

# How to Scare Off Builders

**1** Bunker Hill. Chavez Ravine. The Los Angeles Convention Center. The history of poor people being moved out of their homes by big projects decades ago prompted community activists to insist that city planners formally consider social consequences. Fast-forward to today. Before approving new developments, the city planners now ask plenty of questions in advance. In addition to more technical concerns, like zoning, earthquake safety and building setbacks, they ask about social effects: Will construction increase or reduce affordable housing in a neighborhood? How many new jobs will the project create?

USC plans a new privately financed \$70-million sports arena near the campus. It will create new business activity on a corner where there now is a parking lot. Yet some activists are trying to throw bureaucratic obstacles in front of this project and others, in the form of a "community impact report."

Such a report would add onerous requirements. A hearing on whether to make the report part of every large commercial or housing development within the Community Redevelopment

Agency's jurisdiction will be held by the agency Thursday. The idea of a community impact report is a bad one. Politically savvy builders already work with local residents to win support. When USC's neighbors objected to the arena's size, architects made it smaller. Concerns about traffic on game days prompted changes to a planned parking structure. Union construction jobs? Check. Minority hiring? Check.

Why is this not enough? The push for the report is part of a bigger power struggle, with the sports center merely the object of the moment. The objections were launched late by those whose agendas are tied to a burgeoning local labor movement.

Politicians and planners can already ask hard questions about how a project will affect local residents, and they can already persuade developers to do better. A community impact report is redundant. Worse than that, it would be certain to discourage development in the areas that needed it most. Escalating and unreasonable demands would only drive away investors who could make good money and get less grief elsewhere.

**1** Do the research. Anticipate questions and know the answers.

**2** Initiate and execute consensus-building programs

**3** Develop relationships with local government



# Build Your Project on a Solid Foundation

Let us help you create a positive image of your project, communicate with the community and build ongoing relationships with local government officials. We have the strategies, the tactics and a staff of industry experts to give you the tools to help you earn project approval.

- Community Outreach
- Coalition Building
- Media Relations
- Government Relations
- Marketing
- Brand Building
- Land Use Entitlement
- Urban Planning

Don't risk your next development project by not knowing the pulse of your community. Call us and we can discuss a program specifically designed to meet your needs.

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