"By the People Most Affected": Model Cities, Citizen Control, and the Broken Promises of Urban Renewal

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List of Abbreviations

CAP: Community Action Program

CDA: Community Development Association

CDBG: Community Development Block Grants

FHA: Federal Housing Administration

HEW: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

HUD: Department of Housing and Urban Development

LBJ: Lyndon Baines Johnson

LEAA: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

MCA: Model Cities Agency

NARA: National Archives and Records Administration

NGA: National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

OEO: Office of Economic Opportunity

SLML: St. Louis Mercantile Library

WUA: Washington University Archives

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Abstract

"By the People Most Affected"[1]

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by

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Iver Bernstein, Chair

This dissertation stands at the intersection of civil rights social history, political history, and urban planning. Among the first academic work to recognize the significance of the Model Cities War on Poverty program, this dissertation explores how residents tried to make American cities safe places for poor people to live as full citizens. It argues that neighborhood activists in St. Louis and around the country used the War on Poverty and Model Cities specifically to make a bid for a permanent role in city planning for their neighborhoods. This was no less than an attempt to alter the relationship between poor citizens and the state. The dissertation reveals that in St. Louis, low-income residents effectively infiltrated the municipal planning process, claiming expertise in their own communities and forming autonomous resident organizations that planned for themselves.

Though federal and municipal commitment to fostering citizen participation quickly waned, neighborhood activists in St. Louis successfully asserted their vision for their community

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[1] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

through a series of resident-written comprehensive neighborhood plans that served for years as

the primary expression of residents' goals for themselves and their neighborhood. They designed

and fought to implement self-sustaining housing and entrepreneurship programs to attack both

the causes and effects of urban poverty. However, when faced with calls for permanent resident

control of city planning, I argue that federal and municipal officials betrayed their promises to

residents. By the mid-seventies citizen participation became a smokescreen for urban planners

and government officials to justify their priorities rather than a true reflection of residents'

visions. Examining residents' organizations and visions provides us clues to develop and

implement plans that make working-class urban life viable today.

Introduction

I interviewed Yvonne Sparks on March 7, 2017 in her light-filled office at the Federal

Reserve Bank in downtown St. Louis.[2] She spent ninety minutes telling me about her community

development work in St. Louis from the mid-seventies through the present. She has worked for

university redevelopment initiatives, federal job training programs, city agencies, and in

nonprofits as a liaison between planning entities and communities. She describes her job as

"living public policy on the ground" and believes, "if you engage with authenticity and sincerity

with residents … you generally get the truth. And they are generally right, despite anyone else's

desire for it to be different." At several points in our conversation, she discussed the pain

associated with her job. She spoke of garnering resident input and support for redevelopment and

antipoverty projects, only to have their ideas ignored and thwarted by government officials time

after time.[3]

At the end of my conversation with Sparks, I disclosed that thus far, I had failed to make

contact with anyone who had lived in the neighborhoods I was studying in the sixties and

seventies. Sparks responded, "because they're dead. Because there was no interest in having

community voices at the table."[4] After this statement there were several seconds of silence.

Decades of pernicious policies had not just barred residents' voices from being incorporated into

plans for their neighborhoods; Sparks indicated that city and federal policies had literally killed

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[2] This interview took place on the same day as the 2017 St. Louis mayoral primary. After having the same moderate Democratic mayor for sixteen years, St. Louis voters came within eight hundred votes of electing a black woman progressive named Tishaura Jones. One of Jones' primary campaign platforms was to change development patterns by calling for economic investment outside of the central corridor. At the end of our conversation, I asked Sparks if there was a path out of the devastating pattern of ignoring poor St. Louisans' needs. She responded, "Tishaura Jones would help."

[3] Yvonne Sparks, Interview with author, March 7, 2017. Sparks is the Assistant Vice President and Community Development Officer at The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

[4] Ibid.

the residents who supposedly were to benefit from these programs, and now they were not alive to speak of their experiences.[5]

In many ways, my interview with Yvonne Sparks confirmed my worst fears about the topic I was studying. I set out to study a high-point in resident activism in federal antipoverty programs. But regardless of efforts by residents and sympathetic officials, physical and economic development programs in St. Louis and around the country rarely followed through on residents' visions, let alone made the needs of poor residents the first priority. But just as Sparks continues to work in community development despite, as she describes, these "heartbreaking" failures, studying residents' attempts to assert their visions for urban planning and antipoverty efforts reveals a creative history of persistence, ingenuity, and possibility.

Sparks' introductions eventually led me to several residents who are still alive and able to tell their stories, but her statement revealed the stakes for the poor, urban residents who chose to participate in federal antipoverty programs: citizen activists knew their actions were no less than an attempt to reverse the decades of pernicious government policies that trapped poor and black Americans in poverty and devastated entire communities. These residents understood the connection between the livability of their neighborhoods and their survival. My interview with Sparks grounded my understanding of why resident activists, who were highly skeptical of their government partners, still chose to work within federal antipoverty programs to push forward their vision for their communities. Residents were fighting for their lives, and they believed

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[5] Before speaking with Sparks, I had interviewed two white city planners and two middle-class black St. Louisans who knew the local political scene but had never lived in the area I was studying. One of them even claimed that no political or community organizations existed in these neighborhoods. This comment revealed a gap between middle-class and working-class activism. Poor residents had little use for alliances with elected officials and ward politics. Hank Thompson, Interview with Author, February 8, 2017; Ronald Jackson, Interview with Author, March 1, 2017; Jason Purnell, Gabriela Camberos, and Robert Fields, "For the Sake of All: A Report on the Health and Well-Being of African Americans in St. Louis and Why It Matters to Everyone" (St. Louis: Washington University, 2014), https://forthesakeofall.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FSOA_report_2.pdf. This report documents the ways racial and economic segregation contribute to health disparities in St. Louis, reinforcing Sparks' point.

control over federal money and programs—the very money they knew in the past had been deployed to destroy their communities—might be the only way to control their future.

This dissertation shows how poor urban residents tried to consolidate and expand on the wins of the civil rights movement. Residents asserted they were experts on their neighborhood's conditions to insert themselves into state processes. They simultaneously maintained their organizations' autonomy because they personally experienced how state actions, including urban renewal, often ruined viable working-class and black neighborhoods. My research explores how residents in St. Louis gained power over federal antipoverty programs; how they forged effective partnerships among grassroots organizations, city government, and private companies; how they planned to upgrade their neighborhoods; and how citizen participation became tokenized starting in the 1970s continuing to the present. I chart a high-point of residents' influence over their neighborhoods by examining the context in which residents gained influence—including the War on Poverty, the black freedom struggle, and the urban uprisings of the late sixties—and their strategies for wrestling power from city officials. My work also evaluates the reasons this power was temporary, examining how and why federal officials abandoned their promise to promote citizen participation.

Poor urban residents succeeded in temporarily seizing influence over antipoverty programs as the state attempted to respond to the revolutionary impulses of the 1960s. The civil rights movement produced highly organized local and national organizations and grassroots leaders dedicated to improving life for people of color and impoverished communities. Many urban civil rights groups criticized capitalist, profit-driven urban renewal projects, exposing that these federally-funded projects often bulldozed predominantly poor communities of color in

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order to build housing, civic institutions, and commercial spaces that catered to the middle class.[6]

At the same time, frustrated by police brutality, a lack of tangible civil rights progress, and persistent poverty, many cities erupted in violence in the mid-to-late sixties. Responding to civil rights protests and urban riots, as well as new research on the extent of poverty in the United States, Democratic federal officials launched the War on Poverty in 1964, the nation's largest antipoverty initiative since the New Deal. The War on Poverty opened a fleeting, rare opportunity for residents to directly attack state policies that left them impoverished and disenfranchised, and within this context, resident groups in poor neighborhoods around the country seized their chance to control the antipoverty money flowing into their areas.

I argue that poor urban residents offered a corrective to urban renewal's failings specifically and urban racialized poverty more generally, in the form of resident control of federally-funded antipoverty initiatives. Residents used what I call an "expertise of place" argument to establish themselves as indispensable players in antipoverty programs. They asserted they had the right and the ability to control city planning for their community due to their personal experiences living in poor neighborhoods, calling for antipoverty programs run by and for residents to ensure programs reached their intended beneficiaries. They cast their plans in direct contrast to conventional, state-run, profit-oriented urban renewal initiatives that had been displacing poor and black people around the country for decades. Their ideas, I show, were

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[6] Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Richard Florida and Andrew Jonas, "U.S. Urban Policy: The Postwar State and Capitalist Regulation," *Antipode* 23, no. 4 (1991): 349–84; Lisabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 273-4. Zipp and Florida and Jonas, among other scholars, show that many urban policies of the postwar years served corporate, capitalist interests. Federal urban renewal funds were awarded to private companies to redevelop urban spaces, and companies were easily able to create projects that maximized profit, such as luxury housing and shopping. Zipp explains "urban renewal was the latest technique by which city officials and their allies in downtown businesses, urban planning agencies, civic organizations, and neighborhood groups … cooperated to keep urban space profitable and their city competitive in regional and national markets" in New York City (7). Cohen notes that in New Jersey, entrepreneurs used urban renewal money to rebuild downtown shopping centers.

therefore an implicit critique of government-supported capitalism in favor of grassroots democratic planning.[7] Rather than focusing on projects that would maximize profit for private construction and real estate companies, residents' plans were first and foremost about making communities survivable for poor residents. Their plans asserted that residents' expertise, by virtue of living in their neighborhoods, was crucial to the design of decent, livable communities.

To chart residents' visions for their neighborhood, I focus primarily on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's first largescale initiative, Model Cities (1966-1974), with a particular emphasis on neighborhood organizing in St. Louis, Missouri. Model Cities was a federal War on Poverty program that provided $900 million in grants to plan and implement a comprehensive attack on poverty for the neediest neighborhoods in one hundred fifty cities. The program would combine physical redevelopment, an expansion of social services, and citizen participation to mount a coordinated attack on poverty. Effective programs would become models for remaking other poor communities. Federal Democratic officials were most open to residents' critique of conventional redevelopment programs in the mid-sixties, when urban renewal's failures were impossible to ignore and urban rebellions made responding to these problems paramount. Through Model Cities, St. Louis residents formed a short-lived alliance with sympathetic municipal officials, and residents articulated their vision for antipoverty efforts founded on community control.[8]

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[7] Urban theorist David Harvey explains that in capitalist societies, government institutions "contribute … to the reproduction and growth of the social system" by stabilizing economic and social systems, "creat[ing] conditions for 'balanced growth' and a smooth process of accumulation." Urban renewal served this function in the post-World War II era, promoting capitalist growth and accumulation by providing funds to private companies to redevelop cities to make them more profitable. David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 175.

[8] David Harvey notes that Model Cities should be viewed within the context of a long line of urban planning initiatives aimed at calming civil strife: "From Chalmers through Octavia Hill and Jane Addams, to Model Cities and citizen participation, we have a continuous thread of an argument which suggests that social stability can be restored in periods of social unrest by an active pursuit of 'the principle of community' and all that this means in the way of community betterment and social improvement—and again, the planner typically acts as advocate, as

Further, I argue that residents' community organizing, the comprehensive plans they drafted, and their fight to implement their plans were no less than an attempt to permanently alter both the underlying goals of urban planning and the way planning happened, forcing the state to prioritize poor residents' wellbeing. Neighborhood activists called for an altered democratic process, proclaiming that community control was the only way to ensure government programs were designed for the neediest Americans. Residents in St. Louis's Model Cities neighborhood, directly North and West of the downtown central business district, pushed their way into Model Cities planning and fought to implement their vision for their community. They won a high degree of control over Model Cities planning, and their plans prioritized residents' welfare in a way that conventional urban renewal did not. St. Louis residents' efforts culminated in five citizen-authored comprehensive plans, in which they argued that neighborhood control of antipoverty programs would ensure substantial improvements to poor citizens' lives.[9] Their plans rebuked conventional urban renewal and attempted to consolidate and build on the wins of the civil rights movement.

But local and federal officials were ultimately unwilling to sustain citizen participation for multiple, interrelated reasons, and this dissertation reveals the pernicious effects of federal antipoverty policy through the second half of the twentieth century. First, I argue that shifting to resident control would have weakened officials' deep-seated faith in government institutions to

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catalyst in promoting the spirit of community improvement." However, while he mentions citizen participation, he does not probe what would happen if residents were able to wrest control over planning in Model Cities and other government programs. This dissertation highlights a moment in which residents were, for a short time, able to gain control over planning processes and assert their very different vision for their community that was fundamentally about neighborhood uplift, not capitalist accumulation. David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 180.

[9] Model Cities residents' efforts contrasted with state-controlled neighborhood improvement programs that fueled gentrification, displacing poor inhabitants in the name of historic preservation and neighborhood improvement. St. Louis Model Cities residents were explicit that their plans would make the community better for low-income people, not entice wealthier individuals into their neighborhood. For a history of gentrification, see Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

make positive change. Residents' fight for community control was a clear critique of municipal and federal institutions, and conceding the failures of these institutions would have permanently altered power relations between poor citizens and government officials. Second, while a cohort of federal bureaucrats questioned their own urban planning expertise in the wake of failed urban renewal projects, they ultimately fell back on their professionalism when challenged by residents, arguing that poor neighbors did not have the skills or expertise to plan and implement antipoverty programs. Third, ceding control to residents jeopardized private companies' access to and control over federal urban renewal dollars, threatening profit streams. Model Cities showed starkly that profit-driven capitalism was at odds with grassroots democratic planning. Finally, and crucially, all of this happened through the lens of racism and classism. The characteristics residents used (and were encouraged by officials to use) to exert their authority and right to plan—their poorness and blackness—were the very justifications for ultimately ignoring residents. Taken together, this research shows that federal antipoverty programs almost always bolster the middle class and capitalist business ventures, rather than eliminating the causes and alleviating the effects of poverty. Even during the War on Poverty, an apex of federal commitment to experimentation and citizen influence, state officials quickly abandoned their professed pledge to resident control.

Examining Model Cities, I show that residents used the program as an opportunity to reimagine the relationship between poor citizens and the state, offer a clear vision for how this relationship could work, and demonstrate their ability to take the lead in remaking their neighborhoods. Through resident-municipal collaboration, Model Cities neighborhood leaders attempted to make citizen influence over federally-funded antipoverty programs permanent. Ultimately, residents succeeded in convincing local and federal officials that resident

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participation was necessary to the creation of acceptable antipoverty programs, but this victory did not translate to permanent control in urban planning. Instead, I argue that a crucial legacy of the War on Poverty was that federal antipoverty programs mandated citizen participation but confined residents to a strictly advisory role, cutting off poor neighbors' decision-making power. From the mid-seventies onward, citizen participation has been token at best and pernicious and intentionally harmful at worst.

This story of residents' attempts to infiltrate government planning reveals the complicated ways in which state processes maintain the status quo, even when some government officials were initially open to change. Model Cities residents' comprehensive plans were a critique of state power, exposing not only the ways in which the state failed to respond to the needs of citizens, but more importantly the ways in which the state created the impoverished conditions in which working-class and black residents lived. Some theorists see this disconnect between state actions and citizens' needs as a point of crisis; but residents understood that any supposed "crisis" reflected how the state was designed, and their comprehensive plans therefore fought for a fundamental change to the way urban and antipoverty planning was done.[10] The history of Model Cities reflects scholar James Scott's notion that the "hegemonic planning mentality [of governments] excludes the necessary role of local knowledge and know-how."[11]

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[10] Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs, eds., *Citizens and the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4. Similar to residents' understanding of their conditions, Thomas Sugrue's foundational work on twentieth century urban history argues that the "urban crisis" did not begin with the urban uprisings of the 1960s; rather, Sugrue traces the roots of Detroit's problems to political and economic structures that were crafted during and after World War II. He explains that during the Second World War, Detroit's industrial sector expanded, and black workers were able to demand better wages and working conditions. In the decades after the war, however, racialized economic and political policies that favored white suburbanization to the detriment of increasingly black cities spurred deindustrialization, segregation, unemployment, and poverty. See Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit. Princeton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[11] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1998), 6.

When officials realized residents were criticizing state power, state bureaucrats disregarded the citizen input they initially sought out.

Similar to the way the state devalued resident expertise in Model Cities, my research shows that an erasure of the Model Cities program—particularly residents' struggles for power—from historical and policy scholarship has perpetuated the myth that poor urban residents are incapable of remaking their communities. As a corrective to this absence, this dissertation addresses the themes of urban planning, the black freedom struggle, and federal antipoverty initiatives to transform our understanding of grassroots organizing and antipoverty policy.

The complex political and social struggles that occur when competing groups fight to implement plans can only be understood by analyzing urban planning alongside implementation. Urban plans show how professionals intend to shape physical and social space, but studying implementation reveals residents' resistance to conventional planning methods, the results of constrained resources, and the effects of political changes on urban antipoverty programs. My research shows that the very program residents used to assert their power and authority over urban planning, Model Cities, was subsequently used by federal officials to reject legitimate neighborhood control in favor of token, non-influential citizen participation.

Histories of the built environment have taught us how urban planning reflects and shapes social relations, political life, and power dynamics; imagines space; and organizes demographic groups.[12] However, many urban histories focus too heavily on professional planners and their

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[12] A large cohort of historians and architects have written about how the built environment influences and is influenced by social and cultural life in cities. Gwendolyn Wright pioneered an examination of the ways architectural choices shaped and reinforced French colonial control around the world. Eve Blau's work on inter-war Vienna shows that ideological conflict shaped Vienna's urban space. During this time, Vienna built four hundred communal housing blocks, but this socialist building campaign clashed with a more conservative political climate. David Harvey's research on Haussmann's Paris discusses how changes to the built environment can shape and reflect desired social and economic divisions. Harvey shows that Hausmann's plans for Second Empire Paris removed the poor from the central city by destroying low-income neighborhoods and replacing them with wide boulevards. Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of

design process, sidestepping discussions of program implementation. Sometimes, multiple and competing urban plans are analyzed, but it is not always clear what was ultimately carried out and how implementation strayed from plans. Zeynep Çelik, for example, wrote one of the most important histories of urban planning, focusing on colonial Algiers to explain how urban design shaped and reinforced French colonial power. She shows how the state used architecture and urban planning to control colonized spaces. Further, Çelik demonstrated that analyses of urban and architectural plans are foundational to urban histories. In this vein, my dissertation takes residents' urban plans seriously, analyzing them to understand residents' visions for their community. However, after in-depth analyses of architects, urban designers, and their schemes, Çelik only makes passing mention of which plans were implemented, which were discarded, and which never made it past the demolition phase. In many urban histories, residents' responses and resistance to state planning priorities are largely absent.[13]

Histories of American urban planning, such as Carl Smith's work on the 1909 Chicago Plan and Bradford Hunt's research on failed public housing high-rises, also tend to downplay the complexities of carrying out plans, focusing instead on urban planners and their ideas. Histories of urban renewal detail the destruction of poor neighborhoods, but more needs to be said about the complications of implementation and residents' struggles to influence and control the policies

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Chicago Press, 1991); Eve Blau, *The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919-1934* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006). See also Kevin Kruse and Gyan Prakash, eds., *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[13] Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Çelik does briefly discuss the ways Algerian residents used state-sponsored colonial housing complexes as sites of resistance during fights for Algerian independence, but her sources are almost all colonial or secondary sources, meaning we hear very little from residents themselves.

affecting them.[14] This has led to a double silencing of poor, urban residents, first when officials

design and implement programs, and second in urban planning historiography.

Early research on Model Cities followed this pattern of ignoring implementation and

failing to recognize the contributions of residents. Far more policy studies of Model Cities

planning were undertaken than analyses of implementation, obscuring what was actually

executed, residents' role in the program, and why the program failed to make poor

neighborhoods into livable, sustainable communities.[15] The failure to examine Model Cities

program implementation has led to unfair assessments of residents' abilities, with devastating

consequences for resident influence during subsequent government antipoverty programs.

Both in St. Louis and around the country, most analyses of Model Cities blamed the

program's failures on two fundamental problems. First, they rightly pointed to a clear lack of

funding necessary to take on a task as large as remaking an entire neighborhood's physical stock

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[14] See Carl S. Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); D. Bradford Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Daniel M. Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). The bulk of Smith's book details the creation of the Burnham plan and says much less about how the document was implemented. His chapter on implementation focuses more on what was and was not built, rather than the fraught political process of implementation. Hunt's book focuses on the planning and architecture of high-rise public housing to argue that these structures were built to fail. However, he spends little time discussing the politics of how these buildings were run. A focus on the lack of political will to adequately fund public housing in Chicago would have shown that implementation of public housing schemes play an incredibly important role in the success or failure of housing and urban policies. Increasingly, histories of urban planning and policy are analyzing the complexities and contradictions of the implementation of urban plans. See Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects.*

[15] See "Ten Model Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Second Round Planning Years" (Washington, D.C.: HUD Office of Community Development Evaluation Division, July 1973); Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn and United States, eds., *The Model Cities Program: The Planning Process in Atlanta, Seattle, and Dayton*, Praeger Special Studies in U.S. Economic and Social Development (New York: Praeger, 1970); Charles Haar, *Between the Idea and the Reality: A Study in the Origin, Fate, and Legacy of the Model Cities Program* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975). These studies were undertaken by political scientists and urban policy researchers, and many were commissioned by the federal government. Their purpose for research and underlying questions, therefore, were quite different from this historical study. These researchers wanted to know the extent to which program design succeeded and failed and how to shape future legislation. My historical approach, on the other hand, asks deeper questions about underlying purposes behind the program and the ways in which residents tried to shape and control the program. My study focuses on the power dynamics between residents, municipal leaders, and federal officials.

and social services. Most of these researchers agreed that underfunding made it impossible to achieve residents' goal of making their communities livable.[16]

But these same critics simultaneously assumed Model Cities' failure to improve poor neighborhoods proved that resident control over federal antipoverty money was a folly. The only full-length book published on Model Cities was written in 1975 by Charles Haar, a Harvard law professor who helped the Johnson administration design the program. The limitations of Haar's understanding of Model Cities shaped the way the program has been remembered, perpetuating the belief that the program proved citizen participation was impractical.[17] He admitted the program built the capacity of resident organizations but noted warily that "one price of increased citizen participation … was the consequent risk of rising expectations" that could not be met.[18] He implied that residents' heightened demands of their government would lead to anger and possibly more urban uprisings and was therefore not worth the gamble. He had little to say about residents' abilities to carry out the programs they designed. Often, critics would point to neighborhoods' continued decline to argue that residents were incapable of transforming their community due to lack of professional skills and experience. One HUD official claimed, "the Model Cities program demonstrated to everyone that a neighborhood lacking in financial

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[16] As will be discussed in chapter 1, this lack of funding was clear from the program's inception. Congress lowered the appropriations for Model Cities from a proposed $2.3 billion to $900 million, while at the same time increasing the number of recipient cities to 150. See Charles Haar, *Between the Idea and the Reality: A Study in the Origin, Fate, and Legacy of the Model Cities Program* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975).

[17] Bret A. Weber and Amanda Wallace, "Revealing the Empowerment Revolution A Literature Review of the Model Cities Program," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 173–92. Weber and Wallace reviewed the extant literature on Model Cities in 2012. Their article notes a re-emergence in interest in the program has occurred over the last decade, with a specific interest in citizen participation. However, most references to Model Cities are only passing and often portray the program as an after-thought of the War on Poverty.

[18] Charles Haar, *Between the Dream and the Reality*, 202.

resources can not solve its problems by itself … It takes more than federal dollars and an aware citizenry."[19]

The way professionals and city officials in St. Louis remembered the program mirrors Haar's evaluation. One man involved in St. Louis Model Cities through a job at legal services believed residents "became much more sophisticated in terms of … getting additional resources for their neighborhoods when they could. And they were much more organized as a result of the Model Cities program." But he dismissed their competence, saying "they didn't really have the expertise" to create lasting improvements or warrant permanent influence.[20] Another legal aid attorney reflected that he and other local poverty warriors had been naïve to think residents could direct programs, saying "if you ask a group of residents to sit on a board of directors, and basically go to meetings on a regular basis and make decisions, while at the same time trying to hold down a full-time job, trying to raise kids … that's a lot of responsibility."[21] Even though most knew underfunding was the main reason Model Cities could not achieve its lofty goals, critics assumed the Model Cities experiment also proved that citizen control of urban programs was unworkable.[22]

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[19] Marsha Canfield, "Model…" *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 13, 1974. Crucially, after Model Cities, there were no large-scale efforts to revitalize neighborhoods. As I show in chapter 5, Community Development Block Grants, which replaced Model Cities, allowed cities to funnel antipoverty money away from the neediest areas. City and federal officials criticized residents for failing to revitalize their neighborhoods without having a clear conception of how else to tackle the problem of persistent and concentrated poverty. Instead, through block grants, federal officials encouraged municipal leaders to focus on less impoverished areas that had a better chance of improving. Officials therefore criticized residents' efforts without providing alternatives.

[20] Richard Baron, Interview with Author, June 13, 2017.

[21] Peter Salsich, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017.

[22] Robert Kerstein wrote a political science dissertation on St. Louis Model Cities in 1975, and his assessment mirrors those of Charles Haar, Richard Baron, and Peter Salsich. Kerstein downplays the importance of residents' comprehensive plans and their bids for power, but he does explain the long-term effect of marginalizing poor residents' voices: "while federal intervention made local politics look more 'pluralistic,' it actually helped insulate existing centers of power, and made the reallocation of influence or resources an even more remote possibility than before" (7). Robert J. Kerstein, "The Political Consequences of Federal Intervention: The Economic Opportunity Act and Model Cities in the City of St. Louis" (Washington University in St. Louis, 1975).

Studies of civil rights activities in the urban North, Midwest, and West have gained prominence in the last thirty years, and merging urban planning history with research on the black freedom struggle will reorient urban histories that are overly focused on professional planners and planning. Doing so allows for a recovery of residents' voices, their community vision, and their fight to make their vision a reality. The sources historians of the black freedom struggle use—including civil rights organizations' papers, oral histories, and African American periodicals—allow scholars to examine how marginalized communities react to urban planning decisions and assert their own ideas for remaking their communities. Historian Mandi Isaacs Jackson explains that "the struggle for a voice in urban renewal plans defined the civil rights movement in the urban North for a decade."[23] A strong cohort of historians, including Jackson, Matthew Countryman, Heather Ann Thompson, and Robert Self have mapped how civil rights struggles in Northern and Western cities focused on issues of urban planning and federally-funded urban renewal projects.[24]

This dissertation pushes further, arguing that grassroots civil rights activists did not just want to participate in urban renewal planning controlled by the state. Rather, residents' plans presented an incisive critique of profit-oriented urban renewal schemes and were a bid for permanent control over urban planning for their neighborhoods. Residents argued against reliance on professional "experts," asserting that they as residents, not professional planners,

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[23] Mandi Isaacs Jackson, *Model City Blues: Urban Space and Organized Resistance in New Haven* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 64. Blacks living in cities recognized that urban planning decisions had a profound effect on their neighborhoods, their economic opportunities, and their social isolation. They therefore rallied against urban renewal projects that tore down their neighborhoods and increasingly isolated poor communities from the rest of the city. In New Haven, for example, highway construction projects separated black neighborhoods from Yale University, the largest employer in the city.

[24] For histories of urban civil rights movements, see Jackson, *Model City Blues*; Matthew J Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

were best equipped to diagnose problems in their communities and design solutions. My dissertation reveals residents to be self-aware activists, local poverty experts, and capable urban planners.

By examining resident participation in Model Cities, this dissertation depicts urban neighborhood activism as an attempt to consolidate and build on the accomplishments of the civil rights movement. While the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 aimed to eliminate explicit discrimination rampant in the South, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 attempted to undo decades of racist real estate and housing practices.[25] In this context, residents hoped federal officials were committed to making urban living more equitable. Model Cities residents used a creative mixture of tactics, ranging from making alliances with local and federal officials to staging protests against these officials when they abandoned resident control. My research joins that of other scholars who examine the creative campaigns of the late sixties and early seventies, such as the welfare rights movement, where poor residents made claims for control by virtue of their experiences living in impoverished, under-resourced urban communities.

Annelise Orleck's work on women welfare rights activists in Las Vegas provides a model for merging policy history with a grassroots civil rights history. Grounded in oral interviews, Orleck uncovers the process by which welfare recipients recognized that their identity as poor mothers could be used to build a coalition to force local and federal officials to cede some money and control to grassroots leaders. Their efforts culminated in unprecedented citizen control over state antipoverty money and the creation of a community center that included day care, job

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[25] Nancy Denton, "Half Empty or Half Full: Segregation and Segregated Neighborhoods 30 Years After the Fair Housing Act," *Cityscape* 4, no. 3 (1999): 107–22; Gregory D Squires, ed., *The Fight for Fair Housing: Causes, Consequences, and Future Implications of the 1968 Federal Fair Housing Act* (New York: Routledge, 2018). The Fair Housing Act outlawed discrimination and residential segregation. Like Model Cities, it was hailed as a significant step toward undoing decades of racist housing policies. However, the law lacked enforcement provisions and did not deal with the cumulative effects of past discrimination, so the act was mostly symbolic until enforcement provisions were added in 1988.

training, and medical services. This dissertation recovers similar initiatives undertaken by St.

Louis residents during the Model Cities program. Whereas Orleck's historical subjects used their

identity as poor mothers to win control over antipoverty funds, Model Cities leaders in St. Louis

used their lived experience and understanding of place to prove that poor community leaders

were astute urban planners and political actors.[26]

St. Louis provides a crucial and understudied setting to examine citizen participation,

grassroots planning, and antipoverty programs. St. Louis's model neighborhood residents were

particularly successful at gaining control over Model Cities planning, so their activities provide

an important window into the structure and priorities of low-income, grassroots organizations.

This activism was particularly significant because, at least for a few years, municipal officials

partnered with residents and promoted neighborhood control. Further, while there are several key

studies of civil rights activities in St. Louis, there is relatively little research on low-income,

grassroots neighborhood activism during the civil rights era. Keona Ervin's important research

focuses on black women labor activists, concentrating mostly on workplace and union activities

from the thirties to mid-sixties. Clarence Lang's study of civil rights activism in St. Louis skews

toward middle-class and mainstream organizations, such as the Congress of Racial Equality, and

says less about activism in the Model Cities neighborhood.[27] Lang mentions residents' protests

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[26] Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 6. Orleck's research shows that long after federal officials abandoned the large-scale antipoverty programs of the late sixties, poor people themselves organized to carry out their own vision for alleviating poverty and hardship in their communities. For more on the welfare rights movement, see Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) and Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[27] Keona Ervin, *Gateway to Equality: Black Women and the Struggle for Economic Justice in St. Louis* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2017); Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics and Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009). See also: Priscilla A. Dowden-White, *Groping Toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1910-1949* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011); William B. Helmreich, *The Black Crusaders: A Case Study of a Black Militant Organization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

against unpopular War on Poverty policies and discusses some Model Cities battles at the municipal level, but neighborhood leaders are left out of the story.[28] By examining Model Cities, I trace grassroots activism for the duration of an influential antipoverty program.

This study focuses on resident organizing in St. Louis, and in doing so my research speaks to global patterns of urban grassroots activism. Claiming expertise by virtue of their experiences living in poor neighborhoods, Model Cities resident activism reflects French urban theorist Henri Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city. Lefebvre's right to the city is a call for a renewed access to urban life. He and later David Harvey wrote about reclaiming urban space for residents and resisted the takeover of urban space by private and semi-private entities.[29] From student demonstrations in Paris, uprisings in American cities, and demonstrations for reform in Prague, all in 1968, residents around the world claimed authority over their neighborhoods and tried to take control over the decisions affecting their communities.[30]

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[28] Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway*, 193-196; 230-31. Lang only mentions neighborhood groups when their power waned, saying that after the city took more control of Model Cities in 1969, "neighborhood corporations subsequently lost their planning and operating autonomy, and their input into policy." Most of the model neighborhood organizations and leaders get no mention in Lang's book.

[29] Urban theorists Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey explain the concept of the right to the city is an anti-capitalist attempt to transfer power of urban planning from private businesses and government back to the people. Harvey wrote, "the freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights." David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53 (October 2008); David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, Paperback edition (London ; New York: Verso, 2013); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Rev. ed, 1 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009); Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000). St. Louis Model Cities residents' vision was not an explicit rejection of capitalism, but their plans laid bare the ways in which the American capitalist economy systematically excluded poor people of color from fully participating in society. Similar to grassroots urban movements around the world, Model Cities residents in St. Louis fought for autonomy and control over decisions affecting their neighborhood. In Europe and North America, for example, squatter-activists "search[ed] for autonomy in housing and the built form, and [had] a desire to assemble, organize and sustain their own spaces." Alexander Vasudevan, *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting* (London: Verso, 2017), 9. See also Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). In this analysis of urban grassroots movements, Castells places African American civil rights struggles in the 1960s (from War on Poverty-related organizing to urban rebellions) within a long line of urban movements, including South American colonial revolts against Spanish colonial rule in the 1500s, the 1871 Paris Commune, and early twentieth-century tenant revolts in Mexico.

[30] Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Politics of Detente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 164-212.

Harvey's right to the city entailed an explicit revolutionary and anticapitalistic underpinning, and although St. Louis residents' concept of community control came from similar global impulses, their ideas took a different form. Residents' vision for power was based on partnerships between autonomous resident organizations and municipal institutions. Model Cities activists hoped to use federal money to fundamentally change the way urban planning and antipoverty programs were carried out, casting themselves as community experts and state-sanctioned policymakers. Instead of calling for an overthrow of capitalism, for example, residents criticized the racist effects of American economic policy and made plans to control entrepreneurship and jobs programs. Though perhaps not as radical as Harvey's right to the city, they still advocated for a complete remaking of the relationship between poor citizens and the state. St. Louis activists wrote their comprehensive plans in the summer of 1968, the exact moment that urban protests were raging around the United States and the world, and crucially, they were all striving for the same goal: "greater democratic control over the production and use of" resources, or a right to the city.[31]

Finally, this dissertation alters our understanding of state antipoverty initiatives, particularly Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, the largest state-sponsored economic intervention since the New Deal. In War on Poverty literature, Model Cities and HUD have received relatively little attention from researchers.[32] Many scholars mistakenly dismiss Model Cities as a program that accomplished almost nothing and had little citizen participation.[33]

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[31] David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53 (October 2008).

[32] For a fuller discussion of the historiography of the Model Cities program, see: Bret A. Weber and Amanda Wallace, "Revealing the Empowerment Revolution: A Literature Review of the Model Cities Program," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 173–92. Weber and Wallace's review of Model Cities research shows that the majority of scholarship dismisses the program's importance. This dissertation joins a growing cohort that has renewed interest in Model Cities, particularly in citizen participation.

[33] This misconception probably came from the differences in citizen participation language. The Office of Economic Opportunity's Community Action Program called for "maximum feasible participation," whereas the Model Cities legislation required only "widespread citizen participation." However, this rhetorical difference was less visible in

Historian Elizabeth Hinton, for example, says that Model Cities was "a decisive retreat" from citizen participation.[34] Similarly, Colin Gordon asserted that local "planners [in St. Louis] viewed Model Cities as just another sluice for federal funds." While this was initially true, Gordon neglects to note that residents in St. Louis and elsewhere forced their way into the planning process, designed substantially different goals and programs, and fought to carry out their vision.[35] These scholars fall into the same trap as urban planning historians who focus on top-down planning to the detriment of implementation, missing the ways residents in St. Louis and other cities used experiences from earlier War on Poverty programs to gain more control over antipoverty planning and attempted to carve out a permanent role in city planning.

Scholarship on the War on Poverty's citizen participation almost exclusively examines the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and its controversial Community Action Program (CAP). This is the case despite the fact that the OEO no longer exists (its programs have been shuttered or moved to other agencies), whereas HUD still operates the program that replaced Model Cities: Community Development Block Grants. Further, funding levels for the two programs were similar, with the Economic Opportunity Act allocating $1.2 billion over three years and the Model Cities legislation providing $900 million.[36] By centering HUD and Model

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practice. In fact, St. Louis residents won more control over Model Cities than CAP programs because they were able to build on experience they got through CAPs. For a further discussion of citizen participation language in War on Poverty programs, see chapter 1.

[34] Elizabeth Hinton, "'A War within Our Own Boundaries': Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State," *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (June 1, 2015), 106.

[35] Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 176. Gordon's discussion of Model Cities only examines the initial planning phase and therefore neglects to analyze residents' successful bid to control Model Cities planning, residents' comprehensive plans, and the fate of community-controlled antipoverty programs.

[36] Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg508.pdf; Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-80/pdf/STATUTE-80-Pg1255.pdf . Model Cities allocations were more concentrated, allowing a larger sum to go to individual neighborhoods, though critics argued that Model Cities grants were still not generous enough to mount a comprehensive attack on poverty in the model neighborhoods. See chapter 1.

Cities, this dissertation reveals the complex legacies of mid-century urban planning, citizen participation, and antipoverty initiatives.

War on Poverty research initially focused on the OEO's federal legislative and policy battles.[37] More recently, Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gale Hazirjian compiled case studies of grassroots activism in the War on Poverty. These scholars analyzed resident groups around the country that teamed up with the OEO to create antipoverty programs that operated separate from municipal government. Overall, these studies found that while some resident organizations functioned with a high degree of autonomy, their influence was short-lived.

This literature posits that citizen participation and the War on Poverty waned for two related reasons. First, a series of controversies over spending—one of the most infamous involved a CAP program in Chicago that provided education and job training to gang members—discredited CAPs and by extension the concept of citizen participation. Second, mayors used these scandals to criticize CAPs for operating outside of the municipal structure and undermining city authority.[38] According to this scholarship, citizen participation fell out of favor with federal policymakers only a couple years into the War on Poverty.[39] Orleck and Hazirjian discuss the continuation of War on Poverty programs into the twenty-first century to conclude that the Great Society had a much larger impact than is conventionally acknowledged. However,

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[37] For top-down studies of the War on Poverty and the Great Society, see Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989); Sidney M Milkis and Jerome M Mileur, eds., *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005); and Julian E Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society* (New York: Penguin Press, 2015).
[38] Memo from Bill Farrell Re: The Woodlawn Organization's $927,000 Manpower Demonstration Grant Which Involves Two Chicago Gangs, January 6, 1968, Box 31 Folder WE 9 1/3/68 – 1/22/68, WHCF Subject Files WE 9, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter LBJ Library); John Hall Fish, *Black Power/White Control: The Struggle of the Woodlawn Organization in Chicago*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1973).
[39] For grassroots histories of the War on Poverty, see Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011) and Nancy A. Naples, *Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty* (New York ; London: Routledge, 1998).

their conclusion does not discuss the fate of the War on Poverty's federally-funded citizen participation.[40]

This dissertation shows that the decline of CAPs did not mean federal policymakers rejected citizen participation wholesale. An examination of other War on Poverty programs with significant citizen participation enables scholars to examine policymakers' reactions to CAPs and efforts to hone and institutionalize citizen participation standards at the local and national level.[41] Learning from CAPs, HUD's Model Cities provided grants to municipalities to create comprehensive programs that attacked the social and physical challenges of an urban neighborhood. St. Louis's Model Cities program was an exemplar of a federally-funded, resident-dominated antipoverty initiative that fostered democratic urban planning in poor communities. An analysis of Model Cities in St. Louis therefore alters our understanding of War on Poverty citizen participation and its legacy. This study pushes researchers to look beyond the OEO to deepen our understanding of community participation in the War on Poverty. Doing so shows that experiments with citizen participation in federal antipoverty programs did not end with CAPs. Model Cities was an attempt by both federal officials and resident leaders to alter the citizen participation initiated in CAPs, make participation more palatable to municipal officials, and install resident power as a lasting feature of federal antipoverty initiatives.[42]

However, this dissertation also examines how and why federal officials soured on the citizen control, once they saw how citizens' plans differed from conventional urban programs. I

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[40] I use the terms Great Society and War on Poverty interchangeably.

[41] See Gale Schmunk Murray, "Taming the War on Poverty: Memphis as a Case Study," *Journal of Urban History* 43, no. 1 (2017): 70–90. By analyzing both VISTA and CAPs in Memphis, Murray shows that focusing solely on CAPs gives an incomplete picture of the War on Poverty. Murray argues that an analysis of both CAPs and VISTA argues that the most successful War on Poverty programs avoided the explicit discussion of race.

[42] The transition from real citizen participation to tokenism happened once federal officials confronted residents' plans and saw residents' specific ideas for controlling federal dollars. Until policymakers came face to face with residents' plans, they remained committed to the concept of citizen participation and control.

show that the St. Louis government's attempt to salvage meaningful citizen participation in Model Cities challenges conventional scholarly assumptions that federal officials had to induce their local counterparts to accept resident leadership in War on Poverty programs. Most histories of the War on Poverty highlight the antagonistic relationships between resident activists and city government. Historian Alice O'Connor's portrayal of citizen participation in CAPs focuses primarily on the federal officials who spearheaded citizen participation guidelines. Orleck and Hazirjian's compilation highlights instances in which residents and city officials were at odds.[43] The history of Model Cities in St. Louis, however, shows that in at least some places, city leaders sided with resident groups when federal officials abandoned citizen participation. As the first city to submit comprehensive plans for Model Cities funding, the St. Louis case shows that once the city government accepted the reality of citizen participation, the mayor and the MCA fought to maintain resident control. In St. Louis, the municipal government only fell in line behind federal mandates for decreased citizen participation after a multi-million-dollar penalty.

A note on my use of the terms "citizen participation" or "legitimate resident influence" is also necessary. One of the main purposes of my dissertation is to examine a time in which resident participation meant that local citizens had direct influence or control over antipoverty programs in their neighborhoods. I measure the "legitimacy" of this citizen participation the same way poverty researcher Sherry Arnstein does. Born in New York City and raised in California, Arnstein entered the public policy world in 1963 as a consultant for the Kennedy Administration's President's Commission on Juvenile Delinquency. She subsequently worked to desegregate hospitals, and in Johnson's presidency she developed HUD's citizen participation

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[43] See Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

standards.[44] Arnstein's 1969 "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" presented a spectrum of citizen

control, based on the degree of decision-making and implementation power residents are able to

achieve. Her article has been translated into at least five languages and has been reprinted over

eighty times. She first discusses the lowest rungs of the citizen participation ladder, which she

labels "non participation." Here, residents are told they are able to influence programs in order to

placate their desire for control, only to be systematically ignored and shut out of decision-making

power. In the middle lies tokenism, in which residents are sometimes given an advisory role, but

they do not have power to significantly influence decisions and outcomes. Federal

conceptualizations of citizen participation in the mid-sixties initially looked like this "non

participation." Historian Alice O'Connor confirms that many poverty researchers thought

resident participation should be "therapeutic," a mechanism for residents to express their

frustrations, not the more overtly political participation that gained prominence through CAPs

and Model Cities.[45] Resident activists had to fight to bring citizen participation from these

passive phases into more powerful forms.

At the highest rungs of the ladder, Arnstein describes several situations in which "citizen

power" can be achieved, through equal power-sharing between resident groups and city officials

or citizen control over decision-making. In Cleveland's mostly black Hough neighborhood, for

example, a citizen-run community development organization won a $1.8 million OEO grant to

carry out projects they designed, including a public housing project alongside a shopping center.

When I speak of "legitimate" or "real" citizen participation, I am referencing the highest rungs of

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[44] Model Cities residents seemed to trust Arnstein. In Philadelphia, Model Cities residents told their story of how the city government manipulated Model Cities through an article Arnstein authored. See chapter 4 for further detail. Sherry Arnstein, "Maximum Feasible Manipulation," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 377–90.
[45] See Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), chapter 3.

Arnstein's ladder. Arnstein determined that St. Louis Model Cities planning reached the second highest rung of citizen control, "dominant decision-making," though I find this high-point was fleeting; by the time of implementation, residents' power had been cut off first by federal directives and then by municipal policy.[46]

To examine the top of Arnstein's ladder, I needed to speak with residents who could help me understand the day-to-day challenges of designing and controlling antipoverty programs. Despite Yvonne Sparks' warning that unsuccessful federal programs contributed to the premature death of poor St. Louisans and their neighborhoods, she suggested people to contact, eventually leading to seven interviews with residents who remembered and were involved in Model Cities: two black men, two black women, and three white Mennonites. These interviews did what the vast majority of the archival record could not: provide information and insights on Model Cities and neighborhood activism separate from municipal archives. [47]

When a lack of archival material, not an overabundance, is usually what challenges historians, it seems ungrateful to bemoan an excess of sources. As I was immersed in the research process, community members and advisers suggested more and more places to look for information. On the one hand I appreciated this advice—which often led to interesting discoveries—but sometimes I felt myself becoming overwhelmed by archival possibilities. I

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[46] "Climbing the Ladder: A Look at Sherry R. Arnstein," *American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine,* Vol. 9, No. 7/8, July/August 2015; Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (July 1969): 216–35; Daniel Kerr, *Derelict Paradise: Homeless and Urban Development in Cleveland, Ohio* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 172. The Hough Area Community Development Corporation began as an explicit attempt to stop "white outsiders" from encroaching on the neighborhood.

[47] Oral histories have been crucial to civil rights and welfare rights research for decades. See Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). For discussions of urban subaltern resistance, see: Asef Bayat, "From 'Dangerous Classes' to 'Quiet Rebels': Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South," *International Sociology* 15, no. 3 (September 2000): 533–57.

could envision falling into the trap of thinking I had to "finish" my archival work—uncover all pertinent archives and sources—before I could begin, let alone finish, the writing process.

I was fortunate to have easy access to several sets of papers crucial to my dissertation. The urban planning records at the National Archives in College Park and at the Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon Libraries were very well structured. On the municipal level, well-maintained mayoral papers contained more than enough information for me to glean an understanding of Model Cities in St. Louis. Though the vast majority of this material related exclusively to governmental processes, there were enough documents written by residents to begin evaluating residents' roles in government antipoverty programs. Well-organized, these were the kinds of records I was used to working with, and I wrongly assumed they accurately reflected the way government programs worked.

What attuned me most sharply to the reality of the bureaucratic processes I was studying, however, were the Model City Association papers housed at the St. Louis Mercantile Library. When I contacted the archivist Charles Brown, he told me there were probably over a hundred boxes in the storage room. For the most part they had never been used, however, because they had not been organized or processed. Some of the boxes contained personal information, so Mr. Brown had to go through each piece of paper in a box, redacting any private data, before I could use them.[48] We developed a system in which I would give Mr. Brown key words or topics (such as the neighborhood corporations, resident newsletters, names of resident leaders, or housing programs), and he would look for boxes containing this information. This process, though undoubtedly time-consuming for Mr. Brown, would have worked fairly well had it been easy to

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[48] In fact, I visited the Mercantile Library once during my first year of graduate school. At this initial visit, Mr. Brown told me I could look at whatever I wanted in the Model Cities collection. However, in the two years between my first visit and the beginning of my dissertation research, a student found a social security number on a document, causing the entire collection to be closed until archivists could look through the boxes for personal information.

find anything. More often than not, labels on boxes and folders did not correspond with the information they contained. The files whose contents and labels matched seemed like the last thing I would want to spend my days looking at: boxes upon boxes of proposed contracts, revised contracts, and draft copies for new programs. It was almost never clear who wrote these documents or which plans moved past the draft phase, and residents' voices were missing from most of these files. The resident-centered topics that interested me did not seem to warrant a label. It felt as though a sort of bureaucratic noise was covering up residents' clear visions and their valiant efforts to implement their plans.

The silences in my archives were not due to a lack of documentation, but rather to an overabundance of certain kinds of material and the paucity of others. In some ways, the residents in this study did an excellent job of inserting themselves into the municipal process and, by extension, the archives. Though few and far between, neighborhood newsletters, correspondence with city and federal officials, and meeting minutes all gave direct voice to residents. True to the nature of Model Cities in St. Louis, residents' voices were more prominent in Model Cities files than in most other urban planning documentation. Along with my oral history interviews, there were certainly enough sources to craft an argument. At the same time though, these glimpses indicated that, compared to the entirety of the archival record on Model Cities, there was little to be heard directly from residents, especially as residents lost influence after 1969. Since municipal and federal records were a large part of the story I wanted to tell—they were, of course, two thirds of the federal-municipal-resident relationship I was studying—I had to stop myself from letting residents fall by the wayside.

To prevent myself from letting my dissertation morph in to a study of the relationship among white officials at different levels of government, I came back to Natalie Zemon Davis's

article, "The Silences of the Archives," which I read my first semester of graduate school.[49] As an Americanist writing about a government program at a time in which typewriters and photocopiers existed and some historical actors were still alive, I would never run out of research options. But Davis's article reminded me to go back to my fundamental purpose, giving me a way to drown out the cacophony and find the whispers. Forcing myself to focus on my intended subjects—residents—instead of simply what I was finding most easily, gave me purpose. It made me grateful for the suggestions of archives that were off the beaten track. It redoubled my commitment to oral history interviews, which showed the persistence of neighbors' visions into the present day. I re-conceptualized my project in a way that fit into global urban history. The challenge of this dissertation was resisting the narratives the archives professed most loudly, those of municipal and federal government. I show how residents' demands, which in the archives came through often only as whispers, change our understanding of urban planning and civil rights history.

My dissertation begins by tracing the context leading up to the Model Cities legislation. In chapter 1, I discuss the history of urban renewal, with an attention to residents' efforts to curtail the demolition of their neighborhoods. Residents' protests led some government officials to gradually realize that urban renewal often did not help poor communities. I analyze the first two years of the War on Poverty and the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to understand the ways in which the 1966 Model Cities legislation was intended to fix the flaws of previous urban renewal and antipoverty programs. I show that at the inception of the program, the federal government felt that part of their duty was to make sure

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[49] Natalie Davis, "The Silences of the Archive, The Renown of the Story," in *Historical Knowledge: In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence*, ed. Susanna Fellman and Marjatta Rahikainen (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).

local Model Cities bureaucracies took resident activism seriously. In turn, residents pushed to control Model Cities.

In chapter 2, my dissertation turns to Model Cities planning in St. Louis, which had particularly active resident leadership. This local focus reveals the ways in which resident control over planning yielded radically different priorities from conventional urban renewal. In the summer of 1968, after years of organizing and planning, resident-controlled neighborhood organizations in St. Louis submitted their comprehensive plans to HUD for funding, showing residents' clear vision of their value in urban planning. They claimed expertise and their right to plan for their community by virtue of their experience living in the Model Cities neighborhoods. Their plans rejected conventional urban renewal and instead promoted a vision of community control and independence through self-sustaining housing and entrepreneurship programs. Resident proposals eschewed programs run by municipal agencies, arguing that city departments such as the Land Clearance Authority had for decades exacerbated affordable housing shortages through wholesale clearance in urban renewal projects. Challenging the federal government's cult of the professional expert, residents forcefully, and in some cases successfully, entreated officials at all levels of government to defer to residents' plans.

Chapter 3 charts government officials' reactions to St. Louis's resident-authored Model Cities plans to analyze state conceptions of citizen participation on a national level. Officials continued to call for citizen participation rhetorically, but their actions revealed their unwillingness to cede control to poor residents of color. This painful transition from Model Cities planning to implementation demonstrated that federal officials were ultimately committed to maintaining the status quo in urban power relations. Despite a backlash from St. Louis

residents and city officials against decreases to neighborhood power, when implementation began, residents no longer had the right to control Model Cities.

Chapter 4 examines residents' efforts to retain control over their vision and the day-to-day implementation of Model Cities programs. Only by looking at implementation is it possible to understand how citizen participation fell apart, through institutional barriers amid residents' dogged determination to adhere to their vision. I evaluate how residents reacted to the federal government's betrayal of citizen participation. Residents tried a variety of tactics, from working within these new constraints to outright protest. Amid some isolated victories, residents in St. Louis and other Model Cities were unable to carry out the remaking of their neighborhoods into livable working-class communities. Crucially, though, resident organizations in St. Louis remained autonomous and true to their vision for their community.

The final chapter evaluates the fate of citizen participation through an examination of the Community Development Block Grant program. Shaped in reaction to Model Cities, block grants relinquished a large degree of control of federally funded urban programs to city governments, and in doing so the program intentionally undermined residents' collective power. First implemented during the Gerald Ford presidency, residents quickly realized that block grants stunted the potential for citizen control in urban planning. This chapter explains why Model Cities could not sustain resident control and the impact of this failure on future urban policy to the present-day.

Chapter 1

"Neighborhood Power": The War on Poverty and the Creation of Model Cities [1]

When asked about the origins of neighborhood organizing in North St. Louis, Cecil

Miller insisted it all started with a controversy surrounding aardvarks.[2] Miller, a white

Mennonite from Kansas, moved to the predominantly black Jeff-Vander-Lou area with his wife

as part of a Mennonite mission. He explained that in 1966, residents of this North City St. Louis

neighborhood mobilized to oppose a municipal bond issue that, among other things, allocated

money to build animal habitats for the St. Louis Zoo.[3] As Martin Luther King, Jr. led a campaign

just a few hundred miles north in Chicago to expose the dire living conditions of urban blacks

and attack housing discrimination, Jeff-Vander-Lou residents laid out their argument: "As

responsible citizens of the City of St. Louis, we recognize the urgent need for a bond issue …

However," they continued, "again as responsible citizens, we must also protest against our

explicit exclusion from the benefits of said bond issue." They reasoned, "since the city sees fit to

allocate $1,500,000 for lions, aardvarks and armadillos at the St. Louis Zoo, it would seem

reasonable and humane to allow at least 10 times—if not more—money for the [Jeff-Vander-

Lou] district, in which 70,000 citizens make their homes."[4]

Fifty years of federal policies and local urban planning decisions resulted in a racially

segregated, rapidly declining North St. Louis. In the mid-sixties, the neighborhoods directly

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[1] "Mayor Outlines His Model City Idea to Visitors," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 6, 1967, Series 1 Box 77 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA. St. Louis mayor Alfonso Cervantes used the term neighborhood power to describe the authority resident groups would have in Model Cities planning.

[2] In this time period, this neighborhood was referred to both as Jeff-Vander-Lou and Yeatman.

[3] Cecil Miller, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017. Miller, who moved to St. Louis shortly after the bond issue controversy in 1967, became active in the Jeff-Vander-Lou organization and served as leader Macler Shepard's lieutenant.

[4] "City-Wide Group to be Set Up to Guide Spending if Bond Passes," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 28, 1966; For more information on Dr. King's Chicago campaign, see: James R Ralph, Jr., *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 92-130.

North and West of the central business district, including Jeff-Vander-Lou, were home to over 70,000 people, about three quarters of whom were black. The area had twice the population density, twice the unemployment rate, and twice as many substandard housing units as the rest of the city. Similar to many poor neighborhoods around the country, St. Louis officials found that this "area has up to now been (generally) the forgotten part of the redevelopment of St. Louis."[5] Some residents maintained a positive view of their neighborhood, remembering, "it was a bustling community. That was a pretty well-kept neighborhood in the beginning."[6] Other neighbors agreed with city officials, believing "the neighborhood was just as bad [as it is today]. The houses were in bad condition, there was a lot of crime in the neighborhood."[7] One resident recalled, "there was garbage, there was rats, there was cockroaches … It was the forgotten part of the city." Some residents slept in their cars "because it was so awful inside" the buildings."[8] But all agreed the mid-sixties brought a unique atmosphere of possibility and optimism to the neighborhood, due to nationwide civil rights activities.

To publicize their opposition to the bond issue, Jeff-Vander-Lou residents protested at events where Mayor Alfonso Cervantes tried to gather support for the bond issue. Residents argued that if zoo animals deserved better habitats, St. Louis's human residents also deserved money to improve their neighborhoods. Their strategy was effective. Though the newspaper reported that the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood was the only community to officially oppose the bond issue, the ballot initiative failed.

The defeat of the bond issue put Jeff-Vander-Lou residents in a position of increased power and influence. Hubert Schwartzentruber, another white Mennonite who operated a church

[5] A Proposal for Technical Assistance: A Study of the Economic Development Potential of a Target Area of Saint Louis with substantial long-term unemployment, Series 1 Box 40 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[6] Daniel Jackson, Interview with Author, November 16, 2017.
[7] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.
[8] Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.

in the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood, recalled that two days after the vote, Mayor Cervantes approached Macler Shepard, Jeff-Vander-Lou's revered leader, complimented the residents' efforts, and asked what could be done to improve the neighborhood. Shepard mentioned the need for street lights, and Schwartzentruber remembered, "within six or eight weeks, there were new lights put in." To signal that the city government was responding directly to the organization's campaign, "the very first light … was right in front of the Jeff-Vander-Lou office."[9]

Residents' experience protesting the bond issue taught them two important lessons. First, their protests could force the municipal government to make concessions to the neighborhood. Second, staking a claim based on neighborhood residence, or place, was an effective means of consolidating support and asserting authority that would translate to control in War on Poverty planning. Jeff-Vander-Lou's success at the polls was an impressive feat by itself, and subsequent events revealed the increasing influence poor residents had over city governments around the country in the late sixties.

One product of this unique climate was a new federal program designed to rebuild cities and fight poverty. HUD's Model Cities, crafted by Lyndon Johnson administration poverty warriors, aimed to fix ailing neighborhoods by combining federal grants to cities with a focus on antipoverty. It was a course correction for, but not a total rejection of, urban renewal. The design of Model Cities recognized the flaws of the first fifteen years of urban renewal while still upholding the ideology of federal intervention. Federal officials hoped citizen participation and comprehensive planning would improve poor Americans' lives and neighborhoods. Residents contended the new programs, instead of following the schemes of urban planners, should remake the urban landscape according to the needs and aspirations of the people living in low-income

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[9] Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017.

urban neighborhoods. Model Cities, rather than tearing urban neighborhoods apart, would empower residents to reimagine how poor neighborhoods should look, what resources should be available in them, and who should be in control.

Model Cities linked the spatial reorganization of American cities to the political empowerment of the civil rights generation. Building on civil rights activism and personally affected by the dislocation that went hand in hand with urban renewal, residents wanted to use Model Cities to change urban power structures. They called for resident control of planning in neighborhoods that had been negatively affected by decades of federal urban policies. Model Cities citizen participation rules enabled poor residents to pursue their city planning agenda.

But conflicts among residents' visions, city priorities, and federal concerns were ever-present. The program was roiled by tensions between residents and public officials, even as these individuals forged tense but productive partnerships. Resident leaders of Model Cities saw urban renewal differently than federal officials, knowing from personal experience that urban renewal masqueraded as a solution to poverty but in reality merely displaced the poor and destroyed their communities; consequently their goals for Model Cities would differ as well.

The Roots of Model Cities: New Deal-Era Urban Policy and Civil Rights Struggles in St. Louis

As in urban areas around the country, a combination of local customs and federal guidelines drove residential segregation, housing discrimination, and population decline in St. Louis. In terms of population and geography, the most fateful decision in St. Louis's history was the split between St. Louis City and County as a result of the 1876 Missouri Constitutional Convention. This severed city-county tie made St. Louis's borders permanent, so the city could

not expand as residents moved away from the city core. In 1936 St. Louis city planner Harland

Bartholomew predicted, "if adequate measures are not taken, the city is faced with gradual

economic and social collapse. The old central areas of the city are being abandoned and this

insidious trend will continue until the entire city is engulfed."[10] The city-county split led to an

intense competition for residents, funding, resources, tax base, and business investment.

From the early twentieth century, racial segregation in housing flourished due to a

mixture of government policies and private practices. New Deal public housing was not only

explicitly segregated, it often separated previously integrated neighborhoods. Secretary of the

Interior Harold Ikes, a black liberal, secured one-third of the Public Works Administration's

(PWA) public housing units for blacks, but he did not push for residential integration. Even the

PWA projects built in integrated neighborhoods were segregated. In St. Louis's DeSoto Carr

area (called Carr-Central during Model Cities), officials demolished an integrated neighborhood

to construct racially segregated public housing apartments. By the late sixties, this neighborhood

was almost completely black.[11]

New Deal institutions also fueled middle-class migration to the suburbs, trapped blacks in

urban centers, and made African American homeownership extremely difficult. Federal home

loan and real estate development policies encouraged white middle-class families to move to

suburbs and pursue homeownership. The Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC), established

in 1933, gave neighborhoods A-D ratings based on surveys of occupation, income, building

conditions, and ethnicity. Black neighborhoods were almost always awarded the lowest HOLC

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[10] St. Louis City Plan Commission, Urban Land Policy (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis City Plan Commission, 1936), 7.
[11] Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 21-22. Rothstein's book explains that while individual choices and the real estate industry contributed to racially segregation housing patterns, the role of the federal government in explicitly promoting housing segregation cannot be ignored. His book lays bare the powerful web of federal policies that explicitly and implicitly constrained black Americans' housing choices and led to an unprecedented era of racially-segregated housing that the nation has just begun to grapple with.

rating, making it difficult for blacks to qualify for mortgages. In fact, assessor's manuals explicitly stated that neighborhoods with significant numbers of black residents were at higher risk. By 1937 the HOLC had given what would become the entire St. Louis Model Cities target area the lowest "D" rating.[12]

Alongside the HOLC, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) established minimum standards for home construction and focused on building in the suburbs. Based on HOLC ratings and other appraisals, they barred, or redlined, entire sections of cities from being eligible for federally-backed housing loans, making home ownership for blacks, especially in segregated neighborhoods, incredibly difficult. Even when black residents did achieve home ownership in segregated neighborhoods, FHA rules denied residents the funds necessary to keep their houses from disrepair. Lifelong St. Louis resident Deanetta James recalled these federal policies. She and her husband owned a home at 2724 Sheridan (within the Model Cities boundaries) that needed roof repairs. She explained, "we could not get a loan because the whole area was redlined … No one would lend us any money."[13]

As the federal government promoted segregation in public housing, private real estate agencies maximized profits by encouraging segregation. Until the Supreme Court ruled the

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[12] Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 64; Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 94; Amy E. Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation," *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 4 (May 2003), 394. Rothstein found that the all-white St. Louis suburb of Ladue was labeled most desirable explicitly due to its lack of black inhabitants, whereas a similar suburb was said to have no value due to its black residents. Amy Hillier argues that historians' discussion of HOLC maps have overstated their significance in redlining. She argues that the HOLC maps did more to institutionalize the disinvestment already occurring in non-white working-class neighborhoods. Hillier shows that "the HOLC did not practice redlining through its own lending program." Further, HOLC maps were not widely disseminated. But nevertheless, these maps reflected which areas of the city were not receiving investment and assistance.
[13] Deanetta James, Interview with the St. Louis NGA History Project, c. 2016, https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/project-connect/nga/history/interviews/deanetta-james.cfm. This interview is part of an oral history collection initiated by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's redevelopment project within the Model Cities neighborhood. Residents have met this project with skepticism and resistance. They are hoping to ensure that the construction of this facility in their neighborhood does not spur displacement and gentrification. The oral history project is part of the community relations component of this construction project. See the Afterword for further discussion of this project.

practice illegal in the 1948 St. Louis-based *Shelley v. Kraemer* case, homeowners on residential

blocks could enter into restrictive racial covenants to keep black families from moving into white

areas.[14] The combination of housing covenants and the FHA's lending policies made home

ownership for black people in urban neighborhoods all but impossible.[15]

The St. Louis region's population patterns reflected federal disinvestment from cities and

were indicative of challenges facing urban communities around the country by the mid-twentieth

century. In the first half of the century, St. Louis's population increased due to European

immigration and black migration from the rural South, peaking at 857,000 in 1950. But by the

close of World War II this trend was reversing. Between 1950 and 2000, St. Louis City lost on

average ten thousand residents per year.[16] After racialized lending policies enticed middle-class

whites to move out of cities, national highway legislation facilitated suburban living by making

commuting simpler.[17] Demographic shifts followed a pattern of federal investment that favored

suburban development over urban living and white consumers over black homeowners in the

middle decades of the twentieth century. It was federal housing and highway policies, often

encouraged by real estate developers, that created racially-segregated housing markets across the

nation.[18]

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[14] "Shelley v. Kraemer," https://www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/334us1.
[15] For a detailed account of the racialized federal policies that facilitated suburban expansion to the detriment of cities, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Federal priorities geared toward suburbs fueled fears that racial integration in urban neighborhoods would decrease property values.
[16] Gordon, *Mapping Decline,* 15, 23. US Census, https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/1950_fast_facts.html, http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/29510. In the 1950 census, St. Louis City's population peaked at around 857,000 residents. By contrast, in 2015 the population dropped to about 316,000.
[17] National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, 1956, https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=88&page=transcript.
[18] For a detailed account of the ways the federal government encouraged demographic and economic movement to the suburbs, see Lisabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

Throughout the St. Louis region, black workers faced a host of barriers to decent-paying jobs. In 1930, almost 14,000 of 17,000 black women workers were employed in domestic service. 12,500 black men worked in manufacturing and mechanical positions and about 8,700 had domestic service jobs, out of a total of 33,000. By 1950, of the 109,024 blacks employed in the St. Louis region, a mere eight percent held skilled jobs. Most of these workers were employed in domestic positions and as common laborers. The gross average yearly income for black St. Louisans was only 58% of white workers' earnings, and their unemployment rate was 15% in 1954, more than 2.5 times higher than their white counterparts. This economic reality, combined with population and business activity shifting to suburbs, left working-class blacks vulnerable to deteriorating physical conditions and divestment of services in cities.[19]

Black St. Louisans had a history of civil rights activism, particularly through the Urban League and later the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). As federal policies made life in cities increasingly difficult, black St. Louisans joined a variety of black freedom struggle campaigns to challenge racist public policies and improve their economic, social, and educational standing.[20] The Urban League was active in the early twentieth century, dividing black neighborhoods into block units to organize residents and keep public spaces clean. Eventually, the Urban League would sponsor Pruitt-Igoe's model neighborhood resident group. Poor black women used the respectability of St. Louis's Urban League as a platform for labor organizing, pushing for better

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[19] Keona Ervin, "A Decent Living Out of Our Work: Black Women's Labor Activism in St. Louis, 1929-45" (Dissertation, St. Louis, 2009), 254-255; Kenneth Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest: The Struggle in St. Louis, Missouri, 1964-1970* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 11.

[20] For accounts of urban civil rights activities, see Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2003). Biondi details civil rights action in New York City that preceded the better-remembered southern movement. Also see Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233–63. Attention to civil rights activities throughout the country shows that black activists were not just fighting to end overt legal discrimination and segregation. Activists fought for access to decent housing, education, and job opportunities throughout the black freedom struggle. Resident activists in Model Cities were therefore furthering decades of activism in urban centers.

hours, wages, and working conditions for domestic workers. Black women employed as nut

pickers in St. Louis worked through the Communist Party to further their quest for government

protection against wage cuts.[21] St. Louis residents were also active in A. Philip Randolph's

World War II March on Washington Movement. In contrast to interracial civil rights groups, the

March on Washington activists in St. Louis were all black, and their focus was to win jobs in the

defense industry.[22] Experience in civil rights struggles in the first half of the twentieth century

provided a foundation for residents to agitate for fair treatment during post-World War II civil

rights campaigns.

In the 1950s and 1960s, CORE had a strong presence in St. Louis, sponsoring sit-in

campaigns for access to restaurants and retail establishments in the city. CORE's most famous

initiative in St. Louis was the Jefferson Bank Boycott from August 1963 through March 1964.

Activists protested the lack of black employees at the bank, resulting in the largest civil

disobedience campaign in the city's history. At its height, attendance at local CORE meetings

soared to about three hundred people, and approximately one thousand people participated in a

general strike against racism.[23] As one Jefferson Bank Boycott participant explained, "I wish we

could depend on the various institutions to hire on the basis of equality … but through long

experience we've found that this does not often work. They need to be forced into doing the right

thing."[24] This massive effort, however, had limited effects. Though the bank hired eighty-four

black employees and several St. Louis businesses endorsed a ten-point program for equal

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[21] Keona Ervin, "A Decent Living Out of Our Work: Black Women's Labor Activism in St. Louis, 1929-45" (Dissertation, St. Louis, 2009), 89, 122.

[22] Patricia L Adams, "Fighting For Democracy in St. Louis: Civil Rights During World War II," *Missouri Historical Review* LXXX, no. Number 1 (October 1985), 61-2.

[23] Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics and Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75*, Class, Culture (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 155-185.

[24] Ibid., 163.

employment, these concessions did not change employment opportunities for the vast majority of black St. Louisans.[25]

The city was also home to several Black Power organizations. Most notable were the Black Liberators, a group that formed out of frustration that the Jefferson Bank Boycott and other direct-action protests did not yield tangible improvements for black communities. Initiated by Charles Koen, an activist from Illinois, in the spring of 1968, the Black Liberators' platform was similar to other Black Power groups: they wanted control of land, an end to discrimination, the cessation of police brutality, and respect for black women.[26] Though not officially connected to any national organization, they saw themselves as part a larger black revolutionary movement. They invited activists such as Stokely Carmichael to speak and read the works of Franz Fanon, Malcolm X, and Karl Marx. They opened a headquarters in the Model Cities area. Disillusioned with mainstream politics, they discouraged black St. Louisans from voting for the Democratic mayoral and gubernatorial candidates. Though the Black Liberators were not officially associated with Model Cities, they allied themselves with neighborhood organizations.[27] They supported the Montgomery-Hyde Park neighborhood's anticrime efforts, offering their members to serve as neighborhood patrolmen.[28] In turn, Montgomery-Hyde Park's neighborhood corporation reported, "residents found themselves quite active in the Coalition formed after the

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[25] Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway,* 179-80.

[26] Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest*, 71, 73. Also see William B. Helmreich, *The Black Crusaders: A Case Study of a Black Militant Organization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). To preserve the anonymity of the group's members, Helmreich changed the name of the Black Liberators to the Black Crusaders in his narrative.

[27] Ibid., 75.

[28] Herbert Edwards, "Montgomery-Hyde Park News," *The Model City Voice,* Vol. 1 No. 7, December 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. The Liberators also used OEO money to open a variety store in another black neighborhood. Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest,* 84. See Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics.* As Devin Fergus shows, Black Power groups often used War on Poverty funding for their self-help programs.

incidents of brutality against the Black Liberators."[29] By the time Model Cities came to St.

Louis, residents had a variety of experiences with activism and civil rights protest.

By and large, the established civil rights organizations in St. Louis—namely CORE and

the Urban League, were run by educated, middle-class blacks. Poor black residents living in the

Model Cities neighborhood had less contact with these nationally-affiliated local chapters, nor

were they typically included in their leadership structures. For example, though the Urban

League sponsored some resident organizing in Pruitt-Igoe, the organization's extensive network

of block units did not extend to the Model Cities neighborhoods in the early twentieth century.[30]

The neighborhood organizations that would become affiliated with Model Cities therefore filled

an important gap in St. Louis's civil rights scene. One Jeff-Vander-Lou resident remembered that

the civil rights movement "set the tone [for neighborhood organizing], and I'm not sure it would

have been possible even without that background. But [Jeff-Vander-Lou] was not associated

with any of … the more formal movements of that time."[31] Cecil Miller explained that the

leaders in his neighborhood never fit neatly into the established civil rights movement milieu.

Speaking of Macler Shepard's relationship to the Urban League, Miller recalled, "he's not into

that crowd. He's not respected in that crowd because he's uneducated."[32] At the time, Jeff-

Vander-Lou went as far as to charge: "We don't feel that the Urban League has done one thing in

this area for the poor. Its programs set up nothing for the poor and it didn't involve the poor."[33]

Being rooted by place helped Model Cities organizations and leaders remain closely tied to the

poor residents they served.

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[29] Weekly Report: What's Happening at Montgomery-Hyde Park, November 15, 1968, Series 1 Box 41, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[30] John T. Clark, "When the Negro Resident Organizes," June 1934, Urban League Papers, WUA.
[31] Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.
[32] Cecil Miller, Interview with Author, September 15, 2017.
[33] Robert J. Kerstein, "The Political Consequences of Federal Intervention: The Economic Opportunity Act and Model Cities in the City of St. Louis" (Washington University in St. Louis, 1975), 138.

At the peak of these civil rights activities, the country was experiencing successive summertime urban uprisings. From Watts to Newark to Detroit, racially charged incidents, often involving police violence, sparked days of violence and property destruction in black neighborhoods. In Newark in 1967, for example, five days of uprisings in response to an incident of police brutality left twenty-six people dead, hundreds, of injured, and millions of dollars in property damage.[34] Unlike many cities throughout the country, St. Louis did not experience a major urban rebellion in this period. Civil rights organizations in St. Louis used the specter of riots to give their actions more urgency, implying that if the targets of their protests did not give them concessions, they could expect violence. In a protest against public housing rent increases, some participants held signs declaring, "Idle Hands, Empty Stomachs, Hot Weather = Riots."[35]

These uprisings spurred an intense, nationwide dialogue about the causes of the rebellions and the best means of prevention. From the mid-sixties through seventies, city residents, mayors, and federal officials would use the fear of riots to justify their urban antipoverty initiatives.[36] All three groups claimed their plans and policies for Model Cities (and the War on Poverty as a whole) could help cities avoid riots. In cities that experienced riots, residents pointed to a lack of legitimate citizen power as a reason for the violence. One resident in New Haven, Connecticut saw "one of the basic causes of the riot as being no citizen participation in the business of running the poverty program and the Mayor's office."[37]

Some St. Louis Model Cities residents claimed that strong neighborhood leadership helped the city avoid this kind of violence and argued that neighborhood organizations were

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[34] Mumford, Kevin. *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2007, 98.

[35] Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway,* 213.

[36] For works that discuss how antipoverty programs attempted to respond to and prevent riots, see: Mumford, Kevin. *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2007, chapter 5;

[37] "Interview with Hugh Price," Folder: New Haven, Connecticut – Reports Team Interview, Lyndon Johnson National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders Series E 10 Box E53, LBJ Library.

therefore the best entities to control Model Cities money. Cecil Miller and his wife Judy moved

to the area in 1967 "when the cities were burning." Judy Miller asserted, "I really think that our

organization, among others, and Macler [Shepard], were one of the main things that kept St.

Louis from burning at that time. The people had a little bit of hope."[38] Mennonite reverend

Hubert Schwartzentruber said that Macler Shepard's rapport with residents was instrumental in

quelling violence. He recalled an episode in which Shepard's presence helped prevent an

uprising, explaining, "there was an instance … where the police were trying to arrest some boys

… Macler came to the scene when this was going on, this fight [with] the police." To diffuse the

situation, "Macler got the kids to go into [the] police car to go down to the police station. He

went with them," and Schwartzentruber believed, "it had the very beginnings of what could have

been a major riot. But it didn't happen because I think Macler intervened."[39] Neighborhood

leaders showed officials that their organizations' clout could deter violence.

St. Louis's mayor did not hesitate to explain why, in his view, St. Louis had been spared

a riot. In a *Harvard Business Review* article entitled "To Prevent a Chain of Super-Watts,"

Democratic Mayor Alfonso Cervantes argued that unemployed city-dwellers "are piling up like

inflammable tinder at the Watts-like center of every metropolitan area of the United States."

Seizing on the problem of unemployment, Cervantes explained his newfound belief that private

businesses must invest in training and creating jobs for underemployed Americans if urban

violence was to be curtailed. He cited "a group of local industrialists and businessmen [in St.

Louis who] joined forces with the government's antipoverty program to develop a job training

and job placement program."[40] Cervantes implied that proper urban policy, combined with

business investment, might help cities avoid riots. He also cited luck, black police officers, and

[38] Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.
[39] Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017.
[40] Alfonso Cervantes, "To Prevent a Chain of Super-Watts," *Harvard Business Review*, October 1967, 55–65.

antipoverty programs to explain why St. Louis avoided an uprising.[41] Other officials directly

connected riots to the need for more federal and local antipoverty funds. Newark's Commission

on the city's 1967 riot called for "more state and federal spending to ameliorate the volatility of

the problem areas."[42] Riots were fresh on the minds of federal policymakers as the War on

Poverty and Model Cities developed, and resident leaders used their clout with the community to

convince local officials that resident influence was essential.

Urban Renewal and Resident Activism

For almost two decades urban renewal was the federal government's main weapon to

fight cities' decline. The 1949 American Housing Act established federal urban redevelopment

(later known as urban renewal) funding. Armed with this new source of money, municipal

officials dreamed of revitalizing city centers by attracting commerce, tourism, and wealthy

residents. In a typical renewal project, a city used federal grant money to pay a private company

to redevelop a section of the city. Corporate priorities then determined what would be built and

where, putting the interests of business leaders well ahead of residents' needs. By 1966, there

were about 944 federally-approved urban renewal projects around the country.[43]

More than any other figure, Robert Moses exemplified the priorities of urban renewal. As

New York City's planning commissioner, Moses embraced largescale, corporate-driven

demolition and renewal projects and redesigned large swaths of the city. He was instrumental to

the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's renewal project, which destroyed the working-class

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[41] "Romney is Told why St. Louis Escaped Riots," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 19, 1967. As Michigan's governor, George Romney was hoping to become the Republican Party's presidential candidate. In 1969 he was appointed as HUD's second secretary by President Richard Nixon.
[42] Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).
[43] Wilson, *Urban Renewal,* 407.

Gas Light neighborhood to build the Stuyvesant Town development, which catered to middle-class residents. He also facilitated the redevelopment of Lincoln Center, which displaced over seven thousand lower-class families and eight hundred local businesses.[44]

Though one of the stated goals of the Housing Act was "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family," urban renewal projects tore down many more residential units than they built.[45] One study estimated that between 1949 and 1963, urban renewal demolished about 240,000 homes but only built about 70,000 residential units.[46] For example, in 1958 St. Louis envisioned a new baseball stadium for downtown. Financed largely with private money, Busch Stadium was constructed over a small Chinatown district, despite objections against labeling the area blighted.[47]

Questions of which neighborhoods to demolish and where to build were racialized. Starting in the 1920s, progressive reformers used the term "blight" as part of their ecological framework for understanding and improving cities (the term originally described diseased plants). These reformers likened urban decline to an organism's decay and argued that blight had to be cut out before it could expand.[48] But decades of FHA redlining routinely labeled black

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[44] See Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[45] 1949 American Housing Act, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-108HPRT92629/html/CPRT-108HPRT92629.htm. Lawrence Christy and Peter Coogan, "Family Relocation in Urban Renewal," *Harvard Law Review* 82, no. 4 (February 1969): 684–907. This article found that urban renewal funds built only one low-income housing unit for every six torn down, greatly exacerbating the affordable housing shortage. James Q. Wilson, *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), 341, 347. This study of urban renewal noted that seventy percent of displaced families found their own replacement housing, rather than relying on government-sponsored relocation. Further, displaced families had to spend more money on rent. The median monthly proportion of income spent on rent rose from twenty-five to twenty-eight percent.

[46] Model Cities Program, [1975-1976], Bernard Frieden and Marshall Kaplan, "Community Development and the Model Cities Legacy," Civil Rights Digest, Spring 1977, David Meeker Papers Box 5, Gerald Ford Presidential Library.

[47] Aaron Cowan, "A Whole New Ball Game: Sports Stadiums and Urban Renewal in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, 1950-1970," *Ohio Valley History*, Fall 2005, 63–86; Tim O'Neil, "A Look Back: In 1966, new Busch Stadium was a tub-thumping civic cause," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 11, 2013; Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, 153.

[48] Wendell E. Pritchett, "The 'Public Menace' of Blight: Urban Renewal and the Private Uses of Eminent Domain," *Yale Law & Policy Review* 21, no. 1 (2003). The ecological/medical framework for understanding cities and urban

neighborhoods unworthy of federal investment, making it easy to designate black neighborhoods "blighted" so they could be razed, even though many black residents believed their neighborhoods were not only viable, but thriving. Highway extension, university expansion, athletic and civic complexes, and downtown revitalization projects cut through black neighborhoods. The federal and local policies that trapped black residents in redlined neighborhoods since the early 1900s were directly tied to a devastating history of postwar urban renewal that specifically targeted black residential areas in St. Louis and around the country. In 1963, black author and activist James Baldwin publicly charged that urban renewal was, in essence, "negro removal."[49] The racism of urban renewal was well-known to black city residents.

Even in the heyday of urban renewal, critics questioned the value of large-scale redevelopment projects. Residents expressed their frustration at the demolition of affordable housing, white liberals lamented renewal's inability to revitalize city centers, and conservatives opposed such massive federal spending. In 1961 journalist and activist Jane Jacobs argued in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* that federal urban renewal policies caused neighborhood decline. She contended that the areas urban planners labeled as slums were in fact viable working-class neighborhoods. Her work was "an attack on current city planning and rebuilding," directly challenging the logic of wholesale clearance. She advocated for diversity within city neighborhoods, both in terms of population and land use. Though her work was

decay originated at the University of Chicago's School of Social Work. As Pritchett explains, "this use of medical terminology by the Chicago school made its analysis appear objective and scientific, but it also reflected the general prejudices of society regarding racial minorities, particularly blacks."

[49] Kenneth Clark, "A conversation with James Baldwin," June 24, 1963. In a televised interview, Baldwin declared, "urban renewal … means negro removal."
http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_C03ED1927DCF46B5A8C82275DF4239F9.

widely discussed in urban planning and lay circles—she even served on a presidential task force in 1964—conventional urban renewal projects remained the norm throughout the sixties.[50]

As urban renewal came to more cities, residents focused their activism on blocking urban renewal projects in their neighborhoods. Sometimes, this protest took the form of individual action. In March 1964 Arby Munzer, a homeowner in Jeffersonville, Indiana wrote to the White House to complain about urban renewal in his town. He highlighted the non-democratic nature of the renewal process, claiming, "the officials who have the final decision to confiscate [one's] home by court action [are] three times removed from the voters. Nearly everyone of these officials will profit financially from this [renewal] program directly or indirectly." Munzer concluded, "all the while these officials say to us; you don't want to stand in the way of progress, do you? Well, it appears to me that they are getting progressively richer at the expense of the small home owners."[51] Another property owner from Cleveland, Ohio wrote to the president after months of arguing with her local renewal authority about keeping her home. She explained, "the devil himself could not be so cruel and so ruthless in his persecution of us as are these inhuman state and local bureaucrats and city hall hacks." She too explained that local officials chided her for blocking progress.[52] In both instances, the federal officials who responded to these constituents simply referred these citizens back to the local renewal agencies that were giving them trouble in the first place, citing lack of federal authority in local matters.

In some places, disdain for urban renewal led to collective, grassroots resistance. In New Haven, Connecticut, black and Puerto Rican residents of the Dixwell Avenue area organized specifically to oppose the mayor's urban renewal program, which called for the demolition of

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[50] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 3.
[51] Letter from Arby Munzer to the White House, March 21, 1964, Box 6 Folder: Urban Renewal-Slum Clearance 11/23/63-10/7/64 (General), WHCF Subject Files HS 3, LBJ Library.
[52] Ibid.

large sections of their neighborhood to build housing marketed toward middle-class families and university professors. CORE activists blocked a main street to protest the city's renewal plans in 1961.[53] Residents' critiques got to the heart of urban renewal's hypocrisy: residents had no voice in redevelopment plans for their neighborhoods, and the result was financial benefit for businesses involved in demolition and construction, acute economic hardship for poor people, and an exacerbation of cities' population and tax base decline.[54]

St. Louis's Mill Creek Valley, a predominantly black neighborhood that stretched through the core of the city just west of downtown, was the site of a large clearance and renewal project.[55] Using federal urban renewal funds, city officials demolished the four hundred fifty-acre neighborhood, which had been home to working-class black families, as well as black churches and businesses. St. Louis's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) branch was an early supporter of the Mill Creek project, claiming in 1957 that "the project 'promises to become one of the most encouraging examples of a city determined to stop the spread of its slums.'"[56] Here, a civil rights group bought into the potential of urban renewal without considering consequences for residents living in the area slated for demolition.

Unlike the local NAACP, resident activists living in Mill Creek correctly predicted the dislocation the project would cause and fought against the plan. In the late fifties, several members of the Mill Creek Valley Advisory Committee expressed concern that residents would be displaced without affordable relocation options. At one Advisory Committee meeting, Mill Creek resident Malcolm Myers "asked whether the proposed housing in the area would be

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[53] Mandi Isaacs Jackson, *Model City Blues: Urban Space and Organized Resistance in New Haven* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 64-67.
[54] For more information on the financial benefits for companies involved in urban renewal, see Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline,* and Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects*.
[55] In 1955, the federal government granted St. Louis $685,200 to begin this urban renewal project. "U.S. Give City Go-Ahead for Mill Creek Area Slum Project," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 12, 1955
[56] "St. Louis N.A.A.C.P. Backs Mill Creek Slum Project," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 29, 1957.

adequate for the persons presently living in the area who desire to move back." In response, the

city's Director of Development, O.O. McCracken, "explained that the nature of the housing that

would be constructed in the area would be determined by the private redevelopers on the basis of

surveys which they undertook." McCracken concluded "that the housing would be available to

all families who had the means to acquire or lease it."[57] The city made plain its interests.

Officials did not claim that Mill Creek Valley urban renewal would provide better housing for

current residents. Instead, private companies could do what they pleased with the cleared land.

The city was in effect subsidizing private developers while simultaneously claiming that

imposing guidelines on what was built would be a violation of the ostensibly neutral free market.

In other words, federal money could be injected into the market to promote development, but

government officials would not intervene to protect residents forced from their homes.

For residents like Malcolm Myers, the Mill Creek urban renewal plans were obviously

harmful to the people living in the neighborhood. Repeatedly in Mill Creek Valley Advisory

Committee meetings, concerned members questioned why Mill Creek, a predominantly

residential area, was being rezoned primarily for commercial and industrial sites and upper-

income housing. They asked what would happen to the poor residents of the neighborhood. Each

time, city officials gave the same answer: the private companies that would build on the cleared

area were not beholden to the dislocated residents. City officials tried to allay residents' and

committee members' fears by pointing out that federal urban renewal guidelines required "that

the relocation of families was subject to a stringent Federal audit," but nevertheless, Mill Creek

Valley urban renewal resulted in a shortage of decent, affordable housing.[58]

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[57] Minutes of Meeting of Mill Creek Valley Advisory Committee, October 16, 1957, Series 2 Box 14 Folder 58, St. Louis Urban League Papers, WUA.
[58] Ibid.

Personal experiences with Mill Creek Valley urban renewal inspired activists' careers and prompted the creation of neighborhood organizations. Macler Shepard, who had been uprooted more than once by urban renewal, eventually settled in the Yeatman neighborhood and became a founding member of the Jeff-Vander-Lou resident organization. "It was time to take a stand," he said. "We decided we didn't want or need another urban renewal program in our area that would blight it even more."[59] When residents wrote their Model Cities plan, they made sure to explicitly distinguish their proposals from urban renewal.

Urban renewal in Mill Creek Valley displaced 4,172 families. Like Macler Shepard, many Mill Creek residents moved just north of downtown, which would become the Model Cities target area. Less than half of displaced individuals received government assistance for relocation.[60] A 1968 report estimated that in a two-year period, 1,477 of the displaced families earned less than $3,000 per year, yet only 200 units of public housing were available. The report concluded, "the poor are at the mercy of an unrestricted free enterprise system—in a restricted housing market. About 1% to 2% of Federal housing subsidies … are in support of low-income housing."[61] Despite, or more likely as a result of, these ventures, a 1978 report concluded that urban renewal in St. Louis had no positive impact on the city's economy, and the St. Louis Urban League called renewal "residential disaster."[62] It was this pattern of black neighborhood demolition without relocation, combined with no discernable benefit to the city's economy, that

[59] Doug Bartholomew, "Macler C. Shepard Shares Rockefeller Award," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, December 1979. Jeff-Vander-Lou Newsletters, Missouri History Museum Archive. The Jeff-Vander-Lou organization was the most successful resident-run physical redevelopment corporation in the 1960s and 1970s.
[60] Gordon, *Mapping Decline, 205*-9.
[61] "Action/Housing Department, Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis," October 1968, Series 6 Box 2, St. Louis Urban League Papers, WUA. The St. Louis Human Development Corporation was a War on Poverty agency tasked with carrying out the Office of Economic Opportunity's local antipoverty activities. This Corporation facilitated the development of neighborhood organizations that would take over Model Cities planning.
[62] Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, 158; Sally Bixby Defty, "Deserted Housing Called Disaster, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 26, 1971.

Model Cities residents were responding to when they crafted plans to explicitly challenge conventional urban renewal.[63]

The War on Poverty and the Creation of HUD: An Attempt to Reform Urban Renewal

Model Cities was one of the most important (though certainly not the best-remembered) War on Poverty programs. Given that HUD still exists—whereas remaining OEO programs were absorbed by the Department of Health and Human Services in 1981—examining the War on Poverty through the lens of HUD reveals the complex legacy of the biggest antipoverty effort since the New Deal. As the Johnson Administration struggled with questions of citizen participation in War on Poverty programs, the creation of HUD and Model Cities signaled both a dedication to urban antipoverty efforts and a desire to pivot toward community programs that avoided the controversies early War on Poverty programs engendered.

As President Lyndon Johnson's large-scale attack on the causes and effects of indigence, the War on Poverty created a variety of new, experimental government programs. It embodied federal officials' efforts to provide opportunities for the poor to reach middle-class self-sufficiency through job training, education, and welfare assistance. Most histories of the War on Poverty focus on the programs run by the Office of Economic Opportunity, established in 1964 as a direct result of Lyndon Johnson's declaration of war on poverty.[64] To improve life for forty

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[63] Redevelopment Plan for Mill Creek Valley, Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority, Revised August 15, 1960, http://mappingdecline.lib.uiowa.edu/_includes/documents/ur_doc8.pdf.

[64] See Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). O'Connor's book details the intellectual origins of the War on Poverty by examining the federal officials and consultants who crafted OEO legislation and programs.

million destitute Americans, the OEO created programs for poor communities in urban centers, Appalachia, Indian reservations, and migrant labor communities.[65]

The OEO traced the roots of the War on Poverty to New Deal policies, and federal officials' analysis of the New Deal revealed their agenda for their own antipoverty campaign. New Deal programs aimed to create jobs for skilled workers laid off due to the Great Depression, but the OEO recognized that the New Deal "bypass[ed] the hard-core and poverty-stricken— those without job skills … the 'unworthy poor.' Thus," the OEO explained, "during the Thirties and beyond, literally millions of impoverished Americans failed to benefit directly from the social and economic legislation of the Thirties," including "elderly citizens … the chronically unemployed … workers displaced by improved technology or working at poverty jobs [and] Negroes and the young." After a "rediscovery" of poverty in the late fifties and early sixties, John F. Kennedy made a "war on poverty" part of his presidential platform.[66]

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 contained six programs to be coordinated by the newly-formed OEO. In addition to income tax cuts for the poor, the bill included civil rights, regional development, education, and health insurance provisions. Congressional critics of the legislation charged that the Act was not bipartisan. One Republican representative "labeled the bill a potpourri of stale ideas previously rejected by congress." Some viewed the programs as an encroachment on matters best left to local and state government. Others feared the bill called for a duplication of programs that already existed. Proponents of the Act argued that the program

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[65] Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 5. For example, Head Start offered pre-school services to poor children. VISTA created a vast network of domestic Peace Corps-style volunteers, and Job Corps provided employment opportunities for millions of chronically unemployed citizens.

[66] OEO Administrative History, Administrative History OEO Volume 1 Box 1, LBJ Library. Research such as John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* and Michael Harrington's *The Other America* explored the reality that millions of Americans lived in poverty in spite of a seemingly robust economy.

offered "the advantages of coordination, unification, and interagency cooperation."[67] It was

condemned at the 1964 Republican National Convention and endorsed by the Democrats. The

administration campaigned hard for the bill, enlisting help from organizations as diverse as the

Daughters of the American Revolution and the Socialist Party. President Johnson visited

impoverished communities and urged them to lean on their congressmen. The bill was also

promoted as an anti-riot measure. Political negotiations, such as the sidelining of one of the

architects of the bill, led to the Act's passage 287-218 with relatively few alterations.[68]

The OEO explicitly linked the War on Poverty to the civil rights campaigns of the early

to mid-1960s. Its administrative history, compiled by Acting Deputy Director Robert Perrin,

explained that civil rights protests "highlighted the unrest of a disenchanted minority most

affected by poverty. The Kennedy Administration … was interested in launching a national

program to give the movement direction and purpose, and to translate its energies into a 'virile

program addressed to poverty.'"[69] The OEO believed the civil rights-War on Poverty

relationship was based on channeling the unwieldy nature of the movement into government

programs. Civil rights activists, on the other hand, saw the War on Poverty as means of funding

their own priorities. By demanding autonomy over programs in the OEO and Model Cities,

grassroots activists challenged government officials to admit that racism, poverty, and

government policies were inextricably linked.[70] In Baltimore, residents used an OEO-sponsored

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[67] This line of reasoning is especially interesting, given that the OEO and CAPs would soon be demonized for its lack of coordination. Model Cities was designed to fix coordination problems (but was also criticized for disorganization), as were Community Development Block Grants.
[68] OEO Administrative History, Administrative History OEO Volume 1 Box 1, LBJ Library.
[69] Ibid. In *Poverty, U.S.A.* Thomas Gladwin wrote that "the war on poverty as often as not operates in the shadow of the civil rights movement." Thomas Gladwin, *Poverty, U.S.A*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967).
[70] See Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History*. In the introduction, Orleck explains, "the War on Poverty has usually been seen [by scholars] as distinct from the southern civil rights movement, but the two historic movements were inextricably tied together" (15). This compilation of grassroots War on Poverty research shows the strong connections between civil rights activism and resident participation in the War on Poverty. This dissertation argues that the civil-rights-based grassroots activism in the

Self-Help Housing initiative to expand their control of War on Poverty programs. City officials originally envisioned the program as a service provider, but residents insisted on controlling the direction of the program. They called for landlord-tenant mediation to decrease evictions and the training of poor residents as sanitation inspectors. Residents' commitment to self-sufficiency became a guiding principle of the program.[71] Through residents' activism, OEO programs both empowered poor people and heightened their political consciousness.

The OEO pioneered methods for citizen participation in federal programs that would evolve in Model Cities. The Community Action Program (CAP) was the OEO's most controversial initiative, and it soon stunted the OEO's reputation. To promote self-sufficiency, CAPs funded community organizations to carry out their own programs related to job training, education, the arts, and community-building. Following through on the Economic Opportunity Act's call for "maximum feasible participation of the poor," CAPs bypassed municipal government by allocating money directly to citizen organizations.[72] CAPs funded community gardens, resident newsletters, and voter education programs.[73] Black Power groups remained skeptical of federal antipoverty work, but many still used the money to finance their programs.[74]

War on Poverty shaped the programs and legacies of Model Cities specifically and the War on Poverty more broadly.

[71] Rhonda Williams, "To Challenge the Status Quo by Any Means: Community Action and Representational Politics in 1960s Baltimore," in Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 72.

[72] Poverty Message from The President of the United States Relative to Poverty, March 16, 1964, Box 63 Folder: Poverty Attack, Weaver, 1964, RG 207 HUD Subject Correspondence Files for Robert Weaver, NARA. For accounts of War on Poverty programs and their impact on grassroots activism, see Orleck Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty*.

[73] Orleck and Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty*, 11.

[74] Ibid., 12. See also Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965-1980* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2009), and Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). These books show the complicated relationships between government officials and Black Power groups.

CAPs provided St. Louis residents with crucial community organizing experience within federal programs. The St. Louis the Human Development Corporation (HDC), the city's CAP agency, established neighborhood stations around the city to run programs for residents. The resident-controlled neighborhood advisory councils associated with these stations gained experience with federal antipoverty initiatives and would soon take control of Model Cities planning.[75] For example, the HDC gave Montgomery-Hyde Park residents $101,000 to rehabilitate houses on a section of Mullanphy Street that would become part of the Model Cities target area.[76] The HDC also operated Head Start, summer youth employment, and childhood health programs.[77] The city found that "in one area juvenile delinquency had been reduced by 60 percent since the introduction of [OEO] youth programs."[78] The residents' experience gave them leverage to claim they had the knowledge and skills to plan for themselves in Model Cities.

Many municipal governments, by contrast, resented CAPs. Local organizations funded by the federal government easily skirted formal city institutions, denying mayors, aldermen, ward committeemen control over dollars and programming. City Halls, long accustomed to doling out funds as favors to supporters and determining which urban initiatives moved forward, were often the programs' fiercest critics.[79] Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles charged, "mayors all over the United States are being harassed by agitation promoted by [OEO Director] Sargent Shriver's speeches urging those he calls 'poor' to insist upon control of local poverty

[75] "Program in Need of Money," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 24, 1964.
[76] Memo from Herb Kramer for Loyd Hackler, September 27, 1967, Box 30 Folder WE 9 9-13-67 - 10-24-67, WHCF Subject Files WE 9, LBJ Library; E.S. Evans, "Funding Shortage Stalls Vacant House Program," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 4, 1970.
[77] "U.S. Grants Total $4,432,869 For Antipoverty Work Here," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 28, 1965.
[78] Administrative History of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Box 1 Folder: Administrative History of the Office of Economic Opportunity Volume I, Part II [1 of 3] Narrative History, OEO Administrative History, LBJ Library.
[79] Administrative History of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Box 1 Folder: OEO Administrative History, LBJ Library. The OEO's administrative history recorded that in 1965 the US Conference of Mayors almost voted to adopt an anti-OEO position because the OEO was forcing cities to change the way municipal programs were funded and run. However, by 1966 the same organization chose to endorse CAPs.

programs."[80] Critics also zeroed in on specific programs. Many, including federal officials,

questioned the use of CAP funds to finance The Woodlawn Organization in Chicago, which

provided employment training and education to gang members.[81] In turn, the OEO argued that

"continuing political harassment" impeded the effectiveness of CAPs.

Even without such controversial activities like a program for gang members, CAPs came

under fire for fostering resident-run programs that clashed with municipal government priorities.

Throughout the country, the OEO's call for maximum citizen participation increased residents'

expectations for political engagement. One Baltimore resident explained that she grew "more

conscious of the community's problems" and consequently "more steamed up."[82] When citizens

planned programs for themselves, they saw first-hand that municipal governments often did not

allocate resources fairly, too-often neglecting impoverished areas. In many places, including St.

Louis, newly-opened CAP neighborhood centers created a platform from which residents could

protest municipal decisions that did not take poor residents' needs seriously.

The OEO argued that the vast majority of CAPs eased racial tensions in American cities.

In 1967 the OEO collected over four thousand pages of testimony linking their programs to anti-

riot activities.[83] St. Louis officials credited its OEO antipoverty agency with mediating conflicts

and avoiding a summer disturbance. The city's police chief explained, "I don't think there is any

question that the [OEO's summer youth] program helps maintain a cool civic climate. When a

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[80] Administrative History of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Box 1 Folder: OEO Administrative History, LBJ Library.

[81] Memo from Bill Farrell Re: The Woodlawn Organization's $927,000 Manpower Demonstration Grant Which Involves Two Chicago Gangs, January 6, 1968, Box 31 Folder WE 9 1/3/68 – 1/22/68, WHCF Subject Files WE 9, LBJ Library. For more information on The Woodlawn Organization, see John Hall Fish, *Black Power/White Control: The Struggle of the Woodlawn Organization in Chicago*, Studies in Religion and Society (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1973).

[82] Orleck and Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty,* 69.

[83] "America Speaks Out for OEO," 1967, Box 30 Folder WE 9 7-13-67 – 8-15-67, WE 9, WHCF Subject Files, LBJ Library. "OEO And the Riots—A Summary," Box 2 Folder: Administrative History of the Office of Economic Opportunity Vol. II- Documentary Supplement Chapters III-IV, OEO Administrative History, LBJ Library.

program like [CAP] can find jobs for idle people, there is no question that it helps."[84] Even in cities that did experience urban uprisings in the mid-sixties, federal investigations found that the OEO eased tensions in most cities.[85]

Despite a sustained effort by the OEO to show its worth, criticism dogged the program, wearing down its political capital. In 1966 Republicans argued that the OEO "failed to create a viable partnership between OEO and the states." During budget hearings in 1966, OEO critics placed a number of restrictions on the office's activities, including a decrease in legal services and new funding arrangements for community action.[86]

As many OEO programs lost favor just a couple years after their initiation, HUD's Model Cities program became a primary front in the War on Poverty, making HUD a crucial but understudied facet of federal antipoverty strategies in the late sixties. Model Cities pushed for citizen participation that would allow residents an entrée to municipal power structures, rather than create separate programs against which city governments objected.

The War on Poverty, viewed through the lens of HUD's creation and early rhetoric, was an attempt to fix the failures of mid-century urban renewal. Prompted by residents' criticism of renewal and the citizen participation in CAPs, HUD officials were willing to admit that government institutions, especially renewal authorities, hurt cities by sidelining antipoverty concerns. HUD was consequently open to residents' insistence that neighborhood control could correct these shortcomings. In opening the opportunity for residents to influence municipal

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[84] Summer Program Inspection 1967, Box 30 Folder WE 9 8-16-67 – 9-12-67, WHCF Subject Files WE 9, LBJ Library.
[85] New Haven, Connecticut, Series E 10 Box E53, National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, LBJ Library. In New Haven, as in many other cities, federal investigators who conducted interviews in the month after urban uprisings found that overall, OEO officials served to mediate between residents and city government during violent periods.
[86] Administrative History of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Box 1 Folder: OEO Administrative History, LBJ Library.

planning, federal officials admitted that government institutions had created an imbalance of democratic power; only by transferring some control of city planning to residents would there be a guarantee that federally-funded urban programs represented the needs of poor constituents.

President Johnson called for the creation of a cabinet-level urban affairs department less than a year after the formation of the OEO. He declared in his message to Congress, "using funds for rebuilding existing housing and by providing more and better assistance to families forced out by urban renewal, we can make this program better serve the people it is meant to help."[87] Johnson's call to alter conventional urban renewal was incorporated into the foundations of HUD. Congress passed the Housing and Urban Development Act to create HUD on November 9, 1965.

Johnson held off on appointing a secretary until the new year. Eventually, he settled on the most obvious choice, Dr. Robert Weaver, a black liberal with decades of governmental and academic experience. Weaver was a Harvard-educated economist who embodied W.E.B. DuBois's concept of the talented tenth. He began his decades-long public service career in the Department of the Interior and later administered New Deal programs. He worked with the NAACP in the *Shelly v. Kraemer* case to end racially restrictive housing covenants. In 1960, he became the national Chairman for the NAACP, which positioned him to advise President Kennedy on civil rights matters. Kennedy soon appointed him to lead the Housing and Home Finance Agency, making him the highest-ranking black official in the executive branch. Weaver's urban policy remained remarkably consistent over time. He believed small, incremental, bureaucratic changes were the best methods for improving the living conditions of poor blacks. President Johnson's feelings toward Dr. Weaver remained ambiguous, but Weaver

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[87] Message on the Cities Delivered to Congress, March 2, 1965, Box 1 Folder 2, HUD Legislative Background, LBJ Library. Mayoral organizations and civil rights groups supported the creation of an urban affairs department, but real estate and some business groups opposed the creation of HUD.

worked hard to make his department an effective agent for urban improvement. At Weaver's

confirmation ceremony Johnson charged Weaver to, "build our cities anew. Maybe that is too

much to put on the shoulders of one single man. But we shall never know, Bob, until we try it."[88]

In the first years as a cabinet-level department, Robert Weaver, his undersecretaries, and

HUD employees' rhetoric demonstrated their intention to reform government institutions from

within. They spoke of efforts to expand urban programs in ways that curtailed the previous

negative effects of federal housing policies and urban renewal. For example, Weaver and his

undersecretary in charge of the FHA called for a reorientation of this institution's mission,

admitting that decades of FHA policies contributed to white migration to the suburbs and

deterioration of black urban neighborhoods.[89] Phillip N. Brownstein, the undersecretary in

charge of the FHA in the mid-sixties, explained that his administration was no longer tasked with

providing home loans in suburban areas. Instead, he told his employees, "we have got to

recognize that stimulating a flow of mortgage funds into the inner city, yes even into the slums,

for the transfer of houses, for rehabilitation, and for new construction, is an FHA mission of the

highest priority." He even stipulated that a home loan application "should not be rejected simply

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[88] Remarks of the President at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Robert Weaver as Secretary of HUD and Robert C. Wood as Under Secretary of HUD, January 18, 1966, Box 2 Folder 2, HUD Legislative Background, LBJ Library; Wendell E. Pritchett, *Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City: The Life and Times of an Urban Reformer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Wendell Pritchett, Weaver's biographer, labeled him a key spokesman for racial liberalism, the belief that "racial prejudice was the result of ignorance and could be overcome by education." Pritchett's biography shows Weaver's ideology to be incredibly consistent throughout his life: he believed change within government bureaucracy was the best method for improving cities and opportunities for poor blacks. He was skeptical of direct action civil rights protest throughout his professional life.
[89] The FHA's mission was to stimulate residential construction and home ownership. As HUD's official history explained, "one of the more important developments in HUD during the Johnson Administration was the evolution of the FHA from a conservative, business oriented bureaucracy into an organization actively involved in promoting the social, economic and physical well-being of American cities." Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Box 1 Folder 1, HUD Administrative History, LBJ Library.

because it involves poor people, or because it is in a portion of the city you have been accustomed to rejecting or red-lining for old-fashioned, arbitrary reasons."[90]

HUD's administrative history written in 1968 portrayed the department as an entity dedicated to admitting past urban planning failures and moving toward programs to alleviate poverty and increase the affordable housing stock. HUD called urban renewal "too costly—both socially and economically" and admitted "not much thought was given to what would happen to the poor people displaced by this process." Instead, "a growing awareness of the deficiencies of the bulldozer approach led to a reassessment of the entire urban renewal process."[91] In highlighting federal officials' ability to critique federal urban policy, HUD leaders tried to steer urban planning in a new direction. By admitting urban renewal needed to be reoriented, at its core the creation of HUD gave policymakers a chance to prove that large federal programs could simultaneously alleviate poverty and upgrade cities' physical environment.

Model Cities and Federal Citizen Participation Rhetoric

The first program to embody these shifts in federal urban policy was Model Cities. HUD's administrative history explained, "the Model Cities proposal provided the substance for a dramatic announcement with which to launch the new Department, proof that the establishment

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[90] PN Brownstein speech, October 23, 1967, Box 2 Folder: Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Volume II Part I [1 of 2], HUD Administrative History, LBJ Library. Calling these standard practices "old-fashioned" was to a large extent wishful thinking—for housing discrimination persisted—but these statements signaled that HUD leaders recognized the role federal institutions played in exacerbating urban poverty and hoped to make federal urban policy more responsive to poor residents' needs. In her upcoming book *Race for Profit*, Keeanga Taylor shows that low-income home ownership programs in the 1970s often led to predatory practices perpetrated by the real estate industry. Using these federal programs, real estate agents sold homes to low-income families who could not afford upkeep and mortgage payments. However, St. Louis residents believed their organizations could utilize these federal programs to create sustainable low-income home ownership. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, they envisioned combining these programs with Model Cities money for homeowner training and support services.
[91] Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Box 1 Folder 1, HUD Administrative Histories, LBJ Library.

of HUD was to signal the creation of a generation of new impulses to deal with the challenge of

urbanization and housing."[92] The Model Cities legislation grew out of a fall 1965 urban policy

task force. The task force was manned by creative thinkers dedicated to large federal antipoverty

intervention, including HUD Undersecretary Robert Wood, Urban League Executive Director

Whitney Young, and urban policy professor Charles Haar, who eventually wrote a book on

Model Cities.[93] Through this task force, the shape of Model Cities emerged. They called for

"demonstration projects [to] show that massive programs of social services and physical

reconstruction or rehabilitation, planned and carried out with the continuing participation of

residents of the affected areas, can revitalize the cores of our cities."[94] Their efforts culminated in

the 1966 Demonstration Cities Act, later changed to Model Cities because federal officials feared

the term "demonstration" evoked memories of urban riots.

The task force and original Model Cities legislation called for large grants given to a

small number of cities. The problems with earlier antipoverty and urban planning efforts, the task

force argued, were inadequate funding and a lack of coordination. Previously "federal aid to the

cities has approached a single problem with a single weapon. They operated side by side—

usually indifferent to each other, sometimes even in conflict with each other."[95] The goal of

Model Cities was for municipalities to experiment with new methods of comprehensive planning

to craft coordinated programs that attacked urban poverty from interrelated angles, including

physical redevelopment, housing, education, job training, employment, the arts, and healthcare.

By funding a city agency to coordinate, the hope was that Model Cities would show that a total

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[92] Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Box 1 Folder 1, HUD Administrative Histories, LBJ Library.
[93] See Charles Haar, *Between the Idea and the Reality: A Study in the Origin, Fate, and Legacy of the Model Cities Program* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company), 1975.
[94] Presidential Task Force on Urban Problems, January 1966, Box 1 Folder 1, Legislative Background Model Cities 1966, LBJ Library.
[95] The Cities Message, Box 2 Folder 2, Legislative Background Model Cities 1966, LBJ Library.

attack on the causes and effects of poverty could substantially upgrade the physical and social

landscape in a struggling urban neighborhood. As methods for improving neighborhoods gained

efficacy, the program could be expanded to more communities and cities.

The task force envisioned combining supplemental grants given directly by Model Cities

with existing sources of money, including local and state allocations from other agencies such as

the OEO and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.[96] The task force understood that

Model Cities recipients would need a large amount of cash to get this job done, estimating "that

the gross cost of rehabilitating an area of 80,000 persons in 24,000 dwelling units, plus 500

places of business, would range between \$185 and \$415 millions."[97] In contrast, after changes

were made to the Model Cities legislation during Congressional debates, St. Louis's 73,000-

person model neighborhood only received \$32 million over five years.[98]

During the summer of 1966 HUD and White House officials worried Congress would

reject their legislation. HUD Undersecretary Robert Wood explained that the "program was not

well received by … the mayors and the urban renewal administrations and public housing

people. They just wanted more money."[99] Many mayors worried Model Cities might divert

money from urban renewal, which was popular with municipal officials.[100] Mayors' hesitance

showed that it was federal officials who pushed city planning away from urban renewal and

toward comprehensive planning and resident participation. To cajole House of Representatives

members, the number of cities included in the program was expanded, eventually to one hundred

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[96] The task force also envisioned that some urban renewal money would be used for Model Cities.

[97] Presidential Task Force on Urban Problems, January 1966, Box 1 Folder 1, Legislative Background Model Cities 1966, LBJ Library.

[98] Marsha Canfield, "Model City…" November 13, 1974, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

[99] Robert Wood, Oral History, October 19, 1968, LBJ Library.

[100] Haar, *Between the Idea and the Reality,* 65.

forty.[101] At one point, a House subcommittee suggested eliminating grants for program

implementation and instead only funding planning grants. As a compromise, Congress decreased

funding from $2.3 billion over five years to $900 million, reducing but not eliminating money

for implementation.[102] To entice his fellow lawmakers to support Model Cities, Democratic

Senator J. William Fulbright invoked the specter of riots, asserting "I recognize the need to

change the conditions out of which violence is spawned."[103] The House of Representatives

approved the bill by a vote of 178 to 141, and the Senate vote was 53-22.[104]

Citizen participation, though it did not feature prominently in Congressional debates, was

foundational to Model Cities. The task force explained, "the civil rights movement and the

administration of [CAPs] have contributed a new element to city politics: the mobilization of the

poor to petition their government. As the poor have asserted themselves in the political

marketplace," they concluded, "more and more attention has been paid to their needs."[105]

Conscious of the difficulty CAPs were facing with maximum feasible participation, the task

force believed, "the experience of CAP should be analyzed and the effectiveness of the various

citizen participation schemes judged."[106] From its earliest version, Model Cities was intended as

a program that took resident involvement seriously, and it was designed specifically to improve

the citizen participation started by CAPs. Sargent Shriver, head of the OEO, testified that "we

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[101] This was done so that individual Congressmen could feel confident that their home district would receive Model Cities money.

[102] Haar, *Between the Idea and the Reality*, 101. As a member of the Model Cities task force, Haar was particularly frustrated by Congressional meddling. He stated, "the concept of demonstration cities was being sanitized through a political process which blunted and in some ways preempted the most critical forces that the program model was designed to initiate" (137).

[103] Congressional Record—Senate, August 19, 1966, Box 7 Folder: Demonstration Cities Office Files of White House Aides Mike Manatos, LBJ Library.

[104] Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/89-1966/s425 and http://acsc.lib.udel.edu/exhibits/show/legislation/demonstration.

[105] Presidential Task Force on Urban Problems, January 1966, Box 1 Folder 2, Legislative Background Model Cities, LBJ Library.

[106] Presidential Task Force on Urban Problems, January 1966, Box 1 Folder 1, Legislative Background Model Cities, LBJ Library.

have stimulated the application of the democratic process to the problems of the poor … The

[Model] Cities Program now before Congress can make a major contribution in this direction."[107]

Like Shriver, the creators of Model Cities saw citizen participation as a necessary adjustment to

representative government, explaining "city-wide citizen participation should be the ultimate

expression of a community organized according to democratic principles." Further, the task force

asserted, "citizen participation is the key to transforming the fears and resentment of the past into

positive community action."[108] Residents' opposition to urban renewal eventually resonated with

federal officials, convincing them to realign power to guarantee representation of the poor in

urban planning. HUD employed strong citizen participation rhetoric to ensure Model Cities

prioritized the needs of the poor, not business leaders and middle-class homeowners.

Citizen participation in Model Cities was experimental, but the federal commitment to

resident influence over the program seemed clear. HUD's first set of guidelines for Model Cities

applicants made the emphasis on resident power apparent: "neighborhood residents must have a

meaningful role in the rebuilding and restructuring of their own communities; planning must be

carried out <u>with</u> as well as <u>for</u> the people living in the affected areas."[109] Certainly, the details of

citizen participation remained unclear until the program started, but Model Cities' rhetorical

commitment to resident influence was solid.

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[107] Additional Testimony of Sargent Shriver, Director, Office of Economic Opportunity before the Senate Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization, August 19, 1966, Box 124 Folder: FG 11-15 6/11/66-9/13/66, WHCF Subject Files FG, LBJ Library. There was some competition and overlap between CAPs and Model Cities, but this was not what ultimately stunted the effectiveness of Model Cities.

[108] Presidential Task Force on Urban Problems, January 1966, Box 1 Folder 2, Legislative Background Model Cities, LBJ Library. On its surface, the Model Cities legislation seemed to be calling for a watered-down version of CAP citizen participation. Whereas the Economic Opportunity Act called for "maximum feasible participation," the Model Cities Act required only "widespread citizen participation." However, the character of citizen participation in both CAPs and Model Cities varied so greatly by locality that this distinction is not particularly meaningful.

[109] Preliminary Guidelines for Model Cities Program, November, 1966, Series 1 Box 40 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Poor urban residents saw the potential difference between Model Cities and urban renewal. One black resident in Oakland, California explained, "no longer can some cat who lives on top of the hill come down here just 8 hours a day and make plans for the people who live here with the rats and roaches and the mosquitoes and the mice. It's a new turnabout. We are planning for ourselves in West Oakland." He concluded, "we are letting them know what we want and expecting them to help us get it."[110] He envisioned citizen participation as a transfer of power. Residents would decide their neighborhood's priorities, and the municipal government and federal Model Cities officials were responsible for helping residents attain their goals. HUD's inclusion of this resident's statement in its administrative history showed the department's desire to foreground not just the idea of citizen participation, but the concept of citizen control.

In the selection of Model Cities recipients, both the federal government and local black actors pushed citizen participation to the forefront. Municipalities hoping for Model Cities funds were expected to submit initial applications to be chosen as Model Cities grantees. The federal officials tasked with reading initial planning grants in the summer of 1967 were disappointed with the quality of the applications, largely due to a lack of citizen participation: "viewing citizen participation as an important element … all but one of the cities approved were required to alter extensively this aspect of their proposals during the planning stage."[111] Black St. Louisans mirrored HUD's disappointment in the citizen participation components of St. Louis's 1967

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[110] Donald Sterling Jr., "Cities' No. 1 Job is Organizing Poor," *Oregon Journal,* December 15, 1967, Box 2 Folder Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Volume II Part II [2 of 2] HUD Administrative History, LBJ Library.
[111] Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Box 1 Folder 2, HUD Administrative Histories LBJ Library.

application. A black newspaper reported, "we question the good faith in citizen participation …

since the citizens have been virtually excluded from planning the proposal."[112]

About two weeks before Secretary Robert Weaver announced the Model Cities grant

winners, HUD published a series of booklets to clarify expectations for Model Cities.

Community Development Agency (CDA) Letter No. 3 dealt with citizen participation and put

resident control of Model Cities into motion.[113] HUD stated, "the concern with citizen

participation is that in too many cities the customary institutions and processes of representative

government seem sometimes unable to identify the serious problems of many citizens—as

citizens define them—and accordingly fail to enlist them in problem-solving."[114] HUD officials

admitted that existing representative governmental structures were not allowing poor residents a

voice in governance, so new democratic tactics of citizen planning were being put into place.

HUD argued that citizen voices were needed to make urban planning more responsive to the

needs of the poor. When the recipients of Model Cities were announced in fall 1967, their charge

was to ramp up citizen participation to extend democratic representation to poor urban residents.

In contrast to the OEO's CAPs, which funded resident organizations separate from

municipal government structures, in Model Cities resident participants would work with their

city's bureaucracy, making Model Cities more palatable to mayors. In some cities, including St.

Louis, this system gave residents the power to make official plans with municipal agencies.

Residents' ability to direct city plans gave citizen participation in Model Cities a more powerful

potential than in CAPs (though funding would still be connected to a city agency). Through

HUD's citizen participation framework, federal officials attempted to readjust democratic

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[112] "Model Cities Plans Questioned By Mid-City Group," *St. Louis Argus*, March 10, 1967 Series 1 Box 77 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[113] The implications of CDA No. 3 will be further discussed in Chapter 3.
[114] Administrative History of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Box 1 Folder 2, HUD Administrative History, LBJ Library.

representation to better include poor residents. Instead of money going directly to residents for individual programs—which through CAPs may have guaranteed citizen control temporarily and only for small programs—in St. Louis residents obtained power to direct municipal priorities through their comprehensive plans. This was a bid for more permanent power and a chance to infiltrate government institutions that in the past had not worked for poor, mostly black citizens.

St. Louis Spearheads Model Cities

Announcing the initiation of Model Cities in November 1966, St. Louis Mayor Alfonso Cervantes stated, "you may be assured that [Model Cities] will be carried out with a maximum of participation at the grass roots level … we want this program to do exactly what those whom it will aid feel it should do."[115] It was a remarkable statement from a city leader who expressed almost no interest in citizen participation until it was federally mandated. Described as "charming … with a certain show biz flair," Cervantes was a well-groomed, slick, and polished white politician. As an alderman in the 1950s he initially opposed an integration bill, but by the time he ran for mayor he publicly reversed his stance.[116]

Some black St. Louisans' greeted Cervantes' election with cautious optimism. In his 1965 mayoral bid, Cervantes won a majority of the black vote in large part because the previous mayor's "Urban Renewal in the so-called Mill Creek area involving extensive demolition, ineffective relocation and little reconstruction [was] fresh on the minds of the … residents."[117]

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[115] Memo to Press, November 26, 1966, Series 1 Box 40 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[116] Denny Walsh, "A Two-Faced Crime Fight," *Life Magazine*, May 29, 1970. In 1970, Mayor Cervantes was accused of having mob connections in Life Magazine. See Alfonso J. Cervantes and Lawrence G. Blochman, *Mr. Mayor* (Los Angeles: Nash Pub, 1974). Cervantes liked to highlight the evolution of his understanding of race. In his autobiography, he explained that while he initially voted against an integration bill as an alderman, he later came to believe in integration and racial equality.

[117] Comprehensive City Demonstration Program Submitted August 23, 1968 by City of Saint Louis, Missouri, Alfonso J. Cervantes, Mayor, MCA Box 9, MCA Papers, SLML.

Cervantes also had the support of black politician Bill Clay, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1969-2001.[118]

In office, Cervantes made race relations a prominent feature of his administration. He initiated a committee to examine unemployment, and Urban League members and moderate black leaders worked with his administration. He hoped to garner the respect and acceptance of blacks by maintaining an open-door policy, estimating "that more people have been through this office than in any other administration in the city's history."[119] Sympathetic portraits of Cervantes therefore painted him as a racial progressive, citing the fact that St. Louis did not experience a race riot in the sixties as an indication that the mayor successfully managed racial tensions in the city.[120] In contrast to figures such as Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty, whose refusal to address police brutality exacerbated the 1966 Watts riot, Cervantes understood the need for dialogue between black residents and the city government.[121]

However, poor blacks in the model neighborhood were skeptical of, and sometimes openly hostile to, the mayor. Model neighborhood residents often did not believe their elected officials, black or white, had their best interest in mind. A legal aid attorney who was involved in Model Cities and a public housing rent strike recalled, "they thought [Cervantes] was a jerk … and the residents basically disliked him intensely. He was not at all comfortable working with

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[118] Patrick Cooper-McCann, "The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the 'Team Four' Plan," *Journal of Planning History* 15, no. 2 (May 2016), 5; Lana Stein, *St. Louis Politics: The Triumph of Tradition* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2002), 176.William L. Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, Distributed by University of Missouri Press, 2004), 144. Bill Clay was one of Cervantes' main allies. He gained prominence through his work in the Jefferson Bank Boycott, helped deliver the black vote to Cervantes, and went on to serve in the United States Congress from 1969 to 2001, when his son was elected to replace him.

[119] "St. Louis: 'A Safer City Than It Was Just A Few Years Ago,'" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* April 8, 1973. Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017. Based on oral history interviews and newspaper accounts, it does seem that model neighborhood leaders met with the mayor. These relationships, though, remained tense.

[120] For example, Congressman Bill Clay wrote a full chapter on Mayor Cervantes in his autobiography. See William L. Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press: Distributed by University of Missouri Press, 2004).

[121] Robert Bauman, *Race and the War on Poverty: From Watts to East L.A* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 33-34.

folks on the north side." Similarly, Bill Clay, Cervantes' political ally, "was perceived as basically … a black elected official that didn't give a shit about people in the neighborhood … The truth is that he wasn't welcome at the [public housing] sites."[122] The Black Liberators encouraged blacks not to support Cervantes' reelection in 1968, and a model neighborhood leader ran against Cervantes in this election as a Freedom Party candidate.[123] Jeff-Vander-Lou leader Macler Shepard was even elected Ward Committeeman, but he quit after only a week because he "was ordered by political bosses to 'close ranks' and continue the jobs of all current patronage workers."[124] Residents' distrust for elected officials fueled the credibility and power of neighborhood organizations.

Despite their dislike of Cervantes and their frustrations with local politics, resident leaders took advantage of his open-door policy and hoped he would make good on his promise to allow residents to direct the Model Cities agenda. Jeff-Vander-Lou minister Hubert Schwartzentruber recalled, "I know the mayor listened very carefully to Macler Shepard, even though he didn't like him very much."[125] Residents vacillated between a tense working relationship and open disdain of Cervantes throughout Model Cities, depending on his support for citizen control.

In January 1967, St. Louis became the first applicant to HUD for a Model Cities planning grant.[126] In this application, the St. Louis government envisioned that Model Cities money would combine physical restoration with community development, as HUD intended. The city

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[122] Richard Baron, Interview with Author, June 13, 2017; Obituary: Bobby Westbrooks: Chiropractor And Longtime Community Activist," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 15, 1995.

[123] Kenneth Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest: The Struggle in St. Louis, Missouri, 1964-1970* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 75.

[124] Michael Watson, "Jeff-Vander-Lou: Against All Odds," *Focus Midwest* 12, no. 75 (1976): 19–25.

[125] Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017.

[126] "A Proposal for Technical Assistance: A Study of the Economic Development Potential of a Target Area of Saint Louis with substantial long-term unemployment," January 17, 1967, Series 1 Box 40 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.

explained that their use of Model Cities money would differ from the way other federal grants were used. They stated that "maximizing personal disposable income" for model neighborhood residents was to be "the yardstick by which all programs will be measured."[127] By spring 1967, St. Louis officials understood the federally mandated necessity of taking the lead from residents. The proposal stated, "an interdisciplinary professional planning team will be sent into each neighborhood to lend its services to the area's residents." The city hoped, "with such assistance available, the residents themselves can carry out planning studies and make policy recommendations that will benefit themselves as well as the entire city."[128] Details still had to be worked out, but by mid-1967, residents had an opening through which to carve out a leading role in their neighborhood's redevelopment.

Even though residents did not have a visible voice in the initial application for planning funds, city officials understood that resident involvement would need to be prominent for HUD to accept their plans. Mayor Cervantes stated that "neighborhood power, not black power, student power or white power, is the basis on which St. Louis plans to build its Model City Program."[129] The call for neighborhood power was a way to signal acceptance of resident influence without portraying Model Cities as an alliance between the city and Black Power groups, which would likely garner controversy. Neighborhood power also gave residents some assurance that the mayor was committed to citizen control. The mayor's statement covered up significant racial tensions in model neighborhood relations with the city government, but it

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[127] "A Proposal for Technical Assistance: A Study of the Economic Development Potential of a Target Area of Saint Louis with substantial long-term unemployment," Series 1 Box 40 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA. The city initially decided on employment as its priority, but residents also emphasized housing. As discussed earlier in this chapter, previous emphasis had been placed on standard urban renewal—demolishing low-income neighborhoods to build higher-end housing, university expansion, sports stadiums, and commercial and industrial space.
[128] Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Comprehensive City Demonstration Program, April 26, 1967, Assistant Secretary for Housing and Urban Development Model Cities Reports 66-73, Record Group 207, Box 110, NARA.
[129] "Mayor Outlines His Model City Idea to Visitors," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 6, 1967, Series 1 Box 77 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA.

nevertheless showed that Cervantes planned to follow through on his promise to cultivate and defer to resident wishes for Model Cities. Further, Cervantes' concept of neighborhood power was as a model by which municipal officials could form working relationships with more radical civil rights groups. In the years to come, model neighborhood residents would refer to Cervantes' pledge for neighborhood power when appealing for his support of their plans.[130]

With the phrase neighborhood power, Cervantes showed that mayors could cast Model Cities as a collaboration with residents rather than radicals. This framing seemed much more palatable to the broader public than an alliance with Black Power or CAPs' funding of community programs separate from municipal governments. Precise details of how planning would work and where ultimate decision-making power would lie still had to be determined, but St. Louis's initial Model Cities proposal signaled the first step in ceding a large enough degree of power to neighborhoods that St. Louis's plans would reflect the desires of residents more than the priorities of City Hall. Undoubtedly, neither Cervantes nor federal officials fully understood how residents' plans would differ from established city priorities. Within this political landscape, residents influenced Model Cities for long enough that their visions became the first comprehensive plans of the St. Louis Model Cities program.

St. Louis's MCA was responsible for choosing the model neighborhood. The zone bordered downtown and the central corridor on the near north side of the city, bounded by Delmar Boulevard to the South, Palm Street to the North, Grand Boulevard to the West, and the Mark Twain Expressway to the East.[131] The neighborhood was comprised of 1,664 acres, four percent of the city's land. In the mid-sixties it was home to 73,533 people, about three quarters of

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[130] Letter from Cervantes in the Revised Model Cities Application, December 1968, RG 207 HUD Model Cities Report Missouri Folder 5, NARA. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, residents specifically called on the mayor to follow through on his promotion of neighborhood power.
[131] *The Model City Voice*, March 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers. SLML. Today, the Mark Twain Expressway is called I-70.

whom were black. The land was divided into five sub-neighborhoods to encourage resident

participation and attention to neighborhood-level needs: Yeatman (also known as Jeff-Vander-

Lou), Murphy-Blair, Montgomery-Hyde Park, Carr-Central, and Pruitt-Igoe.[132] Yeatman's

population was almost entirely African American, whereas Montgomery-Hyde Park and

Murphy-Blair were undergoing racial transition as whites moved into the suburbs. Almost all of

Carr-Central and Pruitt-Igoe's residents lived in public housing.[133]
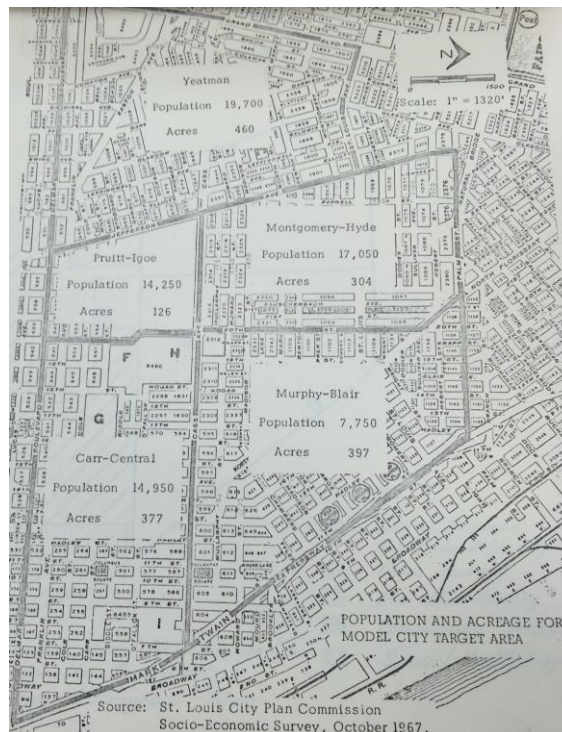
Figure 1: The Model City Target Area and Neighborhoods, directly North of downtown and West of the Mississippi Riverfront[134]

Both the MCA and residents noted the vast array of problems facing the target area. The

MCA's initial planning proposal highlighted disparities between the model neighborhood and the

rest of the city. Ignoring the decades of detrimental federal and local policies that caused these

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[132] Almost all of the Pruitt-Igoe area residents lived in the infamous Pruitt-Igoe public housing apartments that are often cited as the epitome of failed government-funded high-rise housing projects. The buildings were completed in 1956, but by the time of Model Cities, they were in disrepair.
[133] "Application For Neighborhood Facilities Grant—Part I," March 8, 1971 Binder No. 1 MCA Box 1, MCA Papers, SLML.
[134] Ibid.

conditions, the city explained, "a description of the characteristics can basically be summarized

by stating that in nearly all respects the area is in trouble … there is high unemployment, bad

health, poor housing, family instability and neighborhood breakdown … physically, the area is

one of blight and decay." The city also mentioned that St. Louis's post-World War II industrial

decline left residents, many of whom had little education and migrated from rural areas, unable

to find employment. Over eleven percent of adult men could not find jobs, more than twice the

city average. Twenty-five percent of model neighborhood residents received welfare, compared

to thirteen percent in the whole city.[135] From 1967 through mid-1968, St. Louis set up a

municipal bureaucracy and wrote planning grants so that the MCA and the neighborhood

organizations could begin drafting goals and envisioning programs.

Mayor Cervantes' initial hiring choices for Model Cities were further proof that he

accepted citizen participation. The MCA was comprised of a director appointed by the mayor, a

staff, and an executive board. All three MCA directors were black, signaling Cervantes'

understanding that residents believed Model Cities should be designed by and for black St.

Louisans.[136] In turn, the black directors occupied a tough position, and each struggled to

maintain the confidence of both Cervantes and model neighborhood residents. The MCA's first

director was A. Donald Bourgeois, a black lawyer from Chicago who served in this position until

summer 1968. He was previously the St. Louis Human Development Corporation coordinator, so

he had experience working with neighborhood groups in War on Poverty programs.[137] A variety

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[135] A Proposal for Technical Assistance: A Study of the Economic Development Potential of a Target Area of Saint Louis with substantial long-term unemployment, Series 1 Box 40 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[136] As will be discussed later, the first director and the woman who replaced him as acting director were both well-regarded by the community. The third director, a Cervantes ally named Arthur Kennedy, had a much more complicated relationship with residents. He also had the very difficult job of taking over Model Cities when the federal and municipal government were abandoning citizen participation. Residents' opposition to Kennedy showed that black city officials did not necessarily represent the model neighborhood residents.
[137] The Human Development Corporation was St. Louis's local OEO agency, so Bourgeois' had experience with CAP-style community participation.

of newspapers reported Bourgeois' appointment as a sign that Model Cities would be a resident-focused program. In spring 1967, a newspaper in Dayton, Ohio gushed about Bourgeois' commitment to the urban poor, as well as his good looks. The *New York Times* described a scene in which Bourgeois listened thoughtfully to a resident's analysis of her neighborhood.[138] The *St. Louis Argus*, a black newspaper, called his appointment "thrilling" and "ideal." The *Argus* further commented that the selection of Bourgeois "insures maximum participation of the poor, and hitherto forgotten men."[139] Bourgeois was not a resident of the Model Cities area, but citizens involved in the program seemed to interpret his appointment as a symbol of the mayor's willingness to give citizen participation a legitimate chance. Through Bourgeois, Cervantes and the MCA garnered enough resident trust to push forward with citizen-centered planning.

Bourgeois took the federal call for experimentation in urban programs seriously, as well as the mandate for widespread citizen participation. In a 1968 interview he called for "the creation of a power base in the neighborhoods where people are actually charged with the responsibility of controlling their own programs, where people have—literally—the freedom to fail." He continued, "so, therefore, what we're suggesting … is a program where the people do the planning themselves because he who plans controls … the planner call the shots. We want the people to manipulate their own destinies."[140] Here, a mayoral appointee connected planning to power. He explained that power could only come to residents if they were also given the opportunity to be responsible for the success or failure of programs. Through this interview and

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[138] Henry Saeman, "St. Louis: Model Cities Leader," *The Dayton Daily News,* March 27, 1967 and "Model City Project Awaited with Great Enthusiasm," *The New York Times,* May 31, 1967, Series 1 Box 77 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[139] "Model Cities—A New Concept," *St. Louis Argus,* December 16, 1966, Series 1 Box 77 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[140] "Ghetto Power Base Urged by Bourgeois," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 17, 1968, Series 1 Box 77 Folder 20, Cervantes Records, WUA.

the actions of the MCA over the next year, Bourgeois proved his commitment to resident power by promoting neighborhood groups' right to control Model Cities planning.

Staffing choices for the MCA also indicated that the agency was designed to support resident planning. As envisioned by the federal legislation, instead of running programs itself the MCA would be a coordinating agency—it would help residents develop plans and oversee the neighborhood organizations and other city agencies that would implement programs.[141] At least some MCA staff were genuinely committed to taking the lead from residents. Social scientist B. Ann Kleindienst was the MCA's director of Planning Services, and she made her support for resident leadership clear. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* recorded the following exchange: "is the grass roots qualified? Yes, Mrs. Kleindienst said. They are in a better position to gauge their problems, decide their future, and to help themselves." But Kleindienst went further, indicating how different the physical landscape in St. Louis might have looked had residents' views been taken into consideration earlier: "if the decision had been up to the grass roots, the Pruitt-Igoe housing project never would have materialized, she continued. This concept was conceived by the professionals."[142] This city official argued that a public housing failure stemmed from the shortcomings of professional experts. Mirroring residents' assertions of their own expertise, MCA staff believed residents' experiences qualified them to diagnose problems in their neighborhoods and enact solutions. In the first two years of Model Cities, staff attended

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[141] St. Louis City Demonstration Proposal, September 30, 1966, Series 1 Box 40 Model Cities Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA; Background Material on the Saint Louis Model City Agency, November 16, 1967, Series 1 Box 40, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[142] Mel Luna, "Active Role on Major Decisions: Grass-Root Spark for Model City Program," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* November 25-26, 1967, Series 1 Box 77 Folder 20, Cervantes Records, WUA; St. Louis Planning Manual, April, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. Completed in 1956, the infamous Pruitt-Igoe high-rise housing project is widely known as a failed public housing venture. It was demolished between 1972 and 1976. Model Cities resident leaders would maintain that their plans for low-income housing corrected many of the mistakes of the Pruitt-Igoe designs. For more on information on the residents' lived experience in Pruitt-Igoe, see Bob Hansman, *Pruitt-Igoe* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2017).

neighborhood meetings and developed relationships with residents to provide assistance. The Model Cities process was transforming both planning protocols and power relations in St. Louis.

Conclusion

In the two decades after World War II, federal officials believed government institutions, from national organizations such as the FHA to local entities like housing agencies, were best suited to eliminate poverty. However, civil rights activism and urban renewal's devastating impact on poor communities suggested to some federal officials that poor Americans needed a stronger voice in remaking American cities. Residents asserted that they themselves, not federal policymakers or municipal institutions, were best suited to develop and run antipoverty programs. Affirming a new version of American democracy, HUD officials sought to provide impoverished urban residents with the power to transform their communities. If poor residents did not gain power, officials hypothesized that federal programs were likely to continue urban renewal's pattern of destroying the neighborhoods in which poor Americans lived. Model Cities was an opportunity to institutionalize citizen participation in urban planning, and the St. Louis government understood and took seriously federal calls for citizen participation. St. Louis's MCA was consequently set up to foster resident involvement. By summer 1968, neighborhood organizations would push St. Louis to let residents write the Model Cities comprehensive plans. It was an apex for resident control of city planning.

Chapter 2

"Dominant Decision-Making Authority": Resident Leadership
in St. Louis Model Cities Planning[1]

"The experts put the cities together, the experts have run the city … the cities are in a mess nowadays," declared chiropractor and Montgomery-Hyde Park leader Bobby Westbrooks in June 1968. Westbrooks spoke in the wake of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, which sparked looting, fires, and violence in dozens of cities. Forty-three people were killed, and Washington, D.C. suffered $15 million in property damage.[2] But Westbrooks asserted, "they can't blame that on us." Refocusing on the unique opportunity Model Cities presented, Westbrooks called on his neighbors to take part in the Model Cities planning process, noting, "the federal government is with us in this thing." Given the circumstances, it was an incredible show of optimism. But Westbrooks' comments also revealed residents' skepticism of government-led urban planning, noting that "heretofore nothing has worked."[3] By the beginning of 1968, residents allied their neighborhood organizations with Model Cities, seizing on the citizen participation of the War on Poverty. Neighbors in St. Louis successfully demanded not just citizen involvement, but control, in Model Cities planning.

Working through neighborhood organizations largely funded with government money, residents imagined a future in which urban communities would partner with professional experts and government officials to direct programs that targeted both the causes and effects of urban

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[1] Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (July 1969): 216–35. Arnstein measured the amount of control citizens had in a variety of Model Cities bureaucracies. She found that St. Louis, along with a handful of other cities such as Philadelphia and Dayton, were able to achieve a high level of citizen power, which she termed "dominant decision-making authority."
[2] Peter Levy, *The Great Uprising: Race Riots in Urban America during the 1960s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 6-7.
[3] Interview by Lyals Battle with Robert Westbrooks, June 20, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

poverty. In contrast to conventional city-planned projects of the sixties and seventies, residents insisted that neighborhood autonomy was the only way to ensure urban redevelopment and anti-poverty programs were truly oriented toward improving poor residents' lives. At their core, residents' Model Cities comprehensive plans were a rebuke of conventional urban renewal, which tore down poor neighborhoods without rebuilding communities. Their urban plans were not just about rebuilding the physical stock of neighborhoods; they were about building a self-sustaining economy and strengthening communities.

St. Louis provides a powerful example of the dynamics of resident leadership, municipal bureaucracy, and federal involvement in poor urban neighborhoods. As the first applicant for Model Cities funding, as well as the first city to submit its comprehensive plans, St. Louis residents spearheaded the drive for neighborhood autonomy. They latched onto the Johnson administration's tentative approval of citizen participation, and in doing so, they capitalized on this federal experiment to push for community control in municipal planning. The federal citizen participation requirements in Model Cities created a brief opportunity for resident organizations to infiltrate the municipal planning process. Residents used an "expertise of place" argument to establish themselves as indispensable players in antipoverty programs, asserting they had the right and the ability to control city planning in their community due to their personal experiences living in poor neighborhoods. Residents' insistence on neighborhood-controlled institutions called conventional urban planning into question; they suggested an alternative path for large government programs, which would be more focused on racial and economic justice than on large, centralized bureaucracies and middle-class interests.

Crucially, residents' understanding of poverty, as well as the solutions they designed, differed fundamentally from the prevailing wisdom of the time. A few years before residents

wrote their plans, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy Planning and Research Daniel Patrick

Moynihan released an influential report on black poverty, "The Negro Family: The Case for

National Action." Reflecting on three decades of sociological research trends, the report blamed

generational black poverty on a pathological black family structure, or a culture of poverty. He

called for large-scale employment programs, but given that his analysis was predicated on a

problematic black culture, there was no discussion of resident influence or control. Civil rights

groups rejected Moynihan's ideas, and it was Model Cities residents who offered a clear,

alternate vision of their communities and designed corresponding programs. The Model Cities

comprehensive plans, and the residents who wrote them, were a rebuttal to Moynihan and the

many other officials who argued that cultural pathology was responsible for urban poverty.[4]

In St. Louis, residents' efforts culminated in five citizen-authored comprehensive plans,

in which residents contended that community control of antipoverty programs would ensure

substantial reductions in poverty. Each of the five neighborhood corporations—Murphy-Blair,

Montgomery-Hyde Park, Yeatman, Carr-Central, and Pruitt-Igoe—worked with the MCA and a

variety of private sector "advocate planners" to craft their own Model Cities proposals.[5] The

applications explained the neighborhood planning process, described each proposed program,

and included detailed budget estimates. The plans showed a sharp neighborhood vision and

attempts by citizens to work within existing power structures to shape urban development

conversations, make improvements to their communities, and ultimately increase the autonomy

of their neighborhoods. For a brief moment in the late sixties, low-income urban residents forced

city officials to admit the shortcomings of urban renewal and cede planning power to

neighborhoods.

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[4] O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 203-210; https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-moynihan-report-an-annotated-edition/404632/.

[5] In the Yeatman neighborhood, the Jeff-Vander-Lou organization submitted a housing proposal for the area.

Residents Win Control: The Citizen Participation Structure in St. Louis Model Cities

In 1968, neighborhood activist Alfreda Scruggs made an appeal to her neighbors, saying "we have often talked about not having a chance to plan for future development. Now we have been given a chance; let's take advantage of it. If we fail now, we may never have another." Scruggs lived at 1904 O'Fallon Street, and she took full advantage of residents' opportunities to lead Model Cities planning. She served as Carr-Central's health committee chairperson and represented her neighborhood on the Model Cities executive board.[6] Her observation about this fleeting opportunity was astute, and her optimism was mixed with a warning: residents should not expect their newfound power to remain without a fight.

Citizen control in St. Louis Model Cities came through two entities: the MCA executive board and five neighborhood organizations corresponding to each of the sub-neighborhoods in the target area. Sitting on the sixteen-person MCA executive board were residents, including Scruggs, the MCA Director, the city's Director of Welfare, the chair of the Aldermanic Committee on Housing and Urban Development, and aldermen from the model neighborhood.[7] At first, only three residents were to be executive board members. Through a Model Cities committee on resident involvement, "a general discussion revealed that the citizens were not satisfied by … the manner in which the Executive Board … was appointed."[8] A black rights coalition that included black power, civil rights, and resident groups called for "a new board [to]

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[6] "Carr Central Neighborhood News," *The Model City Voice*, September 6, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. She also wrote for the *Model City Voice*.
[7] Robert J. Kerstein, "The Political Consequences of Federal Intervention: The Economic Opportunity Act and Model Cities in the City of St. Louis," Dissertation (Washington University in St. Louis, 1975).
[8] HDC-Model Cities Monitoring Committee Minutes, January 29, 1968, Series 6 Box 2 Folder 55, St. Louis Urban League Papers, WUA.

be selected by residents of the Model City target area."[9] They also expressed frustration that

MCA Director Donald Bourgeois had been slow to respond to their feedback. By summer 1968,

these problems were being resolved. The mayor increased membership on the executive board to

ten resident seats, giving neighbors a majority and de facto veto power. In June, each model

neighborhood organization submitted candidates to the mayor, who then chose two executive

board members from each neighborhood.[10] A resident-written newsletter explained, "with

increased citizen representation on the executive board, the residents of the Model City

neighborhoods will have greater power over the decision making."[11] This collaboration

embodied the power-sharing structure St. Louis hoped to cultivate.

The men and women who served as resident board members were legitimate

representatives of their community, not allies of the mayor. Eugene Porter was a machine

mechanic who was active in St. Louis's NAACP branch, as well as a number of other local

organizations. Born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1930, Porter used the GI Bill to attend college

for two years. He lived in the Pruitt-Igoe neighborhood. John Fedrick, another board member,

was a post office employee who had lived in the Yeatman neighborhood for fifteen years. He

attended school through eleventh grade and for a short period studied accounting. He first got

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[9] "New Negro Group Presents 15 Demands to Cervantes, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 2, 1968. Called the Black United Front, member organizations included the local Congress of Racial Equality, Urban League, and NAACP chapters; the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood organization; the Ministerial Alliance; and a Pruitt-Igoe-based youth organization. The coalition was created after the assassination of Martin Luther King. The group submitted fifteen demands to the mayor, two of which pertained directly to Model Cities (creating a new executive board whose membership was dominated by target area residents and waiving the civil service examination for MCA employees so that more residents could work directly for the MCA). Their inclusion of demands for resident control of Model Cities indicated black activists' belief that Model Cities was an opportunity to increase power in the municipal government.

[10] Memo from Bourgeois to All Neighborhood Chairmen and Coordinators RE: "Increased Resident Participation on the Executive Board, Saint Louis Model City Agency," June 26, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Model Cities Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[11] "The Saint Louis Model City Voice: News of the Model City Neighborhoods," May 1968, Series 1 Box 40 Model Cities Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that neighborhood leader Bobby Westbrooks "was chairman of the committee that drew up citizen participation guidelines for the Model City program—and resulted in strong citizen participation." Clarissa Start, "Fighter Against Inner-City Decay," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 6, 1971.

involved with his resident organization by volunteering for a neighborhood beautification committee.[12] A third executive board member, a white man named William Faulkner, was a self-employed repairman in his late fifties with strong church ties. He attended school through sixth grade and lived in the neighborhood for forty years.[13] A social worker who worked closely with him in the Murphy-Blair area recalled that Faulkner was a "charismatic neighbor" who could often be found sitting on his porch and talking casually with passersby. Each executive board member was also active in his or her neighborhood's Model Cities organization.[14] Based on education and employment, these men were probably somewhat better-off financially than many of their neighbors. But their commitment to community empowerment and resident control in Model Cities was unwavering.[15]

The resident-dominated executive board was a clear indication of Model Cities priorities. The St. Louis government assented to a resident-majority on the board with the understanding that neighborhood dominance would ensure that the MCA accepted residents' plans. The purpose of the executive board was "to review all major decisions made by the planners of the Agency and by the neighborhood planning groups."[16] The executive board voted to approve all contracts and final proposals the neighborhood organizations wrote before they could be submitted for aldermanic and federal review. With ten of the sixteen executive board seats filled by residents, the board was a vehicle for residents to express satisfaction or disapproval with municipal and federal decisions regarding Model Cities. Throughout Model Cities, resident

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[12] "People in Our Community Friend, Neighbor," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, January 1976, Missouri History Museum.
[13] Renee Marver, Interview with Author, May 2, 2017.
[14] "Biographical Sketches," January 15, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Model Cities Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[15] Several women also served on the executive board and in other leadership capacities. Throughout Model Cities, resident executive board members consistently voted to maintain neighborhood control of Model Cities. For executive board meeting minutes that demonstrate this commitment, see M-151 MCA Box 1, MCA Papers, SLML.
[16] "The Model City Executive Board," *The Model City Voice,* May 1968, Series 1 Box 40 Model Cities Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA. "Murphy Blair Resident Housing Corporation," The Action News, Vol 5 No 4, February 21, 1969, Folder: M-151-3-6 Newsletters, MCA Box Murphy Blair Unlabeled, MCA Papers, SLML.

executive board members were vocal champions of citizen control, questioning how many jobs

went to neighborhood residents and blocking proposals that contradicted the neighborhood-

authored comprehensive plans.[17] Therefore, though resident power eventually decreased in other

aspects of St. Louis's Model Cities structure, residents dominated the executive board for its

entire existence.

In 1964 the OEO began funding community organizing efforts in St. Louis through the

Human Development Corporation, giving residents in the model neighborhood access to federal

money and resources.[18] While each of the neighborhood organizations chose somewhat different

by-laws, they all shared the goal of maximizing citizen participation. This priority was made

explicit in the organizations' articles of incorporation and membership rules.[19] For example,

membership in the Yeatman District Community Corporation was open to all area residents over

eighteen, and each member had one vote in the general assembly. The Yeatman Corporation

estimated that fourteen percent of the neighborhood's residents were members of the

corporation, about three thousand people.[20] Over half of the organization's elected board of

directors had to meet the OEO's definition of indigence, showing the Yeatman Corporation

would represent the true character of the neighborhood without being co-opted.[21] The

Montgomery-Hyde Park Neighborhood Corporation, which began in 1965 and was incorporated

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[17] See MCA Box 1, MCA Papers, SLML for examples of MCA executive board meeting minutes.
[18] Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest*, 123. One such organization in St. Louis was Jeff-Vander-Lou, Inc., formed by a group of residents in what would become the Yeatman model neighborhood. Primarily interested in housing, this group presented an initial proposal for their neighborhood to officials in Washington in March 1967. The resident organizations that took the lead in crafting Model Cities plans grew out of these HDC initiatives.
[19] Resident organizations were encouraged to incorporate to facilitate their ability to enter into contracts with the city to plan and implement government programs.
[20] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Model Cities Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[21] Articles of Incorporation of Yeatman District Community Corporation (A Not For Profit Corporation), Series 1 Box 40 Yeatman Neighborhood Service Program Folder, Cervantes Records, WUA.

two years later, boasted five hundred members.[22] In St. Louis and elsewhere, residents

transferred their experience working in OEO programs to their bids for control in Model Cities.[23]

A Model Cities-funded neighborhood publication called *The Model City Voice* served as

a mouthpiece for residents' visions for their neighborhood and their relationship to the MCA.

Initiated in May 1968, just as resident planning was ramping up, the first issue of *The Model City*

Voice explained that the purpose of the publication was to promote dialogue between residents

and MCA staff. MCA employees vocally supported *The Model City Voice*, indicating that the

MCA was eager to encourage citizen leadership. An MCA employee edited the publication, and

each issue featured articles written by staff and residents to facilitate a two-way flow of

information. Regular columns included news for each sub-neighborhood and a back-page article

on black history, all written by residents. The MCA printed 18,000 copies of each issue, and the

publication had a $958 monthly budget. Residents in the five sub-neighborhoods were hired to

distribute the newsletters. The editor encouraged resident reporters to interview neighborhood

corporation chairmen to get the most up-to-date news.[24]

Residents openly discussed their skepticism toward the new federal program. In its

inaugural issue, *The Model City Voice* dedicated a lengthy article to answering residents'

frequent questions regarding Model Cities. To the question, "other people have always made the

decisions about how money should be spent in my neighborhood. How can I be sure they won't

do the same in the Model City program, in spite of what you say about neighborhood planning?"

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[22] 'Summary Sheet' – Contract for Montgomery-Hyde Park Neighborhood Advisory Council, Inc. at 2350 Benton, Series 1 Box 40 Model Cities Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[23] Since these OEO-sponsored organizations were also in charge of Model Cities neighborhood planning, residents' experiences with OEO programs directly informed their strategies in Model Cities. Michael Watson, "Jeff-Vander-Lou: Against All Odds," *Focus Midwest* 12, no. 75 (1976): 19–25.
[24] *The Model City Voice*, May 1968; Saint Louis Model City Agency Notes of Meeting Regarding "Model City Voice," February 8, 1969; July 2, 1968 memo from Judy Leff, Editor to Model City Voice Reporters RE: Reporting Procedure; July 10, 1968 memo from Julius Hemphill to Lou Berra RE: Inadequacy of Model City Voice Budget; MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

the resident-written article admitted, "there is no way to guarantee residents the right to make all the decisions." The article also explained, "the Model City Agency in St. Louis plans to help residents have a greater voice in these decisions than they have had in the past. The agency will do this by granting money to neighborhood resident organizations." The publication made sure to highlight the very different intent of the Model Cities process: "The Model City planning professionals will advise residents, instead of the other way around, as has been the case in the past."[25] Likely, these answers were not just for the benefit of skeptical residents, but also a clear message to the city and federal government: St. Louis residents understood Model Cities as a citizen-run program, so their involvement hinged on real neighborhood control.

Neighborhood corporations took pride in their links to the black freedom struggle. Their tactics varied, but each organization remained committed to resident autonomy and control.[26] Some resident organizations tended toward nonviolent direct action. The Jeff-Vander-Lou resident organization, which carried out housing programs in the Yeatman neighborhood, highlighted connections between civil rights activism and their organization. Macler Shepard, who founded the group, had two years earlier led a march from his neighborhood to police headquarters "following the police shooting of a black youth in a schoolyard."[27] Judy Miller, a white Mennonite who lived and worked in Jeff-Vander-Lou, remembered, "he picked it up himself, but he believed the way that Martin Luther [King] tried to get things different."[28]

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[25] "Questions and Answers About the Model City Program," *The Model City Voice*, May 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

[26] Interestingly, the majority of civil rights activism connected to Model Cities happened through independent neighborhood groups, not local chapters of national organizations. However, civil rights and Black Power activists in St. Louis and around the country used the War on Poverty to access resources and make bids for power. For example, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton wrote much of the Black Panther Party's Ten Point Program from a War on Poverty office in Oakland. See Self, *American Babylon*, 226. Demands for Model Cities resident leadership certainly reflected Black Power's call for community control.

[27] Doug Bartholomew, "Macler C. Shepard Shares Rockefeller Award," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, December 1979, Jeff-Vander-Lou Newsletters, Missouri History Museum.

[28] Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.

Other neighborhood organizations embraced tactics associated with Black Power. Montgomery-Hyde Park highlighted one of their corporation's members, Clara Davy, praising her direct, outspoken communication style and touting her experience in civil rights and black radical groups. The group characterized Davy as having "been plunged into the center of the black revolution" and mentioned her membership in the Congress of Racial Equality. "This activity only makes her leadership in the Neighborhood Corporation even more impressive, for here clearly is a person who is not a middle-of-the-roader, a compromiser, but a fierce and unyielding fighter," according to Montgomery-Hyde Park. They concluded, "the fact that she has found the corporation a promising place to carry on the struggle gives us all a richer hope for the future."[29] Montgomery-Hyde Park's portrayal of Davy showed the corporation's main agenda was to represent and improve their neighborhood, not make an alliance with City Hall.

Montgomery-Hyde Park allied their neighborhood organization with the Black Liberators, a local Black Power group similar to the Black Panthers. Though the Black Liberators were not officially associated with Model Cities, they were willing to collaborate with neighborhood organizations.[30] They expressed interest in Montgomery-Hyde Park's anticrime efforts, offering their members to serve as neighborhood patrolmen.[31] In turn, Montgomery-Hyde

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[29] Montgomery-Hyde Park Model Cities Newsletter, June, 1969, MCA Box Citizen Participation Files, MCA Papers, SLML.

[30] Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest,* 71-75; Also see William B. Helmreich, *The Black Crusaders: A Case Study of a Black Militant Organization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). Initiated by Illinois activist Charles Koen in the spring of 1968, the Black Liberators' platform was similar to those of other Black Power groups: they wanted control of land, an end to racism, the cessation of police brutality, and respect for black women. Though not officially connected to any national Black Power organizations, they saw themselves as part a larger black revolutionary movement. They invited activists such as Stokely Carmichael to speak in St. Louis, and they read the works of Franz Fanon, Malcolm X, and Karl Marx. They opened a headquarters in the Model Cities target area. To preserve the anonymity of the group's members, Helmreich changed the name of the Black Liberators to the Black Crusaders in his narrative.

[31] Herbert Edwards, "Montgomery-Hyde Park News," *The Model City Voice,* Vol. 1 No. 7, December 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. The Liberators also used OEO money to open a variety store in a black neighborhood. Jolly, *Black Liberation in the Midwest,* 84. See Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics.* As Fergus shows, Black Power groups often used War on Poverty funding for their self-help programs.

Park "residents found themselves quite active in the Coalition formed after … incidents of brutality against the Black Liberators."[32] Resident organizations remained steadfast in their commitment that their organizations would both be legitimate representations of their communities and adhere to civil rights principles. Further, despite political and tactical differences between Jeff-Vander-Lou and Montgomery-Hyde Park, they remained in conversation and worked together in Model Cities. Judy Miller recalled, "it was unusual at that time when there were so many firebrands. But for some reason people respected [Macler Shepard] enough to listen to him."[33] Neighborhood organizations cultivated a loyal following, enabling them to force the city government to contend with their organizations' interests.

Views on police brutality also showed Model Cities activists' affiliations with the black freedom struggle. On more than one occasion, *The Model City Voice* published articles about racially motivated police discrimination and violence. One described an altercation between a black resident and a white police officer which left the resident with a broken jaw and a smashed car. The article featured pictures of the victim in his hospital bed and his damaged car.[34] In another piece, Bobby Westbrooks described an encounter in which aggressive police officers searched him and his car without cause. Despite lodging complaints, his queries with the police department went nowhere. He concluded, "I will join those who believe that black people must make their own channels. The St. Louis Police Department must realize that they are pushing people beyond their limits by their acts of obvious prejudice."[35] Westbrooks, a neighborhood leader associated with a government-funded program, emphasized residents' desire to take

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[32] Weekly Report: What's Happening at Montgomery-Hyde Park, November 15, 1968, Series 1 Box 41, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[33] Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.

[34] "The Jimmy Hubbard Affair," *The Model City Voice*, August 22, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

[35] *St. Louis Model City Voice*, Vol. 1 No. 5, September 6, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

control away from police; it was a radical opinion for the federal government to support, even if indirectly.

Residents active in Model Cities did not view working within Model Cities while advocating for community autonomy as contradictory. Instead, they believed the government's duty through Model Cities was to support resident-planned antipoverty programs. Neighborhood corporations sometimes partnered with the municipal government with the goal of changing it from within. Jeff-Vander-Lou stated that the organization, "while seeking self determination, recognizes that it is not separate, but an integral part of the city."[36] Resident organizations wanted to retain autonomy while simultaneously becoming a crucial actor in official city planning. They embraced the concept of being both outside and connected to the government power structure. Though not stated explicitly, resident organizations hoped to be a force that could adapt urban planning protocols. They wanted to shift planning away from relying on professional experts whose urban renewal initiatives favored opportunity for the middle class and toward a model of racial equity where resident groups had power in city planning.

Neighborhood leaders offered a clear argument for residents' control of urban redevelopment money. When asked "what happened to the experts," Bobby Westbrooks responded, "they're around, anytime you want to talk about professionals and experts, you can look at Pruitt-Igoe. That 36-million dollar mistake they made. It took a woman with six children one hour to figure out that Pruitt-Igoe was built all wrong." Exposing the limitations of professional "experts," he continued, "I don't think the city has learned yet, because they are still building high-rises with no facilities, no play areas and I don't think the experts and professionals are going to learn." So he offered an alternative: "it is time for the non-

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[36] Press release from Jeff-Vander-Lou Inc., December 6, 1967, MCA Box Misc. Correspondence, MCA Papers, SLML. Like the five neighborhood corporations, Jeff-Vander-Lou's organizational structure foregrounded resident control. For example, almost every member of the board of directors was a neighborhood resident.

professionals, the citizens, the residents to teach these people the things that need to be done for us and I hope that the federal government is committed to this philosophy."[37] Westbrooks challenged the authority of professional planners, asserting the need for a different kind of expert: one whose experience was rooted in the lived reality of decades of urban planning that ignored the needs of cities' most vulnerable populations.

Through neighborhood organizations, the resident-dominated executive board, and *The Model City Voice*, by spring 1968 residents had gained enough leverage to convince the city to allow neighborhood corporations to take the lead in planning for the first year of Model Cities. Municipal and federal officials may not have been able to foresee the ways in which resident plans would differ from conventional urban renewal, but by the time these differences became apparent, residents had already completed their comprehensive plans and submitted them to HUD as St. Louis's Model Cities application.

Resident Planning in the Model Cities Neighborhoods

St. Louis had been approved for a Model Cities planning grant in 1967, well before the application deadline, but HUD was slow to release this money to the city, causing municipal officials and resident leaders to worry about the legitimacy of federal support. On March 7, 1968, months after St. Louis submitted its request for planning funds, MCA director Donald Bourgeois wrote to HUD Secretary Robert Weaver expressing his concerns: "we are extremely fearful that we will wind up literally having to dictate a plan and then force it down the throats of the neighborhood, in order to submit it on time."[38] Significantly, Bourgeois understood that

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[37] Interview with Bobby Westbrooks, June 20, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.
[38] Letter from Bourgeois to Weaver, March 7, 1968, Subject Correspondence Files for Robert Weaver Box 63, Record Group 207, NARA.

prescribing plans to the neighborhoods would be unacceptable, both to residents and presumably also to the federal officials who mandated citizen participation in the Model Cities legislation. However grudgingly, his message seemed to resonate with HUD. On March 11, Weaver's executive assistant Jay Janis attached a handwritten internal memo to Bourgeois' letter, explaining, "despite the fact that Don Bourgeois is known to be highly opportunistic, there may be some element of truth in his complaint. One of the real problems I encountered … was the predilection of Washington-level staff to impose unneeded restrictions on local people."[39] Janis admitted that federal stalling might derail Model Cities for resident groups. Perhaps as a result of cajoling from Bourgeois, on April 4 HUD finally released $21,000 for neighborhood planning, and St. Louis divided this money evenly between the five neighborhood corporations.[40]

With these limited funds, the residents set out on a summer of passionate, idealistic, and creative planning for their neighborhoods. As violence erupted in many urban neighborhoods across the country in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and thousands gathered in Washington, D.C. to carry out King's Poor People's Campaign, in St. Louis neighborhood corporations used Model Cities money to pay for residents' transportation to meetings, purchase office supplies, hire planners and consultants, and host social events.[41] Each neighborhood attempted at every turn to make sure their comprehensive plans represented the will of the community. The documents the neighborhood organizations created served for years as the primary expression of residents' visions for themselves and their community.

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[39] Routing Slip from Jay Janis, Subject Correspondence Files for Robert Weaver Box 63, Record Group 207, NARA.

[40] Memorandum of Understanding, April 4, 1968, MCA Box 1 Yr 1 and TEMPO, MCA Papers, SLML. Later, neighborhood corporations received additional payments of $5,000 and $2,500. "Neighborhood Power—A Concept for Model Cities," Summer 1969, Series 34 Box 1 Folder: Folder: Briefing Sessions, Budgets, 1968-1969, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA; Robert J. Kerstein, "The Political Consequences of Federal Intervention: The Economic Opportunity Act and Model Cities in the City of St. Louis," Dissertation (Washington University in St. Louis, 1975), 177.

[41] Contract for the Expenditure of Funds from St. Louis Model Cities Agency By Carr Central Neighborhood Advisory Committee (Corporation Papers Pending), Series 1 Box 40, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Resident activists had a heavy burden in writing their comprehensive neighborhood plans. They had to simultaneously establish themselves as legitimate representatives of their community and convince municipal and federal officials that their plans were up to the caliber of professional experts. Their plans needed to show signs of experimentation along with evidence that programs would be successful. Further, they had to maintain resident autonomy while also proving their vision aligned with municipal planning goals that had in the past destroyed poor and black communities.[42] By August 1968, all five neighborhood corporations submitted proposals and budget estimates for programs related to physical redevelopment, job creation, skills training, health, education, welfare, and recreation.

Neighborhood corporations made sure the plans reflected the community's views. "[E]ven … as the final plans were being shaped, effort was extended to seek out more resident participation," Montgomery-Hyde Park residents stated. "The newsletter spewed out, contact workers pounded the streets and ideas buzzed back and forth like mosquitoes."[43] The organization continued publishing its newsletter and soliciting new members and opinions. The Yeatman District Community Corporation explained, "the planning process culminated in an intensive series of committee meetings and Corporation mass meetings at which the final decisions were made – BY THE PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED" (capitalization original).[44] Based on recommendations from the MCA, the neighborhood corporations operated through a system of subcommittees that crafted specific proposals for housing, health, job creation, job training,

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[42] Most notably, many Model Cities residents were victims of the Mill Creek Valley urban renewal project of the 1950s and 1960s. As was typical of urban renewal throughout the country, this project bulldozed thousands of housing units and made little attempt to construct affordable replacements.
[43] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 31, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[44] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

education, welfare, and recreation.[45] Each neighborhood organization then discussed the

committee proposals and voted on their final versions. In some cases, a subcommittee submitted

multiple proposals for organization members to debate and vote on.[46]

Neighborhood meetings were a place for residents to express their frustrations and

imagine improvements to the problems endemic to their communities. Held in local churches or

federally-sponsored neighborhood stations, meetings often attracted over one hundred residents.

Across the neighborhoods, a pattern emerged. Part of the meeting was dedicated to airing

grievances. Hubert Schwartzentruber, who offered his Mennonite church as a gathering space for

Jeff-Vander-Lou, recalled, "so much of it was people simply talking about their needs. Their

anger. [The meetings] brought a voice to the community."[47] Judy Miller recalled that there were

"lots of ideas. And when it came down to it what should we do? What do you want done first?

They came up with the idea of what they needed the most. And what they needed the second.

They didn't know quite how to go about doing it. But they were together on what needed to be

done." Sometimes the meetings functioned like a church service. Someone said their piece, and

the audience would voice their encouragement: "Amen." "Yeah, that's right."[48] But the purpose

of this meeting was not spiritual salvation. It was more practical, but probably just as ambitious.

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[45] St. Louis Model City Planning Manual, April 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

[46] Memo from Wilson to Cervantes Re: "Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Plan," August 7, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA; St. Louis Planning Manual, April, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. The residents followed planning guidelines from a city-published St. Louis Planning Manual. The manual suggested hiring advocate planners, working with MCA staff, and drafting individual components in neighborhood corporation sub-committees. The manual advised residents to split their narratives into problems, causes, and solutions. It also recommended the proposals include a five-year forecast for neighborhood activities. Finally, the manual stressed that while following these guidelines—which were distilled from HUD recommendations—was not required, doing so would increase the St. Louis's chance of winning funding. The fact that the residents largely followed these guidelines was a testament to the working relationship between the residents and the city. The manual itself indicated that the city was supportive of resident-led planning.

[47] Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017.

[48] Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.

It was "bringing to the forefront issues that concerned the various communities at that time."[49]

Residents were trying to save their neighborhood, their schools, streets, health, and homes.

Priorities slowly emerged. Residents saw housing, jobs, and healthcare as the most immediate

concerns, for who could live a full life without a safe place to reside, a livable wage, and bodily

health? Out of this process, residents' Model Cities comprehensive plans emerged.

Residents stressed unity in the creation of their plans, but at times they disagreed about

how to achieve their priorities. For example, as planning was wrapping up in Carr-Central,

residents disagreed over whether to allow an industrial plant to expand into an area chosen for a

residential development. Some neighbors wanted the factory to choose a site already designated

as an industrial area, but others believed a factory expansion, with the promise of more jobs, was

a better bet than a proposal for new housing units.[50] In Yeatman, both the Yeatman and Jeff-

Vander-Lou corporations initially submitted competing housing proposals. Yeatman's

emphasized demolition, whereas Jeff-Vander-Lou promoted rehabilitations. After being told to

reconcile these competing plans, the groups decided to put the Yeatman housing plan aside in

favor of Jeff-Vander-Lou. One Jeff-Vander-Lou member explained, "we have demonstrated that

rehabilitation is the best way to stabilize the area … There really wasn't any argument yesterday.

[Yeatman members] were willing to compromise."[51] Residents debated priorities, but their plans

presented a community consensus.

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[49] Daniel Jackson, Interview with Author, November 16, 2017.
[50] Regular N.A.C. Meeting Minutes, August 21, 1968, MCA Box Yr 1 and TEMPO, MCA Papers, SLML. To make their plans as convincing as possible, residents stressed consensus-building rather than disagreements. The MCA noted that many of the plans were "nearly unanimous." Memo from Margaret Bush Wilson to Mayor Cervantes Re: Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Plan, August 7, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[51] "Two Groups Resolve Conflict: Accord on Model City Plan," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 14, 1968. The Yeatman and Jeff-Vander-Lou organizations would sometimes work together and sometimes clash over the course of Model Cities, but these differences do not account for serious delays in their neighborhood's programs.

The neighborhood corporations maintained their democratic planning until their comprehensive proposals were ready for submission. In mid-July 1968, the Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation met so that each committee chairperson could present her component's plan, and formatting for the final document could be discussed. The next week, committees gave final presentations, the corporation confirmed each program's budget, residents discussed alternatives, and they voted on the entire package.[52] In about three months, each neighborhood submitted its comprehensive plan to the MCA executive board and the Aldermen.
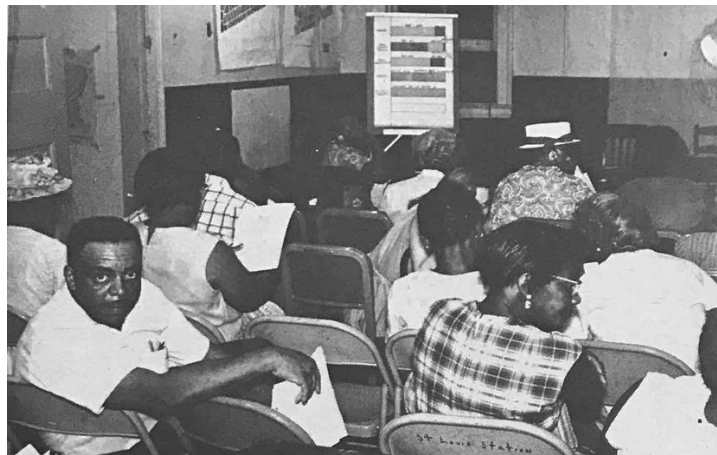

Figure 2: Yeatman Planning Meeting[53]

While the proposals were compiled in a hurry, they were the culmination of years of organizing.[54] Montgomery-Hyde Park explained, "the committees were awaiting the promised money and staff assistance from Model Cities before they really got into it." However, "by spring … the committee members, increasingly aware of the fast-approaching deadline, realized that they had better not wait for help from Model Cities; what planning was going to get done,

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[52] Agendas for July 17 and July 24, 1968 MCA Box 1 Yr 1 and TEMPO 1, MCA Papers, SLML.
[53] "Neighborhood Focus," *St. Louis Model City Voice*, Volume 1 No. 3, August 7, 1968, Series 34 Box 1 Folder: St. Louis Model City Voice, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA.
[54] Many of the corporations had been crafting plans for their neighborhoods at least since War on Poverty money started flowing into neighborhoods in 1964.

they were going to do on their own."[55] Residents knew they could not rely on the federal and

local government to get things done on time. Their statement further indicated that the

corporation was anticipating the possible criticism that residents' proposals were made too

hastily to be taken seriously by city and federal officials. Together, the proposals showed

residents knew the problems in their communities, their causes, and how to address them.

Residents developed relationships with private entities to get assistance in developing

their plans. Each neighborhood organization partnered with private or nonprofit firms who sent

"advocate planners" to assist the residents. The proposals did not indicate serious tensions

between the neighborhood organizations and these firms. In Montgomery-Hyde Park, "a rough

draft of the entire plan was reviewed by professional consultants from St. Louis University's

Center for Urban Programs, and detailed, point-by-point suggestions were reviewed by the

committees and in some cases incorporated directly into the plan."[56] Yeatman residents similarly

referenced an advocate-planner consulting firm while also insisting "this proposal represents the

needs and desires of the residents … surveys, committee hearings, and mass meetings were some

of the devices used to achieve resident participation in the program."[57] Residents involved in the

process believed their plans accurately represented neighborhood needs and desires.

Murphy-Blair had a closer relationship with their advocate planner, explaining that their

proposal was a culmination of "six months of dialogue between the residents of a Model City …

and their advocate planners."[58] Murphy-Blair teamed up with Grace Hill Settlement House and

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[55] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 31, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[58] The Murphy-Blair Neighborhood Residents' Plan, July 1968 Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, a St. Louis architectural firm.[59] Unlike the other proposals, which were stapled together and type-written, the Murphy-Blair proposal was presented as a professionally printed booklet to bolster their legitimacy as a urban planners. Still, the proposal was resident-driven. Cartoons accompanied the text, suggesting the document should be accessible to residents unfamiliar with technical language. The introductory letter from William Faulkner, Murphy-Blair's chairman, used first-person to introduce the proposal, saying, "this is our plan. Over 550 residents of the Murphy-Blair Neighborhood participated in it. It tells you of the hopes we have for our neighborhood."[60]

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[59] Renee Marver, Interview with Author, May 2, 2017. Grace Hill Settlement House has been dedicated to community organizing for decades. Longtime executive director George Eberle was known for mandating maximum employment of residents and participation in planning. Grace Hill social worker Renee Marver recalled being asked frequently to recruit residents to come to meetings and to ensure that all neighborhood programs provided employment opportunities for residents. In the later years of Model Cities, residents would begin to question the intentions and abilities of their advocate planners. Specifically, some residents criticized Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum for their involvement in Pruitt-Igoe. At this stage, though, relationships between residents and advocate planners appeared constructive and cooperative.

[60] The Murphy-Blair Neighborhood Residents' Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA. Murphy-Blair's plan even included a list of residents who participated in making the plan.

Figure 3: Cartoon Accompanying Murphy Blair's Comprehensive Plan[61]

There appeared to be little tension between residents and advocate planners, but the same cannot be said of the relationship between neighborhood organizations and the Model Cities bureaucracy. Yeatman residents, for example worried, "the need now is for some concrete, visible signs of implementation … we are anxious and ready to take the next step in the program and wait only for further direction from the Model City Agency."[62] Carr-Central's proposal pushed further, saying their proposal should "be recognized for what it is: a summary of needs long denied the people of this area, and a strategy for meeting these needs effectively and efficiently." The proposal warned, "the hopes of the people have never been raised so high as they are now because of our recent efforts. However, faith in <u>orderly</u>, <u>systematic</u> planning can be

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[61] The Murphy-Blair Neighborhood Residents' Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[62] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

maintained only if the plan is studied and funded without undue delay."[63] The residents

suggested that if the municipal and federal governments refused to follow the residents' plan, the

city should expect protests or uprisings similar to what had been seen in urban areas around the

country. Despite these delays, neighborhood corporations submitted the proposals on time.[64]

The neighborhood corporations wanted more than control of Model Cities funds. They

wanted to use their official position in Model Cities to carve out a role in all municipal decisions

affecting their residents. On August 12, less than two weeks after residents submitted their

comprehensive plans to the MCA and the Board of Aldermen for approval, the Carr-Central

Neighborhood Corporation stated that their experience writing their neighborhood's

comprehensive plan authorized them to partner with other municipal agencies. Carr-Central

Chairman Emma Hall wrote to the MCA, "we wish to go on record as being ready for discussion

and meetings [with the Land Clearance Authority]."[65] The neighborhood corporations'

experiences with democratic urban planning provided them the ability to force the municipal

government to confront neighborhood demands. This was no small feat.

Fighting for Autonomy: Residents' Comprehensive Plans

Residents' comprehensive plans revealed their analysis of the causes of poverty, as well

as methods for alleviating suffering and reducing poverty over the long-term. They varied in

length, aesthetics, and level of detail, but they all asserted similar visions of community control.

They disputed Moynihan's beliefs about a pathological black culture, as well as urban renewal's

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[63] Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[64] In contrast, very few cities were able to meet deadlines, and federal officials took months to respond to cities' proposals.
[65] Letter from Emma Hall to Margaret Bush Wilson, August 12, 1968, MCA Box 1 Yr 1 and TEMPO 1, MCA Papers, SLML.

focus on middle-class development and removal of poor residents. Montgomery-Hyde Park and

Yeatman's proposals were well over one hundred pages, offering the most detailed budgets and

descriptions of programs. Pruitt-Igoe's proposal was shorter and less specific, and residents cited

lack of planning time and resources. Each proposal outlined programs for physical

redevelopment, recreation, employment, welfare, education, health, safety, and municipal

services. Their strongest vision for remaking their communities came in their physical

redevelopment, health, and employment plans.[66]

Residents' plans differed from conventional city-planned redevelopment projects in key

ways. First, they rebuked urban renewal and offered an alternate vision for upgrading the

physical stock of the neighborhood alongside services for residents. Instead of displacing

residents or giving them the resources to move out of the city, the neighborhood plans attempted

to simultaneously upgrade and stabilize the area for current residents. Neighbors rarely used the

term "urban renewal," since many residents had lived through the destruction urban renewal

wrought. In fact, they explained, "the best way to understand the new Model Cities program is to

understand what it is not. It is NOT urban renewal."[67] By planning for physical redevelopment

alongside social services, residents contended that social programs and urban planning had to

work in tandem to make communities survivable for poor people. Bobby Westbrooks explained

these goals, saying "contrary to what a whole lot of people think, all of us don't want to move

out in the [suburbs], we'd prefer to stay here if this neighborhood is made liveable with better

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[66] Housing Component Draft, October 17, 1968, Folder: Misc. Files- Montgomery-Hyde Park, MCA Box Citizen Participation Files, MCA Papers, SLML; *St. Louis Model City Voice*, Vol. 1 No. 5 September 6, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. The St. Louis's application requested the most money for housing, employment, and health components.
[67] St. Louis Model City Voice Vol. 1 No. 7 December 20, 1968, Folder: Model City Voice, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

houses, better schools, better everything."[68] Finally, residents insisted there was an inherent value to resident-controlled institutions, arguing that unlike city government and private companies, residents' focus would be completely on poor citizens themselves.

Residents' main criticism of the physical state of their neighborhood was a lack of affordable and decent housing for rent or purchase. Montgomery-Hyde Park explained that housing in their area "basically consists of leftovers—leftovers from the nineteenth century, leftovers from diverse ethnic groups since moved west, and leftovers from society as a whole."[69] Eighty-four percent of the available apartments were three-room shotgun style arrangements, inappropriate for families of any size. Fewer than twenty percent of residents described their housing situation as "good," and only one fifth of residents owned their homes. Yeatman's proposal echoed Montgomery-Hyde Park's concerns, explaining, "overcrowding has become a way of life … with instances of 5-6 people living in two (2) rooms."[70] Montgomery-Hyde Park estimated that most renters in the area paid $50-60 per month in rent, and while residents did not have more money to spend on housing, this amount was too low to lease large enough quarters either within or outside the model neighborhood.

Other problems with the physical state of the neighborhoods exacerbated housing shortages. Residents cited vacant and abandoned buildings. The Yeatman neighborhood counted 134 vacant land parcels, blaming obsolete zoning laws, lack of code enforcement, and economic disinvestment.[71] Further, in Carr-Central a lack of private housing options left almost all residents living in low-rise public housing projects. The model neighborhood was home to several large public housing complexes, including Cochran Gardens, Carr Square, and Vaughn

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[68] June 20, 1968 interview by Lyals Battle with Robert Westbrooks, Folder: Model City Voice, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.
[69] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid. Johnson-era Model Cities rhetoric encouraged this kind of experimentation.

apartments. Carr-Central described its low-rise public housing as functioning fairly well, but cited poor management, broken elevators, and inadequate cleaning services.

Residents listed problems with land use and population loss in order to solve them, not write their neighborhood off as a lost cause, as urban renewal planners usually did. Carr-Central expressed intense frustration that industrial sites and warehouses disrupted residential sections of their neighborhood. In "between the two [residential] ends [of the neighborhood] lies trucking, warehouses and empty lots which present a highly effective barrier between the residents and isolates them from each other." They called the warehouses and truck-loading sites an "'invisible' barrier separating the residents of the area."[72] Yeatman said their neighborhood "can be best described as a conglomeration of dilapidated structures, and conflicting, often incompatible uses," noting that companies operating in the area rarely hired residents and were therefore not contributing to residents' well-being. Instead of seeing these conditions as a condemnation of the neighborhood, as was typical with urban renewal, residents used the information they gathered to argue that upgrading housing should be their first priority. Their proposals opposed conventional urban renewal projects that demolished entire blocks and neighborhoods without replacing housing stock.

The neighborhoods shared general goals, which grew directly out of the problems they identified and their criticism of urban renewal. As outlined by Carr-Central, residents wanted "to provide adequate home ownership housing. To provide public housing with emphasis on tenant management. To provide special housing for single people, elderly, and handicapped people. To provide full commercial service and facilities."[73] They believed decent housing would stabilize the neighborhood's population. They recognized that some structures should be torn down, but

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[72] Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[73] Ibid.

the proposals explicitly stipulated that their plans must create more housing than they demolished.[74] Crucially, each application attributed housing problems to lack of investment, not residents' neglect. Their proposals aimed to funnel money into a variety of resident-run programs that would help different segments of the population obtain better and cheaper housing.

Montgomery-Hyde Park offered the most comprehensive housing vision to address the problems they described. Rather than contract with a private company or the city's land clearance and housing authorities, the neighborhood called for the creation of a housing corporation to be run by Montgomery-Hyde Park. The housing corporation would apply for government and private funding, in addition to Model Cities money. They claimed (perhaps naively) that the new corporation could avoid bureaucratic red tape and operate more efficiently. Implicit in their call for a resident-run housing corporation was an important critique of the federal and local officials who had conducted housing policies for decades. Many residents had first-hand experience with the way government agencies tore down neighborhoods and failed to adequately relocate residents. Neighborhood leaders believed residents would do a better job. Soon, though, this call for new, resident-controlled institutions to plan and implement government-funded programs would become a main area of controversy in Model Cities.[75]

Montgomery-Hyde Park residents focused on the neediest section of their neighborhood, an area of about six hundred buildings. They estimated that approximately one hundred of the structures in this sub-area would have to be torn down, and in their place, small parks and new housing structures would be built. The rest of the structures, about five hundred, would be rehabilitated, showing residents' distaste for massive demolition projects and their desire for parks and outdoor recreation space. The neighborhood set an ambitious timeline of rehabbing

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[74] While this guideline seems simple, residents in St. Louis and around the country were familiar with urban renewal projects in which affordable housing units were often torn down without being replenished.

[75] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA

sixty houses the first year and one hundred each subsequent year of the Model Cities program.

Each rehab project would cost approximately $1,500, based on assessments made by advocate

planners at the Bicentennial Development Corporation.[76] A typical rehab would involve

converting a duplex into one six-bedroom house by constructing an indoor staircase to

accommodate large families. The plan called for all but forty residential structures in the housing

area to be rehabilitated by the end of Model Cities' five-year lifespan. As buildings were being

renovated, the neighborhood corporation would temporarily relocate families. They requested

$30,000 to rehabilitate the first twenty houses, and when residents purchased homes, that money

would be used to fix up other houses.[77] Montgomery-Hyde Park wrote proposals for four groups:

potential home-owners, renters, those in need of emergency housing, and the elderly.

Residents could purchase homes restored by the corporation, which would in turn provide

more money for rehabilitations to continue. The neighborhood corporation would help residents

utilize federal low-income home ownership finance programs.[78] In a direct critique of public

housing, other government-sponsored housing programs, and culture of poverty logic,

Montgomery-Hyde Park's home ownership plan called for a resident committee. This committee

would review applications, interview potential home owners, and select the residents who could

purchase Model Cities houses. Whereas most programs for government-sponsored housing

"emphasize[d] occupancy by two-parent families with no felony convictions, the [Montgomery]

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[76] E.S. Evans, "Funding Shortage Stalls Vacant House Program," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 4, 1970. The Bicentennial Development Corporation was a neighborhood-based housing rehab organization that operated in the Montgomery-Hyde Park area. In the years preceding Model Cities, this organization rehabbed about one hundred twenty houses in Montgomery-Hyde Park with OEO money.

[77] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[78] See Taylor's upcoming book, *Race for Profit;* Cecil Miller, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017. Keeanga Taylor argues that federally-sponsored low-income home ownership programs could perpetuate predatory real estate practices, rather than alleviate them. On the other hand, Cecil Miller, who was active in the Jeff-Vander-Lou organization, believed the federal 221(h) low-income housing finance program allowed many residents to successfully purchase and maintain homes. In spite of the risks for low income people, residents wanted the opportunity to own their homes.

organization attempted to allow all persons who wanted to buy homes to do so, provided they

were financially able."[79] Anticipating the mass incarceration of the late twentieth century,

residents' criticized harsh policing of black and poor neighborhoods and consequently believed a

felony record should not exclude neighbors from home ownership or decent housing.[80]

Neighborhood housing plans operated on a new vision of community improvement. By rejecting

government programs' lifestyle and morality guidelines, Montgomery-Hyde Park indicated that

all residents, regardless of their personal history, deserved a chance to purchase a home.[81]

Residents wanted to increase opportunities for themselves, not judge each other's' lifestyles.[82]

Montgomery-Hyde Park also made provisions for the many residents who could not

afford even subsidized home ownership, showing their programs refused to consider displacing

the poor, as urban renewal did. The neighborhood corporation would seek federal grants to

renovate and construct apartments, and federal rent supplements would be available. The

corporation estimated the construction of seventy-five rental units. Montgomery-Hyde Park also

planned for residents "who are at the very bottom of the economic ladder." They picked a

location to construct an apartment complex which would function as an emergency housing

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[79] Sally Thran, "Factors in Abandonment of Model-City Houses," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* October 31, 1973, MCA Papers, SLML.

[80] Elizabeth Hinton has documented how, in general, the War on Poverty ushered in the militarization of police and mass incarceration. Residents' plans pushed against this trend. See Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[81] There is a growing literature analyzing the intrusive surveillance that accompanied the use of federal welfare programs including Aid to Dependent Children and public housing. See: Feliciah Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights,* Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace,* Rhonda Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing,* and Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor.* For information specifically on Pruitt-Igoe surveillance and regulation, see "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth" documentary and Hansman, *Pruitt-Igoe.* This scholarship describes lifestyle restrictions for women living in public housing, one of the most infamous being the stipulation that in order to receive public housing, a male father-figure had to be absent. Individuals with criminal records were often barred from public housing. Welfare programs also limited what recipients could purchase. For years, Pruitt-Igoe residents were not allowed the "luxury" of owning a television.

[82] Other components of the comprehensive plans, such as homemaker training, did acknowledge that resident planners cared about their neighbors' lifestyle choices. However, the fact that access to housing was separated from morality ran directly in contrast to municipal- and federal-controlled programs.

program.[83] Finally, Montgomery-Hyde Park's plans for retirement communities included architectural sketches with rationales for floor plans.[84] Each apartment would have a small garden area and direct access to a walkway. The complexes would be built on land that was already vacant to avoid demolishing viable buildings. They were also designed to be integrated with the surrounding neighborhood to fight against social isolation of the elderly. In contrast to most urban renewal plans, residents' proposals did not need to allocate large sums of money for relocation, since few inhabited structures would be torn down.[85]

Other neighborhoods' proposals criticized the design and maintenance of public housing. Displaying their expertise in urban design, residents derided the Pruitt-Igoe high-rises. They complained that the architects failed to take into account the average size of families, citing high vacancy rates for smaller units and a waitlist for larger ones. A frequent target of ire were Pruitt-Igoe's skip stop elevators, which did not stop on every floor.[86] Residents knew there was not enough Model Cities money for major renovations, and they designed creative, cost effective solutions. Hiring a receptionist and installing buzz-in entries would be too expensive, so Pruitt-Igoe requested $33,000 to install a peephole in each door. They also requested $40,000 to promote resident management in two of the complex's buildings. They envisioned ceding control to tenants in phases and argued that tenant management would foster a sense of community

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[83] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[84] St. Louis Model City Population Estimates, MCA Box Misc Projects, MCA Papers, SLML. This document showed that a disproportionate number of model neighborhood residents were over sixty-five when compared with the city as a whole, making housing for the elderly an important priority.

[85] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[86] Designed as a cost-saving measure, skip stop elevators only stop on certain floors, so residents on alternate floors would have to walk up or down a flight of stairs to get into their apartment. These stairwells were sometimes filled with trash.

responsibility. Anticipating the 1969 public housing rent strike, the proposal also requested funds for a rent supplement program to offset monthly payments.[87]

Residents' housing plans were substantially different from typical physical redevelopment. While conventional urban renewal's goals were many-faceted—bringing in money for private companies, making cities more attractive to the middle class, and upgrading inadequate housing stock—residents' goals were community-focused. Neighborhood corporations insisted they were beholden only to resident needs. Their plans aimed to upgrade housing with minimal disruption to residents' lives, simultaneously encouraging neighborhood stability through home-ownership programs and their aversion to large demolition projects.

Like the housing plans, health proposals showcased residents' analysis of problems in their neighborhood and their vision for resident-led solutions. Carr-Central called its health proposal "a radical approach to the health needs of the medically indigent, at least in terms of the traditional health medical structure represented in St. Louis."[88] Health proposals aimed to correct years of inadequate and harmful health policies in the neighborhoods by putting residents in charge. The Yeatman neighborhood's proposal compiled statistics on health disparities, noting that the rates of infant mortality and deaths resulting from accidents were twice the national average. The proposal also estimated that Yeatman residents received about one tenth the number of medical treatments as their suburban counterparts.[89] To respond to these problems, two themes ran through the five health proposals: accessibility and continuity.

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[87] "Rent Strike Spreads to Pruitt-Igoe," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 12, 1969. Pruitt-Igoe residents joined other public housing tenants in a rent strike to protest rising rent. Eugene Porter, a Pruitt-Igoe resident who was active in Model Cities, was a leader of the strike.
[88] Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[89] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Residents believed proximity to health care facilities was a central cause of health disparities. Some of the neighborhoods had a small clinic, but these facilities provided limited services and were sometimes operated by volunteers. Specialty care and treatment of serious medical issues required a trip to the hospital. Economically-strapped model neighborhood residents had difficulty getting to hospitals and often did not have time to make the commute or wait for care, due to employment and child care commitments. "Once there," the proposal explained, "patients are required to 1) wait long periods of time for service, 2) furnish proof of eligibility, 3) make return visits to clinics scheduled on certain days, and 4) be seen by different physicians during a course of treatment."[90] Residents explained that traveling to large public hospitals entailed "lengthy waiting periods and treatment from a strange doctor, who is overloaded beyond all reason."[91] Residents noted that doctors in large hospitals did not know patients well, nor were they attuned to the health issues of the model neighborhood.

Neighborhood organizations called for the creation of resident-run health corporations to deliver neighbor-focused healthcare. Yeatman residents needed "not only treatment from the most competent practitioners available, but also treatment which is attentive to human dignity. Specifically, residents wish to be treated by a doctor they know will continue to be available to advise for all the health needs of the family."[92] Each neighborhood requested funds for a comprehensive community clinic with a permanent staff. Montgomery-Hyde Park, for example, envisioned a small health center where an entire family would see the same doctor, explaining, "at no time will members of a family be seen by different internists. This method will not allow

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[90] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[91] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[92] Ibid.

for fragmented services that have been traditional in the present system."[93] The residents wanted

the clinic open from 10:00am-10:00pm on weekdays and 8:00am to noon on Saturday, fitting

work schedules. To keep costs down but give residents increased access, medical specialists in

ophthalmology, orthopedics, and urology would visit the clinic once a week. Some

neighborhoods planned to hire resident health advocates to guide community members through

the healthcare system and provide information on sex education, nutrition, contagious diseases,

and federal health programs. Having neighbors help neighbors access medical resources would

ensure that health professionals were familiar with local needs.[94]

Residents' desire to set up neighborhood clinics was part of a national community health

center trend. In 1970 the Black Panther Party ordered the creation of health clinics in each of its

chapters as part of their survival program. These "People's Clinics" had similar goals and were

also run by the community members themselves. Volunteer doctors, nurses, and community

health specialists staffed the clinics. In New Haven, neighborhood civil rights organizations

opened a community health center in 1969 that is still open. Model Cities residents' plans

therefore shaped and reflected black communities' responses to health injustices.[95]

As Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign attempted to reorient the civil rights

movement to alleviating poverty, Model Cities residents offered creative solutions to their own

community's lack of decent jobs and living wages. Since residents had personal knowledge of

barriers to employment, they argued they should also be in charge of drafting solutions.

Neighbors highlighted cripplingly high unemployment rates, well above the national average of

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[93] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[94] Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[95] See Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis ; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011) and Bonnie Lefkowitz, *Community Health Centers: A Movement and the People Who Made It Happen*, Critical Issues in Health and Medicine (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

3.6%.[96] Montgomery-Hyde Park reported a twelve percent unemployment rate and estimated that there were three hundred unemployed adults in their area.[97] Yeatman estimated twenty-eight percent unemployment, and Carr-Central estimated sixteen percent.[98] When residents of Yeatman were asked why they were unable to find a job, forty-four percent cited lack of education and training. Several of the proposals mentioned that existing programs failed to reduce unemployment. Yeatman explained, "an occasional proposal is brought to light but to date nothing concrete has developed."[99]

Neighborhood corporations viewed racism as the most significant contributor to unemployment.[100] Under a sub-heading, "Local Problem," Yeatman listed "82% of all residents are Negroes" as the first reason residents could not find jobs.[101] Another neighborhood referenced negative stereotypes against public housing residents as an impediment to employment. Neighbors were especially angry that many industries operating in the neighborhood were not committed to hiring residents. Carr-Central "residents complain of the many existing trucking, manufacturing, and industrial and commercial firms in the immediate area which hire <u>no</u> or at best, a very few people, from the area."[102] Further, very few neighbors owned businesses, and residents explained that their inability to get small business loans were a

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[96] Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU04000000?years_option=all_years&periods_option=specific_periods&periods=Annual+Data, Retrieved December 5, 2016.

[97] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[98] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968 and Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[99] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[100] Employment Committee Meeting, Montgomery-Hyde Park, June 25, 1968, MCA Box Yr 1 and TEMPO 2, MCA Papers, SLML. Simultaneous to the drafting of comprehensive plans, Montgomery-Hyde Park's employment committee debated initiating a boycott or protest against companies that did not hire black people.

[101] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[102] Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

result of "a continuation of traditional loan practices (particularly credit ratings), and red tape on the part of the Small Business Administration."[103]

Residents also discussed underemployment—meaning workers who were stuck in low-wage, temporary, and part-time positions that did not pay enough to sustain a household—to assert that unfair practices, not personal deficiencies, were the main cause of unlivable wages. Montgomery-Hyde Park, whose area estimated thirty-nine percent underemployment, insisted "the problem [of subemployment] is not so much work habits (punctuality, dress, etc.) as it is a low skill level, lack of education or racial discrimination."[104] This discussion of subemployment added a previously missing element to conversations about poverty and job opportunities. Residents knew that merely obtaining a job was not enough to keep a person and her family out of poverty. Their programs therefore aimed to not just increase the number of jobs but also to increase wages and job advancement opportunities.

Residents' employment plans asserted that residents had inherent value that had long been ignored. Montgomery-Hyde Park framed its employment plan by asking: "one theme that the Neighborhood Corporation has stressed repeatedly is that as many as possible of the jobs, as much as possible of the money, should go directly to neighborhood people. How well does the Model Cities proposal do this?"[105] Answering this question, residents demonstrated a keen understanding of the need for a multi-faceted attack on employment problems. Yeatman explained, "the Corporation seeks to work with the Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Business Commission and other agencies on ways to develop and attract new business into the area." They "hope[d] that business, industry and labor will cooperate and develop new hiring

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[103] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.

practices which give priority consideration to local area residents."[106] Residents wanted both control over their program and partnerships with existing institutions. Yeatman also stated, "the ultimate goal is to upgrade the financial status, to create permanent financial security, to utilize the dormant talent in the area … In this manner we can reduce the welfare rolls, increase the number of tax paying citizens, and restore human dignity."[107] The resident organizations planned five categories of employment programs: direct job creation, skills training, courting industry into the neighborhoods, promoting resident entrepreneurship, and anti-discrimination policies.

The employment plans outlined exactly how many resident jobs each Model Cities proposal would create, because residents believed the surest way to alleviate poverty was through employment. The most direct way to increase employment was to hire residents for Model Cities jobs. Neighborhood corporations wanted to employ residents as construction workers, health specialists, welfare advocates, and teacher aides. Montgomery-Hyde Park estimated that of the 213 jobs their plan would create, at least 167 "can definitely be filled by residents right away."[108]

Residents' difficulties obtaining employment shaped their job training proposals. Yeatman explained, "almost half of the labor force of the Yeatman Model City area is considered inadequately prepared to obtain and hold standard permanent jobs."[109] Neighborhood organizations therefore insisted on running their own training programs. Carr-Central's rationale was that "many have already gone through endless numbers of training programs only to find no

[106] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[109] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

job when they were finished."[110] They believed neighborhood-run programs would ensure that participants would have direct access to employment. Each neighborhood created a training program, and one corporation proposed the construction of an Urban Training Center that would partner with local construction unions.[111] Training would include instruction on how to apply and interview for jobs, individual consultations, and apprenticeships through partnerships with private companies.[112] Plans also included opportunities to complete elementary and secondary education degrees. Montgomery-Hyde Park wanted to fund some residents to be full-time students and requested $120,000 to spend on living expenses for people in training programs. Staff would be hired to help residents decide which training opportunities would be most useful.

Residents knew the barriers their neighbors faced starting businesses, so they allocated money for business loans. Montgomery-Hyde Park dismissed previous small business loan initiatives as ineffective, citing one effort that produced only three loans. As a result, residents wanted to hire a small business specialist for their corporation who would oversee a "special loan fund which would be utilized for high risk loans."[113] This person would help entrepreneurs apply for conventional loans through the Small Business Administration, and the special loan fund would be used if conventional loans fell through. Montgomery-Hyde Park called for a $60,000 revolving fund similar to their home ownership program: with initial seed money, businesses would pay back loans, providing money for future locally-owned business ventures in the neighborhood. To qualify for a loan, "a special committee of residents, businessmen and finance

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[110] Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[111] John Angelides, "Mayor Calls Special Session of Aldermen," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, July 15, 1971. Despite initial opposition, by 1971 the construction unions agreed to sponsor a training center and provide trainees with union membership.

[112] Yeatman District Community Corporation Model City Plan, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[113] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

specialists would be established to pass on all loans granted out of the special funds."[114] Montgomery-Hyde Park residents recommended where to locate neighbor-owned businesses, suggesting the community would benefit from clothing stores, auto shops, and a furniture store on the corner of 23rd and North Market Streets.[115] Residents' take on small business loans revealed their understanding of the inadequacy of government institutions running antipoverty programs. They knew that for years the Small Business Administration's policies failed to help model neighborhood residents start businesses, and their plans explained exactly how resident-run programs would correct these injustices.

Residents' plans recognized that the United States' capitalist economy systematically discriminated against black and poor people. Residents wanted to fix this system without totally overthrowing capitalism, using their carefully-crafted partnerships with municipal officials to ensure black businesses had a fair chance to succeed. In residents' economic vision, their businesses should be given federal subsidies and a place to thrive in neighborhoods, and there should be protections against large corporations pushing local businesses out of communities. Notably, Model Cities residents did not call for black banks, and Historian Mehrsa Baradaran explains why relying on black banks further marginalized black communities. Baradaran argues that black banks were predicated on the idea that poor communities could pool resources to lift themselves out of poverty, but in reality communities were only able to do this with heavy federal subsidies. Residents wanted to use Model Cities funding to make their economic programs work, but nationally Baradaran shows that segregated money replicates segregation.[116]

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[114] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[115] Today, this intersection is completely vacant. It is now within the National Geospatial Agency (NGA) footprint (see Afterword).
[116] See Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Radical Wealth Gap* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017). Baradaran explains that immigrant communities created banking systems for themselves, but federal subsidies were required to make these institutions work.

Finally, residents wanted help fighting employment discrimination. Montgomery-Hyde Park planned to use the corporation's law firm for this purpose. By anticipating the need for legal services, residents asserted that the success of their plans depended on confronting decades of racial and economic discrimination.[117] Each component of their employment plans therefore depended on breaking down the barriers black residents faced on the job market.

The proposals were a great intellectual achievement, turning Moynihan's idea of a pathological black culture on its head to assert neighborhood expertise. Crafted by residents, most of whom had little prior experience with planning or working with the municipal bureaucracy, the five neighborhood proposals presented the preferences of a community long shut out of urban planning decisions. By rejecting urban renewal's mass clearance and arguing that neighborhood-run institutions were best able to keep programs focused on poor citizens, residents offered a new protocol for urban planning: instead of business-driven urban renewal that had recently come under intense criticism, model neighborhood residents in St. Louis pushed government officials to focus on residents' calls for racial equality by ceding control to the residents most affected by the plans being made.

The City Reacts to Residents' Proposals

Community involvement, leadership, and action continued after neighborhood organizations submitted their proposals to the city at the end of July 1968. Residents and their allies pushed for increased funding, control, and legitimacy as the city government decided whether to accept the proposals. After the residents submitted their plans, the neighborhood organizations had about three weeks to advocate for their programs to ensure the Board of

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[117] Model Cities Area Plan: Montgomery Area, July, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Aldermen voted to accept the proposals and sent them to Washington for funding. On August 9, Mayor Cervantes sent a memo to the city's directors of Welfare, Public Service, Public Utilities, Public Safety, Streets, Health and Hospitals, and Parks, asking them to review sections of the proposals relevant to their areas. His memo stated, "as you know, I strongly support this program, but I think we must make certain that these plans are coordinated with the operating departments."[118] Mayor Cervantes sent a separate memo to the MCA's acting director, Margaret Bush Wilson, urging her to coordinate with these departments. Wilson proved a staunch advocate for the neighborhood organizations and the integrity of their proposals. Wilson was a middle-class black lawyer who was active in the St. Louis civil rights scene since the 1940s. After her stint with Model Cities, she would become president of the Missouri branch of the NAACP. While most city departments signed off on the neighborhood proposals, one department head, Irvin Dagen, expressed concern. Wilson's response to Dagen's objections showed the MCA could function as a vehicle within the city government that advocated for residents' wishes, needs, and control.

Irvin Dagen headed the Housing Agency and Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA), the city's urban renewal agency. His criticism of the neighborhood proposals was a threat to the integrity of citizen participation. On August 12, 1968, Dagen sent letters to both Mayor Cervantes and Margaret Bush Wilson, stating that some of the neighborhood proposals conflicted with municipal land clearance initiatives. Citing several studies the LCRA was undertaking, he expressed concern regarding the Carr-Central proposal and potential conflicts with the city's urban renewal plans. He stated, "we do not feel that we can review the proposals in the manner that you requested, prior to the meeting of the Board of Aldermen." He

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[118] Memo from Mayor Cervantes, August 9, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.

continued, "to properly study and evaluate the plans would require a considerably greater period of time, particularly in the view of their comprehensive nature, and their significance and relationship to overall community planning"[119] Dagen was stalling. He had been asked to approve the model neighborhood plans before the Aldermanic vote, yet he claimed he could not do so until after the Board of Aldermen met and his own agency's studies were completed.

In one sense, Dagen's resistance to residents' proposals was surprising. He and his wife were active members of St. Louis's CORE chapter, which coordinated non-violent sit-ins and other protests to integrate public spaces around St. Louis from the late forties through the mid-sixties.[120] But the LCRA had a long history of decimating black neighborhoods through slum demolition and urban renewal projects, so in this setting, Dagen's opposition to residents' approach could be expected. His personal and professional experiences revealed the complexity of sympathetic whites' relationships with black activist groups. Even well-intentioned members of the St. Louis government could let racial bias get in the way of residents' visions. Officials like Dagen, both in St. Louis and around the country, were hesitant to admit that urban renewal harmed black communities. Further, they supported the concept of citizen participation only until they saw that resident plans might impede their urban planning initiatives. Foreshadowing the federal criticism of St. Louis residents' plans, Dagen objected to residents' desires to create their own institutions—such as housing and health care corporations—and implement the programs

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[119] Letter from Irvin Dagen to Margaret Bush Wilson, August 12, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[120] As discussed in chapter 1, although CORE carried out the Jefferson Bank Boycott, the most famous of St. Louis's civil rights campaigns, poor residents in the model neighborhood did not feel that CORE adequately represented their interests. St. Louis's CORE was dominated by a middle-class constituency. Many Model Cities residents therefore found neighborhood organizations more closely aligned with their needs and concerns. The Dagens' CORE papers are available through the State Historical Society of Missouri and provide a history of CORE in St. Louis. The files include articles Irvin Dagen wrote for the *Argus,* St. Louis's black newspaper. For an account of the Dagens' work in CORE, see Mary Kimbrough and Margaret W. Dagen, *Victory Without Violence: The First Ten Years of the St. Louis Committee of Racial Equality (CORE), 1947-1957* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000).

they designed. He thought he was helping neighborhood residents, yet Dagen's implicit racism and bias for top-down planning revealed a crucial disconnect between resident and city priorities.

Margaret Bush Wilson's response to Dagen demonstrated her commitment to the residents' visions and her skill working within the city bureaucracy. She needed to convince local officials of the superiority of resident plans.[121] In a memo to Cervantes, Wilson forcefully defended Carr-Central's proposal, methods of community involvement, coordination with private planning experts, and communication with Dagen's agency. She provided Cervantes with a detailed account of the Carr-Central planning process:

> This land use plan, along with four alternative plans [were] presented to large numbers of Carr Central residents and was on display in the neighborhood planning office … for a period of at least six weeks. The alternative plans were reviewed by residents who walked in off the street and made comments, by the Carr Central Physical Planning Committee, and by some 150 residents in a series of mass meetings. The alternative plans were prepared by Carr Central Corporation's own physical planning advocate, Sam Dardick and Associates, after many meetings with the residents' physical planning committee … This is merely a straightforward statement on how the residents of Carr Central Neighborhood wish to see land in the neighborhood used. Their choice of this land use plan was nearly unanimous.[122]

Wilson then addressed Dagen's suggestion that the Carr-Central plans should be delayed because they conflicted with LCRA urban renewal projects. She noted that members of the Carr-Central Corporation had tried on several occasions to meet with Dagen's staff, but "in general, [residents] were told that [LCRA] plans were in preparation and would not be ready to discuss

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[121] Margaret Bush Wilson was a strong force in the St. Louis and national civil rights scene. A prominent St. Louis lawyer, she became the Missouri chair of the NAACP in 1962. In 1975 she became the national NAACP's chair. Her father James Bush was the real estate agent who attempted to sell the black Shelley family a house on an all-white street, which eventually led to the Shelley v. Kraemer Supreme Court case that struck down racially restrictive housing covenants. For more information on Margaret Bush Wilson and her family's background, see Margaret Bush Wilson, *Twigs from the Bush* (Chicago: American Bar Association, 2009).

[122] Memo from Margaret Bush Wilson to Mayor Cervantes Re: Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Plan, August 7, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.

with neighborhood people for several months."[123] She asserted that throughout the planning process, residents communicated with city agencies.

Wilson went further, challenging the very nature of Dagen's commitment to collaboration with residents. In the same letter to Mayor Cervantes, Wilson wrote, "I further suggested to Mr. Dagen that the Carr Central Model City land use plan be construed by his agency as a direct expression of citizen desires with respect to the urban renewal program, and therefore, as an extremely valuable input to the considerations and plans of the Land Clearance Authority."[124] She had flipped the conversation, asserting that instead of asking residents to agree to the LCRA's ideas, Dagen and the LCRA should follow the residents' lead. She reminded Cervantes that previous urban renewal projects had met citizen protest, and she defended the Carr-Central plan: "Carr Central Corporation documents provide Saint Louis Housing Authority with a unique opportunity to plan for urban renewal in partnership with citizens, and thereby enlist their cooperation rather than their criticism."[125] She concluded that neighborhood residents wanted Dagen's urban renewal projects to focus on better housing instead of building commercial and industrial spaces, reiterating residents' assertion that their perspective was necessary to the creation of effective antipoverty programs.

Her detailed refutation of Dagen's concerns convinced Mayor Cervantes and the city government that residents had worked with city agencies. On August 19, the Board of Aldermen approved the citizens' plans as St. Louis's official Model Cities application by a twenty-to-one vote.[126] For now, residents' proposals were safe from municipal meddling, but it would soon

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[123] Memo from Margaret Bush Wilson to Mayor Cervantes Re: Carr-Central Neighborhood Corporation Plan, August 7, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 7, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] "Aldermen Approve Model City Proposal," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 19, 1968.

become apparent that clashes between the neighborhood organizations and the city's urban renewal office were just beginning.

After the problems with Irvin Dagen and the LCRA were resolved, the mayor, aldermen, and agency directors expressed strong support of residents' plans. The city highlighted that the comprehensive plans were "designed by residents of the area who are victims of the real problems, namely, racial discrimination, growing barriers to economic and social mobility, apathy on the part of those who do not share their problems, and growing numbers of migrants into their neighborhoods."[127] Not only did this statement reflect residents' own diagnosis of their neighborhood's problems, but it also avoided the pitfalls of the culture of poverty arguments. Rather than dismissing residents as apathetic or incapable of making realistic plans for themselves, the city called out powerholders (including the municipal government itself) who had for decades been blind to residents' struggles. The city's acknowledgement of the explicit tie between racial discrimination and the need for resident planning was also new.

Further, the resident-led planning process for Model Cities in St. Louis induced local officials to rethink their patterns of communication with residents. For example, the way St. Louis's Public Utilities department communicated with constituents changed as a direct result of Model Cities. A few months before residents submitted their comprehensive plans, MCA director Donald Bourgeois wrote to Mayor Cervantes regarding Montgomery-Hyde Park residents' concerns about street lights. He explained that residents repeatedly asked the official in charge of a 1966 bond issue if the neighborhood would receive greatly needed street lights.[128] Bourgeois was particularly candid regarding patterns of communication between city hall and residents: "This is the type of communication problem we have been working to resolve … I

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[127] Comprehensive City Demonstration Program Submitted August 23, 1968 by City of Saint Louis, Missouri, Alfonso J. Cervantes, Mayor, MCA Box 9, MCA Papers, SLML.

[128] Recall from chapter 1 that Jeff-Vander-Lou residents used their growing clout to demand street lights as well.

really believe there would be much less ill will if the City would publicly announce now just where and when the street lights from the 1966 Bond Issue are going to be installed." He worried, "as it now stands every neighborhood is angry with City Hall whom they see as being evasive and possibly even 'playing politics' with the street light money."[129] His complaint produced quick results. The next day, Mayor Cervantes took Bourgeois' advice and signed a memo directed to the public utilities commissioner. Mirroring Bourgeois' language, Cervantes explained, "I feel we should now make our decisions known to the public in a straightforward fashion. This is an example of the type of communication which I have been trying to foster … which is as free as possible of 'bureaucratic' delays and evasions."[130] He then asked the commissioner to promptly announce where street lights would go, along with a rationale. During Model Cities, municipal officials could throw their weight behind residents' priorities. Even though this dynamic proved temporary, it indicated a functional working relationship between the mayor's office, the MCA, and residents. More broadly, the MCA pointed to a new model for relationships between government officials and neighborhood activists.

Finally, the residents' plans forced the city to acknowledge the failures of urban renewal. In an introductory statement attached to the residents' plans, the city called urban renewal "a mixed blessing, since it has contributed to a decline of St. Louis' population in recent years." Reflecting residents' logic, the St. Louis government explained that their Model Cities application sought to rectify patterns of urban renewal that displaced the poor by allowing residents the power to direct how redevelopment money would be spent. The mayor specifically mentioned that the Mill Creek Valley renewal project had displaced an entire black

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[129] Memorandum from Bourgeois to Cervantes RE: Street Lighting for Montgomery-Hyde Park Neighborhood, April 17, 1968, MCA Box Citizen Participation Files, MCA Papers, SLML.
[130] Memo from Cervantes to Walter Malloy RE: Announcement of Street Light Improvement Schedule, April 18, 1968, MCA Box Citizen Participation Files, MCA Papers, SLML.

neighborhood without providing relocation. The application then claimed, "an opportunity exists

to demonstrate that [neighborhood] charm can be retained without driving out low-income

persons," echoing residents' desire to stabilize their community, not remove the poor.[131] By

approving residents' plans, the city endorsed neighborhood control of Model Cities funds.

Conclusion: The Significance of Resident Planning

On August 23, 1968, the St. Louis Model City Agency and Mayor Cervantes sent the five

neighborhood corporations' comprehensive plans to HUD. The entire compilation weighed

twenty-six pounds.[132] Budgets included money the city hoped to receive directly from Model

Cities, as well as funding they requested from other sources, primarily federal, state, and local

agencies. By far the largest component was housing, with $7,243,290 of proposed programs,

$6,148,000 coming directly from Model Cities funds.[133]

It was perhaps the first and only time in St. Louis history that resident plans were

submitted to the federal government without being tampered with and with full approval from

City Hall. Due to the prompting of federal citizen participation guidelines, in this moment

residents collaborated effectively with a sympathetic municipal agency to make their visions for

their community the official plans for their neighborhood. Their claim of place-based expertise

founded on their lived experience had worked: Mayor Cervantes hailed the application, claiming

the "neighborhood organizations which have presented their plans to me today have had more

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[131] Comprehensive City Demonstration Program Submitted August 23, 1968 by City of Saint Louis, Missouri, Alfonso J. Cervantes, Mayor, MCA Box 9, MCA Papers, SLML. This plan called for upgrading the neighborhood without significant population change. It argues against gentrification years before the term or concept was discussed in the United States. See Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[132] Letter from Margaret Bush Wilson to Seymour Z. Mann, December 4, 1968, MCA Box AD Bourgeois Files, MCA Papers, SLML.
[133] *St. Louis Model City Voice*, Vol. 1 No. 5 September 6, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

initiative and more decision making power with respect to the Model City Program … than have

citizens in any of the other 75 Model Cities across the country."[134] At the same time, the city's

application acknowledged the huge risk residents took by collaborating with a city government

that had historically ignored their needs. It called the thousands of resident volunteer hours "a

magnificent act of faith" that could continue only if "this initial act of faith is not violated" by

city or federal officials.[135] The resident-dominated planning process was a model for altering

urban planning, taking the lead from residents as a means to ensure antipoverty and antiracism

were the primary goals. St. Louis Model Cities showed how a local government could attune

itself to the needs and demands of poor and minority residents to correct for decades of urban

renewal that failed to alleviate, and often worsened, poverty.

   As seen in St. Louis, model neighborhood residents around the country were beginning to

convince local and federal officials that their leadership could help cities avoid the hazards of

urban renewal.[136] This program briefly created a space for residents to assert their visions and

plans. Because they agreed to work through a government program, residents were able to offer

and experiment with an altered version of urban planning which took residents' demands for

neighborhood control seriously. For a short time, Model Cities in St. Louis supported the goals

of resident self-sufficiency through the creation of autonomous resident-run institutions to plan

and implement federally-funded programs. In this moment, residents were working within the

power structure with real authority and autonomy. St. Louis's neighborhood proposals proved

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[134] Statement from Mayor Cervantes, August 7, 1968, MCA Box Misc. Correspondence, MCA Papers, SLML.
[135] Comprehensive City Demonstration Program Submitted August 23, 1968 by City of Saint Louis, Missouri, Alfonso J. Cervantes, Mayor, MCA Box 9, MCA Papers, SLML.
[136] Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (July 1969): 216–35. As discussed in the introduction, Arstein found that St. Louis, along with a handful other cities including Dayton, Ohio and Oakland, California, achieved "dominant decision-making authority" in Model Cities planning. She estimated that about fifteen of the seventy-five first-round Model Cities recipients "reached some significant degree of power-sharing with residents."

that residents were capable of crafting creative, comprehensive programs` to break the patterns

keeping their communities in poverty and assert their ability to plan for themselves.

Chapter 3

"A Bad Deal": The Fraught Implementation
of Model Cities in St. Louis[1]

On the evening of November 20, 1970, one hundred fifty St. Louisans forced their way into a closed session of the Model City Agency executive board. The board met in the Civil Courts building downtown, just a few blocks from the old courthouse, where over a hundred years earlier Dred Scott argued for his freedom and citizenship. Packed into a meeting room, a "shouting crowd … demand[ed] that the meeting be opened" to the public. Tensions were high. Two days earlier, HUD had announced a $2.5 million decrease for St. Louis's 1971 Model Cities allocation "because of the city's poor record in implementing programs." HUD had cited misgivings about the role neighborhood corporations should have carrying out programs. In response, the MCA board convened to vote on a proposal to eliminate the planning role for St. Louis's five neighborhood corporations that two years earlier had authored St. Louis's Model Cities plans. The November 20th proposal called for the executive board to take over Model Cities planning, putting control over the program closer to the municipal government.[2] Arthur Kennedy, a middle-class black St. Louisan who had been the MCA executive director for a little over a year, supported this altered structure, arguing that it was the only way to save their program.[3] Without it, he feared, HUD would pull all Model Cities funding out of St. Louis.

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[1] "Protesting Residents Halt Model City Talks," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 8, 1970, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. This quote comes from a statement made by MCA Director Arthur Kennedy in reference to new planning procedures that bypassed neighborhood organizations.
[2] Unlike the neighborhood corporations, whose membership was entirely comprised of residents, ten residents and six city officials sat on the MCA executive board. Further, the MCA executive board did not have an independent staff. If planning responsibility was transferred to the MCA executive board, it was likely that MCA staff (almost none of whom were residents), would have much more control over Model Cities planning.
[3] "Model City Session Ends In Uproar," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 20, 1970.

Neighborhood organizations and the people who showed up to the meeting "adamantly opposed" this new structure, "because they contend it takes a key role from residents."[4] Mary Short, a Yeatman MCA board member, was profoundly disappointed with her federal and municipal allies. She had been active in federal antipoverty programs since 1967, when she was elected to represent her area on Yeatman's Neighborhood Advisory Council.[5] Local and federal officials, she said, now distrusted resident leaders and undermined their work. Expressing neighborhood activists' anger with their government partners, she explained, "we're not trying to build any empires. We're not interested in anything but successful programs. You're not willing to find out if we can do it."[6] After a "sharply worded debate" with the protesters who packed into the room, four of the nine board members present, likely neighborhood representatives, suggested opening the meeting to these attendees.[7] But rather than make the meeting public, the rest of "the board reacted by adjourning and thus postponed a decision on a proposed solution to the floundering Model City program" in St. Louis. "Suddenly … about 20 policemen with two dogs on leash moved into the lobby," supposedly in response to "calls that there was a disturbance in the building."[8]

The scene of nonviolent protest and overblown police response, so familiar to veteran civil rights activists in St. Louis and around the country, highlighted the growing conflict between model neighborhood residents and city officials. Gone were the tense but functional partnerships between city agencies and neighborhood corporations that culminated in resident-

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[4] "Model City Session Ends In Uproar," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 20, 1970.

[5] "Yeatman Center Advisers Elected," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 30, 1967.

[6] Robert Sanford, "HUD Wants Model City Board Change," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 12, 1970, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. It is not completely clear whether Short was addressing HUD, the city, or government officials in general, but her message was clear: residents knew that governmental support had been withdrawn from Model Cities neighborhood planning.

[7] "Model City Session Ends In Uproar," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 20, 1970.

[8] Ibid.

written comprehensive plans. Municipal officials knew a decrease in residents' control over

Model Cities would lead to fierce public protests and possibly an urban uprising.[9] Residents did

not get the chance to air their grievances at the November 20th meeting, but they temporarily

postponed a policy change that would strip power from neighborhood organizations. Their

efforts in Model Cities highlighted residents' reactions to their decreasing power: their protests,

their attempts to work within this new structure, and the tortured transition to implementing

Model Cities programs.

What happened between residents' triumphant submission of their plans in August 1968

and the demise of citizen control two years later? Model Cities faltered in St. Louis for many

reasons, including underfunding, residents' inexperience at urban planning, and inadequate city

assistance to neighborhood activists.[10] Certainly, it was never a guarantee that residents'

comprehensive Model Cities plans written in the summer of 1968 would have a substantial

impact on the neighborhood's myriad problems, nor was there proof that residents' plans were

inherently superior to conventional city planning. It was clear, though, that unlike St. Louis

bureaucrats, federal officials were unwilling to test the efficacy of resident implementation.

The transition from Model Cities planning to execution exposed a painful hypocrisy.

Federal administrators would not cede control of urban redevelopment to residents, despite the

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[9] In the recent past city officials, including the mayor, argued that citizen participation in War on Poverty programs prevented violent rebellions, so it was likely any change to resident leadership in Model Cities would be met with intense resistance. See chapter one.

[10] Charles Haar, *Between the Idea and the Reality: A Study in the Origins, Fate, and Legacy of the Model Cities Program* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), 100-101; Presidential Task Force on Urban Problems, January 1966, Box 1 Folder 1, Legislative Background Model Cities 1966, LBJ Library; Marsha Canfield, "Model City…" November 13, 1974, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. As discussed in chapter one, the legislative battle to pass the Model Cities legislation decreased funding for the program while increasing the number of cities in the program, causing serious funding shortages. Though HUD initially estimated that fixing a model neighborhood with 80,000 residents would require between $185-$415 million, St. Louis's 73,000-resident model neighborhood only received $32 million.

official policy of citizen participation.[11] Though federal officials maintained a rhetorical

commitment to citizen participation, federal administrators blocked residents' authority just as

the program unleashed citizens' ambitions. HUD guidelines continually altered the target toward

which Model Cities plans had to aim, most significantly in regard to citizen control.

This moving target was not a simple reflection of the transition from the Johnson

administration (1964-1969) to the more conservative Nixon administration (1969-1974). Instead,

HUD's changes to citizen participation rules exposed federal officials' tenuous commitment to

citizen influence over antipoverty programs throughout the Great Society. Johnson

administration officials initiated and rhetorically supported citizen participation through federal

directives in antipoverty programs, but these administrators were ultimately unwilling to follow

through on this commitment. Paradoxically, though residents were demanding more control over

processes that were under the purview of municipal agencies (such as city land clearance and

housing authorities), it was the federal government that ended the possibility for citizen control.

There are several reasons HUD turned away from citizen participation, whereas the St.

Louis government proved more willing to accept resident leadership in Model Cities. Most overt,

despite their initial calls for experimentation, federal officials remained deeply committed to

partnering with established municipal institutions, such as land clearance and housing

authorities. They maintained their loyalty to existing governmental agencies and planning

processes, even though the Model Cities legislation specifically and the War on Poverty more

generally conceded that municipally-run urban renewal failed to improve life for cities' poorest

residents.[12] Further, outside of St. Louis, many city leaders expressed disdain for federally-

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[11] Recall that the Model Cities legislation called for "widespread citizen participation," and CDA Letter No. 10D outlined a variety of citizen participation structures that allowed for significant neighborhood control.
[12] Chapter one details federal officials' realization that federally-funded and locally-implemented urban renewal programs failed to alleviate poverty and in many cases worsened low-income housing shortages.

sponsored citizen participation, as it dipped into municipal power.[13] Intimately tied to this support of conventional bureaucracy were racist and classist assumptions that model neighborhood residents' were incapable of managing federal money. Federal officials' reactions to St. Louis's resident-written plans and their subsequent policies showed that most government officials never believed residents would be able to craft and implement effective antipoverty programs. Federal administrators ultimately could not see residents as neighborhood experts, worthy of controlling their living conditions. Shortly after Model Cities guidelines called for increased participation by poor and minority Americans, federal officials balked at St. Louis's plans for lacking a dominant role for conventional experts and municipal officials. Overall, the federal reaction to St. Louis residents' Model Cities plans was a desertion of citizen participation rhetoric and an undermining of democratic planning.

Racism, classism, and a commitment to existing bureaucracy were also present in the municipal government, but in St. Louis local concerns forced city administrators, especially the mayor, to stand behind resident participation in Model Cities long after federal officials abandoned it. Local officials had to deal more directly with residents and their anger over having power taken away. Neighborhood organizations had gained substantial political clout, and opposing resident implementation of Model Cities programs could have electoral consequences for local officials or spur an urban uprising.[14] Further, citizen control meant that municipal governments could be absolved if Model Cities programs did not work, for they could blame unqualified residents for failures.

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[13] As has been discussed in chapters one and two, St. Louis's citizen participation structure allowed for an unusually high amount of citizen control. In other cities that achieved resident autonomy, such as Philadelphia, the city government was less willing to stand behind resident leadership. For a comparison of St. Louis and Philadelphia Model Cities, see chapter four.
[14] Again, see chapter one for an account of St. Louis neighborhood organizations' rise and political influence in the Model Cities area.

The mixed messages and contradictory directives coming from HUD had clear and devastating effects on citizen participation. By the end of Model Cities in 1974, federal urban improvement programs would keep citizen participation in name to bolster a program's legitimacy, while in practice gutting citizens' power. This structure of performative but non-influential citizen participation began during Model Cities implementation and evolved into standard practice for decades to come. When faced with the reality that residents wanted to change urban planning structures to give themselves permanent power over urban redevelopment and antipoverty funding, the Democratic federal officials who initially championed citizen participation proved more closely aligned with their Republican successors who codified a decreased role for citizens. Nixon's citizen participation policies mirrored and institutionalized Johnson officials' hesitations regarding resident control over federal antipoverty funding. Model Cities implementation therefore suggested that liberal-conservative differences were more of a political tool to distinguish Democratic from Republican rhetoric than a reflection of any real ideological gap regarding who should control government programs.[15]

Consistencies in Rhetoric: Citizen Participation from Johnson to Nixon

The Model Cities legislation passed in 1966 was innovative in two important ways. Most relevant to this discussion has been Model Cities' call for widespread citizen participation. Though not quite as forceful as the OEO's "maximum feasible participation" requirement, this

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[15] Many scholars have analyzed the ways Richard Nixon both tried to dismantle the Great Society (often motivated by political expediency) while also pushing for social programs that would widen the social safety net. See Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 24-52; Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

difference in language had little effect on St. Louis's Model Cities.[16] Residents and the mayor

accepted neighborhood control, and throughout the planning phase they heard no protest from

HUD.[17] Federal officials supported the concept of resident leadership as part of their

commitment to civil rights and as a deterrent against urban rebellions.[18]

The second innovative feature of Model Cities, though fairly innocuous on its face, was

eventually used to justify the jettisoning of meaningful citizen participation. This innovation

entailed a streamlining of all aid to model neighborhoods through one entity, in St. Louis's case

the Model City Agency. The federal Model Cities architects envisioned that the MCA and its

equivalents around the country would cut through red tape by coordinating money coming from

federal agencies like HUD, HEW, and OEO, as well as state, local, and private funds. This

process was designed to increase efficiency and improve the ability of government institutions to

improve poor neighborhoods. Efficiency was becoming an increasingly prominent concern

among policymakers, especially as the Great Society created hundreds of grant programs that

often lacked coordination.[19] The focus on efficiency was tied to the idea that existing

government institutions could fix persistent societal problems. Residents, on the other hand,

hoped that neighborhood organizations would dominate Model Cities.

These two innovations—citizen participation and a better-coordinated local

bureaucracy—seemed separate priorities when the Model Cities legislation was written.

However, in the name of efficiency, HUD steadily chipped away at citizen control, claiming

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[16] This slight watering down of citizen participation rhetoric in the Model Cities legislation was to appease skeptics of the OEO's CAPs. However, the less forceful language still yielded autonomous resident planning in St. Louis, partly because OEO-organized neighborhood groups authored the 1968 Model Cities comprehensive plans.
[17] In fact, HUD encouraged first-round Model Cities recipients, including St. Louis, to ramp up citizen participation.
[18] Report of the Wood-Haar Task Force, Box 1 Folder 2, Legislative Background on Model Cities 1966, LBJ Library.
[19] See chapter five for a full discussion of the ways the language of efficiency led to the gutting of citizen participation in federal programs.

residents' lack of experience and distrust of government institutions would be too inefficient.

The Johnson administration's reaction to St. Louis's resident-authored Model Cities plans set the

questioning of citizen participation into motion, and Nixon officials fully bore out the

contradictions between citizen leadership and institutional efficiency. By putting efficiency

before citizen participation, Nixon's HUD shut down residents' attempts to force government

officials to value citizen leadership, both during Model Cities and for decades to come.

As Model Cities planning got underway in St. Louis, residents were well aware that the

federal government could both guarantee and undermine their power. As early as June 1968,

when neighborhood corporations were revving up to craft their comprehensive plans, a resident-

authored *Model City Voice* article expressed what would turn out to be legitimate concerns.

Addressing federal officials, the writer stated, "you've made one more promise, and we've

believed you one more time. But this one is the big promise. This is the one you better not

break." The author predicted that President Johnson might reallocate the Model Cities money

"for one of his anti-riot programs, or some other Federal Agency [might sneak] a slice, and we're

left with peanuts one more time after all this work." If this happened, the article concluded

ominously, "then Model Cities and every other government agency in town better get scared.

People are going to hate you."[20] Residents knew their proposals were a radical break from

conventional planning, and they realized that their newfound power could be sustained only with

continued support from HUD officials.

The first signs of federal misgivings regarding Model Cities citizen participation in the

Johnson administration began in October 1968, just two months after St. Louis submitted

residents' plans as its Model Cities application and a few weeks before the 1968 presidential

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[20] "An Open Letter to the Model City Agency," *Model City Voice,* June 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Box 1, MCA Papers, SLML.

election. On October 18, news outlets in St. Louis reported that HUD asked the city to revise

their plan. Because St. Louis was the first city to submit its comprehensive funding proposal,

HUD offered the city three months and $60,000 to make changes. The core of the federal critique

was aimed at making sure other city agencies, aside from the MCA, were on board with resident

plans. This HUD feedback was in line with the original intent of Model Cities, which called for

better coordination of resources in solving urban problems. In an optimistic reading, HUD was

saying that St. Louis had figured out the citizen participation piece of Model Cities and was now

asking the city to ensure the municipal bureaucracy would also be coordinated to support the

residents' plans. Though the city could have used this directive to immediately start undermining

neighborhood power, the MCA assured residents that the content of their proposals did not need

alterations. St. Louis officials believed it was possible for residents to plan and execute programs

that aligned with, or at least did not contradict, efforts being undertaken by municipal agencies.[21]

The words of HUD officials told a somewhat different story. Regional HUD

administrator George Parker stated that "St. Louis has done an excellent job of involving the

people in the areas." But, he continued with condescension, "at the same time, our job is to get

the best possible plan for each city." When faced with actual resident-written plans that called for

citizen-implemented programs, Parker assumed residents could not create the best program for

their neighborhood, despite community leaders' assertion that only they had the expertise

necessary to diagnose neighborhood problems and craft solutions.[22] The implication that citizen

authorship of proposals could not produce "the best possible plan" was stained with classism,

since the whole point of the War on Poverty's citizen participation was to get the poor involved;

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[21] Robert Adams, "Government Tells Agency to Revise Model City Plan," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* October 18, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 5, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[22] For a fuller discussion of residents' assertion that they were best suited to write the comprehensive plans, see chapter two.

if Model Cities residents were not capable of crafting a high-quality plan, as Parker stated, their

poverty was undoubtedly a factor. Parker's letter aligned seamlessly with Daniel Patrick

Moynihan's assertion of a pathological black culture. Parker concluded that heavier involvement

by local agencies was the only way St. Louis's plans could pass muster.[23]

Parker's public critique of St. Louis's application sparked an angry flurry of

correspondence between his office and MCA acting director Margaret Bush Wilson. Wilson

charged that Parker's "comments … reveal a distressing lack of understanding of the real

concerns here in St. Louis,"[24] mirroring residents' argument that only neighborhood leaders were

able to fully comprehend local problems and craft solutions. Parker responded, suggesting that

Wilson's letter "reflects an oversensitiveness to reasonable comment on your initial Model City

submission."[25] His statements revealed the federal contradictions of citizen participation in the

Johnson administration. While many HUD officials, including Parker, were willing to

rhetorically promote a policy of citizen participation, they were not prepared to let residents'

agenda supersede their own understandings of how citizen-municipal partnerships should work.

Parker's reaction to St. Louis's resident-written comprehensive plans exposed

contradictions within HUD's understanding of its own program. Model Cities called for

innovation and citizen participation, and the resident plans fit that bill. However, when faced

with St. Louis's application, federal bureaucrats fell back on the goal of emphasizing control of

municipal institutions such as the land clearance authority and the mayor's office. Parker was

touting citizen participation in name but refusing to trust residents. His reaction embodied the

culture-of poverty assumption that many government officials shared: poor and mostly black

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[23] "Being First Didn't Help," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 21, 1968.
[24] Letter from Margaret Bush Wilson to George Parker, October 22, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 5, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[25] Letter from George Parker to Margaret Bush Wilson, October 23, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files 1, MCA Papers, SLML.

resident leaders were not capable of running government programs, even though HUD had already admitted that federal and municipal institutions failed to alleviate poverty in urban renewal projects. Parker's critique sounded like it contradicted federal citizen participation directives, but in actuality he was one of the first officials to face the disconnect between rhetoric championing citizen involvement and residents' visions expressed in their comprehensive plans. He, and eventually HUD, continued supporting citizen participation rhetorically while retaining power for the municipal institutions HUD was used to dealing with.

Statements from higher-up HUD officials during fall 1968 provided context for Parker's criticism of St. Louis's plans. Ralph Taylor, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Model Cities, sought to clarify the department's position. Taylor warned against a certain kind of citizen participation, explaining, "attempts to make the model neighborhood independent of existing city institutional structures or isolated from the total city population denies to the model neighborhood residents both the resources and general community support they need to solve their own problems." Here, Taylor cautioned that Model Cities money should not be given to community groups advocating "separatism." This was likely a reaction against CAPs that circumvented municipal agencies. In contrast, Taylor described that some "cities will be experimenting with multi-purpose development corporations designed to deal with all the major problems of the community … It is generally proposed that this kind of corporation be controlled by the residents of the neighborhood government." These organizations, he explained, "see their mission as bringing as many model neighborhood residents as possible into the mainstream of American society. They do not seek 'exclusive turf.' They do not expect to be the sole broker for activities in the model neighborhood." This second description seemed to fit St. Louis's neighborhood corporations,

which fiercely defended their autonomy but also coordinated with city agencies.[26] St. Louis residents were seeking equal partnerships, not "exclusive turf," so their citizen participation model should have been acceptable to federal officials.

Taylor's viewpoint, and HUD's more generally, aligned with years-long efforts to steer civil rights activities toward integrationism and curtail Black Power. Great Society officials used the Ford Foundation's corporate philanthropy methods in government antipoverty programs. In the sixties and seventies, the Ford Foundation funded Black Power organizations' community improvement programs with the hope that eventually, black communities could be integrated into mainstream society. It bankrolled community-run education, economic development, and cultural programs. The Ford Foundation garnered some criticism for funding black radicalism and separatism. But ultimately the Foundation, and the government programs that followed its tactics, successfully used funding dollars to influence the projects grassroots groups undertook and to curb the more overtly political and revolutionary impulses of Black Power ideology. When Taylor said he did not want community groups claiming "exclusive turf," he mirrored many policymakers' desire to use government and nonprofit funding to maintain some control over civil rights activities.[27]

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[26] Remarks by H. Ralph Taylor, Assistant Secretary for Model Cities and Governmental Relations at Urban America National Conference on Nonprofit Housing and Community Development Corporations, October 14, 1968, Box 22 Folder 4, Office Files of the White House Aides, James Gaither, LBJ Library. As discussed in chapter one, many mayors criticized CAPs for working around city agencies and wanted control of federal antipoverty money. To fix this problem, Model Cities recipients would have to form partnerships with resident groups. The discussion of black separatism probably referred to black power groups who utilized federal antipoverty money, even as they eschewed working relationships with municipal officials. For example, Robert Self notes that the Black Panther Party compiled and printed its Ten Point Program in a War on Poverty office. See Self, *American Babylon* and David Hilliard, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Huey: Spirit of the Panther* (New York, N.Y: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006).

[27] For more information on the complex relationships among the Ford Foundation, liberal institutions, and black power, see Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics* and Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Ferguson finds that some Ford Foundation leaders, particularly McGeorge Bundy, used culture-of-poverty logic to argue that black Americans felt a sense of "collective defeat" so intensely that a period of segregated programs was necessary before blacks could enter mainstream American society. The result was a

Taylor was aware of the disconnect between resident needs and government institutions: "we recognize that current institutions, both public and private—have failed to meet the pressing needs of the community." But in the same breath, he asserted, "we reject the notion that past failures place these institutions beyond reform."[28] Here was the crux of the problem: both HUD officials and residents understood that institutions like housing authorities and welfare departments were not alleviating urban poverty, but their proposed paths forward differed sharply. Federal officials asked residents to trust that government institutions could be reformed through citizen participation. Residents, on the other hand, believed the best partnership between government officials and neighborhoods was government supporting residents to implement programs themselves. Residents active in St. Louis's Model Cities never advocated the kind of separatism Taylor cautioned against. However, their insistence that resident-run organizations would be better attuned to the needs of poor citizens proved unacceptable to federal officials. As in Parker's critique, the root of the problem was that, faced with concrete plans for resident control, federal officials assumed that poor and predominantly black residents were not up to the task, which could lead to ineffective programs or scandals.

Despite Parker's discouraging words, residents and the MCA had reason to believe HUD's request for application revisions might not spell the end of legitimate citizen participation. Parker was just one mid-level HUD official working out of a regional office, and Ralph Taylor's rhetoric seemed to say St. Louis's neighborhood corporation system was acceptable. Further, general directives from Washington still promoted neighborhood control. A December 1968 HUD bulletin mirrored CDA Letter No. 3, indicating that the federal

strange, counterintuitive relationship between the Ford Foundation and black separatist groups, with the Ford Foundation's ultimate goals of "fixing" black culture and reining in Black Power's most revolutionary impulses.
[28] Remarks by H. Ralph Taylor, Assistant Secretary for Model Cities and Governmental Relations at Urban America National Conference on Nonprofit Housing and Community Development Corporations, October 14, 1968, Box 22 Folder 4, Office Files of the White House Aides, James Gaither, LBJ Library.

government would accept a wide range of citizen participation policies. This bulletin outlined

several ways cities could ensure legitimate resident participation. The publication mentioned that

residents retained veto power in some Model Cities bureaucracies (as was the case on the MCA

executive board) and gave no indication that this would be a problem. Mirroring Ford

Foundation tactics, the bulletin asserted the need to cultivate participation from militant resident

groups, stating, "the door should remain open even if they fail to participate initially because of

… suspicion."[29] HUD and the federal government continued to verbally express support of real

citizen participation, even as their actions in St. Louis began to indicate their reluctance. This gap

between rhetoric and practice would prove fatal for Model Cities, particularly in St. Louis.[30]

The seeds of federal doubt laid in the Johnson era transferred almost seamlessly into the

Nixon administration.[31] Nixon won the presidency by catering to a white, suburban constituency

concentrated in the South and West and playing on racial anxieties. Underneath obvious

disparities between Nixon and his predecessor, though, federal officials' actions showed that

rhetorical differences between Democrats and Republicans faded as Model Cities was

implemented. Across the political spectrum, federal officials were unwilling to transfer power to

resident organizations and preferred bolstering the authority of local officials. Even more than

for the Johnson administration, Nixon officials insisted that Model Cities should increase

municipal power, which fit neatly with Republican calls for smaller federal government.

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[29] Technical Assistance Bulletin No. 3 Subject: Citizen Participation in Model Cities, a HUD Guide, December 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files 1, MCA Papers, SLML.

[30] As discussed in chapter two, by crafting programs to be implemented by neighborhood organizations, residents expressed their distrust for municipal institutions.

[31] In recent years, scholars have begun to analyze the ways in which many of Nixon's programs bear a resemblance to liberal programs. For example, Nixon submitted a Family Assistance Plan, which would have guaranteed a base income to families. Though this plan idealized a two-parent, male-breadwinner family ideal, so did many liberal programs. See Chappell, *The War on Welfare* and Robert Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

Years of urban civil rights activism, combined with successive summers of urban violence, stopped Republicans from simply canceling the program.[32] President Nixon appointed George Romney as HUD Secretary, replacing the black liberal Robert Weaver. As the former governor of Michigan, Romney was a moderate supporter of civil rights. As HUD Secretary, he hoped to vastly increase the housing stock available to low-income Americans, a goal that often conflicted with other Nixon administration priorities.[33] Romney's HUD initially considered scrapping Model Cities altogether because it was so heavily identified as the kind of War on Poverty Program Nixon campaigned against. Romney understood that residents would see the canceling of Model Cities as a betrayal, which might lead to more urban uprisings.

Republicans saw that the success of federal urban policy was at least somewhat dependent on residents' views of government intervention in their neighborhoods. Instead of abandoning Model Cities, HUD officials realized that this Democratic program could be used to advance President Nixon's vision for funding local governments to carry out federal programs.[34] Citizen participation proved easily manipulated and vulnerable. Romney's HUD was able to claim ideological consistency with the Model Cities goals of the previous administration. The commitment to citizen control in this program conceived by Democrats was incredibly fragile.

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[32] See Chapter five for a full discussion of the Nixon administration's reactions to Model Cities.

[33] George Romney eventually stepped down as HUD Secretary due to his disagreements with Nixon, especially due to differences regarding civil rights and black capitalism. Romney's resignation letter stated, "Developments in recent months and days have convinced me that you are no longer interested in my counsel and advice before making policy and operating decisions directly affecting the activities of the Department I head. Consequently, I have concluded more can be accomplished in the future if the Department is headed by someone whose counsel and advice you want. This is true particularly because public housing and many of the untested Great Society programs I inherited in 1969 badly need basic reform, and also because of HUD's inability to discharge our present responsibilities because of its critical staff shortage." Letter from George Romney to the President, August 10, 1972, Box 13, George Romney Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. See Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Radical Wealth Gap* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017). For more information on George Romney's early political career, see T. George Harris, *Romney's Way: A Man and an Idea* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1968) and George W. Romney, *The Concerns of a Citizen* (New York: Putnam, 1968).

[34] As will be discussed in chapter five, President Nixon's revenue sharing and Community Development Block Grant programs were predicated on fewer federal strings and more local control.

Nixon officials understood why residents called for neighborhood control, even as these officials undercut residents' ability to direct Model Cities programs. Assistant HUD Secretary Floyd Hyde wrote to George Romney, explaining "citizen participants are pointing out characteristics of programs of local institutions which they deem unresponsive to neighborhood needs." He understood that residents were demanding control because government institutions could not be relied upon to improve poor people's lives. Like Johnson-era HUD officials, he wanted to avoid the CAP-style citizen participation system in which resident groups worked around, not with, city government. He asserted, "frequently neighborhood resident boards would prefer to bypass institutions they deem unresponsive and use supplemental funds to start new service institutions they can control. While this may make sense in some cases, HUD, by and large, discourages this and encourages instead working with existing institutions."[35] Even though St. Louis Model Cities residents were partnering with, not bypassing, city government, HUD still steadily chipped away at residents' influence.

In April 1969, Secretary Romney issued his first official statement regarding Model Cities. He contended that Model Cities could easily fit into President Nixon's priorities for urban areas. Most important, Romney admitted, "HUD guidelines and administrative practices had not clearly established the principle that local elected officials have ultimate responsibility for program planning and implementation."[36] Romney asserted that while the Johnson administration's HUD had gone astray by allowing citizen leadership to run wild, the primary intention of Model Cities from the beginning had always been to strengthen the role of the

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[35] Memo from Floyd Hyde to George Romney, Subject: The Basic Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Model Cities Program and Its Future, February 8, 1969, Box 9, George Romney Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

[36] Address Prepared for Delivery by Floyd H. Hyde, Assistant Secretary for Model Cities and Governmental Relations, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Annual Meeting of U.S. Conference of Mayors in Pittsburgh, June 17, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.

mayor.[37] Further, Romney stated that Model Cities must prioritize existing institutions, rather than create programs run by new institutions—namely, government departments rather than resident organizations. He explained, "the deliberate decision to make the Model Cities program one to improve the existing system rather than another exercise to create new institutions is its greatest burden and its greatest strength."[38]

Nixon administration officials were often more willing than their Democratic predecessors to elucidate citizen participation priorities to residents and admit the contradictions between resident control and working within established institutions. At a 1969 Model Cities Citizens' conference, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Model Cities Robert Baida articulated the logic behind Nixon's stance on citizen participation. After reaffirming HUD's belief that Model Cities was first and foremost a program to strengthen mayors, he pivoted to address citizen participation more directly. He stated to residents attending the conference, "if you believe 'citizen participation' means 'citizen control' –or – that you do your own thing – your own way, you are not necessarily wrong – but you are in the wrong program – those are not the rules of the Model Cities experiment."[39] This logical labyrinth put cities like St. Louis in an impossible situation: federal officials acknowledged the legitimacy of their citizen participation system even as they rejected it for Model Cities. Asserting that the Model Cities legislation never intended resident control, Baida aligned the Nixon administration's urban priorities with the Johnson administration, saying that resident control was a misinterpretation of the original intent of

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[37] Charles Haar, *Between the Idea and Reality,* 245. Haar's book explained that the Johnson administration also hoped Model Cities would strengthen mayors.

[38] Address Prepared for Delivery by Floyd H. Hyde, Assistant Secretary for Model Cities and Governmental Relations, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Annual Meeting of U.S. Conference of Mayors in Pittsburgh, June 17, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA. Ironically, as will be discussed in detail in chapter four, HUD regulations ended up creating extra levels of bureaucracy in St. Louis, rather than increasing efficiency.

[39] Address Prepared for Delivery by Robert H. Baida, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Model Cities and Governmental Relations at the Conference Northeast Model Cities Citizens' Union in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, November 22, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 5, Cervantes Papers, WUA.

Model Cities. His rhetoric was similar to that of Ralph Taylor, who warned against separatism during the Johnson administration.

Nixon officials were more comfortable than their Democratic predecessors stating outright that their priority was to strengthen local government institutions, not cultivate citizen control. In July 1969, Assistant HUD Secretary Floyd Hyde explained the ways Nixon's treatment of citizen participation followed the lead of Johnson's presidency. Like Johnson officials, Hyde wanted to convey Nixon-era HUD's commitment to citizen planning in Model Cities and other federally-funded programs. He explained, "the role of citizen participation is an exciting experiment that has captured the eyes of local, state, and federal officials and, at the same time, has become a new ingredient for hope and faith for millions of citizens."[40] This assertion sounded almost identical to Democratic Model Cities boosters. Further, Hyde wrote, "it was assumed that a much greater degree of acceptability would prevail in those cities where persons affected by various programs were actively involved in program planning and execution."[41] He shared Democrats' assumption that if residents felt a degree of ownership over plans for their neighborhoods, they would support these programs.

Like Johnson officials, Hyde's comments missed the reality that for residents, the purpose of citizen participation was not a merely desire to "feel involved." Resident leaders wanted control of programs so they could design initiatives that were fundamentally different from previous antipoverty policies and rearrange the power structure in cities.[42] Both Johnson and Nixon officials mistakenly believed that resident involvement would yield resident approval

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[40] Floyd H. Hyde, "HUD Builds Partnership for Participation," Public Management, July 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[41] Ibid.
[42] As discussed in chapter two, one of the clearest areas where residents' plans differed from municipal priorities was housing. Whereas federally-funded and municipally-implemented urban renewal projects demolished large sections of low-income neighborhoods to build commercial space and middle-class housing, residents preferred individual rehabs for rent or sale to residents already living in the neighborhood.

of antipoverty programs carried out by existing institutions that had previously suffered from lack of resident support. When residents in St. Louis crafted plans that eschewed the authority of the municipal institutions that failed to serve them for decades, both Johnson and Nixon policymakers expressed serious apprehension.

Eventually, HUD decided to explicitly overturn residents' claims for control. CDA Letter No. 10-D, published in November 1970, codified the policy HUD had been moving toward—Model Cities citizen participation groups—which in St. Louis included both the neighborhood organizations and the resident-dominated MCA executive board—could either plan or implement programs, but not do both.[43] HUD's rationale was trifold. First, HUD claimed that Model Cities had always intended to promote programs to be run by existing government and private institutions. Then, HUD reiterated its commitment to mayoral control. Finally, HUD claimed there needed to be separation between planning and implementation in order to avoid corruption. The stipulation that resident groups could not operate their programs was completely absent from initial Model Cities guidelines, and its consequences would be devastating for St. Louis. This policy signaled the end of residents' conception of citizen control in Model Cities.

The very characteristics residents used to claim their special authority to design and run programs for their community were used by federal officials to question residents' ability to carry out successful programs. CDA Letter No. 10-D used dry, bureaucratic, colorblind language to cover up the racist and classist motivations for gutting citizen participation. Federal officials claimed the necessity of splitting resident planning and implementation stemmed from a desire to avoid corruption and increase efficiency. However, it was typical for the same entity, whether a

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[43] CDA Letter No. 10-D, November 1970, Series 2 Box 58 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA. Crucially, CDA Letter No. 10-D was not a replacement of the 1967 CDA Letter No. 3, which outlined various possibilities for citizen participation. By claiming CDA Letter No. 10-D was merely a clarification document, Romney's HUD expressed its assertion that their policies were meant to carry out Model Cities as it was originally intended.

government agency or a private company, to be in charge of both planning and implementing

urban renewal.[44] Having the same group plan and execute a program ensured consistency and

decreased the likelihood of clashing agendas, in addition to fostering the efficiency HUD

officials touted. HUD therefore assumed neighborhood groups, which were comprised primarily

of poor and minority residents, were especially vulnerable to corruption and inefficiency.

The Johnson and Nixon administrations firmly maintained that operating within existing

government institutions would not decrease resident power. This assertion was at the crux of the

federal contradiction of citizen participation, and it took a Republican administration for this

commitment to established institutions to be fully articulated. When Democrats created Model

Cities, they did not foresee residents' insistence on planning and implementing programs that

were independent from the city agencies that had historically failed to alleviate poverty. Model

Cities in St. Louis exposed these policy inconsistencies, as well as the destruction these

contradictions caused to residents and their neighborhoods.

Contradictions in Practice: Undermining Citizen Participation in St. Louis

As the first city to submit its application and one of the few places to achieve real citizen

control in Model Cities planning—both through a resident-dominated executive board and

neighborhood corporations—St. Louis felt the full force of federal inconsistencies regarding

citizen participation as it attempted to implement its resident-written plans. The federal reactions

to St. Louis's Model Cities application would paralyze the city's program. Mayor Cervantes and

the MCA preferred their resident-dominated application to remain intact, rather than change

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[44] Examples of private entities in charge of urban renewal projects abound. For example, In *Manhattan Projects,* Samuel Zipp describes a Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's urban renewal project on the Lower East Side. In *Mapping Decline,* Colin Gordon details the ways private companies used municipal blighting powers to gain access to cheap land and tax incentives to build privately owned retail and housing complexes in St. Louis.

course midway through the program. St. Louis officials understood that taking control from residents would spark fierce opposition and could doom Model Cities initiatives. For over a year, the mayor tried to convince the federal government that St. Louis wanted residents to be in charge. In doing so, Cervantes offered an alternate course for municipal and federal officials, one that prioritized resident power over existing government institutions. The Mayor and the MCA tried in various ways to maintain as much citizen control as HUD would allow, but the city government eventually chose to concede to HUD's demands rather than lose Model Cities money. Residents' reactions showed their increasing skepticism of government's ability and willingness to promote neighborhood power.

Between the submission of its application in August 1968 and the beginning of implementation in July 1969, HUD required St. Louis to rewrite its application three times. This painful process exposed the federal government's growing realization that without stronger guidelines, Model Cities might offer too much power to resident groups. A General Accounting Office report on St. Louis explained HUD's viewpoint: "in effect, the first Saint Louis plan submitted in August 1968 actually consisted of five separate plans, one for each neighborhood."[45] Acting MCA director Margaret Bush Wilson defended the residents' plans, saying "the St. Louis Model City Program recognizes that residents in the Model City neighborhood are in the best position of all to know what their problems are and what the overwhelming pressures are which restrict and limit them in achieving a better quality of life." Residents had convinced the MCA that their lived experience authorized them to set priorities and implement programs. Wilson called the residents' proposals a "phenomenal achievement."[46]

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[45] Letter from KL Weary, November 9, 1971, MCA Box MB Wilson Files 1, MCA Papers, SLML.
[46] Remarks of Attorney Margaret Bush Wilson, Acting Director, St. Louis Model City Agency at the 34th Annual Conference, Missouri Municipal League, September 26, 1968, Folder: Folder: (MO) State Dept. Letters Misc, MCA Box Misc. Correspondence, MCA Papers, SLML.

Wilson understood that St. Louis needed to increase municipal influence in its revised application. The MCA assembled a six-member staff committee comprised of individuals who had already proven their commitment to citizen control. The MCA's first re-submission process aimed to consolidate the five neighborhood plans, making no substantive changes to the content of the proposals.[47] Responding to federal critique, the committee emphasized the rationale behind residents' choices and argued that the neighborhood corporation system was not inefficient.[48] At this stage in late 1968, even after the Johnson administration expressed doubts about St. Louis's program, the MCA and the city government stood behind residents' plans.

The MCA and the mayor tried to strike a balance between residents' call for control and HUD's requirement that city agencies have a stronger role. In December 1968, the MCA submitted its revised plan to HUD, confident they had condensed the five neighborhood plans into one cohesive proposal. This submission discussed a variety of programs to be run by residents, but it was written by city officials, not neighbors. Phrases such as "residents will be involved wherever possible" signaled that city officials were trying to prove their revised application had taken HUD's criticism seriously. The proposal recognized the racism model neighborhood residents faced, explaining that "black families are and have been engaged in a continuous struggle to break the artificial barriers of race in housing." Their top priority was therefore still housing, followed by employment and education.[49] Mayor Alfonso Cervantes

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[47] Citizen Participation: St. Louis City Demonstration Agency, 7 January 12, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Box 1, MCA Papers, SLML. For example, Ann Kleindienst was on this committee, and she expressed strong commitment to resident autonomy. Residents were also invited to some meetings with the MCA and HUD representatives. On October 23rd, shortly after HUD directed St. Louis to revise its application, Margaret Bush Wilson invited members of the Yeatman neighborhood corporation to a lunch with federal Model Cities officials. Letter from Margaret Bush Wilson to EF Williams, October 23, 1968, MCA Box AD Bourgeois Files, MCA Papers, SLML.

[48] Memo from Margaret Bush Wilson to All Members of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen RE: Progress Report on Model Cities, October 1, 1968, MCA Box Yr 1 and TEMPO 2, MCA Papers, SLML.

[49] St. Louis Model City Program Volume 1 December 1968, Folder MO 5, RG 207 HUD Model Cities Reports Missouri, NARA.

offered an overt show of solidarity in his letter that accompanied the December 1968 application, asserting, "the planning process has stressed citizen participation on the neighborhood level, and cooperation of agencies needed for the success of the program is indicated."[50]

Residents offered their analysis of the situation and tried to maintain their partnership with city hall. In a letter attached the revised application, residents blamed federal officials for the delay, declaring "the citizen representatives … are extremely concerned about the direction in which the St. Louis Model City Program is heading due to the pressure from Washington."[51] After challenging the federal government to allow St. Louis to implement Model Cities without interference, they called on the mayor to "reaffirm the City's faith and commitment in 'Neighborhood Power', that you reaffirm the City's commitment that the Neighborhood Corporations will be responsible for planning, monitoring and implementing the Model City Program." They expressed their demands unambiguously: neighborhood leadership in all phases of Model Cities. Again addressing Cervantes, they asserted, "we think that your commitment is to the neighborhoods. We sincerely request that you restate the City's position. Our neighborhood citizens believe they can have faith in your commitment."[52] Residents made a strategic choice to publicly identify Cervantes as their ally. They relied on Cervantes' position as a local politician—especially one whose electoral win depended in part on the black vote—to pressure the federal government to support resident control. Responding to the residents,

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[50] St. Louis Model City Program Volume 1, December 1968, Folder MO 5, RG 207 HUD Model Cities Reports Missouri, NARA.
[51] Residents made this statement while Johnson was still president, showing that residents could see neighborhood control slipping away before Nixon's term began.
[52] Letter from the 5 chairmen of the Neighborhood Corporations to Cervantes Submitted with Revised Model Cities Application, December 18, 1968, RG 207 HUD Model Cities Report Missouri Folder 5, NARA.

Cervantes asserted, "I am again putting my money and my faith on [residents'] chances of success. I wholeheartedly reaffirm that commitment today."[53]

In early 1969, HUD approved the long-range goals outlined in the December 1968 submission but objected to the specific programs because they were to be implemented by resident corporations. In HUD's view, "the second plan submitted in December 1968 also called for a duplication of effort by the neighborhood organizations," meaning that HUD believed resident implementation replicated the activities of city agencies such as the Land Clearance Authority and the Welfare Department.[54] It did not matter that Cervantes made assurances that the plans were aligned with municipal priorities. HUD again asked the city to resubmit the plan.

During this second rewriting phase in the winter of 1969, some St. Louis residents tried to maintain faith that the city government would stay true to their resident-written program. But neighborhood leaders expressed frustration and skepticism as months went by. A February 1969 issue of the *Model City Voice* indicated these frustrations. An article co-written by acting MCA director Wilson and Mayor Cervantes acknowledged, "some of you have complained that you do not know what is going on" in regard to the status of the Model Cities application.[55] The article assured residents that the city government would do a better job of keeping the neighborhood groups informed, partly through regular articles in the *Model City Voice*. Even as federal officials continued to criticize St. Louis's application, the city government hoped to allay residents' fears that their proposals would be distorted.

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[53] Letter from Cervantes to Model City Neighborhood Corporation Chairmen, December 19, 1968, MCA Box Yr 1 and TEMPO 2, MCA Papers, SLML.
[54] Letter from KL Weary, November 9, 1971, MCA MB Wilson Files 1 Folder: Comptroller's Office 1970, MCA Papers, SLML.
[55] Alfonso Cervantes and Margaret Bush Wilson, "An Open Letter to Residents of the Model Cities Area," *The Model City Voice*, December 20, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, Folder: Model City Voice, MCA Papers, SLML.

But as St. Louis was preparing its next submission in spring 1969, HUD made its position on citizen participation more explicit. Assistant HUD Secretary Floyd Hyde wrote to Mayor Cervantes, calling the "central role for several neighborhood-based corporations … commendable." But he asserted that St. Louis's submission should allow for the maximum participation of *city agencies*. Using the term "maximum participation," a phrase associated with resident involvement, to describe the desired role for local government was a perverse sleight of hand.[56] Hyde was pretending that municipal agencies were in a relatively weak position, and Model Cities needed to correct this supposed power imbalance.[57] He also doubled down on language of efficiency, citing worries over "duplication" and "a lack of coordination" between residents and city agencies. A month later, HUD's George Parker (who worked both in the Johnson and Nixon administrations) wrote to Cervantes, worrying that "the role of the neighborhood corporations [as planners and implementers] may not only prove cumbersome, inefficient and costly, but might also delay the essential impact of the on-going public agencies."[58] The city was also told to substantially decrease the number of programs.[59] This was not an exercise in streamlining, for HUD approved eighty projects in Atlanta.[60] It was becoming apparent that St. Louis would only receive funding if it scrapped its plans to have neighborhood organizations implement programs. Federal officials used the stated goal of efficiency to undermine resident control, even as their critiques caused significant delays in St. Louis.

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[56] Letter from Floyd Hyde to Cervantes, March 7, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[57] This comment may have also been a dig at the OEO's CAPs, which garnered mayoral disdain around the country for bypassing municipal agencies. Model Cities was already an attempt to fix CAPs' problems and force neighborhood groups and city agencies to work together.
[58] Letter from George Parker to Cervantes, April 14, 1969, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Box 1 Folder: Federal Inter-Agency Regional Team for St. Louis, MCA Papers, SLML.
[59] "Revamp Model Cities Plan," *St. Louis Globe Democrat,* March 24, 1969, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. One of the reasons there were so many programs was that each neighborhood corporation proposed separate plans.
[60] Memo from Floyd Hyde to George Romney, Subject: Operating Results in some Early Model Cities, November 11, 1969, Box 9, George Romney Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

As the MCA was preparing its third Model Cities submission, neighbors' frustration grew. Residents saw that new federal stipulations were tampering with their plans. Macler Shepard, head of the Jeff-Vander-Lou resident corporation, explained, "when we got into Model Cities … it was supposed to be planned from the bottom up. But now it looks like Washington is calling the shots." In response to federal officials' worry that residents might not be responsible enough to control large sums of federal grant money, Shepard responded, "everybody else has made their mistakes. I think it's time we let the community risk one. The people on top have already made two or three."[61] One Murphy-Blair resident leader complained, "HUD interfered with neighborhood plans last week by telling us that we couldn't form a non-profit housing corporation just for our District. Yet two months ago the Model City Agency was urging us to form a housing corporation as rapidly as possible."[62] As would happen throughout Model Cities in St. Louis, the federal government required residents and the city to change their plans so frequently that by the time of implementation, programs bore little resemblance to residents' original visions, nor would they approach the level of efficiency the federal government was supposedly trying to promote.

By April, neighborhood leaders were questioning whether Model Cities was worth their loyalty. After a frustrating meeting to discuss rewriting Model Cities plans to HUD's specifications, Yeatman leader Mary Short warned, "when all this is finished, if we don't like it, we're going to say: You can keep that $9,000,000 where it is."[63] Montgomery-Hyde Park chairman Bobby Westbrooks echoed Short's sentiment, declaring, "if there isn't enough citizen

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[61] Robert Adams, "Model City Bitterness Growing," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 27, 1969, Series 4 Box 10 Folder: U.S. Model Cities January 1, 1969, Alfonso Cervantes Records, WUA.
[62] "Murphy-Blair Resident Housing Corporation," *Action News*, February 21, 1969, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Box 1 No Folder, MCA Papers, SLML.
[63] "Conference on Redrafting St. Louis Model City Plan," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 30, 1969, Series 4 Box 10 Folder 14, Cervantes Records, WUA.

participation, then I think we should just abandon the whole thing." In addition to these threats, Westbrooks also issued a call to action for the municipal government. He said, "I think it's time for this Model City Agency to stand up … and tell Washington. 'Here's a city that doesn't have civil disorders, we know how to involve our citizens.'"[64] Westbrooks reminded city hall that Model Cities was created partly to help cities avoid the urban rebellions that erupted around the country in the mid to late sixties. He argued that resident leaders both deserved and were able to implement their own antipoverty programs by asserting that St. Louis's model neighborhood leaders were working with the city government successfully. As HUD's distrust of citizen participation became clearer, both residents and the municipal government would try to convince HUD that citizen leadership in St. Louis was unique and deserved to be saved.

Around the same time that residents threatened to rescind their support, the chairmen of the model neighborhood corporations tried appealing directly to HUD. Perhaps residents hoped their letter could convince federal officials that St. Louis neighborhood organizations were well-established and capable of implementing Model Cities programs. It is also possible neighborhood leaders had begun to worry that city hall was being dishonest about the federal shift away from community leadership. Either way, as the entity that first opened Model Cities planning to citizen control, residents called on HUD to make good on its promise to protect citizen participation. They wrote to Secretary Romney, demanding to be brought into the conversations between the city and HUD regarding St. Louis's application. Their letter explained that while the resident organizations had been "told generally by City Officials that all plans heretofore are in jeopardy," they had not been given any real explanations for the delays in funding. The residents were keenly aware that they were being pushed out. Their letter stated,

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[64] "Model City Board Revising Plans In Face of Disenchantment," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 28, 1969, Series 4 Box 10 Folder 14, Cervantes Records, WUA.

"the entire Model City Neighborhood Populace is critically concerned over the stunning turn of events in the Model Program which threatens to render meaningless the planning efforts of the neighborhood people." They called the current situation a "crisis" and claimed that "the Model City Neighborhood Residents and organizations are in total rebellion."[65] These leaders were furious that the city government had not involved them in the rewriting process or even told them what was wrong with the application.[66] Residents' attempt to appeal to HUD was fruitless, since it was the federal government that was curtailing citizen involvement in the first place.

The mayor's acceptance of HUD's call to decrease citizen participation happened gradually. The city sent another revised proposal to HUD in the spring of 1969, and HUD still objected to the prevalent role of residents. Mayor Cervantes grew frustrated with HUD for its heavy hand and impatient with the MCA for failing to produce a successful plan. In an April 21 letter to resident organizations, Cervantes stated, "we cannot overlook the fact that the proposal and later amendments … have been rejected three times by the federal reviewing authorities."[67] Notes from a May 18 meeting with acting MCA director Margaret Bush Wilson and her soon-to-be successor Arthur Kennedy recorded, "go with HUD or Go with Model City Team? The Mayor has decided to go with HUD … This means that the Mayor wishes that the most recent budget submissions be rewritten according to what we believe to be the wishes of HUD … The Mayor opts primarily with the funding agency."[68] Cervantes was not eager to strip residents of

[65] Letter from Bobby Westbrooks et. Al to George Romney, March 25, 1969, Yr 1 and Tempo Files Untitled Folder, MCA Papers, SLML.
[66] Residents were probably also aware that citizen participation in other cities was not as robust as the control St. Louis residents achieved during the planning phase. They rightly feared changes to the previously agreed-upon power-sharing structure would result in decreased resident control.
[67] Letter from Cervantes to Citizens, April 21, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA. Responding to the multiple requests to revise the plan, in April 1969 residents on the MCA executive board tried to pass a motion to freeze the rewriting process. Saint Louis Model City Agency Special Executive Board Meeting Minutes, April 8, 1969, Series 34 Box 2 Folder: Agendas and Meeting Notes, 1968-1969, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA.
[68] Meeting with Wilson and Kennedy, May 18, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.

control. Instead, after three failed submissions he concluded that the city would either have to consent to HUD's demands or forego the money completely. Cervantes knew his choice would put considerable strain on relations with the community, but he decided that obtaining funding was a better option than continuing to defy HUD.

In an effort to get the long-delayed funding started, HUD agreed to give St. Louis $5.2 million of a promised $9 million in July 1969, eleven months after the city first submitted residents' plans. This money would be used for twenty-two approved programs, a truncated version of residents' plans that would be further altered as the program progressed. The largest allocation, $647,759, went to housing initiatives, but only $336,000 of the $5.2 million (about 6.5% of the total allocation) was reserved for resident organizations. City agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private companies would control the rest of the money. HUD pledged to release the rest of the money once the MCA finished rewriting the program to HUD's specifications.[69]

Assistant HUD Secretary Floyd Hyde explained the department's rationale to Mayor Cervantes. He first praised St. Louis's application, saying, "I have been deeply impressed with the commitment of the residents of the Model Neighborhood who have participated so diligently in the arduous planning process." He then acknowledged, "I know [the residents] have been greatly disappointed in the delays which have accompanied HUD's approval of the program." He concluded, "the major issues which delayed the approval have concerned the neighborhood corporations – their roles, their readiness to operate projects and activities, and the extent of their coordination with the city … and other agencies."[70] Hyde conveyed HUD's desire that citizen groups should be a component of Model Cities but should in no way dominate or take on roles

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[69] Press Release from Cervantes, June 30, 1969, MCA Box MB Wilson Files 1, MCA Papers, SLML.
[70] Letter from Hyde to Cervantes June 30, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Papers, WUA.

city agencies could play. Over the next year residents and city officials (including the mayor) pushed back against Hyde's portrayal of residents as unqualified, but HUD would not budge.

Despite HUD's intransigence, St. Louis officials greeted the start of Model Cities implementation with fanfare. In a June 30, 1969 press release announcing the federal funding, Cervantes "hailed" the program and explained, "frankly, it has taken a great deal of work to convince Washington that a partnership forged between government and residents can be effective … it is up to all of us now to prove that … we can show results that far surpass traditional methods." Acknowledging his disagreements with HUD, Cervantes implored residents to close ranks behind this significantly altered version of their plans. Similarly, Margaret Bush Wilson, the most vocal municipal proponent of neighborhood control, mirrored Cervantes' optimism. She claimed "now we replace romantic faith with exciting opportunity—the prospects are both bright and beautiful."[71] The task for the city government was now to implement their program in a way both the federal government and local residents could accept.

Underneath these expressions of optimism was a great deal of disappointment, skepticism, and anger, both from residents and the MCA. One resident MCA board member called out the racism implicit in HUD's distaste for neighborhood control, asserting "this is the most disgusting, insulting release of funds to any city I've ever seen …. They're saying, in effect, that the black people of St. Louis don't have the sense to use their precious money."[72] Residents saw that federal officials used the color-blind language of coordination and efficiency to strip control from neighbors, and they knew federal concerns for efficiency were masking racist assumptions that poor blacks would be unable to carry out effective antipoverty programs.

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[71] Press Release from Cervantes, June 30, 1969, MCA Box MB Wilson Files 1, MCA Papers, SLML.
[72] Robert Adams, "Fight Likely on Control Of Model City Funds," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* July 1, 1969, Series 4 Box 10 Folder 14, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Residents continued to discuss blocking the entire program. Just as telling, "unhappiness over the partial funding was not limited to the residents. Staff members at the MCA were reluctant to get into any more disputes with HUD, but privately some felt betrayed." The federal government had initiated citizen participation guidelines for War on Poverty programs to ensure residents' ideas were incorporated into municipal programs. In St. Louis, federal citizen participation guidelines had indeed yielded a working alliance between poor residents and a city agency. Now, it was the federal government being charged with racism for backing away from resident leadership in antipoverty programs.

From the beginning of Model Cities implementation in July 1969 through 1970, in some instances the city government signaled its acquiescence to federal citizen participation standards and in other situations challenged them quite forcefully. One of the clearest indications that the city government was willing to abandon meaningful citizen participation to fall in line with federal priorities was a leadership shakeup in the MCA shortly after the implementation phase started. Margaret Bush Wilson had become acting director of the MCA a couple months before residents' proposals were submitted in the summer of 1968, and she led the MCA through the federal government's multiple requests that the city's comprehensive plans be rewritten. Residents saw her as a key ally within the city government and a reason to trust the intentions of Model Cities. Though she led the MCA for over a year, Mayor Cervantes never made her the MCA's official director. Residents delivered a petition to demand that Mayor Cervantes appoint her to the position permanently and submitted 196 sheets of signatures, for a total of about 4,033 names.[73] However, she was passed over for the formal title of director in July 1969 in favor of Arthur Kennedy, a black city official with close political ties to the mayor. Discussing

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[73] Petition for Appointment of Margaret Wilson, Series 1 Box 2 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Kennedy's leadership of the MCA, "one citizen described Kennedy as a 'truly beautiful man, a warm human being' but said his close ties to the mayor prevent him from fighting for the residents."[74] Wilson and Kennedy had worked closely for years and were friends, but residents lost a powerful advocate precisely when the city was growing wary of its commitment to citizen participation. Residents expressed dissatisfaction with Kennedy for the duration of Model Cities.

Wilson's approach to citizen participation was no longer acceptable, since municipal officials believed (probably correctly) that Wilson was more loyal to residents than to city hall. For about a month after Kennedy was named MCA director, Margaret Bush Wilson continued to work in the MCA as deputy director. But in August 1969, she was fired from her position. Keeping her might have placated the residents, but Mayor Cervantes decided her presence would undermine his commitment to working within HUD's citizen participation demands. Responding to a draft of the announcement of Wilson's termination, the mayor's office explained to Kennedy, "the Mayor doesn't want you to become embroiled in a public controversy with Margaret if it can be avoided. Thus, we have stricken such terms as 'undivided loyalty' and references to her 'present attitude'" from Kennedy's press release.[75]

Municipal officials were right to worry Wilson would protest publicly about her dismissal. One newspaper reported, "Mrs. Margaret Bush Wilson, never one to mince words or bite her tongue, leveled quite a blast at the administration last week when she characterized the appointment of Arthur Kennedy to head Model City as a racist appointment."[76] It was a provocative move, especially since Kennedy was a friend and a fellow black municipal leader.

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[74] Marsha Canfield, "The Man Who Runs Model City," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* August 28, 1971, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML. Kennedy attended Sumner and Vashon high schools, the first two black high schools in St. Louis, and later earned a metal engineering degree from Tuskegee Institute. Before transitioning to public service, he owned a sheet metal company. He worked to open St. Louis's tradesmen unions to blacks.
[75] Memo to Kennedy from Robert W. Duffe, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, August 5, 1969, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[76] "Margaret's Candor," *St. Louis Sentinel,* August 9, 1969, Series 4 Box 10 Folder 14, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Regardless of his race, Wilson asserted, Kennedy's loyalty to the mayor stripped residents of a key advocate and was therefore "a racist appointment." In Wilson's view, any move that would decrease residents' control over programs, including the appointment of a more compliant black leader, should be interpreted as racist. Wilson and residents believed that only neighborhood control could protect against the racist outcomes of antipoverty and urban renewal projects. Any decrease to resident control was therefore, in their view, tantamount to racism.

Though Kennedy spoke out against stripping citizens of control, he followed Mayor Cervantes' line of yielding to shifting federal guidelines that blocked meaningful resident leadership. A journalist reported "that Kennedy once described [the citizen participation changes] as first promising residents a Cadillac, then offering a Ford and finally delivering roller-skates."[77] He was attuned to the betrayal residents felt, but when asked about his views on citizen participation, he stated, "it is my intention to emphasize citizen participation within the guidelines established by [HUD]."[78] Regardless of Kennedy's personal beliefs, he would always fall into line with the mayor and HUD.

Some MCA staff members proved unwilling to align with the mayor and Kennedy. Some staff quit, presumably angry about decreases to neighborhood control and Wilson's termination. A few months into Kennedy's tenure, MCA staff meeting minutes recorded, "we're not stifling opinions but staff cannot express opinions contrary to policy established by the agency. Mr. Kennedy wishes to advise you, without equivocation that loyalty to him will be a condition of employment." This discussion of loyalty indicated MCA staff's disappointment with the agency's capitulation to federal demands. The minutes warned ominously that "we're going to

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[77] Marsha Canfield, "The Man Who Runs Model City," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* August 28, 1971, Globe-Democrat Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.
[78] "Model City Head Drops His Deputy," *St. Louis Sentinel*, August 9, 1969, Series 4 Box 10 Folder 14, Cervantes Records, WUA.

blow it unless we get ourselves together."[79] Kennedy's desperate attempt to get his staff in line

indicated that Margaret Bush Wilson's MCA was committed to resident autonomy and that

under Kennedy, priorities had shifted.

After a year of attempting to salvage citizen control, the city chose federal money over

losing HUD's support. To obtain the rest of the $9 million promised to St. Louis, the city formed

a working group consisting of MCA staff, residents, and consultants to submit plans for the $4

million that HUD was withholding. If disagreements about the plans arose, the mayor would

have the ultimate deciding vote.[80] This system strayed far from the autonomous planning of

resident organizations, and by this point, Model Cities in St. Louis was almost unrecognizable

from the first-year planning phase. Residents objected to the city's acquiescence to HUD's

guidelines, and Arthur Kennedy agreed that it was "a bad deal" for residents.[81] Cervantes seemed

to concur with Kennedy, making several statements over the next few months indicating his

frustration that St. Louis could not run its program according to its own priorities.[82]

After losing these initial citizen participation battles with the federal government, the

city's next phase of negotiations with HUD surrounded the policy that would eventually be

codified in CDA Letter No. 10-D: that resident groups could not have the power to both plan and

implement programs. In the months leading up to CDA Letter No. 10-D, Mayor Cervantes

continued to press HUD about how much citizen participation St. Louis could get away with,

showing Cervantes had not completely abandoned his support of neighborhood power. On

[79] St. Louis MCA Emergency Staff Meeting Notes, November 7, 1969, Folder: Staff Meetings, MCA Box Misc Files 1973, MCA Papers, SLML.

[80] Memo from Kennedy to MCA Executive Board, Members of Neighborhood Corporations, and Other Interested Parties, August 11, 1969, MCA Box MB Wilson Files 1, MCA Papers, SLML.

[81] "Protesting Residents Halt Model City Talks," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 8, 1970, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.

[82] Memo from Alfonso Cervantes to Aldermen, December 12, 1969, Series 2 Box 55 Folder 12, Cervantes Records, WUA.

December 18, 1969, Cervantes sent the following questions to Floyd Hyde at HUD: "what is the maximum amount of citizen control which HUD feels is allowable under the laws and guidelines for Model Cities?" He went so far as to ask, "will a failure by the City of Saint Louis to remove the veto power now vested in the Executive Board cause HUD to suspend further financial assistance for the Model City Program in Saint Louis?"[83] These questions showed Cervantes had not simply embraced HUD's edict of mayoral control in Model Cities.

Cervantes' questions signaled that he knew citizen participation was necessary for Model Cities to work well, either because he believed in the inherent value of citizen involvement or because he knew St. Louis residents would protest forcefully (and in some instances, obstruct programs) if their power was diminished. Also on his mind was the specter of urban riots. Having credited federal antipoverty programs as a factor in avoiding a rebellion in St. Louis, Cervantes saw that citizen control made violence less likely.[84] Cervantes continued pressing for resident leadership even as HUD insisted that mayoral power, not resident power, was the primary federal priority.

Mayor Cervantes persisted in his attempts to keep Model Cities in St. Louis as close as possible to this original vision. He understood that HUD wanted Model Cities implementation to happen through existing institutions, so he tried to use this priority to his advantage. In a June 1970 letter to HUD, Cervantes asserted that in St. Louis, resident organizations were "established institutions" and therefore legitimate entities to both plan and implement programs in the model neighborhood. He explained, "we think that Saint Louis is a unique city, with problems similar to other cities, but yet differing enough to demand solutions especially tailored to our community." He asked for "sufficient flexibility to develop our own solutions to the problems of Saint Louis,"

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[83] Letter from Alfonso Cervantes to Floyd Hyde, December 18, 1969, MCA Box Misc. Correspondence, MCA Papers, SLML.
[84] Summer Program Inspection, 1967, Box 30,WHCF Subject Files WE 9, LBJ Library.

hoping to appeal to HUD's commitment to local autonomy. Cervantes concluded with his strongest statement: "any substantial change in the roles for Model Cities which ignores the historical basis and the existing method of government-citizen cooperation in Saint Louis will seriously impair our ability to bring about meaningful results under the Model City program."[85]

Cervantes' tactic was in fact quite similar to what neighborhood leader Bobby Westbrooks called for almost a year earlier. Westbrooks wanted the MCA to assert that the working relationship between resident groups and the St. Louis government was special and consequently deserved exemption from federal citizen participation guidelines. Later, after it was clear that residents could not both plan and implement programs, the MCA wondered whether an operating agency could *subcontract* with a resident organization, making neighborhood corporations the de facto operating agencies.[86] That Mayor Cervantes failed to convince federal authorities that neighborhood organizations were established institutions proved the racist and classist logic of federal directives separating citizen planning and implementation. Even when resident groups had the backing of the mayor, HUD still believed residents were incapable of planning and running effective programs.

By the end of 1970, municipal officials understood that Model Cities would not create lasting partnerships with residents. When asked on a HUD survey whether Model Cities helped the municipal government establish better relationships with residents, Cervantes checked "no."[87] The city government made a legitimate effort to get HUD to make an exception for St.

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[85] Statement of Alfonso Cervantes to Robert Baida, June 11, 1970, Series 2 Box 57 Folder 5, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[86] 1970 Memo from Louis G. Berra, Director, Contract Administration to Arthur Kennedy, Director RE: Citizen Participation Policy of HUD Vis-à-vis St. Louis, August 7, 1970, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 4, Cervantes Records, WUA. In fact, the tactic of subcontracting did gain some traction during Model Cities implementation. As will be discussed in chapter 4, some Model Cities programs subcontracted to neighborhood corporations. However, subcontracting often added a confusing layer of bureaucracy, delayed the implementation of some programs, and provided critics with an easy way to blame residents for the shortcomings of Model Cities programs.

[87] Survey, October 7, 1970, Series 2 Box 57 Folder 4, Cervantes Records, WUA.

Louis and allow a higher degree of resident control. Municipal officials' failure to convince federal administrators to allow resident leadership showed the fiction of federal commitment to local control. Instead, St. Louis's experiences with HUD indicated that the federal government's strongest impulse, consistent across the Johnson and Nixon administrations, was to fund programs run by established government institutions.

The St. Louis government's efforts to preserve resident control had serious repercussions. In the fall of 1970, HUD decided to decrease St. Louis's Model Cities funding by $2.5 million for 1971. "Partly because it never got 22 projects off the planning board and partly because officials never solved the problem of neighborhood participation in the program," HUD officials explained that they did not trust St. Louis to spend the money it received.[88] Even though Cervantes took planning control away from neighborhoods and fired Margaret Bush Wilson, the residents' strongest municipal ally, St. Louis was still punished for its promotion of citizen control. Federal officials estimated that in November 1970, only $500,000 of the $9 million of St. Louis Model Cities money had been "spent on substantive projects."[89] Regardless of how this figure was measured and the fact that HUD guidelines were a main contributor to slow implementation, it was a damning figure.

With this funding cut, Mayor Cervantes felt he had no choice but to fall in line completely with HUD's directives to eliminate citizen control of programs. After the November 1970 executive board meeting that ended with a chaotic protest and heavy police presence, the city spent two weeks formulating a compromise. On December 2nd the MCA executive board approved a confusing proposal that placed final planning power with the executive board, but

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[88] Marsha Canfield, "Model City Funds Cut by $2.5 Million Here," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* November 18, 1970, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.
[89] Ted Gest, "Model Cities Program Struggling for Life," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* November 30, 1970, Series 4 Box 10 Folder 14, Cervantes Records, WUA.

allowed neighborhood corporations to implement some isolated projects, albeit with increased

city oversight.[90] This new system was a clear loss for resident power.

By this time even some federal officials criticized HUD's heavy hand in St. Louis.

Gentry Brown, a Model Cities coordinator for the OEO, sent a memo to HUD on November 30,

1970 stating his belief that "HUD has been harassing the St. Louis Model Cities program for

some time." He charged that the maltreatment was "based on the fact that the residents are united

into one organization in each target area," implying that HUD preferred factions within

neighborhoods to make residents less powerful. Brown cited HUD's refusal to allow

neighborhood corporations to run a summer youth program or approve St. Louis's application for

continued funding. He said some citizens favored working with HUD in this diminished

capacity, but most were "willing to see the whole HUD-Model Cities program come to a halt."

Brown concluded with two jabs at Nixon's vision for local control. First, he claimed, "HUD has

all the cards (money) and will probably win. The residents will be the losers," insinuating that

the federal government was forcing its will on the city and its residents. He then more directly

attacked the Nixon administration for contradicting its own value of local control: "it is difficult

to see how the St. Louis fight is contributing to the 'New Federalism' of coordinating all federal

programs to achieve more results from the expenditure of federal tax dollars with strong local

involvement."[91] In an internal memo responding to Brown's missive, Floyd Hyde simply

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[90] "Model City Session Ends in Uproar" and Marsha Canfield, "Protests Upset Meeting of Model City Board," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* November 20, 1970, *Globe-Democrat* Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML; "Model City Board Votes $8,700,000 Budget," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 2, 1970. In the new system, when neighborhood corporations were designated to implement a program, the mayor had the power to replace one resident board member with a mayoral appointee. Further, funding restrictions made it impossible for resident organizations to operate efficiently.
[91] Memo to Samuel J Cornelius/VII/RD from Gentry Brown Model Cities Coordinator Subject: Harassment in St. Louis, November 30, 1970, Box 15, RG 207 Subject File Van Dusen, NARA.

doubled down on HUD's stipulation that resident groups could not both plan and implement programs, refusing to engage substantively with Brown's critique.[92]

Conclusion

St. Louis's attempts to salvage resident control embodied an alternate course for city planning. Federal officials, both in Johnson's and Nixon's administrations, clung tightly to the ideal of change through existing institutions and to federal control over spending of federal funds. In fact, their faith in government institutions surpassed the St. Louis government's faith in itself to adequately implement residents' visions in Model Cities. By forcefully and creatively arguing for resident implementation, Mayor Cervantes and the St. Louis government showed that on the municipal level, some officials understood the shortcomings of city institutions and the value of resident control. In St. Louis, the city government had taken seriously the call for experimentation because as mayor, Cervantes had seen first-hand that residents distrusted municipal agencies and that decades of urban programs had not decreased poverty. In pushing for sustained resident control over Model Cities, Cervantes expressed more willingness to adhere to citizen participation ideals than the HUD officials whose agency had originally called for them.

Residents' insistence that they themselves, not government institutions, were best equipped to plan and implement urban improvement plans created an intense dilemma within Model Cities. Rather than embrace resident control, federal officials doubled down on the idea that existing institutions should continue to receive federal urban improvement funds. This faith

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[92] Memo from Floyd Hyde to Van Dusen, Subject: St. Louis, Missouri Model Cities Program- HUD/OEO Relations, January 11, 1971, Box 15, RG 207 Subject File Van Dusen, National Archives. Hyde's letter stated that the roles of planning and evaluating should be separated. While this separation may have made sense (any entity evaluating itself runs the risk of subjectivity), he gives no reason why a neighborhood group cannot both plan and implement a program, leaving evaluation to a separate entity.

in government institutions transferred easily into the Nixon era. Rather than ceding control to communities, as model neighborhood residents hoped, Nixon's HUD wanted to strengthen the position of mayors, continuing the belief that government agencies should be the main vehicles through which urban redevelopment occurred. Despite a continued effort by residents and city officials in St. Louis to portray neighborhood organizations as legitimate institutions capable of planning and implementing antipoverty programs, local actors were unable to convince federal officials, Democrat or Republican, that resident control was the best option. The result was a fraught and largely impotent Model Cities implementation in St. Louis, with just enough resident participation that failure to measurably decrease poverty could easily be placed at the feet of the citizens whose real control had been stripped before programs got underway.

Chapter 4

"Just Enough Money to Fail"[1]: The Flawed Implementation of Model Cities

In June 1971, a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter visited Bobby Westbrooks at the Montgomery-Hyde Park Neighborhood Corporation office.[2] Born in Memphis in 1930, Westbrooks moved to St. Louis in 1952 after serving in the Army as a paratrooper. He worked as a Post Office clerk for twelve years. He earned a doctorate in chiropractic medicine in 1967, the same year he got involved in his neighborhood organization, making him one of the most educated people in Montgomery-Hyde Park.[3] He lived at 2414 North 25th Street, a five-minute walk from the neighborhood office.[4] A long-time resident later noted that even before Model Cities, Westbrooks carried some clout with his neighbors. He was "an individual that was there on the ground floor level that … didn't have to establish a trust factor" with residents.[5]

Westbrooks was "a lean, muscular man [who] moves gracefully." He wore his hair natural, "but not too bushy." Overall, the *Post-Dispatch* reporter concluded, "he doesn't look 'way out' but he doesn't look exactly like the Establishment either." For the reporter, it was as if Westbrooks's physical appearance symbolized the way he balanced his grounding in the community with a contentious but productive relationship with City Hall. But Westbrooks' loyalties were never in question. Jim Adkins, who was in charge of Montgomery-Hyde Park's housing corporation, believed Westbrooks to be "one of the guys most dedicated to the whole

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[1] Sally Thran, "Subsidized Housing Deserted," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 17, 1973. Montgomery-Hyde Park neighborhood leader Ceil Piekarski was quoted in this article saying that underfunded antipoverty programs were the main reason model neighborhood residents could not carry out their plans as they envisioned them.

[2] Clarissa Start, "Fighter Against Inner-City Decay," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 6, 1971.

[3] "Bobby Westbrooks; Chiropractor And Longtime Community Activist," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 15, 1995.

[4] Letter to HUD, HEW, Secretary of Labor, and OEO from Bobby Westbrooks, EF Williams, Eugene Porter, William Faulkner, Elmer Hammond, March 25, 1969, Series 1 Box 40 Model Cities Folder 3, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[5] Daniel Jackson, Interview with Author, November 16, 2017.

concept of people. He doesn't just work at it. He lives it. It's not a passing fancy for him: it's for real." Westbrooks would talk with residents for hours to explain what the neighborhood organization was trying to achieve and which programs were available. He was living proof, Adkins believed, that model neighborhood organizations were dedicated to resident empowerment. Westbrooks' self-reflections corroborated Adkins' description. He said he was proudest of the residents who got involved with the Montgomery-Hyde Park organization.[6]

Westbrooks' vision for community control was unwavering. He employed whichever tactics seemed most likely to bring money and resources into the neighborhood.[7] Adkins explained, "he's militant in many ways but it's a reasoned militancy. He's mad when he has reason to be mad." Westbrooks added, "we don't like fighting City Hall. We don't like fighting politicians. But we will. We have never demonstrated or picketed until all other means have been exhausted." Another community member clarified, "he's not one of your cocktail party blacks … You know, those who go to the meetings to impress white people. He really works with the neighborhood and has a following there. Yet he isn't anti-white either." Westbrooks had found a way to collaborate with city officials without selling out the community.[8]

Westbrooks embodied the ethos of the model neighborhood organizations. Resident groups used a variety of strategies to win money, resources, and control for their neighborhood, and Westbrooks used the *Post-Dispatch* interview to highlight these tenets. He explained that

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[6] Clarissa Start, "Fighter Against Inner-City Decay," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 6, 1971.

[7] In fact, in the 1980s Westbrooks became a Republican because he was so fed up with the Democratic Party ignoring the needs of poor, black, urban residents. "Black Republicans," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* September 22, 1991.

[8] Clarissa Start, "Fighter Against Inner-City Decay," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 6, 1971. As discussed in the introduction, neighborhood residents' plans reflected Henri Lefebvre's and David Harvey's concept of the right to the city. St. Louis residents' attempts to control programs aligned with grassroots activists around the world who fought for autonomy over their living space. David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53 (October 2008); David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, (New York: Verso, 2013); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009); Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000).

while the Montgomery-Hyde Park Neighborhood Corporation got its start through OEO War on

Poverty money, by 1971 only a quarter of the neighborhood's funds came from the OEO.

Westbrooks hoped that avoiding reliance on one particular funding source would ensure the

organization's staying power.[9] He expressed pride in his neighborhood's accomplishments—

notably, with Model Cities funds the group sponsored the first new housing built in their

neighborhood in sixty years—but he cautioned against all-out optimism. He summed up the

Model Cities effort: "nothing has changed … Even though we can see some progress, until the

big system changes, not too many people are going to get too much out of this.'"[10] Neighborhood

organizations' flexible tactics were on full display during Model Cities implementation, as

HUD's abandonment of legitimate citizen participation meant that residents could not administer

the programs they planned.
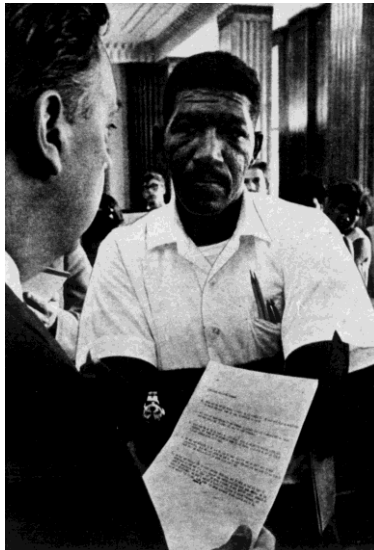
Figure 4: Bobby Westbrooks Delivers a List of Grievances to Mayor Cervantes in 1967 on behalf of the Montgomery-Hyde Park

Neighborhood.[11]

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[9] Although Westbrooks wanted the Montgomery-Hyde Park organization to endure without War on Poverty funds, this organization, like most of the Model Cities neighborhood groups, could not sustain itself after federal antipoverty money dried up.
[10] Clarissa Start, "Fighter Against Inner-City Decay," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 6, 1971.
[11] "St. Louis: A 'Safer City' Than It Was Just a Few Years Ago," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 8, 1973.

Federal officials justified their revocation of financial and rhetorical support for citizen participation by claiming that resident control was inefficient and took power from municipal governments, but Model Cities implementation calls these suppositions into question. The vast majority of Model Cities evaluations from 1973 through the 1990s were largely negative and portrayed citizen participation as an impractical mistake.[12] Both national studies and St. Louis officials assumed residents' lack of experience doomed Model Cities programs, even as they acknowledged that underfunding made the goal of remaking communities impossible. One legal aid attorney who worked with St. Louis residents was impressed by their efforts but concluded, "none of them had the expertise to do real estate development. None of them understood how to regenerate a neighborhood."[13] But the quick dismissals of citizen participation as ineffective and overly idealistic do not line up with Model Cities implementation in St. Louis. These evaluations neglect the very real ways residents fought for and maintained their visions amid an increasingly hostile local and national political environment.

An analysis of Model Cities implementation in St. Louis reveals that while citizen participation could not reverse the physical and demographic decline of the neighborhoods—an impossible task with such little funding—it is wrong to portray model neighborhood residents as well-intentioned but hopelessly unqualified and overly idealistic. This depiction misses an

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[12] Charles Haar, *Between the Dream and the Reality*, 202; Bret A. Weber and Amanda Wallace, "Revealing the Empowerment Revolution A Literature Review of the Model Cities Program," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 173–92; Peter Salsich, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017; Richard Baron, Interview with Author, June 13, 2017. See also Introduction. Most evaluations of Model Cities portrayed citizen participation as an overly idealistic and misguided experiment. Charles Haar's book on Model Cities, *Between the Dream and the Reality*, worried that Model Cities raised residents' expectations and then failed to deliver. HUD officials and local poverty warriors alike believed Model Cities demonstrated that residents did not have the expertise to solve their own problems and believed the programs exposed the limitations of citizen participation. Weber and Wallace's article compiles and evaluates analyses of Model Cities research, explaining that from the final years of the program through the turn of the twentieth century, evaluations of Model Cities were mostly negative.

[13] Richard Baron, Interview with Author, Jun 13, 2017. Baron went on to found a successful real estate company that specializes in affordable and mixed-income housing. His company was certainly more successful over the long-term at obtaining federal subsidies to construct affordable housing, but residents' housing efforts proved the viability of their programs and their ability. By the end of Model Cities, the federal government was no longer interested in funding resident organizations' housing programs.

opportunity to evaluate the political and tactical choices neighborhood activists made. Overall, residents adhered to their visions by trying to follow through on their plans in the context of decreased federal funds and wavering municipal and federal support. They promoted their abilities, recognized their shortcomings, and called on their government partners to make good on their promises. They made mistakes and tried to correct them.

Charting the fraught implementation of Model Cities in St. Louis recovers residents' political savvy, their commitment to their neighborhood vision, and the federal government's abandonment of citizen participation.[14] When they deemed it productive, residents chose to work within the Model Cities program, despite frustrating decreases to their autonomy.[15] Residents' housing programs were their clearest attempt to work within the Model Cities bureaucracy, with mixed results. In other areas, such as crime control, residents fought against the Model Cities bureaucracy and protested municipal decisions. Finally, comparing St. Louis's citizen participation with other cities, Philadelphia and Indianapolis, reveals variations in resident organizations, municipal partnerships, citizen control, tactical choices, and limitations of neighborhood power. Overall, St. Louis residents retained clarity of vision, even when their

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[14] Secondary literature charting federal financial and political disinvestment from the poorest urban neighborhoods and citizen control from the seventies onward include: Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*; Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Joshua Sapotichne, "The Evolution of National Urban Policy: Congressional Agendas, Presidential Power, and Public Opinion" (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2010). Federal funds dedicated to cities shifted from physical improvements and housing to public safety. Chapter five charts the political and legal mechanisms that drove this disinvestment.

[15] Tracing the trajectory of Model Cities implementation reveals an archival paradox. The MCA's papers are housed at the St. Louis Mercantile Library, but these hundreds of boxes are mostly unorganized. The bulk of these files contain information about Model Cities implementation, but the state of the archive is such that it is almost impossible to trace an individual program's implementation from planning through four years of implementation. Monthly financial reports, receipts, budget drafts, incomplete correspondence, meeting minutes, and federal directives are interspersed. While some strands can be followed, it is often impossible to tell what was implemented and what was merely discussed. The state of the archive is an apt metaphor for the tone of Model Cities implementation. Residents and staff members alike must have been overwhelmed by the guidelines and enormous amount of paperwork required to get programs off the ground. The tone of many documents is a mixture of perseverance and resignation. Equally revealing, resident voices are more difficult to find during the implementation period, with the exception of the executive board. The archival record reflects the gradual abandonment of citizen participation.

means of implementing their ideas crumbled.[16] The result was akin to what Bobby Westbrooks warned: the signs of progress residents fought for—new and rehabbed housing, health centers, job training, and education opportunities—could not change what Westbrooks called "the big system," in which resources and attention were flowing out of, not into, model neighborhoods in St. Louis and around the country.

Residents Work within the Model Cities Bureaucracy: Housing

Rather than abandon Model Cities altogether in the wake of federal limits to citizen participation, in some instances neighborhood organizations chose to partner with municipal agencies. Some of the most valiant fights to carry out residents' visions happened in the area of housing. Residents had reason to be cautiously optimistic that decent housing was a priority the federal government shared, since Congress passed the Fair Housing Act in 1968, the same year residents authored their housing plans. However, it would soon become clear that the law lacked enforcement provisions, making the legislation another instance in which federal rhetoric did not match actions. Rising tenant activism and a welfare rights movement argued that poor people deserved decent places to live.[17]

Recall that neighbors' comprehensive housing plans explicitly recognized that decades of government-sanctioned residential segregation, racist lending practices, and urban renewal policies produced an acute shortage of affordable housing for poor residents, so their programs hinged on two concepts: individual or small-scale rehab projects to minimize dislocation and resident-run housing corporations to be in charge of the neighbors' programs. Vestiges of both priorities, as well as residents' design preferences, were borne out during Model Cities

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[16] See chapter one for a discussion of federal commitments to citizen participation during the War on Poverty.

[17] Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 177-179.

implementation, but not on the scale residents intended.[18] Shifts in federal funding demonstrated federal disinterest in and mistrust of citizen participation specifically and poor urban communities more generally.

To conform with HUD's new citizen participation mandates, St. Louis created a new agency, the Model Housing and Development Corporation (MHDC), to oversee Model Cities' housing initiatives.[19] The MHDC met HUD's latest requirements because residents were one-third, not a majority, of the executive board.[20] Residents had originally assumed the MCA would give money directly to them, so the creation of the MHDC added a layer of bureaucracy—even though the federal government claimed Model Cities would create more efficient urban programs. The corporation's purpose was to assist and allocate money to developers for Model Cities construction projects.[21] The MHDC "estimated [that] 75 meetings are held throughout the year in the Model Neighborhood on matters relating to housing and housing development involving citizen participation," indicating its desire to help resident groups carry out the physical redevelopment projects they planned.[22] Mayor Cervantes reported to HUD that the MHDC "has provided financial assistance to each of the model neighborhood corporations through loans and grants to permit them to acquire property and hire consultants to implement each neighborhood's plans."[23]

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[18] For a fuller discussion of residents' housing plans, see chapter one.

[19] The MCA created a similar organization for health projects, called the Joint Community Health Services (JCHS).

[20] MB Wilson Papers Series 34 Box 1 Folder: Administration and Programming, 1970 City Demonstration Program—Year II Housing, H 33 Model Housing and Development. The board was comprised of nineteen people: five residents (one from each neighborhood), bankers, religious leaders, aldermen, Housing Authority administrators, and Land Clearance officials.

[21] MHDC Contract, Certificate of Incorporation for the Model Housing and Development Corporation, July 23, 1969, MB Wilson Papers Series 34 Box 2 Folder General Correspondence, 1968-1969, MCA Papers, SLML.

[22] City Demonstration Program – Year III HO-40 Model Housing and Development, January 1972, MCA Box CPO-1 Model Housing, MCA Papers, SLML.

[23] Letter from Mayor Cervantes to Elmer Smith, January 12, 1972, Folder: General And Miscellaneous Correspondence H-1 Model Neighborhood Housing Development (Year II), MCA Box CPO-1 and Model Housing, MCA Papers, SLML.

Layers of bureaucracy and lack of funds plagued Model Cities housing initiatives, and residents had to continually advocate to ensure their carefully-planned programs did not stagnate. The MHDC operated by granting subcontracts to organizations to carry out physical redevelopment projects. Resident organization leaders grumbled about this extra layer of bureaucracy, though the MHDC seemed sympathetic to residents' wishes. For example, neighborhood groups had to make formal requests each time they needed money. In the spring of 1972 Bobby Westbrooks corresponded with the MCA executive director, detailing the housing accomplishments of Montgomery-Hyde Park and explaining that a lack of money forced their operation to a halt. "We are no longer financially able to maintain our high level of activity or to continue the comprehensive programs required to make the housing program successful," he wrote. "Because we have been unable to get additional funds through the Model City program, our Housing staff has been cut to 2 people."[24] A few weeks later the MHDC agreed to increase Montgomery-Hyde Park's housing allocation by about $8,000, enabling the group to hire another staff member.[25] This system functioned, but not efficiently enough to transform the housing stock in any of the neighborhoods; residents had to vigilantly fight for funds and support.

Housing development in Jeff-Vander-Lou, Montgomery-Hyde Park, and Murphy-Blair illustrated residents' ability to create housing that aligned to their vision, though they were unable to build enough units to permanently alter their neighborhood's character. Jeff-Vander-Lou had the most success, in terms of the number of units rehabbed and its enduring positive

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[24] Letter from Bobby Westbrooks to Arthur Kennedy, March 28, 1972, Folder: Funds Disbursement Documentation 10.0 HO-40 Model Housing and Development, MCA Box CPO-1 and Model Housing, MCA Papers, SLML.
[25] Letter from William A Thomas to Bobby Westbrooks, April 13, 1972, Folder: Funds Disbursement Documentation 10.0 HO-40 Model Housing and Development, MCA Box CPO-1 and Model Housing, MCA Papers, SLML.

reputation among community members.[26] A key factor was assembling a cadre of people who had the skills and financial connections to follow through on the physical rehab scheme Jeff-Vander-Lou designed. At the helm of the Jeff-Vander-Lou organization was Macler Shepard, a resident skilled at cultivating neighborhood participation. One of his associates recalled that "Macler could be very disorganized at times," but "he was able to surround himself with people that had gifts that he didn't have."[27] To keep the organization on task, Shepard picked Cecil Miller as his lieutenant around 1969, as Model Cities implementation was beginning. Miller was not a typical Jeff-Vander-Lou resident. He and his wife Judy were white, and they moved to St. Louis in 1967 as part of a Mennonite Church mission. They taught at local public schools for a year, after which they dedicated themselves full-time to the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood.[28]

Miller helped Jeff-Vander-Lou apply for federal housing grants to complement the funds the group received from Model Cities. He said the "221 … home ownership program [which insures mortgages for low- and moderate-income housing units] is the best one that I've seen come down from HUD. …That was one of the things that [Jeff-Vander-Lou] latched onto [because] housing was so important to them." This federal program allocated money to rehabilitate residential structures and sell them to low-income buyers, allowing for low down-payments. It gave Jeff-Vander-Lou the means to finance their rehabs and sell to individuals who

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[26] Every resident I spoke with remembered Jeff-Vander-Lou fondly. The organization has lasted longer than other resident groups, albeit in a diminished capacity. Even as federal renewal projects destroy many of the houses Jeff-Vander-Lou rehabbed, the organization remains part of the historical memory of the neighborhood. See https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/project-connect/nga/history/index.cfm.

[27] Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017.

[28] Cecil Miller, Interview with Author, June 12 and September 15, 2017; Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017; Hubert Schwartzentruber, Interview with Author, July 9, 2017. Schwartzentruber explained that Shepard chose Miller because he needed help keeping Jeff-Vander-Lou's affairs organized. Miller received sponsorship from the Mennonite Church, so he was able to work full-time for Shepard and the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood.

would not qualify for conventional mortgages.[29] Miller recalled, "in relation to HUD, there was a sense of a partnership back in those days." Jeff-Vander-Lou also made sure to hire residents for construction jobs, a main component of the neighborhoods' comprehensive plans.[30]

But part of Jeff-Vander-Lou's success came through knowing when to move away from government programs and work independently; their acumen at soliciting private funds revealed their understanding of the complex relationship between neighborhood groups, public funding, and private investment. Judy Miller remembered, "there was always the infighting for funds," meaning that resident groups had to compete for limited government grants, including Model Cities. She thought Jeff-Vander-Lou was often denied funding because "we did things our own way. And so we didn't always play politics. And that was difficult." Frustrated that increasingly, "the [federal] money never got into the community, it never got to real people," by the early 1970s, Jeff-Vander-Lou was transitioning away from formal association with government initiatives like Model Cities. Instead, they looked to other sources of funding, including private donations.

One such patron was Tom DePew, a local white businessman whose mother had grown up in the model neighborhood.[31] He "became a benefactor … he raised thousands and thousands

[29] Harry B. Jr Wilson, "Exploiting the Home-Buying Poor: A Case Study of Abuse of the National Housing Act," *St. Louis University Law Journal* 17, no. 525 (1973 1972), 527, 538. Part of the Housing Act of 1968, the 221(h) program allowed for down-payments as low as $200 for people displaced by urban renewal.
[30] Cecil Miller, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017; https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/mfh/progdesc/rentcoophsg221d3n4; See Keeanga Taylor's upcoming book, *Race for Profit*, for an account of problems facing federal home ownership programs. Taylor argues that corrupt real estate industry practices doomed programs aimed at helping poor Americans buy homes. On the other hand, Model Cities research suggests residents believed they could control these federal programs and give poor urbanites the support they would need to maintain the homes they bought. Also see Harry B. Jr Wilson, "Exploiting the Home-Buying Poor: A Case Study of Abuse of the National Housing Act," *St. Louis University Law Journal* 17, no. 1 (Fall 1972): 525–71. Wilson's article shows that throughout St. Louis, federal low-income home ownership programs, including the 221(h) program Cecil Miller touted, preyed on poor families and generated profits for real estate agents. Wilson says low income families were "systematically defrauded by real estate brokers and mortgage lenders." This article documents the abuses of these federal programs, but it is important to note that the model neighborhood organizations were operating very differently than these rapacious real estate companies. Not looking to personally profit, resident housing corporations tried their best to create decent housing and lasting home ownership.

and thousands of dollars to help Jeff-Vander-Lou acquire properties." De Pew also convinced

business owner Monte Shoemaker to build the well-regarded Brown Shoe Company in the Jeff-

Vander-Lou neighborhood, which for decades employed several hundred people. Jeff-Vander-

Lou residents' skepticism about the staying power of federal funds gave them the ability to

maneuver between public and private support, a key factor in their success.[32]

Keenly aware that decades of legal discrimination left black St. Louisans unable to obtain

decent housing, Jeff-Vander-Lou wanted to house those who had been systematically excluded

from decent real estate opportunities.[33] The residents who took advantage of Jeff-Vander-Lou's

housing rehab program showed that the initiative was reaching its intended beneficiaries: people

who would not qualify for conventional mortgages, such as single mothers.[34] Rosie Willis sought

a home for herself and her three young children. She worked for Missouri's social security

agency, but she could not find an affordable house. One of her coworkers told her, "Jeff-Vander-

Lou is selling property now, looking for homeowners. And they want to put more homeowners

in this community." Her coworker counseled her to "'go to the office, talk with Mr. Macler

Shepard, and he will give you all the details.' So that's exactly what I did," Willis recalled.

Shepard told her, "we have a house over on Dayton and Glasgow that's ready to go now." When

Willis saw the property, she "thought oh, I love this house, it's so beautiful in here, everything

was so brand-new and clean and it was just the ideal house for me and my children." The

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[31] DePew was president of the Tier-Rack Corporation. Cecil Miller noted that DePew's son played a large role in DePew's decision to donate money to Jeff-Vander-Lou, saying DePew's son was wary of his capitalistic business practices and refused to sleep in his father's house. To show his son he was not a bad person, DePew looked for philanthropic opportunities.

[32] Cecil Miller, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017; Judy Miller, Interview with Author, November 12, 2017.

[33] As discussed in chapter one, decades of racist housing practices made access to decent, affordable housing almost impossible for model neighborhood residents. Chapter two details residents' housing vision, outlined in their comprehensive plans, to fight against the long history of discriminatory housing practices and provide decent, affordable living for model neighborhood residents.

[34] Ibid. Recalling how the organization's housing rehab projects developed, Miller explained, "at some meeting somewhere along the line Mr. Shepard acquired knowledge [of] a young architect" who was committed to retaining the brick character of the houses.

purchase of the house went smoothly. She provided a $250 down payment, "and there was not a lot of questions about credit rating … and your closing costs. I didn't go through any of that."[35] Jeff-Vander-Lou was able to house marginalized residents because they provided support through the entire home ownership process: from financial aid and rehabbed physical structures to homeowner training.

Roxie Phillips had a similar experience, showing Jeff-Vander-Lou's programs helped residents get around discriminatory housing practices. After growing up and finishing high school in Grenada, Mississippi, she and her family moved to St. Louis. When her husband died in 1968, she recalled, "I tried to find a place for me and my [four] children. Everywhere I went, they didn't want me … They didn't want children," until "somebody told me about Macler Shepard. And they were rehabbing houses. I told Macler, I said, 'I need a place to stay.'" As with Willis, Shepard responded, "'we're rehabbing some houses.' So I came and looked at this house. They were still working on it, but it was just about finished. The next day, it got finished. I went to buy it. 'Mac,' I said, 'here's $200 down.'"[36] Willis and Phillips recalled that buying federally-subsidized Jeff-Vander-Lou homes was their only path to homeownership, and Jeff-Vander-Lou houses were in high demand.[37]

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[35] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.

[36] Ibid.; Roxie Phillips, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017. Both Willis and Phillips were single mothers when they bought their homes in the Yeatman neighborhood and still lived in their homes at the time of the interviews. They explained that the resident organizations did not discriminate against them for being unmarried or poor. Willis also noted, though, that "it's not like they were just giving the houses to anybody. You had to meet some kind of requirements."

[37] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.

Figure 1: Left: Rosie Willis's House; Right: Roxie Phillips's House. Both women still live in these homes.

Most residents greeted the housing rehabs happening in their area with enthusiasm, but the projects faced significant challenges.[38] For one, the tight budget necessary for constructing affordable housing sometimes created substandard units. One winter Rosie Willis noticed her kitchen was very cold. She pushed a knife through the drywall to find out what kind of insulation her house had, only to discover there was no insulation at all. Had she been better informed about the challenges of home ownership, she reflected, she might not have bought a three-story house that would require significant future repairs.[39] Other residents throughout the model neighborhood echoed Willis's concerns about the quality of the housing built by neighborhood corporations, citing drainage issues and poor structural design.[40]

Overall, though, residents' view of Jeff-Vander-Lou housing was positive. One couple explained in 1976 that the rehabbed houses "keep 'people from leaving the area' and they are so happy to see young black people moving back. [They] … only wish … that the city could give

[38] Planning Study Prepared for the St. Louis Model Cities Agency by Jeff-Vander-Lou, Incorporated, July 31, 1968, Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[39] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.

[40] Sally Thran, "Subsidized Housing Deserted," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 17, 1973; "Model City Mystery," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 18, 1973; "Another U.S. Housing Flop," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 20, 1973.

out more money for renovation and building new homes in the Jeff-Vander-Lou area."[41] Roxie

Phillips had no complaints about the quality of her house. She thought Jeff-Vander-Lou "did a

beautiful job" and mentioned that the only major problem she encountered was that siding blew

off of her house during a storm in 2017.[42] Despite challenges, Jeff-Vander-Lou was

implementing its mission of enticing residents to invest in their neighborhood.[43]

Jeff-Vander-Lou's vision of citizen control produced a variety of new housing options for

residents. Between 1966 and October 1970, Jeff-Vander-Lou rehabbed ninety-six homes, with an

average construction cost of $13,000.[44] By the end of Model Cities in 1974, the number jumped

to almost two hundred.[45] One study estimated that by 1980, Jeff-Vander-Lou completed eight

hundred housing units and invested $21 million of capital improvements. The organization also

constructed the seventy-four-unit Aritha Spotts apartment building, named after one of the

neighborhood's beloved activists. By the time this building was ready for residents, one hundred

applicants hoped to live there.[46]

Jeff-Vander-Lou's values of resident empowerment and neighborhood investment

transferred to their homeowners. Reflecting on her decision to purchase a home in the model

neighborhood, Willis explained, "I wanted to show people that you can be very poor, as I am, but

still have some pride about yourself. And have some pride about where you live, and have pride

in wanting to improve where you live. The whole community, not just your house. But the whole

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[41] "People in Our Community Friend, Neighbor," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, January 1976, Missouri History Museum Archives.
[42] Roxie Phillips, Interview with Author, September 18, 2017.
[43] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017. Jeff-Vander-Lou board members were even invited to travel to other cities to teach about their rehab methods. Rosie Willis recalled that Augustus Busch of the Anheuser-Busch Company flew Jeff-Vander-Lou members to Philadelphia to educate the city about their organization's projects.
[44] E.S. Evans, "Fund Shortage Stalls Vacant House Program," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 4, 1970.
[45] "Shepard, DePew Receive St. Louis Award, *Washington University Record*, December 19, 1974.
[46] Barry Checkoway and Carl V. Patton, *The Metropolitan Midwest: Policy Problems and Prospects for Change* (University of Illinois Press, 1985), 252. This complex, the Aritha Spotts Apartments, still exists today as senior housing.

surroundings." Willis's decision to purchase a home in Jeff-Vander-Lou reflected her dedication to urban living. She "thought … I'm going to invest my money in this property down in this ghetto. Because I felt if anyone was going to buy a house and they wanted to live in a city, invest in neighborhoods that surely needed uplifting." Both Willis and Phillips became active in the Jeff-Vander-Lou organization, serving on the board for decades. They witnessed the gradual depopulation of their neighborhood, yet Willis still focuses her activism on improving her surroundings. She spearheaded the creation of a community garden around the corner from her home. She believes the Jeff-Vander-Lou rehab model would still be viable.[47] Jeff-Vander-Lou's initiatives empowered the community, even if its political influence was temporary, with some residents continuing its vision into the present-day.

Montgomery-Hyde Park's vision for housing was similar to Jeff-Vander-Lou's, but their efforts, which produced significantly fewer results, highlighted the barriers resident groups faced.[48] Montgomery-Hyde Park residents evaluated several architects' plans and chose designs that reflected the needs of residents. They insisted that homes have basements, and they wanted to use brick to blend in with the architectural character of the neighborhood. Residents were especially frustrated with the difficulty they were having getting brick structures built in Montgomery-Hyde Park. They explained, "we know that the brick being reclaimed from our neighborhood is being trucked away from our area to be used in modern subdivision houses in such places as St. Louis County. We also know that this resource of ours enhances the value of these forty to one hundred thousand dollar homes … This inconsistency distresses us."[49]

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[47] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.
[48] Recall from chapter two that the Montgomery-Hyde Park comprehensive plan called for sixty new housing units to be built during the first year of Model Cities implementation, with one hundred each subsequent year.
[49] Letter from Ceil Piekarski to Eric Freidman, October 22, 1971, MCA Box Montgomery Hyde Park and Murphy Blair, MCA Papers, SLML; Letter from Bobby Westbrooks to William Thomas, September 23, 1971, MCA Box Montgomery Hyde Park and Murphy Blair, MCA Papers, SLML.

An advertisement for Model Cities houses declared, "Have you ever wanted to buy a new home? But thought you could never afford it! Well, maybe now you can." The announcement encouraged residents to visit the Montgomery-Hyde Park neighborhood center for more information and stressed that "priority on these homes goes to present and former Model City Residents" to stabilize the neighborhood and minimize dislocation. Federal low-income home ownership programs would be used to help residents with down payments and mortgages.[50] In March 1972, fifty-eight houses in the Montgomery-Hyde Park neighborhood were finished or under construction.

But by 1973, two years after the *Post-Dispatch* interviewed Bobby Westbrooks, a significant problem emerged. The MCA had encouraged the neighborhood corporations to acquire a large number of vacant lots and dilapidated buildings with Model Cities funds. In the early seventies Montgomery-Hyde Park bought about three hundred eighty land parcels with the assumption that federal funds would be available to redevelop these properties.[51] But nationally, the federal government pulled funds before Montgomery-Hyde Park could either rehab dilapidated units or construct new homes. In 1973 the city sued the Montgomery-Hyde Park corporation for failing to quickly demolish the approximately two hundred fifty vacant and derelict buildings it owned.[52]

Changes to federal housing policy meant that groups utilizing federal housing rehabilitation funds were set up to fail and then blamed for their inability to remake their neighborhoods. Montgomery-Hyde Park knew they were being unfairly held responsible for this

[50] "Model City Spot Announcement: For Immediate Release," Folder: News Media, Model Cities Box Unlabeled, MCA Papers, SLML.
[51] Folder: Montgomery-Hyde Park; Parcel Summaries [1 through 3], Series 34 Box 4, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA; Saint louis Model City Agency H-33 Model Neighborhood Housing, June 11, 1969, Folder: Saint Louis Model City Agency, Housing, 1969, Series 34 Box 4, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA. Montgomery-Hyde Park acquired most of its properties in 1971 and 1972.
[52] "Neighborhood Unit Caught in Squeeze," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 16, 1973.

predicament, and reports from Detroit, Baltimore, New York, and Los Angeles corroborated the neighborhood's stance.[53] Bobby Westbrooks and Montgomery-Hyde Park housing leader Jim Adkins fumed, "the corporation's new role as slum landlord facing prosecution is ironic in a number of ways." First, the pair pointed out, it was the city government that encouraged them to acquire this property. Once this property acquisition was underway, however, "federal housing programs and money for demolition and new construction have been sharply curtailed." The neighborhood resisted any accusations of corruption, mismanagement, or incompetence. Adkins explained, "we don't want the property … There's no way in the world that we could profit from owning it. The only reason we took the property was that we were told there would be money for demolition and construction of between 300 and 400 new units of housing." Adkins remorsefully pointed out the irony of this situation, explaining "we are all feeding at the same trough, so to speak. One of the things that seems funny to me, as a taxpayer, is that city money is being used to sue itself." Due to a federal housing construction freeze, local delays, and a general lack of money, Montgomery-Hyde Park did not have the funds to start fixing these properties. Defeated, Adkins lamented, "I guess we could just give the stuff up … I suppose we could. I don't know."[54] Significantly, Montgomery-Hyde Park's problems were not rooted in residents' incompetence or a lack of realism; rather, they were the result of following the lead of their municipal partners and relying on federal funding.

Adkins was so disillusioned by the obstacles and setbacks his housing corporation faced that he ceased trying to convince residents to buy or rent the units Montgomery-Hyde Park did finish. He thought that "if we would have had 400 units up by this year, or by last year, that could have made a difference in the school and the neighborhood." However, he explained, "I

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[53] Agis Salpukas, "Moratorium on Housing Subsidy Spells Hardship for Thousands," *The New York Times*, April 16, 1973.
[54] "Neighborhood Unit Caught in Squeeze," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 16, 1973.

wouldn't encourage a poor person to live in one of our houses. I wouldn't encourage people to move in because I can't morally ask people to put kids in these schools, as long as our impact is so slight."[55] Adkins personally felt the high stakes of Montgomery-Hyde Park's program: only complete implementation of their comprehensive plans could remake their communities, so he and some Model Cities leaders grew to believe it would be treasonous to entice residents to buy homes in a neighborhood that was not going to be made livable.

Another model for physical redevelopment came from the Murphy-Blair neighborhood. Murphy-Blair's resident organization had a closer relationship with their advocate planner, Grace Hill Settlement House, than the other neighborhoods. Murphy-Blair called for "a demonstration project to plan 3-4 bedroom apartments for 150 large families. Residents have developed this proposal to combat a crucial problem in this neighborhood—the nearly total absence of decent housing for the many large families here."[56] The problem with housing designed without resident involvement, Murphy-Blair explained, was that "cost limitations on Federal Housing programs can result in severely restricting the quality of development resulting in lack of human and social values." As residents planned their housing, they asserted that "the ability of the corporation to provide … amenities will contribute substantially to the livability of the project."[57] Renee Marver, a social worker at Grace Hill, recalled "I went door-to-door, pulling people into those meetings" so that residents' housing needs could get translated into architectural designs.[58] Residents advocated for "small and inexpensive touches to the units themselves" and "small

[55] Sally Thran, "Factors in Abandonment of Model-City Houses, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 31, 1973.
[56] The Murphy-Blair Neighborhood Residents' Plan, July 1968 Series 1 Box 41 Folder 6, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[57] Murphy Blair Housing Program, January 3, 1969, Series 34 Box 1 Folder: Administration and Programming, 1970, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA.
[58] Renee Marver, Interview with Author, May 2, 2017.

common areas where neighbors can visit and socialize." Residents were likely reacting to the

problems seen in Pruitt-Igoe and other public housing complexes.[59]

Richard Gram, who headed the housing initiatives for Grace Hill Settlement House,

described with clarity the ways in which Grace Hill and its architects partnered with neighbors to

construct apartments that reflected residents' needs. He echoed residents' belief that without

neighbors' involvement in design, the apartments would not be a decent place to live. The first

project Murphy-Blair tackled was a series of townhomes, based on residents' expressed need for

housing to accommodate large families. Gram recalled that architects would present residents

with a variety of plans during neighborhood meetings. He remembered, "moms talked about how

kids, when they're outside, the way the neighborhood was originally laid out, they ended up in

the street, or [mothers] had a hard time finding them … So they wanted to be able to keep them

in." This desire translated to the construction of yards "with the building surrounding an inner

courtyard that has a certain amount of entrances." Gram also explained that "moms said … they

wanted their kids … to go out and play without their having to be outside watching them all the

time, but they wanted to be able to keep an eye on them. And they suggested that where they

spent a lot of time was in the kitchens." Consequently, the architects "designed these units so that

the entrance of the courtyard was through the kitchen. And there was a window from the kitchen

[so] moms can watch their kids in the courtyard."[60]

In the early seventies, Grace Hill Settlement House received a $50,000 loan from the

MHDC to acquire land for the apartment complex.[61] By 1973 the Murphy-Blair Resident

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[59] Murphy Blair Housing Program, January 3, 1969, Series 34 Box 1 Folder: Administration and Programming, 1970, Margaret Bush Wilson Papers, WUA. As described in chapter two, residents criticized Pruitt-Igoe's design for a variety of reasons, including a lack of apartments suitable for large families.
[60] Richard Gram, Interview with Author, May 17, 2017.
[61] Memo from Louis Berra to Leonard Weiss RE: Murphy Blair Rent Supplement Housing Project, May 28, 1971, MCA Box Misc Projects, MCA Papers, SLML.

Housing Corporation owned over two hundred parcels. As in Jeff-Vander-Lou and Montgomery-Hyde Park, Murphy-Blair relied on other federal programs to make their apartments affordable. The units were "rented to residents on the basis of an FHA rent-supplement program, which means residents who are low-income families will pay 25% of their income for rent while the Federal Government pays the difference between that percentage and the market rent."[62] This apartment complex still exists, though it is no longer run by Murphy-Blair.[63] Subsequent plans for additional apartment complexes never got off the ground.

All the neighborhoods faced funding problems that limited the number of units produced, and the neighborhoods could not complete the process of transformation they envisioned. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* estimated that Model Cities intended to provide about one thousand new housing units in the five neighborhoods, but by 1973, only two hundred new units were completed and one hundred seventy-five were in the construction phase.[64]

The clearest financial roadblock was President Nixon's 1973 moratorium on housing subsidies, gutting several programs on which neighborhood organizations relied.[65] This move was an obvious financial and political disinvestment from impoverished neighborhoods. Around the country, local officials "feared [the moratorium] would interrupt housing programs now geared up for rapid expansion." Baltimore's housing commissioner reported, "we bought the

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[62] "Residents Housing Corporation to Build 124 Apts. by 1972," *The Action News*, Vol XVII No 69, April 26, 1971, Folder: M-151-3-11 MB Resident Housing Corp, MCA Box Murphy Blair Unlabeled, MCA Papers, SLML.

[63] Richard Gram explained the prolonged and complex process of changing ownership. By the nineties, HUD wanted to move away from nonprofit ownership and management of low-income apartment complexes. A private company still manages the Murphy-Blair apartments today.

[64] This number is somewhat low, since Jeff-Vander-Lou stopped using Model Cities funds and preferred private investment from Tom DePew. This number counts only the units funded with Model Cities money.

[65] On January 9, 1973, President Nixon announced an eighteen-month freeze on federal money for the programs that funded low-income ownership and rental units. Urban policy researcher Alexander von Hoffman found that the failures of public housing, including Pruitt-Igoe, were used as justification for this freeze. The Office of Management and Budget called for this freeze over the objections of Secretary Romney. Alexander von Hoffman, "History Lessons for Today's Housing Policy: The Politics of Low-Income Housing," *Housing Policy Debate* 22, no. 3 (May 23, 2012): 321–76; Agis Salpukas, "Moratorium on Housing Subsidy Spells Hardship for Thousands," *The New York Times*, April 16, 1973.

land and cleared it … People moved out expecting new housing. Now we have to say there is no money."[66] The stalling of Montgomery-Hyde Park's housing program was directly tied to the building freeze, and Jim Adkins called the housing moratorium "the biggest rape yet." George Eberle, the executive director of Grace Hill Settlement House, argued that "the abandonment you now see is a direct result of" Nixon's decision.[67] Frustrated by Nixon's neglect of affordable housing, HUD Secretary George Romney resigned in 1973. The lack of funds made it impossible for resident organizations to finish but a fraction of the units they planned. Further, some of the houses sold to model neighborhood residents had already been repossessed.[68]

Developers who won Model Cities contracts also expressed frustration. One declared, "if we ever get them finished, I am getting out of the 235 program [a federal low income home ownership subsidy] … HUD doesn't give you enough money to build." Ceil Piekarski, a Montgomery-Hyde Park resident who directed her neighborhood's housing initiatives, concluded ominously, "they always give you just enough money to fail in these things … They never give you enough to succeed."[69] Resident activists blamed underfunding, not neighbors' incompetence, for their inability to grow the scale and quality of their projects.[70]

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[66] Agis Salpukas, "Moratorium on Housing Subsidy Spells Hardship for Thousands," *The New York Times*, April 16, 1973.

[67] Marsha Canfield, "Model …" *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 13, 1974, Globe-Democrat Clippings, SLML.

[68] Gerald Meyer, "Neighborhood Unit Caught in Squeeze," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 16, 1973; November 13, 1974 "Marsha Canfield, "Model …" *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 13, 1974, Globe-Democrat Clippings, SLML; "Model City mystery: How many house mortgages foreclosed," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 18, 1973, Globe-Democrat Clippings, SLML.

[69] Sally Thran, "Subsidized Housing Deserted," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 17, 1973.

[70] Eventually, after witnessing the federal government promise funds and then withhold money, a few residents questioned the wisdom of focusing on low-income housing. One Murphy-Blair resident and business owner resented that his neighborhood was portrayed as poor and was frustrated specifically by his neighborhood organization's attempts to encourage low-income residents to stay in the area. This man believed that Murphy-Blair's system of acquiring land parcels was accelerating depopulation, accusing that the MCA purchased "up property at inflated prices … and then they don't do anything with it but let it go to ruin. Heck, lots of people who wouldn't leave otherwise, sell out when they are offered twice as much as the land's worth." This resident neglected to mention that most of the parcels neighborhood groups acquired were uninhabited, dilapidated, or delinquent on taxes, but the fact remained that model neighborhood groups, especially Montgomery-Hyde Park, acquired many more properties than

Residents' housing schemes were among the most ambitious facets of their comprehensive plans, and neighborhood housing corporations had to wade through a complex bureaucracy amid changing federal priorities. Even though some neighborhoods proved their ability to renovate houses, all five of the sub-neighborhoods would struggle with vacancies and depopulation in the coming decades. Critics cited the lack of a complete transformation of the model neighborhood's physical environment to condemn residents' capabilities, but in doing so they overlooked the role of the federal government in undermining the programs. Resident implementation of St. Louis's Model Cities housing programs showed residents' abilities and the constraints they were working against. Residents crafted and implemented sound strategies to create affordable, decent housing, but federal disinterest and funding cuts made their task impossible. What emerged was not a picture of incompetence but the result of restricted circumstances.

Clashing Agendas: Residents Oppose Municipal Priorities

Whereas with housing residents believed their municipal partners shared their goal of increasing the number of affordable housing units, there was no such common ground in the fields of public safety and downtown development. Here, model neighborhood residents' visions were directly at odds with municipal priorities. When they could, residents chose to obstruct and delay city-authored programs that betrayed residents' comprehensive plans. These actions

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they were able to rehab. Other residents were more cynical overall. One declared, "if you think Model cities and OEO … were ever going to do something, you're spinning your wheels. They're dealing with the symptoms and not getting to the root of the problem … Show me one black person who has come up out of poverty due to either program." Florence Shinkle, "North Side Neighborhood Holds Out For Better Days," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 17, 1974; "Model Cities, OEO Called Big 'Jokes,'" January 29, 1971, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, MCA Papers, SLML

showed that at their core, resident organizations aimed to represent their constituencies and adhere to their vision rather than build political clout for a few individual leaders.

After years of discriminatory policing, dubious arrests, and police harassment, neighborhood leaders believed resident control was needed to create anticrime programs that would protect rather than target residents.[71] In their August 1968 comprehensive plans, residents criticized public safety institutions, explaining, "it seems that an Anti-Crime organization made of neighbors … would be much more useful and fair than an extra wagon of policemen." After directly condemning the police force's penchant for racism and its inability to protect model neighborhood residents, they suggested, "let the policemen concentrate on the bank robbers and on those <u>organized</u> criminals. The <u>people</u> in our neighborhoods ought to take care of each other."[72] This call for autonomy and resident leadership remained prominent throughout residents' efforts to implement their anticrime proposals. Montgomery-Hyde Park residents designed a block watcher program, in which neighborhood organizations would train and pay citizens to patrol their streets to keep residents safe without a heavy police presence.[73] In December 1968, the Black Liberators, a local Black Power organization, offered their members as citizen patrolmen.[74]

Like all the proposals in the residents' comprehensive plans, the block watcher program suffered from federal skepticism and delayed funding. Over two years after residents submitted their comprehensive plans, the fate of the block watchers remained unclear. Though HUD approved a block watcher program, questions of how the program would work and who would run it persisted. Consistent with federal guidelines of late 1969 onward, residents lost control

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[71] As discussed in chapters one and twp, residents vocally objected to racist policing in newspaper editorials and in their comprehensive plans.
[72] *The Model City Voice,* August 7, 1968, MCA Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.
[73] *The Model City Voice,* December 20, 1968, Box MB Wilson Files Newspaper Clippings, MCA Papers, SLML.
[74] For more information on the Black Liberators, see Helmreich, *The Black Crusaders*.

over their anticrime programs. Typical of many Model Cities plans, in the early seventies the city

had yet to spend the money allocated to this program.[75] Residents charged that "the Board of

Aldermen killed" the block watcher program when they refused to let Montgomery-Hyde Park

implement its plans.[76]

At a May 1972 special Model Cities meeting, the executive board discussed what to do

about the stagnant block watcher program. At issue during this meeting was a proposal, backed

by federal and municipal officials, to use Montgomery-Hyde Park's block watcher money to

obtain a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) matching grant. In the early

seventies, LEAA distributed money to public safety agencies. Historian Elizabeth Hinton's

research reveals that LEAA programs across the country led to the militarization of local police

departments through grants for military-grade equipment, which in turn fueled the War on Drugs

and mass incarceration.[77] To obtain this matching grant, St. Louis would have to put the police

department, not a resident organization, in charge of program implementation. Residents across

the sub-neighborhoods presented a united front against the LEAA scheme, reiterating that

Montgomery-Hyde Park deserved to control the block watcher money. At least five resident

board members spoke out during this meeting to defend neighborhood control. Eugene Porter, a

board member from Pruitt-Igoe, "motion[ed] to fund the Blockwatchers project as originally

submitted to HUD without LEAA match." Surprised by the residents' show of resistance, an

MCA official "wanted to be sure that the motion called for funding of the project without LEAA

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[75] Model City Agency Executive Board Meeting Minutes, May 22, 1972, Series 2 Box 55, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[76] Model City Coordinating Council Minutes, July 17, 1972, MCA Box AD Bourgeois Files, MCA Papers, SLML.

[77] Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Hinton argues that liberal institutions like the LEAA have been a main contributor to the War on Drugs and mass incarceration.

match. He was assured that it did."[78] Residents made their stance clear: they opposed federal institutions such as the LEAA and local institutions like the police department taking control of resident-designed Model Cities programs.

Residents' rejection of the LEAA grant showed they knew a larger police presence with more powerful equipment would not make their neighborhood safer and could in fact endanger poor and minority citizens. The rise of the War on Drugs and the acceleration of mass incarceration in the late twentieth century proved residents' fears were justified. Unlike most municipal officials, Model Cities residents were willing to turn down money when they believed the strings attached were unacceptable. The block watcher program never got off the ground, but at least residents impeded the use of Model Cities money for police militarization. Though overall residents could not maintain their grip on Model Cities plans, they continually demonstrated that their experiences led them to very different conclusions regarding what antipoverty programs should look like and who should be in charge of them.

Even after it was clear the battle over residents' right to operate programs was lost, the resident-dominated executive board continued attempts to assert its autonomy. In 1973, the executive board voted down MCA-authored healthcare plans. The MCA "prepared its programs; confident that they had done their homework and approval was in the bag. As it turned out, they hadn't and it wasn't."[79] Calling the MCA's effort to control Model Cities plans an "attempted coup," one observer characterized the MCA staff as "steamrollers to burst through the fragil[e] fortress of citizen power hoping to leave behind an awed, whimpering body on bended knees pleading for reconciliation." Instead of simply rejecting the MCA's proposal, the board also

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[78] Model City Agency Executive Board Meeting Minutes, May 22, 1972, Series 2 Box 55, Cervantes Records, WUA.

[79] E. Henry Adams, "Planning—Barn Attempts Coup D'Etat," *Citizen Participation*, Volume 1 Number 1 St. Louis, January 1973, Series 2 Box 56 Folder: Model Cities-Nov. 1972, Cervantes Records, WUA.

voted for an alternate set of health care plans which called for resident organizations to oversee neighborhood health workers.[80] Although such efforts had little impact on the overall operation of Model Cities, the neighbor-dominated executive board was committed to resident control.

Residents also attempted to revive the neighborhood planning process, which had not taken place since the original five comprehensive plans were crafted in the summer of 1968. In March 1973 the neighborhood corporation chairmen "insist[ed] that the neighborhood planning process be reinstituted."[81] That same year, the resident-dominated executive board accused the MCA of defying neighbors' wishes. The MCA claimed to be following HUD directives, but the executive board voted down MCA plans and instead approved neighborhood corporation plans.[82] Even if these stands did not gain traction, they at least showed residents did not let the battle for citizen control fade completely. They continued asserting that neighborhood control was a prerequisite to transforming their neighborhoods into livable communities.

As residents struggled to carry out their vision by alternately partnering with and protesting against the MCA, other arms of the municipal government pursued very different priorities in and around the model neighborhood, exposing the limits of residents' influence over citywide redevelopment priorities. The clearest example came in the Carr-Central neighborhood. Even though Carr-Central's Model Cities plans called for more housing, improvements to existing public housing, and the rerouting of traffic to make the area more cohesive, the Land Clearance Authority expressed "cautious dismay" at Carr-Central's plan to create homes for low-income people, continually insisting Carr-Central should be redeveloped to support downtown.

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[80] Memo from Kennedy to Members of RICC Team Subject: Model City Agency Quarterly Program Status Report, January 15, 1973, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA. In 1968, when Margaret Bush Wilson was the Acting Director, residents felt the MCA was an ally. After WIlson was fired and replaced with Arthur Kennedy, residents resented a clear decrease in their influence over the MCA and Model Cities programs generally.
[81] Letter from neighborhood chairmen, March 9, 1973, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 2, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[82] Citizen Participation- Newspaper Volume 1 Number 1, St. Louis, January 1973, Series 2 Box 56 Folder 1, Cervantes Records, WUA.

One observer noted that "the divergence in thinking between [the Land Clearance Authority] and Carr Central could not be much greater."[83] Initially, the city deferred to the Carr-Central plan (see chapter 2).

But by 1972 federal commitment to citizen control had disappeared, and the city focused on plans for a downtown convention center overlapping with the Carr-Central neighborhood. The 240,000-square-foot complex was to be financed with a mixture of public and private money. The proposal included calls for a new one-thousand-room hotel and "parking facilities for 7500 cars." Estimates put the price tag at $75 million and claimed the finished complex would employ 7,500 mostly unskilled workers.[84] It was a typical urban renewal project that prioritized attracting business opportunities and tourism. The city had effectively ignored Carr-Central's plans and replaced them with a convention center scheme.

As a justification, the MCA assumed "the mere fact that the [convention center] has been proposed within Model City inevitably connotes a positive and direct effect upon the surrounding city."[85] Mayor Cervantes went as far as claiming, "the convention center is really a neighborhood benefit which will provide thousands of jobs directly and indirectly to the people in the neighborhoods—not the people downtown."[86] Perhaps most telling, he declared, "existing conditions in the suggested area are such that physical deterioration and blight is so extensive that nearly total clearance and redevelopment must be undertaken if this area is to provide

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[83] Jeffrey D. Buchanan, "Urban Renewal in DeSoto-Carr: Citizen Participation Comes of Age," *Urban Law Journal; Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law*, January 1970. This article details the chasm between resident and Land Clearance Authority proposals, including plans for industrial sites, highway spurs, and parking lots. For Buchanan, Carr-Central residents obtained a substantial amount of power over plans for their area, saying "regardless of one's opinion on the Carr Central Association [Model Cities plan,] the upcoming review of its plan will necessarily define whether neighborhood power is to become neighborhood control and whether the current citizen guides are aiding the growth of a successful urban renewal or further impeding a rebuilding of the city."

[84] "Convention Plaza," Series, 2 Box 18, Cervantes Records, WUA; Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, 155.

[85] Model City Land Use Plan, June 1972, Badaracco Records Series 1 Box 10 Folder 1, WUA.

[86] Remarks by Alfonso Cervantes before the Board of Aldermen, October 6, 1972, Badaracco Records Series 1 Box 6 Folder 10, WUA. Similar justifications are still used. See the discussion of the National Geospatial Agency in chapter five.

optimum land utilization, both economically and culturally," totally contradicting residents' foundational premise that their neighborhoods were viable.[87] Convention center boosters had no regard for residents' comprehensive plans, whatever odes were made to cooperation with the community. HUD's abandonment of citizen participation left residents few options besides accepting the convention center and hoping other aspects of their plans could be saved.

By the early seventies, the city's focus on downtown development to the detriment of residents' priorities was complete. A 1972 City Commission plan for the model neighborhood stated, "the role of Model City in relation to the well-being of the downtown was termed 'crucial' … since there are mutual potential social and economic gains for them which would also strengthen the overall economy of the City and its tax revenue."[88] In the early years of Model Cities, housing, jobs, and resources for the neighborhood were the highest priorities, but now, the value of the model neighborhood was portrayed in its relation to downtown. Historian Colin Gordon has shown that the convention center failed to attract people and business to the downtown district. He explained the convention center "was spare and disconnected from the rest of downtown, and was seen by many as less a solution to near northside blight than a barrier between that blight and the 'tourist' downtown." The convention center area was declared blighted in 1984, and by 1993, $193 million of public money had been used to complete and revamp the convention complex.[89]

Comparisons: St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis

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[87] "Convention Plaza," Series 2 Box 18, Cervantes Records, WUA.
[88] Land Use Plan Recommended for Model City Area: Plan Designed to Meet Area Goals, June 19, 1972, MCA Box Misc Correspondence, MCA Papers, SLML.
[89] Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, 155-6, 170.

St. Louis's Model Cities residents achieved much more control over programs than the vast majority of cities. A combination of municipal politics, neighborhood organizations' strength, and timing affected residents' ability to wrest control over Model Cities. But overall, residents' struggles to maintain their autonomy and control revealed that individual neighborhood organizations were ultimately unable to persuade the federal government to permanently invest in citizen leadership and urban antipoverty programs. Despite efforts in individual cities, neighborhood leaders around the country had no mechanism to present a nationwide, coordinated campaign to force the federal government to support resident control over antipoverty programs.

Philadelphia faced many of the same challenges as St. Louis in the planning and early administration of Model Cities, but Philadelphia residents chose to deal with HUD's abandonment of citizen participation quite differently. These similarities and divergences demonstrated the range of tactics residents used to seize and maintain control of Model Cities and the ultimate futility of attempts to wrestle permanent control over city planning and federal antipoverty policies. Like Mayor Cervantes, Philadelphia's mayor lobbied for the Model Cities legislation, so he knew legitimate citizen participation was necessary for HUD to accept the city's program. Consequently, when neighbors protested a lack of citizen input in early Model Cities planning, the Philadelphia government consented to a formal role for residents.[90]

As in St. Louis, Philadelphia residents had a high degree of influence in the early years of Model Cities.[91] A quarter of a million mostly black residents lived in North Philadelphia's model

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[90] For a fuller discussion of Philadelphia's experiences with Model Cities, see Matthew Countryman, *Up South,* 300-307.
[91] Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (July 1969): 216–35. Arnstein characterized Philadelphia's citizen participation as a "partnership" between residents and city hall, just one rung below St. Louis's "delegated power."

neighborhood.[92] Philadelphia residents had experience with War on Poverty programs and insisted that their participation in Model Cities was contingent on avoiding what they termed "the antipoverty trap," in which City Hall would control final decisions. After voicing their frustrations at a series of meetings, residents proposed a partnership between the municipal Model Cities administration and their resident organization, the Area Wide Council (AWC).[93] Headed by William Meek, a black World War II veteran, social worker, and experienced civil rights activist, the AWC's explicit purpose in Model Cities was "to create a new balance of power between ourselves and City Hall." Residents believed that "the mayor knew that we were prepared to send a delegation to Washington to protest his application, and since he desperately needed the votes from our neighborhood to get re-elected, he agreed to our partnership proposal." Like St. Louis's neighborhood corporations, the AWC's combination of political clout and protests won them power and community support. In both cities, resident groups operated autonomously but partnered with the municipal government as official citizen participation organizations. The self-described militancy of the AWC seemed to be paying off—the AWC ousted a Model Cities administrator they disliked and replaced him with a black man and eventually a black woman who lived in the model neighborhood.[94]

At first, the AWC designed Model Cities programs itself. But Philadelphia's Model Cities director criticized the AWC for its lack of experience in planning, charging that the AWC

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[92] Jason Bartlett, "Model Cities," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, 2016, http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/model-cities/.

[93] Citing "The anti-poverty trap" showed that residents understood how easily their power could be coopted in War on Poverty initiatives and were working to avoid cooptation in subsequent programs. Matthew Countryman explains that the AWC was created at a mass meeting with 500 attendees. Two hundred neighborhood groups were affiliated with the AWC through its sixteen hubs around the model neighborhood. Countryman, *Up South*, 302.

[94] William Meek, Interview, May 22, 1979, https://libdigital.temple.edu/pdfa1/Oral%20Histories/AOHWMPJZ2015010032Q01.pdf; Shery Arnstein, "Maximum Feasible Manipulation," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 377–90. "The View from City Hall," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 390–402. These two articles tell the story of Philadelphia's citizen participation struggles, first from the perspective of neighborhood activists and second from the viewpoint of city officials.

missed deadlines and had "an almost total inability to prepare written program proposals." Eventually, "on the basis of regional HUD office recommendations, a New York-based consulting firm was hired to work with the AWC and the Model Cities administration to prepare the application." "Fortunately," city officials explained, "this firm was composed of exceptionally competent professionals, knowledgeable about the problems of urban poverty and capable of communicating well with both AWC representatives and the residents of the model community." Working with the AWC, this firm wrote programs and budgets based on the AWC's vision. St. Louis residents more directly authored their proposals, but both cities' comprehensive plans were a reflection of residents' desires more than city hall's.[95]

Both the AWC and the Philadelphia government accepted these compromises. The residents wrote, "we worked night and day, weekends, and holidays to put together our ideas and the city's ideas. We had many differences in approach, but with our partnership arrangement, we were able to trade off so that they got some of their priorities, but so did we." When HUD directed Philadelphia to reduce its Model Cities budget from $49 million to $25 million, residents explained, "we and the city managed to continue to work together to complete the revised $25 million plan. Strangely, despite all the double-dealing, our partnership was really beginning to make an impression." Mirroring St. Louis, this was a collaborative process in which residents and the city shared planning power.[96] They had achieved real citizen participation, in which residents had enough power to gain significant concessions from the city.[97]

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[95] "The View from City Hall," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 390–402.
[96] Sherry Arnstein, "Maximum Feasible Manipulation," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 377–90.
[97] Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (July 1969): 216–35. Arnstein's research on Philadelphia revealed the tenuousness of the power resident organizations achieved in federal antipoverty programs generally and Model Cities specifically.

Neighborhood-municipal cooperation broke down over the same issue in St. Louis and Philadelphia, but residents in each city chose a different course of action. HUD released only $3 million of the promised $25 million until Philadelphia fell in line with the new citizen participation standards. When this happened in St. Louis, residents were vocally disappointed, but they had little recourse other than to continue lobbying for influence or abandon Model Cities altogether. Philadelphia residents expressed similar frustration, saying "HUD was placing its confidence in the same old-line institutions that have traditionally betrayed the community." To comply with HUD, they said, Philadelphia "completely negat[ed] our partnership … chopping us right down to a strictly advisory role."[98]

But the structure of Philadelphia's Model Cities bureaucracy provided the AWC with a special opportunity. Around the same time that HUD decided to fund resident-run programs, the city had to renew its contract with the AWC to designate it as the official citizen participation organization for Model Cities. AWC leaders "searched our souls … we voted overwhelmingly to refuse the unilateral contract terms." Rather than accept a diminished role for the AWC, resident leaders opted to sue HUD and Philadelphia for violating the "widespread citizen participation" clause of the 1966 Model Cities Act.[99] Whereas St. Louis residents tried to work within this new system, Philadelphia residents were more defiant.

The AWC's legal battles proved pyrrhic. In November 1969 the Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania judge threw out the case, claiming the AWC did not have the standing to sue HUD or the city. AWC leaders blamed this court decision for the breakdown of resident unity within the AWC, recalling, "until we lost our first round with the courts, the AWC was together, and the city was restrained from organizing its own co-opted citizens group … When the District Court

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[98] Sherry Arnstein, "Maximum Feasible Manipulation," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 377–90.
[99] Ibid.

handed down its negative decision, we were torn apart." The AWC called the new citizen participation organization a "plantation-like structure."[100] Like in St. Louis, Philadelphia residents understood the abandonment of citizen participation as racist. Eventually an appeals court reversed the lack of standing decision and sent the case back to the lower court. AWC leaders, including David Meek, were not surprised that the lower court again sided against the residents.[101]

Finally, in a second appeal decided in February 1972, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals again reversed the district court's decision, arguing that the AWC was the rightful citizen participation organization. The judge held that the "very essence of the [Model Cities] Act is participation by the inhabitants of the affected community," and HUD and the city were wrong to move ahead with Philadelphia's program without the AWC's approval. The AWC, as well as resident groups around the country, were vindicated, for the court agreed that influential citizen participation was foundational to Model Cities.[102]

But the price of this victory was excessively high for two reasons. First, by 1972 the AWC existed primarily to pursue its court case, having lost funding and support over the two-and-a-half-year legal battle.[103] Second, and perhaps most telling for the legacy of resident control, this decision regarding what counted as legitimate citizen participation only applied to the Model Cities legislation. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case, and a national

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[100] Of course, the account of the AWC's experience with Model Cities was written by the most dedicated AWC supporters.

[101] Sherry Arnstein, "Maximum Feasible Manipulation," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 32 (September 1972): 377–90; North City Area-wide Council, Inc., Appellant, et al. v. George W. Romney, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development, et al (US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit February 1972).

[102] North City Area-wide Council, Inc., Appellant, et al. v. George W. Romney, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development, et al (US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit February 1972).

[103] Philadelphia's Model Cities agency developed an alternative citizen participation mechanism to replace the AWC, but these groups were only allowed to advise the city and had no real power. Countryman, *Up South*, 307.

standard for citizen participation in federal antipoverty programs was never considered. Citizen

participation, then, could mean whatever federal officials wanted it to mean in any new

antipoverty legislation.[104]

As this legal battle proceeded, Philadelphia Model Cities pressed on with diminished

citizen participation, bearing striking similarities to St. Louis. Residents were relegated to

advisory roles on boards and committees. Even worse, while the AWC's plans had focused on

housing rehabilitation, the city chose to redevelop vacant industrial sites for manufacturing. The

Housing Association of the Delaware Valley concluded that the city reverted to discredited urban

renewal policies that would displace more inhabitants.[105] When reflecting on the lessons they

learned from their legal battles, Philadelphia residents came to understand that "community

people all over the country need to get together to create our national power base to force 'our'

government to deal with us directly." Neither St. Louis nor Philadelphia residents had much use

for their elected officials, whether aldermen, the mayor, or federal representatives. Instead, in

their bids to create neighborhood-led institutions, they advocated for a new kind of democracy in

which poor residents used their collective power to call on the federal government directly for

support and funding of resident-controlled programs.

In contrast, citizen participation in Indianapolis and most model neighborhoods was

never more than token. Initially, Indianapolis did not seek to become a Model City because of

the municipality's historic disdain for federal intervention. The Republican mayor assumed this

Democratic program might be disinclined to give Indianapolis a Model Cities grant. But the

540,000-person city applied for and was awarded a $225,000 second-round planning grant in

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[104] Chapter five includes a fuller discussion of federal alterations to the meaning of citizen participation in the years following Model Cities.
[105] Countryman, *Up South*, 307.

1968.[106] The federal citizen participation rhetoric community leaders utilized in St. Louis and

Philadelphia was not available to Indianapolis residents, since their program started a year later.

From the early days of its program, Indianapolis made intentional and successful moves

to ensure resident leaders would acquiesce to city priorities. Municipal officials anticipated

rancor from residents due to the city's lack of citizen participation, but the Model Cities

administration effectively blocked a powerful resident lobby from forming. The city made sure

their pick for the head of Model Cities, white, Yale-educated architect David Meeker, would not

garner citizen backlash.[107] "Before announcing his selection," the city explained, the mayor "met

quietly with several black Model Neighborhood leaders to inform them of his decision. As a

result, when he publicly announced [the Model Cities director,] numerous Model Neighborhood

leaders voiced their satisfaction." The resident-elected chairman was one of the individuals who

"convince[d] dissident [model neighborhood] blacks that Meeker would be a good … Director."

Surrounding themselves with resident representatives who already bought into the city's

priorities made bids for resident control impossible. Further, the Republican mayor's election

was likely less dependent on the black vote, denying residents another bargaining chip. This was

the kind of co-optation neighborhood leaders in St. Louis and Philadelphia worked hard to avoid.

Even though all three cities held elections to choose neighborhood representatives, in

Indianapolis these individuals never achieved decision-making power, and there were no

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[106] "Ten Model Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Second Round Planning Years" (Washington, D.C.: HUD Office of Community Development Evaluation Division, July 1973).
[107] In 1973 Meeker left Indianapolis to work for HUD. He helped develop the Community Development Block Grant program, discussed in chapter five, which replaced Model Cities and decreased regulations that could have ensured meaningful resident participation.

neighborhood corporations with the influence and community support to hold Model Cities responsible to residents.[108]

When resident board members did take a stand in Indianapolis, the results were meager, with no change to power dynamics. Two key issues were stipends for resident board members and influence over the hiring and firing of Model Cities staff. While "the resident members wanted a monthly stipend for their participation and … control, or at least influence, [over] hiring for the CDA staff, Meeker resisted on both issues, believing that as volunteer participants in the program they should not be paid." He also "insisted that he had absolute control over hiring and firing of his staff." Resident board members eventually secured small stipends, but no influence over staffing. This minor consolation enabled the city of Indianapolis to sidestep resident demands that might have substantively changed the program.[109]

The comparison among St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis highlights similar obstacles to resident control. St. Louis residents, while insistent, were less outwardly defiant toward city and federal officials than in Philadelphia but much more influential than residents in Indianapolis. The AWC faltered in Philadelphia due to its gamble on a lawsuit. On the other hand, resident organizations in St. Louis maintained their autonomy and, to a limited extent, were able to implement the programs they designed, though on a much too small scale and with too thick a bureaucracy to transform their community. Residents in each city had a different degree of success controlling Model Cities, but none could make their position permanent nor change the long-term trajectory of their neighborhood.

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[108] "Ten Model Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Second Round Planning Years" (Washington, D.C.: HUD Office of Community Development Evaluation Division, July 1973).
[109] Ibid.

Conclusion

A list of programs underway in 1973 illustrated the diffuse nature of Model Cities by the end of its lifespan: a swimming pool, summer youth employment, community schools, teacher aides, high school work/study, free breakfast, a skills center, minority contractors, juvenile legal defense, community group homes, a drug treatment facility, health planning and delivery, model housing, relocation, physical redevelopment, a neighborhood facility, social services for elderly, early childhood day care, and community outreach. This collection of unconnected programs was a far cry from residents' carefully-crafted comprehensive visions. Of these programs, neighborhood corporations only directly operated the community outreach component. City agencies or private organizations, with limited resident representation, controlled the rest. The revolving loan funds to encourage home ownership and entrepreneurship were gone or barely functioning. Neighborhood groups envisioned a skills training center, but the one being built was the brain child of MCA director Arthur Kennedy; residents were not directly involved. Perhaps even more damning, in 1973 only two hundred and eight residents had found employment in Model Cities programs, despite the fact that each of the five neighborhoods' comprehensive plans had designed hundreds of jobs. Of the jobs that materialized, only forty-nine residents made more than $5,000 a year.[110] There was no longer even a pretense that these programs would attack the causes of persistent poverty in the model neighborhood, and it was clear that Model Cities was not helping families escape destitution.

Faced with such dreary numbers, what is to be learned from analyzing the implementation of Model Cities? The successes residents did experience proved neighborhood

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[110] Quarterly Program Status Report, October 15, 1973, MCA Box Quarterly Status Reports, MCA Papers, SLML; http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl, https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines. Accounting for inflation, that salary would be about $27,100 per year in 2016, just above the poverty line for a family of four and below it for a family of five. Many experts agree that the poverty line's threshold is much too low, and many people technically above the poverty line still need government assistance.

organizations' visions were grounded in reality; they were not impractical, as many critics argued. The problems revolved around scale, funding, and political will, not residents' abilities. Resident corporations hired architects, directed what housing should look like and where it should be, and constructed hundreds of new housing units. Many residents were immensely proud of their neighborhood's achievements, and a few stayed in their homes for decades. Residents maintained autonomous institutions that were moderately successful at balancing their independence with municipal collaboration. In St. Louis and Philadelphia, neighborhood organizations were not co-opted by municipal officials. In St. Louis they functioned throughout Model Cities with the hope of having a permanent place in city planning.

Evaluations of Model Cities citizen participation are unfairly dismissive. While onlookers assumed Model Cities' failings demonstrated the ineptitude of residents, neighbors' achievements in St. Louis proved citizens were capable of crafting and implementing programs designed to upgrade their neighborhoods for the residents living there. If critics wanted to condemn residents for their idealism, it would be more accurate to say residents' naiveté was rooted in their trust, however tentative, in their federal and local partners. It was these partners who betrayed resident-government partnerships by defunding the programs resident organizations relied on to carry out their vision. There was little evidence that residents were incapable. As the next chapter will show, despite the unjust critiques of residents' capacity, the federal antipoverty program that replaced Model Cities took for granted that influential citizen participation was not an important component of antipoverty programs.

Chapter 5

**Beyond Model Cities: Community Development Block Grants
and the Fate of Federally-Sponsored Citizen Participation**

Introduction

Speaking on a sunny May morning in the community garden she created, Rosie Willis

reflected on her experience owning a home rehabbed by the Jeff-Vander-Lou organization. She

was proud of her decision to invest in a property in St. Louis City and specifically in the Jeff-

Vander-Lou neighborhood. Willis bought her property at a time when it seemed like the federal

government was committed to creating affordable, decent housing for all Americans. In 1968, a

year before her purchase, the Fair Housing Act outlawed discriminatory housing policies.

However, lack of enforcement provisions and a disinclination to tackle the legacy of federally-

backed housing discrimination meant that this act had few practical implications.[1]

Looking back, Willis expressed frustration and disenchantment, explaining, "had I known

… the Team Four Plan … was already in motion, no matter where my friends were moving, I

would … not have moved into the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood. Because the [city's] plan was

then to just let it deteriorate."[2] The Team Four Plan was a consultants' report commissioned by

the St. Louis government in 1972 to create a comprehensive land use strategy for the city. Its

findings spoke to the fate of federally-funded urban programs in the 1970s and revealed the

tattered legacy of Model Cities and citizen participation in St. Louis. Ms. Willis's reference to

the Team Four Plan shows that forty years after the fact, this city planning document still haunts

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[1] See Rothstein, *The Color of Law*. Rothstein points out that enforcement provisions were only added in 1988.
[2] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.

St. Louis residents and is sometimes blamed for the continued deterioration and abandonment of St. Louis's North side.[3]

Couched in seemingly neutral, technical language, the Team Four Plan epitomized local and federal disavowal of residents' neighborhood visions and a retrenched faith in professional planners and profit-oriented projects that catered to a middle-class clientele. Published in 1975, the plan organized St. Louis neighborhoods into one of three categories, with each designation corresponding to different recommendations for physical and services investment. First and most crucial to the Team Four report, conservation areas already functioned well. The key to bettering all of St. Louis, according to the plan, was to focus most intensely on maintaining the population and physical appearance of the conservation areas. Team Four recommended "that the Conservation Areas be the base upon which the rejuvenation of the City be built." Further, the consultants believed, "if these areas are lost, no plan or program can hope to save the City or renew what is left. Thus, the City's primary public responsibility for the future of the entire community is to buttress and then build upon these critical areas."[4] Team Four therefore recommended concentrating city services and private investment in these already thriving neighborhoods. Second, Team Four identified redevelopment areas that could become conservation areas if significant and targeted renewal initiatives occurred. The report warned the city to pick only a few redevelopment projects, for fear of being stretched too thin. Federal money could be used in redevelopment areas.

Finally, Team Four discussed what they termed depletion areas, blocks and neighborhoods in need of so much help that no amount of available municipal money could substantially improve the neighborhoods. The report consequently suggested a "no growth

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[3] For an analysis of the Team Four plan, see Patrick Cooper-McCann, "The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the 'Team Four' Plan," *Journal of Planning History* 15, no. 2 (May 2016).
[4] "Citywide Implementation Strategies: The Draft Comprehensive Plan" (St. Louis: Team Four Inc., 1975).

policy" that discouraged new physical developments "until firm market and adequate public resources are available." The report conceded that public services would have to be provided for remaining residents, "yet these efforts should be pursued without encouraging new investment until the City determines that Redevelopment can and should begin.[5] Rosie Willis recalled with clarity, "the only thing that they were going to provide through that Team Four effort would … be emergency services, the police departments and fire department."[6] A main strategy to be used on depletion areas was land banking, acquiring and holding on to properties for years with no plans for development. Team Four called on the Land Clearance Authority to obtain as many land tracts in depletion areas as possible until a large, coordinated investment program could occur. After years of OEO and Model Cities money flowing into poor communities, the city was being advised to divest from the poorest neighborhoods until market forces made them more appealing to private investors.
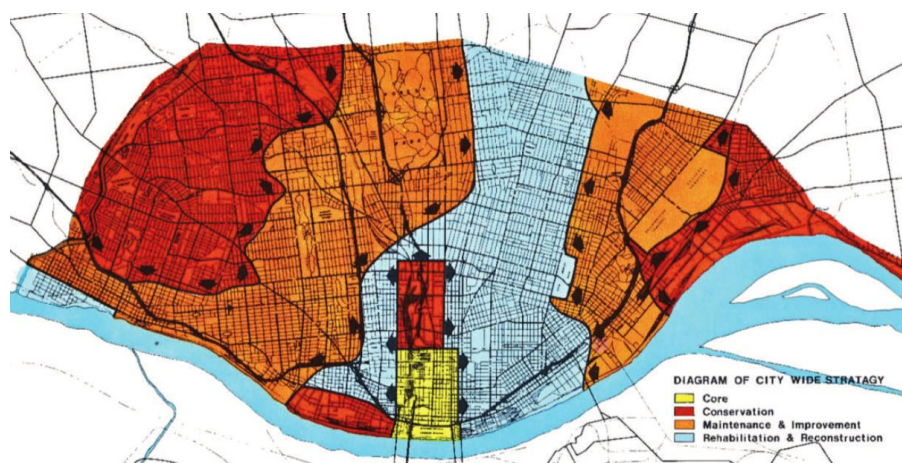

Figure 5: Diagram of citywide strategy, city of St. Louis, 1973. Source: St. Louis City Plan Commission, St. Louis Development Program (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis City Plan Commission, June 1973).[7]

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[5] "Citywide Implementation Strategies: The Draft Comprehensive Plan" (St. Louis: Team Four Inc., 1975).
[6] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.
[7] This image was taken from: Patrick Cooper-McCann, "The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the 'Team Four' Plan," *Journal of Planning History* 15, no. 2 (May 2016). This map shows that the model neighborhood, along with the other majority-black sections of the city, were slated for "rehabilitation and reconstruction." While this might sound different than "depletion areas," this less inflammatory label did not change the strategy: North City has received very little redevelopment money, and redevelopment efforts through the late twentieth century have been

It was abundantly clear to Model Cities residents that their neighborhoods would be slated for depletion, and they knew this policy would mean the death of their communities. They accurately predicted exactly how this plan would affect them, and they were livid. The *Jeff-Vander-Lou News* called depletion area policies a "slow strangulation through the lessening of city services." One neighborhood organization adjacent to the Model Cities area worried, "once advanced deterioration sets in, the frequency by which buildings become vacant and vandalized will create an additional demand on funds to be expended for demolition. In the meantime," residents concluded, "thousands of lower income families will see housing opportunities in other areas of the city, only to find no housing is available to them."[8] Activists quickly assembled an Ad-Hoc Committee Against Team Four Projections. In July 1975, they circulated a petition declaring: "We are disappointed and disgusted that we still have policies of benign neglect, and it appears that many neighborhoods will be destroyed." They estimated that "150,000 families are threatened with displacement as part of the plan."[9] Due to public outcry, the St. Louis Board of Aldermen declined to call a vote to accept the Team Four Plan. But the scheme did not have to be officially adopted for its tenets to be carried out. The specter of Team Four still haunts North City. Rosie Willis explained, "I've invested in the property now, so, [I] just got to make the best of a bad situation."[10]

The Team Four Plan reflected municipal funding priorities once federal officials abandoned their commitment to citizen participation and resident groups lost power. Its very

concentrated in the conservation and improvement areas, especially the Central West End, Lafayette Square, and various portions of South City. This map is not specifically associated with the Team Four Plan, but it illustrates the logic of Team Four.

[8] Philip Sutin, "Plan Said To Hurt Black Area In City," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 19, 1975. The black population in St. Louis was and still is concentrated on the North side of the city, particularly within the Model Cities footprint.

[9] Patrick Cooper-McCann, "The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the 'Team Four' Plan," *Journal of Planning History* 15, no. 2 (May 2016).

[10] Rosie Willis, Interview with Author, May 9, 2017.

existence can be traced to the program that replaced Model Cities—Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)— which remains a primary way HUD transfers money to cities. The *Jeff-Vander-Lou News* pointed out that the city hired Team Four Inc. because "by federal law, the City must have a comprehensive plan to be eligible for Community Development Bloc[k] Grant Funds, the trough which is likely to supply most of the City's federal aid for the indefinite future."[11] The Team Four Plan and CDBGs should therefore be seen as the outcome of the tumultuous and painful experiences of Model Cities both nationally and in St. Louis.

The transition from Model Cities to the still-functioning block grant program in the first half of the seventies reveals that block grants were designed to undermine residents' collective power and pivot away from antipoverty projects; they fostered the transition back to urban renewal-style projects that prioritized capitalist business opportunities and middle-class institutions over investment in poor communities. President Nixon's administration used Model Cities as a testing ground for CDBGs by gradually transferring power from resident groups to mayors and decreasing federal oversight. In the name of efficiency, a seemingly neutral goal, CDBGs stripped away federal guarantees that urban development money would be directed to the poorest neighborhoods and denied residents an influential role. Block grants appeared more democratic because they were available to entire cities and counties, rather than specific neighborhoods, but this obscures the ways the program stunted organized and meaningful citizen participation. An analysis of the early years of block grants demonstrates the ways in which CDBGs shifted city priorities and changed the power balance in model neighborhoods. Residents vocally objected to the relegation of citizen participation to a token advisory role. Due to the program's decades-long existence, CDBGs' legacy, and by extension the legacy of Model Cities

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[11] "Plans for Inner City," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News,* January 1976, Box: Jeff-Vander-Lou Newsletters, Missouri History Museum Archives.

and the War on Poverty, was to require citizen participation in antipoverty programs while simultaneously denying residents a meaningful say in how money was spent. CDBGs therefore continued citizen participation in name while gutting it in substance.

Modeling the New Federalism: Model Cities as Testing Ground for CDBGs

In 1970, Nixon officials were still beginning to respond to the vast network of federal antipoverty grant programs that were emblematic of the Johnson administration. Their efforts became encapsulated in what Nixon termed the New Federalism, a massive campaign to cede control of federal money and programs to state and local government. Yet even from this early stage, "the model cities program—capstone of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society—ironically now [was] being promoted as the ideal showpiece for the New Federalism on which President Nixon [was] basing his domestic policy."[12] Model Cities, which just one and a half years earlier had been a hallmark of Johnson's War on Poverty, became the testing ground for Republicans' alterations to federal-local relations. The result was a turn away from an antipoverty focus and community control in favor of capitalist redevelopment projects for middle-class consumers.

The Nixon administration attacked Johnson-era domestic aid programs primarily from the angle of efficiency, which resulted in the of gutting resident participation requirements and safeguards that federal money be used in the neediest areas. In the early seventies Nixon officials frequently lamented the vast array of federal programs and the bloated bureaucracies that accompanied them. Of particular concern were categorical grants, named because they funded certain categories, or types, of projects such as low-income rental housing and neighborhood beautification. One observer claimed, "by 1968, it was literally impossible to compile a

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[12] "Mayors Applaud GOP Changes In Model Cities; Nixon Unsold," July 11, 1970, Cervantes Papers Series 2 Box 57, WUA.

comprehensive list of national grant-in-aid programs … The right hand did not even know what its own fingers were doing!"[13] Floyd Hyde, Nixon's assistant HUD Secretary in charge of Model Cities, noted that between 1964 and 1969, "the number of categorical aid programs has increased from 65 to over 400," adding that "many cities must employ full time staff just to inventory the list of available resources and programs."[14] Disparaging the vast array of overlapping and contradictory federal programs was a near-constant refrain for HUD and the White House.

Nixon officials criticized categorical grants to explain the wisdom of the New Federalism, and this line of reasoning eventually found adherence around the country and across party lines. HUD Secretary George Romney explained, "in the 1960's the conventional response [to a problem] was to set up some new categorical aid program in Washington to funnel funds back to the local areas. In practice," he argued, "the areas that got the money were not necessarily those with the most pressing problems, but those with the greatest understanding of how to pull the Federal levers." He continued, "in each community there was a natural tendency to apply for funds not for the most needed projects but for those most likely to be accepted by the Washington administrators" and concluded, "I find it remarkable that this kind of system has not broken down before now."[15]

Local officials, both Democrats and Republicans, used a similar language of efficiency to criticize categorical programs. Democrat John Poelker, who succeeded Alfonso Cervantes as St. Louis's Mayor in 1973, called categorical grants "cumbersome" and welcomed the creation of an

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[13] September 8-12, 1970 "Federalism and the Model Cities Experiment" by Judson Lehman James, City College of the City University of New York, Nixon WHCF SMOF Edwin Harper Box 51.

[14] Speech by Floyd Hyde to Cleveland City Club, November 14, 1969, RG 207 Box 16 Folder: Community Development, Nixon Library.

[15] Statement of Secretary George Romney, Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Joint Economic Committee, February 17, 1971, RG 207 Box 1, Nixon Library. As will be discussed later in this chapter, there is an abundance of evidence indicating CDBGs significantly lowered the amount of federal urban improvement money dedicated to the poorest Americans.

urban block grant program.[16] Even some War on Poverty allies believed overregulation was

stunting local initiatives. One legal aid attorney in St. Louis explained, "people who worked on

the various local campaigns were terribly frustrated at the regulations from Washington … From

our perspective, [federal regulations] looked like all kinds of dot your Is and cross your Ts and

do twenty different things before you can do anything."[17] A picture of a bloated federal

government unable or unwilling to flex to local needs emerged. Even though the categorical

programs of the sixties aimed for a more comprehensive attack on poverty, Romney and his

associates argued that they in fact "fragmented and balkanized our metropolitan areas into so

many political jurisdictions that it is difficult if not impossible to mount an effective attack on

current problems."[18] Utilizing the language of efficiency, the Nixon administration made the

New Federalism palatable to a broad range of interests and covered up the reality that

deregulation would allow cities to stop allocating money to the poorest neighborhoods and

diminish resident influence over antipoverty programs.

 With this mindset of saving federal programs from bureaucratic overload, Nixon officials

turned their attention to the specific initiatives they inherited from the Johnson administration,

with a particular interest in Model Cities. HUD Undersecretary Floyd Hyde worked hard to

ensure that Model Cities, and by extension his role at HUD, would not be marginalized.[19] He

deserves much of the credit for convincing HUD and Nixon's aides that Model Cities was not

hopelessly tainted by its connection to Johnson and could quite easily be employed for their own

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[16] Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, City of St. Louis, 1974, Folder 5: City Plan Commission - Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, copy 1, 1974, Series 1 Box 5, Badaracco Records, WUA.

[17] Pete Salsich, Interview with Author, June 12, 2017.

[18] Statement of Secretary George Romney, Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Joint Economic Committee, February 17, 1971, RG 207 Box 1, Nixon Library.

[19] See Chapter three, which discusses Floyd Hyde's efforts to retain Model Cities by altering the program to decrease residents' power. This chapter focuses on how the Nixon administration's altered Model Cities policies paved the way for Community Development Block Grants.

purposes. *The New York Times* labeled Hyde a "liberal," and some questioned whether he was a "closet Democrat;" but Hyde proved to be sharply attuned to federal priorities for urban policy and federal antipoverty spending.[20] As the former mayor of Fresno, California, Hyde believed Model Cities could symbolize Nixon's local control agenda.

Just a few weeks after Nixon's inauguration—and at the same time that Republican HUD officials were reckoning with St. Louis's resident-authored comprehensive plans—Floyd Hyde sent a memo to Secretary Romney positing options for Model Cities' future. He wrote, "for decades the Federal Government has undercut city government's authority by funding programs through independent agencies, special districts or other non-city institutions, thereby sapping city government's capacity and discouraging it from assuming responsibility." He concluded, "Model Cities can reverse this trend."[21] Almost a year later, Hyde sent a similar memo to White House aide John Ehrlichman, reiterating his stance on Model Cities and its potential function as a prototype for Nixon's domestic policy. Entitled "Model Cities Role in the 'New Federalism,'" Hyde argued that "what is needed is a clear recognition of the role that Model Cities can play in support of these Administration objectives, and a decision to utilize Model Cities for this purpose."[22] From the first days of Nixon's presidency, Undersecretary Hyde promoted Model Cities as an experimental program that should embody Nixon's response to the War on Poverty.

Hyde outlined how the Model Cities program could spearhead Nixon's call for decentralization of the federal government. He explained that Model Cities' purpose was to build

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[20] John Herbers, "Nixon Endorses Model Cities Aid with Local Rule, *The New York Times,* September 11, 1970; John Ellis, "Former Fresno Mayor, HUD official Floyd Hyde Dies at 95," *The Fresno Bee*, July 28, 2016. After about a year at HUD, Hyde resigned out of frustration that the Nixon administration did not prioritize urban policy (similar to George Romney). Before becoming the mayor of Fresno, Hyde attended Fresno State University and served in the Marine Corps during World War II. Hyde was a political newcomer when elected mayor in 1965.
[21] Memo from Floyd Hyde to George Romney, Subject: The Basic Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Model Cities Program and Its Future, February 8, 1969, WHCF SMOF Daniel Patrick Moynihan Box 72, Nixon Library.
[22] December 2, 1969 Memo from Floyd Hyde for John Ehrlichman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, the White House Subject: Model Cities Role in the "New Federalism," Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 48.

the capacity of local government to tackle their own problems without federal micromanaging: "as this [municipal] capacity is demonstrated (as monitored by way of the Model Cities process) the Federal government would eliminate its stringent 'paper' requirements [and] consolidate grant programs."[23] Hyde cast Model Cities as the bridge between inefficient Johnson-era categorical grants and the forward-thinking, locally-controlled New Federalism Nixon envisioned. If Hyde's rhetoric was not enough to convince Romney and Nixon, HUD Undersecretary Samuel Jackson provided another compelling reason. One Nixon aide explained that as a black man, "Jackson … feels very strongly that [Model Cities] is the one program that black and urban citizens see as the President's commitment to solving the urban problem."[24] Evoking the successive summers of urban violence, Daniel Patrick Moynihan warned Nixon, "the urban ghettos will go up in flames it you cut [Model Cities] out."[25] HUD officials' strong statements about Model Cities saved it from becoming a casualty of Nixon's political need to separate himself from the War on Poverty. Romney, however, offered a more tempered analysis of Model Cities, saying, "the program's goals are sound, but … there have been critical deficiencies in its administration which call for immediate correction."[26] Romney's HUD therefore opened the possibility of altering Model Cities in a way that would make the program the prototype of the New Federalism.

To formally study Model Cities and possibilities for its future, Nixon convened a task force. No members from the original Model Cities task force were included, and instead, conservative Harvard political scientist Edward Banfield was chosen to head the group. Banfield

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[23] December 2, 1969 Memo from Floyd Hyde for John Ehrlichman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, the White House Subject: Model Cities Role in the "New Federalism," Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 48.
[24] May 12, 1970 Memo for John Ehrlichman from Ed Harper Subject: Issues Between HUD and the Vice-President's Committee on School Desegregation; Nixon WHCF SMOF Edwin Harper Box 1.
[25] Fred Siegel, "Moynihan's Mistake and the Left's Shame," *City Journal*, April 3, 2015.
[26] Secretary Romney's Statement on Model Cities," *HUD News*, April 28, 1969, Nixon RG 207 Box 19, Nixon Library.

was a "critic of almost every mainstream liberal idea in domestic policy, especially the use of

Federal aid to help relieve urban poverty."[27] Shortly before joining the task force, Banfield

published a book entitled *The Unheavenly City*, an ode to culture-of-poverty logic in which he

argued that poor people were "radically improvident."[28] One of Banfield's readers declared,

"anyone who feels that urban blacks who speak of concentration camps and genocide are slightly

paranoic should read … Edward C. Banfield's forthcoming book." Another review claimed, "for

a further discussion of [Banfield's] ideas see 'Mein Kampf,' a work by another noted social

reformer."[29] Other task force members included Indianapolis's Republican mayor, conservative

policy professors, and municipal officials.[30] Nixon's picks indicated his desire to look critically

at every aspect of Model Cities before deciding the program's fate.

Banfield and the task force could have easily rejected Model Cities as an ill-conceived

program designed by liberals to coddle poor and black urban residents. But instead they

concluded, similar to Floyd Hyde, that weaknesses could be corrected with policies reflecting

Nixon's priorities. Banfield even titled the report "Model Cities: A Step Towards the New

Federalism," arguing that Model Cities and Nixon's priorities could be synchronized by

following his recommendations. Banfield pointed to inefficient federal bureaucracy as the main

culprit of Model Cities' problems. He found, "the federal government has tied too many strings

to the aid it has given. Over-regulation has led to waste and frustration." After detailing current

problems with Model Cities, Banfield transitioned to his overall assessment and

recommendations, saying the Model Cities process "compare[s] favorably with the general run

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[27] Richard Bernstein, "E.C. Banfield, 83, Maverick On Urban Policy Issues, Dies," *The New York Times*, October 8, 1999.
[28] Edward C. Banfield, *The Unheavenly City Revisited* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 143.
[29] Nixon RG 207 Banfield's Upcoming Book Finds Urban Remedies Failing," *Model Cities Technical Bulletin*, National League of Cities—United States Conference of Mayors, February 1970.
[30] The Report of The President's Task Force on Model Cities, Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 12.

of proposals being supported by other federal programs and by local governments. In short, the

model cities program is better than what went before." Further, "because it was designed to

reduce waste and increase efficiency by giving cities much greater freedom in deciding how

federal funds were to be used in poor neighborhoods, the model cities program was—in its

conception—a long step in the right direction." Banfield also criticized federal officials, saying

"the federal government did not fully live up to its promises. The program has been both over-

regulated and under-supported."[31]

In one critical way, Banfield's report revealed a rarely-articulated, anti-urban assumption

that crossed party lines: that low-income city neighborhoods were undesirable, regardless of their

physical condition. Whereas model neighborhood residents wanted to simultaneously upgrade

their physical environment and economic opportunities to stabilize their area's population, most

federal urban policy had a different aim, whether stated outright or not. Banfield explained, "the

potential contribution of the model cities program is in relieving immediate distress in the

poorest neighborhoods of the larger, older cities, in raising the level of amenity in these

neighborhoods, and in preparing the residents to get better jobs in other places eventually."[32]At

its core, Banfield's argument exuded anti-urbanism, assuming working-class urban

neighborhoods were inherently undesirable and simply should not exist.

To Banfield, as well as the architects of urban renewal in the late forties and early fifties,

federal assistance to cities was best spent either upgrading physical space to attract upper income

citizens or helping poor residents move away from areas with the highest concentration of

poverty and physical degradation. At the zenith of federal commitment to citizen participation,

officials embraced resident planning but quickly balked when this planning revealed residents'

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[31] The Report of The President's Task Force on Model Cities, Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 12, Nixon
Library.
[32] Ibid.

desires to upgrade their neighborhoods for themselves to create viable, thriving working-class

enclaves (see chapter 3). Banfield's admission that federal urban policy had always aimed to

create opportunities for middle- to upper- class Americans, combined with the Nixon

administration's alterations to Model Cities, revealed a crucial continuity in federal urban policy,

spanning decades and political ideology. There was little federal desire to improve a

neighborhood for the poor residents currently living there. Instead, federal officials were more

interested in either urban renewal-style projects that appealed to upper-income consumers or

economic uplift opportunities that would enable recipients a chance to move out of the most

depressed neighborhoods. It was residents who offered a substantially different view when they

called for neighborhood-run programs to improve physical space in concert with residents'

economic status, to stabilize the population rather than cause large demographic shifts.

Therefore, the Nixon administration's changes to Model Cities and the transition to CDBGs

exposed the cavernous disconnect between the federal agenda for cities and residents' desires.[33]

With Floyd Hyde's boosterism and Edward Banfield's moderate approval, by 1971

Model Cities was well on its way to being one of the most important tools to sell the New

Federalism's decreased national oversight of community development programs.[34] As discussed

in chapter three, the most important way Nixon's HUD molded Model Cities to its agenda was

by clarifying that mayors, not residents, had to control Model Cities. A 1970 HUD briefing to

Nixon's Urban Affairs Council explained, "we have altered the character of the program we

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[33] Residents' visions also offered a potential method for avoiding gentrification. By simultaneously improving residents' economic position alongside the physical status of a neighborhood, population could stabilize rather than turn over.

[34] Urban programs post-Model Cities refer frequently to the concept of community development, an amorphous term that has come to encompass a wide range of activities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines community development as "activities [to] build stronger and more resilient communities through an ongoing process of identifying and addressing needs, assets, and priority investments." Community development includes physical improvement, social services, better-functioning local government, and citizen involvement. https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment.

inherited a year ago, and have begun to implement the New Federalism with legislation already on the books with a program already in being."[35] The connection between Model Cities and the New Federalism could not have been clearer: now that control of the program was with mayors, where Nixon officials argued it always belonged, Model Cities was an experiment for Nixon's plans to alter the way federal money funneled into local government: block grants.

In addition to giving preference to mayoral power, the Nixon administration tested several funding and organizational options with the explicit purpose of finding new ways to transfer control of federal grant dollars to city halls. In mid-1971 Secretary Romney announced a series of "planned variations" in which HUD deregulated several aspects of Model Cities for twenty municipalities. Some cities chose to expand their model neighborhoods to the entire city. Another option was to drastically reduce federal review of plans, giving cities very little oversight.[36] St. Louis did not participate in the planned variations, possibly because the city's lingering commitment to citizen participation made it a poor testing ground for stronger mayoral control. Federal officials made sure to publicize the relationship between these planned variation experiments and future urban development legislation. Secretary Romney explained, "in the case of the elimination of federal reviews, it will give us a better opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the block grant … because in these test cities we'll get closer to those methods of operation."[37] To Nixon officials, analyses of the Model Cities planned variations proved the efficacy of the New Federalism generally and block grants specifically.

Many mayors in planned variations cities heralded the program, but model neighborhood residents saw through federal rhetoric and voiced objections. In its application to become a

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[35] Nixon WHCF SMOF John Price Box 24, February 27, 1970, HUD Briefing to the Urban Affairs Council on Model Cities.
[36] Statement by George Romney, Planned Variation Program, July 29, 1971, Nixon RG 207 Box 16.
[37] September 30, 1970 Secretary George Romney: Joint News Conference with Secretary Elliott Richardson on Reshaping of Model Cities Program Approach, Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 48.

planned variation city, Portland, Maine's Mayor explained, "we would most welcome an opportunity to experiment without detailed Federal review."[38] On the other hand, residents in Dayton, Ohio, where federal studies reported similar initial levels of citizen participation as St. Louis, told HUD, "the proposed citizen participation structure [for the Planned Variation] suffers from … infirmities … The structure, as set forth, would create fragmented citizen participation and could only increase competition within and among several neighborhoods within the city."[39] Dayton residents predicted that expanding Model Cities to the entire municipality and decreasing federal oversight would lead to a competition between resident groups for finite resources and influence. A federal analysis of planned variations showed that residents were correct: there was a decrease in Dayton's carefully-crafted and hard-won Model Cities resident power. A 1972 survey reported, "the proportion of program funds devoted to citizen participation has decreased by more than 25 percent under planned variations."[40] This trend continued during block grants.[41]

Through planned variations, the transformation of Model Cities, both functionally and in the minds of officials, was complete. In 1972, President Nixon stated, "the Planned Variation is a … successful [testing ground] for some of the new initiatives of this Administration and an essential part of the underpinning for our [New Federalism] programs."[42] Planned variation mayors proudly connected their programs to federal priorities. "As of this moment,"

[38] Letter from John Sturgis to Floyd Hyde, November 6, 1970, Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 48.

[39] Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (July 1969): 216–35. Arnstein labeled the citizen participation mechanisms in St. Louis and Dayton as "delegated power," in which "citizens hold the significant cards to assure accountability of the program to them. To resolve differences, powerholders need to start the bargaining process." Letter from George Washington, Chairman of Model Cities Planning Council of Dayton, Inc. to Dayton City Manager, Subject: Response to question on proposed Program Planning Variation, November 3, 1970, Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 48, Nixon Library.

[40] Community Development Evaluation Series No. 7: Planned Variations: First Year Survey, October 1972, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Nixon RG 207 Box 2, Nixon Library.

[41] This diffusion of resident participation and influence is analyzed later in this chapter.

[42] White House Statement by the President, August 18, 1972, Nixon WHCF SMOF Charles Clapp Box 48, Nixon Library.

Indianapolis's mayor declared, "the Model Cities program is the new federalism."[43] Nixon officials used Model Cities to prove that municipal leaders were ready for more control over grant money. The next step was to codify this system in block grant legislation that would outlast the experimental nature of Model Cities.

The Creation of Community Development Block Grants

The CDBG legislation enacted in 1974 combined eight categorical grant programs into one block grant administered by HUD: urban renewal, Model Cities, water and sewer facilities, open spaces, neighborhood facilities, historic preservation, rehabilitation loans, and public facility loans.[44] The purpose was not to allocate substantially more federal dollars to urban redevelopment, but rather to consolidate the money from these existing separate programs so that cities were freer to spend this money on their own priorities. Each year, cities would submit a short application to explain how they would use their money. To ensure efficiency, the law stipulated that HUD had only seventy-five days to review an application, after which it was automatically funded.[45] Gone were the requirements for heavily detailed plans and extended revision periods that obstructed residents' momentum in the late sixties.

Citizen participation requirements were also written into the legislation. The Nixon administration jettisoned the open-to-interpretation language of "maximum feasible participation" and "widespread resident participation." Instead, cities simply had to announce

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[43] Letter from Richard Lugar to John Ehrlichman, July 20, 1970, Nixon WHCF Subject Files LG Box 2, Nixon Library.

[44] This act was in fact President Nixon's third attempt at passing this kind of legislation. Letter from James Lynn to Wilfred Rommel, August 21, 1974, Folder: 8/22/74 S3066 Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (2), White House Records Office Legislative Case Files Box 3, Gerald Ford Presidential Library. This document explains, "Title I of S. 3066 had its origins in the proposed Urban Community Development Revenue Sharing Act of 1971 … Updated and improved in early 1973, the Administration made a second proposal—the Better Communities Act."

[45] "Community Development Block Grant Program: Directory of Allocations for Fiscal Year 1975," Department of Housing and Urban Development, September 1975.

"information about the program to citizens, [hold] at least two public hearings, [and provide] for 'adequate' citizen participation" to fulfill the requirements.[46] These bare-bones guidelines would make resident influence almost impossible.

Figure 6: The federal government highlighted the amount of paperwork required for categorical applications (the first and third pile) compared to a city's CDBG paper trail. Though the problem of too much paper work was very real in categorical programs, federal officials used the goal of efficiency to strip assurances of resident influence over programs affecting their neighborhoods.[47]

Instead of competing for money, as was the case in Model Cities, urban counties would be entitled to money using a predetermined formula based on population, overcrowded housing, and the extent of poverty (which was given double weight). Supplemental to this formula was a "hold-harmless" provision, ostensibly to ensure that cities used to receiving categorical grants would not suffer debilitating funding cuts if the CDBG formula allocated less money to them. The hold-harmless provision would decrease gradually so that in a few years all recipients, regardless of their experience with categorical grants, would be allocated funds based on the standard formula. St. Louis, for example, received $3 million more in the first year of CDBGs

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[46] Brookings Institution, Richard P. Nathan, and United States, eds., "Block Grants for Community Development: First Report on the Brookings Institution Monitoring Study of the Community Development Block Grant Program," (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 1977).

[47] Program Requirements, Folder: CDBG, 1975-1978 (1), Box 6, David Meeker Papers, Gerald Ford Presidential Library.

than it would have without the hold-harmless provision.[48] The idea was that these funding

entitlements would increase efficiency, since cities would not have to spend significant man-

hours crafting proposals to compete for a limited number of grants.

The Nixon administration's criticism of bloated federal government was effective;

support for deregulation and transferring control to local government transcended party

affiliation. Some mayors, including Democrats, vocally supported the New Federalism and block

grants. The National League of Cities staunchly advocated for the legislation.[49] In 1971, the

Nixon administration compiled reactions to the concept of revenue sharing, which would

eventually be encapsulated in the CDBG legislation.[50] Many organizations, including some labor

unions and civil rights groups, expressed interest in the concept but worried about potential civil

rights violations due to decreased federal oversight. The NAACP "called upon Congress to reject

President Nixon's revenue sharing plan unless it provides 'workable safeguards against racial

discrimination in the distribution and utilization of public funds.'" The Nixon administration

concluded that "the [NAACP] board's action … was not against the principle of revenue sharing,

but against the absence of any federal requirements of spending the funds." The NAACP bought

into Nixon's plan, as long as civil rights law was upheld. The Urban League similarly expressed

pause about block grants, saying "black people remain rightfully suspicious of the diversion of

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[48] "Community Development Block Grant Program: Directory of Allocations for Fiscal Year 1975," Department of Housing and Urban Development, September 1975. Richard DeLeon and Richard Le Gates, "Community Development Block Grants: Redistribution Effects and Equity Issues," *Urban Lawyer* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 364–402. Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, City of St. Louis, 1974, Folder 5: City Plan Commission - Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, copy 1, 1974, Series 1 Box 5, Badaracco Records, WUA. The hold-harmless provision averaged the last three years of funding to determine the amount of money a city would initially receive. Each subsequent year, this money would decrease until a city was receiving the amount it was allocated based on the general formula based on population, housing stock, and poverty.
[49] "40 Years Later, Why Advocating for CDBG Still Matters," http://www.nlc.org/article/40-years-later-why-advocating-for-cdbg-still-matters, August 13, 2014.
[50] Though revenue sharing differs somewhat from block grants, their purpose is fundamentally the same: to decrease federal oversight and increase local control over federal money. For this dissertation, these differences are less important than the change from federal oversight in Model Cities to CDBGs.

funds from grants-in-aid programs regulated by the federal government in favor of relatively unrestrictive grants to local governments with a long history of discrimination and callousness towards the poor and the black." However, the group also endorsed the overall concept.[51]

But civil rights organizations that catered specifically to poorer populations saw through the New Federalism, correctly predicting that federal deregulation would enable localities to avoid using antipoverty money to aid the neediest populations. The National Tenants Organization explained that revenue sharing "is dangerously deceptive. Under the banner of 'consolidation and simplification' the administration presents a bill which … allows and encourages the perversion of housing subsidies intended for the poor to substantially wealthier and far less needy families." As a group concerned with poor tenants' ability to control public housing policy, the National Tenants Organization knew Nixon's New Federalism intentionally decreased the national government's ability to ensure federal dollars went to the neediest residents. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights also firmly opposed "the administration's revenue sharing proposals because they would neither strengthen the fiscal situation of states and localities nor improve the relationship between people and their government."[52]

Even model neighborhood residents in St. Louis saw the danger in revenue sharing. One activist explained to her neighbors that revenue sharing's "nature and intent is not yet clear, but experts say, 'It doesn't look good.'" She knew "it will be up to the residents in the community to demand 'citizen' participation' in Revenue Sharing in order to get the most out of their tax

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[51] Memo, August 23, 1971, RG 207 HUD Subject Files Van Dusen Box 13, National Archives.
[52] Ibid.; Ronald Lawson, ed., *The Tenant Movement in New York City, 1904-1984* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), chapter 5. The National Tenant Organization was created in 1969, and its membership was mostly public housing tenants. The purpose of the organization was to increase the collective power of tenants and enact policy change.

dollars."[53] These individuals and groups believed the discussion of federal deregulation was

merely a distraction; what was most needed was more money and neighborhood control, not

changes to federal funding.

President Gerald Ford signed the $8.4 billion CDBG legislation in August 1974.[54] The

bill was extremely popular, winning unanimous approval in the Senate and a 377-21 vote in the

House of Representatives.[55] It was the culmination of five years of Republican efforts to

streamline federal funding to localities while simultaneously ceding control to municipal

governments. Explaining the import of this law, President Ford stated, "this bill will help to

return power from the banks of the Potomac to people in their own communities. Decisions will

be made at the local level. Action will come at the local level. And responsibility for results will

be placed squarely where it belongs--at the local level."[56] At the signing ceremony, Ford called

block grants "the most significant community development legislation since the 1949 [Housing]

act."[57] Model Cities was officially over, replaced by a program that remains a main mechanism

through which federal money flows to urban neighborhoods.

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[53] Helen Floyd, "The Creation of Model Cities or (The Model Cities Process)," *Citizen Participation- newspaper* Volume 1 Number 1 St. Louis January 1973, Folder: Model Cities-November 1972, Series 2 Box 56, Mayor Cervantes Records, WUA.

[54] Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/93/s3066/text; William Frej and Harry Specht, "The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974: Implications for Policy and Planning," *Social Service Review* 50, no. 2 (1976): 275–92. This act combined Urban Renewal, Model Cities, Neighborhood Facilities grants, Water and Sewer grants, Open Space-Urban Beautification, Historic Preservation grants, Public Facilities loans, and Rehabilitation loans. The bill authorized $2.5 billion for 1975, with a total of $8.4 billion to be distributed through 1977.

[55] "Want to Slash Anti-Poverty Programs? Turn Them Into Block Grants," https://democrats-waysandmeans.house.gov/media-center/blog/want-slash-anti-poverty-programs-turn-them-block-grants, accessed April 18, 2017.

[56] Gerald R. Ford: "Statement on the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.," August 22, 1974. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4632.

[57] Gerald R. Ford: "Remarks on Signing the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.," August 22, 1974. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4620. Ford was referencing the 1949 Housing Act that established federal urban renewal funding.

CDBGs and the fate of Citizen Participation

In 1975, the first year CDBGs were given out, 2,484 localities were granted funds, many for the first time, for a total of $2.5 billion. The legally-mandated citizen participation merely required cities to hold two public hearings and provide "adequate" citizen participation.[58] From 1974-1977 the Brookings Institute examined how CDBGs differed from past federal funding programs.[59] Brookings chose sixty-two locations to examine, including St. Louis.[60] Research associates, many of whom were professors, traveled to field assignments to gather information, which was then compiled by six Brookings analysts. St. Louis's analyst directed St. Louis University's Center for Urban programs and had experience with Model Cities as an advocate planner and a program evaluator.[61] The Brookings Institute previously studied Model Cities and Community Action Programs, and their analysis highlighted how experience with these programs influenced citizen participation and CDBG priorities. An analysis of the Brookings Institute's report on CDBGs reveals the legacies of Model Cities and trends for citizen participation in federal urban antipoverty programs.[62] They found that federal deregulation in the name of efficiency resulted in divestment from poor neighborhoods and the silencing of citizen voices. CDBGs gutted roles for resident organizations around the country.

The Brookings Institute compared citizen participation in Model Cities and CDBGs, and while methodological issues weakened their discussion, their results still indicated clear trends. The most glaring problem was that field researchers did not talk with residents. Their definition

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[58] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

[59] Ibid. The Brookings Institute began in 1916 as the Institute for Government Research. Its mission is to conduct public policy research. https://www.brookings.edu/about-us/.

[60] Brookings chose these cities and urban counties to be representative of the country. The sample included both municipalities that had and had not participated in Model Cities.

[61] The Papers of George Wendel, the Brooking Institute's analyst for St. Louis, are housed at the St. Louis University Archives.

[62] The Brookings Institute's prior research made them particularly interested in tracking several topics from Model Cities to CDBGs, including citizen participation, the amount of funding that went directly to the poorest urban areas, and the changes in who wielded power over this federal money.

of citizen participation was also flawed. They measured citizen participation as "the entire process by which organized groups and individual citizens are informed about the program and/or participated in preparing the grant application." Merely keeping residents informed was certainly not the original intent of citizen participation. For residents active in the War on Poverty, this was a huge downgrade. Finally, no good analysis of Model Cities citizen participation was conducted.[63] Despite these problems, the Brookings report still captured important changes to citizen participation that solidified into common practice for decades.[64] As CDBGs funded the continuation of some Model Cities initiatives, they also codified the gradual decline of funding for these programs and the waning commitment to resident influence.

The Brookings Institute framed its research on citizen participation with the following questions: "How has the CDBG program affected citizen participation?" and "how has citizen participation influenced the CDBG program?" To tackle these queries, researchers gauged how seriously municipalities viewed resident participation. They expressed moderate surprise at municipalities' willingness to accommodate some citizen participation, especially because they had observed "what was widely regarded, at best, as a widespread uneasiness among local officials with comparable requirements under previous federal programs." Cities had become used to federally-mandated resident involvement through CAPs and Model Cities.[65]

But at the very time when cities accepted federally-mandated citizen participation, the federal government abandoned their commitment to resident influence. Many municipalities asked the federal government for clearer citizen participation guidelines for CDBGs, likely

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[63] Model Cities Program, [1975-1976?], Bernard Frieden and Marshall Kaplan, "Community Development and the Model Cities Legacy," Civil Rights Digest, Spring 1977, David Meeker Papers Box 5, Richard Nixon Library. This study finds that "reputable evaluations of local impact were never made. Unfortunately, we must rely only on anecdote."
[64] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.
[65] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

because citizen participation rules had center stage in previous federal grant programs.[66] HUD declined, citing their desire for decentralized autonomy in CDBGs, and "thus it preserved for local governments a broad discretionary responsibility for citizen participation." Despite the obvious decrease in federal interest for citizen participation, "officials in the overwhelming majority of the sample jurisdictions … viewed citizen participation as an important part of the application process and not merely a formality." In contrast, of the cities Brookings studied, the ten localities that were new to federally-funded community development programs did not take citizen participation seriously. If nothing else, cities' prior experience with Model Cities and other federal antipoverty programs made them open to some level of resident influence.[67]

Researchers also compared the characteristics of citizen participation in previous federal programs—primarily Model Cities—with resident involvement in CDBGs. The report noted that in most cases, including St. Louis, the resident groups that had been involved with Model Cities also wanted a role in CDBGs. Brookings investigators claimed that most resident groups in Model Cities "were very influential in shaping program activities." While this was an overstatement—St. Louis had one of the most robust citizen participation components, and resident influence declined sharply after initial neighborhood plans were submitted—in comparison to CDBGs, citizen participation in Model Cities was "very influential." The report explained that with CDBGs "Model cities groups not only lost their legally mandated role in decisionmaking for community development; most of these groups now … were forced to compete with many new groups for a share of program expenditures." This was the exact problem Dayton residents warned against. Brookings seemed unsurprised to report that "in most

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[66] Recall from chapter one that in Model Cities, HUD required almost every single first-round applicant to rework citizen participation plans to increase resident influence.
[67] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

cases … model cities groups were unhappy about their role under the CDBG program."[68] The federal policy of decreased citizen control that started mid-way through Model Cities reached a culmination in CDBGs. The resident groups that had been active within the Model Cities context suddenly had to compete with resident groups throughout their cities, due to the expanded boundaries of CDBGs. The result was that poor residents, the original population to be given a voice through federally-mandated citizen participation, lost influence.

In Cleveland, for example, CDBGs led to more overall resident participation in terms of the number of individual citizens involved, but the influence of model neighborhood residents decreased. The city's field researcher explained, "Model cities representatives seemed frustrated by the citizen participation mechanism. The model cities participation organization had an annual budget of $1.1 million, a large staff, and a history of assertiveness." Model Cities residents "expected the CDBG program to function in the same way with an autonomous, funded citizen participation mechanism." However, "the Cleveland city administration and the community development department … had no intention, they said, of continuing the model cities approach to citizen participation." Cleveland's experience showed that federal citizen participation mandates guaranteed a heightened level of resident control in Model Cities. Cleveland's model neighborhood residents called the CDBG citizen participation procedures "illegal" and a "sham," but their charges fell on deaf ears.[69]

To answer the Brookings Institute's second query about the influence of citizen participation on CDBGs, researchers tried to measure the extent to which resident involvement forced changes to CDBG plans written by city officials. In several places, the report noted that municipalities with Model Cities experience tended to have a higher percentage of CDBG funds

[68] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.
[69] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

allocated to programs geared specifically to low-and moderate-income groups. Similarly, "where effective citizens' groups are organized around demands relating to low and moderate-income concerns and where public officials are sympathetic to these demands, benefits to them tended to be higher than in communities where this is not the case."[70] Though the Model Cities-era value of resident empowerment was gone, its effects were still being felt, if increasingly faintly.

Another crucial factor was the *way* residents could participate. In the early Model Cities years, there was an emphasis on participation through community organizations. Around the country, federal officials encouraged relationships between municipal governments and formal resident groups. In St. Louis, the result was that five resident corporations drafted the comprehensive plans for the model neighborhood. Though their power diminished in the seventies, resident organizations remained the main vehicle through which citizens participated in Model Cities. With this history in mind, Brookings researchers predicted that municipalities with formal, experienced citizen participation groups would be most amenable to changing CDBG plans to include resident suggestions.

Instead, researchers were surprised to find that "the citizen participation format that most often was associated with significant influence was public hearings plus neighborhood meetings." Resident organizations were not influencing how cities spent CDBG money. Instead, individuals expressing their opinions in public meetings had more influence over plans. The era of formal citizen influence through resident organizations was over. Residents could show up to informational meetings and serve on planning boards, but opportunities to pool their influence through neighborhood organizations diminished.

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[70] Ibid.

Activities in Portland, Maine revealed how citizens lost collective power. In Portland, "previous experience with citizen involvement in the form of the citizens' advisory committee has been notoriously distasteful for the council." As a planned variation city, Portland took advantage of the decreased federal review process to disempower resident groups in Model Cities, and "under CDBG, neighborhood meetings and surveys presented an opportunity for city officials to generate broad citizen involvement without creating an ongoing organization with which the council would have to deal." Portland's government neutralized residents' ability to demand significant changes to the CDBG application by eliminating any role for community groups. The Brookings Institute concluded "local officials were supportive of citizen participation because they had the opportunity to control it and to use it as they saw fit."[71]

Crucially, resident participation led to only minor changes to CDBG programs: "in the majority of jurisdictions where citizen participation was judged to be influential to a limited extent, what was often involved was persuading local officials to make relatively small changes in the draft application." One researcher called these alterations "little political plums." By making small concessions to individual citizens, such as the elimination of a proposed bike path or the shifting of some funds from street cleaning to recreation facilities, local governments could claim citizen participation was alive and well at the same time that resident-controlled institutions were losing their collective power over city planning.[72]

This marginalization of resident organizations had serious consequences for CDBGs. Without resident organizations to provide a unified voice against policies that would be detrimental to poor neighborhoods, cities were free to ignore resident demands. In Chicago, "some community organizations sought background information relevant to the community

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[71] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.
[72] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

development program and experienced great difficulties and at best long delays in obtaining that information." Further, "by releasing information only when they wanted to, local officials in Chicago hindered the citizen participation process."[73]

Even more striking, Cleveland residents organized to change their city's CDBG plan for crime control. They hoped to reallocate funding for police officers' salaries to the construction of two fire stations. The city refused. Historian Daniel Kerr traced the results of the lack of fire-fighting infrastructure in Cleveland, showing that the city let arson to go unchecked in poor areas because it was cheaper to allow buildings to burn down, rather than pay for demolition of unsound structures.[74] In Cleveland, therefore, diminished citizen participation in CDBGs facilitated the literal burning down of poor neighborhoods. Model Cities had at least encouraged the creation of citizen organizations and mandated that city governments work with these groups. By focusing on individual rather than collective participation in CDBGs, the federal government signaled its intent to deny resident institutions the power they had fought for tooth and nail.

St. Louis residents' experiences with citizen participation in CDBGs proved to be no exception. The St. Louis Community Development Agency (CDA) established a thirty-nine-member Citizens Advisory Committee. Two members from each of eighteen newly created "planning districts," as well as one person from each of two urban renewal project areas, were chosen by the mayor. Only a few individuals active in Model Cities, such as Louise Reeves of Grace Hill Settlement House and John Fedrick of the Yeatman neighborhood, were on the Committee. The committee's jobs were to host the federally-mandated public hearings and

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Daniel Kerr, "Who Burned Cleveland, Ohio," in *Flammable Cities: Urban Conflagration and the Making of the Modern World*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

review CDBG plans.[75] One resident who spoke at a public hearing for first-year CDBG allocations "hoped the north side would get its fair share of" community development money.[76] The Citizens Advisory Committee reviewed all the funding proposals and ranked their priorities. Some model neighborhood organizations submitted proposals for CDBG funding, in a manner similar to Model Cities. Jeff-Vander-Lou requested $83,000 to make a comprehensive plan for its area, and Montgomery-Hyde Park requested money to continue its Model Cities rental and homeownership programs.[77] Neither project was funded.

The city claimed to take residents' wishes seriously in CDBG planning, but residents, especially those who cut their teeth in Model Cities, objected that the city was not truly following neighborhood suggestions. At a July 1975 CDBG planning meeting, CDA staff assured attendees that "recommendations [for projects] are based on citizen input and rating of priorities." Louise Reeves disagreed, "not[ing] that she was a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee and attended every meeting. She expressed the opinion that the eight items listed on the agenda were not consistent with all the top priorities in the list received by members of the Citizens Advisory Committee." Citizens cited several project proposals the Citizens Advisory Committee rated highly that had been discarded. Other projects, like a footbridge in South City, were funded instead of "projects [a]ffecting human beings—what people want are projects to stimulate employment and improve housing conditions in neighborhoods." Overall, Reeves "stated that she felt the Citizens Advisory Committee rating had not been followed to the letter

[75] Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, City of St. Louis, 1974, Folder 5: City Plan Commission - Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, copy 1, 1974, Series 1 Box 5, Badaracco Records, WUA.
[76] Minutes of the Third Public Hearing on Community Development, November 22, 1974, Folder 1: Community Development Agency - Block Grant, November 1974, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA.
[77] Summary of Proposal Submitted by Macler C. Shepard, president of Jeff-Vander-Lou, Incorporated, District 14, December 20, 1974, Folder 1: Community Development Agency - Block Grant, November 1974, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA. Summary of Proposal Submitted by James T. Atkins, for the Montgomery-Hyde Park Community Center, December 20, 1974, Folder 1: Community Development Agency - Block Grant, November 1974, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA.

and that other projects have been included in the top priority ratings." At the end of the meeting, the CDBG package was voted on and passed without amendment.[78]

Seemingly innocuous federal legislation aimed at simplifying bureaucracy choked poor residents' ability to advocate for themselves. The Brookings Institute rightly called federal grant programs "transfers of power." In the name of efficiency and increased local control, the federal government facilitated a decline in resident power through explicit federal policies and municipalities' freedom to conduct CDBG programs as they saw fit. CDBGs codified this decreased and non-influential citizen participation that persists today. As their influence waned, citizens had less motivation to show up to public hearings. Stephen Acree, who worked for the city of St. Louis starting in the 1980s, noted that there has been very little citizen participation in CDBG planning in the last thirty years. He explained, "community participation would be posting a meeting notice and … two people showing up … So you could say, 'well we posted a notice, but nobody showed up' [and] fulfill your legal requirement."[79] With formal influence gone, St. Louis residents felt attending public hearings was not a productive use of time.

"The Spreading Effect": St. Louis Embodies National Funding Trends

St. Louis's CDBG spending patterns mirrored national trends: CDBGs slowly strangled Model Cities programs that focused squarely on alleviating poverty and instead funneled that money to programs for wealthier neighborhoods. The Brookings Institute confirmed that the stated purpose of the hold-harmless provision protected the money local governments received

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[78] Joint Meeting of the Development Ad Hoc and Budget Ad Hoc Committees of the Community Development Commission, July 22, 1975, Folder 5: Community Development Agency - Development, 1975-1976, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA.

[79] Stephen Acree, Interview with Author, March 29, 2017. Acree is now the executive director of Rise, a St. Louis nonprofit whose mission is to improve St. Louis neighborhoods. Acree cited more recent community development projects that have yielded higher rates of citizen participation.

through previous federal programs, including Model Cities. They estimated that in 1975, 90% or $1.9 billion of CDBG money went to hold-harmless funds. Therefore, in CDBG's first year of funding, cities that had previously received federal antipoverty money did not experience sudden or drastic funding cuts, allowing CDBG advocates to claim the program would not harm the poor. St. Louis was allocated $15,196,000 for its first CDBG year, and without the hold-harmless provision it would have received $3 million less.[80]

But crucially, while the hold-harmless provision staved off sudden cuts to cities, over time the policy proved to be pernicious. The hold-harmless stipulation would be gradually phased out, but "it is apparent at the outset that cities having extensive experience in [previous federal antipoverty] programs are most likely to be disadvantaged under an allocation system that redistributes the funds to a larger number of recipients," especially because there was "only a comparatively small increase in the amount being distributed." Even more problematic, there would be "a substantial decrease in the advantage to central cities. Central cities are the largest category of metropolitan area recipients in dollar terms, but their relative share of total metropolitan fund is reduced significantly from the hold-harmless base period."[81] Another study found that 90% of Model Cities recipients were "phase down" cities whose funds would decrease.[82] As funding years progressed, this disadvantage to poor cities would become more pronounced. By 1980, "the projections … indicate losses in the aggregate of more than $300 million, with the central cities' share of total funds declining from 71.8 percent to 42.4 percent."

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[80] Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, City of St. Louis, 1974, Folder 5: City Plan Commission - Guide to the Use of Community Development Block Grants, copy 1, 1974, Series 1 Box 5, Badaracco Records, WUA.

[81] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

[82] Richard DeLeon and Richard Le Gates, "Community Development Block Grants: Redistribution Effects and Equity Issues," *Urban Lawyer* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 364–402.

Wealthier regions in the South and West would benefit most from the allocation plan.[83] The

hold-harmless provision, ostensibly created to protect urban programs previously funded through

Model Cities and other federal grants, set the stage for a gradual disinvestment from the poorest

cities and neighborhoods.

Brookings suggested several ways to mitigate the defunding in the most distressed cities.

The researchers estimated that an additional $500 million in supplemental CDBG funds for the

poorest cities would be needed to make programs in the neediest areas successful.[84] Another

analysis found that tweaks to the funding allocation formula would not yield a substantive

redistribution of CDBG money. Instead, an entirely different funding metric was necessary to

ensure the neediest urban areas received the most funding.[85] Without significant changes, the

proportion of money allocated to the poorest neighborhoods would decline.

Separate from funding formulas, the freedom individual municipalities and urban

counties had to spend their CDBG money was a second reason CDBGs decreased the amount of

federal money dedicated to the poorest urban areas. This local independence was the hallmark of

Nixon's New Federalism, but the Brookings Institute described a worrisome "spreading effect."

Whereas Model Cities grants were dedicated to specific high-poverty neighborhoods, CDBGs

could be used for projects all around a municipality.[86] The CDBG legislation stipulated

"maximum feasible priority to activities which will benefit low and moderate-income families or

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[83] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Richard DeLeon and Richard Le Gates, "Community Development Block Grants: Redistribution Effects and Equity Issues," *Urban Lawyer* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 364–402. The funding formula used population, housing age, and a double weight of poverty, to determine allocations to cities. This study found that even if the poverty level was given twenty times the weight (instead of twice), this would change allocation levels only slightly. Instead, this study suggested a formula based on the *proportion* of a city's population living in poverty.

[86] In theory, this change should have been the logical extension of Model Cities, for the vision was always that programs tested in the model neighborhood would eventually be expanded to the rest of the city. However, because of underfunding, this policy diluted money going to poor communities.

aid in the prevention of slums and blight."[87] But by including the *prevention* of neighborhood deterioration, the bill's authors intentionally widened the geographic scope of CDBGs, for cities could argue that almost any area was in danger of becoming blighted.[88] Further, whereas the Model Cities legislation limited model neighborhoods to ten percent of the city's area, CDBGs contained no such stipulation. This key difference allowed municipalities to designate large "poverty" areas and then siphon monies away from the poorest, neediest areas.[89]

The spreading effect was not a byproduct of the CDBG legislation, but rather, it reflected Republicans' political and geographic priorities. Historians including Matthew Lassiter, Lisa McGirr, and Robert Self have documented the ways Republican politicians and grassroots conservatives focused their attention on rapidly growing, mostly white suburbs, especially in the South and West.[90] Nixon's "silent majority," Lassiter points out, was imagined as white suburbanites who wanted maintain suburban segregation. He notes that Nixon, "called suburban families the Forgotten Americans, and then the Silent Majority, and finally the new American Majority … These labels represented a suburban strategy designed to conceal class divisions among white voters."[91] It is no surprise, then, that the core of Nixon's urban policy, CDBGs, allowed for the spreading of federal urban antipoverty money away from city centers to Republicans' suburban constituency.

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[87] "Housing and Community Development Act of 1974,"
https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Housing-and-Community-Development-Act-1974.pdf.
[88] In *Mapping Decline*, Colin Gordon details the ways municipalities and neighborhoods were declared blighted in order to receive tax incentives and federal assistance. Commonly, applications cited the threat of future blight as justification for the receipt of CDBGs and other federal funds. This was not an issue with the Model Cities Program.
[89] Brookings Institution, "Block Grants for Community Development," 1977.
[90] For accounts of conservatives' increasing focus on suburbs in the sixties and seventies, see Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Robert Self, *All in the Family*.
[91] Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority,* 5.

Even cities that wanted to continue allocating money to their poorest neighborhoods faced barriers. One evaluation of Model Cities found, "a number of mayors acknowledged … that without federally imposed performance criteria, they would not have been able (politically) to spend as much as they did in poverty neighborhoods." With stringent federal criteria, private developers had a harder time pressuring mayors to move money out of the poorest neighborhoods. This report found that "Model Cities ground rules provided a shelter, permitting [mayors] to share responsibility with HUD for monies spent in poverty areas."[92] Without these federal mandates, it was much easier for private business interests to exert pressure on city halls to prioritize projects that only tangentially related to antipoverty efforts. CDBGs allowed corporations to use antipoverty money to maximize their profit.

The Brookings Institute also tracked the fate of specific Model Cities initiatives, concluding that CDBGs ensured the continuation of many Model Cities programs in the short-term while simultaneously setting up their gradual demise. Without CDBGs, many Model Cities programs would likely have been cut immediately. The report found, "often activities in the most distressed neighborhoods … have been continued, but at a lower level, as this spreading effect has taken hold." Other researchers found an important discrepancy in spending patterns between cities whose funding was set to increase and decrease through the CDBG hold-harmless formula. They predicted that "cities [whose funding would increase] will likely prove unresponsive to most pressing urban problems in view of the relative political conservatism of their electorates." These cities funded projects that would not lower poverty levels or increase affordable housing.[93]

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[92] Model Cities Program, [1975-1976], Bernard Frieden and Marshall Kaplan, "Community Development and the Model Cities Legacy," Civil Rights Digest, Spring 1977, David Meeker Papers Box 5, Gerald Ford Presidential Library.
[93] Richard DeLeon and Richard Le Gates, "Community Development Block Grants: Redistribution Effects and Equity Issues," *Urban Lawyer* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 364–402.

Activities in St. Louis mirrored the Brookings Institute's national findings. Reports on the first three years of CDBGs revealed spending patterns sharply different from residents' Model Cities priorities. To plan and administer CDBGs, the CDA allocated St. Louis's $15 million grant to a variety of neighborhood centers and programs, but the largest sums of money were dedicated to initiatives that looked like conventional urban renewal. The CDA explained that "the area where most CDBG Funds have been concentrated is around the new Convention Center." The city allocated over six million dollars to construct the downtown convention center over three years.[94] Though technically this project overlapped with the Carr-Central neighborhood, the "program was initiated to develop commercial and industrial land in and around the Convention Plaza area."[95] As discussed in chapter 4, Carr-Central residents had not mentioned a convention center in their comprehensive plans, and the CDBG allocations did not provide funds for the improved housing Carr-Central wanted. One study found that 46.3% of CDBG funds went to the convention center, LaSalle Park Urban Renewal, redevelopment of the Washington University Medical Center, and Maryland Plaza. Aside from the convention center, none of the projects were anywhere near the model neighborhood.[96] The map below illustrates this spreading, as only two location-specific physical development projects occurred in the model neighborhood, one of which was for an industrial park (numbers 2 and 3 on the map).

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[94] "Project Status Report: Community Development Block Grant Program June 1975-June 1977." City of St. Louis Community Development Agency, July 1977.

[95] Memo from Dale Ruthsatz to Citizens' Advisory Committee, February 18, 1974, Series 1 Box 5, Joseph Badaracco Papers WUA. Community Development Program Work Program: Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority, Folder 4: Community Development Agency - Miscellaneous, May 1975, Series 1 Box 12, John Poelker Files, WUA. Today, this project includes the America's Center and the Edward Jones Dome.

[96] CDA Answers Charges from Neighborhoods," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, October 1976, Missouri History Museum.

Figure 7: Community Development Projects for the 1975 CDBG[97]

Residents were keenly aware of the changes to funding priorities brought on by CDBGs.

The Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood criticized CDBG money spent to redevelop Maryland Plaza,

a strip adjacent to the high-end Chase Park Plaza Hotel in the more affluent Central West End

neighborhood. A newsletter criticized, "unlike the Jeff-Vander-Lou area, Maryland Plaza

Redevelopment is not in the business of providing the existing residents the benefits of its

increasing power, with the exception of Chase Hotel, Inc." The accusation that corporate

interests drove CDBG spending showed that residents believed CDBGs should go to antipoverty

initiatives and resident-centered programs. The neighborhood also offered its own plans for the

use of CDBG funds: "Jeff-Vander-Lou … could have used that $1 million of public works

money to make more than new parking lots. That money could have been used to help owners

who bear the tax burden to insulate their homes and reduce energy loss [and] provide adequate

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[97] Memo from Dale Ruthsatz to Citizens' Advisory Committee, February 18, 1974, Folder 24, Series 1 Box 5, Badaracco Papers, WUA.

trash removal."[98] Their proposals remained consistent with their promotion of a stable neighborhood population through their home ownership model. Jeff-Vander-Lou also reported that three of the four most expensive CDBG projects in St. Louis were not beneficial to low-income communities.[99] Echoing Jeff-Vander-Lou, one community development expert explained, "it's always been clear … that the block grant money got disproportionately distributed in South St. Louis [a historically white and working- to middle-class area]. That's just a fact."[100]

Certainly, some of the early CDBG money was allocated to complete projects initiated through Model Cities, but these exceptions could not reverse the overall trend. In the model neighborhood CDBGs continued to fund the construction of a skills training facility, a health center, Murphy-Blair's community building, and a Yeatman Community Center. Yeatman was the only neighborhood corporation that won the right to operate its own project, but the contract was only for $7,650.

Further proof of the de-emphasis on the model neighborhood were total funding numbers. In 1975, only $3 million of St. Louis's $15 million CDBG allocation went to continuing Model Cities projects (whereas St. Louis was used to receiving about $9 million each year for Model Cities). Projections for the subsequent year allocated only $1.8 million for the continuation of Model Cities projects.[101] Municipal funding choices revealed a disinvestment from the poor neighborhoods that reflected the design of the CDBG program and larger national trends.

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[98] "Maryland Plaza—Once Upon a Time The Emperor's Old Clothes," Morgan Faraday, *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, March/April 1979, *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, March/April 1979, St. Louis History Museum.
[99] "CDA Answers Charges from Neighborhoods," *Jeff-Vander-Lou News*, October 1976, Missouri History Museum.
[100] Yvonne Sparks, Interview with Author, March 7, 2017.
[101] "Project Status Report: Community Development Block Grant Program June 1975-June 1977." City of St. Louis Community Development Agency, July 1977; Memo from Dale Ruthsatz to Citizens' Advisory Committee, February 18, 1974, Folder 24, Series 1 Box 5, Badaracco Papers, WUA.

St. Louis CDBG Allocations in Dollars, 1975-2014

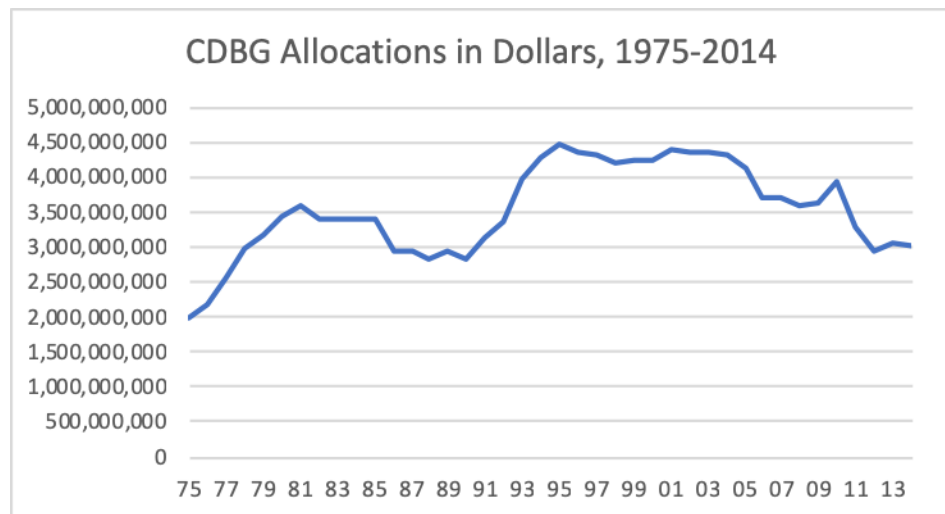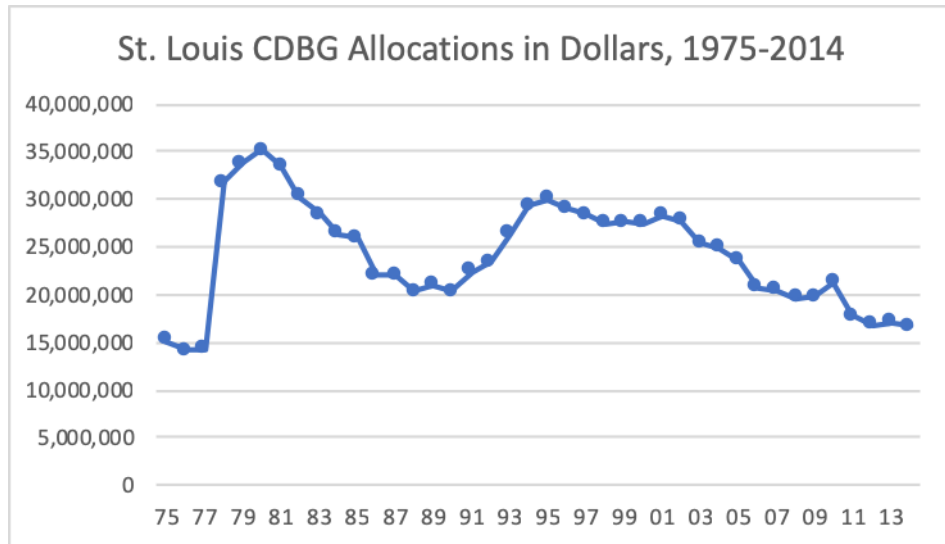
CDBG Allocations in Dollars, 1975-2014

Figure 8: National CDBG Grant Allocations by Year. Note that CDBG allocations have not kept up with inflation, so the funding available to cities has steadily decreased.[102]

Conclusion: Team Four Reconsidered

With the Housing Act of 1949 and urban renewal, cities enjoyed new sources of federal money and little oversight. Due to resident activism, evidence that corporate-driven urban renewal schemes did not decrease poverty, and a series of violent urban rebellions in the mid to

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[102] "CDBG Allocation History By Grantee, 1975-2014," https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg/cdbg-reports-program-data-and-income-limits/.

late sixties, federal officials created new programs, such as Model Cities, to fund physical redevelopment and social programs in the nation's poorest neighborhoods. Residents insisted on a power-sharing mechanism by claiming their authority as citizens of these impoverished neighborhoods. This triumph, however, proved to be a brief aberration in the power relations of urban planning and antipoverty funding. As residents moved to establish themselves and their neighborhood organizations as permanent actors in city planning, the federal government betrayed their commitment to citizen participation. Federal officials had asked for innovation but had not anticipated it would take the form of autonomous resident institutions that gained power through the War on Poverty and the loyal following of neighbors. Under the guise of increasing efficiency and yielding to local control, the Nixon administration garnered bipartisan support for a block grant system that transferred authority back to city governments, decreased federal oversight, and tokenized citizen participation.

From the earliest days of CDBGs, concerned parties pointed out the ways in which St. Louis's CDBG plans mirrored the Team Four Plan. Team Four labeled the poorest sections of the city "depletion areas" and recommended against investing physical redevelopment money there. Aside from providing basic services such as police and schools, Team Four advised the city to land-bank property in these areas until there was a market for private investment there. In December 1975, several settlement houses accused the CDA of following Team Four's guidelines. They criticized a lack of physical improvement projects for the model neighborhood and concluded, "it would appear that the 'Team Four' recommendations are being implemented on the near northside."[103] The same year, labor and civil rights leader Ernest Calloway spoke up at a CDA budget meeting, expressing "the opinion that all the projects seem to follow the Team

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[103] Letter from Michael Jones to John Roach, December 16, 1975, Folder: Community Development Agency - Block Grant, November 1974, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA. Consolidated Neighborhood Services, Inc. (CNSI) was created briefly as an umbrella organization for settlement houses to receive federal antipoverty money.

Four" Plan. To assuage Calloway "the Committees and staff informally discussed Commissioner Calloway's concern and the staff assured him and members of the Committees that the recommendations are based on citizen input and rating of priorities, and not the Team Four philosophy." However, this was the same meeting in which Louise Reeves, a settlement house worker in Murphy-Blair, accused the CDA of ignoring citizens' input.[104]

In fact, Mayor John Poelker was fairly forthright about his desire to follow Team Four's suggestion to funnel development money away from the poorest neighborhoods. In a letter to HUD he explained, "in terribly depressed areas as model neighborhoods where previous physical redevelopment efforts may have met with little or no success … cities want to make attempts elsewhere."[105] Other municipal officials commented more publicly on their desire for disinvestment from North City and the model neighborhood. For example, the "deputy director of the Community Development Agency … argued that the city could spend its money more wisely in shoring up sound neighborhoods." One alderman was particularly candid: "we have to make a choice about which areas we want to save. Other areas will have to suffer benign neglect."[106]

Crucially, within the context of CDBGs, St. Louis did not need to explicitly adopt the Team Four Plan to implement its directives. First through changes to Model Cities and then with CDBGs, the federal government touched off a devolution of responsibility to local governments. By choosing to fund projects outside the city's poorest neighborhoods, St. Louis followed the

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[104] Joint Meeting of the Development Ad Hoc and Budget Ad Hoc Committees of the Community Development Commission, July 22, 1975, Folder 5: Community Development Agency - Development, 1975-1976, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA. Ernest Calloway was a black Teamster union leader and a champion of civil rights. He became the head of the St. Louis NAACP branch in 1955. For more information on Calloway, see: Robert Bussel, *Fighting for Total Person Unionism: Harold Gibbons, Ernest Calloway, and Working-Class Citizenship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
[105] Letter from John Poelker to David Meeker, November 10, 1975, Folder 2: Community Development Agency - Block Grant, August 1975, Series 1 Box 13, John Poelker Files, WUA.
[106] Philip Sutin, "Plan Said To Hurt Black Area In City," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 19, 1975.

intent of Team Four. In 2008, a House of Representatives investigation headed by

Congressperson Maxine Waters found that "Team 4 may not have been adopted, but it appears

that the spirit lives on."[107] With CDBGs still in place today, local governments around the

country are free to implement federally-funded community development projects that are only

tangentially concerned with reducing poverty.

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[107] "The Use of Federal Housing and Economic Development Funds in St. Louis: From 'Team 4' Into the Future" (St. Louis, MO: Subcommittee on Housing and Opportunity of the Committee on Financial Services, U.S. House of Representatives, March 8, 2008).

Conclusion

In the mid to late 1960s, poor communities across the United States recognized an existential threat to themselves and their neighborhoods: decades of urban policy destroyed many working-class neighborhoods, particularly those belonging to communities of color. Profit-driven, government-sponsored urban renewal tore down poor neighborhoods to make room for upper-class housing and commercial space, decreasing the affordable housing stock.

This dissertation uses the Model Cities program in St. Louis to examine how poor urban residents organized and asserted their vision for how to make working-class neighborhoods livable, especially for communities of color. Drawing on their strength and experience as civil rights activists, for a few years in the late sixties residents convinced local and federal officials that they as residents had a unique understanding of their neighborhoods. They successfully argued that community control was necessary to the creation of antipoverty programs that would improve poor people's lives, not replace their communities with wealthier neighborhoods and expensive amenities. Residents boldly asserted their expertise and their ability to plan in the form of Model Cities comprehensive plans. In doing so, they offered an incisive critique of and alternative to urban redevelopment programs that demolished working-class neighborhoods without replacing affordable housing stock.

The details of residents' plans for their neighborhoods made concrete their vision for supportive, self-sustaining working-class communities. Model Cities residents wanted to feel pride and stability in their communities. In St. Louis, residents created programs that increased affordable and decent housing choices for a variety of working-class people, from temporary rental units to affordable home ownership opportunities. Their plans centered families' needs for

childcare, safe recreational space, and access to goods and services. They designed job training programs directly connected to employment opportunities, recognizing a gap between previous training programs and existing jobs. Focused solely on creating communities in which poor people could live well, residents asserted that only they had the ability to plan for themselves.

This dissertation shows that in attempting to seize control of Model Cities, residents were fighting for no less than a permanent change to the goals of urban planning and the mechanisms by which urban planning happened, in the process making planning more democratic. Similar to the activists who participated in urban uprisings across the world in the mid to late 1960s, Model Cities residents understood that conventional urban planning diminished poor people's ability to survive in cities. Rather than profit-oriented redevelopment programs that catered to the middle class and ignored the reality that poor people need decent communities in which to live, residents showed government officials how to create urban plans that centered the needs and wishes of the poor themselves. Unlike professional planners, residents saw value in working-class neighborhoods. Having experienced the destruction caused by professionally-planned urban renewal projects, residents steadfastly argued that only programs controlled by the poor themselves would ensure urban antipoverty programs strengthened, rather than tore down, working-class communities.

Residents used Model Cities to call for new relationships between poor citizens and the state because they recognized that capitalist urban redevelopment undercut opportunities for democratic participation in planning. Model Cities leaders envisioned their communities as equal partners with government officials in the planning and implementation of antipoverty programs, with real decision-making power. Decades of failed urban antipoverty policy made resident power a necessary change to the relationship between poor citizens and the state. At first, Model

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Cities leaders had reasons to be cautiously optimistic that their government counterparts were willing to cede control to Model Cities residents. Some federal officials admitted the shortcomings of urban renewal and promoted resident-dominated Model Cities as a corrective to these faults.

However, when faced squarely with resident-written plans, and their rebuke of profit-oriented urban renewal, federal officials broke faith with residents, assuming that poor communities of color were incapable of handling federal money or creating viable plans. Where residents claimed expertise by virtue of their experience living in poor, black neighborhoods, federal officials assumed these characteristics proved residents' inability to plan for themselves. Instead of rejecting residents' bid for power outright, federal officials claimed the need for resident input at the same time that they denied residents any decision-making power. In this way, government officials blamed residents for Model Cities' failures, even though residents lost power years before it was evident that Model Cities would not make poor neighborhoods viable. Capitalist urban redevelopment undercut residents' democratic urban planning. The result, through the present-day, has been a largely pernicious urban planning system in which officials solicit residents' voices to legitimize their plans while routinely ignoring poor communities' visions.

Afterword

In 2016, the Team Four strategy of neglecting North St. Louis culminated. Since Model Cities, North St. Louis has steadily lost population, and the city declined to invest in physical rehabilitation projects. In the 1970s alone, the city lost twenty-seven percent of its population. Between 2000 and 2010, North City lost 17,500 residents, fifteen percent of its population.[1] The city's Land Reutilization Authority acquired thousands of vacant properties as residents left North City neighborhoods. In 2012 the city sold 1,200 of these parcels to a private developer named Paul McKee for $1.4 million. McKee was land banking, as Team Four advised, and he received over $40 million in tax credits to acquire this property and plan redevelopment projects.[2]

After decades of disinvestment in the Model Cities area, in 2016 the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), a federal defense and security agency, announced plans to build a new facility in North St. Louis. This ninety-seven-acre site is entirely within what was once the Model Cities target area. When the NGA publicized its plans, McKee sold his property back to St. Louis, costing the city $10 million. To boosters of the NGA facility, this process of land vacancy, private acquisition, and sale worked exactly as intended: after decades of depopulation and abandonment, they argued, this area was now empty enough for reinvestment by a large federal project. Most St. Louis officials hailed the NGA scheme as the only viable plan for revitalizing North City.[3]

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[1] Alex Ihhen, "Understanding Population Change and Density in St. Louis," *NextSTL*, September 17, 2014, https://nextstl.com/2014/09/pxstl/.

[2] Many North City residents vilify Paul McKee, as his vision for land banking and total regeneration is directly at odds with the history of individual rehabs popular during the Model Cities era.

[3] "Record of Decision Next NGA West Campus in the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area," Prepared for National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency," June 2, 2016, http://nextngawest.com/media/documents/20160602_NGAROD.pdf.

Some St. Louis residents think the NGA might ultimately be a good thing for their area. Daniel Jackson, who worked at the Montgomery-Hyde Park neighborhood center's radio station during Model Cities, hopes the NGA project will spur development that will uplift the neighborhood. He envisioned that the NGA facility could return the neighborhood to "what it looked like fifty years ago. You didn't even have any vacant houses … Every house … was occupied. You had businesses on both sides of the street. Up and down the street … It was a bustling community. And that's what I see coming back." Despite his prediction that "renters are not going to be able to stay" because property values will increase, Jackson believes the positives of the NGA project will outweigh the negatives.[4]

But other St. Louisans who have lived and worked in North City for decades are skeptical or outright opposed to the NGA project. They believe it's business as usual, another government scheme that might "revitalize" a geographical space but will not bring benefits to the people currently living in the area. Al Sawyer, who has lived in St. Louis most of his life and knew Macler Shepard personally, articulated his concerns and frustration. He described neighborhood meetings hosted by NGA outreach staff, who Sawyer said promised "thirty some million dollars towards … redeveloping the neighborhood, [to] help build the neighborhood back up." But Sawyer explained, the "only thing they did was just made those people on the other side of Cass [Avenue] move … You done took their property and gave them a little or nothing. Maybe eighty thousand dollars, fifty thousand dollars. That ain't nothing compared to that $30 million that the

For more information on Paul McKee's land banking and relationship to the NGA project, see: Stephen Deere and Doug Moore, "Tug-of-war nearly derailed NGA's move to North City," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 27, 2017; Tim Logan, "City Oks big land sale to Paul McKee," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 14, 2012; "Paul McKee, lender wins big with NGA's decision," *St. Louis Business Journal*, April 1, 2016; Nicholas J.C. Pistor, "McKee Plans 500-unit housing project near NGA site," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 8, 2016; Maria Altman, "Northside Developer McKee leaves city property taxes unpaid," *St. Louis Public Radio*, April 9, 2015.
[4] Daniel Jackson, Interview with Author, November 16, 2017.

NGA said they'd give to you."[5] Rosie Willis expressed a similar view. She called the NGA

project a "cancer," explaining, "I'm still not feeling good about [the NGA]. Because it displaced

a lot of people from their homes. No matter how humble they were, these were people's homes.

And they were moved out … they had roots there. They were established there." Worried about

the population change the NGA might bring, Willis said, "I would like to see something that's

still standing. That's still recognizable … I don't want our community to just fade off into the

ages. I want something to remain that says people lived there. I don't want us to become a

vanishing group."[6]

Sawyer and Willis, like many other activists who oppose the NGA, know that any

neighborhood investment that comes with the NGA will be aimed at attracting middle- and

upper-class residents, pushing out the people who have lived in the neighborhood for decades.

Paul McKee's development company is planning a five hundred-unit apartment complex near the

NGA, but he shows no commitment to building affordable housing or listening to the input of

current residents. Instead, he will construct market-rate housing.[7] There are no real efforts to

ensure that those who have lived in the neighborhood for decades will be able to remain.[8]

Community meetings with NGA staff and residents exemplify the system of public

hearings that took hold as Model Cities transitioned to CDBGs. At these meetings, residents

express legitimate concerns about property values, security, and new housing developments. But

without strong neighborhood organizations and a federal commitment to citizen participation,

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[5] Al Sawyer, Interview with Author, August 22, 2017.

[6] Rosie Willis, NGA Interview, no date, https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/project-connect/nga/history/interviews/rosie-willis.cfm.

[7] Nicholas J.C. Pistor, "McKee Plans 500-unit housing project near NGA site," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 8, 2016.

[8] There are isolated examples of residents working hard to remain in their neighborhood. One woman whose house was within the NGA footprint refused to sell her house, and eventually the city paid to put her house on wheels and move it a few blocks away. https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/project-connect/nga/history/interviews/charlsetta-taylor-and-beveryly-and-helen-brown.cfm.

these efforts by individuals and small groups will almost certainly fail to produce tangible benefits for current residents. At one neighborhood meeting, NGA representatives claimed they wanted to work with residents. They focused on getting approval for aesthetic design decisions, asking, "do you like brick? Do you like wrought iron?" while cautioning "it's not promises." Soliciting input on what the NGA building should look like will not stave off the displacement many residents fear. Even more revealing, NGA representatives claimed, "we want to give you a sense of pride," as though neighborhood pride can be doled out through small cosmetic concessions and vague promises to "promote positive outcomes in the neighborhoods."[9]

As the NGA began acquiring properties, the agency and the city initiated a project to celebrate the neighborhood it would be demolishing, interviewing long-time residents (including Rosie Willis), compiling architectural information, and creating a website to document the neighborhood's history.[10] But touting its commitment to neighborhood history falsely suggests that the NGA is part of a natural, desired evolution of the neighborhood. In reality, this project reveals that the NGA seeks to relegate current North City residents to the pages of history, as Willis warned against, casting them as part of the past even as they are struggling to maintain their place in their neighborhood. The Model Cities spirit of neighborhood control is alive and well among individual St. Louis residents who show up to community meetings, question the wisdom of the NGA project and Paul McKee's development schemes, and fight for their lives and their community. But lack of financial and political support for resident organizing makes any fight against the NGA all but impossible.

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[9] Field Notes, St. Louis Place Neighborhood Association Meeting, May 18, 2017; Project Connect, Community Meeting # 1 Slides, City of St. Louis, June 6, 2016, https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/documents/upload/6-6-16-Community-Meeting-1-Project-Connect.pdf.
[10] https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/p`roject-connect/nga/history/index.cfm.

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