Housing and Community Development Report Out

Housing and Community Development

March 26th, 2019
10am-2pm
Tukwila Community Center

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES
CATHOLIC HOUSING SERVICES
OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

CITY OF RENTON & RENTON HOUSING AUTHORITY 75 YEARS

Background

The **Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County** began it's "Housing And…" work with the premise that housing insecurity is intricately tied to other issues such as education, health, and more, in both how people experience these issues and how the solutions must be formed.

Understanding that the affordable housing sector has much to learn and to share, HDC works to convene members and other community leaders to begin conversation on cross-sector collaboration. The goal of the Housing and Community Development event was to unpack the intersection of affordable housing and community development within the landscape of King County's tremendous growth, incredible need for more housing, and strong presence of vibrant, diverse communities at risk of displacement. Building off the work from NACEDA's talking values publication, HDC wanted to explore the themes that drive these efforts, and challenge our success.

HDC was excited to convene over 70 participants to dive into these important questions, and we look forward to advancing this conversation and continuing this work. King County has a wealth of strong community-based organizations and a vast network of affordable housing professionals eager to partner. This conversation of balancing scale and community accountability is happening across the country as a side effect to the booming growth we are seeing. We will continue to wrestle with that balance to come up with promising, inclusive, impactful solutions.

"Right now, the field is exploding with innovative new ideas on how to maximize scale and impact while maintaining local community engagement. Yes, it is hard. Yes, there will be failures. Yes, there will be compromises. But folks are trying. They are taking risks. They are thinking creatively."

-Joe Kriesberg, NACEDA Scale & Accountability

Michael Reichert, Keynote

"If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."-Lilla Watson

Michael Reichert, President and CEO of Catholic Community Services and Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington started the day with a call to action and a call to reflection. Michael urged everyone to think about the important work they all do and the communities in which they work. He reflected on Catholic Community Services' efforts over the last forty years, serving almost 100,000 people every year. He recognized the importance of the work that he and other nonprofit housing developers do, but he pointed out that, despite the efforts of the affordable housing sector, we aren't meeting the needs of low-income folks and marginalized communities.

Michael pointed out that we have all made an "industry of poverty," and that the severe multi-generational poverty that fuels our work is the foundation we must use to reverse the flow of inequities. This is why he continues to tell his staff that they don't work for him, or for Catholic Community Services, but rather for their clients.

Michael prompted the people in the room to think about the strength of the communities they work in, and what they can be and should be doing in relation to the communities they work in and serve. He broke it down to a need to listen, engage, build capacity, partner, and invest. He emphasized that the solutions are in the strengths of the people that the housing sector seeks to serve. He noted that true listening might put you into tension with the idea that you must always build bigger. The community knows what it needs, and it is the role of the housing sector to listen authentically and with humility.

Michael warned of the charity framework when it comes to working in social services. When you begin to think of this work as help rather than partnering, when you frame it as caretaking rather than investing, it creates a damaging power dynamic. His solution is for the housing sector to "See us, know us, believe in us, walk with us, and be us." Michael ended by challenging participants to think about how they can grow into this work and prioritize it. "If you are spending 5% of your time on community outreach and investment, raise it to 15%".

Catholic Community Services has also spearheaded the Communities of Concern Commission which has grown over the past decade to include over 20 organizations all working to ensure that historically disenfranchised communities are able to fully benefit from the economic growth our region is experiencing.

Leaders Panel

(from left to right)

Jan Laskey, Bank of America
Jamie Lee, Seattle Chinatown International District Public Development Authority (SCIDpda)
Ubax Gardheere, City of Seattle Equitable Development Initiative (EDI)
Chris Persons, Capitol Hill Housing
Uche Okezie, HomeSight
Leslie Morishita, InterIm Community Development Association

Each panelist was chosen because of their demonstrated passion and commitment to the work of community development. Whether that's through funding, partnering, or being, all the panelists have experience with the successes and challenges of this work. They and were asked the following questions to spark the conversation.

1) What is community development? How does it align with organizations that consider themselves first and foremost affordable housing developers/providers? What is the role of the housing sector and what work needs to be done beyond housing?

2) For organizations who want to enter or better pursue the work of community development what challenges will they face from an organizational level for the housing sector and from a community engagement perspective?

3) How should we be communicating the importance of community development work? From a funder perspective what does success look like?

4) Community development work has many moving pieces. What have you learned about making those partnerships and collaborations successful? How do you address the power dynamics within those collaborations?

5) With the tremendous need in our region, there is a desire to build as quickly and as much as possible. Community development work often takes more time, intentionality, and deliberation. How do we work at the intersection of these two realities to both build to scale and build with the community in mind? Is there a tension between these two notions and how do we address that?

Panel Takeaways

- We believe in doing work with and by the community -Leslie Morishita
- It's important to be upfront at the beginning of the process with the communities you are working with about the limitations of the project. When they communicate what they want i.e childcare or something else and you know the whole time that it'll never happen, it's important to be honest instead of just nodding your head and telling them later that it won't work. -Jamie Lee
- We saw with the Liberty Bank building project the importance early on of open-communications. There's going to be a lot of back and forth, and you need to trust each other's intentions to make it work. We are really proud of the work that went into this project, and we are proud to say that over 80% of the residents are African American due to strong affirmative marketing work. -Chris Persons
- Think about how you are making your community outreach accessible. What time are you hosting these meetings? Are you providing childcare? You have to think about the historical systemic oppression at play and then actively address it. You can't just do the minimum and think that people will be able to show up as their full selves. -Ubax Gardheere
- We are seeing this now with SCIDpda's and Capitol Hill Housing's partnership. To make partnerships work, you need regular communication. We have weekly meetings and are always emailing or texting. It's those relationships that make a partnership successful. -Jamie Lee
- Ask the communities what they need and keep asking. With the Othello Square project, we are continually working alongside the community to adapt the project to their needs. You can't go into these meetings with things already cemented in your mind. They are the leaders on this. It will take a long time, if you do it right. -Uche Okezie
- This tension of affordability and equity is of our own making. We are working within a system that we've built, and only now are we trying to work within that system to achieve equity and that is why we are feeling that tension. If we change the framework and the power dynamics, we can do both. With the Equitable Development Initative funding we made sure all the stakeholders were a part of the conversation, and they told us how important it was to fund capacity building. If they hadn't been at the table, we might never had thought of it. -Ubax Gardheere

    Much more was said, please reach out to the panelists to learn more about the work they do.

- What we learned:
    - Make sure you've brought the community in from the beginning and be transparent on where their feedback can lead. Make sure to do the necessary work to make sure folks are able to show up beyond just an invitation.
    - Holistic partnerships work when the various parties trust each other. That trust is built through honest and frequent communication where the developer or whoever has the resources does the intentional work to make sure all voices are at the table and given equal space.
    - Think about the needs beyond housing and beyond the building itself, and look at the neighborhood, the community at large.

Discussion Groups

The panel was a jumping off point to spark thoughts in the participants. It was meant to begin the process of reflecting on the many conversations that underly the intersection of housing and community development. We decided on four discussion groups: communicating with funders, community involvement, placemaking and powersharing, and the role of the affordable housing sector. The intentionality behind each was to unpack the challenges that people see or perceive in each of these topics, and to get us a bit closer to workable answers to the questions posed.

Funders Discussion:

- <u>Funders as connectors</u>:
  Funders can be a resource beyond financial support. They can connect community-based organizations (CBOs) with nonprofit partners with high capacity, as well as coach CBOs through funding or development processes. There is credibility through partnership.

- <u>Relationship between funders and community-based organizations?</u>

  Creating funding connections has to start with shared values. CBOs have real value to funders because they represent the real/true voice of the community, and can speak for community needs. That being said, it's important to know the values of individual funders, and make sure CBO values align with funding priorities before making an ask for capacity/infrastructure funding.

  More often, funders are recognizing the need to partner with CBO and conduct community engagement. Especially around ideas like community preference and affirmative marketing; how do we put together guidelines that work?

  Funders need to hear from the community, but the community needs to understand what funder are looking for and work to identify the appropriate funder for CBO needs.

- <u>What funders would like to see from CBOs:</u>

  Need clarity of roles, clear delineation of what ownership looks like In terms of $, funders have to look for capacity and ability. Seattle's Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) is looking for projects that are "shovel hungry" (needing the capacity and support to get started) and "shovel ready" (needing the funding resources to get started) so EDI can fund exploration phases as well as actual development.

  Need to clearly state how CBO capacity adds value and how that translates to a value-add for the community.

  For many funders on the investment side, they're looking at how a project will make the community more prosperous, and it's important as a CBO to be able to communicate that.

  It's important to shop around for funders and investors that are aligned with CBO/community vision in order to reach mission, then make the case for investment.

- <u>What CBOs would like to see from funders and larger nonprofits:</u>
   It's important to acknowledge the dynamics between organizations with power and capacity, and CBOs. CBO voice should be seen at different political levels.
   Funders should acknowledge the need across the County

   Question – how do we "shop" for funders?
   Answers:
- Online prospective research
- Look for other orgs who are mission-aligned, and see who is funding them
- Check with philanthropy – usually very clear with funding priorities
- Foundation websites offer clear insight into bank funding priorities, even if the money isn't coming from foundation

   Larger nonprofits also have a responsibility to community and CBOs, and can be great resource. They have knowledge of processes, can help with funding and project development – mentorship

   For example: SCIDpda introduced LISC to Friends of Little Saigon – an organization the funder would not have known otherwise. There's a strong and important role for intermediary organizations in helping to cultivate relationships for small CBOs. These relationships make it easier for funders to "make the case" on behalf of CBO requests
   CHS has played a "consultant" role to help small CBOs – how do nonprofits advertise that they are open to having these conversations with small orgs.

   Just as nonprofit partners can bring credibility to CBO project, CBOs bring credibility, depth, voice, etc. to partnerships – the relationship has to be set up so that it respects the values and skills of both/all organizations.

- <u>Other discussions:</u>

   On the land issue, is there a role for faith-based organizations? They offer a different kind of partnership.

   There is a disconnect between what "capacity building" means to different organizations. Capacity building could mean you're looking for money for a shovel ready project, or you need money to keep the lights on.

Community Involvement Discussion:

- <u>What does authentic community outreach and relationship building look like compared to "check the box" outreach from a community development perspective?</u>

"Checking the box" doesn't surface the real issues. The first step is taking the time to help community members become advocates for what they really want. "Authenticity" should be the goal.

Community development done right will integrate work with and input from the community from the very beginning; asking community members what they want and involving them in the work and decision-making process from the word go, and should continue throughout the process until the end.

Good community development asks the people what they want before plans are made; involving them in the process of crafting the project rather than coming to them with a "pre-baked" plan and asking them for suggestions about how to change it.

Have people from the same community do the work, whether that be outreach and project facilitation, or actual employment in the construction or other tasks.

Jonathan Smith of Bellwether gave the example of a recent project in Rainier Beach, where reaching out to the Rainier Beach Community coalition was one of the first steps. They also worked closely with the contractor to achieve the goal of hiring directly from the community. A final step was doing targeted outreach and assistance to local community members to apply for the housing once ready to place in service.

Notably, sometimes "check the box" community input happens out of necessity, because only a bare minimum is required and/or not enough time or staff capacity exists to do more.

Community development done right takes time.

- <u>What would have to change at an organizational level to be able to conduct authentic community outreach?</u>

Community members should have a variety of opportunities and formats in which to provide feedback. In-person sessions should be offered at different times including outside of work hours. Online and other virtual feedback options should be available. The languages represented in the community should be supported in feedback modes. At least some outreach should be done by going out to find the people; sometimes those who should be heard from the most are the least apt to offer input, and vice-versa. Some communities are not used to providing input and do not feel welcome doing so. Their feedback must be sought after, and community members should be coached on how to advocate for themselves.

Many steps need to be built into the planning process to integrate community feedback at every point. Mark Gropper of Renton Housing Authority gave the example of Sunset Court, where community members were asked what and how they wanted to be surveyed in the process leading up to the project design and planning.

Forethought must be given to the question of who all of the stakeholders are and have they participated in the process. If not, then efforts must be made to include them. Consistent, trackable data collection can assist with this and the entire effort.

Funders tend to focus on efficiency and cutting expenditures on overhead. However, the process of obtaining community input is not a direct deliverable in the traditional sense, and requires resources to achieve. Focusing on efficiencies risks losing community input.

Part of the issue is that funders tend to define metrics of success. However, community development done right will draw desired outcomes/metrics of success from community members rather than funders or other sources.

Project funders themselves can also be constrained by requirements placed on them. Especially governmental funders are often limited by budgets, statutes, and fiscal/legislative cut-off dates.

Staff positions must be created within funders and developers to support community input and outreach. Position descriptions at the organization should broadly include language about community input to encourage an organization-wide culture of focusing on the community and developing according to its self-identified needs.

Community development should be a culture-a state of mind.

Some additional thought should be given to the economic life of the community and integrating affordable commercial space into developments so that community businesses can continue to live alongside community members.

- <u>How do we address the tension between what is feasible from a technical perspective in a development and what the community is asking for?</u>

It is key to be upfront from the very beginning about community expectations that cannot be met. When a desire or goal is expressed by community members that is not feasible or permissible, they should be told immediately that that's the case and told why. Taking the input but not addressing the conflict will likely lead to some sense of lack of responsiveness or, worse, deception on the part of the developer. Authentic community input must be based on honestly and transparency.

- <u>What challenges exist for both AH developers and community members that could keep them from fully engaging in a productive and authentic community outreach?</u>

Communities change over time. Housing developments can take many years to complete (10 years or more in some cases). A community's ethnic, socio-economic, and other makeup can change drastically over these timescales. This is especially true in rapidly growing areas.

Some thought must be given to the lifecycle of the project from early on. Forethought as to how and when the community might undergo a transformation must be made and planning should integrate points in time and methods to engage community continually and appropriately in order to account for change.

Changing communities also means some are coming apart and being replaced. Community building must also be a part of the process of taking community input.

Establishing "who is the community?" can also be challenging. Is it the low-income people who live there or will be served, the wealthy neighbors, those who are pro or those who are against?

While moments of conflict can threaten the formal progress of a development, they can be used as an opportunity to engage community members who have not been productively engaged by hearing their concerns and authentically inviting them to participate in the process.

Being an ally and coalition building in the community can help solve some of these problems. Relying on local partners to do the outreach, bring people around the table, and facilitate information gathering and processing can also save staff time.

Social media can work for and against community development projects. It tends to amplify whoever is more savvy about using it rather than whoever is actually in the majority.

The Role of the Affordable Housing Sector Discussion:

Financial institutions play a role in investing to increase the supply of affordable housing, and are - through the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) - motivated to fulfill their responsibility to provide service to low-income households.

Housing intermediary organizations complement the financial institution with their gap-filling work to create opportunity for low- and moderate-income people through affordable housing and non-residential components such as child-care centers in diverse, thriving communities.

Affordable housing (AH) actors can explore advocating for policy strategies that help ensure community development and advocate for anti-displacement strategies.

We need to further emphasize that housing is one part of community development

The AH sector can help protect the community from predatory business efforts. There are businesses that target particularly older residents, and cities are limited by laws to expose these businesses. HDC could create an "Equity Focused Star List" of engineers, contractors, etc., and other trusted companies/vendors. The members could help build the list based on their experience working with the vendors.

The sector has an opportunity to model the Liberty Bank Building Request for Proposal language that emphasized utilizing community-based organizations. As HDC, we could further this by creating a set of standards for all NPO developers through a promising practices document.

The sector must pro-actively prepare for upcoming opportunities such as the potential condominium liability reform and leveraging on the opportunity to mitigate displacement.

AH developers must think as community development actors, and consider meeting community needs as they build. Holding space for non-linear aspects of development such as a commercial ground floor should not be an after-thought.

"Housing finance can bring momentum; it can be a driver and opportunity for community building" according to Beth Boram with Beacon Development. Its key that NPO developers, see themselves as a part of the community and scale our outreach and relationship building with the community.

Our development is driven by funding. We have limited funding to achieve these goals. The EDI fund is a drop in the bucket for what we need to meet needs such as commercial floor funding. "We need to flip this and be more intentional in order to build community."- Marty Kooistra, HDC

"We need to reshape our narrative to the funders to ensure equitable development" -Chris Persons, Capitol Hill Housing

AH developers help cut costs by making services such as child care centers near homes for families. We have seen this work.

"The funding community needs to work with the development community to reshape the equity focus. The biggest question is: who is at the table? This must be tied with both equitable

development and relationship building with historically disenfranchised communities." -Jessica Gomez, Seattle Office of Housing

"It's an environmental benefit when you cluster development and amenities." -Brent Butler, Age Friendly Seattle

"Its key that we cluster development along the transit corridors." -Thara Johnson, City of Burien

"Not a lot of residents in our community drive or need cars. We have residents who support small business in our community" -Jamie Lee, SCIpda

The AH sectors create community. "We work in the suburbs exclusively, to acquire multi-family properties for affordable housing. It's all about creating a new community for us" -Dan Landes, KCHA

A building needs an anchor to drive foot traffic. Start thinking about that before breaking ground. Business Impact NW can be trusted to bring in the business you can trust. They can work with organizations before filling out the space.

"Commercial affordability is a solvable challenge. We need to have government support." -Joe Sky-Tucker, Business Impact NW. HDC can take this up.

"The displacement that is happening with people is happening with business" Joe Sky-Tucker, Business Impact NW.

"The AH sector needs to also leverage on the market rate developers to do affirmative marketing and work with small community businesses" -Chris Persons, Capitol Hill Housing. HDC can help convene some for-profit allies to begin these conversations.

Placemaking and Powersharing

- <u>How can organizations that work in multiple jurisdictions engage in placemaking and relationship building?</u>

    The group talked about organizations needing to open up power structures for people of color to have space. They should be a part of the decision-making process. Sharing power in decision making is essential.
    They need to bring in smaller organizations who have built trust with communities and use that knowledge to lead projects and efforts.
    HDC needs to continue to bring organizations together that are doing the work. Seeing everyone at the table and making different connections can align organizations efforts and engage folks more.
    We must work within different communities. "Life does not happen in zip codes, it happens in necessities. We can't give up on people who have been moved out and displaced."
    "At Community Opportunities, we fund places not zip codes. You must go beyond the zip code and find where the need is. "
    This work has to move with the communities, develop community leadership and have staff in those communities to build trust and relationships.

- <u>What strategies can AH developers pursue in working to build their own organizational capacity to support community development as well as build community capacity to pursue community driven projects?</u>

    The Affordable Housing sector needs to recognize how to build capacity to support community development. There is a lack of cultural competency in affordable housing to work with communities.
    Economic empowerment needs to happen before economic development. Communities need to feel empowered.
    Having bilingual staff in residential services is essential.
    Hire people from the communities we are serving.
    You can't do this work alone, and behave as a vacuum.
    We need to think about urban housing. How does the building get into the neighborhood and effect the neighborhood? Is it a benefit or problem?
    There needs to be an investment in workshare, exchanging programs, and skill transfer programs.
    Affordable housing has an expert mentality which does not see the community as experts, that needs to change.
    Community based organizations often don't fit funding opportunities. We need to engage community in workshops to give them a framework for funding opportunities.
    Educate yourself about the culture and the history.
    There needs to be some humility in development work.

- <u>What are the mindset shifts that will have to take place across all sectors for King County to more deeply pursue community development work?</u>
    Takes a village to raise a family.
    We need to recognize that racism and language matter.
    Who defines what's right and for who?
    "Everyone seems so certain, and isn't necessarily opening up space to say, I don't know everything."
    We need to be open and vulnerable.
    Community space has to meet the community need.
    Schools should play a big role, but schools tend to be reluctant to go into shared space agreements with communities. School districts need to rethink what is our place in the community.
    Organizations need partnerships with community.
    Affordable housing focuses too much on units and number of units instead of the need. It further perpetuates inequities.
    We need to know the gatekeeper of the community and who makes the financial decisions.
    Everyone's planning efforts and energy needs to come together.
    Data should inform decisions. We should use that data to tell the story.
    Some communities have households that are large, 6-8 families in one home. Developers need to think about building homes with more bedrooms.
    We use too much technical language in this field. The language needs to be accessible.
    Complex rules in housing needs to be changed. Break down existing laws and language to simplify the gaps and make it more culturally relevant.
    There are a lot of resources, but we need to bring them to one open space.

Tools, Resources, and What's Next

- City of Seattle's Equitable Development Initiative
- NACEDA's Talking Values
- History of Community Development by Van Hoffman

For updated resources check back to the Housing and Community page on our website.

Actions:
- Have you worked on a project that reflects the value of this conversation? Work with HDC to fill out a promising practice form to share your knowledge with your peers.
- Reach out to LISC and Enterprise to learn more about how they can support your work
- Join the HDC Southeast Seattle Convening. Reach out to leah@housingconsortium.org
- Join HDC's Recruiting Diversity Task Force as about of our Race, Equity, and Inclusion initiative

Help guide our next steps, as we continue conversation and highlight this work, by filling out this survey!

http://tinyurl.com/Housing-CD