neighborhood action plan Forest Ridge-Walnut









garland neighborhoods are where it's @!

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June 2007

Greetings!

On behalf of the entire City of Garland organization, I wish to convey our support for all of Garland's neighborhoods and the neighbors who are working so hard to keep them vital places to live, work, shop, learn and invest. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the efforts to create the Forest-Ridge Walnut Neighborhood Program Area Action Plan. We should all be proud of our neighborhoods and look forward to a vibrant future for them through the combined efforts of neighbors, municipal government, and partners throughout the community.

The City of Garland recognizes partnerships are key to maintaining and creating healthy neighborhoods. The continued prosperity of Garland relies upon the vitality of its neighborhoods. By working with residents, business and property owners, real estate professionals, school officials, non-profits, and the faith-community in a coordinated manner to address neighborhood and City-wide issues, we will set a new standard for neighborhoods throughout Garland and build capacity for citizens to effectively manage their neighborhoods.

It will take the combined effort of neighbors, the community, and the City of Garland to carry out the actions contained in this Action Plan. The City of Garland organization is a committed leader and partner in these efforts and seeks to join with others in taking advantage of the tremendous momentum growing throughout the city to move Garland and its neighborhoods forward together.

With warmest regards.

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City Manager





Introduction

The purpose of the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area Action Plan is to put forward a set of strategies to enhance the vitality of the neighborhoods within the Neighborhood Program Area. The strategies suggested in the Action Plan are in response to the priorities identified by the neighbors participating in the planning process. It is not assumed the strategies in the Action Plan will by themselves completely solve the issues; moreover, the priorities addressed in the Action Plan are not exhaustive. Numerous activities and issues outside of this document also influence the future of these neighborhoods.

The key to the successful realization of the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area Action Plan is purposeful and coordinated enactment of the strategies set forth in it. Working together with the same goals in mind, all

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of the partners involved must be committed to the vitality of the area and the enrichment of the lives of those living, working, and investing there. New and stronger partnerships between neighbors, the City of Garland, and resources throughout the community will help neighbors reach their goals for their neighborhoods.

This Action Plan is among the first to be completed as a part of the *Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods*. Initiated by the City Council and City Manager in 2006, the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods seeks to create a framework for neighbors, the City of Garland, and all partners to work together to maintain and enhance the vitality of all of Garland's neighborhoods.

At the core of the *Strategy* is the City of Garland Neighborhood Philosophy:

Recognizing a strength of Garland is the character of its neighborhoods, we will work in partnership with neighborhood stakeholders and community resources to build a stronger community and keep Garland an excellent place to live, work, play, and invest.

This Neighborhood Philosophy identifies neighborhoods as a defining element of the City of Garland and highlights the relationship between neighborhood quality and the overall quality of the city. The Neighborhood Philosophy also embraces the concept of partnerships between neighbors, the City of Garland organization, and the community to build





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stronger neighborhoods. Finally, it speaks to the options individuals, families, and businesses have when choosing where to reside, work, and locate. All of those decisions are influenced by the perception of whether or not it makes economic sense. By taking action to create a bright future for the neighborhoods of Garland, the decisions to live, work, and invest here continue to be sound.

The Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods also has three primary envisioned outcomes. Specifically, they are:

- Stabilized and improved neighborhoods
- Increase sense of community
- Increased neighborhood management capacity

Garland's neighborhoods are all different. There are older neighborhoods and newer neighborhoods. Some are well-maintained, while others are showing signs of age and neglect. Many are organized, with either a mandatory homeowners association or voluntary neighborhood groups. Most importantly, all have the potential to be neighborhoods of choice, places where families and businesses choose to live and invest. The *Strategy* seeks to offer tools to restore and revitalize older neighborhoods and to maintain newer neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods are more than just the houses. Businesses, schools, parks, places of worship, and many other elements really make a neighborhood a true community. Moreover,

neighborhoods also have a relationship to other neighborhoods, the city, and the region, placing them in a larger context. Also, all those living, working, learning, doing business, and investing in a neighborhood should have a sense of pride and responsibility for their neighborhood. By working together and recognizing mutual concerns and how they blend, quality neighborhoods and a greater sense of community will result.

Neighbors must be engaged and empowered to take on the day to day concerns arising in the neighborhood. This is called neighborhood management. Cooperative effort among neighbors, in partnership with community resources and the City of Garland is another outcome of the *Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods*. By supporting neighbors working as individuals and in groups, the neighborhoods, the City of Garland, and the community all benefit.

The Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods is a program for all of Garland's neighborhoods. Numerous programs and activities are available to all neighborhoods to make them stronger.









The Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area was selected as one of four pilot areas to focus additional time and resources to address specific issues. These neighborhoods were chosen for several reasons. Among the reasons for making the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area one of the pilots are:

- The area has few identified neighborhood-based organizations
- Several community leaders are working in the area to make improvements.
- A new park and recreation center is planned on Walnut Street
- Portions of the area are eligible to take advantage of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds
- A growing number of cultural groups are living and operating businesses in the area

Each neighborhood varied in the selection criteria to provide a cross-section of neighborhoods for the process. Because of the characteristics listed, the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area was

selected for this pilot phase. The processes, programs, and policies developed through this effort may serve as templates in other neighborhoods.

The Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area Action Plan is the result of the work of many people investing their time and efforts. Included in the Action Plan is:

- A timeline outlining the process for developing the Action Plan,
- A Neighborhood Story telling the past, present, and future of the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area.
- The priority issues identified by the neighbors and strategic actions to address them,
- A presentation of neighborhood management and specific actions for the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area,
- And a description of how this Action Plan will be accomplished and move forward to realize a well-managed and vital Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area.







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The Vital Neighborhoods process involved several steps intended to involve both neighborhood residents and a wide range of city staff and departments.

July 2006: Selected as one of four pilot Neighborhood Program Areas

October 2006: City of Garland's Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods presented at

Neighborhood Summit

November 2006: Kickoff Meeting at Bradfield Elementary School initiating the

planning process in the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood

Program Area

December 2006: Neighborhood Priorities identified

January 2007: Basics of Crime Watch groups and neighborhood organizations

presented to neighbors

March 2007: Meeting to better define Neighborhood Priorities

April 2007: Community Solutions Meeting to discuss neighborhood-based

actions to address Neighborhood Priorities

May 2007: Community Open House

July 2007: Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area Action Plan

presented to City Council

ONGOING: Action Plan Implementation

Neighborhood Management Capacity Building

Neighborhood Improvement





\mathbf{T} he Neighborhood Story

This Neighborhood Story is intended as a snapshot of the area's past and present and a preview of what the neighborhood might be in the future. One expects a neighborhood as large, mature, and as diverse as this neighborhood to have many interesting stories and common themes—Forest Ridge-Walnut delivers!

The Neighborhood Story presented here is based on discussion with area neighbors in the Forest Ridge-Walnut Program Area at the Kickoff Meeting in November 2006 and conversations with neighbors throughout the planning process of early 2007. The story begins with the development of the first homes in the area in the 1950s. As suburbanization began to boom in the

Forest Ridge-Walnut Population Statistics		
Total Population	10,670	100%
Under 18	3,007	28%
18 to under 62	6,627	62%
62 and over	1,036	10%

* Source: 2000 Census

Dallas area, families were drawn to area homes on the western edge of Garland bordering Dallas and Richardson with their larger lots and room for kids and grown ups to play. The homes were typical of the time and designed for a "modern, growing family". Another attraction of the area as a residential district was its proximity to the industrial parks in the southwest quadrant of Garland employing a growing number of area residents, as well as the area being a short drive into downtown Dallas.







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Forest Ridge-Walnut Statistics Population Data	
	Total
White	6.125
Black/African American	722
American Indian /Alaska Native	54
Asian	1,854
Native Hawaiian / other Pacific	
Islander	0
Some Other Race	1,652
Two or more races	263
Total	10,670
% Hispanic descent	9.8%

* Source: U.S. Census 2000

Schools were built in the neighborhoods to educate the children of the postwar Baby Boom. Churches were also established to meet the spiritual needs of residents. And as typical with suburban development, shopping centers were built at the intersections of the main roads. These centers were anchored by stores like Yardbirds and Minyards and also provided space for other shops and services in their common strip designs.

Over time the neighborhood began to take on character. The saplings grew into large, mature trees. Additions to homes and yards were made to accommodate the needs of growing families. Kids moved from elementary school into junior high and high school and then out into the world. The neighborhood was no longer new, but it was comfortable and inviting.

And all the while, Garland and the Dallas-Fort Worth area continued to grow. By 1970, nearly 75,000 people lived in Garland – almost seven times the 1950 population of 10,571. Garland was home to 180,000 people by 1990. With all the growth in the City and the region, the Forest Ridge-Walnut neighborhoods began being passed over more and more by homebuyers and businesses in favor of newly developed areas.

Today, the neighborhood is at a crossroads. Many of the residents are long-term, often the original homeowners having lived in their homes for forty or more years. Their children are grown, but their homes are paid off and they have fond memories of the years they have lived in them. A good number of homes are now occupied by new families representing the array of cultures living and working in Garland. They have come to the neighborhood for the same reasons families did when it was first developed—it's location to jobs, shopping, and the schools.

But, the neighborhood is showing its age. The shopping centers on the corners are in need of reinvestment or redevelopment. Although they are mostly occupied, the facades are dated,

Forest Ridge– Walnut St Housing Data	tatistics
Total housing units	2,242
Rental housing units	695
Single family housing units	1,547
Owner-occupied	69%
Renter-occupied	31%
Average assessed value	\$163,957
Average age of housing	39 years
Average size of housing	1,450 sq. ft.

* Sources: U.S. Census 2000 Dallas County Appraisal District

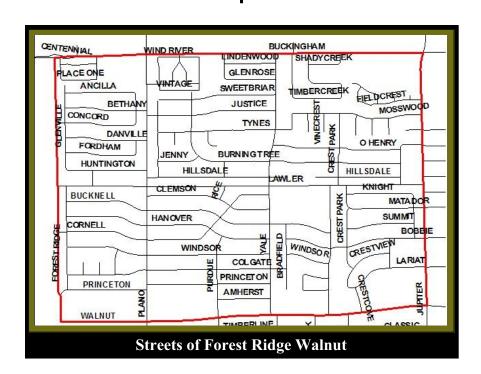




the parking lots lack landscaping and the anchor spaces no longer fit the specifications of today's stores. Neighbors find themselves disconnected from each other and from the city of Garland. Some even call the area a "no man's land" because while it is within the city limits of Garland, it seems more aligned with Richardson and Dallas due to the location of schools, shopping, and restaurants in those cities.

The neighbors of the Forest Ridge-Walnut neighborhoods have chosen to work together to identify and address the issues affecting its vitality. They have chosen to act strategically, get organized. and better manage their neighborhoods. They envision the neighborhood not like it was or is, but as it will be—a friendly, attractive community with diverse,

respectful neighbors who are appreciative of each other. The shopping centers have been recreated as lively community hubs with stores and services for the surrounding neighborhoods and the larger area. The Forest Ridge-Walnut neighborhoods have become a model for other neighborhoods in Garland for the proactive methods they are using to create their vibrant, livable neighborhoods.







Neighborhood Program Area

Neighborhood Priorities

During the process of working with the Forest Ridge-Walnut neighbors, several key priorities were identified to be addressed:

- Reducing the number of parked cars on the street
- Improving residential property maintenance and appearance
- Increasing the feeling of safety in the neighborhood
- Reducing loud music from cars and homes
- Improve Economic Development for Neighborhood Serving Businesses
- Identify Methods and Resources for Improving Residential Property Maintenance

Reducing the Number of Parked Cars on the Street

Neighbors in the program area have expressed a frustration about the number of cars parked on the street. Parking is allowed on the street, but has become a growing concern over time.

Several factors have contributed to this issue. First, more drivers now reside in each household. This causes more cars to be present at an address, thereby overwhelming the existing on-site parking for the residence.

Another change is an increase in people using their garage for storage instead of parking for vehicles. In some cases, people have converted their garage into more living space. This puts more strain

on the available parking in the driveway.

Although the resulting parking in the street is legal, the affect is undesirable by the residents. They feel it is a sign of overcrowding and that the neighborhood may be in decline. From a safety standpoint, children may run out in the street from between cars, giving drivers little to no warning. In general, the residents want to address this issue because it detracts from their neighborhood.

Improving Residential Property Maintenance and Appearance

The neighbors of Forest Ridge-Walnut identified property maintenance as a key issue. As their neighborhood matures, they want to make sure the housing is properly maintained to retain homeownership. Properly maintained neighborhoods:

- Provide confidence to homebuyers, creating stable housing values
- Encourage homeowners to invest in improvements
- Encourage new homeowners to maintain and improve their homes.







Increasing the Feeling of Safety in the Neighborhood

As neighbors are confronted with various signs of decline, their feeling of safety lowers. The following all affect neighbors feeling of safety:

- Property Appearance
- Poor lighting
- Overgrown landscaping
- Cars parked across sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk into the street

Graffiti was a minor concern for some neighbors. Another concern was expressed regarding potential danger from poorly cared for animals.

The neighbors are seeking a safe and secure neighborhood. During the process, the participants asked for police enforcement, lighting and property maintenance to be addressed.

Reducing Loud Music from Cars and Homes

One quality of life issue identified by the residents was of noise. Specifically, they spoke of loud music coming from cars or homes. Neighbors feel loud music is disrespectful and inhibits their ability to fully enjoy their property.

The music from cars passing through the neighborhoods was also disturbing to the residents. In this case they want to make people aware of the ordinance to see a decrease in this activity. They asked for enforcement and respect between fellow neighbors.

Coming Up With The Solutions

The solutions to the priority issues proposed in the following pages were developed by neighbors and City of Garland staff. To develop the proposed actions, City staff and neighborhood residents examined their own roles in solving the priority issues and then generated a series of actions that they could undertake to affect positive change on the topics. The City and neighbor actions were then combined to create a series of complementary actions to address the key issues of the neighborhood. Creative actions generated by both neighbors and staff are included in the plan. Together these actions make up the content of the plan and exhibit the partnership between the City of Garland and the neighborhood residents.









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Neighbors met with each other and the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Team in April 2007 to discuss Community Based Solutions. Neighbors engaged in a participatory exercise to brainstorm possible actions to take to address the priority issues. The neighbors were instructed to only propose solutions not requiring the City of Garland's participation. The reason for this instruction was to get neighbors to begin the process of neighborhood management—taking on the day-to-day issues facing their neighborhood themselves. Thinking in terms of what individuals could do and what actions could be undertaken by blocks, neighborhoods, and the entire community, neighbors came up with a number of potential activities.

Issue Resolution Groups comprised of City staff looked at potential actions from a cross-departmental perspective.

Members of the Issue Resolution Groups discussed what is currently being done by their departments to address the issue.

Next, they brainstormed possible actions, incorporating existing policies and programs, as well as developing some new ones. These ideas were then refined to those determined to be most likely to have a positive effect. Finally, the Neighborhood Resource Team, a panel of management-level City staffers assembled to guide the implementation of the *Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods*, were presented the possible actions for their approval. After the approved actions were determined, an implementation schedule was developed.

The combined efforts of neighbors and City of Garland staff have brought about these proposed actions. It will also take neighbors partnering with the City of Garland and resources in the community to accomplish the work of realizing these actions. The specific actions, project lead, partners in the activities, and a schedule for implementation are included in the next section.





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Reducing the Number of Parked Cars on the Street

The solutions regarding on-street parking in the Forest Ridge-Walnut neighborhoods first address illegal parking. A second group of solutions aim to reduce the number of cars parked on the neighborhood's streets. A Neighborhood Parking Management Program, a new tool for neighbors and the City to cooperatively work on the issue is being developed. This program will allow neighbors to pursue parking restrictions in the neighborhood.

Increasing the Feeling of Safety in the Neighborhood

Neighborhood safety has several components to be addressed. Lighting in the neighborhood is important to creating a feeling of safety. A second issue voiced by neighbors was the lack of positive activities for teens causing them to turn to loitering or illegal behavior. Animal control was also cited by some neighbors as a concern. Crime Watch groups are an excellent way for neighbors themselves to foster a better sense of community and work to reduce crime and increase the feeling of safety. Another request of neighbors was to have additional patrols by police in the neighborhoods, particularly bicycle patrols.

Reducing Loud Music from Cars and Homes

Solutions to address loud music from cars and homes center on developing a neighborly respect for all. Excess noise diminishes the enjoyment neighbors may have of their property. By getting to know each other and the different

cultures of the Forest-Ridge Walnut neighborhoods better, a level of mutual understanding can be created. Should neighborhood based efforts fail to solve this issue; enforcement by the City should be pursued.

Improve Economic Development for Neighborhood Serving Businesses

Economic development issues are important to neighborhoods throughout Garland. A cooperative effort to address these issues is being developed by the City Manager's Office, the Planning Department, and the Chamber of Commerce. Specific actions regarding upgrading the appearance of shopping





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Solutions For Forest Ridge-Walnut

The solutions produced through the work of the neighbors and City staff have been grouped by the priorities identified by the people of the neighborhood. Each priority has one or more objectives identifying specific activities to be pursued to accomplish the priority. The actions listed call for activity by neighbors and/or City staff to accomplish the objectives.

P	riority	Reducing the number of
		parked cars on the street

Objective: Reduce Number of Illegally Parked Cars

Action 1: Inform neighbors about codes and laws regarding

parking and encourage reporting of violations.

Start: Ongoing End: Ongoing

Lead: Police, Code Compliance Partners: Neighborhood Vitality,

Public Information Officer,

Neighbors

Informing neighbors about existing codes is an initial effort. This item may be included in the proposed Good Neighbor Guide. Opportunities must also be created for neighbors to talk to other neighbors about proper parking.

Action 2: Investigate legislative

and judicial obstacles to parking enforcement.

Start: June 2007

End: November 2007 Lead: Transportation

Partners: Code Compliance, Police,

Courts

Research will be done to see what is working in Texas communities regarding neighborhood parking issues and changes to existing policies and procedures.

Objective: Decrease Amount of on

Street Parking.

Action 1: Increase the amount of

off-street improved surfaces for parking

Start: January 2008
End: Ongoing
Lead: Neighbors

Partners: Building Inspection

Inform neighbors about opportunities to add off-street parking and the permit process.





Action 2: Promote the Petition

> Alley Program to pave alleys to provide access to rear of lots where driveways and parking is

present or planned

Start: January 2008

Ongoing End: Lead: Neighbors

Partners: Building Inspection, Street,

Engineering, Neighborhood

Vitality

Identify opportunities to create offstreet parking by providing access to the rear of properties. The Alley Petition Program requires the agreement and financial participation of affected property owners.

Action 3: Install additional lighting

by neighbors and through the Guard Light

Program

Start: January 2008

End: Ongoing **Neighbors** Lead: Partners: GP&L, Police

Some neighbors do not use the parking in the rear of their property because it is poorly lit. Additional lighting may be added by neighbors on their properties or in conjunction with the Guard Light program offered by GP&L.

Action 4: Assemble a list of options

to restrict parking in

residential neighborhoods

June 2007 Start:

November 2007 End: Lead: Transportation

Partners: Planning, Police, Code

Compliance

The purpose is to create a menu of options for the Neighborhood Parking Management Pilot Program mentioned below. The City will also investigate ways to lower the cost to neighbors to provide additional offstreet parking.

Action 5: Create a Neighborhood

Parking Management

pilot program

Start: June 2007

End: November 2007 Lead: **Transportation**

Partners: Planning, Police, Code

Compliance, Neighbors

The pilot program will address neighborhood parking management needs.







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riority

Improving Residential **Property Maintenance** and Appearance

Objective: Increase public

awareness on Code **Compliance and Home Maintenance to Increase Property Values and Decrease Code**

Violations

Action 1: **Develop "Good Neighbor**

> Guide", a guide to expectations of being a good and respectful

neighbor.

Start: August 2007 January 2008 End:

Public Information Officer Lead: Neighborhood Vitality, Partners:

Code Compliance, Health,

Building Inspection, **Environmental Waste**

Services, Water

Working from existing publications, compile a brief summary of helpful tips to educate neighbors about the responsibilities associated with being a good member of the community.

Action 2: Improve education and

> communicate on Code Compliance and home maintenance rules.

Start: Ongoing End: Ongoing

Code Compliance Lead:

Partners: **Neighbors**

Increase printing and distribution of TRAC (Telling Residents About Code) publication, including print and electronic formats, potentially other languages as warranted. Continue presentations on codes to neighborhood organizations

Action 3: Inform neighbors on

existing home repair

programs

Start: December 2007 End: June 2007 Lead: Neighborhood

Development/ Garland

Housing Finance Corporation Corp.

Partners: Neighborhood Vitality

A number of assistance programs exist to help neighbors with home repair. The City will promote greater awareness and understanding of program qualifications, sources, and purposes.





Action 4: Coordinate City programs

focusing on property maintenance and home

repair

Start: Ongoing End: Ongoing

Lead: Code Compliance/

Neighborhood Development

Partners: Neighborhood Vitality,

Building Inspection,

Garland Housing Finance

Corporation.

Coordinate efforts of People Helping People and Code Cares to connect needs with resources. Identify ways to maximize the use of funds, organization, and volunteers between programs.

Action 5: Develop focus area/

model neighborhood

program to focus efforts, services, and resources.

Start: November 2007

End: June 2008 Lead: Planning

Partners: Code Compliance,

Neighborhood

Development, Engineering, GP&L, Transportation,

Neighbors, Garland Housing Finance Corporation.

Neighborhood programs would be focused on a small area to be an example of how resources can be brought together to create vital neighborhoods.

Action 6: Identify and assist

neighbors with property

maintenance needs

Start: January 2008 End: Ongoing

Lead: Neighborhood

Organizations/ Neighbors

Partners:

Neighbors talk to each other to determine if some are unable to properly maintain their home.

Neighbors may then offer assistance

where they feel it is necessary.

Action 7: Report violations,

maintenance requests, or other needs effectively and in a timely manner

Start: January 2008

End: Ongoing

Lead: Neighborhood

Organizations/ Neighbors

Partners:

Neighbors work as "eyes on the street" and must report problems to City departments and not assume they are already aware of them.







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Action 8: Meet and communicate

effectively with Code Compliance officer(s)

Start: January 2008

End: Ongoing

Lead: Neighborhood

Organizations/ Neighbors

Partners: Code Compliance

Code Compliance is an important partner in creating a high quality physical environment. A positive relationship between neighbors and Code Compliance officers should be established and maintained.

Action 9: Plan and conduct

neighborhood activities

to improve property

maintenance

Start: January 2008

End: Ongoing

Lead: Neighborhood

Organizations, Neighbors

Partners: Code Compliance,

Neighborhood Vitality, Environmental Waste

Services

Activities, such as neighborhood cleanups, not only can accomplish a specific task, but also build relationships among neighbors.

P	riority	Increasing the feeling of
		safety in the
		neighborhood

Objective: Create a safer environment

for Neighbors

Action 1: Conduct street lighting

review; add additional lights and trim trees if

needed

Start: June 2007 End: August 2007

Lead: GP&L Partners: Neighbors

The amount of light reaching the street and sidewalk adds significantly to the feeling of safety of pedestrians and neighbors. GP&L will review the number of lights in the neighborhood and determine whether additional lights are needed or trees need to be trimmed.





Action 2: Address graffiti by

reporting and removing as soon as possible

Start: January 2008

End: Ongoing Lead: Neighbors

Partners: Code Compliance

Quick removal of graffiti sends the message it is not acceptable in the

neighborhood.

Action 3: Increase teen activities

Start: January 2008

End: Ongoing Lead: Neighbors

Partners: GISD, RISD, PARD, DART,

Faith-based organizations

Identify opportunities to give teens alternative activities. Work with GISD and RISD to make facilities available for community/after-school programming. Partner with DART to offer transportation to activities.

Action 4: Reduce number of

business burglaries

Start: Ongoing End: Ongoing Lead: NPO

Partners: Neighbors, Businesses,

Municipal Court

Coordinate efforts to address causes of burglaries in the Walnut/Jupiter area and develop strategies to deter and prevent burglaries.

Action 5: Inform neighbors on

proper animal care and

control

Start: August 2007 End: Ongoing

Lead: Animal Services

Partners: Neighbors

This item may be included in the proposed Good Neighbor Guide.

Action 6: Investigate ways to

increase the effectiveness

of Animal Control

Services

Start: September 2007

End: Ongoing

Lead: Animal Services

Partners:

Intermediate action to take after effort to educate neighbors on proper animal care and control.

Objective: Increase Police Presence

Action 1: Develop Crime Watch

groups

Start: Ongoing End: Ongoing

Lead: Neighbors, Police

Partners:

Neighborhood safety starts with having neighbors work together to better know each other and their neighborhood. Crime Watch groups in partnership with the Garland Police Department and Neighborhood Police Officers help to coordinate and support these efforts.





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Action 2: Increase bicycle and foot

patrols by Police in neighborhood

Start: Ongoing
End: Ongoing
Lead: Police
Partners: Neighbors

Taking officers out of their cars allows for more contact and interaction between officers and neighbors.

P riority

Reduce loud music from cars and homes

Objective: Encourage People to Be

Neighborly

Action 1: Develop a "Good

Neighbor Guide", a guide to expectations of being a good and respectful

neighbor.

Start: August 2007 End: January 2008

Lead: Public Information Officer
Partners: Neighborhood Vitality, Code

Compliance, Health, Building Inspection, Environmental Waste

Services, Water

Working from existing publications, compile a brief summary of helpful tips to educate neighbors about the responsibilities associated with being a good member of the community.

Action 2: Promote neighborhood

organizations and getting

to know neighbors

Start: August 2007 End: Ongoing

Lead: Neighborhood Vitality

Partners: Planning, NPO

Approaching each other in a neighborly manner is key to managing conflict. Neighborhood associations are a forum for getting to know each other and sharing information.

Action 3: Develop and provide

multi-cultural training to city employees and

neighbors

Start: December 2007 End: June 2008

Lead: Public Information Officer **Partners:** Human Resources. Multi-

Cultural Commission

Neighborhoods are influenced by the cultures of the neighbors living there. Understanding these cultures will help Garland work through their

differences.





Objective: Enforce Noise

Ordinances

Action 1: Encourage calls to Police/

Health if neighborly

efforts fail

Start: January 2008 End: Ongoing Lead: Neighbors

Partners: Police, Health Inspection,

Residents are encouraged to talk to their neighbors about issues such as loud music. Only after these efforts have failed should the police or the Health Department be notified. There are laws and codes to be enforced, but it is better to be resolved by the neighbors.

Action 2: Develop a targeted enforcement program

enforcement progr

Start: Ongoing End: Ongoing

Lead: Police, Code Compliance

Partners: Health, Neighbors,

Intermediate action to be taken after education efforts. Areas of concern would be identified by neighbors and addressed by the appropriate departments.

P	riority	Improve City Wide
		Economic
		Development for
		Neighborhood Serving
		Businesses

Objective: Attract quality

neighborhood serving

retail

Start: June 2007
End: October 2008
Lead: Planning/Econo

Planning/Economic
Development Partnership

Partners: Chamber of Commerce

Action Steps are currently being developed by the City of Garland Planning Department in partnership with the Garland Chamber of Commerce. Proposals currently being reviewed include activities to improve participation of Program Area businesses in the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods, improving Chamber services to small businesses, and identifying funds, plans, policies, or programs to attract quality neighborhood serving retail to Garland.





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<u>riority</u> Develop a Citywide Neighborhood Marketing Strategy

Objective: Market City of Garland

Neighborhoods and the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods to residents and property owners in the City and to

the larger region.

Start: October 2007 End: January 2007

Lead: Public Information Officer **Partners:** Chamber of Commerce.

Economic Development

Partnership

Action Steps are currently being developed by the City of Garland Neighborhood Vitality Program and the Public Information Office to develop a marketing program highlighting city of Garland neighborhoods and the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods program to improve neighborhoods throughout the City. Proposals currently being reviewed include activities addressing all forms of media and sharing the positives of living in Garland neighborhoods.



Priority
Identify City Wide Methods and Resources for Improving Residential Property Maintenance

Objective: Identify a plan to provide

resources for property owners seeking to improve residential

property

Start: October 2007 End: March 2008

Lead: Neighborhood Planning

Partners:

Action Steps are currently being developed by the City of Garland Neighborhood Planning Program to develop a Residential Property Improvement Plan based on research of grants, tax incentives, and/or fee waivers currently used by cities with similar needs of updating housing stock, approving appearance, and low-income homeowner repairs.



Neighborhood Program Area



${f N}$ eighborhood Management

Neighborhood management focuses on the willingness and ability of neighbors to successfully manage the day-to-day issues in the neighborhood; increasing neighborhood activities; and increasing the sense of community in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood management works by building upon existing assets to connect, excite, and inform citizens. This can be a catalyst and a spark for community change; however, it may require a mind shift for many people. Instead of focusing on what is wrong, it may be more appropriate to start with what is working, and more productive to operate from believing everyone has a gift or talent to share, as well as a responsibility to the community.

Neighbors are the key. A single person or a group of people acting together has the power to have a dramatic impact upon a neighborhood.

Change isn't always monumental; usually, its lots of small things. In neighborhoods, change comes from someone doing something different. And then it grows...from person to family, from one house to one block, from residents to businesses, and throughout the community.

Social capital also plays a role. Social capital is the connections or networks among individuals and groups generating trustworthiness and shared responsibility

making it easier to coordinate and cooperate for the benefit of all neighbors. Social capital can be thought of as grease for the wheels allowing communities to advance smoothly. The source of and opportunities to utilize social capital are endless!

Neighborhood management is critical to the success of the *Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods*. Neighborhoods and neighbors each have differing abilities when it comes to managing their neighborhoods; therefore, the City of Garland must provide opportunities for neighbors to improve their management skills. Specifically for the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area. These activities include:

Promoting and supporting neighborhood organizations

Neighborhood organizations are helpful in promoting coordinated activities for neighborhood health, communicating information, educating neighbors, and building stronger social bonds. The Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Area is generally lacking in neighborhood organizations; however, as the planning process continued, a number of new groups began to form. It is critical for these groups to be supported and encouraged as they continue to grow. The Office of Neighborhood Vitality offers assistance to neighbors as they form and on-going support as needed.





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Offering training and development through Garland Neighborhood Management Academy

The Garland Neighborhood Management Academy (GNMA) was inaugurated in spring 2007. The purpose of GNMA is to provide community leaders with the tools to actively engage in the municipal government process, to manage neighborhood growth and change, and enhance the vitality of neighborhoods throughout Garland. By offering classes to improve the skills of individuals and the capacity of organizations, neighborhoods become better able to manage the dayto-day issues of their neighborhoods. The Forest Ridge-Walnut neighbors will have the opportunity to attend GNMA classes to improve their personal toolboxes for increasing the health of their neighborhoods.

Developing and distributing the *Good Neighbor Guide*

Sometimes people in a neighborhood do not do what is expected of them because they do not know what is expected of them. Such is the case with some of the issues in the Forest Ridge-Walnut neighborhoods. The Good Neighbor Guide is an attempt to inform neighbors of some of the things it takes to be a good neighbor. Starting with existing publications, the City of Garland will develop and distribute the Good Neighbor Guide to let everyone know the standards expected of residents of Garland's neighborhoods. The Good Neighbor Guide be given to all of Garland's residents when it is developed, to GP&L customers when they open an

account, and will be available to neighborhood organizations to include in welcome packets for new neighbors.

Providing education on neighborhood programs

Many of the actions in this plan call for education and information. The City of Garland will be a committed partner in providing education and information to its citizens, moreover, staff will be available to make presentations to neighborhood organizations. The City's website will be continuously available with the latest information on programs and policies. Publications will be periodically reviewed and updated. Having informed neighbors is important to building a more successful community.

The Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods is built upon partnerships. The partnerships may at times require one partner to carry a heavier burden, but together we can achieve our goals. The purpose of increasing neighborhood management capacity is to allow for neighbors to be an equal partner in sustaining healthy neighborhoods.

When neighborhoods succeed, Garland succeeds!



Neighborhood Program Area



Summary

The creation of the Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Action Plan is one of the first steps in the on-going vitality of these neighborhoods. The actions and strategies contained in it are important, but once they are completed the work is not done. New priorities will need to be addressed, new opportunities and additional partners will present themselves.

The City of Garland's Neighborhood Philosophy captures how important neighborhood vitality is to the overall vitality of Garland. It identifies the development and maintenance of strategic partnerships to achieve stable and improved neighborhoods.

These partnerships are important because of the strengths each partner brings into the relationship—be it resources, time, expertise, skills, knowledge, positive attitude, or another talent contributing to a good outcome for neighbors and neighborhoods. Moreover, the benefits of these partnerships are also shared—through increased goodwill, a stronger sense of pride in the community, and a greater return on the investment of capital. In short, working together works.

The Forest Ridge-Walnut Neighborhood Program Action Plan is only guide. It is not a recipe or formula to be followed with a guarantee for success; however, like a recipe or formula, the outcome is dependent upon the qualities of the ingredients or inputs. With commitment and an on-going good faith effort by neighbors, the City of Garland organization, and community resources, the Forest Ridge-Walnut neighborhood can maintain the positive aspects of the area and meet the challenges facing them to become well-managed neighborhoods with a strong sense of community.

