

CERI PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITE APPLICATION FORM

COMMUNITY CATEGORY (PLEASE CHECK ONE)

☐

Small Town:
Population less than 5,000

☒

Mid-Size City:
Population 5,000 - 50,000

☐

Large City/Urban:
Population over 50,000

Guthrie

City/Town

3/11/2021

Date

Leroy Alsup

City Mgr./Adm.

405-282-0496

Phone

Justin Fortney

Contact Person

405-820-5686

Phone

Tourism and Community Development Director

Title

101 N. 2nd Street

Address

jfortney@cityofguthrie.com

Email

NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPOSED PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITE

The Noble Park Cultural and Recreational Area will be located in the area commonly known as "Noble Park,"

which has historical and cultural importance within the African American community of the City of Guthrie and

State of OK. Located in the heart of Guthrie, this neighborhood was abandoned after a century of flooding. This

project would aggregate various plans that have been brought forward over the years for educational and

recreational opportunities for the location, in addition to creating a connective hub for pedestrians and bicycle

users from the west side, east side, and downtown of Guthrie.

Googlemap coordinates: 35.87568891996184, -97.43758441136937

Please read the Call for Applications Preamble and follow the instructions on the attached Application Checklist in order to submit a complete CERI Planning Demonstration Site Application.

LOCAL ASSURANCE AND AUTHORIZATION

As the representative of the city/town of _____, I hereby certify that the information in this Application is accurate. I also authorize this application to be submitted to the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), in consideration for ACOG's collaborative Community Economic Resiliency Initiative (CERI) with the Oklahoma Main Street Center (Oklahoma Department of Commerce) and the University of Oklahoma's Institute for Quality Communities (IQC).

Leroy Alsup

Name of Authorizing Official

City Manager

Title

Leroy D. Alsup

Signature

3/11/2021

Date

Subscribed and Affirmed before me this 12 of March, 2021.

(Day)

(Month)

Annette Lebrande

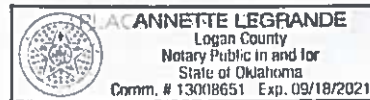
Notary Public

09/18/2021

My Commission expires

13008651

Commission No.



Note: The official applicant to this initiative is limited to city government. However, if the city is applying for a Main Street Program, the city applicant must indicate a commitment to having a 501(c)(3) private, nonprofit partner to develop policy and implement the program.

501(c)(3) PRIVATE, NONPROFIT PARTNER (PROPOSED OR EXISTING ORGANIZATION)

N/A

Contact Person

Occupation

Address

Phone

Email Address

CERI Planning Demonstration Site Application

Noble Park Cultural And Recreational Area

Guthrie, Oklahoma

Planning Demonstration Site Area (Narrative)

The Noble Park Cultural And Recreational Area, commonly known as “Noble Park,” has historical and cultural importance within the African American community of the City of Guthrie and the State of Oklahoma. Located in the heart of Guthrie, this neighborhood was abandoned after a century of Cottonwood Creek flooding. This project would aggregate various plans that have been brought forward over the years for educational and recreational opportunities for the land, in addition to creating a connective hub for pedestrians and bicycle users from the west side, east side, and downtown of the City. Not only does this project have the potential to honor the history of “Noble Park,” but it can serve as a uniting infrastructure project for our entire community, both literally and figuratively.

Shortly after the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889, the Noble Park neighborhood was established by African-American settlers in the bottomland formed by a split in the main course of Cottonwood Creek, a tributary of the Cimarron River running along the western edge of the newly formed city of Guthrie. For the better part of a century, Noble Park consisted of a residential neighborhood, a church, and a City of Guthrie park (pavilion, restrooms, & ballfields). Today all that is left is the ruins of a few homes, the burned out shell of the church, and the park pavilion.

Aerial video of Noble Park: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=820878224673831>

On the following page you’ll see a map of a proposed trail plan for the area in question. This plan was developed after meeting with local stakeholders of the Guthrie Collaborative coalition who have been interested in a Noble Park project for quite some time. Our desire is for this CERI program to aid City and local stakeholders in expanding and refining plans for this area to truly be a game-changing resource for cultural tourism/education, recreation, and transportation.

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Issue Statement

- *Why should your Activity Center be selected as a planning demonstration (demo) site?*

This particular project has the potential to impact an incredible amount of stakeholders and community sectors. From a cultural perspective, it's a way to celebrate the African-American history and community of Guthrie and the State of Oklahoma. Shortly after the Territory opened, Noble Park became a hub of African-American culture. Being able to share that story with future generations is vital to Guthrie's history and future. Doing so within the scope of recreational and bike/ped connectivity will allow for residents and tourists to immerse themselves in that story in a truly unique experience. By developing the Noble Park Cultural And Recreational Area, a metaphorical connecting hub becomes a tangible project that literally connects Guthrie together via bike/ped trails and educational opportunities that makes this project something unique not only for Guthrie, but the entire state.

- *Is your proposed project a game-changer for your community? If so, please explain how the implementation of this initiative will transform the economic prosperity and quality life for your citizens.*

This project would provide central connectivity between the east and west side of Guthrie, allowing residents to access the Central Business District as pedestrians and bicycle users. Being able to more conveniently and safely access retail and essential services without the necessity of a motor vehicle would significantly add to the quality of life for residents of the entire community. Being able to do so while focusing and celebrating the African-American community of our City and State truly makes this a game-changing project for the diversity and economic resiliency of our City. On top of that, the economic benefit of adding a recreational area infused with cultural importance immediately adjacent to our historic Central Business District has the potential to greatly impact tourism revenue. There is currently renewed momentum for Amtrak expansion from Oklahoma City to Newton, Kansas, and the historic train depot stop in Guthrie would be within easy walking distance of the project, adding to the significance of what this project could mean to both Guthrie and every stop along the expanded Amtrak Heartland Flyer route.

- *Does your proposal, if fully implemented, have any regional significance?*

The regional significance of this project would be two-fold: the bike/ped trail connectivity adds to the ability for residents and tourists to experience Guthrie without the necessity of a motor vehicle, which adds to the economic resilience, public health, air quality, and quality of life for the entire region. It also adds a destination experience for cultural tourists who want to know more about the history of the African-American experience in Oklahoma.

• *If your Activity Center is an historic (50% of building inventory is 50 years or older) commercial business district (CBD) or town center, please address the following:*

- Explanation of major assets and problems.

Guthrie's central business district is one of the largest contiguous collections of buildings listed on the National Historic Registry. The volume of historic structures, the density of downtown businesses, and the walkability of our historic downtown combine for a vibrant, walkable core to our City. The extensive number of historic structures also presents challenges as the cost of maintaining and restoring so many one-of-a-kind buildings can be a struggle for a town our size. While our downtown is walkable, the layout of the surrounding neighborhoods presents some connectivity challenges. State highways bisect our community both north/south and east/west, and the traffic count on both of those roads can make bike/ped accessibility to our historic downtown, and the connectivity between west-side and east-side neighborhoods, a challenge. The division of our city by the Cottonwood Creek is also a bike-ped connectivity problem, as water crossings are limited.

- Describe past or present efforts by the public and private sector aimed at revitalizing the historic CBD

In the early 80s, a public/private partnership of City staff and residents did an extraordinary amount of work restoring downtown buildings into one of the flagship historic revitalization projects in the United States. The efforts of historic preservation continue today with investment and construction throughout our downtown, guided by the oversight of the Guthrie Historic Preservation Commission.

- What aspects of ACOG's Updated CEDS Goals (Refer to Call for Applications Preamble) are not being considered in your community's planning efforts and why?

There are currently no mechanisms in place (or planned) to incentivize current or future walking/biking and public transportation infrastructure. This is mainly a product of a modest small town budget.

While we have an on-demand public transportation entity (First Capital Trolley), we currently lack a transit system with regular, comprehensive routes.

- Does your community have any planning efforts or projects that incorporate aspects of the Updated CEDS Goals?

We consistently look to partner with private entities to add to the multi-modal transportation options within our community. Most recently we were able to install bicycle repair stations at both the Guthrie Public Library and the Guthrie Tourism Office with the help of private sponsorships.

Recently the City of Guthrie partnered with the Guthrie Chamber of Commerce and Meridian Technology Center to secure funding and develop a coalition to assist Meridian with establishing a workforce training program for film/TV crews at Meridian's new Guthrie campus.

Detailed explanation of Local Resources dedicated to the process (1 page maximum). Including identification of the primary point of contact and support staff dedicated to a potential 12-month process.

The City of Guthrie commits to providing the staff time necessary to facilitate community involvement, stakeholder recruitment and engagement, and collection of data and resources. The primary staff contact for this project will be Justin Fortney, Director of Tourism and Community Development. In addition, Planning Director Dan Kassik will be available for technical assistance and support.

The leadership of the Guthrie Collaborative, a local coalition that has worked on Noble Park research and planning for years, will continue their involvement throughout the CERI project by offering outreach and input from underserved communities.

Discussion of Local Commitment or political will to implement recommended initiatives and strategies in support of the proposed planning demo site that reflects ACOG's Updated CEDS Goals (2 pages maximum). Required local commitment activities include the following:

- *Provide an adopted and signed resolution from the local government acknowledging long-term commitment to this endeavor.*

(Adopted and signed resolution is included on the following page.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GUTHRIE, OKLAHOMA, REQUESTING THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS (ACOG) CONSIDER THE SELECTION OF THE NOBLE PARK CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL AREA AS A PROJECT CANDIDATE FOR THE CERI PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITE PROGRAM

Be it remembered that on the 2nd day of March, 2021 at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Guthrie, the following resolution was presented and adopted:

WHEREAS, the CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant funds have been made available to ACOG, through the EDA, to provide consultant planning services for municipalities in the ACOG region in partnership with the Oklahoma Main Street Center (Oklahoma Department of Commerce) and the University of Oklahoma Institute for Quality Communities (IQC); and

WHEREAS, The City of Guthrie has selected a project planning proposal described as follows:

The area commonly known as "Noble Park" has historical and cultural importance within the African American community of the City of Guthrie and the State of Oklahoma. Located in the heart of Guthrie, this neighborhood was abandoned after a century of Cottonwood Creek flooding. This project would aggregate various plans that have been brought forward over the years for educational and recreational opportunities for the land, in addition to creating a connective hub for pedestrians and bicycle users from the west side, east side, and downtown of the City. Not only does this project have the potential to honor the history of "Noble Park," but it can serve as a uniting infrastructure project for our entire community, both literally and figuratively; and

WHEREAS, the City of Guthrie agrees to provide extensive community engagement to make the project planning process a success (8 to 12 - month process) and provide ongoing community support to ensure future project implementation and maintenance funding; and

WHEREAS, the City of Guthrie assures that no qualified person with a disability shall, solely by reasons of their disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity administered by the City of Guthrie; and

WHEREAS, the City of Guthrie further understands that acceptance of this resolution by the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is not a commitment of being selected as a CERI Planning Demonstration Site, but only registers the City of Guthrie's interest and commitment in participating in the program application process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That ACOG is hereby requested to consider the selection of this project as a candidate for CERI Planning Demonstration Site

Program, and to submit the completed project application to the CERJ Review Committee for assessment and to the ACOG Board for final consideration,

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Guthrie this 2nd day of March, 2021.



ATTEST:

Kim Biggs, City Clerk

Steven J. Gentling, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

William W. Wheeler, City Attorney

- *Provide a list of specific stakeholders (realtors, bankers, small or large business owners, large landowners, minority and faith-based community representatives, etc.) that are dedicated to be involved throughout the entire process, and will actively serve as members of a community steering/blue ribbon committee.*

The Guthrie Collaborative has done extensive work over the last few years bringing together stakeholders from private businesses, municipal departments, and underserved residents. The intent of this project is to inject expertise, planning, organization, and momentum into the work they've already done, with the goal of using the outputs of our CERI project to both apply/secure funding from outside resources, and strategically plan for the investment of City funds in future implementation of the CERI planning goals.

- *Provide letters of support from local organizations, civic clubs, and businesses (place letters in the Appendices as described below).*

A letter of support from the Guthrie Collaborative is included on the following page.

Guthrie Collaborative/Elbow Heritage Project
P.O. Box 41
Guthrie, OK 73044

March 11, 2021

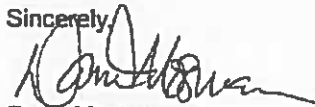
Dear Grant Committee,

I have had the opportunity to be a part of the Guthrie Collaborative for several years. The Guthrie Collaborative began as a way to participate in change that will create a sense of place, pride, and flourishing that brings together various diverse groups in our town. Our overarching mission is to further the quality of life for the citizens of Guthrie. While we have several planned projects, our largest endeavor involves the neighborhood of Guthrie that disappeared but has not been forgotten, The Elbow (officially known as Noble Park). Our goal is to honor the history of The Elbow community. We are finding history and photos as well as recording oral history from former residents. Our hope is to create a park with bike and pedestrian access with trails that would include historical markers. Members of our group have had many innovative ideas to include unique recreation ideas such as a zipline and a meditative labyrinth as well as including public art and historical murals.

Several years ago we had the opportunity to present our fledgling ideas to the City Manager of the City of Guthrie. He took interest in the project and he, as well as other City representatives, attended several meetings. I feel as though they understand the community's wishes to not just create a new recreation area in Guthrie, but to also help to honor and revive a significant piece of our cultural history. I am optimistic that the City is on the correct path as far as their plans to revive The Elbow/Noble Park. I am very encouraged that we were recently contacted by the City to again share our insight in this project. My hope is that the City of Guthrie will continue to hear the ideas of our citizens/committee members as they move forward on this project. I believe that because our group is a collaborative effort of a wide representation of citizens, we could be an asset to help ensure comprehensive and inclusive (reflective) public involvement, especially to the underserved groups within the community.

I am hopeful that the City will find funding to move forward on this project to create a new downtown recreation space that also honors the history of the original residents.

Sincerely,



Dana Mosman

405-641-6212

danascibner@hotmail.com

- *Provide a detailed description of anticipated methods to ensure comprehensive and inclusive (reflective) public involvement, especially to the underserved groups within the community*

City of Guthrie staff and coalition members will solicit direct involvement from the local African-American community, representatives from all neighborhoods affected by the development of this project, representatives from various outdoor recreation advocates, local leaders within the historic preservation community, history professionals from our museum community, and local entrepreneurs.

Provide the following substantive indicators that show Local Capacity to undertake the proposed planning demo site process and the ability to support and implement the desired outcomes (2 pages maximum).

- *Describe a project or elements of a plan that your community has implemented including staffing, funding, development of regulations, community support, and formal actions by the governing body.*

The City of Guthrie recently completed an extensive upgrade to Mineral Wells Park, a flagship historic park in our community. This \$1,000,000 project was funded 50/50 between grant funding and local dedicated capital improvement sales tax. This project was prioritized by City Council, with the City Planning Department and the City Engineer providing extensive staff time and effort to both the planning, grant writing, and implementation of the project goals. Public involvement had a huge impact on the final product, with resident volunteers from the parks advisory board and the Historic Preservation Commission providing invaluable assistance. The City regulations regarding development within the historic boundaries of the community guided the project and insured that the park upgrades celebrated and preserved the historic nature of Mineral Wells Park.

- *Describe the community's financial investment history, including recent capital improvement projects, current bonding capacity, and other financial tools that have been utilized.*

In recent years, the residents of Guthrie have utilized a capital improvement projects sales tax to fund infrastructure improvements and public safety infrastructure. This has resulted in a number of park improvements, including the construction of a brand new park on the west side, new police and fire vehicles, and other needed infrastructure improvements. The City has also consistently been successful securing grant funding for parks, streetscape, and utility infrastructure improvements.

- *Is the community willing and capable of providing a financial and/or in-kind match to enhance the project scope, if agreeable by all participating parties, in order to effectuate a more comprehensive outcome?*

The City of Guthrie will provide staff time and effort from both the Tourism/Community Development and Planning Departments to ensure the success of this project.

Appendices may include relevant supporting documentation as necessary; e.g. photographs, letters of support, related study summaries, supporting comprehensive plan policies. (3 pages maximum)

