

*Chapter 6:
Housing & Neighborhoods Plan*



MIDWEST CITY, OKLAHOMA

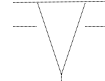
Comprehensive Plan 2008

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Introduction

The words *housing* and *neighborhood* can be defined in the context of structural or physical characteristics, but the meaning can also be applied in a broader sense. More than simply a dwelling or a shelter, *housing* impacts the way in which a family lives and the way in which an area is perceived. The term *neighborhood* also includes the sense of community that can be felt and quality of life that can be enjoyed by residents. Notably, housing is the single largest land use within Midwest City.

Housing and related neighborhoods are inherently unique and that uniqueness makes it difficult to precisely define them. Although such things cannot be easily described, a healthy neighborhood is generally made up of quality housing that is occupied by residents who take pride in their homes and property. A neighborhood is the setting in which residents may develop a sense of belonging through their interactions, common interests, and by simply “being neighbors.” It is, therefore, in the public interest not only to maintain individual housing units, but also to promote the overall well being of neighborhood areas. To accomplish this requires cooperative action by property owners, tenants, the municipality and volunteers. Such cooperative efforts can achieve the highest possible housing quality and environmental character within each neighborhood area. This *Housing & Neighborhoods Plan* discusses various means of stabilizing housing, preserving older residential areas, and encouraging quality new residential development in Midwest City. The City should be a leader in the effort to maintain and improve the housing and neighborhoods within its limits.

Sustainable Housing & Neighborhoods

Much of the discussion and many of the recommendations in this chapter address the importance of creating, revitalizing, and maintaining housing and neighborhoods that are sustainable. In the context of housing and neighborhoods, a number of attributes, as described below, can define the term “sustainability:”

- The housing units are of quality construction and well-maintained;

- Schools and recreational facilities are located close to or preferably in a central section of the neighborhood;
- Non-residential land uses (e.g., public, office, and retail land uses) are carefully and strategically placed in relation to the neighborhood;
- Emergency services, such as fire, medical and police services, are readily accessible;
- There is adequate lighting and other features that foster feelings of safety;
- There is continued investment in public and private property to stabilize property values;
- The majority of the dwelling units are owner-occupied;
- The public facilities and infrastructure serving the neighborhood are well-maintained;
- There are opportunities for social interaction;
- There is a sense of “community” and “belonging” among residents; and
- Homes are in close proximity to hike and bike trails and/or open space.

The City should strive to ensure that these qualities are part of every existing neighborhood area in Midwest City. The City should also ensure that future neighborhoods are designed and maintained in accordance with these characteristics of sustainability. There are recommendations within this chapter that are pertinent to the creation of sustainable neighborhoods in Midwest City.

Trends in Local Housing Condition

Midwest City staff conducted a field assessment of the City’s housing stock in 2003 during the data-gathering phase of the comprehensive planning process. In 1992, a similar assessment was undertaken. (Refer to Chapter 1 for further details.) **Table 6-1** displays the data from these two surveys, offering a comparative analysis of how housing has been maintained over a period of over 10 years. **Figure 6-1** shows the increase or decrease of each housing type between 1992 and 2003. The categories for housing condition are:

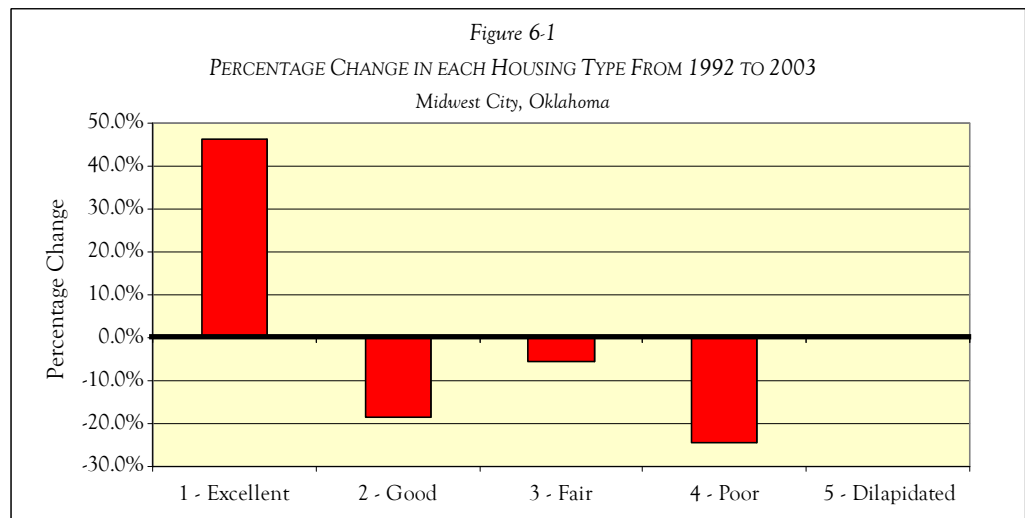
- Type 1: Excellent – *Structures are in excellent shape and are relatively new or very well maintained. There are no visible code violations.*
- Type 2: Good – *Structures are maintained in good condition and may have one or two minor maintenance code violations.*

- Type 3: Fair – Structures have one or two major code violations, such as a sagging roof or windows/doors in need of repair.
- Type 4: Poor – Structures have a poor overall appearance with numerous code violations.
- Type 5: Dilapidated – Structures are beyond repair or feasible rehabilitation and are unsafe or unfit for human habitation.

*Table 6-1
HOUSING CONDITIONS: 1992 & 2003
Midwest City, Oklahoma*

Housing Condition	1992		2003		Numerical Difference	Numerical Percentage Difference	Calculated Percentage Difference
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage			
Type 1 - Excellent	5,740	30.3%	8,406	43.7%	(+) 2,666	(+) 13.4%	(+) 46.4%
Type 2 - Good	12,397	65.5%	10,094	52.4%	(-) 2,303	(-) 13.0%	(-)18.6%
Type 3 - Fair	736	3.9%	696	3.6%	(-) 40	(-) 0.3%	(-) 5.4%
Type 4 - Poor	57	0.3%	43	0.2%	(-) 14	(-) 0.1%	(-) 24.6%
Type 5 - Dilapidated	6	0.0%	6	0.0%	0	0.0%	0%
Total	18,936	100.0%	19,245	100.0%	309	n/a	(+) 1.6%

Source: Midwest City



Based on this comparison, the following conclusions can be made about changes in Midwest City housing:

- There has been a 13.4 percent increase in the percentage of Type 1 units.
- There has been a 13.0 percent decrease in the number of Type 2 units.
- The combined percentages of Type 1 and Type 2 units in 1992 (95.8 percent) and 2003 (96.1 percent) have stayed fairly consistent.
- Type 3, Type 4 and Type 5 units have decreased slightly. Type 3 units have decreased by almost 40 and Type 4 units have decreased by 14.
- Only six Type 5 units were reported in the 2003 survey.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the local housing stock in Midwest City has generally improved slightly over the past decade, as indicated in **Figure 6-1**. A number of recommendations in this *Housing & Neighborhood Plan* address ways in which the City can work to continue this trend.



Model Neighborhood Elements

What elements or features make a neighborhood a great place to live? Can specific design elements increase the quality-of-life residents enjoy? While the answer to the first question depends on the community, the answer to the second questions is yes. Neighborhoods will differ in terms of size of the areas, individual lot size, style of construction, and other features, but certain elements (elements providing quantifiable and unquantifiable value) should be consistently designed into all new Midwest City single-family residential developments. The following establishes ten elements which should be incorporated into all new and redevelopment projects consisting of single-family units.

Applicability

The following recommendations (Elements 1-10) apply to all new or redevelopment projects containing single-family detached and duplex residential developments. However, only Element 1 and Element 2 apply to new or redevelopment projects containing single-family attached units, triplexes, quadriplexes, and multiple-family units, due to their unique nature. Certain elements from a single-family detached or duplex neighborhood are not particularly suited to developing great single-family attached and multiple family developments. For instance, landscaping requirements would be different for single-family detached units and a large scale apartment complex. Additionally, it may be appropriate to modify the degree to which the elements are applied to single-family attached, triplex, quadriplex, and multiple-family developments.

Relief from the Standards of the Neighborhood Elements

In some cases developers may have new or innovative ideas and design methods that would result in great and livable neighborhoods without using all or some of the neighborhood elements. Additionally, strict adherence to these elements may not be feasible due to the small size of a development or other unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, the City should allow a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to provide relief in specific cases but should ensure that quality development occurs.

Element 1: Preservation of Existing Site Features

Purpose

The preservation of existing site features, such as trees, topography, and soil, has a substantial influence on the quality of neighborhoods. Midwest City still has undeveloped areas that are heavily forested and that possess substantial slopes. These areas are uniquely Midwest City, help contribute to the identity of the community, and have existed in their current state for centuries. Over time, development has made these areas more scarce and has removed some of the City's natural beauty and stormwater management abilities. This was a result of harsh development practices such as clear cutting trees and cut and fill practices that negatively affect soils and slopes. As a result of the practices, the new subdivisions are generally devoid of trees and are permeated by retaining walls. This causes homes to look down into neighbors' backyards and windows, and allows soils to be washed away into streets and streams. However, there is time to help ensure that future subdivisions preserve existing site features and avoid the pitfalls of earlier developments. New subdivisions can benefit by designing the following existing site features (discussed in this section) into their development and thus contribute to the quality of life.



Illustration 6-1
EXAMPLE OF TREE PRESERVATION

Preserving existing site features can not only preserve the character that is unique to the City and state, but can provide the following benefits:

“Often, when a piece of ground is cleared of its vegetation, the first good rainfall (and subsequent storms) can wash away large amounts of valuable soil. Where does it end up? Usually, it ends up in local washes and eventually in larger streams. Or, it can end up in a neighbor's backyard. The increased sedimentation in streams can, in turn, impact riparian habitat, stream flow, and aquifer recharge.”

– Cochise County (Arizona) Website, 2007

- **Increase Land Values per Lot** – Trees can be worth substantial monetary values per specimen.
- **Increase Aesthetic Value** – Homes with mature trees are generally considered more visually pleasing and desirable.

- **Air Pollution Reduction** – Trees help improve air quality by removing carbon dioxide and other pollutants and by producing oxygen.
- **Light Pollution Reduction** – Trees can serve as a buffer from light produced by street lights and buildings.
- **Noise Pollution Reduction** – Trees reduce noise from roadways and other sources by modifying humidity and climate, by absorbing sound, and by deflection and refraction.¹
- **Prevention of Soil Erosion** – Trees function as both windbreaks and soil stabilizers, minimizing soil erosion.²
- **Energy Saving** – Research has shown that properly placed trees and landscaping can save 20 to 25 percent on energy use in the home.

Midwest City has an abundance of existing site features which should be preserved during the development of future neighborhoods.

Tree Preservation Recommendations

In the development of new residential properties trees should be preserved wherever feasible, with the goal of preserving the greatest amount of trees. However, to develop a property it is likely that some trees must be removed to allow for the construction of roads, houses, and the utility infrastructure. Therefore, the only trees which should be removed are those located where concrete (for the roads and buildings are needed) or utilities need to be placed. Furthermore, streets and lots shall be designed to maximize the preservation of tree clusters and rows. Clustering concepts should be allowed as an option to promote preservation.

Topography and Soil Preservation Recommendations

In the development of new residential properties, the topography and soils should be preserved wherever feasible. Measures should be taken to ensure that valuable soils are not washed into neighbors' properties or allowed to pollute the community's creeks and drainage areas. It is recommended that retaining walls be limited in height to two or three feet to encourage home sites to develop with the existing topography. Important to the design of retaining walls is the quality of the wall itself. Retaining walls should have an engineer's seal and be constructed with durable masonry materials (e.g., concrete, stone, brick, etc.). Additionally, the appearance of the retaining walls should be considered. It is

¹ American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service, Report Number 445, Tree Preservation Ordinance, Christopher J. Duerksen with Suzanne Richman, page 99.

² Ibid.

recommended that retaining walls should have a stone veneer, stamped patterns/ markings, or other finishing system (e.g., stucco appearance).



Illustration 6-2

WOOD RETAINING WALLS SHOULD BE PROHIBITED



Illustration 6-3

CONCRETE OR MASONRY RETAINING WALLS SHOULD BE PERMITTED

Cut and fill practices should be limited by laying out streets to follow the natural contours or topography of the land. Limiting cut and fill practices will help promote proper drainage and avoid situations where a development negatively impacts adjacent properties. Another possible method to preserve topography and soil is through the option of clustering developments.

Land Disturbance Recommendations

Essential to preservation (i.e., trees, topography, and soils) is the prevention of the disturbance to land prior to the application of development. It is recommended that regulations be passed as soon as possible to control the disturbance of any parcel larger than a half acre to protect trees, topography, and soils prior to development.

Recommended Implementation Tools

1. The Zoning Ordinance or a Tree Preservation Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described in the section *Tree Preservation Recommendations*.
2. The Subdivision Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described in the section *Topography and Soil Preservation Recommendations*.
3. The Stormwater Ordinance should be used to manage land disturbance.



Element 2: Pedestrian Connections

Purpose

Connectivity and the ability to travel from one area to another without the use of a vehicle is an important neighborhood element. Examples of connectivity would be a person being able to walk to a store, park, trail, school, or through an adjoining neighborhood. Neighborhood design should encourage people to be physically active in their community. With approximately 67 percent of Americans being overweight and 33 percent being obese³ (increasing a person's risk of diabetes, heart disease, and other health issues), the neighborhood should be a place where people can get physical exercise in a comfortable and enjoyable environment. The physical health of individuals is an important part of neighborhood livability and sustainability.

Recommended Connections

All subdivisions should provide connections to existing or planned trails, parks, open space areas, and sidewalks. Connections should allow pedestrians to walk safely from the subdivision to surrounding trails, parks, open space areas, subdivisions, and non-residential developments.

1. Shading and Landscaping Connections - Connections should be landscaped or located such that a majority of the pedestrian way receives shade for much of the day.
2. Future Connections - When the development or subdivision is occurring adjacent to an undeveloped property, consideration should be made for future pedestrian access connections. A pedestrian access stub-out should be provided to the edge of the development or subdivision, adjacent to the undeveloped property.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

³ BBC News, Obesity 'Epidemic' Turns Global, OCT 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/7057951.stm>

Element 3: Safe and Sustainable Street Environments

Purpose

Streets are one of the most common and frequently used public features in any urban environment. Every day people use streets to enter and leave their neighborhoods. The effect streets have on people can either be positive, negative, or a mixture of both. Streets have a direct influence of the quality of life and sustainability of a neighborhood. Because of their importance in defining and creating public space, street design should not be based solely on the desire to move automobile traffic. Pedestrians and their relationship to the street also need to be considered. In addition, street design features that discourage speeding are an important element.

“The streets and sidewalks are the social glue that binds the place together.”
 Hinshaw, Mark. “Great Neighborhoods.” *Planning*, Jan 2008, p.7

Recommendations for Traffic Calming Devices

The developer of a subdivision shall install at least four (4) of the following five (5) elements:

1. Textured Pavements or Striping at Crosswalks - Textured and colored pavement includes the use of stamped pavement or alternate paving materials to create an uneven surface for vehicles to traverse. They may be used to emphasize either an entire intersection or a pedestrian crossing, and are sometimes used along entire street blocks. Additionally, striping will clearly delineate the pedestrian pathway and serve to indicate to motorist that pedestrians may be near and to drive accordingly.



Illustration 6-4
 STRIPING AT CROSSWALKS



Illustration 6-5
 STRIPING AT CROSSWALKS

2. Raised Crosswalks - Raised crosswalks are speed tables outfitted with crosswalk markings and signage to channelize pedestrian crossings, providing pedestrians with a level street crossing. In addition, by raising the level of the crossing, pedestrians are more visible to approaching motorists.
 3. Traffic Circles - Traffic circles are raised areas, placed in intersections, around which traffic circulates. Traffic already in the intersection has the right-of-way; drivers yield on entering. Drivers must slow to a speed that allows them to comfortably maneuver around them. These are sometimes called intersection islands.
 4. Narrowings - The width of the traffic lane is reduced by adding islands, restriping the existing pavement, or adding a line of traffic buttons. If using paint or traffic buttons to narrow the travel lanes, one line is placed at the centerline of the street and another line near each edge. These markings have the effect of narrowing the travel lane, inducing drivers to slow down.
-
- Illustration 6-6*
PAINTING USED TO NARROW A TRAFFIC LANE
5. Chicanes - A chicane (pronounced chick - ANE) is a series of narrowings or curb extensions that alternate from one side of the street to the other forming S-shaped curves. It may also be called a deviation, serpentine, reversing curve, twist, or staggering. These are installed away from intersections.

Recommendations for Sidewalks

Sidewalks and their design, notably their relationship to the street, can either discourage or encourage their use. The design of sidewalks can either be inviting for a pedestrian by having tree cover and a landscape buffer from the street or not inviting by placing pedestrians in the direct sun and placing them closer to moving vehicles. It is recommended that sidewalks be incorporated in all new subdivisions, with the possible exception of large rural lots in which sidewalks are not generally needed.

Furthermore, sidewalks should be designed with a landscaped buffer and should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic. The drawing below is the ideal concept for sidewalks within new neighborhoods. As shown, the landscape buffer helps shield pedestrians from traffic and the trees planted within the landscape buffer provide shade for both pedestrians on the sidewalk and cars parked on the street. Also, the aesthetics of this sidewalk design would enhance almost any neighborhood.



Illustration 6-7

IDEAL CONCEPT FOR SIDEWALKS WITHIN NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

The issue with designing sidewalks in this manner is that the City currently requires (in Chapter 42 of its code) a six foot wide clear zone from either the back of the curb or sidewalk. (Section 42-8 reads as follows, "...no street trees shall be planted closer to any curb or sidewalk than six (6) feet."). Therefore, trees would not be allowed to be planted between the curb and sidewalk because there is not enough space within the right-of-way (e.g., there is 14 feet between the back of the curb to the private property line for collector streets and 12 feet for local streets). This code should be revisited and considered in the context of pedestrian orientation with consideration given to safety and other existing issues, such as utility lines.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Subdivision Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

Element 4 Residential Building Materials

Purpose

Quality building materials contribute to the longevity of neighborhoods. The impact materials have on the appearance of a community is substantial. When a neighborhood ages, the wear and tear on the materials becomes more and more noticeable. Since most homes in a neighborhood are built at the same time, they typically have maintenance issues within a similar span. If poor materials are used in construction and all the homes age at the same pace, then a blighted neighborhood could result. It is the goal of the element, to help ensure that homes are built with quality materials which promote the livability and sustainability of the neighborhood.

Recommendation for Building Materials

Midwest City should maintain its current brick façade standards. Currently, 70 percent of the exterior walls of a single-family detached home must be covered by brick. Windows, gables, and second stories should be excluded when calculating the area required to be bricked.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Zoning Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

Element 5: Anti-Monotony Standards

Purpose

A subdivision that is designed in a cookie-cutter format (where homes are virtually identical) lacks diversity and visual interest. Uniqueness of a neighborhood is developed by all the homes not being the exact same, in regards to building materials, size, floor plans, front facades, etc. In an effort to help create ownership, neighborhood pride, and encourage long term commitment, homes should be individual, definable and not just replicas of the adjacent homes.

Anti-Monotony Recommendations

The City should adopt the following recommendations to encourage livable and sustainable neighborhoods and require a developer of a subdivision to install at least five (5) of the following seven (7) elements:

- 1) Minimum Roof Pitch (Mandatory for all homes)
 - a. A minimum 5:12 roof pitch should be required for each primary structure.
- 2) Front Facades or Elevations
 - a. Require no single front facade of a home be duplicated within a specific amount of lots or tracts (e.g., 4, 5, or 6 lots)
- 3) Wall Massing
 - a. Require there be no uninterrupted wall length for a specified distance (e.g., 5, 10, or 15 feet) on any façade of the dwelling unit.
- 4) Architectural Relief Required
 - a. Where a primary structure exceeds one story:
 - i. No single building elevation or design should provide for more than one (1) side that contains fewer than four (4) outside corners.
- 5) Varying Front Yards
 - a. Front Yards Varied – Variations of the front yard setback such that a percentage of the platted lots decrease or increase the setback a specific distance (e.g., five feet).

6) Covered Front Porch

a. Covered Porch Required

- i. No less than a specified percentage (e.g., 20%) of the single-family residential primary structures in any platted block should contain a front covered porch that is permanently attached to and an integral part of the primary structure constructed of like and similar materials to those of the primary structure.

b. Front Yard Encroachment

- i. The front porch can be allowed to encroach into the minimum required front yard setback.

c. Minimum Dimensions

- i. Each covered front porch should include a minimum square foot area and have a minimum depth from the primary structure.

7) Architectural Focal Points

a. One of the following architectural focal points should be incorporated into each housing unit.

- i. **Chimney:** The exterior veneer of a chimney constructed as part of or an extension to the exterior wall of a residential structure must be constructed of like and similar brick or other masonry material to that of the primary structure. The exterior veneer of all other chimneys shall not be constructed of wood or lumber products.
- ii. **Brick Veneer Foundations:** Brick veneer foundations covering exposed foundations above grade.
- iii. **Window Enhancements:** The use of transoms, bay windows, stained glass, or other similar window enhancements.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Zoning Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

Element 6: Provision of Garages

Purpose

The placement of garages in a neighborhood can have a substantial impact on a neighborhood's visual appearance. If alleys are not used in the design of a neighborhood, then driveways must be attached to the street. As a result, little space is available for on-street parking in small lot subdivisions (i.e., 6,000 square-foot lots). Typically, when no alley is present, a common design layout is for the garage to be placed facing the street. This design layout generally establishes the garage as the most dominant visual feature from the view of the street. While this layout is cheaper to construct (less concrete is required for paving) it generally does not contribute to the visual appeal of a neighborhood and does not conform to the image of quality neighborhoods established in the *Goal & Objectives*. Also, there is less space available for off and on-street parking.

Recommended Front Entry Garage Design

In cases where residential driveways and garages are connected to the street it is recommended that one of the following designed be applied:

- 1) The driveway be designed in a letter "J" formation and connected to a garage;
- 2) The driveway is designed straight to a garage that is set back from 15 feet from the front building line; or
- 3) The driveway is designed and connected to a detached garage and is located in the rear yard of the property.

These options will allow for the garage to be placed either in front, at the side, or in the rear of the home. The garage set back, if using a straight front entry design, will provide more space for parking. All options will enhance the view of the home from the street because the garage door will not be the dominant feature of the front building façade and thus will help maintain a high level of visual appeal. Notably, there is one possible exception to this recommendation. Due to the fact that large rural lots have homes on greater setback from the streets, these recommendations may not be suitable and possibly should not be required for large lot homes.

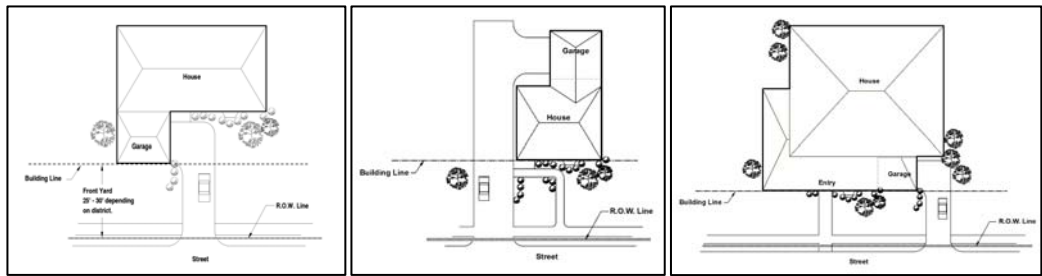


Illustration 6-8

J-DRIVE FRONT ENTRY GARAGE EXAMPLES

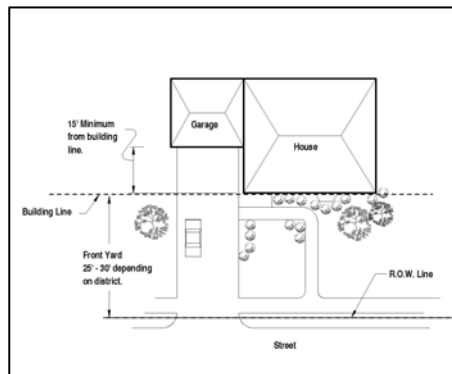


Illustration 6-9

RECESSED FRONT ENTRY GARAGE EXAMPLE

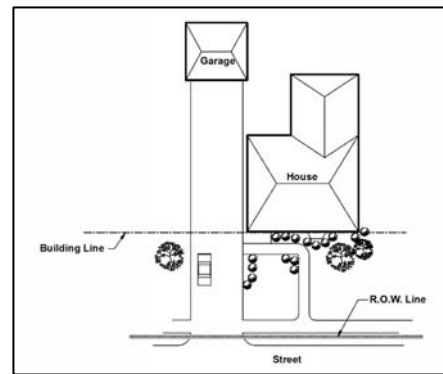


Illustration 6-10

DETACHED FRONT ENTRY GARAGE EXAMPLE

Recommended Garage Size Requirements

It is recommended each single-family unit have a minimum of two (2) enclosed parking spaces.

Recommended Driveway Width

It is recommended that the driveway width be 16 feet.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Zoning Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

Element 7: Provision of Residential Landscaping

Purpose

As discussed in Element 1, trees have a substantial impact on the quality of life within a neighborhood. The benefits of having trees are numerous. The improved aesthetics and increased land value for properties with trees is well documented. Trees are a long term investment and once planted will help a neighborhood age well by creating a tree canopy and providing a stately appearance.

Recommended Residential Landscaping

Tree planting is the foremost recommendation for residential landscaping. Trees should be planted soon after home sites are finished. It is recommended that one or two large shade trees be required in the front yard of a new home. Trees in the front yard should generally take precedence over trees in back and side yards, due to their impact of the neighborhood's appearance. If trees are preserved or currently exist on residential lots, then these trees would fulfill the requirements of this element.



Illustration 6-11

EXAMPLE OF HOMES WITH RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPING

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Zoning Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

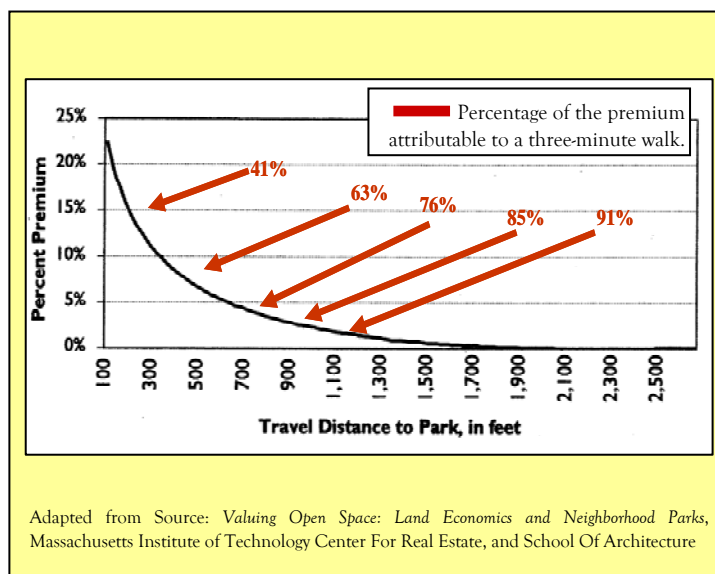
Element 8: Provision of Private Open Space

Purpose

The amount and quality of parks and open space within a community are often cited as important elements of the local quality of life. Midwest City has recognized this fact through an adopted park dedication ordinance and various park planning efforts. However, this portion of the *Housing and Neighborhoods Plan*, focuses solely on providing privately owned and managed open space.

There are researched and proven methods to add value to sites and homes that are adjacent to parks and open spaces. These methods generally relate to the level of visibility and accessibility to such areas. As shown in the image below, the following are key facts related to adding value to properties adjacent to parks and open spaces:

- Properties within 100 feet of public open space have a 23-percent premium property value.
- There is measurable value added to properties for up to a quarter-mile.
- Properties that have access to a park or open space within a three-minute walk account for 85 percent of the total value-added premium.



Given these facts, the way in which a neighborhood is laid out can greatly affect property values. The following actions are therefore recommended to add value, increased livability, and greater sustainability to local home sites.

Recommended Private Open Space

It is recommended that Midwest City require that five to ten percent of a development be maintained as privately owned and managed open space. The following are additional criteria for open space:

- Open space should either be bounded by lots, or bounded by streets with lots fronting onto the streets and adjacent open space. These configurations provide access to open space, thereby encouraging a sense of community and “ownership”.
- To ensure that the maximum value accrues to homes, adjacent homes to open space should directly face the open space, whether or not there may be an intervening street.⁴
- Generally, no home should be further than 800 feet from a public park or open space corridor in order to benefit from a property value premium. This may not be feasible for in large-lot developments (where lots are over one acre in size), and therefore an exception may be made for this type of development.
- The hike-and-bike trail system should connect homes, parks, schools, retail, employment, and entertainment centers, wherever possible. These trail connections should be primarily off-street dedicated trails, and only be located adjacent to streets in retail areas, and where otherwise it is absolutely necessary for continuity.
- In neighborhoods, smaller residential lots or more dense residential areas should be located in the closest proximity to the parks and open spaces provided – this will maximize the value of those lots and areas, and the parks and open spaces off-set smaller lot sizes.
- Where possible, other green areas should also be utilized, such as landscaped medians, roundabouts, street islands, conservation areas, and village greens to provide a heightened sense of open space.
- Detention ponds should not be used as open space unless quality amenities are included.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Zoning Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

⁴ Miller, Andrew Ross. Valuing Open Space: Land Economics and Neighborhood Parks. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), February 2001.

Element 9: Provision of Subdivision Screening Materials

Purpose

As referenced in Chapter 5, screening walls and landscaping would improve the appearance of neighborhoods from the roadway - the view of backyard fences and garages would be transformed to a more aesthetically pleasing perspective of a visually cohesive screening element. Increased privacy for residents' homes is another positive effect. In addition, screening not only improves the image of the roadway but also serves as a buffer for homeowners by decreasing the impact of noise from the adjacent roadway.

Recommendation for Screening Elements (Walls and Landscaping)

In all new subdivisions, a screening element such as a wall or landscaped barrier should be erected on the subdivision's or developer's property adjacent to an arterial roadway. The wall or landscaping should be owned and maintained by the homeowners association/property owners and should not become the



Illustration 6-12
LANDSCAPING BARRIER

responsibility of the City. The purpose of the screening wall is to provide a visual and protective barrier between the subdivision and the roadway. Notably, walls should be made of quality materials that are durable and require low maintenance.

Additionally, it is recommended that the screening element be installed prior to the final acceptance of the subdivision. However, landscape materials may be installed after the subdivision is accepted, upon approval of the City. Generally, landscaping should be fully installed approximately within approximately six (6) months following acceptance of the subdivision.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Subdivision Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

Element 10: Provision of Subdivision Entryways

Purpose

As mentioned in Chapter 5, entranceways into neighborhoods improve neighborhood identity, image, and character. These features can serve as markers for the community and allow residents and visitors to clearly identify subdivisions. A greater sense of place can also be created for neighborhoods using entranceways. Additionally, the image and impression of the area is generally enhanced by the architectural and landscaping elements typically found in entranceways.

Recommended Entryways

Currently, Midwest City does not have requirements concerning subdivision entranceways. The City should consider establishing standards for entryway signs that would be used if the development community decides to construct such an entranceway. While entryways may not be required, establishing standards by which they could be erected would ensure that a high standard would be met. Either a neighborhood (subdivision) entryway freestanding sign or a wall plaque attached to a screening wall at the main entranceway into the neighborhood should be allowed and encouraged. Standards for the perpetual maintenance of the entranceways, which should be the responsibility of a homeowners association, should also be outlined.

Recommended Implementation Tools

The Subdivision Ordinance should be used to implement the standards described within this section.

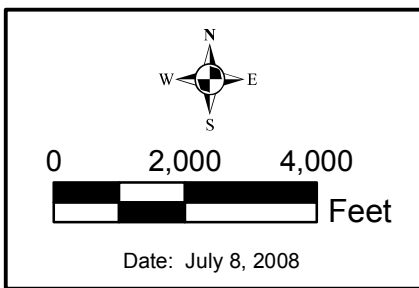
New Single Family Neighborhoods

As Midwest City continues to grow, where will the new neighborhoods be developed? Most of the City's remaining vacant/undeveloped land is east of Douglas Boulevard and contains extensive amounts of tree canopy and has the City's most substantial slopes (refer to **Plate 1-3**). Today, these "green" or undeveloped areas are beginning to experience new residential development. Additionally, Midwest City has many areas that contain older homes on large tracts. The owners of these homes may, at some point in the future, sell their homes and land for redevelopment. Typically, people move to the outskirts of urban areas for cheaper land and sometimes to enjoy a rural environment. Then, as development continues outward from the urban areas, the rural atmosphere that people experienced is lost and land prices increase. Therefore, some people sell their large tract homes to developers who then build new subdivisions.

As a result, there are two types of land situations that will produce new neighborhoods, vacant land development and existing site redevelopment. The amount of this potential developable area is important to the comprehensive planning process. The amount of the potential developable area will help determine the total amount of people that will live in Midwest City, when the City is fully built-out. Furthermore, the potential developable areas are the City's last opportunity to address housing development concerns, such as quality neighborhood design.


Plate 6-1 (Potentially Developable Areas) was developed to estimate the amount of land that could be developed as future neighborhoods. The map was created by careful review of every parcel within the City, with primary focus given to each parcel's development status, current zoning, and future land use designations. The following is an estimate of the potential developable areas:

- **Areas Likely to be Developed: 1,581 acres**
 - Definition: Vacant land that is 2 or more acres, zoned residential and designated residential on the *Future Land Use Map*.
- **Areas Somewhat Likely to be Developed: 1,140 acres**
 - Definition: Not vacant, but large tracts with older homes in which several lots could be assembled or lot splitting could take place. Areas are zoned residential and designated on the *Future Land Use Map* as residential.



Acreeage:
 Total Area of Interest: 2721 acres
 Area of Likely to Be Developed: 1581 acres
 Area of Somewhat Likely to Be Developed: 1140 acres

Plate 6-1 Potentially Developable Areas



Midwest City, Oklahoma
 GIS Division
 Community Development Department

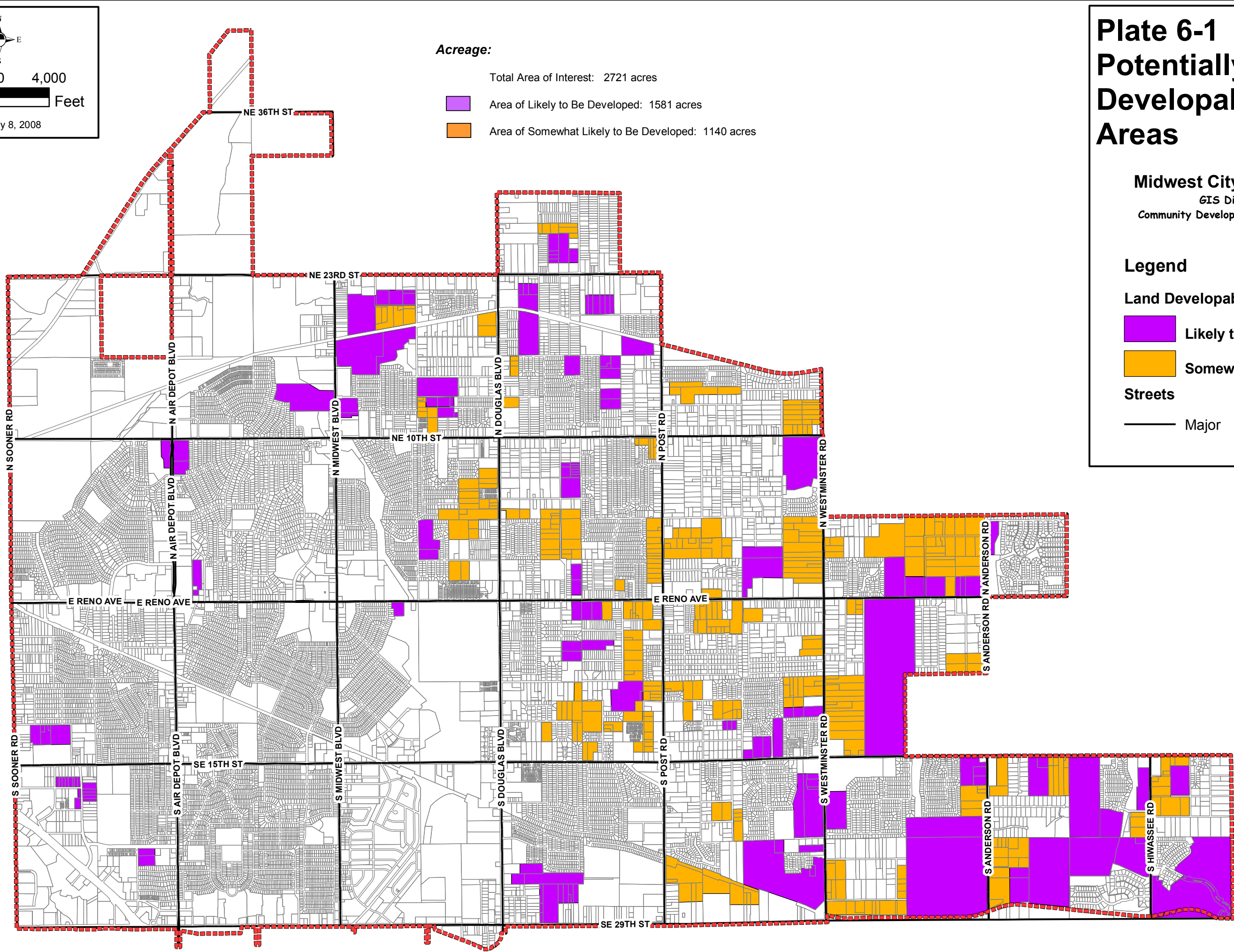
Legend

Land Developability

- Likely to be Developed
- Somewhat Developable

Streets

- Major



Housing and Neighborhood Strategies

Single-Family Neighborhoods

As it is today, single-family development will likely be the prevailing type of residential land use in Midwest City in the future. Cities should not have an abundance of either large-lot or small-lot single-family developments, since a variety of residential densities are necessary in order to provide residents with a choice of house size, lot size, and price ranges. However, cities also need an appropriate housing inventory for market purposes. It is therefore recommended that the City develop a range of lot and dwelling sizes to continue the goal of a balanced variety of single-family housing. The following discussion outlines specific ways in which the City can achieve such a balance.

Existing & Recommended Single-Family Residential Zoning Districts

Midwest City currently has three single family zoning districts. The General Agriculture (A-1) zoning district requires a minimum lot size of two acres (87,120 square feet). The primary single-family zoning district (R-1-D) allows for a minimum 6,000 square feet lot size for single-family detached homes. The R-1-A is similar to the R-1-D, with the addition of single-family-attached units. Notably, single-family detached units are permitted in all residential zoning districts except the manufactured home districts. **Table 6-2** outlines the minimum lots and dwelling sizes required in each existing zoning district.

Single-Family Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size (Square Feet)	Minimum House Size (Square Feet)
General Agriculture (A-1)	87,120	1,400
Single-Family Detached (R-1-D)	6,000	1,400
Single-Family Attached (R-1-A)	6,000	1,400

Source: Midwest City Zoning Ordinance

It is recommended that the City expand its single-family residential zoning districts to provide for a wider range of minimum lot and dwelling sizes between the current A-1 and R-1-D districts. As shown in **Table 6-2**, there is a large difference in square footage between the current A-1 and R-1-D districts. While it is true that a minimum lot size requirement actually allows any lot size equal to or above that number, the development community generally uses the minimum lot size as the benchmark for the lot sizes that are developed. Therefore, several new single-family residential districts should be added, as listed below:

Table 6-3 RECOMMENDED SINGLE-FAMILY ZONING DISTRICTS Midwest City, Oklahoma		
Single-Family Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size (Square Feet)	Minimum House Size (Square Feet)
A-1: General Agriculture	87,120	None
R-35: Single-Family Detached	35,000	2,400
R-22: Single-Family Detached	22,000	2,100
R-10: Single-Family Detached	10,000	1,800
R-8: Single-Family Detached	8,000	1,500
R-6: Single-Family Detached	6,000	1,200

Infill/Redevelopment Policies for Individual Parcels

For the purpose of this discussion, infill/redevelopment housing is defined as new housing construction on existing lots that are less than one acre in size. Furthermore, at least 80 percent of the land within a 300-foot radius of the infill/redevelopment site must be developed and water, sewer, streets, schools, and fire protection must be provided/available.

Infill and redevelopment of existing areas can assist in revitalizing older areas of the City. The promotion of infill/redevelopment housing is considered a win-win situation for Midwest City inasmuch as it:

- Provides a mechanism for increasing the population within the City.
- Reduces the City's infrastructure costs (it is less expensive for the City to provide a connection to an existing line in a developed area than to construct a line for an individual user).
- Revitalizes older areas of the City.

Developing on a vacant or redevelopment (razed) lot may be perceived as having an increased risk, particularly early on in long-term redevelopment projects. The City can assist in making infill development or redevelopment an increasingly attractive option for potential homebuilders by rezoning adjacent, non-residential parcels to protect residential development from inappropriate commercial land use and by waiving development-related fees. The City should establish policies to streamline the regulatory process of development in identified areas of the City where vacant lots are available for infill development and that have ready access to infrastructure.

Also, compatibility can be an issue when infill/redevelopment housing is built in existing neighborhoods. The City should promote new home construction to match the character of the existing neighborhood. Therefore, it is recommended that new homes, in these circumstances, have a minimum house size equal to the average house size of the surrounding neighborhood.

Local Housing Programs & Initiatives

Midwest City has successfully used grant programs to improve local housing for many years. Specifically, the City receives Community Development Block

Grant (CDBG) funds on an annual basis. The City also receives HOME funds, Federal Home Loan Bank Funds, and tax credit projects. The Grants Department is charged with the administration of these funds. Residents are informed of local housing programs with a quarterly newsletter that is mailed to every residential water account in Midwest City. Furthermore, programs are continually advertised on local cable channels. The City administers the following programs as funding allows:

- Homebuyer Assistance Program
- Targeted Homebuyer Assistance Program
- Primary Systems Home Repair
- Enhanced Primary Systems Home Repair
- Transitional Housing Program
- Housing Rehabilitation Program
- Purchase/Rehabilitation Program
- Property Maintenance Program
- Slum/Blight Improvement Program
- Neighborhood Initiative
- Fair Housing Activities

Investigate the Concept of a Local Housing Authority

The State of Oklahoma has identified that there exists, in certain urban and rural areas unsanitary, unsafe, and overcrowded dwelling accommodations; that in such urban and rural areas there is a shortage of safe or sanitary dwelling accommodations available at rents or prices which persons of low income can afford and that such shortage forces such persons to occupy unsanitary, unsafe, and overcrowded dwelling accommodations.⁵

Title 63, Chapter 40 of the Oklahoma Statutes enables cities in Oklahoma to establish local housing authorities to address housing concerns mentioned above and promote housing options for low-income families. Typically, housing authorities offer programs such as assistant/training programs, rental assistance (e.g., Section 8), and public housing choices. An example of a housing authority program can be found in neighboring Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma City Housing Authority provides Section 8 assistance to low-income renters to find any type of dwelling unit, as long as it meets certain requirements for rent limits,

⁵ Source: Oklahoma Statute Title 63, Chapter, 40, Section 1053 - Definitions and Applicability

rent reasonableness, and Housing Quality Standards (HQS). A major benefit to this program is that it enables low-income families to obtain housing of their choice, while the landlord retains private property rights, including management, tenant selection and maintenance.

It is recommended that the city investigate the concept of establishing a Midwest City Housing Authority to address the housing needs of people with low incomes.

Special Planning Areas

Special Planning Areas are areas where redevelopment potential is high and the City can focus efforts to support redevelopment projects. These areas are discussed further in Chapter 4 and are shown on the *Future Land Use Map*. Redevelopment includes both residential and non-residential development. However, this section is focused on the residential component of the Special Planning Areas.

In the areas shown as Special Planning Areas (e.g., Reno Avenue, SE 15th Street, etc.), a mixture of different residential uses are encouraged. Possible residential development would include mixed-use developments with multiple-family units, townhome, and single-family attached developments. The quality of these developments and the image they create within these Special Planning Areas should be one of a sustainable, livable, and quality development. Ideally, the City should be supportive and encourage the redevelopment of vacant non-residential uses, such as vacant strip retail areas, to be redeveloped as mixed-use developments, multiple-family units, and single-family attached units.

Solicit Input & Make Citizens Aware of Available Assistance

People generally do not desire to live in substandard housing units, but there is a reason they have to live in these units. Knowledge as to the reasons why local citizens are living in these conditions may help the City assess what needs to be done. Midwest City officials should therefore solicit input as to what the specific needs are of the individuals who own and/or live in the units identified

as Type 3, Type 4, or Type 5 according to the Housing Condition survey (see related map in the Baseline Analysis and **Plate 6-1** herein).

For example, some of these individuals may be elderly and may not be physically able to undertake the repairs needed to improve their homes. In other cases, lack of funds may keep individuals or families from making necessary improvements. Also, people renting property may be having difficulty with the property's owner not undertaking necessary repairs. Knowledge of factors that may be keeping individuals from undertaking proper maintenance will help the City to determine the best steps to take and to allocate funds and services accordingly. There are many ways that such information can be gathered.

- The City could use a system of door-to-door surveying.
- Public workshops could be held in areas of the City that have a concentration of Type 3, Type 4, and Type 5 units.
- Midwest City officials could seek help from civic leaders who know and/or have contact with citizens that live in these areas.
- As these efforts are undertaken, it is further recommended that the City continue its public awareness efforts (e.g., newsletter and television) in order to inform citizens about the programs available for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and home ownership.

Concentrated efforts such as these would help the City gain the knowledge it needs to be proactive in addressing deteriorating housing units.

Allocate Additional Funds for Demolition

Regardless of the diligence with which the City undertakes maintenance and improvement efforts, some housing units are already past the point of rehabilitation. These units were identified in the Baseline Analysis as poor (Type 4) or dilapidated (Type 5) units and are identified in **Plate 1-7**, the *Housing Conditions Map*. There were 45 homes categorized as such during the 2003 housing survey. However, homes classified as poor (Type 4) may be candidates for rehabilitation and should not be demolished if they can be rehabilitated.

“Wise leaders will provide citizens with input on the choices that lie before a community, with opportunities for ‘visioning’ what they want their city or town or village to look like, and with fulcrums of leverage that can influence the decision-making process” (pg.143)

William Hudnut – *Halfway to Everywhere: A Portrait of America's First Tier Suburbs*

- Just as it is important for Midwest City to address housing units in need of maintenance and rehabilitation, it is equally important for the City to proactively demolish units that cannot be rehabilitated.
- Demolition efforts are not just needed to improve the overall local housing stock, but also to protect the public's health, safety and welfare.

Therefore:

- It is recommended that a set number of homes be demolished each year and funds should be allocated accordingly. Notably, programs and funds (e.g., CDBG) already exist for this type of effort.
- Demolishing dilapidated housing units would make a stronger, more noticeable improvement to the City's overall housing stock, especially in deteriorating areas, over a shorter period of time.

Work With Local Entities & Be a Facilitator

City officials should approach the County, Chamber of Commerce, and business organizations to provide funding (e.g., small loans) or volunteers to help preserve and improve the appearance of local housing. Business organizations should be interested and involved in improving local housing because, as stated previously, economic development efforts and housing quality are closely connected. One study, called *Housing: The Forgotten Component of Economic Development*, states that "corporations look at a wide range of criteria when deciding where to locate a facility. Some of those criteria are about quality of life issues including housing. Business leaders need to be confident that the location they choose is a place where their valuable employees - executives and laborers alike - will want to live."⁶⁶ The following are efforts the City should pursue.

- Ensuring that Midwest City is in the best possible position to compete for companies and employment bases includes providing quality housing.
- In addition, discussing housing issues with leaders of local financial institutions would be another avenue the City should pursue. Specialized home improvement loans for families with limited income could be established through discourse with such leaders.
- Facilitate other localized efforts including the formation of neighborhood associations and local crime watch groups.

⁶⁶ ADDRESS: http://www.wccf.org/pdf/housing_ecdev.pdf

- Facilitate and inform citizens of the most useful person or entity to help them meet their needs.
- Continue the practice of designating a City staff position to be a recognized liaison between the City and neighborhood groups. This practice enables the City to be aware of and involved in neighborhood issues on a consistent basis.



Illustration 6-13
EXAMPLE OF A WELL-KEPT HOME IN AN OLDER
NEIGHBORHOOD

Such efforts on the part of Midwest City are likely also to have the residual effect of increasing homeownership and thereby decreasing the incidence of future housing issues. Notably, the City's Neighborhood Initiative Division already performs many of these efforts.

Work With Owners of Rental Properties

Table 6-1 shows, almost 56 percent of the City's housing units are in need of at least minor repair. A concern is the City's high rate of renter-occupied units, estimated at 39 percent of the total housing units (8,563 of 22,150 units) by the 2000 U.S. Census. Notably, over 48 percent of all rental units (4,128 of 8,563 units) within Midwest City are single-family units. It is critical that maintenance and code enforcement programs be coordinated with owners and landlords for a long-term solution to local housing issues. Midwest City's large number of single-family residential units should be considered in addition and separately from multiple-family units. Single-family units have similar and different issues related to their maintenance.

The City should establish a coalition of owners and landlords that have rental units in Midwest City. The purpose of this coalition would be to allow mutual communication between the City and the owners and landlords. Ideally, the City, owners, and landlords would work together to collectively come up with housing maintenance solutions. The City could consider a variety of incentives for better rental housing maintenance, such as a property tax abatement program for housing units that are improved to City standards. Owners and

landlords may have other ideas that could be expressed about ways in which Midwest City could assist in improvements.

In addition to promoting a coalition of owners and landlords, Midwest City should adopt a rental registration program to establish connections and build relationships with owners and landlords. These relationships would be beneficial to providing the City a contact person for each rental property. With this improved communication between owners/landlord and the City, issues facing rental property can be more quickly addressed.



Illustration 6-14
EXAMPLE OF A WELL-KEPT HOME IN AN OLDER
NEIGHBORHOOD



Illustration 6-15
EXAMPLE OF A WELL-KEPT HOME IN AN OLDER
NEIGHBORHOOD

Review Current Code Enforcement Policies

Code enforcement is one way in which Midwest City now improves local housing, unit by unit. Many cities have code enforcement policies that are reactive – that is, violations of general code regulations are not enforced unless and until a complaint is made. Other cities have code enforcement policies that are more proactive – that is, staff is actively looking at areas of the community from a regulatory perspective, and enforcing codes as they see violations on a regular, consistent basis, even without a complaint being made. Currently, the City has a proactive code enforcement policy and it is recommended that this policy continue.

Survey of Existing Multiple-Family Units

When the 2003 Housing Conditions survey was conducted, the focus was on single-family dwelling units. It is recognized however, that multiple-family dwelling units contribute significantly to the housing stock both in terms of variety and affordability. A survey of the current stock of multiple-family dwellings is therefore needed. It is recommended that the City conduct a thorough survey of all types of apartments in order to: 1) assess their condition and 2) get a current count of such dwelling units. The condition assessment would provide a basis for determining if Code Enforcement should be increased to prevent deterioration of such units. Furthermore, since multiple-family units are an important component in calculating annual population estimates, an accurate count is needed.

Utilize the Urban Renewal Authority

As neighborhoods age and market forces shift, existing buildings may become blighted and the existing land uses may no longer be economically viable. Cities throughout the country have experienced situations where older parts of their communities have become blighted. A common and often successful way for a city to address blight is utilize an Urban Renewal Authority.

Midwest City has recently created an Urban Renewal Authority. It is recommended that the City investigate the concept using the Midwest City Urban Renewal Authority to address blighted areas of the community. The Special Planning Areas should be an area where the services of the Urban Renewal Authority are used.

In Conclusion

The *Housing & Neighborhoods Plan*, should guide Midwest City’s planning efforts related to existing and future residential areas. This Plan has outlined ways in which the City can maintain the present character and quality of neighborhoods and housing in Midwest City and can proactively address deteriorated areas. The link that housing has to economic development, quality of life, and community image makes this issue particularly important. As the City has recognized through its on-going efforts to improve housing and neighborhood areas, it is in the public’s interest to maintain the highest possible housing quality and neighborhood character throughout Midwest City. Interaction and cooperation between property owners, the municipality, and volunteers will be required to maintain and upgrade the quality of housing. **Table 6-4** lists an overview of some of the key recommendations found within this chapter. The following is not a complete description of all recommendations.

Table 6-4
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
Midwest City, Oklahoma

Sustainability

Existing and Future Neighborhoods

The City should strive to ensure the following qualities are part of every neighborhood:

- The housing units are of quality construction and well-maintained;
- Schools and recreational facilities are located close to or preferably in a central section of the neighborhood;
- Non-residential land uses (e.g., public, office, and retail land uses) are carefully and strategically placed in relation to the neighborhood;
- Emergency services, such as fire, medical and police services, are readily accessible;
- There is adequate lighting and other features that foster feelings of safety;
- There is continued investment in public and private property to stabilize property values;
- The majority of the dwelling units are owner-occupied;
- The public facilities and infrastructure serving the neighborhood are well-maintained;
- There are opportunities for social interaction;
- There is a sense of “community” and “belonging” among residents; and
- Homes are in close proximity to hike and bike trails and/or open space.

Table 6-4 (Continued)
 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
 Midwest City, Oklahoma

Model Neighborhood Elements

Element 1: Preservation of Existing Site Features

In the development of new residential properties trees, soils, and topography should be preserved wherever feasible.

Retaining walls should be limited in height to two or three feet to encourage home sites to develop with the existing topography.

Cut and fill practices should be limited by laying out streets to follow natural contours.

Implement regulations to control the disturbance of any parcel larger than a half acre to protect trees, topography, and soils and prior to development.

Element 2: Pedestrian Connections

All subdivisions should provide connections to existing or planned trails, parks, open space areas, and sidewalks.

Element 3: Safe and Sustainable Street Environments

The developer of a subdivision shall install at least four of the five traffic calming elements.

Sidewalks should be incorporated in all new subdivisions, with the possible exception of larger rural lots in which sidewalks are not generally needed. Sidewalks should be designed with a landscaped buffer between the curb and sidewalk.

Element 4: Residential Building Materials

Midwest City should maintain its current brick façade standards. Currently, 70 percent of the exterior walls of a single-family detached home must be covered by brick.

Element 5: Anti-Monotony Standards

Subdivision must install at least five out of seven design elements.

Element 6: Provision of Garages

Garages must be placed either in front, at the side, or in the rear of the home. Each single-family unit must have a minimum of two (2) enclosed parking spaces. Driveways must be 16 feet wide.

Element 7: Provision of Residential Landscaping

One or two large shade trees are required in the front yard of a new home.

Element 8: Provision of Private Open Space

A new subdivision must have five to ten percent of the development be maintained as privately owned and managed open space.

Element 9: Provision of Subdivision Screening Materials

A screening element such as a wall or landscaped barrier should be erected on the subdivision's or developer's property adjacent to an arterial roadway.

Element 10: Provision of Subdivision Entryways

Consider establishing standards for entryway signs that would be used if the development community decides to construct such an entranceway.

Table 6-4 (Continued)
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
Midwest City, Oklahoma

Housing and Neighborhood Strategies

Single-Family Neighborhoods

It is recommended that the City develop a range of lot and dwelling sizes to continue the goal of a balanced variety of single-family housing.

The City should expand its single-family residential zoning districts to provide for a wider range of minimum lot and dwelling sizes between the current A-1 and R-1-D districts. The city should update its single-family zoning districts as follows:

Single-Family Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size (Square Feet)	Minimum House Size (Square Feet)
A-1: General Agriculture	87,120	None
R-35: Single-Family Detached	35,000	2,400
R-22: Single-Family Detached	22,000	2,100
R-10: Single-Family Detached	10,000	1,800
R-8: Single-Family Detached	8,000	1,500
R-6: Single-Family Detached	6,000	1,200

Infill/Redevelopment Policies for Individual Parcels

The City should assist in making infill development an increasingly attractive option for potential homebuilders by rezoning adjacent, non-residential parcels to protect residential development from inappropriate commercial land use and by waiving development-related fees.

The City should establish policies to streamline the regulatory process of development in identified areas of the City where vacant lots are available for infill development and that have ready access to infrastructure.

New homes, in these circumstances, must have a minimum house size equal to the average house size of the surrounding neighborhood.

Investigate the Concept of a Local Housing Authority

The City should investigate the concept of establishing a Midwest City Housing Authority to address the housing needs of people with low-incomes.

Table 6-4 (Continued)
 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
 Midwest City, Oklahoma

General Strategies for Existing Neighborhoods

Special Planning Areas

Special Planning Areas are areas where redevelopment potential is high and the City can focus efforts in supporting redevelopment projects. In the areas shown as Special Planning Areas a mixture of different residential uses are encouraged. Possible residential development would include mixed-use developments, multiple-family units, and single-family attached units.

Solicit Input & Make Citizens Aware of Available Assistance

Midwest City officials should solicit input as to what the specific needs are of the individuals who own and/or live in the units identified as Type 3, Type 4, or Type 5 according to the Housing Condition Survey.

Allocate Additional Funds for Demolition

It is recommended that a set number of homes be demolished each year and funds should be allocated accordingly. Notably, programs and funds (e.g., CDBG) already exist for this type of effort.

Work With Local Entities & Be a Facilitator

City officials should approach the County, Chamber of Commerce, and business organizations to provide funding (e.g., small loans) or volunteers to help improve the appearance of local houses.

Work With Owners of Rental Properties

The City should establish a coalition of owners and landlords that have rental units in Midwest City. The purpose of this coalition would be to allow mutual communication between the City and the owners and landlords.

Midwest City should adopt a rental registration program to establish connections and build relationships with owners and landlords.

Review Current Code Enforcement Policies

Currently, the City has a proactive code enforcement policy, and it is recommended that this policy continue.

Survey of Existing Multiple-Family Units

It is recommended that the City conduct a thorough survey of all types of apartments in order to: 1) assess their condition and 2) get a current count of such dwelling units.

Utilize the Urban Renewal Authority

Investigate the concept using the Midwest City Urban Renewal Authority to address blighted areas of the community. The Special Planning Areas should be an area where the services of the Urban Renewal Authority are used.

Source: City of Midwest City's Housing & Neighborhoods Plan.