

Evaluating the N/NE Preference Policy

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Purpose of the study

To understand:

- Who sought housing through the Preference Policy and their motivations for applying.
- How the Preference Policy has impacted residents' well being.
- Residents' recommendations to improve community well being.

“The neighborhood has changed, and there is a need to make sure that families can do more than exist”

N/NE Neighborhood Housing Strategy
Oversight Committee, 2017 Annual
report



HOW DID WE STUDY THE POLICY?

Approach: Longitudinal mixed methods

Phase	Surveys	Interviews	Focus Groups
Phase 1 (2019): Residents of 3 buildings	98	28	3 (with total of 28 resident participants)
Phase 2 (2020-2022): Residents of 7 buildings	157	39	4 (with total of 19 resident participants)

MAJOR STUDY FINDINGS

Finding 1

The Preference Policy is serving the intended population...

Finding 2

Place matters to residents housed through the Preference Policy...

Finding 3

Most residents are experiencing improvements in some aspects of well-being...

Finding 4

Many residents also experience threats to their well-being...

Phase 1: Preliminary understanding

Phase 2: Deepened insights

... yet it is differentially serving residents based on their distinct needs.

... and there is a particular value to living in a historically Black neighborhood.

... in addition to the value of living in a Black community, many are achieving economic stability and benefiting from residing in a high-opportunity neighborhood.

... particularly as a result of building environment challenges, neighborhood environment challenges, and affordability concerns.

FINDING 1:
THE PREFERENCE
POLICY IS
SERVING THE
INTENDED
POPULATION...

Survey demographics:

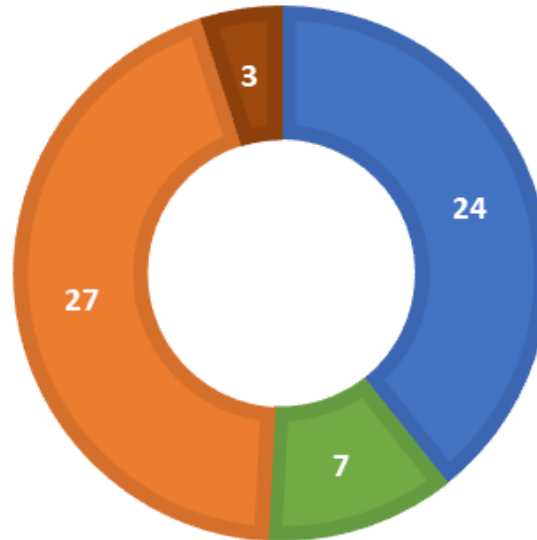
- **Connection to neighborhood**
 - average number of years in neighborhood: 39
 - 74% had lived more than half their life in the neighborhood.
- **Race/ethnicity**
 - 71% identified as Black or African American
 - 13% identified as Latine, Native American, or multiracial
 - 13% identified as white
- **Ages and parenting status**
 - Ages ranged from 20-5
 - 38% currently raising children
 - 34% were adults over 55
 - 43% live alone

FINDING 1:

**THE PREFERENCE
POLICY IS
SERVING THE
INTENDED
POPULATION...**

**YET IT IS
DIFFERENTIALLY
SERVING
RESIDENTS, BASED
ON THEIR
DISTINCT NEEDS.**

TYOLOGY OF RESIDENT EXPERIENCE



What do we know about the “Stable” Category?

- Expressed positive well-being in their building and neighborhood
- Middle-to-older age
- Longstanding ties to the neighborhood
- 1/3 are parents
- Some were previously homeless

“It's nice to be in my own home and have my things, even though they're not the greatest, but they're my things and feel safe about it. It's a huge weight off my shoulders.”

What do we know about the “Stepping Stone” Category?

- Expressed mixed ~~well~~ ^{willing} in their building and neighborhood
- Saw housing as temporary and in service to longer-term goals
- Young -middle age
- Almost all were parents

“Well, in here, you at least get some time to go raise money, save some money and be able to upgrade. And hopefully, if you're doing things correctly, working and everything like that, you'll be able to level up and go get you something.”

What do we know about the “Unsatisfied” Category?

- Expressed mixed ~~well~~ being in their building and neighborhood
- Disappointed in housing situation
- People of all ages
- Over $\frac{1}{3}$ desire to move
- More than $\frac{1}{2}$ of older adults interviewed are in this category
- $\sim\frac{1}{3}$ of parents are in this category

“I’m 67 years old, and I sit around here nervous because I don’t know when they’re going to tell me I’m doing something wrong...”

“It’s been frustrating...I was so excited to come here. And now I’m like, ‘Oh, I can’t wait to leave.’”

What do we know about the “Insecure” Category?

- Primary concern is economic vulnerability/precarity
- Unsure if they will be able to maintain their housing
- Two of the three residents in this category were previously homeless

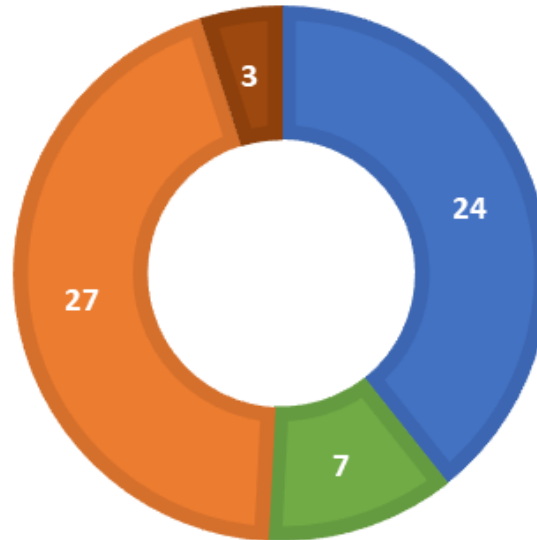
“...I'm going to be homeless again basically. Back on the streets, doing men's shelters, all that kind of crap. I'm 62 years old and with my medical issues, it's going to be the end of me.”

FINDING 1:

**THE PREFERENCE
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TYOLOGY OF RESIDENT EXPERIENCE



FINDING 2:

Place matters to residents housed through the Preference Policy...

Residents have very high place attachment:

- 80% reported that their connection to the neighborhood was motivation for applying
- 87% agree “the history of this neighborhood matters to me”
- 83% agree” “where I live is important to my sense of who I am”

“You just always feel comfortable where you are from. When you go to a place where you're not, you feel foreign. You feel like you're not... it's not home.”

FINDING 2:

Place matters to residents housed through the Preference Policy...

... and there is a particular value to living in a historically Black neighborhood.

Benefits to living in a Black community:

- Culturally affirming schools
- Proximity to Black civic, spiritual, and cultural organizations and events
- Comfort and buffer in the midst of ongoing racism

“...I actually feel more safe being in this neighborhood being that I see more Black people just walking on the streets than I would see in Southwest Portland. So, I actually feel more comfortable in this neighborhood when it comes to dealing with racism because I feel more protected seeing more people that look like me.”

FINDING 3:

**MOST RESIDENTS
ARE
EXPERIENCING
IMPROVEMENTS
IN SOME ASPECTS
OF WELL-BEING**

Benefits of achieving economic stability:

- ~1/2 increased economic wellbeing
- Housing affordability
- Decreased financial stress
- Ability to save
- Access to some affordable amenities

Living in a high-opportunity neighborhood

- Convenience/Transit access
- Access to parks
- Access to stores/amenities

CONTRIBUTORS TO RESIDENT WELL BEING

Intersecting benefits:

“It lets me have an affordable place to live and it's close to all the things that I need to do. It's easy for my caregiver to get here and to help me with the stuff I need to get done. And, like I said, my church isn't that far away from here and the doctor's office is right down the street.”



FINDING 4:

MANY RESIDENTS STILL EXPERIENCE THREATS TO WELL-BEING

Building environment challenges

- Building safety risks
 - violent/unsafe behavior by resident
 - nonresident access to buildings
 - theft/vandalism
- Social tensions and lack of community
 - Only 46% feel that people in their building support one another
- Non-responsive staff

“I have never lived somewhere where I felt this vulnerable.”

“But I just feel trapped here. I don't feel there's any safety.”

FINDING 4:

MANY RESIDENTS STILL EXPERIENCE THREATS TO WELL-BEING

Neighborhood environment challenges

- Neighborhood safety risks
 - only 38% feel safe walking at night
- Experiences of racism
 - 61% agree there's 'alot' of prejudice in neighborhood
 - 39% experience racism in neighborhood

“There is no signs on the door saying you're not allowed, but it doesn't have to be a sign on the door, feel it.”

- Affordability concerns
 - Housing affordability concerns
 - Lack of affordable amenities
 - Financially stretched

RISKS TO RESIDENT WELL BEING



Intersecting risks:

“Take care of home first, then you can go out and do what you're supposed to do to take care of your people. But if you cannot feel safe and take care of yourself at home, which means you need to get efficient rest, low stress, you need to feel safe. None of those three things that I mentioned are happening here.”

MAKING SENSE OF THE FINDINGS

- The N/NE Preference Policy is, in many ways, serving the intended population- however, resident outcomes are mixed.
- A key benefit of the N/NE Preference Policy is enabling residents to access affordable housing in a historically Black neighborhood. Many residents are achieving economic stability and accessing the benefits of living in a high-opportunity neighborhood.
- Many residents are also experiencing significant risks to well-being as a result of challenges in their building environment, the neighborhood environment, or both.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Within Buildings	Within Neighborhood
Regenerate sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase community engagement opportunities for residents within Preference Policy buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase engagement opportunities for residents within N/NE neighborhoods.• Reduce racial bias within businesses and in the community.
Improve safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve building maintenance, security, and staffing levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address unmet housing and community safety needs.
Increase economic stability and opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt policies and practices to support economic well-being within Preference Policy buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase affordability and economic opportunities throughout N/NE.
Enhance accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve communication between building management and residents.• Improve communication between building residents and N/NE Oversight Committee.	

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the residents who participated in the study, and to the housing partners for their collaboration.

Support for this research was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Policies for Action program. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

