UNDER THE RADAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & THE FUTURE OF NYCHA
HUNTER COLLEGE PLANNING STUDIO 2019
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Acknowledgements

Our studio’s yearlong effort would not have been possible without the knowledge, expertise, and commitment to equity of many individuals and organizations. We would like to sincerely thank Tom Angotti, ARCXVI Staff, Victor Bach, Diana Blackwell, Nicholas Bloom, Ed Braxton, Audrey Clemmons, Hally Chu, Elise Golding, Clara Fraden, Michael Higgins Jr, Emily Kurtz, Frank Lang, Matthew Lasner, Marina Metalias, Michelle Mulcahy, Delma Paima, Matthew Rooney, Roberta Semer, Patricia Simon, Deborah Thrope, Michelle de la Uz, Matthew Washington, and Laura Wolf-Powers for contributing their time and guidance in helping us develop this report.

Finally, we would also like to express our gratitude to Maggie Calmes and Chris Cirillo at Ascendant Neighborhood Development and particularly to our advisors, professors John Chin and Bill Milczarki for encouraging us and creating a space for thoughtful and engaging discussion.

Our work is dedicated to the countless NYCHA residents and community organizations who tirelessly fight for housing dignity for all New Yorkers.

Abbreviations

AMI  Area Median Income
AND  Ascendant Neighborhood Development
ARC  Action for the Retired Community
CBO  Community Based Organization
CDC  Community Development Corporation
CHA  Cambridge Housing Authority
CLT  Community Land Trust
EHCA  East Harlem Community Alliance
EHNP  East Harlem Neighborhood Plan
FAR  Floor Area Ratio
FEMA  Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHA  Federal Housing Administration
GAO  Government Accountability Office
HAP  Housing Assistance Payments
HDFC  Housing Development Fund Corporation
HPD  New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HUD  United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
LEC  Limited Equity Cooperative
LNHTC  Low Income Housing Tax Credits
LVC  Land Value Capture
NYCLLI  New York City Community Land Initiative
NYCHA  New York City Housing Authority
PACT  Permanent Affordability Commitment Together
PBRA  Project Based Rental Assistance
PBV  Project Based Vouchers
PHA  Public Housing Administration
PILOT  Payment in Lieu of Taxes
RAD  Rental Assistance Demonstration
RFP  Request for Proposals
RFQ  Request for Qualifications
RPA  Regional Planning Association
SFHA  San Francisco Housing Authority
SHPO  State Historic Preservation Office
TA  Tenant Association
TDR  Transfer of Development Rights
TIF  Tax Increment Financing
USHA  United States Housing Authority
Executive Summary

Public housing in New York City is in a state of crisis. Due to decades of disinvestment, the 400,000 New Yorkers living in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) properties face poor living conditions. The City’s interventions to deal with this crisis thus far have been weak and market-oriented, relying on public-private partnerships. For example, the City has allowed private developers to build infill development on NYCHA properties or, more recently, has begun transferring ownership of the properties to private developers under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. Public housing authorities nationwide have also heavily relied on vouchers and tax credits to address their budget deficits, yet another example of a market-oriented approach.

The narrative is often that government-built and managed housing is clearly a failure, and the only way to fix the problem is through the intervention of the private sector. The number typically quoted in the media is the $32 billion backlog of needed capital repairs, funding which can only be found in the private sector rather than a re-ordering of public priorities. The focus is on the number rather than human lives; a financial problem in need of a financial solution. However, public housing is in its current state at least in part due to the inaction of public housing authorities nationwide, unable to meet basic maintenance and operating needs. The necessity of the private sector is a foregone conclusion. NYCHA is in its current state at least in part due to the lack of funding. The narrative of New York City’s housing crisis is often that residents are confused and concerned with its residents. The narrative that government is incapable of managing public housing. We believe that this narrative is decontextualized, ahistorical, and false.

NYCHA needs to continue to alter the size and scale of RAD Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in order to allow CDCs to be competitive with large for-profit developers. RFPs should require partnerships with neighborhood-based CDCs and, where feasible, these CDCs should be given priority over for-profit developers. RFPs need to have further reduced thresholds in order to lower the barriers to nonprofits’ participation.

NYCHA must allow CDCs a more significant role in the RAD process. One way this could be done would be by allowing them to take an increased ownership stake in properties, NYCHA and city leaders should look to San Francisco, where that city’s housing authority transferred over a significant portion of its public housing stock to local nonprofits with existing and strong ties to those communities. NYCHA should mandate and score favorably responses to RFPs that provide non-profit partners with an ownership stake.

NYCHA should significantly improve both the sense and the practice of transparency when engaging with its residents. A consistent finding by the studio is that residents are confused and concerned about the future of their homes, despite NYCHA’s robust outreach campaign.

After reviewing PACT contracts and requests for proposals, we seek more clarity in the way NYCHA intends to blend various federal housing programs. Specifically, there is a need for more clarity and guidance from NYCHA in the event that Section 18 leaves residents at significant risk in the event of foreclosure. Several developments that are currently in the PACT pipeline could be affected by this reality. As is described in extensive detail in the report, tenant protections under Section 18 are significantly weaker than protections under RAD/Section 8 legislation.

The City of New York must take on greater responsibility for NYCHA and develop a comprehensive housing strategy combining the Mayor’s affordable housing plan with public housing. Rather than competing over scarce federal and state resources, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and NYCHA should work together to ensure the highest quality and largest stock of affordable units for all New Yorkers.

CDCs need to form coalitions and demand alterations of the PACT process for small RFPs.

CDCs should be open to negotiating potential joint ventures with for-profit developers and willing to take on a significant ownership stake in their properties. CDCs should be leading in creating partnerships and ensure that the for-profit developer is supportive of the CDC’s mission and values.

CDCs should work to organize and mobilize NYCHA residents to achieve these outcomes. These CDCs are already leading workshops and trainings about RAD conversion, these efforts should be taken out of the training room and brought directly to NYCHA.

CDCs should include NYCHA residents in their broader organizing efforts alongside rent stabilized residents.
1 Introduction
As our studio client, Ascendant Neighborhood Development (AND) asked us to create a set of documents that can help non-profit housing developers make informed decisions when considering potential engagement with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Specifically, AND requested that our Hunter studio produce a document outlining best practices for community development corporations as they respond to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from NYCHA for Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). This program elicited mixed responses from policymakers, housing advocates, and public housing residents. AND hopes that a report will clarify the political landscape of RAD conversions and provide actionable policies for maintaining public housing in New York City. AND wanted our studio to provide an investigative history of public housing in New York City, the state of existing conditions and recovery programs, and to what extent AND can assist in keeping public housing units available into the future.

Our multi-phased work took place over the course of two semesters. In the first semester, we evaluated possible interventions that would preserve NYCHA developments. We developed an extensive history of East Harlem, and reviewed local, state, and federal housing policy frameworks. In response to the rapidly changing conditions of NYCHA in late 2018 and early 2019, we focused our second-semester research on three primary issues: the evolution of NYCHA’s Request for Proposals for RAD over time, the ability of community development corporations to participate in the RAD process, and an examination of RAD blending, or the practice of bundling Section 8 and Section 18 conversions into a single project.

AND asked us to identify ways to improve the quality of life for NYCHA residents. Specifically, we have assessed the ways in which non-profit community organizations can be involved in improving conditions at NYCHA and preserving public housing.

“Ascendant Neighborhood Development Corporation builds homes, engages community members, and partners with allies to raise up neighborhoods that provide stability and access to opportunity for all.”

AND is a community development corporation based in East Harlem. They have over 30 years of experience developing and managing affordable senior housing. Currently, AND operates 690 permanently affordable rental units across 28 buildings throughout East and Central Harlem. The organization has expertise in construction and building management – they have completed three buildings exclusively for senior citizens making less than 50% of the area median income (AMI). A fourth building targeting low-income seniors is slated to begin construction this year.

AND is an active member of several coalitions, including the Northern Manhattan Collaborative and the East Harlem Community Alliance (EHCA), a consortium of over 185 nonprofits, businesses, religious organizations, and government agencies that work to strengthen the neighborhood of East Harlem.
Study Area

While our studio looked at the state of public housing citywide in the second semester, we originally focused on East Harlem. In addition to being our client’s location, East Harlem faces considerable challenges involving the future of its public housing stock. As of 2016, public housing made up roughly one-third of all housing in East Harlem, a neighborhood of 134,300 people. East Harlem’s median income is $34,400, ranking 48th out of 55 census defined neighborhoods of New York City. Approximately 1 in 3 people in the neighborhood earn incomes under the federal poverty line, and nearly half of all children live in poverty. Public housing has been a source of low-income, affordable housing since the 1940s. Today, East Harlem has the highest concentration of public housing stock in Manhattan, and the second highest concentration in New York City, behind only Brownsville in Brooklyn.

Public housing in East Harlem began in 1941 with the construction of the East River Houses. This development was built strictly for African Americans, specifically excluding the growing Puerto Rican population. By the 1950s, urban renewal and slum clearance resulted in the destruction of four units for every one unit built, and there was a 90% net decrease in low-income housing stock. Puerto Ricans may have accounted for up to 76% of all of those displaced by new construction efforts.

Residents continue to face considerable housing challenges. The rapid decline of federal and state housing assistance funds since the 1980s has eroded the safety net for some of the neighborhood’s most housing-insecure populations. In 2007, 62% of residents in East Harlem depended on publicly subsidized housing, making the neighborhood particularly sensitive to changes to public housing policy and funding.

Today, most federal dollars have shifted away from direct subsidies for the construction of new affordable housing and towards vouchers and private-construction schemes. Gentrification also impacts the residents of East Harlem. Since the early 2000s, property values have nearly doubled, increasing from $476,000 in 2005 to $885,000 in 2015.

In January 2019, our client asked us to expand our scope to assess the citywide public housing strategy. While our work was guided by the needs of our client, we aimed to ensure that our recommendations would apply to all nonprofit developers interested in working with NYCHA. With this in mind, we had 3 goals for our studio:

1. To identify and evaluate all potential solutions for NYCHA, from existing interventions to more creative possibilities;
2. To determine how RAD can be implemented in a way that prioritizes residents and their rights; and
3. To develop a set of recommendations on the role that smaller CDCs should play in NYCHA interventions.
Our research required a multi-phased approach as our research goals changed from the first to second semester. We integrated into our report the positions of various stakeholders, historical and contemporary housing policy analysis, and resident interviews. While public housing is at risk nationwide, our studio prioritized public housing in New York City specifically. Our methodology reflects shifts in national public housing policy while keeping in mind the unique New York City context.

We performed an extensive literature review to understand the policies of PACT (See: Section 6), and how they could be improved to ensure tenant protections and the involvement of the nonprofit sector. We extensively reviewed housing plans and RFPs released by the City and cross-referenced them with data from reports released by community-based development and advocacy organizations. Our studio ran concurrently with NYCHA’s embrace and implementation of PACT. The timely nature of our work allowed us to engage in important conversations with community stakeholders. This research facilitated a deeper understanding of the federal policies that led to the physical and financial deterioration of NYCHA public housing, and that currently enable NYCHA’s transfer of public housing to the private sector.

With our problem defined, we engaged in qualitative research to collect granular data omitted from the academic and government reports of the first phase of research. After analyzing the current housing landscape to contextualize public-private partnerships, we were able to have more informed conversations with community development professionals, public officials, and public housing residents.

In short, our methods consisted of document analysis, site visits, interviews, a panel discussion, and resident surveys. Some significant sources and research are listed in the following pages.
Research + Site Visits

Since AND is based in East Harlem, our studio looked at past neighborhood studies, such as New York City Department of City Planning’s East Harlem Neighborhood Plan. We completed a comprehensive assessment of existing reports, handbooks, websites, and housing policies written by NYCHA, CDCs, and academics. Our studio reviewed NYCHA’s RFPs for the Ocean Bay site and the Brooklyn and Manhattan PACT megabundles to identify barriers for small, community-based non-profit developers and opportunities to foster community control of the developer selection process.

Mayor de Blasio’s Housing 2.0 Plan

- This plan sets a lofty goal of creating and preserving 300,000 affordable housing units by 2026. This has been done primarily through HPD programs and excludes NYCHA units.
- The plan focuses on leveraging City-owned, underutilized land and advocating for the expansion of federal programs like Low Income Housing Tax Credits, but it does not address the lack of public funding for NYCHA.
- The plan makes no mention of the deteriorating state of public housing or policy priorities that affect long-term affordability of public housing units.

NextGeneration NYCHA 2.0

- The later iteration of the plan leverages HUD’s RAD to fund renovations and convert over 62,000 units public housing from Section 9 to Section 8 and Section 18 affordable housing.
- RAD is a public-private partnership, and NYCHA still retains oversight over all major decisions by the new private owners.
- NYCHA reduces its managed portfolio and financial obligations by 33%.

RPA Report

- The report argues that small housing losses ultimately lead to large impacts. The report also posits that, if one-third of NYCHA units become uninhabitable, it would cost government $3 billion dollars to shelter an estimated 40,000 NYCHA residents who would be at risk of homelessness.
- The report notes that NYCHA is the largest source of affordable housing in the country. Without NYCHA, the City’s affordability crisis would spiral out of control.

Site Visits

Ocean Bay

Our studio visited the Ocean Bay (Bayside) apartments in Far Rockaway, Queens. Ocean Bay was the first NYCHA site to fully undergo a RAD conversion. We visited the site to learn about the outcomes of the City’s first RAD conversion.
Site Visits + Outreach

P.S. 139

On four occasions, our studio visited P.S. 139 in Central Harlem. P.S. 139 is one of the sites selected for the Manhattan PACT megabundle. P.S. 139 was converted from a public school to senior housing in 1986. By studying this site, we were able to create a site profile as a template for CDCs. We chose this site because senior housing is a specific development expertise of our client.

Our first visit to P.S. 139 was part of the scheduled NYCHA property visit for RFP applicants, who could then assess the site’s conditions. Following this visit, our studio attended a Tenants Association meeting in which NYCHA residents presented about the RAD conversions. On the third visit, we conducted an interview with a tenant leader and staffer of the site’s social service provider. Finally, our studio conducted resident surveys with the support of a resident leader of the building.

Interviews
(Appendix B for interview questionnaires)

Our studio conducted multiple interviews of stakeholders with an interest in public housing. This included policy experts, NYCHA residents and officials, community-based advocates and organizations, housing rights organizers, and one social service provider.

Resident Surveys
(Appendix C for resident surveys)

In addition to interviews, our studio developed a survey for the residents at P.S. 139. The survey was composed of both closed- and open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Of the 128 residents, we surveyed 43 respondents, of whom 23 were primarily English-speaking, 19 Spanish-speaking, and 1 Haitian Creole-speaking. We designed the survey to capture the residents’ knowledge of the RAD program and their primary needs and concerns.
Disinvestment in Public Housing

During the late 1960s, housing authorities across the United States faced substantial challenges and were widely criticized for mismanagement. According to studies conducted by the RAND Corporation and the Urban Institute, rising inflation resulted in growing deficits for these organizations. In order to address financial troubles and political pressure, housing agencies raised rents causing tenant unrest. President Richard Nixon took advantage of these challenges to reduce federal support for public housing development. Nixon, who believed government should not be responsible for public housing construction, announced a moratorium on all public housing construction in the early 1970s. In the short term, this stopped all funding for new construction and shifted the responsibility of financing capital repairs for public housing onto municipalities and states. In the long term, funding mechanisms shifted so that affordable housing construction became the domain of private developers.

Nixon’s moratorium on public housing construction in 1973 was codified in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, clearing the way for the most common housing subsidy, the Section 8 Program. The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program provides rental assistance to low- and middle-income families to find housing in the private market. Families typically pay 30% of their monthly gross income to the local housing authority. The local housing authority then makes the full rental payment to the private landlord on behalf of the participating family. The Section 8 program is largely dependent on the private production of housing with affordability for tenants maintained through a cash subsidy. Thus, private landlords receive reliable payments by the federal government via the local public housing authority.

Years of negative press and the widely publicized failure of projects such as Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis created an opportunity to further reduce funding to public housing. During President Ronald Reagan’s administration, the federal government almost entirely abandoned its commitment to provide public housing in the US despite growing evidence of rental housing shortages in many urban areas. From its peak involvement in 1976, the federal government cut Section 8 and public housing programs from over half a million units to fewer than 150,000 units in 1982. Only 10,000 of these units were new construction, while the remaining were financed through the Section 8 housing program. This represented a wholesale shift from direct production of affordable housing to almost entirely a voucher approach.

Under President George H. W. Bush in 1992, HUD launched the HOPE VI program. The program sought to “transform public housing by combining the physical revitalization of distressed public housing properties with community building and supportive services.” The main goal of HOPE VI was to deconcentrate poverty by demolishing public housing facilities and building lower density single and multi-family homes in their place. By the conclusion of the program, 98,592 public housing units were demolished and 97,389 units were built in their place. However, only 49,949 of these new units were public housing rental units, meaning the program resulted in a net loss of 43,274 public housing units. The remaining units did receive Section 8 subsidies, but not to the same level received from public housing. Ultimately, HOPE VI ended with mixed results. While the program was successful in deconcentrating poverty in some of the most distressed communities in the US, the largest criticism of the program was that it simply did not provide enough affordable units for the lowest income groups.

Since HOPE VI, the only major program put forth to address the ongoing issues with public housing in the US, has been the RAD program, which was enacted in 2011. Public housing in the US still faces considerable hardships as the physical infrastructure continues to age and federal funding is increasingly channeled to programs such as RAD that focus on the private market as the solution. Already, cities such as Cambridge, MA and San Francisco, CA have unloaded their entire public housing stock to private developers through the RAD program. This appears to be an indication of the future of public housing in the United States, as the RAD program continues to expand across the country.
NYCHA

NYCHA currently houses about 5% of New York’s population and nearly 15% of low-income renters in New York.14 NYCHA residents make up over 137,000 members of the City workforce and spend over $2 billion a year.15 NYCHA is a public benefit corporation chartered in 1934 under the New York State Public Housing Law. Still reeling from the impact of the Great Depression, the City partnered with the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration and began tearing down distressed buildings and constructing high-quality homes for middle-class families, who were selected through a rigorous screening process.

These efforts resulted in New York City’s earliest public housing developments, which included the Williamsburg Houses and the Harlem River Houses. High-quality workmanship, modern amenities, and low-rise character defined these facilities.16

After the 1930s, the pace of public housing construction in New York under NYCHA dramatically increased, peaking in the 1960s and 1970s. From the 1970s onward, federal funds for public housing began to shift to new arenas. With the codification of the Community Development Act of 1974 into law, the federal government directed funding into the new Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The Reagan Administration further weakened NYCHA in the 1980s when it dramatically slashed the budget for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the entity tasked with funding Section 8 and public housing authorities. Between 1981 and 1989, HUD’s budget authorizations decreased from $322.2 billion to a meager $6.9 billion, a reduction of 78%.17 NYCHA received less money from HUD to construct and maintain its properties in the City. This defunding coincided with a financial crisis and subsequent recovery in the late-1970s and early-1980s in New York.

In 1986, in the midst of a housing crisis, the Koch Administration set forth an ambitious Ten-Year Housing Plan. The $4.2 billion initiative relied entirely on the private market and did not allocate any resources for the maintenance of public housing facilities. The City began off-loading significant quantities of remnant properties and making funding opportunities available to private developers. The private market would rehabilitate these buildings and convert them into rental properties. While the program did not produce the quantity of units the Koch Administration anticipated, subsequent administrations would follow the basic policy template of assisting the private market in the production of units as the primary means by which to address housing needs.

In 2002, Mayor Bloomberg announced the New Housing Marketplace Plan committing $3 billion over 5 years to build and rehabilitate 65,000 apartments. While the program aimed to assist low- and moderate-income New Yorkers, none of this investment targeted NYCHA campuses. NYCHA’s notable exclusion from the City’s broader housing plans has both material and ideological implications. The City has consistently committed greater funds to private sector housing developments than to the preservation of public housing, while the federal government has simultaneously reduced appropriations to public housing.

The City has not entirely abandoned NYCHA. However, efforts to improve the physical conditions and budgetary health of NYCHA have largely fallen short of City goals. In 2001, NYCHA was experiencing a withdrawal of funding from federal, state, and city sources. The resulting disinvestment and rising internal costs left NYCHA with scant resources to address deteriorating buildings and the substandard living conditions for nearly half a million residents. In response, NYCHA announced the Plan to Preserve Public Housing, which sought to address the budget gap which had grown to $168 million by 2006 through infill development.18 Unfortunately, the measures within the plan failed to generate sufficient funds to close the aforementioned gap.

The de Blasio Administration has launched the most recent effort to preserve and develop affordable housing in the City, with NYCHA properties playing a key role. NextGeneration NYCHA, launched in 2015, outlined a variety of cost-saving measures to alleviate some of the financial burdens facing NYCHA. In addition to offering to achieve short-term financial stability, the plan also outlines recommendations for providing “underutilized” land for the creation of 10,000 affordable housing units, in what is known as infill development. Infill development to create 544 apartments has already begun at two NYCHA campuses (Holmes Towers and Wyckoff Gardens). Fifty percent of these new units will be market-rate while the remaining affordable apartments would still be financially out of reach for the majority of NYCHA residents. Unfortunately, NYCHA only expects $62 million in revenue from both projects, well short of the amount required to address the capital needs of NYCHA.19 However, the most significant potential funding stream outlined in NextGeneration NYCHA is the conversion of public housing units to Section 8 vouchers through RAD. Housing and tenant advocates view the program as the only viable means for NYCHA to address its capital needs requirements, but questions remain regarding what RAD will mean for many of the current residents at properties being converted.

The reduced prioritization by the City and curtailed federal funding led to the decline of NYCHA’s finances and physical housing stock. A physical needs assessment released in July 2018 projected that NYCHA requires $32 billion for capital improvement projects over five years in order to bring the system into a state of good repair.20 NYCHA currently receives an operating subsidy of $144 million, or only 0.2% of the City tax levy expenditures, but spends $335 million a year on capital improvements. A 2017 Physical Needs Assessment estimated that spending would need to increase spending by an additional 37% to keep pace with repairs.21 A 2014 audit by the City Comptroller found a backlog of $4.52 billion open work orders, 55,000 of which were requests for repairs. According to NYCHA’s own website, as of February 2019, it took on average 83 days to complete repairs associated with work orders.22 The physical infrastructure problems on NYCHA campuses are severe and options are limited. Consequently, NYCHA has turned to new forms of raising funds, such as the RAD program, to address its capital needs.
Exploring Alternative Models for NYCHA
Alternative Models for NYCHA

As a studio, we wanted to explore the potential solutions to renovate and preserve New York City’s public housing. After digging into a range of different options, from already existing policies to visionary new ideas, our studio selected a few specific solutions for which smaller, mission-based organizations, like AND, could consider advocating for. We explored infill, value capture, transfer of air rights, community land trusts, and cooperative ownership models. These alternatives include a change in ownership structure as well as sources of funding for NYCHA. We developed a rubric with five indicators, each scored on a scale of 1 to 5, to evaluate: the feasibility of that solution for tenant protections; capital generation; long-term preservation; scale ability; and equity and empowerment. Our methodological rubric and complete evaluation for each of the alternatives is provided in Appendix A.

Infill Development (Score: 13/25)

Infill development is a strategy embraced by Mayor de Blasio aimed at developing more housing units on NYCHA-owned land, primarily in partnership with private developers. In exchange for the right to build on the land, the developer makes an upfront payment to NYCHA to be used for capital needs of the adjacent campus. Any remaining funding is then shared with other NYCHA campuses in need.22

NYCHA’s prevailing “tower-in-the-park” and super-bloc model left approximately 58 million square feet of “underdeveloped land” in the form of parking lots, open space, green space, playgrounds, or other recreational areas.23 The value of these lots is based on two variables: the location of the lot and the ratio of market-rate to affordable housing units built. The location-based value of the underutilized parcels of land depends on the particular neighborhood and the scale of development already in place.

In 2015, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) conducted a study which found that private developers would pay 2 to 3 times as much for the right to develop in “strong” markets like lower Manhattan as compared to moderate-strength markets like East Harlem or many neighborhoods in the outer boroughs.24 The more affordable housing a developer chooses to build, the less the developer pays for the land. The diminished affordability a developer chooses to build, the diminished value of these lots is based on two variables: the location of the lot and the ratio of market-rate to affordable housing units built. The location-based value of the underutilized parcels of land depends on the particular neighborhood and the scale of development already in place.

Examples of Infill Sites

1 | The Elliott-Chelsea Houses - Chelsea, Manhattan
   With no resident and stakeholder input, 168 housing units were built on parking lots and recreation areas in 2012, before the announcement of Mayor Bloomberg’s 2013 Land Lease Initiative.25

2 | Wyckoff Gardens - Boerum Hill
   A 16-story mixed-income building, with a total of 500 new apartments, with half at market-rate and the other half affordable, built on parking lots.26

3 | Cooper Park Houses - East Williamsburg
   A former parking lot will be developed into a 250-apartment mixed-income complex. The affordable units will be rented to households earning 60 percent of AMI, and half of the revenue generated will go to Cooper Park Houses directly.

4 | Holmes Towers - Upper East Side
   A 47-story project built on top of an existing playground with 50% market-rate housing and 50% affordable housing. NYCHA residents received a preference for 25% of the affordable units through the lottery program.27

While the possibility of building deeply and permanently affordable housing on NYCHA land is becoming less politically feasible as the de Blasio administration further prioritizes market-rate development, there is still a role for a non-profit housing developer like AND in providing senior housing.

In June, 2018, the New York City Council voted to commit $500 million to build up to 1,000 affordable units for low-income seniors on NYCHA land and other public locations. Building senior housing would make room for the more than 200,000 families on the waitlist for public housing, help reduce homelessness, and allow for design elements in accordance with the needs of senior residents.28 AND’s expertise in developing and managing senior housing, could be instrumental in assuring any new senior development conforms to affordability requirements and design specifications.

Although developing senior housing on NYCHA land will not address NYCHA’s capital deficit, it could create a significant number of permanently and deeply affordable units for the most vulnerable New Yorkers, a goal central to AND’s mission.

STUDIO ASSESSMENT

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Image: Rendering of Wyckoff Gardens Infill, by Aufgang Architects (Source: Curbed New York)
Land Value Capture (Score: 17/25)

The value of land increases when certain investments or improvements are made, whether by government or the private sector. Public actions that increase the value of land include changes in land use regulation such as upzonings, investments in infrastructure, and the provision of public services. The concept of Land Value Capture (LVC) is grounded in the idea that because public actions increase the value of land, the windfall from these actions should be more equitably distributed. With LVC, the City can capture—or really, recover—the increase in land value and reinvest this value back into public goods such as affordable housing or infrastructure. The city regularly makes investments or regulatory changes that increase the value of land, including in areas where NYCHA properties are located. We propose that LVC could be recovered and reinvested directly into NYCHA properties to fund necessary capital repairs.

There are many different policy mechanisms that fall under the umbrella of LVC. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy has done considerable research on LVC and published a policy brief detailing different LVC tools and examples of where they have been implemented. Some of these tools include:

Transferable development rights (TDR)
Landowners pay the municipality a fee to transfer development rights from one parcel of land to another. Fees are used to fund public improvements such as infrastructure or affordable housing. TDRs can be done through the packaging and selling of air rights.

Betterment Contributions
Owners of select properties pay a fee to the municipality which helps pay for a public improvement or service from which the owner specifically benefits.

Charges for Building Rights
Developers pay the municipality a fee for additional development rights such as higher floor area ratio (FAR). Fees are used to fund public improvements such as affordable housing or infrastructure.

Impact for Linkage Fees
Developers pay the municipality a fee designed to cover the cost associated with a developer’s impact on certain public services and infrastructure.

Inclusionary Housing or Zoning
Developers are required to build low-income housing in exchange for the right to develop market rate residential or commercial properties.

Applications of the Property Tax
A portion of real estate taxes are captured and directed toward a specific public purpose or project—for example through tax increment financing (TIF) or payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT).

Examples of Land Value Capture
Many different Land Value Capture tools have been used extensively already in New York City. Some examples include a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) district and the development of Highline Park, the sale of air rights above Vanderbilt Yards, the development of the Atlantic Yards, a ground lease on city-owned land and the development of Battery Park City, and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) for the development of Hudson Yards. Another example is the current mandatory inclusionary housing policy that requires construction of affordable housing in exchange for development rights. However, many critics argue that LVC in New York City has not been used for public benefit. The Atlantic Yards, Battery Park City and Hudson Yards projects have been justly criticized for sequestering public funds to facilitate private development rather than provide public goods.

STUDIO ASSESSMENT

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Selling Air Rights (Score: 17/25)

The selling of air rights allows undeveloped floor area to be transferred so that development can occur either on an adjacent lot or a non-contiguous property. Air rights are typically transferred in one of three ways: zoning lot mergers; landmark transfers; and special purpose district transfers. Zoning lot mergers are the most common form of air rights transfer and prominently found in Manhattan south of Central Park. Landmarks and special purpose districts have more flexibility because transfers can extend as far as multiple blocks away from the granting site. Section 74 to 79 of the city’s zoning resolution allows the transfer of floor area from landmarks and special districts. This regulation has been used throughout the city from the Midtown Theater Subdistrict Core to the West Chelsea Special District.

As a partner in the development of the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan, and a partner in Landmark East Harlem, AND is in a strategic position to leverage experience and community involvement in the creation of a special district encompassing the numerous NYCHA campuses within East Harlem. Through the work of AND and Landmark East Harlem, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has issued a Determination of Eligibility for a proposed East Harlem Historic district, which allows property owners within the boundaries to qualify for federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits. This state-recognized designation would strengthen any claim AND makes to incorporate NYCHA into the plan.

Residents, activists, and community-based organizations, through the Zoning and Land Use and the Arts and Culture subcommittees that formed during the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan (EHNP), have called for the establishment of an East Harlem Garden District and a Theater District. The preservation of important East Harlem buildings is also called for in the EHNP. There is a strong case for more formal recognition of the cultural significance of NYCHA campuses whereby the unique history of East Harlem can be preserved. NYCHA buildings reinforce neighborhood character and serve as home to many assets like the active community of tenant leaders and activists and community based organizing groups, who are committed to protecting not just public housing but the vitality of the broader neighborhood.

The research has shown that selling air rights is not a sustainable long-term source of funding but if done thoughtfully can generate significant revenue. If enough revenue is generated, NYCHA can dedicate the majority to repairing issues with the greatest health impacts, like lead paint remediation or roof repairs while the viability of other interventions that provide more long-term funding options is assessed.

Examples of Selling Air Rights and Landmark Designation for Public Housing

1. **Midtown East Rezoning**
   JP Morgan purchased 680,000 square feet of air rights for about $240 million from Grand Central Terminal and an additional 50,000 square feet of air rights for $20.7 million dollars from St. Bartholomew’s Church for the construction of their new 70-story headquarters.

2. **Existing Landmark Designations in Harlem**
   The Harlem River Houses received a National Historic Landmark designation in 1975 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Two other NYCHA developments, First Houses and Williamsburg Houses, were designated as landmarks in 1974 and 2003 respectively. In 2018, three East Harlem buildings were designated as New York City landmark. These examples indicate the possibility of TDR in East Harlem given recent landmark designations.

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Community Land Trust

A community land trust (CLT) – whose history in the United States began in Albany, Georgia during the Civil Rights Movement – is a nonprofit, community-based model of collective ownership that is primarily focused on the preservation of long-term housing affordability. CLTs separate the ownership of the property from that of the land on which the property is built.38 In a classic CLT, the board of directors is equally divided into three voting blocs: (1) homeowners or leaseholders; (2) residents from the surrounding community who do not lease or live on CLT land and (3) individuals representing the public interests, including elected officials, local funders, housing and social service nonprofits.39 The trust owns the land permanently and removes it from the market and therefore eliminates its speculative property value.40,41

Community-based non-profit organizations can partner with NYCHA and other sources of city funding to coordinate an LEC conversion, with the help of programs like the Housing Development Fund Corporations (HDFCs), which develop the financing for low-income housing.42,43 Limited equity cooperatives (LEC)--typically multi-family buildings—are income-restricted with limits on resale price.44,45

The Mott Haven Victory HDFC case study shows that NYCHA is capable of converting non-standard sites into co-ops with support from a knowledgeable community-based organization.

Example of LEC

1 | Bronx: Mott Haven Victory HDFC

NYCHA scatter sites that were converted into cooperative homeownership

If AND were interested in the CLT or LEC model for preserving affordable housing in East Harlem they should start with the following:

1 | Conduct tenant surveys to determine interest in shared-ownership structure
2 | Support tenant decision-making power
3 | Research the possibility of a “pilot” CLT/LE Cooperative conversion in depth

NYCHA properties with experienced tenant associations and a local CLT established may be able to build consensus and advocate for a portion of public housing to be placed in a local land trust. Larger organizations, such as New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI), are currently implementing a citywide land trust campaign that targets NYCHA properties with active leadership. These assets could build intra-developement support to assert residents’ rights to the land by forming a land trust that spans the entire city. To present themselves as viable managing developers, CDOs must demonstrate that: (1) they have financing options, and (2) they have the expertise to implement their proposal. However, there are clear political and technical restrictions to CLT and LEC conversions. This is especially true for public housing. Nevertheless, tenant decision-making power must be prioritized. While CLT and LEC conversions are unorthodox CDOs should strongly consider plans to produce community-oriented ownership structures in NYCHA.
The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program

RAD Program

Authorized by Congress under the Obama administration in 2011, the RAD program is the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) most recent initiative to address the crisis of underfunded and rapidly deteriorating public housing in the United States through privatization. With HUD approval, RAD allows local public housing authorities to transfer public housing developments from Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (government-owned and managed public housing) to Section 8 of the same legislation, as amended in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (privately owned and managed subsidized housing). This transfer introduces two potential benefits: one, ownership and management of the property is given over to a private or nonprofit entity that may be better incentivized to maintain the property; and two, once under Section 8, the properties can access private debt, equity, and other sources of funding, unavailable under Section 9, to make needed capital improvements. Notably, the conversion from Section 9 to Section 8 does not involve any increase in public funding for the properties; the funding provided by HUD switches from Section 9 Capital and Operating Funds to Section 8 subsidy but the amount stays the same. The program therefore is “revenue neutral,” making it politically palatable to those who oppose any increased funding for public housing and the main reason why the program passed through Congress with bipartisan support.

While the program is undoubtedly a privatization scheme, there are provisions in place intended to ensure the protection of existing residents and the long-term preservation of the properties. HUD regulations require that RAD conversion not involve the loss of any public housing units. There must be a one-to-one replacement, whether in the case of a renovation or demolition and new construction. HUD also requires that a public or non-profit entity always maintains a controlling interest in the property, even in the case of foreclosure. For example, this might mean that the local Public Housing Authority (PHA) continues to own the land, while ownership of the buildings is given to a private entity through a 99-year ground lease.

Finally, the contract that HUD enters into with the PHA (the Housing Assistance Payment or HAP contract), which states HUD’s obligations to the property, must be renewed upon expiration. There are two types of funding contracts: Section 8 project-based vouchers (PBV) or Section 8 project-based rental assistance (PBRA). In both cases, rental vouchers (subsidy) are attached to the specific building, meaning the subsidy stays with the building even if a tenant moves out. These contracts are either 15 or 20 years long, and must be renewed upon expiration.

There are other protections for tenants built into the RAD program as well. The Section 8 program sets resident rents at 30% of their household adjusted gross income. If this amount is more than what they currently pay, the rent increase is phased in gradually over 3-5 years. RAD maintains many, but not all, of the resident processes and rights guaranteed under public housing. For example, residents retain their right to request a grievance process and to organize. Resident organizations also continue to receive resident participation funds as per the existing PHA policy. When a development is being considered for a RAD conversion, HUD requires the PHAs to notify all residents of the plans and to conduct at least two meetings with residents to address their concerns. HUD also requires one additional meeting after the development has been selected to participate in RAD. If the rehabilitation of the building requires tenants to be relocated during construction, the developer is responsible for preparing a comprehensive Relocation Plan. All tenants have the right to return with no additional screening. The “choice-mobility” option provided under PBV and PBRA is also extended to residents undergoing RAD. If they so choose, they have the right to move elsewhere with tenant-based rental assistance.

Risks of RAD

The potential benefits of RAD are significant. In cities like New York where public housing residents face chronic issues such as mold, leaks, rodents, lead and other health hazards, RAD offers the possibility of a major infusion of capital and much-needed...
Section 8 funding is not unlimited and not available in the 1990s to under $2 billion per year since then. The average of $4.1 billion per year (in 2015 dollars) is seen as a relatively stable funding source. Risks to Funding Sources: Section 8 is seen as a relatively stable funding stream in comparison to public housing appropriations which have continued to decline “from an average of $4.1 billion per year (in 2015 dollars) during the 1990s to under $2 billion per year since 2012.” Section 8 funding is not unlimited and not permanently guaranteed. If more RAD conversions take place, more Section 8 subsidy will be needed, which may lead to increasing competition for limited funds. RAD conversions not only rely on Section 8 subsidy but also other sources of funding such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). Increased use of LIHTC by RAD projects leaves less available LIHTC for the construction and renovation of other affordable housing.

Privatizations: Public housing has been poorly maintained by public management due to the federal government’s failure to fully fund its Section 9 obligation. It is important to note that there are also risks associated with conversion to private management. HUD’s promise of resident rights does not equate to enforcement or oversight. The general lack of oversight in the RAD program would allow violations to occur unnoticed. Private management may also mean the loss of good-paying jobs for the existing property management staff. Private owners arguably will be less concerned about protecting long-term affordability. Furthermore, as identified by the National Housing Law Project, private owners frequently block or prohibit resident organizing activities, despite the fact that residents maintain their right to organize under RAD.

Foreclosure: There are weak measures in place in the instance where the HAP contract is terminated by HUD or if the property goes into foreclosure. In the event of foreclosure or cancellation of the HAP contract, the “Use Agreement” continues to survive and is binding on all future owners. The Use Agreement is the first lien on the property and requires all future owners to comply with its affordability requirements. However, the Use Agreement’s affordability requirements are only that rents must not exceed 30% of 80% of Area Median Income. This would likely mean a dramatic increase in rent for existing residents and displacement. Without the HAP contract, there is no additional long-term subsidy contract ensuring the rent levels will be preserved for very low-income families.

Variation Across Cities: RAD conversions look very different across cities. Some PHAs retain complete ownership and continue to play a strong role in management and oversight, while other PHAs opt for more privatization. RAD conversions also do not necessarily result in substantial rehabilitation. The GAO report found that as of 2017, 61% of conversions involved planned rehabilitation, 12% involved new construction, and 27% involved no construction. According to the report, HUD officials only approve conversions with no planned rehab if the property has no immediate needs to be addressed. However, it is possible that PHAs could convert public housing units under RAD just to offload the responsibility, without ensuring that conversion involves actual improvement in residents’ quality of life through necessary capital repairs and renovations.

Variation Across Cities: RAD conversions look very different across cities. Some PHAs retain complete ownership and continue to play a strong role in management and oversight, while other PHAs opt for more privatization. RAD conversions also do not necessarily result in substantial rehabilitation. The GAO report found that as of 2017, 61% of conversions involved planned rehabilitation, 12% involved new construction, and 27% involved no construction.

Lack of Oversight: The RAD program is called Rental Assistance Demonstration, because it was meant as such—a pilot program to test whether or not it would be successful. If successful, PHAs could potentially scale it to include a larger portion of the country’s public housing inventory, totaling approximately 1.3 million units. When HUD launched RAD in 2013, the program was initially capped at 65,000 units. Over the last five years, Congress has significantly expanded the program raising the maximum of units to 455,000 units in 2018. PHAs are required to discuss their upcoming RAD conversion, but this is often insufficient to effectively explain changes that residents will experience as a result of a RAD conversion. Given that many residents of public housing are elderly, differently abled, and do not speak English as their first language, there must be greater levels of engagement to ensure that residents are informed. Avenues for participation in the decision-making process and access to plans and documents related to RAD are also vital to resident understanding, but are currently non-existent.

RAD/Section 18 Blending: RAD has increasingly been implemented in conjunction with a different HUD program, Section 18. We must highlight two main risks associated with the use of Section 18. First, Section 18 is not subject to the same regulations as RAD, such as the RAD requirement of HAP contract renewal. Second, funding for Section 18 comes from a different source (Tenant Protection Vouchers) and funded by congressional appropriations from Congress’ annual discretionary budget. As part of the discretionary budget, TPVs are not fixed annual expenditures. The discretionary budget has fluctuated over the last 20 years. The blending of RAD and Section 18 is discussed in more detail in the next section.
RAD and Section 18 Blending

RAD can be used in conjunction with Section 18, a provision of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. Section 18 allows for the demolition and disposition of certain public housing properties that are deemed obsolete. Section 18 has relocation provisions that can include relocation assistance payments, such as Housing Choice Vouchers, for tenants who are displaced as a result of the demolition. In March of 2018, HUD released a new demolition and disposition notice permitting properties undergoing RAD conversion to also receive Section 18 vouchers for a portion of units. This is only under the condition that the “demolished” units under Section 18 will be replaced and redeveloped. Specifically, up to 25% of the units in a RAD project can be proposed for disposition under Section 18 and replaced with Section 8 project-based voucher assistance.

This RAD-Section 18 “blending” provision was created in order to help finance RAD conversions. The rental assistance given under Section 18 is up to fair market rents (FMR), which is a higher subsidy than provided under RAD. In order to qualify for RAD-Section 18 blending, all of the units (both RAD and Section 18) must be newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated without using 9% LIHTC. RAD and Section 18 normally have different rules around relocation, but in the case of RAD-Section 18 blending, the RAD relocation requirements apply to all residents, including those from the Section 18 units. This means that all tenants have the right to return without prescreening. Nonetheless, there are differences between the two programs and it is unclear if the same benefits and protections are guaranteed to all residents in a project when both RAD and Section 18 are used.

Section 18 allows NYCHA to tap into tenant protection vouchers that generate higher rental subsidies than the traditional RAD vouchers. The higher rental subsidies are based off the fair market rents in the particular area. Section 18 does not result in higher rents for tenants but could potentially result in higher rents if the Section 18 tenant protection vouchers go unfunded by Congress. Tenant protections are lesser for Section 18 recipients than RAD residents. Section 18 permits the demolition of public housing but simultaneously provides a greater subsidy for tenants than does RAD, Section 18, while providing a more generous financial benefit to the recipient also comes with the risk associated with being tied to Congress’ discretionary budget – an element which removes local control and some element of political accountability. There are no obligations that Section 18 contracts be renewed and they are really at the behest of congressional whim. With New York’s aggressive real-estate market and a number of NYCHA properties being located in high value real-estate markets and gentrifying neighborhoods, the embrace of Section 18 can put residents at an especially severe risk.

Tenants rents under RAD rise to 30% of the tenant’s income whereas rents stay the same under Section 18, making the program initially seem more appealing to the possible applicant. As noted above, Section 18 comes with significant risk to participants as compared to RAD. The risk of foreclosure on an affordable housing development is higher with Section 18 because of the reliance on Congressional funding while RAD is considered a lower risk – unless undone by the collapse of the Section 18 portion of the project’s resident funding. Both provide risks to permanent affordability but Section 18, as noted above, is once again constantly in a more precarious financial state due to the nature of its funding. The risk of foreclosure under Section 18 is higher, resulting in a more tenuous tenancy for residents.

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RAD Implementation in the U.S.

Dozens of public housing authorities across the U.S. have already converted public housing units under RAD. The table below shows the public housing authorities with the largest shares of RAD units as of 2016. Many authorities, such as in San Francisco and Cambridge, Massachusetts, have committed to converting all of their public housing units to RAD. As shown in the table on the following page, while these and other authorities may have converted large percentages of their portfolio to RAD, their total number of units pale in comparison to NYCHA’s. The Cambridge Housing Authority has committed 92% of its public housing stock to RAD, but this represents only 2,202 units — just 1% of NYC’s total units. While NYC is an exceptional case, there are lessons to be learned from other cities’ experiences with RAD. The case studies below detail the experiences of the RAD program in San Francisco, Cambridge, and NYC.

San Francisco, California

San Francisco has committed to converting its entire public housing stock to Section 8 through RAD. So far, about half of its stock has been converted, representing 3,500 units and $700 million in repairs.\(^6\) This overhaul of San Francisco’s public housing authority was led by Mayor Ed Lee, who took office in 2011. In 2013, Lee brought together local housing organizations, city agencies, public housing residents, and community members in various public meetings to come up with a plan for addressing the issues facing public housing in the city. These conversations culminated in the San Francisco Housing Authority’s Public Housing Re-Envisioning Plan, which highlights RAD as a prime solution. The city of San Francisco sold 29 properties with 3,492 units to 7 developers, and chose Bank of America Merrill Lynch as the lender for the project.\(^6\) It was the largest affordable housing deal in U.S. history. The financing for the conversion totaled over $700 million, including $285 million in LIHTC equity.\(^7\) Because many people in the community demanded that non-profit organizations take a lead role in the process, the city required that all new owners of public housing be at least partially not-for-profit. The land remains owned by the housing authority, which grants 99-year leases to the new owners. In line with HUD regulations, the city ensured a one-to-one replacement of units so that no units would be lost as a result of the conversion, and where temporary relocation of residents was required during construction, the city ensured that residents return to their original units.\(^8\) Non-profit organizations like the Chinatown Community Development Center and the Mission Economic Development Agency took the lead in engaging residents, holding community meetings, and doing outreach so that residents would be included throughout the process. These non-profits also were the developers on a number of properties.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Since 2014, the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) has committed 2,130 of its total 2,900 units to undergo RAD conversion.\(^9\) These units are located on over 30 sites and are at different phases of conversion. Since current and proposed properties are each going through their own investor/leender RFP process, these properties may have different financing partners. Russell Apartments, for example, is currently under construction and is utilizing MassHousing bonds and Wells Fargo debt and equity.\(^10\) Millers River, on the other hand, is utilizing MassHousing bonds, tax credit equity from Wells Fargo, and debt from Citibank. The CHA provides program loans to serve as gap financing on these deals as well.\(^11\) RAD conversion is lauded as a central component in supporting green infrastructure efforts in Cambridge public housing. Tina Miller, a CHA energy consultant, remarked that converting CHA’s housing stock into low-income tax credit properties with Section 8 subsidies is “much more beneficial than the public-operating subsidies.”\(^12\)

With these RAD conversions, the CHA makes an effort to make environmental and sustainable improvements whenever possible. This includes planting trees, installing storm water tanks under the CHA parking lot, and building a green roof over a new community center at the Millers River Apartments.\(^7\)

For RAD to work, the CHA educated residents about how the conversion would impact their lives. In terms of resident engagement, CHA staff provided resources for residents, like having RAD-literate members on-staff for resident inquiries. CHA, developers, and residents support resident workforce development as a positive resident engagement effort.

RAD Best Practices

Based on our interviews with stakeholders involved in RAD conversions across the country, it is clear that RAD conversions vary considerably. There is no guarantee that a RAD conversion will be done well, but there are certain best practices that can be used to increase the likelihood that it will be successful. Some of these best practices include:

- Engaging residents and encouraging transparency at all levels
- Holding many more meetings with tenants than the three that HUD requires
- Ensuring equal benefits and protections to all residents in the case of RAD-Section 18 blending

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New Table refers to public housing developments with CHAs that have already converted to projects based on Section 8. It does not cover public housing with pending CHAs that are part of portfolio or multi-phase RAD conversions (see Note 10).
RAD in NYC: Permanent Affordability Commitment Together

RAD is currently the only development tool that HUD offers to repair and preserve public housing stock in the United States. While there are a number of potential negative aspects to the program, RAD would allow underfunded NYCHA properties access to millions of dollars in funding for much-needed repairs. These properties have had no consistent funding since New York State divested from them in 1998.

As discussed previously, RAD is implemented differently across cities. HUD gives leeway for local public housing authorities to decide certain program features, such as how the authority retains ownership. New York City’s implementation of the RAD program is called Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT). Under PACT, public housing units are converted to Section 8 and properties are owned and managed by private developers, while NYCHA retains ownership of the land. Private developers are given a 99-year land lease. On November 19, 2018, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a commitment from NYCHA to convert an additional 62,000 apartments to RAD.78 With 175,457 public housing units in NYC, this represents a little over one-third of NYCHA’s entire portfolio. The RAD conversion of these 62,000 apartments is predicted to address nearly $13 billion in repairs and will include new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, floors, elevators, boilers and roofs.79 The City guarantees that residents in buildings undergoing RAD conversion will retain their rights as public housing residents, pay rent limited to 30% of their income, and remain in their buildings during the renovations. The 62,000 units will be completed on a rolling basis by 2028.80

After participating in a number of conversations with advocacy groups, resident leaders, and the public at large, NYCHA created a set of Guiding Principles for developers.81 These principles were folded into the PACT program, which ensures some of the strongest resident protections in the country, including a commitment to permanent affordability. These guiding principles clearly stipulate the responsibilities of the property manager, the developer, and the explicit role NYCHA will play during the RAD-conversion process and after rehabilitations have been conducted.

Similar to the federal guidelines for RAD, PACT creates a public-private partnership between NYCHA and the selected private developer to not only make needed repairs, but also to manage sites more efficiently, while NYCHA retains an oversight role. This partnership opens up access to private capital and the ability to take on private debt, a source of funding previously not available to public housing authorities.

PACT is the critical piece of the NextGeneration NYCHA plan, NYCHA’s ten-year comprehensive plan for capital generation in order to fund much needed repairs and improve the quality of life for residents. In fact, PACT is deemed such a critical piece of the plan that almost one-third of public housing units are slated for a RAD conversion and the housing authority expects PACT to generate half of the projected capital need.82
Triborough Preservation Partners Pilot

While there has only been one RAD conversion completed in NYC thus far, NYCHA piloted a similar type of public-private partnership to infuse private capital into public housing in 2014. The purpose of this pilot was to assess the effectiveness of essentially turning over management of public housing to the private market. For this pilot, NYCHA changed the ownership structure of six NYCHA developments, four of which are in Manhattan (one in East Harlem), one in Brooklyn, and one in The Bronx. Instead of completely turning over ownership, NYCHA created a new quasi-public entity called Triborough Preservation Partners to take on 50% of the risk while NYCHA maintained the other 50% ownership stake. They were then able to contract a private management company, C+C Property Management, to take over responding to repairs and building renovations, creating a model for private development teams to recreate in the future.

Similar to RAD Conversion, the Triborough buildings converted the source of funding from the public housing rental subsidy to project based Section 8. Once the buildings changed ownership they were able to raise capital funds by selling tax-exempt bonds through NYC Housing Development Corporation (NYCHDC) and selling Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to private entities bringing in over $80 million for renovations at a cost of about $90,000 per unit. The outcomes of this project were expected to assist HUD in understanding the challenges of severely distressed public housing developments, especially those larger buildings that are unique to other big cities throughout the country like New York. The Triborough Preservation Partners Pilot led to favorable outcomes and encouraged the housing authority’s commitment to future public-private partnerships.

The subsequent report titled “New Partners in Public Housing” released in June 2018, monitored all the buildings for a 5-year period, before, during, and after construction. They compared the “pilot group,” which were the 6 buildings transferred to Triborough, to the “control group,” represented by 6 buildings similar in size and location. The results of the report show comparisons between the pilot group and the control group as well as changes in the pilot group from before conversion to after conversion.

Some highlights from the report are:

> Service and repairs were less of a concern, pilot group’s work orders decreased to 2,109 while control group’s work orders increased to 12,023

> Rent collection became more effective, pilot group’s percentage of households in rental arrears dropped to 4% while the control group’s increased to 26%.

> Energy consumption showed that the pilot group became much more energy efficient following renovations specifically with regards to electricity usage and gas heating.

In this section, we will review the trajectory of PACT RFPs and highlight the authority’s changes to applicant requirements. NYCHA has released 4 RFPs under this program starting in February 2016 with Ocean Bay. The authority implemented the Ocean Bay conversion with additional funding from FEMA due to superstorm Sandy in 2012. Ocean Bay enabled developers to seek 4% LIHTC tax exempt bond financing, a financing method in affordable housing development that will be unavailable to current RFPs due to scarcity of funding. Lastly, the Ocean Bay RFP was for a single site, whereas new RFPs cover a broader geographic region, constituting megabundles of scattered cluster sites. This has made developer capacity an even more significant priority.

There were two primary criticisms of NYCHA’s Ocean Bay RFP; it included no designated social services provisions and did not specify how frequently the developer meet with residents. In response to this criticism, NYCHA required for its Brooklyn and Manhattan RFPs that the selected applicant work with an existing provider and to ensure no interruption of service occurs. The applicants in the Brooklyn and Manhattan RFPs were both required to incorporate new services and community amenities on the basis of resident feedback and to survey residents prior to construction to identify resident concerns. There is no specified method by which applicants are required to gather that data, but the requirement alone is evidence of a growing awareness on the part of NYCHA to embrace community outreach as part of their implementation strategy.

Additionally, after the Ocean Bay RFP, NYCHA lowered development threshold requirements, reorganized weight distribution of its selection criteria, and incorporated RAD Roundtable’s ‘Guiding Principles,’ which we will discuss further in the next section. The changes to threshold requirements make RFPs more accessible to smaller developers and require respondents to present more detail on social service provisions.

The new requirements for a social services plan indicate a resident-focused shift in NYCHA’s RFP process. Yet, there is more that NYCHA can do to make RFPs more accessible to smaller developers and require respondents to present more detail on social service provisions.

### Changes to RAD RFPs Since Ocean Bay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETITIVE SELECTION CRITERIA (WEIGHT)</th>
<th>OCEAN BAY</th>
<th>BROOKLYN</th>
<th>MANHATTAN</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Proposed Rehabilitation</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring Plan (*=Social Services included)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%*</td>
<td>10%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Instead of the ‘Financial Proposal’ and ‘Hiring Plan,’ the former criterion favors CDCs, which are more involved in local communities than the typical for-profit developer. SFHA’s RFP also incorporates a “selection panel” that involves professionals from various city agencies and other third parties.

Through its development thresholds, NYCHA is attempting to ensure that developers are capable of completing the enormous rehabilitations outlined in each megabundle’s RFP scope. However, these high thresholds are deterring nonprofits from applying. Fortunately, NYCHA reduced the thresholds in the Manhattan RFP requirements, with the amount of total development cost experience coming down to $75 million from $200 million in the Brooklyn RFP. NYCHA derives these figures from the physical needs assessments of the RFP properties. Therefore, to make these RFPs accessible to smaller developers, NYCHA needs to decrease the amount of units per megabundle. NYCHA justifies the large scale of the RFPs by arguing that construction and management contracts will benefit from economies of scale. On the other hand, tenant activists and community development professionals have criticized NYCHA for offloading properties too quickly and with an overconfidence in private developers, a dynamic that could threaten the future preservation of this deeply affordable housing.

After announcing its 2.0 plan in late 2018, NYCHA released the 2 latest RFPs for the next 3,300 units to enter PACT. These RFPs were published in a 40-day window, setting a fast pace for NYCHA’s RAD conversion plans. Following the Ocean Bay conversion, NYCHA’s RAD program has aggressively scaled up its conversion process with only a limited review of the risk involved. NYCHA’s Ocean Bay RAD made impressive improvements to the physical living conditions of the property, but the conversion is also only three years old and was done with significant FEMA funding.

The second RFP, which is not included in the above tables, was released in May 2017 for a megabundle of Bronx and Brooklyn sites. These sites are already under construction, with multiple development teams assigned clusters of buildings. Three development teams were chosen to renovate the nearly 1,700 units and these teams were comprised of developers such as Gilbane, Pennrose, Hunt Group, and RDC. This group includes developers that are headquartered in other states and property managers, such as Wavecrest, that have a reputation for being unresponsive to resident needs. When only large-scale national developers qualify under an RFP’s development experience requirements, we lose the cultural competency and local expertise provided by neighborhood-based CDCs.

Given that the federal government has continuously failed to finance capital improvements or significantly invest in social services, RAD offers some hope to NYCHA residents. NYCHA’s physical conditions have declined for decades and the infusion of private capital into NYCHA appeals to government leaders across the political spectrum. Ocean Bay’s successful renovation and relatively favorable resident reviews allowed the initial trial to be marketed as a model for larger and more challenging NYCHA property bundles. However, Ocean Bay’s $560 million physical needs assessment pales in comparison to the $11 billion and $9 billion physical needs assessments of the Brooklyn and Manhattan bundles respectively.
RAD Right Now
Manhattan RFP

Taking into account our client’s capacity and area of impact, we want to highlight NYCHA’s Manhattan Superbundle RFP, released in February 2019. NYCHA released its RFP for a bundle of 16 sites in Manhattan, the majority of which are located in Harlem, East Harlem, and Washington Heights. NYCHA has since held a number of informational sessions that are open to the public but are geared mostly toward developers interested in applying to the RFP. In a hurry to offload management of these properties to the private sector and kick off the rehabilitation process on a large scale, NYCHA’s RFP process has so far favored large, for-profit developers, which are incentivized by the tax benefits of investing in public housing.

The RFP includes sites that will be RAD-Section 18 blended, fully funded by Section 18, or unfunded.

There are seven RAD sites, comprising 598 units. However, they are not fully funded by RAD, as NYCHA expects that up to 25 percent of the units in these properties will be converted under Section 18:

1. 335 East 111th Street
2. Park Avenue-East 122nd, 123rd Streets
3. Manhattanville Rehab (Group 2)
4. Public School 139 (Conversion)
5. Samuel (MHOP) III
6. Fort Washington Avenue Rehab
7. Grampion

There are seven Section 18-only sites, comprising 496 units:

1. Manhattanville Rehab (Group 3)
2. Washington Heights Rehab (Groups 1 and 2)
3. Washington Heights Rehab Phase III
4. Washington Heights Rehab Phase N (C)
5. Washington Heights Rehab Phase N (D)
6. Samuel (MHOP) I
7. Samuel (MHOP) II

There are two unfunded, Part 200 sites, comprising 624 units:

1. 344 East 28th Street
2. Wise Towers

Current Efforts to Improve RAD Implementation

The nonprofit community and many progressive local officials, such as Manhattan Borough President Gail Brewer, have criticized NYCHA for tailoring the RFPs to for-profit developers. As the RFP stands now, only these developers meet the thresholds for development and management experience. Applicants must have successfully completed at least one tenant-in-place rehabilitation project with a total development cost of $75 million within the past 7 years. Applicants must also have successfully managed 1,700 units of affordable housing within the past 7 years. The sheer size of the RFP bundle, plus these 2 criteria, prohibit most nonprofit developers from applying to the RFP as a developer or property manager. Their only option is to apply in conjunction with a larger developer to be the social service provider.

There are multiple ways in which activists, nonprofit organizations, and public officials have organized to advocate for a RAD process that prioritizes nonprofit involvement. Enterprise Community Partners, a national organization that provides technical assistance and funding to non-profit community development organizations, has held workshops and roundtables for local nonprofits and residents to discuss the implications of RAD and how NYCHA can better design the program to safeguard its deeply affordable housing stock and to increase involvement of local nonprofits. According to Michelle Mulcahy of Enterprise, NYCHA has attended Enterprise’s workshops and has been open to feedback. In response, NYCHA changed its RFP after the Ocean Bay experience to require that development teams work with existing social service providers and create a social services plan prior to rehabilitation. Enterprise is also currently exploring funding and grants for community-based organizations to learn more about RAD in order to educate their constituents, many of whom are public housing residents.

Additionally, the Community Board 7 Task Force, led by Roberta Semer, the chair of Community Board 7, has built a network of local activists, organizations, and public officials to advocate for greater involvement of nonprofits in RAD. The task force consists of participants of community boards across the city. Five years ago, CB7 members created this committee over their concern for the future of NYCHA housing on the Upper West Side, an area where public housing constitutes the last available stock of deeply affordable housing. The task force has organized various informational forums for NYCHA residents, and even arranged an educational trip to Cambridge, Massachusetts RAD sites. Partially in response to their advocacy, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer wrote a letter to NYCHA calling for the RFPs to be broken down into smaller bundles of projects.

Small Scale RFQ

In response to feedback from nonprofits, public officials, and activists, NYCHA issued in April of 2019 a Request for Qualifications for Large-Scale and Small-Scale Partners (RFQ). The RFQ for Small-Scale Partners would enable smaller developers to enroll in a list of pre-qualified partners, who will then be eligible to apply as developers of the smaller bundles of RAD conversions, for which NYCHA will release RFPs in the near future. The threshold for small-scale developers is that they have completed at least 1 residential rehabilitation project with a total development cost of at least $10 million within the past 7 years. This would allow nonprofit developers, such as AND, to apply for future RAD RFPs.
8

RAD:
Moving Forward
P.S. 139 Site Evaluation

Possibilities for the Future of RAD?

From the list of RAD conversion sites in the Manhattan RFP, our studio identified a public housing site that a nonprofit developer like AND could potentially re-develop and manage. Public School 139 is a 64,945-square-foot, former school in East Harlem that was converted in 1986 to senior public housing. The 125-unit project is home to 128 residents, including 120 single seniors, 4 seniors in multiple-person households, and 1 single non-se- nior. The census tract in which Public School 139 is located is predominantly low-income, with 35% of the population living in poverty. The census tract is also predominantly black/African American (69.1%) and Latino (24.7%).

According to the Manhattan RFP, Public School 139 requires almost $14 million in capital improvements the first year of conversion and an additional $21 million over the next 19 years. Early on, the vast majority of improvements consist of architectural and apartment renovations. From years sixteen to twenty, most money will be allocated to mechanical improvements.

AND has the staff capacity and experience to redevelop and manage Public School 139. First, AND works primarily with senior populations in East Harlem. It is familiar with the neighborhood and the population group, and would thus be well-positioned to guide Public School 139’s senior residents through the conversion process and provide social services thereafter. Second, the required capital improvements of $35.5 million are within the scope of real estate projects that AND has previously undertaken.

Expanding Community Input

A primary concern regarding RAD conversions is the wellbeing and safety of NYCHA residents. Our studio prioritized resident outreach in order to gauge residents’ concerns about RAD and to understand residents’ needs. We selected P.S. 139 as our tar-

get site, both because it suited our client’s development portfolio and because the site was included in the Manhattan megabundle.

First, we built relationships with resident leaders by attending a Tenant Association meeting in February 2019. There, we connected with two resident leaders, one who lives at P.S. 139 and one who was a member of the Roundtable for Resident’s Rights and Protection. After this initial meeting, we scheduled interviews with the two resident leaders and with the staff of the service provider at P.S. 139, ARC XVI. These interviews informed the questions for our survey for the remainder of the tenants at P.S. 139. (See Appendix B).

> Resident Interviews

The resident questionnaire was designed to engage residents about how they experience Harlem, the RAD conversion process, and the types of resources and services they want to see in their homes and neighborhood (see Table 4).

The respondents indicated a pattern of common themes: income disparity, future affordability, social services, and the RAD program. The table on the following page highlights some of their responses.

The resident interviews demonstrated that leaders often have a better understanding of the RAD process, probably due to their leadership position. They also reported that NYCHA residents were confused about potential rent increases and other tenant protections, despite attending meetings about RAD. Overall, the respondents were optimistic about the RAD conversion because their outstanding repair and maintenance issues would be addressed. In addition to RAD and needed capital repairs for the building, the respondents highlighted a dire need for social services for NYCHA residents, particularly for vulnerable and aging residents.

Interview Guide

(Question Number)

1. (Changes in the neighborhood) (3) Describe your neighborhood (5) Resources/services needed from NYCHA (10) Are you familiar with RAD (13) RAD handbook (15) RAD positive outcomes (12) Resident Engagement roundtable

<table>
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<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>RESPONDENT</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“A lot of our seniors are making choices between medicine and healthy food”</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Restoration of social services”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“We have a lot of homelessness. They need to have a place to stay and we have some people who beg for food, money”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“We need services that are going to be more affordable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“it’s hard to understand”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Folks are trying to change the name...Harlem is our home...they want their name instead of Harlem...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Tenants don’t really know...they need to know more...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Gentrified” and “economically challenged”</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“it sounds very good to me...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“stop this band-aid process.....no one should be living in sub-standard conditions. They pay their rent...the quality of life is so sub-standard”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“...this is not set in stone...you’re going to have to make adjustments...it is not a perfect process, but it’s a working progress”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Not really, I’m trying to learn. I’m not familiar with it...they showed us pictures about how it’s going to be remodeled”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“...that’s the concern with the people...moving and rent”</td>
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Theme:

Affordability | Social Services | Income Disparity

Social Services | Perception of RAD | Gentrification

Gentrification | Income Disparity | Perception of RAD

Repairs | Quality of Life | Perception of RAD

RAD Comprehension
Social service provider interview

ARC XVI is the social service provider located in the P.S. 139 building. They are a multi-service agency servicing the needs of the elderly in Northern Manhattan with a mission to “empower seniors to make choices” for themselves. In the interview, the respondent reported that the organization provides services to any seniors who frequent their site, NYCHA residents or otherwise. They reported observing a growth in Spanish-speaking and East Asian population in the area. The respondent reported that ARC XVI is fully aware that the site has been chosen for a RAD conversion and does not expect that these changes will affect their services. Corroborating what we heard from the resident interviews, the ARC XVI respondent highlighted the need for repairs, stating that “in general, the place needs to be suitable for living.” The respondent also noted that health services and home assistance are critical needs, especially for those who do not qualify for Medicare.

P.S. 139 Resident Outreach/Survey

The responses from our interviews informed the survey that our studio created for the residents at P.S. 139. Similar to the resident interviews, the studio aimed to gauge the extent of residents’ knowledge of RAD and to measure their priority needs. In order to better access residents, one of the building’s resident leaders joined studio members during outreach. Forty-three of the 128 residents in the building responded to our survey. While the survey was structured to collect specific data, this process also allowed for more casual conversations with residents about changes in the neighborhood and the impending building renovation. After our interviews, we realized how complex the topic was and many residents still had questions about RAD.

The survey indicated that most of the respondents had some knowledge of the RAD program and were aware that their building would undergo renovations. Many residents were hopeful that these renovations would yield positive results. During our outreach, respondents explained that they relied mostly on the resident association meetings to learn about RAD, but that the meetings had become repetitive and they needed more information on the entire process. Specifically, respondents wanted to know more about the trajectory and timeline of their building’s rehabilitation. They expressed concerns about the speed at which these renovations would be completed, particularly as many residents were waiting for NYCHA to address outstanding repair and maintenance issues. Residents also expressed the need for safety and supportive services/accessibility for seniors, especially those with limited mobility and for home-bound residents.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PRIORITY RESIDENT CONCERNS</th>
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<td>SAFETY</td>
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<td>REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE</td>
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<td>RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING STABILITY</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image 1 (left): Studio member Edgar surveying P.S. 139 residents
Image 2 (right): Studio member Sarah surveying P.S. 139 residents
Panel Discussion with CDCs, community advocates and NYCHA residents

Our studio developed a variety of approaches to community outreach. In order to further engage conversations between CDCs, community advocates, and NYCHA residents about RAD, our studio hosted a panel discussion at the Silberman School of Social Work in East Harlem on April 24, 2019. We brought together CDC leaders, tenants, and other stakeholders to share concerns and questions about NYCHA’s PACT implementation. Over 70 people attended, including many NYCHA residents, and the event was livestreamed by CityLimits to allow virtual engagement with the discussion. The studio’s primary takeaways from the panel were:

NYCHA resident leaders believe more has to be done to educate and inform residents about the conversion. There were many concerns about NYCHA’s transparency with regard to site selection and resident engagement.

CDC leaders believe they are better suited to partner with NYCHA over private entities, especially in addressing the needs of public housing residents.

The Manhattan Borough President’s Office, Community Boards, and active resident leaders are already strategizing and building coalitions. They are already working to fill information gaps for residents.

Takeaways

Members of the panel had broad concerns about whether long-term affordability, accessibility, safety, provisions for seniors, and social services would still be provided, and specifically, whether these protections would still be in place after a RAD conversion.

Residents also showed a widespread uncertainty about how the process would impact them directly. They called for more communication between NYCHA and the residents, greater community input, and more educational resources to help illuminate an incredibly complicated conversion. Elise Golding, a community organizer at St. Nicks Alliance who works closely with NYCHA residents, explained that the level of resident engagement with NYCHA for its infill project at Cooper Park Houses has been subpar. She said that tenants are left in the dark about the process. Our interviews with and feedback from residents suggest there are similar issues with regard to RAD.
New York City has a robust history of community development that traces back to the 1970s. During that time, the city was experiencing a financial crisis that led to disinvestment and abandonment of many communities. The administration was thus faced with a growing affordable housing crisis: eighty-one thousand units of housing stock disappeared in the late 1970s. 45.6% of renters spent more than 30 percent of their income on rent in 1981 and the city was experiencing rising rates of homelessness. With ownership of about 102,000 units of occupied and vacant in rem (tax-foreclosed) housing, the City was incentivized to transfer this housing to private ownership and finance its rehabilitation. Numerous city-led programs enabled tenants, community-based non-profit developers, and for-profit developers to purchase and rehabilitate units. Individuals and communities rallied together to form CDCs, taking on responsibility for neighborhood revitalization and rehabilitation. CDC funding was rooted in the Community Reinvestment Act and Community Development Block Grant policies of the 1970s.

Much of New York City’s cultural vibrancy can be traced back to these locally embedded CDCs, whose work was spearheaded by and motivated towards the betterment of the community as a whole. The disinvestment by banks, developers and the city not only left wide-spread abandonment of the built environment, but also a loss of necessary social and economic resources for residents. At their inception, CDCs provided critical infrastructure for communities, including neighborhood watches, community gardens, after school programs, credit unions, and small business opportunities. Today they continue to provide housing opportunities for low-income communities, but also act as important civic leaders and invested stakeholders. CDCs continue to play a vital role in neighborhoods throughout the city. Not only do nonprofit developers build and manage affordable housing, they also provide a variety of social services including, but not limited to, pro bono legal support, workforce development, senior programming, tenant organizing and assistance, and supportive services for formerly homeless individuals.

CDCs in NYC

New York City has developed over 100,000 units of affordable housing across all 5 boroughs. Locally mission-driven nonprofit developers have acted as stewards within the community, ensuring neighborhood stability, responsible ownership and management of affordable housing, and a commitment to permanent affordability. The long legacy of CDCs within neighborhoods means they have deep connections to communities and a wealth of knowledge about the needs of residents.

Barriers to CDC involvement in RAD

There are two primary barriers to CDC involvement in RAD: the developer threshold requirements and the scope of the RFPs. The Ocean Bay RFP required developers to have comparable development experience in a residential preservation project worth over $50 million and comparable management experience overseeing more than 500 residential units. The Brooklyn RFP required the developer have experience conducting a tenant-in-place rehabilitation and overseeing a development project of over $300 million in total costs. Additionally, Brooklyn RFP applicants need experience managing over 2,600 units. After input from the RAD roundtable, NYCHA lowered the development threshold requirements for the subsequent Manhattan RFP. The Manhattan RFP requires comparable development experience of at least $75 million within the last 7 years and experience managing over 1,700 units.

All of the RFPs thus far were for properties or bundles with more than 1,300 units, larger than the capacity or portfolio of many local CDCs. The scale of these RFPs would therefore only be feasible for larger for-profit developers, who have the capital and staff to build and manage at that scale. Additionally, the Brooklyn and Manhattan RFPs feature properties that span across both boroughs. Given CDCs’ focus within specific neighborhoods, they would be unable to manage properties with such a wide geographic reach.

Vetting Competent CDCs

If NYCHA is willing to provide CDCs with greater and more robust development responsibilities, it is important to vet CDC applicants. Given concerns about the scale of development potential for small-scale nonprofit developers, NYCHA can incentivize CDC developers to team up with other CDCs to respond to larger RFPs. Inter-organizational work within the broader CDC community can thus be a valuable asset for working with NYCHA in the future. Moving forward, NYCHA should embrace joint ventures between CDCs and larger developers—a collaboration that could build trust among NYCHA residents while also ensuring financial viability.

Ideally, selected development teams should include CDCs that have strong community ties within the neighborhood of development sites. With the current wave of RFPs, NYCHA has selected developers with large development and financial capacity and with no connections to the neighborhoods in question. We believe NYCHA must provide stricter guidelines for development selection. For example, developers or management companies with excessive building code violations and no strategy to address these violations, property foreclosure, or a history of tenant harassment should be disqualified.

NYCHA should institute more stringent requisites for tenant engagement and protections as compared to prior RFP issuances. For example, selected CDCs should have a strong history of providing social services to high-needs communities and a demonstrable effectiveness in this role. Most importantly, the selected CDC should have a proven record of maintaining safe and affordable housing for its residents. A larger presence of CDCs in public housing goes hand in hand with providing communities with responsible and equitable development.
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Recommendations
Our studio developed a set of recommendations for CDCs and for NYCHA

CDCs can organize themselves to advocate for aforementioned changes from NYCHA by doing the following:

1 | Form a coalition of CDCs to make demands to NYCHA

CDCs in New York cover a wide range of neighborhoods with a diverse set of interests. Many of these organizations serve communities with large public housing populations. CDCs should make an effort to coordinate their activities and pool their resources to better impact changes in policies relating to public housing residents. Collectively, CDCs will be in a stronger position to not only demand smaller RFPs, but also to demand that all development teams for RAD projects include a non-profit partner with an ownership stake.

2 | Negotiate in potential joint ventures with for-profit developers for a share in ownership and profits

Larger for-profit developers must seek out non-profit partners to complete the development team, when applying to PACT RFAs. CDCs have the power to negotiate the extent of their management shares and the level of decision-making power with these for-profit developers. CDCs need to assess the mission of the developers with which they partner. By doing so, CDCs can assure that they work alongside developers with a shared vision for public housing.

3 | Organize NYCHA residents

As this report demonstrates, the RAD program is complicated. The process is even more complex for people who do not have the resources to study the program over ten months. The people most impacted by the RAD program are the least likely to have the expendable time to engage in its implementation. CDCs can continue to educate and organize residents to more effectively articulate their concerns and demands to NYCHA, then elected representatives, and developers. CDCs can hold trainings and workshops for residents about PACT, alerting residents to policy and program concerns.

Our analysis of NYCHA’s expansion of RAD conversion we suggest the following:

1 | NYCHA should alter the size of its Request for Proposals to make CDCs more competitive with for-profit developers

NYCHA has consistently released RFAs that immediately disqualify non-profit and small scale neighborhood housing developers from taking on a lead developer role. Many non-profit developers have decades of experience, but not at the scale required by the RFAs’ minimum threshold requirements. These CDCs often have experience working with public housing residents.

NYCHA should look to the capacity of these organizations as primary partners rather than ancillary social service providers. Non-profit developers should be given priority over for-profit developers, as in the case of San Francisco’s RAD conversions. CDCs are often mission-driven and deeply embedded in the communities they serve, while for-profit developers are primarily concerned with profitability.

We are encouraged by NYCHA’s improvements in their procurement process since the first RFP for Ocean Bay in 2016. Specifically, they have reduced minimum development thresholds in the Brooklyn (2018) and Manhattan (2019) RFAs. We also are supportive of the Request for Qualifications released in April 2019. This shows NYCHA’s willingness to work with smaller, locally-based developers and hope that the resulting projects will be at a much smaller scale and within the development capacity of local non-profits.

2 | CDCs need the opportunity to play a more significant role in the RAD process

In conjunction with Recommendation 1, we believe that non-profit housing developers, community based organizations, and community development corporations need to play a primary role in RAD conversion and have a larger percentage of ownership in these conversion projects. Since the Brooklyn RFP, NYCHA has required lead developers to implement a social service provision plan. As a result, developers have reached out to various non-profits across the city to fulfill this requirement. However, the social service providers are not likely to be offered an ownership stake. Therefore, we recommend that NYCHA give higher scores to development teams that include ownership for nonprofit partners.

Longstanding, mission-driven organizations are held accountable by the communities they serve. They have deep local knowledge and historical connections to NYCHA residents and tenant leaders. A larger ownership role in the RAD program would cement the organizations’ stake in the wellbeing of the neighborhood and would ensure the uninterrupted provision of social services.

Ultimately, the NYCHA RFAs should require lead developer partners to fund the budgets of social service providers. Currently, social service providers operate at slim margins, and the influx of funding would allow them to scale up their work and be on more stable footing.

3 | NYCHA needs a safety net for residents in the event of Section 18 foreclosure

RAD and Section 18 are complicated programs that draw from different appropriations in the federal budget. Section 18 Demolition and Disposition allows NYCHA to tap into Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs). TPVs require higher rental subsidies than traditional Section 8 RAD vouchers. NYCHA’s dependence on TPVs in the financing of RAD transactions relies heavily on the Congress’s continued funding of these subsidies at a high level. Even a slight reduction in congressional funding for TPVs could result in foreclosure, immediately increasing rents across NYCHA units from 30% of AMI to 80% AMI.

NYCHA needs to develop a plan to deal with potential funding shortfalls for Section 18 since these subsidies are dependent on annual Congressional appropriations. These appropriations could be cut at any time. NYCHA also needs to clearly communicate what will happen to Section 18 units after the 20-year period of affordability at the proposed rate expires.
4 | NYCHA needs more transparency when engaging with residents

NYCHA resident engagement process has included numerous meetings across Brooklyn, The Bronx, Manhattan and Queens around the PACT conversion. The agency has aimed to facilitate resident communication with developers regarding the scope of renovations and tenant-in-place rehabilitation. Despite these outcome-based conversations, many residents are still confused about the process of RAD conversion. Residents are pleased about the short-term repairs and renovations made to their homes, but are concerned about the long-term implications of the PACT program and changes to public housing policy.

Although NYCHA has held a number of meetings, based on our interviews and surveys, we found that residents want greater transparency. As such, we encourage NYCHA to provide residents with meaningful resources to address lack of clarity and incorporate their input into decision-making. This could include a public review process that allows residents to help evaluate and qualify developers.

5 | The City Of New York should take on greater responsibility for NYCHA properties

Based on our first semester research and interviews with policy experts and advocates, we recommend that the City of New York develop a comprehensive housing strategy that integrates public housing into their affordable housing agenda. As it stands, the competing plans of HPD and NYCHA fight over scarce resources for low-income housing development and preservation. We believe interagency coordination should be explicit in all housing plans moving forward in order to increase the City’s efficiency at securing affordable housing for as many residents as possible.
Our studio examined NYCHA’s efforts to implement the RAD/PACT program in New York City. NYCHA’s deeply affordable housing stock is in a state of crisis that has been manufactured by the federal government after decades of neglect and disinvestment. Lacking viable alternatives, NYCHA plans to convert one-third of its public housing units into private Section 8 and Section 18 units through the RAD program. While cities like Cambridge, Massachusetts and San Francisco, California have fully converted their public housing portfolios under the RAD program, our studio was hesitant to advocate for a similar policy in New York City. Since New York City’s public housing portfolio is so extensive, housing more residents and maintaining more units than the next fifteen largest cities combined, it is difficult to compare NYCHA’s experience with those of other cities. To date, only Ocean Bay has undergone a full RAD conversion in New York City — the largest single-site RAD transaction nationally to date — and this project had significant caveats, such as access to FEMA funding from Superstorm Sandy, that will not be carried over into other conversions throughout the city.

Our studio faced a number of limitations over the course of our two semesters of work. Any group or organization that seeks to build off of our work should be mindful of the following constraints:

- The limited scope of tenant surveys may have led to our studio overlooking some resident concerns.
- Language barriers with NYCHA residents made it difficult to survey a wider variety of opinions and concerns.
- The scope of our studio’s work changed dramatically from the first semester to the next, causing our group to shift research and engagement priorities.
- As the semester draws to an end, and our studio’s work is concluded, we will be unable to critically review NYCHA’s implementation of RAD at the Brooklyn and Manhattan sites.
- The brevity of our studio made it difficult to have a meaningful and substantive conversation with NYCHA regarding what we viewed as the strengths and weaknesses of their implementation process.
- The lack of outcome data made it difficult to comprehensively review the range of impacts RAD may have on public housing tenants and facilities. As previously noted, Ocean Bay was the only completed RAD conversion in New York City at the conclusion of our studio.

Importantly, there is little publicly available information on NYCHA’s plan for addressing potential Congressional cuts to Section 18 funding (Tenant Protection Vouchers).

Our studio’s recommendations attempt to address barriers to CDCs taking a more active role in the RAD process and provide constructive critiques of NYCHA’s public engagement efforts. Imbuing CDCs with more responsibilities in the RAD process will generate greater benefits for and sensitivity towards residents. We recommend that NYCHA reduce the scope of the RFPs to allow CDCs to play a great- er role. As we have learned over the past two semesters, residents consider community organizations more trustworthy partners than both for-profit developers and NYCHA. A more engaged CDC community will address many of the widespread concerns over displacement and transparency. Moreover, there is room for NYCHA to improve its public outreach efforts. While NYCHA has undertaken a robust public outreach campaign, many tenants and community advocates we spoke with have specifically identified a lack of clarity and transparency as some of the their most serious concerns. For example, NYCHA has made little mention of the distinction between RAD and Section 18 units, perhaps in an effort to reduce resident anxiety.

Our studio’s second set of recommendations is directed at non-profit CDCs themselves. CDCs should not wait for NYCHA to embrace them as partners. Rather, CDCs should continue to organize and build coalitions among like-minded organizations, activists, and public officials to influence the RAD process in New York City. In addition to their development and property management backgrounds, CDCs have decades of organizing and advocacy experience within the low-income communities of color they serve. Therefore, CDCs would serve as strong stewards of New York City public housing, the last bastion of deeply affordable housing stock in a city increasingly unaffordable to working people.

We believe that public housing is an important social good. Given the state of NYCHA’s crisis, our studio worked to develop a set of actionable recommendations for NYCHA and New York City’s CDC community to improve the living conditions for those living in NYCHA communities. Nevertheless, we also recognize this as a self-created issue due to decades of policy decisions that directly contributed to NYCHA’s crisis. In the future, we envision a place where public housing is adequately supported and funded.
Endnotes


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velopment, report, October 2, 2018.

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[29] Ibid.


[34] Historic Preservation,” Ascendant Neighborhood Development.

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ting Project Based Vouchers (PBVs) And Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBA) For Public Housing Con-

[51] Ibid.

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eence Guide For Public Housing Projects Converting To Project Based Voucher (PBV) Assistance.” Page 18.


tion (RAD) Notice Regarding Fair Housing And Civil Rights Requirements Applicable To RAD First Component - Public Housing Conversions.”


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countability Office. February 2018.


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[65] Ibid. 


[69] Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco. 2018. “Annual Plan 2018 (For Fiscal Year 2019)”. San Francisco. Page 38


[71] Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco. 2018. “Annual Plan 2018 (For Fiscal Year 2019)”. San Francisco.


[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.


[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.


[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid. 


[82] New York City Housing Authority. NYCHA 2.0. NYCHA; New York City. December 2018.

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid. 

[89] “Rehabilitation and Transfer of SFHA Scattered Sites,” San Francisco Housing Authority, March 15, 2018


[91] Interview with Michelle Mulcahy, April 3, 2019. 

[92] Interview with Roberta Semer, March 27, 2019.


[94] Ibid., 843.


[96] Ibid.
Works Referenced

Infill Resources


East Harlem Neighborhood Plan, (2016).


Land Value Capture Resources


Air Rights Resources


CLT & LEC Resources


### Protections for Existing Tenants

- **STRONG**: The solution ensures that existing tenants have the right to stay in their homes without rent increases, they retain their rights as public housing residents (right to grievance process, right to organize, etc.), and current amenities such as open space are not sacrificed.

- **MODERATE**: The solution puts existing tenants at risk of displacement, compromises their rights as public housing residents, and may involve the loss of current amenities such as open space.

- **WEAK**: The solution involves the displacement of existing residents, the loss of rights as public housing residents, and the loss of existing amenities.

### Capital Generation

- **STRONG**: The solution provides realistic means for generating the capital needed to make necessary repairs in NYCHA properties.

- **MODERATE**: The solution provides means to raise some funds for capital repairs, but this funding would need to be supplemented or is not sufficient on its own.

- **WEAK**: The solution does not generate capital to make necessary repairs.

### Long-Term Preservation

- **STRONG**: The solution provides means to not only fund immediate repairs but also to cover long-term maintenance and operating expenses for NYCHA properties, and the properties are preserved as permanently affordable at the income levels of existing residents.

- **MODERATE**: The solution provides the means to fund immediate repairs and could cover some maintenance and operating expenses in the short term but is not a long-term solution. The properties could be at risk for losing affordability to existing residents.

- **WEAK**: The solution only addresses short-term immediate needs, and/or does not guarantee the permanent preservation of affordability to existing residents.

### Scale-ability

- **STRONG**: The solution has the potential to be implemented on a citywide level and could feasibly benefit at least half of all NYCHA sites.

- **MODERATE**: The solution has the potential to be realistically implemented at around one third of NYCHA sites.

- **WEAK**: The solution could realistically be implemented in five or fewer NYCHA sites.

### Equity & Empowerment

- **STRONG**: The solution offers the opportunity for self-determination and community control for existing NYCHA residents, beyond superficial consultation.

- **MODERATE**: The solution offers opportunity for participation and engagement but does not give decision-making power to residents.

- **WEAK**: The solution does not involve NYCHA residents in the process whatsoever.

### Appendix A.1 | Studio Assessment of Infill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protections for Existing Tenants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The right to open space, green space, and recreational areas is violated in favor of development, despite loud resident opposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Generation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A projected maximum of $200 million over 10 years is not enough to meaningfully reduce NYCHA’s deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Preservation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Market-rate infill is seen as a visible first step to privatizing all of NYCHA land, and the land value pressures associated thrust NYCHA campuses into further precarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale-ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The abundance of “underutilized” NYCHA land (58 million square feet) throughout the five boroughs and broad political support for private development lends itself to high scale-ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Open space is consistently framed as a capital asset rather than a housing right, and this right is violated or ignored by developers and city officials. Fierce community opposition renders this intervention very weak in terms of equity and resident empowerment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix A.2 | Studio Assessment of Land Value Capture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protections for Existing Tenants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>This solution would not change NYCHA residents’ status as public housing residents. Therefore, their rights would not change and they would not be displaced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Generation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The collection of fees or other mechanisms to recapture value would generate funds for needed repairs, but these funds alone would be insufficient to address NYCHA’s capital needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Preservation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The LVC policy could be designed in such a way that it remains in place long-term (i.e. impact fees that are required for any new development; there will always be new development) and therefore could provide a long-term, stable source of income. Applications of the property tax may be less sustainable, because the policy would only be in place until the revenue collected has paid back the bonds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale-ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A LVC policy would likely face significant pushback from the real estate industry and political conservatives; it would be politically difficult to scale up this solution. Additionally, the solution is dependent on capturing value that is created by public actions such as rezonings and therefore might be limited to areas where these types of public actions have occurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The LVC policy could be designed in such a way that gives residents a say over how the collected revenue is invested. However, there is no guarantee that this would actually happen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix A.3 | Studio Assessment of Selling Air Rights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protections for Existing Tenants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>If NYCHA campuses are incorporated into a landmark designation or a special district, they can continue to provide deeply affordable housing while assessing the financial viability of selling air rights to fund much-needed capital improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Generation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Though a short-term revenue-raising strategy, it is very lucrative. Estimates show that selling 10 percent of NYCHA’s air rights could generate $1.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Preservation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Any revenue raised through the selling of air rights would be short-term, but the amount generated could substantially address NYCHA’s deficit and contribute to the long-term preservation of the campuses through the funding of major capital improvements like boiler and roof replacements and lead remediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale-ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Highly scale-able as NYCHA campuses throughout the city contain millions of square feet of unused FAR, especially in light of rezoning efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The solution offers opportunity for participation and engagement, but does not give decision-making power to residents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix A.4 | Studio Assessment of Community Land Trusts + Limited Equity Co-ops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>CLT</th>
<th>LEC</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protections for Existing Tenants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Residents in both CLT and LEC models have ongoing protections, especially if they receive section 8 vouchers as to subsidize their rents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Generation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Funding for rehabilitating NYCHA properties come from only a handful of sources. Generating capital becomes heavily dependent on expansion of government grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Preservation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>While CLTs and LECs are structured to ensure affordability, there are a form of privatization. Additionally, there is a risk with cooperatives as they have a history of falling into market-rate housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale-ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CLTs and LECs are dependent on highly organized resident base and exist in localized circumstances. To garner support from residents and trust from local funders is a time-consuming process that requires ongoing coordination, making this solution difficult to replicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>CLTs and LECs allow for resident control over longer periods of time or what is in known as in perpetuity with the CLT land ownership model. These methods of ownership have been implemented successfully in traditionally low-income communities such as the elderly and others means tested populations to preserve affordability for existing residents and protect neighborhood demographics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix A.6 | Studio Assessment of RAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protections for Existing Tenants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HUD guidelines require that no tenants are displaced and guarantee the right to return if tenants are relocated during construction. All of the rights guaranteed under the public housing Tenant Bill of Rights, however, are not guaranteed under RAD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Generation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RAD gives public housing authorities the ability to raise capital from private debt and equity markets. Tax credit equity is a main source of funds for RAD projects, but is limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Preservation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Section 8 funding is a relatively stable funding source, but there is always a chance that funds could be cut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale-ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NYC has plans to convert 62,000 NYCHA units under RAD, about one-third of the total. Scaling up RAD, however, depends on the availability of funding sources like tax credit equity, which are limited. RAD, theoretically though, could in the future be applied to all of NYC’s public housing stock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HUD requires that residents are informed of the RAD process, and many developers do much more tenant engagement than required by HUD. However, residents are not given any decision-making power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B.1 | CDC Questionnaire

**Respondent No. | | |**

**Opening Questions**

READ: I am going to begin the interview by asking you general questions about your organization

1. Could you talk about your organization and the work that you do? What is the scope of your organization’s work?
   a. [If not answered in the previous question] What is your experience in housing development and property management?
   b. What is your relationship with the neighborhood in which you are located?

2. [IF APPLICABLE] Could you speak on your relationship with residents/the people who use your services?

Next, I am going to ask a few questions about NYCHA

3. Has your organization ever worked with NYCHA/public housing and/or NYCHA residents?
   a. NO, skip to question 6
   b. If YES:
      i. In what capacity?
      ii. What has your experience been working with NYCHA and HPD?

4. Is your organization interested in working with NYCHA and HPD to rehabilitate NYC public housing units?
   a. In what capacity?

**READ:** The following questions are about Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Conversions

5. Has your organization responded to any recent NYCHA RFPs?
   a. Did you submit an application?
   b. What challenges did you face?

6. Have you (your organization) read the RAD RFPs released for Manhattan NYCHA sites?
   a. If YES, have you read the RFPs?
   b. If NO, skip to Question 14

7. Does your organization plan to respond to the RFP?
   a. Are there any barriers to your organization responding to the RFP?
   b. Is your organization able to meet the minimum thresholds for the awards (over 2,600 units developed cumulatively 7 years + $300 million in total development within the last 7 years)?

8. Would you want to be involved in the RAD process?
   a. In what capacity would you be involved?

9. Do you believe the RAD conversions will yield positive outcomes for tenants and communities?
   a. PROMPT: could you say more? What are your thoughts about RAD?

10. How could NYCHA and the city facilitate more CDC involvement in public housing?

11. How do you envision the future of NYCHA?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
   a. Do you have any questions for me/us?
Appendix B.2 | Questionnaire Social Service

**Organization**

**Respondent No. | | |**

**Opening Questions**

*READ:* I am going to begin the interview by asking you general questions about your work as a social service provider.

1. Could you talk about your organization and the work that you do?
2. How long have you been located at this site?
3. What is your relationship with the Harlem community?
4. Have you witnessed any drastic changes in the neighborhood since you’ve lived here?
   a. What kind of changes?
   b. Would you say that these changes affect you? If so, how?
5. What kind of services do you provide?
6. How often do the residents use the community center?
7. What have you identified to be the primary needs of the residents?

*READ:* Next, I am going to ask a few questions about NYCHA.

8. What is your experience working with NYCHA?
9. Do you receive funding from NYCHA?

*READ:* Now, I am going to ask a few questions about RAD conversions.

10. Are you familiar with the Rental Assistance Demonstration conversion (or RAD) program?
    If NO (explain the program to tenant)
    If YES,
    a. Could you describe what you know?
    b. How did you learn about it?

11. Are you familiar with private-public partnerships?
    If YES,
    a. Could you say more about what you know?
    b. Do you believe that this is a positive system to help NYCHA residents?

12. How do you think that RAD conversion will affect your community center/your work?

13. Do you have any concerns about the RAD program?
    a. What are they?

14. Do you think that the RAD conversion will have positive outcomes for the residents?
    a. What are your expectations?

15. What do you think NYCHA and the City can do to preserve public housing and protect public housing residents?

16. Do you have any questions for me?
Appendix B.3 | Resident Questionnaire

Respondent No. |__ |__ |

To be completed by the interviewer before the interview

Building Address: ________________       Survey ID: ________

Introduction/Purpose
You are being asked to take part in a research study about NYCHA and the RAD conversion program.

If you agree to be in the study, we will conduct an interview with you. This interview will include questions about your neighborhood, your household income, your dwelling, and your education. The interview will take about 30 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would like to record this interview so as to make sure that we remember accurately all the information you provide. People often say very helpful things and we can’t always write fast enough to get them all down. The recordings will be kept private. You may still participate in the interview if you do not want to be recorded.

In any sort of report made public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. We can stop the interview at any point if you do not feel comfortable to continue.

If you have questions at any time about this project or the procedures, you may contact our research supervisor, William Milzarski, via email at wmilzarski@hunter.cuny.edu

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature ________________________________ Date __________

Your Name (printed) ________________________________

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview recorded.

Your Signature ________________________________ Date __________

Opening Questions

READ: I am going to begin the interview by asking you general questions about Harlem

1. How long have you lived in this building?
2. How long have you lived in Harlem?
3. How would you describe your neighborhood?
4. Have you witnessed any drastic changes in the neighborhood since you’ve lived here?
   a. What kind of changes?
   b. Would you say that these changes affect you? If yes, how so?
5. Are you satisfied with the resources and services available to you in your neighborhood?
   a. If NO, what resources would you like to see? You can be as detailed as you want here.

READ: Next, I am going to ask a few questions about NYCHA

6. What is your experience living in NYCHA?
7. Are you a member of the Tenant Association?
   a. for how long?
   b. What is your role in the tenant association?
   c. How long has the tenant Association been active?
   d. How does the Tenant Association engage with tenants?
8. How often do you use the community center/senior center?
9. Are you satisfied with the resources and services available to you in NYCHA/in your building?
   a. If NO, what resources and services would you like to see?

READ: Now, I am going to ask a few questions about RAD conversions

10. Are you familiar with the Rental Assistance Demonstration conversion (or RAD) program?
    If NO [explain the program to tenant]
    If YES,
   a. could you describe what you know?
   b. How did you learn about it?
   c. Do you know the difference between Section 8 and Section 18?
11. **Are you familiar with private-public partnerships?**
   If NO, [explain]
   If YES, 
   a. Could you say more about what you know?
   b. Do you believe that this is a positive system to help low-income communities?

12. **Were you part of the resident engagement roundtable for RAD?**
   If YES, 
   a. What was the engagement process like?
   b. Did you feel like your input was valued?
   c. How would you envision the process differently?

13. **Have you read the RAD resident handbook?**
    a. Did you find it useful?

14. **Do you have any concerns about the RAD program? What are they?**

15. **Do you think that the RAD conversion will have positive outcomes for the residents?**
    a. What are your expectations?

16. **What do you think NYCHA and the City can do preserve public housing and protect public housing residents?**

17. **Do you have any questions for me?**
Resident Survey

* Required

1. NYCHA Site *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ 335 E 111th
   ○ P.S. 139

2. You are being asked to take part in a research study about NYCHA and the RAD conversion program. This survey will take 3-5 mins to complete. This survey is anonymous. If you choose to participate, we will not collect your name. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. We can stop at any point if you do not feel comfortable to continue. If you have questions at any time about this project or the procedures, you may contact our research supervisor, William Milzarsky, via email at wmilzarsky@hunter.cuny.edu. Do you consent (agree/have your permission) to take this survey? *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

3. Do you live in this building? *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

4. Are you familiar with the RAD conversion program?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

5. Are you aware that your building is being rehabilitated/renovated?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ Other: ________________________________

6. Are you familiar with the Section 8 program?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

7. Are you familiar with the Section 18 program?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

8. Do you have any concerns about RAD/the renovations?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ Other:

9. Do you think RAD will have positive outcomes for residents?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

10. Have you attended any meetings held in your building about the RAD conversions?
    Mark only one oval.
    ○ Yes
    ○ No

11. (If yes to previous question) how many?
    Mark only one oval.
    ○ 1
    ○ 2
    ○ 3
    ○ 4
    ○ 5

12. Have you read the RAD conversion Resident Handbook?
    Mark only one oval.
    ○ Yes
    ○ No
13. **What are your most important needs as a NYCHA resident?**
   Check all that apply.
   - Repairs and maintenance
   - Safety
   - Recreational Activities (trips, game nights, dinners, etc)
   - Housing Stability

14. **What resources and services would you like to see?**
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

15. **Do you use the senior center?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No

16. **Comments?**
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

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**Appendix C.2 | Resident Survey (Spanish)**

**SPANISH Resident Survey**

* Required

1. **NYCHA Site**
   Mark only one oval.
   - P.S. 139
   - 335 E 111th

2. **Senior Center**
   Mark only one oval.
   - Si
   - No

3. Usted está invitado/a a participar en un proyecto de investigación acerca de NYCHA y RAD (Programa de demostración de asistencia de alquiler). El cuestionario lleva 3 a 5 minutos para completarse y es anónimo. Si usted decide participar, su nombre no aparecerá en el estudio y su identidad no va a estar asociada con sus respuestas. Tomar parte en este estudio es completamente voluntario. Usted decide qué preguntas quiere responder y podemos detener el cuestionario en cualquier momento si usted no se siente cómodo para continuar. Si tiene preguntas con respecto al proyecto/cuestionario, puede contactarse con el encargado del proyecto William Milzarsky, via email a (william.milczarski@hunter.cuny.edu). ¿Está de acuerdo en participar?*
   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No

4. **¿Vive en este edificio?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - Si
   - No

5. **¿Está familiarizado/a con el programa de RAD?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - Si
   - No
   - Other:
   ____________________________
6. ¿Sabe si su edificio va a ser renovado?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No
☐ Other: __________________________

7. ¿Está familiarizado/a con el programa de la Sección 8?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No

8. ¿Tienes conocimiento de el programa seccion 18?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No

9. ¿Usted tiene preocupaciones sobre RAD/ las renovaciones?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No

10. ¿Usted cree que RAD va a tener resultados positivos?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No

11. ¿Atendiste reuniones sobre la conversión a RAD en este edificio?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No

12. (If si to previous question) ¿Cuántas reuniones?
Mark only one oval.
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

13. ¿Has leído el Manual de Residente sobre la conversión a RAD?
Mark only one oval.
☐ Sí
☐ No

14. ¿Cuál es tu necesidad más importante como un residente de NYCHA?
Check all that apply.
☐ Reparaciones y mantenimiento
☐ Seguridad
☐ Actividades de Recreación
☐ Establecimiento de Vivienda

15. ¿Cuáles recursos y servicios te gustaría ver?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

16. ¿Commentarios?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________