

Neighborhood Conservation District Fact Sheet

Q. Why does the City have Neighborhood Conservation Districts?

A. The Neighborhood Conservation District Ordinance was enacted in 2014. The purpose of the ordinance, which is a part of the City's Zoning Code and permits the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts as overlay districts under the code, is to allow owners of property within residential neighborhoods the opportunity to preserve the attractiveness, desirability, and character of residential neighborhoods by precluding all or certain types of rental properties and thereby avoiding the potential negative effects rental properties can have on a neighborhood with regard to property deterioration, increased density, congestion, noise and traffic levels and reduction of property values.

Q. Where are the R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-2A, R-3 and R-3A Districts located within the City?

A. Most residential neighborhoods in the City of Steubenville have one of these zoning classifications; R-1 and R-1A, Low Density Residential District; R-2 and R-2A, Medium Density Residential District; and R-3 and R-3A High Density Residential District.

Q. What does creation of a Neighborhood Conservation District accomplish?

A. The creation of a Neighborhood Conservation District would mean that no new registrations of single-family dwellings for rental purposes would be accepted by the City after the effective date of the ordinance establishing the District; therefore, no new rental single-family detached dwellings would be permitted in the District. The ordinance would not affect other types of rental housing such as attached dwelling units and multi-family housing units.

Q. What about the rental property already in the proposed area?

A. The restriction on single-family detached rental housing imposed by the District does not impact properties that have already been registered as rental properties. However, if a property owner allows a rental registration to remain expired more than one (1) year, then the property would lose any prior legal non-conforming grandfathering. There is an exception to this however for single-family detached dwellings actively being offered for sale in compliance with the District requirements.

Q. What are the steps required to petition for a Residential Rental Restriction Overlay District?

1. Contact the Planning and Zoning Commission office to obtain a petition furnished by the City. A staff person will provide you with the necessary information needed regarding who can circulate a petition, who can sign a petition, requirements for establishing petition boundaries, and the time frame allowed for collecting signatures. They will also confirm that the boundaries of the area meet the legal requirements of the residential rental restriction overlay district that is being requested.

2. After acquiring signatures from one owner of at least two-thirds of all parcels within the proposed boundary of the district is obtained, the petition is submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission office. Remember only one owner of each parcel counts toward the required number of signatures. If a person owns more than one parcel of property within the proposed district, they may sign the petition for each parcel they own. If there are not sufficient signatures the Commission staff will let the contact person know how many additional signatures are needed to validate the petition. If the staff concludes that sufficient valid signatures have been presented, the petition will be referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Within 30 days of receipt, the Planning and Zoning Commission staff will determine whether the petition conforms to the requirements of the Neighborhood Conservation District.

3. If it is determined that the petition is in conformity with the requirements, the staff will draft the appropriate ordinance and forward it to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Following a public hearing, the Commission makes a recommendation to City Council regarding the ordinance.

Q. How is a petition verified?

A. The petition is reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission staff to confirm that all signatures are of parcel owners within the proposed boundary and that there is only one signature per parcel and the signature matches the County Auditor's record of ownership for that parcel. If valid, the staff will then forward the petition to the Planning and Zoning Commission and, if not valid, the staff will notify the contact person to let them know how many additional signatures are needed to validate the petition.

Q. How is a proposed District reviewed and acted on?

1. Once Planning and Zoning Commission receives a valid petition, the Commission requests that City Council introduce a neighborhood conservation district ordinance and schedules a public hearing.

2. City Council sunshines the ordinance, then gives it its first two readings. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission makes a recommendation to City Council, either positive or negative regarding adoption of the ordinance. City Council then, after receipt of the Commission's recommendation, takes final action on the ordinance at their next regular meeting, either approving or denying the ordinance.

Q. How is a Neighborhood Conservation District modified or abolished?

A. A neighborhood may petition to modify or abolish an approved District by obtaining signatures from one owner of at least two-thirds of all parcels within the proposed boundary of the district. The process is the same process used to develop the original overlay district.

Q. Is there a fee?

A. Prior to acceptance by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the representative(s) of the neighborhood responsible for the petition must provide the City with an advance deposit payable to the Clerk of Council in the amount of \$500.00. The cost of advertising the public hearing notice in the newspaper and having a court stenographer keep a record of the hearing is deducted from the deposit. If funds are left over, they are refunded. If a balance is due, the representative(s) are responsible for the additional costs.