



# CHAPTER 9

# NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of strong communities. Strengthening the capacity of neighborhoods to achieve their goals will have a positive impact on Fort Worth's future. This chapter focuses on the programs that have been developed to respond to the needs and issues facing Fort Worth neighborhoods.

The City's goal is to have an active neighborhood association in every residential part of Fort Worth. Neighborhood organizations such as mandatory and voluntary neighborhood associations, non-profits, neighborhood alliances, and faith-based organizations are a means to build neighborhood capacity. An active, functioning neighborhood association can achieve many benefits including the following:

- Create a strong neighborhood image, pride, and sense of community among residents.
- Increase resident involvement in neighborhood improvements.
- Improve neighborhood safety.
- Promote skill and knowledge among members.
- Achieve consensus on priority issues and a course of action.
- Enable the City to better serve the neighborhood.

**8,301**

City Program Volunteers in FY 2021

**137,302**

Total City Volunteer Hours in FY 2021

**129,161**

Robocalls made for 28 Events in FY 2021

**45,000**

Average Daily City News Subscribers

**1,443**

Weekly Community Engagement Bulletin Subscribers

**422**

Monthly Faith-Based Bulletin Subscribers

**70,340**

Viewers on Fort Worth TV Webpage in FY 2021

**38,971**

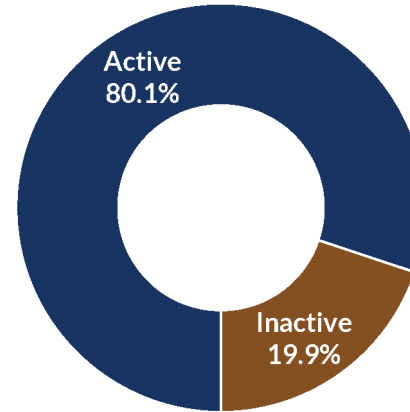
My Fort Worth (MyFW) App/Web/Text Uses in FY 2021

**312,737**

Calls to the City Call Center in FY 2021

Source: City of Fort Worth, Communications & Public Engagement Department, 2021.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS STATUS



### KEY ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

- Inclusive of all residents within its boundaries.
- Operates via an open, democratic process.
- Communicates regularly with members.
- Responds to neighborhood needs and concerns.
- Taps into City resources for the benefit of members.

## CFW SOCIAL MEDIA USERS\*

SOCIAL MEDIA	# OF USERS
nextdoor	281,000
Twitter	169,900
Facebook	57,600
YouTube	52,118**

\*Figures as of November 2021.  
\*\*Number of viewers.

## SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY AGE

Percent of U.S. adults who say they use at least one social media site, by age.

AGE RANGE	PERCENTAGE
18-29	84%
30-49	81%
50-64	73%
65+	45%

Source: Pew Research Center, Social Media Fact Sheet, 2021.

The purpose of capacity building is to enable neighborhood residents to work together, make well-considered and collaborative decisions, develop a vision and strategy for the future, and take the necessary steps to bring their collective vision to fruition. Through a collaborative decision-making process, individual skills are developed and an open atmosphere that invites participation from all members of the neighborhood can be achieved.


## CAPACITY BUILDING ESSENTIALS





Source: *Measuring Community Capacity Building*, The Aspen Institute, 1996.


## EDUCATION PROGRAMS


The City's Community Engagement Office offers the following adult education workshops that promote capacity building. The workshops range from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

- 

**Neighborhood Leadership Training**  
Covers officer responsibilities, bylaws, how to have productive and informative meetings, and tools for consensus building.
- 

**Building Trust, Building Community**  
Presents ways to develop new relationships and take strategic steps for building trust and a more engaged community.
- 

**Community Outreach & Recruiting Volunteers**  
Tools and techniques for planning events and using social media to grow a neighborhood association and recruit volunteers.
- 

**City Hall 101**  
Learn how city laws are made and how city government is structured. Learn who represents a neighborhood's interests and how concerns are heard.
- 

**Civics 101**  
Learn about your role in promoting good government that works for all citizens.

Source: *City of Fort Worth, Communications & Public Engagement Department*, 2022.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

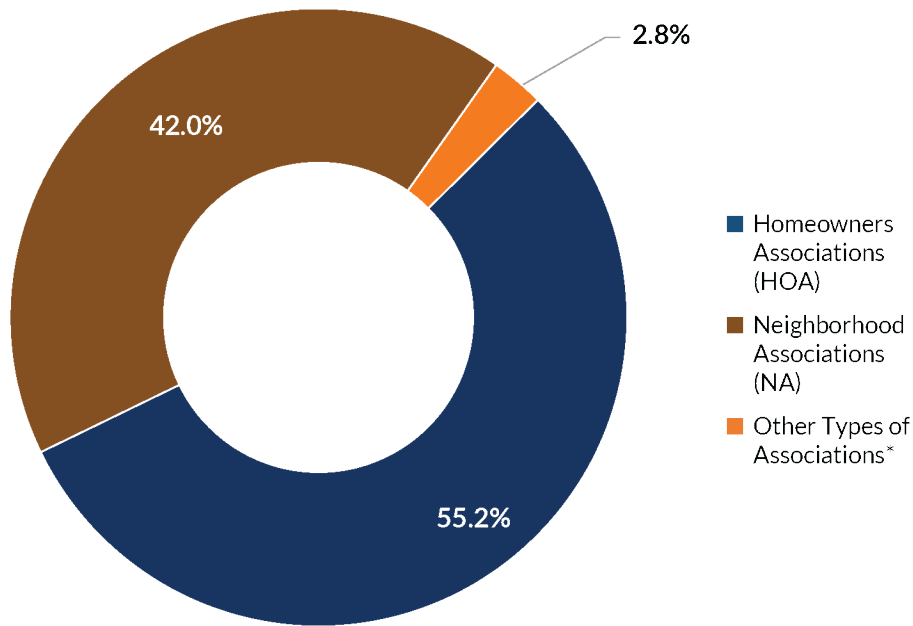
### Mandatory Associations - Legal Entities

Primarily *Homeowners Associations (HOAs)*, which are often established when a subdivision is created. As legal entities every homeowner is legally required to belong to the association, pay dues, and abide by restrictions. Often, there are requirements and restrictions included in the deeds that go beyond what city ordinance requires.

### Voluntary Associations - Social Organizations

Formed by concerned neighbors who want to get to know each other or who want to deal with crime, code violations, zoning issues, etc. and generally known as *Neighborhood Associations (NAs)*. Residents within the boundaries of an association are not required to join or pay dues, nor enforce any rules.

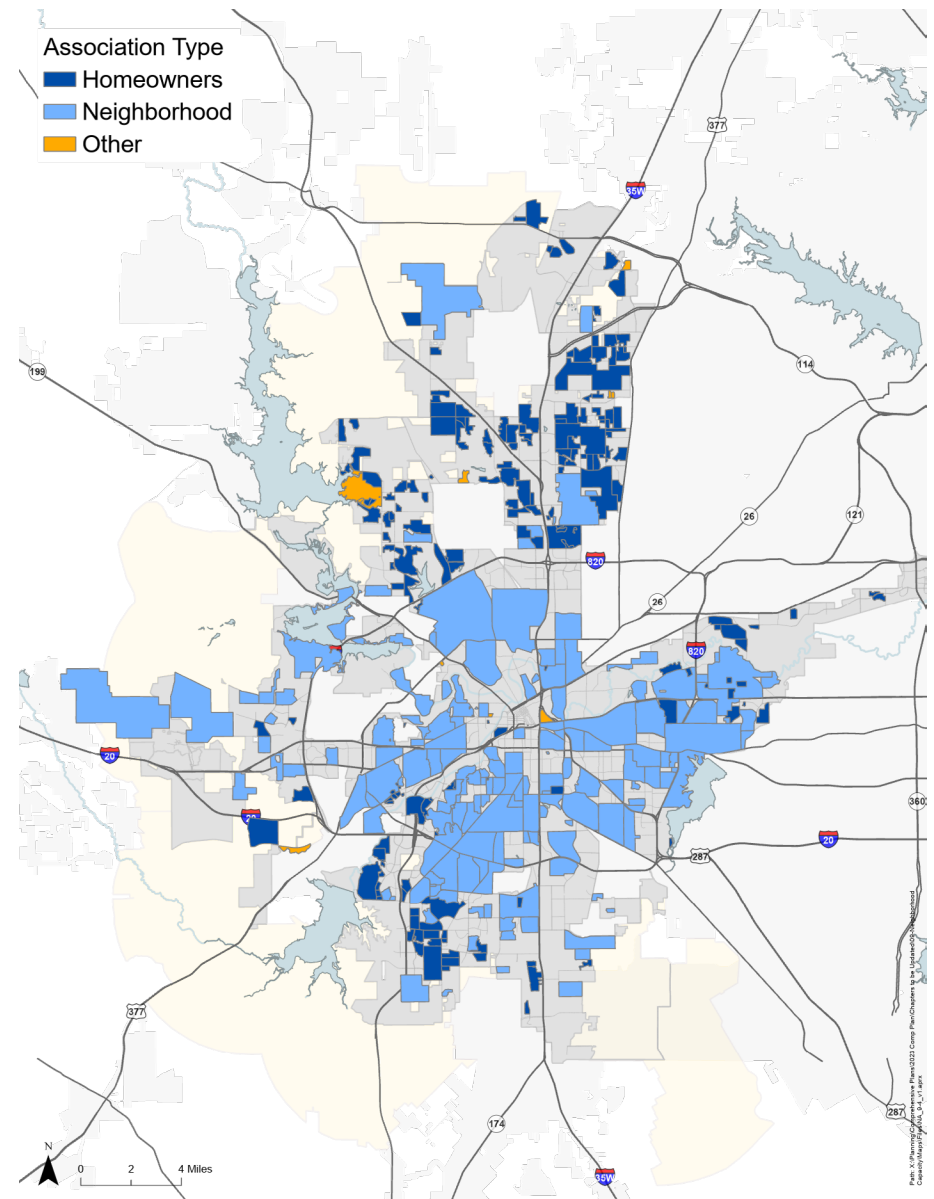
## REGISTERED NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS



\*Land Owners (LOA), Owners (OA), Property Owner (POA), and Residents (RA) Associations.

Source: City of Fort Worth, Communications and Public Engagement Department and Planning & Data Analytics Department, 2022.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS



## NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCES

Neighborhood alliances are umbrella organizations that consist of multiple neighborhood organizations that organize to foster communication and/or advance common interests or initiatives.

- Alliances are active in influencing City policy and decisions about how City resources will be used to address neighborhood needs.
- Alliance boundaries are not permitted to overlap with another alliance.
- Forming or joining an existing alliance requires a majority membership vote from neighborhood associations.

## REDEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Redevelopment organizations are generally nonprofits that focus on locations that the private sector has bypassed. Their activities are varied but can include corridor redevelopment, business development, advocacy, and other activities. In many instances, the target areas for redevelopment organizations include or are adjacent to neighborhoods, which provide an opportunity for collaboration. Example redevelopment organizations include:

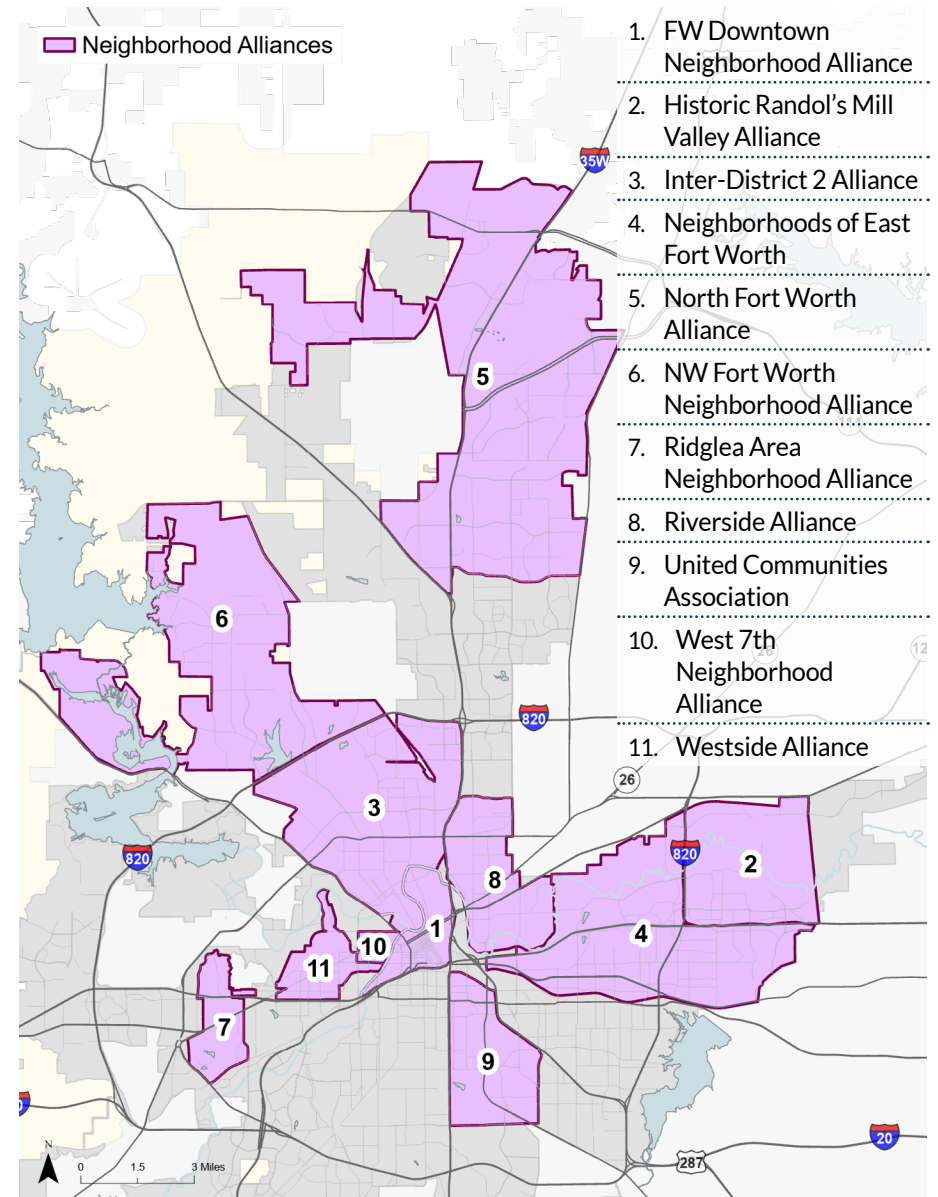
- Berry Street Initiative
- Near Southside Inc.
- Southeast Fort Worth, Inc.

## FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Faith-based organizations are religious organizations or places of worship whose mission and purpose includes outreach and assistance to communities in need.

- Faith-based organizations often are active in meeting needs in their immediate community or the city as a whole.
- Registering with the City helps faith-based groups stay informed about City projects and programs they may want to partner with or provide input on.
- Faith-based organizations can be instrumental in helping the City communicate information to residents.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCES



Source: City of Fort Worth, Communications & Public Engagement Department and Planning & Data Analytics Department, 2022.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVITIES

Neighborhood organizations are involved in a wide variety of activities, such as planting trees, organizing clean-ups, participating in Citizens on Patrol and Code Rangers, raising funds to cover the cost of improvements like street sign toppers, and many other activities.

**898+**

Estimated NA and HOA Meetings Each Year

**15+**

Neighborhoods that Receive Free Trees Each Year

**61**

Average Annual Clean-Up Events

**130**

Events for 2021 National Night Out



Neighborhood street sign topper.



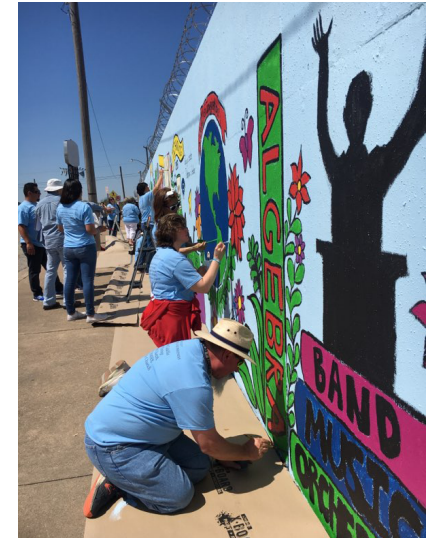
Eagle Ranch Property Owner Association clean-up held February 2019 at Eagle Ranch.



Volunteers at the City of Fort Worth's tree farm.



Ridgmar Neighborhood Association National Night Out held at Mary and Marvin Leonard Park in 2015.



Bomber Heights Neighborhood Association and Luella Merrett Elementary School community mural project, located at Kermit Avenue, painted in March 2019.

Source: City of Fort Worth, Communications and Public Engagement and Park and Recreation Departments, 2021.

## CODE RANGERS PROGRAM

The Code Rangers program promotes healthy neighborhoods through community empowerment and action by establishing and maintaining a strong relationship between neighborhood organizations and the Code Compliance Department.

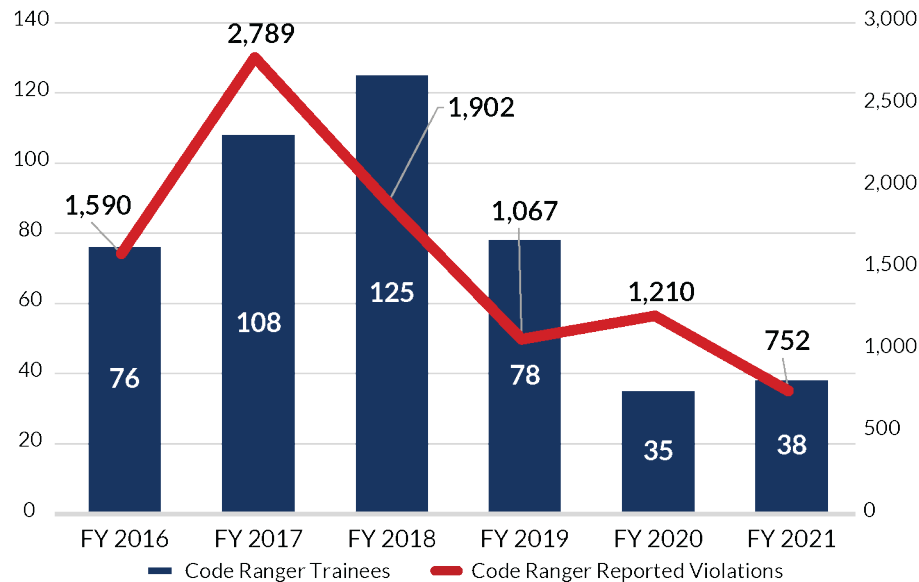


Bandit signs illegally located along a street right-of-way.

# 26,275

Bandit signs removed from public property between FY 2016 and FY 2021

## CODE RANGERS TRENDS FY 2016/2021



Source: City of Fort Worth, Code Compliance Department, 2022.

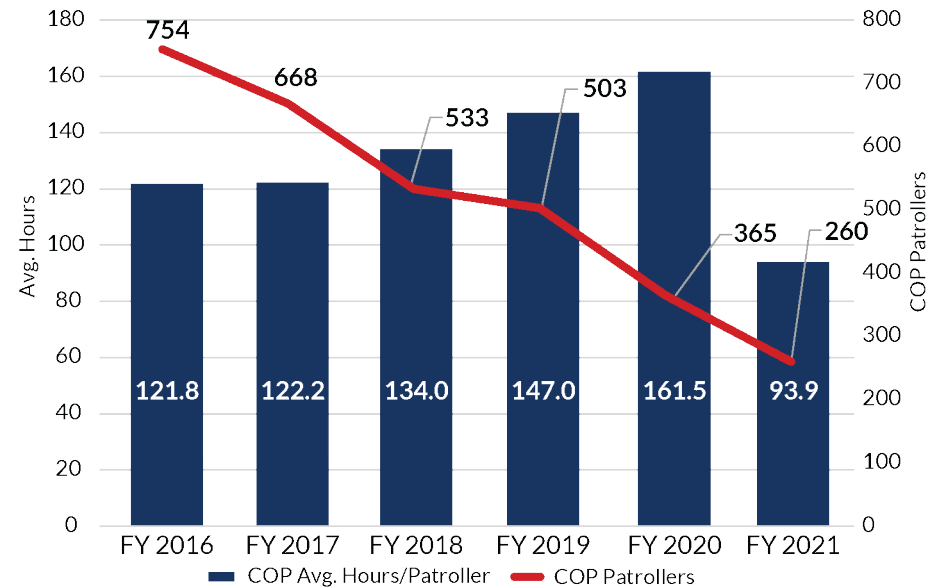
## CITIZENS ON PATROL PROGRAM

The Citizens on Patrol (COP) program is a volunteer program through the Fort Worth Police Department. Residents are trained to work with Neighborhood Patrol Officers (NPOs) to identify and address neighborhood crime issues. Although there was a 65.6 percent decline in COP neighborhood patrol groups between 2016 and 2021, the program continues to be the primary reason for the decrease in Part I Crimes, which include theft, burglary, and auto theft.



Citizens on Patrol recruitment at Sam's Club, 8301 Anderson Blvd., November 28, 2018.

## CITIZENS ON PATROL TRENDS FY 2016/2021



Source: City of Fort Worth, Police Department, 2022.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

The City of Fort Worth Community Engagement Office assists residents as they organize associations, provides support to existing associations, facilitates communication between residents and City departments, provides useful information to neighborhoods, and develops educational opportunities for associations to continue to grow and be successful. Neighborhood organizations are encouraged to register with the City to receive the benefits listed to the right.

### 45-55

Assigned Neighborhoods for the 6 Community Engagement Liaisons

### 199

Meetings Attended by Community Engagement Liaisons in FY 2021

### 15

Redistricting Software Training Sessions Held in 2021

### 282

Student and Adult Presentations between 2019 and 2020



Summer Open House meeting, held on July 29, 2021, at the future City Hall, 100 Energy Way, to discuss the 2022 Bond Election, 2022 Annual Budget, Comprehensive Plan, Redistricting Software, and City Services.

Source: City of Fort Worth, Communications and Public Engagement Department, 2021.

## REGISTRATION BENEFITS

### DATABASE

The Community Engagement database provides contact information pertaining to each organization registered with the City. The database is widely used by all City departments for public outreach. It is the key communication tool to keep organizations informed.

### WEEKLY BULLETIN

Inclusion in the weekly distribution of the Community Engagement weekly bulletin and other special email notifications sent by the City. These tools help to keep residents informed on issues that could affect their neighborhood.

### MAP

The Neighborhood Organization Map documents the official boundaries for each neighborhood and is used by the City for many purposes.

### NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Early Courtesy Notification System provides early notification of Board of Adjustment, City Plan Commission, and Zoning Commission cases that fall within a Registered Association's boundaries or within 1/4 mile of the association's boundaries. The notification is in addition to City notification of property owners within 300 feet.

### SUPPORT & TRAINING

Free training opportunities for registered organizations as well as technical assistance on organizational issues and City service issues.

## REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

### 1

Minimum 1 meeting per year.

### 2

Hold elections at least every 2 years.

### 3

Meetings open to all residents.

### 4

Bylaws on file with the City.



## ANNUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS AND NEIGHBORHOOD AWARDS

Each year, neighborhood leaders, elected officials, area agencies, and City departments come together to share and discover effective ways to actively engage Fort Worth neighborhoods.

The Fort Worth Neighborhood Awards recognize registered neighborhood association efforts to revitalize, socialize, engage, collaborate, stay healthy, and communicate with neighbors.

276

People Attended the Neighborhood Workshops and Awards Event in 2020

40

Exhibitors Offered City, Community, and Social Service Information at the Workshops and Awards Event in 2020



2019 Community Engagement Workshops and Awards held on February 22, 2020, at the Bob Bolen Public Safety Complex.

Source: City of Fort Worth, Communications & Public Engagement Department, 2021.

### GROUP AWARDS



#### **Fort Worth Pride**

Awarded to a neighborhood association with a successful physical beautification or revitalization effort.



#### **Spirit of Fort Worth**

Celebrates a neighborhood association that makes residents feel connected by focusing on social or cultural aspects of a neighborhood.



#### **Civic Engagement & Community Collaboration**

Honors a significant partnership and creative civic engagement initiative to find solutions that bring about positive change.



#### **Health and Wellness**

Honors a significant health and wellness project.



#### **Newsletter**

Acknowledges excellence in communicating news about neighborhood events and issues, and developing interest and involvement in neighborhoods.

### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

- Code Compliance Officer of the Year
- Neighborhood Patrol Officer (NPO) of the Year
- Danny Scarth Trailblazer Award
- Fort Worth Neighbor of the Year

## NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY PROGRAM

The City of Fort Worth launched the Neighborhood Improvement Strategy (NIS) Program in 2017 to make strategic investments in distressed Fort Worth neighborhoods in collaboration with neighborhood associations and residents. The vision of the Neighborhood Improvement Strategy Program is *sustainable neighborhood renewal that improves conditions and quality of life for residents.*

The NIS program was initially funded by a 1/2-cent of municipal property tax but has evolved into an annual allocation from the operation and maintenance portion of the property tax funds for capital expenditures. Each neighborhood receives between \$3M and \$4M that is typically spent on capital improvements that significantly improve neighborhood physical conditions, such as sidewalks, street trees, lighting, police cameras, park improvements, and street repaving, as well as increased City services such as code enforcement and mowing. The selection of projects is made by neighborhood residents based upon their highest rated concerns for the neighborhood.

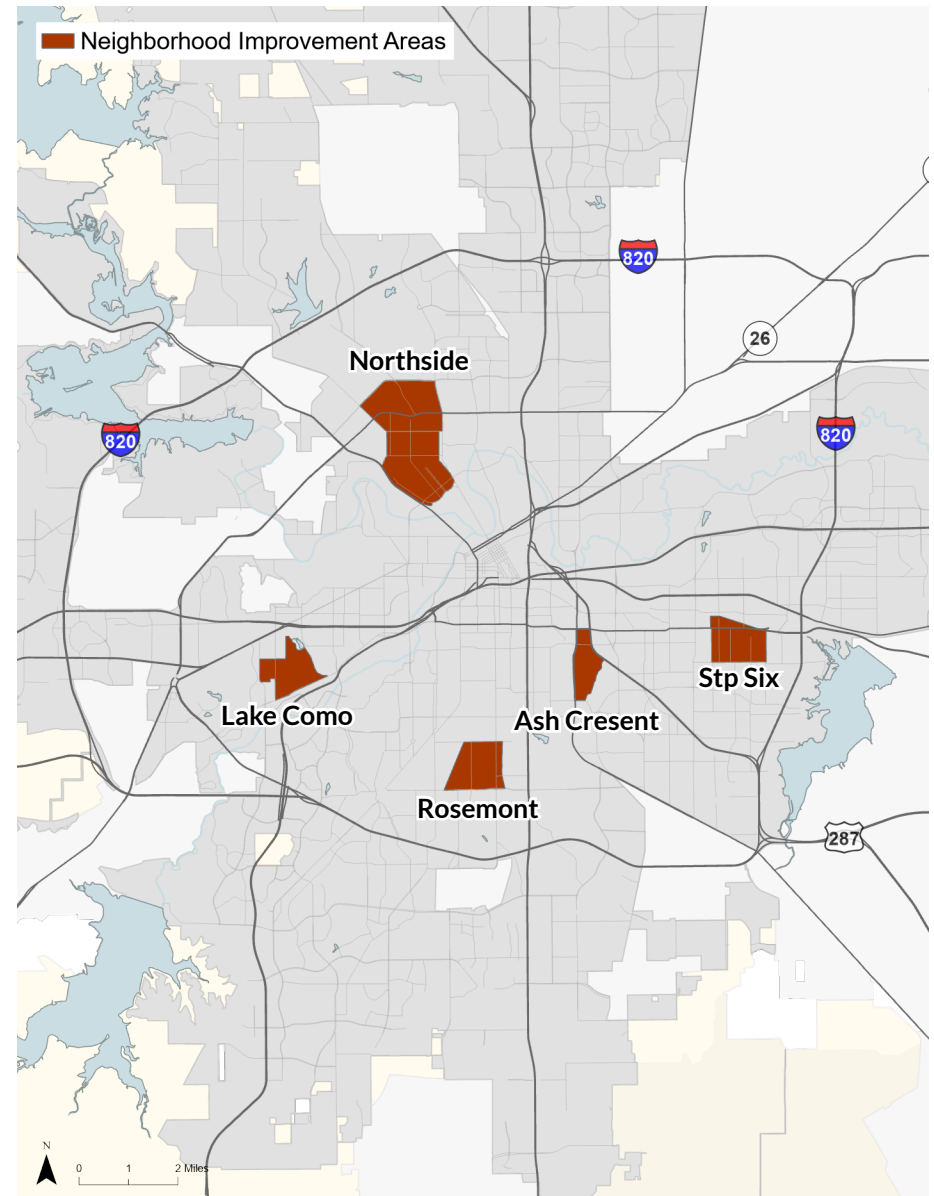
### SHORT-TERM GOALS

- Improve public safety.
- Invest in improvements to the area's physical characteristics.
- Increase community engagement.

### LONG-TERM GOALS

- Promote economic revitalization.
- Provide supportive services to reduce poverty and create paths to self-sufficiency.
- Improve internet connectivity to promote learning and employment.

## TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS



Source: City of Fort Worth, Neighborhood Services Department and Planning & Data Analytics Department, 2022.

## NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY OUTCOMES

DESIGNATION YEAR	ALLOCATION	NEIGHBORHOOD	AREA CRIME*	BUILDING PERMIT VALUE CHANGE*
2017	\$2.56M	Stop Six	↓ 36%	↑ 3,132%
2018	\$2.77M	Ash Crescent	↓ 22%	↑ 336%
2019	\$3.05M	Northside	↓ 30%	↓ 50%
2020	\$3.10M	Rosemont	↓ 18%	↓ 23%
2021	\$3.19M	Lake Como	TBD	TBD

\*Represent changes one year prior to Neighborhood Improvement Strategy designation through the end of 2020.

### PUBLIC WI-FI SERVICE

In 2021, the City enhanced the NIS program by pledging \$5M of COVID-19 Relief funding to provide free Wi-Fi service to the five NIS neighborhoods to assist residents with online resources, job applications, etc.

The program extends the City's free public Wi-Fi signal into area's with limited access. Equipment installed on utility poles uses radio signals to relay Wi-Fi from existing City facilities (e.g., community centers, libraries) into the neighborhood.



Source: City of Fort Worth, Neighborhood Services Department, 2021.

## PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

The public investments that are made in the Neighborhood Improvement Strategy target areas generally falls under one of the three categories listed below.

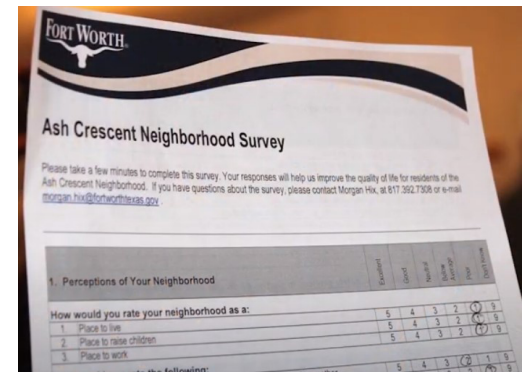
- Physical Improvements**
  - Park Improvements
  - Streetlights
  - Sidewalk construction
  - Street repaving
  - Tree Planting



- Public Safety**
  - Brush removal
  - Demolition of blighted structures
  - Illegal dumping enforcement
  - Litter removal
  - Surveillance cameras



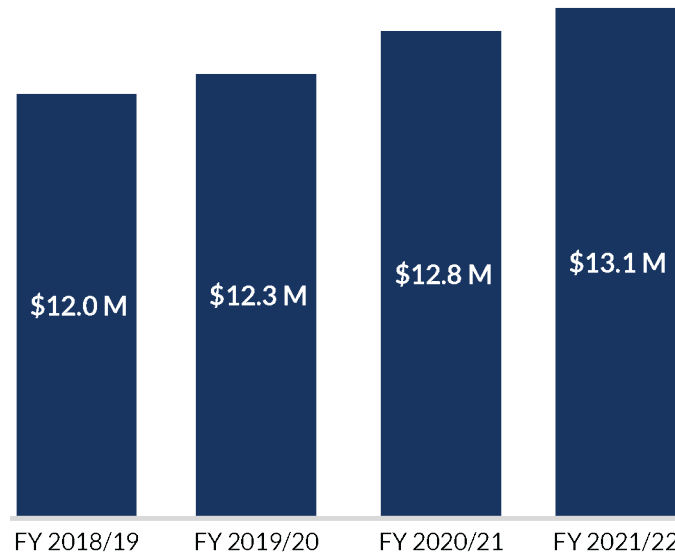
- Increase Community Engagement**
  - Mailers
  - Social Media
  - Surveys



## HUD GRANT ALLOCATIONS FY 2018/19 - FY 2021/22

The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

The City's HUD-funded projects and programs are listed in the City's Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan.



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Community Development Council (CDC) is a citizens' advisory board established to advise the City Council on setting priorities for projects funded from the HUD grant programs listed in the chart below, and to assist in ensuring compliance with the federal grant requirements. Funding priorities are listed in the City's Annual Action Plan as directed by the five-year Consolidated Plan.

## COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (CHDO)

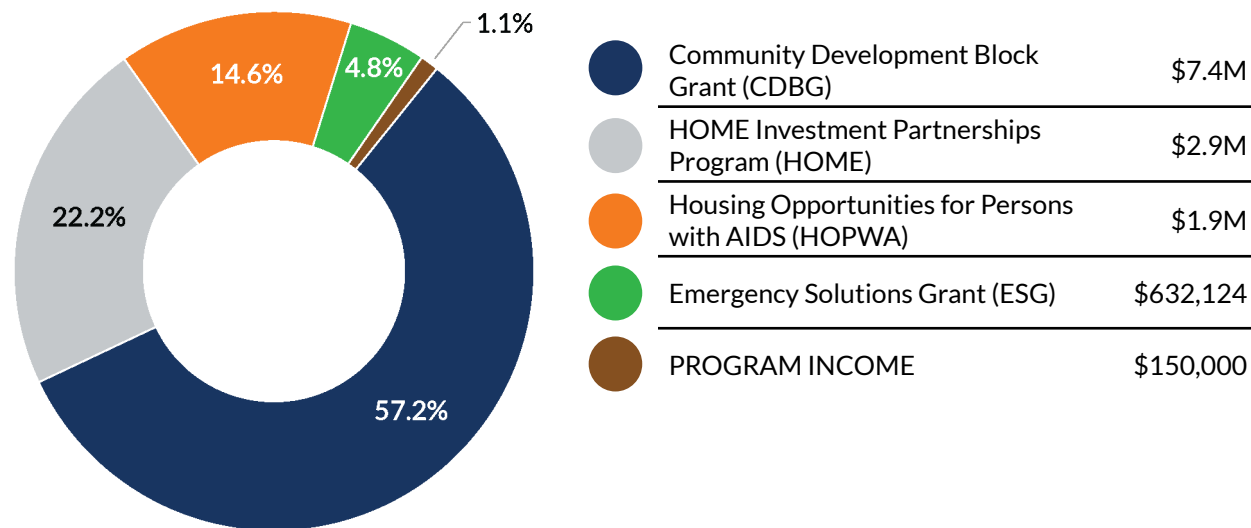
A CHDO is a private nonprofit, community-based organization focused on developing affordable housing for the community it serves. Some CHDOs offer first-time homebuyer training.

In order to qualify for designation as a CHDO, the organization must meet certain requirements pertaining to its legal status, organizational structure, and capacity and experience.

Currently, Fort Worth has three active CHDOs:

- Development Corporation of Tarrant County
- Housing Channel
- Samaritan House

## HUD PROGRAM GRANTS FY 2021/22



Source: City of Fort Worth, Neighborhood Services Department, 2021.

The City of Fort Worth uses the following goals, objectives, and strategies to create and support high quality neighborhoods that are livable, sustainable, neighborhoods of choice that serve the needs of households in all stages of life.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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- 1 Maintain or increase the number of registered neighborhood associations.**
  - Promote the retention of existing neighborhood associations and the creation of new associations.
  
- 2 Increase leadership capacity levels of registered associations.**
  - Each year, assist 10% of all registered neighborhood associations to expand their communication, outreach, and knowledge-base.
  
- 3 Reduce distress indicators in historically disenfranchised neighborhoods.**
  - Conduct surveys of distressed neighborhoods.
  - Initiate intervention strategies to bring distress indicators in line with the Citywide average.

## STRATEGIES

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### *Neighborhood Associations and Leadership Capacity*

- Encourage neighborhood organizations to complete leadership training.
- Provide Hispanic outreach and translation services to registered organizations.
- Encourage neighborhood associations to connect with an Alliance to address issues that span neighborhood boundaries.
- Review the City of Fort Worth Registration Policies for Community Organizations and update, if needed.
- Increase the awareness of the MyFW app to neighborhood associations through testimonies of issues solved in a timely manner.

### *Reduce Neighborhood Distress Indicators*

- Utilize best practice approaches to address neighborhoods that have moderately declining indicators, e.g., Middle Neighborhoods initiative.
- Promote neighborhood associations' participation in the Citizens On Patrol (COP) program.
- Compile data on central city residential areas to determine level of distress indicators.
- Conduct surveys of distressed Neighborhood Improvement Strategy Program selected neighborhoods to determine major issues from neighborhood's perspective.