

# CHAPTER 9: NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of strong communities. Strengthening the capacity of neighborhoods to achieve their goals will have a positive impact on Fort Worth's future. This chapter focuses on the programs that have been developed to respond to the needs and issues facing Fort Worth neighborhoods.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Neighborhood capacity is most developed when there is a sense of community among area residents. With a sense of community comes pride in the neighborhood, a strong neighborhood image, and resident involvement in neighborhood improvements. Neighborhood organizations, such as mandatory and voluntary neighborhood associations, non-profits, Citizens On Patrol, and neighborhood alliances, are a means to build neighborhood capacity.

### Neighborhood Associations

There are two types of neighborhood associations—mandatory and voluntary. Mandatory associations are established when a subdivision is developed. They are legal entities and every homeowner is required to belong to the association and to pay dues. Often, there are requirements and restrictions included in the deeds that go beyond what city ordinance requires. Homeowners are legally required to abide by the restrictions and they sign documents agreeing to this when they purchase their home.

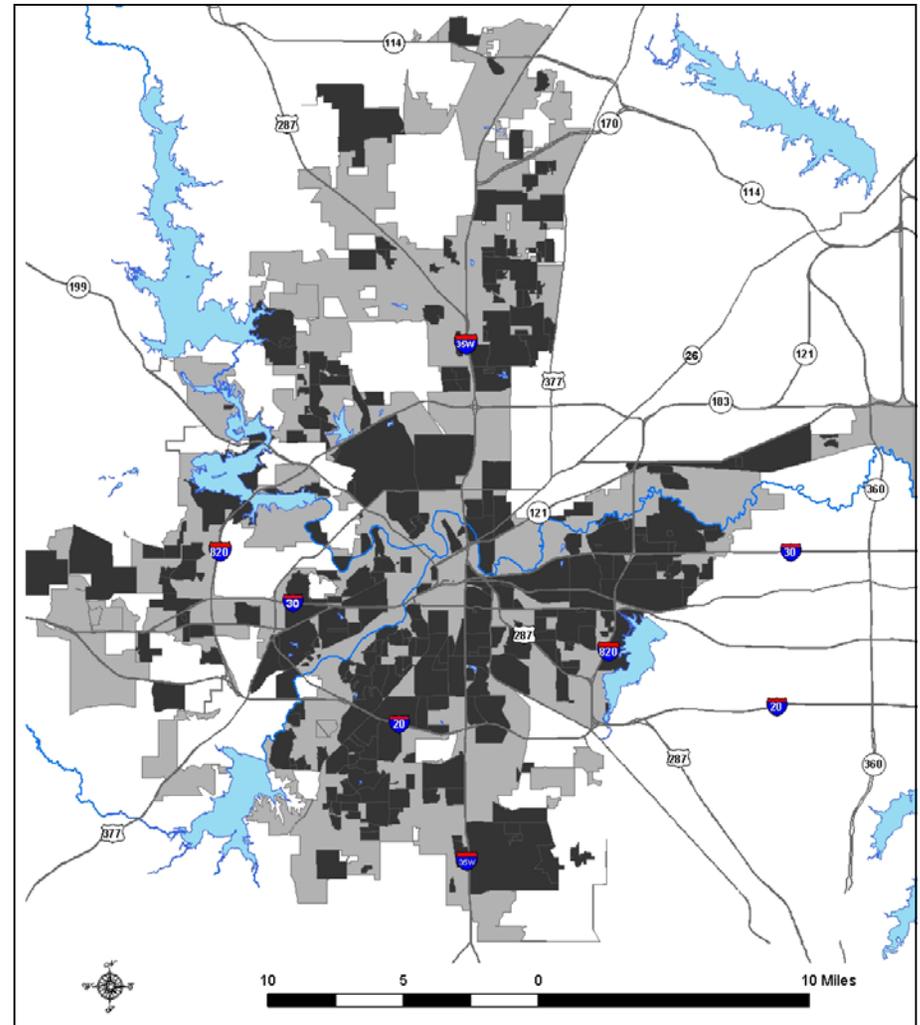
Voluntary associations are social organizations rather than legal entities. They are formed by concerned neighbors who want to get to know each other or who want to deal with crime, code violations, or a zoning issue. Residents within the boundaries of an association are not required to join or pay dues. Establishing a voluntary association does not give neighbors authority to enforce any rules. In voluntary areas, regular city codes apply.

The number of neighborhood organizations in Fort Worth is growing. Since August 1997, the number of registered associations has increased from 114 to 295. Approximately one third of these associations are mandatory. There are a handful of resident associations or tenant associations located in apartment complexes or townhomes. The remaining 175 registered associations are voluntary.

New neighborhood associations are regularly forming and registering with the City. However, there are existing neighborhood organizations that are not registered with the City, and there are many areas in Fort Worth that remain unrepresented by any type of neighborhood association. The City's goal is to have an active neighborhood association in every residential part of Fort Worth.

Neighborhood associations are involved in a wide variety of activities, such as planting trees, organizing clean-ups, funding special neighborhood street signage, and community policing. Neighborhoods monitor zoning and building proposals in their areas through a City program that provides courtesy notification to residents about local zoning and development cases that are going before the Zoning Commission,

**Areas Covered by Existing Neighborhood Associations, 2011**



There are 295 registered neighborhood associations in Fort Worth. The service areas of neighborhood associations are depicted above. It is the City's goal to have all neighborhoods represented by formal neighborhood associations. (Sources: Planning and Development Department, 2011.)

City Plan Commission, and Board of Adjustment. The City is better able to serve neighborhoods where established neighborhood organizations foster close links to residents. Through neighborhood organizations, residents can discuss issues and concur on a clear set of priorities and course of action to reach their goals.

### **Neighborhood Alliances**

Another type of neighborhood organization is the neighborhood alliance or coalition. There are currently 18 alliances registered with the City. Alliances work on issues that impact an area larger than a single neighborhood. Their size and scope ranges from alliances that represent a handful of associations to the Fort Worth League of Neighborhood Associations, which has a citywide focus. Alliances are active in influencing City policy and decisions about how City resources will be used to address neighborhood needs.

### **Neighborhood-Based Housing and Economic Development Initiatives**

Current initiatives by the Housing and Economic Development Department (HED) encourage greater leveraging of public and private sector funds and to create joint ventures in local neighborhoods. HED promotes greater investment in neighborhoods by supporting neighborhood organizations and businesses, while stimulating housing development with local Community Housing Development Organization (CHDOs) and Community Development Corporations performing housing & economic development activities.

The City has made efforts to enhance neighborhood capacity and coordination with private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies, particularly with regard to the development of the City's housing and economic development strategies. The City of Fort Worth supports neighborhood coordination with local banks, community development corporations, neighborhood organizations, low income housing developers, and commercial developers to generate interest within communities and neighborhood boundaries. Many of these neighborhoods are low and moderate income areas and, consequently, benefitting from neighborhoods' commercial and residential improvements. In addition, the City utilizes its own Community Development Council (CDC) and the Economic and Community Development Committee (ECDC) to ensure continuum of service, identification of gaps in service, and to eliminate duplication of efforts.

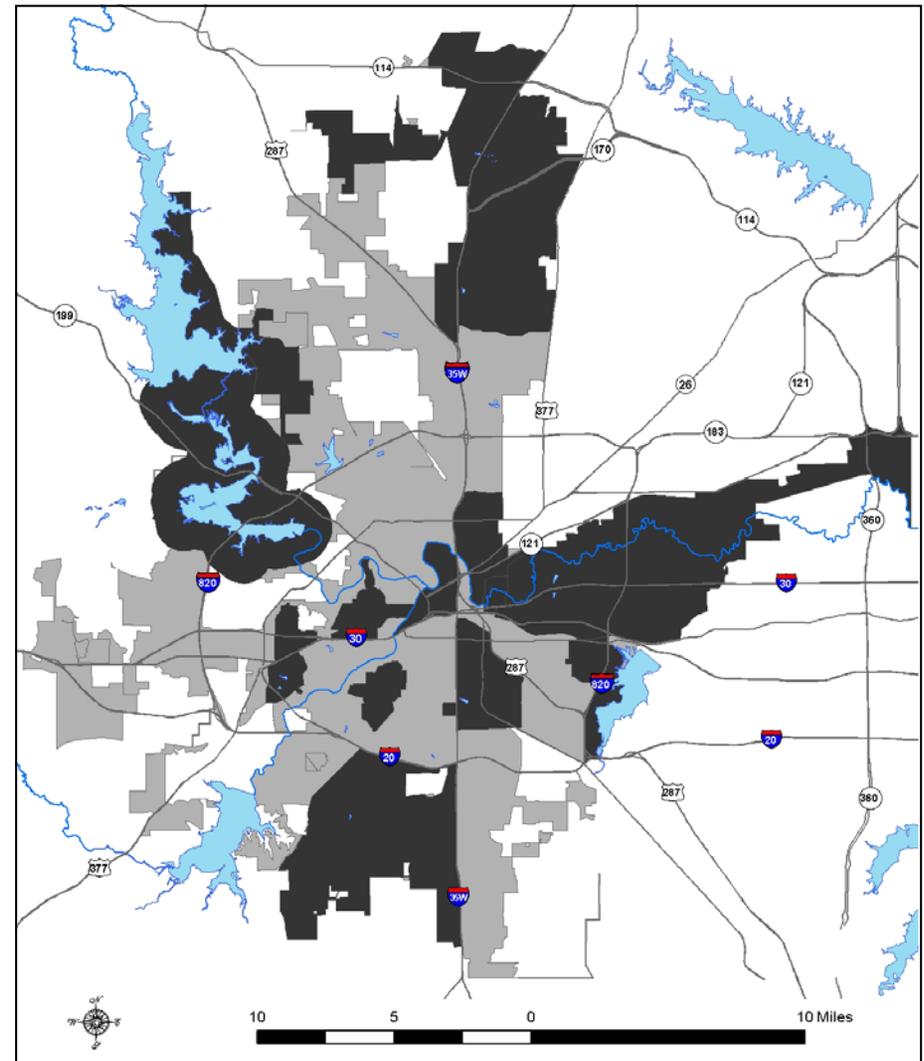
### **Other Types of Neighborhood Organizations**

Community policing groups have been an effective force in helping to reduce crime. In Fort Worth, these groups are important neighborhood resources. Fort Worth's award-winning community policing program has trained 8,265 members, of which more than 1,000 are organized in 200 Citizens on Patrol groups. These groups work hand in hand with Neighborhood Police Officers (NPOs) to identify and address crime trends.

## **GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

Assist neighborhoods in forming associations, increasing their capacity, and preparing and implementing neighborhood plans.

### **Areas Covered by Existing Neighborhood Alliances, 2011**



There are 18 registered neighborhood alliances in Fort Worth. The service areas of neighborhood associations are depicted above. (Sources: Planning and Development Department, 2011.)

- Help 10 neighborhoods form associations in 2012.
- Prepare and implement additional organizational development and neighborhood training opportunities in 2012.
- Assist resident groups in understanding how to access City services by providing education about City programs and resources.

## PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Existing City programs to develop neighborhood capacity are discussed below.

### Neighborhood Education Office

Neighborhood Education Specialists work with residents to establish and revitalize neighborhood associations in Fort Worth. The Neighborhood Education Office of the Planning and Development Department provides guidance as residents establish the association's boundaries, draft the association's by-laws, and develop a democratic process for elections and meetings. The neighborhood association defines its own purpose, determine its goals and strategies and develops neighborhood plans to address concerns such as crime, zoning, parks, code compliance, and others.

Once an association is established, it will have an opportunity to register with the City. To be registered, associations must have at least one meeting per year, must have elections every two years, must allow all residents within their boundaries to participate and must have bylaws on file with the Neighborhood Education Office.

Neighborhood Education Specialists attend neighborhood association meetings to build relationships with neighborhood leaders and to educate residents about City services. The specialists often serve as problem solvers, answering questions about City processes and connecting the association to City and community resources.

In addition to providing neighborhood capacity building, the Neighborhood Education Office provides resident groups, schools and faith based organizations with presentations and information about a variety of City services. These education efforts are coordinated with individual City departments.

The Neighborhood Education Office maintains a web site ([www.fortworthgov.org/neighborhoods](http://www.fortworthgov.org/neighborhoods)) to provide important information to neighborhoods, improve communication between neighborhoods, foster alliances among neighborhoods, and link individual neighborhood web sites.

### Courtesy Notification System

Neighborhood associations that are registered with the City are included in the Courtesy Notification System. Through this system, neighborhoods receive information on cases scheduled to go before the Zoning Commission, City Plan Commission, or Board of Adjustment if those cases are located within the boundaries of an association or within one-quarter mile of a neighborhood's boundaries.

### Neighborhood Planning Programs

The Planning and Development Department and the Housing and Economic Development Department plan for individual neighborhoods as available staffing and resources allow. Recent neighborhood planning efforts include the Oakland Corners

## Fort Worth Neighborhood Office Web Site

Home > Departments > Planning and Development > Neighborhood Education

**Neighborhood Education Office**

The Neighborhood Education Office works directly with residents in the community, providing education on City services, as well as support for neighborhood associations.

**Education**

Neighborhood Education offers educational presentations to neighborhood associations, schools and community groups by request. Presentations last about 30 minutes each and are offered free of charge.

Please call 817-392-6201 for more information or to schedule a program.

**Education Programs for Adults**

**Caring for Cowtown Air** – Do you know where air pollution comes from? Learn about ozone formation, effects on your health, simple ways to prevent pollution and what the EPA and City of Fort Worth are doing about possible gas well emissions.

**Contact**

**Physical Address**  
818 Missouri St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76104

**Mailing Address**  
1000 Throckmorton St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

**Phone:**  
817-392-6201

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**Calendars**

The Neighborhood Education Office Web Site ([www.fortworthgov.org/neighborhoods](http://www.fortworthgov.org/neighborhoods)) is a project of the City's Neighborhood Office. It was created to improve communications between neighborhoods. On the web site, users can search a database of registered associations, view a neighborhood calendar of meetings, access a map of associations, and view web pages created by individual neighborhood organizations.

(Source: Planning and Development Department, 2011.)

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Plan, the Northside Economic Development Strategy Workshop and Report, the Lake Worth Vision Plan, the Texas Motor Speedway Area Master Plan, and the Lake Arlington Master Plan. The Housing and Economic Development Department also provides neighborhood planning assistance, capacity building, and funding to selected neighborhoods located in special target areas and neighborhood empowerment zones, such as Polytechnic Heights Educational Corridor, Polytechnic Heights/Wesleyan Corridor, and Stop Six.

**Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Program**

The City encourages neighborhood organizations to become certified Community Housing Development Organization (CHDOs). Typically CHDOs carry out the following activities: acquisition and/or rehabilitation of rental housing; new construction of rental housing; acquisition and/or rehabilitation of homebuyer properties; new construction of homebuyer properties; and direct financial assistance to purchasers of HOME-assisted housing sponsored or developed with HOME funds.

The Housing and Economic Development Department provides a variety of community development programs and activities involving training, technical assistance, and funding, benefitting neighborhoods. City programs for neighborhoods – which can involve public/private joint ventures – include:

- Providing financing for acquisition and rehabilitation of existing home and for lot acquisition and interim financing for new construction (acquisition, rehabilitation, resale, home improvement program, homeownership, infrastructure, infill, CHDOs and public services programs);
- Providing grants or loans to for-profit and non-profit housing agencies for acquisition or rehabilitation of multifamily units, affordable to low-income households, and transitional housing;
- Rental subsidies to increase affordability and accessibility for cost burdened and overcrowded households;
- Demolition of vacant dilapidated structures to encourage the redevelopment of declining areas of the City;
- Code enforcement to encourage the redevelopment of declining areas of the City;
- Gradual new development of affordable single-family units for renter and homebuyer households;
- Gradual new development of affordable multifamily rental units;
- Increased new development & rehabilitation of smaller 2-3 bedroom affordable housing;
- Rental and homebuyer subsidies to decrease the need for doubling-up of households;
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance for owner-occupied housing;
- New development of accessible housing for elderly and disabled households; and,
- Homebuyer’s assistance to increase affordability and purchasing power for low-income homebuyers.

All eligible projects/activities will be available on a city-wide basis unless they are required by HUD regulations to be limited to specific identified low-income areas.

**Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Plan**



**OAKLAND CORNERS**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT ZONE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Adopted by Fort Worth City Council January 6, 2009

*Rebuilding neighborhoods with compatible quality infill housing and appropriate mixed-use development in commercial areas.*



The Oakland Corners Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan was adopted by the City Council in January 2009. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)