



CITY of BOISE
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING



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BOISE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN FRAMEWORK

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The Neighborhood Planning Program was developed to serve community members and organized neighborhood associations by identifying and advancing neighborhood priorities through planning, regular engagement, and the alignment of resources.

The development of Neighborhood Plans is one of the fundamental efforts of Boise's Energize Our Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Planning programs. A Neighborhood Plan is the result of the collaborative effort between the City Planning and Development Services Department, other city departments, outside agencies, and neighborhood stakeholders to document existing conditions and identify future needs of a neighborhood.

Since 2011, six neighborhoods have adopted or are in the process of developing a neighborhood plan. Another 12 neighborhoods have a plan that was completed within the last 15 years.

WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN?

A Neighborhood Plan is a long-term vision document that is reviewed and adopted by City Council to supplement *Blueprint Boise*, the city's Comprehensive Plan. A neighborhood plan is intended to guide change for 10 to 15 years and includes a vision, a list of goals, and implementation strategies. The neighborhood planning process engages the entire community, including residents, neighborhood association members and leadership, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and many others to develop a shared plan for the future of the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING is fundamental to the city's vision to be the most livable city in the country. Through the year-long planning process, neighbors and the city will be engaged in:

IDENTIFYING A FUTURE VISION for the community and then developing strategies and tools for achieving that vision.

MAKING DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS for land use changes and future neighborhood investment to help ensure neighborhoods grow as envisioned by the plan.

PROVIDING A LEVEL OF ANALYSIS, DETAIL, AND GUIDANCE on issues affecting local areas that citywide plans cannot.

IMPACT ON CITY POLICY

A neighborhood plan in and of itself is not a binding ordinance or agreement. It is a set of general principals and recommendations for actions. A good plan will be explicit about the steps necessary to implement its goals and the people who must be involved to make it happen. Neighborhood plans get implemented when neighbors, with assistance from city (and potentially other public agency) staff, work to get the plan's recommendations acted upon by the appropriate parties.

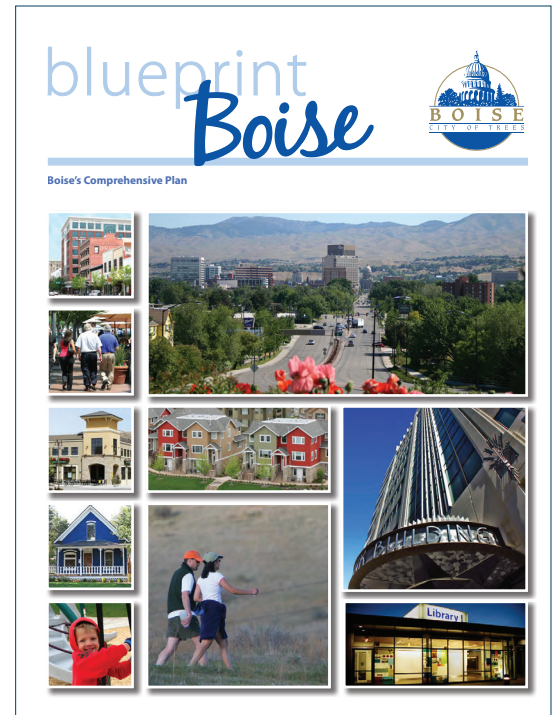
RELATIONSHIP TO BLUEPRINT BOISE AND OTHER CITY INITIATIVES/PLANS

Blueprint Boise, Boise City's Comprehensive Plan, was adopted in 2011 and remains one of the city's primary planning documents. Among other things, *Blueprint Boise* calls for compact, balanced land use that accommodates future growth while supporting multi-modal transportation and sustainability. All neighborhood plans must comply with *Blueprint Boise* and are adopted by reference. However, where *Blueprint Boise* provides high-level citywide guidance, neighborhood plans provide localized guidance.

Neighborhood planning is an integral component of the Energize Our Neighborhoods (EON) program's effort to make all Boise neighborhoods unique and desirable. Throughout the neighborhood planning process, communities collaborate with staff to build capacity and identify livability improvements that can be implemented with further assistance from the EON Team, through the Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP), or with ACT (Activate, Connect, Transform) Mini-Grants.

Neighborhood plans are also the opportunity for the City and neighborhoods to further explore and refine city and agency plans, and policies and initiatives at a smaller scale. Effective neighborhood plans provide context-sensitive implementation strategies for such plans.

Throughout the neighborhood planning process, the project team will coordinate with various City departments and partner agencies to review other plans and policies, including City of Boise Parks and Recreation Master Plans, Arts & History Cultural Plans, and the Ada County Highway District Neighborhood Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans.



THE PURPOSE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

A neighborhood plan provides an articulated, shared vision to guide decision-making that provides multiple benefits to the neighborhood and the city.

1. A Neighborhood Plan provides an important communication link between neighborhood members and city government, helping each party understand the neighborhood's current conditions, needs, and desired projects.
2. City planners, developers, elected and appointed officials, and neighborhood associations can use the Plan to determine if development proposals and land use changes are in accordance with the neighborhood's core values and vision for the future.
3. Neighborhood Associations can use the Plan as a project list to the prioritize project applications for Neighborhood Investment Program funding, ACT Mini-Grants, and other funding opportunities.

BACKGROUND

4. Neighbors, elected officials, and staff can use the Plan as a framework to guide their efforts and track progress towards the neighborhood's vision.
5. The Plan can serve as an informational tool, providing guidance to those deciding whether they want to live or invest in the neighborhood.

If the planning process has been truly inclusive, there are many additional benefits of neighborhood planning including increased neighbor involvement, the development of neighborhood leadership, and an increase in knowledge for the neighborhood of government decision-making processes and procedures.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CORE VALUES

The Neighborhood Plan process has three core values: intentional, creative, and inclusive. These values are the foundation of the Neighborhood Plan Framework and inform how City staff and neighborhood associations prioritize and develop neighborhood plans. These values will remain constant and guide how plans are completed in the years to come.

INTENTIONAL	The planning process will be clear, and participants will know what to expect. Staff and neighborhood members will use data and community feedback to pinpoint and address community assets and needs. The planning process will target those issues most relevant to the community, and that can be effectively addressed through neighborhood planning.
CREATIVE	Neighborhood Plans will develop customized, unique, and creative recommendations for each planning area. City staff and neighborhood members will seek to find innovative solutions to improve the quality of life for the community while balancing the need to achieve citywide goals. In order to support creative solutions, neighborhood members and city staff will work as partners to improve the neighborhood and the city together.
INCLUSIVE	The planning process will treat neighborhoods fairly and promote balanced, equitable outcomes. The process will include diverse perspectives and provide multiple ways for community members to be involved. Planning information will be accessible and transparent. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to shape content as it is developed and will be informed in a timely manner of all opportunities to participate.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN INDICATORS

To help prioritize, the city developed neighborhood indicators of planning need. These indicators help to establish which neighborhoods within the city have the greatest need for a plan, relative to other neighborhoods in Boise. This information is used to determine which neighborhoods should be prioritized in the annual Neighborhood Planning Program workplan and through the allocation of Neighborhood Investment Program funding. These indicators are one tool for evaluating which neighborhoods have the greatest planning need, but other factors are considered when developing the workplan and allocating NIP funding.

It is anticipated that many of the indicators can be repurposed, or new ones added, to measure neighborhood progress over time and to track progress toward achieving specific plan goals.

The indicators are organized by five themes, as follows:



LIVABILITY

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE: Measures the percentage of neighborhood area within 10-minute walk of a park or open space access point. Lack of access indicates greater need for a plan.

SIDEWALK COVERAGE: Indicates the amount of the neighborhood that has safe places for neighbors aged 8-80 to walk. Lower percentage of sidewalk coverage indicate greater need for a plan.

MILES OF MISSING SIDEWALK: Indicates volume of investment needed to complete the sidewalk network within the neighborhood. Higher numbers of missing sidewalk indicate a greater need for a plan.

PUBLIC ART: Indicates the cultural investment in the neighborhood. Measures the amount of public art per 1,000 residents. Less public art indicates a greater need for a plan.



INVESTMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT PROGRAM FUNDING: Neighborhood Associations are eligible to apply for funding through the Neighborhood Investment Program. A neighborhood plan can build capacity and help to generate a list of project ideas. Neighborhoods with little historic NIP funding indicate a greater need for a plan.

VACANT LAND: Measures the percentage of land within a neighborhood that is vacant (greater than 0.5 acre and not public open space without a building). Greater amounts of vacant land indicate a greater need for a plan.

AGENCY COLLABORATION: Neighborhoods where collaboration between other agencies and/or resources can be aligned will be prioritized for plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN SEQUENCING



POLICY

EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD OR MASTER PLAN: Areas without any plan or a plan that is older than 10 years indicate greater need for a plan.

ACTIVITY CENTERS: An activity center is an area that attracts people for shopping, work, school, recreation and/or socializing. Activity centers vary in size, location and uses. The identification of more activity centers indicates a greater need for a plan. Activity centers are shown on the Blueprint Boise Land Use Map.



ECONOMY & PEOPLE

COST BURDEN: Measures the percentage of cost burdened households (housing costs greater than 30% of income). More cost burdened households indicate greater need for a plan.

MEDIAN INCOME: Measures median income in a NA. Lower Median Incomes indicates greater need for a plan (neighbors more vulnerable to displacement).

MINORITY POPULATION: Measures the percent of the neighborhood population that is non-white. Neighborhoods with higher percentages of minority population are often vulnerable to displacement, indicating a greater need for a plan.

CDBG ELIGIBLE CENSUS TRACTS: Measures if census block groups within a NA that are eligible to receive CDBG funding. Higher percentage of CDBG tracts indicates greater need for a plan.



NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

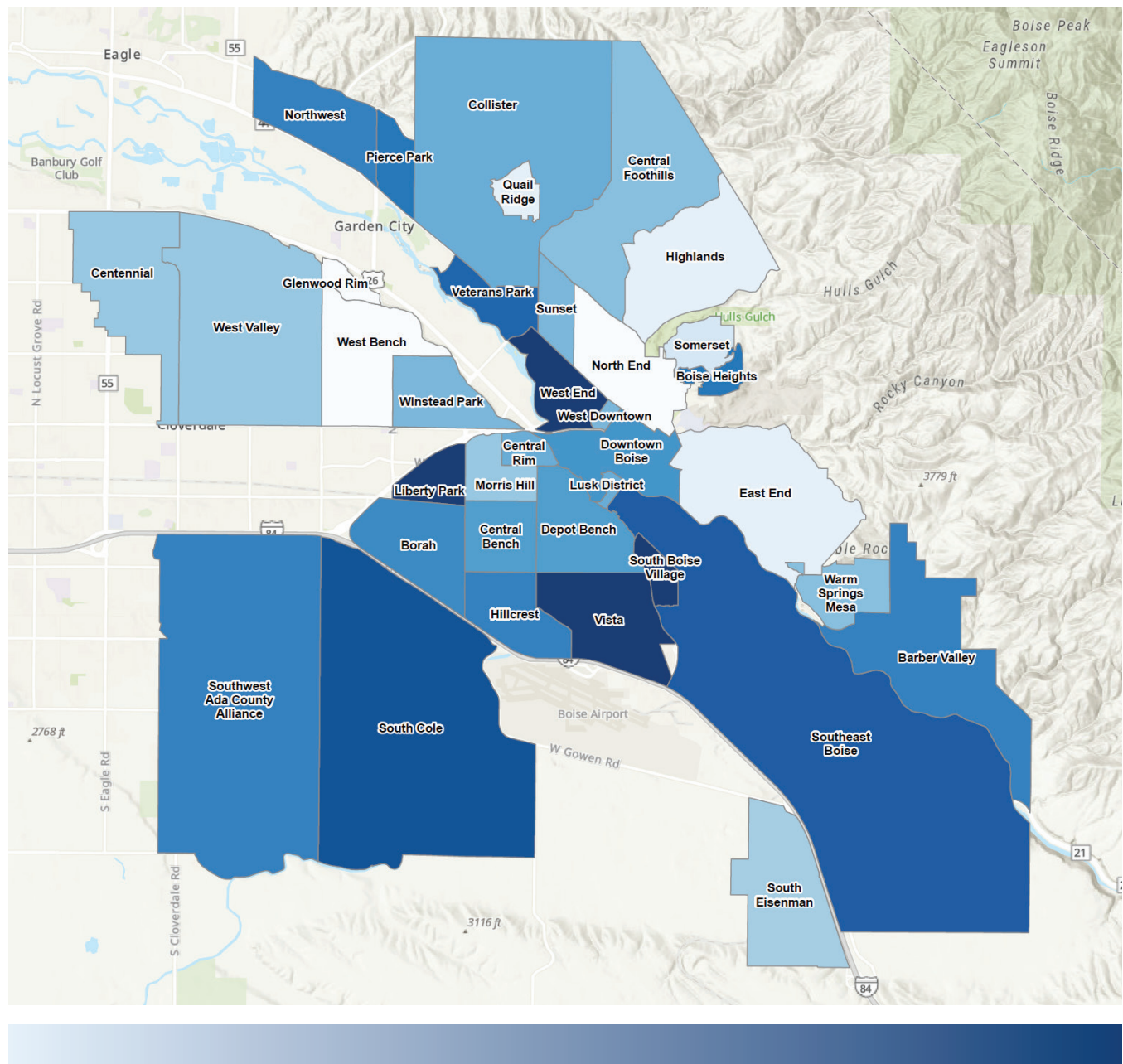
POPULATION: Measures change in the population over a ten-year period. More change (increase or decrease) indicates greater need for a plan.

PERMIT ACTIVITY: Measures change in the number of permits per acre. Higher permitting activity indicates greater need for a plan.

CHANGE IN HOMEOWNERSHIP: Measures the change in home tenure (renter vs homeowner). Greater change (either negative or positive) indicates a greater need for a plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING NEED

The indicators have been compiled to create an index of planning need for each neighborhood association boundary, depicted in the following map. Darker areas of the map indicate neighborhoods with a greater planning need based on the indexed score of the indicators above.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPINGS

Due to the variety of neighborhood geographic and population sizes, specific neighborhood planning areas may encompass more than one neighborhood association boundary or include grouping of several neighborhood associations. If needed, neighborhoods will be analyzed and then grouped together after carefully considering the following elements:

- Shared histories, challenges, and aspirations
- Built environment and natural features
- Planning need
- Character, context, and development patterns
- Major destinations (institutions, amenities, shopping districts)
- Common infrastructure (major roads, drainage)
- Geographic size and population
- Councilmember and public input

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN?

Neighborhoods not actively participating in a planning process can undertake activities on their own to get prepared for an eventual plan kickoff. Doing so will help the planning process to go more smoothly because some of the work will have been completed in advance. Activities include:

ORGANIZE

Consider participating in Neighborhood Association meetings and encourage others in your neighborhood to do the same. Put items on the agenda related to the upcoming neighborhood plan. Organize meetings with the larger community to talk about planning-related issues.

PARTICIPATE

Attend Energize Our Neighborhood (EON) and other city trainings and educational opportunities. Attend City Council and Commission meetings to stay up to date with city policies and pressing neighborhood issues.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Discuss what people love about the neighborhood, what should change, and what should remain.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Document the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are present in the neighborhood.

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION

Conduct a photo inventory of existing conditions. Pair photos with results from the listening sessions and SWOT analysis.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many parties involved in developing a neighborhood plan, including city staff, neighborhood residents, neighborhood association members, and a Neighborhood Planning Committee. Setting roles and expectations for all parties is an important first step in the planning process. The city suggests the following as a framework to clarify roles and responsibilities.

CITY OF BOISE

The City of Boise will provide necessary funding to develop the plan through the Neighborhood Investment Program or other department sources. After the completion of the plan and adoption, City departments will use the Plan, as directed, to guide decision making in the neighborhood.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER/NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN PROJECT MANAGER

The Neighborhood Plan project manager will be a staff planner from the Comprehensive Planning Division who is a member of the Energize Our Neighborhood team. The project manager will develop a plan scope of work; identifying major tasks, project milestones, neighborhood input points and establishing deadlines. The project manager will coordinate the hiring of a planning consultant (if applicable) and the formation of the Neighborhood Plan Committee (NPC). The project manager will ensure equitable participation and provide resources to the NPC and the public about the planning process and city policies. The project manager will manage the development, implementation, and synthesis of plan public engagement as well the format and creation of the final plan document. The Project Manager will assist appropriate parties with the implementation of the plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Neighborhood Plan Committee (NPC) is group of participants (about 15) who represent diverse interests including but not limited to residents, neighborhood association members, businesses, non-profits, education, and underserved populations. The NPC will meet regularly throughout the planning process to guide all aspects of plan development.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION(S)

The Neighborhood Association (NA) will select members to serve as NA representatives to the NPC. The NA will assist with advertising of the neighborhood plan outreach and volunteer to assist at public outreach events. The neighborhood association(s) will have the opportunity to adopt the final Neighborhood Plan document (if desired) before adoption by City Council.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

The community is a driving force in each step of the neighborhood planning process. Effective outreach uses diverse methods to reach people to get the word out about an event, provide updates, or to gain specific feedback.

Each neighborhood planning process will develop a customized community engagement strategy drawing on some or all the methods detailed below.



TRADITIONAL OUTREACH

PUBLIC MEETINGS	Public Meetings will be held at key points throughout the planning process to solicit feedback from the public. Each meeting typically includes either a presentation, open house style activities, or structured exercises conducted in small groups.
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS	Neighborhood Planning Committee Meetings occur regularly throughout the planning process to guide all aspects of the development of the plan.
NEWSLETTER & INFO-BLASTS	Updates and meeting announcements are provided via City or NA newsletters and info-blast e-mails to people who joined the Neighborhood Plan mailing list.
EVERY-DOOR DIRECT POSTCARDS	In every phase of the planning process (typically 4 phases) the City sends postcards with pertinent information in advance of public outreach.



FOCUSED/INNOVATIVE OUTREACH

PIGGY-BACK ON OTHER EVENTS	Attend meetings organized by others to reach people who are already involved in other aspects of the community. Work with established groups and get on meeting agendas for business organizations, parent/ teacher organizations, etc.
FOCUS GROUPS	Focus groups are a useful way to gather detailed input from a small group of people.
POP-UP EVENTS	This involves setting up a station in a public place, such as at a farmer's market or outside a store or informal public gathering space. Pop-ups are way to increase awareness of the plan and to reach new people.
CELEBRATION & RESOURCE FAIRS	These public meetings serve two purposes, to entertain or educate attendees and to collect information for the neighborhood plan. Resource fairs help connect people to agencies and programs to address their needs and concerns outside of the area planning process.
OFFICE HOURS (DROP IN OR BY APPOINTMENT)	Members of the neighborhood can make an appointment or can drop in a public place (like a park or library) to provide feedback over a series of days.



ONLINE OUTREACH

WEBSITE	Each neighborhood plan will have a project website to serve as a central hub for information. The website will include meeting dates, links to interactive tools, and project documents.
INTERACTIVE TOOLS	These include surveys, interactive maps, live polling, etc. to collect feedback digitally. They allow people to provide feedback.
SOCIAL MEDIA	Sites like Facebook and Nextdoor are helpful to increase awareness of the neighborhood plan and announce events or online surveys.
WEBINARS	Online streaming and recording of content with a follow up live question and answer and survey.

**This information has been modified from City of Denver Community Planning & Development Neighborhood Planning Initiative Strategic Plan*

PLAN CONTENT OVERVIEW

Neighborhood plans can address a wide variety of topics that are relevant to the specific neighborhoods. However, there is a set of essential information that will always be included in the neighborhood plan to ensure that the plan is evidence-based, inclusive, and actionable. The typical sections of a neighborhood plan are described below:

THE NEIGHBORHOOD TODAY

As part of the initial development of the plan, the planning team will conduct an analysis of the neighborhood today. The analysis typically includes a description of previous plans/studies and how they inform the current planning effort, an understanding of regional circumstances that influence the neighborhood, an inventory of assets and landmarks, and an analysis of demographic, transportation, and safety data and trends.

BASIS FOR ACTION

The basis for the action section of the plan documents all public engagement efforts conducted as part of the neighborhood planning process. This section also shows how the neighborhood had a direct impact on the development of the vision, goals, objectives, and projects.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES/CORE VALUES:

The vision and guiding principles or core values set the overall foundation for the plan. These elements are the big picture aspirations for the future of the neighborhood.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

All plans establish a set of goals and associated objectives. These goals and objectives are typically focused on built environment topics such as urban design, parks, open space, and transportation or policy and regulation topics such as zoning, land use, and sustainability.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation section will organize recommendations by type (funding and infrastructure, regulatory, and partnerships) and establish the relative priority and timeframe for implementation. Wherever possible, this section will also identify metrics to help track progress toward implementing the recommendations. Specific updates to *Blueprint Boise* will also be identified.

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW



PHASE 1: **LEARN** (2-3 MONTHS)

In the Learn Phase the project team begins studying the area's existing conditions (data and neighborhood feedback), using that information to identify issues and opportunities for the plan to address.

STEPS	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the neighborhood 2. Identify neighborhood assets, strengths, and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) Neighborhood Planning Committee meetings • One (1) Round of Neighborhood Engagement (Plan Kick-Off & Visioning) • Survey



PHASE 2: **VISION** (2-3 MONTHS)

In this phase, through visioning events and surveys, the project team drafts a vision for what the neighborhood wants to become. Goals and objectives are developed and focused around specific plan topics.

STEPS	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Set the vision 4. Focus the plan around goals and objective topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) Neighborhood Planning Committee meetings • One (1) Round of Neighborhood Engagement (Plan Goals & Objectives) • Survey



PHASE 3: **CREATE** (3-5 MONTHS)

The create phase is where much of the work is completed. In this phase the project team and the public propose and prioritize actions that are aligned with and support the implementation of the plan vision and goals.

STEPS	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Identify actions (projects, programs, policies) 6. Prioritize actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two (2) Neighborhood Planning Committee meetings • One (1) Round of Neighborhood Engagement (Project Identification & Prioritization) • Survey



PHASE 4: **FINALIZE** (2-3 MONTHS)

The last phase is where ideas are formalized and documented in a draft plan. The draft is shared with the public, revised accordingly, and eventually adopted by the Neighborhood Association (if desired) and City Council. After adoption, the plan implementation process begins.

STEPS	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Draft plans 8. Adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) Neighborhood Planning Committee meetings • One (1) Round of Neighborhood Engagement (Plan Presentation) • Open Comment Period • Survey • Public Hearing (City Council)

