

## **SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE**

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

September 9, 2024

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The primary focus of this memorandum of understanding shall be to further the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Super Neighborhood Initiative as expressed by the Mayor of the City of Houston. It shall be the intention of this memorandum of understanding (MOU) to set out the structure of an alliance amongst the super neighborhood councils recognized by the Mayor. The MOU shall identify the roles and responsibilities of participating councils who shall work collectively to advance the institutionalization of the Super Neighborhood Initiative as a meaningful partner of the government of the City of Houston ("the City"). Two objectives essential to institutionalization shall be addressed:

- (1) an organizational framework for super neighborhood councils to discuss issues of community impact and make decisions that shall present a unified voice to the City; and
- (2) an operating strategy for all councils to participate inclusively and with accountability in that framework.

#### **Background of Super Neighborhood Initiative**

The Mayor of Houston launched the Super Neighborhood Program on June 7, 1999 as a means to welcome the input offered by community-based organizations throughout the city. The program was key to the Mayor's concept of Neighborhood-Oriented Government that, at its core, provided for community participation in decisions of local significance made by the City. The program was intended as an additional venue for access to city government, working alongside the formal, elected representation of the Mayor, City Council, and Controller, as well as the public outreach conducted by City departments. It was specifically designed to organize and process the many proposals of the stakeholder groups operating in similar local areas. Propelled by community-driven efforts, the program, now referred to as the Super Neighborhood Initiative, counts thirty-six councils representing 43 super neighborhoods as participants.

In February 2002, leaders of super neighborhood councils began informally meeting on a monthly basis to share ideas for community projects, ways to improve the initiative, and constructive feedback to the City to institutionalize super neighborhoods. As the forum grew with additional councils recognized and joining, the group which calls itself the Super Neighborhood Alliance ("the Alliance") appealed to the Mayor to support the emerging council of super neighborhood councils. At the November 2002 meeting of the Alliance, the Mayor agreed to:

- Introduce a proclamation acknowledging the Alliance as an Advisory Board that advises the Mayor on matters of community impact,
- Conduct citywide outreach about the Super Neighborhood Initiative, and

- Introduce a resolution for City Council approval that reflects a commitment for the City to consider super neighborhood action plans (SNAPs) proposed by the councils to make annual budget decisions.

The initial Memorandum of Understanding between the Super Neighborhood Alliance and the City of Houston was signed, effective March 17, 2003.

An updated Memorandum of Understanding was signed, effective September 9, 2024.

### **Organizational Framework of the Alliance**

The umbrella organization that shall function as an Advisory Board shall be formally called the Super Neighborhood Alliance ("the Alliance"). The Alliance shall be founded on the following guiding principles:

- The Alliance shall be a non-partisan, non-profit organization whose sole purpose shall be to further the institutionalization of the Super Neighborhood Initiative into City government.
- The Alliance shall welcome all eligible members regardless of religious beliefs, ethnicity and race, color, age, national origin, physical challenges, gender, and sexual orientation.
- Membership in the Alliance shall be open to all Super Neighborhoods. Each Super Neighborhood Council may send as many representatives as it reasonably chooses who may attend any portion of an Alliance meeting and participate in non-disruptive civil discussion and debate as designated by the Alliance Chair. However, only one Representative from each Super Neighborhood may vote on matters before the Alliance. Super Neighborhoods may substitute representatives as they choose. The representative shall be a Super Neighborhood Council's president, chair, or other appointee assigned to serve on the Alliance.
- In recognition of scheduling conflicts, an alternate designated by each individual council may substitute for that council's representative on the Alliance.
- The Alliance shall impose no membership dues or fees for participation.
- Input to the City shall be based on membership consensus, as unified decisions of the Alliance.
- Decisions of the Alliance shall be made at its regular meetings promulgated in the "Meetings" section of this MOU, the notice of which shall be provided five days prior to any general meeting.
- The Alliance shall expect each member to adhere to the by-laws and decisions of the super neighborhood council he or she represents.
- The Alliance shall abide by the operating procedures for member participation as set forth in this MOU.
- The Alliance shall be open to public review and accountability.

### **Strategy for Participation**

For the purpose of coordinating regular meetings, emergency sessions, information exchanges, and other administrative needs of the Alliance, members shall agree to the following operating procedures:



Officers. Officers shall be elected at a meeting for which written notice shall be duly given to all eligible members. Positions to be filled shall include the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. The chair shall preside over all regular meetings and executive sessions. The chair shall have the authority to conduct meetings and maintain order. The chair shall appoint all committee chairs as necessary.

The vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the chair. This office shall assist the chair to perform various duties and serve on committees as assigned by the chair.

The secretary shall keep an accurate record of proceedings of all regular meetings, act as custodian of current records, attend to correspondence, and file and maintain up-to-date membership lists and attendance records.

The treasurer shall keep an up-to-date record of all financial transactions, receive all money, and deposit funds in the bank. This officer shall disburse money as authorized by the Alliance. The treasurer shall present a report of finances at each regular meeting of the Alliance. Any check disbursed shall contain the signatures of two of the following: chair, or vice-chair, and the treasurer.

Terms. The chair and vice chair shall be elected to one-year terms at the regular January meeting by quorum of the members of the Alliance. The secretary and treasurer shall be elected to two-year terms. Officers shall be installed at the subsequent February meeting of each year

All officers shall be elected by a simple majority quorum of the Alliance. No officer shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

A vacancy in an office shall be filled by a special election. Officers elected to fill vacancies shall assume office at the first regular meeting following the special election and shall hold office until the next regular installation of officers.

Any officer who fails to meet the obligations and responsibilities of his or her office may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of the Alliance. Any officer who does not meet the continuing eligibility requirements for membership in the Alliance shall relinquish his or her occupation of the office to the Chair who shall arrange to fill the vacancy.

Committees: Committees shall be established by the Chair, as need arises. The committee chairpersons shall appoint committee members.

Meetings: The Alliance will hold at least 9 regular monthly meetings at a time and place to be designated by the Planning Committee annually each December for the upcoming year. In the event that a regular meeting falls on a legal holiday, the time and date of the general meeting shall be set by the chair at the preceding regular meeting with the consent of the Alliance.

Voting: In recognition of joint councils that may participate, one (1) vote shall be assigned for each super neighborhood represented by a member. The Chair shall cast one (1) additional vote in the event of a tie vote. One-third of the Duly Designated Alliance Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular meeting.

Other: "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be the guide for procedure on all points of order not covered herein. Operating procedures may be amended from time to time on an as-needed basis by written

resolution and presented at a regular meeting, to be read and approved by a two-thirds majority vote at two consecutive meetings at which a quorum is present at each meeting.

**Signatories**

We verify that we are duly elected officers of the Super Neighborhood Alliance and, by signing, attest that the Alliance by-laws were properly amended on September 9, 2024 and this MOU reflects the changes necessary to the original MOU executed March 17, 2003 to reflect the 2024 amendments to the Alliance by-laws.

X *Cheryl Palmer O'Brien*

Cheryl Palmer O'Brien  
Chair - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X

Keith Downey  
Vice Chair - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X

Amy Dinn  
Secretary - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X DocuSigned by:  
*Martin Buzak*  
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Approved as to form  
City of Houston Legal Dept.  
File No.: LD-CON-0000003435

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Chair - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X   
Keith Downey (Nov 9, 2024 17:11 CST)

Keith Downey  
Vice Chair - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X

Amy Dinn  
Secretary - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X

City of Houston Legal Dept.

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Chair - Super Neighborhood Alliance

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Amy Dinn  
Secretary - Super Neighborhood Alliance

X

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