BUILDING
"YES"

A Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) Toolkit

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We thank them for sharing their expertise and note that errors in this publication are our responsibility.

The people who reviewed the document and provided comments:

- **Marie Ryan**, Principal, Goss Gilroy Inc.
- **Shannie Duff**, Deputy Mayor, City of St. John's

Welcome Message

As the Chair of the Advisory Committee, made possible by federal funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, I am pleased to welcome you to this Toolkit.

In gathering this information, staff from the City of St. John's, the Canadian Home Builders' Association - Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network, and the St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness came together for a common purpose - to help stakeholders involved in housing to navigate the development process and to assist them in building inclusive communities.

As someone intimately involved in housing myself, I can identify with the need for improved coordination between those who aim to offer housing choice for everyone. These stakeholders include builders and developers, municipalities, community organizations, businesses and residents living in communities all across our province.

Sometimes residents are hesitant about the effect a specific building project may have on the quality of their neighbourhood and it was our goal to understand these concerns, determine how to meaningfully engage local residents; offer successful approaches, and present opportunities to combine efforts in support of the long-term development of our provincial communities, both large and small.

We have attempted to pull together best practices originating from other jurisdictions in Canada, as well as specific, recent experiences from here in Newfoundland and Labrador. On behalf of the Committee, we hope this material provides you with practical information and user-friendly advice that will support your work.

Sincerely,

Jim Ford,
Advisory Committee Chair

Acronyms

Canadian Home Builders' Association - Newfoundland and Labrador	CHBA-NL
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	CMHC
Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Program	CMHC AHP
Mokami Status of Women Council	MSWC
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation	NLHC
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network	NLHHN
Not-In-My-Backyard	NIMBY

Executive Summary

This practical Toolkit, designed for use by stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador, provides best practices to support development proposals that offer different housing options through community engagement and education. Housing options may include, but are not limited to, affordable housing, mixed-used development, higher-density housing and other supportive housing initiatives.

For the purposes of this Toolkit, "housing proponent" refers to anyone in this province involved in building homes and meeting the needs to growing communities, including builders, developers, municipalities, and community-based service providers. This material is intended to give you the tools and guidance to help you along the way.

One of the most important, and often overlooked, tools at your disposal is pre-planning. Pre-planning means identifying potential issues and gaps in knowledge, understanding and discussing challenges, coming up with solutions, neutralizing concerns and communicating key messages in advance of beginning your development. We understand this is a lengthy document and not everything here will apply, so please refer to the Table of Contents to point you in the right direction.

The Toolkit is divided into a number of parts, following our Focus Group Results and NL-Specific Case Studies, which form the foundation for the Toolkit. It covers Responding to Concerns frequently brought up by residents and how to effectively respond, as well as the myriad of Approaches for Housing Proponents to consider and prepare for.

These include Preliminary Research and Due Diligence, how to Analyze the Zoning Process, and understanding the Development Planning Process; capitalizing on A Community Strengths, Building a Case for Development and Identifying Supporters. Interwoven with these topics is thoughtfully designing a Successful Community Campaign and Meaningful Engagement with the Media.

In the section, Approaches for Municipalities, there are Planning Tools, Public Education opportunities and Implementation and Monitoring Techniques to help navigate the process. Finally, in the Appendices there are useful web links, meeting facilitation tips and a directory of contact names and email addresses to call on the expertise of individuals in the province who have had direct experience in Not-In-My-Backyard challenges.

Introduction

This Toolkit was designed to equip "housing proponents" - developers, municipalities and community-based service providers - with comprehensive and proactive approaches to addressing the Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) syndrome and the resulting barriers it creates to housing options.

It is anticipated this material will not only pave the way for the creation of innovative affordable housing solutions across Newfoundland and Labrador, including a mix of affordable rental properties, increased housing density, and supportive housing and mixed income communities, but also strategies that are collaborative and coordinated.

NIMBY has been clearly identified by a broad range of stakeholders as a major barrier to the development of more affordable housing options. In the absence of informed dialogue, individuals and communities often react unfavourably to inventive housing solutions. These responses can incur high economic, political and social costs for a range of populations in need of these options.

Likewise, responding to NIMBY attitudes on a project-by-project basis is extremely difficult, time-consuming, uncoordinated and, therefore, often unsuccessful. A more practical tactic is required to make inroads and getting familiar with this Toolkit is the first step.

Background

The Canadian Home Builders' Association - Newfoundland and Labrador (CHBA-NL) embraces housing options and supports the building of homes that everyone can afford. Choice and affordability, however, are at risk due to the unintended consequences of the rapidly expanding provincial economy and the rising costs associated with home building.

NIMBY was brought forward as an area of concern at the Housing Our Community Together forum, hosted by the City of St. John's in November 2011, and these sentiments were echoed by other developers and community groups, which opened up this important dialogue.

As the voice of the residential construction industry, the CHBA-NL represents over 200 member firms comprised of new home builders, renovators, land developers, subcontractors, suppliers, and service providers. Members have a wide range of expertise and are active in weighing in on matters of importance to the community and the province. As a result, the CHBA-NL aims to develop innovative partnerships and collective approaches with stakeholders to solve community challenges through engagement.

Meaningful "engagement" means involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, rather than simply consulting or soliciting feedback. This includes engaging local residents and adjacent neighbours in vicinities where housing projects are proposed.

In partnership, the CHBA-NL, the City of St. John's, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Newfoundland and Labrador Homelessness & Housing Network (NLHHN), and the St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness have combined efforts to achieve a common goal - to devise effective solutions for creating sustainable, well-planned communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Definition

In the broadest sense, the "Not-In-My-Backyard" syndrome or "NIMBY" is the term used to describe the desire of residents in a neighbourhood to prevent certain land uses near their homes or communities. It has also been defined as "opposition to housing projects that are based on stereotypes or prejudice towards the people who will live in them. It can refer to discriminatory attitudes as well as actions, laws or policies that have the effect of creating barriers for people." [1]

Some of the examples of discriminatory practices cited in the policy include:

• Requiring fences or walls around the property to separate it from other neighbourhood homes because of the intended residents;
• Arbitrary caps on the numbers of residents allowed;
• Adding visual buffering or removing balconies, so tenants cannot look out on their neighbours; and
• Requiring residents to sign contracts with neighbours as a condition of occupying the building.

Community apprehension reflects residents' concerns that their lives will change for the worse. Sometimes these anxieties are concrete and focused on measurable impacts to a neighbourhood. In other instances, they may be based on stereotypes or new and unfamiliar residents.

Newfoundland and Labrador is no exception to these challenges, though the way these developments are approached in this province can help foster understanding and preserve harmony, while moving forward with proposals that are critical to the social and economic needs of a rapidly growing urban landscape.

Here is a list of housing developments that have experienced NIMBY:

• Affordable housing
• Transition and group homes
• Homeless, youth and women's shelters
• Nursing homes and long-term care facilities
• Student housing and dormitories
• Mental health treatment facilities
• Drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres
• Condominiums and townhouses
• Higher-density housing and mixed-use residential development

[1] Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). *Policy on Human Rights and Rental Housing*. P. 50.

These are other projects that have not always been welcomed:

- Day cares, schools, colleges, hospitals
- Shopping centres and strip malls
- Correctional facilities
- Industrial and commercial projects like power plants, airports and factories
- Landfills and hazardous waste facilities

In short, any collective action taken against a proposed physical or social change to the local environment reflects NIMBY. Physical changes are characterized by new housing construction, renovations to existing buildings, landscaping or altered traffic patterns; social changes refer to demographic, ethnic, racial or economic changes to a neighbourhood.

Addressing NIMBY requires an understanding of the underlying discomfort regarding new developments, applying the skills to discern and effectively address valid concerns, and creating the means to engage all stakeholders impacted by a proposal in the planning process.

Human Rights Framework

While some municipalities have developed their own anti-discrimination policies that uphold the rights of social housing residents, many jurisdictions have taken a broad approach to the types of residential accommodation coved by human rights legislation whereby protections are typically restricted to "self-contained dwelling units".

Newfoundland and Labrador's Human Rights Code defines a "self-contained dwelling unit" as a "dwelling house, apartment or other similar place of residence that is used or occupied or is intended, arranged or designed to be used or occupied as separate accommodation for sleeping and eating."[2]

The City of St. John's Affordable Housing Charter, for instance, states that affordable housing is, amongst other things, a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a

foundation for a safe, prosperous and healthy community.[3] Notably, Canada is also a signatory to, and co-author of, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[4]

Likewise, the Charter of the NLHHN, a provincial group of community-based service providers, municipal, provincial and federal departments and agencies, and representatives of persons at risk of homelessness, declares an intent to ensure choice and safe options suited to the needs of individuals and families, and that social inclusion is fundamental to creating these options.[5]

2 Human Rights Code, RSNL 1990, Chapter H-14.
3 Mayor's Advisory Committee on Affordable Housing. Solid Foundation, Long View: Affordable Housing Charter and Action Plan 2011-13, City of St. John's. St. John's City Council, February 28, 2011. P. 7.
4 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December, 1948, at Palais de Chaillot, Paris. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled.
5 Housing and Homelessness Network. Charter: Housing and Homelessness Network. March 2007. P. 3.

Focus Group Results

The CHBA-NL hosted a forum at the City of St. John's in January 2013, bringing together thirty-five stakeholders with direct experience in navigating the NIMBY experience to discuss and identify trends.

Participants included builders and developers, City Councillors, and the media; those working in the fields of affordable and supportive housing, mental health, social work, homelessness, and community development; representatives working directly with youth, women and released offenders; in addition to residents belonging to community associations who have actively been involved in conversations relating to development proposals.

It was identified that the discomfort felt by individuals and communities predominantly stemmed from:

- **Prejudice** – aimed against occupants or tenants of a proposal
- **Presage** – the perceived impacts of a proposal by local residents and neighbours
- **Process** – a lack of community engagement with local residents and neighbours
- **Protocol** – land use regulations or zoning conflicts
- **Pretext** – a prior negative development experience that impacted residents and neighbours

Regardless of the underlying cause, the findings of the Focus Group overwhelmingly pointed towards increasing communication strategies and improving meaningful engagement with local residents throughout all stages of the development planning process.[6] Putting into practice effective strategies like these, more often than not, creates an atmosphere of partnership and respect for the views of all stakeholders involved.
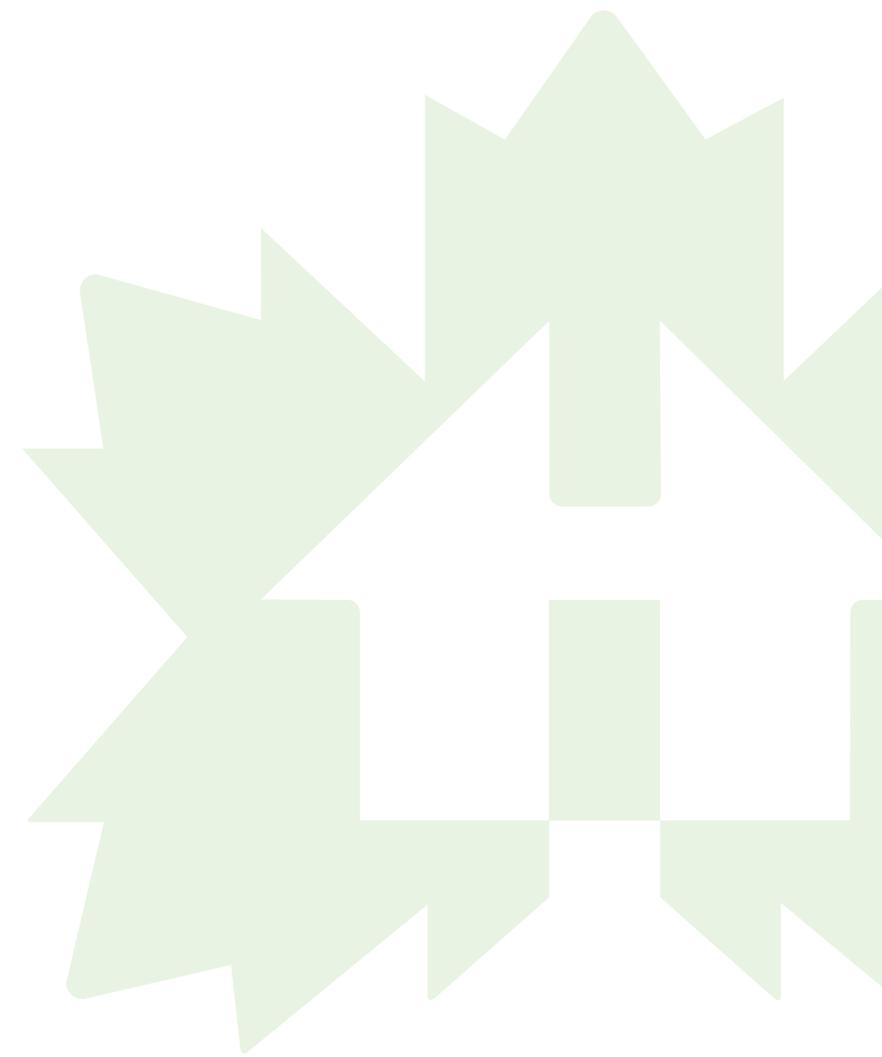
6 See Appendix B for a complete summary of the Focus Group results.

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CAREW LODGE
St. John's, NL (2001, 2012)

Housing for Individuals with Mental Illness & Recently Released Offenders

In 1997, Carew Lodge was a private boarding house known for the violence, alcohol and drug abuse that plagued its surroundings. Not only was the building run down, but the police and fire department were regular visitors. That being the case, neighbours were delighted when Stella's Circle purchased the property.

A current tenant and caretaker at that time made a point of canvassing the neighbourhood to introduce herself and to talk about Carew Lodge, resulting in positive feedback and articles in The Telegram. Recognizing its potential was first in this building's remarkable transformation to becoming a model for affordable and supportive housing for people living with mental illness and recently released former inmates.

With twenty-four new and refurbished units, proponents cite early engagement with the neighbourhood as pivotal to its success. This took the form of talking with school representatives, knocking on doors and hosting multiple public consultations. Proponents collaborated with the City to identify mutual needs - in this case, housing the hard-to-house. A community development worker was hired to dedicate their time championing the project and to act as a contact point for stakeholders.

Fast forward to the most recent renovation in 2012: The neighbouring Bishop Field Elementary School was not in favour of the extension, citing density concerns and anxiety over having too many individuals with the same challenges being housed in the same building. With windows facing the school, would tenants "be watching" kids and why didn't Stella's Circle have mixed housing?

Past and current tenants spoke out at a meeting to allay fears and address questions, and as a result, people genuinely felt differently about it. Transparency was key, as was being up front with

neighbours about the project. Other strategies like inviting the neighbourhood to a summer BBQ to mingle, were also a success. Having a staff presence at the building adds to the sense of organization and security that both tenants and residents feel, in addition to promptly returning calls and ensuring that concerns are addressed.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Lewisporte, NL (2009)

Housing For Seniors

This housing complex was designed and built for seniors, consisting of eighteen units. As Bert Twyne, the visionary housing proponent behind the Village puts it, "One of the most important things to remember when providing housing for Seniors is that it is 'for Seniors,' so it should be 'about Seniors'."

Eight units are funded by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) and the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Program (CMHC AHP), regulated by the AHP criteria. Ten units are financed by the "Life Rent" method and open

to any senior regardless of social or financial status. All eighteen units consist implement below market rent, however, the proponent has been very careful to refrain from segregating people with low or fixed income because the Village is fundamentally about a quality standard of living for any senior.

Proponents did not experience opposition from neighbours, credited to the amount of information provided to the community. Bert stated that, "This development is literally in my back yard, so we were careful to not put anything in someone else's back yard that I did not want in mine. I think that is a good guideline to follow no matter where a project is located."   Bert understands that the design should be pleasing - open space, good views, and a move away from the perception of "row housing".
The proponent deliberately avoided using the term "affordable housing", which often comes with a host of negative preconceived notions.   Instead, they used

terms like "diversified housing", presented two methods of financing and offered residents the freedom to choose the one that best suited their circumstance. They even went so far as to avoid any institutional terminology like "Complex", in favour of "Village", which tehy believe enhances a sense of belonging.

Bert went on to say, "We are considering the addition of fourteen more units and we have already begun to inform the community of what we propose to put in their backyard. We are also asking for their input relative to items that would make the project more pleasing to them. I have to apply to the Town for a zoning variance and, because of the communication of information, we are not expecting any opposition."

Language, especially when it comes to re-zoning issues and land use changes, influenced public perception and had the power of helping or hindering community buy-in of a development proposal. "Our Village is more than just a place to live - it also offers a social aspect. We have not used all the space with buildings. We have a central patio where seniors can gather and enjoy each other's company.   The Village also holds an annual Christmas Dinner and an annual BBQ. These are for all residents of the Village no matter their financial status."

SUMMIT PLACE
Corner Brook, NL (2012)

Housing for Individuals With Complex Needs

Summit Place provides ten affordable and safe housing units for people with mental health needs. Collaborating with the City proved crucial to the proposal, particularly since the property needed to be rezoned. The rezoning process alone lasted one year but that was not the only challenge proponents faced.

The proponent disclosed that more targeted communication with residents of the neighbourhood was necessary, as the initial public consultation did not go well. In hindsight, door-to-door canvassing prior to the first public forum to answer individual concerns would have yielded better results. The second public consultation was far more effective because those taking the lead were prepared and a number of individuals having personal experience with mental health issues were in attendance.

Housing for individuals with complex needs is a tough sell - local residents and the wider community at large can have very fixed ideas about what "mental illness" means and the

stigma associated is serious, though unwarranted. Education and awareness regarding mental illness and personalizing the stories of those affected is a key component to alleviating distress.

Providing a forum for the community to learn more about these issues and to discuss the experiences of friends and family suffering from mental illness humanized the prospective occupants and brought a level of understanding that was missing from the equation.

In all, the proponent took away some key practices:

• Survey the public, in the beginning, to determine their understanding of mental illness (or whatever the concern may be) and what their unease stems from;
• Present the facts and a clear message about what the project is.
• For instance, housing for individuals with complex needs versus a psychiatric institution;
• Be prepared to undertake education about mental health issues and the supports available;
• Include individuals from the neighbourhood on the project development committee;
• Aim strongly for buy-in from a City Councillor to support the proposal;
• Make sure to canvas door-to-door to offer information, materials and to answer questions;
• Make use of the media wisely by maintaining open communication versus a "no comment" attitude; and
• Use designs plans and large signage during construction to advertise the build with a "Coming Soon" display.

MOKAMI STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL CENTRE & LIBRA HOUSE

Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL (2013)

Affordable Housing and Emergency Crisis Shelter for Women & Children Experiencing Abuse

This narrative demonstrates unique challenges, leading to immense opportunities, based on the experience of a women - a housing proponent - who was uniquely involved with both the Mokami Status of Women Council Centre and Libra House, which are separate and distinct organizations.

The Mokami Status of Women Council (MSWC), in this instance, owned a property in a residential area, zoned as both business and residential. The housing proponent working for the MSWC assumed local residents would not be bothered by the organization's plan to build a women's centre, including eight affordable housing units, as their building was already located there. That was until she received a court order, prohibiting them from moving forward, from an unhappy neighbour.

The situation escalated until it ended up in court, where the judge ruled that the best course of action would be to file two restraining orders prohibiting either owner from going on the other's property.

In the meantime, the housing proponent was conflicted, recognizing that it was in the organization's best interest to be more open and public about what they were trying to accomplish. Fortunately, a contractor who owned another property, which was distanced from other houses, offered to trade land with them, effectively resolving the issue. The new affordable housing units were then nicely situated in proximity to a hostel, a Friendship Centre, a church and a handful of other businesses.

With this experience fresh in her mind, the housing proponent, now working on behalf a different organization, embarked on another build - Libra House. This proposal was for an emergency crisis shelter for women and children experiencing violence and abuse. The shelter was moving from its twenty-five year old home to another location in a new area of town and, based on the prior circumstance, the proponent knew to prepare differently.

To maintain transparency, the housing proponent and her team appeared on the radio and called the newspaper to do a story; held a series of creative fundraisers, sought out support from local politicians, and organized tours of the location to achieve buy-in before they even broke ground.

Early preparation included engaging Town Council, as well as enlisting the endorsements of CMHC, if necessary, and the RCMP to confirm that calls are not received regarding issues at the shelter. The housing proponent even put an ad in the newspaper calling on citizens to write directly to the Town in the event that they had concerns. The Town, however, received nothing but positive feedback and after completion, the proponent made a point of sending "thank-you" notes and appreciation to everyone for their support.

It is her belief that the ease and success of the shelter is due in large part to stakeholders feeling included in the project, coupled with the organization having been a mainstay in the community for twenty-five years without incident. "We prepared for the worst and hoped for the best, and that's exactly what happened."

THE LILLY
St. John's, NL (2010)

Housing for Youth At Risk of Homelessness

For male and female youth with complex needs and facing homelessness, The Lilly offers two-bedroom and single bedroom units. Its realization resulted from community consultation, which involved talking to residents, listening to feedback and casting young people in a positive light.

Information was presented quickly and questions were answered honestly, in collaboration with interviews provided to the media. This included an appearance on the local Morning Show to discuss how every individual, the community's sons and daughters, need and deserve adequate housing. Rather than allowing the proposal to be sensationalized by fears of crime and insecurity, proponents held informal meetings with local residents to discuss potential concerns and how they will be addressed.

Highlighting the revitalization of the community through refurbishing a derelict building, coupled with an accurate anticipated increase in property values and tours of the site, calmed residents' fears and generated support.

Best practices resulting from proponents of The Lilly included:

• Documenting everything, including every time someone knocked on a door, when media was engaged, or when a call or letter was received (positive and negative);
• Incorporating a response mechanism for each instance where the process was criticized, so those comments could be swiftly recognized and responded to;
• Going beyond the City's requirements when providing information to the neighbourhood to ensure everyone with an interest is captured;
• Reinforcing clear messages and partnering with natural allies;
• Inviting immediate neighbours and representatives from condo boards to participate in the design process;
• Steering away from making promises that may be impossible to keep regarding, among other things, who will live there; and
• Connecting with City Council to find out what they need in terms of process and for suggestions on who to talk to in the neighbourhood, but not for lobbying purposes.

MARGUERITE'S PLACE

St. John's, NL (2011)

Affordable & Supportive Housing for Women

This women-centred environment includes three units in downtown St. John's and eight units of supportive housing. In this instance, the housing proponent did not encounter community resistance to the development since it was entering into an NL Housing Community.

The primary reasons earning acceptance was the repetition of key messages and early, direct engagement with the community, which were critical factors in dispelling myths. Likewise, opening the space up to be used by community members helped with its integration and was welcomed by local residents.

In taking a proactive approach to media engagement, stakeholders assert that the onus sits on the shoulders of housing proponents to ensure that positive stories are reported by the media and that successes are communicated to the public through all means available.

Key to achieving effective communication is hiring one or more experienced facilitators, rather than relying on existing staff, who have their own responsibilities. If this is not feasible, then frontline staff or designated supporters must be adequately trained to manage this role.

An important message from the housing proponent of this development is that, in many cases, it is not always possible to please everyone in the surrounding area - some people will be offended no matter what measures are taken. Realistically, only time will change some people's minds, others may have personal opinions that cannot be altered, and sometimes it's necessary to plunge ahead in the face of pockets of opposition for the greater good.
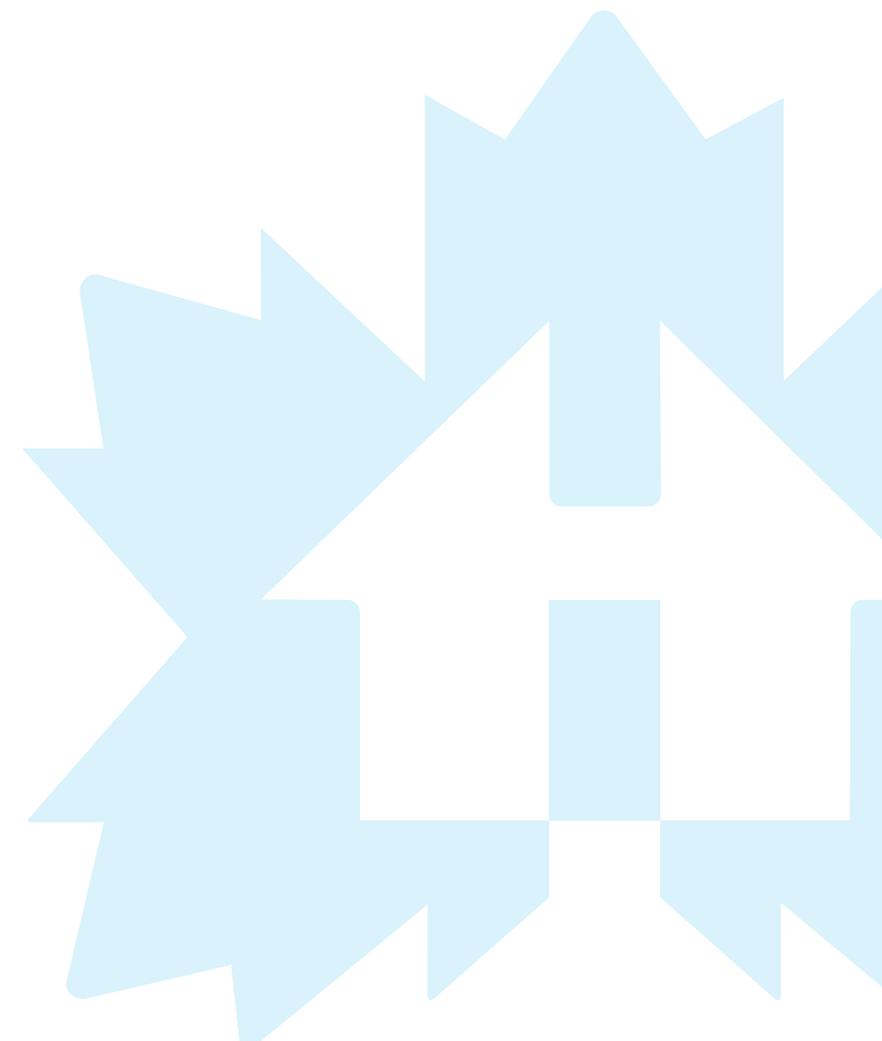
Responding to Concerns

As developers, municipalities, social service providers and other housing proponents strive to build affordable housing, address density issues, and explore housing options for everyone, they sometimes run into objections from the community where a different form of housing is proposed.

At the same time, proponents have a responsibility to respect the legitimate concerns of the local community, in addition to the rights of current and prospective residents. They are also obligated to conduct development in a way that will advance the prospects of future proposals intended to benefit the entire community, rather than simply concentrating on pushing the proposal at hand forward.

Alternate housing options may bring up concerns that sound like these:

• It will lower property values;
• Crime rates will increase;
• There will be too much traffic;
• The character of the neighbourhood will change;
• It is badly designed, cheaply built and will be unattractive;
• It will contribute to overcrowding of public schools
• and increase taxes.

Though these concerns may be unsubstantiated, it is important to identify them, understand where the apprehension originates and to respond in a timely manner with true and accurate information.

Contrary to these widely held views a substantial body of research, dating back to the early 1970s, has established that affordable housing and residential intensification has no detrimental effect on property values or on the time that homes spend on the market. Studied in Canada and the United States across a variety of neighbourhoods and development proposals, twenty-five reports of affordable and supportive housing have concluded that there were no adverse impacts on property values.[7]

In British Columbia, the province commissioned a number of guides about NIMBY and among the seven case studies examined, there were none in which property values decreased. In fact, value increases were reported, substantiating positive impacts on properties in proximity to housing developments.[8]

In addition to the facts, it is important to know how to respond to concerns:

• Provide residents with the most relevant studies;
• Obtain testimony from an informed realtor or appraiser;
• Present the property maintenance budget and management plan;

Property Values

Home ownership is considered by many to be a milestone. For most, their home is their most important asset and they rely on it to provide for their children's education and for their own retirement. Home owners are understandably concerned when a changing neighbourhood threatens this investment. A reduction in property values is perhaps the most commonly expressed objection to a housing proposal or higher-density development.

7 Affordable Housing and Choice Today (ACT). **Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY.** 2009. P. 4.
8 Affordable Housing and Choice Today (ACT). **Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY.** 2009. P. 4.

- Conduct a new property value study tailored to the community;
- Designate a trusted spokesperson to speak on the housing proponent's behalf; and
- Conduct a housing tour of similar builds with an opportunity to speak with neighbours.[9]

Crime & Safety

The development of different housing options in many communities may be the first opportunity for existing residents to live near people with mental illness, disabilities, those of a different ethnic background or income level. Anxiety about new neighbours sometimes gives rise to allegations that they will cause the crime rate to increase.[10] Studies of affordable housing, group homes and emergency shelters have concluded, however, that crime rates are no higher in proximity to those units than in comparison sites.[11]

The design and use of public spaces, particularly the sense of control and ownership that residents have over these areas, have far more significant effects on crime than density or income levels. Likewise, there is no significant evidence to demonstrate that affordable or supportive housing leads to increased rates of reported

violent, property, criminal mischief, or disorderly conduct criminality. In fact, affordable housing often has a stabilizing effect on a neighbourhood by enabling people to stay in their communities.

As with property values, it is essential to share research data to set the record straight about allegations that affordable housing breeds crime and insecurity.[12] Proponents should emphasize that good management and security are priorities, and that measures will be in place to ensure both standards are met.

Most affordable housing residents want nothing more than to become part of the quiet, peaceful life of the surrounding community. They have sought out affordable housing, so that they can live independent, self-sufficient lives.

- Offer correct factual information debunking the myth that crime rates will increase;
- Recruit supporters trusted by the community to interact with local residents;
- Create opportunities for current neighbours and new residents to meet;
- Reassure neighbours regarding the process for identifying and, as required, supporting occupants;

- Enlist the support and knowledge of key community stakeholders, like law enforcement;
- Provide concrete evidence of how residential property standards will be enforced; and
- Showcase other builds that demonstrate no increase in crime rates.

Increase in Traffic

There is nothing to suggest that residential intensification will necessarily lead to congestion on neighbourhood streets. Like any new development, a higher-density or infill-housing proposal must meet the municipality's planning and engineering standards. Furthermore, multiple-family dwellings near quality transit services are likely to attract residents with lower levels of car ownership, as are dwellings oriented to seniors and lower-income families.[13]

Building Design

Neighbours concerned about the development of housing options or other facilities often fear the worst in terms of design and its impact on the navigability and aesthetics of the neighbourhood. People sometimes assume that affordable housing or other housing types will result in unsightly buildings and poor design, fed by a

9 Sara Pratt and Michael Allen. **Addressing Community Opposition To Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing Toolkit**. Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Inclusive Communities Working Group, 2003. P. 8.
10 Sara Pratt and Michael Allen. **Addressing Community Opposition To Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing Toolkit**. Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Inclusive Communities Working Group, 2003. P. 9.
11 Affordable Housing and Choice Today (ACT). **Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY**. 2009. Pp. 5-6.
12 **Vancouver Sun**. Studies don't support fears of social housing: Crime will go up. Property values will fall. Traffic and noise will increase. My neighbourhood will be less desirable. April 5, 2008.
13 Affordable Housing and Choice Today (ACT). **Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY**. 2009. P. 4.

public image of a low-cost, no-frills approach. Architects, planners and design consultants have learned from these mistakes and now thoughtfully take into account building and site design, as well as the design process, to address local concerns while preserving the vision of a proposal. Appropriate, neighbourhood-sensitive design has become an effective means of responding to fears and should be carefully considered by developers, municipalities and all housing proponents.[14]

Affordable housing, for instance, is not affordable because it has been built with cheap or shabby materials. Rather, it is affordable because innovative developers, with or without government funding, have contributed to keeping the construction and operating costs low. As a rule of thumb, housing is "affordable" when it costs no more than 30% of a household's income.

It is important to point out that all housing options must comply with the same building restrictions and design standards as market-rate housing. As a result, it will be designed to fit in with the character of the neighbourhood. When funded with public money, additional restrictions and higher standards are sometimes required.

Similarly, "higher-density" does not have to mean "high-rise" or cluttered. There are many ways to develop housing that enhances, rather than detracts, from the neighbourhood.

Strain on Public Services & Infrastructure

Generally, higher-density housing requires less extensive infrastructure than planned communities on previously undeveloped land with respect to piped water and sewerage, for schools, roads and other services. Likewise, higher-density housing provides a concentration of passengers for public transit, it improves efficiency of other neighbourhood services in a more compact area, and it can also be a smart way to take advantage of underutilized infrastructure.[15]

Impact on Character of the Neighbourhood

Local residents may feel apprehension about how the character of their neighbourhood will change in a negative way.

A primary aim of zoning laws is to manage change and to mitigate its effect on existing uses of land, especially in residential areas. Such laws, however,

cannot be imposed in a manner that violates sound community planning policies. If a housing project, for instance, can be built on a particular parcel of land, the anxiety of neighbours should not create an obstacle to such a use.

If variances are routinely granted for other uses but withheld for housing that offers choice, such practices might be challenged. Often the existing zoning code provides for sufficient flexibility to absorb new affordable units without changing the character of a neighbourhood.[16]

Integration of New Residents

Often, prospective occupants already live in or near the neighbourhood where a housing development is proposed. They are people who share an apartment with other family members or friends, or they are struggling to pay market rents by giving up meals or choosing to walk instead of paying bus fares.

No one is required to ask permission to live in a neighbourhood and legislation, from planning acts and human rights codes, are in place to prevent "people zoning". People zoning through by-laws that define the use of land by reference

14 Sara Pratt and Michael Allen. **Addressing Community Opposition To Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing Toolkit**. Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Inclusive Communities Working Group, 2003. Pp. 10-11.
15 Affordable Housing and Choice Today (ACT). **Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY**. 2009. P. 4.
16 Affordable Housing and Choice Today (ACT). **Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY**. 2009. P. 5.

to personal characteristics have been held to be invalid. Likewise, by-laws that restrict affordable housing development in certain areas, such as lodging or rooming houses, while allowing other establishments of a similar scale can also be viewed as discriminatory.[17]

Politicians should highlight the advantages and importance of integrating new residents to pre-empt comments of this nature and, if they do arise, municipal staff should do all they can to respond plainly and swiftly to any comments made along these lines.

Affordable Housing Already Exists in the Neighbourhood

It is against the law to discriminate against people because of their ethnicity, religion, skin color, physical or mental abilities, or because they are indigent. Municipalities, with the aid of a comprehensive housing or community development plan, can address this by demonstrating that social housing, supportive housing and residential options that offer affordable housing are planned in a variety of neighbourhoods in a way that complements the broader quality of life goals for a city. [18]

Approaches for Housing Proponents

Smart developers and housing proponents plan a strategy in advance through financing, design, and scheduling, but they also develop a campaign to bolster community support for their development. Effective planning means doing the preparation to ensure the successful integration of a development into the community.

Some plan their strategic operations to avoid local resistance by working only in familiar jurisdictions, using only land that has the necessary approvals already, proposing only politically acceptable developments, or making significant concessions as soon as considerable opposition increases. In many areas, the market for these kinds of housing is already saturated or the need and demand for other kinds of housing (which may attract more community opposition) is much higher.

Others seek to develop housing where the existing neighbourhood already has many low income residents or minority populations,

"[People] often oppose a thing merely because they have had no agency in planning it"

—Alexander Hamilton

which may or may not have resulted from past exclusionary zoning policies. Development in these areas tends to increase or perpetuate segregation by race and income, limit opportunities, and run into other forms of opposition. [19]

Every development and every community is different but each requires a plan to bring basic pieces of factual information together with likely allies and coordinate efforts toward ultimate approval of the development. A proposal cannot succeed if the housing proponent waits until opposition arises before developing a plan that includes all these elements.

17 **Ontario Human Rights Commission** (OHRC). Comment of the Ontario Human Rights Commission on the City of Toronto's Proposed By-Law. September 25, 2009.
    Online: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/comment-ontario-human-rights-commission-city-torontos-proposed-zoning-law
18 **Affordable Housing and Choice Today** (ACT). Housing In My Backyard: A Municipal Guide for Responding to NIMBY. 2009. P. 6.
19 Sara Pratt and Michael Allen. **Addressing Community Opposition To Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing Toolkit**. Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Inclusive Communities Working Group, 2003. P. 29.

Preliminary Research & Due Diligence

Planning for approval requires a developer or housing proponent, as part of their due diligence, to collect and synthesize information about the community in which the development will be built, and to determine the extent of existing support for the development.

In some cases, this assessment will also suggest areas of weakness or possible areas of contention, so a strategy can be developed in advance that anticipates likely areas of community concern and suggests solutions. Here is a shortlist of questions that any new proposal should consider:

1. The Community Zoning Process
- What approvals are likely to be needed for this project?
- What is the usual process for approvals?
- Who will review the application?
- Who will make the decisions?
- What are the criteria for decisions?
- What is the likely timeline?
- Who are the real decision-makers?
- What do other developers say?

2. The Neighbourhood Around the Proposed Build Site
- What is the surrounding neighbourhood like?
- What types of housing are already in the neighbourhood?
- Who are the local neighbourhood leaders?
- Is there a neighbourhood association?
- Has the neighbourhood been the site of other developments and what was its reaction?
- What are the neighbourhood needs and concerns?
- What are the neighbourhood's organizational, geographical, and resource-based assets?
- What is the ethnic and economic makeup of the neighbourhood?

3. The Community as a Whole
- What kinds of housing needs are there in the community?
- Will the proposed project meet those needs in some way?
- What history do building proposals have in the community?
- Which advocacy groups and community service organizations are active in the community?

- What recent housing and neighbourhood issues have been in the news?
- What positions have local media taken on housing development projects?
- What has local government said and done about these development types?
- How can we integrate community and local knowledge into a beneficial strategy?

4. Local Supporters
- Who are they?
- What activities have they recently been engaged in that relates to the proposal?
- What are their linkages to local government decision-makers?

5. Legal Issues
- What are the weak spots in the proposal?
- What needs to be done to correct any weak spots in the proposal?
- Are there any zoning issues that might be raised?
- Are the zoning issues discriminatory in any way?

Analyze the Zoning Process

The developer or housing proponent's preliminary research should look at the zoning process itself and the criteria for decision-making to determine what zoning approvals will be needed. If rezoning, variances or waivers are needed for the development to be approved, the relevant ordinance, procedures and decision criteria need to be collected:

• Identify time frames for the process;
• Discern preliminary from final decision-makers;
• Determine whether the process requires or permits a hearing.

Even more important is identifying who the decision-makers are and those who influence the decision-making process:

• Identify who will be the opinion leaders;
• Discover what reliance is given to staff recommendations;
• Establish what role various elected and appointed officials typically play in the approvals process.

It goes without saying that a sound proposal is the most critical success factor but it is also important to know your audience. If staff recommendations are accepted in the majority of cases, an approval strategy should be aimed at staff. If a municipal planning commission makes the final decisions, however, then the strategy should be directed at that body. Likewise, if the mayor or a council member is a key influencer, a housing proponent should find that out and plan accordingly.

One way to find out municipal procedures and how the real process works is to talk to other developers who have recently been through the it. Ask them whether or not their developments raised concerns, solicit their advice and find out what lessons they learned. A developer who has gone through a recent struggle over a commercial development might also be helpful. Other possible resources are provincial or local advocacy groups, such as affordable housing providers, private housing groups, housing finance agency staff or local lawyers who

specialize in planning and zoning law. Lawyers with this speciality should be asked whether or not they represent local governments before a detailed discussion occurs due to an inherent conflict of interest.[20]

> "Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."

Below are examples of the development planning and zoning processes with stakeholders in the City of St. John's in Newfoundland and the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay in Labrador. Both are included in this Toolkit to represent the spectrum of complexity involved in securing an approval in different municipalities across the province, from more intense to less.

CHART: City of St. John's Development Planning Process with Key Stakeholders

STEP	HOUSING PROPONENT	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY & LOCAL RESIDENTS
1	The housing proponent submits a proposal to build to the municipality.		
2	The housing proponent and City's Development Team discuss the proposal.		
3	The application to build is approved. OR The status of the application is pending based on rezoning obligations required by municipal Development Regulations.		
4	The housing proponent applies for rezoning. The Department of Planning gathers information and refers the application to other departments for consideration, maintaining written contact with the housing proponent.		
5	The Department of Planning submits a report to the Council's Planning Committee and the housing proponent may request to present to the Council's Planning Committee.		
6	The Planning Committee presents recommendations to the Regular Meeting of Council, who determines whether to accept them and consider the application.		
7		Council decides to consider the application and the City publishes a notice of the proposed amendment in a local paper. Notices are also mailed to property owners and tenants within a 150 meter radius of the subject property.	
8		Council sets up a Public Meeting to discuss the application.	
9	The housing proponent is asked to attend and present information about their application. The general public is invited to attend the Public Meeting, organized by City staff and chaired by a Councillor. It is advertised in the newspaper at least ten days prior and notices are mailed fourteen days in advance. City staff remain available to discuss the proposed amendment.		

STEP	HOUSING PROPONENT	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY & LOCAL RESIDENTS
10		The minutes of the Public Meeting are forwarded to Council for consideration and if Council agrees to proceed, they will adopt the amendments and forward them to the NL Department of Municipal Affairs for review.	
11		When Municipal Affairs confirms that there is no Provincial interest involved, and if an amendment to the Municipal Plan is required, the City will appoint an independent Commissioner to convene a Public Hearing, as required by the Urban and Rural Planning Act.	
12	The general public is invited to attend the Public Hearing. It is advertised in a local newspaper and by mail-out notice at least fourteen days beforehand. The applicant will be asked to attend and present information on the application; City staff will also be present.		

CHART: Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay Development Planning Process with Key Stakeholders

STEP	HOUSING PROPONENT	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY & LOCAL RESIDENTS
1	The housing proponent submits a proposal to build to the municipality.		
2	The housing proponent and Town's Development Team discuss the proposal.		
3	The housing proponent submits an application to develop.		
4	The application to build is approved OR The status of the application is pending based on a variance required by the municipal Development Regulations.		
5	The housing proponent submits a variance application and the Municipal Services Committee gathers information.		
6		A public notification to property owners located in the vicinity of the property under application is sent out. The notice is written and distributed by Town staff and a set waiting period is in effect to allow those notified an opportunity to respond.	
7		A recommendation is provided to Council from the Municipal Services Committee, who considers whether to approve or reject the variance. If rejected, the decision can be appealed within fourteen days.	
8	With approval, the housing proponent can now commence development.		

It is obvious from these charts that authentic community engagement is minimal, at best. It only really occurs at later stages in the development planning process or, in a very nominal way, if rezoning or a variance applies. As a result, ample opportunity exists to improve on these minimum obligations.

Likewise, rezoning issues can provide the impetus for community consultation by way of meetings that enable local residents and community associations to see and comment on building plans.

Discriminatory Zoning & Land Use

Despite laws prohibiting discrimination many jurisdictions still engage in discriminatory zoning and land use practices, however implicit it may be, to define and maintain the character of urban, suburban and rural communities.

Municipalities may continue to enact zoning ordinances to:

- Create single-family districts;
- Preserve open space;
- Prevent overcrowding;
- Promote adequate access to public utilities;
- Ensure adequate parking;
- Prevent congestion and mitigate the effects of traffic;
- Enforce and protect health and safety regulations; and
- Retain historic character and attributes of the housing stock.

Historically, local governments have had broad latitude in adopting and enforcing local zoning ordinances. Laws themselves are prohibited from expressing illegal discrimination, on their face or in operation, because of race, colour, religion, origin, gender, sexual orientation, familial status or disability. However, when zoning laws and practices discriminate against a protected class, they may be successfully challenged.

Local zoning ordinances may be disputed if they effectively discriminate against people of protected groups or if they have a harsher impact on those groups. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, zoning ordinances may contain provisions that treat affordable housing, supportive housing or group homes for people with disabilities or mental illness differently. When such different treatment is based on race, origin, disability or other protected class membership, it violates the law.[21]

21 Sara Pratt and Michael Allen. *Addressing Community Opposition To Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing Toolkit.* Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Inclusive Communities Working Group, 2003. P. 13.   Table of Contents | Page 26

Adverse Zoning Action & Indications of Legal Violations

Direct Evidence of Discrimination
- Decision-makers, whether elected or appointed, make discriminatory statements; or
- Elected officials appear to base their decisions on illegal, discriminatory sentiments.

In these instances, the adverse zoning action will affect significant numbers of potential residents who are among the groups protected against discrimination and who are expected to live in the housing if it is developed. The reasons given for this type of adverse zoning action seem to be code words for illegal discrimination in the sense that information about the prospective residents of the housing is of more interest than more typical zoning questions.

A Pattern of Segregation
- Data shows that the decision will continue a pattern of segregation;
- For example, affordable housing that will likely house immigrants is rejected in a neighbourhood that is historically homogenous.

The Historical Background
- The historical background demonstrates that the zoning patterns or decisions came from discriminatory origins;
- Prior applications have been rejected with evidence of discriminatory motivations; or
- There has been a history of refusals to permit low-income housing, rental housing or other social service provision in a particular area.

Timing of Decision-Making
- The timing and sequence of events are unusual or suspicious;
- For example, a week after an application for zoning approval is filed for multi-family housing constructed with three stories, planned to house primarily foreign workers, the zoning authorities recommends an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would only permit two-story multi-family units.

Departures from Procedure
- When procedural steps and regular protocol are conveniently abandoned or bypassed;

- For example, a hearing is scheduled when normally there is none; the planning process is amended or not followed when it normally is.

Deviations in Approval Process
- The usual reasons for accepting or denying similar approvals are not applied;
- New reasons or additional requirements are imposed after community opposition arises or a particular application is submitted;
- Issues that appear to be valid concerns are raised that have never been discussed before; or
- The reasons given for rejecting a development are untrue or they are not applicable to this development.

Legislative or Administrative History
- The legislative or administrative history of the zoning decisions are unusual or contain evidence of discrimination;
- For example, elected officials make statements in correspondence, meetings or to the media

that indicate discriminatory reasons; or
- There is extensive public commentary or controversy with discriminatory overtones that surrounds the decision-making.

Non-Discriminatory or Origin-Neutral Reasons
- Reasons relating to traffic, safety, crime rates, impact on public services or the like are cited without any comprehensive study of their content;
- The rationale is either inapplicable, the particular study is inaccurate, or the veracity of comments cannot be supported.

Comparative Builds in the Municipality or Region
- Other similar housing or social service provision in the municipality is not viewed with the same exacting scrutiny as projects that will have a significant minority population, a number of families with children, or people with mental illness or disabilities.

The Surrounding Neighbourhood

Developers and housing proponents routinely examine a proposed site for development with great care. Equal attention should be taken in evaluating the neighbourhood surrounding the proposed site. Consideration of a neighbourhood's recent history, both positive and negative, in planning a strategy should be made. A recently approved application for a similar type of housing may not necessarily indicate that a new development will be welcome.

Examine the record of the approval, understand how it is similar or different from the current proposal, and assess if and why the proposed development is still needed. A prior rejection of a proposal is not necessarily a sign that a new development should not be considered. Examination of a past proposal and the reasons for its rejection may be instructive in identifying pitfalls to avoid in a future application and it may even suggest positive opportunities for another development.

Moreover, evidence of adverse action against other developments can be useful evidence if the proposed development is rejected for illegal discriminatory reasons. Likewise, evidence of procedures applied to developments that were approved may be used to show that municipal officials departed from customary procedures in rejecting a specific proposal.

Here are some questions to consider:

1. What is the character of the neighbourhood?
2. What is the vacancy rate?
3. What are the housing rental costs in this neighbourhood?
4. Has the neighbourhood lost affordable housing units?
5. Will the development provide housing for people who live there now?
6. Will the development change the neighbourhood in particular ways?
7. Will it enhance it in positive ways?
8. If there are particular community needs identified, can the proposed development meet them in some way?

- If a community lacks nearby childcare, development plans might include an on-site day care operation;
- The absence of a local park, walking trails or playground might suggest that something like this could be part of a proposed development;
- If there is no community meeting space nearby, a development might offer a community center space, cafe, shops or other services as part of its plans; or
- A new development can replace vacant lots, dilapidated buildings, or provide a buffer to ameliorate traffic noise.

A Community's Strengths

Be cognizant that a community's strengths can also suggest support for a particular development. If the neighbourhood is predominantly older single-family housing in good repair, a new development might enhance property values. A new multi-family housing development could provide housing for sons and daughters or grandparents of current property owners.

Likewise, never underestimate the importance of local history and the experience of longstanding residents within a neighbourhood. An active member of a neighbourhood association in St. John's expertly pointed out that even the term "NIMBY" is divisive. Instead, she suggested the acronym, "TALK: Take Advantage of Local Knowledge" as a starting point in how housing proponents relate to, approach and engage communities in the development process.

Neighbourhood Ethnicity & Socio-Economic Status

Areas that are predominantly or completely homogenous may have some resistance to housing in one area but might readily accept a mixed income rental property in another. A neighbourhood that is already somewhat integrated racially or ethnically might accept a homeownership development more readily than a rental development or have no significant objection to affordable housing units.

Every neighbourhood will be different. Generally, a development that will help integrate a neighbourhood ethnically and/or economically is likely to be considered to further fair housing principles. At the same time, a development that will bring significantly higher levels of diversity to a neighbourhood may be more likely to encounter resistance from existing neighbours.[22]

The Needs of the Community

A realistic strategy will also address the needs of the community as a whole. If a community has no affordable housing or has lost affordable housing due to higher rents, it is likely to need some. If a community is located near jobs, larger cities, or a large population of people with low or moderate incomes, it is likely to need housing options.

The community's history in responding to development proposals is also important:

22 Sara Pratt and Michael Allen. Addressing Community Opposition To Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing Toolkit. Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Inclusive Communities Working Group, 2003. P. 32.

- Have approvals already been granted?
- Were they a matter of course or a matter of controversy?
- Did the project ultimately fail or succeed?
- Has the community gone on record in support of or opposed to, low-income housing, affordable housing, multi-family housing, higher-density developments, or other housing options?

Concurrently, housing proponents are advised to become active in on-going community-wide strategies to improve the general climate for housing options. This may mean attending meetings and becoming engaged in activities that housing advocates are conducting, participating in the development of housing policies, attending public hearings on issues other than those for a particular development, participating in the CHBA's efforts to raise awareness about the importance of housing options, and promoting the enforcement of fair housing laws in general.

In terms of supporters, there are many potential sources. Housing and homelessness groups already active in the community are particularly good resources because they are likely to understand the scope of the challenge. While it is unwise to assume a natural kinship, it makes sense to draw on the expertise and experience of proponents to better understand the community, its housing dynamics, and to anticipate any areas of community concern.

Natural Supporters to the Developer or Housing Proponent

- Housing advocates;
- Advocates for people who are homeless or who have complex needs;
- Faith-based groups (particularly those with members who would be beneficiaries);
- Other developers with like-minded objectives and experience;
- Housing finance agencies and lenders;
- Fair housing groups and enforcement agencies;
- Non-governmental, non-profit and civic organizations;
- Local businesses and business associations who would benefit from new residents;
- Planners interested in solid community development;
- Environmental organizations;
- Unions who back projects that offer jobs to their workers;
- Previous community leaders, project endorsers, and their networks;
- Past and present elected officials.[23]

A developer or housing proponent should expect to make an effective presentation on behalf of the proposed development to these potential allies and to show how the proposed development might ease burdens.

Building a Case for a Development Proposal

Support for a particular development does not always come easily or without hard work. Early in the process it is important to develop a set of talking points and key messages about why this specific development is the right project for this neighbourhood and this community at this point in time.

Key Messaging

While this will have much to do with the positive attributes of the particular community, it also describes the concrete linkages between the proposed development and the community - it answers the question: "Why is the development so important here and now?".

In the beginning, a fact sheet with key messages may be as simple including:

23 See Appendix D - Directory of Contacts and Community Organizations for potential supporters and other housing proponents.

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- Size of the development proposal;
- Location of the development;
- Stakeholders involved in championing the proposal;
- Anticipated residents;
- Benefits to the neighbourhood;
- Benefits to the community;
- Consistency with community goals in areas like design, size, and meeting needs;
- Consistency with municipal goals for planned community development;
- Contact information; and
- An image of the building design.

Such a list might also anticipate and respond generally to an identified area of potential concern. If, in prior applications, the quality of the housing construction has been a subject of discussion or rejection, the shortlist of positives might include references to the developer's prize-winning design and construction of a development in another location.

In short, housing proponents must design a message that will build public support. This message should be repeated, expanded, and amplified as a campaign continues. As meetings are initiated with supporters and with public officials, the message will be adjusted as necessary to answer questions that come up with frequency.

Multimedia Campaign Materials

As the message and the information become more specific, housing proponents should prepare multimedia materials that can be used and distributed in a variety of forums to educate various segments of the community about the development. The types of materials that will be needed will vary based on the kinds of issues brought forward and whether or not serious opposition has developed.

However, basic materials should be created regardless of whether or not opposition has galvanized. These are useful in gaining support, many are relatively easy and inexpensive ways to educate the community and decision-makers, and they all will have the advantage of keeping the positive aspects of the development in the public eye.

> "Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure."
>
> —Confucius

Essential Materials for Campaigns

- Survey or poll questions for canvassing and assessing reactions
- Fact sheets to distribute to local residents
- A brief history of the housing proponent's successes
- A multi-purpose PowerPoint or slideshow presentation
- Enlarged images of the proposed development
- A website or blog to publicly track progress and improve transparency

Other Relevant Campaign Materials

- Brochures, flyers, postcards, posters
- Newsletter and or E-newsletters for regular updates
- Advertisements for print, television and radio
- Enlarged photos of similar successful developments
- A promotional video for web and e-mail promotion
- A Facebook Page, if there is a designated moderator

Identify Supporters to Inform & Seek Endorsement

Developers and housing proponents should work towards obtaining and maintaining support for their proposal:

- Key players and critical opinion-shapers should be identified early;
- Follow all meetings up with a "thank-you" call or email, including contact information; and
- Address issues that are raised immediately and with consistent messaging.

Potential Supporters
Proponents will vary in different communities but may include the following:
- Planning, development, and zoning staff;
- City councillors and other key decision-makers;
- Elected and appointed officials whether or not they are decision-makers;
- News media, including editors of local newspapers and radio hosts;
- Community opinion-shapers, clergy, and informal leaders;

Areas of concern should be appropriately responded to through education and awareness, historical background information, statistical data in support of plans and any other suitable means. The goal during meetings is not just to present the housing proponent's position, but to listen for, identify, and resolve genuine concerns. As legitimate concerns are addressed, only unreasonable ones, such as discrimination, stated and unstated, will remain.

- Neighbourhood associations, community leaders;
- Individual residents in the neighbourhood of a proposed development; and
- People who live near other builds and who have overcome their initial concerns about the impact on the neighbourhood.

Supporters may include people whose business it is to decide situations on the facts, like planning and zoning staff. Likewise, proponents may include elected or appointed officials who are not directly involved in decision-making but who are able to support the need for a particular type of development in a community without becoming embroiled in controversy.

Members of legislative bodies, mayors, and others who do not decide zoning issues may be willing to back a proposal because they understand the needs of the community as a whole. Informal community opinion leaders, like clergy or neighbourhood association representatives may be aware of strong reasons for community support, like the benefits of housing options. These supporters may also be able to provide stories that can illustrate why, for instance, affordable housing is essential to the community.

Support from neighbourhood associations can be pivotal. Sometimes an early educational meeting that focuses on how the proposed development will benefit the neighbourhood is key to the ultimate success of the project. Finally, developers and housing proponents should seek to identify individuals from the neighbourhood who are willing to support the development. Nothing is more effective than a neighbourhood resident who is articulate and objective when asserting why a particular proposal should be developed in his or her own neighbourhood.

Know the Law

Early in the process, after identification of any likely zoning or land use issues, and certainly as soon as any opposition based on illegal discrimination is identified, housing proponents should prepare a legal strategy. The nature of the strategy will vary depending on the type of opposition and the kinds of issues that are being raised.

While litigation may not be necessary and should be avoided, it is essential to have an accurate assessment of rights as early in the process as possible. The strength or weakness of those rights will have a profound effect on other parts of the development strategy.

Prepare the Key Elements of a Legal Strategy

Collect information of how other similar applications have been treated;

- If discriminatory statements are made, document them; collect fliers, newspaper articles, petitions and other information that express discriminatory sentiments;
- Record the dates and names of people who are making the discriminatory statements;
- If public meetings are held, ask that they be recorded; if they are not, arrange to record them, with notification and permission of the group;
- Document the likely impact of an adverse decision on a protected class or classes;
- Be prepared to work with legal counsel or housing allies to educate government lawyers, government decision-makers, or planning staff about fair housing principles;
- Involve people knowledgeable in the law in planning meetings, public hearings and strategic planning;
- Develop materials that deals with and resolves legitimate concerns; and
- Get legal assistance from lawyers who have the experience to manage these issues.

A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

A strategy that looks comprehensive and effective three weeks before an application is submitted can quickly become outdated as a result of emerging events - unexpected reasons for opposition develop, planning staff asks for concessions, or an expected supporter changes his or her mind.

Before, during and after an application, communication is necessary to make the strategy effective. Frequent meetings with allies, supporters, and others should be routine. New materials must be developed to respond to budding issues and flexibility in how to carry out the strategy will be essential.

For a campaign to be successful, constant attention is needed to ensure that a housing proponent's team provides positive education and outreach to the community, as well as resolves legitimate objections promptly and reasonably. It is up to those supporting the development to create an effective and knowledgeable presence in support of the proposal.

CHART: Designing a Community Relations Strategy

STEP	ACTION	TARGET & IMPLEMENTATION
1	Designate a spokesperson to represent the face of the proposal	a. An individual with integrity, excellent communication skills and, preferably, known to the community, will be selected to present key messages in the media
2	Identify and recruit credible supporters and secure their commitment to back the proposal in writing from individuals or from organizations	a. Local residents and adjacent neighbours who see value in the build b. Businesses and business associations who will benefit from the proposal c. Community leaders and associations with influence d. City Councillors and trusted, former public officials e. Non-profit and faith-based organizations who support infrastructure for social groups f. Prospective occupants of the proposal g. Beneficiaries like construction workers, suppliers and property owners h. Realtors and appraisers who can dispel myths about risks to property values i. Homebuilders who support projects that lead to housing construction j. Unions who back projects that offer jobs to their workers k. Law enforcement and public safety officials who can put security concerns to rest l. Previous project endorsers and their network of like-minded people
3	Develop key messages and a brochure or fact sheet to distribute to local residents to introduce them to the proposal	a. Stakeholders (builder/developer, municipal representatives, community-based service providers) will collaborate to design key messages that incorporate the perspectives of each, including prospective occupants b. A common purpose should be devised, who the proposal serves, its benefits, how they align with broader community and policy objectives, and the means by which the community will be engaged

STEP	ACTION	TARGET & IMPLEMENTATION
4	Develop an Internet strategy for presenting information on an on-going basis, including a website and/or blog, in addition to creating a Facebook Page and Twitter account to actively promote the build, post images and discuss the project with the public	a. One or more credible supporters from Step 3, with the appropriate skills and experience, will be responsible for pulling these together and will take direction from the lead proponents identified in Step 1 b. The web strategy will include an outline of the proposal, provide a forum for discussion, showcase support from multiple sectors, as well as act as a storehouse of information from the proposal inception, completion, and monitoring and evaluation c. It will also be used to notify the public of events such as hearings, public meetings, site tours and other proposal-related activities d. The individual dedicated to the online strategy will add content, post regularly, moderate comments and report back to the lead proponents
5	Undertake a preliminary community assessment to determine attitudes and solicit feedback from local residents and adjacent neighbours by presenting information and asking a few targeted questions	a. A core group of volunteers from Step 3, selected by the lead proponents, will be enlisted to carry out the assessment and distribute information by way of brochures or fact sheets b. These volunteers will be responsible for canvassing the neighbourhood door-to-door to provide information regarding the proposal, where the community can find more information online and to conduct an informal survey to determine initial reactions
6	Refine key messages, based on the results of the preliminary community assessment, to address concerns, taking into account residents' feedback	a. Lead proponents will work in tandem to flesh out the most effective messages, sound bites and talking points, with consistency and overall benefits in mind b. These will be used for the purpose of a broad range of marketing and communication activities, including the online strategy, hearings, public meetings and media interviews
7	Develop a range of marketing and promotional materials, using the refined key messages, designed for different audiences	a. With the input of the lead proponents and other supporters, determine the scope of the campaign, which may include: newsletters (print or email), one-page fact sheets, advertisements (print, radio, television), promotional videos for online strategy (website, blog, Facebook), audio-visual presentations (PowerPoint) b. The lead proponents will prioritize which marketing materials will be created, determine how each will be financed, and select those responsible for creating elements of the campaign under a specific timeline

STEP	ACTION	TARGET & IMPLEMENTATION
8	Bring stakeholders together by considering a variety of methods for local residents, adjacent neighbours, the wider community, the media and proponents to meet as a group to discuss	a. Based on an assessment of the feedback from the community and their main positions, a meeting will be organized, taking the form of a workshop (input on building design, community needs) or public meeting (presenting information, addressing concerns) b. The lead proponents will seek out one or more independent facilitators to lead the public forum c. Invitees will be selected and informed of the event; presentations by the housing proponents will be made, anticipating and addressing controversy and questions before they arise d. Time will be available at the end for Q&A (see Appendix C - How to Effectively Facilitate Public Meetings for a complete checklist to prepare)
9	Schedule a tour of a similar, successful build in the municipality, which can be organized and customized for local residents to view	a. A suitable build will be identified that would be comparable to the one proposed, considering proximity, community make-up, socio-economic status and demographics b. Arrangements will need to be made with the owner or operator of the build for an open house and organized tour, including date, time, transportation, parking and publicizing the tour c. Opportunities to meet and hear from local residents of that build will be incredibly valuable to counter concerns related to property values, traffic congestion, safety and security, occupants and how new residents have integrated d. This also provides a chance to hear not only about what has not gone wrong, but also all of the benefits to the local community that have resulted and may not have been anticipated, such as advantages of having new services, increases in business activity, improvements in the character of the neighbourhood and more
10	Plan to conduct a walk-through of the new build, if it goes forward, at a particular stage of the construction process	a. If there is value in it, lead proponents will arrange to conduct a viewing of the build with local representatives of community associations, business owners, and the like, keeping residents informed and up-to-date on progress, building design, how standards are being met and more
11	Hold a grand opening and ribbon-cutting, and invite local residents, the community, and the media to attend and celebrate the achievement	a. If the proposal moves forward with development, the coordinated partners will organize a celebratory event to inaugurate the new build and welcome it and its new occupants to the community in which it is located b. This initiative will include a press release, an organized tour of the site, invitations, parking arrangements, catering and brief formalities

Public Input in the Process

At times, the process of requesting public input, in advance of a municipality making a determination on rezoning, can be cumbersome. In some cases, doing so may shift responsibility for making the decision from government officials to members of the community who feel strongly enough about the proposed housing to become active participants in the zoning and land use process.

As a result, many significant and socially beneficial developments never move beyond the drawing board. Whether such action is a violation of the law will depend on if it discriminates against a protected class and whether the decision to seek public input is consistent with the municipality's practices with respect to other applicants.

In virtually every jurisdiction, public hearings have been used to inform residents of proposed changes in their neighbourhoods and to give them an opportunity to articulate and share their concerns with local authorities. Both of these goals - education and community participation - are appropriate and important. However, mandatory notification and public hearing requirements may violate procedure and undermine the attempt by public officials to make fact-based assessments concerning the impact of a new building proposal.

Public Hearings & Alternative Engagement Strategies

A public hearing can provide a forum for large numbers of residents to express anger and fear at the prospect of having unwanted neighbours in their midst. Responsible public policy requires a mechanism for distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate objections, giving voice to the former, and ensuring that the latter does not influence the process.

It is within a housing proponent's rights to request that a municipality employ alternatives to widespread notification and mass meetings by way of:

- Door-to-door outreach by housing proponents and other supporters to provide information, solicit feedback and answer community concerns;
- Small meetings with elected officials and the leadership of neighbourhood and business associations to respond to community concerns in a controlled atmosphere; and
- Designating a city agency to conduct mediation between housing proponents and concerned citizens to seek common ground.

Planning for a Public Hearing

If the municipality decides to have a hearing or must have a hearing because the ordinance requires one, there are a number of key issues that should be considered as part of planning for the event.

A public hearing need not be a free-for-all or an unstructured debate. It can become an unpleasant experience or a positive turning point toward community acceptance, depending on how it is handled. Efforts should be made to suggest tactics that will enable a hearing to be conducted in a courteous and respectful manner:

1. Hearing time - the municipality should establish a maximum period of time for the hearing to last (start and end time) and a time limitation announcement, for example, that a hearing will convene at 6:30 pm and end no later than 9:00 pm.
2. Attendee sign-in - a hearing should have an official sign-in sheet, with name, address, telephone number, political subdivision and any other relevant information as a useful way to recognize and maintain a record of speakers.
3. Speaker sign-in - for some hearings, a speaker sign-in sheet may be used

simply to order the speakers, so they have an opportunity to be heard in the order that they signed in

4. **Speaker time limit** - Announce in advance, and enforce, a rule that each speaker has three minutes to make their statement. This strategy upholds attendees rights to be heard while helping to ensure that the discussion does not get out of hand.

5. **Commencement announcement** - the facilitator of the hearing may be requested to call on all speakers and the audience, to hear each other respectfully and thoughtfully, reminding speakers of the time limits, and to notify if the hearing will be recorded.

6. **Discriminatory remarks** - if any speaker makes a remark that expresses discriminatory content, the facilitator of the hearing should advise the audience that those types of remarks could be considered discriminatory and that discriminatory comments will not be considered by the decision-makers because the evaluation will be made on reliable facts made on the record, not on opinions.

7. **Profanity or threats** - if a speaker makes a profane or foul remark, the facilitator should stop the speaker and caution them and the audience against making objectionable comments before letting the speaker continue. A speaker who makes a direct threat of a criminal act should be sternly cautioned.

8. **Development proposal presentation** - the proponent should be permitted to conduct a presentation that is not subject to the speaker time limit required of the general audience.

9. **Municipality's role** - municipal officials should set out positions, relevant information and concerns. These reservations should be communicated to the developer or housing proponent in advance, so an informed response can be prepared.

In very rare situations, the developer or housing proponent may request that a hearing be halted or continued on another date if audience members repeatedly interrupt, make repeated discriminatory remarks, or if repeated cautions does not permit a reasoned discussion. At some hearings, decision-making takes place at the end of the hearing, in which case and in exceptional circumstances, a decision-making action may be postponed.

A developer or housing proponent may ask for additional time to provide a response to comments or to provide supplementary information. A "cooling off" period may reduce negative response or hostility and permit additional time for further action to avoid a negative decision.

> "Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."
>
> —Alexander Graham Bell

The Developer or Housing Proponent's Role in a Public Hearing

A well-prepared and planned strategy should include consideration of all likely concerns. New issues should be the subject of quick research, letters informing the deciding officials of the solution or response to the issue, and, if necessary, making the response available to the public through media outreach:

- **Design a comprehensive plan** - this plan should include enlisting individuals with the skills, expertise and time to assist in carrying out each step of the strategy in a coordinated way;
- **Select the public face of the proposal** - the person selected to make presentations should be well equipped to handle any questions that might be raised and capable of making prompt responses;
- **Designate a note-taker** - this individual will be responsible for recording comments and feedback at public meetings, hearings and maintaining an on-going record;

- **Enlist credible supporters** - these allies must be willing to speak on behalf of the project and contacted well in advance of the hearing and invited to attend to speak in support; they are also enlisted to contact appropriate government officials to vocalize support of the proposal;
- **Develop a thoughtful and orderly presentation** - this audiovisual presentation should educate and inform, as well as anticipate questions before they arise, so it can be demonstrated how concerns do not factor or how they will be mitigated;
- **Prepare for legitimate objections** - if objections are raised on grounds that can be evaluated, addressed or rejected, studies and analyses of the data should be mentioned, and copies provided;
- **Design print material** - these include fact sheets and other information that reacts to actual or possible objections, which can be distributed door-to-door, at hearings and public meetings;
- **Undertake a media strategy** - this strategy should be proactive and pre-empt concerns before they flare up;
- **Ensure hearings and meetings are recorded** - if the municipality does not do this as a matter of course, the developer or housing proponent should ensure the necessary approvals are organized in advance;
- **Be confident in responding to credible challenges** - decision-makers should base their conclusions on the record and on a developer's or housing proponent's ability to anticipate the key issues and respond to them on a factual basis at the hearing or immediately after;
- **Solicit direct professional assistance** - this help would come from housing experts or legal counsel and, depending on the kinds of issues that are likely to be raised and their connection to housing litigation, case law may exist that suggests certain strategies or responses by developers and that also might be raised in the hearing or in correspondence to decision-makers.

Hosting a Community or Public Meeting

Besides preparing for public hearings, which are generally organized and administered by municipalities and local governments, it is likely that an independent meeting with local residents, leaders from community and business associations, and the bringing together of other key stakeholders will be necessary.

In this circumstance it is not only advisable to engage 1-2 independent facilitators to conduct the proceedings, it is essential that all parties prepare presentations, anticipate questions, and ensure the meeting itself is organized, smooth and logistically seamless. If you are at a loss for selecting the right candidates, refer to Appendix D - Directory of Contacts and Community Organizations for potential sources of facilitators, guidance and information.

See Appendix C - How to Effectively Facilitate Public Meetings for steps, guidelines and tips on how to effectively conduct public meetings from notification to follow-up.

Meaningful Engagement with the Media

There are two choices for a media strategy:

1. Affirmatively seek out the media and make the case for a proposed development; or
2. Prepare to respond to media coverage if and when it is publicized.

In some cases, where neighbourhood concern is anticipated, it may be best to seek media coverage early to shape the message. In other situations, a strategic assessment may conclude that a low profile is more conducive to ultimate approval.

- Make several efforts to meet with key players including editorial boards;
- Send the appropriate factual information to several sources within a particular news market;
- Look for ways to reach out to other media, such as newspapers, radio or television; and
- Expand the area of news coverage to nearby media markets.

In either instance, media contact should communicate the benefits of the development and a supporter or ally should be designated as the spokesperson, having been prepared to communicate messages clearly and consistently (see Appendix D - Directory of Contacts and Community Organizations for potential and experienced delegates):

- Planning, development and municipal housing staff;
- Key decision-makers such as Councillors;
- Elected and appointed officials, whether or not they are decision-makers;
- Non-governmental, non-profit and civic organizations;
- Community opinion-shapers, such as clergy (non-denominational or otherwise);
- Neighbourhood and business associations;
- Advocates for people who are homeless or who have complex needs;
- Faith-based groups, particularly those with members would benefit;
- Other developers with like-minded objectives and experience;
- Housing finance agencies and lenders;

- Fair housing groups and enforcement agencies;
- Residents from the neighbourhood of the proposed development; and
- Those living near similar developments and who have overcome their initial fear about the impact on their neighbourhood.

Working with media will likely require seeking positive features or news coverage by reporters and seeking editorial support for the development proposal. In smaller communities, it is the local editor of the newspaper to whom a media campaign should be addressed, since support from the editor effectively means support in reporting as well. In larger communities, the two functions are separate and both should be addressed.

An early meeting with editorial staff to discuss the development and ask for support is useful as part of an affirmative strategy. Reporters will want and should be provided with resources that enable them to be objective:

- Brief factual summaries of information;
- Quotations from spokespeople;
- Pithy responses to statements from those who are concerned;
- Tours of comparable properties;
- Interviews with key supporters; and
- Provide recent, local success stories.

Press Releases & Consistency in Key Messaging

While support from local media outlets can be important to the approval and continued success of a project, key messages from the overall strategy should be reinforced and highlighted in press releases.

These messages should reflect some of the most positive aspects of the project, for instance:

- New rental housing for families in the community;
- Housing for seniors that was previously lacking;
- High quality design, management and maintenance;
- Responsibly meeting the needs of different social groups;
- Compatibility with the existing housing stock; and
- Improvements in access and affordability.

Whether a press release, press conference or other special outreach is needed will depend on the particular situation. A press release in advance of a hearing can help ensure that news media fair will attend and cover the hearing. Following a hearing, a press release may provide material for a follow-up story that responds to concerns raised for the first time at a hearing.

A press conference, especially in conjunction with other community supporters can help inform the public of the breadth of community support and the objectively positive reasons for the development.

Freedom of Speech & Criminal Conduct

In rare instances, community and individual opposition may result in criminal action in response to a development proposal. Whether criminal conduct results from a threat, vandalism, trespass, arson or other actual or threatened harm, speedy involvement of law enforcement officials is critical.

The municipality and government officials should be encouraged to quickly and publicly oppose these kinds of crimes and they, along with community groups, should call for a prompt and thorough investigation. Efforts to involve residents in carrying out a strong community-wide response to these kinds of crimes should be made, including unified expressions of concern, responses from community and religious leaders, and a show of leadership in opposing crimes by seeking judicial and legal remedies.

Approaches for Municipalities

Gaining community acceptance is a process built on both short and long-term strategies, requiring municipal staff and politicians to be patient, nimble, diplomatic and most of all, well prepared. Achieving affordable housing, new higher-density development or other housing options can only occur through a collaborative process of engaging the residents and the neighbourhood. First, however, is working in tandem with the developer or housing proponent to ensure the best possible proposal is brought forward to the community. Likewise, if the municipality is genuinely in favour of a proposal, they should take a stand on the project and publicly state their position with clear reasons why it fits into the municipality's long-term community planning agenda.

Legislative Frameworks

Like every municipal activity, housing development takes place within a legislative framework set by the provincial or territorial government. Municipal, planning and environmental assessment acts, in addition to building codes, make up the laws most commonly associated with community developments. Within this framework, municipalities adopt their own by-laws and regulations to ensure the well-being of all their citizens.

With specific regard to non-profit, social or supportive housing, there will also be provincial legislation governing how public funds may be used in the building and operation of such housing. These requirements may help to identify and support certain sites within the municipality. Canada is also a signatory to the international convention on the right to adequate housing, which in turn is bound by the principle of non-discrimination.

As a municipal politician or staff, you can use the laws to support proposals for affordable housing or intensification by considering the following:

1. The proposed development must meet all legislative requirements in that housing construction must meet the standards of the building code to safeguard against poor quality construction and development must comply with good planning practices established by the province and the municipality;
2. Provincial legislation requires municipalities to pursue smart growth options by accommodating future populations through intensifying or infilling in existing neighbourhoods;
3. Where appropriate, provincial funding regimes and requirements for much-needed affordable, non-profit or supportive housing limit the number of locations where development is economically feasible;
4. Objections to the housing proposal rooted in discrimination violate human rights legislation; and
5. Only respectful comments will be heard, with zero tolerance for discriminatory remarks.[24]

> "I feel that luck is preparation meeting opportunity."
>
> —Oprah Winfrey

Planning Tools

Municipal officials use all the tools at their disposal to try to create more liveable communities, starting with comprehensive, long-range planning to establish future growth patterns down to site-specific zoning and design guidelines. When it comes to affordable housing or intensification, planning tools can be used strategically to facilitate broader acceptance of controversial proposals and, at the same time, remove barriers to new development.

In choosing the right planning tools and developing housing strategies, municipal officials should work closely with developers, housing proponents and with people or agencies who will benefit most from such housing by following good practices:

- Create an overall housing strategy for the municipality, addressing the need and demand for different types of housing, such as lower-end market, social and housing for complex needs;
- Develop a policy for affordable and supportive housing throughout the municipality in all neighbourhoods;

- Establish as-of-right zoning that complies with all applicable zoning regulations and does not require any discretionary action by the City to implement strategies for housing affordability throughout the municipality;
- Identify residential areas to permit as-of-right zoning, based on planning guidelines, for supportive housing and higher-density housing;
- Carry out long-term planning in an integrated manner, making effective links between infrastructure and land use, and in particular, the links between greater density and public transit; and
- Establish policies for infill and intensification with design guidelines to ensure the integration of new development with the existing urban form as well as the enhancement of the public realm.

Community Engagement & Communication Strategies

There is probably no more singly important thing a municipal official can do to gain community acceptance than listening to the public. Yet, one of the most common complaints expressed by residents is lack of awareness of a new housing proposal or lack of good information.

What can make public participation so challenging for affordable housing or infill proponents is the difficulty in ensuring that future occupants in need of the housing have a voice. Most are not yet in the neighbourhood and are therefore unavailable to support the proposal. The objective, therefore, is to find those who can speak as proxies for future residents, or advocates for affordable or higher-density housing. A clear emphasis should be placed on communication, with recommendations related to community engagement (open, early, frequent, clear and accurate) and use of the media to drive positive messages.

Each municipality has its own personality and its own way of doing things but there are practices that can be adapted to suit each community and every unique housing proposal:

- Have a defined strategy for engaging the public;
- Use a variety of techniques and forums to engage the public directly, like community meetings and webinars, as well as indirectly, such as websites and mail outs;
- Be sensitive to the language of communication, particularly in an area with many newcomers;

- In addressing the public, emphasize the positive, like community benefits for affordable, higher-density or mixed-use housing;
- Communicate how the proposal meets the municipality's vision for the community, its strategic objectives, its official plan, and emphasize how it can meet multiple city objectives, like economic prosperity, attracting workers, and sustainability;
- Be well prepared before community meetings by knowing the facts, anticipating objections, and understanding the neighbourhood's development history;
- At public meetings, establish rules of behaviour from the outset, for example, no comments contrary to the Human Rights Code will be accepted, as the focus will be on community planning components;
- Do not hesitate to respond vigorously to inappropriate comments, but equally important, acknowledge and reinforce constructive comments;
- Identify members of the public who are interested in knowing the facts, including potential allies because champions from within the community are also likely to be highly regarded as good neighbours;

- Housing advocates and developers are proxies for future occupants who may not yet live in the community;
- Business owners understand the importance of affordable housing as it is critical for their workforce, so take time to canvas their support; and
- Supply the media with up-to-date accurate information, while stressing the importance of the proposed development in meeting municipal goals.

> "Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation."
>
> —Robert H. Schuller

Online Municipal Engagement

Municipal engagement with the community is key to ensuring residents are better informed about housing-related activities, including public participation in planning, City standing committees and keeping up-to-date on Council agendas. This represents an excellent opportunity for the public to understand and to get involved in the development process.

The City of Toronto, for instance, is a model for online municipal engagement. Its website offers E-newsletter updates and RSS feeds on a variety of topics for the public to sign up for, including past and upcoming Council and Committee agendas, reports and minutes. Municipalities may consider a similar strategy when attempting to reach out to the public on housing topics and proposals.

Making a point of identifying Committees' roles and functions, the City of Toronto provides names of each Committee member, as well as agendas, minutes and reports, which are downloadable. Its website also has a link to "Request to speak", and tips on how an individual can go about doing this.

Moreover, the City of Toronto invites residents to learn about City government - to find out how decisions are made, what is behind the numbers and news, who is responsible for what, and how everyday folks can make a difference. Some of the topics they school citizens on include civics, demystifying local planning, the stages of Council decision-making, the City's fiscal framework, elections, and leadership.

Public Education

Educational tools can be deployed in at least two ways:

1. In a general context through courses or workshops on planning issues unrelated to a specific development proposal; or
2. In the communication of information related to a specific development proposal.

In the first instance, residents have the opportunity to learn more about planning and housing development in a conflict-free environment. Such approaches also enable municipal staff to elaborate on relevant provincial and municipal policies, and to describe the inter-connectedness of decision-making at the local council table. The atmosphere in the room (or the virtual room, if a webinar) is less fraught and if done well, it can be an enjoyable and engaging event.

In the second instance, strategies to gain community acceptance on a site-specific development will be most successful when everyone involved has access to the same reliable information. This information must be up to date, easily accessed and communicated simply:

- **Educational materials** - prepare using a variety of formats (illustration, text, charts, maps), as this will help communicate information to an audience with diverse learning experiences;
- **Draft simple fact sheets** - draft in advance of a public meeting on a specific proposal, summarizing development details and how they meet municipal or provincial policies;
- **Work with proponents on educational materials** - work collaboratively with developers and housing advocates to amass a compendium of information on building practices, development processes and housing needs in the community;
- **Engage local architects and urban designers** - create a catalogue of visual images illustrating various housing types, the meaning of various densities and the relationship of housing and the public realm;
- **Draw on local historical information** - use old photos to demonstrate how communities change and draw connections to the past to help remind residents of the nature of change;
- **Use educational materials in different forums** - from generic community-based courses to community meetings on site-specific proposals;
- **Emphasize transit** - this can be helpful in putting forward the basis for intensification;
- **Bring in technical experts** - solicit professionals to develop educational materials and communicate concepts to the public, including lawyers, engineers, heritage preservationists, ecologists, foresters, and others;
- **Take the learning outside of the classroom** - request developers, housing proponents and housing managers to conduct tours;
- **Organize a tour** - tour an attractive higher-density or mixed-use neighbourhood;
- **Establish an ongoing evaluation of the processes** - create steps in order to adjust the strategy in collaboration with stakeholders, as appropriate;
- **Seek Council approval of a city-wide strategy** - this has been the key to defusing opposition, along with evidence showing the need for such housing;
- **Putting a human touch on proposals** - use video, for instance, to feature the personal stories of individuals and families dealing with the challenges of a mental illness or an addiction;
- **Examples of success** - present existing housing that demonstrates successful integration into the neighbourhood;

- **Public health system benefits** - indicate, if you can, that emergency room usage and hospital stays would be reduced; and
- **Statistical evidence** - use facts and specifics to show that crime is unlikely to increase.

Implementation & Monitoring Techniques

Once a development is approved, the municipality will make sure it is built according to appropriate planning and building regulations. Keeping track of the effects in the community after the housing is built and residents have moved in can be helpful. For instance, it would be useful to learn whether any of the community's worries have come to pass and how new residents have contributed to the neighbourhood.

A decisive element in successful strategies to counter anxieties is through presenting evidence drawn from thriving integrated housing developments within a community. Affordable housing developments or mid-rise apartments that blend into the neighbourhood and enhance, rather than depress, property values can be a major selling point when trying to gain community acceptance. Similarly, data

that shows no increase in the incidence of crime in a neighbourhood can be constructive in combating one of the biggest myths around social or supported housing.

It is always preferable to use examples from within the local area, whenever possible. Residents will be quick to criticize comparisons with other cities or towns, no matter how similar their socio-demographics.

All of this points to the need for a monitoring system as a good practice in helping build a local information base to facilitate future developments. In developing and using a monitoring system, municipal officials should:

- Identify data and information that is easy to collect and easy to track, such as data on property values, which is easy to collect and useful in defusing a frequently expressed concern;
- Link in with whatever monitoring programs may already exist in the municipality, for example, measures for affordable housing or intensification; and
- Supplement technical information and data with photographs, videos and audio recordings from successful neighbourhoods and interviews with new and old residents.
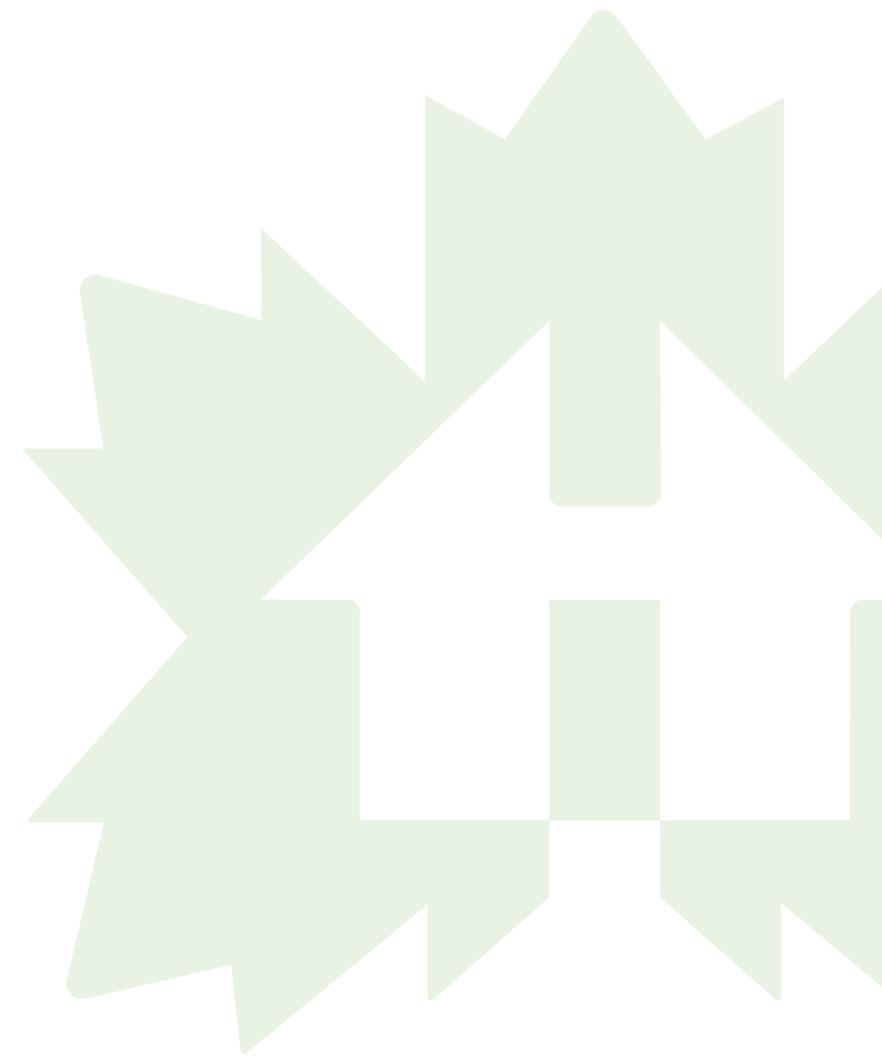
Rights & Obligations

Property Owners

Like other property owners, social housing providers are obligated to maintain "good neighbour" standards, and though they may vary between municipality, they can include the duty to:

- Maintain the building to the standards set out in the Building, Fire and other Codes;
- Properly store and remove garbage;
- Keep walkways, driveways and parking areas in good repair and cleared of snow and debris;
- Maintain occupancy standards related to the number of residents;
- Keep the property free of rodents, vermin, insects and other pests, and from conditions that may encourage infestations
- Keep the property free of garbage, junk, dilapidated structures, wrecked or inoperable vehicles, or any health, fire or safety hazard;
- Ensure grass is cut, yards are free of undergrowth, trees are pruned of unsafe branches, and hedges and shrubs do not obstruct views, streets or sidewalks;

- Provide buffering to prevent lights shining into dwellings, wind-blown waste from littering nearby properties, or to minimize other nuisances;
- Protect vacant buildings against the risk of fire, accident or other danger; and
- Cooperate with municipal licensing and standards officers.
- These are the same requirements as other landlords and housing providers cannot be asked to meet a higher standard than neighbours are expected to meet.[25]

Occupants

Under the Residential Tenancies Act, all tenants must keep their unit clean, and repair or pay for any damage caused by themselves or their guests. They can be evicted for illegal activity, impairing the safety of others, disturbing the enjoyment of other tenants or harassing the landlord, and allowing too many people to live in the unit. [26]

Municipal property standards can also place obligations on tenants to keep their homes in a clean and sanitary condition; keep all exits clear and unobstructed; cooperate with the landlord in upholding property standards; limit the number of occupants to the maximum permitted; and take immediate action to eliminate any unsafe conditions.

Landlords are not responsible for their tenant's actions, however, there is no law against:

- Sitting in the front yard, steps, decks or common areas;
- Smoking outdoors, provided it does not violate municipal by-laws;
- Talking, laughing, drinking or hosting parties on one's own property, provided municipal noise by-laws are not violated;
- Receiving visitors in one's own home;
- Leaving the lights on;
- Entering or leaving the building late at night;
- Using taxis;

25 HomeComing Community Choice Coalition. **Beyond the back yard fence: A guide for Ontario supportive and affordable housing providers**. October 2011. Pp. 6 - 7.
26 Residential Tenancies Act, SNL2000, Chapter R-14.1.

- Receiving help from emergency services, including ambulances, fire trucks or the police;
- Being ill or dying in one's home.[27]

Anticipating Irritants

By taking a dispassionate view of the property, housing providers can identify potential irritants before they give rise to disputes:

- **Garbage and recycling** - ensure outdoor bins are protected and that occupants understand the rules for removal; provide space for occupants to dispose of furnishings without creating eyesores;
- **Balconies and porches** - if these spaces are being used for garbage or storage, help find alternate storage space to avoid hazards;
- **Shared driveways** - exchange phone numbers with those using the driveway to settle any disputes quickly;
- **Smoking** - if tenants smoke on a patio or deck, ensure they are positioned to prevent smoke from blowing into neighbours' windows and sheltered from wind and prying eyes; and
- **Snow clearing and yard maintenance** - ensure occupants are supplied with the tools and training to do a good job, if they are responsible for this type of work.[28]

27 Municipal standards vary across the province. Check your municipality's website for the standards that apply in your area.
28 HomeComing Community Choice Coalition. **Beyond the back yard fence: A guide for Ontario supportive and affordable housing providers.** October 2011. P. 11.

APPENDIX A • Online Resources

- Affordability and Choice Today (ACT)   www.actprogram.com

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)   www.cmhc.ca

- Canadian Home Builders' Association - Newfoundland & Labrador (CHBA-NL)   www.chbanl.ca

- Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA)   www.chba.ca

- Canadian Housing & Renewal Association (CHRA)   www.chra-achru.ca

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)   www.fcm.ca

- HomeComing Community Choice Coalition   www.homecomingcoalition.com

- Homelessness Strategy, Human Resource & Skills Development Canada   www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/communities/homelessness

- Newfoundland and Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network (NLHHN)   www.nlhhn.org

- Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission   www.justice.gov.nl.ca

- Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA)   www.onpha.on.ca

- Mokami Status of Women Council   www.mokamiwomen.ca

Below is a summary of the responses provided by the 35 participant stakeholders who attended a January 2013 Focus Group at City Hall in St. John's, NL to identify and discuss trends.

Types of proposals that have typically attracted NIMBY-related concerns in NL
- Homeless and youth shelters
- Mental health facilities
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers
- Transition homes
- Affordable housing units

Housing occupants perceived as threatening to communities and local residents in NL
- Individuals with addictions who are in treatment
- Individuals who have mental illness
- People who are at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with criminal justice history
- Individuals living on low income

Primary stakeholders who are active in expressing their unease or discomfort with a proposal

- Neighbours and local residents located in proximity to a proposal
- Schools or parent-teacher associations
- Businesses or business associations

Primary stakeholders who are perceived as responsible for addressing the NIMBY-related concerns
- Municipalities
- Builders and developers
- Social service providers (if applicable)

Primary ways in which NIMBY attitudes are identified and introduced as a concern
- Negative media attention
- Public meetings
- Campaigns or demonstrations
- Phone calls and emails
- Petitions

Main categories of concern felt by stakeholders who are uneasy about a proposal
- **Prejudice** – aimed at occupants/tenants of proposed build
- **Presage** – perceived impacts of build
- **Process** – lack of community engagement
- **Protocol** – land use regulations or zoning

- **Pretext** – prior adverse development experience

Main reasons cited by stakeholders for unease or discomfort involving a proposal
- Lack of information or misperception
- Fear of crime or insecurity
- Perceived property devaluation
- Prejudice or racism
- Opposed to higher-density housing, changes in zoning

Most effective strategies cited by stakeholders to address concerns related to land use and zoning
- Planning concerns of public taken into account
- Coordination of partners
- Proposal is fully supported by all decision-makers

Most effective strategies cited by stakeholders to address a lack of community participation
- Coordination of partners
- Engaging community through community relations strategy
- Planning concerns of public taken into account

Most effective strategies cited by stakeholders to address concerns regarding proposal design
• Planners and architects worked with community
• Engaging community through community relations strategy
• Proposal improves property

Most effective strategies cited by stakeholders to address concerns of perceived impacts of a proposal
• Conducting a community assessment to determine attitudes and solicit feedback
• Comprehensive community relations strategy
• Engaging community leaders and opposition through education and meetings

Most effective strategies cited by stakeholders to address concerns relating to a prior adverse development experience
• Engaging community leaders and opposition through education and meetings
• Conducting a community assessment to determine attitudes and solicit feedback
• Planning concerns of public taken into account

Most effective strategies cited by stakeholders to address prejudice towards prospective occupants
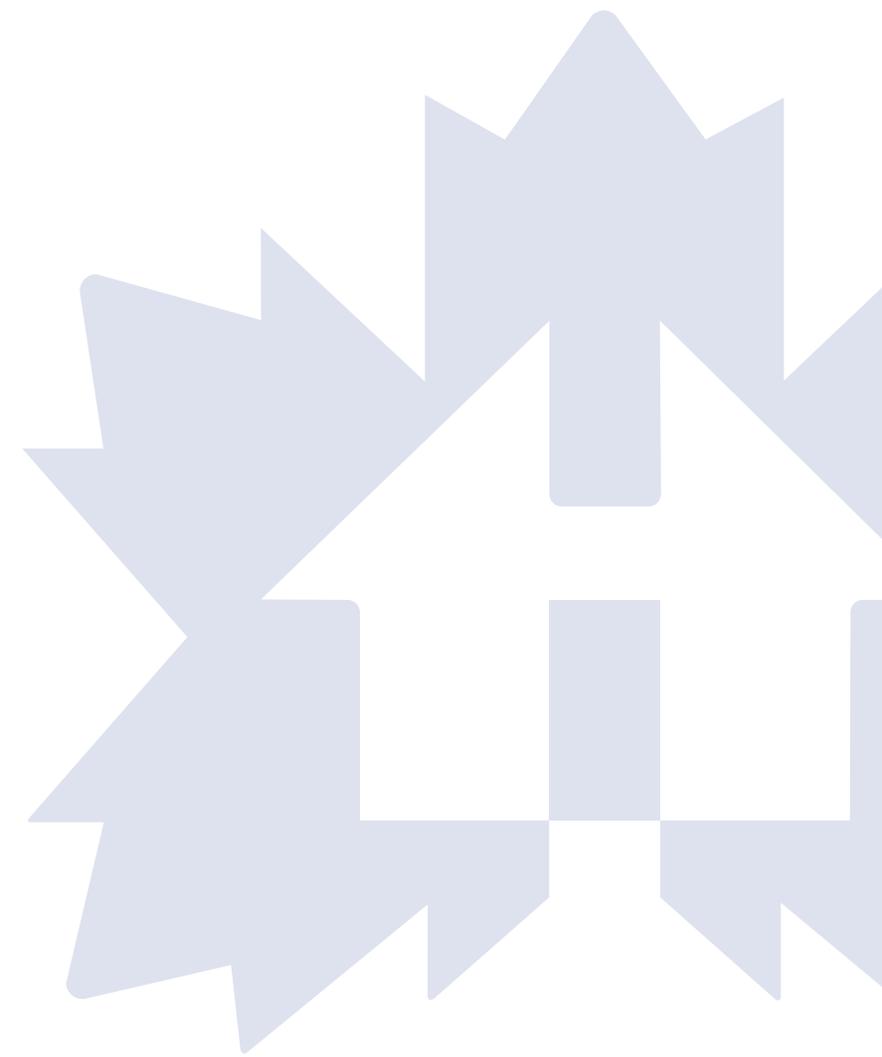• Conducting a community assessment to determine attitudes and solicit feedback

• Engaging community leaders and opposition through education and meetings
• Comprehensive community relations strategy

Tools and techniques cited by stakeholders as successful in mitigating NIMBY-related concerns
• Maintaining on-going relationships with local residents
• Designating a community facilitator
• Enlisting the support of a trusted spokesperson
• Focus group sessions with local residents and neighbours
• Public education workshops
• Distributing regular newsletters and factsheets
• Open houses and tours of similar builds
• Public service announcements and positive key messaging
• Promotional websites and videos
• Implementing Good Neighbour Agreements

Housing proponents perceived by stakeholders as responsible for carrying out success strategies
• Municipalities, planners and local councillors
• Local residents and neighbours
• Builders and developers
• Social service providers

Create the Agenda

- State the start and end times, along with the time limits for each topic
- Ask stakeholders for topic suggestions that have may have been overlooked

Send Meeting Invitations

- Select the best method for distribution to the right audience - email, newspaper ad, in local residents' mailboxes
- Include an RSVP deadline, which ensures you have enough materials for all attendees

Select a Venue

- Book the space in advance and ensure there are sufficient tables, chairs, accessibility and parking
- Ensure adequate audio-visual equipment is available, including podium and microphone

Catering

- Determine whether and what food and beverages will be available, including options for those with food restrictions
- Book catering in advance and follow-up 48 hours before the scheduled event

Set Up the Meeting Space

- **Lecture** - chairs in rows - establishes the speaker as the main focus and works well when the main purpose is imparting information
- **Theatre** - a table at the front of the room - allows a panel of speakers or experts to sit up front with attendees sitting in rows like those in the lecture format
- **Classroom** - tables in front of rows of chairs - allows attendees to take notes while the speaker remains the focus of the meeting
- **Roundtables** - choose this option if you want your participants to function as teams or to foster sharing amongst the group
- **U-Shape or boardroom set up** - for meetings where you want the participants to see each other and interact with one another
- **Chair circle** - with the facilitator in the centre - this is for meetings intended as open and participatory
- Remember to leave space for your beverage and snack station
- Consider arrangements such as temperature, ability to hear and see, and special needs

Provide Tools and Materials

- Provide pens, notepads, workbooks, handouts and all else required for the meeting, such as flipcharts, etc.
- Create a 'parking lot' for questions, either in the form of a flipchart or white board, which attendees can write their question, or a specified location in the room where questions can be posted in sticky notes
- Provide participants with beverage or snack stations (for longer meetings) or water pitchers or water bottles and snacks on each table (for shorter meetings)

Prepare an Evaluation Form or Survey

- Hand out a survey at the meeting and leave time at the end for them to fill them out
- Ensure volunteers are on hand to collect them at the door or have a box where they can be deposited as attendees exit the venue
- Surveys or evaluation forms provide you with feedback to see how the meeting was received

Send Meeting Reminders

- These should go out a day or two before the meeting's RSVP deadline
- Request for anyone whose plans have changed email their regrets

Doorkeeper

- Designate a doorkeeper to welcome attendees and assist late comers by bringing them up to speed with what has been covered, the housekeeping details, how to ask questions, and directing them to a seat
- The doorkeeper can also assist with collecting evaluation surveys at the end of the meeting

Note-Takers

- Designate at least two note-takers to record the conversation for future reference

Start the Meeting on Time

- Attendees who arrive late can catch up - it is rude to those who were prompt to wait for late-comers
- Set boundaries, explain the agenda and make housekeeping announcements, including information about break times, restroom locations, an explanation about the 'parking lot', and turning cell phones off as courtesy to everyone

- Designate a timekeeper to keep track of the time and schedule to stay on track

Neutrality and Facilitation

- Establish common ground and the coming together because of a shared vision to prevent small conflicts from escalating
- Co-facilitators can be supportive by relieving one another through taking turns
- Maintain energy, attention, understanding, confidence, assertiveness, and respect
- In tense and tiring situations try humour, affirming what has been achieved and taking breaks

Vibe-Watcher

- Someone not actively facilitating can pay more attention to the emotional climate of the meeting and watch out for individuals being affected, particularly through body language
- In situations of conflict, this designate can intervene by taking the role of intermediary, by taking time out with someone to listen to their concerns, or suggest breaks and tools to improve the atmosphere

Staying on Topic

- The facilitator's job is to keep all meeting attendees and speakers on topic, as allowing off-target tangents will derail the schedule

- Stick to appointed break times
- Encourage the expression of multiple viewpoints
- Hold people to speaking on behalf of themselves and not of the entire group
- Keep looking out for and highlighting minor points of agreement and state them
- Sum up the outcomes of the meeting for clarity at the end

Disruptive Behaviour

- Address speakers who dominate the conversation
- Introduce a go-around where each person has the opportunity to speak in turn if they choose
- Remind participants to let everyone contribute equally
- Pro-actively ask others for their opinion

Answering Questions

- Take questions from your participants or from the 'parking lot', and allow enough time to address everyone's questions
- Be accessible to the participants by staying after the meeting for anyone who does not want to address the group but needs to ask a specific question one-on-one
- Remind your attendees to complete their surveys and thank them for attending

Local Government Related to Housing

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Glenn Furlong	Corporate Representative	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	gfurlong@cmhc-schl.gc.ca
Madonna Walsh	Affordable Housing Manager	NL Housing Corporation	mrwalsh@nlhc.nl.ca
Scott Morton-Ninomiya	Affordable Housing Coordinator	City of St. John's	SMorton-Ninomiya@stjohns.ca
Judy Tobin	Senior Housing Officer	City of St. John's	jtobin@stjohns.ca

Builder, Developer or Otherwise Engaged in Residential Construction

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Victoria Belbin	CEO	Canadian Home Builders' Association	NLceo@chbanl.ca
Theresa James	Membership Services	Canadian Home Builders' Association	NLmembership@chbanl.ca
Nelson White	Executive Director	Habitat for Humanity	nwhite@habitatnl.ca
Bert Twyne	Project Manager	Karwood Contracting	jim@karwood.com
Jim Ford	General Manager	Karwood Contracting	jim@karwood.com
Sheldon Colbourne	Project Manager	Erco Homes	sheldon@ercohomes.ca

Private Sector

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Marie Ryan	Principal	Goss Gilroy Inc.	marie.ryan@bellaliant.net

Community Services

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Gail Thornhill	Director of Supportive Housing	Stella Burry Community Services	g.thornhill@stellascircle.ca
Sherri Skeans	Treatment Centre Director/Partner	Serenity on the Rock at Red Mantle Lodge	sherri@serenityontherock.com

Homelessness

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Bruce Pearce	Community Development	St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness	bpearce@nl.rogers.com
David Murphy	Communications and Strategic Partnerships	Newfoundland and Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network	david@nlhhn.org

Mental Health

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Carla Barton	Regional Mental Health Promotion Consultant	Eastern Health	carla.barton@easternhealth.ca
Gloria Williams	Regional Mental Health Promotion Consultant	Eastern Health	gloria.williams@easternhealth.ca
Heidi Edgar	Justice Program Coordinator	Canadian Mental Health Association	hedgar@cmhanl.ca
Jade Mahoney	Interagency Coordinator	Community Mental Health Initiative	cmhi.iac@gmail.com

Women

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Leslie Macleod	Executive Director	St. John's Status of Women Council	executivedirector@margueritesplace.ca
Janet O'Donnell	Executive Director	Libra House	librahouse@nf.aibn.com

Seniors

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Kelly Heisz	Executive Director	Seniors Resource Centre of NL	info@seniorsresource.ca
Allan Miller	Chair	Mayor's Advisory Committee on Seniors, St. John's	allan.miller@nf.sympatico.ca
Devonne Ryan	Nexter Representative	Mayor's Advisory Committee on Seniors, St. John's	devonneryan@gmail.com

Youth

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Sheldon Pollett	Executive Director	Choices For Youth	sheldon@choicesforyouth.ca

Corrections

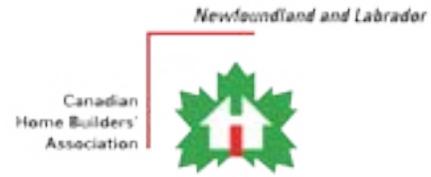| NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Iris Bussey	Clinical Social Worker	Correctional Service Canada	iris.bussey@csc-scc.gc.ca
Cindy Murphy	Executive Director	John Howard Society	cmurphy@jhsnl.ca

Community Associations

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Elizabeth Oliver	Community Representative	Georgestown Neighbourhood Association, St. John's	eoliver@warp.newfoundland.net
Simon Lono	Community Representative	Georgestown Neighbourhood Association, St. John's	simonlono@gmail.com

Municipalities

Newfoundland and Labrador

Canadian
Home Builders'
Association

www.chbanl.ca