

August 2015

Dear LISC Bay Area Officials,

According to a recent real estate company's memo that was made public, your organization is involved by the tune of \$3 million dollars to assist in the illegal purchase of an affordable housing complex built by an African American church in San Francisco, Third Baptist. The illegal sale that was to occur July 30, 2015, but was stopped by a court ordered injunction.

The Neighborhood Profile-Broad Street report funded by your company along with San Francisco's Office of Workforce Development and Planning Department indicates that churches, mostly African American along the Broad Street corridor are a hindrance to economic "neighborhood serving retail." The churches being a challenge as your report indicates resulted in an article in the Ingleside Excelsior Light newspaper in San Francisco, July/August 2015.

The following statement along with a photo of a church can be found on the LISC Institute for Comprehensive Development website in an article dated May 2, 2011: <http://www.instituteccd.org/news/2377>

In another surprising result, Sampson studied the role of 11,000 churches in Chicago neighborhoods and found that places with a strong church presence — mainly African-American and low-income areas — had relatively few non-profit organizations. And a high level of mistrust of neighbors.

Are the churches strong in these areas because of the lack of non-profits? Or are there few non-profits because the churches are so strong? And why the mistrust?

Again, important questions that should be the focus of future studies.

To counter your company's apparent pattern of bias against Black churches, I am writing to engage your company to truly build neighborhoods by utilizing a great resource that already exists in the communities. I request that your company 1) drop its funding for the purchase of Frederick Douglass Haynes Gardens 2) provide grants to stabilize family homes in foreclosure utilizing the churches along the Broad Street corridor as a platform for the initiative to serve as a replicable prototype (social service model akin to the attached document can help pay the mortgages) 3) provide grants for workforce development in the neighborhood using once again the churches as a platform for service.

I look forward to your company meeting with community leaders to work out plans that will truly live up to your motto: "Helping neighbors build communities" and will be in alignment with Robin E. Rubin's Tedx talk about "Breaking the chain of poverty" posted on the LISC website.

Sincerely,

Jackie Wright