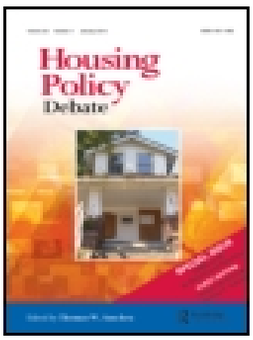

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Broken Promises or Selective Memory Planning? A National Picture of HOPE VI Plans and Realities

Lawrence J. Vale[a], Shomon Shamsuddin[b] and Nicholas Kelly[a]

[a]Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA; [b]Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, USA

ABSTRACT

Government efforts to redevelop public housing often face a contentious gap between plans and realities. This paper compares 2014 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administrative data on housing unit counts and unit mixes for all 260 developments receiving Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) revitalization grants with data provided in the original HOPE VI grant award announcements. We find that HUD records undercount approximately 11,500 once-proposed units. The biggest changes were a 29% decline in the number of market-rate units and a 40% decline in homeownership units. The chief shortfall during implementation, therefore, was not with public housing units (although the HOPE VI program as a whole did trigger an overall decline of such units). To help elucidate the dynamics at play when the unit allocation shifts between initial grant award and implemented project, we include a series of five brief case studies that illustrate several types of unit change. Interviews with HUD staff confirm the baseline for record-keeping shifted during implementation once project economic feasibility became clearer; adherence to original unit mix proposals remained secondary. HUD prioritized its accountability to Congress and developers over its public law accountability to build the projects initially proposed to local community residents. Although these changes have sometimes been interpreted as broken promises, it is even clearer that HUD's monitoring system exemplifies what we call Selective Memory Planning: when planners and policy makers, willfully or not, selectively ignore elements of previous plans in favor of new plans that are easier to achieve.

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Public housing; income mixing; HOPE VI; implementation; accountability

Government efforts to develop or redevelop housing are often contentious because of the gap between what is proposed and what is delivered, especially to low-income families. In the United States, urban renewal is perhaps the most prominent example of government intervention that ultimately resulted in the demolition of affordable housing and the displacement of poor communities (Teaford, 2000; Wilson, 1966). Some scholars have suggested that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere program—better known as HOPE VI—represented a reincarnation of urban renewal—this time by removing and redeveloping public housing projects located nationwide (Goetz, 2013; Keating, 2000; Vale, 2013). There were 260 HOPE VI revitalization grants awarded between 1993 and 2010, so it now seems possible to more fully assess the program as a whole, although some data challenges remain (Vale & Shamsuddin, 2017).

CONTACT Lawrence J. Vale ljvale@mit.edu

Elected officials and private developers praised HOPE VI for ridding cities of "severely distressed" public housing and for producing more attractive mixed-income communities (Cisneros & Engdahl, 2009). Some critics, concerned about accountability to communities, attacked the program for displacing extremely low-income residents and for reducing the overall number of public housing units (Crowley, 2009; Goetz, 2013; Vale, 2013), whereas other critics—those more concerned about the economic performance of the program—attacked HOPE VI for ballooning costs, excessive construction delays, and bureaucratic inefficiency (Utt, 2009).

Despite praise and criticism of overall program outcomes, little is known about how project goals changed *during* the HOPE VI redevelopment process. Public housing redevelopment stretched over years and many planned housing units went unbuilt, resulting in revisions to the original proposals (GAO, 2003a; Popkin et al., 2004b). Further, there has not been a proper accounting of the unit mix of the HOPE VI program to date because of a lack of available data. These unit mixes—the varying combinations of public housing, so-called *affordable* housing,[1] and market-rate housing, plus the tenure balance between rental and ownership—vary considerably not just from project to project but *within* the same project over time (Vale & Shamsuddin, 2017). This article examines how housing goals and planned income mixing changed during the course of implementation at HOPE VI project sites nationwide. We obtained HUD's HOPE VI Management System administrative data on each of the 260 HOPE VI projects, and augmented this by gathering housing unit information from HUD's initial grant award announcements and press releases. Understanding how projects changed during implementation entailed more than data collection, however; it also involved analysis of the way that these data were recorded by HUD, since this forms a key basis for what researchers can conclude about implementation of HOPE VI.

We compare what was awarded to public housing authorities (PHAs) when they first applied for HOPE VI grants with what HUD officially recorded, and with what was actually built. We do this by utilizing a unique data set created by entering every available original HOPE VI grant award announcement and comparing those with data in the HOPE VI Management System. The analysis demonstrates that the HOPE VI Management System did not begin recording planned housing unit totals at the time the HOPE VI award was made. Summary statistics show that this decision about program accounting resulted in undercounting approximately 11,500 housing units, equivalent to about 10% of total redeveloped units originally proposed under HOPE VI.

Much of the negative publicity about HOPE VI has focused on the overall decline of public housing units triggered by the program as a whole. Yet if one looks at the internal implementation trajectory of HOPE VI grants, focusing on the difference between what was stated in the initial grant awards and what was actually delivered, the chief shortfall was not with public housing units. The biggest changes were a 29% decline in the number of market-rate units and a 40% decline in homeownership units. To help elucidate the dynamics at play when the unit allocation shifts between initial grant award and implemented project, we include a series of five brief case studies that illustrate several types of unit change.

To seek explanations for the observed discrepancies between grant awards and units delivered, we also conducted interviews with HUD staff who designed and implemented HUD's HOPE VI management tool. Our interviews confirm that unit counts were periodically updated and overwritten in the recordkeeping to reflect the most recent project estimates. Staff used the management system to demonstrate transparency and efficient grant expenditures, in response to concerns about spending oversight. Adherence to original proposals—or even keeping a record of them—remained secondary.

The findings indicate that HUD tracking and recordkeeping obscured the unit totals and mix of incomes that had initially been proposed in the grant as awarded. The results suggest that HUD administrative data may not be a complete and accurate source of information regarding the progress of HOPE VI projects. Any assessment of individual HOPE VI projects—and the program as a whole—must consider how and when housing unit count information was recorded.

These findings also reveal two broader conclusions. First, as suggested by the quantitative data and confirmed by interviews, HUD prioritized its accountability to Congress and developers over its accountability to former residents of the public housing developments (and to their neighbors in the surrounding community) when monitoring the implementation of HOPE VI projects. Under pressure

to spend the HOPE VI funds allocated by Congress, HUD focused on working with developers and PHAs to build their projects in a manner eventually judged to be mutually feasible, so compliance with the unit mix of the projects as initially proposed remained a secondary concern. The discrepancies we find between the original grant announcements and the project descriptions that were recorded in the HUD database are not accompanied by documentation from HUD about how these plans changed over time.

Second, this article builds on literature about the struggle to define and ensure accountability in public–private partnerships such as HOPE VI. We argue that HUD's emphasis on certain accountabilities over others is embodied and enabled by a phenomenon we have dubbed *selective memory planning* (SMP). This phenomenon, discussed in more detail later in the article, occurs when powerful actors, willfully or not, selectively ignore elements of previous plans in favor of new plans that are easier to achieve. In the case of HOPE VI, housing officials and developers conveniently overlooked early project agreements for new development plans that were easier to complete.

Literature Review

Accountability and Implementation Challenges in Housing Redevelopment

Accountability is a persistent concern when government intervenes in the housing and urban development arenas. Problems in measuring benefits and the limited capacity of the public to monitor government activity add to the challenges of holding government responsible for a desired level of performance (Paul, 1992). Accountability is particularly difficult in large development projects where costs are often underestimated and benefits overestimated (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, & Rothengatter, 2003).

Accountability becomes more complicated when government intervention directly involves and relies upon the private sector—in public–private partnerships, for example. Prior work argues there are two types of accountability for public–private partnerships: an economic view of accountability that prioritizes efficiency, protection against fraud, and data collection; and a public law view of accountability that prioritizes holding actors accountable to public values (When Hope Falls Short, 2003). The two types of accountability can lead to conflict because "these competing normative agendas lead to fundamentally differing views regarding the goals of accountability, as well as which parties must be held accountable and by whom" ("When Hope Falls Short," 2003, p. 1480). Further, public support can be diminished if the public–private partnership's objectives are viewed as misaligned with community interests (Blakely & Green Leigh, 2013). These issues of accountability came to the forefront in the HOPE VI program once public housing authorities partnered with private developers to redevelop public housing projects.

Proper accountability requires proper accounting—accurate records of government performance are necessary to evaluate that performance—but this is a challenge for the HOPE VI program. Independent reports noted HUD's lack of consistent oversight of HOPE VI grants, including failure to perform required reviews (GAO, 2003a). Critics argued that HUD and housing authorities did not engage in adequate monitoring of building activity and resident outcomes during the redevelopment process, starting from prerelocation conditions at the public housing sites ("When Hope Falls Short," 2003). In addition, HUD did not report HOPE VI project cost information to Congress, as required by law (GAO, 2002). The lack of consistent project data made it extremely difficult to conduct any evaluation of HOPE VI (Locke, Popkin, & Fosburg, 1996; Popkin et al., 2004b). Indeed, only in 1999, 6 years into the program, did HUD formally incentivize PHAs to hire evaluators—and even then they were given freedom to define their own performance (Zhang, 2004). However, most quantitative evaluations of HOPE VI have focused on the effects of the program on residents rather than on the success of the program at meeting its own project unit goals (Popkin, 2010; Popkin, Levy, & Buron, 2009).

Studies of HOPE VI Program Priorities and Implementation

For HOPE VI, program accountability and evaluation are intertwined with project implementation because of the multiple challenges encountered throughout the long housing redevelopment process. For our purposes, implementation entails *plan conformance*, the ability of a plan to meet its objectives, which includes an evaluation of plans against their actual impact on the built environment (Kinzer, 2016; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Talen, 1996). Neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city, HOPE VI proved consistently difficult to implement (Holin, Buron, Locke, & Cortes, 2003; Popkin et al., 2004b). Press accounts, academic studies, and government reports often reveal disputes involving project approval, site selection, resident relocation, project financing, and developer decisions (Abt Associates, 2003a, 2003b; Bennett, Smith, & Wright, 2006; GAO, 1998).

Project implementation at individual sites was further complicated by the evolution of HOPE VI program priorities over nearly two decades. The underlying priorities expressed by program officials varied with each successive round of applications—with many of these changes reflected in grant agreements—producing great variation among projects within the program (Vale, 2013; Vale & Shamsuddin, 2017). Key changes to the HOPE VI program include suspending the one-for-one replacement rule, a greater emphasis on mixed-income and mixed-finance developments as the projects went on, shrinking grant sizes, and an emphasis on homeownership toward the end of the program (Baron, 2009; Goetz, 2013; Zhang, 2004). In response to these changes, housing authorities and their development partners changed their redevelopment plans during the implementation process.

Most previous research on HOPE VI has overlooked implementation and instead focused on case studies of individual project sites or sites located in the same city (Chaskin & Joseph, 2015; Fennell, 2015; Graves, 2010; Kleit, 2005; Shamsuddin & Vale, 2017a; Tach, 2009; Vale & Shamsuddin, 2017). Other studies have compared projects in a few different cities but, again, have not emphasized the implementation process (Buron, Popkin, Levy, Harris, & Khadduri, 2002; Popkin et al., 2002, 2004a). These studies typically highlight the differences between dire social, economic, and building conditions in the previously existing public housing project and the dramatic improvements in urban design, housing quality, and visual appearance in the resultant new mixed-income development (Cisneros & Engdahl, 2009). Such studies typically contrast the situation facing former residents when they lived in a place of concentrated poverty with the social dynamics of the new community (Shamsuddin & Vale, 2017a). Although it is important to do this, because these assessments take a *before and after* approach they often overlook how HOPE VI projects were altered *during* the process (Cisneros & Engdahl, 2009; Goetz, 2013; Tach & Emory, 2017).

Relatively few studies have examined the process of carrying out a HOPE VI intervention, but those that do reveal the ways that initial expectations are altered during implementation (Abt Associates, 2003a; Arena, 2012; Austen, 2018; Salama, 1999; Vale, 2013; Vale, 2018). HOPE VI implementation entails a long process from application to approval to developer selection to construction and, often, even the HOPE VI proposal is not the beginning of the story, but rather just the latest round of efforts to remake a highly contested place (Vale, 2013). This contestation results from having many different constituencies, each with distinct goals.

For the primary actors involved—public housing residents, developers, elected officials, housing agency staff, and neighbors—previous studies reveal that the number and type of housing units to be developed were both the crucial issue and politically charged (Abt Associates, 2003a; Arena, 2012; Austen, 2018; Salama, 1999; Vale, 2013, 2018). Closely related to this, views differed on who should inhabit such units. Former residents and advocates typically argued for preserving public housing units, building affordable housing, and maintaining projects as rentals. Groups interested in neighborhood revitalization often pushed for developing market-rate housing and homeownership units (Abt Associates, 2003b; Shamsuddin, 2017). Some HOPE VI advocates, fearing a return to concentrated poverty, regarded increased homeownership and market-rate rentals as essential justifications for the program (Buron et al., 2002). But proposed and agreed-upon housing unit decisions often changed during the course of implementation. This least-studied aspect of HOPE VI forms the core of this article:

the variation between what was *proposed* when cities first were awarded HOPE VI grants and what actually got built. We examine how those changes were recorded—or not recorded—and the implications for accountability to local residents.

Data and Methods

HOPE VI Management System

This article analyzes data from the HOPE VI Management System obtained from HUD for each of the 260 HOPE VI projects. This management system consists of quarterly reports that list a broad array of information about each of the 260 HOPE VI revitalization grants through the third quarter of 2014 (HUD, 2014). These reports were maintained by a contractor responsible for tracking the progress of each HOPE VI project based on self-reported data from individual housing authorities. Each report lists units in each project in two categories, *total project estimates* and *actual to date*, and each contains a large amount of information about the types of units to be built, or already built, as part of the project.[2] In the reports, HOPE VI project units are further categorized into one of three mutually exclusive unit types: public housing units, defined under an Annual Contributions Contract where residents usually pay 30% of their income for rent; affordable housing where units are subsidized by Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) or another shallow subsidy; and market rate, where the units typically receive no subsidy. The reports also show the number of rental and homeownership units for each project. For the purposes of this article we have assumed that all data have been reliably reported at any given moment in time.[3]

The HUD HOPE VI Management System dashboard displays only a single, undated total project estimate although complex projects with shifting budgets must frequently alter their estimates about what seems most likely to occur as new opportunities or constraints emerge. HUD's record-keeping system therefore does not keep track of how the total project estimates evolved over time, thereby raising the question of what single point in the process it is measuring and presenting a challenge for accounting—and therefore also a challenge for accountability.

HOPE VI Award Announcements

In an attempt to clarify this, we cross-checked the management system with other sources of HOPE VI information—specifically, information on HUD's original HOPE VI grants, which we call *award announcements*.[4] HUD issued such grant announcements, also known as HOPE VI Fact Sheets, detailing the award amount as well as the types of units to be produced for each project, from 1997 until the end of the program in 2010. However, because these announcements were only made available from 1997 onward, we supplemented them with information on projects from two other data sources: 1993–1996 projects from Abt Associates' Historical and Baseline Assessment of HOPE VI (Locke et al., 1996) and, if data were not available in that report, a 1997 GAO report on HOPE VI (General Accounting Office, 1997).[5] As with the award announcements, this would seem to provide the best available *contemporaneous* estimate of the original project parameters. Taken together, these additional HUD data enabled us to describe most projects at the time they received their initial HOPE VI awards.

Comparing Data Sources—A New HOPE VI Data Timeline

After examining these original award announcements we determined that they rarely matched the total project estimates in the HUD database. In fact, less than 10% of them had the same total unit figures, and only 1% had the exact same figures in terms of unit and tenure mix. What HUD designates total project estimates may therefore best be seen as *revised estimates*—marking the time when there was some sort of an approved development plan, following clarification and revision of the overall scope of the project. These two data points are complemented, as noted, by *actual-to-date* figures in the dashboard—which referred to the full build-out or, if still under construction, what had been completed

as of the third quarter of 2014. From this, it became clear that total project estimates referred to an intermediary point in the HOPE VI process and that, as expected, actual-to-date did not necessarily refer to a fully completed project.

We therefore reconceptualize these HOPE VI data points as marking three key moments in time: (a) award announcement, (b) revised estimate, and (c) actual-to-date. To underscore how these categories represent a sequential recording of plans for HOPE VI projects, we designate award announcements as Time 1 (T1), revised estimates as Time 2 (T2), and actual-to-date as Time 3 (T3).

We treat the award announcement (T1) as a proxy for the proposal negotiated with the community at the time of the original HOPE VI application. This moment is often reported on in local newspapers, usually based on press releases directly emanating from HUD. It is also true, however, that HUD did not fully fund many of the grants at the level requested in the applications, presumably making those initial proposals harder to realize. In any case, our reconceptualization of the HOPE VI time sequence is intended to make clear that the point in time HUD's management system calls *total project estimates* does not actually describe the beginning of the project. Rather, this *revised estimate*—what we call (T2)—coincides with a negotiated grant agreement that may happen only years after the HOPE VI application had received funding—and which may be subject to further revision.

Comparing award announcements (T1) with revised estimates (T2) permits us to assess front-loaded changes to the HOPE VI program, whereas comparing revised estimates (T2) and actual-to-date (T3) figures lets us measure how much change occurred between these latter two periods. To judge this fairly, the tabulations excluded those HOPE VI projects—25% of them—where HUD data showed that all units have not yet been built and that work may still be ongoing. We used basic summary statistics to identify differences between award announcements (T1) and revised estimates (T2) and between revised estimates (T2) and actual-to-date (T3).

Sample Sizes

We used a variety of sample sizes in the data analysis, always seeking to maximize the number of cases that can be included while also making fair comparisons. Of the 260 HOPE VI revitalization grants, it proved possible to obtain information from award announcements on total units for 242 of those projects (93%). However, we could only assemble complete T1 data—on the detailed mix of unit subsidy types or tenure, or both—for fewer projects: 176 (68%) for unit tenure, 160 (62%) for unit type, and 156 (60%) for complete unit mix (unit tenure and type).

When examining unit counts that include the actual-to-date (T3) time period, we restrict our sample size to include only the 196 fully completed projects (75% of the total), because those under construction might show lower unit counts simply because they are not yet finished. For completed developments we have total unit information on 181 projects (92%), complete information on tenure (homeownership/rental) for 128 projects (65%), and complete unit mix (unit type and tenure) for 112 projects (57%).

Other Data Sources and Interviews

In addition to these quantitative data sources, we also examined newspaper articles to provide a better sense of HUD's original commitments to the communities affected by HOPE VI. Not all projects had corresponding newspaper articles about the original grant announcements, and as a result they do not form a base of inference for this article. However, our analysis demonstrated that in most instances reporters simply wrote about the content of HUD's original grant announcement. Reporters rarely chronicled the changes in particular HOPE VI grants over time. Compared with the data contained in the management system, the original grant announcements were more likely to accurately reflect general public perception of the initial project.[6]

To supplement the quantitative data from HUD about the HOPE VI program as a whole, we include five brief case studies of HOPE VI implementation. The cases provide ground-truth examples of places that showed significant alterations in unit counts between initial grant and actual production, as

revealed by the data analysis. Each case illustrates a distinct type of unit change that occurred during implementation. From the set of places illustrating each category of change, we picked the one where there seemed to be the most supplementary data available from press accounts or published scholarship. In one case, which had not been fully constructed, we also conducted two interviews with housing authority personnel, intended to gain further insight into the anticipated final unit mix.

To judge how the various challenges of implementation may have affected record-keeping, we conducted semistructured interviews with two HUD staff and with one former HUD consultant. We selected these informants based on their role in the creation of the management system as well as its current implementation. Collectively, these individuals were responsible for the HOPE VI database design and oversight from the 1990s to the present. By speaking with these HUD staff, we can better understand how they used the HOPE VI Management System. It also allowed us to better cross check and interpret the results of our data analysis.

Findings

Comparing Total Units and Unit Types Between Award Announcements and Revised Estimates

First, we use basic summary statistics to examine how the award announcements (T1) align with HUD's revised estimates (T2). As can be seen in Figure 1, based on the 242 HOPE VI projects for which we have information on at least total units in all time periods, we see a 10% reduction in total units from T1 to T2, or a loss of 11,627 units. This means that 10% of all HOPE VI units announced at the time the awards were made have disappeared from the management system designed to track these grants. It is not clear whether these T1 figures were initially entered into the system and then subsequently overwritten once estimates changed, or whether they were never entered in the first place. In either case, the data management system provides no place to record—or remember—this loss.

Although differences between the award announcements and revised estimates are not tracked in HUD's database, the system does track revised estimate and actual-to-date figures. Comparing how these two data columns measure the progress of HOPE VI unit production reveals how HUD chooses to count the difference between estimates and actuals. Figure 2 compares data on those 181 projects that are no longer under construction and for which we have information on total units at all three time designations. From the award announcement to the revised estimate, there is a 13% reduction

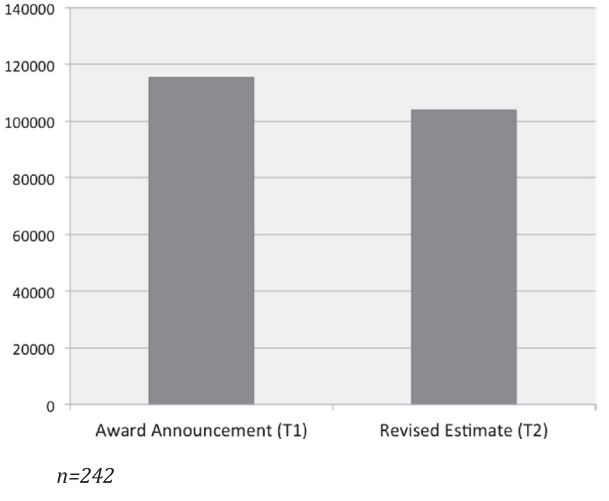

Figure 1. Total units from award announcement to revised estimate.
Note. For T1 and T2 we have total unit information on 242 of the 260 projects (93%); $n = 242$.

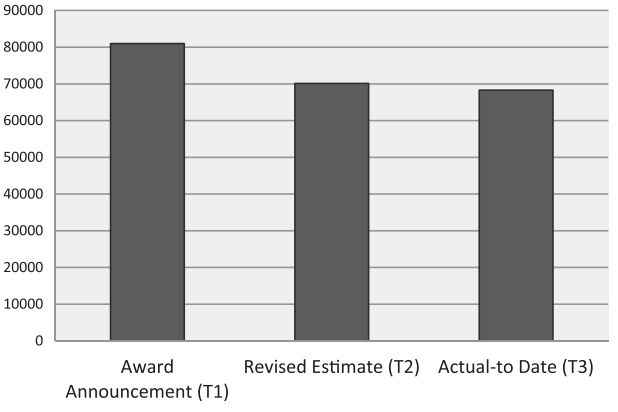

Figure 2. Total units over time.

Notes. When examining unit counts that include the actual-to-date (T3) time period, we restrict our sample size to include only fully completed projects, because those under construction might show lower unit counts simply because they are not yet finished. For completed developments we have total unit information on 181 of the 260 projects (70%); $n = 181$.

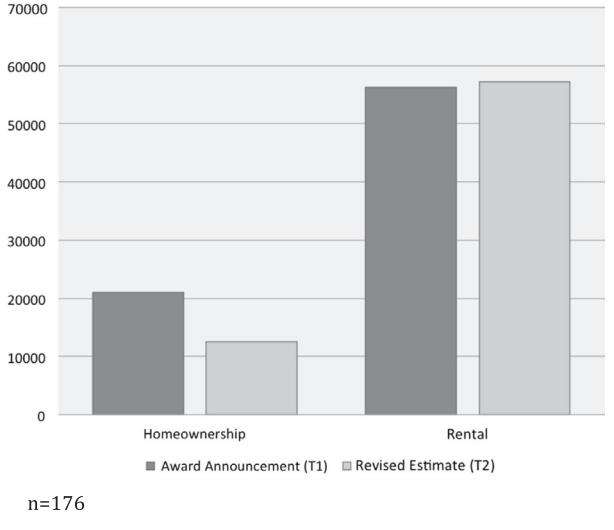

Figure 3. Unit tenure from award announcement to revised estimate.

Note. We have complete data for unit types across the first two time periods for 176 of 260 projects (68%); $n = 176$.

in units—an even greater loss than in the larger sample described above. However, from the revised estimate to actual to date, there is a loss of units of just 3%. This indicates that the major loss of units occurred outside the purview of what the HOPE VI management system retains.

Figures 3–6 focus on differences between award announcements (T1) and revised estimates (T2) to examine the front-loaded shortfalls in units. Figure 3 shows that, for projects where we have data on tenure type across T1 and T2, the overall drop-off dramatically affected homeownership units, which decreased by 40%. The overall number of rental units, on the other hand, increased slightly.

In addition, Figure 4 shows that for projects where we have data on unit type across T1 and T2, the overall drop-off mostly affected market-rate units: these decreased by 29%. Public housing units very slightly decreased over time, whereas the number of affordable units increased slightly.

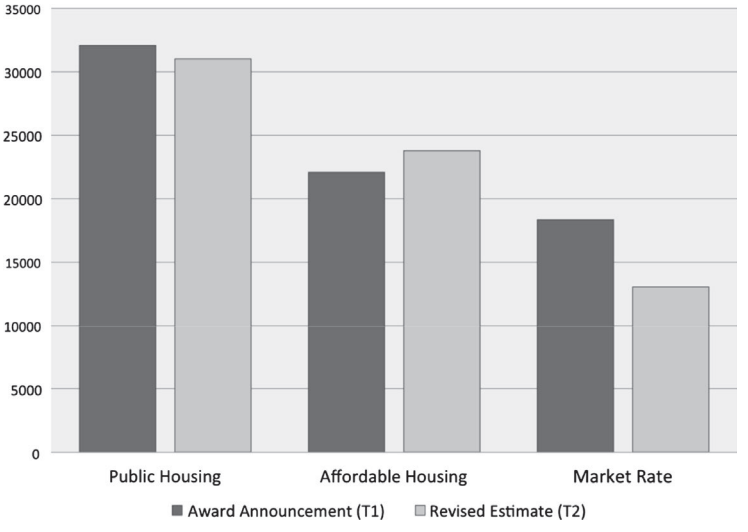

Figure 4. Unit types from award announcement to revised estimate.
Note. We have complete data for unit types across the first two time periods for 160 of 260 projects (62%); $n = 160$.

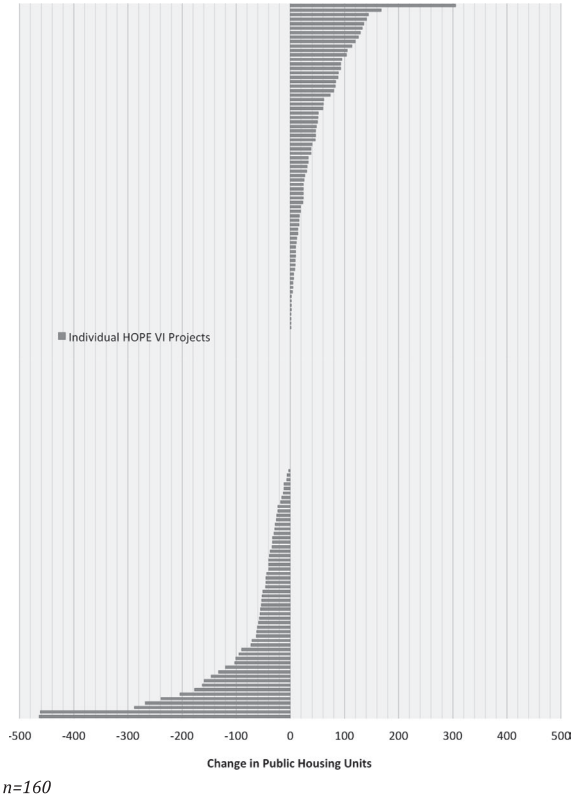

Figure 5. Change in public housing units from award estimate (T1) to revised estimate (T2).
Note. We have complete data about unit types across the first two time periods for 160 of 260 projects (62%); $n = 160$.

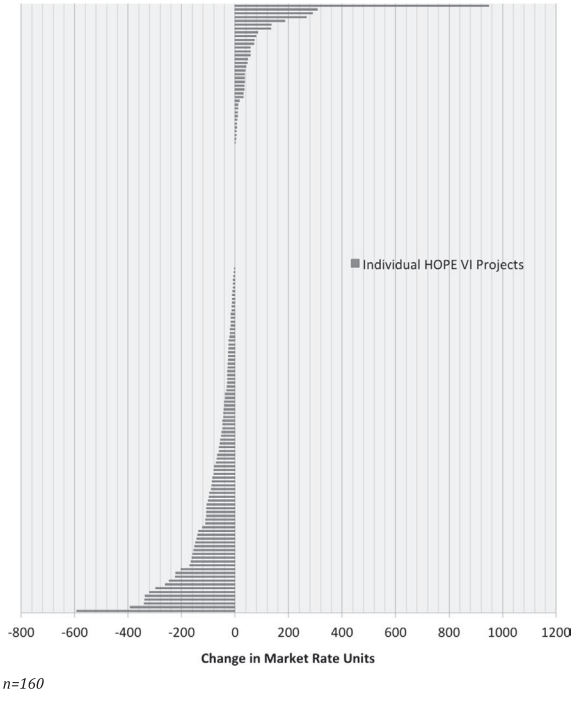

Figure 6. Change in market-rate units from award estimate (T1) to revised estimate (T2).
Note. We have complete data for unit types across the first two time periods for 160 of 260 projects (62%); $n = 160$.

Although in aggregate the number of public housing and affordable housing units remained constant, this conceals a great deal of variation among HOPE VI developments, many of which gained public housing units, and many of which lost public housing units. Figure 5 displays the gains and losses of public housing units and Figure 6 depicts the gains and losses in market-rate units from the award announcement to the revised estimate.

Figure 5 reveals that reductions in public housing unit numbers occurred at only 35% of HOPE VI projects between T1 and T2. Unit numbers remained virtually unchanged at about 20% of projects, and the remaining cases—approximately 45%—saw *increases* in numbers of public housing units. By contrast, as Figure 6 shows, many projects witnessed substantial decreases in numbers of market-rate units from what had been initially proposed. Far more projects experienced decreases in numbers of market-rate units (57%) than increases (23%).

In other words, the *broken promises* occurred in two directions—in more than one third of the cases, public housing proponents could have grounds to complain about "lost" units, whereas more than half of the time those favoring more market-rate housing could lament an unexpected loss of such units.[7]

Change in Unit and Tenure Mix Across Data Sources

The findings also reveal a change in the unit *mix* within projects over time. This sample includes only completed projects where we had full information about types of units and tenure mix ($n = 112$). These data show that the change in mix happens entirely between T1 and T2, with virtually no change in the percentage mix between T2 and T3. Whereas HOPE VI projects averaged 50% public housing at T1, projects averaged 57% public housing at T2 and T3. Whereas the percentage of affordable units remained relatively constant at approximately 30% across T1, T2 and T3, the percentage of market-rate units decreased dramatically from 20% at T1 to 11% at T2 and T3. These changes can be seen in Figure 7.

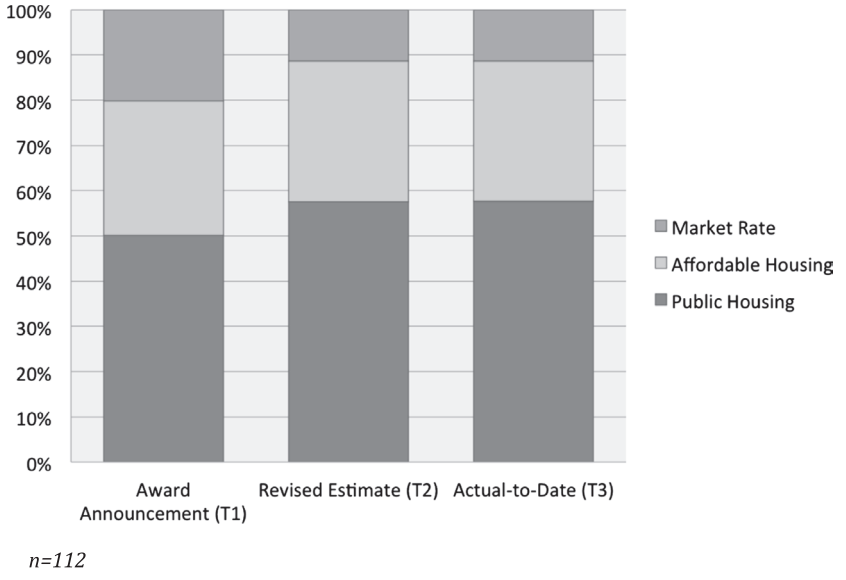

Figure 7. Unit mix over time.

Notes. When examining unit counts that include the actual-to-date (T3) time period, we restrict our sample size to include only fully completed projects, because those under construction might show lower unit counts simply because they are not yet finished. We have complete unit mix data (unit type and tenure) across all three time periods for 112 of the 260 projects (43%); $n = 112$.

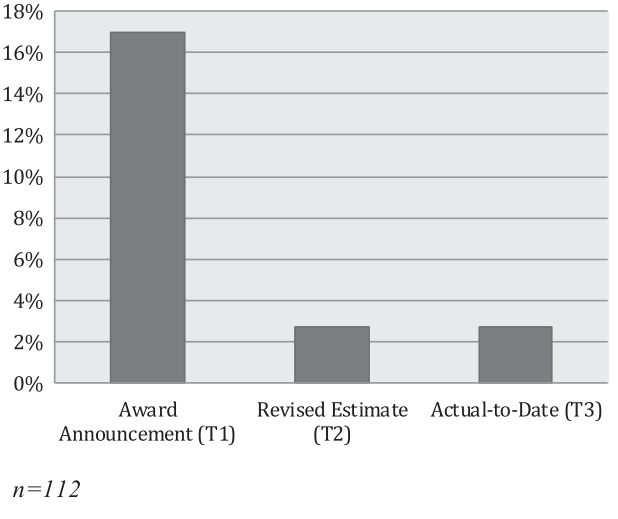

Figure 8. Median percentage of market-rate units over time.

Notes. When examining unit counts that include the actual-to-date (T3) time period, we restrict our sample size to include only fully completed projects, because those under construction might show lower unit counts simply because they are not yet finished. We have complete unit mix data (unit type and tenure) across all three time periods for 112 of the 260 projects (43%); $n = 112$.

Not captured in these figures is the fact that the *median* percentage of market-rate units plummeted from 17% in T1 to 3% in T2 and T3. Figure 8 captures this striking decrease in the median number of market-rate units from T1 to T2. Almost one quarter of projects lost *all* market-rate units from T1 to T2, leading to the large decrease in the median.[8]

When we examine the mix of unit tenure between homeownership and rental in projects where the data set contains complete information on tenure ($n = 128$) we find similar substantial differences

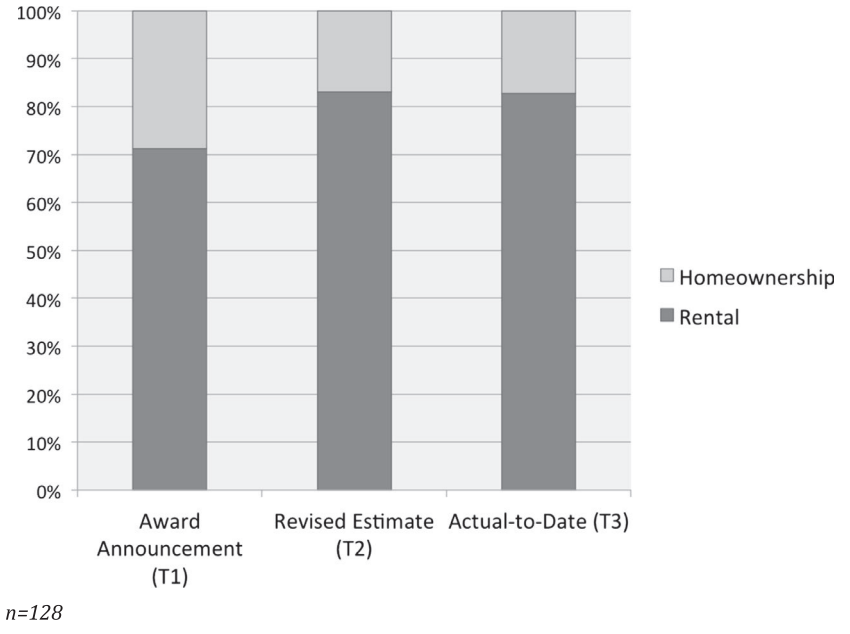

Figure 9. Tenure mix over time.

Notes. When examining unit counts that include the actual-to-date (T3) time period, we restrict our sample size to include only fully completed projects, because those under construction might show lower unit counts simply because they are not yet finished. For completed developments we have complete information on tenure (homeownership/rental) for 128 of the 260 projects (49%); $n = 128$.

between T1 and T2: a 12-percentage-point reduction in the average percentage of homeownership units, and a corresponding increase in the percentage of rental units—with almost no differences between T2 and T3. This can be seen in Figure 9.

To illustrate the impact of these findings on the ground, we include five brief case studies that exemplify the substantial and often unacknowledged discrepancies that can exist between the HOPE VI award announcements and the revised estimates in HUD's database.

Case Study 1: St. Thomas, New Orleans, and the Complexity of HOPE VI Projects

This first case study shows how the HUD management system—despite its seeming ability to capture the goals and realities of HOPE VI projects—can mask a high degree of complex volatility during project implementation. This political history is experienced quite viscerally by residents whose communities are being redeveloped. Figure 10 shows what one page of data looks like in the system HUD uses to track HOPE VI progress at each site. This particular dashboard depicts the data collected about St. Thomas HOPE VI redevelopment in New Orleans, Louisiana, which received its grant in 1996 and is now known as River Garden. At first glance, this looks to be a transparent and comprehensive way to understand the HOPE VI experience at that site—what was estimated, what was built, how much was spent, and how much was leveraged from other sources.

But as the above analysis suggests, much can be masked by the way data are reported, since the total project estimates are really *revised estimate*s (T2)—which are not equivalent to the award announcements (T1)—and since multiple false starts can also happen between T2 and completion of the project (T3). The dashboard reporting offers no clue that the original HOPE VI application envisioned a 775-unit development of two-story dwellings, and included preservation and rehabilitation of 200 apartments in a series of live oak-shaded courtyards that featured handsome brick buildings with cast iron railings, originally constructed in 1941. Half of the apartments would serve public housing households, another quarter of the units were designated as affordable because of shallower subsidies, and the remainder consisted of 190 market-rate homeownership units. Moreover, residents also expected to

have controlling stake in the project, since the initial proposal stated they would be "a 51% partner in a joint venture with an experienced multifamily housing developer," and also proposed a resident management corporation (RMC), seeming to offer resident control over both management and tenant selection (Bagert, 2002, p. 2; see also Arena, 2012).

HOPE VI, as delivered, provided 738 units, with a majority of them offered at market rates—although now just 23 of these were offered as for-sale homes. And instead of two-story homes, large portions of the development feature mid-rise apartment structures. Only five of the original brick structures were preserved and rehabbed, containing just 37 apartments. The developer eventually selected to carry out the deal flatly rejected the earlier proposal of a 51% partnership for residents and the RMC. In short, the development as built bore little resemblance—physically, managerially, or socioeconomically—to what the community had been told to expect at the time a HOPE VI grant had been submitted (Vale, 2018).

Moreover, this greatly understates the volatility that prevailed during an intermediate series of proposals (i.e., between the T1 proposal and the eventual T2 agreement). At one point, the developer expected the new community to contain 884 market-rate units, constituting 78% of the total (Bagert, 2002). Meanwhile, the developer proposed 100 off-site public housing units with three and four bedrooms (intended to accommodate larger households), none of which was ever constructed.[9] To be fair, a few of the frequent shifts of plan occurred because of the advent of Hurricane Katrina and the Great Recession, but most of the wide swings of unit count and unit mix occurred well before either of those events. To view the HUD dashboard charting the differences between project estimates and actual to date, it looks as if little had changed (see Figure 10), yet to those experiencing the transformation on the ground—whether as residents or as neighbors—the highly fraught situation was anything but static for a period of more than 15 years.

HOPE VI REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM: QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Grant Name:	St. Thomas	Reporting Period:	3QCY2014 (4QFY2014)
New Grant Name:		Grant Number:	LA-48-URD-001-I196
City:	New Orleans	Award Year:	1996
		Grant Type:	Implementation

Financial Information

	Total Project Estimates		Actual - to - Date	
Grant Information	HOPE VI Awarded:	$25,000,000	HOPE VI LOCCS Disbursed (As of 9/30/2014):	$24,311,964
Funding Source	HOPE VI Budgeted:	$25,000,000	HOPE VI Expended:	$24,687,924
Leveraged Funds	Other Public Housing Budgeted:	$2,736,318	Other Public Housing Expended:	$2,736,318
	Other Federal Funds Budgeted:	$26,054,822	Other Federal Funds Expended:	$26,185,036
	All Non-Federal Funds Budgeted:	$120,906,017	All Non-Federal Funds Expended:	$120,906,017
	SUB-TOTAL (Leveraged Funds):	$149,697,157	SUB-TOTAL (Leveraged Funds):	$149,827,371
	Total Funds Budgeted (All Sources):	$174,697,157	Total Funds Expended (All Sources):	$174,515,295

Production Information

Relocation	PH	Section 8	Other *	Evicted	Total
Total Project Estimates	197	277	159		633
Actual - to - Date	197	277	159	75	708

Demolition	Planned:	Approved:	Total:
Total Project Estimates	1,365	1,365	
Actual - to - Date			1,365

Construction

	Rental ACC			Rental Oth Affordable		Rental Market	Home Owner ACC	Home Owner Other Affordable		Home Owner Market
	PH Funds Only	PH + Other Funds	LIHTC + PH Funds	LIHTC Only	Other Income Restrict		PH Funds Incl	Subsidy with Income Restrict	Subsidy No Income Restrict	
Total Project Estimates (LIHTC: 158)	182	0	64	94	0			0	15	
	246			94		360	0	15		23
	700						38			
Actual - to - Date (LIHTC: 158)	182	0	64	94	0			0	15	
	246			94		360	0	15		23
	700						38			

	Total Project Estimates			Actual - to - Date		
Unit Total	New: 701	Rehab: 37	Total: 738	New: 701	Rehab:37	Total: 738
Re-Occupancy			Total: 92			Total: 92
Occupancy			Total: 773			Total: 734

This Quarterly report is based on self-reported data for the period ending 9/30/2014

*OTHER includes actual evictions. Evictions cannot be planned, but are included in the total number of relocations as they include households initially designated for relocation.

0 9/30/2014

Figure 10. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI Management System: Dashboard for St. Thomas Development in New Orleans.

Case Study 2: Denver's Park Avenue and the Loss of Public Housing Units

Denver (Colorado)'s Park Avenue HOPE VI development, the result of a 2002 grant, illustrates how HUD's selective data reporting concealed not only a significant loss of total units between the award announcement and revised estimates but also a significant loss of public housing. Whereas the project's award announcement (T1) contained 1063 total units including 439 units of public housing, its revised estimate (T2) featured just 582 total units and only 280 units of public housing—a 45% loss of total units, and a 36% loss of public housing. Still, just like most HOPE VI projects reported through the HOPE VI Management System dashboard, the actual-to-date (T3) figures matched these revised estimates (T2) exactly—as if no changes at all had happened to the project during implementation.

A local press report on the project in May 2004 showed some early changes of plan, although unit figures remained somewhat close to the original estimates: 873 units would be built, with 250 public housing rentals, 270 affordable rentals, 149 market-rate rentals, and 204 homeownership units (some of which could also have been targeted to public housing residents; "East Village Revitalization," 2004). In 2011, an academic article written about the development started from a new, slightly lower baseline: 844 units. The article then notes that the Great Recession caused a further reduction to 812 units because of the difficulty of securing matching funding from private developers. That article stated that 434 public housing units were now part of the plan—including approximately one quarter of all homeownership units (Cloud & Roll, 2011).

Most remarkable, however, was the loss of units *after* 2011; it is clear that HUD's total project estimates—582 total units and 280 public housing units—were entered into the management dashboard (or updated) about a decade after the grant had been awarded. This considerably updated *baseline* masks an extreme disappearance of once-proposed units. As part of the substantial overall shortfall in total units to be built, the new estimate indicated that 159 once-proposed public housing units would not be constructed—but these changes were not recorded. They could only be registered as losses if one chose to remember the T1 proposals that are not archived in the HUD management system. By choosing to forget about these public housing commitments, HUD lowered the bar for success, making it much easier to meet its new, revised goal.

Case Study 3: Washington's Arthur Capper/Carollsburg and a (Possible) Gain in Public Housing Units

The redevelopment of the Arthur Capper and Carrollsburg public housing developments in Washington DC illustrates how, in certain cases, HOPE VI developments can appear to see an *increase* in public housing units from award announcement to revised estimate—but a *loss* in total units. However, even when it appears that more public housing units were built, sometimes this type of discrepancy can conceal other broken promises to low-income residents—promises that HUD never recorded.

Before redevelopment, Capper and Carrollsburg contained 780 units of public housing. The award announcement (T1) in fiscal year 2001 called for 417 units of public housing, 290 units of affordable housing, and 855 market-rate units. However, a highly motivated tenant group tried to wrest control of the plan from HUD (DeVault, 2001) and tenants strongly protested any restrictions that would prevent original residents from moving back (Morton, 2002). These tenants campaigned to secure a one-for-one replacement of units (Andersen, 2014). By 2003, the mayor promised that 100% of public housing residents could return to the development. The plan called for 707 public housing units, 525 affordable rental units, and 330 market-rate units—a significant increase in units ("Owners Cite Threats by Developer," 2003).

The revised estimate (T2), however, lists just 550 public housing units. So, although this appears to be an increase from the award announcement, it actually is a *decrease* from what was explicitly specified to residents in 2003. Furthermore, what has been built to date remains markedly lower: just 377 public housing units. Since HUD records a loss in units, this represents one of the few discrepancies in the dashboards between the revised estimate (T2) and actual-to-date (T3) figures. But even this reported

loss does not reveal the T1-to-T2 loss of public housing and total units *that was never recorded in the first place*. Residents fought hard to ensure a one-for-one replacement of units, but the fact that these higher guarantees were not even recorded by HUD—let alone met—highlights the failure of HUD's tracking system to ensure full accountability.

The reality is particularly consequential for many original public housing residents: according to HUD's dashboard, only 133 of them had reoccupied public housing units in the new development. Certainly, not all wished to return, and surely there were some problematic households that should not have been allowed to return, but many original residents still deeply lamented the sizable loss of units left available for their occupancy. British housing activist Glyn Robbins describes the disillusionment of Rose Oliphant, "one of the few former public housing tenants who managed to return to the [Capper/Carollsburg] area after redevelopment:"

> Her friends and neighbours have been scattered to other parts of the city and region, particularly the once-marginalised, but now gentrifying, Anacostia district across the river of the same name. As ever, the empty "right to return" promise was made by the authorities, but for most it was never kept (Robbins, 2017, p. 197).

Even if residents like Ms. Oliphant wanted to contest how well HUD had met its original goals, HUD's own record-keeping of that project would not allow them to do so.

Interviewed in 2014, Laurie Putscher of the Washington, DC Housing Authority (DCHA) insisted that one-for-one public housing replacement may yet come since "we're replacing 707 public housing units over time." For now, however, the townhome portion has "86 public housing rental units, [and] a few affordable homeownership units and everything else is, in round terms, million dollar townhouses" (Authors' telephone interview with Laurie Putscher, DCHA, March 2014). In hot market areas with demand for market-rate homeownership units, it can often be difficult to find room for public housing. As Michael Kelly, former director of DCHA, puts it, Capper-Carollsburg is one of those sites where "the economics are just so obvious that you knew it was going to happen. It was just a question of how and when" (Authors' interview with Michael Kelly, DCHA director, March 2009). It is easier to meet that market demand if promises about public housing can be left to the vagaries of selective memory.

Case Study 4: Spartanburg's Phyllis Goins Courts: Gaining Public Housing While Losing Market-Rate Units

The redevelopment at Phyllis Goins Courts in Spartanburg, South Carolina, provides an example of a HOPE VI project where the number of public housing units increased and market-rate units decreased during implementation. The Spartanburg Housing Authority received a $20 million HOPE VI grant in 2004 to redevelop the 184-unit public housing project, located on the city's south side (Killian, 2004). Yet, in large part because this particular HOPE VI grant was deployed to impact housing in several parts of both the south side and north side of Spartanburg and was spread over 15 different named phases, it exhibited unusually large discrepancies between the T1 award announcement and T2 revised estimates. Initially, the plan proposed replacement of the barracks-like Goins with a more traditional neighborhood, with a community center, recreation center, and park—but also envisioned 400 other affordable and market-rate homes spread into several other areas (Killian, 2004).

The newly named Collins Park development opened in 2007, replacing the old Goins project with 100 rental duplexes, and with 36 homeownership units expected next. The housing authority relocated 138 households from Goins, and the management of Collins Park did not prioritize rehousing them: only nine of the former households gained places. Many of the rest of these African American families faced traumatic relocations (Neary, 2011). Still, since Collins Park utilized only a little more than $5.5 million of the HOPE VI grant, the housing authority was able to deploy funds for several other phases (Shackleford, 2007a, 2007b).

Unfortunately, in 2009, because of the Great Recession, many of the Phase 5 and Phase 6 market-rate and subsidized homeownership units were eliminated from the plan. In 2010, the revitalization plan dropped additional plans for rental units (Phase 8) and homeownership units (Phase 9). By contrast,

other later-phase portions—including subsidized rentals for seniors (Phase 7), two LIHTC-subsidized communities (Phases 10 and 13), replacement public housing units (Phase 11), and one small homeownership portion (Phase 12)—all proceeded to completion much as planned. The Spartanburg team also added a 14th phase, a community known as Independence Place, using LIHTC funds and bonds, which did not use funding from the HOPE VI grant. Finally, as a 15th component to the revitalization launched by the HOPE VI grant for Phyllis Goins, the housing authority completed the 54-unit public housing community known as J. Curtis Anderson, located on the site of the former Woodworth Homes project. Once again, this did not draw upon HOPE VI grant monies. For reporting purposes, however, HUD record-keeping treated all of these revitalizations as part of the Phyllis Goins HOPE VI grant, although much of the expenditure occurred on the opposite side of the city from the demolished project (HUD, 2014). The overall result—driven by both an economic downturn and a persistent commitment to adding affordable housing—yielded 165 fewer market-rate units but 126 more public housing units than had initially been predicted.

Case Study 5: Atlanta's McDaniel Glenn and the Loss of Homeownership Units

The McDaniel Glenn project in Atlanta, Georgia, which received its HOPE VI grant in 2004, exhibited a larger than normal discrepancy between the award announcement (T1) and the revised estimates (T2). Between the time the Atlanta Housing Authority applied to HUD for HOPE VI funds and the time of HUD's revised estimate, the recorded estimate of the total number of units produced dropped from 907 to 673 units—a 26% decrease. This included a 22% decrease in public housing units, a 52% decrease in market-rate units, and a 20% increase in affordable units. To reiterate, these are all changes that predate the final revised estimate data (T2) that remains in HUD's official record.

Most notably, between T1 and T2 the project lost *95%* of its homeownership units, while experiencing a 15% increase in rental units. This overall loss of units also resulted in a loss of affordable homeownership units: whereas 67 affordable homeownership units were proposed, only 11 were recorded in the revised estimate and actual-to-date figures.

A note explaining this decrease is buried deep in the HUD dashboard for this project. Dating from September 2011, it reads, "Given the downturn in the Atlanta for-sale market due to the impacts of the sub-prime lending problem, a request will be submitted to HUD for review and approval [of] an amendment to the revitalization plan." However, no further information on the original unit estimates is provided, nor any details on what those changes entailed.

The suddenness of this change—without clear documentation that it actually had occurred—would certainly surprise those who had followed the project in the press. In June of 2005, for example, the *Journal-Constitution* reported that 297 for-sale homes would be built at the site—already a decrease from the 335 units originally proposed, but far more than the 16 homeownership units HUD would include in its revised estimate for the project. Even more conspicuously, the official evaluation of the McDaniel Glenn project, released in 2010, did not report this loss of homeownership units, presumably because the loss occurred only in 2011 (Rich et al., 2010). This premature evaluation is a reminder that a HOPE VI project is always a work in progress and subject to change. For exactly that reason, proper record-keeping is important to keep track of past commitments to the community.

This case illustrates that the issue of discrepancies between what HUD announced would be built and what was actually constructed can sometimes go well beyond any loss of public housing to communities. As this Atlanta example shows, public housing was lost, but so were units meant to create a more mixed-income community at the site, as well as ownership units.

These five examples of HOPE VI implementation begin to highlight the range of possible shifting trajectories in terms of unit mix and tenure mix. Collectively, in combination with the overall quantitative analysis of the program grants that we have undertaken, they make clear that the complex set of shifting financial and social realities often bears little relation to initial expectations. In all this, it is certainly difficult for a data management system to keep pace. Interviews with HUD staff charged with doing this help clarify the challenges and reveal their priorities.

Interviews With HUD Staff

Interviews and correspondence with those who have played key roles since the early 1990s in documenting the results of HOPE VI provide considerable corroborating evidence and explanatory detail for what we observed when assessing the quantitative discrepancy between the award announcement (T1) and revised estimate (T2). The interviews also illuminate HUD's priorities. Asked about how the management system relates to the grant announcements, one of the designers of the system noted that the original HUD applications were made *before* the PHA and its partners "had a chance to think their plans through very carefully. Once they had done that, the updated plans were entered into the management information system" (HUD Consultant, 2016a).[10] A designer of the management system elaborated that some of these plans may also have changed over time, instead of merely after the grant submission, because of changes in the housing market, the failure of developers, and changes the PHA made after collaborating further with HUD. He commented that it was not at all unusual for HUD programs to change in this way (HUD Consultant, 2016b). He also noted that although HUD was pushing for mixed-income developments during the mid-1990s, when actually confronted with how to finance the projects, PHAs said, "Oh my god, how are we going to do this?" and sometimes changed their estimates (HUD Consultant, 2016b).

HUD staff that oversaw HOPE VI in its early years confirmed that the database figures, including the project estimates, are not static but rather change over time. They stated that projects might change for a whole host of reasons, including fluctuations in the market, incompetence, and corruption (HUD Officials #1 and #2, 2016). They also observed that the HUD grantees had to work within their budgets, and often had to change their plans after submitting their original proposals (HUD Officials #1 and #2, 2016).

When asked about discrepancies between the original HUD grant announcements and the project estimates in the management system, one of the designers of the system argued that these differences were not hugely problematic, given that such changes were typical of HUD and project development more broadly. Far from lying about the nature of the projects, he said, the grantees were more focused on conveying their basic intentions to the public through their original grant proposals, with subsequent changes the result of work with HUD to figure out how to make the projects viable (HUD Official #1, 2016). Furthermore, two current HUD staffers maintain that the management system has remained an effective monitoring tool. The purpose of the system, in their mind, was not so much monitoring original grant proposals as pressuring agencies to spend their money, given the significant delays that plagued HOPE VI throughout the program (HUD Officials #1 and #2).

Discussion

HOPE VI Accounting: Pragmatic or Problematic?

HUD clearly did not base its tracking database on the estimates contained in the original proposals made by housing authorities when seeking HOPE VI funds. Rather, the counting typically began only somewhat later—often after a development team was selected and had settled on a redevelopment plan that was feasible to implement. Consequently, HUD dashboard estimates for projects tend to be very close to what would actually be built, even if both of these figures differed from what was initially proposed and intended by local housing authorities.

Given that most PHAs waited until they received a HOPE VI grant to put the project out for bids from developers, it seems wholly reasonable to expect some changes to the original HOPE VI project proposals. Only during middle stages of implementation do PHAs get a reality check, especially if the grant did not cover the full amount requested. Furthermore, because of the mixed-financing structure of the program, HOPE VI projects often involve LIHTC, which require separate application and approval from state agencies. Therefore, there may be good reasons why income mixes change over time during project implementation, and sound explanations for why the reality as built ends up being very different from the expectations set out in an initial application.[11]

HUD officials and others who assisted HUD with data management readily acknowledge the discrepancy between data recording and HOPE VI implementation. Their explanations reveal an entirely understandable pragmatism, and a clear belief that treating the HOPE VI applications as the baseline for measuring what the program delivered would be an abject mistake. Their point is that those who submitted the original applications did not know—and could not know—the full set of circumstances that would affect what could eventually be implemented. It therefore made little sense to hold local PHAs or HUD responsible for failing to meet an ill-advised initial target. Far better, they argue, to begin at a later point while reserving the right to shift the baseline expectation should circumstances change. This decision ultimately maximized the likelihood that HUD, local PHAs, tax credit investors, city governments, and developers would seem to have fulfilled something very close to what they had proposed.

Here, however, it is important to make clear that all participants do not make the distinction between a proposal and a promise in the same way. To those whose careers often involve large-development deal-making, a proposal is simply that—an initial proposition that will be subject to significant revision. Many PHAs, developers, lawyers, and mayors understand this. To some public housing residents and their community-based allies who are less familiar with big development deals, however, what was negotiated into a proposal could seem to be a promise about rebuilding public housing. To some neighbors, by contrast, the proposal could seem a commitment to remove public housing and replace it with market-rate development.

The results suggest two different types of broken promises: one related to the shortfall of once-proposed market-rate and ownership units, and one related to shortfalls in public housing. Perhaps unexpectedly—given the large emphasis in the public housing redevelopment literature on complaints about lost public housing units—it is the construction of market-rate housing that has much more frequently fallen short of initial expectations. In other words, it is not just a matter of low-income communities complaining about a reduction in the amount of public housing; the opposite can hold true as well (Shamsuddin & Vale, 2017b). The overall delay or cancellation of substantial parts of the market-rate portions of HOPE VI mixes in many places has, thus far, yielded many communities where public housing residents constitute a higher percentage of occupancy than HOPE VI applications had intended. This has certainly changed social and financial expectations at HOPE VI sites, but this finding should not be misconstrued as suggesting that more public housing units have been built than were initially proposed. Public housing units may constitute a higher percentage of the mix than initially expected, but there are still far fewer public housing units on these sites than before HOPE VI (Goetz, 2013; Vale & Shamsuddin, 2017). That was always the intention. The loss of public housing units is not a failure of HOPE VI promises; it is the fulfillment of the HOPE VI *premises*.

Moreover, the unit losses and shifts between the award announcements and revised estimates may not yet tell the full story of losses and shifts. Given that almost one quarter of HOPE VI projects remained incomplete as of 2015, there may be back-loaded unit losses as well (i.e., a further drop-off between revised estimates and actual to date). It is worth noting that nearly one third of the HOPE VI projects with unbuilt units date from the 1990s—the early part of the program. Clearly, these projects have already taken a long time to execute, and that in itself casts doubt over how many of the units promised at the revised estimate stage will ever be built.[12]

These discrepancies return us to the question of when one *should* start counting and reporting project estimates. Is it when a housing authority first wins HOPE VI funds for its proposal, based on something that has been negotiated with a community? Or should a local reporting agency start counting only after the project has been revised, especially if the project did not receive the full amount of requested funding? Or should counting start only after a housing authority has selected a developer and accepted a version of the plan that the developer says it can execute? Or should the counting begin only when that developer has its full funding secured for all aspects and phases of the project? Ideally, one would want information about all of these moments, especially since—to residents and most other stakeholders—the project commenced with the initial decision to apply for funds, and since that application was grounded in a particular set of assumptions about what would be built, and for whom.

Accounting and Accountability: Selective Memory Planning?

Interviews with past and present HUD officials reveal that the intent of the management system to monitor HOPE VI progress was to fulfill the *economic* view of accountability that prioritized efficiency, protection against fraud, timely spending of funds, and data collection. However, by failing to note many of the most important changes to the HOPE VI plans, HUD clearly underperformed in its data collection. The *public law* view of accountability––which would ask HUD to support the basic values and promises of HOPE VI by creating revitalized communities for residents––was deprioritized in comparison to HUD's focus on working with PHAs to spend HOPE VI grant money and work with developers to get their projects built. Given the difficulty of project development, especially with low-capacity PHAs, these are certainly worthy goals—but they were nevertheless put forward as the dominant goals of the HOPE VI program—over and above proposals made to public housing tenants and other community residents. Since the HUD management system forms the basis for GAO and Inspector General reports, as well as the official record of the program that is used by Congress, research institutes, and academics, its limitations need to be acknowledged.

This analysis reveals that more than merely failing to document the shifting goals that took place during HOPE VI implementation, HUD engaged in what we have termed selective memory planning (SMP). By consistently altering the distance to goals in ways that effectively ignored the initial start dates of its projects, the HOPE VI accounting system could seemingly erase the memory of previous plan iterations. In effect, HOPE VI staff within HUD—as well as the development teams at each individual project—treat a plan's updated formulation as if it had always existed, measuring progress against that new, revised goal. What appears to be actualized now conveniently bears close resemblance to what had been estimated to occur—yet the comparison is with the *latest* goals for the project, not with the original proposal.

SMP involves more than a mere updating of plans—it internalizes the revised goals. In the example of HOPE VI, SMP also erases any record of the original proposals, but this is not necessarily a nefarious effort aimed solely at improving the appearance of success or a deliberate act of erasure—although HUD record-keeping preferences may indeed have had that effect, at least in the minds of who those complain about broken promises. In any case, viewing how HUD chose to document the changes that occurred during implementation clearly shows how HUD's nonaccountable accounting system seems designed to overstate the similarity between initial plans and completed realities. In these ways, SMP both *signifies* which accountabilities housing officials and developers prioritize and *enables* that prioritization by allowing them to claim success at meeting specific, selected goals. The intent of SMP may be mostly benign, but the process of selecting which parts of the past to record and remember carries consequences for residents and accountability because it makes effective monitoring extraordinarily difficult.

In terms of HOPE VI, SMP is a fundamental challenge to the monitoring and evaluation process of the program itself. The solutions offered by Flyvbjerg et al. could help: increased transparency and performance specifications, as well as a more precise definition of the nature of the public interest (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003). Indeed, better clarifying that the HOPE VI program is meant to serve residents and improve their lives—the public law vision of accountability—instead of merely enabling the most efficient spending of government resources—the economic view—would represent an essential step toward realigning the priorities of HUD in its monitoring and evaluation.

We believe that the SMP phenomenon we observed in HOPE VI is likely common in other complex development projects and in other areas of planning.[13] There are many instances where powerful players selectively ignore parts of previous plans to pursue a new plan that seems more feasible to implement. HOPE VI accounting is but one instance of SMP. Whatever the area of application, SMP is perhaps understandable from an efficiency perspective, but this does not obviate the need for improved accounting and accountability—particularly for projects that result in the transformation of communities.

Conclusion

At base, the initial HOPE VI proposals are deals between housing authorities and communities, whereas the HOPE VI projects as built are deals between developers and HUD, subject to many intervening forces. This analysis of HUD tracking data about HOPE VI reveals some modest alteration between the time of total project estimates and actual-to-date completions, but also shows that the true measure of HOPE VI outcomes depends on examining when such ever-shifting estimates are made. We observe that projects lost units not only through demolition but also through slow and steady attrition during the process needed to reach agreement about exactly what would be developed. This resulted in an overall shortfall in the delivery of once-projected housing—not only of public housing units but especially of those homes intended for market-rate occupancy and homeownership. These shifts occurred either because the selected development team changed its preferences or because the underlying housing market shifted in ways that made the original plan untenable, or both.

This delayed and selective accounting reduced the responsibility for full and transparent measurement since it did not assess project outcomes against the promises and agreements made with communities when the initial awards were received. By cross-referencing the official HUD tracking data with other sources about the origins of HOPE VI proposals, we have assembled a fuller picture of how complex project implementation negotiates promises and realities. Additional interviews with the HUD officials responsible for managing the data reporting for HOPE VI confirmed that the baseline had been deliberately shifted. This program has been attacked from the right for its delays and from the left for its inequities, and this article has supplied evidence to support both critiques.

More broadly, this research reveals how bureaucracies can change their original baseline estimates of a project, moving the goal posts without acknowledging that any changes occurred. We have found that local PHAs were able to make significant changes to their HOPE VI projects while—at least in the HUD database meant to keep track of these projects—looking like they made no changes at all. Indeed, far from an attempt to cover up changes in the projects, the interviews at HUD suggest that these changes carried more mundane motives, reflecting political concerns as well as the need for project expediency. Nevertheless, this analysis reveals a distinct lack of urgency about the need to keep full records for the HOPE VI program that map its complete trajectory from initial grant proposal to built-out developments. Building off of prior work on planning implementation, we labeled this phenomenon *selective memory planning*.

The unacknowledged market-rate unit shortfalls in the HOPE VI program may have implications for current and future approaches to public housing redevelopment and mixed-income housing. In the wake of HOPE VI, there are ongoing government efforts to reimagine public housing sites (e.g., the Choice Neighborhoods program), which often involve the introduction of new market-rate housing units. More broadly, mixed-finance projects rely on the rental or sale of market-rate housing to subsidize the cost of housing units for low-income households. In both cases, optimistic assumptions about market-rate occupant demand may come into conflict with the realities of local—or even national—housing market downturns, which could threaten the reach and viability of these projects.[14]

Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) offer a helpful perspective in evaluating whether the implementation of a particular project has failed. They write that,

> when we say that a program has failed, this suggests we are surprised. If we thought from the beginning that they were unlikely to be successful, their failure to achieve stated goals or to work at all would not cry out for any special explanation. (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984, p. 87)

The history of the HOPE VI program strongly suggests we should not be surprised by these findings. HOPE VI has been roundly criticized for a lack of communication with residents and failure of public participation (GAO, 2003b; National Housing Law Project, the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, Sherwood Research Associates, & ENPHRONT, 2002). Indeed, the program was created to overturn the public perception of decrepit public housing contributing to crime and destitution (Cisneros & Engdahl, 2009). In this sense, the most relevant *baseline* condition was the failed public housing itself, not some initial proposal designed to replace it. HOPE VI proponents aimed to demolish the worst public housing

in the country and replace it with new, mixed-income developments as quickly as possible—not to increase community participation. Little surprise, then, that its record-keeping system gave minimal attention to tracking the initial specifications of project proposals.

Nevertheless, for residents of low-income communities who already have difficulty holding federal bureaucracies accountable, the lack of proper documentation about the HOPE VI program remains disappointing. A full assessment of HOPE VI would require HUD and PHAs to be held accountable to their original promises to communities—or to at least admit that, by relying on selective memory planning, they have fallen short.

Notes

1. HUD records for HOPE VI use the term *affordable housing* to connote housing that has some subsidy, but does not have the full deep subsidy associated with public housing. The definitional threshold for what counts as *affordable* housing tends to be highly variable.
2. The reports also list a large amount of detail on funding, as well as many pages on when units were produced and of what type, a phase compliance checkpoint report, and a phase narrative report. These sections are not the focus of this article and so are not discussed further here.
3. HUD continues to use the management system to track ongoing HOPE VI projects. We also have seen no evidence to suggest that the data reported in the management system is inaccurate for *that point in time* at which it is reported. We accept this to be the case to make data analysis feasible.
4. Although it would have been ideal to cross-reference these award announcements with the data contained in the original HOPE VI applications, HUD did not systematically retain copies of those applications.
5. Although it would be preferable to have the original grant announcements or grant proposals, HUD has been unable to locate them, despite repeated requests. As a result, we do not currently have information on some grants from the years 1994–1996.
6. Public housing residents and neighbors may have been exposed to project presentations separate from newspaper reports, since HUD required community consultation prior to submission of a HOPE VI proposal.
7. Such shortfalls may be perceived quite differently, however, since losses of public housing are subtracted from housing that was previously 100% public housing, whereas losses in market-rate units merely entail a smaller addition of such units to a place that formerly lacked any of them.
8. The mean, however, is skewed upward by the outlier Cabrini-Green in Chicago, Illinois, which experienced a large increase in proposed market-rate units after its initial HOPE VI proposal had been submitted.
9. As one anonymous reviewer usefully pointed out, the number of bedrooms proposed can be just as important as the number of units. To understand the social impact of a mid-course shift in unit provision in a way that would reveal which types of families will likely be accommodated, it is just as important to count the number of beds as it is to keep track of the number of front doors. Unfortunately, the dashboard data supplied by HUD do not provide sufficient detail about the number of bedrooms per unit to enable this article to provide a systematic analysis of this aspect.
10. Although all interviews with past and present HUD career officials and consultants were on the record, given current political volatility, we have left them anonymous.
11. HOPE VI projects also receive widely differing local funding matches. In the first round of HOPE VI funding, for example, McGuire Gardens in Camden, New Jersey, was redeveloped using 96.6% HOPE VI funds, whereas Mission Main in Boston, Massachusetts, relied on HOPE VI for only 31.3% of its funding (Holin et al., 2003, 26). Thereafter, as mixed-finance projects became increasingly ubiquitous, HOPE VI grantees frequently had to rely on the uncertainties of tax credit allocations, and often faced uncertainty about the availability of local matching funds (GAO, 2002). It is hardly surprising, then, that the complexity of funding can attenuate the implementation timetable or present insurmountable obstacles, making it more likely that realized projects will differ from initial proposals.
12. Of those fully completed projects where full income-mix data are available, there has been only a 2% loss of units between T2 and T3. But since the incomplete projects are larger on average, and have higher percentages of market-rate units and homeownership units, it is unclear what this will portend. Either these will get built out and start to mitigate the loss of these higher income units that occurred between T1 and T2—or the same trend established between T1 and T2 will continue, yielding an even greater shortfall in higher income units and a corresponding skew of income mixes toward lower income occupancy.
13. For example, SMP could be applied to climate change adaptation, transportation and infrastructure, business improvement districts, environmental protection, international development, or other arenas.
14. We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting these points.

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Notes on Contributors

Lawrence J. Vale is Ford Professor of Urban Design and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Shomon Shamsuddin is Assistant Professor of Social Policy and Community Development at Tufts University.

Nicholas Kelly is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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