

# II. Land Use & Transportation Plan

## INTRODUCTION

The NORMAN 2025 *Land Use and Transportation Plan* represents a long-range 20-year vision for the physical development of the City. It is grounded in planning goals and policies that set the general direction of the Plan. These *Goals and Policies* articulate a basic desire by the City to manage the location of its growth in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner, while encouraging healthy economic development. In order to accomplish these goals, the City is organized into geographic *Growth Areas*, based on factors related to infrastructure delivery and suitability for urban development. These growth areas, in turn, serve as a framework for the designation of a future *Land Use Plan*. This *Land Use Plan* recommends future land use categories for all property in the City. A *Transportation Plan* has been prepared which is consistent with the *Growth Areas* and supports the *Land Use Plan*.

The Plan sets the stage for the City to be proactive in the way it manages growth. Through the use of *Growth Areas*, the Plan establishes priority areas for urban development based on existing or proposed public facilities. The Plan depicts a healthy development balance between the eastern and western areas of the City, with significant areas identified for future urban densities. It identifies areas suitable for industrial development and sets the stage for providing that these areas be protected from conversion to other uses. It also establishes very low densities for areas that are environmentally sensitive such as the Garber-Wellington aquifer recharge area and the Ten-Mile Flats floodplain, so as to minimize the numbers of dwellings located in those areas. It further protects the City's environmentally sensitive areas by limiting development in the 100-year floodplain and requiring structures to be shifted to higher, non-flood plain parcels. Cluster developments are also encouraged to reduce environmental impacts and to help facilitate a greenway system throughout the City, primarily along the Little River and Canadian River and their tributaries.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

The *Goals and Policies* are the key integrating force behind the *NORMAN 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan*. They establish a general statement of intent for the future growth and development of the City and serve as the policy basis for the more specific growth area designations, land use recommendations, and streets and highway designations. They will be used as a guide for future land use and infrastructure decisions and for considering requests to amend the Plan.

The *Goals and Policies* encompass a progression of growth-related principles that articulate the most efficient and environmentally responsible way for Norman to handle growth through the year 2025. The City of Norman is best served by managing growth through influencing the location choices of future development. Infrastructure is recognized as being an effective tool to manage the location of growth. Urban-level growth

is encouraged to locate where infrastructure is readily available and discouraged in the more rural and environmentally sensitive areas of the City. The long-term economic health of the City is also a major influencing factor for future growth, as are protection of the rural environment and the provision of a greenbelt system throughout the City. Each of these goals is stated below, followed by a series of policies related to the goal. These statements are the policy framework for the *NORMAN 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan*.

### **Goal 1: Managed Growth**

Affirmatively and responsibly manage the location of growth in Norman based on available public services and the environmental suitability of the land for development.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Accommodate a projected year 2025 population of 137,000 people in a fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner.
2. Promote a compact urban area by directing development into areas within or in proximity to the existing infrastructure-serviced areas.
3. Continue to support the revitalization and redevelopment of Norman's central business district.
4. Promote compatible mixed-use developments within existing urban areas.
5. Protect the water quality of Lake Thunderbird and the Garber-Wellington aquifer by restricting development in flood plains, aquifer recharge areas and areas of erosion-prone soils.
6. Guide development into locations where the land use is most cost-effectively served by urban level services (i.e., accessible to water, sewer, and the urban road network).
7. Balance development on the east and west sides of the urbanized area of Norman by continuing to encourage commercial and residential development on the urban east side.
8. Support infill development on properties that have been skipped over within the urban areas.
9. Discourage areas identified for urban densities from being prematurely developed at very low, non-urban densities by prohibiting the rezoning of areas located in the Current and Future Urban Service Areas for other than urban-level land uses (typically more than 3 dwelling units per acre).

### **Goal 2: Infrastructure-Supported Growth**

Utilize the provision of infrastructure in supporting and influencing growth into areas most suitable for development.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Support growth that minimizes operational costs by encouraging development in areas where adequate public water, sewer and roads are currently available or can inexpensively be extended.
2. Require urban development densities in areas where substantial investment in urban level infrastructure has been made, thereby encouraging greater utilization of the infrastructure investment.
3. Use infrastructure to influence growth toward areas suitable for development and away from areas of restricted or very low suitability.
4. Continue to prohibit development accessing unopened section line roads.
5. Maintain compact urban form by permitting new or expanded sewer lift services only in the Current Urban Service and Future Urban Service Areas and requiring appropriate fee surcharges for permanent maintenance of lift stations.
6. Maintain and improve infrastructure in the existing urban areas.
7. Monitor the impact of development on existing and future infrastructure capacities.

8. Extend major utility lines and facilities only into those areas identified for urban development.
9. Approve new development only when the facilities to serve it will be concurrently available
10. Advance fair and predictable standards for allocation of infrastructure costs between the development community and the City.
11. Address existing and future infrastructure right-of-way needs by acquiring land prior to development or as part of the development, to include adequate right-of-way for shared storm water and greenway systems.
12. Encourage regional and state highway planning for roadway improvements consistent with desired growth patterns and the Transportation Plan.
13. Encourage opportunities for multi-modal transportation, such as Park and Ride Facilities in both south and north Norman.
14. Explore and encourage opportunities for both on and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities for commuting to work, schools, shopping, between neighborhoods, and/or other destinations.
15. Discourage through traffic within existing neighborhoods or planned areas by routing it to the major street system.
16. Orient parks and recreational facilities to the needs of all Norman's citizens, including persons with disabilities, senior citizens, young children, and teenagers; and provide for a variety of interests and activities.

### **Goal 3: Housing and Neighborhoods**

Encourage and support diversified housing types and densities in order to serve different income levels, family structures, and ownership.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Proactively manage the preservation, revitalization and maintenance of existing urban neighborhoods.
2. Establish a neighborhood planning program for targeted portions of the City's core area, in order to address such issues as land use compatibility, parking, circulation, and neighborhood improvements.
3. Encourage opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in and between neighborhoods and other activity areas.
4. Foster and encourage construction of new residential units, and conversion of underutilized buildings into residential units, in downtown Norman.
5. Create an overlay Neighborhood Conservation District in order to more closely monitor and discourage illegal or inappropriate conversions of housing, as needed for neighborhood stabilization.
6. Adopt an implementation strategy regarding occupancy limits of a dwelling, such as requiring that occupancy be limited by adequate on-site parking, size and number of bedrooms, etc., to ensure that single-family units are used for their intended purpose instead of rooming/boarding houses.
7. Develop an incentive program that encourages development of affordable housing.
8. Support the provision of affordable housing through the periodic review of development regulations and administrative procedures to eliminate any unnecessary costs.
9. Encourage housing designed for university student occupancy in areas suitable for high intensity uses.
10. Equitably disperse publicly assisted housing throughout the City, utilizing sub-community planning districts as a geographic framework for distribution, in accordance with the allocation models and procedures contained within the Housing Master Plan, as amended.
11. Adopt an implementation strategy that seeks to ensure that the City's limited supply of land designated for medium and high-density residential is not converted to lower-density uses, in order to preserve the City's compact urban form.

### **Goal 4: Economic Stability and Enhancement**

Enhance the quality of economic growth in the City by attracting high technology-related industries that have low environmental impacts.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Diversify the economic base of the City to create a better balance of privately operated corporations with continued growth in the public sector employment base.
2. Direct environmentally responsible industrial growth onto land that is highly suited for industrial development.
3. Protect suitable industrial land from residential conversion or encroachment by:
  - Identifying and rezoning it to an industrial zoning classification;
  - Critically reviewing rezoning requests for conversion of industrial land to non-industrial uses; and
  - Assessing the impact of incompatible land uses adjacent to industrial lands.
4. Consider industrial uses that have minimal infrastructure demands and environmental impacts for suitable areas outside the urban service areas.
5. Solicit industrial prospects that do not overburden the City's existing or planned infrastructure such as water, sewer or roadways.
6. Initiate redevelopment and revitalization projects in the central business district that assist in enhancing the area as a viable economic entity in Norman.
7. Promote mixed-use developments that provide for a balance of housing, services, and employment in appropriate locations.
8. Support the extension of public utilities and business recruitment efforts for development of the University Research Park and South Campus.
9. Promote greater utilization of public transit services to support employment opportunities.
10. Secure payments-in-lieu of taxes related to development of for-profit ventures occurring within properties that are tax exempt.
11. Prepare and adopt design standards for commercial development in order to improve the appearance of the City's commercial corridors, help attract other high-quality development, and improve the city's economic foundation.

### **Goal 5: Rural Character and Development**

Retain the distinct character of rural Norman and protect the environmentally sensitive Little River Drainage Basin.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Preserve rural Norman's character and protect its environmentally sensitive nature.
2. Maintain development densities in rural Norman that generally do not exceed 1 unit per 10 acres.
3. Encourage cluster developments and preserve open space by providing bonus densities and by simplifying regulations.
4. Establish a level of public service delivery for rural Norman that is appropriate for the rural setting.
5. Protect water quality in Lake Thunderbird and the Garber-Wellington aquifer from point and non-point pollution related to development (impervious surface run-off, oil and gas drilling, disposal of toxic chemicals, etc.)

6. Minimize the amount of development that occurs in the 10-Mile Flats area, in order to preserve the area's character as well as protect residents from hazards associated with flooding.
7. Ensure that the costs for provision of services for development occurring in Norman's rural areas, such as roadways, police protection, emergency services, and solid waste disposal, are fully borne by rural area residents and are not subsidized by urban area residents.
8. Establish a community separator area between Norman and neighboring communities to the north.
9. Continue to accommodate limited commercial opportunities in rural east Norman through the use of Special Enterprise Areas (on 20-acre minimum lots), where service oriented tourism facilities relating to Lake Thunderbird as a destination can capitalize on the rural, pastoral qualities identified and sought to be maintained in the area.

### **Goal 6: Greenbelt Development**

Develop and maintain a greenbelt system for Norman.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Use greenbelts to protect environmentally sensitive lands that are generally the least suitable for development, especially flood prone areas.
2. Encourage the use of lot clustering in areas not served with sanitary sewers as a means to develop the greenbelt system.
3. Use the greenbelt system to link together existing recreation areas.
4. Create a multi-purpose greenbelt corridor that:
  - Creates a unique greenway character for Norman;
  - Protects the environmentally sensitive areas of the City and serves as a wildlife habitat;
  - Serves as a stormwater management resource for urban run-off and regional detention needs;
  - Provides recreation opportunities for bicycling, walking and jogging, as well as an alternative route to move through the City for commuting to work, schools, shopping, between neighborhoods, and/or other destinations by bicycling or walking;
  - Preserves agriculturally significant lands; and,
  - Provides suitable locations for sanitary sewer easements and facilities.
5. Use greenbelts to provide open space areas adjacent to highways and major streets for sound buffer zones and protection from incompatible land uses.
6. Continue to improve a natural landscape planting and maintenance program for City-owned properties and rights-of-way of major streets and highways.

### **Goal 7: Core Area Stability and Enhancement**

Continue efforts to promote the enhancement and stability of the core area.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. Continue to promote public and private efforts to strengthen the Downtown area through implementation of the Downtown Norman Revitalization Plan.
2. Continue efforts to work with Norman Regional Hospital on issues related to land use, transportation, and expansion.
3. Continue efforts to work with the University of Oklahoma on issues related to facility location, design, and expansion, as well as student housing, parking, and public transit usage.

4. Establish a neighborhood planning program for targeted portions of the City's core area, in order to address such issues as land use compatibility, parking and circulation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transit facilities and usage, and neighborhood improvements.
5. Adopt an implementation strategy to address the potential impacts of building conversions to parking in the core area.
6. Adopt an implementation strategy to address the potential impacts of parking in the core area, to ensure that new or expanded parking areas are properly designed and buffered to minimize impacts on other uses in the neighborhood.
7. Adopt an implementation strategy to strengthen controls on building demolitions and/or conversions in the core area.