

HOMEConnecticut: It's The Program, The Medium AND The Message

New Partners for Smart Growth
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A Safe, Affordable Home: The Foundation of Opportunity

PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES 227 LAWRENCE STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105 860.244.0066 PSCHOUSING.ORG

Overview of Connecticut

- Only 31 of the 169 towns have >10 % affordable housing
- 2/5 households spend >30% on housing
- 6th highest median home values
- No justice: 138/169 have good schools, abundant services



Responses to Inequity, Segregation

- Stick – 8-30g: zoning override statute
- Carrot – Incentive Housing Zone Program
 - **a.k.a: HOMEConnecticut Program:** voluntary municipal incentive program encouraging proactive planning for smart-growth mixed-income housing near town centers, transit and in areas of existing or planned infrastructure.
 - Incentives: cash grants for planning, zone creation and construction of affordable units



The Program:

3 Incentives, 3 Requirements

Requirements:

- At least 20% affordable units at 80% AMI
- 20 MF, 10 townhouse/duplex, 6 SF per acre

Incentives:

- Planning, Pre-Dev Grant: no strings attached
- Zoning Incentive: Cash payment when overlay zones is created
- Building permit incentive: Cash when permits are issued.



Actors and Partners

- Partnership for Strong Communities: staff work
- Partners: Steering Committee of 40+ actors – business, philanthropic, housing, human services, municipal government, RPOs, Chambers of Commerce, banks, economists, “captive” industries (hospitals, universities, utilities)

Later expanded to other disciplines: environment, energy, education, transportation, healthcare



Strategy: No Wagging Fingers!

NOT what you “should” do

Rather what it’s “in your interest” to do

- Boomers
- Teachers, police, firefighters
- Adult children/Millennials
- Grand list – prop tax revenue
- Volunteers



What's Most Important?

- The Product?
- The Sales Pitch?

Answer: Yes!

But... Best program is worthless unless it's sold



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The Only 4 Questions

- Who's the audience?
- What's the goal?
- What's the message?
- What's the medium?



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The Audience

Internal

- Partners
- State policymakers

External

- Municipal officials
- Residents
- Power Actors (Business, Opinion Leaders)
- Developers



The Goal: Make The Sale!

Messaging: A Means, not an End!

- Educate?
- Establish credibility?
- Spark action?

ONLY ONE WAY TO DO IT:

1 Meeting, 1 Conversation, 1 Town at a time!



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The Message

- **FIRST:** Dispel the myths and stereotypes
- **NEVER** – or **RARELY** – because it’s “the right thing to do.”
- **ALWAYS** because it’s “in your interest to do it...”



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It's Not What You Say, It's How You Say It

- ***Delicately:*** Race vs. Income
- ***Just The Facts:*** Occupations & Incomes
- ***Head On:*** Confronting Fears



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The Message

- **In the town's interest:**
 - Increased grand list
 - Creates churn
 - More people will stay
 - More volunteers
 - Economic vitality
- **Dispel the myths**
 - School population will not explode
 - No gangs
 - Better property values



The Medium

- Establish credibility
 - Facts and the right messenger
- Multiple points of entry: www.pschousing.org
- Different tools to appeal to different groups
 - Housing Data Profiles
 - Factsheets
 - Maps
 - Videos
 - Games



The Medium

- Paper Deliverables
 - **Factsheets** <http://www.pschousing.org/fact-sheets>
 - Suburban CT Fact Sheet - http://www.pschousing.org/files/PSC_SuburbanCT.pdf
 - Jobs/Income Fact Sheet - <http://www.pschousing.org/files/HC-JobsIncomesHousingv5web.pdf>
 - Benefits of Housing diversity fact sheet - <http://www.pschousing.org/files/HC-HousingDiversityAddsValue.pdf>
 - **Housing Data Profiles** - <http://www.pschousing.org/news/2013-municipal-housing-data-profiles-now-available>



The Medium

- **Maps**

- **Interactive map on connections between housing and transit**

- <http://www.pschousing.org/news/new-partnership-map-allows-users-explore-connections-among-housing-transit-and-population>

- **HOMEConnecticut status map**

- http://pschousing.org/files/HC_TownStatus_February2014_Map.pdf



The Medium

- **Media**

- **North Stonington Video**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KavsQhOVFrk>

- **Idea Factories Video**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bMcA95mPAk>

- **Rent Roulette**

- <http://www.pschousing.org/RentRoulette.html>



Lessons

A long game: 5-8-year gestation period

A new game: Proactive housing creation

- Towns must develop capacity
- State must provide help
- Developers must learn new tricks
- Everyone must recognize the world has changed!
- Advocates must learn patience!!!!



Sustainability

- A new education process
- A new sense of community: we need all types!
- An understanding that housing policy can solve other problems.



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More Questions?

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