DESIGN PRINCIPLES PRIMER

Site

Massing

Landscape

Program

Circulation

Units

Systems

Materials

Culture

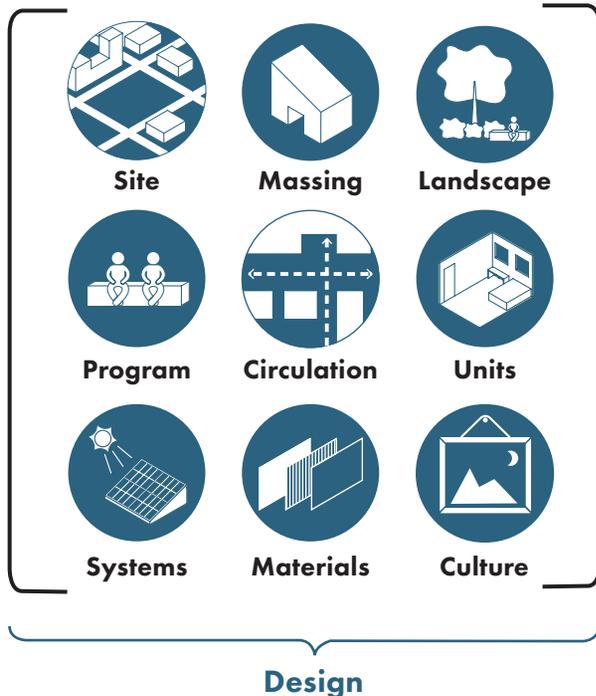**Design**

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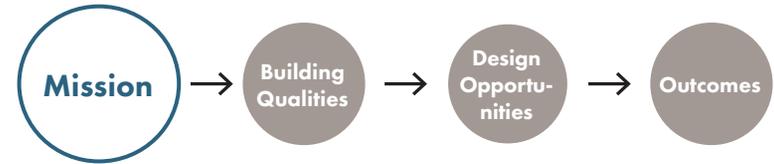
Revisit your project mission. Pull out the most important objectives as they related to the residents, larger community, and your organization. If you have not yet created a project mission, identify 1-2 goals in each area. Honing in on your goals helps center your thinking on what is important and/or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

Mission → Building Qualities → Design Opportunities → Outcomes
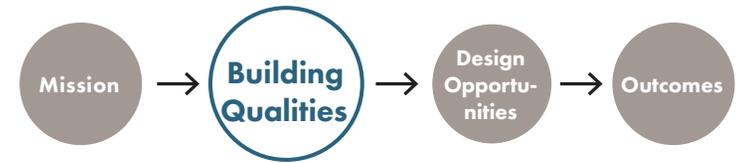
Use your project mission to guide this exercise. Think about how each space can fulfill your broader objectives.
We suggest also using this worksheet with your design team to gain mutual understanding of how mission can be translated spatially through programming and design elements. This exercise can 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

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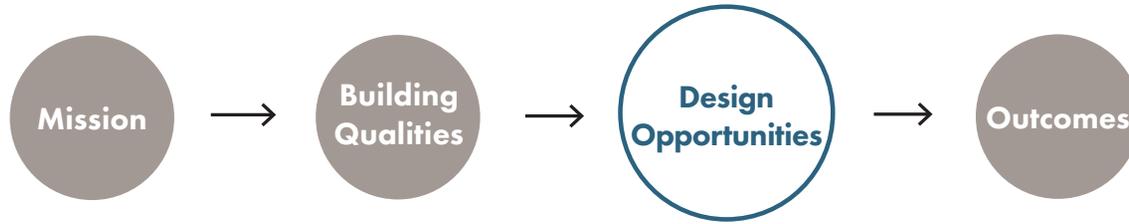
Below are the 9 core design principles used on all housing projects defined. For this exercise, read the definitions and reflect on how these principle – which are already at play in your projects – might be leveraged to provide additional value and fulfill on your project's mission.

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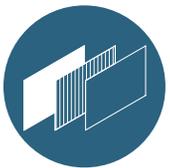
Units: How the individual unit layouts support its occupants' needs and wellness.

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?