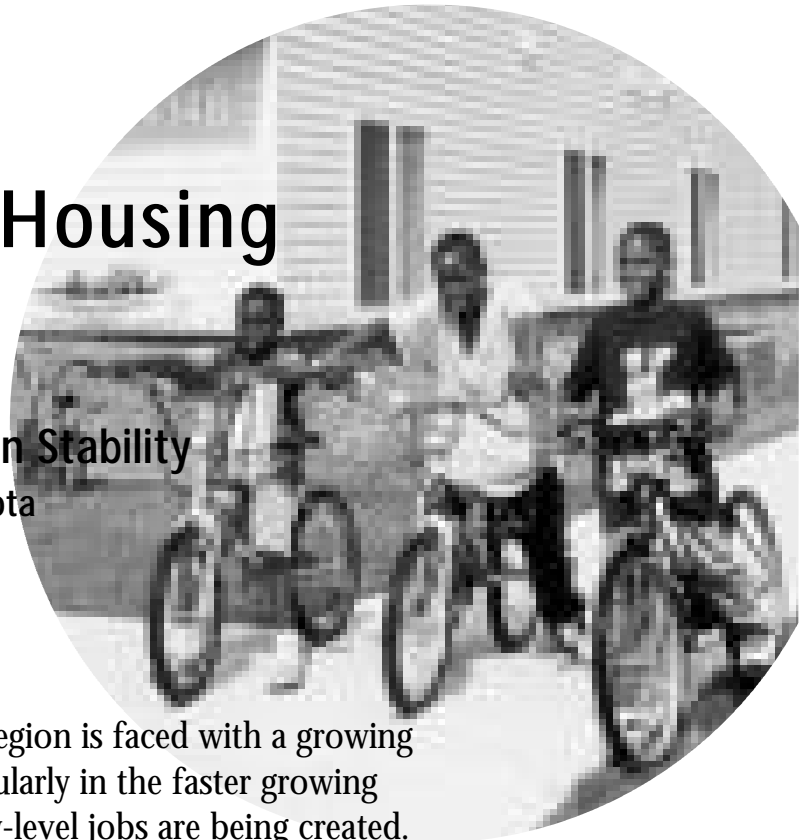


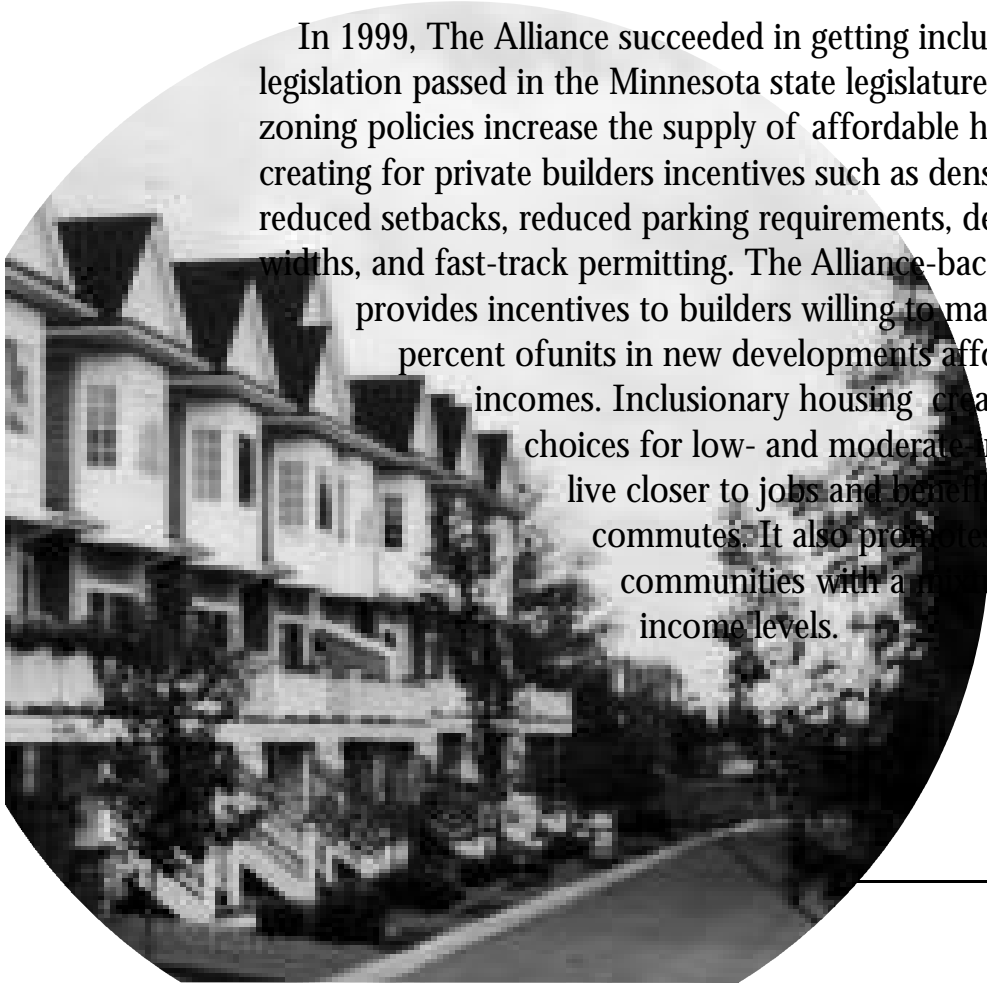
Inclusionary Housing Initiative

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
Minneapolis - St. Paul, Minnesota



The Minneapolis – St. Paul region is faced with a growing affordable housing crisis, particularly in the faster growing parts of the region, where entry-level jobs are being created. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition of groups that has been successfully working to address the shortage of affordable housing and related equity and livability issues.

In 1999, The Alliance succeeded in getting inclusionary housing legislation passed in the Minnesota state legislature. Inclusionary zoning policies increase the supply of affordable housing by creating for private builders incentives such as density bonuses, reduced setbacks, reduced parking requirements, decreased road widths, and fast-track permitting. The Alliance-backed legislation provides incentives to builders willing to make 10 to 15 percent of units in new developments affordable at lower-incomes. Inclusionary housing creates more choices for low- and moderate-income people to live closer to jobs and benefit from shorter commutes. It also promotes healthy communities with a mixture of income levels.



Entry-level job opportunities are often located in fast-growing suburbs on the fringes of a region, far from central cities and older, inner-ring suburbs. While suburban communities benefit from infrastructure investments for schools, roads, and sewer systems, these same communities often institute restrictive zoning and housing codes that prevent low-income people from finding housing that is close to jobs.

The Alliance was able to build a broad base of support for the housing legislation by nurturing relationships among environmental groups, social justice organizations, the business community, and builders. Members also cultivated support among suburban elected officials and are now working with these new partners to address other regional issues such as transportation and employment opportunities.



Area Description

The Minneapolis-St. Paul region is an area of 2.4 million people spanning seven counties. It has been a national leader in regional tax-base sharing and has a unique regional governmental body, the Metropolitan Council, which operates the regional bus system, collects and cleans wastewater, acts as a housing redevelopment agency, and provides planning services. Governor Jesse Ventura recently launched his smart growth initiative for the state, *Growing Smart in Minnesota*, which seeks to maximize economic opportunity, protect environmental and cultural resources, and avoid wasteful spending.

While the quality of life in the Twin Cities is quite good, the region does face significant challenges. Sprawl is a real issue, and the region is experiencing increased traffic congestion. With more than 200 political jurisdictions, the region faces problems of fragmented planning and community development efforts.

There are serious shortages of affordable housing in the Twin Cities, especially in parts of the region where entry-level jobs are being created. Two-thirds of all new jobs created in the Twin Cities metropolitan region are in the suburbs, and nearly half of all new jobs pay less than \$22,000 per year. Workers earning \$7, \$10, and \$12 per hour cannot find adequate housing for their families; rental apartment vacancies are at an all-time low, having dipped below 2 percent for several years in a row.

Massive infrastructure investments are made every year in suburban communities to strengthen local schools, to provide easier transportation access to roads and highways, and ensure that new housing developments are hooked into a regional sewer system. These investments, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars per year, are the driving engine of residential and commercial growth in these desirable communities. Many of these cities,

however, engage in “regulating out” lower-income people by passing restrictive zoning and housing codes and setting maximum density standards that encourage builders to create large lot, high-end housing in sprawling subdivisions. Meanwhile, inner cities and older suburbs have shouldered the lion’s share of affordable housing while struggling to build a tax base healthy enough to provide decent streets, good schools, police and fire protection, business growth and retention, and a sufficient social services network to help the large segment of the population that is poor, disabled, elderly, or homeless.

Lead Organization

In 1994, Minnesota state legislator Myron Orfield convened a group of environmental and social justice groups from the Minneapolis–St. Paul area to discuss the connections between increasing sprawl, tax-base capacity, and social inequities. Orfield recognized the need for affordable housing in the suburbs of the region, where the majority of employment opportunities were located. After the initial meeting, these groups kept meeting and became known as the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

Today, the Alliance is a coalition of 26 civic, community, environmental, religious, and social justice organizations. Members include community- and regional-level groups. The Alliance advocates for public policies that promote community reinvestment and responsible land-use in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area, focusing on issues of social and economic justice for low-income people and people of color. By linking groups and issues that have not traditionally been viewed as interdependent, the alliance is able to strengthen the call for regional equity.

The Alliance acts as a facilitator and catalyst for its member organizations by identifying regional issues within a local context and coordinating organizing and

educational campaigns. The goal of the coalition is to expand the base of organizational and public support for regional reforms related to affordable housing, access to transit, racial and economic segregation, tax-base equity, land-use planning, economic development, inner-city revitalization, and the harmful environmental consequences of sprawling growth.

Currently, the Alliance has two full-time staff members. Russ Adams, hired as a part-time coordinator for the alliance in 1995, became the full-time director in 1996. The group hired another staff person to assist with coordinating its campaigns, after receiving a three-year grant for \$180,000 from the Minneapolis Foundation. The Alliance is currently applying for 501(c)(3) status. Member organizations play an important role in establishing Alliance priorities and carrying out campaigns.

Since 1994, the Alliance has pursued a number of issues related to regional equity. In 1995 it mobilized a grass-roots campaign for more open, public discussion of growth and development options for the region. It targeted the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council, the region's primary planning agency. The following year it pioneered the "Tour de Sprawl," a bike and bus tour that would eventually spur similar efforts in 10 other states. This creative look at the region has attracted hundreds of participants since its inception, including suburban mayors and urban and suburban community-based social and environmental organizations. The 1998 and 1999 tours focused on the growing affordable housing crisis. In 1997, they worked with several faith-based organizations to successfully lobby the Minnesota state legislature for increased funding for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields.

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, a nonprofit organization, has been the Alliance's fiscal sponsor since its inception.

The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA) was a founding member of the Alliance and has been heavily involved in the work for a regional inclusionary housing policy. The nonprofit Family and Children's Service has also been a key actor in housing policy work. Transit for Livable Communities, a nonprofit transit advocacy group promoting better transportation policies on a local, regional, and state-wide basis, has helped Alliance members make the important connection between transportation and affordable housing. The local chapter of the Sierra Club has been a partner in the annual Tour de Sprawl, and Jewish Community Action has provided an important window into a faith community. Another faith-based organization, the St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations (SPEAC), led Alliance members on the successful 1997 brownfields legislative campaign that secured \$19.4 million in state funding for polluted land clean-up and redevelopment. This campaign demonstrated that the environmental community could join together with religious and social justice groups to advocate for environmentally beneficial community redevelopment strategies that also brought decent wage paying jobs to troubled urban neighborhoods.

Initiative: Motivation and Strategy

Alliance involvement in housing goes back to 1995, when a proposed housing agreement between the city of Maple Grove, a suburb in the southwestern part of the region, and the Metropolitan Council spurred the Alliance to action. They challenged the agreement, which would have granted Maple Grove a sewer expansion in exchange for an insignificant increase in the supply of affordable housing. The Alliance's report, "Housing at the Crossroads," documented how the agreement would virtually shut out low-income people from Maple Grove, while regional subsidies would cover the majority of

the cost for the sewer project. As a result of their efforts, the number of affordable housing units in the agreement was increased from 450 to 630.

Concern about the regional housing crisis grew. In 1995, two Alliance members, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA) and the St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations (SPEAC), organized a public meeting with members of the Metropolitan Council. Two hundred, twenty-five citizens attended the meeting, which challenged the council over definitions of “affordability” regarding the Maple Grove housing agreement. At the meeting, MICAHA and SPEAC representatives asked people to demonstrate the level of housing they could afford by putting a sticker on one of three cardboard houses representing 30 percent, 50 percent, and 80 percent of the regional median income. Most people selected the 30 percent option. MICAHA and SPEAC used this to demonstrate that the council’s definition of what was affordable — 80 percent of median income — was not truly affordable for most families in the Twin Cities.

Alliance members met with the Metropolitan Council in 1996 to push for a mandatory inclusionary housing program similar to that in Montgomery County, Maryland, but they met with resistance. By 1997, the Alliance had reached a turning point when members realized that they would have to devise an affordable housing plan of their own.

Process: The Inclusionary Housing Campaign

In 1998, the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability initiated an inclusionary housing legislative agenda and began to educate the public and build support for the campaign. Assistance in crafting an inclusionary housing policy was provided by MICAHA and the Minnesota Housing Partnership, a private nonprofit community housing development

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organization that works on housing issues throughout the state. The Alliance built momentum for the campaign through wide distribution of its newsletter and through Internet action alerts, meetings, and other events. The Alliance also received a big boost when it got coverage in two national publications, the *Nation* (in November 1998) and *Urban Ecology* (in January 1999). Groups like the Community Stabilization Project, an advocacy organization for St. Paul tenants, were especially helpful in reaching lower-income residents. Catholic Charities, Jewish Community Action, MICAHA, and St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations helped make important connections to faith-based communities.

MICAHA worked with the Illusion Theater to produce *Like Waters Rolling Down*, a musical about justice in housing. The play presented its audience with the effects of housing discrimination and generated meaningful discussions about how to address the issue. Several versions of the production were developed in order to bridge the divide between urban and suburban audiences. More than 900 citizens attended the play in White Bear Lake, a wealthy, east metropolitan suburb.

Another member, the Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) provided critical outreach to urban and suburban citizens and secured letters of support from suburban mayors. The Minnesota Fair Housing Center was instrumental in helping to kickoff the issue of mixed-use development in 1998 by hosting a large forum, “Inclusionary Communities,” in a suburb of Hennepin County (which comprises Minne-

apolis and some western suburbs). Nearly 800 people attended this day-long affair which featured speakers from around the country, including an expert from Montgomery County, Maryland. The Community Stabilization Project helped underscore the critical need for targeting affordability goals for very low-income families.

Alliance members recognized early on that for a regional housing policy to be a success, not only would it be necessary to increase funding for non-profit housing developers, but it would also require bringing private-sector builders on board as well. In discussions with builders, it became apparent that many of them supported the creation of more affordable housing. The problem, in builders' eyes, was the number of regulatory and cost barriers in their way.

Zoning regulations promoted low-density, large-lot developments; developers could not build more compact, more affordable housing if they wanted to. Knowing that there was some common ground with the private sector allowed Alliance members to focus on how to address the builders concerns while crafting a bill that would meet the needs of low-income renters and home buyers.

In the summer of 1998, the Alliance headed the Inclusionary Housing Task Force to design a bill that would strengthen the Livable Communities Act (LCA). Passed by the Minnesota legislature in 1994, the act provided funds for projects that demonstrate creative and innovative models of compact, efficient development by linking mixed-income housing, transit, employment opportunities, commercial land-uses, community institutions, and public spaces. The Metropolitan Council set 10-year goals of 55,000 new affordable ownership units and 13,000 new affordable rental units by 2010. In 1999, the pace of the development of affordable units in the region was such that it would meet only half of the target.

In November 1999, Alliance members were stunned, along with other Minnesotans, when former professional wrestler Jesse Ventura shook up the political establishment by winning the governor's seat. Says Russ Adams "Most of us, myself included, were sure this could only mean trouble at the legislature." However, surprising things began to happen. A number of suburban representatives sympathetic to housing issues were appointed to committee leadership positions in the Republican-controlled legislature. When Governor Ventura released his first budget, it included a \$16 million increase in the base budget of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). Alliance members began to breathe more easily.

By the fall of 1998, the Alliance had crafted the Inclusionary Housing Initiative, using Montgomery County, Maryland and California's Density Bonus Law as models. The purpose of the initiative, a voluntary program, was to support the creation of

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communities that combine market-rate housing with very affordable housing. It would encourage the building of affordable units in new housing developments by giving developers density bonuses or other incentives, such as reduced setbacks and parking requirements, decreased road widths, and fast-track permitting and approvals. A density bonus allows the developer to build additional residential units above the maximum number of units permitted by the existing zoning. Developers could add extra market-rate units



to a parcel; the income from these units would help to offset the production costs of the affordable units.

The original affordability goals for the initiative were to increase the supply of home ownership opportunities for those residents at or below 50 percent of the area median family income and to increase rental opportunities for those at or below 30 percent of the median. Its winter 1999 newsletter outlined the alliance's expanded objectives for the region:

- ? **Housing** — increase the regional supply of affordable housing; create higher-density, mixed-income developments; help preserve or replace affordable housing stocks in older communities.
- ? **Regional Policy** — strengthen the Livable Communities Act; promote the private-sector's role for solving the regional housing crisis; promote equal access to educational opportunities.
- ? **Economic Opportunity** — connect low-income workers to job growth areas; create more locational housing choice in suburban communities; reverse racially segregated settlement patterns.

? **Environmental Conservation** — conserve natural areas by modestly boosting housing densities; integrate land-use planning and transit strategies; promote better housing design, smaller lots, and narrower streets; fully utilize existing infrastructures; shorten commuting distances.

Under the Alliance's proposal, a new inclusionary housing account of \$6 million to \$8 million would be created within the Metropolitan Council and the MHFA, with half of the funds going to the seven-county metropolitan area and the rest designated for the remainder of Minnesota. Cities would apply for loans and grants to develop mixed-income housing that would make at least 10 percent of the housing affordable rental units or 15 percent affordable homes for ownership. At the same time, the broader housing advocacy community was promoting a legislative measure that would effectively double the budget of the MHFA, providing an additional \$80 million for programs that had shown success in creating and rehabilitating affordable housing.

In the winter of 1999, with a draft bill ready, Adams and other Alliance members worked to recruit sponsors in the state legisla-

ture. Sen. Dick Cohen, a Democrat from St. Paul “immediately grasped the innovative approach represented by the Inclusionary Housing Initiative,” says Adams. He quickly became a champion of the bill and secured a commitment from Rep. Jim Rhodes, a Republican from the inner-ring suburb of St. Louis Park, to author the bill in the House.

The support of these two legislators was key; Senator Cohen enjoyed the respect and cooperation of House members, and Representative Rhodes was a widely respected moderate who had spoken out on behalf of affordable housing many times. Alliance members knew they needed him to build support for the initiative among suburban legislators. Rhodes brought in a rural legislator at the outset to co-author the bill, Rep. Bob Gunther, a Republican. Gunther was respected among housing advocates for his past support of affordable housing measures. As a small-business owner, he also understood the potential boost the bill’s regulatory incentives could give to private developers.

Throughout the legislative session, members of the Inclusionary Housing Task Force lobbied for the campaign. Because the bill was voluntary and incentive based, it attracted support in the Republican-controlled House and from local municipal officials. Private developers too were supportive because of measures that reduced regulatory barriers. They were joined by Metropolitan Council members and anti-sprawl advocates in endorsing the bill’s emphasis on higher housing densities.

Outcomes

The Alliance initiative succeeded in the spring of 1999, when the Minnesota state legislature passed the inclusionary housing bill, creating an account of \$8 million over two years. Half of the funds went to a regional account under the Livable Communities Act. The rest was appropriated to the Minnesota

Housing Finance Agency for building proposals that would reduce costs through building techniques or waivers on regulatory restrictions or include units affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of the median income.

Of the \$4 million appropriated to the Metropolitan Council through the Livable Communities Act, priority was given to funding proposals with at least 15 percent of the owner-occupied units affordable to

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households at or below 60 percent of the area annual median income (a slight compromise from the alliance’s original goal of affordability at 50 percent of the median) and at least 10 percent of the rental units affordable at or below 30 percent of the area annual median income.

There were other compromises as well. The original goal of the Alliance was to pass a metrowide, mandatory inclusionary housing policy that would require all developments of a certain size (for example 50 units or more) to contain 15 to 20 percent very affordable housing units (i.e., affordable at 50 percent of the median income). The mandate language was removed during the course of the campaign as Alliance members and supporters tried to gather votes in the legislature. This action essentially eliminated all opposition to the bill by private developers and local city officials. Adams says “While we still came away with an innovative funding program to support a new approach to siting affordable housing, we lost one crucial component: the ability to require hundreds of developments across our region to provide affordable

opportunities to working families and low-income households. Our coalition partners still remain convinced that the most effective and wide-sweeping policy plan would be to require all developers to implement an inclusionary strategy.” The Alliance is now working with several of its faith-based member organizations to explore the feasibility of waging another campaign to pass a mandatory inclusionary housing program based on the one in Montgomery County, Maryland, which they see as an effective strategy for increasing affordable rental and ownership housing in wealthier suburban communities.

In December 1999, as a result of the inclusionary housing campaign, the Metropolitan Council appropriated \$450,000 for an inclusionary housing project in Chaska, a wealthy southwestern suburb with high growth and employment opportunities. The Chaska Brickyard project provides 32 rental housing units for people working in the Chaska area at rents affordable to people earning 30, 50, and 60 percent of the area median income. Twenty percent of the units are reserved for Section 8 rental assistance. The Metropolitan Council is currently reviewing three other applications for inclusionary housing funding.

In the fall of 1999, the Alliance persuaded the council to adopt a new program that would grant developers a special waiver of sewer hookup charges for Inclusionary housing developments. The council appropriated \$750,000 to this three-year demonstration program and expects that more than 220 housing units benefit from the waiver each year.

Adams cites timing as a crucial component in the Alliance’s success. In the mid- and late 1990s, the housing crisis in the Twin Cities was readily apparent. Local media reported regularly on the problem, and citizens were expressing their concern to politicians. In 1999, the year the bill was

passed, there was a state budget surplus and a governor in office who recognized the importance of affordable housing. The bill had strong authors in both the House and Senate who were committed to finding funding for the program. Opposition to the bill was low because most people recognized that there was a housing crisis. Rather than dwelling on whether to pursue an inclusionary housing program, it became a question of how much should be spent.

Adams acknowledges that in some cases the incentives provided by the bill that was passed will be used in rapidly growing areas, places typically associated with sprawl. Some of the affordable housing units generated by this legislation will be built on greenfields. However, the Metropolitan Council’s implementation criteria are based on smart growth principles and ensure that where new mixed-income developments are created they will be built more responsibly, for example, at higher densities with a mix of uses, and close to transportation corridors.

The creation of mixed-income housing will address some of the regional inequities of sprawl by reducing the segregation of low-income residents and people of color. For example, the city of Minneapolis is working on an 800-unit project that will replace a dilapidated, former public housing site with 60 percent market-rate units and 40 percent affordable units. This central city housing development is partly the result of a lawsuit brought against the city of Minneapolis and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for deliberately segregating public housing residents and people of color.

Funding and Resources

Staff/Budget

As the inclusionary housing campaign progressed, it gradually required more staff time and resources. Russ Adams estimates that the campaign, at its midpoint, a six- to nine-

month period (part of the public education and outreach phase), took up 25 to 30 percent of the staff's time; the last part of the campaign, a three- to four-month period (involving intensive legislative lobbying) required 60 to 75 percent of the staff's time. The Alliance also invested \$7,000 to \$8,000 in public education, newsletters, and printed materials.

Funding

Throughout the two-year campaign, the Alliance had the strong support of their member organizations, because the inclusionary housing initiative cut across so many areas of concern. One member, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, had been an important ongoing source of administrative support for the group. Several local funders — the Minneapolis Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, Headwaters Fund, First Universalist Foundation, and the Otto Bremer Foundation — provided more than \$80,000 in program and operating support for the alliance and the campaign. The Ford Foundation approached the Alliance with a grant for \$30,000 in 1999.

Other Resources

The cooperation of member organizations and others was an important resource early on. The Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing and the Minnesota Housing Partnership both provided representatives for the Inclusionary Housing Task Force. Early stages of the campaign involved a lot of research, which was divided among these two organizations and Russ Adams. Member groups provided mailing lists and helped distribute the Alliance newsletter to their constituents. The Education and Housing Equity Project provided important citizen input through its Community Circles, a set of forums which brought citizens together to discuss affordable housing problems. Adams wrote newsletter articles, and a paid editor handled the layout. Member organizations pitched in to fill the need for more organizers and researchers. It was difficult to find useful tools for educating people about inclusionary housing, especially pictures and other graphics. Gathering and packaging information was time consuming.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

“One mistake that organizations should try to avoid is to attempt to act too quickly,” says Adams. “It is important to proactively lay the groundwork first through outreach, research, and public education before entering the policymaking arena.” The inclusionary housing initiative was a two-year campaign. Alliance members needed that time to do important research, to build support for the campaign, to secure “buy-in” from coalition members, and to create a bill that was right for Minnesota. While they originally looked to Montgomery County, Maryland, as an example, Alliance members soon realized that any housing bill would have to be relevant to

local conditions. There were many occasions when it looked as if the bill would not go to the floor of the legislature. At times, Adams and other leaders had to pull groups together and maintain optimism in the face of what looked like defeat.

Communication was essential, and not just with those on the Alliance's side. Making connections with builders associations, the city, and suburban mayors was a key to the Alliance's success. By carefully listening to the concerns of builders, the group was able to devise a policy around density bonuses, which both addressed the need for affordable housing and addressed the concerns of the private sector.

Adams believes that the Twin Cities activist community is learning not to write off the suburbs as a “hopelessly homogeneous, politically conservative bastion.” They have learned that cultivating suburban citizen support is essential for reforming regional housing policy. Adams and Alliance members went to suburban mayors with their winter, 1999 newsletter, which contained pictures of mixed-income housing developments in Montgomery County. This was an important tool for showing people that affordable housing could be developed in the suburbs and in an attractive manner. When Republican legislators began to hear from their suburban colleagues, support for the bill increased.

Dick Little of the Education and Housing Equity Project says that the campaign was successful because it was truly grassroots. For instance, EHEP’s Community Circles brought many people into the campaign and helped build momentum. Several organizations influenced the character of the campaign, including pushing members to focus more on racial equity.

Recommendations

For community-based organizations

It is important that an organization’s board of directors understands from the beginning the time commitment that is necessary for a campaign like this. Russ Adams has a few important pieces of advice for organizations setting out on a regional campaign:

Do your research. Good organizations will always start with research, despite the impulse to get out there and organize right away. Organizing is not helpful if there is no clear issue to organize around. Be clear on the issue at hand. Also, look at what other groups are already doing on the issue and identify the best efforts. Take the time to construct a clear message, including why the issue is important and what needs to be done.

Make contact through one-on-ones. Sit down and make a list of people who need to be contacted. These will be experts in the field, movers and shakers, and people who can bring others to the cause (such as motivated citizen activists, community organization “leaders,” and staff from likeminded organizations). Prioritize the list and talk to the most sympathetic ears first. Most important, listen to their concerns, their suggestions, and their hopes for creating meaningful social change.

Alliance members offer these additional words of advice:

- ? “Housing issues are increasingly regional issues. You have to get involved at that level. Push yourself to get involved in early discussions and find your voice.” — Caty Royce, Community Stabilization Project
- ? “It’s important to reach out and expand the range of people who are talking about affordable housing as a way to address other societal problems like racial and education inequities. School board members, school administrators, and the business community should be involved.” — Dick Little, EHEP
- ? “Talking to my legislator and learning to stand up to him on certain issues was a valuable experience. If you are working on legislation make sure that you ask for more than you want because it will get whittled down!” — Rosemarie Zipoy, ISAI AH
- ? “There is a trade off between spending a lot of time at the outset of a campaign to develop a strong proposal or acting quickly: Do you strike while the iron is hot, or do you develop it more? There was political interest, so Alliance members moved. The effort might have benefited from more long-term systematic work on developing the proposal. Some people feel that the resulting legislation is rather vague.” — Kirsten Bansen-Weigle, Minnesota Housing Partnership

Is it possible for other states to emulate the success of Minnesota, a relatively progressive state? Yes, if your state legislature funds housing activities. In other cases, Adams thinks it is more realistic for activists to concentrate their efforts at the local level by working on regional, county or municipal housing policy. By focusing on local incentives for developers, such as density bonuses, decreased road widths, and smaller setbacks, it will be easier to gain the support of builders. The more desirable the community, the easier it should be to gain support for such a policy, since demand for housing will be high.

Even though many cities may not have the same progressive outlook as the Twin Cities, it is possible for activists and coalitions in other areas to build the kind of connections necessary to push a regional housing agenda. Housing activists and community-based organizations must work to build relationships with faith-based communities, environmental activists, transportation advocates, and others. Housing activists must find the “hook” for other groups to get involved — whether it is justice, environmental protection, or access to jobs in the suburbs — and invest adequate time in relationship building before undertaking joint action.

For government

Adams sees an important role for government in affordable housing and other regional issues. Nothing happens without some type of subsidy, whether it is building roads for automobile traffic or building affordable housing. Clearly the federal government can provide funding and guidance, but activists should also work at the state and local levels to promote policies that meet the needs of low-income people and people of color.

Tom McElveen, community development director for the Metropolitan Council, says the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability was absolutely instrumental in getting inclusionary

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability presents an effective model in united inner-city community development and environmental groups into a coalition.

***-Myron Orfield, Director,
Metropolitan Area Research
Corporation***

housing legislation passed. Advocacy groups like the Alliance could be an asset to city or regional government in other areas; they think about the ideal — the vision — but they are also very pragmatic. They have been very effective at communicating with business, government, and local citizens. According to McElveen, “This region is moving forward with them as a partner to meet housing, community development, and economic development needs.”

For funders and non-profits

Nationally based non-profits can act as a clearinghouse for information, technical assistance, and training. Just knowing how other groups are pursuing similar issues can be a huge help to local organizations and coalitions. Foundations obviously have a role, and many seem to be moving in the direction of providing support for more comprehensive initiatives that address issues of equity. Both groups can play an important part in building the critical mass necessary to affect change on issues related to regional equity and sprawl.

For More Information

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