

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN FOR BURIEN

10/20/2020



PREPARED BY BROADVIEW PLANNING



BROADVIEW
PLANNING

ECONorthwest
ECONOMICS • FINANCE • PLANNING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Burien is working in partnership with the community to create a new Housing Action Plan (HAP). The HAP will provide data and strategies for implementing the Community Strategic Plan/Housing Choices and provide a foundation for improving the city's Comprehensive Plan Housing Element. The dual top priorities for this work are (1) to assess Burien's housing needs in the context of social equity, demographic changes, and market dynamics; and (2) to develop a suite of strategies that respond to the unique opportunities and challenges of Burien and its residents. The HAP is being funded by a Washington State Department of Commerce E2SHB 1923 Grant.

The process for developing the HAP is as important as the HAP itself – it aims to connect residents, workers, businesses, nonprofit organizations, service providers, and other key stakeholders to discover qualitative data and stakeholder stories to support HAP data. A Public Outreach Plan (Plan), as described below, outlines the strategies and approaches for gathering feedback and input on perceptions of housing issues and choices, policy recommendations, and barriers to housing affordability and availability. This outreach targets a broad and diverse range of stakeholders, including historically marginalized communities and those typically left out of public processes.

Public outreach will be a joint effort between Broadview Planning (BVP), ECONorthwest (ECONW), and City of Burien, and will be conducted through four iterative, reinforcing approaches, such that we gain a robust understanding of the current state. The outreach approaches include stakeholder interviews, focus groups, community housing forums, and questions related to housing in the City's annual Community Assessment Survey. Throughout the process, outreach efforts will include current, relevant, and resonant updates to websites, social media, and other materials. This plan should be considered a living document, evaluated on a regular basis, and improved over time.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT APPROACH

A public involvement plan is an essential tool for sound project management. Its core purpose is to identify strategies and methods to inform stakeholders of program goals, timelines, and outcomes. The results of this process will present a current snapshot of the issues, stakeholder perspectives, opportunities, and future outlook for housing.

Equity Focus

To advance equity in our communities, we must communicate the idea that safe and affordable places to live are connected to the other essential conditions for wellbeing -- effective schools, access to vital services, and living-wage jobs. Our work to advance social justice through housing will ensure that communities are designed and developed to allow fuller participation in economic, social, and political life, particularly for frontline communities. To that end, we have synthesized a Frameworks Institute playbook with practical recommendations on communications. This analysis encourages housing advocates and policymakers to move away from a narrow "affordability frame" toward a "fairness frame."

Accomplishing this shift involves adopting a set of framing guidelines, including:

1. Build messaging around the values of *Fairness Across Places* and *Regional Interdependence*.
2. Avoid consumerist language, and describe how non-economic outcomes (civic, social, health) are influenced by reasonably priced places to live.

3. Move from the individual to the collective, “our region’s economy affects all of us.”
4. Explain how policies affect equity— without condemning the entire public and private sectors.
5. Take the time needed to introduce race in the most productive way.
6. Position community development organizations as helping to “solve the puzzle” of varying concerns, expertise, and resources.
7. Highlight possibilities for wide-scale improvement—not wide-scale disaster. Encourage everyone to be part of a solution.

See Appendix A for a fuller synthesis and example messages that have been tested with the public.

Outreach Goals

- Conduct outreach that reflects the diversity of Burien and helps tell the qualitative story of the city’s housing opportunities and challenges.
- Balance outreach as a tool for educating on the need for affordable/diverse housing, and input on the HAP.
- Integrate lessons from South King County Regional Housing Action Plan and describe how Burien contributes to Puget Sound’s regional housing strategy.
- Remain focused, yet flexible, on authentic public involvement during the challenges of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Actively seek out and engage community groups and populations that are historically under-represented in traditional planning processes, and ensure input is representative of Burien’s cultural and demographic diversity.
- Elevate the voices of people in underserved populations
- Paired with data analysis, outreach results will lay the foundation for long-term buy-in for future action.

Demographics

Originally occupied by the Lushootseed-speaking peoples (Duwamish and Muckleshoot), the City of Burien, formerly known as Sunnydale, was established as an agricultural community around World War I. Located just south of Downtown Seattle, Burien borders the Puget Sound to the west, and is adjacent to the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport to the east. There are roughly 51,000 residents of Burien, which includes a significant Hispanic population, largely from Latin American countries. An estimated 25% of Burien’s population identify as Hispanic, of which 31% of children and 17% of adults primarily speak Spanish at home.

Additionally, an estimated 11% of the adult population identified as speaking Asian/Pacific Islander languages at home. And 27% of Burien’s population identifies as foreign born. These metrics suggest the need for multiple language translation and interpretation available in order to capture representation of these populations.

Table 1 – Burien Demographics ([Census 2018](#))

Demographics	City of Burien	Washington Average
Population	51,326	N/A
Median Age	38	37.6
Race & Ethnicity	White: 48% Black: 8% Native: 1% Asian: 13% Islander: 1% Other: 0% Two or More: 5% Hispanic: 25%	White: 69% Black: 4% Native: 1% Asian: 8% Islander: 1% Other: 0% Two or More: 5% Hispanic: 13%
Per Capita Income	\$32,537	\$36,888
Median Household Income	\$62,315	\$70,116
Persons Below Poverty Line	13.6%	11.5%
Children (Under 18) Below Poverty Line	21%	15%
Persons Per Household	2.7	2.6
Occupancy	Owner: 53% Renter: 47%	Owner: 63% Renter: 37%
High School Grad or Higher	81.5%	91.1%
Bachelor's or Higher	26.6%	35.3%
Language at Home (Children)	English Only: 53% Spanish: 31% Indo-European: 2% Asian/Islander: 10% Other: 4%	English Only: 78% Spanish: 13% Indo-European: 4% Asian/Islander: 4% Other: 1%
Language at Home (Adults)	English Only: 66% Spanish: 17% Indo-European: 3% Asian/Islander: 11% Other: 3%	English Only: 81% Spanish: 7% Indo-European: 4% Asian/Islander: 6% Other: 1%
Foreign-Born	27%	14%
Place of Birth for Foreign-Born Population	Europe: 5% Asia: 34% Africa: 9% Oceania: 3% Latin America: 47% North America: 2%	Europe: 15% Asia: 43% Africa: 6% Oceania: 2% Latin America: 30% North America: 4%

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Learning from experience and capturing ideas for change are keys to a successful public involvement project. As a living document, this plan should be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure goals are met, there are adequate staff and budget resources, timelines are accurate, and messaging continues to resonate with stakeholders.

An adaptive management approach for this project includes:

- Open communication and collaboration between Burien staff and all consultants is imperative to ensuring this plan continues to meet needs and the project is successful.
- Maintaining a flexible approach to decisions and outcomes, including checking in regularly to discuss what's working and what's not.
- Working together to identify tactics that are not working and taking actions to correct or change tactics if needed.
- Thinking creatively and experimenting with strategies to find new and underserved communities.

Risks + Opportunities

As with all public involvement projects, success is based on public participation and clear communication with stakeholders. All communication efforts involve risk. By highlighting and preparing for potential issues at the outset, we can minimize the likelihood, or impact, of threats to the success of this outreach process.

Like the rest of this public outreach plan, this section will evolve as the issues, threats, and risks the program faces will change as it grows and develops. Brainstorming strategies and solutions for being prepared with the internal team will be critical to the program's success and a cornerstone of adaptive management. We've identified several risks, including:

- Conducting outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic challenges our ability to connect with stakeholders, will present technological challenges, and may restrict meaningful public participation on longer-term issues like housing in the midst of more emergent issues.
- Difficulty reaching underserved communities – non-English speaking, people experiencing homelessness, and low-income populations.
- Successfully communicating the nuances of housing issues with those who don't understand, or participate in, public processes.
- Community groups could feel underrepresented or dispute the thoroughness of public involvement in final policy recommendations.

STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION

Key stakeholders are individuals who have interest, expertise, and/or influence in the project. These are the people that will be communicated with in a variety of channels and with a myriad of messages throughout the lifetime of the outreach process. BVP and ECONW will conduct stakeholder interviews and Burien staff will assist with contact information, scheduling meetings, and developing an initial stakeholder list (Appendix B) that will be updated as necessary. Key stakeholder groups identified early in the planning process include:

- Faith based organizations
- City staff
- Developers (non-profit + private)
- Service providers
- Cultural organizations
- Non-native English speaking residents (Spanish, Vietnamese, East African)
- Children/Youth
- Burien Planning Commission
- Burien Human Services Commission

OUTREACH PROCESS + TIMELINE

All methods of gathering insight and information will have equal footing. Participating in live event, or sending in an email will carry equal weight.

1. Stakeholder Interviews + Analysis

Outreach objective: 10-15 stakeholder interviews.

During this phase of outreach, we will identify and interview key stakeholders to inform HAP outcomes, generate awareness of the project, and build support for future outreach opportunities, and recruit participants for focus groups. Additional benefits of stakeholder interviews include:

- Connecting with individuals who aren't comfortably providing input in large group formats.
- Building initial support among partners to help spread the word and build momentum for the project.
- Discovering new stakeholders and potential outreach partners for focus groups.
- Identifying opportunities to tailor future public involvement strategies to meet the needs of diverse groups throughout the project so that they represent an appropriate snapshot of Burien's communities.
- Informing elected officials of the project and that they are aware, and supportive, of the project and the public involvement process.
- Developing a deeper understanding of different perceptions of housing issues and through a variety of approaches to messaging with stakeholders.
- Gaining a greater understanding of contextual opportunities, constraints, and sensitivities.
- Presenting the size and scope of the outreach project and setting appropriate expectations.

Next Steps: Finalize stakeholder list, review and approve draft questions, and schedule interviews. Update/create project website prior to beginning interviews.

2. Focused Conversations

Outreach objective: 4-6 stakeholder focused conversations with representative groups.

This phase of outreach will focus on assessing housing opportunities and constraints with key stakeholder groups actively involved in Burien housing issues. Given the technical nature of this phase of outreach, the consultant team will target stakeholders with specific expertise and insight, such as, affordable housing providers, and faith-based organizations. These participants will discuss options and vet potential policy recommendations. There will also be cultural/language focus groups of residents, who will tell their own housing stories, rather than speaking through the lens of a representative organization. Focus groups will likely be held through online formats,

Next steps: Finalize stakeholder list and create focus groups. This phase will start after stakeholder-scan interviews are complete, or nearly complete, and after some of the initial data is available.

3. Housing Forums

Outreach objective: Host three housing forums to discuss affordable housing policy issues on a local and regional scale.

Three housing forums will focus on hosting a panel of experts who can speak their experience developing affordable housing in Burien and south King County. The first two forums will be an online moderated panel discussion, include 4-5 participants, and be open to the public. The third will be a presentation of the HAP, and allow for public comment, input, and feedback.

Next steps: Finalize participants, set a date, and issue public invitation.

4. Community Assessment Survey

Outreach objective: Ask 2-3 housing related questions on the City’s annual Community Assessment Survey.

Next steps: Draft questions for review and approval.

10/20 UPDATE: The Community Assessment Survey will not launch until spring 2020. Given the new timing, the project team will assess if it's still feasible to ask housing-related questions that will be applicable to this project's outreach process.

Ongoing Outreach Tools

Social Media

Social media are key communication channels to accompany public outreach strategies. When used effectively, they allow for information and messages to spread quickly across multiple communities. Through social media, we can create connections with diverse communities, establish a greater online presence, and post regular updates for project information and meeting locations.

Content will be posted to Burien’s social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, NextDoor) at the discretion of city staff. Burien staff will moderate both accounts, respond to any messages and will provide documentation of any comments/messages. Council members and Commissioners may be asked to serve as “communications ambassadors” and use their constituencies and community relationships to promote the project, and more specifically the community surveys.

Ethnic + Culturally Specific Media

Given the diversity of Burien’s population, some audiences may be best reached through newspapers, radio, and TV that target specific cultural communities and in priority languages. In order to avoid outreach fatigue and perceptions of tokenization, the consultant team will work with Burien staff to identify appropriate stakeholders to interview and participate in focus groups.

Potential sources include:

1. [La Mega Caliente Radio](#) - Local Burien Spanish radio station.
2. [Platforma Latina](#) - Burien based Latino news outlet and platform.
3. [La Estacion de la Familia](#) - Spanish Radio broadcaster just north of Burien City.
4. [El Rey 1360AM](#) - Spanish Radio broadcaster.
5. [La Radio De Seattle](#) - Seattle Spanish radio station
6. [Asian American Television \(AAT\)](#) - “the only 24-hour Multi-Asian TV Broadcaster in WA State.” Not specific to Burien.

Communication Materials

Each outreach phase will include materials to promote the project, community meetings, and research findings. Materials will use clear, consistent, succinct messaging, graphics where possible, and use culturally relevant images that reflect Burien’s diversity. With the assistance of staff, BVP will develop communication materials, including:

- Agendas for focus group meetings
- Written content for website updates, press releases, blog articles and other forms of written communication.

Burien will be responsible for printing all communication materials including maps, agendas, boards, fact sheets, and any payment for online advertising.

Communication Protocols + Coordination

Internal coordination

- Bi-weekly check-ins with Outreach Steering Team (Susan McLain, Nicole Gaudette, Emily Inlow-Hood, Chris Craig, and Colleen Brandt-Schluter) during the active engagement process to discuss the themes, what’s working, and challenges.
- Steering Team will focus on the process of refining approach based on early results to inform and guide future efforts.
- Emily will provide final approval for all public-facing communication materials.
- Emily will post/distribute electronically after final review and approval.

Communicating with the public

- Burien staff will develop style guide/logo for project materials.
- Communication and information will be housed on the project’s website: www.burien.gov/housingaction
- Project email address: housingaction@burien.gov
- Nicole will collect and maintain a project listserv on an spreadsheet, and if it reaches over 50 contacts will consider switching to a different tracking method.
- Burien staff will compile and track any correspondence that comes in through the website/email.

Roles/Responsibilities + Timeline

	Stakeholder Interviews	Focus Groups	Community Assessment Survey	Community Forums	Briefings/ Presentations	Online/Social Media
Purpose	Identify issues, engage key stakeholders, build awareness + project support	Identify issues, vet ideas with subject matter experts	Gather community perspectives on housing issues	Convene experts to provide policy guidance, provide opportunities to engage the broader community	Update decision makers, receive guidance and feedback	Update project progress, provide community resources and information, announce events
Lead	BVP	BVP	Burien	Burien	Burien	Burien – posting/ final edits
Support	N/A	Burien – staff support	BVP – draft questions	BVP	ECONW, BVP	BVP- initial drafts
Materials	Interview questions, project website	Interview questions, project website including FAQ	2-3 Housing survey questions	Agenda, PPT presentation, questions	TBD	Social media updates/announcements, website content
Timeline	July-early August	August	Late August	July- Early August	TBD	Ongoing
Deliverable	Summary of key themes	Summary memo	PowerPoint of results + data	Summary memo	Briefings as necessary	Social media content, website updates

A final report-out in the form of a PowerPoint presentation will tie together all elements of community engagement, including lessons learned and how public involvement will influence the work to create effective housing policy solutions.

Messaging

Coordinated messaging is critical to ensuring the audience understands the reason for their participation and how this will benefit their communities. Messages should have the ability to be changed when required in order to serve different audiences and scenarios. At the outset of their process the project team identified the following key messages:

Compliance

- The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires local housing plans to identify a range of different housing types that match community needs and provide housing options for people of all income levels. (RCW 36.70A.070)

Housing Action Plan

- Washington State Department of Commerce awarded Burien a grant to develop a Housing Action Plan. The grant encourages all cities planning under the GMA to adopt actions to increase and diversify housing options in Burien.
- We are creating baseline data for Burien, working in collaboration with other South King County cities. This Housing Needs Assessment looks at Burien's housing needs—now and in the future—within the context of the Puget Sound region, King County, and south King County.
- We need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the City of Burien's current policies and actions around housing.

Need

- Burien includes a wide range of households with unique challenges and needs. We want to hear from the community to make sure the Housing Action Plan reflects all residents, and to make sure we understand our community's strengths and challenges.
- The Housing Action Plan will be informed by different types of engagement, including one-on-one interviews, group discussions, panel discussions, a project website, and community-wide virtual meetings. Our Planning Commission and Human Services Commission will provide guidance on project process, analysis, and contents of the plan.
- We need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the City of Burien's current policies and actions around housing.

Appendix A

HOUSING & EQUITY COMMUNICATIONS

The Frameworks Institute and Enterprise Community Partners engaged in [an extensive study](#) to determine which frames resonated best with the public (2018). They found that using an “affordability frame” was too narrow to engage and activate the public; moving toward a “fairness frame” allowed people to envision housing and community development as forces that make places vibrant and dynamic. They begin to see how housing is an inextricable piece of that, understand solutions to housing challenges, and recognize the role of public policy in addressing injustice and advancing fairness.

The Frameworks Institute encourages seven framing guidelines to effectively marry housing and equity through a “fairness frame.” They are enumerated with examples below:

1. **Build messaging around the values of *Fairness Across Places* and *Regional Interdependence*:** *Fairness Across Places* focuses attention on how amenities and problems vary by location, which then creates unequal advantages and disadvantages. The uneven distribution of resources allows people to recognize that outcomes are not due to individual decisions. *Regional Interdependence* further collectivizes the issues of affordable housing and reminds people that when housing costs are too high, everyone should be concerned.

Example: Our zip codes—the places where we live—shouldn’t determine the trajectory of our lives. The ideal of justice for all means that people should have an equal opportunity to make the most of their potential, no matter where they come from. To live up to this core principle, we must insist that our leaders and decision-makers pay attention to fairness across places. When all our communities have good homes, good schools, dependable public transportation, and strong businesses, it provides all of us with a fair shot at success, no matter where we live.

2. **Avoid consumerist language:** Explain how a host of non-economic outcomes — civic, social, and/or health-related — are influenced by the availability of reasonably priced places to live. Make the case that there is a shared, public stake in tempering and managing the costs of apartments and homes. Work to replace the language of exchange (buyers, sellers, landlords, renters) with the lexicon of the commons (people who live and work here, homes and apartments, neighbors and neighborhoods). Give examples of how places, not just prices, affect the wellbeing of people and communities.

Example:



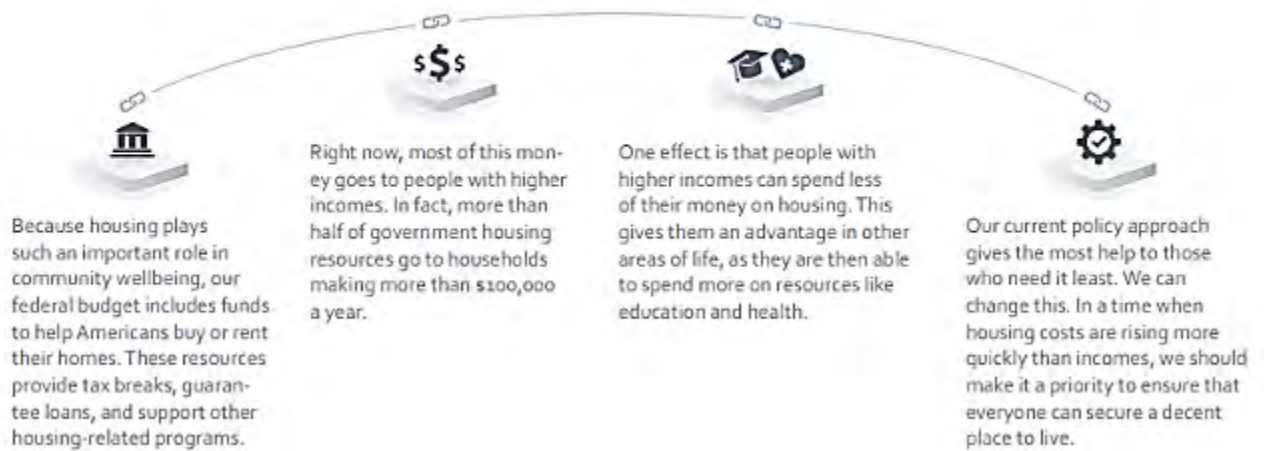
3. **Move from the individual to the collective:** Unless advocates and policymakers explain the collective benefits of improving housing affordability and reducing housing scarcity, these problems will be viewed by the public as personal troubles, not public issues. This assumption is a major impediment to building public demand for meaningful solutions to problems that affect most communities across the nation.

Example: As our region's economy has grown, rents and mortgages have grown, too—but wages for most jobs have not. As a result, a large portion of our city's workforce has been priced out of nearby residences and must commute from the outer suburbs. This unravels our civic and social fabric by taking up time—pulling people away from participating in communities and fraying family life. To mend the situation, we must insist on more inclusive housing policies that temper rising costs and make it possible for people at different income levels to work and live here.

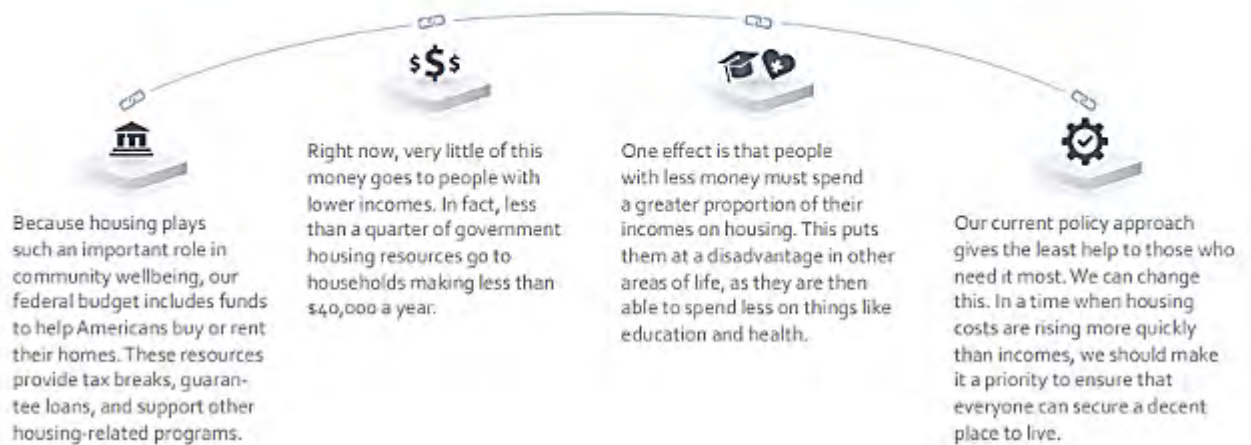
4. **Explain how policies affect equity – without condemning the entire public and private sectors:** Explanatory chains help non-specialists benefit from the perspective of issue insiders, inviting them to follow a new chain of logic rather than sticking to the cognitive short cuts that people usually rely on to simplify complex issues.

Example:

How US Housing Policies Advantage Wealthy Communities



How US Housing Policies Disadvantage Low-Income Communities



5. **Take the time needed to introduce race in the most productive way:** Conversations about housing — and housing equity — are also conversations about race, racial segregation, and structural racism, both past and present. To move from a narrow affordability frame to a broader fairness frame, advocates and policymakers must be prepared to discuss race in their communications and outreach.

Example: Across the United States today, people of color and whites tend to live in different neighborhoods. This is the result of legal and social discrimination against people of color.

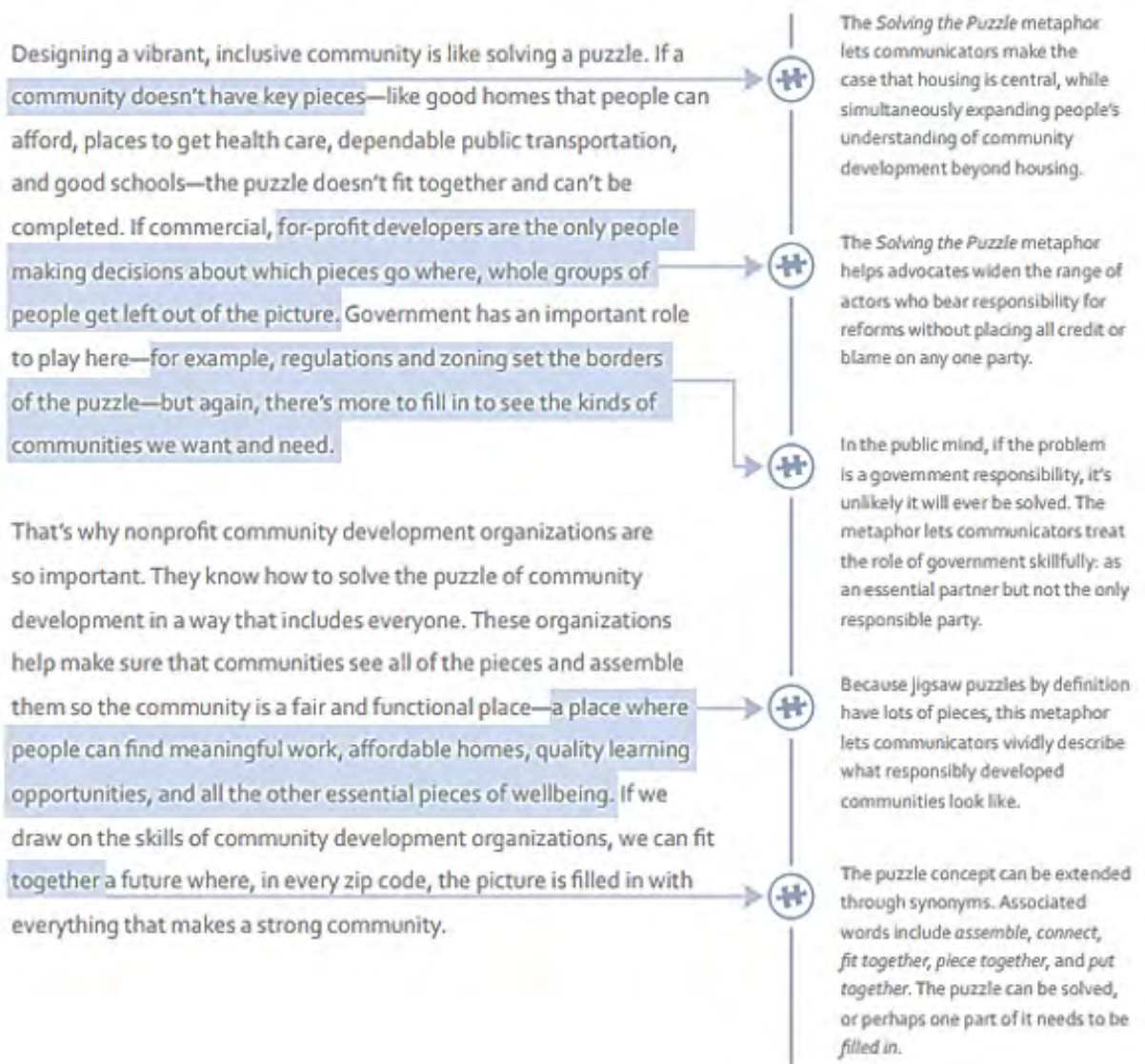
For example, Black applicants are more likely to receive subprime loans than whites, even if they have the same financial background. These loans have higher interest rates and bigger payments.

Subprime loans make it harder for borrowers to build up their savings and to pay down loans. Together, these factors make loan default and foreclosure more likely. When communities have a lot of foreclosed homes, property values fall, which reduces residents' wealth and makes it difficult for them to sell their homes or move. This is one way that today's practices perpetuate racial segregation, and we shouldn't permit it.

Our community development plan calls for mortgage lenders to commit to fair lending practices and to publish data so that people in all communities are confident that lenders use the same standards to evaluate loan applications from whites and people of color

6. **Position community development organizations as solving the puzzle of varying concerns, expertise, and resources:** Affordable housing issues are complex. The significant public investment needed to make affordable housing projects feasible poses major challenges for advocates. Given this, the public holds the government responsible for housing policy and community design but, at the same time, is skeptical about government's ability to get things done. FrameWorks recommends that advocates and policymakers adopt the *Solving the Puzzle* metaphor, which compares responsible community development to a puzzle with many pieces. This metaphor positions housing as a central piece of the puzzle and community development organizations as having the unique skill set to solve the puzzle.

Example:



7. **Highlight possibilities for wide-scale improvement – not wide-scale disaster:** Members of the public are primed to be fatalistic about the possibility of reining in high housing costs. They are aware there is a problem, and they find it concerning, but being aware of a social problem does not necessarily lead the public to support or demand policy changes. A sense of efficacy — the belief that changes are feasible and would improve matters — is also required. To reframe the public conversation, advocates and policymakers should emphasize the benefits of creating more affordable housing and stop relying on messages that only highlight the costs of inaction. At every opportunity, communicators should lay out a positive vision of the benefits that will come when communities proactively address affordability issues.

Example: The places where we live shape our lives, including—and especially—our health and safety. Sometimes health impacts are easy to understand: it's not hard to connect housing to health when lead's in the water, mold's in the air, or crumbling staircases cause injuries. It can be less obvious how the cost of housing affects health, but it makes sense. When housing is expensive, it's harder to pay doctor bills, join sports leagues, or eat well, which opens the door to chronic disease and other health problems.

Right now, our policies are causing the cost of homes and apartments to rise steadily, while, at the same time, dampening wage growth and income levels. To fix the affordability problem, we need to put the pieces of responsible community development together. It's a complex puzzle, but we can complete it if we work together. The good news is that the pieces of a healthier approach are at hand. We can arrange communities so that homes are near parks and stores and bike paths, making physical activity easier. We can make sure that every neighborhood has access to grocery stores, where fresh and nutritious food is available, putting healthy diets within everyone's reach. We can make affordability measures a priority in our local, state, and federal housing budgets.

To make this happen, we need community development organizations—nonprofit organizations that work with communities to ensure that their concerns are understood by policymakers and their needs are addressed by for-profit developers. By holding the process accountable to the community and thinking about how housing affects health and wellbeing, we can turn the problem with housing affordability into an opportunity to create more vibrant, healthful neighborhoods.

Citation: O'Neil, M., and Sweetland, J. (2018). Piecing it together: A framing playbook for affordable housing advocates. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute. Accessed on July 7, 2020, from <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/publication/piecing-it-together-a-communications-playbook-for-affordable-housing-advocates/>.