

DEVELOPER RESOURCE TEAM

GREEN DEVELOPMENT ZONE HOMES



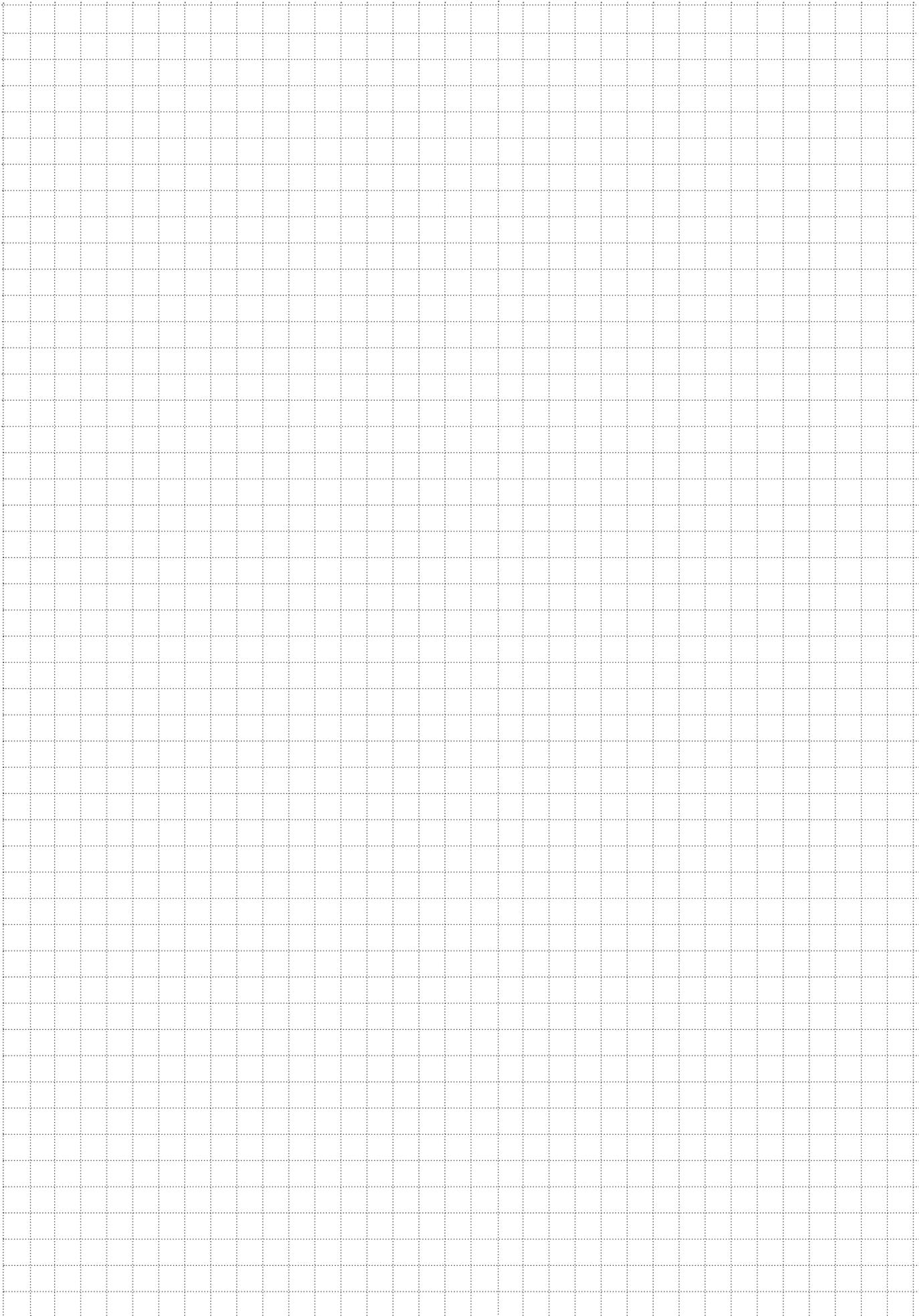
People United For Sustainable Housing (PUSH)

Buffalo, NY



Jenifer Kaminsky is an urban planner whose work focuses on community development and creation of affordable housing. She currently resides in Buffalo, New York, where she serves as Director of Planning and Community Development for the Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Co (BNSC), the housing development arm of People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH). In this capacity, she leads BNSC's efforts to create high quality, green affordable housing on Buffalo's West Side and to reclaim vacant lots as opportunities for stormwater management and community green space.

Prior to coming to Buffalo, she helped create shared-equity housing cooperatives with the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) in New York City and develop affordable housing in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston with the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corp (JPND). Ms. Kaminsky holds a Master of City Planning degree with a focus on Housing and Community Economic Development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).



DEVELOPER RESOURCE TEAM

GREEN DEVELOPMENT ZONE HOMES

About PUSH

PUSH Buffalo's mission is to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing, expand local hiring opportunities and advance economic justice in Buffalo. Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company (BNSC), PUSH's development arm, works within a 25-block neighborhood that they designated as a Green Development Zone (GDZ) in 2008.

The GDZ is a place-based initiative that uses place making and other techniques to engage residents. They also implement green affordable housing construction, community-based renewable energy projects, housing weatherization, green jobs training, green infrastructure, and urban agriculture. The work stems from their community organizing with residents on the issues most important to the residents – vacancy and abandonment, lack of good jobs, and high utility bills from living in houses with little to no insulation.

BNSC has also looked at how projects can create jobs. For example, they incorporated local and targeted hiring goals into contracts with project general contractors and have leveraged their workforce development efforts within green construction to ensure a pool of ready and skilled workers.

Project Description

The BNSC's GDZ Homes project will restore two buildings, 412 and 417 Massachusetts Avenue. At 412 Massachusetts Avenue, the project will stabilize an 11-unit multifamily home. Five of the units in that building will be affordable to households with incomes at or below 50% of area median income (AMI) and 6 of the units, 60% AMI.

The 417 Massachusetts Avenue project component will stabilize a building that sits on a prominent corner and will include nine units of affordable housing. The ground floor commercial space will provide an important neighborhood anchor with the WASH Project Laundromat and Cultural Arts Center: A walking-distance laundromat is a critical neighborhood need. In addition, recognizing that laundromats are gathering places, the WASH project incorporates cultural and arts programming, establishing it as an outlet to create and engage in art, music, and literacy, as well as a neighborhood access point for information. Many of the WASH Project's programs are targeted to members of the neighborhood's diverse refugee populations.

Project Context

Within a quarter mile of 412 and 417 Massachusetts Avenue, there is a city park, urban farm, twice-weekly farm stand, a stop for a major cross-town bus route, and small retail businesses. The Massachusetts Avenue corridor is at the center of a concerted neighborhood improvement effort with focused investment of public and private funds. New York State and the City of Buffalo have invested in rehabilitating long vacant and substandard structures near 412 and 417 Massachusetts Avenue. Now those rehabbed buildings are anchors, stopping the area's downward drift.

Institute Goals

- **Building Systems**

Consider how to translate project innovations into a design manual for our design teams. Consider how development professionals might best engage in design work; including creating questions and goal markers that staff can create at project start to guide the design team.

- **Maintaining Innovation**

Create stronger strategies for ensuring compliance with funder/lender guidelines while keeping as central: design, innovation and resident needs. For example, BNSC has attempted to incorporate green infrastructure tools, including rain gardens for storm water management. Such measures go beyond code and funder requirements. As such, they can be viewed as additional work to design and manage, versus central project elements.

- **Innovation**

Learn innovative ideas in the areas of project accessibility, environmental sustainability, and the use of design to engage residents in projects.

- **Meaningful Participatory Planning**

Explore new strategies to incorporate the results from meaningful participatory planning processes, while also maintaining project feasibility.

For their GDZ Homes project, PUSH has faced all the above challenges and is still working through them. For example, how should PUSH incorporate storm water management on the two small sites, how do they incorporate accessibility and universal design into rehab scopes, and what are meaningful engagement opportunities for neighbors.