

**Affordable Housing and NIMBYism:  
Urban, Suburban and Rural Strategies**

**PLAN 530: Affordable Housing Policy and Planning**

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## INTRODUCTION

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NIMBYism relating to affordable housing is a growing problem, seen around the world. It is present in urban, suburban and rural communities, and can be especially problematic when affordable housing is planned in established communities. According to a survey conducted by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in conjunction with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), NIMBY syndrome is the leading regulatory barrier to building affordable housing and infill development across municipalities of all sizes (Survey of Canadian Municipalities: Regulatory measures for Housing Affordability and Choice, 2001). Therefore, understanding and developing ways to alleviate NIMBYism in all sizes of municipalities is key in addressing affordable housing issues in Canada.

NIMBY is a term used within the context of planning, derived from the acronym of Not In My Backyard. NIMBYism (or NIMBY syndrome, NIMBY attitudes) stems from the deeply rooted vision of home and community (Steffel, 1995), and is broadly defined as “the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighbourhood (Dear, 1992).” The ability of NIMBYism in influencing land-use has become an increasingly widespread phenomenon, limiting the abilities of affordable housing developments (Steffel, 1995). While NIMBYism can provide benefits through raising the standards of engagement and development of a project, it can create “(...) injustices which threaten to undermine the fundamental rights of people to have access to housing they can afford (Steffel, 1995).”

The term affordable housing is used throughout this document. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Company defines

affordable housing as “affordable when a household spends less than 30% of its pre-tax income on adequate shelter.” This is further clarified by expressing that affordable housing is a broad term that captures emergency shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing and subsidized housing, as well as market rate rental and homeownership that are affordable (CMHC, 2017).

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## METHODS

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In order to understand and develop strategies to reduce affordable housing NIMBYism, this report references 30 scholarly articles, government documents, as well as for-profit and not-for-profit documents. Because the issues of building and maintaining affordable housing affect numerous stakeholders, a diversity of sources is important in attempting to gain a full understanding of the topic.

Numerous search terms were employed to gather the sources. Notable terms were, but not limited to; *NIMBY*, *community opposition*, *affordable housing*, *urban*, *suburban* and *rural*. Criteria was included when it was relevant to the topic. Geography and age of the material held the most relevance, as a focus of this report is to inform a Canadian perspective, and NIMBYism changes over time. All sources were obtained lawfully.

The sources have been used to summarize the issues of NIMBYism pertaining to urban, suburban, and rural affordable housing. The sources also informed the development of approaches to minimizing affordable housing NIMBYism.

## **NIMBY AND COMMUNITY OPPOSITION**

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NIMBYism has been a prominent term used to identify communities in opposition to development, and yet it has fallen out of favour in the literature since the early 2000s (DeVerteuil, 2013). Three main critiques of the term have arisen. The first is that the term is seen as pejorative and disparaging when communities have legitimate concerns over a proposed development. The second is that NIMBY fails to capture feelings that are distance-related, when opposition is not necessarily local. The third prominent criticism is that the term does not take into consideration the increasing environmental, rather than social, concerns of opposition (DeVerteuil, 2013; Wolisnk, 2006). For instance, in the case that a community may be averse to proposed fracking, the term 'community opposition' better represents the community's legitimate concerns (Dokshin, 2016).

## **NIMBY BEST PRACTICES VERSUS STRATEGIES**

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Given the complexities that give rise to NIMBY syndrome, diffusing NIMBY attitudes is, not surprisingly, challenging. In addition to the ways in which NIMBY can present itself in individuals and institutionally, NIMBYism manifests differently in urban, suburban and rural communities. This will be explored later in this paper. While there are commonalities between urban, suburban and rural NIMBY communities, these contexts have different demographics, land-uses, histories, and economies, to list just a few differences. In addressing NIMBY attitudes, a best practices approach is often attempted for resolving or minimizing the NIMBY opposition. However, best practices as a term can be misleading. They can be poorly implemented when a practice is transferred identically from one place to another, with little or no consideration for the differences between places.

Best practices can be used in many ways, but in the planning context, it can be defined as "the patterns and regularities ... [that] people learn ... are the best ways ... toward the fulfillment of their purposes (Turner, 2001)." Best practices are "knowledge-centered (Ernest, 2015)," meaning that best practices are guided by "a set of doings and sayings organized by a pool of understandings, a set of rules ... and common and collective ends, projects, emotions and beliefs (Alexander, 2015)". The nature of planning is that people have different epistemological backgrounds and cultures (Alexander, 2015). These fundamentally different views on what knowledge is, makes best practices problematic in the planning field.

This inability to apply best practices strategies to NIMBYism and affordable housing leaves us with the tool of strategies. Strategies differ from best practices, as strategies are meant to be manipulated and tweaked to adapt and fit the needs of the environment in which they are to be implemented. Best practices do not account for differences and uniqueness across differing places, or fundamentally different ways of knowing. Best practices can in fact be harmful and destructive to implement, as assumptions about what is "best" for one place may turn out to be damaging to another (Alexander, 2015).

There are a great number of guiding documents to managing the relationship between affordable housing development and NIMBYism. This can be overwhelming, and the goal of this paper is to provide well-informed strategies based on the multiplicity of guiding sources. As previously stated, urban, suburban and rural NIMBY syndrome manifests differently. NIMBYism regarding affordable housing does have one strong common element regardless of its setting; issues are largely based on manifestations of fear (Scally, 2013). This paper aims to delineate the different strategies, approaches, and prioritizations that can be most

effectively adapted to use in these different types of communities.

## **UNDERSTANDING NIMBYISM**

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In order to provide strategies in combatting NIMBY syndrome in urban, suburban and rural communities, we must first understand what different factors manifest to generate NIMBYism in these three types of communities.

### **URBAN AND SUBURBAN NIMBY AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

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Urban and suburban NIMBYism are the most well-known and researched forms of NIMBY syndrome (Waegemakers Schiff, et al, 2015). This is evident in the amount of media coverage and the abundance of academic research found on these two subjects. Cities and suburbs by definition have higher concentrations of population than rural areas, which contributes to higher concentrations of NIMBY attitudes, as well as NIMBY awareness.

Suburban NIMBY attitudes tend to differ from urban, usually in that suburban community resistance can focus on “opposition to urban consolidation (Ruming, et al., 2012).” Despite the differences of urban and suburban views, their similarities are such that the same set of NIMBY strategies can still effectively reduce NIMBY attitudes. Strategies after all, take into consideration the ways in which communities differ, and aim to emphasize strategies according to a community’s characteristics.

Urban and suburban areas have traditionally experienced different forms of population, economic and land-use histories. And yet, their respective issues of NIMBYism are becoming more and more similar. While suburbs were once more uniformly middle-class families with children, this makeup is no longer

ubiquitous. The suburban distinction now comprises much broader cross-sections of demographics. Employment opportunities are more diverse and no longer affixed so readily to urban centres, requiring the need for adoption of other income levels in suburban areas (Steffel, 1995). Despite the fact that NIMBY strategies will vary depending on a community’s conditions, the similarities urban and suburban contexts share within a municipality allow for a general set of overarching strategies to apply for both urban and suburban NIMBYism.

### **HOW DOES NIMBYISM MANIFEST?**

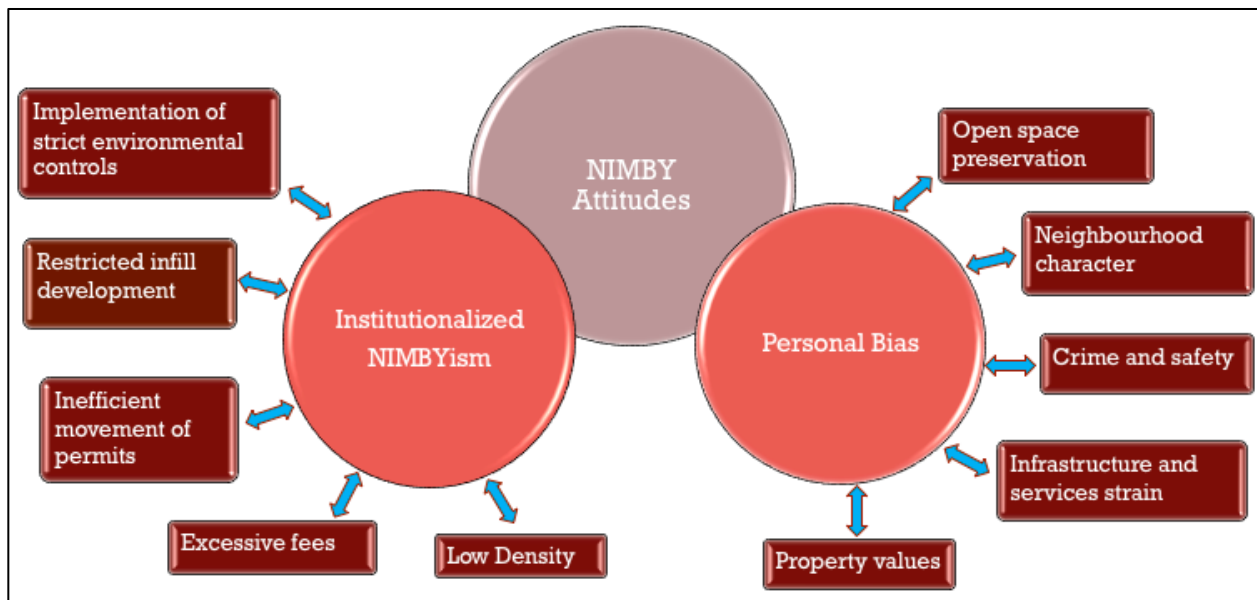
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NIMBY syndrome has been broken into two distinct parts (*Figure 1*): (1) an attitude of ‘personal bias’, and (2) institutionalized actions (Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing 1991; Scally, 2013). NIMBY ‘personal bias’ attitudes are often shaped by five general fears: (1) property values, (2) crime and safety, (3) infrastructure and services strain, (4) neighbourhood character, and (5) open space preservation (Dear, 1992; Pendall, 1999; Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, n.d.; Scally, 2013.).

There are also concerns that affordable housing, potentially coupled with property tax reliefs, will be unable to support the increased need for services associated with population growth. This leads to institutionalized NIMBYism, which is reflected through local government actions (Scally, 2013) of restricting the “supply and increasing the demand for housing thus driving up the costs of multifamily rental housing development (Pendall, 2008).” Restricting the supply ranges from directly excluding multifamily development, to indirect regulatory barriers like cost inflation, implementation of strict environmental controls, requiring low-density development, restricting infill development, excessive fees, and inefficient movement of

permits for proposed projects (BC Ministry of Housing, 2014; Scally, 2013).

Figure 1: How NIMBY attitudes are expressed



## UNDERLYING REASONS FOR SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL NIMBY MANIFESTATIONS

To understand and then combat personal bias and institutionalization of NIMBY attitudes, it is helpful to categorize these fears according to the systems by which they are influenced. Overall, these NIMBY fears can be organized into four broad categories; economic, political, social and spatial.

**1. Economics** fuel many opinions and stances with regards to NIMBY attitudes. They are primarily seen in two forms:

### *Homeownership*

Homeownership is a large factor in shaping NIMBY attitudes (Duke, 2010; Shively 2007). The Homevoter Hypothesis has been developed by

William Fishel, and it argues that homeowners' concerns for their property values influences their attitudes and behaviours towards municipal politics (Fishel, 2001; McGregor, & Spicer, 2016). The term 'homevoters' is coined to represent "homeowners who participate in local affairs in order to protect and enhance the value of their homes (McGregor, & Spicer, 2016). Additionally, homeowners have different attitudes towards local affairs and participate more than renters. Homeowners tend to hold more negative opinions on the construction of new social housing than renters.

### *Gentrification*

Gentrification is defined as "the production of space for progressively more affluent users (Hackworth, 2002)." Gentrification puts pressure

on inner city areas (generally), and can therefore exacerbate issues of displacement of vulnerable peoples. Gentrifying forces have their own brand of NIMBYism that “seeks to remake the built social environment to suit their needs (DeVerteuil, 2013)”, impacting the original and ‘lower-class’ land uses. DeVerteuil argues that NIMBYism is inextricably linked to high social and economic classes.

**2. Politics** can also play a role in shaping NIMBY attitudes. Political influences on NIMBYism are the following:

#### *Public Trust in Governments*

Public trust in governments and politicians is often seen when development is proposed in established neighbourhoods (Tighe, 2010). Residents may feel they have not been consulted in the proposal, or that there is a lack of transparency in the processes. When opposition to projects is already formed, providing data and information, even if it aims to dispel the concerns of residents, is discredited because there is a lack of trust in the motives of the government officials and political leaders (MacNeil, 2004; ULI 2005; Wheeler).

#### *Ideological beliefs*

According to Tighe, people tend to think that NIMBYism stems from practical concerns, like decreasing property values (Tighe, 2010). However, not all issues originate from practical concerns. Concerns can also stem from different ideologies. For instance, if one does not believe that affordable housing is warranted, no amount of data will assuage their concerns.

#### *Electoral cycle*

Electoral cycles impede politicians from dedicating and advocating for resources in support of long term investment programs. Politicians can be in fear that speaking out in favour of services supporting homelessness and

affordable housing will damage their campaigns and funding sources (Jacobs, 2015).

### **3. Planning process**

#### *Growth plans*

When developments are proposed, NIMBY attitudes can be fueled by the lack of a growth plan, or perceived lack. Not demonstrating a clear planning process, and how the development will integrate into the existing community can fuel personal bias, such as the belief that the development will increase traffic congestion (Dear, 1992; Iglesias, 2002).

### **4. Social**

#### *Social attitudes and stigma*

There is a strong sentiment that bringing affordable and low-income housing into communities brings crime. This is due to our society’s association between crime and poverty (Iglesias, 2002; Tighe, 2010).

#### *Racial discrimination and segregation*

Similar to the social attitudes associating crime and poverty, there is often the stigma that different, non-white ethnic groups bring with them crime (Fiske et al 2010; Tighe, 2010). Dear also points to the stigmatization and segregation by the community of those who may have illnesses, such as HIV (Dear, 1992).

#### *Information and media framing*

Studies show that media can fuel existing stereotypes and issues, particularly regarding poorer and minority groups. Media can be a powerful tool that benefits the affordable housing agenda, but ensuring a positive representation of affordable housing and NIMBY issues requires advanced planning (Goetz, 2008; Tighe, 2010).

## 5. Spatial

### *Sense of Place*

When affordable housing is proposed, the changes that it will bring to the community are seen as a threat. There is a sense that the community will lose the sense of place and character that it has cultivated, and people have difficulty accommodating change due to their attachments to these less tangible attributes (Devine-Wright 2009; Ruming 2014).

### *Built environment*

Threats to the built environment are similar to that of sense of place. Communities become concerned with the physical changes that are planned for in their community (Dear, 1992).

### *Visibility of homelessness*

Members of the community worry that building low-income and affordable housing will encourage the establishment of homelessness within their communities (Waagemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).

### *Proximity of site*

The distance at which a resident lives from a facility is a strong indicator of the strength of

their NIMBY attitudes. The closer a resident is to the proposed development, the greater likelihood that they will oppose it (Dear 1992; Jimenez, 2005).

## **URBAN AND SUBURBAN NIMBY STRATEGIES**

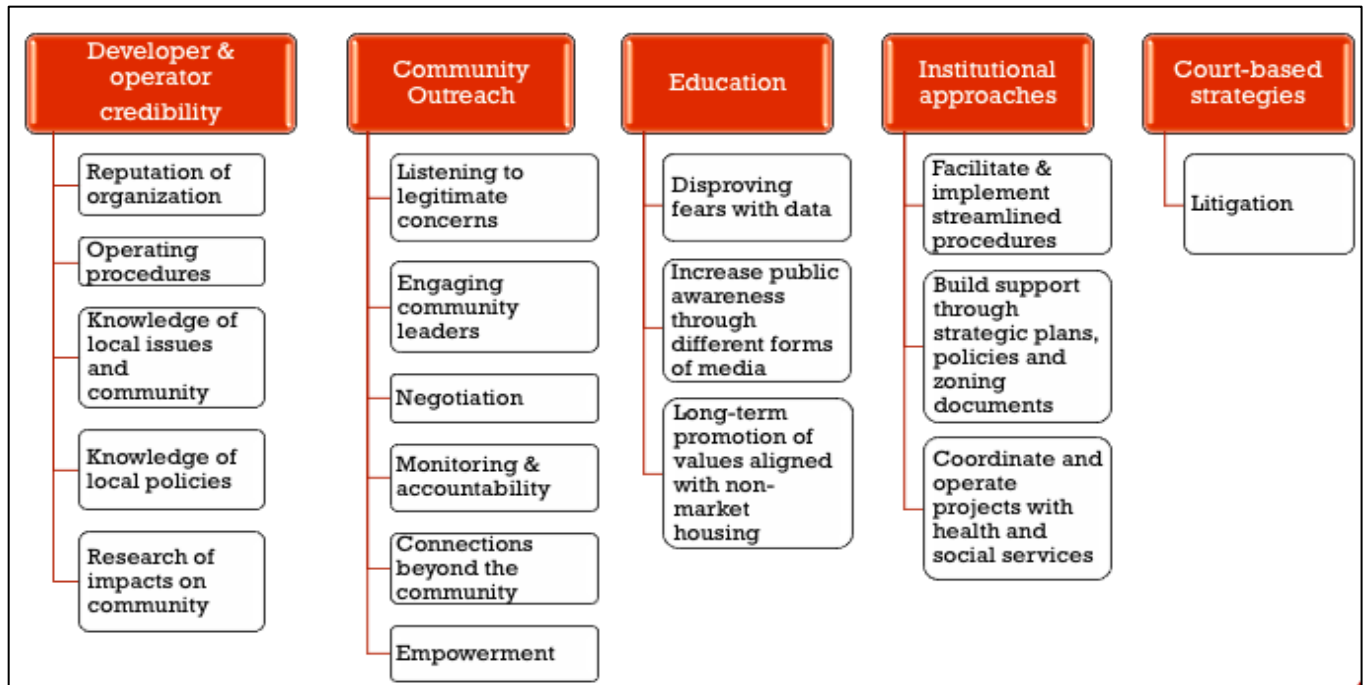
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These NIMBY attitudes and policies require a robust set of strategies to minimize concern and dispel fear and negativity around affordable housing developments. Strategies to successfully minimize NIMBYism come down to assuaging fears and personal concern, as well as preventing these fears from becoming written into policy.

There are broadly five strategies that have been developed for this paper (*Figure 2*), that are recommended to be used congruently to reduce NIMBY attitudes regarding low-income housing. These five strategies have been adapted and synthesized from the literature cited within this report. Each strategy is expanded upon following *Figure 2*, and the cited sources can be further investigated in order to understand how these strategies have been informed.



Figure 2: Five Strategies of Minimizing NIMBYism



## PREDEVELOPMENT: CREDIBILITY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The predevelopment stage is an important time-frame, where certain strategies need to be prioritized. NIMBYism and community opposition are most easily managed by preventing them to take root (Iglesias, 2002).

### *Credibility*

Credibility is an important predevelopment strategy. Credibility of the developer, the future operator of the site, and even the government give a foundation of accountability, reliability, safety and reassurance to the community.

Credibility is shown through the track record and reputations of the developer and operator from past projects. Demonstrating knowledge of local policies, and local community issues are also key to establishing credibility. Developers and their partners should conduct research on the impacts the development would have on the community such as services and amenities (ULI, 2005).

### *Community outreach*

Community outreach is the second major piece to the predevelopment strategy. The developer and its partners need to be able to hear legitimate concerns from the community, and provide mitigation and solutions to these concerns (Iglesias, 2002). Engaging with community is a good way to build transparency and support for the project. Community leaders can be church, school, political, and other leadership roles, and the most effective ways of approaching any community members is informal way (Jimenez, 2005).

### *Coalition building*

Support can be grown outside of the community itself. Developers and their partners should look to build coalitions of beneficiaries and other supporters to engage a broader platform of support (Tighe, 2010).

### *Negotiation*

Negotiation is important to be prepared for. Even the most thoroughly designed plans change. However, the organizations need to be prepared by knowing what they can and are capable of compromising on, and what types of concessions and incentives they will offer the community when challenges are made to the plans (Tighe, 2010; Wheeler, 1994).

### *Community Advisory Committees*

Community Advisory Committees (CACs) are a good way of bringing local leaders and residents together to help “effectively legitimize the activities of the proposed service, incorporate needed technical and advocacy skills, and diffuse opposition (Dear, 1992).” CACs bring together diverse community viewpoints and provide structured and respected environments for issues to be aired, addressed and solved (Dear, 1992; Iglesias, 2002; Affordability and Choice Today, 2009).

## **ONGOING RESOURCES AND TOOLS: EDUCATION, INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES AND LITIGATION**

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Credibility and community outreach are strategies important to employ at the predevelopment stages, but they must be carried throughout the entire low-income housing development project to maintain and continue building positive relationships within the community.

Education, institutional approaches and litigation are strategies that require different timelines or opportunities within the overall strategy, but they are integral in the success of a development as well as the predevelopment strategies.

### *Education*

Education provides tools to be used in predevelopment and community outreach, but education is not just disproving fears with data. Disproving facts with data is an important element to education, but it is not the sole piece. Regional governments and organizations must consider long-term educational pieces, so that they can promote values that are consistent with non-market housing (BC Ministry of Housing, 2014). Disseminating community oriented educational pieces should include outreach via education and communication facilities, mainstream media, and social media (Dear, 1992).

### *Institutional approaches*

Reducing barriers, and facilitating and increasing efficiencies of proposed affordable and low-income housing plans will save time and money (Dear, 1994). Ensuring low-income housing support is built into strategic plans, policies and zoning documents will boost support and awareness of individual low-income and affordable housing projects as they are proposed. Coordinating, operating, and monitoring projects with health services will be mutually reinforcing and breed resilience amongst these services and projects. It will also increase their chances of success (Sally, 2013).

### *Litigation*

Court-based actions have a long history in affordable housing developments (Tighe, 2010). While litigation is not a leading strategy that reduces NIMBY attitudes, it is necessary to be prepared for court-based strategies when defending unconstitutional discrimination by communities; or when communities resist these developments when they have the support of policy through strategic planning documents (Sally, 2013; Tighe, 2010).

## **UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPERS**

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Across Canada, housing and land values have been increasing, and in many cases, there has been a stagnation and/or lack of government funding to adequately support the growing needs surrounding affordable housing. The result is such that the private sector has coupled with local governments in the form of both non-profit and for-profit affordable housing development (ULI, 2005). For-profit developers of affordable housing tend to function on a “double bottom line” philosophy; making a profit, and an altruistic “doing good” for those in need (ULI, 2005).

Non-profit developers of affordable housing are becoming more entrepreneurial, as there is the realization that operating as though they are a for-profit business is needed. Generating profit or revenue aids in the sustainability and long-term success of the organization itself, for its past, present and future projects (ULI, 2005). This is important to acknowledge and understand, as NIMBY attitudes can impede affordable housing developments. When projects are stalled by NIMBYism, it causes loss of bottom lines to both types of organizations, which in turn may prevent the project from moving forward all together. If an affordable housing project is stalled, it may affect the organization’s abilities to take on new affordable development project in the future, due to the financial challenges that manifest with delayed and unfinished projects (Dear, 1992).

The five NIMBY strategies outlined give a robust set of tactics to reduce NIMBY attitudes, and can prevent them from forming altogether. An example of these strategies coming together to successfully build an affordable housing development was accomplished in a high-income neighbourhood in Silicon Valley, when a development firm partnered with a public affairs firm. Opposition was overcome through several avenues. Land use approvals were attained from the city, church leaders and civil right leaders

supported the project, as well as unions, the Chamber of Commerce, regional employers, prospective tenants, and other diverse groups. Media was used to promote and inform the city about the development. Community research and outreach also succeeded in defusing negative attitudes of residents (GCA Strategies). In this case, four tactics were employed; (1) Developer and Operator Credibility, though its knowledge and research done within the community; (2) Community Outreach and (3) Education, due to the use of research and education for local residents, and use of media to support the project; and (4) Institutional Approaches though attaining land use approvals from the City. Litigation (5) was not used, as it was not needed in order to successfully overcome the NIMBY attitudes.

Beyond these 5 Strategies, it is important as well to consider the four main stakeholders that are involved in the entire development process; the developer, the government, the community and the future residents. These parties will all be contributing and affect the future of the neighbourhood, and they must be included throughout the entire planning, building and facilitating process.

## **RURAL NIMBY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

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The causes of NIMBYism are relatively well understood in the urban and suburban contexts, and strategies tend to have been outlined thoroughly. There are different obstacles to overcome when developing affordable housing in rural communities. Because rural communities face different challenges than urban and suburban settings, NIMBYism can arise from different factors. Rural communities across Canada have differing realities, making comparison between rural communities a large

challenge as well. Understanding how rural communities approach affordable housing compared to both urban and suburban as well as between one another is important in order to best strategize for overcoming NIMBY attitudes.

#### *Local awareness*

Affordable housing is a challenge to provide in rural communities. Rural communities tend to display fewer visible signs of homelessness, and instances of couch surfing and crowded accommodations means that housing availability and affordability are not often visible (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014). This means that residents, city council members nor the business sector buy in to the notion of providing affordable housing (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014). “The existence of homelessness counters the mythology of idyllic small-town living, thus it takes more to bring it to the surface as a priority issue (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).”

When addressing issues of affordable and subsidized housing, rural communities often lack a full understanding of housing models. There is a sense that it is a linear progression beginning with shelters. These communities can struggle with building subsidized housing options when they do not have shelters in place first (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).

#### *Budgets*

Smaller population numbers mean that there are often fewer services and amenities available to residents, and fewer funds to run and provide additional amenities and services (Waegemakers Schiff, et al, 2015). When a rural community has a small budget, they are not often able to provide services like shelters or affordable housing stock. And as mentioned previously, when they do have money to spend, these issues seem to be low on the community’s list of priorities (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).

#### *Funding Support*

On top of small budgets, communities get varying degrees of funding and support from other levels of government. Rural communities often have to apply for this funding. Some communities are confused and concerned about their funding rejections, while other communities are unaware of the possible funding streams. Some provinces and jurisdictions require the development of programs and provide funding differently, leading to increased levels of engagement in the affordable housing market (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014). While the level of funding and coordination varies widely from community to community, when “we talk about system planning, we need to acknowledge the system in place at the rural level is likely full of gaps, making it difficult to introduce a comprehensive (and resource- intensive) homelessness [and affordable housing] strategy when disparities exist across social services (seniors, economic development, transportation, child care) (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).”

#### *Housing Stock*

Development patterns are different, which often means a dominant housing typology of single family dwellings, and not a large number of low-rise or apartment buildings. When housing is being built in growing communities, it is often targeted at affluent people relocating (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014). This is also true in rural communities that experience growth patterns related to seasonality, such as tourism (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).

Many northern rural communities also face a lack of building materials, leading to housing stock shortages. When low-income and subsidized housing is not available, people can be forced to leave their communities for other rural communities. In doing so, they become isolated from their own community as their connections are altered (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014).

*First Nations and Aboriginal populations*

Displacement due to lack of housing stock can be especially problematic for Aboriginal and First Nations people. These groups often experience a great deal of racism in urban and suburban areas, where their relative populations are lower, affecting their ability to find places to live (Lee et al. 2007; Patrick, 2014). While the relative majority of First Nations and Aboriginal peoples live in rural communities, racism-fueled NIMBY attitudes and a lack of available and/or affordable housing can cause displacement and isolation of individuals or small groups. For instance, when a community cannot provide housing to a member of an Aboriginal or First Nations group, this individual must move to another community, that may or may not be in

close proximity to their home community. Rural communities often lack adequate transportation options, and the individual may then lack the means to access their home community. Subsequently, cultural support and community ties become strained or weakened, and this leads to the individual’s isolation (Patrick, 2014).

*Economics*

Waegemakers Schiff and Turner demonstrate through the following table, the diversity of rural communities. It highlights key trends in these different Canadian rural communities, and helps to connect homelessness and housing issues with broader economic situations of these rural communities.

**Types of Rural Communities**

*Table 1: Rural Community Housing and Economic Challenges and Opportunities (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 201; Bruce, et al., 2005).*

Growing Communities	Stable or Slow Growth Communities	Declining Communities	Dormitory Communities	Retirement Communities	Northern Communities
<p><b>Challenges tend to be:</b> NIMBYism, increasing land values, and need for services</p> <p><b>Opportunities tend to be:</b> affordable land, and proactive community leadership</p>	<p><b>Challenges tend to be:</b> NIMBYism; limited land for development ; economic uncertainty; need for community services</p> <p><b>Opportunities tend to be:</b> affordable land, and proactive community leadership</p>	<p><b>Challenges tend to be:</b> lack of construction sector; limited economic options; lack of viable housing market; need for community services</p> <p><b>Opportunities tend to be:</b> supply of affordable land and land subdivision potential; proactive community leadership</p>	<p><b>Advantages tend to be:</b> located near a large urban centre, good retail and service industries</p>	<p><b>Advantages tend to be:</b> reasonably close to a large urban centre, good retail, services and health sectors</p>	<p><b>Challenges tend to be:</b> isolated and far distance from markets, large gap between high and low paying jobs, limited expansion options</p>

## **RURAL NIMBY STRATEGIES**

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### *Growing awareness*

The circumstances that cause NIMBYism to arise in rural areas are often hidden, complex, and disparate across rural areas. Despite this, one of the common elements of rural communities is a lack of visibility and awareness of the local need for affordable housing (Waegemakers Schiff, et al, 2015). A recommended starting point would be to raise awareness amongst rural community residents about the need for affordable housing in the area. Given the tight-knit nature that often characterizes rural communities, creating awareness is in some cases easier than in urban and suburban areas that are more spread out or diverse. (Lee et al. 2007).

### *Growing funding*

Funds are a large issue, and increased coordination and transparency with funding agencies needs to be pursued. This will likely involve greater cooperation between different levels of government. With Canada's National Housing Strategy, rural communities may be able to leverage their funding needs more effectively.

Ultimately, there is a scarcity of information on affordable housing for individuals and families living in rural areas (Waegemakers Schiff, et al, 2015). This further challenges the ability of minimizing NIMBY attitudes. Rural NIMBY attitudes can be fueled the same way that urban and suburban values are fueled, but NIMBY attitudes can exist also from lack of awareness, and lack of understanding of the housing situation in that rural community. Every community's needs must be assessed on an individual basis to understand the context of NIMBY attitudes.

Because no action can be taken unless there is an awareness of the affordable housing deficits, the most important aspect of reducing

NIMBY attitudes in rural areas is the need to grow awareness of the need for affordable housing. Growing awareness will shed light on the need to grow funding. Then, *Table 1: Rural Community Housing and Economic Challenges and Opportunities* can help define the type of rural community that is in need of more affordable housing, and then mould the five road Strategies from *Figure 2* (see page 9) to meet the unique factors contributing to NIMBY attitudes in the rural community.

## **EXTINGUISHING NIMBYISM: SHIFTING ATTITUDES AND CULTURE**

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NIMBYism exists because of a set of values that are incongruent with the needs of more vulnerable peoples (Tighe, 2010). This has been outlined how NIMBYism manifests, (page 5), as an individual or a distinct group is threatened, or fears negative repercussions as a result of allowing low-income and affordable housing into their community.

To overcome the disconnect between NIMBY groups and prospective affordable housing tenants, we should ideally aim to change our culture around individuality. An example of this, would be shifting our views on property values. NIMBYism is in part fueled by the belief that property values will decrease with the development of affordable housing in a neighborhood. If our society viewed the benefits of affordable housing as increasing healthy density, and the benefits that it brings to a community, property values would in fact increase (Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, n.d).

Shifting our cultural values is also about connecting to all people. We must continue to grow empathy in our society by supporting and

building inclusive communities, organizations and cultures that will reduce stigma and prejudice toward the wide range of people in need of affordable housing.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

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NIMBY attitudes are not a new phenomenon, and they are widespread and global. Understanding and managing the context of each community, and the roles, responsibilities and

desires of the stakeholders are the most effective and comprehensive ways of reducing NIMBY attitudes, and building successful affordable housing. As each community requires independent consideration, the standard strategies need to be adapted for each unique context, and adjusted as changes occur throughout the development process in a given community. Coordination, communication, trust, and collaboration are the ways different groups will succeed in addressing affordable housing needs.

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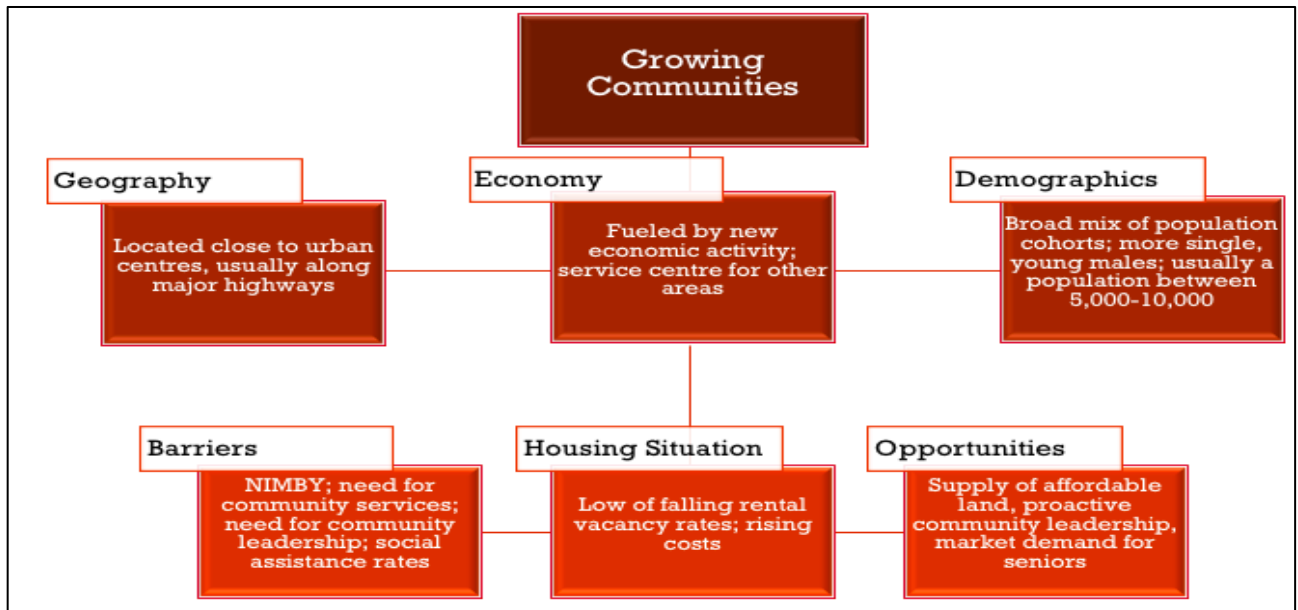
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# APPENDIX

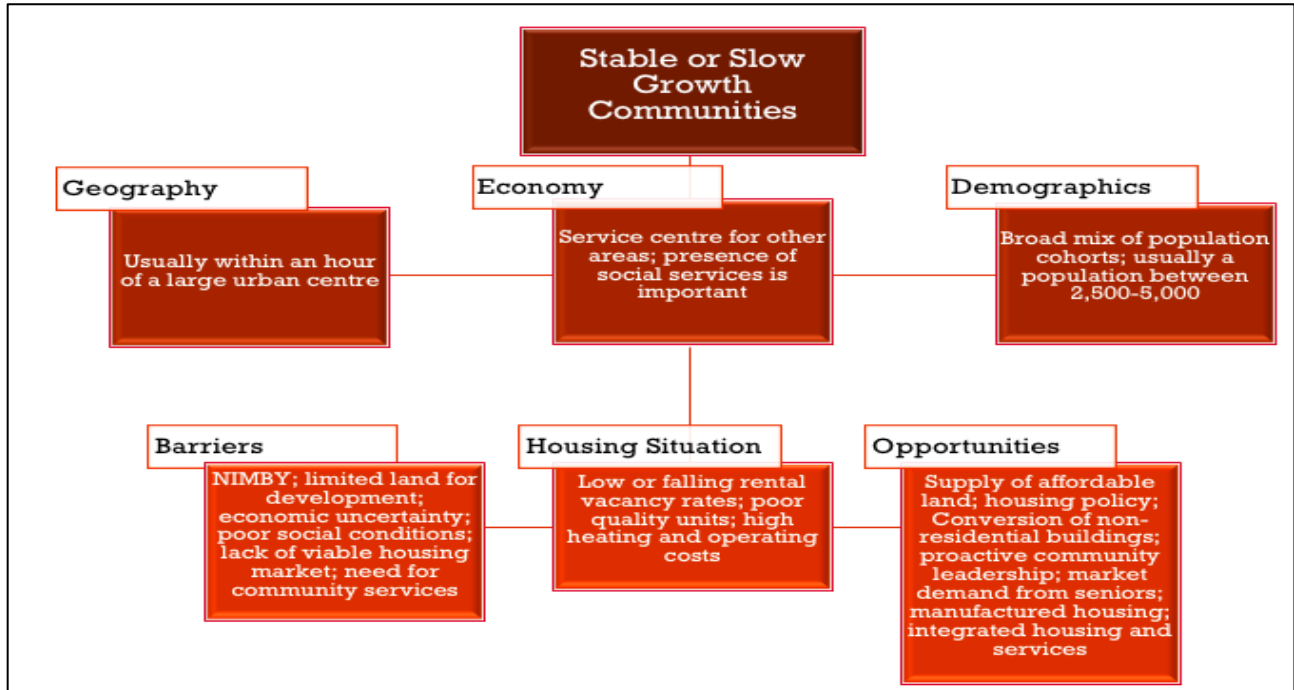
Appendix A:

Rural Community Descriptors, Challenges and Opportunities, adapted from *Rural Community Housing and Economic Case Study Analysis* (Waegemakers Schiff & Turner, 2014 Bruce, D., et al., 2005).

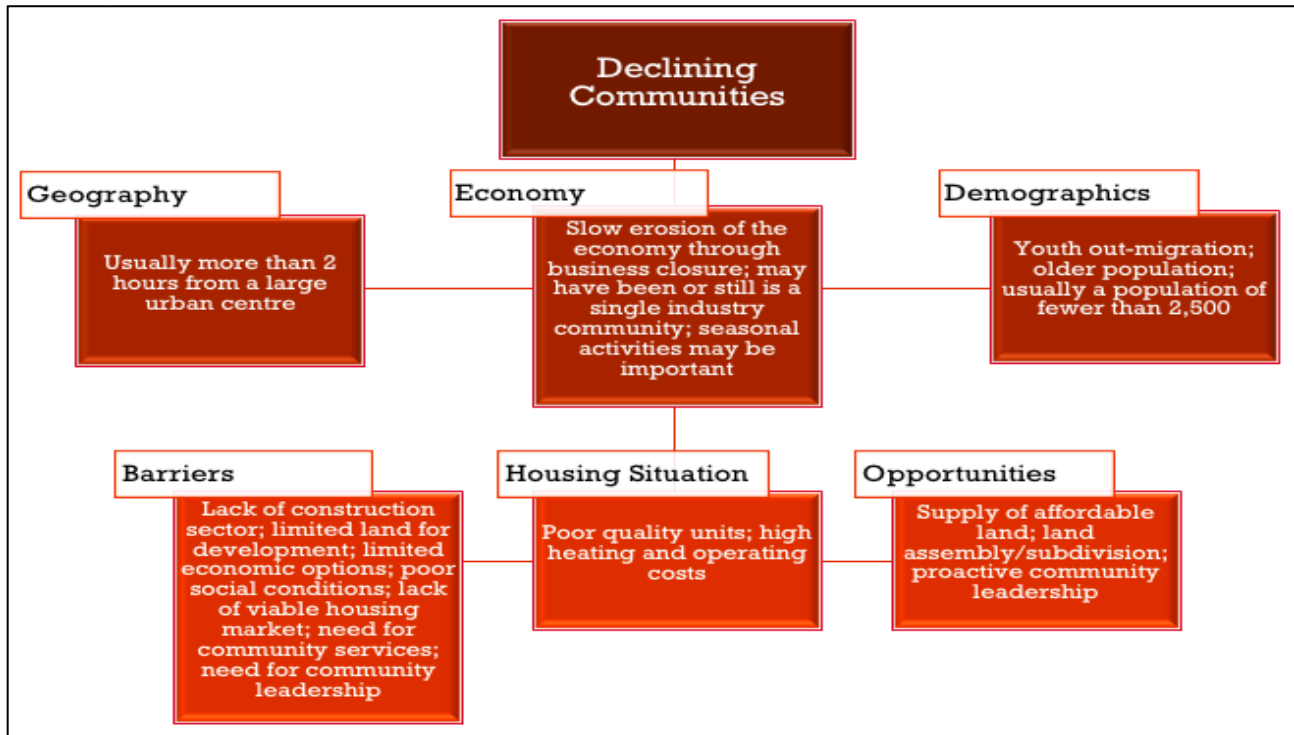
Growing Communities:



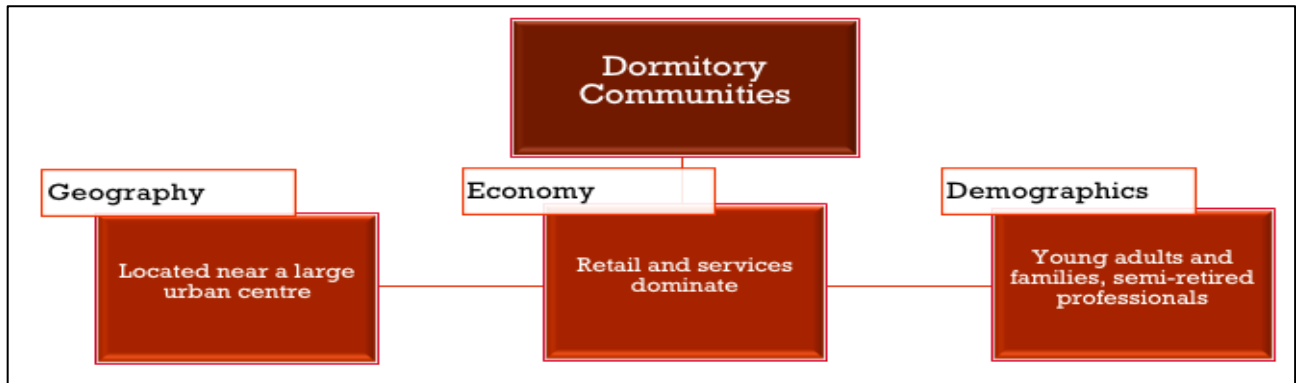
Stable or Slow Growth Communities:



Declining Communities:



Dormitory Communities:



Retirement Communities:



Northern Communities:

