CAPACITY BUILDING

PLANNING & DESIGN

DEVELOPMENT

WHERE THE PEOPLE SHAPE THEIR CITY
WHAT ISSUES ARE COMING UP IN YOUR COMMUNITY & FOR YOUR CODE ENFORCEMENT TEAM?
CODE ENFORCEMENT’S MISSION IS TO KEEP HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE AND HEALTHY

- Restore distressed properties
- Keep landlords accountable
- Protect low-income tenants & homeowners
- Keep vacant lots clean
- Preserve neighborhoods
- Increase neighborhood resiliency
People of color receive more violations in gentrifying neighborhoods.

Housing voucher recipients are placed in low quality housing.

Fear of eviction and immigration detention prevents contact with city enforcement.

Priority areas for enforcement are often low-income communities of color.

People of color receive more violations in gentrifying neighborhoods.

Low income homeowners cannot afford to address code violations.

But code enforcement can also impact low-income communities of color disproportionately.

Landlords can prefer to pay a fine than address violations. Tenants are stuck with bad conditions.

No social support for residents displaced in condemnation.
LOW INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS OF COLOR HAVE DETERIORATED DUE TO A HISTORY OF DISINVESTMENT, REDLINING AND MORE!

DISPARATE IMPACT ON BLACK & BROWN COMMUNITIES: LESS ACCESS TO CREDIT, LOWER HOME APPRAISAL RATES, LOWER HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES COUPLED WITH HIGHER RATE OF CODE VIOLATIONS

THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN FURTHER EXACERBATED BY 2008 FORECLOSURE CRISIS AND NOW, CURRENT HOUSING INSTABILITY CAUSED BY ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

THIS DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT IS NOT RANDOM
This disproportionate impact is not random

- Enforcement processes & policies are designed by unequal systems
- They reflect the implicit biases, viewpoints and limitations of the designer and the systems in which they operate
- In the context of institutional and systemic racism, processes and policies may (and most likely do!) reproduce these norms in ways that can disparately impact the most vulnerable
• Code officers have a deep knowledge, and ear to the ground about housing conditions.

• They are the first responders of the built environment.

• Often the tools at the disposal of the code enforcement team (violations, fines) are not the right tools to deal with the root causes of the violations.
• Code officers have a deep knowledge, and ear to the ground about housing conditions.

• They are the first responders of the built environment.

• Often the tools at the disposal of the code enforcement team (violations, fines) are not the right tools to deal with the root causes of the violations.

• There is an opportunity in every community to develop a different approach that is proactive + equitable + works with communities + provides social supports.

But we also see that...
HOW CAN WE REIMAGINE CODE ENFORCEMENT?
PUTTING EQUITY FRONT AND CENTER

SOURCE: CENTER FOR STORY-BASED STRATEGY
PRINCIPLES OF AN EQUITABLE PROCESS

RESTORATIVE

EVIDENCE-BASED

COLLABORATIVE

COMMUNITY-CENTRIC

PROACTIVE
SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. WORK WITH OTHERS
2. THINK ABOUT YOUR PROCESS
3. ENGAGE COMMUNITY
4. MAKING CHANGES TOWARDS EQUITY
WORK WITH OTHERS
• Code enforcement alone cannot deal with the larger equity issues affecting our neighborhoods

• Build or deepen partnerships with:
  • Other city and county agencies
    • City Planning
    • Community Development
    • Social Services
    • Health
    • Public Housing Authority

• Non-Government entities
  • Community Organizations
  • Service Providers
  • Utility Companies
HOW CAN WE DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS?

- ESTABLISH OFFICIAL CHANNELS FOR SHARING DATA AND INFORMATION ABOUT PROPERTIES AND CASES

- IDENTIFY PERSISTENT PROBLEMS THAT ARE TOUCHED BY DIFFERENT AGENCIES AND OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

- BRAINSTORM JOINT SOLUTIONS INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH ISSUES ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS

- INSTITUTIONALIZE COLLABORATION, PARTICULARLY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS
WORK WITH OTHERS

ELMIRA, NY

• DEEP COLLABORATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS:
  • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
  • CODE ENFORCEMENT
  • LEGAL
  DESPITE LEADERSHIP CHANGES

• INSTITUTIONALIZED COLLABORATION WITH COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT AND INSPECT APARTMENTS PAID WITH HOUSING VOUCHERS

NEWBURGH, NY

• DEEP COLLABORATION BETWEEN CITY PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

• INFORMAL COLLABORATION WITH HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TO REFER TENANTS FACING CONDEMNATION AND DISPLACEMENT
EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS
IDENTIFY EQUITY CHOICE POINTS: PARTICULAR STEPS IN THE PROCESS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON EQUITY

MAP CITY PROCESSES USING A HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN LENS

UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFERENT ACTORS EXPERIENCE AND/OR ARE IMPACTED BY THE SAME PROCESS

IDENTIFY THE MOST EFFECTIVE PLACES TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS, CHANGES OR TWEAKS IN ORDER TO MAKE PROCESSES MORE EQUITABLE
USE A PROCESS MAP TO IDENTIFY EQUITY PAIN POINTS

1. Instigate the process
2. Inspection
3. Evaluation
4. Re-evaluation
5. Enforcement
6. Next Steps
EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS

1. Instigate the process
2. Inspection
3. Evaluation
4. Re-evaluation
5. Enforcement
6. Next Steps

PAIN POINT

- LOOKING AT THE PROCESS THROUGH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: CODE TEAM, OTHER AGENCIES, OUTSIDE PARTNERS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- A LACK OF ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, COMMUNICATION GAPS OR EVEN THE RULES THEMSELVES!
EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS

1. Instigate the process
2. Inspection
3. Evaluation
4. Re-evaluation
5. Enforcement
6. Next Steps

PAIN POINT

OPPORTUNITY

• IDEAS FROM DIFFERENT ACTORS ABOUT HOW THE PROCESS CAN BE IMPROVED
• HOW CAN WE LEVERAGE CURRENT CONDITION FOR IMPROVEMENT?

EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS

PAIN POINT

OPPORTUNITY

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PAIN POINT
IDEAS FROM DIFFERENT ACTORS ABOUT HOW THE PROCESS CAN BE IMPROVED

OPPORTUNITY
HOW CAN WE LEVERAGE CURRENT CONDITION FOR IMPROVEMENT?

BEST PRACTICE
EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS
ENGAGE COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

STANCE TOWARD COMMUNITY

0: Ignore
  - Message to Community: Your voice, needs & interest do not matter
  - Impact: Marginalization
  - Activities: Closes door meetings, Misinformation

1: Inform
  - Message to Community: We will keep you informed
  - Impact: Placation
  - Activities: Fact Sheets, Open Houses, Presentations

2: Consult
  - Message to Community: We care what you think
  - Impact: Tokenization
  - Activities: Public Comment, Focus Groups, Surveys

3: Involve
  - Message to Community: You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about the issue
  - Impact: Voice
  - Activities: Community organizing & advocacy, Interactive Workshops

4: Collaborate
  - Message to Community: Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue
  - Impact: Delegated Power
  - Activities: MOUs with Community based organizations, Citizen advisory Committees

5: Refer To
  - Message to Community: It is time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions
  - Impact: Community Ownership
  - Activities: Community-driven planning, Consensus building, Participatory Actions Research, Participatory budgeting

SOURCE: THE MOVEMENT CENTER
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO INFORM MORE EQUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Community Engagement Guide

Public education brochure

Engagement tools
CREATE USER FRIENDLY MATERIALS

PARTNER WITH TRUSTED LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

GO WHERE PEOPLE ARE AT

LEVERAGE EVENTS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION & RESOURCES

CREATE INCLUSIVE SPACES: TRANSLATION, FOOD, CHILDCARE & TRUSTED LEADERS

ESTABLISH A FEEDBACK LOOP TO BUILD TRUST & COMMUNICATION
ROCHESTER, NY

- PARTNERSHIP WITH 3 LOCAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS
- SMALL MEETINGS WITH TRUSTED LOCAL INTERPRETERS (5 LANGUAGES)
- SENSITIVE TO CULTURAL NORMS
- CONNECT CITIZENS TO CITY RESOURCES
- ESTABLISHED ONGOING DIALOGUE
ELMIRA, NY

- BUILDING TRUST AND LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
- LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS TO REACH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS
- BROAD AND DEEP ENGAGEMENT:
  - TABLING AT COMMUNITY EVENTS
  - FOCUS GROUPS
  - COMMUNITY HOME REPAIRS
  - COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAYS
MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY
• Revise rules, structures and procedures to address equity pain points identified by city, organizations and community

• Create innovative solutions and investments to address the root causes of equity issues, not just the symptoms

• Review recruitment and training practices to embed equity in these processes

• Institutionalize community engagement as constant practice

• Institutionalize cross-departmental collaborations
MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY

EDUCATION MATERIALS

• HEALTHY HOUSING GUIDEBOOK
  ROCHESTER

• EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR HOMEOWNERS AND TENANTS
  WHITE PLAINS

TRAINING

• GOOD NEIGHBOR SCHOOL
  ALBANY

• MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING FOR OFFICERS
  ELMIRA

• CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR CODE OFFICERS
  BINGHAMTON

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• REGULAR MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY
  ELMIRA + BUFFALO

• PUBLIC CODE DATA + KIOSKS
  NEWBURGH + MT. VERNON

• OUTREACH WHEN CODE POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE
  ROCHESTER
MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY

STAFF ROLES

• COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM SYRACUSE

• HOUSING SERVICES CASEWORKER ALBANY + BINGHAMTON

• EVICTION PREVENTION COUNSELOR ROCHESTER

PARTNERSHIPS

• FUNDING FOR OUTREACH BY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ALBANY + BUFFALO + MT. VERNON

• COLLABORATE WITH AND FUND LEGAL AID SERVICES ELMIRA + NEWBURGH + NIAGARA FALLS

DIRECT SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

• REVOLVING LOAN FUND FOR REPAIRS BUFFALO + ELMIRA +

• TENANT SUPPORT DISPLACEMENT FUND WHITE PLAINS
DIRECT INVESTMENT

- EMERGENCY ABATEMENT FUND
  ROCHESTER

- COMMUNITY CLEANUPS
  ELMIRA + BUFFALO

- DEEP DIVE BLOCK PROGRAM
  (TREE, SIDEWALK + LIGHT IMPROVEMENTS)
  ALBANY

- STABILIZATION FUND FOR DILAPIDATED HOMES
  BINGHAMTON

- IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY HOUSING FOR DISPLACED TENANTS
  NEWBURGH

- DESIGN AND PREDEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
  NEWBURGH

MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY
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