

HOW TO START A COUNTY SANCTIONED NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

1. Talk to your neighbors and find out if they share your interest. A minimum of three landowners from the neighborhood must formally request the Flathead County Planning and Zoning (FCPZ) Office to hold publicly advertised informational meetings in a public place open to all interested parties. FCPZ will attempt to mail notices to all landowners whose property might be included in the plan area, informing them of the initial meetings. The meetings will be chaired by FCPZ staff and designed to inform property owners about neighborhood plans and the process used to create them. Those individuals that initiated contact with FCPZ shall be the official neighborhood contacts until a Steering Committee is selected.
2. The neighborhood contacts should determine tentative boundaries of the neighborhood plan area.
3. The neighborhood contacts should go to the Flathead County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department at 800 South Main Street in Kalispell and purchase a map of the plan area that shows the number of landowners within the tentative boundaries.
4. The neighborhood contacts should create a petition that says, "I own land within the tentative boundaries of the _____ Neighborhood Plan area. I am interested in establishing a neighborhood plan. I would like the Flathead County Planning and Zoning (FCPZ) Office to assist our neighborhood in the process by holding public organizational meetings and then developing a plan. I understand that a mailing announcing the first organizational meeting will be sent to ALL landowners within the tentative boundaries of the plan area. I also understand that the proposed plan must be supported by at least 50% of all landowners signing a petition of support or a 60% poll of responding landowners before being submitted to the Flathead County Planning Board."
5. The neighborhood contacts should collect signatures representing ownership of at least 10% of the parcels within the tentative boundaries and take the petition to FCPZ.
6. Schedule an initial Organizational Meeting that is publicly advertised and mail a notice announcing the meeting to every landowner within the proposed plan area. The mailing will be conducted and the meeting chaired by FCPZ.
7. Hold the initial and subsequent organizational meetings in public places. The phase is complete when the actual boundaries are set, a steering committee has been selected and an organizational approach to generating the plan has been chosen.
8. FCPZ will inform all landowners within the selected boundaries that their property is in a plan area, invite them to join the planning effort, tell them how to contact the steering committee and how they can access materials related to the neighborhood planning process.
9. Follow the six steps outlined in Chapter 10 of the Flathead County Growth Policy to develop the plan. All meetings are to be noticed publicly and held in a public place.
10. At the end of Step 4 of the process described in Chapter 10, the plan must demonstrate wide support before it can be presented to the Planning Board and Commissioners for adoption. This can be done by having at least 50% of the landowners within the plan area sign a petition supporting the plan, or by having FCPZ poll the neighborhood by mailing ballots to all landowners within the plan area. 60% of the respondents must be in favor of adopting the plan, with a minimum of 30% of landowners responding.