

Advocacy Efforts to Reduce NIMBYism

Strategy description

In an effort to balance the views of neighbors who oppose affordable housing, and to represent the views of those who support it but who tend to be less vocal, some local governments and non-profits advocate for specific housing development proposals. Generally, affordable housing development proposals must meet established criteria that include the number of units in the development that will be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Advocacy efforts may include proactively meeting with community groups to address concerns and attending planning board meetings to explain the benefits of the project.

Target population

Advocacy efforts target new developments for low- and moderate-income renters and homebuyers.

How the strategy is administered

Advocacy efforts can include local government officials or non-profit housing organizations proactively meeting with neighbors of proposed developments to address concerns and attending planning board meetings to speak in favor of new developments. Groups of people who support affordable housing are also sometimes organized to attend planning board meetings to balance NIMBYs.

How the strategy is funded

Funding sources vary; local government efforts are funded by agency budgets; foundations, grants from government sources, or other fundraising efforts may help fund nonprofit and public/private partnership efforts.

Extent of use of the strategy

Widely used.

Locations where the strategy is being used

- In Austin, the S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed Income, Accessible, Reasonably-priced, Transit-oriented) Housing Policy Initiative assists in resolving development related issues with other City departments. In addition, S.M.A.R.T. Housing has gained success by identifying the legitimate interests of affected neighborhoods and working with the community to address concerns and find mutually accepted solutions.
- In Washington, the Low Income Housing Institute communicates with government officials, the media, and the general public to create awareness of housing issues. LHI sponsors educational activities to raise public awareness and to confront and dispel fear, ignorance

and prejudice that may arise from prospective affordable housing construction in some neighborhoods and communities.

Pros and cons to using the strategy

Pros:

- Can play an important role in obtaining approval for development proposals.
- Provides a collective voice supporting the construction of affordable housing.

Sources of information about the strategy

- Austin's S.M.A.R.T. Housing Program website, <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/ahfc/smart.htm>
- Low Income Housing Institute website, <http://www.lihi.org/>
- Affordable Housing Design Advisor website, www.designadvisor.org

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This document is a portion of NAHB's report
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Research on State and Local Means of Increasing Affordable Housing



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