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Life Tomorrow: Living Through the Redevelopment of the Heartside Area

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Life Tomorrow:
Living Through the Redevelopment of the Heartside Area

Mackenzi Anne Huyser

Grand Valley State University
Thank you to the residents of the Heartside neighborhood who were so gracious in allowing me to speak with them about their experiences. You were my very best teachers and should receive full credit for the following paper.

Thank you to my thesis committee- Professor Jerry Johnson, Professor Joan Borst, and Mr. Mike Dekker. Your encouragement and experience working with people made my task of developing and creating this paper a wonderful experience.

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This paper is dedicated to my teacher who inspired and challenged me to study urban sociology and how that impacts social work. Your caring nature, Christ-like attitude and committed approach to sociology have had a tremendous impact on my life and plans for the future.
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Abstract

The Heartside area is located in the central city of Grand Rapids and is bounded by the streets of Fulton, Wealthy, Ionia and Lafayette. The neighborhood has seen a number of developmental changes in the last seven years. These changes include structural changes in buildings and a change in the clientele who visit and live in the area. The development of the VanAndel Arena, in 1995, brought many new restaurants and stores into the neighborhood. An area occupied by vacant buildings, homeless shelters, and limited growth, Heartside has seen a rapid, intense period of redevelopment. The current residents in the Heartside area are confronted by this new development. They are witnessing new changes, and new faces in the neighborhood. The neighborhood which was once considered by some to be “too risky” to drive by, is now being inhabited by those individuals. The neighborhood is seeing more activity, new development and a new future. The residents have been affected by the change in the neighborhood. They are aware of the changes that are happening in the neighborhood and are aware of the concerns about their place in the neighborhood. Many of the locals view the structural renewal as a positive improvement, but are unsure of its impact on them as residents. Urban planners and other experts hope to see continued developmental changes take place in the Grand Rapids area, but few have asked the important questions concerning the residents and their place in the Heartside neighborhood.
Life Tomorrow: Living Through the Redevelopment of the Heartside Area

Introduction

The Heartside area, located in the central city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has undergone rapid redevelopment since 1995. This is an exploratory study of the low-income residents in the area and how the changes have affected them in their personal lives. The Heartside neighborhood houses many low-income residents in rental and subsidized housing through the organization Dwelling Place, Incorporated. Connections with various residents in the neighborhood were made through contacts at Degage Ministries, an affordable coffeehouse that serves residents of Heartside. The sample included residents currently residing in the area who have lived there at least six months. The sample was conducted by “snowball sampling”, using connections with residents to lead to other residents who were willing to share their experiences. These residents are referred to as “key informants”, and considered experts in telling their stories. Ten key informants were interviewed and their testimonies, in their own words, are shared in the following story.

The following set of informal questions was discussed with the key informant at the initial meeting:

What is the individual's history in the neighborhood?

What changes has the individual seen in the last three years in the neighborhood?

How have these changes affected the individual?

What does the individual think of the changes in the neighborhood?

How safe does the individual feel in the neighborhood?
How do the people involved in the new developments react to the individual in the neighborhood?

What does the individual think will happen in the next few years to the Heartside neighborhood? The discussions were taped and then transcribed using the key informants' own words. These testimonies were only edited for punctuation and clarity for the reader.

Data collection consisted of three steps that included interviewing, participant observation, and analyzing documents. During regular visits to the neighborhood key informants were interviewed about their experiences prior to the many development changes, and the differences in their present experiences. From these contacts other contacts were made through "snowball sampling". Each key informant completed the consent form necessary for the study. Open-ended, in-depth interviews with key informants occurred on different occasions. Initial interviews were held, which lasted between two and three hours, and follow-up contacts occurred on an as needed basis. Documents were analyzed as a process in the research, including newspaper articles, written reports and other documents relevant to understanding the developmental changes in the neighborhood.

Data was analyzed using inductive logic. Based on information received from key informants, researcher observations and interactions, certain assumptions were made. Examples from these interactions were used to support findings, as well as point out discrepancies in findings and information received. An attempt has been made to account for results and underlying assumptions by being aware and sensitive to the researcher's predictions and personal viewpoint. This process of introspection was an important and
necessary part of the research. The paper is structured according to different chapters that cover the information received from the key informants. The chapters include a brief introduction, followed by the stories of the residents, and then conclude with a discussion of the information presented.

This paper is an attempt to share the stories of the Heartside area residents, so their voices may be heard. It was written for those residents, community members, social service providers and students who are learning about the discrepancies among class and race in our society. Many of the residents in Heartside face the problems of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, mental illness and other social ills. They know the problems they face everyday and have survived, despite those problems.

What is our society’s obligation to the low-income residents who are living in this neighborhood? What are the long-term effects of gentrification and revitalization in the Heartside area? History has taught us many lessons about the divisions between class and race, and how those divisions destroy neighborhoods, communities and cities. Our obligation is to advocate for inclusion in the Heartside area, where mixed-income levels and diverse populations are not judged by the color of their skin or their financial situation, but by the unique contributions and strengths they bring to the community. We must find a balance between advocating for these residents while tackling the difficult social problems facing our nation. Advocating for better opportunities for the mentally ill, homeless, unemployed and uneducated members of our society is also a necessary part of our obligation. Prevention of these social problems is an important part of the long-term plan that needs to be addressed. Hopefully, this paper will foster discussion in
the Heartside area and in other areas about how these social problems can be addressed, 
in order to create a better society for those who are considered undesirables.
Chapter One- History of the Heartside Area

The chapter begins with an overview of the history of the Heartside area. Much of the information in this overview was taken from a report written for a Small Business Management Class at Grand Valley State University. Their information came from Herbert J. Brinks, who has among his other work at Calvin College, developed a history of the Heartside Neighborhood.

The Heartside neighborhood is located in the central city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Bounded by Fulton Street on the north, Wealthy Street on the south, Ionia Avenue on the west and Lafayette Avenue on the east, the neighborhood is a compact community center. These boundaries were selected, in the 1800's, because of natural boundaries such as railroad tracks and the expressway on the west, and because of different structural characteristics from the other downtown neighborhoods. The Heartside area was once a low-lying flatland that had an important relationship with local transportation systems. The railroad was located in the center of the district. An inter-urban railroad also served the area in the late 1800's. When the U.S. 131 Interchange was built this completed the cycle of transportation that had been developed as central to the Heartside district. Hotels were built in response to the central uses of Heartside and this resulted in a multi-purpose area composed of residential and manufacturing buildings. The district houses 72 buildings constructed between 1880 and 1925, that were associated with civic and business leaders prominent in society at the time.

In the 1870's most of the workforce in the area was male, single and mobile. They worked on the railways, docks and in the warehouses. By 1890, there were six rail lines running out of Union Station, with nearly 76 trains running on a single day by 1918.
Also lining Ionia Avenue, were seventy warehouses servicing the furniture industry. As a result, the need for housing grew and by 1890 the area was able to house up to 3,000 residents in hotels along Division Avenue in the Heartside area.

As history unfolded in the Heartside area, changes resulted in three transitions in the neighborhood from the 1920's to the 1960's. These changes included upgrades in manufacturing, developments in transportation, and in the residents. In 1960, the railway station was destroyed in order to build the U.S. 131-exit ramp. Transportation priorities in the area changed from railroads to automobile use, resulting in the loss of jobs for many of the workers in the Heartside area. Due to the loss of jobs in the railroad sector and the upgrades in the manufacturing jobs, workers were not in high demand and the unemployment rate in the area jumped. This also resulted in the loss of business for hotels and retailers in the area, causing a wave of failed businesses within the Heartside district. As a result, the buildings were not occupied and began to experience structural decay. The hotels that remained in the area no longer served the working class but began to rely on those most familiar with poverty. This included migrant workers and the physically disabled. Deinstitutionalization of mental hospitals in the 1960's and 1970's also had a tremendous impact on the area. Mental patients were not given transitional housing but were simply released to the streets with no assistance. Many became homeless and lived in the Heartside area. Following the Vietnam War, many veterans returned and had difficulty finding jobs and housing. Many of these veterans also sought refuge on the streets and in the Heartside area.
John (60's)

Today there is no downtown, no shopping. John is unsure of why they took it all away from the central downtown area. He remembers dime stores and other shops downtown, on each end of the city. There are no other entertainment places downtown, the movies even have moved out of town. John speaks with regret that these stores and other activities have moved. He does not have the chance to visit the places since they have moved out of town. His only form of transportation is the bus.

Discussion

The dramatic changes that occurred in the Heartside area between the 1920's and the 1970's caused the stunted growth and changes in the physical characteristics of the area. This trend of servicing the low-income and undesirables has continued in the Heartside area through the 1990's. Funding priorities have fluctuated during the decades, but the stability of the neighborhood in terms of the characteristics of the residents has remained the same. Looking at the history of the area and the major changes in the nation during this time, it is easy to see how the neighborhood has been impacted. With the restructuring of jobs, the loss of vitality in the area, deinstitutionalization, and the end of the Vietnam War, the Heartside area was faced with a majority of the social problems in society. The area and the city were not prepared to deal with the array of problems in the neighborhood, so they were ignored by those entities.

Today the city is faced with the problems it left unsolved. Human service providers were the only ones who picked up the pieces left by this eruption of social problems in the neighborhood. Today they are left with little power as the city attempts
to carry out its own agenda in the neighborhood. The area again must deal with an eruption of redevelopment and rapid growth. History has shown us how well areas respond to rapid change and how this causes a great disruption to the activities already occurring in the neighborhood. The city is not prepared to deal with the social problems in the area because in the past it left the area once those problems began. It is only a matter of time before the developers and the city encounter some of the social problems and the system will fail the residents of the Heartside area.

Many of the residents hope to have the Heartside area that they once remembered; an area that was occupied by working residents, filled with retail stores, hotels and the other vitality of city life. However, this was when the area had a thriving furniture manufacturing industry, growing transportation systems, and retail establishments that were supported by workers in the area. The businesses in the Heartside area will be replaced by white-collar jobs, upscale restaurants and other high cost retail establishments. Once these changes take place, the residents who are in the area will not be able to frequent these establishments because of their lower economic standard of living. Residents will see more people and more activity in the area, but they will also see themselves being pushed out of the area by higher costs of living, fewer available services and fewer establishments that serve their immediate needs.
Chapter Two- Residents in the Area

According to the 1990 Census Profile, the Oldtown-Heartside neighborhood had a population of approximately 1,552 residents. The number of residents had grown from the 1980 census that cited approximately 1,225 residents in the neighborhood. The 1990 census profile also cited the racial profile in the neighborhood as being 66.3 percent White, 30.0 percent Black, 0.4 percent Asian, 2.4 percent American Indian, 2.4 percent Hispanic, and 0.9 percent Other races. The median age of the residents in the area was cited as 39.9 years old (Grand Rapids Neighborhood Profiles, 1990). These figures show a basic picture of the physical makeup of the residents in the neighborhood called Heartside. Their personal stories follow:

John (60's)

He talks of his horses when he was young. He grew up in a farming community in the Stanton area. The closest city was nine miles away. After he lost his farm, John worked construction and was responsible for building stores during the 1960's. He worked for ten years and has worked on construction sites in over thirteen states.

He speaks some of his family and the life he had with them. He speaks highly of his five daughters and their accomplishments. His marriage lasted 28 years, ending in divorce in 1989. He had no place to go after the marriage ended, his wife left him with nothing; there was nothing he could do about it. As a result he lived on the street. He suffered from frostbite when he first became homeless. He was able to survive; some people have not been able to do that. His attitude toward life is not one of anger or violence but rather
he just says it is something that happens. It took a long time for this healing to come; it has taken him 10 years.

John only sees working people at lunchtime in this neighborhood. He wishes there were more stores so people would come down to visit the area. It would take big name brand stores to come into the area and bring people back into the neighborhood. He thought when they built Degage it would be an open restaurant all day long and people would come in there, regular people, but they don’t come there. He only sees the regular people in the taverns and nightclubs. If the homeless people had money they could get into the clubs and other places, but they don’t look good. A lot of the restaurants won’t let people in because they cause trouble. There are not many other places to sit in the neighborhood. All that is left to do is to walk around. There is nothing in the neighborhood for the low-income people to do, only for the working people.

“The people who worked at the VanAndel Arena quit right after they started. There are jobs all over, restaurants have been hiring all the time, but the people who live here don’t want to work. Parents are not teaching their kids how to work or teaching them manners. The residents in the neighborhood have not been taught that they need to work. The homeless can get six meals a day if they want to eat that often. Other people have to work to get all those things. The services in Grand Rapids are too good that the residents do not have to work. It is sad that they have not used their minds. Many people wish they could go to work and these guys down here don’t want to go to work. If you’ve
been on the streets for a long time and are used to living in this way it is hard to get back out.”

The government tries to forget the homeless. People don’t go where there are homeless. In America we should not have homeless, but you really cannot do something if they don’t want the help. Some of the people have been homeless for so long they don’t know any different. He knows a guy who has been in the mission for 18 years. All he knows is drinking and drugs. You can’t feel sorry for them if they don’t want to get out of it. He was tired of it and he got out of it. People say they drink to lose their troubles but then they have more troubles. The state shouldn’t have to pay for those people. Too many people come to Grand Rapids because of the services that are available. He was homeless for five years, out on the streets, that was enough for him to make him work.

Alisha (30’s)
She has lived in the Grand Rapids area for five years, she moved from Illinois with a friend. She has lived in the Heartside neighborhood for all those years. When she first moved to the area she got a job at Wendy’s and became an assistant manager, she really enjoyed her job and enjoyed working. She was into a number of positive things when she first moved to the area. She was involved in church and a number of other positive activities in the neighborhood.

Adam (40’s)
He was born in Grand Rapids in 1955. He moved to Cleveland in 1991 and was there for seven years. While living in Cleveland, he was robbed of food stamps and was stabbed
in the back. His family, who then lived out of state, supported him, got him money and moved him back to Grand Rapids. When he moved back to Grand Rapids he lived in the mission for a few days before finding an apartment. Now he lives in the Dwelling Place Inn, in the Heartside area, and has been there for two years. Many of the people living in the Dwelling Place Inn have had past alcohol or drug use and some were addicts at one time.

His personal history is one that is not a positive experience. At one point he was ready to give up on life and was ready to quit. One of his family members betrayed him and he turned to drugs. This was the point in his life when he ended up homeless and living in the mission.

**Sarah (40's)**

Sarah has lived in the Heartside neighborhood since 1992. She spent time working at the Grand Rapids Press but lost her job because of improvements in technology. She has a disability and cannot find a job that will support her; most companies see her as a liability rather than an asset. She works as a volunteer now. Sarah was almost to the point where she was on the street but then was taken into the Morton House. She has had a number of problems but focuses on her faith as the reason for pulling through. She volunteers in the clothing store twice a week and is also a street minister in the neighborhood.

She grew up in the country on a farm outside of Grand Rapids. Her family was very poor, living mainly off what they grew. Her mother tried to keep the kids in the country as long as possible in order to keep them out of trouble. Sarah came into the city in the
1960's and began walking the streets. She used to hangout in the dimestores in the downtown area with her friends. She remembers visiting a bowling alley where they used to have a lot of fun. Then the bus service was cut back and the idea of the mall was introduced; as a result, a lot of the stores and businesses in the area left.

When she first moved into the area she got involved in a church and the minister really spoke to her. It is hard for her to talk about how much of a difference she has made in her life. She knows she has to get past being angry about her situation and the waste she is seeing with other people in the neighborhood. The ministry has helped her recover from her alcohol addiction.

Sarah sees a lot of people coming in and out of the neighborhood. There is; however, a core group of people in the neighborhood. Some people just stay for a while in the neighborhood and then they leave. She is witnessing to new people in the neighborhood all the time. Usually she sees them in the missions or in the soup kitchens. She missed some of the people she used to see in the neighborhood. She thinks some of the older ones have died or moved away. The neighborhood really changes. People come for a while and then they get their lives straightened out and move elsewhere. A lot of the people in the neighborhood are also mentally ill, having been forced onto the streets when mental institutions closed. It is really sad because now they are left on their own and have no support. A lot of the people need to be taught basic skills. People need to be taught how to do things, such as housekeeping skills. People need to have stability and stay in the places where they are. If they are having trouble keeping their place clean
they need to find out why, they shouldn’t just be thrown out but they need to be taught those skills. Heartside Manor thinks they are a throwaway place, all the people who come there are just throw aways. The drug dealers live there and they are the ones who are hurting the place. If you live in that place you go crazy because there are so many people and so many things going on in that place. A lot of these people are so fragile from things that have happened to them in their lives and when they live in a place like this it is so hard on them.

Some of the people who live here are angry, they are poor and they know that they cannot do anything about their situation. When people are addicted to alcohol and drugs and have been a part of that addiction for so long, there is nothing they can do about it. Many people are very sad, they have no support, and their jobs often end quickly. They need people to encourage them and stand by them. The environment that these people have been put in is dirty. How are they going to stay clean if they are being brought back into the dirty neighborhood where they first started their bad behaviors?

**Charles (60’s)**

He has lived in the area for fifteen years. He was married when he first came to the area. Things happened, and his ex-wife moved to Austin when she divorced him. He lived in the Eastown area first and then moved into Heartside Ministries and into Dwelling Place. He served in the National Guard until his back got bad, and he had a stroke and they finally let him go. Since then he has served as treasurer on the Board of the Heartside Neighborhood Association for two and a half years. He takes care of money and writes
reports for the Association. The Association became the umbrella for the Hard Times Café, and he took over the accounting job for the café also.

Jim (40’s)

He has lived in the neighborhood for one year. He has lived in Grand Rapids for his whole life. He graduated from Central High School in 1971. He lives in an apartment on Commerce Avenue. His housing is cheaper than Section 8 housing, but he does not live in Section 8 housing. The services he uses include restaurants, the gas station, and the Laundromat. He also uses the Heartside Clinic and Heartside Ministries. All the services he needs are in the neighborhood.

He works second shift at The Amway Grand Plaza as a shuttle driver. He likes his job a lot and has worked there for about a month. He enjoys meeting a lot of people from around the country. People in the area are able physically and mentally to work and should be getting jobs. They are not working because they are always the first ones in line to get food at the soup kitchens. They never have to roam the streets because they always have food. There are jobs available for people to work in the neighborhood. They do not work because the services are too good to them. It is a mindset for these people. Right now they think it is all right because they are getting the things they need. They do not need to work and they do not have any money because they do not need any. They also have nothing to do and this makes the crime rate go up in the neighborhood. There are a lot of people who are mentally and physically challenged and even they should be working at least two hours a day. There is too much laziness. The people in
the neighborhood are half his age and they should be working. There are jobs available in the restaurants, hotels, and at the VanAndel. They know how to eat and they should be able to wash dishes. There is a big difference between those who work and those who do not. Look at Hope Network, those people are physically challenged and they can work. These people can work also.

He appreciates the fact that people are remodeling the buildings in the area, it makes him feel better that people think the buildings are good. He thinks there are enough businesses in the area. The people in the neighborhood right now are positive and it is getting better. Eight out of ten people in the neighborhood are good people. The people who live here now will interact with the rich people in terms of cleaning up after them and providing services to these people. The rich people know someone has to do these things for them and he does not think this will be a problem. It is good that people are able to provide services to the rich. People will be able to blend in more and interact more with the rich in the area.

Discussion

In 1990, the labor force in the Heartside area was composed of 645 people. Out of this number, 34.9 percent were female and 36 percent were unemployed, 13.3 percent of jobs were in the field of manufacturing, where as the percentage of persons 25 years and older who were high school grads or higher was 62 percent (Grand Rapids Neighborhood Profile, 1990). These percentages leave a high rate of discrepancy in the numbers reported and the interviews conducted. Many of the jobs that are available for persons without a college degree are in outlying areas of the central city and require
reliable transportation. Not only is parking an issue in the central area of the city, but also the added cost of an automobile is a concern for many of these residents. Of the workforce in the Heartside area, 28.1 percent commuted to work by auto alone, 23.7 percent carooled, and 15.6 percent used public transit (Grand Rapids Neighborhood Profile, 1990).

Job availability and transportation are only a few of the issues many of these residents encounter when looking for work. Significant personal issues also create barriers to finding work. In 1990, 20.8 percent of the Heartside population consisted of persons 16 years and older with a mobility or self-care limitation (Grand Rapids Neighborhood Profile, 1990). Many residents have criminal records, including felony drug and prostitution charges. These sanctions often make them unattractive to potential employers, on top of the other barriers they present.

The VanAndel Arena brought a number of jobs to the area that eliminated the transportation barrier. Jobs are given on a weekly basis, with interviews held on the spot through a temporary staffing agency. These jobs are mainly third shift jobs of maintenance service positions. Some residents have been faithful employees at the arena while others have been inconsistent and have not continued as employees.

The residents in the area are low-income or homeless. Many of the homeless residents stay in the shelters or on the streets. The residents are throwaways or undesirables according to the standards set by society. Many are receiving disability payments, Veterans benefits, or Section 8 subsidies. These payments are enough to pay the small amount of rent needed to live in their apartments and/or pay for personal items. Many of the residents have been and still are drug addicts. They have been in and out of
treatment facilities, and for one reason or another, have found themselves back on the street. For these residents, much of their monthly subsidy is spent on their addictions. Other residents who live in the area are mentally ill. They may be receiving services in the Heartside area and find this area to be one of acceptance compared to other communities in the city.

Few of the residents have support systems beyond Heartside, such as family or friends. They have found the Heartside area to be a community of people much like themselves. The residents are not judged by their addictions, their mental illnesses or financial means when they are in the community. Rather, they are accepted for who they are without question. They have acquaintances in the area who are easy to talk to over a meal or a cup of coffee. Many of the residents are lonely and have suffered through numerous losses, including their own sense of hope. By living with others who are hopeless they are not as frustrated by their losses and have found a way to hide feelings of hopelessness. As one resident put it, “I don’t give a damn if the city is growing if I’m not growing with it.” These residents have lost hope and their drive to grow because of the abuse they have suffered in their personal lives and neglect from the system. They have come to expect the system to fail them, and they do not see the purpose in fighting for change.

Many of the residents in the Heartside area do not see themselves as worthwhile members of society. This makes them a target for exploitation. The Heartside area is a prime target for redevelopment because of the low property values, tax breaks as part of the Renaissance Zone, historical structures, and the interest of upper-class individuals. The residents in Heartside will not prevent this expansion and takeover by the upper class
from happening. They have known the system to fail them and do not want to be set up for yet another failure. They also know that there is no place for their voice to be heard. The residents will stay as long as they are able, and then when they must move, they will find another area that will provide them the services they need to survive.
**Chapter Three- Housing in the Area**

Dwelling Place, Incorporated, is a private, non-profit organization established in 1980. The organization’s mission is to “develop, maintain, and preserve safe and affordable housing for residents in the central city of Grand Rapids” (Small Business Management Class, 1998). Dwelling Place’s history includes rapid growth during the early 1980’s, followed by financial strain in 1987. For two years, Dwelling Place worked to change their credibility as an organization and sought outside help from United Way to seek solutions for serving the low-income and homeless residents in Grand Rapids. In 1989, Dwelling Place restructured their services and renewed their quest to serve residents in the community. In 1990, the organization began to serve in three different areas, including economic development, social services, and spiritual growth (Small Business Management Class, 1998).

In 1997, Dwelling Place had a total of $25 million in real estate assets. The number of housing units that were managed by the organization increased from 6 to 14, which included a total of 532 units, and 293 units of Section 8 housing. A large number of housing facilities owned by Dwelling Place are located in the downtown area of Grand Rapids, in the Heartside neighborhood.

Many of the residents in the Heartside area do reside in housing made available by Dwelling Place, Incorporated. Today, there are more than 600 units available to the poor, elderly and disabled living in the area. In 1982, the Dwelling Place Inn was established, with 87 units of housing available to low-income residents. In 1983, Weston apartments were opened, with 190 units of housing. In 1987, My Sister’s House was opened, with 19 units of housing available to mothers and their children. Liz’s House
opened in 1990, with 5 units of housing. And in 1995, the Herkimer Apartments opened, with 122 units of housing for low-income residents (Roelofs, 2000). For the residents who do live in their own apartments in the Heartside area, Dwelling Place, Incorporated, has made the difference. Without this subsidized housing they would be living in shelters or on the streets. Dwelling Place, Incorporated, has raised the standard of living for these residents, as well as given them a sense of pride in their living space. Many of the residents have survived the streets and poverty, and each of their stories is different.

**John (60’s)**

He pays $79 a week for a room at the YMCA. Section 8 housing is available, but the people don’t understand you still have to pay rent, so they end up losing their place. An employment place would help them and encourage them to work and get money and feel better about themselves. People don’t think they have to work, but John believes they do if they want to feel good about themselves.

**Mike (40’s)**

Mike has lived in the neighborhood for about seven years; he came in May of 1992. He has resided at the Herkimer Hotel, which is now owned by Dwelling Place. He also lived in the Calumet Apartments above God’s Kitchen. Dwelling Place is responsible for most of the housing in the neighborhood, and most of the residents receive Section 8 housing. In this program, the government pays two-thirds of the rent. The rental section of the area is mainly covered by Section 8 housing.
Adam (40's)

He lives in a one-bedroom apartment. About 85 people live in the Dwelling Place Inn. Some of the interactions in the apartments are positive, but he does see a lot of the men going after the girls for sexual interest and these interactions are often negative.

Services in the neighborhood that he uses include Degage, God's Kitchen, restaurants in the area, and Grand Valley Nurses who visit the Herkimer Hotel. A nurse also visits the Dwelling Place on Tuesdays. Other Housing and Urban Development (HUD) services include low-income housing for many of the residents. These are subsidized for Section 8 housing, at $342 per room/month. The economy has reached its height with inflation and the facilities they offer don't sustain the value of worth. He knows the room is not worth that amount of money, but to keep the neighborhood alive they have to keep people in the room. A lot of the money goes to pay for security and case managers at the Dwelling Place. Because people could not afford to live there HUD had to take over the payments through the Section 8 program.

The new apartments will charge $600-$700 per month and people will not be able to stay in the area. As people begin to clean up the area the rent costs will rise and people will not be able to afford the rising rent costs. Even at his skill level, his income does not provide enough to survive. People want to work to get ahead but they know they will not be able to make it with the small amounts of money they receive from their employers. There are also too many barriers to working for many of the people who live in the area. The problem is in society itself. It is a self-defeating system where the people dictate the
prices and money, and then this dictates the lifestyle. Those who do not fit into that lifestyle are not getting ahead. People who are low-income are beat down and often controlled in the system.

**Theresa (20’s)**

She has lived in the neighborhood for four years. The neighborhood has gotten a lot better: she likes living in the neighborhood because it is so close to downtown. You can walk downtown and there are a lot of shops that are starting to fill up more. It is a different neighborhood because there are different kinds of living places and more apartments, as opposed to houses, in the neighborhood. She knows a few people in the neighborhood; because of the type of housing a lot of people come and go in the neighborhood. There is not really a neighborhood feel in the area. She uses the grocery store and gets small things there; otherwise, for major shopping she goes outside of the neighborhood. There are a lot of services in the area, especially for low-income people, such as health services, food places, hospital services. She would like to see Division Avenue fill up with shops and other stores, to fill up all the old buildings, even the types of places that are on Ionia Avenue. She doesn’t know how it would work to put shopping right on top of where all the homeless people are, that might be hard. The neighborhood has cleaned up some since the stores moved in. She notices more people coming through the neighborhood, but in terms of new people in the neighborhood she thinks it is about the same crowd as before. It is not much of a neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods.
Discussion

As this area continues to undergo physical transformation and structural changes, the economic development in the area also continues to experience growth. The property assessments in the area have close to doubled in the last three years, from $15.8 million in 1995 to $28.6 million in 1998 (Small Business Management Class, 1998). Authorities from the Downtown Development Authority expect a similar increase in the coming years. The housing situation may have an impact on the residents living in the area as the economic growth continues in the next few years.

With the pending development of new housing in the old Ferguson Hospital, Dwelling Place is continuing to be an active force of change in the neighborhood. The organization hopes to have it completed by the year 2001. These housing units will be called the Ferguson Heartside Community Resource Center, and will provide 110 units available to low-income residents (Roelofs, 2000). As the neighborhood continues to undergo change and upper class residents move into the area, the success of this project will depend on the attitude and cooperation of developers, city officials and residents. If the goal is to promote mixed-income housing in the neighborhood, both the low-income and upper class residents must be committed to that vision. If Dwelling Place, Inc., receives offers for their property their mission to provide affordable housing to the Heartside area will come into question. The balance of providing services and the affordability of those services in a rapidly growing area will be of great importance for this organization.

The Federal programs that serve the homeless and low-income residents are at risk of being reduced according to federal budget cuts (National Coalition for the
Homeless, personal communication, June 14, 1999). In the year 2000, it is anticipated that over $20 billion will be cut from the federal budget; much of this effecting programs that directly serve the residents of the Heartside area. The Labor-Health and Human Services-Education budget are anticipating cuts as high as $11 billion. The Veterans’ Affairs, and Housing and Urban Development programs are expecting cuts as high as $9 billion (National Coalition for the Homeless, personal communication, June 14, 1999). These potential program cuts will impact the residents in a way that could reduce programs such as Section 8, HUD McKinney, substance abuse block grants, and Health Care for the Homeless. The housing market in the Heartside area is dependent upon funding from these specific sources. As the federal budget fluctuates, residents of the area will be adversely effected.

Many of the residents in the Heartside area are veterans or are receiving reduced housing expenses as a result of Section 8 funding. Although Dwelling Place, Incorporated, has committed to continuing to serve the low-income residents in the Heartside area, the federal government’s promise may not be the same. Housing is an important issue, especially to the homeless and low-income residents. Many residents who are not covered under these federal assistance programs are paying much more than the anticipated amount for housing. The Office of Housing and Urban Development recommends that individuals should pay approximately 30% of their income toward housing costs. Many people with low paying jobs and those who are unemployed are exceeding this amount. By paying more into their housing costs and not investing that money into permanent housing, residents are being pushed further into poverty.
The low-income residents in the Heartside area are aware of these concerns and know what the possible implications of reduced federal funding and limited housing available from Dwelling Place, Inc., may mean for their personal situation. However, they have not been able to advocate for themselves based on these potential changes. The service providers must empower the residents to advocate for themselves. The service providers know that these housing services are needed for the residents, but without the residents actively pursuing and advocating their own future, the situation may change for the worse. Service providers, residents and developers must meet together to discuss the housing implications for the neighborhood. Without a commitment from both sides to create mixed-income housing, the neighborhood will again face an unpredictable future.
Chapter Four- Crime in the Area

Crime is a concern for the residents living in the Heartside area. Crime is also a concern for individuals visiting the Heartside area, as it is perceived to be a high crime area in the central city. Causes of concern related to crime may be due to a lack of proper lighting along the streets and unoccupied buildings. With the large number of people living in the area, a significant number of whom are unemployed, many residents can be seen walking the streets during the day and early evening hours. This can also give visitors a feeling of insecurity.

Visitors, however, are not the only ones who can be victims of crime in the area. Many of the women living in the area may resort to prostitution or become victims of violent crimes. Drugs on the street are prevalent in the Heartside area. Often women who are addicted to drugs turn to prostitution as a means of supporting their drug habit. As a result, this frequently leads to being arrested, furthering the cycle of poverty and hopelessness in these women living in the Heartside area.

Poverty is also a major contribution to crime in the area. In 1979, the median household income in the area was $4,689. Eleven years later, in 1990, the median household income was $5,988 (Grand Rapids City Planning Department, 1978, 1998). With high unemployment rates and low levels of income, many of the residents submit to the temptation of crime. The level of poverty in an area often positively correlates with the amount of crime and drug use by the number of people living in poverty. The residents who were interviewed in this story have all experienced some level of crime in the Heartside neighborhood. They talk about their experiences and the role of the police
in the area who are trying to implement the necessary changes to reduce crime in the neighborhood.

**John (60’s)**

John feels comfortable in the neighborhood, but others don’t. They don’t care enough about themselves to care about other people. He refuses to be ignorant and act out of control in front of others: this is what makes people scared. You have to think something of yourself and others. These guys have to want to get off of the street.

People are not scared, just afraid to go down Division Avenue because they hear about muggings, robberies and killings. People see the homeless people and it scares them. The media makes too much of the homeless and this makes people scared. It hurts to see people who are scared of you.

**Alisha (30’s)**

She has not witnessed too many changes in the neighborhood because of her situation in and out of jail. The people in the neighborhood are different and they change frequently. Alisha wants to be a witness to the people in the neighborhood and help them learn from their mistakes. She knows what it is to be a prostitute, to be robbed and raped, and she can help those who are suffering from those experiences. She talks about the changes in her lifestyle since she moved to Grand Rapids. She recites a line that says, “the drugs won’t kill you but the lifestyle will.” There are a lot of services available and you have to be willing to work for them.
She stays in her house at night and does not feel safe in the place where she lives. She also feels a lot of pressure to do drugs, especially in her neighborhood. It is not a safe place to stay. If she leaves she thinks she will be asking for trouble. The support she has from friends in the neighborhood is also limited. She sees the drugs on a regular basis. She likes the changes they have made on Ionia Avenue; the buildings look great, and they are really neat. They did a good job taking the old neighborhood and rebuilding it. The VanAndel has been a great addition; residents are able to work there and do something with their time. All these services will help people and give them things to do. She thinks the places are positive things, and the people who visit them are dressed nicely. She has never interacted with the people visiting the places, and she stays to herself when she visits these places.

There is a lot of police activity, they have more foot patrols and help the people who need assistance. It is difficult for her to come out in the neighborhood and see the same homeless people and the same drug users at different places. It is also difficult for her to come out and visit with people in the neighborhood. Most of the people she interacts with are homeless and staying at the mission or the shelter. Others stay on park benches and under bridges. She knows that people can get arrested for sleeping outside like this, but they still do it. She hopes to have more jobs, schools, medical help in the area, and benefits for the elderly and disabled. She hopes to leave the neighborhood and hopes to get an apartment outside of the neighborhood. She feels a sense of community in the neighborhood, but all she sees are drugs and negative behaviors.
Life Tomorrow

Mike (40's)

Safety in the neighborhood is not a concern for Mike; he trusts in God and has faith that He is the force and safety in the community. He feels safe leaving his home at night. He goes to Degage as much as possible and finds time to greet people and socialize with them. At night, most of the interactions are limited to those who are committing crimes in the neighborhood. After about 9:30, when Degage closes, the people on the street are those committing crimes, other than the homeless people who have no place to stay.

The police officers need to do more work in the area. A lot of things have changed since 1992, but they still need to stop loitering in the area. If they did this in a forceful action people would not hang out in the area any longer. The police need to stop the drug dealers, the prostitution, and the homeless. Until they do that in the area the problem will still exist. The people who are hanging out on the corners need to be kicked out of the area. The police are not doing their job as well as they can. The drug dealers are the true pimps in the area. They are taking the money from the women who are acting as prostitutes for their drugs.

Adam (40's)

The people that he has interacted with in the Heartside area are not living there very long. Newcomers into the neighborhood do not trust the people living in the neighborhood. The homeless have compromised their moral values, they do not feel human inside. They are into drugs and prostitution, the more cynical they get they begin to get selfish. They are different people after they have lived in the neighborhood for awhile. They have been robbed and pushed. People do not understand or have compassion for them. Once the
damage is done their values have changed as well as the crowd they hang out with. They begin to think and talk like them and they become one of them. Their values have changed and the capacity for reason has become void. Something inside of these people has died. The more they stay the more they lose their values and the people they associate with begin to share similarities with them. If you change the environment you begin to change the person. The outlook and the perspective have changed once these people moved into the Heartside neighborhood and interacted with the people for sometime.

Adam feels safe in the neighborhood by himself. He has friends in the neighborhood, but does not really call them his friends because he does not trust them and doesn’t know what they will do. People must keep up a front in the neighborhood. Kindness is seen as weakness. In five years he sees himself dead inside. Everyday he thinks he is dying more inside. He can try to do the best he can but he will still lose. The times have changed and he has become very calloused. He is aware of evil, but he trusts the higher power. The first time he interacted with people he was desperate, each time it got a little easier. He got to the point where he could do it again. He began to want it all and take more. Misery loves company.

Charles (60’s)

A lot of people are afraid to come down to the neighborhood. It doesn’t matter if it is late at night or early in the morning. Charles has enough friends in the neighborhood that he feels safe, although there are a lot of bad people mixed in with the good. He feels safe in
the neighborhood because he has people looking out for him. He wouldn’t advise anybody who doesn’t know the neighborhood to come down to the neighborhood during the day, particularly women, and especially at night.

Jim (40’s)

Jim thinks the neighborhood is an above average neighborhood. The more people in the city the crime rate goes up. The little crimes they do have in the neighborhood are small. The people who are not working and who are strung out on drugs are those who are hurting people in the neighborhood. There are a lot of positive people in the neighborhood, especially in the daytime. He thinks the neighborhood is growing and getting stronger each day. People are visiting the neighborhood and they are concerned about crime in the neighborhood. If this were not a concern for them, they would be interacting more already. There is a fine line between laughing and talking with people in the neighborhood, and then losing that trust because you are getting beat up and robbed. Some of the people who are upper class are afraid of being hurt in the neighborhood. This is because of all the news they hear and the problems that have happened in the neighborhood before. It makes him feel bad that these people are afraid to come into the neighborhood because it disgraces him as a result. He is not a part of these things but it looks bad on him because of the things that others do in the neighborhood. Racism is also a part of this, because of his race and the negative behaviors in the neighborhood. He feels he is judged more by his race rather than the area in which he lives.
Theresa (20's)

People visiting the area are also scared to come downtown, in a way, because of all the problems they see on Division Avenue. The Guiding Light Mission is just like a drug dealers dream; they are all hanging out there and that does not look good for the neighborhood and the people who are driving down Division Avenue into the neighborhood. The police should keep a better eye on the mission and watch the kinds of activities that are taking place there.

When Theresa first moved into the neighborhood she was nervous and a little scared, but now she feels more comfortable in the area. There is always a police officer around if you need one. She interacts a lot with one of her neighbors. He is really nice, and they talk about the things going on in the neighborhood. He is really a watch dog in the neighborhood. They do not talk a lot about the new developments. People seem to be concerned with what is going to happen. She is not sure if it is actually the homeless people who are concerned about what will happen, or if it is the service providers for the homeless who are more concerned about what will happen as a result of the redevelopment.

There is a fear of the unknown in the area but also of the people in the area. People are afraid of walking alone and being alone in the area. She has been living here and knows there is really nothing to be afraid of. She sees people asking visitors for money. She thinks the cops have cut down on some of this behavior.
The interactions in the neighborhood will just have to work themselves out. Once the shops and places start coming into the neighborhood and make a name for themselves, people will start visiting those places and then have to worry about the residents. But people also have to dare to put their shops in the area and hope that people do start to come to the shops.

**Joy (20's)**

A lot of people are really scared to come into the area. Especially when they have to get off at the Wealthy Street exit and drive past all the homeless people in the area. Joy thinks they should just move the Guiding Light Mission somewhere else to stop all the negative things going on there. The other places along Division Avenue do not let people hang out. She feels safe in the neighborhood now and knows that there are police officers around the area. She does not see the officers interacting with the people in the area unless they are pulling someone over. They never stop to just talk to people in the area.

**Discussion**

Many of the residents who are living in the Heartside area feel safe. The main reason for the safety they feel is that they are familiar with the type of people who live in the area and they are comfortable with those people. Many of the residents know each other from interactions at the various service providers and businesses they use. The Heartside area is a small neighborhood and many of the residents interact on a daily basis on the streets. The residents are also familiar with those residents who are involved in illegal activities, and they make a point of staying away from those residents for their own safety.
Many of the women who were key informants commented on the safety issues they encounter as women in the area. Some of their concerns include being raped or forced to become involved in prostitution. Often times, if a woman is seen walking along Division Avenue, located in the center of the Heartside district, it is assumed that she is a prostitute. Many of the women commented that they choose not to walk down the street alone or late at night because of the risk of being arrested for prostitution, being propositioned for sexual acts or of being tempted with drugs.

Many of the residents who are involved in positive behaviors in the neighborhood do not interact with others in the neighborhood at night, in order to avoid being arrested or accused of being involved in a crime. These residents are trying to keep their jobs, find steady employment, or have already been failed by the criminal justice system. The chances that they will be arrested in the area at night are high, and they feel that they have too much to risk by putting themselves in that situation.

The upper class people who are starting to move into the area and more frequently visit the bars and restaurants in the area seemed to be concerned about the risk of crime. For this reason, there has been an increase in the number of police officers, including foot patrols, patrolling the Heartside area. As the city attempts to encourage more people to visit the area, they must also ensure that their safety is being protected. This is being done not only by more patrolling police officers, but also through the implementation of other security measures, such as increased street lighting.

Fear of crime will likely increase as more visitors and new residents move into the area. The social problems that are currently prevalent in the Heartside area are unfamiliar to many of these potential visitors and new residents. This creates a sense of fear. With
this increased fear, police patrols may have to be increased as well as will other methods to prevent crime. Homeless who continue to create problems, or instill a sense of fear in the visitors and new residents, may find themselves being arrested or being pushed out by the police officers. Many cities have created ordinances to remove the homeless populations from central cities, and Grand Rapids may resort to the same solution. If the goal is to increase the number of residents living in the central city and the main barrier to this is the fear of crime, the city will take the necessary means to ensure the problem is resolved. This again will put the homeless, mentally ill and low-income residents at risk of being pushed out of the area they consider home.

The city knows that in order for the Heartside area to grow in property value and population, the issue of crime must be addressed. If a business is planning to invest in developing a storefront in the Heartside area, they must be convinced that their business will not become victim to vandalism or looting. The same is true for potential residents in protection of their property and person. Residents who are not involved in illegal behavior but in the wrong place at the wrong time may be at greater risk of being arrested for a crime they did not commit, or of becoming a victim of crime. Again, this will have an impact on how the residents live their day to day lives.
Chapter Five- Services in the Area

There are a number of services located in the Heartside area that are available for the low-income and homeless residents. These include medical services, shelters, clothing providers, soup kitchens, low-cost restaurants, dry cleaners, a job training center, United Way, faith-based services, and counseling services. Many of the residents in the area access these services on a regular basis. They have gotten to know the service providers who supply the social services and have interacted with them on a regular and friendly basis.

Alisha (30's)

Alisha receives support services in the area and gets personal items and uses local restaurants. She has lived in cars and garages like many of the other low-income people in the neighborhood. The mission and food services help people who are out and about in the cold. The residents can also do service in the neighborhood and help out at these various locations. Many of the places she has lived in the past have not had the resources that the Heartside neighborhood has. She lives in the back of a shop, similar to a garage. She calls herself homeless; she was strung out on drugs and was led down a road of destruction.

Mike (40's)

The services that are available to the low-income residents include Guiding Light Mission. The homeless people can stay there, and Mel Trotter also houses men, women and children. Dwelling Place also has a service called The Inn for residents. There are a number of non-profit services in the area. Casey's and Degage are important services in
the area. In The Image provides clothing and furniture. The area also has a number of medical services.

Charles (60's)

Charles doesn't use too many services in the neighborhood, although he does use some of the health services in the neighborhood. The Heartside Clinic is one of the services. They take care of some of the residents who live in the area. They sometimes provide the residents with bus tickets. He has a lot of friends who visit Degage. He eats there and has a lot of friends there. The people who visit there leave a lot to be desired, but they are good people. Most of the people who are in the Heartside neighborhood are struggling with money. A lot of them are lower class and they are all living in the same place together. They are always asking each other for money to make a phone call or to get something.

He also knows of a Heartside Education Project that helps residents get their diplomas. There is also a computer center and they allow anyone to come in there and they do not have to pay to use the computers. If these people learn how to use the computers then they can use them in the world. Degage is also a service available in the neighborhood for residents to use. People in the neighborhood appreciate this service and consider this a place to come to when they want to interact with other people from the neighborhood.

Discussion

The human services available in the Heartside area have played an important role in assisting the residents. Many of the services that are available and used in the area
include medical services, housing services, and food services, including restaurants. Because the residents living in the area are low-income, they are unable to pay for these services. These services are subsidized by federal or state funding, as well as through private sector donations. Without subsidies and donations, many services would cease to exist.

Some of the residents did comment that there are too many services available in the Heartside area. Many of the residents in the area are not employed and therefore would not receive health benefits without the services available in the area. For example, there are a number of residents who suffer from mental illness and physical disabilities that make them ineligible for certain jobs that are available in the neighborhood. Others, however, do seem quite capable of working or make the choice not to work for other reasons.

The social problem of homelessness is complex. Educational attainment, mental health, physical health, significant losses, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, limited support systems and other social problems can all play a role in the problem of homelessness. Many times, homeless people have had few opportunities for success. They also experience a deep sense of hopelessness and have difficulty seeing themselves outside of their present situation.

Most of the services available in the Heartside area are not services that encourage self-sufficiency or empowerment. The services that ensure dependency are the shelters, soup kitchens, and liquor stores. As long as these services remain in the area, it will continue to attract homeless and low-income residents. If the human service providers want to see the residents succeed, they should continue to invest their efforts in
creating low-income apartments, grocery stores, Laundromats, job training centers, medical and mental health services. These are the types of services that will encourage self-sufficiency, rather than dependence. If human service providers are able to prepare the residents to survive on their own they will be prepared if the system fails.
Chapter Six- Impact of Redevelopment in the Area

Over the last seven years, the Heartside area has seen a tremendous amount of redevelopment and change. These changes include structural changes in the buildings in and around the neighborhood, as well as changes in the consumers who visit the neighborhood. The development of the VanAndel Arena in 1995 brought many restaurants and stores into the neighborhood, followed by new clientele. An area occupied by vacant buildings, homeless shelters, and limited growth is seeing a rapid, intense period of growth.

The redevelopment of downtown areas is not a new concept to many large cities. Developers have rediscovered downtown neighborhoods as prime land space that is desirable to many young professionals. Neighborhoods which were once unoccupied by the middle and upper class have now become desirable neighborhoods. Many factors contribute to this change, including low-costs in the initial stage of redevelopment, as well as greater access to downtown entertainment. The Heartside area is beginning to see this change take place. With the movement of many businesses who employ young professionals back into the downtown area, and the promise of new services, entertainment, and new housing opportunities, this development has increased.

Cities are often in control of the redevelopment that happens in downtown areas. Those who are in control of the development are able to make crucial decisions that will benefit their interests and address their own goals in the downtown areas (Cook, 1980). In Heartside, there are a number of new housing projects that are serving the interests of the investors. Cherry Street Landing is renovating some of the buildings in the Heartside area into offices, shops, restaurants, and apartments (Grand Rapids Press, 1998).
According to the Grand Rapids Press (1999), the Cherry Street Landing Project is "an ambitious redevelopment project that will bring upscale housing, offices and retailing to the Heartside area west of South Division Avenue." The low-income residents in the Heartside area will be caught in the middle of this, and their living conditions will be juxtaposed with those of the new upscale residents and workers.

Cities are also places where unique buildings are redeveloped for their specific character. This is also true in the Heartside area. "In the past two years, about a dozen apartments and condominium projects have been built in downtown Grand Rapids. Almost all are renovations of old warehouses, factories and offices" (Grand Rapids Press, 2000). These new apartment projects, six of them located in the Heartside area, will bring new residents into the community. These different projects total approximately 300 new residences and could bring as many or more new people into the neighborhood.

The current residents in the Heartside neighborhood are confronted by this new development. They are witnessing new changes and new faces in their neighborhood. This neighborhood that was once considered by some as "too risky" to drive through, is now home to those same individuals. The neighborhood is seeing more activity, new developments and a new future. The residents who were interviewed have commented on what redevelopment they have seen in the neighborhood and how this has affected their lives.

**John (60's)**

All the buildings in the area are new. The housing stock has changed. The apartments in the Heartside area will be increased to $900 and $1000 a month. Current residents will not be able to afford that. He thinks those who cannot afford it will have to move. They
will have to leave. The people moving in won’t want to see or hear the homeless; even the government doesn’t want to hear about the homeless. He is not sure where they will go, but he knows that there are not many places like this (Grand Rapids). Other states have more difficult laws and the homeless are not allowed in those places.

People who are rich and have money are afraid of the homeless and that is why the homeless have to stay away from them. He does not visit any of the new establishments in the Heartside area. Many of the people are wondering what will be left for them in the neighborhood. They also wonder where they will stay. They cannot afford to pay nine hundred dollars a month for an apartment. They can only pay $400 a month. He interacts well with business people in the downtown area, he never feels threatened. He has seen businesses threaten homeless people and try to keep them away from their stores.

He doesn’t think many people will move into the neighborhood. He is not sure what they will do with all the apartments downtown. He doesn’t think anyone will want to live in them or be able to afford them. They are going to be about $900-$1100 per month. The people who will be able to afford those are the doctors and lawyers. If they even want to. Most of the people who work here want to get out of here as soon as possible. People are tired of being asked for money or cigarettes. They just want to get out. The government is using the money for revitalization and no one will come downtown. They could be spending money on something else. They will build a road, but they don’t want to help the veterans or homeless. They could build more shelters and people would feel better about themselves. There would be fewer fights. If the homeless felt better about
themselves they would go to work, but they have nothing to feel better for. Four thousand-five hundred people are homeless, they are veterans, they are sleeping outside and around town. People have to help themselves. There are too many services in the neighborhood, why do people have to work to help them? And why would they want to stay down there? All they do is roam around. The homeless will have to move because they won’t be able to stay around. People don’t want them anymore. They don’t want to be bugged for cigarettes. They don’t want to see drunks walking down the streets and falling all over.

Alisha (30’s)
The buildings have really changed in the area. She describes these beautiful buildings, especially down Division Avenue. She feels like she is finally getting something out of the neighborhood. So many of the homeless have to live in terrible conditions and see things that are ugly. The changes in the neighborhood are great for the residents. She thinks many of the places will be for low-income residents and she will be able to find a place to live. So many of the residents will be able to enjoy the beautiful places in the neighborhood. She sees the need for more low-income housing, education, jails need to improve, and the shelters need to improve. These ideas are based on her personal experience.

Mike (40’s)
He does not feel restricted by the changes in the neighborhood; he knows he can make it if he tries. He feels that he has many opportunities in the neighborhood. He talks of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), which is planning to revitalize the area and remodel the buildings in the area. These businesses have brought action into the
community, whereas over the last ten years he has not seen this action and life in the neighborhood. Grand Rapids is trying to restore the downtown buildings. He is a member of the Main Street Council. Its task is also to revitalize the neighborhood and improve the condition of the buildings in the neighborhood. Since he has moved here, the Dwelling Place has bought up and improved more housing units for area people. When he first moved to the neighborhood he had many roaches in his apartment. This was terrible and it was a bad way for people to have to live. Now the rooms have a small kitchenette and bathrooms.

Since he moved here Degage has improved their building and the VanAndel has improved the neighborhood and has employed people in the neighborhood. The downtown area has been remodeled and has improved since he has been here. He sees more positive activity in the neighborhood. There are a number of homeless people and low-income people in the neighborhood. He speculates that the majority of the people in the neighborhood are African-American. The neighborhood feels better than three years ago. He thinks the neighborhood has been trying to better itself and residents receive a lot of support, especially in services available in the neighborhood. He sees people reaching out to each other and helping each other. Things can only get better when people are helping each other in this way.

The changes are positive in that the community is trying to better itself. He knows this will not happen overnight. The DDA and other organizations are trying to help the neighborhood and rebuilding much of the area. The neighborhood is seen in a negative
way because of the Guiding Light Mission. He does not think that housing people without helping them to get jobs is a good fit in a neighborhood that is trying to better itself. It is not good for the visitors who are coming to the downtown area to see the homeless people on the streets in front of Guiding Light doing nothing. A lot of drug dealers are hanging out there, as well as on other streets where there are whores and illegal things going on. A lot of changes have come in the last seven years.

He has had limited interaction with the new clientele in the neighborhood. The main problem he sees is that most of the residents are low-income and homeless. He cites the example that if you have money you feel better about yourself than if you don't have any money. You are happier and you are able to survive on the little things that you need. But when you don't have money, you are sad and mad, and this causes a lot of problems, because people are without a job and no money and they are unhappy with their lives. This creates problems in society because of the lack of income, no money. We need to get jobs for people and make them happy. If we continue to have people without money they will continue to have problems and be unhappy about their situations as well as turn against others who do seem happy.

When people see new clientele coming to the community to help them and serve them, they like the people in the neighborhood. But people who are not on the same level, as these people do not like them coming into the neighborhood. He relates this back to the biblical story of Cain and Abel and the result of being jealous of others. The same reaction comes up to today between people who have things and those who do not have
anything. This goes on in all communities. If you don’t have anything and you don’t have any plans to get anything, and you don’t love yourself, you are going to be mad at the world. Most of these people are mad at themselves because they cannot get out of the situation they are in, and then they cannot love others because they have a problem with themselves. If they do not have an education and they see someone with a master’s degree, they get jealous because of what they don’t have. A lot of the people here have that problem. They never had a proper education, never had love on a proper level, and they never enjoyed life. When they see a rich person with money and education, they get jealous. This causes a problem in seeing new people with those things in the neighborhood.

He does not think the homeless people will be displaced in the neighborhood. He thinks those who are trying to make it will survive. If a person sees someone in the neighborhood and they know they are trying to help, people will respect that. As long as the residents are given the opportunity to continue to develop themselves they will not be jealous of other people coming into the neighborhood. This is the poorest neighborhood in the city of Grand Rapids and the people who come here should know that you are not going to find the happiest people in the city in this area because of their financial situation.

The low-income and homeless people who are working hard in the area are looking for a place to stay. In order to have a place to stay, they need to have a job and make money. The number one thing to help those in the neighborhood is to help them find jobs, then
encourage them to find a place to stay, and then they will feel better about themselves. The neighborhood will be a better place to live if we could help the homeless and low-income people get jobs. If all the people in the neighborhood had jobs they would be able to take care of themselves. If they do not have jobs this causes homelessness, it causes crime, and people wonder how they will be able to make it in life. A lot of the bad things in the neighborhood happen because people do not have jobs. Skills and jobs for the homeless people and low-income people in the neighborhood are most important.

Adam (40's)

The changes he has seen in the neighborhood are that the services in the neighborhood for the homeless and low-income people are being pushed out of the area. When the new hotels and restaurants move into the area, the people with money will not be interested in seeing people sitting on the corner and drinking. These low-income people will be huddled into another area. The area is also renovating and people will start to expect $500- $600 for the apartments. He feels that the neighborhood will branch out. It is just a matter of time before the prices go up, the people will not be able to purchase the goods they need, and the buildings will be sold to people who can buy them. They will then be shut out and the people will be kicked out. The restaurants are now geared toward white tie people after five. They now cater to people of a higher class and they are building up the neighborhood. Everyone they think they are doing it for won’t be there to enjoy the new buildings and places that have been renovated. The people who pay money don’t want to see drunks in the neighborhood and eventually the drunks will be kicked out.
Heartside will still be called the Heartside area but the people who live there will be different.

Sarah (40's)

Downtown has changed a lot since she first came here. The busses stopped running so long, the restaurants started to die after that and people stopped coming downtown. The stores catered to the rich and the office people instead of the people who lived in the area. Division Avenue has always been a red light district. Division Avenue and the Heartside area is a transit area, the area changes every six months. She noticed that when she first came into the area.

In the past two years she has seen a lot of development in the area. A lot of people are worried but she is not worried. She thinks if people learn to behave themselves they will not be forced out of the neighborhood. But she thinks there might be some people who will be forced to move out because they cannot behave properly. If they don't behave well there will be people talking and people moving out of the area. People have to be accountable and behave themselves properly.

A lot of the services cater to the rich. When the City Center first came into the area they had all these little shops but it was nothing that the residents could use or could afford. The same is true of the restaurants and the bars. The only restaurant they can afford is Casey's. It is all catered to the rich and they are all high-class places. There is no point in going into these places because there is nothing that the residents can buy. Back in the 1960's there were more discount places and people could maybe afford something.
There are not enough services for the poor in the area and they can not afford to go out to the malls and the places where they could afford to shop. There are no bookstores, hair salons, restaurants, dime stores, grocery stores, pharmacies, or shoe stores. These are the places they need to have so they can find items they can afford. People who are disabled have a hard time getting around in the area. Even walking a few blocks is difficult for them. The downtown area caters to the office people and not the residents. There is no need to have office buildings and schools built in the area, these services are not helping the residents living there. Due to the neighborhood changes she needs to take a bus to get the services she needs. She thinks she should live in a community where people can go out of their homes and find the services they need.

Grand Rapids has become a party town. There are bars, restaurants, and all of these things cater to the office people. There is nothing in the neighborhood that caters to the poor. There are few jobs, businesses, and shops for the poor. They used to have a number of jobs in the area. There were always places for people to get work. Now there are no jobs left for the people in the area. People will need to move to an area where they can find jobs. You will start to get middle income and rich people living down here and maybe that will start to spur more retail in the area. She hopes that the people who live in the area will start to behave and will not be pushed out of the area. If you get a mix of residents the people who have money will start complaining. If they find people who really want stores in the area, hopefully, the retail will start to grow. Even the stores that have started to come back into the area are often only catering to the rich. Many of them
carry fine wines and that is no good because it is of no use to the poor. When the rich are gone the stores are gone.

Charles (60's)

Since the arena moved in and they started to build some new buildings the retail has grown and it's begun to snowball. He likes the changes because he thinks there will be more businesses in the area and more people. That will get rid of some of the bad people in the area. Either that or they will have to straighten up themselves and straighten up their act, get it together and start to behave. Up to about three or four years ago there was a lot of prostitution in the area. It is still going on, but it is going on under the surface. He thinks the reason is because since the arena came into the area a lot of people park their cars where the prostitutes were, and people were walking and driving through the area where the prostitutes worked. That was the reason a lot of that activity stopped on the surface. The people they want in this area are the upper class people and if they see problems going on in the neighborhood they will not want to move in. That leaves the lower class people on the street or moving some place else. That's the only way it can work.

The neighborhood still feels the same today as it did five years ago, except there are new businesses coming into the neighborhood. The businesses have started to pick themselves up and the people living in the neighborhood will have to straighten themselves up if they want to stay. Then there are people in the neighborhood who are going to be negative no matter what and they will be pushed out if they do not straighten up. He lives in the neighborhood because he does not know how to get out of the
neighborhood. For him it is a place to come because there is no other place. It is the only place you can come where everyone will tolerate you.

He does see conflicts between people who have a lot of money and those who are low-income living together in the neighborhood. The Hard Times Café has seen a lot of this conflict already. He thinks some of the same things will happen with Cherry Street Landing. There needs to be a lot of work done to see that the people in the area are not pushed out. There are people down here who cannot fight being pushed out because they do not have enough education or they do not have the strength. It is just a hopeless situation. That was one reason to get services started to teach people to help themselves. So far it has worked, but it will take a long time to get these people to the place where they can really help themselves. It’s a sad thing when people with money tell these people who are down on their luck they are nothing, they will never be anything and there is no one to help them. That is what the people in power are saying when they just ignore the residents and do not pay attention to anything they say.

There are a ton of buildings in the area that are empty, the city should have done more to encourage businesses to come down here that cater to the rich when the arena moved into the area. The city should have given them more benefits for moving into the area and encouraged them to build up the different buildings in the area. They want to attract all these different people to live in the area but parking is a problem and no one wants to pay these high rates. There are not enough businesses in the area to encourage people to stay.
He is not positive about the nightclubs that have opened in the area. He does not visit the nightclubs but he knows people who go in there must have money. He is not wealthy enough to think about going into these places.

Jim (40's)

The changes he has seen in the past year are more buildings and remodeling of buildings in the area. There is less crime because of the increase in police officers in the area. They are on foot patrol in the neighborhood. He sees a lot of reconstruction of the buildings along Division, Commerce, and Ionia Avenues. There is a lot of construction on and off. Those who did the construction did a great job. When the S-curve shuts down there will be more traffic in the area. He is not sure what kind of businesses will be moving into the area when the construction is completed. He thinks the Heartside area owns the buildings and they will be using them for new places in the neighborhood.

He sees a lot of positive and negative people in the neighborhood. The positive people he sees include business people, and people who are visiting the businesses in the neighborhood. He sees men and women visiting people in the neighborhood. The negative people are involved in negative activity such as drugs, prostitution and small crimes. He tries to fit in around positive people. He tries to keep a positive attitude and he likes to work. He knows for him there is more to life than wandering around and eating at different places.
He has visited a few of the new restaurants and bars in the neighborhood and had a really nice time. He knows that in order to go into these businesses you have to give the owners business. Too many people in the neighborhood are not able to give business to these owners, and therefore, they are not able to visit. The owners don’t just want to have people hanging out but they want to have business in their places. The people who are not working are missing out on a great opportunity to use the businesses that are coming into the neighborhood. He thinks that the people in the neighborhood have money, but they are using their money for other things. The people have to have some money because they are “making it” in the neighborhood.

Joy (20’s)

She thinks that the people who are living in the neighborhood now will be unable to interact with the new people moving in. Something will have to change because they cannot keep having those people just hanging out in front of their businesses. It is a rough situation because a lot of the people have substance abuse problems and can be scary because of those problems. The best thing to do would be to fix the problems that are keeping the people from working and then help them back into the neighborhood.

A lot of people say they do not want the developers to come into the area, but you cannot keep it how it is now with all the bad building structures. It will be hard for the residents because they have their own little community, they all hang out with each other all day. You cannot just break up a community like that, plus they are having fun. It seems like having homeless people around all the time will really break up the things that are going
on in the redevelopment work. You cannot have new businesses with homeless people around. No one will come to shop at those places.

Edward (20's)

He remembers a different feel in the downtown area before the arena was built. Downtown was basically dead and no one visited the area. The arena really boosted up the activity in the area. People want to see what was going on. They are not as scared in the area because all the cops are right there at the VanAndel helping out with the sporting events and watching the people. People are mostly scared of the area because they do not know what it is like to be downtown.

People are not asking for money as much as they used to and are not bothering people for things as much as before. Transportation is a big problem in the neighborhood. It is too expensive to park and people take advantage of the people who are using the parking lots. Parking is a big inconvenience and it is very expensive for those visiting the area.

Discussion

The changes in the Heartside area have had an impact on the residents in the area. Some of the impact has only been physical in that the residents have seen the physical changes in the structure of the buildings and have seen the improvements the city is making in the neighborhood. Some of the residents have been impacted emotionally. They think about what the new developments and new residents will do to the area. They wonder if they will be pushed out or how the community of Heartside will change.
The low-income residents do not use the new businesses in the area. Many of the businesses are upscale restaurants and clothing stores that cater their goods and services to the upper class. The low-income residents know they are not welcomed in these establishments based on their income level. They see this exclusion as one way to push them out of the neighborhood. The residents have been impacted by these new businesses moving in through the visitors coming to the area, as well as the way the business owners and clientele interact with them in the neighborhood. The new businesses are aware of the residents in the neighborhood. They see them as undesirables and an eyesore for potential customers.

The residents have also been impacted as businesses are pushed out of the area to make room for businesses that cater to the upper class. One example of this situation occurred with Casey's restaurant. Once it was determined that the building housing Casey's would be made into a Howard Johnson Hotel, the restaurant that served many of the low-income and homeless residents needed to move. Casey's was able to find a place to continue business in the Heartside area, but the damage had been done to the neighborhood. The residents and the service providers knew that this was a possibility in their neighborhood as developers and new residents began to move into the area. This lack of control by the residents has also had an effect on their mental stability. By waiting for the unknown they are living from day to day. They are not influencing what changes are made in the area and this gives them a feeling of discontentment and causes them to worry about their future in the neighborhood.

It can be argued that all of the residents have been affected in some way by the changes they have seen in the neighborhood. It may be in the way they change their daily
routine so as to not be seen in a place where there are visitors, or a place where they could be arrested. The residents may only think about the changes as they walk down the street and see the buildings unfold with restructured history. It may take the residents longer to cross Division Avenue during rush hour. In some way, either small or great, all of the residents have been affected by the changes that have taken place in the Heartside area over the last five years.
Chapter Seven- Predictions for the Future of the Area

The housing stock in the Heartside area consists mostly of apartments and this causes the area to have a certain amount of instability. This can cause an even greater shift in the pendulum, resulting in greater uncertainty and more rapid change. Trends in funding will also play an important role in who lives in the Heartside area. Federal budget cuts and/or surpluses will affect those who receive assistance for low-income housing. The residents have different views on how the changes will affect them in their neighborhood. They also have different rationale as to why these changes will affect them and where they see themselves fitting into the neighborhood in the next five years. Their concerns are valid and only time will tell what trends will happen in the neighborhood and with the residents.

John (60’s)
A lot of guys have felonies that follow them for life. They did something wrong and have to face that, but it keeps following them. These felonies have stopped them from getting jobs and places to live and it hurts them. In the next five years you won’t see many homeless. They are just getting out of hand. They should work and not beg—people are getting tired of that, so are the cops and the government. The neighborhood will just be working people, but they will be here only to work.

Mike (40’s)
He hopes to establish a National Alliance of Homelessness Program in the neighborhood, and become a partner with the Welfare to Work Program to help people find jobs in the neighborhood. He would like to work with these programs to help people get resources
for their homes and maintain a standard of living. In the next five years, he sees housing opportunities for low-income people. This will play a major role in housing for the homeless people in the area. With all the development going on in the area, a lot of the residents are afraid they will be moved out. He does not think this will happen. The residents get paranoid that the city wants people to move out. As long as the Section 8 contracts exist in the neighborhood that will show people they can stay.

He hopes that more connections can be made with the residents, and local organizations and schools in the neighborhood. He hopes programming will help train the residents and develop skills to help them better themselves. We need to work together in this area to pass on the skills we each have to help others grow.

Adam (40's)

In five years he sees the neighborhood as being called Heartside, but not including homeless or low-income people. Degage bought a parking lot across the street and their intentions were good but the homeless people will not be there to use it. Homeless people do not have cars and they do not need a place to park. The buildings are being remodeled and there is a new crowd, the new apartments will have to have places for these residents to park. The homeless people will have to branch out. The clientele will be new and the homeless people will not be included. The money that Degage spent on that parking lot will be going to the rich because they will be the ones using the parking lot. The services will start to be more concerned about money. Eventually the homeless will have to use the back door or the upstairs at Degage and the people with money will
get to use the front door. Eventually the homeless will have to move out of the area. The park and the hotel will reflect that because the people will be hanging out there and the police will be patrolling there more frequently. Eventually the people will move out, and the prostitutes will be forced to move. The people who will be downtown will have money and be dressed right. These people do not want to see homeless people around. The anti-city law against homeless is that if you are carrying a suitcase around you can be arrested. They will begin to bus people out and not allow them to go to the park. Senior citizens will begin to take over the area. The homeless will not be allowed in the neighborhood because they smell. The neighborhood will consist of high-class call girls, senior citizens, business people, and older wealthy people. It will become a completely different neighborhood. He does not think people will be given the chance to work in the new businesses because of their appearance and their situation.

Sarah (40's)

A lot of people think that if the rich start to move in the area they will buy up Morton House and the other property, but she doesn't think that is true. If people behave themselves and conduct themselves the way they should, the rich will not push them out. She dresses in a way that is appropriate, she tries to fit in with how the rich look and tries to look her best. Some people are afraid of getting kicked out of the neighborhood, but that is only because they do not know how to behave.

The government is thinking of ending Section 8 and giving everyone vouchers for rent. What impact will this have on the housing for the poor in the area of Heartside? Poor
people cannot live on a dead end job. They will need training and help in developing skills so they can make a living and keep themselves alive. People also need to have health insurance so they can get their medical problems taken care of, then they will be able to eliminate welfare and really help these people. People need to learn how the rich dress so they fit into the neighborhood and can use the services that are there for the rich. A lot of rich don’t understand the poor. As soon as they drive in the neighborhood they are locking their doors. These people are not scary, they are human beings, and they just have problems.

Charles (60’s)

In five years he thinks the area will have a lot more buildings occupied. Then they will not have the trouble they have now with all the people living in the buildings. The city does not really want to think about the people in Heartside, because they are throwaways. It is considered the slums. There will be a better class of people living in the area in five years. He does not have a problem living with the class of people that he lives with now because he was once one of them, but things will be different. He had enough education and knew enough that he was able to get out of that situation. A lot of the people down here do not have the amount of education that he did. If we are able to get a better class of people in the area they will be rubbing elbows with these people and they will have to upgrade because of that reason. No one is moving out of the area so they will have to get along with each other and learn to better themselves to fit in with the new people in the area. He thinks it will get better as they move along and get these people to better educate themselves. The people with money also have to realize that they need to help the homeless in the area better educate themselves and the upper class needs to teach
these people how to do that. Some of the new people in the area will be able to understand their responsibility by moving into the neighborhood but others might not understand. Some people will interact with each other and others will not. Some people are not even interested in each other. When they start moving in there they will either be in for awhile, and if they cannot handle what the neighborhood is like, they will move out. If too many of them move out the neighborhood it will be just like it was before. There is a great need in the area for people who are able to help these homeless people. That is why so many of these services are so important. He has seen situations where the people with money are abusive to the people without money in the neighborhood.

Jim (40's)

In five years, the neighborhood will have new streets and businesses and will generate more income. People, jobs and the little crime in the neighborhood will be on a small scale. Working people will live in the neighborhood, he hopes. The Weston apartments will always be there, even though the hotel is moving in. He just hopes some of the activity will stop once the hotel moves into the area. People will have to move out of the area if they are having too much activity. People might move into the Loft Apartments. Otherwise, people will have to move outside of the city and live in apartment complexes. The people who do not want to work will end up in jail or dead. In his opinion, people who are not working are those who assault and do crimes to other people. There is no room in the Loft Apartments for people who do not want to work. There is no room for people to live in Heartside who do not want to work. There are a lot of people living on
the street, but they stay in old buildings and under bridges. Those people will have to find another building to live in when the buildings keep getting remodeled.

**Theresa (20's)**

The changes will affect the residents as far as how well the residents are able to handle the changes. She does not think that the residents will be kicked out of the neighborhood because she thinks that the neighborhood is pretty well established and it is stable for those living in the neighborhood right now. Hopefully, the service providers can figure it out so that they can improve the neighborhood and also help keep the homeless where they are right now. Even with the stores, there are not shoppers going to the stores because they are scared of the people standing in front of the stores, and even though the stores have started to come, there are few customers for this reason. The storeowners will not be happy with this problem keeping their customers away.

In the next five years she would like to see the streets cleaned up and the buildings redone. She would like to see an arts-type neighborhood, with a dance studio and art stores. All the rents skyrocketed in the area when they were redone. The more downtown gets fixed up, the more people will be willing to pay those high costs and live in those places. More houses will be condemned and perhaps this will push more of the low-income people out of the area.

The homeless may be pushed out because they sometimes have the frame of mind to let other people do things for them. Their voices are not heard because they don't really
have anything to fight for. They might be upset about it, but their whole problem is not being able to do anything about the problems they have. A lot of the homeless she sees are chronically homeless and she is not seeing any changes in their behavior. There are probably people in the area that they do not see, who are able to get back on their feet after sometime, and are not chronically homeless like the people they see year after year. It is kind of ironic that people can just come into a neighborhood and kick people around and tell them what will happen in their neighborhood.

Joy (20's)

In the next five years the area will probably be all cleaned up and the streets will look beautiful. The people will have to think about what they are going to do. It will really be cleaned up. Grand Valley State University is in the area and younger people are moving into the area. She thinks this is really healthy for a city to have a strong downtown area. The lines of communication just need to be opened up right now to decide what will happen to the homeless people. It is not something that will just be cured. It will have to be dealt with. Where they are going to put people is the question. They are where they are because that is the natural place to go. This is the place where their services are. They might bump them down Division Avenue a little bit. The service providers need to work more with the residents to get them what they need. The homeless do not really have their voices heard. She never sees the homeless wanting to make changes in the neighborhood or the services they use. For this reason she does not think that the homeless care about what is happening to them in the neighborhood.
The new developments will probably move people out of the area more, especially where the new hotel will be built and the new restaurants on Ionia Avenue. There is a lot of low income housing right there and the people visiting those places will not want to see those people. People were upset about Casey’s moving out and then they were able to reopen on Division Avenue.

Edward (20’s)
People who are homeless should not plan on being homeless. There are plenty of jobs for them to get and maybe redeveloping the neighborhood will be a good thing and get the homeless back on their feet and force them to do something or get out of the neighborhood.

Discussion
Many of the residents are concerned about the housing opportunities in the area what will happen once the upper class residents move into the area. Their concerns are legitimate in that many of the buildings that are being redeveloped in the area will house upper class residents who are willing to pay large amounts of money for their living space. “Many of the apartments and condominiums feature the standard details of urban loft living: high ceilings, brick walls, tall windows, exposed ductwork and wood floors...The price range is wide, but downtown living is likely to be more expensive than suburban life. Apartments will start at about $600 for an efficiency and rise to more then $3,000 a month for a three bedroom...Mayor Logie hopes to increase the number of residents living downtown from the estimation today of 3,000 residents to 5,000 residents by the year 2005” (Grand Rapids Press, 2000).
What trends will happen in the next five years in the Heartside area? How will the residents be affected by this change? Many of the residents are low-income, and many are unemployed. The chances that they will be able to afford housing in this area without assistance from Section 8 are very slim. This social program, as well as other housing programs, is crucial to their place in the neighborhood.

Mayor Logie, of Grand Rapids, has predicted rapid growth in the downtown area by the year 2005. Other urban planners and experts agree. They have debated this issue over the last few years and have agreed there is hope for the downtown area of Grand Rapids. Suggestions they have made to the city include finding developers who are willing to invest in the downtown area, and creating a light rail system that would assist people who are eager to travel into the downtown area (Grand Rapids Press, 1999). Planners and residents can only speculate about the rapid growth and redevelopment in the Heartside area and what affect that will have on the city and the residents there.

One of the fears of residents in Heartside has already become reality for many of the low-income and homeless residents. In September 1999, Casey’s restaurant closed their location on Ionia Avenue, SW. This low-cost restaurant had many regulars that consisted of “elderly, physically or mentally ill, on fixed incomes and living in low-income housing” (Grand Rapids Press, 1999). In place of the old restaurant will be a modern Howard Johnson’s. This project will cost 3.4 million dollars in renovation and the 100 rooms will be rented for $62 to $70 a night. The owner of the new hotel purchased the building five years ago in hopes of creating more low-income housing for the residents of Heartside. This plan was stopped when the State of Michigan cut the
project’s funding. Ironically, this developer was the former director of Dwelling Place, Incorporated.

Dwelling Place, Incorporated, is a non-profit community organization. They cannot continue their role in the community without backing from the Office of Housing and Urban Development and the Section 8 housing program. Their property values have soared in the neighborhood and it could be only a matter of time before they are offered a price they cannot resist. Will this be a trend in the neighborhood? Only time will be able to answer that question. But there are a number of risks associated with this rapid, upscale growth in the Heartside area. The ability of different classes to live together has not been a trend in the United States. The wealthy have dominated the market and the developers have followed the trends of the wealthy. The mission of Dwelling Place is to maintain and develop affordable housing in the central city area. Many of their residents are the elderly, disabled, and those living in poverty. To many, these people are seen as undesirables. The rest of society does not want to hear about these people in the papers much less live with them in their neighborhoods. This was part of the reason for the “white flight” into the suburbs in the 1950’s. The middle and upper class do not understand this poverty and this causes fear and flight. If developers continue to push to develop the Heartside area one of the groups will have to give.

Politics also plays an important role in the redevelopment of the Heartside area. The goal of Mayor Logie is to have 5,000 people living in the downtown area by the year 2005. If he can bring about this kind of change he will be creating job security. He knows his voters are not the current residents in the Heartside area; the poor, disabled and the elderly. His voters are the developers who get the Empowerment Zone tax breaks for
developing in areas that need revitalization, and businesses who benefit from this growth. If property values increase in the central city, more services can be brought into the city that will create jobs, stimulate the economy, and raise the standard of living in the central city. This will in turn increase tourism and interest in the city of Grand Rapids. Politically, this is a positive trend for Grand Rapids.

One can only suggest possible trends for urban life. Trends are often cyclical through the decades and, as a result, many of the individuals involved tend to be short sighted. “White flight” in the 1950’s became a trend with the move to suburban life. Thirty years later and still continuing, we have the trend of gentrification (the movement of young professionals back into inner city areas). According to Anderson (1990), the change in racial make-up and class impacts the services in the community, as well as the property values. A wise investor only concerned about property values could have easily purchased property in the Heartside area seven years ago at a low cost. With tax breaks for investing in a central area of the city and the property value nearly doubling as a result of the recent trend, their investment would have paid for itself. This trend is often seen in large cities as developers then move on to a different area after they have benefited from their investments. The neighborhoods are then the ones who lose as developers move out without being fully invested in the area.
Chapter Eight- Conclusions and Implications for Social Work Practice

In other major cities, gentrification has become a common trend. Chicago's Gold Coast, located between Lake Shore Drive and Michigan Avenue, on the north side of the city, has moved into the area once known as Caprini Grœ.en. This area is considered to be prime land for developers and they are eager to begin their plans. This land was purchased from the city and low-income housing projects were torn down in order to accommodate development. The families that lived in these projects were relocated without a choice.

The Heartside area has been a topic of discussion and concern for the past seven years. The low-income residents have seen rapid change and have been left to wonder what will happen next and what will happen to them. As change continues to occur in the neighborhood, service providers are starting to become involved and also wondering whom they will serve if the low-income residents and the homeless are pushed out of the area. Many of these service providers are well invested in the Heartside area and do not anticipate being forced to move out of the area.

Grand Rapids and Dwelling Place, Incorporated, may be different in this aspect. Because this is a non-profit organization, they may be able to hold off from selling their property to new developers. However, they will not be able to serve the same clients they do today if housing programs such as Section 8 are cut from the federal budget. Social Security and benefits to veterans are also necessary funding sources that enable residents in the Heartside neighborhood to live in apartments provided by Dwelling Place.

Servicing low-income and homeless residents has been common in the Heartside area through the 1990's. Today the city is faced with the problems they left unsolved.
History has shown us how areas respond to rapid change and how this causes a great disruption to the activities already occurring in the neighborhood. The developers and city officials are seeing some of this disruption as they work to place new residents in the Heartside area.

The jobs and higher standard of living that was once available to the residents in Heartside has now disappeared. The residents have not been able to find a way to make the services and opportunities in the area work to become self-sufficient. The opportunities that are available in the Heartside area are now white-collar jobs. Residents will see more working class people in the Heartside area as more developers actively seek affordable warehouses suitable for office space. Many of the jobs that are available for persons without a college degree are in outlying areas of the central city and require reliable transportation, which is unavailable to many Heartside residents.

The Heartside area is an easy target for redevelopment because of the low property values, tax breaks as part of the Renaissance Zone, historical structures, and the interest of upper-class individuals. As this area continues to undergo physical transformation and structural changes, the economic development also continues to grow. The property assessments in the area have nearly doubled in the last three years, from $15.8 million in 1995 to $28.6 million in 1998 (Dwelling Place, 1999). A similar increase is expected in the next few years. As the property values and the tax base in the neighborhood continue to increase so will the threat of gentrification by the upper class.

As the neighborhood continues to undergo change and upper class residents move into the area, the success of developing mixed-income housing will depend on the attitude and cooperation of developers, city officials and residents. If the goal is to
promote mixed-income housing in the neighborhood, both the low-income and upper class residents must be committed to that vision. Although Dwelling Place, Incorporated, has committed to continuing to serve the low-income residents in the Heartside area, the federal government's promise may not be the same. Without a commitment from service providers, residents and developers to create mixed-income housing, the neighborhood will again face an unpredictable future.

As new residents move into the area, the fear of crime will become more of a reality. The depths of the social problems that exist in the Heartside area are unknown to many of these visitors and potential new residents. This creates the fear of the unknown. Homeless people who create problems or instill a sense of fear in the new residents will be arrested. Many cities have created ordinances to push the homeless populations out of their central cities, and Grand Rapids may do the same. If the goal is to increase the number of residents who live in the central city, the city will take the necessary means to ensure that the crime problem is solved. This will put the homeless, mentally ill and low-income residents at risk of being pushed out of the Heartside area.

The human services that are available in the Heartside area have had an important role in assisting the residents living in the area. The services that are offered to the residents are subsidized by federal or state funding, as well as through the private sector. If these sources of funding are reduced or eliminated, the services will not continue.

Politics also plays an important role in the redevelopment of the Heartside area. Mayor Logie of Grand Rapids has predicted rapid growth in the downtown area by the year 2005. Planners and residents can only speculate about the rapid growth and redevelopment in the Heartside area and what affect that will have on the city and the
residents in Heartside. If property values increase in the central city, more services can be brought into the city that will create jobs, stimulate the economy, and raise the standard of living.

The social problem of homelessness is complex and does not present easy solutions for society. Educational attainment, mental health, physical health, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, limited support systems and other social problems all can play a role in the problem of homelessness. As with so many situations, this is a problem that is not easily solved.

What trends will happen in the next five years in the Heartside area? How will the residents be affected by this change? Many of the residents are low-income, and many are unemployed. They will not be able to afford housing in this area without assistance from Section 8 and other federal housing programs.

The study on the Heartside area has many implications for social workers. In order for the low-income residents currently living in the Heartside area to remain in that area, federal and state housing assistance programs must continue. Organizations, such as Dwelling Place, must receive the necessary funding to continue to provide decent and affordable housing to low-income residents. Dwelling Place and their private funders must be committed to remaining in the area and serving the low-income population. Residents who move into the Heartside area must be committed to the challenge and rewards of mixed-income housing. The local and federal government must also research and fund programs that encourage mixed-income housing. Social programs to end poverty and racism must also be a part of the long-term plan for the Heartside area and for the nation.
Social workers must be advocates for low-income residents and the homeless, helping find new and innovative programs to assist in their contributions to society as productive human beings. Social workers must also be committed to the prevention model in their practice. They must research programs that encourage young people to succeed and contribute to society. They must be advocates for strengthening the family structure and providing nurturing environments for young people to grow and thrive.

The residents in the Heartside area who are willing to fight for their neighborhood and community must be given a voice. This can only be done through empowerment of the individual. Residents who are able have the obligation to speak about the changes they have seen in the neighborhood and how this has affected their lives. Without their commitment and action, nothing will change. Social workers are advocates for people who are without any means to action. We are the voices of those who are mentally ill, poor and disabled. We must see first hand how these changes are impacting the residents and encourage those who are able to speak out against those changes. Because we are not developers or investors we are not able to speak with money, rather our only option is to speak in numbers. We are organizers and educators. We need to keep the populations we serve aware of the changes that may affect them and encourage them to raise their voices. Change will not come easily and will not come without a fight.

Social workers must study trends and anticipate how those trends will affect their field of practice. We cannot, however, always react to the issues we face on a daily basis. Therefore, social workers must be proactive and anticipate the effects of gentrification and development on neighborhoods prior to their destruction. Neighborhoods are living, dynamic systems and they will cycle according to growth and stagnation in the city. The
Heartside area has seen some of this growth in the revitalization of many buildings in the area. The area has also witnessed gentrification of the upper class into the area. This has impacted the residents in many ways. As social workers, we are advocates and must continually commit ourselves to empowering our clients.

The study on the Heartside area again shows social workers and our clients the amount of power that is held politically and financially, but unequally in society. We must continue to invest ourselves in the areas that we predict will affect our clients. We must also act politically to advocate for funding of programs that our clients need on a daily basis. While we are advocating for this funding we must also look for dollars for the prevention of the social problems that are prevalent in the Heartside area. This is the area where true change will take place. Research is necessary to create effective programs that prevent the problems faced by the residents in Heartside.

The study on the Heartside area is a tool for social workers, city officials, developers and residents to use in their interactions with each other. As neighborhoods and communities cycle throughout the decades we must be prepared to face the issues in a proactive manner. If we simply push the problem aside we will be forced to deal with a much larger issue when the problem resurfaces. As the crisis in the Heartside area unfolds over the next year, the city will face the social problems that they were not able to deal with over the last eighty years. These problems cannot simply be pushed out of the area, because they will again resurface and continue to impact the city's neighborhoods, criminal justice system, education system, housing, mental health system, medical system, child welfare system, and the political arena.
Empowerment and prevention are the tools that need to be used in the Heartside neighborhood and other areas across the nation. The residents in the Heartside area must use their voices and advocate for themselves. As they are empowered through proactive services rather than those services that encourage dependence, they will find opportunities for success. The ecological approach of the person in their environment is necessary to empowering residents and preventing social problems. Residents must be empowered to build upon their strengths in a way that shows they are not victims but survivors of racism, classism, stigma, gender inequality, poverty and gentrification.
References


