

Chapter 4.12 Registered Neighborhood Associations

Article I. In General

Section 4-12-1. Purpose

The purpose of the Registered Neighborhood Association program is to assist Amarillo’s redeveloping neighborhoods by formally recognizing the efforts of associations that are voluntarily organizing and actively engaged in improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

A Registered Neighborhood Association program will:

- A. Formalize and clarify the ongoing implementation partnership between the City and neighborhoods with adopted plans;
- B. Assist other older neighborhoods without adopted plans organize and become more civically engaged;
- C. Increase access to the various departments of the City for neighborhood associations and to improve the flow of information between these groups and the City;
- D. Provide a forum for collaboration among neighborhoods to address common challenges; and,
- E. Develop more specialized resources and programs to enhance the livability of Amarillo neighborhoods.

Section 4-12-2. Definitions

“Adopted Neighborhood Plan” refers to those neighborhoods that coordinated with the City to create a Neighborhood Plan, which was adopted as an amendment to the Amarillo Comprehensive Plan by the City Council.

“Neighborhood” means a geographically contiguous area within a designated boundary which is characterized by a substantial commonality of interest and identification as a neighborhood separate from others within the City of Amarillo.

“Neighborhood Association” means a voluntary association formed by persons within a neighborhood for the purpose of considering and acting on issues affecting the livability and quality of life in their neighborhood. An association is open to all members within the boundaries of the neighborhood without bias and has as a regulated and predictable meeting pattern which is advertised in an appropriate manner to all members of the community. An association must have an organizing document ratified by the group.

“Neighborhood Planning Initiative” means the interlocal agreement created in 2016 between the City and Potter County to develop neighborhood plans as a revitalization tool for Amarillo’s distressed neighborhoods.

“Homeowners Association” means a mandatory organization in a subdivision, planned community or condominium that makes and enforces rules for the properties and their residents. Those who purchase property within an HOA's jurisdiction automatically become members and are required to pay dues and follow the codes, covenants and restrictions (CC&Rs) which are recorded legal documents in the county records.

“Public Improvement District” is a designated area where property owners elect to pay a special assessment for improvements and services within that area. The services must benefit the PID area only and are supplemental to any City service. PIDs are created by the authority of Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Code.

Section 4-12-3. Relation to the Neighborhood Planning Initiative

Registration is a requirement for ongoing implementation assistance for those neighborhoods with plans developed as part of the Neighborhood Planning Initiative and/or adopted as amendments to the Amarillo Comprehensive Plan, ensuring an ongoing mutual commitment on behalf of the City and the neighborhood to the plan goals.

Section 4-12-4. Relation to Mandatory Homeowners' Associations and Public Improvement Districts

Homeowners Associations and Public Improvement Districts are not eligible for participation.

Article II. Eligibility and Registration

Section 4-12-5. Eligibility.

To be eligible to register as provided in this article, neighborhood organizations shall meet the following eligibility standards:

- A. They shall maintain membership which is open to any person who lives, rents, or owns any real property within the recognized boundaries of the neighborhood association. Other individuals or organizations may be members as further set forth in each neighborhood association's bylaws. The membership of the association must be comprised of at least 15 members and the association must hold one general membership meeting annually.
- B. They shall be an organized entity as recognized by filing Article of Incorporation with State of Texas and adopt written bylaws or rules and regulations that contain provisions that address the following subject matters:
 1. Statement of purpose;
 2. Description of the authority and duties of the board leadership;
 3. Method of election of officers and description of officer terms;
 4. Stated duties and responsibilities of officers;
 5. Establishment of a quorum number for voting purposes;
 6. Definition of membership; and

7. Statement of non-discrimination.

- C. They shall have clearly stated boundaries in their bylaws. The boundary of a neighborhood association shall be determined in one of two ways: 1) identified by the adopted Neighborhood Plan; or, 2) drawn by the association membership after consultation with City staff. The boundary shall be reasonable and representative of physical and social characteristics of the neighborhood; represent a geographic area that is no smaller than four square blocks; and, have parameters that correspond with street center lines and property parcels lines.
- D. They shall prepare and utilize an annual action plan to guide their work.
- E. They shall not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, income, or political affiliation in any of its policies, recommendations or actions.

Section 4-12-6. Registration

A. Any neighborhood association may register by filing with the Planning and Development Services Department the following information:

- 1. Official name;
- 2. Current boundary;
- 3. The name, email, mailing address, and telephone number of the primary contact whom the City or a member of the public may contact;
- 4. A roster for the board of directors including officer positions, and the schedule for electing directors and officers;
- 5. The number of persons the organization represents and number of dues paying members, if any;
- 6. Methods used to communicate with members and the neighborhood;
- 7. A copy of the organization's articles of incorporation and/or bylaws;
- 8. A copy of the current annual action plan; and,
- 9. The time and place of the meetings.

B. A new and/or previously unregistered neighborhood association may register with Planning and Development Services Department on a year-round basis.

C. There is no fee for registration.

C. If the information filed by the neighborhood association is incomplete, staff will notify the neighborhood contact within 14 days. If no revisions are submitted, the filing will be considered incomplete and the neighborhood association will not be registered.

D. For complete submittals staff will, within 14 days, take one of the following actions:

- 1. Extend official notice of registration, list the association on the City's website, and prepare a resolution for City Council approval; or
- 2. Deny registration by providing written notice of the denial and including in the notice the reason for denial. Neighborhood Associations may re-apply for registration the following year.

Section 4-12-7. Annual Renewal

Registered Neighborhood Associations shall file the following renewal materials by March 15 each year to maintain their status:

1. Number of members for the previous year;
2. The name, email, mailing address, and telephone number of the primary contact whom the City or a member of the public may contact;
3. Board of directors roster including current officers;
4. Date, time and location of board and general membership meetings;
5. Agenda and minutes of the required annual general membership meeting;
6. Current bylaws or rules and regulation, if such bylaws or rules and regulation have been amended in the prior year; and,
7. Current annual work plan.

Section 4-12-8. De-listing and Re-listing

Any Registered Neighborhood Association which does not meet, or ceases to meet, the eligibility standards of section V, the responsibilities of section X, or which does not apply for renewal as required by section VII. shall be considered non-compliant. Non-compliant neighborhoods shall receive a written letter stating necessary steps to achieve compliance. If those steps are not achieved within three months, neighborhoods will be de-listed and benefits will be de-activated for a period of one year. After one year of non-compliance, neighborhoods will be recommended for removal from the list of Registered Neighborhoods by the City Council.

Article III. Duties, Benefits and Responsibilities

Section 4-12-9. Duties of Planning and Development Services

Planning and Development Services shall have the following duties in connection with all Registered Neighborhood Associations:

- A. To maintain a current map of the boundaries and a current list of the official names, boundaries, officers, and primary contact persons of all Registered Neighborhood Associations on the City's official website;
- B. To provide regular email communication about City-related events, policies, land use proposals, and projects to the officers of each Registered Neighborhood Association;
- C. To notify all Registered Neighborhood Associations each January of their requirement to re-register by March 15;
- D. To collaborate with neighborhood leadership during development of the annual action plans for city-related projects including cost estimating, scheduling, and other feasibility items.
- E. To administer Registered Neighborhood Association benefits as listed in Section XI.

Section 4-12-10. Registered Neighborhood Association Responsibilities

Registered Neighborhood Associations commit to the following responsibilities:

- A. Organize and undertake activities, projects, or programs which foster a sense of community and improve livability within the neighborhood;
- B. Work in collaboration with city staff and other partners to mutually further the goals of adopted neighborhood plans;
- C. Comply with their adopted bylaws or rules and regulations.
- D. Establish and utilize an orderly and democratic process for making representative decisions;
- E. Establish and follow a clear method for reporting to the City actions which accurately reflect the Registered Neighborhood Association's position on a matter that is the subject of a pending City agenda item and identify whether the decision was reached by the board, a survey of the general membership, or by a vote at a general membership meeting, and the vote for and against the position.

Section 4-12-11. Benefits Available to Registered Neighborhood Associations

Registered Neighborhood Associations receive the following benefits:

- A. **Communication** – Direct communication with a single point of contact (neighborhood planning liaison in the Planning and Development Services Department) for questions and concerns regarding city services, capital improvement projects, land use applications, and other program and policies impacting the neighborhood;
- B. **Plan Implementation** – Project management and technical assistance for implementation of adopted neighborhood plans;
- C. **Toolkit** – Access to resources including sample bylaws, membership forms, event how-to guides, etc.;
- D. **Training** – Coordinated capacity-building trainings and workshops for civic engagement, non-profit management, and neighborhood livability including opportunities for neighborhood roundtables;
- E. **Data** – Annual Neighborhood Indicators dataset;
- F. **Block Parties** – Fee waiver for one neighborhood block party annually;
- G. **Neighborhood Signs** – Eligibility to participate in the City's street sign topper program and install neighborhood welcome signs;
- H. **Traffic Calming** – Eligibility to participate in the City's petition process for neighborhood traffic calming solutions; and,
- I. **Funding** – Other funding opportunities as they become available.

Article IV. Guidelines for Registered Neighborhood Association Benefits

Section 4-12-12. Block Party Guidelines for Registered Neighborhood Associations

Block parties allow neighbors to get to know one another and share information which helps create stronger, safer, more livable neighborhoods. Registered neighborhoods are eligible for one block party fee waiver per calendar year.

A. How to Apply – Neighborhood associations that want to host a neighborhood block party can apply directly through the Traffic Engineering Department. Each event requires the submittal of both a Special Event Application and a Block Party Application on the City's website at least 14 days prior to the event. At the time of application, neighborhoods must indicate they are registered and utilizing the Block Party Fee Waiver benefit.

After the permit is approved, Traffic Engineering will send a traffic control drawing and instructions on picking up the traffic control equipment.

B. Guidelines

1. Block parties are small, neighborhood-only (200 people or less) social gatherings that typically require the closure of a single block.
2. The City will waive the permit fee and provide barricades and/or cones for street closures related to approved block parties that are consistent with the provisions in the City's Transportation Code (Chapter 16-3 Traffic – Article VI, Special Street Uses). A valid ID and \$100 deposit (cash or check only) is required when picking up the traffic control equipment.
3. This type of street closure is not permitted for events that are open to the general public.
4. Signatures for the street closure are required. All property owners on both sides of the street to be closed are required to sign the form and 70% must be in agreement to close the block.
5. The City reserves the right to approve which street may be closed and the placement of barricades, tables, and other items in the street.
6. The City does not require a Certificate of Liability Insurance form for neighborhood block parties.

Section 4-12-13. Sign Topper Guidelines for Registered Neighborhood Associations

The purpose of the Sign Topper Program is to help neighborhoods be recognized for their unique character, increase the visibility of a neighborhood to non-residents, encourage a sense of belonging and neighborhood pride, and complement other neighborhood identity efforts.

A. How to Apply – Neighborhood associations that want to participate in this program must submit a *Sign Topper Application* to Transportation Division. Neighborhoods are encouraged to consult with Planning and Development Services staff about the process before submitting an application. The application must include a sketch of the proposed topper as well as a location map. Sign toppers will not be manufactured until their application is approved by the Transportation Division.

B. Design/Manufacturing Guidelines

1. Sign toppers must adhere to the Design and Manufacturing Guidelines established by the City.
2. All design and manufacturing costs are the responsibility of the neighborhood.

3. The neighborhood will also be required to design and manufacture an overage of 10% for future damages.
4. Neighborhoods will be provided one sample sign at no cost for final approval. Additional sample signs may be ordered at Cost to the neighborhood.

C. Installation Guidelines

1. Only the City's Transportation Division is authorized to install sign toppers.
2. All installation costs are the responsibility of the registered neighborhood.
3. Prior to requesting installation, a registered neighborhood must provide the following information: (1) location map identifying where the toppers will be installed and (2) name of all streets for which the toppers will be parallel to.
4. Sign toppers will be discouraged from installation on an existing Stop Sign and would need to be added with street markers on a separate pole and corner.

D. Maintenance Guidelines

1. Only the City's Transportation Division is authorized to remove, repair or replace sign toppers.
2. The City of Amarillo reserves the right to remove any sign topper that has become unsightly without replacing the sign.

Section 4-12-14. Neighborhood Welcome Sign Guidelines for Registered Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood welcome signs reinforce the sense of identity and pride within neighborhoods. These are signs typically installed along the perimeter at major entry points into the neighborhood.

A. How to Apply – Neighborhood Associations that want to install welcome signs need to prepare a written proposal to Traffic Engineering and Planning and Development Services. The proposal must include a sketch of the proposed welcome sign as well as a location map.

B. Guidelines

1. Traffic Engineering reviews the sign design and proposed locations.
2. Once the design and location have been approved, the neighborhood association can either work with an independent contractor or the City to obtain bids for sign fabrication and installation. Traffic Engineering must approve the final specifications presented by an independent contractor.
3. Signs shall be installed at various entry points along the arterial streets which form the perimeter of the neighborhood.
4. Signs will not be installed at interior locations except along a major arterial street which bisects a neighborhood.
5. Signs must be fabricated to meet design and manufacturing standards for installation in the public right-of-way.
6. Sign dimensions can be no larger than _____.
7. Signs must be located at a minimum 35' from the intersection.

8. Neighborhoods are responsible for the cost of the signs including installation and replacement of missing or vandalized signs.
9. Business names may be included on signage, but shall be identified as sponsors.

Section 4-12-15. Pedestrian Safety Petition Process Guidelines for Registered Neighborhood Associations

The Neighborhood Pedestrian Safety Petition Program provides a method whereby safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists can be improved through different methods of traffic calming and/or installation of signage or devices to encourage and promote a more user-friendly roadway. Registered neighborhoods may submit recommendations for traffic calming projects for review by the City of Amarillo's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Committee; however, neighborhoods must demonstrate that a majority of the property owners, business owners, and tenants in the project area are in support of the recommendations. The Neighborhood Pedestrian Safety Petition Program is administered by the Public Works Department.

A. How to Apply – Neighborhood associations interested in traffic calming devices or other pedestrian safety enhancements must begin with a property owner petition. The neighborhood association should designate a petition sponsor to manage the process. The sponsor will be provided with the petition forms and a list of all of property owners in the project area by the City's Public Works Department.

B. Guidelines

1. Petitions may be circulated only within the neighborhood(s) defined boundary affected by the application. Signatures should be obtained only from stakeholders who include: homeowners, tenants, and business owners who reside or have businesses in the specific area affected by the petition. One valid signature is allowed per household and one valid signature is allowed per business.
2. All persons signing a petition must be at least 18 years of age.
3. The sponsor must demonstrate that a good-faith effort was made to petition all residences and businesses in the designated project area. 66.7% (2/3) of all residences and businesses within the project area must indicate support for the project through the petition process.
4. Individuals may only sign once in support or opposition of a project.
5. Should the petition meet all of the requirements and 66.7% of the signatures for the project are validated, the City of Amarillo will schedule the item to be placed on the agenda for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee for review and recommended action. The applicant will be notified of the meeting date, time and location and will be invited to attend the meeting to present the petition.
6. Upon acceptance of the project, the City of Amarillo will begin evaluation of all assets required to complete the project and will seek a funding mechanism for current project and future maintenance of the project. If no funding is available, private funding or partnerships will be evaluated for possible implementation. If funding cannot be resolved, the project will be placed within a priority list of projects and submitted for future funding and no further processing will take place. If funding is available, the project will proceed through the standard recommendation process by the Traffic Advisory Board for consideration by City Council.