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Seventy-Five North Developments: A Holistic Approach to Improving Northeast Omaha

Fabiola Alikpokou
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, fabiola@huskers.unl.edu

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Seventy-Five North Developments:  
A Holistic Approach to Improving Northeast Omaha  

By  
Fabiola Alikpokou  

A THESIS  

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
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Seventy-Five North Developments
A Holistic Approach to Improving Northeast Omaha
Fabiola A. Alikpokou, MCRP
University of Nebraska, 2018

Advisor: Rodrigo Cantarero

The concentration of public housing in high-poverty neighborhoods has many negative impacts; it limits educational opportunities for kids, leads to increased crime, causes poor health outcomes, hinders wealth building, and decreases investments (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). Northeast Omaha exhibits many of these issues. North Omaha is not only home to many of the city's minority persons, but also home to one of the most impoverished Black communities in the United States (Cordes, Gonzalez, & Grace, 2011). The Omaha-Council Bluffs area was ranked 14 for the highest African-American poverty rate out of 100 most populous metro areas in 2010 (Drozd, 2014). In addition to poverty, North Omaha also has the highest area of concentrated public housing (HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, 2018). The impact of high concentrations of public housing in North Omaha have affected families, businesses, and schools in the community and subsequently have led to years of little or no investment in the area. While organizations have worked to educate, research, and evaluate ways to revamp North Omaha, these efforts have sometimes fallen short due to funding, lack of interest from private developers, and other factors. To change the face of the North Omaha, Seventy-Five North is developing high-class mixed-income housing in the area using the Purpose Built Communities model of mixed-income housing, education, and wellness. The objective of this research is to explore the potentials of the new strategy in improving the community.
Dedication

This thesis work is dedicated to God and my mother, Hanou Caroline Dravie, who came to the United States with nothing and worked hard to give her children everything. This work is also dedicated to my husband, Anthony, who has been my rock during the challenges of graduate school and life. To my children, Olivia Dede and Gabriella Koko, who have been my source of motivation. And to my wonderful and supportive siblings, Apelete, Frieda, and Noelie Nomenyo who have loved and supported me through it all.

Lastly, to my amazing friends, who have spent countless hours editing my paper and supporting me. Thank you. I love you all. May God bless you.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Omaha, Nebraska has been ranked high as an ideal place to raise a family and have a good quality of life. However, for many of the 87,000 residents in North Omaha, many of whom are minorities, this is not the case. For some years, North Omaha suffered the consequences of redlining, which resulted in racial discrimination in housing, and neighborhood segregation. In the 1930s, the Home Ownership Loan Corporation created a map for cities to use as a guide for determining where to issue federal and private mortgages. The map designated Black communities around the nation, one being North Omaha, as red zones which indicated no funds should be granted to homes in those areas, as it was viewed as hazardous. Subsequently, more funds went to all-White neighborhoods where White citizens could purchase homes which increased property values, resulting in thriving communities (Strand, 2017). While the Fair Housing Act of 1968 was created to end housing discrimination such as redlining, the past discriminatory practices left many Black communities in the United States with poverty, deteriorating homes, inadequate amenities, low performing schools, no or low wage jobs, and high concentration of public housing. It has been nearly 50 years since the Fair Housing Act was passed, yet the consequences of the discriminatory housing practices are still present today in many minority communities, including North Omaha. In addition to redlining, there were also discriminatory practices involved in urban planning that continued to hinder low-income communities—such as exclusionary zoning and location of public housing. During the mid-twentieth century, when the majority of public housing was built, the common locations were undesirable areas that had few amenities and a large
percentage of low-income minorities (Lens, 2013). For Omaha, the sites selected for
public housing were located in North and South Omaha, the two areas with the largest
Black and Hispanic populations. The decisions to overwhelm these communities with
concentrations of public housing left the neighborhoods plagued with crime,
underperforming schools, and little to no opportunities. According to the Heartland 2050
Vision report, Black and Hispanic/Latino people in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region,
especially children, have lower access to opportunities than Whites in all metrics (school
proficiency, labor market engagement, job access, and health hazard exposure) and are
less likely to be prepared to enter the workforce (Metropolitan Area Planning Agency,
2014), subsequently leading to unemployment. To help redevelop northeast Omaha,
specifically in U.S. Census Tracts 52 and 11 (Map 1) in the Highlander neighborhood,
Seventy-Five North was created to help end generational cycle of poverty and address
community deterioration by establishing tools for the local school to thrive, recreational
facilities, and other amenities to attract new public and private investment to the area
(Seventy-Five North, 2018). The development is expected to impact Census Tract 53
(Map 1). Seventy-Five North will serve as the ongoing overseer of the development and
Seldin Company will manage the housing portion of the development.
Map 1: US Census Tracts, Highlander Neighborhood & Seventy-Five North Development Site

Source: Fabiola Alikpokou
Research Intent and Purpose

This research intends to answer the questions; 1) to what extent does the new housing development approach, using the mixed-income housing, education, and wellness method impact the Highlander community in northeast Omaha? 2) In what ways might the development impact housing quality and accessibility for low-income households, and educational attainment? And 3) What have been the results in other communities and do these results align with expectations for the Highlander neighborhood in northeast Omaha. To answer the research questions, the research will explore Seventy-Five North's development in northeast Omaha, specifically in U.S. Census Tracts 52 and 11 in the Highlander neighborhood and evaluate the components of its approach. Census Tract 52 and 11 are studied because the development is in the two tracts. The research will also examine data in U.S. Census Tracts 53 and 12 because they are adjacent to the studied tracts and are expected to be impacted by the development. Because the project is in its early stages, no before-after evaluation approach is possible. Instead, the research exploration seeks to measure the potential impact of the development by reviewing case studies of other Purpose Built Communities. The case studies will include East Lake community in Atlanta, Georgia (U.S. Census Tract 208.2), Bayou District in New Orleans, Louisiana (U.S. Census Tract 138), and Woodlawn neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama (U.S. Census Tract 3). The last intent of the research is to examine the suitability of the development using only mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness as a strategy to improve the Highlander neighborhood and not other community development strategies, based on literature. The findings of this research will contribute to the discourse around housing and communal issues and
provide a foundation for city planners in making decisions on housing projects aimed at
distressed neighborhoods and community development in Omaha.

We begin with a brief history of the study area, Northeast Omaha. This is followed by a
look at the current state of the community and the Seventy-Five North project. Next, we
evaluate the literature on the individual elements of the Purpose Built Communities
model—housing, education, and wellness. The research continues to the methodology
and analysis of the findings. The final chapter summarizes the findings and provides
direction for future research and recommendations.
CHAPTER 2
HISTORY OF NORTHEAST OMAHA

Many of today’s distressed communities in the United States share similar traits — they all were once thriving historic neighborhoods, and are now minority-majority residential and economically distressed areas. In Omaha, that neighborhood is Northeast Omaha, formerly known as Near North Side (Map 2). Surrounded by many landmark neighborhoods, Northeast Omaha is the oldest area in Omaha. Northeast Omaha, formerly known as Near North Side (Map 2) is bordered by Cuming Street on the south, 30th street on the west, 16th street on the east, and Locust street on the north.
In the late 1800s, the area was booming with the development of the first streetcar running from 24th Street to 30th Street and development of prominent homes and businesses. Before the US Civil War, the community was occupied by Swedes, Irish, English, Canadians, and a small number of African-Americans and Mexicans. After the US Civil War, in 1865 the presence of African-Americans started showing with the formation of African-American churches, social and political organizations, and three Black newspapers. Omaha did not experience many societal problems until lack of representation in politics was realized, which then put a great deal of stress between the Black and White residents in the early 1870s. The tension strengthened when Omaha became a destination for African-Americans due to recruitment by Union Pacific Railroad and the great migration. This influx was later on noted as a public issue in 1879, setting the foundation for future reactions to immigrants.

As Omaha grew, mostly due to the railroad, so did the population and different immigrant groups from southern and eastern Europe. Many formed their own communities throughout the city. Irish Americans established neighborhoods in South Omaha. Greeks and Hispanics, later on, occupied the area. The increase in a mixture of residents created competition for industrial jobs and housing. Similar to many cities, racial tension erupted in times of social and economic friction.

By 1920, the racialized pattern of residential development was starting, and the North Omaha area was known as a "colored" area. Nationally, the federal government agency responsible for determining the areas to issue home buying mortgages created Security Maps. The map designated area with green (best), blue (still desirable), yellow
definitely declining”), and red (hazardous). Areas that were predominantly Black or Hispanic were designated red (hazardous), and areas that were mostly White were either green (best) or blue (still desirable). The redline designation crippled many Black and Hispanic districts across the nation, including North and South Omaha, as they did not have access to federal mortgages and were not able to grow their communities. While the redlining discrimination ended in 1968 with Fair Housing Act, the scars and damages can still be seen today in the Highlander neighborhood.

Public Housing in Northeast Omaha Background

The Highlander neighborhood (Map 3) covers 30th and Hamilton to 30th and Lake, and 27th and Hamilton to 27th and Lake, in northeast Omaha. The area is a residential community north of Creighton University and a 10-minute drive to downtown Omaha. In the community is the historic Prospect Hill Cemetery, Charles Drew Health Center—a health facility that serves low-income families, Urban League of Nebraska—a civil rights organization that is dedicated to serving low-income urban neighborhoods, and Salem Baptist Church, the largest African-American church in Nebraska. Despite its attractive location and rich history, the Highlander neighborhood is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Omaha due to the long history of it being the destination of public housing.
Map 3: US Census Tracts and the Highlander Neighborhood in Omaha, Nebraska

Source: Fabiola Alikpokou
The first largest public housing project in Omaha was Logan Fontenelle with 550 units serving 2,100 residents (Fletcher, n.d.). It was built in 1938 at the intersection of north 24th and Paul (U.S. Census Tract 12) to serve low-income European residents originally. Two years later, two more public housings were built on 30th Street. Hilltop homes on 30th and Lake (U.S. Census Tract 52), and Pleasantview Homes on 30th and Parker (U.S. Census Tract 52) adjacent to the Prospect Hill Cemetery, in what is now known as the Highlander neighborhood. As time went on, White residents stopped moving in, and more African-Americans moved in from the south in the 1950s. Eventually, the community and the public housings were occupied by Black residents. Over time, the community started to deteriorate as buildings weren’t kept in good condition and units became overcrowded. In addition to crime and community deterioration, jobs in the community moved westward as the new civil rights law prohibited job discrimination (Avant, 2017). The move left people in the community unemployed thus causing poverty. The last major action that left northeast Omaha devastated was the riot of 1969 when an Omaha Police Officer shot and killed a 14-year-old girl, Vivian Strong. As a response, people fire-bombed and destroyed business (Avant, 2017). Combination of these events set the violence tone for the community, and in the 1970s the area was known as “Little Vietnam” due to the violence in the area (Fletcher, n.d.). Over the years, as Omaha developed and grew, the Highlander neighborhood where the Hilltop and Pleasantview public housing were located and the Logan Fontenelle on 20th and Paul became isolated and violent. Early 1990’s were blood years as the Hilltop community saw multiple murders of young people leading Omaha’s City Council to demolish Hilltop housing project in 1995 (Avant, 2017). In that same year, the Logan Fontenelle was demolished.
after a group of Black residents sued the federal government for preventing them from moving out of the community (Fletcher, n.d.). In 1996, Salem Baptist Church purchased the old Hilltop site to build the largest African-American Church in Nebraska. In 2008, the 300-unit Pleasantview Homes, the last of the massive public housing built in the 1940s was demolished. In 2012, Seventy-Five North acquired the 36 acres land for the redevelopment of the Highlander neighborhood which was left distressed as result of past historical events (Seventy-Five North, 2018).
Image 1: Logan Fontenelle, 1938

Source: North Omaha History by Adam Fletcher Sasse

Image 2: Pleasantview Apartments, Circa 2008

Source: Omaha World Herald
CHAPTER 3
SEVENTY-FIVE NORTH

The primary goal of Seventy-Five North is to end generational cycle of poverty and address community deterioration in the Highlander area by establishing tools for the local school to thrive, recreational facilities, and other amenities to attract new public and private investment to the area using the Purpose Built Communities model. (Seventy-Five North, 2018).

Seventy-Five North was founded in 2011 to implement ideas from years of research and community engagement activities conducted by various organizations for improving North Omaha, including the Empowerment Network (Gonzalez, 2017). Since its founding date in 2005 (Biga, 2011), The Empowerment Network has spent countless hours conducting community engagements, networking and collaborating, and researching ways to improve North Omaha. As a result of these actions, the North Omaha Village Revitalization Plan was created in 2011. The City of Omaha adopted the plan into the city’s master plan to give direction on improving the northeast Omaha community (Biga, 2011). Because of the North Omaha Village Revitalization Plan—provided research, design, and establishing the 30th and Parker area as a mixed-income neighborhood, and the work of the Empowerment Network (Alliance Building Communities, 2011), Seventy-Five North was able to have a strong foundation to start the Highlander Development on (Gonzalez, 2017).

Deciding location for development was a no-brainer because of the vacant land next to Prospect Hill Cemetery where Pleasantview public housing used to be. The organization purchased the 23-acre land for $775,000 paid by Susie Buffett (Cornell, 2013).
Additionally, they purchased lots, houses, and parcels outside the old Pleasantview, increasing their development area to nearly 40-acres (Gonzalez, 2017). There are many funding sources for the development, but main funding comes from philanthropy such as: Susie Buffett’s Sherwood Foundation, the William and Ruth Scott Foundation, Walter Scott Foundation, Daugherty Foundation, Kiewit Foundation, and Lozier Foundation (Gonzalez, 2017). The other funding source comes from tax incentive programs such as the Low-income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and New Markets Tax Credit.

To achieve the goal of revitalizing the Highlander neighborhood, Seventy-Five North realizes that strong partnership is the key. On the Highlander campus, the organization has a partnership with Creighton University, Hardy Coffee Co., Metropolitan Community College, and Big Mama’s Kitchen and Catering, and Whispering Roots, Inc. Outside of the campus, Seventy-Five North has many partnerships including; The Empowerment Network, Urban League of Nebraska, Charles Drew Health Center, and Salem Baptist Church (Seventy-Five North, 2018). The organization is led by Othello Meadows who serves as the President and CEO, Cydney Franklin who is the Senior Program Director, and Alexis Bromley—the Director of Strategic Partnership. The Board of Directors include; Thomas Warren—Chief Executive Officer at Urban League of Nebraska (Board Chair), Dana Brad—Executive Chairman at Waitt Brands (Director), Kristin William—Director of Community Initiatives at the Sherwood Foundation, Marty Shukert—Principal at RDG Planning and Design, Susan Buffett—Chair at the Sherwood Foundation, and Kenneth Johnson—Retired, City of Omaha Planner (Seventy-Five North, 2018).
Using the Purpose Built Communities’ model, Seventy-Five North is developing in phases. The first phase includes 16 buildings (Burbach, 2015) with a total of 101 rental units (Gonzalez, 2017). Construction for the second phase is expected to start in 2018, and it will include Early Learning center, senior housing, and single-family homes for sale (Chapman, 2017).

Purpose Built Communities

Recognizing years of perpetuating generational poverty, Seventy-Five North selected to use a holistic approach from Purpose Built Communities (PBC) of mixed-income housing, education, and wellness to redevelop the Highlander neighborhood in North Omaha.

Thomas (Tom) Grady Cousins developed the Purpose Built Communities model in 1995. Cousins was born in Atlanta, Georgia in December 1931. He attended the University of Georgia in Athens where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in business administration. He and his father started a real estate business in 1958. In the 1960s, he transitioned from real estate to property development and later on to sports franchising where he took ownership of the Atlanta Hawks (Atlanta Magazine, 2011).

In 1993, Tom Cousin came across a passage in the New York Times that read “About 70 percent of prisoners in New York State come from eight neighborhoods in New York City. These neighborhoods suffer profound poverty, exclusion, marginalization and despair. All these things nourish crime” (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 170). Cousins realized that these neighborhoods exist in every city and they serve as the centers of
dysfunctions in the city. He also realized that for the government to successfully address the issue they must organized around the geographic area of the problem. However, government agencies lack the funds and resources to fully address the problem. When they do attempt to address community development, it is often focused on single issues such as housing, education, public safety, and nutrition (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 171). Therefore, they are not focusing the overall community health and applying solutions that fit the community’s need (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 171). Tom Cousins realized that the issues in the passage he read was happening in his own home city. East Lake was known as a “Little Vietnam” and it fit perfectly as the center of dysfunction in Atlanta (Franklin & Edwards, 2012). Tom decided to redirect his philanthropic funds to revitalizing East Lake. However, he realized that “he could not tackle this problem one issue at a time. Replacing housing would not attract families if the schools were in poor shape. Schools could not be expected to perform well in neighborhoods where children feared for their safety and showed up hungry and unprepared. And it is hard to reduce crime in neighborhoods full of unemployed high school dropouts” (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 175). As a result of this realization, the Purpose Built Communities (PBC) was created to use mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness to revitalize East Lake.

The premise behind the mixed-income housing, according to PBC is to “Offer an environment with high-quality construction and practical amenities surrounded by safe walkways and streets, transforming the way residents view themselves and their neighborhood” (Purpose Built Communities, 2018) Their primary goal of this element is to effectively deconcentrate poverty (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 175). De-
concentration of poverty has been assumed to yield better economic opportunities for low-income residents (Oakley, Ward, Reid, & Ruel, 2011, p. 825). Scholars have discussed that mixed-income environment exposes low-income families to high-income residents who might produce a positive social space (Oakley, Ward, Reid, & Ruel, 2011, p. 825). The mixed-income environment also allows low-income families to have access to high-quality amenities that they won’t normally have access to such as better schools, streets, and police services (Graves, 2010, p. 111). Furthermore, the mixed-income community includes high-quality housing and research have shown that good housing conditions are essential for people’s health and affect childhood development (Streimikiene, 2015, p. 140). These are things that can benefit low-income families.

With Cradle-To-College Education element, PBC hopes to “Establish an arena for student growth, learning, and achievement at every level starting at birth, and implement a rigorous and relevant curriculum to help ensure successful futures through college and beyond” (Purpose Built Communities, 2018). Their overall goals with education are to provide early learning for low-income children and improve education quality in the community to attract middle-income families (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 175). Research supports the notion that education is a tool for attracting middle and higher income families to a mixed-income community. In "Creating and Sustaining Successful Mixed-Income Communities," authors Joseph and Feldman discussed the role schools play in promoting neighborhood revitalization. The key to sustaining mixed-income communities are the market-rate residents, specifically, middle-income families, and one way to attract them to the area is good quality schools (Joseph & Feldman, 2009, p. 624). The education element in the PBC model is important because research shows that people
with educational attainment have higher chances of gaining employment (Yabiki & Schlabach, 2008, p. 545). This means that as educational attainment increases in the community, more residents will be gain employment thus decreasing unemployment rate and increasing household income.

The last element in the PBC model is community wellness. With this element, PBC hopes to “the provide a community-specific mix of facilities, programs, services that honor local history, reflect the priorities of residents, promote healthy lifestyles, create jobs, and reduce crime” (Purpose Built Communities, 2018). The main goal of this element is to provide support to low-income families to break the cycle of poverty and bring the community together (Franklin & Edwards, 2012, p. 176). Community wellness is imperative to include in neighborhood redevelopment because the state of the neighborhoods that are the target for PBC are often suffering from high crime rate, lack of jobs, and residents in poor health.

In 2009, Tom Cousins, with financial assistance from Warren Buffett and Julian Robertson, developed the Purpose Built Communities to use the model nationally.

The Purpose Built Communities’ website outlined how communities can use their model. First, they must define the neighborhood. In Omaha, that area is northeast Omaha, 30th, and parker to 30th Bedford (South to North) and Highway 75 to 33rd street (East to West). Second, they must create a new organization that will run and oversees the development, they are known as “Community Quarterback.” In Omaha, the Community Quarterback is Seventy-Five North. Lastly, they must include the three elements of,
mixed-income housing, cradle-to-college education, and community wellness in their development.

There are many strategies for revitalizing a community. One strategy for community redevelopment is housing. In low-income communities, redeveloping public housing through the federal HOPE VI program — a plan by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to revitalize public housing into mixed-income developments — was a way to improve the community economically (Tach & Emory, 2017, p. 688). Another way to help revitalize a community is through communication. Disadvantage communities lack the infrastructure resources to empower citizens to engage in civic activities that will help them redevelop their communities (Nah, Namkoong, Chen, & Hustedde, 2015, p. 12). Strong civic engaged allows for strengthening and sustaining local communities, helps create a sense of community among individuals, and enables them to make decisions that will benefit everyone (Nah, Namkoong, Chen, & Hustedde, 2015, p. 13). Another community revitalization strategy is through business expansion and retention. The strategy was first introduced in the 1960s and 80s to revitalize communities by attracting business clusters (Zhang & Warner, 2017, p. 172). The goal of this strategy is to help bring jobs and services such as child care to the community (Zhang & Warner, 2017, p. 171), increase efficiency and competitiveness of local businesses (Zhang & Warner, 2017, p. 172), improves quality of life, and help address communal issues such as poverty and unemployment (Zhang & Warner, 2017, p. 170).
CHAPTER 4
THE DEVELOPMENT

There are numerous strategies for community revitalization apart from the Purpose Built Communities’ model. Some strategies might focus on safety, housing, business, schools, etc. However, local leaders in Omaha sided with the Purpose Built Communities’ (PBC) holistic approach of mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness as a method to revitalize the Highlander neighborhood in northeast Omaha, specifically in U.S. Census Tracts 52 and 11. Using the three elements to revitalizing the Highlander neighborhood is important because of housing deterioration in the community, the concentration of poverty, the underperforming school, low number of adults with high educational attainment, the concentration of minority residents (Figure 1), and poor health of the residents. These characteristics of the community have contributed to the longtime isolation of the area and the people.

The development will be in Census Tract 52 and 11 (Map 4 & 5) but is expected to impact Census Tracts 12 and 53. According to research, when community development occurs, the neighborhood adjacent to the development will experience spillover (Thompson, 2008). This is predicted to occur in Census Tract 53 and 12. The project will start at 30th and parker to 30th Corby (South to North) and Highway 75 to 33rd street (East to West).
Figure 1: 2016 Population by Race & Ethnicity in Omaha and Census Tracts 52, 11, 53, and 12 (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey
*Exclude American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific population due to low %

Map 4: US Census Tracts and Study Area

Source: Map by Fabiola Alikpokou
The overall structure of the development will be centered around Mixed-income housing, education, and community Wellness. The development timeline is shown in Table 1.
Table 1: Seventy-Five North Development Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>• Seventy Five North was founded and entered a partnership with Purpose Built Communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>• Engaged in dozens of community listening sessions with over 1000 participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partnered with Brinshore Development and started master planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>• Finalized purchase of former Pleasant View Homes site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>• Omaha Board of Education approves plan for reconstituted Howard Kennedy Elementary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Neighborhood groundbreaking!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>• Reorganized Howard Kennedy opens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>• First residents move into Highlander.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>• Construction will begin on Early Learning Center and single family homes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fabiola Alikpokou

Mixed-Income housing

North Omaha has had a long history of housing discrimination that prevented many African-American families from moving out of the community to better their lives. One such practice is redlining, lending discrimination where lenders denied mortgages for minorities to purchase properties in better neighborhoods (Ezeala-Harrison & Glover, 2008, p. 45). The impact of housing discrimination shows in the segregation of Omaha, the concentration of poverty in north Omaha, and the deterioration of properties and housing structures in the community such as images 3 and 4. Micro-focus on the
Highlander neighborhood shows that the effects of residential segregation from redlining goes beyond housing. According to Strand, “Where you live affects your physical and mental well-being: housing is connected to health. Where you go to school depends on where you live: education is connected to housing. Your health also contributes to success in school: education is connected to health. Your academic preparation affects work qualifications: employment, as well as wealth and income, are connected to education. Where you live also affects who you know: housing affects your social networks. Who you know affects whether you can find a job: social networks affect employment and income” (Strand, 2017, p. 200).

These interconnections are the connections that Seventy-Five North hopes to improve. To do that, the Highlander campus will have high-quality rental only mixed-income housing shown in image 5, 6, and 7. The housing structure on the campus will be multifamily homes, single-family row homes, and townhomes. Sixty-two of the homes will be at a subsidized rate and 39 at market rate. In an interview with the Omaha World-Herald, Othello Meadows, president and CEO of Seventy-Five North said, “the mission to reverse the area’s decline began with creating housing contemporary and solid enough to attract professionals and their families” (Gonzalez, 2017).
Image 3: Deteriorated Property

Source: Image by Fabiola Alikpokou

Image 4: Deteriorated Property

Source: Image by Fabiola Alikpokou
Image 5: Seventy-Five North Town Homes

Source: Image by Seventy-Five North
Image 6: Seventy-Five North Row Homes

Source: Image by Seventy-Five North
Image 7: Seventy-Five North Multifamily Homes

Source: Image by Seventy-Five North
Education

A significant challenge in the Highlander neighborhood is education. The educational level (Figure 2) of residents in Census Tracts 52, compared to Omaha demonstrate the dire need for more educational resources in the neighborhood. The data shows that the highest education level is less than high school degree or no diploma. The other tracts show a better result of having some college or associate’s degree as the highest education level. A Possible explanation for the higher educational level in Census Tract 11, and 12 could be due to two reasons. First, these two tracts are larger; therefore, it includes more residents. Second, Census Tract 11 has large multi-family housing complexes in close proximity to Creighton University. Therefore, it’s possible that many Creighton students might occupied these houses, which will increase the educational level. In Census Tract 53, the educational level might be higher compared to its neighboring tract 52 because; One, it’s a much larger tract compared to tract 52. Second, it has some of north Omaha’s prestige housing units located in Miami Heights. Therefore, the residents who are occupying those home might have higher degrees and income. And Lastly, the senior living facility at Salem Village at Miami Heights located in this tract might also drive up the educational level due to their age. While these tracts have the same educational level as Omaha of some college or Associate’s degree, it is still lagging in Bachelor’s degree or higher.

The education level in the community gives an insight into the type of jobs residents might qualify for. The higher educational level, the better job with higher income one yields (Yabiki & Schlabach, 2008). Therefore, as a result of low educational attainment, most residents will most likely qualify for jobs that require less than bachelor’s degree,
which tends to be low wage employment. Seventy-Five North plans to help address the education gap by helping to create resources for adults in the community to advance their education, thus getting better—paying job. In addition to improving adults’ education in the community, Seventy-Five North entered into a 10-year community partnership with the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) to transform Howard Kennedy Elementary School, a low performing school in a high poverty area.

Revamping Howard Kennedy elementary school, one of the lowest-performing schools in the state (Gonzalez, 2017), is vital to the success of the community. Research shows that the key to sustaining mixed-income communities are the market-rate residents, specifically, middle-income families, and one way to attract them to the area is good quality schools (Joseph & Feldman, 2009, p. 624). Without good schools and well-
educated children, sustaining the community will be difficult. Seventy-Five North is set to redevelop the elementary school by focusing on professional development for the teachers, increase literacy rates, implementing early learning program, early intentional intervention for struggling students, increase in Science Technology Engineer and Mathematics (STEM) programs and project-based learning, and lengthening the school day. Seventy-Five North will also build a new Early Learning Center.

The history of the Highlander neighborhood has had a tremendous negative impact on Howard Kennedy Elementary. According to a 2014 Omaha World-Herald article, “Kennedy is one of OPS’s highest-poverty schools, with nearly 98 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-cost lunch. One-quarter of students are English-language learners” (Duffy, 2014). As a result, Howard Kennedy elementary school is one of the lowest performing elementary schools in Omaha. There are many contributing factors to the school’s performance; one could be the state of the overall community’s impact on the students, such as living in a concentrated area of public housing. The elementary school is walking distance from where the old public housing, Pleasantview, once stood. The public housing area was plagued with gang activities and crime. Studies have shown that schools near such conditions tend to perform worse than others.

To examine the impact of the location of Howard Kennedy Elementary School on the student’s performance Nebraska Department of Education data was used to compare Dundee Elementary school to Howard Kennedy. Dundee Elementary School (Map 6) was selected because it is the nearest Omaha Public elementary school near one of Omaha’s most affluent neighborhoods, Fairacres and Dundee. These two neighborhoods overlap in
Census Tract 47, and According to the U.S. Census Bureau (Table 2), the median household income in 2016 was $145,329. The neighborhood comparison (Table 2) allows for a demonstration of how neighborhood impact student’s performance in school. To compare the two schools, Howard Kennedy and Dundee Elementary Schools, I looked at the school years 2012-2013 to 2016-2017 focusing on the percentage of teachers with master’s degrees, teacher’s average years of experience, average salary, the percentage of students who receive free or reduced-cost lunch, and percentage of students who meet or exceeds proficiency in math and science.

*Map 6: Dundee and Howard Kennedy Elementary Schools, Omaha, Nebraska*
### Table 2: Howard Kennedy & Dundee Elementary Schools Neighborhood Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract (CT)</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>% Below Poverty Level</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjacent to Howard CT 11</strong></td>
<td>20,424</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Tract 12</td>
<td>26,289</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>Some College or Associate’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjacent to Dundee CT 47</strong></td>
<td>145,329</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree or Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee School CT 48</td>
<td>45,694</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree or Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Tract 49</td>
<td>34,317</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Tract 52</td>
<td>26,935</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Howard Kennedy CT 53</strong></td>
<td>22,099</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>Some College or Associate’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey

The first data I looked at teachers with master’s degrees (Figure 3). Examining the level of education of the teachers is important because research has shown that schools in low-income communities tend to have teachers with low educational levels. The data shows that the percentage of teachers with master’s degrees at Dundee Elementary has been higher than Howard Kennedy. However, over the years the percentage at Howard Kennedy has increased significantly, especially from the 2013-2014 school year to 2014-2015. And in 2016-2017 that percentage increased even more, from 55% to 67%. As a result, 75% of the teachers at the start of the 2016-2017 school year were new (Duffy, 2016).
The next data I examined was teachers’ average years of experience (Figure 4). Similar to teachers in low-income schools having a low educational level, data also shows that they tend to have fewer years of experience than schools in affluent neighborhoods. The data indicate that Dundee has a trend of having teachers with more years of experience than those at Howard Kennedy, with an average of a year or two difference. But in 2016-2017 the gap widens with teachers at Howard Kennedy having 11 years of experience compared to those at Dundee who had 15.
The research then looked at average yearly of salaries (Figure 5). Similar to average years of experience, the average difference of yearly salary between Howard Kennedy and Dundee is not big. However, teachers at Dundee have always been paid more except for the 2016-2017 school year where teachers at Howard Kennedy were paid on average $53,764 in current dollars compared to $52,608 at Dundee.
Next, I looked at the percentage of students who are on free or reduced-cost lunch (Figure 6). The free and reduced lunch indicates that these students’ families are low-income and need assistance. Howard Kennedy is in a low-income community, so it is not surprising that nearly all students are on free or reduced-cost lunch in the school years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015, shown in Figure 7. In Dundee, Fewer than 50% of students are on free or reduced-cost lunch. Data for 2015-2016 is not available for Howard Kennedy, and 2016-2017 is not available for both schools.

![Figure 6: Percentage Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Students at Howard Kennedy & Dundee Elementary Schools](image)

*Source: Nebraska Department of Education*

Lastly, I looked at the percentage of students’ proficiency in math and science (Figure 7). The purpose was to see how students have performed on standardized test over the years. The findings show that Howard Kennedy Elementary School has lagged Dundee which has had a higher percentage of students who are proficient in math and science for years.

\[\text{No data available for Howard Kennedy for the last two years}\]
In 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, Howard Kennedy had less than 40% of students who were proficient in math and science while Dundee had almost 60%. In 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, the proficiency rate increased to over 52% for Howard Kennedy and over 63% for Dundee. In the 2016-2017 school year, 67% of Howard Kennedy School students were proficient in math and science. The highest it has had in years and the closest it has been to Dundee which had 70% percent of students proficient in math and science.

![Figure 7: Percentage of Students Proficiency in Math & Science at Howard Kennedy & Dundee Elementary Schools](image)

*Source: Nebraska Department of Education*

All in all, the data shows that 2016-2017 school year was a major change for Howard Kennedy. The school improved significantly by being in the same range with Dundee elementary school with an increase in the number of teachers with master’s degrees, increase in teacher’s yearly salary, and, most importantly, increase in the number of children who are proficient in math and science.
The impact of the 2016-2017 school year could be explained by the fact that in 2016, Seventy-Five North started revamped Howard Kennedy as part of the education piece of the Purpose Built Communities model. In partnership with the Omaha Public Schools (OPS), Seventy-Five restructuring the school in four ways, according to a 2016 Omaha World-Herald article: First, change in staff. They hired a new principal and three-quarters of the teachers were new. Second, the staff had to undergo a week full of training and professional development and team bonding. Third, there was a new curriculum focusing heavily on STEM, art, and math learning projects. Lastly, school hours were extended by an extra 45 minutes of in-class learning, and they will start school a week earlier than other OPS schools (Duffy, 2016). The result of 2016-2017 school year shows that Seventy-Five North’s new strategy in the school system has helped improve the education.

Seventy-Five North also partnered with Metropolitan Community College (MCC) to provide academic resources to students and community members. The primary goal is to initiate steps towards a college degree or career enhancement. MCC’s program includes adult education, youth programming, certification and assessment, continuing education, Workforce Training Academy, career services and the 180 Re-entry Assistance Program (Highlander Accelerator, 2018).

**Community Wellness**

The community wellness component in the PBC model encompasses program and services that are going to enhance the community (Purpose Built Communities, 2018). The enhancement of the community means crime reduction, job creation, health and
wellness initiatives, and local history preservation. With this goal, Seventy-Five North hopes to improve employment rate, increase household income, and decrease poverty rate (Seventy-Five North, 2018).

These are all things that are hindering the development area of Census Tract 52 and 11 and the development impact area of Census Tract 53 and 12. For example, the unemployment rate (Figure 8) is more than double the city’s rate. This is particularly true in Census Tract 12 which has 19% unemployment, which is more than triple the city’s rate. There are various reasons for the unemployment in north Omaha. Some of the reasons for high unemployment in the Highlander neighborhood are explained in the Heartland 2050 Equity Profile where it was shown that African-Americans are less likely to get hired than any other group in Omaha, and if they are hired, they earn less, regardless of educational level. Geographically, many of the employment centers are located in the western part of Omaha, thus increasing transportation costs for people who have to travel to those locations.

To address unemployment, Seventy-Five North aspires to bring more private investments into the Highlander neighborhood, so many of the residents can have closer access to employment. The organization has also partnered with Metropolitan Community College to provide an adult education program to the community so residents will have the opportunity to increase their educational level, thus increase chances of obtaining higher wage employment.
Household income (Figure 9) is another area that the community lags compared to Omaha. Residents in Census Tracts 52, 11, 53, and 12 earn almost half of what Omaha residents do. The US Census data shows that while Census Tract 53 has a low unemployment rate (Figure 8) of 5% and higher educational level (Figure 2) than its neighboring Census Tract 52 which has unemployment of 11%, they earn less. Another interesting point is that Census Tract 11 has the highest percentage of residents with Bachelor’s degree or higher, yet they have the lowest median household income. This shows that while people might have education and jobs, they are not earning enough. And Census Tract 11, the possible explanation for the low median household income could be the number of younger residents since the median age (Figure 10) is 24, which could be Creighton University students. The data speaks volumes to the need for resources in the community for adults to enhance their skills to be competitive in the job market.
Poverty (Figure 11) is another hindrance to the community. The development areas, Census 52 and 11 have the highest poverty rate. However, Census Tract 11 has the
highest compared to the other tracts and City of Omaha. This is not surprising given that the area also has the lowest median household income.

**Figure 11:** 2016 Poverty Rate in Census Tracts 52, 11, 53, 12, and Omaha (%)

In summary, even though North Omaha has some of the richest histories in Omaha, the darkest ones have hunted the community and the people for years. For example, the high concentration of public housing, poverty, overcrowding, and relocation of jobs in the 1950s and 60s left the community vulnerable to high crime and gang activities.

Consequently, The African-American community in Nebraska, specifically in Omaha, suffered the most due to it. According to the Violence Policy Center, Nebraska ranked number one in the nation with the highest Black homicides rate in 2011 (Violence Policy Center, 2014). In 2012, the ranking went to number two for the highest Black homicides (Violence Policy Center, 2015). And in 2013, the state ranked fourth (Violence Policy Center, 2016). While crime is slowly decreasing in Omaha, much of Omaha’s crime is still concentrated in north Omaha. The crime trend was showed in 2015; The Trace, an American gun-related news outlet, reported that 90% of 57 murders in 2013 in Nebraska
happened in Omaha; much of the crime was clustered in north Omaha - specifically north of 24th Street (Mascia, 2015).

In addition to crime, the community also has limited access to amenities, putting them in food deserts—community vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers (American Nutrition Association, 2011). As a result of residents having difficulty accessing affordable and healthy foods in the community, they seek cheaper food options which are often unhealthy and cause obesity, chronic disease, and shortening one’s lifespan (The Landscape, 2018). As part of the development, Seventy-Five North is bringing many amenities to the community that will be located on the Highlander Campus (Map 7). The campus will have new dining options (Big Mama’s Kitchen and Catering, Hardy Coffee shop) in the Accelerator Building, swimming pool near the playground, community health and wellness center, and community gardening. The campus’s lush green space will be used for different physical activities such as yoga, boot camp as well as concerts, music festivals and summer film screenings.

To address the lack of nitrous foods in the community, Seventy-Five North partnered with Whispering Roots, a national organization. The goal is to help address the wellness/health aspect of its strategy for revitalizing North Omaha using urban agriculture and aquaponics. Whispering Roots is a non-profit organization that focuses on bringing healthy fresh foods, nutrition education, innovative agricultural and S.T.E.M education to residents and students in underserved communities. The greenhouse (Map 7) near the
Accelerator building on the Highlander campus will be used to grow healthy nutritious foods for distribution to the community. Additionally, classes will be offered to teach the community about Controlled Environment Agriculture, Aquaculture/Aquaponics, Nutrition and Healthy Food Cooking/Preparation. In addition to working with Whispering Roots, Seventy-Five North is also working with Creighton University to address wellness/health gap in the community. The primary focus of Creighton’s role is to facilitate and implement community-driven projects and programs to enhance the wellness of the community.

This information and the U.S. Census data shows the need for the Seventy-Five North development in Census Tracts 52 and 11, and the importance of its impact on Census Tract 53 and 12.

*Map 7: Highlander Campus*
CHAPTER 5
LITERATURE REVIEW

Cities’ primary approach to developing low-income communities has been the provision of housing, particularly public housing. However, the concentration of public housing has conversely led to concentrated areas of poverty in some communities. Unfortunately, some of these areas have become known as the Projects or ghettos. The site of the Seventy-Five North development was once a place where such ghetto stood in the Highlander neighborhood in northeast Omaha. The central premise of Seventy-Five North is to eliminate the concentrated area of poverty in north Omaha by avoiding traditional public housing style development and instead develop mixed-income housing.

Since the 1930s, public housing has been the US government’s response to subsidizing housing cost for low-income families to improve living conditions and quality of life. However, several studies have shown that concentrated areas of public housing are not always beneficial to low-income families. What was supposed to help them end up hindering them and the community, resulting in a negative perception of the public housing system, thus decreasing funding and interest in improving conditions (Currie & Yelowitz, 2000).

One way a concentrated area of public housing impacts families negatively is education. In “Education of Children Living in Public Housing,” authors Schwartz, McCabe, and Chellman described and compared the typical characteristics of elementary and middle schools attended by students living in public housing communities, to schools attended by other students throughout New York City (Schwartz, McCabe, Ellen, & Chellman, 2010). The first feature discussed in the research is the quality of the teachers in the
school attended by students living in public housing. Many of the teachers lack experience and are paid less. The next characteristic of the school is the relatively high number of Black and Hispanic students. Many of their peers also reside in public housing, and the majority are eligible for free lunch (Schwartz, McCabe, Ellen, & Chellman, 2010, pp. 78-79). The last characteristic is the students' performance. The research found that students living in public housing score lower on standardized tests than everyone else, including classmates who do not live in public housing (Schwartz, McCabe, Ellen, & Chellman, 2010, p. 70). Education is vital in life. For many children residing in a concentrated area of public housing, the environment powerfully shapes their educational experience. Additionally, the quality of education also hinges on the quality of teachers at the school, availability of financial resources at the school, and the community environment, such as areas vulnerable to crime. These are all factors that can add stress on children and hinder learning (Schwartz, McCabe, Ellen, & Chellman, p. 83).

Another example of ways concentrated areas of public housing impact families negatively is health and wellness. Studies have shown that living in a concentrated area of poverty takes a toll on one's health, from stress due to financial and safety concerns in adults to children contracting unnecessary illnesses (Wadsworth, 2012). To demonstrate the correlation between living conditions and stress, the authors of "Characterization of Stress in Low-Income, Inner-City Mothers of Children with Poorly Controlled Asthma," investigated factors associated with the experience of life stress in minority mothers with children who have high-risk asthma and are low income, living in the inner city. According to the study, minority children living in low-income communities are
disproportionately more impacted by asthma morbidity and mortality (Bellin, Collins, Osteen, Kub, & Bollinger, 2017). Many of the mothers of children with asthma experience a high level of stress due to concern about neighborhood safety, violence exposure, poor housing conditions, pest infestation, and mold. Living in poverty as a single parent household and overall neighborhood disadvantage contribute to stress levels (Bellin, Collins, Osteen, Kub, & Bollinger, 2017, p. 815). After evaluating 279 participants, the study found that over 40% of the participants report a high level of stress. The primary causes of high stress are looking for a job, paying bills, housing condition and neighborhood conditions (Bellin, Collins, Osteen, Kub, & Bollinger, 2017, p. 817). The study concluded by discussing ways to limit stress for mothers caring for asthmatic children in low-income inner cities. Better housing conditions, a safe neighborhood, and social support are ways to reduce the stress levels in mothers (Bellin, Collins, Osteen, Kub, & Bollinger, 2017).

To mitigate the public housing issue, cities started to demolish these homes. Some research has noted the positive impact of de-concentrating public housing by demolition, included such results as crime reduction. For example, scholars Aliprantis and Hartley studied whether there is an overall effect of de-concentrating public housing on the crime rate in "Blowing it up and knocking it down: The local and city-wide effects of Demolishing High Concentration Public Housing on Crime." According to the article, cities used HUD's HOPE VI policy, where a grant is made available for public housing authorities to demolish and revitalize public housing (Aliprantis & Hartley, 2013, p. 67). The article studied the impact of demolition and relocation of public housing on crime in Chicago, where the program was implemented. The City of Chicago demolished
approximately 20,000 housing units to build new mixed-income development. Residents were relocated to various housings throughout the city. The study ultimately showed that destruction of high-rise public housing reduced crime in the area that it once stood. In contrast, findings from other studies have pointed out the negative impact of demolishing public housing on families. In "Dismantling Public Housing, Reconstructing the Lives of Children," author Edith Barrett discusses the negative impact of public housing on the lives of children, and while relocation is beneficial for families living in concentrated public housing, it has some adverse effects on children. Barrett studied children who have relocated over five years to explore its social and educational impact. In an evaluation of the Public Housing Authority in Southwest, the participants did surveys and focus groups discussing topics relating to the lives of their children after the move. The study found that children involved in the move were unable to calm down behaviorally. The disruptive relocation delayed their ability to develop a way to self-regulate psychologically (Barrett, 2016, p. 99). The overall conclusion was that the movement had some impact on the children, but the significant impacts were the design of the new development as they were not child-friendly and the unpreparedness of the local schools for the influx of new residents.

To replace public housing, communities have shifted to inclusionary zoning or mixed-income housing approaches to deconcentrate public housing and encourage integration. Meltzer and Schuetz define inclusionary zoning as "programs that either require or offer incentives for developers to set aside a certain percentage of the units within their market-rate residential developments at prices or rents affordable to specified income groups" (Meltzer & Schuetz, 2010, p. 578). The purpose of mixed-income development is to help
enhance low-income families’ lives by improving their neighborhoods, rather than moving them to a better neighborhood. Several researchers have hypothesized that the mixed-income approach shows promising results in transforming distressed communities by reducing crime, improving private investments, and producing better housing quality for market-rate and subsidized tenants (Fraser & Nelson, 2008). This notion is supported by US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) research. According to HUD’s Confronting Concentrated Poverty with a Mixed-Income Strategy, there are three positives of mixed-income housing. First, lower-income residents who had lived in poverty with limited access to opportunities would benefit from proximity to higher-income, employed neighbors who would model opportunity pathways (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). Second, by redeveloping the community itself, residents are about to remain in their support systems network, including easier access to family, friends, and school (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). Another positive side to mixed-income housing development is the active network developers and leaders involved create with residents over time (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). The relationship ensures better neighborhood conversation and encourages residents to be involved in the community.

While the mixed-income strategy is designed to improve distressed communities, and help low-income families by putting them in a better environment, some scholars have suggested that the mixed-income approach promotes gentrification and does not help the families. Gentrification is described as poor and working-class areas in an inner city that are revitalized by the private sector and occupied by middle-class home buyers and renters (Kohn, 2013). Very often when the mixed-income housing is promoted in
communities, gentrification is talked about (Kohn, 2013). When mixed-income revitalization occurs, more affluent residents moves in, thus increasing prices for renters and increasing the property value of homes, which raises the overall cost of living (Kohn, 2013). Then, low-income families are unable to afford to reside in the community and are then forced to move out. Other scholars have echoed the same notion by looking at the financial gain of mixed-income housing for private investors. According to Goetz, "the demolition of large public housing estates clears away significant concentrations of poverty from these areas and allows for the conversion to a housing stock and land use pattern more accommodating of private-sector investment" (Goetz, 2011, p. 1582).

The primary response to assisting low-income communities historically has been a public housing development. However, over the years, scholars have shown the negative impacts of a concentrated area of public housing. In response, cities adopted the mixed-income strategy. Since then, an array of studies has been done to examine the pros and cons of such an approach. To address this gap, this research examines Seventy-Five North’s development using the Purpose Built Communities model of mixed-income housing, education, and wellness. By exploring three case studies of communities that have used the Purpose Build model, this article provides empirical evidence to support the use of a holistic approach to community development to help low-income families improve quality of life.
CHAPTER 6
METHODOLOGY

The three research questions expand in this paper include: 1) to what extent does the new housing development approach, using the mixed-income housing, education, and wellness method impact the Highlander community in northeast Omaha? 2) In what ways might the development impact housing quality and accessibility for low-income households, educational attainment, and wellness? And 3) What have been the results in other communities and do these results align with expectations for the Highlander neighborhood in northeast Omaha. To answer these questions, we must understand the Highlander neighborhood. To do that, the history of the community is discussed. Then the 2010-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Census data is used to look at educational attainment, median household income, population by race and ethnicity, poverty level, unemployment rate.

The research proceeds with three case studies on Purpose Built Communities to evaluate the potential impact of the Seventy-Five North Development and the effectiveness of the model. The case study method is used because the Purpose Built Communities model is a new strategy for community development and no study has been done to evaluate its effectiveness. I also used the case study method because the Seventy-Five North development has not been around long enough to measure its impact.

The case studies focus on three communities that used the Purpose Built Communities (PBC) model: East Lake community in Atlanta, Georgia (U.S. Census Tract 208.2), Bayou District in New Orleans, Louisiana (U.S. Census Tract 138), and Woodlawn
neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama (U.S. Census Tract 3). These three communities were selected because they are the oldest PBM communities that allow us to examine the impact of the development. Although these case studies cannot yield generalizable claims about all Purpose Built Communities, they offer some information on the potential effects of the development over time. In comparing (Table 3) the three case studies’ Census Tracts to Omaha’s Census Tracts, it shows that the communities share some similar traits prior to the development in 2000, with the exception of East Lake, which was already developed: the highest education level was high school graduate and less than high school or no diploma in East Lake and Woodlawn. They all had high poverty rate, and the median household income was in the Seventy-Five North Development site, Census Tract 52 and 11 were about the same as the median household income in Woodlawn. Table 4 shows that in 2010, the communities that had been revitalize using the Purpose Built Communities model; East Lake, Bayou District, and Woodlawn all surpassed Census Tracts in Omaha in median household income. However, Census Tract 11 in Omaha surpassed Woodlawn in education, but East Lake saw the most significant change in education level going from less than high school in 2000 to Bachelor’s degree or higher in 2010. Another similarity in all the communities demonstrated in Table 5, apart from East Lake, is that the housing units in the areas were majority occupied and housing tenure was renter-occupied. East Lake on the other hand shows improvement in all of the indexes and majority of the housing in the community was occupied and housing tenure was owner-occupied. The 2010 data comparison of the case study communities shows that the communities were in the same condition as Omaha when it first started, with the exception of East Lake which started in 1995. The result in East Lake shows that over-
time the communities might improve their poverty and unemployment rates, increase the median household income, and change housing tenure from renter to owner. Increasing homeownership in communities increase wealth, social status, security of tenure, pride, and life satisfaction for the owner (Santiago, Galster, & Kaiser, 2010)

The information used in the case studies was collected from their respective websites, as well as from the Purpose Built Communities website. Census Bureau data was also used to look at unemployment, educational attainment, and poverty levels before and after the developments.

The findings of this research will contribute to the discourse around housing, community redevelopment, communal issues, and provides a solid ground for city planners in making decisions on housing projects in Omaha.

**Table 3: 2000 Omaha, East Lake, Bayou District, and Woodlawn Census Tracts Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omaha CT 52</th>
<th>Omaha CT 11</th>
<th>East Lake, ATL CT 208.2</th>
<th>Bayou District, CT 138</th>
<th>Woodlawn CT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population size</strong></td>
<td>1,822</td>
<td>2,894</td>
<td>3,560</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>3,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td>$24,796</td>
<td>$20,996</td>
<td>$45,254</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>$22,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment Rate</strong></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty Rate</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Education Level</strong></td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>Less than High School, no Diploma</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>Less than High School, No Diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3
*Median Household Income Expressed in 2016*
### Table 4: 2010 Omaha, East Lake, Bayou District, and Woodlawn Census Tracts Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omaha CT 52</th>
<th>Omaha CT 11</th>
<th>East Lake, ATL CT 208.2</th>
<th>Bayou District, CT 138</th>
<th>Woodlawn CT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>1,237</td>
<td>3,001</td>
<td>4,014</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>2,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$18,829</td>
<td>$17,246</td>
<td>$45,491</td>
<td>$27,984</td>
<td>$23,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Education Level</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>Some College or Associate's</td>
<td>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>Less than high school, no diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey  
*Median Household Income Expressed in 2016*

### Table 5: 2010 Omaha, East Lake, Bayou District, and Woodlawn Census Tracts Housing Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omaha CT 52</th>
<th>Omaha CT 11</th>
<th>East Lake, ATL 208.2</th>
<th>Bayou District, 138</th>
<th>Woodlawn 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-Occupied</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-Occupied</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey
Case Studies

East Lake Neighborhood, Atlanta, Georgia 1995

As one of Atlanta's historic neighborhoods, East Lake is a trendy and family-oriented community. The neighborhood is 4.5 miles away from downtown Atlanta and close to local eateries, shops, and transit. The neighborhood is also home to East Lake Gold, the location for PGA’s annual Tour Championship. While the community is located in an attractive location and hosts one of the top national sporting events, it has seen its horror days.

In 1902 the Atlanta Athletic Club purchased lands around the lake and surrounding the area. Soon after, they opened the East Lake Golf Club. The community thrived with sporting business, homes, and sporting teams. In the 1950s the land was donated to the City of Atlanta, and a new company purchased the East Lake Golf Club. During the 1970s East Lake Meadow, a 650-unit public housing project was constructed. Over the next two decades, the community deteriorated and experienced high crime rates. The community became known as "Little Vietnam” by local law enforcement due to the crime and drug trade (Yu, 2015). The crime rate was 18 times higher than the national average, almost 60% of adults were receiving public assistance, only 13% were employed, and only 5% of fifth graders were hitting state academic performance targets (East Lake Foundation, n.d.).

In 1995, Atlanta developer and philanthropist, Tom Cousins created the East Lake Foundation and partnered with the Atlanta Housing Authority to demolish the public
housing and redevelop the East Lake Neighborhood (Franklin & Edwards, 2012). Due to the condition of the community, Cousins realized that a development approach that is geographic, holistic, and specific to the unique set of assets and deficits that exist within the neighborhood is needed to develop the area. This notion birthed the Purpose Built Communities model of using mixed-income housing, education, and wellness to rebuild distressed communities.

Using the new model, the foundation built 542 mixed-income housing units, built the Drew Charter School with focus on early childhood education, and partnered with the YMC to build a health and fitness community center (East Lake Foundation, n.d.). As a result of the development, the community attracted local commercial investments, increased the population from 1,400 to 2,100, decreased neighborhood crime by 73% and violent crime by 90%. Adult employment went up from 13% to 70%, and the charter school was ranked 4th in performance with 74% of students on free or reduced-cost lunch. To measure the long-term impact in the community of Census Tract (CT) 208.02, I used the US Census Bureau data to look at changes in educational attainment (Figure 12), unemployment rate (Figure 13), poverty rate (Figure 14), median household income (Figure 15), and population by race and ethnicity (Figure 16) from 2010 to 2016.

Overall, the development helped improve the community in the four areas of studies. The percentage of residents with a bachelor’s or higher degree (Figure 12) increased from 32% in 2010 to 43% in 2016. Unemployment (Figure 13) decreased from 9% in 2010 to 5% in 2016. The percentage of residents living in poverty (Figure 14) went down, and median
household income (Figure 15), expressed in 2016-dollar value increased from $45,491.26 in 2010 to $57,422 in 2016. Another major change in the community is shown in Figure 16 with an increase in population integration with an increase in White residents and decrease in African-American residents.

**Figure 12: East Lake, Atlanta, Georgia Census Tract 208.02 2016 Education Attainment (%)**

![Education Attainment Graph](image)

*Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

**Figure 13: East Lake, Atlanta, Georgia Census Tract 208.02 2016 Unemployment Rate (%)**

![Unemployment Rate Graph](image)

*Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey*
**Figure 14:** East Lake, Atlanta, Georgia Census Tract 208.02 2016 Poverty Rate (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey

**Figure 15:** East Lake, Atlanta, Georgia Census Tract 208.02 2016 Median Household Income

*Income expressed in 2016*
Figure 16: East Lake, Atlanta, Georgia Census Tract 208.02 2010-2016 Population by Race & Ethnicity (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey
*Exclude American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific population due to low %

Bayou District, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2006

The 2005 Hurricane Katrina left many communities devastated in New Orleans, especially low-income residents. The St. Bernard public housing project in the Gentilly neighborhood was one of many communities destroyed by the hurricane. After the destruction of their homes, survivors of the St. Bernard housing project formed a tent city to house their families. Many lived in the substandard condition for months.

Before Hurricane Katrina, the St. Bernard housing project was similar to other public housing projects. The area was plagued with crime, depilated buildings infested with rats, and often riddled with lead and asbestos. The idea to demolish St. Bernard and other housing projects nearby was viewed as an opportunity to fix the wrongs of the past and
provide a better quality of life for residents in New Orleans' largest public housing developments. Bayou District Foundation was formed in 2006 to revitalize the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans.

The Bayou District Foundation became the first organization to use the Purpose Built Communities Model to revitalize a distressed community after the model was used in East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta. The foundation's primary purpose was to redevelop the former St. Bernard public housing, destroyed by hurricane Katrina and to do it by focusing on education, housing, and wellness.

After the demolition of the St Bernard public housing in 2010, fifty-three acres sat open and the sub-area within Gentilly neighborhood was renamed Columbia Parc Community (Bayou District Foundation, n.d.). According to the foundation’s website, 685 mixed-income residential units were built of which 493 are subsidized and 192 are market rate. The foundation opened Educare New Orleans early childhood learning center in 2013, serving 168 low-income children, ages six weeks to 5 years old. To address wellness, the foundation opened St. Thomas Community Healthcare clinic to provide affordable primary, prenatal care, and dental care. The foundation partnered with the March of Dimes and Louisiana State University Dental School to achieve the wellness goal. The foundation is currently working to develop a K-8 education facility, grocery, and drug stores in the community. The impact of the development in the community is evident in two ways. First, crime has been reduced in the community by 100%. Second, 100% of
the community residents are either employed, in vocational training, or enrolled in a full-time university or college (Bayou District Foundation, n.d.).

Using the same four data items from the Census Bureau, we are able to see the overall impact of the development from the condition of Census Tract (CT) 138 community from 2010 to 2016. Figure 17 shows an overall increase in educational attainment. The data shows that more residents have higher levels of education in 2016 than in 2010. Figure 18 shows that unemployment decreased in 2016 compared to 2010. However, Figure 19 displays poverty increasing almost 10% from 2010 to 2016. Figure 20 displays median household income, expressed in 2016-dollar values decreased in current dollars value from $27,984.44 in 2010 to $19,896 in 2016. The data could be interpreted as showing that more people are getting jobs, but that they are not earning enough to increase household income and take them out of the poverty range. Population by race and ethnicity in Figure 21, did not change much, except a slight increase in Hispanic/ Latino and some other or two or more races.
Figure 17: New Orleans, Louisiana, Bayou District Census Tract 138 2016 Education Attainment (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Figure 18: New Orleans, Louisiana Bayou District CT 138 2016 Unemployment Rate (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey
Figure 19: New Orleans, Louisiana Bayou District CT 138 2016 Poverty Rate (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Figure 20: New Orleans, Louisiana Bayou District CT 138 2016 Median Household Income

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey

*Income expressed in 2016
**Woodlawn Neighborhood, Birmingham, Alabama 2010**

Present-day Woodlawn Neighborhood was a city formed by farming families in 1815. With the development of 1884, the Georgia Pacific Railway came to the area, and this led to rapid growth of the community, including construction of city hall, jail, fire station, schools, churches, and library. The city was annexed into Birmingham in 1910 and remained a thriving community until the mid-20th century. The 1960s and 70s brought social unrest and economic turmoil to the area, resulting in urban blight. By 1975, the White population started moving out as Black residents moved in, taking resources and amenities. Adding more hindrance to struggling Woodlawn was the construction of Interstate Highway 20 and 59, which divided the neighborhood. As a result, crime increased, property ownership decreased, unkempt vacant lots grew, and houses deteriorated.
Woodlawn continued to decline for many years. The 2000 and 2010 census shows the community losing 13% of its population by 2010. 67% of the residents earned less than $25,000 per year in 2009. Over 40% of adults had no high school diploma or GED, and 74% of the residents were renters in 2010. Over 6% of the housing was substandard and aging in the same year (Planetizen, 2012, p. 13).

In 2010 a strong initiative was taken to revive the community. Local partners came together to form Woodlawn Foundation. Using the Purpose Built Communities approach of holistic community development, the organization seeks to improve quality of life by focusing on community safety, education, and economic opportunity. The goal will be achieved by supporting local businesses and attracting investors, as well as increasing access to parks, open space, and recreation. Community health will be emphasized, and existing homes will be renovated to expand homeownership, to retain existing residents, and to attract new ones.

Since the formation of the Woodlawn Foundation to revitalize Woodlawn, 64 subsidized townhouses have been built for residents to rent, 12 market rate single-family homes were constructed to move residents towards homeownership, and 88 houses have been restored and updated to retain existing residents. The foundation partnered with Cornerstone Schools of Alabama, a private Christian school, to offer income-based tuition to financially-constrained families in the community. The Woodlawn Foundation also partnered with the local public schools to offer enrichment programs. These academic partners are collectively known as Woodlawn Innovation Network (WIN).
Since the initiative, WIN schools have increased proficiency on the state's 2017 exam. To improve education, the foundation is also working with partners to offer literacy tutoring services, writing skills, and the Early College Program for Woodlawn high school students to earn college hours. A total of 840 credit hours has been earned collectively.

Similar to the other two case studies, I used the same four data items—educational attainment, unemployment, poverty, and median household income—to show the impact of the development thus far in the Census Tract (CT) 3 community. Figure 22 shows improvement in the number residents with a bachelor’s degrees or higher. However, the percentage of residents with some college or associate’s degrees decreased and the percentage of people with high school degree increased. The remainder of data shows that the development did not help lower the poverty rate, increase median household income, or increase the employment rate. The percentage of residents who are unemployed shown in Figure 23 increased; the percentage of people living in poverty shown in Figure 24 also increased, and the median household income in Figure 25 decreased. When comparing median household income, expressed in 2016 dollars, it shows that in 2010 it was $23,502.27 and in 2016 it decreased to $19,583. The population by race and ethnicity of the community shown in Figure 26 reveals almost a 10% decrease in African-American persons, a small reduction in White population, and an increase in other groups except for Native Hawaiian other Pacific Islander. The data overall demonstrates that while educational attainment increased, there is still work to do in lowering the unemployment and poverty rates, and increasing the median household income.
Figure 22: Woodlawn Neighborhood, Birmingham, Alabama Census Tract 3 2016 Education Attainment (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Figure 23: Woodlawn Neighborhood, Birmingham Alabama Census Tract 3 2016 Unemployment Rate (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey
Figure 24: Woodlawn Neighborhood, Birmingham, Alabama Census Tract 3 2016 Poverty Rate (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Figure 25: Woodlawn Neighborhood, Birmingham, Alabama Census Tract 3 2016 Median Household Income ($)

*Income expressed in 2016
Figure 26: Woodlawn Neighborhood, Birmingham, Alabama Census Tract 3 2016 Population by Race & Ethnicity (%)

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 & 2012-2016 American Community Survey
*Exclude American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific population due to low %
CHAPTER 7
ANALYSIS

As mentioned in chapter three, there are many approaches to community revitalization: redeveloping public housing, communication, and civic engagement to give residents in low-income communities the power to change their area, and/or business expansion focusing on the economic viability of low-income communities. However, Seventy-Five North in Omaha, Nebraska chose the Purpose Built Communities model of mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness as a strategy to redevelop the Highlander neighborhood in northeast Omaha. The organization decided on the holistic approach due to the long history of poverty and neighborhood deterioration discussed in chapter two. While there are benefits to other community revitalization strategies; housing, education, and community wellness are some of the top things northeast Omaha, specifically the US Census Tracts 52 and 11 in the Highlander neighborhood have suffered from. Therefore, using the three elements combine is expected to bring great benefits to the community.

Evaluating the potential benefits as result of using the Purpose Built Communities models comes examining case studies of three communities that have used the same model: East Lake Neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia; Woodlawn Neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama; and the New Orleans Bayou District. The research evaluated the impact of the development on educational attainment, poverty rate, unemployment, median household income, and the population of race and ethnicity in the neighborhood using US Census Tract data from 2010 to 2016. The research also compared information from the respective development organizations regarding the impacts of the developments in the communities.
The first community evaluated was East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia. This community was the catalyst for Purpose Built Communities model. The area used to be a country club style neighborhood. Therefore, it attracted upper-income residents due to the presence of the community golf course that drew an audience for the PGA. Since East Lake was the first community to use the model, it has the longest time of impact to show.

Census Tract 208.02 changed significantly since the redevelopment was initiated. In 2010, fifteen years after the development, the majority, 67% of the residents, were African-Americans, 27% of whom had less than high school or no diploma education level and 32% had a bachelor’s degrees or higher. Poverty was at 21% and unemployment at 9%. Twenty-one years later, the community increased higher degree of educational attainment with the percentage of people with less than high school or no diploma decreasing to 22% and people with a bachelor’s degrees or higher increasing to 43%. The poverty rate decreased to 17%, and unemployment decreased to 5%. The most significant change in the community was household income, which increased from $41,607 in 2010 to $57,422 in 2016. The face of the community also changed. The percentage of African-Americans decreased from 67% to 57%, and the number of White residents increased from 30% to 37%.

Next community examined is the Bayou District in New Orleans, Louisiana. It is important to note that the possibility of the correlation between Hurricane Katrina and the behavior of residents impacting the Census Data results. Nonetheless, Bayou District, Census Tract 138 shares the common trend of an increase in educational attainment level
and a decrease in the poverty rate. People with less than high school or no diploma decreased from 32% in 2010 to 24% in 2016. Residents with bachelor’s degrees or higher increased from 7% in 2010 to 13% in 2016. Poverty increased from 35% in 2010 to 44% in 2016. Unemployment decreased from 20% in 2010 to 14% in 2016. Household income also saw a decrease from $25,595 in 2010 to $19,896. Lastly, population saw the least amount of change, with White population staying the same and Black or African-American increasing by 5%. The main change in population is an increase in some other or two or more races and Hispanic or Latino.

The last community is the Woodlawn neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama. The neighborhood’s Census Tract 3 saw an increase in higher education attainment after the development. In 2010 6% of residents reported having a bachelor’s degrees or higher, and in 2016 it increased to 10%. Some college or associate's degree went from 34% in 2010 to 23% in 2016. Interestingly, the poverty rate and unemployment rate both increased. The poverty rate was 26% in 2010 and 2016 it increased to 39%. And unemployment went from 6% in 2010 to 11% in 2016. Household income also decreased from $21,512 in 2010 to $19,583 in 2016. The population saw a decrease in Whites and Black or Africans. In 2010 the White population was 22% and Black or African-American was 74%. In 2016 both groups decreased to 21% for White and 62% for Black or African-American. Other groups saw an increase except for Native Hawaiian and other Pacific which remains at 0%. American Indian and Alaska Native went from 0% to 2%, Asian went from 0% to 2, Some other or two or more races were at 5% and increased to 9% and lastly Hispanic or Latino increased from 22% to 24%.
The findings from the case studies are used to answer the first research question; to what extent does the new housing development approach, using the mixed-income housing, education, and wellness method impact the Highlander community in northeast Omaha? Based on the trend of impact in the three case study communities, one can suspect that the Highlander neighborhood, specifically Census Tracts 52 and 11 where the development is located, might see a change in demographics of residents, specifically an increase in White population and a decrease in African-Americans. The community might also see improvements in educational levels of its residents due to a decrease in the percentage of residents with less than high school or diploma and an increase in people with a bachelor’s degree or higher in all the case studies after the developments. Areas that did not see much improvements in the case studies are the poverty and unemployment rates, and median household income except in East Lake. This finding could be expected in the Highlander neighborhood as. Another impact that the development approach might bring is decrease in crime rate. Based on the community evaluation after the development, most of the areas saw a significant decrease in crime. The second research question; in what ways might the development impact housing quality and accessibility for low-income households, and educational attainment is answered by first looking at one of the goals of the Purpose Built Communities model; provide high-quality housing. This shows that the quality of the housing in the community will be top-notch in Omaha. In addition to newly built housing units, some communities such as Woodlawn neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama also focuses on renovating existing homes. This is something Seventy-Five North might do as they move
to phase-two of single-family homes because many of the homes in the Highlander neighborhood are historic homes that might be worth preserving. Because the developments are intended to help low-income communities, it means that low-income families are able to have access to these homes based on their background and income. However, the East Lake community demonstrates that over time, the household income in the community will increase which does not tell us much about whether if these are low-income families improving their career to raise their wages, or if gentrification is occurring. Therefore, the research is unable to answer to the accessibility of the housing in the development area to low-income families over time. Second, the development does show that it has a positive impact on educational attainment as the research show educational level increased in all of the three case study communities. Lastly, the case studies show that the development had positive impact on community wellness. For example, many of the communities had access to health facilities and wellness amenities that they didn’t have before. In East Lake they build YMC and health and fitness center for the community, in the Bayou District, St. Thomas Community Healthcare facility opened and grocery stores for nutritious foods.

All things considered, the development had a more positive impact in all the case study communities than negative. Even though median household income did not increase and poverty and unemployment rates did not decrease in some communities, the positive results in all of the metrics in the East Lake community show that it will take time before the community sees an overall positive impact in all of the metrics. To compare the overall effect of the development on the community based on the respective foundation’s
reporting, it is important to realize that each neighborhood is unique in that they have different challenges, people, operations, etc. therefore, their level of impact due to the developments in their respective community is not going to be same. Table 7 and 8 allows us to see the effects uniformly using the US Census Data. However, Table 6 shows the unique impact on the individual community. The main takeaway from the result in Table 7 is that it will take time for the community to see an effect in all the metrics used in this study. Woodlawn is the newest development and has the least amount of impact to show for, while East Lake is the oldest has the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>East Lake, ATL</th>
<th>Bayou District,</th>
<th>Woodlawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Employment or college enrollment</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>No information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Academic Performance</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>No information</td>
<td>Improved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: East Lake Foundation, Woodlawn United, and Bayou District Foundation*

Table 7 comparison shows where Omaha’s Census Tracts stands regarding the case study communities after the development. The 2016 data indicates that Census Tracts 52 and 11 improved median household incomes compared to the Bayou District and Woodlawn. Unemployment is about the same in all the communities except for East Lake. And educational level improved in the case studies but decreased in Census Tract 52. The housing trend in the communities shown in Table 8 is still the same as it was in 2010 with
it being majority occupied and high rental percentage. The data does show that ownership dropped in all of the communities except Woodlawn.

In summary, with the Purpose Built Communities model development comes an increase in higher educational attainment. This is shown in the case studies where all three communities saw the number of people with less than high school or diploma decrease and the number of people with a bachelor’s degree or higher increase. Another common trend found in the case studies is population shift; a reduction of Black or African-Americans and increase in White population in East Lake, a decrease in Woodlawn, and no change in the Bayou District. The three areas that need improvement, according to the case studies, are poverty rate, unemployment rate, and median household income. These three elements speak volumes about how residents are doing financially. East Lake is the only community that shows improvement in all the indexes. This demonstrates that it will take years before the community starts to see a drop in poverty and unemployment rate and increase in median household income.

Table 7: 2016 Omaha, East Lake, Bayou District, and Woodlawn Census Tracts Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omaha CT 52</th>
<th>Omaha CT 11</th>
<th>East Lake, ATL 208.2</th>
<th>Bayou District, 138</th>
<th>Woodlawn 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>1,748</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>4,365</td>
<td>2,518</td>
<td>2,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$26,935</td>
<td>$20,424</td>
<td>$57,422</td>
<td>$19,896</td>
<td>$19,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Education Level</td>
<td>Less than High School, no Diploma</td>
<td>Some College or Associate’s</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</td>
<td>Some College or Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey
Table 8: 2016 Omaha, East Lake, Bayou District, and Woodlawn Census Tracts Housing Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omaha CT 52</th>
<th>Omaha CT 11</th>
<th>East Lake, ATL 208.2</th>
<th>Bayou District, 138</th>
<th>Woodlawn 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>1,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Gentrification

The topic of gentrification is inevitable when discussing redevelopment in low-income communities. Author Kohn describes gentrification as poor and working-class areas in some inner cities that are revitalized by the private sector and eventually occupied by middle-class home buyers and renters (Kohn, 2013). Very often when the mixed-income housing is promoted in communities, gentrification is talked about (Kohn, 2013).

Gentrification shows up in three ways in some cases. First, the area becomes populated by local start-up artists who are not making high wages. Then, middle-class residents who enjoy that artistic and fun atmosphere and low cost of living in the area begin to move into to the area. Then the community changes to where it becomes attractive to developers and upper-middle-class professionals. The prime areas that are vulnerable to this transformation are inner city areas that have easy access to entertainment and amenities, areas like the Highlander neighborhood. In the three case study communities, East Lake in Atlanta, Bayou District in New Orleans, and Woodlawn in Birmingham, I looked at how the community has changed by examining changes in unemployment rate,
poverty rate, household income, and demographic change. Based on the changes, one could argue that gentrification is occurring. In all three cases, the dominant group, African-Americans, is slowing being replaced by other groups. Based on the five signs of gentrification, one could say that New Orleans Bayou District and Woodlawn are on step one with an increase in White residents who are not making high wages; hence, an increase in the poverty rate, unemployment rate, and median household income. However, their presence might draw in higher income residents later on like the East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta. The East Lake will be considered to be on step two of the gentrification scale due to a significant increase in median household income, a decrease in Black or African-American population, decrease in poverty and unemployment rate. In Omaha, Seventy-Five North’s primary goal is to end poverty, end community deterioration, and increase private investment in the community. The road they are taking to reach their goal addresses some of the four metrics of unemployment, poverty, household income, and the population that I used to measure the change in the three case studies. For example, through a partnership with Metropolitan Community College, Seventy-Five North intends to improve education and career training for adults in the community, so they can obtain higher earning jobs. Through this, they hope to address the poverty and unemployment rates in the community. Household income is being addressed by the mixed-income housing strategy. As the community progresses over time, and based on the data from the three case studies, Seventy-Five North has to pay attention to gentrification. Kohn identified five harms of gentrification that Seventy-Five North must pay attention to. First, residential displacement. displacement occurs when landlords increase rent prices to profit from demand for housing in the community (Kohn,
Second, exclusion. This occurs when potential residents cannot move into the community because of rising cost (Kohn, 2013, p. 299). Third, the transformation of public, social, and commercial space. Fourth, polarization. This harm is associated with gentrification because it is bringing low-income and high-income residents together and when they come in contact with each other, they could form disruptive collisions (Kohn, 2013, p. 299). Fifth, homogenization. This is a negative impact of gentrification because it turns the area into elite enclaves (Kohn, 2013, p. 299). While mixed-income development is intended to help improve communities, particularly distressed communities, it is important for organizations in charge to pay attention to impacts such as gentrification, homogenization that highlights the built environment and might appear to be set up only for upper-class residents, and polarization which is a possible adverse effect of mixed-income environment, where conflict between low-income and upper-income residents might emerge.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

Over the years, community leaders have realized the failure of the concentrated areas of public housing. In response, mixed-income housing strategies have been implemented nationally to revitalize distressed communities. In the hope of reviving his own community in Atlanta, Georgia, developer, Tom Cousins realized that providing housing alone is not enough to help the distressed area of East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta. He used a combination of mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness to revamp East Lake. After successful results, Tom Cousins, along with other funders such as Warren Buffett, founded the Purpose Built Communities organization to use the same model nationally. One of those communities is the Highlander neighborhood in northeast Omaha. Seventy-Five North was formed to oversee the life of the development permanently.

Once a vibrant community, Northeast Omaha and its residents have suffered greatly due to race riots and discriminatory housing practices publicly and privately. As a result, the community that has been left behind for years. The lack of investment in the community shows in its substandard housing, vacant lots, concentration of low-income residents, street conditions, crime rate, unemployment rate, lack of amenities, lack of connectivity to the rest of the city, and high concentration of minorities. These elements have stigmatized the community, leading to a negative perception of the area for many years. These perceptions have led to residents abandoning the community, a decrease in high-income residents, and a decrease in job opportunities.
To rectify historical wrongs and invest in Northeast Omaha, Seventy-Five North was created to revitalize the Highlander neighborhood using the Purpose Built Communities' holistic approach to mixed-income housing, education, and wellness. The objective is to end the cycle of generational poverty and community deterioration by building high-quality housing, thriving schools, and recreational facilities to attract new public and private investment to the area.

The Purpose Built Communities model was created by Tom Cousins in the early 1990s after he helped revitalize the East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia. After seeing the success of the method, Purpose Built Communities was formed to use the model nationally. There is no scholarly literature available on the model. Therefore, the literature review was done on the individual elements of the model.

To make a case for the first element of mixed-income housing, the research evaluated public housing and its hindrance to low income families. Some scholars have argued that areas with concentrated public housing have done more harm to communities and families than help, which has led to a negative perception of public housing. As a result, people fear public housing, and a "not in my backyard (NIMBY)" mentality developed. Thus, distressed communities have been excluded, leading to Racially/Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (RECAP) areas, like North Omaha.
To help improve communities without moving residents to a better neighborhood and avoid NIMBY, many municipalities have adopted the mixed-income housing strategy. The sole purpose of mixed-income development according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is to create racial and financial integration and to help improve low-income families’ lives by improving their neighborhoods.

As mixed-income strategy advances, so has the backlash against it. Some scholars have identified the negative side of physical integration. Some scholars say the strategy is being adopted too fast, without further research on the impact of it. If robust research is done, cities will see that low-income residents need more than just physical integration. Low-income families need resources to have a stronger voice in the political system and have a seat at the table for policies that impact them. Also, once low-income families are in a mixed-income residential environment, they need help dealing with more affluent neighbors who tend to have more power due to their financial status.

Literature review on the matter of educational attainment focuses on the impact of living in the concentrated public housing areas. Research shows that concentrated areas of public housing are not helpful to good school performance because schools in these areas tend to have less-experienced and low-paid teachers. In the case of research conducted in New York, students who lived in public housing scored lower on standardized tests compared to low-income students who did not live in a concentrated area of public housing. Literature also showed when redeveloping a community, local schools can be
used to attract residents, especially in the mixed-income areas. To encourage higher income residents to move into a mixed-income area, school quality must be high.

The last element of the holistic approach to Purpose Built Communities is wellness. Research has shown that residents in low-income areas tend to experience worse health conditions than people in more affluent neighborhoods. Redeveloping a distressed community must also include addressing their health needs. Literature shows that to improve the wellness of mothers in low-income areas they need better housing, safer neighborhoods, and more support from society. Thus, it is important to avoid excluding low-income neighborhoods from the rest of the city.

A case study approach was used in this thesis to measure the potential impact of Seventy-Five North on The Highlander neighborhood and the surrounding area. The research looked at the first three communities to use the Purpose Built Model — East Lake Neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia (Census Tract 208.02); Bayou District in New Orleans, Louisiana (Census Tract 138); and Woodlawn neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama (Census Tract 3). I examined changes in educational attainment, poverty and unemployment rate, demographic, and median household income from 2010 to 2016. This allowed me to get a sense of how the communities and the people have changed and gave me some insight relative to what to expect in the Highlander neighborhood. The result showed that higher education attainment increased. The percentage of people in the community with a college degree or higher went up all in all three communities. Therefore, Omaha should expect to see the same in the future. The other three metrics—
poverty, unemployment, and median household income—did not improve as well as the educational attainment in Woodlawn. And in Bayou District, unemployment went down, but poverty rate went up, and median household decreased. Some possible explanation, could be that 1.) Bayou District and Woodlawn developments are still new, so it will take time for the impact to show; 2.) The median household income decreases because people are getting education or job, but aren't getting paid the proper wage, thus putting them below the poverty line; 3.) the residents that are moving in are earning lower wages. The findings in the data show possible gentrification in the three case studies as new groups of people are replacing the dominant race. For example, East Lake is the longest running community that used the Purpose Built Communities model. The community shows that over time, the number of African-Americans, who are the dominant residents in the community, has decreased over the years, and the median household of the community increased, and according to Kohn, these are signs of gentrification.

Revitalizing distressed communities is supposed to be in good faith and helpful to local residents in improving their quality of life. Seventy-Five North is doing just that. However, unintended consequence sometimes occurs, such as gentrification, where the development ends up serving others and not the people in the community. It is vital for future research to examine whether these developments are helping the people. The unanswered question that remains is: Since the number of Black or African-Americans in these communities are reducing, where are they going? And is the increase of educational attainment and median household income that of residents who were there or is it from
new residents? Future research should address these questions to ensure community revitalizations are helping the people it is intended to help.

**Limitations**

This study had multiple limitations. First, there is a lack of prior research on the Purpose Built Model Communities. Because the model is new, in-depth research has not been done on the impact of the approach. Therefore, a literature review was conducted on individual elements, looking at what role each plays in community development. Case studies were also conducted as a way to evaluate the potential impact. As a result of the case studies, the second limitation emerged. Each community presented its own set of characters that determined the outcome of the development in their community using the Purpose Built Communities model. For example, in East Lake, the community golf course was the main driving force for the development. The attraction of the golf course shifted the change in the community as higher-educated White population entered the community. The Highlander neighborhood does not have a golf course or anything that would bring in a certain type of people. Thus, comparing the impact of East Lake to Northeast Omaha is not an aligned comparison. The Bayou District in New Orleans were one of the communities that were most impacted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. This tragedy made it harder for the community to develop because the city in its entirety was still recovering. While the community development did help improve the community, the impact is shown slowly, and in some case, it didn't help. For example, unemployment increased by 2% and the community lost 21% of its residents. The third limitation is a time constraint. As mentioned previously, the Purpose Built model Communities is new.
Therefore, many of the communities that are using the model have not been around long enough to see the full impact of using the model. East Lake is the longest running community. However, comparing it to other communities is not fair, as it is heavily driven by the golf course. The last limitation of the study is when comparing 2010 to 2016, there is no way to know whether if we are still comparing the same original residents or not; therefore, the task of determining whether the model is effective or not is challenging.

**Recommendations**

From the case studies, we see that while educational attainment increased significantly, unemployment and poverty rates did not increase as much; in some cases, it decreased. In Omaha, research shows that African-Americans who hold the same level of education and job experience as Whites still earn less. This shows that, if we are to expect the same impact in Northeast Omaha as other Purpose Built Communities in the case studies, Seventy-Five North must put effort into focusing on employment for residents in the community, primarily African-Americans since they are the predominant race in the area and the predominant race to earn less than any other groups of people in Omaha.

Literature review shows that low-income residents tend to get lost amid mixed-income housing environments. To avoid this from happening, low-income residents must not be forgotten in the new environment. Seventy-Five North must provide resources for their vulnerable residents and a voice, both political and social. Additionally, low-income
residents must feel comfortable voicing their opposition or support for anything happening in the community.

To further evaluate whether the Purpose Built Communities model is effective in the Highlander neighborhood, Seventy-Five North must know whether they are serving people already living in the community or new residents. If new residents dominate the new housing market, then are they really doing what they set out to do? If new residents dominate the area, then where are the current residents going?
Appendix

Appendix A: Original Site Plan of the Development Site

Source: Image by Seventy-Five North
Appendix B: Vacant Land of the Development Site

Source: unknown

Appendix C: The Development of the Campus

Source: Image by Seventy-Five North
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