

# **Hello, Neighbor: Final Report**

51-773: Design and Public Policy for Humanitarian Impact  
Professors Kristin Hughes, Tim Zak

Sarah Weber  
Praew Suntiasvaraporn  
Amal Nanavati  
Michael Quinn

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Preliminaries: Concept &amp; Background</b>	<b>2</b>
Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation	2
Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan	2
Community Engagement in Pittsburgh: Garfield Case Study	3
Garfield Statistics	3
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation: Garfield 2030	4
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation: Neighborhood Investment Strategy	4
<b>Hello, Neighbor! Initiative</b>	<b>5</b>
You Must Be New Here	5
Community Cookbook	5
Hello, Neighbor! Garfield Pilot	6
Timeline Highlights	6
<b>Conclusions &amp; Next Steps</b>	<b>7</b>
Next Steps	7
Ways to Expand Upon Hello, Neighbor!	8
SWOT Analysis	9
<b>Appendix: Hello, Neighbor! Toolkit</b>	<b>10</b>
Gain Interest	10
Build Cookbook	11
Gain Trust	12
Engage Community	13

# Introduction

Pittsburgh has been celebrated with numerous positive accolades over the past few years. The city has been dubbed “The Most Livable City” (2014), “The Next Austin,” and “Silicon Valley 2.0.” However, it is often a “tale of two cities” for many marginalized residents. Although this recognition reveals tremendous successes for Pittsburgh’s revitalization, it often overshadows the narratives of many of the city’s residents that still face stark inequality in their day-to-day lives.

Hello, Neighbor! is an initiative to draw together members of diverse communities in Pittsburgh, especially those facing a great deal of change from gentrification. It works by increasing engagement between new residents and old residents of a community, thereby strengthening the bonds in that neighborhood and ensuring that new residents integrate with, rather than disrupt, existing communities.

## Preliminaries: Concept & Background

Pittsburgh has gained national attention over the last decade as the “Most Liveable City.” However, according to the *Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan*, 25% of people have yet to share that standard of living. The purpose of this section is draw attention to City government initiatives addressing social and economic disparity in the region, as well as statistics that illustrate the need to curb the negative effects of gentrification.

## Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

### **Empower City-to-Citizen Engagement**

Within the “Deepen and Expand Digital Public Engagement” subgoal, they had the following concrete actions which relate to our project:

- “Provide a toolkit which empowers community groups to better disseminate information from community meetings, connect with their constituents, increase turnout, and run effective meetings.”
- “Communicate new and longstanding city services to residents through a targeted campaign.”
- “Host Citizenship Days through the Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan to promote and celebrate citizenship.”

## Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan

The Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan lays out metrics that the City will use to determine their success. Below are a subset of the metrics that relate to our project:

- “We increase civic engagement among new Americans.”

- “Pittsburghers are more educated about diversity, cultural sensitivity, and the value immigrants bring to our city.”
- “More students are inspired to explore global cultures.”
- “We better connect neighborhoods to diverse cultural opportunities.”
- “We have more opportunities to showcase diversity and celebrate multiculturalism.”

Within the “Welcome, Neighbor” section of the Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan, recommendation 13 is: **Host new events to celebrate immigrant culture and neighborhood heritage.** Excerpts from this recommendation are below:

“The Mayor will assess existing opportunities to implement programming to celebrate international cultures, **promote neighborhood heritage**, encourage dialogue, and capture resident heritage stories at City-owned spaces in neighborhoods across Pittsburgh...These projects provide another avenue to take our welcoming efforts to the people and **connect with Pittsburgh’s distinct neighborhoods** to celebrate our immigrant cultures and **community heritage**...We’ll seek opportunities to **tap the spirit of community-led innovation** that have combined neighborhood revitalization, equity, and the arts...”

## Community Engagement in Pittsburgh: Garfield Case Study

The below section contains data that demonstrates the need for an initiative such as Hello, Neighbor! in Garfield. The statistics illustrate the rapid demographic and economic change Garfield has been going through recently. The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) sections include excerpts from reports published by the BGC that outline their goals for Garfield by 2030, in addition to how they will invest their resources into the neighborhood.

### Garfield Statistics

- From 2000 to 2010 the **White population in Garfield changed by -16.2%**, whereas the **Black population changed by -35.1%**. In comparison, Garfield’s population as a whole changed by -32.6%, whereas Pittsburgh’s population changed by -8.2%.  
**Source:** 2000 Census Data & [PGHSNAP](#)
- From 2000 to 2010 **for every 1 White person that left Garfield, 16 Black people left.**  
**Source:** 2000 Census Data & [PGHSNAP](#)
- From 2000 to 2010, **the median house value in Garfield increased by 39.9%** (from \$43,096 to \$60,300, adjusted for inflation and in 2010 dollars)  
**Source:** PGHSNAP ([http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP\\_v2.02.pdf](http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP_v2.02.pdf))
- As of 2010, **44.5% of Garfield’s population was below the poverty line**  
**Source:** PGHSNAP ([http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP\\_v2.02.pdf](http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP_v2.02.pdf))
- As of 2010, **23.1% of houses in Garfield (455 out of 1971 total) are vacant**, and **42.8% (832 out of 1971) are renter-occupied.**  
**Source:** PGHSNAP ([http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP\\_v2.02.pdf](http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP_v2.02.pdf))

- As of 2010, of the people in Garfield age 25+, **54.6% of them had graduated high school** as the highest education degree, and 19.0% did not graduate high school  
**Source:** University of Pittsburgh’s University Center for Social & Urban Research’s 2010 [Neighborhood Profiles](#)
- According to US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-year estimates, Garfield’s 1114 Census Tracts (the East side of Garfield), has **32.9% unemployment**, and **52.5% poverty**. It also has **46.1% of households using SNAPs food stamps**.  
**Source:** Pittsburgh Food Bank’s 2013 [Hunger and Pittsburgh Report](#)
- The **median house value in Garfield has increased by 39.9%** from 2000-2010.  
**Source:** PGHSNAP ([http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP\\_v2.02.pdf](http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PGHSNAP_v2.02.pdf))

## Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation: Garfield 2030

This document contains the following goals for Garfield by 2030 that align with ours’:

- **“Social sustainability:** Residents know each other, the sense of community is strong, social cohesiveness is important.”
- **“Civic sustainability:** A shared sense of neighborhood “ownership” and standards of respectful behavior are upheld. Garfield citizens have an active and effective engagement in political process.”

The document follows up on those goals by saying the following:

“However, a neighborhood plan for housing and development is not going to solve Garfield’s problems. They are the **problems of poverty, poor education, underemployment, and hopelessness:** fundamentally the **community’s inability to establish and maintain social control in the neighborhood.**”

“The neighborhood population today cannot sustain itself or its neighborhood. Yet attracting new residents, while it brings more resources into the neighborhood, is not in itself, the answer. Garfield’s residents need to be prepared to have a major stake in the **improvement of their neighborhood, through youth development**, parenting support, **better education**, public safety initiatives, new standards in housing management, and homeowner counseling. This plan does not address that critically important work; it only acknowledges here that the success of the plan ultimately **depends on it**”

## Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation: Neighborhood Investment Strategy

The Neighborhood Investment Strategy outlines BGC’s short term plans (ending in 2016) to start the ball rolling on the change outlined in Garfield 2030.

Within the “Good Houses” goal of this document, one of the assets the BGC wants to develop is “**Long-term residents who have a loyalty to the neighborhood.**” Within this goal and relating to that asset, they list the following subgoal:

**“Start homeowner/block associations**

Resident initiated homeowner/block groups are a **good way to bring together residents who want to make a difference on their street/vicinity, and a good way to meet neighbors.** They can accomplish small scale activities on the block or street level, like cleanups, **block parties,** and **new neighbor welcoming...** These are intended to be more comprehensive than the Neighborhood Watch Block Clubs—their **primary purpose is to build relationships, which in turn will enable residents to solve problems of all kinds.**”

## Hello, Neighbor! Initiative

The Hello, Neighbor! initiative connects new neighbors and residents who have been in the area for years, encouraging them to come together to address community issues. We wanted the project to be something that benefits the long-time residents and requires new residents to think creatively and critically about their impact in a neighborhood with a long history. Additionally, the initiative provides a welcoming, neighborly approach that creates more pathways for changes in a community to benefit old residents.

The Hello, Neighbor! initiative will leverage data from real estate agents to connect new residents directly with information about their neighborhood. New residents will learn about the community through two aspects of the Hello, Neighbor! initiative: the You Must Be New Here tote bag and the Community Cookbook.

## You Must Be New Here

You Must Be New Here is an outreach initiative that connects new residents with information about the neighborhood they are moving into. It is a new take on the traditional “welcome basket” that new residents may receive from their neighbors when they buy a house in a new location. It encourages community engagement and provides an opportunity for the recipient and new resident to reflect on how the neighborhood is changing. Finally, it encourages newcomers to be mindful about the history of the place they are moving into and complex issues that longtime residents have been battling as the City of Pittsburgh continues to grow.

This initiative will consist of a tote bag that contains information about the community, that is given to new entrants into that community. The tote bag can include community artifacts, such as vegetables from a community farm, information about community organizations, and profiles of current residents. In addition, it will include actionable items for the new residents to do in their first few weeks in the neighborhood: volunteer with a community organization, meet an old resident, go to a popular community meeting spot, etc. This was modeled after an initiative

in Minneapolis that gives totebags to incoming immigrant and refugee communities that are full of stuff they may need to assimilate: bus passes, lists of community resources, etc. However, the You Must Be New Here tote bag is more of a “call to action” for new residents in Pittsburgh’s gentrifying communities, reminding the residents that it is their responsibility to be mindful and considerate of where they are moving, and encouraging them to participate in community activities and meet their neighbors.

## Community Cookbook

The Community Cookbook is one artifact within the You Must Be New Here tote bag that contains recipes from community members. Why a cookbook? One of the many accolades Pittsburgh has received has been being named the #1 Food City by Zagat. But it is also a region full of food deserts. For residents of the city, food is a symbol of inequity. However, food can also be a powerful symbol of community, connection, conversation, and solidarity. Therefore, the Community Cookbook uses the symbol of food to draw people together: to form a snapshot of the community -- it’s diversity, it’s strengths, it’s problems, etc. -- through the unifying lens of food.

In addition to highlighting recipes from community members, the cookbook will also expand public engagement with the culture, politics and issues at stake within Pittsburgh communities. The cookbook will highlight unique cultural stories from marginalized communities in Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods: minorities, women and immigrant culinary entrepreneurs; community kitchens; soup kitchens; and a grandma who cooks for everyone no matter what. It will highlight unique social issues or stories related to the neighborhood, and serve as a way for people to know their neighbors and community organization resources through the lens of food.

## Hello, Neighbor! Garfield Pilot

In Garfield, we hope to work with the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), since they are already experienced with community engagement initiatives and have a large volunteer base. The BGC publishes a monthly Community Newspaper, to “to inform the community about news, events, people, and initiatives in our neighborhoods.” In that newspaper, local real estate agent Lillian Denhardt, a member of the BGC’s Board of Directors, sponsors a section that both publishes the latest real estate transactions in Garfield and advertises her real estate business. This makes residents aware of properties that are being bought and sold in their neighborhoods.

We hope to leverage the information from the Bulletin to learn about new residents who are moving into Garfield, and use the BGC’s volunteer base to create and distribute You Must Be New Here tote bags to new residents. We also hope to leverage BGC volunteers, in partnership with community kitchens like the Smallman Galley, to hold one or more events promoting the Hello, Neighbor! initiative and crowd-sourcing community ideas and

contributions for the tote bag and cookbook. Below is a rough timeline of how we would implement this in Garfield.

## Timeline Highlights

All months are in 2017:

<p><b>January/ February:</b> Getting Started</p>	<p>Reach out to the BGC or other hosting organizations to see if they would be willing to host Hello, Neighbor! Also reach out to organizations to gather volunteers and other community partners.</p>
<p><b>March/ April:</b> Build Cookbook</p>	<p>Host fun and engaging events -- Sketchaton @ YMCA, Free Lunch @ East End Thrift Store, the Heights Vacant Lot BBQ -- to get community interest, recipes, and opinions about this initiative. Using that data, build the cookbook</p>
<p><b>May/June:</b> Introduce Cookbook</p>	<p>Kickoff food-based event planned by volunteers to introduce the cookbook into the community.</p>
<p><b>July:</b> Build Tote Bag</p>	<p>Use community perspectives to determine what to include in the tote bag. Introduce the Hello, Neighbor! Initiative at an event</p>
<p><b>August - December:</b> Engage Community</p>	<p>You Must Be New Here Tote Bag completed. Start giving it to new residents using the Community Newspaper, host events as necessary to keep residents excited about this initiative, and watch Garfield become a stronger and richer community!</p>

## Conclusions & Next Steps

The Hello, Neighbor! initiative aims to increase engagement between old and new residents in neighborhoods facing rapid change. It flips the motives of a traditional “welcome basket” -- instead of old residents welcoming new resident with gifts, the You Must Be New Here tote bag presents old neighbors with expectations of becoming an active member of the community, along with suggestions on how to do so. Through this, we hope to strengthen communities and draw neighbors together to support one another, starting the ball rolling towards a community that is more civically engaged.

Below are next steps for us to pursue in implementing the Hello, Neighbor! Initiative in Garfield, as well as ways that this initiative can be expanded upon in the future.

## Next Steps

- Reach out to the BGC to see if they would be willing to host this initiative.
- Create a stakeholder map for Garfield and identify the key players (individuals and organizations) who should participate.
- Build a budget surrounding Hello, Neighbor!
- Determine more incentives for current residents to participate in the Hello, Neighbor! Program
- Work with the BGC (or other hosting organization) to organize the kickoff events and collect recipes.

## Ways to Expand Upon Hello, Neighbor!

- Spread it to other Pittsburgh neighborhoods! Then, we no longer need to have a separate “Garfield Community Cookbook” -- we can have a “Pittsburgh Community Cookbook” that includes chapters for different neighborhoods.
- Work with Pittsburgh city officials to incorporate community planning meetings into Hello, Neighbor! That way, becoming civically engaged can be more explicitly incorporated into the Hello, Neighbor! Program, rather than us hoping that when residents gather, they will talk about problems facing their community.
- Expand upon the cultural artifacts that are created through the Hello, Neighbor! program. Why limit it to a community cookbook? What if the community came together to create a manifesto that outlines their values and goals? What if there were a day for residents to reflect on the past year in their community, and create a “Garfield Over Time” artifact(s) that shows snapshots of Garfield over the years? These are all additional ways to draw old and new residents together in contributing to the future of their community, and to create additional artifacts that can be incorporated into the You Must Be New Here tote bag.
- Build upon the existing program to ultimately create a neighborhood ambassador program that prioritizes long term residents, and perhaps youth of the neighborhood, in contributing to future decisions for their neighborhood.

## SWOT Analysis



# Appendix: Hello, Neighbor! Toolkit

Is your community facing rapid change? Do you rarely talk to your neighbors? Do you wish your community had more interaction amongst all of its residents, new and old? If so, your community might be a perfect place to implement Hello, Neighbor! If you are interested in starting this program or a version of it in your community, read below for best practices in getting it off of the ground!

## Gain Interest

The first step is gaining the interest of your community members and organizations that work in your community; that is the only way this initiative will be sustainable.

- **Establish Contacts & Map Stakeholders:** Determine key community leaders, organizations, and other stakeholders and how map out how interact in your community. Contact them and pitch your idea. Make sure at least one organization is willing to host this initiative; this includes supplying volunteers, advertising the initiative, and creating the Community Cookbook and the You Must Be New Here tote bag.
- **Recruit Volunteers:** These volunteers can come from one or more of the organizations you reached out to, or perhaps even from a local university. Using this volunteer base, do the following:
  - Continue contact housing or community organizations
  - Contact and establish partnerships with real estate agencies. This will allow you to stay informed of who moves into the community.
  - Contact local schools and other possible venues for Hello, Neighbor! events. Hello, Neighbor! events can include kickoff parties, recipe-sharing events, block parties, etc.
- **Measure Community Interest and Engagement:** Now is the time to get community buy-in. Below are methods of understanding community viewpoints and engaging them with this initiative:
  - Put out surveys or other cultural probes. Sample questions include:
    - Fun facts about themselves:
      - What do they enjoy doing in their free time?
      - What is their favorite childhood memory?
      - Where did they grow up?
    - Personal experiences with the community:
      - Do they have a story that is meaningful to them related to the community?
      - Why did they move to this community?
      - What is their favorite place to go in this community?

- Their relationship to and memories of food:
      - What is their favorite childhood memory related to food?
      - What do they cook that they are most proud of?
      - Where do they get groceries?
      - What food have they always wanted to eat?
  - Host events to gather data and/or recipes:
    - Sketch-a-thon: an event where community children draw their favorite foods
    - Lunch at a community gathering spot: this is a great way to get community members together to talk about shared struggles and/or their favorite recipes.
    - Recipe-Swap: An event where community members take their favorite recipes and exchange them with other community members. This event can be expanded more broadly into a skill-swap!

## Build Cookbook

Once you have gathered data and recipes from the community, you are ready to create the cookbook!

- **Determine who will create the cookbook:** this can be the volunteers themselves, but it could also be professional designers and/or local university students. Reach out -- you never know who would be willing to do this!
- **Determine what software you will use:** There are a number of software programs you can use to design the cookbook. Some of these include:
  - **Canva** is a free online software that makes it really simple to design stunning multi-page documents!
  - **Microsoft Word** requires a bit more time to design a colorful, engaging cookbook. However, it is a program most people are already familiar with.
  - **Adobe Illustrator** may take more time to learn, but it has very powerful features that allow users to completely customize their cookbook as desired.
- **Create a template:** the secret to a well-designed cookbook is having a consistent template: for the cover page, chapter intros, recipe pages, etc. Templates include pre-determined color schemes, fonts, and layouts - experiment until you find what is right!
- **Insert the content:** once you have a template, edit the content as desired and then paste it directly into the template pages

## Gain Trust

Now that we have the cookbook, a building block for this initiative, the next step is gaining the community's trust in the Hello, Neighbor! initiative.

- **Host a kickoff/cookoff event for the Community Cookbook:**
  - Volunteers should reach out to local kitchens to get their support
  - Ideally, the event would feature community members from the cookbook and their recipe. If that is not possible, then get catering from local caterers. Remember, the goal of this event is community engagement and community development.
  - Identify one or more community organizations that this event can fundraise for. Examples include local markets, soup kitchens, community farms, etc.
  - At this event, cookbooks can be sold to interested residents, as well as getting the word out about the Hello, Neighbor! initiative.
- **Introduce the Hello, Neighbor! Initiative:**
  - This could be done at the above event, if desired.
  - Have an interactive tote bag that community members can fill with chits of paper that are suggestions for what to include in the You Must Be New Here tote bag. Sample questions include:
    - Perspectives on new neighbors:
      - What are they looking for in a new neighbor?
      - What do they feel new neighbors should know about them?
      - What do they would want to know about new neighbors?
      - If you were to give a new neighbor a tote bag full of community artifacts to welcome them, what would you include?
    - Their views of the community:
      - What does it mean to be a resident of this community?
      - What sets this community apart from others?
      - What could be improved about this community?
      - If they had to describe this community in one word, what would it be?
      - What are their aspirations for this community?
  - Current residents can sign up for a variety of ways to engage with this program:
    - They can receive yard signs, door signs, badges, and other kinds of swag that recognize their contributions to the neighborhood as long-term residents
    - They can sign up to hear about future volunteer opportunities in Hello, Neighbor! or in the community

## Engage Community

Now that you have laid the groundwork for this initiative, start the ball rolling! Start building the tote bag, distributing them to new residents, host community events as necessary, and watch your community transform into a tight-knit, welcoming, neighborly place!

- **Build tote bags:**
  - Distill the information gathered in the above events to define what will be in the tote bag
  - Gather the artifacts you decided upon
  - Print bags and create bags. Don't put any perishable artifacts into the bag until the bag is ready to be given to new neighbors
  - Start a marketing campaign to local businesses or non-profits: would they want any pamphlets included in the tote bag, or would they want to donate anything to this initiative?
- **Distribute tote bags:**
  - **Determine new residents moving in:** Work with the real estate agent partners to determine what new residents are moving into the community. Potentially make this information publically available through a publication or a GIS map?
  - **Distribute You Must Be New Here tote bags:** Have volunteers gather old residents to introduce themselves and present the tote bags to new residents. Introduce them to the Hello, Neighbor! initiative and the list of actions they must do to remain an active member of this community.

Congratulations, you have successfully implemented the Hello, Neighbor! initiative! Have feedback or insights? We would love to hear your story at [hello.neighbor@gmail.com](mailto:hello.neighbor@gmail.com)!