

Research Topic: Gentrification in Larimer

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Rising Housing Costs in Larimer

Introduction

Gentrification is a problem in Larimer that has been negatively affecting the longtime residents in the community since 2014. People have been pushed out of their homes because they cannot afford the new houses being built. Since 2014 some houses' values in Larimer have increased by up to \$200,000. The new prices aren't affordable to the residents that have lived there for their whole lives. The median income in Larimer is \$39,723 which is not enough money to afford the houses in Larimer. Our research is going to explore how the Larimer community feels about the rising housing costs in their neighborhood. We want to find a way to increase the number of affordable houses in Larimer.

Literature Review

According to the article "Shifting neighborhoods: Gentrification and cultural displacement in American cities" by Jason Richardson, Bruce Mitchell, and Juan Franco, gentrification causes rising rents, home and property values. These rising costs reduce the supply of affordable housing, causing people to be displaced. Gentrification also prevents the residents from benefiting from the economic growth and the greater availability of resources. Displacement of longtime residents are mostly African-American and Hispanic.

The article "Waiting for affordable housing in New York" by John Willy is about how affordable housing spiraled down in New York when 9/11 happened. Most of the people in New York did not have access to rent-stable houses. The number of people receiving government assistance increased by 65,000 due to the lack of affordable homes.

The article "Gentrification in Harlem" written by Richard Schaffer, and Neil Smith, is about how gentrification is affecting African-Americans. This article also talks about how gentrification is leading to the downfall of wealthy African-Americans and the migration of white people entering and raising prices of the housing and displacing blacks.

We are contributing to this research by talking not only about the gentrification in Larimer but also about the rising housing costs and how it affects the longtime residents. These two issues have not been explored before through research in Larimer.

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Methods

Researchers conducted a survey on rising housing costs. Researchers created this survey using questions developed during an in class assignment. The survey consisted of 22 questions. The first set dealt with demographics. The second set included community needs. The next set explored questions that were specific to our study. Respondents were asked the following: "On a scale of 1 - 5, how much of an issue is the rising housing cost in Larimer?" We also asked, "Has your monthly rent gone up in the past 5 years?" Additionally, researchers distributed their survey by going out into our community and receiving consent from respondents.

Researchers conducted an interview on rising housing costs. Researchers created this interview using questions developed during an in class assignment. The interview consisted of seven questions. Some examples of questions we used are, "How has gentrification affected you?", "Are you afraid that you will be pushed out of your neighborhood", and "How do you feel about the rising housing costs?"

Results

Our study sought to explore how the Larimer community felt about the rising housing costs caused by gentrification. Results reveal that the residents in Larimer felt like the rising housing costs were negatively affecting the community. The following section provides further insight into how the residents in Larimer felt about the rising housing costs and how we can try to help with this problem.

Respondent Profile

Survey respondents provided answers and insight on the rising housing costs as a result of gentrification in Larimer. Our total survey population included 36 respondents. Of those surveyed, our typical survey respondent fits a unique profile. The majority of our respondents were Black/African-American females that were aged 40+. Their educational background was some college and a highschool diploma. Most people are in a single parent home with a household income between \$25,001 and \$50,000.

Community Needs Assessment

Respondents provided important feedback on their community. The data that was collected showed that 26.8% of respondents don't feel safe in Larimer during the nighttime. These results suggest that residents in Larimer aren't able to go outside during the nighttime without being scared or feeling uncomfortable. The data also shows that 37.1% of the residents in Larimer feel that the police protection isn't good in Larimer. These results suggest that the police don't frequent Larimer and make the people feel safe.

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Study Specific Findings

Results from our survey questions suggest the following: 63.9% of residents in Larimer believe that the rising housing costs are an issue. These results suggest that the rising rents in Larimer is a problem that the residents would like to change. The results reveal that 52.8% of people haven't had offers to sell their home. This suggests that most of the houses in Larimer have already been sold and have been rented out. The results from our survey suggest that 61.1% of residents' rent has gone up in the past 5 years. This shows researchers that the rising rents are a real issue that has been a problem for at least 5 years. Results from our survey reveal that 27.8% of residents' rent has gone up by at least \$200. These results show that the rents in Larimer have been rising slowly but surely.

Overall results from our survey reveal that the residents in Larimer want to learn more about gentrification and want researchers to try to help change it to help people stay in their community.

Discussion

In our study, we experienced difficulty finding community members willing to take our survey. A theme we found while disseminating surveys is that most Larimer community members knew that gentrification was a problem but they were uncertain on how they felt about it and how they could contribute to our solution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from this study will help researchers learn how the community feels about the rising housing values and costs as a result of gentrification. This study will also help researchers understand what the community needs are as it relates to gentrification. Results from our research suggest that residents want to keep their neighborhood the same and not have changes to the community. We think that the community should be able to advocate for changes to better the community instead of forcing people out of their longtime homes to better the community. Current and longtime residents deserve quality access to living in their communities.