Building Excellent Opportunities in Garland Neighborhoods

The City of Garland is facing build-out, meaning that nearly all of the land within the city has been developed with houses, shopping centers, offices or other uses. Neighborhoods are the primary land use throughout the city and are the heart of the community. But because so many of Garland’s homes were built more than forty years ago, in many neighborhoods action is needed to avoid disinvestment, neglect or undesirable invasions. The needs and expectations of today’s families for their homes are different from past decades. For newer neighborhoods not facing infrastructure and market decline, there is an effort to protect investment and maintain valuable assets. Yet, there is a need for public assistance to help develop and improve older neighborhoods. It has become more important than ever to focus on neighborhood vitality in existing neighborhoods, while creating adaptable, inviting new communities for the future.

With the adoption of the Envision Garland 2030 Plan as a guide for Housing and Neighborhood Policy, Garland promotes neighborhood vitality through a range of citywide initiatives to stabilize existing neighborhoods, create investment opportunities and expand housing options. The City has three main areas that it helps to build vital neighborhoods: neighborhood investment, technical assistance and community engagement.

How to Learn More: Neighborhood Vitality Programs
GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.org
972-205-2445
GREAT Homes Program
972-205-2130

Garland Idea Book Continues to Earn Accolades

The City of Garland’s Residential Idea Book has been recognized as a 2013 Urban Design Award winner by the Greater Dallas Planning Council. It received the Dream Study Award. The Idea Book advances the Envision Garland 2030 Comprehensive Plan by providing resources and support to neighborhoods in their efforts to update aging housing stock and to promote the City’s goals for neighborhood vitality. The Idea Book provides information for home improvements, and identifies steps residents can take to maintain the condition of their homes and neighborhoods. It also enhances each neighborhood’s ability to maintain existing community character well into the future. Earlier this year, the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association awarded the Idea Book an Honorable Mention for project planning. The Residential Idea Book can be downloaded from the City of Garland’s online Development & Permitting Center, or obtained from the Planning and Building Inspection Departments. Garland has kicked off its next Idea Book project—this time focusing on water and energy efficiency. To help make the 2014 Idea Book a success, Garland residents are urged to take a short, online survey about what they would like to see in the new edition. The survey is located at GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.org or by calling 972-205-2445.

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Garland Idea Book

Neighborhood Investment: In certain neighborhoods, the development of quality housing for Garland’s many incomes and household types is a high priority. The City offers an array of programs through the GREAT Homes initiative to encourage the construction of new homes, renovation of existing homes and public infrastructure in those neighborhoods. Garland’s Department of Housing and Community Services (HCS) does so by using increasingly scarce federal funds to provide affordable housing opportunities and to strengthen and revitalize Garland neighborhoods.

Building on the successful development of more than 35 homes in the past three years, the City will continue its effort of reinvesting into neighborhoods in partnership with the public and private sectors. The hallmark of the GREAT Homes initiative is not only making affordable the upfront construction or renovation costs, but also the cost of living in that home over time. Providing energy-efficient appliances, windows and other building techniques lowers the monthly cost of owning a home while increasing its value. This program has helped more than 60 families during the past six years make much needed and lasting upgrades to their properties.

“The HCS Department’s GREAT Homes program is an innovative approach to reinvigorating Garland’s existing housing stock through energy efficient and aesthetic upgrades, while maintaining the architectural integrity of Garland’s more mature neighborhoods,” said储存. HCS Department Manager. “The department offers creative financing terms, which not only benefit the buyers of the homes, but provides a dollar per dollar return on investment back to the City, perpetuating the program. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has deemed Garland’s housing initiatives as a ‘best practices model’ for other Texas cities to duplicate.”

Technical Assistance: One of the City’s best recognized resources for supporting neighborhoods is the Office of Neighborhood Vitality (ONV). The ONV works with neighborhoods to create leadership and partnerships to help residents create and sustain a healthy future for the neighborhood.

The cornerstone of neighborhood vitality is education and training. The Garland Neighborhood Management Academy (GNMA) offers classes on a variety of topics covering governance, engagement, leadership development and neighborhood management. GNMA provides neighborhoods with the tools to actively engage in the main job; public process and to manage neighborhood growth and change. GNMA has received national recognition for its effectiveness in supporting communities. Neighborhoods, IRS named it as the Best Neighborhood Program of 2013.

“We have reached out to hundreds of Garland residents through GNMA,” said Jilka Conner, Office of Neighborhood Vitality manager. “GNMA classes allow residents to better understand and empower residents and neighborhood organizations to make a positive impact on their neighborhoods, allowing them to thrive and grow.”

Community Engagement: The ONV also administers the Neighborhood Vitality Grant Program, which is designed to encourage residents to work together on projects that enhance the physical conditions in Garland’s neighborhoods. The matching grant program awards up to $10,000 per group over a five-year time period to support projects such as landscaping, lighting, screening walls and sidewalks.

Garland’s annual Neighborhood Summit, which is hosted to build ties between neighborhoods and individuals to share stories from their neighborhoods’ experiences, while hearing from nationally recognized speakers about innovative and practical ways to enhance neighborhoods.

Conner has been recognized for her innovative ideas in support of the Garland community. The Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter of Community Associations Institute recognized her efforts in fostering vibrant, educated and empowered communities by naming her an honorary member. The Garland City Council named her as the 2012 recipient of the Mayor’s Award for Grassroots Leadership Class.

These activities and programs contribute to the City’s efforts to help neighborhoods address key issues. The Planning and Community Development Department works in specific neighborhoods to study their particular needs, recommend actions to those needs, and work with residents to develop a plan of action to accomplish the neighborhoods’ goals. These action plans outline activities for both the City and the residents to improve the residential neighborhood.