

IMPACTS OF FARM WORKER HOUSING ON THE RECEIVING COMMUNITIES IN
THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Erika Valencia

Politics 458

Whitman College

December 12, 2008

INTRODUCTION

“The core of our economic success is the fundamental truth that each American does better when all Americans do better; that the well being of American business, its capital markets, and the American people are aligned. I think all of us here today would acknowledge that we've lost that sense of shared prosperity.”¹

This powerful nation was founded on universal values that all people are entitled to security, safety, happiness and family well-being. These are values that are often taken for granted in America but are slowly being lost. The loss in the universality of these values is especially visible when applied to the security, safety, happiness and family well-being of the American farmworkers and their families. Even in the midst of the current economic crisis, farmworkers faithfully continue to contribute over \$6.4 billion each year in agricultural production to the economy of the state of Washington. Regardless of their tremendous contributions these workers are still earning wages that are considerably below the poverty level.² These low wages makes it difficult, in many cases impossible, for this group of workers and their family to afford housing. For those who do manage to afford a monthly rent, more often than not, farmworkers get the “least of the last” while paying much more than thirty percent of their income, more than is stated on the federal guidelines, in rent.³ Investing such a high percent of their earning on housing alone makes it so that other essential necessities, such as health insurance, transportation and groceries, are not always affordable. The situation for farmworkers gets worse when one of the primary supporters of the household gets sick, become the victim of a work related accident or has to miss work due to an unexpected occurrence. For farmworkers, being cost-burdened and falling victims to said accidents can mean that the next month’s rent will not be afforded. This was the situation of one of the workers I interviewed, and will be discussed in greater detail shortly. Lastly, and no more encouraging, the conditions of the existing housing units in the state of Washington are unbelievably poor.⁴

To help alleviate present farmworker housing conditions, affordable housing advocates design and propose housing developments in rural Washington where agriculture employs over 187,000 individuals. Nonetheless, housing advocates encounter obstacles like decreased governmental assistance for housing programs, exclusionary zoning regulations and time consumption due to the numerous steps involved. Even the task of getting the design of a housing project approved can be challenging for the average affordable housing development. But in the case of housing developments designed for individuals like farmworkers, there is yet another

¹ The New York Times. “Obama on Renewing the American Economy.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/27/us/politics/27text-obama.html?pagewanted=print> (accessed December 1, 2008).

² Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” (July 2008), 1.

³ Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” Executive Summary, (July 2008), 5.

⁴ Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” Executive Summary, (July 2008), 5.

barrier to confront. “More challenging than finding the resources necessary to initiate a project,” expressed Mario Villanueva, an affordable housing advocate, “is convincing the community of the importance of providing affordable housing for their local farmworkers.”⁵

The level of support from citizens in the community can either break or make a farmworker housing development successful. Community opposition, specifically disapproval of residents near the development, often slows down farmworker advocates and housing providers in their efforts to make housing decent and affordable for Washington’s farmworkers. In some cases this form of opposition from the neighboring residents can stop a housing development all together. This type of opposition is commonly referred to as the NIMBY syndrome (Not In My Back Yard!).

As this report will show, in the case of affordable housing for farmworkers, the sentiments associated with NIMBY opposition are based on the fear that affordable housing developments will attract a crowd of low-income tenants into the community. The low-income status combined with the fact that ninety-five percent of farmworkers are Latinos (Mexican) in many instances paints a stereotypical image of the results that would come about from incorporating this group of newcomers into an already established community. This is where concerns from the neighbors arise. In the case of affordable farmworker housing, these concerns include the fear that crime levels will increase in the community, that the value of the properties will be negatively impacted, and that schools in the community will get overcrowded while the performance of current students will lower. There is nothing that will bring people together as rapidly as the fear that newcomers might hinder the wellbeing of their family and home. But these fears are based on the negative image that affordable housing for farmworkers has been given over the years. It is rare to hear a positive success story attributed to affordable housing developments for farmworkers although my research points encountered many.

There is very limited, if any, literature that speaks to the benefits that result from affordable housing for farmworkers in the state of Washington. My research attempt to fill this void by systematically analyzing whether or not there are implicit and explicit benefits that result from this type of housing. Through my research I found that there are in fact many benefits. The most obvious of them being those the farmworkers themselves enjoy. But my research took this question a step further and looked at the benefits the general community reaps. Here I claim that contrary to the common perception behind farmworker housing developments, this kind of housing serves the general community not only by stabilizing the local agricultural workforce but also by alleviating homelessness in the community, preparing children who are already in the school districts to go to school more prepared, increasing investment in the community,

To prove my claim, I undertook a unique process of research in partnership with my two community members. Throughout the process of my research, I worked closely with Rosalinda Mendoza and Brien Thane, both from the Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust. This nonprofit organization in Seattle is made up of growers, community leaders and housing providers. The Trust has dedicated the last five years to providing support, information, advice and guidance to those who promote affordable housing in the state of Washington. Both Mendoza and Thane referred me to housing experts, advocates and organizations and they guided my research to better investigate farmworker housing as they gave me feedback that

⁵ Mario Villanueva, Personal Interview, 3 October 2008.

helped my findings be as accurate, up to date and factual as possible. I conducted numerous interviews with housing advocates, non-governed organizations, religious leaders, farmworkers and the families of farmworkers. These have been beneficial in recording the firsthand experiences of those who are directly involved in these cases and to further support my findings. A third element that aided me in supporting my claim was the survey I conducted at the Chamber of Commerce in East Wenatchee which gave me a good sense of the community's thoughts regarding farmworker housing. Additionally, original letters from opponents and proponent of farmworker housing and letter from the East Wenatchee County Commissioners were collected and analyzed proving further support. Lastly, I bring all of my primary data gathered in East Wenatchee together with my scholarly research and focus this broad topic on a local farmworker housing development. The local development, Bello Rio in East Wenatchee, Washington, became my case study because it is representative of the classic farmworker housing projects that face NIMBY opposition by their respective communities. In East Wenatchee, the surrounding neighborhood organized against the development as soon as they heard word about it because of their varied concerns.

My case study becomes instrumental because it provides details about the initial claims that were made by the opposing community against the Bello Rio development. An analysis of my data renders an understanding of the basis under which the initial NIMBY claims were created. A look at the history of Bello Rio will then provide what I call "factual aftermath". In other words, did the NIMBY claims the drove the neighbors to take the Bello Rio development to court prove to be factual years after the housing development was inhabited? For example, in the time that Bello Rio has been around, did crime increase as was initially believed would be one of the outcomes? More details about the literature I used and my data will follow.

It is important that research such as the one I briefly describe be conducted. In doing this affordable housing advocates will begin to breakdown the myths surrounding affordable housing for farmworkers and shine light to the numerous unmentioned benefits. When the benefits of affordable housing are recognized and understood by the surrounding communities, the existing farmworker housing need in the state of Washington of over 39,401 new units will begin to be met. This is something a state like Washington for whom agriculture plays such a significant economic role desperately needs to stabilize its workforce.⁶

In order to move closer to meeting the current housing demand for the farmworkers who contribute tremendously to the state's economy, affordable housing advocates must do two things. First, they must be able to point to the benefits affordable farmworker housing generates. After these benefits are identified, advocates must then find an effective method to convey the message that farmworker housing does indeed benefit all. By doing this, housing advocates will gain much needed support from those who at one point opposed or were indifferent.

SCHOLARLY LITERATURE REVIEW

Vital to this report is understanding the benefits that result from affordable housing for farmworkers and why historically it has been difficult to meet the present farmworker housing need. What follows sets the foundation for the remainder of my research and it will be referred to

⁶ Synthesis Report on Washington State Farmworker Housing Needs and Housing Supply, (March 2004).

continuously since it covers a variety of crucial topics. First, it begins by addressing the importance of devoting attention to “affordable farmworker housing” not just “affordable housing” in general. Second, it points to the reasons why historically it has been hard to meet the housing need for this group of workers. Lastly, and just as important, it looks at solutions that have been offered in the past in hopes to move closer to meeting the present farmworker housing need. In this last section, special emphasis is devoted to the lessons that can be learned from past developments to move closer to a comprehensive solution to this crisis.

Who are the Farmworkers?

“Like machines, nearly two million of workers in America’s fields labor without rights, earn sub-living wages, and exist in dehumanizing circumstances”⁷

Ninety-five percent of farmworkers who work in agriculture come from Mexico and many of them have limited education levels.⁸ Recently, the number of farmworker families has increased, whereas before it was mostly single men. Farmworkers are involved in agriculture work, which is “among the most dangerous occupation, with injuries and illness disabling farmworkers at a rate three times that of the general population.”⁹ Regardless of these high risk levels, Christine Ahn adds, “farmworkers are paid poverty wages... Three out of four U.S. farmworkers earn less than \$10,000 annually, and three out of five families live below the federal poverty line. Living conditions are equally harsh as migrant housing commonly lacks plumbing and working appliances, and is often next to pesticide-treated fields. Farmworkers spend more than 30 percent of their income on this sub-standard housing.”¹⁰ Additionally, farmworkers are less likely to have health insurance, entitlement to pension or vacation compared to other ethnic groups.¹¹

As Ahn mentions, the housing conditions for farmworkers and their families are presently less than desirable. According to a study conducted by the Housing Assistance Council (HAC), “poor housing conditions are disproportionately higher among renters and minority households than among owners and whites.”¹² Endless scholars have studied the poor housing conditions that in most cases apply to farmworkers. David A. Strauss, for instance, highlights the particularities in obstacles encountered by farmworkers like the drastically lower income due to their

⁷An Oxfam America Report. “Like Machines in the Fields: Workers Without Rights in American Agriculture.” www.maketradefair.com.

⁸ An Oxfam America Report. “Like Machines in the Fields: Workers Without Rights in American Agriculture.” www.maketradefair.com.

⁹ Ahn, Christine. Melissa Moore, and Nick Parker. “Migrant Farmworkers: America’s New Plantation Workers.” *Backgrounder* 10, No.2 (Spring 2004): 1.

¹⁰ Ahn, Christine. Melissa Moore, and Nick Parker. “Migrant Farmworkers: America’s New Plantation Workers.” *Backgrounder* 10, No.2 (Spring 2004): 1.

¹¹ Ahn, Christine. Melissa Moore, and Nick Parker. “Migrant Farmworkers: America’s New Plantation Workers.” *Backgrounder* 10, No.2 (Spring 2004): 1.

¹²Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 22.

occupation, lack of resources, all which create a type of chain reaction and “translates into inadequate housing or, in extreme cases, no housing at all.”¹³

Effects of Inadequate Housing

“Housing for farmworkers is a serious and sometimes desperate matter”¹⁴ but what a lot of people do not realize is that these inadequate housing conditions is something that does not only affect the farmworkers but also the surrounding community. It is estimated that over 7.7 million nonmetro units have children present. Out of these nonmetro units “35 percent have problems with cost, crowding, or adequacy.”¹⁵ These conditions are not ideal for the academic life of the children who live in these units. The crowding conditions lead to the discouraging position of children trying to find a place in the household to complete their schoolwork while staying out of the way of the rest of the inhabitants.¹⁶ The adequacy standards in many cases leads to illnesses and both of these factors do not contribute to a healthy classmate.

Meeting the Present Farmworker Housing Need

The state of Washington has taken important steps in the right direction as it attempts to meet the present housing need associated with farmworkers. From 1999 to the year 2007, 1,068 units were created for permanent farmworkers. As vital as every unit is when it comes to meeting the states need, these attempts still leave the state with a shortage of over 39,401 units. But the process of meeting this goal is not as simple as some might think. “Decent building sites close to services are scarce, very expensive, and face long approval processes. Local permit and impact fees average \$20,000 per housing unit, adding to ever-increasing construction costs. Nonprofit developers must also be willing to meet local design standards, including, for example, such costly amenities as tile roofs. The NIMBY factor is, of course, ever present and becomes even more entrenched as housing prices increase.”¹⁷

The following section covers two of the obstacles that when combined can serve as the perfect tool that will make affordable farmworker housing advocates spend a great deal of their funds on extra fees, delay a housing development for a long period of time, or bring a development to an end. These two obstacles are zoning ordinances and NIMBY opposition (Not In My Back Yard).¹⁸

¹³ Strauss, David A. “Farm Labor Housing: An Overview.” *The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council* 10, No. 2 (Summer 2005): 2.

¹⁴ Strauss, David A. “Farm Labor Housing: An Overview.” *The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council* 10, No. 2 (Summer 2005): 3.

¹⁵ Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 15.

¹⁶ Areceo, Kusserow, and Wright, “Understanding the challenges and Potentials of Migrant students,” 232-34.

¹⁷ Wilson, Mark. “Successful Farmworker Housing Goes Beyond Roofs and Walls.” *The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council* 10, No. 2 (Summer 2005):13.

¹⁸ Kirk, Steven. “Rural Neighborhoods Learns Ways to House Unaccompanied Workers.” *The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council* 10, No. 2 (Summer 2005):17.

The Convenience of Zoning Regulations for Opponents

Due to its unconstitutional nature, there are no zoning ordinances that explicitly state that farmworker housing cannot exist in a given part of a city. Regulations that prohibit a certain racial group to live in a particular side of town do not exist. However, this colorblind language is precisely what affordable housing advocates must be aware of and pay close attention to. This colorblind language makes zoning regulations conveniently “universal” and regrettably “problematic.” In *Land Use Regulation and Residential segregation: Does Zoning Matter?*, author Christopher Berry speaks to this universality of zoning regulations:

[Zoning] tries to exclude certain land users altogether; in particular, racial minorities and those of low income are the usual targets of exclusionary zoning. The zoning regulations most commonly used as exclusionary devices include bans on multifamily housing and a variety of minimum building standards; lot size and width, building size, density (that is, lot coverage) and so forth. Although restrictions such as these do not explicitly exclude specific people or groups of people, they effectively establish minimum limits on the cost of housing, which fosters economic segregation. And given the correlation between race and income, economic segregation has implied racial segregation (253).

Here and in other examples Berry provides, he makes it clear that opposition to affordable housing projects cannot be based on race or economic status even if such factors are the true sentiments behind the opposition. Instead, communities can oppose a housing development based only on their sentiments but still be able to take the case to court by simply proving that the housing development does not comply with one of the codes: be it the design of the development, the size, density, the width or any of the requirements on an endless list. For example, if a community opposes a farm worker housing project, in a region of a city whose zoning regulations require a multifamily housing project to be between 250-300 feet wide but the proposed unit exceeds by fifty feet, this discrepancy between the project being proposed and the regulations in that particular city will be enough to take this case to court to delay and in some cases even stop the development.

Zoning: A Brief Historical Account

To provide a historical account of where this obstacle comes from, Robert L. Liberty takes the reader back to the days in which zoning was nothing more than verbal agreements. He then goes on to talk about “official zoning regulation” that were known as “black zones” and “white zones.” These, he says, were born in the South and slowly made their way North. He claims that although existing zoning regulations do not include language about race, the present segregation has everything to do with the existence of zoning ordinances,

Taking Berry’s claim one step further, William A. Fischel talks about the rural communities that have no zoning. Many take this to mean that proposing a development in such a location would be an easier process but even then, Fischel states, those communities can easily and rapidly make up zoning regulations to contest a proposed project they do not support. The phenomenon Fischel talks about is nothing new though. Cases like the ones he describes are often seen in the state of Washington when farmworker housing projects are proposed. Even though it is commonly known that there is no differences between zoning ordinances for the typical affordable housing project and those for affordable farmworker housing, zoning ordinances offer the ideal tools Berry mentions above that opponents can easily use to delay or halt the process for

additional housing projects in the area. Gregory E. McAvory also speaks to this idea when he talks about the NIMBY opposition (Not In My Back Yard) and uses different examples to announce that citizens should question and challenge experts, in this case city regulations and official, who claim to know what the “common good” is for communities.

Community Support

Community support, as mentioned earlier, can either break or make a development successful. Opposition from the receiving community of this type came up in all of my interviews with farmworker housing advocates as one of the most difficult barriers to overcome and scholars also have a great deal to say about it. Steven Kirk describes this opposition as “Not In My Back Yard – NIMBY – syndrome, a nasty phenomenon facing traditional affordable housing.”¹⁹ He later goes on to talk about his personal experience in the field and states that when it comes to affordable housing developments, there is only one other type of housing development that faces as much opposition as affordable farmworker housing: “[NIMBY] grows to epic proportions in siting (sic) housing for unaccompanied farmworkers.”²⁰ This opposition to affordable housing for farmworker families and singles requires that farmworker housing providers follow the “usual tactics” but great success also requires to move beyond this in creative ways, expresses Kirk. To support his formula, Kirk goes on to talk about those techniques that have worked in the past. Amongst them the most crucial he speaks of is his recommendation to housing advocates telling them to select land in neighborhoods where zoning is multifamily as to comply with the areas codes and avoid as much as possible the NIMBY opposition. He also suggests that that green interior areas are included in every design. Doing this will provide recreation space that is “also controlled.” Overall, the exterior design of the building should always further the image of “Rural Neighborhood’s model.” The last two techniques, if followed, will make these developments for farmworkers more desirable, less like the typical image of farmworker camps and “unlike the image of transient shelters with scores of men milling about the entrance, our designs provide lighted, attractive common space that is outdoors for our tenants but interior to our facility.”

But Rolf Pendall take this a step further and suggests that no matter what you do to try to comply with the communities requirements, there will always be those who oppose based on racist and classist sentiments.²¹ Others will be strong supporters of the NIMBY opposition but only because they have genuine concerns about the impacts new developments will have on crime, the value of their property and their children’s wellbeing.²²

Impacts of Farmworker Housing

¹⁹ Kirk, Steven. “Rural Neighborhoods Learns Ways to House Unaccompanied Workers.” *The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council* 10, No. 2 (Summer 2005): 17.

²⁰ Kirk, Steven. “Rural Neighborhoods Learns Ways to House Unaccompanied Workers.” *The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council* 10, No. 2 (Summer 2005): 17

²¹ Pendall, Rolf. “Opposition to Housing: NIMBY and Beyond.” *Urban Affairs Review* 35, No. 112 (1999): 115.

²² Pendall, Rolf. “Opposition to Housing: NIMBY and Beyond.” *Urban Affairs Review* 35, No. 112 (1999): 115.

“Few Causes will mobilize American citizens, at least the 68 percent who own their homes, faster or more effectively than a perceived threat to the value of their property.”²³

Many studies have tried to evaluate whether the perceptions that property values will decrease as a result of affordable subsidized housing is correct. A scholar at Harvard University looks into this question and analyses it based on his many years of research. But to answer this question he breaks it down into five main categories and studies each individual effect at a time: Removal Effect, Physical Structure Effect, Market Effects, Population Growth Effect and Population Mix Effect. After taking the reader through each of the independent categories he concluded by stating that “evidence clearly fails to support the notion that subsidized rental housing will in general depress neighborhood property values or otherwise undermine communities.”

Authors like Strauss have made the crisis around affordable farm worker housing clear. Such authors have described the present housing situation and conclude by pointing to the barriers that have made it difficult to keep advancing in meeting the current farmworker housing need. Amongst these obstacles Kirk describes the NIMBY syndrome and the most efficient ways to overcome this barrier. Berry and other scholars give different accounts about the history of zoning regulations, their origins and how they have evolved over the years. They make it clear that due to its unconstitutional nature, these regulations do not mention class or race explicitly. Regardless of the colorblind language, Berry and a few others claim that race was a strong component of these regulations in the beginning and continues to be today.

RESEARCH METHODS

As prior literature illustrates, affordable housing for farmworkers continues to be a great need in the state of Washington but historically this type of housing has been opposed by the general community. This opposition is not particular to the state of Washington, it can also be observed in other states like Oregon and California. My research takes prior literature a step further and speaks to the often unnoticed benefits that result from additional affordable housing for farmworkers. What is unique about this research is that it does not only focus on the benefits the farmworkers themselves enjoy, which is what prior scholarship does. Instead, my research highlights the benefits adequate and affordable farmworker housing pours onto the neighboring community. Here I make the claim that if the neighbors were involved and aware of the benefits I will later discuss, opposition in the form of NIMBY would drastically decrease and most likely convert into the support that affordable housing advocates desperately need. To show this, my research relies on a variety of different methods including a case study that can be used as a model of the typical farmworker housing development that faces NIMBY opposition. Also, a survey conducted at the Chamber of Commerce in East Wenatchee that shows an up to date impressions the community holds regarding affordable farmworker housing. Interviews with a variety of people were also collected, including affordable farmworker housing advocates, members of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association (those involved in the NIMBY opposition), the farmworker residents of Bello Rio and the children of the farmworkers. These interviews all shine light to a different side of the story and together become very powerful component of my research. Both my survey and my interview questions were designed in company with my

²³ Green, Richard K. “Low Income Housing Tax Credit Housing Developments And property Values.” *Urban Land Economics Research*. (June 2002): 3.

community partners Rosalinda Mendoza and Brien Thane. Lastly, and just as important were the twenty-nine letters written by the opponents and proponents of Bello Rio and the County Commissioners of East Wenatchee. These correspondences circulated around the community during the time in which Bello Rio's construction was halted and when NIMBY opposition from the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association resonated most. These letters along with the summary of the Bello Rio hearing are also analyzed in depth.

Before I initiated contact with my interviewees, I first submerged myself in as much background information as possible. In doing this, I concentrated mostly in obtaining information about specific areas like the general concept of affordable housing and the difference between affordable housing and affordable housing farmworkers. I read news reports and data speaking about the impact affordable housing had in the past and the kind of support and NIMBY opposition these projects received. I did this with a special focus on specific cases in the state of Washington. As I kept reading, my findings lead me in different paths. The names of different scholars started to arise and these aided me in my quest to become more familiar with the topic at hand. Different primary materials that I use in this report were also found. Along with these discoveries, many questions were also starting to form. When I came across something that was completely foreign or simply too difficult to decipher, I would turn to my partners, Mendoza and Thane, both of whom are very experienced in this area. A lot of these questions were later transformed into the actual questions I use in my interview. Once I felt like I had a good background, I started my interview process with key advocates that were referred to me by my partners and through my readings. I found this process to be even more enriching.

Interviews with Affordable Farmworker Housing Advocates

My interviews with Mario Villanueva and Alicia McRae were instrumental in that they provided a “behind the scenes view” that was not magnified in my scholarly literature. These two interviews, which lasted forty-five minutes and an hour respectively, both mentioned NIMBY opposition as one of the main obstacles they confront in their efforts to promote adequate and affordable housing for farmworkers. McRae for instance, shared that each development presents different obstacles and every time they try to take what they learned in the NIMBY process and apply it to future projects. Regardless of these efforts, she mentioned, affordable housing developments are still faced with opposition at different levels. Villanueva speaks highly of his local and state leaders. He mentions that they have been generous with the funding aspect of the process. But one obstacle that has been hard to reconcile, is the opposition from the general community him and his colleagues are constantly facing. He relates NIMBY opposition to the stereotypes associated with Latinos and also notes that something needs to be done to bridge this disconnect. These two interviews which were recorded in their respective offices brought my scholarly literature to life as it provided firsthand anecdotes that will be discussed in more detail later. Also, both Villanueva and McRae pointed me to new individuals who have been involved as farmworker housing advocates and additional data sources which all validated their personal accounts.

Interviews with Members of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association

Most of the news articles I read regarding Bello Rio and the NIMBY opposition this development was faced with continuously mentioned the leader of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association: Sonney Langhurst . Because of the prominence of this individual in prior interviews and readings, I saw it just to touch bases with him. After informing him about my research over the phone, Langurst was more than willing to speak to “the other side of the story.”

Langhurst immediately assured me that “[w]e were never against migrant Hispanic seasonal farmworker low-income housing. We were never against it. Our issue was the location. Langhurst made it clear that the association’s concerns was the location, the funding sources and fact that Bello Rio was not in accordance with the city’s dispersal codes. The sources he used to support this claim was word-of-mouth and statements he heard from other members of the association. It was clear that he was genuinely concerned about the funding sources used for Bello Rio but had a difficult time sharing with me where these funds came from or pointing me to reliable source of information. His initial claim that “we were never against migrant Hispanic seasonal farmworker low-income housing” was not supported by a letter he personally sent on June 14th and letters from other members of the association that advocated against Bello Rio.

Interviews with Residents of Bello Rio and their Children

When visiting Bello Rio for the first time, I was invited into the homes of some of the resident farmworkers. Although many of them were willing to share their stories I tried to visit the homes with resident children. The reason for this is because I saw much value in hearing the stories of the young residents to see the impact their new living conditions had on their academic lives, if any. During my stay in East Wenatchee, I had the privilege to speak to a great number of children who were students at the Eastmont District at the time but only six of my interviews are used in this report since they were the only ones recorded. The recordings and note taking process took place only after I received permission from the parents who were present in all cases. In two of these interviews, the parents shared their student’s report cards with me. Interview questions for the farmworker residents were also designed with much thought since it was of great value to hear their accounts depicting the impact affordable housing had on their lives. These become more valuable to my research than prior enumerations that had been collected by past scholars. My interviews while at Bello Rio ranged from thirty-minute interviews to an hour and fifteen minutes, all of which were conducted in Spanish and later translated by me. For confidentiality purposes, the names of all residents and their children have been altered and pseudonyms have been used.

Bello Rio as a Case Study

To demonstrate what this type of opposition known as NIMBY looks like, the motives and concerns behind the opposition, the effect of NIMBY on affordable housing developments, the benefits of affordable farmworker housing and much more, my research focuses on one out of dozens of NIMBY cases in the state of Washington: Bello Rio in East Wenatchee, Washington. Bello Rio was randomly chosen and although there are some particularities to this case study, overall Bello Rio can be seen as a classic example of an affordable housing development designed for farmworkers that was greeted with NIMBY opposition by the neighboring community. Typically, when the community first finds out about the development plans, they respond by trying to stop the development in whatever way possible. If this does not work the neighbors organize and contacted their local and state leaders asking for support. If these initial steps do not work, as a last resort, they take the case to court. Using Bello Rio as a model of NIMBY opposition allows this research to centralize the literature finding and put them in a local context. This in turn made it easier to go into depth on the various issues.

Survey: East Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce

As to obtain an inclusive understanding of the community’s perception towards affordable farmworker housing, I conducted a survey in East Wenatchee. I saw it best to conduct my survey

at the Chamber of Commerce because these individuals come from different backgrounds and are in one way or another involved in the local community. For these reasons, I saw them as good representatives of the community's overall view of farmworker housing. In my survey I asked the twenty-one respondents to share their thoughts about the effects affordable housing for farmworkers operated by a housing authority or nonprofit has on the neighboring community. I asked this in terms of how affordable housing for farmworkers impacts the value of properties, whether this type of housing is a financial benefit or burden to the receiving community and whether or not they believed crime increases as a result of this type of housing (questions can be found in Appendix xx). I also asked them to evaluate what they thought "most of the community" thinks about chosen issues and their importance. Conducting this survey at the Chamber of Commerce in the respective community as my case study presented me with an updated version of the community's perception of affordable farmworker housing. In comparing this new version with those found in the scholarly literature, I found that these two were not in accordance with one another and that contrary to the literature, the community, for the most part, does see benefits in the affordable housing developments for farmworkers.

Letters

The twenty-nine letters I obtained all vary in their origin and destination. Some are addressed to the Housing Authority asking that their decision about the construction of Bello Rio be reevaluated. Others are written to the East Wenatchee County Commissioners expressing the dissatisfaction of the citizens who feel that their interests regarding Bello Rio are not being represented. Yet others are being written by the County Commissioners themselves expressing their support to the Housing Authority for their outstanding work with farmworker housing. As if their initial letter of commemoration never existed, the County Commissioners later address a second and third letter to the same recipient discouraging them from continuing the construction of Bello Rio since they claim, they did not know this development was specifically for farmworkers.

In a later analysis, these letters will serve as tools for three things. First, they will be the vehicle that will provide the best picture of the occurrences that took place at the beginning stages of Bello Rio's emergence in the exact words of those involved. Second, they will clearly voice the proponents and opponent's innate sentiments and concerns. Lastly, they will show the back-and-forth movement of those who could not decide whether or not they supported affordable housing for farmworkers, the county commissioners, specifically. All of these letters were written between the time construction of Bello Rio was initiated and then halted as a result of the intensity of NIMBY opposition.

Court Case

After a meeting the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association attended with the Housing Authority and other affordable housing advocates, members of the association felt that their voices were still not being heard regardless of so much effort. Because of the way the meeting was conducted and the things that were said, some neighbors felt disrespected. When the meeting concluded, the group of concerned neighbors met to discuss their worries. They concluded that as a last resort the best step to take next was to take this case to court. The court summary is analyzed here and it translates into legal words those concerns that found legal terminology in court.

The NIMBY Study

NIMBY opposition is not only present for affordable housing for farmworkers. This kind of opposition can also be seen in affordable housing developments that cater to disabled citizens, the elderly, and the poor. These observations and many others were made through a careful study of 36 randomly chosen NIMBY cases throughout the West Coast. Out of these 36 a total of 16 involved farmworker housing developments while the rest involved other affordable housing. Considering that there are not many housing developments devoted for farmworkers when you compare the number of affordable housing for farmworkers that was opposed with other types of affordable housing developments, this number of 16 is considered reasonably high. This suggests that affordable housing for farmworkers is disproportionately opposed. A combination of their low-income status with the stereotypes that are often linked to Latino farmworkers can be one of the factors attributed to these findings.

Additionally, analyzing these 36 case studies, provides a picture of the process that was taken by other housing developments before the NIMBY opposition presented itself. It shows how the community was included and the actions that were later taken to overcome the opposition. The analysis of this data helped me model some of the recommendations I later present.

PRIMARY MATERIAL ANALYSIS

The section that follows starts by providing a history of East Wenatchee, the city in which my case study, Bello Rio, is located. It includes a historical account of East Wenatchee's dependency on agriculture and farmworkers over the years. Immediately, analysis points to a disconnect in the number of farmworkers needed in the region to sustain stable agricultural production with the quantity of housing available for these workers. As a step in the direction to a solution to this disconnect, Bello Rio with its characteristics is presented followed by an instantaneous response of NIMBY opposition. Following this historical account are the many concerns that the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association had regarding Bello Rio: their concern that they were not included in the process, their worries about the possible impacts that farmworker housing might have on the school, property values and potential increase in crime. Each section uses a combination of the research methods described above to show the initial concern of the neighbors, the actual outcome, and observations made throughout my research process.

The Apple Capital of the World

Sitting at the heart of the state of Washington are Wenatchee and East Wenatchee. These twin cities, which belong to the County of Chelan and the County of Douglas respectively, are separated by the Columbia River. Connecting the two cities is a bridge that spans the gap. Also connecting these two cities are the many commonalities they share as far as agricultural contributions. Based on the last Census of Agriculture (2002), the agricultural products sold for this region added up to more than \$169 million in total market value and this value continues to rise.²⁴ About ninety-seven percent of it came from the sale of tree fruit, which is about \$163.8 million. For Wenatchee and East Wenatchee, the tree fruit consists primarily of pear, cherries and apples. A good illustration of the abundance of fruit that comes from this region of the state of

²⁴ Washington Apple Country Tours. "Washington Apple Country History." <http://www.appleorchardtours.com/hist14.htm> (accessed November 17, 2008).

Washington is provided by Otis W. Freeman and other data that estimate that “one apple out of every eight that compose the commercial apple crop of the United States comes from the Wenatchee area in north central Washington.”²⁵ Furthermore, scholars like Freeman claim that “a greater production of apples comes from this section than any other area of similar size on earth.”²⁶ It is no wonder Wenatchee and East Wenatchee are widely known as the Apple Capital of the World. These high levels of agricultural contribution to the economy of the nation, particularly the state of Washington, also points to an even higher level of dependency on seasonal and year round farmworkers.

Farm Worker Housing Needs for East Wenatchee

If you recently bought apples at your local grocery market, they most likely grew in Wenatchee, Washington, not too far from home. But have you ever wondered where the hands that picked the apple on your table go after they finish a day of labor? As Stratus suggested earlier, as many as thirty-two percent of farmworkers return to their overcrowded units where they pay more than the average median income.²⁷ Thirty-six percent live in substandard quality housing²⁸ and six percent spend the night in the fields, a tent or outdoors in their vehicle.²⁹ For East Wenatchee alone “[i]t is estimated that there is a need of 1,500 housing units for agricultural workers who reside year-round in Douglas County,”³⁰ which does not take into account the need for seasonal worker housing. Due to the limited number of housing units available, the substandard nature of those available units, and for some the lack of housing all together, farmworker housing received some attention in past years and leaders from the state declared the lack of housing a crisis in Washington about ten years ago.

In 1999 Gary Locke, Washington’s 21st governor, announced farmworker housing to be a state priority. His advisory board who are experts on affordable housing stated that farmworker housing had become widely recognized as “Washington State’s number one rural housing need.”³¹ To meet this need, Governor Locke and his Affordable Housing Advisory Board designed a ten-year plan in an attempt to move closer to meeting the overall need by first focusing on 10,000 farmworkers over the course of the following ten years.

²⁵ Freeman, Otis W. “Apple Industry of the Wenatchee Area.” *Economic Geography* 10, No.2 (Apr., 1934): 161.

²⁶ Freeman, Otis W. “Apple Industry of the Wenatchee Area.” *Economic Geography* 10, No.2 (Apr., 1934): 161.

²⁷ Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” Executive Summary, (July 2008).

²⁸ Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” Executive Summary, (July 2008).

²⁹ Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” Executive Summary, (July 2008).

³⁰ Anonymous. “Enterprise Community Investment, Inc; Grand Opening of Bello Rio Apartments Creates Affordable Homes for Farm Worker Families in East Wenatchee, Washington.” *Agriculture Week*. June 9, 2008.

³¹ Rural Migration News. “Washington: Farm Worker Housing.” http://migration.ucdavis.edu/rmn/more.php?id=335_0_3_0 (accessed November 12, 2008)

Recognizing the problem and working towards a permanent solution is a good beginning but unfortunately when it comes to affordable housing developments designed for farmworkers, ninety percent of the times affordable housing advocates face NIMBY opposition from the receiving community.³² That is far more opposition than what an affordable housing advocate would encounter when they present a typical affordable housing project. This is not to say that other affordable housing developments do not face opposition.

Although many examples exist of affordable farmworker housing developments that were faced with strong NIMBY opposition, this research paper focuses on Bello Rio specifically because it is a classic example of those projects which the surrounding community greets with a very well known phrase: “Not In My Back Yard!” What follows is particular to Bello Rio but the process and the NIMBY opposition this housing project underwent can be used as a representative model of the opposition faced by many other affordable farmworker housing developments in the state of Washington.

Bello Rio: Affordable Farmworker Housing

Image 1.³³



Presented to the East Wenatchee community as one step in the direction to a solution to the farmworker housing crisis in that region is Bello Rio. The Housing Authority of Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee (CCWHA) and the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing (ORFH), served as the developers and sponsors of the Bello Rio housing project. This

³² Letter from Bill Hobbs, addressed to senator Cantewell.

³³ Picture taken by me during my first meeting to East Wenatchee.

development is composed of twenty-six newly constructed units.³⁴ These units consist of two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments that serve as shelter for twenty-five families while reserving one of the units for onsite management. Rent is based on the income of individual families as follows: “three families below 30 percent of AMI (Average Medium Income), 20 families below 40 percent of AIM and two families below 50 percent of AIM.”³⁵ The twenty-sixth unit was designed as a community building.³⁶

Affordable farmworker housing that is operated by a housing authority is unique in that it is aesthetically pleasing, well managed and clean. As is frequently stated, this kind of affordable housing is “the best in the block, well-maintained [and best of all] specially financed to be affordable to a range of income levels.” Bello Rio’s design, for instance, includes a playground for children with play structures, benches, picnic areas, open green spaces and fully landscaped front and back yards. It also counts with 73 appropriate parking spaces of which not all are occupied (refer to Image 1).

Bello Rio is in a central location, about 1.5 miles from the city center, which includes the Valley Mall, major restaurants, supermarket and major department stores making it different from the hidden labor camps. Bello Rio is within a very short commuting distance from the doctors and dentists offices, not to mention the proximity to fast food restaurants and gas stations.

The main attraction of housing units operated by a housing authority or nonprofit like Bello Rio is the reserved community building. In this case, this space is 1,605 square feet and the design consists of a large community room and an office. Through this designated learning and service area, residents and their families have access to services that range but are not limited to the following: “English as a Second Language classes by The Housing Authority; medical, dental and social services by Columbia Valley Community Health; child development/healthcare resources by Enterprise for Progress in the Community (EPIC) and Migrant Head Start programs; legal and credit counseling services by Columbia Legal Services; and legal service regarding employment, fair housing, and discrimination issues by NW Justice.”³⁷ Privately owned housing or housing of other types typically does not offer such programs that nonprofit organizations and housing authorities often make available to their tenants.

The NIMBY Opposition (Not In My Back Yard)

“Nimbys are noisy. Nimbys are powerful. Nimbys are everywhere. Nimbys are people who live near enough to corporate or government projects and are upset enough about them to work to stop, stall, or shrink them. Nimbys organize, march, sue, and petition to block the developers they think are threatening them. They twist

³⁴ Author Unknown. A pamphlet given to me by one of the housing advocated talking about the history of Bello Rio, East Wenatchee, Washington, November 12, 2008).

³⁵ Author Unknown. A pamphlet given to me by one of the housing advocated talking about the history of Bello Rio, East Wenatchee, Washington, November 12, 2008).

³⁶ Author Unknown. A pamphlet given to me by one of the housing advocated talking about the history of Bello Rio, East Wenatchee, Washington, November 12, 2008).

³⁷ Author Unknown. A pamphlet given to me by one of the housing advocated talking about the history of Bello Rio, East Wenatchee, Washington, November 12, 2008).

*the arms of politicians, and they learn how to influence regulators. They fight fiercely and then, win or lose, they vanish.*³⁸

Alicia McRae, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Chelan County & City of Wenatchee (CCWHA), sees this development as a great start: “Bello Rio is significant because it begins to address this need by providing quality, safe and affordable housing for Douglas County’s farm and agricultural workers.”³⁹ The community’ optimism and support did not come close to McRae’s. Instead, they responded by rapidly organizing to oppose the development in hopes of impeding such project from being constructed in their surrounding community.

The East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association played a strong role in this opposition. Created long before the Bello Rio development even existed, this association of concerned neighbors came together to oppose a different project in the community (name of that project is unknown). As soon as mobilization against that particular project came to an end, the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association stopped meeting. It was not until they received word about Bello Rio that the Neighborhood Association came together one more time. This time, in response to the Bello Rio development, members of the association quickly stepped in with outreach to other neighbors about their concerns regarding Bello Rio.⁴⁰

Obstacles for Affordable Farm Worker Housing

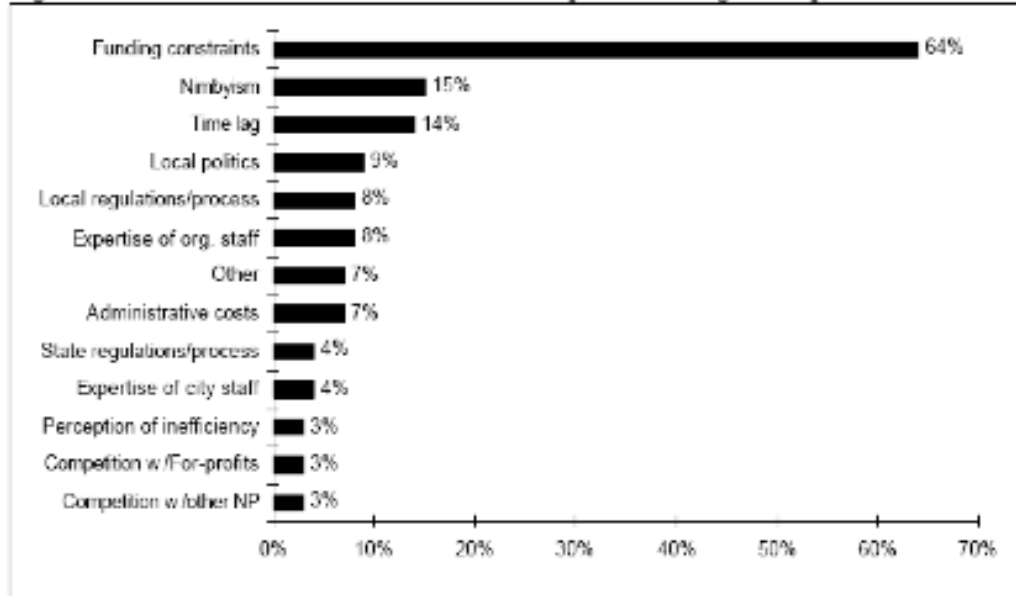
Based on my interviews, the housing advocates I talked to all mentioned NIMBY opposition as one of the strongest and most difficult barriers to overcome when it comes to affordable housing for farmworkers. Some of them stated funding constraints and NIMBYism combined with zoning ordinances as the two equally difficult barriers to overcome. While others like Mario Villanueva, whose housing agency serves 7 central Washington counties, ranked NIMBY opposition as their number one obstacle. The table below further highlights NIMBY as a major barrier although it is particular to the obstacles faced by nonprofits housing developers in the state of California (see Figure 4). This table is based on the survey responses of farmworker housing advocates.

³⁸ William Glaberson, “Coping in the Age of ‘Nimby,’ ” *New York Times*, 19 June 1988, sec.3, 1.

³⁹ Anonymous. “Enterprise Community Investment, Inc; Grand Opening of Bello Rio Apartments Creates Affordable Homes for Farm Worker Families in East Wenatchee, Washington.” *Agriculture Week*. June 9, 2008.

⁴⁰ Alicia McRae, Personal Interview, 12 November 2008.

Figure 4. Most Critical Barriers to California Nonprofit Housing Developers' Success



Note: N = 141 Nonprofit Housing Developers
Survey asked respondents to rank all variables 1 through 12 according to importance. The above graph displays the percentage of nonprofits ranking that variable as number one in importance. Many respondents gave equal value to several variables, therefore percentages do not total 100%.

41

Basis of NIMBY Opposition

As mentioned earlier, Bello Rio soon became a classic model of a housing development facing community opposition based on NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) claims. In this case, the concerns of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association ranged anywhere from crime will increase, to property values will decrease due to an already existing large number of low-income housing in our area, traffic and congestion will rise, such housing projects in our area will ruin the appearance of our neighborhood, we did not have a say in this process since we were not properly informed, and “if you want to build it take it to the fields.” The opposing side firmly defended their belief and after a meeting held by the housing authority the opponents present organized to sue the Housing Authority of Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee.

“How is this going to impact our schools?”⁴²

One of the biggest concerns of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association was that the children of the farmworkers who would occupy the new development would in turn overcrowd the surrounding schools. They feared that the academic performance of their own students would lower due to the fact that teachers would have to divide their time between more students of different learning levels. For these reasons, twelve percent of the participants surveyed

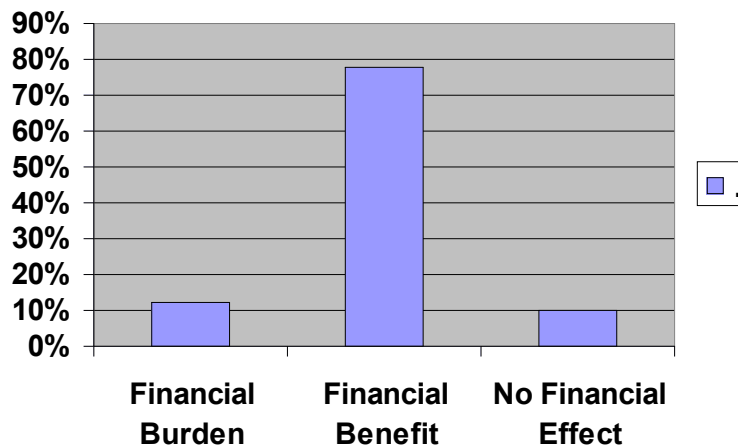
⁴¹City of Mission Viejo Affordable Housing Education Program.

<http://www.google.com/search?q=City+of+Mission+Viejo+Affordable+Housing+Education+Program+Obstacles+to+affordable+housing&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a> (accessed November 23, 2008).

⁴² Marisa D. Shreiner. Letter to Mary Hunt, Dane Keane, and Ken Stanton, December 5, 2006.

at the Chamber of Commerce believe that affordable housing for farmworkers operated by a housing authority or nonprofit is a financial burden to the community (see Figure 1). They believe that this burden presents itself because the children of low-income farmworkers do not only overcrowd the schools but also because these children are “more expensive to teach.”⁴³ These are definitely legitimate concerns but these concerned neighbors did not take into account the fact that the children of the farmworkers were most likely already attending “their” schools.

Figure 1. Survey Response ⁴⁴



According to records obtained from the Eastmont School District, which is the district belonging to East Wenatchee in Douglas County, in the academic year 2005-'06 there were 1,611 Hispanic students enrolled in the Eastmont School District. In the school year 2006-'07 the number increased by 124 students, accounting for 1,735 Hispanic students in attendance. The most recent academic year recoded (2007-'08) remains about the same with a total of 1,737 Hispanic students (see Table 1). This is an increase in two students over the course of one academic year. It is important to remember that in 2004 there was still no paperwork filed or permits issued for Bello Rio. At that point in time, Bello Rio was nothing more than an idea. By the year 2007 construction of Bello Rio had been stopped due to NIMBY opposition and in that year the increase was only two students. Regardless, the numbers of students in attendance in academic year 2007-2008 will match up very closely to the present year which takes into account the children of farmworkers who live in Bello Rio, estimates Bob Busk.⁴⁵

Table 1. Eastmont School District⁴⁶

	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	American Indian

⁴³ Survey conducted at the Chamber of Commerce. Survey response.

⁴⁴ Table representation of the members of the Chamber of Commerce.

⁴⁵ Bob Busk, Phone Interview, January 31, 2009.

⁴⁶ Table representing the ethnic makeup of Eastmont School District. Data obtained on <http://k12.wa.us/data/admin/default.aspx> (accessed January 31, 2009).

2005-'06	1,622	3,452	42	51	67
2006-'07	1,735	3,479	40	55	69
2007-'08	1,737	3,428	39	53	64

Other school districts that do not show recent activity in their incorporation of farmworker housing show the same patterns in their ethnic breakup that Eastmont School District reveals. The number of Hispanic students in Aberdeen School District, for instance, increased by a total of twelve percent between the years 2005 and 2008. For Eastmont School District, the increase was only seven percent, considerably lower. This goes to show that the number of ethnically diverse students is slowly increasing in all school districts. This is true regardless of the community's incorporation of affordable housing for farmworker.

Additionally, it is vital to draw a clear distinction. The fact that a student falls under the category "Hispanic" does not mean that they and their families are farmworkers. Even the slight increase in the number of Hispanic students in the school district does not represent the number of students whose parents work in the agricultural industry. This suggests that the number of students coming from farmworkers families was less than the 1,737 Hispanic students accounted for the academic year 2007-'08.

The above findings reveal that the children of farmworkers most likely attended these schools all along but before moving to Bello Rio, these students lived in substandard, overpriced and overcrowded homes. Under such inadequate housing conditions the children of farmworkers lived in, the opponents were right to fear that these children might become a burden to the schools in their community. This thought is supported by the many studies that show that inadequate housing negatively affects the academic life of students who live in such homes. This, no doubt, also affects the classmates of these students and the schools. However, moving into adequate and affordable housing transformed the negative effects into positive ones. What follows is an account of this transformation.

Living in Bello Rio: How Children's Academic Life was Affected

The change in their living environment had numerous noticeable impacts. This statement is supported by the personal testimonies of six of the student residents I interviewed at Bello Rio in the presence of their parents. From what they shared with me, in many ways, living in their new homes improved their style of life and their academic performance. All of them spoke of how much they appreciate having a beautiful place they can call "home," more time to spend with the family and their personal space, which also allows room for a desk to study, Veronica explained. She remembers her living conditions prior to living in Bello Rio and speaks of her memories: "we lived with my uncle and his family in a small apartment. We never had time to study because after school the kitchen table was being used for supper or the adults would gather there to talk. I shared my room with my sisters, brother, my mom and dad and a table didn't fit."⁴⁷ Now Veronica only shares her room with her baby sister, Crystal, who follows her everywhere!

⁴⁷ Veronica, Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

Veronica shows me around her new home but before opening the door to her room she makes sure to highlight the fact that “now there is walking space, it is not just beds.”⁴⁸

Sandra and Sofia who are sixteen and fourteen years old respectively also have a lot to say about their new home. These two sisters speak about the much needed privacy they never had and now enjoy. But more important than that, mentions Sofia, is the time she now gets to spend with her family. This is especially true of her mother who she would only see on weekends due to the two shifts she had to work to be able to afford rent and other essential necessities. Their mother, Marta, also points to this change in their life, “I used to work a lot and I hardly saw them [my daughters]. It’s because I had two jobs and when I was home I would only sleep.”⁴⁹ Marta currently works only one shift and is still able to afford rent without having to divide the expenses between the family’s friend they used to live with. In addition to spending quality family time together and being able to afford rent at the same time, Marta also share how moving to Bello Rio has impacted the girl’s academic life. The girls giggle in the background while their mother shares some anecdotes: “The thing is that when they [the teachers] would call me from school to tell me that the girls were not behaving or doing their school work, they would cover for each other so I would never find out. Now I have time to go to school and be aware of the things they do. And I am the one who answers the phone but...now they hardly call. I think that it did benefit them, I encourage them.”⁵⁰

When I asked the student residents if their grades had improved, with no hesitation, they all answered this question with a firm “yes!” Two of the mothers who keep good records of their children’s awards, grades and unique art pulled out a folder to show proof of the improvements their children have made. Two years before moving into Bello Rio Veronica, according to her grade reports, had only a few Bs, mostly Cs and a couple Ds and Fs. Her present midterm grades consist of the equivalence of some As, mostly Bs and only one C. Veronica’s mother is convinced that moving into adequate housing was one of the strongest factors that played into her daughter’s academic improvement. According to her, Veronica is now self motivated and when she gets home, she goes directly to her desk to do homework. She also motivates her younger siblings and enjoys tutoring them.

Marcos also brags about his improvement in school and asks his mom to show me his most recent report card. While they look for it, Marcos’ mother tell me that she has noticed a big improvement and the teachers have too, according to what they told her at her last parent-teacher meeting. When I asked her what factors she attributes to Marcos’ improvement she responds by telling me a story that echoes that of Sandra and Sofia’s. Similar to Sandra and Sofia’s mother, Marcos’ mom worked a full shift when they lived in their previous residence to help her husband with rent and other expenses. The problem started when she fell off a ladder at work and got injured. At the time, all she did was take a couple weeks off until she recuperated and could walk again. She then returned to work with her husband. Even though she was only working one shift, when she returned home she would be in so much pain that all she would do was sleep and rest. She knew she could not stop working because her check was just as important as her husband’s, “if I took more time off I would loose my job and that was a big part of what “*nos mantenía*”

⁴⁸ Veronica, Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

⁴⁹ Marta, Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

⁵⁰ Marta, Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

(supported us). Because of this change in their life that resulted from her accident at work, they allowed their children to watch television all day or do whatever they wanted when they came home from school as long as they kept themselves busy. Moving to Bello Rio gave her the opportunity to get treated while her husband sustained their home. Immediately after moving in, her knee was operated and she is now a full time housewife. After showing me her enormous scar she mentioned that although she hopes to go back to work in the near future, she is glad she can be at home because “now that I am here I help [my children] with their homework and they have a set schedule.”⁵¹ The attention she is now able to dedicate to her children is what, she claims, resulted in the Bs on Marcos’ report card.

Even the playground in the center of the development serves as more than mere recreational time. It is also serves as an “incentive” for the students to be proactive with their homework. As Marcos mentioned, part of his new schedule includes recreational time after school that he can only take advantage of “after I finish half of my homework.”⁵²

Additionally, the services that are organized by the Housing Authority and provided by different organization in the community, serve as resources these students, and even the parents, did not have access to prior to living in Bello Rio. These services, which take place in the Community Building (a space in the Bello Rio development reserved for activities for the residents), range from English as a Second language classes (ESL) to legal and credit counseling services provided by Columbia Legal Services. Mariana, the mother of Luis mentioned that when she was having problems with her son’s behavior and learning abilities over the summer she was referred to a child development center that was made available to her through the Migrant Head Start programs and Enterprise for Progress in the Community (EPIC). In addition to these services, these two organizations also provide healthcare resources to the residents of Bello Rio. Mariana mentioned that although it has not been long since they started attending, she has noticed favorable results, “yes, I have noticed the difference.”⁵³

All of the above factors combined serve as definite proof that the academic lives of these students are transforming in a positive manner as a result of their living environment. These factors also support the seventy-eight percent of surveyed respondents who believe that affordable housing for farmworkers operated by a housing authority or nonprofit is a financial benefit to the community (see Figure 1.1). But the benefits that came as a result of living in adequate housing are not exclusive to the farmworkers and their children. As these seventy-eight percent of survey respondents indicated, affordable housing for farmworkers helps the children come to school better prepared to learn and it stabilizes their agricultural work force at the same time. Additionally, the community, the schools, the teachers and the classmates also partake in these improvements. And the benefits the community enjoys go beyond merely being culturally exposed and as a result culturally aware. The fact that the children of farmworkers come to school more prepared, motivated, surrounded by recourses outside of school, and with a vision, makes them ideal classmates.

Property Values

⁵¹ Marcos and his family. Personal Interview, November 13, 2008.

⁵² Marcos and his family. Personal Interview, November 13, 2008.

⁵³ Mariana. Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

A second concern shared by the surrounding community regarding Bello Rio was the impact this development would have on the values of their home and property. Bello Rio and Vista del Rio exemplify how this concern played out for the receiving community: “both Bello Rio and Vista del Rio faced opposition by the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association, which feared that projects would reduce area property values.” People like Sonny Langhurst, the leader of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association and some of the neighbors interviewed spoke of these initial concerns. One of the neighbors, for instance, stated that her husband and she invested a lot of energy in the movement against the development because they feared that such development would not only lower the value of her property but she also feared that crime would increase as a result. When asked if she had witnessed a decrease in the value of her property in the time Bello Rio had been around, as was her initial fear, she answered, “no, I think with the whole stock market and the whole housing it’s hard to say.”⁵⁴

An elderly white couple who lives immediately next door to Bello Rio was convinced that the farmworker housing development had no negative impact on the value of the surrounding homes. They said they were not sure of the present figures of the value of their home, but they did know that every year these numbers keep rising. They pointed to a newly constructed house across the street from them and then showed me a “for sale” pamphlet advertising that house. “Do you think property values in this area are decreasing if that house is going for \$469,000,”⁵⁵ asked the husband with a smirk in his face. The wife quickly added that the house was put on the market only a month before and there were already a couple offers made.

Research conducted by the Housing Authority shows that property values surrounding Bello Rio raised at the same rate as those properties in adjacent communities with no farmworker housing. In an interview with McRae she stated that “[their] findings show that farmworker housing does not negatively affect the value of surrounding properties.”⁵⁶ The results of the study conducted by the housing authority and similar studies conducted by other scholars all came to the same conclusion. However, the findings of these studies are not reflected in the common perception of the community. In a survey conducted at the Chamber of Commerce in East Wenatchee, thirty-two percent of the members surveyed believed that affordable housing for farmworkers operated by a housing authority or nonprofit would have negative effects on the neighboring properties. These respondents attributed the negative effects to the way the farmworker housing development is managed and the appearance of the property itself. They also attributed the negative effects to the general perception of farmworker housing. Using some of the same reasons, forty-five percent of the respondents said that affordable housing for farmworkers operated by a housing authority or nonprofit has positive effects on the surrounding properties. They credited these positive outcomes to the way the property is managed, the appearance of the housing and the fact that there is more investment in the community. Yet twenty-two percent of the respondents believe that affordable farmworker housing has no effect on the surrounding properties.

My scholarly literature and primary data reveal that farmworker housing will not depreciate the value of the surrounding properties. If anything, the value of the adjacent

⁵⁴ Anonymous, Personal Interview, November 13, 2008.

⁵⁵ Anonymous. Personal Interview, November 13. 2008.

⁵⁶ Alicia McRae, Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

properties will remain constant or will continue to rise at the same rate of the surrounding communities. This is evident with Bello Rio where the surrounding properties' value has appreciated with time. Even the neighbors of Bello Rio who at one point opposed the development because they believed that their property would be negatively affected do not have the same mindset not that they have seen the results. For these reasons, my findings suggest that the disconnect between the survey respondents is based on the fact that these group of individuals are most likely making their conclusion about the impacts of farmworker housing based on different sources of information and sentiments.

Figure 2. Effects of Affordable Farmworker Housing on Neighboring Properties

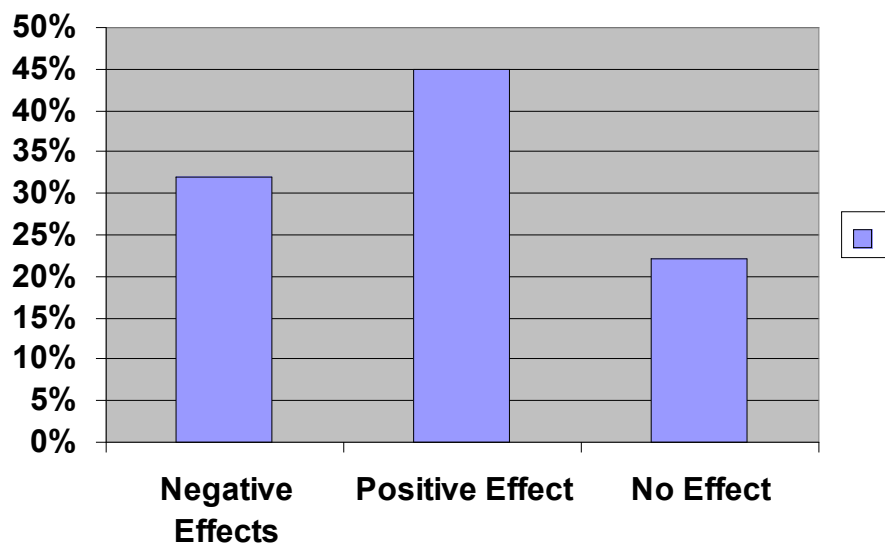


Figure 2. Responses of survey conducted in East Wenatchee at the Chamber of Commerce. Respondent’s impressions of the effects affordable housing for farmworkers operated by a housing authority or nonprofit would have on the value of neighboring properties.

Crime Will Increase in Our Neighborhood

The neighbor across the street from Bello Rio openly shared the reasons why her and her family became strong supporters of the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association that fought against the project. According to her, her husband and she became one of the primary financial supporters because they had two major concerns: “we hired a lawyer because we didn’t want more traffic congestion and because of crime, it was one of our worries.”⁵⁷ But when asked if she had noticed an increase in crime in her neighborhood as a result of the new development she answered that she had not noticed any crime activity in the time the development had been around. Even though, according to her own testimony, her initial fear that crime would increase in her neighborhood did not play out, with no hesitation she states that she still does not approve of the development because “it does affect the community as far as transportation, I mean...not transportation but traffic. And it is noisy over there. The kids are playing and screaming and

⁵⁷ Interview with neighbor (directly across the street), East Wenatchee, November 13, 2008.

yelling and hollering and things like that.”⁵⁸ Even though crime is no longer one of her concerns, she would still like to see a different type of development in place of Bello Rio, “maybe, upper...more upper scale homes or condos,”⁵⁹ she suggests.

The next door neighbors to Bello Rio said the opposite to the first neighbor. They spoke of the fact that they are not bothered to have the Bello Rio tenants next door because “they are not bothering anyone. They are here to work and they need a home just like everyone else,” stated the elderly couple. They also agreed with statements made by the opponents and proponents of Bello Rio that they had not witnessed any crime activity.

The neighbors’ account that crime did not increase in the neighborhood should not come as a surprise. Affordable housing developments that are run by Housing Authorities are some of the best run and managed rental units in the community. One of the residents I interviewed spoke of the differences between her old residence compared to Bello Rio: “[here] you don’t hear a lot of noise outside, here you don’t hear that they popped the tires of a car, that they stole a car, that they broke the windows of a car. Because where we lived before if they didn’t steal a car, somebody would break into one. And another thing that I like about this place is that at night, there is a lot of lighting outside.”⁶⁰ She communicated how satisfied she is with her current residence and stated that the neighbors need and want to be at Bello Rio because “it is a privilege” and for that reason they respect their home.

This particular neighbor and the Housing Authority both talked about the zero tolerance there is for inappropriate behavior. Although they will be flexible and willing to workout arrangements with residents who cannot pay their deposit in one full payment, they will not allow any one resident to infringe in the safety or peace of their neighbor. But so far, states one of the members of the housing authority, there has been no crime or gang activity in the time they have managed housing developments for farmworkers: “These housing developments do not have any more crime activity than the rest of the neighborhood. Heritage Glen [also a farmworker housing development] that has been around for more than six years does not show any history of gang activity or violence. We researched this last year and our police calls in the development are actually less than the rest of the neighborhood.”⁶¹

Even the surrounding neighbors of this development who were once opposed testified that they have not witnessed any criminal behavior related to the new Bello Rio housing development. Regardless of the fact that Bello Rio, as well as other farmworker developments, have proved to be peaceful residence for hard working families, there are still many people who have their minds set on their initial presuppositions:

“These are the ingredients to creating area’s (*sic*) of high crime, and run down homes...This area will become a heaven for drug users and citizens will have to use extreme caution to avoid things such as needles. Young children will no longer be safe in this area. And eventually this part of the trail will only be used by those you

⁵⁸ Interview with neighbor, East Wenatchee, November 13, 2008.

⁵⁹ Interview with neighbor, East Wenatchee, November 13, 2008.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, Personal Interview, November 13, 2008.

⁶¹ Alicia McRae, Personal Interview, November 12, 2008.

are building this for. Because no other citizen will be safe there. If the planning director thinks I am wrong, then (*sic*) let him camp there during the night after the migrant workers have moved in”⁶²

Statements like these were included in a great number of letters sent to the housing authority, the County Commissioners, the newspaper and everyone else who would listen to the opponent’s concerns. They included sentiments and stereotypes that ranged from “the Hispanics are violent and lazy” tittle the children born per family going on with the immigration culture.” However, based on the evidence above, it becomes clear that the farmworkers that live in housing developments managed by Housing Authorities or nonprofits, Bello Rio specifically, are not the violent criminal gangsters that are portrayed in the news and in popular movies. A large number of them do come from neighborhoods that were high in crime but this cycle is not continued when the families inhabit a development like Bello Rio. For these reasons, it is important that housing advocates and nonprofits that support affordable housing and housing for farmworkers start to talk about the often unheard success stories that are possible as a result of adequate and affordable homes like Bello Rio.

Not aware of this project

A great percentage of the opposing party members echoed their concern that their neighborhood never received proper notification about existing plans to build Bello Rio, especially not in that particular location. Some neighbors went a step further as to claim that their county commissioners were not doing their job properly. Marisa Shreiner, a neighbor of soon to be Bello Rio, addressed her three county commissioners in a letter dated December 5, 2006 to express her discontentment with her leader’s representation:

“My husband and I were completely unaware of this project. Tonight [at the meeting held by the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association] I found out that this has not only been approved, but that there is a very small window of opportunity for neighbors to be able to appeal this...I must ask, how can a decision with ramifications of this magnitude be quietly ‘rushed’ through the hoops and typical barriers for a development of this kind? How can this happen without adequate notification to the community, specifically the people who have established their homes in this area? Most importantly, where was our representation from you, our elected officials, when this project was first proposed? You are elected to serve and represent the people of Douglas County. I strongly feel that you not have (*sic*) fulfilled your obligation of office, nor even attempted to do so with anything related to this project.”⁶³

Concerns like Shreiner’s were heard everywhere, in encounters between neighbors in supermarkets and in more formal avenues including letters to the county commissioners and in the newspapers and the radio. Numerous people claimed that they never received proper notification about this development. But when I personally spoke with the neighbors immediately next door who asked to remain anonymous, they testified that long before ground was broken, there were signs put up on the site announcing that low-income housing would soon be

⁶² Colin R Craig Ret. Letter addressed to Dane Keane, Ken Stanton, and Mary Hunt, December 4, 2006.

⁶³ Marisa D. Dhreiner, letter addressed to Mary Hunt, Dane Keane, and Ken Staton, December 5, 2006.

constructed there. They said that in addition to those signs, they also saw information in the newspaper talking about the low-income project.

Supporting the testimony of these neighbors are statements made by leaders of the project who in later meetings reminded the opponents that they, as leaders of the development, took every step needed to announce the emergence of Bello Rio. These meetings were held shortly after the Bello Rio development had begun its construction stage as a result of the neighbor's outrage, which also took place before the court hearings were held.

Brien Thane, the executive director of the Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, who for over 17 years has been involved in planning and developing farmworker housing in Douglas and Chelan Counties also witnessed that appropriate measures were taken to insure that the neighbors were properly informed. In a letter he wrote to the county commissioners in the year 2007 he reminds them of the actions taken at the beginning stage which Thane claims the citizens and commissioners were well aware of: "Neighbors of the development were informed of your plans [referring to the county commissioner's plans, to whom the letter was addressed to] by the usual and customary means well before ground was broken. In conformance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act of Determination of Non-Significance was posted on the development site and published in local newspapers, including the newspaper of record for Douglas County. An environmental review was also conducted by USDA Rural Development in conformance with the National Environmental Protection Act, which also did not find any significant impacts from the development."⁶⁴

When it comes to farmworker housing it is obvious that there are sentiments and fears attached to the topic and the neighbors who have started families in the vicinity must be taken into account from the beginning. This is where the founders and supporters of Bello Rio lost what could have been strong support. Even though it is not necessary for farmworker housing founders to hold additional meetings than what the founder of a typical development would have to hold, it is still recommended that they do so. In looking at other farmworker housing developments in the state of Washington and in California, it was the developments who involved the surrounding community from the beginning that received the most input and support because the neighbors felt like they had a say in what was going on in their vicinity.

East Wenatchee County Commissioners

Early in the month of March of 2005, the three members of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners in East Wenatchee publicly announced their support for affordable farmworker housing, specifically for the permanent farmworker housing development of Bello Rio. In a letter addressed to Housing Development Specialist, Bryan Ketcham, the county commissioners of East Wenatchee commended both Ketcham and the Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing for their outstanding work related to farmworker housing specifically. They then went on to express their support for future projects: "we wish to extend our support to the Housing Trust Fund USDA, Rural Housing Services for funding the [farmworker housing project] in East Wenatchee,

⁶⁴ Brien Thane, Letter addressed to the Board of Commissioners, the Housing Authority of Chelan County, and the City of Wenatchee, January 4, 2007.

Washington.”⁶⁵ The enthusiasm of county commissioners was also heard outside of these letters in the news paper and radio but it did not last long.

Upon receiving numerous complaints from the citizens of East Wenatchee, the county commissioners, Ken Stanton, Dane Keane and Mary Hunt, went back on their encouraging words of support and in December of 2006 they urged “the Board of Directors of the Housing Authority to re-consider the placement of the seasonal Farmworker housing at this location and consider other locations in the valley that are more suitable.”⁶⁶ Later, after this letter had been sent but plans for the development continued, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners stressed the seriousness of the matter at hand and attempted to communicate that they were willing to go to any extent to stop this development. Since they felt their personal efforts did not having much of an effect, they sought additional support. In an effort to obtain help from other leaders in the state to have more of an impact, the county commissioners contacted Governor Christine Gregoire, Senator Linda Evans Parlette, Representative Mike Armstrong, and Representative Cary Condotta. In their plea for help they stated:

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners along with the East Wenatchee neighborhood Association are requesting your assistance to stop construction of the seasonal migrant farmworker housing project within the urban area of the city of East Wenatchee, located in Douglas County... There are two phases to the project, Bello Rio which is designated as “low income” housing and Vista del Rio which is designated as “seasonal farmworker housing”. The County Commissioners in 2005 allocated funds for the low-income project, but did not realize that it to is (*sic*) restricted to farmworker housing of a permanent nature. It does not allow for occupancy by other “low income” families which was our intent... It was never our intent that facilities would be located within the Urban Growth Boundary of the City of East Wenatchee. Our intent was for these workers to be located on the orchards... We would hope you would intervene on our behalf and the constituents of this neighborhood in stopping this project and working with the Counties, fruit industry and CTED in getting this seasonal farmworker housing where it belongs, on the orchards.⁶⁷

But what was it that made county commissioners Dane Keane, Mary Hunt and Ken Stanton have such a drastic change of mindsets? When in their first letter they were praising the housing experts for their outstanding dedication because, in the commissioner’s words, the new development would “provide housing for 128 migrant farm workers with incomes below 50% of area median income”⁶⁸ now they were claiming that they “did not realize that it to is (*sic*)

⁶⁵ Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Letter addressed to Mr. Bryan Ketcham, Housing Development Specialists, and the Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing, March 8, 2005.

⁶⁶ Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Letter addressed to the Housing Authority of Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee, December 11, 2006.

⁶⁷ Douglas Board of Commissioners, Letter addressed to the Honorable Christine Gregoire, Office of the Governor, December 22, 2006.

⁶⁸ Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Letter addressed to Mr. Bryan Ketcham, Housing Development Specialists, and the Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing, March 8, 2005.

restricted to farmworker housing of a permanent nature.”⁶⁹ Where did their initial beliefs go when they stated that “we have a great need for affordable housing for migrant farm workers to support our agricultural industry.”⁷⁰

Judging from the small percentage of letters I analyzed compared with the amount of correspondence the commissioners most likely received regarding Bello Rio, the county commissioners support vanished once they started to hear from opponents like Shreiner. This is where my initial statement of “the community can either brake or make a development successful” comes from. It is clear that at the beginning the county commissioners saw value in the addition of affordable housing for farmworkers but once NIMBY pressure was felt, they had no choice but to step back on their words of encouragement and listen to the concerned citizens.

Results of NIMBY Opposition

Even though the Housing Authority overcame the NIMBY opposition by winning in court and were able to continue on with the construction of Bello Rio, there were still many unfavorable permanent effects as a result of this delay. The time spent in litigation alone added up to eighteen months when the construction of the project obviously had to be stopped. The cost of the development increased by about a fifth of the total price: “Legal action presented by a neighborhood group halted the project last year. Delays increased the project’s cost by an estimated \$900,000,” McRae said. Court fees, workers wages, resources and other miscellaneous expenses amounted to the nearly one-million-dollar project increase as a result of such opposition and this of course, does not take into account the resources, time and expenses the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association endured, which were also substantial. This begs the question, how many other services and additional units could have been constructed with the support of those who in this case played the NIMBY role and if these funds had been allocated in a constructive manner?

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contributions of Agriculture and Farmworkers to the East Wenatchee Area

East Wenatchee is unique in that it has a combination of bounty irrigation, perfect climate and suitable soil that foster the quality and richness of the many crops grown in the area. These characteristics that are found in the city of East Wenatchee especially further the advancement of the quality and growth of apples in the region. For this very reason, “Wenatchee apples are distributed over the entire world...Argentina, Peru, Hawaii, China, East Indies, and Egypt are among the lands that buy Wenatchee apples.”⁷¹ It is estimated that one out of eight apples in the United States comes from this area⁷² but also along these lines are other estimates which state that in the same Wenatchee area the hard workers who pick these apples are living in substandard

⁶⁹ Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Letter addressed to the Housing Authority of Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee, December 11, 2006.

⁷⁰ Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Letter addressed to Mr. Bryan Ketcham, Housing Development Specialists, and the Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing, March 8, 2005.

⁷¹ Freeman, Otis W. “Apple Industry of the Wenatchee Area.” *Economic Geography* 10, No.2 (Apr., 1934): 170.

⁷² Freeman, Otis W. “Apple Industry of the Wenatchee Area.” *Economic Geography* 10, No.2 (Apr., 1934): 161.

homes that are overpriced, while others camp outside due to the housing need in their area of over 1,500 units.⁷³

East Wenatchee and the state of Washington have always been proud to announce their status as the leaders in the agricultural production. East Wenatchee, known as the “apple capital of the world,” and the state of Washington, who “ranks first in the U.S. for production of 11 commodities, including apples, sweet cherries, pears, hops and red raspberries” have only these numbers to boast about.⁷⁴ When it comes to housing for the farmworkers who have advanced Washington’s number one employer, agriculture, the conditions and availability of farmworker housing units are far from desirable.⁷⁵ The conditions are so horrific and detrimental to the farmworkers themselves and to the surrounding community that in the year 1999 governor Locke declared farmworker housing a state crisis.⁷⁶

It is vital that this movement to address the lack of affordable homes for farmworkers, which is still fairly young, be revitalized. But in doing this, advocacy must start with the general community. As Pendall distinguished earlier, many of those involved in NIMBY opposition are active due to genuine concerns. Maria D. Shreiner who earlier addressed her representative can be seen as one of those neighbors who sincerely believe that affordable housing for farmworkers will bring negative impacts to her community. These misperceptions can be traced back to the form in which Shreiner was informed about the new development. In her letter she makes it clear that it was not until the very night that she wrote her letter that she found out about this new development. Those who gave her the information about this development at the meeting she attended also informed her that “there is a very small window of opportunity for neighbors to be able to appeal this.”

Now, imagine Shreiner at a meeting held by the Housing Authority long before permits were issued and land acquired. If Shreiner and concerned citizens like her were taken into account in the planning process, she would have a lot to offer. This is especially true if these citizens are informed about the many benefits associated with the addition of this type of housing. But instead of these positive outcomes, you have neighbors who could have been of great support joining other concerned citizens and establishing the East Wenatchee Neighborhood Association.

As the Bello Rio development demonstrates, more vital than the eighteen months that were lost in litigation and the nearly one-million-dollar budget increase for the development are the bridges that were burnt in the NIMBY process. These bridges accounted for in the loss of support of the neighboring community bring many implications. As it became evident through

⁷³ Anonymous. “Enterprise Community Investment, Inc; Grand Opening of Bello Rio Apartments Creates Affordable Homes for Farm Worker Families In East Wenatchee, Washington.” *Agriculture Week*, June 9, 2008.

⁷⁴ Washington State Department of Agriculture. “Agriculture-Washington’s No. 1 Employer.” <http://www.tridec.org/ftp/home/County%20Rankings%20and%20Market%20Value%20of%20Crop%20and%20Livestock%20Products.pdf> (accessed Dec 2, 2008).

⁷⁵ Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust, “A Sustainable Bounty: Investing In Our Agricultural Future,” Executive Summary, (July 2008), 5.

⁷⁶ Washington State Office of the Governor. “Locke signs bill to begin addressing farm worker housing crisis.” <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/GovernorLocke/press-view.asp?pressRelease=681&newsType=1> (accessed Dec 1, 2008).

my case study, the lack of support from the community in the form of NIMBY opposition is very powerful. So powerful that even the County Commissioners who clearly supported the development in the beginning were forced to represent their constituents by joining them in the opposition by discouraging the project and contacting other leaders to further support.

The state of Washington has been recognized in the past for their leadership amongst states when it comes to providing housing for farmworkers. However, it is crucial that farmworker housing advocates start to reach out to the general community to make their leadership more highly regarded by the local community. Although it is not a requirement to hold extra meeting, farmworker housing advocates must remember that the specifics about the type of housing they offer, the race and class roles, are more often than not intimidating to the surrounding community. That is why here I stress the importance of conveying the “factual aftermath” to the surrounding community in the beginning stages of the development. Doing this in the beginning will make the neighbors feel like they have a say in what is going on around them. Additionally, and just as important, speaking to the neighbors about the benefits of affordable housing in the beginning stage will make them more receptive to the message advocates are trying to convey.

Starting locally with the neighboring community and gaining their support by expressing the benefits of affordable housing this report highlights, will provide advocates with the much needed group of individuals who can in turn advocate and transmit this message to those around them. Furthermore, having the neighbors working in support of affordable housing will make it so that existing support from the city and state leaders will continue to be nourished and funding more accessible. Also, the support from those leaders who might be indifferent about affordable housing will be won through the neighbors outreach.