

Not in My Backyard: Using Communications to Shift “NIMBY” Attitudes
about Affordable Housing

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June 28, 2018

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Executive Summary

This study explores the use of communications to shift “not in my backyard” or NIMBY attitudes about affordable housing. Through content analysis and expert interviews, it provides more evidence to support past findings that NIMBY opposition to affordable housing reflects deep-seated racist and classist attitudes. It recommends using storytelling and empowering impacted people to act as messengers and leaders in conversations in their communities about affordable housing. It also calls for more research on racist and classist attitudes specifically in the context of affordable housing and NIMBY opposition. Improving the efficacy of communications efforts in the field of affordable housing to increase support would help address the shortage of 7.2 million homes that are affordable to Americans earning extremely low incomes.

About the author

Anna Rockne is an master's candidate in the Strategic Communications program at the University of Minnesota's Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication. She is communications and marketing professional with eight years of experience in the nonprofit sector. Her passion is using communication to fight prejudice, support equity and drive the public to do good. After earning a B.A. in media and cultural studies from Macalester College, Anna completed a year of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA. Currently she is the marketing and communications manager at Aeon, a nonprofit developer, owner and manager of affordable homes in the Twin Cities. Prior to that role, she was the national communications manager at College Possible.

INTRODUCTION

A home is a foundation for individuals and families to thrive in school, at work and in their communities (Sally, 2012, p. 719). According to a 2018 report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is a shortage of 7.2 million homes for rent that are affordable for Americans earning extremely low incomes (Aurand, Emmanuel, Yentel, Errico & Pang, 2018). “Not-in-my-backyard” or NIMBY attitudes against affordable housing developments are a common obstacle to meeting the critical need for affordable homes. According to Sally and Tighe (2015), NIMBY opposition presents a significant obstacle to the siting of affordable housing, leading to construction delays, denial of permits or zoning changes, and a decrease in the number of units built as part of a project (p. 760).

Overall, the literature in the areas of communications, public opinion and attitude formation related to affordable housing is scant. Academic studies in the field of affordable housing are almost entirely in the disciplines of urban planning, political science and public affairs, and there is little research focused on changing NIMBY attitudes (Sally & Tighe, 2015, p. 765). More research is needed to determine what role communications campaigns can play in effectively changing NIMBY attitudes by addressing the stereotypes, ideologies and misinformation that underlie them. According to Dr. J. Rosie Tighe, a professor of urban studies, urban planners and developers working on affordable housing projects rarely use public opinion research and instead gather attitude information sporadically and too late in the process to tailor their communication strategies in response (2010, p.11). This capstone will further the research on NIMBY attitudes by analyzing materials from successful affordable housing campaigns, culling insights from communications practitioners and scholars, and applying relevant communications theories to develop recommendations to strengthen future affordable housing campaigns.

Research question: What is the relationship between message characteristics of affordable housing campaigns and the extent to which efforts to overcome NIMBY attitudes about affordable housing are successful?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Affordable Housing and NIMBY Attitudes

Tighe provides a conceptual definition of NIMBY attitudes: “The phrase, ‘Not in my Backyard’ implies that those who oppose the construction of affordable housing do not necessarily disagree with the need for such housing, but take issue with the proposition that it be built near them” (2010, p. 9). NIMBY as a term to describe opposition to the siting of affordable housing emerged in the academic literature in the late 1980’s. Theoretically, NIMBY consists of two components: personal attitudes at the individual level, and resulting government action (Sally, 2012, p. 719). NIMBY attitudes must be combated at the individual level through an understanding of attitude formation, and at the policy level through an understanding of public opinion formation. NIMBY opposition can take the form of a small number of individual residents, or an organized group such as a neighborhood association. In some cases, affordable housing developers identify public officials or agencies as the driving factor behind residents’ NIMBY opposition (Sally & Tighe, 2015, p. 758).

Sally summarizes the beliefs that feed NIMBY opposition. According to the literature: affordable rental housing undermines property values for homeowners, raises crime, and puts an undue strain on public resources like police and schools (2012). Sally then summarizes the four most common categories of responses to NIMBY attitudes: disproving fears, shifting public opinion, regulating equity through incentivizing or mandating policy changes, and finally circumventing the opposition (2012). Sally argues this framework for understanding and

responding to NIMBY is incomplete because it fails to recognize the unique contexts of NIMBY (i.e., suburban, urban or rural communities) and the heterogeneity of the public responding to the proposed development.

Affordable housing is conceptually defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: "In general, housing for which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities." The theoretical definition of affordable housing, which is commonly used by municipal governments, is "housing that is developed through some combination of incentives, cost-effective construction techniques and governmental subsidies that can be rented or purchased by households who cannot afford housing in the community" (Tighe, 2012, p. 968). Tighe notes that in past studies, researchers have failed to provide a definition of affordable housing to participants. This is significant because, as Tighe uncovers in her study, distrust of government is high, there is a negative legacy of public housing, which is government-owned or operated, and public housing and affordable housing are often conflated (2012, p. 978).

Public Opinion

Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, provided a critical framework for public opinion formation through the lens of political science and media studies (1922). Lippmann says that people rely on stereotypes and their own simplified narratives about events and issues because the world is too big and complex for the mind to fully comprehend or interpret (p. 16). He calls these "the pictures inside our heads," which make up his operational definition of public opinion: "Those pictures, which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are Public Opinion with capital letters" (p. 29). These pictures become ingrained and indistinguishable from fact, and "... under certain conditions men respond as powerfully to

fictions as they do to realities, and that in many cases they help to create the very fictions to which they respond” (p. 14). The pictures in people’s heads about affordable housing are largely fiction.

Information and Attitudes

Both Tighe (2010) and Scally (2012) found in their research that many people hold false beliefs about affordable housing (i.e. affordable housing lowers neighboring properties’ value). Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schwieder, & Rich (2000) explored the impact of misinformation on public opinion and, in their research, found a relationship between preferences and beliefs. The “factual” beliefs people hold are closely linked to their own preferences, not the truth. The researchers’ most startling finding was that individuals whose beliefs were furthest from the truth were the most confident that they were correct (Kuklinski et. al, 2000, p. 798). Also, participants presented with accurate information did not show statistically significant changes in their preferences; the information either didn’t sink in or failed to alter their preferences (Kuklinski et. al, 2000). This finding may indicate that factual or “re-education” campaigns about affordable housing are unlikely to be effective. In addition, the participants “who are both highly inaccurate and highly confident tend to be the strongest partisans and thus the very people who most frequently convey their sentiment to politicians” (Kuklinski et. al, 2000, p. 799). As a result, Kuklinski et. al argue that misinformation, and people’s confidence in its accuracy, skews public opinion (p. 805).

Recent research on public opinion about affordable housing reflects the disconnect between the public’s professed attitudes and their behavior. According to national surveys, there is an acknowledgement of the great need for affordable homes, and public support for policies that promote affordable housing is strong. Tighe (2010) cites a 2006 survey by the National

Association of Realtors, which found that 65 percent of Americans would support an affordable housing development next door to their homes (p. 10). In a 2016 poll by the nonprofit Make Room, 77 percent of respondents said they support the development of more affordable rental homes in their community (“Americans support”). However, when a hypothetical housing development becomes an actuality, behavior doesn’t reflect the attitudes expressed in surveys, and frequently community members’ opposition blocks the development of affordable housing (Tighe, 2010, p. 10).

Tighe argues this disconnect exists because the commonly voiced—but largely unfounded—arguments against affordable housing, i.e. lowering property values or increased crime, are actually a disguise for prejudiced individual attitudes and beliefs (2010, p. 13). Tighe indicates that other studies have found that proximity of an affordable housing development spurs NIMBY attitudes, but studies are rarely conducted in these conditions. In the absence of an impending development, responses to survey questions uncover general values, but fail to uncover specific, situational attitudes, which are a key element of NIMBY (Scally, 2012, p. 968).

Symbolic Racism

Tighe outlined the foundational elements of attitude formation in relation to affordable housing: media framing, values and ideologies, stereotypes, salience and proximity to a development (2010, p. 4). Tighe explored the literature on attitudes towards the poor, racial minorities, government interventions, and programs aimed at equality that redistribute resources, all of which are believed to impact perceptions of affordable housing. Tighe’s literature review consisted of 151 sources in disciplines ranging from social psychology to economic development and land use, and her recommendations for strategies to counter NIMBY attitudes circle back to the fundamental need to change individuals’ attitudes about

differences in race or class (p. 13). Multiple studies she cited found that Americans hold similar beliefs about the poor and racial minorities, suggesting that they correlate poverty with racial minorities (Tighe, 2010, p. 25).

In a 2012 study, Tighe further explored the factors that drive opposition to proposals for affordable housing. She created a NIMBY index and used existing race and poverty indices in her research, confirming her hypotheses that race- and class-based stereotypes and distrust of government are all predictors of negative attitudes about affordable housing (2012, p. 977). By isolating each index, Tighe determined that negative racial stereotyping had the strongest relationship with high NIMBY attitudes (Tighe, 2012). Tighe's findings align with the claim by Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo, & Kosterman (1997) and Sears & Henry (2005) that racial attitudes are a stronger factor in driving preferences about race-targeted policies than ideology. Sears et al. explore the theory of symbolic politics, which states that socialization causes individuals to develop strong attitudinal predispositions (1997, p. 18). These predispositions are triggered by any policy issues that have a racial component, such as equal opportunity or social welfare policies (p. 48). Even when controlling for ideology, racist attitudes emerge as a strong influence on policy preferences for conservatives and liberals alike (Sears & Henry, 2005, p. 99).

Framing Effects

Framing, according to Shanto Iyengar, "...refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems" (1991, p.11). Simply changing the wording when presenting a problem has a significant impact on subjects' responses to survey questions (Iyengar, 1991, p.11). In Entman's review of the literature on framing theory, he pointed to evidence from multiple theorists that when people are less informed about a social or political issue, framing has a much stronger influence on their reaction to communications (1993, p. 56).

Affordable housing is such an issue—it is not generally among the top political or social issues the public is concerned about, unless a development is proposed nearby (Tighe, 2010, p. 5).

Both Tighe (2012) and researchers at the Frameworks Institute, a nonprofit think-tank studying issue framing to advance nonprofits' messaging, argue that framing is an important tool to craft messages that resonate with audiences (Manuel and Kendall-Taylor, 2016). Tighe (2012) recommends framing affordable housing as providing access to opportunity rather than as a tool for equality. An opportunity frame is more likely to please conservative or individualistic audiences than a frame focused on need or helping, she argues, but researchers at the FrameWorks Institute found that an opportunity frame—and many other commonly used affordable housing message frames—can backfire. The “backfire effect” is another name for the behavior Kuklinski et. al (2000) identified in their study, in which individuals presented with factual information become more entrenched in their inaccurate beliefs. Kuklinski et. al challenge the efficacy of issue framing because their findings suggest that people resist changing their minds. They hypothesize that the impacts of framing found in past studies were temporary (2000, p. 811).

Social Judgment Theory

Kuklinski et. al's findings support the argument that people form their position on an issue based on their existing values, not facts (2000, p. 811). This argument is the basis of social judgment theory, which says people agree or disagree with messages not based on their merits, but instead based on how they compare to their own existing attitudes (Sherif & Sherif, 1967, p. 129). Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall (1965) say that individuals who have a high degree of ego-involvement in an issue have a larger latitude for rejecting messages or ideas that don't match their own (p. 137). “[A highly committed person's] own stand, which is well defined and

highly salient, serves to anchor their judgments,” (Sherif et al., 1965, p.137). A homeowner learning about a proposal to build an affordable housing development in their neighborhood would quickly become highly involved in the issue, particularly if they feared it would lower the value of their home, and increase traffic and crime in the area. Their increased ego-involvement, and thus increased latitude of rejection, makes it especially difficult to persuade someone in this situation. Sherif et al. (1965) found that when a statement falls outside one’s latitude of acceptance, not only will they reject it, but they will deem it false (1965, p.137).

Discussion

Though Lippmann, Kuklinski et al. and others have established that public opinion does not reflect careful deliberation of factual information, it remains a powerful force in shaping policy, and public and private investments. Sears showed how attitudes about programs and policies meant to support equity are influenced by racist beliefs. Iyengar and others have shown how strongly individuals’ attitudes are shaped by message framing. Sherif and Sherif posited that people evaluate the validity of messages not based on the merit of their content, but on how well they align with their existing beliefs and attitudes. For these reasons, using facts as the basis for affordable housing campaign messages is not likely to be effective.

NIMBY attitudes are characterized by a great deal of nuance and complexity. NIMBY attitudes emerge and are expressed at the community level in response to specific projects. There is no “one size fits all” approach to fighting NIMBY opposition because it is so situational, and it is rarely studied in the context of an actual affordable housing development or campaign. While NIMBY attitudes and their expression vary depending on the context of the affordable housing development and the community, based on Tighe (2012), Sears et al. (1997) and Kuklinski et al. (2000), NIMBY attitudes may have some underlying drivers in common.

Individualistic ideology, racial stereotypes and misinformation are all likely to stoke NIMBY opposition. For this reason, future research should seek ways to dismantle race- and poverty-based stereotypes and develop strategies to counter misinformation.

Tighe suggests using storytelling, human interest media coverage and alliance-building as tools to circumvent common stereotypes and misinformation that often shape attitudes about affordable housing (2012, p. 13). Many affordable housing campaigns have had success focusing on the need for affordable homes for groups that are unlikely to be blamed for their circumstances, like children, teachers or firefighters (Tighe, 2010, p.11). Others have used similar strategies to challenge stereotypes by focusing on showing employed or retired White people living in affordable housing (Goetz, 2008, p. 223). Others have used values-based messages to appeal to voters. Stories about veterans in Alabama or musicians in Austin not being able to afford a place to live frames the need for affordable housing in a way that taps into commonly held values in those communities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses qualitative and quantitative methods to explore communications campaigns that drove support for affordable housing. A content analysis was conducted using messages from recent affordable housing campaigns in three different regions of the country that resulted in ballot measures passing: Austin, Texas in 2013; Kalamazoo County, Michigan in 2015; and Santa Clara County, California in 2016. Ten items from each campaign were analyzed; items were selected to reflect the variety of communication channels used. Content analysis was used to identify the message frames, affective appeals and message content, such as testimonials, endorsements, information about the ballot measure or calls to action, as well as the type of endorser or spokesperson featured.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with a range of experts, including one communications professional from each of the three affordable housing campaigns that led to successful ballot measures, three communications leaders working at national organizations in the affordable housing field, and two scholars studying NIMBY attitudes about affordable housing. A total of eight one-hour interviews were conducted over the phone in April and May of 2018. Each interviewee was asked the following questions:

1. How did you incorporate the community's values into your campaign messages?/How do you recommend campaigns incorporate their community's unique values into their campaign messaging?
2. What types of message frames did you find/do you think are most effective?
3. What kinds of reasons did you find people gave for their opposition to affordable housing?
4. What role did factual information play in your campaign messages, and how did you address misinformation?

5. What role did emotional appeals play in your campaign?
6. How did you address stereotypes through your campaign? Which stereotypes?
7. What language did you find most effective for specifically talking about affordable housing and the people who live in it (i.e. housing, homes, residents, neighbors)?
8. How do you know it was effective? How do you recommend measuring effectiveness?
9. What communications strategies do you think should be explored in the future?

Additional questions were asked if time allowed (see appendix 4 for transcripts including a complete list of questions). Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed to uncover common themes and compare guidance from communications experts with messages used in the campaigns to look for alignment. The recommendations provided by scholars who study NIMBY attitudes was also compared to that of the communications experts in the affordable housing field to identify commonalities and inconsistencies.

FINDINGS

The content analysis and expert interviews uncovered several important themes, which are used as organizing concepts for the findings of this research:

- Higher-order beliefs: values, message frames and the self
- Arguments used: the use of facts and countering misinformation in NIMBY opposition
- Unconscious attitudes: stereotypes underlying NIMBY attitudes
- Emotions and attitude change: messengers, beneficiaries and affective appeals
- Tactics: message content and evaluating effectiveness
- Future strategies to explore

Values, Frames and the Self

When asked about incorporating the audience's values into message frames, several interviewees discussed using focus groups, polls or surveys across their city, county or state to establish their values. One interviewee was surprised when focus groups and statewide polling revealed that similar values-based messages that worked in Michigan, Oregon and North Carolina over the past 20 years also performed well in Alabama recently. This also bore out in the responses from interviewees; there were many similarities in the values they discussed speaking from their vantage points all across the country. Four interviewees mentioned children and two others mentioned family as either performing very well in focus groups or polls, or being established as widely shared community values. For one of the campaigns, in Kalamazoo County, Michigan, children was the singular focus. The campaign was titled "Vote Yes for Kids," and the communications expert who worked on the campaign explained why they believed it would be most effective with this framing.

“The overall input we had on this was that we had to make this a very simple yes or no choice. We needed to make sure that what folks were saying yes or no to was an affirmation of the values that we think our community upholds. This idea that we support kids is very well established.”

Two interviewees said ensuring seniors have a place to live was a shared community value, and two said homes for veterans performed well in polling or focus groups. Two interviewees said diversity and the community being a place where everyone could afford to live, were shared values in the communities—Austin, TX and Arlington, VA—which were both described as racially and economically diverse communities. One interviewee said equity and fairness did not test well, but supporting first-time homebuyers and homeless people did.

In response to this question about incorporating values into messaging, Nat Kendall-Taylor pointed out the distinction between messages that resonate and messages that change attitudes, ultimately increasing support for affordable housing and decreasing NIMBYism. He has found that the opportunity frame, which is commonly used in the field can cause a backfire effect.

“What we do is we test a bunch of different values both qualitatively and experimentally and determine which of the values is doing the things that we want it to do. ...The field loves using the value of opportunity, and it resonates, but in not completely predictable ways.... It actually causes people to reject the idea of fairness and affordability in housing and reinforces people’s sense that when it comes to affordable housing, they don’t believe people deserve opportunity. Access to affordable housing isn’t part of the American Dream.... People fundamentally don’t think society or government should be doing anything to make this private consumer good more affordable. They think it is what it is and people get what they deserve.”

This proved to be an inconsistency between research and practice in the field. An opportunity frame was the second most commonly identified in the content analysis, and most commonly named community value by the experts interviewed. Most of the experts interviewed also discussed this idea that broadly, Americans don't see housing as a right or a social issue. Rather, they see housing as a privilege and a market good that is driven by the economy. In response to this set of beliefs about housing, Amy Clark discussed the importance of engaging the self in messages. "We can counter that mentality by finding ways of talking to people about themselves. It's not a campaign about those people over there, it's about you and your family and your future."

Similarly, another interviewee said, "I believe the key to advocacy around affordable housing hinges on whether you can get your audience to understand that what you're talking about is the same thing that they value: safety, security, family, a place to call home.... I have seen the power of moving people by connecting the issue that you're advocating for with the reality of what home means to them." An interconnectedness frame was used in almost half of the messages included in the content analysis. The messages included language about how the ballot measure would impact the voter and the broader community, not just the beneficiaries of affordable housing funds. Other campaign messages appealed to the audience's self-concept by describing them as concerned about helping their most vulnerable community members, or as a community where every child had a home.

Message frames identified in content analysis

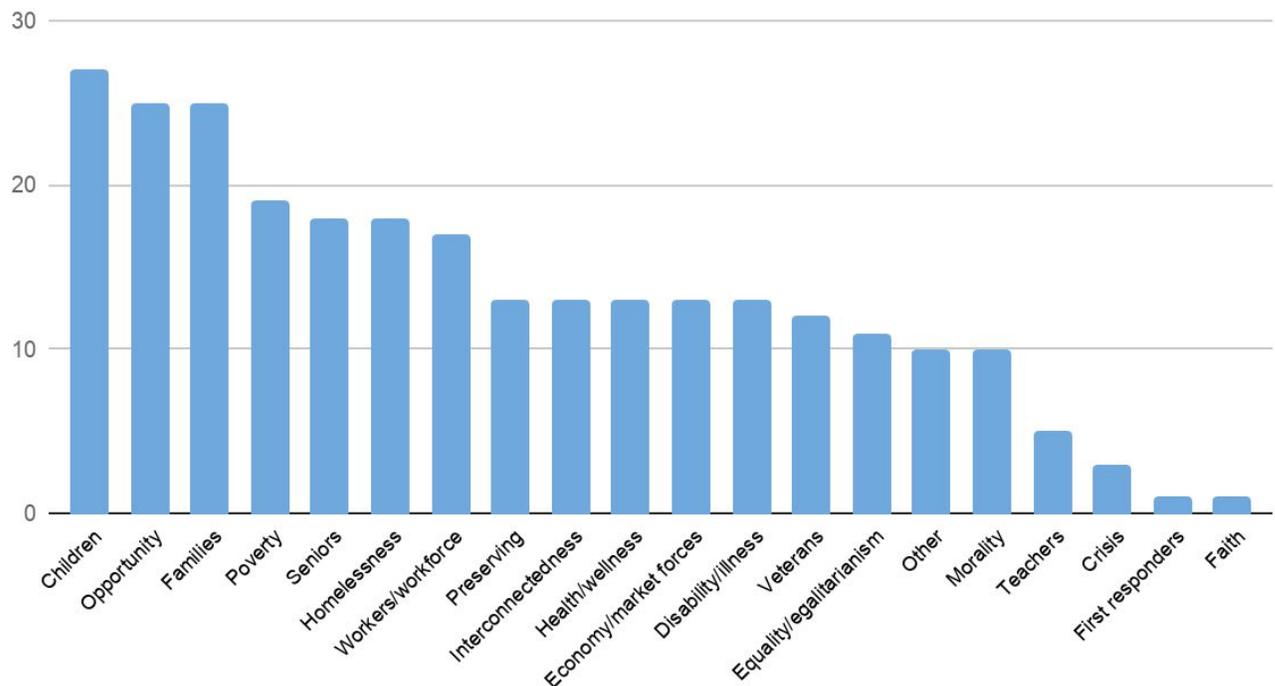


Chart 1

Facts, misinformation and opposition

There was universal agreement among the experts interviewed that facts alone are not effective. This belief was largely reflected in the content analysis results: only one of the messages analyzed relied on facts alone—an eNews story with the subject line “Get the Facts”. Every other message analyzed included at least one affective appeal. When asked about how they addressed misinformation through their campaigns or recommend doing so, several interviewees discussed the importance of avoiding repeating a myth in the process of correcting it because it could instead reinforce it. Others recommended pivoting back to their talking points rather than addressing misinformation head-on. This study’s literature review suggested that trying to correct misinformation could be unproductive.

One interviewee, a scholar who studies NIMBY attitudes in the context of urban planning, suggested using facts to alleviate legitimate concerns from neighbors about affordable housing, citing studies that have shown new construction affordable housing is attractive, increases property values, and does not increase crime. Another interviewee felt that using facts to clarify what the cost of a ballot measure will be for homeowners was a sound strategy, but this did not extend to more contentious aspects of affordable housing. He said, “For instance, if I was in a NIMBY situation and there was an accusation made, say it was a senior development and the argument was, ‘there will be criminals living in the building’ I would not argue back, ‘there will not be criminals living in this building.’ People think you’re lying.” Another interviewee said, “It may be that it’s not that people disbelieve facts that are presented to them, it’s that they’re not interested in changing their minds.”

Stated NIMBY opposition identified by interviewees

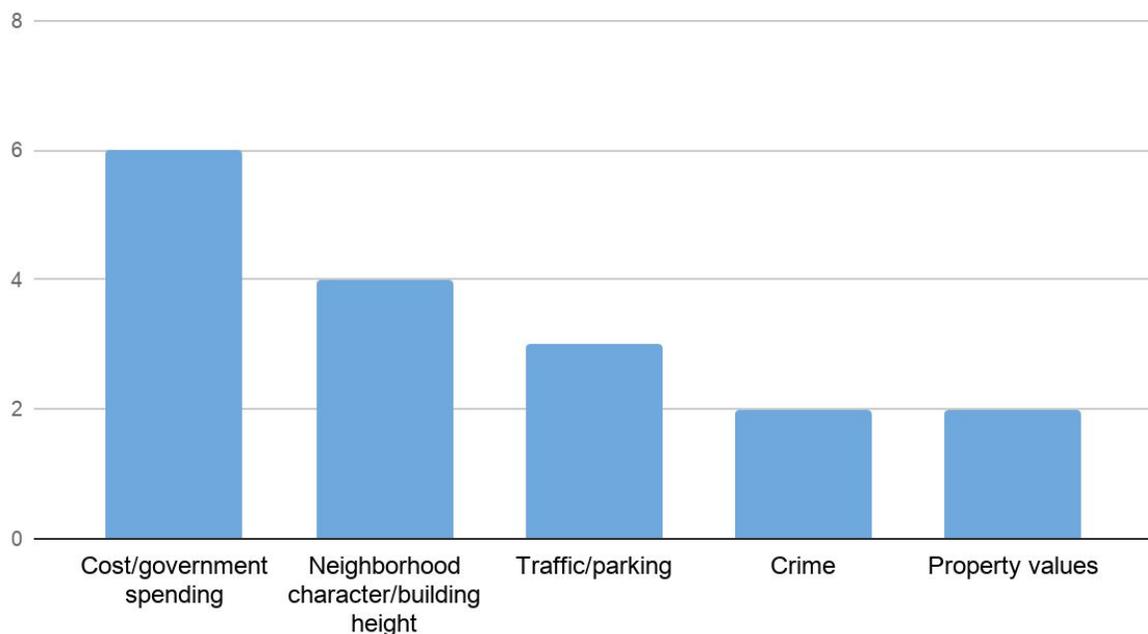


Chart 2

When asked about the reasons interviewees had heard people give for their NIMBY opposition to affordable housing, the most common were concerns about the cost or disapproving of taxpayer or government spending on the issue followed by concerns about it not matching the character of the neighborhood or building heights; parking, traffic or transit issues (only noted by interviewees who are based in densely-populated areas); and finally crime and property values. None of the communication pieces in the content analysis responded to any of these issues directly, which suggests that the campaigns were disciplined about remaining focused more on their key messages, than addressing misinformation or responding to opposition. One interviewee felt addressing areas of opposition directly would be a losing battle.

“Based on our experience, we never, ever talked about what it was going to cost somebody. All it did was tell them it was going to cost them. ...We never said, ‘this is the right thing to do because it will only cost you X.’ We got a lot of pushback from people who had contributed six figures to the campaign. They thought it was important to be transparent.”

Instead, the campaign messages focused on the community’s value system and how the measure would benefit the community. Similarly, another interviewee said, “When the falsehoods run along the faultlines it means we need to double down in talking about our areas of strength using value messages that connect with people and be very clear about what it is that is our positive vision.”

Stereotypes

Five of the interviewees said that NIMBY opposition is sometimes, or often rooted in racism, classism or a symptom of negative stereotypes about people of color or low-income

people. One interviewee who has worked in the affordable housing field for several decades described its failure to address this issue directly.

“...I think any analysis of NIMBY that doesn’t start with, ‘it’s a symptom of deep-seated racism’ is missing the point. ...While I’m proud of that work [in the field], the ground not covered is really important. The inability of the housing community to name this issue for what it really is is central to halting the progress in unraveling it. We’re never having that real conversation of what the issue is.”

Many interviewees said the stated reasons for NIMBY opposition were a tool for people to absolve themselves of guilt or responsibility for helping people facing housing insecurity. One interviewee gave an example of opposition to converting an old military base in North Seattle into homes for people exiting homelessness. “[People who opposed it said], ‘there isn’t enough public transit and enough services to help these people.’ ...They’re cloaking themselves in this moral authority, wearing this concern as a costume.” Another interviewee said the stated opposition to affordable housing centered on the character of the neighborhood and traffic because people felt bad directly saying, “we live in a capitalist society. Why should we pay more to help these people? They should help themselves.”

One interviewee recommended quoting someone who was once concerned about affordable housing being built in their neighborhood, but is now happy with the outcome. However, she expressed skepticism about how effective this approach would be, and how effective any communications strategy would be if the underlying concern actually is based on racism or classism. When asked how she recommends countering stereotypes, she cited contact theory, which says that exposure to different types of people can break down stereotypes. “In a lot of ways, affordable housing is the way you overcome race and class

stereotypes. It's a tool for integration and diversity. If you can get that in, that might be the sort of contact that can eventually undermine those stereotypes."

Another interviewee said, "You can't argue people out of stereotypes. You can't disprove them. What you can do is give people new ways of thinking about issues and people that provide an antidote at a deep cognitive or cultural level to the belief that underlies the stereotype and the stigma." Stories can serve as that antidote, as another interviewee argued, "...using examples and stories that have lived experience—they are the best way to break through the calcified stereotypes.... Putting people in a position to tell their story as part of a larger narrative has ongoing returns that are hard to calculate."

Another interviewee said mining for stories that were relatable was critical. "We were definitely looking for stories where people could say, 'you know, I sympathize with that person. That could happen to anyone.'" In an example of an affordable housing property for seniors in an Oregon suburb that was blocked by NIMBY opposition, the interviewee recommended using a narrative about the real people who would live in the property: retired lunch ladies from the community's school district. These seniors who were well-known in the community would be difficult to blame for their circumstances, criminalize or stigmatize.

Several interviewees felt that addressing stereotypes, racism, classism or the systemic nature of poverty directly would have been counterproductive to their campaigns. This was because, "we recognized where our audience was and appealed to them that way," as one interviewee said. For others it was outside the scope of the campaign, it would require messaging that was too complex, it could backfire among groups with particular political beliefs or ideologies, it could feel like an attack and trigger defensiveness, or it could open up a larger debate that took attention away from the campaign's focus.

Messengers, beneficiaries and affective appeals

Part of the effectiveness of the children, seniors and veterans frames, Tighe has argued, is that it's difficult to blame them for their circumstances. As another interviewee said, "Who's going to argue that children don't deserve a safe place to call home?" Tighe also discussed using examples of firefighters, police officers or teachers as people struggling to find affordable housing. She recommends, "using these people that people want to be their neighbors as a poster child, literally for the face of affordable housing." It's difficult to apply negative stereotypes to groups that elicit empathy, like children, or groups that are respected, like educators or healthcare professionals. Empathy was the most common affective appeal, appearing in nearly three-quarters of the messages analyzed.

Every interviewee agreed that emotional appeals are more effective than factual appeals, though one interviewee argued that while an emotional component is critical to an effective message, it is a means to an end. "Just because a message is emotional doesn't mean it's effective. I can get you riled up about a message by being incredibly negative, doom and gloom, crisis, urgency... that probably elicits some emotion in you. But if my goal is to get you to support policies and move your thinking, that kind of emotion is actually antithetical to the goal." Several interviewees discussed the importance of highlighting solutions, particularly with evidence that they will be effective. One interviewee said past research has shown that messages that balance the problem and solution are more persuasive. Another said she believed the most effective type of message had an aspirational tone and pointed to a solution that was proven to be effective. While hope was the most commonly used affective appeal as revealed by content analysis, solutions as a message frame appeared infrequently.

Affective appeals identified in content analysis

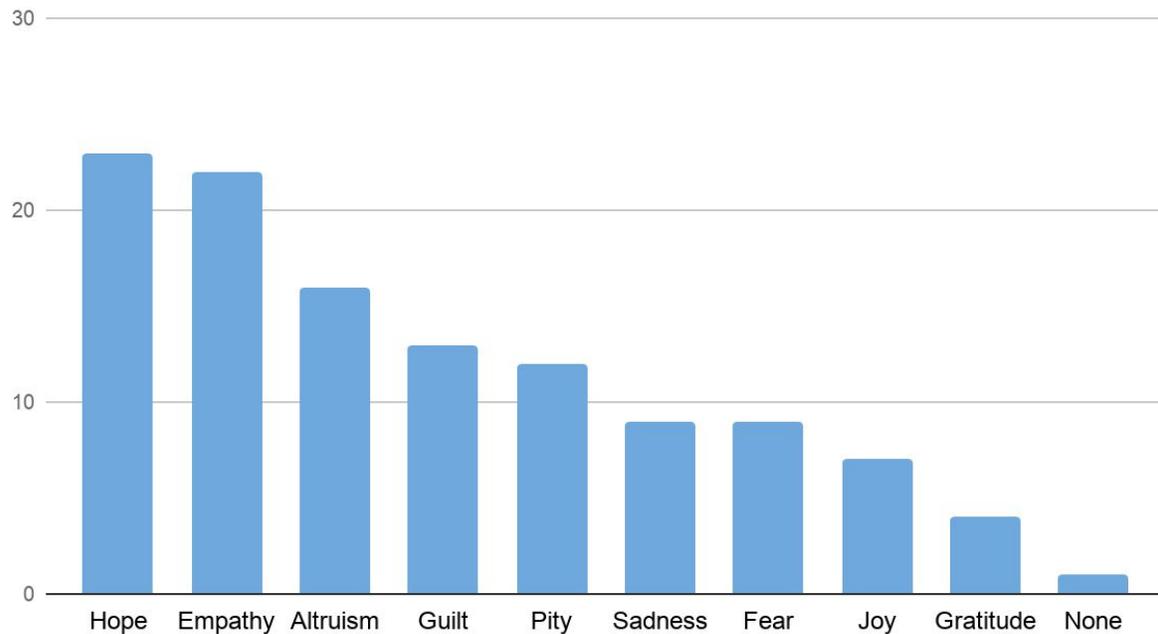


Chart 3

Messengers were described as an important part of message framing by half of the interviewees and use of spokespersons or endorsers was a component of 85 percent of the messages analyzed. The most common spokesperson or endorser was a business or nonprofit leader, featured in more than half of the messages. Elected officials were featured in about one-third of the messages, followed by faith leaders, people impacted by affordable housing, and community members. Newspapers also served as endorsers in two of the messages. One interviewee hoped more research would be conducted to explore the effectiveness of local government officials as messengers. She also called for more research about whether nonprofits as messengers in affordable housing campaigns would face less opposition, building on research from Seattle showing higher trust of the nonprofit community. Another interviewee had heard from multiple affordable housing groups that impacted people were very effective

messengers, and their participation in campaigns and community conversations decreased NIMBY opposition to affordable housing developments. For this reason he called for more investment in training and organizing among this group.

Spokespeople and endorsers identified in content analysis

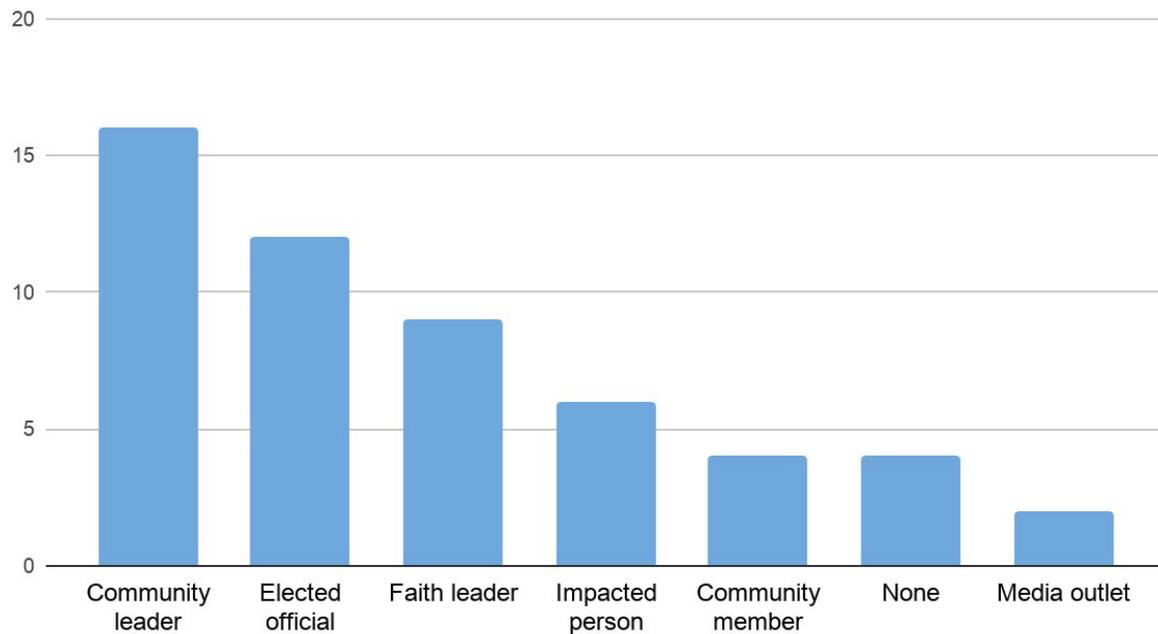


Chart 4

Message content and evaluating effectiveness

Six of the interviewees advised that it is best to avoid the terms commonly used in the affordable housing field. Instead of “affordable housing” using more simple terms, such as “affordable homes” or “homes for working families” is preferable, they said. One interviewee suggested there is empirical support for simplifying language even further, using “a place to live” instead of “home.” Another interviewee, Professor Tighe, cited Goetz’ 2008 study which suggested that people will see through any phrase used to describe affordable housing and

come to associate it with the negative race- and class-based stereotypes they hold about people they imagine as the residents in affordable housing (p. 228).

In Tighe's own research, she ruled out the term "workforce housing" because it seemed to confuse people. "I did a bunch of focus groups and decided to settle on 'affordable housing' because it was to me the most neutral term, even though I was actually talking about subsidized housing. I thought it was the most commonly used. People knew what I was talking about but it didn't carry as much stigma [as other terms]." She advised against using the term "public housing" as it doesn't accurately reflect today's affordable housing programs and holds very negative connotations. Another interviewee said talking about homes, housing, apartments, renters and homeowners did not have a variable impact on performance of messages in their polling. This may be because the area studied, Santa Clara County, California, has such high costs of renting and home ownership that the community may not hold the same stereotype of renters being less invested that is common in other communities.

The message purpose was also classified in the content analysis, whether it was to raise money, share information, make a call to action, share an endorsement or something else. The most common message purpose was a call to action, featured in 90 percent of the messages reviewed. These were primarily messages encouraging the audience to vote, though some were more general messages about taking action to solve the problem. Information about the ballot measure was present in 70 percent of messages. This included information about both the ballot measure itself and instructions on how to vote. Endorsements were a component of nearly two-thirds of the messages, and research or facts about affordable housing were present in nearly half of the messages. There was consensus among the experts that stories are a critical component of a successful campaign, and, whether hypothetical or specific, stories were

a prominent part of each of the affordable housing campaigns studied. But, a story, quote or testimonial were present in just over one-third of the messages analyzed.

Message purpose identified in content analysis

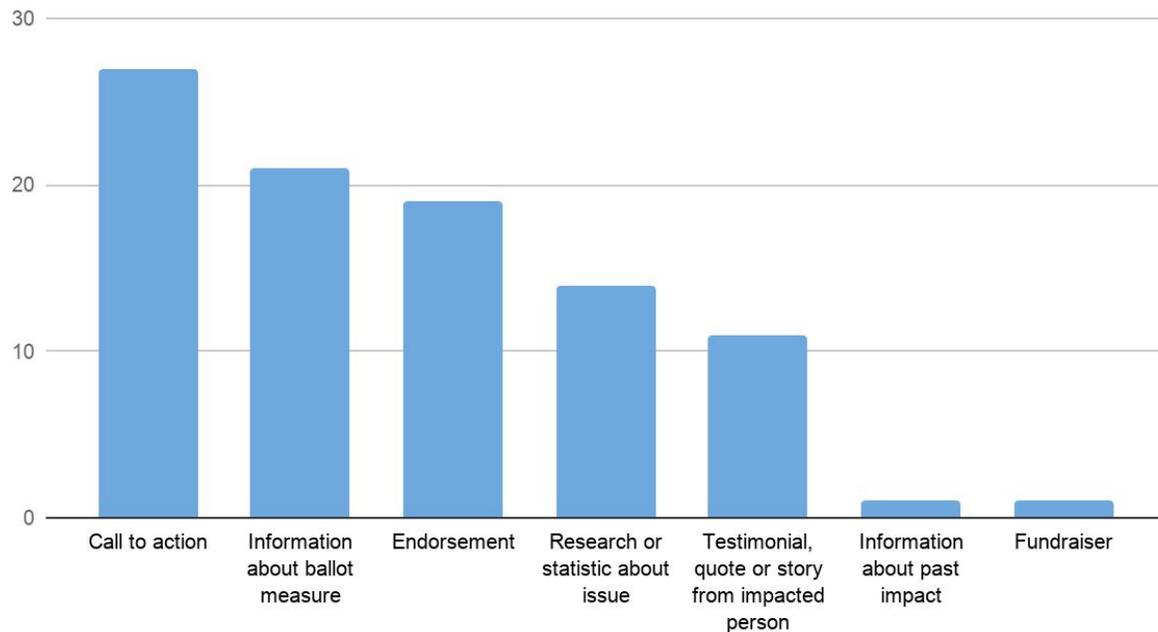


Chart 5

When asked about how to measure effectiveness of campaign messages, interviewees discussed empirical methods, including polling, focus groups, ballot measure passage, social media analytics, or experimental approaches such as A/B testing. Other signs of effectiveness mentioned were seeing the campaign’s messaging reflected in media coverage, politicians’ remarks, or used by the opposition. Campaign messaging being adopted by the general public or outliving the specific campaign were seen as strong signs of effectiveness. One example of this is the “Keep Austin Affordable” campaign. The message has been used for multiple ballot measures and it has gained traction beyond Austin city limits, serving as an example for other

affordable housing organizations across the country. As one interviewee said, it resonates because "...it's a message about how the people of Austin see themselves and see their city."

Challenges and Future Strategies

Several interviewees believed NIMBY opposition to affordable housing is, in part, due to a lack of understanding that housing is both a root cause and a symptom of other challenges communities are facing, such as low wages, high costs of health care or recidivism. The complexity of affordable housing means it is difficult for the general public to understand the true cost of a shortage of affordable homes. For example, one interviewee said, "It's much harder to fix the problems that come with homelessness than it is to just keep people in their homes. ...We need to tackle this idea that there's an existing safety net. A shelter is not a long-term solution." Because affordable housing isn't widely seen as a root cause, it has less salience than other issues. One interviewee said elected officials told her, "...our constituents are not calling about affordable housing. They're calling about other things. Why should I make an issue of this when my constituents aren't?"

One interviewee called for a longer-term strategy similar to healthcare and education advocacy, which makes the case for housing as a right. Another interviewee argued for an umbrella campaign approach in which the entire field of affordable housing aligns its messaging and uses a consistent narrative across all communication channels. Another interviewee, who has seen a lack of funding weaken affordable housing campaigns, suggested that a national foundation invest in a campaign to promote affordable housing revenue. The interviewee with an urban planning lens felt that any communications or education strategy to build support for affordable housing is an incomplete solution. She believes negotiation with residents, litigation, policy and work with housing developers will always be a part of the process.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One limitation of this study is that it did not directly measure individuals' perceptions of affordable housing. Though it references polling results of message testing discussed by interviewees, the polls were not available to the researcher at the time this study was completed. Instead this study measured message frames used in communications that led to successful ballot measures in support of affordable housing. The three ballot measures studied were used to secure funding for affordable housing and supportive services across a city or county, not imminent, specific developments in voters' neighborhoods. This is another limitation of this study. It does not capture the situational nature of NIMBY attitudes. Very little research has been done in the conditions of specific affordable housing developments. It's difficult to set up a study on a short timeline, and rarely do affordable housing developers or advocates have the time or resources needed to conduct public opinion research. Further research in the field of communications is needed in the context of proximal affordable housing campaigns.

While this study examines messaging from successful campaigns, message characteristics cannot be isolated definitively as the independent variable. The potential impact of other factors, including the political leanings of the community where the campaign was conducted, the resources available to the campaign, and the effectiveness of endorsers or spokespeople cannot be ruled out. Other election conditions also could have impacted the outcome of the ballot measures. For example, in Kalamazoo County, it was an off election year for the rural community, which was more likely to oppose the measure, and this may have limited voter turnout among this group. Future research could isolate other variables, including election conditions, campaign funding, the political environment, and spokespeople and endorsers to determine their impact on campaign outcomes.

Another limitation of this study is that it does not compare an equal number of messages from successful campaigns to those of unsuccessful campaigns to determine if message characteristics are, in fact, an influential variable. A review of several messages used in an unsuccessful campaign in Alabama showed similarities in framing and affective appeals. The greatest difference between this campaign and the successful campaigns was resources; the campaign wasn't well-funded and struggled to gather stories. Finally, future research should explore how communications campaigns can effectively address the stereotypes, racism and classism that underlie NIMBY attitudes. One interviewee said, "What if people in NIMBY opposition had to own the cloak of racism, wouldn't it be different? It takes more research and the existing research hasn't been applied to housing."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for future communications campaigns to support affordable housing are made based on the expertise of the interviewees, research that informed their approaches and content analysis of materials from successful campaigns.

1. **Use stories to put a face to the people who live in affordable housing, and look to them to be messengers and leaders in the conversations in their communities.**

One interviewee said, “There’s a need to take values-based messaging to the next level... and I think the way to do that most effectively is to empower people who are personally impacted, who have lived experience, in such a way that they can be in lead roles in shaping the dialogue of the campaign.” Stories may be a foil for negative stereotypes, but they must be carefully selected to tap into commonly-held values, and engage the audience’s empathy. This approach also gives a voice to impacted people, and may curb NIMBY opposition by forcing people to directly face the people they are protesting against.

2. **Use children and seniors as message frames when talking about the need for affordable homes.** These frames tap into an essentially universal shared value and engage empathy. As many interviewees noted, it’s very difficult to blame children or seniors for their circumstances or argue with the idea that children and seniors shouldn’t be homeless. Stories featuring impacted children can also help highlight the broader impact of housing by drawing a connection between a stable home and success in school.
3. **Highlight tangible solutions.** One interviewee recommended that half of all message content should be about the problem and half should focus on the solution. This prevents fatalistic thinking, motivates the audience by showing the impact of taking

action, and draws a clear path to behavior change. Both the problem and the solution need to be clearly explained. According to Manual and Kendall-Taylor (2016), “While current housing messages expend a great deal of effort in establishing the problem, these messages would be more powerful with stronger explanations of **why** this is happening or **how** the problem would be affected by alternative policies” (pg. 15). It’s important to show what the solution will look like and how it impacts the broader community.

4. **Engage the self.** Describe how the problem affects the audience and what they will gain from being part of the solution. For example, a stronger community where every child has a home, or reduced traffic by building affordable homes near jobs, or 5,000 new jobs created in construction, property management and social services spurred by housing bonds. An interconnectedness frame could help tap into a collectivist mindset and avoid the individualistic thinking that causes the opportunity frame to backfire (FrameWorks Institute, 2017, p. 6).
5. **Talk about home, not housing.** Using language that aligns with how the audience thinks about their own home will make it easier for them to empathize with the need for homes for others. Narrative language, such as “a place to sleep” is relatable and warm, while “affordable housing” is emotionless and takes the people impacted by the issue out of the conversation. More descriptive terms, like affordable senior housing or affordable family housing could be stronger alternatives to “affordable housing” or “workforce housing” because they tap into the most effective messages frames.
6. **Close the gap between research and practice by looking to accessible, empirical research for best practices.** Organizations like the FrameWorks Institute are bridging a gap by making proven strategies for message formation about affordable housing

accessible to professionals working in the field. Research released by the FrameWorks Institute in 2016 and 2017 highlights messaging strategies to engage audiences and avoid the backfire effect. In June 2018, the Frameworks Institute will release a prescriptive research study about affordable housing which identifies empirically tested message frames. This research was not available at the time this study was completed.

Finding effective ways to use communications to shift NIMBY attitudes has important implications. It could make it easier for organizations and communities to raise funds for affordable housing, and it could make it more likely that affordable housing developers successfully complete projects. Both would help alleviate the critical shortage of 7.2 million affordable homes in this country. If the public no longer opposed—or even began to support—affordable housing, millions of low-income people would benefit from the stabilizing force of home.

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Appendix 1: Content analysis questions

1. Campaign location
 - a. Austin, TX
 - b. Kalamazoo County, MI
 - c. Santa Clara County, CA

2. Name of piece
 - a. *[Fill-in]*

3. Format (choose all that apply)
 - a. Mailing
 - b. Handout/flier
 - c. Social media post
 - d. Advertisement - TV
 - e. Advertisement radio
 - f. Advertisement - digital
 - g. Video
 - h. Email
 - i. Campaign website
 - j. Speech/presentation
 - k. Ballot argument/ballot language
 - l. Script for calls/door-knocking/poll greeters
 - m. Letter to the editor/op-ed
 - n. Other

4. Affective appeals (choose all that apply)
 - a. Guilt
 - b. Pity
 - c. Empathy
 - d. Sadness
 - e. Fear
 - f. Hope
 - g. Joy
 - h. Altruism
 - i. Gratitude
 - j. None
 - k. Other

5. Message frames (choose all that apply)
 - a. Workers/workforce
 - b. Families
 - c. Children
 - d. Veterans
 - e. Teachers
 - f. First responders/firefighters
 - g. Seniors
 - h. Disabilities/illness

- i. Health/wellness
 - j. Preserving community/community character
 - k. Opportunity
 - l. Crisis
 - m. Poverty
 - n. Economy/market forces
 - o. Homelessness
 - p. Equality/egalitarianism
 - q. Morality
 - r. Interconnectedness/self
 - s. Faith
 - t. Other
6. Message characteristics (choose all that apply)
- a. Call to action
 - b. Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person
 - c. Endorsement
 - d. Research/statistics about issue of affordable housing
 - e. Information about ballot issue
 - f. None
 - g. Other
7. Spokespeople and/or endorsers (choose all that apply)
- a. Elected official
 - b. Faith leader
 - c. Community leader/organization (business, nonprofit, etc.)
 - d. Impacted person
 - e. None
 - f. Other

Appendix 2: Content analysis data

Q1	Q2	Q3
Campaign location	Name of piece	Format (choose all that apply)
Austin, TX	Kick-off presentation	speech/presentation
Austin, TX	Campaign intro video	video
Austin, TX	KAA postcard	Mailing
Austin, TX	Persuasive postcard	Mailing
Austin, TX	Short video ad	advertisement - TV,video
Austin, TX	2006 bonds ROI video	social media post,video
Austin, TX	Kick-off video	speech/presentation,video
Austin, TX	Facebook post - faith msg	social media post,video
Austin, TX	Rep. Doggett video	social media post,video
Austin, TX	Facebook post/video, elderly resident	social media post,video
Kalamazoo, MI	Postcard #1	Mailing
Kalamazoo, MI	Postcard #2	Mailing
Kalamazoo, MI	Postcard #3	Mailing
Kalamazoo, MI	eNews story	email/eblast
Kalamazoo, MI	Appeal (mailed letter)	Mailing
Kalamazoo, MI	Letter to the Editor	letter to the editor
Kalamazoo, MI	Poll greeter instructions	script for calls/doorknocking/poll greeting
Kalamazoo, MI	Vote YES presentation	speech/presentation
Kalamazoo, MI	Website - homepage	campaign website
Kalamazoo, MI	Website - millage proposal	campaign website
Santa Clara, CA	Ballot argument	ballot argument
Santa Clara, CA	Video ad 1	advertisement - TV,video
Santa Clara, CA	Video ad #2	advertisement - TV,video
Santa Clara, CA	Website - about page/FAQ	campaign website
Santa Clara, CA	Ballot language	Other - ballot language
Santa Clara, CA	Op/ed	letter to the editor
Santa Clara, CA	Website - spread the word	social media post,campaign website
Santa Clara, CA	60 sec. video - seniors	advertisement - TV,video
Santa Clara, CA	Facebook post - News endorsement	social media post
Santa Clara, CA	Facebook post - ballot measure info	social media post

Q4
Affective appeals (choose all that apply)
empathy, hope, altruism
guilt, pity, empathy, sadness, fear, hope, joy, altruism, gratitude
empathy, fear, hope, joy, altruism
empathy, sadness, fear, hope, joy
pity, empathy, fear, hope, joy, altruism
hope, altruism
empathy, hope, joy, altruism, gratitude
guilt, hope, altruism
pity, empathy, hope
empathy, sadness, hope, joy
guilt, pity, empathy, sadness
guilt, pity, empathy, sadness, fear
guilt, pity, empathy, sadness, fear, altruism
none
empathy, hope, altruism
guilt, pity, empathy, sadness, hope
guilt
guilt, empathy, hope
empathy, sadness, hope
guilt, hope, altruism
guilt, pity, hope, altruism
empathy, hope, joy, altruism, gratitude
empathy, hope
guilt, pity, empathy, hope, altruism
pity
guilt, pity, empathy, fear, hope, altruism
pity, empathy, fear, hope, altruism, gratitude
empathy, sadness, fear, hope
empathy, hope
guilt, altruism

Q6
Message frames (choose all that apply)
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,economy/market forces,families,children,veterans,seniors,disability/illness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,homelessness,morality,interconnectedness,families,children,veterans,teachers,seniors,disability/illness,health/ wellness
workers/workforce,economy/market forces,homelessness,interconnectedness,families,children,seniors,disability/illness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,economy/market forces,equality/egalitarianism,families,children,veterans,seniors,disability/illness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,morality,interconnectedness,families,children,seniors,disability/illness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,equality/egalitarianism,families,children,seniors,disability/illness,other-solution
preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,morality,interconnectedness,families,children,seniors,health/wellness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,morality,faith
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,equality/egalitarianism,veterans,seniors,disability/illness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,interconnectedness,seniors,disability/illness
poverty,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,interconnectedness,families,children,health/wellness
workers/workforce,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,homelessness,interconnectedness,families,children,health/wellness
opportunity,poverty,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,morality,interconnectedness,children,health/wellness
opportunity,homelessness,families,other,children,health/wellness,other-self-sufficiency
opportunity,homelessness,morality,families,other,children,other-self-sufficiency
opportunity,poverty,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,families,other,children,health/wellness,other-self-sufficiency
opportunity,equality/egalitarianism,families,other,children,teachers,health/wellness,other-self-sufficiency
opportunity,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,interconnectedness,families,children,health/wellness
opportunity,homelessness,families,children,health/wellness
preserving community/community character,opportunity,economy/market forces,homelessness,morality,interconnectedness,families,children,other-self-sufficiency
workers/workforce,opportunity,poverty,homelessness,morality,families,children,veterans,teachers,first responders,seniors,disability/illness,other-transit,traffic
preserving community/community character,opportunity,morality,families,children,seniors
workers/workforce,opportunity,families,children,veterans,teachers
workers/workforce,opportunity,crisis,poverty,economy/market forces,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,interconnectedness,families,children,veterans,seniors,disability/illness,health/wellness,other-traffic
poverty,homelessness,families,children,veterans,seniors,disability/illness
workers/workforce,opportunity,crisis,poverty,economy/market forces,homelessness,interconnectedness,families,other,children,veterans,teachers,seniors,disability/illness,health/wellness,other-traffic, clean air
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,homelessness,equality/egalitarianism,families,children,veterans,seniors,health/wellness
workers/workforce,preserving community/community character,opportunity,poverty,economy/market forces,interconnectedness,families,children,seniors
crisis,poverty,homelessness,other,children,veterans,seniors,other-solution
workers/workforce,poverty,morality,families,children,veterans,seniors,disability/illness

Q7
Message characteristics (choose all that apply)
Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Information about ballot measure,other-information about past impact
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Research/stats about issue
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure, other-fundraiser
Call to action,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Endorsement
Call to action,Endorsement
Call to action,Endorsement,Research/stats about issue,Information about ballot measure
Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Endorsement,Information about ballot measure
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person,Endorsement
Call to action,Testimonial/quote/story from impacted person
Call to action,Endorsement
Call to action,Endorsement,Information about ballot measure

Q8
Spokespeople and endorsers (choose all that apply)
none
community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
none
impacted person,other - newspaper
none
community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite,impacted person
faith leader
elected official
impacted person
elected official,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite,community member
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
elected official,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
none
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite,community member
community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
impacted person
community member
elected official,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite,community member
elected official,faith leader,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite
impacted person
impacted person
other - Newspaper
elected official,community leader (exec dir., biz leader, socialite,community member

Appendix 3: Interview questions

1. How did you incorporate the community's values into your campaign messages?/How do you recommend campaigns incorporate their community's unique values into their campaign messaging?
2. What types of message frames did you find/do you think are most effective?
3. What kinds of reasons did you find people gave for their opposition to affordable housing?
4. What role did factual information play in your campaign messages, and how did you address misinformation?
5. What role did emotional appeals play in your campaign?
6. How did you address stereotypes through your campaign? Which stereotypes?
7. What language did you find most effective for specifically talking about affordable housing and the people who live in it (i.e. housing, homes, residents, neighbors)?
8. How do you know it was effective? How do you recommend measuring effectiveness?
9. What communications strategies do you think should be explored in the future?

Appendix 4: Interview transcripts

1. How did you incorporate the community's values into your campaign messaging?/How do you recommend campaigns incorporate their community's unique values into their campaign messaging?
 - a. I have to believe that the most important bridge we have is within the confines of research and helping us understand the values that our fellow community members have, using examples and stories that have lived experience - they are the best way to break through the calcified stereotypes. Example: "I don't have a problem with black people, it's n-----s I don't like." Absolutely grotesque. It shows that there's this window to shift their opinions. I believe the key to get all advocacy around affordable housing hinges on whether you can get your audience to understand that what you're talking about is the same thing that they value: safety, security, family, a place to call home. Hand in hand with what that means in terms of translating lived experience. I've seen this eureka moment happen many times in a setting like faith-based community or community forum where people realize, geez if you don't have a place to put on clean clothes, how would you ever be ready for a job interview. People don't put the facts together. I have seen the power of moving people by connecting the issue that you're advocating for with the reality of what home means to them. In the end I think the most powerful way of doing that is having people who are prepared to share their own story. Doing story banking or taking peoples' stories has a limited return. Putting people in a position to tell their story as part of a larger narrative has ongoing returns that are hard to calculate.
 - b. The trend for several years has been towards; a lot of the messaging is similar because a lot of folks are looking at what their counterparts in other jurisdictions are doing. A lot of the messaging will be around 'children should have a stable home' or 'children need a place to do their homework' or 'children should have access to opportunity.' OR bringing in a health angle or maybe something around seniors being able to retire and stay healthy. A lot of the big-picture values come through. Arlington County, VA comes to mind. The county has a value statement - they started with that value statement when they started their affordable housing planning process, particularly around diversity. It's a suburb of D.C. which is very dense and growing metro area - housing isn't growing fast enough. The median income is \$120,000/year but huge population of immigrants and people who work in service industry. The goal is maintaining Arlington as a place for all people.
 - c. We did have people do polling of various messages to find out how people would respond. It was conveyed to me that the whole diversity issue scored very high. For whatever reason the people of Austin really did feel like people of all types should be able to find a home they can afford in Austin. Austin is a place where people value diversity. I think we enjoyed advantage being in a more open-minded city.

- d. That was key. My overall input on this was we had to make this a very simple yes or no choice. We needed to make sure that what folks were saying yes or no to was an affirmation of the values that we think our community upholds. This idea that we support kids is very well established. We didn't want to be too academic about it. We could talk exactly about how this would help 100 families and define homelessness, etc. At the end of the day it was, 'would you be willing to spend \$5 more per year to help kids whose families are experiencing homelessness? Yes or no?' It wasn't Vote Yes to End Homelessness, it was Vote Yes for Kids. All of it was focused on putting kids at the center and connecting that a home was a really critical place.
- e. The word community there is interesting. Frameworks is not in the segmentationist vein. There's lots of work in the field of communications, and people who apply methods that are used to market products and achieve legislative wins to thinking about how you reframe issues and change public thinking. This is unproductive and inefficient. It leads to rabbit hole view that you need different things for different communities and segments within communities. When we work on values we look for values that resonate across as many segments as possible and that resonate in the direction that leads to ultimate change that advocates and experts want. Not just resonant and that make people feel, but that increase support for policies, that decrease NIMBYism. What we do is we test a bunch of different values both qualitatively and experimentally and determine which of the values is doing the things that we want it to do. The findings are often that the values that the field thinks will be effective aren't as effective as you'd expect. It's the underutilized values that we find to be effective. We try to find values that resonate in communities and across communities. The research that we've done with Enterprise - the first part is published, next part isn't published until next month - prescriptive research. The field loves using the value of opportunity - field loves it and it resonates but in not completely predictable ways. If resonance was your outcome it would be successful, but it's not effective in moving people in the right direction. Actually causes them to reject idea of fairness and affordability in housing. Reinforces people's sense that when it comes to housing people don't believe people deserve opportunity. Access to affordable housing isn't part of the American Dream. Academic exercise where you can test values and then there's the real world. While logically opportunity frame makes sense to people in the field, it's not doing what we expect it to.
- f. We actually did some community research and we did a series of two focus groups and statewide polling because we thought there's no way that the messages that are working in all these progressive places are going to work here. We were hearing from people a long time ago that whatever is working in other communities will work here. Sure, enough, the same values come up here that came up in Oregon, Michigan, North Carolina the past 20 years. The values that raised to the top were: Hardworking Alabamians, one was children focused and one was veterans focused. Those made the most sense knowing the political climate here. In our research we found that you can talk about disabilities but when you talk about specific disabilities the approval ratings go down. When you

say disability someone automatically assumes they're in a wheelchair, but when you say HIV there comes a whole other level of judgment. Every time we talked about things here, people either asked us about workforce housing or when we got the housing trust fund passed as a mechanism, the first was to get a housing trust fund and the second was to get money for it. We originally had those 2 components together. In 2010, legislature went super majority Republican - decided to split it out. One of the amendments was a sweat equity. They tried to do a sweat equity component on multifamily. Did it for home ownership piece. The only homeownership model was a Habitat model. It's the "deserving" poor. We don't name other people who can benefit from affordable housing but they still benefit. The housing trust fund here is very broad. It says we can create, retain or maintain affordable housing - can do rental or home ownership. Increased area median income to include Habitat for Humanity and to push homeownership because Habitat is very well respected here.

- g. Honestly, we were very, very much message-driven by what the poll told us. We were extremely disciplined. There were a number of advocates in Santa Clara County who wanted us to talk about equity issues, meaning, isn't it fair for the minimum wage worker to have housing. Isn't it fair for somebody who works in your hospital or works on your car as a mechanic, etc. to have a place to live. And while those people as messengers were important, the equity message as I recall wasn't as compelling as some of the other messages. We were extremely disciplined in following what the polls said. The poll tested the values that people have about affordable housing. There was a cost component for first time homebuyers. In this crazy expensive housing market that was important. One was homeless issues and doing something to provide housing for homeless people. I would say values to the extent we identified them in our polling were a big part of what we messaged.
 - h. I think in a lot situations, communities perceive affordable housing as detrimental to their values or counter to their values. That establishes a bit of an antagonistic communication from the get-go. A lot of it is listening to communities' particular concerns: aesthetics, increased traffic, negative impact on schools, increased crime, etc. The key there is to figure out what the community says they're concerned about, and for the most part there's been a ton of research that shows affordable housing can be indistinguishable from other households. Traffic can be mitigated through parking strategies, etc. Furthermore residents of affordable housing are more likely to use public transit. Show photos of great looking affordable housing that looks like the neighborhood. Talk about stories of people becoming new neighbors and new friends. Despite prior suspicion and concern, usually once it's built people realize it's fine. Using quotes from people who have said, I was worried at first but now it's fine.
2. What types of message frames did you find/do you think are most effective?
 - a. I think the message frame of home, but also the opportunity frame, reward for work, responsibility to care for the most vulnerable, and safety and security.

- b. A lot of the work that Tiffany Manuel is doing at Enterprise Community Partners is important. She's about to release some new research. She makes two important points: 1) We've built awareness - we're done building awareness, people get that there's a problem; they can see homelessness, high costs. They don't get the connection - there's employers who think transportation costs are issue, not the long commutes due to housing issues. 2) When you frame, because of the way we think as Americans, and the American story of manifest destiny - we conquer, we do everything for ourselves, lone cowboy. When we use language about mobility and choice neighborhoods, etc. choice framing plays into messaging being rejected. 'If you can't afford it, you should just move.' We can counter that mentality by finding ways of talking to people about themselves. It's not a campaign about those people over there, it's about you and your family and your future.
- c. All of the above (children frame, access to opportunity frame). People will support housing with opportunities for people to become self-sufficient and open up that space for someone else. I did also do stories on these various people. They would say, we would like to one day have our own home and find that new job, get a degree. And certainly that kind of messaging was powerful. We did find that messaging that was specific to seniors, veterans and families with children was more powerful. The campaign kicked off with a video that included three stories: first, an elderly woman who received funding for renovations to her home that allowed her to keep it; second, a veteran with disabilities; and third, a family that ran into bad financial problems because they had a child with severe medical problems when he was born. Mom had to quit her job because it was a full time job taking care of their kid. These types of stories really resonated with people.
- d. Using the frame of children was the most effective. Kids were the most important in our primary purpose.
- e. There are different types of frames - values, or other frame elements that can be very effective. We do a lot with metaphor as a thinking device to open up new ways to understand how issues work in order to better evaluate solutions put in front of them. Metaphors are important when you have relatively technical expert issues that people may not have a good understanding of and illustrating a process, like the process of how housing units get developed. It's an opaque topic that people don't understand. The metaphor can help concretize understanding. You can make people smarter about how issues work, and therefore there's a bunch of solutions that make sense where they didn't before. I think it's really important when it comes to NIMBYism. A lot of NIMBYism is due to a lack of understanding of housing developments and how they work and what they do. There's also things like messengers. Done messenger testing: community members vs. development officers vs. other members of decision-making bodies - found a significant difference in how people take on and assess messages. Solutions is another important and frequently missing or deficient part of a frame. There's something that I call the 90-10 rule. Most nonprofit advocate messages spend 90% hammering home the problem and maybe 10% that looks at/talks about solutions. If you're able to achieve more of a

balance between the problem and the solution you have much more persuasive and effective messages. I've worked on 35 different social issues over the years. The housing field is better than other issue areas at presenting solutions. That's a relatively easy fix for this field - balance between problems and solutions (and urgency and efficacy). There's other elements of a frame as well. How you knit arguments together thru the use of narrative structure that works for helping people think about social issues is an important meta frame element. Lack of a distinction made between getting people to donate \$ is a fundamentally different outcome than getting people to think differently about an issue. In the UK fundraising for childhood poverty and neglect. Fundraisers have raised a ton of money by doing what in communications is called flies on eyes photos. Showing horribly abused kids and that stuff works to fundraise. People will give you five pounds just so that they don't have to think about the problem anymore. But those messages do absolutely nothing, and there's good evidence to show that they're actually counterproductive in helping people think differently about the issue and support solutions. You have people thinking the same thing you would do to raise money is the same thing you would do to build a movement or change minds.

- f. They're based on reward for work, and opportunity, and in a sense, a third one was responsibility - that's where the veterans one came in. The men and women who defend our country deserve to return to a safe home. Those were the value frames that rose to the top. The child one tested the best. Who's going to argue that children don't deserve a safe place to call home? Do not stray from the message whatever you do. And, that's the easiest one to remember and where you'll get the least pushback.
- g. According to the poll results, it was senior housing, veterans housing, homelessness, and first-time homebuyers. Those kind of permeated amongst different audiences. It depends on the audience which of those messages worked. Even Republicans who are against new tax measures, they could get behind the idea of their children having an opportunity as a first-time homebuyer. But they weren't all about it providing housing for the homeless. It depended on the audience/demographic. First-time homebuyers permeated amongst renters; while veterans and homeless permeated amongst liberals; providing entitlements for folks that needed it the most. What we see really now, the money didn't build anything. When you actually have an affordable housing project that is going to come to fruition you get NIMBY attitudes that range from people who already have theirs. It doesn't matter if you're a renter or homeowner, you get attitudes 'you are gentrifying our community' -- they use traffic as an excuse. Seeing that amongst renters in rent-controlled cities. They already have their low rents and you put in more affordable housing. The things we didn't talk about were important. We had a lot of people, advocates, people who had donated money, say 'you need to tell people that it's only going to be about \$90/year.' Based on our experience, we never, ever talked about what it was going to cost somebody. All it did was tell them it was going to cost them. We talked about values, we talked about solving problems. We never said, this is the right thing to do because it will only cost you X. We got a lot of pushback from people who had

contributed six figures to the campaign. They thought it was important to be transparent. We talked about our value system as a community and how it benefits the community itself.

- h. Talking about things like the face of affordable housing. Talking about how high rents are - showing the median income of an elementary school teacher, police officer or firefighter and say these people can't afford the rent - we're building affordable housing so that they can. Using these people that people want to be your neighbors as a poster child literally for the face of affordable housing. Another big concern is that property values will go down so there's a ton of studies that show new construction of any kind increases property values. Using facts to alleviate people's concerns. I'm very skeptical about how effective those will be. Very skeptical about how effective any communications strategy that will be. If the underlying concerns are racism and classism, communications strategies won't be effective. Nobody's saying anything super racist, you can't call them out on it. If you call them out on it, they get defensive and they shut down. People who are blatant about those attitudes. Well-meaning middle class people that hold a lot of stereotypes and prejudice about subsidized housing and people that are poor. You have to attack those stereotypes. I have no idea how to do that. My approach has been, we're not going to change their minds by flying so let's get the political power to do it anyway.
3. What kinds of reasons did you find people gave for their opposition to affordable housing?
 - a. Property values, parking, changing the characteristic of the neighborhood, guests, the criminal element. Under all this research and how to move forward in all of this, I think any analysis of NIMBY that doesn't start with, 'it's a symptom of deep-seated racism' is missing the point. Whether it's traffic or building height or whatever, what's really driving it... the willingness in order to hold onto the racist beliefs. It becomes the subtext for all of this work, and yet, in this field, another factor going on, housing messaging doesn't get in. While I'm proud of that work, the ground not covered is really important there. The inability of the housing community to name this issue for what it really is, is central to halting the progress in unraveling it. We're never having that real conversation of what the issue is.
 - b. There's a lot around transportation and other quality of life issues -- too many people, too many people parking or on the highway; new people are going to overuse the stuff that I consider mine. There's the stuff that's either racist or veiled racism. We're all used to seeing it, it's pretty easy to spot. At hearings in the Bay Area, and people in North Seattle will take the cause of the moment and turn it around as a reason for their opposition. A developer was trying to get a height variance. Some of the arguments were about shadows -- 'it'll kill my plants.' At a zoning board meeting, someone said, 'there's a lot of immigrants in this neighborhood... it will case shadows on the places where these immigrants live.' Years before that in another North Seattle neighborhood there were objections to an old military base being repurposed for people exiting

homelessness: there isn't enough public transit and enough services to help these people. They're cloaking themselves in this moral authority; wearing this concern as a costume. You can use messaging to manipulate that impulse. We all want to be really good people -- we all see ourselves that way. Find a way to leverage that tendency that we all have to get people to support the development. If someone says there's not enough services here, the response can be, 'I'm so glad that you've brought up this concern about these people having these services they need. We're concerned about supporting people, too.' Use it to redirect the conversation to, 'we've found people who are in this situation want to live in a quiet neighborhood just like you do and are just as happy as you are to go to work or school.'

- c. Honestly, we did not hear much opposition. There wasn't an organized opposition. There was a tax protester. Anything that involved government money he opposed. The things I can remember hearing are, people said, 'we can never spend our way out of this problem' and we combatted that by saying 'tell this family it's a lost cause' looking at the individual family situation. Some people would say, 'let the market do what it does.' Some people not fans of public assistance of any sort. I don't remember there being a NIMBY attitude. A lot of the groups we talked to were groups that we felt confident that we would get to support it if we could just rally them and get them to show up in an off-year election. There was an Access Television talk show where I was outnumbered by conservatives; there were attitudes about government spending or 'not my problem' but they actually said, 'we know we're going to lose this one' based on polling, and they felt like we had spent a lot of money to secure a win. It had more to do with the organization of the campaign. People who had a stake in it were astonished at the loss the previous year and rallied the next year. They were fired up, made donations, and got the message out. The opposition wasn't organized. We won by 70%.
- d. The biggest ones were the cost: 'my taxes are already too high, this is going to be really expensive' and that wasn't the case with this specific proposal. \$5 a year, really? The flipside was that it wasn't going to be enough money to deal with the problem. We got questions on exactly how the money was going to be spent and where it would go. The way the process was designed, we didn't know the answers to that. This creates a pot of money that will be awarded to agencies that have expertise in housing. It doesn't have a lot of the red tape that other funding has. The difference in a family staying in their home this month is a tank of gas - there weren't resources to help with that... this created that resource. Lack of overall information on homelessness drove opposition to this. People would say 'we don't have any homeless kids' or "it's not as big of a number as you think it is" then we got data and it was Latest data: 900 kids in Kalamazoo public schools are homeless. You always get a little bit of racism mixed in there, classicism, most of that was behind the surface and they were hiding behind another argument. My organizing background was with the LGBTQ task force—they taught me how to do community organizing. Race/class/religion are the largest wedges that are used to divide our communities, so it was key when we were building this that we focused on universally accessible things—kids. We

used lots of stick figures. When you see kids, whatever that looks like for them, that's what they see. Used diverse images - needed to break down some of the stereotypes of what homelessness looked like, or where it was. A campaign is always about figuring how much of the needle you can move versus operating in the opinion environment as it is. When people wanted to talk about pulling them up by the bootstraps we'd talk about how many of these homeless families have jobs. We need a local solution so they don't have barriers to help. Affordable housing is a systemic issue, this is a way to start addressing that -- fighting intergenerational poverty. We recognized where our audience was and appealed to them that way. Race and class less so in this campaign.

- e. Those backfires in the piece published with Tiffany Manual— they're not explicit arguments or rationales but they are implicit patterns of thinking that form opposition. The view that the housing market is a market governed by basic market principles. Idea of consumerism. When it comes to housing, which is modeled as a consumer good and you get what you can afford and if you can't afford high quality then you shouldn't get it. Calls toward increasing affordability seems a violation of fundamental market principles. It's not seen as inherently problematic that some people can't afford quality housing. I think NIMBYism is tapping into something different, but at a general level in public discourse that is the thing that stalls the conversation. People fundamentally don't think society or gov't should be doing anything to make this private consumer good more affordable. They think it is what it is and people get what they deserve. More than a lot of other issues when there are prominent stories about affordable housing it is so interesting to read the comments that follow. It's not classified as a social issue, it's a consumer issue. Immigration is seen as a social issue, not a consumer issue. People compartmentalize it into the private market domain.
- f. It is not written in the constitution that people deserve a place to live -- that was from a senator predicting what his constituents would say to him. One representative told me that people in low-income housing don't even own affordable housing, no one's helped me get my home so why should we help them, they should move if they can't figure out where to live. Very judgment-based. I don't think a good portion of the state understands what taxes are and why they're paid - fundamental misunderstanding of revenue, and an assumption that we're overtaxed in Alabama which is not true. Opposition groups: The bankers said - once you start to increase this fee, there's no end in sight. The realtors say it will keep someone out of home (it wouldn't - 100% increase on a mortgage record tax which is \$75 up to several hundred dollars. Realtors didn't like the revenue source so we said to their board of directors, 'give us a different revenue source.' They are one of the most powerful lobbyists in Alabama because they give to everyone. Realtors can be friend or foe. National groups have a ton of money to push out collateral and propaganda. The chair of the committee showed us the pile of 'don't do any tax on our homes' collateral. Developers of homes - want the money for themselves - they have protected us because we put the money out there, and if they can't have the majority of the money then nobody else can. Multifamily developers did not sign on because they were dealing with a real estate assessment issue - these affordable projects

are being assessed at market value, which makes the taxes way higher than rents will support. They couldn't neutralize a revenue and a change in existing revenue. On the fundraising side to pay for advocacy it's sort of an intangible. The other problem is it's incredibly complicated, so to try to explain it to people is incredibly hard. We also were told that our constituents are not calling about affordable housing - they're calling about other things. Why should I make an issue of this when my own constituents aren't? It's hard to talk about - it's confusing. People aren't realizing that housing is a root cause.

- g. It was all money - mostly it's philosophical. Why is the government putting money together to build housing? We live in a capitalist society. Why should the my property taxes go up (that's how a bond measure gets funded in CA) to help these people? They should help themselves. They feel bad saying that so they say traffic, it doesn't fit in the character of the neighborhood. We have all these single family homes, it doesn't fit to have a four-story multi-unit building.
 - h. The school and crime stuff is largely the result of racism and classicism so that's a tough one to counter. For me the communications strategies should alleviate all of those legitimate concerns. They're not familiar with affordable housing. When people say traffic and schools they really mean poor people and nonwhite people. If the underlying concerns are racism and classicism, communications strategies won't be effective. If nobody's saying anything super racist, you can't call them out on it. If you call them out on it, they get defensive and they shut down. There are well-meaning middle class people that hold a lot of stereotypes and prejudice about subsidized housing and people that are poor. You have to attack those stereotypes. I have no idea how to do that. My approach has been, we're not going to change their minds by flyering so let's get the political power to do it anyway.
4. What role did factual information play in your campaign messages, and how did you address misinformation?
- a. It depends what kind of misinformation. This gets very quickly different in a NIMBY from a public policy. From a factual standpoint, say the campaign is about passing a property tax levy to fund affordable housing. Places that you have to argue back on is 'what's the impact for homeowners', how much will it cost? How will the money be used. All this stuff that is known and could be distorted. On the other hand, repeating falsehoods, especially that align with strongly held beliefs, avoid it almost every time. For instance, if I was in a NIMBY situation and there was an accusation made, say it was senior development, and the argument was 'there will be criminals living in the building' I would NOT argue back 'there will not be criminals living in this building' - people think you're lying. Instead, respond with narrative detail and real experiences of people who will be living in the property, like the lunch ladies from Lake Oswego. When the falsehoods run along the faultlines it means we need to double down in talking about our areas of strength using value messages that connect with people and be very clear about what it is that is our positive vision.

- b. Facts are really important but facts aren't your message. The mistake that we make is thinking that facts can speak for themselves. We all have preconceived idea that influence the way we interpret new information so we don't have a guarantee that people will interpret data the same way we do. This isn't science. We should not feel uncomfortable about telling people what to think before we give them the facts. Put the framing on before you flood people with data. If you don't do that they will decide what to think about the data. Talking about lives of low-income people/low wage people, and wanting to find a solution, they often say we need to raise minimum wage or increase job training, new employers, etc. but that's not what your housing levy is about. You have to introduce the idea that making affordable housing is a solution. Misinformation: you have to make an attempt to correct/debunk. The best practice is to not spend a whole lot of time repeating the myth. Try to explain the motivation behind that myth. Hopefully you've dug that out of people's brains and you can fill it back in with the real truth. There's been some newer research, like the backfire effect research from FrameWorks Institute. In Brendan Nyhan's newer research, he's gone back to say this isn't actually the effect we were seeing: it turns out new arguments don't reinforce the old argument. It may be that it's not that people disbelieve facts that are presented to them, it's that they're not interested in changing their minds. As much as message is really important, the caveat is being really conscious of how you're designing your campaign and who you're targeting because there's people you don't have to worry about or should be trying to turn away. Make sure you're making clear what the truth is, but you may win more if you concentrate on building and solidifying support of potential supporters. People want to take themselves out of sense of responsibility - if you think of poor people as irresponsible then you don't have to feel bad.
- c. There was a point in which the person who was doing the fundraising raised a bit of an objection to the messaging. She said, 'that's all wonderful, they're great stories, but I can't bring these to corporations. These are people that like to see spreadsheets, facts and figures, results, ROI.' I had just completed a video with HousingWorks - they had commissioned research on the 2006 bonds and ROI using infographics and an interview with executive director. Wasn't just this touchy feely good thing to do; it made financial sense for the community, it created jobs. There was a financial upside. That was the one area where it wasn't quite so story-oriented. We had literature that had bullet points, we gave that to the media, especially print reporters.
- d. It played somewhat. Because taxes are complicated, we gave examples. 'If your house is worth X then you pay Y.' We tried to make sure that we were being really clear about process and need. The more that you got into the weeds on process the more you started to lose. Our mailed pieces were anecdotal stories reinforcing values. There were places where facts mattered in a really intense way, like presenting to a group of independent insurance agents. There was one person who was very opposed to it. He had a high-value home; he would have owed something like \$25-\$50. He tried to say we were wasting all this money. I pushed back really hard. It's only 1.5 people working on this campaign. The truth is the campaign played out in values, not in facts. The only fact was, 'how much

will my taxes go up?'

- e. Anyone who says we live in a post-fact world... I don't believe that. For one thing we never lived in a fact and truth world. Facts never spoke for themselves. That's not how thinking works. Facts remain important, but they do not by themselves win the day when it comes to framing. They're an important part of any narrative or message but they're a component of a larger frame. The mistake a lot of people make in the field is they assume that facts speak for themselves so they make the facts the frame. The reason why we have to address this issue is... and then they use a fact as the driver for the frame. This is an area where we know value appeals are much more effective than fact appeals. Facts can be a really important part of making a case. But, they need to be telegraphed in terms of the point they're used to make. [Regarding misinformation:] The piece that Tiffany and I wrote... the term backfire/the boomerang effect. This is a hotly debated issue right now... the degree to which repetition reinforces. Brendan Nyhan, who is one of the founders of the backfire effect is now doing research that's questioning whether it's as pronounced and important as his earlier research suggested. We know enough about cognition to say that the classic rhetorical strategy of, 'I tell you what you think, show you that it's wrong and put my correct information in front of you' is bunk as a strategy. It sets up this oppositional way that people think about ideas. It sets up a competition of right vs. wrong, which is never productive. And by leading with the thing you don't want people to believe you actually reinforce it. You're always more effective when you lead with what you want to say, not with what you don't want people to believe. Ordering is really important when it comes to information correction.
- f. Yes, we used facts. We tried pretty hard to not use that many numbers because we tend to lose people. We'll do a couple of different pieces. We do statewide county by county assessments, in addition to use 'out of reach' stuff. Use social math - this is how many buses it would take to hold all of AL's homeless children. To a certain extent we will fight the misinformation. I won't fight the realtors head-on publicly. If they can't afford a \$200 addition to their closing costs, they can't afford that home. This is not going to keep them out of a home. You don't need all legislators to agree with you - you need the majority +1. Don't go head-on with the people who disagree strongly. The bias effect. It completely screws up what you're trying to say. It's not worth going down that path. We will pivot sometimes and try to get back on message. We haven't gotten a lot of misinformation out there, rather, it's hard to open the door. Misinformation comes when things are talked about a lot, but not that many people know about this... issues like property value.
- g. We did a lot of factual information. What's interesting is it's only really compelling to have someone impacted tell that story. The number of homeless, people that couldn't afford housing. Nonprofit housing developers -- having them tell the story about a bond would help them provide opportunities. Messengers were as important if not more important than the message. Teachers living out of their cars. Obviously we wouldn't say something untrue. Almost as important in that is having someone who is sympathetic and believable. We spent a lot of time

finding those messengers. We had an elderly woman who lived in a trailer park talk about housing for seniors. We had a veteran who had been helped by finding affordable housing. He was in a place and his message was, "I got help. Help my fellow veterans." Teachers. We didn't use elected officials because they're not the ones who benefit. We tried to get the people who were going to benefit to be messengers. There wasn't an organized campaign against Measure A. Santa Clara County Taxpayers Association was against it, but they didn't have the same kind of resources. We did not go out of our way to correct misinformation. We like to frame our issue and have people react to what we put out there. We had credible third parties. We had a lot of resources. They [the opposition] got a published ballot argument that goes to all voters. We didn't want to repeat their argument with our money and answer it.

- h. Another big concern is that property values will go down so there's a ton of studies that show new construction of any kind increases property values. Using facts to alleviate people's concerns. I'm very skeptical about how effective those will be. I'm very skeptical about how effective any communications strategy that will be. The good news is that we do have the facts on our side. If you look at new affordable housing construction it is attractive, and integrated into the community. It doesn't look like people think it will. There's been studies that look at neighboring property values and crime rates and show that these fears are largely unfounded. Those facts can be used well. And when talking about who the people are who need affordable housing that can be helpful and those types of communication are the only way to do that. I think you need to use the facts and get the facts out there, but I think we're living in a post-fact world so a lot of people just don't believe the facts. This is a challenging reason to try to use reason and fact-based logic against someone who is emotionally invested in another opinion.
5. What role did emotional appeals play in your campaign?/What about using emotional appeals?
 - a. They're more effective as long as they're sophisticated and thoughtful. I think it's a hybrid of information and emotional stuff that acknowledges the way people make decisions.
 - b. What you do see sometimes is in the advocacy community is the idea that housing as a human right or we have a moral duty to do 'X' which feels like guilt to me. I think it's incredibly ineffective. It can be insulting to people. Just because someone doesn't agree with what you're proposing or just hasn't studied it yet doesn't mean that they're not a moral person. You put yourself at huge risk of insulting people and turning them off. We're really attuned to emotional manipulation in general, particularly around political campaigns. I think combining an aspirational message with real solutions that you have proof of being effective, I think that's a good message. You do want people to think forward and think about what a future could look like: 'imagine if we all worked together for a stronger community.' It has to be grounded in 'this is what it's going to look like: this many more people will have places to live and will generate this many jobs';

a literal picture.

- c. We went into the campaign thinking we wanted communications to be a real priority and have it be really story-oriented, in terms of the personal angle and not so much the facts and figures and concepts that oftentimes people don't understand or they don't feel. But if they could see the faces of people who could say 'this was transformative, this changed my life, my children's lives,' that it would be more difficult for people to say 'I don't care about that' or 'what's the point.' We were definitely looking for stories where people could say, 'you know, I sympathize with that person, that could happen to everyone.' We knew that we couldn't create enough affordable housing to solve the problem. There wasn't enough money that we would be able to get to do that. But when you can see one person, or one family that for them it was the solution. I was brought on with that already being the attitude and strategy. My background was in journalism and video production -- I was a TV reporter. I was fairly new to communications and use of social media, but stories was the priority so it just sort of worked. The housing first model says, don't focus on the person and what they've done. If you put a roof over their head and give them a place to belong that everything else will fall in line, and of course, provide the services and the means for them to get on that positive road and stay on it. Appeal to people's sense of wanting people to have another chance, and help them see the big picture of what a better community it will be if we do have this opportunity for people to be uplifted and find a better place in life.
- d. Absolutely more effective. When we were telling stories of folks who would benefit, that's when we were winning. If the price tag isn't absurd and it's for an issue that people care about from a values perspective, this means someone can pay their security deposit. It wasn't so much the 'how'. As long as they bought into the 'why,' the 'what' is what got them excited.
- e. This is the resonance problem. Emotion is the same thing -- any effective message has to have an emotional component and it's not mutually exclusive with a factual component. Any message that is emotion-free isn't going to land or stick or encode or grip you need for other parts of it to work. The problem is that emotion is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. Emotion shouldn't be viewed as the outcome, it should be a mediating variable. You need emotion for an effective message. But just because a message is emotional doesn't mean it's effective. I can get you riled up about a message by being incredibly negative, doom and gloom, crisis, urgency... that probably elicits some emotion in you, but if my goal is to get you to support policies and move your thinking, that kind of emotion is actually antithetical to the goal.
- f. Yes. You lead with the values, then once you both agree with a value you can talk about the nuances of that. 'Why are we the worst in the country at child well-being?' pulled at the heartstrings.
- g. We also tried to use the emotional heartstrings as well.

6. How did you address stereotypes through your campaign?/How do you recommend addressing stereotypes? Which stereotypes, and how?
 - a. There's a need to take values-based messaging to the next level to figure out how to proactively make the case based on race, gender, and class, and I think the way to do that most effectively is to empower people who are personally impacted who have lived experience in such a way that they can be in lead roles in shaping the dialogue of the campaign. I think that takes an investment in developing them as leaders. It goes beyond storytelling, especially because sharing your personal experience on issues this painful and personal is not something that should be done transactionally. People choose to do this because they believe and are committed to seeking change. People rarely ever use their residents. The greatest success stories I've ever heard about... housing advocates starting right before the recession reached out to the Center for Community Change saying their usual effective strategies were becoming less effective. That's when Home Matters spun off. Messaging was one thrust, another was building cross-issue collaborations, the third area is building leaders among residents who live in affordable housing -- building resident networks in CA and WA. We talked to nonprofits who have practiced community organizing as a standard part of their approach, consequently... within first 10 minutes of 6 separate conversations the people we were talking to made some mention of it being... 'a bottom-line issue for our housing development department because we don't have NIMBY issues anymore.' The mobilized community is rallying around this. I bet people with opposition will say different things when it's now in front of the broader community - they lose the mob mentality, they lose their power.
 - b. I don't have a ton of clear answers here. You can go back to leaning on people's best vision of themselves. Give them the opportunity to be non-stereotyping. The focus of the messaging has to be on what the audience is going to get out of this. You can address stereotypes but it has to be from that perspective. It's tricky.
 - c. We had a strategy of controlling the message so that the portrayal of the people who would benefit would be as positive as possible, and to let people know there would be screening of the people that would benefit from affordable housing. We did make a point of being diverse with the messaging. We didn't want to give the impression that we were trying to help any one community. The housing that would be created would be spread throughout the community for a few reasons: jobs are spread throughout and we had a need for housing close to jobs. We did not want the worst image of a homeless person to be burned in the minds of voters when they went to the polls. We shouldn't shy away from the stories that are a little harder to tell. We didn't do that through this campaign, though. It's a hard sell to say let's spend tax money to give homes to people who you've seen harassing people or in distress.
 - d. One of the core aspects was a significant number of community presentations - Kiwanis, Rotary clubs, church clubs. That's when we did the most dispelling of myths. Really there's that many homeless kids, there's rural poverty and

homelessness, too. That's where we made some of the biggest impacts. In mailed pieces we showed several different races to break stereotypes of what poor people look like.

- e. This is similar to the problem that misinformation leads people into. When people try to bust stereotypes they repeat the stereotype and reinforce it. That's the worst thing you can do. Stereotypes and stigma are difficult to unseat. If they weren't, we wouldn't have any. What they're fundamentally about is assailing the underlying thinking that underlies them. You can't argue people out of stereotypes. You can't disprove them. What you can do is give people new ways of thinking about issues and people that provide an antidote at a deep cognitive or cultural level to the belief that underlies the stereotype and the stigma.
 - f. We stuck more of the general conversations about disability. We haven't done a lot there. Partnered with disability rights and services, shared an advocacy day to talk about all kinds of disabilities and what it would mean for all people to have safe, quality affordable homes. Goes to the heartstrings a little bit. Some further-along more progressive places may have. Washington Low Income Housing Alliance has done the most around an equity lens. That's the only place that I've seen this. White people don't need to be the ones that are leading conversations on equity and yet that's what's happening. They have a toolkit.
 - g. The only way we countered it is we had sympathetic people who said, 'this will help me.' We did very targeted things to ethnic communities: Chinese, sympathetic figures speaking Chinese that we advertised on Chinese radio and TV; we did Spanish-speaking sympathetic figures (single mom and two kids) who we put on Spanish TV and radio. And we did Vietnamese. Again sympathetic figures with the messages we knew from the polling worked. Let's build senior housing, let's build veteran housing, etc. Because we weren't project-specific we didn't have those types of stereotypes. People can say, 'that can be anywhere.' When you propose it in their community they freak out. This was a bond measure so it was about providing money for these things.
 - h. I'm not sure you can. I honestly do not know. I've been a lot of reading and research on stereotypes and I haven't found the person that says how to change them. Contact theory -- the more diverse of an area you live in the fewer stereotypes you have. Once the housing is built, it's fine. In a lot of ways affordable housing is the way you overcome race and class stereotypes -- it's a tool for integration and diversity. If you can get that in, that might be the sort of contact that can eventually undermine those stereotypes.
7. What language did/do you find most effective for specifically talking about affordable housing and the people who live in it (i.e. housing, homes, residents, neighbors)?
- a. Homes, whether it's apartments or ownership. At the end of today I'm going to go home. People don't go to their housing, they don't go to units, they go HOME. Any term will be sniffed out. People geeked out about calling it workforce housing and they're in the same battles. In terms of messaging tropes: 'Housing is a

human right' -- I hate it. That doesn't work, it sounds like a demand and it's a confusing to some people. Home is a human right - I think that's saying something entirely different. We all need a place to call home. Workforce housing -- one of the stereotypes about affordable housing is that it's a government handout and it's for people who are sucking up resources. We are shooting ourselves in the foot when we talk about workforce housing, people conflate it with the government handout. Residents is more cold. But you can't just call people neighbors always. Be as specific about what you're talking about as often as you can. If that has to be in the abstract, then talk about it in terms of these are the bank tellers, these are the people who change your oil. Make it relatable.

- b. Talk about things the way that regular people talk about them - I don't go home to my unit, I don't refer to myself as a renter. I'm a person and I live in a home. Tiffany in her research, recommended stripping terminology down even further to "place to live" instead of "home". In general stripping your terminology and phrasing down to its basic elements helps you get away from jargon.
- c. Affordable housing sounds too much like public housing and it has an image problem. For example, trying not to use the word "project". Sometimes people have an image of a halfway house. A lot of developments are for single adults transitioning out of homelessness, and there often are stories from their past that resulted in them being homeless, but what we've found is that, if they would introduce the community to the types of people that they help and see that they do select people that are in a position to be ready to be positive part of community and that they're going to appreciate what's happened and tell them their story instead of throwing numbers at them; '200 people' scares people. They almost never get a bad reception -- the tide turns as you appeal to people and their sense of goodwill and wanting to help. It would be unfair if we didn't mention that we're also sitting in Austin, the blueberry in the tomato soup... a liberal stronghold. Even then, we're talking about people's homes and families. There is that negative reaction to something they don't fully understand with something very close to their homes. They do screen people before they can move in and they tell neighbors about that. In the case of people with disabilities we talked about how they want to live independently and be a part of a community, not segregated. We leaned heavily on the diversity message because it tested so well in message testing. Wherever we could tell someone's story -- how they wanted to help the community and be a positive part of the community, we really pushed that. Focusing on the positives. I have heard that people respond better to the word home than housing -- I'd be curious to find out.
- d. Every child deserves a home. Not just a place where they leave their stuff. When I ask you where your home is, what do you think of? The word home was key to everything we were doing. Housing is clinical so we didn't say that as much. Stable housing is an important part of our community -- that checks the intellectual box, but not the emotional one. Home. It's expensive. Rent is too high, homes cost too much. We don't need to overcomplicate that.

- e. [Cannot speak to this at this time because findings will be shared in FrameWorks & Enterprise Community Partners' latest research, to be released in June. As of June 3, this research was not yet available.]
 - f. Yes - always homes, families. We have tried to get a lot of stories but haven't been as successful as we'd like. We do not use the term housing at all.
 - g. Mostly it was people that needed it, so it was about teachers, nurses, the homeless, veterans. Those things polled very well. Providing housing opportunities for those professions and those folks. Didn't differentiate between homes, housing, apartments, renters, homeowners. We didn't find any substantial difference in the actual words we used to describe what was going to get built.
 - h. Look at Ed Goetz' paper, "Words Matter". He tackles this question. He said it's all parable. People will see through it. I did a bunch of focus groups and decided to settle on affordable housing because it was to me the most neutral term even though I was actually talking about subsidized housing. I thought it was the most commonly used -- people knew what I was talking about but it didn't carry as much stigma. Workforce housing -- no one knows what that is. It never really caught on. It confused people. Public housing is obviously a no-go. It's inaccurate -- not describing today's programs and has terrible images in people's minds and neighborhood effects.
8. How do you know it was effective?/How do you recommend measuring effectiveness?
- a. Seeing the way you frame and describe the issue picked up in the media, seeing the people who disagree with you using your language and your frames. And beyond winning a ballot measure, another manifestation; every affordable housing measure that has passed lately has the word opportunity in it. In Portland politicians have picked up that language, which means it's working.
 - b. I have very little for you here. The traditional ways to do it are pulling in focus groups; do A/B testing in email and try different messages in subject lines to see who opens what. If you see your message out in the wild and it's being used by someone who isn't part of your campaign or coalition that's a pretty good indicator that it's getting some traction. At the very least it sounds like something another human would say. Keep Austin Affordable is a great example because that message has housing words in it but it's a message about how the people of Austin see themselves and see their city. Another example: the Don't mess with Texas campaign was an anti-littering campaign. The company that came up with it figured out it was young dudes throwing garbage out of their truck windows and this message would resonate with them. 'I'm a tough guy, I'm going to defend my state by not throwing my garbage out of my window.' It tied into their beliefs and their self-concept.
 - c. [Interviewer: Of course passage of the ballot measure was one indicator, but are there any other quantitative and qualitative methods for measuring effectiveness

that were used?] I don't really know if anything in particular was done after the campaign. I was hired to do a retrospective video from the campaign. Echo is a homeless advocacy group. I would say there was definitely polling. We had a very active field campaign and I'm sure there was a lot of feedback there -- phone banking. I think it was a combination of communications and a very active field campaign that had no opponent out there on the street. As far as other analytics, obviously with social media there is some but I don't remember seeing much negative response. We were preaching to the choir in many ways.

- d. I feel like we had some poll from the beginning that showed it was winnable but not a slam dunk—in the 50's. We didn't do anything significant afterward. We didn't know how it would shake out. There were people who were just no's on any new taxes. We didn't know how turnout would look because it was an off-year election day. We won in a bunch of places that we did not expect to win -- Texas Township, Portage, we lost in plenty of places but we did better than we anticipated. Either we did a really good job of turning out our supporters, or the general messaging frame must have worked so even people who were generally anti-tax decided it was worth their investment. It doesn't surprise me that there's more that brings us together than brings us apart. Who doesn't like kids?
- e. [The FrameWorks Institute use empirical research methods to test message frames, including content analysis, focus groups, and qualitative and experimental message testing.]
- f. It only helped us shape the messages. We tried a couple things that we thought would work really well in the south - one was a faith-based message and one was an us-versus them message (state versus federal) but both polled terribly which was shocking to us. The value frames that worked in OR are the same that worked for us. Helping Montana - do not reinvent the wheel. We haven't been able to do any long-term eval. Of the impact of our messages. We know that the messages sound good and people feel comfortable using them. We did allow hard working Alabamians to be Alabamians with disabilities.
- g. We did polling before the campaign. We did 2-3 polls; two of them were done prior to us actually even going on the ballot. This was put on by the county of Santa Clara, so the county did a lot of survey work to see what features (benefactors) were the types of features that would get the most support. We also did a lot of polling on the actual ballot question. In California there is a 75-word limit on the ballot question. It's not just 'vote yes' it was, 'In order to create housing for seniors, veterans, homeless....' We spent a lot of time and money on that ballot question. It was very poll-driven.
- h. That's really hard. It's partly about being lucky enough to do a pre and post measure or some sort of experimental model. A political scientist at CSU, for her dissertation, made up news stories and showed them to people and asked them what they thought about them. A textual kind of survey, asking 'how does this change your opinion of affordable housing?' and give two different groups two different things and measure responses. Or to be able to follow an actual

campaign. It's a little easier now. I set up a Google news search and collect anything with NIMBY in it over past five years. I'm interested in, how does the media cover these kinds of conflicts around affordable housing?

9. What communications strategies do you think should be explored in the future?
 - a. We need more research and polling around effective ways to talk about race including ways that alienate the audience. There's this body of research that says one big fault of progressive efforts is in messaging to the middle. They don't alienate the opposition for what they're really peddling. What if people in NIMBY opposition had to own the cloak of racism, wouldn't it be different? It takes research, and the existing research hasn't been applied to housing. I think that there needs to be more investment in organizing people who are impacted and giving them access and training so this messaging info can help them tell their story in the most effective way to break through these stereotypes.
 - b. The #1 thing for continued exploration is coming up with ways of talking to people about themselves and making it about housing. I'm interested in the role of the local government in the process. It varies from place to place and who has to sign off on what. How could local government officials be effective messengers for this cause? If they're ineffective they could be really damaging: They could hide behind advocacy community and let them take the lead or let a developer take the heat for their policy decisions or intentionally or unintentionally creating a situation where controversy can bloom. Our research in Seattle showed that people really trusted the nonprofit community to get the work done. They trusted people at nonprofits to tell them the truth. That can be very location-specific.
 - c. I would have to think about that. It was so successful that it would be difficult to think of what we missed. Honestly, I love the story-oriented aspect of it. It was right in my wheelhouse, but there was a point at which I wanted to be able to give people those numbers -- the positive ROI, in an easily digestible way, that's why I did that video [on the impact of 2006 bonds]. There had to be an audience out there that was looking for that. I wonder with stories, how representative is that? For that skeptic, using evidence. We were pretty diverse -- we were all over the place. We tried to involve all of the housing providers because it's a very diverse group. They aren't all liberal. That did get us into some faith-based communities, and when you have that compassionate message you can actually find some support there. Our polling showed that the most likely person to vote for the bonds is an older black woman. The polling was powerful and showed us where we would be most successful in finding voters. We were very purposefully diverse in our storytelling, what I really meant was that we were careful to incorporate enough white people. There are more minorities living in affordable housing; it follows poverty, it follows any number of social issues. But, at the same time, we found value in showing people it wasn't just that. We didn't just show white people. The one story that a lot of people felt the next day, 'I think we're going to win' -- it was a young lady with cerebral palsy, she was white, blond. They felt like that would somehow a game-changer and it's sad, but I don't want to give you the impression that we didn't talk about it or consider it. I don't

think in Austin we had to fight that. The diversity argument, it polled very well, so we went with it and it worked.

- d. In the short-term, reminding folks that people are often one or two mistakes away from losing their homes. That's really bad. It's much harder to fix the problems that come with homelessness than it is to just keep people in their homes. There needs to be an undercurrent shifting the attitude that housing is a privilege. It should be a right. The idea that someone becomes unworthy of having a place to live needs to change. With the success of housing first in Utah and other places -- for whatever mistakes a parent may have made, that kid deserves a place to call home. From a longer-term advocate strategy, maybe we need to push the envelope much like health care and education to make housing a right, and we need to figure out how, from a budget standpoint, to make that possible. We need to tackle this idea that there's an existing safety net. A shelter is not a long-term solution. If we're not willing to force raising wages, then we have to pay for it on the housing side. The thing I think is interesting for communications professionals to remember, there's more and more millennials and other young folks who have been told that education is the key to move beyond these situations, but that's less and less true. Folks that have played by the rules, worked hard, ended up with debt and jobs that pay \$30,000. Maybe education isn't the key. The landscape is shifting. It's time that we asked for and received more.
- e. I'm increasingly not a fan of traditional buses and billboards campaigns. I tend to think about what's called an umbrella campaign as being particularly effective. Taking a communications strategy or framing strategy and baking it into the way that all the people who talk about an issue talk about it. So if you can imbue the field with a new metaframe about the issue. If you can take all the people who are talking about affordable housing and implant a narrative in them and have them carry it around and deploy it in all of their micro and macro interactions... that's the campaign you would want. Making collateral, talking to elected officials, etc. Those are the kinds of projects that my organization tries to partner on.
- f. The thing that we have struggled with is the lack of funding to actually have strong campaigns. Some people have had more opportunities. It's been really hard. I have always been interested in a national foundation actually trying to take on the revenue argument and doing a communications campaign to give revenue a positive narrative.
- g. I think it's just campaigns in general. The whole use of social media has exploded in campaigns. Jay and I are working on other campaigns and using social media, videos, targeted social by geography or demographics. That's the message/communication opportunity that we utilize a great deal in the campaigns. Jay: We ask people in our surveys where do you get your information? Facebook started showing up as an answer in 2008, like 3%. In 2016, Facebook was like 22%. The audience is so large when you do a poll, you have an older demographic that gets information from traditional means, and a younger generation that gets it from social. Social media has taken away from

the importance of traditional political communication means (radio, TV, etc.) But we still have to still use all of it -- it's so fragmented. You can't rely on direct mail. You're missing a huge audience by not doing Facebook, YouTube, Google, radio, TV, newspaper. On a county-wide effort, it's really hard. You usually don't have the resources to do it all. Pick particular messages for particular mediums based on who you're targeting. Less important for a small city campaign. Suburbs of Sacramento -- school bond measure, all they're doing is outdoor advertising. Ed: we had money to do anything and everything we wanted. We did pretty expensive social media video ads, we did ethnic TV ads, we did ethnic radio, we did billboards, we spent money on everything. Jay: When you're a campaign consultant you want the resources you need to do the job. We had very willing benefactors. We had six or seven different six-figure donors. And foundation money: Silicon Valley Foundation, Housing Trust, Chan-Zuckerberg Foundation was big contributor.

- h. I don't think I'm qualified to answer that question. We need more information -- there's very little about what is and isn't effective. The sort of work that you're doing right now is just what we're doing. Understanding as well that a communications strategy and an education strategy are only part of a process where things like actual negotiation with residents or litigation happen. All that stuff may be part of that process. I wrote an article with Corianne Scally in 2015 called "Democracy in Action" looking at how opposition to affordable housing affected developer decisions. We did surveys of affordable housing developers in New York state and asked whether it caused them to make different siting decisions anticipating opposition. Did it cost them time and money?

10. Additional questions and responses from interviews

- a. **Question:** As you develop strategies and messaging, what informs your approach? Local or national survey research, studies on persuasion, previous campaigns?

Response: I was hired because of my background in messaging and communication and affordable housing advocacy. We worked with Larry Wallack that had formerly been with Berkeley Media Studies group. Engaging in a process in the 2000's where we realized that, at best we were haphazard messengers, and at worse, we were working against ourselves. The organization has since founded an advocacy college around framing and the application of public opinion research. From that workshop approach, using mostly public health as the venue, we began to understand how sophisticated understanding of framing in particular, values-based frames, was key to changing very calcified arguments in significant ways. Including understanding one of the great myths of this current period of time; we all carry conflicting values and beliefs; local public opinion research that Professor Wallack helped guide. I helped export that messaging approach to California and Washington. I've been conducting messaging research in Kalamazoo, Alabama, Arkansas, Denver, and diving deeper into messaging research. 18 years of experience studying messaging. Using public opinion research, being a proselytizer for need to do public opinion research. There's huge thematic consistency across this country. But, you need

to know who you're trying to move and attitudes change over time.

Question: Do you recommend that communities do any pre-testing or focus groups before launching a campaign? How often do you think that happens?

Response: This gets back to resources - most housing campaigns struggle with resources. If you're going to the voters, you need to poll. Not every campaign does. Would you build a building without an architect. Why would you run a campaign without a communications expert. Focus groups in particular are a tough area - groups think they can hold their own focus groups instead of hiring professionals. I think we know enough about the general attitudes and people are that you can go straight to polling. Doing local focus groups around a NIMBY issue in particular, implies to me that maybe parking is the real issue, which I don't think it is. Since the recession Portland has exploded in development. In 2 miles, there's been 300 new units added in, all private market. No NIMBY pushback. There IS pushback, but because it's subsidized housing there's this thing with community engagement. It hasn't got the same kind of traction where it slowed anything down.

Question: What ideologies do you think underpin opposition to affordable housing?

Response: I think it's almost entirely racism. I think it's hard to decouple race and class. The white American.. There's an equation that to be African American is to be poor and to be poor is likely to be African American. Race is the driver for wildly out-of-whack reactions of some NIMBY. In Lake Oswego, OR the community blocked a development for seniors of under 30 units. The target population included a number of women who had worked as the lunch ladies in the cafeteria. They raised the kids in that community, and they were white. Three years, couldn't get it sited. They [the opposition] said 'parking!' It's so deep -- we do things that are against our own best interests. There are some horror stories in the back of their heads. The only thing that conjurs that kind of fear is race. I think that the ground we need to cover is figuring out how to talk about this more directly, particularly at this time in the country. I tend towards collectivist - that's where my roots are. The problem is collectivist for who? Who's in, who's out? Although most affordable housing has very serious restrictions that prevent people with criminal records from living in the housing, there is a real need for people coming out of the criminal justice system. It relates to recidivism. This is one of the most difficult issues when you try to do housing for this group. "I don't want criminals in my neighborhood" and then we look at who interacts with the criminal justice system and why, and quickly we get into this structural racism. Very few people consider people who've experienced the criminal justice system as within their collective. The opportunity frame is the most appealing to housing advocates. It's very much in line with how housing folks talk about their work -- giving people a foundation, a platform, stronger communities. However, the opportunity frame is the frame where I get more pushback from left-leaning informed, well-educated, people, who say it's bullshit. There is not opportunity in this country for people in the same way. We're talking about a false model. HOW the opportunity frame is applied is the most crucial piece. It's definitely wrong to talk about the opportunity to access housing as being the goal. Opportunities are often not realized. As opposed to 'having a stable place to call home unlocks other opportunities, education, success in workforce.' It's this ladder where the

opportunity frame is still useful but it needs to be married with some real talk about the historic and system inequities that have made some of our collective ostracized and left out of this circle of us.

- b. **Question:** Have you worked with PR agencies to develop campaign messages or strategies?

Response: In a few different contexts I've seen it; I haven't done a ton of it myself. It really depends. I have seen some really crisis-focused fact-first messages come out of PR-developed campaigns, which I don't think is a best practice for housing. Just because you're paying someone a lot of money doesn't mean they're up on the best practices. In some ways, it's an issue of the learning curve, and in our sector we think our issue is so much more complicated than anything else and no one could possibly understand it. But that doesn't matter for a campaign. The guy down the street doesn't need to understand financing in order to know how to vote. The value outside firms can bring is they're a reality check for us in saying no one cares about private activity bonds and the thing you just said makes no sense. The research and reality check can be valuable.

- c. **More background on the Keep Austin Affordable strategy:** I feel like we enjoyed a huge advantage because we did not have a problem at all getting our message out to the people - to have the ability to change their minds, and the reason for that was the reporters were feeling the affordability crisis themselves. Reporters said 'I sure hope y'all win. I can't believe how much I'm paying in rent.' Rarely will you get that kind of advantage, because usually reporters don't have a stake in it. The landscape was a bit tilted. We were living a charmed life. Keep Austin Affordable took the storytelling approach, and identified people who had inspiring stories and were good speakers and were ready to go. We compiled a group of people to prep for media interviews. Reporters got to a point where they really appreciated that - I made their job easier for them - they're looking for the story. It made them keep coming back more often. When you're on deadline you don't have the time to create all of the elements that your managers want. They want someone who is going to make the viewer feel their situation and empathize with them. As a reporter, I would call someone that should have been able to provide that personal story and they'd not have anyone for me to talk to. In the previous year when the bonds failed, part of the reason why was because, for the stories on the issue, reporters found the first homeless person on the street. There are people on the street who are not in the best position to do a media interview. Some of the things they got were not positive. Our feeling was, it will make all the difference in the world if we can prevent that from happening. The way to do that is to provide people for them to talk to.
- d. **More background on the Kalamazoo County election and community dynamics:** The other key point was the timing of the ballot helped us. It was a time when the urban core was voting in its elections, but if you were a less informed rural voter you might have missed that election. We had a large faith coalition and I think that helped us because we were able to reach a lot of rural folks that we would traditionally miss through a canvassing operation that we

reached through a faith network.

- e. **Question:** How do you distinguish between getting people to change their thinking and getting people to take action?

Response: This distinction between thinking and acting or understanding and behavior is another major tension in our field. There are theories, the ladder hypothesis which would say if you can use messages to get people to do small things you can ladder up those actions into more meaningful behaviors. That comes out of the communications and climate change field. Recycling, or turning off a light is utterly meaningless in addressing climate change, but as a gateway behavior. There's reasonably good evidence that if you can get people to do one of those gateway behaviors you can scale up to more meaningful civic action. But there's reasonable evidence that refutes it too. Communications as a microbehavior theory. There's another one that we ascribe to more, that understanding and attitudes are a tiller of the behavioral soil. If you can get people to think in different ways and have different attitudes and attribute responsibility in different ways and to have more efficacy, that paves the way for a whole bunch of different behaviors. If you surveyed the 50 leading communications scholars who work on that question, I'm not sure what you would get. You would get a lot of people who believe strongly in attitudes and thinking as a precursor and you'd get as many people that if you can change a behavior, in addition to scaling up to a more meaningful behavior, that behavior may actually be THE thing that gets people to change their views. There's really good work within the field about different kinds of understanding and attitude change, for example, normalcy. If you can make a thing seem more normal you can get a direct path to a behavior change without changing people's underlying attitudes or beliefs. I'm skeptical of any theory that says you can change behavior in a meaningful and sustainable way without addressing attitudes, understanding and ways of thinking.

- f. **Question:** What ideologies do you think underpin opposition to affordable housing?

Response: I think race is at the core of a good portion of what we're talking about. Racist or bigoted in general. There's a piece around the American "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" kind of mentality, which frankly is unrealistic. There's a disconnect between what we get as a subsidy with a mortgage and people getting a literal subsidy with a voucher for somebody to pay some of their rent every month. Either we hear or we infer based on what people are telling us, these two things. The inherent problem with stories is, if it's successful most people will agree with it, but they will pick the parts out that they would have issues with. So, for example, why did this person get in this situation in the first place, versus there was a problem, there was a subsidy that helped, and look at the success. I will share the final report. I do love talking about this stuff and I wish I had more money to spend on actually messaging to people all the time. What you do for your own local specifications. When I presented some of this at the National Housing Conference in Minnesota, the faith-based thing was being used here. It depends on the context. We down here, where everybody is a Baptist Pastor, I'm not going to get in any sort of religious discussion and having

to spar off on something biblical.

- g. **Question:** How do you recommend approaching ideologies that underpin NIMBY attitudes? Working to shift the ideology, or trying to frame an affordable housing message in a way that aligns with people's ideological framework?

Response: I think that is also difficult and I think that contact or exposure to people who are different than you is how you change those attitudes. Those are deep-seated attitudes about appropriate role of government, whether you are more individualistic or egalitarian in your views. I would recommend Issue framing and agenda-setting.