

NextGen Neighborhoods – Holmes Towers

Ideas Session 1: Results

Below are the results from the October 28, 2015, brainstorming session held with Holmes Towers residents and neighbors who were asked to identify concerns about the proposed development and to suggest ideas on what to do to improve quality of life.

A. Concerns Sorted Into Categories

The following list of concerns was generated in response to the following question:

“The plan to build additional apartments (50% affordable and 50% market rate) at the Holmes Towers has raised many concerns.

“Please tell us what concerns you personally have about the plan?”

1. Concerns About Program (9 Concerns)

- New building won't make any money. Development will fail
- 50/50 split won't make a financial impact. Need something like 10 affordable 90 market rate for it to work
- Why not more than 50% affordable housing? Why not public housing?
- Cost benefit of having to rebuild playground will take away from repairs
- If plan doesn't work, what happens afterward?
- What happens when the money runs out?
- If not addressing maintenance issues now, will NYCHA have capacity to do so after plan?
- Need repairs at Holmes now
- Term of lease

2. Impacts During Construction (8 Concerns)

- Air quality during and after construction
- Health issues related to construction, dust, noise, and rodents
- Quality of life during construction
- Structural safety of building here
- Construction, demolition, dirt, building stability
- Over construction
- Noise/ disturbances
- Air quality/ asthma

3. Impact on Rents (7 Concerns)

- Rent increase
- Concern about being charged extra for utilities
- Market rents will hike NYCHA rents
- Lowering the rents for fix income residents + residents in affordable units
- Is the rent to be increased for NYCHA residents?

NextGen Neighborhoods – Holmes Towers

Ideas Session 1: Results

- Impact on prices in neighborhood w/more market rate tenants

4. Loss of Views (5 Concerns)

- Views will be eliminated
- Not enough room; blocks our view of the east river
- Blocked view
- People will see residents in windows
- New development blocking light & increasing utility cost

5. Playground (5 Concerns)

- Kids won't have anywhere to play
- No playground
- How long will the children be without a playground?
- Playgrounds are important to children where will all the new old/children play?
- If building is being built on playground and playground needs to be built on relocated space, why not build the building where playground is being relocated?

6. Fear of Eviction/Displacement (3 Concerns)

- Residents being displaced in the long term
- Displacement/relocation
- Don't want to relocate (at Holmes 25 years)

7. Loss of Community (3 Concerns)

- Holmes will lose its nice community.
- Effects on community (gentrification)
- Effects on families and health

8. Overcrowding (3 Concerns)

- Location of building
- Overcrowding in the neighborhood
- Not enough space for new building

9. Parking (3 Concerns)

- Not enough parking for residents
- Consider parking situation and security of spaces
- Will additional free parking spaces be added to our area?

10. Resident Engagement (3 Concerns)

- Residents don't have all the info

NextGen Neighborhoods – Holmes Towers

Ideas Session 1: Results

- NYCHA doesn't care what residents think
- Taking land away from residents

11. Safety (3 Concerns)

- More police like before
- Will housing police patrol the new buildings as they do NYCHA buildings?
- More pressure brought on by new market rate tenants to over-police and restrict residents

12. Loss of Amenities (2 Concerns)

- Will benches in front of 405 be taken away?
- Lack of walking open space

13. Miscellaneous

- When will construction start/finish?
- Why not build on top of highway, like at Rockefeller University?
- Mayoral corruption
- Cannot meet minimum requirements
- Not a lot of stores in area
- Residents won't be able to access new building and its facilities.
- De Blasio owes developers favors for their financial contributions, so build this building in park slope where de Blasio lives.
- How will the strain on the schools be addressed with more kids?
- Environmental
- ASPCA brings their dogs across to Holmes Towers to do #2, where will they take dogs when new building is built?
- Why is this being done to this area and not someplace else?

NextGen Neighborhoods – Holmes Towers

Ideas Session 1: Results

B. Ideas for Better Quality of Life Sorted Into Categories

The following list of ideas was generated in response to the following question:

“The plan to build additional apartments (50% affordable and 50% market rate) at Holmes Towers is expected to generate revenues for both NYCHA and Holmes.

“How should those revenues be used to improve quality of life in Holmes?”

1. Repairs (14 ideas)

- Fix Holmes Towers first
- Revenue should be used for infrastructure
- Interior improvement in halls, stairs, and apartments
- Maintain/Fix elevators and roofs
- Add elevators
- Renovate/upgrade existing apartment units
- Storm resistant windows
- Repairs
- Repairs in general
- Fix plumbing and mold
- Hot water and boiler repairs
- Quality repairs
- Cameras in halls and stairs
- Hire more maintenance workers and spend on painting, plastering, and apartment renovations
- More grounds keepers

2. Open Space (9 ideas)

- Invest in more trees
- Fix playgrounds and increase size
- Indoor playground
- Gym facilities, pool
- Fitness center
- More garden spaces
- Beautification of grounds
- Dog walk
- Better/clear swings

3. Commercial Uses (7 Ideas)

- Need affordable supermarket
- More business to area

NextGen Neighborhoods – Holmes Towers

Ideas Session 1: Results

- Banks
- Barber shops beauty parlor
- Construct more shoe, furniture, and clothing stores
- No need for more retail stores

4. Education (6 Ideas)

- Add more classrooms to schools
- Educational opportunities for kids
- ESL language school
- Literacy program
- Community programs and events

5. Rents (2 Ideas)

- Reduce rents in development
- Lower current rents

6. Senior Center (2 Ideas)

- Senior center
- Expansion of senior center

7. Miscellaneous

- Residents don't want the money
- More youth employment opportunities
- Hire an independent auditor to make sure money is being spent correctly
- Improve air quality, which can't be done
- Clinic on the property