

Glendale Townhomes Public Housing in Prospect Park: Background

Updated July 2015

What's Happening: The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) proposed a Plan to use a federal program called Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) to offer the 184 units of Glendale Townhomes (near Luxton Park) to private developers, demolishing and converting the public housing into 550 privately owned housing units (some up to 5 stories high). This would include low income Section 8, mixed income and market rate housing. The townhomes, land and green space is currently publically owned.^{1,2} In July 2015, "Due to the large number of concerns and questions and general lack of clarity regarding this action, City of Minneapolis leadership determined it best to...not take any action on the Plan at this time."³

Why was a moratorium needed on this Minneapolis City Council action?

Piece of Minneapolis History. Glendale was built in 1952 as a home for veterans and named after two Minneapolis aldermen – Glen Wallace and Dale Stanchfield. It borders a nationally registered historic district that could be negatively impacted by the redevelopment plans. Designed by prominent architects Larson and McLaren as a showpiece of public housing, Glendale itself could be worthy of preservation. A historic research study is currently being conducted by the firm Hess Roise, on whether a federal Section 106 review will apply - that could put the demolition of Glendale into question.⁴

Problematic Community Engagement. A significant percentage of Glendale residents are refugees, with English not their primary language. Nearly all the residents are people of color, with 60 percent of the households being from Somalia, Ethiopia, or Southeast Asia.⁵ The public comment period and public hearing process was occurring during Ramadan, and most information to date has been relayed electronically when many residents



do not have ready access to computers. Prospect Park families are only just learning of the proposal and have voiced official concern over the potentially significant impact of the privatization plans to the neighborhood,⁶ as well as the impact to children at Pratt Community School.

No Other Alternatives Presented. The level of disrepair at Glendale and why that property within MPHA's portfolio was chosen is under dispute, given that Glendale has received a 98/100 physical unit inspection score from HUD, one of the highest in MPHA's portfolio.⁷ Preliminary research on the first round of housing units approved for RAD is indicating that "more economically viable or otherwise better-off housing projects are potentially more likely to be converted, as opposed to more severely distressed [or] poorer projects...[because] better-off projects might be more attractive to potential investors."⁸ Acknowledging the real estate location of Glendale, the Prospect Park Association is looking into an independent assessment of the units to ensure that this does not result in unnecessary demolition. Other alternatives for repair or financing of the existing infrastructure have not been presented to the community. Given that other city public housing agencies, like the St. Paul Public Housing Agency, have successfully accessed local and state funding to fill federal

¹ Glendale Housing Development Project Plan, May 29th, 2015

² Glendale Master Plan Factsheet, MPHA.

³ City of Minneapolis, Community Planning and Economic Development, July 8, 2015 letter to residents.

⁴ Prospect Park Neighborhood Association: www.prospect-park.org/about/historic-district.html

⁵ Glendale Household Demographics, MPHA.

⁶ Prospect Park Association board resolution on Glendale redevelopment plans, passed June 22, 2015.

⁷ HUD Public Housing Physical Inspection Score, inspection date 11/30/2010: www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/pis.html

⁸ James Hanlon, Director of the Institute for Urban Research at Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville.

budget gaps to maintain their public housing stock,⁹ alternative financial solutions should be evaluated prior to committing city planning resources to a Glendale redevelopment.

Disruption and Displacement of Vulnerable

Residents. Studies are showing that the benefits of public housing demolition and their conversion to private redevelopment accrue within upper income households, while the costs of displacement and instability largely fall on low-income communities of color.¹⁰ With the 3 percent rental vacancy rate in the Minneapolis housing market,¹¹ the conversion of public housing into private Section 8 units can put the Glendale families at risk of instability and homelessness. RAD contracts last about 15-20 years, and Section 8 funding at the federal level is not necessarily secure in the long term. Residents report that even with a Section 8 voucher in hand, housing is difficult to find; and there are currently no Section 8 rental openings in Prospect Park or adjoining neighborhoods. Further, residents are at risk of landlord foreclosure, as was the case in the recent housing mortgage crisis.¹²

Already a Model for a Strong, Stable, Mixed Income, Racially Diverse Community.

The Glendale Townhomes is more than just housing – it is a place-based community that provides protection, a strong social network and stability for refugee, immigrant and low-income families. Considering the significant health disparities facing our city and state,¹³ and the limited access to parks and open space for low-income residents in Minneapolis,¹⁴ Glendale provides safe green space and community gardening, promoting access to healthy food and a healthy community. Prospect Park, the neighborhood in which Glendale is located, is a mixed income, racially diverse community, in strong support for having Glendale public housing in its boundary.¹⁵

⁹ Saint Paul Public Housing Authority, www.stpha.org.

¹⁰ Goetz, E., *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice and Public Housing Policy*, 2013, Cornell University Press.

¹¹ Minneapolis Trends Reports - An Overview of Socioeconomic and Housing Trends in Minneapolis, Q1 2015.

¹² Glendale Resident Testimony; Housing Link Section 8 Rental Database; and The Atlantic: How Housing Policy is Failing America's Poor, 6/24/15.

¹³ Minnesota Department of Health, *Advancing Health Equity Legislative Report*, January 2014.

¹⁴ Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy, *Twin Cities Environmental Justice Mapping Tool*, www.ceed.org/ejmap.

¹⁵ City of Minneapolis *At A Glance: Prospect Park*, Department of Regulatory Services, March 24, 2015.

News Articles for Further Reading:

Glendale: A Prospect Park Enclave, 12/9/09

www.mndaily.com/2009/12/09/glendale-prospect-park-enclave

MPHA faces Glendale Resident Pushback, 5/12/15

www.startribune.com/mpha-faces-glendale-resident-pushback/303454301/

Low Income Townhome residents fear redevelopment will force them out, 6/8/15

www.myfoxtwincities.com/story/29270447/low-income-glendale-townhome-residents-fear-redevelopment-will-force-them-out

The Obama Administration Is Expanding a Program to Fix Up Public Housing, 6/9/15

www.thenation.com/article/209369/obama-administration-expanding-program-fix-public-housing-too-bad-program-might-also

A RAD-ical Housing Experiment, 7/30/14

http://inthesetimes.com/article/16931/a_rad_ical_housing_experiment

How Housing Policy Is Failing America's Poor, 6/24/15

www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/06/section-8-is-failing/396650/

Saint Paul Public Housing Agency invests \$2.5 million upgrade Dunedin Terrace and Hi-Rise, 4/10/13

<http://insightnews.com/news/10602-saint-paul-public-housing-agency-invests-25-million-upgrade-dunedin-terrace-and-hi-rise>

Factsheet produced by: Prospect Park Association Glendale Committee (www.pperr.org/c-ppe-c.html) and Defend Glendale (www.facebook.com/DefendGlendale)

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**Note of thanks to the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy (CEED) for their research support for this factsheet (www.ceed.org)*
