With predictions for the needs of affordable housing ever increasing, there is an ever growing pressure to develop innovative ideas and strategies. While no single strategy will mitigate this problem, we will need to leverage multiple opportunities into the built environment. This will not be accomplished just through public policy and urban planning; we will need to take advantage of our extraneous resources.

"Architecture starts when you carefully place two bricks together" Mies van der Rohe.

It is often said that cities lack the resources to fill the gap in need for affordable housing, but communities invest a lot of resources in single-use structures and infrastructure. If we could leverage these resources in a simple and effective way, it may allow for a new typology, creating a pre-planned second life to these utilitarian structures.

This proposal looks at the problem of providing good affordable housing to those in need through two lenses.

First, suggesting there are opportunities with semi-permanent infrastructure; such that happens responding to large scale disaster events, world gatherings (i.e., Olympics), areas receiving substantial influxes of seasonal labor, or even temporary festivals. These spaces can be adapted and remade, keeping temporary structures, such as modular buildings, available for future use. This approach results in an economic flexible site-neutral system.

Second, suggesting there are "systems" in place that could be leveraged or engineered to allow for a second, more meaningful life. These modified "pre-engineered" systems provide an opportunity for meaningful change in how the built environment is developed and shaped. Use of a simple clear span structure acting as an armature for an immediate need (i.e., hurricane relief) can concurrently support important infrastructure, such as making electricity and collecting rainwater. This structure can be clad in readily available materials, from plywood to high-performance insulated panels. After its purpose is served, it can be adapted to a new program. Prefabricated housing units could be shipped and hung from the structure using a series of cables, reducing the need for a brick and mortar construction site. Other infrastructure items could be reused, such as sheet piles and Jersey barriers for temporary parking, storage, or mobilization space. Through thoughtful planning, these utilitarian developments can seamlessly transform into valuable community resources.