City of Cedar Hill
Comprehensive Plan 2008

Chapter 7:
HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

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INTRODUCTION

The words *housing* and *neighborhood* can be defined in the context of structural or physical characteristics, but the meaning can also be applied in a broader sense. More than simply a dwelling or a shelter, housing impacts the way in which a family lives and the way in which an area is perceived. The term neighborhood also includes the sense of community that can be felt and quality of life that can be enjoyed by residents. Notably, housing is the single largest land use within Cedar Hill.

Housing and related neighborhoods are inherently unique and that uniqueness makes it difficult to precisely define them. Although such things cannot be easily described, a healthy neighborhood is generally made up of quality housing that is occupied by residents who take pride in their homes and property. A neighborhood is the setting in which residents may develop a sense of belonging through their interactions, common interests, and by simply "being neighbors." It is, therefore, in the public interest not only to maintain individual housing units, but also to promote the overall well being of neighborhood areas. To accomplish this requires cooperative action by property owners, tenants, the municipality and volunteers. Such cooperative efforts can achieve the highest possible housing quality and environmental character within each neighborhood area. This Housing chapter discusses various means of stabilizing housing, preserving older residential areas, and encouraging quality new residential development in Cedar Hill. The City should be a leader in the effort to maintain and improve the housing and neighborhoods within its limits.

Sustainable Housing & Neighborhoods

Much of the discussion and many of the recommendations in this chapter address the importance of creating, revitalizing, and maintaining housing and neighborhoods that are sustainable. In the context of housing and neighborhoods, a number of attributes, as described below, can define the term "sustainability:"

- The housing units are of quality construction and well-maintained;
- Schools and recreational facilities are located close to or preferably in a central section of the neighborhood;
- Non-residential land uses (e.g., public, office, and retail land uses) are carefully and strategically placed in relation to the neighborhood;
- Emergency services, such as fire, medical and police services, are readily accessible;
- There is adequate lighting and other features that foster feelings of safety;
- There is continued investment in public and private property to stabilize property values;
- The majority of the dwelling units are owner-occupied;
- The public facilities and infrastructure serving the neighborhood are well-maintained;

- There are opportunities for social interaction;
- There is a sense of "community" and "belonging" among residents; and
- Homes are in close proximity to hike and bike trails and/or open space.

The City should strive to ensure that these qualities are part of every existing neighborhood area in Cedar Hill. The City should also ensure that future neighborhoods are designed and maintained in accordance with these characteristics of sustainability.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

The following goals, objectives, and corresponding policies were developed through the visioning portion of this comprehensive planning process. All additional discussion throughout the chapter is intended to support and supplement these goals and objectives. It should be noted that some goals and objectives are applicable to more than one chapter, and therefore may be discussed in each pertinent section.

Goal 7.1:
Encourage the development of quality housing throughout the City that meets a diversity of housing needs, for the full-life cycle of citizens.

Objective 7.1 a: Encourage a variety of residential lot and housing sizes.

Objective 7.1 b: Continually monitor residential developments within the City to understand the amount of housing stock diversity.

> ➢ Track the City's existing housing inventory, in terms of housing type, lot size, house size, ownership, and location, in order to accurately determine the variety of housing.

Objective 7.1 c: Ensure that there is a mixture of single-family, townhouse / condominium, and multiple-family developments.

Objective 7.1 d: Ensure that townhouses / condominiums, duplexes, and multiple-family units are compatible and complementary to surrounding land uses.

Objective 7.1 e: Explore the use of high-quality, traditional and non-traditional building materials, as well as building and site design criteria.

Goal 7.2:
Support the creation of unique residential properties to encourage long-term stability and reinvestment.

Objective 7.2 a: Allow and/or encourage new development types and trends (such as New Urbanism / Traditional Neighborhood Development, etc.), which promote alternative designs through form based codes that create a pedestrian friendly and mixed land use environment.

> ➢ Promote the integration of mixed use developments, where appropriate, which have a combination of residential and non-residential components.

Goal 7.3:
Recognize the importance of existing neighborhoods to the character of Cedar Hill by implementing policies that will support their long-term sustainability and livability.

Objective 7.3 a: Wherever necessary, retrofit neighborhoods with pedestrian connections and access to open space.

Objective 7.3 b: Ensure that all homes have pedestrian access to amenities such as parks, open space, hike & bike trails, and schools.

Objective 7.3 c: Investigate specific ways in which the City can designate and actively participate in upgrading residential areas through organized community programs and funding.

> ➢ Implement a program to coordinate resources and volunteers to improve and beautify strategic neighborhood areas, on a prioritized basis.

Objective 7.3 d: Promote incentives and strengthen programs to assist owner-occupants in meeting housing code requirements.

> ➢ Aggressively pursue code enforcement efforts.
>
> > ‧ Emphasize a proactive approach.
> >
> > ‧ Design an assistance program to aid the elderly, disabled, and those financial hardships in meeting code standards.
>
> ➢ Investigate the creation of home ownership education/training programs, for first time home buyers.
>
> > ‧ Consider a joint effort with local banks and other lending institutions.
> >
> > ‧ Educate residents about Code Enforcement, including new codes, common violations, how to mitigate violations, and the purpose of code enforcement efforts.
> >
> > ‧ Coordinate with local real estate professionals/organizations.
> >
> > ‧ Better communicate to the public the tools, resources, and information available to assist in the home buying process.

Objective 7.3 e: Consider the use of public improvement districts (PIDs), such as Waterford Oaks and High Pointe PIDs, to improve the quality of existing neighborhoods.

Goal 7.4:
Encourage infill development to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

Objective 7.4 a: Establish infill policies for vacant residential areas to ensure that new housing makes a positive contribution and is compatible with the overall area.

> ➢ Focus capital improvement and development efforts on supporting infill development, in order to preserve the limited vacant land remaining.

> ➢ Continue to monitor and increase water and wastewater service availability.

Objective 7.4 b: Establish infill policies for non-residential development.

MODEL NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTS

What elements or features make a neighborhood a great place to live? Can specific design elements increase the quality-of-life residents enjoy? While the answer to the first question depends on the community, the answer to the second questions is yes. Neighborhoods will differ in terms of size of the areas, individual lot size, style of construction, and other features, but certain elements (elements providing quantifiable and unquantifiable value) should be consistently designed into all new Cedar Hill single-family residential developments. The following establishes eight elements which should be incorporated into all new developments and any redevelopment projects consisting of single-family units.

Applicability

The following recommendations (Elements 1-10) apply to new residential development and redevelopment projects. Elements 1 and 2 apply to all units: single-family detached, single-family attached, duplexes, triplexes, quadriplexes, and multiple-family units. Elements 3-10 apply only to single-family detached and duplex units. This division is made because certain elements from a single-family detached or duplex development may not be ideal for a single-family attached or multiple-family development. For example, landscaping requirements would be different for single-family detached units compared to a large apartment complex. Additionally, it may be appropriate to modify the degree to which the elements are applied to single-family attached, triplex, quadriplex, and multiple-family developments.

In some cases developers may have new or innovative ideas and design methods that would result in great and livable neighborhoods without using all or some of the neighborhood elements. Additionally, strict adherence to these elements may not be feasible due to the small size of a development or other unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, the City should allow a Planned Development (PD) process to provide relief in specific cases but should ensure that quality development occurs.

Element 1: Preservation of Existing Site Features

Purpose

The preservation of existing site features, such as trees, topography, and soil, has a substantial influence on the quality of neighborhoods. Cedar Hill still has undeveloped areas that are heavily forested and that possess substantial slopes. These areas are uniquely Cedar Hill, help contribute to the identity of the community, and have existed in their current state for centuries. Over time, development has made these areas more scarce and has removed some of the City's natural beauty and stormwater management abilities. As a result, new subdivisions are sometimes devoid of trees. However, there is time to help ensure that future subdivisions preserve existing site features. New subdivisions can benefit by designing the following existing site features (discussed in this section) into their development and thus contribute to the quality of life.

Preserving existing site features can not only preserve the character that is unique to the City and state, but can provide the following benefits:

Example of a local neighborhood which preserved the trees and topography.

- **Increase Land Values per Lot** – Trees can be worth substantial monetary values per specimen.
- **Increase Aesthetic Value** – Homes with mature trees are generally considered more visually pleasing and desirable.
- **Air Pollution Reduction** – Trees help improve air quality by removing carbon dioxide and other pollutants and by producing oxygen.
- **Light Pollution Reduction** – Trees can serve as a buffer from light produced by street lights and buildings.
- **Noise Pollution Reduction** – Trees reduce noise from roadways and other sources by modifying humidity and climate, by absorbing sound, and by deflection and refraction.[1]
- **Prevention of Soil Erosion** – Trees function as both windbreaks and soil stabilizers, minimizing soil erosion.[2]
- **Energy Saving** – Research has shown that properly placed trees and landscaping can save 20 to 25 percent on energy use in the home.

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[1] American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service, Report Number 445, Tree Preservation Ordinance, Christopher J. Duerksen with Suzanne Richman, page 99.

[2] Ibid.

Preservation Recommendations

Cedar Hill has an abundance of existing site features which should be preserved during the development of future neighborhoods.

Trees should be preserved in accordance with the City's recently adopted Tree Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance # 2007-320).

Element 2: Pedestrian Connections

Purpose
Connectivity and the ability to travel from one area to another without the use of a vehicle is an important neighborhood element, as discussed in Chapter 5. Examples of connectivity would be a person being able to walk to a store, park, trail, school, or through an adjoining neighborhood. Neighborhood design should encourage people to be physically active in their community. With approximately 67 percent of Americans being overweight and 33 percent being obese[3] (increasing a person's risk of diabetes, heart disease, and other health issues), the neighborhood should be a place where people can get physical exercise in a comfortable and enjoyable environment. The physical health of individuals is an important part of neighborhood livability and sustainability.

Example of a pedestrian connection.

Note: This was a high scoring VCS image.

Connection Recommendations
All subdivisions should provide connections to existing or planned trails, parks, open space areas, and sidewalks. Connections should allow pedestrians to walk safely from the subdivision to surrounding trails, parks, open space areas, subdivisions, and non-residential developments.

1. <u>Shading and Landscaping Connections</u> – Connections should be landscaped or located such that a majority of the pedestrian way receives shade for much of the day.

2. <u>Future Connections</u> – When the development or subdivision is located adjacent to an undeveloped property, consideration should be made for future pedestrian access connections. A pedestrian access stub-out should be provided to the edge of the development or subdivision, adjacent to the undeveloped property.

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[3] BBC News, **O**besity 'Epidemic' Turns Global, OCT 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/7057951.stm

Element 3: Safe & Sustainable Street Environments

Purpose

Streets are one of the most common and frequently used public features in any urban environment. Every day people use streets to enter and leave their neighborhoods. The effect streets have on people can either be positive,

> *"…the streets and sidewalks are the social glue that binds the place together."*
>
> Hinshaw, Mark. "Great Neighborhoods." *Planning,* Jan 2008, page 7.

negative, or a mixture of both. Streets have a direct influence of the quality of life and sustainability of a neighborhood. Because of their importance in defining and creating public space, street design should not be based solely on the desire to move automobile traffic, especially in residential areas. Pedestrians and their relationship to the street also need to be considered. In addition, street design features that discourage speeding are an important element.

Recommendations for Traffic Calming Devices

The developer of a subdivision shall install at least three (3) of the following five (5) elements:

1. <u>Textured Pavements or Striping at Crosswalks</u> – Textured and colored pavement includes the use of stamped pavement or alternate paving materials to create an uneven surface for vehicles to traverse. They may be used to emphasize either an entire intersection or a pedestrian crossing, and are sometimes used along entire street blocks. Additionally, striping will clearly delineate the pedestrian pathway and serve to indicate to motorist that pedestrians may be near and to drive accordingly.

Note: This was a high scoring VCS image.

2. <u>Raised Crosswalks</u> – Raised crosswalks are speed tables outfitted with crosswalk markings and signage to channelize pedestrian crossings, providing pedestrians with a level street crossing. In addition, by raising the level of the crossing, pedestrians are more visible to approaching motorists.

3. <u>Traffic Circles</u> – Traffic circles are raised areas, placed in intersections, around which traffic circulates. Traffic already in the intersection has the right-of-way; drivers yield upon entering. Drivers must slow to a speed that allows them to comfortably maneuver around the circle. These are sometimes called intersection islands.

4. <u>Narrowings</u> – The width of the traffic lane is reduced by adding islands, re-striping the existing pavement, or adding a line of traffic buttons. If using paint or traffic buttons to narrow the travel lanes, one line is placed at the centerline of the street and another line near each edge. These markings have the effect of narrowing the travel lane, inducing drivers to slow down.

5. <u>Chicanes</u> – A chicane (pronounced chick - ANE) is a series of narrowings or curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other forming S-shaped curves. It may also be called a deviation, serpentine, reversing curve, twist, or staggering. These are installed away from intersections.

Recommendations for Sidewalks

Sidewalks and their design, notably their relationship to the street, can either encourage or discourage their usage. The design of sidewalks can either be inviting for a pedestrian by having tree cover and a landscape buffer from the street or not inviting by placing pedestrians in the direct sun and placing them closer to moving vehicles. It is recommended that sidewalks be incorporated in all new subdivisions, with the possible exception of larger rural lots (over 20,000 square feet in area) in which sidewalks are not generally needed.

Furthermore, sidewalks should be designed with a landscaped buffer and should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic. The photo to the right is an example of the ideal concept for sidewalks within new neighborhoods. As shown, the buffer helps shield pedestrians from traffic and the trees planted within the buffer provide shade for both pedestrians on the sidewalk and cars parked on the street. Also, the aesthetics of this sidewalk design would enhance almost any neighborhood.

Element 4: Residential Building Materials

Purpose

Quality building materials contribute to the longevity of neighborhoods. The impact materials have on the appearance of a community is substantial. When a neighborhood ages, the wear and tear on the materials becomes more and more noticeable. Since most homes in a neighborhood are built at relatively the same time, they typically have maintenance issues within a similar span. If poor materials are used in construction and all the homes age at the same pace, then a blighted neighborhood could result. It is the goal of the element, to help ensure that homes are built with quality materials which promote the livability and sustainability of the neighborhood.

Note: This was a high scoring VCS image.

Recommendations for Building Materials

Cedar Hill should maintain its current fire resistant construction standards. Currently, this ordinance requires 100 percent masonry on the front elevation and a minimum of 80 percent on the remaining exterior walls of a single-family detached home must be covered by brick. However, the City should consider expanding this interpretation to include the use of cementitious fiberboard and other innovative materials, as appropriate for neighborhoods. The photos below are examples of new residential construction, built with cementitious fiberboard, which exemplify the goals of quality, sustainable neighborhoods. The City should develop separate architectural standards if cementitious fiberboard is used. Windows, gables, and second stories should continue to be excluded when calculating the area required to be constructed of fire resistant materials.

Element 5: Anti-Monotony Standards

Purpose

A subdivision that is designed in a cookie-cutter format (where homes are virtually identical) lacks diversity and visual interest. Uniqueness of a neighborhood is developed by all the homes not being the exact same, in regards to building materials, size, floor plans, front facades, etc. In an effort to help create ownership, neighborhood pride, and encourage long term commitment, homes should be individual, definable and not just replicas of the adjacent homes.

Anti-Monotony Recommendations

The City should adopt the following recommendations to encourage livable and sustainable neighborhoods and require a builder of a subdivision to use a combination of the following elements:

1. Minimum Roof Pitch (Mandatory for all homes)
   a. A steeper minimum roof pitch should be required for each primary structure (e.g., 6:12 roof pitch or steeper).

2. Front Facades or Elevations
   a. Require no single front facade of a home be duplicated within a specific amount of lots or tracts (e.g., no repeat of a façade or main material color within 4, 5, or 6 lots).

3. Wall Massing
   a. Require there should be no uninterrupted wall length for a specified distance on any façade of the dwelling unit (e.g., not longer than 5, 10, or 15 feet before there is a deliberate change in the direction of the wall).

4. Architectural Relief Required
   a. Where a primary structure exceeds one story:
      i. No single building elevation or design should provide for more than one (1) side that contains fewer than four (4) outside corners.
      ii. The front elevation or design of a primary structure must contain a minimum of four (4) outside corners.

5. Varying Front Yards
   a. Variations of the front yard setback should be allowed such that a maximum percentage of the platted lots are permitted to decrease their setback a maximum of a specific distance.

6. Covered Front Porch
   a. Covered Porch Required

         i. No less than a specified percentage of the single-family residential primary structures in any platted block should contain a front covered porch that is permanently attached to and an integral part of the primary structure constructed of like and similar materials to those of the primary structure.

  b. Front Yard Encroachment

         i. The front porch can be allowed to encroach into the minimum required front yard setback (not to exceed 5 feet).

  c. Minimum Dimensions

         i. Each covered front porch should include a minimum square foot area and have a minimum depth from the primary structure.

Element 6: Provision of Garages

Purpose
The placement of garages in a neighborhood can have a substantial impact on a neighborhood's visual appearance. If alleys are not used in the design of a neighborhood, then driveways must be attached to the street. As a result, little space is available for on-street parking in small lot subdivisions. Typically, when no alley is present, a common design layout is for the garage to be placed facing the street. This design layout generally establishes the garage as the most dominant visual feature from the view of the street. While this layout is cheaper to construct (less concrete is required for paving) it generally does not contribute to the visual appeal of a neighborhood and does not conform to the image of quality neighborhoods established in the goals and objectives. Also, there is less space available for off and on-street parking.

Recommendations for Front Entry Garage Design
In cases where residential driveways and garages are connected to the street it is recommended that one of the following designed be applied:

1. The driveway be designed in a letter "J" formation and connected to a garage;
2. The driveway is designed straight to a garage that is set back from 15 feet from the front building line; or
3. The driveway is designed and connected to a detached garage and is located in the rear yard of the property.

Examples illustrating various residential garage configurations.

These options will allow for the garage to be placed either in front, at the side, or in the rear of the home. The garage set back, if using a straight front entry design, will provide more space for parking. All options will enhance the view of the home from the street because the garage door will not be the dominant feature of the front building façade and thus will help maintain a high level of visual appeal. Notably, there is one possible exception to this recommendation. Due to the fact that larger lots have homes on greater setback from the streets, these recommendations may not be suitable and possibly should not be required for large lot homes.

Element 7: Provision of Residential Landscaping

Purpose
As discussed in Element 1, trees have a substantial impact on the quality of life within a neighborhood. The benefits of having trees are numerous. The improved aesthetics and increased land value for properties with trees is well documented. Trees are a long term investment and once planted will help a neighborhood age well by creating a tree canopy and providing a stately appearance.

Recommendations for Residential Landscaping
Tree planting is the foremost recommendation for residential landscaping. Trees should be planted soon after home sites are finished. It is recommended that one or two large shade trees be required in the front yard of a new home. Trees in the front yard should generally take precedence over trees in back and side yards, due to their impact of the neighborhood's appearance. If trees are preserved or currently exist on residential lots, then these trees would fulfill the requirements of this element.

Also, the City should investigate ways to minimize the visual impact of utilities, such as encouraging electric companies to locate transformers in more inconspicuous areas.

Example illustrating the impact of trees in residential front yards.

Element 8: Provision of Subdivision Entryways

Purpose

Entryways into neighborhoods improve neighborhood identity, image, and character. These features can serve as markers for the community and allow residents and visitors to clearly identify subdivisions. A greater sense of place can also be created for neighborhoods using entryways. Additionally, the image and impression of the area is generally enhanced by the architectural and landscaping elements typically found in entryways.

Note: This was a high scoring VCS image.

Recommendations for Entryways

Currently, Cedar Hill does not have requirements concerning subdivision entryways. The City should consider establishing standards for entryway signs that would be used if the development community decides to construct such an entryways. While entryways may not be required, establishing standards by which they could be erected would ensure that a high standard would be met. Either a neighborhood (subdivision) entryway freestanding sign or a wall plaque attached to a screening wall at the main entryway into the neighborhood should be allowed and encouraged. Standards for the perpetual maintenance of the entryways, which should be the responsibility of a homeowners association, should also be outlined.

INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT

Infill and redevelopment projects are appropriate and likely to occur in the Old Downtown area, near and around the existing City Hall facility. With the opening of the new Government Center, reuse of the old City Hall as family style restaurant, and long-range plans for a commuter transit station, infill and redevelopment of housing in the area will be necessary for vitality and sustainability.

Purpose

Infill and redevelopment of existing areas can assist in revitalizing older areas of the City. The promotion of infill housing would be very positive for the City of Cedar Hill inasmuch as it can:

> *"Aging housing stock needs reinvestment from time to time, or it will deteriorate further and ultimately turn to blight."*
>
> Hudnut, William. Halfway to Everywhere. ULI, 2003, p 239.

- Reduce the City's infrastructure costs (it is less expensive for the City to provide a connection to an existing line in a developed area, than to construct a line for an individual user).
- Provides a catalyst for the redevelopment of aging and/or deteriorating areas (such as those identified in blue and red on the *Housing Conditions Map*, in Chapter 1).
- Allow for the revitalization of the Old Downtown, while maintaining the integrity of the historic character.

Developing on a vacant or redeveloped lot may be perceived as having an increased risk, particularly early on in long-term redevelopment projects. However, the City can assist in making infill development or redevelopment an increasingly attractive option for potential homebuilders by rezoning adjacent, non-residential parcels to protect residential development from inappropriate commercial land use and by waiving development-related fees.

Recommendations

The City should identify the specific Old Downtown area which is appropriate for and in need of infill and redevelopment projects. Corresponding policies should be established for the identified area. Due to the variation in character, historic nature, topography, and style of different parts of the City, a proposal for infill or redevelopment outside of the Old Downtown area would need to have individualized polices to serve as a guideline as to what is appropriate in that respective area. It may also be beneficial to streamline the regulatory process of development in the Old Downtown are where vacant lots are available for infill development and that have ready access to infrastructure.

It is recommended that the City should promote new home construction to complement the character of the existing neighborhood.

Example of new residential construction which may be appropriate for infill and redevelopment.

ASSISTANCE & EDUCATION

Much of the discussion in this chapter is specifically aimed at a relatively small percentage of housing in the City: new construction, either in a new development or as infill. This section of the chapter applies to all housing and includes recommendations for improving housing and neighborhoods, as well as assisting homeowners across the City.

Purpose

Housing and neighborhoods define much of a City's character and perception by visitors. It seems highly unlikely that anyone prefers neighborhood blight and substandard housing conditions, but these conditions exist, as least to some degree, in most communities. So, why is this? Deteriorating housing and neighborhoods can be attributed to several common factors including:

- Elderly or disabled residents who are not physically capable of making repairs and doing yard work, etc;
- Economically distressed residents who do not have the resources to invest in their homes and neighborhoods; and
- High rental turnover rates and absentee landlords, who have little or no incentive to invest in the property.

Code Enforcement

The City's most direct and effective method of preventing declining housing and deteriorating neighborhoods is through the use of their Code Enforcement program. Code Enforcement officers notify residents when they are in violation of a City ordinance and can issue citations for non-compliance. Examples of common violations are high grass and weeds, junk vehicles, trash and debris, and non-conforming fences.

The goal of the program is "to encourage voluntary compliance and avoid punitive actions…" Cedar Hill's Code Enforcement program adheres to the theory that "a helping hand approach is more successful than the punitive approach as citizens may not be aware that their actions are in violation of City ordinances." By taking this approach, the City is making a cooperative effort with citizens to improve the quality of housing and neighborhoods throughout the community.

> *"Ideally, the code enforcement program should assist property owners in maintaining or upgrading their housing. To this end, it should provide information on loans and advice on renovation and maintenance. Inspectors should be trained to provide some rehabilitation counseling to property owners, and more complete counseling follow-up services should be part of the program."*
>
> Downs, Anthony. Neighborhoods and Urban Development. Brookings, 1981, p 164-5.

Community Programs

In addition to Code Enforcement, community programs, organized at the City or neighborhood level, can be an effective means of improving areas within the community. Such programs can be set up through volunteers with local churches, civic organizations, or school groups. Minor repairs such as painting, fixing fencing, and removing weeds are tasks which can be easily completed by volunteers in an afternoon, but which would be impossible for elderly or disabled residents to accomplish on their own. By involving volunteer groups and improving a neighborhood or even a single house, people become more invested in their community.

Citizens of Tampa participate in a citywide "Paint Your Heart Out" program.

www.paintyourheartouttampa.com

Homeowner Education

While homeownership is the quintessential American dream, with the current mortgage/credit crisis, buying and keeping a home is becoming increasingly difficult. According to a private economist "…the number of [nationwide] foreclosures could soar to one million this year and next, about double the 2007 rate."[4] While foreclosures are obviously detrimental for homeowners, they are equally harmful for cities. Therefore, it is in the City's best interest to set up programs and classes to educate homeowners and potential homeowners about the risks and responsibilities associated with home buying.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Code Enforcement efforts should continue with their supportive approach to identifying and mitigating code violations. With an ever increasing population, the addition of extra Code Enforcement officers should be considered. In addition, the City should continue to support, encourage, and promote various assistance programs to improve housing and neighborhoods throughout the City. This will not only benefit homeowners, but will also serve to help relieve the burden on the Code Enforcement program, and allow officers to be more proactive.

It is also recommended that the City consider Homeowner Education programs to educate the citizens of Cedar Hill about the process of buying a home. This effort should be done in coordination with other stakeholders in the community.

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[4] "New Program Aims to Forestall Foreclosures." Associated Press, 12 Feb 2008. www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23118645/

IN CONCLUSION

The table below summarizes the recommendations from this *Housing & Neighborhoods* chapter. In addition, a reference to the corresponding goals and objectives are included with each recommendation.

Summary of Recommendations	
Model Neighborhood Elements	Goal /Objective
Neighborhoods should be designed and maintained in accordance to the characteristics of sustainability.	5.2; 7.3
1: Preservation of Existing Site Features Future neighborhood development should preserve Cedar Hill's unique characteristics and features, including topography, soils, and trees.	4.2; 5.6
2: Pedestrian Connections Connections should be provided to allow residents to walk between residential subdivisions, trails, parks, open space, and non-residential developments.	7.2a; 7.3a; 7.3b
3: Safe & Sustainable Street Environments Subdivisions should have at least three of the following street elements: textured pavements or striping at crosswalks, raised crosswalks, traffic circles, narrowings, or chicanes. Sidewalks should also be included in all subdivisions, and should be designed with a landscaped buffer and should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic.	5.1
4: Residential Building Materials The City's current fire resistant construction standards should be maintained, but an interpretive expansion to include the use of cementitious fiberboard should be considered.	7.1e
5: Anti-Monotony Standards Residential developers should be required to install a percentage of at least five of the following elements into all new subdivisions: minimum roof pitch, front facades or elevations, wall massing, architectural relief, varying front yards, and covered front porches.	7.1a
6: Provision of Garages Front entry garages and driveways should be configured in one of the following designs: a letter "J" formation, set back 15 feet from the front building line, or detached from the dwelling unit and located in the rear of the property.	7.1e
7: Provision of Residential Landscaping One or two large shade trees should be required in the front of all new homes.	7.1
8: Provision of Subdivision Entryways Standards for entryway signs should be established.	5.1d

Summary of Recommendations	
Infill & Redevelopment	
Policies should be established for specific areas the City identifies as appropriate for infill and redevelopment projects.	7.3; 7.4
Infill construction should complement and be similar to the existing neighborhood.	7.4a
Assistance & Education	
Code Enforcement should continue with its approach, but should also consider adding more officers.	7.3d
Assistance programs should be supported, encouraged, and promoted as a method to improve homes and neighborhoods throughout the community.	7.3c
The implementation of Homeowner Education programs should be considered in coordination with other community stakeholders.	7.3; 7.3d