

# 4

## **Making Places: Neighborhoods & Districts**

**Current Conditions**

---

**Objectives for Future Neighborhoods & Districts**

---

**Housing Goals & Recommendations**

---

**Employment Areas & Economic Development Goals & Recommendations**

---

# Current Conditions

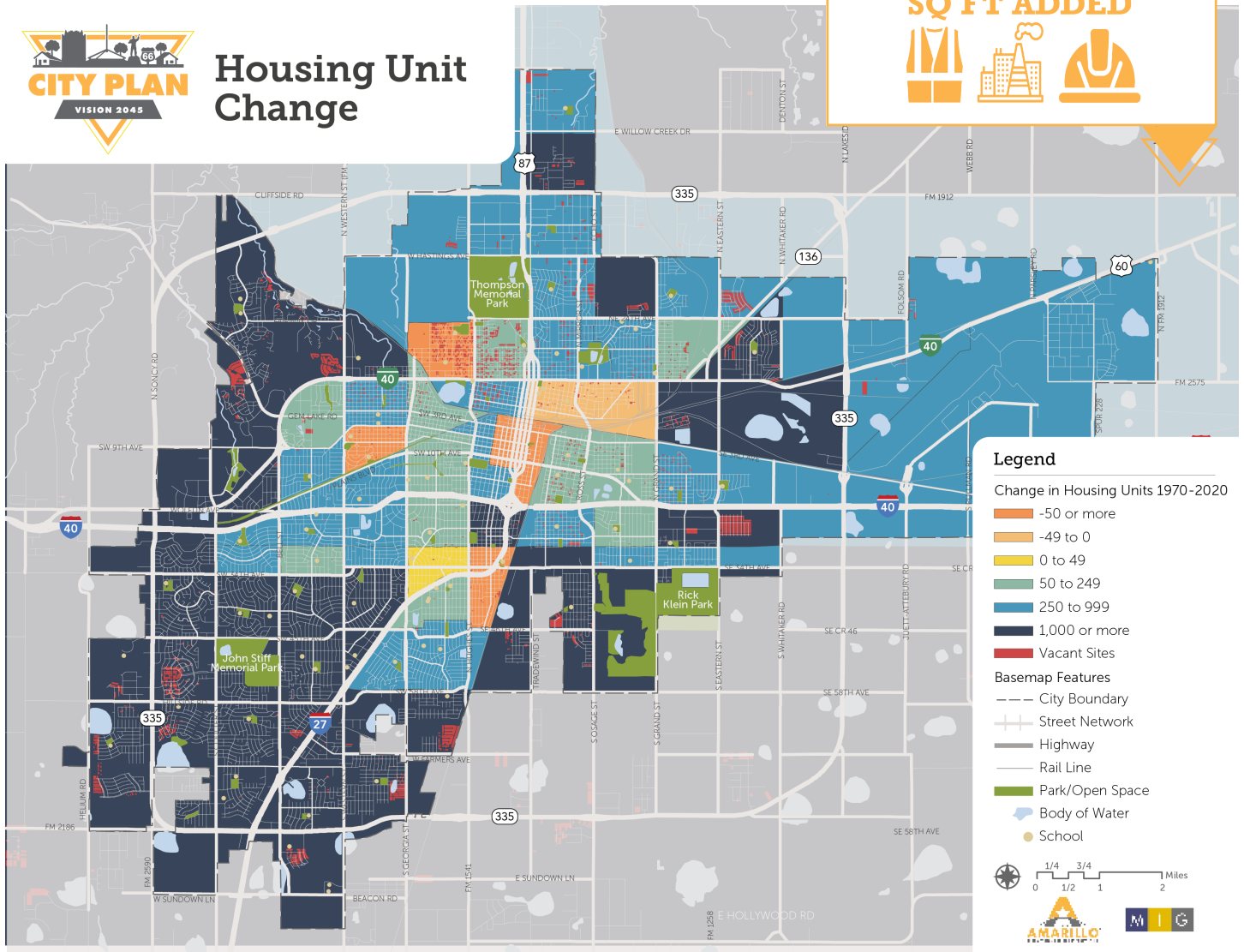
Housing production in Amarillo has generally kept pace with population growth over the last decade, with an annual growth rate of 1.1% between 2010 and 2021. However, Amarillo’s housing stock is relatively homogenous and outdated – with single family homes making up almost 80% of all units and almost half of all homes built more than 50 years ago. Nearly two thirds of Amarillo residents own their home, while about a third are renters. Furthermore, recent housing development has largely maintained the status quo, not significantly adding to Amarillo’s diversity of housing options.

Amarillo’s oldest neighborhoods in the central core were developed between 1889 and 1940. The next ring of development was more suburban in nature in the 1950’s and 60’s in the post World War II era. Since then, as evidenced by the map below, most housing development has occurred at the periphery, expanding outward into undeveloped areas. In fact, some areas in central and

**SINCE 2010:**  
**OFFICE: 500,000 SQ FT ADDED**  
  
**RETAIL: 740,000 SQ FT ADDED**  
  
**INDUSTRIAL: 990,000 SQ FT ADDED**  




## Housing Unit Change







northern Amarillo lost housing units and population over the last 50 years and have not revitalized since. This map also illustrates the concentrated pockets and broad dispersion of vacant unimproved properties that offer potential opportunity for new housing development in Amarillo, including central neighborhoods and the urban core.

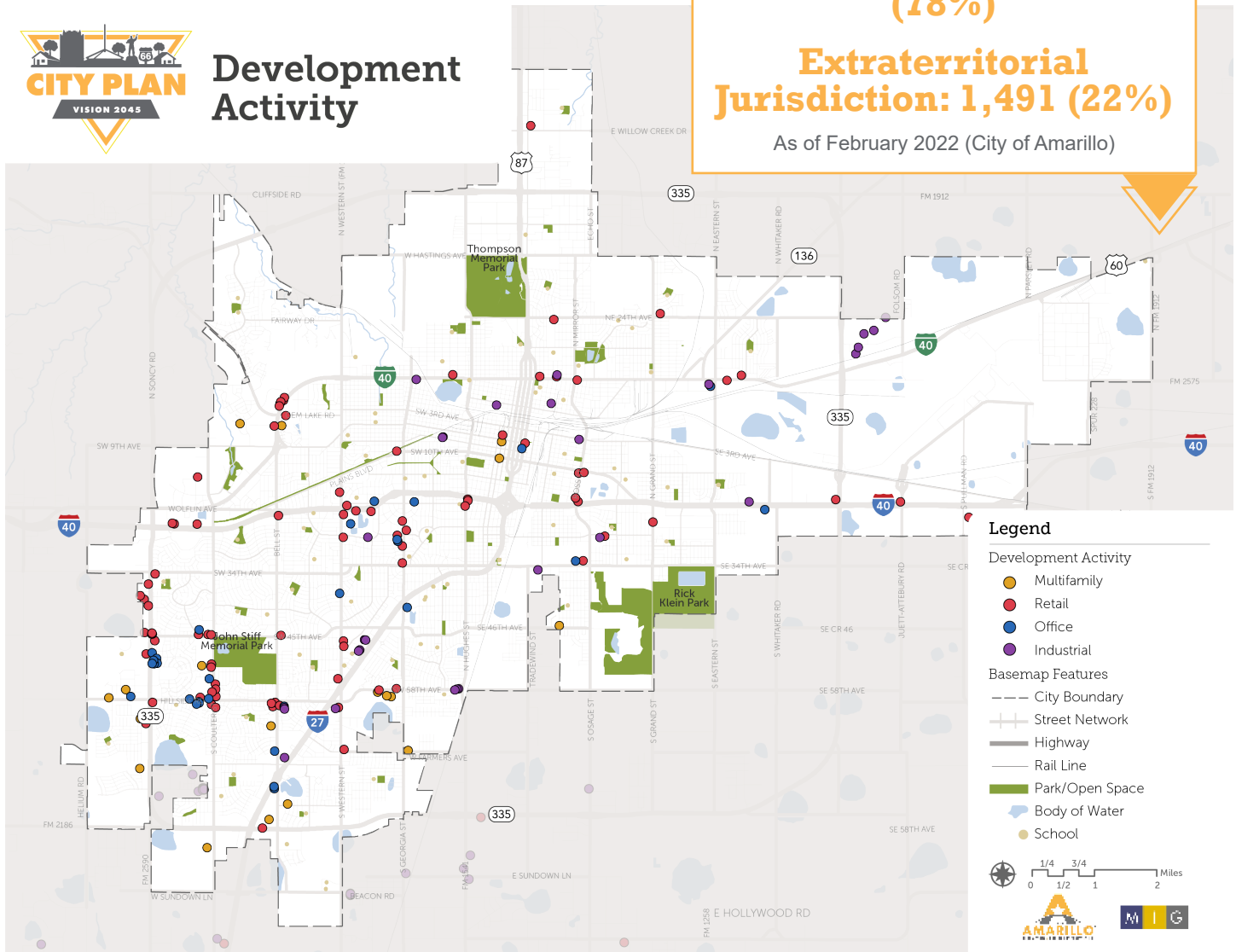
As with most growing communities in the U.S., Amarillo has experienced increasing housing costs and decreasing housing affordability over the last decade, with the median home price rising about 70%, reaching \$220,000 in 2023, while incomes have not kept pace. Amarillo's lack of diverse housing types contributes to this challenge, limiting the options and choices available for a community with diverse housing needs.

The map below illustrates recent development activity in Amarillo (2010-2022), including multifamily residential, retail, office, and industrial. Most commercial development has occurred in the southern and western areas of the city, especially near major interstates. This development indicates areas of growth and new investment, reflecting Amarillo's continual advancement. In the coming decades, Amarillo's uninhibited land area will continue to offer extensive opportunity for strategic investment and new growth but should be carefully guided.

**BUILDABLE LOTS:**  
**CITY LIMITS: 5,167 (78%)**  
**Extraterritorial Jurisdiction: 1,491 (22%)**  
 As of February 2022 (City of Amarillo)



## Development Activity





## Objectives for Future Neighborhoods & Districts

One of the greatest challenges in community development today is to pair available housing options and available job opportunities within close proximity to each other. When residents can live close to where they work, there are multiple benefits. First, residents spend less time commuting, which in turn gives them more personal time each day to do things such as exercise, spend time with friends and family, volunteer, or enjoy Amarillo’s activities and restaurants. Second, it supports multi-modal transportation objectives through shorter driving distances and/or greater ability to walk, bike, or take public transportation. Of course, there are many additional co-benefits, such as the potential for more active lifestyles and greater social interaction at the neighborhood scale. Additionally, these characteristics help attract new talent by increasing quality of life.

However, it is also important to account for incompatible land uses and the benefits of clustered economic activity. The priorities and conditions for advanced manufacturing are vastly different from home life, but both are equally important to Amarillo. Housing and economy are two sides of the same coin, requiring a coordinated and strategic approach to support core industries and foster emerging or new industries, while simultaneously expanding housing options to meet the needs of all workers and households – including variety in style, size, location, and cost.

The Neighborhoods & Districts (N&D) goals and recommendations in this chapter focus on these needs, challenges, and objectives. They expand upon the Complete Neighborhoods Scenario to provide more nuanced guidance to foster a thriving economy, expand housing choice, and improve accessibility through strategic land use, investment, partnerships, and creative funding programs.

## Housing Goals & Recommendations

### N&D Goal 1

Create opportunities for a greater diversity of housing options in both established and newly developing areas of Amarillo.

Amarilloans expressed a desire for more types of housing development, to expand options for different household sizes, stages of life, household income levels, and a combination of rental and ownership options.

### Recommendations

1. Promote housing in areas with existing or planned infrastructure necessary to support development.
2. Reduce regulatory barriers to ensure housing development keeps pace with employment growth through improvements in permitting and review processes.
3. Allow for middle density housing options in all neighborhood place types and expand the diversity of middle density housing options that are allowed by-right.
4. Ensure new infill housing in existing neighborhoods is designed and scaled to fit the neighborhood context.
5. Allow for medium and high density housing in commercial and industrial areas transitioning into mixed use places through the application of community mixed use and innovation mixed use place types.
6. Encourage high density residential development in locations near major transportation/transit routes and in close proximity to job centers (Place Types with 25-50 jobs per acre).





## N&D Goal 2

Ensure Amarillo residents and the regional workforce have access to affordable and attainable<sup>1</sup> housing options.

Amarilloans expressed concerns about maintaining affordability across all types of households to ensure opportunities for all household incomes and to prevent involuntary displacement.

### Recommendations

1. Support and prioritize the development of affordable housing projects in locations near transportation routes and jobs.
2. Maximize the impact of housing funds through partnerships with private and non-profit housing partners.
3. Use financing tools, such as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) and Public Facilities Corporations (PFC), to fund and incentivize development of new housing products in targeted reinvestment areas.

## N&D Goal 3

Revitalize and encourage infill housing and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods.

Throughout the community engagement and input process, Amarilloans expressed a strong desire for public and private reinvestment in older portions of the community.

### Recommendations

1. Encourage private investment in housing and businesses through the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Incentive Program by clearly communicating opportunities and eligibility rules.
2. Continue to pilot reinvestment tools and programs, such as the sidewalk cost-share pilot program, that allow the City to partner in reinvestment.
3. Support and expand programs that encourage reinvestment in existing homes and neighborhoods, foster the stabilization of transitional neighborhoods, and support home ownership.
4. Direct capital improvements and the use of incentives to improve and upgrade infrastructure and public amenities in underserved neighborhoods and targeted vacant and undeveloped areas.
5. Utilize value capture tools, such as improvement districts and tax increment financing, that capture the additional tax value generated by new development to help fund improvements.
6. Support the creation and efforts of community development organizations that can lead focused reinvestment efforts in neighborhoods through use of tools and powers not available to the City.

<sup>1</sup>Affordable housing refers to income-restricted, subsidized housing, while attainable housing refers to housing that is affordable to lower income households, occurring naturally within the housing market.



## Infill Development

Infill development provides the opportunity to utilize vacant or underdeveloped parcels within areas that are generally already largely developed. Rather than promoting outward development, infill development promotes fiscally responsible reinvestment and allows the introduction of uses that can enhance and strengthen communities.

The infill development graphic illustrates the transformation of an underutilized half block site into a residential community. The site is maximized with a variety of housing types including a duplex, quadplex, and attached condominiums, which helps expand middle density housing options in the downtown area.

**CURRENT**



**FUTURE**





## CASE STUDY: 209 N MADISON STREET SMALL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

City Plan recognizes the challenges of a successful infill program in Amarillo. Past plans have recommended infill as a strategy as well, but little development has occurred. This case study highlights a major feasibility challenge:

**Small-scale single-family homes that are both complimentary in neighborhood character and affordable to an average Amarillo family are likely infeasible without assistance from the public sector or non-profit housing partners.**

This case study investigates the development of two subsidized, income-restricted affordable ownership single-family homes on two adjacent vacant lots in the North Heights Neighborhood Plan area. Key takeaways include:

- First, the property would need to be rezoned to allow for single-family residential development, even though other single-family homes exist on the same block and in the surrounding neighborhood.
- Despite significant cost-saving assistance from the City (fees and land), the units wouldn't be affordable to many households currently living in the area. These units would only be affordable to households making \$74,900+.
- Without cost-saving assistance from the City (fees and land), and/or if infrastructure improvements were necessary, this project would likely be infeasible as subsidized, income-restricted affordable housing.
- Construction loan financing is typically provided using land as equity. In this case, the builder would need special approval conditions.
- As a project meant for affordable homeownership, home buyer education, downpayment assistance, and financing would also need to be provided through a non-profit (e.g. community housing development corporation).

### Land Use

Existing Zoning	Industrial (I-1)
Complete Neighborhoods Scenario Place Type	Neighborhood Medium (NM)

### Unit Type & Size

Lot Acreage	0.2
Lot Dimensions	60' x 140'
Number of Units	2
Home Size	1,200 SF

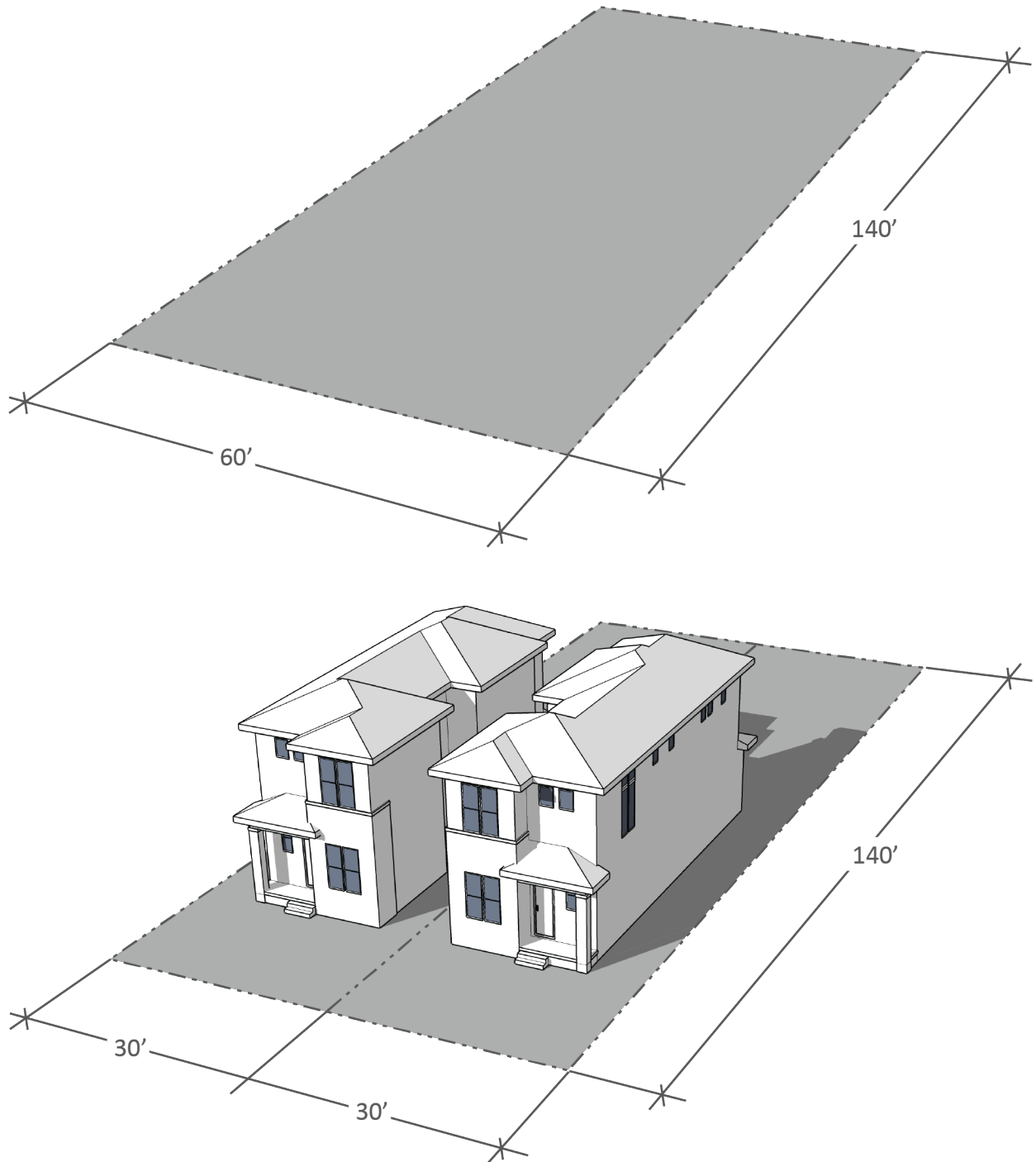
### Construction Costs

Land Acquisition	\$0 (owned by CoA, provided to builder through developer agreement). Land estimated at \$2.95 SF
Construction Cost	\$135 SF / \$162,000
Interest Carry	\$8,000
Profit/Contingency	\$15,000 per unit
Permitting	\$0 (rezoning (\$816) and building (\$738) fees waived through NEZ)
Infrastructure	None needed - 2" water line & 6" sewer line adequate

### Financing

Sale Price	\$185,000 / \$154 SF
Qualifying Income	\$60,000 YR
Down Payment	\$6,475
Closing Costs	\$6,000
Monthly Mortgage (30 yr at 6.625%)	\$1,163
Monthly Taxes & Insurance	\$661
Total Monthly Payment	\$1,874
Median Family Income (site location Census Tract)	\$44,820
Monthly Payment Affordable to Median Family Income Household	\$1,120

## CASE STUDY: 209 N Madison Street Small single-family homes





# Employment Areas & Economic Development Goals & Recommendations

## N&D Goal 4

Support the growth of the region’s economic strengths to expand economic opportunities for all residents.

Considering projected growth for the region, Amarilloans expressed a desire to ensure employment opportunities in Amarillo keep pace with expected population increases.

### Recommendations

1. Support the attraction and retention of businesses in the region’s focus industries including agriculture, life sciences, manufacturing, food processing, and energy.
2. Grow Amarillo as a destination for outdoor recreation and entertainment through investments in recreation amenities, access to attractions, and new entertainment destinations.
3. Facilitate the growth of Amarillo as the regional destination for health care, retail trade, and logistics.
4. Provide opportunities and resources for entrepreneurship.
5. Promote continued research and education in ag-tech and veterinary medicine in order to spur new business formation and attract investment.
6. Maximize City and AEDC owned land to strategically develop around Rick Husband International Airport as an important employment center in East Amarillo.

## N&D Goal 5

Grow Amarillo as a leading community for applied education and workforce development.

Key stakeholders in the planning process prioritized workforce development as an important component of a larger business attraction, retention and growth strategy.

### Recommendations

1. Expand programs and partnerships with education partners (Independent School Districts, Amarillo College, West Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center) that provide workforce education and training programs that support the region’s industry strengths.
2. Continue to invest in improving the attractiveness of living and working in Amarillo to support workforce attraction and retention.
3. Utilize economic development tools and incentives to direct investment and job opportunities to underserved and underemployed populations.

## N&D Goal 6

Invest in creation and growth of a variety of economic place types.

Amarilloans prioritized a diversity of development to accommodate a diverse array of employers over the next 20+ years.

### Recommendations

1. Invest in infrastructure projects that support the growth of the city's manufacturing and logistics districts.
2. Protect manufacturing and logistics districts from encroachment of incompatible uses.
3. Attract investment into the Center City through use of incentive tools and public-private partnership programs and opportunities.
4. Provide support for property owners and developers reinvesting in older and historic buildings in the Center City to attract and facilitate growth of economic activity and housing.
5. Support the transition of older, outmoded industrial areas and commercial/retail centers into mixed use place types by allowing a greater diversity of uses in these areas.
6. Allow for and support the growth of neighborhood "main street" business districts.
7. Use value capture tools, such as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) and Public Improvement Districts (PIDs), to redirect investment into employment place types.

### Innovation Retrofit

The direct benefits of retrofitting buildings can include added functionality, efficiency, and sustainability. Additionally, retrofitting projects have the opportunity to revitalize their communities by providing services and transforming the built environment. Often these can occur in partnership with local education institutions.

## FUTURE







## CURRENT



The Amarillo Art Institute and AmTech Career Academy are located west of downtown Amarillo, on the site of the city's first mall. Some of the original buildings have since been retrofitted into their existing uses and currently provide the community with educational services. Building on the momentum of these two community resources, the graphic re-imagines the site into an innovative campus. The site allows for additional campus related buildings, innovation mixed-use type development, retail, housing, and multiple opportunities for open space.



