

Elmore Horizon Team Work Plan **November 13, 2007**

Vision

Elmore is a proud, diverse, entrepreneurial community with an excellent quality of life. We support and nurture our local talent and local businesses, and our local economy offers services to meet our needs. We're building on our rich history and heritage through a vibrant arts and cultural life. This is a safe place with small-town values and a welcoming, open culture. Elmore is known as a great place to live for all ages!

(Developed October 23, 2007 by 108 residents of Elmore)

Infrastructure

The purpose of the Elmore Horizons Team is to:

- 1) communicate the vision to the broader community;
- 2) coordinate and help get movement and momentum going for achieving the vision;
- 3) make the most of the resources available, and;
- 4) be accountable for stepping back and seeing if the actions being taken are achieving the vision.

There is no set leadership structure to the Elmore Horizons Team. Instead it is an open and welcoming group, whose meetings are open to the public. It is a goal of the Elmore Horizons Team to involve community members that have not yet been involved through a variety of different means, including, but not limited to, a "welcome wagon" packet for new residents introducing them to Elmore, hosting community events, and going door-to-door in order to connect with Elmore residents.

The Elmore Horizons Team will meet monthly on the first Thursday of the month. The agenda may be based on the attached basic agenda, with additions and subtractions as needed. Time and location will be determined as needed. At every meeting one person will be appointed as facilitator and another as note-taker. Meeting notes will be collected and kept in a central binder, which will be brought to every meeting. Meeting notes will also be posted on the Elmore Community Blog (<http://elmore.communityblogs.us>).

Decision-Making Process

Decisions will be made by consensus. If a decision cannot be reached by consensus, a simple majority vote can be used to settle the decision, but the vote should only be focused on the issue at hand. The ground rules for discussion are that all should have an equal chance to talk, with no one monopolizing the conversation. If needed, the group can decide to limit discussion on a topic.

Decisions regarding allocations of funds will be made using the Elmore Horizons Funding Request Form. Members of Future Squads who need funding for projects will fill out this form, then that Squad's liaison will present the application and project budget to the Horizons Team for a decision. Once a project is funded and completed, the Future Squad will be responsible for reporting, through their liaison to the Horizons Team, on the outcomes, expenditures, and learning from the project.

The Horizons Team will do the following as they make funding decisions:

- Consider two areas of funding: temporary/short-term funds and long-term, strategic investments;
- Determine if there is an opportunity for fundraising to happen at the event being funded, and;
- Focus on how the request connects to and advances the vision.

Communication

The community will be notified of key decisions, events, and successes through updates published in the quarterly town newsletter, through the community blog, and through a printed newsletter which can be distributed in grocery flyers, church bulletins, radio, cable access, and other community outlets. Specifically, the blog and newsletter will be used for feedback from the community about posts, regular updates, a listing of community events, open invitations for community involvement and volunteer opportunities. The Horizons Team will also seek input from the community through a survey which will be developed and distributed through a variety of means (see above) in April or May of 2008. Depending on the results of that survey effort, regular surveys may continue in the future.

Future Squads will maintain good communication and coordination of efforts through Horizons Team meetings. This communication will include reporting on projects and events, review of financial statements, as well as ongoing affirmations and checks of consistency in communication among group members. Future Squad liaisons will report back to their groups on those items, and items of public interest will be posted on the community blog.

Vision Affirmation/Sustainability

Overall, it is the responsibility of the Horizons Team to monitor and evaluate progress on achieving the vision. As such, at each monthly Horizons Team meeting the start will include revisiting the vision to refocus the goal at hand, as well as identifying and celebrating recent work that has moved the community closer to this vision. The group will work to maintain awareness of and sensitivity to poverty issues in the community and in all aspects of their work.

In order to sustain the work of the Horizons Team for the long-term, a committee will be developed to seek out additional resources. A primary focus of this committee will be on cultivating local events that draw in the larger community and have a fundraising component.

Plans for member term limits, recruitment of new members, and planning for turnover will be addressed in a revision of this plan in May/June of 2008, when the long-term future of Elmore Horizons will be explored in greater depth. There will be a rotating schedule for current members to step down and new ones to join the Horizons Team. This schedule will be determined, but will assure that there is not a complete turnover of the Horizons Team at any given point.

Sample Horizons Team Meeting Agenda:

- Review and approve agenda – anything to add?
- Read the Vision for Elmore
- Reports from Future Squads & discussion
- Budget report
- Review funding requests
- How are we doing with communication with the community?
- How are we doing with outreach to unrepresented community members?
- Revisit the workplan: are there any changes or updates to make?
- What do we have to celebrate?

**ELMORE
FUTURE SQUAD PLANNING WORKSHEETS**

Future Squad: _____ Community Cleanup and
Beautification _____

Future Squad Co-Leaders: Margaret Sunderlin & Pat Coupanger

Future Squad Goal(s): To help meet people’s basic housing needs, build community pride, and enhance Elmore’s public spaces and assets.

Connection to Poverty Reduction: Invest in community resources; Help people meet their urgent needs; Build assets and hold onto them

Projects	Desired Outcomes	Actions	By When Implemented	Details
Neighbor-to-neighbor cleanup assistance	<p>Assist low-income, low-mobility, and elderly residents with necessary home maintenance and spring cleanup projects</p> <p>Provide free hauling of yard waste for all residents</p> <p>Improve housing stock and help residents preserve value through maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late-spring date set and advertising created for community-wide cleanup day • Volunteers organized to collect and deliver yard waste to county site 	Spring 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elmore’s very high number of seniors means many residents need assistance to maintain their homes
Home fix-up Revolving Microloan Program	<p>Provide small loans for low-income residents to do basic home maintenance and improvement projects</p> <p>Create opportunities for neighbors to build relationships across income and other differences</p> <p>Improve overall quality of local housing stock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether Elmore EDA can serve as fiscal agent or if a new entity should be formed • Develop eligibility criteria based on need, as well as sustainability plan for funds • Formulate reciprocal “pay-it-forward” element of program, providing volunteer labor for home projects from other loan recipients • Promote program throughout community through advertising and personal contacts with 	Winter 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funds for basic home repairs is an issue for many Elmore residents, including young families and older people on fixed incomes. • In addition to providing funds, the program will create a network of mutual assistance for home repairs and maintenance.

		neighbors in need		
Community Swap and Thrift	Create a site, either physical or virtual, where residents can exchange used household goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and determine whether a physical space, website or newsletter, or periodic “swap days” are preferable • If needed, secure site, whether for ongoing or temporary use • Organize volunteers to staff, as well as to haul unclaimed items to county dump 	Begin exploring long-term options in Spring 2008.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An added benefit of this program could be making use of one of Elmore’s many vacant downtown buildings • In addition to providing needed items to low-income residents, this project will help other residents clean up yards, homes, etc. by removing unneeded items.
Garden Club	<p>Assist low-income, low-mobility, and elderly residents with beautification projects at homes and businesses</p> <p>Engage residents in community projects through gardening and beautification</p> <p>Improve business opportunities in downtown area by creating a more shopper-friendly environment</p> <p>Improve visibility for Horizons with addition of planters in high-traffic locations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formed, local expert gardeners and learners recruited • Public places beautified, including cleaning, flower planting, and addition of planters around downtown • Plants and labor donated by area businesses and volunteers from a variety of sectors of the community 	Launched Spring 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some funding requested from and provided by local Thrivent Financial for Lutherans board • Local handymen built planter boxes for downtown area, which were then decorated by local youth



**ELMORE
FUTURE SQUAD PLANNING WORKSHEETS**

Future Squad: _____ Youth and

Families _____

Future Squad Co-Leaders: currently vacant _____

Future Squad Goal(s): To improve the health, social capital, stability, and engagement of the community and all its residents, particularly youth and seniors.
Connection to Poverty Reduction: Focus on youth and schools, Invest in basic community resources

Projects	Desired Outcomes	Actions	By When Implemented	Details
Summer Swimming Access	Create access to a healthy, low-cost summer activity for area youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizons group determines youth preference for summer access to swimming pool in nearby Blue Earth • Working together with city council, Horizons group lobbies county board to re-establish and fund summer bus service to Blue Earth pool for Elmore youth 	Launched summer 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its first summer, the bus to the pool was heavily used. The county board will reconsider funding this year and is likely to re-fund the program.
Bike Track & Bike Safety Education	<p>Create a site for a free, healthy activity for local youth, within walking or biking distance of their homes</p> <p>Collaborate with local police to educate youth on safe use of the site, provide helmets to low-income youth, and improve relations between youth and law enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizons team members consult with youth to determine needs and desires • Organize local volunteers with tools and equipment to convert donated land into BMX dirt bike track • Work with police and local business to hold “bike rodeo” for bike safety education • Work with youth to continually improve and self-regulate track 	Launched summer 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-police relations have been an issue raised in Elmore since the beginning of Horizons, and the safety education components of this program have built better relationships with both youth and parents in Elmore • It was initially thought that a skateboard park would be the best recreational resource for Elmore, but youth organized independently and approached the Horizons group to request that a bike track be built instead. • With no school in the community, local opportunities for youth and families to gather and socialize are limited, and building such assets has been a high priority.

<p>Get to Know Your Neighbor Picnic</p>	<p>Provide a free meal to residents</p> <p>Provide opportunities for residents to gather and socialize in a safe, neutral environment</p> <p>Build social capital across previously isolated sectors of the community</p> <p>Build awareness of Horizons' presence in the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set late-summer 2007 date and work with city to reserve park • Solicit food and door prize donations from area businesses for picnic and organize volunteers to grill and serve • Publicize event to entire community through a variety of media 	<p>First picnic held in summer 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of about 20 students from Elmore Academy, the local juvenile detention center, attended and performed an original rap about their experiences in Elmore • This event achieved more intergenerational engagement than Elmore had in the past – in that regard, it was a major breakthrough for social capital-building in the community
<p>December Holiday Activities for Families</p>	<p>Provide a free meal to residents</p> <p>Provide opportunities for residents to gather and socialize in a safe, neutral environment</p> <p>Build social capital across previously isolated sectors of the community</p> <p>Build awareness of Horizons' presence in the community</p> <p>Instill community pride and investment in residents homes through decorating and snow sculpting competitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free holiday pancake supper is held • Visits with Santa and ornament-making party for children is held • “Elmore Glows” is held throughout December – Horizons provides free strings of holiday lights to residents and holds an outdoor decorating competition • Family Fun Days held in February, included snow sculpting demonstration and competition, as well as free food 	<p>First events held in December 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many young families attended the pancake breakfast and ornament making, in many cases attending first community event in some time, or ever
<p>Open Gym for Seniors</p>	<p>Provide affordable, winter-friendly fitness opportunity for large senior population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizons works with Elmore Academy to provide open gym time for seniors to exercise indoors in winter, Monday through Friday mornings 	<p>Launched Winter 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This collaboration represents an important bridge between the Academy and the community, which are often alienated from one another.

Community Garden	Provide shared community space and assistance for anyone wishing to grow their own vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for private land, donated by local family, to be prepared for planting • Work with Garden Club members to involve local youth and seniors in planning and planting 	Launched Spring 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project offers an important opportunity for local youth to collaborate with and learn from from Garden Club members and elders.
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