

The Northside Neighborhood Initiative¹

A Proposal to the Town of Carrboro Seeking Funding and Ongoing In-Kind Town Staff Support for the Northside Neighborhood Initiative

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¹ Inclusive in this area are multiple connected neighborhoods including Northside, Lloyd-Broad, Tin Top and Pine Knolls, but we use the broader “Northside” name here for the sake of simplicity and for consistency with the language used in the [Northside Housing Market Action Plan](#).

Background

Residents of the Northside neighborhood, including Carrboro's Lloyd/Broad and Tin Top communities, have helped sustain the Carrboro and Chapel Hill communities for generations.² Many of these neighbors—for example, Ms. Eva Barnett (pictured below) who has long lived in Carrboro and run a beauty shop there—have been community



leaders and advocates in their spare time while working multiple jobs well into their 80s. Northside residents have taken great pride in keeping up the homes they have lived in—often for several decades—and in maintaining an inclusive, diverse neighborhood. Now, more than ever, they are facing the impact of intense market forces, an aging housing stock requiring re-investment, and rising ownership costs that threaten the future of one of Orange County's most diverse neighborhoods. The good news is

working together with partners these neighbors are making significant progress in responding to and reversing these trends.

The Northside Neighborhood Initiative (NNI)—a collaborative effort among neighborhood residents, UNC, the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Chapel Hill, the Marian Cheek Jackson Center, Self-Help, nonprofit housing developers (including Community Home Trust, EmPOWERment Inc., and Habitat for Humanity), and other partners—was formalized in spring of 2015 after years of planning. The NNI is dedicated to *preserving the future* of the Northside neighborhood, with a particular focus on retaining the neighborhood's long-term residents, as well as providing quality affordable and workforce housing opportunities for existing and new residents.

Through a comprehensive neighborhood planning effort documented in the Northside Housing Market Action Plan, participants agreed to work toward fulfilling shared aspirations for Northside. The neighborhood residents and partners in the NNI envision a Northside that is “vital, family friendly, socially cohesive, multi-generational, mixed-income, and diverse... that celebrates its strengths and opportunities, while honoring the

² Please refer to the Northside Housing Market Action Plan (MAP), which was previously shared with the Affordable Housing Task Force and with Carrboro Town staff who have actively participated in Northside planning and implementation work, for more background on neighborhood boundaries, demographics, trends, etc. Do not hesitate to be in touch if you would like us to send you an electronic copy of the MAP or have questions about this proposal.

neighborhood’s cultural and historic legacy.”

Funding Request Summary

For a few years the Town of Carrboro has provided significant in-kind support to the NNI by allowing staff to participate in upfront planning and ongoing coordinating and implementing efforts. In addition, the Town previously awarded \$55,000 to Self-Help for land acquisition and home repairs, which we have deployed on a number of properties inside Carrboro town limits. Finally, the Town has helped fund and otherwise support our nonprofit development partners in myriad ways to create and preserve affordable housing, protect the community from “student-ification”, and more. Self-Help, as lead NNI implementation partner alongside the Jackson Center, is deeply grateful for the Town’s support to date. We now request that the Town of Carrboro—like the Town of Chapel Hill, Orange County, and UNC have done—take an important next step to sustain the NNI by playing an active financial role in ensuring effective program delivery.

Specifically, Self-Help seeks a \$30,000 grant to support NNI implementation, including land banking for affordable housing, coordinating critical home repairs and grant-funded property tax relief for low-income seniors, coordination among community Compass Group members, strategic partnership among development partners, managing home renovation and repairs, and other critical program implementation efforts jointly coordinated by the Jackson Center and Self-Help. (For the sake of simplicity in contracting and reporting with the Town, Self-Help will contract with the Jackson Center for its key role in these program activities rather than asking the Town to execute two separate funding agreements.) Town funds would be used solely to deliver program services within the Carrboro town limits.

We believe this request is consistent with the goals and policies of the Town’s Guidelines for the Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund, and with related policy initiatives.

Program Description

Town of Carrboro grant funds of \$30,000 would be used over the next 12 months to carry out NNI implementation through program activities such as those described above and further detailed on the following page. The Center for Community Self-Help, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, will manage these grant funds and provide annual reports or other information the Town requires via its grant contract. Self-Help will co-lead implementation of NNI programs in partnership with the 501c3 nonprofit Jackson Center, which is our grassroots neighborhood-based partner. Although the NNI includes numerous elements, we have provided an overview of two key programs below to help illustrate the type of work the Town’s funds will support.

Northside Land Bank: Creating and Preserving Diverse Housing Options

The Northside Land Bank is the keystone of much of the NNI work. The Land Bank utilizes a \$3 million loan from UNC to Self-Help, in order to facilitate the purchase and



renovation/construction of vacant homes and land, such as the house pictured to the left. These funds allow a community-guided acquisition process to compete with a robust and aggressive student rental investor market that is increasingly targeting Carrboro. Once property is acquired, the Land Bank responsibly manages the property and re-sells it at or below cost to nonprofit affordable housing developers and direct to homebuyers (where feasible) with owner-occupancy and (as applicable) affordability deed restrictions attached. Town grant funds for

the Land Bank would be used to help defray staff costs associated with acquiring, building/renovating, and selling property within the Carrboro town limits of the NNI target neighborhoods.

Please note that land banking is listed as an eligible/desired use in the Town of Carrboro's Guidelines for the Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund (per section 4-C), which also includes related activities such as supporting housing construction and re-selling properties to individuals and families (4-D and 4-E, respectively).

Promise of Home: Safety and Accessibility Repairs & Other Supports for Existing Residents

Self-Help's funding request of the Town will also be dedicated toward the implementation of the Promise of Home program for Carrboro residents, which provides critical safety and accessibility repairs along with other supports to help residents stay rooted in the community. The Promise of Home program is designed to make critical repairs to eligible homeowners' dwellings in order to make their house safe, decent and affordable, in order to increase retention among current residents, reduce ongoing and future maintenance costs, promote energy efficiency, and preserve affordability. It also provides philanthropic foundation-funded tax relief for low-income seniors to help them continue to live affordably in their homes.

Approximately 60 homeowners in the Northside/Lloyd-Broad section of the neighborhood are low-income seniors (age 62 and older), which is the target demographic for Promise of Home. Roughly one-third of these families live in the Carrboro side of the neighborhood. (We do not yet have as detailed of data for the Pine Knolls/Tin Top portions of the target area but know there are dozens more low-income seniors.) With an aging housing stock and the rising cost of living, many long-time residents need significant home repairs—e.g., roof replacement, HVAC repairs, electrical and plumbing updates—and assistance with rising property tax bills to be able to stay in their homes. The Promise of Home program seeks to help these low-income, elderly neighbors stay safe and rooted in the Northside.

Note that critical housing repairs are listed as an eligible/desired use in the Town of Carrboro's Guidelines for the Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund (per section 4-I).

Conclusion

The Town of Carrboro has played an important and productive role to date in neighborhood planning and in coordinating with NNI partners. We greatly appreciate your ongoing in-kind and property-specific support of the work, and respectfully request a financial commitment of \$30,000 in grant funding to support equally critical, broader-based efforts to implement NNI programs. In so doing, the Town of Carrboro will be supporting the effort alongside the Town of Chapel Hill and Orange County, which have both committed funds for this purpose.

We are proud of the collaborative and impactful work completed to date, and excited about the new initiatives underway in the Northside. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Town staff in the months and years ahead, and in sharing the data and stories coming out of this work as the NNI continues. We welcome your feedback or questions regarding this funding request, and would be happy to walk with you through the neighborhood to show you more examples of the work in person at your convenience.

Thank you for all you do for the Carrboro community, including the neighborhoods of the NNI. We look forward to your review of this request and to your ongoing support.