

Coalition for Neighborhood Self-Determination
Draft Neighborhood-Led Planning Policy
March 2022

What: This is a guide for neighborhoods seeking to create their own neighborhood-led land use plan to be adopted by the City of Dallas to inform future land use, development and investment in their community.

Why: The City of Dallas currently does not have a clear process for neighborhood-led plans to become policy. Prior to December 2020, the process was outlined in the City's 2019 Guide to Neighborhood Planning, and also informally described by people who had been involved with neighborhood-led plans that were adopted into policy. This document seeks to outline an inclusive and equitable process for neighborhoods seeking to draft their own neighborhood-led plan and seek adoption by the City of Dallas.

Who: This proposal is created by the Coalition for Neighborhood Self-Determination, which was formed to specifically advocate for the city to restore the path for neighborhood-led plans to become policy. This was born out of the experience of Floral Farms Neighbors United/Vecinos Unidos, who drafted the first ever bilingual neighborhood-led land use plan and tried to get it adopted by the City of Dallas the same as other neighborhoods in North Dallas in November 2020. They were told the process had been dissolved, and so this Coalition formed to restore it. Since then the Tenth Street Residential Association and Singleton United/Unidos, other Coalition member organizations, have drafted their own neighborhood-led land use plans. Because these three organizations have recently drafted their own neighborhood-led land use plans, their recommendations are critical for a successful policy on this matter.

Outline: The following section outlines the different phases involved in the neighborhood-led planning process. Because the City of Dallas has a large Spanish speaking population, all planning materials and meetings regardless of location must be provided in Spanish. Other languages are on an as-needed basis. The planning processes also must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide for accommodations for people with disabilities to participate in all planning activities both physically and virtually. We are committed to inclusive and equitable processes because it leads to better outcomes for our City.

Phase 1: Community Engagement I (4-6 months depending on neighborhood-based group capacity & availability)

Part 1: Education and Organizing (1-2 months)

The first step in developing a neighborhood-led land use plan is to first make sure the community understands the basics of land use, zoning and how urban planning can be a tool for positive change. The community group or neighborhood association interested in neighborhood planning can request the the City of Dallas Planning and Urban Design Department or other non profit planning organizations to provide a Zoning and Land Use 101 event as a first step. This can act as the first public meeting opportunity where residents and other stakeholders can come together to understand the potential benefits of a neighborhood-led plan and learn about some of the basic terminology that will be discussed. The neighborhood based organization must determine the boundaries of the planning project allowing for input opportunities for the public, and every home (owner and renter occupied) and business (property owners and tenants) within the plan boundaries should be notified about the initiation of the neighborhood-led planning process and all other public meetings through U.S. mail or door to door outreach.

Similarly, throughout the planning process the planning team and neighborhood-based organization must advertise all planning meetings in an open and public manner, such as posting on social media, e-mails or text alerts to those who sign up for information updates, posting notices in popular businesses or community gathering areas within the neighborhood, or via U.S. mail or wide distribution of flyers throughout the planning area.

- Zoning, Land Use and Planning 101 workshop(s) to provide education and common understanding of the benefits of planning

Part 2: Existing Conditions (1-2 months)

While the neighborhood is providing public meeting opportunities for educating residents on zoning, land use and urban planning, the planning team supporting the neighborhood based organization will conduct the existing conditions analysis. The planning team can be non-profit or for-profit planning consultants, planning staff from PUD, or a combination of both. It is ideal if both city planners and other professional planners are involved throughout the process, however it is at the residents discretion on who their planning team is and has no impact on the final adoption of the plan.

The existing conditions analysis will look at the current land use, zoning, demographic and other publicly available information for the area within the plan boundaries. This information will then be presented back to the community with the neighborhood based

organization determining the time, location, format and outreach plan for the meeting. Multiple public input opportunities in different venues, formats and times of days must be provided for maximum resident participation in understanding the existing conditions in the community.

- Existing conditions analysis created by the planning team through research and aggregation of publicly available data
- Presentation on the existing conditions done with the neighborhood based organization in multiple venues, formats and dates/times that best meet the needs of the community

Part 3: Vision Creation (1-2 months)

The vision is the backbone of the neighborhood plan. Because of this it is important that substantial community engagement be conducted to allow for many ways for the public to contribute to the vision for the neighborhood-led land use plan. The neighborhood-based organization will work with the planning team to develop inclusive and equitable engagement methods to solicit resident feedback on the vision for the area. Some examples include using art, play, written and verbal activities so that nobody is left out.

- Vision meetings hosted by the neighborhood-based organization with support from the planning team to facilitate the provide resources

Part 4: Survey Outreach (1-2 months depending on response rate)

The Vision meetings will help identify the key themes that can evolve into priority issue areas for the planning team to conduct further research on, and for the neighborhood based organizations to consider when coming up with recommendations. Using the input from the vision meetings, the planning team and neighborhood-based organization will develop a survey that can be widely distributed virtually and physically to all homeowners and renters in the plan boundaries. Resources and support for the distribution will come from the planning team and city funding for neighborhood planning. As mentioned above door to door outreach, placement of surveys at common community locations, active survey outreach at events, and other strategies should be used to maximize survey participation within the plan boundaries.

- Survey created and distributed by neighborhood based organization and planning team and be made widely available for maximum participation of residents within the plan boundaries

Part 5: Placing Priorities (1-2 months)

The survey will quantify the priorities and concerns for the land use plan. The next step is to place those concerns. This means, understanding geographically within the plan boundaries, what changes the participants would like to make to support their vision. Through another series of facilitated meetings with the neighborhood-based organization and the planning team, the public will have several opportunities to physically map, draw, outline or build what they envision for future land use within the plan boundaries. Creative engagement strategies should be used to solicit input. This includes having a mail-in option, digital option, in person meeting options etc. This will be the basis for the planning team to understand the differences in the current land uses and future desired land uses, and how the zoning currently does or does not accommodate those land uses.

- Public input meetings hosted by the neighborhood-based organization with support from the planning team to facilitate the provide resources

Phase 2: Plan Drafting (2-4 months depending on planning team capacity)

The planning team will use this period to draft the first version of the land use plan using the input received from the community on their vision, their priorities and potential future land use and zoning recommendations. The land use plan draft must include all relevant standard sections involved in a planning document (Introduction, Background, Existing Conditions etc). This draft is then summarized in a short executive summary so that the key points can be shared with the public, and made available online and in print to the community for review once it is complete. It and all accompanying documents must be made available in English and Spanish, and in another language on an as-needed basis depending on the demographics of the community served. A presentation on the draft should be created and made available to the public in a series of community meetings similar to the previous ones - in collaboration with the neighborhood-based organization and allowing for multiple public input opportunities and methods.

- Draft land use plan created, summarized in executive summary and presentation created by the planning team with the neighborhood-based organization
- Multiple public input opportunities created for review of the plan and input to be collected for reviewing the draft

Phase 3: Community Engagement Part II (2-3 months)

Part 1: Incorporate Feedback on Plan Draft (1-3 months)

The planning team will aggregate feedback in the form of a survey, written comments, verbal comments and any other feedback submission method to make changes to the draft

plan document. These comments will be incorporated into the document for the final draft of the plan.

- Neighborhood based organization and planning team make public feedback opportunities available (meetings, survey in person and digitally, verbal feedback etc).
- Planning team incorporate feedback into plan draft

Part 2: Final Community Presentation (1 month)

The final draft of the land use plan will be presented back to the public in multiple forums and methods for community consensus. If there is consensus around the draft, the planning team will explain the next steps in terms of adopting the land use plan at the City of Dallas.

Phase 3: Adoption & Implementation (1-3 months)

The final phase takes the draft plan through the city's adoption process. This process involves the neighborhood-based organization and planning team presenting the draft land use plan document to the City Plan Commission, where they are provided the opportunity to provide input and ask questions. The City Plan Commission can recommend for the plan to be passed to the City Council for adoption or can request that questions or concerns be addressed, and the residents and planners come back again the following month. At that time it will then be passed to the City Council for review and adoption. Once the plan has been adopted, the next step is for the planning team, neighborhood-based organization and their city council person, CPC representative, PUD staff and [name of new position we want to create] to oversee next steps for implementation. The [new director] will then meet with the planning team and neighborhood-based organization as needed to ensure implementation steps are taken.

Plan implementation begins after the plan has been adopted and continues indefinitely until either 1) the plan's visions has been achieved, or 2) until such time that a new plan supersedes the adopted plan. The task of implementing the plan is made easier by following the strategies and actions section outlined in the implementation & resources section of the plan. This section must include relative priorities and timeframes for all the plan's vision recommendations (typically short, medium, and long term implementation). It also identifies recommendations by type, typically using the following categories: partnerships, funding & infrastructure, and regulatory.

Both City Staff and the Service Area Committees will work to drive the implementation of the plan's vision. As the acting bodies, those groups will meet on an annual basis to

score and reevaluate the effectiveness of the scoring criteria and determine additional actions where there are shortcomings. After plan's adoption, any further public engagement is conducted on an as needed basis, in relation to a specific implementation activity. For example, an infrastructure project recommended by the plan would likely have its own public outreach component. The public can use these metrics & check-ins to stay informed on the plan's implementation.