

Engage

Neighborhood Engagement
Strategic Plan
for
Habitat for Humanity
of Orange County



Habitat
for Humanity®
Orange County, NC

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Nearing its 40th year of providing affordable housing opportunities in Orange County, Habitat is at an inflection point. At this point in Habitat's evolution, there is an increased need to both understand the current conditions and trends of the communities it serves as well as to develop a structured and coordinated response to community engagement moving forward. This plan was developed in collaboration between Habitat for Humanity of Orange County, NC, UNC's Community Practice Lab in the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy in the Department of Health Sciences, and community consultants that included both Habitat homeowners and non-Habitat homeowners.

Need for the Plan

As Habitat's approach to community development is evolving, the organization has identified a necessity for intentional community engagement. Understanding how and when Habitat should connect with the broad communities in which they are building is **necessary to support ethical and sustainable community engagement**. Additional compounding factors that necessitated this plan were **an aging housing stock** of both Habitat homes and in general in Orange County, NC. Habitat **homeowners are also aging** and will likely need additional support as they transition into elderhood. As Habitat responds to an increased need for affordable and accessible housing, its **paradigm and volume for building have shifted**. Building larger and more diverse developments engenders more responsibility over the communities they manufacture.

Plan Development

This plan was developed over the course of a year (Aug 2022- June 2023). The team included Habitat staff from the Homeowners Services Department, staff and students from the UNC's CPL, and community consultants who brought multiple varying lived experiences of Habitat community to the process. In the Spring, Masters of OT students researched and developed the ideas of this team further, offering structure and content to the approach. In May and June, the plan was refined and organized into the 5-year plan below.

Strengths and Actions Needed

Habitat and the communities in which it works **bring numerous strengths and opportunities** to this work. With **passionate staff and dedicated community members**, Habitat is well poised to leverage its international network of affiliates and resources, including a helpful Quality of Life Framework, to engage with local Orange County neighborhoods effectively and sustainably. However, it is not without its challenges. To mobilize an effective neighborhood engagement strategy, we identify **four specific areas for action** that Habitat must address: 1) **Increasing Habitat capacity** for neighborhood engagement, 2) **Facilitating communication** among Habitat and community, 3) **Cultivating cohesion** among diverse communities, and 4) **reinforcing community leadership** and decision-making actions.

Components of the Approach

To achieve the goals of this plan and take the actions described above we propose an approach that hinges on five core components: **1) Resident Leadership, 2) Staff Capacity, 3) Competencies and Training, 4) Neighborhood Engagement Activities, and 5) Evaluation**. Resident leadership as a foundation for neighborhood engagement is emphasized as the anchor for all other activities.

- 1) **Resident Leadership:** We propose the organization and support of **local resident leadership groups** in each Habitat-affiliated neighborhood if they are not already in existence. We also propose the development of a **resident leadership coalition** that bring these leaders together to direct Habitat's work.
- 2) **Staff Capacity:** We propose the hiring of **three new types of employees** under a Neighborhood Engagement Team (NET) that will sit within the Homeowner Services Department. This includes a team manager, neighborhood engagement coordinators, and community advocacy specialists.
- 3) **Competencies and Training:** We propose a **holistic and critical approach** to neighborhood engagement that is rooted in strengths-based approaches, antiracism, cultural responsiveness, and resident leadership. We also propose operational skills for the team and Habitat in community advocacy and coalition building.
- 4) **Neighborhood Engagement Activities:** We provide an **overarching trajectory** for how staff will engage with communities and what activities might be helpful for them to be participating in given varying community contexts. As communities are different and ever evolving, we offer some **specific tailored approaches based on foundational outcomes** of community quality of life.
- 5) **Evaluation:** We suggest development of **specific evaluation methods** throughout the neighborhood engagement process that will reveal both **formative and summative** outcomes for Habitat's neighborhood engagement process. We propose that Habitat measure both its own effectiveness as well as the community's perceived health and well-being. As the NET develops, we **expect the evaluation process and measures to gain more form and detail.**

5-Year Plan

Given the components suggested, we propose a **5-year process** to initiate, assess, build capacity, and ensure sustainability of Habitat's neighborhood engagement initiative. In this process, we suggest **initiating the team's work in Hillsborough** due to its strong community foundations and Habitat's existing sustained engagement. We also propose **beginning initiatives within Habitat** as an organization that will work to integrate the NET approach into all departments, particularly the emphasis and value on resident leadership and decision making. Following Hillsborough, we suggest the team focuses on the Chapel Hill and Carrboro area and then move into the broader County jurisdictions. To do this, we propose a **phased hiring process** of new NET members.

Conclusion

Habitat's impact on Orange County is clear. Affordable housing and more accessible homes have been increased significantly through its work. However, as its paradigm shifts and larger, more complex communities emerge from its work, neighborhood engagement is needed. With strength in time, treasure, and talent, Habitat is prepared to take on the responsibility of more intentional engagement with the communities in which it works to amplify resident leadership, respond to community contexts, and facilitate vibrant homes and communities for the long term.

Background for the Plan

Habitat for Humanity of Orange County, NC (hereinafter referred to as “Orange County Habitat” or “Habitat”) is a non-profit organization that addresses the need for safe, decent, and affordable housing through new home construction and home preservation. Since 1984, Habitat has built nearly 350 affordable homes and repaired over 250 homes for low-income households in Orange County.

In response to a growing need for affordable housing in the county and region, Habitat is significantly increasing the number of homes it builds each year. For instance, Habitat is in the early construction stages of its largest development to date, Weaver’s Grove, which is a planned mixed-income residential community with 239 units, 101 of which will be Habitat homes. (Habitat for Humanity of Orange County [HHOC], n.d.). Figure 1 details a concept map for Weaver’s Grove, which includes a mixture of housing types, including single-family homes, duplexes, and condos, along with a variety of amenities, such as a community center, garden, playground, splash pad, coffee shop, and basketball court (Weaver’s Grove, 2023).

Figure 1: Weaver’s Grove Concept Plan



Source: weaversgrove.org

Beyond building homes, Habitat’s program model emphasizes engaging the communities it serves through a neighborhood revitalization strategy, which includes “partnering locally with residents and community leaders and organizations to best address real concerns and improve the lives of the people who live in the neighborhood.” (Habitat for Humanity International [HFHI], 2023a). Locally in Orange County, this work has included activities such as critical home repair projects, development of community gardens, financial literacy and home maintenance workshops, and affordable housing advocacy campaigns (Triangle J Council of Governments [TJCOG], 2020).

Nearing its 40th year of providing affordable housing opportunities in Orange County, Habitat is at an inflection point. To date, Habitat has ties to over nearly a dozen unique communities across the county. Soon, this footprint is going to expand as Habitat plans to grow quite significantly. At this point in Habitat’s history, there is an increased need to both understand the current conditions and trends of the communities it serves as well as to develop a structured and coordinated response to community engagement moving forward.

In the fall of 2022, Habitat partnered with the Community Practice Lab at UNC’s Division

of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy (“UNC CPL”) to develop a five-year strategic plan for neighborhood engagement. Accompanying this strategic plan is a baseline report that provides an in-depth look at Habitat’s homeowners, homes, and communities to date. Together, the strategic plan and baseline report serve as foundational tools to ensure Habitat can best serve Orange County, NC for years to come.

Habitat & The Community Practice Lab

[The Community Practice Lab \(CPL\)](#) in the Department of Health Sciences in the School of Medicine at UNC-Chapel Hill is an interdisciplinary team, led by Dr. Ryan Lavalley, that partners with local organizations to support initiatives, program development, and community engagement most often in the realms of aging and housing justice. Through creative scholarship, innovative program development, and committed partnerships, the lab catalyzes and expands community-driven, sustainable, and knowledge-based initiatives while cultivating leaders and practitioners working to enhance quality of life, equity, and justice across diverse communities and systems.



Prior to the creation of the CPL in 2019, Habitat partnered with Dr. Ryan Lavalley in projects around aging and housing since 2017. In the 21-22 academic year, Habitat partnered with the CPL to facilitate and develop [a strategic plan for the Dorothy Johnson Community Center](#) in the Fairview community of Hillsborough, NC informed by a parallel oral history collection project. This partnership was expanded over the 22-23 academic year to bolster Habitat’s neighborhood engagement across Orange County. All these projects have involved student support.

Compounding Factors That Necessitate a Plan

Aging Habitat Home(owner)s

The proportion of Habitat’s existing homes and homeowners that are older is growing. The median age of Habitat homes is 15 years old, with nearly one-third of homes being over 20 years old. The median age of current Habitat homeowners is 53 years old, compared to the county average of 34 years. Currently, nearly one in three (32%) of Habitat homeowners are over the age of 55 years old. Moreover, the share of Habitat homeowners who are older adults is expected to steadily increase in the coming years.

Habitat’s Paradigm Shift

Habitat has primarily built single-family detached homes. However, due to changing housing needs and availability, Habitat has shifted its construction strategy to constructing large-scale, mixed-income communities with diverse housing types. In the coming years, Habitat is projected to build primarily duplexes, townhomes, and multi-family properties. Habitat duplexes in Northside (located in Chapel Hill) and townhomes in Crescent Magnolia (located in Hillsborough) serve as two recent examples.

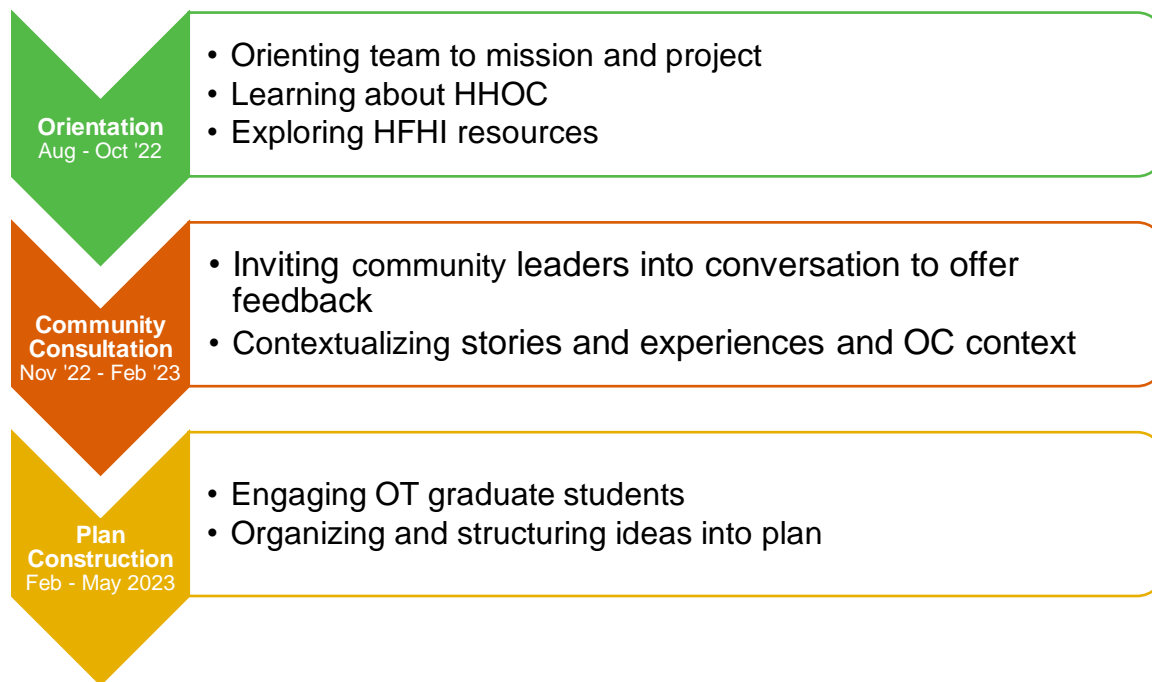
Significant Growth in Home-Building

Habitat is preparing to significantly expand its building efforts. From 1987 to 2022, Habitat built nearly 350 homes, ranging from 2 to 22 homes built annually. Habitat’s 2023-2027 strategic plan seeks to build 110 homes over the next five years. Beyond Weaver’s Grove, Habitat plans to be a part of building several other large-scale developments, including Homestead Gardens in Chapel Hill and East Village in Hillsborough. An expanded building footprint will exacerbate needs for community support and engagement. This expected growth requires a more defined and planned effort to engage the communities prior to new construction as well as more concerted efforts to support upcoming Habitat homeowners connect to their new communities.

2022-2023 Process and Activities

Overarching Process

The process to develop a neighborhood engagement approach for Habitat was launched in August 2022 by the staff of Homeowner Services in consultation with the Community Practice Lab (CPL) of the Department of Health Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This process consisted of three phases. Each phase sought to gather and organize information for the next



Fall 2022 (Orientation and Community Consultation)

During the initial stages, Habitat and CPL staff reviewed resources and tools produced by Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) and reflected on neighborhood engagement activities that had already been implemented by Habitat in Orange County. The **neighborhood revitalization's Quality of Life Framework** developed by HFHI was identified as an intuitive backbone for the project, especially the foundational outcomes of **sense of community**, **social cohesion**, and **collective action** (HFHI, 2019).

Input from members of the community is essential in the community building and planning process. Therefore, the team identified community consultants who had a variety of experiences with Habitat, including living or working in communities where Habitat has built homes (i.e. Crescent Magnolia, Chestnut Oaks, Fairview, Northside, Phoenix Place). We developed the processes (including producing a MOU) to invite and compensate the consultants for their time. Four community consultants joined the team for regular meetings and at times independently interviewed by a CPL team member to provide insights through their experiences living in Habitat neighborhoods and working with Habitat. The consultants' lived experiences highlighted realities in Habitat's current neighborhood engagement process and approaches that enhanced or hindered each of the foundational outcomes in the Quality of Life Framework.

During these team meetings we covered the following topics and goals:

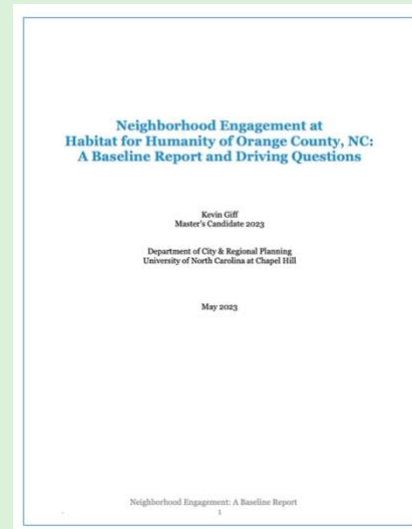
- Introductions and team building
- Reviewing and discussing the Quality of Life Framework
- Reflecting on Habitat's historical activities and overarching program process
- Discussing a common agenda, shared process, and resident directed team
- Reflecting on current job responsibilities through lens of Quality of Life Framework
- Describing barriers and facilitators of Habitat's neighborhood engagement
- Listening to consultant experiences with Habitat's program, presence, and staff
- Discussing particular stories of when Habitat supported or did not support sense of community, social cohesion, and collective action efforts
- Identifying Habitat's concrete role in addressing challenges to achieving foundational outcomes in various communities

Spring 2023 (Plan Construction)

Six Masters of Occupational Therapy students were enlisted through Dr. Ryan Lavalley's Community Level Occupational Therapy course at UNC-CH to gather information and begin to form the Neighborhood Engagement Strategic Plan. These students met with the project team, community consultants, and multiple other entities relevant to their work. They focused on exploring the roles and responsibilities of potential staff members and the training and competencies they would need to be successful. They also suggested activities and interventions that team members could implement to support the work. The students' work has been integrated into the following plan.

Neighborhood Engagement Baseline Report & Driving Questions

In coordination with the Community Practice Lab and Habitat, Kevin Giff completed a baseline report to accompany this strategic plan. This report was completed under supervision of UNC Chapel Hill's Master's of City and Regional Planning program and satisfied the Master's Project requirement for the program. The accompanying baseline report outlines key characteristics of the current homeowners who have purchased a home with Habitat, the homes they live in, and the communities they are a part of. This report was created through analyzing decades of Habitat programmatic data, including demographic and mortgage information, comparative data from the U.S. Census, and recent Orange County property record information. The purpose of this report is to both share insights into how Habitat can best address the needs of current Habitat homeowners and communities and to inform future programming decisions as the organization prepares to increase and diversify its homebuilding. The full report can be accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.17615/knxv-jk91>



Capacity Assessment

Current Resources and Strengths

Through working closely with Habitat staff, community consultants, and a capacity assessment completed by the UNC OT students, below we highlight current resources and strengths of Habitat that serve as a solid foundation for future neighborhood engagement.

Habitat Staff, Board, and Volunteers

Habitat maintains a passionate group of staff, board, and volunteers that are dedicated to Habitat's mission of building homes and community. All departments within Habitat work towards building strong communities. We found that while many times, the Homeowner Services department is primarily responsible for working directly with communities Habitat serves, residents and homeowners engage with the wider organization staff substantially as well. For example, we heard from both community consultants and construction team members that the construction team was a significant presence and bridge to the local community for Habitat and future homeowners as their homes are built.

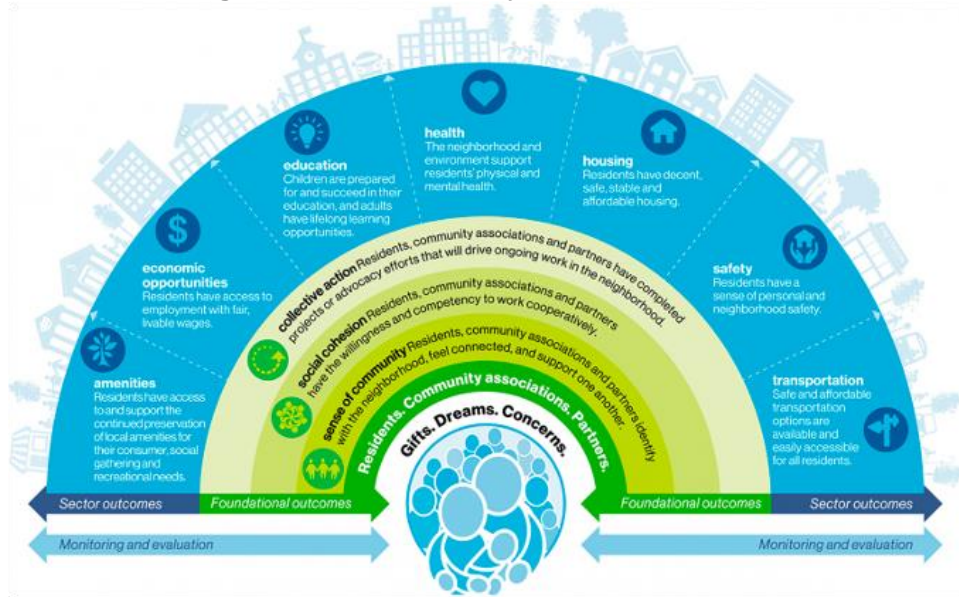
Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) Network and Support

General Support. Habitat for Humanity of Orange County is an affiliated organization of HFHI. HFHI is an international, nonprofit home construction builder that has provided affordable homeownership opportunities to low-income individuals and families across the world since 1976. In Fiscal Year 2022, Habitat International built or repaired homes for over 7.1 million people worldwide (HFHI FY22 Annual Report). As an affiliate of HFHI, Habitat for Humanity of Orange County, NC is part of a network of over 1,300 affiliates in over 70 countries worldwide and is eligible to receive funding and technical support from HFHI. Habitat's brand recognition, wide network, and access to resources all serve as significant strengths for guiding and expanding neighborhood engagement efforts locally in Orange County, NC.

Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. In 2016, HFHI launched a Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative which aimed to improve the quality of life of residents in the neighborhoods and communities it builds and repairs homes. Currently, Habitat's neighborhood revitalization efforts have encompassed a wide variety of initiatives, including critical home repairs and modifications, small-scale neighborhood projects, including community gardens, community centers, and advocacy campaigns for community assets like expanded housing options, public amenities, and transportation. (HFHI, 2023a).

Quality-of-Life Framework. Driving and guiding this work, is HFHI's Quality of Life framework (see figure 2 below). The Quality of Life framework acts as the underlying theory of change in Habitat's community development efforts. The framework is structured around three foundational outcomes (i.e. sense of community, social cohesion, and collective action) and seven sector outcomes (i.e. amenities, economic opportunities, education, health, housing, safety, and transportation) that cumulatively work to improve overall quality of life. (HFHI, 2023b).

Figure 2: HFHI's Quality of Life Framework



Source: Habitat for Humanity International (2023)

Long-Standing Community Connection

For nearly forty years, Habitat has built and repaired homes in numerous communities across Orange County. In many cases, Habitat has sustained a presence (through home building or repair) in certain communities for decades. For instance, Habitat constructed its first home in the Northside neighborhood (located in Chapel Hill) in 1988 and is currently in the process of building two duplexes in the community. Habitat has had similar multi-decade presences in the Rogers Road and Fairview communities in Chapel Hill and Hillsborough (Giff, 2023). Habitat's long-term connections to communities in Orange County can serve as an asset for future community engagement efforts as the organization has a proven track record and relationships to the communities it serves. However, this sustained community presence also provides a need for Habitat to understand its roles, responsibilities, and reputations in these communities.

History of Responding to Community Needs

Habitat has a background and history of utilizing its programming to respond to unique and developing community needs in Orange County, NC. Some prominent examples, include:

Responding to Aging:

In Orange County, older adults have limited access to safe and affordable housing. In this county, residents over 65 years old are the most cost-burdened. Moreover, the current housing supply that is suitable for older adults is limited (Womack, 2021). In 2019, Habitat responded to this unmet need through the development of Crescent Magnolia, an affordable homeownership community built for residents over 55 years old in Hillsborough, NC. Crescent Magnolia is a 24-unit townhome community consisting of single-story, universally designed homes. The development is located within Waterstone, a larger mixed-income community, and is close to several amenities, including a library, a hospital, parks and green space, and on a transit line (Womack, 2021; Wray, 2018). This accessible, senior-focused homeownership community is an innovative response to serving older adults in Orange County and beyond.

Responding to Diversity and Racial Equity:

The families Habitat serves are more racially and ethnically diverse than Orange County as a whole. The vast majority (89%) of homeowners served through Habitat's homeownership program identify as people of color, compared to 31% countywide. Habitat homeowners primarily identify as Black or African American (40%), Hispanic or Latino (28%), Asian (20%), and White (11%) (Giff, 2023). While these demographic results are likely due to structural inequality that has historically excluded people of color from other home-buying options - rather than Habitat's intentional inclusion based on race - Habitat has provided a mechanism for more accessible home ownership for families of color. However, as Habitat builds larger communities, attending to and preventing unintentional segregation of these families are essential.

Responding to Diverse Housing Types:

The current housing stock in Orange County is not adequately meeting the needs of its residents (Nelson, 2022). In recent years, Habitat has responded to growing and changing housing needs by expanding its traditional single-family home-building model to incorporate a diversity of housing types (such as duplexes and townhomes) and building in a diversity of community contexts (such as mixed-income communities.) As mentioned before and most notably, Habitat is currently in the early stages of building Weaver's Grove, a planned mixed-income residential community.

Actions Needed for Neighborhood Engagement

We identified four areas for action, 3 of which target the QOLF's foundational outcomes:

1. **Increasing Habitat capacity for neighborhood engagement**
2. ***Sense of Community*: Facilitating communication among Habitat and community**
3. ***Social Cohesion*: Cultivating Cohesion Among Diverse Communities**
4. ***Collective Action*: Reinforcing Community Leadership and Decision-Making**

Increasing Habitat Capacity for Neighborhood Engagement

Facilitating and sustaining community engagement requires relationship building, trust, and commitment. To best support resident-led neighborhood engagement, **Habitat needs to support consistent staff in the communities it serves and incrementally increase the capacity of dedicated staff over the next five years** to address current and growing needs.

Evidence for Action:

- Habitat's Homeowner Services team primarily focuses on the specific needs of individuals and families who participate in Habitat's new home construction program. Habitat needs additional staff capacity to steward the organization's relationship with the local communities that Habitat is building or planning to build.
- Habitat creates communities and is often distant or absent once the construction process is complete. This leaves residents with a myriad of challenges – sometimes rooted in the way the community was constructed or developed (i.e. a single home in an existing community versus living in a Habitat subdivision) – to face on their own.
- The communities where Habitat builds are racially and culturally diverse. Habitat's staffing and leadership models can be strengthened by recruiting individuals who have lived experience or deep relationships with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- Staff turnover at Habitat has presented challenges in maintaining community relationships. Consultants reported reluctance in engaging with Habitat due to an ongoing cycle of building relationships with staff who may not be present in their communities later.

Facilitating Communication Among Habitat and Community

Effective communication in neighborhood engagement processes is critical for success. Communication includes internal communication among Habitat staff, board members, and volunteers, external, with community members or partners, and extra-organizational, among community members themselves and their partners. **Habitat has a responsibility to build bridges among residents and communicate effectively with all residents in the communities it serves.**

Evidence for Action:

- Historically, neighborhood engagement at Habitat has not been clearly defined or coordinated. This has led to staff members across departments all working on neighborhood engagement initiatives separately. This dynamic creates the possibilities for miscommunication, misalignment of resources, and resident burnout.
- Habitat communication is primarily top-down. Often funding and resources earmarked for neighborhood engagement (such as common area improvements or other community development projects) have been directed by funder or donor timelines and processes rather than community-led needs and goals.
- There are underlying power differences in relationships between Habitat staff, board, and volunteers and community members across social lines of difference such as race, income, education, and community rootedness. These dynamics are not unique to Habitat but still require understanding and purposeful engagement.
- Habitat homeowners and neighboring residents speak a variety of languages (including Spanish, Burmese, Karen, Swahili, Arabic, and American Sign Language.) The diversity of languages spoken among the communities Habitat serves is an abundant opportunity for shared multiculturalism but require thoughtful supports for effective communication and relationship-building among community residents and between residents and Habitat staff.
- Communities use varying communication methods. In some communities, virtual methods (such as email, Zoom, or social media groups) are effective ways to share information and connect with neighbors. In other communities, residents are less comfortable or have less access to these tools and thus rely on person-to-person forms of communication (such as a phone call, home visit, or flyer.) It is important for Habitat to understand these differences to ensure equitable access to information and effective communication.

QOLF Foundational Outcome Action Summary: Sense of Community

QOLF Definition: “Residents, community organizations and partners feel connected, identify with the neighborhood, share and support each other. A sense of community is generally fostered through spending time together and sharing information.”

Priority Support: *Communication* (among community members and between community members and Habitat staff) was a key factor in fostering a sense of community. While events provided good opportunities to meet each other and cultivate community identity, everyday communication efforts through phone calls and face to face interactions fostered connections among neighbors and Habitat staff. Residents who are hesitant to participate in community events may be more responsive to an invitation from a familiar neighbor than a call from Habitat. Language and cultural differences can also contribute to challenges or confusion in an overarching sense of community.

Habitat’s role can be to support tailored relationship building among the original community and new residents, prior, during, and after move in. This support should be rooted in the specific realities and histories of the community.

Cultivating Cohesion Among Diverse Communities:

Habitat has created and will be creating particularly diverse communities. As differences across race, culture, experience, and income level offer opportunities for innovative and generative community relationships, neither new nor existing community members have had clear guidance from Habitat in building cohesive and mutually supportive relationships, especially across language and cultural differences. **As a home and community builder primarily serving people who have been historically excluded and oppressed, Habitat has a responsibility to foster effective social and communal relationships across diverse communities to redress racism, classism, ableism, and xenophobia.**

Evidence for Action:

- Habitat's strategy as a hands-off developer and home builder rather than a social service organization has left communities to manage conflict alone. While conflict is inevitable in any community, Habitat's construction of communities with such diverse experiences necessitates further involvement and ongoing support to protect the benefits of diverse communities.
- Habitat is in a unique position to highlight the value and benefit of diversity among communities by building bridges between new residents and already existing communities.
- Community members approach living as neighbors and as a community differently, adding complexity to how Habitat educates, manages, interacts with, and supports these communities and residents.
- Support for Habitat homeowner community participation seems to be needed most in communities where there is already a strong sense of identity and traditions (such as Roger's Road, Northside, or Fairview.)
- With further involvement, diversity among communities will be amplified as a strength, facilitating rich community experiences and social relationships, leading to longer term community resilience and stability.

QOLF Foundational Outcome Action Summary: Social Cohesion

Definition: "Residents, community organizations and partners are willing to work together towards a common goal for the neighborhood. They have built trust and know how to work together despite differences."

Priority Support: *Developing or introducing all residents to accessible processes and procedures* that support participation in or development of internal community decision making and action processes.

Successful community cohesion was built on explicit processes and procedures that supported communities in working together toward shared goals, founded on their evolving sense of community. For example, the Fairview Community Watch had a clear organizational structure and process through which decisions were made. Additionally, the Compass Group of Northside, have an explicit charge and multiple standard processes for making decisions around community properties and development.

Habitat's role can be to assess readiness for processes and procedures and then facilitate the development of sustainable processes and procedures as needed for working together. Tailored relationship building with the existing community prior to move in, facilitated communication across the community in multiple languages, and education rooted in the specific realities and histories of the new emerging community will be helpful.

Reinforcing Community Leadership and Decision-Making

Neighborhood engagement and initiatives are often driven by Habitat staff rather than community input and decision-making. **Habitat has a responsibility to ensure neighborhood leadership is a foundational value of all action taken in communities.**

Evidence for Action:

- Homeowner associations (HOAs) in communities where Habitat homes are located can be a potential vehicle for community engagement but often this has not been the case. The majority (82%) of Habitat homes are in communities with an already existing HOA.
- Habitat establishes an additional HOA for each of subdivisions it builds. Once construction is complete, Habitat transfers management to homeowners living in the community. Homeowners then elect a board of directors to govern and oversee the HOA, including enforcing rules and maintaining services
- Some Habitat-created HOAs are in communities with a larger sense of identity (e.g. Rogers Road, Northside, & Fairview). Non-Habitat homes within these communities are not part of a formal HOA. Therefore, the Habitat developed HOA cannot serve a community-wide role.
- This dynamic may impact sense of community and cohesion, particularly, in communities with existing leadership structures, such as community watches or associations. *In a few cases, consultants noted that Habitat HOAs in these communities functioned to divide cohesive communities.*
- Still, many Habitat homeowners and neighboring residents are unclear about the community guidelines and processes of their HOAs. This disconnection has sometimes exacerbated the divide among neighbors of different backgrounds and customs.
- Many communities Habitat serves have difficulty maintaining regular leadership in their HOAs or community associations. While it is not Habitat's responsibility to ensure local neighborhoods have stable leadership, Habitat's unique role as a key stakeholder and convener can create stronger ties and build resident leadership.
- Habitat also has an opportunity to support resident-led neighborhood engagement through plugging into existing neighborhood planning efforts. Habitat communities, such as Northside, Rogers Road, and Fairview have established neighborhood plans that outline residents' goals and for their communities. Habitat can support community-led decision-making through working with residents on these aims.

QOLF Foundational Outcome Action Summary: Collective Action

Definition: Residents, community organizations, and partners sustainably conduct projects and advocate together for changes in environment, policies, and systems

Priority Support: *Clear leadership, goals, and evidence* foster a community's capacity to act together for broader change. Strong leadership and collaboration founded on well-developed habits of working together in community are essential for collective action. Rooted in community realities with clear evidence and interests of the community, a core team or group can work to represent and advocate for the community in broader systems and institutions. Collecting and mapping evidence that describes community issues (e.g. properties bought by commercial developers) can add support and momentum to this work.

Habitat's role can be to consistently support community leaders' engagement and participation in community direction setting and decision making. Habitat can provide opportunities for learning, necessary resources, consultation, and connections with other communities. Habitat should seldom, if ever, be the initiating leader of a project or advocacy effort in community.

Engage: Plan Components

The above process and findings identified five major components of a robust and sustainable neighborhood engagement plan. Each is necessary to ensure a successful and effective relationship with local communities and supporting their everyday quality of life. All five are essential, however we begin with Resident Leadership to emphasize that all other components are rooted in this aspect.

1. Resident Leadership
2. Staff Capacity
3. Competencies and Training
4. Neighborhood Engagement Process
5. Evaluation

Staff

- NET Development: 5 Year Staff Plan
- Sustainable and Versatile Positions
- Coaching Model for Resident Leadership

Competency & Training

- NET & Habitat General Staff Education
- Community First Approach
- Strengths & Relationship Based

Resident Leadership



Neighborhood Engagement Process

- Approaches/Tools for Habitat and Residents
- Funding for capacity building
- Time from Habitat and Residents

Evaluation

- Process of Community Engagement
- Outcomes for Residents and Habitat
- Data Driven Approach

Resident Leadership

When undertaking neighborhood engagement, teams must consistently recognize that the community should hold the power and responsibility for community leadership and problem solving (Leclair, 2010). Founding neighborhood engagement in resident leadership, requires Habitat staff to challenge the charity model, shift power to the community, and position themselves as followers in the work. The community should drive their own change process and Habitat staff should serve only as facilitators. Through relationships and leadership support, the community should have opportunity to drive Habitat's engagement, donations, and housing initiatives in the community as well as other non-Habitat initiatives. Building a positive relationship with communities, founded on trust, commitment, and respect of community-driven goals, is paramount.

Resident Leadership Councils

Habitat should always have residents who are directing and influencing the development of projects and communities. A resident leadership council is a group of residents who facilitate community decision making and vision setting. In general, it should be Habitat's goal to support the development of a Resident Leadership Council (RLC) or comparable entity. This can look differently depending on the community context:

Already Existing Formal Leadership

As Habitat engages with communities, there may be natural resident leadership organizations already functioning. For example, the Fairview Community Watch in Hillsborough is a longstanding and integral community organization that has functioned as an anchor for community programming, advocacy, and cohesion for many years. Habitat should seek out these resident leadership organizations within any community in which they intend to build.

Leaders but not Formal

Habitat may engage with communities where there is not a formal resident leadership group or organization, however there may be natural or historical leaders within the community who gather and support neighbors in problem solving. In these instances, Habitat can work with the natural leadership and maintain the historical processes and procedures the community has used to make decisions or, if the community is interested, support them in developing more formalized community leadership structures.

No Clear Leaders

Habitat may engage with communities that do not have clear leadership or clear processes and procedures through which the community makes decisions. In these contexts, it will be important for Habitat to listen, understand, and offer coaching among community members to support them in identifying or developing community leaders and structures to address community decisions – particularly regarding Habitat construction and community development. Habitat will also need to be vigilant in these situations to prevent Habitat from becoming “the leadership” and ensuring they are incentivizing community members to take leadership roles.

Neighborhood Engagement Resident Coalition

As resident leaders are identified across the county in neighborhoods where Habitat has built or will build, we recommend organizing a formal group of resident leader representatives from across the county who gather regularly (e.g. annually) to receive updates on Habitat's neighborhood engagement plans, directions, and work. These leaders should be positioned to influence Habitat's neighborhood engagement processes, community relations, and overarching direction as they develop and evolve.

Staff Capacity: The Neighborhood Engagement Team (NET)

Amplifying resident leadership and direction setting requires time, energy, and personnel. To be rooted in resident leadership, Habitat staff should spend time with communities, learn about and build relationship through participation in everyday community life, and amplify strengths already present (Leclair et al., 2019). Staff can visit known community spaces, support regular and consistent community events, and contribute to community-led initiatives to demonstrate their interest and commitment to the community's success (Lavalley, 2022; Leclair et al., 2019). Habitat staff can also support resident leaders in ongoing assessment of their own community by facilitating interviews, focus groups, surveys, and other assessment tools (Leclair et al., 2019). Below, we propose the development of the Neighborhood Engagement Team (NET) and concrete strategies for ensuring resident leadership is driving the work of the proposed team and the greater Habitat affiliate. We propose three types of positions:

1. **NET Manager**
2. **Neighborhood Engagement Coordinators (NEC)**
3. **Community Advocacy Specialists (CAS)**

NET Manager: Leader of the NET

Roles and Responsibilities

- Guide and oversee the NET and associated activities in community and with Habitat.
 - Facilitate team development and competencies.
 - Provide needed resources to support team members and residents.
- Represent the NET in broader community conversations and relationships
 - Serve as the primary liaison between Habitat broader staff, the Coalition of Resident Leaders, and the NET.
- Connect with other neighborhood engagement teams in other Habitat for Humanity affiliates and organizations that may be doing similar work to inform the process.
 - For example, with compensation, the NET manager could coordinate with the Marian Cheek Jackson Center (MCJC) to train the NET in strategies for neighborhood engagement such as oral histories and abundance-based community development.

Key Skills

- Team leadership and management to support establishing group norms, delegating responsibilities, establishing values, and resolving team conflicts.
- Communication skills among team, Habitat affiliate, and community leaders
- Organizational and project management skills
- Systems level thinking and analysis
- Visioning for county wide neighborhood engagement

Neighborhood Engagement Coordinators (Sense of Community & Social Cohesion)

Roles and Responsibilities

- Building strong relationship between community and Habitat
 - Spend time in communities developing strong relationships and trust with residents
 - Learn about the unique needs of assigned communities
 - Establish bi-directional communication between the community and HHOC
 - Gather information about and facilitation events/activities community members would like to have offered.
 - Collaborate with NET members to build skills, share ideas, and support success

- across the county.
- Support social cohesion and everyday community life
 - Facilitate response to and resources for addressing conflict and advocating for community needs
 - Supervise Event and Activity Assistants to plan and organize events of interest and relevance to community members.
 - Provide logistical support as needed for workshops, social gatherings, or celebrations directed by resident leadership
 - Coordinate spaces, outreach, decorations, food, and communication with Habitat
 - Communicate with Habitat regarding events and presence in community
 - Collaborate with other Habitat employees to prepare volunteers, development team, construction teams, etc. to engage with the local community
- Support resident leadership development
 - Collaborate with existing leadership structures such as HOAs or community centers by attending meetings and maintain strong communication with these organizations.
 - Facilitate resident leadership by providing structure and support for developing processes and habits around community-driven leadership
 - Communicate with the Habitat development team about the needs of the community to facilitate use of donor funding for necessary projects and events.
- Support community assessment
 - Collect outcome measures
 - Gauge community members' current social cohesion, satisfaction and trust, as well as quality and quantity of current communication with HHOC.
 - Consider the three foundational outcomes and their current status within the community

Key Characteristics

- Value and understand the importance of physically being in community
- Strong capacity for building relationships with residents and community members of all ages, backgrounds, and lived experiences.
- Strong communication skills with both the NET and residents
- Coaching and facilitation skills for supporting varying groups and organizations such as resident leaders or HOAs
- Knowledge of local resources and potential partnerships to facilitate connections among the community
- Considerate and intentional about events and activities, honoring community culture, approaches, and values

Community Advocacy Specialists (Collective Action)

Roles and Responsibilities

- Collaborate with NET, specifically the NECs, to support team advocacy knowledge and action opportunities
- Connect NET members and residents to advocacy resources, systems, and mechanisms
 - Bridge local organizations with resident leadership and coach advocacy from Habitat communities at a county level as needed.
 - Support, as needed, collective action as resident leadership learns to understand and engage with change mechanisms

- Liaise with the Dispute Settlement Center as needed to inform and support intra-community conflicts or disputes that are creating challenges among the broader community

Key Characteristics

- Strong communication skills in varying and sometimes delicate situations
- Skills in community organizing, local government navigation, and conflict resolution
- Coaching skills to support NECs and resident leadership in coordinating advocacy efforts
- Strong advocacy skills, active listening skills, and effective communication skills.

Consideration for NET Team Composition

- **Consistency and sustainability** are critical for maintaining a strong NET at Habitat. Making sure neighborhood engagement employees are well compensated and feel valued in their roles should be a top priority of Habitat.
- **Volunteers** may be used to support these paid roles (ex: helping to collect surveys, helping decorate for events) but would not be appropriate to take over these roles since volunteers are often less reliable and consistent relational leaders in the community.
- These roles would ideally be filled by people who have **experience living and/or working in** communities similar to those in which Habitat is working.
(See Appendix A for examples of other affiliates neighborhood engagement models)

Competencies and Training

Increasing Habitat’s staff capacity is essential for success in neighborhood engagement, however these additional – as well as current – staff will require certain skills and competencies to successfully contribute to a community-driven neighborhood engagement approach. These include both skills in their approach like a collaborative partnership orientation and skills in operation, like evaluation methods for community impact. Staff should be able to engage with community through a strengths-based and cross-cultural approach while also mobilizing strategies that are informed by historical power structures and discrimination.
(See Appendix B for examples of training resources)

Below we describe the approach the NET should be rooted in as well as the broad operational skills necessary for neighborhood engagement work. While not every team member can have all the skills described, as a NET, all these skills will be essential:

Approach

Strengths Based and Community First: Staff should be able to acknowledge and honor the skills, opportunities, gifts, and resources already in the community, and with that acknowledgement position themselves always as directed by the community’s interest’s first.

Living Communities: Staff should be able to engage with the complex nature of living together in community, understanding the many relationships, activities, and spaces that actively come together to create “community” and attending to a community’s social, historical, economic and political contexts (Garrido et al., 2019). Community is much more than the houses where residents live.

Coalition Building: Staff should be rooted in a collaborative partnership model. Non-profits are often ensnared by the competitive spirit. Staff should be well versed in implementing, seeking out, and developing a collaborative attitude across initiatives.

Antiracism & Cross-cultural Responsiveness*: As Habitat constructs diverse communities of residents – both original residents prior to Habitat’s involvement and Habitat homeowners – staff should be able to respond to and support cross-cultural engagement and dialogue. *We emphasize the importance of this approach further below.

Accountability and Learning: Habitat staff will overstep in community, neglect resident leadership, or make other mistakes. Staff must be ready to be accountable to community, listening and learning from and with community.

Operations

Presence and Engagement: Staff should be present in building relationship with and contributing to local communities in respectful and strengths-based ways. This is part of the work and should be compensated for in their time.

Neighborhood Planning: Staff should have a basic understanding of how neighborhood and community development unfolds, particularly regarding municipal planning, ordinances, covenants, and homeowners’ associations.

Resource Mobilization: Staff should be ready to identify and leverage available opportunities – whether through grants, donations, or other resources – under the direction of resident leadership.

Advocacy: Staff should have general knowledge of mechanisms for change that communities may want to activate such as speaking to elected officials, communicating with municipal staff or utilities, or reaching out to other services and organizations in the area.

Evaluation: Staff should be able to examine the impact of their own work in the communities as well as support resident leaders in evaluating neighborhood well-being.

Antiracism and Cross-Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural humility is defined by “flexibility; awareness of bias; a lifelong, learning-oriented approach to working with diversity; and a recognition of the role of power,” (Agner, 2020).

Cultural humility is essential to a team and approach rooted in antiracism. **Antiracism** is integral to an ethical, community-rooted approach to neighborhood engagement. Antiracism paired with cross-cultural responsiveness will encourage the NET to critically analyze power while also attending varying cultural experiences in community. Cross-cultural responsiveness is the ability to listen to and engage with people from different cultures while maintaining a foundation of cultural humility and critical perspectives. People often overestimate their ability to engage across cultures (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2016), therefore, it is essential for Habitat to be vigilant in training staff to step into communities with residents from multiple cultures and lived experiences. Being informed by structured models for community development in multi-cultural spaces (such as the Community Cultural Competence Model (CCCM) (Garrido et al., 2019)) could offer helpful guidance to the processes Habitat is interested in facilitating.

Neighborhood Engagement Process

Given the varying community contexts in Orange County, Habitat’s process, activities, and resources for each community’s neighborhood engagement will need to be tailored. Type of Habitat development, resident leadership, capital resources, eligible grants, histories, and social relationships will differ. Specific activities, interventions, and tools will need to match the context of the community. Some tools within the Quality of Life Framework will be effective, while in certain contexts, they will not. Habitat builds in a variety of community contexts. Each of these contexts requires a tailored approach to community engagement. Below we described these different contexts and describe the potential approaches recommended.

Community Contexts

Support for Sense of Community is Needed

Weaver’s Grove is the clearest example of this situation. While this development does sit alongside other neighborhoods, it is large and separate enough to be essentially its own new community. Development of community culture will be an iterative and organic process as this community comes together. Habitat has a responsibility to foster the foundational outcomes from initiation and will likely have great influence over the culture of the community in general. This approach requires consistent reflection, finding and returning to resident leaders, and regularly assessing community culture.

Support for Social Cohesion and Collective Action is Needed

Habitat may build in communities where the development’s size is such that it greatly shifts community social and geographic relationships (e.g. Phoenix Place) or simply where resident leadership is not actively occurring. The community may not be prepared to manage or integrate with new Habitat homeowners or HOAs. This approach will require intentional cultivation or facilitation of integrated cohesion across the community. This re-coordination may be complex due to HOAs, community centers, or already established community habits and history.

Foundational Outcomes are Strong

Habitat may build in a community that already has thriving leadership and organizations (e.g. Northside, Fairview). This approach will require intentional and respectful relationship building with the already present leadership, preferably even before land purchase. From there, the residents can drive construction and community engagement with new Habitat homeowners.

Influence of Habitat’s Construction Strategy	
Habitat’s approach to home-building impacts the ways in which Habitat homeowners engage in everyday life of their communities. Habitat must adapt neighborhood engagement processes and procedures for each community context.	
Building Style	Influence on Community
<i>Scatter Site:</i> Individual single-family homes in existing communities or rural parts of the county. Examples include homes in Fairview, Northside, and Roger’s Road.	Habitat homeowners may feel a deeper sense of community with the wider community over their Habitat homeowner-identity.
<i>Subdivision:</i> Small- or mid-sized subdivisions of single-family homes. Examples include Chestnut Oaks, Tinnin Woods, and Phoenix Place.	Habitat homeowners may feel a deeper sense of community and social cohesion with other Habitat homeowners in their defined subdivision and accompanying HOA rather than the wider communities.
<i>Mixed-Income:</i> Mixed-income neighborhoods with a mixture of housing types (including single-family homes, duplexes, multiplexes, and townhomes.) Examples include Crescent Magnolia (in Waterstone) and Weaver’s Grove.	Mixed-income communities, which tend to be much larger and more economically diverse, may experience different norms. There is risk for inequity in resources and agency in decision-making in the community.

Parallel Processes*

As we analyzed the work of Habitat, we discovered three parallel processes that needed to be understood and mapped out to better situate a neighborhood engagement process within Habitat’s already existing approaches.

	Years 1-3	Years 2-4	Years 3-6	Years 5-7
Habitat Construction	Land Acquisition and Planning	Home Building and Selling	Servicing Mortgage	Homeowner Services as Needed
Neighborhood Engagement	Connecting with residents already present around property.	Bridging new residents with original residents. (Sense of Community)	Supporting Everyday Living & Resident Leadership (Social Cohesion)	Consultant and Support as Needed (Collective Action)
Homeowners	Not yet present.	Homeowners Program, Connecting with existing residents	Living and Engaging in Community	Leading and Participating in Community

*Appendix C breaks down further details for NET members roles.

Evaluation

Ensuring that both Habitat and communities can understand the current status of their neighborhoods will be critical. Regular check-ins with resident leaders, data collection, and ongoing measurement of quality of life of communities will inform the work. This requires consistent, accessible, and clear evaluation of the NET process and community outcomes.

Habitat Organizational Readiness for Neighborhood Engagement Assessment.

An evaluation of organizational readiness is available in the handbook by HFHI referred to as Affiliate Readiness, Participation and Neighborhood Selection Guide (2019). A self-evaluation for Habitat was conducted by the Homeowner Services department in August 2022 before CPL consultation was initiated. See Appendix D or full assessment. We recommend this assessment be completed again after Year 1 of this plan.

Results of Self-Assessment	
Understanding NR and Organizational Readiness	Between “Does Not Meet” & “Close to Meeting”
Commitment for Partnership and Developing Skills	“Exceed”
Implementation	“Not Yet Determined”

Measures provided in the QOLF

The QOLF provides multiple measures to evaluate the foundational outcomes including already crafted surveys and questionnaires. However, these surveys are quite long. It may be beneficial for the NET team to modify these measures to be more manageable. We suggest creating a regular schedule of evaluation more frequently at the beginning (every 6 months) and less frequently later (every year or two) on which these measures are completed.

University Resources and Programs

Universities in the area have interest in community health and well-being. UNC has a particular interest in ensuring Orange County communities are supported by its resources. Duke and NC State may also offer helpful resources to assist in measuring the health of Habitat affiliated communities.

5 Year NET Strategy

Year 1: Initiation

The work of the NET in year 1 is mostly to develop more structure for the team and pilot the proposed positions and NET groups such as the resident coalition. It will be important to monitor process and reflect throughout the year to inform future development of the team.

Goals

Resident Leadership:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain community consultant engagement to serve as base of future resident councils and coalition. • Begin identifying community leaders across Orange County
Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire Neighborhood Engagement Manager • Hire Neighborhood Engagement Coordinator for Hillsborough*.
Competencies and Training:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation trainings to NET members regarding approach, components of the plan and overarching work trajectory. • Begin organization-wide training and competency initiatives regarding this approach.
Neighborhood Engagement Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillsborough: Support existing resident leadership and processes in Fairview (including incorporating Odie Street into wider community) and Crescent Magnolia. • Chapel Hill-Carrboro: Begin assessing resident leadership and processes in Roger’s Road and develop processes for Weaver’s Grove.
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed by resident leadership, develop set of indicators and processes for evaluating neighborhood engagement • Begin assessing baseline foundational outcomes of OC communities where Habitat is working. Focus specifically on Hillsborough and specific neighborhoods in Chapelboro (e.g. Rogers Road). • Conduct Neighborhood Revitalization Organizational Readiness Self-Assessment again at end of year

*Why Hillsborough?

Hillsborough already has significant structure and success around this work, therefore starting here will offer a rich environment in which to develop this emerging role. This initial position will act as a pilot and emerging model for the NEC role. This position will support neighborhood engagement efforts by engaging directly with Habitat-connected communities **in Hillsborough**. The NEC will collaborate with existing community leadership structures by attending meetings and maintaining strong communication with these organizations. The NEC will work alongside residents and partners to plan and organize programming and events of interest and relevance to community members. The Hillsborough NEC will develop and maintain strong relationships with residents in Fairview, Crescent Magnolia, and East Village (in planning stages).

Year 2: Assessment

Year 2 is focused on developing assessment measures for both formative and summative outcomes for the NET team in relation to the communities with which they are working as well as the overall mission of Habitat. Year 1's evaluation, although helpful in and of itself, will likely be most helpful through informing future approaches to assessing the work of the team. This year will also pilot the resident coalition and add an additional NEC to the team.

Goals

Resident Leadership:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate formation of Neighborhood Engagement Resident Coalition with Community Consultants as leaders • Begin supporting leadership development as needed in communities
Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire Chapel Hill-Carrboro NEC • Develop processes for retainment and development of NET staff
Competencies and Training:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop NET skills in coalition building and resource mobilization. • Train homeowner services at large, construction, and HR in general NET approach
Neighborhood Engagement Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillsborough: Continue supporting resident leadership and processes in Fairview and Crescent Magnolia. Begin developing processes for planned East Village development. • Chapelboro: Support existing resident leadership and processes in Roger's Road (including Phoenix Place, New Homestead Place, & Rusch Hollow), Northside, and Weaver's Grove • Greater Orange County: Begin gently engaging with community leaders across Orange County jurisdiction.
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and move forward plan for Hillsborough and Chapelboro area using above findings. • Adjust measures based on experience in Hillsborough and Chapelboro. • Continue assessing baseline foundational outcomes of OC communities where Habitat is working. Focus specifically on communities in Orange County jurisdiction such as Tinnin Wood, Richmond Hills, and Chestnut Oaks. • Evaluate NET team process via interviews and metrics of engagement success with NET team and resident coalition.

Years 3 & 4: Building Capacity

With solid structure and foundation to its NET team, Habitat will begin building more significant capacity around this work through developing resident leadership across the county and hiring additional team members focused on neighborhood engagement and collective action. This year will pilot the Community Advocacy Specialist (CAS).

Goals

Resident Leadership:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support development of Resident Leadership Council (RLC)s in local and emerging communities and regularly check in with Resident Coalition. • Continuing to evaluate and support leadership in communities as needed
Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire Greater Orange County NEC • Hire Community Advocacy Specialist (CAS)
Competencies and Training:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop NET skills in advocacy, systems thinking, and collective action. • Develop specific neighborhood engagement strategies, integrated and supported by the NET, among each of the other Habitat departments.
Neighborhood Engagement Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillsborough: Continue supporting resident leadership and processes in Fairview and Crescent Magnolia. Initiate processes for East Village • Chapelboro: Support existing resident leadership and processes in Roger’s Road (including Phoenix Place, New Homestead Place, & Rusch Hollow), Northside, and Weaver’s Grove. Develop processes for planning Habitat building in Homestead Gardens and Pine Grove. • Greater Orange County: Begin NE process in County, including Efland-Cheeks (Tinnin Woods & Richmond Hills) and Chestnut Oaks. • NET will begin engaging the CAS for support and connecting to communities as needed.
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and move forward plan for Greater Orange County area using above findings. • Support RLC self-assessments on a regular basis • Integrate finding from NET team process into standard operating procedures of NET work. Evaluate team process at least annually.

Years 5 and Beyond: Community Leadership & Long-Term Sustainability

At this point in the NE plan, Habitat should have experience and structure driving the processes of community engagement. Resident leadership should be integrated across the level of the NET and clearly influencing processes, initiatives, and goals across all Habitat-affiliated neighborhoods. A 5-year evaluation of the NET process and neighborhood foundational outcomes will be important. The NET team should reassess its capacity and activities to determine the next phase of its work.

Goals

Resident Leadership:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust and sustainable resident leadership coalition and local resident leadership councils are directing the work of the NET and Habitat • Regular meetings and processes are sustained among Habitat staff and community members. • Residents are setting vision for collective action and community advocacy
Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support flexible and sustainable engagement of staff and NET as needed with community. Sustain NET members for more than 3 years of employment each.
Competencies and Training:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop system for ongoing training and competencies in NET approach, including resident led skill building. • Work with HR to embed NET approach in hiring and onboarding as turnover inevitably will happen.
Neighborhood Engagement Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE process is up and running across all of Orange County with clear steps and processes even if turnover in Habitat staff occurs. • Vision and develop NE process for upcoming planned communities preemptively.
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to evaluate and support leadership in communities based on foundational outcomes • Inform NE process through at least annual assessment of NET team work • Evaluate foundational outcomes across all of orange county neighborhoods regularly.

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Appendix A – Other Habitat NE Models

Habitat for Humanity Affiliates Neighborhood Engagement Staffing Models:

1. Habitat for Humanity of Charlottesville
 - a. Family and Community Services Staff
 - i. Director of Family and Community Services
 - ii. Community Engagement Associate
 - iii. Community & Family Service Specialist
 - iv. Community Connector
 - b. Southwood Mobile Home Park Staff
 - i. Director of Neighborhood Revitalization
 - ii. Financial Empowerment Manager
 - iii. Community Engagement Manager
 - iv. Operations and Asset Manager
 - v. Maintenance Manager

2. Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte Region*
 - a. Community Engagement Staff
 - i. Director, Development, Community Engagement & Partnerships
 - ii. Community Engagement Supervisor
 - iii. Neighborhood Revitalization Specialist
 - b. Committee
 - i. Neighborhood Revitalization Oversight Committees (NROC)- North
 - ii. Neighborhood Revitalization Oversight Committees (NROC)- South

*Staff identified via online search. Additional staff positions may be present

Appendix B – Training Resources

Dispute Settlement Center

The Dispute Settlement Center is a non-profit community mediation center located in Carrboro focused on bringing peaceful settlements to disputes. They provide training workshops and custom-tailored training. Habitat can make use of this resource to help with community disputes but also prepare own staff to have basic knowledge to mediate the conflicts caused through their creation of diverse communities

<http://www.disputesettlement.org/>

Sustainable Community Development

The Sustainable Communities Initiatives (Bergstrom et al., 2012) is a community engagement guide focusing on community engagement for sustainable community development.

[The Sustainable Communities Initiatives](#)

Another resource for sustainable community development is Angela Blanchard's Ted Talk on asset-based community-driven development (ABCD) to sustain community.

[Sustaining Community](#)

Appreciative Inquiry Model

Appreciative Inquiry is an asset-based approach to organizational and social engagement that utilizes questions and dialogue to help participants uncover existing strengths, advantages, or opportunities in their communities, organizations, or teams. (Also mentioned in Angela Blanchard's ted talk; link above)

[Appreciative Inquiry](#)

Building Community Relationships

The Community Toolbox is an online guide developed by professors at the University of Kansas and is an internet-based resource for practical, comprehensive, accessible, and user-friendly information on community-building, which both professionals and ordinary citizens can use in everyday practice (Fawcett et al, 2000).

[Community Tool Box Ch14, Section7](#)

Appendix C – Neighborhood Engagement Team Activities for Each Approach

Community Status	Position	Habitat Process Stage			
		Years 1-3	Years 2-4	Years 3-6	Years 5-7
		Land Acquisition and Planning	Community and Home Building	Supporting Everyday Living	Engagement as Needed
Support for Sense of Community is Needed	NEM	<p>Support NEC in learning about and deeply engaging community or if new community (e.g. Weaver’s Grove), the surrounding community.</p> <p>Begin identifying natural leaders in or around the community.</p>	<p>Begin identifying leaders in new homeowners.</p> <p>Build relationships with potential leaders and invite into RLCs or coalition.</p> <p>Support NEC in considering appropriate events and supports for community.</p> <p>Reinforcing coaching model and resident leadership.</p>	<p>Support development of RLC and leadership team as community is ready.</p>	<p>Support connection of RLC with Habitat Staff and reinforce their autonomy as they begin to lead more.</p>

	NEC	<p>Engage with neighbors, residents, organizations, and other entities engaging with the area.</p> <p>Map stakeholders and community partners.</p> <p>Identify opportunities and threats for sense of community.</p> <p>Learn about history of community or support exploration of history (e.g. oral history collection)</p>	<p>Facilitate events that gather neighbors and community partners together to learn about each other and the community.</p> <p>Support development of events or activities that reinforce sense of community (e.g. regular celebrations, traditions)</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for community to reflect on its identity or shared values.</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for residents to plan and vision the future of the community together.</p> <p>Support documentation and storytelling of community through strengths-based approaches.</p>	<p>Facilitate evolution of community leadership and support management of conflict among communities.</p> <p>Offer strategies for leadership and evaluation of community's foundational outcomes regularly</p> <p>Facilitate regular opportunities for resident leadership to evolve as new homeowners enter into the community.</p>	<p>Support the community consistently and frequently until it has consistent processes for leadership for at least 4 years, then begin stepping back.</p>
	CAS	<p>Understand and explore likely community advocacy interests</p>	<p>Introduce ideas of collective action and advocacy generally to community.</p>	<p>Consult with resident leadership as they develop and assist with navigating potential advocacy efforts.</p>	<p>Support resident leadership in knowing if they are ready to navigate collective action efforts and how they can move them forward as needed.</p>


Support for Social Cohesion and Collective Action is Needed	NEM	Engage with Resident Leadership, hear their thoughts and interests regarding potential development.	<p>Discuss relationship between Habitat HOA and existing leadership structures.</p> <p>Identify potential pitfalls or conflict among resident leadership models</p> <p>Act as liaison between Habitat staff and RLC to reinforce resident leadership model.</p> <p>Advise NEC on how to proceed</p>	<p>Ensure dedications are rooted in community and neighbors and leadership are invited and setting vision</p> <p>Regularly checking in with leadership as new homeowners begin living in community</p> <p>Invite RLC member to coalition</p>	<p>Checking in on RLC as needed</p> <p>Ensuring participation in coalition</p>
	NEC	<p>Begin to understand current resident leadership structures and participate in meetings regularly.</p> <p>Identify areas that Habitat can support resident leadership processes and support prior to new resident arrival.</p> <p>Learn about history of community or support exploration of history (e.g. oral history collection)</p>	<p>Continue participation in resident leadership meetings</p> <p>Regularly participate in and facilitate local events</p> <p>Regularly meet neighbors to discuss social cohesion</p> <p>Encourage plan for new community connections and resident leadership model</p> <p>Engage residents in leadership development</p> <p>Facilitate problem solving and future planning for</p>	<p>Encourage and support celebration events and facilitate homeowners engagement with community leadership</p> <p>Support recoordination of resident leadership as necessary in response to previous ineffective approaches or integration of new residents.</p>	<p>As resident leaders recoordinate to new community structure and presence of new homeowners, NEC engages as needed until only regular check-ins from NET manager are necessary.</p> <p>Maintain presence in community as needed, connecting with local residents at least a few times a year</p>

			<p>community recoordination with new development.</p> <p>Support and welcome new homeowners to cross community events and engagement, development of welcoming committee, oral history exhibits, or other activities that reinforce strong sense of community (e.g. community picnics, celebrations)</p>		
	CAS	Evaluate resident leader processes and consult with NEC and NEM to understand any helpful support	<p>Provide regular check-ins and training on collective action approaches.</p> <p>Facilitate identification of community interests and advocacy efforts.</p>	Support new homeowner engagement in advocacy efforts through education and preparation.	Consult with resident leadership as needed
Foundational Outcomes are Strong	NEM	<p>Engage with Resident Leadership</p> <p>Seek out thoughts and interests regarding potential development.</p>	Maintaining regular check-ins and support	Maintaining regular check-ins and support	<p>Checking in regularly with resident leadership and pulling in NEC as needed.</p> <p>Assisting in community evaluations as needed.</p>

	NEC	<p>Connect with local resident leadership and residents in already occurring events as needed.</p> <p>Become familiar with resident processes and procedures for community participation to support new residents.</p>	<p>Facilitate engagement between Habitat staff and residents through already existing mechanisms.</p> <p>Welcome Habitat staff and new homeowners to events already planned and support organizing of events</p> <p>Connect new residents to community history and current culture</p> <p>Connect existing residents to cultural education regarding new residents</p>	<p>Facilitate connection of new residents to resident leaders, processes, and events</p> <p>Check in with existing and new residents about community participation and experience</p>	<p>Maintain presence in community as needed, connecting with local residents at least a few times a year</p>
	CAS	Consult with resident leadership as needed	Consult with resident leadership as needed	Consult with resident leadership as needed	Consult with resident leadership as needed

Appendix D – Organizational Readiness Assessment

organizational readiness
assessment



Date of completion:
 Name of person recording:
 Affiliate name, state:
 Names and titles of assessment respondents:

KEY
 Exceeds = Demonstrates and applies STRONG skills and concepts.
 Meets = Demonstrates and applies skills and concepts.
 Close to meeting = Demonstrates and applies MOST skills and concepts.
 Does not yet meet = Demonstrates some skills and concepts.
 No mark = Not determined.

Capacities, skills and competencies	No mark	Does not yet meet	Close to meeting	Meets	Exceeds
Understanding neighborhood revitalization					
1. All current board members have an understanding of neighborhood revitalization and the Quality of Life Framework.		1			
2. All staff members have been trained on neighborhood revitalization and the Quality of Life Framework principles and practices.		2			
3. The board of directors has an understanding of the principles of asset-based community development.	?				
4. The board of directors has an understanding of logic models and outputs vs. outcomes.				3	
5. Staff members have received training in asset-based community development.			4		
6. The staff has received training in logic models and outputs vs. outcomes.			5		
7. The affiliate has a commitment to outcome evaluation.			6		
8. The affiliate exhibits an understanding of the long-term nature of revitalization work.			7		



Capacities, skills and competencies	No mark	Does not yet meet	Close to meeting	Meets	Exceeds
Organizational readiness					
9. The affiliate has operationalized neighborhood revitalization in its strategic plan and annual work plan.					
10. A variety of staff members are responsible for neighborhood revitalization activities.					
11. A multiyear staffing plan, including succession planning, is in place to support neighborhood revitalization efforts.					
12. The affiliate's board and staff are in agreement that affiliate resources will be dedicated to the neighborhood revitalization effort (including staff time, money and programming).					
Focus neighborhood					
13. The affiliate's staff and board are supportive of conducting part or all of the affiliate's work in a defined focus neighborhood.					
14. The affiliate has or will develop the ability to use secondary data sources to research neighborhoods.					
Coalition engagement					
15. The affiliate's board and staff understand the difference between the roles of a convener and a participant in a neighborhood coalition.					
16. The affiliate's staff and board are in agreement that neighborhood revitalization work will be conducted as part of a multisector coalition.					
17. The affiliate's staff members have the skills to foster a resident engagement and ABCD approach by the neighborhood coalition.					

Capacities, skills and competencies	No mark	Does not yet meet	Close to meeting	Meets	Exceeds
18. Assessment of potential focus neighborhoods identified current and potential partners, associations, organizations and agencies and their intent and interest to work collectively as a coalition to improve quality of life.					
Resident engagement					
19. The affiliate is committed to working in partnership with neighborhood residents.					
20. The affiliate is committed to a resident-directed neighborhood vision and work.					
Implementation					
21. Neighborhood revitalization is included in the affiliate's fundraising efforts.					
22. Affiliate staff members have the skills and competencies to implement neighborhood revitalization efforts.					
23. The affiliate is able to provide expanded housing products and solutions.					
24. Affiliate staff members have the skills for outcome evaluation, including data collection, analysis and reporting.					