OVERCOMING NIMBY 2.0

2018 Workshop

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HOUSING VIRGINIA

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What is Housing Virginia?

Housing Virginia is a broad based, statewide nonprofit partnership of public and private organizations and committed individuals. We believe that all Virginians should have access to high quality, affordable housing in suitable locations.

Housing Virginia exists to address the large scale housing issues that we face by:

Informing discussions with data and information,

Connecting the dots between housing and other critical issues, and

Unlocking opportunities with communications and trainings.

TODAY'S GOALS:

1. Understand NIMBY-ism

2. Re-frame your messages

3. Get to YES in my backyard

(Or at least, "I wouldn't mind it in my backyard")

"This is out of step with the residential nature of the neighborhood"

"I believe in protecting the single family neighborhood and this is a terrible imposition to place on the residents of this community"

"This calm, quiet happy place will become one of chaos, noise and crime potential"

*"Criminals would be drawn to the area, <u>**potentially killing us and our children**</u>"*

Chesterfield Planning Commission votes against B&B plan

Richmond Times-Dispatch (July 21, 2015)

Link: bit.ly/2BHS2YA

PART 1

The Causes and Key Issues Driving the NIMBY Response

UNDERSTANDING NIMBY-ISM

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NIMBY = Not In My BackYard

- "Public Housing"
- "Low-Income Housing"
- "Homeless Shelter"
- "Section 8"
- "Supportive Housing"
- "Affordable Housing"
- "Rental Housing"
- "High Density"
- "Fair Housing"
- *ANY HOUSING*

Typical NIMBY Fears
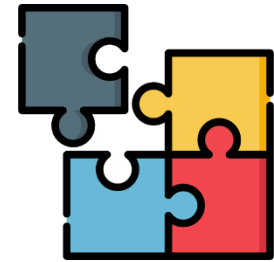
Increased Crime

Increased Traffic

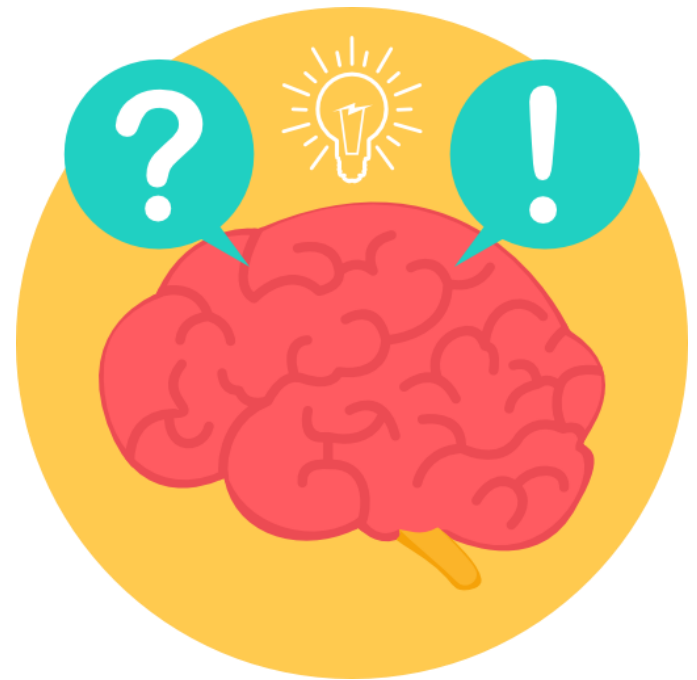Declining Property Values

Environmental Impact

Overcrowded Schools

Not "In Character" with Community

At its core, NIMBYism is a fear response, both to the unknown and to the misunderstood.

In order to address these fears and misunderstandings, you will need to understand why a NIMBYist thinks this way.

In some cases, the fears are more transparent…

1. "[X] will bring crime to my neighborhood!"

2. "I don't want to live near those people."

3. "I bought my house/pay rent at full price – why should they get special treatment?"

What brings out a NIMBY response in a community?

...while in others, it's a little more obscured by another issue.

1. "My property values will go down!"

2. "What about the traffic?"

3. "[X] will overcrowd the local school!"

4. "[X] will cause environmental problems!"

5. "[X] will put a strain on our public services!"

6. "[X] just doesn't fit in with our community."

Who do NIMBYs not want in their backyard?

NEW NEIGHBORS

Motivated by…

- Classism
- Racism
- Privacy

OUTSIDE DEVELOPERS

Motivated by…

- Fear of density
- Anti-growth
- Property values

BOTH

How is NIMBYism manifested?

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

- Voicing opposition at meetings

- Letters of opposition

- Rallying neighbors

- Direct action

- Social media

INSTITUTIONALIZED NIMBYISM

- NIMTOO: *Not In My Term of Office*

- Uncooperative local staff

- Hostile elected/appointed officials

How did NIMBYism get its start?

Rise of nuisance laws and zoning ordinances (early 1900s)

Community organizing amidst growing public infrastructure (1960s)

Expansion of homeownership and individual property rights (1980s)

NIMBYism today

ALL ARE WELCOME HERE ❤

Developers Win!
NEIGHBORHOODS LOSE!
STOP MPLS 2040
MINNEAPOLISFOREVERYONE.ORG

NIMBYism today

NIMBYism is bipartisan!

- Homeowners consistently oppose new development—regardless of political views.

- **"HOMEVOTER HYPOTHESIS"** (William Fischel, 2005)

  - Primary political motivation = preservation of home value

- *Conservatives* who support free markets and property rights oppose development on land they do not own.

- *Liberals* who support redistributive policies oppose new development in their neighborhood.

"The Bipartisan Cry of 'Not in My Back Yard'"
The New York Times (August 21, 2018) nyti.ms/2nTGJmn

BACKGROUND

- Union Presbyterian Seminary partners with developer to build ~300 apartments on green space it owns (by-right)

- Some units reserved for Seminary students at reduced rents

- HUD financing; no affordability requirements

EXAMPLE: Westwood Tract (Northside, Richmond)

DEVELOPER EFFORTS

westwoodtract.wordpress.com

- Website/blog with history, needs assessment, FAQ addressing common concerns

- Plans, drawings, renderings posted online as PDFs

- Personal responses to online comments and questions

- Community meetings

CURRENT STATUS

- Zoning appeal and opposition subsequent lawsuit dismissed

- Permits secured

- Site work and construction underway

- First units online late 2018

Examples of NIMBYism in Your Community

1. What was the proposal?

2. What made it "controversial"?

3. What did proponents do wrong or right?

4. What was the eventual result?

5. What lessons can be learned?

How can we be **proactive** about NIMBYism?

Predicting and responding to NIMBYism is a complex process, but not an impossible one.

1. Understand thinking behind NIMBY response
2. Engage with the community from the onset
3. Develop and maintain a consistent engagement strategy
4. Maintain transparency through the entire process

ACTIVITY 1 (10 min)
RESPONDING TO NIMBY FEARS

1. Complete **WORKSHEET 1** in workbook
   1. Review common NIMBY fears in first column
   2. Draft your responses in second column
   3. *Use your gut reaction*
2. Share results and discuss

PART 2

Hitting Reset on Your Communications Strategy

RE-FRAMING YOUR MESSAGE

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What is a **FRAME**?

Frames are *sets of choices* about how information is presented. Effective framing requires:

- Knowing what to lead with

- Selecting words that "fit your frame"

- Choosing what to leave unsaid

Understanding is **FRAME DEPENDENT**

Given the <u>importance of free speech</u>, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally? ➡ **85% in favor**

Given the <u>risk of violence</u>, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally? ➡ **40% in favor**

Sniderman & Theriault, 2004

A message *backfires* when it reinforces the audience's existing biases, rather than changing them …even when contradictory evidence is provided.

Tiffany Manuel, Ph.D, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

www.housingvirginia.org

THE BACKFIRE EFFECT

- The effect has been studied and confirmed by cognitive and behavioral scientists for more than 30 years

- *"When misinformed people were exposed to corrected facts in news stories, they rarely changed their minds. In fact, they often became even more strongly set in their beliefs."* (Keohane, 2010)

- This effect is present in many issues, including housing

Data and facts alone <u>rarely</u> change minds.

Data is most effective when it bolsters <u>strong explanations</u> and <u>value statements</u>.

The Role of **DATA**

"With piles of data but no alternative frame to hang them on, housing advocates may be seeing renewed interest from local legislators but are facing an increasingly unsympathetic public."

"You Don't Have to Live Here", Enterprise and FrameWorks Institute, October, 2016

Your Audience Determines FRAME and MESSAGE

Your Supporters and Funders
- o   "We are Doing the Right Thing"
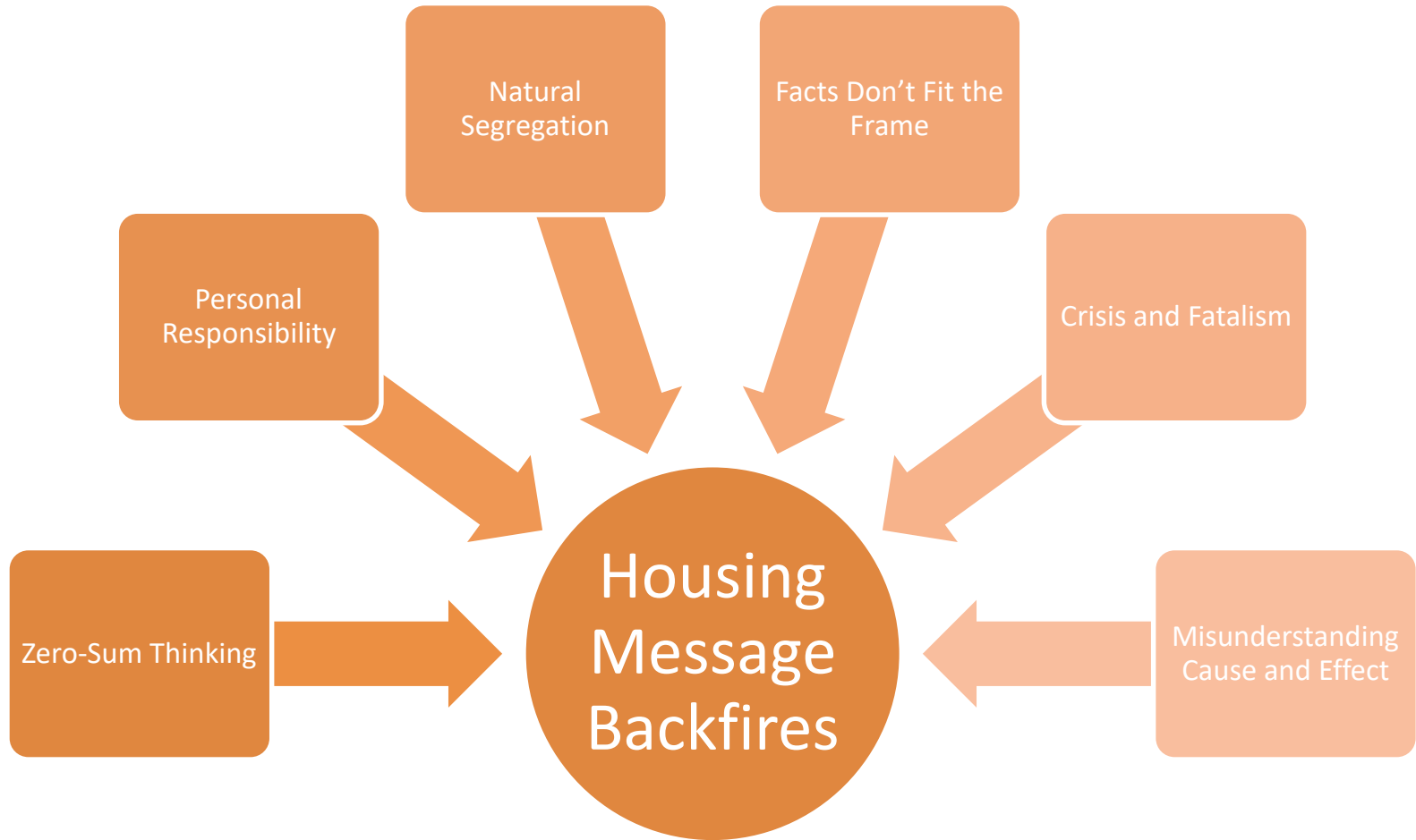
Elected Officials and Policy Makers
- o   "Good Data makes Good Policy"

Neighbors, Citizens, Voters, the Public at Large
- o   "Choose the Frame to Avoid Backfires"

Why Your Messages Probably Aren't Working

Natural Segregation

Facts Don't Fit the Frame

Personal Responsibility

Crisis and Fatalism

Zero-Sum Thinking

Housing Message Backfires

Misunderstanding Cause and Effect

Source: "You Don't Have to Live Here: Why Housing Messages are Backfiring and 10 Things We Can Do About it," Enterprise Community Partners (2016)

Common Backfires in Community Engagement

ZERO-SUM THINKING: "This issue has nothing to do with me. It's not my responsibility to solve other people's problems."
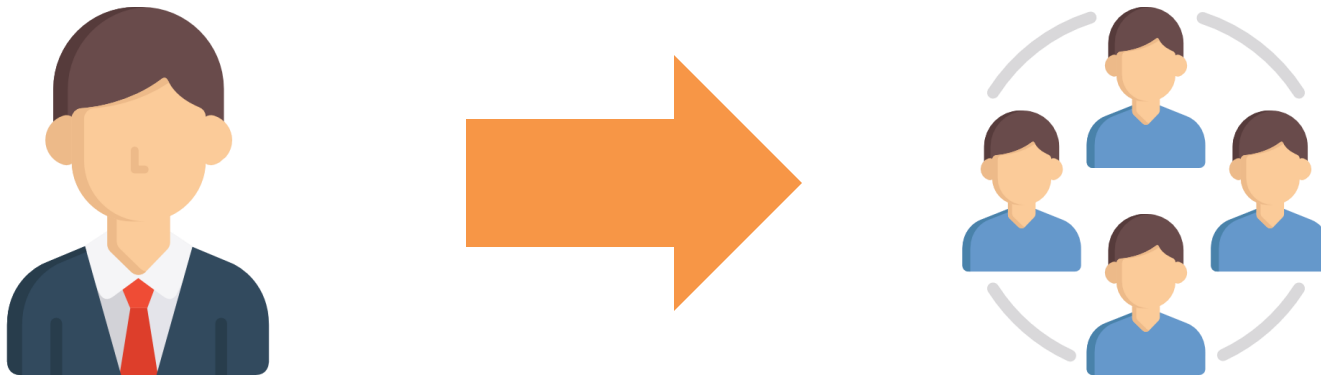
SOLUTION: Tell a "*story of us*" – how affordable housing benefits the whole community – instead of a "story of them."

Common Backfires in Community Engagement

TRADITIONAL MESSAGE :   John and Mary need our help. They are trying to overcome addiction and homelessness. They need an affordable home and counseling support.

NEW FRAME: Tell a "*story of us*". Our community makes sure that all of our neighbors have the chance to succeed. When someone is struggling, we all come together to help. That's what makes our community great.

Common Backfires in Community Engagement

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: "Buy/rent the house you can afford or move. Stop making poor decisions and asking me to pay for them."

SOLUTION: Make it clear that *where you live affects you* – community-level factors shape health, economic mobility, and opportunity.

NEW FRAME: Everyone should have an equal opportunity to succeed. <u>But we all start in different places</u>. If you are born into a poor family in a neighborhood with little opportunity, you may need a boost that a more fortunate person doesn't need. The life expectancy, income potential, education (etc – fill in the stat) is very different for babies born in these two neighborhoods just two miles apart.

**NATURAL SEGREGATION:** "Who wants to live next to [X] people? I worked hard to move where I am now."

SOLUTION: Use *robust examples* – and even "field trips" – that show successful, quality affordable developments.

NEW FRAME: Use well crafted descriptions, pictures, field trips, bus tours, videos to give people a new frame on what "affordable housing" really is. Most people do not have direct experience with high quality affordable housing so they form their opinions on the traditional memes of run down, dangerous "public housing."

FACTS DON'T FIT THE FRAME: "Most people I know are doing fine. That data doesn't sound right to me."
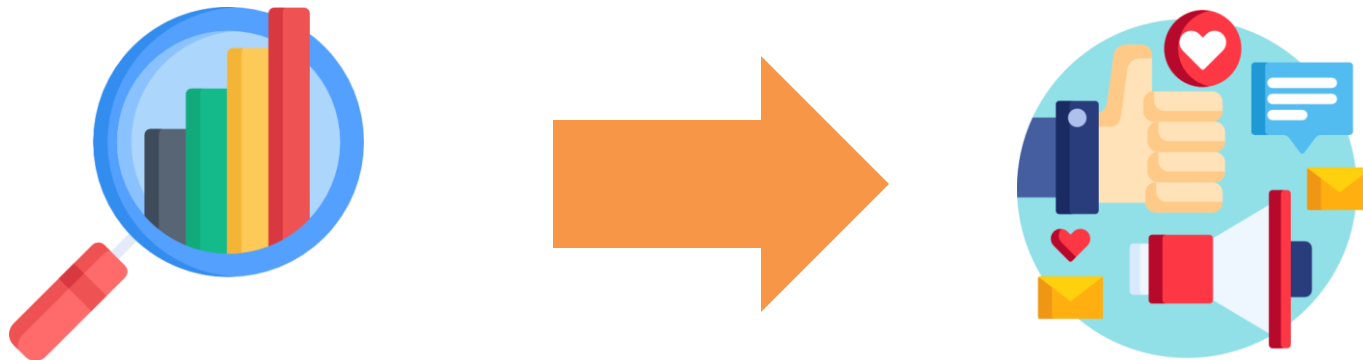
SOLUTION: Don't let data be the message on its own — data should *enhance* a larger message frame.

NEW FRAME: Start with an example that most people will connect with and that is "non-threatening."

Many young people in our community who have graduated college and are working have needed to come back to live with mom and dad because we just don't have housing they can afford. In fact, the average rent in our community is X and you need to earn Y to live here. No wonder we have a problem.

Common Backfires in Community Engagement

CRISIS AND FATALISM: "How do you expect me to change the housing market and solve poverty? We can never fix this."
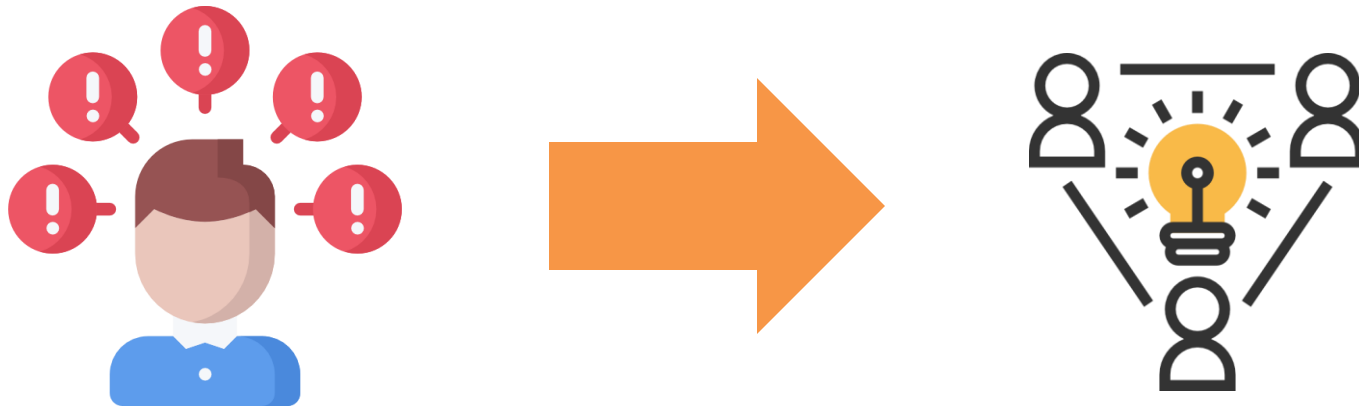

SOLUTION: Highlight successful examples of *partnerships* — especially with government — that demonstrate how we can work together to advance positive change.

Common Backfires in Community Engagement

NEW FRAME: Use the 80/20 RULE. Spend 20% of your presentation talking about <u>the problem</u> and spend 80% talking about <u>solutions that work</u>. Most people turn off when the problems go on and on but they tune in when they understand how to problem SOLVE.

MISUNDERSTANDING CAUSE AND EFFECT: "Why do we need more affordable housing? It just breeds crime and dependency."
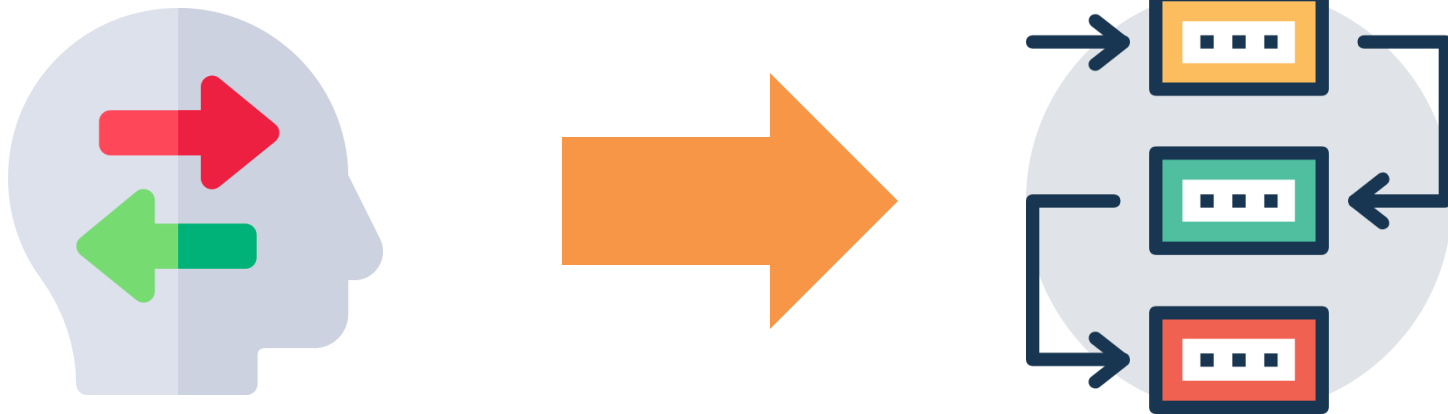
SOLUTION: Help the public understand basic issues by explaining *why* this is happening and *how* the problem can be solved with concrete actions.

NEW FRAME: Explain how housing is connected to other important issues. For example, the health of seniors is often directly connected to their living conditions…if their home isn't accessible, it may result in risk of injury. If their home isn't near health or other services, they may not receive the treatment they need. If their monthly house payment is too high, they may need to cut health care or healthy food expenses.

DISCUSSION (15 min)
ANALYZE YOUR MESSAGES

1. Break into groups

2. Share your existing communication material

3. Discuss…

   1. How well do your current messaging strategies align with "reframing" recommendations and best practices?

   2. What, if anything, are you doing correctly?

   3. What, if anything, should you change?

   4. Can you think of any time where your messaging backfired on you?

ACTIVITY 2 (10 min)
ELEVATOR PITCH

1. Break into groups

2. Assume you are trying to develop...

   1. Homeless shelter at suburban church

   2. Fourplex in single-family neighborhood

   3. 50 unit affordable multifamily project in gentrifying neighborhood

3. Complete **WORKSHEET 2** (page 10) in workbook

4. Share results and discuss

BREAK

ACTIVITY 3 (15 min)
TEST YOUR RE-FRAMING SKILLS

1. Break into groups

2. Complete **WORKSHEET 3** (page 11) in workbook

   1. Review common fears in first column

   2. Describe how you might go about responding to these fears *based on your new messaging knowledge*

3. Share results and discuss

PART 3

Building Relationships and Action Plans

GETTING TO "YES" IN MY BACKYARD

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Relationship Building
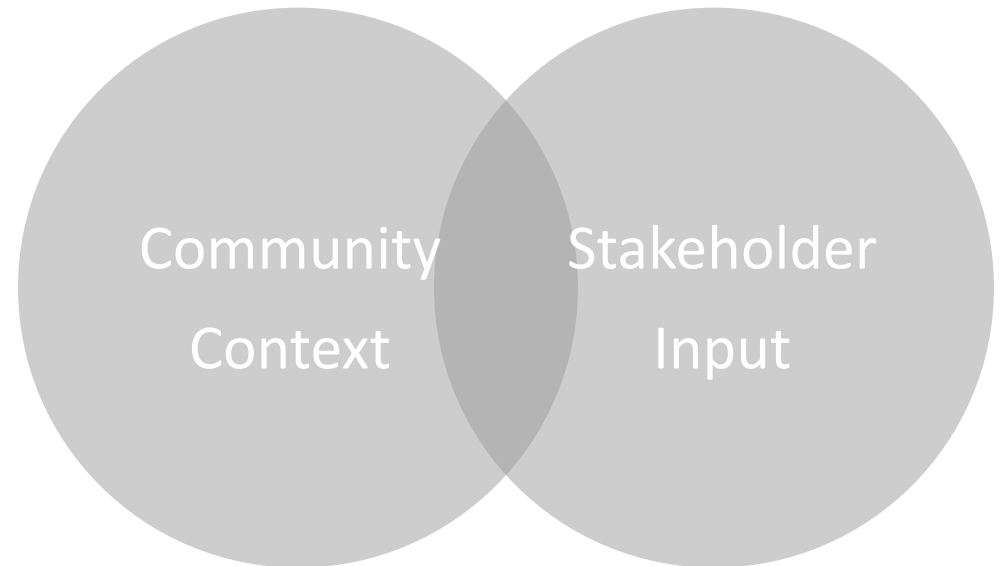
Changing Minds Through Relationship Building

KEY QUESTIONS BEFORE PROJECT:

1. Do we have a stated purpose and community value?

2. Why should this particular project go here?

3. Do we understand who is most and least affected by this project?

4. Do we understand their core concerns?

MAINTAIN TRANSPARENCY with a consistent communications strategy. Keep your promises and know from the outset:

1. WHAT you communicate

2. WHO the audience is

Community
Context

Stakeholder
Input

Changing Minds Through Relationship Building

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

New Residents
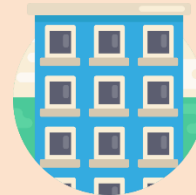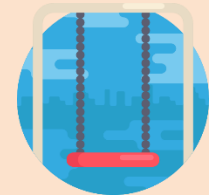
Neighborhood Associations

Neighbors

Local Government

SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS

Local Housing Authorities

Social/Children's Services

Schools, Health & Human Services

Law Enforcement

BUILD GOOD NEIGHBOR RELATIONS with

community leaders by:

1. Recognizing potential effects of project/program

   on community

2. Proactively seeking community input

3. Only making promises you can keep

4. Working with a community liaison to build trust

Changing Minds Through Relationship Building

Correct Misinformation

- Disseminate Project Materials
- Use Graphics
- Small Group Meetings
- Person-to-Person Interactions

Meet Emotional Needs

- Proactively Engage with Community Leaders
- Door-to-Door Canvassing
- Keep Meetings Small and Intimate
- Maintain Equal Exchange

Focus on Mutual Priorities

- Acknowledge and Respect Citizen Concerns
- Bring in Moderate Stakeholders as Mediators
- Demonstrate Commitment to Related Values

Negotiate Conflicts of Interest

- Compromise
- Exchange Concessions
- Counter-Balanced Benefits
- Expand the Pool
- Joint Decision Making

"Overcoming NIMBY Opposition," *Public Sector Digest* (February 2010).

Changing Minds Through Relationship Building

"Unless required by law or local government regulations, **avoid conducting public participation in the form of mass meetings**. The least appropriate communication mechanism is the large informational meeting format in which local government authorities and project sponsors opponents stand up at the podium and dispense information. Meanwhile, faceless opponents in the crowd vie with each other for the chance to shout the most hostile questions designed to trip up the presenters."

"Overcoming NIMBY Opposition," *Public Sector Digest* (February 2010).

Changing Minds Through Relationship Building

KEY QUESTIONS AFTER ENGAGEMENT:

1. Have we communicated fully, clearly, and consistently?

2. Have we tried to address stakeholder concerns?

3. Have we kept our promises and brought value to the stakeholders?

Two More Considerations

Who and Where

1. Who is the right Messenger to tell our Story...does it Change Depending on the Audience ?

2. What is the Most Conducive Venue for our Message...What is the Worst?

Action Plan

1. **CREATE YOUR POSITION**:

   Provide your organization and the community with a compelling message about who you are and why your project is valuable.

2. **RESEARCH THE COMMUNITY NEEDS THOROUGHLY:** Develop a clear understanding of the context upon which your project is entering and why it is needed.
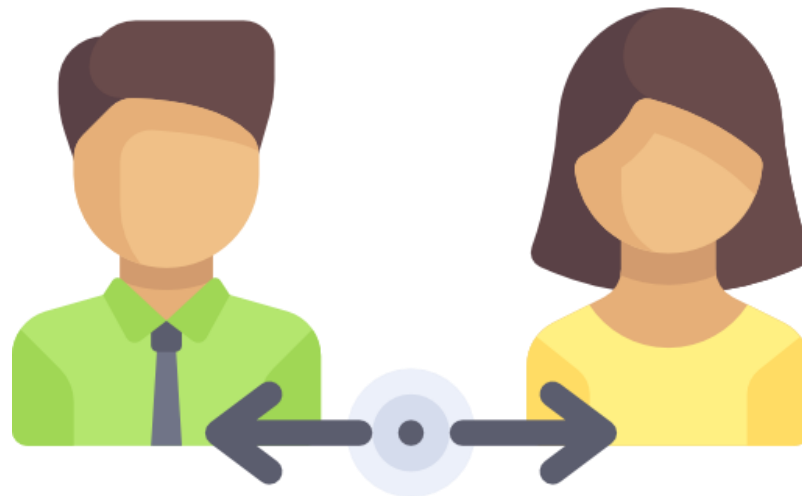
3. **INCLUDE COMMUNITY LEADERS AND POTENTIAL NIMBYS:** Gain their trust through transparency, honesty, and openness. Find a "community champion" who will advocate for your project.

4. CREATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT:
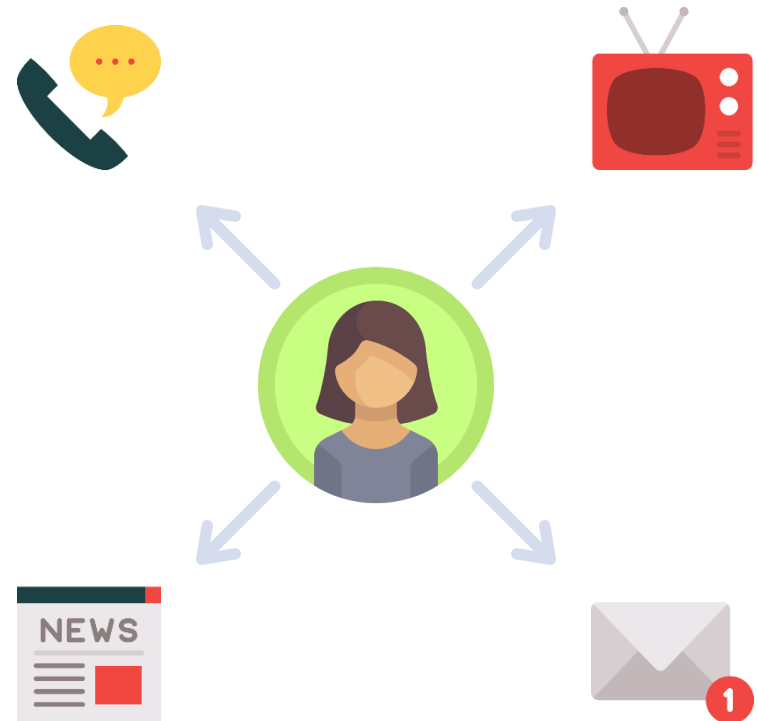
Develop working relationships with the local government departments involved with enabling the project to move forward.
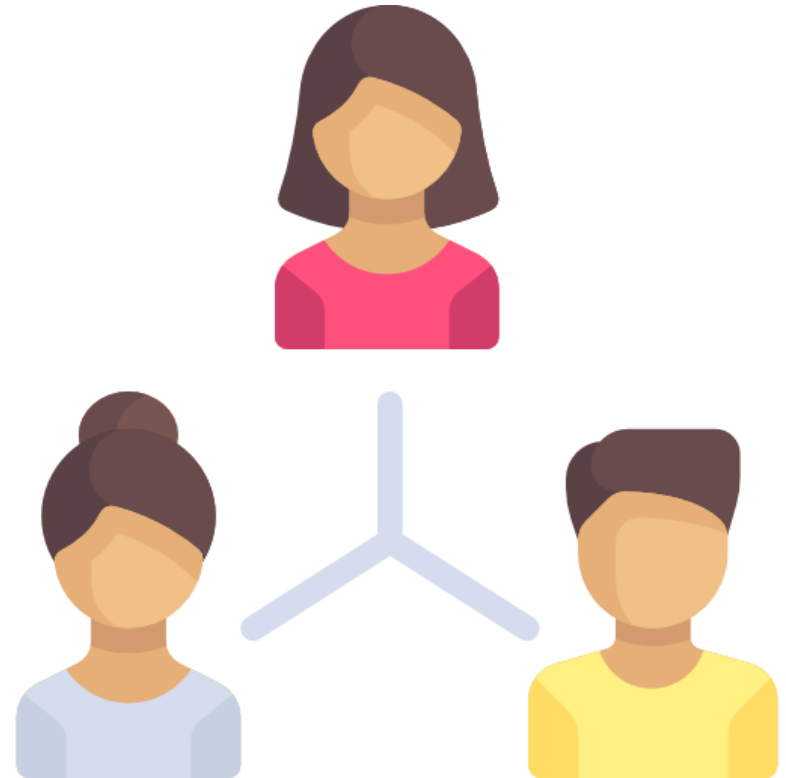
5. ENGAGE WITH THE MEDIA:

Avoid negative publicity by providing the press with clear goals and positive, proactive messaging.
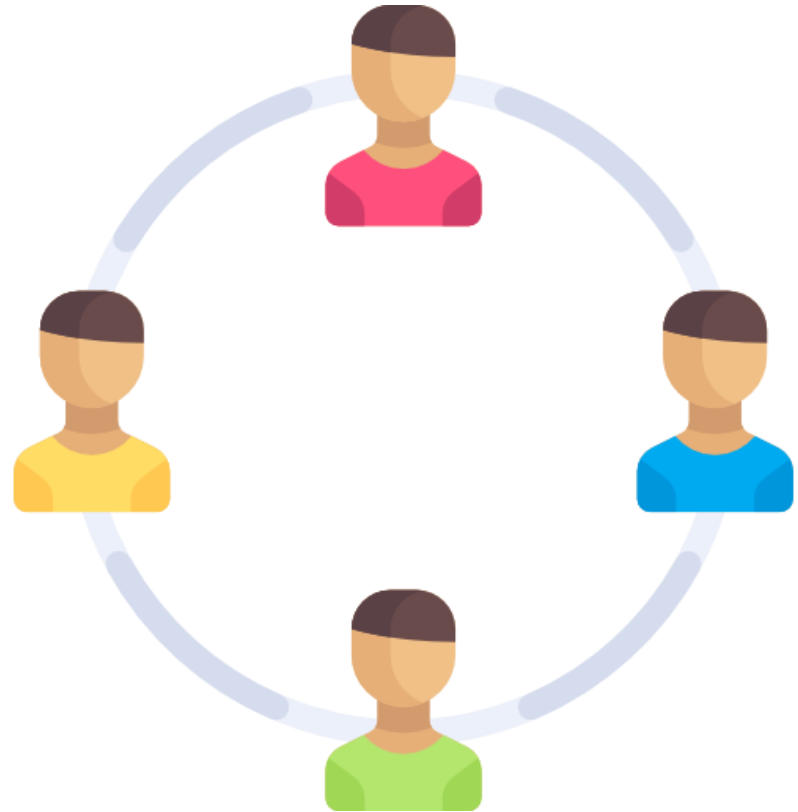
6. **COLLABORATE WITH EXISTING SUPPORTERS:** Draw upon existing supporters' excitement for the project to assist with its promotion.

7. **HOST AN OPEN HOUSE OR COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION:** Consolidate support by making your development a community-driven improvement project.

ACTIVITY 4 (20 min)
CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

1. Break into groups

2. Assume you are trying to develop...

   1. Homeless shelter at suburban church

   2. Fourplex in single-family neighborhood

   3. 50 unit affordable multifamily project in gentrifying neighborhood

3. Complete **WORKSHEET 4** (page 14) in workbook

4. Share results and discuss

Adhere to **PRINCIPLES**

1. Respect and understand local context

2. Be transparent and keep promises

3. Avoid confrontational dialogue

IF SUCCESSFUL:

1. Track progress and follow up with engaged stakeholders

2. Advertise accruing community benefits

3. Use successes and lessons for next project

Questions and Wrap-Up

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