

PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY:

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY



Pratt Center
for Community Development

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly half a million New Yorkers are registered occupants of public housing, and the actual number of people living there is likely much higher. The New York City Housing Authority is their landlord, yet in practice NYCHA is barely an independent institution—it reports to the mayor of New York City, who appoints its chair and manages its budget. Many of these residents are among the poorest in New York. Even as New York City’s overall poverty rate has stabilized, poverty has become increasingly concentrated in many census tracts that include public housing. More than half of New York City Housing Authority residents live in census tracts in which a majority of households live in poverty, and nearly two-thirds of NYCHA developments are located in these extremely poor tracts.¹

NYCHA projects are not the only places in New York City with a large concentration of low-income residents. Privately owned and managed buildings subsidized through the federal Section 8 program and new housing developed with the aid of low income housing tax credits are home to tenants with incomes as low or lower than those of the typical resident of NYCHA-operated projects. But because they are owned and managed directly by government, NYCHA’s developments present a unique opportunity to reach residents—to enrich their prospects for economic advancement in conjunction with existing City-run programs that until now have operated as if public housing does not exist.

The high poverty rate in public housing is not a sign of failure—indeed, it is in part a measure of NYCHA’s great success in providing homes for those who can’t afford housing in the marketplace. As our review of residents’ tenure in public housing determined, the average household remains in public housing for 19 years—much longer than most New York renters remain in their apartments. With some 130,000 applicants for apartments languishing on waiting lists, NYCHA is in part a victim of its own success (and the lack of other affordable housing options in New York City).

The slow turnover of residents may have blunted the impact of a 1998 federal mandate ordering all housing authorities to take steps to “deconcentrate” poverty. NYCHA subsequently implemented a “working family preference” in its application process that reserves half of all new vacancies for families with a member who is employed, retired or disabled. Half of NYCHA households earn less than \$22,050, the federal poverty line for a family of four, and the median income for newly arrived households is slightly lower than that.

Citywide, NYCHA tenants comprise 31 percent of all residents living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. The concentration of New York City’s poor in the very housing complexes that the city operates suggests a need—and an opportunity—for creative and targeted intervention. Yet NYCHA largely operates separately from the city agencies that could make a positive difference—such as the Department of Small Business Services, which administers job training programs. A disproportionate number of the New Yorkers who could benefit most from help in securing such resources as job training, employment, and reliable public transportation live in complexes that are isolated from those opportunities.

To identify where resident needs and agency capacity align, the Pratt Center undertook a demographic analysis of public housing households and residents, including a picture of income, employment, education, and race and ethnicity. This data, much of which is not readily available elsewhere, comprises Part I of this report.

The data reveal some distinct advantages to be harnessed and disadvantages to address.

1 A census tract is a small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county, delineated for data presentation purposes. Designed to be relatively homogeneous units with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions at the time they are established, census tracts generally contain between 1,000 and 8,000 people, with an optimum size of 4,000 people. In New York City, the typical census tract is comprised of about six blocks.

Advantages to build on include:

- **NYCHA's role as a critical and effective source of affordable housing for New York City's low-income residents.** The rent burden for NYCHA residents—the amount of household income spent on rent each month—is far lower than that of other renters in New York City. Yet because incomes are so low, the total amount of money public housing households have left after paying rent remains limited. Protecting this rent-to-income ratio is a critical tool for keeping NYCHA residents afloat.
- **A growing commitment by City Hall to bring agencies providing employment and social services into closer contact with residents of public housing.** Over the past year, such efforts have included a request for proposals from the Department of Youth and Community Development for operation of community centers; a similar move by the Department for the Aging to oversee management of senior centers; and the arrival of the Human Resources Administration to coordinate employment services.
- **Underutilized land and development rights.** NYCHA has tens of millions of square feet of unused development rights on property it controls. In many cases, those development rights can be tapped for the benefit of current NYCHA residents.

Needs to be addressed include:

- **NYCHA residents participate in the labor force at a much lower rate than other New York City residents.** Just 43 percent of working age adults are in the labor force, compared with 66 percent of all working age New Yorkers. For those who are in the workforce, unemployment is over 9 percent. While much of the gap is due to a high representation of people with disabilities and young children, many public housing residents who could and want to be working are not.
- **Many NYCHA residents are “linguistically isolated,”** meaning that all family members age 14 and over have considerable difficulty speaking English. Nearly 17 percent of NYCHA's households are linguistically isolated.
- **More than one-quarter of NYCHA residents live ½ mile or more from the nearest subway line,** isolating them from employment, education, and essential services.

Building Communities of Opportunity

In Part II of this report we offer recommendations for three policy strategies—in workforce development, public transportation, and development of NYCHA vacant land—to improve economic opportunity for NYCHA residents.

These recommendations are not intended to encompass a complete solution to the complex set of factors, including lagging educational attainment and a high prevalence of disabilities, that keep NYCHA residents out of the workforce at a higher rate than other New York City residents. Rather, these three policy strategies are intended to encourage practical, modestly priced extension of existing City initiatives, outlining how they can meaningfully incorporate public housing residents as constituents. These strategies recognize what our demographic survey suggests: a significant minority of NYCHA residents remain un- or underemployed for reasons that can be addressed through better access to training and employment opportunities.

This study's authors are not alone in identifying concentrated poverty in New York City as an urgent issue requiring systematic intervention. The Bloomberg Administration's Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) has identified areas of concentrated poverty—that is, Census tracts in which 40 percent or more residents live in households below the federal poverty line—as a central challenge to efforts to diminish poverty in New York City. Yet its 2006 report, which identified geographic areas of concentrated poverty in New York City, did not specifically note a basic corollary—many of the areas with the highest concentrations of poverty are home to New York City Housing Authority developments, where the City itself serves as manager.

The high representation of public housing residents among New Yorkers living in areas segregated from economic opportunity is both a troubling sign and an indication that government agencies must do more than manage housing. NYCHA's facilities and management structure, coupled with the assets of other city agencies, can serve as a resource to make public housing itself an engine of economic opportunity. Under the right circumstances, the geographic proximity of people in need to one another can serve as an opportunity for the City to coordinate on-site services, connections to local employers, and other place-based interventions.

Any such interventions in the near future must take advantage of existing or creative financial resources, because NYCHA, like New York City and State, has none to spare. The agency's crippling budget deficit will be alleviated by renewed support from Washington, including a projected \$423 million in stimulus funds. The stimulus money will be dedicated to much-needed capital projects and building maintenance.

The Bloomberg administration has begun tapping other city agencies to help carry the budgetary and programmatic responsibilities of running some of NYCHA's services for residents. The Department of Youth and Community Development, for example, has issued a request for proposals for the operation of community centers in public housing, many of which had been slated to close for lack of funding in NYCHA's budget. Similarly, the Department for the Aging is soliciting groups to operate senior centers in public housing. The Human Resources Administration will be providing on-site employment services.

This report's policy recommendations outline three additional ways that City Hall can deploy existing agency resources and programs to the benefit of public housing residents, with the explicit objective of improving opportunity.

- **Linking public housing residents to employment created by economic development projects**

We estimate that about 160,000 NYCHA households live near a major economic development project sponsored by the City or State. This report proposes models under which public housing residents can get access to employment and training opportunities on those projects through partnerships with other city agencies.

- **Connecting public housing residents with employment and educational opportunities via cost-effective rapid transit**

This report looks at how a new network of bus rapid transit routes under development at the Department of Transportation and MTA can be designed to meet the transit needs of public housing residents, taking full advantage of public housing's population density and generously sized streets and public spaces.

- **Tapping the potential of NYCHA's vacant land**

An existing City program to sell or lease underutilized NYCHA property has been hampered by a lack of consistency or clarity in its objectives. A look at the details of requests for proposals issued for recent real estate sales, featured in this report, reveals that the solicitations are erratic in how they involve residents in planning, how much they seek to generate revenue through property sales, how much to keep the sale price low in order to encourage affordable housing development, and how much to encourage new community centers, small businesses, and other needed resources. This report calls for a strategic and systematic approach focused on consistent objectives and above all to promote the creation of opportunity for existing NYCHA residents.

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WHY IS PUBLIC HOUSING ISOLATED FROM OPPORTUNITY? A BRIEF HISTORY

Public housing provides a vital resource—a place to live for those who cannot afford decent quality housing at market prices. Yet it rose from an often conflicted history of racial and economic segregation and inequitable development that intensifies the isolation of its residents today. Across the United States, the construction of public housing reflected a series of choices that have kept it geographically and economically removed from other settlement, opportunities for social mobility, and transportation. These include the siting of public housing in the least desirable locations, a history of explicit racial discrimination, the political failure of efforts to make public housing mixed income, and modernist urban design that often served to separate developments from their surrounding neighborhoods. New York City has a much better track record of addressing these issues than most cities around the country, but the demographics of its public housing are still shaped by these tensions.

NYCHA built the first public housing in the country in 1934, before the federal government created a national public housing program. NYCHA took a row of tenement buildings built in the mid-1800s, demolished every third building to provide light and air, rehabilitated the remaining buildings, and created a common courtyard and play area. The result was an urban design that remains attractive, by standards then and now. The First Houses still stand on Avenue A, between 2nd and 3rd Streets on the Lower East Side.

From the beginning, New York City pushed to keep public housing residency diverse, in the face of Washington lobbying by private real estate interests to limit public housing to low-income residents, so that middle-class families would buy their homes instead. New York fought the rules and in some cases built its own housing projects that skirted federal regulations. Nonetheless, New York City also succumbed to patterns of segregation, in which public housing increasingly became a place for the poorest.

Public housing in New York City was constructed largely through urban renewal, generally on sites that were designated as slums by master builder Robert Moses and often over the objections of neighborhood residents and local officials. With the force of his imperial power Moses built public housing across a wide swath of the

city. Most NYCHA developments were built in poor neighborhoods, often isolated from public transportation and community services, including the Lower East Side, Harlem, Williamsburg, the South Bronx, and eastern Brooklyn. As elsewhere, public housing in NYC was initially segregated by race as a matter of law, with projects built either for whites or blacks.

Across the decades, NYCHA has generally maintained a higher quality level of public housing management than other large authorities across the country. NYCHA developments certainly have problems—especially maintenance failures, which have grown significantly in the wake of shrinking budgets and deferred repairs. But even while other public housing systems in the U.S. fell into a mire of physical dilapidation and high crime, NYCHA developments remained relatively successful as a source of housing.

Over the past two decades, public housing authorities across the United States have taken dramatic steps to confront the problems of isolation, crime, and distress in its most troubled public housing. The primary strategy has been the federal HOPE VI program, under which public housing authorities are allowed to demolish their worst developments and replace them with new, mixed-income complexes, generally lower-rise and with fewer units. There is substantial debate around the success of HOPE VI. Many once-feared developments have been rebuilt as attractive mixed-income neighborhoods. However, the amount of housing available for low-income families has been reduced, and some studies have identified significant displacement.²

Originally NYCHA declined to participate in HOPE VI, believing that it did not have developments so bad they qualified for demolition. (The requirement that fewer units be constructed than demolished was also objectionable, given that the agency has long had a waiting list of several hundred thousand people.) Eventually NYCHA undertook two HOPE VI projects—Egdemere/Arverne in Far Rockaway and Prospect Plaza Houses in Oceanhill-Brownsville, along with a similar (but not HOPE VI funded) effort at Markham Gardens in Staten Island.

During the same period, the neighborhoods surrounding some NYCHA developments—including Chelsea, the Lower East Side, the Upper West Side, parts of Harlem, Fort Greene/Downtown Brooklyn, and Boerum Hill—have undergone significant gentrification. As a result, public housing in those neighborhoods now borders million-dollar homes. Unlike many other low-income residents, public housing tenants in these neighborhoods are not at risk of displacement from gentrification. In these instances public housing provides the benefit of secure, affordable residence in a wealthy neighborhood, generally with improved services and access to public transit. However, it is unclear to what extent public housing residents of these communities benefit from these services. Many children from public housing remain in segregated, poorly performing schools, and there is no evidence that public housing residents in these neighborhoods are more likely to obtain good jobs than those in areas of concentrated poverty.

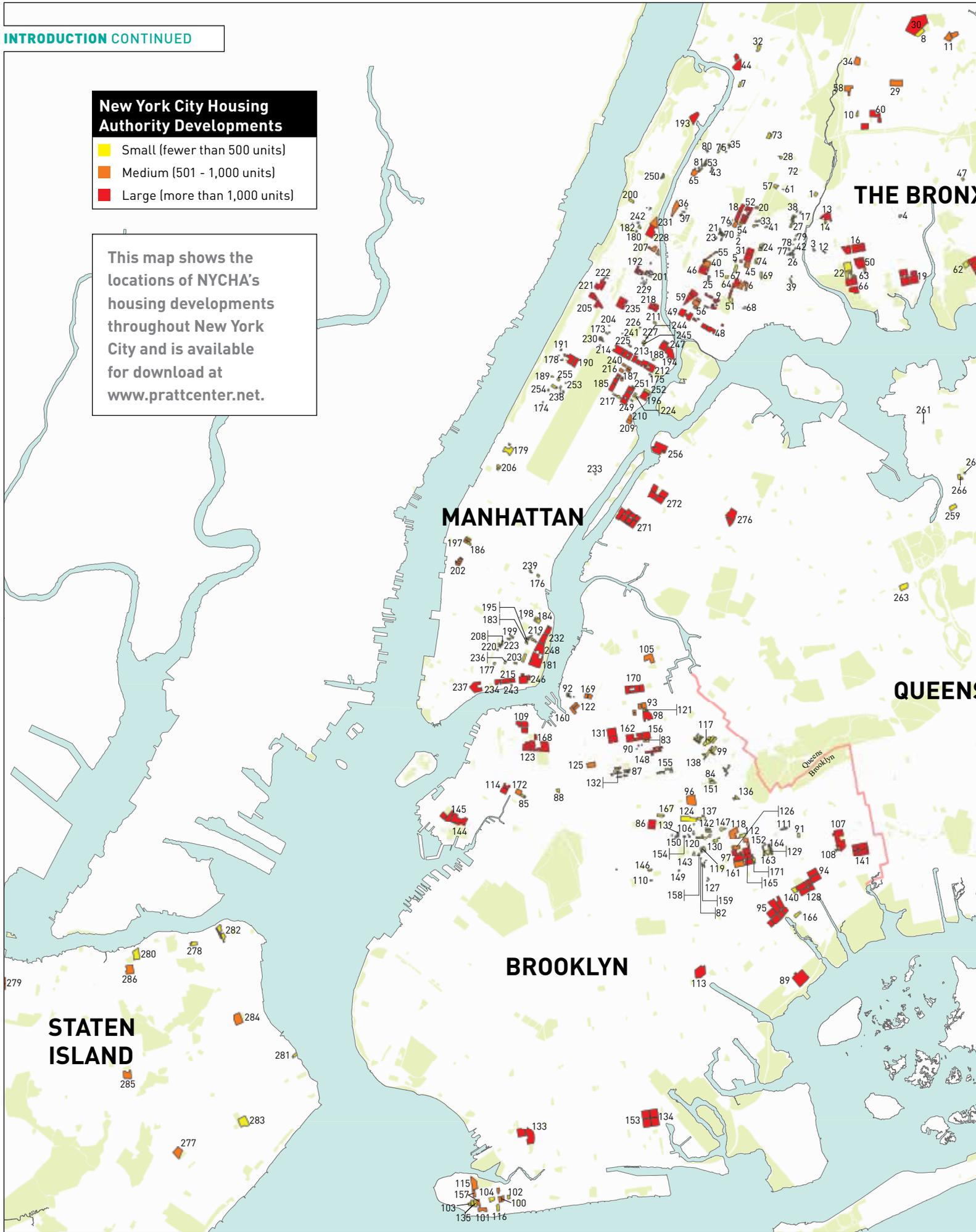
The majority of public housing developments continue to be in high-poverty neighborhoods, as discussed in this report. Many of the biggest developments sit within much larger high-poverty neighborhoods—in Oceanhill-Brownsville, East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Upper Manhattan, Mott Haven, and Soundview.

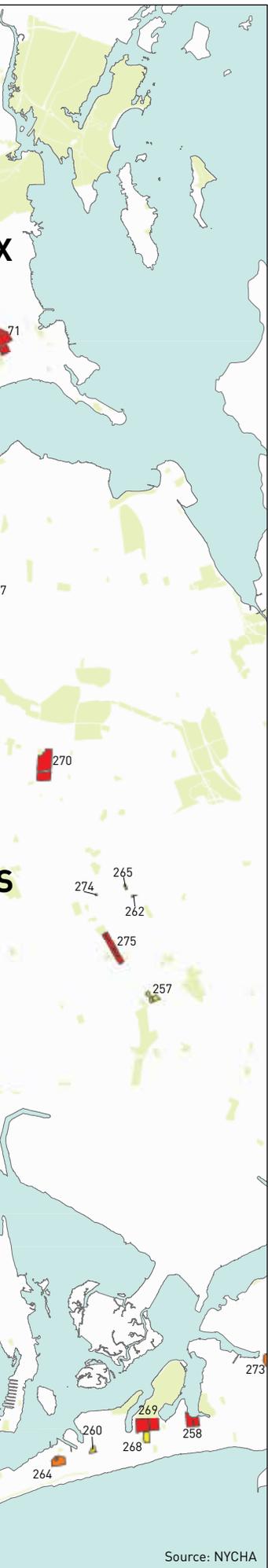
2 Center for Community Change (2002), *A Hope Unseen: Voices from the Other Side of HOPE VI*, Washington D.C.

New York City Housing Authority Developments

- Small (fewer than 500 units)
- Medium (501 - 1,000 units)
- Large (more than 1,000 units)

This map shows the locations of NYCHA's housing developments throughout New York City and is available for download at www.prattcenter.net.





Source: NYCHA

| ID | The Bronx | Units |
|----|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | 1010 East 178th St. | 218 |
| 2 | 1162 Washington Av. | 64 |
| 3 | 1471 Watson Av. | 96 |
| 4 | 2125 Glebe Av. | 131 |
| 5 | 905-907 Eagle Av. | 66 |
| 6 | Adams | 925 |
| 7 | Bailey Av. - West 193rd St. | 232 |
| 8 | Baychester | 441 |
| 9 | Betances | 1,087 |
| 10 | Boston Rd. Plaza | 216 |
| 11 | Boston Secor | 537 |
| 12 | Boynon Av. Rehab | 82 |
| 13 | Bronx River | 1,245 |
| 14 | Bronx River Addition | 225 |
| 15 | Bronxchester | 208 |
| 16 | Bronxdale | 1,497 |
| 17 | Bryant Av. - East 174th St. | 72 |
| 18 | Butler | 1,476 |
| 19 | Castle Hill | 2,023 |
| 20 | Claremont Parkway-Franklin Av. | 187 |
| 21 | Claremont Rehab (Group 2-5) | 489 |
| 22 | Clason Point Gardens | 400 |
| 23 | College Av. - East 165th St. | 95 |
| 24 | Davidson | 174 |
| 25 | East 152nd St. - Courtlandt Av. | 221 |
| 26 | East 165th St. - Bryant Av. | 111 |
| 27 | East 173rd St. - Vyse Av. | 168 |
| 28 | East 180th St.-Monterey Av. | 239 |
| 29 | Eastchester Gardens | 876 |
| 30 | Edenwald | 2,036 |
| 31 | Forest | 1,349 |
| 32 | Fort Independence | 342 |
| 33 | Franklin Av.(I-III Conv.& MHOP) | 159 |
| 34 | Gun Hill | 732 |
| 35 | Harrison Av. Rehab (Group A & B) | 184 |
| 36 | Highbridge Gardens | 699 |
| 37 | Highbridge Rehabs | 215 |
| 38 | Hoe Av. - East 173rd St. | 65 |
| 39 | Hunts Point Av. Rehab | 131 |
| 40 | Jackson | 868 |
| 41 | Jennings St. | 22 |
| 42 | Longfellow Av. Rehab | 73 |
| 43 | Macombs Rd. Rehab | 16 |
| 44 | Marble Hill | 1,682 |
| 45 | McKinley | 616 |
| 46 | Melrose | 1,019 |
| 47 | Middletown Plaza | 177 |
| 48 | Mill Brook w/ Ext. | 1,377 |
| 49 | Mitchel | 1,728 |
| 50 | Monroe | 1,101 |
| 51 | Moore | 463 |
| 52 | Morris (I & II) | 1,885 |
| 53 | Morris Heights Rehab | 5 |
| 54 | Morrisania | 206 |
| 55 | Morrisania Air Rights | 841 |
| 56 | Mott Haven | 992 |
| 57 | Murphy Consolidation | 281 |
| 58 | Parkside | 879 |
| 59 | Patterson | 1,790 |
| 60 | Pelham Parkway | 1,263 |
| 61 | Prospect Av. | 30 |
| 62 | Randall Av. - Balcom Av. | 251 |
| 63 | Sack Wern | 410 |
| 64 | Saint Mary's Park | 1,007 |
| 65 | Sedgwick | 783 |
| 66 | Soundview | 1,259 |
| 67 | South Bronx Area [Site 402] | 112 |
| 68 | Southern Boulevard | 87 |
| 69 | Stebbins Av. - Hewitt Place | 119 |
| 70 | Teller Av. - East 166th St. | 90 |
| 71 | Throggs Neck w/ Addition | 1,469 |
| 72 | Twin Parks East | 219 |
| 73 | Twin Parks West Consolidated | 311 |
| 74 | Union Av. - East 166th & 163rd St. | 317 |
| 75 | University Av. Rehab | 230 |
| 76 | Webster | 605 |
| 77 | West Farms Rd. Rehab | 208 |
| 78 | West Farms Sq. Conventional | 20 |
| 79 | West Farms Sq. | 37 |
| 80 | West Tremont Av.- Sedgwick Av. | 148 |
| 81 | West Tremont Rehab (I, II, III) | 78 |
| ID | Brooklyn | Units |
| 82 | 104-14 Tapscott St. | 30 |
| 83 | 303 Vernon Av. | 234 |
| 84 | 33-35 Saratoga Av. | 125 |
| 85 | 572 Warren St. | 200 |
| 86 | Albany (I & II) | 1,225 |
| 87 | Armstrong (I & II) | 617 |
| 88 | Atlantic Terminal | 299 |
| 89 | Bayview | 1,609 |
| 90 | Bedford - Stuyvesant Rehab | 84 |
| 91 | Belmont - Sutter Area | 72 |
| 92 | Berry St.-South 9th St. | 150 |
| 93 | Borinquen Plaza (I & II) | 934 |
| 94 | Boulevard | 1,424 |
| 95 | Breukelen | 1,594 |
| 96 | Brevoort | 894 |
| 97 | Brownsville | 1,337 |
| 98 | Bushwick | 1,220 |
| 99 | Bushwick II (Groups A, B, C, D, E) | 276 |

| ID | Brooklyn | Units |
|-----|------------------------------------|-------|
| 100 | Carey Gardens | 682 |
| 101 | Coney Island | 534 |
| 102 | Coney Island I (Site 1b) | 192 |
| 103 | Coney Island I (Site 8) | 124 |
| 104 | Coney Island I (Sites 4, 5) | 375 |
| 105 | Cooper Park | 700 |
| 106 | Crown Heights Rehab | 121 |
| 107 | Cypress Hills | 1,441 |
| 108 | East New York City Line | 66 |
| 109 | Farragut | 1,389 |
| 110 | Fenimore-Lefferts | 36 |
| 111 | Fiorentino Plaza | 158 |
| 112 | Glenmore Plaza | 438 |
| 113 | Glenwood | 1,186 |
| 114 | Gowanus | 1,137 |
| 115 | Gravesend | 634 |
| 116 | Haber | 380 |
| 117 | Hope Gardens | 324 |
| 118 | Howard | 813 |
| 119 | Howard Av. | 148 |
| 120 | Howard Park | 155 |
| 121 | Hylan | 209 |
| 122 | Independence Towers | 743 |
| 123 | Ingersoll | 1,826 |
| 124 | Kingsborough w/ Ext. | 184 |
| 125 | Lafayette Gardens | 879 |
| 126 | Langston Hughes Apts. | 509 |
| 127 | Lenox Rd. Rehabs | 74 |
| 128 | Linden | 1,586 |
| 129 | Long Island Baptist Houses | 229 |
| 130 | Marcus Garvey | 320 |
| 131 | Marcy | 1,714 |
| 132 | Marcy-Greene Av. (Site A & B) | 78 |
| 133 | Marlboro | 1,759 |
| 134 | Nostrand | 1,146 |
| 135 | O'Dwyer Gardens | 572 |
| 136 | Ocean Hill | 238 |
| 137 | Ocean Hill-Brownsville | 125 |
| 138 | Palmetto Gardens | 114 |
| 139 | Park Rock Rehab | 134 |
| 140 | Penn-Wortman | 336 |
| 141 | Pink | 1,500 |
| 142 | Prospect Plaza | 0 |
| 143 | Ralph Av. Rehabs | 117 |
| 144 | Red Hook East | 1,408 |
| 145 | Red Hook West | 1,470 |
| 146 | Reid Apts. | 227 |
| 147 | Reverend Brown | 200 |
| 148 | Roosevelt (I & II) | 1,103 |
| 149 | Rutland Towers | 61 |
| 150 | Saint Johns - Sterling Place Rehab | 83 |
| 151 | Saratoga Sq. (Site 60) | 250 |
| 152 | Seth Low Houses | 535 |
| 153 | Sheepshead Bay | 1,053 |
| 154 | Sterling Place - Buffalo Rehab | 125 |
| 155 | Stuyvesant Gardens (I & II) | 479 |
| 156 | Sumner | 1,098 |
| 157 | Surfside Gardens | 598 |
| 158 | Sutter Av.-Union St. | 100 |
| 159 | Tapscott St. Rehab | 155 |
| 160 | Taylor St. - Wythe Av. | 525 |
| 161 | Tilden | 998 |
| 162 | Tompkins | 1,045 |
| 163 | Unity Plaza | 167 |
| 164 | Unity Plaza - Turnkey | 461 |
| 165 | Van Dyke I | 1,714 |
| 166 | Vandalia Av. | 287 |
| 167 | Weeksville Gardens | 256 |
| 168 | Whitman | 1,652 |
| 169 | Williams Plaza | 577 |
| 170 | Williamsburg | 1,628 |
| 171 | Woodson | 405 |
| 172 | Wyckoff Gardens | 527 |
| ID | Manhattan | Units |
| 173 | 131 Saint Nicholas Av. | 99 |
| 174 | 154 West 84th St. | 35 |
| 175 | 335 East 111th St. | 66 |
| 176 | 344 East 28th St. | 225 |
| 177 | 45 Allen St. | 104 |
| 178 | 830 Amsterdam Av. | 159 |
| 179 | Amsterdam w/ Addition | 174 |
| 180 | Audubon Apts. | 167 |
| 181 | Baruch w/ Addition | 2,391 |
| 182 | Bethune Gardens | 210 |
| 183 | Bracetti Plaza | 108 |
| 184 | Campos Plaza (I & II) | 493 |
| 185 | Carver | 1,246 |
| 186 | Chelsea w/ Addition | 96 |
| 187 | Clinton | 748 |
| 188 | Corsi Houses | 170 |
| 189 | De Hostos Apts. | 218 |
| 190 | Douglass (I & II) | 2,056 |
| 191 | Douglass Addition/Rehab | 135 |
| 192 | Drew Hamilton | 1,210 |
| 193 | Dyckman | 1,167 |
| 194 | East 120th St. Rehab | 42 |
| 195 | East 4th St. Rehab | 25 |
| 196 | East River | 1,157 |
| 197 | Elliott | 607 |
| 198 | Fabria Rehab | 0 |

| ID | Manhattan | Units |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 199 | First Houses | 126 |
| 200 | Fort Washington Av. Rehab | 226 |
| 201 | Frederick Samuel Apts. | 664 |
| 202 | Fullton | 944 |
| 203 | Gompers | 473 |
| 204 | Grampion | 35 |
| 205 | Grant | 1,940 |
| 206 | Harborview Terrace | 377 |
| 207 | Harlem River (I & II) | 690 |
| 208 | Hernandez | 149 |
| 209 | Holmes Towers | 537 |
| 210 | Isaacs | 635 |
| 211 | Jackie Robinson | 188 |
| 212 | Jefferson | 1,486 |
| 213 | Johnson | 1,299 |
| 214 | King Towers | 1,378 |
| 215 | La Guardia w/Addition | 1,768 |
| 216 | Lehman Village | 616 |
| 217 | Lexington | 448 |
| 218 | Lincoln | 1,283 |
| 219 | Lower East Side (II, III & V) | 296 |
| 220 | Lower East Side I Infill | 189 |
| 221 | Manhattanville | 1,272 |
| 222 | Manhattanville Rehab (II & III) | 97 |
| 223 | Meltzer Tower | 229 |
| 224 | Metro North Plaza; Rehab | 267 |
| 225 | Milbank - Frawley | 80 |
| 226 | Morris Park Senior Citizens Home | 95 |
| 227 | Park Av. - East 122nd, 123rd St.s | 89 |
| 228 | Polo Grounds Towers | 1,612 |
| 229 | Public School 139 | 125 |
| 230 | Randolph | 452 |
| 231 | Rangel | 984 |
| 232 | Riis (I & II) | 1,191 |
| 233 | Robbins Plaza | 150 |
| 234 | Rutgers | 1,749 |
| 235 | Saint Nicholas | 1,524 |
| 236 | Seward Park Ext. | 360 |
| 237 | Smith | 1,933 |
| 238 | Sondra Thomas Apts. | 87 |
| 239 | Straus | 267 |
| 240 | Taft | 1,464 |
| 241 | Taft Rehabs | 1,464 |
| 242 | Thurgood Marshall Plaza | 180 |
| 243 | Two Bridges URA (Site 7) | 250 |
| 244 | UPACA (Site 5) | 180 |
| 245 | UPACA (Site 6) | 150 |
| 246 | Vladeck (I & II) | 1,510 |
| 247 | Wagner | 2,154 |
| 248 | Wald | 1,848 |
| 249 | Washington | 1,511 |
| 250 | Washington Heights Rehab | 130 |
| 251 | White | 246 |
| 252 | Wilson | 398 |
| 253 | Wise Rehab | 398 |
| 254 | Wise Towers | 398 |
| 255 | WSUR | 236 |
| ID | Queens | Units |
| 256 | Astoria | 1,103 |
| 257 | Baisley Park | 378 |
| 258 | Beach 41st St. | 1,658 |
| 259 | Bland | 399 |
| 260 | Carleton Manor | 168 |
| 261 | College Point Rehab Program | 13 |
| 262 | Conlon LIHFE Towers | 215 |
| 263 | Forest Hills Co-op | 430 |
| 264 | Hammel | 708 |
| 265 | International Tower | 145 |
| 266 | Latimer Gardens | 423 |
| 267 | Leavitt St. - 34th Av. | 83 |
| 268 | Ocean Bay/Oceanside | 417 |
| 269 | Ocean Bay/Bayside | 1,378 |
| 270 | Pomonok | 2,068 |
| 271 | Queensbridge North & South | 1,540 |
| 272 | Ravenswood | 3,142 |
| 273 | Redfern | 603 |
| 274 | Shelton House | 153 |
| 275 | South Jamaica (I & II) | 1,047 |
| 276 | Woodside | 1,355 |
| ID | Staten Island | Units |
| 277 | Berry | 506 |
| 278 | Cassidy - Lafayette | 378 |
| 279 | Mariner's Harbor | 604 |
| 280 | Markham Gardens | 0 |
| 281 | New Lane Shores | 276 |
| 282 | Richmond Terrace | 488 |
| 283 | South Beach | 421 |
| 284 | Stapleton | 693 |
| 285 | Todt Hill | 502 |
| 286 | West Brighton | 632 |

METHODOLOGY

This report relies on data from the following sources:

- **NYCHA Resident Data Books, 2002 and 2006.** The New York City Housing Authority conducts annual surveys of its residents and reports a variety of socioeconomic indicators including population, family size and make-up, income, employment, and length of tenure in public housing.
- **New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS), 2002 and 2005.** Compiled every three years by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Housing and Vacancy Survey provides data not only on housing costs, types, and conditions in New York City but also employment, household income, and other essential economic information about households. The HVS also allows for comparisons between households residing in public housing with those living in other types of housing. HVS data is available down to the level of the “sub-borough,” geographic areas designated by the census that are roughly similar in outline to New York City’s community districts.
- **Census 2000.** In New York City, a few dozen census tracts align with public housing boundaries, making it possible to tap into further information about public housing residents. We created a proxy dataset from the 2000 Census by selecting the 51 census tracts in which more than 70 percent of residents live in public housing. This allowed us to look at household and individual characteristics of public housing residents.

We have conducted a geographic analysis to discern patterns in the siting of public housing relative to economic opportunity and resident demographics. In addition to standard maps showing geographic trends, this report includes cartograms—maps that show highlighted geographic areas at a scale proportionate to their public housing population.

For more detailed information about the analytic approach used in this report, see Appendix A.

A DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Context

Public housing population as measured by the New York City Housing Authority stands at just over 400,000. This figure reflects a slight decline in recent years, despite a long waiting list and a growing need for affordable housing.

| Total population | Trend 2002–2006 | |
|------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 408,360 | -13,686 | -1.6% |

Source: NYCHA Data Book 2002, 2006

Over the past five years, the total official population of NYCHA housing has shrunk by almost 14,000 residents, a 1.6 percent decline overall. This is surprising given the continuing strong demand for NYCHA apartments.

The reasons for the dip are unclear but the numbers likely reflect an undercount of actual population, since it is not uncommon for households to include additional members who are not known to the housing authority; some experts estimate the population is closer to 650,000. Family size has remained basically stable over the same time period. While changes in unit or building status due to rehabilitation or elimination could account for a population decrease, we were unable to obtain information from NYCHA or other sources on changes in unit occupancy or availability.

A plurality of NYCHA residents live in Brooklyn. NYCHA residents are overrepresented in the Bronx and underrepresented in Queens and Manhattan.

| Geographic distribution by borough of NYCHA residents and NYC residents | | | | Source: NYCHA Data Book 2006, Census 2000 |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Borough | # of NYCHA Residents | % of all NYCHA Residents | Total # of Residents | % of all NYC Residents |
| Manhattan | 118,107 | 28.9 | 1,537,195 | 19.2 |
| Bronx | 105,296 | 25.8 | 1,332,650 | 16.6 |
| Brooklyn | 135,177 | 33.1 | 2,465,326 | 30.8 |
| Queens | 39,682 | 9.7 | 2,229,379 | 27.8 |
| Staten Island | 10,098 | 2.5 | 443,728 | 5.5 |

Brooklyn houses the greatest share of NYCHA residents, with more than one-third residing in the borough. Manhattan and the Bronx each house roughly one-quarter. Brooklyn’s share of the public housing population is the most proportionate to its share of the city’s population, whereas Queens, home to 2.2 million residents, is home to just 40,000 who live in public housing.

The average tenure of NYCHA residents citywide is 19 years, with Manhattan residents having the longest tenure.

On average, residents of NYCHA developments in Manhattan stay put in their housing for longer periods than do residents of NYCHA developments in the outer boroughs. Staten Island residents have the shortest tenure, at 14.5 years. In the Lower East Side, Upper West Side, Central and East Harlem, and areas in Brooklyn close to Manhattan, residents have an average tenure spanning 21 to 24 years. Conversely, areas further from the urban core (North Shore Staten Island and the Rockaways) have the shortest average tenure, averaging 13 to 18 years. Other areas have an average length of stay ranging from 17 to 20 years.

| Average tenure by borough, in years | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Manhattan | 22.3 |
| Brooklyn | 18.7 |
| Queens | 18.3 |
| Bronx | 18.1 |
| Staten Island | 14.5 |

Source: NYCHA Data Book 2006

Poverty

Almost half of NYCHA's residents are living in poverty.

While the agency has historically strived to achieve a mix of incomes in public housing, 49.8 percent of NYCHA residents are living below the federal poverty threshold, currently \$22,050 for a family of four. While NYCHA residents represent fewer than 5 percent of all New Yorkers, they comprise roughly 14 percent of all of New York City's poor.

A significant number of NYCHA residents live in areas of concentrated poverty.

Almost two-thirds of NYCHA residents are living in areas of concentrated poverty, defined as census tracts in which more than 40 percent of residents live below the federal poverty line. In addition, public housing developments are located in 69 percent of these concentrated-poverty census tracts. Four areas—north and east Brooklyn, Upper Manhattan, and especially the South Bronx—emerge with the most consistent overlap between high concentrations of poverty and the location of public housing.

Almost half of public housing residents live in neighborhoods where poverty is even more concentrated, with half or more residents living below the poverty level. One-third of NYCHA's developments are located in these areas.

The federal poverty line is currently \$22,050 for a family of four. Almost two-thirds of NYCHA residents live in areas where 40 percent or more of residents are in poverty.

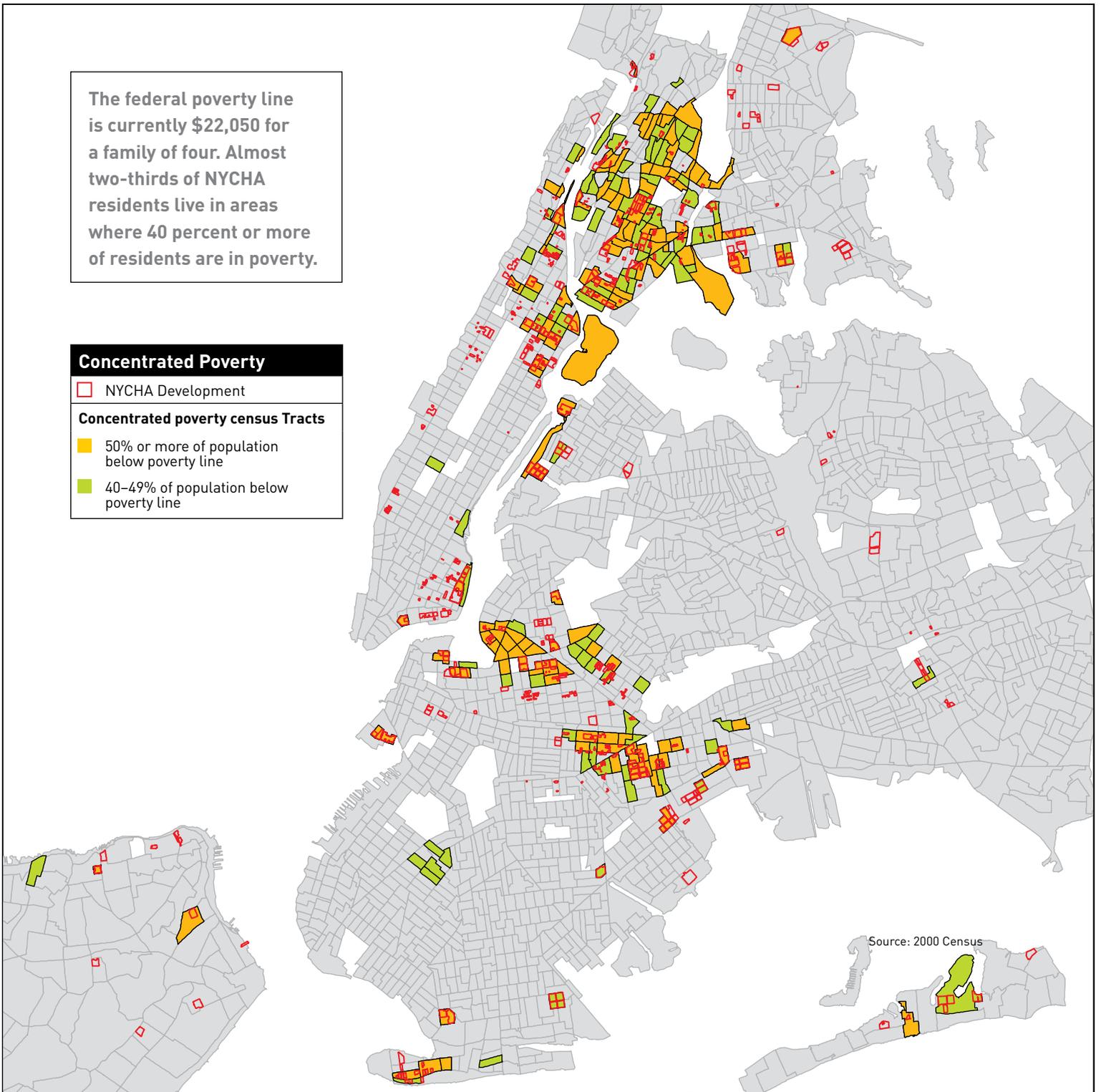
Concentrated Poverty

 NYCHA Development

Concentrated poverty census Tracts

 50% or more of population below poverty line

 40-49% of population below poverty line



Rent Burden

NYCHA developments are an important source of affordable housing for New York City's poorest residents, with by far the lowest incomes and the lowest rent burden of any type of housing.

| Rent burden and remainder by rental type | | | | | Source: HVS 2005 |
|--|------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| | Households | Median H'Hold Income | Median Mthly Gross Rent | Rent burden | Average Remainder/Month |
| Public housing | 167,564 | \$14,784 | \$347 | 28% | \$885 |
| Rent controlled | 40,681 | \$23,554 | \$648 | 33% | \$1,315 |
| Mitchell Lama rental | 56,983 | \$22,500 | \$765 | 41% | \$1,110 |
| Stabilized pre 1947 | 701,642 | \$33,000 | \$900 | 33% | \$1,850 |
| Stabilized post 1947 | 278,670 | \$36,400 | \$950 | 31% | \$2,083 |
| Other rental | 647,830 | \$44,000 | \$1125 | 31% | \$2,542 |

Spending on average just 28 percent of household income on rent, NYCHA residents experience the lowest rent-to-income ratio, or rent burden, of all renters in the city. Public housing residents' low average rent burden is especially noteworthy in light of their low household incomes. The low rent burden provides public housing tenants with greater financial stability and protects the small amount of discretionary income remaining.

NYCHA residents' rent burden has remained stable in recent years, unlike that of the majority of New York City renters.

| Changing economic situation for NYC renters, Income & Rent | | | Source: HVS 2002, 2005 |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Change in Median H'Hold Income | Change in Rent | Change in Rent Burden from 2002-2005 |
| Public housing | 14.3% | 13.9% | -0.4% |
| Rent controlled | 9.1% | 7.3% | -1.7% |
| Mitchell Lama rental* | -16.9% | 11.7% | 34.5% |
| Stabilized pre 1947 | 3.1% | 16.4% | 12.9% |
| Stabilized post 1947 | -1.3% | 15.2% | 16.7% |
| Other rental | 10.0% | 18.2% | 7.5% |

* The dramatic increase in income-to-rent ratio for state-subsidized Mitchell-Lama housing is likely due to the move of an increasing number of buildings to market rate; in those instances, among existing residents only low-income tenants remain eligible for government housing subsidies that would permit them to stay.

The rent burden has increased for all New York City renters except NYCHA residents and rent-controlled tenants, whose rent burden has remained relatively flat as income has grown at a slightly faster pace than rent.

Employment

Only one-third of working-age NYCHA residents are employed, compared with more than half of other New York City residents.

| Labor Force Status for working-age NYCHA residents compared to all other working-age NYC residents | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Labor Force Status | NYCHA Residents % | Other NYC Residents % |
| In labor force—employed | 33.5 | 58.7 |
| In labor force—unemployed | 9.3 | 5.2 |
| Not in labor force—disability, ill health | 14.9 | 4.4 |
| Not in labor force—other | 42.3 | 31.7 |

Source: HVS 2002

Working-age NYCHA residents are less likely to be employed than other New Yorkers and more likely to be unemployed or not looking for work. One in three NYCHA residents is currently employed, while two-thirds of NYCHA residents report that they are not working—with 57.2 percent of all working age residents not participating in the labor force and 9.3 percent unemployed.

Compared with other New York City residents, NYCHA residents are more likely to cite ill health or physical disability as a reason for being out of work.

Although many of the reasons public housing residents are not looking for work are similar to those of non-NYCHA residents, the percent citing ill health or physical disability is significantly higher. The proportion of NYCHA residents claiming this as a reason is more than double that of other New York

| Main reasons not looking for work | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | NYCHA Residents % | Other NYC Residents % |
| Family responsibilities | 9.6 | 14.7 |
| In school or other training | 24.9 | 27.0 |
| Ill health, physical disability | 26.1 | 12.3 |
| Retired | 29.8 | 37.7 |
| Other | 5.6 | 8.3 |

Source: HVS 2002

City residents. This suggests that public housing residents are more likely than other New Yorkers to be disabled. Also, fewer public housing residents cite retirement and family responsibilities as reasons for not looking for work, despite the prevalence of senior citizens and families with children, probably because public housing residents have disproportionately few financial resources to allow for the luxury of retirement or child-rearing.

NYCHA residents are more likely to be chronically unemployed than other New Yorkers.

| Last worked in 1996 or earlier | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| NYCHA Residents % | Other NYC Residents % |
| 21.6 | 13.8 |

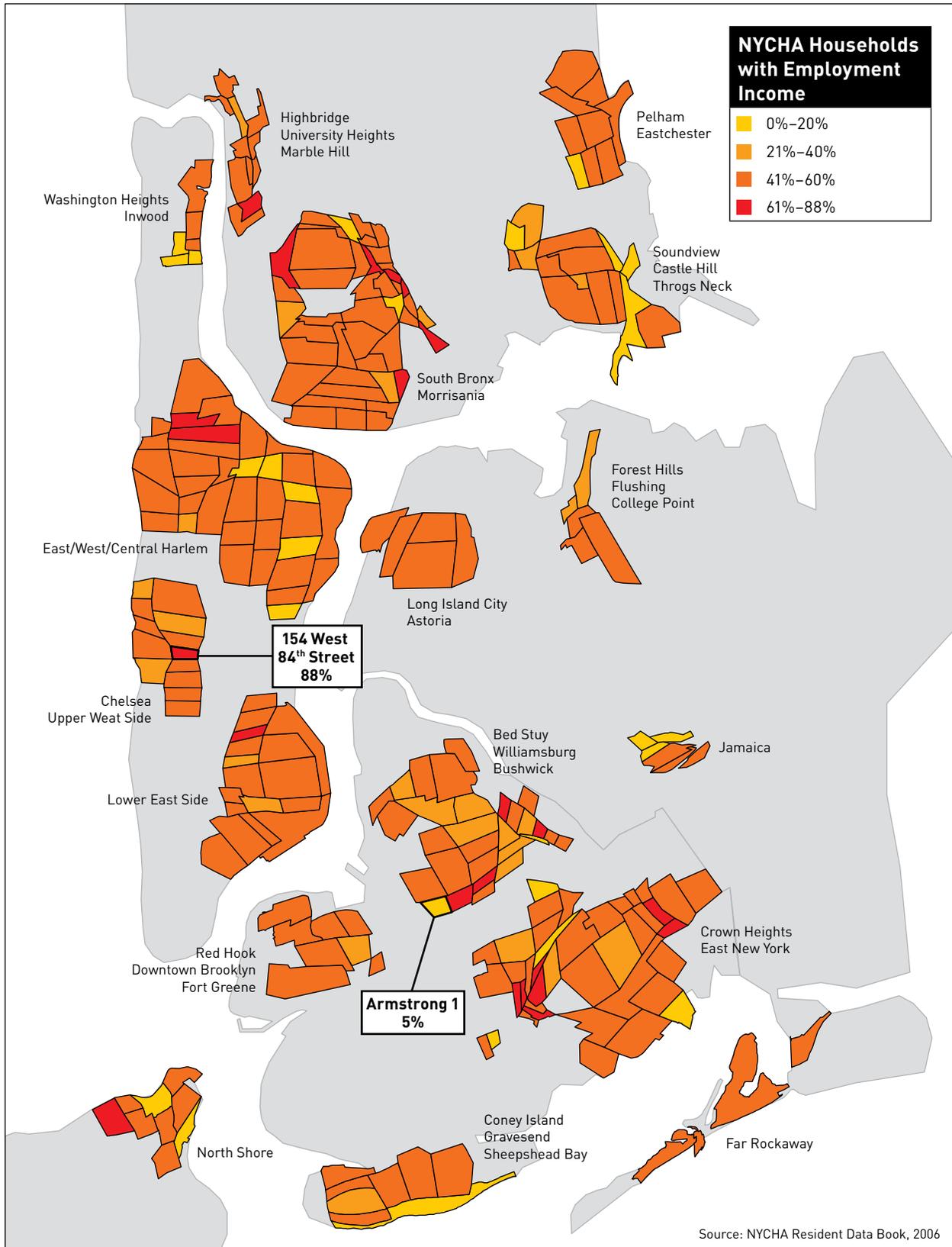
Source: HVS 2002

| Last worked in 1996 or earlier, main reason not looking | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Reason not looking | NYCHA residents % | Other NYC residents % |
| Retired | 49 | 65.3 |
| Ill health, disability | 32.7 | 15.7 |
| Family responsibilities | 8.5 | 11.6 |
| In school or other training | 2.4 | 2.4 |

Source: HVS 2002

A significantly higher percentage of public housing residents, 21.6 percent, responded that they have not worked since 1996 or earlier, compared with other New York City residents at 13.8 percent. NYCHA residents cite ill health or physical disability as the main reason they are not looking for work at more than twice the rate of other New York City residents.

Among NYCHA developments that are not specially designated for senior citizens, the proportion of households earning income from employment ranges widely, from just 5 percent in central Brooklyn’s Armstrong houses to 88 percent at 154 West 84th Street on Manhattan’s Upper West Side.



Income and Public Assistance

NYCHA residents experienced rising income during the recent period of economic growth.

The average income of public housing households increased by 56 percent, or 39 percent when adjusted for inflation, between 2002 and 2006, to \$21,520. Public housing residents in Park Slope/Red Hook, Jamaica, Downtown Brooklyn, and the Rockaways experienced the most growth in income.

The Pratt Center investigated some possible explanations. Over the past decade, following a 1998 federal mandate to deconcentrate poverty in public housing, NYCHA imposed a “Working Family Preference,” under which half of all vacancies in public housing must be filled by a working family; those earning between half and 80

percent of New York’s area median income—between \$38,401 and \$61,450 for a family of four—get top priority. We also looked at income trends in selected public housing developments located in gentrified or gentrifying areas, to see if income trends among relatively new residents could help account for the overall rise in household income.

The data on the incomes of new NYCHA residents suggests that the Working Family Preference is having little impact on resident income. The current median income for households moving into public housing between 2002 and 2005 is roughly \$20,000 a year—slightly lower than the current median income of households that moved into NYCHA housing in the past. In gentrifying areas we examined, the median income of new households was slightly higher than that of longtime households; on the Lower East Side, new households’ median income was roughly \$25,000.

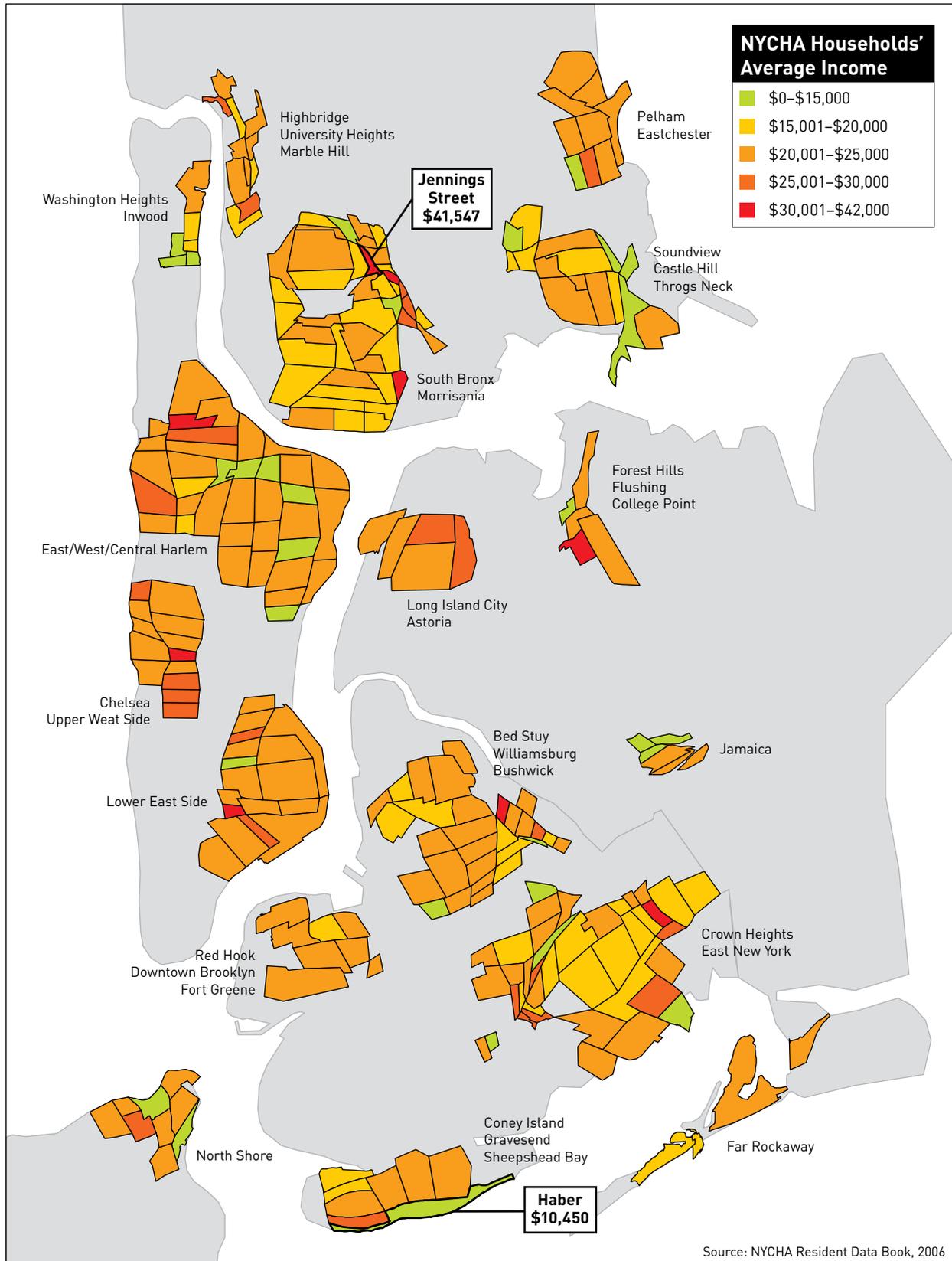
| Highest increase in NYCHA resident income from 2002–2006 | |
|--|---|
| Sub Borough Areas | Percent change in Average Income (adjusted for inflation) |
| Rockaways | 43.4 |
| Downtown Brooklyn/Fort Greene | 34.2 |
| Jamaica | 33.2 |
| Red Hook/Park Slope | 31.1 |

Source: NYCHA Data Book, 2002, 2006

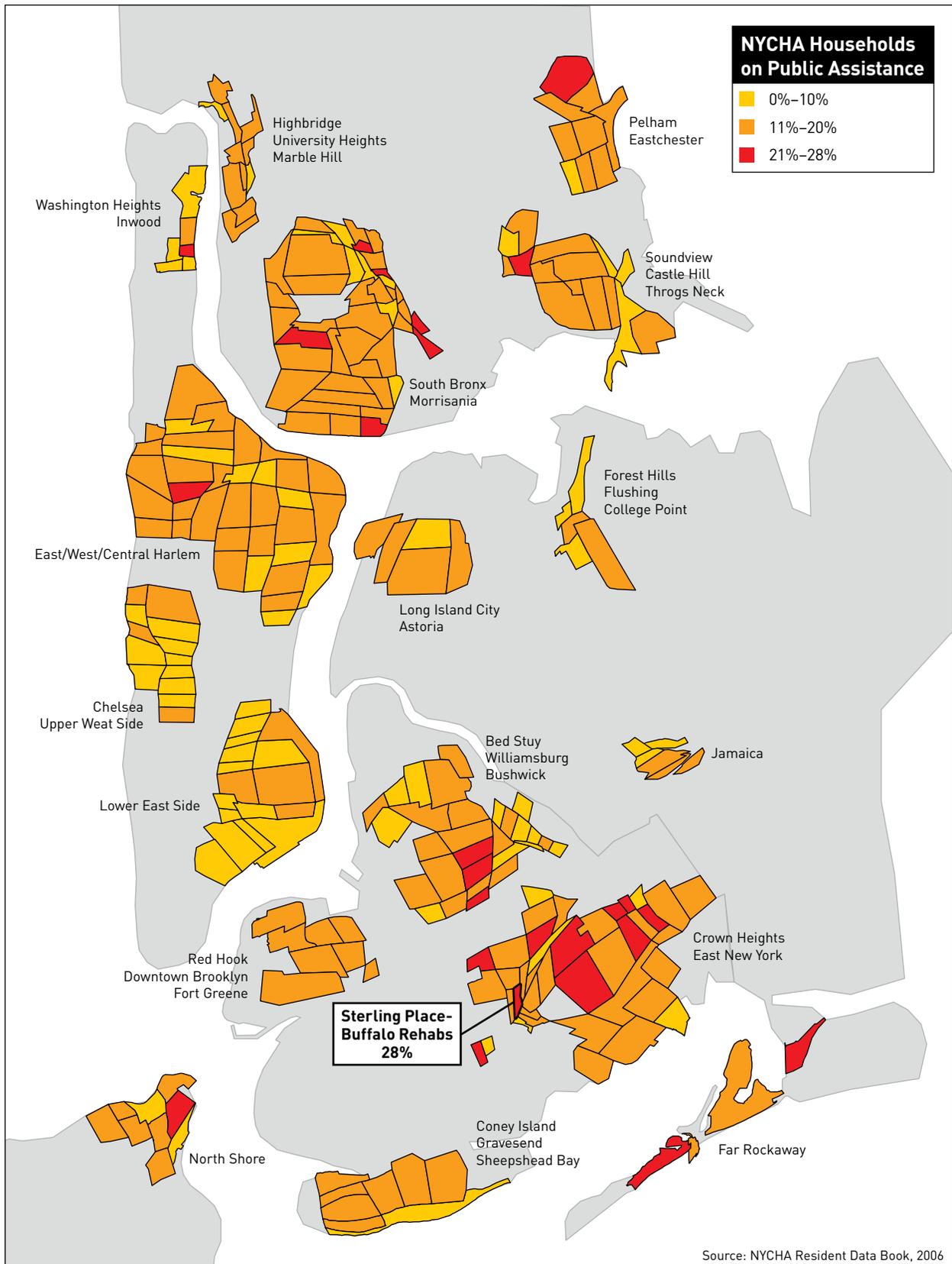
The number of residents receiving public assistance has increased

At the same time that income has risen and the overall number of public housing residents has declined, the number of households receiving public assistance has also risen by 8 percent, to 24,385. Manhattan exhibits the lowest public assistance rates, especially Chelsea and the Lower East Side. One in seven NYCHA households—24,385 out of 173,353—receives cash assistance. (Citywide, just 4 percent of New Yorkers do.)

Average income for many NYCHA residents is constrained by fixed public sources of assistance. The lowest average annual income is \$10,450 at the seniors-only Haber houses in Coney Island; highest is \$41,647, at Jennings Street in the Bronx.



Citywide, 24,385 NYCHA households, or one in seven, receive government cash assistance. East Brooklyn has the highest concentration of recipients, peaking at 28 percent in the Sterling Place-Buffalo Rehabs.



Education

The education gap between NYCHA residents and other New York City residents is significant. NYCHA residents are much more likely than other New Yorkers to exit the education system before completing high school.*

| Educational attainment | Other NYC residents % | NYCHA residents % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Less than High School | 25 | 47 |
| High School Graduate or some college | 45 | 45 |
| College Graduate or more | 30 | 8 |

Source: HVS 2002

Public housing residents exit the education system at earlier stages than most other residents of New York City. Nearly half of all NYCHA residents report that they do not have a high school education. While NYCHA and non-NYCHA residents are just as likely to have graduated from high school or attained some college experience, non-NYCHA residents are significantly more likely to graduate college or beyond.

* For more detail on this topic, the Furman Center and the Institute for Education and Social Policy have conducted a more extensive study of NYCHA and education: *Public Housing and Public Schools: How Do Students Living in NYC Public Housing Fare in School?* Available at: http://furmancenter.org/files/FurmanCenterandIESPPolicyBriefPublicHousingandPublicSchools_000.pdf.

Public housing residents exit the education system at earlier stages than most other residents of New York City. Nearly half of all NYCHA residents report that they do not have a high school education. While NYCHA and non-NYCHA

The education gap persists even in a comparison of NYCHA residents with other New York City residents with similar incomes.

| Educational attainment—Hholds earning less than \$35k | Other NYC residents % | NYCHA residents % |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Less than High School | 29 | 45 |
| High School Graduate or some college | 51 | 48 |
| College Graduate or more | 20 | 7 |

Source: HVS 2002

A comparison of all residents with household incomes below \$35,000—what might be considered a peer group—further confirms that NYCHA residents are lagging behind on educational attainment. Forty-five percent of NYCHA residents report that they have never completed high school, whereas only 29 percent of other residents earning less than \$35,000 report this. Higher education shows a similar imbalance: 7 percent of NYCHA residents earning less than \$35,000 report graduating from college or above compared to 20 percent of other residents with incomes below \$35,000.

residents with similar incomes.

A comparison of all residents with household incomes below \$35,000—what might be considered a peer group—further confirms that NYCHA residents are lagging behind on educational

Racial Composition

While black residents remain the majority in public housing, Latinos are on trend to surpass their numbers.

| Racial composition 2006 | | |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|
| Black | 201,042 | 49.2% |
| Latino | 172,238 | 42.2% |
| White | 17,591 | 4.3% |
| Asian | 14,802 | 3.6% |
| Other | 2,687 | 0.7% |

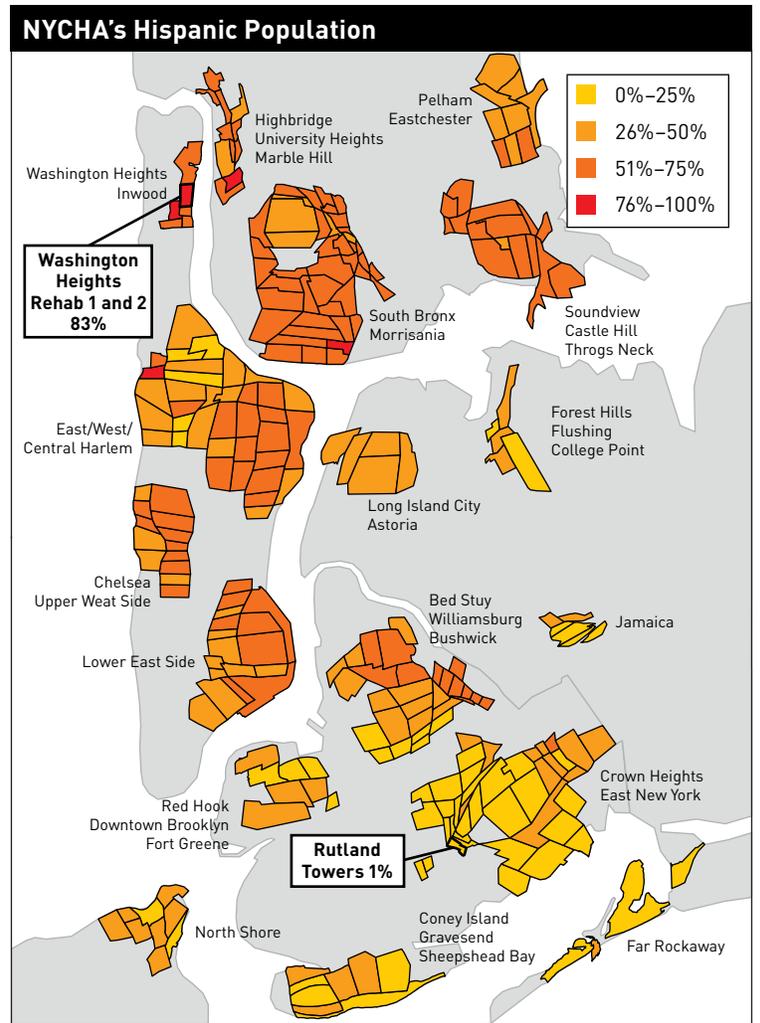
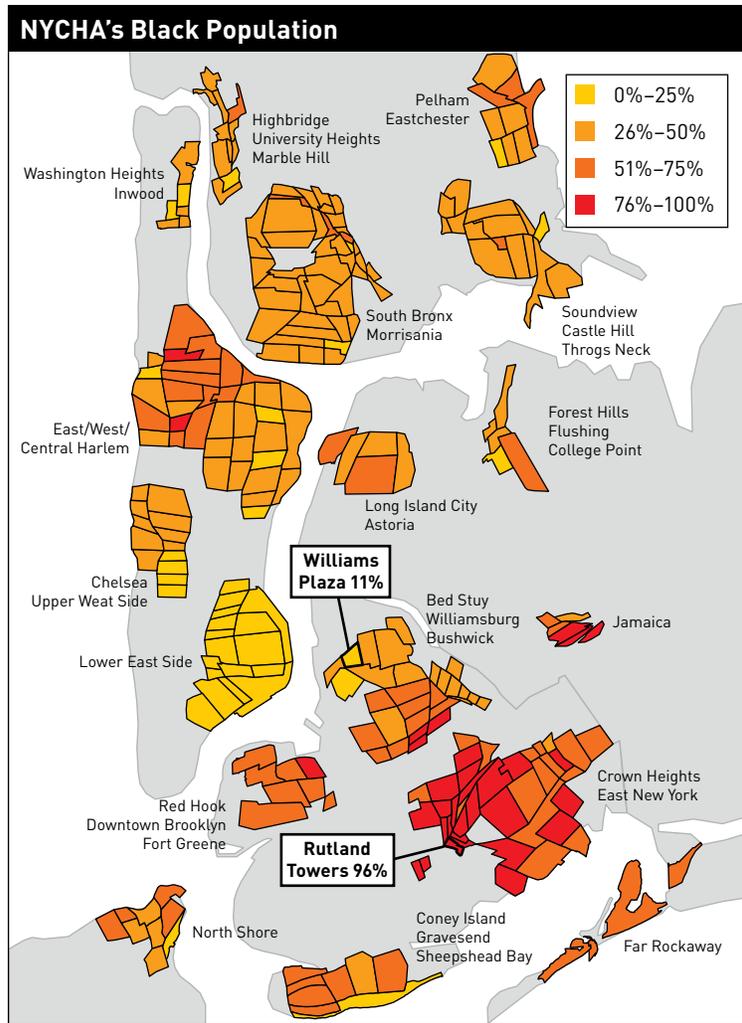
| Trend 2002-06 | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| Black | -15,854 | -7.3% |
| Latino | +2,444 | +1.4% |
| White | -7,025 | -28.5% |
| Asian | +4,786 | +47.8% |
| Other | +1,957 | +268.1% |

Source: NYCHA Data Book, 2002, 2006

| Racial composition — distribution among boroughs | | | | | |
|--|-------|----------|-----------|--------|---------------|
| | Bronx | Brooklyn | Manhattan | Queens | Staten Island |
| Black | 21.8% | 41.6% | 22.7% | 11.3% | 2.5% |
| Latino | 33.2% | 24.4% | 33.9% | 6.7% | 1.8% |
| White | 9.3% | 44.0% | 22.1% | 15.2% | 9.4% |
| Asian | 3.6% | 13.5% | 15.2% | 12.2% | 1.4% |
| Other | 24.3% | 25.6% | 9.4% | 20.1% | 4.9% |

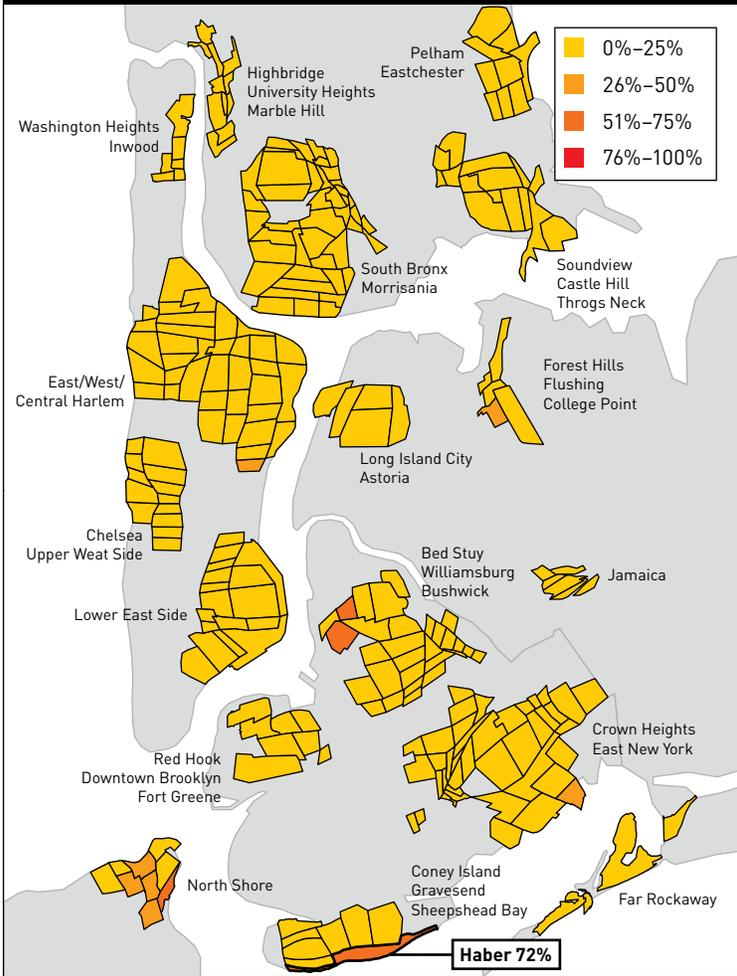
As has been the case since the 1960s, a plurality of public housing residents are black, but the number of black residents dwindled by more than 7 percent over a recent four-year period. At the same time, public housing has seen an increasing number of Latino residents, with a 1.4 percent increase during the same period. While Asian and white residents are roughly equal minorities in public housing, Asian residency is increasing at a rapid clip, whereas white residency has declined significantly. If this trend continues, Asians will soon outnumber white residents in public housing.

The steepest declines in the numbers of black residents occurred in the Central Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Downtown Brooklyn/Fort Greene, and Brownsville, in Astoria, and Central and East Harlem. The black resident population also declined throughout most of the Bronx. Significant increases in black residents occurred in Jamaica, the Lower East Side/Chinatown, Flatlands/Canarsie, Sheepshead Bay/Gravesend, Hillcrest/Fresh Meadows, Pelham Parkway and Mid-Island.

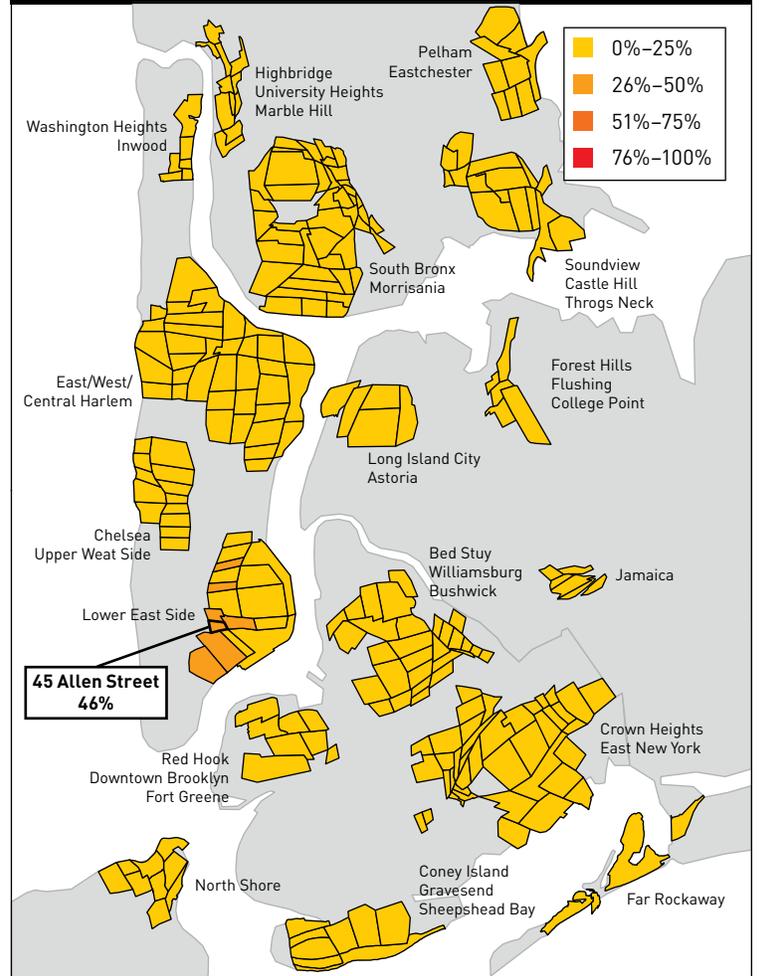


Source: NYCHA Resident Data Book, 2006

NYCHA's White Population



NYCHA's Asian Population



Source: NYCHA Resident Data Book, 2006

Puerto Ricans dominate the increasing Latino presence in public housing.

Latino populations have been increasing, with developments in the Bronx becoming largely Latino. The number of Latino residents of public housing has increased throughout much of the city in recent years, with some of the largest increases occurring in Central Harlem, Morrisania, the Rockaways, and Morningside Heights. Latino residency also increased throughout Queens. However, steep declines took place in a few areas: Williamsburg, Downtown

Brooklyn, East Harlem, Riverdale/Kingsbridge, University Heights/Fordham, and the Lower East Side/Chinatown.

| Latino origin for NYCHA residents compared to all other NYC residents | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Spanish/Latino origin | NYCHA Residents % | All other NYC Residents % |
| Puerto Rican | 29.1 | 8.6 |
| Dominican | 7.6 | 6.7 |
| Cuban | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| South/Central American | 2.8 | 6.3 |
| Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano | 0.5 | 1.9 |
| Other Spanish/Latino | 1.6 | 2.0 |
| Not Latino | 58.3 | 74.0 |

Source: HVS 2005

Among Latino public housing residents, people of Puerto Rican descent are the most heavily represented group, with Dominicans a distant second. Puerto Rican NYCHA tenants comprise almost 30 percent of all public housing residents, even though only 8.6 percent of all New

Yorkers are Puerto Rican. Almost one in five of all Puerto Ricans residing in New York City now lives in public housing. The number of Puerto Ricans in public housing remains high even as the total number of Puerto Ricans in New York has dropped sharply in recent years. Only U.S. citizens are eligible for public housing subsidies, and Puerto Ricans do not face the citizenship obstacles that foreign-born Latinos do.

White residents represent a small and dwindling percentage of the NYCHA population.

The number of white residents of public housing has declined citywide, but the change has been most precipitous in developments in the city’s extremities, including Coney Island, Sheepshead Bay/Gravesend and Flatlands/Canarsie in Brooklyn, Pelham Parkway in the Bronx, Hillcrest/Fresh Meadows in Queens, and the North Shore of Staten Island.

Asians, while a small percentage of the NYCHA population, are an increasing presence in NYCHA developments, particularly on the Lower East Side.

Half of all Asian public housing residents in New York City live in a few large developments on the Lower East Side. Between 2002 and 2006, the Asian population in this area experienced a 23 percent increase. In addition, several other areas beyond lower Manhattan, including East Harlem, Coney Island, the Rockaways, Downtown Brooklyn, Chelsea, and Astoria all experienced a modest increase in the number of Asian residents.

Nearly 17 percent of NYCHA’s households are linguistically isolated.

| Linguistically isolated households | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Spanish | 77.3% |
| Other Indo-European | 11% |
| Asian-Pacific | 10.9% |
| Other Languages | 0.7% |

Source: Census 2000 Proxy

Overall, 16.6 percent of public housing households are linguistically isolated, meaning that all family members age 14 and over have considerable difficulty speaking English. Of these linguistically isolated households, 77.3 percent are Spanish-speaking.

Age

Youth are prevalent throughout NYCHA housing developments.

NYCHA housing developments are well-populated with young people. Within the South Bronx, Morrisania, Soundview, Williamsbridge/Baychester, the Rockaways, Brownsville/Ocean Hill, and the North Shore of Staten Island, more than one-third of all public housing residents are under the age of 18. Two areas are noticeable for their lack of children—Forest Hills/Rego Park (11.1 percent) and South Crown Heights (8.7 percent), both of which have a preponderance of senior citizens.

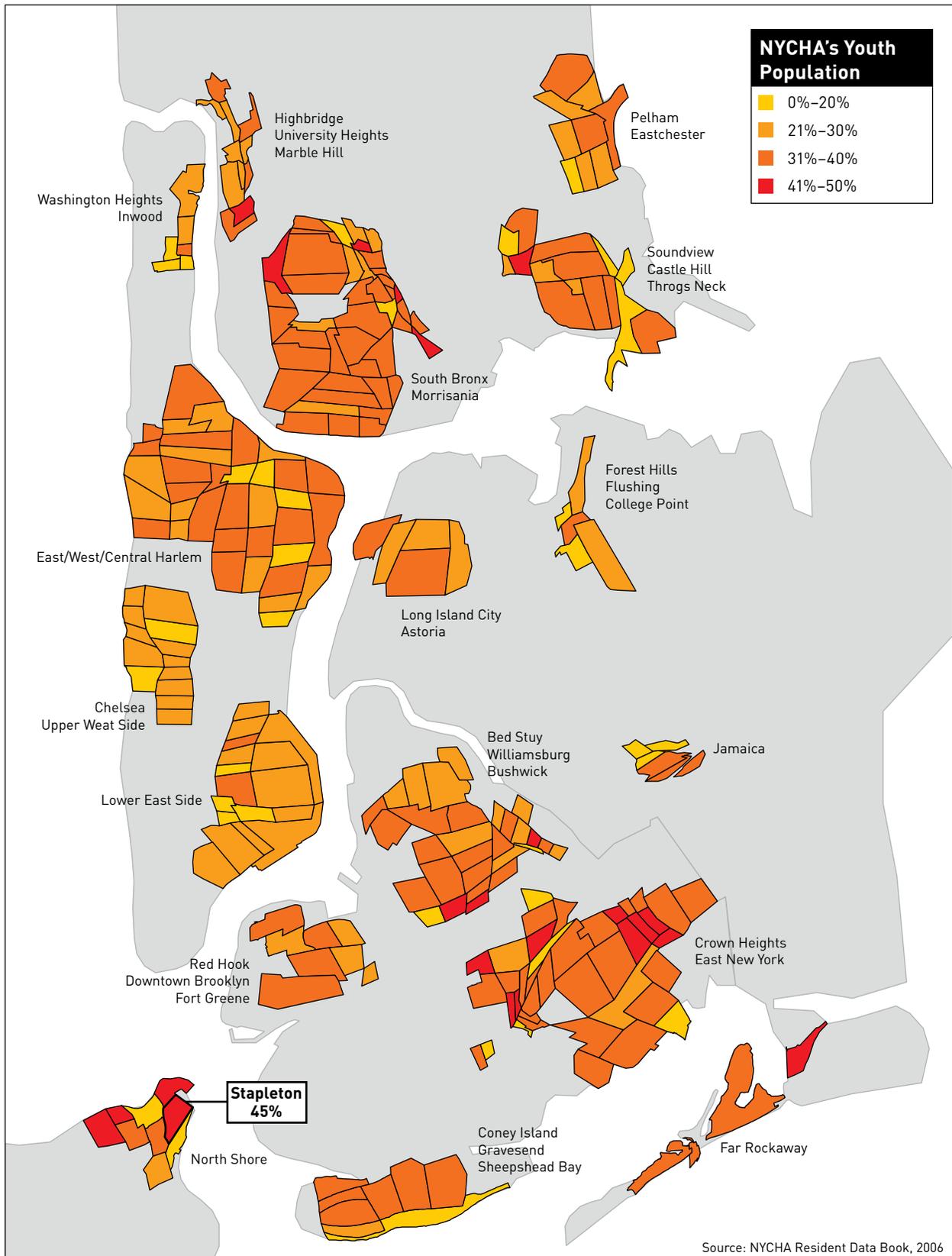
Senior citizens' presence in public housing is mostly consistent across the city, at about one-fifth of all residents.

| Senior citizens— significant proportion by sub-borough | |
|--|----------------|
| | % Sr. Citizens |
| South Crown Heights | 73.5 |
| Forest Hills/Rego Park | 46.7 |
| Washington Hts./Inwood | 31.9 |
| Upper East Side | 27.8 |
| Stuyvesant/Turtle Bay | 25.7 |
| Flushing/Whitestone | 24.7 |
| Jamaica | 24.4 |
| Chelsea/Clinton/Midtown | 23.7 |
| Upper West Side | 23.5 |
| Lower East Side/Chinatown | 23.4 |
| Pelham Parkway | 20.8 |
| Hillcrest/Fresh Meadows | 20.2 |
| Williamsburg/Greenpoint | 20.0 |

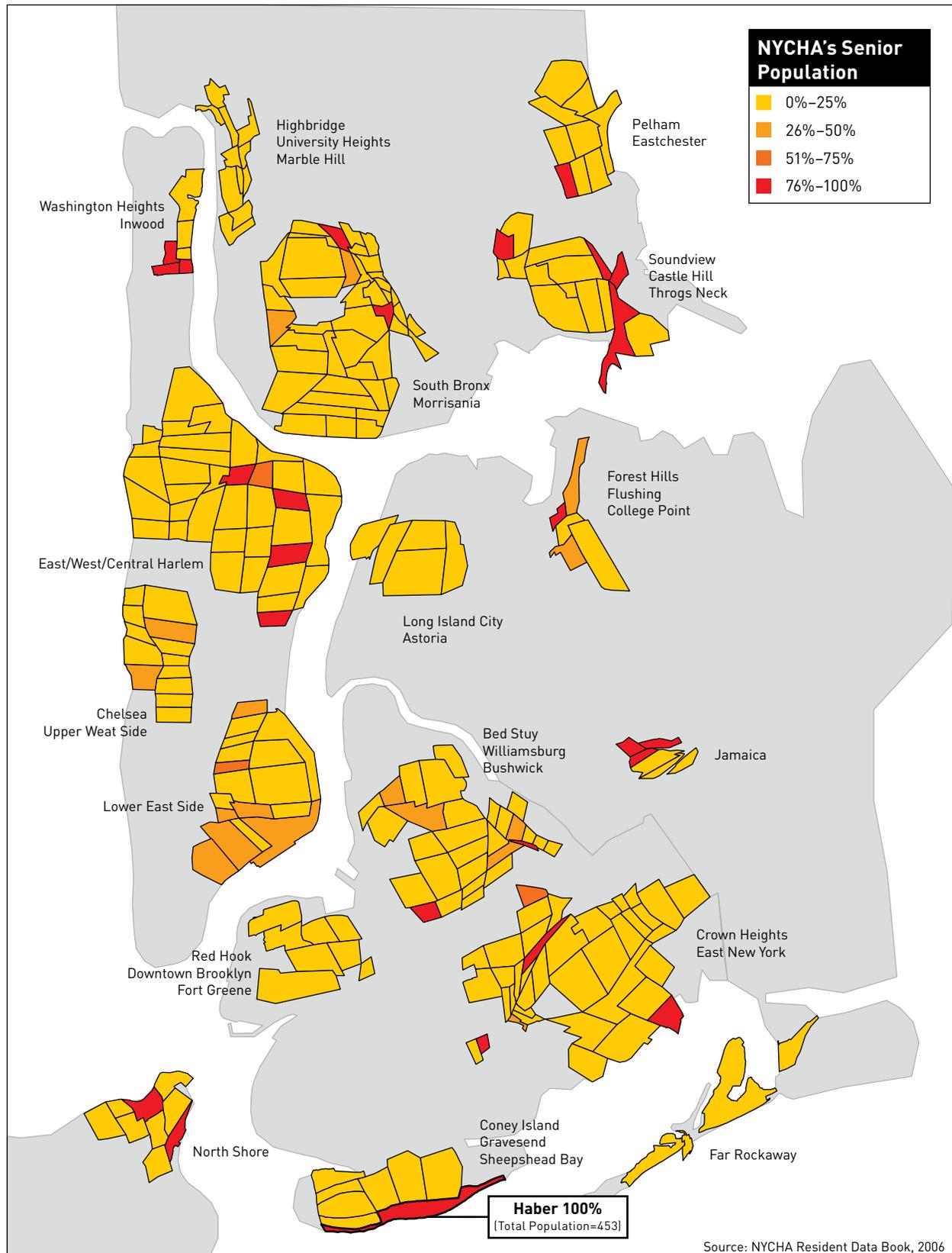
Source: NYCHA Data Book 2006

The senior citizen population is mostly consistent throughout public housing in New York City, amounting to one in five of all residents, but two areas in particular—South Crown Heights and Forest Hills/Rego Park—have exceptionally high numbers. In certain instances, adults older than 62 comprise more than 20 percent of the total population. The Rockaways, where the senior population comprises only 8.6 percent of the total population, has the smallest number of senior citizens.

Citywide, more than one-third of all public housing residents are under age 18.



NYCHA has 28 developments designated as housing for senior citizens, the largest of which is Haber, in Coney Island. The proportion of seniors tends to be lowest in walkup buildings, including Howard Avenue-Park Place in Brownsville.



Gender

Working age women outnumber men two-to-one.

Among 18 to 62 year-olds, the female population is double the male population. The ratio is closer, at 1.5 women for every man, in Forest Hills/Rego Park, Chelsea/Midtown, Williamsburg/Greenpoint, and the Lower East Side. The ratio is the most extreme in several areas: North Shore, Mid-Island, Jamaica, Hillcrest, the Rockaways, the southern and central parts of Brooklyn (Brownsville, Sheepshead Bay, Park Slope/Red Hook, Canarsie, East New York/Starrett City).

Public housing’s gender imbalance is widened by screening policies that tend to preference female applicants or exclude men disproportionately; these include an exclusion of convicted felons for a period of time following completion of a sentence or probation and a policy that gives victims of domestic violence priority for public housing vacancies.

| Gender, 18–62: sex ratio—sub-boroughs with greatest disparity | |
|---|--------------------|
| | women for each man |
| North Shore | 2.7 |
| Rockaways | 2.5 |
| Mid-Island | 2.5 |
| East New York/Starrett City | 2.4 |
| Park Slope/Red Hook | 2.4 |
| Sheepshead Bay/Gravesend | 2.4 |
| Brownsville/Ocean Hill | 2.4 |
| Flatlands/Canarsie | 2.4 |
| Hillcrest/Fresh Meadows | 2.4 |
| Jamaica | 2.4 |
| Gender, 18–62: sex ratio—sub-boroughs with a more equal ratio | |
| Chelsea/Clinton/Midtown | 1.5 |
| Forest Hills/Rego Park | 1.5 |
| Stuyvesant Town/Turtle Bay | 1.7 |
| Williamsburg/Greenpoint | 1.7 |
| Lower East Side/Chinatown | 1.7 |

Source: NYCHA Data Book 2002

Single-Headed Households

Single-headed households are more prevalent in public housing than the city overall.

| % of single-headed households | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| NYCHA Households | 32.1 |
| New York City Households | 14.9 |

Source: NYCHA Data Book 2006, Census 2000

Public housing residents have more than double the rate of single-headed households as the city as a whole. More than one-third of NYCHA households are headed by a single person.

Immigration

Immigrants have a minor presence in public housing compared to New York City as a whole.

| Immigrant renters | | Source: HVS 2005 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Foreign Born | Native Born |
| Stabilized | 51.6% | 44.4% |
| Unregulated Rental | 30.8% | 30.8% |
| Other Rent Regulation | 6.6% | 5.9% |
| Public Housing | 6.6% | 10.9% |
| Mitchell Lama | 3.1% | 4.9% |
| Controlled | 1.2% | 3.1% |

| Place of birth | | | Source: HVS 2005 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | NYCHA HH | ALL NYC HH | |
| New York City | 42.5% | 41.6% | |
| Outside NYC | 18.3% | 15.0% | |
| Puerto Rico | 20.7% | 2.3% | |
| Outside U.S. | 18.5% | 41.1% | |

Immigrants' presence in public housing is inconsistent with that in the rest of New York City. Only 18.5 percent of heads of households were born outside of the United States. This is in stark comparison to New York City as a whole, in which 41.1 percent of households are headed by immigrants. Immigrants reside in public housing at nearly half the rate of native-born renters.

OPPORTUNITY #1: LINKING PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS TO EMPLOYMENT CREATED BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Introduction

New York City has seen a substantial increase in large-scale government-initiated economic development projects in recent years—including stadiums, shopping centers, recreation areas and academic centers. The current recession and troubles in the credit and commercial real estate markets have slowed some projects and scaled back others, but a significant number of new development projects, large and small, continue to move ahead toward completion.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) coordinates initiatives seeking to bring jobs and economic activity to New York City, often through real estate-related projects. It solicits private development and investment on government-owned or controlled property and finances infrastructure for its development. EDC reports that since 2000, its efforts have resulted in \$1.7 billion in private sector investment in city infrastructure and the creation of over 12,000 permanent jobs.³ New York State also subsidizes job-creating economic development projects in the city, through its Empire State Development Corporation.

Yet opportunities generated by New York’s massive investments in economic development are not necessarily reaching those New Yorkers who need them most. New York City is only now beginning to explore prospects for “job linkage”—a structured program for hiring in neighborhoods hosting economic development projects. These “first source” programs—so called because neighborhood residents are considered as the first source of candidates for newly created permanent positions—have been successful elsewhere, notably in Los Angeles.

None of New York City’s linkage efforts yet target public housing residents, and existing workforce development programs in public housing are going through difficult growing pains. As a result of budget cuts, NYCHA’s in-house workforce development program, called Resident Employment Services, is due to be transferred to the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), which administers welfare-to-work programs. Following a federal mandate to train and hire public housing residents for construction and maintenance jobs within the system, NYCHA also operates two programs—one known as Section 3 (the name of the federal mandate) and other the Resident Employment Program, which requires large NYCHA contractors to spend 15 percent of their labor costs on employing local public housing residents. Audits from the city comptroller, reviewing 52 recent projects from six contractors, found that none met the spending requirement; combined, they hired just 10 public housing residents.

Recognizing both the need and opportunity for effective workforce development efforts targeting public housing residents, the Bloomberg administration recently committed New York City to develop a new employment program modeled on the federal Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative, a seven-city demonstration program seeking to help every able-bodied working age adult in a public housing development prepare for and obtain jobs.

HRA and the Jobs-Plus Initiative will be well poised to help public housing residents access jobs created through economic development projects. The lengthy timeline for completion of development projects provides an opportunity for city agencies to identify appropriate candidates through targeted outreach within public housing and arm them with job-readiness skills, social services, and training as needed.

3 www.nycedc.com

Such efforts are a natural fit with the projects sponsored by the New York City Economic Development Corporation and Empire State Development Corporation. Among the projects that receive government benefits in the form of land use approvals and/or financial subsidies, more than two in three are located within one mile of an area with a high concentration of New York City Housing Authority developments.

As economic development takes place throughout New York City, it is important to link the population most impacted by development to the economic benefits. Linkage programs and first source hiring can help local residents, including those in public housing, share in the benefits. Negative impacts of these developments to NYCHA residents include cost of living increases, as new development brings higher-priced retail and neighborhood services, and the burdens of living near major construction sites. Benefits of economic development should be secured for people living within the surrounding neighborhoods.

New York City's Targeted Hiring and Workforce Development Program

In March 2007, the Pratt Center for Community Development began working with the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to develop a program connecting City-sponsored real estate development with workforce development initiatives aiming to employ area residents. In August 2007, the Pratt Center presented both agencies with our research on best practices, based on best practices from first source hiring programs around the country, including a framework for improving the coordination of workforce development activities associated with city-led real estate development projects. EDC and SBS successfully initiated a pilot project at the 168th Street Garage in Jamaica, Queens, which a developer selected by EDC will be transforming into a mixed-use development of market-rate and affordable residential with ground floor retail and parking.

SBS's Workforce Development Division defined the target population, conducted labor market and occupational research, performed a resource assessment of community workforce development organizations, and developed a project-specific workforce development plan. EDC incorporated the targeted hiring, retention, and career advancement goals into its request for proposals seeking developers for the project.

While SBS and EDC proceed to select a developer for the Jamaica site, the two agencies are moving to implement the model at other economic development sites around New York City via a new Targeted Hiring and Workforce Development Program. The program is now assessing employment and training opportunities tied to additional current and future economic development projects on property being sold or leased by New York City, with a dedicated SBS staff person serving as project coordinator.

First Source Hiring Programs

First source hiring programs can be used to create employment opportunities for low-income residents in a geographic area surrounding development projects. Many cities around the country provide successful examples of linking workforce development to real estate projects.

In 2007, the Pratt Center evaluated linkage strategies in Denver, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. Most of these cities' initiatives began as a result of community pressure, and have resulted in productive collaboration between municipalities, community groups, and developers. Each city has designated a local government agency as the institutional leader to work with developers and neighborhood-based community groups. Under the guidance of municipal workforce development coordinators, developers are responsible for informing tenants about linkage programs and conveying employment information to the city. Community groups are also involved, either as coordinators, advisors, or watchdogs.

First source hiring mechanisms come in a variety of forms. In Los Angeles, the city creates community benefits agreements as contractual obligations between the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) and the developer for any project involving subsidy or discretionary land use approvals. Due to the success of the Los Angeles agreements, the CRA/LA is currently creating policy to formalize the program and move away from individual, project-by-project agreements. In Denver, developers receiving subsidies of \$100,000 or more of tax increment financing are required to follow the city's first source hiring policy. In San Francisco, all projects larger than 25,000 square feet or valued above \$2 million must sign a development disposition agreement that obligates the developer to work with the city's redevelopment agency on job linkages. In Minneapolis, where a living wage policy is enforced, those employers not subject to the policy are encouraged to sign a job linkage agreement to establish a five-year job creation goal and encourage living-wage jobs. First source hiring policies and programs can be written as their own ordinances, into the policies governing first source hiring, or established on a case-by-case basis.

Goals and target populations are both defined by geographic area and priority for hiring. In Los Angeles, displaced residents get first consideration, followed by residents within a three-mile radius of the project and residents from low-income neighborhoods throughout the Los Angeles area. Additionally, employers consider only targeted job applicants for a period of three weeks during initial hiring and a period of five days upon opening. In Minneapolis, priority is given to all residents of Minneapolis; however, in some cases the target population is confined within certain Zip codes directly impacted by the development project. Minneapolis also develops targets, with each developer averaging 35 percent of new hires from within the target population and 78 percent paying a living wage. San Francisco seeks to hire local residents for half of all project-related jobs, with priority diffusing out from the area where development occurs to the entire city. Denver reaches out to the low-income population as a whole without established target goals; however, all employment opportunities must be processed through the municipal development authority.

In addition to hiring goals and targets, many cities require jobs created by taxpayer-subsidized development to meet living wage standards and create career advancement opportunities. Los Angeles's first source hiring program is usually part of a larger community benefits package that includes living wage policies, developer financial contributions to job training programs, and affordable housing. CRA/LA secured \$100,000 from developer of the Staples Center and \$500,000 from the Grand Avenue Project to establish the First Source Referral System, which teams up jobseekers with local training providers. Minneapolis adopted a living wage policy in 1991 requiring businesses to create and retain at least one "living wage job" for each \$25,000 of assistance. As of 2007, any firm in Minneapolis receiving \$100,000 or more in city assistance during one year must pay a living wage of \$13.25 an hour (a little less if the employee also receives health insurance). San Francisco created City Build, a program for all city subsidized development that links youth with internships at architectural and engineering firms participating in redevelopment efforts.

Municipalities, developers, and community groups can assume a variety of roles in the first source hiring process. In some instances, municipal agencies have served in a coordinating role. Community based organizations have proven to be especially successful coordinators as a result of their typically close ties to the neighborhoods from which workers and trainees are being recruited. In Los Angeles, community-based organizations specializing in employment services routinely vie against the City workforce development agency for contracts to deliver the first source hiring services. Developers typically designate liaisons to work with their commercial tenants and the coordinators. It is critical, however, that one group manage a centralized venue for job postings, recruitment, training, and monitoring. In some instances, a trailer is located on-site before construction begins, and staff assists locals with resume-writing and referrals. Community organizations often recruit, screen, and train jobseekers. The many roles in the first source hiring processes can be tailored to meet the specific strengths of the community.

A successful program relies on clear reporting processes, monitoring, transparency, producing reliable data on such outcomes as service delivery, the number of interviews and hires, and retention of hires over time, as well as opportunities to use that information for program improvement.

Best practices include site visits to employers by the coordinating agency, monthly employment goal and population target reports, tenant leases that spell out leaseholders' employment and wage obligations (including penalties for failing to comply), database tracking systems, on-line electronic reporting, and the publication of results via publicly accessible websites. While compliance is most often encouraged through the publication of the results, some cities impose financial penalties, such as the cancellation of financial assistance, on developers and tenants who fail to meet their obligations. Yet developers and tenants typically report that after initial wariness they came to see these structures as an asset, not a burden. They tend to view the participation of city agencies and local non-profits in recruitment and screening of workers as a valuable resource.⁴

Proximity of New York City Economic Development Initiatives to Public Housing

Public housing developments are located near many city- and state-sponsored economic development projects slated to break ground in the next 18 months, making them ripe opportunities for job linkages with public housing residents. Economic development initiatives throughout New York City mapped with New York City Housing Authority clusters illustrate the proximity of public housing residents to many of the jobs expected to be created by 2012 (see map). clusters, as defined in this report, are high-density groupings of public housing developments. Of the two-thirds of city economic development projects within one mile of NYCHA developments, almost three in four will create 500 jobs or more, offering substantial job creation and potential career ladder opportunities for NYCHA residents. NYCHA and the Human Resources Administration, the agency slated to run employment services for public housing residents, should evaluate these as possible sites for first source hiring programs and work with the Department of Small Business Services where appropriate. While the majority of the initiatives create jobs in retail, office, and building services, there are initiatives that will generate jobs in more specialized sectors such as film and biotech, with the possibility of higher entry-level wages and career ladders.

Seventy-nine percent, or 26, of the city- and state-sponsored economic development initiatives will produce 500 jobs or more, termed "High Job Creation" initiatives. Of those, 17 fall within a one-mile radius of the edge of a NYCHA cluster. Mapping reveals two broad areas of New York City with especially high densities of economic development projects: the East Harlem, North Central Harlem, and South Bronx clusters in the north and the Wyckoff, Downtown Brooklyn, Williamsburg, and Lower East Side clusters in the south. These NYCHA clusters have significant

4 Wolf-Powers, Laura, Jeremy Reiss, and Margaret Stix. 2006. "Building in Good Jobs: Linking economic and workforce development with real estate-led development," Pratt Center for Community Development, p. 16.

LINKING PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS TO EMPLOYMENT CONTINUED

opportunities to develop linkage programs with development projects. For example, the northern NYCHA clusters are within one mile of four high job creation projects: 125th Street in Harlem, Kingsbridge Armory, the Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market and the Columbia University Expansion. Combined, these projects represent approximately 10,000 employment opportunities in a variety of sectors including: residential, retail, entertainment, and the arts. The southern NYCHA clusters are within one mile of the Atlantic Yards Plan, Brooklyn Navy Yard, City Point, Red Hook Cruise Terminal, Sunset Marketplace, The New Domino, the East River Waterfront, and the World Trade Center Redevelopment. These developments could produce over 55,000 employment opportunities in residential, retail, entertainment, arts, office, hospitality, arena-related, cultural facilities, film production, marina support and industrial manufacturing sectors.

Fifteen percent of the economic development initiatives within New York City will produce 101 to 500 jobs, classified as “Medium Job Creation.” Four of the five medium job creation economic development initiatives fall within one mile of NYCHA clusters: East River Plaza, Gowanus Canal Corridor Development, the High Line Redevelopment and Downtown Whitney Museum Expansion, and Mart 125. East River Plaza, near the East Harlem cluster, is a 485,000 square-foot retail center with completion expected in early 2010. Target, Best Buy, Marshalls, and possibly Costco are expected tenants.

Economic development initiatives with specialized workforce opportunities, such as light manufacturing, construction and biotech, provide living wages and career ladders and should be a priority for public housing workforce development efforts. The Brooklyn Navy Yard is a city-owned industrial park attracting tenants in film and television production, construction, and green manufacturing near the Downtown Brooklyn and Williamsburg clusters. Steiner Studios is the Navy Yard’s biggest tenant and is currently expanding their studio space and considering building a media campus. The East River Science Park, formerly called the Alexandria Center for Science and Technology, will be a Biotech Center near the Lower East Side cluster with specialized laboratories and office space creating jobs in research, technical support, and data processing.

Economic Development Projects Near NYCHA Developments

Economic Development Initiatives

▲ Project Location

Suggested Target Hiring Area

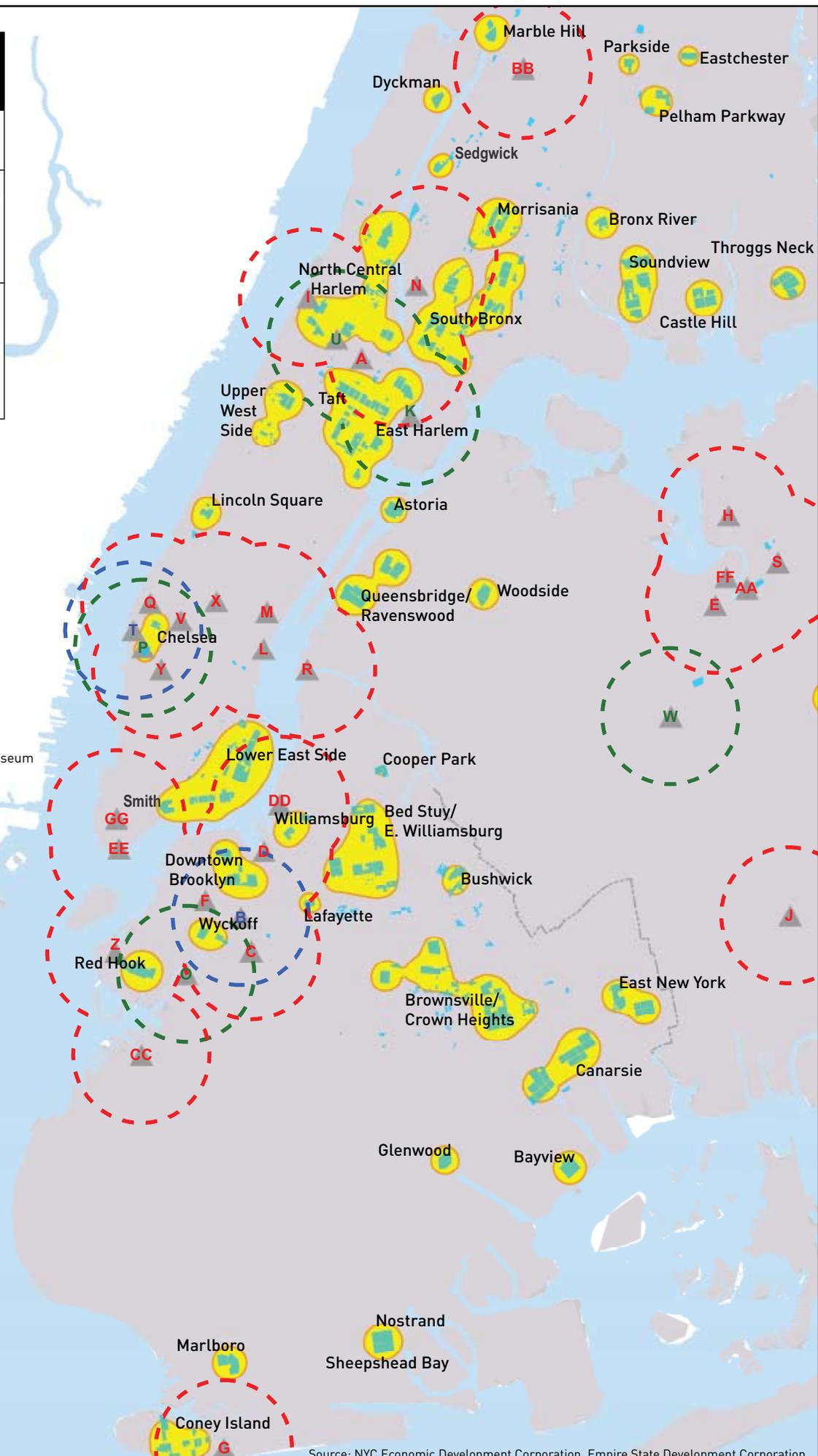
- Low Job Creation (0-100)
- Medium Job Creation (101-500)
- High Job Creation (>501)

NYCHA Public Housing Developments

- All NYCHA Developments
- High-Density Clusters (highlighted areas include at least six NYCHA units per acre)

Major Economic Development Projects

- A 125th Street in Harlem
- B BAM Cultural District
- C Atlantic Yards
- D Brooklyn Navy Yard
- E Citi Field
- F City Point
- G Coney Island Redevelopment
- H College Point Police Academy
- I Columbia University Expansion
- J Downtown Jamaica
- K East River Plaza
- L East River Realty at Con Edison
- M East River Science Park
- N Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market
- O Gowanus Canal Corridor Development
- P High Line Redevelopment and Whitney Museum
- Q Hudson Yards Rezoning and Development
- R Hunters Point South
- S Flushing Commons
- T Convention Center Expansion
- U Mart 125
- V Moynihan Station
- W New Rego Park Mall
- X New York Diamond Tower
- Y Saint Vincent Hospital
- Z Red Hook Cruise Terminal
- AA Sky View Parc
- BB Kingsbridge Armory
- CC Sunset Marketplace
- DD The New Domino
- EE East River Waterfront
- FF Willets Point Development
- GG World Trade Center Redevelopment



Source: NYC Economic Development Corporation, Empire State Development Corporation

Recommendations

NYCHA should be the focus of a first source hiring pilot project that includes targeted outreach and a strong job-readiness component.

HRA or the new Jobs-Plus Initiative should work with NYCHA to select a specific economic development project that provides especially promising opportunities to employ large numbers of nearby public housing residents. A site can be determined by various criteria: proximity to a NYCHA cluster, specialized workforce opportunities, or areas of high job creation. NYCHA, via HRA, can then conduct targeted outreach and provide job-readiness and other social services to prepare public housing residents in advance for the upcoming jobs.

The City should work to extend the Department of Small Business Services' Targeted Hiring and Workforce Development Program to connect public housing residents to city-sponsored economic development initiatives.

The opportunity for NYCHA residents to benefit from linkage strategies developed by SBS, in conjunction with developers, is substantial. NYCHA and HRA can engage in outreach and work-readiness training for public housing residents living near economic development sites, and SBS can work to extend its Targeted Hiring and Workforce Development Program to ensure public housing residents participate.

Compliance and monitoring of any job linkage program should be robust and thorough before NYCHA and HRA initiate a first source hiring program.

Before any first source hiring program is initiated, it is imperative that a clear compliance system be in place. A successful program requires clear reporting processes, monitoring, and transparency. Best practices include site visits, monthly employment goal and target reports, tenant leases that integrate the hiring program, database tracking systems, on-line electronic reporting, and the publication of results via publicly accessible websites.

OPPORTUNITY #2: CONNECTING PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS WITH OPPORTUNITY VIA COST-EFFECTIVE RAPID TRANSIT

Context

Like all New Yorkers, New York City Housing Authority residents benefit from an extensive transit system that extends widely across the city, operates 24/7, and, importantly, charges a flat fare and allows free transfers between bus and subway. This last feature, made possible by the introduction of MetroCards in 1997, eliminated the “two-fare zone” burden on residents of neighborhoods beyond a walking radius from subway stations and contributed to significant growth in transit ridership, particularly bus usage.

| Bus ridership growth by borough 1998–2008 | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|--------------|----------------|
| Borough | 1998 | 2008 | Change 98–08 | % Change 98–08 |
| Brooklyn | 605,690 | 738,284 | 132,595 | 21.9% |
| Bronx | 452,651 | 558,919 | 106,268 | 23.5% |
| Manhattan | 515,474 | 554,633 | 39,159 | 7.6% |
| Queens | 302,042 | 387,849 | 85,806 | 28.4% |
| Staten Island | 105,579 | 135,561 | 29,982 | 28.4% |

Source: MTA and NYC Transit data, reported in New York City Department of Transportation: Sustainable Streets Index December 2008.

Place of Residence, Access to Transit, and Commuting Time

Still, many NYCHA developments are in locations that are poorly connected to transit. Access varies greatly. Many pre-World War II developments are in relatively well-served locations. By contrast, many of those built in the 1960s through 1980s are in relatively isolated locations, often with no direct access to subway lines. While the transfer from bus to subway no longer adds to the cost of commuting and other travel, it greatly increases the amount of time consumed by travel. Overall, some 758,000 New York City residents spend more than 60 minutes each way riding to work. More than two-thirds of these workers are traveling to jobs that pay less than \$35,000 per year.

Analysis of census data also reveals sharp racial disparities in commuting times. The average trip to work time for white New York City residents is 36 minutes; the average time for black, Asian, and Latino residents is 47, 42, and 41 minutes respectively. These disparities reflect both racial and economic segregation: the neighborhoods in which housing is both affordable and available to low- and moderate-income households of color are often either at the extreme ends of subway lines or in areas where subways are beyond walking distance and are accessed by bus or other means. Neighborhoods where residents enjoy shorter commutes have higher percentages of white residents, as well as higher incomes.

Twenty-eight percent of NYCHA residents live in units located farther than ½ mile from the nearest subway station. This means that 112,600 NYCHA residents face either a long walk, or a bus ride and then a transfer, in order to access the subway system.

Reliance on buses for all or part of NYCHA residents' trips to work exacts a very significant cost in time. The average speed of local buses in New York City is slow and diminishing. In the outer boroughs, buses on many of the most heavily traveled corridors move at average speeds of 5 to 8 mph; on Manhattan crosstown routes, the average speeds are as low as 3.7 mph.⁵ Traffic congestion also means that buses have difficulty maintaining published schedules, making trip times unpredictable. Still, buses are the only transit option available to many NYCHA residents. Even in developments relatively close to subway stations, elderly and disabled residents, women, and people traveling with children may need or choose to take the bus instead of the subway because of the relative safety and physical ease of access buses provide.

Location of Employment Opportunities

NYCHA residents, in common with other low-income New Yorkers, are also disadvantaged by the spatial distribution of jobs in the sectors that are most likely to employ them. Jobs in high-wage sectors, such as finance and media, are concentrated in the Manhattan central business districts, where they are well served by a radially designed subway system. The service and manual jobs NYCHA residents are more likely to obtain—in such fields as retail, health care, construction, and transportation—are more widely dispersed across the city and the region.

The distances between homes and workplaces may be relatively short—most New Yorkers, including NYCHA residents, work in the same borough in which they live. But outside lower and mid-Manhattan, the transit system does not connect residences and workplaces efficiently. Trips that would take 20 minutes or less by car can take 45 minutes or more by local bus. This diminishes the number of employment opportunities that residents of any given development are able to access using public transportation.

Driving Is Not an Available Alternative

Overall, fewer than half (44 percent) of New York City households have regular access to a car. Rates of car ownership among low-income households, including NYCHA resident households, are lower still, even in locations with relatively poor access to transit. Low incomes and lack of access to credit are among the obvious barriers to car ownership for NYCHA residents. While car ownership is commonly viewed as a marker of middle-class status, the cost of owning and operating a car is in fact more likely to keep low-income families in poverty. The average total cost of car ownership in New York City is \$400 to \$600 per month. Low-income households are also vulnerable to predatory financing practices that add to car ownership cost and risk. Driving is not an affordable option for many residents of areas that are the most isolated from the subway system.

5 Straphangers Campaign, Annual Pokey Award release, November 2008 (<http://www.straphangers.org/pokeyaward/08/table1.html>)

Lack of Efficient and Reliable Transit is a Significant Barrier to Employment and Exacerbates Social and Economic Isolation

The travel time burden created by lack of subway access and slow, unreliable bus service compounds the social and economic isolation of NYCHA residents. It exacerbates the challenges created by linguistic isolation, low educational attainment, chronic health conditions, and disabilities that disproportionately affect NYCHA residents. The physical isolation of many NYCHA developments from shopping, schools, and other vital resources means that trips to access essential, everyday services consume inordinate amounts of time. Households in well-served areas are able to combine such trips; NYCHA residents are seldom able to achieve such efficiencies, and the logistics of combining work, parenting, and the pursuit of adult education are daunting.

Prospects for Improving Transit Access for NYCHA Developments

The Metropolitan Transit Authority's 5- and 10-year capital plans do not contemplate any expansions of the subway system into now-underserved areas of the outer boroughs. The extension of the #7 line to the far West Side will improve access to the system for residents of planned new developments on the West Side of Manhattan—but residents of this area already enjoy relatively good access to transit compared with residents of many outer-borough complexes. And the rapid worsening of MTA's finances in recent months makes it less likely that even high-profile projects, including the #7 extension, and future phases of the Second Avenue subway, will be completed in the foreseeable future. Many other subway and rail projects that the MTA's leadership had hoped to complete in its current and upcoming capital plans have been reduced in scope or dropped from the plan entirely.

MTA faces a long-term structural deficit that was deepened by the 1994 reduction in direct state funding of its operations. The MTA has become extremely reliant on farebox revenue, leading to a steady march of fare increases. New York City's bus and subway riders now pay a higher share of the total cost of their service than riders of any other transit system in the U.S., and the fare increases imposed in 2009 are almost certain to be followed by future hikes.⁶

As the MTA's finances continue to worsen along with prospects for the economy as a whole, the agency is exploring less capital-intensive alternatives for expanding service. With the New York City Department of Transportation, New York City Transit, the division of MTA that operates New York City's subway and local bus system, is moving to develop a citywide bus rapid transit network. Both the timeframe for implementation and the routes that the new system will comprise have yet to be determined. If bus rapid transit route planning targets now-underserved areas, residents of many of the NYCHA developments that are now isolated from transit could benefit significantly.

6 Report to Governor David A. Paterson from the Commission on Metropolitan Transit Authority Financing, December 2, 2008.

What Is Bus Rapid Transit?

In its most sophisticated form, which has operated for over a decade in Bogotá, Colombia, bus rapid transit is a high-performing “third mode” of transit, able to move people at speeds and in numbers comparable to those of a light rail system.

BRT’s distinguishing features include:

- dedicated rights-of-way, protected from incursion by other traffic by physical barriers and/or enforcement cameras
- electronic coordination of traffic signals with bus movements.
- bus stops that are widely spaced and distinctively designed, and include provisions for payment of fares before the bus arrives.
- specially designed vehicles with low floors, wide doors, and other features that enable efficient boarding, and support the branding of the system as a comfortable and efficient alternative.

Each feature contributes to improved speed and reliability; taken together, they enable BRT systems to achieve performance comparable to that of light rail systems, but at a much lower cost: millions of dollars, rather than billions, per route mile. BRT routes can also be implemented much more quickly than surface rail or subway, and with much less disruption of existing infrastructure and businesses.

In June 2008, the New York City Department of Transportation and New York City Transit launched “Select Bus Service,” replacing limited-stop service on the existing Bx12 route operating along Pelham Parkway and Fordham Road in the Bronx. SBS lacks some key attributes of BRT—for example, bus lanes are marked with colored pavement, but are not physically protected. But it incorporates other key features, most notably pre-boarding fare collection, which significantly speeds trips. In its first six months of operation, ridership is up 30 percent, and travel times have decreased by an impressive 20 percent, along one of the city’s most congested commercial corridors. Ninety-eight percent of riders report that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the new service, which was implemented rapidly and at very low cost.

Potential Benefits of BRT to NYCHA Residents

NYC DOT’s and MTA’s stated commitment to broadly implementing a full-featured BRT network promises significant benefits to many of New York City’s low-income residents, and to NYCHA residents in particular.

- BRT’s speed and reliability can greatly improve NYCHA residents’ access to important job centers and other destinations—such as schools, health care, and retail centers.
- BRT is more easily accessible to disabled people, seniors, and people traveling with children than either the subway or standard buses. The combination of station-like stops, with platforms raised a few inches above curb level, and low-floor buses with wide doors, mean that the system is much easier for people of all physical abilities to use. Because NYCHA residents are disproportionately affected by disabilities and other chronic health conditions, a new system that is fully ADA-compliant from its inception—but which, unlike Access-a-Ride, is fully integrated into the mainstream transit system and its fare structure—will be especially valuable.

BRT is well-suited to many areas where NYCHA projects are now most isolated; many of those developments are in neighborhoods with wide streets and low levels of car ownership. If routes and stops are well selected, BRT

will not only improve mobility for NYCHA residents but will also strengthen their communities. In some NYCHA developments, planning and design of BRT stations could be integrated into the redevelopment of unused land for residential or commercial use, creating new nodes of social and economic vitality. Indeed, some NYCHA sites are lacking only the “T” to become in-place transit-oriented developments.

NYCHA Developments That Could Benefit From Bus Rapid Transit

The Pratt Center for Community Development and COMMUTE (Communities United for Transportation Equity), a citywide coalition advocating for transit improvements that will benefit low-income communities, collaborated to develop a proposal for bus rapid transit service that would enhance mobility for communities citywide that are now underserved by transit—and that could particularly address the unique transportation needs and opportunities offered by public housing.

Our proposal includes a citywide network of 15 routes connecting areas of high population density that are underserved by rapid transit with employment centers, and linking neighborhoods that are currently very difficult to travel between using public transportation. The Pratt Center and COMMUTE have shared and discussed these proposed routes with the Department of Transportation, which is embarking on its own process of mapping out bus rapid transit for New York City. DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Kahn has specifically cited this proposal as an illustration of the type of system DOT and MTA hope to put in place.

The first map (see page 42) illustrates COMMUTE's proposed network of BRT routes, along with locations of NYCHA developments. Dot colors indicate how many workers residing in NYCHA housing now live over ½ mile from a subway station. Citywide, 235,000 of 464,000 low-income “extreme commuters” trips to work would be made more efficient by the implementation of BRT. In all, over 2.1 million commuters live within ½ mile of the proposed BRT network.

The second map highlights NYCHA developments whose residents would most significantly benefit from the implementation of BRT. More than three in five of the 112,600 NYCHA residents who now live farther than ½ mile from a subway line—70,000 residents—would be brought within a ½ mile radius of a rapid transit line by the development of the proposed BRT network. In all, more than 315,000 of NYCHA's 406,200 residents would live within ½ mile of the BRT network as proposed, creating new mobility options for this large, underserved population.

The proposed BRT network would serve several NYCHA developments that house large numbers of people but are now isolated from rapid transit. These locations present outstanding opportunities for the development of new BRT-served transit nodes. Their residential density means that new BRT lines could economically serve large numbers of riders, and that complementary uses—retail or other community services—could be co-located at the new BRT stations.

Because U.S. Census commute time data only includes people who now work, it understates the potential benefit of bus rapid transit to NYCHA residents. Some number of the residents who do not now participate in the workforce due to ill health or disability would have a new, accessible means of reaching potential jobs. While people with disabilities or chronic health conditions certainly face additional barriers to working, including the physical demands of the jobs themselves, providing an affordable, reliable, and accessible transit option that connects residents to a large number of workplaces would remove an important barrier for many NYCHA residents.

CONNECTING PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS VIA TRANSIT CONTINUED

Some 293,500 NYCHA residents live near subway stations, but the other 112,600, or 28 percent, lack access.

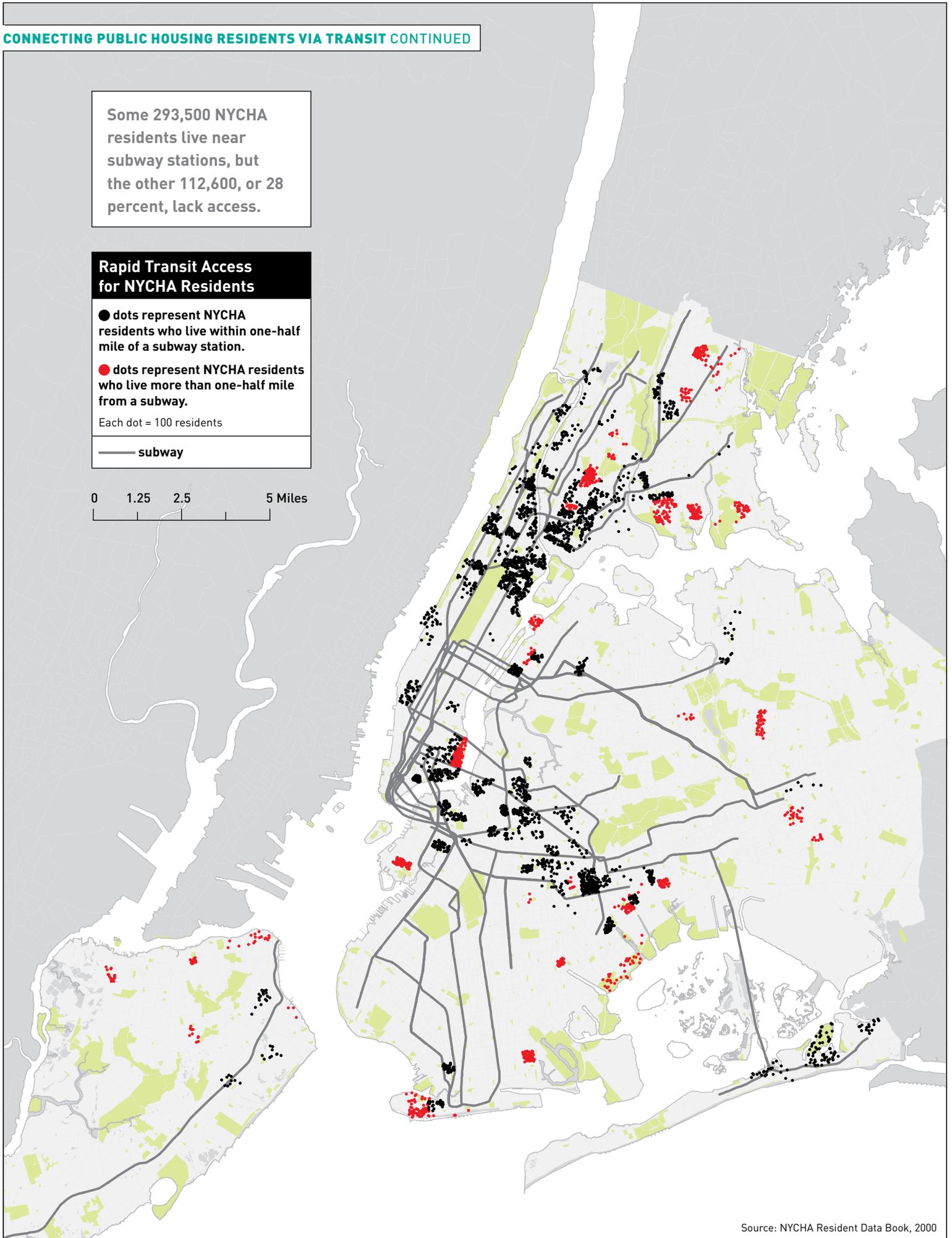
Rapid Transit Access for NYCHA Residents

- dots represent NYCHA residents who live within one-half mile of a subway station.
- dots represent NYCHA residents who live more than one-half mile from a subway.

Each dot = 100 residents

— subway

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles



COMMUTE's proposed BRT network would bring fast and affordable mass transit to about 70,000 of the 112,600 NYCHA residents who live more than one-half mile from a subway.

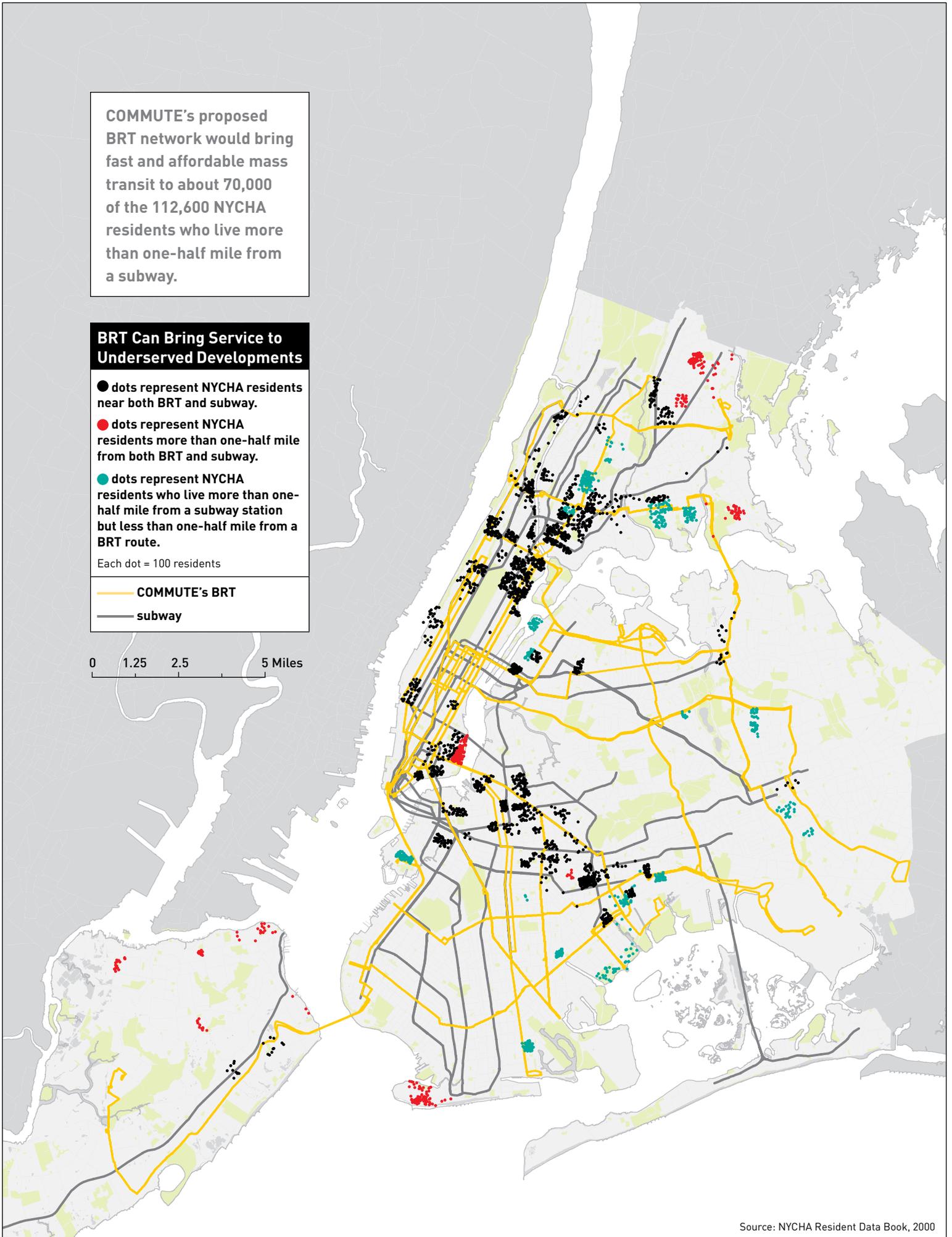
BRT Can Bring Service to Underserved Developments

- dots represent NYCHA residents near both BRT and subway.
- dots represent NYCHA residents more than one-half mile from both BRT and subway.
- dots represent NYCHA residents who live more than one-half mile from a subway station but less than one-half mile from a BRT route.

Each dot = 100 residents

- COMMUTE's BRT
- subway

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles



The new mobility that BRT would promote would also enable residents to more easily access important services, particularly health care and education. NYCHA residents living in now-isolated developments would be able to access services across a much larger area. And the BRT stations themselves could anchor new retail and service hubs, strengthening both NYCHA residents and surrounding communities underserved by transit and retail.

Recommendations

The benefits to NYCHA residents from a well-planned and implemented bus rapid transit system are significant. There are actions that NYCHA can take on its own to help ensure that those benefits are realized, and others that it can take in collaboration with MTA and NYC DOT.

Both of those agencies have expressed their intention to move forward to implement a citywide BRT network, but its details remain to be worked out. Both agencies have also expressed a desire to work with a broad range of stakeholders, to ensure that the benefits of the new system are maximized, that any negative impacts (such as loss of on-street parking) can be mitigated, and that obstacles to implementation can be overcome. Because NYCHA residents represent a large number of potential BRT riders, they are an important constituency whose input MTA and DOT should solicit; they are also a potentially important group of supporters, as plans for the new system encounter the inevitable obstacles. NYC DOT is now undertaking an outreach campaign to identify bases of support along potential BRT lines, and to establish local advisory committees as it moves forward with plans for implementation. DOT would value the input of NYCHA residents in this process; NYCHA itself should seek opportunities to collaborate with DOT and MTA on the planning of routes and station locations.

Reaching out to NYCHA residents as BRT stakeholders:

- NYCHA could help MTA and DOT to engage residents in planning for new routes. Involvement of residents will help MTA / DOT to design new services that respond to residents' needs. Data available to MTA and DOT from the U.S. Census, and from current ridership on existing transit routes, doesn't provide enough information to help the agencies design new routes and services for maximum impact. The census captures only data about trips to work; it does not reflect travel patterns for other kinds of trips. Neither the census nor current ridership statistics can quantify trips *not* taken, to jobs *not* held by NYCHA residents because no efficient transit connection now exists. Meeting with NYCHA residents through tenant associations and at community centers and other local venues will be an important means of supplementing analysis of data to create a comprehensive picture of transit patterns and needs.
- The same outreach effort can also be used to inform residents of the potential of BRT to improve connections to workplaces and other destinations. As the new BRT system is implemented, information about routes, destinations, and "how to use BRT" should target NYCHA residents, especially seniors and people with disabilities.

Identify space for BRT stations on NYCHA sites

BRT may present a special opportunity in NYCHA developments where underutilized land exists, whether or not the creation of additional housing and commercial space is contemplated. Coordinating the planning of new BRT routes and stations with development plans would improve mobility for existing and new residents, make retail spaces more valuable, and aid in placemaking and strengthening of community. The MTA is already working on transit-oriented development projects with several suburban communities now served by its commuter rail lines. NYCHA projects represent opportunities for in-city, in-place transit-oriented development—with or without new construction—that would be served by new BRT routes.

Develop feeder routes within large projects

Some of the larger NYCHA developments were built on a superblock urban planning design model that is now largely discredited, in part because of the way that such designs isolate residents from the services and amenities that the traditional street grid accommodates. These projects might be logical hubs for BRT feeder routes, where smaller vehicles make frequent stops and connect riders to BRT trunk lines. In Bogotá, Colombia, feeder lines also provide free local service within neighborhoods; riders pay fares at the stations where they board the trunk lines, and no fare is charged to board the feeder bus. Start-up and operating costs for the feeder buses would be eligible for funding under the Job Access and Reverse Commute program, a category of federal transportation assistance that is awarded on a competitive basis to municipalities and other entities, including public authorities such as NYCHA. NYCHA could apply for this funding on its own, in collaboration with MTA or DOT, or in partnership with another entity that would develop and operate the service.

OPPORTUNITY #3: THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF NYCHA'S VACANT LAND

Introduction

In April 2005, the New York City Housing Authority joined with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the agency charged with development and preservation of privately owned affordable housing, to launch a collaborative effort to capitalize on NYCHA's vacant and underutilized land holdings. The stated goal: "to create affordable apartments and homes for low-income New Yorkers."⁷

The Bloomberg administration has reported that the initiative, a part of the mayor's New Housing Marketplace plan, will ultimately create over 6,000 new units of affordable housing on vacant and underutilized sites (primarily parking lots, as well as sitting areas, vacant land, and deteriorating buildings).⁸ The total potential square footage of development on NYCHA-controlled real estate could be much greater. Since 2005 NYCHA and HPD have released requests for proposals for the development of more than 2,000 units of new or rehabilitated housing on these underutilized properties.⁹

The collaboration between NYCHA and HPD holds substantial potential but also raises many critical questions. Thus far, NYCHA and HPD have treated this effort not as a comprehensive program but instead as a series of individually negotiated requests for proposals. No program guidelines exist to help guide how the program will proceed. There is no formal process for making site planning or programmatic decisions, or for including public housing residents or members of the public in the process, prior to the release of individual requests for proposals (RFPs). This leaves a debate on each individual project over a series of critical questions:

- **How should the value in the scarce NYCHA land be apportioned?** between:
 - creating new affordable housing;
 - generating revenue for NYCHA, at a time when it faces a financial crisis; and
 - generating benefits for current NYCHA residents through homeownership opportunities, new community facilities, jobs, and other measures.
- **What mix of incomes should be served?**
- **Is it acceptable to include market-rate units?**
- **Who should make the plans for these sites, and how?**

Existing public housing serves the poorest New York City residents, and makes it possible for them to afford housing because it does not take an excessive share of their already small incomes for rent. NYCHA plays a critical role in this respect, since the cost of other subsidized housing is generally out of reach for the lowest-income New Yorkers.

7 As described on HPD's website (as of 11/10/08), at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/developers/govt-owned.shtml>, and in the initial April 2005 press release, at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/pr2005/pr-04-12-05.shtml>.

8 <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/pr2007/pr-11-29-07.shtml>

9 See NYCHA/HPD RFP's for East Harlem, West Side, Stanley Avenue, and Affordable Housing for the Bronx

The agency's mission and unique and vital role in housing New York's poorest, who are also most inadequately served by private housing options, suggests that new development on Housing Authority property should also house low-income residents. Indeed, the stated goal of the NYCHA vacant development program on the HPD website and in initial RFPs is to provide low-income housing.

Yet not every project has reflected that goal. Most prominently, the planned development of new housing at Harborview, a NYCHA development in Clinton approved in 2008, includes a significant proportion of market rate housing to be built by the Atlantic Development Group. Following community objections, the project did ultimately include more units of affordable housing than initially planned—46 middle-income and 46 moderate-income units, as well as 126 units of low-income housing, with half reserved for seniors, in addition to 102 market-rate apartments—but the project marked a significant turning point: this was the first time that market-rate units had been included in a NYCHA redevelopment. Many community organizations opposed the deal, objecting to the inclusion of market-rate units, the lack of public participation in shaping the RFP, and other features of the development that they believe violate the spirit of commitments made previously to the community in the context of the Hudson Yards rezoning.

Atlantic Development has pledged to pay NYCHA \$15 million for the site. NYCHA General Manager Doug Apple has already indicated that his agency will be considering more such projects in the future: “This is the floor, not the ceiling,” Apple stated after the Atlantic Development proposal was approved. “There will be sites coming up that we believe have a much higher percentage of market-rate potential.”¹⁰

How should current NYCHA residents benefit from these efforts?

As this report has demonstrated, the majority of public housing developments are located in and are themselves areas of concentrated poverty. While income-mixing is one strategy for addressing concentration of poverty in public housing, this does not address the deeper challenge of creating opportunity for existing residents of NYCHA developments. The NYCHA/HPD collaboration creates an opportunity to address unmet needs of current residents of these neighborhoods—for employment (either in construction, or in the operation of new business that would be created on site), for affordable homeownership, and for community services like decent grocery stores, small businesses, and day care centers. While some sites have included community facilities, there does not appear to be a policy of looking at neighborhood needs and strategically utilizing development potential to meet them. Nor has there been a significant documented effort to maximize job creation or homeownership opportunities for current NYCHA residents.

In this section, we take a closer look at this initiative through an analysis of the requests for proposals issued so far. We offer recommendations for how to codify what has been a project-by-project endeavor into a systematic program with promoting opportunities for NYCHA residents as its governing goal.

10 Quoted in “A Step Toward Market-Rate Housing for NYCHA,” Julia Vitullo-Martin, Center for Rethinking Development at the Manhattan Institute, November 2008 e-newsletter.

Context

The debate around the use of NYCHA land takes place amid a much broader national debate about the benefits of privatizing public housing. Across the country, public housing authorities have undertaken a mix of privatization, demolition, income-mixing, and deconcentration strategies. These have been implemented for a range of reasons, some ideological (based on the goal of “deconcentrating” poverty and creating more mixed-income communities, which can, in the right circumstances offer better educational and employment opportunities, and community services), and some financial (to address the continuing reduction in federal funds to operate and maintain public housing, relative to rising costs). While supporters of privatization efforts have argued that public housing is a failed strategy and should be replaced with mixed-income developments (or nothing at all), critics have pointed out that in many cases, the most vulnerable and lowest-income tenants have been displaced, and the overall stock of housing for low-income tenants has been reduced. According to HUD’s 2002 Annual Report to Congress on the HOPE VI program, as of September 30, 2002, HOPE VI grantees had planned to demolish 78,259 units while only building 33,853 new low-income units.

NYCHA has not been aggressive in pursuing the deconcentration strategies established by HUD. It sought relief from HUD’s HOPE VI rules to be able to limit the amount of public housing demolished in that program on its two HOPE VI projects in the Rockaways and Oceanhill-Brownville. Far more than most other big-city housing authorities, it has sought to maintain its existing housing stock.

In 2004, NYCHA did begin the demolition and privatization of Markham Gardens, a 360-unit public housing project on Staten Island’s north shore. Claiming that it was dilapidated beyond repair, NYCHA and HPD proposed to demolish the development and issue a request for proposals to private developers to build mixed-income housing. The Pratt Center worked with tenant leaders at Markham Gardens, who were opposed to both demolition and privatization. While the City decided to proceed, it did make a wide range of concessions to residents. The request for proposals for the project included a commitment of project-based Section 8 certificates to ensure that all interested residents could return to the development, a promise that at least 150 of the units would remain affordable to low-income occupants regardless of whether previous residents returned, a provision for access to homeownership opportunities for public housing tenants, and enhanced community facilities for current residents.

Since 2002, HPD and NYCHA have been collaborating on projects that, like Markham Gardens, involve a request for proposals to developers interested in building projects on NYCHA-owned sites. Several of these projects have involved the rehabilitation of existing vacant buildings. More recently, the focus has shifted to the development of vacant land. Unlike Markham Gardens, in most cases these projects generally seek to develop new housing on vacant, inactive, or underutilized land plots without, in most cases, threatening, displacing, or demolishing existing communities.¹¹

Projects to Date

The NYCHA/HPD collaboration began with several requests for proposals during 2002 through 2004 that primarily involved substantial rehabilitation. In 2006 and 2007, four RFPs solicited development plans for approximately 2,000 new units of housing. Available details from these RFPs are summarized below. A more detailed description can be found at www.prattcenter.net/NYCHA-land.

11 The developments in East Harlem and the University Avenue Coalition, one of the four projects in Affordable Housing for the Bronx, both involve demolition or rehab of existing buildings, only some of which are currently vacant.

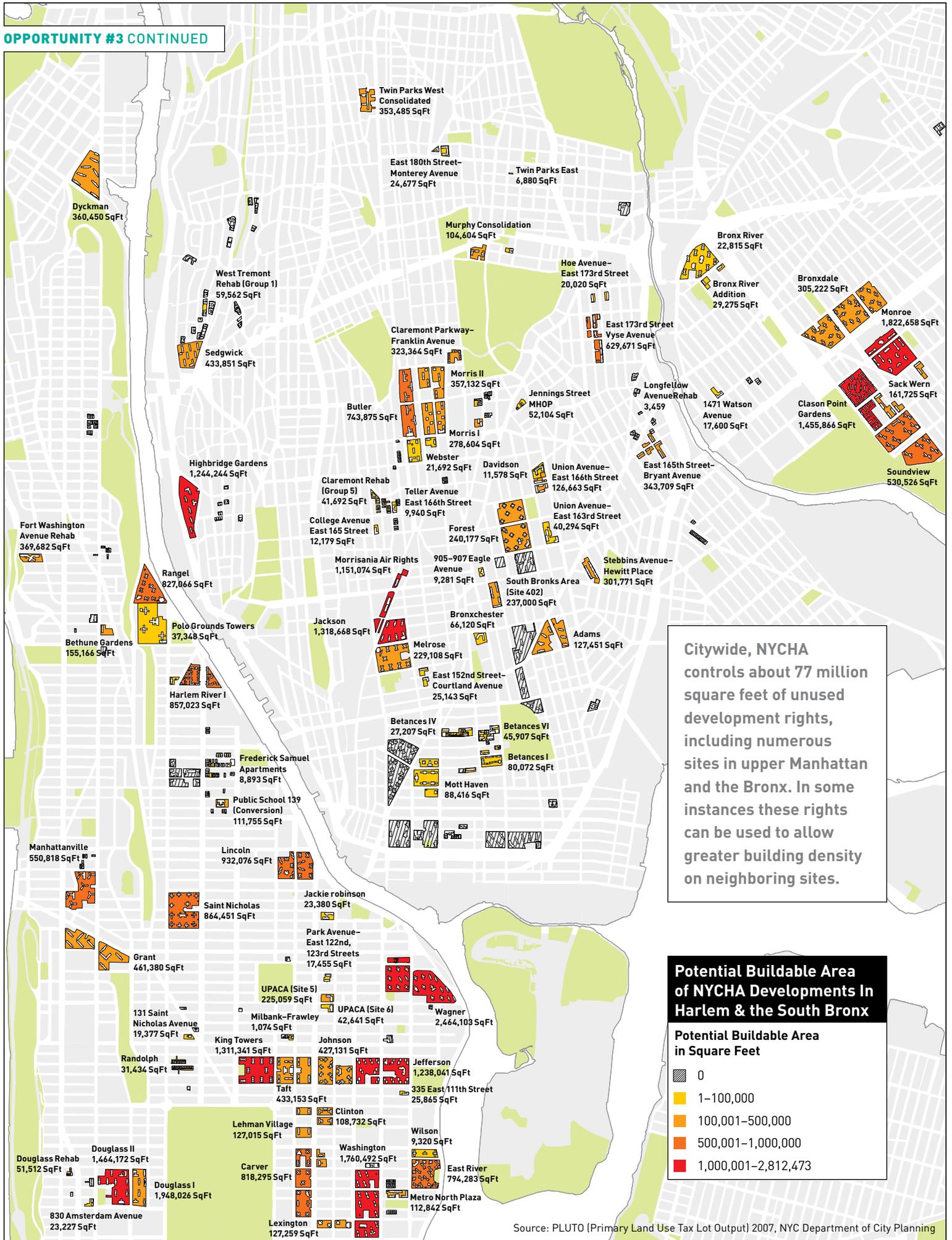
| Development | RFP year | Preexisting site | Program |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| Fabria Houses, Manhattan | 2002 | 5 dilapidated buildings | RFP allowed 39 low-income units +19 market rate. Winning bidder, Phipps Houses, is developing 64 low-income units. |
| University Macombs, Bronx | 2003 | 7 vacant buildings + vacant lot | 321 low-income units (10% homeless, 25% NYCHA, 35% other low-income) |
| Brook/Willis, Bronx | 2004 | 8 vacant multifamily buildings | 121 low-income units |
| Stanley Avenue, Brooklyn | 2006 | Parking lot, boiler plant | 145 low-income units, 30 of them homeownership |
| East Harlem- Metro North, Manhattan | 2006 | 17 buildings and vacant lots | 300 low-income units, 39 moderate-income |
| Chelsea-Elliot/Fulton, Manhattan | 2006 | Parking lot | 400 moderate-to-middle income units |
| Harborview, Manhattan | 2006 | Parking lot | RFP prioritized moderate/middle income; winning bid emphasized market-rate and low-income; approved project was a compromise. |
| Affordable Housing for the Bronx | 2007 | 145,000 s.f. vacant lot, plus numerous vacant buildings | 400 rental units, all-affordable, 60% low-income; 100 homeownership units, at least 30% affordable to low- and moderate-income households. |

Potential development: Thus far, NYCHA and HPD have issued RFPs that will generate approximately 2,000 units of affordable housing, out of the 6,000 new units of affordable housing in total envisioned for the collaboration.

In August 2008, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer issued a report, *Land Rich, Pocket Poor*, which identified 30.5 million square feet of unused development rights for NYCHA properties in Manhattan. The Pratt Center performed a similar analysis citywide and identified approximately 77 million square feet of unused development rights—31 million in Manhattan, 21 million in Brooklyn, 16 million in the Bronx, 9 million in Queens, and 1 million in Staten Island.

The vast majority of these unused development rights would be impossible to build upon given the configuration of existing buildings. Some of the unbuildable potential development rights might be able to be sold to adjacent sites, as a transfer of development rights allowed under New York City zoning. In many cases, however, utilizing these development rights would require a change to existing zoning law—for example, by allowing development rights to be used over a several block area. Nonetheless, these development rights represent a significant opportunity for NYCHA and the city.

OPPORTUNITY #3 CONTINUED



Citywide, NYCHA controls about 77 million square feet of unused development rights, including numerous sites in upper Manhattan and the Bronx. In some instances these rights can be used to allow greater building density on neighboring sites.

Potential Buildable Area of NYCHA Developments in Harlem & the South Bronx

Potential Buildable Area in Square Feet

- 0
- 1-100,000
- 100,001-500,000
- 500,001-1,000,000
- 1,000,001-2,812,473

Source: PLUTO (Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output) 2007, NYC Department of City Planning

Benefits of the Collaboration

New housing: This collaboration has the ambitious goal of adding 6,000 new units of affordable housing. While some HPD language makes it appear that this will be all low-income housing, in practice the requests for proposals have sought a range of affordable housing targets, ranging from very low income (below 50 percent area median income) to middle-income housing (165 percent AMI), with some including market-rate housing.

A majority of the RFPs awarded thus far, including Affordable Housing for the Bronx, Metro North in East Harlem, and Stanley Avenue in East New York, require that a majority of their housing go to households below 60 percent AMI (approximately \$44,000 annually for a family of four). This places the program at the lower-income/more affordable end of Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace programs.

Mixed-income communities: The development of low-, moderate-, and middle-income housing immediately adjacent to public housing projects has the potential to create many of the benefits associated with mixed-income communities, without the HOPE VI downside of displacing public housing residents.

However, it is not clear to what extent the objective of creating mixed-income communities has informed the RFP process. In some cases, as in Affordable Housing for the Bronx, the RFP prescribed a detailed and diverse mix of income tiers, which appears to address neighborhood conditions and needs for affordable housing as well as income-mixing. In Manhattan's Harborview development, by contrast, where the area already includes luxury housing and low-income units but lacks moderate or middle-income housing, the initial development proposal neglected to address that glaring need. This omission is particularly notable given that the Bloomberg administration had reached an agreement with the City Council, via the Hudson Yards redevelopment plan, to increase moderate- and middle-income housing in the area that includes Harborview.

New housing opportunities for NYCHA residents: All of the developments discussed here set aside between one-fifth and one-quarter of their units for NYCHA residents, typically with preference for those who live in the adjacent housing project or people on the citywide Section 8 waiting list, and in some cases to ensure that units will be affordable to other low-income families in the future. With the exception of the West Side developments, project-based Section 8 vouchers are being used to subsidize those units.

Some of the developments offer homeownership opportunities. In the Bronx's Soundview Houses (part of the Affordable Housing for the Bronx RFP), half of the two-family homes being developed for sale will be restricted to households earning below 80 percent of area median income; at Brooklyn's Stanley Avenue Homes, all of the homes will be targeted to that income level. In both cases NYCHA residents get preference in the application process.

Better use of street-level space: Public housing projects have long received warranted criticism for their monolithic blocks and lack of street-level life. Some of the RFPs included in the NYCHA/HPD collaboration seek to revive street level life in the vicinity of public housing. In the Elliot-Chelsea houses on the West Side, for example, ground floor retail will add diversity and activity at street level. In the Soundview and Stanley Avenue Houses, townhouse-style homes will create activity at a more human scale. In most cases the development will activate formerly inactive or underutilized streetscapes and spaces. However, as new development replaces open space (even vacant lots), it is important to ensure that new development adds vitality to the street life of the neighborhood,

Improved facilities and services: In addition to providing affordable housing opportunities, NYCHA's mission states a commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents through "community, educational, and recreational programs." Some, but not all, of the NYCHA/HPD RFPs require developers to provide community facilities or resident service plans, including counseling, job training, social services, and youth programming, for the first five years of the development. All developments also require the developer to pay fees to replace parking, outdoor sitting areas, and other community uses displaced by the development.

Revenue for NYCHA: NYCHA is facing severe financial problems, with revenues from the federal government and Albany covering less and less of its operating and capital costs. Its budget deficit this year is nearly \$200 million. NYCHA has been forced to raise rents and redirect capital funds to cover operating costs (resulting in deferred maintenance, which is partially responsible for recent highly publicized elevator failures). With this in mind, it makes sense for NYCHA to consider the untapped potential of its land as an asset to assist with its financial imbalance.

However, this must be done carefully. Publicly owned land is a precious resource that can only be sold once, and NYCHA's deficit is structural. One-shot sales may appear to be an attractive option for this year's budget—but they neither solve next year's structural deficit nor achieve the best public benefit possible.

Thus far, each of the RFPs in the collaboration has had a different approach. Several sites have been sold for one dollar, in order to maximize developers' ability to create affordable housing and public benefits. One development, Metro North in East Harlem, uniquely operates on a ground lease, providing \$85,000 upon signing, \$100,000 per year for the first 10 years, and a percentage of the development's operating surplus thereafter. And several of the RFPs have required a minimum sales price but encouraged bidders to offer more—thus leaving it to the developers to determine the best mix of revenue versus affordability and other benefits.

Job opportunities for NYCHA residents: While some of the RFPs specify preference for bidders who provide jobs and contracts to local entities, the Affordable Housing for the Bronx RFP uniquely obligates the developer to work with NYCHA to connect public housing residents with construction jobs.¹² This is a substantial potential benefit given the high levels of chronic unemployment among NYCHA residents and should be included in all future RFPs.

Recommendations

We commend the NYCHA-HPD collaboration. It is poised to provide substantial benefits that align with NYCHA's mission to provide affordable housing to low income New Yorkers while also working to increase the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

However, the Pratt Center encourages NYCHA to consider creating a set of standards and a program to maximize benefits—and in particular benefits to public housing residents—moving forward:

- **Codify the program.** The collaboration should be turned into a real program, with clear guidelines, priorities, and rules, rather than a series of RFPs or one-off deals which are repositioned and redescribed each time.
- **Establish a process for NYCHA resident and public participation in the planning process.** The RFPs for these projects—which generally establish the affordability, size, layout, and use—have thus far been developed without public input. While these projects will generally go through the city's uniform land use review procedure (ULURP) after a developer is selected, at that point the most important decisions are already made and difficult to change. The city should require a process of consultation with NYCHA residents and neighbors of a selected site, at which they can give input into the uses, affordability level, community facilities, size, and scale of the project.
- **One-time sale of assets is not a smart way for NYCHA to balance its budget. NYCHA should lease the land to developers, providing a long-term revenue stream, and require permanent affordability.** Publicly owned land is scarce and precious in New York City, and it should not be sold to cover budget gaps, even in times of crisis. The primary goal should not be revenue generation, but public benefit. Where the land will be conveyed

¹² The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 3 program requires that all projects that utilize federal construction funds allot 15 percent of the labor cost of a contract to resident hiring for construction or building service jobs, a mandate many of NYCHA's own contractors have not succeeded in meeting. However, none of the developers are recipients of federal funding.

to a developer for NYCHA's financial benefit, it should be done through a long-term lease rather than a one-time sale. This generally yields a better net present value than requiring the cash to be paid up front.

- **The primary goal should be creating “neighborhoods of opportunity”**—mixed-income communities where residents across the income scale have as much access as possible to quality education, community services, and employment opportunities. With this goal spelled out as city policy, and with the process of public participation identified above, RFPs can be crafted to:

- Strengthen the income mix within a neighborhood, by creating housing for those groups who are least well represented in the area's housing market and looking to create genuinely diverse neighborhoods.
- In every case, a majority of the housing created should be affordable, at a wide range of tiered incomes. The inclusion of a modest percentage of market-rate units in some of these developments can remain a possibility, but only if measures are in place to ensure that revenue from market-rate units is channeled for the benefit of NYCHA residents and low-income New Yorkers.
- Use the model of tightly proscribed income bands, like those in the “Affordable Housing for the Bronx” RFP, to achieve affordability at a wide range of incomes.

- **The program can do more to plan for and offer meaningful opportunities to existing NYCHA residents** by emphasizing:

- **Community services** (e.g. child care, community center, senior center), where there is a demonstrated need.
- **Neighborhood-serving retail** (e.g. grocery stores): Public housing neighborhoods often lack many basic services, including independent businesses, and especially grocery stores that serve healthy food. The Department of City Planning and the New York State Supermarket Commission have recently identified many “food deserts” in low-income neighborhoods. Any NYCHA/HPD RFP in a food desert, and that contains suitable space, should include the requirement of building a new grocery store to provide good food.
- **Employment opportunities and job training:** All RFPs in this collaboration should go beyond basic Section 3 requirements to include at least the language from the “Affordable Housing for the Bronx” RFP. Even better, NYCHA should work with the Mayor's Commission on Construction Opportunities to craft a specific program under which NYCHA residents would have apprenticeship opportunities on these jobs.
- **Homeownership opportunities:** Where developers include affordable homeownership units, priority should be given to eligible NYCHA residents ready to become homeowners, with homeownership counseling and assistance provided.
- **Urban design and transit improvements:** One thing that should be site-specific in the RFPs is a directive to improve the urban design and transit connections for the development. Because NYCHA developments are so often “towers on the park” that undermine street life and isolate residents, it is critical new development address this problem through a strong mix of uses, good streetscape and storefront design, and connections to transit. Bidders should receive bonus points for the quality of these features in their proposal.

By codifying the program and focusing on creating “neighborhoods of opportunity” for NYCHA residents and other low-income New Yorkers, the Bloomberg Administration can build upon this good idea to make it into a great opportunity for low-income families, especially those living in public housing.

APPENDIX A: NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

Further information about the data used in “A Demographic Overview”:

- The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS) information is only available at a unit of geography called the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), which is also referred to in New York City as the sub-borough, or sub-borough area. This unit is in many cases identical to the New York City Community Districts, but does differ in delineation in some instances. The sub-borough area is slightly too large of an area to consider as the immediate neighborhood, and in many cases a sub-borough includes areas undergoing rapid economic change, and other areas experiencing a different type of change (e.g. Park Slope and Red Hook, adjacent neighborhoods with very different economic profiles which are part of the same sub-borough). This makes it difficult to test hypotheses comparing neighborhood-wide shifts with NYCHA-resident trends within these neighborhoods. In addition, the HVS is a sample survey, so the comparison of small sub-groups (such as public housing residents within sub-borough areas) is constrained by the limited quantity of sample records. For the most part, conclusions about NYCHA residents at the sub-borough level is error-prone.
- Census 2000 Proxy: See map, which highlights the 51 census tracts in New York City in which 70 percent or more of residents live in public housing. This report interprets census data pertaining to those tracts as applying to all public housing residents in that tract. We used the census proxy to gather information on poverty and linguistic isolation, which are not measured in the HVS or NYCHA Data Book. Roughly 77,000 of NYCHA’s 175,000 units are located in these tracts, which over represent Brooklyn and Queens and under represent the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island.
- Population Count: A comparison of housing unit totals between the Census 2000 Proxy and the NYCHA Data Book revealed a significant discrepancy. Even when the housing unit counts represented a 99 to 100 percent match, the NYCHA Data Book population count averaged only 86 percent of the Census full count. This 14 percent undercount is an important finding, not only for the purposes of comparing Census to NYCHA data, but also for a more accurate representation of public housing residents. According to the NYCHA Data Book 2006, there are 408,360 people living in 174,619 households—with an average of 2.3 people per household. Factoring in an average undercount of 14 percent brings the total public housing population up to 473,735 people, with an average of 2.7 people per household.
- Poverty Rate: To establish the poverty rate of NYCHA residents (as defined in the decennial census), 32 census tracts which have a 90 percent coincidence with NYCHA housing unit counts were analyzed. Within this group, it was found that 49.9 percent of the residents were in poverty. Presuming this to be a sample representative of NYCHA residents as a whole, this means that half of all NYCHA residents are living in poverty, or roughly 236,394 people.

This map highlights the census tracts in New York City where at least 70 percent of the population lives in public housing, and where census data can therefore serve as a guide to the demographics of public housing.

NYCHA Development-Census Tract Coincidence

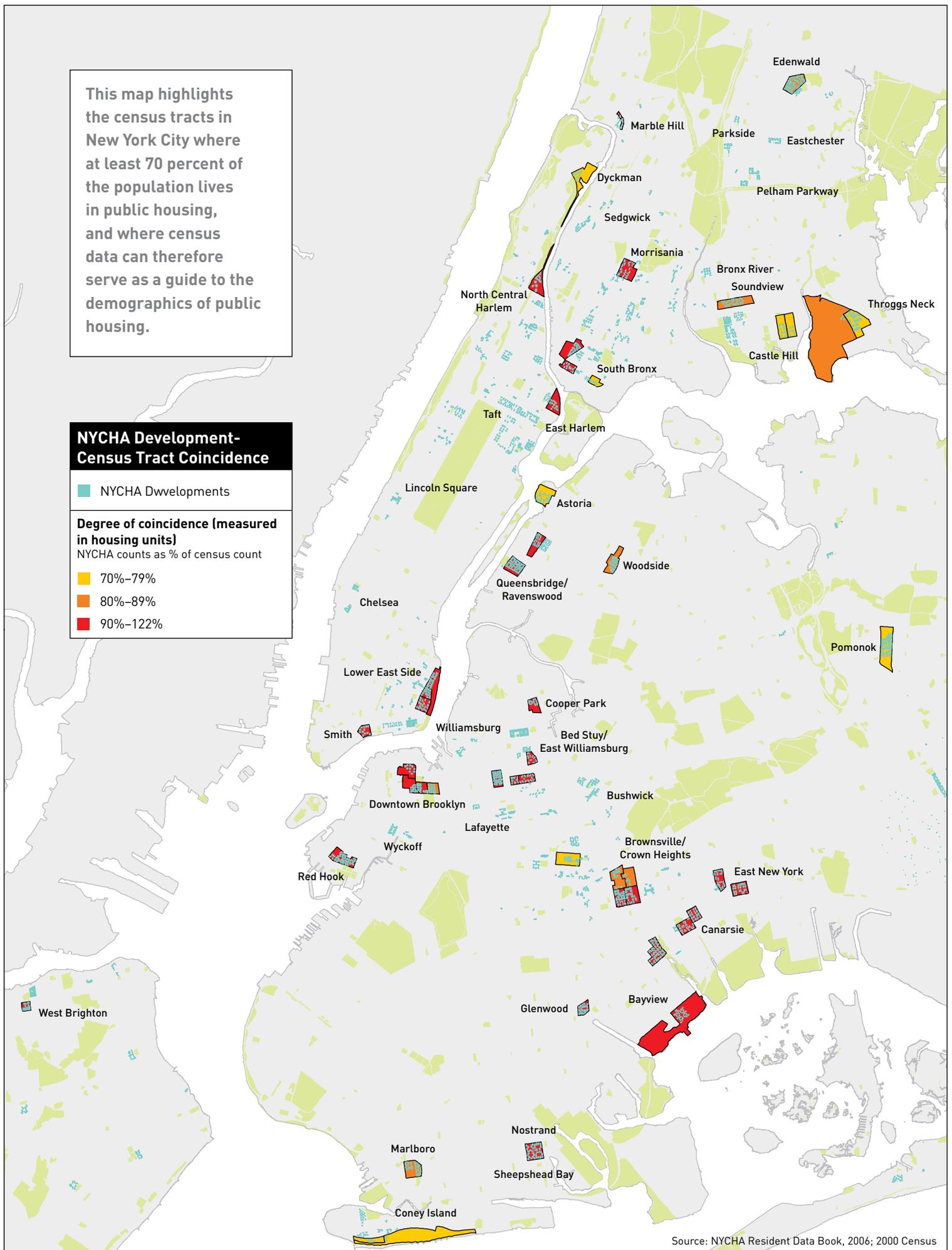
NYCHA Dvelopments

Degree of coincidence (measured in housing units)
 NYCHA counts as % of census count

70%–79%

80%–89%

90%–122%



APPENDIX B: METHODS FOR MAPPING PROXIMITY OF NEW YORK CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES TO NYCHA DEVELOPMENTS

Economic development initiatives are included if they receive public subsidy or discretionary land use approvals, plan to break ground by 2010, and promote job creation as a primary purpose. Non-economic development projects, such as housing and recreational projects, are included if they meet a job creation threshold of 75 jobs. We believe this threshold provides a significant opportunity to pursue linkage strategies. Given this threshold, residential projects with over 750 units or 750,000 square feet, recreational and community facilities with over 75,000 square feet, and cultural facilities with 150,000 square feet are included as economic development initiatives.

Economic development initiatives are divided into three categories of potential job creation. The categories of low, medium, and high job creation represent 0-100 jobs, 101-500 jobs, and greater than 501 jobs, respectively. Job creation, land use, square footage, and employment data were gathered from project proposals, environmental impact statements, the NYCEDC website, the PlanNYC website, project websites, and newspaper publications. The most current information available was used; however, job creation numbers should be viewed as estimates.

All NYCHA developments are mapped. Those situated within 0.5 miles of another NYCHA development, in an area with more than six public housing units per acre, are designated as high-density clusters. These clusters provide substantial population to support first source hiring and workforce development programs.

