

PROMISE AND BETRAYAL



Universities and the Battle for
Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods



JOHN I. GILDERBLOOM • R. L. MULLINS JR.

Foreword by Henry Cisneros

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and
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FOREWORD BY HENRY CISNEROS

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Dedication

This was not just another project to us; rather, it was an intellectual labor of love for a topic we are passionate about. Both authors made equal contributions to this book. Many people were important to us during the production of this book and the research at its core. Local officials, university administrators, and businesses were very supportive. Our family and friends were behind us, especially Dr. Mark T. Wright, who was part of the team and took this research into the community and is developing affordable housing in Louisville and elsewhere. He is doing well by doing good. Sam Watkins and the late Frank Clay were instrumental in opening doors in the Russell Community. Finally, we appreciate the support and energy of the residents of the Russell Neighborhood. We are glad they let us share their lives, hopes, and dreams.

If you would not be forgotten
As soon as you are dead and rotten
Either write things worthy reading
Or do things worth the writing
—Benjamin Franklin

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Foreword

Our colleges and universities have always been the hope for our nation's future. As repositories and conservators of knowledge, they pass on the accumulated understanding and wisdom of one generation to the next. As centers of thought and research, they continually build on the work of previous generations, constantly expanding our horizons of understanding.

Our institutions of higher learning introduce young people to the wider world beyond the familiar confines of home and family—to new ideas, new ways of looking at things, and, most importantly, to other people from widely varying backgrounds—to the rich diversity of human experience. They instill values critical to the health of a democratic society, including lifelong respect for learning and openness to new ideas, concern for others beyond our immediate circle of family and friends, personal civic responsibility, a drive to make tomorrow better than today, and tolerance.

Colleges and universities are an invaluable resource for urban policy and planning, doing fundamental research, providing seminal analysis of urban problems, developing strategies for their solution, and supporting programs to train urban planners and scholars. Academic research has already made vital contributions to the understanding of urban issues and, through that understanding, to the well-being of American cities. But as important as they are, research and understanding are not enough. Articles, books, and conferences are not enough. Political capital is not of much use unless it is spent on leadership. By the same token, intellectual capital's value is diminished if it is not invested in action.

In that regard, the university-community partnership has been pioneered in Chicago by the University of Illinois (UIC), DePaul, and Loyola as a model for the nation—a vivid demonstration of what can be accomplished when major institutions combine resources with those of government, business, and community groups.

The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative is helping to create: (1) an affordable housing consortium; (2) commercial and industrial area design; (3) entrepreneurial programs for youth; (4) adult literacy and community health programs; and (5) linkage of neighborhood groups on the Internet through UIC's academic data network. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has supported the UIC effort with a variety of grants, including HUD Academy (a joint project with DePaul) to train HUD staff (\$160,000), the Community Outreach Partnership Program (\$580,000), and the Joint Community Partnership Center (\$2.4 million).

Additionally, the University of Louisville (U of L) has worked in partnership with businesses, government, public schools, and community-based groups to help inner-city residents lift themselves out of poverty. The U of L's HANDS (Housing and Neighborhood Development Strategies) program provided support for the conversion of 150 units of former public housing development—La Salle Place—to private homes for sale to low-income buyers. More recently, the university's Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) program has worked closely with the Telesis Corporation (a Washington, D.C., developer), local and HUD officials, Mayor Jerry Abramson, and community organizations to save the 600-unit HUD Section 8 Village West Apartments from foreclosure and eventual demolition. They have also provided technical support to several non-profits for building affordable homes and even converting an abandoned school into an assisted housing development.

As another example, the University of Pennsylvania Center for Community Partnerships was started in 1992, in part to create new and effective partnerships between the university and the community and to strengthen a national network of institutions of higher education committed to engagement with their local communities.

While I was at HUD, we created the Office of University Partnerships to help colleges fulfill their urban mission. Our goals were to recognize, reward, and build upon successful examples of universities' activities in local revitalization projects, create the next urban generation and encourage them to focus their work on housing and community development policy and applied research, and form partnerships with other federal agencies to support innovative university teaching, research, and service partnerships. Now, more than ever, universities are essential in helping HUD achieve its mission of creating communities of opportunity.

Of particular note was our work with local communities and their universities and colleges to create a "campus of learners" initiative to build partnerships between public housing developments and nearby schools. This initiative converted some developments into "learning campuses" similar to dormitories at universities. Family members study at home to learn skills, using computers hooked up to self-paced education and training courses devised by the schools.

A good example is the model community revitalization initiative incorporating the “campus for learners” concept that Trinity College has begun in Hartford, Connecticut. Trinity’s plan links it with nearby hospitals through a new Allied Health and Technology Center and includes three new innovative public schools, a home ownership initiative that combines housing with education—and their own version of a campus of learners—and possibly a regional children’s science center.

This initiative has the support of local officials, key private organizations—especially the hospitals—and the state government. By focusing on job-oriented economic development, education, and home ownership, the Trinity initiative holds great promise for the future of Hartford and for the college. HUD helped greatly through a Community Outreach Partnership grant and some technical assistance funds.

Tulane and Xavier, two prestigious universities, also brought about dramatic improvement to a most troubling public housing authority. Working together, the partnership implemented a “campus of learners” program for residents of some New Orleans public housing developments. The universities and HUD also inaugurated a community project to develop comprehensive solutions for problems in inner-city communities that have public housing.

This book, by John I. Gilderbloom and R. L. Mullins Jr., is about translating our understanding of the tough urban issues facing us today. It is about leadership and a call to action. It is about partnerships between the public and private sectors, profit-making businesses, and nonprofit organizations, between community-based groups and public agencies, and especially between the university and the community. Forging these partnerships is absolutely critical to the future of urban America. And it is a ten-year history of the University of Louisville program. While it celebrates its successes, it also discusses its mistakes so we can learn from them. It makes a major contribution to understanding the dynamics of university-community partnerships.

The nation’s cities are an important focus of American life as major centers for commercial activity, housing, leading banks, community networks, and international trading companies. They are home to the basic infrastructure of trade and commerce—our roads, bridges, seaports, and airports. The central cities are megacenters for the arts, education, and scientific discovery. All of these amenities bring together people of diverse races, backgrounds, and religious persuasions.

Many American cities, however, are in a steep and steady decline for reasons both contemporary and historic. Current economic pressures on cities arise from global competition and technological innovation, which are fundamentally restructuring the U.S. economy. Having suffered through more than twenty years of job losses and fiscal stress, our cities are failing to generate robust economic opportunities and create good jobs for those with less than a college education.

Businesses have fled to the suburbs or overseas, leaving behind “brown fields” and empty buildings on contaminated lots that no one wants to develop. These communities can no longer sustain themselves. Sadly, this fundamental fact of life will not change with an upswing in the business cycle.

The American city, as the historic gateway to social and economic mobility, is becoming home to many of the most disadvantaged people in America. Labor force detachment, lack of education, welfare dependency, drug use, teenage pregnancy, a high infant mortality rate, and an increase in violent crime reflect a cityscape in which upward mobility and economic independence are virtually unknown. We are in danger of becoming two nations—one as highly skilled, well-paid workers and professionals, and the other as low-skilled, low-wage workers or a no-skilled, no-wage unemployed underclass.

The resources of our colleges and universities are critical to the fight to save our cities. Institutions of higher learning must join the effort to turn around their communities—not just for moral reasons—out of enlightened self-interest. The long-term futures of both the city and the university are so intertwined that each needs the other for survival—one cannot have longevity without the other.

The American institution of higher learning may, in the dawning of a new century, be entering one of its most challenging and productive eras. Among its tasks will be that of helping to reshape the city to become, once again, the driving force in the economic, social, and cultural life of this nation. HUD stands to make that task more doable and more likely to succeed. It has invited American colleges and universities to join in this worthwhile effort.

It is not Washington’s role to pay for everything, regulate everything, or mandate everything. Its role is to marshal resources from all sectors of society and bring them to bear on the problems we face as a society. HUD’s role is to catalyze, facilitate, mediate, and get out of the way and to let people of goodwill and faith in our communities do their jobs.

My vision as mayor of San Antonio as well as HUD secretary was clear—make tomorrow better than today. Leave your piece of the world better for your children. We must take responsibility for the problems facing us today. All of us must contribute our time, talents, and resources to resolving them. We own these problems and have a collective stake in their solution. And, believe me, the only way we can solve them is together. They must be solved in communities, by communities, and through community partnerships. That is why this theme of partnership, of pooling skills, talents, and resources with other federal agencies, state and local governments, private industry, and community groups with colleges and universities, runs like a strong, steady current through everything we did at HUD.

In the end, there are really no words that can adequately describe how important one's work as a chancellor, president, provost, dean, board of trustee member, professor, student, and staff is to the future of this country. But these professionals have the power to make the university more responsive to the immediate needs of the community. I can only say: Keep it up. This book by Gilderbloom and Mullins is an important contribution to the field and should be read by university and community leaders, as well as by policy makers at all levels.

Henry Cisneros
Former Secretary of the U.S.
Department of Housing
and Urban Development

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Preface

Universities can play important roles in partnership with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The University of Louisville turned a poor black neighborhood into a laboratory of innovation. Soon this once blighted neighborhood was rebuilt, reclaimed and revitalized. This neighborhood went from a laboratory to a model for the rest of the nation. University programs such as SUN make operational the concept of public-private partnerships in order to succeed in urban renovation and rehabilitation where many others have failed. The key is creating a sustainable partnership that can grow with the neighborhood. Urban universities with planning programs can bring tremendous creative and technical resources to community leaders and should take activist roles in helping their communities by supplying the knowledge and assistance.

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Policy, Development Research for International Conference on Revitalization of Cities, Environmental Justice funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the Association of Governing Boards, University Community Partnerships (principal consultant/private contract), funded by the MacArthur Foundation and the ARCO Foundation. Also, the Kentucky Housing Corporation, Kentucky Real Estate Commission, Neighborhood Development Corporation, Neighborhood Housing Services, Louisville Central Community Center, Louisville Central Development Corporation, Project One, Telesis Corporation, University of Kentucky School of Architecture, University of Louisville Foundation, Liberty National Bank and Trust, PNC Bank, National City Bank, Cumberland Bank, Homebuilders Association, of Louisville, Jefferson County Commissioner Darryl Owens, Mortgage Bankers Association: L&T Properties, Housing Authority of Louisville, Jefferson County Public Schools, National Center for Family Literacy, Housing Partnership of Louisville, University of Louisville faculty, Metroversity, University of Louisville Foundation, University of Louisville, Kentucky, Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development, and Fannie Mae.

Additional Resources

We have been funded to provide seminars and a DVD based on this book. The DVD that complements this book provides an eighty-picture slide show of before and after pictures of our target neighborhood, video clips of former President Clinton, former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, former Harvard President Derek Bok, Mayor Jerry Abramson of Louisville, Kentucky, and former University of Louisville President Donald Swain discussing the importance of the university-community partnership. Also included are various clips produced by the HUD and the University of Louisville that were developed for this project. The DVD is approximately two hours long. It is available at the following web sites: <<http://www.gilderbloom.org>> or <<http://www.louisville.edu/org/sun>>.

We also do a yearly seminar based on this book and on the DVD. We are available to present the information in this book and DVD, at your university or city.

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CHAPTER 1

Promise of University-Community Partnerships

Collaborative processes, or bottom-up approaches, have not been tried extensively. When tried, many have not truly been bottom-up. One thing that distinguishes a bottom-up approach from a top-down approach is the scope of the project and sources of funds. Most of the failed, top-down approaches have employed large amounts of federal money and minimal local investment and have been geographically extensive, covering large sections of cities or regions. Bottom-up strategies are narrowly focused from an areal perspective, often concentrating on a single neighborhood or part of a neighborhood. While seed money may come from a federal program, there is usually a significant local investment component (25% or more), which gives local governments, nonprofits, and neighborhood groups more ownership of the program and its processes.

Neighborhood residents must, in concert with others in the community, reach out and form partnerships with those who can help revitalize their neighborhood. A broad-based coalition must be assembled to address problems; we can no longer be categorical in our approach. The categorical grant programs of the past have not been as effective as their developers had hoped. A holistic approach is required. The individuals working in the coalition must believe that they have the power to make a difference and to find, through themselves or their partners, people who can wield the necessary power to carry out their plans. Finally, these plans must be developed and carried out at the lowest level. If there is not a significant commitment by all parties, especially residents, then the effort will fail. If the plans are being directed from afar, then history shows that change will be either fleeting or non-existent.

Neighborhood planners working within the confines of an overall city plan are under a tremendous amount of pressure to remake the neighborhoods that comprise the cities. Attractive, safe, desirable, convenient neighborhoods in conjunction with economic opportunities and residents who can seize them may be the only things that can stem the tide of emigration from the cities to