

21.03.130 - Neighborhood or district plans.

A. Purpose and authority.

1. Purpose.

a. The purpose of this section is to allow and facilitate the development of neighborhood or district plans by citizen groups that are approved by the assembly. Neighborhood and district plans that are developed by local government are not subject to this section, but rather follow the process of subsection [21.03.070 C.](#), comprehensive plan amendments, substantive.

b. Neighborhood or district plans shall be guided by the elements of the comprehensive plan, as defined in [Section 21.01.080](#). Neighborhood or district plans should give specificity to the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies of the comprehensive plan. These plans shall supplement and elaborate on the comprehensive plan. The goal of a neighborhood or district plan is to protect and promote the positive elements of neighborhood or district character and identity, while promoting the orderly growth, improvement, and future development of the neighborhood, community, or municipality.

2. Authority.

a. These procedures and minimum standards are established for the creation and review of plans for the development, growth, and improvement of the municipality, and its neighborhoods and communities. The plans may be sponsored, upon express approval of the assembly by resolution, by any group or organization representing the broad public interest, upon express approval by assembly resolution (hereafter called the "sponsor").

b. In order to obtain the approval of the assembly as a sponsor, any community council, group of councils, or other groups or organizations shall request a resolution from the assembly authorizing them to proceed with the development of a neighborhood or district plan. The group shall demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of a majority of the assembly, that

i. They represent the broad public interest necessary to successfully develop a plan;

ii. They have read and understand the requirements of this ordinance, and that their proposed plan will comply with the standards set forth in this ordinance; and

iii. They have sufficient financial resources and a sufficient level of knowledge and expertise to warrant the expenditure of public resources as provided herein.

3. Policy guidance. An adopted plan shall be an element of the comprehensive plan and shall serve as a policy to guide subsequent actions by municipal agencies. The assembly and the planning and zoning commission shall consider adopted plans in review of land use, zoning actions, and capital improvement programs, where

consideration is consistent with the charter, the comprehensive plan, and general law. Agencies shall consider adopted neighborhood or district plans as guidance for actions, whether or not actions are subject to commission review. The existence of an adopted neighborhood or district plan shall not preclude the assembly, any municipal department or agency, or any board or commission of the municipality from developing other plans or taking actions not contemplated in the neighborhood or district plan affecting the same geographic area or subject matter.

B. Plan submittal.

1. *Initiation meeting.* The sponsor of a plan shall meet with the department at the initiation of the planning process to discuss and clarify content requirements, scheduling, and other relevant issues. Periodically, the department shall report to the commission, and to the assembly by an assembly information memorandum (AIM) requiring no further action, on the progress of neighborhood or district plans underway.
2. *Work program.* Following the initiation meeting, the sponsor shall prepare a work program which shall be submitted to the department for approval. The work program shall include a project schedule, a proposed table of contents, a proposed public participation plan, and at least three milestones at which times the sponsor shall meet with the department.
3. *Submittal.* Twenty-two printed copies along with an electronic version of all proposed plans shall be submitted to the department. The submittal shall include the name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) designated by the sponsor to be its representative(s) in any discussions of the plan.

C. Threshold review and determination.

1. *Department review and determination* Within 90 days of the submittal of a plan, the department shall review the plan and determine whether the plan meets the standards for form, content, and for consistency with sound planning, as set forth in subsection D. below.
 - a. If the department determines that the plan does meet the threshold standards of subsection D., the department shall distribute the plan for public review and commission public hearing as described in subsection E.
 - b. If the department determines the plan does not meet the threshold standards of subsection D., the staff shall provide written notification to the sponsor of all deficiencies with respect to form, content, process, and any changes, additions, or deletions which, in the opinion of staff, may correct such deficiencies.
2. *Coordination of plan review.* The department may determine, despite a finding of appropriate form, content, and sound planning policy, a proposed plan should not immediately proceed, due to other municipal planning efforts underway which should be coordinated with the plan. In such a case, the department shall develop an appropriate timetable for distributing the plan for public review and commission public hearings.

D. *Standards.*

1. *Form and content.* The form and content of all proposed plans shall be consistent with the following:

- a. The plan shall state its sponsoring entity or entities and the names of the individuals who participated in the development of the plan.
- b. A plan shall enhance or implement goals, objectives, policies, and/or strategies of the comprehensive plan and provide further detail and specificity. A plan may take the form of a master plan or targeted plan.
 - i. A master plan for a neighborhood, district, or other geographic area of the municipality may combine elements related to housing, industrial and commercial uses, transportation, land use regulation, open space, recreation, cultural features, health, economic vitality, community facilities, and other infrastructure.
 - ii. A targeted plan may consider one or a small number of elements of neighborhood, district, or municipal-wide problems or needs, and shall focus on issues related to the use, development, and improvement of land within the plan study area.
- c. A plan shall not be limited to a single zoning district or a specific parcel in private ownership. A plan shall cover an identifiable, cohesive geographic area or neighborhood.
- d. Plans shall be presented in clear language and coherent form with elements, chapters, or sections organized in logical sequence.
- e. Plans shall state goals, objectives, or purposes clearly and succinctly. Policy statements or recommendations shall contain documentation and explanation of the data, analysis, or rationale underlying each. Plans shall analyze and propose policies to address identified problems.
- f. A plan shall contain, as applicable:
 - i. Inventories or description and analysis of existing conditions, problems, or needs; projections of future conditions, problems, or needs; and recommended goals and strategies to address those conditions, problems, or needs.
 - ii. Alternatively, or concomitantly with the elements described above, a plan may also contain a vision for a future end state and a strategy(ies) for achieving it.

The level of detail and analysis shall be appropriate to the goals and recommendations presented in the plan. The information and analysis relied upon to support the recommendations shall be sufficiently identified to facilitate later plan review, including accuracy and validity of the information and analysis. Supporting information may be contained in the form of narrative, maps, charts, tables, technical appendices, or the like.

g. A plan shall contain a land use plan map for the geographic area encompassed by the plan. The land use plan map shall propose appropriate land use categories, which generally include: residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, transportation, community facilities, parks, and natural open space. The land use plan map may provide more specificity than the general categories.

h. Plans shall be accompanied by documentation showing public participation in the plan formulation and preparation. Public outreach, such as surveys, workshops, hearings, or technical advisory committees, is recommended as a tool for community support and consensus, in addition to department, commission, and assembly approval.

2. *Sound planning policy.*

a. Every plan, regardless of form and content, shall include discussion of:

i. Its long-range consequences;

ii. Impact on economic and housing opportunity for all persons, particularly low- and moderate-income, and persons with disabilities;

iii. Provision of future growth and development opportunities;

iv. Ability to improve the physical environment; and

v. Effect on the geographic distribution of municipal facilities.

b. A plan shall set forth goals, objectives, purposes, policies, strategies, and/or recommendations within the legal authority of the municipality.

c. A plan considering issues under the jurisdiction of specific municipal or state agencies shall disclose all agency comments.

d. A plan shall analyze its relationship to applicable policy documents, including all adopted elements of the comprehensive plan, as well as its relationship to adjoining neighborhoods and other areas.

e. A plan shall solicit input from residents, local businesses, agencies, and non-profit organizations local to the neighborhood, and demonstrate it has considered these comments on their merits.

E. *Plan distribution and review.*

1. *Plan distribution.* When, pursuant to subsection C. above, a plan is ready for public review, the department shall, within 30 days of its determination, provide copies of the plan simultaneously to all municipal and state agencies with jurisdiction over elements of the plan, and to all community councils. The department shall also make copies available to the general public at city hall and the planning and development center, and post the plan on the department website.

2. *Public, agency, and community council review.*

a. Each community council may conduct its own review of the plan. Within a period of 120 days following receipt of the plan, the community council may provide written recommendation(s) to the department and the sponsor.

- b. Members of the public and other municipal, state, or federal agencies may provide written comments to the department during the 120-day review period.
3. *Department review.* The department shall review the plan during the 120- day review period, and prepare a staff report and recommendation for the commission. The department shall consider the neighborhood, community, and municipal-wide impacts and the long-term effects of the actions or policies recommended by the plan. The department shall also consider the impact of the plan on economic and housing opportunity, future growth and development, and the physical environment, including consistency of the plan with other adopted plans.

F. *Planning and zoning commission review.*

1. *Schedule for review.* The commission shall schedule a public hearing within 60 days following the final day of the public review period.
2. *Public notice.* Notice shall be provided in accordance with subsection [21.03.020](#) H.
3. *Planning and zoning commission action.* The commission shall vote, within 60 days following the close of the public hearing to recommend approval, approval with modifications, remand to the sponsor, or disapproval of the plan. In reviewing the substance of the plan, the commission shall consider the neighborhood, community, and municipal-wide impacts and the potential long-term effects from the actions or policies recommended by the plan. The commission shall consider the impact of the plan on economic and housing opportunity, future growth and development, and the physical environment, including consistency of the plan with other adopted plans, and any other pertinent adopted neighborhood or district plans. Any modifications recommended by the commission shall be consistent with the standards for form, content, and sound planning policy, as set out in subsection D. above.
4. *Commission findings.* The commission's recommendation shall include findings describing its considerations and providing explanation for its determination. The findings may include recommendations for the implementation of plan elements. The recommendation shall be transmitted to the assembly for final approval.

G. *Assembly adoption.*

1. *Transmission to assembly.* The commission's recommendation shall be transmitted to the assembly for introduction within 45 days of the commission recommendation. The assembly shall schedule a public hearing not more than 45 days after introduction.
2. *Public notice.* Notice shall be provided in accordance with subsection [21.03.020](#) H.
3. *Assembly action.* Within 45 days of the close of the public hearing, the assembly shall either:
 - a. Adopt the plan;
 - b. Adopt the plan with modifications;
 - c. Remand the plan to the commission; or
 - d. Not adopt the plan.

If the assembly adopts the plan with modifications, the modifications shall be consistent with the standards for form, content, and sound planning policy, as set out in subsection D. above. If the plan is adopted, either as proposed or with modifications, it shall become an element of the comprehensive plan as described in [section 21.01.080](#).

H. *Review and revision.* A plan shall be reviewed by the department concurrent with the review of the comprehensive plans as otherwise provided in this title to determine if the plan is consistent with the comprehensive plan. If the sponsor shows a major change of circumstances in the neighborhood or district, the sponsor may request a review of the plan before the end of any ten-year period. Any revisions shall be presented for adoption as an amendment to the plan, in accordance with the procedures set forth herein.

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