

URBAN RENEWAL THROUGH THE DECADES

What is Urban Renewal?

Urban renewal programs work to revitalize blighted or inadequate areas through redevelopment on a local scale. Renewing these areas establishes a basis for economic development and makes once deteriorated areas more attractive to private sector development.

How is Urban Renewal Accomplished?

This redevelopment comes in the form of outright demolition and reconstruction of the blighted area and/or preservation and rehabilitation of existing structures which will then be adapted to the needs of the local community.



Southwest Washington, D.C.



Philadelphia



Oklahoma City

San Francisco



Providence



City of Salem



Southwest Washington,

1939

1965



During the 1950s, officials used the DC Redevelopment Act of 1950 to push for large scale clearance of slums and blighted communities to make way for office buildings and high-end residences for federal employees. These demolished areas were solely African American neighborhoods; 4,500 African American families were forced to relocate as the District leveled 99% of the buildings in SW Washington. 5,900 new buildings were built in place of demolished homes; of these new buildings, less than 5% were considered moderately-priced housing. This widespread destruction tore apart families and the culture and history of SW Washington.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1960

2000



Unlike Washington, Philadelphia bulldozed only those buildings deemed unsalvageable and attempted to adapt and repair most of the already existing structures. Listening to the community, planners incorporated moderately-priced housing in addition to high-end housing. This allowed for retention of already existing residents rather than displacement of the lower class. As the city's less attractive areas were updated and revitalized, Philadelphia saw increased economic growth and increased civic pride from its residents.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

1929



2012



During the 1950s and 1960s, Oklahoma City experienced similar slum clearance to SW Washington, but towards the 1970s advocacy groups began to push for less demolition and more retention of older structures. However, the city continued to tear down historic structures, like the Criterion Theatre, to make room for parking lots and extensive shopping malls. Remaining blighted areas in the city continued to be cleared to make room for office buildings and parking lots to accommodate commuters from outside Oklahoma City. In response to opposition from residents, the city did build some moderately-

San Francisco, California

1950

2000



Much of the urban renewal projects taken on by San Francisco were influenced by community organizations. Groups pushed for renewal of the city's dilapidated areas while retaining affordable housing prices. This minimized displacement of residents during renewal projects. The community also encouraged preservation of existing structures and a focus on environmental and land use laws in the City. San Francisco's renewal projects focused its attention on mixed use development to encourage economic growth within blighted areas.

Providence, Rhode Island

2009



2014



Urban renewal projects in Providence were focused on revitalizing the city's water front district while retaining historic buildings within the project area. Providence looking to encourage commercial growth while minimizing impacts on the historic character of the city. This required the city to also revamp its transportation infrastructure and reroute its river. Many of the larger buildings at the waterfront were converted to mixed use, incorporating housing into commercial structures. Providence also attempted to make the water-front more attractive both to residents and tourists by adding a "waterfire" feature along the river. During festivals and other events along the riverside, baskets can be set ablaze to add a unique backdrop to the historic cityscape.

City of Salem, Oregon



Salem focused on establishing seven small areas of the city to renewal at one time. Each section of the City was assigned an individualized plan for renewal depending on its current condition and its potential for revitalization. For example, while the plan for the Waterfront focused on mixed-use zoning and creating a more pedestrian friendly area to create a more walkable area, the area of West Salem focused on creating more housing for a wide range of incomes and encouraging economic growth to eliminate blight and raise property values.

