

2012

NIMBY Effects on Low-Income Housing Policy: A Case of Two Cities

Russell Brown

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Brown, R. (2012). NIMBY Effects on Low-Income Housing Policy: A Case of Two Cities (Master's thesis, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/355>

This Immediate Access is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact phillips@duq.edu.

NIMBY EFFECTS ON LOW-INCOME HOUSING POLICY:
A CASE OF TWO CITIES

A Thesis

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

By

Russell Brown

May 2012

Copyright by
Russell Brown

2012

NIMBY EFFECTS ON LOW-INCOME HOUSING POLICY:
A CASE OF TWO CITIES

By

Russell Brown

Approved: March 28, 2012

Matthew Schneirov, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology
(Committee Chair)

G. Evan Stoddard, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, McAnulty College and
Graduate School of Liberal Arts
(Committee Member)

James Swindal, Ph.D.
Acting Dean, McAnulty Graduate School
of Liberal Arts

Joseph Yenerall, Ph.D.
Director, Graduate Center for Social and
Public Policy

ABSTRACT

NIMBY EFFECTS ON LOW-INCOME HOUSING POLICY: A CASE OF TWO CITIES

By

Russell Brown

May 2012

Thesis supervised by Dr. Matthew Schneirov and Dr. Evan Stoddard

I researched the strategies that city officials and housing developers used to address NIMBY concerns about low-income housing developments. I conducted interview research with planning commission members, their staffs, and housing developers from two cities. I wanted to understand what strategies the interviewees employed to address NIMBY concerns, if best practices were used during the planning process, how well those practices were followed, how effective the approaches used were in a real-world setting, and inquire about alternative methods. The findings indicated that population density and median income were the relevant factors regarding NIMBY-related issues. Also, traffic concerns, classism, and ageism were also found to be prevalent NIMBY concerns. The strategies used included the engagement of residents early in the planning process, studies being conducted to identify credible issues, and the

use of the judicial system. The methods outlined were the best practices used, and were effective in addressing NIMBY concerns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to both Dr. Schneirov and Dr. Stoddard for the time they spent in helping me to craft this thesis. Their dedication and hard work is not lost on me, and I am deeply in their debt for their commitment. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Joseph Yenerall for the role he played in helping me to find such an interesting topic as I have in this idea of NIMBY.

I would also like to extend my humble gratitude to the sponsors of the Michael P. Weber Research Grant and the descendants of Michael Weber. This grant made the research process much smoother, and the monetary aid given was pertinent to a struggling graduate student. It helped me with the traveling I did and research tools necessary. To his descendants, Michael Weber's commitment in life to urban issues is a valued one, and your generous grant honoring his passion is a wonderful way to introduce that passion to other students. Again, I give my sincerest regards.

I would also like to thank the many people who allowed me to interview them for the purposes of this research. I hope it is not lost on you, the contribution that you have made to studies of urban policy. I am sure that the knowledge and experiences you have passed on to me through this process will have a valuable impact on future researchers who study this topic.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, and many friends, for helping me in the many ways that you have over these last couple years of this Master's program. The various words of encouragement and continued support throughout my life have shaped me into the person I am today. Thank you all for your support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgment.....	vi
Introduction.....	ix
Definition of Terms.....	1
Literature Review.....	1
Understanding the NIMBY Problem.....	1
Theoretical and Psychological Perspectives of NIMBYism.....	8
Affordable Housing Initiatives and Their Impact.....	12
Methods Planning Commissions/Developers Can Use.....	16
Research Questions.....	27
Methodology.....	28
Coding.....	30
Limitations.....	31
Findings.....	33
City A Commission/Staff Findings.....	33
City B Commission/Staff Findings.....	43
Housing Developer Findings.....	44
Discussion.....	48
Analysis of City A.....	48
Analysis of City B/Housing Developer.....	52
Comparison/Contrasts Between Cities A and B.....	54

Comparison of Findings to Review of Literature.....	55
Policy Recommendation.....	58
Conclusion.....	59
References.....	62
Appendices.....	67

INTRODUCTION

Research Overview: For my thesis, I am studying the concept of NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) concerns in low-income housing developments. I am looking, specifically, at what planning commissions, their staffs, and housing developers in select cities have to say about NIMBY and its effect on passing proposals for low-income housing developments. In addition, I am also looking at what strategies these planning commissions and housing developers have used to address NIMBY concerns in their communities. What have they done that has been both successful and unsuccessful? What other insight about the NIMBY problem can these experienced professionals give about their experiences?

My research will consist of interviews with planning commission members, their staffs, and housing developers. The answers that these professionals give me will be categorized and summarized. However, the benefit of conducting the research through the use of interviews is that it will allow me to create a dialogue with these individuals in hopes of understanding, more thoroughly, the various aspects of the NIMBY problem. In addition, learning how these individuals address these concerns to the degree that the development proposals are approved by the city councils can be helpful to other planning commissions and developers who may have trouble with citizen complaints. There are strategies that exist, some of which will be discussed in the literature review, and there may be some of these that have been implemented.

I have some general research questions related to how planning commission staffs and housing developers address NIMBY concerns and how they succeed in placing

developments. First, what strategies are employed by the commission staffs and developers to counter NIMBY actions? Second, are the best practices used, as they are described by the literature? Third, to what extent do the actual practices conform to or depart from these practices? Fourth, what differences are there? Lastly, in hindsight, are there other approaches that the planning staff members of these two cities would have utilized given the opportunity now?

Why This Study? This topic really fascinated me due to an experience I had while on an internship. There was a residential development that was moving through the final stages of approval by the city council in a city in Pennsylvania. The plan was complete and needed only the approval of city council. The residents had complained of a threat of increased traffic, and, to alleviate this fear, two separate traffic studies were conducted and found that the increase would not be significant. Despite this, the council voted down the plan anyway.

The way that this policy question played out intrigued me quite a bit. It seemed that there might be ulterior motives behind why the residents did not want the development there, as no other reasons were given other than traffic concerns. It was clear that the residents were a major contributing factor to the council's decision to vote the plan down. If the city council had approved it, was there a possibility it would hurt them when the time came for reelection? What were the real motives behind the residents' fervor in keeping the status quo? These questions brought me to the big question that I want to look at, which is how many housing policy decisions are influenced by local residents or constituencies.

Topic Relevance: This topic is important because recognizing how NIMBY concerns are addressed is a very special part about the way our government is run. In one sense, due to the fact that we live in a democracy, people have every right to have a say in what goes on, whether it be at the local, state, or national level. Especially within a community, these decisions affect a person's daily life in a much more direct way than what goes on at the national level, or even the state level. On the other hand, a balance needs to be struck between listening to the legitimate concerns within a community, and allowing them to become too powerful and forcing cities into troubling situations in which they cannot grow and develop.

This topic is relevant because cities all around the country are dealing with these concerns with everything the governments do. This is especially true of low-income housing. With the advent of low-income housing developments, a resident has a legitimate concern about decreasing property values, or the rise of crime within their community. However, residential developments are imperative to city growth, as there are just too many individuals who are unable to meet their needs. The study will shed some light on the practices that go on within a city planning commission and with a housing developer. Hopefully, I will be able to find some feasible solutions to problems that many cities are facing.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

NIMBY is an acronym for “Not-In-My-Back-Yard.” NIMBY is further defined as “opposition by residents and public officials alike to additional or different kinds of housing units in their neighborhoods and communities” (Meck, Retzlaff, and Schwab 2003:26).

Affordable housing will be defined here as those housing developments occupied by low-to-moderate income individuals, and includes public housing, rental units, Section 8, and other voucher-based programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What follows is a review of the relevant literature concerning the NIMBY phenomenon. First, I will further define what NIMBY is and how much these communal fears transfer into reality. Secondly, I will view the theoretical and psychological underpinnings of the NIMBY problem, including the city theories that are pertinent to understanding it, and the psychology of why people adhere to NIMBYism. Following this, I will go over a brief synopsis of how housing initiatives in the United States have added to the NIMBY problem. Lastly, I will describe the methods that both planning commissions and housing developers have utilized to temper NIMBY concerns.

Understanding What the NIMBY Problem Is and How Valid These Concerns Are for Communities

This section will define the NIMBY phenomenon and describe its varying

components. I will also use this section to describe how each of the researchers referenced here has found how these components of NIMBY have translated into legitimate fears. This will be done intermittently throughout, as well as at the end of, this section.

NIMBY is, at its core, a problem of citizen opposition to affordable housing. According to Tim Iglesias (2002), this kind of opposition “has deep roots in fear, racism, classism, ablism, and growing antidevelopment reactions” (Iglesias 2002). Theodore Koebel and Robert E. Lang (2004) define NIMBY sentiments as “anti-government sentiment; anti-poor sentiment; racial prejudice and segregation; and, fear of adverse impacts” (Koebel and Lang 2004). Sentiments against the creation of affordable housing, in relation to its negative effects on a community, “may be a smokescreen for deeper conflicts over a just society and the role of government” (Koebel and Lang 2004). The problem can be framed as a “classic collective action problem” (Iglesias 2002:81). NIMBY makes its difficulties felt most by “[translating] NIMBY sentiment into codes and ordinances that effectively burden development and constitute barriers to affordable housing...[t]hrough such regulations, the NIMBY syndrome has been institutionalized at the local level” (Kean and Ashley 1991:35).

As mentioned above, Stuart Meck, Rebecca Retzlaff, and James Schwab (2003) defined NIMBY as “opposition by residents and public officials alike to additional or different kinds of housing units in their neighborhoods and communities” (Meck et al. 2003:26). Meck and his team of researchers specifically cite Pendall’s 1999 study for its conclusions. In addition to those conclusions, however, this study also makes note that “the transition of NIMBY sentiment into codes and ordinances...effectively burdens

development and barriers to affordable housing” (Meck et al. 2003:26). They add that “[t]he results are excessive growth controls, exclusionary zone ordinances, unnecessarily drawn-out permit and approval processes, and arbitrary restrictions against special types of housing units that combine to make housing less affordable for many households” (Meck et al 2003:26).

A commission formulated by HUD and detailed in the Thomas Kean and Thomas Ashley article found that “the heart of NIMBY lies in fear of change in either the physical environment or population composition of the community” (Kean and Ashley 1991:39). Though “uphold[ing] property values, preserving community characteristics, maintaining service levels, and reducing fiscal impacts” (Kean and Ashley 1991:39) are often cited as the reasons for NIMBY concerns, at times “these expressed concerns are also used as socially acceptable excuses for ethnic and racial prejudices” (Kean and Ashley 1991:39).

Mark Obrinsky and Debra Stein (2007) classify NIMBY resistance into two categories: actions in opposition to specific projects or proposals, and actions against a whole class of housing (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:5). These researchers then detail the primary NIMBY concerns and their legitimacy. First, “[o]pponents of multifamily housing often claim that apartment residents impose higher expenditures for local government services” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:6). This complaint is usually correlated with worry over crowded schools. The researchers generally find this argument invalid, as Obrinsky and Stein (2007) reveal the following:

On average, 100 single-family owner-occupied houses include 51 school-age children. By contrast, apartments are attractive to single people, couples without children, and empty nesters, which is why 100 apartment units average just 31 children. The disparity is even greater when considering only new construction: 64 children per 100 new single-family

houses vs. 29 children per 100 new apartment units. Wealthier apartment dwellers have even fewer children (12 children per 100 households for residents earning more than 120 percent of the area median income, AMI), while less wealthy residents earning less than 80 percent of AMI still have fewer children (37 per household) than single-family homes.

As for more fiscal concerns, the residents “often ignore how much revenue apartments bring into the local government...[as] apartment owners often pay more in property taxes than owners of single-family housing” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:7). In general, Obrinsky and Stein’s (2007) data displays that residential fear about over-crowded schools is unwarranted.

Secondly, Obrinsky and Stein's (2007) article views traffic concerns as a component of NIMBY. This common NIMBY complaint displays that residents think that traffic will increase from having a large number of people in an apartment complex. The data that the researchers found suggested otherwise, as “apartment residents own fewer cars than single-family homeowners...[and] single-family housing generates more automobile trips per household...18 percent more trips during the week, 31 percent more trips on Saturday, and 41 percent more trips on Sunday” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:9). In all, traffic concerns also seemed like an unwarranted fear for residents.

The third issue often cited in NIMBY-related concerns, according to Obrinsky and Stein (2007), is that of falling property values. Their article details that “most research [found that]...in general, neither multifamily rental housing, nor low-income housing, causes neighboring property values to decline” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:10). Obrinsky and Stein's (2007) research suggested the following:

In sum, assisted housing of various types: (i) had positive or insignificant effects on residential property values nearby in higher-value, less vulnerable neighborhoods, unless it exceeded thresholds of spatial concentration or facility scale; (ii) evinced more modest prospects for

positive property value impacts in lower-value, more vulnerable neighborhoods, and strength of frequently negative impacts was directly related to the concentration of sites and scale of the facilities.

Again, the concerns of average resident may be unfounded.

The final NIMBY concern that Obrinsky and Stein (2007) describe is that of increased crime in a neighborhood and less social interaction. They admit that there were few studies that had been conducted referencing links to crime and rental housing, though “studies of Irving, Texas[,] and Anchorage, Alaska, found no connection between crime and housing density” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:13). As for social interaction, the study again found that “apartment residents are almost twice as likely to socialize with their neighbors...[and] just as likely as house owners to be involved in structured social groups” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:13). Obrinsky and Stein admit that “opposition to apartments may be more emotional than analytical” (Obrinsky/Stein 2007:14).

Rolf Pendall (1999) found some similar types of NIMBY sentiments to Obrinsky and Stein (2007). He found that “racial or class antagonism, ideological commitment to home ownership, desire to protect neighborhood ambience, and fear of decreased home value” (Pendall 1999:115) are all possible reasons associated with the dissent among local residents of a housing development's conception and placement. Pendall's (1999) study was focused in the San Francisco Bay Area, and his method of gathering data included the use of experts in the field, “including for-profit and nonprofit builders, planning and community development directors, housing policy makers from state and federal government, attorneys, planning and civil engineering consultants, academics, and local elected and appointed officials” (Pendall 1999:117). The researchers then utilized the “planning director of each jurisdiction to select six residential projects that

had proceeded through final discretionary approval in the late 1980s” (Pendall 1999:117), totaling 182 projects in the study. The findings of the study yielded that the development controversies could be divided between NIMBY protests (those about adjacent-use complaints) and antigrowth protests, with a percentage falling in between, namely about infrastructure or traffic concerns (Pendall 1999:121). Thus, Pendall classified antigrowth protests, infrastructure and traffic concerns as separate from NIMBY concerns.

The conclusions of Pendall’s (1999) study went as follows. First, “affordable housing projects with streamlined approval processes generated less controversy than the average project” (Pendall 1999:132). This sentiment would go against what many researchers would hypothesize. Secondly, “projects requiring a larger number of permits or public approvals tended to generate more controversy than projects facing less burdensome approval processes, even holding constant their size and density” (Pendall 1999:132). Lastly, there were instances of “controversy correlate[ing] with the public forum of the final decision” (Pendall 1999:132).

A *Time* magazine article by Hornblower, Sachs, and Willwerth (1988) also outlines the NIMBY phenomenon and adds to the definition of NIMBY. These authors use the example of a 1987 fire in a Gladwin Avenue foster home in Queens, New York. The fire was believed to be arson, and caused by 5 citizens who lived on that block (Hornblower, Sachs, and Willwerth 1988). The residents on the street protested this establishment, citing various reasons including “falling property values...[and] visiting relatives [who] might commit crimes” (Hornblower et al. 1988).

As far as the scope of the NIMBY problem is concerned, Hornblower, Sachs, and Willwerth (1988) say that these “problems are growing (in scope) because there are more

homeless, more AIDS victims, more drug addicts, more prisoners, more garbage, [and] more toxic waste” (Hornblower et al. 1988). Kean and Ashley (1991) also shared this sentiment, saying that NIMBY fears are “widespread, deeply ingrained, easily translatable into political actions, and intentionally exclusionary and growth inhibiting” (Kean and Ashley 1991:35).

Are the fears of falling property values, increased traffic, added strain on infrastructure, and the other concerns outlined above as constituting NIMBY concerns legitimate? Obrinsky and Stein (2007), as stated above, largely felt that these concerns were unwarranted. Kean and Ashley (1991) also found that these fears are mostly illegitimate. Individuals feel their property values are threatened with the advent of low-income housing, including “multi-family rental housing, attached single-family housing, manufactured housing, housing on small lots, or accessory apartments developed from unused space in single family homes” (Kean and Ashley 1991:39). However, this concern is proved moot, as “[t]hose who express concerns about property values are often unaware of evidence showing that expanding the mix of housing types in an area will not adversely affect property values” (Kean and Ashley 1991:40).

Community characteristics are also a common NIMBY concern for residents, as many citizens want many aspects of their community to remain static over time. As a result, “they fear the destruction of scenic vistas, open space, and the tranquil ambience of their hamlet resulting from the presence of more people, more traffic, or more commercial enterprise” (Kean and Ashley 1991:40). The maintenance of service levels is also a concern, as added stresses to water supply and traffic to previously adequate roads can make individuals very unresponsive to the addition to housing (Kean and Ashley

1991:40). Fiscal worries within a community are also very present; however, revenue was up in most local communities despite the limitations put on local governments on property taxation.

Preserving homogeneity, or keeping the racial makeup or average age, in a community may be one of the strongest concerns people have of the addition of more low-income housing developments. The individuals with these worries often cite falling property values or increased traffic as their reasons for dissent, but it is just that these residents are “unwilling to admit to prejudice against minority group members” (Kean and Ashley 1991:41). Despite these possible prejudices, NIMBY groups are still very successful at lobbying local governments, even leading to the production of “no-growth candidates...[and] no-growth platforms” (Kean and Ashley 1991:42).

Theoretical and Psychological Perspectives of NIMBYism

This section will look at the theories of city management and community. This will include theories of community ties and family. Also, this section will view how NIMBYism works psychologically. Understanding how our minds work to create this dislike of change will be essential to understanding the NIMBY problem with regard to our society.

Paul Lewis (2000) made claims to some theories of how cities tend to operate. These theories include fiscal maximizing theory, the trusteeship city theory, and pluralist theory (Lewis, 2000). A city that seeks to fiscally maximize itself will see “residential development...disfavored by local governments” (Lewis 2000:3). Instead, a city seeks to “improv[e] the position of the median voter or taxpayer (Peterson, 1981) [or] achiev[e] a

fiscally optimal population size (Tiebout, 1956)” (as cited in Lewis 2000:3). He finds this theory less useful due to the “limitations for explaining variations in city land-use emphases” (Lewis 2000:3). Lewis also believes that “there is little in the fiscal maximization perspective that allows for much variety in city behavior” (Lewis 2000:3).

The trusteeship city theory “emphasize[s] the entrepreneurship and leadership of local public officials in guiding local development policy” (Lewis 2000:4). This theory depicts metropolitan areas as presenting “local policymakers steering communities toward their vision of a community’s desirable future (Lewis 2000:4). Lewis frames this theory by stating that “[a] trusteeship orientation suggests [that city leadership should] not merely respond...to group demands, local needs, or a business elite, but position...a city to further its long-term viability as a political and economic community” (Lewis 2000:4). Lewis (2000) summarizes his understanding of the trusteeship theory by stating that public officials had “relative autonomy...in making development decisions to achieve their desired vision of the community future” (Lewis 2000:5).

Classic pluralism “suggests that city governments serve largely to mediate conflicts among local interest groups” (Lewis 2000:3), which would lead to the obvious conclusion that “city governments presumably thus reflect, in large part, demands articulated by local constituencies” (Lewis 2000:4). Pluralist theory does allow for “a considerable role for the leadership of elected representatives” (Lewis 2000:3). It stands to say then that if “government serves as a broker among competing interest groups, then business influences, socioeconomic needs, local demographic characteristics, and citizen concerns over [the] externalities of growth can all be expected to play a role in shaping local growth policies” (Lewis 2000:3). It would make sense, then, that city leaders would

not pursue strong economic development in cities where opposition, or NIMBY sentiments, are at their highest.

Herbert Inhaber (1998) also looked at the psychology behind NIMBY in his book. Understanding the psychology of NIMBY is more like understanding the psychology of risk. The temptation exists to conduct a poll to see what people think about any sort of community development. What will be found as a result of such a poll is that “NIMBY is alive and well-practically everywhere” (Inhaber 1998:90). Inhaber (1998) warns that “[r]esponses to a poll often do not correspond to actions because it costs little to nothing to give an answer [while actual] actions can be expensive” (Inhaber 1998:91). Looking at individuals’ actions via the lens of risk psychology, you have to divide people into two categories, people who are risk tolerant versus people who are averse to risk (Inhaber 1998:92).

With NIMBY, risk is very multi-faceted. As Inhaber (1998) says, “[t]here are [a number of] factors, including voluntariness and control, that go into [a person’s] risk equation, aspects that are non-numerical. When cities commission studies to calculate the concerns that culminate in NIMBY, (i.e. traffic problems, infrastructure constraints, falling property values, etc.) they often find that the researcher who made the calculations, or the risk analyst as Inhaber describes, does not compute all of their concerns. The risk analyst “is primarily concerned with numbers [while to] the public, risk equals the calculated numbers *plus* (or times) outrage, the sum of the other factors” (Inhaber 1998:95).

Inhaber (1998) also details what factors are included in his calculation of total outrage. These include volunteerism versus compulsion, diffusion of hazards in time and

space, risk versus benefit, memorability of hazards, dread of risks, loss of control over hazards, loss of community, distrust of experts, luxury versus necessity, and familiar versus the unfamiliar (Inhaber 1998). I will summarize some of Inhaber's factors in his "outrage" calculation here.

Volunteerism versus compulsion is, simply, an individual's want to have a choice in what is going on in their community. That choice extends to what developments are being planned near their home. Diffusion of hazards in time and space refers to the difference between a rare effect that harms many in a short time against a longitudinal effect that has a small impact consistently. Risk versus benefit simply refers to a "host community [knowing] *exactly* how much of a benefit they will derive from acceptance" (Inhaber 1998:97). Memorability of hazards refers to bad experiences with development that have happened in the past. Inhaber gives examples that include "Love Canal, Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, and Bhopal" (Inhaber 1998:97). Even though technology is better and the process through which developments has improved over the years, people remember any bad experiences that have happened previously, and thus these fears need to be alleviated.

Loss of control over hazards is similar to volunteerism, in that people have a need to feel in control over their situation. When developments are proposed, people feel like they are helpless due to their not being involved in the process. Loss of community can be equated to a loss or change of community identity, or a "potential loss of togetherness" (Inhaber 1998:103). Luxury versus necessity is the choice of external goods that are excessive in nature versus what one needs to survive. Familiar versus unfamiliar is what a person knows or has experienced before versus what they do not know or understand.

The outrage calculation that Inhaber (1998) concocts is a very good psychological look into the NIMBY syndrome. All of the factors he mentions in his outrage tabulation are related to fears that go into the psychology of NIMBY. These factors can be used in the formulation of methods to counter NIMBY more thoroughly.

Affordable Housing Initiatives in the United States and Their Impact on NIMBYism

The history of affordable housing policy in the United States has been one marred with failures over the last seventy-five years (Koebel and Lang 2004). Housing policy failures have contributed to issues with “tenants who vandalize property, who litter, who take almost no care of their units, and who are hostile to their neighbors” (Koebel and Lang 2004). Though it is a difficult concept to measure effectively, the NIMBY presence is usually related to “reduce[d] property values of adjacent and nearby properties” (Koebel and Lang 2004). This fact makes it important to understand how NIMBYism has been affected by affordable housing policy from a historical perspective.

Affordable housing in the United States has taken one of two possible routes. These routes are public housing and housing vouchers. Both of these measures have provoked NIMBY concerns.

To understand the problems with the public housing initiative, one needs to look no further than the Chicago area at the Cabrini-Green high rises. This complex “symbolized the failures of public housing” (Schaper 2010). The Chicago Housing Authority began to move people out of this complex, and at the end of 2010 all had been moved out. Most of these tenants were relocated to mixed-use, low-rise units around Chicago (Schaper 2010), very similar to the units that Koebel and Lang had referenced as

the stereotype people view. Schaper's article for National Public Radio detailed that "the lifestyle of [the] families that have been able to move out of Cabrini-Green and [the] other high rises is 100 percent better [thanks to the modern way these individuals live in newer housing]" (Schaper 2010), though the article also displayed that some people have been relocated to areas with crime and poverty rates just as high. The Cabrini-Green project is exactly the style of housing people think of when manufactured housing is brought up as a reform tool in public housing; even though that style is not built anymore because of its ineffectiveness.

In the past, manufactured housing was a cluttered, barracks-style housing type that grouped large numbers of low-income individuals together. Manufactured housing, however, is the most affordable low-income housing unit type in existence. Despite that, urban and suburban areas have left it off the list of viable solutions for reform due to "its stereotyped design features, [though today they are basically] indistinguishable from site-built housing" (Koebel and Lang 2004). The main source of NIMBY opposition to this style of affordable housing is a falsified idea of high costs, as this "'fiscal-impact' calculus has reached almost mythic proportions, despite rather weak empirical tests" (Koebel and Lang 2004). People believe that these units will have higher costs and lower returns, and the evidence Koebel and Lang (2004) found does not support that belief.

Though it has seen more successes than public housing, the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP), otherwise known as Section 8, has also contributed to NIMBY concerns expressed by residents in towns across the country. Despite its solid record, complaints have continued to rise about HCVP recipients and the program itself. There are numerous reasons for this. First of all, the program itself has expanded

tremendously. The researchers point out that “HCVP certificates and vouchers now represent one-third of the nation's assisted housing” (Jones, Holin, Pistilli, Turnham 3). This increased scope of the program also means that some areas of concentrated homes exist, as the number of people and the fact that “a large share of assisted households used their subsidies in the units in which they already lived” (Jones et al 4) have increased the concentrations of people living in certain areas.

A major problem that arises from this expansion of services relates directly to NIMBY concerns. More specifically, “the belief exists that...today’s HCVP families are proportionately much more likely to contain members with behavioral problems, as well as more likely to need significant supportive services” (Jones et al 4-5). Since these are largely perceptions, Jones and the researchers cannot confirm or deny whether these concerns hold any merit. However, since NIMBY sentiments tend to include worries about race and behavioral issues, these allegations have credence in academic circles.

A HUD study found a number of additional facts about the program. First, “[o]ne of the key dilemmas identified during the study was the tension of community concerns about concentrations of HCVP (Section 8) families and the fundamental premise of the program that permits families to choose where they live” (Jones et al 6). Secondly, the researchers found that “[a]larm about concentrations of HCVP families is often the manner in which a community’s concern [or NIMBYism] is first articulated[;] [h]owever[,] upon investigation the communities’ concerns were actually about a concentration (or perceived increase in) particular problems or behaviors such as crime and poor housing quality” (Jones et al 8). Also related to NIMBY concerns, residents of neighborhoods that are declining also have inherent fears of families on housing vouchers

moving in. These fears include “drop[s] in property values or decrease in home ownership rates, changes in the racial makeup of a neighborhood, or a downward trend in public school test scores often attributed to HCVP” (Jones et al 8).

The researchers appeared to put a good deal of emphasis on community perception. They offer some solutions for the conflicts in HCVP areas. These include taking NIMBY concerns seriously, looking at the real issues, getting community support for solutions, and broadening perspectives of the community by being more active in improving the image of the program (Jones et al 10-11).

Meck (2003) credits heavy increases in housing costs, which grew from 20-35% over the last several decades, to disproportionate regulation (Meck et al. 2003:27). This was especially true in the cities of “Boston, Los Angeles/Long Beach, and San Francisco/Oakland” (Meck et al. 2003:27). The NIMBY problem is also very widespread, and each community “expect[s] other communities to satisfy [the] need [for affordable housing]) (Meck at al. 2003:27). The overarching NIMBY problem with the residents is that “[w]hen many jurisdictions in a metropolitan area refuse to take responsibility for affordable housing...households seeking affordable housing may find themselves shut out of the entire metropolitan area...[so] everybody suffers” (Meck at al. 2003:27).

Methods Planning Commissions and Housing Developers Can Use to Limit NIMBY Effects

This last section of the literature review will focus on the measures that researchers and scholars have developed for both planning commissions and housing developers to begin combating NIMBYism. Since NIMBY problems have myriad

similarities across the globe, strategies have begun to be developed that are universally plausible for developers and planning commissions. It will be interesting to see if my current study will display if these methods were used to curb NIMBY sentiments.

John Forester's (1982) article looks at how city planners deal with local land-use conflicts. To begin, Forester (1982) says that there are certain responsibilities that planners can help developers and the local residents with, no matter what the differences are in process through which permits are acquired. He says that planners "must help both developers and neighborhood residents to navigate a potentially complex review process; clarity and predictability are valued goods...need to be concerned with timing...[and] typically need to deal with conflicts between project developers and...residents" (Forester 1982:435). Planners also have the by-laws of their city at their advantage, as most charters are written so that there is some leeway in the planning process. In that regard, if you are familiar with the process, "the complexity of the planning process creates more opportunities than headaches" (Forester 1982:436).

Forester (1982) also says that it is important for planners to separate the developers and the residents in the planning process. Through his interviews, Forester (1982) finds that "planners generally know what to expect from developers; the developers' interests are often clearer than the neighbors'" (Forester 1982:437). As a result, "developers may cultivate good relations with planning staff...while neighborhood groups do not...[as] meetings with neighborhood activists [are] more guarded and uncertain" (Forester 1982:437). Developers also have a "common professional language" (Forester 1982:437) with the planning staff, and developers are united in what they are trying to accomplish, while neighborhood residents' ideas and opinions are more

scattered.

Forester (1982) sees six methods for mediating such conflicts. The first strategy is acting as a regulator and understanding the rules of the decision-making process. This means “making professional judgments and then recommending to the planning board the conditions that should be attached to the permits” (Forester 1982:438).

The second strategy for planners is to “speak *for* neighborhood concerns..[and] anticipate the concerns of affected residents” (Forester 1982:438). This means the planner is “not only judicial, but explicitly political [in]...representing neighborhood interests” (Forester 1982:439).

A third strategy is to have the developers and residents meet. This strategy’s success will depend upon the planning commission’s ability to mediate, as some planners interviewed by Forester (1982) used this strategy while others avoided it.

The fourth strategy runs in contrast to the third one listed above, in that planners should advise both sides, or use “shuttle diplomacy” (Forester 1982:440). Meeting separately with the developers and with the residents will better allow the planners to moderate and acquire a compromise of ideas.

The fifth strategy moves along the same lines, only promotes an active planner in “present[ing] each side’s concerns to the other so that they can be understood and addressed” (Forester 1982:441). This role serves more of a mediating role with an advisory role advocated by the fourth strategy.

A sixth possible strategy is splitting the job into negotiating and mediating among

the planners. This path allows certain individuals to be sympathetic on both the planning and residential sides of a NIMBY argument. It keeps individuals from appearing they are politicking, or working for a goal other than compromise.

All of these strategies incorporate a “shift from adversarial to problem-solving” (Forester 1982:444) mentality in creating solutions. This allows a planning commission a chance at being more successful. Much depends upon the negotiating abilities of the planning commission and their ability to deal with problems rationally.

An article by the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California ((NPHANC), on the California state website, details some steps a local government can take to bypass the NIMBY problem. The first step is “[w]orking with local advocates, the development team meets early in the development process to research, assess and plan” (hcd.ca.gov). This step requires the analysis of aspects of the proposal and your organization, including “your organization’s reputation...its previous experience in dealing with local government...[and a] full analysis of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site” (hcd.ca.gov). It is important after these steps to “have a clear plan of action” (hcd.ca.gov).

The second step is to “prepare a political strategy which coordinates all your work towards getting the votes you need” (hcd.ca.gov). This includes becoming familiar with the important policy individuals who drive the process as well as the community’s “key leaders” (hcd.ca.gov). This also includes getting your supporters on board, educating the public, and documenting everything (hcd.ca.gov). Then, one needs to “prepare a strategy to build active community support for your proposal” (hcd.ca.gov). This is important to

do before challenging your opponents and contacting them about possible compromises. The article seems to put a lot of emphasis on organization and building supporters.

As a result of the previous step, it will be important to “prepare a strategy to work through concerns of community members and to deal with active opposition” (hcd.ca.gov). This is where the organization and planning really begin to show dividends, as it will be much more possible for one to use “alternative methods for community outreach (e.g. door-to-door canvassing, open-house forums, or small house meetings) instead of large[,] open community meetings” (hcd.ca.gov). Preparing responses to the concerns that are legitimate is a major part of this step.

The next step is preparing a strategy to “protect and use your legal rights” (hcd.ca.gov). Using lawyers to handle any “illegal discrimination or raise complex legal issues” (hcd.ca.gov) can be very helpful in dealing with opposition to your proposal. The final step is to “prepare a public relations/ media strategy to send your message to decision-makers and the public” (hcd.ca.gov). Again, this last step is useful in accentuating the positives of what your proposal is doing, and effectively defusing any opposition.

Peter Dreier’s (1991) study is useful in that it displays one case study of evolving practices involving city development. In Boston, the creation of linkage policies became a popular policy shift (Dreier, 1991). This shift was made possible largely by the changing societal forces found in the 1980’s (Dreier 1991:371). Linkage is a “development impact fee assessed on large commercial projects to fund affordable housing” (Dreier 1991:356). He provides a history of the mayoral administrations from

the late 1960's to the 1980's and the Flynn Administration. Dreier outlines the linkage policies that have been successful in the Boston area (Dreier 1991:371). Dreier points out that at the time the article was written, no constituency had opposed any of the development projects in the city (Dreier 1991:371).

Despite the successes with these policies in Boston, Dreier (1991) warns that linkage will not necessarily fit into cities that do not have “an expanding private economy” (Dreier 1991:372), but still promotes it by saying that “until the federal government recommits itself to assisting America’s cities and to housing low- and moderate- income citizens, housing linkage will remain an important example of progressive urban policy that is attainable within the existing space for urban reform” (Dreier 1991:372). It would be useful to explore what cities, if any, still adhere to this policy to fund low-income housing developments.

Emeritus professor Perry Norton, who was formerly an urban planning professor, also gave some ideas about how to limit NIMBYism, including “tax abatements for homeowners who live near an undesirable public facility, or...guarantee[s] on the resale value of their homes” (Hornblower et al. 1988). However, Hornblower (1988) also points out that many city governments do not actively “consult residents about new projects or do not respond to their complaints” (Hornblower et al. 1988). The authors here cite Richard Taub, a University of Chicago sociologist, as describing how a sense of community among residents can foster the NIMBY mentality. The article depicts him as saying, “[o]ften, communities that are the most cohesive are also hostile and fearful of outsiders” (Hornblower et al. 1988).

The 2003 “NIMBY Report” article looks at a number of cases involving NIMBY in North Carolina, Minnesota, and Connecticut. The first case revolves around a low-income housing developer in Charlotte, North Carolina, and a method it used to beat NIMBY tactics. St. Peter’s Homes, which is a non-profit housing developer, had tried for years to provide some permanent housing to a number of homeless individuals in Charlotte (NLIHC 2006). It was denied on two previous occasions due to the municipal zoning code and its refusal to allow single-room occupancy housing on the chosen sites. Despite a number of NIMBY protests, opponents who provided a great deal of misinformation, and open protests during the public meetings, they managed to get the needed funding approved through the city (NLIHC 2006).

In Connecticut, an organization that works with the disabled, known as First Step, was working to create a new living area for disabled tenants in a more suitable building and location (NLIHC 2006). Its request was denied by the zoning board. First Step challenged the City of New London, saying that the “action amounted to intentional discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) because of the disabilities of the agency’s clients, and that the City’s failure to approve the permit also amounted to failing to provide ‘reasonable accommodation’ to people with disabilities” (NLIHC 2006). After taking it to district court, the judge ruled that the City of New London was in violation of ADA because they were discriminating against those with disabilities and were not ‘accommodating’ those people. The case is known as *First Step, Inc. v. City of New London*.

In Minnesota, Plymouth Church Foundation was also fighting to put in housing for disabled homeless persons. In redeveloping an abandoned nursing home, the group

won over local officials, and passed the project in the City of Minneapolis (NLIHC 2006). Neighborhood opponents attempted to sue the city for violating the rights of neighbors to the facility, but the claims were dismissed (NLIHC 2006).

When talking to developers, the researchers found that they held two different beliefs about why they should not attempt to rectify the NIMBY problem. Some of these developers made the argument that “every time [we encounter the problem] is so unique that you can’t transfer any lessons to the next time” (Iglesias 2002:82), while others stated that the complaints are “always the same no matter what you do” (Iglesias 2002:82).

Both perceptions have some degree of merit. The researcher states to the first argument made by the developers that “[i]t is true that each development is unique[;] including because of the specific project proposed, the particular site and surrounding neighborhood, the current political climate, and the set of staff and decision makers” (Iglesias 2002:82). However, there is some degree of similarity for each new development, as “opponents’ issues and tactics are so repetitive as to be predictable. Generally, opponents will be concerned about who will be living in the housing, tenants’ behavior...negative effects on their property values, the appearance and density of the proposed structure, [and] standard land use issues (traffic and parking)” (Iglesias 2002:82).

Iglesias (2002) also makes mention of the tactics that the opponents of affordable housing are apt to use. They are likely to “distribut[e] flyers; [go] door to door and holding meetings to organize against the development; circulat[e] petitions to document

opposition; [demand] meetings with the developer; [tell] their story to the media; and [lobby] local government staff and officials through telephone calls, faxes, e-mails, and private meetings” (Iglesias 2002:82).

Another HUD article focuses on NIMBY concerns with regards to the creation of affordable housing to persons with disabilities. The article offers a six-step strategy for gaining community acceptance. The first step is planning. In this step, “it is important for an organization to do a self-assessment of its own capabilities, including its reputation for successful projects and its general reputation within the community and with the local government” (Combating NIMBYism). Even before finalizing plans, “it is important to involve potential allies” (Combating NIMBYism). The second step is figuring out which local officials will likely support, reject, or are undecided about the plan. This article makes the case that it “is important to make special efforts to reach the undecided” (Combating NIMBYism). Using the laws in place on affordable housing may be important in shoring up support from local government officials (Combating NIMBYism). The next step is gathering community support. The important aspect for “any public relations strategy related to housing development is to be able to respond to neighborhood concerns” (Combating NIMBYism).

The fourth step is actually addressing those concerns. The researchers argue against an open public forum, as opponents will likely just air criticisms of the project (Combating NIMBYism). Understanding reasons for opposition is also important to this step. As an example, “fears about crime are unlikely to be calmed by receiving copies of academic studies reporting low crime rates at affordable housing developments. Rather, fears about crime are better addressed by a meeting with a police officer who has

experience with another similar housing complex built and managed by the developer” (Combating NIMBYism). The fifth step is the development of a legal strategy.

Understanding the laws on both the federal and state levels is important for dealing with both local governments and the residents of a community. The final step is the development of a public relations strategy. Using the media is important here to gain support for what you’re trying to accomplish.

To summarize the steps, commissions and developers must plan for NIMBY. Next, planner’s need to gain support from officials, then attract support from the community. Then, planners must formally address the concerns raised, and then develop a legal strategy. Finally, use the media and develop public relations strategies.

Legal strategies also must be viewed in relation to combating NIMBYism. Hornblower’s (1988) article details a case in the Supreme Court that set a precedent for NIMBY-related complaints for homes for the mentally challenged. In it, the court ruled that “Cleburne Texas...could not require a special permit for a home...because of community opposition and ‘irrational prejudice’” (Hornblower et al. 1988). It also detailed how, in New Jersey, the Supreme Court ruled that “wealthy suburbs must share the burden of low-cost housing” (Hornblower et al. 1988).

Iglesias (2002) looks at successful regional tactics to confront local opposition in San Francisco. There, city officials used the Managing Local Opposition (MLO) approach. It was founded on the belief that “local opposition will never be ‘overcome’, so a more reasonable framing from the developer’s perspective is ‘managing’ local opposition” (Iglesias 2002:79). The MLO approach has developers attempting to “respect

the legitimate concerns of the local community and neighborhood...respect the rights of current and prospective residents whom it desires to serve; and advance the prospects of future affordable housing proposals in that community” (Iglesias 2002:79).

Koebel and Lang discuss methods that have successfully begun to create greater community acceptance of affordable housing measures, starting with developers and advocates approaches. The first is the ‘New Urbanism’ and ‘Livable Communities’ concepts. These concepts combine “mixed-use and mixed-income developments” (Koebel and Lang 2004). New Urbanist designs have “better integrated residents into a neighborhood and lowered community resistance to public housing” (Koebel and Lang 2004). Advocates have also been able to use “Yes In My Backyard...initiative [and]...political and community organizing as well as legal and public relations strategies” (Koebel and Lang 2004). “[T]he Gautreaux experience, the Moving to Opportunity Program and the HOPE VI program have stressed the importance of tenant selection and education in the promotion of mixed-use development” (Koebel and Lang 2004) in urban areas.

Communities have also developed strategies for combating NIMBY sentiments. One method communities have undertaken is the use of incentive programs; the “most prominent [of which] are known as ‘fair share’ and ‘inclusionary’” (Koebel and Lang 2004). Fair share programs were made to “distribute publicly assisted housing throughout a metropolitan area [but these programs have] been abandoned or substantially weakened recently” (Koebel and Lang 2004). Inclusionary programs “primarily require or encourage developers to include affordable housing in their developments” (Koebel and Lang 2004).

One of the premiere tenets of the Managing Local Opposition (MLO) approach mentioned above is the need to be proactive. Housing developers “can take advantage of the opportunity to manage local opposition by holding planning meetings early in the predevelopment process to assess potential opposition and to organize strategic responses” (Iglesias 2002:84). Iglesias also makes note of the five critical audiences in the planning process, “local government (including staff, decision makers, and the city attorney), supporters, concerned neighbors, the media, and the courts” (Iglesias 2002:83). Gaining support of these audiences is crucial to managing NIMBY concerns. A common mistake of developers is solely engaging the concerned neighbors’ audience. This usually happens “because the developer has failed to take the initiative to manage the local opposition and so is constantly on the defensive, reacting to the opponents’ latest attack” (Iglesias 2002:89).

There are seven concerns the MLO approach deals with. These concerns include “lack of information/misinformation; fear of negative impacts (e.g. property values, crime, or poor design); complaints about process (e.g. expressing a desire or explanation to participate); prejudice or bias toward prospective residents; conflicting interests regarding...land use concerns...value conflicts...and issues unrelated to the actual proposal” (Iglesias 2002:90-91).

Research Questions

This section will highlight the general research questions that I am viewing through my study. Given the nature of the qualitative data collected, my study does not easily conform to an experimental model. Instead, I sought to better understand the scope

of the NIMBY problem and the strategies that are employed to address it in certain communities. This structure is not conducive to a quantitative model, and thus I am producing a set of research questions as opposed to general hypotheses. The research questions are as follows:

- What strategies are actually employed by the planners and developers to address or counter NIMBY concerns or actions?
- Are “best practices” used as described in the review of literature?
- To what extent do the actual practices of the city’s planning staffs and housing developers conform to or depart from those found in the literature as described?
- Were these approaches effective in the opinion of the interviewees? Why or why not?
- In retrospect, would those individuals interviewed have used other methods different from what they had done?

Methodology

I conducted this study by launching two case studies of different cities in Pennsylvania. I am not revealing the names of these cities, as I want to protect the identities of those individuals that I interview. As a result, I hope to create a candid dialogue with these individuals. Since my literature review indicates that there may be some controversial elements, such as classism or racism, involved in the NIMBY problems that they have addressed in the past (Koebel and Lang 2004), I feel it is best to

leave their names, and cities and developers that they work for, out of the study.

I am examining how the planning commissions, their staffs, and the housing developers have handled NIMBY concerns through the use of interviews, in order to see how successful these entities were in addressing the concerns of the residents. Success will be defined as whether or not the development was placed, what the residents' concerns were, and whether the residents' concerns were addressed at the conclusion of the process. As a result, I will be requesting specific examples from the people that I interview about recent developments (a five to ten year period) that have been proposed. A list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix I and Appendix 2.

I gave consent and release forms to the individuals I interviewed. Thus, participants had the option of answering as many or as few of the questions as they wanted. As far as transcription of the interviews is concerned, I tape-recorded the interviews, and only transcribed the parts of the interviews pertinent to the study. By tape-recording the interviews, I was able to go back through the data more thoroughly. I created categories based on the information from my literature review, and categorized them for each interview that I did.

It is important to note that, although the questions (found in Appendices 1 and 2) were generally followed, it was the intent of the researcher to allow for these interviews to be as detailed and unstructured as possible so as to allow for a candid and informative discussion for the purposes of the study. The researcher allowed for the questions asked just to serve as template, or guide, for the interviewer. Therefore, once general information was collected about these individuals and their experiences, the questions

asked at various instances throughout the interview process varied depending on the answers given. This measure allowed for the commission members, their staffs, and the housing developers to be comfortable through this process. All of the information provided details the focal points of the questions asked and all relevant information.

The information I received told me a number of things. First, the interviews told me what strategies exist among these cities to curb NIMBY sentiments. Second, I got a clear idea of how successful the cities were in curbing NIMBY sentiments. Thirdly, I found out whether the Planning Commissions or the housing developers are more effective in influencing NIMBY, and which entity is more likely to take measures to keep NIMBY concerns from becoming an issue in the planning process.

I did not interview area residents who have the NIMBY concerns. For one reason, it would have been difficult to locate such individuals. Many of the developments that were discussed by the developers and commission staffs may have happened some years in the past. Second, I would have had to obtain the contact information from other means, as it is not difficult to locate planning commission members or housing developers in a phone book or online; however an individual who has perhaps led opposition to affordable housing developments would be more difficult to come into contact with them. Third, the information in my literature review was conclusive as to what types of concerns local residents have expressed, and these concerns were pretty similar across multiple metropolitan areas.

The case study method was chosen for this study because I wanted to gather a large amount of data on one specific area. A case study is a focused study on a variety of

aspects of one possible case. In this study, the case study method will determine the multifaceted approaches to NIMBY in a specific city. Case studies are limited because it may not be possible to generalize the results. To offset these limitations, I am conducting two separate case studies by looking at two different cities. In addition, I may find different NIMBY concerns may have been brought up and addressed within both cities' planning staffs, so there may also be more variety in the circumstances that each city has addressed.

Coding

The interviews are designed to access as much information as possible using candid and open-ended questions so as to allow the commission members, staff members, and housing developers a comfortable environment that they can speak freely in. To allow for this, all information will be coded accordingly. This section is to identify how I will code the results.

Neither of the cities studied will be identified. I will identify one city as 'City A', and the other as 'City B'. These designations will be done randomly. Each planning commission and commission staff member interviewed will be identified by the city letter to which they belong, and an individual number (i.e. a planning commission member from City A will be coded as 'CA 1', another member of the same city will be coded as 'CA 2'). This way, each individual interviewed will be able to be identified specifically.

Housing developers will be individually numbered and coded as well. The developers will not be identified through any city affiliation, as the developers work in multiple locations. The results obtained from the developers will be used to supplement

the information given by the planning commissions and their staffs. The first developer interviewed will be identified as HD 1; the second interviewed HD 2, and so on.

I am also going to leave out any information that can help identify where the cities are and who the individuals interviewed are that are given to me throughout the interview process. Thus, names of developers or adjacent town names or locations will be foregone and left out of this study, or will be referenced in more general terms. These measures are being taken so that confidentiality will not be broken and that the integrity of these interviews will be maintained.

Limitations

This study will be limited by a few factors. First of all, though my reasons are substantive for not including opposition leaders in the interview process, I will be looking at this topic from the planning staff and developers' point of view exclusively. It is possible that there are complaints that are not covered in the literature review. However, if this situation does occur, I can easily just add categories to my results to accommodate for any lack of information in my review of literature. Still, this study is limited by the fact that I am not interviewing individuals who have expressed NIMBY concerns. It would have been difficult to locate these individuals, as I would only have had word of mouth statements of who these individuals are from planning commission staffs and housing developers. Second, I feel the NIMBY concerns that may have appeared are represented within the review of the literature.

In addition to not having contact with NIMBY residents themselves, I will also not be able to interview every member of each city's planning commission member, staff

member, and area housing developer. The result of this limitation is the possibility of a skewed analysis.

Another factor that may be a limitation is that I am only looking at select cities, and only in Pennsylvania. I do not have the resources to get a more varied sample. It is possible that there exists some state-to-state difference in NIMBY concerns, though I have seen nothing in the literature to suggest this.

Both cities I have chosen have similar population sizes. The advantage is my results will be more reliable when viewing two similar-sized cities. The reason for this is because there is a greater likelihood that two cities of similar size may have similar growth concerns within their planning staffs. However, cities with higher or lower populations to the cities I am studying may, again, have different methods for addressing NIMBY concerns not listed in this study.

Findings

City A Planning Commission/Staff Interview Findings

Three representatives from the planning commission staff gave their interpretations of the research questions and what they viewed with regards to NIMBY concerns. As predicted, their interpretations correlated well with each other's points of view, as they were all involved in the various processes through which low-income housing plans were proposed. The staff members were involved in two proposed

developments. They all agreed that one produced very little by way of NIMBY concerns. However, the second development that these commission and staff members were involved with did produce NIMBY concerns.

These members went into great detail about when, how and why the NIMBY concerns were raised for the low-income development in question. Their first concerns were raised “not too long after the first newspaper article came [out]” (CA 1), or early in the process when it was first rolled out to the public. “The number one concern that was spoken the most...was of traffic” (CA 1). “The...road where the property is located, is a pretty narrow, old country road basically...it’s got some dips and curves in it, and is not a higher level road. It comes back into town at a very...convoluted [and] congested intersection, which already has issues” (CA 1). The argument was that, “it [was] going to be dangerous on the road...because it was going to be adding all of this traffic and it would make this already bad intersection even worse...which there is some basis of fact for those concerns” (CA 1).

The commission staff members wanted to try something early in the planning process to combat these concerns over traffic. At the development site, there was a second access point, or another road, that was near the planned development. Thus, “Very early on, the planning commission said to the developer that we wanted to have access on both roads so that traffic can be spread...and there’s an option to go either way. The developer agreed to that and they revised their plan to put a drive up on both roads. That did not eliminate many of the concerns, [but] it helped.” (CA 1)

In addition, there were various other issues the community had, according to the planning commission and their staffs. According to the staff, “There were three main

traffic concerns that really came up; sight distance, [the poorly designed] intersection, and the jug handles [on the major highway]” (CA 2). “One of the issues was the sight distance coming out onto [the road], it was perceived as a dangerous sight distance...regarding adding 40 homes coming out onto...a rural collector road, to the intersection...that was a bad intersection anyway” (CA 2). By sight distance, the staff member was referring to the unobstructed vision that a driver had at the intersection point to both the left and right.

The commission staff took measures to help alleviate concerns. “We had more traffic studies done for this development because those concerns were raised, the board insisted on the developer’s engineer traffic study...because we wanted some factual data and not just opinion...and then the city paid their own traffic engineer to review the first engineer’s study and do their own study and give their own...professional opinion about what issues were valid” (CA 1). Though the concerns were a focal point, the staff admits that “The number one reason [the studies were done was to avoid] any perception of negligence” (CA 1).

As far as the results of the traffic studies were concerned, “...both traffic engineers did not find any problems, you know, any factual, substantive problems. They both measured it, felt it met normal criteria...yes there would be some additional cars in the intersection, but the percentage of increase to the problems that already existed...wasn’t...mathematically significant” (CA 1).

Despite the positive results of both traffic studies, doubts remained. According to the staff members, the true essence of the issue lay elsewhere. “I think some of their

traffic concerns were true, and real; but it was always clear that the underlying, more compelling issue was the fact that it was going to be low-income housing. I think that started out as an under-current; nobody really wanted to say it. As things went on, it got more heated. Some of the residents actually...just blurted it out at a public meeting that there would be drug-dealers, there would be needles on the street” (CA 1). The researcher then questioned when these new concerns appeared. The response was that, “...[those concerns] were raised more towards the end [of the process]. With everyone [at the public meetings], you could read between the lines, but nobody actually said it; because you can talk about traffic and you can hang your hat on that, and that’s...okay to say. There were a lot of residents that did stand up during the public meetings and...you could read between the lines. But then I think eventually, towards the end, probably the last public meeting, some people did get up and really start talking about the things that were kind of taboo, that you talk about drugs, and all of these other issues” (CA 2).

The staff members indicated that the tone of last meetings became increasingly negative within the community. “[The residents were using phrases like,] ‘those kinds of people’ [when they were referring to low-income individuals.] You started [to] actually hear them saying that” (CA 1). Another staff member agreed that, “[the negative comments happened] towards the end...they were very fired up about it, they were desperate to voice their concerns” (CA 2).

The tone was captured by the local newspaper in this city as well. The staff and members added that, “There are a lot of good articles that [the newspaper] wrote about it. There were some things that made...the front page of the paper that made the city look elitist” (CA 2). As far as specific comments made, “[t]here were some things that were

said [like] ‘We don’t want those people here’, and it was for those reasons that typically aren’t said in public” (CA 2). It was added that, “[o]ne of the [newspaper] articles was so bad, that I got a call from a neighboring, non-Caucasian mayor of a city that has a high minority representation basically saying ‘Who do these people think they are? I’ll take [this housing development]. If you don’t want this housing development in your city, I would like it here.’ This was not the staff, this was not the elected officials, [it was] a few people who came to the meeting; it was pretty bad” (CA 3).

The researcher then inquired as to the amount of people who were truly voicing these more taboo concerns. The response was that, “[t]here was a wide range of people that were there [at the public meeting], some of them I think...were legitimately interested in finding out the facts, some of them [had] legitimate concerns about existing conditions, and there were some that were pretty extreme...hopefully not representative of the community...because [their comments] were in poor taste” (CA 3). When questioned about the public nature of the comments, the response was, “[n]ot as much was said out loud, as [it was] the comments you could hear. Fortunately, where I was at, a lot of the far extremes were behind me, and it was hard to just sit there and listen to some of it” (CA 3).

Another unexpected addition to the experiences that commission and staff shared was that “[t]here was one resident...that stood up and said, ‘I’m one of these [low-income] people and I would like to live in this community.’ So she was, basically, kind of a representative, low-income person that was listening to all these people around [make negative comments about] what perception [she] is. She actually stood up, and I remember her saying a few words, and kind of gasped some people...[just] adding that

perspective” (CA 2).

When asked about the root cause of concerns among the residents, all three planning commission staff representatives agreed that it was “more of an income thing.” A staff member added that, “[p]art of it [was that] people do have legitimate concerns. This is a more rural part of the community [where the development was to be built, the] lots are bigger, [the] houses are spread out. Now, you are putting this dense development in there. There was some of that concern. [Residents were saying,] ‘I like being here on my farm.’ ‘I can’t see anything [through] my back door.’ There was a little bit of [that kind of concern; otherwise known as] ‘Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything’ (BANANA)” (CA 3).

After this process was complete, the plan came down to a vote from the commission, and after all of the discussion, “[t]hey voted down the plan” (CA 2). After the plan was voted down by the board, “the developer appealed [that decision]. They basically asked the court to strike down the commissioner’s decision. The commissioner...put together an official...explanation as to why the plan was denied...and then the developer took that to the court. The court basically overruled and said, ‘No...this reason is not valid [for each explanation given by the commissioner]. The court then ruled that the commissioners had acted improperly [by voting down the plan], and that the plan did meet all of the requirements of the ordinances; which is basically what the staff had suggested to them was the case. The court then declared the plan approved” (CA 1).

To the researcher’s question as to whether or not it was the community pressure

that influenced the board to vote down the plan, the response from all three planning commission and staff members was yes, “[because] they are elected officials, and they are sensitive to the residents [or] the voters that put them in office” (CA 1). To the researcher’s question about the methods the board chose to use in this process, namely the idea of voting down the plan and then knowing that the courts would overturn their decision and allow the planned residential development to be built, the response was: “I would think if they had listened to the solicitor [that] they must have known that it was going to be over-turned if it went to court, and that the only way it wasn’t going to happen is if the developer, somehow, gave up [which by that point in the process was not a possibility]” (CA 1).

When asked about the influence the local residents had over the board, many members of the planning staff replied with more in-depth responses: “It appeared obvious to me that there were discussions going on between residents and commissioners beyond what was happening at the public meetings, so I’m sure that this group was lobbying [to stop the proposed development]. One of the commissioners lived in that area [where the housing development was going to be built, so] she probably got some pressure [to vote down the plan]” (CA 3).

The researcher then asked the staff more about their views on the motivations for the board to vote the plan down. The response was; “[l]ooking at it from the elected officials/commissioners eyes, they probably made their decision knowing that the court was going to turn it down. But to save face politically, and...to appease those residents that were the vocal minority in the situation, [they can say to their constituents] ‘Hey, we turned it down, but the court turned it over and there was really nothing that we could do.’

And that was what they ended up doing afterwards when they went through the approval process...the court basically said...you have to do this.” (CA 2). Agreeing, another staff member said, “[They could say,] Hey, I listened to you, but we were forced to [allow the development to happen]” (CA 3).

On multiple occasions, the researcher asked if there were any differences of opinion among the staff members. The response was; “I think all three of us looked at this through the same set of eyes from a staff stand point” (CA 3).

The commission and staff members of City A also discussed how organized the residents were, as the research done indicated in some cases community organizations were rather effective, while at other times NIMBY residents were much more stratified and less organized. The response was that “[t]here were a few leaders...through the process that were talking to each other. Typically, it was more of a localized group. It was not an activist group that got together. There was a little bit of organization...like they would get together before the meetings [and share ideas]” (CA 2). Added another staff member, “It wasn’t like in some places where there was already a neighborhood organization. There was...a petition [that circulated]” (CA 1).

The research indicated that many housing developers reach out to the community prior to the approval process. This tends to decrease the number of complaints that developers face. The researcher also inquired as to whether or not the developer of this low-income housing block had worked with the community prior to the approval process. The response was that “[we told] them when they first came in that we recommend that you reach out to the neighborhood in advance of the plan hitting the meetings officially. [The housing developer] did do that here; they tried [to inform the community]. There

was just so much [concern among the residents that it did not seem to do much to aid the approval process]. We always do recommend [that developers be proactive throughout the process]” (CA 1).

The researcher then asked whether the commission or staff got involved in that process. The response was that “[The commission] stays out of...the process. We will give [a developer] a mailing address, list of names and addresses...we will make a meeting room available, but we think it’s better for us to just stay clear of it...to avoid the perception that we are in cahoots with the developer. We try to sell the [developer] that you try to introduce yourselves first, before you’re in front of the planning commission and the board, to give them a chance to see the plan [and] get to know you. But [the commission] stays out of it” (CA 1). Another staff member added, “[The developer] knew that they were bringing in a ‘NIMBY,’ and that there were going to be some issues. So...really every suggestion that [the planning commission and planning staff] gave them, they [in turn] tried to comply with them. Overall, it was [a] good development process. If it’s allowed there by zoning and by subdivision land development regulations, we try [to help those developments be carried through]. [The developer] did a lot of things to try to help ease the situation and the perceptions, and make as good of a development as they could, and still make a profit on it. But I think they were very good” (CA 2). The staff members agreed that the developer had done an admirable job in assessing the community and attempting to reach out to them.

The researcher inquired if there were any other NIMBY complaints that were expressed by local residents. The response was that “[s]torm water was also an issue that was brought up throughout the process” (CA 2). Another minor concern “was about

falling property values, though those were more minor. It is standard” (CA 2). Another staff member largely agreed, saying, “[the topic of falling property values] wasn’t mentioned as much” (CA 1). The real deal, as already stated, was traffic. “Traffic was...the big thing that really came out, until...towards the end of the meetings, that’s when everything [else] came out” (CA 2).

Another low-income development was also earlier proposed in the same city within the time period specified by the study. That time, it was approved by the board and staff of City A. The researcher asked what difference existed between the earlier development and the one already discussed. The response was “[t]hat development was a little bit different because it was senior housing. There is that perception of low-income versus senior low-income, because senior low-income is ‘I’m on a fixed income’, and what are you going to do about that? It is very hard to have legitimate concerns [about that population of individuals]” (CA 2). Another staff member had more to add. “[The senior low-income development] was a little less NIMBY. To the north is mostly vacant land and the nearest home was quite a ways. To the east was farm land and houses far to the south, so there wasn’t a lot of neighbors; [and as a result, there wasn’t much as far as NIMBY concerns]” (CA 1).

“[The complaints they had] were a lot of the same thing. There was some concern about traffic brought up. That was really the main issue. The [question about] ‘Who’s going to live there?’ didn’t bother people quite as much...or at least they didn’t express that...probably because it was the elderly. [There is a big difference in perception between] poor young people and poor older people. I think [the senior development residents] were perceived to be harmless, you know, [the] ‘It could be my mother’

[mentality]. People tend to think [elderly individuals on fixed incomes] pose no threat to their community. We saw [the perceived differences between developments intended for younger individuals versus ones for older individuals] because one of the major concerns was traffic, and I don't think the underlying issue really was, 'who was going to be there?'" (CA 1).

Another difference lay in the issue of who planned the senior development as opposed to the low-income development. "[The senior development] was done by the housing authority, and it was for the elderly, so that gave it some legitimacy. Where [the low-income development] was done by a slick, private developer [who was] looking to make money...The housing authority is an established, institutional agency; they are going to be here for the long run. They are not going to build this...and leave town with the money" (CA 1).

As far as final thoughts about the NIMBY topic as it pertained to the low-income development, one staff member had this to say: "You have traditional neighborhood developments [in a neighboring town] that were done through the HOPE VI project, where you have your traditional, old, almost barracks-style housing units. This [developer] was building single-family lots that really shouldn't [have garnered the stereotypes]...you needed to have some income to [rent these homes]" (CA 2).

City B Planning Commission/Staff Interview Findings

The researcher interviewed one member of the planning commission of City B. This individual was the chairman of the planning commission of City B and had been a member of the commission for 29 years.

The response to my inquiry of whether or not this individual had any experiences dealing with NIMBY complaints began with, “I have conducted thousands of public hearings, but only a handful [of the hearings] were really attended by a large number of people. And that happens [for any number of reasons, for instance] when you try to put a group home in, or if you try to put in anything dealing with people who have mental illnesses, or criminals. If you propose such developments, forget it” (CB 1).

The researcher asked for experiences with NIMBY concerns with regards to low-income housing. The response from the commission chair was that “[City B] used to be a big city...with a population of around 65,000...we had everything. Today, with a population of 19,000 to 20,000, people have not been replaced as others have died off. Here, in this town [with the current state of affairs], if you want to build public (or low-income) housing, you are probably going to be able to build it. In this kind of a town...where there is very little funding...if you want low-income housing, it will [be allowed to pass]” (CB 1).

The researcher then questioned further why this was the case for City B. The response was, “If you live in [other more affluent areas near City B], I don’t think [that low-income housing would pass easily]. [For home owners in more affluent areas,] fear is a predominant factor [which leads to NIMBY concerns]. When you have something nice and you have a lot of money, [an individual] tend[s] to become afraid that something is going to ruin it, or someone is going to take it away from you. In [City B]...you have a lot more understanding [that low-income housing will be developed]” (CB 1). This individual continued by stating that “It is easier to [develop low-income housing] in a poor community. [So,] we have not had as many developments [go through public

hearings or the planning commission]” (CB 1). In summary, the commission chair could not name any specific low-income housing developments that had passed through the planning commission within the time period allotted by the study.

Housing Developer Interview Findings

One housing developer interviewed with the researcher. This developer worked largely within City B and in the areas surrounding City B. Most of the developments constructed by the developer are low-income in scope. This developer works both with building new housing developments and renovating existing developments. This developer did a great deal of work with the rehabilitation of current housing as well as building new housing within cities. The following were the findings of this interview process.

To the researcher’s inquiry about NIMBY concerns that were experienced generally, the response was that, “I think you have that concern when you’re...building new housing” (HD 1). Clarifying further, “[i]f you [deal] with rental properties, you’re more inclined to have [NIMBY concerns arise]; the neighbors may be more un-accepting. Sites [that] were not previously developed with housing [have less NIMBY concerns]. With new housing...we [take] an old site [and make it] an improvement to the neighborhood. When you’re improving the neighborhood, you’re not really causing any kind of distraction” (HD 1).

The researcher then asked about NIMBYism with regards to the rehabilitation process. The developer responded by stating that, “with the rehab (rehabilitation of homes) situation, [a developer] is improving the property, which is good for the

neighborhood, so I really don't think you have too much [in regards to NIMBY concerns] going on in [City B]" (HD 1).

The researcher then asked if there were any recent and specific examples of NIMBY concerns voiced to the developer. The developer responded by stating that "we do have two apartment buildings, and that is where we have had problems with behaviors with the tenants" (HD 1). Continuing with the specific concerns, this individual stated that "There have been concerns [namely with] garbage. Garbage dumped...not even bringing cans back into the house...it's mainly been minor issues that we have run into" (HD 1). Outside of the garbage complaints with those developments, the developer said that there were "no concerns that I know of [building those two developments]" (HD 1).

The developer then began to describe what the contributing factors were to the few NIMBY concerns that he faced. The response was that, "It is no secret that about 50% of housing stock [in City B] is rental units right now, so there is a lot of this concern. The biggest problem is the tenants in these situations don't have respect for the property or their neighbors" (HD 1). As for when developers were more likely to have NIMBY concerns in their development process, the response was that "I think you run into that more in those types of situations [when] you are going into a neighborhood and making home improvements in that neighborhood, that pleases the other people because the neighborhood's property value increases. Since I have been here, we really haven't had to deal with too many complaints or too many problems with our programs" (HD 1). The developer also explained that "It's the abandoned properties that endanger someone's house and their property and their family [that also become NIMBY concerns]. You have squatters in [an abandoned housing unit], you could have rodents, and other animals in

[that unit], it could be a fire hazard, or it could be ready to fall down. So, those are the issues. If you don't have the funding, it is tough to deal with. You can deal with [the problems] a little bit at a time, but if it's next door to your house, that is the most important one to you; just like if it is next door to my house, that is the most important one to me. That is where the complaints we hear resonate from" (HD 1).

As to the question of why the developer had not encountered more issues with NIMBY concerns, the response was that "when you are in an old town like this that has lost over 50% of its population over the last 25 years, you have got issues [bigger than NIMBY complaints]. You are in an entitlement community...so people that require those services tend to matriculate into that area. Your median income level comes way down. So, you have a large population of low-income individuals living in town. A lot of people have walked away from properties and just let them deteriorate" (HD 1).

The developer did have one experience that was relevant. The developer stated that "When you have a city like this, in an older neighborhood, where the houses are next to each other, [where] there is not a lot of room between houses...that becomes a concern [as well]. We did run into a situation...One house that we did a project in had a [person] living in it that was in an older, more established, I'd say 90 - 95% owner occupied area. [This person] was in a rental unit right in the middle of this area. [This person's] respect for the neighborhood was not very good, and caused a lot of problems. When we showed up to do a job, it caused more problems for us because [the surrounding home owners] were already with their binoculars looking out the window at [this rental unit's occupant]. We found out that the behavior of [this person, this person's] friends, [and] the people who were at fault [reflected] on us, because we were the ones who were there [trying to

fix up the rental unit]. [The homeowners] complained to the mayor [about our work on the property]. It was because of the other activity going on...causing distractions [in the neighborhood]. This person was very difficult to deal with” (HD 1).

When asked for any final thoughts on the NIMBY phenomenon, the developer stated, “Now, [say] there are two lots between [certain] houses for ten years, and all of a sudden on those two lots, you put a house in there. Now, [the residents] are going to be upset because they had all that space in between the houses; now you will have many concerns. In the last several years, we have not run into that situation. Everything we did [in City B] included rehab[ilitate] an existing home, or redevelop a property that had never been developed on before. [Or,] if you are putting a business into an area that is mainly residential, now you got trucks coming up the road that you did not have before; that would cause issues [with local residents]” (HD 1). The developer could not think of any other experiences in which NIMBY concerns needed to be examined or handled.

Discussion

The two case studies yielded differing perspectives on the issue of NIMBYism in the cities. This section will first summarize and analyze the responses from the interviewed members of City A, then those from City B and the housing developer. The analysis will be guided by what the findings of this study are in relation to the research questions. Next, I will draw comparisons and contrasts between the two cities, in addition to the analysis of their implications. Finally, this section will be used to compare the actual experiences of the commission, staff, and housing developers in this study to the relevant literature.

Analysis of the Findings in City A Interviews

The findings in the interviews conducted in City A yielded that NIMBYism is still prevalent concerning low-income housing developments. The city recently constructed a low-income development that went through a complete approval process. To summarize, the developer was forthcoming with the residents in City A, and according to all three of those interviewed, the developer did an admirable job engaging the residents of City A. Despite that, the commission staff of City A acknowledged that “there was just so much [concern]” (CA 1).

The primary concerns that were indicated early in the building process were traffic concerns that would arise as a result of the new development. The commission staff acknowledged that this was a legitimate concern. To examine these traffic concerns, both the city’s engineer and an engineer from the developer conducted traffic studies to understand whether or not there would be a significant increase of traffic flow on the rural roads that existed. Both studies concluded that there would be increased traffic, but not to any significant level that would add to any existing problems in the city. Even before the completion of the traffic studies, a second road was added onto the development plan so as to further help alleviate traffic concerns.

After the change to the plan and the traffic studies, the commission began to move through the final stages of the planning process. At this point, the NIMBY concerns changed, and began to take the form of classism denoted in the review of literature. Various comments were made about a perceived increase of drugs and undesirable individuals inhabiting the city. After all of the public outcry, the planning board voted

down the plan, and, as explained by the commission staff members, the reason for the negative vote was assuredly because of the residents' desire to not have the development built. In addition, these board members were elected officials, and they seemed to feel as though they needed to represent their constituents. The board's decision was overturned by the court, stating that the reasons given were not acceptable, and construction of the development was to begin soon after.

The commission staff members acknowledged that there were little to no NIMBY concerns with regard to the other development. This development, though it was low-income in nature, was for senior citizens on fixed incomes. The general consensus among the commission staff members was that it was because of the age of the individuals in the senior development that the NIMBY concerns were at a minimum. This acknowledgement by the commission staff indicates further that an element of age is involved in the number of NIMBY complaints a particular low-income development may face.

City A's commission staff members mainly allowed the housing developer to engage the community as its primary strategy to combat the NIMBY concerns. The earliest traffic concerns were also met by a strategy that allowed for a second road into and out of the new development to be added. The utilization of two traffic studies also aimed to quell traffic concerns that were raised by the residents. These were the two strategies that were employed by the planning commission and the staff.

It appeared best practices were used according to the review of literature. Forester's (1982) article describing his six steps to combating NIMBYism were largely

followed, including anticipating concerns, speaking for the community (the planning board's decision to vote the plan down), the use of "shuttle diplomacy," or helping both sides achieve their goals, and the consistent negotiating and mediating among the planners (Forester 1982) were all achieved for the duration of this process. Hornblower's (1988) study, as well as the MLO approach discussed by Iglesias' (1988) article, also advocated for planning staffs and developers to engage the community early in the process.

The methods used by the planning commission, staff, and developer largely conformed to the methods found in the literature. The community was engaged prior to the actual development process, all ordinances were followed, and the planning process appeared to work in that the community was able to voice their concerns throughout the process.

However, the planning commission's decision to knowingly allow for the courts to be the institution that made it possible for the development to be constructed, while effective, is debatable as to whether or not it is considered a "best practice." A board, in theory, would vote for a plan they thought was effective, as all indications throughout the process displayed that this was the case for City A's low-income housing development. For the board to vote down the plan, even though it was evident to them and the planning committee that the judicial system would allow the plan through may be considered dishonest to its constituents; even though they are representing those same interests by voting the plan down.

The effectiveness of the process is a rather subjective ideal. The development was

allowed to proceed through the planning process as designed by the city, and eventually was developed while addressing most of the community's concerns. However, the process seemed to reach more primal NIMBY concerns, such as classism and ageism towards the end, and the newspaper articles that were written did paint City A in an unfavorable light to the public outside of the city (CA 3). The interviews did not yield any other methods through which the planning staff could have foreseen that the development would be approved without the local opposition. The planning staff wanted this development in the city. In sum, though there were negative comments and aspects to the process, the process was effective in that community concerns were addressed, the commission staff and developer could address the community concerns, and the development was eventually built, despite the 'no' vote from the planning board.

Analysis of Findings in City B and Housing Developer Interviews

The commission director of City B and the housing developer that largely worked within that city had far fewer experiences in having to address NIMBY concerns. Both interviewees believed the primary reason for this fact was the median income of the average resident in City B. Over half of the residents in that city are low-income individuals. The commission chair stated "In [City B]...you have a lot more understanding [that low-income housing will be developed]" (CB 1), namely, because of the low-income nature of the city itself. This sentiment was echoed by the housing developer, as this individual pointed out the fact that the recent population losses experienced by City B would affect the amount of NIMBY complaints uttered throughout the city (HD 1). Due to the fact that the research questions focus on NIMBYism, these questions are not applicable to City B based on the interviews conducted.

The interview data from the housing developer correlates with the commission chair in City B. The concerns the developer detailed were very minor or non-existent. The premiere concerns that are attributed to NIMBYism, for example a lowering of property values and traffic concerns, would not affect the residents in City B because of the high density of the city (HD 1) and the already low cost to the homes in City B. Therefore, the research questions are not applicable to this city. The developer stated that in the rare instances new housing is built, the property values would actually rise when compared to the neighboring properties.

The affordable housing developments that the developer spoke of were not up for public review, and as a result, it would not have been possible for CB 1 to comment on such as the head of the planning commission in City B. This also means there was no ability for the public to voice any public concerns, NIMBY or otherwise. This research was focused on the experiences of these individuals, and since there were no NIMBY complaints faced, it is difficult to comment on it further.

The interview with the housing developer did produce a new topic that was not discovered through the review of literature or the other interviews. That topic was the rehabilitation of existing houses and their effect on NIMBY concerns. This developer stated, much like with the argument over property values, that any rehabilitation projects completed in City B provide improvements to those properties. As a result, the basis for NIMBY concerns (namely, that the work conducted would hinder the community in some way) remains invalid.

The concerns that were encountered by the developer during rehabilitation process

happened in two rental apartment buildings. This was not pertaining to the actual developments, but to accumulated garbage from the residents. This, too, is not NIMBY related to low-income developments, as the definition of NIMBY as provided by Meck was the “opposition by residents and public officials alike to additional or different kinds of housing units in their neighborhoods and communities” (Meck et al 2003:26). Those apartments were already built, so the concerns outlined by the developer were not NIMBY related to the development. They were complaints about the residents already in those apartments.

There was only one relevant experience communicated by the developer about one rental property that was rehabilitated. The renter of that property had noticeable behavioral issues beforehand. The developer did address the concerns with the neighboring residents, but only after the complaints were raised. The developer did not anticipate the concerns ahead of time. This was largely because it was an improvement on the property.

Comparisons/Contrast Between the Interview Experiences in City A and City B

The experiences communicated to the researcher from the interviewees in these two cities differed greatly. When the parameters of the study were identified and these cities were chosen, the size of the cities was taken into consideration. Therefore, it would be logical to conclude based on city size that the amount of NIMBY concerns would be similar based on population size. A city's size turned out to be insignificant as far as this research is concerned.

There are myriad other factors that contributed to whether or not NIMBY

concerns existed in these cities. The most prominent factors appeared to be the density of the city, as well as the number of low-income developments already in existence within the city itself. In City A, there were a greater number of affluent individuals compared to City B, based on the interview data given. The interviewees of City A's planning staff made no direct mention of the number of affluent individuals versus low-income individuals specifically; however it is reasonable to conclude that this was a factor in the presence of NIMBY concerns, based on the comparison of the interviews from the City B representative and the housing developer. Those interviews yielded that median income was a factor, and that a majority of the population of that city was low-income. Since the interviews with the planning staff in City A yielded that the local residents were worried about the advent of low-income individuals being a part of their town, the reasonable conclusion is that there was at least a perception of far fewer numbers of low-income individuals living in City A as opposed to City B.

Population density was also a factor. City A has more rural areas within its geographic location than does City B. The location of the development in City A was a spacious, rural area of the city. Within the framework of the review of literature, NIMBY concerns are often present when changes happen to previously undeveloped land, which the local residents had grown accustomed to having undeveloped. This would lead the researcher to conclude that this aspect may have been another unspoken reason for the NIMBY opposition to the development outline by the interviews from City A's representatives.

Comparison of Findings to the Review of Literature

As the literature review indicated, sentiments against the creation of affordable housing, in relation to its negative effects on a community, “may be a smokescreen for deeper conflicts over a just society and the role of government” (Koebel and Lang 2004). Those sentiments were apparent in the development outlined by the representatives in City A. Also, much like the definition Iglesias provided, classism and ageism were finite factors in the presentation of NIMBY concerns in City A. Kean and Ashley’s (1991) article also identified that “[translating] NIMBY sentiment into codes and ordinances that effectively burden development and constitute barriers to affordable housing...[t]hrough such regulations, the NIMBY syndrome has been institutionalized at the local level” (Kean and Ashley 1991:35). In City A, this translation occurred, as the class and age of the low-income individuals who would inhabit the development were masked by a more accepted concern for increased traffic on the rural roads in City A. It was institutionalized, as those that expressed classist and ageist concerns were using the accepted argument over traffic to help prevent the approval of the development.

It is important to note that the interviewees within City A did acknowledge that some of the residents were legitimately concerned for the traffic. These traffic concerns are identical to those outlined by Obrinsky and Stein’s (2007) article. But for a large number of the residents, especially those who lived near the development site, the classist and ageist factors were present.

Though the commission chair of City B had little direct experiences related to NIMBY concerns, the chair did have beliefs congruent with Kean and Ashley’s article to HUD when they stated that “the heart of NIMBY lies in fear of change in either the physical environment or population composition of the community” (Kean and Ashley

1991:39). This sentiment was identical to the thoughts echoed by City B's representative.

Theoretically, each city's methods for addressing development concerns fall in line with a different theory from Paul Lewis (2000). City A, in its attempts to mediate the NIMBY conflicts among local interests, was following the classic pluralist theory (Lewis 2000). This continued throughout the process; even the board's decision to vote down the plan was a representation of the demands articulated by City A's local constituents. In contrast, City B appeared to fall more in line with the trusteeship city theory. Local policymakers and businesses appear to have ways of bypassing public hearings and are given much freedom to steer the city as they see fit.

Forester's methods for conflict resolution with regard to quelling NIMBY concerns were followed relatively well. As noted in the review of literature, Forester outlined a six-step process by which land-use conflicts may be mitigated. Five of the six steps were followed, as City A's planning staff recommended proper conditions associated with permits (especially with regard to traffic concerns), spoke for neighborhood concerns, they allowed for the developers and neighborhood residents to meet, conducted shuttle diplomacy by working with both the residents on the issues stated and with the developer to aid in moving past the issues, and the staff was active throughout the process (Forester 1982). The staff did not play as much of a mediation role towards the end of the development process when newer concerns were raised. This is because the planning process itself was completed and all early concerns were met. The new concerns were, again, related to more taboo worries among the residents. There was little the developers or the planning staff could do to mitigate such concerns.

Hornblower's article also detailed that cohesive communities tend to produce more overt

NIMBYism (Hornblower et al. 1988). It is not possible to tell whether or not City A was a cohesive community as Hornblower's (1988) article would define. If true, it would further allow for understanding as to why the NIMBY concerns arose so fervently in City A. The literature review also outlined the MLO approach in Iglesias' (2002) article. The approach, similar to that of Forester, was also followed by the staff and developer of City A.

Policy Recommendation

It would prove to be difficult to recommend a one-size-fits-all housing policy paradigm for state or local governments to follow given the city-specific nature of NIMBYism and the types of complaints given by residents. This study displayed that there is a variety of variables that play prominent factors as to why such a policy recommendation would be difficult. Is a housing development low-income or not? If so, what is the target-age population for the development? Is the developer a housing authority or a private company? How much residential housing already exists within the community? These are just a few of a plethora of questions that city and town officials involved in housing policymaking across the country would have to account for in a comprehensive housing policy.

Despite this fact, there is one recommendation that can be made based on the results of this study. The policy that towns and cities should adopt is a policy of mandating early-intervention approaches for the benefit of local residents. Individuals who live in an area where a proposed housing development is going to be erected would then have a chance to see the development and voice concerns. This policy should be

adopted especially when private developers are involved in the housing development. As the interview findings have displayed, individuals become nervous and wary when developers outside of their hometown are involved in any changes to the town itself. Mandating that private developers first put a housing plan out to a commission and a public meeting will allow city officials and the developer to gauge what kind of NIMBY sentiments may become problematic and need to be addressed.

In summary, some measure of John Forester's six steps to mediating NIMBY concerns woven into any city's current housing policy, if not already in existence in some form, will likely allow the process of housing development to run smoother and issues to be more easily overcome. Iglesias asserted that residents involved in NIMBY conflicts tend to follow similar patterns of behavior. The examples in this study also seem to confirm that theory. With that knowledge, cities can plan for the steps they would want to take based on their population demographics and how likely a new development is to have a controversial nature.

This study produced an account of a controversial low-income housing development that, despite heavy opposition from local residents, was able to be constructed. Politics played a primary role in the planning board's voting down the plan, but because concerns were addressed early in the process, and sound judgment was used throughout the process, the appellate court overturned the board's decision and allowed the development to be built. Thus, sound housing policy allowed the planning staff and developer to combat NIMBYism effectively due to early engagement of residents and adapting the development plan to the concerns raised if they are legitimate.

Conclusion

City A's commission staff had experiences with the NIMBY phenomenon, while City B has not had such experiences. The reasons, according to the interview data, include differences in median income between the cities, the population density within the city, the city's geographic make-up as to whether there is rural or urban land use, and the population's affluence and cohesiveness. The NIMBY concerns that were encountered most prominently in City A were traffic concerns, classism, and ageism.

Strategically, the planning commission staff had the developer in City A engage the residents early in the process. They addressed the traffic concerns that were raised with two traffic studies, neither of which yielded any significant increase in traffic. Despite that, a second road into and out of the planned development was added to the plan to address the concerns. The plan was voted down by the planning board due to the pressure from the board's constituents. A court overturned the board's decision, and the planned low-income development was built anyway.

Had concerns not been addressed properly, there is little doubt the court would have overturned the decision. But, the board's decision was based on its constituents, and those residents at the end of the development process were motivated by classism and ageism of low-income individuals. A general fear, as outlined in the literature, was the underlying cause of the NIMBY concerns in this city.

It appeared best practices were used by the developer and the planning commission staff, as they were effective in addressing NIMBY concerns and allowing for the development to proceed as planned. The board was able to represent their

constituents, but it did not hinder the process of the development. Further studies should be done in the future to test the generalizability of these results and to see what other factors may be involved in NIMBYism. In addition, other cities may have developed other, more effective methods for addressing community concerns.

References

- Allen, Michael. 2003. "No Shelter from the Storm: The Supreme Court Hands NIMBY Forces a Powerful Weapon." *Shelter Force Online*. Issue 131, <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/131/shelterinstorm.html>
- Bothwell, Stephanie E. Raymond Gindroz, and Robert E. Lang. 1998. "Revitalizing Neighborhoods with Traditional Neighborhood Design: A Case Study of Diggs Town." *Housing Policy Debate* Vol. 9, Issue 1. Retrieved October 14, 2010 at http://www.knowledgeplex.org/programs/hpd/pdf/hpd_0901_bothwell.pdf
- Dreier, Peter. 1991. "Downtown Development and Urban Reform." *Urban Affairs Review* Vol. 26, No. 3, 354-375.
- Forester, John. 1982. "Planning in the Face of Conflict." Pp. 434-446 in *The City Reader* edited by Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout. New York and London Press.
- Hornblower, Margot. Andrea Sachs, and James Willwerth. 1988. "Ethics: Not In My Backyard, You Don't." *Time*, June 27.
- Iglesias, Tim. 2002. "Managing Local Opposition to Affordable Housing: A New Approach to NIMBY." *The NIMBY Report: Using Civil Rights Laws to Advance Affordable Housing*. Washington, DC: National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Retrieved at

[http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=tim_iglesias)
[HYPERLINK"http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=tim_iglesias"&HYPERLINK"http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=tim_iglesias"context=tim_iglesias](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=tim_iglesias)

Inhaber, Herbert. 1998. *Slaying the NIMBY Dragon*. New Brunswick, New Jersey;

Transaction Publishers. Retrieved via Google on 29 November, 2010 at

<http://books.google.com/books?id=8d7RqKSYOe4C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Jones, Amy. Mary J. Holin, Linda Pistilli, Jennifer Turnham. "Tools and Strategies for

Improving Community Relations in the Housing Choice Voucher Program."

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy Development And Research. Retrieved at

<http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/hcvpguide.pdf>. N.d.

Kateria, Gaurav, and Michael P. Johnson. 2004. "Neighborhood Selection of Public

Housing Residents in the Housing Choice Voucher Program: Quasi-Experimental

Results from Chicago." H. John Heinz School of Public Policy and Management,

www.heinz.cmu.edu/research/140full.pdf

Kean, Thomas H. Thomas L. Ashley. 1991. *Not In My Backyard' Removing Barriers to*

Affordable Housing. Pp. 1-44. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Retrieved at

<http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/NotInMyBackyard.pdf>. N.d.

Koebel, Theodore C. and Robert E. Lang, 2004. "Community Acceptance of Affordable Housing." Retrieved on October 14, 2010 at

<http://www.vchr.vt.edu/pdfreports/Community%20Acceptance%20of%20Affordable%20Housing.pdf>. N.d.

Lewis, Paul G. 2000. "What Type of City To Be? Local Government Receptivity to Industrial, Commercial, and Residential Development." Public Policy Institute of California, prepared for delivery at the 2000 Annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, San Jose, California, March 24-26.

Meck, Stuart. Rebecca Retzlaff, and James Schwab. 2003. "Regional Approaches to Affordable Housing." *American Planning Association*

http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/PDF/regional_app_aff_hsg.pdf

Obrinsky, Mark. and Debra Stein. 2007. "Overcoming Opposition to Multifamily Rental Housing." National Multi-Housing Council White Papers. Washington D.C.

<http://www.nmhc.org/Content/ServeFile.cfm?FileID=5717>

Orlebeke, Charles J. 2000. "The Evolution of Low-Income Housing Policy, 1949 to

- 1999.” *Housing Policy Debate* Vol. 8 Issue 2, pp. 489-520.
- Pendall, Rolf. 1999. “Opposition to Housing: NIMBY and Beyond.” *Urban Affairs Review* Vol. 35, Issue 112.
- Peterson, Paul E. (1981). *City limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. N.d.
- Schaper, David. 2010. “Long Goodbye for Infamous Public Housing Complex.”
Retrieved on National Public Radio on 7 December, 2010 at
<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/07/131858205/long-goodbye-for-infamous-public-housing-complex>
- Six Steps to Getting Local Government Approvals*. Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, Retrieved on 30 September, 2010 at
http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/nimby/six_steps.pdf
- “The NIMBY Report: February 2003.” *National Low Income Housing Coalition* 2006
http://www.nhtf.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=2952
["http://www.nhtf.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=2952&id=44"](http://www.nhtf.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=2952&id=44)
["http://www.nhtf.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=2952&id=44"](http://www.nhtf.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=2952&id=44)
- Tiebout, Charles (1956). “A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures.” *Journal of Political Economy* 64: 416-424. N.d.
- Turner, Margery A., Susan J. Popkin, and Mary K. Cunningham. 1999. “Section 8 Mobility and Neighborhood Health.” The Urban Institute with support from U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development and the MacArthur Foundation.

N.d.

United States Department of Health and Human Services “Combating NIMBYism: What

A Difference a Community Makes.” SAMHSA’s Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity, and Social Inclusion Associated with Mental Health.

Retrieved at

<http://www.stopstigma.samhsa.gov/publications/combatingNIMBY.aspx>. N.d.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2010. *Low-Income*

Housing Tax Credit. Washington D. C. Retrieved at

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/lihtc.html>) N.d.

Appendix I – Interview Questions for Planning Commission Members and their Staffs

- What is your name and position on staff?
- How long have you had your current position on the planning staff?
- What other employment have you had in similar areas of work?
- Have you been involved in the planning process of any residential developments in the last 5 to 10 years?
- How does that process work?
- How involved is the community in that process?
- Are you familiar with the concept of NIMBY?
- Have you seen any examples of NIMBYism during the process of getting a residential or low-income development in your city?
- In what forms have you seen these concerns come up (e.g. traffic, property values)?
- What steps do you take to hinder NIMBY sentiments?
- How proactive are you in getting the community involved?
- What housing developers do you work with most?
- How involved have they been in the process of curbing NIMBY sentiments?
- Do you seek to work with developers in lessening NIMBY sentiments?

- Has NIMBYism been problematic for your city's mission?
- Are there any developments that have been stopped by NIMBY sentiments?
- What strategies did your community use to stop/hinder the development(s)?
- Have you had to rely on current laws or ordinances to make a housing development happen?
- Do you have any other comments you would like to add that may help my research?

- What is your name and position within this company?
- How long have you worked with this company?
- Have you worked with any other housing developers, and if so, which one(s)?
- What cities have you enacted low-income housing developments in the last 5 years?
- How does the process through which you land a contract and enact a low-income housing development work?
- Are you familiar with the concept of NIMBY?
- How much of a problem do communities NIMBY sentiments pose for your company?
- What steps has your company taken in past low-income housing developments to deal with NIMBY concerns?
- In what forms have these concerns come up (e.g. traffic, property values, etc.)?
- What steps has your company taken to help alleviate these community concerns?
- Do you work with planning commission's or their staff in the cities you have been with on the NIMBY problem?
- Have you ever lost a low-income housing development due to NIMBY pressures on a city?
- What strategies has your past company(s) taken to alleviate these concerns?

- What strategies have communities used against you?
- Have planning commissions and the staffs in the cities generally been helpful or a hindrance to your goals?
- What cities have been more effective in dealing with NIMBY concerns that you have seen?
- Have any ordinances or laws been a hindrance to a low-income housing development that you have worked on?
- Do you have any other comments that may help my research?