



SNI Impact Report 2012-2022

City of Oklahoma City
Planning Department
May 15, 2025



stabilization



placemaking



commitment



collaboration

For more information, program applications, and progress reports, please visit:

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Introduction to the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative

In 2010, City of Oklahoma City leaders recognized the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to neighborhood revitalization. At the direction of the City Council, the Planning Department developed a new program framework, called the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI). SNI seeks to improve neighborhoods and public investments in a more holistic, concentrated approach versus scattered throughout the city. This is accomplished by using data-driven analysis to select neighborhoods then engaging with residents and stakeholders to develop strategies, programs, and partnerships to address needs such as housing, infrastructure, and placemaking, as well as be a catalyst to attract new residents, services, and businesses.

The first phase of SNI began in 2012 and the following three neighborhoods were selected: Classen's North Highland Parked, Classen Ten Penn, and Culbertson's East Highland. The next phase of SNI included Capitol View and Capitol Hill in 2018, and Metro Park in 2020. The SNI is considered a five-year commitment; however, Classen's North Highland Parked completed the SNI program in four years. If there are justifiable reasons to continue work beyond five years, there is also the option to extend SNI's commitment, typically for two (2) years.

To date, the City has invested more than \$16.7 million of Federal funds in the SNI neighborhoods and there has been more than \$51.2 million of private investment. The sources of Federal funds are Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Why a 10 Year Analysis of SNI?

The SNI programs and investments are evaluated annually and the accomplishments are published in the SNI Annual Report and posted at www.okc.gov/sni. Neighborhood revitalization impacts can be difficult to quantify, as some impacts take many years to truly be understood. In addition, it took many years for the neighborhoods to decline to their current condition. Thankfully, the program was built using measures and data that can be tracked over several years, which enables us to measure impacts immediately and for many years to come.

SNI has been operating for over a decade and there is a 10-year track record of outcomes from activities in the original SNI neighborhoods selected in 2012, Classen Ten Penn, Classen's North Highland Parked, and Culbertson's East Highland. This document was created with the following questions in mind: **Have our SNI initial investments been a catalyst for private economic investments? Have we created those special "Places" in neighborhoods? Are homeowners finally able to realize real equity in their homes and build wealth? Is the concentrated approach to investing in neighborhoods more effective than a scattered approach?**

First, let's learn about SNI's holistic approach, how neighborhoods are selected, the implementation process, and what investments were made in each neighborhood. Later we will examine investment impacts and share some suggestions for Phases 2 and 3.

SNI's "Holistic" Approach in Action

Social, Physical, and Economic Investments

New **street trees**
lower utility bills,
enhanced **walkability**
& beauty

Arborist sharing the
benefits of trees,
proper tree care, and
planting techniques

Local partners and
adult neighbors
mentoring the youth
volunteers



New, **affordable**,
accessible, and
energy-efficient **home**
for wheelchair-bound
homeowner

Former **vacant lot**
now occupied and
contributing more
property tax

New **sidewalks**
increase mobility and
access to schools,
jobs, and **parks**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PRIDE

SNI's Neighborhood Selection Process



The SNI selection process starts with several months of data collection, mapping, and visiting neighborhoods to evaluate existing conditions. As the SNI program is principally funded with federal grant funds, neighborhoods must be located within the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA), as approved by HUD. Data is analyzed on the following tiers:

- Tier 1: In this phase planning staff identifies all neighborhoods within the NRSA boundary and analyzes the following factors to determine basic eligibility for the program; household incomes, housing values, owner-occupancy rates, number of children in the neighborhood, and incidents of crime.
- Tier 2: This phase of analysis identifies assets, proximity, and investments, such as existing neighborhood associations, schools, parks, employment centers, commercial areas, and recent and planned public and private investments.
- Tier 3: This analysis identifies conditions and opportunities, such as residential units, building permits, public housing units, and undeveloped parcels.

Based on all three tiers of data, several neighborhoods are identified as good candidates for the SNI Program. Those neighborhoods are invited to attend a workshop to learn more about the program and the application process. The SNI Selection Committee, made up of about 20 members, with the purpose to advise on the methodology for identifying eligible neighborhoods. The committee reviews applications, scores neighborhoods in the interview process, and ultimately makes a recommendation to City Council on which neighborhoods should receive SNI program assistance.

SNI's Implementation Process

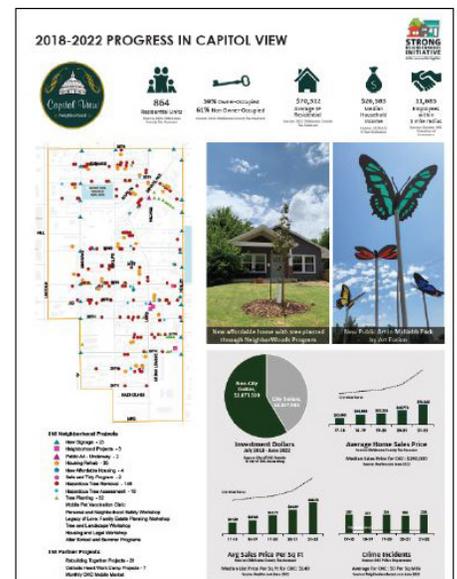


Within a month of the City Council's selection, Planning staff hosts a kick-off meeting with the new SNI neighborhood to get acquainted, discuss program expectations, and discuss needs and priorities to include in their SNI Revitalization Strategy. These meetings are filled with excitement and well-attended. Staff leads conversations about needs and ideas regarding housing, infrastructure, human services, and business and economic development. Through this, a list of highest to lowest priorities is established and thus the outline of the strategy begins to take shape.

Next, staff conducts on-site evaluations, windshield surveys, interviews with stakeholders, and discussions with current and potential partners that could help with the strategy's implementation. Once the strategy is prepared by City staff and approved by the neighborhood, project lists are incorporated into the HUD Annual Action Plan, and when funding is approved, implementation begins. At the neighborhood level, SNI program applications are shared by neighbors face-to-face, mail, electronically, and through social media.

Partners such as Neighborhood Alliance of Central Oklahoma (NACOK) begin providing technical assistance to the neighborhood organization. At the SNI staff level, visible projects selected by the neighborhood are being planned, designed, and contracted. Visible projects are key, as they build trust and support for the initial efforts.

At the end of each fiscal year, all of the projects, expenditures, and accomplishments are mapped and included in the SNI Progress Report which is shared with the neighborhood and public. Measures are shown graphically to determine progress in four areas: incidents of crime, sales price per square foot, average sales price, and public versus private investments. These four measures are important to ensure transparency and effectiveness of our public investment.



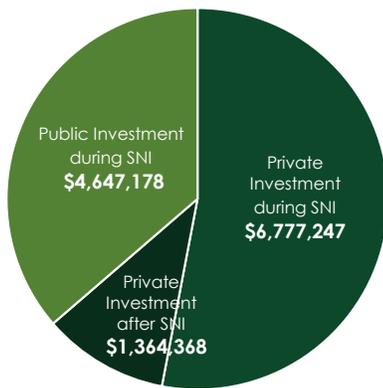
SNI Impact Analysis

The remainder of this document is intended to share the efforts made towards the implementation of the Phase 1 SNI Revitalization Strategies and evaluate the outcomes for the time period between 2012-2022. Undoubtedly, there are many factors that impact urban neighborhoods. The success of other larger investments in close proximity to SNI areas certainly impact the desire and demand for living, working, and owning a business nearby. The global COVID 19 pandemic impacted every facet of our lives and our community. The following indicators are just a portion of the data tracked annually: Investments by Neighborhood, Investments by Program Type, Crime, Housing, and Market Values.

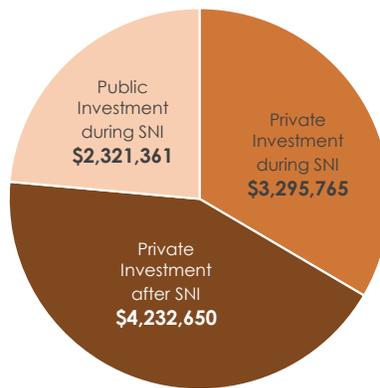
Public investments are expenditures administered and/or overseen by the SNI. **Private investments** are building permits issued to a private or non-profit entity for new construction, remodel, or demolition of both residential and commercial projects.

Investments by Neighborhood

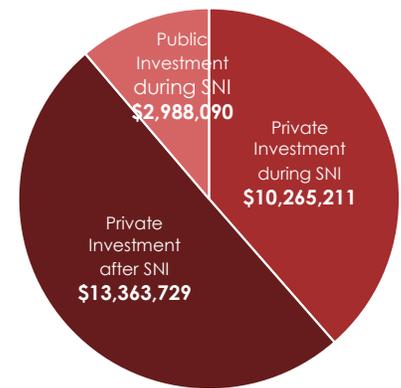
As mentioned previously, the intention is for SNI's public investments to be a catalyst for private investments, it is not intended to be the only or largest investment in the neighborhoods. The goal is a 3:1 ratio of private dollars versus public dollars. Below are graphs showing public investment during SNI and private investment during and after SNI. As you can see, Culbertson's East Highland, which was part of the SNI program for 7 years, had the largest public investment of \$4.6M and while there has been \$8.1M private investments, its ratio is closer to 2:1. Classen's North Highland Parked and Classen Ten Penn have seen private investment increase since SNI, respectively about 3:1 and 7:1, between 2012-2022. Most notable, Classen Tenn Penn has seen \$23.6M in building permits since 2013.



Culbertson's East Highland



Classen's North Highland Parked

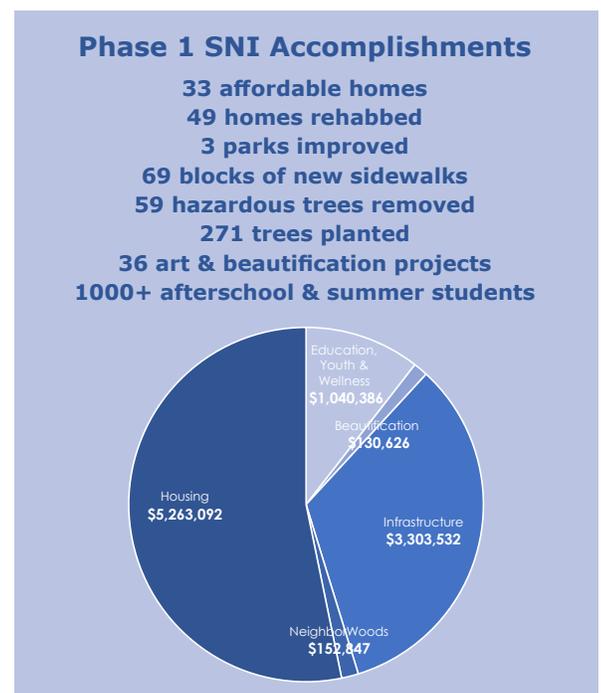


Classen Ten Penn

Investments by Program Type

While housing and infrastructure are a significant portion of SNI's annual investment, several additional programs contribute to the holistic approach to revitalization. SNI afterschool and summer programs, for example, provide safety, education, and enrichment. The Oklahoma Afterschool Network's STEAM program served more than 1,000 students in underserved neighborhood schools. The SNI NeighborWoods Program removed 59 hazardous trees and planted 271 new street trees, providing shade and traffic calming along residential streets.

Public art and landscape projects contribute to revitalization by providing beautification and spaces unique to the neighborhood. Through the SNI Neighborhood Grant Program, 36 placemaking and beautification projects were completed, including neighborhood signs with neighborhood logos, and several pieces of public art, such as murals and sculptures. Classen Ten Penn and Culbertson's E Highland received significant park renovations to McKinley Park and John F Kennedy Park, while Classen's N Highland Parked received a brand new pocket park, Fremont Harn Gardens. These special places were designed and created thanks to engagement and participation from neighbors, as well as support from the OKC Parks Department. The neighborhood associations continue to use them for special celebrations, workshops, and annual events such as Neighbors Night Out.



Crime

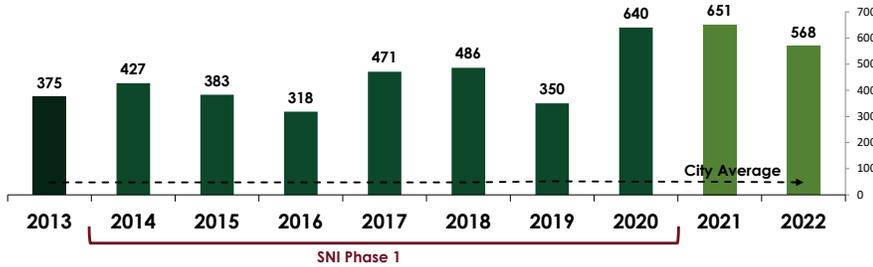
Crime and the perception of crime are harmful to neighborhoods, personally, physically, and economically. To reduce these impacts, the SNI partners with the Oklahoma City Police Department (OCPD) and NACOK to educate and empower residents. OCPD and NACOK offered crime prevention and reporting workshops for neighborhoods as well as trainings on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). The more people that are out walking with eyes on the street, the safer the area becomes. This has definitely been the case in SNI neighborhoods that host events and activities in public spaces such as parks, share information door-to-door, and just generally encourage people to be outdoors and visible. During phase 1, SNI spent \$3.3M on infrastructure such as sidewalks and parks. Sidewalks and ramps contribute to safety by providing access for all to parks, schools, jobs, and transit.

Crime in Classen Ten Penn has reduced 290% since 2013 which is a reflection of their neighborhood association's intentionality and commitment, which continues today. Classen's North Highland Parked has proudly maintained a crime rate well below the city average. All three have seen similar SNI investments; however, Culbertson's East Highland continues to struggle with crime and it is important to point out two key issues: 1) there are more than 190 vacant lots, homes, and commercial properties, and 2) most of the renter-occupied homes are reportedly in poor condition according to the US Census. These issues are harmful to residents, community pride, property values, and they increase opportunities for crime. According to the 2021 Housing Affordability Study, there is strong support for the City to be involved in addressing housing quality, supply, and safety for everyone. However, there are currently no public resources being used to inspect or rehabilitate privately-owned rental properties or commercial buildings.

Thankfully, affordable housing partners such as Progress OKC, Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Housing Services, and the OKC Urban Renewal Authority continue to build homes in Culbertson's East Highland and the neighborhood association has recently reorganized and stepped up advocacy and collaboration efforts.

Number of Crime Incidents in Culbertson's E Highland

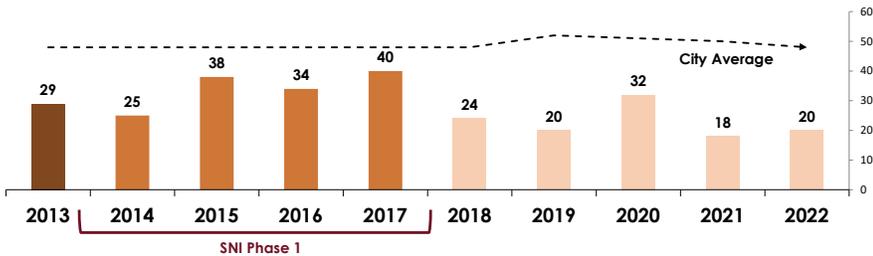
Source: OCPD



Walkability study with students from FD Moon

Number of Crime Incidents in Classen's N Highland Parked

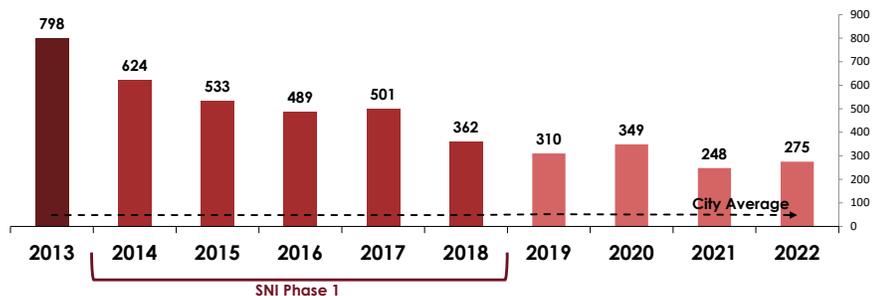
Source: OCPD



Planning meeting for new Freemont Harn Gardens

Number of Crime Incidents in Classen Ten Penn

Source: OCPD



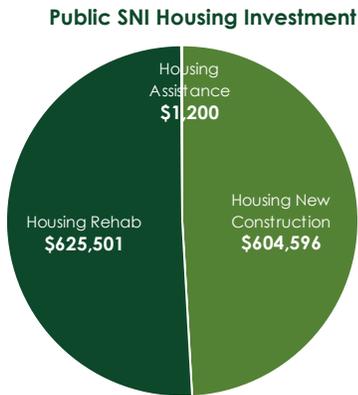
Tree planting event with Energy FC support

Housing

Housing is the top priority for each SNI neighborhood and the most critical public investment. Whether it is housing rehabilitation which can provide repairs that enable homeowners to age-in-place, new construction of affordable or market-rate homes, or down-payment assistance, all contribute greatly to the safety and livability of the neighborhoods, housing values, and personal wealth.

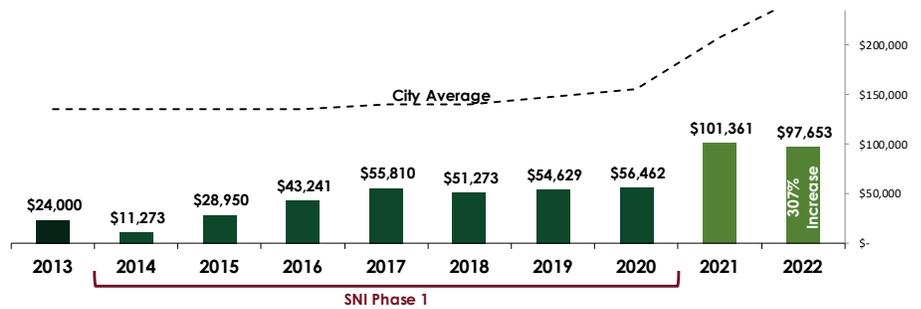
Imagine owning a home for several years and you need to sell it, but the homes comparable to yours are selling for \$11,273. This was the reality for homeowners in Culbertson's E Highland in 2014. The prices in the other two SNI neighborhoods were not much better. The average sales price in OKC was around \$130,000. This disparity in values made private and non-profit builders think twice about investing and building new homes there. At that time, the cost to build a new home was \$85/sq ft, so a 1,000 square foot home cost \$85,000 to build, not including land.

Culbertson's East Highland

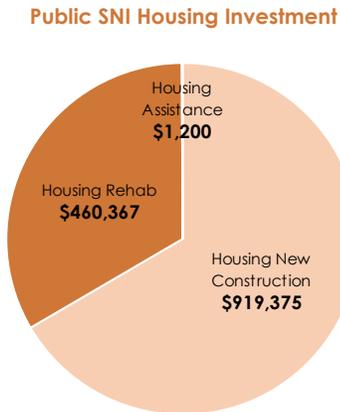


Average Home Sales Price

Source: OK County Assessor

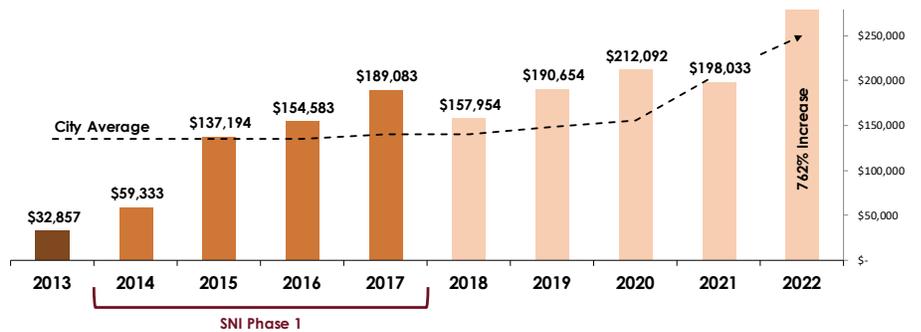


Classen's North Highland Parked

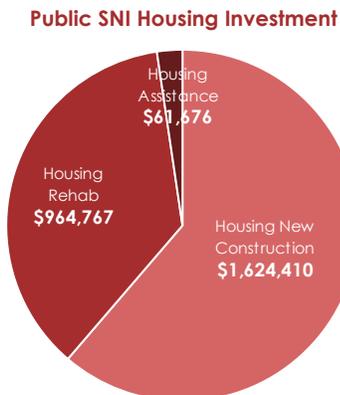


Average Home Sales Price

Source: OK County Assessor

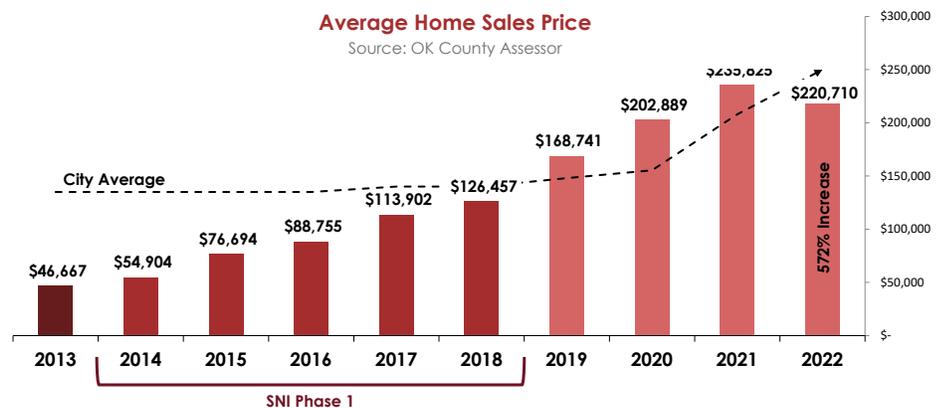


Classen Ten Penn



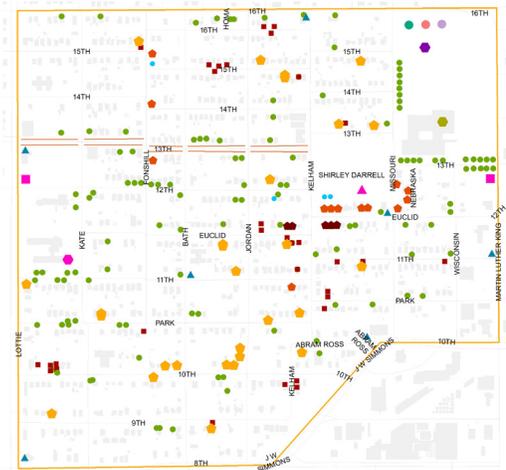
Average Home Sales Price

Source: OK County Assessor



Thankfully, the City was able to use HOME funds from US HUD to work with affordable housing partners and Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to build affordable homes and gradually increase the sales prices and comparables to a level that lessened the risk, thus enabling new construction, private remodels, and additions.

Between 2014 and 2017, the sales prices in Classen's N Highland Parked increased from \$59,333 to \$189,083, outpacing the citywide average. As it is a very small neighborhood of only 150 residences, the addition of 7 new homes caused a dramatic increase in the averages. This and the addition of homeowners with higher incomes precipitated the decision to stop the public investment and 2017 was the SNI's final year in the neighborhood. Its location and the fact that it is within the boundaries of a highly-regarded public elementary school, contributed to its quicker than expected revitalization.

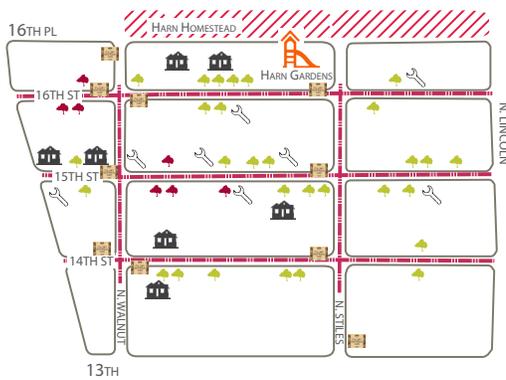


Accomplishments	Number
Block of New Sidewalks	10
Housing Rehabs	31
New Affordable Homes	18
Mobile Pet Clinics	2
Monthly Mobile Markets	18
Park Improvements	1
Euclid Alley Construction	1
Marcus Muse Mural	1
New Bus Shelters	2
Neighborhood Signs	7
Down-payment Assistance	6
New Trees Planted	127
Hazardous Trees Removed	35
Afterschool Students	600+



Home built by Progress OKC

Culbertson's East Highland

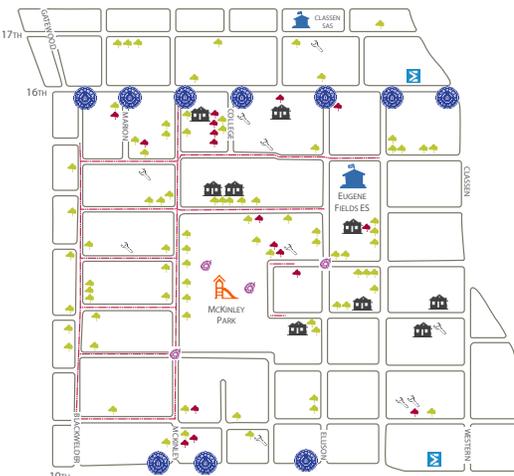


Accomplishments	Number
Neighborhood Signs	10
Block of New Sidewalks	15
New Trees Planted	29
Hazardous Trees Removed	7
Housing Rehabs	8
New Affordable Homes	7
Park Improvements	1



Home built by Positively Paseo

Classen's North Highland Parked



Accomplishments	Number
Neighborhood Signs	10
Afterschool Students	400+
Block of New Sidewalks	44
New Trees Planted	115
Hazardous Trees Removed	17
Housing Rehabs	10
New Affordable Homes	8
New Bus Shelters	2
Public Art Projects	4
Park Improvements	1



Home built by Positively Paseo

Classen Ten Penn

During Phase 1 of the SNI, the City and its housing partners built 33 homes and rehabbed 49 homes for low-to moderate income homeowners. Housing rehabilitation programs not only make homes safer, accessible and/or energy efficient, they are essential to keeping existing homeowners in their homes and their neighborhoods. **The overall goal for SNI is to enhance and improve the neighborhood for the people who are there, not redevelop, displace, or replace existing residents.** That is why their input and participation is so important and valued in the strategy development and implementation of SNI.

Property Market Values

As mentioned previously, SNI investments are intended to improve quality of life and increase values and equity so that property owners can build wealth. We use property market values, both commercial and residential, to measure this outcome. As shown in the map below, the average property market values of all three Phase 1 SNI neighborhoods increased more than 200%. The average property market value in Culbertson's E Highland was \$18,213 in 2012 and \$56,594 in 2022, an increase of 210.73%. It outpaced popular neighborhoods such as Gatewood at 168.5% and Lincoln Terrace at 129%, where there are fewer vacant lots and new construction. The sales prices in SNI areas were used as comparables in nearby neighborhoods as well.

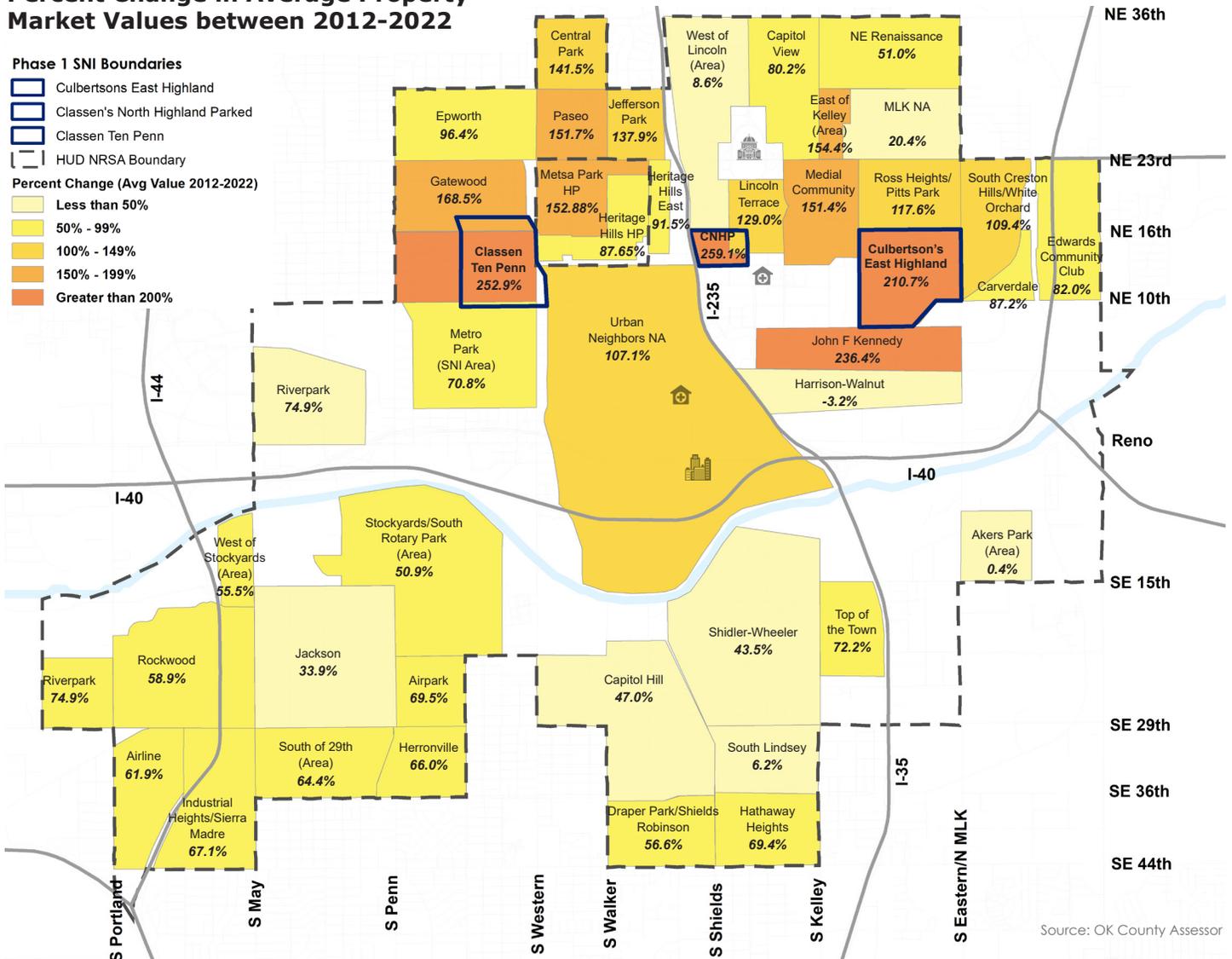
There is no doubt that the SNI's concentration of housing investments, and the significant private investment that followed, positively impacted market values and built equity for property owners. Notable is the fact that Phase 2 areas have seen minimal new home construction to date, which is reflected in their modest increases: 47% in Capitol Hill, Metro Park 70.8%, and 80.2% in Capitol View. All nine of the new homes constructed are in Capitol View and built by CHDO Positively Paseo. Next, let's see how these changing market values impact property taxes.

Average Property Market Values by Area

Neighborhood	Avg Market Value 2012	Avg Market Value 2022	% Change 2012-2022
CTP	\$ 52,857.76	\$ 186,518.52	252.87%
CNHP	\$ 75,627.85	\$ 271,603.29	259.13%
CEH	\$ 18,213.41	\$ 56,594.26	210.73%
NRSA	\$ 106,226.72	\$ 198,173.59	86.56%
City-Wide	\$ 184,980.13	\$ 287,330.21	55.33%

Source: OK County Assessor

Percent Change in Average Property Market Values between 2012-2022

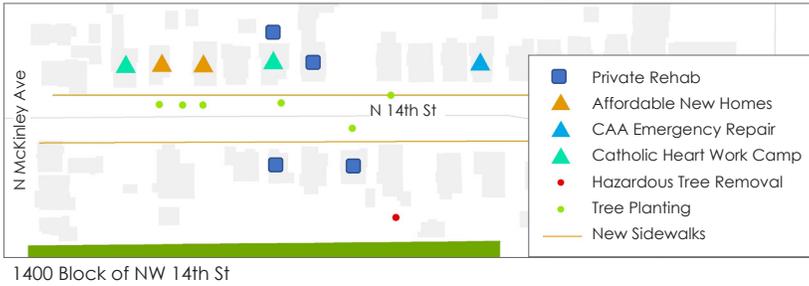


Source: OK County Assessor

Property Values and Taxes: A Case Study in Classen Ten Penn

In 2012, the 1400 to 1500 block of NW 14th Street in Classen Ten Penn had a variety of challenges. Crumbling sidewalks, furniture on the curbs, stray animals, boarded up homes, vacant lots, and yet it also had great assets nearby such as Eugene Field Elementary School, McKinley Park, the Plaza District, and most importantly, a few long-term homeowners committed to making it better.

23 Homes Studied (change from '12-'22)



2014: 1400 Block of NW 14th St



2024: 1400 Block of NW 14th St

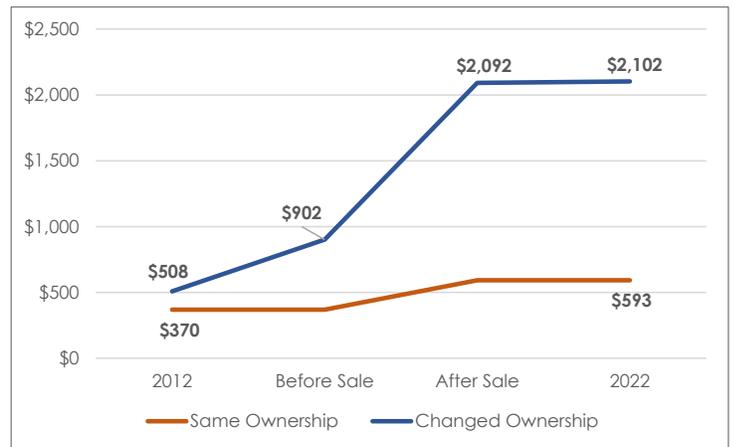
Right away, these leaders began to apply for SNI programs and meet with our partner agencies. They talked to Rebuilding Together, who brought nearly 2,000 volunteers in to repair homes and install wheelchair ramps. Community Action provided emergency repairs and Catholic Heart Work Camp youth volunteers painted two home exteriors. They also requested sidewalks and new trees, which SNI was happy to provide. Positively Paseo built two new homes which are still owned by the same buyers today.

SNI studied this block between 2012 and 2022. Of the 23 homes studied, 13 had not changed ownership and the other 10 have new homeowners. One affordable home was built on a vacant lot, 2 boarded homes were remodeled (one was resold to an income-qualifying buyer), and five homes were rehabbed privately.

We wanted to know how this amount of change on one block impacted property taxes. In Oklahoma, annual property tax increases are capped at 3% with Homestead Exemption and 5% without. Property taxes can be frozen for low-income senior citizens. However, the caps are lifted to reflect the taxable market value when the property changes ownership.

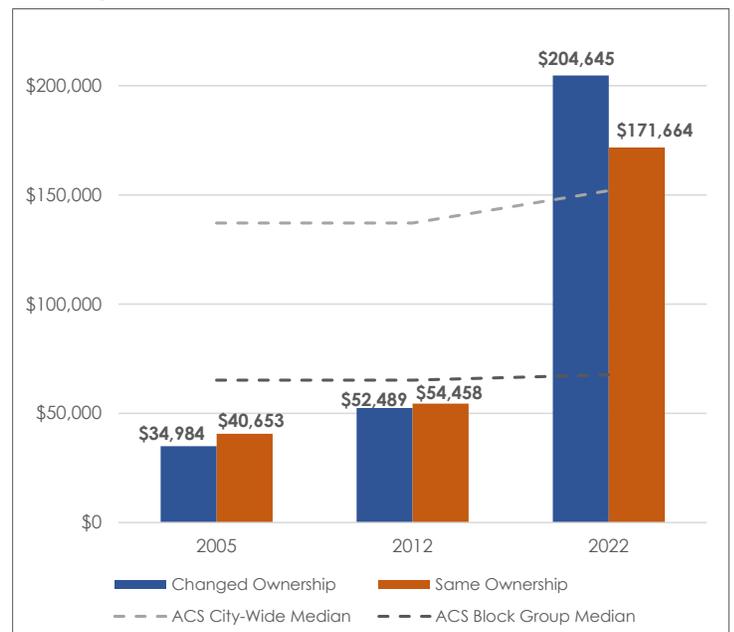
As seen to the right, the 2012 average annual property taxes ranged from \$370 to \$508. **The homes that did not change ownership saw only an average increase of \$223 over the 10-year period, while their property values increased from \$54,458 to \$171,664.** The property taxes for those who purchase homes, pay the current taxable market value. For example, a new home built on a vacant lot that was only collecting \$508 in property tax revenue, could now be contributing \$2,102 towards schools, public safety and other County services. Not to mention the people that live in those homes are now contributing to the workforce, sales tax revenue, and to this neighborhood.

Average Annual Tax Bill



Source: OK County Assessor

Average Taxable Market Value



Source: OK County Assessor

Summary

This document was created with the following questions in mind: **Have our SNI initial investments been a catalyst for private economic investments? Have we created those special “Places” in neighborhoods? Are homeowners finally able to realize real equity in their homes and build wealth? Is the concentrated approach to investing in neighborhoods more effective than a scattered approach?**

The total public investment in SNI neighborhoods was \$9.9M in Phase 1. More than half, \$5.3M of that was in housing. Private investments totaled more than \$39M. The strategic use and targeting of public funds have proven to be a catalyst and leverage for the infusion of private capital. The more than 200% increase in single-family market values and the fact that the market values in SNI areas significantly outpaced the non-SNI areas over the 10-year period, are clear evidence that SNI's holistic, incremental, and concentrated approach to neighborhood revitalization is indeed effective in SNI neighborhoods.

While there is reason to celebrate successful revitalization efforts, there are glaring needs that remain. For example, there is a blighted property or boarded home on nearly every street in previous and current SNI neighborhoods. As long as these exist, it will continue to be difficult for owners, renters, and potential buyers to feel safe and for properties to reach their full market potential. The same is true for commercial corridors. Today, more than 20% of the 237 buildings along commercial corridors in the current SNI areas are vacant or boarded. Thankfully, more than 35 business owners have applied for the SNI Storefront Program for assistance with signs and facade improvements, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), administered by the Alliance for Economic Development. There is not assistance, however, available to improve the conditions or safety of the actual structures behind the facades.

More important than any structure, relationships and trust between residents and their city government and leaders need strengthening and mending. This can be accomplished through meaningful conversations and thoughtful actions that improve the day-to-day lives of our residents and business owners.

As the SNI program continues its work in current and future SNI areas, staff recognizes opportunities to enhance what is working and propose new initiatives for revitalization. Several key observations have emerged since working with the initial neighborhoods in 2012:

- 1. Filling vacant lots with new homes is transformational for the appearance and prosperity of a neighborhood.** For SNI neighborhoods to thrive once again, people with mixed incomes and homes of all sizes need to return. Additional housing partners, resources, and actions identified in the Housing Affordability Implementation Plan should be incorporated into future revitalization strategies, where possible.
- 2. Neighborhoods with residents willing to take on and stay in leadership roles will have better success in setting and accomplishing goals and resolving conflicts along the way.** Continuing the City's relationship with Neighborhood Alliance, to teach the fundamentals of neighborhood organizing, will help the residents learn the tools necessary for civic engagement and successfully advocate for themselves.
- 3. Proactive and thoughtful efforts between SNI staff, residents, and City Code Enforcement are more likely to educate and engage the residents to work willingly on the maintenance and safety issues in their neighborhoods, including blighted and/or vacant residential and commercial structures.** A flexible, well-managed source of funds available to residents for compliance repairs would be popular. Examples of existing programs are the Hazardous Tree Removal, the Safe and Tidy program, and the Alliance's Storefront program.
- 4. Intentional engagement with local philanthropic and non-profit organizations has been tremendously beneficial, as it results in greater collaboration, community ownership, and help the City funds go farther.**

SNI investments have made significant positive impacts on the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods. However, there is still work to be done and with continued support, SNI staff is committed to ensuring residents have a voice, a greater quality of life, and can realize the economic and quality-of-life benefits of their personal investments in their homes, businesses, and community.

The key to the success of all revitalization efforts in Oklahoma City are the residents and the partners that step-up to volunteer and contribute. The SNI team celebrates these individuals and organizations. THANK YOU!

Neighborhood Streetscapes: Before & After



Looking East : from corner of N Kelham and N Euclid 2014



2024

Culbertson's East Highland



Looking North: from corner of NE 13th and N Walnut 2014



2024

Classen's North Highland Parked



Looking North: from corner of NE 12th and N Blackwelder 2014



2024

Classen Ten Penn

A note from SNI Neighborhood Leaders



"SNI helped build up my neighborhood in ways that I didn't think was fathomable 14 years ago. To see a government entity invest infrastructure into our community, help pull together buy-in from surrounding neighbors and community partners is unheard of. It took motivated neighbors to work together for change and a city that let the neighbors figure out what their community needed, instead of the other way around. The best part of SNI has been the reduction in vacant and empty lots in the neighborhood contributing to more people being housed and a better sense of community."
 - Jessica Thompson, Classen Ten Penn



“Classen’s North Highland Parked (CNHP) neighborhood continues to thrive after the successful SNI! Developers continue to build new homes and remodel existing old homes within. Our community is filled with both families and singles who enjoy daily walks with their pets and children. We even have a family who produced quads and along with their older son became a family of 7. Neighbors continue to enjoy Harn Park, also a result of the community participation in the SNI program. CNHP will be forever grateful to SNI for helping us move forward in such a spectacular way.”
 - Shirley Denson, Classen’s N Highland Parked

“After living in the Edmond area, I was led to build my home and moved in the Culbertson East Highland neighborhood in December, 2020. While grateful for SNI’s work, I am also disappointed by the neglect and disparities that still exist, as they should be unacceptable for a community that is surrounded by a medical facility, thriving downtown and State Capitol. The property owners of unkept vacant lots, slum landlords, government housing is a large percentage of the problems. This neighborhood should be a thriving, healthy community with opportunities for our youth and others.”
 - Valerie McMurry, Culbertson’s E Highland

SNI Partners



Current SNI Neighborhoods

Capitol Hill

Martin Luther King

Metro Park

