



## Introduction

Welcome to the Neat Neighborhoods Competition Handbook. In this introductory section, we aim to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the competition. The handbook covers various categories, each with its own dedicated section.

### Competition Background

A part of the Clean Green Springfield initiative, the Neat Neighborhoods Competition is patterned after Tidy Towns, a tradition rooted in Ireland since 1958. This community challenge has now found its way to Springfield, thanks to the Hatch Foundation, marking the start of an exciting competition aimed towards a cleaner, greener, and happier city.

Looking back at early 2021, the City of Springfield and our community partners faced a challenge—comments and complaints were flooding in about the increasing amount of trash along our roads. Maybe it was the pandemic or a collective surge of community spirit, but there was an unmistakable energy—a shared eagerness to get involved, be active, and create a positive impact.

As we dive into the new Neat Neighborhoods Competition, the spirit of Clean Green Springfield, born from collaboration and a shared commitment to positive change, becomes a key player in our quest for a tidy town. It's not just about tidying up; it's about leaving a lasting impression and being proud of your neighborhood.

### Competition Structure in Springfield

In Springfield, the competition is organized across our four City Zones: Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3, and Zone 4. Neighborhoods within each City Zone will compete against one another, fostering a sense of friendly competition and camaraderie. The competition will award a first, second and third place winner in each Zone. This hands-on approach not only gets the community involved but also lets us take a personalized look at the special projects each neighborhood is diving into. Each neighborhood has a volunteer captain willing to provide communication, coordination and documentation.

### Competition Timeframe

Neat Neighborhoods registration opens May 1, 2024, with judges considering project and enhancements taking place between Jan. 1 – Sept. 1, 2024.



### Categories and Scoring

The competition is divided into five categories, with the score being a reflection of the collective efforts and achievements of participating neighborhoods. The categories cover a broad spectrum including: community planning, public spaces, green spaces, streets, tidiness, and more.

### Embracing Local Culture

While Tidy Towns originated in Ireland, Springfield's adaptation of the competition integrates seamlessly with our local culture and values. It serves as a platform for communities to showcase their commitment to environmental stewardship, neighborhood pride, and community development.

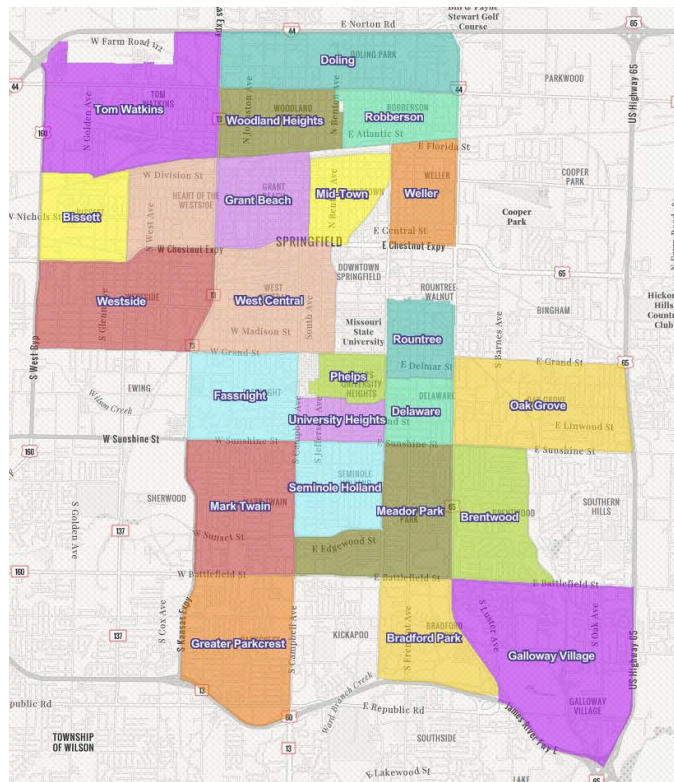
### Encouragement for Participation

We encourage all [registered neighborhoods](#) in Springfield to actively participate in the Neat Neighborhoods competition. Regardless of the size or scale of your project, every effort contributes to the overall enhancement of our community. This inclusive approach ensures that the Neat Neighborhoods competition becomes a unifying force, bringing residents together for a common cause.

### Zones and Neighborhoods

The Neat Neighborhoods competition breaks down each Zone to keep the numbers of neighborhoods as even as possible, making sure the competition landscape is a level playing field. This breakdown isn't about complicating things; it's a straightforward way to ensure every community has an equal chance.

By organizing neighborhoods this way, we're not just playing with numbers; we're creating a fair platform for each community to stand out. It's a simple strategy that speaks volumes about our commitment to fairness.





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**Zone 1 Neighborhoods**

Bissett  
Grant Beach  
Heart of the Westside  
Midtown  
Tom Watkins  
Westside  
Woodland Heights

**Zone 2 Neighborhoods**

Delaware  
Doling  
Oak Grove  
Robberson  
Rountree  
Weller

**Zone 3 Neighborhoods**

Fassnight  
Greater Parkcrest  
Mark Twain  
Phelps Grove  
West Central

**Zone 4 Neighborhoods**

Bradford Park  
Brentwood  
Galloway Village  
Meador Park  
Seminole-Holland  
University Heights

**Competition Categories**



The Neat Neighborhoods Competition will be judged based on activities in five categories. Read more to learn about the categories and get ideas.

Community - Your Planning & Involvement	<b>25</b> points
Public Places / Roads, Streets & Alleys	<b>25</b> points
Green Spaces	<b>25</b> points
Tidiness & Litter Control	<b>25</b> points
Total Points	<b>100</b> points

### **COMMUNITY – YOUR PLANNING AND INVOLVEMENT**

This section, worth **25 points**, emphasizes the importance of neighborhood planning and involvement in the effort. It evaluates the overall quality of the planned projects and associated community engagement. Key factors include: neighborhood involvement, partnerships with local agencies, completed projects, and the discussion of your Neat Neighborhoods Plan. Social inclusion, a whole-neighborhood approach, and the role of volunteers are also considered.

#### **When determining a plan for Neat Neighborhoods activities, consider the following.**

What makes your neighborhood special?

- The unique characteristics and atmosphere of your neighborhood.
- Important places and features reflecting the area's history.
- Perception of the area by visitors.

#### **Assess the needs of your neighborhood**

- Conduct a cleanup or beautification assessment survey to help identify neighborhood needs.
- Survey specific areas if there is need for targeted improvements.
- Hold a neighborhood meeting to present the survey report.



- Engage with the area community to help prioritize actions and present a realistic list to the neighborhood.
- Consider engaging schools, churches and businesses for surveys involving children's or employees perspectives and help with projects.

### **Link in with Other Plans or activities**

Groups should look at existing planned neighborhood cleanups and activities to coordinate efforts. Example: annual Neighborhood Cleanups, stream cleanups, other Clean Green Springfield activities, Adopt-A-Street and Adopt-A-Stream. Does your neighborhood regularly host an event in April or May? What can you do to enhance it?

### **Plan Group Actions**

Groups should establish achievable goals through strategic planning. Projects should be worthwhile, feasible, and financially sound.

## **PUBLIC PLACES / ROADS, STREETS & ALLEYWAYS**

In this section, worth **25** points, the Neat Neighborhoods Competition aims its efforts in cleaning and enhancing public spaces. The evaluation centers on the quality of projects and neighborhood engagement, emphasizing the care and revitalization of parks, social gathering spots, and communal areas. The focus remains on the upkeep of public spaces for neighborhood well-being. Public right-of-ways, parks, social gathering spots, and communal areas are pivotal, and efforts are dedicated to ensuring their cleanliness and functionality. Our roadways are the veins of our city, influencing our daily lives and shaping the character of Clean Green Springfield. We acknowledge the critical role that a well-maintained transportation network plays in creating a sustainable, welcoming environment.

### **Cleanliness Initiatives**

Neat Neighborhoods actively engage in maintaining litter and debris control in public spaces. Special attention is given to cleanliness in social and pedestrian-access areas. The Neat Neighborhoods competition works towards fostering a sense of pride by ensuring these spaces remain aesthetically pleasing and free from litter or debris.

### **Community Cleanup Events**

To reinforce the importance of a clean and vibrant neighborhood, Clean Green Springfield supports neighborhood cleanup activities specifically targeting public areas, including roads,



streets and alleyways. These activities bring the community together, instilling a shared responsibility for the upkeep of communal spaces.

### **Education/Awareness/History of Neighborhood Public Places**

Neat Neighborhoods recognize and enhance their neighborhood landmarks and appreciate the history behind historical elements unique to their neighborhood. Consider initiatives to increase education and awareness of these elements and their importance to your neighborhood identity. Plan a cleanup, beautification, or improvement of some sort to educate about the importance of upkeep and preservation of these historical elements.

Through these dedicated efforts, the Neat Neighborhoods Competition aims to create an environment where public places are not only taken care of by residents but also actively contribute to the overall quality of life in the neighborhood.

### **Major roadways and local streets**

Often the major roadways in the neighborhoods offer greater opportunity for cleanup and beautification because where there's more traffic, there's usually more litter. Major roadways also often function as gateways into our neighborhoods. What can your neighborhood team do to shine up these spaces to welcome folks in? Local neighborhood streets have their own issues with litter overflowing out of uncovered curbside trash bins, and curbside trash dumping.

### **Parking lots, Dump Sites, and Bridges**

Parking lots, and areas under bridges often escape attention but are crucial for a cleaner Springfield. Addressing issues like litter and debris build-up in these areas is essential. Engaging with relevant authorities or owners helps address these challenges effectively.

### **Pedestrian Connections and Inclusive Access: Walkways to a Cleaner Future**

Walking and biking is a vital mode of transport. Well-maintained trails, inclusive access, and attention to cleanliness and lighting encourage more people to walk and bike.

As we navigate these cleaner pathways, let's not forget the importance of safety and community engagement. Neat Neighborhoods groups play a central role in ensuring our roads are not just functional routes but a reflection of our commitment to a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant Springfield.

## **GREEN SPACES**



Cleanliness and tidiness of Green Spaces accounts for **20** points. Nestled within certain neighborhoods are essential green spaces that contribute to the identity of our community. One notable example is Fassnacht Creek, which cuts its way through Phelps Grove Park. It's not just about tidiness; it's about nurturing a thriving ecosystem. In the Neat Neighborhoods Competition, we value the cleanliness of these areas, but more importantly, we celebrate initiatives that contribute to biodiversity, sustainability, and community awareness. Here's a closer look at how we score green space litter control and clean-up:

### **Litter Cleanup in Green Spaces**

**Remember to respect private property.** While we love a good clean-up, always adhere to posted signs on private property. If you identify a concern of trash on private property, a simple talk with neighbors can do wonders, or you can reach out to the City's Citizen Resource Center at 417-864-1010 or email [city@springfieldmo.gov](mailto:city@springfieldmo.gov). Communication is key!

### **Spread Green Space Awareness & Education**

Launch educational programs highlighting the importance of green spaces. This may include hosting workshops, talks, or neighborhood events to spread awareness of the importance of maintenance and care. Contact the City's Department of Environmental Services to learn more about educational offerings for your neighborhood!

### **Applaud the Doers**

Recognize initiatives or individuals that make our community gardens, streams and natural environment gleam and join in.

Consider waste reduction, composting, water quality initiatives like rain gardens, native plantings and wildlife/pollinator supporting activities. The Neat Neighborhoods Competition is not just about picking up litter; it's about ensuring our green areas thrive for generations. Let's not just clean; let's protect.

## **TIDINESS AND LITTER CONTROL**

Maintaining a litter-free environment isn't just a checkbox; it's the beating heart of the Neat Neighborhoods Competition. At the core of our commitment lies the belief that clean, welcoming neighborhoods are the cornerstone of a thriving community. In the Neat Neighborhoods Competition, the overall litter control category is worth **20** points.

### **Regular Patrols and Clean-ups**

Actively engage neighbors and volunteers in regular litter patrols and equip volunteers with



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gloves, litter pickers, and bags for effective clean-ups. Consider dividing the area among volunteers for more efficient coverage. The Clean Green Springfield initiative will provide the litter pickers, trash bags and bag removal service if you register your cleanup activity.

### **Engagement with area agencies and businesses**

Collaborate with businesses, apartment complexes and agencies in your neighborhood to enhance litter control efforts. This includes spreading awareness of the litter problem, maintenance of commercial trash containers, encouraging these agencies to take care of their property and even encouraging them to join Neat Neighborhood Teams to help.

### **Identifying and Addressing Problem Areas**

Conduct periodic litter surveys to identify problem areas. Map out these locations, including riverbanks, wooded areas, and open spaces along fence lines. Zoning areas based on cleanliness levels can guide targeted interventions.

Utilize survey data to inform and engage the neighborhood, local authorities, and elected representatives. It serves as evidence supporting requests for service or enforcement.

### **Tackling Cigarette Litter**

Address the serious issue of cigarette litter. Educate the neighborhood about the environmental harm caused by cigarette butts, emphasizing their non-biodegradable nature and potential harm.

### **Recycling Initiatives**

Identify potential recycling, composting, or sustainability resources in your neighborhood and help educate neighborhoods on their location and use. Form a recycling brigade that offers to collect recycleable materials to take to one of the City's Recycling Dropoff sites.

### **Local Campaigns and Partnerships**

#### **Collaborate with Clean Green Springfield and other available initiatives**

Check for existing local campaigns and projects such as Clean Green Springfield point of pride events, neighborhood cleanup drop-off events through Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Adopt-A-Stream and Adopt-A-Street programs and Great Neighborhoods initiative. Collaborate with these initiatives to strengthen collective efforts.





**POINT SYSTEM AND AWARDS**

Community - Your Planning & Involvement	25 points
Public Places / Roads, Streets & Alleys	25 points
Green Spaces	25 points
Tidiness & Litter Control	25 points
Total Points	100 points

**Community - Your Planning & Involvement**

How does the neighborhood plan and engage in initiatives that enhance the overall cleanliness and appearance of their neighborhood?

**Scoring Criteria Examples:**

- Active neighborhood involvement in planning and executing cleanup projects (5 points).
- Demonstrated collaboration with local authorities and organizations (5 points).
- Creativity and innovation in planning neighborhood cleanup events (5 points).
- Inclusivity and participation of diverse community members (5 points).

**Public Places / Roads, Streets & Alleyways**

How well are public places maintained and utilized for the benefit of the neighborhood? How well are the roads, streets, and alleys maintained and utilized within the neighborhood?

**Scoring Criteria Examples:**

- Cleanliness of parks, social gathering places, and communal areas (5 points).
- Neighborhood cleanup events held in public areas (5 points).



- Amount of curb debris and litter (5 points).
- Aesthetic appeal and cleanliness of alleys/Greenways (5 points).

### **Green Spaces**

How does the neighborhood contribute to the cleanliness of green spaces?

#### **Scoring Criteria Examples:**

- Educational initiatives on the importance of green spaces (10 points).
- Cleanliness of community gardens or other sustainable neighborhood activities (10 points).

### **Tidiness & Litter Control**

How effectively does the community manage and control litter in their neighborhood?

#### **Scoring Criteria Examples:**

- Regularity and efficiency of litter clean-up initiatives (5 points).
- Implementation of recycling programs (5 points).
- Public awareness campaigns on litter prevention and recycling/sustainability (5 points).
- Overall tidiness and absence of litter in the neighborhood (5 points).

### **Neat Neighborhood Award**

The Neat Neighborhood designation is awarded to the top point-scoring neighborhood in each of the four zones, showcasing the best neighborhood. This acknowledgment highlights the efforts of the citizens who are making Springfield cleaner, greener, and more connected.

#### ***The winning neighborhoods will receive:***

- A plaque to show off their achievement.
- Bragging rights as the leaders of Neat Neighborhoods in their zone.
- Cash prizes for the top vote-getting neighborhood and honorable mention in each zone.

*The Neat Neighborhood Award is a symbol of community pride and showcases the neighborhood's role in turning Springfield into a cleaner, greener, and better city.*

### **Scoring Process: City Stewards / Adjudicators**

In the spirit of community engagement and impartial evaluation, the Clean Green Neighborhood competition employs a dynamic scoring process overseen by local leaders known as "City Steward." These individuals play a crucial role in assessing the efforts of participating neighborhoods and contributing to the fair and transparent evaluation of each zone.

### **City Steward Selection**



To prevent any potential bias, each zone will have a panel of **two City Stewards** who will work alongside the leaders of Neat Neighborhoods. The City Stewards are carefully selected based on their commitment to community development, diverse backgrounds, and their enthusiasm for fostering a cleaner, more vibrant Springfield.

### **Eligibility Criteria for City Stewards**

City Stewards can come from various backgrounds, including but not limited to individuals who have completed Springfield leadership programs, local business owners, public officials, city employees and community leaders. This diverse mix ensures a well-rounded perspective and a comprehensive evaluation of the participating neighborhoods.

### **Residency and Workplace Restrictions**

To maintain fairness, City Stewards are not allowed to reside or work in the zone they are judging. This restriction aims to eliminate any potential bias and guarantees an impartial assessment of the initiatives taken by each neighborhood.

### **Becoming a City Steward**

Individuals interested in becoming a City Steward have the opportunity to [sign up for the role](#), expressing their dedication to contributing to the betterment of Springfield. Alternatively, the city may select individuals based on their expertise, involvement in community affairs, and commitment to the principles of the Neat Neighborhoods competition.

By involving the City Stewards, the Clean Green Neighborhoods Competition not only ensures a fair evaluation but also transforms the process into a collaborative and engaging community endeavor. Together we can make Springfield cleaner, greener, and more vibrant!

## **GETTING STARTED**

Starting a Neat Neighborhoods Group is a pivotal step in the journey. The most effective groups involve a broad representation of residents, businesses, and public bodies. While a broad-based group is the ultimate goal, it's not mandatory, as the Neat Neighborhoods program itself can inspire local interest and group structures over time. The main goal is to get your neighborhood energized and take pride in the area you live.

### **Formation of Working Group**

The idea is to get everyone involved in the neighborhood. A great starting place would be the established [Neighborhood Association](#). Since the prize money is going towards bettering your



neighborhood and will be awarded **directly to registered neighborhoods**, getting the advice of the elected neighborhood board and the neighborhood as a whole is recommended. Once there's a group of interested individuals, determining the type of Neat Neighborhoods Group that best serves the community becomes essential. A team captain should be selected to handle logistics and to ensure competition rules are followed.

To register your team and team captain, visit [cleangreenSGF.com](http://cleangreenSGF.com)

### **Community Representation**

Encourage members from various parts of the community, diverse backgrounds, and age groups to be involved. As time goes on, annual efforts should be made to attract new members, ensuring a shared responsibility, and preventing burnout. Each member has something valuable to contribute, be it skills in IT, social media, artistic abilities, or other talents

### **Safety Measures: Ensuring the Well-being of Volunteers**

Note: Clean Green and Neat Neighborhood volunteers are reminded that their safety and welfare must always take priority. In order to ensure the safety of volunteers, comprehensive safety measures are implemented across all Clean Green Springfield activities.

### **High Visibility and Protective Gear**

Volunteers should be equipped with high-visibility vests, bright-colored clothing, gloves, and safety glasses when needed. This not only ensures their visibility during clean-ups but also provides necessary protection.

### **Traffic Control Measures**

The City's Public Works department will provide advice on ensuring the safety of volunteers working along roadsides or in public spaces.

### **Safe Handling Practices**

Volunteers are educated on safe handling practices, especially when dealing with potentially hazardous materials during clean-up activities. This includes proper disposal of waste and adherence to safety guidelines.

### **Coordination with the City of Springfield**

Neat Neighborhood groups actively collaborate with the City of Springfield and registered neighborhood leadership to enhance safety efforts. This may involve coordinating with Clean



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Green Springfield organizers at the City to manage traffic during events or obtaining necessary permits to ensure a secure environment.

### **Emergency Protocols**

Clearly defined emergency protocols are in place, outlining procedures for various scenarios. This includes immediate response plans, emergency contact information, and evacuation procedures if required.

### **Training and Awareness**

Volunteers undergo training sessions that emphasize safety protocols and best practices. This ensures that everyone involved is aware of potential risks and is equipped to respond appropriately.

### **Health and Hygiene Practices**

In light of health considerations, volunteers are encouraged to maintain good hygiene practices, especially during public events. This includes the availability of hand sanitizers and other hygiene amenities.

### **Competition Closing Date**

It's essential to keep an eye on the competition closing date for Neat Neighborhoods Competition. The competition runs for eight months, from Jan. 1 - Sept. 1.

### **Submission Deadline**

Submit your entries before the Neat Neighborhoods Competition closing date of September 1 to ensure a smooth process and avoid last-minute rushes. The competition spans January through August, providing an eight-month window for neighborhoods to showcase their Neat Neighborhoods projects and neighborhood improvements. Plan strategically to maximize impact during this period. Mark the competition closing date on your calendar and use the preparation period wisely to plan your projects. Stay informed through official channels, document progress, and prepare the necessary materials for a solid submission. By considering these steps and planning ahead, you can contribute to a successful and organized Neat Neighborhoods competition.

Inaugurating a transformative era for Springfield, Neat Neighborhoods is not just a competition but a dynamic movement fostering cleaner, greener, and more connected neighborhoods. Encompassing five key pillars, including Community Planning & Involvement, Public Places,



Green Spaces, Tidiness & Litter Control, and Roads/Streets/Alleys/Greenways, the initiative thrives on community-led transformation. From meticulously planned projects to vibrant public spaces, biodiversity initiatives, and litter-free roads, Clean Green Springfield encapsulates the collective vision of neighborhoods in Zones 1, 2, 3, and 4. Recognizing outstanding efforts through the Neat Neighborhoods award and honoring Community Champions, the initiative serves as a beacon of community pride, leadership, and positive change. The Neat Neighborhoods Competition stands as a testament to Springfield's journey towards a cleaner, greener, and more connected future—one neighborhood at a time.