

# Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ)

*Promote housing, economic development and quality services in Fort Worth's Central City.*



## Background

Chapter 378 of the Texas Local Government Code, effective since May 1999, authorizes municipalities to create NEZs and provide tax and other incentives to promote affordable housing and economic development, and improve the quality of social services, education, or public safety for residents of the NEZ. Pursuant to this law, the Fort Worth City Council created the NEZ program in 2001 to encourage redevelopment activities in Fort Worth's central city, particularly target areas such as commercial corridor urban villages.

## Selection Criteria for NEZ

A NEZ may be selected in one of two ways: designation by the City Council or through an application process. Selection criteria for a NEZ include:

- Be aimed at creating or rehabilitating affordable housing, promoting economic development, or improving the quality of public services
- Have at least 75% of its boundaries located in CDBG-eligible areas or the central city
- Have no more than 6,000 people or be no larger than 1.5 square miles at the time of designation
- Meet criteria for State Reinvestment Zone
- Must develop a Strategic Plan that outlines the goals and objectives of the NEZ

The City Council will give priority consideration to areas located within or include state/federal empowerment or enterprise zones, mixed-use growth centers, Model Blocks, special target areas, or commercial corridors. If a proposed NEZ boundary includes an urban village as defined in the Fort Worth Comprehensive Plan, a logical, defensible area of the urban village as determined by the City must be zoned mixed-use.

## Basic Incentives Available in a NEZ

### Municipal Property Tax Abatement

The following properties and projects may qualify for municipal property tax abatements:

- Owner-occupied property
- Investor-owned single family property
- Single family development project
- Multi-family development project
- Commercial, industrial or community facilities development project
- Mixed-use development project

## Fee Waivers

The following fees are waived for **qualified properties or projects**:

- All building permit related fees (including plans review and inspections)
- Plat application fee (including concept plan, preliminary plat, final plat, short form replat)
- Board of Adjustment application fee
- Demolition fee
- Structural moving fee
- Community Facility Agreement (CFA) application fee
- Zoning application fee
- Street and utility easement vacation application fee
- Traffic impact fee
- Water & waste impact fee (Limits apply)
- Ordinance Inspection fee
- Consent/Encroachment Agreement Application fee

## Release of City Liens

The following City liens may be released for **qualified properties or projects**:

- Weed liens
- Demolition liens
- Board-up/open structure liens
- Paving liens

## Designated NEZ Areas

There are currently sixteen designated NEZs:

- Evans/Rosedale
- Hemphill/Berry
- Historic Handley
- Magnolia Village
- Berryhill/Mason Heights
- Polytechnic/Texas Wesleyan
- Ridglea Village/Como
- Riverside
- Rolling Hills
- Stop Six
- Woodhaven
- Berry/University
- Lake Arlington
- Trinity Park
- West 7th/University
- Wedgwood Square
- Oakland Corners

## Other Possible NEZ Areas

City Council endorsed the designation of commercial corridor urban villages and their surrounding eligible neighborhoods as NEZs. Nine of them have been designated. The final designation of remaining three urban villages is pending until they are rezoned to mixed-use. These possible NEZ areas are Mercado and Paddock Bend.