Northeast LA Community Housing Alliance (NELACHA)

*Last updated: 04/16/25**
Shareable link: https://tinyurl.com/NELACHA

This document summarizes discussions, resources, and next steps that are part of the Northeast LA Community Housing Alliance (NELACHA) bi-monthly meetings. If you have questions, feel free to email helen@mas.la.

Navigating this Document

1. Click the "Show Document Outline" icon in the upper left hand corner of the screen.
2. Resources/background documents up next.
3. The most recent meeting notes will be below, scroll down to find more summaries!

Background Info

- What is the NELA Community Housing Alliance?
- Community housing pathways 101
- Community housing lunch n learn highlights
- Community housing outreach materials - all materials here
    - Property owner postcard
    - Property owner brochure
    - Program brochure
    - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Community Housing in NELA - maps!

NELACHA Structure

- Bi-monthly NELACHA meetings (4th Thurs every other month) - contact melissa@mas.la

Funding Sources

- United to House LA (ULA) | City of LA
    - Proposed guidelines by ACT-LA

Local social movements

- Social housing campaign - map of public land in City of LA here
- United to House LA Coalition
- Tongva Policy Memo
- Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) efforts in LA County

- LA Community Land Trust Coalition

Homebuying Resources

Ladder Up $20k Grant Program
Richard Tellez
City National Bank
714-478-0749
richard.tellez@cnb.com

Real Estate Team
Jennifer Saldaña
Dow Capital
310-597-2825
Jennifer.saldana94@gmail.com

Sammy Lyon
Dow Capital
424-246-5912
sammy@lyonideas.com

Lender for folks with ITIN, who aren't able to co-buy
Nelson Arevalo
Mortgage Broker
310-612-4734
nelson@arealefinance.com

Upcoming meetings

- **Tues, January 27th, 2025 | 5:30-7:30pm** at LA Más' space 2806 Clearwater St, Los Angeles, CA 90039
    - Quarterly NELACHA mtg | We'll be reflecting on how community members can be part of the decision making and stewardship process for community housing projects. Please RSVP with melissa@mas.la

03/25/2025 Meeting Notes | Presentation + LA Más Updates

Community Housing Program Updates

- Governance and Property Acquisition
    - Governance Committee officially launched.
    - LA Más is in escrow on two properties:
        - **Lincoln Heights (LH):** 11 residents with roots in the neighborhood; 2 vacancies.
          $200,000 needed for repairs.
        - **Highland Park (HLP):** Currently vacant. Property is under the REAP program (housing rehabilitation). $300,000 needed to remove the building from REAP.
          Potential to add 2 ADU units; construction would require an additional $400,000.
- Financial Needs
    - Partners have raised $2.28M for property purchases.
    - LA Más must raise $500,000 to maintain ownership and stakeholder equity across both properties.
- Property Condition and Redevelopment
    - HLP property foundation is deteriorated; structural rebuild likely required including demolition, new foundation, and interior remodeling.
- Support and Engagement Opportunities
    - NELACHA can support by:
        - Engaging neighbors and property owners.
        - Inviting relevant stakeholders to future meetings.
- Q&A
    - Resident asked whether the $300,000 includes ADU construction.
        - *No, that amount is only for repairs; ADU construction will cost an additional $400,000.*
    - Resident inquired about the HLP property foundation.
        - *It is crumbling and requires full structural remediation.*

First-Time Homebuyer Education – Jennifer Saldaña

- Key Points
    - Emphasized the importance of education and long-term preparation.
    - Shared personal story: Took five years from decision to purchase to actual homeownership.

    - Encouraged late bloomers: Jennifer's father bought his first home in his 50s.
- NELA Housing Context
    - Average home price: $1.15 million.
    - Homes typically sell above asking price within one month.
    - 46.3% homeownership rate, below national average (65–66%).
    - High influx of buyers from San Francisco.
    - Homeownership Types: Condos, Townhomes, Single-Family Homes, and Multifamily (2–4 units).
- Homeownership vs. Renting
    - Many LA property owners live outside the community.
    - Implications for local economies, public amenities, and displacement.
    - Urged reflection: Will current residents still be here when improvements arrive?
- Steps to Homeownership
    - Learn about the process.
    - Share your goal and set a timeline.
    - Financial preparation (budgeting, saving, debt management).
    - Engage with realtors and lenders.
    - Get pre-approved.
    - Begin home search and make offers.

Home Loan Process – Richard Elles, City National Bank

- Loan Basics
    - Pre Approval clarifies buying power.
    - Required components:
        - Down payment
        - Credit score
        - Income documentation
        - Home insurance
    - Monthly mortgage includes:
        - Principal
        - Interest
        - Property taxes
        - Insurance
        - PMI (if <20% down payment)
- Down Payment Assistance
    - Grants and loans available.
    - City National Bank's *Ladder Up* program provides $20,000 grant.
- Loan Types
    - Residential: 1–4 units.
    - Commercial: 5+ units.
- Additional Notes
    - You can be on the title without being on the loan.

    - Caution advised with co-signers—relatives preferred.
    - "If you want to be a homeowner, you will be a homeowner."
- Q&A Highlights
    - PMI costs approx. $400/month; CNB program may waive it.
    - Loan application requires pay stubs, bank statements, W-2s, and tax returns (3 years if self-employed).
    - ITIN holders cannot get loans but can be on the title.
    - Buying jointly is possible; all parties must be pre-approved.
    - Two years of work history in the same field is ideal (even if with different employers).
    - First-time homebuyer status applies if not owned in past 3 years.
    - On not paying off loans: Consider financial strategy—speak with an advisor.
    - HELOC (Home Equity Line of Credit): Allows borrowing against home equity for short-term use.

Next Steps:

- Explore potential support for LH and HLP properties.
- Invite potential partners to upcoming meetings.
- Share first-time homebuyer resources with community members.

11/20/24 Meeting Notes | Slide deck

Arvia Gallery Walk

- One of the participants shared that they lived on Arvia for 17 years and recall the house alluded to in Andres' artwork that got flipped
    - Before the home was flipped it was full of life, fruit trees and plants, they remember the residents always gathering outside
    - Reflection: when the home was flipped it lost life, lost the gathering space, the essence of community
- Another participant shared that as renters, landlords hold power over renters and exert their power over them in really sad ways - she was growing sugar canes in the small patch of green space they had and the landlord forcibly removed it all
    - LAM does not want to perpetuate the power dynamics, instead we hope to transform the way we treat each other as human beings
- Community Housing promotora shares her experience at the escrow closing press conference of Arvia
- Questions
    - First time participant asked "How should we approach property owners? How do we start the dialogue?

Community Housing Acquisition Journey

- Community Housing video - an accessible medium to reach more people (property owners, potential funders, community members), tell the story and demonstrate that it is possible - that values aligned property owners exist!
- Financial feasibility discussion
    - How will LA Más keep these units affordable?
        - RSO protections
        - Budget transparency
        - Market rate ADU
    - Will LA Más consider abolishing the rent?
        - Current community housing strategy is still participating in the housing market - we need the rent to pay for operating costs (insurance, property taxes, improvements)
    - Is there a loan on this property?
        - No, we do not have a mortgage in the traditional sense.
        - However, our co-owner Self Help Ventures Fund invested $1.3M of their funds to the project, which come with interest payments. Part of the rent will go towards paying interest, which is much lower than a traditional mortgage. Loan clarifying questions

What's next

- **Community Advisory Committee**
    - Overall excitement and agreement
    - Recommendation: do not open the CAC to the public, LAM staff should do targeted outreach with clear criteria
        - A CAC member should demonstrate commitment, non-biased perspective

Future of NELACHA

- Path to ownership (individual/collective) resource - participants expressed interest and agreed to host this information
- Reflections on what else people want to see in NELACHA/LA Mas space
    - Harmony and respect across different perspectives - community agreements
    - More commitment - more responsibilities to advance this work
    - Immigration rights resources post-election results
    - Collective discussions on how to activate CH projects when there is physical space available but no vacancies (community benefits)

09/24/24 Meeting Notes | slide deck

**Many thanks to Jordan Gonzales for notetaking support.*

1. Community-Centered Stories and Housing

- Focus on highlighting the history of people and the community, especially those rooted in Northeast Los Angeles (NELA).
- Emphasis on creating spaces for social gatherings with neighbors.
- Advocacy for community-driven housing:
    - Securing housing for working-class residents.
    - Ensuring accessible, affordable housing.
    - Removing housing from the traditional market to maintain affordability.

2. Arvia Project Updates

- Escrow: The project is on track to close escrow within two weeks.
- Operating Agreement: There is a focus on creating an agreement that honors residents.
- Costs: The project is expected to cost $1.6 million, including property acquisition, repairs, and the addition of a new unit.
- Resident Participation: A question was raised about why other residents from Arvia are not participating in the Northeast LA Community Housing Alliance (NELACHA).
- New Unit: The additional unit will be market rate to subsidize existing rents.
- Community Use: There are considerations to open the home for community use, with opportunities for business or Section 8 partnerships.
- Business Potential: The possibility of business use on project sites was discussed.

3. Criteria for Future Projects

- Priority should be given to organized, working-class residents and patient sellers.
- Properties with vacancies or extra space for building are ideal.
- Organized residents facilitate faster and smoother purchase processes.

4. Housing Justice and Collective Values

- It's important to involve property owners who have a community-focused mindset, offering affordable, habitable housing.
- However, undocumented residents face stress and uncertainty due to lack of knowledge and legal protections.

- Unity among community members is crucial. When Arvia was up for sale, real estate agents initially pushed for a "cash for keys" approach, but the trust between residents and property owners allowed them to remain in their homes without taking buyout money.

5. Housing Justice Summer Campaign

- NUESTRA NELA Campaign: The launch of this campaign aims to demonstrate community values around housing justice and affordable living.

6. CLT Conference Reflections from Promotoras

- Araceli:
    - A major takeaway was the need for more funding. Having information about organizations that can assist with fundraising is essential.
    - Organizing is key to making community housing a reality.
- Zoila:
    - She valued hearing firsthand experiences about the community acquisition process, including examples like a woman from Fresno who discussed how businesses can affect land ownership.
    - She appreciated the opportunity to meet a diverse group of people, including those involved in land and housing activism.
- Maria:
    - She highlighted the importance of workshops and recognized that while the process is time-consuming, success elsewhere shows it can be achieved in their community as well.
    - Emphasized the importance of reclaiming land and spaces, with attendees fighting for different lands and housing rights.
- Concepción:
    - Learned from others with more experience, especially those involved in projects related to cultivating land sustainably, reducing the use of chemicals.
    - Felt motivated by the dynamic energy of the conference and emphasized the need for further training and education to support the movement.
- Yaneth:
    - She reaffirmed that unity around a common vision makes success possible. She was inspired by a project in Santa Ana focused on ecological development and discussed applying these principles to their own work.
- Collective Reflection:
    - The importance of gatherings (convivio) was emphasized as a way to build community bonds.
    - Promotoras found inspiration in continuing their learning and applying their insights to local efforts.

07/30/24 Meeting Notes | Agenda here + slide deck

Arvia Project Updates

- Helen shared that LA Más made an offer of $1.2 million in mid-July with our partner Self-Help Ventures Fund on the 5-unit property on Arvia Street.
- Sellers accepted the offer today and we have entered escrow!
- We have 60 days to complete 'due diligence', where LA Más confirms that the purchase is financially feasible. Although LA Más is partnered with Self Help Ventures Fund, we are looking to confirm a second funding partner.
- Some things La Más is confirming in 'due diligence' are:
    - Can we build a two-bedroom ADU that can be rented at market rate (to cover the difference in affordable rents for the existing tenants)?
    - What will insurance costs be?
    - Can we qualify for a property tax discount?
    - Will our partnership with the Mayor's LA4LA fund work out?

Board Community Housing Committee

- Given the significant legal and financial responsibilities of being property stewards, our board has to approve items like entering into a legal partnership. Currently, we have a board committee with voting power to grant LA Más authority to make decisions and provide technical expertise. In the next month, we will be expanding this committee to non-voting board members with professional experience.
- Our board also wants the community to participate in decision-making.
- We hope to finalize a community decision-making method for LA Más in the next few months.
- See how community decision-making would fit into the existing LA Más organizational structure.
- Community attendees brainstormed about community decision-making at La Más using existing community decision-making models (membership, community land trust, and steering committee) as examples. See reflections from the community on each model.

Community Housing Property Outreach Feedback

- We would like to get feedback on campaign material aimed at attracting property owners interested in community housing and partnering with LA Más. See the campaign postcard, Nuestra NELA, and contact Miguel Ramos at miguel@mas.la with any feedback or questions.
- Jordan, LA Más housing fellow, will be hosting community housing gatherings and presentations to distribute Nuestra NELA campaign materials and for folks to learn about community housing!

- August 21st - Nuestra NELA Lawn Sign Pick-up
- September 11th - Live Screen Printing
- September 25th - Chat with Community Realtors

Join us at our next NELACHA meeting on September 24th, 2024, 5:30-7:30 pm.

05/28/24 Meeting Notes | Agenda here + slide deck

First Community Housing Project - Arvia

- Miguel shared that LA Más is in the process of trying to put a bid on a 5 unit complex in Cypress Park.
- Project identified through a Clockshop community walk where our board member shared program details and a resident of Arvia was a participant.
- Property has not been sold for 60 yrs; residents are organized and have lived there 5-20 yrs
- Property an existing hub for arts and gathering - interest by residents to invite greater community to engage!
- Property owner willing to sell off market and below market
- To stabilize existing renters going to build an ADU that will be available at market rate
- Partnership & funding in the works by LA Más team from different sources
    - LA4LA (Mayor's initiative to invest in new housing strategies) - pending
    - Public Counsel (free legal support) - confirmed!
    - Self Help Ventures Fund (a non profit bank and developer) - getting approval to finance purchase and partner with LA Más
- Timeline - trying to get approval to put in an offer in late June/early July; if this moves forward - property would be jointly owned by LA Más and Self-Help Ventures Fund

Community Housing Mapping with Cal State University LA (CSULA)

- Helen shared details on partnership with CSULA course on GIS for Community Advocacy and working with 6 students.
- Goal is for students to use data and mapping to help NELACHA focus on streets/neighborhoods with a higher chance of finding property owners interested in partnering with us on community housing projects.
- We're assuming that more likely property owners tend to be long-time residents (properties haven't been flipped) and properties that are multi-unit have more opportunity.
- Natasha, a CSULA student and NELA resident, shared details on the following maps here:
    - Parcels owned for 20+ yrs
    - Length of ownership
    - Parcels with 2+ more units
- Final report by students here
- Highlights:
    - Keep on looking in the flats of Glassell Park and Cypress Park
    - Spend more time in Lincoln Heights + Highland Park + Elysian Valley

Community Housing Narrative Campaign

- Meli highlighted the powerful quotes from last month's community housing lunch n learn and how these themes reflect the brainstorm from March's meeting, including:
    - Redefining wealth: community vs: individualism/
    - Housing is not a commodity
    - Abolish landlord/tenant dynamics
    - Leaving a community legacy.

Promotores Reflections

Miguel shared how our 10 Community Housing promotores have led outreach by participating at community events and doing door to door outreach. Reflections including:

- Acknowledging there is so much housing injustice out there - there needs to be space to heal, to acknowledge hurt, to create a space for hope
- Easier to chat with renters, harder to find property owners
- Lots of resistance to the idea of not maximizing profits, even from families who see housing as an investment strategy
- Desire for different types of events to gather people (besides our bi-monthly NELACHA meetings that are not for everyone)

Community Benefits Brainstorm

We will be creating a steering committee to help prioritize and create a framework for community decision making.For example, as we move forward in acquisition of properties we want to ensure that the properties can be cared for by the community at large, residents living on the property, as well as LA Más. We would like there to be representation from the 3 different aspects of our community. We want to create a clear structure and help think through the different ways properties can continue to benefit the community and ensure the community can be part of the care for the property.

The following brainstorm is to help a steering committee prioritize and come up with recommendations.

- What are some ways the greater community can be involved if they are not residents of the property?
- What decisions does the greater community want to make for properties we acquire?

Reflections here - conversation to be continued at the next meeting in July!

03/26/24 Meeting Notes | Agenda here

For first time participants,

Here is an overview of what NELACHA is all about and our accomplishments to date.

Branch Report Backs!

Neighbor Engagement

- Campaign Materials | Community Housing campaign materials have been finalized thanks to the feedback from NELACHA members.
- Promotores | We have 10 Community Housing Promotores of working class residents who are leading outreach with neighbors they know, connecting with strangers at community events and spaces, and soon knocking on doors based on maps created by Cal State University LA students.
- Outreach | We've invited allies to also help identify property owners and share information at community events (like recent Clockshop walking tour)
- Narrative Campaign | The idea we're proposing runs counter to the dominant culture of owning land, building equity, and fending for yourself. With feedback from so many NELACHA members, we'll create a narrative campaign that will change the hearts and minds of our community, center our lived experience, and also appeal to property owners. The goal is to change the binary perspective around owner/renter to one of being part of a solidarity ecosystem.

Coalition Engagement

- Social Housing | Eva with Fideicomiso Comunidad Tierra Libre shared details about the social housing spearheaded by ACT-LA with advocacy led by grassroot residents. She invited two residents to serve as representatives for LA Más to spread the word across the city. Lupe and Letty are signed up!
    - Social housing and community housing are different words but share a lot of the same values. Community housing is what LA Más and NELACHA is calling our program in Northeast LA. Social housing is a citywide effort that is in its early stages wit goals of acquiring public property for housing. More details in our Community Housing FAQ.

Narrative Campaign

NELACHA members were asked to draw/write ideas that challenge and change the narrative around housing!

- What current examples do you see that counter that narrative?
- How do we change the hearts and minds of our neighbors?
- What would property owners respond to or resonate with?

Check out the gallery of ideas here!

02/20/24 Meeting Notes | Agenda here

**Many thanks to Ben Vizcarra-Barton for notetaking support.*

Housing Problems + Solutions (from pair-sharing)

- Problems
    - High cost of rent
    - Not a lot of opportunities to purchase their own homes
    - Landlords don't want to rent to large families (ex. 6 people)
    - Housing seen as a business model not as a need
    - Complicated to change the market mentality (ie. housing for profit) - new generation is more eager to make money
- Solutions
    - Loans from banks to purchase or rent housing
    - Attend City Council meetings and tell them to represent us as the community - we elected them!
    - People with more experience can share/teach others
    - Take housing out of the market, look into alternatives like community land trusts and cooperatives
    - Organizing, fighting together to build those alternative pathways
        - Fight alongside community members in other neighborhoods

Discussion about community ownership

- Many sellers aren't receptive to community members wanting to buy
- Eva with Fideicomiso Comunitaria Tierra Libre shared about TOPA (Tenants Opportunity to Purchase Act) - active campaign to pass a law that would support tenants in LA County
- Meli shared that LA Más strategy is to start with property owners who will be amicable to this b/c they have relationships w/ neighbors in NELACHA

Brochure & FAQs feedback

- Brighter colors like orange or fuschia
- Cover image looks like a book - maybe put a more representative image?
- Show images that are more representative of community housing rather than single family homes
- Uplifting the home - hand up rather than hand down
- More accessible words/vocabulary - for the Spanish word for affordable "economicas"
    - "Low income" and explain the income limits
- "Residents" has an immigrant connotation
    - Suggestion: people who live in the community
    - neighbors/vecinos
- "People of color" - not sure how people feel about it, is it racist/offensive?
    - Maybe need some agreed upon terms for self-identification
    - Just keep to "working class people"
- Convenes / facilitates / acquisitions - are these too technical?
    - Convene can connote conferences or governing bodies

    - Other words seem clear in Spanish
- What is the difference between community/social/public housing?
- Lettering might be a little small
- Who will benefit?
- Use logo to win confidence from property owners
- Be specific about neighborhoods
- Tap into people who want to pass on their homes to non-profits in their wills

Postcard & Script feedback

- Too much information - postcard are great for instant ideas
- This would be a good place for the vision
    - The vision is an ask of both residents and the property owner for a better community.
    - Tell a narrative about the life of a property from private ownership (who/how), to a sale/donation recycled back into the community as social housing (family/how) community housing is supported.
    - Maybe the story of a couple who's largest asset is the home they purchased and cared for the last 30-50 years, instead of paying 50% death taxes on the asset, make arrangements to transfer title to the non-profit and the pre arraigned profits/proceeds go to their heirs in some sort of tax deferred trust?
    - Or the vision of a case study or actual case study from another CLT?
- Three bullet points are good, but too long

Questions

- Where is the money coming from?
    - Request to learn more about the financing
- Can someone plan to give their property over to an org or community after they die?
    - LA Más to research and provide more info
- How will we incorporate conflict resolution / mediation?
    - Thinking about conflict resolution b/t property owners and tenants

Next steps

- All community housing outreach materials will be updated by Fri, March 1 - please come pick up and start chatting with property owners in Northeast LA.
- If you have feedback on materials, questions on the program, or property owner leads - reach out to Miguel!

01/23/24 Meeting Notes | Agenda here

**Many thanks to Bz Zhang + Ben Vizcarra-Barton for notetaking support.*

Historic Context of Housing

Meli invited participants to join in a journey to better understand land and housing in Los Angeles (Tovaangar) today. Participants shared:

- Chaparral, native plants, relationship to the earth, especially recognizing Chumash, Tongva, indigenous peoples
- Land back efforts
- Los Angeles River, especially this time of year - fishing for sustenance
- Exclusion in housing
- Changes in demographics and increased cost of living

Contemporary land and housing policies root back to their colonial history that excludes specific groups of people + over extracts resources from the land. It is important to remember this history so we can create a new and more just reality…this is what we're hoping to do with you all through these efforts

Community Housing Pathways

Helen shared a community housing pathways handout created by LA Más as a way to think about possibilities grounded in funding resources and economic realities. We want to support residents in understanding pathways so you can decide how best to spend your energy and our collective energy.

LA Más' role as facilitators of NELACHA is to share parameters. Your role as residents is to define the direction we take, which properties we focus on, who we partner with, and what type of community housing is the most meaningful and impactful.

Helen highlighted four examples that represent real people and possible pathways to explore, including buying existing housing or building new housing. Depending on the property owner and property, public or private funding could be pursued. Partnership with other organizations will be essential. However, to start - we must find a property owner willing to sell or partner.

Questions:

- Are there specific people who give money for the families to get housing, will this property be owned by those specific people or the families?
  - It depends on where we find funding, lots of banks that will provide loans but there still needs to be an entity responsible for payments. LA Más could potentially take on that kind of risk. The most important is residents to have affordability, decision-making, and if it's possible - eventually ownership. For instance, for public funding, nonprofit organizations are the landlords given the requirements. But long-term, LA Más is interested in exploring how these housing units can stay affordable for the residents and for the residents to own it in the long-term. Can we get funding to keep the housing units in the community — that's the emphasis over individual homeownership? Should we spend time getting 20 units that stay affordable in the community or help 2 units go to individuals?
- Is there information about the many homeowners that lose their buildings to

foreclosures?
    - The process is often with banks. There will be a state funding source later this year - Foreclosure Intervention Housing Prevention Program - that could help. If you identify those properties, we can strategize about how those buildings don't get lost. We want to learn more about all the different homeowners who are interested in selling so we can figure out together where we should spend our energy.
- Can we find out more information to help people who are losing their buildings to foreclosures?
    - The current practice that a lot of landlords face is that they get a lot of mail, harassment, and phone calls to sell their houses. We want to build on relationships that people already have. Some landlords who are struggling financially, they think the only option is to sell their house; maybe they are in debt. We are trying to provide more options for people who are trying to sell; to allow people to stay in their neighborhoods - "anti-flippers." We want to take housing out of the market, but we need to learn how to talk to our neighbors about these pathways. Colonization has imposed these systems of property and housing upon us for 500+ years. How do we steward housing for our community members who really need it?
- I heard about an organization that helps whoever wants to buy a house. Is that something we can do?.
    - A lot of our working class community wouldn't even be able to qualify for some of those resources - so in NELACHA, it won't be our focus. LA Más core values is to support the collective and communal.
    - A participant also added - Many people believe that the price of housing is just always going to be too high and out of reach. A lot of those resources are meant to help us attain homeownership, but rather than trying to get a little bit of support for this hard-to-attain goal, we actually need to build new systems of affordability where those types of loans and programs aren't even needed. But it's so hard to think about because it's not what we're used to anymore, but that's not what it used to be.
- How can we incorporate the interest of existing homeowners if they are ready to sell back to the community? You mentioned an older person wanting to live with their kids and thus move out, but it could also be an older person who wants to stay on that property because they want to stay in their neighborhood and keep their family whole.
    - There are many multigenerational families in NELA and we will need to incorporate those understandings of what people are experiencing and wanting.

Branches Overview

Miguel shared the three branches of focus - which will be working meetings that are phased in to support the work.

1. **Property owners + neighbors** | this is the most important, w/o a property owner partner, it's hard to get started. This is one of the biggest assets you all bring - your relationships. Inviting your neighbors to join us means more engagement with potential property owners! The immediate goal is to create a toolkit for engaging neighbors and property owners:
2. **Policy & advocacy** | our current systems don't work, so we have to advocate with others to make better policy. This group will advocate for resources in NELA and engage in city-wide initiatives. Joining a coalition to fight for policy change like social housing means we can be more powerful together.
3. **Partners** | we need to partner with other orgs to tap into public funding, we need financial orgs to provide loans, we need funding partners to help close the funding gap. This group will be activated once property owners have been identified. We hope this group will make all the complicated processes accessible to everyone, especially since we want the residents we center to help us decide which partnerships to pursue.

Branch Discussion | Policy + Advocacy Engagement

Helen shared some existing policy/advocacy work in community + social housing, including ULA implement, social housing, ACT-LA, etc.. Participants shared additional ways to engage:

- Coyotl + Macehualli | Currently suing the city to stop luxury housing in El Sereno - fighting for poor and working class people, and for the animals and trees.
- Electoral campaigns | Trying to get Council candidates to adopt community/social housing in their platforms (Note - LA Más can't get involved in political campaigns)
- Ballot measures
- Community housing | There was a poll last year to see whether people supported social housing, and it was not popular. So, giving people that vision and understanding of community housing could be really helpful.
- Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act | learning more about what's going on here

Tools that would be helpful:

- Sharing orgs that are already tracking relevant policy
- Invitations to join events related to community/social housing (ex. ACT-LA)
- Voter guides (especially on ballot measures)

Follow up | Helen will continue to share opportunities with interested participants.

Branch Discussion | Property Owner + Neighbor Engagement

What tools are helpful for you in sharing info about community & social housing?

- Flyers
- Word of mouth
- Small group gatherings
- Brochures
- Door knocking
- Phone calls - to invite neighbors to our meetings

- Sharing on social media
- Learning sessions
    - About the mission of LA Más
    - Rehearsing conversations (role playing)
    - Practicing key works
- Script with FAQs for property owners

What's a good way to engage property owners? residents/neighbors? Where?

- Markets
- Schools
- Laundromat
- Church
- Neighborhood Council meetings
- Library
- Parks
- Community Events
- Tenant union meetings - need to make sure property owners are aligned with program values.

Follow up | next branch meeting on 02/20 will focus on finalizing a script and brochure for engaging property owners

12/12/23 Meeting Notes | Agenda here

**Many thanks to Dalia Yedida for notetaking support.*

Background | LA Más Housing Journey

In 2022, LA Más shared various housing models with working class communities of color in Northeast LA and heard the following housing aspirations::

- To be in control of their housing -> stability, no landlord harassment, no huge rent increases;
- To be part of the decision making process that involves their housing -> healthy living conditions;
- Not everyone wants to be a property owner or part of the collective decision making process;
- Overall, residents want to stay in their communities and want to real pathways to make that possible.

In 2023, with those community priorities in mind, LA Más spent the year in housing exploration and research - engaging and learning from two dozen plus experts who have developed affordable housing projects, created community land trusts, financed affordable housing projects, and fought for policy change. Big lessons include.

1) We learned that trying to buy existing housing - like apartments where rents are low and protected by rent stabilization - is nearly impossible without a big grant (free money) or public funding. The reason is that a loan is not possible (even from a non profit bank) because the existing price of housing is so high in Northeast LA and existing rents are much lower.
2) In order to access public funds for purchasing housing, we have to partner with organizations with experience to acquire property. Public funding is the most promising resource, but hard to access and limited.
3) With market rate prices being so high, below market or off the market is a much easier pathway. Relationships are often the key factor in finding housing below market or off the market. There are so many examples of that in Northeast LA, where many long-term residents rent or sell to their neighbors.

These are the big lessons we have learned by listening to the housing movements around us. A lot of these learnings have been internal, so we can frame real pathways for residents to be rooted in the communities of Northeast LA. We invite residents to shape the next steps in making community housing into reality.

What is Northeast LA Community Housing Alliance?
Details here

NELACHA is a space where the larger community can work together to center the needs of working class residents in creating community housing that enables long time neighbors to stay in their communities and have a say in their housing.

Those who are involved will shape the work and strategies. There will also be popular education about the housing system - we can not have community stewardship without our community centered in learning and exploration.

LA Más will facilitate and convene NELACHA with the approach that housing needs to be *stewarded* for the next generations and *not to be commodified.* We want to support the community in creating community housing that is: 1) affordable long-term to working class residents, 2) invites residents to make decisions about agreements, improvements, etc.

Questions from participants:

- Will we share info about first-time homebuyer programs? (Carlos)
    - Carlos shared he was curious even though he likely wouldn't qualify.
    - Oscar thought that was important to highlight that the homebuying process isn't accessible to many community members & still encouraged everyone to learn about the process because those same eligibility structures will be in place when social housing gets approved.

    - Helen highlighted focus on collective solutions instead of individual ones.
- What is the timeline? (Gama)
    - Helen shared the goal of NELACHA identifying properties early in the year & getting towards at least one acquisition by end of 2024.
    - At an upcoming meeting, LA Más can share details on what the pathway for acquisition looks like.
- What is the application process for prospective residents? (Karen)
    - To be determined by participants of NELACHA
    - There may be some restraints given funding sources.
- How soon could a group/organization like NELACHA form? (Martin)
    - Next meeting will be 01/23!
    - This is also a space where residents could hold LA Más and fellow participants accountable to goals.

Resources discussed:

- Some people donate to land conservancies to get a tax break (Jon)
- Campaigns & public funding context that was shared
    - Social housing campaign requires people power to change and implement new policies (Cynthia/ACT-LA)
    - United to House LA
    - Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program (FIHPP)
    - Senate Bill 1079 (Oscar)

What role do you see yourself playing?

- Sharing information from my participation in the neighborhood council
- Recruiting more community members to come to meetings
- Housing and real estate assistance, fundraising
- Building partnerships and building capacity, building out Housing Hub (capacity building project) for the community to learn more about social housing
    - Toolkits from ACT LA on how to access ULA fund, finance options
- Connecting with foundation that funds different community ownership projects and different forms of finance and funding structures
- Partnerships with East Side Cafe and El Sereno CLT, preserve housing, space at the Cafe
- Mapping & campaigns - reaching out to landowners and acquisitions
- Acquiring property and making it accessible to community (Lorena)
- Support exploring the pathways to buy housing (Carlos)
- Identify property to buy (Gama)
    - Example: In Lincoln Heights - 6 unit property with tenants who are already in conversation/organizing to purchase from current landlord
- Get new political leadership in CD14 with housing values alignment (Gama)
- Share info/strategies from other tenants/housing groups like LATU (Virginia)
- Suggestion: narrative campaign about homeownership and wealth building (Donna)

- Building partnerships and activating community resources (Jennifer)
- Share resources - community landlords on next door app (Lorena)
    - Selling homes below market rate

Which one of these community housing pathways are you interested in learning more?

- Getting properties donated
    - How did Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy get the land back project donated? Learn from them
    - Connect with estate planners on donations
- Learn more about social housing
- Work with tenant unions to learn which buildings are being sold based on tenants who are at risk of eviction/getting help
- Public Land Bank: received $10M in initial funding but then lost funding, has current staff – what do they do?
- Cooperative Housing; tenancy in common as opportunity for more access to equity and flexibility in ownership
- ADUs: could we get them to rent-to-own to our people?
- How to inform property owner allies that they don't need to sell their properties at market rate (Donna)
    - Change narrative of housing as a commodity

Are there any questions that we should consider for these pathways?

- Connecting struggles fighting luxury developments in Boyle Heights, Little Tokyo
- The slogan: from the river to the sea, all housing will be free
- How does the community feel about individual(s) ownership versus nonprofit/community ownership?
- Mapping: are certain types of community housing more available in NELA? Is there more public lands in NELA (map exists)
- How do we start conversations with potential sellers? Or other partners?
- How do we identify potential sellers and properties before they go on the market?