

TITLE: Green Infrastructure & Gentrification Peer Circle

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2019

ATTENDEES:

- Diana Toledo
- Drew Curtis
- Paula Conolly
- Cynthia Sarthou
- Rebecca Page
- Rowan Schmidt

Why we came here

Diane: Toledo – developed GI plan.

DC: Riverfront development built, then public housing knocked down. Need to be intentional, thinking about development without displacement, rather than just getting GI built.

Cynthia: NOLA has experienced a lot of gentrification. Only places not gentrified because they flood. If we improve, will more people move in? City more segregated than 10 years ago. “progressives only focus on GI”

PC: work with utilities, but purpose is so narrow, may disregard potential outcomes. Other folks in network have same concerns.

RP: Themes of decommodifying housing, community control

Discussion notes

DC: decommodifying is one of the keys – give land to community, develop leases with homeowner, development entity. Gets off the speculative market. Stops homes from being flipped. E.g. Crescent City CLT. Also, public housing. Rental Assistance Demonstration.

Cynthia – what are the economics of setting up land trust?

DC: >> Same as other projects, but bigger bang for buck. Permanent affordability, investments stays there.

Other mechanisms for decommodification?

>> Rent control, right to council

PC: as a GI person, what is the first step I can take?

>> engage with community.

RS: Can these things get us to the scale we need to be at? What level of resources do you have? Could land trusts like TPL, TNC be good partners?

Cynthia – could help to have a toolkit that folks can use going into communities. Are there best practices – what to consider, how to talk to community, economic arguments. Need to document knowledge.

DC: before you come up with a GI project, talk to community first.

D: in some cities, there is a plan, but not documented, for fear of being taken and manipulated.

DC: when a city procures a contractor for GI, make sure community engagement included as a line item.

C: before siting, talking to community. If you were to site a project, where would you get most public amenities, flood reduction, heat island etc.

PC: utilities often have specific stormwater management goals, need to site things in specific places

Other questions to ask:

What are the places to engage – e.g. rather than project by project, get this into master planning, land use planning? What are the incentives/reasons for City to allow displacement? Causal connections – GI usually installed with a whole set of infrastructure investments? Examples of communities that have seen success.