



Neighborhood Conservation Districts

Quick Facts:

- Often called NCD
- Popular Neighborhood Planning Tool
- Provides for review of demolition, new construction, and exterior changes
- Texas Cities with NCDs include Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio

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What are the benefits of NCD designation?

NCD are a regulatory tool that provides for review of changes in your neighborhood. NCDs help residents preserve the characteristics of their neighborhood that they find most important. Neighborhood Conservation District designation protects and strengthens the desirable and unique physical features, design characteristics, and recognized identity, charm and flavor of neighborhoods. It offers a level of "protection" for property values, helping to prevent blight caused by incompatible, insensitive development.

Does a NCD affect my taxes?

NCD designation does not initiate tax increases. The Galveston Central Appraisal District handles the assessment of property for tax purposes.

Does a NCD affect the use of my property?

Neighborhood Conservation Districts are "overlay" zoning and do not regulate land use. Land use is determined by the underlying base zoning.

Is a NCD for residential or commercial properties?

NCDs may be residential or commercial in nature. NCD may also be used for areas that contain a mix of residential and commercial uses.

How do I know if my neighborhood or commercial district is eligible for a NCD?

Generally, the criteria for designation includes:

- a minimum of three full city block or six blockfaces, and
- at least 75% of the land area must have been improved at least 25 years ago, and
- the area possesses distinctive features that create a cohesive, identifiable setting, character or association.

Who is able to initiate a NCD?

There are several ways to initiate the process. Property owners may initiate the process through a petition of either:

- property owners representing 51% of the land area within the district, or
- 51% of the property owners within the district.

The City may initiate the process at the direction of City Council, the Planning Commission, or the Landmark Commission.

Is my neighborhood already designated?

No, currently no Galveston Neighborhoods have been designated as Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

If my neighborhood is eligible for Historic District status, should we consider a NCD designation?

If a neighborhood maintains the necessary architectural or historical integrity to be eligible for a historic district, it would be encouraged to pursue historic district designation, rather than a NCD designation. However, the neighborhood property owners would generally make that decision.

What are design standards?

Design Standards are the regulations by which the changes in the neighborhood are reviewed. The neighbors create the Design Standards. The enforcement of the Design Standards is the responsibility of the City of Galveston. The Design Standards may address such issues as demolition, new construction, and exterior changes.

Who decides what design standards are important for my neighborhood?

The property owners located within the NCD determine the unique "character-defining" elements that are important to them.

Do the design standards apply to new construction or rehabilitation of existing properties?

Both, although the design standards primarily affect those properties where new construction will occur. Rehabilitation projects will also be required to adhere to the design standards, if applicable.

If my property is in a NCD, will I have to rehabilitate my property to conform to the design standards?

No, property owners are not required to rehabilitate their property upon designation. Compliance with the Design Standards is triggered by demolition, new construction, or rehabilitation.

What if I can't afford the requirements of the design standards?

The standards are determined by the same property owners who will be using them, therefore, the local economic conditions may become part of the determining factors for the design standards.

Will the design standards address paint color?

No, repainting would not be regulated by the Design Standards.

Once a NCD is established, how do I get my project approved? Is a commission presentation required?

The NCD review process is an administrative process, without a commission review. Proposed projects are reviewed during the building permit process.

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