

Frequently Asked Questions

Neighborhood Preservation Zone (NPZ) and Neighborhood Design Manual

Neighborhood Preservation Zone

What is an NPZ?

The Neighborhood Preservation Zone (NPZ) is an enabling ordinance that allows National Register historic neighborhoods initiated by the Mayor and Council to be considered for a rezoning to an overlay zone. The purposes of the NPZ are to preserve and enhance the unique character and historical resources of established city neighborhoods and to provide for the creation of neighborhood-specific design manuals for each NPZ district.

What was the impetus for the NPZ?

Public concerns expressed over the construction of new residences that are architecturally and dimensionally incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood was the impetus for the NPZ. The Mayor and Council directed staff to prepare the NPZ ordinance to allow certain National Register historic district neighborhoods to prepare design manuals that guide new construction to be more compatible with existing development.

Why is the Jefferson Park Neighborhood involved?

The Mayor and Council chose the Jefferson Park Neighborhood as one of two pilot neighborhoods to prepare a design manual. Both of these neighborhoods are experiencing development pressures related to the growing student population at the University of Arizona.

What types of projects are subject to the NPZ?

Projects meeting the following criteria are subject to the NPZ:

1. Located within an adopted NPZ;
2. Property is zoned residential (RX-1, RX-2, R-1, R-2, R-3, RH, SR, or SH);
3. Proposed development or expansion is visible from the street; and,
4. Requires a building permit.

Construction of multi-story residences and additions to the upper floor(s) of an existing structure are also subject to the privacy mitigation standards within the neighborhood design manual.

What affect will the NPZ have on new construction?

New structures and significant additions to existing structures will have to be architecturally compatible with the defining characteristics of nearby contributing properties to the historic district. Compliance with neighborhood-specific dimensional standards, such as building height, that differ from the underlying zoning, may be required if alternative standards are approved by the Mayor and Council at the time the neighborhood is included in the NPZ.

What does compatible mean?

Visual consistency of development by mirroring the prevailing dimensions and architectural and design characteristics style of the surrounding area. A building is considered compatible when it “blends in” with the structures in the immediate area. Compatible does not mean “repetition,” “copy” or “identical to” existing structures within the neighborhood.

Review of Projects within an NPZ

What is the review procedure for projects within the NPZ?

Projects will be reviewed by the City’s design professional for compliance. The design professional will be an architect with historic preservation experience. The design professional will forward a recommendation to the director of the Planning and Development Services Department. If approved by the director, the applicant may then proceed to the building permit review process. If denied by the director, the applicant may either: appeal the decision to the Board of Adjustment **or** redesign and resubmit the project for review by the design professional.

Are projects subject to neighborhood review?

No. However, applicants are encouraged to discuss their project with the surrounding residents and property owners and representatives of the neighborhood association.

Will nearby property owners and the neighborhood association be notified of proposed projects?

No, except if the project requires a variance or the applicant appeals the director’s decision to the Board of Adjustment. In these cases, the surrounding property owners and representatives of the neighborhood association are notified.

Neighborhood Design Manual & Process

What is the purpose of a neighborhood design manual?

A neighborhood design manual is required of every NPZ. The design manual will identify the defining design characteristics of the neighborhood and provides guidance for new construction within that specific neighborhood.

Specifically, the design manual will:

- Identify the overall character of the neighborhood, including predominant architectural styles;
- Establish privacy mitigation standards for new multi-story projects locating adjacent to existing single-story residences; and may also,
- Recommend development regulations, such as building height and setbacks that differ from the requirements of the underlying zoning.

What is the process for developing and implementing a design manual?

1. Neighborhood design manual orientation: City staff will provide an overview of the NPZ, the design manual process, and answer questions.
2. Form a neighborhood design manual committee: The committee will be responsible for developing the specific policies and guidelines for review by the neighborhood. The committee will be comprised of property owners and renters. Individuals wanting to be considered by the committee must submit an application.
3. Neighborhood design manual committee meetings: The committee will meet bi-weekly for approximately 3 months to develop the specific policies and guidelines.
4. Neighborhood review of the neighborhood draft design manual: The draft design manual, including the policies and guidelines recommended by the design manual committee, will be presented to the neighborhood for review and comment.
5. Staff review and recommendation: City staff will review the neighborhood design manual and forward their comments to the director of the Planning and Development Services Department. The director will make a recommendation whether to proceed with the rezoning.
6. Rezone the neighborhood to be included in the NPZ: In order to implement the design manual, the neighborhood will be rezoned to be included in the NPZ. The design manual will become a condition of rezoning. The rezoning will follow the typical rezoning procedure, which includes a public hearing with the Zoning Examiner and final consideration by the Mayor and Council. The rezoning will not affect the permitted uses permitted by the underlying zoning.
7. Review projects for compliance with design manual: Once the Mayor and Council approves a neighborhood to be included in the NPZ, new development and significant additions to existing structures within residential zones must comply with the design manual.

How long will it take to develop the design manual?

The entire process from developing the neighborhood design manual (4-6 months) to rezoning the neighborhood (5-6 months) may take approximately 1 year.

Who prepares and approves a Design Manual?

Neighborhood residents will participate in a design manual development process. The director of the Planning and Development Services Department will make a recommendation and present the design manual at the rezoning public hearing. When the Mayor and Council adopt the rezoning for the neighborhood overlay, the design manual will become part of the conditions of the final rezoning approval.

How can I get involved?

There are three ways to get involved:

1. Attend the neighborhood-wide design manual meetings.
2. Consider becoming a member of the neighborhood design manual committee.
3. Attend the public hearing.

Contact Adam Smith at the information provided below or go to www.tucsonaz.gov/planning/jeffersonpark to find out more about how and when to get involved.

Where can I get more information?

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or
www.tucsonaz.gov/