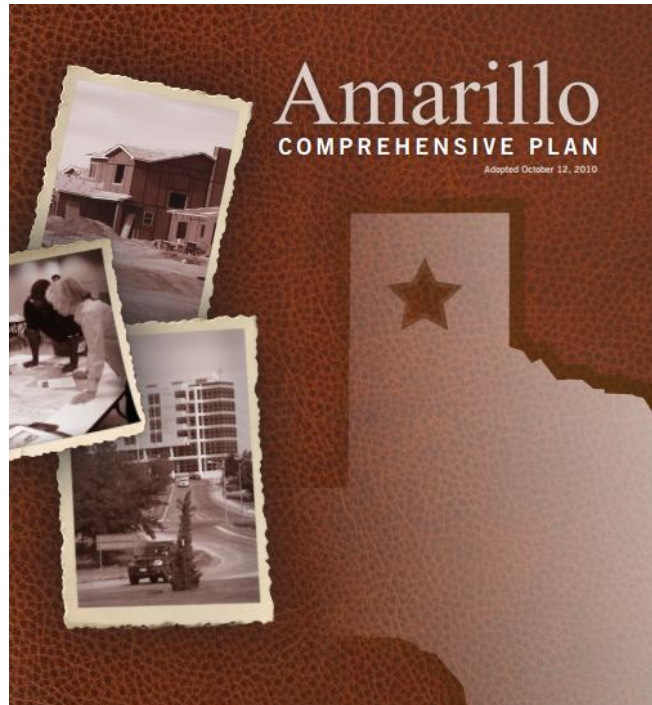


The North Heights Neighborhood Plan

An Amendment to the Amarillo Comprehensive Plan



CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Paul Harpole
Lisa Blake
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Elisha Demerson
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Capital Improvements & Development Engineering Department

Building Safety Department

Community Development Department

Parks & Recreation Department

Police Department

Public Health Department

Public Works Division

Traffic Field Operations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through adoption of this plan, the City Council demonstrates the City's commitment to the implementation of the plan. The implementation of recommendations for which the City of Amarillo is responsible and the support of this neighborhood plan will be met and demonstrated through:

- City Council, boards, and staff
- City annual budget
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Other agencies and organizations
- Direct neighborhood actions

This neighborhood plan would not have been made possible without the commitment, advice, and insights of the North Heights advisory committee, who selflessly devoted many hours to the development of this plan. The City thanks them for their dedication to this important project.

Anita Burell

Anita Ryan

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Freda Powell

Glenna Gilbreath

Grover Martin

Johnny Hughes

Juaquin Rocha

Laird Kinnier

LaVaun Green

Lorine Jackson

Ludell Hill

Madeleine Frum

Mariah Strong-Woods

Mary London

Melinda Perkins

MH Burrell

Mildred Darton

Nei Winston

Pearlene Martin

Perry Hughes

Phillip Randle

Raymond Cloudy

Rosie Taylor

Ruth Ellen Lynch

Tim Ingalls

Verlinda Pride-Watson

Vicky Tharpe

Wiley Smith

The City would also like to thank the Amarillo United Citizens Forum for the use of their Cultural Center facility throughout the North Heights neighborhood planning process. Their generosity is highly appreciated. This facility is truly embodies the community spirit of this neighborhood.

The goal of this project is to assist the North Heights neighborhood with their future planning and development needs by addressing the neighborhood's goals and desires through the creation of a neighborhood plan.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The North Heights neighborhood, located in northeast Amarillo, is defined for the purposes of this study as having a northern boundary of NE 24th Ave, an eastern boundary of US Hwy 287/Fillmore St, a southern boundary of BNSF railroad line, and a western boundary following the west line of Section 189, Block 2, AB&M Survey.

This neighborhood encompasses 1,673 acres and is developed primarily with single-family residences, an established neighborhood created by the subdivisions shown in Figure 1 below. The primary subdivisions which together form this neighborhood include: University Heights, North Heights, Hampton Park, Whittington, Park Hills, North Hills, Amarillo Heights, Miller Heights,

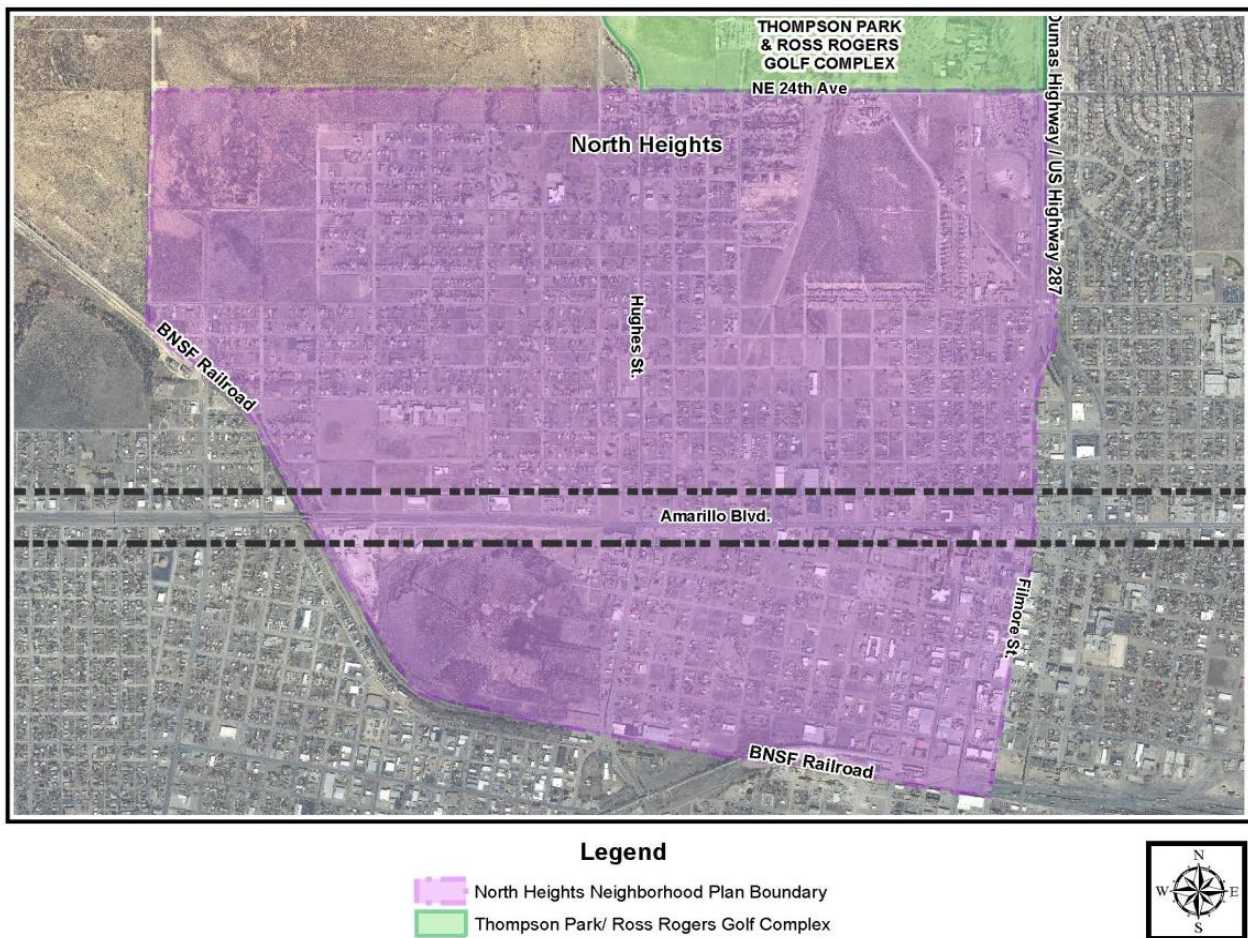


Figure 1

Wild Horse, and Glidden and Sanborn, all of which are shown in Figure 2 on page 5. While some of these subdivisions were created in the 1950s and 1960s (in the northeast quadrant), others date back to the early 1900s and even the late 1800s (in the central and northwestern areas). Most of the housing units which exist today were built in the early to mid part of the twentieth century. Notable features within this neighborhood include four schools, seven churches, and three parks, as shown in Figure 3 on page 6. The neighborhood is entirely within the Amarillo Independent School District.

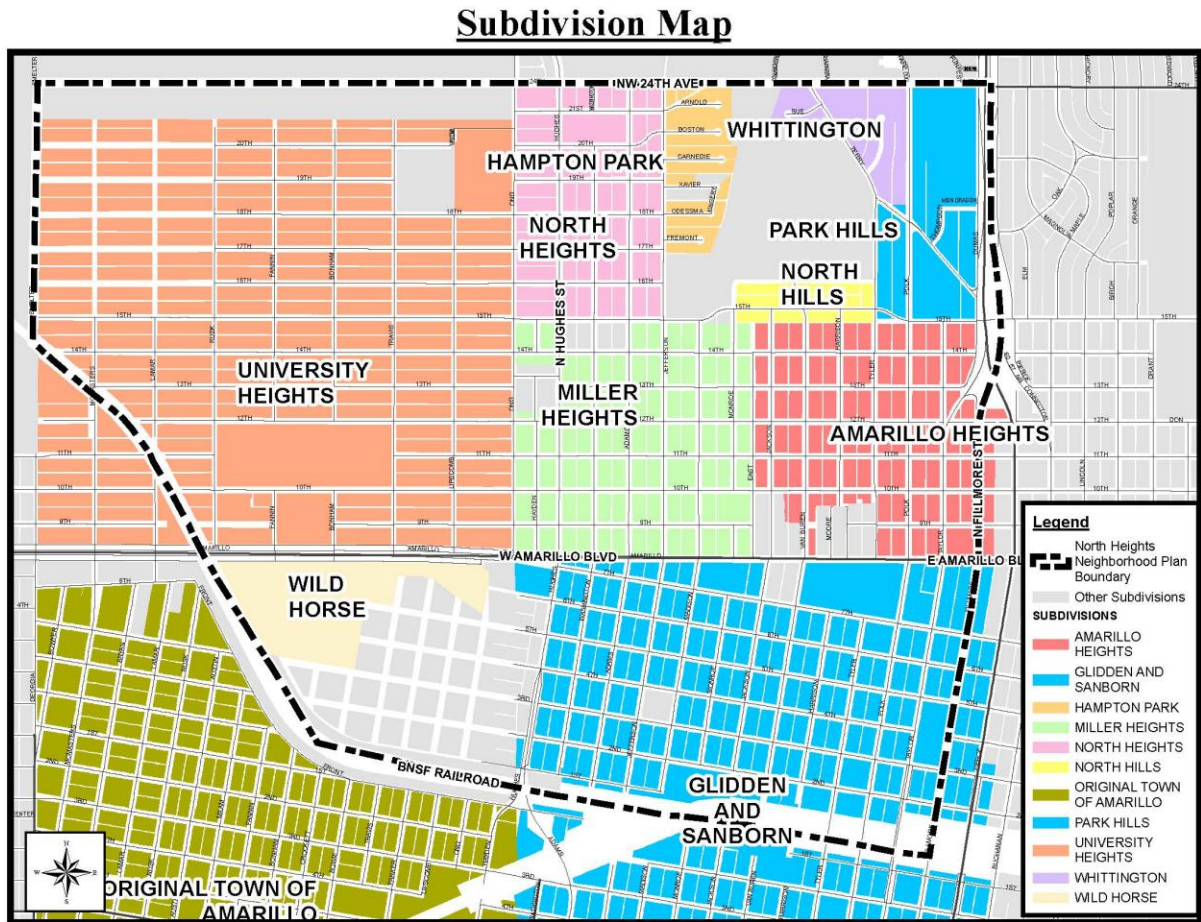


Figure 2

Parks and Civic Areas

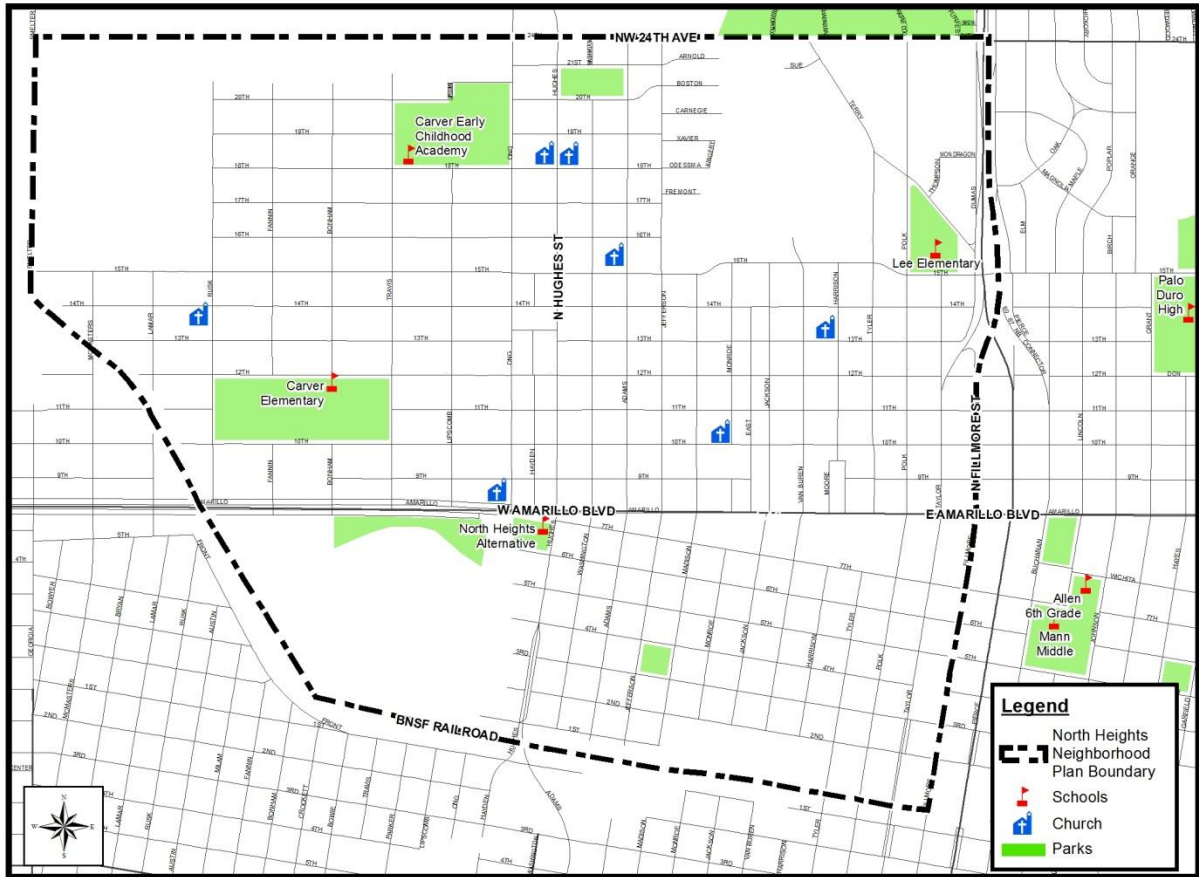


Figure 3

THE BIG PICTURE

Community Counts

In late 2015, the Amarillo City Council authorized the creation of BluePrint for Amarillo, a document setting the strategic direction for the city in identifying priorities, allocating resources, and sharpening focus. Community Counts is the term given to one of the City Council's top five priorities, the assisting of neighborhoods with future planning and development needs by addressing the goals and desires of their residents through collaboration – the ultimate result of which is a plan which summarizes what the neighborhood residents desire, and outlining how to get there. Six areas were identified as target areas for closer examination. North Heights is the first area for which a plan has been formulated.

Relationship to Adopted Plans

The North Heights Neighborhood Plan will be considered as an amendment to the Amarillo Comprehensive Plan, adopted on October 12, 2010. The Comprehensive Plan contains general policies, suggestions and guidelines proposed for use by the City of Amarillo to guide the orderly growth, development and redevelopment through land use and development ordinances, guide decisions regarding provisions of services and improvements, and as a tool for policymaking. It guides the long range development of the community. This amendment to the plan is intended to supplement and provide a greater level of detail to help guide decisions within this area of the community and to provide a more complete analysis of the characteristics of this neighborhood.

This plan will be used moving forward as a guide for decision making, a tool for evaluating potential policies and land use decisions being considered, information to serve as a basis for prospective public-private partnerships, and a starting point for infrastructure and mobility projects.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

The next series of maps (Figure 4 - 11) show the demographic breakdown of the neighborhood, utilizing data located in the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Age

The “median” age – that is, the age which divides the population into two numerically equal groups, half younger and half older – varies greatly throughout this neighborhood boundary. Figure 3 below illustrates that the youngest median age (0-25 years) exists in the western central part of the neighborhood; in contrast, the northeast corner of the community has a median age of 39–45 years and in the northwest, 32–38 years.

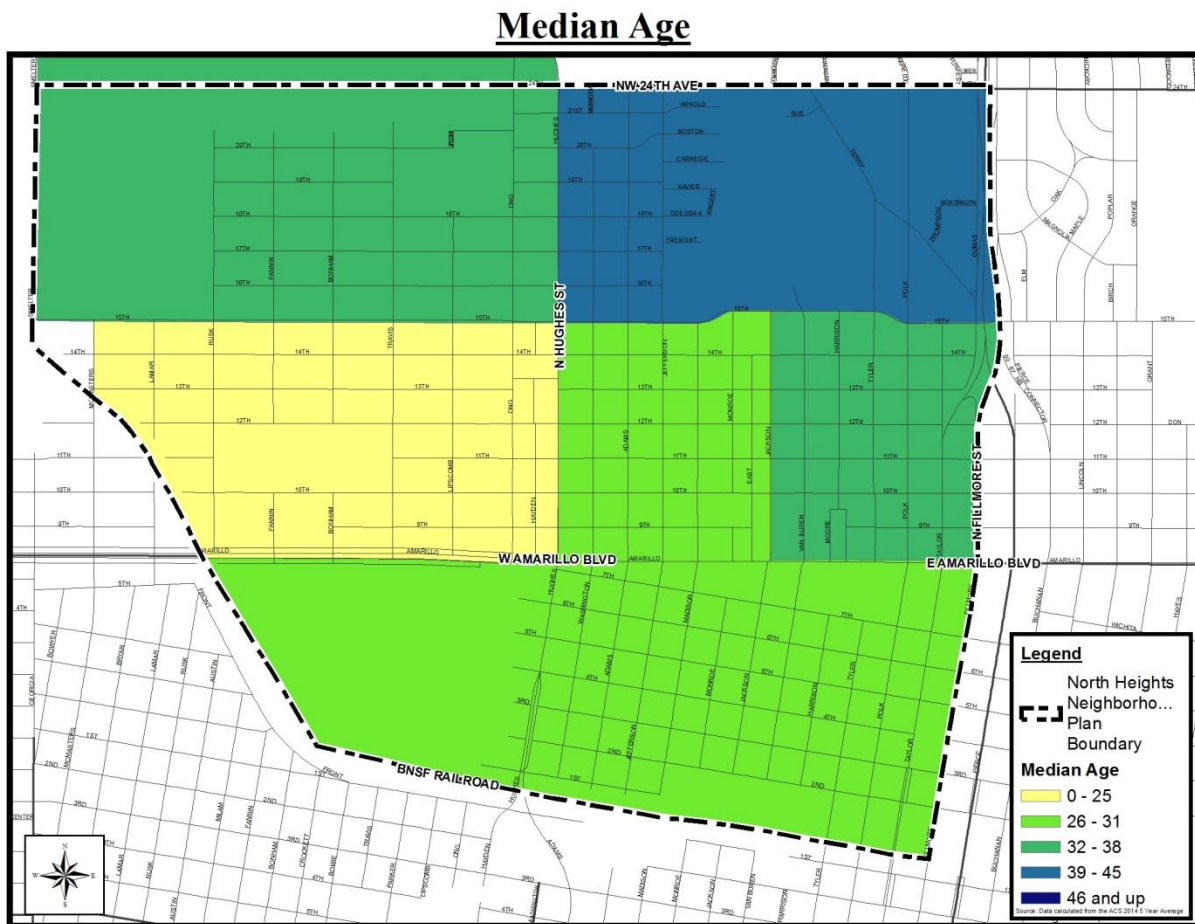


Figure 4
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population by Race

Figure 5 below shows the distribution of race throughout this neighborhood. This data collected for the American Community Survey, or ACS, collects data for four different race categories: African American, Asian, Latino, and White. The North Heights neighborhood – and four of the five tracts outlined below within it – is predominantly African American; however, the southernmost tract within this neighborhood is largely comprised of Latino residents (53%) and White residents (43%).

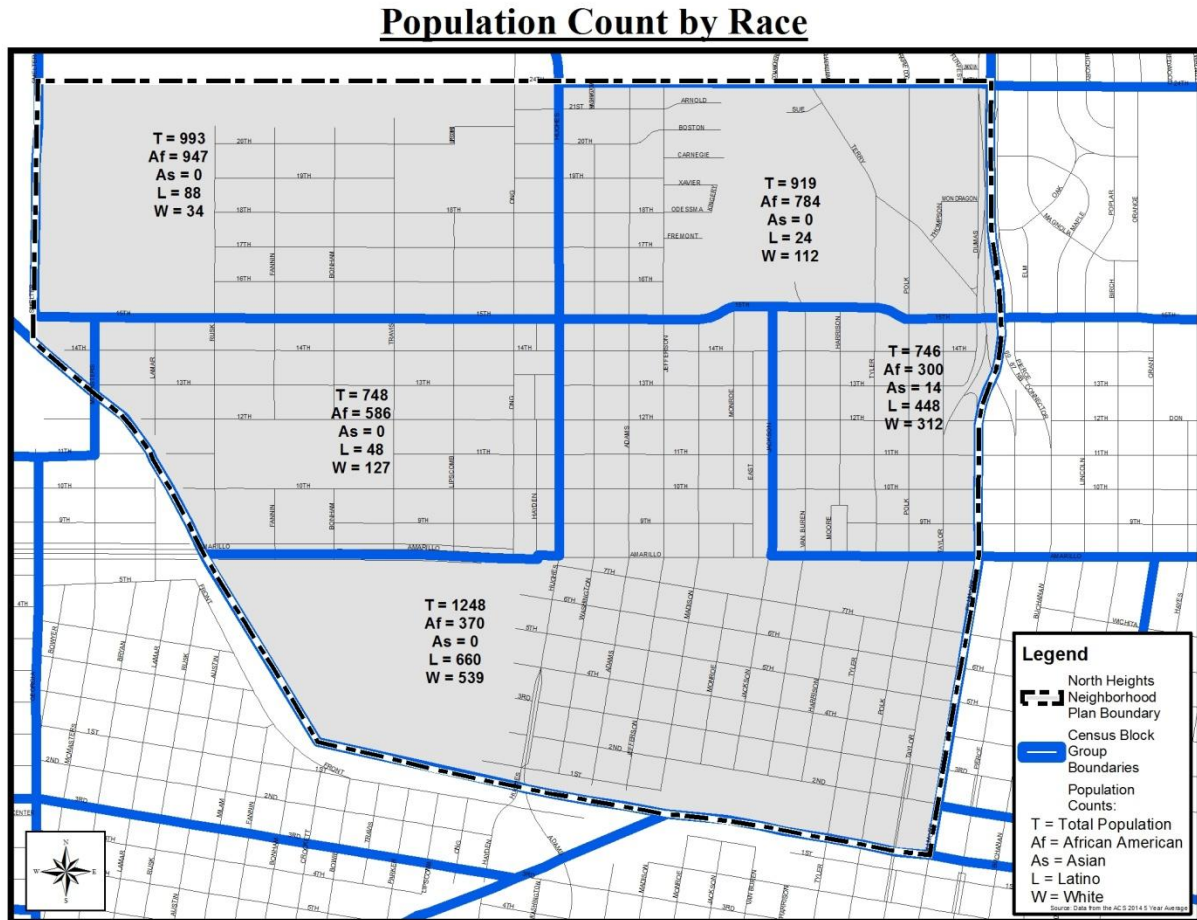


Figure 5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Poverty Level

The distribution of poverty level throughout this neighborhood is illustrated in Figure 6. The U.S. Census Bureau measures poverty level by utilizing a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps). [Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates]

The data summarized in Figure 6 shows a clear line of demarcation aligning with 15th Avenue. North of this dividing line, the statistics show that 30% - 45% of the population is below poverty status, while that number increases to 45% - 60% south of this line.

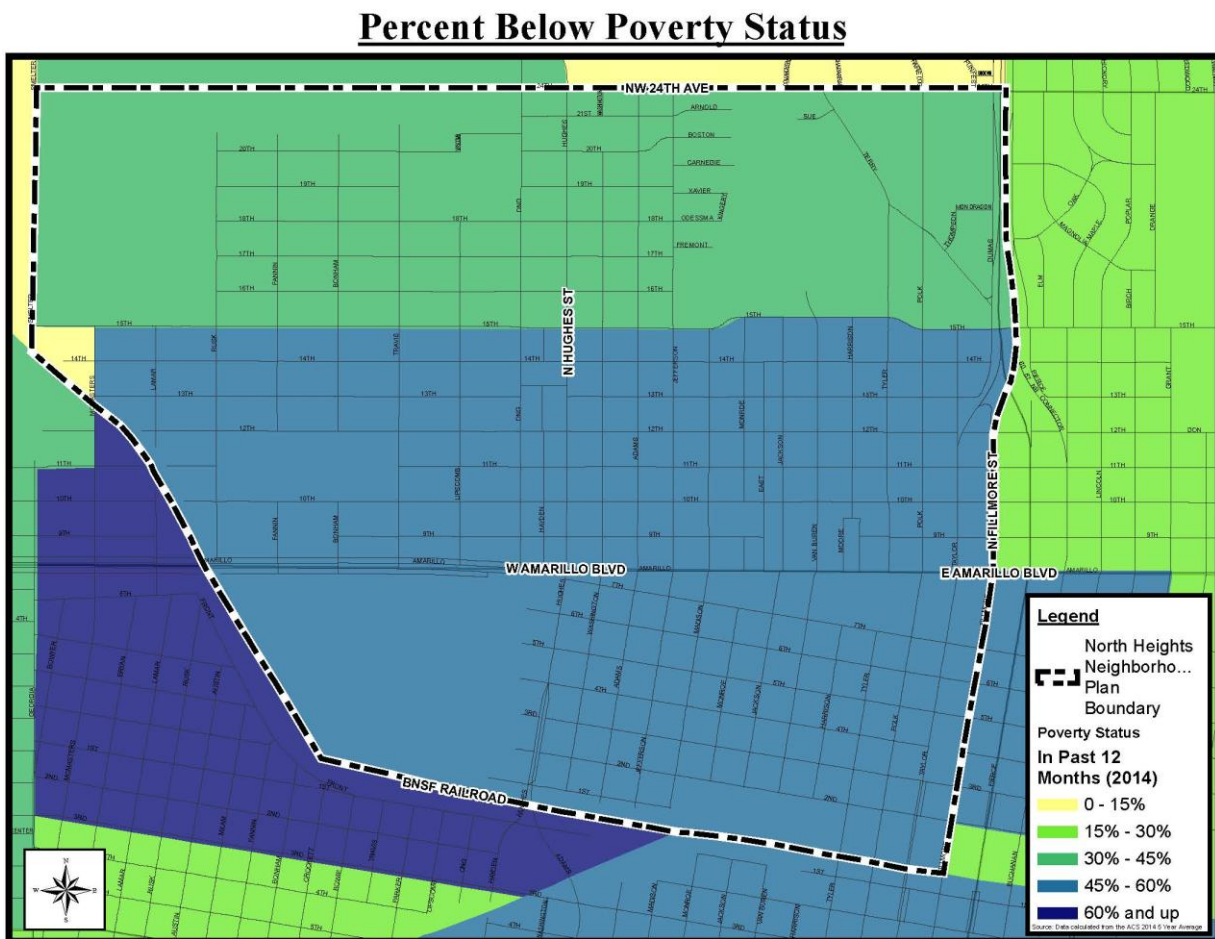


Figure 6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population

Included in Figure 7 below, and Figure 8 on page 12, are two different population measures provided by the ACS, the first being average population per household, and the second being population per census block. A census block is an area roughly equivalent to a neighborhood established by the Census Bureau for analyzing populations.

The distribution – again, by the average population per household – is demonstrated by Figure 7 below, showing this as slightly higher in the eastern portion of the neighborhood.

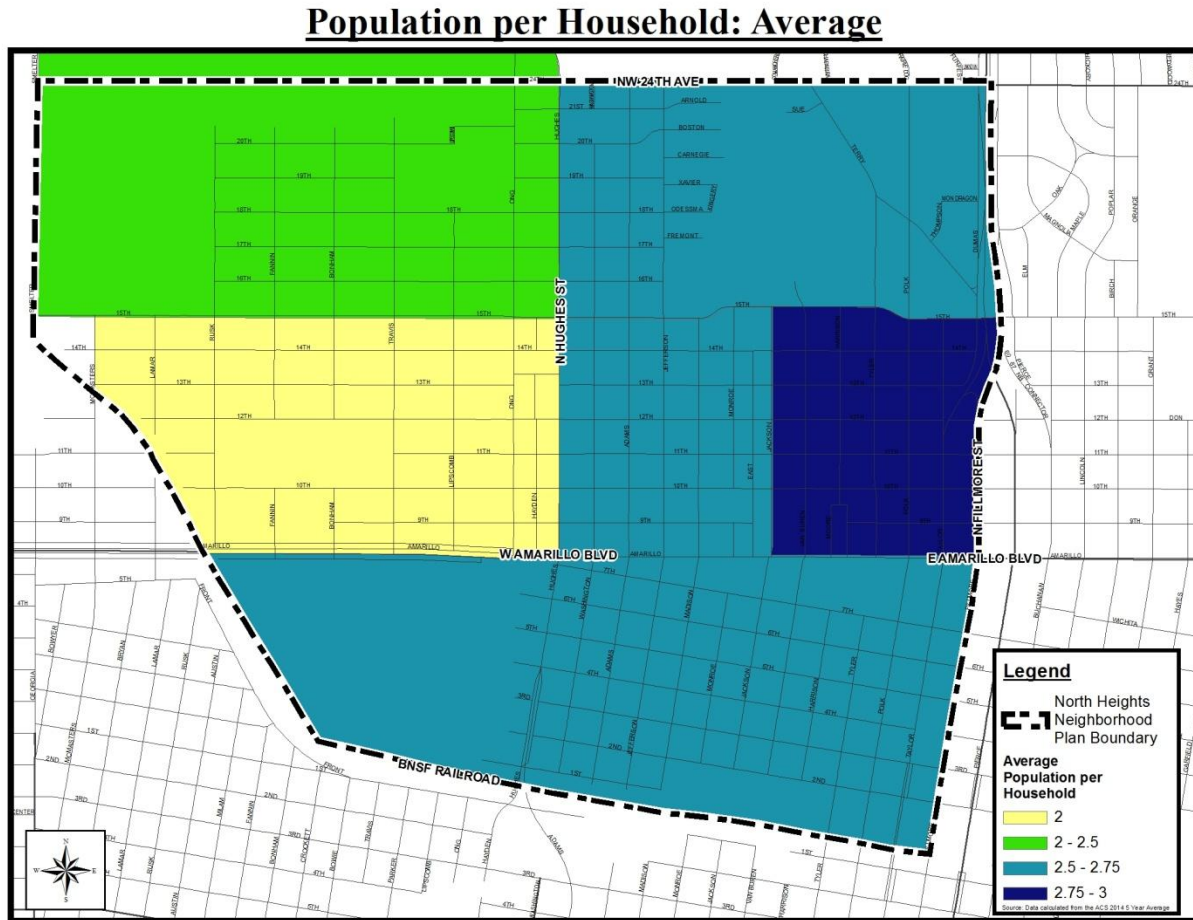


Figure 7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 8 takes a different approach at estimating population of the North Heights neighborhood by looking at the census tracts (complete and partial) which make up this particular area. The eastern and southern portions of the neighborhood have higher average populations per neighborhood as well as highest populations per census block in this neighborhood boundary. Overall, the estimate for population within this neighborhood is 4,654 total persons.

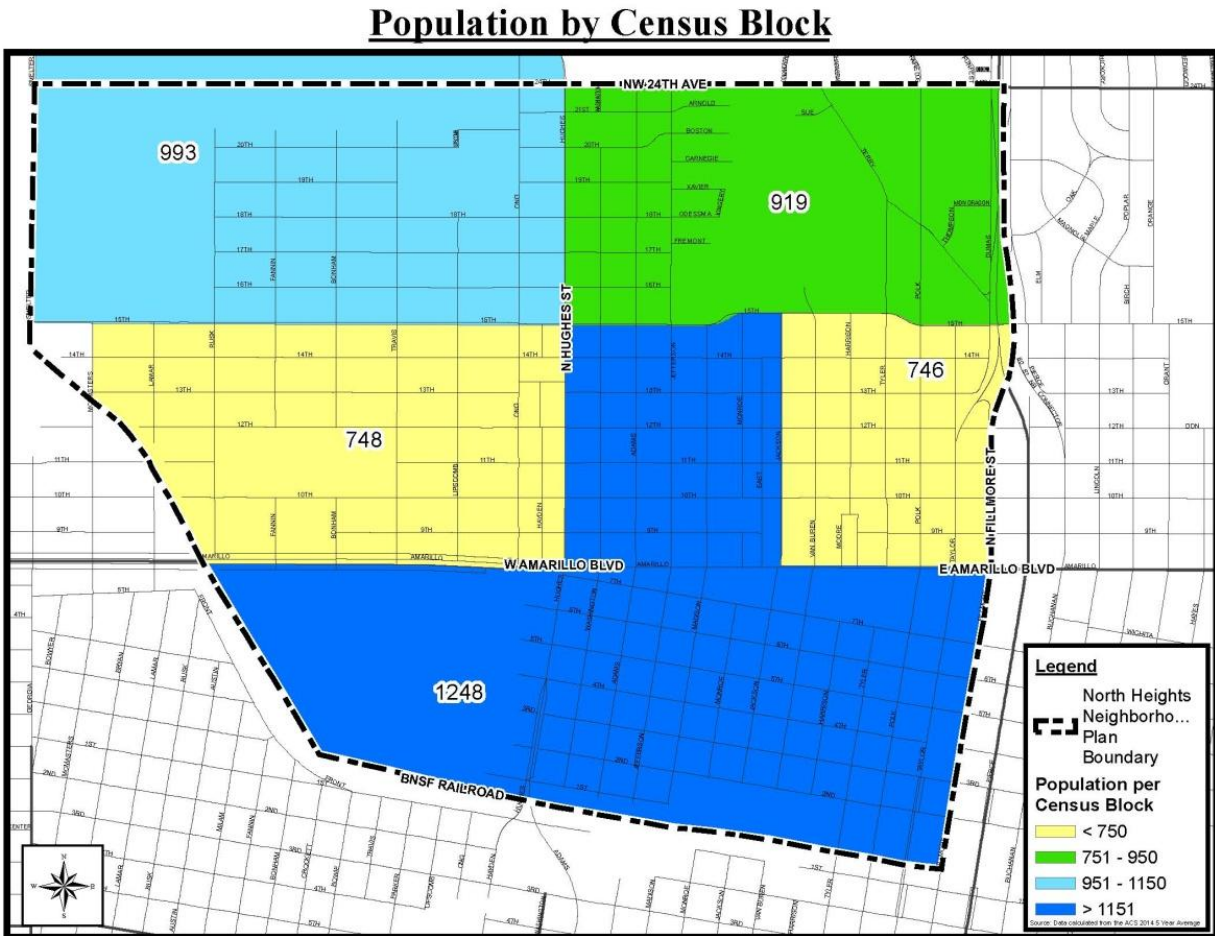


Figure 8
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Owner vs. Renter Occupied

In Figures 9 and 10, the percentages of homes which are owner occupied (by census block) and renter occupied (by census block) are shown throughout the North Heights neighborhood. The northeastern and northwestern parts of the neighborhood have the highest concentrations of owner occupied housing, approximately 45% to over 55% of the homes in those areas. Conversely, in the central western portion of the neighborhood, less than 37% of the homes are owner occupied.

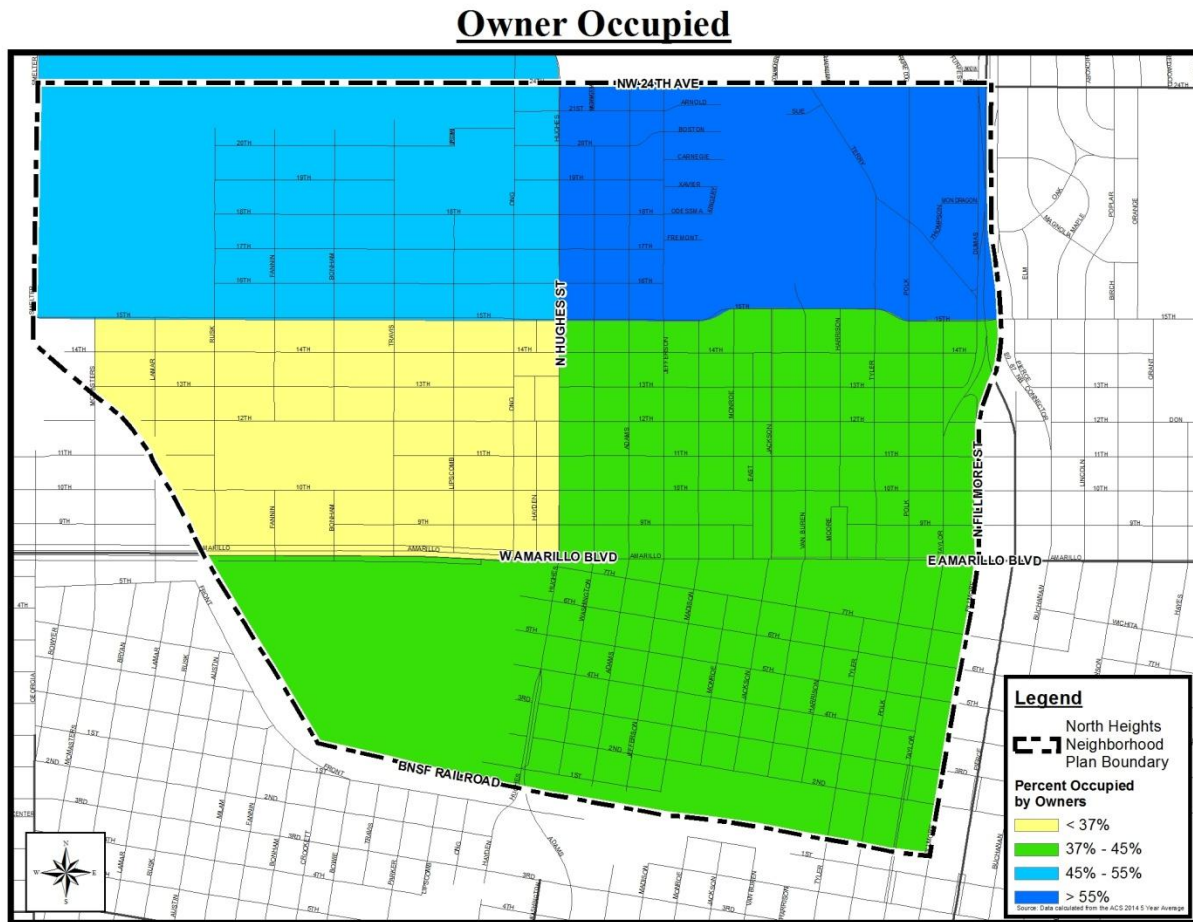


Figure 9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 10 demonstrates that the highest concentrations of renter occupied property are located in the northwestern and eastern central parts of the neighborhood; and, the western central part of the study area has the lowest concentration of renter occupied properties, at less than 22%.

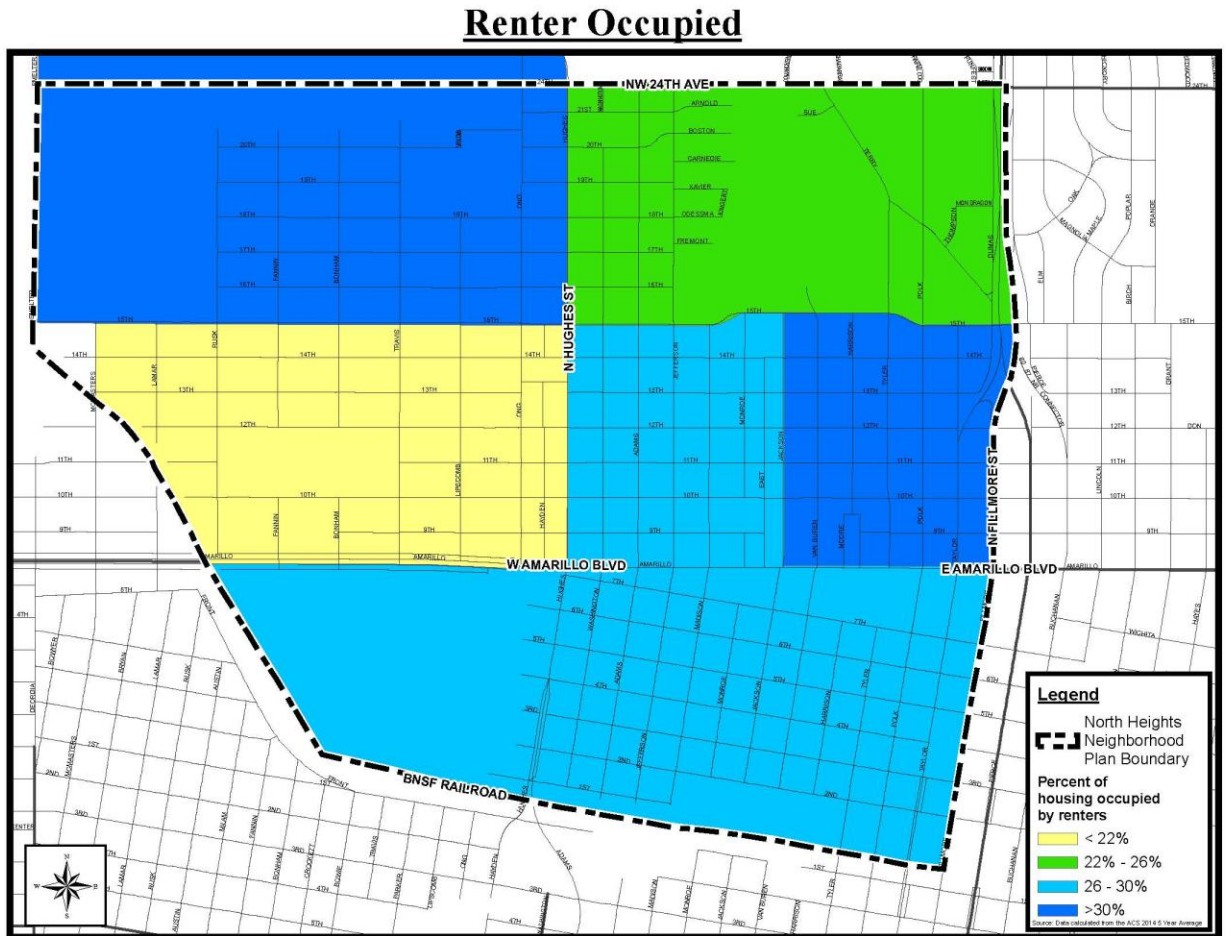


Figure 10
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Vacant Housing

Within the North Heights neighborhood, the level of vacancy (an average of unoccupied housing units, or units occupied by people who will be there for two months or less) fluctuates. In Figure 11 below, the area of highest vacancy is the western central census block, where on the average, more than 35% of the residences are vacant. Conversely, in the northern portion of the neighborhood, stretching from the western boundary to the eastern, the average is less than 10% of the residences are vacant.

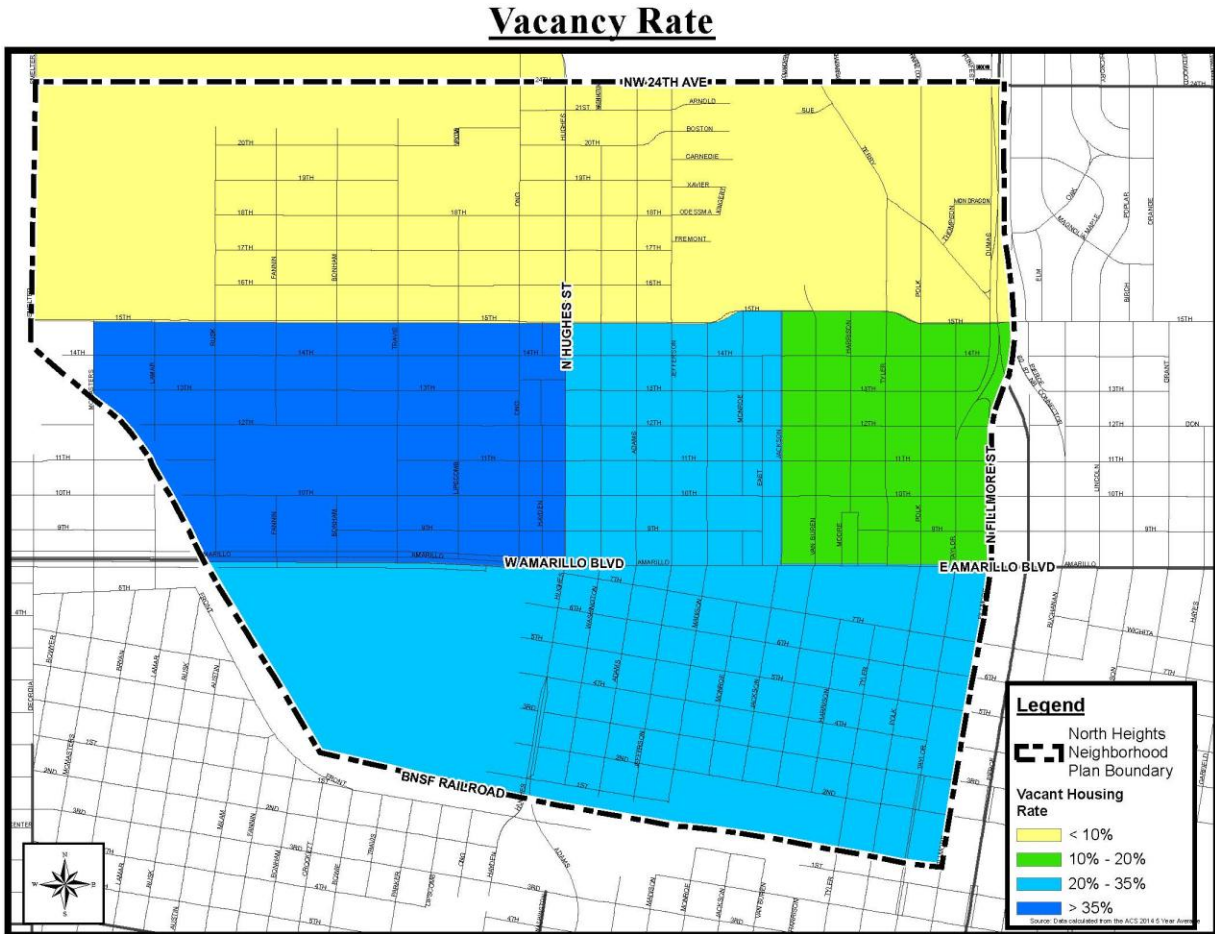


Figure 11

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Land Use

Figures 12 and 13 (pages 17 & 18) show the current land use of the parcels within the neighborhood and the future planned land use for the parcels within the neighborhood. The future land use planned for the area is excerpted from the Future Land Use and Character map, adopted as part of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The Local Government Code, outlining regulations for Texas cities, requires that zoning regulations be approved in accordance with the adopted comprehensive plan for each city, part of which is this map. Since zoning requests are considered and analyzed in conjunction with this map, it plays a significant role in establishing the growth of the area.

The predominant land uses in this area are agricultural/vacant land (gray) and single-family residential (yellow). Distributed throughout the central part of the neighborhood boundary are public/park/school sites (green), and commercial uses (blue) are concentrated along the corridors of US Hwy 287/Fillmore St and Amarillo Blvd. Remnants of industrial usage occur along the rail line and in the southeast corner of the neighborhood.

In looking to the future of growth within the neighborhood boundary, the land use pattern is projected to stabilize and better organize many of the very same uses which currently exist today. The aforementioned single-family residential traditional neighborhood pattern north of Amarillo Blvd is projected to continue, and currently vacant areas in the northwest and northeast quadrants are also expected to develop as residential. Another core residential area – some of which exists presently – is anticipated to emerge between NW 1st and 7th Avenues, from N Hughes to Van Buren Street. The current commercial corridors of US Hwy 287/Fillmore St and Amarillo Blvd are anticipated as seeing additional commercial activity emerge, with some additional areas identified for commercial land use along N Hughes St, and NE 7th and NE 6th Avenue. While some industrial land uses are likely to continue, they are limiting to the same general areas where they exist today.

Zoning

The current zoning determines the land use and siting restrictions for development and redevelopment within the neighborhood. Figure 14 (page 19) shows a variety of residential zoning districts throughout this neighborhood, including both single and multi-family residential (R-1, R-2, R-3, MF-1, and MH) throughout the central core of the neighborhood, a small section just south of Amarillo Blvd, and throughout the northeastern most portion of the area. The corridors of Amarillo Blvd and US Hwy 287/Fillmore Street have large concentrations of Light Commercial (LC) zoning, along with some isolated General Retail areas (GR). Industrial zoning (I-1) is widely present in the northwestern, southwestern, and southeastern corners of the neighborhood.

Current Land Use of the North Heights Neighborhood

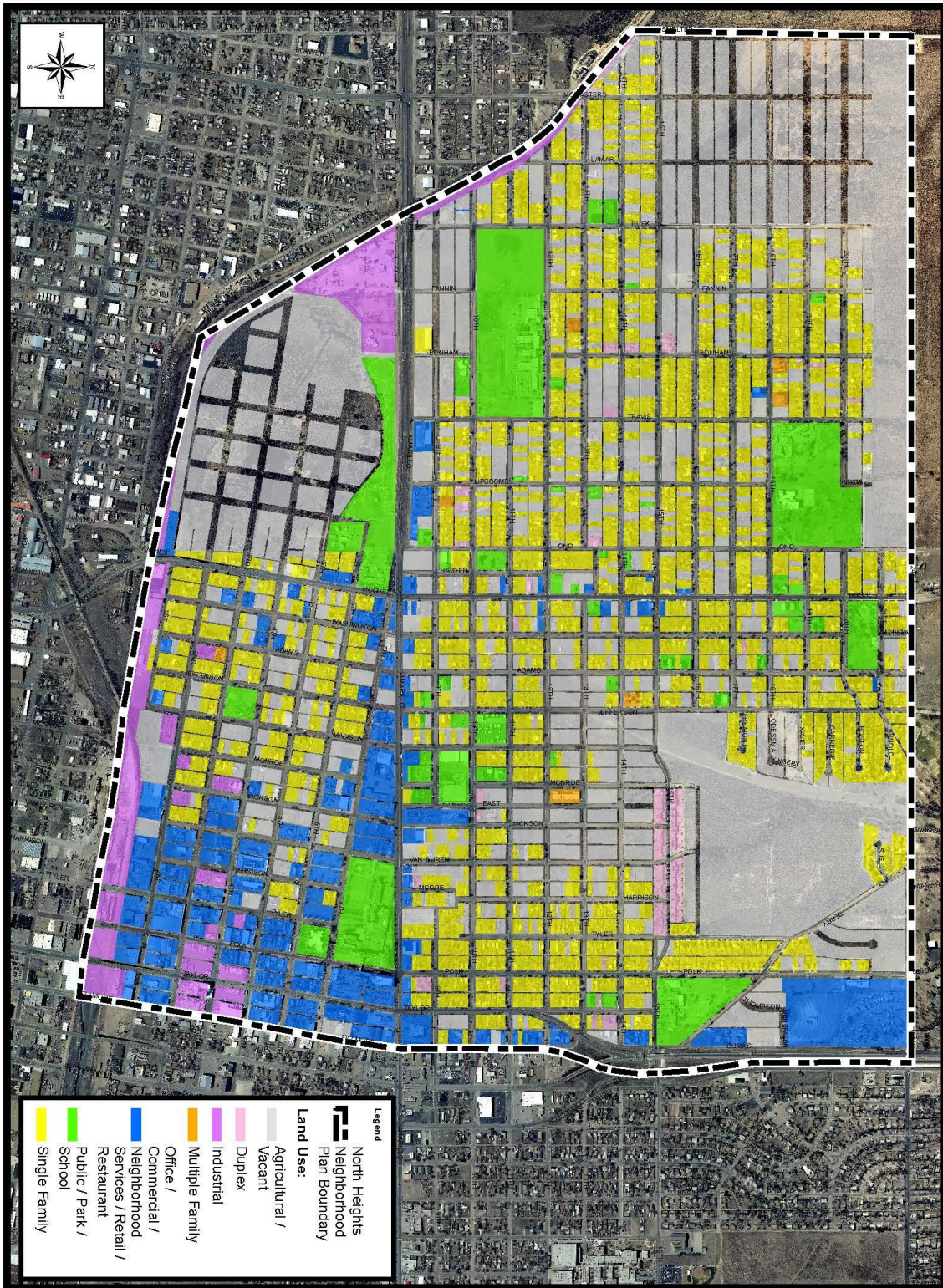


Figure 12

Future Land Use of the North Heights Neighborhood

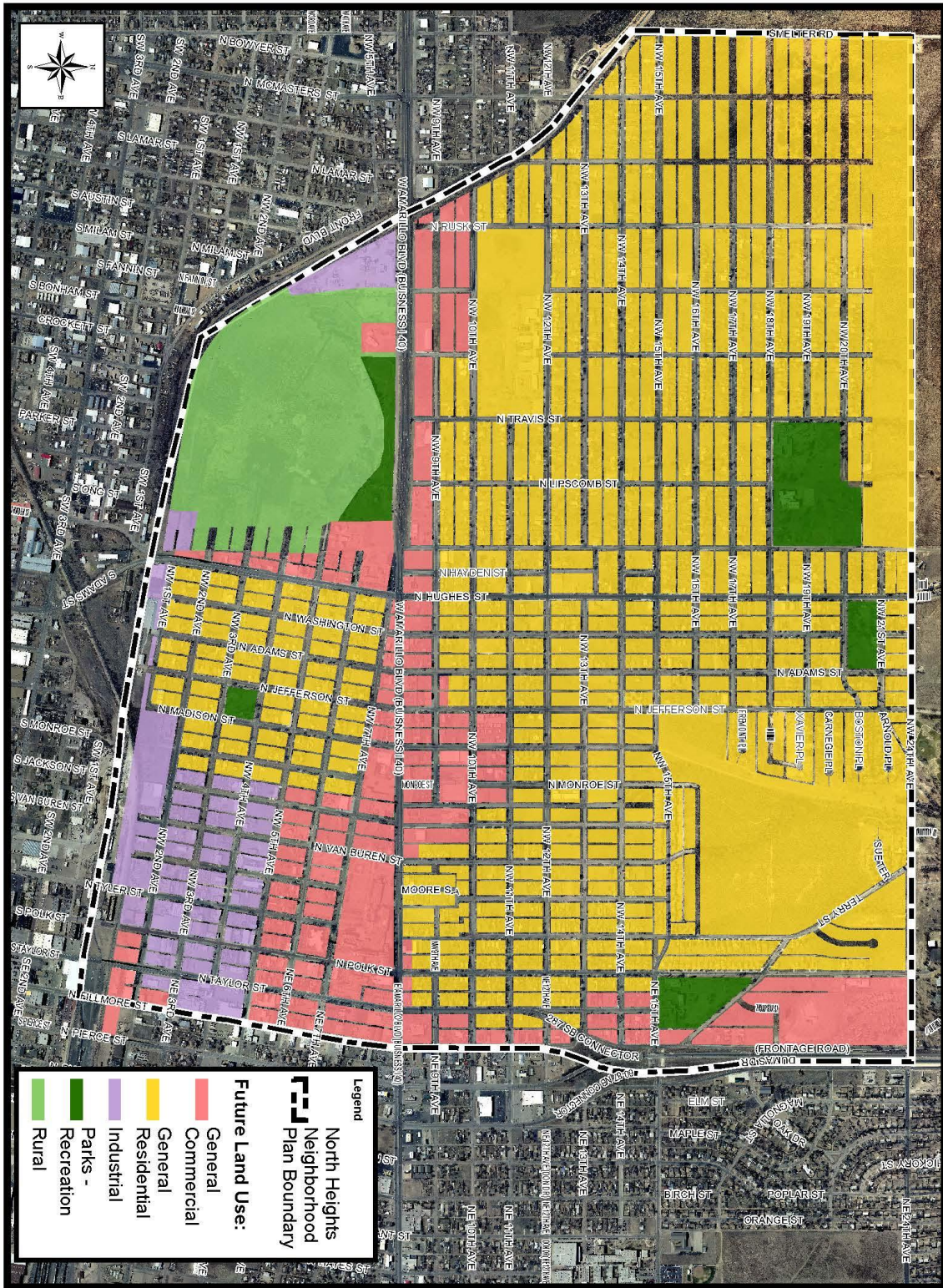


Figure 13

Zoning Map of the North Heights Neighborhood

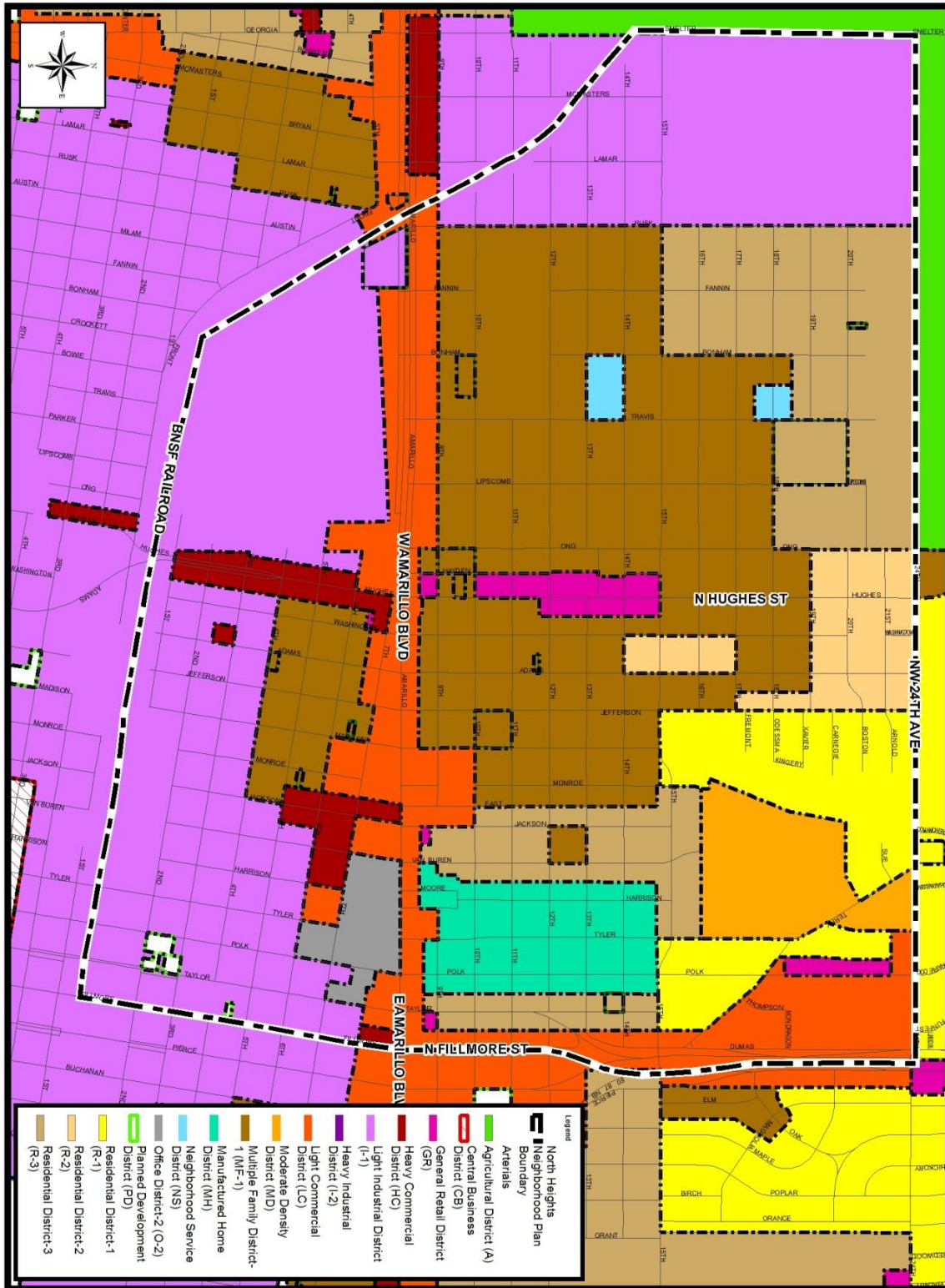


Figure 14

Sites of Historic Interest

Within the North Heights neighborhood boundary, there are a number of sites of historic interest, denoted with red and yellow dots in Figure 15. A 1997 Historic Preservation Survey prepared by Hardy-Heck-Moore & Associates identified a total of 109 historically significant buildings, 98 of which were deemed as medium priority and 11 of which were deemed as high priority. Some of these notable high priority sites include 107 N Polk St, a commercial warehouse dating back to 1913 that once operated as the Cora Hotel (Image 1) and 1501 N Adams St, a two story brick church and Sunday School building built in 1948 (Image 2). Table 1 on page 22 summarizes the sites identified.

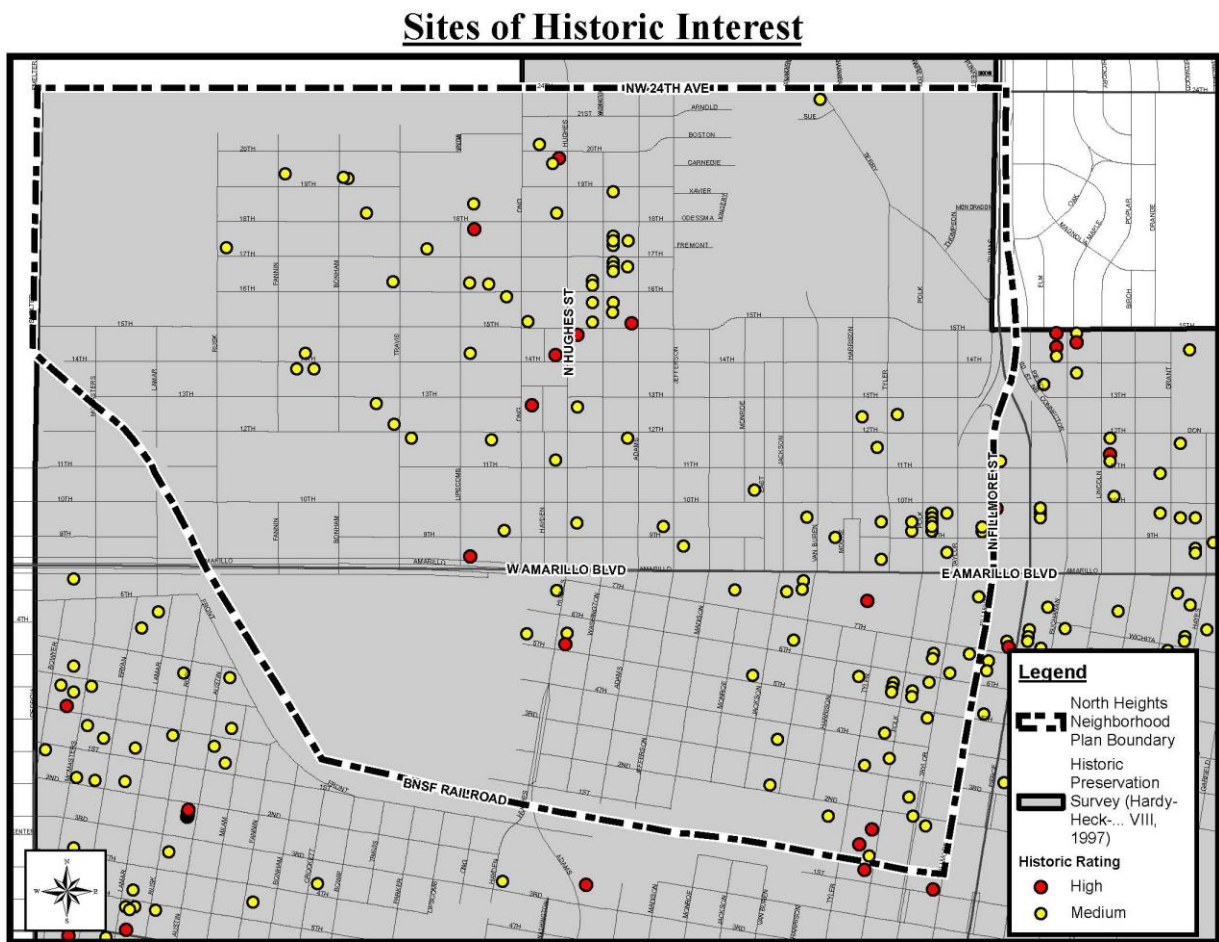


Figure 15



Image 1
Source: Google maps, © 2014, maps.google.com



Image 2
Source: Google maps, © 2013, maps.google.com

RATING	ADDRESS
High	1337 NW 18TH AVE
High	200 NW 7TH AVE
High	99 N POLK ST
High	1501 N ADAMS ST
High	1336 W AMARILLO BLVD
High	1401 N HUGHES ST
High	1416 N HUGHES ST
High	500 N HUGHES ST
High	107 N POLK ST
High	1101 NW 20TH AVE
Medium	1705 N ADAMS ST
Medium	1609 N ADAMS ST
Medium	1602 NW 12TH AVE A
Medium	1439 NW 12TH AVE
Medium	1321 NW 12TH AVE
Medium	1617 NW 13TH AVE
Medium	1924 NW 14TH AVE
Medium	1919 NW 14TH AVE
Medium	1931 NW 14TH AVE
Medium	1340 NW 14TH AVE
Medium	1114 NW 15TH AVE
Medium	1604 NW 16TH AVE
Medium	1326 NW 16TH AVE
Medium	1342 NW 16TH AVE
Medium	1311 NW 16TH AVE
Medium	1424 NW 17TH AVE
Medium	2042 NW 17TH AVE
Medium	1626 NW 18TH AVE
Medium	1330 NW 18TH AVE
Medium	1944 NW 19TH AVE
Medium	1642 NW 19TH AVE B
Medium	913 NW 19TH AVE
Medium	414 NW 2ND AVE
Medium	1116 NW 5TH AVE
Medium	1306 NW 9TH AVE
Medium	1117 N ADAMS ST
Medium	607 N HUGHES ST

Medium	601 W AMARILLO BLVD
Medium	1005 EAST ST
Medium	901 N FILLMORE ST
Medium	903 N FILLMORE ST
Medium	731 N FILLMORE ST
Medium	619 N FILLMORE ST
Medium	1204 N HARRISON ST
Medium	1801 N HUGHES ST
Medium	1101 N HUGHES ST
Medium	1210 N HUGHES ST
Medium	904 N HUGHES ST
Medium	607 N HUGHES ST
Medium	504 N HUGHES ST
Medium	716 N JACKSON ST
Medium	501 N JACKSON ST
Medium	905 N JEFFERSON ST
Medium	816 N JEFFERSON ST
Medium	815 MOORE ST
Medium	900 N POLK ST
Medium	901 N POLK ST
Medium	908 N POLK ST
Medium	906 N POLK ST
Medium	905 N POLK ST
Medium	904 N POLK ST
Medium	902 N POLK ST
Medium	93 N POLK ST
Medium	513 N POLK ST B
Medium	509 N POLK ST
Medium	505 N POLK ST
Medium	508 N POLK ST
Medium	506 N POLK ST
Medium	401 N POLK ST
Medium	309 N POLK ST
Medium	909 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	807 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	114 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	615 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	611 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	600 N TAYLOR ST

Medium	517 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	211 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	417 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	117 N TAYLOR ST
Medium	1204 N TYLER ST
Medium	1107 N TYLER ST
Medium	905 N TYLER ST
Medium	805 N TYLER ST
Medium	513 N TYLER ST
Medium	117 N TYLER ST
Medium	300 N TYLER ST
Medium	823 N VAN BUREN ST
Medium	309 N VAN BUREN ST
Medium	731 N VAN BUREN ST
Medium	723 N VAN BUREN ST
Medium	607 N VAN BUREN ST
Medium	1702 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1706 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1704 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1610 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1608 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1606 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1603 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1601 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1509 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1508 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1504 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1501 N WASHINGTON ST
Medium	1644 NW 19TH AVE REAR
Medium	1110 NW 20TH AVE
Medium	1105 NW 20TH AVE
Medium	401 NW 24TH AVE

Traffic Counts

In understanding how the neighborhood and its street network functions, areas of high traffic count are important in identifying corridors for focus. In Figure 16 below, the total daily traffic average of key corridors is shown. The area of highest traffic volume is the segment of W Amarillo Blvd from N Hughes St to the western edge boundary, at over 20,000 vehicles per day. Along E Amarillo Blvd from N Hughes to N Taylor St, daily traffic on the average is between 15,000 and 20,000 vehicles per day. Another key area of high traffic volume is N Hughes St from Amarillo Blvd to NE 15th Ave.

Traffic Count: Daily Average

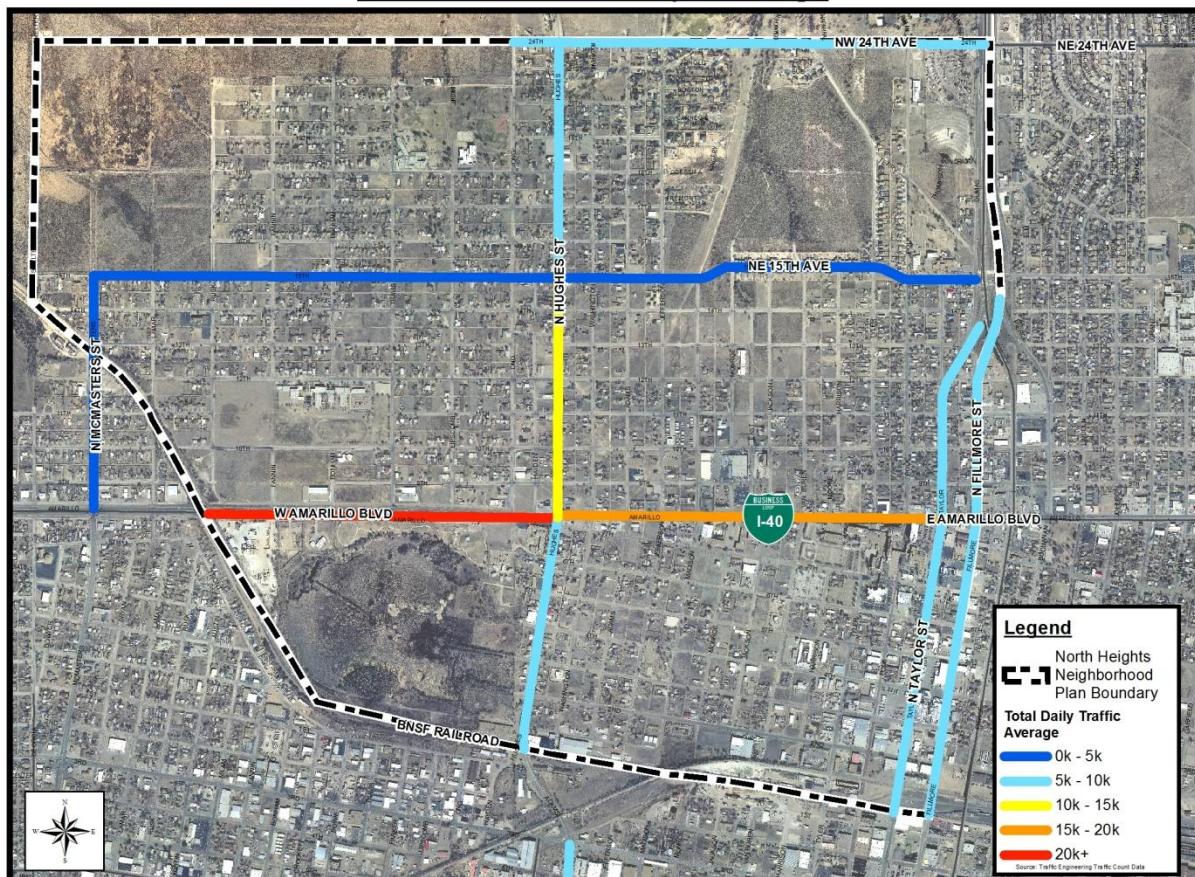


Figure 16

Utilities and Drainage

The existing storm, sewer, and water mains are illustrated in Figure 17 as well as topographical maps showing areas where drainage is typically collected. Correlating with the largest vacant areas in the neighborhood are key drainage areas at the northwest and northeast corners of the map, and Amarillo Lake just south of Amarillo Blvd in the southwest corner. The area is largely served with utilities, a key fact in ascertaining future development and land use possibilities.

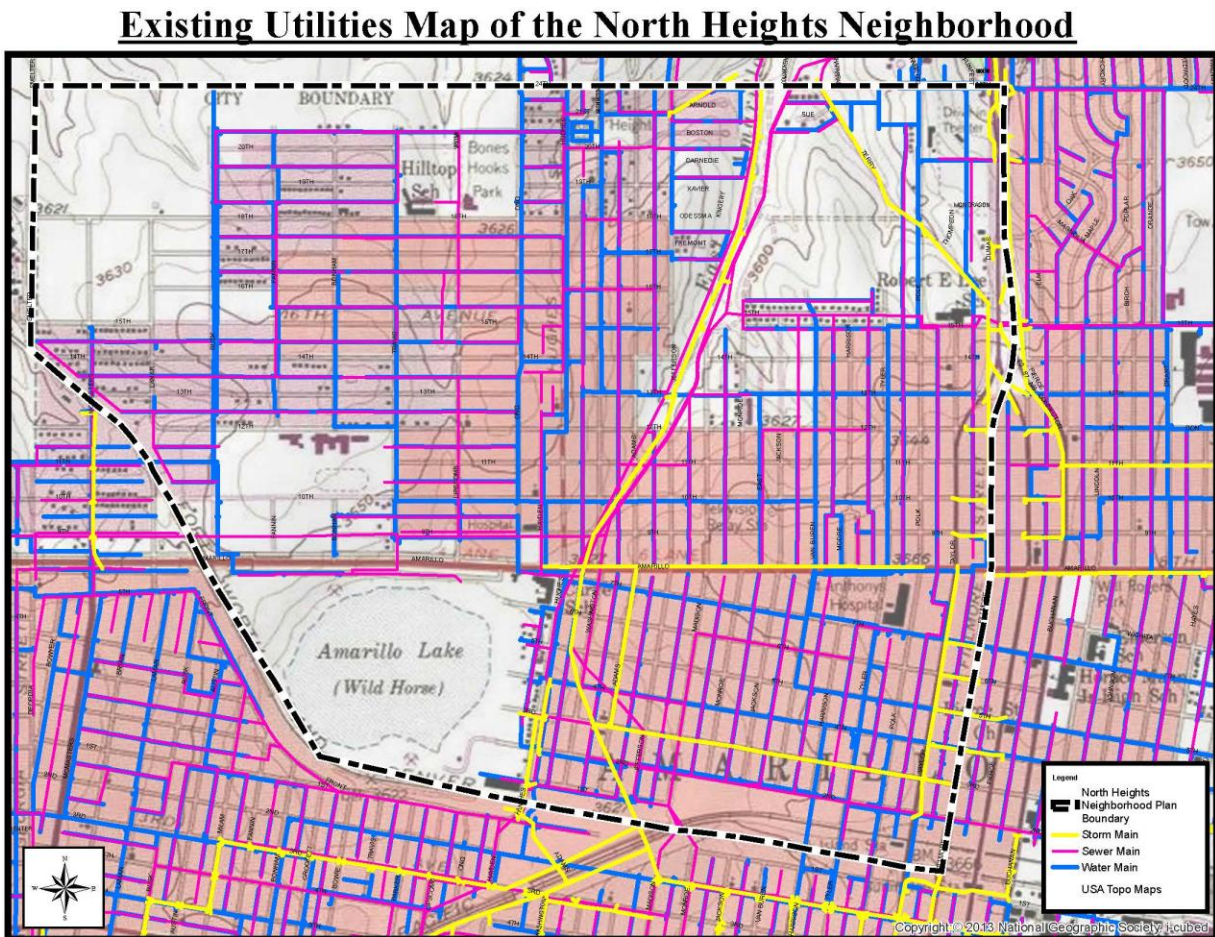


Figure 17

Accessibility to Transit

Figure 18 lays out the various bus stops and bus routes. There are a number of areas within the North Heights neighborhood that are currently on, or close to, a bus route, and there are a total of 39 bus stops within the neighborhood, and streets served at this time include 2nd, Taylor, Hughes, Polk, 12th, 13th, 14th, Bonham, and 18th.

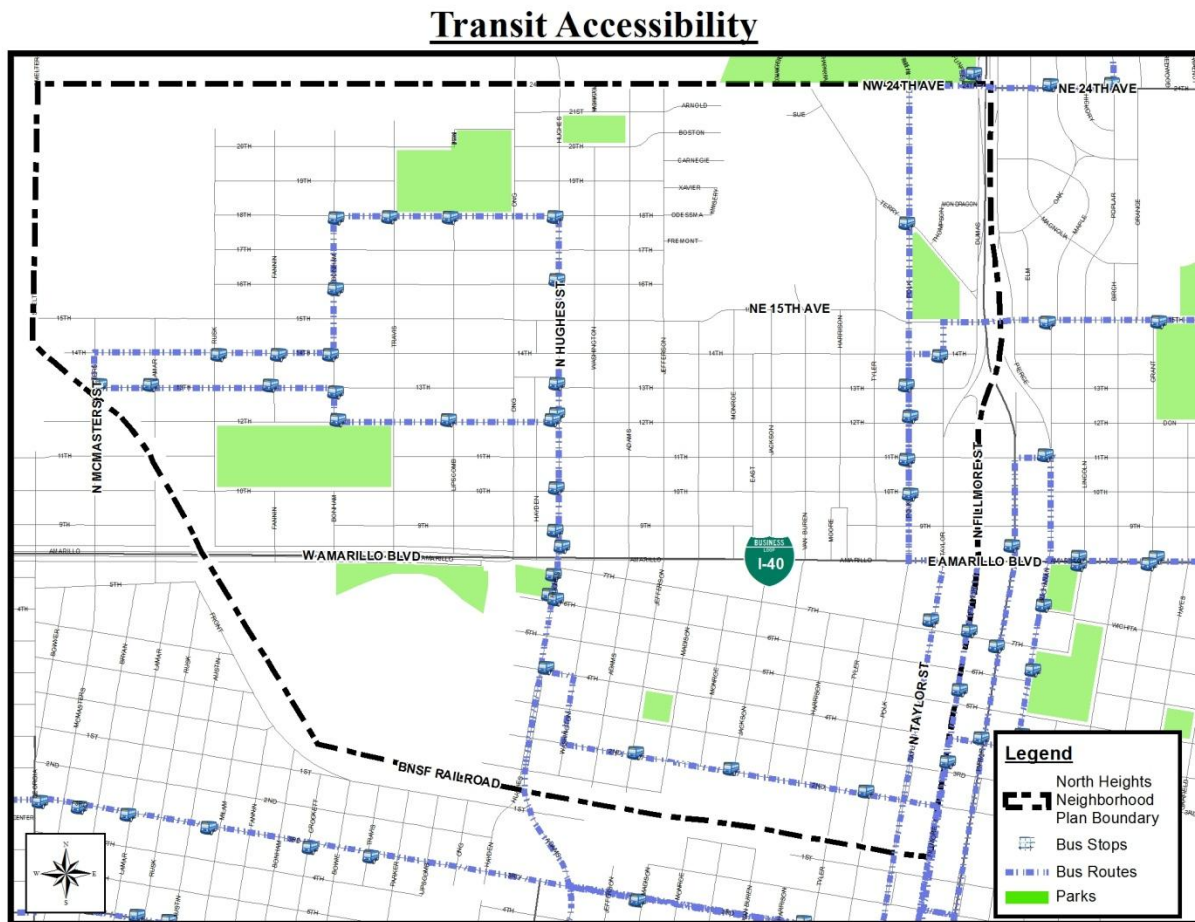


Figure 18

Streets & Sidewalks

Figure 19 illustrates street segments which are currently completely or largely unimproved in yellow, while the red denotes lots which do not have an adjacent sidewalk. Clearly, this area is largely underserved for adequate pedestrian access through the neighborhood, though some limited sidewalks exist around civic facilities and the southeastern corner of the neighborhood boundary.

Street and Sidewalk Map

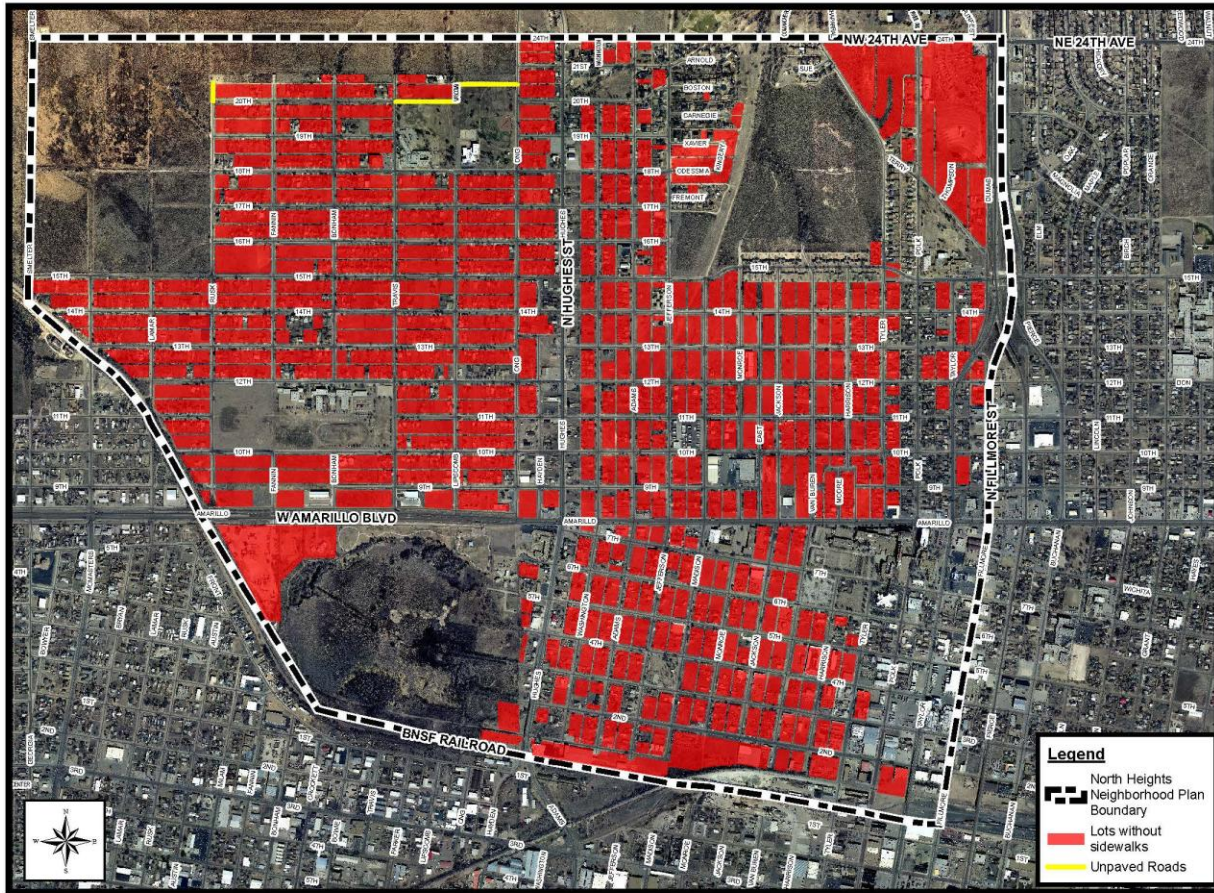


Figure 19

Property Valuation

An important factor in considering future development and redevelopment of an area is the property valuations throughout the defined boundary. Figure 20 below shows the distribution of property appraisals across the study area. The most concentrated areas of highest valuation in the North Heights neighborhood are located on or near the corridors of Amarillo Blvd, US Hwy 287/Fillmore St, and NW 24th Ave. Throughout the residential portions of the neighborhood, the appraised values fluctuate greatly, with pockets of parcels appraised under \$10,000 which may be key sites for potential redevelopment. While some of these pockets correlate with areas of topographic difficulty, others are widely dispersed.

From a trending perspective, the appraised valuations from 2007 to 2016 show a total increase in value of \$7,523,104 (from \$79,903,351 in 2007 to \$87,426,455 in 2016), and an increase in median valuation from \$5,995 to \$8,400.

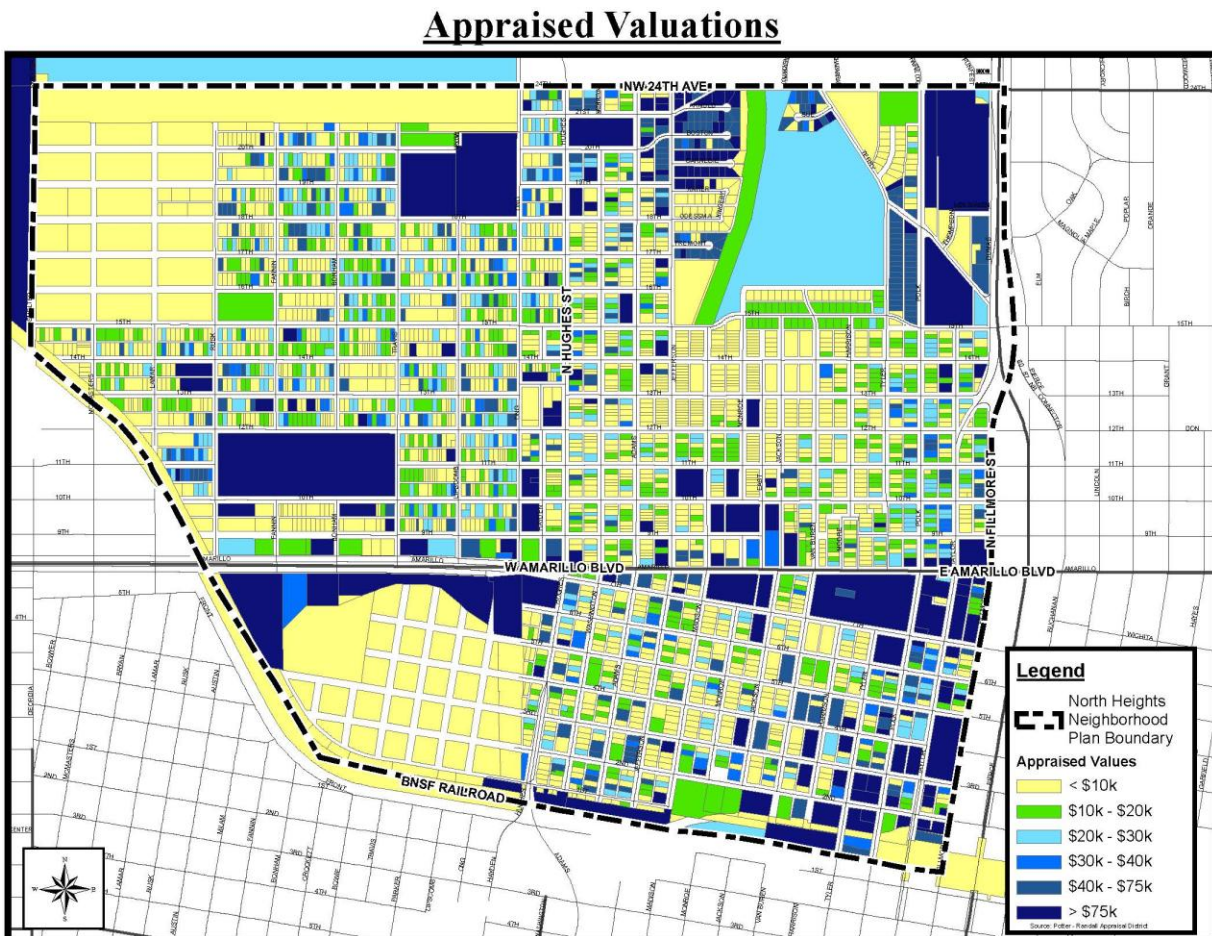


Figure 20 Potter-Randall Appraisal District, 2016

THE ASSESSMENT: PRIORITY AREAS, GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTIONS

Neighborhood planning takes the process of comprehensive city planning and creates a sharper focus by identifying boundaries of a specific neighborhood and tailoring the process to the unique character, history, and needs of that neighborhood. This document attempts to break down the overall challenges and opportunities of the North Heights neighborhood into three priority areas with goals, strategies, and actions associated with each area. This organization of ideas allows the implementation and progress of the plan to be measured and evaluated at appropriate intervals.

Each goal is designed to help address a challenge and/or opportunity within the neighborhood. Objectives are used to further define the goals and strategy statements help define the action that must be taken to make the goals and objectives a reality.

As alluded to above, the input received throughout the neighborhood engagement process focused around three common priority areas. As a result, goals and objectives for each were identified to guide formulation of strategy statements.

Top Priority Areas

- **Maintaining a Strong, Vibrant Neighborhood**
- **Economic Development /Redevelopment**
- **Improve Transportation and Mobility Systems**

The following goals, strategies, and actions are the primary areas that were determined to be most important to the future of the neighborhood by its residents and other interested citizens.

➤ **Maintaining a Strong, Vibrant Neighborhood**

Because strong healthy neighborhoods are critical to the long-term vitality and strength of Amarillo and the quality of life of its residents, it is imperative to preserve and enhance its neighborhoods. A city's character is reflected in its neighborhoods. They provide a place to relax and recharge from daily schedules. Neighborhoods are where citizens live, they are their home.

- Goal: Create a neighborhood comprised of high-quality, well maintained, mixed income housing that accommodates families and individuals.
 - Strategy - Development and maintenance of quality, affordable housing
 - Create economic incentive programs to attract potential property owners/builders, such as property tax abatement for new residential construction within residentially-zoned areas for the first five years after receiving a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - Actively market neighborhood to potential developers/builders.
 - Help facilitate loan programs from local financial institutions.
 - Encourage a mix of housing alternatives through zoning.

- Strategy - Home Ownership and Occupancy
 - Promote steps to maintain significant levels of home ownership and owner occupancy.
 - Inventory absentee homeowners and notify them of neighborhood plan and efforts to increase homeownership, leading to a higher inventory of properties for sale and/or redevelopment.
 - Discourage rental housing with possible residential zoning regulations tailored to rental housing in priority/targeted areas.
 - Research and encourage rent-to-own programs.

- Strategy - Home Maintenance/Rehabilitation
 - Facilitate the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing units and yards for all homeowners.
 - Coordinate creation of a neighborhood association to organize the neighborhood and consider items such as deed restrictions.
 - Enforce applicable ordinances throughout neighborhood (dilapidated structures, weeds, junk and debris).
 - Establish programs to promote and educate residents on responsibilities of maintaining property, information on where and how to dispose of junk and/or debris, and being a “good neighbor”.
 - Establish a network of professionals with services to assist property owners.
 - Identify and promote rehabilitation programs/assistance and educate property owners on their use.
 - Establish neighborhood support groups/organizations to help property owners who need assistance maintaining properties.
 - Create incentive programs to defer taxes on any additions or remodeling to encourage investment.
 - Establish a “recognition” program for older homes which have been successfully renovated/repaired.

- Strategy - Redevelopment of Vacant and Unused Properties
 - Create catalyst areas (such as NW 13th – NW 17th Ave, east of N Jefferson, and west/south of Carver AISD site) for housing development, and offer new construction tax incentives for new residential construction.
 - Establish land-banking policies in cooperation with local government entities for possible future private development.

- Analyze current residential and commercial land use patterns and address incompatible zoning issues.
- Encourage re-use of vacant major commercial/institutional buildings with support from local government entities through tax incentives for pre-defined improvements and timelines.
- Create incentive programs to defer taxes on development of vacant lots.
- Strategy – Planning/Policies
 - Develop planning policies that encourage and support a diverse mix of quality housing by way of zoning tools (Rezoning, Overlays, Mixed Use).
 - Provide flexible development-related regulations where appropriate.
 - Amend inconsistent and incompatible zoning districts.
 - Encourage replatting and development of older areas by waiving development-related fees.
 - Encourage zoning patterns that diversify/maximize opportunities for residential and commercial development.
- Goal: Address Neighborhood Character/Quality of Life
 - Strategy - Preserve Neighborhood Historic Heritage
 - Create overlay districts to promote and protect historic areas of the neighborhood.
 - Identify significant local landmarks historic buildings and develop strategies for their preservation and restoration
 - Strategy – Enhance the Livability of the Neighborhood
 - Encourage programs, services, and activities that engage residents of all ages.
 - Create a neighborhood newsletter with neighborhood announcements of activities/events.
 - Connect neighborhood representatives and AISD representatives to ensure a strong neighborhood school system by developing a long-range plan for neighborhood schools within this area.
 - Create “adopt a neighborhood” program to facilitate maintenance and upkeep of certain high visibility areas.
 - Research and encourage more programs/opportunities to implement federal, state, and/or local programs that could improve the neighborhood (community garden, weed & seed, plant-a-tree, etc).

- Consider placing at appropriate locations city satellite facilities within the neighborhood (fire, library, medical, senior citizens).
- Strategy – Neighborhood Organization
 - Encourage the development and strengthening of existing organizations.
 - Establish a neighborhood or property owner association.
 - Recognize neighborhood organizations as official representatives of the neighborhood and continue to involve them in ongoing implementation of the neighborhood plan.
 - Designate certain staff across government services to work with neighborhood representatives.
- Strategy – Create a Sense of Community
 - Install new, iconic street name signs throughout neighborhood, starting at major intersections (Hughes and Amarillo Blvd, Hughes and NW 24th, and Hughes and NW 1st).
 - Create neighborhood gateway enhancements at appropriate locations (Amarillo Blvd just east of railroad line, Amarillo Blvd and Polk St, Hughes and NW 1st, and Hughes and NW 24th).
- Strategy – Create and Enhance Open Space and Recreation
 - Improve park/open spaces character by installing new and additional covered areas, benches, tables, grills, permanent board games (especially Hazelrigg and Heinz parks).
 - Provide more facilities for youth sports activities and small child playscapes.
 - Assess hike/bike trail opportunities that can link neighborhood to Thompson park and schools.
 - Plant more trees in open spaces and parks.
 - Promote adult leagues programs to be played in local recreation areas.
 - Collaborate with churches to create “bingo” type nights or other adult leisure activities.
 - Provide or designate areas for community gardens.
 - Provide specialty lighting in priority/high profile open spaces.
- Goal: Create a Safe Neighborhood Environment
 - Strategy - Create an atmosphere where residents feel safe in their homes and in their neighborhood
 - Promote neighborhood safety by working closely with local police and instituting community policing initiatives.
 - Consider locating policing substation within neighborhood.

- Hold periodic meetings between law enforcement agencies and neighborhood residents to identify and prioritize resident's concerns.
 - Encourage and support formation of neighborhood and business watch programs.
 - Encourage community and business sponsorship of regular youth oriented activities to be held in community or school facilities.
- Strategy – Promote Neighborhood Safety by Improving Traffic (NW 24th and Hughes, Travis and Amarillo Blvd, NW 15th and Hughes)
 - Enforce sight visibility violations at various intersections.
 - Maintain and improve lighting at intersections (high volume intersections being top priority).
 - Consider alternative street designs for improved traffic calming where appropriate and in new developments.
 - Identify and address “drag-strip” thoroughfares.

➤ **Economic Development/Redevelopment**

Neighborhood commercial development not only provides a tax base for the City but also provides jobs for local residents and indicates the vitality of the local area as well. There are various mechanisms to achieve appropriate neighborhood commercial development. Since revitalization initiatives are multi-faceted, efforts must address improvements to the built environment as well as the social and economic conditions of the neighborhood and its surroundings.

- Goal: Encourage greater economic diversity and growth in quality jobs while building on local strengths.
 - Strategy – Identify Appropriate Areas for Development/Redevelopment
 - Amend zoning patterns to promote appropriate mix of business along designated corridors (Hughes St south of Amarillo Blvd, diversifying commercial mix along Amarillo Blvd west of Hughes St).
 - Address dangerous and dilapidated structures both within the neighborhood and major arterials that may be impeding surrounding development.
 - Strategy – Align and coordinate resources to encourage and support economic development/redevelopment
 - Encourage economic development by drafting and approving specific economic incentives for North Heights neighborhood which could include local hiring requirements.
 - Designate business corridors for marketing and promotion of economic development incentives or creation of special districts.

- Encourage repurposing major vacant structures, hire expert consultants, encourage and support discussion meetings.
- Strategy – Identify Key Corridors and Sites for Infrastructure Improvements
 - Designate key thoroughfares as primary business corridors (Amarillo Blvd and Hughes St).
 - Implement specific streetscape element requirements along primary business corridors.
 - Identify and evaluate all public infrastructure along primary business corridors for construction and/or reconstruction.
 - Identify/designate an appropriate corridor and/or intersection to focus resources on for initial improvements (Hughes St and Amarillo Blvd, and Hughes St and NW 24th Ave).

➤ **Improve Transportation and Mobility Systems**

Convenient and safe access to neighborhood services, public parks, schools, libraries, and other necessary parts of the City is important to neighborhood residents. Adequate and good quality streets, sidewalks, street lighting, and utilities are vital to the health and livability of all neighborhoods.

- Goal: Improve Public Rights-Of-Way Facilities
 - Strategy – Improve Streets and Sidewalks
 - Inventory and evaluate all streets and sidewalks within neighborhood and prioritize construction and reconstruction.
 - Address need for sidewalks with appropriate ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) ramps within neighborhood at all intersections.
 - Strategy – Increase Lighting Along Neighborhood Thoroughfares
 - Inventory and evaluate neighborhood lighting along streets, at intersections, and public transit facilities and prioritize where increased lighting is needed and where existing lighting needs maintenance
 - Strategy – Improve Multi-modal Transportation Routes to Provide Connectivity
 - Review and assess public transportation stops, routes to schools, jobs, etc for better efficiency
 - Work with TXDOT on implementing streetscape elements along Amarillo Blvd
 - Work with residents to further evaluate designation and improvements for multi-modal transportation (pedestrian, bikes, public transit, etc) routes throughout neighborhood
 - Update and improve public transit facilities and consider expanding operation timeframes

LAND USE: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As implementation of this Neighborhood Plan moves forward, it is important to identify guiding principles which will ensure consistency in decision making with this document and the ideas, strategies, and actions outlined within its contents. Land use decisions have major impacts on development patterns and may include a variety of decisions, including zoning requests, infrastructure planning, and consideration of development proposals. These principles focus on the health, stability, and functionality of the North Heights neighborhood area and are listed below.

- Determine that the decision will not create an arbitrary development pattern.
- Plan for an adequate and diverse supply of housing for all income levels.
- Minimize negative effects between incompatible land uses and ensure adequate transitions.
- Distinguish suitable areas for public uses.
- Discourage intense uses within or adjacent to residential areas.
- Diversify the types of commercial activity.
- Limit development in floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Consider public safety as it relates to future developments.
- Protect and promote areas of historical and cultural significance.
- Avoid creating undesirable precedents.
- Promote expansion of the economic base to create job opportunities.
- Ensure consistency of land use decisions on similar properties.
- Keep infrastructure in mind when making land use decisions.
- Advance development that serves the needs of a diverse population.
- Promote redevelopment and infill that meets community needs and is complimentary to the neighborhood.
- Enhance neighborhood identity and investment where possible.
- Make decisions that result in the highest level of service to the neighborhood possible.
- Maintain a safe and efficient street network while improving multi-modal transportation options by increasing bicycle and pedestrian connections to key destinations within and around the neighborhood.

THE GAME PLAN: PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation

The City Council will demonstrate the City's commitment to North Heights Neighborhood Plan by formally adopting the plan as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan. However, the implementation of every action item listed in this plan will require separate and specific consideration. Adoption of the plan does not begin the implementation of any item. Approval of the plan does not legally obligate the City to implement any particular action item. The implementation will require specific actions by the neighborhood, the City and by other agencies. As mentioned earlier, the North Heights Neighborhood Plan will be supported and implemented by:

- City Council, Boards/Commissions, and Staff
- City Departmental Budgets
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Outside Agencies and Organizations
- Neighborhood Action

City Guidance

Numerous boards and commissions of the City will look to the North Heights Neighborhood Plan when they need guidance about the neighborhood. The Planning and Zoning Commission will already know if a proposed zoning change in the North Heights area would be appropriate and supported by the residents and businesses of the neighborhood. The Parks and Recreation Board will have a guide available stating the neighborhood's priorities for parks and open space. Additionally, City staff will use the plan as a guidance document for review of projects and programs.

Budgeting

Each year, every City department puts together a budget that states the department's priorities for the coming year as it relates to the Blueprint For Amarillo. By bringing the strengths and desires of the North Heights neighborhood to the attention of City departments, the North Heights Neighborhood Plan will help them prioritize those projects that help address the neighborhood's needs. There are issues in the neighborhood that require a major capital expenditure. In these instances the guidance provided by the plan will be critical to see the project will proceed in a fashion that keeps in mind the overall long-term interests of the neighborhood.

Outside Agencies and Organizations

Other agencies and organizations outside City government will play an important role in the implementation of the North Heights Neighborhood Plan. As these agencies look for public input, the North Heights Neighborhood Plan will be available as a clearly articulated vision of the direction the neighborhood desires to go.

Neighborhood Action

Many of the elements of the North Heights Neighborhood Plan will be implemented by direct neighborhood action, possibly with some City support. Periodic neighborhood events would be an example of projects that might best be coordinated by the neighborhood.

Implementation Tracking

The implementation of the North Heights Neighborhood Plan will be monitored on a regular basis. Some items are expected to be completed quickly. For others, especially those items that need additional funding, it may be more difficult to schedule a firm completion date. Nevertheless, the status of every item proposed in the neighborhood plan will be tracked. The North Heights Neighborhood Plan Implementation Table Chart provides an easy way to check the status of the implementation of the plan. For each action proposed in the plan, the chart lists the strategy statement, responsible party, proposed time frame, and the current status. This table will be updated regularly as more information becomes available and as the status of projects change. An regular update report summarizing the overall implementation status of the plan's recommendations is proposed to be given to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. The plan and the implementation table will be available upon request from the City of Amarillo Planning department.

North Heights Neighborhood Plan Updates

To be effective, a neighborhood plan must be periodically updated to reflect changes in the neighborhood. The North Height Neighborhood Plan needs to be reviewed, at a minimum, annually. Planning department staff will conduct the review, update the status of the action items and consider any additions or amendments. Planning staff may also designate subcommittees to assist in this review. However, just as the original advisory committee represented a diverse mix of interests in the neighborhood, the updating subcommittee should include representatives of homeowner, renters, businesses and non-resident property owners as well. Over time, a neighborhood plan may need more changes to stay current than would be appropriate for a small subcommittee to make and may warrant an amended plan to be adopted. How often this will be necessary depends on how much the conditions have changed in the neighborhood.

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Abbreviations:

BS – Building Safety

CD – Community Development

CP&D – Capital Projects & Development

ED – Economic Development

NO – Neighborhood Organization

PD – Police Dept.

P&R – Parks & Recreation

PL - Planning

PW – Public Works

TR – Transit

AISD – Amarillo Independent School District

TXDOT – Texas Dept of Transportation

Strategy Priority:

H – High

M – Medium

L - Low

➤ **CREATE STRONG, VITAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

GOAL : Improve neighborhood stability by creating a neighborhood comprised of high-quality, well maintained, mixed income housing that accommodates families and individuals.

Strategy - Promote the development and maintenance of quality affordable housing

Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Create economic incentive programs to attract potential property owners/builders, such as property tax abatement for new residential construction within residentially-zoned areas for the first five years after receiving a Certificate of Occupancy.	ED, PL, BS	Mid	
H	Actively market neighborhood to potential developers/builders.	ED, NO	Ongoing	
H	Help facilitate loan programs from local financial institutions.	ED, NO	Ongoing	
M	Encourage a mix of housing alternatives through zoning.	PL	Short	

Strategy - Home Ownership and Occupancy

Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Promote steps to maintain significant levels of home ownership and owner occupancy (incentives, deed restrictions, etc.).	PL, ED, NO	Short Mid	
M	Inventory absentee homeowners and notify them of neighborhood plan and efforts to decrease rental units and to increase homeownership, leading to a higher inventory of properties for sale and/or redevelopment.	ED, PL	Short	
M	Discourage rental housing with possible residential zoning regulations tailored to rental housing in priority/targeted areas.	PL	Short	
H	Research and encourage rent-to-own programs.	ED	Mid	

Strategy - Home Maintenance/Rehabilitation				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Facilitate the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing units and yards for all homeowners.	ED, BS, NO	Ongoing	
M	Coordinate creation of a neighborhood association to organize the neighborhood and consider items such as deed restrictions.	NO	Mid	
H	Enforce applicable ordinances throughout neighborhood (dilapidated structures, weeds, junk and debris).	BS	Ongoing	
M	Establish programs to promote and educate residents on responsibilities of maintaining property, information on where and how to dispose of junk and/or debris, and being a "good neighbor".	BS, PL, NO	Short	
H	Establish a network of professionals with services to assist property owners.	NO	Short	
M	Identify and promote rehabilitation programs/assistance and educate property owners on their use.	BS, PL, NO	Ongoing	
H	Establish neighborhood support groups/organizations to help property owners who need assistance maintaining properties.	NO, PL	Short	
M	Create incentive programs to defer taxes on any additions or remodeling to encourage investment.	ED, PL	Mid	
M	Establish a "recognition" program for older homes which have been successfully renovated/repared.	PL, NO	Short	

Strategy - Redevelopment of Vacant and Unused Properties				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Create catalyst areas (such as NW 13th - NW 17th Ave, east of N Jefferson, and west/south of Carver AISD site) for housing development, and offer new construction tax incentives for new residential construction.	ED, PL, NO	Short	
M	Establish land-banking policies in cooperation with local government entities for possible future private development.	ED, PL	Mid	
M	Analyze current residential and commercial land use patterns and address incompatible zoning issues.	PL	Short	
H	Encourage re-use of vacant major commercial/institutional buildings with support from local government entities through tax incentives.	ED, PL	Short	
H	Create incentive programs to defer taxes on development of vacant lots.	ED, PL	Mid	
Strategy - Planning/Policies				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Develop policies that encourage and support a diverse mix of quality housing by way of zoning tools (Rezoning, Overlays, Mixed Use).	PL	Short	
M	Amend inconsistent and incompatible zoning districts.	PL	Short	
M	Encourage replatting and development of older areas by waiving development-related fees.	BS, PL	Short	
H	Encourage zoning patterns that diversify/maximize opportunities for residential and commercial development.	PL	Short	
L	Provide flexible development-related regulations where appropriate.	PL, CP&D	Short	

GOAL : Address Neighborhood Character/Quality of Life				
Strategy - Preserve Neighborhood Historic Heritage				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Create overlay districts to promote and protect historic areas of the neighborhood.	PL	Short Mid	
H	Identify significant local landmarks and historic buildings and develop strategies for their preservation and restoration.	PL	Short	
Strategy - Enhance the Livability of the Neighborhood				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Encourage programs, services, and activities that engage residents of all ages.	P&R, NO	Ongoing	
L	Create a neighborhood newsletter with neighborhood announcements of activities/events.	NO	Short	
H	Connect neighborhood representatives and AISD representatives to ensure a strong neighborhood school system by developing a long-range plan for neighborhood schools within this area.	ED, PL, AISD	Mid	
M	Create "adopt a neighborhood" program to facilitate maintenance and upkeep of certain high visibility areas (Amarillo Blvd, Hughes St, 24 th Ave, Parks).	BS, PL, TXDOT	Short	
M	Research and encourage more programs/opportunities to implement federal, state, and/or local programs that could improve the neighborhood (community garden, weed & seed, plant-a-tree, etc).	ED, PL, NO	Ongoing	
H	Consider placing at appropriate locations city satellite facilities within the neighborhood (fire, library, medical, senior citizens).	All Depts, NO	Long	

Strategy – Neighborhood Organization				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Encourage the development and strengthening of existing organizations.	NO	Ongoing	
M	Establish a neighborhood or property owner association.	NO, PL	short	
H	Recognize neighborhood organizations as official representatives of the neighborhood and continue to involve them in ongoing implementation of the neighborhood plan.	BS, PL, NO	Short	
M	Designate certain staff across government services to work with neighborhood representatives.	All Depts	Ongoing	
Strategy – Create a Sense of Community				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Install new, iconic street name signs throughout neighborhood, starting at major intersections (Hughes St and Amarillo Blvd, Hughes St and NW 24 th Ave, and Hughes St and NW 1 st Ave)	PW, NO	Mid	
M	Create neighborhood gateway enhancements (Amarillo Blvd just east of railroad line, Amarillo Blvd and Polk St, Hughes St and NW 1 st Ave, and Hughes St and NW 24 th Ave)	PL, PW, TXDOT	Short Mid	
Strategy – Create and Enhance Open Space and Recreation				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Improve park/open spaces character by installing new and additional covered areas, benches, tables, grills, permanent board games (especially Hazelrigg and Heinz parks) Provide specialty lighting in priority/high profile open spaces (Bones Hooks, MLK).	P&R, PW	Mid Long	
H	Provide more facilities for youth sports activities and small child playscapes.	P&R	Mid Long	
M	Assess hike/bike trail opportunities that can link neighborhood to Thompson park and schools.	PL, P&R	Short Mid	
M	Plant more trees in open spaces and parks.	P&R, NO	Short Mid	
L	Promote adult leagues programs to be played in local recreation areas.	P&R	Short	
M	Collaborate with churches to create “bingo” type nights or other adult leisure activities.	P&R, NO	Short	

L	Provide or designate areas for community gardens.	PL, NO	Short	
Goal: Create a Safe Neighborhood Environment				
Strategy - Create an atmosphere where residents feel safe in their homes and in their neighborhood				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Promote neighborhood safety by working closely with local police and instituting community policing initiatives.	PD	Short Ongoing	
H	Consider locating policing substation within neighborhood.	PD	Long	
H	Hold periodic meetings between law enforcement agencies and neighborhood residents to identify and prioritize resident's concerns.	PD, NO	Ongoing	
H	Encourage and support formation of neighborhood and business watch programs.	PD, NO	Short	
H	Encourage community and business sponsorship of regular youth oriented activities to be held in community or school facilities.	P&R, AISD, NO	Ongoing	
Strategy - Promote Neighborhood Safety by Improving Traffic Controls (NW 24th and Hughes, Travis and Amarillo Blvd, NW 15th and Hughes)				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Enforce sight visibility violations at intersections.	PW	Short	
H	Maintain and improve lighting at intersections (high volume intersections being top priority).	CPDE, PW	Short Mid	
L	Consider alternative street designs for improved traffic calming where appropriate and in new developments.	CPDE, PW	Mid Long	
M	Identify and address "drag-strip" thoroughfares.	CPDE, PD	Short Mid	

➤ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT				
Goal: Encourage greater economic diversity and growth in quality jobs while building on local strengths				
Strategy - Identify Appropriate Areas for Development/Redevelopment				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
M	Amend zoning patterns to promote appropriate mix of business along designated corridors (Hughes St south of Amarillo Blvd, diversifying commercial mix along Amarillo Blvd west of Hughes St).	PL	Short	
H	Address dangerous and dilapidated structures both within the neighborhood and major arterials that may be impeding surrounding development.	BS	Short	
Strategy - Align and coordinate resources to encourage and support economic development/redevelopment				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Encourage economic development by drafting and approving specific economic incentives for Heights neighborhood which could include local hiring requirements.	ED, PL	Short Mid	
H	Designate business corridors for marketing and promotion of economic development incentives or creation of special districts.	ED	Short	
H	Encourage repurposing major vacant structures, hire expert consultants, encourage and support discussion meetings.	ED, PL, AISD	Mid Long	
Strategy - Identify Key Corridors and Sites for Infrastructure Improvements				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Designate key thoroughfares as primary business corridors (Amarillo Blvd and Hughes St).	ED, PL	Short	
M	Implement specific streetscape element requirements along primary business corridors (NW 24 th Ave, Hughes St, Amarillo Blvd), (Hughes St/Amarillo Blvd being primary intersection for implementation).	CPDE, PW, PL	Mid Long	

H	Identify and evaluate all public infrastructure along primary business corridors for construction and/or reconstruction (NW 24 th Ave, Hughes St, Amarillo Blvd).	CPDE, PW	Short	
H	Identify/designate an appropriate corridor and/or intersection to focus resources on for initial improvements (Hughes St and Amarillo Blvd, and Hughes St and NW 24 th Ave).	CPDE, PW, PL, NO	Mid	

➤ **IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY SYSTEMS**

Goal: Improve Public Rights-Of-Way Facilities				
Strategy - Improve Public Rights-Of-Way Facilities				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Inventory and evaluate all streets and sidewalks within neighborhood and prioritize construction and reconstruction.	CPDE	Short	
H	Address need for sidewalks with appropriate ADA ramps within neighborhood at all intersections.	CPDE, CD, PW	Ongoing	
Strategy - Increase Lighting Along Neighborhood Thoroughfares				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Inventory and evaluate neighborhood lighting along streets, at intersections, and public transit facilities and prioritize where increased lighting is needed and where existing lighting needs maintenance	PW, CPDE	Short	
Strategy - Improve Multi-modal Transportation Routes to Provide Connectivity				
Action Priority	Action Summary	Responsible Party	Time Frame	Status
H	Review and assess public transportation stops, routes to schools, jobs, etc for better efficiency.	CPDE, TR	Short	
M	Work with TXDOT on implementing streetscape elements along Amarillo Blvd.	TXDOT, CPDE	Mid Long	
M	Work with residents to further evaluate designation and improvements for multi-modal transportation (pedestrian, bikes, public transit, etc) routes throughout neighborhood.	P&R, PL, CPDE, TR, NO	Short Mid	
H	Update and improve public transit facilities and consider expanding operation timeframes.	TR	Short Mid	

