

Title: Affordable Housing Plan Development for the Puerto Rican Agenda

Student Name: [REDACTED]

Faculty Mentor Name: [REDACTED]

Department: City and Metropolitan Planning

State the Problem/Topic of Research or Creative Work

Because of the devastation from Hurricane Maria, thousands of Puerto Ricans have become displaced from their homes to the Chicago area seeking refuge. Chicago has currently received approximately 2,000 Puerto Ricans and expect an additional 8,000 by the end of the year. These individuals are moving into homes with family members, into homeless shelters, or renting through the private market, Section 8, and Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The emphasis for the project is to develop an affordable housing model for the community collective, the Puerto Rican Agenda, to utilize for future housing efforts in the city of Chicago. I will be coordinating with the Puerto Rican Agenda to understand the locations and the influential factors in the relocation process for the displaced Puerto Ricans.

Relevant Background/Literature Review

Infrastructure development has had a difficult history in projects that allow the inclusion for all individuals to partake in. When historic preservation became the trend in the 1960s, it brought about the idea of rational planning, where architect's, "focus was to destroy blight and rationally place industrial parks, residential zones, and natural areas throughout their cities" (Friedmann and Clyde 1980). This ideal was expected to increase the health, safety, and efficiency of cities,

but in that generation, “Minority, low-income, and inner-city neighborhoods suffered the most because they were considered blighted and unsanitary” (Vale 2002). Rational planning has motivated urban planners to segregate their designs based on racial and ethnic categories, resulting in difficulties for minorities to thrive in their community on a financial basis. The idea began to dissolve after the 1960s when developers and planners were aware that they needed to engage directly with the communities they have chosen to serve. Members of the community also wanted their planners and policy-makers to respect and listen to their ideas during the planning process to incorporate the needs of the community first. This jumpstarted the concept of the community engagement model, which sought, “to understand the city as a complex, living organism in a constant and unending process of change” (Jacobs 1992). [REDACTED] has worked in the Chicago community to develop models for change, and from her observation of utilizing the community engagement model, developing change can only be achieved by contemporary planners who are willing to engaged and understand the community they are serving and develop policies with interested locals and needs in mind. For this project, constructing an affordable housing plan cannot be performed through conjectures and assumptions. To accommodate for the needs of the incoming Puerto Rican population, the process will require their assistance and feedback on how to serve their needs and help them transition in a new society and community.

Specific Activities to be Undertaken and a Timetable Allotted for Each Activity

The research emphasizes the development of affordable housing for the Puerto Rican community in Chicago with the Puerto Rican Agenda.

February – May 2018

Through weekly meetings with [REDACTED], I will be gathering information from three organizations in the Puerto Rican Agenda collective: Bickerdike, Hispanic Housing, and LUCHA. I will be compiling the housing and demographic information in spreadsheets from these organizations into one document for members of the Puerto Rican Agenda and the community to understand and utilize. This will also serve as a benchmark on what information has been collected and what information is needed to move forward with constructing an affordable housing model. Once this documentation process is complete, [REDACTED] and I will create a survey to obtain the additional information, along with other data needed for the Puerto Rican Agenda.

May - June 2018

I will be traveling to Chicago with [REDACTED] to conduct a survey for members of the Pilsen community, which is notable for having a large Latino population. I will be interacting with tenants, local homeowners, and other interested parties to learn about the community in general and about the accommodations and necessities that they would conceive as necessary to thrive, in terms of housing. This survey will also take into account thoughts of the community members and how to accommodate an affordable and sustainable housing design for the influx of immigrants in the upcoming years. Through documentation and compilation of this information, it will be presented to the Puerto Rican Agenda and Archeworks, an architectural firm that emphasizes social change in the Chicago area. Archeworks will assist in developing preliminary designs of affordable housing plans for construction purposes, and the Puerto Rican Agenda can utilize the information for future policy efforts.

July – August 2018

Upon my return to Utah, I will continue meeting with [REDACTED] to organize the information from the survey and the previously obtained information from the housing organizations of the Puerto Rican Agenda to develop graphics in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for interested parties and the public to observe. In conjunction, I will be documenting the timeline of this project for the Community Engaged Scholars (CES) program for the Bennion Center to present to the CES committee for their feedback on how to further develop a model for affordable housing with a community emphasis. During this effort, I seek to give attention to the importance of the community engagement model of planning. By offering insight on the process of developing an affordable housing plan for the displaced Puerto Rican population in Chicago, and underprivileged communities as a whole, I am optimistic that this research can guide programs and policies to better address community needs and support more proactive efforts in allowing the community to assist in the infrastructure development of the city.

Example

Relationship of the Proposed Work to the Expertise of the Mentor

[REDACTED] is the Assistant Professor in the City and Metropolitan Planning (CMP) department at the University of Utah and serves as the Vice Chair of the Planning Commission for Salt Lake City, Utah. Her passion and ideology ruminates on the concept of conducting research and designs in partnership with stakeholders, from grassroots organizations to governments agencies. She has also spent time living in Chicago and working with the Puerto Rican Agenda, providing me with basic knowledge of the organization and Chicago in general, as I have not been to the city. [REDACTED] is also my faculty partner for the Community Engaged Scholars capstone project with the Bennion Center at the University of Utah. She will

be coordinating the ChicagoLAB program in the summer that brings students from the University of Utah to the Chicago area to work on different community issues through an urban planning emphasis. I am partaking in that program, where she will continue to mentor my efforts on developing community-based research for the use of the PRA. During the spring semester, I meet with [REDACTED] on a weekly basis on how I can apply my dual majors of civil engineering and urban ecology in a community service component. By preparing myself on the initial steps to develop an affordable housing plan with the Puerto Rican Agenda in Chicago, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has been a supportive mentor in the process to prepare me for this program.

Relationship of the Proposed Work to Your Future Goals

Being in the civil engineering department at the University of Utah, I sought to connect my choice in major with my passion toward community service. One of my professional goals is to develop affordable housing for underprivileged communities and I want to establish a stronger importance for the community to help with developing the construction projects that would beneficially impact their area. In the engineering field, workers are solely focused on the numerical value of their work when there is a larger social value that comes into play. I asked my professor about how the community influenced their work in the engineering field. Their responses emphasized the clients and stakeholders are the largest figures that operate in the planning process but the community never becomes involved because there has not been enough interest. Although I understood that the key players operate mostly in development projects, I found it difficult to accept that the people, who inhabit or utilize the areas of these projects, did not have a larger role in developing infrastructure for their needs and lifestyle.

The purpose of my work emphasizes developing the beginning stages of an affordable housing plan for the Puerto Rican Agenda in their future policy work. This experience will support my enrichment of understanding the methods of how to develop an affordable housing model and cultivate the infrastructure utilizing community based research as a major component.

Community service has been a nominal influence for myself growing up, and I want to bridge the realm of engineering, urban planning, and service to sustain and prosper the various communities in the world. People are the most influential part in the growth of the city and the community, and through this project, I am devoted to recognize their needs and potential solutions. Working with the Puerto Rican Agenda and [REDACTED] will support my

capability of gathering information from community members, and with the assistance of ArcheWorks, I can obtain the skills to formulate an initial plan for affordable housing in the

Chicago area, which will be needed to accommodate for the influx of migrants at the end of the 2018 year. Working alongside professionals in the housing industry will optimize my experience in gaining necessary skills to work on future affordable housing projects in terms of urban

planning and engineering. UROP is a fantastic opportunity to learn and create a holistic approach to develop a solution to the affordable housing issue in the Chicago area. The experience that

UROP provides will assist in my professional development of understanding the geographic, political, and ecological components that are necessary in creating affordable housing for underprivileged communities in the nation. Receiving the support from the Office of

Undergraduate Research will benefit in settling the cost for my education at the University of Utah and conducting an impactful project in Chicago that will cultivate my professional skills to create affordable housing for underprivileged communities.

References Cited

Friedmann, J. & W., Clyde. (1980). *Territory & Function: The Evolution of Regional Planning*.

Tampere: University of California Press.

Jacobs, J. (1992). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage

Vale, L. J. (2002). *Reclaiming public housing: a half century of struggle in three public neighborhoods*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press

Example