

# What is a Healthy Neighborhood?

## A Healthy Neighborhood Definition

“A “healthy neighborhood” is a place where it makes economic sense for people to invest their time, energy and money. Where neighbors have the capacity to successfully manage the day-to-day issues in the neighborhood, and where neighbors feel confident in their investment and the future of the neighborhood.” Healthy neighborhoods are as dynamic as others. But whereas distressed neighborhoods lack the capacity to manage the changes that accompany the forces all neighborhoods are exposed to, healthy neighborhoods are buoyant in rough seas. Healthy neighborhoods grow their strengths and become stronger. Healthy neighborhoods compete successfully for scarce investments.”

## Characteristics of Healthy Neighborhood

A healthy neighborhood is a place where:

- Neighbors know and look out for one another
- Residents are proud of their neighborhood
- Properties are well kept and maintained
- Properties are routinely updated and invested in
- Residents set, maintain, and demand acceptable behavioral norms
- Public and private spaces are kept clean and free of litter and debris

## What is a Well Maintained Property?

A well maintained property demonstrates the following behaviors:

- The siding and paint is clean or washed
- Broken windows and screens are fixed or replaced
- Lights, mailboxes, and house numbers exist, are maintained, and lights turned on at night
- The lawn/grass is cared for and cut weekly or as needed
- Sidewalks, driveways, and walkways are edged and kept clean
- Bushes and hedges are cut and trimmed in the spring and fall
- Leaves are raked, fallen branches removed, and trees trimmed as needed
- Fences are straight, functional, painted and maintained or they are removed

## **What are the Behavioral Norms of a Healthy Neighborhood?**

- Properties are well maintained – grass cut, lawns is clean, and bushes/hedges timed
- Excessive noise does not occur early in the early morning or late at night
- Trash bins are neatly placed at the street the night be pick-up and brought in the same day
- Litter is not acceptable. Residents pick-up and remove litter from the street, sidewalks, and lawns
- Cars are not parked on sidewalks or lawns or left in states of disrepair in the driveway

## **Neighborhood Values & Norms**

A healthy and stable neighborhood has “neighborhood values” or norms that most if not all owners agree on and abide by. In distressed and in-transition neighborhoods these values and norms are either not as strong, and in some cases, none existent. These neighborhood values are the basic things that most people in healthy neighborhood take for granted. But when these values don’t exist, these little things, can send a strong message to residents and the market that neighborhood does not care.

An important component of any neighborhood reinvestment strategy should be to create an environment where these “neighborhood values” are established again and followed. The following are some examples of “neighborhood values” that need to be implemented:

- Yards are kept clean and well maintained. The grass is cut regularly, bushes and hedges are trimmed, and no junk or debris are kept in the yard. Only appropriate fences are installed. Inappropriate and damaged fences are removed. All fences are well maintained.
- Front porches are kept clean and porch furniture is in good condition. Indoor furniture is not acceptable for use on porches.
- Residents turn on front porch lights at night (the use of energy efficient bulbs will result in no increase in energy costs).
- Resident plant flowers in front-yard gardens or display flowers in planters on front porches. Residents also display and fly flags on front porches. Flowers and flags are simple and inexpensive ways of showing that residents care.
- People do not litter. And when there is litter, it is removed immediately. Residents sweep the sidewalk, driveways, and street (along the curb) weekly.
- Trash is placed out at the street only on trash day (or night before) and the trash containers are taken in on the same day. Trash is not put out days before collection because it blows away, is disturbed by animals, and is an eyesore for the neighborhood. All trash, including bulky waste, is placed neatly at the street.
- Residents respect their neighbors and conduct their lives in ways that do not negatively impact their neighbors. This means no loud music, no beeping the car horn, and no other

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noises. Maintenance and construction work should not start before 8:00AM or beyond 8:00PM.

- Residents respect and observe speed limits and other traffic regulations. They do not speed and endanger the lives of children, pets, and pedestrians. They do not park illegally, block traffic to talk with friends, or park their cars on sidewalks or in front lawns.
- Residents take responsibility for their children's actions and teach them to be good neighbors. Children don't play in the street, respect private property, and respect their neighbors.
- Residents shovel snow sidewalks, walkways, porches, and driveways in a timely manner. Residents also rake leaves and pick up fallen branches in a timely manner.
- Residents do not engage in criminal activity in their homes or on the block. Residents do not allow or accept criminal activity. Dealing drugs is never acceptable.

All residents should be encouraged to embrace these neighborhood values. Block watches, neighborhood organizations, and other community organizations should all embrace these values and promote them.

## **Neighborhood Values – Sample Code of Conduct**

We the residents (homeowners, renters, and investors) of the \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood or blocks are proud of where we live and respectful of our neighbors and neighborhood. As good neighbors we embrace the following neighborhood values:

- All yards are kept clean and well maintained. The grass is cut regularly, bushes and hedges are trimmed, and no junk or debris are kept in the yard. Only period and use appropriate fences are installed. Inappropriate and damaged fences are removed. All fences are well maintained.
- Front porches are kept clean and porch furniture is in good condition. Indoor furniture is not acceptable for use on porches. Front porch and rear entry lights are turned on at night.
- Resident plant flowers in front yard gardens or display flowers in planters on front porches. Residents also display flags on front porches. Flowers and flags are simple and inexpensive ways of showing that people care.
- Residents do not litter. When there is litter, residents removed immediately. Residents sweep sidewalks, driveways, and streets (along the curb) weekly.
- Trash is placed out at the street only on trash collection day (or night before) and trash containers are taken in on the same day. Trash is not put out at the street days before collection because it blows away, is disturbed by animals, and is an eyesore for the neighborhood. All trash, including bulky waste, is placed neatly at the street.
- Residents respect their neighbors and neighborhood and conduct their lives in ways that do not negatively impact their neighbors. This means no loud music, no beeping car horns, and no other excessive noises. Property maintenance, lawn care, construction work never starts before 8:00AM or goes beyond 8:00PM.
- Residents respect and observe speed limits and other traffic regulations. Residents do not speed and endanger the lives of children, pets, and pedestrians. Residents do not park illegally, block traffic to talk with friends, or park their cars on sidewalks or in front lawns. Pocket bikes, mini bikes, ATV's are not driven in the neighborhood.
- Residents take responsibility for their children's actions and teach them to be good neighbors. Children don't play in the street (blocking traffic), respect private property, and respect their neighbors.
- Residents shovel snow on sidewalks, walkways, porches, and driveways in a timely manner. Residents also rake leaves and pick up fallen branches in a timely manner.
- Residents do not engage in criminal activity in their homes or on the. Residents do not allow or accept criminal activity. Buying and selling drugs is never acceptable.
- Buildings are well maintained and regularly invested in. All property improvement projects are of high quality and consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood.