BISHOP CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Developed by Bishop Creek Neighborhood Residents with City of Norman Revitalization

May 10, 2012

BISHOP CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Acknowledgements

The City of Norman Revitalization Staff would like to thank residents of Bishop Creek Neighborhood, particularly Karleene Smith, AICP, as well as the following people for their assistance in developing this neighborhood plan and bringing it forward for adoption.

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Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan
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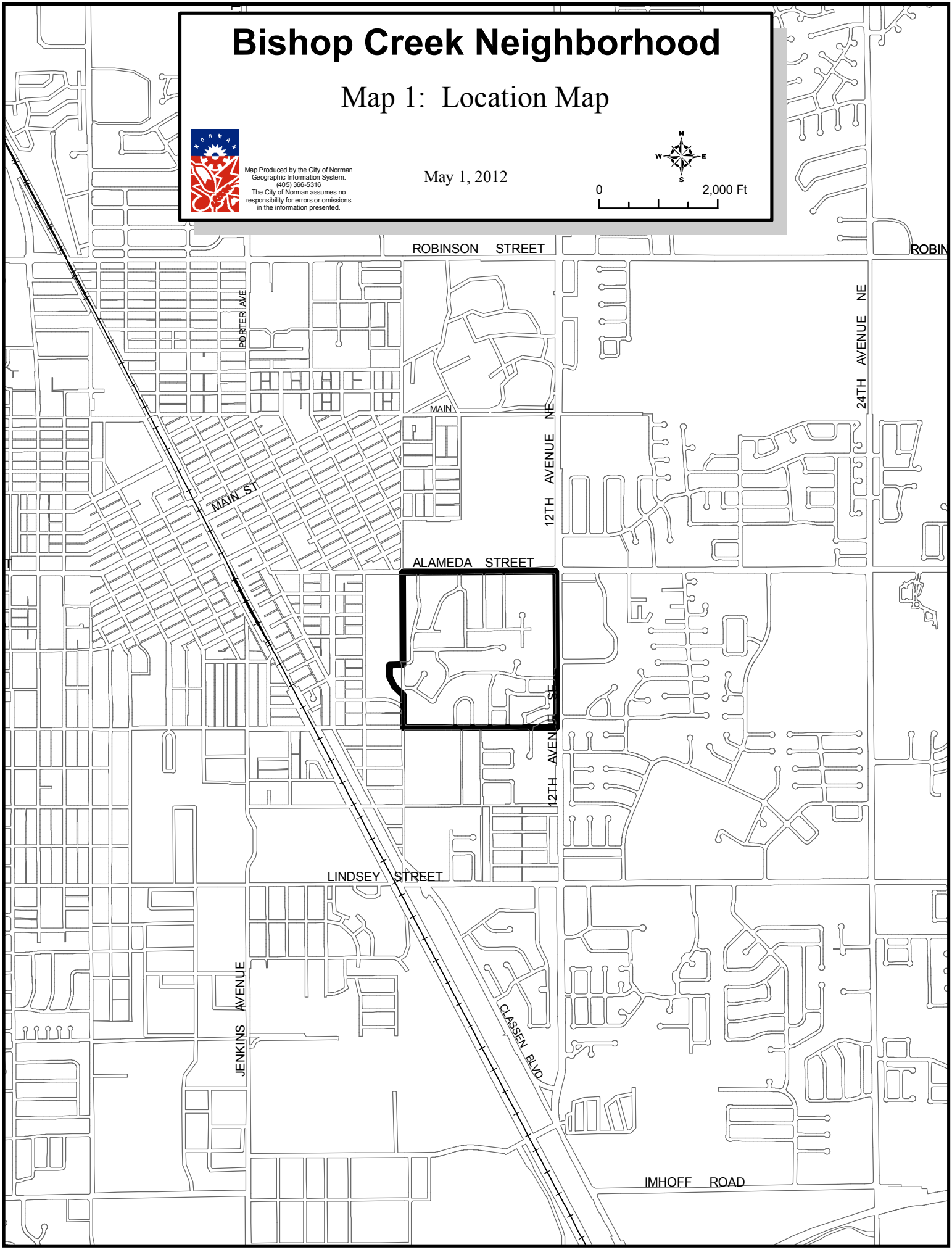
Bishop Creek Neighborhood

Map 1: Location Map



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May 1, 2012

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Executive Summary

Single-family houses along Villa, Rancho, Tollie Drive and Creston Way are affordable for a variety of small households.

Mature trees throughout Bishop Creek Neighborhood provide shade and cooling as well as adding value to individual properties.

An expectation that property will be well-maintained is a cornerstone of a high quality of life in any neighborhood.

Neighborhood Boundaries and Name. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is a central Norman neighborhood encompassing nearly a square mile. It is bounded by Alameda, Boyd Street, 12th Avenue SE and Bishop Creek, just west side of Oklahoma Avenue. The neighborhood name references the creek, several tributaries of which flow through the area.

Platting History. The neighborhood includes roughly 350 single family houses divided among six residential subdivisions: Morningside Addition (1950), Hanley Addition (1952), Bel-Aire Addition 1 (1963), Lincoln Terrace Addition (1964) and the Bel-Aire Addition 2 (1966). Bel-Aire Addition 3 which includes Dustin and Melisa Drives was platted in 1997. Commercial additions in Bishop Creek include Bel-Aire 4 (2005) which is the Planned Unit Development on 12th Avenue SE, and the Replatted Cinema East Addition which includes the Alameda Square Shopping Center and outparcels.

The Neighborhood Planning Process. The planning process brings residents together to identify neighborhood assets as well as physical and social problems that need to be addressed. The processes is also designed to enhance a sense of community and connectedness among neighbors. The Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan establishes the intent of neighborhood residents to protect and maintain these important elements of place. The Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan's philosophy is best summarized as "*strengthen what we have*." City staff worked with residents who attended neighborhood meetings held at Lincoln Elementary School on September 14, 2011 and April 11, 2012, and conducted numerous field surveys**.**

Land Use. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is dominated by single-family residential land use, with adjacent commercial corridors along Alameda and 12th Avenue. This is consistent with the area zoning (see Map 2-3) There is one park, Kiwanis, in the neighborhood proper, with Eastwood Park on the neighborhood's western edge. Lincoln Elementary School is one block west of the neighborhood.

Sense of Place. Neighborhoods are defined by a sense of place—i.e. the physical elements of the neighborhood that work together to create an impression or identity. Bishop Creek Neighborhood's character is defined by well-maintained mid-20th Century, single-family houses, mature trees lining the streets, and a combination of curvilinear and gridded streets with nicely landscaped yards. The neighborhood's streets are mostly quiet and accommodate pedestrians as well as cars, even without sidewalks.

Quality of Life. Most residents feel strongly that they enjoy a high quality of life in the Bishop Creek area. Indicators of quality of life are a sense of

Executive Summary, cont

Bishop Creek is one of Norman's great neighborhoods, just as it is, due to its mid-20th Century charm and strong sense of place.

Bishop Creek Neighborhood is inhabited by many long-term residents who care deeply about the long-term health of the neighborhood

Calming traffic and improving pedestrian safety through he s-curve at Morningside and Oklahoma is a priority for Bishop Creek residents.

place, friendly neighbors who are personally connected to the place and create a sense of belonging, walkability, tree canopy, good schools, and proximity to community destinations.

Residents. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is inhabited by many long-term residents who care deeply about the neighborhood. The area has also become attractive to younger residents who are drawn to its relative affordability, mid-20th Century charm and well-respected elementary school. An emerging trend that has some neighbors concerned is the transition of owner-occupied housing to renter-occupied housing. Many fear that the increase in rental property will decrease the strong sense of personal investment among neighbors.

Infrastructure. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is well-served by physical infrastructure which includes the large-scale network of public services or systems such as water lines, storm and sanitary sewer systems, and roadways. The neighborhood is also well served by civic infrastructure which includes Lincoln Elementary School and Kiwanis and Eastwood Parks.

Participants in neighborhood meetings identified assets, liabilities and opportunities (pp.11-12) which city staff later grouped into a set of guiding principles for the plan:

Take Actions that Strengthen People

It is important to take actions that strengthen connections between neighbors.

Take Actions that Help Us Care for Our Place

The neighborhood's character and sense of place are important to protect both property values as well as the neighborhood's long-term quality of life. Sense of place is what makes a place worth caring about and incorporates both the built and the natural environment.

Take Actions That Improve Getting Around

Effective and managed circulation for all modes of transportation, pedestrians and bicycles as well as automobiles, is needed to support a high quality of life in Bishop Creek Neighborhood.

The Guiding Principles were then expanded into a set of specific goals for neighborhood improvement that include those listed. Starting on page 22 of the this document, these plan goals are expanded to include a variety of specific objectives that if implemented, will go a long way to helping the neighborhood maintain strong property values, a high quality of life, and an enduring sense of personal commitment to place.

Executive Summary, cont

Bishop Creek includes many distinctive homes built between 1950-2000, including this Contemporary style house built in the 1970s.

GOAL 1: Develop a Viable Bishop Creek Neighborhood Organization.
Support the development of an active Neighborhood Association as a way to improve neighborhood quality of life, promote communication between people, and build connections between Bishop Creek area neighbors.

GOAL 2: Protect Bishop Creek Neighborhood's Distinctive Character and Sense of Place.
Protect the neighborhood's sense of place by protecting the tree canopy, maintaining the single-family character of the district, and by strategically calming traffic.

GOAL 3: Improve Traffic Circulation for All Modes of Travel.
Calm traffic and improve safety along key streets and at busy intersections. Improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood.

Conclusion. Bishop Creek is one of Norman's great neighborhoods, just as it is. Given the neighborhood's age and good condition, there are few infrastructure deficiencies. The two issues that most concern the neighbors are related to traffic and changing demographics.

Through the United States, cities and neighborhoods are learning how to modify 1950s-60s-era development patterns that privileged cars at the expense of people. The plan makes several recommendations that should be explored, particularly for the S-curve of Morningside/ Oklahoma where many children cross the street walking to and from Lincoln School. In addition, the plan emphasizes a neighborhood paradigm shift that recognizes that the street network is intended for all users, pedestrians and bicycles as well as cars.

Managing a shift in neighborhood demographics and expectations can only be tackled with social capital and can only be achieved by neighbors themselves. The plan puts a great emphasis on neighborhood organizing as the only effective remedy for declining neighborhood standards, fears about increased rental occupancy, and a sense of declining personal investment in the neighborhood.

Bishop Creek has all the building blocks in place to continue to thrive and prosper for the next fifty years.

Twentieth-Century neighborhoods that fare well in the 21st Century will have several common characteristics: walkability and a central location, a strong sense of place, and most importantly the clear and present evidence of residents who are actively working to build and maintain connections between all neighbors. Bishop Creek has all the building blocks in place to continue to thrive and prosper for the next fifty years. Aside from minor refinements needed to improve neighborhood circulation for all users, the primary recommendation of this plan is a return to good, old-fashioned neighborliness.

What Is Neighborhood Planning?

A neighborhood is a geographic location with distinguishing physical and environmental features. It is a place where people live, work and play. Neighborhoods are the building blocks of cities.

Neighborhood planning is a process by which residents identify assets and agree on priorities for neighborhood improvement, and to devise strategies to achieve their goals. During these conversations, neighbors ask themselves "what do we want to protect in our neighborhood?" and "what is not up to our standards and how can we improve it?" And they ask themselves "what draws us to this place that and what will keep us here in the future?"

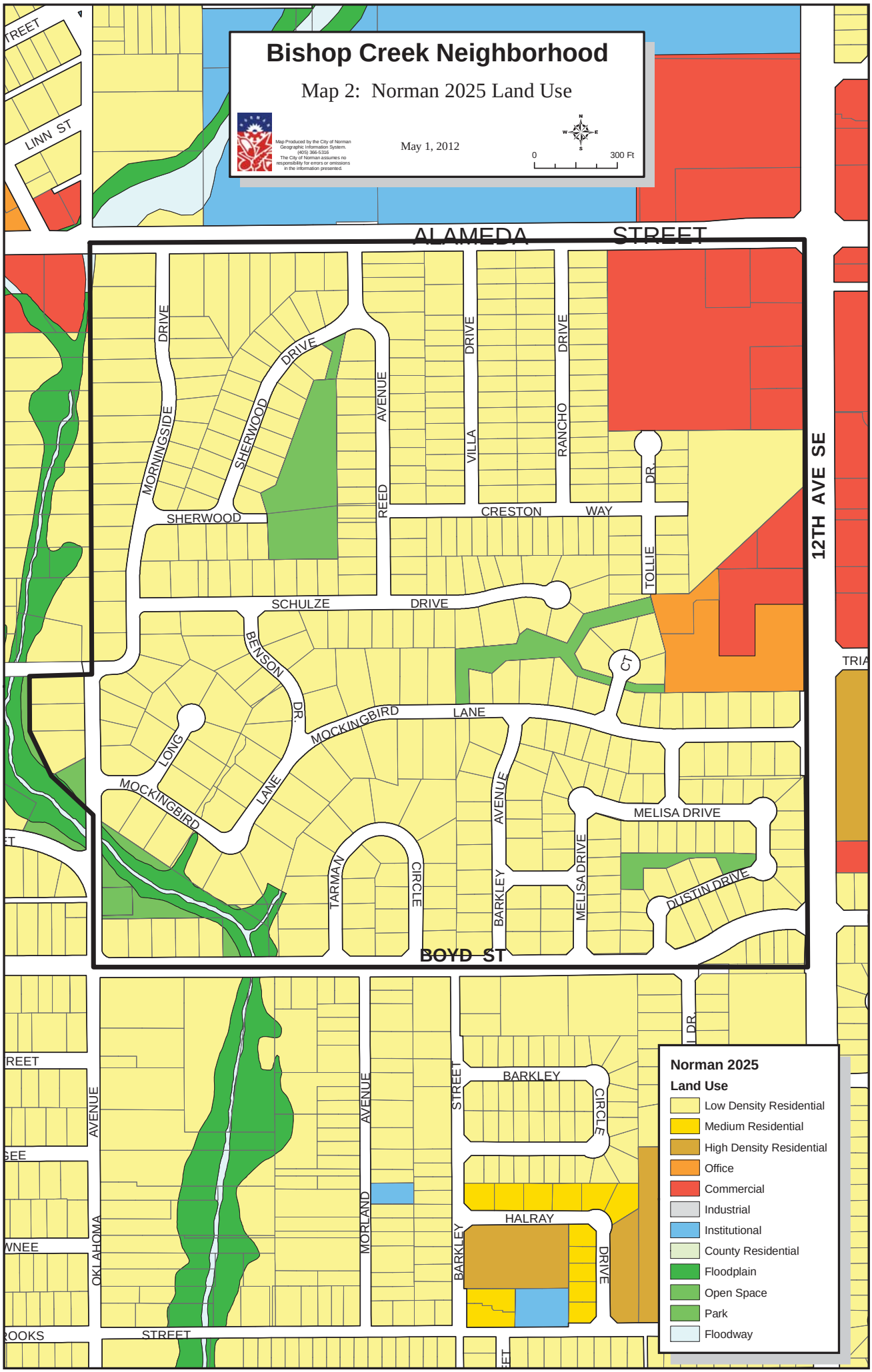
The *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan,* drafted in 2004, recommended the establishment of a neighborhood planning program with a dedicated staff person. The program would be designed to "engage neighborhoods in the Core Area in a participatory planning process to directly address such issues as land use compatibility, parking, circulation, and neighborhood improvements." The *2025 Plan Implementation Techniques and Technical Memorandum* recommends that "The Planning Commission and City Council would adopt each of the neighborhood plans as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan."

Neighborhood planning begins with a physical assessment and documentation of environmental conditions. Planners then meet with neighbors to identify social conditions and neighborhood assets. By articulating goals to protect the physical and social environment, planners help neighbors develop a plan to protect existing assets and to implement desired change. Ideally, neighborhood plans should be updated every five-to-ten years.

The most important goal in neighborhood planning is to develop a strong sense of community connectedness. This means residents know and trust each other, and choose to work together to create real improvements in the neighborhood. By working together to identify community assets and develop a plan for protecting them, neighbors have direct control over their future.

Neighborhood meetings are often held in schools, churches, libraries or other public settings.

In order to be effective and successful, neighborhood planning must occur in the context of the broader community's values and aspirations. Though plan goals will be specific to a neighborhood, they must reflect goals that are supported and striven for by the larger community. The plan concept laid out in the Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of all of Norman's current major planning initiatives, including: *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan*; *Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, and the *Norman Stormwater Master Plan*.


Bishop Creek Neighborhood
Map 2: Norman 2025 Land Use
May 1, 2012
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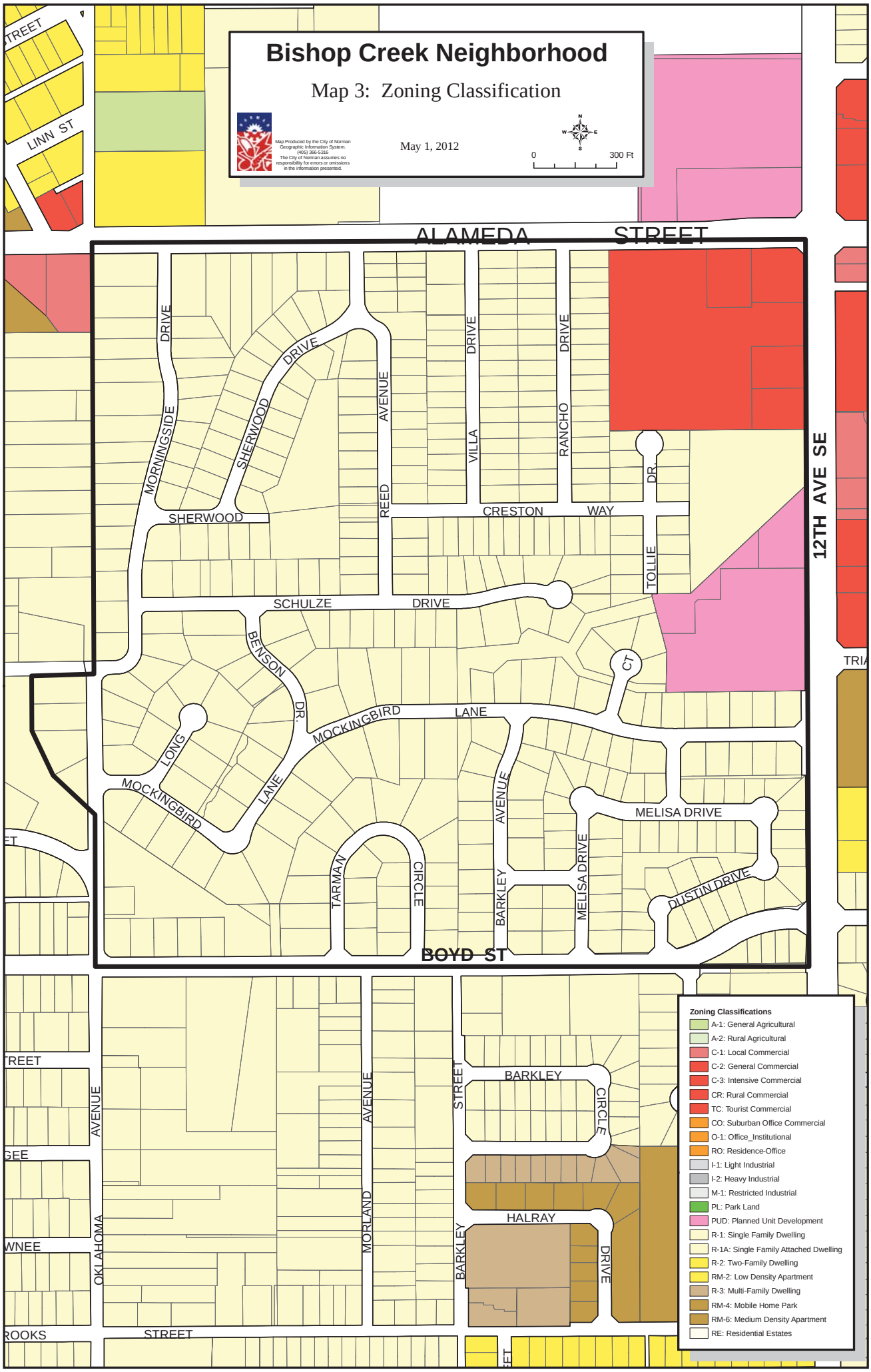
ALAMEDA STREET
12TH AVE SE
BOYD ST
LINN ST
MORNINGSIDE DRIVE
SHERWOOD DRIVE
REED AVENUE
VILLA DRIVE
RANCHO DRIVE
CRESTON WAY
TOLLIE DR.
SCHULZE DRIVE
BENSON DR.
MOCKINGBIRD LANE
LONG CT
MELISA DRIVE
DUSTIN DRIVE
BARKLEY AVENUE
MELISA DRIVE
TARMAN CIRCLE
BARKLEY CIRCLE
HALRAY DRIVE
MORLAND AVENUE
OKLAHOMA STREET
Norman 2025
Land Use
Low Density Residential
Medium Residential
High Density Residential
Office
Commercial
Industrial
Institutional
County Residential
Floodplain
Open Space
Park
Floodway


Bishop Creek Neighborhood
Map 3: Zoning Classification
May 1, 2012
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ALAMEDA STREET
12TH AVE SE
BOYD ST
LINN ST
DRIVE
MORNINGSIDE
SHERWOOD
AVENUE
REED
VILLA
RANCHO
CRESTON
WAY
TOLLIE
SCHULZE
BENSON
MOCKINGBIRD
LANE
LONG
CT
MELISA DRIVE
DUSTIN DRIVE
TARMAN
CIRCLE
BARKLEY
HALRAY
MORLAND
OKLAHOMA
STREET
Zoning Classifications
A-1: General Agricultural
A-2: Rural Agricultural
C-1: Local Commercial
C-2: General Commercial
C-3: Intensive Commercial
CR: Rural Commercial
TC: Tourist Commercial
CO: Suburban Office Commercial
O-1: Office_Institutional
RO: Residence-Office
I-1: Light Industrial
I-2: Heavy Industrial
M-1: Restricted Industrial
PL: Park Land
PUD: Planned Unit Development
R-1: Single Family Dwelling
R-1A: Single Family Attached Dwelling
R-2: Two-Family Dwelling
RM-2: Low Density Apartment
R-3: Multi-Family Dwelling
RM-4: Mobile Home Park
RM-6: Medium Density Apartment
RE: Residential Estates

Neighborhood Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities

Tarman Circle includes a number of Neo-Spanish Mission Revival style houses with arched entries, courtyards and tile roofs.

The neighborhood is well served by civic infrastructure which includes Lincoln Elementary School and Kiwanis and Eastwood Parks.

Because it was developed in the mid-20th Century, Bishop Creek Neighborhood does not include sidewalks. The streets are wide enough to accommodate all users.

The following is a verbatim list of neighborhood-generated Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities generated by participants during the September 14, 2011 meeting. Assets were defined as positive aspects of the neighborhood that require promotion or stewardship. Liabilities were defined as things that needed to be fixed or that were not up to neighborhood standards. Opportunities were defined as things that could become neighborhood assets with an investment of some kind of resources.

Assets

- People know each other and watch out for each other
- Close to university
- Lincoln School
- Gingerbread Preschool
- Kiwanis and Eastwood Parks
- Sled run at Eastwood Park
- Open space and walking path at Kiwanis Park
- Nice mix of ages
- Walkable
- Great tree canopy
- Fairly quiet
- Houses are mostly well-kept
- Feels safe
- Wildlife still observed
- Affordable housing
- Many long-term occupants, including original owners
- Neighbors are friendly
- Good proximity to "stuff" (i.e. destinations)
- Not a "cookie cutter" type neighborhood

Liabilities

- Increasing trend of rental occupancy of single family houses
- Rentals = more cars
- Turning movements onto 12th Avenue increasingly difficult
- Turning onto Alameda from Morningside and Sherwood increasingly difficult
- Trashy conditions behind Alameda Square Shopping Center
- Runoff from Alameda Square onto adjacent residential property
- Trash from Anatole detention pond flows into neighborhood
- Increasing trend of out-of-state ownership of neighborhood houses

Neighborhood Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities

- Vacant houses
- Oklahoma/Morningside curve is dangerous for kids walking to school
- Cars blocking sidewalk
- Sidewalk conditions along Boyd between Classen and Oklahoma
- Slight increase in property crimes
- Streets need sweeping
- Pedestrians on Boyd are threatened by bikes, especially at night
- Cut-through traffic on Mockingbird
- Bishop Creek at Benson has confusing traffic control

Opportunities

- Develop various methods of communication for the neighborhood (email, Facebook page, etc)
- Reinstall play equipment in Eastwood Park, preferably with a natural color palette (equipment installed late Fall 2011)
- Improve/enhance overall neighborhood walkability
- Establish safe walking paths to school
- Enhance Eastwood Park bridge
- Develop an active neighborhood association that allows neighbors to get to know and trust each other and have some fun on a regular basis:
  - Email database
  - Cookouts/Potluck events
  - Regular Community Policing reports
  - Newsletters
- Welcome wagon-type outreach for new neighbors
- Continue to improve relationship with OU especially regarding bike traffic along Boyd Street
- Install pedestrian lighting along Boyd Street
- Improve bike/pedestrian interactions along Boyd Street
- Reduce amount/speed of cut-through traffic along Morningside
- Improve maintenance at Alameda Square Shopping Center
- Improve maintenance at Anatole Square Shopping Center

A walking path around Kiwanis Park enjoys a great deal of use.

Bishop Creek Neighborhood Context

Boundaries and Name. Bishop Creek Neighborhood encompasses nearly a square mile bounded on the north by Alameda, on the south by Boyd Street, on the east by 12th Avenue SE and on the west by Bishop Creek. (see Map 1) The name was chosen by neighborhood residents and references the Bishop Creek, several segments of which flow through the neighborhood.

Some may wonder why the Bishop Creek Neighborhood boundary does not extend west to Classen Boulevard. The reasoning is this: Bishop Creek's 1950-60s-era residential plats (detailed description below) and subsequent development patterns are all connected by the street network and form a unit. Despite its adjacency, the Southridge Addition west of the creek dates to the 1920-30s and has a very different layout and development pattern. For this reason it was not included in the Bishop Creek neighborhood's boundaries.

The Planning Process. The neighborhood planning process seeks to identify neighborhood assets and make plans to protect them; to enhance a sense of community and connectedness among neighbors, and to identify physical or environmental problems that need to be addressed. The Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan recognizes that there is much about the Bishop Creek Neighborhood that works quite well, just as it is. With that acknowledgement, the purpose of the plan is to protect the neighborhood's many assets and identify ways to correct issues that aren't meeting the neighborhood's expectations .

Land Use. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is defined by its land use, the built environment, and its physical, social and economic conditions. Land use patterns in the neighborhood are dominated by single-family homes, with adjacent commercial corridors along Alameda and 12th Avenue.

Many Bishop Creek Neighborhood children walk to Lincoln School using the sidewalk along the north edge of Eastwood Park.

History of Additions. In the northeast corner of the neighborhood, the Hanley Addition, platted in 1952, includes Villa, Rancho, Creston Way and Tollie Drive. Streets in the Hanley Addition follow a strict linear grid and have small, rectangular lots. These streets have new drive approaches and rolled form of curb and guttering. The balance of the Bishop Creek Neighborhood includes a curvilinear street pattern with mostly irregular-shaped lots. This includes the Morningside Addition (1950), the Bel-Aire Addition 1 (1963) and Bel-Aire Addition 2 (1966). Lincoln Terrace Addition (1964) also includes Tarman Circle, a semi-circle off Boyd Street with no access to the rest of the neighborhood. Bel-Aire Addition 3 was platted in 1997 and includes Dustin and Melisa Drives which have a modified cul-de-sac pattern typical of that time period. Neighborhood commercial additions include Bel-Aire 4 (2005) on 12th Avenue, which includes the Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Neighborhood Context

What is Sense of Place?

The term "sense of place" describes a personal response to the built and natural environment that individuals experience in daily life. It refers to feelings, emotions and attachments that people have for a particular location.

In the Bishop Creek Neighborhood, sense of place is defined by the setting of mature trees lining the streets, the street pattern itself, the placement of houses along the blocks, the presence of several churches. These elements work together with the close-knit rhythm of houses to create a sense of place that is unique to this neighborhood.

Bishop Creek doesn't *look* or *feel* quite like any other neighborhood in Norman. This sense of place is a valuable asset and should be nurtured and stewarded through sensitive planning for future generations.

Bishop Creek Infrastructure Projects 2007-2012

- Urban concrete pavement reconstruction Morningside Drive: Alameda – Schulze
- Urban asphalt pavement reconstruction Creston Way: Reed – Tollie
- Upgrade Outdoor Emergency warning system

Planned Projects 2012

- Asphalt pavement maintenance Villa and Rancho: Alameda – Creston

Addition which includes the Alameda Square Shopping Center and two outparcels.

Sense of Place. Neighborhoods are also defined by a sense of place—i.e. the physical elements of the neighborhood that work together to create an impression or identity. Bishop Creek Neighborhood's character-defining elements are a comfortable mid-20th Century suburban feel, with well-maintained single-family houses, mature trees lining broad streets; and many nicely landscaped yards. For the most part, the neighborhood's streets are quiet and accommodate pedestrians as well as cars, even without sidewalks.

Residents. Bishop Creek Neighborhood has many long-term residents and is also attracting many younger residents who are drawn to its relative affordability, mid-20th Century charm and well-regarded elementary school. An emerging trend that has some neighbors concerned is the transition of owner-occupied housing to renter-occupied housing. Fears are that the increasing levels of rental occupancy could be a destabilizing force in the neighborhood and lead to shrinking property values and a diminished quality of life. According to the 2005-*2009 American Community Survey* (a subset of the US Census) the median home price in this census tract (2006.02) is $129,900, which represents an 18%increase from median values in the previous five-year survey.

Infrastructure. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is well-served by physical infrastructure, which is the large-scale network of public services or systems such as water lines, storm and sanitary sewer systems, and roadways. The neighborhood is also well served by civic infrastructure such as parks and schools.

Streets. Overall street conditions throughout the neighborhood are good to very good. The layout of the street network reflects the time period during which each section was developed. Nearly all streets have curbs and guttering and underground drainage with the exception of Villa, Rancho, Creston Way and Tollie Drive, which do not. Creston Way and Tollie Drive have both received asphalt maintenance over the past five years. Villa and Rancho are scheduled for asphalt maintenance in 2012.

Quality of Life. Most residents feel strongly that they enjoy a high quality of life in the Bishop Creek area. Indicators of quality of life are a sense of place, friendly neighbors, a sense of belonging, walkability, tree canopy, good schools, and proximity to community destinations.

Elementary School. Though Lincoln School is not technically located within the Bishop Creek Neighborhood boundaries as defined in this

Neighborhood Context

The Kiwanis Park playground is relatively new. When recently planted trees mature, the surrounding area will enjoy shade much of the year.

The pedestrian bridge over Bishop Creek in Eastwood Park represents a future opportunity for a highly functional placemaking element.

A walking path was added to Kiwanis Park in 2009, attracting many more users.

plan, it is a major neighborhood destination and defines pedestrian patterns to a high degree. Bishop Creek residents certainly regard it as the neighborhood school and it functions a very successful civic hub.

Neighborhood Parks. Bishop Creek Neighborhood proper includes one city park with another park immediately adjacent. Kiwanis Park is situated in the middle of the neighborhood, and residents sometimes refer to Kiwanis as the "Hidden Park" because its 3.5 acres are surrounded entirely by houses. Due to this layout and because the park has virtually no parking, it attracts few users from outside the neighborhood. This fact gives residents a strong sense of security and ownership of the park which they value highly and seek to protect. The park includes around two acres of open space, relatively new playground equipment, and a single-hoop basketball court located on the east side. In 2009 the City added a walking trail around the north half of the park which is enjoying a great deal of use.

Eastwood Park is a 6.9-acre resource situated on western edge of the neighborhood. It is largely comprised of land located in the Bishop Creek floodway and floodplain. The park straddles both east and west sides of Oklahoma Avenue and is also accessible from Ponca Avenue. The park received new playground equipment in 2011 and includes a sidewalk along the northern edge which is heavily used by children walking to and from Lincoln School. Neighbors have expressed interested in the installation of an additional sidewalk segment along the creek through the park from Oklahoma to Ponca to encourage children who walk to school from the southeast part of the neighborhood.

Proximity to Community Destinations. Bishop Creek Neighborhood enjoys a central location in Norman one mile east of the University of Oklahoma and Campus Corner Commercial District and one mile from Downtown Norman. The neighborhood is also adjacent to the 12th and Alameda commercial district which includes a variety of neighborhood retail such as a grocery store, a hardware store, a drug store, restaurants, and other services.

Despite the neighborhood's close proximity to OU, an employer for many residents, many people report that they drive their cars to OU in part because of the perceived barrier of crossing Classen Boulevard, a major arterial road, two blocks east of Bishop Creek Neighborhood. Though Classen is a relatively narrow four-lane road, it carries a heavy volume of traffic throughout the day. The intersection of Classen and Boyd, which does include a crosswalk, feels particularly intimidating to pedestrians and cyclists.

Neighborhood Context

As required by the City of Norman, Bel-Aire Addition 3 (Dustin and Melisa Drives), was developed with sidewalks in 1997.

What is Walkability?

A walkable neighborhood is a place where people live within walking distance to most places they want to visit, whether it is school, work, grocery stores, parks, churches, banks, retail shops, or drug stores, and where people choose to walk to access these goods and services instead of drive their cars.

A walkable neighborhood has sidewalks or clear pedestrian zones linking major destinations in and around the area. A walkable community is made up of a collection of walkable neighborhoods.

Pedestrians approaching the cross-walk along Alameda can be hard to see for northbound traffic on Morn-ingside Drive.

Sidewalks. The Bel-Aire Addition 3 (Dustin and Melisa Drives), was developed with sidewalks in 1997. There are also sidewalks along the edges of the neighborhood on Boyd, 12th Avenue, and Alameda. In most places it would be difficult to retrofit sidewalks without sacrificing legal parking in existing driveways—blocking a sidewalk with a car is a violation of City ordinance. Many residents are understandably reluctant to reduce the amount of available parking so there may be little neighborhood support for adding sidewalks. The exception to this may be in the S-curve of Oklahoma/Morningside, which is discussed in more detail on the next page.

Walkability. The majority of Bishop Creek Neighborhood was built without sidewalks as was common practice in the mid-20th Century throughout the country. The City of Norman began requiring new subdivisions to include sidewalks in the late 1970s. For the most part, neighborhood streets are wide and can accommodate pedestrians and cars, even without sidewalks. Many residents enjoy walking in the neighborhood for exercise, to socialize, and to reach the school or park.

Walking From the Neighborhood. Though the neighborhood is centrally located in Norman, walking from Bishop Creek Neighborhood could require pedestrians to cross Alameda and 12th Avenue, two busy arterial roadways with five lanes of moving traffic. Though both roads have pedestrian-activated crosswalks at major intersections, their width and traffic speed may be intimidating to some walkers and cyclists. Though Boyd Street is a two lane-arterial road that carries a fairly high volume of traffic, its narrow width and posted speed limit of 25 mph allows most users to feel comfortable crossing the street.

Pedestrian Conflicts. Neighbors report conflicts—mostly at night—between pedestrians walking along Boyd Street and cyclists using the sidewalk. A City of Norman Public Works project scheduled for installation in FY 2013 will add sidewalks to the south side of Boyd Street between Classen Blvd and Barkley Road. This may help remove some of the bicycle traffic from the sidewalk on the north side of Boyd Street. There is an existing, on-street bike lane along the south edge of Boyd but in its present form appears to not be used very often.

Housing Stock. Bishop Creek Neighborhood includes a variety of housing stock built between 1950-2000, with the majority constructed in the 1950-1960s . Stylistically, the neighborhood's single-family residential character is defined by a combination of small, post-WWII Minimal Traditional single family houses; low-slung Ranch-style, Neo-Colonial, Contemporary, and Neo-Mediterranean houses (1950-1970), and a "North Dallas style" subdivision built in the 1990s, featuring

Neighborhood Context

Neighbors are concerned about children crossing the street in the middle of the S-curve at Oklahoma and Morningside Drive.

In 2007, speed tables were added to Oklahoma at neighbors' request. As pavement markings have faded, the shade makes them hard to see.

City of Norman

Traffic Engineering Analysis

- May 6-9, 2004
  traffic data for Oklahoma Avenue from Brooks to Boyd
- May 1-4, 2007
  traffic data for Oklahoma/ Morningside, Boyd to Alameda
- September 9-12, 2008
  Along Morningside from Schulze to Alameda

Radar Speed Feedback

- April 4-8, 2011
  Oklahoma/Morningside from Bishop Creekto Schulze
- July 11-15, 2011
  near 806 Bishop Creek
- May 2-6, 2011
  Bishop Creekfrom Barkley to 12th Avenue NE

red-brown brick houses with steeply pitched roofs. Overall the housing stock is in good-to-excellent condition, with a few structures in the oldest sections of the neighborhood in fair condition. Neighbors have observed deteriorating conditions at several properties held in limbo by unsettled estates with out-of-town heirs.

Traffic Issues. Increased traffic volumes on arterial streets around the neighborhood—specifically 12th Avenue, Boyd Street and Alameda—have provoked an increase in cut-through traffic on the only two continuous roads through the neighborhood. This trend is most evident on Oklahoma/Morningside Drive. These streets are wide (25 feet +) which often gives drivers a false impression that it is okay to drive faster. Residents complain about traffic volume/speed, increased noise and a sense of "being invaded."

There is no practical way to alter the organic pattern of streets and the lack of alternative roads that connect arterials. What can be done is to increase a sense of friction that can make cut-through streets less attractive to non-local traffic and slow drivers down. Examples of roadway friction include:

- Cars parked on the street
- Regular presence of pedestrians and cyclists
- Overhanging tree canopy
- Textured pavement
- Pinch points, e.g. landscaped traffic islands, diverters or similar mechanisms that calm as well as beautify the neighborhood
- Speed tables

Speed Tables. At the request of nearby property owners, the City of Norman Traffic Engineering Division has conducted several types of speed and volume analyses along neighborhood streets experiencing cut-through traffic (see sidebar). Significant findings from a 2007 warrant study conducted along Oklahoma/Morningside and the support of a strong majority of neighboring owners resulted in the installation of three speed tables along the Oklahoma segment in 2008.

Oklahoma/Morningside Curve. One area where the lack of sidewalks provokes neighborhood concern is the S-curve where Oklahoma becomes Morningside Drive. Many walkers, particularly children, use the sidewalk along the northern edge of Eastwood Park to access both the park and Lincoln School. The park sidewalk terminates in a private driveway at Oklahoma. Neighbors are particularly concerned about children on foot and bikes crossing the street at blind spots in the curve.

Though there is no "quick fix" remedy for this issue, several steps combined could continue to calm traffic in this area and make a safer

Without buffering, noise, light, activity and odors from the backside of commercial centers has a negative impact on adjacent homes.

crossing point more apparent to pedestrians.

- Raise curb height. The roadway has been overlain with asphalt many times and existing curbs are very low. Raising curb height may calm car traffic through the S-curve by making the road edges more distinct narrowing the feel of the roadway.
- Consider building a sidewalk "landing pad" connecting the sidewalk from Eastwood Park with Oklahoma/Morningside
- Consider a crosswalk that emphasizes safe crossing at Schulze Drive rather than further south into the curve
- Make existing speed tables on Oklahoma more visible by adding additional and brighter striping.

Land Use Conflicts. Given its overwhelmingly single-family residential land use, there are few land use conflicts within the neighborhood. However at the northeast edge of the neighborhood, the line between commercial and residential uses is shallowly etched. The Norman Zoning Ordinance requires a six-foot stockade fence between residential and commercial uses so at present there is only that buffer between the backside and loading dock of Alameda Square Shopping Center (southwest corner of 12th and Alameda) and adjacent residences on the west and south. Neighbors observe that the rear area of the center area is regularly strewn with trash and that damaged fencing is often slow to be repaired or replaced. This affects properties along Tollie and Rancho Drives and a large residential parcel that remains on 12th Avenue.

12th Avenue SE. Another area of neighbors' concern is future land use of the Bel-Aire 4 Addition, a partially developed parcel along 12th Avenue SE. Initially platted and planned for medical office use, this 7.05-acre parcel is now zoned as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for neighborhood commercial uses that would be permitted in a C-2. zone. At present the land uses includes a bank on the north end and an urgent care medical clinic and dental office on the south end. The site plan approved when the land was platted in 2005 allows for the construction of up to seven commercial buildings with associated parking on this site. Adjacent neighbors on the north and west sides are concerned that these commercial uses will generate noise, smell and additional runoff into the Bishop Creek watershed that forms the western edge of this site.

Future Redevelopment. With its central location and proximity to many destinations, future market forces may begin to drive redevelopment in some parts of the neighborhood, especially along edges where houses are relatively small or commercial properties are underperforming. While future redevelopment may be desirable in some locations, it is strongly recommended that any redevelopment which occurs must be sensitive to the neighborhood's overwhelming single-family land use character.

The Alameda Square Shopping Center offers convenient neighborhood retail to Bishop Creek residents.

Neighborhood Context

As required by City Ordinance, a six-foot stockade fence separates The backside of Alameda Square Shopping Center from adjacent houses

Eroded banks indicate that high volumes of water occasionally flow through this segment of Bishop Creek

Two segments of Bishop Creek flow through the neighborhood, occasionally carrying huge volumes of water. Most times it has low flow.

A foreseeable market-driven scenario could include a future redevelopment of the Alameda Square Shopping Center at the southwest corner of 12th Avenue SE and Alameda. If commercial redevelopment were to occur at this site, a mixed-use approach to land use, related to that which has occurred one mile south at 12th Avenue SE and Lindsey Street, could be desirable. Mixed uses could include retail or office on a ground floor and residential units above, or a similar configuration.

Redevelopment of commercial uses adjacent to houses should be required to employ four-sided architecture and landscape buffering to protect the adjacent residences from negative effects of commercial land use. The term "four-sided architecture" refers to an architectural finish on all sides of a building. The rationale for this requirement is so that adjacent houses are not subjected to an unattractive view of a commercial center's backside and related service activities such as deliveries and trash collection. Along with four-sided architecture, attractive masonry walls and enhanced landscaping standards should be required to buffer adjacent houses from light, noise and odors associated with commercial land uses.

Bishop Creek Watershed. Bishop Creek Neighborhood is traversed by several tributaries of Bishop Creek, one of Norman's primary watersheds. This is the origin of the neighborhood's name. The Eastwood Park segment of Bishop Creek is the largest and most visible in the neighborhood and carries large volumes of water during heavy rains. Much of Eastwood Park is located in the Bishop Creek floodway and floodplain and is therefore not legally buildable. Parks are a very effective way to put floodway to productive civic use and still yet allow the natural drainage system to do its job. Neighbors understand that on occasion, water volumes through the park are high but eventually the waters recede.

Eroded stream bank conditions along Bishop Creek tributaries crossing both Schulze Drive and Mockingbird Lane indicate large volumes of water occasionally flow through those areas. During a heavy rain stormwater runoff creates temporary high water in the low spot on Creston Way but the existing on-street drainage system does its job and most of the water dissipates within hours of a storm.

Throughout Norman, the volume of stormwater flowing through the city's watersheds has increased substantially. This is the result of the creation of more impervious surface upstream. Impervious surface refers to any surfaces covered by paving or a roofed structure that cannot absorb stormwater. As a community-wide issue, Norman has begun to address stormwater management by limiting the amount of impervious surface on individual parcels of land. The community also commissioned the development of a *Stormwater Master Plan* in 2007-2009 which has not yet been adopted by City Council.

Guiding Principles of the Neighborhood Plan

Crosswalks designate a pedestrian zone that allows cars and walkers to safely share the road. Clear sight lines for all users are critical to a crosswalk's effectiveness.

During a neighborhood meeting on September 14, 2011 held at Lincoln Elementary School, participants generated lists of neighborhood Assets, Liabilities and Opportunities (see pp. 13-14.).

For purposes of discussion during the meeting, assets were defined as positive aspects of the neighborhood that require protection and stewardship. Liabilities were defined as things that need to be remedied or that were not up to neighborhood standards and expectations. Opportunities were defined as issues that could become neighborhood assets with the investment of some type of resources—funding, elbow grease or social capital.

These assets, liabilities and opportunities were then grouped into related issues and developed into a set of Guiding Principles that underpin the recommendations of the neighborhood plan.

- *Take Actions that Strengthen People*
  It is important to take actions that strengthen connections between neighbors.

- *Take Actions that Help Us Care for Our Place*
  The neighborhood's character and sense of place are important to protect both property values as well as the neighborhood's long-term quality of life. Sense of place is what makes a place worth caring about and incorporates both the built and the natural environment.

- *Take Actions that Improve Getting Around*
  Effective and managed circulation for all modes of transportation, pedestrians and bicycles as well as automobiles, is needed to support a high quality of life in Bishop Creek Neighborhood.

This crosswalk at Ponca, just outside neighborhood boundaries provides safe crossing for children walking to Lincoln School.

Neighborhood Plan Goals

Though just outside the neighborhood, the segment of Ponca by Eastwood Park is heavily traveled by school pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks are needed here.

Sustainable enhancement of neighborhood quality of life requires a coordinated strategy rather than just the undertaking of a series of individual projects. Effective strategies for neighborhood revitalization can only be created by the people who live in the area routinely asking themselves questions such as "how do we want our neighborhood to look in ten years?" And "what steps can we take ourselves to make it happen?"

Underpinned by the Guiding Principles described on the previous page, *The Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan* recommendations recognizes the neighborhood's existing infrastructure and inherently "good bones," and establishes long-term goals that, when implemented, will continue to support and sustain one of Norman's great neighborhoods.

GOAL 1: Develop a Viable Bishop Creek Neighborhood Organization.

Support the development of an active Neighborhood Association as a way to improve neighborhood quality of life, promote communication between people, and build connections between Bishop Creek area neighbors.

GOAL 2: Protect Bishop Creek Neighborhood's Distinctive Character and Sense of Place.

Protect the neighborhood's sense of place by protecting the tree canopy, maintaining the single-family character of the district, and by strategically calming traffic.

GOAL 3: Improve Traffic Circulation for All Modes of Travel.

Calm traffic and improve safety along key streets and at busy intersections. Improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Plan Goal 1

Develop a Viable Bishop Creek Neighborhood Organization.
Support the development of an active Neighborhood Association as a way to improve neighborhood quality of life, promote communication between people, and build connections between Bishop Creek area neighbors.

1. **Gather a few neighbors who can commit to planning one neighborhood-wide event social event such as a neighborhood picnic, ice cream social, or dessert party.**
    a. Use the email database developed during the neighborhood planning process to publicize the event. Print fliers and deliver door-to-door. Ask kids to help with distribution.
    b. Seek volunteers to help with all aspects of planning, execution and clean up.
    c. Actively promote the idea of neighborhood organization in conversations, on Facebook, etc.

2. **Establish a Neighborhood Association to build lasting social capital among residents.**
    a. Following a successful event as proposed above, hold an organizational meeting. Elect officers and identify one neighborhood project to take on.
    b. Continue to develop the email database to gather and sustain momentum to form a permanent neighborhood association.
    c. Find a volunteer who can manage and maintain a Bishop Creek Neighborhood Association Facebook page.
    d. Find 1-2 people willing to start an electronic and hardcopy newsletter. Older children could take this on!
    e. Develop a system of Bishop Creek Block Captains to have local eyes on each block and to make communication more manageable.
    f. Kiwanis Park area neighbors could develop a neighborhood activity for children to be held in the park—an annual event such as a parade, an arts project, sporting event, a garden, etc.
    g. Start a neighborhood walking group.
    h. Work with Lincoln School faculty and PTA to promote neighborhood children walking and biking to school. Start a walking school bus or bike train.

What is Social Capital?

The term *social capital* refers to an attitude, spirit, and willingness of people to engage in collective civic activities.

Engaging with each other while undertaking civic activities forms a network of relationships that, together with behavior norms, trust, and cooperation, enables a community or neighborhood, to function effectively. Social capital builds on itself. It is highly contagious!

Neighborhood Plan Goal 2

Protect Bishop Creek Neighborhood's Distinctive Character and Sense of Place.

Protect the neighborhood's sense of place by maintaining the single-family character of the district, protecting the tree canopy, by strategically calming traffic and by meaningful environmental enhancements.

1. **In coordination with a City of Norman tree give-away, host a neighborhood tree-planting event that includes volunteers who can assist neighbors who need help planting trees throughout the area.**
    - α. Explore interest/expertise in forming a neighborhood tree committee to monitor aging trees and trees that may have been damaged in storms.
    - β. Tree committee could be neighborhood resource on tree care, planting, maintenance, and how to choose the best species for different locations

2. **Work with the City to continue enhancing Bishop Creek Neighborhood's two parks, Eastwood and Kiwanis.**
    - α. Form "Friends Of" groups for Kiwanis and Eastwood Parks to continue building a sense of neighborhood stewardship and to coordinate maintenance and desires for future improvements with the City of Norman.
    - β. In coordination with the City of Norman, Friends Of Parks groups could plan, install and maintain special gardening projects—e.g. Native Oklahoma wildflower garden, butterfly garden, etc.—in the parks to beautify and help intensify the sense of place.

3. **Working through the neighborhood association, discuss neighborhood expectations for conduct and property maintenance with new neighbors, especially renters.**
    - α. Neighborhood Association could develop a neighborhood brochure that addresses these issues in a friendly way, with block captains who distribute when new neighbors arrive.
    - β. Working through the Neighborhood Association, establish a relationship with Norman's Kiwanis Club to explore possible partnerships and/or the club's sponsorship of events or park infrastructure improvements.

Successful 21st Century Neighborhoods must be walkable with a central location, have a strong sense of place, and have residents willing to organize to protect their investments.

Neighborhood Plan Goal 3

A sidewalk is needed on all sides of a school to establish a pedestrian zone that is separated from cars.

Improve Traffic Circulation for All Modes of Travel.
Throughout the neighborhood, calm traffic and improve safety along key streets and at busy intersections. Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the neighborhood. Promote the idea among all residents that neighborhood streets are intended for all users, pedestrians and bicycles as well as cars.

1. **Require that in the future, any major roadwork in Bishop Creek be based on the concept of a complete street, i.e. a roadway that is designed to accommodate all users: pedestrians and bicycles as well as cars.**
2. **Work with the City of Norman and Norman Public Schools to ensure that sidewalks are installed along all major walking paths near and around Lincoln Elementary School.**
   - Along Ponca between Duffy and Ferrill
   - Duffy Street between Classen and Ponca
3. **Explore calming methods (other than speed tables) to reduce cut-through traffic on Morningside/Oklahoma and Mockingbird Lane.**
4. **Consider construction of a walkway through Eastwood Park along Bishop Creek.**
5. **Explore the possibility of replace the pedestrian bridge over Bishop Creek in Eastwood Park with an attractive bridge that is both a functional and an element of neighborhood placemaking.**
6. **Work with Public Works and the City Traffic Engineer to explore methods to provide a safer pathway for pedestrians and cyclists through the Oklahoma/Morningside Curve.**
7. **Explore the idea of creating a landscaped island in the wide area where Mockingbird Lane and Benson converge.**
8. **Explore a means to improve crosswalk visibility for northbound car traffic at Morningside and Alameda**

What is Traffic Calming?

Traffic calming… Definitions of traffic calming vary but the term refers to a variety of on-road devices that are intended to alter motorist behavior on a street or network of streets.

Traffic calming devices are used to control traffic volume or speed, with the inevitable result that altering one changes the other.

The primary goal behind traffic calming is to improve the safety of neighborhood streets and to enhance the quality of life for people who live, work, and play along the street and in that neighborhood.

Conclusions

Bishop Creek is one of Norman's great neighborhoods, just as it is.

Bishop Creek is one of Norman's great neighborhoods, just as it is. Given the neighborhood's age and good condition, there are few infrastructure deficiencies. The two issues that most concern the neighbors are related to traffic and changing demographics.

Throughout the United States, cities and neighborhoods are waking up to the importance of neighborhoods that work for everyone. Planners and residents alike are learning how to modify 1950s-60s physical development patterns that privileged cars at the expense of people. Unfortunately the "fixes" for these organic deficiencies are neither simple nor inexpensive. The Bishop Creek Neighborhood Plan makes several recommendations that should be explored, particularly for the S-curve of Morningside/Oklahoma where many children cross the street walking to and from Lincoln School. In addition, the plan emphasizes a neighborhood paradigm shift towards an understanding that Bishop Creek streets are intended for all users, pedestrians and bicycles as well as cars.

Managing a shift in neighborhood demographics and expectations can only be tackled by building social capital and among neighbors which can only be built by neighbors themselves. This plan puts a great deal of emphasis on neighborhood organizing as the only effective remedy for a perception of declining neighborhood standards, fears about increased rental occupancy, and a sense of diminished personal investment in the neighborhood.

Twentieth-Century neighborhoods that fare well in the 21st Century will have several common characteristics: walkability and a central location, a strong sense of place, and most importantly the clear and present evidence of residents who are actively working to build and maintain connections between neighbors. Bishop Creek has all the building blocks it needs to continue to thrive and prosper for the next sixty years. Aside from a few technical problems to address, the simple thought not easy answer is a return to good old- fashioned neighborliness.

Planning to Stay

By William R. Morish and Catherine R. Brown © 1994

…….***On Neighborhoods***

"A neighborhood is a complex system....It's tempting to start planning with a clean sheet of paper and its logical extension, the empty block.

But in reality, each neighbor- hood is a messy amalgem of the natural and the built, the moving and the fixed, the evolving and the permanent. Moreover, the intricate layers and shifting networks are the foundation for a vital, interesting community…."

Short-Term Implementation Plan

A Short-Term Implementation Plan for the Bishop Creek Neighborhood will be included in the last section of the plan document Listed below are a number of important projects that the neighborhood should strive to accomplish over the next five years in order to sustain and improve neighborhood quality of life. Cost estimates and potential funding sources for these projects will be included in the full Implementation Plan.

1. Develop an active neighborhood association that allows neighbors to get acquainted, build trust, and plan activities. Appoint neighborhood officers and organize projects that will benefit the entire neighborhood. Benefits would include
   - Regular Police reports
   - Connection with City Council representative
   - Enhanced communication through email database
   - Newsletters
   - Formation of outreach committee for new neighbors (owners and renters) to welcome and help establish and enforce neighborhood expectations for property maintenance and neighbor conduct.
   - Ability to organize regular social events such as cookouts, ice cream socials, dessert gatherings, etc.
2. Neighborhood association should meet regularly to stay informed about neighborhood conditions, the anticipated sale of property, and to touch base regularly with neighborhood policing officers.
3. Develop various methods of communication for the neighborhood (email, Facebook page, etc) and establish neighborhood email database to keep neighbors in the loop.
4. Work with the City of Norman to help enforce the existing City ordinance allowing no more than three unrelated people to occupy a single-family house.
5. A neighborhood association should interface with owners of Alameda Square Shopping Center (12th and Alameda) to ensure that loading dock areas and the rear side of the center are kept clean and buffer fences remain in good repair.
6. Closely monitor proposed zoning changes that could affect the neighborhood and keep neighbors informed about these proposals.
7. Communicate with City Parks and Recreation about conditions and needs in neighborhood parks. Plan activities that take advantage of park resources to build community.