

PROJECT MISSION WRITER



“Without vision there is no power.”

Given the fast-paced funding cycles, demanding development process, and lengthy funding requirements, how do you achieve more for the people and communities you serve? Your efforts must be focused, your stakeholders inspired to move ideas forward, and your team working in sync. Create a vision to guide your team with the Project Mission Writer.

Project mission statements are a powerful tool to:

- distinguish your project in a competitive funding environment;
- ensure project stakeholders make decisions from the same playbook;
- set-up decision making in the value-engineering process; and,
- maintain project continuity throughout staffing changes.

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This workbook is broken down into three parts: Establishing Context, Creating Your Project Mission, and Communicating Your Project Mission.

1) Establishing Context

Good design starts with what is unique about your project: the people it will serve, the community it will join, and your organization’s approach. In this exercise, you will identify your goals for this project based on the assets and needs that you observed through clarifying your context.

2) Drafting Your Project Mission

Next, you will identify your most important priorities and knit them together into a Project Mission Statement. The mission becomes your team’s shared narrative for decision-making and impact, while informing your design team where to focus their efforts.

3) Communicating Your Project Mission

Finally, you will identify internal and external project stakeholders to share your mission statement with. Afterwards, evaluate their feedback and incorporate into your mission as needed.

* The complete Design Matters Toolkit can be found at:
www.EnterpriseCommunity.org/DesignMatters

ESTABLISHING CONTEXT

Good design starts with what is unique about your project: the people it will serve, the community it will join, and your organization's approach. In this section, you will identify your goals for this project based on the assets and needs that you observed through clarifying your context. **Establish your context through the following three exercises:**

1. **Residents:** With your team, brainstorm a few resident stories. Home in on some characteristics, such as their age, occupation, family information; this will help you think about specific building features that respond to resident needs.
2. **Community: Place and People:** Here, you will map your site and identify key resources. Going on a site tour, hosting a community meeting, and speaking with local residents will be essential to a real understanding of the surrounding assets and history.
3. **Organization:** To wrap up, you will identify how this project might help you achieve broader organizational goals.

* This exercise should be completed more than once. First, use this worksheet with your team to understand your baseline knowledge and assumptions. Then, seek out community input in order to ground truth these assumptions. A way to capture their input is meeting the community where they are, such as barber shops, bodegas, playgrounds/parks during the weekends. Need more ideas? Check out the Enterprise [Participatory Design Toolkit](#).



1. RESIDENTS

Trying to plan for residents when you are uncertain who will be moving in can be difficult. However, getting as specific as possible is an opportunity to make a big impact with your building. This exercise helps you think about how real people will interact with the spaces you are creating.

Warm-Up: Resident Story

Imagine a few resident typologies (age, household size, other demographics) e.g. are they a young parent, a teenager, a retiree, or some other group your building will serve?

Deep dive: pick a resident from above and get specific.

Name: _____ Age: _____

Social Identifiers (*race & ethnicity, occupation, marital status, etc.*): _____ Household Characteristics: _____

What are ways this resident might interact with and use the building?

What are their goals?

Project Goals

Considering resident's daily routines, identify any specific needs that could be more effectively addressed (e.g. physical abilities, language barriers, cultural practices, etc.)

What are some outcomes you are trying to help residents achieve?

How might your project help residents advance these outcomes and/or meet their goals?

Who could you speak with to get a better idea about the goals and needs of the resident groups you will be serving? e.g. visit nearby projects serving similar demographics, interview the residents and staff

Project Goals for Residents:
Write at least three potential goals for this project's impact on future residents.

Format your goals:
(verb) + residents' + (noun)
e.g. Reduce residents' exposure to pollution; Improve resident health



2a. COMMUNITY: PLACE

Draw your site and its surroundings. What institutions, assets, and activities currently exist in relevant proximity to the site? If you haven't already, make sure to go on a site tour and speak with local residents to identify any cultural assets you may have missed.

Are there existing community assets or institutions currently serving resident needs?

- Cultural institutions and programs
- Recreational and other open spaces
- Local businesses
- Schools, educational institutions, and programs
- Faith-based organizations
- Community organizations and programs
- Healthcare or wellness institutions and/or businesses
- Public safety groups or services
- Libraries and community centers
- Workforce development services
- Services provided by public/municipal agencies

**How might they become partners or contributors to your project?
What are the opportunities for your building to connect to these physical or social amenities?**

Project Goals for the Community: Write at least three potential goals for this project's impact on the community.

Format your goals: (verb) + (noun)

e.g. Leverage connection to nearby park; Create space to showcase local businesses; Co-locate with early childhood learning center



2b. COMMUNITY: PEOPLE

Take a first pass at this exercise with your team. However, it is essential to develop a community engagement strategy to ground truth the context your team has identified.

Community Assets	Community History	Community Engagement
<p>What cultural assets are present? (e.g. a strong multi-generational Latinx community, a hub for spoken word poetry, a reputation for the best summer street festival)</p> <p>What are skills or strengths among the resident community that might be relevant?</p>	<p>What is the history of your neighborhood, e.g. has redlining or other discriminatory policies impacted the community?</p> <p>How might this project cause community displacement and loss of diversity and culture?</p>	<p>What are your goals for the outcomes of your community engagement and partnership process?</p>
<p>How might this project integrate community character, culture, open space and commercial business in the design decisions?</p>	<p>How might your design or programming prevent or minimize these impacts?</p> <p>How might your project strengthen relationships and cohesion among community members?</p>	<p>Who in the community are often left out of community engagement?</p> <p>How can you adapt your process to ensure their needs and voices are captured?</p>

Project Goals for the Community: Write at least three potential goals for this project's impact on the community.

Format your goals: (verb) + (noun)
 e.g. Address historical impacts of redlining; Champion rich cultural history



3. ORGANIZATION

- **Context:** What is the importance of this project to your organization?
- **Needs:** What goals or outcomes might this project forward for your organization?

Could the project...

- pilot new construction practices or project prototypes, such as panelized construction or accessory dwelling units?
- build trust between your organization and local community?
- improve sustainability practices, such as integrating passive house construction or Enterprise Green Communities?
- leverage better community engagement processes? (How have your current process been successful? What could be improved?)
- integrate arts and culture into the engagement process?
- strengthen your relationship to your design team, funders, construction team, and/or other stakeholders?
- reflect a definition of health that is inclusive of social determinants, mental and physical health, and trauma/stress?

Project Goals for Your Organization: Write at least three potential goals for this project's impact on your organization.

Format your goals: (verb) + (noun)
see right hand column for examples

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DRAFTING YOUR MISSION

Now that you understand the context of your project more deeply, it's time to put it all together. In this section, you will revisit the goals established in the previous section, update them as needed, and coalesce it into your draft project mission.

step 2



CREATING A DRAFT PROJECT MISSION

In the three boxes below, copy the goal(s) from the previous pages that still resonates with you, and add any new goals that may have surfaced.

Resident Goals (pg. 3)

Community Goals (pg. 4 + 5)

Organizational Goals (pg. 6)

Put it all together! Write your project mission:

Pick the 1 or 2 goals from each of the categories above and combine them into a project mission statement. It could just be a bulleted goal list.

Think of this as a roadmap for staying focused as project parameters evolve and as an elevator pitch to share with your stakeholders, internal and external, to gain their input and buy-in on your project's big picture goals.

- Remember, this is just a first draft! So, don't worry about getting the language exactly right. After meeting with stakeholders, update the mission by incorporating their thoughts.
- This is an opportunity for your team to get on the same page about project priorities and goals.
- When working in a group, first complete this activity individually, then collaborate to create a shared version.

Need inspiration? Take a look at sample missions on the next page.

SAMPLE MISSIONS



Sample Missions

1. Prioritize a healthy and connected resident experience through healing-centered design that includes warm amenity and transition spaces with opportunities for resident self-expression and moments of connection; accessible first floor community spaces; and, access to nature. Connect to the surrounding neighborhood by prioritizing early community engagement and providing public green spaces designed to meet resident and community needs.
2. Develop comfortable spaces that meet the unique needs of veterans, and offer access to centralized physical, social, and mental health services that allow residents to heal and thrive. The design will foster connection among residents by creating spaces with a gradient of privacy and with the broader community through an inviting campus.
3. Create farmworker housing that enhances farmworkers' financial well-being and quality of life by: limiting utility costs through energy efficient building placement and features, tailoring building designs to the farmworker lifestyle (such as providing adequate outdoor farm gear storage), and reflecting local cultural practices throughout the design.

Ideas Bank

Need more help getting started? Our ideas bank will guide you in thinking through some important resident- and community-focused goals.

1. How might this project prioritize people? How might you involve residents and/or build local leadership through this project?
2. How might residents be driving/participating/educated/informed about the building and how to use or take advantage of its features?
3. What factors in this project could produce and perpetuate racial inequities?
4. How might your design decisions uplift local culture, creativity, and/or other assets?
5. What existing data and/or community plans exist? How can we ground-truth existing data or plans with community?
6. Who are other people in the community who care about the issues and priorities or could be involved?

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COMMUNICATING YOUR MISSION

Now that you have a *draft* project mission, share this mission both internally and externally and update it to reflect your community and partners' needs and goals. Once you finalize your project mission statement, it will be the goalpost guiding the community impacts you intend to make. **In this section, we'll help you:**

1. **Identify project stakeholders** to discuss your draft mission with. What motivates them? What is your relationship to them?
2. **Map out the influence** each stakeholder has, as well as their level of support for, your project objectives. This will help you visualize where to focus your efforts for any difficult conversations.

step 3



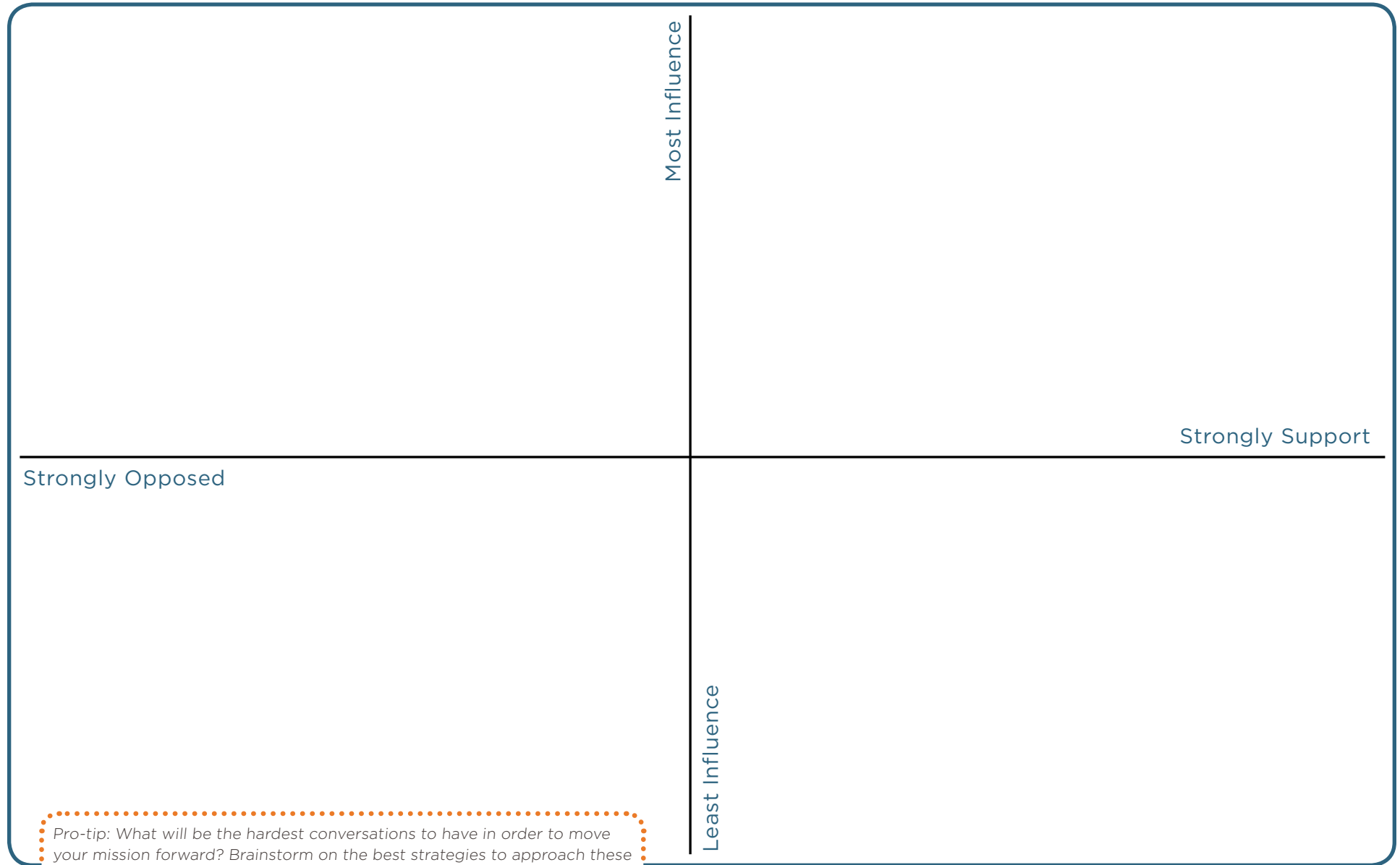
IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

Impact	Interests	Relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will this project affect?• Who must be involved to make the project a success? <p>Residents <i>(think about the different types of residents you will be serving)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What concerns or fears do they have regarding the project?• What motivates or excites them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you characterize your relationship?• Place a star next to final decision makers.
<p>Staff <i>(real estate team, design team, resident services, etc.)</i></p>		
<p>Other Stakeholder Groups <i>(city government, community organizations, support service providers, local businesses, funders, etc)</i></p>		



IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS, PT. 2

How do your stakeholders relate to each other and to your project? This power mapping exercise visualizes the influence each stakeholder has, as well as their level of support for your objectives. Use this as an opportunity to think about the relationships, both positive and negative, that you will have to navigate to achieve your project mission and to reflect on others' perspectives.



Pro-tip: What will be the hardest conversations to have in order to move your mission forward? Brainstorm on the best strategies to approach these conversations with your team.

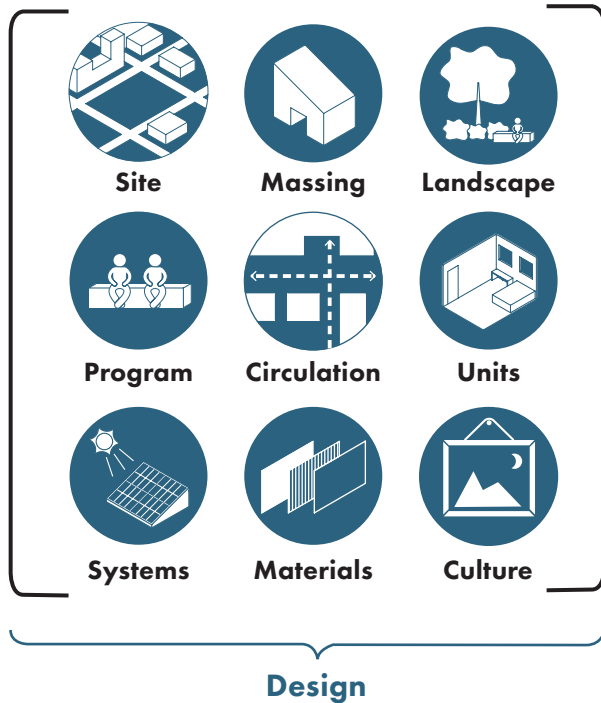
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The Project Mission Writer is part of the Design Matters toolkit, which supports developers in adopting the three core practices of Mission - Design - Impact for achieving people-focused design.

You can access the complete Design Matters Toolkit and accompanying research at www.EnterpriseCommunity.org/DesignMatters.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES PRIMER



Leveraging Design

The tight budgets and difficult sites increasingly synonymous with affordable housing require innovative design solutions. Just like the master of a project *pro forma* can accomplish much more than a novice, a developer with a strong grasp of design principles framed with a holistic design approach can accomplish more for the residents and communities on the same development budget.

Developers with foundational design knowledge:

- save time and money getting to the right design solution earlier in the process;
- confidently advocate for design decisions with funders; and,
- respond with agility when a design strategy is no longer feasible.

Pro-tip: Bring these worksheets to your next meeting with your architect to brainstorm how to interpret mission into concrete designs.

In this workbook you will develop new and innovative design strategies to fulfill on your project's big goals by:

Refining your Project Mission

Design is the process of creating the most elegant development solution possible, which also balances your project's many goals. Therefore, all good design starts with a clear understanding and prioritization of your goals. This exercise starts by refining your objectives and mission.

Aligning Spaces with Mission

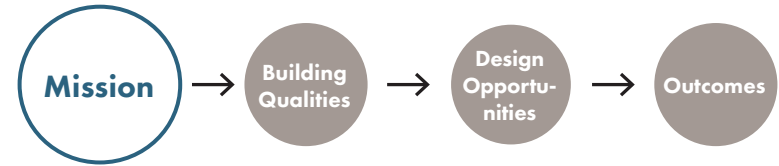
Often, the intended impacts for each of a development's programmed areas (common spaces, offices, etc.) are left until the final stages of design, when it is

difficult to make big picture changes. Here, you will "visit" each component of your building and think about programs or qualities that you would like to incorporate into the space, given your goals. This may also surface new ideas to integrate into your project mission.

3) Leverage Design Principles

With your project goals clearly in place and with some thinking complete about the building qualities you would like to incorporate, you will examine how the 9 Design Principles might be used to forward these objectives.

REFINE YOUR PROJECT MISSION



Revisit your project mission. Pull out the most important objectives as they related to the residents, larger community, and your organization. If you have not yet created a project mission, identify 1-2 goals in each area. Honing in on your goals helps center your thinking on what is important and/or essential as you brainstorm possible design approaches for your development.

Residents

Pro-tip: If you don't yet have a project mission, think about specific resident needs your project might address re: health, well-being, community cohesion, economic mobility, etc.

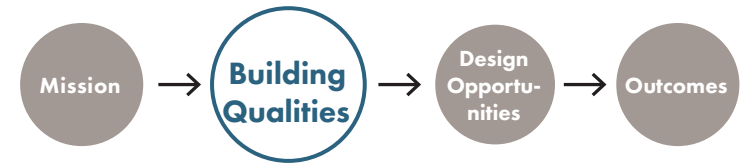
Community

Pro-tip: If you don't yet have a project mission, think about how the community might be impacted by or reflected in your development.

Organization

Pro-tip: If you don't yet have a project mission, consider what role this project might play for your organization or what it might pilot.

ALIGN SPACES WITH MISSION



Use your project mission to guide this exercise. Think about how each space can fulfill your broader objectives.

**We suggest also using this worksheet with your design team to gain mutual understanding of how mission can be translated spatially through programming and design elements. This exercise can be used to inform a more detailed Design Brief (see a template in our Pre-Development Design Toolkit)*

Mission: Common Spaces

What do you want your common spaces to achieve? What values do you want represented?

Mission: Landscape

How do you envision residents interacting with the landscaping? Will it be restorative? Provide exercise? Connect with the external neighborhood?

Mission: Management Areas

What do you want your management areas to achieve? What will be the relationship between the management areas and the wider residential / community spaces?

Mission: Individual Units

How do you want residents to feel about their homes? What amenities can they provide?

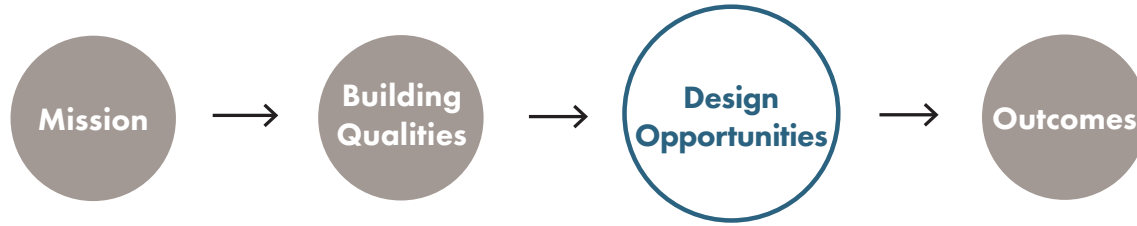
Mission: Hallways + Stairwells

How might your hallways and stairwells impact residents? Could they encourage exercise, health, connection, etc.?

Mission: Other

What are other important goals for the development?

LEVERAGE DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



Below are the 9 core design principles used on all housing projects defined. For this exercise, read the definitions and reflect on how these principle – which are already at play in your projects – might be leveraged to provide additional value and fulfill on your project’s mission.

Design Opportunities

Use this space to write insights for your project.



Site: Where you place and how you position your development within the existing built environment.

How can you leverage your site to create connection to (or separation from) your neighborhood?



Massing: The shape, form, and size of a building.

What massing would allow your project to both be responsive to context while also create a sense of place?



Landscape: Incorporation of planting and the creation of indoor or outdoor space.

How might you activate your project’s landscape for better outcomes?



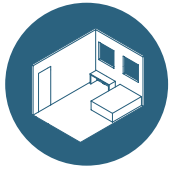
Program: Services included in the building and the purposeful arrangement of those services.

Where are there opportunities to use additional program to benefit residents and the community?



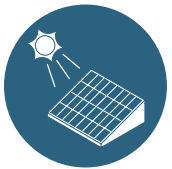
Circulation: How people and things move through and around the building and the site.

How might your project's pathways, adjacencies, and view corridors be intentionally designed?



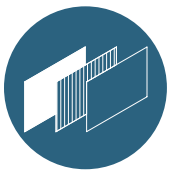
Units: How the individual unit layouts support its occupants' needs and wellness.

Who are you designing for and how will that guide your unit design?



Systems: The building energy, water, mechanical, and ventilation interior and exterior systems, including fixtures and equipment.

What level of innovation or risk are you willing to take with your building systems?



Materials: Used to form, cover, and clad the building.

Where might there be opportunities to leverage material selection to achieve outcomes for your project?



Culture: Cultural elements present an opportunity to leverage design to connect with local culture and create a sense of identity.

How might your project be culturally responsive to its future residents and neighborhood context?

IMPACT MEASUREMENT GUIDE



Impact

Measure your impact. Share your story.

In pursuing good design, it's valuable to become a well-evidenced advocate. Projects already contend for scarce resources, and you may be asking funders to take a risk and go beyond the norm. By sharing your impact, you can ensure funders and other stakeholders alike that the building elements you propose do have meaningful outcomes for people. That being said, impact measurement is a big task that could easily become an afterthought. How do you get started? Refining 1-2 areas you would like to measure and charting clear steps early on keeps measuring impact straightforward.

The practice of evaluating impact allows you to:

- make powerful, data-driven arguments for investing in quality, people-focused buildings;
- adapt your project designs based on previous projects to be as efficient and effective as possible; and,
- distinguish your team in a competitive funding ecosystem.

In this workbook, you will do the foundational work to measure and promote your project's impacts:

1) Decide what to measure

You don't need to measure everything. Before undertaking an effort to measure outcomes, you will start to think about what areas of your mission would be most important to measure and share with stakeholders.

2) Target your scale of impact

Building designs can create impact at various scales. In this exercise, you will think about which level of impact you would like to pursue.

3) Map Your Strategy

Based on your goals for impact, you will brainstorm two specific design interventions that could achieve that impact.

4) Chart Next Steps

Effective impact measurement requires thoughtful planning, from your building's design through to actual measurement. You will likely need to involve multiple partners and may need to seek professional help. By refining your targeted goals above, working with outside assistance becomes an obtainable goal.



DECIDE WHAT TO MEASURE

What are the two goals that you hope to achieve through your development (for residents, the community, the environment, etc.) that you think could benefit from having evidence of their effectiveness. *If you completed the Project Mission Writer, refer back to your Project Mission for ideas.

1

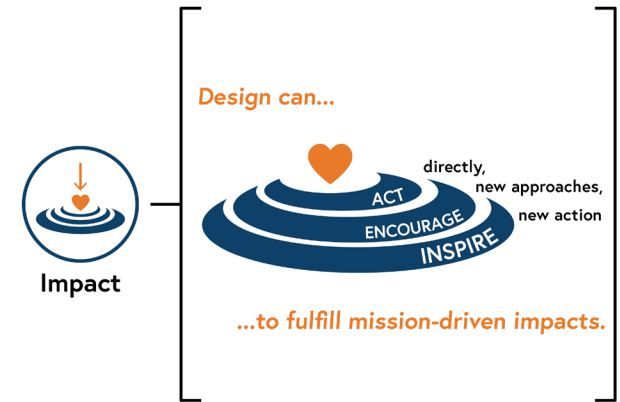
Example: impacting resident health, specifically decreasing childhood obesity.

2

- Outcomes measurement can be a rigorous process, so we recommend that you start by trying to measure the effectiveness of one or two design interventions.
- Are your goals health-related? Refer to our **Health Action Plan** for a step by step plan for identifying and incorporating health-based goals into project design.

TARGET YOUR SCALE OF IMPACT

Refer back to your mission: what are the two most important focus areas you would like to accomplish through your development? Reflect below on the three different scales at which design might help you achieve your intended impacts.



Design can...

...act directly

Example: By designing well-placed solar panels on a building's roof, the building's design directly decreases its energy demand, with little additional action needed.

How might your development's design act to directly create the outcomes that you intend?

...encourage new approaches

Example: Adding a prominent and/or beautifully designed staircase to a building encourages residents to take the stairs.

How might your development's design encourage new approaches to support the outcomes you intend?

...inspire new action

Example: A series of art installments inspired by local history and culture inspires more pride in the neighborhood in the passersby.

How might your development's design encourage others around you to take new actions?



MAP YOUR STRATEGY

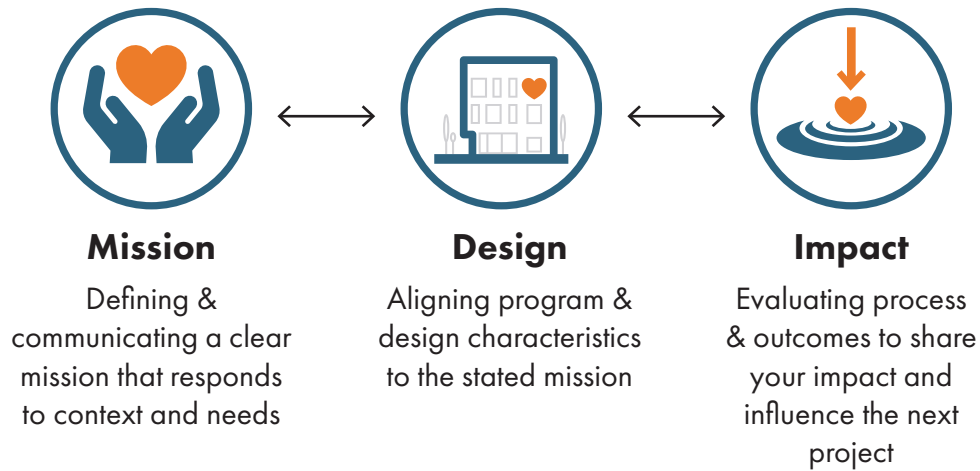
Pick one of your two desired outcomes to focus on. Use your understanding of design principles to think about how design might drive the outcome you identified. **Pro-tip: Before moving forward with any one strategy, scan the field for other evidence based approaches and seek industry specific resources (i.e. senior design guidelines, etc.).*

Desired Outcome:

Example: decrease childhood obesity

	Design Intervention	Assumptions + Actions	Outcomes
Design Idea #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are 2 core design interventions that can help us achieve our mission? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are we making? What needs to happen to achieve the desired outcome? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key outcomes that we expect to see? How might we measure them?
Design Idea #2	<p><i>Example: Addition of playground</i></p>	<p><i>Children can access the playground and are interested in using it.</i></p>	<p><i>Increased exercise time; minutes spent on playground each week</i></p>

CHART NEXT STEPS



Effective impact measurement starts with choosing the right design intervention to measure and choosing your metrics early in the process. Congratulations – you have started that process! Skilled support goes a long way in making effective measurement happen. Below we chart next step to move into action:

What local outcomes measurement resources might you harness from nearby educational/ research institutions or otherwise to help you move forward?

Who will reach out to them and by when?

What other actions do you see to take?