

## Turning the Corner an update from Data You Can Use February 2018

On January 23, 2018, Data You Can Use (DYCU) joined the cross-site call of partners in the Urban Institute's Turning the Corner Project to learn how colleagues in Detroit, Buffalo, the Twin Cities, and Phoenix were doing on their efforts to monitor neighborhood change. Nationally, the project is supported by the Funders' Network- Federal Reserve Philanthropy Initiative. Locally, the project is supported by the Community Development Alliance with in-kind support from the Department of City Development, LISC, and MKE United. The project is aimed at: producing meaningful and more frequent measures of neighborhood dynamics; and facilitating informed community conversations to prevent displacement and equitably restore neighborhoods.

The first section of this report reflects some early thinking on the concept of neighborhood change and more specifically the term "gentrification." It addresses the challenge of documenting gentrification given mixed understandings, lack of good comparable cities, failure to account for normal geographic mobility and moving patterns, the resistance to using indicators of class. This section also introduces three other variables that deserve more attention—proximity to downtown and transit, lack of action, and neighborhood power. Discussion of these concepts will be included in subsequent updates. It should be noted that these are early thoughts based on an incomplete set of interviews and data and are offered not as conclusions but ideas for discussion and development.

The second section of this report provides an update on progress of the project in Milwaukee and the other cross-site cities. Finally, new and additional resources for those seeking to understand neighborhood change are included in Section 3. Questions, comments and contrary interpretations are welcome and can be sent to [Katie@datayoucanuse.org](mailto:Katie@datayoucanuse.org).

### Section 1. Gentrification: The Complexity of the Concept

While the use of the word "gentrification" is common, understanding of its meaning is not. Although much work has been done to document, describe and define the term, in common parlance it may be used in contradictory ways. For some, it may mean redevelopment, refurbishment, renovation and restoration while for others it means inflated prices, displacement, forced relocation, and a manifestation of racism. It is often used to express fear of change, uncertainty, and a feeling of being excluded from the decision-making process. Like McCarthy's accusations of "communism," many raise the specter of gentrification with little understanding or evidence of its presence. Several challenges arise in attempting to establish good evidence, however.



Comparability: Much of what has been written about gentrification stems from what has occurred in New York and San Francisco. While there are things to learn from such mega-metropolises, they are not generally good comparables for the City of Milwaukee. One tool that might be useful here is the [Peer City Identification Tool](#), offered by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, which identifies cities that cluster together on key indicators (equity, resilience, outlook and housing). The tool identifies cities that are experiencing similar trends or challenges across four areas.

**Equity** indicators consider a city's racial and socioeconomic composition. The indicators of this dimension are: Hispanic-white dissimilarity index, black-white dissimilarity index, poverty rate, changes in poverty rate and inequality, percent white and percent with a bachelor's degree. For Milwaukee, comparable cities on this dimension are: Atlantic City, NJ; Cleveland, OH; Dayton, OH; Detroit, MI; Flint, MI; Gary, IN; Patterson, NJ; Saginaw, MI; Trenton, NJ; and Youngstown, OH.

**Resilience** indicators describe economic conditions and labor market conditions. The indicators of this concept are: labor force participation, changes in labor force participation, labor share of manufacturing, median family income, and changes in both. For Milwaukee, comparable cities on this dimension are: Allentown, PA; Canton, NJ; Cincinnati, OH; Covington, KY; Euclid, OH; Memphis, TN; New Britain, CT; Vallejo, CA; and Winston-Salem, NC.

**Outlook** explores signs of a city's demographic and economic future and includes measures of: % foreign born, % population change, % of families with children, % of population 20-64, and population size. Milwaukee's comparable cities include: Kansas City, MO; Long Beach, CA; Memphis, TN; Oakland, CA; St. Paul, MN; Tucson, AZ; Tulsa, OK; and Virginia Beach, VA.

**Housing** measures affordability, tenure and age of housing stock. Variables include: % of housing units built before 1980, vacancy rate, home value to income ratio, homeownership rate, and % rent burdened households. Comparable cities are Allentown, PA; Binghamton, NY; Bridgeport, CT; Lancaster, PA; Reading, PA; Rochester, NY; Springfield, MA; Syracuse, NY; Utica, NY; and York, PA.

Note that there are only two cities, Memphis and Allentown, that are in the same category as Milwaukee, and on only one of the dimensions (resilience) are the three cities in the same category. More importantly and in **every case, the comparable cities vary by the dimension. In no case is Milwaukee in the same category as New York or San Francisco.**

Geographic Mobility: Beyond the challenge of identifying comparable cities, there is a challenge of distinguishing normal movement from displacement, and then displacement from gentrification. According to the US Census Bureau, nationally, nearly 40 million people per year move. In 2013, approximately 12% of the US population moved. We know that there is generally a high degree of geographic mobility in urban areas. A portion of this is explained by naturally occurring movement and there are some general patterns. For example, urban people move more than rural people. Most people move within the same county. Most people move for housing-related reasons (48%), followed by family-related reasons (30%), and job-related reasons (19%).

Whether measured by the Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the Current Population Survey (ASEC) or the American Housing Survey (AES), there are four main reasons for moving. (See references in Section 3) These are:

1. **Family-related** includes change in marital status, establishing one's own household, and other family reasons.
2. **Job-related** reasons include: retirement, loss of a job or looking for work, to reduce commute time or move closer to work, and transfer or to take a new job.
3. **Housing-related** reasons include wanting a better neighborhood/less crime, wanting to own, wanting cheaper housing, wanting a new or better apartment, and foreclosure or eviction.
4. **Other** includes natural disaster, change of climate, health reasons, to attend or leave college and other. (CPS ASES)



Both the ASEC and the AHS report reasons for moving. Nearly half of people who moved gave a housing-related reason. Trends include the following patterns:

- Males are more likely than females to move for job-related reasons.
- Young people 25-29 have the lowest percentage of housing-related reasons for moving.
- Black or African American respondents report the highest housing-related reasons for moving of any race.
- People with a bachelor's degree or advanced education have different reasons for moving than those with lower levels of educational attainment.
- Among all marital statuses, married respondents were least likely to move for a family-related reason.
- Job related reasons for moving are more common among employed civilians than unemployed individuals.
- Intra-county movers move more for housing-related reasons—if a move is instigated for a housing reason, such as “wanted a new or better home/ apartment” or “wanted to own home not rent,” or “foreclosure/eviction,” then moving to a new residence located within the same county seems likely. In fact, it may be preferable because the householder has personal knowledge of potential housing choices and neighborhoods in the area.
- Since 1999, three reasons consistently account for over 40% of a householder's decision-making
  - New or better apartment (20%)
  - Other family reason (11%)
  - Other housing reason (11%)

Gentrification assumes lower income people move when they are forced out by rising prices. But early interviews in Walker's Point and Brewers Hill reveal a range of other reasons.

**Long-Time Brewers Hill Resident:** *"Growing up I must have lived in more than 30 different houses in this neighborhood. That's what people did, they moved from one house to another, the plumbing was bad, the heat was bad, the neighbors were bad...we'd move."*

**Long-Time Walker's Point Resident:** *"Hispanic people are not moving out because white people are moving in. They moved because the housing stock is not good and they want a better house where their children can play in the yard. They are moving away from cockroaches just like anyone else would."*

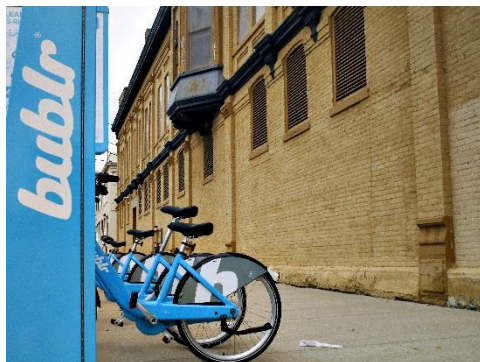
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So the questions remains: how do we account for what we know about people's reasons for moving in determining the extent or effect of gentrification?

Class: Beyond the issues of comparability and general geographic mobility, the term "gentrification" is more traditionally related to class than simply income or race. While some dismiss the concept of class as being equal to income, others take a more sociological or anthropological view and note that middle and upper class black and ethnic minorities are also part of the gentrification movement. Further, academics, artists and entrepreneurs are often early adopters in neighborhoods that are later labeled gentrified, and these groups have a status that may not be reflected in their income.



From its origins in England in the 1960's, the term referred to "people of good social position," in the UK, the class of people next below the nobility in position and birth, the privileged upper classes. While we shy away from the concept of class in the US, the indicators which are generally included in its



assessment might be informative here. Traditionally, the concept of class includes a consideration of occupation, education, income and wealth. Differences in wealth may be reflected in investments in housing, education and health care. Acknowledging that class and race are often closely intertwined, there are some who say gentrification is more about class than race and that what distinguishes gentrification from normal migration is the displacement of lower class populations with higher class populations.



In addition to these challenges, there are three other areas mentioned in interviews and focus groups that should be explored in greater detail in considering indicators of neighborhood change. These are; proximity to downtown and transit; disinvestment and lack of action; and community ownership and power-building. These will be explored in future updates.

## Section 2: Project Status: Cross-site Updates

**Milwaukee:** Data You Can Use completed the qualitative data collection for Walker’s Point including a focus group of longtime residents, and business-owner interviews. While notes are still being summarized, it is striking how long-time residents and business owners alike in Walker’s Point credit the early visionaries, the strong neighborhood organization, and an involved alderman in helping to balance the revitalization of the neighborhood while respecting the roots of the neighborhood. A discussion of the qualitative findings will occur with interested stakeholders in the first quarter of 2018. Interviews in Brewers Hill began the week of January 29th.



The policy advisor from the Mayor’s office has been interviewed and a roster of city-policy makers to interview has been developed. These interviews focus on the trajectory of policy that led to or affected neighborhood change in these neighborhoods.

Additionally, a photo-journal collection of key points mentioned in interviews has been developed by Casandra Leopold, an Urban Planning intern placed at Data You Can Use.

For the quantitative data, the Department of City Development (DCD) has received its market analysis and recommendations from the HR&A consultants in conjunction with the larger Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Design (ToD) Planning Study. The affordability and anti-displacement recommendations for Brewers Hill and Walker’s Point will inform the larger study. Separately, DCD has been assembling demographic and housing market data for all neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, to try and determine to what extent, if any, these neighborhoods have seen economic and racial displacement. This analysis, will be focused at the Census tract and shared with Data You Can Use. More formal analysis at the neighborhood level is being explored.

Like other communities, this work points to the need for:

- consistent definitions of gentrification, displacement and related terms,
- the identification of at least a preliminary list of strategies that might help to mitigate the risk of displacement,
- on-going and continued analysis, and
- consideration of the identification indicators that can be used to identify those neighborhoods or Census tracts that may be at potential future risk of gentrification and displacement.

**Buffalo**—Three neighborhoods that boarder Downton are included in the analysis in this city and focus groups involving 56 people have been conducted and transcribed and are being analyzed using Atlas software. Quantitative data is being analyzed at the census block level.

**Detroit**—This city started the project earlier than other sites and will be releasing their report in June. They found analysis at the census block level to be too low. They are exploring how different indicators might be helpful to different audiences. For example, what indicators resonate with residents? What indicators resonate with developers? What indicators resonate with policy makers? What indicators resonate with funders? They are using a colored heat map to show “susceptibility” to gentrification. Similarly, they are asking what graphics, maps, photos and videos appeal to different audiences.

Like Milwaukee, they are asking what is the role of neighborhood organizations in promoting and managing change, and what measures might there be of the “strength of the organization” and how might this be assessed?

**Phoenix**—The cross-site partner in Phoenix is mapping 15 variables to indicate potential likelihood of neighborhood displacement and is developing a web-based product to reflect change in businesses. They are using Google street view in three neighborhoods to look at types of business and like Milwaukee, they are asking questions about how one distinguishes normal urban economic development from displacement?

**Twin Cities**—The qualitative focus group work will occur in March with an early report in April. The NNIP partner is convening a group of policy makers to discuss what they are doing to slow the gentrification process. Additionally, they are exploring the property owned by absentee landlords and the presence of social service agencies. The quantitative data are being tracked with housing data and avoiding American Community Survey (ACS) data. Quantitative data will also include property sales of single-family homes, rental rates, and homestead status. The data show an increase in the rate of change from non-homestead to homestead status. The Twin Cities partner has purchased NET data, a Federal Dunn & Bradstreet- like longitudinal data base and are also using an update of the Lisa Bates/ Portland State index informed by new versions from Chicago, Seattle, and Berkeley. (see references in Section 3) The approach will use neighborhood level boundaries but include data at individual tracts to show the range at a sub-neighborhood level. They also pay for the Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LEHD) quarterly report.

## Section 3: Additional Resources

### Noted in Cross-site call and/or referenced in this update.

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p20-574.pdf> Why people move census and ACES data re geographical mobility Reason for Moving: 2012 to 2013

[Can a community land trust give long-term residents a foothold in a changing neighborhood?](#) This is a recent blog by Mychal and a colleague about DC:

[Evictionland: More and more Americans experience eviction](#), and gentrification is partly to blame (Curbed article - quotes Rob Silverman from the Buffalo team and our center director). primary location is a DC suburb but covers evictions more generally and briefly mentions other cities like Buffalo and Milwaukee.

[Mary Pattillo's](#) second book, [Black on the Block](#) (University of Chicago Press 2007) focused on gentrification and public housing transformation in North Kenwood - Oakland on Chicago's South Side. The book developed the concept of "middlemen" and "middlewomen," the roles that black professionals play in working alternatively to mediate or exacerbate racial and class inequality."

<https://displacement-risk.housingstudies.org/> - DePaul displacement index

<http://www.urbandisplacement.org/> - Berkeley displacement index

<https://chicagotonight.wttw.com/2018/01/09/how-gentrification-takes-shape-across-chicago-neighborhood-gentrification-as-political-debate>

[http://www.nfg.org/democratic\\_development\\_report](http://www.nfg.org/democratic_development_report) democratic development for thriving communities, Neighborhood Funders Group

Ihrke, David, 2014 Reasons for Moving:2012 to 2013 Current population Reports p20-574 US Census Bureau, Washington D.C.

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago [Peer City Identification Tool](#)

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Photos in this document taken by Cassandra Leopold of the neighborhoods of interest, for Data You Can Use.

**If you have questions or comments about this report or the project in general, please contact**

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**Thank you.**