Building momentum for local solutions

Housing for everyone!
Tips and takeaways

Local strategies & solutions

Scope of the housing crisis

Contra Costa County snapshot

About Ensuring Opportunity
What is Ensuring Opportunity?

A countywide initiative to end poverty in Contra Costa by addressing root causes of poverty.

Goal: Achieve equity and opportunity for all residents

Change systems & policies so that every community member has an opportunity to thrive.
Elected officials

We engage diverse stakeholders…

- Nonprofit providers
- Funders
- Public sector providers
- Business
- Residences
- Providers
- Elected officials
- Leadership
- Team
- Organizations
- Labor
- Faith communities
- County & cities
- Residents
- Opportunity
- Poverty

...by creating a “big tent”
We believe that everything is connected …
... and EQUITY is at the heart of our work.
Contra Costa Snapshot

- 1.1 million residents, 804 square miles, 19 cities
- Majority people of color (46% White, 25% Latino/Hispanic, 15% Asian, 9% Black)
- Three distinct regions (West, Central, East)
- Mix of rural, suburban & urban sensibilities
Contra Costa Housing Crisis Index

1 in 6: Residents are struggling to make ends meet

30,939: Additional affordable units needed

$7,667: Monthly income to afford median rent

75%: ELI renters spending > 50% of income on rent

1,607: Homeless Contra Costa residents (Jan 2017)

66%: Decrease in housing funding, 2008-2016

* ELI = Extremely Low Income: earning 30% or less of Area Median Income
What gets in the way of progress?

- Fragile activism
- Regulations
- "There's no money"
- Political inertia
- NIMBYism
## Contra Costa Housing Town Hall Findings

### Countywide Shared Priorities

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<th>Top Perceived Barriers</th>
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**Opportunity**

Contra Costa
What's working in Contra Costa?

- Tenant protections
- Concord Community Reuse Project
- Granny flats – city fees, process
- Shared housing
- Rehab & sell abandoned homes
- Richmond Council study session
- Homelessness outreach teams
- Tiny homes pilot
- Homelessness outreach teams
- Small-scale innovations with potential to scale

... but so far, it’s not nearly enough to meet the need.
What is needed now?

A countywide, highly visible housing campaign that engages residents, elected representatives, policy makers, housing experts and stakeholders from every sector in identifying and committing to a coordinated array of solutions.

A countywide, highly visible, highly visible housing campaign.
Who needs to be involved?

- Residents
- Housing developers
- Funders
- Labor unions
- Employers
- Advocates
- Educators
- Policy makers
- Elected representatives
- Financial institutions
- Service providers
- Community organizers
- City leaders
- County leaders
- Community
- County
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- Educators
- Advocates
- Housing developers
- Residences
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Ensuring Opportunity

Actions to date

- Countywide Housing Summit #2 – March 2018
- Housing Town Halls (BOS districts) – Fall 2017
- Contra Costa Housing Summit #1 – June 2017
- Housing Policy Brief – Spring 2017
Last month’s Housing Summit was attended by 180 people from all backgrounds and sectors. People are hungry for opportunities to connect, share ideas and learn about solutions.
What's on the horizon?

- City-level innovations
- Countywide housing needs assessment
- 2020 county housing bond measure
- Contra Costa Housing Advisory Council
Housing Advisory Council

PURPOSE

Build knowledge, interest, political will and shared vision among a diverse and strategically selected group of residents, experts, community leaders and influencers.

Create trust, collaboration and concrete agreements to expand, protect and preserve affordable housing.

Build knowledge, interest, political will and shared vision.
Housing Advisory Council

OBJECTIVES

- **Housing funding** – Identify and pursue funding sources to preserve and produce affordable housing.

- **Housing policy** – Support policies at the city, county, regional and state level that help create, protect and preserve affordable housing.
Create ways to educate and engage diverse communities and other political and community leaders.

Seek strong early support from county board of supervisors.

- East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)
- Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NP)

Call on partners with expertise & successful track records.
STRATEGIES, cont.

- Build a large, diverse, and strategic coalition
- Test and refine language and framing
- Consider timing carefully
- Presidential elections → largest voter turnout

Housing bond

OPPORTUNITY

POVERTY

STRAIGHTIES, cont.
Other strategies for local impact

- Work at both the city and county levels
- Overcome common misperceptions & resistance (while protecting workers)
- Bend the cost curve
- Pursue new funding sources
- Explore new financing options
- Pursue new opportunities (and keep an eye on the state & the feds)
Encourage cities to take concrete actions to support development of affordable housing (e.g. inventory sites, revise permits/fees, etc.).

Promote rapid learning culture: design, test, fail, learn, repeat.

Praise, amplify & scale up promising local models.
Tips and takeaways

1. Take a holistic approach
   • Link with broader systemic barriers (racism, health, formerly incarcerated, ...)
   • Be a bridge builder: invite others in, welcome diverse viewpoints, break down silos, challenge stereotypes
   • Cultivate likely and unlikely allies (business, labor, racial justice, health care, housing advocates, etc.)
   • Support all housing approaches: new production and tenant protections and housing preservation

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Tips and takeaways, cont.

2. Target your efforts strategically

- Recruit champions who can influence the persuadables
- Get the right people on the bus
- Go where the energy is (people, politics, funding, etc.)
- Build a coalition of the willing and the persuadable
- Leverage community support to build political courage
3. Take bold steps (with humility) and takeaways, cont.

- Figure out your "secret sauce": what do you bring to the table? What gap or need are you going to fill?
- Think big & take small, practical steps
- Create learning opportunities and communities
- Connect with & support resident leaders & community organizers

Housing is complicated, and everyone’s holding a different leg of the elephant.
Why this work matters

“Housing is absolutely essential to human flourishing. Without stable shelter, it all falls apart.”

– Matthew Desmond, author of “Evicted”
Ensuring Opportunity: The Campaign to End Poverty In Contra Costa County