Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Planning for Community Preservation



Content Developed by Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Residents and City of Norman Revitalization Staff

June, 2011

Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan
Table of Contents

	page
1. Acknowledgements	5
2. Map 1—Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Location	7
3. Executive Summary	9
4. Map 2—Land Use	
5. Map 3—Zoning	
6. Map 4—Zoning/Land Use Conflicts	
7. What is Neighborhood Planning?	13
8. History of CDBG Program in Norman 1974-2010	15
9. Neighborhood Planning: How Did We Get Here?	17
10. Neighborhood Assets, Liabilities & Opportunities	18
11. Neighborhood Issues	20
12. Map 5—Underground Drainage	
13. Map 6—Locations of Curb and Gutter	
14. Map 7—Housing Conditions	
15. Map 8—Alleys	
16. Neighborhood Context	27
17. Ruth Updegraff Park Revitalization	36
18. Porter Avenue Corridor Plan	37
19. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan Concept	39
20. Plan Concept Goals and Recommendations	40
21. Implementation Strategy	48
22. Map 9—Plan Recommendations/Implementation	
23. Conclusions	49
24. Demographic Summary	51

Acknowledgements

The City of Norman Revitalization Staff would like to thank residents of First Courthouse Neighborhood and the following people for their assistance in developing this neighborhood plan and bringing it forward for adoption.

Norman City Council

Mayor Cindy Rosenthal
Ward 1 Al Atkins
Ward 2 Tom Kovach
Ward 3 Hal Ezell
Ward 4 Carol Dillingham
Ward 5 Rachel Butler
Ward 6 Jim Griffith
Ward 7 Doug Cubberly
Ward 8 Dan Quinn

Norman Planning Commission

Jim Gasaway, Chairman
Zev Trachtenberg, Vice-Chairman
Cynthia Gordon
Diana Hartley
Tom Knotts
Chris Lewis
Curtis McCarty
Roberta Pailes
Andy Sherrer

City of Norman

Steven D. Lewis, City Manager
Susan F. Connors, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development

Revitalization and GIS Staff

Linda R. Price, AICP, Revitalization Manager
Lisa Krieg, Grants Planner
Jolana McCart, Admin Tech IV
Susan Owen Atkinson, AICP, Neighborhood Planner
Rick Hoffstatter, GIS Analyst I
Larry Knapp, GIS Analyst II
Michelle Matthews, GIS Utilities Analyst

Map of Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood

Executive Summary



Old Silk Stocking neighborhood has a well-developed sense of place and a comfortable livability.

The Old Silk Stocking Plan for Neighborhood Preservation is an update and expansion of the original *Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan*, drafted in 1990. Ideally, neighborhood plans should have a maximum shelf life of ten years. Over the past twenty years, Old Silk Stocking neighborhood stakeholders have met annually to discuss issues and to review neighborhood goals articulated in the 1990 Plan. Each year, they have voted to spend Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds on a variety of infrastructure projects ranging from sewers to sidewalks. Neighborhood meetings during which the contents of this plan were initially developed were held in 2007 and 2008, with infrastructure surveys done in 2009.

History of the Name. At the dawn of the 20th Century, the neighborhood now known as Old Silk Stocking was Norman's premier residential district. The young city's most distinctive homes were built here and many city leaders resided in the area. This neighborhood was regarded as a highly prestigious address—that is to say the ladies of this neighborhood could afford silk stockings. When residents formed a neighborhood association in 1974, they chose a name that reflected the neighborhood's rich history. Neighborhood boundaries are shown on **Map 1**.

Neighborhood Snapshot

Land Use and Zoning Patterns. Land use in the Old Silk Stocking neighborhood is defined by three major types: single-family residential, civic infrastructure, and adjacent commercial corridors. The predominant land use is single-family residential. As a citywide goal, the *Norman 2025 Land Use Plan* advocates the proactive preservation and revitalization of existing urban neighborhoods. Despite its overwhelmingly single-family character, nearly 20 blocks in the heart of Old Silk Stocking neighborhood are zoned R-3 Multi-Family, with another 20 zoned R-2 Two-Family. Rising property values driven by the housing market's appetite for early 20th Century architecture and the on-going revitalization of the Porter Corridor will attract new investment to the neighborhood, which is desirable. However, the existing R-3 zoning permits land uses that are often destructive to single-family character. If property owners in Old Silk Stocking's R-3 zoning districts do not take steps to protect single-family land use, they may be forced into a reactive mode as the economic climate of the Porter Corridor evolves. (**See Maps 2, 3 and 4**)



The neighborhood contains some of Norman's oldest and most historically significant architecture.

Encroachment. Land use conflicts stemming from Porter Avenue businesses expanding into adjacent residential blocks have dominated neighborhood concerns for many years. Unchecked expansion of commercial uses is a destabilizing force in neighborhoods. Its ripple effect negatively impacts property values causing owners to lose confidence in their investments. This trend has been chronic along Porter Avenue and along the residential edge immediately north of downtown for decades.

Executive Summary, continued

With the 2010 adoption of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* and the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD), Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood now has a strong tool that creates a limit line for commercial expansion and requires a physical buffer between commercial and adjacent residential uses. This protection should help restore residential property owners' confidence and boost their incentive to reinvest in houses near commercial edges. The City will begin implementing streetscape improvements along Porter Avenue outlined in the plan, as funding becomes available.

Sense of Place. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood possesses an inherently strong *sense of place* that shape its form and make it a desirable place to live. Sense of place in Old Silk Stocking is defined by features such as single-family land use, tree-lined streets, sidewalks, and close proximity to Downtown and the Porter Avenue Corridor.

Infrastructure. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood is well-served by both physical and civic infrastructure. Physical infrastructure refers to the network of public services such as water lines, sewer systems, roads, alleys and sidewalks. Civic infrastructure refers to parks, schools, museums, recreational trails and other public buildings and institutions.

Neighborhood Quality of Life. The neighborhood's quality of life is defined by factors both tangible and intangible. These factors include:

Neighborhood Issues

Long-term Residents. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood has many committed, long-term residents but some previously owner-occupied areas are converting to rental housing, particularly along commercial edges at Porter Avenue and north of downtown. This trend is often a catalyst for declining housing values and decreased levels of property maintenance.

Environmental Deterioration. Old Silk Stocking has experienced a steady decline of property maintenance over the past thirty years. This trend can be an indicator of declining emotional as well as economic investment in a neighborhood and subtly conveys an inaccurate message that no one cares about this place.

Proximity to Community Destinations. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood is adjacent to Norman Regional Hospital, and includes doctors' offices, churches, schools, portions of the Porter Avenue commercial corridor, and Downtown Norman within its boundaries. Residents can easily walk or bike to reach many basic services and daily needs including popular restaurants. This convenience comes at a price though: increased traffic, noise, commercial encroachment, and the loss of housing for non-residential uses.



Haug's Addition in the north half of the neighborhood has primarily small, single-family homes built in the 1950s and 1960s.

Executive Summary, continued

During the neighborhood planning process in 2007-2008, participants identified neighborhood assets, liabilities and opportunities. Planners grouped these into broad issue categories for this plan. Each category includes assets to be protected, liabilities to be corrected, and opportunities that could be developed. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood's issue categories include:

- Physical and Civic Infrastructure
- Neighborhood Investment, Quality of Life and Appearance
- Traffic, Parking and Circulation

Cyclical Nature of Participation. Because CDBG neighborhoods play an active role in prioritizing neighborhood projects, the projects that are chosen for implementation reflect levels of resident participation, group dynamics, the realities of aging infrastructure, and demand vs. urgent need. Over three decades, Old Silk Stocking has moved through cycles of active neighborhood participation to minimum participation. The neighborhood has also moved through cycles where demand was high for physical infrastructure improvements to cycles where residents demanded tangible, above-the-ground improvements instead.

Neighborhood Plan Concept

The Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan Concept, which may be best summarized as "*Strengthen What We Have*," identifies six, long-term goals for the neighborhood with objectives that, if implemented, will be very helpful in bringing about the long-term revitalization of one of Norman's oldest neighborhoods:

GOAL 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Edges

Mark clear boundaries that separate Downtown and Porter Avenue commercial land uses from adjacent residential areas in Old Silk Stocking. A mutually respected edge is critical for peaceful coexistence between commercial and residential land uses.

GOAL 2: Protect History, Character and Sense of Place

Protect the neighborhood's physical environment that includes blocks of historic houses and other structures, the pattern of sidewalks, streets and trees, and proximity to neighborhood goods and services.



This Victorian house at Crawford & Acres addresses both streets with its unusual corner entrance.

GOAL 3: Strengthen Zoning Protections

Support zoning changes that reflect 2025 Plan Land Use Plan *recommendations, preserve the single-family residential character of the neighborhood, and promote peaceful co-existence of adjacent land uses.*

GOAL 4: Improve Traffic and Circulation at Key Locations

Calm traffic and improve safety along key streets and at busy intersections. Improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood but particularly across Porter Avenue.

Executive Summary, continued

GOAL 5: Upgrade Neighborhood Infrastructure

Make meaningful infrastructure improvements that enhance Old Silk Stocking neighborhood's quality of life.

GOAL 6: Enhance Appearance and Quality of Life

Encourage participation in programs that beautify the neighborhood, enhance individual property values, and build a sense of connection between neighbors.

Next Steps and Implementation

Sustainable enhancement of neighborhood quality of life requires a coordinated strategy rather than just a collection of projects. And effective, sustainable strategies for neighborhood revitalization can only be created by the people who live there, asking themselves questions such as "how do we want our neighborhood to look in ten years?" And "what steps can we take ourselves to make it happen?"

City staff plays an important supporting role in this process but the momentum and personal investment in revitalization must come from residents themselves. City staff's task for the next ten years is to help all of Norman's CDBG areas identify and implement a revitalization strategy that combines community identification and placemaking, social organization projects, and community beautification in ways that foster a strong sense of ownership in the neighborhoods.

A Short-Term (One-to-Five Year) Implementation Strategy is included in the last section of this document. Listed below are the seven most important projects the neighborhood should accomplish in the next five years. Possible funding sources are identified in the full Implementation Strategy at the end of this document. (**See Map 9**)

1. Install gateway monuments and/or neighborhood identification signage at entry points into the neighborhood:
   - Robinson/Hayes at Crawford
   - Robinson at Peters
   - Acres at Jones
   - Tonhawa at Peters
   - Tonhawa at Crawford
   - Frank west of Porter at commercial limit line
   - Daws west of Porter at commercial limit line
2. Hold Neighborhood Association Relaunch event, including election of neighborhood officers and gathering email addresses for neighborhood database.
3. Develop neighborhood identification graphics package to include neighborhood logo, signage, and letterhead.
4. Revitalize Ruth Updegraff Park.
5. Help establish and convene a Friends-of-Ruth Updegraff Park group.
6. Help develop electronic neighborhood newsletter.
7. Eliminate alley trash collection wherever feasible. City staff should work with individual neighbors to find alternative pick up sites where needed.

What is Neighborhood Planning?

A neighborhood is a geographic location with a resident population and distinguishing physical features. It is a place where people live, work and play. Neighborhoods are the building blocks of cities.

Neighborhood planning is a process by which residents of a community gather to identify assets and agree on priorities for neighborhood improvement, and to devise strategies to achieve their goals. During these conversations, neighbors ask themselves "what is working well in our neighborhood that we want to protect?" and "what is not up to our standards and how can we improve it?" They ask themselves "what is it about this place that draws us here and what will keep us here in the future?"

Neighborhood Planning in Norman

The *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan,* drafted in 2004, recommended the establishment of a neighborhood planning program with a dedicated staff person. The program would be designed to "engage neighborhoods in the Core Area in a participatory planning process to directly address such issues as land use compatibility, parking, circulation, and neighborhood improvements." The *2025 Plan Implementation Techniques and Technical Memorandum* recommends that "The Planning Commission and City Council would adopt each of the neighborhood plans as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan."

Neighborhood planning begins with a physical assessment and documentation of environmental conditions. Planners then meet with neighbors to identify social conditions and neighborhood assets. By articulating goals to protect the physical and social environment, planners help neighbors develop a plan to protect existing assets and to implement desired change. Ideally, neighborhood plans should be updated every five-to-ten years.

The most important goal in neighborhood planning is to develop a strong sense of community connectedness. This means residents know and trust each other, and choose to work together to create real improvements in the neighborhood. By working together to identify community assets and develop a plan for protecting them, neighbors have direct control over their future.



Neighborhood meetings are often held in schools, churches, libraries or other public settings.

Lastly, in order to be effective and successful, neighborhood planning can only occur in the context of the broader community's values and aspirations. While plan goals may be specific to a neighborhood, those goals must reflect those that are supported and strived for by the community as a whole.

What is Neighborhood Planning , continued

The plan concept laid out in the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of all of Norman's current major planning initiatives, including: *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan*; *the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan; The CDBG Five-Year Consolidated Plan*; *Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, and the Safe Routes to School Initiative.

History of the Community Development Block Grant Program in Norman 1974-2010

Beginning in 1974 with a $206,000 grant , Norman has developed a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program that has targeted infrastructure deficiencies and improvied quality of life for homeowners and the community as a whole. During CDBG's 37- year history, the City of Norman has installed over ten miles of water lines, five miles of sewer lines, and nearly 30 miles of sidewalks throughout CDBG neighborhoods. The program has also made significant drainage and street improvements throughout the targeted area.

In addition to infrastructure improvements between 1974-2010, CDBG funds have made possible over 900 emergency repairs, house rehabilitations, and accessibility modifications at a value of nearly $5.7 million for income-eligible homeowners in neighborhoods throughout the city.

The CDBG program has also underwritten acquisition of neighborhood parks and the installation of pedestrian-scale, period lighting in the city's oldest neighborhoods. Over the years CDBG has also made possible a number of special projects including the purchase of the Sooner Theatre, the construction of the Little Axe Community Center and Fire Station, and a major addition to the Norman Senior Citizens Center. These projects have created lasting benefits that are felt community-wide. In all, over $9.4 million in CDBG funds have been spent on infrastructure and other projects in Norman.

An invaluable though intangible benefit of the CDBG program is that participant neighborhoods have access to the City's planning process for infrastructure as well as non-infrastructure projects. Because CDBG neighborhoods' needs are revisited annually as required by the program, these areas are constantly on the City's radar screen. In many cases, CDBG funds are used as a tool to leverage other capital projects, thereby allowing the City to rectify larger problems and spread the benefit to a wider community. The complete rebuilding of Jones Avenue in 1995 is a prime example of this kind of leverage.

In 2010, the City of Norman received $929,444 in CDBG funding, down from a high of $1,053,000 in 2003. Forecasts for 2011 funding levels project significantly less money coming from Washington. Current economic conditions are forcing all areas of government to do more with less. However, this belt-tightening can also be seen as an opportunity.

History of CDBG Program, continued

In the coming years our task at the City of Norman is to help Norman's CDBG areas can become attractive, high-functioning neighborhoods at not only a physical but also at a social level. What is needed now is a strategy that combines CDBG projects such as community identification, placemaking, and more effective social organization, with projects that foster a sense of ownership in the neighborhoods. In cities across the United States, it has been demonstrated that creating a strong sense of ownership among inhabitants is the most effective tool in successful neighborhood revitalization.



Porter Avenue has a number of Art Deco style buildings that give the corridor a distinctive character.

Neighborhood Planning: How Did We Get Here?

Since 1974, Old Silk Stocking residents have met twice annually to discuss neighborhood issues and prioritize CDBG projects. Over nearly four decades, CDBG projects have addressed infrastructure deficiencies such as inadequate water and sewer lines, deteriorated streets, inadequate lighting and poor drainage. Many of these projects were identified in the area's first long-range plan, the 1990 *Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan*. Though brief in scope, the *1990 Plan* has been referenced often and used to guide neighborhood projects for the past 20 years.

Update of 1990 Plan

The *1990 Plan* focused on resolving on-going conflicts between commercial and residential land uses along Porter Avenue and the Downtown edge. An escalation of land-use conflicts prompted the Norman City Council's 2007 decision to study the Porter Avenue Corridor at an intensive level, with the hope of developing solutions to land-use conflicts and also identifying opportunities for improved traffic circulation, economic development and aesthetics along the corridor. Beginning in October 2007, residents participating in the annual fall meeting identified neighborhood Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities as a starting point for an update of the *1990 Plan*.

Where Do Things Stand Now?

Though four years have passed since Old Silk Stocking's original brainstorming sessions, the neighborhood's core assets and liabilities remain largely unchanged. Opportunities, however, continue to evolve in the changing economic, political and funding climate. The primary reason for the delayed completion of the neighborhood plan was the City's decision to undertake the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan*. As funding becomes available, the gradual implementation of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* is likely to have a positive effect on the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood.



Old Silk Stocking neighborhood includes five established churches.

Another changing dynamic that may have a positive impact on the neighborhood is Norman Regional Hospital's (NRH) decision to build a new hospital campus west of I-35. The NRH Healthplex opened in late 2009. This shift has already drawn some doctors and clinics away from Porter Avenue to new offices near the new hospital though the trend has reached a plateau as the real estate market catches up with demand. At present, NRH remains committed to keeping its Porter Campus open as a general service, acute care hospital. The long-term impacts of this shift are still developing but may present significant opportunities for the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood in the future.



For Old Silk Stocking residents, Norman Regional Hospital is both an asset and a liability.

Neighborhood Assets, Liabilities & Opportunities

As one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, Old Silk Stocking has great bones. In addition to its distinctive architecture and a strong sense of place, the Community Development Block Grant program has improved neighborhood infrastructure over the past 37 years. The following is a transcription of lists of neighborhood Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities generated by participants during the Fall 2007 CDBG meeting. This list is a verbatim recording of neighbors' ideas. A few items identified as opportunities in 2007 have since been accomplished in the four year since the planning process was initiated.

ASSETS

- Ruth Updegraff Park
- Wilson School
- Proximity to medical district
- Proximity to Downtown/Main Street
- Accessibility to all City services
- Bus service
- Proximity to Legacy Trail
- Lots of old houses
- Historic architecture
- Commercial parking
- Economic diversity
- Nice trees
- Affordable housing
- Proximity to stores
- Proximity to Porter Corridor
- Calm, peaceful spots throughout neighborhood
- Great sense of scale
- Walkable
- Clearly defined neighborhood boundaries
- Cleveland County Museum/Moore-Lindsey House
- Five churches
- Close to Longfellow Middle School
- Salvation Army
- Health for Friends
- Visible police presence
- Police know the neighborhood well
- Many long-term residents
- Some infill development
- Works Progress Administration (WPA) 1936 drainage channel



The WPA drainage channel is a significant historic feature in the neighborhood but some consider its condition a liability.

Assets, Liabilities, and Opportunities, continued

LIABILITIES

- Mosquitoes
- Train noise
- Tall weeds
- Loose animals
- Poor property maintenance
- Lack of code enforcement
- Close proximity to hospital, churches, Porter Ave traffic, noise
- Commercial encroachment
- Lots of parking lots
- Illegal home occupations
- Conversions of owner occupied housing to rental housing
- Greyhound and Jefferson buses loading at C-store at Porter/Acres
- Increasing numbers of potholes
- Proximity to destinations for the homeless (Salvation Army, Greyhound Bus Station, Health for Friends)
- Dilapidated infrastructure and housing
- Overhead electrical wires
- "Land sharking"activities
- WPA drainage channel lacking maintenance

OPPORTUNITIES

- Step up pro-active code enforcement
- Create mixed-use residential units
- Pave driveways that need it
- Improve property maintenance
- Remove bar ditches
- Add curb and guttering
- Repair and preserve WPA Channel
- Protect single family residential character
- Create intentional nodes of higher density housing
- Preserve historic houses
- Preserve population density as it is now
- Encourage more owner occupancy
- Preserve affordable housing
- Continue supporting the expansion of Legacy Trail



Old Silk Stocking neighborhood feels livable, which is attracting young families to put down roots in the area .

Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Issues

Lists of neighborhood-generated Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities were grouped into broad issue categories. Each category is summarized below, describing assets to be carefully stewarded, liabilities to be corrected, and opportunities that could be developed into meaningful neighborhood improvement. These issue categories serve as the basis for the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan Concept that is fully developed later in the document.

Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood issue categories include**:**

- Physical and Civic Infrastructure
- Neighborhood Investment, Quality of Life and Appearance
- Traffic, Parking and Circulation

Physical Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure refers to the large-scale network of public services or systems such as water lines, storm and sanitary sewer systems, roads, alleys and sidewalks in the neighborhood. Civic infrastructure refers to parks, schools, museums, recreational trails or other public buildings or institutions. Churches, though private, are often included in descriptions of civic infrastructure. Examples of physical infrastructure in the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood include the following:

WPA Channel—A stone and concrete drainage channel constructed in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) is a historic engineering feature that imparts unique character to the neighborhood as well as providing a vital stormwater drainage function. However the channel needs routine maintenance that preserves both its function and historic construction methods and materials.

Underground drainage was installed beneath Jones Street when it was rebuilt in the 1990s. This system was designed to have excess capacity to drain east/west streets that intersect it. The Jones system has allowed the City to address localized drainage issues on a few east-west streets. Old Silk Stocking neighborhood has five types of stormwater drainage systems in place, from full curb & gutter with underground drainage to a passive drainage system of bar ditches or swales. (**See Maps 5 and 6**)

Sidewalks— Throughout much of the southern half of the neighborhood there are sidewalks; however some segments are missing or deteriorated and many corners do not yet have accessibility ramps. In the northern half of the neighborhood there are limited places to install sidewalks due to the relatively shallow placement of houses on lots, short driveways and the lack of on-street parking. The goals of parking cars in driveways and installing sidewalks can often be in direct conflict.



Shallow setbacks in some blocks make it difficult to install sidewalk without sacrificing parking.

Summary of Neighborhood Issues, continued

Water Lines and Sanitary Sewer. The entire sanitary sewer system in the neighborhood has been replaced. All areas are served by lines between 8-12 inches. The entire neighborhood is serviced by water lines between 6-12 inches, with a few inadequate (1-inch lines) remaining along Crawford and Frank Streets.

Civic Infrastructure

If physical infrastructure makes it possible for people to inhabit a place, civic infrastructure makes it enjoyable to live there. Civic infrastructure in Old Silk Stocking includes:

Ruth Updegraff Park—The park provides neighborhood open space, though it is underutilized in its current condition. However the park has a strong basic design, central location, and presents a significant opportunity to become a popular area destination and a distinctive placemaking anchor in the Old Silk Stocking neighborhood.

Wilson Elementary School—Located at 800 N. Peters, the historic brick school opened its doors in 1925 and has been a neighborhood anchor ever since. The school serves grades Pre-K -5 and includes a large playground that could be utilized as neighborhood play space after school hours. During 2010-2011 school year, the campus is undergoing an expansion and major renovation. Wilson School also hosts a Neighborhood Center, a family support and youth enrichment program sponsored by the Center for Children and Families (CCFI). The Neighborhood Center offers free programs immediately after school, during the evening, and over the summer months for children 4-17 years from all over the Norman community.

Legacy Trail—Located in the former railroad right-of-way, Legacy Trail is the central segment of the City's system of trails and greenbelts. Legacy Trail includes a 10-foot wide concrete path, bridges, seating areas, and plazas with public art and interpretive graphics depicting the settlement of Oklahoma and the history of Norman. The trail segment adjacent to the neighborhood stretches from Main to Robinson Street.



Legacy Trail is the central segment in the City's growing system of trails and green-belts. The trail is located just west of Old Silk Stocking neighborhood.

Summary of Neighborhood Issues, continued



Built in 1899, the Moore-Lindsey House Museum, 508 N. Peters, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Moore-Lindsey House—The Moore-Lindsey House (1899), 508 N. Peters, is perhaps Old Silk Stocking's most distinctive neighborhood landmark. As one of the city's oldest residential structures and a rare example of Victorian architecture in Norman, the Moore-Lindsey House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The building is owned and maintained by the City of Norman Parks and Recreation Department and has functioned as a house museum since the late 1970s. The museum is open to the public and is operated by the Cleveland County Historical Society. The Historical Society also maintains a collection of Victorian-era furnishings and textiles used throughout the house as well as an archive of historic photographs of Norman and Cleveland Country.

Churches and Schools—There are five active church congregations in the neighborhood, in addition to the Salvation Army, which also operates a homeless shelter. Trinity Baptist Church, together with its across-the-street neighbor Wilson School, 800 N. Peters, form a strong civic core in the heart of the neighborhood. A former brick church building at the northeast corner of Peters and Rich has been repurposed for office use. Active church congregations in Old Silk Stocking include:

- Goodrich Memorial United Methodist Church, 200 W Hayes
- Salvation Army, 318 E Hayes
- Trinity Baptist Church, 801 N. Peters
- Young Life, 291 N Crawford
- Northside Church of God, 222 E Hayes

Neighborhood Investment, Quality of Life & Appearances



This house typifies a well-cared-for, early 20th Century house in the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood.

A healthy neighborhood with a high quality of life requires emotional as well as financial investment. Indicators of health can be both tangible and intangible. Indicators of neighborhood investment include overall neighborhood condition, houses kept in good repair, well-tended trees, neat yards, people out on the sidewalks and in their yards, and the presence of well-utilized public spaces. Intangible indicators of neighborhood health include property values and sales price trends, how often houses come on the market, how quickly they sell, and what percentage of the houses are owner or renter-occupied.

Long-term Residents. Old Silk Stocking has many long-term residents who are deeply connected to neighborhood. This is good for neighborhood health and well-being. But, parts of the neighborhood are experiencing conversions of owner-occupied housing to rental, particularly along commercial edges. This can be an indicator of decreasing levels of personal investment, falling market values, and often leads to diminished levels of property maintenance.

Summary of Neighborhood Issues, continued

Norman 2025 Land Use Plan Goal: Preserve Urban Neighborhoods

Preserving Norman's urban neighborhoods was a key goal of the *Norman 2025 Land Use Plan,* adopted by City Council in 2004. The stated purpose of the plan goal is "to encourage and support diversified housing types and densities in order to serve different income levels, family structures and ownership." Goal 3 policies include:

1. Proactively manage the preservation, revitalization and maintenance of existing urban neighborhoods.
2. Establish a neighborhood planning program for targeted portions of the City's Core Area in order to address issues such as land use compatibility, parking, circulation, and neighborhood improvements.
3. Encourage opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in and between neighborhoods and other activity areas.
4. Foster and encourage construction of new residential units and conversions of underutilized buildings into residential units in downtown Norman.
5. Create an overlay Neighborhood Conservation District in order to more closely monitor and discourage illegal or inappropriate conversions of housing as needed for neighborhood stabilization.

Housing Conditions and Property Maintenance. Most housing in the neighborhood is classified in average to above-average condition, with small areas of below-average housing. (**See Map 7**) Neighbors complain of poor property maintenance, particularly in rental housing. This is often an indicator of declining emotional and financial investment in a neighborhood. Lack of property maintenance sends a subtle if inaccurate message to all that "nobody cares much about this place." This neighborhood was designated for Proactive Code Enforcement in 2008.

Proximity to Community Destinations. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood is close to Norman Regional Hospital, doctors' offices, churches, schools, the Porter Avenue commercial corridor, and Downtown Norman. Residents can easily walk or bike to reach many basic services and daily needs, including popular restaurants. However this convenience comes at a price: increased traffic, noise, encroachment from expanding businesses, and demolition of houses for parking lots.

Effects of R-3 Zoning. Despite its overwhelmingly single-family character, 20 blocks in the heart of Old Silk Stocking neighborhood are zoned R-3 Multi -Family, with another 20 zoned R-2 Two-Family. These designations are relics of the 1954 Zoning Ordinance which regarded the housing stock of the area as aging and/or obsolete. (**See Map 4)**

The 1954 Zoning Ordinance—still in use today—was Norman's first effort at "modern" zoning practice and used broad brush strokes to designate half the neighborhood for future multi-family use. Though the R-3 zoning enabled it, this wide-spread conversion to a denser pattern of residential land use has not materialized. Though the R-2 classification does permit duplexes as well as single family houses, R-2 does not allow multi-family residential uses and is therefore less of a threat to the neighborhood's single-family character.

Since 1954, R-3 parcels adjacent to the Downtown and Porter Avenue business districts have experienced steady land use change driven by commercial expansion. This has been most often seen in the form of parking lot construction that is an allowable land use on R-3 parcels with a Special Use Permit. There have also been several instances of the demolition of single-family houses that are replaced by higher-density residential structures utilizing building designs, scale and materials which are insensitive to the historic character of neighborhood.

Norman's *2025 Land Use Plan* seeks to encourage and support diversified housing types and densities to serve different income levels, family structures and ownership patterns. This housing diversity exists now in Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood but could be threatened by changing real estate dynamics in the area.

Summary of Neighborhood Issues, continued

Preserving Single-Family Neighborhoods: What Are the Options?

If single-family property owners in R-3 zoning districts perceive that permissive zoning is a potential threat to neighborhood stability, there are several options to consider:

- **Do nothing.**

  UPSIDE: Costs nothing, risks nothing, does not cause neighborhood friction brought on by efforts to change.

  DOWNSIDE: Risks that future development could erode the historic single-family character of the neighborhood.

- **Rezone R-3 areas to match existing single-family land use.**

  UPSIDE: Would bring the zoning into agreement with current land use. This would protect the neighborhood from inappropriate future land uses and/or structures that are out of scale with single-family houses.

  DOWNSIDE: There are administrative costs associated with rezoning; some property owners will object which can cause neighborhood friction; A strong majority of property owner support is required to pass.

- **Establish Conservation District overlay zoning for some sections of the neighborhood.**

  UPSIDE: Protects neighborhood character without changing underlying zoning and without being as restrictive as a historic district overlay. Used very effectively in other communities.

  DOWNSIDE: Does place some limits on private property; City of Norman has not yet developed this zoning category so it would take time to create and develop a process to administer.

Porter Corridor Impacts on Residential Land Use. The Porter Corridor planning initiative resulted in the adoption of a long-range plan for the corridor (see Porter Corridor section of this document) and the adoption of the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD). The PCZOD allows a limited and controlled expansion of commercial land uses along Porter Avenue into the adjacent blocks between Porter and Crawford.

To minimize the negative effects of commercial expansion on the neighborhood's single-family character, the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* recommends that residential blocks between Porter Avenue and Crawford Street be considered for higher density single-family housing in the future. For example, instead of the traditional pattern of one house per 7,000 +/- square foot lot, residential blocks west of Porter could be redeveloped for attached, single-family units such as townhouses or duplexes on 7,000-10,000 square-foot lots.

As revitalization occurs along the corridor, these residential blocks west of Porter could become very desirable locations for new investment. A denser pattern of residential land use could also be an effective buffer for more traditional single-family blocks west of Crawford. Any of the redevelopment initiatives described above would be initiated by property owners on private property and would not be initiated, mandated or funded by the City of Norman.

Revitalization Impacts on Property Values. Revitalization of the Porter Corridor is a highly desirable trend for the City and private property owners alike. However, as revitalization begins to occur, this may put upward pressure on property values in the neighborhood. Rising property values will attract new investment in the neighborhood—a positive trend. But if property owners in R-3 zoning districts make no effort to protect single-family land use, they may be forced into a reactive mode as the economic climate of the Porter Corridor evolves.

Options. Using this plan as a roadmap, Old Silk Stocking property owners need to intentionally create the future they desire for the neighborhood. Working with City staff, they need to understand the options for regulatory tools to help ensure that future. This neighborhood plan has outlined many opportunities and challenges as well as potential strategies to manage change. In the end, a decision to "do nothing" may be the choice, but it is critical that all stakeholders understand what is at stake and the possible tradeoffs for each course of action.

Summary of Neighborhood Issues, continued

Effects of Commercial Encroachment at the Edges. As discussed previously, without intervention, commercial edges often creep into adjacent neighborhoods with a negative impacts on physical and social conditions of residential blocks. Unchecked commercial expansion is a destabilizing force in neighborhoods that negatively effects property values and causes property owners to lose confidence in the security of their investment.

For decades this trend has been chronic along Porter Avenue and immediately north of downtown. With the 2010 adoption of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* and the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District, Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood now has a strong tool that creates a limit line for commercial expansion and requires a physical buffer between expanding businesses and adjacent residential uses. This protection should help restore residential property owners' confidence and boost incentive to reinvest in houses near commercial edges since the community has reached a shared understanding that commercial development has a stopping point.

Traffic, Parking and Circulation

Old Silk Stocking's circulatory system is an effective grid system, though there are locations where circulation conflicts persist. Office and commercial parking lot expansions have encroached into residential blocks as far west as Crawford Street in the northern areas.

Parking Lots. Until the adoption of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan*, residential blocks adjacent to Porter Avenue had no recourse when office or commercial uses sought to expand parking lots. North of Rich, office uses and parking lots expanded west to Crawford in the 1970-1980s. Some parking lots along Crawford are screened and minimally landscaped; others are not. The *Porter Corridor Plan* establishes a commercial limit line and buffering requirements between commercial parking lots and adjacent residential uses. The limit line will allow commercial uses a little breathing room to create a limited amount of additional parking and will minimize most commercial parking on adjacent residential streets.

Gravel Driveways. Many properties in the neighborhood retain gravel driveways. These can work well if they are well-maintained; many are not. An option to remedy this situation is to develop a driveway improvement program to construct permanent edges and update gravel driveways or to replace gravel driveways with concrete. To create more visual impact it would be appropriate to focus on entire block faces, including both owner and renter-occupied properties. Either approach will stop gravel creep and will give a defined edge to parking areas. Property owners should also consider the existing Driveway Replacement Program offered through the City' Public Works Department. This program covers 100% of the cost of installing a new drive approach and right-of-way pavement if the property owner agrees to improve the rest of the driveway.

Summary of Neighborhood Issues, continued

Rich at Jones, and Frank at Jones. Rich and Frank Streets are the northern and southern edges of Wilson Elementary School. Both streets cross Jones Avenue on the western edge of the school property. Traffic on Jones Street moves quickly, even with crosswalks and a school zone indicated by flashing lights. These two intersections present opportunities to improve safety for pedestrians crossing Jones and to calm the speed of automotive traffic on Jones. One way to improve safety for pedestrians is to construct pedestrian landings at these intersections with Jones. Pedestrian landings temporarily narrow the feel of the road and also shorten the road width that pedestrians must cross.

Acres and Jones Intersection. This intersection one half-block east of the BNSF railroad tracks is a four-way stop. The presence of the railroad tracks seems to add to the intersection's confusion level. Neighbors report many cases of vehicles running the stop signs.

Acres and Porter Intersection. The Acres-Porter intersection is complex. Porter Avenue is a busy arterial road carrying up to 18,000 cars per day. As one of Norman's few streets with an at-grade railroad crossing, Acres has become a busy east-west through-street for automotive traffic. Acres crosses Porter Avenue at "the elbow," i.e. a bend in the road, so drivers' sight lines are shorter there, allowing them less response time to see pedestrians, cyclists or turning movements of other cars.

Acres is also a major pedestrian route to Longfellow Middle School, located one block east of Porter. There is a pedestrian-activated, in-ground crosswalk on the north side of this intersection. Both users and observers complain that the lighted crosswalk is confusing to drivers, who often do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Due to the periodic high volumes of traffic, cars struggle to turn left onto Porter from Acres at certain times of the day. Finally, the convenience store located at the northwest corner of Acres and Porter is also the designated Greyhound Bus stop in Norman. This designation adds bus traffic and turning movements to an already hectic intersection and sometimes routes bus traffic onto neighborhood streets.

Opportunities

Like most mature American neighborhoods, Old Silk Stocking has assets to be protected and liabilities to be addressed. But with its central Norman location, its wide variety of early 20th Century housing stock, its proximity to public facilities, good and services, recreational and entertainment facilities, Old Silk Stocking has substantial opportunities on its horizon that many neighborhoods can only dream of. Later in this plan document, we outline strategic goals and objectives to help neighborhood residents begin to take advantage of this potential for revitalization.



Old Silk Stocking is a comfortable residential neighborhood defined by trees, sidewalks and houses with front porches.

Neighborhood Context

As in many mature American neighborhoods, Old Silk Stocking possesses an inherently strong *sense of place* with many features that define its form and identity and make the neighborhood a desirable place to live. These features include:

Historic Character. Old Silk Stocking retains examples of Norman's most distinctive historic architecture, including surviving examples of Victorian architecture as well as Craftsman and Bungalow styles.

Street Pattern. As one of Norman's originally platted neighborhoods, Old Silk Stocking has blocks oriented toward the railroad tracks and blocks that were platted later with cardinal orientation. This creates an interesting pattern of angled streets and triangular blocks.

WPA Channel. The neighborhood is also shaped by the Imhoff Creek watershed flowing through it, much of this through a WPA-constructed stone channel, a significant feature of historic engineering.

Trees. Many Old Silk Stocking streets are lined with mature trees. The leafy green canopy provides a comforting sense of enclosure as well as environmental benefits such as cooler temperatures, increased oxygen levels, decreased levels of carbon dioxide, and a sense of well-being.

Physical Environment and Scale. Old Silk Stocking has a strong sense of place and a human scale. This is defined by a well-established traditional rhythm of houses, tree-lined sidewalks, streets, and alleyways. The neighborhood, with its many different styles and sizes of houses just feels livable.

Porter Corridor and Main Street. Old Silk Stocking residents are easy walking and biking distance from goods, services, and institutions that support their daily activities along the Porter Avenue Corridor and Main Street/Downtown.

Civic Infrastructure. Old Silk Stocking includes a school, churches, parks, a museum, an historic theatre, and a historic Post Office building.

Public Space. Ruth Updegraff Park with its gazebo and benches, nearby Legacy Trail, and the playground at Wilson School all provide community gathering and play space for Old Silk Stocking neighborhood.

What is Sense of Place?

The term "sense of place" describes a personal response to the built and natural environment that individuals experience in daily life. It refers to feelings, emotions and attachments that people have for a particular location.

In the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood, sense of place is defined by mature trees lining the streets, angled streets and resulting triangular blocks, the stone-lined creek channel flowing through the area, and the sense of front yard open space created by the placement of Updegraff Park. These elements work together with the close-knit rhythm of houses to create a sense of place that is unique to this neighborhood.

Old Silk Stocking doesn't *look* or *feel* quite like any other neighborhood in Norman. This sense of place is a valuable asset and should be nurtured and stewarded through sensitive planning for future generations.

Neighborhood Context, continued

Boundaries and Geography. Old Silk Stocking is the largest of Norman's five CDBG neighborhoods and one of the oldest. It includes approximately 229 acres over 56 blocks. The neighborhood is bounded on the north by the center line of Robinson Street; on the south by the north side of Main Street; on the east by the center line of Porter Avenue and on the west by the BNSF railroad tracks. The neighborhood includes residential structures primarily built between 1890 and 1975. The neighborhood's central street, Peters Avenue, was once known as Silk Stocking Row because of the gracious homes built there during the late 19th/early 20th Century. When the neighborhood was designated as a CDBG area in 1974, residents wanted their name to reflect this history.

Neighborhood Character. The neighborhood's dominant land use character is single-family, with scattered duplexes, garage apartments, or denser uses, edged by two commercial corridors along Porter Avenue and Main Street.

Original Plats. A southern section of the neighborhood was included in the original town site of the Norman, Oklahoma Territory plat. Three subsequent plats were developed later: J.A. Jones (1892), Highland Addition (1903), and Haug's Addition (1948).

Architecture. Platted just after the Land Run of 1889, the neighborhood retains several examples of Victorian architecture dating to the 1890s, as well as examples of Craftsman/Bungalow style from the 1910s-1920s. The northern half of the neighborhood includes Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Neo-Colonial styles, and interpretations of Folk-style structures largely constructed post WWII.

Landmarks. The heart of Old Silk Stocking neighborhood includes a number of landmark structures, notable for their age, function, design or location. All of these landmarks contribute significantly to the neighborhood's character and sense of place:

- The Moore-Lindsey House/Cleveland County Historical House Museum, 508 N Peters
- Ruth Updegraff Park, bounded by Peters, Acres and Beal Streets
- Stone-lined WPA Channel along Imhoff Creek
- Wilson Elementary School, 800 N. Peters, built 1925
- Trinity Baptist Church, 801 N. Peters



Built in 1933, the United States Post Office, 207 E Gray Street was listed in the NRHP in 2000.

National Register of Historic Place (NRHP). Three individual structures and one district in Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

- Moore-Lindsey House/Cleveland County Historical House Museum, 508 N Peters (NR 1985)

Neighborhood Context, continued

- United States Post Office, 207 E Gray (NR 2000)
- Sooner Theatre, 101 E Main (NR 1978)
- 100-200 blocks of East Main Street (NR 1978)

Porter Corridor. The eastern edge of the neighborhood includes a portion of the Porter Avenue Commercial Corridor as well as historically significant examples of Art Deco architecture:

- Van's Pig Stand , 320 N. Porter, former Sinclair Gasoline Station
- Comer Thomas Garage, 204 N. Porter, now A-1 Auto Repair

Historic District Status. Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood includes some of Norman's earliest examples of Victorian and Craftsman architecture. The neighborhood has been the subject of Intensive-Level Historic and Architectural surveys to determine eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The original Old Silk Stocking area was surveyed in 1989. The Sooner Homes section of the neighborhood (Haug's Addition) was surveyed in 2002. These areas were deemed ineligible to be listed in the NRHP due to an overall loss of historic integrity. In the past, property owners have been unwilling to consider designating a local historic district due to concerns that such a designation would place burdensome restrictions on private property use. With no other constraints in place and enabled by current zoning, the historic character of the neighborhood is disappearing due to demolitions and remodeling that are insensitive to historic design and building patterns.

What About a Historic District?

Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood has considered historic district designation several times over the past 37 years. Each time, proponents were unable to rally the required property owner support to designate a district. Without regulation, much of the neighborhood's architectural integrity has been lost to insensitive changes to its structures over the years. In 2011 there is probably not enough historic fabric remaining to justify such a designation. Other tools should be considered for future protection of neighborhood resources.

*Census Data and Land Use***.** According to US Census data and Cleveland County Tax Assessor records, Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood is 51% owner-occupied and 49% renter-occupied units. Most recent Census data shows a total of 590 housing units. Housing units include 86% single family units and 14% multi-family structures (2-4 unit). In terms of household income, the neighborhood is described as 58.35% low-to-moderate income.

Neighborhood land use is characterized by three major types:

- *Single-Family Houses*. A residential district consisting primarily of single family homes and a small number of multi-family units.
- *Civic Infrastructure*. Wilson Elementary, Trinity Baptist Church, the Moore-Lindsey House Museum, and Ruth Updegraff Park. The neighborhood abuts community infrastructure including Legacy Trail, Andrews Park and the City's Municipal Complex, which includes the US Post Office and the Norman Public Library.



Modest sized, single-family houses are the dominant land use pattern in Old Silk Stocking neighborhood.

Neighborhood Context, continued



Early 20th Century houses in Old Silk Stocking neighborhood may be modest in size but they are strong on charm.



A treasured aspect of Old Silk Stocking's neighborhood character is the presence of mature trees lining the sidewalks.

- *Commercial Corridors*. The northeastern section of the Old Silk Stocking neighborhood includes the north half of the Porter Avenue Commercial and the Medical Corridor. Southern portions of the neighborhood include Downtown Norman.

Zoning. Despite its dominant single-family character, the neighborhood was zoned R-2 Two-Family and R-3 Multi-Family in 1954. These designations, particularly the R-3, have enabled a number of land use changes that have increased residential density and changed the neighborhood's single-family character, particularly at the edges adjacent to commercial land uses. (**See Map 3**)

Housing and Overall Neighborhood Condition. Old Silk Stocking residents are frustrated with trends toward poor property maintenance. They also feel they have no effective means to address problem tenants in rental properties. (**See Map 7**) Early 20th Century housing provides an attractive, affordable niche for many homeowners, but the downside of neighborhoods of this vintage is that the houses are considered small as defined by "new house" standards. Without forces that preserve real estate values and personal investment (e.g. zoning overlays or strong neighborhood associations), the American appetite for ever-bigger houses has diminished these neighborhoods' appeal. This trend has been accelerated along Porter Avenue and the Downtown edge by the demand for land to house business and institutional expansion. Houses are much more likely to be renter-occupied along these edges and property conditions are often noticeably poorer. Patterns of neighborhood erosion began along these commercial edges decades ago and will continue without some kind of intervention. While the Downtown commercial corridor has steadily improved over the past decade, physical and aesthetic conditions along Porter Avenue are poor, with only fair economic conditions and market rates.

Trees and Sidewalks. Many people comment that two of Old Silk Stocking neighborhood's best features are the presence of tree-lined streets and sidewalks. Trees cool the environment, infuse oxygen into the air and provide a sense of leafy enclosure. However the neighborhood's tree canopy is aging and many trees have been lost in recent storms. Rights-of-way along the streets need to be replanted to ensure a tree canopy remains in place for many years.

The sidewalk network is in good condition but needs spot repairs, missing segments installed, and accessibility ramps installed in many locations. Sidewalks exist in the older southern subdivisions of Old Silk Stocking but were not included as standard infrastructure in the later mid-20th Century additions.

Neighborhood Context, continued



Early 20th Century "front porch houses" are typical in older sections of the Old Silk Stocking neighborhood.

Haug's Addition (1948) in the northern half of the neighborhood was built without sidewalks. Houses in this area were sited close to the street with shallow setbacks, making it difficult to retrofit sidewalks without sacrificing parking on private property. If blocks also have a bar ditch and culvert drainage system this further constraint makes sidewalk construction on those blocks nearly impossible to achieve.

Conversions to Rental Housing. The trend of converting owner-occupied housing to rental housing has been particularly acute along commercial edges in Old Silk Stocking. Several blocks adjacent to Porter Avenue and north of Downtown have become almost 100% rental. With the adoption of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* and its limit line for commercial expansion, this trend could see a reversal in the future.

Affordable Housing. Old Silk Stocking and surrounding Porter Corridor neighborhoods include some of Norman's remaining affordable housing. Relatively small early 20th Century houses make attractive starter homes for young families, graduate students, seniors or those looking to downsize. This population diversity is an asset that residents value highly. Revitalization along Porter Avenue may push adjacent residential property values upward, but it is important to the neighborhood that affordability be preserved in any way possible. The average size house in Old Silk Stocking is around 1,000 square feet, which is a modest size by local real estate standards. In general, houses are moderately-priced compared to elsewhere in Norman.

Land Use Conflicts

Conflicts between residential and expanding commercial land uses have existed for decades at the southern and eastern edges of Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood. As far back as 1984, Norman's *Central Core Plan* recommended a revitalization project for the neighborhood that established a clear line between commercial/institutional and residential uses. In the past five years, conflicts along Porter Avenue have become more frequent as successful commercial operations seek to expand the only direction they can—into adjacent neighborhoods. Along with land use conflicts, traffic congestion continues to build along Porter Avenue, making current circulation patterns along the corridor unsustainable in the long term.



Parking lot encroachment has been occurring in the neighborhood for many years.

Infill Development. The design of infill buildings being constructed in Old Silk Stocking is often insensitive to the design, scale and materials of the neighborhood's historic housing stock. The *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* recommends that residential blocks immediately west of Porter Avenue to Crawford could be appropriate locations for denser single-family infill structures. This form of development could

Neighborhood Context, continued



Land use conflicts along Porter Avenue have become more frequent as businesses have become more successful.

buffer more traditional single-family blocks from commercial land uses along Porter but still remain sensitive to the neighborhood's historic residential character.

Neighborhood Edges. Along commercial edges of Porter Avenue and Downtown, current transitions between land uses can be abrupt. *The Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* creates a commercial limit line and seeks to create graceful transitions between land uses with required buffer walls and landscape strips between commercial and residential uses. Institutional uses also need buffers between themselves and residential neighbors.

Land uses delineated in the *1990 Plan* were adopted in three *Five-Year Consolidated CDBG Plans*, in 2000, 2005, and 2010 respectively, These plans were recommended by Old Silk Stocking residents, adopted by the Norman City Council and approved by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Cultural and Economic Diversity. This neighborhood's diversity of land uses and building types means it is a visually interesting environment with lots of texture. The varied environment also spawns a high degree of cultural and economic diversity among inhabitants. Old Silk Stocking neighbors value their diversity and the sense of neighborhood vitality that comes from people being out in their yards, children walking to school, and neighbors interacting with each other on the street.

Physical Infrastructure

*Stormwater Drainage***.** Poor drainage is a persistent problem in Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood for three reasons: 1) the area is very flat; 2) it has highly clayey soils that do not allow water to percolate into the groundwater, and 3) there are a limited number of underground drainage structures available. The City sought to solve flooding issues as far back as 1936 by dispatching Works Progress Administration (WPA) crews to build stone-lined channels for Imhoff and Bishop Creeks in Central Norman. This successfully sped water downstream but as more impervious surface has been created upstream over the past 70 years, the problem of stormwater runoff continues to grow.

Old Silk Stocking's north-south collector streets have curb and guttering. The east-west cross streets predominantly have inlet/ underground or bar ditch drainage systems. The neighborhood has five types of drainage systems throughout the area. The five types of drainage infrastructure found throughout the Old Silk Stocking neighborhood are described on the following page.

Neighborhood Context, continued



Along some streets tin the northern parts of the neighborhood, there are no drainage structures in place.

There are five types of drainage structures found in Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood:

- Concrete curb-and-gutter, with drainage inlets and underground drainage
- Concrete curb-and-gutter
- Drainage inlets with underground drainage
- Bar ditches with culverts
- Bar ditches that have been filled in over the years, leaving a passive system of detention/evaporation

For many years, Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood has had a long-standing goal of eliminating bar ditches and installing curb and gutter along all neighborhood streets. Integrated drainage structures are prohibitively expensive in terms of engineering and construction costs—approximately $150,000 a block in 2011 dollars—and are not prevalent in the neighborhood so in many cases there is no place for stormwater to drain.

While underground drainage is the fastest way to remove stormwater, it is by far the most expensive and the least environmentally sustainable method to drain stormwater from city streets. The City's Public Works Department's knowledge and understanding of stormwater management best practices is evolving. This means that City engineers are investigating stormwater removal methods that are both effective and environmentally sensitive. The City seeks to help citizens understand how techniques such as regular maintenance of bar ditches will allow that type of drainage system to operate to its highest efficiency. City engineers are also exploring new techniques of sustainable stormwater management such as rain gardens, a water retention technique that beautifies while also performing a vital function.

Flood Plain. Until recently, sections of the Old Silk Stocking neighborhood along Imhoff Creek were designated as 100-Year Flood Plain by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Flooding was occasionally severe along Beal Street west of Peters, through Ruth Updegraff Park, and along the north-south alley between Acres and Hughbert Streets. In 2008, FEMA redrew Norman's designated Flood Plain to reflect changes that have occurred throughout the city's watersheds. At that time, the 100-Year Flood Plain designation was removed from the neighborhood. For property owners, removal of this designation means that they are no longer required to carry flood insurance. Removal also eliminates significant barriers for property owners to obtaining building or paving permits. While the channelized creek still occasionally carries large amounts of water, the area is no longer deemed to be a flood hazard.



The stone-lined channel of Imhoff Creek was built by the WPA during the 1930s.

Neighborhood Context, continued

In addition, as part of the revitalization of Ruth Updegraff Park, the City will install an underground pipe from a drainage inlet on Acres Street to the channelized creek. This will make significant drainage improvements along Acres Street, which has a long history of flooding and standing water after heavy rains.

Alleys. The entire Old Silk Stocking neighborhood has a system of alleyways. Some are paved; many are gravel, but most are in serviceable condition. (**See Map 8**) For many years, the neighborhood has allocated CDBG funding to pave these alleys with asphalt, one block at a time. Recently however, residents living along paved alleys have realized there are downsides to this practice: paved alleys generate stormwater runoff and with repaving develop a higher elevation than adjacent properties, so they also contribute to backyard flooding. Paved alleys attract more traffic that moves faster than traffic on a gravel surface. In addition to the runoff and speeding issues related to paving alleys, the practice of alley garbage collection is highly inefficient. Norman's Sanitation Division uses the new style of side-collection automated trucks that allow one employee to service an entire route. But this also means that trash trucks must make four passes to collect trash from a single block (two sides of the streets, two sides of the alley). Alley collection is also hard on the trash trucks. For large trash trucks, many of the city's alleys are nearly impassable due to vegetation, projecting gas meters, low-hanging utility wires, and the location of alley buildings. The City Council, supported by staff recommendations, has expressed an interest in ending alley trash collection. This policy change needs further exploration but may become a reality in the near future.



Some of Old Silk Stocking's alleys are paved; many are gravel but most all are in good-to-serviceable condition.

Finally, repairing alleyways to the City standard of 6-inch thick concrete costs a minimum of $70,000 a block. Asphalt paving is sometimes cheaper but does not hold up well under heavy truck use. A loaded trash truck can weigh up to 44,000 pounds. These heavy trucks damage alleyways that were never intended to carry such loads. These constraining factors in the city's alleys add to the cost of garbage collection for all Norman's citizens.

Over the program's 37-year history, many CDBG dollars have been spent paving alleyways, only to have them deteriorate quickly due to heavy truck traffic. City streets are designed to carry heavy loads; neighborhood alleyways are not. As CDBG budgets continue shrinking with no end in sight, the question must be asked: is alley paving the best use of limited funding? What kinds of projects could provide the greatest benefit to the largest number of Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood residents?

Neighborhood Context, continued

Sanitary Sewer. Over the past 37 years of the CDBG program, Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood has been completely retrofitted with new 8-12-inch sanitary sewer lines. As the CDBG program replaced sewer mains, sewer connections to individual houses throughout the neighborhood were also replaced.

Water. The entire neighborhood is serviced by 6-12-inch water lines, many of which were installed by the CDBG program over the past 37 years. As the CDBG program replaced water mains, water connections to individual houses were also replaced throughout the neighborhood. A few undersized lines (under 4 inches) remain at Crawford & Acres, Crawford & Himes, and along the 300-block of East Frank. These undersized lines should be upgraded as funding allows.

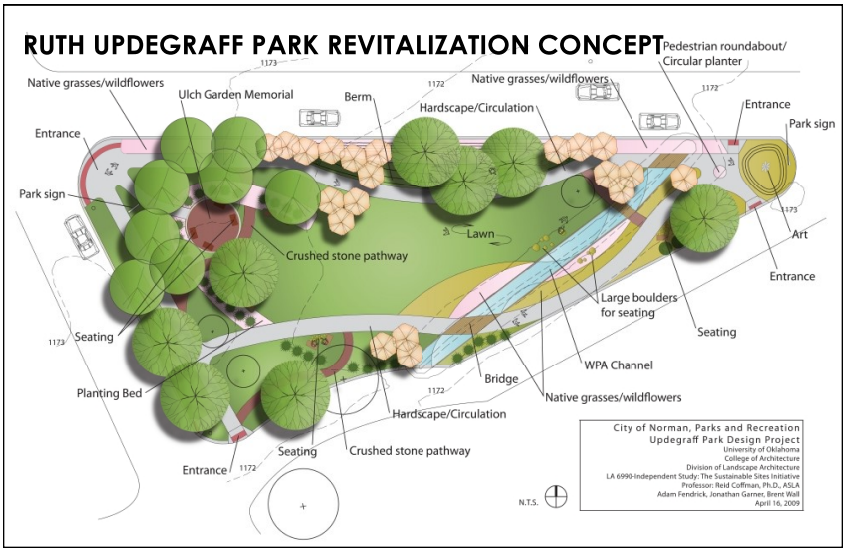
Lighting. The CDBG program has funded installation of pedestrian-scale, historic-style lighting fixtures along several blocks of Jones, Peters, Beal and Acres Streets. Roadway lighting meets the City standard of one light at the end of each block in most locations though residents often state that the City standard is still too dark for their comfort. In some places, this is because the tree canopy is beneath the 30-foot roadway light, so it blocks the light from reaching the street or sidewalk.

Revitalization of Ruth Updegraff Park

Shrinking CDBG budgets at the federal level have prompted a re-thinking of the nature of future neighborhood projects in Norman's CDBG areas. Old Silk Stocking residents have recommended focusing resources on improving Ruth Updegraff Park, a small triangular park at the intersection of Peters, Acres, and Beal Streets. Though underutilized, Ruth Updegraff is Old Silk Stocking's only formal park and is a focal point for the neighborhood.

Existing Conditions. Ruth Updegraff Park is just over a half-acre in size. Park furnishings include a wooden gazebo and benches, groups of mature trees, light posts, sidewalk along Peters Avenue, a channelized segment of Imhoff Creek, a wooden bridge, and the Vicki Ulch memorial garden. The Moore-Lindsey House and the gazebo are occasionally rented for weddings and the Cleveland County Historical Society hosts two annual events in the park.

Opportunities. Participants in the February 2009 Design Workshop (see sidebar) expressed a desire for better separation between the park and moving traffic along Acres Street; the need for more shade trees and comfortable seating areas in the park, and a need for the park to feel more inviting. City staff was seeking ways to integrate sidewalk along Acres Street into the park itself. All participants agreed that a gazebo is an important feature in the park. An idea that came out of the workshop is to relocate the gazebo to allow the park's center to function as true open space. Given the gazebo's enduring popularity for weddings, workshop participants observed that a gazebo tucked under the trees would be very inviting and could provide an attractive setting for wedding photos with the Moore-Lindsey House in the background.



Ruth Updegraff Park Design Workshop

On Saturday, February 28, 2009 a dozen neighbors and Old Silk Stocking property owners participated in a Park Design Workshop. The day-long event explored how Updegraff Park could be made more attractive, more functional, and more of a neighborhood destination.

Working with landscape architecture graduate students and a professor from the University of Oklahoma's College of Architecture, the group used several techniques to elicit participants' opinions about ways to better-utilize this half-acre park resource.

The Ruth Updegraff Park Plan Concept (bottom right) develops stakeholders' ideas from the workshop into an attractive vision for the revitalization of a significant neighborhood asset.

Five Reasons to Revitalize Ruth Updegraff Park

1. Park enhancement is a highly visible and effective tool in neighborhood placemaking.
2. This project would give the City the opportunity to solve a long-standing drainage issue along Acres Street.
3. Revitalization of Ruth Updegraff Park would also help enhance the setting for the Moore-Lindsey Historical House Museum, a City-owned facility.
4. Park revitalization will create very attractive and usable public open space for the neighborhood.
5. Investment in the public realm conveys a strong commitment to revitalization of the neighborhood and Porter Corridor area.

Porter Avenue Corridor Plan

Why Undertake the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan?

In its current form, Porter Avenue's impact on Old Silk Stocking neighborhood is largely negative, though residents appreciate the convenience of being close to commercial and institutional destinations. Commercial uses along Porter need room to grow and the only place they can expand is into the adjacent neighborhoods. This has occurred steadily over recent decades, causing the removal houses for parking and igniting a trend of disinvestment in the adjacent residential blocks. West of Porter Avenue, blocks that were once owner-occupied have become almost entirely rental occupied. Porter's environmental aesthetics are poor, which detracts from the quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods. Right now, Porter is an opportunity unrealized. Many nearby residents and business owners would like to change this.

What is the Purpose of the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan?

The purpose of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan-Staff Update* is to guide future improvement of the Porter Avenue Corridor, while focusing on the existing community and the rich history of the area. The plan explores opportunities for the creation of a pedestrian environment along Porter Avenue, the establishment of an enhanced streetscape that attracts new commercial activity and leverages investment in commercial property, and the preservation of adjacent residential neighborhoods.

What Do We Hope to Achieve in the Porter Corridor?

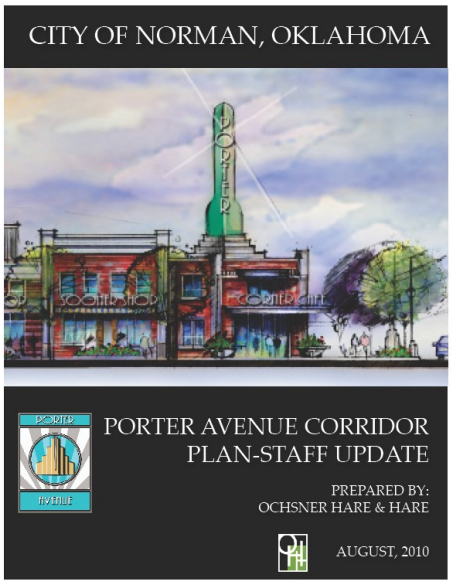
The *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan-Staff Update* describes five broad categories of long-term improvement along the corridor:

Mobility and Public Safety

Establish Porter Avenue as a safe, accommodating connection with Downtown Norman, other established commercial districts, and adjacent neighborhoods. Manage traffic along Porter in a way that maintains the corridor as a safe transportation network for all users, allowing access for pedestrians, buses, and bicycles as well as cars.

Aesthetics

Create a destination environment reminiscent of Porter's transportation "roots" that is complemented by attractive green



The Porter Avenue Corridor Plan was created to establish a revitalization vision for this important 1.2-mile corridor through central Norman.

Porter Corridor Plan, continued

What is the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD)?

During the Porter Avenue Corridor planning process, a Zoning Overlay District was identified as a regulatory tool that could be effective in achieving a desired balance between commercial and residential land uses in the corridor.

City Council adopted the PCZOD, thereby establishing a commercial limit line to the east and west of Porter Avenue. The PCZOD requires businesses that expand to this line enact physical buffers that provide a separation between residential and commercial activities.

What Are the Development Standards Required by the PCZOD?

- Establishes a limit line for commercial land uses at a maximum of 250 feet back from Porter Avenue.
- Requires that commercial land uses expanding to the limit line must have 10- foot wide landscape buffer and 4-foot high masonry wall, increasing to 6 feet adjacent to neighbor's backyard.
- Requires parking lots to have downcast lighting on poles no higher than 20 feet.

space, a spectacular streetscape, and high visual interest which creates an attractive environment for private investment on adjacent land throughout the corridor.

Neighborhoods

Blend existing neighborhood fabric with opportunities for new residential development that will establish Porter neighborhoods as walkable and well-maintained with connectivity and easy access to amenities and essential goods and services.

Economic Development

Make Porter Avenue a significant revenue-generating corridor for Norman, encouraging development efforts that create a balance of uses. Create development that blends seamlessly with adjacent neighborhoods, parks, trails, and institutions.

Land Use

Balance Porter Avenue's active commercial and mixed use areas with the needs and character of the surrounding established neighborhoods to maximize economic growth and protect the interests of all Porter Avenue stakeholders.

What's Next for the Porter Corridor?

As step to begin implementing the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan*, Norman City Council also adopted the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD). The PCZOD establishes a limit line for commercial land uses along Porter Avenue. Businesses seeking to expand to this line must build an opaque masonry wall with a ten-foot deep landscape buffer at the property line to separate residential properties from expanding commercial activities. Masonry walls create a physical and psychological edge that clearly conveys the point where one land uses stops and another starts. A mutually respected edge is critical for peaceful coexistence between commercial and residential land uses.

The Porter Avenue Corridor Plan establishes a long-range vision for creating both physical and economic change along this central Norman corridor. At present, the City lacks funding to begin implementation of streetscape improvements but staff is seeking funds that will allow revitalization of the public space to get started. Implementing these revitalization goals for Porter Avenue will require time and investment from both the public and private sectors. Without the investment to improve Porter's streetscape environment and to create a permanent protective buffer between commercial and adjacent residential land uses, the Porter Avenue that exists today is likely the best it will ever be.



This 1920s Bungalow-style house on Peters Avenue addresses the street with its porch and fenced front yard garden.

Neighborhood Plan Concept: Strengthen What We Have

Working with resident-generated goals, data from a physical survey of the neighborhood, and other current City plans, the City of Norman planning team has developed this Neighborhood Plan Concept as a framework to implement specific improvements in the Old Silk Stocking (OSS) Neighborhood.

The Plan Concept, perhaps best summarized as "Strengthen What We Have," identifies six long-term goals for the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood. On the following pages, each goal is articulated and accompanied by specific objectives. If implemented, these measures will be very helpful in preserving and protecting Old Silk Stocking's many assets and will also effectively reverse negative trends in the neighborhood.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Edges
Mark clear boundaries that separate Downtown and Porter Avenue commercial land uses from adjacent residential areas in Old Silk Stocking. A mutually respected edge is critical for peaceful coexistence between commercial and residential land uses.

GOAL 2: Protect History, Character and Sense of Place
Protect the neighborhood's physical environment that includes blocks of historic houses and other structures, the pattern of sidewalks, streets and trees, and proximity to neighborhood goods and services.

GOAL 3: Strengthen Zoning Protections
Support zoning changes that reflect 2025 Plan Land Use Plan *recommendations, preserve the single-family residential character of Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood, and promote the peaceful co-existence of adjacent land uses.*

GOAL 4: Improve Traffic and Circulation at Key Locations
Calm traffic and improve safety along key streets and at busy intersections. Improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood but particularly across Porter Avenue.

GOAL 5: Upgrade Neighborhood Infrastructure
Make meaningful infrastructure improvements that enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.

GOAL 6: Enhance Appearance and Quality of Life
Encourage participation in programs that beautify the neighborhood, enhance individual property values, and build a sense of connection between neighbors.



Simple brick columns with landscaping can create a very effective neighborhood entryway.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Edges

Mark clear boundaries that separate Downtown and Porter Avenue commercial land uses from adjacent residential areas in Old Silk Stocking. A mutually respected edge is critical for peaceful coexistence between commercial and residential land uses. These goals are closely correlated with the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan goal to protect neighborhoods.

1. **Develop neighborhood gateways that formalize entry into Old Silk Stocking at the following locations:**
   - Robinson/Hayes at Crawford—specific location and design depends on future land use at this location
   - Robinson at Peters
   - Acres at Jones
   - Tonhawa at Peters and/or Tonhawa at Crawford
   - Frank west of Porter at commercial limit line
   - Daws west of Porter at commercial limit line
   - Tonhawa and Crawford

2. **Strengthen neighborhood identity through meaningful placemaking activities.**
   - Develop a high quality neighborhood identification graphic package that includes a logo and signage.
   - Plant appropriate species of trees in rights-of-way to create or sustain the urban tree canopy.
   - Expand historic lighting scheme to other parts of the neighborhood.
   - Revitalize Ruth Updegraff Park to be more attractive with meaningful open space.
   - Install a public art piece thematically linked to the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood at the confluence of Acres/Beal.
   - Develop interpretive signage for Ruth Updegraff Park, Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood, and the WPA-era Channel.

3. **Monitor proposals to expand commercial zoning along Porter Avenue and northward from Downtown to ensure that developers fulfill obligations for residential buffering per the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD).**



Neighborhood gateways are both symbolic and functional points of entry.

What is Placemaking?

According to authors and urban planners Al Zelinka and Susan Jackson Harden in a book entitled *Placemaking on a Budget*, "placemaking refers to the process of adding value and meaning to the public realm through community-based revitalization projects rooted in local values, history, culture and natural environment."

Urbanist Phillip Langdon writes "placemaking has become a necessary activity as a response to the 20th Century's creation of an impermanent, standardized built environment at odds with community pride and loyalty. Yet the stubborn fact remains: human beings need places that matter to us, places in our cities, towns and neighborhoods that we can point to and inhabit with pride."

Examples of Placemaking

- Public art in parks or other gathering places in the public realm
- Attractive lighting designs
- Creation of neighborhood gateways
- Decorative sidewalk treatments
- Tree planting in public ROW
- Corridor landscaping
- Neighborhood identification signage on posts or light poles
- Interpretive historical signage for parks, schools, buildings, the stone-lined WPA creek channels
- Park revitalization projects, e.g., stream restoration, seating areas, tree planting, lighting, decorative fencing, and interpretive signage, engaging play equipment.

GOAL 2: Protect Character and Sense of Place

Protect the neighborhood's physical environment that includes blocks of historic houses, sidewalk patterns, tree-lined streets, and the proximity of neighborhood goods, services and institutions.

1. **Undertake neighborhood placemaking activities (see sidebar) that strengthen the neighborhood's edges, strengthen identity, and create public spaces that attract people.**

2. **Revitalize Ruth Updegraff Park to make it an attractive, inviting "living room" for the entire neighborhood.**

3. **Work with the City of Norman to develop Conservation District Overlay zoning that would regulate exterior changes to historic structures at lower levels of control, would preserve and enhance neighborhood character and would bolster property values.**

4. **Work through the City's Neighborwoods Program to distribute and plant appropriate tree species in rights-of-way to sustain or create the urban tree canopy.**
   - Create a neighborhood tree-tenders support program to help nurture newly-planted trees and teach property owners how to take care of them.
   - Develop a Friends of Ruth Updegraff Park program to invest neighbors in the park's condition and to maintain the health of new plantings in the park.

5. **Work with the City of Norman to create home improvement grants for property owners to be used for painting and exterior repair.**
   - Use improvement programs to preserve and enhance neighborhood character and historic building design

6. **Use attractive sidewalk treatments to link the neighborhood with the Porter Corridor and Downtown.**

What is the Difference Between Land Use and Zoning?

Existing Land Use. Existing land use refers to how land is being used at present. Land use describes the structure on a parcel of land and how that structure functions. For example, a single-family house on a parcel is referred to as low-density (or single-family) residential land use. An apartment building is called a multi-family residential land use.

Future Land Use. Future land use describes a city's recommendation in a long-range plan for how land might be used in the future. This recommendation by itself has no teeth. Future land use recommendations take into account existing land use plus land use trends that are occurring or which may be desired in the future in that area.

Zoning. Zoning is a legal designation for a parcel of land that allows only certain types of land use to occur there. In the case of Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood, half the neighborhood was zoned in 1954 with the assumption that its future land use would be multi-family. The neighborhood land use has remained overwhelmingly single-family but the zoning still allows a much higher density residential land use. This discrepancy may create future conflicts.

What Is a Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay?

A neighborhood conservation district is not a zoning category that currently exists in the City of Norman. Conservation districts are zoning tools that help older neighborhoods preserve their basic architectural character. Conservation districts regulate issues such as land use, size and scale of new structures, or additions and garages and the placement of parking on a site. Unlike a historic district, a conservation district would not regulate building materials or other fine-grained architectural details. A conservation district could be administered by staff or a City Council-appointed commission. Staff could develop this zoning category along with property owners who choose to pursue it. Ultimately City Council would have the final say in adopting a new zoning category.

GOAL 3: Strengthen Zoning Protections

Support zoning changes that reflect 2025 Land Use Plan recommendations, which preserve the residential character of Old Silk Stocking and which promote the peaceful co-existence of neighboring land uses.

1. Explore the possibility of downzoning parts of the neighborhood to R-1 if property owners in the area choose to pursue it.

- Request that City staff make a presentation to educate neighborhood residents about current land use vs. current zoning and about how changing real estate dynamics in the area could potentially impact Old Silk Stocking.
- Discuss various regulatory tools available to preserve single-family neighborhood character.

2. Examine neighborhood conservation overlay zoning protections as a tool to help maintain the architectural character of the neighborhood and to control residential .

- Request that City staff make a presentation to all five CDBG neighborhoods about conservation district zoning, how it would preserve neighborhoods and how a conservation district differs from a historic district.
- Meet with neighborhood property owners who could be regulated by a neighborhood conservation district overlay to evaluate protections vs. tradeoffs and to determine if property owners wish to pursue the additional zoning.

3. Support applications for commercial or institutional rezoning only when the project complies with the Commercial Limit line of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan,* including off-street parking lots.

- Consider the formation of a neighborhood committee that can review zoning issues when they arise and work with City staff and zoning applicants to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed zoning changes.



To safely cross busy streets, pedestrians must rely on drivers stopping at crosswalks.

What is Walkability?

A walkable neighborhood is a place where people live within walking distance to most places they want to visit, whether it is school, work, grocery stores, parks, churches, banks, retail shops, or drug stores, and where people choose to walk to access these goods and services instead of drive their cars.

A walkable neighborhood has sidewalks or clear pedestrian zones linking major destinations in and around the area. A walkable community is made up of a collection of walkable neighborhoods.

Walkability In Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood:

- Wherever feasible, install sidewalks where there are missing segments throughout the neighborhood.
- Using *Porter Corridor Public Streetscape Design*, install new or replace existing sidewalks along Porter Avenue.
- Using *Porter Corridor Public Streetscape Design,* install landscaping improvements along Porter Avenue that make sidewalk environment more attractive to walkers.
- Install accessibility ramps throughout the neighborhood wherever they are missing or inadequate.

GOAL 4. Improve Traffic and Circulation at Key Locations

Reduce speeds and improve safety along key road segments and at busy intersections. Improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood but particularly along and across Porter Avenue.

1. **Address traffic problems at the intersection of Acres and Jones and speeding problems on Fay and Peters.**
   - Increase police monitoring of known speeding areas.
   - Request the City Traffic Engineer undertake a study of areas with persistent speeding problems to determine if traffic calming measures are required.
   - Request the Traffic Engineer assess the Acres and Jones intersection to determine if improvements are feasible.

2. **Make pedestrian improvements at the Acres and Porter intersection a community priority.**
   - Work with Norman Public School officials to get a crossing guard stationed at this busy intersection.
   - Improve sidewalk connections along Acres Street linking Longfellow Middle School, Porter Avenue, Updegraff Park, Legacy Trail and Andrews Park.
   - Request the City of Norman to fund a detailed traffic analysis of the Porter Avenue Corridor to determine the best options for future traffic flow along Porter Avenue, including the best options for safe crossing at the intersection of Acres & Porter.

3. **Use CDBG funding to improve walkability in the neighborhood.**
   - Use the sidewalk survey from this document to establish priority sidewalk projects.
   - Use School Sidewalk funds from Public Works to address sidewalk deficiencies near Wilson School and along routes to Longfellow Elementary on the west side of Porter Avenue.

4. **Improve sidewalks along and across Porter Avenue.**
   - Use the *Porter Corridor Public Streetscape Design* to begin improving sidewalks that serve the neighborhood on the west side of Porter.
   - Consider using CDBG funds to leverage private sector improvements to commercial facades along Porter Avenue.
   - Make landscaping improvements along Porter Avenue that connect with gateways into the neighborhood.



The historic stone-lined creek channel, built in 1936 by the federal Works Progress Administration , is both a neighborhood landmark and a maintenance challenge.

GOAL 5. Upgrade Physical and Civic Infrastructure

Make meaningful infrastructure improvements to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.

1. **Improve drainage throughout the neighborhood by installing curbs and gutters where appropriate or by other means where curbs and gutters are not feasible.**
   - Use data from this survey to verify location of existing drainage structures in the neighborhood and to identify specific locations where improved drainage is needed. Determine if existing drainage system is adequate.
   - In areas where there are no drainage structures in place, identify other techniques that could improve the drainage situation.
2. **Maintain and preserve the WPA Drainage Channel as both a historic resource and an important drainage feature.**
   - Work with the City Street Department to assess the condition of the WPA Channel throughout the neighborhood.
   - Promote the idea that all future repairs should strive to be sensitive to the historic construction methods of the channel.
3. **Revitalize Ruth Updegraff Park as an inviting and meaningful open space for the neighborhood.**
4. **Improve sidewalk connections along Acres Street that link Longfellow Middle School, Porter Avenue, Updegraff Park, Legacy Trail and Andrews Park.**
5. **Expand pedestrian-scale lighting plan to include more areas of the neighborhood.**
6. **Eliminate alley trash collection to reduce sanitation truck damage to alleys and improve sanitation department operating efficiency.**
7. **Replace undersized water lines at Crawford & Acres, Crawford & Himes, and along the 300-block of East Frank.**
8. **Initiate sidewalk and landscaping improvements along the west side of Porter Avenue which conform to the *Porter Avenue Corridor Design for Public Streetscape*.**
9. **Develop Driveway Replacement program that targets entire blocks, maintaining and containing gravel and/or replacing gravel driveways and drive approaches with concrete.**
10. **Install neighborhood gateways and identification signage. (See Goal 1)**



Lack of formal infrastructure and poor drainage along some streets creates problems during heavy rains.



Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood has a genteel livability and a neighborhood design that conveys a high quality of life.

GOAL 6. Enhance Appearance & Quality of Life

Foster participation in programs that beautify the neighborhood, enhance individual property values, and build a sense of connection between neighbors. Effective implementation of this goal will require a public-private partnership with some tasks undertaken by the City, some undertaken by the City and the neighborhood together, and some initiated by neighborhood residents themselves.

1. Work to reactivate Old Silk Stocking's Neighborhood Association as an important symbol of social investment and community revitalization.

City-Led Tasks

- Establish neighborhood leadership training programs (e.g. Neighborhood Alliance's Neighborhood Leaders for Today) that sustain the organization and successfully implement ongoing revitalization activities.
- Communicate with BNSF railroad about rail corridor maintenance and enhancement efforts.
- Develop Driveway Replacement program that targets entire blocks, maintaining and containing gravel and/or replacing gravel driveways and drive approaches with concrete.

Neighborhood - City Partnerships

- Hold a Neighborhood Association "relaunch" event to reactivate residents and get them engaged in the neighborhood. Have a facilitated discussion about neighbors' expectations of the association's mission, purpose, goals and future projects.
- Educate property owners about neighborhood expectations for property maintenance and to work with Code Enforcement to address problem areas.
- Make meaningful recommendations for future CDBG projects in the neighborhood.
- Participate in discussions about future redevelopment efforts as part of Porter Corridor revitalization, especially as an advocate for preservation of neighborhood affordability and design character.
- Establish an electronic neighborhood newsletter that comes out at least twice a year.
- Create an email database to facilitate more effective communication among neighbors.



An expectation of well-maintained property is a cornerstone of a high quality of life in any neighborhood.



Old Silk Stocking's mature tree canopy must be protected and replaced when trees are diseased, damaged, or die .

GOAL 6, continued

Neighborhood-Led Tasks

- Use the association to monitor issues that affect the neighborhood, to be an effective communication tool, to educate residents about property maintenance expectations, and to provide a mechanism that builds connection between neighbors.
- Organize regular neighborhood social gatherings that allow neighbors to get acquainted and share information (e.g. potluck suppers, ice cream socials, neighborhood picnics, etc.)
- Use Neighborhood Association and email to distribute information about various City of Norman programs that can benefit property owners.
- Initiate a needs assessment of neighborhood residents who may require various kinds of assistance to maintain and improve their property.

2. Maintain Old Silk Stocking's historic tree canopy by planting new trees and replacing diseased or dying trees.

Neighborhood-City Partnerships

- Work as a Neighborhood Association with the City's Neighborwoods Program to distribute and plant appropriate tree species in rights-of-way.
- Hold a Tree Planting Day as part of the Neighborwoods Program, the City's urban reforestation program for planting street trees in rights-of-way.
- Working through the Neighborhood Association, create a neighborhood tree-tenders support program to help nurture newly-planted trees and to teach property owners how to take care of them.

3. Develop a Friends of Ruth Updegraff Park program to invest neighbors in the park's condition and to maintain the health of new plantings in the park.

Neighborhood-City Partnership

- Hold a information-gathering meeting with other "Friends Of Park" groups in the City followed by an organizational meeting to outline mission, strategies and next steps.
- Plan an annual neighborhood event (e.g. an ice cream social) to be held at Updegraff Park.

GOAL 6, continued

4. Work with the administration of Wilson Elementary School, the Center for Children and Families' Neighborhood Center Program at Wilson School, and neighborhood churches to build stronger partnerships that help support the neighborhood.

Neighborhood-City-School Partnership

- Work with Wilson School Administration to make Wilson Elementary School the regular meeting place for the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Association.
- Encourage residents to use the school playground and fields as neighborhood open space and play space.
- Work with the school and other resources to develop continuing education opportunities (hobbies, academics, etc.) that can be held at school facilities.



Neighborhood identification signs are effective placemaking tools and help reinforce a sense of place.

Neighborhood-Led Tasks

- Approach area churches about partnering with the OSS Neighborhood Association to undertake home improvement projects for elderly or handicapped neighborhood residents.

Short-Term Implementation Strategy: 2012-2017

PROJECT	COST ESTIMATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
1. Install gateway monuments at entry points into the neighborhood: Robinson/Hayes at Crawford — Robinson at Peters Acres at Jones — Tonhawa at Peters Tonhawa at Crawford Frank west of Porter at commercial limit line Daws west of Porter at commercial limit line	$10,000-$30,000	CDBG (budgeted)
2. Proceed with Updegraff Park Revitalization project, beginning with hardscape and new gazebo, followed by landscape installation	$120,000-$130,000	CDBG (budgeted)
3. Help convene and facilitate Friends-of-Updegraff Park organizational meeting	$200	Staff and volunteer time
4. Hold Neighborhood Association Relaunch event, including election of neighborhood officers and gathering email addresses for database	$200	Staff and volunteer time
5. Facilitate development of electronic OSS Neighborhood Newsletter	No cost	Staff and volunteer time
6. Create email database	No cost	Staff and volunteer time
7. Develop neighborhood identification graphics package to include neighborhood logo, signage, and letterhead	$2,500 +/-	CDBG
8. Install neighborhood identification signage throughout neighborhood	$10,000 +/-	CDBG
9. Work with the City Planning Staff, the Planning Commission and City Council to develop Conservation District Zoning category	No cost	Staff and volunteer time
10. Work with City Staff to develop home improvement grant program for property maintenance of owner occupied, low/mod income housing; fund program	$40,000	CDBG
11. Install missing sidewalk segments and accessibility ramps where missing	$20,000	Capital Fund Neighborhood Improvement, CDBG,
12. Eliminate alley trash collection wherever feasible, working with neighbors to find alternatives	No cost	
13. Install a block of Porter Avenue Streetscape	$ 165,000 +/-	Capital Fund Neighborhood Improvement, CDBG

Conclusions: Where Do We Go From Here?

Over the past 37 years, City staff working with CDBG neighborhood residents have implemented numerous infrastructure improvements in five neighborhoods. Much of the critical infrastructure such as replacement of water and sewer lines, and reconstruction of collector streets has been addressed. Though expensive to undertake these projects are essential to basic health and sanitation. But in some ways, these kinds of infrastructure projects could be considered low-hanging fruit. The more difficult task in forging a sustainable climate of neighborhood revitalization is the "hearts and minds" campaign. This is the task of creating a sense of personal investment for individual property owners in the long-term economic health and social well-being of the neighborhood.

Solve One Problem; Create Another. Solving urban infrastructure problems in Norman's CDBG neighborhoods is rarely as simple as it looks on the surface. In older neighborhoods, problems are inextricably woven—solve one, create another. For example, residents often complain of localized drainage deficiencies in Old Silk Stocking. Yet the problem is not installing curb and gutter; it is overcoming the lack of storm sewers in the area to drain stormwater. Sidewalks are another thorny issue. Sidewalks were not part of standard infrastructure in many mid-20th Century subdivisions. Moreover, the shallow setback of houses in these subdivisions often means that installing sidewalks inadvertently eliminates parking for many residents who would block sidewalks—a violation of City Code—by parking in their own driveways.

Neighborhoods Needs Shifting. After three decades in the CDBG business, the needs of Norman's Core Area neighborhoods and the tasks required to fulfill those needs have shifted. Now more than ever, CDBG neighborhoods need to be well-organized, well-connected, and charged with meaningful projects on residents' plates to keep all stakeholders engaged, invested and making progress. Now more than ever, CDBG funding must catalyze neighborhood revitalization by coordinating residents' efforts and supporting a system of sustainable, resident-led projects.



The fortunes and expansion plans of Porter Avenue businesses have an impact on adjacent residential blocks.

A Coordinated Strategy Needed. Sustainable enhancement of the quality of life in Old Silk Stocking neighborhoods requires a coordinated strategy rather than a collection of projects. Effective strategies can only be created by the people who live in the

Conclusions, continued

neighborhood, regularly asking themselves questions such as "how do we want our neighborhood to look in ten years?" and "what steps can we take ourselves to help make it happen?" City staff's task for the next ten years is to help all of Norman's CDBG areas combine activities to their best strategic advantage. Projects such as neighborhood placemaking, effective social organization, and community beautification of parks and rights-of-way will foster a stronger sense of neighborhood ownership and an overall climate of revitalization.

Plan Implementation. A neighborhood plan should have a maximum life span of ten years. After five years, neighborhood plans should be reviewed and updated as circumstances require.

The Short-Term Implementation Strategy on the previous page describes projects that should be initiated in the next one-to-five years (2012-2017). The Implementation Strategy details specific projects that are recommended in the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Plan and identifies possible funding sources that could be available to bring these projects to fruition. The projects recommended in the implementation plan have been developed from neighborhood-generated lists of opportunities and from field observations made by City staff. They represent neighborhood priorities at social, civic and infrastructure levels.

Old Silk Stocking Demographic Summary

This data is derived from the 2000 Census Block Group statistics. 2010 Census Block Group data is not yet available.

Neighborhood Population	1167
Total Number of Housing Units	591
Average Household Size	1.9 persons per unit
Percentage of Population Defined as Low/Mod Income	58.35%
Land Use Distribution	86% single family residential 14% 2-4 family residential
Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units to Renter-Occupied Units	45% owner-occupied 55% renter-occupied
2011 Average Daily Enrollment at Wilson Elementary School	250 students