

Building Community Support



MHP Massachusetts Housing Institute

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Town of Arlington

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Photo credits: Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Introduction



- Background and experience of today's trainers in building community support
- How and why we need to effectively build community support



What is the most common objection you've heard related to affordable housing initiatives?

Ways to build support

- Ongoing awareness about housing needs
- Long-term planning
- Specific initiatives (e.g., development proposals, zoning amendments)

Example – Ongoing Awareness

HOUSING CHOICE IMPROVES BARNSTABLE'S LOCAL ECONOMY

Barnstable workers are priced out of our community.

WAGES FALL SHORT

HOURLY WAGE NEEDED TO AFFORD
A TWO-BEDROOM RENTAL

\$22.61

RETAIL SALES hourly wage

\$10.04

HOME HEALTH AID hourly wage

\$11.97

WAITER/WAITRESS hourly wage

\$12.04

CARPENTER hourly wage

\$17.36

LANDSCAPER hourly wage

\$13.52

TEACHING ASSISTANT hourly wage

\$13.04

**HOUSING IS KEY TO
OUR STRONG
ECONOMIC FUTURE**
“Regions that build more
housing achieve stronger
job growth.”

Moscovitch, Edward, Recipe for Growth, MHP, 2009

THE LABOR MARKET IS DECLINING



**THE CAPE & ISLANDS WAS ONE OF
ONLY TWO LABOR MARKETS IN
MASSACHUSETTS TO DECLINE IN
POPULATION.**

The Cape & Islands is home to the oldest
average population in the state. Businesses
face a shortage of younger workers to replace
baby boomers as they retire.

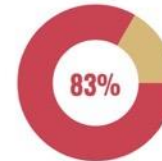
*Commonwealth Corporation & New England Public Policy
Center, Labor Market Trends in the Cape & Islands,
December 2012*



HOUSING CHOICE STRENGTHENS OUR COMMUNITY

Housing helps address needs of an aging community
and retains young residents and their families.

CHOICES ARE LIMITED



Most of the housing stock (83%) is
single family.

HOME OWNERSHIP IS OUT OF REACH FOR FAMILIES

AFFORDABLE PRICE FOR A HOUSEHOLD OF 4
AT BARNSTABLE'S MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$209,000

2014 MEDIAN SALE PRICE

\$432,500

THE COMMUNITY IS AGING

% RESIDENTS 65 YEARS OR OLDER



THERE ARE FEWER FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Households with children under age 18 decreased
15% between 2000 and 2010.



Example – Ongoing Awareness

- Housing Coordinator
- Housing Committee education/advocacy
- Online housing info
- Educational speakers
- Letters to the editor
- Social media campaign
- Regular updates to Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting members, other


Example – Long-term planning



COMMUNITY HOUSING VISIONING MEETING

Hosted by Town of Barnstable Growth Management Dept.

Listen
Learn
Share



Strategies
Ideas
Solutions

THU, DEC 1, 7:00
Teamship Authority
Conference Room

OR

WED, DEC 2, 6:30
Osterville Library

Barnstable's Growth Management Dept invites you to lend your voice as we discuss the community's visions and goals around housing. We'll work together to develop strategies to produce diverse housing types at a broad range of prices for Barnstable residents. Your input will guide the Town's Housing Production Planning process. Data from the Housing Needs Assessment will be presented to support understanding of the issues.

Be A Part of the Discussion About Housing

For more information call (508) 862-4678 or follow the planning process at facebook.com/BarnstableHPP



Public engagement for long-term planning

- Community-wide workshops
- Neighborhood forums
- Surveys
- Tours of development
- Meetings with town officials
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Focus Groups



Example – Specific Initiative

Sample Mixed-Use Development in B-4 Zone on 10,000 SF Lot

Per proposed amendments to Article #6, Sections 6 & 6.285, and Article #7, Section 8.07(b)



3,000sf ground-floor retail, 12 residential units, 4 Stories (50 ft) tall, 15 surface parking spaces

Example – Specific Initiative



Town of Arlington

Massachusetts Avenue

Phase II Streetscape Vision Plan

Business Partnership Meeting
May 5th, 2016 at 8:30 am

[mark your calendar](#)



The Town is embarking on a study that will outline a Plan for the next Phase of Massachusetts Avenue between Mill Street and Pond Lane. Over the next few months we will be developing a “Conceptual Streetscape Plan” that will seek a great deal of community input. We will be exploring topics such as:

- What makes Arlington Center great?
- What streetscape improvements will make Arlington Center a better place to live, work, and visit?
- What features need to be improved within the sidewalks and public areas such as Broadway Plaza and the streetscape in front of Town Hall?

You are invited to participate in a Business Partnership Meeting on May 5th at 8:30 am at the Town Hall Auditorium to discuss Issues, Opportunities, and a Vision for the future of this section of Massachusetts Avenue.

We value the perspective of business people working right on Massachusetts Avenue. Come join us and share your thoughts and ideas!

The Town of Arlington is matching local funds with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, administered by the Department of Planning & Community Development, for these planning activities

For more information about Mass. Ave. Phase II, contact Assistant Director of Planning Laura Wiener at (781) 316-3091 or lwieners@town.arlington.ma.us.

Messaging to gain support

Developing a Consistent Message

- **What action are you seeking?**
- **Who can take that action?**



(Source: Action Media, actionmedia.org)

Developing a Consistent Message

- **What story needs to be heard?**
- **Who should they hear it from?**



(Source: Action Media, actionmedia.org)

Developing a Consistent Message

- Lead with values & shared aspirations (e.g., *build safe, healthy, & welcoming communities*)
- Talk about results and benefits
- Use plain language (e.g., *homes people can afford.*)
- Memorize data to support arguments

(Source: Action Media, actionmedia.org)

Word Choice Matters

Instead of . . .



"Affordable housing"
"Low-income housing"
"Subsidized housing"
"Projects"

Say . . .



"Affordable homes"
"Homes affordable to all"
"Affordable places to live"
"Developments"

Word Choice Matters



Framing the message matters



Social
Issue

WE = Faith Community
People in need
Advocates



Framing the message matters



Consumer
Issue

WE = Everyone affected
by housing situation



Messaging strategies based on research/public opinion

WHO IS SPENDING MORE THAN HALF OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING COSTS?



Almost **1 of every 5** total households.



More than **1 of every 2** households with low/moderate-income.*



More than **3 of every 4** renter households with low/moderate-income.

Create a relationship between income, housing cost, and economic benefits

Source: Center for Housing Policy

About 1,040 (48%) of Barnstable's extremely and very low-income households spend more than half of gross income on housing.

Can you imagine working full time for \$10/hr making \$1,600 a month and spending more than \$800 on rent? This leaves you with \$800 for groceries, childcare, healthcare, gas, car insurance, and taxes. You get the idea.

Messaging strategies based on research/public opinion



Make it clear the whole community benefits – research finds that decent, affordable housing has positive impact on overall community health, economic investment, and education.

Source: Center for Housing Policy

Use research to reframe debate

- Establish Context
 - Housing market
- Lead with values
 - Economic opportunity
 - Stability and balance
 - Children and families
- Define the issue / propose solutions

Define issue(s)/ propose solution(s)

- We need to take action to:
 - Stabilize the housing market,
 - Stimulate the economy,
 - Increase the supply of affordable places to live.
- Propose your solution:
 - Approve this development
 - Adopt this ordinance
 - Create a housing trust fund

Tell Stories

- Find the most-compelling success stories and share them
- People remember stories more easily than statistics. (Statistics are still needed to support stories.)
- Stories are more likely to be shared/retold than statistics.

Working through community concerns

- Tools to address conflict and address questions
- Selecting and training facilitators
- Focusing on the message, including facts and impact

Leadership

“ . . . a leader is not a mad scientist on the outside pulling levers and pushing buttons, but rather a mad inhabitant, an intentional inhabitant, who deploys themselves as a key variable to influence the environment from the inside.”

Bill Traynor (Trusted Space Partners)



Discussion Exercise



- Select a process (ongoing awareness, long-term planning, specific initiative)
- Answer the following questions to begin work on your message:
 - What action are you seeking?
 - Who can take that action?
 - What story needs to be heard?
 - Who should they hear it from?