

Introduction

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of a city. Planning at the neighborhood level is fundamentally important for sustaining and improving the quality of life a city has to offer. A neighborhood plan is the blueprint that helps a community evolve from where it is today to where its residents and property owners want it to be in the future. A plan helps residents come together to develop their own interests rather than relying on planners and other experts to determine what those interests are.

Because the planning process involves extensive community input from plan inception, citizens come together to solve problems in a cooperative spirit. By providing a mechanism for citizens to influence municipal service delivery, neighborhood plans encourage the community to develop self-help projects that augment the services and capital projects provided by the city. These plans incorporate the values and spirit of the neighborhood and foster continuous involvement in the community.

The *Wilmington Future Land Use Plan 2004-2025* (FLUP), which is a long-term, broad-brush approach to major issues affecting the entire city, identifies 13 neighborhood areas, six of which are considered “threatened neighborhoods.” The FLUP defines threatened neighborhoods as areas experiencing increased crime, boarded-up houses and businesses, decreased owner-occupancy rates, decreased property values, and escalating code violations. The SouthSide study area contains two neighborhood areas identified as threatened in the FLUP.

Good planning practice dictates that efforts be made to assist in revitalizing these threatened neighborhoods. To help achieve this goal, the FLUP calls for the development of neighborhood plans for each area as a supplement to the strategies in the FLUP. This document is adopted as an amendment to the FLUP.

The purpose of this plan, the *SouthSide Small-Area Plan, A Plan for the Dry Pond, The Bottom, and Lake Forest Neighborhoods* (SouthSide Plan), is to identify specific long-term goals aimed at improving the quality of life in the area, with strategies to achieve these goals. This plan enables stakeholders to be more active in charting their own course for the future of the community, thereby proactively building social capital, preventing neighborhood decline, protecting property values, and building a sense of place.

This plan incorporates the values and spirit of the SouthSide community and encourages continuous involvement in the community. The relationships between physical, social, political, and economic issues are addressed together to achieve desired outcomes. It is a plan for the community, by the community and it is up to the community to ensure that the plan is a success. While some strategies identified in this document will require action by the city or other public agencies, the overall success of this plan depends on the involvement of residents, property owners, and business owners of the SouthSide community. Strategies that require action by the city or other agency often will require funding and it is up to the SouthSide community to point to the plan to help influence budgetary decisions.



A code enforcement officer discusses relevant issues with a resident at a community meeting.



Residents sign a resolution endorsing the SouthSide Plan.