

# Social Housing and Open Space Thoughts

Sean Kim

## Summary of NYC Social Housing

- Public housing in NYC is currently undergoing a long-term maintenance crisis.
- A main point of contention is the deficit between the needed funds needed to repair or construct new social housing and the available resources from public organizations like NYCHA.
- Case studies and solutions have been proposed, including:
  - Privatization of social housing
  - Better Planning to Account for Environmental Effects
  - Tax Incentives for Alternative Financing Sources



Queensbridge Houses

## Issues Case Study: Elliott-Chelsea Housing

- Chelsea Housing highlights several issues with the public housing situation in NYC.
- Its infrastructure is in disarray, racking up over \$1 billion worth of repairs.
- NYCHA had juggled several options to help the residents:
  - Renovate the buildings for future usage.
  - Completely demolish the buildings and rebuild.
- The primary issue was finding the necessary fundings.
- There's also issues of funding and permitting (licensing).



## The Carolina (CBIPS Site Visit: 3/7/24)

- The Carolina contains 400 affordable housing residential units in East Harlem, Manhattan.
- The Carolina shows potential for affordable housing with amenities going beyond basic needs.
  - Amenities include a fitness center, garden courtyards, and accessible skyline views - good open spaces.
- It highlights the importance of continual guidance and investment, and not an upfront material payment.
  - An example standing out is the staff trained to supervise the fitness center for wandering children.
  - The maintenance of the gardens was reminiscent of conventional housing.
- Its location is ideal for affordable housing residents.
  - Close access to public transportation is a big reason.
- The Carolina shows that affordable housing goes not need to settle for less.



# Modular Construction

- Modular construction allows for swift construction at lower economic and environmental costs.
- Several companies already developed modular affordable housing in NYC and other locations.
- However, certain obstacles may impede its progressive use for NYC social housing:
  - The upfront costs to develop residential units may deter investors.
  - Local building codes and transportation logistics can become a hassle for establishing units.
  - The privatization of modular construction may be a deterrent for people who may prefer to keep social housing as public as possible.
- For modular construction to become a viable option:
  - Establish consistent plans for financing modular construction.
  - Have parties be more receptive to the possibility of using P3s.
  - Flexibility in general will enhance conduciveness of modular construction.



461 Dean Street

# Financing Status

- As a public organization, NYCHA receives little funds from the federal or city government.
- In an email from Joy Sinderbrand, the Senior Vice President for Capital Programs, it's explained that NYCHA works with nonprofits, elected officials, and the Public Housing Community Fund for grounds improvement.
- Most capital funding goes to critical needs such as hygiene and heat.
- Suggestions abound on how to garner more money for public housing:
  - Privatization of certain spaces
  - Business collaborations between housing residents and third parties
  - Tax Incentives

# Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces

- There have been initiatives to improve consideration for environmental sustainability and open spaces.
  - Public housing projects like the Carolina and Via Verde try to emphasize community connecting with nature.
- There still lies issues in maintenance and financing.
- At the moment, open spaces as a whole is rather disjointed and not well conducive to community well being.



[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dattner.com%2Fprojects%2Fview%2Fvia-verde-the-green-way%2F&psig=AOvVaw2it\\_fEb\\_B3g-DN21x\\_jYJ-&ust=1723074686014000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CB\\_EQjRxqFwoTCMjZiNvH4YcDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dattner.com%2Fprojects%2Fview%2Fvia-verde-the-green-way%2F&psig=AOvVaw2it_fEb_B3g-DN21x_jYJ-&ust=1723074686014000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CB_EQjRxqFwoTCMjZiNvH4YcDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE)

# Final Perspectives on Social Housing

- Social housing is at a standstill in terms of solutions and financing.
- The housing market, privatization-public struggles, and difficulties in fundings make long-term changes unlikely to implement.