### Host a Tour of Contemporary Affordable Housing

#### Goals
- Demonstrate the high quality architecture and design of existing affordable housing
- Recruit and bolster supporters through direct experience dispelling negative perceptions
- Reduce or eliminate opposition to a proposed development

#### Key Techniques
- Organize a group of co-sponsors to help plan the tour and establish goals to guide all decisions
- Plan substantial time and effort to motivate your target audience to attend
- Remain flexible during the tour to adjust for unforeseen circumstances

### Create a Planning Team for Core Decisions

- **Choose co-sponsors for the tour** who share your goals and can provide staff, contacts, mailing lists, shared funding, and access to projects.

- **Identify target audience**, including decision-makers and staff, as well as potential supporters such as people from environmentalist community and faith organizations. Establish a number of tour participants for planning purposes.

- **Establish specific goals for the tour** such as support for a specific policy or project, or goodwill towards developers. Test every critical decision you make by asking: will this help meet our goals?

- **Decide on the format of the tour**, including whether it will be a walking or bus tour. (You want to keep your group together so only use private vehicles for a very small group.) Consider whether there will be a formal program at some point during the tour.

- **Establish budget** for tour including bus rental, cost of mailing invitations, printing publications and refreshments. Determine who will pay expenses.

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### How To: Host a Tour of Contemporary Affordable Housing

#### Choose Sites for the Tour

- **Select sites** consistent with the goals and format for the tour.
- **Choose a tour leader** familiar with the sites. This person should also enjoy leading tours. Building the relationship with the audience through personal rapport is as important as knowledge.
- **Choose sites that most deeply demonstrate the story you want to communicate**, such as the range of neighborhoods, types of developments and how the development fits into the neighborhoods.
- **Include buildings built or rehabilitated ten years ago** if possible.
- **Carefully limit the number of sites** to be visited. Quality is more important than quantity.
- **Determine what you will do at each site:**
  - Identify **who will be the best guide for each site**, for example, the tour leader, the project developer or on-site manager.
  - Decide **what points to make at each site**. Possible points include financing, people served, and good property and tenant management.
  - Plan **how much time to spend at each site** (allow lots of extra time.)

#### Invite Your Target Audience

- **Discuss how you will invite and motivate your target audience** to attend. Substantial effort may be required to produce a good turnout. This is particularly true if you are inviting opponents of a proposed development.
- **Make tour logistics as convenient as possible**, including selection of meeting place, time and date.
- **Invitations should be personalized.**
- **Use peer pressure to encourage people to come**, for example letting one Councilmember know that other members of the Council have confirmed.
- **If project opponents are your target audience**, let them **know that decision-makers will be informed** about your invitation and their response.
- **Create a “hook”** to grab your intended audience, such as:
  - An upcoming decision or special event;
  - Including certain kinds of housing, such as senior housing or buildings using “green” materials
  - Using known and popular speakers as tour guides.

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Maximize Opportunities To Make Points During the Tour

• Use the travel time to the first tour stop to elicit participants’ concerns and fears about affordable housing. For example, ask “What are the most common concerns about infill/affordable housing that you have heard.” This serves three purposes:
  › Establishes a connection between the guide and the group;
  › Provides sense of interests, concerns and sophistication of your group;
  › Identifies points tour leader needs to make during upcoming presentation.

• Allow sufficient time to answer guests questions that arise after seeing one development before moving on to the next site.

• Provide adequate numbers of well-informed staff to see to guests’ needs, without having staff out number the guests.

• Augment your visit to each site with additional information that emphasizes the points you are trying to make. Examples include:
  › Pictures of a site pre-rehabilitation/construction to make a point about how it improved the neighborhood;
  › Including a slideshow or a small discussion panel as part of the tour program;
  › Inviting current residents, property managers and neighbors to give their “testimony,” as well as the project manager or a representative of the developer. (Be sure to go over their comments with them in advance.)

• Provide printed materials to all guests. This can serve several purposes:
  › Reinforce your tour goals;
  › Refresh the guests’ memories after the tour;
  › Share tour experience with invitees or staff unable to participate in the tour;
  › Provide something to browse through during the inevitable “dead” time between buildings;
  › Reduce the need to communicate large amounts of complex information in a short time.
### Details

- **Assemble tour leader and staff** prior to the arrival of guests to run through tour schedule and practice presentations.

- **Provide simple refreshments**, such as cold drinks and cookies.

- **Provide ample notification** to the on-site manager and tenants about the tour and its purpose.

- **Identify someone to take pictures of the tour**.

- **Bring abundant supplies** of handouts and nametags for guests.

- **Plan time after the tour** for meeting planners to debrief about what worked and did not work in order to better plan for future tours.

### Follow-up With the Tour Participants

- **Plan time at the end of the tour** for participants to evaluate it. This reinforces your interest in their concerns and could help you design more effective tours in the future.

- **If your target audience includes opponents**, leave time in the program to *elicit and respond to their concerns*. However, be very clear that the purpose of the tour is informational, not an opportunity for negotiation.

- **Send follow-up letters** to those who attended, thanking them, answering any unanswered questions, and directing their attention to the next step.

- **Contact interested or enthusiastic participants** to recruit them for future work.

- **Using your original mailing list**, send follow-up letters to those who did not attend. The letter should include written materials from the tour and offer another opportunity to find out about affordable housing.