. 2006, Apr 17 "Last of Robert Taylor Homes to Come Down." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 20. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/last-robert-taylor-homes-come-down/docview/2577495318/se-2>. Roig, "The communities to which public housing residents will return – if they ultimately return – will bear no physical resemblance to the dilapidated high-rises of yesterday, and the labels objects attached to them will reflect the changing notions of what communities are supposed to be." Roig cogently describes what I mean when I say that the city, and the CHA as an extension of municipal authority and desire, imposed a new ethic of community building and a new image for the ideal Chicago neighborhood. Roig's reporting along with Deering's examination of city efforts to aestheticize low-income housing is further substantiated by what Bradford Hunt referred to as the physical rendering of public housing as invisible. Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 283, and 286 for a visual representation of rendering invisible the ugliness and low-income associations of public housing. See appendix, Image 4, which depicts the new town homes of the mixed-income West Haven community with the Henry Horner Extension in the background.

<sup>121</sup> Olivo, Antonio. 2006, Sep 28 "CHA Revamp Stifled by Delays ; \$1.6 Billion Project Will Take Until 2015": [Chicago Final Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 3-2C.3. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/cha-revamp-stifled-delays-1-6-billion-project/docview/420509442/se-2>.

<sup>122</sup> Sanchez, Casey. . 2006., Oct 20 "SIX MORE YEARS: CHA PUSHES 'PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION' TO 2015." *Weekend Chicago Defender (1980-2008)*, 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/six-more-years/docview/2572647108/se-2>.

shoring up of federal funds, should invite suspicion as to how federal funds were being spent.<sup>123</sup>

With substantial delays in redevelopment and the construction of replacement housing, where were former public housing residents to live in the meantime? It has been established that many residents successfully received replacement housing via Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers, moved to other CHA developments not under demolition orders, or otherwise found housing themselves. However, the *Residents' Journal's* coverage of numerous stories of successes and outright failures of relocations, and with the growing number of concerns for the reduction in low-income housing stock covered in *Homeward Bound*, the worries over permanent displacement were at this juncture more severe than they had been in earlier news coverage.

### **Displacement After the Launch of the Plan for Transformation 2000-2010**

Redevelopment plans were in disarray following the launch of the CHA's \$1.5 billion plan. Meanwhile residents protested the initiation of the plan and vied for Housing Choice Vouchers. Vouchers were a popular method of relocation both before and after the Plan for Transformation's launch though acceptance was not without drawbacks. This section seeks to determine the pitfalls of the relocation process especially relating to the provisioning of Housing Choice Vouchers. In addition, it will highlight moments of misapplication of CHA policy under the Plan for Transformation in the context of creating housing insecurity for former CHA tenants.

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<sup>123</sup> It is slightly outside of the objectives of this paper, and an examination of CHA corruption warrants its own project, but *Residents' Journal* reporting found that over 60 private contractors enlisted by the CHA had made substantial donations to the 17<sup>th</sup> Ward Democratic Organization. These contractors varied from resident management corporations to relocation service providers and construction companies. Terry Peterson, CHA chief executive officer from 2000-2006 (right in the middle of the Plan for Transformation) was formerly alderman of the 17<sup>th</sup> ward. This disturbing relationship may have been a partial reason for substantial delays, though without deeper investigation, that relationship cannot be determined outright as a direct cause. Residents' Journal and Better Government Association Investigators. "A Questionable Connection." March-April 2005. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 8. Number 2.

In a concerning story about increasing threats of evictions of public housing residents for lease compliance in the spring of 2000, Johns discussed the lack of clarity as to what qualifies as lease compliance. According to the CHA Leaseholder Housing Choice and Relocation Rights Contract,

A resident is considered to be lease compliant if they are current with their rent, or are current in a repayment agreement, have good credit history with utility companies, and have a good history of paying excess utility charges to the CHA, and have no notices of lease violations in the resident's file that document a record of criminal activity or history of disturbances for them or others on the lease.<sup>124</sup>

Despite these tenets which appear to be simple demands of any landlord or property owner, residents and representatives of tenant advocacy groups concurred that lease compliance and subsequent eviction orders were anything but clearly defined. For example, John LeFlore, program coordinator for the Family Access in Rental Housing Program in Metropolitan Tenants-Organization, stated that “Part of the problem around this term of lease compliance is that the housing authority hasn’t done very much to define what that means to folks.” Furthermore, Johns juxtaposed the CHA’s list of lease compliance with a continued stream of tenant complaints about neglected utilities and emergency building maintenance orders that have gone unanswered or unchecked by CHA maintenance. What many tenants feared is that in conjunction with ill-defined lease compliance standards and a lack of CHA assistance with building issues, the CHA was manufacturing the eviction orders to speed up the redevelopment of target buildings. “(The term ‘lease compliant’) could be a tool used to massively evict tenants, to simply make it easier to conduct demolition efforts and to conduct gentrification and the like.”<sup>125</sup> This is an obvious concern, considering that under the Plan for Transformation, the CHA was legally obligated to assist residents in lease-compliance.

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<sup>124</sup> Johns, Mary C. “Transforming CHA: Is CHA Lease Compliant?” April 2000. *Residents’ Journal*.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Evictions were not just a threat to residents living in buildings targeted by CHA redevelopment and demolition. In “Transforming CHA: More Vouchers, Less Housing,” Mary C. Johns reported on issues of lease compliance and evictions of residents that have taken Section 8 vouchers in other parts of the city.<sup>126</sup> She found that several former public housing residents were facing discrimination, and as with the CHA’s neglect of property, there was evidence of disregard for tenant complaints of building issues and inhumane conditions at private market units. For example, “Jane Doe, a mother of 5 currently in the Housing Choice Voucher program, remains homeless because landlords are not willing to rent her due to a past eviction that wasn’t Doe’s fault, Grauer [Brenda Grauer, an attorney with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago] said.” Doe’s experience was part of a larger pattern of circumstances that many former public housing residents were finding themselves in due to disregard for Housing Choice Voucher holders. Johns’ article follows earlier reporting from *Residents’ Journal* about landlord enrichment through their neglect of their properties that house Section 8 voucher holders. This development was happening with nearly 60,000 people on the waitlist for a housing choice voucher, according to Johns. In totality, the creation of housing insecurity crisis through these developments complicates the blame placed on the CHA, in that the replacement of public housing infrastructure with competition in the private housing market inherently created conditions that threatened low-income people with homelessness.

Johns continued her reporting on the inadequacies of vouchering out residents in a bombshell story that revealed the CHA had afforded some the Relocation Rights Contract while others were left out following a late initiation of the contract.<sup>127</sup> The Rights Contract promised by

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<sup>126</sup> Johns, Mary C. “Transforming CHA: More Vouchers, Less Housing.” August 2000. *Residents’ Journal*. Volume 4, Number 5.

<sup>127</sup> Johns, Mary C. “Relocation Rights Contract.” June-July 2002. *Residents’ Journal*. Volume 6, Number 5.

the CHA was not ensured to all relocated residents. The importance of this contract mainly coalesced around resident right to return following CHA rehabilitation of public housing units, giving former residents first choice for units in what would be become mixed income communities. But as Johns reported, “Residents who relocated with Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 voucher or certificate) in late 1999, 2000, and early 2001 did not receive a Relocation Rights Contract because the contract was not put into effect until March 2001.” The question implicitly posed by this haphazard provisioning of Housing Choice Vouchers, is to how the CHA was keeping records of residents that had since been displaced or were going to be displaced from their public housing complexes awaiting the granting of a voucher? For residents that had been displaced, where had they been living in the meantime? “In July 2001, CHA received a \$1.7 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and \$225,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help pay for and automated tracking system for more than 14,000 families as they move into temporary housing.” This program may seem like a catch-all solution to those potentially left out of the Relocation Contract, but as Johns noted, the only assurance that the CHA could offer was that relocated residents would be notified “sometime this year” as to “whether they qualify for the right to return.” Qualification would be completely dependent on lease-compliance and because of the shaky and discriminatory determination of said compliance, the CHA essentially was saying it couldn’t make promises for people who were – by their own fault – left out of the right to return, thereby solidifying the possibilities for permanent displacement and possible homelessness.

During disorganized tenant relocation, Ethan Michaeli reported on the current state of the CHA's Plan for Transformation by examining the amount of time that demolished sites have stayed vacant.<sup>128</sup> 2,300 families have been relocated since the initiation of the Plan and,

Of that number, 1,300 families have moved out public housing using Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers and certificates). 1,000 families have moved into other public housing units. That means that CHA is less than 3% of the way through the Plan for Transformation, though it is 30% of the way through the time frame of the plan. Part of the reason the Plan is moving so slowly, of course, is that the CHA has built almost no replacement housing.

In addition to the lack of replacement housing, the land on which many former public housing complexes stood and the land surveyed for replacement housing development at that point remained empty. For example, the land where housing replacing the Robert Taylor Homes was supposed to go had at that point remained vacant for two years. Also, in the North Kenwood-Oakland neighborhood, "the land where the CHA promised to build replacement units for the Lakefront Properties buildings has been vacant for close to two decades now."<sup>129</sup> With no construction of replacement housing, the haphazard provisioning of Housing Choice Vouchers, and the unrelenting operation of bulldozers at sites marked for demolition, the limitation of housing opportunities was growing. Questions of where former tenants were to live in the meantime were still up in the air. Was everyone going to get a Housing Voucher in time before demolition? Even if they got the voucher would they be able to find a viable apartment in time?

Mary C. Johns addressed these questions in a story on the Sullivan Report, an investigation concerned with tracking CHA resident relocations.<sup>130</sup> It found that public housing residents, Robert Taylor residents who did find relocation housing primarily through Section 8

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<sup>128</sup> Michaeli, Ethan. "Myths and Urban Legends." January-February 2003. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 6. Number 6.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Johns, Mary C. "Report Criticizes CHA Relocations." January-February 2003. January-February 2003. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 6. Number 6.

provisioning, found that the properties their new residences failed viability investigations, resulting in multiple moves.<sup>131</sup> While these failed investigations were occurring and people were having to move repeatedly, the housing market continued to tighten. Director of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless John Donahue expressed concern about this fact in a *Chicago Defender* article.<sup>132</sup> The Sullivan Report, “indicates that the Plan for Transformation of public housing is flawed, Donahue said. ““There’s no housing out there. It shows that housing has to be built before they demolish any more.” Donahue recognized that the tight housing was limited in its ability to afford everyone facing displacement in public housing adequate accommodations. According to the Report, after the initiation of Phase II of redevelopment and demolition under the Plan for Transformation, it was discovered that many former residents wanting relocation through Section 8 vouchers were rushed through the process.<sup>133</sup> If this occurred again in subsequent phases of redevelopment, public housing residents could have very likely ended up on the street. The Sullivan Report subsequently made recommendations to the CHA to prevent this from happening in the later phase of demolitions and redevelopment, including the spacing out

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<sup>131</sup> Popkin, Susan J and Mary K. Cunningham. “CHAC Section 8 Program: Barriers to Successful Leasing Up.” April 1999. The Urban Institute. Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, 30-31. Popkin and Cunningham’s investigation of Section 8 investigations, though prior to the Plan for Transformation, found that multiple residents reported waiting sometimes 60 days to have investigators check the viability of apartments and houses for Section 8 relocation. Additionally, long wait times were reported for receiving results of inspections. Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi, and Larry Kamerman. *Dislocation*. [S.l.]: Alladi Group, 2005. McLaurien’s second relocation is not an anomaly. Robert Taylor residents of 4525 S. Federal were moved several times following displacement on September 30, 2002. Venkatesh’s final credits state that residents Chuck, a single man with a number of physical and mental illnesses, and Lee Lee Henderson, a single mom with kids, were moved several times. Chuck, failing to find a private apartment using Section 8 was initially relocated to the Dearborn Homes. Lee Lee found a house in the Englewood neighborhood but had to move more than once due to Section 8 inspection failures.

<sup>132</sup> Ruldick, Joe. “Where did all the People Go? the Sullivan Report Shows.” 2003, Feb 15. *Chicago Defender* (1980-2008), 1. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/where-did-all-people-go-sullivan-report-shews/docview/2572597688/se-2>.

<sup>133</sup> Kenyatta Ousley-Pratt stated that, “I feel that we were rushed. A lot of people were rushed in to making these decisions as far as taking a Section 8 voucher or staying where they were and just moving to another building.” Bezalel, Ronit, New Day Films, and Kanopy. *70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green*. [San Francisco, California, USA]: Kanopy Streaming, 2018 (36:17 -36:29).

of Section 8 vouchers across the course of a year (2003).<sup>134</sup> For public housing residents it must have seemed only a matter of time before some of them – and they had no idea who given CHA relocation practices – ended up in shelters or on the street.

Ethan Michaeli of *Residents' Journal* was concerned with this possibility, beginning a piece titled “Homeless Not Hopeless” with one of the essential questions that this thesis is attempting to justify inquiry into: That is how many people ended up unhoused by the CHA’s ongoing Plan for Transformation.<sup>135</sup> According to disturbing relocation figures in 2002, “—a significant number of residents ended up outside of the public housing system altogether despite CHA’s responsibility to house every relocated resident.” Of the surveyed 725 relocated families, 298 were moved to different public housing developments that are not slated for demolition or immediate rehabilitation. Two examples are the Dearborn and parts of the Harold L. Ickes Homes. 374 former residents attained Housing Choice Vouchers and moved into the private rental market. 27 were moved into what the CHA is referring to as “unsubsidized housing,” (CHA claims that many of these people opted out of CHA residency while tenant testimony points to the contrary) while another 26 residents were evicted, disappeared, or died. The CHA’s categorization of those that ended up in “un-subsidized” housing is made clear with the experience of Lobeta Holt, a former resident of the Robert Taylor Homes who Michaeli highlighted. “Holt was forced to stay on her aunt’s couch after she was denied a Housing Choice Voucher and CHA was unable to find an apartment in another development accessible to people with disabilities [Holt carries an oxygen tank].” Although the overwhelming majority of residents found housing in considerably secure sites, the mere existence of those who fell outside

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<sup>134</sup> Robert Taylor residents at 4525 S. Federal were given 180 days to apply for Section 8 vouchers, find apartments, and await inspections. Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi, and Larry Kamerman. *Dislocation*. [S.l.]: Alladi Group, 2005.

<sup>135</sup> Michaeli, Ethan. “Homeless Not Hopeless.” May-June 2003. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 7. Number 1.



of the legal responsibility of the CHA was haunting. Moreover, the lack of a safety net for those like Holt who did not qualify for Housing Choice Vouchers, is deeply concerning to Michaeli. “The agency’s lack of concern,” Michaeli asserted, “indicates that hundreds, maybe thousands of other families will end up under viaducts and in the city’s other unofficial housing programs.” Michaeli, having previously reported on encampments of Lower Wacker for the *Defender*, appropriately referred to them as the unofficial housing programs of the city of Chicago. Without an aunt’s couch to sleep, it is likely that Holt and other untracked and unidentified former residents could have ended up on Lower Wacker or in similar places for the neglected. CHA in these circumstances was likely directly responsible for the ‘unhousing’ of public residents.

The relationship between homelessness and public housing residents was not a new phenomenon. Michaeli, using research from public housing researcher Sudhir Venkatesh, discovered that the CHA had largely failed to address the presence of squatters in vacant CHA buildings.<sup>136</sup> “It is common knowledge that the CHA has been serving as a de-facto homeless shelter for many years, providing shelter for many in its vacant apartments and on the sofas of legal residents. Venkatesh adds an important layer here by documenting that these squatters overwhelmingly have deep, lasting, interwoven relationships with legal tenants.”<sup>137</sup> The significance of this account is simply that Venkatesh, aside from most academia concerned with homelessness and public housing separately, had documented evidence of communal bonds that

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<sup>136</sup> Michaeli, Ethan. “Residents Steered to Poor Areas.” *Residents’ Journal*. January-February 2004. Volume 7. Number 4.

<sup>137</sup> According to Venkatesh’s research in his documentary *Dislocation*, as many as 30 squatters live in the 4525 S. Federal building of the Robert Taylor Homes. These squatters, along with the remaining residents of Robert Taylor were displaced on September 30, 2002. This was obviously an earlier instance of displacement of residents and squatters. The *Residents’ Journal* article, as well as Venkatesh’s research suggest that the squatter issue is an ongoing problem in the vacant CHA buildings (Robert Taylor, Stateway Gardens, and Ida B. Wells were the vacant complexes directly mentioned in the article). Filming a building cookout enjoyed by squatters and public housing residents alike, Venkatesh narrates, “[SQUATTERS] They’re like everyone else. They live, eat, and work with their neighbors [legal CHA residents].” This example is one of a few in this project that directly portrays a relationship in solidarity built between these groups. It requires further investigation in a larger project.

were formed by the intrusion of illegal squatters onto CHA property during redevelopment (scheduled demolition). Furthermore, despite their difference in socio-economic standing found fraternity with each other. The housing insecurity created at public housing sites affected not only legal residents, some of whom had called these complexes home for generations, but also illegal residents who were dealing with the creation of a housing insecurity crisis in the late 90s and 00s without a physical structure to protect them from the elements. They were welcomed by CHA residents.

Carlos Roig reported on the 5135 S. Federal building as the last building in the Robert Taylor Homes complex and its scheduled demolition.<sup>138</sup> Roig found that, “Some current and past residents say their former neighbors have entered the ranks of the homeless. They all await word on exactly when they will be able to move into the redeveloped communities that will ultimately fill the now-vacant land between the Dan Ryan Expressway and State St.” In this limbo period, some residents had reportedly become unhoused. Where these people went and if they currently had some sort of shelter cannot be determined without tracking. Some residents may have lived on the streets, in shelters, maybe even squatted in vacant units at other public housing sites like those at 4525 S. Federal. All of the residents waited for vacant land to be filled with replacement housing promised by the outlines of the Plan for Transformation. However, they would also have to contend with the incoming lease compliance hurdle. Former residents and housing advocates claimed that former public housing residents were being held to a higher standard regarding lease compliance at rehabilitated CHA sites. Complaints were addressed by Sharon Gist Gilliam in the

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<sup>138</sup> Roig, Carlos. 2006, Apr 17 "Last of Robert Taylor Homes to Come Down." *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* (1973-), 3. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/last-robert-taylor-homes-come-down/docview/2577495318/se-2>.

*Defender* article, in which she bluntly stated: “If you’re somebody who can’t abide by the rules, you’re going to have to go elsewhere.” Where to the CHA could not clarify.

Investigative reporting in the *Residents’ Journal* by Mary C. Johns continued the publication’s coverage of CHA negligence regarding the tracking of displaced public housing residents.<sup>139</sup> In another bombshell story in 2010, CHA officials admitted they didn’t know the whereabouts of 3,200 families who were relocated under the Plan for Transformation. The previous July, the CHA placed ads in local newspapers trying to find residents they’d lost. But when the ads produced only limited results, CHA stipulated that former tenants who didn’t respond within 90 days would lose their right to be relocated. Fortunately, the CHA changed its position following a statement from CHA General Counsel Scott Ammarell who stated that after the 90-day period, qualified former residents who did not respond would still be reinstated on the replacement housing list regardless of the timing of their outreach. 1,400 families reportedly reached out to the CHA in response. In accordance with the Plan for Transformation the CHA had a legal obligation to keep record of relocated public housing residents and further, provide housing relocation assistance regardless of where former residents wanted to live. Clearly the CHA did not entirely follow through on that promise, and thus contributing to greater depths of housing insecurity for people they were legally responsible for. This revelation of CHA negligence is sobering not simply because the Authority simply exonerated itself from a legal contract with residents, because many of these residents ultimately may have been lost to homelessness.

### **State of Homelessness Following the Launch of the Plan for Transformation 2000-2010**

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<sup>139</sup> Johns, Mary C. “Tenant Leaders Challenge CHA Over Relocation Rights.” Spring 2010, Number 45.

Examination of primary sources clearly indicates the Plan for Transformation , coming on the heels of public housing and SRO displacements in the 1990s, considerably limited options for and perhaps increased competition for city between public housing residents and the unhoused. A study of increased rental markets by the University of Illinois at Chicago reported in a *Homeward Bound* article, found that

The Chicago region has experienced significant population growth as well as a real estate boom over the past decade. However, this increase in demand has not been accompanied by an increase in rental housing. Among several factors that have limited housing growth, resistance in some communities to rental housing has resulted in zoning codes that limit apartment construction. Another deterrent is the high property taxes on rental property in Cook County.<sup>140</sup>

In concurrence with the UIC study, *Homeward Bound* staff found that in the atmosphere of this tight rental market, “—between 113,000 and 166,000 people are homeless on the streets, in shelters, or doubled up with family members during the course of the course of a year in the Chicago region.” The UIC study identified a significant aspect of socio-structural deterrents to expanding the affordable housing stock. The limitations for affordable housing are not always top-down redevelopment schemes that significantly and visibly alter the built environment. Sometimes these limitations are dependent on the biases of housed society. Affordable housing like rental housing has been associated with criminality, poverty, among other hinderances to higher property values. While housed society hinders expansion of low-income housing, the city of Chicago throughout the 1990s substantially decreased the availability of SRO hotels. These developments forced many into more temporary shelters, onto the street, or forced people to double-up. It is likely that many public housing residents intersected this population of doubled-

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<sup>140</sup> Homeward Bound Staff. “Study Reveals Lack of Rental Housing in Chicago Region.” Winter 2000. *Homeward Bound: A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago*. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

up Chicagoans, as redevelopment forced many families to make space for relatives and friends, though the study does not specify on where these households were located.

On top of the limitations in rental housing, there were also substantial limitations in shelter capacity during this time. Writing in *Residents' Journal*, Mary C. Johns fused the redevelopment of CHA properties with observed changes in the unhoused population and its demographics in Chicago.<sup>141</sup> In October 2001, she wrote, “—the Chicago Department of Human Services reported that shelters in Chicago were filled to the maximum.” Displacement of public housing residents and the unhoused saw significant escalations at this time, public housing residents perhaps more so since the displacements of the 1990s were compounded with displacement tied to the launch of the CHA’s plan. Notably, “Homeless service providers also reported that single mothers with children were appearing more often in homeless shelters.” By the accounting of Reverend Sanja Stinson (executive director of Matthew House, a homeless shelter located next to the Ida B. Wells Homes), “—in November that up to 15% of the increased number of homeless people there are people who formally resided in CHA with leaseholders.” The connections between the unhoused and displaced or future displaced CHA residents are clear through the testimonies between municipal workers and shelter staff. Furthermore, the connections between CHA redevelopment and the creation of the homelessness crisis of the mid-to-late 1990s going into the 2000s are further strengthened by the noted demographic changes. As historical and sociological work concerned with homelessness has found increasing numbers

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<sup>141</sup> Johns, Mary C. “Transforming CHA – Homelessness: A Constant American Tragedy.” October-November 2001. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 6. Number 1.

of women and children among the unhoused population, so to did the accounts of the Chicago municipal workers and shelter directors confirm this phenomenon.<sup>142</sup>

*Tribune* reporter Antonio Olivo showcased the experience with homelessness of Elashune Calhoun and her seven children, presenting other nuances of homelessness as a sociological phenomenon.<sup>143</sup> The experiences allow opportunity for explanation of the difficulties of holistically accounting for the severity of homelessness. Calhoun and her family were evicted from their home in Englewood the previous May. Since that time, they had been living with Calhoun's mother in a four-bedroom house. "That places her in a category of families who are "doubling-up' with relatives and friends because of a lack of affordable housing options in the city, the non-profit Chicago Coalition for the Homeless said." Doubling up, advocates argued, obfuscated the true depths and severity of homelessness. Doubling-up is not easily trackable, nor is living with a family member or friend (potentially against their lease) information that housing insecure people are likely to freely offer social scientists and public officials. It is concerning nonetheless because "Most cities, including Chicago, assess the need for homeless services by counting occupied shelter beds, then touring city streets to get a rough idea of how many people are resorting to park benches, sidewalks, and bridge archways."<sup>144</sup> And though this method of recording the numbers of people on the street and in the shelters afforded the city of Chicago a notable decrease of about 3,000 people since 2004, unhoused advocates argue that given the

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<sup>142</sup> DePastino, Todd. *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 256-262. And Kusmer, Kenneth L. *Down & Out, on the Road: The Homeless in American History*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 241-242.

<sup>143</sup> Olivo, Antonio. 2006, Dec 22 "Homeless Tally Put at 21,000 in Chicago; Many Not Counted, Advocacy Group Says": [North Shore Final , NS Edition]. *Chicago Tribune*, 1-2NS.1.  
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/homeless-tally-put-at-21-000-chicago-many-not/docview/420521290/se-2>.

<sup>144</sup> 2005 was the first year of HUD's Point in Time Count. HUD estimated that on any given night in 2005 there were as many as 754,000 unhoused people including those on the street and in shelters.  
<https://archives.hud.gov/news/2007/pr07-020.cfm>

circumstance of doubling-up and homelessness as a temporary status, the number is likely much higher.<sup>145</sup> In light of these facts, Olivo pointed out that the city of Chicago launched a 10-year Plan to End Homelessness in 2003. The plan allocated \$18.9 million per year toward homelessness, prevention, social services and the creation of single room occupancy residences and other types of affordable housing. However, knowing the limitations of the city's methods of assessing the severity of homelessness, as well as its use of less than holistic tracking measures for displaced CHA residents, Olivo's reporting provokes the question of whether or not this is this enough money to address the issue of homelessness in its entirety?

Amid the visibility of an estimated tens of thousands of people on the streets and in the shelters of Chicago, public housing residents were appropriately concerned with the status of vacant units in the Lathrop Homes on the North Side.<sup>146</sup> Interviews conducted by Mary C. Johns in her article "Lathrop Residents Want Vacant Units Occupied" detailed the intermingling of the public housing residents at Lathrop and the unhoused population during the affordability crisis in the city.

Keeping these units empty, in the midst of a housing crisis, is a terrible waste,' declared Cynthia Scott, a member of the Lathrop Leadership Team, during the press conference that followed the October 23 march and rally. Leasing 300 units would help families avoid homelessness and reduce the crime and maintenance problems that comes with vacancies,' she added.

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<sup>145</sup> In collaboration with a variety of organizations including CPS and University of Illinois-Chicago, the Coalition found that, "a total of 73,656 people in the city were homeless at one time or another during a 12-month period that began in July 2005." This statistic needs specification, but the wording does afford the study some legitimacy in the sense that it emphasizes the reality that homelessness is not always a prolonged or permanent state of housing insecurity. As is demonstrated in relocation stories and reporting in *Homeward Bound*, homelessness is often a temporary state dependent on several factors, whereas statistical approaches to counting the unhoused in shelter or on the street might obscure certain trends in population change, spread of alcohol and substance abuse, and may emphasize more severe/permanent states of homelessness. Also see this edition of the *Residents' Journal* for citation of the same source. Gray, Jerlinda. "Are You Warm for the Holidays." Fall 2008. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 8. Number 6.

<sup>146</sup> Johns, Mary C. "Lathrop Residents Want Vacant Units Occupied." Fall 2008. *Residents' Journal*. Volume 8. Number 6.

According to Johns' figures, at the time of writing there were 600 units left vacant out of 925 in total. With this figure in perspective and Scott's evaluation of the value of public housing units to be a fail safe for families on the brink of severe housing insecurity, the links between homelessness and public housing as codependent developments in a changing cityscape become clear. Public housing advocates, homelessness advocates, and the unhoused themselves asked the simple question of why these places were vacant? It was a simple question levied multiple times at the CHA during its prolonged campaign of demolition which saw residents in an insecure period not knowing how long they were going to have housing or whether or not they were going to join the increasingly seen unhoused on the street, in the shelters, and living with family and friends.

In connection with a changing built environment, decreasing availability of housing may have been driving poverty to the suburbs in the years after the initiation of the Plan for Transformation. *Tribune* reporter Robert Channick reported that, "Crowded and underfunded, suburban shelters turned away an increasing number of homeless last year and already have done it this year even though the temperatures have been normal since October, the traditional start of the shelter season."<sup>147</sup> Suburban shelter staff from all over the city were noting increased demands. North of Chicago in the city of Woodstock, Cathryn Perfetti, director of McHenry County PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) found that workers were confronted with twice as many unhoused people demanding assistance across the organization's nine shelters. In the South Side suburbs of Chicago Heights, shelters

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<sup>147</sup> Channick, Robert. 2009, Dec 04 "Suburban Shelters Filling Up Shelters Suffer from Funding Lag: Despite a Mild Autumn, Homelessness Stretches Nonprofits' Ability to Respond in Collar Counties." *Chicago Tribune*, 1-4.7. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/suburban-shelters-filling-up-suffer-funding-lag/docview/420907660/se-2>. This increased closing of doors to the unhoused in the suburbs is also happening in the context of Chicago's annual opening policy for warming centers; open between the months of October and April. The Facts Behind the Faces – "Homelessness: The Causes and Facts," *Homeward Bound*, Summer 1999.



Saw a 30 percent increase last year in the number of shelter nights at its 29 sites, with about 33,000 people through June.” And lastly, on the West Side at PADS facilities in Maywood, “...nearly 600 people were turned away last winter at its 12 sites. Crowding is so acute that a nightly lottery is held to determine who gets the 40 to 70 beds. The unlucky ones get a bus ticket to Chicago and a list of referrals.

With these shelter infrastructure limitations, advocates and organizations were requesting more public assistance, though many indicated that approaches to addressing homelessness were shifting. For example, “The \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included \$1.5 billion for homeless prevention and re-housing. About \$70 million of the stimulus funding was allocated to Illinois, but none for emergency shelters.” Here the state of homelessness with its increased visibility is compounded with the issues of welfare reform coming out of the late 90s. One of the lasting effects of the 1996 Welfare Bill was that states received block grants for addressing specific social issues and crafting their own welfare programs. Every state was to address homelessness differently in this case, and because of so many shelter turn aways in the suburbs, a couple diagnoses can be suggested. The first is that Chicago’s available low-income housing stock and its shelter capacity was diminished to the point where it is actively pushing its poor to the edges of the city. The second is a critique leveled at the hierarchy of responsibility under the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill. Federal authorities, for better or worse essentially passed responsibility off to state governments, which in the case of Illinois, failed to accommodate emergency shelter funding amid a significant amount of shelters caps in the suburbs of Chicago.

## **Conclusion**

This examination of the relationships between the unhoused and public housing residents began with the observations of Helen Finner, resident advisory council president for the Ida B. Wells Homes. The subsequent exploration of primary source , including residency and advocacy publications as well as media reports, has revealed numerous avenues in which these two groups

intersect. The history of the built environment of Chicago in the 1990s and 2000s, while still needing further exploration, can be described as a time of substantial depopulating of its urban core. At a time of increasing inequality and contracting federal, state, and municipal social welfare resources, public housing residents and the unhoused faced a squeeze on multiple fronts for their livability in the city. Within the context of relevant historical and sociological literature, these phenomena are not happening in a vacuum, nor are they truly separate issues within homelessness and public housing redevelopment, respectively. Although it would be an overstatement to suggest that the city of Chicago alone is to blame outright for the detrimental outcomes of welfare reform or lack of living wages in connection with its exacerbation of an affordable housing and housing security crisis, it is certainly culpable in the latter half of that equation and residents like community organizer Joseph Saunders are not the only ones who saw it that way.

Private developers, encouraged by municipal notions of reimagining the city for a more profitable city population, drastically altered the physical and social makeup of these areas where the unhoused and public housing residents used to call home. Neighborhoods like the South Loop, Near South Side, the Near West Side and West Loop, the near North Side and the areas of Old Town, were once full of vast physically imposing structures dedicated to housing Chicago's low-income population. And although there are important considerations to keep in mind in terms of these places being concentrated/isolated sectors of urban poverty (often preserved along racial lines and class lines), it was a sense of democratic city spatial distribution in that space relatively central to Chicago's Loop, afforded to a variety income-levels and racial/ethnic groups. Large sections of these neighborhoods have been completely remade in the city/private partnership's image, though there are some notable exceptions to the city's complete levelling of

these areas. For example, though slated for redevelopment the Cabrini Green row houses remain standing. They are mostly vacant but the buildings that remain stand as an exception to the surrounding area of vacant lots (where its partnered mid-and high-rise buildings once stood), the townhomes comprising Cabrini's mixed-income neighborhood, and the luxury shopping and living centers that encircle the area. The few remaining residents in the row homes also stand in opposition to the intruding demographic of mostly white and affluent residents who replaced the human face of the neighborhood. Likewise, despite the depopulation or displacement campaign waged by the city of Chicago in places like Lower Wacker and Tranquility City, the unhoused residents of Chicago's streets can be found in and around these areas, but the spread of unhoused street residents has extended to other areas of visible prominence, notably along Lake Shore Drive, under the imposing crisscrossing roads of the I-55/I-90 interchange, and of course the unhoused presence at Humboldt Park that has sparked recent controversy.<sup>148</sup>

The visible offensiveness of homelessness is significant in the context of this paper and is indeed an intersection between the two populations. The destruction of public housing and the subsequent displacement of its residents partnered with the redevelopment of the South Loop and the prominence of the unhoused on the street in connection with this story raise the practical question of where the unhoused and displaced are allowed to exist in the city of Chicago. Where can these people reside where the visual offense of a high-rise public housing complex, the area of and around an SRO, or the mere presence of an unhoused encampment in the depths of the city will not bother the city or its housed residents?<sup>149</sup> Moreover, when will city officials realize

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<sup>148</sup> Paurella-Aureli, Ariel. "City Clears Humboldt Park Tent Encampments, Vows Enforcement Forward," December 10, 2024. *Block Club Chicago*. <https://blockclubchicago.org/2024/12/06/city-clears-humboldt-park-tent-encampment-vows-enforcement-moving-forward/>

<sup>149</sup> In his examination of Chicago's changing built environment, Wright discusses the Chicago 21 Plan, a precursor to the large redevelopment schemes of the 90s and 2000s that this paper centers on. Wright states, "...the plan increasingly appears to be aimed at excluding persons of undesirable appearance or income. The city of Chicago, according to Betancur, Bennet, and Wright (1991, 204), is now designed as a fortress city, "aimed to redevelop the

that peripherization of low-income/unhoused residents does not blot out poverty or alter the conditions of street life for the better? Questions of spatial orientation and the making of a city image still have crucial considerations in the current spatial orientation of Chicago and within the broader conversation of housing insecurity. Issues of gentrification, restrictive zoning that gives preference to single-family housing, limits on use of public space, and the lack of affordable housing in proximity to the city center, are indicative of patterns of city policy that restrict building and spread of affordable housing options for this cross-section of Chicagoans. These restrictions are indeed legitimated by societal stigma of living next to those who supposedly do not conform to an imagined and desired safety and comfort from the natural urban clustering of people of vastly different experiences and socio-economic makeups. The examination of the demise of Chicago public housing and the continued displacement of the unhoused on the streets combined with the limitations of shelters, unfortunately fell outside of housed-society's preferences for urban living, revealing the most important consideration of their cross-examination. And though the preceding material and analysis is not close to a holistic discussion of this interrelation of the unhoused and public housing residents in the altering urban forms of Chicago, the examination certainly warrants further academic consideration.

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land that circled a booming service sector downtown for middle- and upper-class residents.” In order for this transformation to take place, a “buffer zone” needed to be created, namely through the physical removal of low-income people and the buildings they occupied. Wright, Talmadge. *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 135. For those residents not tied to residencies within specific built structures, alternative, perhaps more blatant in their messaging, measures would be incorporated into the city's campaign of exclusion. The use of wrought-iron fences on Lower-Wacker invites further investigation of construction and design methods of exclusion. See Rosenberger, Robert. *Callous Objects: Designs Against the Homeless*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. Rosenberger examines a relatively new and unconsidered topic within exclusionary spatial study and focuses on the minute details of park benches, waiting areas, trashcans, and building entryways to showcase the seemingly innocuous methods of design to discourage, and ultimately eliminate unhoused uses of public devices and space.

## Appendix

Image 1

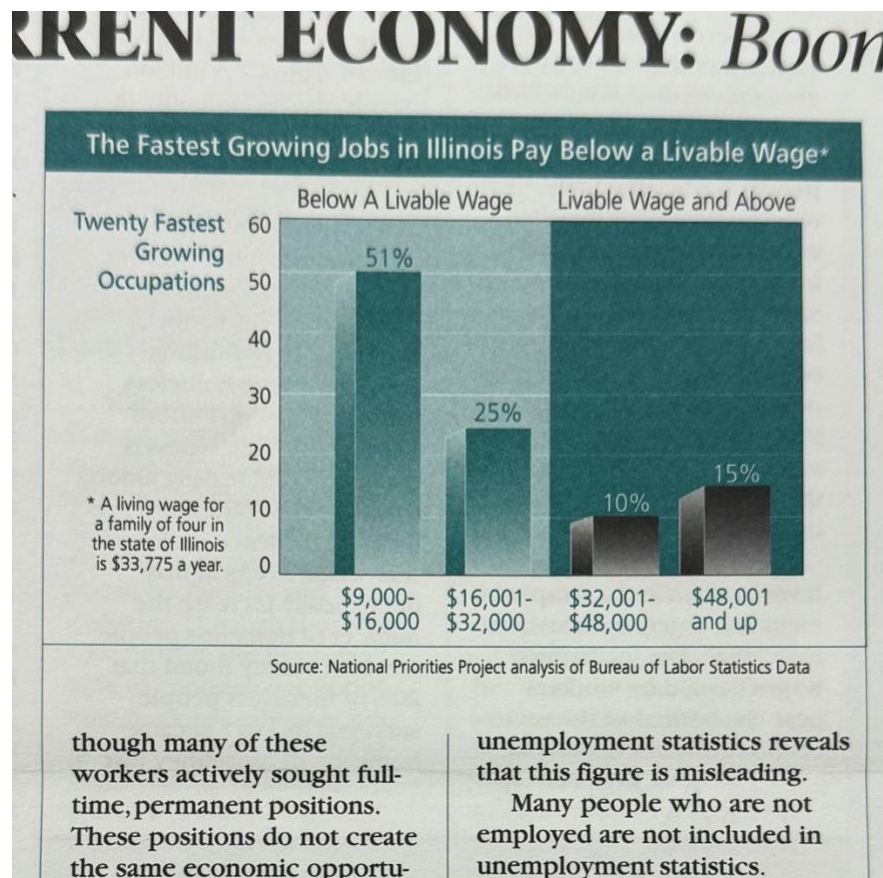


Image 2

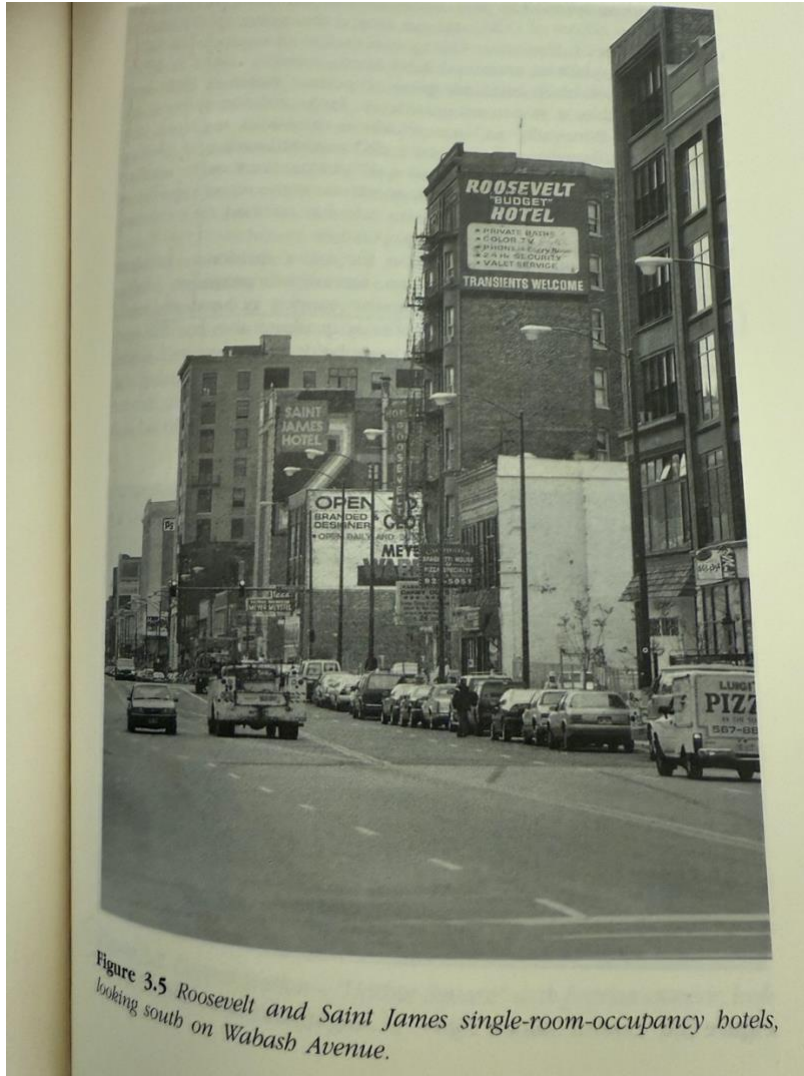


Figure 3.5 Roosevelt and Saint James single-room-occupancy hotels, looking south on Wabash Avenue.

Image 3



New York	Los Angeles	San Francisco	Chicago	Atlanta	PROHIBITED CONDUCT
		X			<b>A</b> Begging in Public Places City-wide
X	X		X	X	<b>B</b> Begging in Particular Public Places
X	X	X		X	<b>C</b> Aggressive Panhandling
					<b>D</b> Sleeping in Public City-wide
	X			X	<b>E</b> Sleeping in Particular Public Places
				X	<b>F</b> Camping in Public City-wide
X	X	X			<b>G</b> Camping in Particular Public Places
X	X			X	<b>H</b> Sitting or Lying Down in Particular Public Places
			X		<b>I</b> Loitering/Loafing/Vagrancy City-wide
		X		X	<b>J</b> Loitering/Loafing in Particular Public Places
X	X	X		X	<b>K</b> Obstruction of Sidewalks/Public Places
X	X		X	X	<b>L</b> Closure of Particular Public Places

Image 4

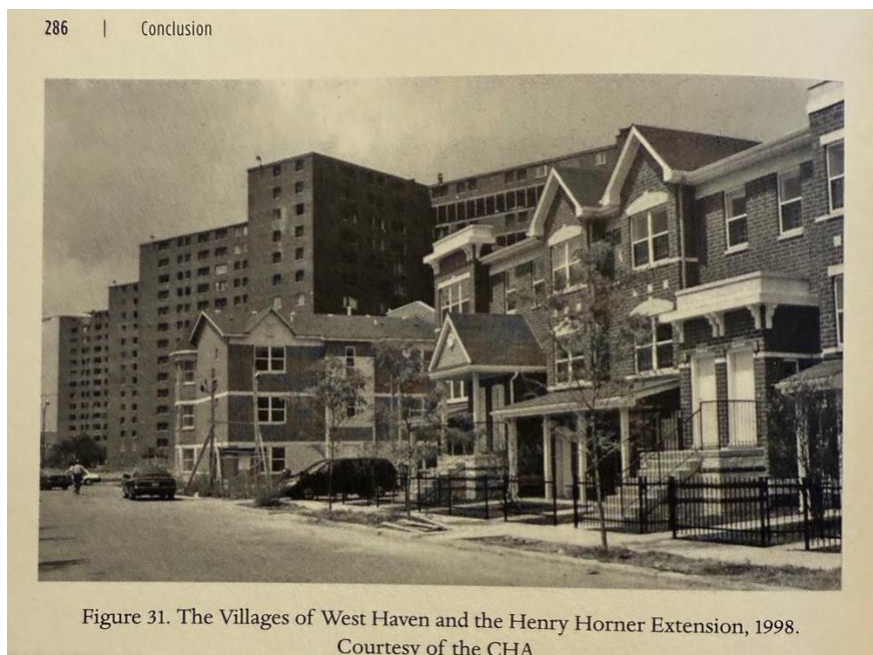


Table 1

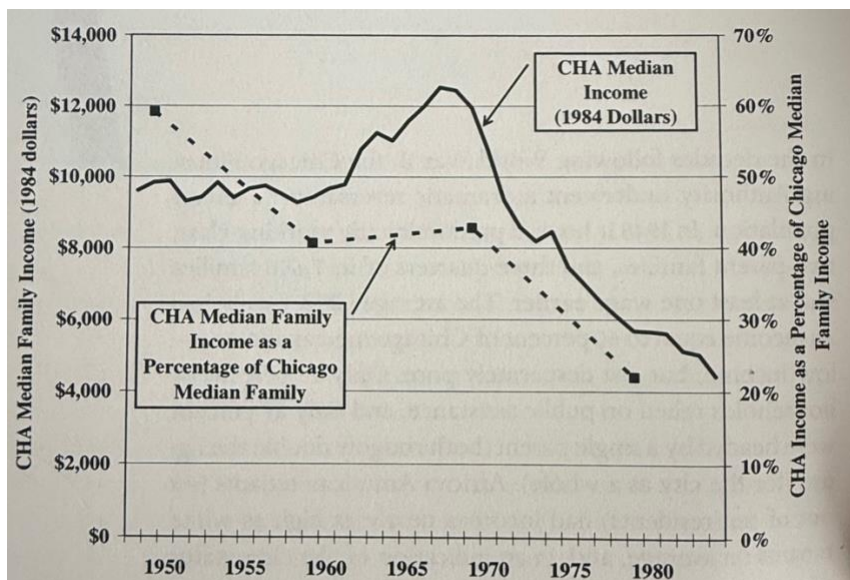


Figure 26. Median incomes for CHA families, 1948-84 (in 1984 dollars). From CHA, *Annual Statistical Report*, 1948-84. The report for 1950 is not available, and data for that year is extrapolated. City of Chicago median family income data for 1949, 1959, 1969, and 1979 from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population*, 1950-80.

Table 2

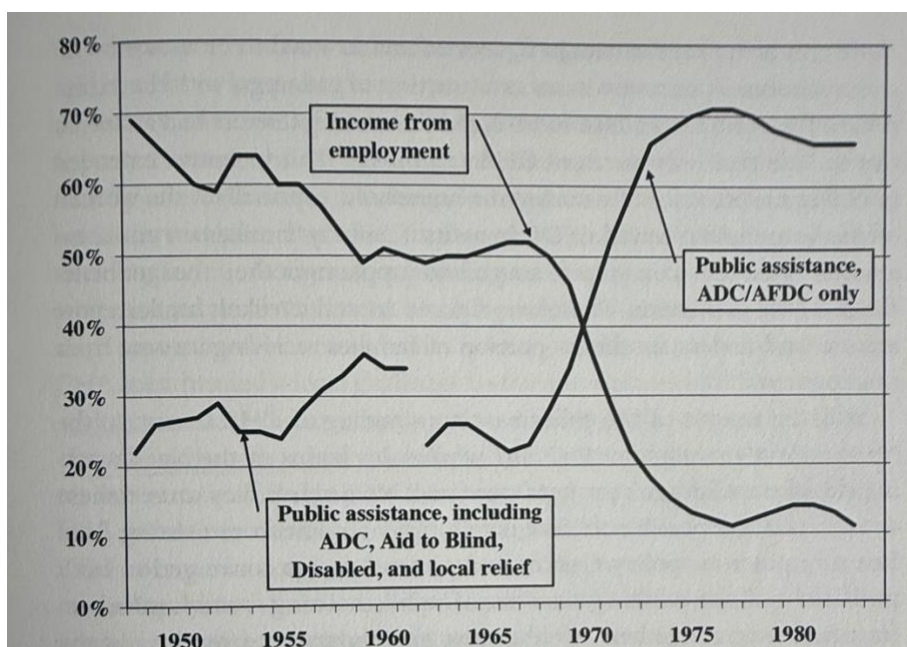


Figure 27. Sources of income for CHA families, 1948-83. From CHA, *Annual Statistical Report*, 1948-84.

Table 3



Table 5.3 Race and Ethnicity (Percentages)

A. Chicago Homeless Study				
Race or Ethnicity	Street Sample	Shelter Sample	Weighted Total	1980 Chicago Census
Hispanic white	3.0	7.5	5.5	— <sup>a</sup>
Hispanic black	1.0	1.8	1.4	— <sup>a</sup>
Black American	55.6	50.8	53.0	35.5
American Indian	7.1	3.5	5.1	0.1
Asian or Pacific	1.0	0.4	0.7	2.3
White	28.9	32.1	30.7	55.1
Other	3.3	3.4	3.3	7.0
Don't know	0.0	0.5	0.3	—
Unweighted <i>N</i>	165	557	722	
B. Combined Homeless Studies				
Race or Ethnicity	Average Percentage		Number of Studies	
Black	45.8		31	
Hispanic	11.8		19	
American Indian	4.9		13	
C. Chicago GA and AFDC Clients and SRO Residents				
Race or Ethnicity	GA	AFDC	SRO	
Black	71.2	76.4	54.1	
White	12.0	9.7	40.5	
Hispanic	13.2	12.1	3.2	
American Indian	1.0	0.6	0.5	
Other	2.4	1.5	1.6	
<i>N</i>	400	737	185	
D. Johnson-Pew Clinic Populations				
City	White	Black	Hispanic	
Albuquerque	58.2	4.6	24.9	
Baltimore	35.7	64.5	1.7	
Birmingham	53.9	46.1	0.0	
Boston	75.2	20.6	2.0	
Chicago	31.7	62.7	4.1	
Detroit	27.5	71.1	1.4	
Milwaukee	37.3	62.7	0.0	
Nashville	79.5	16.0	3.4	
New York	25.3	52.2	22.0	
Philadelphia	35.8	57.2	4.4	
San Antonio	55.8	6.9	34.1	
San Francisco	72.4	22.3	5.3	
Washington, D.C.	17.6	80.8	0.8	

## Note on Primary Sources

### “Homeward Bound” CHM – qHV4506 C4H6 Oversize

Homeward Bound is a periodical published by the Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness in the 90s and 2000s. I found original copies of the periodical in the repositories of the Chicago History Museum. A couple of months ago I asked the Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness for their records of the periodical if the organization had them. I unfortunately received no reply which may affect the periodical in its totality since many issues are missing from the CHM collection. However, I would say that the stories covered of housing insecurity, welfare cuts, SRO hotel destruction, commentary on social issues that intersect with homelessness, and experiences of street life make this periodical invaluable to this project. Many of the articles are written by or with testimony of unhoused Chicagoans, making this periodical arguably a primary source in discussions of homelessness and housing insecurity.

### *Residents’ Journal* – Acquired from the *Residents’ Journal* Digital Collection on the Chicago Public Library Digital Databases

“*Residents’ Journal* is a newspaper written by and for residents of Chicago public housing. Led by former *Chicago Daily Defender* journalist Ethan Michaeli and Mary C. Piemonte (née Johns), the publication began in 1996 with funding from the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). When this funding ended in 1999, the staff opted to form the not-for-profit organization, We the People Media, to take over *Residents’ Journal* and the Urban Youth International Journalism Program. Together, the two programs trained thousands of adults and youths in all aspects of journalism and news production.” – Chicago Public Library