



Neighborhood engagement is an opportunity, not an obstacle.

- ✓ Listen to and address resident concern head-on
- ✓ Show the need and benefit of affordable homes
- ✓ Illustrate positive impact to neighborhoods
- ✓ Be open about developer interests in the project
- ✓ Speak clearly, honestly, and respectfully
- ✓ Be present in neighborhoods

EFFECTIVE MESSAGING ARCHITECTURE

WHAT TO SAY

Make connections between the public's current understanding of Houston's challenged housing market with the opportunities new affordable development can bring - improved quality of life and economic outcomes for all neighborhood residents.

Balance discussing positive outcomes while closely listening to and directly addressing resident concerns to overcome public misperceptions and stigma.

HOW TO SAY IT TO

Earn community trust through early, frequent, clear, consistent, truthful, and transparent messaging. Listen first, and then speak clearly, honestly, and respectfully to neighborhood residents.

Avoid inaccessible or out-of-the-way locations and instead meet the community where they are most likely to be - at home.

WHO TO SAY IT

Go deep. Build trust by engaging communities where they live. Go beyond the confines of formal town hall settings and be present in neighborhoods.

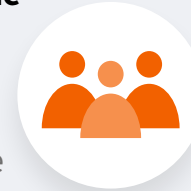
Proactively create opportunities for feedback to identify neighborhood support as you increase awareness and momentum for a project.

ADDRESS CONSISTENT NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS



Implications to Home Value

- Home Quality
- Type of Home
- Aesthetics of Home
- Impact on Property Value



Impacts on the Community

- Resident Background and Criteria
- Implications on Crime
- Implications on Schools
- Implications on Street Congestion



Faith in Execution

- Developer Track Record
- Project Timeline
- Developer Motives

USE PRODUCTIVE LANGUAGE

Words to Signal Respect

Language to Use	Language to Avoid
"I understand your concern"	"Clearly" or "Obviously"
"We have found"	"Always" and "Never"
"You might consider" or "One possibility is"	"Should"

Words to Overcome Stigma

Language to Use	Language to Avoid
"Affordable Homes"	"Affordable Housing"
"Homes" and "Neighborhoods" ("We need more homes in neighborhoods")	Referring to the housing "market"
"Access or Availability [to safe and quality homes]"	"Scarcity" or "Supply"
"Investments in your neighborhood"	"Subsidies" or "Incentives"
"Neighbors," "Workers," "Families," "Seniors," and "Veterans"	"Residents" or "Tenants"

PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

Avoid meetings in out-of-the-way or inaccessible locations.

- Meet people where they are.
- Hold face-to-face conversations
- Leave door hangers
- Engage on social platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, etc.
- Be present on neighborhood apps: NextDoor, Citizen
- Distribute flyers in community spaces

SHARE RELEVANT STORIES

Rather than using facts and figures, work to overcome potential opposition by sharing real-life stories of past or future residents in the context of the systems which create the need for more affordable homes.

Examples

Meet Nate and Amelia: Due to sustained damage after Harvey, Nate and Amelia, 32 and 28, and their family of five were forced to move out of the home they were renting and could not find an affordable place to live close to their jobs. They are now faced with having to move farther away from their jobs, sacrificing a longer commute and less time with their children, who will also have to change schools.

DEPLOY TRUSTED MESSENGERS

Build relationships with community leaders who already have connections and influence in the neighborhood.

Rather than using a spokesperson, engage people who are connected to the neighborhood and know how people think and what they believe.



Houses of Worship



Established Residents



Local Elected Officials



Local Business Leaders

IMAGES MAKE IT REAL

Using images of safe, quality homes and of the neighbors eligible to live in the homes will help earn community support.

