Building Resilient Communities

Strategies to Keep Communities Together through Human-made and Natural Disasters

Joe Donlin
Presentation Outline

1. Tenant Challenges
2. Small Business Challenges
3. Tenant Strategies
4. Small Business Strategies
5. Long-Term Resilience
Displacement Increasing and Expanding

No-Fault Evictions, City of LA

Does NOT include, common forms of displacement resulting from:
- Harassment
- Coercion
- Cash-for-keys
- Slum housing
Housing in Our Community in 1999

As documented by UNIDHD through interviews with long-term residents, September 2006

36th Place

Community-serving Housing
Housing in transition from Community-serving to Student-serving
Student-serving Housing

Displacement on one Block
Housing in Our Community in 2009

Displacement on one Block
Case Example: Tenants Face Slum Conditions and various forms of Displacement

Tenants threatened with direct displacement via the Ellis Act, while facing:

- Slum conditions (mold, rats, disintegrating pipes, broken stairwells) threatening their health and safety
- Harassment by owners
- Exposure to harmful debris due to nearby stadium construction
Slum Housing: A Health and Safety Crisis
Major Tenant Challenges, part 1

- **Slumhousing** conditions harm the health and safety of renters
- **Insufficient tenant rights**: non-existent, insufficient and/or poorly-enforced
- **Overcrowded housing** due to lack of affordable housing
- **Displacement often incentivized** by policy (vacancy decontrol, Ellis Act)
- **Rising rents** lead to loss of savings, unacceptable choices (food or medical care?), homelessness and death
- **Corporate Landlords** control thousands (in LA County alone) of rental properties and single family homes as commodities
Major Tenant Challenges, part 2

- **No Right to Counsel**: lack of legal representation magnifies chances of eviction
- **Asymmetric Information**: tenants often know very little about development plans of landlords and developers
- **Ownership out of reach**: for most tenants under *conventional* ownership models
- **Discrimination and harassment**: tenants more vulnerable to racism, sexism, transphobia, xenophobia held by a property manager, landlord, developer, private equity firm or that lives in public policy
Challenges: Community-Serving Small Businesses
BEFORE: Displacement of Businesses

USC University Village
le. 3301 S Hoover St, Los Angeles, CA 90007

2222 Figueroa
le. 2222 S Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90007

Adams and Grand
le. 237 W Adams Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90007

Area of Map: 1 square mile
AFTER: Displacement of Businesses

USC University Village
27 businesses displaced

Adams and Grand
13 small businesses and over 100 workers displaced

2222 Figueroa
8 small businesses displaced:
Strategies

Anti-Displacement and Community Resilience
Strategy: Community Organizing and Advocacy

Art by Favianna Rodriguez and Melanie Cervantes

"The only secure community is an organized one"

"Alto Polimigra!"

Art by Favianna Rodriguez
Community Benefits are necessary. We're ready to bring our demands to the developer.

LOS beneficios para la comunidad Son Necesarias. Estamos Listas para llevar nuestras demandas a el desarrollador (constructor).
The Future of South Central LA is in Question

www.unidad-la.org/peoplesplan
Strategy: Investments in Multi-issue Community Benefits

- The community benefits proposal is the result of a 5-month community process that involved over 100 local residents.
- The proposal is driven by 6 principles: significant benefits, implementable & enforceable, neutrally enforced, community control, local expertise and transparency.
- Community residents & partners are ready to engage in the work being proposed.
- Residents identified 9 priority issue areas that they felt would benefit the community; those issue areas are shown here.

**Displacement Prevention**
- Work WITH community to build better neighborhoods with the same neighbors.
- Support the creation of a community anti-displacement team.
- Prevent displacement by investing in training & awareness programs by & for community.

**Affordable Housing**
- Keep South LA’s hard-working families in their homes by creating affordable housing.
- The community asks for a commitment to build or rehabilitate a total of 245 Affordable units and create an integrated project.
- Working families seek a pledge to keep housing that falls within 50% of their income.

**Good Jobs**
- Keep jobs local, hire South LA workers, invest in job skill development training.
- Commitment to providing living-wage jobs and working with local unions.
- Invest in workers reflective of the community: support Black construction workers, day laborers, garment workers & inclusive hiring policies.

**Health**
- Invest in the wellness of the community with on-site centers.
- Commitment to ensuring environmental impacts are reduced or diminished before & after construction.
- Support community wellness through investment in community-based health programs such as farmer’s markets.

**Green Space**
- Make onsite green/open spaces easily accessible to community.
- Support community mobility with bike lanes and exercise areas.
- Invest in community well-being by supporting creation of new parks, sports leagues and senior & family centers.

**Safety**
- Establish an on-site policy against criminalization of homeless, people of color & low-income families.
- Prevent racial profiling and brutality by providing training to all on-site security.
- Create a community safety plan in collaboration with local community organizations.

**Homelessness**
- Commit to treat all homeless persons with dignity.
- Invest in individual’s right to well-being with shower and transportation programs.
- Work with community to develop sustainable, equitable and viable services.

**Small Business**
- Partner with local small businesses through investment, loan and revitalization programs.
- Invest in small business by allocating retail space for local entrepreneurs.
- Collaborate with community business owners through an Economic Development Council.

**Youth Development**
- Invest in the future of the community through leadership programs.
- Support the development of local youth through arts & recreation programs.
- Commit to investing in the future of the community through community-based career training programs.
Community Benefits Agreements

A. Staples (LA Live) CBA - 2001
- **Jobs**: 50% local hiring for permanent jobs. Established a First Source Referral System
- **Housing**: 270 affordable housing units; seed funding for community land trust
- **Parks and green space funding**

B. Lorenzo CBA - 2011
- **Jobs**: Local and ‘disadvantaged’ hiring for permanent and construction jobs
- **Housing**: 46 affordable units on site. Off-site affordable housing grant program.
- **Community Health Center** with 20 years free rent
- **Small Business** fund and discounted retail space
- **TOD strategies fund**

C. USC Development Agreement - 2012
- **Jobs**: 30% Local and 10% ‘disadvantaged’ hiring for permanent and construction jobs. Training fund.
- **Housing**: $15-20 million in affordable housing funds
- **Student Housing**: 4,000 net new on-campus student beds help ease displacement of families off-campus
- **Legal clinic** at USC law school for tenant rights
- **Local Small Business** support program
- **Economic Development Coordinating Council**

D. Grand Met CBA - 2015
- **Housing**: 15% on site affordable housing (5% extremely low-income, 10% very low-income)
- **Jobs**: Local and ‘disadvantaged’ hiring for construction and future retail jobs
- **Local Small Business**: 5% commercial space for community-based businesses
- **Community Benefits Fund** to support local small business and social services for family and homeless
Case Example: Community Benefits for Tenants

USC Agreement with UNIDAD
● New Legal Clinic for Tenants at USC
● $20 million for affordable housing preservation / production
● 4,000 net new on-campus student beds (thus fewer students seek housing in local neighborhoods)
Case Example: Community Benefits for Small Businesses

Lorenzo CBA
- 20 years rent-free for Community Health Center
- Discounted rent for other community-serving businesses
- Revolving loan fund for small businesses
Strategy: Equitable Land Use Planning

People’s Plan: A community-driven vision for equitable development in South LA.

1. Displacement-Free Investment Zones
2. Equitable Economic Development
3. Community / Environmental Health
4. Strengthen Community Leadership
Strategy: Policy Change for Tenant Protections
Strategy: Empower Tenants with Information and Tools

Let’s build a tool that will support...

- Stopping displacement of our neighborhoods
- Empowering tenants and housing justice advocacy
- Expanding the use of community ownership strategies

Organizers Warning Notification and Information for Tenants

September 27, 2018
Time: 1-3pm
@ 152 W. 32nd St.
Los Angeles, CA

A project of SAJE | Made possible by SPARCC Los Angeles
OWN IT! Enable Real-time Notifications on Building and Community Updates

Be notified when

- Building has been listed for sale
- A property is sold
- A building permit has been pulled
- Reported to Public Health
- Reported to Building and Safety
- Reported to Housing Dept
Social Resilience in the Long-Term
Keeping Communities Together Before & After Disaster

Pre-Disaster

1. **Develop Detailed, Enforceable and Funded Plan to Keep Communities Together in the Face of Disaster.** Include strategies pertaining to anti-speculative protections for tenants and property owners; how to utilize federal funds to best protect tenants and homeless community members.

2. Promote and expand various forms of **community ownership of land and property**.

3. **Infrastructure programs should invest heavily in anti-displacement practices** lead by community groups on the ground. Similarly, agencies wielding large infrastructure dollars should utilize the “power of the purse” to encourage local municipalities to enact anti-displacement laws.

4. **Invest in social housing**, similar to models in Europe.
Keeping Communities Together Before & After Disaster

Post-Disaster

1. **Make Illegal Speculative Land Deals Post-Disaster.** Avoid the “disaster capitalism” consequences seen post-Katrina and Sandy

2. **During post-disaster redevelopment, require a net gain (relative to pre-disaster numbers) of affordable housing.** Facilitate the return of tenants and homeless members of the community.