



Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Training Sheet

CONTACT TEAMS

City of Austin
Planning and Zoning Department
November 2018

WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CONTACT TEAM?

- ◆ A Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (NPCT) is a group of individuals designated to be the stewards and advocates of their adopted neighborhood plan. They work with city staff towards the implementation of their recommendations, review and initiate plan amendments, serve as community points of contact, and work on behalf of other neighborhood stakeholders.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ◆ **When does a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team form?**
Ideally the NPCT forms as part of the neighborhood planning process. Usually toward the end of the process and before the Neighborhood Plan is adopted by City Council.
- ◆ **What are the Roles and Responsibilities of a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team?**
 - 1. Review and respond to amendments to their adopted neighborhood plan**
The NPCT will be asked to review and respond to proposed plan amendments by attending plan amendment meetings organized by neighborhood planning staff. The Contact Team will submit a letter to staff, prior to the Planning Commission public hearing, stating whether they support or do not support the proposed amendment.
 - 2. Work to implement the adopted neighborhood plan**
Once the neighborhood plan is adopted by the City Council, the Contact Team is responsible for monitoring and prioritizing the plan's recommendations. The Contact Team will work closely with the Implementation Coordinator as well as communicating with implementing departments. Contact Teams should also create their own "To Do" list to implement recommendations from the Neighborhood Plan that do not require funding.
 - 3. Working on behalf of your planning area stakeholders**
As a member of a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team you are responsible for communicating with stakeholders in your planning area. This is particularly important when making a recommendation on proposed plan amendments or prioritizing plan recommendations.
 - 4. Serve as community points of contact**
From time to time new policies and/or changes to the Land Development Code may require a NPCT to make decisions about these changes. An example is the Mobile Food Establishment Ordinance. Contact Teams are given the opportunity to submit an application for consideration by City Council to determine whether the new standards should apply in their planning area.
- ◆ **Can the NPCT initiate a plan amendment?**
Yes. The NPCT has the ability to submit an application to amend the neighborhood plan at any time. However, amendments that affect a large portion or all of a planning area, such as residential design tools or certain infill options, can only be submitted once every two years.



See other side for more information...



MORE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

◆ **Can a NPCT initiate a zoning change?**

No, a Contact Team cannot initiate a zoning change. A zoning change may only be initiated by the property owner of record, City Council, the Planning Commission and in certain cases, the Historic Landmark Commission.

◆ **What is the difference between a plan update and a plan amendment?**

A **plan update** is conducted by the Planning and Zoning Department along with community participation. A plan update involves looking at the entire planning area, assessing changes that have occurred since plan adoption, taking a look at all the recommendations in the plan, and rewriting significant portions of the plan. Plans will be updated based on direction from City Council as resources allow. Generally speaking a **plan amendment** is a small change to the adopted plan, for example a change to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) or the addition of a special use or infill option to the planning area. For more information see Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Training Sheets, *Your Role in Plan Amendments* and *Overview of Neighborhood Planning* or the Neighborhood Plan Amendment Application Packet.

◆ **Are Contact Teams and Neighborhood Associations the same?**

No. Contact Teams and Neighborhoods Associations are different entities. The city requires a Contact Team as part the adoption of the neighborhood plan. The city has certain requirements of the Contact Team with regard to membership and by-laws. There are no such requirements of Neighborhood Associations other then they register with the city's Community Registry for the purpose of receiving official communication from the city.

◆ **Are Developers required to work with Contact Teams and Neighborhood Associations?**

The plan amendment process requires developers to meet with contact teams but not neighborhood associations. City staff will not schedule a community meeting to discuss a proposed plan amendment until the applicant has made contact with the Contact Team.

◆ **What is a Contact Team in good standing?**

A Contact Team is considered in good standing with the Planning and Zoning Department when they have met the following requirements: they are registered with the city, have by-laws based on the standardized by-law template, have submitted their by-laws and membership list with the city and work on behalf of their community and neighborhood plan.

◆ **How much weight do the Contact Team recommendations have with the Planning Commission and the City Council?**

The Contact Team is responsible for making a well-informed recommendation on plan amendments. However, City Council is the final decision-making body and may not agree with the Contact Team recommendation. Because Contact Teams serve as community points of contact and shepherds of the neighborhood plan, Planning Commission and City Council are very interested in hearing the recommendations of the Contact Teams.

For more information on Contact Teams

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