

For Many Black Washingtonians, Gentrification Threatens Housing and Health



Jefferson Marketplace at 7th and Q streets was built after Kelsey Gardens was demolished.

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This is the first article in a series focused on the health effects associated with gentrification in Washington, D.C. This series is supported through a journalism fellowship with the Center for Health Journalism at the Annenberg School of Journalism at the University of Southern California.

By many measures, the revitalization of neighborhoods across Washington, D.C. has been a windfall for the city. Fueled by

higher tax revenues and property values, the city is awash in construction cranes, new libraries, restaurants and retail, and more than 70 miles of bike lanes—all welcomed signs of gentrification in the nation's capital.

Lost in the city's waves of new amenities and newer, more affluent inhabitants, are the long-time Washingtonians who have been pushed out or who are fighting to stay in the city.

Shirley Williams is one of those residents, who decided to fight. For Williams, that fight came with debilitating consequences.

Williams said that she



PHOTO BY BERNIE FOSTER

PCRI Launches Pathway 1000 Implementation Plan

Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc. (PCRI) celebrated completion of the Pathway 1000 Implementation Plan April 17 PCRI offices at 6329 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Prepared by PCRI, its partners and collaborators and informed by a participatory community engagement process, the Plan contains collaborative, inclusive and integrated goals, strategies and actions to raise and invest \$300 million over the next ten years to create 1,000 affordable homes for Blacks and others displaced or in danger of displacement from North and Northeast Portland, of which 800 will be sold to new homeowners. The initiative aims to create hundreds of living wage jobs and spur significant business growth and development.

Formed twenty-five years ago in response to a housing crisis created by redlining and predatory lending practices, PCRI is a non-profit community development corporation with a mission to preserve, expand and manage affordable housing in the City of Portland and provide access to and advocacy for services to residents. More information on Pathway 1000 is available at <https://pcrihome.org/archives/category/pathway-1000>.

developed diabetes a year after she and fellow residents were displaced, for eight years, from their 54-unit garden-style apartment complex at 7th and Q Streets in the Shaw neighborhood. She has since returned. Now, there's a new apartment building at 7th and Q named Jefferson Marketplace; an upscale pet store, a Thai restaurant and a French wine bar are located on the street

level; Williams said that she's not the same, either.

Williams connects many of her health problems to the uncertainty of her housing situation, a rootlessness that has spanned nearly a decade.

"I'm on dialysis now; I can hardly get around," said Williams, a mother of three grown children. "I wasn't weak. I could walk down to those ONE DC meetings, but I can't do that anymore. I'm

pretty sure it affected my health; I lost my eyesight...can't see anything anymore."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the displacement associated with gentrification has many health implications that contribute to disparities among special populations, including the poor, women, children, the elderly, and members of racial/ethnic

minority groups. "These special populations are at increased risk for the negative consequences of gentrification," the CDC said. "Studies indicate that vulnerable populations typically have shorter life expectancy; higher cancer rates; more birth defects; greater infant mortality; and higher in-

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