



Task Force on Consolidated Government
Council Member Lori Boyer, Chair

**Neighborhoods, Infrastructure, Planning,
Services, & the St. John's River**

FINAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighborhood Engagement & Participation **Neighborhood Councils**

Charter Amendments:

1. The Charter should be amended to require that the City create a citywide system of neighborhood councils to promote more citizen participation in government and to make consolidated government more responsive to local needs.

Ordinance Code Changes:

1. The Ordinance Code should be change to require the development of the Neighborhood Council Plan in accordance with the new Charter amendment and the Ordinance Code should include the following requirements:
 - a. The City shall seek public input in the formulation of the Plan.
 - b. The plan shall contain a statement of goals, policies and objectives of the Neighborhood Council system in draft ordinance format (regulations) which, if adopted by ordinance would be sufficient to implement the Plan.
 - c. The regulations shall establish the method by which boundaries of neighborhood councils will be determined. The system for determining boundaries shall maintain existing neighborhood boundaries to the maximum extent feasible.
 - d. The regulations must ensure that all areas of the City are given an equal opportunity to form neighborhood councils, and that all areas are incorporated into a council.
 - e. The regulations shall establish the procedure and criteria for recognition or certification of neighborhood councils.
 - f. The regulations shall not restrict the method by which the members of a neighborhood council are chosen.
 - g. The regulations shall require that neighborhood councils adopt fair and open procedures for the conduct of their business.

- h. The Mayor and Council shall provide for the creation of a new division/department or the designation of an existing City division or department to undertake these duties within 120 days of the effective date of this Charter revision.
2. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the Neighbor Hood Council Plan to be presented to the Council and Mayor within one year of the designation of the appropriate City entity to undertake the duties of the Neighborhood Council Plan (*see recommendation in Housing & Neighborhoods Department section*). The Council shall consider the plan/regulations and adopt or modify it within six months. If implementing ordinances are not adopted within this time period, the regulations shall become effective and shall be binding upon all City departments and Independent Agencies.
3. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the certification of neighborhood councils according to the following requirements.
 - a. Each neighborhood council seeking official certification or recognition from the City shall submit an organizational plan and by-laws showing, at a minimum:
 - a. Membership will be open to everyone who lives, works or owns property in the area (stakeholders);
 - b. Assurances that members will reflect the diverse interests within their area;
 - c. A system through which the neighborhood council will communicate with stakeholders on a regular basis;
 - d. A system for financial accountability; and
 - e. Guarantees that all meetings will be open and public, and to the extent feasible, every stakeholders to participate in the conduct of business, deliberation and decision-making.
 - b. Neighborhood councils may petition for certification or recognition in accordance with the regulations set forth in the Plan.
4. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the establishment of procedures for receiving input from Neighborhood Councils prior to decisions by the City Council, City Council Committees, boards and commissions, and the Independent Authorities.
5. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require that each neighborhood council be allowed to present to the Mayor, and the City Council, an annual list of priorities for the City budget.
6. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require Neighborhood Councils monitor the delivery of City services in their respective areas and have periodic meetings with responsible officials of City departments, subject to their reasonable availability.
7. The Ordinance Code should be changed to state that the City Council may delegate authority to Neighborhood Councils to hold public meetings prior to Council vote.
8. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the Mayor and Council appropriate funds, into a special fund created by ordinance, for two years for startup of neighborhood

councils. Thereafter, funds shall be appropriated sufficiently to carry out the defined responsibilities in full for department and councils.

9. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the Mayor and Council shall not transfer powers, duties or functions of the department to any other department or agency during the first five years of its implementation.

Housing and Neighborhoods Department

Charter Amendment:

1. The Charter should be amended to create or designate a City division or department to develop, nurture and support the grass-roots, independent and participatory neighborhood councils.
2. The Charter should be amended to create or designate a City division or department to prepare a plan, approved by City Council via legislation, with public input, for the creation of a system of neighborhood councils to ensure that every part of the City is within the boundary of a neighborhood council, and has an opportunity to form a neighborhood council.
 - a. The City division or department tasked with the creation of the plan for a system of neighborhood councils shall also be tasked with:
 - i. Assisting neighborhoods in organizing themselves, preparing petitions for certification, and identifying boundaries that do not divide communities.
 - ii. Assisting neighborhoods and Neighborhood Councils with public and civic education, outreach and training with an emphasis given to areas that have traditionally low rates of participation in government.
 - iii. Assisting neighborhood councils with their annual submission of priority projects for consideration in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
 - iv. Identifying neighborhoods at the “tipping point” within 1 year of establishment of the department.
 - b. The City shall designate the appropriate entity to convene quarterly meetings of Neighborhood Councils to share information and to engage neighborhoods in the overall City high level planning effort

Infrastructure

Ordinance Code Change:

1. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require that a specified percentage of appropriated spending and authorized borrowing for CIP projects be specifically used for urban service district services that were promised but not delivered on such as roads, water lines, sewer lines, storm water drainage, streetlights, and other similar services.

Capital Improvement Program

Ordinance Code Changes:

Organization

1. The Ordinance Code should be changed to create a committee to receive prioritized lists of projects from city departments, agencies, commissions, and Neighborhood Councils, and shall score these list of projects based upon criteria establish by the City Council through ordinance.
 - a. This committee shall meet subject to the sunshine laws.
 - b. This committee shall be the only venue for submission of projects from necessary entities, and for the scoring of submitted projects.
 - c. The Mayor shall maintain his/her right and responsibility as the Chief executive to choose the projects for inclusion on the CIP and prioritize this list prior to submittal to the City Council for approval.
 - d. The committee shall include
 - i. 2 Representatives elected by the presidents of the Neighborhood Councils
 - ii. Executive Director of the Library's Designee
 - iii. Chief Administrative Officer
 - iv. 2 Appointees made by the Mayor
 - v. Director of Public Works' Designee
 - vi. Director of Parks & Recreation's Designee
 - vii. The Sheriff's Designee
 - viii. Chief of Environmental Quality's Designee
 - ix. Director of the Florida Department of Health in Duval's Designee

Process & Procedure

2. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the CIP Planning Committee hold a public meeting at which they receive projects and hear explanation of projects from each department, agency, commission of the City, and Neighborhood Council for the purpose of scoring the projects prior to submitting the list to the Mayor for development-of the CIP budget for the succeeding fiscal year and a proposed Capital Improvement Program Plan.
3. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require that each department, agency, commission, and Neighborhood Council of the city shall have the opportunity to speak at the meeting and explain their projects and justifications for their priorities.
4. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the CIP Planning Committee hold a separate public meeting to received public comment on the projects proposed by the departments, agencies, commissions, and Neighborhood Councils of the City. There shall be no less than 14 days between each meet, to allow the public time to review the submitted projects prior to the public comment meeting.

5. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the CIP Planning Committee give 14 days notice of both meetings. The meeting shall be held in City Council chambers if possible. The meeting shall take place at time most accessible to the public.
6. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the CIP Planning Committee meet in the sunshine to discuss and score projects after the public comment meeting.
7. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the Mayor to prioritize the scored list and continue to present the CIP budget to the City Council on or before July 15 each year, as is currently required.

CIP Generally

8. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the scoring criteria be established by the City Council and passed as an ordinance.
9. The CIP Committee shall include prioritized projects over at least a 5 year period, but preferably longer.
10. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the CIP submitted by the Mayor prioritize projects over a 5 year period, but may include projects over a longer period of time. After completion of the first year of the revised CIP plan, projects listed in years two, three, four, five, and beyond shall automatically move up one year in priority. Year two projects shall automatically become year one projects, year three projects shall become year two projects, and so on. A project may only be held or returned to a later priority year upon a specific vote of the City Council on that individual project, not as a part of a vote to accept the CIP as a whole.
11. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require a project not be removed from a CIP list without a two-thirds vote of the City Council.
12. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require each CIP project should include with it, in its listing on the CIP, the number of years it has been on the CIP.

Public Communication & Access to Information

13. The Ordinance Code should be changed to require the City create a webpage within the City's website for purposes of tracking the progress of projects included in the CIP similar to the Florida Department of Transportation's website. The website should allow the projects to be searchable, or shall be published, by type of project, council district, status (including "authorized by City Council but not yet funded"), by each individual source of funding, and department or agency overseeing the project, projects submitted to the committee for inclusion in the CIP but not submitted by the Mayor for City Council approval, and any other categories deemed beneficial to the public.

Planning

Recommendation

1. The City Council should reconsider and review the relevance of the existing planning districts for usefulness in the City's planning process.