

Greauxing Resilience at Home

Town of Warrenton, Virginia: Fauquier Habitat for Humanity Haiti Street Neighborhood Revitalization



GEORGETOWN CLIMATE CENTER

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Louisiana is one of the hardest-hit areas in the United States as extreme weather events and regular flooding become more frequent and intense.¹ These challenges often fall “first and worst” on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color or “BIPOC” and low-income communities.² This is especially true in the U.S. Gulf Coast region and the state of Louisiana.

Over time, these challenges are being exacerbated by population increases and transitions as climate and non-climate drivers (e.g., people moving out of urban centers into more rural areas) influence where people choose — or are able — to live.

In southeast Louisiana, resilient, affordable housing initiatives are critical to ensuring equitable adaptation that takes into consideration the myriad overlapping challenges facing all Louisianans, but especially those living in communities that have long borne a disproportionate burden of risk.

Over a two-year period between fall 2020 and spring 2022, **Capital Region Planning Commission** and **Georgetown Climate Center** partnered with dozens of people from government, private, and nonprofit sectors and community stakeholders in Region Seven of the **Louisiana Watershed Initiative**.³ The result of that partnership effort is **Greauxing Resilience at Home: A Regional Vision**⁴ (Regional Vision), a resource to inform Region Seven’s ongoing work to increase community resilience by promoting affordable housing and nature-based solutions.

Regional and local governments in Region Seven can use the Regional Vision to identify potential legal, planning, and policy tools and projects to increase the affordability and availability of housing and the use of nature-based solutions. In addition, the Regional Vision offers insights for policymakers across Louisiana, throughout the Gulf Coast region, and nationally.

This report is composed of 24 individual case studies developed by Georgetown Climate Center to support the Regional Vision. These case studies describe best and emerging practices, tools, and examples from Louisiana and other U.S. jurisdictions to make progress on these complex and challenging issues. These case studies are intended to provide transferable lessons and ideas for regional and local governments addressing housing and mitigating flood risk as integrated parts of comprehensive community resilience strategies. Collectively, these case studies present a suite, although not an exhaustive list of tools and approaches that can be used to facilitate any of these efforts.

1 STATE OF LA., LOUISIANA CLIMATE ACTION PLAN: CLIMATE INITIATIVES TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR 15–16 (Feb. 2022), available at <https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/CCI-Task-force/CAP/ClimateActionPlanFinal.pdf>.

2 See *id.* at 15–17.

3 The Louisiana Watershed Initiative is an effort to create a paradigm shift in floodplain management towards a strategy that approaches flood risk reduction from a nature-based solutions and land-use-based approach. A part of this approach includes identifying eight separate regional watershed management areas to assist in achieving cross-jurisdictional activities.

Region Seven is one of these eight watershed regions. Region Seven encompasses the upper part of the toe of Louisiana’s boot. It spans eastward from the Mississippi River near Baton Rouge across the Northshore (i.e., north of Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas) to Mississippi and along the Mississippi River to the Bonnet Carré Spillway. The region includes 13 parishes and 45 incorporated municipalities.

4 To reflect their connection to Louisiana’s cultural heritage, the project team and members of Region Seven that participated in this process chose to use the word “Greaux,” a French-inspired phonetic spelling of the word “Grow,” to brand this product.

Where possible, all the case studies share a consistent organizational format to allow easier cross-comparison of tools, processes, and takeaways:

- The **Background** section introduces the regional and local context (e.g., location, demographics) for each case study, including the following facing each jurisdiction: extreme weather risks, housing and environmental challenges, and development pressures.
- The **Housing** section focuses on the legal, planning, and policy tools and projects that have been designed and implemented to support the growth and preservation of housing affordability and availability.
- The **Environment** section highlights how vulnerable habitats like floodplains and other open spaces are being restored, conserved, and protected as a part of comprehensive resilience strategies to provide important ecosystem and community benefits like reducing flood risk and creating community assets, such as parks and trails.
- The **Community Engagement** section summarizes how governments have provided different types of public engagement opportunities and how affected residents have contributed to these planning and decisionmaking processes.
- The **Funding** section identifies how the programs, plans, and projects discussed have been funded by federal, state, and local government and private and nongovernmental sources.
- The **Next Steps** section captures the anticipated future actions that featured case study jurisdictions may take in implementing these tools and strategies.
- The **Considerations and Lessons Learned** section concludes with the primary takeaways from each example that other regional and local policymakers and communities may consider when developing or implementing their own housing and resilience strategies using these legal, planning, and policy tools.

A few additional notes about the case studies:

- **The case studies selected prioritize relatable and scalable models from places similar to Louisiana:** Wherever possible, Georgetown Climate Center aimed to acknowledge and lift up the work of jurisdictions and nongovernmental actors in Region Seven and neighboring watershed regions to inspire peer-to-peer sharing and actions from as close to home as possible. These resources are drawn from 12 states, with an emphasis on regions and local areas in the Gulf and Mid-Atlantic: Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Examples and lessons drawn from these regions are easiest to apply to a Louisianan context because they feature similar geography or analogous impacts from flooding and other climate effects.
- **There are no perfect, “one-size-fits-all” solutions:** While the case studies and resource entries informing the Region Vision are instructive for Region Seven and beyond, none of them are “perfect” examples of how to solve these complex and challenging issues. Georgetown Climate Center found no single case study or resource that provides a point-for-point or model for what Region Seven is trying to accomplish. No other jurisdiction identified is currently trying to integrate housing, flooding, equity, resilience, and population changes together in a single plan, ordinance, or policy. However, some jurisdictions are moving in that direction, or are making progress on discrete elements of what will eventually become a more holistic strategy. Therefore, this report and the Regional Vision draw analogous connections and recommendations that can be combined to facilitate more comprehensive planning and land-use efforts.

The case studies in this report were informed by interviews with practitioners and community leaders in charge of designing and overseeing this work. No statements or opinions, however, should be attributed to any individual or organization included in the *Acknowledgements* section of this report.

It is also important to note that the examples described in each case study are ongoing and the content included in this report is current as of spring 2022. For future updates about these and other case studies and the Regional Vision, please visit [Greaxing Resilience at Home: A Regional Vision](#) and Georgetown Climate Center’s [Adaptation Clearinghouse](#).

Town of Warrenton, Virginia

Fauquier Habitat for Humanity Haiti Street Neighborhood Revitalization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fauquier County is a rural county located in the northern area of Virginia at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.¹ Fauquier County is close to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area where many residents commute for work.

Fauquier Habitat for Humanity serves Fauquier County.² Fauquier Habitat builds new houses for low-income families and operates a neighborhood revitalization program.³ One of its neighborhood revitalization projects includes working with the historic Haiti (pronounced “Hay-ti”) Street neighborhood in Warrenton, Virginia.⁴ In 2019, Fauquier Habitat acquired multiple properties in the Haiti Street neighborhood for this revitalization initiative.

Currently, Fauquier Habitat is constructing about three homes a year in the Haiti Street neighborhood and helping to preserve the neighborhood’s historic culture through these builds. Fauquier Habitat is also preparing families for homeownership and placing families in their Haiti Street homes. Fauquier Habitat has partnered with various local entities for this work and engaged with the community from the start of the project. Fauquier Habitat’s work with Haiti Street serves as an example for other jurisdictions seeking to create permanent affordable housing in rural areas by involving the community and local organizations, as well as setting up future homeowners for success.

BACKGROUND

Fauquier County is a rural county in Virginia located about 40 miles southwest of Washington, D.C.⁵ Within the county, there are eight designated service districts, which comprise less than 10

¹ *About Fauquier*, FAUQUIER CNTY., VA, <http://www.fauquiertourism.com/about-fauquier> (last visited Nov. 29, 2021).

² *Mission & History*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/who-we-are/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³ *Neighborhood revitalization*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/what-we-do/programs/neighborhood-revitalization.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Demographics*, FAUQUIER CNTY., VA, <https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-a-g/community-development/planning/long-range-planning/demographics> (last visited Nov. 29, 2021).

percent of the county's land.⁶ As of 2019, more than 71,000 individuals resided in Fauquier County with 87 percent of this population being white.⁷

In the Fauquier County comprehensive plan, the county states that there is a disconnect between Fauquier County's population and its housing stock.⁸ Specifically, 83 percent of the units in the county are single-family detached homes, but only 24 percent of households in the county have families with two adults and children.⁹ The county has proposed new actions to address this disconnect by building more diverse types of housing.¹⁰ Regarding affordable housing, one of the county's goals is to provide "housing opportunities for all income levels."¹¹ The county predicts that between 2015 and 2040, about 400 new housing units will be needed each year to accommodate future growth, which is about a 36 percent increase in the county's housing stock.¹² Many housing challenges in Fauquier County are being largely driven by people commuting to the Washington D.C. area.

In addition to Fauquier County's comprehensive plan, the county is also involved in examining housing on a regional scale. In 2019, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission received a community impact grant from Virginia Housing to conduct a regional housing study for the Virginia counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock, and the towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Madison, Orange, Remington, Plains, Warrenton, and Washington.¹³ The goals of the study were to: (1) provide data to understand housing challenges in the region; (2) analyze regional land-use practices and zoning ordinances; and (3) provide recommendations.¹⁴

The housing study balances the need to advance a regional housing strategy, while also understanding the specific challenges, needs, and history in each county and municipality. To the former, the counties, which include Fauquier County, tackle affordable housing on a regional scale.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *QuickFacts Fauquier County, Virginia, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU*, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fauquiercountyvirginia/PST045219> (last visited Nov. 29, 2021).

⁸ Fauquier Cnty. Bd. of Supervisors, Housing: Chapter 3B 8 (2021), *available at* <https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/33332/637625515345200000>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* at 8–9.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ RAPPAHANNOCK-REG'L COMM'N. WORKING GRP., RAPPAHANNOCK -RAPIDAN REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY 4 (2020), *available at* https://cms9files.revize.com/rappahannock/Document_Center/Program%20Areas/Housing/Regional%20Housing%20Study/Final/Regional%20Housing%20Study%20Report.RRRC.pdf; *Regional Housing Study*, RAPPAHANNOCK-REG'L COMM'N. WORKING GRP., https://www.rregion.org/program_areas/housing/regional_housing_study.php (last visited Dec. 2, 2021).

¹⁴ RAPPAHANNOCK-REG'L COMM'N. WORKING GRP., RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY 5 (2020), *available at* https://cms9files.revize.com/rappahannock/Document_Center/Program%20Areas/Housing/Regional%20Housing%20Study/Final/Regional%20Housing%20Study%20Report.RRRC.pdf.

In the study, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission uses the term “attainable housing” instead of affordable housing to avoid negative implications that often surround the term “affordable housing.” The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission explains that changing the terminology “can assist in the education of who in the region needs housing and their role in shaping the overall economy.”¹⁵

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission states that attainable housing is needed to: “(1) better enable businesses to attract and retain workers; (2) ensure there are residents to support school enrollment, local volunteer organizations, and community group membership; (3) establish a larger customer base of year-round residents for local businesses; and (4) create a stronger sense of place that is attractive to both current and potential residents.”¹⁶ In the study, two county recommendations are to increase and maintain attainable housing stock and address negative perceptions around attainable housing.¹⁷ Lastly, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission conducted a zoning ordinance review for best practices that encourage attainable housing and concluded that both Fauquier County and the Town of Warrenton have “amenable zoning practices to encourage attainable housing.”¹⁸

OVERVIEW OF THE FAUQUIER HABITAT HAITI STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT

Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity is an organization that partners with people in communities in the United States and around the world to build and improve the places individuals call home.¹⁹ The organization advocates for affordable housing and supports sustainable and transformative development.

A central feature of Habitat’s model is working in partnership with the people the organization serves. Specifically, volunteers work with the individuals and families who will own the homes being built.²⁰ For a one-adult family, future homeowners build alongside volunteers for about 250 hours.²¹ For families with two or more adults, the future homeowners provide about 500 hours.²²

¹⁵ *Id.* at 6.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 5.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 11.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Our Mission, Vision, and Principles, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.habitat.org/about/mission-and-vision> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

²⁰ *Mission and History*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/who-we-are/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

In addition, all attend homeownership classes, which cover topics, such as finance and home repair.²³

Habitat for Humanity's efforts also include neighborhood revitalization.²⁴ The organization uses an asset-based community development model for this work.²⁵ For this model, residents in a particular neighborhood are the primary stakeholders and create "a collective vision for an improved quality of life in their neighborhood."²⁶ For neighborhood revitalization, Habitat for Humanity works with local residents, community leaders, and organizations to address the unique issues and concerns of a particular neighborhood.²⁷ Habitat for Humanity chooses to use this model for neighborhood revitalization because the organization believes that "building houses alone does not fix the systemic, generational problems that plague underserved communities." Moreover, the organization believes that without working with the community and understanding local issues, any work will be "unsuccessful as there is no sense of ownership or agency on the part of residents and other stakeholders."²⁸

Fauquier Habitat for Humanity

The Fauquier Habitat affiliate was created in 1991 and serves both Fauquier and Rappahannock counties in Virginia.²⁹ Fauquier Habitat uses the Habitat International partnership housing model to serve as the general contractor to build new houses and rehabilitate and revitalize the existing housing stock in these counties. Fauquier Habitat also has a neighborhood revitalization program and uses the Habitat International asset-based community development model for those projects.³⁰

Fauquier Habitat emphasizes that its work is "a hand up, not a hand out to low-income families."³¹ For example, families have to show their ability to pay a mortgage.³² Additionally, potential homeowners must take classes and complete certain tasks before they can submit an application

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Neighborhood revitalization*, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.habitat.org/our-work/neighborhood-revitalization> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

²⁵ *Neighborhood revitalization*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/what-we-do/programs/neighborhood-revitalization.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Neighborhood revitalization*, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.habitat.org/our-work/neighborhood-revitalization> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

²⁸ *Neighborhood revitalization*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/what-we-do/programs/neighborhood-revitalization.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

²⁹ *Mission & History*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/who-we-are/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³⁰ *Neighborhood revitalization*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/what-we-do/programs/neighborhood-revitalization.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³¹ *Mission and History*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/who-we-are/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³² *Newsroom*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/news-events/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

for a home through Habitat. By doing this, Fauquier Habitat works to give people not only a house, but also the tools to be an effective homeowner.

Haiti Street Neighborhood Project

Among its neighborhood revitalization projects, Fauquier Habitat is currently working with a neighborhood in Fauquier County that is located both on and adjacent to Haiti Street/Eva Walker Park (pronounced “Hay-ti”) in Warrenton, Virginia.³³ The first homes in the area were built in 1869.³⁴ It is a historically Black neighborhood.³⁵ The Eva Walker Park was named after local resident Eva Walker who was both an entrepreneur and civil rights activist.

In 2017, Fauquier Habitat launched the Haiti Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. This initiative addresses quality of life and housing issues for the Haiti Street area.³⁶ The goal of the initiative is to “preserve Haiti Street history while ensuring quality affordable housing.”³⁷

The affordable housing and environmental foci of the project are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

HOUSING

In July 2019, the PATH Foundation awarded Fauquier Habitat \$82,718.89 for projects that improve the quality of life in the Haiti Street/Eva Walker Park neighborhood. The PATH Foundation is an organization that provides grants to nonprofits and governmental agencies who are bettering the health and vitality of Fauquier, Rappahannock, and Culpeper counties in Virginia.³⁸ Prior to receiving this grant, Fauquier Habitat had already been working in this neighborhood to learn more about residents’ needs, build relationships, and establish trust.

³³ *Neighborhood Revitalization*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/what-we-do/programs/neighborhood-revitalization.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³⁴ *Newsroom*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/news-events/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³⁵ *Neighborhood Revitalization*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/what-we-do/programs/neighborhood-revitalization.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³⁶ Fauquier Habitat Launches Haiti Street Revitalization, FAUQUIER NOW (Mar. 23, 2017), https://www.fauquiernow.com/fauquier_news/entry/fauquier-habitat-launches-neighborhood-revitalization-initiative-2017.

³⁷ *Newsroom*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/news-events/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

³⁸ PATH FOUNDATION, <https://pathforyou.org/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021); PATH FOUNDATION, https://pathforyou.org/grant/?sft_grant_year=2019 (last visited Oct. 25, 2021); *PATH Foundation announces more than \$755,000 in program and planning grants*, FAUQUIER TIMES (July 16, 2019), https://www.fauquier.com/news/path-foundation-announces-more-than-755-000-in-program-and-planning-grants/article_a41fab34-a760-11e9-a462-df5dec95fc31.html.

In September 2019, the PATH Foundation awarded Fauquier Habitat an additional \$1,050,000 for the Haiti Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.³⁹ This second grant was allocated to acquire and renovate a large part of the Haiti Street area to create affordable housing and neighborhood stability.⁴⁰

With the help of PATH Foundation grants, in 2019, Fauquier Habitat bought five properties on Haiti Street consisting of nine living spaces.⁴¹ With this purchase, Fauquier Habitat then owned a total of 11 properties comprising 19 housing units.⁴² Fauquier Habitat had a sense of urgency for the acquisition of these properties since Haiti Street is located near the Warrenton downtown and is adjacent to a historic area that would have driven gentrification. Fauquier Habitat's Executive Director noted that the acquisition allowed the organization to beat "potential gentrification of the neighborhood, which most often means displacement of people, further escalation of housing prices, and the economic erosion of affordability in the county."⁴³ By March 2022, Fauquier Habitat will have built 13 homes on Haiti Street. Of these homes, three homes represent a new generation of construction.

Since the acquisition, Fauquier Habitat has been working with the Haiti Street neighborhood to maintain trust. At the end of 2021, Fauquier Habitat was in the process of building single-family homes in the neighborhood with the goal of zero-household displacement. Two families were placed in these homes, and three more families will likely be placed in homes by the end of 2022. Fauquier Habitat anticipates being done with construction by the end of 2024/early 2025.

In the future, Fauquier Habitat intends to place the homes in a new state land trust, which includes a shared equity model.⁴⁴ The Virginia Statewide Community Land Trust (VSCLT) is a nonprofit

³⁹ PATH FOUNDATION, https://pathforyou.org/grant/?_sft_grant_year=2019 (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Newsroom*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/news-events/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021); *With PATH grant, Habitat for Humanity buys five Haiti Street properties*, FAUQUIER TIMES (Nov. 8, 2019), https://www.fauquier.com/news/with-path-grant-habitat-for-humanity-buys-five-haiti-street-properties/article_edee31d4-0261-11ea-be48-33521302e86f.html; *Habitat buys 9 Haiti St. dwellings for \$778,000*, FAUQUIER NOW (Nov. 12, 2019), https://www.fauquiernow.com/fauquier_news/article/fauquier-habitat-buys-9-haiti-st-dwellings-for-778000-2019.

⁴² *With PATH grant, Habitat for Humanity buys five Haiti Street properties*, FAUQUIER TIMES (Nov. 8, 2019), https://www.fauquier.com/news/with-path-grant-habitat-for-humanity-buys-five-haiti-street-properties/article_edee31d4-0261-11ea-be48-33521302e86f.html. Note, another news article states that 20 housing units were encompassed by this purchase. *Habitat buys 9 Haiti St. dwellings for \$778,000*, FAUQUIER NOW (Nov. 12, 2019), https://www.fauquiernow.com/fauquier_news/article/fauquier-habitat-buys-9-haiti-st-dwellings-for-778000-2019. Regardless, the total number of housing units in 2019 was either 19 or 20.

⁴³ *Newsroom*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/news-events/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021); *With PATH grant, Habitat for Humanity buys five Haiti Street properties*, FAUQUIER TIMES (Nov. 8, 2019), https://www.fauquier.com/news/with-path-grant-habitat-for-humanity-buys-five-haiti-street-properties/article_edee31d4-0261-11ea-be48-33521302e86f.html.

⁴⁴ PATH FOUNDATION, https://pathforyou.org/grant/?_sft_grant_year=2019 (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

organization created in 2021 “that seeks to develop and maintain permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for low and moderate-income households.”⁴⁵ The VSCLT serves the entire state of Virginia and every Habitat affiliate in Virginia can participate in the VSCLT.⁴⁶

Fauquier Habitat is interested in considering how to transition the Haiti Street homes and future homes it acquires into the VSCLT to make homes permanently affordable. Doing this would also allow Fauquier Habitat to invest more money into the quality and construction of the homes, rather than in the purchase and ownership of land. Housing upgrades help reduce overall housing and maintenance costs as well as avoiding worries about gentrification and displacement.

ENVIRONMENT

Fauquier Habitat partnered with Piedmont Environmental Council, a consistent supporter of Fauquier Habitat’s work, to help with the Haiti Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.⁴⁷ Piedmont Environmental Council is a Virginia-based nonprofit that focuses on protecting and promoting the rural economy, natural resources, history, and beauty of the Virginia Piedmont area.⁴⁸ Fauquier Habitat requested the Piedmont Environmental Council’s support with the landscaping for one home being built in the Haiti neighborhood. This particular home was a two-level house located at 116 Haiti Street. The Piedmont Environmental Council notes that this home “represents Habitat’s new focus on building structures that pay homage to traditional architecture in the community.”⁴⁹ The partnership resulted in Piedmont Environmental Council designing the landscape and transforming the “home’s small yard into vibrant, low-maintenance landscape with 217 native plants.”⁵⁰ Additionally, the Piedmont Environmental Council also helped build a community garden for the neighborhood.⁵¹

Another environmental consideration Fauquier Habitat makes is building energy efficient homes as a way for the communities they work with to be resilient to climate change. Fauquier Habitat also promotes energy efficiency as a way of reducing homeownership costs for homeowners.

⁴⁵ *About*, VA STATEWIDE CMTY. LAND TRUST, <https://www.vsc.lt.org/about/> (last visited Nov. 29, 2021).

⁴⁶ *Habitat Affiliates*, VA STATEWIDE CMTY. LAND TRUST, <https://www.vsc.lt.org/habitat-affiliates/> (last visited Nov. 29, 2021).

⁴⁷ *Fauquier Habitat Goes Native Around Haiti House*, PIEDMONT ENV’T. COUNCIL (Dec. 16, 2020), <https://www.pecva.org/resources/publications/piedmont-view/fauquier-habitat-goes-native-around-haiti-house/>.

⁴⁸ PIEDMONT ENVTL. COUNCIL, <https://www.pecva.org> (last visited Dec. 6, 2021).

⁴⁹ *Fauquier Habitat Goes Native Around Haiti House*, PIEDMONT ENV’T. COUNCIL (Dec. 16, 2020), <https://www.pecva.org/resources/publications/piedmont-view/fauquier-habitat-goes-native-around-haiti-house/>.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ Alisa Booze Troetschel, *Fauquier Habitat makes a difference in Warrenton neighborhood*, FAUQUIER TIMES (Aug. 17, 2021), https://www.fauquier.com/news/fauquier-habitat-makes-a-difference-in-warrenton-neighborhood/article_2168a15c-f105-11e9-b278-c3dfc6cf04ae.html.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

After Fauquier Habitat acquired the homes in 2019, it started a strategic planning process.⁵² This process was initiated to help identify the ways to best use the properties and to allow neighborhood residents, Fauquier Habitat, local officials, architects, consultants, Virginia Housing, Virginia Community Development Corporation, and others to work together to decide next steps.

Since 2017, Fauquier Habitat has also worked with the community to identify goals for the Haiti Street neighborhood.⁵³ As a result of those community meetings, Habitat created training courses for the community that tackle leadership, organization, communication, and advocacy skills.⁵⁴ Additionally, cleanup days was one goal identified by the community. Fauquier Habitat currently hosts community meetings for residents twice a month.⁵⁵

FUNDING

In July 2019, the PATH Foundation awarded Fauquier Habitat \$82,718.89 for projects that improve the quality of life in the Haiti Street neighborhood, and in September 2019, the PATH Foundation awarded Fauquier Habitat \$1,050,000 for the Haiti Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. The PATH Foundation is a health legacy foundation. It was created through the sale of Fauquier Health System, the local nonprofit health system, to LifePoint, a for-profit national health entity. PATH partnered with LifePoint and held a public charity status for five years, but now has a private foundation status. PATH's primary service areas are Fauquier, Culpeper, and Rappahannock counties and has a goal of improving the health of these communities.

In addition, in 2019, Fauquier Habitat received a community impact grant from Virginia Housing. Fauquier Habitat received \$100,000 and will use the money to determine what housing options are best for the neighborhood. Community impact grants provide "local governments resources towards community revitalization and encourages the development of mixed-use/mixed-income properties, which often anchor community development efforts and spur economic growth."⁵⁶

⁵² *Newsroom*, FAUQUIER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, <https://www.fauquierhabitat.org/news-events/> (last visited Oct. 25, 2021).

⁵³ Alisa Booze Troetschel, *Fauquier Habitat makes a difference in Warrenton neighborhood*, FAUQUIER TIMES (Aug. 17, 2021), https://www.fauquier.com/news/fauquier-habitat-makes-a-difference-in-warrenton-neighborhood/article_2168a15c-f105-11e9-b278-c3dfc6cf04ae.html.

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Grant Program Areas*, VA HOUSING, <https://www.vhda.com/BusinessPartners/GovandNon-Profits/CommunityOutreach/Pages/Grant-Program-Areas.aspx> (last visited Nov. 29, 2021).

NEXT STEPS

As of 2022, families are in the process of being placed in homes on Haiti Street. Fauquier Habitat's goal is zero-displacement. Currently, Fauquier Habitat is constructing about three homes a year with the hope to scale up that number in the future. Fauquier Habitat anticipates being done with construction by the end of 2024/early 2025.

Fauquier Habitat's commitment is to the Haiti Street neighborhood and supporting residents as much as possible. However, Fauquier Habitat acknowledges that every problem cannot be solved by only providing housing support to a community. Partnerships with other social organizations are also necessary to address other local issues, such as poverty and crime.

Currently, the homes on Haiti Street are all single-family homes. With the community impact grant, Fauquier Habitat collaborated with an architect to create housing design standards that are compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood.⁵⁷ Additionally, Fauquier Habitat will be analyzing whether the community wants more rental units and/or homeownership opportunities.

Overall, Fauquier Habitat hopes to build a model that can be replicated in other communities in Virginia and emphasizes that it starts with buy-in from residents and having everyone be mutually accountable to one another.

CONSIDERATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Fauquier Habitat's work with the Haiti Street neighborhood is a good example of how to create lasting affordable housing, building trust and engaging with communities, and preparing future homeowners for successful home ownership.

To achieve equitable housing, supportive planning and zoning actions are needed at the local level. As of January 2022, there are ongoing discussions with the Town of Warrenton about increasing the density in the Haiti Street neighborhood in order to make this new development possible. Regardless, the town's comprehensive plan already recognizes the need for such a density increase in its land use maps, potentially paving the way for this zoning update.⁵⁸

However, the work in Haiti Street could not have been accomplished without funding from the PATH Foundation and Fauquier Habitat purchasing the land in the neighborhood, constructing the

⁵⁷ Alisa Booze Troetschel, *Fauquier Habitat makes a difference in Warrenton neighborhood*, FAUQUIER TIMES (Aug. 17, 2021), https://www.fauquier.com/news/fauquier-habitat-makes-a-difference-in-warrenton-neighborhood/article_2168a15c-f105-11e9-b278-c3dfc6cf04ae.html.

⁵⁸ See TOWN OF WARRENTON, VA., PLAN WARRENTON 2040 (Apr. 13, 2021), available at <https://www.warrentonva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/200/April-13-2021-Adopted-Comprehensive-Plan-PDF?bidId=>; TOWN OF WARRENTON, V.A., TOWN OF WARRENTON FUTURE LAND USE (Apr. 3, 2008), available at <https://www.warrentonva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/204/Future-Land-Use-Map-PDF?bidId=>.

new homes, and building and maintaining trust with community members. As this example shows, a variety of government and nongovernmental entities should be brought to the table to implement different parts of a project. Creating public-private-nonprofit partnerships has been key to many parts of Fauquier Habitat's work.

Community engagement and buy-in is also critical to achieving true equitable housing. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that all priority needs in a community will not be solved by providing housing alone. Therefore, partnerships with other social organizations are also key to address other social and economic issues a community faces.

Moreover, though individual strategies and models must be founded in grassroots efforts, those models can be scaled up to also function across different service areas and regions. In Warrenton, Fauquier Habitat is starting small in the Haiti Street neighborhood. The hope is that Fauquier Habitat can work in other counties in Virginia — with the support of additional regional Habitat organizations and other partners — to influence more efforts to increase affordable housing options and revitalize underserved communities elsewhere.

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Housing Study, of which Fauquier Habitat was a part, is another example of replicating work to address “attainable housing” on a regional scale. Other jurisdictions, especially those dealing with regional commuters for work — like in the District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia or “DMV” area — can consider similar regional-scale work and planning opportunities.

Further, the scalability of Fauquier Habitat's work may be positively influenced by the new statewide community land trust established in Virginia. Community land trusts are an innovative way to create permanent affordable housing in communities. Fauquier Habitat's involvement with the VSCLT is a good example of a way to invest more money into the quality and construction of affordable housing and minimizing worries about gentrification and displacement.

Lastly, by requiring potential homeowners to take classes and complete certain tasks before they can submit an application for a home, Fauquier Habitat not only provides homes, but prepares the community for effective, long-term homeownership. Efforts like this can create long-term community capacity to build individual and neighborhood-wide resilience.