

ORIGINAL TOWNSITE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Developed by Original Townsite Neighborhood Residents with City of Norman Revitalization

June 14, 2012

Original Townsite Neighborhood Planning for Community Preservation

Content Developed by Original Townsite Neighborhood Residents and City of Norman Revitalization Staff

PLAN DRAFT

June 2012

Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan
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Ward 2 Tom Kovach
Ward 3 Hal Ezell
Ward 4 Carol Dillingham/Greg Jungman
Ward 5 Dave Spaulding
Ward 6 Jim Griffith
Ward 7 Linda Lockett
Ward 8 Dan Quinn

Norman Planning Commission

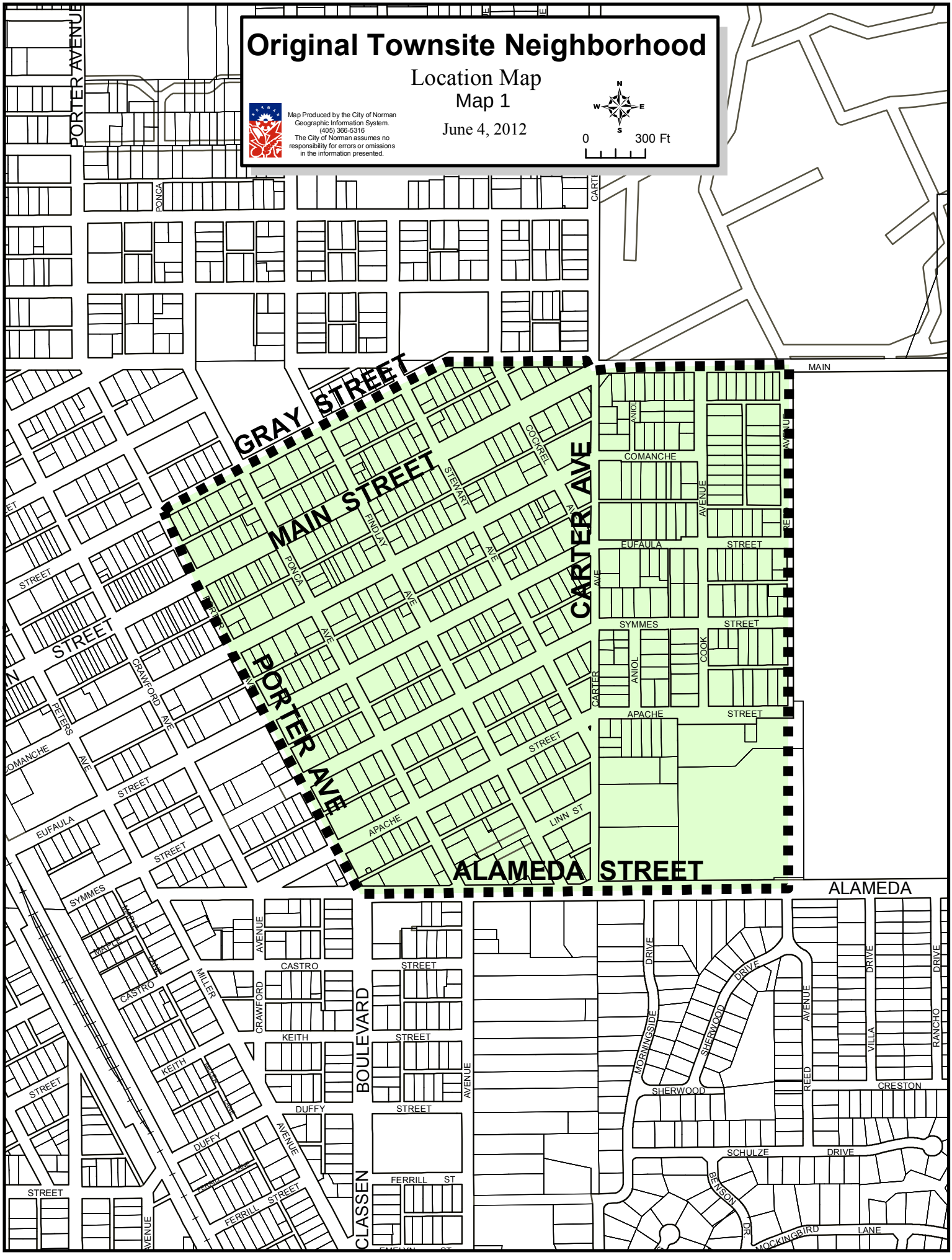
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Original Townsite Neighborhood
Location Map
Map 1
June 4, 2012
Map Produced by the City of Norman
Geographic Information System.
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PORTER AVENUE
PONCA
CARTER
MAIN
GRAY STREET
MAIN STREET
COCKREL
STEWART
FINDLAY
AVE
CARTER AVE
ANIOL
AVENUE
COMANCHE
EUFAULA
STREET
SYMMES
COOK
APACHE
PORTER AVE
CRAWFORD
PETERS
LINN ST
ALAMEDA STREET
ALAMEDA
MAPLE
CASTRO
MILLER
KEITH
DUFFY
FERRILL ST
BOULEVARD
CLASSEN
DRIVE
MORNINGSIDE
SHERWOOD
REED
VILLA
RANCHO
CRESTON
SCHULZE
BENSON
DR.
MOCKINGBIRD
LANE



The roundabout and public art project at Main and Carter was part of the Main Street Roadway Reconstruction Project completed in 2009.

ORIGINAL TOWNSITE NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS COMPLETED 2007-2012

1. East Main Street Road Reconstruction with drainage improvements, installation of multi-modal paths, roundabout, and public art
2. Drainage improvements
   - Carter: Alameda – Apache
   - Bishop Creek: Linn – Apache
3. Drainage inlet reconstruction on Porter from Alameda – Gray
4. Sewer main replacement of all mains in the neighborhood
5. Sidewalks on Eufaula from Carter to Reed
6. Street reconstruction
   - Eufaula: Cockrel – Reed
   - Stewart: Main – Carter
   - Symmes: Porter – Reed
   - Apache: Porter – Cook
   - Cockrel: Carter – Acres
   - Comanche: Ponca – Cook
   - Reed: Symmes – Main
7. Asphalt street maintenance on Main from Porter to Carter
8. Replaced Outdoor Emergency Warning System

Executive Summary

The Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan is an update and expansion of a plan for all of Norman's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) neighborhoods written in 1990. Neighborhood meetings during which the contents of this plan were developed were held in 2007, 2008, and 2011 with infrastructure surveys completed in 2012. This document summarizes the larger plan, which includes a detailed inventory of physical conditions as well as detailed objectives under plan recommendations.

Neighborhood Boundaries and Name. Original Townsite neighborhood is bounded by Main and Gray Streets on the north, Alameda on the south, Reed Street on the east and Porter Avenue on the west. The neighborhood was so named because it was included in the first acreage platted to become the Town of Norman in 1889.

CDBG Neighborhood. Original Townsite was designated as one of Norman's CDBG neighborhoods in 1974. In the nearly 40 years since then, residents have met annually to discuss neighborhood issues, establish revitalization goals, and to agree on spending priorities for CDBG projects. Over the years, residents have largely chosen to spend funds on a variety of infrastructure projects from sidewalks to sanitary and storm sewers.

Land Use. Like all neighborhoods, Original Townsite is characterized by its land use and built environment, as well as its physical, social and economic conditions. Land use in the neighborhood is defined by three major patterns: residential, institutional and commercial. Single-family residential land use is the dominant pattern (80%) with pockets of two-family or multi-family units interspersed throughout (20%). Land use conflicts stemming from business expansion along Porter Avenue and to a lesser extent along Alameda have dominated neighborhood concerns for many years. Also, institutional expansion at Sarkeys Foundation has removed some adjacent housing, causing concerns for some about a "loss of neighborhood turf." Though outside the neighborhood boundary, the future of undeveloped land just east of Reed Street, which is owned by Griffin Hospital/the State of Oklahoma, presents a question and perhaps an opportunity.

Encroachment. Unchecked expansion of commercial corridors can be a destabilizing force in adjacent neighborhoods. Its ripple effect negatively affects property values causing property owners to lose confidence in their investments. This series of cause-and-effect events has been underway along Porter Avenue for many years. In 2010, the Norman City Council adopted the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* which included the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD). The overlay district sets a limit line for commercial expansion into adjacent residential blocks and requires a physical buffer between these land uses. This protection should begin to restore Original Townsite property

Executive Summary, continued



Original Townsite includes a wide variety of single family housing.

owners' confidence and boost incentives to reinvest in properties along commercial edges. As funding becomes available the City will begin to implement streetscape improvements throughout the Porter Avenue Corridor as outlined in the plan.

Sense of Place. Original Townsite Neighborhood possesses an inherently strong sense of place with distinct elements that shape its form and identity and make it a desirable place to live. Sense of place is defined by features such as the dominant single-family pattern of residential land use, streets lined by mature trees, the presence of sidewalks, and by the neighborhood's close proximity to destinations.

Housing Stock. Original Townsite Neighborhood includes a wide variety of housing stock built between 1889-2000, with the majority of structures constructed between 1920-1950. Overall the housing stock is in fair to good condition, with scattered cases in poor condition. According to 2000 Census data (most data available at the Block Group level), the neighborhood is 48% owner-occupied and 52% renter-occupied. There are 566 housing units, 80% of which are single-family units.

Proximity to Community Destinations. Original Townsite Neighborhood is adjacent to Main Street and the Porter Avenue commercial corridor. The neighborhood is near the 12th Avenue commercial corridor, and close to Norman Regional Hospital and doctors' offices, several churches, as well as two schools. In addition, the neighborhood is 1.5 miles from the University of Oklahoma's North Oval. In other words, Original Townsite residents can easily walk or bike to reach many basic services and daily needs.

Residents. Original Townsite Neighborhood is inhabited by many long-term residents but it has also begun to attract younger residents who are drawn to the neighborhood's affordability, early 20th Century charm and good schools. Particularly along the commercial edges, some areas of the neighborhood are experiencing conversions of owner-occupied housing to rental housing. Nearly 74% of the neighborhood residents fall into the low-to-moderate income category.



The neighborhood has abundant early 20th Century charm and a central location in Norman.

Infrastructure. Original Townsite Neighborhood is well-served by both physical and civic 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. Civic infrastructure refers to parks, schools, museums, recreational trails and other public buildings and institutions. Throughout its 38-year history, the CDBG program has been a reliable source of financing infrastructure upgrades in Original Townsite. (See page 9 for detailed description of improvements completed since 2007.)

Executive Summary, continued



Original Townsite remains relatively affordable and includes a wide variety of residential architecture.

Quality of Life. Original Townsite has experienced a steady decline of property maintenance levels over the past thirty years. This trend often signals declining levels of emotional as well as economic investment in a neighborhood. This has been particularly true adjacent to Porter Avenue, Main Street and Alameda. Original Townsite neighborhood became a Pro-Active area in 2008 and the City of Norman has since adopted Pro-Active Code Enforcement citywide. This has had a positive impact on conditions overall but there is still a long way to go. A key change that must occur is the creation of a culture of neighborhood expectations for tidiness.

Bishop Creek Watershed. Original Townsite is traversed by a segment of Bishop Creek, one of Norman's principal watersheds. During heavy rains, the creek regularly floods its channelized banks. Repetitive loss from these floods resulted in the City buying and demolishing five houses in the floodway at the northeast corner of the neighborhood. A number of other neighborhood houses along the creek remain in the floodway. One way to prevent further flooding is to re-examine how runoff is currently managed upstream, particularly on the Griffin Hospital campus.

Redevelopment. With its central location and proximity to many community destinations, market forces may begin to drive redevelopment in some parts of the neighborhood, especially where multi-family (R-3) zoning exists. Redevelopment may be desirable in some locations, but it is strongly recommended that future redevelopment must be sensitive to the neighborhood's overwhelming single-family land use character.

Neighborhood Plan Concept

Cyclical Nature of Participation. The CDBG funding allocation process allows residents to play an active role in prioritizing neighborhood projects. The choice of projects reflects group dynamics, participation levels and the realities of aging infrastructure in a 120-year old neighborhood. After nearly four decades of CDBG, neighborhood residents have moved from active to rather low levels of participation. The neighborhood has also cycled through high need and demand for physical infrastructure improvements to a point where residents now place a higher priority on visible, above-the-ground improvements.



The PCZOD will smooth transitions between land uses to buffer homes from negative impacts of commercial activity.

Guiding Principals. During neighborhood meetings in 2007 and 2011, participants generated lists of neighborhood Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities (see pp. 21—22). Assets were defined as positive aspects of the neighborhood that needed protection and stewardship. Liabilities were defined as things that needed to be fixed or that were not up to neighborhood standards. Opportunities were defined as things that could become neighborhood assets with an investment of some kind of resources. These issues form the scaffolding for the neighborhood plan's guiding principles and plan recommendations.

Executive Summary, continued



Newly created open space along the Bishop Creek floodway can become a neighborhood amenity.

Guiding Principles for the Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan

- **People**
  Strengthen connections between neighbors.
- **Place**
  Protect the neighborhood's character and sense of place, including both the built and natural environment.
- **Getting Around**
  Improve pedestrian, bicycle and automobile circulation as needed to support a high quality of life in Original Townsite Neighborhood.

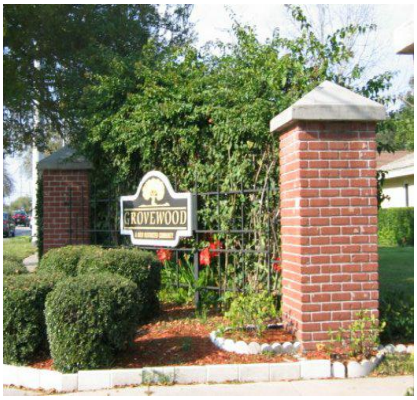
Underpinned by the Guiding Principles, *The Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan* is perhaps best summarized as a plan to "strengthen what we have." Working from the neighborhood's existing infrastructure and inherent good bones, the plan establishes six long-term goals that, when implemented, will strengthen and continue to revitalize Norman's oldest neighborhood.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Edges
Mark clear boundaries that separate residential areas in Original Townsite from adjacent commercial/office land uses along Porter Avenue and Alameda.

GOAL 2: Protect History, Character and Sense of Place
Protect the neighborhood's physical environment that includes blocks of houses and other buildings, 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, that preserve the single-family residential character of Original Townsite Neighborhood, and that promote the peaceful co-existence of adjacent land uses.*

GOAL 4: Improve Circulation for All Modes of Travel
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the neighborhood but particularly along and across Porter Avenue.



Gateways are used to announce neighborhood identity as well as mark boundaries.

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.

Executive Summary, continued

Next Steps. Effective enhancement of neighborhood quality of life requires a coordinated strategy rather than the undertaking of individual projects. Effective, sustainable strategies for neighborhood revitalization can only be created by the people who live in the area 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 for 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 revitalization strategies that combine neighborhood placemaking, social organization projects, and community beautification in ways that foster a strong sense of identity and ownership in the hearts and minds of neighborhood residents.

A Short-Term Implementation Plan for the Original Townsite Neighborhood will be detailed and included in the last section of the plan document. Listed below are the ten most important projects the neighborhood should strive to accomplish over the next ten years. Cost estimates and potential funding sources for these projects will be included in the full Implementation Plan.

1. Hold a neighborhood association relaunch event, including the election of neighborhood officers and gathering email addresses to create a neighborhood database.
2. Install gateway markers/monumentation at points of entry to the neighborhood such as: Apache/Carter/Stewart Triangle, Main at Ponca, Ponca at Linn, on cross streets east of Porter , etc.
3. Revitalize McGeorge Park.
4. Help convene a "Friends of McGeorge Park" group to build neighborhood ownership of the park and support its upkeep.
5. Work with City staff to develop home improvement grant program for exterior property maintenance of owner-occupied, low/moderate income housing, fund program.
6. Install neighborhood identification signage throughout the area.
7. Work with City Staff and the State of Oklahoma/Griffin Hospital to identify ways to decrease flooding along Bishop Creek.
8. Improve sidewalks wherever feasible throughout the neighborhood.
9. Working through the neighborhood association and the City Code Enforcement program, build a culture of expectation that both landlords and owner occupants will maintain their property to certain minimum standards.
10. Encourage the City to implement blocks of streetscape improvements along Porter Avenue.
11. Explore the possibility of establishing a partnership with Sarkeys Foundation to facilitate and further neighborhood revitalization efforts.

Original Townsite Neighborhood

Norman 2025 Land Use

Map 2

June 4, 2012

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Geographic Information System.
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0 300 Ft

PONCA

ACRES STREET

GRAY STREET

MAIN STREET

COCKREL

STEWART

FINDLAY

AVE

PONCA

PORTER

AVE

NFORD AVE

STREET

APACHE

LINN ST

ANIOL

COMANCHE

AVENUE

EUFAULA

STREET

SYMMES

STREET

CARTER

ANIOL

COOK

APACHE

STREET

ALAMEDA STREET

AVENUE

CASTRO

STREET

MILLER

CRAWFORD

KEITH

STREET

BOULEVARD

AVENUE

KEITH

MILLER

LANE

DUFFY

STREET

DUFFY

AVENUE

LANE

FERRILL

STREET

FERRILL ST

DRIVE

AVENUE

Norman 2025

Land Use

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Residential
- High Density Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- County Residential
- Floodplain
- Open Space
- Park
- Floodway

Original Townsite Neighborhood

Zoning Classification

Map 3

June 4, 2012

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N W E S

0 300 Ft

PONCA

FRANK STREET

ACRES STREET

GRAY STREET

MAIN STREET

STEWART

COCKREL

ANIOL

COMANCHE

AVENUE

EUFAULA STREET

SYMMES STREET

COOK

CARTER

APACHE STREET

LINN ST

ALAMEDA STREET

FINDLAY

PORTER

AVE

CRAWFORD AVE

STREET

APACHE

CASTRO

KEITH

DUFFY

FERRILL ST

MILLER

LANE

BOULEVARD

AVENUE

Zoning Classifications

- A-1: General Agricultural
- A-2: Rural Agricultural
- C-1: Local Commercial
- C-2: General Commercial
- C-3: Intensive Commercial
- CR: Rural Commercial
- TC: Tourist Commercial
- CO: Suburban Office Commercial
- O-1: Office_Institutional
- RO: Residence-Office
- I-1: Light Industrial
- I-2: Heavy Industrial
- M-1: Restricted Industrial
- PL: Park Land
- PUD: Planned Unit Development
- R-1: Single Family Dwelling
- R-1A: Single Family Attached Dwelling
- R-2: Two-Family Dwelling
- RM-2: Low Density Apartment
- R-3: Multi-Family Dwelling
- RM-4: Mobile Home Park
- RM-6: Medium Density Apartment

Original Townsite Neighborhood

Drainage

Map 4

June 4, 2012

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Drainage Features

- Curb and Gutter
- Underground Drainage

PONCA
FRANK STREET
ACRES STREET
MAIN STREET
COMANCHE
ANIOL
AVENUE
EUFAULA
STREET
SYMMES
COOK
CARTER
APACHE
LINN ST
ALAMEDA STREET
PORTER
CASTRO
KEITH
DUFFY
FERRILL ST
BOULEVARD
SHERWOOD
SCHULZE
BENSON
DRIVE

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 community residents 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?"

The *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan,* adopted 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 documentation of physical and environmental conditions in the area. 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 chart a course of action 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 to develop a plan for protecting them, neighbors have more of a sense of direct control over their future.

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



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

What is Neighborhood Planning?

The plan concept established in this 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 2010 CDBG Five-Year Consolidated Plan*; *Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, and the Safe Routes to School Initiative and the *Norman Stormwater Master Plan*.

History of the Community Development Block Grant Program in Norman 1974-2012

Beginning with a $206,000 grant in 1974, Norman has developed a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program targeting infrastructure deficiencies and improved quality of life for homeowners and the community as a whole. During the CDBG program's 38-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, 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 lighting in the city's oldest neighborhoods. In addition, the program catalyzed the acquisition and development of a number of special projects including the purchase of the Sooner Theatre, construction of the Little Axe Community Center and Fire Station, and construction of a major addition to the Norman Senior Citizens Center, the former public library located at 329 S. Peters. 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 throughout the city.

An invaluable though intangible benefit of the CDBG program is that participant neighborhoods have more direct access to the City's planning processes 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, allowing the City to solve larger-scale problems and spread the benefit to a wider community. The complete rebuilding of Cook Street in Original Townsite Neighborhood, which was completed in 2005, is a prime example of this kind of leverage.

In 2012, the City of Norman received $738,883 in CDBG funding, down from a high of $1,053,000 in 2003. Forecasts for 2013 funding levels project even deeper cuts in funding from Washington. Current economic conditions are forcing all areas of government to do more with less. As always though, an era of belt-tightening can also be viewed as an opportunity. In the coming years our task at the City of Norman is to help

History of CDBG, continued

our CDBG neighborhoods become more attractive, higher-functioning communities at not only at a physical level but also at a social level. What is needed now is a strategy that combines CDBG projects such as community identification and placemaking, with more effective social organization projects that foster a sense of ownership in the neighborhoods. In cities across the United States, time and again it has been demonstrated that creating a strong sense of ownership among inhabitants is the most effective tool in creating successful and sustainable neighborhood revitalization.



The neighborhood includes many structures that are more than 100 years old.

Neighborhood Planning: How Did We Get Here?

Since 1974, Original Townsite residents have met twice a year to discuss neighborhood issues and prioritize CDBG projects. Over nearly four decades, CDBG projects have addressed many infrastructure deficiencies inherent in a neighborhood of this age. Issues such as inadequate water and sewer lines, deteriorated streets, inadequate lighting and poor drainage have all been improved with the help of CDBG funds. Many of these projects were identified in the area's first long-range plan, *The Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan (*1990*)*. Though brief in scope, the *1990 Plan* has been referenced often and used to guide neighborhood projects for the past 22 years.

Update of 1990 Plan

Original Townsite residents participating in the annual fall neighborhood meeting identified a variety of Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities as a starting point for an update of the *1990 Plan*. The *1990 Plan* focused on resolving on-going conflicts between commercial and residential land uses along Main Street, Alameda and Porter Avenue. Many of these conflicts still exist. An escalation of land-use conflicts along Porter Avenue prompted Norman City Council's 2008 decision to study Porter Avenue at the corridor level with the goals of developing long-term solutions to land-use conflicts and identifying opportunities for improved aesthetics, traffic circulation, and economic development. Beginning in October 2007 and again in September 2011,



Original Townsite includes an intact network of alleys. Some are paved, some remain gravel.

Where Do Things Stand Now?

In the five years since neighborhood planning efforts began in 2007, Original Townsite Neighborhood's core assets and liabilities remain largely unchanged. Yet opportunities continue to evolve in Norman's ever-changing economic, political, environmental and social climate.

At 122 years old, Original Townsite Neighborhood has begun yet another generational life cycle, attracting new homeowners drawn not only the neighborhood's affordability but also to its good schools, central location and close proximity to Downtown and the University of Oklahoma. Landlords have long been attracted to Original Townsite's affordability for investment property—for at least the past 15 years, the neighborhood has been slightly more renter-occupied than owner-occupied. Keeping all neighborhood stakeholders engaged in positive way remains a challenge. The formation of an active neighborhood association would provide one effective mechanism to invest owner occupants, tenants and landlords in the neighborhood's long-term health and well-being.



The former Greenleaf Grocery, 301 S Porter, has been rehabilitated for future commercial/office use.

How Did We Get Here, continued.

Original Townsite Neighborhood is well-positioned to benefit from both public and private reinvestment. As funding becomes available, the gradual implementation of streetscape improvements laid out in the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* will likely have a positive effect on the Original Townsite Neighborhood. Private sector reinvestment in commercial property along Porter Avenue has begun slowly as both long-time owners and new investors see a bright future for this important commercial corridor in Central Norman. In addition to improvements on Porter, the Sarkeys Foundation has significantly rehabilitated buildings on their campus along the south side of East Main Street between Ponca and Findley.



American Legion Post No. 88 is a prominent landmark at the southeast corner of Main and Stewart Streets.

Neighborhood Assets, Liabilities & Opportunities

As Norman's oldest neighborhood, Original Townsite has great bones. In addition to its strong sense of place, the CDBG program has positively impacted neighborhood infrastructure over the past 38 years. The following is a verbatim list of neighborhood-generated Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities developed during the Fall 2007 and Fall 2011 CDBG meetings. A few of the issues the neighborhood recognized as opportunities in 2007, i.e. Proactive Code Enforcement have been achieved in the past four years. Other opportunities are underway; many will require hard work as well as resources from both private and public players.

Assets

- Presence of two schools nearby
- Parks in neighborhood
- Sarkeys Center
- Variety of residents
- Historic value and character
- Churches
- American Legion Hall building
- Fire Station
- Variety of types and sizes of housing
- Nice tree canopy
- Affordable place to live
- Multi-generational residents
- Ellison Feed and Seed
- Proximity of Business District
- Downtown within walking distance
- Some big lots
- Nice private gardens
- Alleys
- Old Dee's Diner building (now Janet Reid, DDS, 509 S Porter)
- Visible police presence
- Neighborhood feels secure
- Close to medical district
- Includes bus route
- Many long-term residents
- Designated bike route
- Predominantly single-family housing



Sarkeys Foundation rehabilitated a church building to house foundation activities and programs.

Assets, Liabilities, and Opportunities



The City recently purchased and demolished five houses along Bishop Creek floodway.

Liabilities

- Lack of community storm shelter
- Lack of sidewalks
- Permissive zoning could allow MF uses
- Lots of cut-through traffic (speed and volume)
- Drainage issues at Eufaula and McGeorge Park
- Broad flood plain in neighborhood
- State property not well-maintained
- Proximity to jail
- Proximity to medical district
- Lack of safe bike routes
- Lack of curb and gutter in most locations
- Some areas of poorly maintained residential property
- Aging infrastructure
- Aging electrical network
- Missing street signs (street names)
- Lack of lighting (poles may be too tall to be effective)

Opportunities

- Add curbs/gutters to all streets
- Add sidewalks to all streets
- Pave alleys
- Pave driveway approaches
- Create neighborhood gateways
- Maintain and preserve WPA Channel (formerly known as "the Ditch")
- Downzone portions of the neighborhood to protect single-family housing
- Create bicycle-friendly streets
- Make significant improvements to overall property maintenance
- Adopt pro-active code enforcement
- Build a community storm shelter
- Revitalize Porter commercial corridor
- Erect neighborhood historical signage (interpretive signs for WPA Channel, etc.)



This commercial center at the Main and Findley can offer neighborhood goods and services.



Longfellow Middle School, 215 N Ponca, is the school for Original Townsite Neighborhood serving students in grades 6-8.

Key Issues in Original Townsite Neighborhood

Lists of neighborhood-generated Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities were grouped into broad issue categories that encompass all aspects of life in Original Townsite Neighborhood. These categories are summarized below. The issue categories form the basis of the Guiding Principles for Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan

- Physical Infrastructure
- Civic Infrastructure
- Land Use
- Neighborhood Investment, Quality of Life & Appearance
- Traffic, Parking & Circulation for Pedestrians and Cars

Guiding Principles for Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan

- **People**
  Strengthen connections between neighbors.
- **Place**
  Protect the neighborhood's character and sense of place, including both the built and natural environment.
- **Getting Around**
  Improve pedestrian, bicycle and automobile circulation as needed to support a high quality of life in Original Townsite Neighborhood.



"Aerial sidewalks" over and along Bishop Creek are functional but not attractive.

Original Townsite Neighborhood Context

Boundaries and Geography. Original Townsite is geographically the largest of Norman's five CDBG neighborhoods and according to platting records and the 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Norman's oldest. The area includes roughly 175 acres spread over 35 blocks. It is bounded on the north by Main Street; on the south by Alameda and a jog along Carter and Apache Streets; on the west by Porter Avenue, and on the east by the east edge by Reed Avenue. Though a few remaining structures date to the original plats in 1889, 1903 and 1910, the majority of the area's homes were built between 1920 and 1950.

Census Data and Land Use. US Census data and Cleveland County Tax Assessor's records indicate that Original Townsite Neighborhood is 48% owner-occupied and 52% renter-occupied. Though 2010 Census data is not yet available at this level of detail, 2000 Census data shows a total of 566 housing units in the neighborhood. Of the 566 units, 452 (80%) are single-family units with 75 (14%) 2-4-family structures. There are 36 (6%) 5+unit structures. In terms of household income, Original Townsite Neighborhood is described as 73% low-to-moderate income with a total population of 1023 inhabitants.

What is Physical Infrastructure?

Physical infrastructure refers to large-scale network of public services and systems such as water lines, storm and sanitary sewer systems, roads, alleys and sidewalks in the neighborhood.

Physical Infrastructure

Water. The entire neighborhood is serviced by 6-12-inch water lines, many of which have been installed by the CDBG program over the past 38 years. As the CDBG program replaced water mains, water connections to individual houses were also replaced throughout the neighborhood. Four- inch lines remain in the 900-block of Comanche and the 400-600 blocks of Apache . These undersized lines should be replaced as funding allows.



A stone-lined drainage swale allows runoff to percolate through rocks into ground water.

Stormwater Drainage. Poor drainage is a persistent problem in Original Townsite Neighborhood for three reasons: 1) the area is very flat, 2) has poor soil percolation, i.e. clayey soils that do not allow water to filter into the ground, and 3) there are a limited number of underground drainage systems available.

The neighborhood has five types of stormwater drainage systems:

- Concrete curb-and-gutter, with drainage inlets and underground drainage structures (Cook St; 800-900 blocks Eufaula, Findley)
- Concrete curb-and-gutter
- Drainage inlets with underground pipes
- Bar ditches/swales with culverts
- Bar ditches/swales that have been filled in over the years, leaving a passive system of detention/evaporation

Neighborhood Context: Physical Infrastructure



WPA Drainage Channel

The stone-lined drainage channel that many people refer to as "the ditch" is actually an historic public works feature constructed between 1935-1937 by crews employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the National Youth Administration (NYA).

During the Great Depression, Norman received WPA funding to provide jobs for hundreds of local unemployed men and boys. Seeking to solve long-standing flooding problems along segments of Bishop and Imhoff Creeks, WPA/NYA crews lined the creek channels and walls with native stone.



Pedestrian-scale lighting enhances a sense of safety and also imparts a decorative element to the street.

Given the environmental constraints mentioned above, opportunities to install underground drainage infrastructure are limited. In addition, the cost of installing underground drainage is expensive: around $150,000 per block. Original Townsite neighborhood does include swales or bar ditches which serve a vital drainage function, though many have been filled or have silted in, diminishing the effectiveness of these passive systems.

Flooding. The northeast quadrant of Original Townsite Neighborhood includes a segment of Bishop Creek floodway and flood plain. (see Map 1) Norman's *Stormwater Master Plan (*2010*)* identified thirty houses in Original Townsite Neighborhood that are located in the floodway and which are recommended for removal. The City of Norman recently had the opportunity to purchase and remove five structures in the floodway which had suffered repetitive flooding over the years. (See sidebar on page 27.)

Sanitary Sewer. Over the past 38 years, the CDBG program has underwritten the cost of retrofitting the entire Original Townsite neighborhood new 8-12-inch sanitary sewer lines. As the CDBG program has replaced sewer mains throughout the neighborhood over the past 38 years, connections to individual houses were also replaced where needed.

Alleys. Original Townsite has a system of alleyways which are a great neighborhood asset though they do require additional maintenance. Alleys provide rear access to properties and an additional source of parking. Some are paved; many are gravel, and most are in serviceable condition. A few have been abandoned (though not vacated) over the years.

Sidewalks. Sidewalks are present in the western sections of Original Townsite Neighborhood between Porter and Carter, but much of the eastern third of the neighborhood was built without sidewalks. The existing sidewalk network is in basically good condition but needs spot repairs, installation of missing segments, and accessibility ramps in a few locations. Houses in the eastern section of the neighborhood generally have shallow front setbacks, making it difficult to retrofit sidewalks without sacrificing parking on private property. In the older sections of the neighborhood if blocks have drainage swales and culverts this makes it nearly impossible to install sidewalks without addressing the drainage, which would make the entire project cost prohibitive. On blocks without sidewalks where residents desire to add them, sidewalk construction will be considered when it will connect to the existing sidewalk network and when 100% of block residents agree to the request.

Neighborhood Context: Physical Infrastructure

What About Stormwater Runoff?

The CDBG program has long supported the elimination of bar ditch drainage systems from neighborhoods in favor of curb and guttering . The reality is that this goal is not physically possible to achieve in many locations throughout Norman's oldest neighborhoods. Lack of underground drainage plus environmental conditions that aren't conducive to installing underground pipes means there is often no place to drain stormwater *to*.

Underground drainage is the fastest way but by far the most expensive and least environmentally sustainable method to drain stormwater from city streets. With Norman generating ever-greater volumes of stormwater runoff, the City Public Works Department's knowledge and understanding of stormwater management practices is evolving.

As more impervious surface is created by ever-growing urbanized areas upstream, the problem of stormwater runoff continues to grow and must be dealt with more effectively. City engineers and elected officials are constantly researching effective and environmentally friendly methods to manage stormwater.

Flooding: Shaping A Different Outcome

Original Townsite Neighborhood includes 20+ houses located in the Bishop Creek floodway. These properties were identified in the *Norman Stormwater Master Plan* (2010) as having a high likelihood of flooding. The plan recommended that the city acquire and demolish these houses in order to minimize future flood damage.

While this approach would reduce future flood hazards, it would be costly to taxpayers, disruptive to property owners, and would provide no benefit to the community or the neighborhood. Instead, if stormwater runoff into Bishop Creek, particularly at the Griffin Hospital Campus, could be better managed, it would almost certainly reduce potentially devastating flooding downstream and eliminate the need to acquire houses.

Trees. Many people comment that tree-lined streets are one of Original Townsite neighborhood's best features. 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 mature trees have been lost in severe storms of the past few years. Rights-of-way along the streets need to be replanted to ensure that tree-lined streets remains in place for the next generation.

Lighting. Roadway lighting throughout the neighborhood meets the City standard of one light at the end of each block in most locations; however residents often observe that the City standard is too dark for their comfort. In some places, this is because the tree canopy is beneath the 30-foot height of roadway lighting so that it blocks the light from reaching the street or sidewalk. In other situation, the minimum standard simply does not meet local expectations for lighting levels. Over the past 38 years, the CDBG program has funded the installation of pedestrian-scale lights in each of the program neighborhoods.

Civic Infrastructure



Fire Station No. 1 on Main Street is Norman's oldest fire and emergency services facility.

If physical infrastructure makes it possible to inhabit a place, civic infrastructure is what makes it enjoyable to live there. Examples of civic infrastructure include parks, schools, churches and other institutions. Original Townsite's civic infrastructure includes:

Jefferson Elementary School. Original Townsite neighborhood is supported by Jefferson Elementary School, located at 250 Cockrel. Jefferson opened its doors in 1916 and has been a neighborhood anchor ever since. The school serves children from Pre-K - 5. Student enrollment in 2012 was just over 400. The sprawling red brick complex has had several additions since its original construction but retains a basic Institutional Gothic style of architecture. The school also includes a large playground that can be utilized on occasions as neighborhood play space after school hours if the school administration is amenable.



Jefferson Elementary, 250 Cockrel, serves Original Townsite Neighborhood students in grades Pre-K-5.

Longfellow Middle School—Located at 215 Ponca in First Courthouse Neighborhood, the historic brick school first opened its doors in 1925, originally as a primary school and later as a high school. Today the school serves children in grades 6-8 with a student body of just over 600 students. During the 2011-2012 school year, the campus began a major renovation that will include an enhanced building entrance, a front courtyard along the Ponca Avenue edge and a complete rehabilitation of the school auditorium. With the auditorium renovation, Longfellow will become well-suited for a variety of large-scale community gatherings and performances.

Churches—Moderately sized church campuses can add positive visual texture and activity to established neighborhoods. However this can be a delicate balance between competing land uses since churches are often motivated by needs for expanded parking and building facilities. Just like expanding commercial land uses, churches usually seek to expand the only place they can: into adjacent neighborhoods. For the most part, Original Townsite Neighborhood churches have peacefully co-existed with residential land uses. Churches in the neighborhood include:

- The former Immanuel Baptist Church, 715 E. Eufaula
- Community Missionary Baptist Church, 701 E. Apache
- Assembly of Praise, 622 E. Main
- Trinity Holiness Church, 502 E. Symmes



The former Emmanuel Baptist Church at 715 East Eufaula is one of four church buildings located in the neighborhood.

Institutions. Other institutional land uses in the neighborhood include the Sarkeys Foundation Campus, 530 E. Main Street and the American Legion Building at 710 E. Main. Though not located in the neighborhood per se, Original Townsite does experience impacts from the presence of Griffin Memorial Hospital at Main and Carter.

Neighborhood Context: Civic Infrastructure



McGeorge Park play equipment will be moved to the front of the park out of the floodplain.

Four Reasons to Revitalize McGeorge Park

1. Park enhancement is a highly visible and effective tool in neighborhood revitalization.
2. Park revitalization will create very attractive and usable public space for the neighborhood.
3. Investment in public space conveys a strong commitment to neighborhood revitalization which helps invest neighbors in the park and the neighborhood as a whole.
4. Better neighborhood investment will reduce incidents of park vandalism



Triple C Corner is open space created when the City bought and demolished five houses in the Bishop Creek flood plain.

McGeorge Park. Located at the northwest corner of Eufaula and Stewart, this 1/2-acre park located partially in the floodplain and floodway of Bishop Creek was named for the McGeorge Family whose home was once on the site. One of the most visually interesting features of the park is the WPA-era stone-lined channel of Bishop Creek wraps around it on the north and west sides. The park includes several mature trees, playground equipment, a one-hoop basketball court and picnic tables. There is limited parking along Eufaula Street. In 2012 the playground will be relocated from the back of the park to the front in order to stop annual flooding which washes all the bark chips out of the playground. Moving the equipment will also permit greater visibility from the street and put open space in the floodplain where there is no equipment to damage. The move creates an opportunity to install expanded seating in the shade. Provision of comfortable seating is effective incentive to encourage better supervision of children by adults at a playground. It also builds community by giving adults a place to interact.

Triple C Corner. Named for the site's location at the convergence of Carter, Comanche and Cockrel Streets, Triple C is not a dedicated city park. It is a one-acre (+/-) open space in the Bishop Creek floodplain created in 2011 when the City of Norman bought and subsequently demolished five houses which had suffered repeated flood damage over the years. With McGeorge Park only one block away, another formal park is not desirable in this area. Instead, neighbors and City staff agree that passive open space maintained by the City can provide opportunities for informal recreation or quiet contemplation. To that end, residents have requested a few seating areas be added, along with the planting of a few trees to create shade.

The newly created open space at Triple C Corner provides a variety of strategic improvements for the neighborhood:

- Removal of structures that had become neighborhood eyesores due to long-term neglect and repetitive flooding
- Open space becomes a neighborhood amenity providing opportunities for passive recreation
- Triple C connects identified sidewalk network/trail segments to the north of Main Street along Carter Avenue and on-street bike path routing to the south, ultimately connecting with Legacy Trail
- Decreased impervious surface in the area helps reduce downstream flooding and improves water quality

Circulation, Traffic and Parking

Street Network. As Norman's oldest neighborhood, Original Townsite's street network includes a grid system which is oriented to the BNSF railroad tracks between Porter and Carter Avenue, changing to a north-south grid between the east side of Carter and Reed Street. The convergence of the two systems creates eight triangular blocks of all sizes. Some of the small triangles offer natural opportunities for beautification and placemaking such as neighborhood gateways and identification signage, landscaping and public art.

Street Termini and Dead End Streets . Eufaula, Symmes and Apache Streets terminate at Reed Street at the state-owned property east of Reed Street . Apache is no longer connected to the grid at Reed and is now considered a dead end street. A local street called Aniol includes one only block between Apache and Symmes and a dead-end block north of Comanche.

Parking Lots. Commercial and institutional parking lot expansions have encroached into residential properties along Main Street and Alameda. Until the adoption of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan*, residentially zoned blocks adjacent to Porter Avenue suffered from commercial encroachment when adjacent office or commercial uses expanded their parking lots.

Bus Stops. There is a CART bus stop with no shelter at the southeast corner of Gray and Findley. Adjacent neighbors have helpfully supplied a wooden bench for waiting.

Gravel Driveways. Many properties in the neighborhood retain gravel driveways. These can function well if they have contained edges and are kept well-maintained ; many have no maintenance.

Traffic Conflicts. Along with land use conflicts, traffic congestion continues to build along Porter Avenue, making current circulation patterns along the corridor likely to become more congested in the long term. Particularly during morning and afternoon rush hours, stacking traffic blocks left turning movements onto or off of Apache and Symmes Streets.

Walkability and Bikeability. While Original Townsite neighborhood is mostly a local destination, its central location between major arterial roads such as Main Street, Porter Avenue, and Alameda means it provides essential pedestrian paths and neighborhood street connections for bicycles. This function should be strengthened wherever possible.



Original Townsite's central location and compact size includes sidewalks which makes it highly walkable.



The pyramidal roof shape on this cottage on East Main Street indicates a construction date between 1890-1910.



This National-Style cottage likely dates to around 1915. Its form is described as "gable front and wing."



Sarkeys Foundation Annex is a former church building that the foundation uses for meetings and gatherings.

Land Use and Zoning

Land use in Original Townsite Neighborhood is characterized by four major types:

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Civic Infrastructure
- Adjacent Commercial Corridors

Plats. The neighborhood includes five plats: Original Townsite, 1889; Aniol Addition, 1903; Rucker's Church and Rucker's Church 2, both platted in 1910, and Block 4 of Aniol Addition, 1966. Portions of the neighborhood east of Carter remain unplatted.

Plan References. Land uses delineated in the *1990 Neighborhood Plan* and in three *Five-Year Consolidated CDBG Plans*, (2000, 2005, and 2010 respectively), were recommended by the Original Townsite Neighborhood, approved by the Norman City Council and accepted by US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These plans were also consistent with the *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan.*

Zoning. The neighborhood was zoned a combination of R-2, Two-Family and R-3, Multi-Family in 1954, with C-3 zoning for commercial uses along Porter Avenue and Alameda. A four-acre parcel still zoned for agricultural use (A-2) remains on Carter Avenue just north of Alameda.

Land Use. While neighborhood land use is strongly single-family residential (80%), R-2 zoning allows two-family dwellings, which is still a low-density residential use. This contributes positively to the neighborhood's overall affordability and density (See Map 3). The area zoned R-3 between Porter and Ponca Avenues could allow a higher density residential pattern in those blocks which could be desirable if/when Porter Corridor revitalization efforts gain momentum. Institutional uses include churches, fire station No. 1 and the Fire Administration Office and the Sarkeys Foundation, located at the southwest corner of Main and Findley.

*Commercial Corridor*s. The neighborhood includes the Porter Avenue Corridor between Main and Alameda, and the Alameda Corridor between Porter and Carter. Both areas are zoned C-3. All commercial and office uses on these streets face outward, away from the neighborhood though in many cases facility parking is located behind businesses, accessed on neighborhood streets. The 400-block of Main Street (between Porter and Ponca) includes commercial uses on the south side of the street; institutional uses on the north side.

Neighborhood Context: Land Use and Zoning

Porter Avenue forms a seam between Original Townsite neighborhood and Downtown Norman. While the Downtown and the Main Street commercial corridor has steadily improved over the past ten years, physical and aesthetic conditions along Porter Avenue are poor. Deteriorating aesthetics as well as declining property values prompted the Norman City Council to commission a study of the Porter Corridor in 2008-2010. The resulting *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* is discussed in more detail on pp. 37-38.

Effects of Commercial and Institutional Encroachment. The trend of conversion to rental housing or the removal of houses for parking has been significant along commercial edges in Original Townsite particularly adjacent to Porter Avenue, where blocks have become nearly 100% rental. With the City's 2010 adoption of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* and the establishment of the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD), Original Townsite Neighborhood now has a powerful tool limiting commercial expansion into the neighborhood. The PCZOD also requires a masonry buffer wall and ten-foot landscaping buffer between businesses that expand to adjacent residential uses. This protection should help restore residential property owners' confidence and boost the incentive to reinvest in houses near commercial edges since the community has reached a shared understanding that commercial encroachment will have a stopping point.



Prior to the PCZOD, commercial uses adjacent to houses were required to buffer with an opaque fence and a 5'landscape strip.

Neighborhood Context



This restored Victorian-era farmhouse has stood sentinel at the NE corner of Main and Ponca for more than 100 years.

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 Original Townsite Neighborhood, sense of place is defined by the setting of mature trees lining the streets, the street pattern itself, the placement of houses along the blocks, the presence of several churches. These elements work together with the close-knit rhythm of houses to create a sense of place that is unique to this neighborhood.

Original Townsite 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.

Investment, Quality of Life and Community Appearance

A high quality of life in a neighborhood requires emotional as well as financial investment from its inhabitants. Indicators of neighborhood health are both tangible and intangible. Tangible indicators are reflected in overall environmental conditions, e.g. Neatly kept houses and yards, healthy trees, people out in their yards, and the presence of attractive, well-utilized public spaces. Intangible indicators of health include property values and sales price trends, how often houses go on the market and how quickly they sell, and the percentage of owner vs. renter-occupied housing.

Long-term Residents. Original Townsite has many long-term residents who are deeply connected to the neighborhood. This is good for neighborhood health and well-being. However, parts of the neighborhood, particularly along commercial and institutional edges, has becomes solidly rental housing.

Housing Conditions and Property Maintenance. Given the age of the neighborhood, the majority of housing is average-to-good condition, with pockets of structures in poor condition (in some locations-where?) Trends toward poor property maintenance can indicate declining emotional and financial investment in the neighborhood. Properties left in disrepair can send a subtle message that nobody cares. Neighbors in Original Townsite often complain about poorly maintained rental property but often feel helpless to turn this negative trend around. The neighborhood was designated for Proactive Code Enforcement in 2008.

Sense of Place. As in many mature neighborhoods in American cities , Original Townsite possesses an inherently strong *sense of place* with many physical features that define its form and identity and make the neighborhood a desirable place to live. These features include:

- *Physical Environment and Scale*. Original Townsite has a human scale. This scale is defined by a well-established traditional rhythm of small-to-medium sized houses, tree-lined sidewalks, streets, and alleyways. With its many different styles and sizes of residential structures, residents say that the neighborhood "just feels livable."
- *Historic Architecture*. Original Townsite Neighborhood retains many examples of early late 19th/early 20th Century architecture, including examples of Folk Victorian, National-Style and Craftsman/Bungalow architecture.
- *Central Location*. The neighborhood is the heart of Core Norman, near downtown, schools, parks, hospital, and OU.

Neighborhood Context: Quality of Life



Tree-lined streets provide the setting for many early 20th-Century homes such as this Crafts-man bungalow on Main Street.



The roundabout at Carter, Gray and Main is a community landmark as well as a traffic control device.

- *Street Pattern*. In general, Original Townsite has a grid pattern of streets, lined with sidewalks in the southern sections of the neighborhood. Many blocks in this neighborhood have between seven and ten houses on the largest face of a block. Blocks between Porter and Carter are laid out with a railroad orientation. Blocks east of Carter are laid according to cardinal directions. This creates interesting triangular blocks where the two systems meet.
- *Trees*. Original Townsite streets are lined with mature trees. The leafy green canopy provides a sense of enclosure and environmental benefits such as cooler temperatures, increased oxygen, decreased carbon dioxide, and a sense of well-being.
- *Porter Corridor and Main Street*. Original Townsite residents are within easy walking and biking distance of goods, services, and institutions that support their daily activities along the Porter Avenue Corridor and Main Street/Downtown.
- *Civic Infrastructure.* Original Townsite is close to an elementary school and a middle school, has four churches, and a neighborhood park. The neighborhood also includes CART bus routes and a bus stop along Findley Avenue.
- *Parks and Open Space.* McGeorge Park provides gathering and play space for the neighborhood and for the community as a whole. Triple C Corner is a newly created open space that can function for gatherings as well as recreation.
- *Landmarks.* The heart of Original Townsite neighborhood includes a number of landmarks, notable for their age, function, design or location. All of these landmarks contribute significantly to the neighborhood's character and sense of place:
  - Main Street & Carter Avenue Roundabout
  - American Legion Hall
  - Sarkeys Foundation Campus
  - Churches
  - Ellison's Feed and Seed
  - Commercial Corner at Main and Findley

Historic District Status. No part of Original Townsite Neighborhood is designated as a local historic district. Historic and architectural surveys conducted in 1989 determined that much of the neighborhood had lost its original architectural integrity due to overwhelming changes to structures. A handful of individual structures built between 1895-1940, located mostly along Main and Eufaula Streets, retain some degree of their original design.

Neighborhood Context: Quality of Life



A full-width porch adorns the front of this Folk Victorian-style house likely built around 1900.

No structures in Original Townsite Neighborhood are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Affordable Housing. The average size home in Original Townsite is around 1,000 square feet, which is considered small by local real estate standards. In general, houses in this neighborhood are low-to-moderately priced compared to elsewhere in Norman. Relatively small early 20th Century houses make attractive starter homes for young families, graduate students, senior citizens or anyone seeking to downsize. This population diversity is an asset that residents value highly. As revitalization begins to occur along Porter Avenue, it may increase residential property prices, but it is important to the neighborhood and to the city as a whole that housing affordability be preserved.

Cultural and Economic Diversity. Original Townsite's physical diversity of land uses and building types means it is a visually interesting environment with lots of "texture." This environment spawns a high degree of cultural and economic diversity among inhabitants. Original Townsite neighbors value this 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.



Early 20th Century housing is small by today's real estate standards but is highly livable and centrally located.



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

Porter Avenue Corridor Plan

Why Undertake the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan?

In its current form, Porter Avenue's impact on Original Townsite neighborhood is somewhat 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 in recent decades, causing the removal of houses for parking and igniting a trend of disinvestment in the adjacent residential blocks. East of Porter Avenue, many 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 Avenue is largely an opportunity unrealized. Many residents and property owners along the corridor would like to change this. Toward this end, City Council adopted the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan in August 2010.

What is the Purpose of the Porter Avenue Corridor Plan?

The purpose of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* 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* 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 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 space, a spectacular streetscape, and high visual interest which will in turn create an environment that attracts private investment on adjacent land throughout the corridor.



Ellison's Feed and Seed is a Porter Avenue landmark partly housed in a former 1920s-era Phillips 66 Station.

Porter Corridor Plan, continued

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 a function of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan*, Norman City Council also adopted the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD) which establishes a limit line for commercial land uses along Porter Avenue. Businesses which expand to this line must build an opaque masonry wall and ten-foot deep landscape buffer at the property line that will separate residential properties from commercial activities. Masonry walls are effective in creating a physical and psychological edge that clearly conveys the point where one land use stops and another starts. This 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. 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.

Redevelopment Opportunities

State-Owned Land Along Reed Street. The State of Oklahoma owns a 200+ acre parcel of land which borders the eastern edge of Original Townsite Neighborhood along Reed Street. The parcel is also bounded by Main Street on the north and by Alameda on the south. This parcel includes several social service agencies but approximately half of the land is undeveloped and roughly half of that is located in the floodplain/floodway. A parcel accessed from Alameda houses the Cleveland County Mental Health Association. A parcel accessed from Main Street is being used by a non-profit agency, East Main Place, which provides transitional housing for the homeless. East Main Place has repurposed the former Griffin Memorial Hospital nurse's dormitory.

This acreage of state-owned land is part of the Griffin Hospital campus, the bulk of which is located on the north side of Main Street. Health care operations at Griffin have been shrinking continuously for many years and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), the parent agency of Griffin Hospital, may in time choose to consider other uses for their land. Because the land is held in a legislative trust, it cannot be sold outright but it can be utilized through long-term leases such as the two agencies mentioned above currently hold.

If the ODMHSAS considers a redevelopment plan for the area south of Main Street, a plan that is sensitive to Original Townsite's single-family residential character would be strongly encouraged.

East Side of Carter Avenue. A roughly 10-acre parcel of land anchored by the northeast corner of Alameda and Carter Avenue remains largely vacant. Privately owned, this land includes three parcels that are zoned, R-2, A-2, and R-2, respectively. The southernmost parcel is designated as floodplain/floodway, making it difficult if not impossible to develop. If the owner ever chooses to develop or sell to be developed the middle and northern two parcels, development plans that are sensitive to the surrounding single-family residential pattern would be strongly encouraged.

East of Porter Avenue. Based on levels absentee ownership, occupancy patterns, property conditions, and location, The *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan* suggested that it may become desirable in time to redevelop residential blocks between the Porter Corridor Commercial Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD) and Ponca in an area currently zoned R-3, Medium Density Residential.



The eastern edge of the neighborhood along Reed Street borders a large tract of undeveloped land owned by the State.

Future Redevelopment Opportunities, cont.

If redevelopment of the area between Porter and Ponca becomes feasible, a medium density residential pattern could include townhomes, quadruplexes, duplexes or other structures as would be allowed by the current R-3 zoning. Increased density in these blocks may be desirable for several reasons:

- It could meet a growing demand in Norman for housing options with a more urban feel, close to Downtown and relatively close to the University of Oklahoma campus.
- Medium density residential uses designed to be compatible with the neighborhood's early 20th Century character could be both good investments and make a positive aesthetic contribution to the neighborhood.
- As traffic and activity levels increase along Porter Avenue, higher density residential uses can act as a land use buffer for single-family blocks east of Ponca.



Single-family houses are the dominant residential land use pattern in Original Townsite neighborhood.

Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan Concept: Strengthen What We Have

Working with resident-generated goals and guiding principles, data from physical surveys of the neighborhood, and relevant City plans, the City's Revitalization staff has developed the following Neighborhood Plan Concept as a framework to initiate specific improvements in the Original Townsite Neighborhood.

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

GOAL 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Edges
Mark clear boundaries that separate residential areas in Original Townsite from adjacent commercial/office land uses along Porter Avenue and Alameda.

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

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

GOAL 4: Improve Circulation for All Modes of Travel.
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the neighborhood but particularly along and across Porter Avenue.



Bungalows are the most typical form of the single-family house found in the neighborhood.

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.



Neighborhood gateways provide both symbolic and functional points of entry into a neighborhood.



This triangle of Carter, Apache and Stewart Streets would be a natural location for a landscaped neighborhood gateway.



GOAL 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Edges

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

1. **Develop gateways that formalize entry into Original Townsite at the following possible locations:**
   - Triangle of Carter, Apache and Stewart Streets
   - Findley at Alameda
   - Ponca at Alameda
   - Apache east of Porter Corridor at Commercial Limit Line
   - Eufaula east of Porter Corridor at Commercial Limit Line
   - Main at Ponca
   - Gray at Ponca
   - Cockrel at Main

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 reintroduce or sustain the urban tree canopy.
   - Expand pedestrian lighting throughout the neighborhood.
   - Revitalize McGeorge Park to become a meaningful neighborhood gathering space
   - Develop interpretive signage for McGeorge Park, Original Townsite Neighborhood, and other landmarks in the neighborhood, especially the stone-lined channel of Bishop Creek flowing through the neighborhood.

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

GOAL 2: Protect Character and Sense of Place

Protect the neighborhood's physical environment that includes blocks of 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 McGeorge Park to make it an attractive, inviting "living room" for the entire neighborhood.**

3. **Work through the neighborhood association 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 McGeorge Park program to invest neighbors in the park's upkeep and condition.

4. **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

5. **Use attractive sidewalk treatments to link the neighborhood with the Porter Avenue Corridor and Downtown as well as linking the neighborhood with McGeorge Park and the two neighborhood schools.**

What is Placemaking?

According to urban planners Al Zelinka and Susan Jackson Harden, authors of 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 the natural environment."

In addition to that, Urbanist Phillip Langdon writes that "placemaking has become a necessary activity in response to the 20th Century's creation of an impermanent, standardized, built environment at odds with community pride and loyalty." He adds, "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" and a sense of belonging.

Examples of Placemaking

Successful placemaking takes many different forms from the installation of public art to activities on private property that help create a distinctive neighborhood identity.

- Public art in parks or other gathering places in the public realm
- Attractive lighting designs
- Neighborhood gateways
- Decorative sidewalk treatments
- Tree planting in public ROW
- Decorative bus stops or shelters
- Corridor landscaping
- Neighborhood identification signage on posts or light poles
- Interpretive historical signage for parks, schools, buildings, or natural features
- Park revitalization projects, e.g., stream bank restoration, seating areas, picnic shelters, tree planting, lighting, decorative fencing, and interpretive signage, engaging play equipment.

GOAL 3: Strengthen Zoning Protections

Support zoning changes that reflect Norman 2025 Land Use Plan *recommendations and which preserve the residential character of Original Townsite Neighborhood by promoting the peaceful co-existence of adjacent land uses.*

1. **Support applications for commercial or institutional rezoning only when the application is consistent with the Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD) and the commercial limit line of the *Porter Avenue Corridor Plan.***

2. **Neighborhood residents should support rezoning applications when the application brings the subject zoning into consistency with the existing land use or when plans for rezoning would enable a redevelopment of the property that is compatible with surrounding neighborhood character.**

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

During the Porter Avenue Corridor planning process, the 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 Porter Corridor Zoning Overlay District (PCZOD) thereby establishing a commercial limit line. The PCZOD requires businesses that expand to this line build an opaque masonry wall and 10-foot landscaped buffer at the property line that will 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.



The pedestrian crosswalk at Main and Cockrel was recently improved using Safe Routes to School funding.

What is a Walkable Neighborhood?

A walkable neighborhood is an area where people live within walking distance of most places they want to visit—i.e. school, work, grocery stores, parks, churches, banks, retail shops, or pharmacies; 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.

It is worth noting that walkable neighborhoods tend to be friendly to bicycles as well!

Improving Bike/Ped Linkage In Original Townsite Neighborhood

- Install missing sidewalk segments and accessibility ramps wherever feasible throughout the neighborhood.
- Ensure that arterial roads (Main, Porter, Alameda) safely connect with bike/ped routes through the neighborhood along Carter, Eufaula, Symmes, Cockrel, Findley, and Ponca.
- Guided by *Porter Corridor Streetscape Design*, install new or replacement sidewalks with landscape improvements along Porter Avenue to improve overall pedestrian environment.
- Explore possibility of adding bike/ped path leading south from Main along Bishop Creek/Carter Avenue.

GOAL 4. Improve All Modes of Circulation Throughout the Neighborhood

Improve safety for all users—pedestrians, bicycles and cars—along arterial road segments and intersections. Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the neighborhood but particularly along and across Main Street, Porter Avenue and Alameda.

1. **Make pedestrian and bicycle linkage a neighborhood priority.**
   - Wherever feasible, improve sidewalk connections along Carter, Eufaula, Symmes, Cockrel, Findley, and Ponca.
   - Explore creation of bike/pedestrian pathway south from Main Street along Carter/Bishop Creek to connect with Comanche and Eufaula and destinations south and west.

2. **Continue to improve neighborhood walkability to school.**
   - Use School Sidewalk funds from Public Works Department to address any remaining sidewalk deficiencies near Jefferson Elementary and Longfellow Middle School.

3. **Implement streetscape improvements along the Porter Avenue Corridor.**
   - Use the *Porter Corridor Public Streetscape Design* to begin improving sidewalks that serve the neighborhood on the east side of Porter Avenue.
   - Make landscaping improvements along Porter Avenue that connect with neighborhood gateways at the following locations:
     - Apache east of Porter at Commercial Limit Line
     - Eufaula east of Porter at Commercial Limit Line
     - Symmes east of Porter at Commercial Limit Line
   - Strongly support the City of Norman undertaking a detailed traffic analysis of the Porter Avenue Corridor to determine the best options for future traffic flow along Porter and how this will impact surrounding the surrounding area.



Moving Play equipment out of the flood-plain at McGeorge Park will prevent wash out of bark chips during floods and will increase open space.

GOAL 5. Upgrade Physical and Civic Infrastructure

Make meaningful infrastructure improvements throughout the neighborhood to enhance residents' 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 the type and 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 without formal drainage structures in place, identify alternative techniques that could improve drainage effectiveness.

Can Low Tech Drainage Solutions Make a Difference?

Their purpose of drainage swale or a bar ditch is to catch and detain runoff, holding the water until it can soak into the ground.

Regular maintenance of swales can be very effective in promoting better stormwater drainage. Dredging swales that are silted in, removing debris as soon as it accumulates, and regular mowing can help swales function to their highest capacity. Meanwhile 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 drainage function.

2. **Revitalize McGeorge Park to become an inviting and meaningful open space for the neighborhood, with opportunities for both active and passive recreation.**

3. **Improve sidewalk connections throughout Original Townsite linking the neighborhood with Jefferson Elementary School, Longfellow Middle School, the Porter Avenue Corridor and Downtown Norman.**

4. **Establish a plan to install pedestrian-scale lighting along key sidewalks in the neighborhood.**

5. **Initiate sidewalk and landscaping improvements along the east side of Porter Avenue which conform to the *Porter Avenue Corridor Design for Public Streetscape.***

6. **Install neighborhood gateway monuments and/or signage at major points of entry to the neighborhood:**
   - Triangle of Carter, Apache and Stewart Streets
   - Findley at Alameda
   - Ponca at Alameda
   - Apache east of Porter Corridor at Commercial Limit Line
   - Eufaula east of Porter Corridor at Commercial Limit Line
   - Main at Ponca
   - Gray at Ponca
   - Cockrel at Main

7. **Develop Driveway Replacement program that targets entire blocks, maintaining and containing gravel and/or replacing gravel driveways and drive approaches with concrete. (See page 50.)**



Keeping drainage swales mowed and clear of debris helps them function effectively to retain stormwater runoff.



Well-maintained houses and yards convey to all that residents care about the health and welfare of the neighborhood.

GOAL 6. Enhance Neighborhood Appearance and 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 Original Townsite's Neighborhood Association as an important symbol of social investment, community connection and revitalization.

City-Led Tasks

- Establish neighborhood leadership training programs (e.g. OKC Neighborhood Alliance's Neighborhood Leaders for Today) that build and sustain the organization and successfully implement ongoing revitalization activities.

Neighborhood - City Partnerships

- Hold a Neighborhood Association Relaunch event to reactivate existing neighborhood association with a facilitated discussion about neighbor expectations of the group's purpose and goals.
- 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 future discussions about redevelopment as part of Porter Corridor revitalization, especially as an advocate for the preservation of neighborhood affordability and design character.
- Establish an electronic and hard copy neighborhood newsletter that is published at least twice a year.
- Create an email database to facilitate more effective communication among neighbors.

Neighborhood-Led Tasks

- Use the association to monitor issues that affect the neighborhood, to be an effective communication tool, to educate residents and property owners about neighborhood's expectations for property maintenance, and to provide a mechanism that builds connection between neighbors.



Community Missionary Baptist Church has hosted several neighborhood meetings and seeks to be neighborhood civic hub.

GOAL 6, continued

Neighborhood-Led Tasks, continued

- 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.
- Work together to develop and maintain a neighborhood webpage.
- Initiate a needs assessment of neighborhood residents who may require various kinds of assistance to maintain and improve their property.
- Propose partnering with one or several area churches to have a neighborhood clean-up and work day.

2. Maintain Original Townsite's mature tree canopy by planting new trees and replacing diseased or dying trees.

Neighborhood-City Partnerships

- Work as a Neighborhood Association with City staff to distribute and plant appropriate tree species 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.
- Partner with churches to hold a Tree Planting Day to plant and help reestablish street trees in yards and rights-of-way.

3. Develop a Friends of McGeorge 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 Friends neighborhood event (e.g. ice cream social) to be held at McGeorge Park.

Driveway Repair & Replacement

Original Townsite Neighborhood includes properties with a variety of driveway conditions from poorly maintained gravel to brand new concrete. Driveway conditions—good or poor— have a significant visual impact on the appearance of a block.

CDBG funding could be used to undertake a driveway repair and replacement program. Gravel drives could be replenished and a containment edge added to keep gravel in place. Or gravel drives could be paved with concrete. Both could receive new concrete driveway approaches. This treatment would have a strong positive visual impact on entire block faces, and could include both owner and renter-occupied properties. Either treatment will stop gravel creep and will provide a defined edge to parking areas, making it less likely that cars will park in yards

Property owners should also consider the City of Norman's existing Driveway Replacement Program offered through the 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.



Conclusions: Where Do We Go From Here?

Over the past 38 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 infrastructure projects could be considered low-hanging fruit. The more difficult task in forging a sustainable climate of neighborhood revitalization is a successful "hearts and minds" campaign. This is the process of creating an enduring sense of personal investment for individual property owners in the long-term economic health and social well-being of their 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 Original Townsite. Yet the problem is not installing curb and gutter; it is overcoming the lack of sewers in the area to accept 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. These days, 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 efforts to coordinate residents' efforts and to support a system of sustainable, resident-led projects.

A Coordinated Strategy Needed. Sustainable enhancement of the quality of life in Original Townsite Neighborhood requires a coordinated strategy rather than a collection of projects. Effective strategies must be created by residents of the neighborhood regularly asking themselves questions such as "how do we want our

Conclusions: Where Do We Go From Here?

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 decade is to help all of Norman's CDBG areas combine activities to their best strategic advantage. Projects such as placemaking, effective social organization, and the beautification of parks and rights-of-way will foster an aesthetically more attractive environment with a stronger sense of neighborhood ownership and a climate of revitalization.

Plan Implementation. A Short-Term Implementation Strategy on the following page details specific projects recommended in the Original Townsite Neighborhood Plan. It also identifies possible funding sources, and establishes the players who will be required to act in order to bring these projects to fruition. Projects recommended in the implementation plan have been developed from neighborhood-generated lists of opportunities. They represent neighborhood priorities at a social, civic and infrastructure levels.

Original Townsite Neighborhood Short-Term Plan Implementation Strategy

PROJECT	COST EST	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
1. Install gateway monuments and/or signage at entry points into the neighborhood	$10,000-$30,000	CDBG
2. Proceed with McGeorge Park Revitalization, beginning with play equipment relocation, new benches, additional landscaping	$25,000	CDBG
3. Help convene and facilitate Friends-of-McGeorge Park organizational meeting	No cost	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 Original Townsite Neighborhood Newsletter	$200	Staff and volunteer time
6. Develop neighborhood identification graphics to include neighborhood logo, signage, and letterhead	No cost	Staff and volunteer time
7. Work with City Staff to develop home improvement grant program for exterior property maintenance of owner occupied, low/mod income housing; fund program	TBD	CDBG Rehab funds
8. Install missing sidewalk segments and accessibility ramps where missing	$10,000 +/-	CDBG
9. Install a block of Porter Avenue Streetscape	$40,000	CDBG
10. Implement Driveway Gravel Maintenance/Paving Project on a block-by-block basis	$195,000	Capital Fund Neighborhood Improvement, CDBG,