

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY: WHAT'S NEXT?

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**Opening Remarks:**

RICHARD V. REEVES  
John C. and Nancy D. Whitehead Chair,  
Senior Fellow and Director, Future of the Middle Class Initiative  
The Brookings Institution

**Presentation:**

JENS LUDWIG  
Nonresident Senior Fellow, Economic Studies  
The Brookings Institution

**Presentation:**

NATHANIEL HENDREN  
Professor of Economics, Harvard University  
Founding Co-Director, Opportunity Insights

**Research Panel:**

JENNY SCHUETZ, Moderator  
David M. Rubenstein Fellow, Metropolitan Policy Program  
The Brookings Institution

STEFANIE A. DeLUCA  
James Coleman Professor of Sociology and Social Policy  
Johns Hopkins University

JEFFREY R. KLING  
Associate Director for Economic Analysis  
Congressional Budget Office

PATRICK SHARKEY  
Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs  
Princeton University

**Practice Panel:**

ALAN BERUBE, Moderator  
Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Metropolitan Policy Program  
The Brookings Institution

A. FULTON MEACHEM, JR.  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Charlotte Housing Authority

SARAH OPPENHEIMER  
Director of Research and Evaluation  
King County Housing Authority

MARGERY A. TURNER  
Senior Vice President for Program Planning and Management  
Urban Institute

**Closing Remarks:**

RICHARD V. REEVES  
John C. and Nancy D. Whitehead Chair,  
Senior Fellow and Director, Future of the Middle Class Initiative  
The Brookings Institution

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. REEVES: Thank you so much for coming. My name is Richard Reeves. I'm a Senior Fellow here at Brookings Institution. It's my great pleasure to welcome all of you to this event. I am the director of the Future of the Middle Class Initiative and co-director of the Center on Children and Families, and we are hosting this event today.

I'm just going to tell you what the idea is in terms of the flow. Please use the hashtag #MovingToOpportunity if you're watching on social media. And I'm particularly grateful to those of you in the room, but I don't want to forget the people who are watching

on line as well. Currently I think we're about 400 people who are watching this on line from around the country and from actually around the world. So, thank you to all of you. Please do join in on social media, send your questions, et cetera, to the panels.

The work of the Future of the Middle Class Initiative and of the Center on Children and Families is focused on improving quality of life and promoting upward mobility, especially out of poverty and into a secure middle-class family income.

And it's with that in the mind that we've put this event together today and also to give some notice to some new research that you're just about to hear about. And so, the running order is as follows: we're going to hear two presentations from Jens Ludwig, who is a professor of social service administration law and public policy, which is a lot to cover, at the University of Chicago, but also a Nonresident here at Brookings. And please do check out his latest work, which we've summarized on our website today. And he'll be followed by Nathan Hendren, who is professor of economics at Harvard University and he is one of the founding co-directors, along with Raj Chetty and John Friedman of Opportunity Insights, which is obviously doing a lot of work in this space and produced a series of papers that have in some ways motivated some of the work around Moving to Opportunity.

And I am going to take this chance to point out that Nathan was also the recipient of an award relatively recently. It's the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. So, I want to congratulate him on that. Please join me actually in giving him a round of applause for that (applause) because until that point nobody knew that economists counted as scientists or engineers. (Laughter) But we'll definitely let it stand. Then we're going to have two panels, each moderated by a colleague of mine from Brookings who I'll introduce when that time comes.

The questions that are going to underpin the conversations we have today, as far as I see it, are along the following lines: does place itself matter for opportunity? In a causal fashion, does where you live matter for your outcomes? Can moving places lead to greater opportunity? If it can, when and how does it in fact lead to greater opportunities

following a move? How can we make more moves to greater opportunity by identifying the barriers and lowering them and incentivizing people to move? And, last but not least, should have to move to have opportunity? Or put slightly differently, what do we do to ensure that the places from which people move are also places of high opportunity?

So, this some of the framing questions I hope we're going to get to today in our presentations and in the panels. And also just a note on terminology, we're going to be talking today about Moving to Opportunity, the specific program which we're going to be hearing a lot about, and moving to opportunity, which is the general sense that people can move to an area of higher opportunity. And so I just invite the speakers just if you are using it in one of those particular ways, to try and help us through it, because Moving to Opportunity and moving to opportunity are not always used in the same way when you're discussing it with academics who work on Moving to Opportunity. (Laughter)

So with that I'll hand it over to our first speaker. Oh, I should say also the speakers will just take five minutes of questions at the end of their presentations. Those are largely for clarification purposes about the papers they've presented. I think the substantive issues will be better left to the panels and the experts that will be on those panels, including our speakers and/or their co-authors. So, with that, I'll hand it over to our first speaker, Jens. Thank you.

Please join me in welcoming Jens. (Applause)

MR. LUDWIG: Great. Thanks so much. The hypothesis that place itself might matter for economic advantage or disadvantage in the United States stems in part from the fact that you see such strong patterning of people's life outcomes, even in neighborhoods that are incredibly geographically proximate to one another.

So you see this maybe most vividly in places like the south side of Chicago, where I live. So starting in the 1940s the City of Chicago developed some housing projects on the State Street corridor that runs from the downtown. This is just west of the Washington Park neighborhood on the south side. And if you literally just cross the street, in

this case Cottage Grove Avenue, that separates the Washington Park neighborhood from the Hyde Park neighborhood where the University of Chicago is located, you can see dramatic differences in things like the likelihood that kids graduate from high school, the overall crime rate, health outcomes, infant mortality, and on and on and on.

So this was a pattern that University of Chicago sociologists noticed at least 100 years ago and raised the question of what might there be about neighborhood environments that could causally influence people's life outcomes, things like differential access to neighborhood institutions or middle-class families that might serve as role models who are sources of job referrals. There's a different hypothesis though which is that maybe the patterning that we see across these neighborhoods might instead reflect some differences in the types of families that end up living in different types of neighborhoods.

And so to answer that question, in 1992 the Congress authorized a HUD demonstration called Moving to Opportunity that set eligibility for families with kids living in some of the most economically distressed housing projects in the country in five cities, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, LA, and New York. It enrolled a total of 4,600 families over a 4-year period from 1994 to 1998. So to give you some sense for what the baseline neighborhoods look like, in Chicago, my hometown, the Robert Taylor Homes were one of the baseline sites. You can see some pictures from when these were still standing.

So families voluntarily signed up for Moving to Opportunity and then they were randomly assigned by HUD to one of three different groups. So one possibility is that families could be assigned to a control group that doesn't get any additional assistance to move out of these baseline housing projects, but weren't constrained from moving out on their own. The second possibility is that families could be randomly assigned into what we call the low poverty voucher group that received a section 8 housing voucher subsidy to lease an apartment in the private housing market, but with the restriction that they had to move to a neighborhood, a census tract, with a 1990 poverty rate below 10 percent. It's a way to think about the size of that move, the baseline poverty rate for the neighborhood, the

MTO neighborhoods, were on the order of 40-50+ percent, depending on what specific city you're looking at. And they also received some additional mobility counseling beyond what's normally provided to section 8 housing recipients. And then the third possibility is families could be randomly assigned to receive a regular section 8 housing voucher.

So this gives you some visual sense for the types of neighborhoods that families moved into. If you look at a map of the different MTO cities, you can see it's almost like a -- has a flower patterning with families in control group in the middle in the baseline housing projects, with usually the families receiving the regular housing vouchers sort of ringed around them, and then the families receiving the low poverty vouchers in an outer ring beyond them as well.

Here's what it looks like if you look at neighborhood poverty rates. This is on the X axis for the control group and the low poverty voucher group. And on the Y axis is the share of families in the different groups. And you can see that there are indeed -- so the red distribution here, the families in the control group, and you can see that there are indeed some control group families who wind up moving into lower poverty neighborhoods on their own. So there is some overlap in the neighborhood poverty distributions. But you can also see that most of the families in the control group are living in neighborhoods with poverty rates over the 10-15 year follow up period that are somewhere between say 25 and 50 percent.

And in contrast, you can see the yellow graph here is the distribution of neighborhood poverty for the families assigned into the low poverty voucher group who moved. And you can see there's a noticeable increase in the share of those families living in much, much lower poverty neighborhoods, 10 or 20 percent average over the entire study period.

If you look at the families who received the regular housing vouchers versus the control group, you can see that there's a mean shift in neighborhood poverty rates over the study period, but it's not nearly as pronounced. So the lower poverty voucher

intervention was successful in generating much, much larger differences in neighborhood economic conditions, although more modest changes in neighborhood racial segregation, which I think will be a point that will come up probably a bunch in the first research panel.

So what happens to families when they receive a housing subsidy like this and move from very, very economically disadvantaged developments into lower poverty neighborhoods? Well, let me start with a story for MTO adults. If you look at the 1992 congressional legislation authorizing MTO, the key outcomes that it focuses on are schooling outcomes for kids and economic outcomes for adults. When we look at the adults in MTO, when we follow up their outcomes 10 to 15 years after baseline, what we see is indeed very large impacts on adults, but not where we expect it. So we see very large changes in things like mental health and physical health. So if you look at, for instance, the prevalence of adults who meet clinical criteria for depression, you see very sizeable differences between families who received low poverty vouchers and the control group. And if you look at health outcomes, like obesity, morbid obesity, or even diabetes, you see very substantial differences again between low poverty voucher families and the control group, more muted differences for the families who received regular vouchers, consistent with the fact that the families who received regular vouchers also experienced more muted changes in neighborhood conditions.

When you turn to economic outcomes for adults, the thing that the initial MTO authorizing legislation was focused on on the adult side, you see no detectable differences in employment rates or earnings or any other outcomes. So this is a graph over time by number of quarters since the time of random assignment for employment rates for the three different groups in MTO. And you can see that they track each other very closely over the entire period. There's a little bit of cyclicalality with the business cycle for all families, but no differences across groups.

So this raises, for starters, something of a puzzle because, as I said, social scientists and medical researchers and anybody who studies human behavior and human

outcomes, has been interested in the role of place and neighborhoods and people's life outcomes for decades or centuries. I think the first study of neighborhood effects that I know of was first published in the 1700s in London. And there are countless dozens and dozens of studies that neighborhoods exert very important impacts on outcomes, including adult economic outcomes. And so how do we reconcile this puzzle of moving to opportunity, showing no gains in adult earnings versus so many previous non-experimental studies showing big impacts?

So that's been a topic of some work that Jeff Kling and I and some other people have been doing with David Harding at the Berkeley Sociology Department for the last few years to try and reconcile the apparent differences between moving to opportunity and the observational neighborhood effects research. And some of the hypotheses that people -- in the initial years when MTO research was coming out, some of the hypotheses that people had offered included things like well, the MTO families are unusually disadvantaged, drawn from unusually disadvantaged neighborhoods, only about a quarter-ish of the eligible families in this baseline housing development signed up for MOT. Maybe there's just something intrinsically different about those families that makes them less responsive to changes in community environments.

A different type of hypothesis that's been offered for trying to reconcile MTO with other neighborhood effect studies is maybe the treatment dose of the neighborhood changes induced by MTO were not pronounced enough to change economic outcomes for adults. So maybe families didn't spend a long enough time in really low poverty neighborhoods, or maybe there wasn't a large enough change in neighborhood racial composition to change adult outcomes. And we've spent some time reanalyzing the MTO data and comparing those results to data from the panel study of income dynamics. And we think that we can rule out these sorts of explanations for why MTO is different from previous studies on adult earnings.

The most likely explanation, based on our analysis of the different data sets,



suggests that what's going on here is in the previous neighborhood effect studies the types of families who wind up in lower poverty neighborhoods include adults who would have had better economic outcomes anyway. And so the previous -- at least with respect to adult economic outcomes -- previous neighborhood effect studies seem to have been confounding the influence of neighborhood environments with the influence of something else about the household characteristics themselves.

So that's the story for adults. If we turn to MTO children, again following the kids out through 10 to 15 years after baseline, we saw remarkably limited impacts on kids at least 10 to 15 years out after baseline. We saw some improvements in health and behavioral outcomes, particularly for girls, but almost no signs of improved academic outcomes, the thing that the Congressional legislation that authorized MTO was focused on, for either boys or girls regardless of the age that kids were at baseline. So the story up through 10 to 15 years was quite disappointing I think from the perspective of neighborhood moves, trying to improve the long-term life chances of children. And then, due to some incredible ingenuity from Nathan Hendren, and Raj Chetty and Larry Katz, they managed to track outcomes for people in MTO for an even longer time period than we were originally able to do by linking information on MTO program participants to IRS tax data. So when we followed people out through 10 to 15 years, you know, if you think about kids who were very young at baseline, they're not quite old enough yet to have really fully integrated into the labor market. And so when we're looking at things like earnings outcomes, it's not super meaningful when people are late adolescence or early adulthood. So what they were able to with the IRS tax data is essentially discover a pattern that looks like this -- so let me just talk you through what this is.

So on the Y axis here is the difference in earnings during adulthood between people assigned to the low poverty voucher group versus the control group. And what you're seeing along the X axis here is the age at which income is measured for the MTO program participant. And what you're seeing in the red line here is what that looks like

for the MTO kids who were age 13 or older at baseline. And essentially what you see is little difference between the low poverty voucher group and the control group in earnings for the MTO kids who are already adolescents at baseline. And, if anything, maybe some hint of some decline in earnings.

In contrast, if you look at the blue line here, this is the low poverty voucher versus control difference in earnings for the kids who are under age 13 at baseline. And you can see that as you follow kids out into their mid to late 20s, you can start to see very pronounced differences in earnings as a result of the MTO induced moves.

And so this is an example of I think partly potentially the heightened sensitivity of children early in life. There's a lot of research, starting with (inaudible) neighbors that suggest it. And I think also from a social science and policy analysis perspective, the enormous value of this research infrastructure that comes from the IRS tax database that Raj and Nathan have been able to assemble.

So what does this all mean for public policy? Well, for starters, to recap the findings, there do seem to be some long-term benefits to kids, especially kids who were very young at baseline. And the story from MTO and neighborhood mobility for adults I think depends a lot on what you care about. If you are focused very narrowly on reducing income poverty, you will think about MTO and neighborhood moves as something of a disappointment, at least for people who are already adults. If you're objective instead is to improve the well-being of poor people, MTO yields a much more optimistic story for adults, given these improvements in things that are very important for life outcomes.

What does this imply for public policy? I think this will be obviously a topic of a lot of discussion and follow up panels. But Rob Collinson, who is new assistant professor at Notre Dame, and I have a Brookings policy brief that just came out today that starts to sketch out some of the different policy implications of the entire body of MTO research. And I think one strand of policy thinking that I think we want to engage in now is how exactly do we make our existing housing programs more helpful for low income

families. Given the pattern of benefits that we see in MTO, I think a very natural place to start is to think about ways of prioritizing housing subsidies for families with young children, if part of the goal is long-term poverty reduction and promotion of social mobility. I think there are a variety of things that we can think about doing to make housing vouchers better able to help families move into lower poverty neighborhoods, things like making the voucher program work better from the perspective the landlords, changing the way that the voucher subsidies work across neighborhoods with different poverty rates. These are things that will come up during the policy panel I'm sure.

A different type of I think policy question raised by this pattern of MTO findings is thinking about what other types of supports we need to improve the economic outcomes for adults. And so I think what MTO says is that mobility alone is not enough to do that. What types of supplements do we need to boost adult labor market outcomes?

And the final thing that I will end on is the point that Richard mentioned at the end of his introduction, which is there's no state of the world in which we are -- so right now, I think as probably most people in the room know, housing subsidies are sufficiently generous and the overall housing subsidy budget in the United States is sufficiently limited where only something like a quarter of all income eligible households in the United States receive federal housing subsidy. So for starters, we're not even providing any sort of housing subsidy, whether that's public housing or other place based housing subsidy, much less a housing voucher. We're not getting much good coverage over low income housing families for starters. There's no conceivable way in which we'll ever be able to provide every low income family with a chance to participate in a mobility program. And so I think to the extent to which this new longer-term MTO research has rejuvenated attention to place based policies, I think that raises a lot of questions about what else we can do to change the neighborhood environments themselves in which poor families are currently living.

And the thing that I wanted to close with was something of a surprise I think to many of us who started off in the MTO research. You know, when many of us were

thinking about why families would sign up for MTO initially, people who spent a lot of time thinking about education were sure that MTO families would sign up for access to better schools. If you were a health person, you're sure it would be access to better healthcare. If you were a labor economist, you were sure that it was going to be due to access to better job opportunities. But when Jeff Kling and Jeff Liebman and Larry Katz went out and started to talk to MTO families in Boston about a million years ago, one of the things that they realized was most important from the perspective of the families themselves -- and we can actually see this in the survey data as well -- is neighborhood safety. And I think that's not surprising if you've been reading some of the research that people like Pat Sharkey have been doing over time showing the effects of exposure to community violence on children's schooling outcomes, on mental health, on overall well-being. And so there's a lot of policy energy around thinking about community economic development, improving schools. And all of these things are clearly important.

And I think just one lesson about placed based policy that I hope doesn't also get lost in the conversation is that we all prioritize don't lose sight of the neighborhood feature that the MTO families themselves prioritize as well, which is safety.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

And then I think we have a few minutes for clarifying questions.

MR. REEVES: But you were pretty clear. (Laughter)

MR. LUDWIG: But I was --

MR. REEVES: Because they don't need it, in which case we shouldn't (inaudible). So we should use the time for the panel.

MR. LUDWIG: Okay. Perfect. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. HENDREN: Wonderful. So thanks. Can everybody hear me okay?

Great.

So it's a pleasure to be here. Just want to say thanks for the opportunity to speak with you all. Looking forward to telling you a little bit about some of the work on the

Creating Moves to Opportunity project and looking forward to hearing all of your questions and thoughts as well.

So I'm going to talk about Creating Moves to Opportunity experiment, evidence on neighborhood choice among voucher recipients. Just at the outset I want to be clear, this is a joint work with Peter Bergman, Raj Chetty, Stephanie DeLuca, here in the audience, Larry Katz, and Chris Palmer. And also it has been an enormous collaboration with the Seattle and King County Housing Authorities -- Sarah Oppenheimer here in the second row, who you'll hear from later, MDRC, and Jay Paul North America.

And we want to motivate what we were after with this work with really four facts on neighborhoods and economic opportunity. The first fact is that children's prospects for upward income mobility very substantially across neighborhoods in the United States, and even nearby neighborhoods. So we're going to start a broad level of looking at the extent to which kids climb the economic ladder based on where they grew up. So what you're looking at here is the average incomes of kids at age 35 for children who grew up in low income families, so families who earn about say \$27,000 a year, and how that maps out based on which metropolitan or rural area they grew up in the United States.

And so you can see enormous various in the extent to which kids climb the ladder. So in Atlanta children earn about \$27,000 a year, here in DC it's about \$34,000, \$37,000 in Boston. You can go to parts of the Midwest where you're in excess of \$45,000 a year. And so there's enormous differences in the extent to which kids are climbing the ladder.

Now, as we zoom in into finer geographies, what I think was most surprising to us is that this broad variation actually replicates within virtually every major metropolitan area in the United States. So this is showing you that upward income mobility of different census tracts in the Seattle and King County area. And you can see just within Seattle you have the same level of variation you saw on the national map. So the color scheme is basically the same. You see incomes in some neighborhoods around \$25-30,000 a year.

You go out to Eastgate or North Queen Anne portions of Bellevue where you see \$40-50,000 a year for children who are growing up in families whose parents who earn the same amount of money, but just happen to be growing up in different neighborhoods.

The second fact that we want to motivate this work with is moving to better neighborhoods improves children's economic outcomes in adulthood significantly and in proportion to the exposure time that they have in those areas while they're growing up. And so I just want to show some evidence on this. So Jens alluded to this in the MTO example, which is in the center graph on the bottom there. And what you see in the MTO example is that children who are below age 13, the youngest children in the Moving to Opportunity experiment, had the largest gains from their families obtaining these vouchers and given the opportunity to move to higher opportunity areas, or in this case, lower poverty areas.

What you're looking at in the other graphs are other quasi experimental pieces of evidence that build on a body of work that I think motivated a lot of the way in which one can rationalize the MTO findings through this exposure time idea. And so the graph on the upper left is showing you that families which children who move at younger ages, those children grow up to have higher outcomes if they grow up in neighborhoods that have higher rates of upward mobility. Conversely, the longer a child spends growing up in a neighborhood that has lower rates of upward mobility, the lower their outcomes would be in adulthood.

Now, that pattern has been replicated not only in the United States, but also in Australia, in Montreal, in Danish data, and also you find a similar exposure time pattern looking at Hope Six Demolition. So this is some work by Eric Chin documenting that the youngest children whose families were displaced during the Hope Six process from public housing projects were the ones who experienced the largest economic gains in adulthood.

And so broadly what this suggests is that neighborhoods matter. We are in a sense a product of where we grew up, and that product is a function of how long we spent growing up in each of those places.

So turning now to the policy perspective on this, the third fact is that low income families, and in particular low income families who receive housing vouchers, predominantly live in low opportunity areas. And so this again you see in virtually every major metropolitan area, but I'm going to motivate this with the picture from Seattle. So this is the 25 most common census tracts for where housing choice voucher recipients live in the Seattle area. And if you take a look at the graph here you can see that these green dots tend to concentrate in areas that have lower rates of upward mobility. And this is a pattern that you see virtually in every city in metropolitan areas in the United States.

Now, one potential rationalization for why families, in particular low income families, are raising their children in neighborhoods that have lower rates of upward mobility, one potential explanation for that is that the neighborhoods that have higher rates of upward mobility might just simply be more expensive. And we do see that in general neighborhood that have higher rates of upward mobility have higher rents on average. So this is showing you that pattern in Seattle. The horizontal axis, you're looking at the median two bedroom rent in 2015 from the census. And on the vertical axis, you're seeing the average income of kids who grew up in low income families in each of those different census tracts in Seattle. And the pattern is increasing. But I think what's notable about this pattern is that there is a lot of variation, there's a lot of sort of variation around that axis. So in particular, if you compare a couple of places, like the Central District or North Queen Ann, you look in the census data, it doesn't look like the rents are all that different. And it at least raises the question that there's perhaps potential for moving to some of these higher opportunity areas without actually experiencing higher rent.

Now, of course, there could be a range of alternative tradeoffs that families would face when moving to some of these other neighborhoods. And so more broadly I think this turns to the central question that we want to use as motivation for the experiment I'm going to talk with you about today. And that question is why don't low income families move to opportunity -- the basic question that we really want to address. It seems like

neighborhoods matter; it seems like if you did move to a neighborhood that has higher rates of upper mobility, your children would have higher earnings. And so what's going on here? Well, broadly, we think there can be two classes of explanations. On the one hand, we could imagine that this is a preference story, that perhaps families prefer to stay in maybe their current neighborhoods -- maybe those neighborhood have other amenities, maybe they have shorter commutes, maybe they have greater proximity to family.

Now, on the other hand, perhaps families, and low income families in particular, face greater barriers when thinking of moving to higher opportunity areas, perhaps they have trouble because of lack of information of how to find a unit in a higher opportunity area or they face other search frictions, or perhaps they face discrimination from landlords that don't particularly want them to lease their units in the high opportunity areas.

And we think this distinction is really critical from a policy standpoint because then if barriers are really what is driving this story, it raises the policy question of can we relax those barriers through public policy. And in particular, you know, barriers are driving segregation. Can we do this in changes in affordable housing policy, like the House Choice voucher program?

And so this motivated the Creating Moves to Opportunity experiment in the Seattle and King County area. This is a randomized control trial with the aim to develop and test policy scalable strategies to reduce the barriers that housing choice voucher recipients face in moving to high opportunity areas. And so to construct this experiment, or to do this experiment, we wanted to start by defining opportunity areas. So we've showed you this map that has sort of got all of these different colors on it, but we wanted to imagine an intervention that would provide families with the resources and perhaps supports that could help relax the barriers that they might face when moving to opportunity areas or neighborhood with higher opportunity. So we started by defining what we mean by high opportunity areas. Now, our target population is going to be families with children. And so we decided to define opportunity areas by places that had the greatest chance of improving



their children's outcomes or raising their children's incomes in adulthood.

And so we sued the opportunity atlas, which is what I was showing you screen shots of several slides ago, to define opportunity areas as places where historically children from low income families have had the highest incomes. That's basically how we went about defining opportunity areas for this experiment. And then we started roughly with the top third of the distribution of opportunity areas of neighborhood in Seattle and King County to define our opportunity areas, and then we adjusted those definitions, collaborating with folks in the housing authorities, to think about two potential issues for actually implementing this design. The first is to think about neighborhood change. So when we were showing you those graphs, those are the average income of kids who are age 35 today, which means they were growing up in those neighborhoods many years ago. And so we might want to worry about to what extent are neighborhoods changing over time. So we got data on test scores, other things that you can measure at younger ages to try to assess the extent to which neighborhoods and their upward mobility characteristics are changing over time.

Now, one of the things I'll just say briefly on this, that we were pretty surprised by -- and I think surprises everybody that we talk with on this -- is that we actually found that while you can see lots of differences in the composition of residents in these different areas over time, you know, some places get richer, some places get poorer, when you really zoom in and try to find evidence that there's changes in the upward mobility characteristics of neighborhoods, we really didn't find any significant changes. And so, for example, in many of the areas that we were looking at when you look at say the third grade test scores of children on the free and reduced price lunch programs, it actually looks like even in "gentrifying neighborhood", those things are fairly flat lined.

And so at the end of the day we turned out not doing much in terms of adjusting for neighborhood change, but I think this is always going to be an important thing to keep in mind with these types of exercises.

The second is just naturally there's some cases where you're missing a tract that didn't fall into the top third and you want to create a contiguous area. And so that was the second thing from an operation standpoint of thinking about an implementation. We wanted to do something that was going to be clear to the families. And so this is the neighborhoods, a picture of the neighborhoods that we settled on for defining opportunity neighborhoods. So these are hashed out in blue here. They show you all the opportunity areas that we defined in the Seattle and King County area.

Okay, so those are the opportunity areas. What did we do for the treatment? Now, if you recall, we want to try to understand to what extent are barriers the reason that families are not moving to these different areas. And so we designed a treatment that broadly has three different components. The first is customized search assistance, so helping families find units in these areas. We partnered families with an individual from a nonprofit that helped families search in these different areas and helped them think through their search process. The member of the nonprofit also reached out directly to landlords in high opportunity areas to try to bring them into the housing choice voucher program and provide units for these families. And we also provided them with short-term financial assistance, so helping with things like application fees and things of that nature.

And so just to put some numbers on what this sort of looked like, on average the staff was spending about six hours with these families in their search process. So this is a decently intensive collaboration that this staff had with each of these families in the study. And it also appears that the landlord component was pretty central for a lot of these families. So half of the families who end up making moves to opportunity areas, that's how you, half of those connections were established through units identified these rental brokers, the nonprofit staff these families were working with. And then on average, the financial assistance summed up to about a little over \$1,000 to cover things like increased security deposits or application fees in some of these neighborhoods.

And so overall the program costs about \$2,600. So that's actually a decently sized program when you think about it. This is a fairly intensive intervention for these families. When you step back though and view this from the perspective of how much money are we spending on the families from the voucher perspective, so sum up the half the total amount that the cost of the voucher over the average of seven years that these families are experiencing that voucher, it's only about 2 percent of the total amount of money that these families are getting. And so really how much you think about whether this program is expensive or cheap really depends on your perspective. From the perspective of the total amount of money these families are getting, that's quite cheap.

Last thing I want to say, the goal is to distinguish between preferences and constraints. So as a result, in contrast to the MTO experiment, where families had to move to a low poverty census tract in order to be able to use that voucher, we are not going to restrict the vouchers to be used in low poverty or high opportunity areas. We are going to allow families to use those vouchers wherever they would like, but we're going to pair them with services to help them access some of the higher opportunity areas. And so that's I think an important distinction that we wanted to test with this experiment relative to the MTO work.

Okay, so what were the results? So I'm going to show you a graph here where on the vertical axis it's just simply the fraction of families that move to a high opportunity area, so one of those shaded regions in the map that I showed you. And just to put some historical perspective on this, historically families with vouchers, about 11 or 12 percent of them, would move to these areas. So that's about the rough fraction of vouchers that are used in those higher opportunity areas.

Now, for the control group, we found fairly similar rates of about 14 percent being used in high opportunity areas. And for the treatment group, when they got these services, we found that over half of them decided to move to these higher opportunity areas. And so we found an enormous difference in the extent to which families move -- making one

of these fairly large decisions for your life, where do you choose to raise your children -- seems to have really moved the needle on that decision through this intervention.

Now, one potential story you could have in mind is that perhaps we just increase the total fraction of families that actually were able to find a unit with their voucher, because these services helped families actually find units. You're paired with a member of the nonprofit staff. Turns out that's actually not what this program did. So even 84-85 percent of families in the control group were able to use their voucher, they just chose to use it in a non high opportunity neighborhood. And so this difference between the control and the treatment group and the fraction of families that exercised the voucher was not statistically significant.

And so really what the program did was change not whether families used the voucher, but where they chose to use it. And so let me put a little bit of picture on that. This is kind of a graph or a map showing you where families in the treatment and the control group used the voucher. So the green is the treatment group, the red is the control group. And I think the thing to really point out here is that the families in green are largely pretty scattered throughout the opportunity areas. There's some clustering, you know, a couple of pairs in particular units, but broadly scattered throughout the various ranges of high opportunity areas. Doesn't seem like it's generating significant clustering in any one particular area.

We also see very strong effects across different races and ethnicities. So one hypothesis, if you thought that say preferences were heterogeneous and perhaps more tied to particular neighborhoods for particular races or ethnicities, you might have seen smaller effects for some races and ethnicities relative to others. We don't see any statistically distinguishable differences across these different groups. There's a slightly smaller point effect for black non Hispanic participants, but that's not statistically distinguishable from the other patterns. And broadly in say of the sub-groups that we were able to slice, we really don't see any significant pattern of heterogeneity. Really, across the

spectrum, we found fairly large effects, on the order of about 40 percentage points for any of the sub-groups that we were really able to tease out.

Another question you might ask is are families making other tradeoffs when they move to higher opportunity areas. A couple of things we can take a look at there, how far do they go relative to where they start. That actually doesn't seem to vary between the treatment and the control group. Relative to where they're starting, they're moving roughly the same distance. And they also don't seem to be living in units that are any larger or any smaller. And I think this comes back to the story of potentially the existence of a lot of dispersion within the set of opportunity areas in terms of prices.

Now, lastly, one kind of fundamental question -- and especially as it relates to the extent to which it will generate exposure effects on these kids -- is the extent to which families would persist in these opportunity areas. And one story that you might have is that perhaps families that were paired with these nonprofit staff went to the high opportunity areas, but they did it through a little bit -- perhaps even you might even call it like a coercion from the -- you know, you paired up with somebody who is really here to help you and they're saying, hey, you should move here, and so you go there and now you may not stay. And so Stephanie DeLuca and her team have been conducting follow up interviews with the families now that they've been there for a while to say, okay, are you satisfied in your destination neighborhood, do you want to stay in your destination neighborhood. And the broad story here is that, if anything, the pattern goes the other way, these families are more satisfied with their neighborhoods, they seem to be wanting to stay in those neighborhoods, and don't seem to be trading off something along the way.

So in conclusion here, broad conclusion is that we think segregation is largely driven by barriers and constraints, not by any kind of preference. And so moreover, services that reduce barriers can increase moves to opportunity and increase upward mobility we think substantially for kids. So just to kind of put some numbers on this, as I said before, the program costs \$2,600 per voucher issued. If you scale that by the fraction of

children that move to opportunity neighborhoods, that's \$4,700 per opportunity move. The experiment itself, we think based on the opportunity atlas, that prediction of what we know from what neighborhoods do to kids' incomes, we think if you took a child at birth and imagine they grew up in one of the neighborhoods that the families moved to, they would have incomes that are \$200,000 higher, roughly 10 percent higher, and would also increase their college attendance rates, reduce teen birth rates, and reduce incarceration rates. And so for a kind of a bang for a buck perspective, this program seems to have a pretty high return.

Now, coming back to what Richard was discussing at the beginning, and what Jens is referring to, I don't think this is any reason to run away from other forms of place based policy and investing in places. I think, if anything, what we're learning here is that families want the best for their kids. And so that means that we should also think about improving the neighborhoods where those families currently reside. And I think there's a high value of further work along the lines of the types of RCTs that we've been discussing with the Moving to Opportunity experiment that can hopefully shed more light on those types of policies. But I do think this work suggests that expanding access to high opportunity neighborhoods provides an immediate tool for both decreasing segregation and expanding economic opportunity for kids.

So we'll leave it at that and turn it over to questions. (Applause)

SPEAKER: Did you give any consideration to communities that have inclusionary zoning or scattered site policies and program?

MR. HENDREN: Can you repeat that for everybody?

SPEAKER: Was any consideration given -- and I recognize that we're looking right now at this particular case study -- but those communities that already have inclusionary zoning programs as well as scattered site units?

MR. HENDREN: Yeah, so I guess I would be curious by what you would mean by consideration. So the work that we were doing was not interacting in any particular

focused way with other baseline policy characteristics of any of the local areas.

SPEAKER: So when you're looking at opportunity zones, when you're looking at opportunity communities, the question is where those opportunity communities lacking any other kind of programs that would in fact encourage integration as well as a higher academic standard.

MR. HENDREN: Gotcha. So I think this broadly relates to the question of are they opportunity neighborhoods that we identify, places that would actually improve the incomes of the kids who are moving there. And so we did a lot of work to try to understand the extent to which that -- so there's a lot of reasons that children perhaps may not be well integrated into these particular neighborhoods. I think one of the examples are we had some examples of neighborhoods that -- let me walk you through a couple of examples. So I think broadly our conclusion is that the opportunity atlas provides a pretty good guide for neighborhoods that have a high causal effect on kids' outcomes. We think other particular characteristics, like the poverty rate, for example, is subject to more concerns along the lines of other types of confounding factors when trying to think about what is the impact that a neighborhood has on kids' outcomes.

And so one particular example I can give you on that front is I think we were studying one of the neighborhoods that had gentrified near downtown Seattle, that had experienced pretty significant reductions in poverty and expansions in mean incomes, but it actually looked to us, according to the opportunity atlas, like it had low rates of upward mobility. And this is the case where we went back and got some of the test score information, and what you see is increases in test scores for children in those areas if you just look at mean test scores. But then you restrict to children on free and reduced-price lunch, it was actually much more of a flat line in those neighborhoods, which I think speaks exactly to this type of inclusion in question of what neighborhoods are gentrifying is it actually uplifting all residents in those areas. And I think in a couple of the instances we were trying to take a look at, we did not necessarily see significant patterns that were related

to that.

Now, I don't want anybody to take away from that that's sort of saying gentrification is good or bad, that's not what this paper was really focused on, but we did try to do some work on this question to really understand whether the opportunity atlas was providing a relevant guide for these families.

Other questions?

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Debra (inaudible). I'm a graduate student at the University of Maryland. I had actually done some research in the Seattle area regarding early learning centers. And so I know a huge issue is racial segregation within early learning centers due to difficulty braiding funding between state and federal early learning programs.

So I was wondering what you factored into your analysis involving that issue.

MR. HENDREN: So we didn't, but I'm going to punt on that one and that come to the group when we're up here. We didn't focus on much of that in terms of this research question, but I think it will be a good question for the group.

Go to the back maybe.

SPEAKER: This is great stuff. Thank you.

I wondered if you could sort of thing about the voucher holders themselves as being a subset of -- because I think it's a little bit confusing about conclusions about low income people or poor people in general. And voucher holders have a specific profile, specific route to getting a voucher and how that may -- if you could sort of distinguish them from the other population of low-income people in the same neighborhoods.

MR. HENDREN: Yeah. One of the things we were surprised by in a lot of the moving work is, for example, when you compare the quasi experimental evidence that I was showing you in the graph, sort of the impact that neighborhoods have on kids, you can look broadly at all moves across the U.S. for families with children and compare that the experiences you see for MTO families. And broadly you see fairly similar patterns, which I



think speaks a little bit to this kind of question of are children of voucher holders different or are voucher holders different. I think from the perspective of what's going to happen to their children, I think the answer is no. I think to Jens' point, the types of families that are selecting into the program and moving to higher opportunity areas we think are selected and make it difficult to do a lot of work that just simply compares the groups who move opportunity versus don't.

MR. REEVES: Okay, I'm going to ask people to hold just because we want to keep on time. The good news is Nathan is staying on the panel. So I'm not saying don't ask your question, I'm just saying hold them for a second. I'm going to invite the panel to come on, but please join me again in thanking Nathan for his presentation. (Applause) And if our first panel will go up.

The structures of the panel -- and I should have said that it at the beginning -- what we're hoping is the first panel will be able to dig even further into what do we know, the research questions, and then the second panel will be up to focus somewhat more on how do we use what we know, more of the how, the practicalities of how we turn that knowledge to good effect.

The first panel is going to be moderated by my colleague, Jennie Scheutz. She is the David M. Rubinstein Fellow in our Metropolitan Policy Program here at Brookings and she's also a member of the scholarly team working on future of the middle-class issues.

So, with that, I'll hand it over to Jennie.

MS. SCHUETZ: Thanks, Richard. Thanks to all of you for sitting patiently through the presentations and thinking of all of the great questions that you want to ask at the end of our panel, so I'll ask you to keep those in mind. I'd like to give brief instructions to our panelists, so, Nathan, you've already met -- Nathan's a professor of economics at Harvard and co-director of the Equality of Opportunity Project. You have a sense of what his research is on because you just saw some of it.

Next to Nathan is Jeff Kling. Jeff is the associate director for economic

analysis at the Congressional Budget Office. He's written extensively on public housing and high poverty neighborhoods. On the other side of Jeff is Pat Sharkey. Pat's a professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University. He studies crime in urban neighborhoods. And on the far end is Stefanie DeLuca. Stefanie is the James Coleman professor of sociology and social policy at Johns Hopkins University just up the road from us in Baltimore. Her research focuses on how social context affects the outcomes of disadvantaged young people and she is one of Nathan's co-authors on the paper that was just presented. Thank you guys for being here today.

All right, so I think we're going to dive-in first to the CMTO project, so I'm going to talk about CMTO as being the Seattle work, and I'll talk about MTO as being the more general project that Jeff and Jens had worked on. So the CMTO project is a really nice way of starting to understand some of the barriers that low-income families face in moving to higher opportunity neighborhoods, low-poverty neighborhoods.

We'll come back to that in a moment, but I wanted to ask Stefanie, in particular, because you've done some qualitative interviews with the families who moved, can you tell us a little bit more about what the families were telling you about their perception of the barrier, so if you've learned anything about why they hadn't moved to high opportunity neighborhoods before or what they saw as the hurdles to moving to these places?

MS. DELUCA: Sure. I pressed the button on that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, that's the green.

MS. SCHUETZ: It turns green. Okay, great.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, and the two of you hold it right here.

MS. DELUCA: Okay. All right, good afternoon.

PANELISTS: Good afternoon.

MS. DELUCA: So thanks for the question, Jenny, because I think one of the things that's exciting, you know, in being up here and sharing this with you, is a chance to take the stories of the nearly 120 families that we've talked to in Seattle and bring them

here from their homes and McDonald's and Starbucks and libraries and be able to share them widely, and so I'm grateful for them to -- you know, for having shared time with us as we were better able to understand this intervention from their perspective.

So I think there are a lot of different ways to come at this. I meant, the first thing that I'll say that I think is important and has driven a lot of the mixed methods work I've done on experiments and quiz experimental interventions is to remember that even if families move, a lot of the challenges that they face also move with them. What that means is they've just, you know, had years of experiences, traumatic, challenging experiences, you know, that really shape the way that they make decisions, and so I think, you know, the question of why, you know, they haven't made decisions to move to higher opportunity neighborhoods is, you know, may be better thought of as, you know, how, you know, they've spent so much time trying to juggle whatever they can while they have it, right?

I mean, we think about this as sort of a bandwidth tax, and so I think what I heard when we sat down to talk to families, when we say, "First, tell us the story of your life." And that's how we start, and that could take 30 minutes or it could take 2 hours, and then we get to the other stuff. But I think, you know, the first thing is, you know, we met families who, you know, nearly a third of the caretakers we spoke to have been victims of domestic violence, and nearly a third had had significant health problems themselves or, you know, among their children.

You know, a quarter were homeless in some way, broadly defined, and though six months before we met them, and so I think, you know, these all really shape the kinds of decisions that get made every day. So, you know, we talked to families from 14 different countries, which was striking. I'm used to living, you know, studying places like Baltimore and Cleveland and Dallas, you know, where there are a lot of families who've always been there, and Washington state is a place that invites families from lots of other places and so one challenge, I think, too, was just families trying to understand how to navigate institutions and policies locally. This was especially true for the

immigrant families, especially those from East African countries, but, I think, you know, in terms of the biggest barriers -- when we talk to them about their residential history more generally, the biggest barrier we heard about was credit, and it's hard to, I think, overstate the importance of credit and the effect it has on how families perceive themselves as potential clients and tenants that would go to a landlord and say I'd like to rent one of your places, and, you know, we can talk more broadly when we talk about maybe aspects of the intervention that really helped ease the process for families to lease-up who had credit history, but I think the process of being repeatedly denied units because of a spotty credit history is really demoralizing, casting somewhat of a residential pessimism, I would call it, on the way families view their choices and their decisions.

One mom in Seattle, said to me, Sondra said, you know, they won't let you rent when you have credit problems, but you can have a criminal background in Seattle. You know, I don't have any crimes, but I still can't find a place. And so I think the credit problems were really big, you know, and the navigators did a lot of work to help smooth that process out, but that was still one thing, I think, and that, you know, stems from a host of other barriers, right, besides housing I think that we could certainly talk about.

MR. SHARKEY: So this point that Stefanie makes, just it strikes me as good point to note how important it is to have ethnographers do this research. When you try to digest everything that's come out from Moving to Opportunity with a capital, it's impossible, and the reason is because this kind of intervention into a family's life produces extremely complex results particularly for disadvantaged groups who have a lot going on, and so this has to be seen in relation to decades of research on similar housing mobility programs, and more importantly decades of ethnographic research from people like Alaggia Anderson who have done work showing the importance of violence; Mary Pattillo showing how proximity to areas of extreme disadvantage affects the life chances of kids; Stefanie's work showing just the constraints at the low end of the private rental market and how moves are made very quickly in reaction to a crisis where the family is trying to find a safe block that

will pass an inspection, and that's it. That's the primary concern.

So these insights have come from a large body of ethnographic work and, you know, if we're going to design policy, one of the things I love about the Seattle project is that they brought in Stefanie who can start to understand what's actually going on in families' lives and this has been done in Baltimore, so it's now being done in Seattle. Stefanie has worked in Alabama and elsewhere. And this is where we have learned the most.

It's the experiment has been enormously valuable, but to understand what has actually been going on, I, at least personally, have relied on what Stefanie has found and Kathy Eaton and Laura Tach and a lot of other ethnographers who have done this research.

MS. SCHUETZ: So I think that's a nice segue actually to put it back to Jeff. The paper that Jens presented that you worked on is really trying to reconcile some of the differences in the MTO research, so this experimental program with the observational research, and you guys sort of rule out a couple of the -- so the MTO research finds that for adults, at least, there aren't significant improvements in labor market outcomes and some of the observational research has found that families that move to low poverty neighborhoods do better in the labor market, right, so this was some of the puzzles you're trying to resolve.

So, you know, you sort of rule out some hypotheses and back into this, you know, very economist like conclusion that the difference is social action on unobservable, so when you do observational research and you see that families moved to low-poverty neighborhoods and they do better, those families are somehow different than the families who didn't move, and MTO essentially gets people to move who wouldn't have moved without the experimental program.

So it sounds like, you know, some of the things Stefanie is telling us are giving us a hint at what some of the unobservable are, so things like family credit history or have they had a traumatic experience in their past or is there some trauma in their recent present that's causing them to move very quickly. So I'm curious, you know, as you're

listening to the results that come out of the CMTO and especially some of this ethnographic research, does that give you any sort of different insights on either the difference between MTO and the observational studies or a different way that we could think about, you know, this sort of self-selection on unobservable which is often kind of opaque to non-economists?

MR. KLING: So I have a somewhat different take on that issue. I think of it as there are ways in which moving to Nathan's high opportunity areas have effects on some outcomes and not on other ones, and so the work you're referring to is really about adult economic self-sufficiency, earnings in the labor market and such, and there's a lot of other outcomes that are interesting and important, but some of them don't have that same feature, so we think that the individual characteristics of the adults were very important for labor market outcomes, the effect of living in a high opportunity area seems to be pretty big for adult health outcomes for the kids' earnings, especially when they moved when they were young and so on.

So I think that the story is being a lot about it's important to have an idea of what outcomes you're interested in and understanding those channels, and with respect to the importance of the ethnography that Pat was talking about, I think of it as being more of an iterative process and so Stefanie alluded to this where, you know, we did some surveys and we did some in-person semi-structured interviews, then we did some more surveys, then we did some more semi-structured in-person interviews and then we did some more surveys.

And so each time we're going along, we're learning more about like we should have more survey questions on health because we learned some things that we didn't know at the beginning and we should have a much richer module on criminal victimization because that's a really important thing that wasn't in the congressional authorizing legislation, but it's super important to the families, and so it was really that iteration that I felt like was the place where we were learning the most.

MS. DELUCA: So we're not -- can I jump in on that, on the adult outcomes?

So I think that the interpretation -- you know, I'm glad that you mentioned the other outcomes because they often get lost in favor of a focus on economic self-sufficiency, but when we think about explaining the children's' outcomes, we have to look to the parents because the mental health improvements, and maybe some of the health improvements, were things that we saw from our qualitative work in Baltimore helped parents parent more effectively.

So I think parents are still benefiting in ways as Jeff mentioned, but those benefits help us explain how children end up benefiting, right, that those mechanisms are key, so I think that, you know, focus tends to get lost as well because explaining the increase in children's earnings or, you know, the chances of them going to college, right, we can explain both through the direct neighborhood effects, but we can also explain through the benefits for parents in their kind of a parenting dividend from also being in safer neighborhoods.

MS. SCHUETZ: So I want to unpack a little bit what we mean when we talk about high opportunity neighborhoods, so as you explained, you guys have a very specific definition in large part because of how you're able to identify them, neighborhoods that 30 years ago produced kids with higher earnings as adults, right, so that's in part a technical definition because of what you have available, but I think for sort of policy questions and understanding this, it would be really helpful to know what's different about high opportunity neighborhoods and low opportunity neighborhoods, particularly ones that are sort of, you know, the rent is the same, but some seem to do better for kids than others, and pointing out also that the original MTO program incentivized families to move or required them to move to low poverty neighborhoods which is not necessarily the same thing as a high opportunity neighborhood.

So I'm curious, you know, from any of you either based on these papers or your other research, when we talk about high opportunity neighborhoods, what's special about them?

MR. HENDREN: All right, so I think that I can start on this. I think there's still a lot of work to obviously be done to understand what is the kind of secret sauce in a high opportunity area that is "missing", or underinvested in lower opportunity areas, and I don't think we know the answer to that. If you take all the observables we can find really in the census and try to just run a kind of regression of trying and predict high versus low opportunity areas using things like the poverty rates, the best R-squared you can really get out of that is like 50, 60, percent, and there's just an enormous amount of variation that we just don't really understand, and some of the strongest predictors are things like the fraction of two-parent households and the number of people that return their census forms.

The types of things that we don't think is actually a causal, like that's not the secret sauce, that's something that's like what it smells like, right? And so we're trying to figure out, you know, what exactly is it in these neighborhoods that drives those patterns, and so I think we don't know, and so then I think, you know, the second thing here, and I think this comes back a little bit to the discussion of what are we trying to do with the policy; are we trying to improve kids' outcomes, are we trying to improve adult outcomes?

In some cases like in the mechanisms that Stefanie was alluding to, those could be very much aligned, that if you improve the mental health of parents, perhaps you're having spillover effects on the kids, but perhaps there are other tradeoffs. If there are other types of experiments, say, you know, if you're pairing with Jobs Plus type programs and you have to be close to employment, maybe those aren't the same neighborhoods where the types of infrastructures for children are the strongest. I don't know. I think there's a lot to be unpacked to really understand those, but I think the one thing we are learning is that neighborhoods are very multidimensional.

One example I can give you concretely, there, is that the types of neighborhoods that are more likely to induce children to go to college are not always the same ones that induce the highest earnings. There's actually orthogonal variation in those neighborhoods and actually that if your child moves to the neighborhoods that have the



higher

college-going rates at an earlier age but no higher incomes on average are more likely to go to college and they don't have higher incomes.

It's like we're sort of this product of the neighborhood environments we grew up in, this multidimensional type of environment that you're growing up that's shaping, of a large extent, your outcomes in adulthood, but what is doing it, I think, is the big open question.

MS. DELUCA: I think the answer, we don't know enough yet, is something I would also say, but, you know, unto this point, I mean, we are going to be following families in Seattle to ask them what has changed, you know, about the way that life looks for you now. Right, you starting broad like that and then waiting to hear how much of that has to do with the way parents interact with their communities and their children.

But what I've always seen in, you know, across many families in the cities that I've been in is the sort of adaptive strategic efforts parents put forward to take the advantages that they can from different kinds of neighborhoods in places where, you know, one neighborhood may provide work, another may be where childcare resides with an auntie and then, you know, there's the neighborhood where you and your children sleep at night.

So I think there's, to Nathan's point, quite a bit of patchwork parenting and strategy going on that does complicate some of these simple answers, but, you know, it certainly shouldn't be meant to emphasize how much our parents are doing actually to try and put all these benefits together.

MR. HENDREN: And just one thing that I think is well-established at this point is that violence undermines communities in a way that I think is impossible to ignore and is presence in every ethnography of urban poverty and disadvantage and it does so by undermining investment, both, you know, investment of families, whether families are willing to buy a house, to raise children in a community, business owners, whether they're willing to set up shop, members of core community institutions like schools, whether teachers are

willing to invest in a school district, whether people are willing to venture out in a public space and take advantage of libraries and other amenities and be out within public space.

And so that comes out of ethnography and that's also I think been strongly supported in quantitative work as well, so I don't want to leave the impression that we know nothing about what creates strong, thriving communities. One thing we do know is that that is impossible if public spaces are unsafe. Now, there's a lot more that has to go on to develop the kind of core institutions that can make sure that every kid has a place to go, that families have support networks, and so forth, but I think that is the starting point. It's very hard for places to thrive if public spaces are unsafe.

MR. KLING: So I just want to echo the importance of safety and Jens talked about this a bit, the end of his presentation. It really was one of the things that was the most striking to us early on, so like the paper that he was alluding to, one of the first papers we wrote which is now like over 20 years ago was called *Bullets Don't Got No Name*, and so this paper was really about the stories of the families that we sat down with and this woman's story was about how she really kept her kids inside because she didn't really know when that bullet was going to find her kid.

But those bullets were out there, and they might get her kid at any time, and so those kinds of things were sort of the anecdotes that were underlying the very broad measures of safety that we were capturing in the surveys and we think are very important parts of the mental health effects that we saw were important causal effects of moving to a higher opportunity area, so that's a way in which we think of that story as all fitting together.

MS. SCHUETZ: So we can use tools like the opportunity atlas to help identify neighborhoods that at least historically have been high opportunity. Once we find these neighborhoods, presumably we'd like to help as many people as possible have the opportunity to move there if they want to, and the CMTO research is starting to show us that we can think of the sort of barriers to moving into these high opportunity neighborhoods both at the family level.

So things like they have poor credit, they have a hard time finding a landlord to rent to them, they've -- you know, have difficult personal circumstances or financial circumstances, so kind of family-specific, but there are also sort of broader neighborhood or marketer institutional barriers, and we can actually think about something like, you know, the landlord's unwillingness to rent to a Section 8 voucher holder as an institutional barrier.

So as we think about kind of policy solutions, could we think about the kinds of interventions that we would do at the family level and the kinds of policies that might be effective at a broader level, at a neighborhood or market or, you know, a sort of a housing market level that would be helpful? You can take either one of those, or both.

MS. DELUCA: So I'm going to take the landlord piece on this because while we've been talking to families for the last while, we've also been talking to landlords in Baltimore, Cleveland, Dallas, D.C., and we'll be talking to landlords in Seattle as well, and there's some really interesting things that you find, you know, that effective policies have in common when, you know, helping families move and helping convince landlords to take voucher holders, and I think treating people with respect and dignity is a key piece of that.

So that's one of the things we talk about in the paper about CMTO, is just families feel a lot of support and they feel like their choices and their vision for their future matters, and that's part of what's so compelling about the navigators; landlords also want to be treated well. And so we talked to nearly 160 landlords in the Baltimore, Dallas, and Cleveland, and we asked them -- this is work supported by HUD and the Annie E. Casey Foundation in partnership.

We asked landlords why they didn't take voucher holders, and the interesting thing was that nearly two-thirds of the landlords we had spoken to previously had rented to voucher holders, which means that maybe they'd do it again, right. Why weren't they renting to voucher holders? And there's been work, you know, at the Urban Institute on this as well, on the pervasiveness of landlord discrimination, but things came up like not having someone to talk to at the housing authority and not having someone to answer the

phone when you have a question about paperwork or bureaucracy.

The bureaucracy, itself, if you've never failed an inspection, why are you having to go through one every single year, why the inspections seem capricious, unfair and unpredictable, and this just drives landlords crazy. Will it be the fact that the screen door has a crack, but the storm door itself is perfectly sturdy and the inspection fails? They hate this, right? And, you know, one thing we learned from the Baltimore Mobility Program, and there are folks here, Pete and Adria, who are running this.

I think Allison is somewhere on the phone, who previously worked in Baltimore, found very similar things, and so staff were dedicated, like they are in Seattle, to helping build relationships with landlords to understand what they need, how to get it, and then also to be able to bridge the divide between what landlords think about voucher holders if they've never rented to them and who voucher holders really are by having, you know, families create rental resumes to help explain who they are and why there might be that mark on their credit history, you know, providing landlord with damage guarantee funds that hardly ever get used by saying, "Look, we get that you're a business person and we respect that, so if something happens, we understand. We got that; we can cover you if you're willing to rent to a family."

These are really compelling things to say to landlords, and over 4,000 households have moved in the Baltimore region to opportunity neighborhoods, right, and so it's possible to do this by building relationships with landlords, and I think that can, you know, benefit not just families who are moving with mobility programs, but families in general in our rental market. We don't do enough to support the folks who own the properties that house our poorest families and we are increasingly relying on the private market to do this job, so we really need to understand better how to do it.

And this, you know, I think may come as a surprise to many in the room who may see landlords as money-grubbing, profit-making jerks, you know, which is a narrative out there. It's the exception in our field work. Landlords are people, too, and many can't believe how they've ended up ever having to ask someone to leave a property, so I

don't pretend to paint a picture of all of them as being a kind heart and altruistic, but you'd be surprised how many are, but more importantly how many are reasonable business folks who are wanting to work with a program that understands that.

MR. SHARKEY: So we're here to talk about this program Moving to Opportunity, which was designed by Marge Turner and others because of a problem of concentrated poverty, and so I do think it in addition to thinking about this policy intervention and related interventions, we should at least say out loud the broader historical context which all of you know, but it's worth just acknowledging it.

So over the past 50 years, and much longer of course, our primary response -- so instead of investing to deal with core social challenges like concentrated poverty and joblessness and violence and segregation and racial conflict and social unrest, and climate change, and the things that started to become most visible in cities, really, in the sixties and seventies, we have instead taken an approach where we have allowed and, in fact, subsidized advantage segments of the population to remove themselves, to separate themselves from those social problems, to establish barriers, barricades, sometimes physical barricades in space, and by this, you know, I mean, I'm talking about land-use regulations.

I'm talking about gated communities, but I'm also talking about forming new government exclusive school districts. I'm talking about the whole array of mechanisms that have been used to allow segments of the population to distance themselves from those social problems, okay? And this has been subsidized for the past 50 years by social policy. This has been our response to those problems, the establishment of these barricades.

And so these policies are designed to quarantine problems in particular areas to isolate advantage segments from those areas and to restrict access, who can access these areas of opportunity. So while we're talking about programs that can be thought of as ways to scale those barricades to allow small numbers of people to move beyond to jump over those barricades that divide every inch of American soil, we also have

to think not just about improving the places behind the barricades, but about tearing those barricades down, and that gets us into discussions about land-use policy, that gets us into discussions.

You know, Jenny, is an expert in housing and all of my ideas about housing come from you, so, you know, it would be good if you could chime in on what are some of those ideas about transit investment, making sure that every jurisdiction is forced to build affordable housing even if they have no desire to do so, ending the home mortgage interest deduction.

You know, these are policy domains that I think everybody in the room knows are essential, but, you know, we don't want to limit our focus, so it's fantastic to help people access areas of opportunity, and that's really valuable, and this Seattle project is incredibly promising and encouraging, and I love it, but we also have to have -- always have to keep this broader discussion about how do we tear down those barricades while we have this discussion about allowing larger numbers to overcome them to scale them.

MS. SCHUETZ: I'm so excited you brought up zoning. That wasn't a plan, but it's timely. So let's talk about one of the ways to create more available neighborhoods is just to make sure that there are rental apartments within whatever HUD's willingness to pay the rent available in lots of these areas, and I'd be curious to know from the work that you guys did with individual families, with landlords, you know, doing outreach, how hard was it to find apartments within the FMR standard for people to apply to? Were there neighborhoods that you would have loved people to be able to go move to and there was just nothing there?

MR. HENDREN: I mean that's a pretty good question, and I think actually we could almost defer it to the next panel and have Sarah answer that one. I'm staring at her right now, who's in Seattle --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You can call and talk to her.

MR. HENDREN: Yeah, right. I'll punt the good ones down the line. I think,

you know, other particular places that were sort of excluded, and, you know, I think there's generally a shortage of housing in Seattle as far as -- you know, that's basically the uniform response when we talk with people there. It's like, my goodness, this housing market is so tough, and you hear that in so many cities, and I think that then speaks to the policies and the questions of, should we be allowing localities to be making those decisions when the impacts are on all of those and on the national scale.

I think that's the fundamental tension we face when opportunity, and opportunity for kids is inherently local, is inherently about neighborhoods, is inherently likely driven by decisions that are happening inside of neighborhoods and those implications are implications for children who grow up and live throughout the country pay tax revenue or don't pay as much tax revenue.

I think these kinds of effects really affect us all, but they're decisions that are occurring at the local level. That's sort of a classic case for sort of an externality where you get exactly the kind of barriers that Pat's talking about to arise and I think that is a big issue that is sort of coming to its forefront. Specific recommendations on what we should do about it, I think that's a tougher set of things because presumably there's benefits to allowing local decision makers to make decisions in their community (inaudible) and to have stakes in their communities, but these are the kinds of tradeoffs we have to work through.

MS. SCHUETZ: So I want us to think a little bit about the extent to which this program could be scaled, and let's pretend for the moment that resources aren't a constraint, so assume that -- or financial resources aren't a constraint, right, so finances aren't the only problem that we'd run into, so one question is, are there going to be apartments available in all of the communities you want, and enough apartments to absorb more people?

I think another question is, what would this program look like if you scaled it up? You know, there were, what, 300 families who are a part of this, the Seattle Housing Authority administers, you know, tens of thousands of vouchers, would it be possible for

Seattle in King County to provide the same sort of family level counseling and services and assistance matching to apartments to everybody who has a voucher? Is that something that's feasible to scale? Is that something that's just not going to work if you open it up to the whole housing authority?

MS. DELUCA: So, I mean, I think, you know, it's one of the questions, right, otherwise we wouldn't all be here thinking about how this could possibly be done where we live. I mean, I think, you know, what does scaling mean, right? Does that mean we are going to offer enough, you know, assistance for all voucher holders to move, right? I mean, there are lots of reasons to think that might not be the best strategy, but if, you know, finances aren't an issue, I mean, I think we want to focus on creating a good program.

I mean, I think that that one of the things that works so well in Seattle is you have high-functioning housing authorities who have high-functioning partners who really built a terrific program that's working really well for families who struggle as much as any family I've met in Baltimore or Cleveland or anywhere else, so, I mean, I think if we talk about scaling and we immediately think are there enough units, you know, I think can we make good programs.

And, you know, different cities and localities are going to have challenges with that because, you know, some of the staff at housing agencies I've talked to in different cities say, well, we're trying to do the voucher program already just by itself and that's hard, or we're trying to figure out how to manage some of the properties we have; that's hard enough. So I think we want to, you know, figure out institutional capacity and then we want to figure out how to design really high-quality programs.

I mean, that's the first thing, and then -- or at least a parallel thing to consider in the idea of scaling up. I mean, but, you know, again, I'll turn to the Baltimore program, you know, that I've been talking to families from that program for a long time and, you know, nearly, you know, 4,000 households have moved across the central Maryland area over 16 years, I think, if I've got some of those numbers about right.



Pete, I don't know, you probably have -- symbolic has the more updated numbers, which is extraordinary and possible. It happened. People found a way to do it. Landlords said, yeah, so I think there are lots of things that are possible and reasons to be optimistic, but we want to say do we want that to be the policy, right, to some of Pat's points and also to your expertise, Jenny, but also let's figure out how to development good programs where we decide to scale. I don't think I can emphasize that enough.

MR. KLING: With respect to the scale, I think it's pretty clear that one could have a national program that was in hundreds of cities rather than five demonstration cities, and had a budget that was billions of dollars as opposed to a demonstration that's on the order of 70 million. That's still is a long way from completely unconstrained budgetary resources and serving every person who is possibly eligible, but that is much bigger than the demonstrations that have occurred like, or is a magnitude bigger, so there's a lot of room to scale that I think pretty clearly that could be scaled and then there's also some limits beyond that.

MS. SCHUETZ: Like, this may be asking you guys to get outside of sort of your comfort zone of your expertise, but both MTO and CMTO were done in select cities, so Seattle, Baltimore is their handful of cities, if HUD were thinking about replicating this in other cities, are there lessons for the kinds of cities where this would be more easier to replicate or be more likely to succeed, either in terms of the housing authority, the housing market, the neighborhood characteristics?

I mean, one of the distinct features of Seattle is the demographics there look really different than in a lot of other cities, right, West Coast cities, Midwest, Northeast cities look pretty different. Does that have implications for where we could do something like this and have it work?

MR. SHARKEY: Yeah, I'm happy to take that. I mean, I think it is coming outside of our comfort zone, but I'll try to step out there. I think, you know, one of the key features, I think, of the experiment in Seattle, for example, and I think was a feature of MTO

as well was -- so the key feature in Seattle was there was the main program was very tailored to each individual, and so when we talk about high quality, it's like each family sort of got what they needed out of the program, and that requires, I think, a degree of motivation by the parties involved in the program to execute that, and so I think there is an important design question for how do we insure that type of quality throughout an expansion, and I think that's always the case with many expansions of government surfaces, and I think that's an important question whenever we think about a scale.

I think in the MTO, if I recall, there was sudden sight hederage in '80 in the extent to which the experiment itself was implemented, and then also in the outcomes as well, which, you know, I think unfortunately because it only got to five sites and it didn't have the second round that was originally planned, we don't know what the general characteristics are of places that succeed at this versus don't, and I think that is really important to understand.

You want to be able to trace-out that scaling path and understand, you know, who should be doing this, who shouldn't be doing this, and if they can't do it, what needs to change in order for them to do it. I think unfortunately we're not there now, but I do think, you know, we're excited with the number of partners that have been excited about doing this type of work like what we've been doing up in Seattle and are hopeful that we can try to generate that library over time, but it is very important and it's not something we know now.

MS. SCHUETZ: Do you want to say just quickly sort of where other cities are, where you guys are working or planning to work?

MR. SHARKEY: Yeah, so we have partners, that they're in Chicago; there's folks that MDRC has been working with and they're in Chicago and working with us in St. Louis; Milwaukee has been in discussion, New York has been in discussions with us. I think there's a broad sort of coalition of folks, broadly MTW agencies that have a lot more flexibility in what they're able to do that have sort of been at the table and said, hey, we'd be

very interested in trying to do things along these lines.

I think the extent to which, you know, what each site is actually going to be engaged in I think is an ongoing set of discussions, so I don't want to put any particular housing authority out on the spot of like, oh, they're going to do this and they're going to do that, but I think there is enormous excitement that is out there in the housing authority space that we're excited to build on.

MS. SCHUETZ: So I want to come back to a point that Jens made in his presentation which is that even if we could manage to scale-up the treatment for voucher holders or maybe even for all housing authority clients, there are going to be a lot of people who aren't going to get this treatment, right? I mean, even in your program with very intensive kind of counseling, was at 45 percent of the treatment families stayed in, you know, what you're defining as not high opportunity neighborhoods.

In MTO, the percentage was even higher, right, so a lot of families are not going to move to the areas that are on the opportunity atlas map. What should we be doing to make neighborhoods better for people who are staying? I'm expecting you to solve all neighborhood problems in the next 20 minutes.

MS. DELUCA: So I'm going to take the second part of the question, actually, and just maybe clarify a few things that get misunderstood. So with the original MTO take-up rates hovering at 50 percent or lower in some cities, you know, a number of critics have interpreted that as saying, you know, those are families who chose not to move who didn't want to move, and I think it's easy when you see, you know, low policy take-up rates or a parent policy failure to look for individual explanations and overstate the durability of preferences for low-income or low-opportunity neighborhoods. We talked to lots of families in the Baltimore site of MTO to try to understand a bit more why it is that the take-up rate was slow and, you know, why it's seen that so many families moved back to higher poverty neighborhoods, and I think, you know, the first thing I'll say is that the MTO families didn't receive a fraction of the support that the CMTO families received and we're

having to use a voucher that was extraordinarily limited.

The policy, itself, is quite limited. There was no source of income discriminate -- no source of income protection against discrimination by landlords in any of the sites, and you had, as far as I know, you know, payment standards weren't high enough. There was no help with security deposits, and, you know, it's difficult to use vouchers across jurisdictions.

Families had to apply to multiple housing authorities, so I could go on, but so one thing to clarify, just whenever those take-up rates come up is that it's difficult to use the voucher with some modest counseling. I think families who did move when we spoke with them, you know, many talked about how they enjoyed the safety that Pat and Jeff and Jens have talked about and didn't want to move out of safer neighborhoods, but because landlords sold properties, they had to and they had no help, and then, you know, a limited voucher.

There were housing quality failures, and so there were quick moves that had to happen. Families changed size, they had to move, and, again, there was no support and families were forced to move in a rental market that was, you know, was far less hospitable to voucher holders than it is even today, and so I think that it's important to talk about that take-up rate as being not evidenced so much of families not wanting to move and therefore that's a reason to think about how many that wouldn't be served, so that's an important clarification.

I think in Seattle the take-up rates interesting. We're looking still at least in the qualitative data, and I'm sure that some of the program data still to understand that, but what we heard from families that we talked to, you know, it was a number of immigrant families who understood perfectly well the benefits that the navigators explained to them about moving to opportunity neighborhoods, but had deep community ties, and that, you know, involved work, some were home healthcare workers, some had very limited English skills and were relying on friends to help broker leases with landlords as it was, and then,

you know, also there were some families who had just leased-up somewhere and didn't want to even think about breaking that lease and moving, so anyway, the take-up rates are complex, and so I wanted to just put that out there by way of just talking a little bit about that.

MR. KLING: Another thing I'll say is that I think one of the goals of the work that we've been doing is to try to learn some about what Nathan referred to as the secret sauce and to the extent that you think part of the secret sauce is safety then you can either move to it or try to create it, and so there are a lot of tools to try to create it whether it's policing policy or afterschool programs or some of the catalog that Jens mentioned that's a way in which you can think of what this research is telling us about place to give you a direction for where to focus one's energy to try to create some of those conditions.

MS. SCHUETZ: And I want to make sure you get a chance to chime in, so crime is one of your specialty areas. One thing we know that's different about cities and neighborhoods is that crime was much higher all across the U.S. in the 1990s when MTO was launched than it is today; does that make a difference for how we should expect kids to grow up in neighborhoods today? I mean, even the kids who don't get a chance to move, do we expect there to be sort of a substantial improvement in everybody's outcomes?

MR. SHARKEY: Absolutely, I expect that. I mean, the problem of concentrated poverty looked entirely different in the early 1990s than it does now because in most major cities violent crime has plummeted, and so concentrated poverty means something very different now, not everywhere, but in New York, L.A, San Diego, D.C., not as much in Baltimore which still has the same level of violence that it had 25 years ago, so this, you know, leads to the question then, should we see if violence is as important as I've argued it is and other people have suggested it is as well, then should we see these major changes in what it means to grow up in disadvantaged neighborhoods, and, in fact when you look at the data we have seen those changes, so in the places where violence has fallen the most, academic achievement has improved the most.

There is very strong evidence for long-term gains in economic mobility. You

know, you have the basic outcome of life expectancy, so life expectancy has improved dramatically for segments of the population that were hit hardest by violent crime and continue to be hit hardest by violent crime, most notably black men, okay. Life expectancy of black men is still way lower than white men and white and black women, and there's a huge gap that remains, but it has shot up the most, okay, and in a mechanical way, you can look at how the decline in violence has affected life expectancy, and I find in my work that this is probably been the most important public health advancement in the past several decades, for a black man, in particular.

So I think, you know, that the expectation is that the drop in violence should change the meaning of concentrated poverty and, in fact, it has. That doesn't mean it has made concentrated poverty unimportant. We have new challenges, the housing crisis has worsened in the past 25 years. Economic inequality has worsened in the past 25 years. Now, we have a whole host of new challenges that are present in cities and poverty is not any easier than it was 25 years ago, but it looks very different.

MS. SCHUETZ: So I'm going to give the panelists one last round of questions, and then open it up to you guys, so you can start thinking about your questions. So for each of you, we've learned a lot from both of these programs from these demonstrations from going back and reanalyzing the data. If you could pick one or two sort of top knowledge gaps, questions we don't yet know the answer to that you think are really important, particularly for making decisions about policy, about where to invest our resources, what don't we know that we need to find out moving forward?

MR. HENDREN: Mmm. So I think the secret sauce, I guess, I'll come back to here. I mean, I think we do know that certain things do matter, so there is good evidence that increased spending on schools, for example, and crime do have a causal role in promoting upward mobility, but I think we don't have a sense of what drives the dramatic variation across the United States in mobility that we do see.

MR. KLING: One of the hardest things to study in which I think why we

perhaps know the least about it is, what is the effect on a receiving neighborhood when new families move into it? So they're such a small part of such a big thing it's really hard to tease-out, and it could be that the controlling factor is really the plurality and they have very little influence on it or it could be that the effects are very nonlinear and they could have a very big effect and we really have not had a good way of sorting that out, but that's one of the things that I would identify.

MS. SCHUETZ: Which matters a lot for the scaling question. If we're going to send many more people to some of the receiving neighborhoods, what does that do to the receiving neighborhood?

MR. SHARKEY: Okay, so I think there's still a lot of work to be done on understanding exactly what generates that variation that Nathan pointed to on the map of Seattle or any city where there's this huge variation within cities in upward mobility in places that don't look, at least at the surface level, all that different, so I think that's generative of a research agenda to figure out exactly what's going -- and we have some hints.

We have some starting points, but I think that's a next phase, and thankfully Nathan and Raj Chetty and the team in Opportunity Insights make this data public, so we can get to work and try to figure it out, so that's one key item on a research agenda. I think a second one -- you know, we kind of dodged Jenny's question a little bit on what investments in communities are crucial to making sure the communities don't fall apart and neighborhoods don't go downhill and, again, we have some hints and some ideas there, but I think that's a more general question, you know.

I argue that we really need to think beyond an individual safety net and really think about community safety nets and how to make sure that every neighborhood has a set of institutions and organizations and public spaces that allow it to avoid going downhill when the next crisis hits, whatever that next crisis might be, and I think we don't have a precise set of ideas about what those investments might be.

Okay, third, the political challenge is the huge one. When we start to think

about how to tear down invisible barricades, how to deal with land-use regulations, how to make sure communities build affordable housing, I think that, you know, we need guidance from the people who are trying to do this and have run into political obstacles to doing this, and so this involves legal scholars, this involves practitioners to figure out how to do this effectively.

MS. DELUCA: I think it's not surprisingly we have some gaps in common given that we're all interested in some of the same questions. I mean, the place-based question is something I've been thinking about for a long time. Quite some time ago, Alex Polikoff called me and said, how's Sandtown-Winchester doing, and I was in the car and he said I think maybe you should take a look, and I said, well, Alex, I've got a bunch of other stuff going on, but why don't I just take some of the census data and take a look, and, you know, a bird's-eye view of Sandtown-Winchester in West Baltimore and compare it to other similarly situated neighborhoods in Baltimore in the 1990s when Sandtown got, you know, by our calculation low-ball estimate, \$130 million in an 8x9 block neighborhood to deal with housing, some education, workforce training.

There's a lot we don't know about the investments made in Sandtown, and so it was a dark day to have to release the report through the Abel Foundation to say that at least, you know, the way we compared neighborhoods in Baltimore who hadn't gotten that money, Sandtown didn't look all that much better. Homeownership increased quite a bit between 1990 and 2010, but so did foreclosure right after that which, you know, got me thinking about how vulnerable neighborhoods like Sandtown-Winchester are, and when we think about place-based is it that we, you know, invest in the neighborhoods that need it the most which was the motivation by Jim Rouse and others to invest in Sandtown, but, you know, during this period, you know, the labor market in Baltimore became no more favorable to people without a college degree.

The aggressive policing tactics in Baltimore were at a peak, and all the neighbors around Sandtown were high poverty as well, so it was tricky. I haven't stopped



thinking about it. We're looking at development strategies in 16 neighborhoods in Baltimore right now, different kinds of partnerships, public and private, to see whether it's possible for communities to have amenities. The folks have been waiting 25 years, like those in Barclay, so that's, you know, work-in-progress, so I'm not able to know for sure what we'll see, but it's difficult work, and we need to do more of it. The measurement issues are difficult. We tend to really follow money that gives individuals benefits. We follow that money really carefully, but we don't always follow money that's invested in communities the same way with research, and we definitely need to do that, so I think, you know, part of my agenda and one that I would encourage is increasingly trying to understand the payoff to place-based strategies.

I know Laura Tach and Pat, and you, Reisen, I think Nathan and Raj are also working on trying to pinpoint the payoff to those kinds of investments so we can learn a bit more using some of the tax data. So I think it's a big research agenda item. I love Baltimore even though it's a tough place to live right now, and I think we can't just shrink it. We can't just solve our problems by shrinking cities, so how do we do something better? The other thing I've been thinking a lot about is just how this is, you know, really a basic urban social question, you know, how do people measure and interact with their neighborhoods?

And doing work in Seattle was really influential in rethinking this on my part because living in Baltimore and being on a block face and you walk out the street and there's lots of folks, you know, running around and you interact with neighbors, a lot of the affordable development in Seattle, your neighbors are part of that complex. We saw some of this in Dallas as well. So how, you know, folks define neighborhoods and then how they interact with it is something, you know, to the secret sauce a bit.

You know, it's something we want to, I think, go back to basics a little bit and try to think about that, and I'm also thinking, you know, about some of your earlier work, Pat, on street efficacy and how young people engage with neighborhoods and how we select

what we want to avoid and what we want to go toward, and so these are sort of two offerings, some things I've been thinking a lot about that, number one, we should do a better job and, number two, we should maybe revisit and do that research agenda again.

MS. SCHUETZ: Great. All right, so if you're interested in asking a question, raise your hand. We have some staff circulating with microphones. Make sure you speak into the microphone. If you can, identify who you are, who you're with, and as David Ellwood used to say, please ask your question in the form of a question that ends in a question mark. (laughter) Yeah.

MR. DASTRUP: Hi, Sam Dastrup from Abt Associates. I had a clarification on the Seattle work on the timing and specifically relative to the implementation of the ZIP code payment standard, you know, the smaller fair market rents, and more broadly just wondered how important you thought that, you know, if I'm right and it was post (inaudible), how important that is to have that higher rents and the higher -- you know, you showed some correlation, and so the question mark is, how important are the rents to the whole question?

MR. HENDREN: Yeah, good question. So what he's referring to is that there is five-tiered payment standards in the King County area and an additionally bonus payment in the Seattle area for moving to an opportunity area, an area that generally has higher rents. I think broadly what we see is that there is movement within each of the different tiers, so one of the things we see in King County is that they do move to more expensive neighborhoods and that actually ends up increasing the kind of the net cost of the program.

I think it's an open question on whether or not we would have seen as impactful moves, like, did that enable a lot more families to move to opportunity because it opened up some of the neighborhoods near Bellevue and things like that that were a little bit more expensive and kind of more traditionally thought of as "good neighborhood". And I think we don't know the answer of what the experiment would have looked like if they didn't

have the tiered payment standards. Our sense, though, is that given the kind of uniformity and the distribution of moves within the opportunity areas that there were a lot of places that were not actually the most expensive neighborhoods that a lot of families did choose to move to, so if you just simply threw those families sort of out of the data, the ones that went to the most expensive areas, you still would be seeing a significant effect given the strong effects that we're actually seeing, so I think we would have still seen an effect, how big it would have been, I think is a harder question.

MS. SCHUETZ: Mark?

MR. SCHROEDER: Mark Schroeder, HUD. So I guess my question's for Nathan, and my question is this: When you showed your map of where the opportunity neighborhoods are in Seattle, or in the Seattle area, most of them were in the suburbs. There was a few of them in North Seattle which happens to be where the University of Washington is located, so my question is, if you used a poverty line but it wasn't who is somewhat liberalized for the fact that the cost of living is much higher even for poor people in Seattle than it is in the rest of the country, would your neighborhoods not be essentially the same as the ones you have?

MR. HENDREN: Yeah, they would be similar, so it was certainly correlated with the poverty rate, but that actually wasn't one of the stronger correlates. It's actually more strongly correlated that map with other variables like the fraction of two-parent households in the tract, but to answer the question more directly, it would basically be like I think the correlation's right around 50 percent, so loosely, it's kind of you've picked up about half of that variation with the poverty rates and you get an additional kicker with the others with using the opportunity atlas, if that makes sense.

MS. SCHUETZ: Yeah, let's go to the second row, third row, here, yeah.

MS. REA: Hi, Deborah Rea, again, from the University of Maryland. I just want to go back to my question regarding early learning centers. I'd like to know what kind of data you are collecting at the classroom level where there might be more segregation that

isn't identified at the school or the district level?

MS. DELUCA: So I was thinking about your question, and I meant to address it. I can't answer that particular question, but I can say one thing which is that the daycare center question comes into play when the navigators meet with families, so we haven't actively collected data on that yet, and, you know, I think there's a lot of questions to still ask about families, how they're benefiting, you know, which, you know, family routines have changed and improved or gotten harder and all of that, but so one of the things that happens when families meet with the navigator is that they'll talk about what families need, you know, what's your vision for what you'd like, your life to be like, where might you like to see yourself and your family living.

Okay, let's talk about the different things that your kids need. Let's talk about daycare. Let's talk about after-school activities. So let's talk about swimming pools. How about you, mom, do you want to go back to school? Look, you know, North Seattle Community College is not far. So those pieces come in, at least in the frontend, as part of the package of, you know, families meeting with the navigators, so that as much as -- you know, I was thinking about your question, I caught (inaudible) where they feed it, but whether or not families then experience struggles because those daycare centers are different or not, we don't know yet.

MS. SCHUETZ: On the aisle here. Yeah, the gentleman in the blue shirt.

MR. LASH: My name's Michael Lash. I just want to ask, while you move people to an more opportunity, what actually happens in the community that they've left from? Does the quality of life deteriorate there or does it stay the same or it probably doesn't get better?

MR. SHARKEY: I think this was the open question that Jeff was proposing. I think we don't know the answer to that. I think one thing I'll say, in the Seattle context, a lot of the families are not actually even coming from neighborhoods within, say, Seattle and kind of moving out to the suburbs. That's not exactly the model you want to necessarily

have in your mind in this particular context, but I think the general spirit of the question is one that needs to be answered, and I don't think we have a solid sense from an academic standpoint.

MR. KLING: If your question is about whether the neighborhoods that people were coming from, then that has to do a lot with the waitlist for people who are trying to get into those units, so the public housing that a lot of the voucher holders are coming from itself has a long waitlist, and when somebody leaves then they tend to be replaced with somebody who was like them, and so it doesn't change the characteristics of the place that they're coming from in a material way because of the cueing to get into that area to begin with.

MS. SCHUETZ: Richard?

MR. REEVES: I've been trying to stop myself asking this question and I failed. I'm not satisfied with the polite consensus that we seem to have arrived at in the balance between moving people out of areas and then what we do for the people left behind. The consensus seems to be we say, yes, we should move people out, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do lots of things for the people left behind, and we're all kind of sort of that's how we get out of these conversations, but I'd like to ask, how would we know what was the right number of people then to move out.

I think Patrick said we would not move everybody out, obviously, and everyone says that, (inaudible) okay. But it's been implied that we could move more people out than we do now. How would we know what was the optimum number to move out; is it just a budgetary constraint in which case the more the better; is it however many people want to move out; is it according to some algorithm for what would be the equitable thing to do? I just don't know, and my fear is that absent that conversation, this work, although it's not the intent, could be used almost as an argument against doing the things for the places left behind.

It becomes a sort of social policy of escape committee. Look, what

happens; look at these great things that happen to the people that move out, and so without that being the intent, it might actually play into a narrative which doesn't pay enough attention to the people left behind. So I just want to try and interrupt that politeness that I'm feeling a little bit right now, like, just tell me what you really think.

MS. JULIAN: Thank you. I'm Betsy Julian from Dallas, and actually I will be polite, but that position -- as twilight as I can. That argument has been going on very, very long time. I think it's a good point. The answer is how many people do we let move out. That really articulates it in a way that I think speaks to the problem historically which --

MR. REEVES: (inaudible) who wants to move out.

MS. JULIAN: Well, that's really different, and you posited it differently because when you don't want to really talk about letting people who've been contained by government policy be released from those constraints, then you talk about moving them out. Well, let's just stop for a -- that we would literally let every family who got the full navigator resources. I think one of the reasons Seattle is so important is the families were told what their options were and what we're seeing is what they wanted to do, you know, writ large.

So I think if we start with nobody's moving anybody. They're saying you who have been contained can go that can try to access opportunities. If you've got a six-year-old child, you do not have to wait until we figure out the big answer to the question, what do you do about the place that is "left behind", and I do think it's important to realize for voucher holders, many of these folks haven't been living in the communities they're living in. That's not their community. They're -- live where they were able to find housing. It may not have been for more than a year. We have worked with over 4,000, 5,000 families over the past years in our program. It's not a research program, but the common themes are so real. People say, tell us where we can go, where can we find housing, all the problems that Stefanie identifies are the real ones for the families, but given the chance and I think then the Seattle program has so much power because it said with the kind of help, which is not rocket science, given that kind of help, those are the kind of choices people get

to make.

So the answer is -- how many? You let people go who want to go. That's, in fact, I would argue that the most important thing you can do for a community that is struggling with concentrated poverty and with the legacy of segregation is to start with letting people go who don't want to be there because I don't think you fight the kind of battle that is involved in the most distressed communities with hostages. My experience has been working in those communities and working with families who want to get out and people who want to stay is that what you really want is a core of really committed volunteers.

Often times, homeowners who have lived in that community forever or people who have those ties, that is your social capital that you want to cash in on as you try to address those issues. So I really want to push back on the notion that anybody talks about these programs moving people out as if we pick them up and put them some place, and if you're going to tell them they can't go because we decided socially it would be bad for the communities in which we have put them in the first place, I think that is a fundamental bad way to look at this, the idea of this issue of whether it's a moving to advantage communities, opportunity communities or wherever people want to go, and if you will look, honestly, where poor white people have always been able to access much more than poor people of color, but I did want to -- before you asked the question, I wanted to ask Patrick a question.

MS. SCHUETZ: Yeah, let me give the panel a quick chance to respond to see if anybody has a different answer.

MR. SHARKEY: I mean, so I thought the perspective that you have in terms of how to think about both what we did in Seattle and the implications for policy, I think were, you know, incredibly well-said. I think the only sort of thing I could say on the place-based front, I think from a research standpoint, we don't have the analogous MTO as Stefanie was alluding to. We don't know what a thing we can kind of latch-onto that is going to necessarily improve places.

We do know that it's good to invest in schools and we know it's good to do policies that reduce crime.

I think there's a lot of other spaces and examples of place-based policies that are hard to really sort of put your finger on, oh, this worked or this didn't work, and I think, you know, highlighting the potential for needing to explore place-based policies as well is not because I necessarily think they are going to be better or worse than "choice-based policies". I think as you rightly said, I think we should all have the freedom to live where we would like to live and raise our children and I think in a lot of ways this is a civil rights issue, but I think at the end of the day we also do want to have the body of research that we currently don't have for understanding what the impact of place-based policies are.

MS. JULIAN: Can I ask Patrick the question I would have asked if -- there's no secret sauce and I absolutely think we've got to figure out what we do about the communities that these families are choosing to want to either escape from because there's still families there, is it crime, and our families always say safety like yours do -- that is driving a lot of what they want. If you had to say, what is the most important policy that would raise the floor?

Let's put aside this whole idea of getting to opportunity. Let's talk about getting kids at six years old or younger out of the most low -- all the opportunity isn't even the word -- the most disadvantaged places, do we have a metric that says, we're going to at least get kids out of this while we work on building and improving the neighborhoods that are high poverty or considered disadvantaged in general, is there a silver bullet -- I don't want to use that term, but is there a metric-like crime?

And, Patrick, I think you -- if we could just get the crime down to a metro-wide average in a neighborhood that is otherwise high poverty and has a lot of the other problems, is that an important policy metric that would say, we're going to get kids out of this if it's below this?

MR. SHARKEY: So I think it's the first order is the fundamental challenge. I



think it's necessary. It's not sufficient in the sense that nothing else can happen when a place is violent. The types of people in organizations that are potentially going to invest in a community won't do it if a place is violent, and I don't mean, you know, just residents. I also mean business owners and other -- so I do think it's the first order challenge, but certainly not sufficient.

And, you know, when we talk about -- I use Marge's term, place conscious, policies as opposed to place-based investments because I do think there's a growing body of evidence much of which comes from the crime lab in Chicago that Jens runs, but elsewhere, you know, this results of graining abandoned lots in Philadelphia more and more well-designed studies looking at, you know, not just Harlem Children's Zone, but similar organizations that take the perspective of looking out over a community.

We have a growing body of evidence that suggests that if we invest in these kinds organizations, or if a community sits on a foundation of strong organizations then it's much less likely that that community is going to fall apart and go downhill. So beyond just saying, you know, every community needs to become safe, I do think if I were going to call for a general policy that could apply to every single neighborhood across the country, I would say invest in strong organizations and institutions in that community, and if every community sits on that foundation of strong organizations, I think there is much lower likelihood that people are going to fall through the cracks or the neighborhood is going to fall apart.

MS. STUETZ: And that's an excellent place to turn it over to our Practitioner Panel. So thank you to our panelists for being here today (applause).

(Recess)

MR. REEVES: Thanks again to the panelists and to Jenny for facilitating that conversation. Our next panel is going to focus more on the practical aspects. That's going to be moderated by my colleague, Alan Berube, who is the Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program here at Brookings.

MR. BERUBE: Good afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon. Hi. I hope folks are able to stick around to hear from a panel that I think does a remarkable job, present company here excluded, from traversing the research to policy maker to practitioner spectrum around the really critical design issues that we were hearing about in the last panel. I'm just going to get right into it and just say who I'm sitting up here with and what their titles are. I'll get them to say a little bit about themselves.

To my immediate left is Marge Turner. She's a Senior Vice President for Program Planning and Management at the Urban Institute here in Washington. Fulton Meachem, next to Marge, he's the President and CEO of the Charlotte, North Carolina Housing Authority. Then to my far left, Sarah Oppenheimer. She's the Director of Research and Evaluation for the King County, Washington Housing Authority.

I think everybody's full bios are in your packets, but I'd just like to ask each of my fellow panelists to just say something about yourselves briefly, if folks are reading your bio, like what may they not discover about you that relates to today's discussion on MTO, capital case MTO, lower case MTO, and assisted housing mobility, more generally. Marge?

MS. TURNER: I think my bio is clear. I have been a policy researcher for most of my career, for almost all of it at the Urban Institute. The focus of my work has been on housing discrimination, housing segregation, why it matters and what we ought to be doing about it. In the 90's I was a political appointee at HUD and helped design and launch the Capital M, Capital T, Capital O demonstration, which was an incredible honor to be able to do.

MR. REEVES: Yeah, Pat kind of gave that away on the last panel. Fulton?

MR. MEACHUM: Fulton Meachem, CEO of the Charlotte Housing Authority. What you may not know is I have actually been the CEO of the Pittsburgh too. Both of these agencies are MTW agencies, moving to work agencies, which allows a great deal of flexibility and creativity. Focus has always been on how to move people in, up and

out of poverty, concentrate a lot in supportive services and wrap around services for our residents to find pathways out of poverty.

MR. REEVES: Okay. And, Sarah?

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Sarah Oppenheimer. I actually was a relative newcomer to housing authority work. Oftentimes I think people come to housing authorities and there is such rich information to know. So, I had a lot of catch up to do. I came there about 6 years ago. KCAJ is also an MTW housing authority, which means there is a lot of exciting innovation and so, I have this very cool job of being able to evaluate that and figure out who are very smart, cool researchers that we can do applied research with. One of the first projects I began working on when I came to the housing authority was starting to build out what our applied research agenda would look like related to mobility, as well as our place-based efforts. I just want to say I feel so grateful that there is a practice panel up here. It's really exciting. There were many moments throughout the day where I'm like oh, I think it would be great to say something on it. I was so reassured that our research colleagues, they had all, because we have been so collaborating so closely, they were able to answer a lot of those practice-based questions which was fantastic and it's exciting to see it come full circle.

MR. REEVES: As a moderator, maybe I should just like, at 55 minutes, open it up to Fulton and Sarah and just say feel free to respond to all of the questions that arose for your guys in the first couple of hours of the event, but I'll try to be a little bit more structured about it. Maybe I could start with you, Marge, and ask you as a housing researcher, a former policy maker, and just like an extraordinary human being, how do you think about, and describe the wider context, for the discussion for the new findings around capital M, capital C, capital O, which again, I think the last panel began to allude to, but I think you're a great authority on this too.

MS. TURNER: Thanks, Allen. I do want to build on the themes Pat started to raise on the last panel and really broaden this conversation out, so it encompasses the

larger context of racial segregation and injustice within which assisted housing mobility policies really need to be consider. I'm going to say perhaps even more bluntly than Pat did, that we, the United States, systemically and intentionally built separate and unequal neighborhoods.

We did it through public policies. We did it through individual action. We did it through institutional practices. We excluded people of color from the neighborhoods that offered amenities and opportunities, and we starved the neighborhoods in which people of color were concentrated, trapped, consigned to live, of public and private resources and investments. The consequences over decades have been profound for the long-term economic prospects of children growing up in those neighborhoods, for people's physical and mental health, but not just for individuals. It's the persistence of racial prejudice and polarization in our country and the persistence of fear among us on all sides of the line.

So, we know that that history of racial segregation produced poverty concentration and in more recent years, we've been seeing an increase in economic segregation. A lot of the conversation in the first panel sort of seemed to be talking about economic segregation as if it didn't have anything to do with this history of racial segregation. I don't want to suggest that the two are just the same thing, but you really can't think about them independently. I don't think we would have poverty concentration and neighborhood distress if we had not intentionally and systemically and effectively built separate and unequal neighborhoods.

We've been talking today mostly about the promise and potential of assisted housing mobility programs, who benefits and at what cost, and what it takes to make them effective. I think that's a really important conversation to have. I really believe that these programs play an important role. I've spent a lot of my career figuring out what role they can play, and also, how we can advance them. I think they're incredibly important for the participating families, but not just for the participating families for helping us break down the patterns of racial segregation and poverty concentration that we so electively built, but we

can't think that assisted housing mobility programs, no matter how we scale them, can do it by themselves.

We really have to think of them as one tool in a broader toolkit that advances interconnected, not competing strategies of restoring the well-being and access to opportunity in historically distressed neighborhoods.

I tend to agree that it starts with safety, safety from the police, as well as from criminals. But I agree with Pat. That's necessary but not sufficient. I think we need to think about to preserve affordable housing in neighborhoods that are changing, even if they're not opportunity rich right away. If they appear to be becoming opportunity rich, we have to make sure that we're preserving the affordable housing options that are there. We expand access to opportunity rich neighborhoods for people living in distressed communities.

Again, that's more than a mobility program. We tend to focus so much on the behavior of the low-income people, their preferences, their choices, their failures in moving to the kind of neighborhood we think they should live in. We need to focus at least as much attention on the behaviors, the exclusionary policies, and the exclusionary practices of the people who live in opportunity rich neighborhoods and that is most of us. So, I'll stop there, but I welcomed the let's stop being so polite invitation and felt like we ought to be explicit.

MR. BERUBE: Let's get nasty. No, I'm chicken. For folks who haven't spent a ton of time in Charlotte, or in Seattle, King County, I wanted to just ask Fulton and Sarah to say a little bit about what your communities look like from the standpoint of the clients you serve and how much they do or don't resemble the sort of separate and unequal landscape that Marge was describing characterizes a lot of metropolitan America.

MR. MEACHEM: Charlotte, Southern city, population somewhere 800,000, and we have this crescent of poverty. All right? So, you have north, south, east and west. The crescent really is from east to west. High opportunity areas are predominantly south and

north. East and west part of the community is predominantly African American. The housing developments in which we manage, again, high concentrations of poverty there as well.

Luckily, we've been able to get five 06's, which really put us in a position to really transition some of our communities and make them more mixed income type communities. So, in doing that, we've been able to, in some cases, be able to make those communities, if you will, higher opportunity areas by bringing in high wealth, high income individuals to those particular communities, but at the same time, schools haven't always caught up with that. In some cases, in some of my communities you could probably draw a Section 8 around local formula schools and high poverty areas, no pun intended, but I think there is a little pun intended. So, what we're trying to do now is look at ways through our own mobility program, our housing opportunity program, is to really go out here and communicate with owners and see how we can actually get more of the market when it comes to the housing choice voucher program. We have things like – there was a question earlier about, we have income source discrimination. That's legal in Charlotte. We do not have inclusionary zoning in Charlotte. We have some structural issues that we have to overcome in order to get our families into these areas. We've hired some individuals to kind of help them search, go out and actually communicate with these landlords and let them know that we have some fantastic participants that just need a little more opportunity.

We've been able also to increase our payment standards. We can actually get into some of the areas that we could not get before. All right? We could not get into some of the southern parts of our cities because the prices were too high and the fair market rents that HUD was giving us did not allow our residents to be able to move there. Now, we're able to go up to 150 percent of the area median income on these particular units. So, now we're able to get more of our families there.

So, Charlotte is different from Seattle in a lot of different ways, but we're happy because we're almost ready to get into the opportunity insights and start working with them on exactly how we can scale the program that we already have.

MR. BERUBE: Great. I'm going to come back and ask you more about that, Fulton. Let's hear a little bit about Seattle and King County.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: So, Seattle and King County is different from Charlotte, and so, I think it's good to sort of hearing about this work in different communities throughout the country. I'm pleased to see that Nathan put up maps, so you guys have a sense of the geography of King County and Seattle. King County is the jurisdiction that the King County housing authority serves and then in the center of it, there's the Seattle Housing Authority. The Seattle Housing Authority covers that jurisdiction. So, we've made it very complicated for voucher holders at the outset.

King County is a really huge geography. It's about the size of Delaware. 1.3 million people live in King County, outside of Seattle. We think about 750,000 people live in Seattle proper. It's also very, very fragmented in terms of municipality. So, if we are thinking about structural issues, if we're thinking about local policies and the impact of local politics, that is something that is very much alive and well in King County. There are 38 different municipalities. CSNJ also covers unincorporated King County. So, we cover 19 different school districts. It's just very much a patchwork, but on the plus side, it's one housing authority. I think because we have this sort of regional scope, when we have looked at our neighborhood, certainly with the opportunity outlets, but when we looked at our community even before that, we have seen the variability and where we have such variability along economic lines, along poverty rate lines, along school quality, all these things. That definitely shows up and the maps that Nathan was talking about too. That has really been a motivator for us to think about the role that the housing authority should be playing, and place and really thinking critically and more strategically around how we can work on the concentration work.

I think that from our families' prospective, it's important to point out I don't think they even realize when they come in, the geography that KCHA covers and we can talk about that later in terms of how that plays in to the work that the navigators are doing with

families around opportunity area education. But the other, I think, backdrop that certainly our families are feeling and that is alive and well, is that we have seen enormous economic growth in Seattle and in King County that has been fueled by the tech industry and that has been great for many. It has not benefited our families for sure. That is primarily benefited people who are much higher income. I would say moderate to high income, but primarily high. Right? And so, we are seeing tremendous bifurcation of wealth in our community. Our families have certainly not benefited from that, but they have felt the impacts because the economic growth has made huge impacts on our housing market.

So, vacancy rates are incredibly tight, I mean less than 1 percent in most areas. So, the competition for units is just staggering. I was looking at some data with my team last week and I was like, this can't be right, that year upon year, this one community has had zero percent vacancy. It has. So, there is a need for affordable housing for sure. We have also seen that rents have continued to increase. For a 1-bedroom unit, the median rent is now \$2,000 in King County. We are talking about needing units that are much larger than that for our families. Families are being pushed into different communities and they don't necessarily feel that they have a lot of choice in the matter or that they necessarily have the tools and I think that's what we're hearing when families come in the door, around how the broader sort of economic backdrop is impacting them.

MR. BERUBE: Could I just briefly ask each of you -- how much do you see the neighborhoods in which your families live, be they in placed basic subsidized housing or voucher holders suffering from high rates of violent crime, back to the discussion from earlier with Pat and the long-term effects of that?

MR. MEACHEM: I would say it's pretty much the same throughout the City. I don't think it's disproportionately more, but I do think that it's disproportionately more in the media. It is disproportionately more in the papers. You hear about it more. People see that more than you see it on the other side of town, which I do believe puts the situation where you see these communities as they are the problem and the people in them are the problem



as well.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Yeah. I mean I think one thing about Seattle and King County is that fortunately I don't think we have experienced the same level as violent crime as other places in the country. I think that so how safety and considerations of safety are factoring in our families' decision may look quite different than the kind of conversations that Stephanie and others have had with say, Baltimore and other places in the country where there are much higher rates of violence and frankly, a greater proportion of really concentrated poverty than we see in Seattle and King County. That said, and Stephanie would be able to speak to this more, I do think safety is showing up in some conversations with families. I think that is sort of a constant. I also think that -- some much to what you were saying -- I think that where we see violent crime coming up, I think that often is connected to families in subsidized housing, which is incorrect, but that is the narrative that is shaped.

MR. BERUBE: There is a reality and there is a perception, I think, that each of you are alluding to there. So, let's dig in a little bit on CMTO and assisted housing mobility for a few minutes. Maybe start with you, Marge, and ask you, given your storied history in researching discrimination, barriers to barriers of housing mobility, capital M, capital M, capital O, like when you saw the findings from the research that Nathan presented, did you say, Oh, my God, that's blowing my mind, or did you say, of course, I've always known that, or something in between or a little more nuanced?

MS. TURNER: I thought it was really great, really heartening, to see that well designed, well delivered, hands on help tailored to the needs of families really makes a difference to what they can do. I was really interested and, I think, pleased that you don't need to restrict the target location of the voucher. You give real help and extra help getting over those hurdles, but people can move wherever they want to move, where they think is best for their family. I think that's really exciting to see those in such a rigorous research design. I think it points to tools we can build in and should build into the housing voucher

program more fully, but people have also talked about source of income distribution, source of income discrimination.

A couple of years ago, Urban did a structured testing study in 5 sites of the ability to use your voucher. It shows how important it is to get more landlords accepting voucher holders, especially in high opportunity neighborhoods. As a research team, we sifted through more than 341,000 rental ads in those 5 study sites in order to get about 8700 units that were available and met local voucher standards. So, we were essentially on a large scale doing what families have to do, to even identify a unit they could call and ask, do you accept vouchers. When they made that call, the answer was no, 78 percent of the time in Fort Worth, 76 percent of the time in LA, 67 percent of the time in Philadelphia, lower in Newark, 31 percent, and lower in D.C., which does have source of income protection, 15 percent. We didn't have enough sites to be able to say with rigor that source of income protections do it but I think there is a good argument for pushing on that tool, if you can enforce it, because you don't have to just put the protections in place. You have to enforce them.

One other interesting thing I just want to put on the table is we've already talked about the fact that the voucher program is too small to meet needs. It's not 1 in 4. It's 1 in 5 eligible households gets assistance nationwide, but several of the presidential candidates have been talking about a renter tax credit in various flavors. Some of those flavors look an awful lot like a housing voucher delivered through your tax returns, rather than by a housing authority. I think there's a lot of really interesting questions there about whether it will work better because there's less stigma, less concern about the housing authority bureaucracy or whether it will work worse because there is no housing authority to support you and there is certainly no housing counseling to support you. So, I think that's a really interesting area for us to be pushing on, whether we get a renter tax credit or not.

MR. MEACHEM: Right. I'm in between two researchers. So, I'm going to take it from the point of a CEO in dealing with this mobility question. It forced us to really

deal with what you just talked about, is all the bureaucracy that comes with managing this voucher program, the inspection process, timing of inspections, really being introspective about when you can actually pay. So, we have to make this program more marketlike. That's what we've had to have this internal discussion with ourselves. How do you make the program more marketlike? When you go look for an apartment, you go to an apartment, you do a criminal background check, credit check. If everything works out, then you ultimately go there, sign off on your deposit, pay your deposit, move in, move in. Right?

With us, it takes a little longer than that. Right? Sometimes 45 days, 60 days. So, we've had to talk with, and we created a landlord group, an advisory group, that comes and talks about those issues. That's what we can do, is be afraid of hearing the truth from them and being able to make those changes. We've been able to reduce now those times for inspections down to 7 days. We're still working on our being able to pay at the same time a person moves in, but I think what it's doing now is allowing us more opportunities in the community to actually find housing for our participants, because that's what this is at the end of the day, where they want to live, definitely in areas of opportunities but where they want to live. That's what this mobility program is kind of doing for us, being very introspective about it and how we can actually grow more of this market.

MR. BERUBE: Glad we're talking about some of the details of implementation and I wonder like you look at – if you were just looking at Nathan's presentation about CMTO, you sort of know the main elements of the search assistance program, the landlord engagement. What about KCHA and what you all went through in order to partner effectively around the demonstration might you not glean if you are just looking at reading the research paper? Like what are the particularities for your agency at that point in time for making this thing a reality and getting the results that you did?

MS. OPPENHEIMER: I think part of the motivation but also one of the challenges we assumed at the outset that we were launching this during such an expensive and tight time in the rental market. I think that sort of upped the ante for KC and SHA

because we have this notion that if we can make this work here, then that will really be something else for us. It also will be, I think, useful for understanding what are some of the elements of these services that might translate to housing authorities that are working in similarity tight rental markets. I think we've talked a lot about sort of the program design and I'm so incredibly pleased and proud of it. I think part of that is we put a lot of time at the outside talking with families, talking with landlords, talking with our front line staff, who know the ends and outs of the barriers of why families are not leasing up quickly or leasing up at all, and spent months also working with our colleagues in Baltimore and Dallas and Chicago, learning about their programs, learning about which elements of those programs might translate well in Seattle, and King County, and what places we may need to do some tailoring because of specific experiences in the market and also with an eye toward how could we build up something that we thought would be as scalable, and as efficient as possible.

Because as this is something that we were launching in house, at the housing department with our CBO partner, we wanted to only test things that we thought weren't just pie in the sky, but would be things that if they were effective, we could probably take to scale eventually. So, part of those conversations led to a lot of the insights that Fulton is talking about. We learned from landlords that it was our own bureaucracy that was often standing in the way of people getting their foot in the door. What were some efficiencies we could build in? Nathan talked about landlord outreach and engagement, but partly that was us doing a lot of deep thinking on our end around how could we streamline pretty bureaucratic processes around the filing of new housing paperwork, around our inspection schedules, around how we actually get our rent checks processed, to have 1 to 3 day turnaround times, because that was what it was going to take to convince landlords in these hot markets that it was worth renting to a Section 8 voucher holder, when there was another person right in line who would pay the same amount.

It also meant working very closely with families to find out what had their

prior experience been within the housing search process. It was heartbreaking when we would hear from families. They didn't even know they had poor credit until they had applied to a unit. That's when they found out that they had this credit score that was keeping them out of housing. That shouldn't be when people find out that information. That's something we can change. Right? So, incorporating into the navigator services, running credit checks, so people are armed with that information. That's really powerful. That's not a simple operational change, but that's something that we can absolutely do.

I think another surprising thing that came out is that we kind of assumed this is what the housing search process looks like. You go to apartments.com. You go to Craig's List. You find units. I think one thing I remember talking to Stephanie about is that it wasn't surprising because if we really thought about our conversations with families over the years, it's so expensive in Seattle and King County. Most people have not done a lot of sort of traditional housing search, because they didn't have the resources until they had a voucher to go do that. So, they've been staying with family and friends. They've been going through lots of sort of non-traditional housing search processes. Then they get this voucher and we're like okay; the clock is ticking. Go find a place and go to apartments.com and you'll be fine.

But that's an entirely new process and we need to set up how we build that information out with families and how we use that as a starting point. I think the navigators do a tremendous job with that, but I also think there was great insights along the way about how we can just do a better job of explaining the voucher program, explaining like what are the limits, explaining what can your voucher pay for and where are the areas you can be moving. That kind of operational changes are things that we can use for the benefit of anybody who is coming through the door.

MR. BERUBE: Yeah. Especially it seems like a lot of the things you're talking about are the positive externalities of doing a CMTO demonstration that spill over to families who are not in CMTO proper.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: That was a big motivation for the housing authority participating. I think this was opportunity to say, one, how can we start to think about mobility and how we support families' geographic choice more critically. Two, how can we use this opportunity to look under the hood and make our voucher program that much better functioning?

MR. BERUBE: So, notwithstanding that, I wanted to just stick in the housing mobility space and sort of within the voucher space. I'm just sort of curious. In both of your instances, Fulton and Sarah, how much do you feel like you are making a tradeoff, right, between I can serve "x" number of families with the gold plated services versus the silver plated services and how you, as an agency without unlimited resources, should weigh your activities in both classes?

MR. MEACHEM: That is the philosophical question, wasn't it?

MR. BERUBE: Okay. We're at the Brookings Institution.

MR. MEACHEM: I know, right. When we first started considering the program, that was the dilemma, where in a city where I have 13,000 people on a waiting list. We need 34,000 new affordable housing units in the City of Charlotte right now. Everybody was saying you just need to find housing now and go, because I think everybody knows that HUD didn't give you additional money to do this. So, you have new increased payment standards, but it takes maybe sometimes one and a half of the amounts of rent that you would pay in a standard unit than to move into a mobility, a high opportunity area. Our Board struggled with that for a little bit, of moving people fast anywhere they would like to go to really having a concentrated focus on trying to move people into high opportunity areas. So, we looked at a pile of 100 families moving there.

I don't look at it as a trade-off. Let's say it's not a trade-off. It's really something of how we build and get to scale. I think that's what we're talking about. How do we get to scale? How do we, in this process, because we are finding some efficiencies in our program and we're homing in on some of the issues that landlords have. How do we

just make it better now for all the residents, all the participants that we have, so that there really is more choice? Because if we have the relationships with these new housing providers, just simply because this person moves out, they'll let another person move in. That's how we're kind of taking it is, this is our first foot in the door of selling the program in a place we've never been able to sell it before, opening up a market that we've never had before.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Yeah. I think that this trade off, if we think of it that way, is something that we grapple with a ton. Wait lists are long. Obviously homelessness in Seattle and King County is a huge crisis. I think that has taken us to task a lot over the last 5 years in thinking about how we are thinking about multi-tiered payment standards on our vouchers and how are we thinking about our work in the space on mobility as our work on place based. We had moved to multi-tiered payment standards before CMTO, well before we had been a 2-tiered system and had moved to 5 and now 6. There are some efficiencies in that, and I think that helps us to not lead the market in some of the lower cost areas and then to not lag the market in some of the more expensive areas.

MR. BERUBE: I would just say, Sarah, that at a dollar difference across the tiers, we know the program is about \$2600 a client for the services. What is the incremental payment to get to the high opportunity neighborhoods?

MS. OPPENHEIMER: I think the difference between the 2 bedroom and 1 and 6 is on the order of about \$850. So, it's quite a large span, but I think one of the reasons that we had gone to the multi-tiered is because it's not enough. It's not an equitable solution to be issuing a ton of vouchers that nobody can use. It's not enough to issue a ton of vouchers that, as we've seen historically, can only be used in certain communities. The pendulum obviously can't swing so far that we are serving only a few number of folks, but I think that we've also taken a long gain view on sort of the equity approach on this, that if we can really build in choice in an intentional way, which includes making sure that we're right sizing the right value of the voucher that these local markets are demanding and doing

regular analysis. We reanalyze our payment standards twice a year now to make sure that they're keeping pace with the market. That's how rapidly it's changing. That's what we need to do to make sure that people that have gotten this resource can use it and their families can benefit from it, at the same time, making sure that we're spreading this resource as far as we can. We're keeping a really close eye, obviously, on these percentages of where folks are living by tier and those are living in real time conversations.

MR. BERUBE: Marge, as a former HUD official and somebody who is in touch with a lot of housing authority officials around the country and thinks about a lot of different markets, from your perspective, when you think about this question of scale and scalability of an intervention of CMTO and recognizing that we're probably next to some of the higher performing higher capacity housing authorities in the country, what comes to mind to you as ingredients for success in taking this up a level?

MS. TURNER: We're constrained as long as at the Federal level. We're not willing to expand the housing voucher program. Sometimes we have these terrible fights between people of goodwill because we're battling over insufficient resources. So, I really liked both your answers. These are creative, effective housing authorities thinking pro-actively about how to make low cost adjustments that make the program work better for everybody, but not allowing this precious resource of a housing subsidy to limit families to neighborhoods where the evidence shows it may not do the adults any harm any more. We've already done it, but it certainly is doing the children harm and we ought to stop doing that with our scarce housing subsidies.

MR. BERUBE: Let me just shift the conversation just a little bit, just a few degrees, and come back to the topic of the economic outcomes for the adults which was the topic of the paper that Jens presented earlier. On that note, let me start with you, Fulton, because I know this is a place where the Charlotte Housing Authority has had work requirements for its adult clients for some time now. I wonder what you've learned from that and how you see some of the findings from Jens' paper, given what you've learned there,



and given some of the other experiments that we've conducted on helping to move public housing clients into work, like Jobs Plus, strategies like family self-sufficiency that he alluded to in this paper too.

MR. MEACHEM: We really do believe you have to build more than bricks and sticks as a housing authority. We have a supportive services program with a mandatory work requirement. There is a difference. For work requirements, they're saying basically, get up and go to work, not a lot of supports. Just a requirement for people to go to work. Ours is completely different than that. We have a supportive services program with case managers that work with our families, identify what barriers there are, whether they might be childcare, education, transportation. We pay for childcare. So, we are wrapping services around the requirement of a mandatory work requirement. We've seen some great success with that model. We have roughly a 48 percent graduation rate, positive moves. Positive moves mean individuals that move out of subsidized housing into market rate housing. We just believe that this is the right model. We'd like to see that combined also with now the mobility component. So, we didn't really have a lot of impact before on adults. Why?

Sometimes maybe there wasn't the right compassion and consequence to go along with that in our model of the supportive services to go along with the mandatory work requirement. We've had some great success. We've had Jobs Plus as well. We have a Jobs Plus program in a community that started out at 20 percent employment and now is at 75 percent employment. When we talk to residents, some of it is they didn't know these supports were available. We're finding out that marketing our programs -- and that's marketing, not just the first thing that they heard when they're signing off on a lease, but full-fledged marketing this program to people and making sure they know it's available to them in newsletters and Facebook and other things is the way to get them connected. We really do feel there are really many opportunities to move the needle on the adults as well as on the children.

MR. BERUBE: Do you have a sense as to how much the neighborhood in

which they're living, or the part of the City in which they're living plays into their success in moving to work or not? Do you really feel that this will overlap a lot with the mobility strategy or are those two different things?

MR. MEACHEM: There's no question there are certain parts of the City that don't have as much transportation, not as close transportation, further from job centers that impact it, but I do believe that we do have a transportation system in Charlotte. The real issue was that in some cases the question for our families was never have you thought about what you want to do. You're 27 years old. Maybe you have not had a job. What would you like to do? What would you like to be? Then they tell you this. Then you put together with them a plan of action about how to do it and just watch them flourish. I mean, that's what it is. The intervention between case managers, that support team, and the resident is where, I think, the real secret sauce is. That's what I think.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: I was just going to say I think the secret sauce is asking families, as experts, what do you think. I think Stephanie articulated it well in terms of how navigators and CMTO are talking about this. It relates back to, I think, one of the interesting findings, or at least what I pulled in the discussion of Jens' paper around families who had been part of MTO and have been employed and sort of the disruptive effective moves potentially on currently employed families. Obviously, I read that paper after we have been working with navigators, but I think one of the interesting things that I think is part of the navigator model is really thinking about what are the unique circumstances and contours around each family's life and how does employment, child care, transportation, social networks plug into that and if families are currently working, thinking about where is your work located; where do you take your kids; where do you drop them off? Let's think about like how we would – I mean the navigator is physically going out, driving different routes, going and looking at different maps or driving on the bus routes with folks to figure out how might this work in your life, given where you're working right now. That means to the conversation earlier about choice, for

some families it's not going to make sense to move areas. That's part of what makes the MTO successful. Right? I don't think like the 54 percent that didn't move to high opportunity areas as not actually being successful in intervention. I think maybe they ended up in where they are in the community in a way that feels more informed and more intentional. That's really exciting. I am hopeful that we'll have some impact on the economic outcomes that we see for families. I think that this is – the economics for the adults that are moving, it's a really heavy lift. We have FSS. In our broader programs, we have moved to biannual inspections as a way to hopefully incentivize working. We have lots of partnerships with work force development. We do our own early learning programming, as well as out of school times support as a childcare resource for families. With that said, it is so expensive that the idea of moving into a living wage job and having consistent hours at a living wage salary is still really outside of the realm of possibility for a lot of our families.

MR. BERUBE: Fulton, did you want to add to that?

MR. MEACHEM: No. I agree. I'll make this easy.

MR. BERUBE: I like additions like that. Marge, again as somebody present since the creation of MTO, I may be read a third of the bazillion MTO papers that folks have published over the years. I have a slight sense of what the preponderance of the evidence was saying up to the point of Jens' new contribution. I wonder how you reacted to the findings of that, thinking about experimental versus non-experimental and then again relate it to what these guys were just saying about the reality of work and the lives of folks who come into contact with public housing agencies and are coming from very poor neighborhoods.

MS. TURNER: So, obviously, when the earliest MTO results found no employment and earnings, I was very disappointed by that. I'm disappointed by this latest evidence that no matter how you slice and dice those MTO findings for adults, including testing some arguments I have made about why we didn't see the results we expected, that there still isn't a strong argument that the move alone results in better employment and outcomes for adults.

I think Stephanie's point about the complexity of these families' lives, your point about what a huge climb it is to get to a real living wage job, given the disadvantages you've been deal from the outset. We may need to accept that for many families a move alone isn't enough, that a move plus might be better than just the plus. Without the move, I think we still have a lot to learn on that, but I also want to come back to Stephanie's point about the health of the parents, health and mental health. First of all, that is a really important outcome in and of itself, for people to be healthier and not depressed and not anxious. But in addition, I believe the evidence says that one of the worst things for a child's well-being is to have a parent with depression. Addressing a parent's depression is a huge, important benefit for kids. We still have to figure out how to help adults whose opportunities have been so profoundly constrained, how to help them not just be great parents for their kids and give their kids a better shot but make some headway of the economic ladder themselves.

MR. BERUBE: I want to ask a pendulum question for my last question. I just wanted to get to this question of race a little more explicitly, you, Charlotte, and Seattle, King County to illustrate. Thinking about the potential scale and the effects of mobility solutions. Just being real, Fulton, like how much is racism going to be a barrier for folks moving from that crescent to the southern and more prosperous parts of your City to their ability to make the move and to their success once they make that move?

MR. MEACHEM: Ask that question again.

MR. BERUBE: How much do you feel like just plain old racism --

MR. MEACHEM: Messing with you. Just messing with you.

MR. BERUBE: I started shaking in my boots when you said that.

MR. MEACHEM: I know. Again, I started off the conversation saying that we're in a Southern city. I've talked to you about we don't have exclusionary zoning. We have pretty much income source discrimination. There are some things that are baked into the pie a little bit that, I think, as a city, we are really grappling with. We've had some very

difficult conversations, I think, over the last 4 years about race, about equity, but one thing I'm happy about is I think we're facing it now. We had a pretty big blowup that we had to look ourselves in the face and say race is an issue. We didn't know. Some of us in our community didn't know that there really was an affordable housing crisis or that individuals that really are looking for employment can't find that employment in the city and the city that is growing so fast, 100 people moving there a day and building 40,000 apartments going up every day. The question was what's in it for me. So, will it be an issue? Yes, it will be.

But I think the leadership we have in the city now, I would say both on the business side as well as the public side are really facing that issue and trying to address equity when it comes to affordable housing, and we've raised over \$175 million right now to put more additional units on the ground to give people more opportunity. That's that supply that we're talking about of where some of the families of which we serve on a day to day basis now will be able to live, work and play, but racism has and is a barrier in this whole affordable housing issue.

MR. BERUBE: Sarah?

MS. OPPENHEIMER: So, we're not a Southern city and racism still plays, I think, a huge role in Seattle and King County. Shocking. But in true northwest fashion, it's much more passive ways perhaps. You know, I think that, while they were not statistically significant differences. When Nathan showed those bar charts, we are seeing fewer black families move to high opportunity areas than white families. I think racism plays into that.

I think we have source of income discrimination now Statewide, and in Washington. I think we are still seeing discrimination, just not in overt ways and we need stronger enforcement. So, I think there is still lots of work to be done. I think two things on the more positive side.

One is that I think the maps have been a really powerful tool in our work with families in the community to really think more empirically and move away from sort of assumptions that I think oftentimes were driven by assumptions on race and income on what

our high opportunity neighborhoods. We had done prior work on mobility counseling long before CMTO with different maps and heard from a lot of families, like you've picked a small number of very white communities and we're not interested in going there. What we did with the mapping with the atlas, I think that it was helpful to see which communities came up. It's a more diverse map than we've had in the past. I think that that was really helpful. It gained a lot of trust, I think, in the families that we're working with, that we were taking new approaches to really understand what it was about these communities. I think the other thing is you can't talk about mobility, which relates to concentration of poverty and segregation, without talking about race and the role that the housing authorities play, have played in perpetuating that and what we need to do about it. But I think we were pretty slow to get there, frankly, at KSHIN. So, I think this has prompted some really thoughtful conversations and strategies throughout the agency that maybe were brought on by this mobility work, but I think have impacts like far above and beyond anything having to do with just the MTO.

MS. BERUBE: Thank you, guys. Okay. So, let me wrap up with a very sort of Brookings question. I think Jenny asked a version of this on her panel too, which is, where should the research and demonstration field be moving next. What should Nathan and his team in opportunity insights be doing next to really help us better understand, not only the potential effects of assisted housing policy on economic mobility, but like how to do it well? I sit in a think tank, but I've been told that implementation matters. So, let's start with you, Marge.

MS. TURNER: I want to come back to this secret sauce question that got raised a lot. I agree that we need to understand better what aspects of a place make the biggest difference in terms of people's prospects. But I also want to suggest a tweak on this that maybe the secret sauce is changing over time. I mean, the world is way different than it was in the decade when the kids' weekends we see outcomes for were growing up. The internet wasn't the same kind of issue. The labor market was different. The housing market was different. I don't know what else is different because I grew up in the 1960's. I think this

is a real issue, that what makes an opportunity supporting neighborhood may be changing in some ways. We'd better get smarter about it.

I just want to put out one other plea for researchers and research institutions and that is to face up to race and racism in our work. Doing the kind of community engaged listening that Stephanie does is part of that, because if you really listen to people and treat them as people who have wisdom to help inform the research and the policy development, I think you are going to learn a lot about race and racism, but there are ways to think about statistical methods that acknowledge racism instead of just treating race as this characteristic that you put in as a dummy variable. I think a lot of us have gotten the answers to our questions wrong.

We probably asked some wrong questions and we've definitely gotten our policy prescriptions wrong. I know I have. This is something that I am really thinking about a lot. The Urban Institute is thinking about it. Brookings is thinking about it. We all really have got to work on this.

MR. BERUBE: Thanks, Marge. Fulton?

MR. MEACHEM: First, I just want to say thank you for giving practitioners like myself real information that we can go help our families with. I just want to say thank you, because far too long we've been thinking these things, but not being able to really move the needle from a policy standpoint, boards, et cetera because they said well, that really doesn't make a difference in somebody's life, maybe moving them to a high-quality community, a high opportunity community. So, thank you for giving us that information so that we can now move forward as there is empirical evidence that says we should do this and that gives us permission to do it. I might be struggling a little bit about what else we can do, but technology. How does that play a part now in moving our families, let's say to high opportunity areas that can't move to high opportunity areas? How can we engage this internet, this new world to put our residents in a better position? Because we will constantly, I do believe, face issues where a hard unit, a physical unit may not be available. I think we

need to be thinking broader than that to figure out are there other ways for us to kind of -- I think as we asked that question earlier today. What happened to those communities that people left from? Maybe technology is the way we can increase the value of those areas.

MR. BERUBE: That's great. Sarah?

MS. OPPENHEIMER: I think it's been suggested a lot already. I think that the place spaced work needs further evidence for the reason that Fulton is describing. I think that it can really invigorate the policy and practice conversations. I think it will give us more precise tools. I think it will bring more folks to the table. I think that's already been said, and I would wholeheartedly double down on all those suggestions.

I think another place that would be helpful to get some additional inquiry is around -- and it started up again. I'm looking at displacement and gentrification and really what's happening across these neighborhoods. In Seattle and King County, displacement is front and center, something we're thinking about in both families who are living in high opportunity, as well as families that are living in lower opportunity communities. I think we don't have a great evidence base to help us answer our questions and sort of shape our approaches to that in critical ways. I think the last suggestion or hope I would have would be to actually piggyback on what Stephanie was saying about really understanding families' experiences of neighborhoods and how families are defining their neighborhoods, perhaps more in suburban communities like King County, but I think similar to lots of other places across the country, sort of how we have been describing neighborhoods is very much sort of an urban way of describing it that I don't think necessarily shows up well for a lot of the families we work with. Like it was hard to even think about a term to describe some of the neighborhoods on our maps because it's diffuse. Right? And people have their own definition of what their neighborhood is, but it is based on sort of boundary lines that they have come up with.

I would love to see some work around sort of revisiting how we're describing neighborhoods and neighborhoods across the country that doesn't necessarily rely on



census tracks or sort of urban definitions of neighborhood. Then the last thing I would just say is to second the things to have, practitioners up here and to put a plug in for the conversations to continue to involve certainly families and the communities we're working with, as Marge said, but also to continue to include housing authorities and other public institutions that are doing this work. While I think we haven't necessarily done a great job of bridging engagement with, but I think we'll get much better findings that don't feel sort of black box if we continue these types of conversations.

MR. BERUBE: That's great. Thanks to each of you. Having done a little bit of field work in South King County over the years, the notion of like a neighborhood as represented by a census track.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Yeah, exactly.

MR. BERUBE: I'm totally with you there. Look at that. I had only ten seconds left for this portion, 9, 8, 7. Now, we're going to a question. 6, 5, 4. Wow. Okay. So there is somebody in the – where are the mikes? Okay. Great. So, just like Jenny said, please identify yourself and your affiliation, if you would, and ask a question. My version of David Elwood is your voice should turn up at the end of the sentence unless you're Richard or a commonwealth country, in which case it may go down a little bit at the end of the question. So, let's start in the back there on the aisle, the gentlemen in the jacket there.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thanks. My name is Lawrence. I'm a reporter. These conversations keep circling back to how research shouldn't form policy. I'm really interested in policies that as Pat Sharkey put it, break down the barricades. I'm wondering if you can give us some examples of places and policies that have been forceful and effective in breaking down some of these barriers? To the extent that they are forceful, I would ask you to speculate on the long-term political ramifications, because we're seeing some real flash points, especially as regards school segregation right now.

MR. BERUBE: Who would like to start on that? That sounded like a Marge question. I'm sorry, but yeah, we can get others warmed up.

MS. TURNER: Well, I wish there was a great example of forceful policy to break down the barriers of segregation that didn't generate opposition that makes it difficult to sustain. I wish there was. I think we all have to just keep piling our efforts on top of each other and plugging away at this challenge, but I have 3 examples I would put out there.

One is from King County, which if I understand the policy correctly, as quite bravely has gone out and purchased existing rental properties that already exist in high opportunity areas, and essentially counted on the fact that the market is so hot that those rents are going to become extremely affordable over time, being places that not only opportunity voucher holders can live, but other moderate and other income households can live. That's done very quietly because you're buying apartment buildings that exist already in high opportunity locations. So, that's one.

Everybody probably knows that Montgomery County has operated for a very long-time inclusionary zoning program that goes beyond what most places do. It gives the housing authority the right to buy some of those units. So, again, quietly, in a new development –

MR. MEACHEM: I really like that policy.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: It's a really cool policy. So, you get moderate income families living in the below market unit, but you also get some very low-income families. There is evidence there that again, the effects for children are profound. Then Minneapolis just got rid of its single-family zoning. A lot of places are talking about that. It's freaking out a lot of people in many places that are talking about that, but it's interesting to me that typically when we talk about upzoning and going for higher density, the conversation is about going to a lot higher density. Just saying that we're going to just no more single family, we could begin like moving in the right direction.

MR. MEACHEM: I'll say too, for Charlotte, one of the things we're doing too is we have some very high valued assets in uptown Charlotte. What we're doing is really creating these mixed income mixed use communities that are

dense now. On our land, we can make inclusionary zoning a requirement. So, we're doing 80/20 deals now where 80 percent of the property is market rate, 20 percent is affordable, an making them just dynamic places to live, kind of turning that area into what, a high opportunity area at the end of the day. I think if anybody can do those in their particular cities, I think that would be great.

MR. BERUBE: Let's take another question. Let's get Solin.

SPEAKER: Solin Gerard, Senior Fellow for the Center of the Study of Social Policy. Marge, I just want to say real quickly, for the over decade that I've known you, you always say structural racism. I wish you weren't always the only one who does it, but thank you for doing it. I was waiting for it.

MR. BERUBE: Then TO the term, "place conscious policy", wants everybody to do.

SPEAKER: So, my question for all of you is about social ties and social networks to sustain the mix. Once the move is done, there are things we knew about MTO in terms of relationships in among young people and such, and, Sarah, in particular because of the immigrant refuge context of the Pacific Northwest, what are you finding either from the navigators around "are my people there"? Will there be people to supposed me, the kind of cultural affinities in context and how important that might be in the move?

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Yeah, so, I think it's something that we have thought about a lot and in some ways, I kind of want to pump my answer on this until we have more data.

MR. BERUBE: We'll have the next panel talk about that one, Sarah.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Yeah, exactly. Stick around. But I think we need to wait until we have more interviews that Stephanie and our team are working on with families around what does their social network look like and how much did it factor into their move decisions.

MR. BERUBE: A lot of social networks do. A lot in the back row there.

They look very eager.

MR. DADDICK: Thank. I tried to ask a question on the last panel. So, I'm still here. My name is Alex Daddick. I get to visit every once in a while with you all. My organization is called FAHI. We work in Appalachia. We're based in Eastern Kentucky. I'm glad to be here with you all and appreciate all the work that the researchers on the first panel and the fine practitioners here are doing on issues like structural racism and moving people to opportunity. This is both for the panel and for the Brookings staffers here, if you would care to answer. The research focuses understandably on the larger cities because that's where the program pilot was. In a lot of parts of the country, we've got smaller cities and then towns where there are also – I'm holding a report that was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It's a discussion draft, but it points out that 80 percent of the persistent poverty counties are non-metro. They are small cities and rurals, and that every majority black and native American family county is also persistently poor, the majority of those in rural areas. So, I wonder, like in all this discussion, I'm hoping that you all would elaborate a little bit on what you see as the opportunity for those places and how they can think about moving to opportunity, given the attachment to place they have. Also, if you want to relate it to the political barriers that were talked about, because a lot of the legislators that make policy that create housing vouchers, for example, and enough funds come from some of these more rural states. That has an impact on policy. I'd really appreciate that. For the Brookings folks, I'd love to hear what you think, because you're directing some of these kinds of panels. I would also extend an invite to a tour to anybody who would like to come to Appalachia. We would love to have you and show you how it works there as well as outside of some of these larger cities. So, thank you.

MR. BERUBE: Thank you, Alex. I can't speak exactly to the housing mobility strategy. Marge is giving me -- Marge is shaking me off. No, no. You wanted -- okay.

MS. TURNER: I just want to say I feel really inadequate on this topic. A

couple of years ago I tried to work with colleagues at Urban on this U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty that the Gates Foundation funded. We tried to develop a Communities of Opportunity strategy that would be applicable in rural communities as well as urban. We realized the policy challenges aren't the same. The solutions aren't the same. We didn't know enough about – we didn't know enough to be useful on the rural issues, and frankly, we didn't find the kind of rich body of scholarship and experimentation to build on.

MR. DADDICK: So, here's my follow up. Why do you think that is and why is it that researching coming down, I wonder –

MR. BERUBE: You're young. I'll just jump way in. You're catching people on the panel who have long been associated with centers, within their institutions that have the title Metropolitan in their name. That's the way Appalachia is sort of othered and has not gotten the kind of – I think, policy attention. Your organization was born out of the war on poverty and model cities and very early kinds of urban focus programs in the late 1960's.

MS. TURNER: We've had a lot of conversations about it. We have scholars who would like to develop a rural program and we haven't been able to get one off the ground. It may be that having been called the Urban Institution makes it a little hard to get a rural program off the ground, but I don't --

MR. BERUBE: Richard perhaps has one up his sleeve. So, let's hear it.

MR. REEVES: I just want to say that I did do a short paper where we just looked at the rural areas using the data from opportunity insights which I'll be happy to send to you, because most attention is with the cities because that's where most of the people are. It's reasonable in one way. To try to look sometimes at just terms of correlations of what seemed to be the rural areas that showed high rates of upper mobility and the slightly depressing finding was that they were all marked by pretty high levels of out migration, because, of course, what you're doing is you're seeing where the kids are from, but then you're measuring their annual earnings, wherever they are. So, the measure is what are you earnings in your mid-thirties compared to where you grew up, but your mid-thirties, you

might be somewhere else. Actually, those levels wooed high levels of migration. That was a quite sobering finding because what it suggested was to go up, you had to go out for many of these areas. I think all that does is underline the need for these place conscious policies because back to where we were before, it's not as if everybody wants to leave. They should have the choice to be able to stay in those places and still have a decent quality of life.

MR. BERUBE: My final offering, Alex, is some of the work that my program is doing, it's not about housing mobility per se, but rather how do we create more centers of opportunity across the country that are effectively urban in nature, let's say mid-sized cities that aren't too far from, says, eastern Kentucky, aren't too far from other parts of Appalachia, aren't too far from very small towns in states like Michigan or South Carolina, rather than assume the policy solution lies in building much more housing in Washington and San Francisco and Seattle and Boston, which, of course, we should do, but we cannot expect every young person, nor should we want every young person from those kinds of communities to have to go that far away from their families and their communities to seek opportunity.

Let's get the gentlemen sitting here, please.

MR. WATSON: Thanks. Henry Watson. I'm a PhD student at Georgetown. The thing I wanted to ask about is we've established that all these barriers are not just there by chance. They're intentionally erected to protect people from the disadvantaged areas. So, when it comes to mobility programs, I'm curious about what the reaction is from the middle and upper income families that reside in the high opportunity areas, what's their reactions to mobile programs in places where there's fractured local government, like you were saying. Is there a policy conflict between local governments that represent the high opportunity programs and the local governments that represent the low opportunity areas, because obviously one might have more interest in a mobile program than others strictly speaking from a rational protects my own perspective.

MR. MEACHEM: Well, you've heard of nimbyism? Not in my back yard.

Same thing places out. The great thing though, about the voucher program it is so stealth in a lot of ways that individuals don't really know who that individual is that they have a Section 8, that they are having any subsidy or anything else. That's what makes this, I think, a program that can be scaled if we had more vouchers that we could scale, because the issue is that you really can't tell. I do development as well. When I'm doing a 150 unit apartment building and they know that since it's Fulton Meachem, he's going to have some affordable housing in it, I'm right in front of the zoning committee and city council and I have little flags behind me saying please vote no. That influences the politics sometimes and the inability to build more affordable housing, but when already in the marketplace you have vacancies. Now, you can fill them this way. It's much more organic.

MS. OPPENHEIMER: Yeah. I think we've been pretty stealth, as Fulton would say, but partly with CMTO, we wanted to make sure, and as you saw on that map, that we would see pretty diffuse distribution. So, in terms of this impacting any particular and in terms of receiving community alla, there was no reason to be sort of out in front. I think one thing though that has helped on the flip side of that in our work throughout the community, as Marge was saying, we've done a huge amount of work on development and acquisition on units throughout the county, so 51 percent of the about 11,000 units that we own outright are in higher opportunity areas. We are already imbedded in those communities and one of the things that we are doing because of our MTW is working really closely with school districts throughout the county. Those are school districts in high and lower opportunity areas to make sure that we're figuring out how to bring those systems together. I think that does help on some of the issues you're raising.

MR. BERUBE: One last question. I'm going to go right here on the aisle.

MS. LEE: Hi. My name is Rosa Lee from George Washington University. For the moving to an opportunity program is within the context of one region. I'm just wondering if it is possible to even think about at the more Federal level support, and the moving to a high opportunity region. This might be related to Alex at the back to rural and

urban migration, but if you wanted to move across a metropolitan area, that also, there is a lot of stricter barrier, especially housing, rent, prices. If you wanted to move from Charlotte to the Seattle area, the rent difference is going to be thousands of dollars, not necessarily a couple of hundred dollars. Do you think finding a good opportunity region or moving to a metropolitan area is plausible or is it worthwhile? I just wanted to hear about what is your insight for this.

MS. TURNER: In principle, the voucher program is Federal. So, you can move out of the metropolitan area you received the voucher in. It's not easy. A few families in the moving to opportunity demonstration did move beyond the boundaries of the metropolitan area. But I actually think the question about rural communities was about how can those communities become places of opportunity without requiring everybody to leave them.

MR. BERUBE: Do you want to either be -- are you thinking about it, Sarah? So, I guess the answer to it is, yes, it's possible. Whether it should be the emphasis of public policy or we should think that that's the solution that people are looking for, I guess is a separate question. Again, we'll come back to that on the next panel.

In the meanwhile, please join me in thanking our great panelists, Marge, Fulton and Sarah. Back to Richard.

MR. REEVES: I'm just going to close up. I do want to thank Alan. I'm thrilled you mentioned Minneapolis. Jenny Schultz is leading a conference in Minneapolis with Abigail Wasniak on housing and mobility and I'm thrilled about that. Camille Bousec, my colleague here who runs the Race, Prosperity and Inclusion Initiative is embarking on a big project using qualitative research to look at social capital in Charlotte and how that relates to opportunity.

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