



Detroit's Crisis

Despite Detroit's image of being under-populated with large amounts of vacant land and abandoned homes and buildings, rapid growth and revitalization has been spurred by an in-flux of people with higher incomes. This growth has resulted in a shortage of multi-unit apartment housing causing increased rental rates though the conversion of low income housing into market rate housing.

The conversion, or potential conversion, of apartment buildings serving low income senior citizens in Detroit into market-rate housing has created a human service crisis for seniors living in the Downtown and Midtown areas of Detroit. As is the case with most urban areas, Detroit has a high concentration of subsidized low income senior housing. There is insufficient support at the local, state, or federal level to support the financing of new housing for low income seniors in Detroit who may be displaced and will be compelled to relocate. There is a shortage of low income senior housing in Detroit and seniors incur waiting lists as the population of seniors steadily increases. Over 2,000 seniors in over a dozen apartment buildings are at risk of being displaced from their homes and communities over the next decade.

National Challenges, National Efforts

What is happening in Detroit, Michigan with subsidized low income senior housing is also of concern nationally to policy makers and practitioners. Federally subsidized housing programs specifically designed for seniors with low incomes began in 1959 with the Section 202 program (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2013). The Section 8 rental assistance program, with 15 to 40 year project-based Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contracts followed in 1974 and was responsible for the construction of most of the privately owned, subsidized housing presently available for low-income seniors in the United States.

The elimination of this program has led to a decline in the housing built specifically for seniors from 40% of the units in low income housing with project-based rent subsidies to 13% (Kochera, Redfoot & Citro, 2001). It is projected that within 10 years, all of the original project-based Section 8 HAP contracts will have expired and communities will need to have a plan in place for the well being of seniors who reside in these units. In Detroit alone, over 2,000 seniors are estimated to be at risk of being displaced.

SHP-D looks forward to working with you to create One Detroit for All.



For policy briefs and more information, please contact:

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One Detroit For All

SHP-DETROIT is a coalition of organizations and individuals who are dedicated to the preservation of subsidized low income senior housing in Detroit.

Known for advocacy, the members of **SHP-DETROIT** have come together to increase awareness of the displacement of Detroit Seniors and to communicate the need for action to protect their rights and well-being.

Member Agencies:

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| Authority Health | Luella Hannan Memorial Foundation |
| Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan | Neighborhood Service Organization |
| Community and Home Supports | Presbyterian Villages of Michigan |
| CSI Support & Development Services | St Aloysius Neighborhood Services |
| Detroit Area Agency on Aging | United Community Housing Coalition |
| Detroit Future City | Wayne State University School of Social Work |
| Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit | |
| Develop Detroit | |
| LISC Detroit | |

Subsidized low income senior housing is defined as housing for seniors or disabled individuals whose incomes are at or below \$14,250 (30% of the Area Median Income (AMI)).

The Coalition

The Senior Housing Preservation-Detroit

(SHP-D) was created to advocate on behalf of seniors to preserve existing low income apartments, to educate community leaders regarding the issues of displacement, and to promote the inclusion of low-income seniors in the vision for a greater Detroit. SHP-D supports inclusive development for all.

Our goals

Civic leaders—encourage elected and administrative officials, business leaders, community development professionals, developers, funders, foundations, senior housing providers, senior agencies, public health agencies, and academic scholars, among others, to engage around a vision for inclusionary housing and inclusionary zoning to ensure that seniors remain part of the emerging diversity of Detroit.

Senior Housing Preservation - Recognizing the many contributions older adults have made and continue to make to the community of Detroit, SHP-D is focused on protecting the well-being of older adults residing in Downtown and Midtown Detroit, by focusing its efforts on three major fronts:

1. Exploring ways to preserve existing low-income housing* and create new and additional low-income housing opportunities.

* Low income housing residents « annual average medium income averages about \$15,000 or less per year, as compared to “affordable housing” which generally refers to annual incomes averaging around \$30,000-\$40,000.

2. Exploring ways to reduce trauma and support those who are compelled to relocate through research, assessment and advocacy.

3. Preserving the intergenerational diversity of Midtown and Downtown Detroit in particular.



Strategies needed:

1. Preservation of existing residential structures, or existing HUD vouchers, is the most viable tactic for ensuring the stability of the existing senior residential population in the Downtown and Midtown area.
2. Ensure that older adult involuntary movers will receive needed services and to make the involuntary moving process as successful and low-risk as possible, the coalition has identified two policy needs:
 - Increase awareness and assess the needs of older adults and other vulnerable populations in the moving process, and the link between housing health and well being: physical health, mental health, emotional, financial, and logistical needs (literacy, transportation, housing location); and the cultivation of family/ friend community support network.
 - Policy officials need to require owners of buildings where seniors and other vulnerable populations have been forced to relocate to subsidize relocation costs* for the tenant’s voluntary mental health clinical services, and ensure that inter-agency service coordination is available to older adults to help with monitoring the status of the individual for at least one year following relocation.

* Relocations costs should include the following: application fees, fees for birth certificates, ID’s, police re-ports, bus tickets for housing search, laundry, furniture replacement (beds/sofa), packing assistance, packing supplies, moving services (move and pack), security deposit, un-packing at new location, utility re-connect fees, and other fees associated with moving. Estimated cost can vary greatly depending on size of unit, quantity of items, and health of tenant. The list of items noted above is not exhaustive.

Assessing the Needs and Contributions of Older Adults

Older adults facing relocation should be assessed. SHP-D has developed an assessment tool to evaluate the following domains:

1. **Assessing The Older Adult’s Contribution to Community** What are ways the older adult participates in their community? Do they provide caregiving for a immediate family member or friend or neighbor. Are they involved in intergenerational programs? Do they work and or volunteer in their community? What other cultural/ social/ political/ educational assets do they contribute?
2. **Assessing The Older Adult’s Physical Health Needs** What is the health status of the older adult (including mobility)? How might their health change **because of** relocation? Are there recent physical changes? Will they need relocation assistance due to their health needs?
3. **Assessing The Older Adult’s Mental Health Needs** What are the cognitive needs of the older adult? How will relocation affect their cognitive functioning? Is the older adult comprehending the information provided about moving, housing options, etc? Will they need relocation assistance due to their mental health needs?
4. **Assessing The Older Adult’s Emotional Needs** What are the emotional needs of the older adult? Is there fear of change or fear of the unknown? Is there anxiety about the details of moving? How attached is the older adult to their current place of residence? **Will separation from their current residence contribute to, for example, grief/loss, loneliness, and isolation from support systems, powerlessness?**
5. **Assessing The Older Adult’s Financial Needs** How does the older adult’s financial situation change with relocation? What are comparable rentals? Where are housing vouchers accepted? What are the restrictions based on income and/or assets?
6. **Assessing The Older Adult’s Logistical Needs** What are the logistical needs of the older adult? What is their literacy level? Do they need help to fill out forms, and/or obtain documents needed for new residence? Is assistance needed to identify housing options? Do older adults need to be driven to potential residences? Will the older adult need help with packing and/or moving?

7. Assessing The Older Adult’s Network

Who is in the older adult’s network (partners, family members, friends, **place of worship**, others)? How will they support the older adult (emotionally, financially, logistically)? Are relationships sufficient to support the older adult through the transition, or will additional support be needed? How socially isolated is the older adult? Will the move increase or decrease social isolation?

8. Assessing The Older Adult’s Spiritual Needs

What are the spiritual needs of the older adult? Will there be a place of worship close to the new location? If active in current place of worship, are there barriers to continued participation, such as transportation? How will the older adult’s involvement with their place of worship change due to relocation?

9. Assessing The Older Adult’s Access to Community Resources

What resources does the older adult have access to in their current location (shopping, banking, entertainment, parks, medical professionals, senior centers, transportation resources)? How will access to these resources change in the older adult’s new location?

So What Are We Asking You to Do?

Join us!!! Participate in our discussion and mission to create viable policies to keep Detroit inclusive of low-income seniors. We believe a great city is a diverse and inclusive city that meets the needs of all of its citizenry.

- Take action to protect our seniors by providing safe and inclusive development through inclusionary zoning and housing by preserving or increasing low income housing units.
- When relocation is proposed, require that developers adopt a plan to minimize the trauma and negative effects of relocation on seniors by providing relocation resources.