

# preserveokc



SOUTHERN WINDOW  
PLANTS

SHOP GOOD

SHOP  
GOOD

TEE SHIRTS & GIFTS

WORK HARD DO GOOD HAVE FUN

URBANE  
HOME & LIFESTYLE

ALLIED  
ARTS

COFFEE SLINGERS



Adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission 1/3/2020 |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen Brown".

Allen Brown, Chair

Adopted by the Planning Commission 4/9/2020 |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janis Powers".

Janis Powers, Chair

Received by the City Council 7/7/2020 |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Holt".

David Holt, Mayor

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First National Bank and Trust Company Building,  
constructed in 1930 and Listed in the National  
Register of Historic Places in 2018.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

Oklahoma City is in the midst of a nationally-recognized renaissance, centered on the revitalization of historic places, building on the city's rich history and unique identity. From renewed interest in historic neighborhoods, to an explosion of revitalization in historic commercial districts, to the rejuvenation of long-vacant landmark buildings, the physical fabric of Oklahoma City's past is being brought back to life.

Continuing this success hinges on incorporating a preservation ethic into broader planning goals. The concepts of neighborhood revitalization, sustainable growth patterns, preserving open space and rural character, providing walkability and diverse uses in an urban setting, and attracting people with great places carry a common thread of appreciating and investing in the built resources that we already have.

## Purpose

Adopted July 9, 2015, **planokc** established a long-term vision for the development and growth of Oklahoma City. Reaching beyond the building blocks of land use and public services, **planokc** acknowledges the importance of quality-of-life factors for the development of the city, from building a strong economy and diverse transportation system, to protecting the environment, to valuing the artistic, historic and cultural resources that make Oklahoma City great.

The preservation, appearance, and culture element, called “**enrichokc**” of **planokc** identifies goals and initiatives related to historic preservation; landscape; heritage, arts and culture; community appearance and urban design. The lead initiative of **enrichokc** is to develop and implement a historic preservation plan. This plan, **preserveokc**, establishes “a comprehensive strategy for the identification, retention, preservation, and revitalization of the city's historic, cultural, and architectural resources.”

Oklahoma City has devoted resources to the revitalization of key historic buildings and places. Neighborhoods and commercial districts have benefited from City programs to encourage revitalization, and from private sector investment in preservation, supported by state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation.

But Oklahoma City has also lost important historic resources, and has many more waiting to be brought back to life.

**preserveokc** uses public input in the form of survey responses, public meetings, and previous public outreach from the recent **planokc** process. **preserveokc** identifies ways to build upon the successes achieved through historic preservation, and to learn from recent preservation challenges. **preserveokc** seeks to fully integrate preservation principles into the goals established in **planokc**, and into the way we think about how our city grows.

## WHAT THIS PLAN DOES:

- Long-range policy document
- Informs leaders, property owners, and community members about historic preservation concepts, tools, and priorities
- Articulates vision and goals for the City and community
- Recommends potential strategies
- Identifies roles and responsibilities

## WHAT THIS PLAN DOES NOT DO:

- Change or override existing processes, procedures, policies, or codes
- Modify the purview, composition, or powers of decision-making bodies
- Create new historic districts or landmarks
- Impose new requirements
- Establish new programs

## Implementation

preserveokc establishes four **Big Ideas** to address the way the City of Oklahoma City can influence preservation, rehabilitation, and revitalization of historic places. The plan outlines the rationale *behind* each idea and the attainable goals *within* them and recommends specific actions and policies to implement in order to reach the goals. The **Implementation Matrix** in Chapter 5 identifies stakeholders and key players to carry out the recommendations, and suggested time frames for implementation.

These concrete steps create the framework and the tools necessary for the City, community leaders, residents, and property owners to continue the revitalization of Oklahoma City's historic resources.

## Historic Resources Inventory

In addition to the Implementation Matrix, preserveokc introduces the use of a Historic Resources Inventory. This Inventory will be a regularly-maintained database of historic resources, identified through sources including survey work, National Register nominations, and public input. The Inventory will be used to inform property owners and the general public, to identify priority areas for future preservation efforts, and to provide information for various review processes, though the Inventory itself is not a regularly tool.

Founders Tower, constructed in 1964 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.



## BIG IDEAS

Historic preservation is well-established in Oklahoma City as a priority for government, and a beneficial and rewarding endeavor for the private sector. The city's most consistent development trends and nearly all of **planokc**'s Big Ideas align closely with the goals of historic preservation. This alignment is demonstrated by ongoing market interest in established, existing neighborhoods and commercial districts; in demands for districts with walkability, high quality of life amenities and a strong sense of identity and place, and in increasing demand for development that is both economically and environmentally sustainable. Yet many challenges remain for historic preservation to be recognized as the community's first response. The following key issues encapsulate the city's challenges and opportunities identified in the development of **preserveokc**.



## BIG IDEA ONE

### Strengthen Public Support for Historic Preservation

We will build a culture of appreciation for Oklahoma City's history and historic resources through accessible information, effective public outreach, and the formation of productive partnerships that recognize and celebrate the roots of Oklahoma City's unique identity.

*People gather at the **Freedom Center**, a Historic Landmark to the Civil Rights Movement, to silently march in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.*





## BIG IDEA TWO

### Practice Good Stewardship of City Owned Historic Resources

The City of Oklahoma City will continue to lead by example, and act as a good steward of City-owned and -controlled historic resources through maintenance and preservation of City facilities and through decision making processes about City projects affecting historic resources.

*Oklahoma City's **Municipal Auditorium**, now known as the Civic Center, was completed in 1937 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.*



## BIG IDEA THREE

### Protect Historic Resources Citywide

We will use existing, regulatory tools, and develop and implement new tools to proactively identify, evaluate, and protect historic resources throughout Oklahoma City.

*The **C.C. Cooke Building**, located in downtown Oklahoma City, is eligible for the National Register, but has no local historic designation.*



## BIG IDEA FOUR

### Develop Effective City Tools and Policies to Promote Preservation

We will use existing, financial and procedural incentives, and develop and implement new ones, to promote the preservation of Oklahoma City's historic resources.

*Buildings like the **Yale Theater** in Capitol Hill have benefited from programs like the City's Commercial District Revitalization Program, as well as being listed in the National Register of Historic Places with access to state and federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.*



ENABLE

DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF  
OKLAHOMA CITY AND FOR THE PERPETUATION  
OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

MUNICIPAL BUILDING

# OFFICIAL POSITION ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The City of Oklahoma City values the identification, recognition, retention and revitalization of historic resources as a significant benefit to our economy, our environment, and to our sense of place and identity for residents and visitors. The City of Oklahoma City will promote and encourage historic preservation through such means as:

- Strengthening public support for historic preservation through outreach to and education of the general public and community leaders;
- Leading by example as a good steward of City-owned and City-controlled historic resources;
- Protecting historic resources citywide through the use of existing and new processes for identification, recognition, consideration, and regulation; and
- Encouraging historic preservation through the enhanced use of existing and development of new financial or procedural incentives for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.



### The Marion Hotel - Before

Constructed in 1904 and designed by architect Edward Coady, the Marion is one of Oklahoma City's earliest apartment buildings. After decades of use, it fell into decline and closed its doors in 1985. The building remained vacant for 30 years, even as the surrounding Automobile Alley was revitalized.

### Why Plan Now?

planokc recognizes this moment in history as a turning point for Oklahoma City. Undeniable change has occurred during the past 25 years, with more eagerly anticipated in the next 25. Without question, anticipated change includes historic preservation. Once-abandoned neighborhoods are seeing new generations move in, with property values on the rise. From the downtown core to neighborhood commercial corridors, long-abandoned buildings and landmarks have been rediscovered and reactivated, often with historic tax credits.

As Oklahoma City's revitalization continues, the need for a comprehensive approach to historic preservation is clear. Thriving historic resources deserve recognition and may warrant additional protection, as they attract new interest. Other historic areas are at a reinvestment tipping point and could benefit from incentives to ensure their potential is not lost. Still others wait to be discovered and appreciated, in need of identification and increased community awareness of their inherent value.

preserveokc seeks to integrate a multi-faceted approach to historic preservation into the larger context of Oklahoma City's ongoing revitalization. As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oklahoma City's Historic Preservation Commission, preserveokc seeks to build on Oklahoma City's legacy of preservation successes, to learn from recent challenges and losses, and to address emerging needs.

## Why Preserve?

Oklahoma City's historic places tell the story of how our city was built; they are the genetic code of Oklahoma City's identity: from the tie rods on the Rock Island Plow building, to the parlors of grand homes in Heritage Hills, to the alignment of city streets with the curvature of a trolley line, the physical fabric of **place** informs how we came to be who we are today.

**Place** creates our identity: a sense of pride for residents, a memorable destination for visitors, and a desirable quality of life for those looking to live or work here. **Places** define our city and set us apart from our peers.

**Place** guides efficient, sustainable development. Appreciating **place** allows us to build upon the contributions of past generations while anchoring new growth in the existing built environment.

Oklahoma City's historic resources, individually and collectively, are our most tangible expressions of place. Without them, we lose the invaluable qualities that **place** encompasses.

Historic Preservation is the most powerful tool we have to harness **place**, to understand and appreciate the forces that have created our unique city, and to shape what our city can become in the future.



### The Marion Hotel - After

In 2015, with the help of historic tax credits and other financial incentives, the building was rehabilitated and reopened as an apartment building. The Marion is now listed in the National Register and is designated as an Oklahoma City Historic Landmark.

Workers remove a mansard roof from a commercial building in the Paseo Historic District, revealing Art Deco ornament and historic signs below.



chapter one

# INTRODUCTION: WHY PRESERVE?

*“Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.”*

- Jane Jacobs,  
*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

## What is **preserveokc**?

**preserveokc** is Oklahoma City’s first citywide plan for historic preservation and was a key recommendation in **planokc**. **preserveokc** identifies strategies, policies, and priorities for the rehabilitation of the historic resources that collectively define the culture and heritage of Oklahoma City.

**preserveokc** highlights the role that historic preservation has already played in successful revitalization of neighborhoods, commercial districts, and landmark buildings. It demonstrates the value of integrating historic preservation into future city planning and development efforts.

Finally, the plan proposes a strategy for continued revitalization success by blending preservation, sustainability and economic development as a powerful tool that reinforces Oklahoma City’s unique community character and sense of place.

## Why create **preserveokc**?

Over the past 25 years, Oklahoma City has experienced an undeniable renaissance, much of which has been fueled by the revitalization of the city’s historic structures, neighborhoods, and commercial districts. Visionaries at the heart of the city’s revitalization efforts have evolved into a community of city officials, residents, property owners, developers, and business leaders, all of whom understand firsthand the irreplaceable cultural and economic value of our community’s historic resources.

Oklahoma City’s renaissance has not been a quick fix with instant results; nor has it been steered by the whims of market trends and economic fluctuations. It has required significant investment of public resources and political capital with a long-term commitment to good planning and the methodical achievement of community goals. Similarly, historic preservation is about taking the long view to realize the potential value of historic places for future generations. **preserveokc** is about establishing a vision for this community’s historic resources and using preservation as a proactive tool to guide long-term revitalization.

## Issues and Opportunities

Historic preservation is well established in Oklahoma City as a priority for government and a beneficial and rewarding endeavor for the private sector. The city's most consistent development trends and nearly all of planokc's Big Ideas align closely with the goals of historic preservation. This alignment is demonstrated by ongoing market interest in established, existing neighborhoods and commercial districts; in demands for districts with walkability, high quality of life amenities and a strong sense of identity and place, and in increasing demand for development that is both economically and environmentally sustainable. Yet many challenges remain for historic preservation to be recognized as the community's first response. The following key issues encapsulate the city's challenges and opportunities identified in the development of preserveokc.



## Community Engagement with Preservation

Oklahoma City has a diverse population, and includes many different cultures, histories, experiences, and perspectives within the larger city. Oklahoma City residents, including community leaders, vary in their understanding of and engagement with historic preservation. We have the opportunity to broaden the public's appreciation of history and to encourage public discourse about which historic resources matter most to our community.

*Oklahoma City has a large, multi-generational Vietnamese community who funded and organized the installation of a **Vietnam War memorial** in **Military Park**, dedicated in 2017. This community is under-represented in historic preservation sites and initiatives in Oklahoma City.*





## City-Owned or Controlled Historic Resources

Oklahoma City has frequently rehabilitated and maintained historic resources for the City's use, or as part of larger projects like MAPS. These efforts invest in existing infrastructure, spur revitalization in surrounding areas, and enhance the quality and character of important places in Oklahoma City. As the owner and steward of numerous historic properties, the City of Oklahoma City has an important opportunity to lead by example in historic preservation.

*The **Oklahoma City Municipal Building**, rehabilitated between 1995 and 1998, restored many of the historic interior spaces. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.*



## Unprotected Historic Resources

Oklahoma City has a long-established Historic Preservation Commission, flourishing historic districts, and numerous other design review processes and zoning tools that provide some protection for historic resources. Beyond these tools, many historic resources are unidentified or unprotected. As Oklahoma City grows, so too must the array of tools available for preserving Oklahoma City's unique character.

***Epworth United Methodist Church** was the pre-statehood home to what would become Oklahoma City University. This building is in the National Register of Historic Places, but there are no local protections in place to require review for changes to, or demolition of, the building.*



## Investment in Revitalization

Oklahoma City has skillfully stimulated investment and revitalization through the use of incentives in many key areas such as downtown. Often, the resulting projects include rehabilitation of historic structures. More work can be done to ensure that incentives encourage and prioritize historic preservation over demolition. In addition, we must develop incentives specifically targeting the rehabilitation of historic resources.

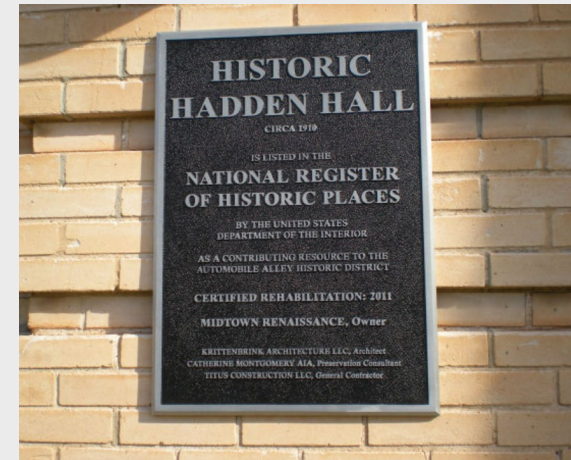
*The **Sunshine Cleaners building**, now Stonecloud Brewing, used numerous incentives to convert a 1929 industrial laundry facility into a brewery and taproom, contributing to additional reinvestment in west downtown. The property was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.*

## What is Historic Preservation?

**Historic Preservation:** *The adaptive reuse, conservation, protection, reconstruction, rehabilitation or stabilization of sites, buildings, districts, structures or monuments significant to the heritage of the people of Oklahoma City.*

-Oklahoma City Municipal Code

**Historic preservation** is a broad tool, extending far beyond the regulated historic districts, meticulous rehabilitations of landmark buildings, or straight-laced house museums often associated with the concept. At the core of the of historic preservation is an emphasis on the heritage of the people of Oklahoma City.



## Knowing our History

Historic Preservation includes **research and documentation**, the foundation of knowledge about historic places. Efforts such as historic building inventories, archeological surveys, National Register nominations, and Historic Landmark designation reports provide a record of the places that define Oklahoma City's heritage.

*A plaque indicates the National Register status of **Hadden Hall** in Midtown Oklahoma City.*



## Maintaining Authenticity

Historic Preservation includes the **physical work** of **maintaining**, or **rehabilitating**, a historic place. From a simple repair to a transformative adaptive reuse, the physical fabric of a place maintains its authenticity, making it a true historic site rather than an inaccurate reproduction.

*Participants in a workshop learn to make repairs to wood windows, retaining the historic character and improving the efficiency and sustainability of the historic home.*



## Engaging with Place

Historic Preservation is a **participatory activity** for the City and the public. Whether conducting a tour of City Hall for school children, attending a public meeting about a historic district, or demonstrating on a street corner in front of an important landmark, historic preservation is about engaging with the past through the built environment.

*A group gathers on the steps to tour the recently rehabilitated **Oklahoma State Capitol Building**.*



## Revitalizing Community

Historic Preservation includes the **revitalization** of entire **neighborhoods** and **districts**, retaining their character and identity, along with their economic viability. Beyond the individual buildings, everything from the massing and rhythm of the built environment to the flow of the natural landscape make up the distinctive character of a neighborhood or district.

***The Pump** is a thriving business in a former filling station within the Paseo Historic District. This adaptive reuse retained the historic character of the property while establishing a new function, and is part of a larger revitalization effort in the surrounding area.*

## What are Historic Resources?

**Historic Resource:** Sites, districts, structures, buildings, or monuments that represent important facets of history in the locality, State, or nation; places where significant or historic events occurred; places associated with a significant personality or group important to the past.

- Oklahoma City Municipal Code

“**Historic resource,**” in the context of this plan, is a broad term describing properties that have historic, architectural, or archeological significance, and that may or may not be formally designated in some way. In addition to the familiar buildings and districts, historic resources include a diverse list of **property types**, including statues and monuments, bridges and dams, archaeological sites, and even parks and landscapes. These resources define the full scope of the physical environment in which history has taken place.



## Monuments

Monuments or objects may include artistic or symbolic installations, such as a fountain or sculpture. **The Pioneers of 1889**, sculpted by Leonard McMurry and donated to the City of Oklahoma City by BD and Pauline Eddie in 1959, represents not only the subject matter of the piece itself, but the history associated with its creation, installation, and those involved in designing and commissioning the piece.



## Landscaped Sites

Designed landscapes, such as parks or cemeteries, may be significant for their design, for the history surrounding their development, or significant events that occurred there. **Will Rogers Gardens and Arboretum** is listed in The National Register of Historic Places and is significant for its design.



## Structures

Structures, distinct from buildings, may include bridges, dams, or even grain silos. They may represent great architectural design or feats of engineering, or be associated with important historic events. The **Overholser Dam** is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is significant for its engineering and transportation history.



## Other Property Types

Some historic sites have little or no physical evidence of human activity or alteration, at least that is visible to the naked eye. They may contain significant archeological resources, carry cultural or spiritual significance to a group, or be the identifiable site of a historic event, such as a battlefield. The **Ringing the Wild Horse** site in northeast Oklahoma City is listed in the National Register for its association with Washington Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies*, published in 1835.

## Preservation Tools

While historic preservation encompasses a broad range of activities, incentives, and regulations, and varies widely across the country, there are some specific programs already at work in Oklahoma City. The following is a summary of the most prevalent programs already in use in Oklahoma City.



## National Register of Historic Places

Created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, this is the federal government's list of historic resources.

Listing on the National Register provides honorary recognition and limited protection from federal undertakings. Listing may qualify a property for financial incentives, such as state and federal tax incentives.

The City of Oklahoma City regularly assists property owners with listing their properties, and is active in listing city-owned historic resources. Thousands of historic resources in Oklahoma City are listed, either individually or as part of National Register districts.

*The **Milk Bottle Building**, **Gold Dome**, and **Citizens Bank Tower** are all National Register-listed properties.*



## Historic Preservation/ Landmark Zoning

Since 1969, Oklahoma City has used historic preservation zoning to protect important historic districts and individual buildings. Like other forms of zoning, Historic Preservation/Landmark Districts are established through a public process and require adoption by the City Council.

Designation as a Historic Preservation or Landmark District requires review of changes to the exterior of properties or to sites, including review of demolition, by the City of Oklahoma City's Historic Preservation Commission.

*The **Union Soldiers' Cemetery**, where veterans of the Civil War were buried, is a locally-designated Historic Landmark.*



## Special Design District Zoning

Like Historic Preservation/Landmark zoning, Special Design District zoning creates identified districts in key areas of Oklahoma City and requires review of changes to the exterior of properties and sites, including demolition.

Though not specifically focused on historic preservation, these districts contain many historic resources and emphasize the importance of preserving and revitalizing the historic and architectural character of areas like Downtown, Bricktown, and Capitol Hill.

***Stockyards City** is a Special Design Zoning District. The district is also a National Register District and part of the Oklahoma Main Streets program.*



## Preservation Easements

The City of Oklahoma City has the ability to accept the donation of historic preservation easements. Different from zoning, an easement is an agreement executed by a property owner and filed as part of the property records.

Preservation easements provide a customizable alternative to historic preservation/landmark zoning and may qualify as a tax-deductible donation.

*Oklahoma City currently holds one preservation easement on the **Skirvin Hilton Hotel**.*

## Benefits of Historic Preservation

For the purist, perhaps the greatest benefit of historic preservation is its ability to inform us about the past. Beyond the philosophical importance of knowing our history, communities benefit from historic preservation activities in far-reaching and tangible ways, the evidence of which is already clear in Oklahoma City.

From thriving neighborhoods and distinctive commercial districts, to economic revitalization and environmentally-sustainable development, historic preservation is a vital ingredient in what makes Oklahoma City a great place to live, work, play and grow.

### Thriving Neighborhoods

In 2017, the Oklahoma City Council established seven Council Priorities to guide the city's governance and future development. One of these priorities is to "promote safe, secure, and thriving neighborhoods." The Council Priority asserts that: "Neighborhoods are the building blocks of a great city and residents expect safe neighborhoods that provide a high quality of life. We will continue to promote strong and safe neighborhoods by providing public safety services, effective code enforcement, and support for neighborhood revitalization efforts."

Oklahoma City recognizes that desirable places to live are key to a community's vitality and economic strength. This is supported by Oklahoma City's 2013 *Housing Market Preference and Demand Survey*, which found that drivers for housing demand increasingly include factors like mixed-use environments, walkability to services and entertainment, and "sense of place."

This study highlights the important role of preserving historic neighborhoods in Oklahoma City's continued success. Nearly 80% of households surveyed value the overall quality of the neighborhood, including sense of place, sidewalks, and access and proximity to amenities, over the characteristics of a particular house such as size.

Oklahoma City's 2014 *Community Appearance Survey* further documented strong support for attributes such as pedestrian-friendly streets with sidewalks, mature landscaping, inconspicuous garages, and front porches, as well as a diverse mix of housing types such as duplexes and fourplexes. Many of these characteristics are found in Oklahoma City's pre-World War II neighborhoods.

The Housing Study identifies historic areas from Classen Ten-Penn to Capitol Hill as

ripe for redevelopment and revitalization. **preserveokc** Survey respondents identified 25 of their own neighborhoods as "historic" but not zoned HP/HL. Nearly 80% of those indicated that their neighborhoods were constructed prior to the 1930s. Preservation is key to ensuring that the desirable characteristics of these areas are maintained and enhanced in balance with their revitalization.

Preserving diverse housing stock in historic areas also improves socioeconomic diversity in these neighborhoods. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's *Atlas of ReUrbanism* (2016) documents the ability of neighborhoods with mixed-age housing stock and a range of unit types to offer housing for a wider range of household incomes than in more homogenous neighborhoods. Numerous studies, including *Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Oklahoma* (2008, by the Center for Urban Policy Research for Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.) document the stabilizing effect of historic preservation on property values.

Preserving and revitalizing our many historic neighborhoods creates a livable, walkable, attractive environment that meets a range of housing needs while offering a high quality of life and sense of place.



*It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future.*

*- William J. Murtagh,  
first Keeper of the National Register*

**Right:** In 2010, the American Planning Association named Oklahoma City's **Paseo Arts District** as one of its Ten Great Places in America in the Neighborhoods category. This prestigious national award highlighted The Paseo's 1920s Spanish Revival architecture featuring tile roofs, stucco, parapets, arched windows and doors, and embellishments such as scroll and crest relief and ornamental iron. Paseo's urban context, mix of uses, scales of development, and enduring sense of place work together to make this district unique in Oklahoma City.

In addition to its great success as a preservation story, the Ten Great Places award is also well-deserved recognition for the many layers of planning, private investment, and public funding that have cumulatively supported Paseo's return from the brink of dilapidation in the 1970s, to its rebirth as one of Oklahoma City's most beloved and economically successful places.





## Vibrant Economy

One of the most important responsibilities of a city is to create and maintain a healthy and diverse economy. Another of the seven Council Priorities, “Maintain Strong Financial Management,” recognizes this:

*Growing the revenue base through greater diversification of revenue sources and promoting greater opportunity for our citizens to earn higher incomes will help the City meet the needs of our citizens as the City grows.*

In other words, it benefits the City and its residents to encourage diverse economic activity that creates high-paying jobs, funneling that money back into the local economy. Few economic activities generate more investment than the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Every public dollar spent on the historic tax credit spurs **ten times** the investment, including things like the purchase of materials and workers’ wages, according to the study *Oklahoma Historic Tax Credit: Impact on the Oklahoma Economy* (2016), prepared by PlaceEconomics for the Tulsa Foundation for Architecture.

Across the state, historic rehabilitation projects have created an average of 450 jobs per year, generating more jobs, and higher-paying jobs, than new construction. Oklahoma City has benefited as the location of nearly half of these projects since 2006, generating over \$240 million in investment.

**Left:** Historic neon and blade signs in **Oklahoma City’s Stockyards City** are important features of the National Register-listed historic district’s distinctive character.



Because the study does not account for historic rehabilitations projects that did *not* use historic tax credits, it cannot account for the positive domino effect of economic activity generated as properties neighboring tax credit projects are motivated to undertake their own rehabilitation projects.

The economic benefits of historic preservation do not stop when the rehabilitations are complete. The City of Oklahoma City's study *Addressing Vacant and Abandoned Buildings in Oklahoma City* (2013) documents the economic impact of a vacant building on neighboring owners' property values, and on revenues generated for the City. Properties that use historic tax credits **are required to** be put back into income-producing use, which equates to the creation of long-term jobs, increased property values, and other revenue-generating activities.

Research by the National Trust for Historic Preservation further supports the economic significance of reusing historic buildings. A study of 50 cities across the country found that commercial areas with a building stock diverse in size and age had 45% more small-business jobs and 33% more jobs in start-up businesses than did areas with more homogenous building stock. Areas with older, smaller, mixed age buildings also have a higher percentage of women- and minority-owned businesses.

Oklahoma City contains numerous examples of the economic successes spurred by the revitalization of historic structures. Districts including Automobile Alley, Paseo, Film Row, Bricktown, the Plaza District, Stockyards, Uptown 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Capitol Hill, and Western Avenue collectively illustrate the economic activity generated by revitalizing historic

buildings with new, diverse, and often locally-generated uses. These thriving districts offer models that can be built on throughout the city.

*Every \$1 awarded in historic tax credits spurs \$11.70 in economic activity.*

- Oklahoma Historic Tax Credit Report, Tulsa Foundation for Architecture

**Above:** Completed in 1910, the **Colcord Building** at 15 N. Robinson was one of Oklahoma City's first skyscrapers. Listed in the National Register in 1976, the office building was converted to a hotel and restaurant in 2006.

## Quality of Place

planokc's Issue Focus 8: "Place Quality" recognizes the importance of our civic assets, commercial nodes and corridors, and our recreational facilities, noting that "good places are good business." Distinctive places are key to the city's economic future and quality of life. Special districts and attractions add texture and distinctiveness to the city and create a unique and interesting place to live and visit.

Across the country, cities are striving to "arrive," to attract residents and visitors, and to become destinations. The most successful attractions are great places that are distinctive and memorable, inviting visitors to linger and experience the place rather than simply pass through.

planokc's Community Appearance Survey highlights residents' preferences for streetscapes, storefronts, and buildings that address pedestrians rather than vehicular traffic. planokc's Housing Market Study further documented Oklahoma City residents' interest in proximity and access to these amenities when choosing where to live.

For the past 70 years, American development trends have overwhelmingly built dispersed, low-density development only accessible by car. These development patterns do not support the distinctive, human-scale features, or critical mass necessary to become great places.

Oklahoma City's historic commercial districts often embody the physical characteristics of memorable places: human-scale, walkability, with distinctive design, flanked by historic neighborhoods. The compact size and scale of

these areas is what make them diverse and dynamic, well-suited to revitalization.

It is no surprise that each of planokc's six identified "cultural districts," and four potential future cultural districts, are within historic areas. These places are identified as "experience centers" that strengthen their surrounding neighborhoods, branded with distinctive identities through their atmosphere and their physical environment.

A 2011 study by American Express entitled *Open Independent Retail Index: A Study of Market Trends in Major American Cities* found that historic areas blessed with the right mix of entrepreneurs, infrastructure, and customers often draw business from a much wider area, sometimes becoming regional or even national destinations.

The study found on average that neighborhoods surrounding historic commercial districts gained 50% more in home values over their citywide markets over the 14 years preceding the study. The study adds that these business districts

*"aren't just places to shop or eat. They are community amenities that the market values highly. Just living near one provides increases in property value well beyond the broader market. They are community employment centers, too, bringing jobs into established neighborhoods where people live and transit works."*

Distinctive destinations also attract visitors (and their money) from outside of Oklahoma City. Research shows that cultural tourists – those looking for accommodations, venues, and

experiences that reflect a destination's culture – spend as much as 60% more than "leisure" travelers. Cultural tourists, and particularly millennials, value engagement with a destination's cultural assets and authenticity in the travel experience ("Cultural Tourism: Attracting Visitors and Their Spending" by Cheryl Hargrove, prepared for Americans for the Arts).

Beyond these identified districts, Oklahoma City is rich with commercial nodes, corridors, and other public spaces offering rich opportunities for the creation of many more great places. These places are not without challenges, from their physical condition to regulations that make adaptive reuse difficult. Parks have been a priority since Oklahoma City's earliest planning initiatives, but are chronically underfunded, with little emphasis on maintenance of the distinctive historic features embedded within them.

Revitalized historic resources are the building blocks of great places. Intertwined with the livability of neighborhoods and the creation of jobs and economic activity, they create destinations for residents and attractions for tourists. Historic preservation is one of Oklahoma City's most effective tools in the creation of a city of great places.

*If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.*

- Fred Kent,  
Project for Public Spaces

**Right:** The addition of pedestrian amenities including street furniture, lighting, and landscaping helped to transform a declining neighborhood commercial corridor into one of the city's liveliest historic commercial districts, the **Plaza District**.





## LEED Certification for Existing or Historic Buildings

LEED Certification is the “seal of approval” of the United States Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Many associate the honor with new construction; however, LEED certification also includes a category specifically for “existing buildings”. LEED status is awarded to many existing and historic properties across the country that make improvements to their energy efficiency while retaining historic character.

There are no LEED-certified historic buildings in Oklahoma City, but there are many successful examples across the country. The **Balfour-Guthrie Building** in Portland, Oregon was constructed in 1919 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building attained LEED Silver Certification in 2002.

## Sustainable Growth

Historic preservation is premised on the reuse of existing structures over demolition and new construction, and promotes the revitalization of existing neighborhoods and commercial districts in lieu of new development and additional sprawl. This emphasis on the retention, repair, and recycling of our established built environment aligns perfectly with efforts to protect our environment and create a more sustainable city.

*Our Common Future*, a 1987 United Nations report, defined “sustainable development” as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This broad concept is now woven into regional and city planning across the country. **planokc** routinely references the critical need for planning evaluations that balance the environmental, fiscal, and social effects of development and land use decisions and consider their impact on the health of residents, businesses, and natural resources.

For decades, Oklahoma City’s low density development patterns, and its related dependence upon cars, has contributed to environmental degradation and the loss of natural resources, habitats and valuable agricultural land. Two Plan Elements, **sustainokc** and **greenokc**, emphasize the need for incentives and regulations that protect “Environmentally Sensitive Areas,” encouraging development that is more efficient to service and sensitive to its environmental impact.

Historic Preservation is an important but often overlooked tool for promoting sustainability at a citywide scale. As recognized by a 2013 U.S. Green Building Council report titled “LEED for Neighborhood Development and Historic Preservation,” reuse of existing, historic neighborhoods uses existing transportation and utility infrastructure. In addition, historic neighborhoods are often more dense, compact, and walkable, perpetuating a more sustainable lifestyle for residents.

In addition to using established neighborhoods and their existing infrastructure, preservation also protects natural and rural character that is historically significant in its own right. “Historic resources” include rural farmsteads and the context of their agricultural surroundings. Even natural areas exhibiting minimal human disturbance, such as prairie lands traditionally used for grazing, or the historic Cross Timbers that defined Oklahoma Territory for early explorers, are part of our city’s history. Preserving the rural and undeveloped portions of Oklahoma City for their historic and cultural significance reinforces the City’s goals to protect our natural resources.

planokc also addresses the importance of increasing “green building practices,” encouraging more sustainable design. Historic preservation is inherently more sustainable than even the “greenest” new construction project. According to the “LEED for Neighborhood Development and Historic Preservation” report, historic buildings contain “embodied energy,” meaning

the energy and resources used in the manufacturing, transport, and assembly of the original construction. Reuse of these buildings takes advantage of that embodied energy. Demolition wastes it.

Beyond the loss of embodied energy, demolition of existing structures creates additional waste by depositing tons of debris in landfills. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the demolition of a single, 1,600 square foot house puts 127 tons of debris in a landfill. A 2011 study by the National Trust for Historic Preservation found that it can take between 10 and 80 years for a new, “energy efficient” building to overcome the climate change impacts of its construction, including demolition, the manufacture and transportation of materials, and the construction process.

It is often assumed that the savings created by an energy-efficient building compared to an old building outweighs these environmental costs. However, historic buildings offer efficiencies inherent in their design that tip the balance in favor of adaptive reuse. The LEED report notes that buildings constructed prior to the advent of modern HVAC systems took advantage of heat, shade, and natural ventilation through their design, modeling the “passive design principles” now coming back into popularity. The 2011 National Trust report compared the reuse of historic buildings with new construction of comparable size and function, and found that “building reuse almost always offers environmental savings over demolition and

new construction.” Further, it is possible to make additional energy-efficiency upgrades to existing buildings, and even qualify for LEED certification in a historic rehabilitation, while retaining the building’s historic character.

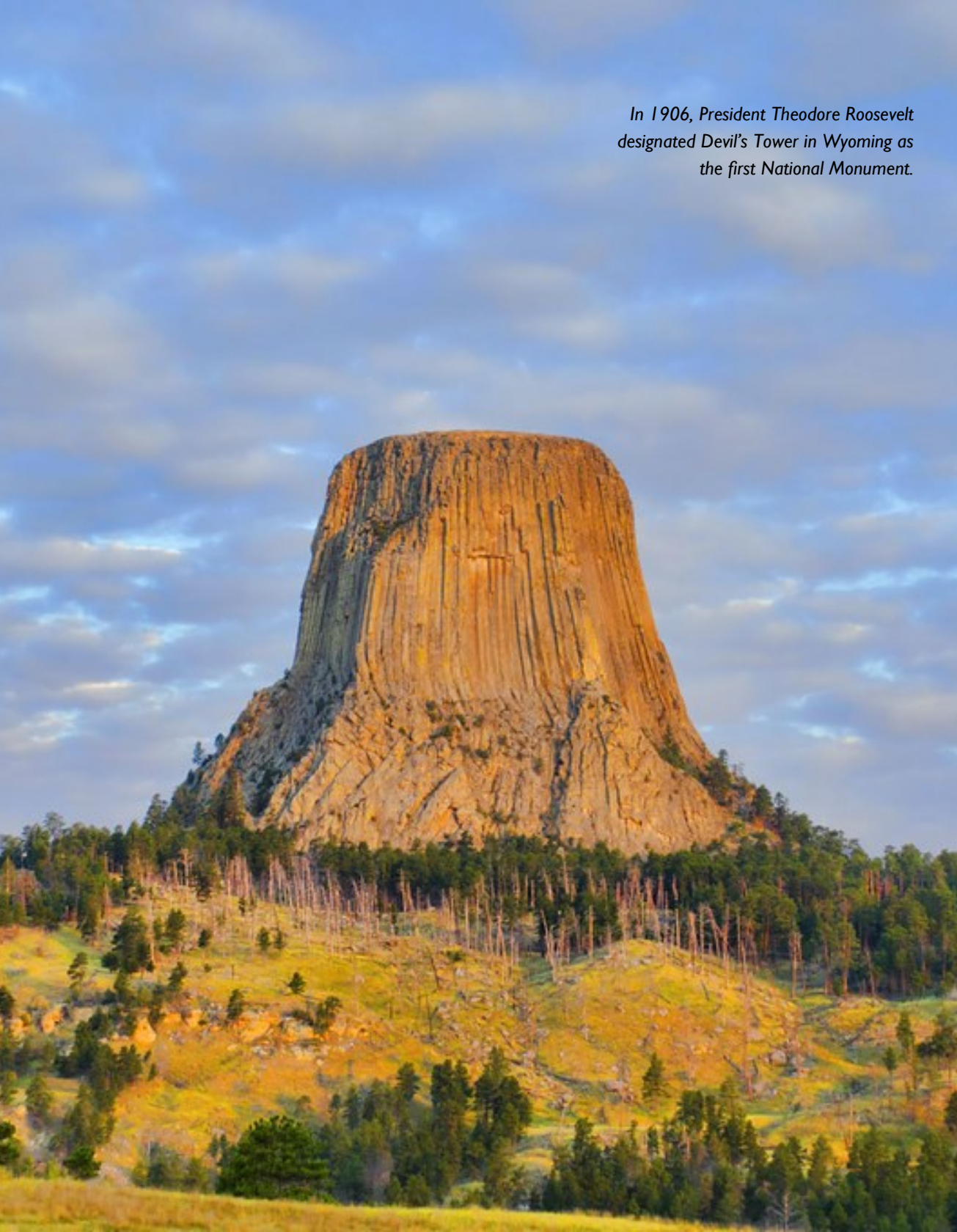
The retention, repair, and recycling of our established built environment aligns perfectly with efforts to create a more sustainable city.

*The greenest building is the one that’s already built.*

- Carl Elefante, FAIA

2018 President of the American Institute of Architects

*In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt designated Devil's Tower in Wyoming as the first National Monument.*



## Regulatory Basis for Historic Preservation

Historic preservation has been an established field for well over a century, with the acquisition and restoration of George Washington's Mount Vernon by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1858 often identified as one of the first true historic preservation efforts in the U.S.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, what had largely been a private activity in the United States began to gain some regulatory teeth. Teddy Roosevelt championed the **Antiquities Act** of 1906, establishing the first federal protection for "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest," and creating the first National Monuments. This was followed by the **1935 Historic Sites Act**, establishing "a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States."

In these same decades, the use of zoning by municipalities grew increasingly sophisticated, addressing not only land use but also physical form, character, and quality of life. As early as the 1930s, the cities of **Charleston** and **New Orleans** created the first locally regulated historic districts in the country.

The rapid transformation of development patterns, transportation systems, building methods and materials, and lifestyle in general following World War II stirred an increased interest in historic preservation. At the federal



level, massive undertakings like the construction of the interstate highway system cleared paths across the continent, destroying historic sites that stood in the way. At the local level, cities across the country saw grand historic structures and established neighborhoods cleared as “blight,” all in the name of modernization and progress.

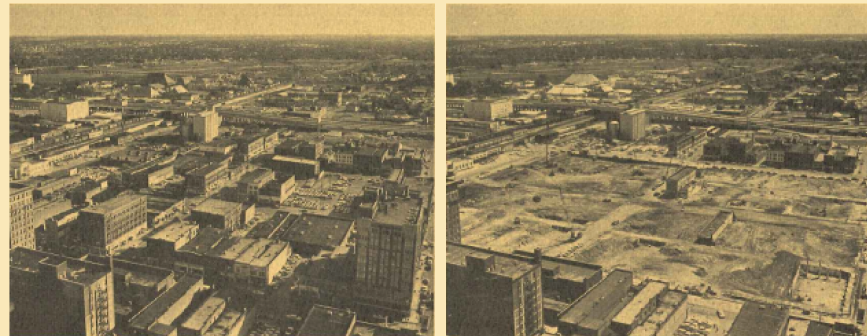
In 1965, the United States Conference of Mayors’ **Special Committee on Historic Preservation** published a book titled *With Heritage So Rich*, calling for a “new preservation”:

*“If the preservation movement is to be successful...it must go beyond saving occasional historic houses and opening museums. It must be more than a cult of antiquarians. It must do more than revere a few precious national shrines. It must attempt to give a sense of orientation to our society, using structures and objects of the past to establish values of time and place.”*

Following on the heels of that publication, the **National Historic Preservation Act** of 1966 established a system for identifying and recording historic and archeological resources, and for evaluating and minimizing the effects of federal activities on those resources.

Locally, many cities began to establish their own ordinances for historic preservation, designating districts and buildings as historic. Cases like **Penn Central Transportation Company v. New York City** made their way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1978, establishing a strong legal basis for local historic preservation ordinances.

## Tomorrow’s City...



## ...Is Being Born Today

“Tomorrow’s City...is Being Born Today” claims a 1970s publication of the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority, noting that “entire blocks of buildings, some dating back almost to the hectic Land Run of ‘89, have been leveled.” The publication features before-and-after images of downtown in the midst of clearance, paired with renderings of anticipated transformations.

In many cities, dramatic clearance of downtowns and neighborhoods sparked a concern for the loss of the historic character and a desire to see that important places be preserved.

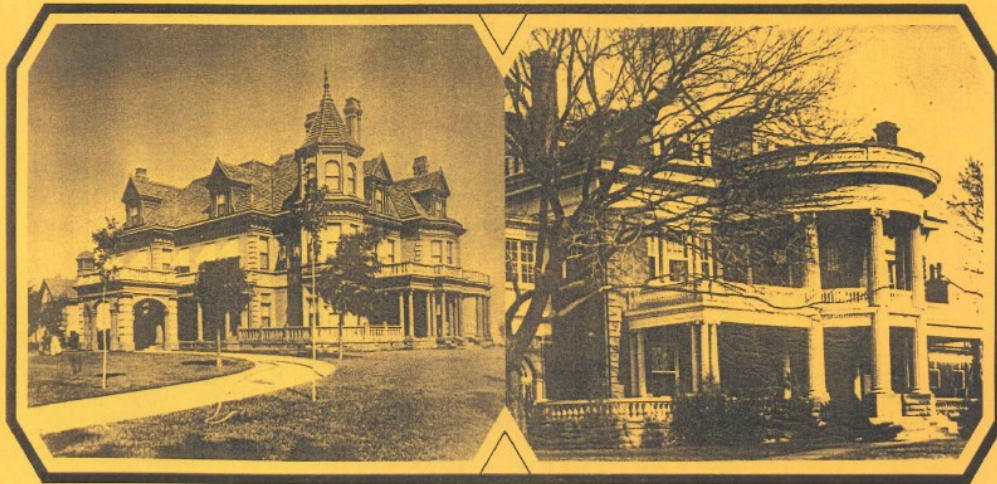
## Oklahoma City's Historic Preservation Program

Oklahoma City fits neatly within the national timeline of local historic preservation efforts. Though downtown Oklahoma City was in the midst of a massive urban renewal effort, initial interest in historic preservation came from historic neighborhoods. Residents were concerned about commercial encroachment, conversion of historic homes into boarding houses, and other indicators of decline.

In 1966, Mayor George Shirk directed the City Planning Department to prepare a study for the creation of a historic preservation commission. A 1967 report titled "Preserving the Heritage of Oklahoma City" led to the establishment of Oklahoma City's Historic Preservation Commission and the first local historic district in Oklahoma in 1969. Additional historic districts followed, including Putnam Heights in 1972 and Crown Heights and Edgemere Park in 1977.

Even as other zoning tools were developed, Historic Preservation and Historic Landmark District designation continued to be a vital tool for the rehabilitation of historic neighborhoods throughout Oklahoma City. Mesta Park, Jefferson Park, Paseo, and Heritage Hills East combined historic designation with other zoning tools such as Urban and Neighborhood Conservation District overlays in order to encourage revitalization.

The first Historic Preservation and Landmark districts in Oklahoma City focused primarily on residential neighborhoods. However, early efforts by the HP Commission to recognize individual structures as historical sites through the honorary



### PRESERVING THE HERITAGE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

CITY OF OKLAHOMA CITY, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

FEBRUARY, 1967

### Heritage Hills

In 1969, the neighborhood that would come to be known as Heritage Hills became the state of Oklahoma's first locally-protected historic preservation district. Once home to the founding fathers and political leaders of Oklahoma City, the neighborhood saw increasing commercial encroachment and conversion of large, stately homes to other uses throughout the middle of the 20th century. With the support of Mayor Shirk, the city created a new zoning district and established Heritage Hills as the first "historic and architectural district."

The neighborhood went beyond zoning protections to collectively invest in dilapidated buildings, public spaces like parks, and their neighborhood school. Neighborhood coordination and activism, paired with a national movement to better identify and protect architectural heritage, paved the way for what is now one of the city's most celebrated preservation success stories.

placement of plaques identified dozens of significant properties. Some of these went on to be rezoned as Historic Landmarks, including a former Wells Fargo Livery Stable, an African American Church important to the Civil Rights Movement, and Union Soldiers Cemetery for veterans of the Union Army.

### **Oklahoma City Today**

Historic preservation in Oklahoma City continues to expand beyond the established districts. Oklahoma City became a Certified Local Government in 1991, working with the State Historic Preservation Office to carry out historic surveys, prepare National Register nominations, provide educational activities, and develop this plan.

“Design Review Districts” in key commercial areas across Oklahoma City, though not specifically focused on historic preservation, identify the redevelopment and preservation of historic and architectural resources as a priority. Oklahoma City’s Commercial District Revitalization Program and Strong Neighborhoods Initiative do not have a regulatory component, but act as resources for the revitalization of numerous historic areas.

Though not always the focal point, historic preservation continues to be an important component of numerous other City activities, from the use of wide ranging federal funding sources to rehabilitation of historic homes, to the rehabilitation and reuse of City-owned historic buildings.

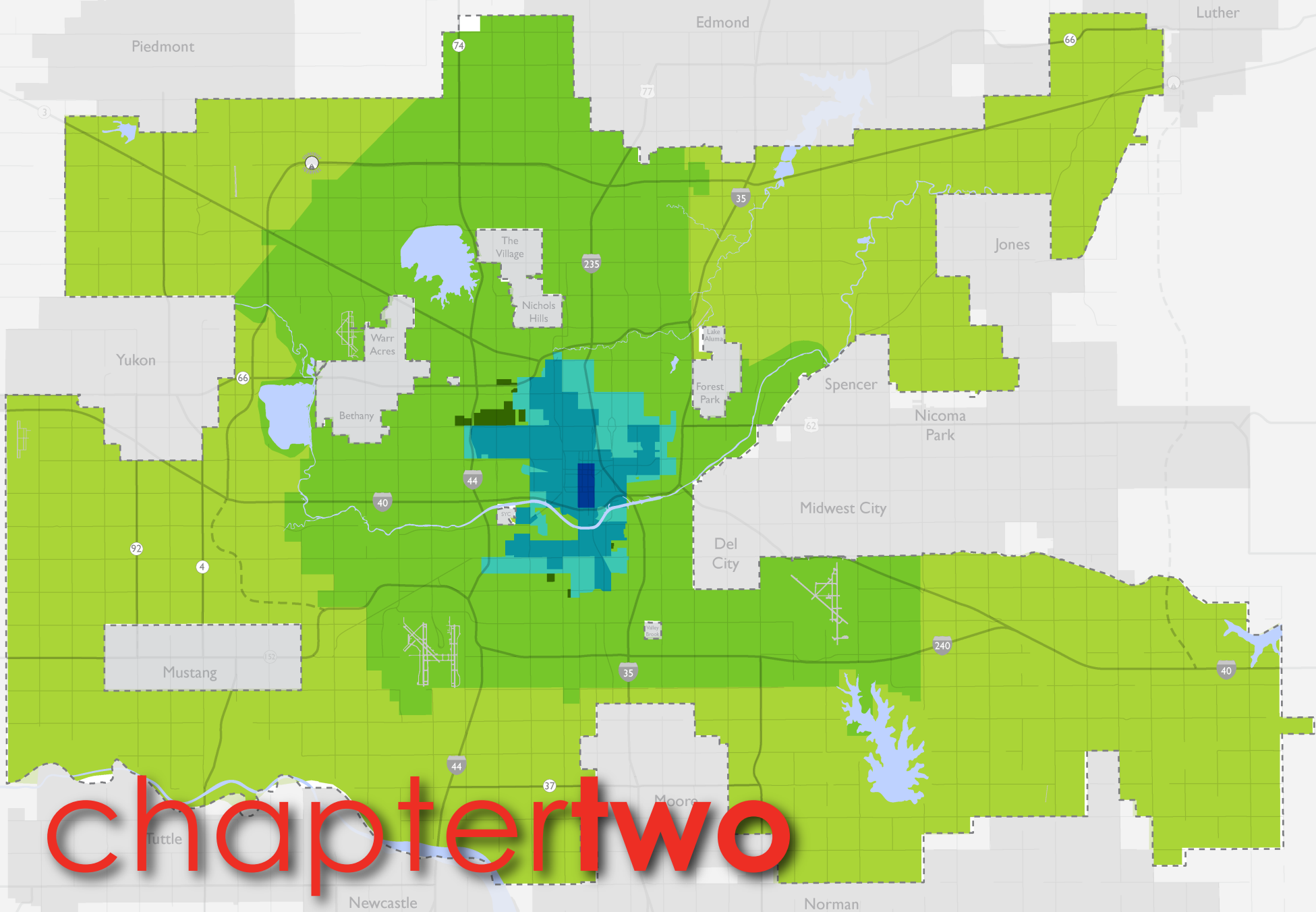


### **Oklahoma City’s Historic Landmarks Program**

Shortly after its formation, the Historic Preservation Commission began a process of identifying local landmarks through honorary recognition and placement of plaques on buildings identifying them as historic sites. It quickly became apparent that another tool was needed to truly preserve individual landmarks. In 1979, an ordinance creating the Historic Landmark overlay zoning was adopted.

From early efforts to save the 1910 Hales Building (demolished through Urban Renewal in 1979), to the consideration of the historic significance of the Walnut Avenue Bridge (saved from demolition in the 1990s), the Commission has used this tool to facilitate public discourse on the importance of historic resources to our community.

# CITY LIMIT GROWTH OF OKLAHOMA CITY



# chapter two

- 1891
- 1893 - 1910
- 1911 - 1930
- 1931 - 1945
- 1946 - 1960
- 1961 - 1965
- 2019



# Oklahoma City's Historic Resources

*“How can we live without our lives? How will we know it's us without our past?”*

- John Steinbeck,  
*The Grapes of Wrath*

## Historic Overview

Simply stated, historic preservation cannot happen without an understanding of the history of a place. History shapes the development of a place, defining the built—and sometimes unbuilt—environment that exists today. History informs our appreciation of the world around us, whether grand or modest. The significance of that history to the people of a community shape historic preservation's priorities and goals.

The history of Oklahoma City's development has been thoroughly documented; historic surveys, scholarly articles, biographies and histories abound; many are listed in the appendix and as references.

Rather than retell the comprehensive history of Oklahoma City, this chapter first provides a brief overview of the history of the city as related to its physical development and its current built form.

Second, this chapter presents an overview of Oklahoma City's previously-identified historic resources, some of which have been

thoroughly rehabilitated and others that have merely been identified as worthy of preservation.

Finally, this chapter identifies priorities and potential for historic preservation in Oklahoma City today: geographic areas, architectural styles, periods of time, and threads of the city's history waiting with untapped potential to better tell the story of Oklahoma City's past, and to contribute to its future revitalization.

## Pre-settlement to 1894

Prior to the 1830 start of the forced removal of American Indian Tribes, Oklahoma was inhabited by indigenous Plains Tribes, including the Wichita, Quapaw and Osage. As Tribes from the southeastern United States were forcefully relocated to “Indian Territory,” a central area of approximately 3,000 square miles remained “unassigned.”<sup>1</sup>

Located in the center of Indian Territory with favorable geographic conditions, pressure for railroad access and ultimately settlement resulted in the opening of the Unassigned Lands. The Land Run of April 22, 1889 brought thousands to try to claim their 160 acres to homestead. A railroad fuel and water stop for the Santa Fe Railroad had been established three years prior, marking the spot of the future Oklahoma City township.<sup>2</sup>

With the opening of the Unassigned Lands, today’s Oklahoma City was created; the population reached an estimated 10,000 by nightfall on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1889.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from train depots spaced every ten miles along the Santa Fe line, no townsites were laid out prior to the Run. Chaos resulted, with conflicting surveys and contested claims sometimes taking years to resolve. Immediately, though, tents, wooden commercial buildings and homes were built, housing the necessities and amenities of a town established overnight. Settlers came from all over the country and even the world; people looking for a fresh start and

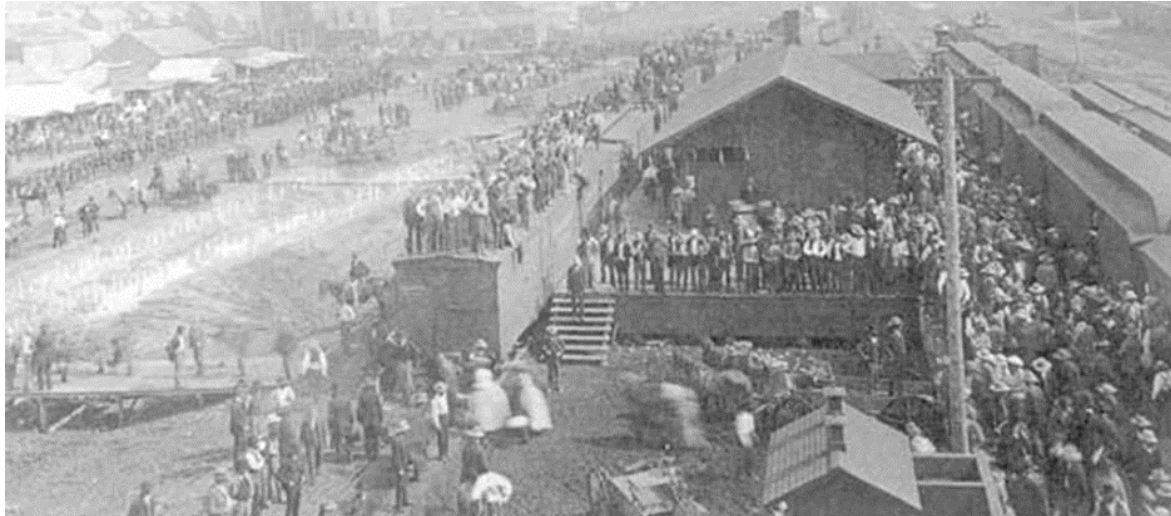


free land included farmers and ranchers, but also business people, entrepreneurs and politicians.<sup>4</sup>

Oklahoma City was incorporated on May 23, 1890, and city leaders went to work establishing an economic base for the city. In addition to the preexisting Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad running north-south on the eastern

edge of downtown, the Choctaw Coal and Railway (later Rock Island) Company’s tracks ran east-west between First and Second Street.<sup>5</sup> An 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map listed Oklahoma City businesses served by rail, such as mills, coal and lumber yards, a grain elevator. Other necessities included city facilities for gas, water, light and power.<sup>6</sup>





By 1894, downtown Oklahoma City offered services and shops including a bank, drugstore, tailor and millinery, furnishings and wall paper, jewelry, stationary and books, as well as amenities including eight churches, six hotels, an opera house, fair grounds, a masonic temple, and importantly, the county jail.<sup>7</sup>

Within walking distance of downtown,



wood-frame homes dotted the surrounding blocks, often with small stables in the back yards. West of Walker Avenue, in an area otherwise described on the Sanborn Map as “Farm Lands,” a brick “school house” is noted to be under construction.<sup>8</sup>

Within a few short years, the city expanded, annexing land as original homesteads were divided again and again, platted into subdivisions. Beyond the growing city, the rest of the Unassigned Lands continued to develop as well. Other cities were also “born” from the Land Run; some like Guthrie and Edmond would remain independent communities, becoming neighbors and competitors, while others like Britton were ultimately annexed by Oklahoma City.<sup>9</sup> Some homesteads remained undivided, developed, not incorporated into Oklahoma City for decades to come.



**Opposite page:** Oklahoma City “before the run” (above) and Henry Overholser’s early commercial buildings on W. Grand, circa 1889 (below).

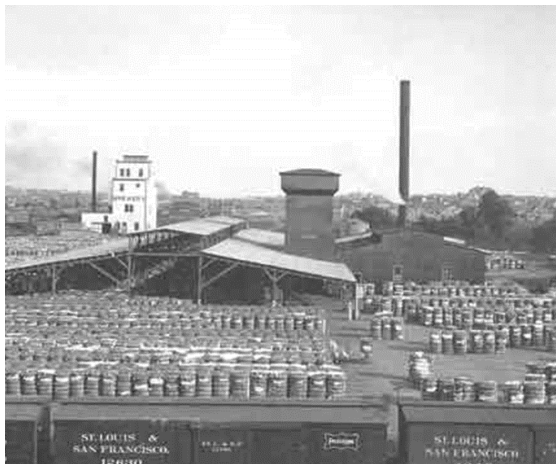
**This page:** Train arriving in Oklahoma City, July 4, 1889 (top left); Emerson School, circa 1910 (above); a house in Maywood addition (below); and street view circa 1890s (bottom left).



## 1895-1910

Oklahoma City's growth in its first five years was steady, but the next 15 years of growth was exponential. The city transformed from a frontier town to a metropolitan state capital. While the footprint of the city did not increase dramatically, the population boomed from about 7,000 in 1894 to 64,000 in 1910. Along with the explosion in population came the physical transformation of the city, with construction costs growing from \$1.2 million in 1900 to over \$6 million in 1910. This growth was driven in part by two sets of tracks: railroads and trolleys.<sup>10</sup>

Early civic leaders worked with railroad companies, wooing them to bypass Guthrie, then the capital of Oklahoma Territory, for Oklahoma City instead. By 1898, three railroad lines intersected downtown, with a fourth added by 1903. Oklahoma City became a major hub for agricultural goods,



manufacturing, wholesale, and distribution, with an estimated \$39 million worth of goods passing through the city by 1910.<sup>11</sup>

The rail lines transformed Oklahoma City in the first decade of the century. They shaped the layout of warehouse districts, created jobs and even helped Oklahoma City to become the capital of the three-year-old state of Oklahoma in 1910. They drove the economy, and the resulting built environment, as the city's first "skyscrapers" began to appear on the horizon, and the wood frame homes gave way to a more dense, urban form.<sup>12</sup>

The boon of having landed the railroads was not without downsides. Almost immediately, the danger of so many at-grade railroad crossings in the heart of a city spurred public outcry for change. In December 1911, the City passed a resolution asking the railroads to elevate their tracks.<sup>13</sup>

The other tracks sprawling across Oklahoma City were those of the trolley lines, first installed in 1903. Oklahoma City's trolley lines were developed privately, with companies granted franchises by the City. Not coincidentally, the developed routes provided access to yet-to-be developed subdivisions, guided by trolley line owners who doubled as real estate developers.<sup>14</sup>







The trolley lines brought with them diagonal routes that cut across the gridded street pattern, circular turnarounds and wide boulevards to accommodate the tracks, still present long after the last trolley passed. They brought once distant subdivisions, as well as attractions like the fairgrounds, Bell Isle Amusement Park, Delmar Gardens, and Wheeler Park, within reach of Oklahoma City's working and middle classes.<sup>15</sup>

While the trolley lines were largely the creation of the private market, the city was beginning to exert a stronger hand in its development. Ordinances were passed to annex newly-platted subdivisions in order to better control development. This wasn't without protest; a significant annexation in 1908 met objections from owners, who opposed being taxed, and from some city leaders who feared the cost of ever-expanding sewers and water mains.<sup>16</sup>

Guided by the City Beautiful movement, the 1910 Dunn Plan laid the first groundwork for the larger development of the city, designing a system of parks, boulevards, and parkways for the city's increasing automobile traffic.<sup>17</sup> Though slow to implement, this plan ultimately resulted in the creation of major parks at what were then the far corners of the city, and in the (partial) development of a loop connecting the parks called Grand Boulevard.

**Opposite page:** Looking west on Main Street from Broadway, 1910 (above); Oklahoma Cotton Compress at Santa Fe tracks and E. Noble, circa 1903 (left); and the Pioneer Building at Broadway and W. 3rd, 1907 (right).

**This page:** At-grade railroad crossing north of the Skirvin Hotel, date unknown (top left); streetcars at W 18th Street, 1903 (top right); Belle Isle post card, circa 1914 (middle right); Delmar Gardens Outdoor Café, approximately Reno and Western, 1909 (bottom right).





## 1910-1945

Much of the Oklahoma City that we recognize today was developed between 1911 and 1945. Though the city limits didn't increase dramatically, the population grew from 64,000 in 1910 to over 200,000 by the 1940 census. Citywide construction costs reached over \$100 million by the 1930s, filling in the business center, commercial districts, and neighborhoods that define the core of modern-day Oklahoma City.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most significant change for Oklahoma City in this era was its designation as the capital of the newly-formed state of Oklahoma, transforming the northeast side of



Oklahoma City with the construction of a capitol building and surrounding neighborhoods. Already the geographic center of the state, Oklahoma City was now officially the political center as well.

In 1928, the discovery of oil in Oklahoma City further transformed the economy and the landscape, with oil wells popping up across the city, eventually even on the lawn of the Oklahoma State Capitol Building. The Victorian homes surrounding downtown gave way to a growing skyline of skyscrapers housing the business generated by government and industry, from cattle and meatpacking to steel and automobiles.<sup>19</sup>

Driven by the trolley lines, the density of what would become known as "Midtown" crept north toward 13th Street. Hotels, boarding houses, "flats" and apartments housed a growing workforce, and a network of shops, theaters, churches, schools, and other civic institutions followed.<sup>20</sup>

Development expanded in all directions, as neighborhoods and commercial corridors served by trolley lines, including Classen Boulevard and the Paseo, developed farther and farther from downtown. The lines connected established but formerly distinct areas, such as Capitol Hill, with the rest of the city.<sup>21</sup>

While they drove much of Oklahoma City's early growth, the railroads through the heart of the city became too much to bear in the midst of the city's booming development. After years of conflict, the Rock Island and Frisco relocated south of downtown to Union Depot in 1930.<sup>22</sup>

Oklahoma City's growth was not without challenges, and outright injustice, for some. Early Oklahoma City zoning ordinances defined the boundaries within which African Americans could live, located east of the Santa Fe rail line. By 1920, over 8,000 African Americans had established a separate, thriving community



within Oklahoma City, centered around NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Though the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the segregationist zoning restrictions in 1936, the early boundaries of Oklahoma City's African American community left an imprint on the city's development pattern still visible today.<sup>23</sup> Oklahoma City experienced the Great Depression along with the rest of the country, combined with the Dust Bowl and steep declines in oil prices. By 1935, the south shore of the North Canadian River held tents and shanties,



housing rural migrants seeking work in the city. Community Camp (no longer extant) was constructed near the Canadian River and housed hundreds of families during the height of the Great Depression; developments like Will Rogers Courts provided more permanent "low-income" housing.<sup>24</sup>

In large part, the only significant construction projects in Oklahoma City were New Deal-funded works. This included the construction of the "Civic Center," proposed in the city's first comprehensive plan in 1930. These structures occupied the former railroad right-of-way downtown.<sup>25</sup>

Outside downtown, New Deal projects appeared in the form of parks, a stadium, and even animal enclosures at the Oklahoma City Zoo.

Like much of the country, Oklahoma City did not see real growth return until the start of World War II. The creation of the Midwest Air Depot (now Tinker Air Force Base), as well as related

industry such as the Douglas Air Craft Company Plant, generated tens of thousands of jobs, stimulating new residential and commercial development toward the southeast.<sup>26</sup>

The end of World War II brought the Federal Aid Highway Act, which transformed the landscape of the entire country.<sup>27</sup> Automobiles took an early hold on the city's growth, as far back as the 1910 Dunn Plan's proposal of "parkways." By the 1930s, ridership on the streetcar system was in decline, and both miles of paved roads and numbers of registered vehicles in Oklahoma City were increasing exponentially.<sup>28</sup> The neighborhood by neighborhood, streetcar line-driven growth of the city had given way to the car- and highway-centered development pattern that would dominate the post-World War II years.



**Opposite page:** Looking north on Robinson, 1919 (left); Looking south from the State Capitol, 1936 (right).

**This page:** Union Station, circa 1931 (top); the Aldridge and other Deep Deuce businesses, circa 1920s (left); rendering for the Oklahoma City Civic Center (above).



## 1945-1965

At the end of World War II, Oklahoma City was less than 30 square miles; by 1965 it would reach 647 square miles. Driven by both Oklahoma City's anticipation of its own growth, and by an effort to prevent being "hemmed in" by surrounding communities, this rapid expansion was further fueled by new development patterns seen nationwide. These changes reshaped the city as a whole, and also saw the historic downtown transformed.<sup>29</sup>

In its first half-century, Oklahoma City grew gradually, taking in a few acres at a time as development grew on the edges of the city. By the 1950s, however, the desire to control land before it was developed, and to prevent surrounding communities from overtaking Oklahoma City's potential for growth, led to an aggressive annexation drive.<sup>30</sup>

The goal of preventing surrounding communities from cutting off the City's ability to expand combined with the anticipation that the population would increase dramatically in the coming decades, resulting in the incorporation of large swaths of essentially undeveloped, rural lands into the city limits.<sup>31</sup>

This expansion aligned well with changes happening in development patterns nationwide. New federal highway programs provided miles of roadway for ever-increasing numbers of drivers. Highways provided fast routes around and out of downtown, with auto-oriented development following along. From signage intended to catch the eye at 40 miles an hour, to drive-through banks located on expressways rushing people out of downtown, automobiles reshaped the way people lived and the way cities were built.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, new federal programs encouraged

home ownership, funding the development of new, suburban neighborhoods according to "modern" design standards. New construction methods and materials changed the way homes were built, while technological advances in everything from kitchen appliances to air conditioning changed the way people lived, and the way homes functioned. As development spread further from the historic core of the city, amenities like schools and churches, shops and restaurants, and police and fire stations followed.<sup>33</sup>

Simultaneous with the City's annexation drive and suburban sprawl was a realization that the inner core was in decline. As some residents left for the new suburbs willingly, others were forced out of older, primarily African-American neighborhoods that stood in the path of new highways, or in the way of large-scale redevelopment plans.<sup>34</sup>

Downtown businesses found it increasingly difficult to compete with suburban shopping centers, equipped with new, modern-looking buildings and plenty of free parking. Between 1958 and 1964, at least 71 businesses left downtown Oklahoma City, either relocating or closing their doors altogether.<sup>35</sup>

The exodus was partially accelerated by the City's plans to transform much of downtown Oklahoma City. City Council created the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority in 1961. In 1965, the City adopted the Pei Plan, a master plan by architect I.M. Pei. The plan called for clearing nearly 500 acres of downtown, creating superblocks, and constructing a downtown shopping mall, new housing, retail, a convention center, and a grand park. The anticipated removal of hundreds of buildings led business owners not to renew their leases, leaving block after block of commercial buildings vacant or underutilized.<sup>36</sup>

Just as Oklahoma City grew from a train stop on the prairie to an urban center of government and commerce in its first two decades, the post-war years saw exponential growth in size and population. Hundreds of square miles of rural and undeveloped landscape transformed into highways, neighborhoods, and commercial thoroughfares. A once-bustling downtown declined into one of increasing vacancy and uncertainty, as demolitions and redevelopments loomed in the years to come.

**Opposite page:** 200 block of Main Street, circa 1953 (left); Citizen's Bank's "uptown" branch on NW 23rd Street, complete with a drive-thru, circa 1950 (right).

**This page:** Advertisement for Ranch home designs (top); rendering of Penn Square Mall, 1958 (middle); postcard for Luster's Motel on NE 23rd, a property featured in the "Green Book" for Route 66 (circa 1960).





## 1965 to Present

In the past 50 years, Oklahoma City has continued to evolve. In the 1960s and 1970s, with annexation largely complete and the Pei Plan underway, the optimism for Oklahoma City's growth and transformation was high. Newspaper articles of the time reported on new industrial facilities like General Motors, new office parks on Northwest Expressway, and shopping malls like Crossroads and Quail Springs. Grand openings for supermarket chains and shopping malls provided confirmation of the city's growth and success.

However, that grand vision did not all go as planned. The implementation of the Pei Plan demolished hundreds of buildings in the downtown core, creating "superblocks" in anticipation of a massive transformation for downtown. New office towers reshaped the

skyline of downtown, but much of the vacant land sat undeveloped for years, and promised amenities, parks, and housing in the downtown core failed to materialize.<sup>37</sup> By the 1980s, a City Council member observed that "downtown is dead and we helped kill it."<sup>38</sup>

Surrounding neighborhoods also felt the effects of downtown's decline; some experienced a gradual deterioration as residents left for the suburbs, while other neighborhoods were intentionally cleared. These removals disproportionately affected historically African American neighborhoods in northeast Oklahoma City's, even as the Civil Rights Movement brought local and federal action for integration of schools, housing, employment, and other sectors. Northeast Oklahoma City homes, churches, and long-established business districts were lost to Urban Renewal, "blight" clearance, and highway construction.<sup>39</sup>



Meanwhile, the incredible population growth that had been anticipated, and that had fed the race for expansion of the city limits, did not come to pass. Instead, low-density suburban development sprawled to the far corners of the city, stretching resources for services and infrastructure thin.<sup>40</sup>

Through this period, oil booms and busts brought great wealth followed by economic downturns, stopping and starting projects. The failure of Penn Square Bank in 1982, and losses like the National Finals Rodeo to Las Vegas in 1984, and a proposed United Airlines Maintenance Facility to Indianapolis in 1991, made the Pei Plan vision of the City's future seem increasingly unattainable.<sup>41</sup>

In 1992, Oklahoma City passed the first Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPs) sales tax initiative, funding public improvement projects to revitalize downtown. Public investment in areas like Bricktown brought life back to the area and spurred additional private development activity.



A significant event in the course of Oklahoma City's history was the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building. In addition to the great loss of life, buildings were damaged or destroyed, even miles away from the blast.

This horrible act could have come as a final blow to a city that was just beginning to rebuild itself. Instead, it seemed to awaken a determination and civic commitment to seeing Oklahoma City succeed. Federal dollars for recovery assisted in the creation of the Automobile Alley National Register district, which became the largest collection of historic tax credit projects in the state.<sup>42</sup> Additional MAPS projects were completed, long-shuttered downtown buildings like the Skirvin Hotel were rehabilitated and reopened and renewed interest in the urban core translated to new businesses, revitalized neighborhoods and commercial districts.

Today's Oklahoma City has seen many buildings

come and go, whether through the gradual progression of the city's development or through the intentional clearance of projects like the Pei Plan. But Oklahoma City has also cherished many historic resources, working to preserve and rehabilitate key landmarks and districts.

Those properties that remain do more than provide memorials to a time gone by or contribute to an attractive environment. Today's historic resources convey a sense of identity; that identity is integral to the City's ability to revitalize while remaining a distinctive and unique place.

**Opposite page:** Architect I.M. Pei explains a model of his plan for Oklahoma City's redevelopment (left); Rendering of Sears at SW 44th and Western, 1964 (top); Demolition of Baum Building with First National Building and Hales Building beyond, 1972 (bottom).

**This page:** Crowds visit the Bricktown canal with new ballpark beyond, both MAPs projects, 1999 (left); Crowds enter the rehabilitated Skirvin Hotel.

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## Photo Log

p. 38 top: <http://cybermarsx.mls.lib.ok.us/okimages/okimages.asp?WCI=ViewImage&WCU=000000234>

bottom: <http://iqc.ou.edu/2011/09/28/urban-design-in-territorial-oklahoma/>

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Top: Jim Edwards, Mitchell Oliphant, and Hal Ottaway, *The Vanished Splendor III* (Abalache Book Shop Publishing Company, 1985).

Bottom left: <http://cybermarsx.mls.lib.ok.us/okimages/okimages.asp?WCI=ViewImage&WCU=000000178>

Bottom right: <https://www.okhistory.org/kids/centurychest1.php>

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Top left: <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2007/05/leo-sanders-collection.html>

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Top: <http://frisco.org/mainline/2015/10/04/union-station-oklahoma-city/>

Bottom left: <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/12468/photos/173797>

Bottom right: Image provided by Catherine Montgomery

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Top left: <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1123612/?q=katz>

Top right: National Register of Historic Places, Mutual Savings and Loan Association Building, National Register #16000621.

Pg. 45

Top: Image provided by Ron Frantz

Middle: <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1301947/?q=penn%20square>

Bottom: gateway/OHS?

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Top left: <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2008/03/tall-buildings.html>

Top right: <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1297342/?q=sears%20western>

Bottom: <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc477982/?q=demolition%20baum>

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Top: <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2007/02/skirvin-hilton-grand-reopening.html>

Bottom: [https://www.velocityokc.com/blog/inside-okc/the-bricktown-canal-in-its-20th-year-a-symbol-of-okc-s-renaissance/?back=super\\_blog](https://www.velocityokc.com/blog/inside-okc/the-bricktown-canal-in-its-20th-year-a-symbol-of-okc-s-renaissance/?back=super_blog).



# Oklahoma City's Historic Resources Today

Over the course of its relatively brief history, Oklahoma City has grown and evolved rapidly. For some moments in our history, literally no physical fabric remains. For other periods, sites, districts, structures, buildings, and monuments remain intact. These provide a tangible connection to important moments in our past and create a sense of identity today. These are the places that the City of Oklahoma City defines as “historic resources.”

Oklahoma City has many recognized historic resources, formally identified and protected in one form or another.

Beyond those formally identified resources, there are thousands of buildings previously evaluated and identified as potentially historic through projects like historic surveys or individually by interested citizens.

Even beyond those properties that have been surveyed and documented in varying levels of detail, we know that there are large areas of the city where comprehensive survey work to identify historic resources has never been undertaken, and where there is great opportunity to identify, recognize, and revitalize historic resources.

To catalogue the entirety of Oklahoma City's historic resources in this plan would be impossible, but existing data has been used to create a digital Historic Resources Inventory. This section of **preserveokc** provides an overview of patterns, trends, and areas of interest in Oklahoma City's identified and potential historic resources.



## Formally Recognized Historic Resources

### City of Oklahoma City Designations

In Oklahoma City, we have nearly 4,000 properties with Historic Preservation/Historic Landmark Zoning, the strongest form of protection available at the local level. These include historic districts, all of which are primarily residential neighborhoods with some neighborhood-scale commercial properties mixed in. This also includes nine individual landmarks, including churches, apartment buildings, commercial structures, the former home of a Civil Rights-era advocacy organization, and even a cemetery.

In addition to zoning, the City holds one preservation easement on the Skirvin Hilton Hotel, created as part of the City's involvement in the redevelopment of this downtown icon.

While these properties represent diverse functions, architectural styles, and time periods, they are relatively concentrated in and around the city's urban core. Many geographic areas, architectural styles, and facets of Oklahoma City's past are currently under- or unrepresented.

### National Register of Historic Places

Over 100 properties are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with thousands more listed within two dozen National Register districts. These are mostly concentrated in and around downtown, with smaller concentrations east of downtown and beyond.

These properties represent the entire span of Oklahoma City's history, with the earliest constructed as early as the 1890s and the most recent in the 1960s.

The highest concentration of National Register listed properties were constructed between 1911 and 1930.

Early National Register listings, not only in Oklahoma City but nationwide, tended to focus on the "founding fathers" category of history: early civic leaders, predominantly white, wealthy, and male. But these listings today cover a broad spectrum of history, culture, and architecture.

Similarly, National Register districts have expanded from homes of the rich and powerful to include commercial and industrial districts, historically segregated neighborhoods, and post-war housing developments.

Today, Oklahoma City properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places provide a fairly comprehensive representation of the city's past. They illustrate different cultures, time periods, and property types. However, like locally designated properties, National Register-listed properties are concentrated in the urban core.

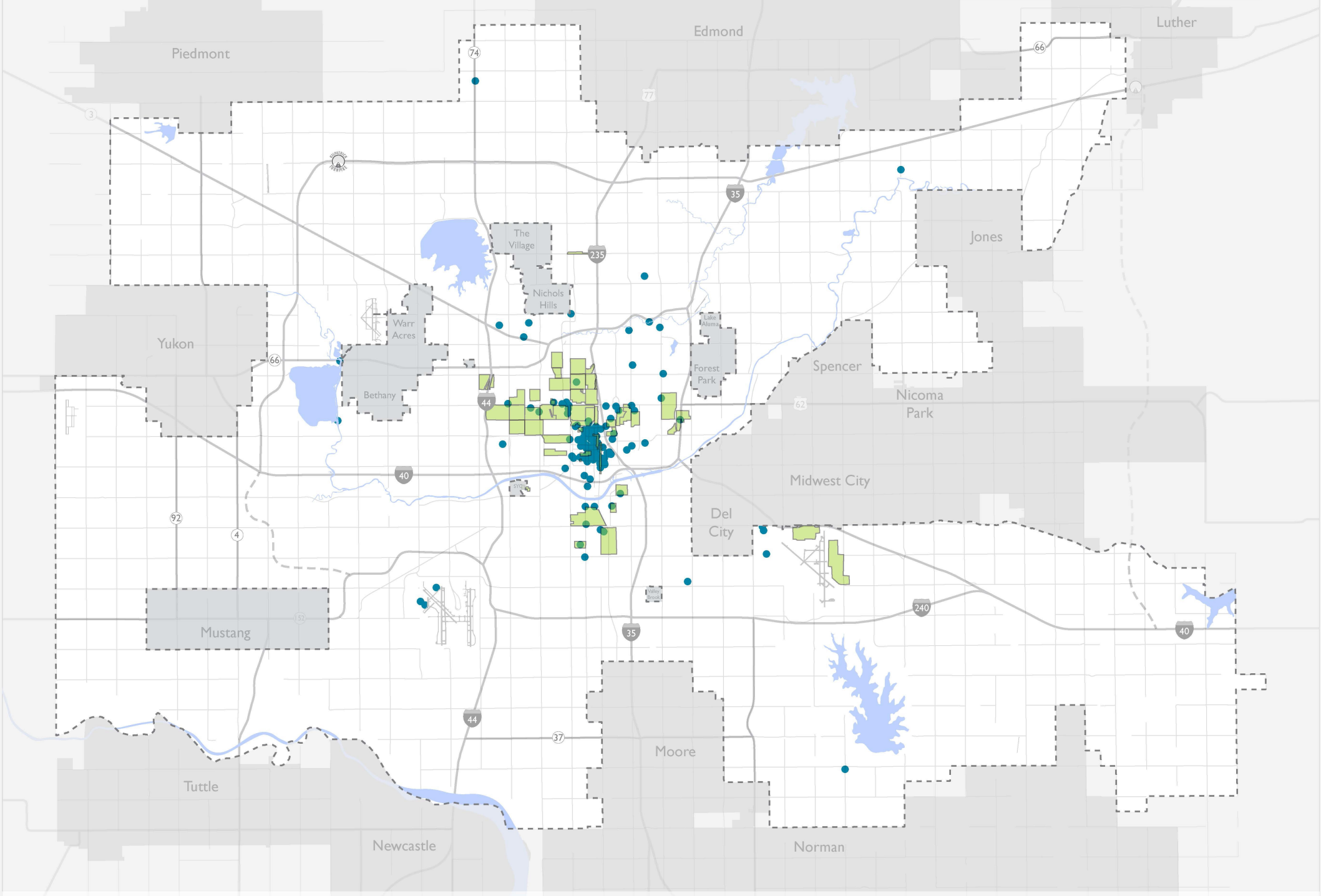
National Register properties also appear to be disproportionately representative of the time period between 1911-1930, with 32% of National Register properties falling into this time period.

**Left:** The Milk Bottle Building, the Sieber Hotel, and Wells Fargo Building are locally-designated Historic Landmarks and are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Right:** This map identifies properties and districts that are either locally designated or are listed in the National Register. Note: Some National Register properties, such as archeological sites, have restricted locations and are not mapped.

# FORMALLY RECOGNIZED HISTORIC RESOURCES

This map is representative of data available at the time of the creation of preserveokc. Current maps and information are available via the Planning Department and okc.gov.



**Recognized Districts**



**Recognized Landmarks**



## Recognized Historic Resources

Avery Building <i>15 E California Ave</i>	Electric Transformer House <i>2412 N Olie Ave</i>	Haywood Building <i>303 NE 2nd Street</i>	Main Public Library <i>131 Dean McGee Ave</i>
Bourne Dairy <i>5801 N Martin Luther King Ave</i>	Elks Lodge Building <i>401 N Harvey Ave</i>	Heierding Building <i>35 Harrison Ave</i>	Main Street Arcade <i>629 West Main St</i>
Braniff Building <i>324 N Robinson Ave</i>	Elks Victory Lodge <i>322 NE 2nd St</i>	Hightower Building <i>105 N Hudson Ave</i>	Marion Hotel <i>110 NW 10th Street</i>
Cain's Coffee Building <i>1 NW 12th Street</i>	Fairchild Winery <i>1600 Ridgeway Rd</i>	India Temple Shrine (1980) <i>621 N Robinson Ave</i>	Mayfair Apartments <i>1315 N Broadway Place</i>
Calvary Baptist Church <i>300 N Walnut Ave</i>	Farmers Public Market <i>311 S Klein Ave</i>	J.I. Case Plow Works Building <i>2 E California Ave</i>	Medical Arts Building <i>100 Park Avenue</i>
Central High School <i>800 N Harvey Avenue</i>	Fidelity National Building <i>200 N Harvey Ave</i>	Jewel Theater <i>904 NE 4th St</i>	Melvin F Luster /Lyons House <i>300 NE 3rd St</i>
Citizens State Bank Tower <i>2200 N Classen Blvd</i>	Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant <i>900 West Main Street</i>	John Sinopoulos House <i>4000 N Kelley Ave</i>	Merchants Transfer & Storage <i>19 E California Ave</i>
Citizens State Bank (The Gold Dome) <i>1112 NW 23rd St</i>	Freedom Center <i>2609 N. Martin Luther King</i>	Kaiser's Ice Cream Parlour <i>1039 N Walker Ave</i>	Mid-Continental Life Building <i>1400 Classen Dr</i>
Colcord Building (1976) <i>15 N Robinson Ave</i>	United Founders Life Tower <i>5900 Mosteller Dr</i>	The Kelley Club <i>2300 North Kelley Ave</i>	Mideke Supply Building <i>100 E Main St</i>
Wesley Hospital <i>300 NW 12th Street</i>	First Christian Church <i>1104 N Robinson Ave</i>	Kingman-Moore Building <i>100 E California Ave</i>	Milk Bottle Building <i>2426 N Classen Blvd</i>
Cotton-Exchange Building <i>228 Robert S Kerr Ave</i>	First Church of Christ, Scientist <i>1200 N Robinson Ave</i>	Lake Overholser Bridge <i>8500 N Overholser Dr.</i>	Miller-Jackson Building <i>121 E California Ave</i>
Czech Hall <i>515 SW 6th Street</i>	First National Building <i>120 N Robinson Ave</i>	Lake Overholser Dam <i>1701 E Overholser Dr</i>	Montgomery Ward <i>500 West Main St</i>
Sieber Grocery and Apt. Hotel <i>1305 N Hudson Ave</i>	Goodholm House <i>3101 General Pershing Blvd</i>	Lincoln Park Bathhouse <i>2000 Remington Place</i>	Oklahoma City Discovery Well <i>approx. 2800 SE 57th St</i>
Donald Pollock House <i>2400 NW 59th St</i>	Harbour-Longmire Building <i>420 W Main Street</i>	Littlepage Building <i>219 N Central Ave</i>	Municipal Auditorium <i>201 N Walker Ave</i>
Douglass High School <i>600 N High Ave</i>	Harding Jr. High School <i>3333 N Shartel Ave</i>	Mager Mortgage Company <i>231 NW 10th St</i>	Municipal Building <i>200 N Walker Ave</i>
Dunbar Elementary <i>1432 NE 7th Street</i>	Harn House <i>1721 N Lincoln Blvd</i>	Magnolia Petroleum Building <i>722 N Broadway Ave</i>	Mutual Savings and Loan Assn. <i>601-605 NW 23rd Street</i>

Oklahoma City National Memorial  
*200 NW 5th St*

Oklahoma County Courthouse  
*321 Park Ave*

OG&E Co. Building  
*321 N Harvey Ave*

Oklahoma Hardware Building  
*27 E California Ave*

Oklahoma Historical Society Building  
*2100 N Lincoln Blvd*

Oklahoma Publishing Co. Building  
*500 N Broadway Ave*

Oklahoma State Capitol  
*2300 N Lincoln Blvd*

Osler Physicians Building  
*1200 N Walker Ave*

Overholser House  
*405 NW 15th St*

Pilgrim Congregational Church  
*1433 Classen Dr*

Pioneer Building  
*401 N Broadway Ave*

Plaza Court  
*1100 Classen Dr*

Federal Office Building  
*215 Dean A McGee Ave*

"Ringling the Wild Horse" Site  
*approx. 13000 N Westminster Rd*

Rock Island Plow Building  
*29 E Reno Ave*

Santa Fe Depot  
*146 South EK Gaylord Blvd*

Sherman Machine and Iron Works  
Building  
*14-26 E Main St*

Skirvin Hotel  
*1 Park Ave*

Dr. W. H. Slaughter House  
*3101 NE 50th St*

Smith & Kernke Funeral Directors  
*1401 NW 23rd St*

St. Joseph's Cathedral  
*301 NW 4th St*

St. Paul's Cathedral  
*127 NW 7th St*

Stanford Furniture Company  
*1 E Sheridan Ave*

Sunshine Cleaners  
*1002 NW 1st St*

Taft Junior High School  
*2901 NW 23rd St*

Tiffany House  
*5505 N Brookline Ave*

Town House Hotel  
*627 Northwest 5th Street*

Tradesman's National Bank Building  
*101 N Broadway Ave*

Union Depot  
*300 SW 7th St*

Union Soldiers Cemetery  
*2028 NE 36th St*

W.T. Hales House  
*1521 N Hudson Ave*

Walcourt Building  
*1401 N Walnut Ave*

Walter & Frances Edwards House  
*1621 NE Grand Blvd*

Weather Service Building  
*1923 N Classen Blvd*

Wells Fargo Building  
*115 E Reno Ave*

### **Districts**

Capitol-Lincoln Terrace

Carey Place Historic District

Crown Heights Historic district

Edgemere Park Historic District

Edwards Historic Districts

Edwards Heights Historic District

Film Exchange

First Christian Church District

Gatewood Historic District

Heritage Hills Historic District

Heritage Hills East Historic District

Jefferson Park Historic District

Lincoln Terrace East

Maney Historic District

Mesta Park Historic District

Miller's Boulevard Historic District

Oklahoma City University

Paseo Historic District

Putnam Heights Historic District

Shepherd Historic District

Spanish Village Historic District

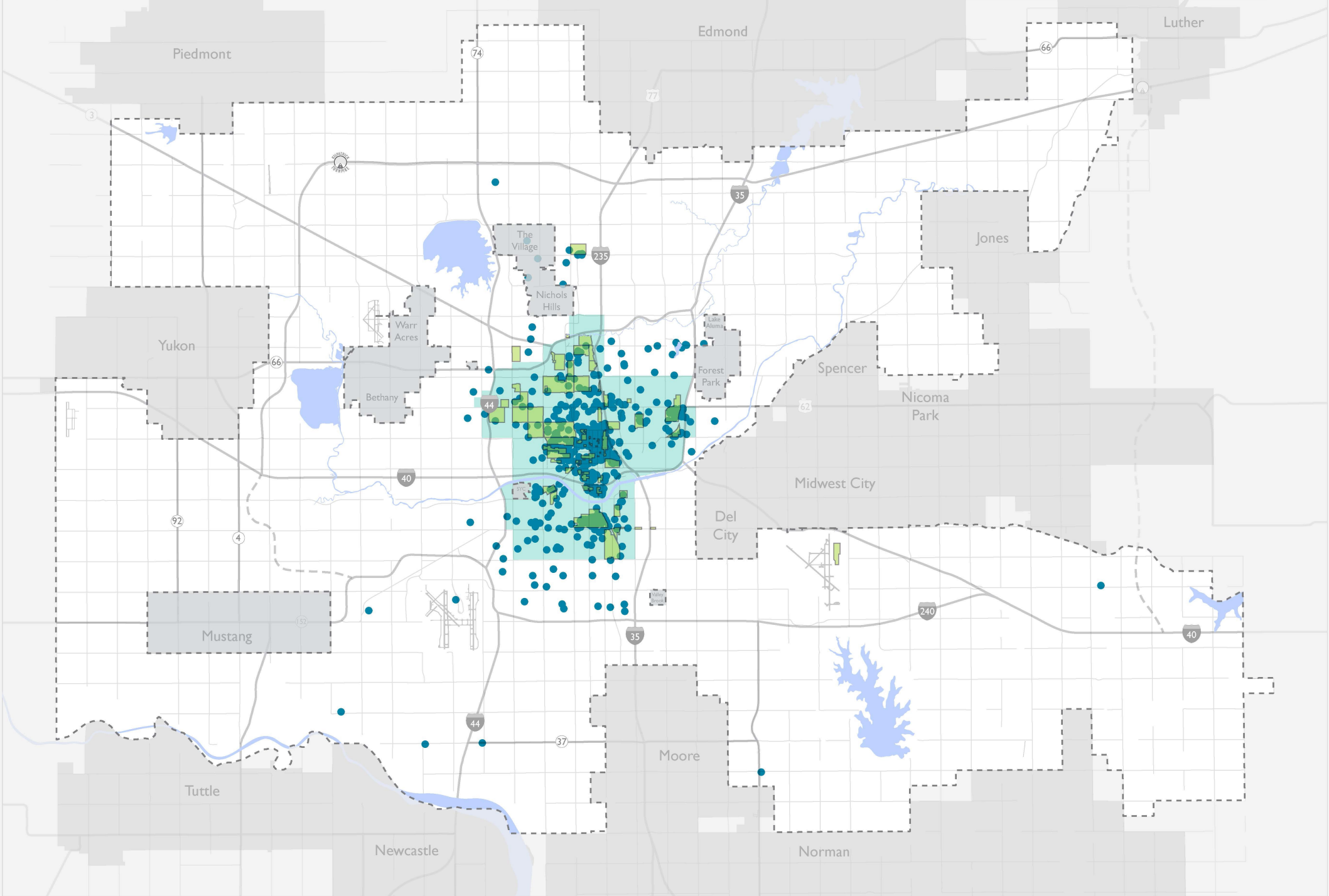
Stockyards City

Will Rogers Park and Arboretum

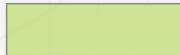


# POTENTIAL HISTORIC RESOURCES

This map is representative of data available at the time of the creation of preserveokc. Current maps and information are available via the Planning Department and okc.gov.



**Surveyed Areas**



**Potential Districts**



**Potential Landmarks**





## Properties Identified as Potential Historic Resources

Historic surveys collect and analyze data to document potential historic resources, as well as to provide information on the history and development associated with a specific region, time period, or property type.

Surveys are performed for many reasons. Some are motivated by a specific goal, such as a neighborhood's interest in being listed on the National Register of Historic Places or becoming a local historic district. Others are carried out as part of a larger project, such as surveying a commercial district that will be affected by the construction of a new highway. Still others are part of ongoing efforts to maintain an inventory of data without a specific use in mind.

Surveys can be performed for a defined geographic area. Geographic surveys in Oklahoma City have included the downtown core and surrounding, largely residential areas. Surveys can also be organized thematically, such as existing surveys of schools, WPA structures, Route 66 resources, or modern architecture.

Over the past 40 years, historic surveys have identified over 700 individual resources and at least 75 districts as potentially historic. Similarly to the pattern of formally-designated properties, these resources are clustered most densely in the urban core.

These properties represent elements of Oklahoma City's early development, from the growth of downtown and surrounding

neighborhoods to the influence of industry and trade.

Properties identified as potentially historic cover nearly every imaginable property type, from homes, schools, and churches to industrial warehouses and early skyscrapers, from train stations to filling stations.

## Updating Historic Survey Data

Historic Resources are a moving target, and their inventory requires ongoing maintenance and updates. County assessor records indicate that approximately 2,000 buildings a year hit the 50-year mark, a rough starting point for identifying historic significance. It is important that we regularly reevaluate survey information, particularly in areas experiencing growth or transformation.

As time passes, properties that were not old enough to be considered historic at the time of a survey may gain significance, while properties identified as potentially historic may have been demolished. Districts that were not "visually cohesive" enough to warrant a historic district at the time of a survey 30 years ago may now contain rare remaining examples of an element of Oklahoma City's history.

**Left:** This map shows properties and districts that have been identified as potential historic resources through a variety of surveys and studies.

**Right:** Belle Isle Library, a barn at 17121 SE 59th Street, and a shotgun house at 528 SW 27th Street, all identified as potential historic resources.



## Completed Surveys of Historic Resources in Oklahoma City

### Geographic Surveys

Automobile Alley Historic District (1996)  
Bellacasa Terrace Addition (1999)  
Capitol Hill's Commerce Avenue (2017)  
Central Park, Jefferson Park, and Paseo Neighborhoods (1994)  
Classen Ten Penn (1992)  
Central Oklahoma City (1992)  
Downtown Oklahoma City (2009-2012)  
Gatewood Neighborhood (1993)  
Heritage Hills East (2017)  
Military Park Neighborhood (1993)  
Miller's Boulevard (2013)  
Northeast, Northwest, and South Oklahoma City (1994)  
Oklahoma City Historical Resources Survey (1980-1981)  
Oklahoma City 1890-1930: Platted, Parked, and Populated (1982)  
Oklahoma City Zoo (draft) (2016)  
Riverside Historic District (2004)  
Shepherd Historic District (1995)

### Thematic Surveys

Archeological Study of the Canadian River Valley in Central Oklahoma (2002)  
Barns in Central and South-Central Oklahoma (2012)  
Historic Highway Bridge Survey (2007)  
Historic Homes of Oklahoma (1975)  
Industrial Resources of Oklahoma County (1991)  
Modern Architecture (2009)  
Movie Theaters of Central Oklahoma (2005)  
New Deal Public Art (2004)  
Route 66 Resources (statewide) (2002)  
School Buildings of Oklahoma City (2001)  
WPA Structures (1987)

**Top:** An early house in Classen Ten Penn; a mid-century church at 6501 NW 23rd Street; Rose Hill Mausoleum at 6001 NW Grand Blvd.

**Middle:** C.E. Davis Building in Capitol Hill, the Maywood Building in Deep Deuce, the Clara Girvin Bridge at the Oklahoma City Zoo.

**Bottom:** Remaining structure at Producers' Cotton Cooperative, Ann's Chicken Fry on Route 66, and Taft Stadium at NW 23rd and May.





### Previously Undocumented Properties

While existing documentation of historic resources is extensive, some areas of the city remain largely unaddressed. These areas are located outside the urban core, in portions of the city that were annexed within the last 60 years.

Even though these areas were not within the limits of Oklahoma City from its inception, they still contain the potential for historic resources. Homes, barns, churches, and other structures, once well outside the developed city, convey a sense of a different era. Entire communities, such as the Wheatland area in southwest Oklahoma City or Britton to the north, retain a distinctive character separate from the surrounding Oklahoma City.

Conversely, in concert with the development period for these regions of the city, many excellent examples of mid-century commercial, institutional, and residential architecture illustrate the post-war transformation of a city, and of architectural tastes, construction methods, and lifestyles.

Sprawling neighborhoods of Ranch-style homes, expansive schools and eye-catching churches form the residential areas, while auto-oriented commercial developments communicate their “space age” modernity along major corridors.

Through ongoing assessment and identification of historic resources in these underrepresented areas, we can better understand the history of our city and better serve a wide range of needs.

### Archeological Resources

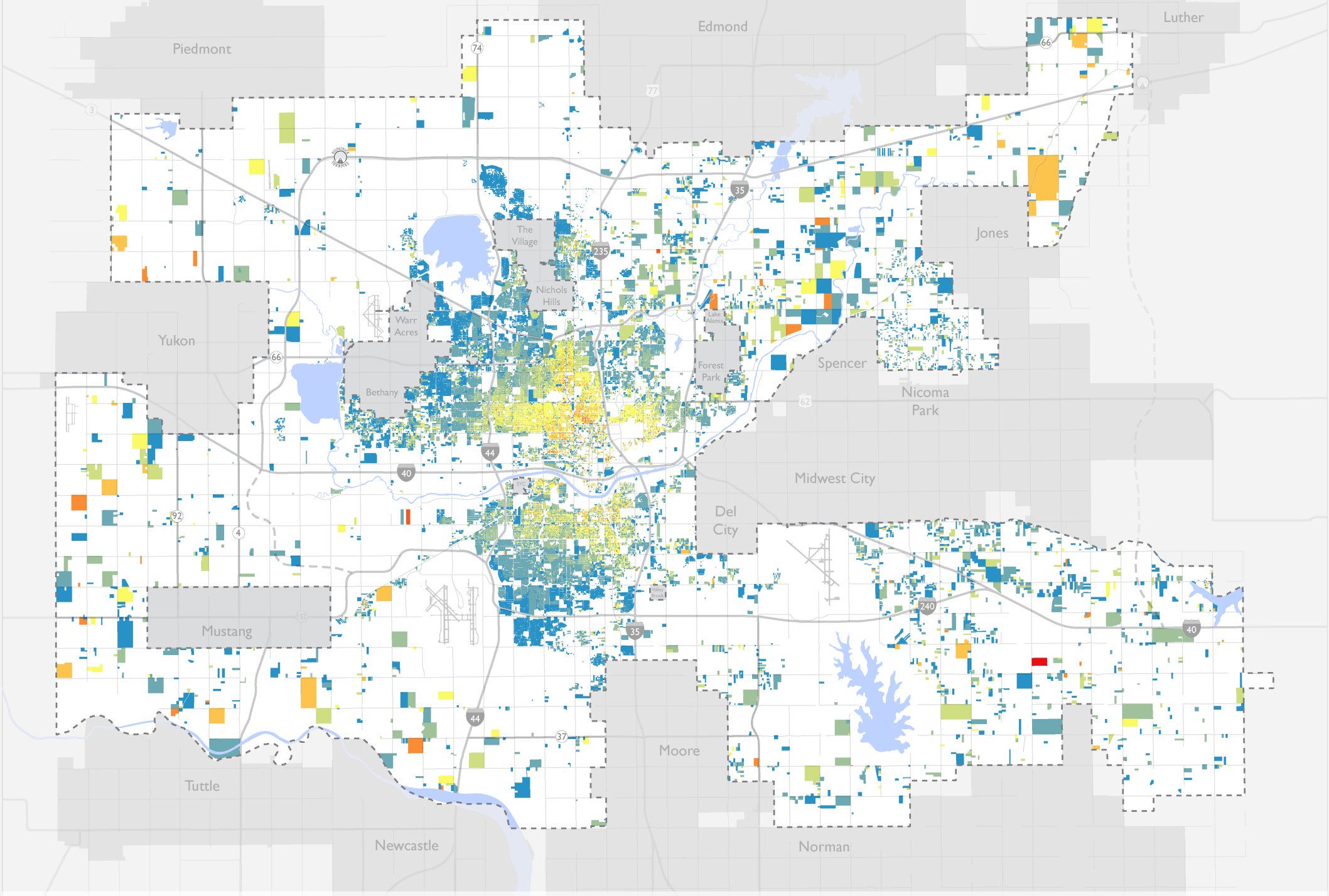
While Oklahoma City was only created in the last century, the land upon which it sits had been occupied for many centuries before. From the pre-contact artifacts of people indigenous to North America and sites associated with early Native American communities to the remnants of European explorations, military installations, and early settlements, archeological resources provide rare physical evidence that has often been recorded by no other means. Significant amounts of land within Oklahoma City remain largely undeveloped and undisturbed, potentially containing archeological materials. Even sites developed previously have the potential to retain archeological resources.

Federal legislation offers a range of protections specifically for archeological resources and cultural sites. The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office and the Oklahoma Archeological Survey offer excellent resources for the identification and evaluation of archeological materials. The location of archeological sites are often restricted in order to protect the delicate resources they contain. While not as obvious as historic buildings, archeological resources are important for their informational content and cultural value.

**Left:** These structures in the 7000 block of South Cimarron Road (top) and the 14000 block of North Council Road (middle) are some of the oldest homes in Oklahoma City. Storybook Ranch neighborhoods like Southwood Hills including this home on SW 61st Terrace (bottom), built in 1962, are now potentially historic.

# PARCELS IDENTIFIED AS 50+ YEARS OLD

This map is representative of data available at the time of the creation of preserveokc. Current maps and information are available via the Planning Department and okc.gov.



- Pre-1890
- 1890 - 1899
- 1900 - 1909
- 1910 - 1919
- 1920 - 1929
- 1930 - 1939
- 1940 - 1949
- 1950 - 1959
- 1960 - 1969



## Priorities for Future Work

Input from public meetings, stakeholder groups, and online surveys has been assessed in combination with an evaluation of the existing Historic Resources Inventory. From this, broad categories have been identified that encompass priorities for future work. This work may include new or updated surveys, nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, local designation, or other efforts to identify, research, and record the significance of Oklahoma City's historic resources.



## Updates to Older Surveys

Decades' worth of survey work provides valuable information about Oklahoma City's history and identifies potential historic resources. However, many of these were completed nearly 30 years ago. Properties not old enough to be considered historic at that time may now be eligible, while others that were identified as historic may have subsequent alterations that affect their status.. These efforts need to be revisited, with survey data updated on a regular basis so that historic resources are identified accurately.

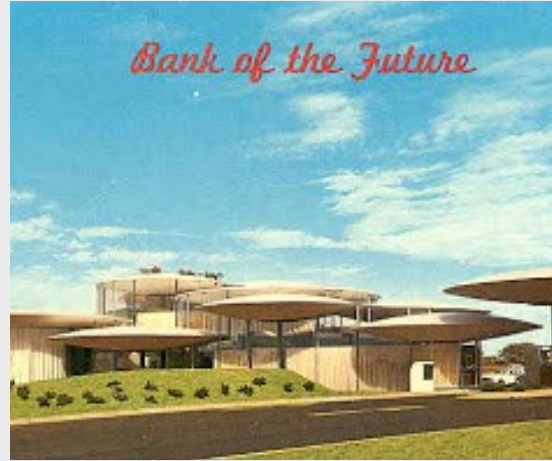
*Neighborhood-scale commercial buildings such as this one at the corner of NW May and 16th are present throughout the city, and may qualify as historic resources.*



## Early Resources Outside of Previously-Surveyed Areas

We know there are many potentially historic resources outside the bounds of previous survey areas without any formal designation or protection. From early agricultural properties, at least seven of which have been recognized as Centennial Farms by the State Historic Preservation Office, to early businesses, churches, and homes, these properties are some of Oklahoma City's oldest resources. These properties need to be more thoroughly identified and evaluated for their historic significance.

*This house on Winnie Street in Wheatland is indicated to have been built in 1899.*



## Resources of the Recent Past

Oklahoma City experienced a dramatic boom in its economy, physical size, and population in the post-war era, transforming the city and the surrounding region. New materials, design concepts, technologies, and ways of life reshaped the city's built environment. Development from this time period is now old enough to be considered for its historic significance, and also represents a disproportionate percentage of the city's building stock. These homes, institutions, and businesses represent the optimism and ingenuity of an important time in Oklahoma City's history.

*This historic postcard features the State Capitol Bank at 3900 N. Lincoln Blvd., built in 1962.*



## Diversity in our Historic Resources

Our history includes more than the men with streets named after them; it includes diverse Native American populations and generations of immigrants and refugees from across the world. It includes women's suffrage and LGBTQ culture, labor protests and Civil Rights-era sit-ins. It includes an African American community, segregated and then demolished. This history requires representation, sensitivity to cultural differences, and an understanding that while "cohesive character" of a typical historic district may be lost, the remaining resources still convey meaning.

*This 1920s church on NE 3rd Street is a rare remnant of a historically African American neighborhood that once thrived east of downtown.*





# Our Plan

*“You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.”*

- Yogi Berra

## Introduction

Adopted in 2015, **planokc** instructs us to “develop and implement a citywide historic preservation plan.” This plan has been developed on the basis of that directive, building on the key issues identified in **planokc** of identification, protection, and incentivization.

Development of this plan incorporated many forms of public engagement and research. Decades of research into the historic resources of the city and region, available via the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, provided a baseline for the understanding of Oklahoma City’s opportunities and challenges. Multiple surveys and studies prepared in the creation of **planokc** provided valuable information for this plan. A public kick-off meeting, multiple stakeholder meetings, meetings with small groups and individuals, and an online survey further informed the development of plan recommendations.

**Opposite page:** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Oklahoma City at Main Street and Broadway, 1919.

The following section of the plan seeks to encapsulate the concerns, challenges, opportunities, and aspirational goals identified through the development of this plan. Four **Big Ideas** target broad themes identified through the plan’s development, then refine those themes to specific, achievable initiatives. Initiatives include real-world, Oklahoma City-based examples of issues or opportunities, and inform further recommendations for specific actions to be implemented upon adoption of **preserveokc**.

*Supporters gather to celebrate as the recreated belfry and steeple is installed at the historic 8th Street Church in Midtown.*

big idea a one



# Big Idea One: Strengthen Public Support for Historic Preservation

*“If you have a population which cannot see beauty, you will have a population which cannot produce beauty.”*

- William Morris,

British artist and social activist, 1834-1896

## BIG IDEA

We will build a culture of appreciation for Oklahoma City’s history and historic resources through accessible information, effective public outreach, and the formation of productive partnerships that recognize and celebrate the roots of Oklahoma City’s unique identity.

## INITIATIVES

1. Increase community awareness of and appreciation for Oklahoma City’s history and historic resources.
2. Increase community awareness of and support for historic preservation activities.
3. Raise awareness among community leaders of historic preservation’s value to Oklahoma City.
4. Encourage public engagement in historic preservation.

Since the movement began, historic preservation has always been a grass-roots led activity. Beginning with the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association who raised \$200,000 in 1858 to purchase and save George Washington’s home, to Oklahoma City residents’ tireless advocacy in 1969 for the creation of Heritage Hills, the state’s first locally-designated historic district, historic preservation is at its most effective when it serves a need that is locally recognized, locally understood, and locally supported.

In order for Oklahoma City to reap the full-spectrum benefits that historic preservation can offer, both the general public and community leaders must understand and support the mission and it’s related activities. First, the community must understand its own multi-layered history and must recognize existing historic resources and why they matter. The public must also have broad access to information and resources, and be encouraged to collect and share their own collective history so it can be appreciated and utilized by others.

Second, the community must understand what historic preservation is—and what it is *not*. This requires a clear articulation of the various levels of historic preservation, from a flexible adaptive reuse approach that maintains the character and identity of historic places while still allowing contemporary uses, to far less common museum-quality restorations that encapsulate a moment in time.



The public also requires a clear understanding of preservation “*whys*,” such as increases in individual property values, tangible quality-of-life improvements, and significant environmental benefits that can be gained when communities and individual property owners choose historic preservation approaches over new construction.

Beyond understanding the “*what*,” public support for historic preservation must be amplified through clear knowledge of the “*how*.” This means making widely available information on tools, programs, and incentives that make a historic preservation projects just as feasible as new construction.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, understanding how to engage in effective historic preservation is critical to building strong public support *for* historic preservation. Success here may be best evidenced by a mobilized community that knows how, when and where to use preservation tools, and understands how community history affects, and is affected by, future development.

**Clockwise from far left:** Wood window repair workshop, installation of district markers, Paseo Art Walk, and training for design review board members.

**Opposite page, clockwise from upper left:** An “urban camp-out” at the Overholser Mansion, a bicycle tour stops in front of the Municipal Auditorium, a car show on Automobile Alley, and families trick or treat at the Harn Homestead.

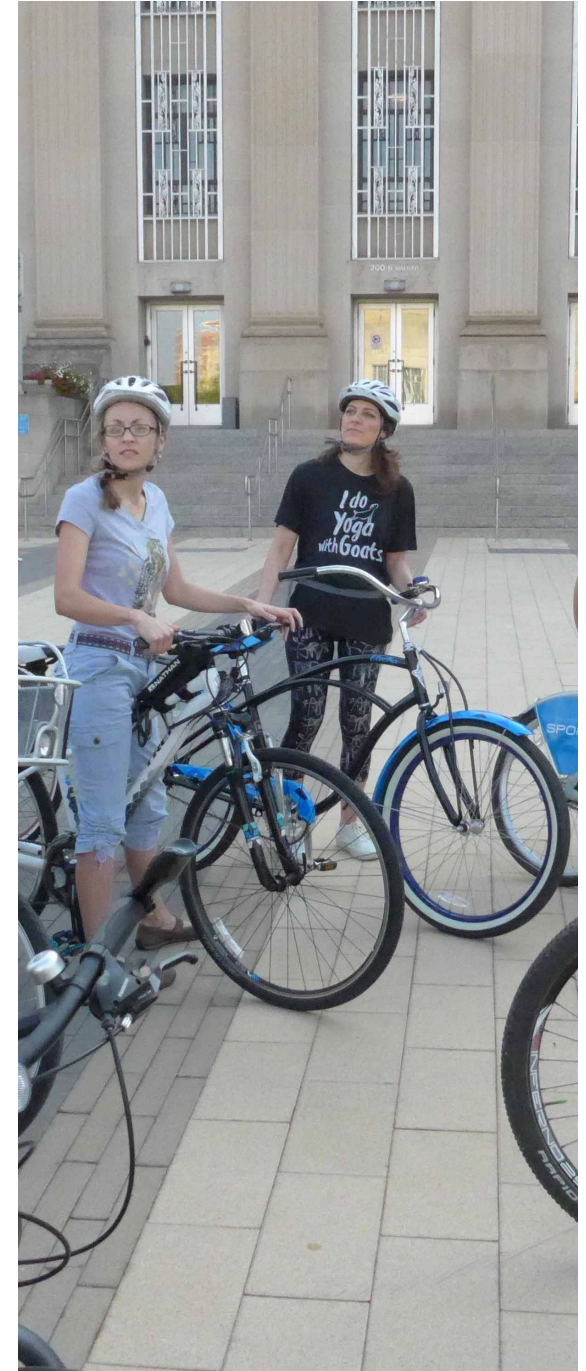
## Initiative I:

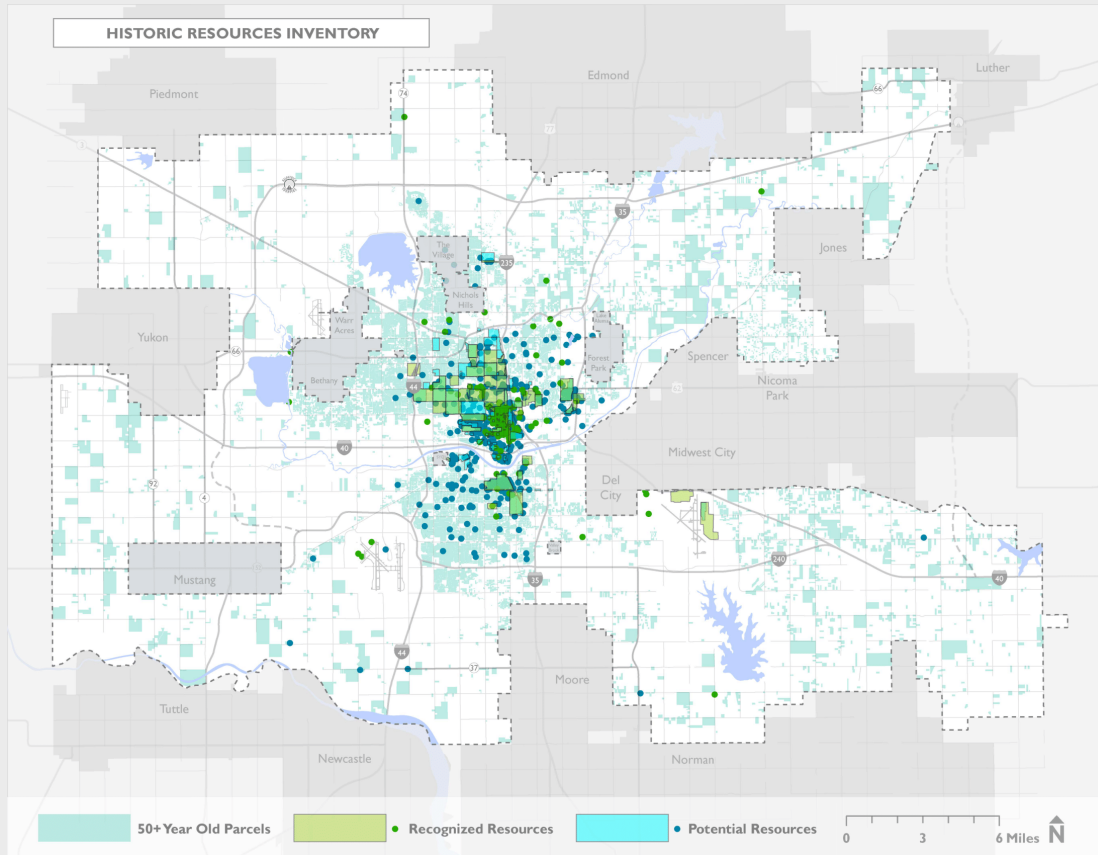
### Increase community awareness of and appreciation for Oklahoma City's history and historic resources.

Oklahoma City's built environment exhibits waves of the city's history and development, built and rebuilt through oil booms and busts, construction and relocation of rail lines, neighborhoods developed and then replaced by new highways or urban renewal. Though many of Oklahoma City's earliest structures are gone, many historic resources remain, physically communicating the city's past, creating a palette of design elements and materials, and establishing a framework for future development.

Not all of these resources are initially impressive, and some may even go unnoticed. However even modest homes, utilitarian warehouses, neighborhood churches, shops, and schools tell the story of how Oklahoma City came to be. These historic resources from many different development eras create the rich fabric that is Oklahoma City today.

The public should be empowered to learn more about the history that has shaped Oklahoma City, and to share their own stories. This knowledge should inform public appreciation of the city's unique identity, and serve as a reference for decision makers about ongoing growth.





## Inventory of Historic Resources

This map depicts individual properties and districts that have been formally recognized as historic at a local or federal level. This map also includes individual property and districts that have been identified through surveys and research efforts and significant and potentially historic. Finally, this map shows properties identified via county assessor records as at least 50 years old. These properties, based on age, are potentially historic and can be used to identify priority areas for future survey work.

## Inventory of Historic Resources

For five decades, both professional and amateur historians have identified, documented, and evaluated historic structures, sites, and districts throughout Oklahoma. Within Oklahoma City, dozens of historic districts and hundreds of individual structures have been locally designated as historic, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or determined to be eligible for the National Register. Thousands more structures throughout Oklahoma City have been surveyed and recorded, establishing baseline data for historic and architectural resources.

As a composite, this data is a valuable inventory that serves several key purposes:

- Provides information for the general public seeking to learn about Oklahoma City history;
- Informs property owners assessing their building's significance; and
- Informs policy-makers considering decisions affecting the growth of Oklahoma City.

The inventory of historic resources also has the potential to be interactive, allowing opportunities for the community to submit information about historic resources that are important to them.

Implementing proactive expansion and ongoing maintenance of this inventory, and making it available to City departments and the general public, is critical to increasing awareness of Oklahoma City's history and historic resources.

## Promoting Historic Resources

An historic inventory is a valuable tool, but its mere existence does not generate awareness in the public at large. In addition to recording, updating, and making available information about our community's history and historic resources, the City can proactively use this data to promote these resources.

Across Oklahoma City, commercial and entertainment districts, residential neighborhoods, and other destinations take advantage of their historic identities to brand and market themselves, to establish community, and to create identity. From historic Uptown along NW 23rd Street and historic Capitol Hill along SW 25th Street, to the former showrooms of Automobile Alley and the former industrial warehouses of Bricktown, Oklahoma City's districts demonstrate the revitalization power of connecting historic character, distinct identity, and reuse of distinctive historic buildings.

Similarly, "historic" neighborhoods, whether formally designated or informally recognized for their character and architecture, have successfully used their history to promote their neighborhood identity. For example, since 2016, nine neighborhoods from all parts of the city have worked with the City to install sign toppers for neighborhood identification.

Increased awareness of Oklahoma City's history and historic resources can be achieved through less formal means as well. Providing information

for use by neighborhood or commercial associations and other groups, acknowledgement of historic places through awards and recognition, social media, or other City communications, are all ways to enrich public appreciation for Oklahoma City's unique character, and to build public support for the preservation of related historic resources.

Through the use of an accurate and accessible inventory of historic resources, opportunities for the public to provide information about places important to them, and outreach activities to publicize Oklahoma City's history, we will strengthen public support for the preservation of our most important historic places.





### **Uptown 23rd Street Urban Pioneer**

Successful business people often find that good preservation practice also makes good economic sense. The lived-in character of historic commercial buildings can be a priceless asset for entrepreneurs seeking to establish a brand new sense of place.

In 1934, a Jefferson Park structure that began life as a 1919 Victorian home, was adapted for commercial use with the addition of a stylish Art Deco storefront. For the next six decades, three generations of family operated Cheever's Flowers at 2409 N. Hudson.

In 2000, the building was adapted again to become Cheever's Café. The flower shop's 20-foot display cooler remains the centerpiece of the storefront—now showing off a variety of dessert and wine bottles. The back portion of the former house has been adapted for a private dining area.

Cheever's Café has provided a solid foundation for the ongoing and expanding revitalization of the Uptown 23rd Street Commercial District—becoming an OKC “special place” nearly overnight.

## **Initiative 2: Increase community awareness of and support for historic preservation activities.**

We must combat misconceptions of what historic preservation is—and is not—by providing resources, information, and evidence in the form of our own success stories to demonstrate that preservation is doable, and worth doing.

For the public to support historic preservation, people must understand what historic preservation is, how it works, and how they serve to benefit from it. Many assume that preservation standards are so rigid that an old building cannot be repurposed for a new use, or adapted for modern amenities or accessibility. People often assume that preservation is so expensive that it can only be undertaken at a financial loss. Alternatively, it is assumed that once a building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is protected, and the battle is won.

With 50 years of preservation experience under our belt, Oklahoma City has more local historic districts and more completed historic tax credit projects\* than any other city in Oklahoma. These projects have been accomplished by a local community of skilled, knowledgeable and devoted property owners and professionals. We can do a better job of

tapping into these resources and utilizing them to enhance public support for, and understanding of, historic preservation.

### **Targeted Outreach**

Stakeholders working and living within Oklahoma City's numerous Design Review and Historic Districts, including residents, property owners, and professionals such as realtors, architects, or contractors, benefit from specific training and outreach. Participants in the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative and Commercial District Revitalization program work in largely historic areas, and would also benefit from increased awareness of preservation-related tools and incentives.

Numerous existing programs via the City of Oklahoma City and other organizations include:

- Hands-on Rehab Workshops;
- Partnerships offered to neighborhood and business district associations;
- Realtor Training +CEUs on Design Review District process, through the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Association of Realtors; and
- Training workshops on programs of the National Historic Preservation Act via the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office.

Each of these has been an effective way to reach different audiences and presents an opportunity for continued and increased outreach to support and engage those involved in historic preservation.



## Training for Decision-Makers

In addition to those affected by historic preservation and design review, we also need to reach those responsible *for* historic preservation design review: elected officials and appointed review commission or committee members would benefit from training on the what, why, and how of historic preservation, directed specifically toward their roles.

Existing, targeted training efforts include an annual workshop for all design review commissions and committees, quarterly workshops for the Historic Preservation Commission, and training opportunities throughout the year provided by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Enhanced understanding of best preservation practices, principles guiding adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic structures, and available incentives to assist with historic preservation projects will improve comprehension of, and support for, a range of historic preservation activities.

**Right:** The 1907 Pioneer Building at 103 Dean A. McGee is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This building is within the Downtown Business District, reviewed by the Downtown Design Review Committee.



### Historic Tax Credits at Work

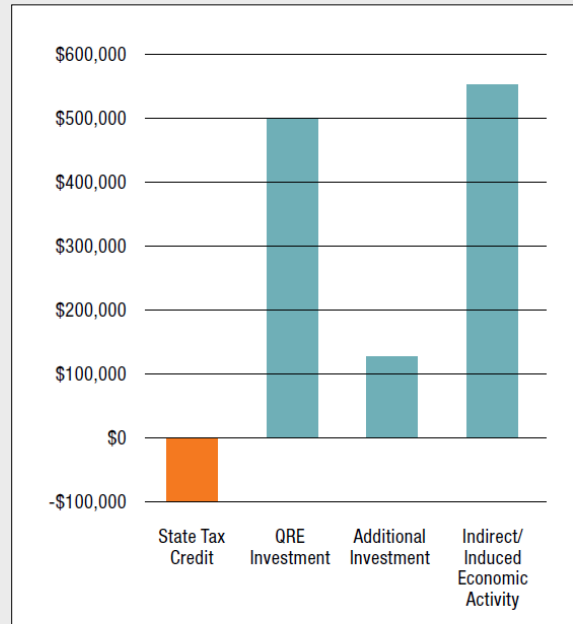
These graphics illustrate statistics about the use and effect of tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic structures. Research shows that, for every \$100,000 paid out in tax credits, over \$1 million in additional investment is generated.

Oklahoma City has benefited greatly from these credits, with nearly half the tax credit dollars in the state being used in Oklahoma City.

Contrary to popular belief, these tax credits are not limited to massive projects and large, iconic landmarks. Research shows that nearly half of the tax credit projects in Oklahoma are under \$1 million investments, and more than a quarter of the projects are under \$500,000 investments.

Graphics and data from *The Impact of Historic Tax Credits by PlaceEconomics, Inc, courtesy of Tulsa Foundation for Architecture.*

Economic Impact of \$100,000 tax credit project



### Initiative 3:

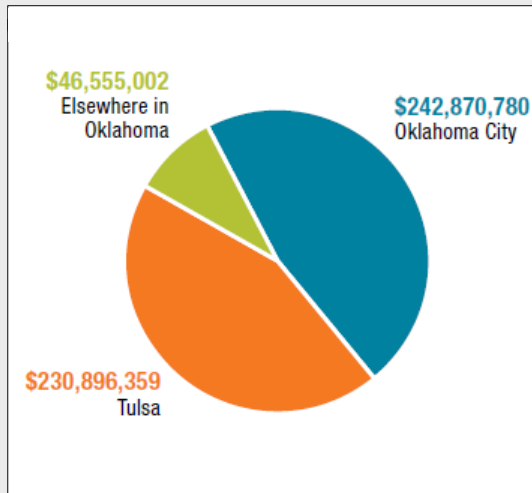
### Raise awareness among community leaders of preservation's value to Oklahoma City.

It is critically important for community leaders to recognize the cumulative benefits of historic preservation for the City of Oklahoma City. Chapter X, *Why Preserve?* highlights the quality of life, environmental, and economic impacts of historic preservation. Just as we routinely collect and report information such as jobs created, sales tax generated, or number of code enforcement cases resolved to city leaders, we must track and share information on the impact that historic preservation is having on Oklahoma City.

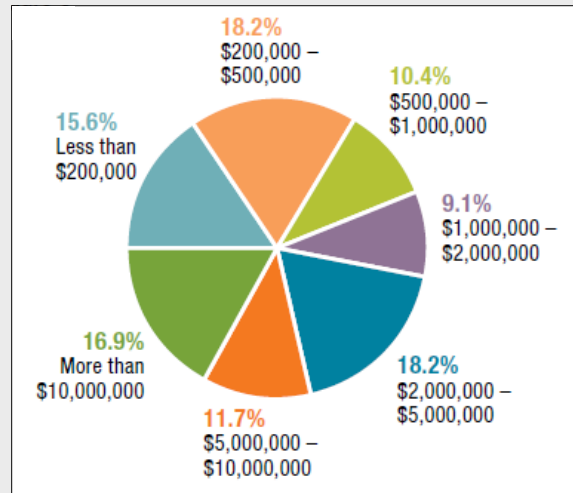
Readily available data that would help to quantify the benefits of historic preservation may include:

- Changes in property values
- Economic impact of historic tax credits
- Building Permit data
- Status of vacant, abandoned, or dilapidated historic buildings
- Commercial Revitalization District and Strong Neighborhood Initiative program data
- Historic resources in Tax Increment Finance Districts
- Heritage Tourism data from the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors' Bureau

Location of Tax Credit Projects by Investment



Tax Credit Projects by Investment Size



Other agencies and organizations that may be potential resources include:

- Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office
- Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.
- BlackSpace Oklahoma
- Neighborhood Alliance
- Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
- Business Improvement Districts
- Oklahoma Department of Commerce

These resources can highlight the economic benefits of historic preservation-related activities to Oklahoma City, and emphasize the importance of historic preservation as an economic driver. Collecting and making available measurable information on the cumulative benefits of historic preservation will strengthen appreciation for the integral role that preservation plays in Oklahoma City's development and revitalization.

#### **Initiative 4: Encourage Public Engagement in Historic Preservation.**

The success of historic preservation, and the many benefits that come with it, depends upon an engaged public that values its history and historic resources, and knows how to take an active role in what happens to those resources.

When the public can engage effectively and at the appropriate point in a decision-making process, projects can be directed toward the best possible outcome, avoiding the delays of last-minute objections and conflicts.

#### **Public Notification**

Public notification processes are well-established for existing design review and other regulatory or rezoning processes, often resulting in attendance at public meetings, letters of support of, or opposition to proposals, and media coverage.

While meeting the letter of the law, we should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of notification processes, ensure that the public not only receives proper notification but also understands their options for engagement, can find information online, and determine whether additional methods of outreach are needed.

Partner organizations such as Neighborhood Alliance and neighborhood and commercial district associations may be able to distribute information beyond the legally-required methods for notification and further enhance public engagement in review processes.

#### **Additional Outreach**

The City uses numerous forms of outreach, from press releases and social media posts to coverage on the City's government access cable channel, Channel 20, to distribute information to the public. By sharing information about opportunities to engage in historic preservation, we can strengthen the public's ability to take an active role in historic preservation.



The Tower Theater on NW 23rd Street used state and federal tax credits to rehabilitate a historic movie theater into a performing arts space, complete with a restored neon sign, contributing to the revitalization of a larger commercial area.

*The City of Oklahoma City constructed the Lake Overholser Dam and Pump House in 1918; the structure was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.*



big idea two

# Big Idea Two: Practice Good Stewardship of Our Historic Resources

*“Rehabilitating historic properties conserves taxpayers’ dollars, conserves our heritage, and conserves the natural environment. Rehabilitating historic buildings and using the infrastructure that is already in place to serve them is the height of fiscal and environmental sustainability.”*

- Donovan Rypkema,  
PlaceEconomics

## **BIG IDEA**

The City of Oklahoma City will continue to lead by example and act as a good steward of City-owned and –controlled historic resources through maintenance and preservation of City facilities and through decision making processes about City projects affecting historic resources.

A city is best known through its physical presence. Its government buildings, parks, and recreational facilities are the places where people interact with the “face” of a city, experiencing the pride with which a city maintains itself and the quality of life a city strives to establish. Oklahoma City’s grand civic buildings and neighborhood fire stations, local parks and public art are evidence of past generations’ efforts to establish a world-class city, and the present generation’s dedication to maintaining that legacy.

## **INITIATIVES**

1. Preserve and maintain City-owned Historic Resources.
2. Consider historic preservation early in the decision-making process for City projects.
3. Ensure the preservation of City-owned historic resources in the event of a change of ownership.



### **ZooZeum: New Use for a Historic Bathhouse**

Administrators at the Oklahoma City Zoo, a trust of the City of Oklahoma City, knew they had something special on their hands with the Works Progress Administration-built Bathhouse. Erected in 1935, nobody knew quite what to do with the rusticated red sandstone structure that had provided changing and shower facilities for generations of swimmers at Lincoln Park's Northeast Lake.

That is until 2011, when zoo staff conceived of a unique way to reuse the historic building and create a new attraction at the zoo: a ZooZeum. The only museum of its kind in the country, the ZooZeum is the place where visitors can experience galleries filled with artifacts and photographs of the Oklahoma City Zoo's 114-year zoological and botanical history.

The Lincoln Park Bathhouse structure, as it is formally identified on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016, is significant for its association with social history, specifically the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Oklahoma during the Great Depression. The ZooZeum is an outstanding example of good stewardship and adaptive reuse of publicly-owned historic resource.

For decades, the City of Oklahoma City has renovated, occupied, and maintained historic civic buildings, leading by example with adaptive reuse of historic structures. National Register-listed City properties include:

- Municipal Building
- Municipal Auditorium
- Harbor-Longmire Building
- Santa Fe Depot
- Union Depot
- Lake Overholser Bridge and Dam
- Will Rogers Park Gardens and Arboretum
- Lincoln Park Bathhouse

Despite these many successes, the City of Oklahoma City does not have a formal policy to evaluate the effect of City activities on City-owned or controlled historic resources.

It is important for the City to continue to protect long-term investments in its character-defining assets through the good stewardship of City-owned and controlled historic resources.

## **Initiative 1: Preserve and maintain City- owned Historic Resources**

From New-Deal era bath houses to ornate, Art Deco train stations, the City of Oklahoma City owns and maintains numerous historically significant structures and sites. Multiple departments are responsible for both ongoing maintenance and decisions about significant renovations. Some historic resources are within design review or historic districts, triggering a review process that considers historic preservation, and others have taken advantage of federal funding which triggers the National Historic Preservation Act's review process. However, many historic resources owned by the City or its Trusts are not subject to these processes and no special review is required.

### **Identification**

An important part of maintaining historic resources is being able to identify the resources themselves. The list of properties owned by the City or its Trusts should be regularly evaluated for the identification of historic resources. This identification, in coordination with utilization of a Historic Resources Inventory, is essential to good planning and efficient use of City resources. In recent years, the City of Oklahoma City has taken identification to the next step by initiating the nomination of several City-owned properties to the National Register of Historic Places. This type of recognition honors those places that

matter to Oklahoma City, raising awareness of Oklahoma City's history and identity. As part of identification of City-owned historic resources, we should continue to lead by example through the identification and formal recognition of eligible City property, such as through listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Best Practices for Maintenance**

City facilities are managed by numerous departments, all with their own procedures or standards for maintenance and renovations. The General Services Department oversees building maintenance, repair, and enhancement for numerous City-owned properties, including the downtown campus. The Parks and Recreation Department manages and maintains over four thousand acres of park grounds, with park-related structures throughout. Numerous other departments, from Utilities to Police and Fire, oversee their own facilities, while the Public Works Department manages other projects citywide.

Individual City departments have procedures in place for maintenance, but there are no City-wide policies specifically addressing the treatment of city-owned historic resources.

Incorporating consistent standards for maintenance of identified historic resources into existing departments' procedures would guarantee that best practices are followed, ensure the resources' longevity, and protect generations of investment in Oklahoma City's built environment. Existing, established standards,

such as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, and the Building Conservation and Rehabilitation Guidelines for Oklahoma City, provide a starting point for developing standards to be applied to city-owned historic resources.

### **Review of Major Renovations**

Significant investments in properties of the City or its Trusts trigger review by City Council and the Mayor. However, this review does not specifically assess the effect of the proposed actions on a historic resource from a preservation perspective.

The City of Oklahoma City's Historic Preservation Commission is empowered to "comment upon and provide recommendations to the City Council, Planning Commission, other City Boards, Committees and Commissions on actions of other governmental units with respect to the effect of such actions upon historic, architectural and archeological resources," but it currently does not comment on projects outside of HP/HL-zoned districts.

An existing, similar process for advisory reviews and recommendations to City Council by the City of Oklahoma City's Arts Commission on activities related to public art presents a model for providing recommendations on City-owned historic resources. Consideration of the impact of City projects continues the City's stewardship of its own historic resources.



## Initiative 2:

### Consider Historic Preservation Early in the Decision-Making Process for City Projects

In addition to the historic resources that the City currently owns and maintains, the City of Oklahoma City sometimes acquires additional property, or partners with other entities, to invest in the renovation of public facilities. Whether planning for construction of a new facility or renovating an existing building, these activities have the potential to affect historic resources.

Consideration of a project's impact on historic resources should be formally incorporated into the existing public decision-making process. This process should:

- Evaluate whether historic resources will be affected through consultation of the Historic Resources Inventory;
- Encourage public input on the identification of historic resources ; and
- Consider whether an adverse effect on an identified historic resource can be avoided.

These considerations should be made early enough in the project development process to allow time for modifications. This will ensure that projects incorporate historic resources when feasible. They will also identify potential public concerns in a timely manner, keeping large projects on course.



### Initiative 3:

## Ensure the preservation of City-owned historic resources in the event of a change in ownership

It is a rare but real possibility that as City facilities fall out of use they may be de-accessioned and sold for redevelopment. Despite a change in ownership, these historic resources continue to be viewed as a part of Oklahoma City's legacy. Depending upon their significance and the prominence of their location, formerly City-owned historic resources have the potential to be anchors and architectural landmarks and serve as prime examples of creative, adaptive reuse.

To allow a historic resource built by the City and maintained for generations to be insensitively altered or even demolished squanders that public investment. This wastes an opportunity to extend the City's stewardship of its historic resources. When the City considers divesting itself of a historic resource, strong consideration should be given to encouraging or requiring the preservation of that resource as part of a sale or other redevelopment agreement.

**Opposite Page:** The Overholser Bridge, the Municipal Auditorium, Park Structure in Earlywine Park, Union Depot.

**Right:** Santa Fe Depot, Memorial Park, Harbour-Longmire Building, and the Water Filtration Plant.





big idea a three

# Big Idea Three: Protect Historic Resources Citywide

*“Is it not cruel to let our city die by degrees, stripped of all her proud moments, until there is nothing left of all her history and beauty to inspire our children? If they are not inspired by the past of our city, where will they find the strength to fight for her future?”*

- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

## **BIG IDEA**

We will utilize existing, regulatory tools, and develop and implement new tools, to proactively identify, evaluate, and protect historic resources throughout Oklahoma City.

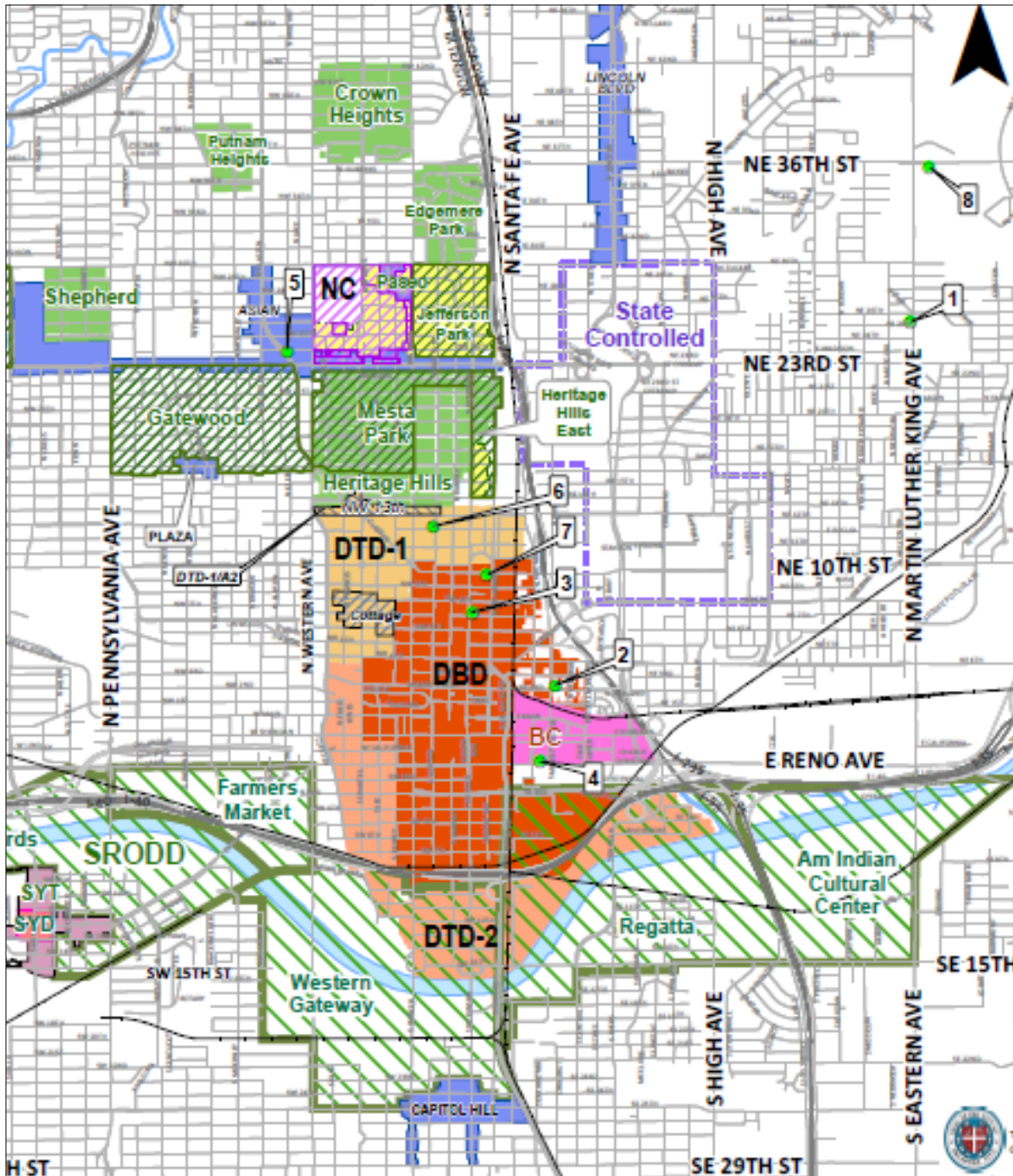
## **INITIATIVES**

1. Identify and Document Historic Resources throughout Oklahoma City.
2. Use design review as a tool to manage change affecting historic resources.
3. Use existing, and develop new, zoning tools to protect Oklahoma City’s historic resources outside of established Historic and Design Review Districts.
4. Develop preservation tools to address vacant, abandoned, and dilapidated historic buildings.

Regulatory tools are integral to the management of a city’s ongoing growth and revitalization. In 1969, Oklahoma City became the first in the state to utilize zoning for the purpose of protecting historic resources with the creation of the Heritage Hills Historic and Architectural District. Since then, eight more historic districts, numerous individual landmarks, and other special zoning districts have been created throughout Oklahoma City’s residential and commercial areas.

Good growth and successful revitalization do not happen by chance. Every city uses zoning and other regulatory tools to manage the development of their downtowns, their commercial corridors, their neighborhoods, and their open space, ensuring the highest quality of life for residents and visitors. As areas from the Plaza District to Paseo and Automobile Alley to Capitol Hill have experienced reinvestment and growth, they’ve been guided by regulatory tools that protect and enhance existing character.

To ensure the ongoing success of these districts and other areas throughout Oklahoma City, additional protection of historic resources is necessary. A small fraction of Oklahoma City properties have the limited



protection of the National Register of Historic Places, while even fewer are protected by local regulations. Too often, historic resources are lost or dramatically altered with no oversight and no opportunity for public input.

Recent survey data shows strong public support for additional protection of historic and cultural resources. In planokc’s Citizen Survey, 75% of respondents felt that it was “very” or “somewhat” important to enhance efforts to preserve historic structures. This was the highest-ranked action identified by the survey as a way to “improve the quality and appearance of the community.”

When asked about specific areas of the city, planokc Citizen Survey respondents identified the preservation of natural areas (for rural parts of the city) and historic buildings (for downtown) as high priorities. Each of these priorities ranked second only to the “repair and maintenance of city streets,” and ranked higher than encouraging new development.

With the range of existing regulatory tools, and public support for the use of additional tools, the City has the opportunity to build on established practices and develop innovative approaches to preservation. We can ensure that ongoing development and revitalization incorporates Oklahoma City’s many historic resources so that they may be enjoyed and valued for generations to come.

## Initiative 1: Identify and document Historic Resources throughout Oklahoma City

As addressed in Big Idea 1, *Strengthen Public Support for Historic Preservation*, we cannot preserve and protect what we do not know exists. Out of more than 400,000 structures in Oklahoma City, approximately 40% are more than 50 years old, yet fewer than 1% have been individually evaluated for, or listed on, the National Register of Historic Places.

Existing survey and National Register data is maintained by the City in a Historic Resources Inventory, but this inventory has not kept pace with Oklahoma City's growth and the related aging of historic structures. Each year, the number of potentially significant properties increases, as approximately 2,000 more structures reach 50 years of age (generally considered the cut-off for qualifying as potentially historic).

Further, while the current Inventory provides information about properties that have been evaluated for National Register eligibility, it does not adequately address which properties may qualify locally as Historic or Architectural Resources according to definitions within the Oklahoma City Municipal Code.

Ongoing maintenance and further expansion of the Historic Resources Inventory is not just a scholarly exercise. The Historic Resources Inventory is a valuable tool to inform residents

and property owners, City leaders and decision makers, about significant historic resources. The Inventory can be used to:

- Identify historic resources that may qualify for financial incentives, such as state and federal tax credits for historic preservation;
- Streamline the City's participation in federal review processes, such as FEMA-funded disaster response, EPA-funded environmental impact studies, or HUD-funded housing rehabilitation projects;
- Inform decision-makers and developers about priority areas for revitalization; and
- Highlight historic resources worthy of more formal recognition, including local historic district or landmark designation, or nomination to the National Register.

In the interest of providing accurate and useful information to the public at large, to property owners, and to decision makers, the ongoing maintenance and enhanced use of the City's Historic Resource Inventory is an important first step in identifying and protecting Historic Resources citywide.



Winchester Drive-In at 6930 S. Western is Oklahoma City's only remaining drive-in movie theater in operation, and was identified as historically significant by participants in the *preserveokc* survey. Neither the drive-in nor its spectacular neon sign has any local protection. It has not been identified as eligible for the National Register, in part due to its age.

## **Initiative 2: Use Design Review as a Tool to manage change affecting Historic Resources**

Oklahoma City has a multi-layered approach to historic preservation and design review within established Historic Preservation/Landmark and Design Review Districts. Each of these zoning tools effectively manages change within key, character-defining areas of the city. These existing tools present an opportunity for improvement in the treatment of historic resources.

### **Existing Design Review Process**

Locally-regulated historic preservation and design review zoning is a powerful tool for guiding change, not just freezing a historic resource in time. Through the opportunity to guide redevelopment, the review process gives a community the ability to see the potential in key districts and buildings, to encourage property owners to rehabilitate historic properties, and to spur revitalization for entire districts. The individuals who serve on Historic Preservation and Design Review Commissions and Committees are ambassadors for the vision and significance of their districts.

Throughout Oklahoma City, nine Historic (HP/HL) districts and 10 Design Review districts oversee the maintenance, revitalization, and redevelopment of diverse residential and commercial areas. From July 2014 to July 2016,

these districts have approved over 1,300 projects, working with just as many property owners, developers and architects to achieve the best possible outcomes on a range of projects.

Projects bring ongoing investment and increase property values. Since 2009, property values within Historic and Design Review Districts have increased on average by 18.8% per year, compared to a 4.8% increase for the entire city.

The consideration of historic resources is an important yet sometimes controversial component of the design review process. Establishing policies for identification and review of historic resources will provide greater predictability for the public and for property owners. It will give design review body members the confidence that they are making decisions in an informed and consistent manner.

These policies should include:

- Consultation of the Historic Resources Inventory to identify historic resources;
- Evaluation process for properties not yet included in the Inventory;
- Improved Guidelines for review of Historic Resources; and
- Utilization of ability to refer cases affecting Historic Resources to the Historic Preservation Commission.

For Design Review Districts other than Historic Preservation/Landmark Districts, guidelines for changes to historic buildings are minimal. All

Design Review Districts should incorporate guidelines for historic resources. Documents like the *Building Conservation and Rehabilitation Guidelines for Oklahoma City*, as well as those previously developed for individual districts like Automobile Alley and Capitol Hill, serve as strong examples.

Policies for review of identified historic resources should also be developed to strengthen the recently revised criteria for review of proposed demolitions. Use of the Historic Resources Inventory can further clarify which properties are likely to be considered Historic and Architectural Resources under the review criteria. Additional policies may include a framework for determining when demolition of a historic resource should be referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for additional comments.

### **Engaging Design Review Members**

Changes in policy make little difference if those implementing them are not fully engaged. New policies and guidelines should be combined with ongoing training opportunities to better inform and empower members of Design Review Commissions and Committees.

Interviews with members of design review bodies highlighted a need for ongoing training on the evaluation of historic resources.

Design review body members also expressed support for the increased utilization of their ability to seek additional information or expertise on historic resources, such as through the request for additional review and recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission.

## Expanding Historic Preservation and Design Review Districts

Nationally, cities use local zoning tools for landmark and historic district designation to proactively identify and protect important buildings, sites, and districts. In comparison to peer cities, Oklahoma City has a very small number of locally designated historic landmarks, mostly concentrated in and near downtown. Oklahoma City has not designated a local historic district since 1999. The most recent Design Review District to be created is the Scenic River Overlay Design District, established in 2007.

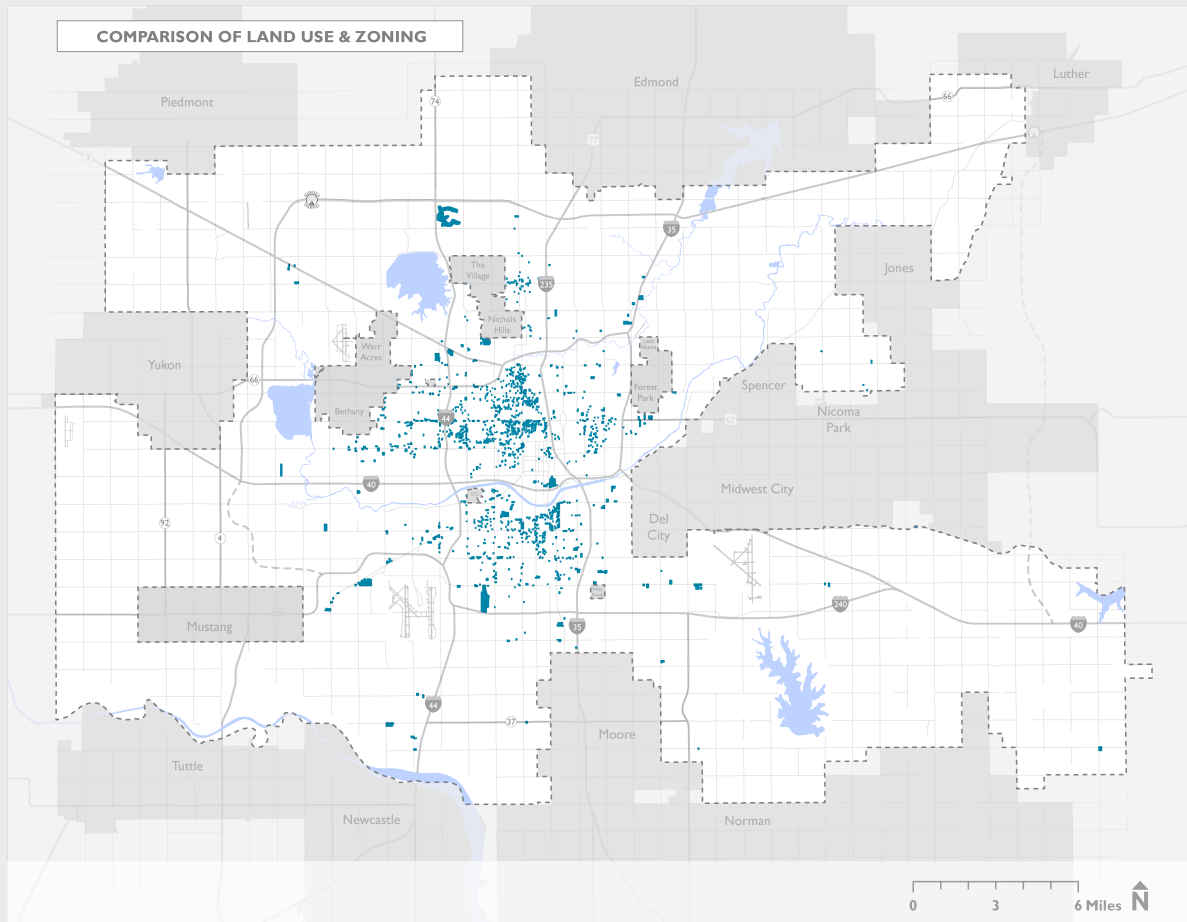
Creating and maintaining historic and design review districts requires time and effort, both in the rezoning process to create a new district and in management of the design review process once created. These processes also require a significant commitment from residents and property owners. However, there is public support for expanding historic and design review districts, with **planokc** Citizen Survey respondents ranking the enhancement of efforts to preserve historic structures the highest among actions to “improve the quality and appearance of the community.”

Working with neighborhoods, residents, and property owners to identify Oklahoma City’s significant historic resources improves community appearance and quality of life. In this way we can proactively identify the community’s priorities for preservation.



### Creston Hills

Though not designated as a historic district, Creston Hills was identified as “historic” by residents in an online survey for **preserveokc**. First developed during the 1928 oil boom, northeast OKC’s South Creston Hills’ 30- square block area was restricted to white buyers, who purchased lots for \$50 down and \$15 a month. By January 1929, with 40 bungalows under construction, the Great Depression ground development to a halt nationwide. Little was built during the 1930s, but during the 1940s war years and beyond, new home construction in South Creston Hills—now for predominantly black homeowners—boomed due to proximity to good jobs at Tinker Air Force Base. Though not designated, residents prize the area for its historic character and comfortable, neighborly feel.



### Non-Conforming Zoning & Use Parcels

This map depicts individual parcels indicated by the County Assessor to be at least 50 years old, for which the current zoning’s allowed uses do not match the current use as identified by the County Assessor’s records.

A zoning designation that does not match the actual use of the property may impede redevelopment of a historic resource. In addition, zoning at a much greater intensity than what exists may inadvertently encourage demolition and replacement of less intensively-developed historic resources.

### Initiative 3:

### Use existing and develop new zoning tools to protect Oklahoma City’s historic resources outside of established Historic and Design Review Districts.

Out of more than 400,000 structures in Oklahoma City, less than 3% are regulated with Historic Preservation, Historic Landmark, or other Design Review District zoning. Nearly 100 neighborhoods and districts have been previously identified as potentially historic, but have no local protections in place.

For the majority of properties located outside of special design districts, zoning tools are in place to ensure compatibility of uses and the related built environment, regulating the “bulk standards” for proposed development, including building height, setbacks, density, and materials. While these regulations provide some oversight, they do not address historic resources. Entire neighborhoods can be rapidly transformed, rural landscapes destroyed, and iconic landmark structures lost, with no public notification or review process for “by-right” demolitions, alterations, or new construction. There is strong public support for increased oversight for changes to historic and cultural resources beyond the limited boundaries of historic and special design districts. 70% of planokc Citizen Survey

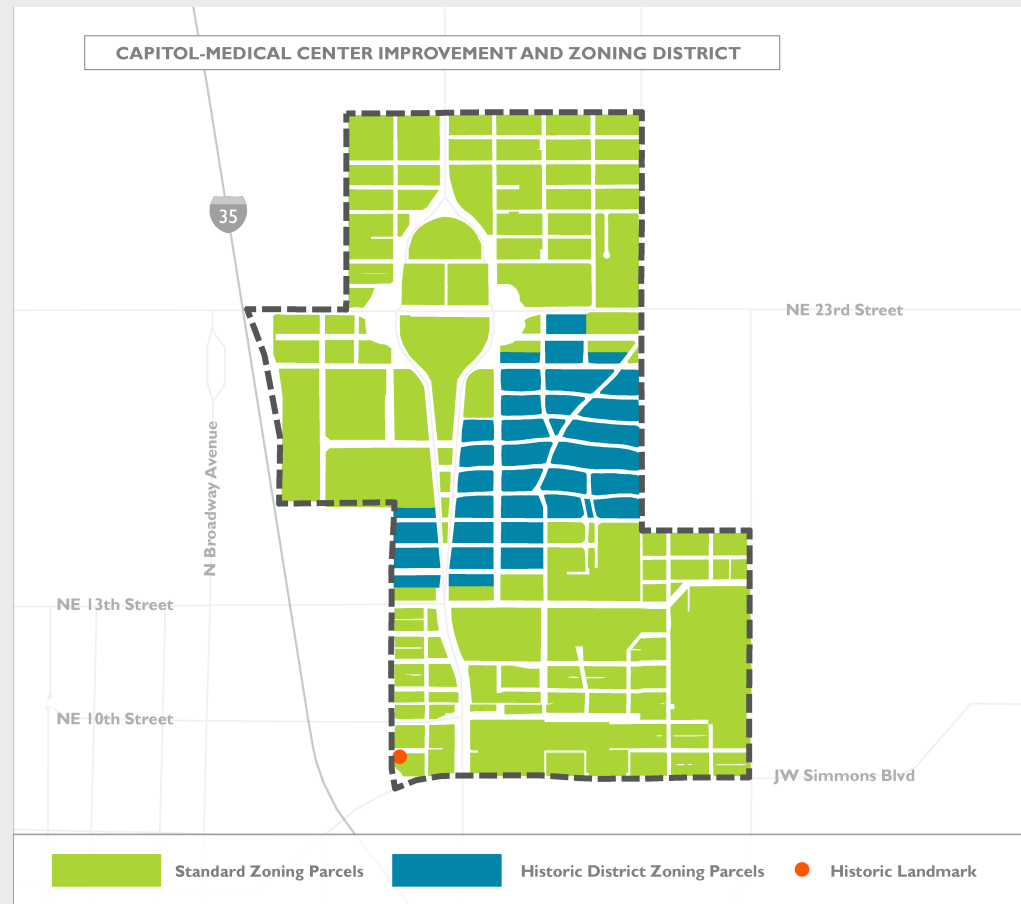


respondents supported preserving natural areas through regulation. 80% of preserveokc survey respondents who identified their neighborhoods as historic (but not zoned HP) supported review of changes to buildings in their neighborhood, while 83% supported review of demolitions.

This public support aligns with preservation goals identified in the City's comprehensive plan. planokc calls for revising existing or adopting new ordinances that ensure consistency in the review of projects that affect historic properties. By looking beyond Historic Preservation/Landmark and Design Review District zoning to other review processes, the City can establish a more comprehensive approach to preservation and revitalization.

### Compatibility of Zoning with Historic Resources

As a city, we value quality development that creates distinctive places, utilizes established character and existing infrastructure, and preserves the historic, architectural, rural, and natural qualities important to our quality of life. We encourage reinvestment, revitalization, and infill development that enhances established character rather than detracts from it. We can further these goals by strengthening consideration of historic resources in our existing regulatory processes and implementing additional tools to specifically address historic preservation citywide.



### The Capitol-Medical Center Improvement and Zoning District

The Capitol-Medical Center Improvement and Zoning (CMZ) District is a defined area within Oklahoma City that surrounds the Oklahoma State Capitol complex and the University of Oklahoma Medical Center. This area is not subject to City of Oklahoma City zoning regulations. Created by the State Legislature in 1953 to oversee development surrounding the State Capitol, the district has its own Zoning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission, and has designated historic districts and landmarks through its own zoning process.

This region of the city includes some of our most significant buildings and neighborhoods. While the City of Oklahoma City has no regulatory control over the district, we can share tools like the Historic Resources Inventory, programs like workshops, and provide support with many other non-zoning tools identified in this plan for the identification, protection, and revitalization of historic resources within the CMZ District.



## Consideration of Historic Resources in Development Review

The density and established development pattern of an existing, historic property or district should be a factor in evaluating the compatibility of a new development or change in zoning. Just as Environmentally Sensitive Areas are identified in **planokc**, historic resources should be identified, evaluated and when appropriate, protected, as part of evaluating the compatibility of a proposed development with the comprehensive plan.

**planokc** assigns Land Use Typology Areas (LUTAs) to land within Oklahoma City. Each LUTA focuses on the appropriate intensity of development for each part of the city and identifies areas designated for the provision of urban services, concentrations of commercial and employment uses, and preservation of rural and natural areas. These LUTAs range from undeveloped open space to the high intensity of Downtown.

While LUTAs are not preservation-specific tools, they illustrate the importance of considering the impact of growth and development upon existing resources. LUTAs, and the development review process in general, present an opportunity for increased consideration of historic resources.

## Proactive Evaluation of Zoning Compatibility

Beyond review of individual development proposals, identification of historic resources presents an opportunity to evaluate the compatibility of the existing zoning with a historic

## Compatibility of Historic Resources and Zoning: Restoration of Historic Use

The apartment building at 436 NW 27th Street is located within the Jefferson Park Historic District, in an area now zoned "R-2" (which allows two-family residential development), but historically housed at least four apartments. The owner's efforts to renovate the building required it to be brought into compliance with current zoning, limiting it to no more than two dwelling units. In order to return the building to its historic function, the owner pursued several forms of zoning relief. We can pursue programs, policies, or ordinance amendments to better facilitate the continued use of historic structures that are compatible with their surrounding neighborhoods but no longer in compliance with their zoning.

resources' density and intensity of use. Zoning that allows dense residential development within a rural area, for instance, may inadvertently encourage demolition of historic structures for higher-density redevelopment.

Conversely, single-family zoning applied broadly to neighborhoods that historically included a mix of single family homes, duplexes, small apartment buildings, and neighborhood businesses may create barriers to the ongoing use or adaptive reuse of historic properties and constrain compatible new development.

As historically-significant areas are identified, their compatibility with their existing zoning should be evaluated as well. When larger, comprehensive changes are made to the Planning and Zoning Code, the compatibility of the existing character of identified historic resources with their zoning should be assessed and revision encouraged in the case of a conflict.



### **Compatibility of Historic Resources and Zoning: Retention of Existing Development**

This farmhouse on SW 29th Street was constructed prior to Oklahoma statehood, and county records indicate it has been in the same family since that time. This property has not been evaluated in a historic survey, and has no local or federal historic designations.

Currently, this and surrounding properties are zoned "R-1," which would allow single-family residential development, at a greater density than the current, rural character of this property. There would also be no review for the demolition of the historic house, and no consideration for the impact of development on the historic significance of this property.



## **New Zoning Tools**

In addition to the development review process, the creation of new review procedures or zoning requirements would achieve additional protection for historic resources. Examples from across the country include enhanced review of demolition of identified categories of historic resources and zoning overlays that provide varying levels of review for new development within historic areas outside of established Historic Preservation, Historic Landmark, or Special Design Districts.

## **Demolition Delay**

For example, cities across the country have implemented regulations, typically called “Demolition Delay” ordinances, to allow more thorough consideration of the demolition of historic resources. These tools identify specific properties, categories of properties (such as those already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or those over a certain age), or geographic areas, for which the review is conducted.

Enhanced review typically incorporates a public notification process, additional review by staff or a designated review body, and a mandatory waiting period prior to issuance of a demolition permit. The process is intended to increase public awareness of

**Left:** In 2019, the Oklahoma City Council, the owners of the National Register-listed First Christian Church, and a prospective buyer executed a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that the building would be preserved in the event of a change of ownership. Tools like Demolition Delay ordinances can provide a more predictable and proactive method for identifying alternatives to the loss of historic resources.

potentially significant demolitions, and to encourage property owners to consider alternatives to demolition.

### Stepped Approach to Design Review

Many projects other than demolition may affect the character of a district or neighborhood, or dramatically alter a historic structure. Beyond review of demolitions, many communities have implemented tiered approaches to historic preservation and design review. These staggered levels of design review may limit their purview to certain categories of work, such as demolition and new construction, or be more flexible than a typical historic or design review district.

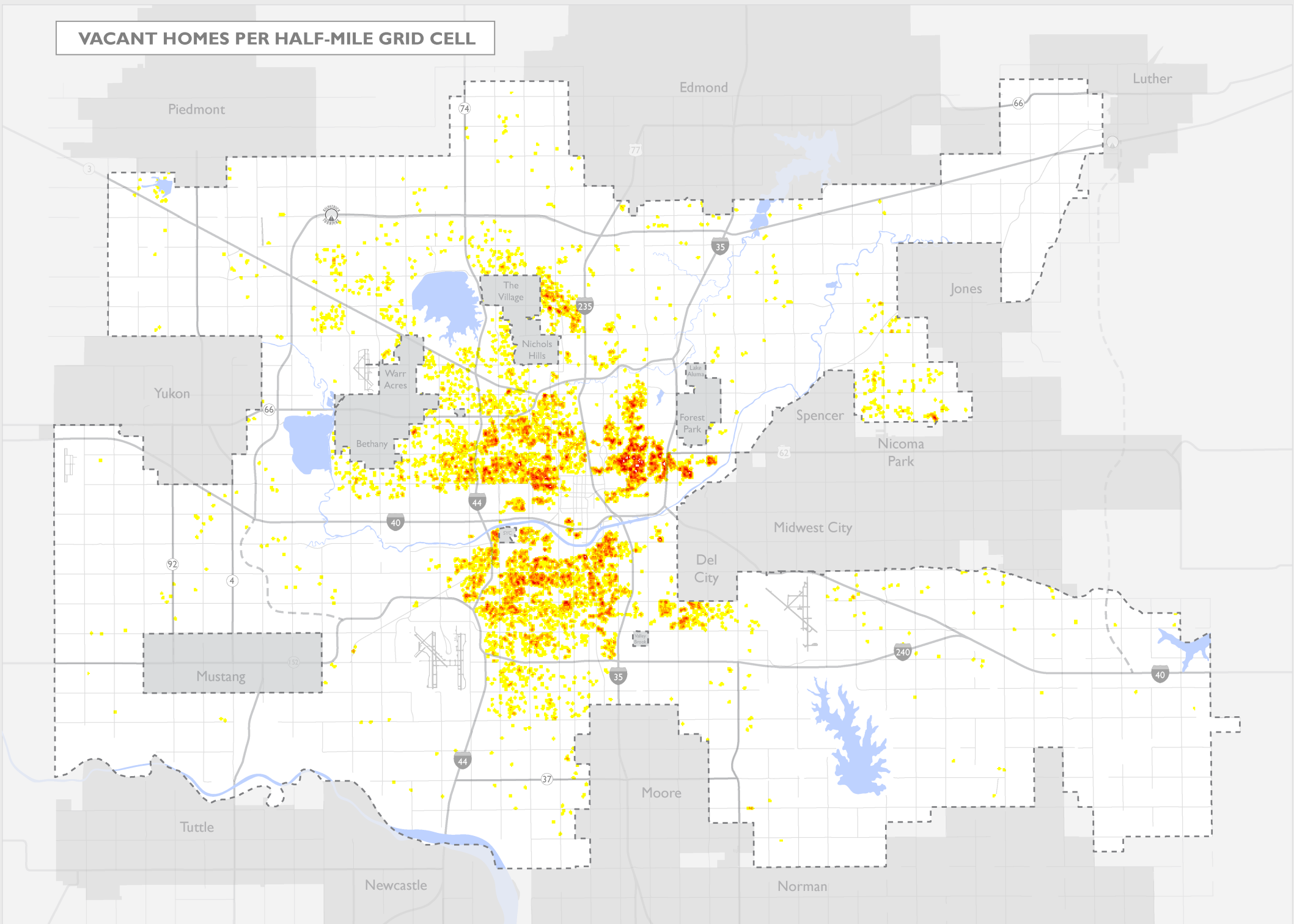
Implementing a tiered approach to design review gives residents greater opportunity to provide input into their neighborhood's development. This approach encourages investment and revitalization by setting clear expectations for an area's character, providing direction for compatible development, and stabilizing property values. This approach provides greater opportunity for the City to guide revitalization and redevelopment in key areas of the city.



### The Evolution of a House: 1520 NW 6th Street

In 1907, a photographer captured this modest home in Oklahoma City. Over the years, the structure has evolved, as architectural features, windows, doors, siding, and roof forms have been replaced or changed. While most of these changes were seemingly minor, the cumulative effect is a transformation of this modest, historic home.

# VACANT HOMES PER HALF-MILE GRID CELL



## Fiscal Impacts of Vacant & Abandoned Buildings On OKC's Economy

### \$2.7 billion in lost property value

- 29% loss within 150 feet
- 21% loss between 151-300 feet
- 12% loss between 301-600 feet

### \$6.5 million annual cost of providing City services

Cost of police, fire and animal welfare calls attributable to vacant and abandoned structures.

### \$17.8 million in lost annual revenues

- \$12.4 million in lost sales/use taxes, franchise fees, licenses and permit and service charges
- \$5.4 million in lost property tax revenue to debt service fund

**\$15 million in lost revenue to OKC school districts** from negative impact of vacant and abandoned buildings on surrounding properties

## Initiative 4: Develop preservation tools to address vacant, abandoned, and dilapidated Historic Resources.

In addition to zoning, code requirements for the basic maintenance of structures affect the potential revitalization of thousands of historic properties throughout Oklahoma City. New efforts to specifically address the serious problems caused by vacant and abandoned buildings increase property maintenance code enforcement efforts, with a disproportionate number of vacant and abandoned buildings located in potentially historic areas (map). These regulatory activities have the potential to have a significant impact upon Oklahoma City's historic resources citywide.

plan**okc** emphasizes the importance of addressing vacant and abandoned buildings, calling them out as a detractor from Neighborhood Health, one of eight issue focus points in plan**okc**. Multiple Elements in plan**okc**, including live**okc** (communities), enrich**okc** (preservation, appearance, and culture), and strengthen**okc** (economic development) identify addressing vacant and abandoned buildings as key to improving the quality of life, physical appearance, and potential for economic development in Oklahoma City.

In 2013, Oklahoma City completed the study *Addressing Vacant and Abandoned Buildings in*

*Oklahoma City: Prevalence, Costs and Program Proposals*. The study identified the real costs to the City from code enforcement, police, fire, other safety responses, and lost revenue in the form of decreased property taxes, all stemming from vacant and abandoned properties.

In 2014, Oklahoma City adopted a new abandoned building ordinance that defined abandoned buildings, implemented escalated fines for violations of the property maintenance code, identified abandoned buildings as a "public nuisance," and implemented fees for police and fire responses at abandoned buildings.

In 2016, a follow-up report from the City of Oklahoma City Abandoned Buildings Coalition was issued with recommendations for further action, including:

- increased administrative fees for code enforcement work related to abandoned buildings;
- developing a more strategic, proactive and preventative code enforcement approach;
- alternatives to traditional boarding and securing of properties to improve appearance and minimize the perception of blight;
- improvements in the area of public information and data collection and analysis; and
- increasing neighborhood engagement in the code enforcement process.



### How Far Gone is Too Far Gone?

In 2015, this 1930s house at 917 NW 40th Street was nearly demolished. Neglected for years (top) with unresponsive owners, the house had become an object of extreme frustration for the Crown Heights neighborhood. With few options to provoke repair or maintenance, the house was added to the City's list of dilapidated structures slated for demolition. At the 11th hour, owners agreed to sell the blond brick Colonial Revival home to new owners who did not regard the condition as "too far gone." In 2016, following a full restoration and rehabilitation (bottom), the new owners moved into the house.

The report identifies efforts that may require more significant reform or funding, including:

- amending state and local laws to allow expanded recovery of associated public costs;
- establishing an abandoned property abatement fund or other investment mechanisms;
- targeted approaches to demolition of derelict structures;
- legislative efforts to addressing transfers of ownership, property taxation rates, and foreclosures;
- tax incentives to encourage revitalization or remediation of blight; and
- development of a land bank.

Each of these plans and studies echo the comments and concerns of preserveokc stakeholders and public process participants. They illustrate the impact of vacant and abandoned buildings themselves, and the methods selected to address them, upon Oklahoma City's historic resources. Current and ongoing efforts to alleviate Oklahoma City's vacant and abandoned building epidemic must specifically address the challenges and the opportunities facing historic resources citywide.

### Code Enforcement

Enforcement penalties strong enough to motivate owners to either remediate or sell their property, paired with financial incentives or

assistance for qualified owners, would counter some of the economic imbalance in the current system. In the case of historic properties, rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures as the method of abatement must be emphasized over their removal. This is key not only to preserve individual historic resources, but to retain the cohesiveness, character and quality of surrounding neighborhoods and commercial districts. As recommended in the 2016 Vacant and Abandoned Buildings Coalition report, these enforcement efforts must be proactive and forceful, stimulating an owner response and the necessary repairs before it is too late to bring a structure back into use.

### Demolition by Neglect

With recognized, protected historic properties, failure to maintain a structure violates not only property maintenance requirements, but circumvents the City's codes mandating the affirmative maintenance of designated historic resources. Enhanced code enforcement methods sometimes dubbed "Demolition by Neglect" can more directly target vacant, abandoned, and dilapidated structures.

Demolition by Neglect ordinances typically identify specific structural problems and maintenance deficiencies that demonstrate demolition by neglect of a historic resource, as well as appropriate methods of remediation. They give municipalities stronger enforcement tools such as increased fines or liens for repairs made by the City. These ordinances should include



provisions that prevent owners from claiming an economic hardship if they request approval of demolition; prohibit permitting for new work unrelated to abatement, or bar new development on the site for a specified length of time if the property is ultimately demolished due to neglect.

### **Incentives and Assistance**

As recommended by the 2016 Vacant and Abandoned Buildings Coalition report, effective enforcement should be paired with financial assistance programs and incentives to encourage compliance. The City currently offers financial assistance for qualified owners to address property maintenance issues, such as those managed by the City's Housing and Community Development Division. These programs provide a basis for expansion and an opportunity to focus specifically on historic properties. Financial incentives specifically aimed at revitalization of vacant historic buildings, paired with requirements for appropriate rehabilitation, may also leverage state and federal tax incentives for historic rehabilitations, further extending the City's investment.

The negative effects of vacant, abandoned or dilapidated structures on Oklahoma City are well documented. The loss of historically and architecturally significant structures to neglect is irreversible. Using existing regulatory tools and creating new tools to address property maintenance and abandoned buildings is one of the most important steps the City can take to secure the high quality of life created through the active occupation of our historic resources.

### **Revitalization Power of Tacos**

In 2009, three seasoned chefs took a chance on a vacant drive-in restaurant at 530 NW 23rd Street. Since then, Big Truck Tacos has helped catalyze the successful revitalization of one of OKC's hottest historic commercial districts, Uptown 23rd.

This segment of NW 23rd Street, once known as the heart of Route 66 through Oklahoma City, was the city's first shopping district outside of downtown. It is surrounded by historic neighborhoods and traveled daily by thousands of vehicles. However, by the early 2000s, this stretch of NW 23rd had many vacant and boarded buildings, struggling businesses, and little to draw interest and activity.

Big Truck Tacos was one of the first businesses to invest in what is now a thriving, urban commercial district, transforming a mid-century cinder-block building into a trendy, thriving destination restaurant.

Big Truck Tacos' success, including a modest exterior rehabilitation involving mostly paint and new signage, demonstrates how a great idea can activate even a humble historic structure. Just as one vacant building can bring down an entire block, one revitalized space can catalyze millions of dollars of reinvestment in surrounding properties. Now supported by the Uptown 23rd District Association and a participant in the City's Commercial District Revitalization Program, this historic corridor is lined with reactivated historic buildings and thriving businesses.



*After decades of vacancy, developers of the historic Douglass High School (also known as Page-Woodson) used numerous local, state, and federal incentives to rehabilitate the building into housing.*

**big idea four**



# Big Idea Four: Develop Effective Tools to Promote Preservation

*“An incentive is a bullet, a key: an often tiny object with astonishing power to change a situation.”*

- Steven D. Levitt,  
*Freakonomics*

## **BIG IDEA**

We will use existing and develop new financial and procedural incentives to promote the preservation of Oklahoma City’s historic resources.

## **INITIATIVES**

1. Incorporate consideration of, and requirements for, historic resources into the use of existing incentives.
2. Create new financial incentives specifically for historic preservation.
3. Create procedural incentives to facilitate and encourage historic preservation.
4. Facilitate use of state and federal incentives for historic preservation.

By emphasizing the importance of historic preservation within existing incentive programs, and developing new tools and policies to encourage historic preservation specifically, we can more fully support and encourage the preservation of historic resources beyond the limits of regulatory controls.

Some of the greatest preservation success stories have been initiated through the use of incentives—programs that encourage a property owner to voluntarily preserve their building. At the national level, federal tax incentives have generated over 42,000 rehabilitation projects, generating \$84 billion in investment and an estimated 2.44 million jobs.

Oklahoma’s equivalent state tax incentive has generated 77 rehabilitation projects, \$520 million in total project investment, and over 6,000 jobs. Nearly half of these projects, and over \$240 million in investment, have occurred in Oklahoma City alone.

The City of Oklahoma City has seen the impacts of successful



incentive programs. Prominent landmarks and entire commercial districts have been rehabilitated thanks to the state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation, in many cases boosted by the assistance of tax increment financing or other locally-run grant or loan programs. Neighborhoods, too, have seen the impact of financial and other programs to assist and incentivize revitalization.

Nationwide, cities are using similar incentive programs to specifically encourage historic preservation and to address the specific needs and challenges of their communities and historic building stock.

Oklahoma City has an opportunity to develop and expand incentives that recognize the value of historic resources to the community's larger redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

**Left:** The historic Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, now the 21C Hotel (see opposite page).

## Initiative 1:

### **Incorporate consideration of and priority for historic resources into the use of existing incentives.**

The City of Oklahoma City utilizes incentive programs and other forms of assistance to encourage private investment and good development. Each of these programs affects individual historic structures, as well as entire historic neighborhoods and commercial districts. Each of these has successfully leveraged local, state, and federal funds for the revitalization of residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors key to Oklahoma City's quality of life. While these frequently impact historic resources, there is opportunity to more effectively utilize these incentives and programs to encourage historic preservation.

#### **Tax Increment Finance Districts**

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts, used in cities across the country, reinvest property taxes into a designated area, encouraging increased private investment and ultimately generating increased property values and revenue. Oklahoma City has established 11 TIF districts, spurring millions of dollars in private investment in existing buildings and new developments. TIF projects include historic properties like the Skirvin Hilton and Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant (now the 21C Hotel) downtown, and Page Woodson High School in Northeast

Oklahoma City, as well as new developments in the Oklahoma Health Center, along the Oklahoma River, and elsewhere.

Enabling legislation for TIF Districts states that the *intent* is that “conservation, preservation, and rehabilitation be emphasized while demolition, clearance and relocation be minimized where possible.” Many TIF projects involve the rehabilitation of historic structures, and pair this valuable local incentive with state and federal tax credits. However, the consideration of the impact of a potential TIF project upon historic resources, and utilization of TIF funds to specifically advance historic preservation has not been formalized within the TIF district process in the past.

Tax Increment Finance Districts are a powerful tool for revitalization. Rehabilitation of historic structures is key to that revitalization's success. There is local precedent for the incorporation of historic preservation into TIF districts, such as in the requirement of a preservation easement at the Skirvin Hilton, or the inclusion of consideration for historic resources in the recently-created Core to Shore Reinvestment Area Policy Guide. We should build on these successes to formalize policies that include consideration of, and priority for, the preservation of historic resources throughout new and existing TIF districts.

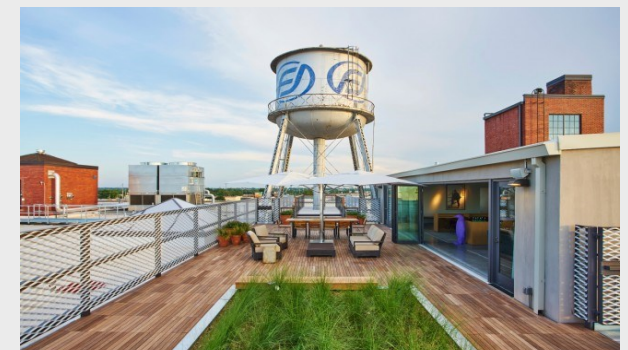
### **Artful Use of Tax Credits and TIF**

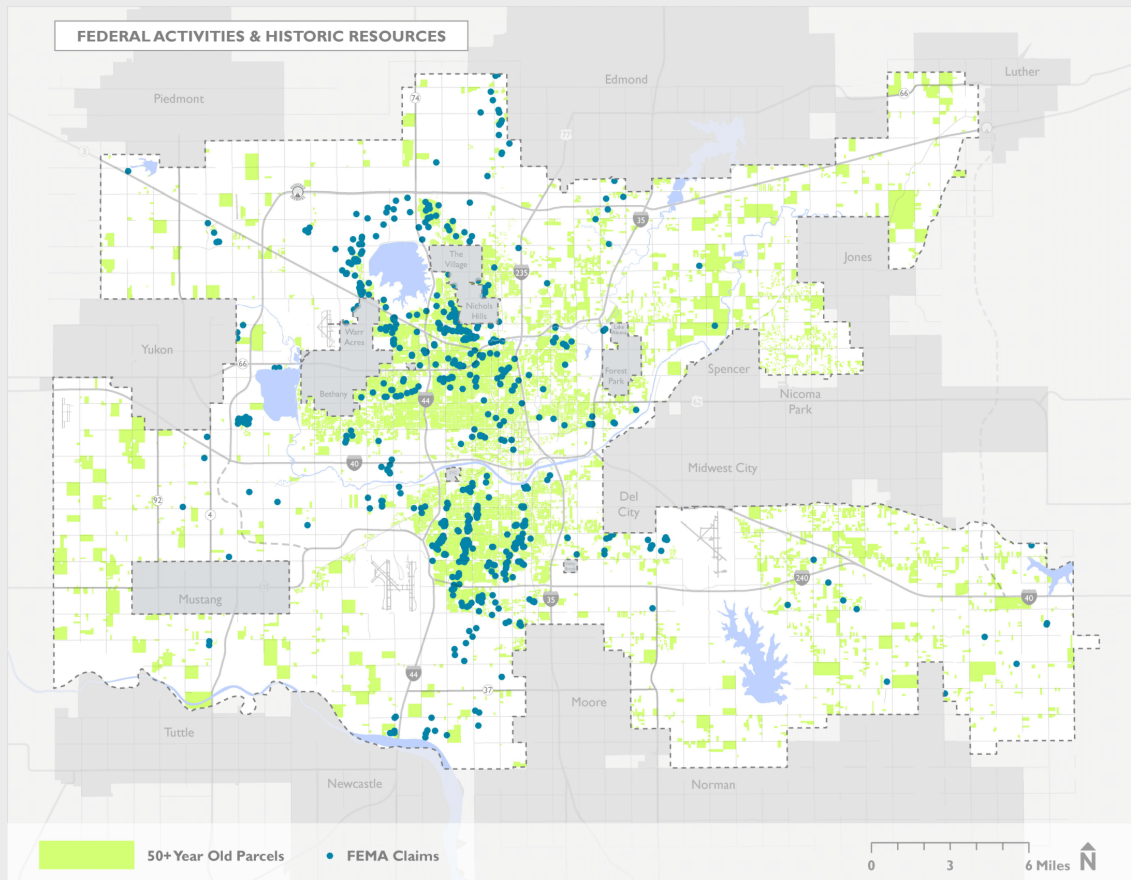
In 2016, Louisville, KY-based 21c Hotels opened their newest venture in Oklahoma City's 100-year-old Fred Jones Manufacturing building. Located at 900 W Main Street, the four-story red brick building was originally a Ford Model T assembly plant designed by famed industrial architect Albert Kahn. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014.

21c hoteliers, preservationists and contemporary art collectors Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson strongly believe in the power of historic preservation to leverage downtown revitalization. And Fred Jones property owners Hall Capital couldn't agree more. Managing partners were anxious to see their family's third generation investment put to a new use as a development catalyst on the western edge of downtown OKC.

The \$51.5 million project converted the former manufacturing plant to a 134-room hotel, restaurant and art museum using a combination of private and public financing. This included 20%, respectively, in state and federal Historic Preservation Rehabilitation Tax Credits, as well as \$5.3 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and \$6.9 million in a Section 108 loan backed by the City's Community Development Block Grant allocation.

This project, with its enormous potential to create jobs and to anchor and spur revitalization of a difficult-to-develop, formerly industrial corner of downtown, would not have been possible without the combined use of tax credits, TIF and CDBG.





### Federal Activities & Historic Resources

By coordinating the use of data on historic properties and federally-funded activities, such as the FEMA claims mapped here, the City can use federal dollars more efficiently. Many federal activities trigger review of historic resources, and we can streamline compliance with better coordination. We can proactively identify key areas of activity and prioritize survey efforts in advance of future needs.

### Federal Programs

The City manages over \$30 million in grant funds for revitalization and redevelopment. These funds are available within a variety of programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as programs through the Environmental Protection Agency and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Each of these programs includes federal requirements for identification and consideration of historic resources. We can take steps to more efficiently manage compliance with preservation-related requirements, including:

- use of proactive survey work and the Historic Resources Inventory to streamline identification of historic resources;
- inclusion of historic resource identification and treatment methods in the City of Oklahoma City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan; and
- development of programmatic agreements for specific federal programs.

We can also use these funds and the programs they support to encourage historic preservation, prioritizing projects that rehabilitate historic resources or make infrastructure improvements in qualifying historic areas.

Whether small grants or loans to assist with façade improvements along historic commercial corridors, or public investments in sidewalks or sewers within historic neighborhoods, these funds present an opportunity to respond to stakeholders’ needs for redevelopment of historic areas, and to direct assistance toward important historic resources.

## Initiative 2:

### Create new financial incentives specifically for historic preservation.

Ensuring that existing incentives encourage, support, and do no harm to historic resources is an important first step in promoting historic preservation activities. Beyond this, many cities utilize financial or procedural incentives to specifically encourage historic preservation activities. Oklahoma City has had great success with the use of local incentives to encourage a range of development activities, but has not focused these on historic preservation. The City has the opportunity to create additional tools specifically to encourage historic preservation, and further catalyze rehabilitation of historic structures and districts.

#### TIF and Tax Abatement for Historic Preservation Areas

The state statute that gives Oklahoma municipalities the ability to create Tax Increment Finance districts allows the creation of a TIF district in a “historic preservation area,” but Oklahoma City has never created a TIF district on this basis. Historic preservation areas are defined as properties or districts in, or nominated to, the National Register of Historic Places, *or* areas or structures subject to historic preservation zoning. That statute further specifies that rehabilitation in a historic preservation area must



#### Case Study: A Hypothetical Tax Abatement

Some cities and counties have effectively used property tax abatement as a financial incentive for historic preservation. This tool “freezes” a property’s assessed value at the pre-rehabilitation amount for a specific number of years, lessening the impact of increased value (and therefore increased taxes) for an owner when they choose to undertake a significant rehabilitation project. When the property has been vacant or underutilized for many years, this savings can be significant.

One illustration of the type of property that would benefit from such a tool is Bricktown’s Rock Island Plow, vacant for decades before it was rehabilitated.

	2012 (Pre-Rehabilitation)	2019
Market Value	\$1,261,000	\$4,973,590
Assessed Value	\$138,710	\$547,095
Property Tax	\$15,911	\$62,062

The Oklahoma County Assessor indicates a tax increase of \$46,151, or 290% over the pre-rehabilitation taxes. If this increase was abated for 5 years, it would result in a savings of approximately \$230,000, or approximately 5.75% of the project’s estimated construction cost.



### **Tax Increment Financing for Historic Preservation Areas**

Oklahoma’s Local Development Act gives municipalities the ability to create Tax Increment Districts (TIFs). The legislation includes guidelines for working in conjunction with programs such as Oklahoma Main Streets and historic preservation, and ensuring that “conservation, preservation and rehabilitation be emphasized while demolition, clearance and relocation be minimized where possible” for *all* TIFs.

Beyond that, the legislation gives municipalities the ability to create TIFs for “historic preservation areas,” or structures or areas listed in, or nominated to, the National Register of Historic Places AND subject to historic preservation zoning. In this way, the economic revitalization of an area can be prioritized equally with the retention of its historic character.

meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

This category for TIF funding gives the City an opportunity to create an incentive for revitalization in historic areas that may not meet TIF criteria for an Enterprise or Reinvestment Zone, or where the additional requirement that rehabilitation meet preservation standards is warranted. Further, it provides a much-needed “carrot” for the regulatory “stick” of historic preservation zoning. By creating preservation-based TIF districts, we can further utilize this impressive tool for the revitalization of historic areas key to Oklahoma City’s character and quality of life.

In addition to TIF, cities across the country have used property tax abatement to incentivize historic preservation activities. By capping a property’s assessed value at the pre-rehabilitation value for a set number of years, the burden of increased property tax due to investment is alleviated. In return, the City is able to attach requirements for the preservation of the property to the abatement. While property taxes in Oklahoma are relatively low, an abatement for a property undergoing significant rehabilitation would be a worthwhile incentive for many property owners.

### **Preservation Easements**

In addition to TIF for historic preservation areas, other opportunities exist to create incentives with preservation strings attached. One such tool is a preservation easement. Preservation easements



are a unique tool for the protection of historic resources that function separately from zoning. Easements can be put in place in perpetuity or for a defined number of years. With the donation of a preservation easement, property owners potentially qualify for a tax deduction.

The City previously has accepted the donation of a preservation easement on the Skirvin Hilton, pairing the public investment into the building's rehabilitation with the requirement that the historic building be preserved. More fully developing a preservation easement program would create an additional tool for protecting historic structures while offering some financial benefit to property owners.

### **Financial Assistance for Rehabilitation**

Oklahoma City manages a number of successful programs to provide assistance for repair or redevelopment of properties. Across the country, cities pair similar programs with the encouragement (or requirement) that they be applied to historic buildings, and to appropriate rehabilitation work. Whether property tax abatement, a low-interest or forgivable loan, or a grant, Oklahoma City can use existing or new incentive programs to encourage and facilitate historic preservation.

Preservation challenges, such as dilapidated homes in historic districts, storefronts in commercial corridors, or prominent, vacant and abandoned landmarks, can be the road block to an area's redevelopment. Alternately, their rehabilitation can be the turning point for an

entire neighborhood or district's renaissance. Local incentives for historic preservation can be customized to address Oklahoma City's specific preservation challenges and to attach strings in order to ensure that those challenges are met appropriately.

Oklahoma City can use resources like Community Development Block Grant funds, General Obligation (G.O.) or General Obligation-Limited Tax (G.O.L.T.) Bond funds, other city projects, or develop tax incentive or abatement programs targeting identified preservation priorities. The City of Oklahoma City can learn from our own experience with successful incentive programs, and from other cities' successes in incentivizing preservation, to expand existing, and create new, tools to specifically encourage the revitalization of historic resources citywide.

**Right:** Built in 1911, the Skirvin Hotel was the centerpiece of the Oklahoma City social scene for decades, but sat vacant for twenty years before a bundle of financial tools brought about its rehabilitation. The hotel reopened in 2007 and donated a preservation easement to the City of Oklahoma City in 2014.



### **Initiative 3: Create procedural incentives to facilitate and encourage historic preservation.**

Property owners, developers, and others experienced with the redevelopment of historic properties note that *process* can be as much of a challenge as cost. Struggles with building code requirements, zoning limitations, and other procedural hoops leave valuable, viable historic buildings empty or underutilized. We can remove or reduce procedural roadblocks to facilitate and encourage the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of historic resources throughout Oklahoma City.

#### **Building Code Compliance**

Historic buildings often contain features that do not meet current building code standards, from means of egress to accessibility. These features can be identified as insurmountable obstacles to reuse, but options exist to address those issues without destroying a historic building's character. In addition to the 2015 International Building Code, Oklahoma City has adopted the 2009 International *Existing* Building Code.

According to the International Code Council, this set of requirements is intended to

“encourage the use and reuse of existing buildings. The scope covers repair, alteration, addition and change of occupancy for existing buildings and historic buildings, while achieving appropriate levels of safety

without requiring full compliance with the new construction requirements contained in the other I-Codes.”

This alternative to the International Building Code is an important tool for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic structures.

However, **preserveokc** stakeholders report that the available code provisions for existing and historic buildings are not widely known or well publicized. We must raise awareness of equally safe alternatives for code compliance in the redevelopment of our existing, historic buildings in order to ensure their ongoing use and viability.

#### **Zoning Relief for Adaptive or Restored Use**

Throughout Oklahoma City, there are historic buildings that are no longer zoned for their historic use, or that were constructed for a use that is no longer necessary or appropriate to their surroundings. We can encourage the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of these historic structures by removing unintended barriers to the reuse of a historic property as part of an appropriate rehabilitation project.

Many of Oklahoma City's neighborhoods historically contained a mix of uses and property types, including single and multi-family residences, accessory structures containing additional living quarters, and neighborhood-scale commercial properties. Where neighborhoods have been rezoned for single-family residential development only, or other

low-density categories of use, the reuse of these structures for their original intent is now non-conforming. The challenges and uncertainties of redeveloping these structures put them at significant risk, making demolition and new construction in conformance with the existing zoning the quicker, cheaper, easier option.

Conversely, throughout the city there are historic properties with original uses that are no longer viable, or are now incompatible with surrounding development. These properties are ideal candidates for adaptive reuse: converting a historic building to accommodate a new use while retaining its historic character and architectural features. Oklahoma City has numerous examples of successful and creative adaptive reuse of historic structures, with gas stations, churches, and industrial warehouses converted to trendy bars, law firm offices, and boutique hotels. However, rezoning requirements related to conversion can create uncertainty and impede success.

We can protect historic structures in both of these situations by improving the rezoning process for historic buildings. We should identify appropriate uses for existing, historic buildings that are compatible with their surrounding neighborhoods and develop policies that facilitate their rezoning. Further, we should identify specific roadblocks to reuse, such as parking requirements, and identify ways to alleviate these when compatible with the historic resource and surrounding development.

We will identify ways to appropriately accommodate the reuse of historic resources in order to give property owners and surrounding neighbors a greater degree of certainty, and facilitate the revitalization of more historic resources. By pairing incentives with requirements for appropriate rehabilitation, such as through the donation of a preservation easement or inclusion of an HL overlay, we can further protect historic resources citywide.

### Case Study: Adaptive Reuse

Calvary Baptist Church, 300 N. Walnut Street in the Deep Deuce District, is a rehabilitated African American church which sat vacant for years after being damaged in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995. The imposing, three-story red brick structure has a storied history in Oklahoma City. Designed by Russell Benton Bingham, architect and member of the congregation, construction began in 1921 with the dedication in 1923. For 70 years, this prestigious congregation served as a cornerstone of Oklahoma City's African American community.

Beginning in 1958, the church was the physical and spiritual base for a multi-year sit-in campaign that changed the face of segregation in Oklahoma City and arguably, the country as a whole. Rev. Martin Luther King spoke here in 1960. The church is recognized by the National Park Service as a historic site of the Civil Rights Movement.

Adapted for law offices in 2014, the project included restoration of historic features and spaces, re-creation of a historic neon sign, and rehabilitation of the sanctuary, with pews, pulpit, and stage left in tact; the sanctuary is now available for community events.





#### **Facilitating the Use of State and Federal Incentives**

As a Certified Local Government, the City regularly receives federal funding through the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office that can be used for, among other projects, historic surveys to identify property and districts that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In recent years, the Historic Preservation Program has worked with the City's Commercial District Revitalization Program to identify historic commercial districts, coordinate with interested property owners, and carry out historic surveys. In this way, we can facilitate the use of financial incentives and further the rehabilitation of some of our city's most distinctive places.

Above is Owl Court, located within the Britton Road Commercial District where a historic survey was recently completed.

#### **Initiative 4:**

#### **Facilitate the use of state and federal incentives for historic preservation.**

The City of Oklahoma City has a long history of identifying and documenting historic resources, and of being proactive in initiating the nomination of properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places. The City should build on these efforts. We should strategically prioritize the use of available resources for survey work and for National Register nominations in order to facilitate the use of state and federal tax credits for historic preservation throughout Oklahoma City's many historic neighborhoods and commercial districts.

Whether intentionally or incidentally, historic surveys conducted by the City have had the effect of spurring investment and utilization of state and federal tax credits. Survey efforts following the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building in downtown Oklahoma City identified the Automobile Alley historic district. That district eventually became one of the largest collections of historic tax credit projects in the country.

Similarly, the multi-phase intensive level survey of downtown Oklahoma City, completed between 2009 and 2012, identified numerous structures as individually eligible for the National Register, some of which have since gone on to use historic tax credits.

Since the summer of 2016, the City has worked with the State Historic Preservation Office and with various universities and student volunteers to survey Heritage Hills East and Capitol Hill's commercial corridor along Southwest 25<sup>th</sup> Street, two districts that could potentially benefit from National Register listing and historic tax credits.

We should use available resources, including funding received through the Certified Local Government program, to identify and nominate eligible properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places. This will facilitate the rehabilitation of historic structures citywide by providing easier access to state and federal tax credits for certified rehabilitation.



### **Facilitating the Use of State and Federal Incentives**

Once a historic survey of an area has been completed, the City has the opportunity to use CLG funds to prepare National Register nominations for historic properties or districts. Recent efforts include Capitol Hill's Commercial District, Heritage Hills East, and the Britton Road Commercial District. Each of these districts include historic, income-producing properties that could potentially use state and federal tax credits for their rehabilitation.

Above is a portion of the Capitol Hill Commercial Historic District, recently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.



chapterfour

# Implementation

*“There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here and there, but those days are gone. Preservation is the business of saving communities and the values they embody.”*

- Richard Moe,  
Former President, National Trust for Historic Preservation

## Introduction

The following policy recommendations are organized by the Big Ideas, breaking each Big Idea and Initiative of **preserveokc** down into specific, achievable, actions. These recommendations have been laid out as a matrix with columns describing components for implementation.

- **Policies** are specific action items identified as possible methods to address the Big Ideas and Initiatives.
- **Type of Policy** identifies the type of action recommended, such as an ordinance amendment, a new policy to develop, or an outreach program to coordinate.
- **Partners** and **Responsibility** identify those agencies, departments, and organizations involved in implementation of the policy.
- **Start By** specifies a time frame for implementing the policy, whether a finite project or an ongoing program.

## big idea one

Policy #	Policy
1.1.1	<p><b>Historic Resources Inventory:</b> Maintain and improve Historic Resources Inventory as a database for information on historic resources throughout Oklahoma City through the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regular Updates:</b> Incorporate and regularly update information gathered through historic surveys, historic resource documentation required as part of compliance with federal review, and local project reviews.</li> <li>• <b>Set Survey Priorities:</b> Identify priority areas for additional survey and research areas through evaluation of the existing database, development trends, and other survey needs such as disaster response.</li> <li>• <b>Identify Sources of Assistance:</b> Dedicate existing and identify new resources for maintenance of the Inventory, including staff, volunteer programs, and funding for surveys through entities such as the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, National Parks Service, FEMA, and HUD.</li> <li>• <b>Develop Public Submittal Mechanism:</b> Create a mechanism to allow the public to submit information for review and inclusion in the Historic Resources Inventory.</li> <li>• <b>Provide Access:</b> Make the Inventory available to the public and to City departments for consultation.</li> <li>• <b>Enhance Information for Evaluation:</b> Incorporate additional information into the Historic Resources Inventory to identify the potential for National Register eligibility as well as identification of Historic and Architectural Resources.</li> <li>• <b>Cross-list with other Inventories:</b> Where feasible, combine or link the Historic Resources Inventory to similar databases, such as City-owned properties and public art inventories.</li> <li>• <b>Use Inventory to Identify Potential for Additional Designation:</b> When appropriate, nominate resources identified in the Inventory to the National Register of Historic Places, or pursue local tools for designation and protection such as HP/HL zoning, preservation easements, or other local identification programs.</li> </ul>
1.1.2	<p><b>Outreach to Organizations:</b> Assist neighborhood and commercial district associations and other organizations in identifying historic areas by providing information and resources for their use.</p>
1.1.3	<p><b>Visual Recognition:</b> Continue and expand programs for recognition of historic areas and sites through district identification in the form of street sign toppers, banners, and other visual markers.</p>



Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<p><b>Program/partnership</b></p> <p><b>Process or procedures</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p>Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office</p> <p>Oklahoma Archeological Survey</p> <p>Applicable county assessors</p> <p>Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. and other community organizations</p> <p>City departments, including Development Services, Parks, General Services, and Public Works</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>Program/partnership</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p>Neighborhood Alliance and Commercial District Associations</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>Program/partnership</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p>Neighborhood Alliance</p> <p>Public Works</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>

## big idea one

Policy #	Policy
1.1.4	<p><b>Promotion:</b> Work with individuals and organizations to highlight specific aspects of Oklahoma City’s history and the associated sites through outreach, such as promotional and educational materials; recognition via public meetings, programs, awards, social media; and the City’s government access cable channel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promote Identified Assets:</b> Capitalize on identified districts and areas of public interest, such as Route 66 and Oklahoma’s western heritage.</li> <li>• <b>Increase Awareness:</b> Identify underrepresented populations or aspects of Oklahoma City’s history, such as turn-of-the-century immigrant populations, Hispanic culture, and the Civil Rights Movement to increase awareness and engage residents in the diverse history and culture of Oklahoma City.</li> </ul>
1.2.1	<p><b>Awareness-Building Programming:</b> Provide programs that increase public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Oklahoma City’s Historic Preservation Program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Walking tours</li> <li>• Informational publications</li> <li>• Media outreach</li> </ul>
1.2.2	<p><b>Engage with Participants:</b> Utilize Oklahoma City’s preservation community, including organizations, historic district residents, and preservation-savvy developers, to participate in educational outreach and promote awareness of local success stories.</p>
1.2.3	<p><b>Specialized Training:</b> Continue and expand specialized training about the purpose, process, and benefits of historic preservation for leaders and professionals that interact with the field, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners of historic properties</li> <li>• Professional groups including realtors, architects, and contractors</li> <li>• Neighborhood association and commercial district leaders</li> <li>• Design Review Committee and Planning Commission members</li> <li>• City leaders and elected officials</li> </ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
Program/partnership	<b>Planning Department</b> Public Information Office Community organizations	2020
Program/partnership	<b>Planning Department</b> Public Information Office Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office Community organizations	Ongoing
Program/partnership	<b>Planning Department</b>	2020
Program/partnership	<b>Planning Department</b>	Ongoing

## big idea one

Policy #	Policy
1.2.4	<p><b>Online Resources:</b> Develop comprehensive web content on historic preservation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Preservation/Landmark and Special Design Districts’ purpose, designation process, and review processes</li> <li>• Information about researching historic properties in Oklahoma City</li> <li>• Resources for additional historic preservation tools, including links to information about the National Register of Historic Places, Historic Tax Credits, and training and educational opportunities</li> </ul>
1.3.1	<p><b>Collect Relevant Data:</b> In order to provide comprehensive and accurate data about the benefits of historic preservation, track data about historic preservation activities through sources such as the following existing tools and programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building permits issued</li> <li>• Property values over time</li> <li>• Strong Neighborhoods Initiative</li> <li>• Commercial Districts Revitalization Program</li> </ul>
1.3.2	<p><b>Coordinate Efforts with Other Organizations:</b> Collect and share data on benefits of historic preservation, including historic tax credit projects completed, and the effects of heritage tourism, by working with other organizations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Historic Preservation Office</li> <li>• Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.</li> <li>• Neighborhood Alliance</li> <li>• The Oklahoma City Convention and Visitor’s Bureau</li> <li>• The Oklahoma Department of Commerce</li> </ul>
1.3.3	<p><b>Publicize Information via Reports and Presentations:</b> Make information on the benefits and value of historic preservation available to City leaders via regular reports and presentations, and to the press and general public via methods such as print and online materials, and press releases.</p>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Program/partnership</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Public Information Office Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office Metropolitan Library System	<b>2020</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Process or procedure</b> <b>External agency coordination</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department Applicable County Assessors	<b>2020</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>External agency coordination</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> State and local agencies Community organizations	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Process or procedure</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Public Information Office	<b>2020</b>

## big idea one

Policy #	Policy
1.4.1	<p><b>Evaluate the Public Notification Process:</b> Evaluate and enhance the effectiveness of existing processes for project notification, including public notice and availability of information regarding Special Design Districts, Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment and City Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess, and improve as necessary, the availability of information related to applications, agendas, and decisions made for design review, development review, and other permits or variances.</li><li>• Provide clear information on various review processes and the opportunities for the public to engage via written comments and attendance at public meetings.</li><li>• Assist property owners and the general public with “connecting the dots” of overlapping reviews, such as Planning Commission recommendations to City Council, or Design Review recommendations to the Board of Adjustment, to create a clear and transparent process.</li></ul>
1.4.2	<p><b>Review Availability and Accessibility of Information:</b> Ensure that individuals and organizations have access to user-friendly information about City review processes, how to research or track a project, and how to get involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beyond statutory requirements, assess feasibility of using additional, “opt-in” methods for notification to interested individuals and organizations, such as group email services.</li><li>• Work with organizations such as Neighborhood Alliance, commercial district associations, and advocacy organizations to develop additional means to provide property owners and the general public with the information necessary to encourage early and effective public engagement.</li></ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<p><b>Process or procedure</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b>            Development Services Department            City Clerk's Office</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p>
<p><b>Process or procedure</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b>            Development Services Department            City Clerk's Office            Public Information Office            Community organizations</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p>

## big idea two

Policy #	Policy
2.1.1	<b>Historic Resources Inventory:</b> Identify and maintain an updated inventory of historic resources, including buildings, structures, and sites owned or controlled by the City of Oklahoma City ( <b>see big idea one, 1.1</b> ).
2.1.2	<b>Share Our History:</b> Promote Oklahoma City’s history and identity and encourage historic preservation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicizing rehabilitations of City-owned properties;</li> <li>• Identifying historic sites through media outreach, website content, historic markers, and other means of recognition; and</li> <li>• Nominating significant City-owned properties for formal recognition, including the National Register of Historic Places and Historic Preservation/Landmark zoning.</li> </ul>
2.1.3	<b>Establish Best Practices and Oversight:</b> Establish City policies for the appropriate maintenance, repair, or alteration of City-owned historic resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information about the historic significance of City-owned properties and best practices for historic preservation to City leaders and City departments;</li> <li>• Work with City departments that manage property to develop appropriate standards for routine maintenance activities;</li> <li>• Develop a policy for advisory review by the Historic Preservation Commission for major renovations to City-owned historic resources.</li> </ul>
2.2.1	<b>Develop Policies for Public Investment:</b> Develop and implement City policies for public investment, such as through acquisition of property or investment in development via bond programs, sales tax programs, etc., for the consideration of the impact upon historic resources. Policies may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of whether a historic resource is within, or in close proximity to, the subject site, such as through consultation of the Historic Resources Inventory;</li> <li>• Assessment of anticipated work for effect on historic resources, such as through consultation of established preservation standards and guidelines or advisory review by the Historic Preservation Commission;</li> <li>• Prioritization of the retention and reuse of historic resources as part of a project over demolition and new construction;</li> <li>• Opportunity for public input on identification of affected historic resources, and evaluation of effects of the proposed work;</li> <li>• Timeline for review at a stage early enough to allow revisions to proposals.</li> </ul>



Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Program/partnership</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Public Information Office Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department Public Works Department General Services Department Parks Department	<b>2020</b>
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>

## big idea two

Policy #	Policy
2.3.1	<p><b>Protect City Resources in Transfer of Ownership:</b> In the interest of ensuring the preservation of significant properties that reflect the legacy and investment of the City of Oklahoma City, encourage or require the preservation of City-owned historic resources when de-accessioning surplus property. Policies may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Issuing a Request for Proposals requiring the rehabilitation of historic resources as part of the transfer of ownership;</li><li>• Requiring the donation of a preservation easement as part of a transfer of ownership; and</li><li>• Requiring the designation of the property as a Historic Landmark (HL zoning) as part of a transfer of ownership.</li></ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Process or Procedure</b>	<b>Planning Department</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Policy Decision</b>	City Manager's Office	

## big idea three

Policy #	Policy
3.1.1	<b>Historic Resources Inventory Expansion:</b> Expand the format of the existing Historic Resources Inventory to incorporate identification of Historic and Architectural Resources as defined within the Municipal Code.
3.1.2	<b>Next Steps for Historic Resources:</b> When appropriate, nominate resources identified in the Inventory to the National Register of Historic Place or pursue local tools for designation and protection such as HP/HL zoning, preservation easements, or other local identification programs.
3.2.1	<p><b>Identify Historic Resources:</b> Develop and implement a formal process for evaluating and identifying historic resources within Special Design Districts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizing a Historic Resources Inventory that identifies historic, architectural or legacy resources;</li> <li>• Creating a process for evaluating properties not yet included on the Historic Resources Inventory; and</li> <li>• Developing a consistent process for review of different categories of work when Historic Resources are affected, including minor or significant alterations and demolition.</li> </ul>
3.2.2	<p><b>Strengthen Design Review:</b> Strengthen review of alterations to historic resources by incorporating existing design guidelines for historic resources, or developing additional guidelines for existing or historic buildings, into Special Design Districts' zoning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider encouraging appropriate rehabilitations through the Design Review process, such as through administrative approvals for projects meeting specified rehabilitation requirements or already undergoing review for historic tax credits.</li> </ul>
3.2.3	<b>Strengthen Review of Demolitions:</b> Strengthen review of demolitions of historic resources within Special Design Districts by implementing a consistent process for consideration of historic resources, including opportunity for additional comments from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office City Council	<b>2020</b>
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Ordinance Amendment</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Ordinance Amendment</b>	<b>Planning Department</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Process or Procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>

## big idea three

Policy #	Policy
3.2.4	<b>Increase Awareness:</b> In coordination with strengthened review processes, promote public awareness of the Design Review process, the role of the Design Review bodies, and the importance of early consultation on proposed projects, particularly when affecting historic resources.
3.2.5	<p><b>Support Commission/Committees:</b> Educate and empower members of Design Review Commissions and Committees by offering regular workshops, training, and content within staff reports on topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissions/Committees responsibility and authority within the larger permitting process;</li> <li>• Categories of historic resource designations and what regulatory weight they carry;</li> <li>• Evaluating historic and architectural significance;</li> <li>• Principles and best practices in rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, and how to apply these to their review process;</li> <li>• Interpretation of existing and development of new guidelines for historic resources; and</li> <li>• Opportunities to request additional information, including further research from applicants or staff, or recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission.</li> </ul>
3.2.6	<b>Require Expertise:</b> Increase preservation expertise on all Design Review bodies by requiring one or more members of each Commission/Committee to be trained or professionally experienced in historic preservation.
3.2.7	<b>Enforce Decisions:</b> Verify that work approved through the Design Review process is completed as approved through improvements to the zoning inspection process, including involvement of Design Review staff and increased coordination with zoning inspection staff.

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
Program/partnership	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department Public Information Office	2020
Program/partnership	<b>Planning Department</b>	Ongoing
<b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Ordinance Amendment</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	2020
Process or Procedure	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office Development Services Department	Ongoing

## big idea three

Policy #	Policy
3.2.8	<p><b>Designate Landmarks:</b> Proactively identify individual structures, sites, and districts that warrant further protection and Design Review through Historic Preservation/Landmark or Special Design District zoning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to residents and property owners, particularly those proposing work to historic buildings, about the opportunity to designate properties as Historic Landmarks.</li> <li>• Provide information to commercial areas, such as through business district associations, the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, and the City’s Commercial District Revitalization Program, about rezoning as a Historic Preservation/Landmark or Special Design District.</li> <li>• Provide information to neighborhoods through Neighborhood Alliance and individual neighborhood associations about rezoning as a Historic Preservation/Landmark or Special Design District.</li> <li>• Evaluate and implement utilization of existing “Legacy Resource” designation for identification of Architectural and Historic Resources within the Urban Design Overlay district, expanding the “Legacy Resources” tool to other Special Design Districts as appropriate.</li> </ul>
3.2.9	<p><b>Evaluate Other Tools:</b> Evaluate and strengthen other special zoning districts, such as Neighborhood and Urban Conservation District overlays, for their effectiveness in the context of historic preservation.</p>
3.2.10	<p><b>Strengthen Code Enforcement:</b> Work with Code Enforcement and the Municipal Counselor’s office to improve the code enforcement process by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating and improving the effectiveness and timeliness of the code enforcement process;</li> <li>• Investigating opportunities for stronger financial or procedural penalties, such as prohibiting issuance of permits for new (non-remedial) work at properties with outstanding violations; and</li> <li>• Raising awareness of opportunities for interested members of the public to report, track, and provide information on possible violations.</li> </ul>



Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Process or procedure</b> <b>Policy decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office Public Information Office Community organizations	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Process or procedure</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department Community Organizations	<b>2020</b>
<b>Process or procedure</b> <b>Policy decision</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office Development Services Department	<b>2020</b>

## big idea three

Policy #	Policy
3.3.1	<p><b>Utilize zoning to encourage reuse and revitalization:</b> Evaluate and improve the compatibility of zoning regulations with historic resources to ensure that reuse and revitalization is encouraged. Ways to improve compatibility may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining or implementing zoning for historic resources that is compatible with the existing, established physical character, including density, height, and setbacks;</li> <li>• Identifying and addressing zoning requirements that inhibit the redevelopment of historic resources, such as parking requirements that are inconsistent with historic commercial development patterns.</li> </ul>
3.3.2	<p><b>Incorporate Historic Resources in Development Review:</b> Amend plan <b>okc</b> to incorporate consideration of historic resources into Development Review, similar to the established process for assessment of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determination of whether a Historic or Architectural Resource, including a structure, site, or district, exists on a proposed development site, such as through consultation of the Historic Resources Inventory;</li> <li>• Assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development on the Historic or Architectural Resource, such as demolition, insensitive alteration, or infill construction; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification of the proposed development to protect identified resources or mitigate potential impacts, through methods such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive reuse of historic structures and incorporation into larger development;</li> <li>• Modification of the design of surrounding new development to be compatible with existing, historic resources; and</li> <li>• Concentration of increased density in a smaller area, leaving existing, lower density development adjacent to historic resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.3.3	<p><b>Strengthen Demolition Review:</b> Develop more thorough review procedures for demolition of historic resources outside of existing Historic Preservation/Landmark and Design Review Districts, including the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply review to identified categories of historic resources, such as those listed on or determined eligible for the National Register, those identified in the Historic Resource Inventory as Historic or Architectural Resources, those located within identified geographic boundaries, or those meeting a specified age criteria;</li> <li>• In recognition of the potential impact of a demolition upon adjacent property values, provide an opportunity for public notification and comment upon significant demolitions; and</li> <li>• Incorporate a delay period sufficient to allow time for public notification and consideration of alternatives to demolition.</li> </ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<p><b>Policy decision</b></p> <p><b>Ordinance Amendment/ Development Review</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p>City Manager's Office</p> <p>Development Services Department</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p>
<p><b>Policy Decision</b></p> <p><b>Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p>City Manager's Office</p> <p>Development Services Department</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p>
<p><b>Program/partnership</b></p> <p><b>Ordinance Amendment</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p>City Manager's Office</p> <p>Development Services Department</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p>

## big idea three

Policy #	Policy
3.3.4	<p><b>Expand Design Review Options:</b> Pursue development of tiered approaches to design review to provide varying levels of oversight and protection for districts and neighborhoods with established identity and historic character in order to protect the historic identity, quality of life, and economic vitality of Oklahoma City’s character-defining neighborhoods and commercial districts. Tiered approaches to design review may provide guidance on issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alteration to historic resources</li> <li>• Demolition</li> <li>• New construction, including increasing density where appropriate.</li> </ul>
3.4.1	<p><b>Strengthen Property Maintenance Codes:</b> Continue efforts to improve code enforcement for property maintenance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a more aggressive fee structure in order to motivate owners to remediate;</li> <li>• Conduct proactive, preventative enforcement and follow-up inspections to prevent deterioration as early as possible;</li> <li>• Develop more appropriate methods of securing properties, with particular emphasis on minimizing damage to historic fabric;</li> <li>• Collect and provide data on the effectiveness of enforcement efforts in order to continually identify strengths, needs, and opportunities for improvement.</li> </ul>
3.4.2	<p><b>Increase Public Participation:</b> Improve public access to, and neighborhood engagement in, the code enforcement process through methods such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased online availability of information about the status of violations within the code enforcement process;</li> <li>• Establishing pilot programs in neighborhood partnerships, using enhanced efforts to address problems within key locations and increased coordination between code enforcement and affected surrounding property owners;</li> <li>• Providing individuals and neighborhoods or other organizations with information about opportunities for assistance, including grant or loan programs for qualified property owners, that can assist with repairs or rehabilitation of structures.</li> </ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Ordinance Amendment</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>
<b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Ordinance Amendment</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office Development Services Department	<b>2020</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department Public Information Office Community Organizations	<b>2020</b>

## big idea three

Policy #	Policy
3.4.3	<p><b>Pursue Reforms:</b> Pursue substantive funding mechanisms and legislative action in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate effective penalties in the case of ongoing property maintenance violations;</li><li>• Create new financial tools, such as abatement funds and tax incentive programs; and</li><li>• Provide mechanisms for transfers of ownership and property acquisition.</li></ul>
3.4.4	<p><b>Strengthen Protection for Historic Resources:</b> Beyond citywide property maintenance codes, requirements for properties within the Historic Preservation/Landmark districts include provisions for affirmative maintenance, and may warrant enhanced efforts for remediation. We should ensure that historic resources are not lost to remediation efforts, such as demolition, or neglect by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing financial assistance and incentives specifically for qualified historic resources;</li><li>• Developing policies and protocol for abatement and securing of structures determined to be historic, including:</li><li>• Adopting methods to avoid damage to historic fabric when boarding and securing a structure;</li><li>• Repairing windows, doors, and other historic materials rather than boarding them in order to protect the integrity of the property and surrounding historic district; and</li><li>• Evaluating enhanced code enforcement ordinances specifically for historic resources, such as a Demolition by Neglect ordinance.</li></ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>State Legislation</b> <b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Financial Tools</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office Development Services Department	<b>2021</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Process or procedure</b> <b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Financial Tools</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office Development Services Department	<b>2021</b>

## big idea four

Policy #	Policy
4.1.1	<p><b>Prioritize Historic Resources in TIF:</b> Incorporate consideration of, and requirements for, historic resources into existing and new TIF district policies, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of historic resources within TIF district boundaries in coordination with the Historic Resources Inventory;</li> <li>• Criteria for review of TIF-funded work to historic resources, including renovation and demolition;</li> <li>• Priority for projects that retain and rehabilitate historic resources; and</li> <li>• Priority for projects that incorporate additional funding sources, including state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation.</li> </ul>
4.2.1	<p><b>Develop a Preservation Easement Program:</b> Build on the success of the Skirvin Hilton preservation easement to fully develop a preservation easement program, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide alternative means of historic recognition and protection, beyond existing zoning and National Register tools;</li> <li>• Offer the opportunity for financial incentives to property owners related to the rehabilitation of their properties; and</li> <li>• Establish a potential mechanism for oversight of historic properties receiving financial assistance for rehabilitation, in order to ensure their long-term maintenance and preservation.</li> </ul>
4.2.2	<p><b>Develop Property Tax Abatement Program for Historic Preservation Projects:</b> Work with counties and other tax-receiving entities to establish abatement of property taxes in return for the appropriate rehabilitation of historic structures of all types. An effective program should include the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for identification of qualified properties;</li> <li>• Criteria and process to evaluate the appropriateness of qualified rehabilitation work;</li> <li>• Process for inspecting work upon completion to ensure compliance; and</li> <li>• Mechanisms for long-term protection of properties receiving assistance, such as the application of HP/HL zoning or requirement that an easement be donated for a specified amount of time.</li> </ul>



Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Financial Tools</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b>	<b>Planning Department</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Financial Tools</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>

## big idea four

Policy #	Policy
4.2.3	<p><b>Expand Existing and Develop New Assistance Programs to Encourage Historic Preservation:</b> Use existing programs and available funding sources, including CDBG, General Obligation or GOLT Bonds, and sales tax projects, to provide financial assistance specifically for the revitalization of historic properties or districts of all types. Effective programs should include the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for identification of qualified properties;</li> <li>• Criteria and process to evaluate the appropriateness of qualified rehabilitation work;</li> <li>• Process for inspecting work upon completion to ensure compliance; and</li> <li>• Mechanisms for long-term protection of properties receiving assistance, such as the application of HP/HL zoning or requirement that an easement be donated for a specified amount of time.</li> </ul>
4.3.1	<p><b>Promote Consideration of Historic Resources in Building Code Review.</b> Increase awareness and utilization of resources for the reuse of historic buildings, including the application of the 2009 International Existing Building Code, to ensure that historic buildings are brought up to modern safety standards through the least invasive means possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information and training as needed to contractors, architects, and City staff on methods of meeting requirements of the Building and Fire Codes while retaining character-defining features of historic buildings.</li> </ul>
4.3.2	<p><b>Facilitate Reuse of Historic Resources.</b> Where appropriate, incentivize the reuse of historic resources for their original use or for a compatible adaptive reuse through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways to facilitate zoning changes, variances, or other mechanism to facilitate reuse of historic resources that meet identified criteria;</li> <li>• Allow the reuse of historic structures, such as reuse of a historic fourplex within a neighborhood that is now zoned for single family residential, or adaptation of a historic school for office use, when compatible with surrounding uses;</li> <li>• Allow variance to requirements that cannot be met on an existing, historic site without damage to the historic character, such as parking minimums, in order to encourage redevelopment of the resource while retaining compatibility with surrounding development;</li> <li>• Include mechanisms for long-term protection of properties receiving zoning relief or other assistance when that assistance is intended to facilitate the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of a historic resource, such as conditions on approvals or the incorporation of an HL overlay as part of a rezoning.</li> </ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<b>Program/partnership</b> <b>Financial Tools</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>
<b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Process or procedure</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department Public Information Office	<b>2020</b>
<b>Policy Decision</b> <b>Process or procedure</b> <b>Ordinance amendment</b> <b>Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Planning Department</b> Development Services Department City Manager's Office	<b>2020</b>

## big idea four

Policy #	Policy
4.4.1	<p><b>Nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places:</b> In coordination with property owners, neighborhood and district associations, identify eligible properties or districts with the potential for rehabilitation, and nominate them to the National Register of Historic Places. Priorities for nomination may include properties or districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With high degree of owner support for, and interest in, pursuing rehabilitation;</li><li>• Involved in other city initiatives, such as the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative or Commercial District Revitalization Program;</li><li>• Within larger areas identified for revitalization or redevelopment efforts; or</li><li>• Identified as at-risk for loss of significant historic properties that would benefit from the availability of additional financial incentives.</li></ul>

Type of Policy	Partners	Start by
<p data-bbox="217 248 491 282"><b>Program/partnership</b></p> <p data-bbox="217 304 491 337"><b>Process or procedure</b></p>	<p data-bbox="890 248 1172 282"><b>Planning Department</b></p> <p data-bbox="890 304 1414 337">Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office</p>	<p data-bbox="1679 248 1802 282"><b>Ongoing</b></p>

## Appendix A: Additional Resources

### Technical Assistance

#### Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office

Oklahoma History Center  
800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
[www.okhistory.org/shpo](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo)  
405/521-6249

#### Oklahoma Archeological Survey

University of Oklahoma  
111 E. Chesapeake, Bldg. #134  
Norman, OK 73019  
<http://www.ou.edu/cas/archsur>  
405/325-7211

#### Oklahoma Main Street Center

Department of Commerce  
900 N. Stiles Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104  
[www.okcommerce.gov](http://www.okcommerce.gov)  
405/815-5171

#### Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.

405 NW 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
405/525-5325

#### Oklahoma City Foundation for Architecture

1300 N Shartel Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
[www.okcarchitecture.com](http://www.okcarchitecture.com)  
405/948-7174

#### Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

*Federal agency appointed to advise the President and Congress on national preservation policy.*  
[www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)

#### National Trust for Historic Preservation

*Nonprofit organization involved in advocacy for historic sites.*  
[www.savingplaces.org](http://www.savingplaces.org)

#### Preservation Action

*Nonprofit organization involved in lobbying for historic preservation policy at the federal level.*  
[www.preservationaction.org](http://www.preservationaction.org)

#### U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

*Federal agency responsible for implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act and associated programs, including the National Register of Historic Places.*  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>

### History and Research

#### Oklahoma History Center

#### Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office and Research Center

*In addition to materials available on-site, online resources include National Register nomination, historic surveys, and other documents pertaining to historic preservation via the State Historic Preservation Office; articles and images available online via the Research Center; and the Encyclopedia of Oklahoma.*

Oklahoma History Center  
800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
[www.okhistory.org/shpo](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo)  
405/521-6249

#### Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library

#### Oklahoma Room

*On-site and online collections include Sanborn maps, city directories, newspaper archives, and rare or out-of-print publications spanning the history and development of Oklahoma City.*  
300 Park Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
[www.metrolibrary.org](http://www.metrolibrary.org)  
405/231-8650

