

COLUMBUS, OHIO

TITLE: RECOVERY FROM CRISIS: Stories & Strategies from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program

OPEN: Narrator: The US Department of Housing and Urban Development launched The Neighborhood Stabilization Program in 2008 to stabilize communities across the country hit hardest by the housing crises. We visited 4 of these communities in 2011 and now return in 2014 to learn about the successes, the challenges and the continued stabilization efforts.

COLUMBUS, OH / Map of USA and Columbus

Population: 787,033

Area: 225 sq mi

Median Home Value \$134,900

Median Household Income - \$43,992

Awarded \$50,889,728 in NSP funding.

Source: United States Census Bureau State and County Quick Facts

Narrator: The City of Columbus is a large sprawling city that was hit early and hard by the foreclosure crisis. It experienced over 35,000 foreclosure filings between 2008 and 2012 leading to a sharp spike in vacancies and REO properties often concentrated in neighborhoods that were already suffering from long-term disinvestment.

KIM STANDS, Assistant Housing Administrator, Department of Development, City of Columbus: Through NSP the city received over 50 million dollars with NSP1, 2, and 3. And one of the very first things that we did before investing money was to do a market study.

Out of that market study we saw that there were specific neighborhoods that we wanted to go and invest in.

MAP OF COLUMBUS

Kim Stands: Over the years now that we've been in NSP, we've seen a real ring of impact, our investment actually making a difference in those neighborhoods. One of those neighborhoods was on the Near East Side, which was North of Broad.

Leah Evans, Director, Homeownership, Homeport

Homeport has been investing in the North of Broad neighborhood for over nine years, with the advent of Neighborhood Stabilization, we have been able to expand the vision that we originally had for the community.

CHALLENGE: Aging housing stock and long term disinvestment

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Leah Evans: We've always had a goal of strategically investing in blocks at a time.

MAP OF NORTH OF BROAD

Leah Evans: We started on 21st, and one of the reasons that street has been such a magnet has been because of the city's partnership with us.

STRATEGY: Partner with city for infrastructure improvements

Leah Evans: That street got all new paving, all new curbs, all new street pedestrian lighting.

Leah Evans: Represented here you see our Homeport strategy of centralizing and concentrating our development on a block by block approach so you have about 8 properties just within walking distance of each other that have all been rehabbed or newly constructed to build back on the existing housing stock and bring neighbors back to the neighborhood."

Paul and Traci Graves, Homeowners

Paul Graves: The home next door is supposed to be demolished any day now and they will be putting a brand new home in there similar to this one.

Traci Graves: And actually, what 10-15 years ago we lived not too far from this area. Back then to now we've definitely seen a difference in the diversity in the community and that also makes it very attractive.

Patrick Potyondy and Amber Camus, Homeowners

Patrick Potyondy: The area was definitely in transition when we moved here. There were a lot of vacant properties, a lot of empty lots but we were confident in Homeport's mission and goals and work. Since moving in over those 5 years we have seen a lot of changes.

ROWLEEN MOVING IN

Rowleen Tedford, Homeowner: I went to the Homeport site, and I saw this listing. It was the first listing at the top of the website. I looked at it and I said, "That is my home." I've always been a good resident. Didn't have any evictions or anything. But every time I moved into an apartment, the rent would go up. And then because I was on such a tight budget, I would have to move again. And the last five years I have moved my kids four times. I'm a single mom. I have three kids. All three of them are at college, I'm supporting them. I mean, without Homeport and their assistance, I wouldn't have been able to get this home. This house will provide my children and I some stability.

Al Waddell, Longtime resident & Real Estate Agent: Income diversity in an urban neighborhood is crucial. And it's income diversity that in the end of the day really makes a community work. It makes it possible to have a grocery store and a dry cleaner and a

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laundry mat. And it makes all of the things that we consider essential to community life, it makes those things possible.

STRATEGY: Building a mixed-income community

SHOTS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Leah Evans: Neighborhood of choice is a phrase that we use to represent what the neighborhood can be. And when we established that as a goal, it meant that we had to address a number of different things, whether that be the infrastructure by working with the city, whether that be the services by making sure that we were in communication with our community police liaison, or whether that be the housing stock itself.

STRATEGY: Comprehensive neighborhood revitalization

Leah Evans: We want people throughout Central Ohio as well as throughout Ohio, or buyers coming in from out of state to choose this neighborhood.

STRATEGY: Neighborhood re-branding

Leah Evans: So, NOBO was the name that we established for this neighborhood, but we also understood the history of the King-Lincoln District in the Near East Side. So, we wanted to tie those two things together. And one of the ways that we did that was through the naming of each of the models of our homes. We had the Ella, we had the Dizzy, we have the Louie's Sway, and we wanted to harken back to the jazz history of the King-Lincoln District and tie the neighborhood into what we were doing here.

Leah Evans: One of the marketing pieces that we established early on was the penguin that you see that we use as our logo. On a lot of the vacant houses, even before we started to develop them, we painted North of Broad, Homeport, the little penguin logo so that people started to hear that and see that everywhere. We also used it in print media online. We did coffee cup sleeves. We did sandwich boards. So, we did the traditional things that you do to market a brand.

Leah Evans: North of Broad is existing in an inner-city neighborhood in Central Ohio, and some of the challenges that come with being in an inner-city neighborhood include graffiti, loitering.

CHALLENGE: Criminal activity

TRANSITION TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETING. WE HEAR RESIDENTS WITH EACHOTHER TALKING ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Policeman: Now when was that?

Neighbor: 5 weeks ago, we had that rash of break-ins

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STRATEGY: Resident engagement and community organizing

Leah Evans: And early on the North of Broad, which is now the resident's association, established a block watch so that they could address more issues besides just crime. And that was the impetus for continued activity, and also a connection between the new residents and the existing residents.

Resident: It's great being in this area, I mean it's an 8 minute walk.

Resident: Yeah, I love it here. I'm really impressed with how close everything is.

Resident: It takes me 10 minutes by bike to get to work. That's the benefit right?

THE LONG STREET BRIDGE

Al Waddell: Another exciting development that we've had recently is the opening of the Spring Street and the Long Street bridges. They have reconnected the Near East Side neighborhood to the downtown core. So, that's about 60, 70 years ago that our neighborhoods were cut off by the freeway system. But these projects have had the effect of reconnecting us.

Al Waddell: Homeport //strategically looked at the properties that were the biggest problem, and they targeted acquiring them so that they could transform them. The genius to their strategy is to make a big difference in a small area. That small area then becomes the momentum, which spreads that change, which spreads that revitalization to the blocks immediately around it.

Kim Stands: We asked ourselves, "How are we going to keep this going?" We knew that those resources were going to go away.

Dedicating Local Funds

Future Site of: 400 MIXED-INCOME APARTMENTS

Kim Stands: The city has stepped up. We're back to using bonds again, and doing it in a way that is now using the lessons learned from NSP.

For more information about Columbus, OH

columbus.gov

homeportohio.org

For more information about neighborhood revitalization:

neighborworks.com

nhc.org

enterprisecommunity.org

nlihc.org

habitat.org

To learn about other NSP case studies:

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hudexchange.info/nsp