



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Department of Development Services

DCM: Cassey Ogden

DATE: June 23, 2025

SUBJECT

Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding current and new public engagement initiatives.

BACKGROUND

On December 9, 2024, the Development Code Review Committee (DCRC) held a discussion regarding prioritizing future potential Denton Development Code (DDC) amendment topics and similarly provided direction to staff regarding receiving an overview of public engagement practices. At this work session, staff will present information for discussion related to current and new public engagement initiatives.

The Denton Development Code (DDC) Subsection 2.4.3B (Citizen Participation) provides for a citizen participation process that recommends applicants prepare and execute a Citizen Participation Plan and submit a Citizen Participation Report prior to submitting applications listed in Table 2.2-A Summary of Development Review Procedures. The current citizen participation also encourages applicants to contact property owners within 200 feet of the subject property and residents within 500 feet of the subject party to discuss the project and hold at least two neighborhood meetings. During the past six years, staff has received only one Citizen Participation Report and no Citizen Participation Plans associated with development applications. Instead, staff typically attends neighborhood meetings for zoning entitlement projects to understand community concerns.

While DDC Subsection 2.3.3B (Planning and Zoning Commission, Operational Procedures) recommends neighborhood engagement for development projects, there are currently no built-in incentives for applicants (developers and property owners) to participate, nor any assurances that neighborhood engagement and applicant concessions will lead to project support. Given that the 2019 DDC has been in effect for six years and considering the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council's continued emphasis on resident engagement, about a year ago, staff proposed revising this DDC section. The aim was to offer development process incentives (community engagement incentives) for applicants who actively engage with nearby residential neighborhoods for projects requiring zoning entitlements (e.g., zoning changes, specific use permits).

The proposed community engagement incentives were presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission during two work sessions in May and June 2024. After substantial discussion, the Commission decided not to proceed with the incentives at that time. They concluded sufficient neighborhood engagement was already occurring between applicants seeking zoning entitlements and nearby affected residents, and expressed concerns regarding the City's enforcement ability of the required memorandum of understanding between the applicant and neighborhood to receive the incentives. As such, staff continues to advise applicants of the importance of engaging with nearby residents prior to submission of zoning entitlement

applications and scheduling of public hearings, since that is the expectation of the Commission and City Council.

Understanding resident engagement is a top City priority and to encourage increased neighborhood engagement City-wide, staff has created a neighborhood planning engagement program and several new public engagement initiatives have been completed or are in progress:

- A new, “Successful Community Engagement” webpage is available on the City’s website, offering best practices and tips for applicants to improve communication with neighborhoods.
- Targeted neighborhood engagement initiatives are underway. These include but are not limited to: revamping the Community Leader Registration Map and Form, developing a program to assist residents with forming neighborhood groups, and planning the creation of a cross-department community outreach team.

Longer term, staff is interested in expanding the City’s neighborhood planning engagement program as additional resources become available, building upon past activities that have been successful in Denton as well as other communities.

EXHIBITS

1. Exhibit 1 - Agenda Information Sheet

Respectfully submitted:
Tina Firgens, AICP
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