

City of Tallahassee Neighborhood Engagement and Outreach Policy

DEPARTMENT: Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs

DATE ADOPTED: November 13, 1984

DATE OF LAST REVISION:

122.01 AUTHORITY: Approved by the City Commission

122.02 PURPOSE: Neighborhoods are a priority for the City of Tallahassee. They represent the vibrancy, richness, beauty and diversity of our community. This Neighborhood Engagement and Outreach Policy outlines the framework that the City has established to help neighborhoods receive needed and available City services and the manner in which those services are delivered to neighborhoods; to strengthen and support neighborhood-led initiatives and projects; to involve neighborhoods in comprehensive planning decisions regarding the use of land and the protection of the environment, to increase residents' awareness and knowledge of City programs, procedures and activities; to mutually develop solutions to problems that affect the stability and sustainability of neighborhoods; to facilitate and provide dedicated points of contact for each neighborhood organization; and to encourage the formation of neighborhood organizations and their involvement in the decision-making processes of their city government.

122.03 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY: This policy outlines how the City will engage with neighborhoods and establishes the services and programs registered neighborhoods should expect to receive from the City, noting that these services and programs may change from time to time, as warranted. Furthermore, this policy is intended to provide guidance to the City's administrative structure and processes to ensure the proper delivery of these services and programs to neighborhood organizations, including, but not limited to, neighborhood associations and homeowners' associations.

122.04 NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT:

The City of Tallahassee seeks to engage neighborhoods and its general citizenry in all relevant aspects of city governance. In doing so, the City shall ensure that neighborhood organizations that are registered with the City are informed of services and programs that allow them to participate effectively and efficiently in their City government. Any neighborhood association, homeowner association, community group, or official neighborhood representative registered with the City of Tallahassee shall be afforded fair and equal access to the following:

- I. The opportunity to provide input during the design of City-funded projects occurring within or adjacent to their neighborhood, including the opportunity to be involved early in the planning process to express their neighborhoods' consensus preferences about choice of location, amenities, orientation, size, land use intensity, and other features.
- II. Prompt, courteous, informed responses to all questions regarding City business. Replies, if only to report that inquiries or research are underway and a full response will be forthcoming at a later time, should typically be made by the next business day within receipt of an inquiry.
- III. Advance notification of the construction/installation of any significant City-related public infrastructure or utility projects taking place within or adjacent to a neighborhood (e.g. road paving; water, sewer or drainage work; traffic signal installation or removal; park renovation or substantial maintenance; land purchases; etc.), including the day(s) and probable length of any street closures, utility interruptions, or any other adverse impacts on the neighborhood, and the name(s) and phone number(s) of the City representative(s) most knowledgeable and able to answer questions during the course of a normal business day while the work is taking place.

- IV. Notification of the submission of any application for rezoning, zoning or land use variance or exception, Development of Regional Impact (DRI) or Planned Unit Development (PUD) application, or other significant land use action; a clear explanation of the date, time and place of all applicable public hearings and other opportunities for public input on the application; and a clear explanation of the type of testimony that is allowable and relevant from neighborhood organizations and residents.
- V. Opportunity for input into the City's strategic planning process, annual budget process, including the opportunity to express support for preferred City government priorities and/or to suggest new priorities, and capital improvement projects.
- VI. Opportunity to nominate individuals to serve on various advisory/citizen review boards, as well as legislatively required boards and/or commissions.

122.05 IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:

- I. To receive the above services, neighborhood organizations must register with the City's Neighborhood Affairs Division. Neighborhoods can register online at Talgov.com/neighborhoodservices/na_register.aspx or they can complete and submit a hardcopy registration form to the Division. Hard copies of the registration form can be printed from **xxxx** or picked up from _____. It is the responsibility of neighborhood organizations to keep their contact information updated with the Division and to identify the neighborhood representative(s) to whom such notices/correspondence should be sent.
- II. To ensure effective implementation of the above services, the City Manager may develop written procedures consistent with the intent of this policy to provide guidance to staff's implementation efforts. The City's Neighborhood Affairs Division shall work with all City departments to ensure that the services envisioned by this policy are delivered efficiently to all requesting neighborhood organizations.
- III. Errors made by City staff in the process of implementing this policy shall not be deemed grounds for cause of action, petition for writ of certiorari, or any element thereof. The City Manager and or his/her designee shall take action to address any infraction to the delivery of services and programs necessary to keep neighborhoods engaged with their city government.

122.06 NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH:

The City of Tallahassee hereby establishes guidance and procedures for the delivery of services and programs to its diverse, vibrant, eclectic and livable neighborhoods. This policy also establishes the mission, vision, context and goals of the Neighborhood Affairs Division, which supports the City's Mission, Vision and Values. The Division shall have primary responsibilities for overseeing and coordinating the delivery of services to neighborhood organizations and other duties as may be assigned by the City Administration from time to time. The provisions below enumerate how the Division will be organized to carry out these duties.

122.061 LEADERSHIP: The Neighborhood Affairs Division is established to administer the City's neighborhood programming and services. The mission, vision, context and goal of the Division are as follows:

- **MISSION:** To provide exceptional programs and services that build valued relationships with neighborhoods; support healthy, vibrant and resilient communities; and improve the quality of life for residents of Tallahassee.
- **VISION:** Thriving and livable neighborhoods that have effective leadership and engaged residents.

- **CONTEXT:** Strong neighborhoods are the bedrock of a community, impacting everything from public safety to economic development. As the City continues to actively engage with neighborhoods, trust grows, and communities are strengthened.
- **GOALS:** To foster collaboration, enhance community beautification, and strengthen neighborhood safety throughout Tallahassee. To connect neighborhoods to city government through active community engagement. To enhance livability and preserve the unique characteristics of neighborhoods.

122.062 RESPONSIBILITY:

A. Neighborhood Affairs Division staff (Neighborhood Services Coordinators) shall:

1. Act as a conduit for information between neighborhoods and city government by serving as a primary liaison between neighborhood organizations, the City Administration and the City Commission;
2. Provide timely information, in collaboration with other City Department, to neighborhoods and a means of exchanging and sharing of ideas among neighborhood groups and the City;
3. Work cooperatively with neighborhood groups toward the attainment of neighborhood goals and encourage the participation of all citizens in their municipal government processes;
4. Assist neighborhood groups in gaining better awareness of and access to various City services, the budget process, and available resources for neighborhood planning and development;
5. Provide a structure for community involvement in the development and implementation of public programs such as neighborhood crime watch, beautification, neighborhood leadership and training and, litter abatement/eradication and for early detection of problems with City services;
6. Ensure that neighborhoods are notified in ample time to allow participation in the decision-making process of proposed changes in City policies, design of projects, services, and activities having a significant effect on their neighborhoods; and
7. Offer assistance to groups in forming a neighborhood association and defining the boundaries of their organization.

B. City Departments:

To provide the best possible service and comprehensive solutions to neighborhood organizations and to aid in delivering the level of service contemplated by this policy as herein referenced, each City department shall:

1. Designate a department liaison to the Neighborhood Affairs Division to assist in resolving neighborhood concerns related to departmental services or programs.
2. Ensure that the Neighborhood Affairs Division is duly notified of proposed/adopted changes in departmental policies, projects, services, and activities having a significant effect on neighborhoods in ample time to allow participation by the impacted neighborhood associations in the process.
3. Provide technical support at neighborhood meetings when proposed changes in policies, projects, services and activities are presented for citizen input and at other times as may be requested by the neighborhood organization or Neighborhood Affairs staff.
4. Provide information to the Neighborhood Affairs Division on services and programs for distribution of articles to neighborhood associations for inclusion in association newsletters.
5. Provide speakers for neighborhood meetings to promote a better understanding of city government operations and services.

122.063 NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING: To empower and work with registered neighborhood organizations as equal partners, Neighborhood Affairs shall offer programming and services that support the City’s Strategic Plan and include but are not limited to Neighborhood Leadership, Beautification and Community Gardens, Neighborhood Safety, Grants and Neighborhood Planning. Programs and services that are developed to address these issue areas will include input from neighborhood organizations.

122.064 SERVICE DELIVERY AND EXPECTATIONS: The delivery of services and programming to registered neighborhood organizations shall be guided by the following values and practices:

- 1) **Promptness and Courtesy:** City staff shall provide prompt, courteous and informed responses to inquiries from neighborhood organizations about City business. Inquiries must be acknowledged by the next business day within receipt of an inquiry.
- 2) **Advance Notification:** Prior to the commencement of any planned significant City work in or adjacent to a neighborhood, the City shall notify the affected neighborhoods prior to the start of the work.
- 3) **Civic Engagement:** When requested, City staff shall ensure that registered neighborhood organizations and residents are duly noticed of the agendas of City Commission meetings and other public meetings where City business will be discussed.

122.07 EFFECTIVE DATE: This policy became effective November 13, 1984. Revised (Date??)

122.08 RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: The City Manager shall make amendments as required for the purpose of keeping this policy complete and up to date.