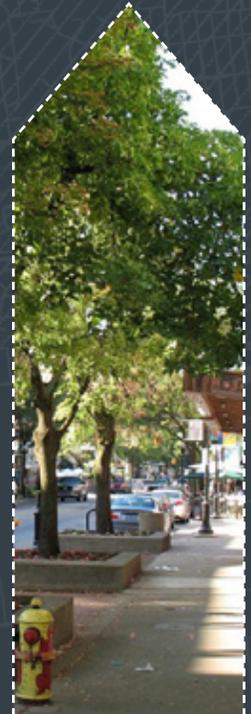
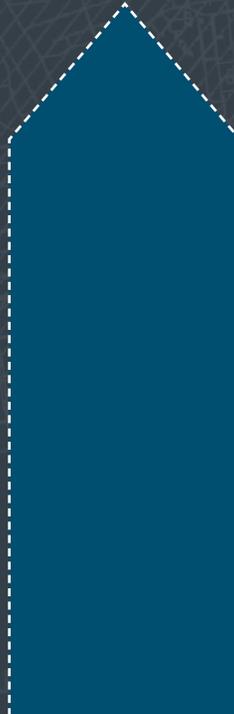


*Promising Practices
for a Public Education
Campaign*

Advocating for Housing Affordability in Ann Arbor



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Images in this report came directly from the following sources: Mlive, Ann Arbor District Library archives, OCED, photos taken by team members

Design by Susan Ackermann

This research was supported by The Dow Chemical Company's Sustainability Fellows Program at the University of Michigan, which supports full-time graduate students and postdoctoral scholars at the University who are committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, and meaningful sustainability solutions on local-to-global scales. Our Fellowship Team worked with Teresa Gillotti and the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), to research and develop recommendations for developing a public education campaign advocating for affordable housing in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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*We would like to thank the following collaborators and mentors.
This report would not have been possible without you.*

The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED)
Teresa Gillotti, Housing and Community Infrastructure Manager
For overseeing this project and providing us with invaluable support, feedback, and guidance.

Ann Wallin and Nicole Berg, Dow Fellows Program Coordinators
For their coordination and constant support through our project.

Victoria Campbell-Arvaí, Ph.D., Assistant Research Scientist
in the School of Natural Resources & Environment and Project Advisor
For providing us research guidance and expertise as we developed and implemented this project.

Participants of our focus groups
Including the Affordable Housing Leadership Team
For allowing us to present our ideas and offering us excellent, informative feedback.

Finally, we are especially thankful to the many individuals who agreed to be interviewed as part of the project, both locally and nationally, as well as those who shared their insights with us on a more informal basis throughout the project's development and implementation.

Executive Summary

Washtenaw County's housing costs are on the rise, which will result in a county decreasingly affordable and out of balance and, eventually, unsustainable.

INTRODUCTION

Washtenaw County's housing market is becoming increasingly unaffordable for both owners and renters. According to a 2014 Needs Assessment Report funded by the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), housing costs in Washtenaw County are on the rise and are expected to continue to increase and outpace income gains, making affordability a significant challenge for the county. The result, according to the report, will be "a county decreasingly affordable and out of balance and, eventually, unsustainable."¹ In response to the 2014 county report, in early 2015 Ann Arbor City Council adopted 20 year affordable housing (AH) goals, voicing their commitment to working with partners to create nearly 2,800 new affordably priced rental units in the city by 2035.

Despite the demonstrated need for more affordable housing in Ann Arbor and general support for the idea of AH among city residents, there has been significant opposition and backlash against specific affordable housing projects when it is proposed in people's neighborhoods. With this context, the Office of Community and Economic Development identified that a public education campaign could be an effective strategy to address the community on the topic. Based on extensive research, our team proposes the recommendations outlined within this report for a public education campaign advocating for housing affordability in Ann Arbor.

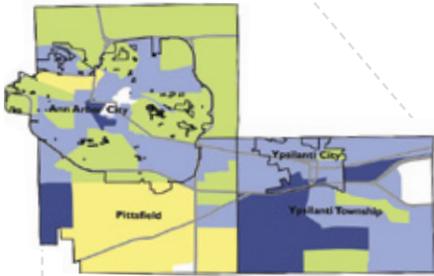


Figure 1

UN-AFFORDABILITY IN WASHTENAW COUNTY, 2012

TARGET AREA CENSUS TRACTS

% PAYING > 30% OF INCOME ON RENT, 2012

0-24.9%	50-74.9%
25-49.9%	75-100%

1. CZB report, "Affordable Housing and Economic Equity - Analysis: Washtenaw County, Michigan," last modified, January 2015, <http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/plans-reports-data/housing-and-infrastructure/2015/washtenaw-county-affordability-and-economic-equity.pdf>, 4.

2. Ryan Stanton, "Millions of Dollars Worth of Public Housing Renovations Underway in Ann Arbor," MLive, last modified February, 22, 2015, http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2015/02/ann_arbor_public_housing_renov.html#incart_river_index.

BACKGROUND

Over the past 30 years, Washtenaw County has seen numerous AH projects and developments get underway, to varying degrees of success. According to the City of Ann Arbor, there are currently a total of 15 AH and apartment complexes, 40 rental housing properties accepting section 8 vouchers, and 260 Avalon affordable residential apartment units in the city. Despite reports that Ann Arbor is investing millions of dollars in public housing renovations,² the city still faces a massive AH shortage. Figures 2 and 3 (on page 2) illustrate that there is a shortage of affordable rental housing in the City of Ann Arbor, as compared to the county as a whole.

Many Washtenaw County residents employed in Ann Arbor cannot afford to live in the city, including those holding jobs that are critical to the economy and well-being of Ann Arbor, such as

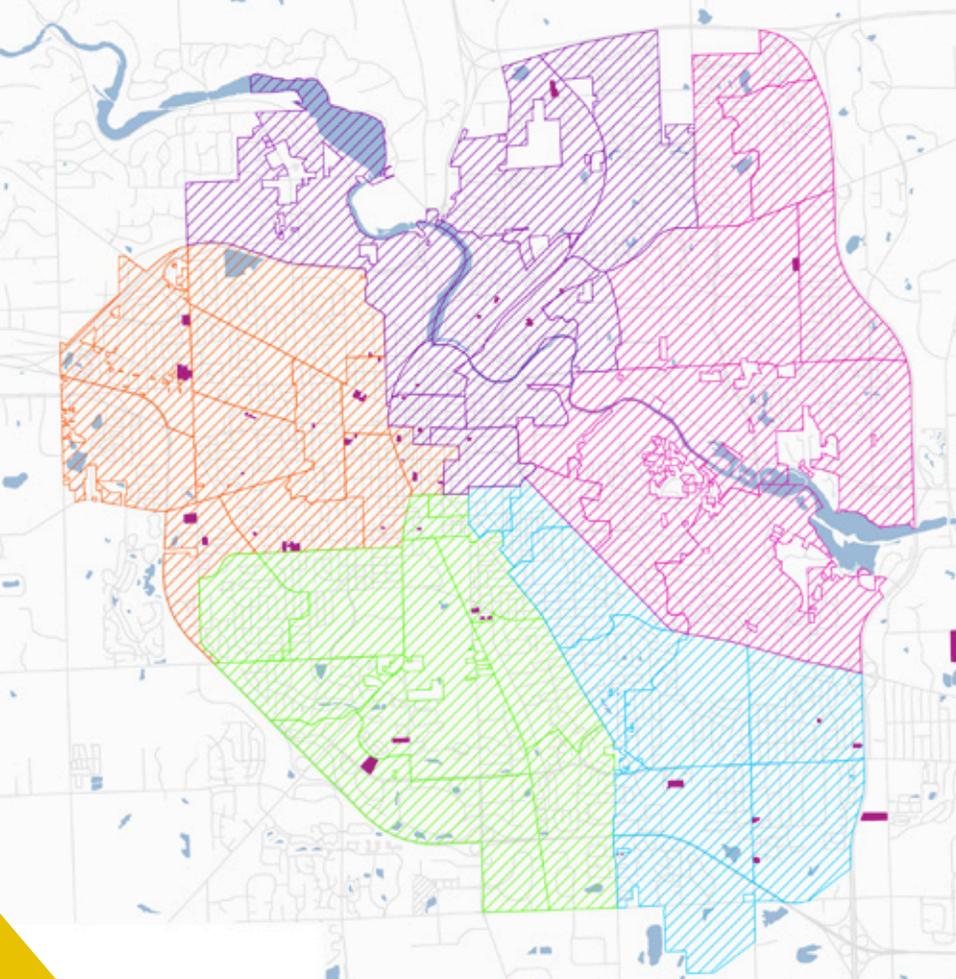


Figure 2

**AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS,
ANN ARBOR, 2015**

-  Ward 1: 209 units
-  Ward 2: 24 units
-  Ward 3: 89 units
-  Ward 4: 276 units
-  Ward 5: 456 units

Source: OCED

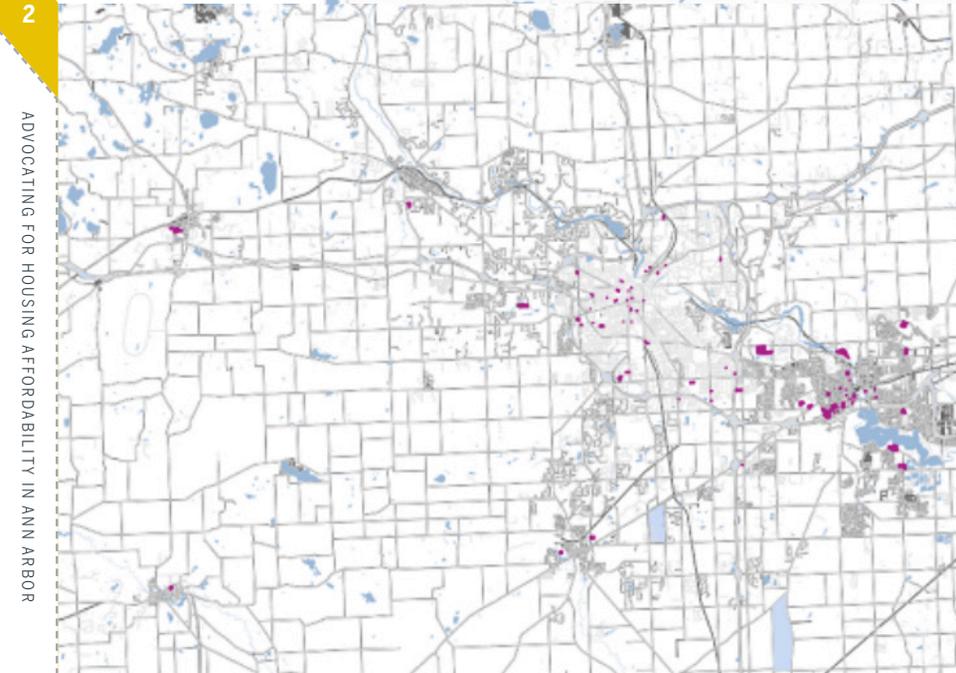


Figure 3

**AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS,
WASHTENAW COUNTY, 2015**

- Ann Arbor: 1,054 units
- Chelsea: 72 units
- Dexter: 20 units
- Milan: 36 units
- Saline: 95 units
- Ypsilanti: 1,089 units
- Pittsfield Township: 462 units
- Scio Township: 144 units
- Superior Township: 150 units
- Village of Manchester: 32 units
- Ypsilanti Township: 868 units

Source: OCED

nurses, teachers, childcare workers, firefighters, and police officers. According to the U.S. Census, the median household income in Ann Arbor in 2010–2014 was \$56,835 as compared to nearby Ypsilanti, where it was \$32,148. The median home price in Ann Arbor was double that of Ypsilanti (\$231,700 and \$114,700, respectively). These figures demonstrate the tremendous need for more affordable options within the City of Ann Arbor to help house the city’s growing workforce, ease congestion, and ensure the diversity, vitality, and social equity of Ann Arbor.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to be a communication tool that provides accessible resources for the OCED and other affordable housing partners in Ann Arbor to help launch a public education campaign around affordable housing, by providing:

1. **Resources and informed recommendations** to engage affordable housing allies in designing a public education campaign that will tap into latent public support for affordable housing; and
2. **Information** that can be used by affordable housing advocates when proposing new affordable housing developments or policies that are likely to face opposition from NIMBYs (“Not In My BackYard” folks) or others.

METHODOLOGY

To inform our recommendations, we examined both Ann Arbor’s AH context and AH campaigns from across the nation to learn about best practices that could be applied to Ann Arbor.

- **Local Research:** We performed 19 key informant interviews and conducted extensive research on the city’s historical context using library archives, online articles, geographic data, and local policy.
- **Campaign Examples:** We conducted an online search to identify model AH campaigns that have been implemented

Figure 4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY



elsewhere, including at the local, state, and national levels. We followed up with five campaigns through phone interviews to better understand their context, strategy, metrics, successes and failures, and lessons learned.

- **Focus Groups:** From the above research, we distilled three campaign approaches which were shared with local AH stakeholders in the form of two focus groups, which helped our team to assess how well each resonated with key AH advocates in Ann Arbor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This document captures specific key findings from the breadth of our research demonstrating promising practices to consider. Condensing these into themes, we broadly recommend:

- **Plan Strategically.** Defining the project goals and scope from the outset, and ensuring they are consistent with available funds and resources as well as effectively shared with partners and stakeholders, is an important early step in the campaign planning process. Work plans ensure that 1) the goals of the campaign are

clearly identified and consistent with the resources available; 2) the scope and timeline is realistic; 3) the target audience is being reached effectively; 4) the communication channels are clear; and 5) the outcomes are defined and measurable. A work plan will help ensure a smooth campaign rollout, prevent potential disagreements down the road, and ultimately improve the overall efficacy of the campaign.

- ***Build Partnerships—such as Coalitions—to Boost the Signal.*** Broad, diverse, inclusive coalitions are critical but they are difficult to sustain. It is important to consider creative ways to engage a coalition to sustain collaboration throughout the lifecycle of a campaign and beyond.
- ***Invest in Visuals.*** It pays to hire an expert. Professionals add a great deal of value and expertise to the project and high quality visuals helps the audience take the content more seriously.
- ***Measure and Evaluate.*** Formally measuring and evaluating the process and outcomes of a public education campaign is critical to determining whether the small steps taken early on were effective and how to improve those efforts on a larger scale as well as assessing the overall success of the campaign. It is critical that metrics of success are built into an AH campaign plan from the outset. Precise measurement tools and strategies will vary based on the goals and activities of each AH campaign. For difficult to measure metrics, engaging local topic-specific experts about their perceptions of campaigns before and after can be a good way to gauge change.

CONCLUSION

There is potential for Ann Arbor to benefit from a well-planned, collaborative, multi-dimensional public education campaign. The crucial campaign components include organizing collaboration, taking time to strategically plan the campaign process, and aligning scope with available funding and resources. Messaging and planning that results from coordinated collaboration has a higher potential for impact. Coalescing a campaign coalition with representation from some of the more than 70 AH stakeholders in Washtenaw County could leverage the community support to advance Ann Arbor toward the city's goal of creating nearly 2,800 new affordably priced rental units in the city by 2035.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEX MCDUGALL

Key Findings: Local Research

Figure 5

INTERVIEWEE AFFILIATIONS

Elected Officials (current)	4
Elected Officials (former)	3
Government Employees (current or former)	3
Non-Profits	3
Grassroots Advocacy	2
Developers	2
Local Business Owners	1
University of Michigan	1
Total Official Interviews	19

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

During the summer of 2016, we interviewed 19 stakeholders in Ann Arbor's affordable housing arena about their experiences with public support and opposition to affordable housing developments or policies as well as their thoughts on how a public education campaign could help boost support for affordable housing initiatives. A summary of our findings is below.

SUMMARY OF SELECT KEY FINDINGS

BREAK DOWN THE TERMINOLOGY: Tackling “affordable housing” will be difficult without first helping the public to unpack that term. This includes better, consistent communication about the different tiers of society that all need housing affordability, including those 30% or below area median income (AMI) (very low income/homelessness), those earning less than 60% AMI (low income), and those earning between 50%–120% AMI (low to moderate income, workforce housing).

“[S]omebody at 60% of AMI of \$35,000 has a whole different set of problems than someone who is earning \$20,000. We all strive for happiness and our families to do well, but with different incomes or different times in our lives... If I'm 30 and earning \$35,000, or if I'm 80 and I'm earning \$20,000, **there's just different needs all encompassed within 'affordable housing.'**” —An interviewee

EDUCATION FEELS EMPTY WITHOUT ACTION: A successful campaign will challenge the public to do something if they want to support housing affordability in Ann Arbor. This could range from signing on to a public statement of support, giving money to related non-profits, showing up for public meetings about the issue, or voting for a relevant ballot initiative. In short, make sure the campaign is linked to some sort of action step.



PRAISE FOR LOCAL NONPROFITS: Articles from the 1990s suggest that the Ann Arbor community greatly supports the affordable housing development and maintenance from the nonprofits, such as Avalon Housing. One prime example mentioned in the 2014 county report is Carrot Way, an Avalon project, which is identified as a good model of affordable housing in Ann Arbor.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEXANDROUCAL

LACK OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS HAVE BEEN PROBLEMATIC: In 1990, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that 41 of Ann Arbor's affordable housing units were vacant due to lack of maintenance. In the early 2000s, the city tried to preserve the YMCA's 100 units. However, the city chose to demolish these units due to high repair costs. These examples demonstrate that the lack of maintenance and repair of units have reduced Ann Arbor's affordable housing in addition to the lack of affordable housing.

DORMANT ALLY OF THE UNIVERSITY: Despite its strong presence in Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan has yet to weigh in as an institution on AH issues. However, there has been some historical involvement on affordability issues by individual faculty members. For example, in 1994, an architecture professor, Kurt Brandle, had his students design sustainable affordable housing projects. From 1992–2008, Kurt served on the board of Washtenaw County Affordable Housing Corps, an organization that strived to help people help themselves

into homeownership. More recently, through the University of Michigan's "Telling It" program, students volunteered to create a sculpture in a year long after school project and unveiled it at Carrot Way Apartments in 2015, depicted in the image above.

THE VARIED PERSPECTIVES OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING: In Ann Arbor, there are contrasting views related to affordable housing. For example, some neighbors of Platt Road believe the Platt Road project will increase the concentration of low income housing and will increase rates of crime in this neighborhood. In contrast, other neighbors of Platt Road advocate for this affordable housing project because they believe the mixed housing project will cause little harm to property values or neighborhood safety. Additionally, the mayor is a proponent of this project because of the infrastructure that exists at this site and the job opportunities nearby. This example demonstrates the importance of knowing the stakeholders and their issues of interest when developing a public education campaign.



Key Findings: Campaign Examples

WEB-BASED RESEARCH

We conducted web-based research on best practices for conducting an AH campaign and examined over 45 national, state, and local campaigns from across the country to learn more about their goals, audience, action plan, and lessons learned. From this research, we identified the following best practices:

A GOOD CAMPAIGN STARTS WITH GOOD

PLANNING: Strategic planning from the outset is critical to developing a successful AH campaign. Proactively and collaboratively formulating a concrete, written work plan at the beginning of the campaign development process will help ensure that: 1) the goals of the campaign are clearly identified and

consistent with the resources available; 2) the scope and timeline is realistic; 3) the target audience is being reached effectively; 4) the communication channels are clear; and 5) the outcomes are defined and measurable. A work plan will help ensure a smooth campaign rollout, prevent potential disagreements down the road, and ultimately improve the overall efficacy of the campaign. See *Additional Resources* on page 25 for a list of campaign planning tools.

BUILD A BROAD AND COMMITTED COALITION:

Just as important as the message of an affordable housing public education campaign is who is involved in disseminating that message. Complex, wide reaching issues like AH cannot be tackled singlehandedly by

Figure 7

TABLE OF EVALUATION TYPES FROM HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT, 2002

EVALUATION TYPE	DEFINITION/PURPOSE	EXAMPLE QUESTIONS
FORMATIVE	Assesses the strengths and weaknesses of campaign materials and strategies before or during the campaign's implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the campaign's target audience think about the issue? • What messages work with what audiences? • Who are the best messengers?
PROCESS	Measures effort and the direct outputs of campaigns—what and how much was accomplished. Examines the campaign's implementation and how the activities involved are working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many materials have been put out? • What has been the campaign's reach? • How many people have been reached?
OUTCOME	Measures effect and changes that result from the campaign. Assesses outcomes in the target populations or communities that come about as a result of grantee strategies and activities. Also measures policy changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been any affective change (beliefs, attitudes, social norms)? • Has there been any behavior change? • Have any policies changed?
IMPACT	Measures community-level change or longer-term results that are achieved as a result of the campaign's aggregate effects on individuals' behavior and the behavior's sustainability. Attempts to determine whether the campaign caused the effects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the behavior resulted in its intended outcomes (e.g., lower cancer rates, less violence in schools)? • Has there been any systems-level change?

<http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/publications-resources/public-communication-campaign-evaluation-an-environmental-scan-of-challenges-criticisms-practice-and-opportunities>

any one individual or organization. Rather, coalitions, or groups of individuals and/or organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a shared goal, are a critical foundation of a successful AH campaign. Coalitions also greatly benefit from having a core group of individuals who can consistently convene. It is important to establish realistic meeting times and expectations early in the coalition-forming process. Building local coalitions with broad support, including stakeholders, local opinion leaders, and policy makers, is an important first step in the campaign planning process. Generally, the broader and more committed the membership of the coalition, the better.

IMPLEMENT IN PHASES: A public education campaign surrounding an issue as complex and wide reaching as AH is most likely to be successful using a phased approach for engaging different audiences to achieve different goals at different time points. Phasing allows a campaign to evolve and grow strategically, over time, through varied modes of communication and multilevel strategies and tactics. For example, a campaign whose ultimate goal is policy change may start at the local level with general public education (PHASE 1), then proceed to grassroots outreach (PHASE 2), and ultimately work its way up to the city or state level to engage in policy advocacy (PHASE 3).

START SMALL AND SCALE UP: AH is a large, complex issue that can easily overwhelm the public. In developing an AH campaign, it is critical that people feel they have an active role to play and that their contribution can and will make a difference. To enhance public engagement, a campaign must carefully manage the scale of the activity it is asking people to participate in. For example, it may be most effective to start with one or more small “asks” and build up to larger ones.

MEASURE AND EVALUATE: Formally measuring and evaluating the process and outcomes of a public education campaign is critical to determining whether the small steps taken early on were effective and how to improve those efforts on a larger scale as well as assessing the overall success of the campaign. It is critical that metrics of success are built into an AH campaign plan from the outset. Precise measurement tools and strategies will vary based on the goals and activities of each AH campaign. See figure 7 for a summary of tools.

DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW UP: Building credibility, trust, and relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders is important to the success of any AH campaign. When a stakeholder expresses interest in an AH project or effort, effective and timely follow-up is critical. By having follow-up materials ready (e.g. a handout ready to be mailed, a presentation ready to be shared, a training/service that can be offered immediately, etc.), a campaign can reach potential supporters quickly and effectively.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

We performed semi-structured phone interviews with representatives from five different AH campaigns from across the country, including: Maine Affordable Housing Coalition³ (Portland, ME); HousingMinnesota Campaign⁴ (St. Paul, MN); Faces and Places of Affordable Housing⁵ (Fort Collins, CO); East Bay Housing Organizations⁶ (Oakland, CA); and the Housing for All Campaign⁷ (Washington, D.C.). The goal of the interviews was to enhance our perspective on different campaign methods and their outcomes to inform our own recommendations and aid in the development of an effective campaign in Ann Arbor. Interviewees were asked questions about their campaign's goals, outcomes, takeaways, funding, and partnerships, among others. A summary of our findings is presented on pages 10 and 11.

3. “Maine Affordable Housing Coalition,” accessed October 23, 2016. <http://mainehousingcoalition.org>.

4. Chip Halboch, “Affordable housing...On billboards?: A grassroots coalition shapes a media campaign on the value of affordable housing,” National Housing Institute, last modified April 2002. <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/122/organize.html>.

5. City of Fort Collins, “The Faces and Places of Affordable Housing” Poster Campaign, last modified March 2003. <http://www.fcgov.com/socialsustainability/faces-places-posters.php>.

6. “East Bay Housing Organizations,” accessed October 23, 2016. <http://www.ebho.org>.

7. Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development, “What is the Housing For All Campaign?” accessed October 23, 2016. <https://www.cnhed.org/housing-for-all-campaign/>.

CAMPAIGN PLANNING

- ***Need a good match between objectives and available resources.*** Defining the project goals and scope from the outset, and ensuring they are consistent with available funds and resources and effectively shared with partners and stakeholders, is an important early step in the campaign planning process.
- ***Multidimensional communications campaigns are most influential.*** Multi-level campaigns that reach different target audiences through different communication channels can provide an opportunity for enhanced engagement.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition's interactive video web page offered visitors an opportunity to send an email directly from the site to the state legislator. After watching the video, viewers could email the legislator to voice their support for increasing the number of section 8 housing vouchers from the state.

- ***When it comes to visuals, it pays to hire an expert.*** Media—whether print, video, web, or otherwise—must be of very high quality. Working with a professional firm, agency, or production company adds a great deal of value and expertise to the project and helps consumers take the content more seriously.
- ***Empower and equip community members and organizations to engage in AH issues.*** When planning a campaign, include opportunities for leadership, advocacy, and/or media training. This will make the campaign more sustainable over the long-term, and is the right thing to do.

The Housing for All Campaign engaged Washington, D.C. residents who were impacted by D.C.'s housing programs in capacity building to develop their leadership skills. Engaging residents was a key strategy of the campaign and many training opportunities were offered that prepared community members to be active in advocacy, build relationships with peers, and feel confident participating in the AH conversation.

COALITION BUILDING

- ***Coalitions are critical, but they are difficult to sustain.*** Coalitions that are built at the outset of a campaign risk falling apart over time. It is important to consider creative ways that engage a coalition and can be sustained throughout the lifecycle of a campaign and beyond.
- ***Broad coalitions are best.*** It is critical that coalitions/partnerships are as diverse and inclusive as possible, engaging stakeholders from across the political spectrum and various economic sectors (e.g. housing, construction, business, faith groups, etc.). By casting a wide net and including everyone in the conversation, the coalition will be taken more seriously and its campaign efforts will be better received.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition attributes much of the success of their campaign efforts to the fact that they are perceived as centrist. They cast a wide net when assembling their coalition, which ultimately included not only stakeholders from within the housing community, but also perceived outsiders who have a vested interest in AH, such as construction companies, banks and “middle of center” community members.

- **But...coalition members also need shared interests.** Coalition members must have some common interest(s) that is supported through membership (e.g. interest in addressing the needs of low-income people). To achieve this, the coalition should be clear about what its objectives are and seek to draw in those groups/organizations that support those objectives.

MESSAGING

- **Share success stories.** Highlight how AH helped people and/or how an AH development improved or enhanced a community. This helps harness support for AH by dispelling fears and myths, demonstrating that public engagement can make a real difference, and showing opponents that AH projects and programs can work.
- **Test campaign materials with outsiders.** When developing the campaign, solicit feedback and input from people outside of the AH community. An outside perspective on campaign materials may provide valuable improvements to campaign imagery, tone, and language that would not have been possible from insiders.
- **Diversity is important in campaign imagery.** By including the stories and images of a diverse range of people affected by AH (e.g. different races, incomes, employment sectors, life stages, etc.), a campaign is more inclusive, reaches a wider audience, and reduces the risk of making any one person the “definition” of AH housing issues.

The Faces and Places of Affordable Housing and the City of Fort Collins, CO consider all the benefits of AH for everyone in the community through a “triple bottom line” approach to sustainability (economic health, environmental services, and social sustainability) and present AH as a natural triple bottom line solution.

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

- Identify clear metrics at the outset of the project. Good measurement and evaluation practices are critical to understanding the impact of a campaign. A campaign that establishes concrete goals, objectives, and metrics for measuring outcomes prior to launching will be much stronger in its ability to identify successes, make improvements, and demonstrate impact to funders and the public. For example, one goal could be to achieve 1,000 likes on Facebook for a particular event or cause. See figure 7 on page 8 for additional ideas.
- Change in public perception is best measured by asking an expert. Because a change in the general public’s understanding of AH is difficult to quantify, it may be best to ask knowledgeable people in the community if they perceive any difference in the way AH is being perceived in the community, both before and after an AH campaign.

HousingMinnesota opted to understand and measure changes in public perception before and after the campaign by asking knowledgeable experts in the community if they perceived any difference in the way AH was being perceived by community members.

- Long term policy change is a worthy goal, but is difficult to measure. Because it is hard to make direct connections between campaign activities and specific policy changes, campaigns seeking to influence policy should also consider using other more short-term and quantifiable metrics to define success.

Public Education Campaign Approaches

Taking what we learned from campaign examples, local research, and focus groups we distilled the following three AH campaign approaches as potential launching-points for an AH campaign in Ann Arbor—Humanizing, Community, and Economic.

After briefly describing each approach, we have featured some concrete examples of AH campaigns from across the country that have successfully utilized each in their materials via various platforms. We have also included a list of potential allies who would be logical partners in spreading each type of approach in Ann Arbor, as well as a list of potential audiences that could be targeted. Finally, we have compiled feedback on each approach from the focus groups on the three approaches and how they could be adapted in Ann Arbor.

APPROACH 1 HUMANIZING

FOCUS: This approach is focused on individuals and families.

“We can appeal to people’s emotion, not by saying you should take care of these poor people, ...[but by] showing them real people’s lives, and look—they’re thriving! They live here. They’re successful. **This is a person that’s like your brother or your uncle or your nephew.**” —An interviewee

SUMMARY: A humanizing approach captures the stories of those who are affected by housing affordability issues. This could include those who have lived or currently live in affordable housing, those who live in unaffordable housing, neighbors of affordable housing, businesses whose employees need affordable housing or others. The purpose of this approach is to help the general public “put themselves in the shoes” of others and draws on a sense of morality and fairness.

POTENTIAL ALLIES: Those who might be interested in *spreading* materials that use this approach

- Faith-based groups, including churches and Religious Action for Affordable Housing (RAAH)
- Non-profit advocates
- Civil Rights groups such as NAACP
- Unions, including Huron Valley Labor Federation
- University students

POTENTIAL AUDIENCES: Those who would be *receptive* to this approach

- Faith-based organizations
- City Council
- The well-to-do
- Not In My BackYard folks (NIMBYs)
- Students

EXAMPLE #1

*The Places and Faces of Affordable Housing*⁸
Fort Collins, CO, 2002

Platform: Traditional Poster

This campaign primarily used the platform of posters and ads to spread its message. The posters showed different individuals who are included in affordable housing, such as children, families, and survivors of domestic violence to communicate that “those” people are these people. The poster on the right focuses on a person in the community that is excluded by unaffordability but plays an important role in the community where he cannot live.

Focus Group: Specific Feedback

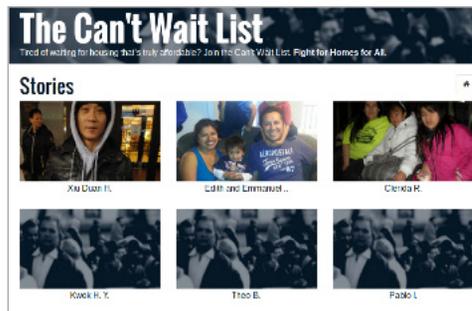
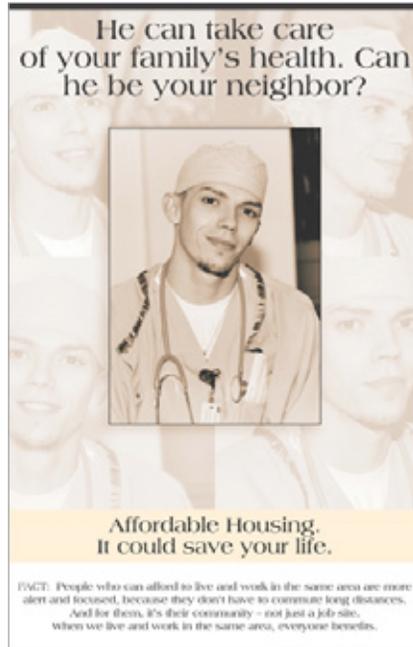
In general, focus group participants liked that the posters use visuals of different populations of real people in need of or impacted by affordable housing. At the same time, there was some concern about whether the approach objectifies or exploits people and one participant observed that he would feel better using the faces and names of people who had agreed to be part of the AH campaign.

EXAMPLE #2

*I Can't Wait Campaign*⁹
National, ongoing

Platform: Website Testimonials

People can use the campaign's website to share testimonials of their struggles to find affordable housing and the burdens this places on them and their families. By having real people share their real stories, the Can't Wait list is both empowering and lends its stories an extra layer of credibility.



Focus Group: Specific Feedback

While some participants praised this platform for being easily accessible, others worried that the “digital divide” would discourage certain groups without a computer or computer literacy (e.g. older populations) from visiting. The question was raised regarding how you go about getting the people you are trying to persuade to visit the site since a website requires someone to actively choose to engage with it. Others wondered how you would go about grabbing people's attention via a website, how to measure impact, and if maintenance would be a significant barrier.

8. City of Fort Collins. “The Faces and Places of Affordable Housing” Poster Campaign, last modified March 2003, <http://www.fcgov.com/socialsustainability/faces-places-posters.php>.

9. Homes for All/Right to the City Alliance. “The I Can't Wait List,” accessed November 6, 2016, <http://homesforall.org/cantwaitlist/>.

FOCUS GROUP IDEAS FOR HUMANIZING:

Tell Stories of Success, Don't Forget an "Ask"

Focus group participants liked the concept of using storytelling as a means of connecting Ann Arbor residents with AH issues and people they might know in the community who are affected by AH. Ideas about ways to do this varied, with the most prominent and promising suggestion being to **highlight successful people in the community who started off in poverty and tell the stories of how AH helped them get where they are today.** In doing this, it is important that materials include a specific "ask" to connect people with next steps and/or larger ways of engaging with the issue/campaign.

Other ideas for conducting a humanizing campaign in Ann Arbor included:

- Profile local workers in fast-growing, low-wage jobs who do not earn enough to live in Ann Arbor.
- Work with local employers (e.g. UMHS and U-M) to highlight employees/jobs that need AH.
- Work with local artists on an AH mural project downtown to help spread the word.
- "This is What a Renter Looks Like" campaign to dispel stereotypes/myths.
- Play to residents' self-interest by citing ways they can benefit from more AH (e.g. "X # of people drive into Ann Arbor for work—traffic will be better if they can live here.")

APPROACH 2

COMMUNITY

FOCUS: This approach focuses on the type of community the people of Ann Arbor want to see, and where affordable housing fits into this vision.

"Every single person should feel like Main Street in Ann Arbor is someplace they could walk or State Street, or Kerrytown Shops, or the farmer's market... If we've missed an opportunity to find a way to keep people in our community of all stripes, we will become Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham. I really dread that. That would be my campaign, if I had one. That would be it."

—An interviewee

SUMMARY: A community approach looks at how housing affordability underpins the broader community where people live, work and play. It draws on people's sense of their civic duty as well as their values about what type of community they would want to live in.

POTENTIAL ALLIES: Those who might be interested in *spreading* materials that use this approach

- Transit Authority
- Downtown Development Authority
- Environmental groups
- Ann Arbor Community Foundation
- Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Unions, including Huron Valley Labor Federation
- Small businesses

POTENTIAL AUDIENCES: Those who would be *receptive* to this approach

- Business
- University
- NIMBYs
- Environmentalists

SAMPLE PLATFORM #1

*Housing Awareness*¹⁰

Vermont, ongoing

Platform: Website

Vermont's campaign is community focused, with "housing is the foundation of Vermont communities" as their tagline. It serves as a centralized resource for educating Vermont on AH.



SAMPLE PLATFORM #2

*Affordable Housing Village*¹¹

Germany, ongoing

Platform: Renderings

Some campaigns have also taken advantage of renderings, which envisions what a community or space could look like. Above, a Dutch company demonstrates what affordable housing could look like after transforming it from old US barracks.

Focus Group: Specific Feedback

There was a general lack of enthusiasm regarding the use of renderings. While most participants agreed that renderings provide a useful visual to counter stereotypes regarding the appearance of AH, others questioned whether the barrier to more AH is what the units will look like. Participants also observed that renderings are too academic in nature and limited in reaching the general public. There was concern that renderings are narrow, site-specific, expensive, and inviting of criticism.



SAMPLE PLATFORM #3

*Housing for All*¹²

Washington, D.C., ongoing

Platform: Action Step

This campaign identifies ways for community members to get involved, show support, or take action. D.C.'s "Housing for All" asks people to support investment in affordable housing, and gives a brief description: "By signing as a supporter of the Housing For All Campaign we ask that you work with us to promote affordable housing solutions that D.C. desperately needs."

Focus Group: Specific Feedback

Most participants strongly favor a campaign platform that is more "actionable," but many don't believe a simple sign-on is enough to compel people to take action. Rather, as several participants noted, the campaign needs offer ways for people to engage, and the call to action needs to be specific in terms of how someone's support will help.

FOCUS GROUP IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY

Speak to Values, but Question Assumptions

Focus group participants thought a community-focused AH campaign approach in Ann Arbor should speak to residents' values and vision of Ann Arbor as an open and accessible community. Residents are happy to praise Ann Arbor for its diversity, yet the reality is that the city is unaffordable for many. ***A community approach would ask residents to question their assumptions about Ann Arbor's inclusiveness and speak***

10. Vermont Housing Finance Agency, "Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign," accessed November 17, 2016, <http://www.housingawareness.org>.

11. Dezeen, "MVRDV to transform old US Army barracks in Germany into affordable housing," accessed November 17, 2016, <https://www.dezeen.com/2016/04/14/mvrdv-us-army-barracks-mannheim-germany-traumhaus-affordable-low-cost-housing/>.

12. Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development, "What is the Housing For All Campaign?" accessed October 23, 2016, <https://www.cnhed.org/housing-for-all-campaign/>.

to people's deepest values surrounding what kind of community they want to live in. As one participant noted,

“Many of us observe with alarm that we couldn’t afford to move into our neighborhoods now (versus even 10 years ago)—so, remind us of the reasons we live here, moved here, want to stay here—and connect with the private fear and moral outrage that these things are shifting, not for the better. It can’t be ‘last one in, lock the door’ anymore.”

—Focus group participant

Other ideas for conducting a community campaign in Ann Arbor included:

- Educate residents about the challenge of finding AH, since many may be unaware.
- Create an online “sign-up” campaign that would publicly identify the general location of people in Ann Arbor who support AH.
- Show how people are affected by Ann Arbor’s construction of luxury housing (e.g. eliminating YMCA site for high end apartments).

APPROACH 3

ECONOMIC

FOCUS: This approach focuses on the economic impact of affordable housing.

“Then affordable housing is also an economic development imperative. And for me, I look at this as both how we develop resilient communities. So making sure that people of all incomes can live and thrive in each of our communities. So if you are a wealthy person living in Ann Arbor, in this downtown space, **I would argue that you should care about affordable housing because that economic diversity inside your boundaries helps to keep your city strong and healthy.** There’s also, on the flip side of it, this idea that we don’t want to concentrate poverty because when we compound those challenges they become expensive to resolve as a society.”

—An interviewee

SUMMARY: An economic approach brings forth the economic benefits of affordable housing, ranging from the avoided tax-payer costs in social services that stable housing provides to increasing disposable income to be spent in the community. This approach appeals to people's self-interest and rational thinking.

POTENTIAL ALLIES: Those who might be interested in *spreading* materials that use this approach

- Chamber of Commerce
- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Banks
- Developers
- Small businesses

POTENTIAL AUDIENCES: Those who would be *receptive* to this approach

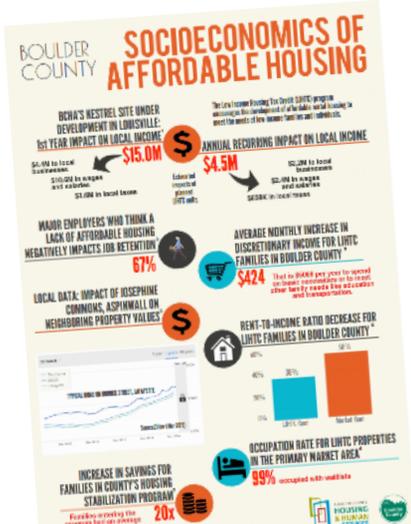
- Business
- University
- NIMBYs

EXAMPLE #1

Our Boulder County¹³
Boulder, CO, 2015

Platform: Infographics

This infographic demonstrates the monetary value of a particular housing project in wages and taxes, both in the development process and annually after construction



is complete. It also highlights the value of affordable housing to businesses and demonstrates how this project positively impacts its residents by accounting for how much their housing-cost burden is reduced.

Focus Group: Specific Feedback

While a number of participants responded favorably to infographics, noting that they are highly informative, adaptable (e.g. offer the ability to be used and developed, as needed, on various topics), visually appealing, easily distributed (e.g. via Facebook and Twitter), and good for many different audiences, others worried that they are “cluttered,” “static,” “passive,” and only appropriate for younger audiences (too narrow).

EXAMPLE #2

Maine Affordable Housing Coalition¹⁴
Maine, 2013

Platform: Videos

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition video demonstrates the economic impact of affordable housing. About 1,000 people are employed by affordable housing projects through building, contracting, and material companies. It also captures the benefits to tenants in having affordable housing options. Videos can be a powerful platform for sharing complex, multi-stakeholder stories.

Focus Group: Specific Feedback

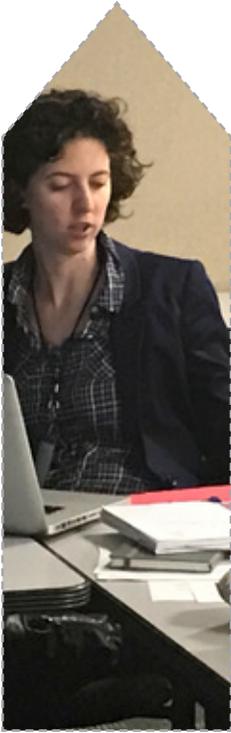
Participants noted that people love videos and that they give a good overview of the issue. It was noted that videos can capture “real and raw” emotions of people impacted by affordable housing and that one video can potentially portray all three campaign approaches—humanizing, economic, and community. Potential negatives surrounding the video platform were mixed—concerns and questions were raised about length (e.g. videos can be too long in our “30 second bite world”), metrics (“what is the return on investment and do you actually get the support?”), the cost (perceived as high), distribution, and reach/effectiveness of the video format.

From Maine Affordable Housing Coalition video: “These are smart investments to make because what you’re doing is lowering long term costs by getting people in a position to be successful and contributing to the economy.”



13. (Our Boulder County Infographic) is Our Boulder County, “Socioeconomics of Affordable Housing,” last modified August 2015, <https://ourbouldercounty.org/document/affordable-housing-boulder-county>.

14. “Maine Affordable Housing Coalition,” accessed October 23, 2016, <http://mainehousingcoalition.org>.



FOCUS GROUP IDEAS FOR ECONOMIC

It's About More than Money:

It's Also Personal

Focus group participants had many different ideas about what an economic campaign approach to AH in Ann Arbor might look like. Beyond simply sharing information about the financial impact of AH on major businesses and employers in the county (e.g. “high cost housing keeps out creative talent”), participants thought a more personal and broad approach to “economics” would be most persuasive. *The proposed idea is to play to people's self-interests by demonstrating how everyone is affected in some way economically by the lack of AH in Ann Arbor, whether due to increased time spent in traffic, congestion, and/or air pollution in the area.*

Other suggestions for conducting an economic AH campaign in Ann Arbor included:

- Use economic equity argument: diverse communities are economically more stable and prosperous, and supporting AH supports a prosperous economy and community.
- Turn the county's report into an infographic for the general public to understand AH issues in the county.
- Include a specific ask for contributions from U-M, local businesses, and government to do something about affordability issues in the county.
- Be cautious with the economic approach because there is some division around the “growth” mentality in Ann Arbor.

Focus Group Feedback on Campaign Approaches

We conducted two focus groups with a total of 11 individuals to test out the three different campaign approaches and platforms outlined above with stakeholders in Washtenaw County, including staff members from the OCED and members of the Affordable Housing Leadership Team. As part of this process,

we presented each group with the Humanizing, Community, and Economic approaches and provided opportunities for feedback and discussion about each approach. We also solicited more general ideas and suggestions for conducting an AH campaign in Ann Arbor. Our results are summarized below.

Figure 8: TABLE SYNTHESIZING FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK BY CAMPAIGN APPROACH

APPROACH	RECURRENT THEMES	DIRECT QUOTES
HUMANIZING Likes	Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Opens eyes to who is affected and how that is different from perceptions” • “Made it seem more real, people can relate” • “Makes the issue feel personal—people might be motivated by a story” • “Stories are compelling way: you know someone who needs affordable housing”
	Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Using ‘real’ people plays on people’s compassion” • “Folks can relate—empathetic”
HUMANIZING Dislikes	Objectifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Difficult to get people to volunteer their stories and object them to scrutiny and criticism” • “Does it objectify folks? If folks agree to be part of campaign that feels much better” • “Can feel exploitative in putting local faces to the issue”
	Lack of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Humanizing is easy; connecting to behavioral change, resource investment can still be difficult” • “Individual stories may not address root causes. I can donate to help a person, but doesn’t help connect to policy, government change...”
COMMUNITY Likes	Communal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Collective approach” • “300 foot view, focus on system, not only individual”
	Speaks to Ann Arbor’s (A2’s) values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Think it’s a good idea to tap into A2’s big ego—put \$ where mouth is” • “We definitely see ourselves as ‘progressive’ and are proud of our quirky localism (businesses, etc.)—play to these qualities”
COMMUNITY Dislikes	Vague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Could get blurry” • “Seems a little undefined”
	Lack of inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you risk alienating folks more because they can’t relate in some way?” • “May be challenging to help everyone feel ‘community’ based”
ECONOMIC Likes	Evidence-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Consistent with CZB report” • “A2 is a pretty data-lovin’ town” • “Using data can be very compelling”
	Reaches critical audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Really important for policy makers and business community” • “Can get business/construction community involved” • “What about local units of government as target? Employers?” • “Needs to be part of any campaign”
ECONOMIC Dislikes	Narrow audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Economic argument may be too obtuse for those that are wealthy and don’t work for government” • “Resonates with a very specific group—folks who hold the NIMBY attitude most likely won’t be swayed by this” • “May only target a more business-minded audience and could miss other people who may be interested in an issue”
	Emphasis on money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “De-humanizes it a little: is it just about economics or that children have a safe space to live?” • “It sucks it is always about the money”



IDEAS FOR CONDUCTING A CAMPAIGN IN ANN ARBOR

When asked for more general (non-approach specific) feedback about conducting an AH campaign in Ann Arbor, the following key themes emerged from focus group participants:

USE MIXED APPROACHES

The three campaign approaches were viewed as not mutually exclusive and participants expressed interest in creating a hybrid AH campaign for Ann Arbor that mixes approaches and platforms.

MAKE IT ACTIVE

Many of the campaign messages were viewed as far too passive and participants were adamant that an AH campaign in Ann Arbor should be active, participatory, and include a specific call to action to mobilize people.

ASK, "TO WHAT END?"

It is necessary to consider to what end you would use each approach, given that a different approach or platform may be needed to accomplish different end goals or reach different audiences.

LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT

Terminology, such as "affordability," and concepts, such as poverty, mean different things to different people and must be clearly defined and understood as part of an AH campaign in Ann Arbor.

EVERYONE IS IMPACTED

It is important to consider all the ways people are affected by the lack of AH in Ann Arbor, including traffic, congestion, and air pollution.

Recommendations

The promising practices we found and the key findings we highlighted from our local research, campaign examples, and focus groups capture specific components to consider for a public education campaign. In addition to these, we broadly propose the following recommendations to help guide AH stakeholders in a long-term public education campaign that can help engage support to move Ann Arbor toward its goal to create nearly 2,800 new affordably priced rental units in the city by 2035.

CREATE OR BUILD OFF OF EXISTING COALITIONS

Partnerships are identified as a foundational piece of successful public education campaigns. Engaging stakeholders across the spectrum of affordability, from homelessness to workforce housing, establishes a cohesive front from which a comprehensive long-term affordability public education can be sustained and short-term topic-targeted initiatives can be launched as needed. Coalitions are difficult to sustain. It is important to consider creative ways that engaging a coalition can be sustained throughout the lifecycle of a campaign and beyond.

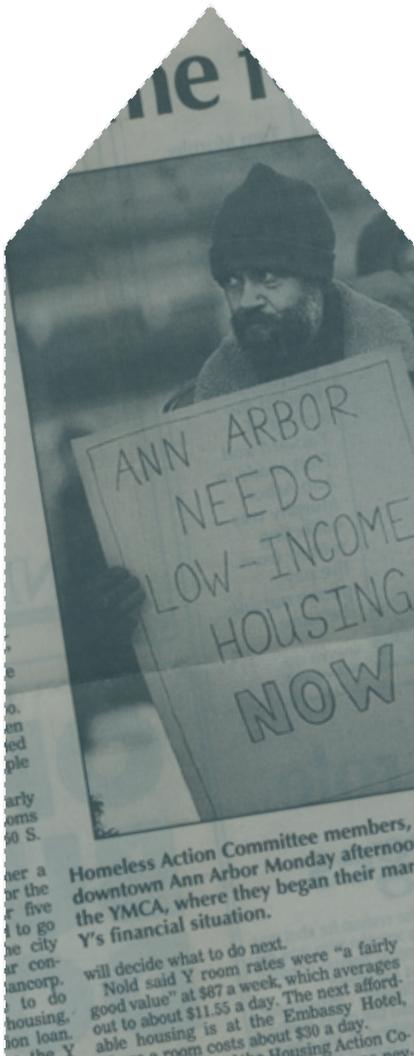
CONSIDER MODELING AFTER

East Bay Housing Organizations¹⁵ is a membership-based organization that includes developers, architects, contractors, consultants, faith-based organizations, residents, and many others. EBHO brings this diverse set of AH stakeholders together for Affordable Housing Week, an annual event in which members share their work, spread awareness of the benefits of AH, and stay engaged with one another throughout the year.

DON'T RECREATE THE WHEEL

There is a wealth of resources on the subject of affordable housing of which we have referenced compelling practices and successful examples. Modeling when possible and learning from other campaigns' lessons is an excellent starting point when designing Ann Arbor's affordability campaign messages and strategies. National AH campaigns also have a plethora of resources to use and events from which to piggyback. Consider building an affordability frame into existing Ann Arbor events to link it with demonstrated community values.

15. "East Bay Housing Organizations," accessed October 23, 2016, <http://www.ebho.org>.



CONSIDER MODELING AFTER

The **Can't Wait List**¹⁶, a website of testimonials through the national campaign Homes for All. People share their struggles to find affordable housing and the burden this places on them and their families. This is both empowering and lends its stories an extra layer of credibility while being active and interactive.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROCESS

Public education campaigns take time and can be approached in phases. Inclusive conversations to cultivate stakeholder investment are integral to establish a strong foundation for a sustained campaign. Planning is a constant process of coordination, delegation, design, production, implementation, assessment, and revisions—over and over again.

CONSIDER MODELING AFTER

HousingMinnesota¹⁷, which was implemented in three phases: Phase 1 was reaching out to the public to develop campaign materials; Phase 2 was engaging a diverse set of stakeholders impacted by the AH issue (e.g. labor, business, and faith communities, among others); and Phase 3 was focused on research, community organizing, and legislative activities that supported AH.

START SMALL. SCALE UP. SHARE.

Tackling small targets intentionally will provide an opportunity to experiment and track impact. This could take the form of different stakeholders grouping together around topics, such as homelessness or workforce housing, or setting an annual campaign theme for everyone to work toward from their respective frames. The understanding gained from starting small will inform strategies for and quality of scaling up. This evidence-based lesson learning should be shared with other stakeholders and allies as well as other communities. Ann Arbor could become a nationally leading community addressing affordability by tracking and communicating campaign strategy impact and the evolution of lessons learned.

MAKE AND MEASURE METRICS OF SUCCESS

Being successful means having the intended impact. Setting metrics of success and designing systems for measuring must be implemented to track actual impact. This is an unsubstitutable part of the planning process. Resources and capacity should be allocated accordingly. Depending on the approach, it may be more or less difficult to measure. Consider asking local experts before and after campaigns to gauge their perception of change. See the *Harvard Family Research Project* table on page 8 for evaluation ideas.

16. Homes for All/Right to the City Alliance, "The I Can't Wait List," accessed November 6, 2016, <http://homesforall.org/cantwaitlist/>.

17. Chip Halboch, "Affordable Housing...On billboards?: A Grassroots Coalition Shapes a Media Campaign on the Value of Affordable Housing," National Housing Institute, last modified April 2002, <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/122/organize.html>.

THE MAIN INTERCONNECTED PROCESS COMPONENTS of planning a public education campaign that we distilled from our research are:

MESSENGERS are as important as message. Relevance and social perception should be considered. As we found in our Ann Arbor context research, there has been praise for local nonprofits such as Avalon. Such positively perceived organizations could leverage messages.

PLATFORM can and should be multidimensional, active, and ideally allow for an action step. Understanding which platforms reach different audiences most successfully in Ann Arbor will take a concerted effort to measure impact.

AUDIENCE will determine messenger, message, and platform and should ideally be engaged post campaign approach to gauge the level of impact from a specific campaign. Monitoring and evaluating will help to further understand and refine approaches.

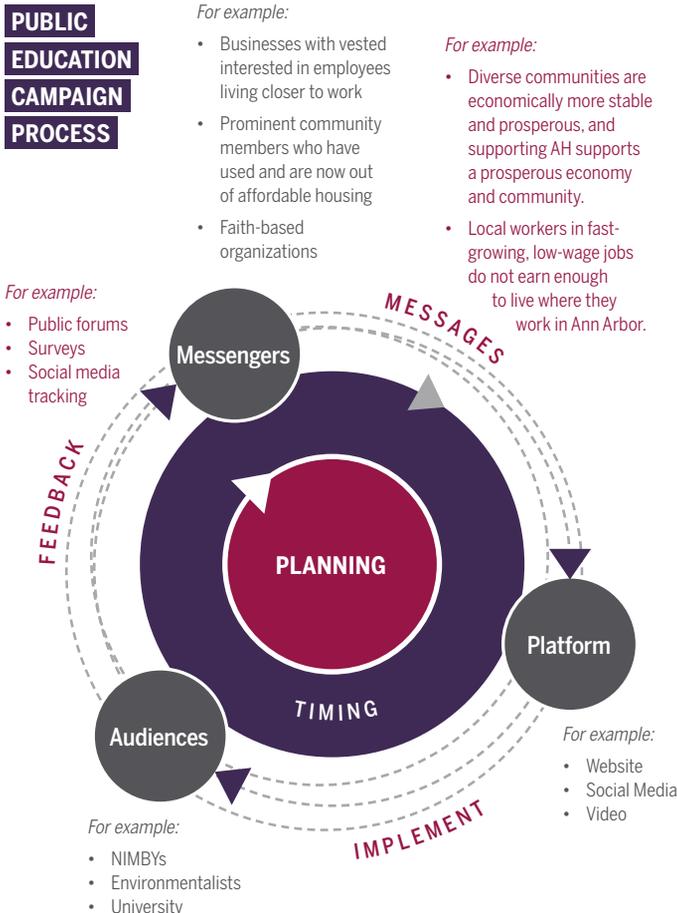
FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE doing these types of campaigns, are there any words of wisdom in terms of what to watch out for or things to be cautious of?

“...Not spending enough time in the planning process. Really putting a plan together and giving yourself a good six months to a year to say, ‘Okay. This is when we’re going to do this event.’

Finding a time to say, ‘This is when the plan’s going to be done so we can’t change from this. We’re not going to like all of a sudden decide to do this other event and being able to stick to that,’ so that there’s a lot of time that you people feel confident of.”

—An interviewee

Figure 9



Next Steps

STEP 1

Use this document as a conversation starter and an opportunity to engage with AH stakeholders about impressions, feedback, and vision for moving forward.

Consideration

There are many community collaborations in Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County working on various housing-related issues in the area. It is important not to confuse or overwhelm the landscape. Consider creating a new coalition to house all groups/individuals/organizations involved in AH issues **OR** expanding the breadth of an existing group (e.g. Washtenaw Housing Alliance).

STEP 2

Form a coalition. Select representatives from stakeholder groups who can commit time and capacity to designing and disseminating a public education campaign.

Considerations

1. Include a broad, diverse, and inclusive set of stakeholders.
2. Collectively determine whether the coalition's name/branding should be focused on Ann Arbor (e.g. A3: "Affordable Ann Arbor") or the larger county as a whole.
 - As projects/issues/proposed developments arise, the public can see that they are housed under the umbrella group of the broader campaign/coalition and may be more likely to support said project/proposal.
 - Consistent campaign branding is important so individual projects can be easily recognized as part of broad campaign but can be manipulated as needed for specific projects/needs.
3. Seek committed coalition members and establish a realistic meeting schedule.
 - Interest is nothing without commitment. It is important to have a core group of people that are committed to the coalition.

Public education campaigns are not speedy endeavors and success lies in effective planning, collaboration, and tracking. Here are the initial steps we recommend moving forward.

STEP 3

Assess funding needs and opportunities.

Considerations

1. Campaigns may look very different depending on the political climate at the time.
2. Assess strength of match between campaign objectives and available resources, and adjust accordingly.
3. The majority of funding may go toward the cost of professional services (e.g. advertising, PR, marketing, and/or video), as well as to the development and production of collateral.
4. Funding can come from a wide range of one or more sources, so pursue many avenues.
 - Other campaigns have received funding from charitable and corporate foundation grants, corporate donors, banks, and public housing associations, among others.

STEP 4

Start the planning process. Reference the campaign approaches and examples in this document. Reach out to other allies in the community.

Consideration

The research collected and distilled for this document is not comprehensive nor should it be the sole determinants in planning a public education campaign. This document is a conversation tool and a starting point.

STEP 5

Continue to meet and evaluate.

Consideration

Establishing sub-committees of people interested in different process areas could prove valuable for sustainability and consistency (e.g. evaluation committee).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Community Tool Box provides a library of tools to help take action, teach, and train others in organizing for community development. Check out their guide for starting a coalition: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coalition/main>

Non-profit Housing Association of California prepared Affordable Housing Campaigning Toolkit: <http://nonprofithousing.org/the-original-nph-toolkit/>

“Communication Campaign Professional Development Resource Guide”
<https://www.prevention.org/resources/sapp/documents/CommunicationCampaign.pdf>

The National Association of Realtors offers a toolkit for “Making Affordable Housing Work” that includes federal resources and homeownership programs, consumer education and counseling resources, and AH research and statistics: <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/toolkits/HOP-Toolkit/whol toolkit.pdf>. For a short version of their suggestions: <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/toolkits/HOP-Toolkit/2publicawareness.pdf>

“Building a Year-Round Communications Campaign” by North Carolina Housing Coalition focuses on communication aspects of campaigning: http://www.nchousing.org/research-data/nchc_research_publications/nchc-housing-comm-manual/Building%20a%20Year%20Round%20Communications%20Campagin.pdf

“Public Communication Campaign Evaluation” investigates evaluation challenges, criticisms, and practices and includes sections on useful methods for designing evaluations: <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/publications-resources/public-communication-campaign-evaluation-an-environmental-scan-of-challenges-criticisms-practice-and-opportunities>

National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) offers a wide range of tools and publications to strengthen AH advocacy: <http://nlihc.org/library/publications>

