



The Coalition to Protect Public Housing

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CHA Plan for Cabrini-Green Still not Complete

On Monday, June 20th, the Chicago Housing Authority held a press conference to announce a plan to build several hundred new units of public housing at Cabrini-Green. This plan is part of a 1996 law suit against the CHA by residents that resulted in 2000 with a Consent Decree between the CHA and Cabrini-Green residents. The Consent Decree allowed 1324 family units to be demolished in return for a total of over 700 new public housing units and 296 affordable units that could also house former public housing residents.

However, the new CHA plan will be short 235 public housing units required by the Consent Decree and there is currently no funding allocated for any further construction of these 235 public housing units. Despite the lack of a plan, land, and money for new public housing units to complete the Consent Decree, the CHA has announced it will begin the demolition of two buildings this week that are not covered by the Consent Decree.

Carol Steele, a Cabrini-Green resident, says,

“The CHA needs to fulfill the original agreement from the Consent Decree before it closes any more buildings. Before they start to move more people out, they need to finish what they started and build the 235 missing units from the Consent Decree that this new construction plan does not account for. The CHA is closing buildings but has no plans to allow for those residents to come back. We still have over 1000 families in Cabrini-Green but there are no plans in place for them to be able to return if they are forced to leave.”

The CHA does not have a resident approved plan for the remaining 2/3 of Cabrini Green. Terry Peterson, the CHA CEO, has been quoted saying, “We’re going to keep our word, residents are going to move out, but we’re going to make sure they move back.” How can he do this if he makes residents leave the community without having any plans in place for them to return?

Ms. Steele says, “The CHA needs to halt all demolition until it has a resident approved plan to rehab or rebuild public housing on the Cabrini-Green land for the residents of the remaining buildings. The CHA must not be allowed to continue to displace families from Cabrini-Green without first having a plan for replacement housing for them on the Cabrini-Green land. There is plenty of vacant land at Cabrini-Green that has not yet been allocated for new construction. The CHA needs to build first, and not displace residents. It seems like Martians have taken over the city-the neediest Chicagoans lack housing, health care and living wage jobs and the city is doing nothing for them.”

Deidre Brewster, a displaced former Cabrini-Green resident, says, “Under international law, it is a human rights violation to force families out of their communities. As the CHA displaces far more families than it builds new homes for, it is forcibly evicting families and violating their human rights. I would hope the money for my replacement housing has not gone to Terry Peterson’s 17th Ward Organization because there is no public housing there for me.”

Marvin Edwards, a Cabrini-Green resident and former resident manager of the William Green Homes, says, “Patrick Fitzgerald needs to step it up and start investigating CHA corruption. Everyone is benefiting from the transformation plan except for the majority of the residents who have to move out and never come back to their community.”

The CHA continues to pressure residents to leave the community and take Section 8 housing vouchers. Recent articles in the *Chicago Tribune* have shown that the Section 8 voucher plan often places residents in high crime, high poverty segregated neighborhoods in apartments with numerous code violations. The homeless shelters are overflowing this summer and the shelter system is facing a cut of 300 beds. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless won a lawsuit requiring homeless families to have first priority one public housing units but now that is no longer being honored by the CHA. There are not a lot of options for destitute families in Chicago.

For more information please contact Deidre Brewster at 773-329-9372.