Introduction
This report presents the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Muskogee, Oklahoma. It sets forth long-range recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of existing community areas, and for desirable improvements, developments and redevelopments within the City and its surrounding environs.

This Plan is the product of an extensive planning program, and incorporates much of the material included in previous interim report, “Existing Conditions Report” prepared as part of this planning process in October 2010.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map
The Comprehensive Plan is the City's official policy guide for physical improvement and development. The Plan considers not only the current needs and issues within the community, but also presents a plan for guiding new improvements and developments for the next 15 to 20 years. The Plan establishes the ground rules for private improvements and developments and provides the framework by which the City can review and evaluate private development proposals. In addition to private improvements, the Plan provides a foundation for decision-making based on community consensus, community visioning, and an existing conditions analysis and identifies a number of public improvements ensuring that local dollars are spent effectively and the quality of life enjoyed by residents is improved.
Introduction

History of Muskogee

The City of Muskogee has a rich history. Muskogee began as a railroad town but its past reaches back to the native people who built their villages and burial mounds along the three rivers that come together just north of the city. Early settlers of Muskogee used the area as a trading outpost, dealing largely with furs and cattle.

Known as the Three Forks region, this area was the hub for the settlement and development of what became Indian Territory. Here the Five Civilized Tribes arrived after their long trek from the southeast known as the “Trail of Tears”. The City of Muskogee was created when the Missouri-Kansas & Texas Railroad crossed within Muskogee through the entire Indian Territory in 1872. The City was named for the Creek Tribe, and the town quickly grew into Indian Territory’s most important city.

It was in Muskogee that the Tribes gathered in 1905 to write a constitution for the State of Sequoyah. Muskogee was selected to be the capital of the “Indian State”, however, after being denied admission to the Union Indian Territory joined with Oklahoma Territory to form the State of Oklahoma.

The City’s population boomed when Charles Haskell, the first governor of Oklahoma, moved to Muskogee. Mr. Haskell modernized the City, making it the center of business, industry, and agriculture in the region by maximizing its geographic location and building a regional railroad system. By the time Mr. Haskell became governor in 1907, Muskogee’s population had risen from 4,000 to over 25,000 in less than ten years, making it the second largest city in the state until the Oklahoma oil boom in the late 1900s.

During World War II, the City’s population grew to nearly 50,000 and sustained growth through the end of the war. The era of prosperity that followed helped Muskogee develop a reputation as a musical hub for jazz and country-western music. In the post-war era the character of the City changed, mirroring national trends, by expanding suburbs and subdivisions and seeing disinvestment in the downtown core.

As the County seat, Muskogee is home to a number of important government offices as well as the Muskogee Regional and Veteran’s Medical Centers and the Port of Muskogee, making it the most important service and financial center in the immediate region. Situated along the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas Navigation System, Muskogee has established the Port of Muskogee, the Nation’s most inland all weather waterway. The City’s existing transportation system is one of the community’s greatest strengths. The system is truly intermodal, not only providing local access for vehicles and pedestrians, but to outside destinations via trains, airplanes and boats.

The City is currently facing many challenges that are similar to other older communities around the country such as disinvestment in the downtown and its Original Town Site (OTS), traffic and circulation issues, and blighted residential properties. To address these challenges, the City continues to plan for and work towards improvement and reinvestment.

Other high profile regional draws in the City include the Muskogee Civic Center, Davis Field Airport, the Five Civilized Tribes Museum, the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee War Memorial, Bacone College, other higher education facilities and hospitals.
Community Setting

The City of Muskogee is located in Muskogee County, Oklahoma. Muskogee is the County seat and largest city in Muskogee County, accounting for 39,223 of the County’s 70,990 residents (2010 Census). Muskogee is located approximately 50 miles from Tulsa and 140 miles from Oklahoma City, the two largest cities in the State. Muskogee is in the northeastern portion of Oklahoma within the State’s “Green Country” area, a region known for its heavily-wooded areas, water resources, and rolling topography.

The City and its larger planning area is generally bounded on the north and east by the Arkansas River which is part of the McClellan-Kerr Waterway, made up of the Arkansas, Verdigris, and Grand Rivers. These waterways combine to connect with the Mississippi River and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico.

The City’s location, near the confluence of the Arkansas, Verdigris and Grand Rivers, is also one of its most important characteristics. The Port of Muskogee is located along the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, the nation’s most inland all weather waterway. The waterway originates at the Port of Catoosa and runs southeast through Oklahoma and Arkansas to the Mississippi River.

The length of the system is 445 miles from the head of navigation, at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa, to the Mississippi River. Beginning at the Port of Muskogee, it takes a commercial towboat and barge tow four to five days to travel the entire system and seven to ten days to get to the City of New Orleans, Louisiana.
Original Town Site (OTS)
The Original Town Site is considered the birthplace of Muskogee. In general the area is bounded by Tamaroa Street to the north, Summit Street to the east, Augusta Street to the south, and Junction Street/20th Street to the west. In the first part of the 20th century this area was a vibrant mixed use area that truly was the heart of the community. According to the City’s Previous Comprehensive Plan, in 2000, the Original Town Site represented 17% of the land area of the City, 30% of the population, and 31% of the housing units.

Today, the area is comprised of several residential areas and types of dwelling units from large mansions to more modest sized single-family homes and apartments; a central business district (Downtown Muskogee) with multistory buildings consisting of shopping, apartments and offices; industrial areas, the fairgrounds and parks and; municipal, county and federal government offices and facilities.

Over time however, the Original Town Site has seen its role and prominence change and has experienced disinvestment, as it struggles to compete with new growth areas and emerging corridors. Development can often occur more easily in the City’s periphery on “greenfield” sites, which has led to disinvestment in the OTS, causing declining home prices that has affected the school district and caused strain upon other community services and infrastructure.

The area’s aging housing stock and infrastructure are in need of improvement and currently create a poor image and appearance for the larger community. To begin to address the issue of blighted or vacant homes, the City has created and implemented a variety of programs to renovate or demolish structures over time. However, the City is aware that this is not the only solution, and this updated Comprehensive Plan establishes new policies, programs and recommendations to assist the City in stabilizing and enhancing the area.
Past Comprehensive Plans

Many of the City’s past plans, studies and reports were reviewed as part of this planning process to assess their relevance to the City’s current issues and priorities. Highlighted below is a summary of the City’s previous Comprehensive Plans. Muskogee 2013, prepared in 2000, and the 1977-2000 Comprehensive Plan.

Muskogee 2013: Comprehensive Plan

In 2000, the City began the process of creating a new, at that time, Comprehensive Plan titled Muskogee 2013. The Plan presented a vision for Muskogee, an assessment of current conditions, trends, and an action plan. Not surprisingly as the country experienced unprecedented growth, the statistics and projections provided in the demographic and economic review show that in 2000 the residential housing market was strong, and was expected to continue to grow each year. A table of housing permits is provided in the plan that shows the strong housing market at that time. For comparison purposes, at the height of the housing boom, the City issued 153 housing permits in 2005 and only 18 permits in 2009. The number of housing permits issued in 2009 was the lowest in decades.

Community Survey

As part of the planning process, a Community Survey was distributed to approximately 15,000 households. The survey results indicated that the community was concerned with the physical, social and economic vitality of Muskogee. Demolition of dilapidated structures and redevelopment were most desired by respondents, while street repair was the most desired city service. Other key community concerns included a lack of recreational facilities, the vitality of downtown, and public safety.

Original Town Site Recommendations

An important goal of the Comprehensive Plan was to provide recommendations for supporting and strengthening the Original Town Site (OTS). The Plan identifies neighborhood boundaries, specific needs and issues, goals and policies, and key implementation strategies and projects to address the issues identified in the OTS.

Goals and Policy Statements

Goals and policies are provided for all properties within the City’s planning area, specific geographic areas and by land use designations including industrial uses, commercial uses, aesthetics, utilities and non-emergency services, transportation, parks, environment, emergency response, and a general miscellaneous category.

Future Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan recommends a variety of land use categories for all properties within the City and its planning area. The land use categories include; parks and open space; agricultural and rural residential use; low, medium and high density residential uses; low, medium and high intensity commercial uses; light and heavy industrial uses; mixed use; public and institutional uses; transitional areas; and overlay areas.

A transitional designation is shown for two areas within the City, 1) the Okmulgee/Chandler area, and 2) the Gibson/Jefferson area. These areas were identified as undergoing a gradual change in land uses that warranted special attention. Both areas include language and policies that have the goal of ensuring the areas change appropriately overtime. The Gibson/Jefferson Transition area recommends a future Jefferson Street overpass connecting to Martin Luther King Drive to improve the area.

Overlay Districts are also provided for mobile/manufactured housing areas and for riverfront industrial areas. Both overlay districts provide additional guidelines to ensure appropriate development and land uses in each area. A key goal of the riverfront industrial district is to reserve properties fronting the Arkansas River for businesses that need river/port access.

Summary

Overall, the Comprehensive Plan is very thorough, but because it is more than ten years old, written in an era prior to the boom and decline in the local and national economy, the document is no longer able to realistically guide the city. It is important to note however, that many of the issues and concerns that were identified in the Plan were unaddressed and still exist today. In considering the outreach undertaken as part of this study, it is important that the new Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map build upon the relevant goals, objectives and recommendations of the 2013 Plan.

1977-2000 Comprehensive Plan

The 1977 Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Muskogee Metropolitan Area Planning Department. The document consisted of an analysis of existing conditions, demographics, land use, housing, community utilities, community facilities, and transportation. Long-range plans are provided for residential, commercial, industrial, and public land uses.

A brief summary of the main differences include:

- Consists of a much narrower list of recommended land use designations
- Includes a planning area that extends 3-miles from the city limits. Within this planning area, future land uses are shown, as is a potential transportation road network.
- Identifies less commercial along US Highway 69 than the 2013 Plan
- Identifies less commercial along Highway 62/64, Okmulgee Avenue, Chandler Road than in the 2013 Plan.
- Shows more light industrial along the US 64/Main Street corridor, while the 2013 Plan designates more residential and commercial uses along the corridor.
Planning Process

Muskogee’s Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a significant amount of research, study, analysis, and public participation. In 2010 the City hired Houseal Lavigne Associates, a consulting firm with special expertise in comprehensive planning, to assist the City with the update of the plan. Following a detailed work program, Houseal Lavigne Associates prepared the plan over the course of 12-months.

The project was initiated with community workshops and the creation of an online questionnaire and project website used to obtain input from the Muskogee community. This was followed by an inventory and description of the existing conditions undertaken to better guide the development and creation of the Comprehensive Plan document. All of this information was compiled and summarized in the “Existing Conditions Report” which is now on file at Muskogee City Hall.

In the final steps of the planning process, the draft Comprehensive Plan was reviewed with the Planning Commission and the public and a Final Comprehensive Plan document was prepared. This document was revised based on further comment from City Staff and the Planning Commission and submitted to the Muskogee City Council for adoption.

The Plan has been designed not only to serve as a legal document for guiding land use and development, but also as a guide for future land use policy and for prioritizing, promoting and implementing new development and redevelopment projects and actions within the City.

Plan Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into the following 9 sections:

Section 1: Community Profile – This first section of the Plan provides a review of the community’s demographics and highlights market potentials, ensuring the Plan is built on a foundation of economic reality.

Section 2: Community Outreach – This section presents a summary of the outreach exercises conducted as part of the planning process, highlighting community issues and opportunities.

Section 3: The Future of Muskogee - This section describes the community’s desired future for the City of Muskogee in general terms. It provides a narrative sketch of how Muskogee will become a better place to live and work over the next 20 years.

Section 4: Goals & Objectives – This section presents goals and objectives that provide specific actions for the City and its Comprehensive Plan as it strives to achieve the vision established in the previous section.

Section 5: Land Use Plan - The Land Use Plan illustrates and describes in general terms the type and location of future land uses within the City of Muskogee and its growth areas. This section also provides detailed recommendations and policies targeted at the improvement of Muskogee’s commercial corridors and Downtown.

Section 6: Transportation Plan & Policies – The Transportation Plan is intended to ensure an adequate transportation network exists to accommodate the efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians throughout the community.

Section 7: Community Facilities Plan & Policies - This section identifies the future need for community facilities and offers long-range recommendations for future facility locations and improvements to ensure that residents are adequately served by the City and its service providers.

Section 8: Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features Plan & Policies – This section provides recommendations intended to protect and enhance Muskogee’s natural areas, expand the park and trail system in growth areas as well as established residential neighborhoods, and improve access to regional assets.

Section 9: Implementation - This section presents specific actions, catalytic projects, as well as potential funding sources, that the City should pursue as it endeavors to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
This market overview and analysis has been provided to determine the general trends, supply, demand, and potential for residential and commercial uses within the City of Muskogee and the surrounding area. This analysis examines the City's competitive position within the market, identifies the issues the community is facing and will likely face, and creates a foundation to assist with future land use designation and planning objectives.

To accommodate for anticipated demographic shifts within the City, the market analysis contrasts current figures, as of 2011, with 2016 projections. While projections can be made beyond this time frame, the degree of accuracy in which market potential can be assessed would be reduced. Market data for this analysis were obtained from ESRI Business Analyst, a nationally recognized provider of market and demographic data.

Defining the Market Area

The market analysis utilizes data from two different geographies referred to as the primary and secondary market areas. The primary market area is defined as the City of Muskogee. The secondary market area consists of the area within a 20 minute drive from Downtown Muskogee. For the purposes of this analysis, drive time was calculated from the intersection of Main Street and Okmulgee Avenue. Understanding that this analysis is conducted for the entire City, this starting point was selected due to its central location. Each respective market area is discussed in more detail as they relate to the residential, retail, and office market findings.
Demographic Overview
Population Change
The table below includes information on changes in population and number of households within the City of Muskogee. Population is defined as the overall number of people within a specified geography. A household is defined as the group of individuals who live in the same dwelling unit. Any discussion of household age in the following overview is with regard to the age on the individual identified as the head of household. Overall, household and population growth in the City is projected to be positive over the next five years.

It is important to note that projections of population/household growth or decline is an aggregated equation of people moving into and out of an area with the result being either a net gain or loss. This figure is based on a combination of historical trends and data as well as anticipated changes in employment, development and other factors.

In contrast to trends in recent decades, the City of Muskogee is positioned to realize growth over the next several years. This is due to a number of factors including expansion of health care uses, increasing activity at the Port and the growth in government jobs located in the City. Through business relocations to the City and the expansion of existing uses, the City is also expected to see an increase in its employment base over the next decade. While all of these positions will not result in workers moving into the planning area, the number of people locating to the City will absorb some of the available housing units and should also create demand for additional new construction. Over time, as business become more established and workers residing outside of the planning area become familiar with the community there is likely to be an increase in the percentage of workers residing in Muskogee.

While population projections for the City are positive and indicate continue growth, the City has a stated goal of significantly increasing its resident population over the next decade. It is committed to being proactive and targeting strategies to realize this goal. The attraction of new businesses, employment and activity generators are positive initiatives that will serve to facilitate this population growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Annual Rate</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>39,055</td>
<td>39,093</td>
<td>38 (0.1%)</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>15,642</td>
<td>15,654</td>
<td>12 (0.1%)</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>1 (2.2%)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$33,806</td>
<td>$37,740</td>
<td>$3,934 (11.6%)</td>
<td>2.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Income</td>
<td>$47,519</td>
<td>$51,915</td>
<td>$4,396 (9.3%)</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$19,580</td>
<td>$21,358</td>
<td>$1,778 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Age Profile
The chart on the right illustrates projected population change within age cohorts of the City over the five year period between 2011 and 2016. In general, projections indicate that the number of young and middle-aged households will experience moderate decline which will be largely offset by growth among older households aged 55 years and up.

- The population under the age of 35 is projected to decrease by 305 (-1.6%) over the next five years.
- It is anticipated that the number of individuals between the ages of 35 and 54 will have decreased by 658 (-6.9%) between 2011 and 2016.
- An increase of more than 9% (1,002 individuals) is projected to occur in the population aged 55 and older between 2011 and 2016.
- The estimated 2011 median age of 36.4 years is projected to increase (age) slightly to 37.2 in 2016.
Race & Ethnicity

The charts on the right illustrate the estimated 2011 and projected 2016 racial and ethnic composition of the City. Muskogee is a diverse community with a growing minority population.

► In 2011, it is estimated that 56.4% of the City’s population comprises individuals who are considered White Alone (as classified by the U.S. Census).
► During the five year period between 2011 and 2016, it is projected that the White Alone population will have decreased by 1.9% while the non-White Alone population will have increased by 0.1%.
► The City’s American Indian population, as classified by the US Census, is projected to grow by 2.7% to 5,416 individuals in 2016.
► The most significant increase among any racial or ethnic group is projected to occur in the Hispanic population which has an estimated 2,795 individuals in 2011 and is projected to grow by 17.8% to 3,246 in 2016.

Household Change

The chart on the right depicts anticipated growth among City households with regard to income between 2011 and 2016.

► The proportion of households with annual incomes of less than $50,000 is projected to decrease by 842 (-8.1%) between 2011 and 2016.
► The proportion of households with annual incomes over $100,000 is also projected to remain relatively stable, increasing by 134 (9.7%) between 2011 and 2016.
► The greatest anticipated increase is projected to occur among households earning between $50,000 and $99,999. This group is projected to grow by 728 households (18.4%) and come to make up nearly one-third of all households by 2016.
Age by Income
The chart on the right illustrates the projected change in the number of households according to the age of the head of household and household income. Changes projected to occur between 2010 and 2015 (the latest year for which detailed age by income data are available) are shown as they pertain to each respective household age cohort in the City.

For example, the blue columns indicate change within the market area household population under the age of 35. A bar for this age group is shown in each income bracket. A blue bar located above the zero line of the graph indicates growth, while a blue bar below the zero line indicates decline.

► It is anticipated that the number of households aged 35 to 54 will decrease in every income group, except for those earning between $100,000 and $149,999.
► The number of households aged 55 to 74 is projected to grow across all income groups, except for those earning between $75,000 and $99,999, increasing by a total of 602 households (12.9%).
► The number of households earning between $50,000 and $74,999 is projected to increase among all age cohorts, increasing by 1,047 (35.1%).
► Change in households earning more than $100,000 annually is projected to be minimal regardless of age cohort.

Residential Market
Housing Profile
The table below summarizes housing characteristics for the City of Muskogee as reported in the 2006-2008 American Community Survey, the most current data source available.

The majority of housing units in the City are owner-occupied, detached single family homes with three bedrooms.

► Approximately two-thirds of the City’s 16,029 occupied housing units are owner-occupied.
► Nearly three-quarters of the City’s housing units are single family detached, with the majority of the remaining units (21%) located in multi-family buildings with three or more units.
► Three-bedroom units are common within the City, composing nearly half of all units. Two-bedroom units make up another one-quarter of the City’s housing stock.

Age of Housing Structure
City of Muskogee, 2006 - 2010 Average Estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939 and Earlier</td>
<td>2,318 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 - 1949</td>
<td>2,185 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 - 1959</td>
<td>3,512 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 - 1969</td>
<td>2,499 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 - 1979</td>
<td>2,242 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 - 1989</td>
<td>1,911 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 - 1999</td>
<td>995 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2004</td>
<td>657 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 and After</td>
<td>194 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2006 - 2010; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Age of Housing
The information provided in the chart below illustrates that since the establishment of the City in the early half of the 19th century, Muskogee has experienced steady growth. The City’s housing stock is composed of structures whose construction dates to periods throughout the last century. A diverse age range within the local housing stock is typically indicative of a wider range of home prices and affordability.

► New housing units constructed since 1999 account for less than 10% of the City’s housing stock.
► Each decade since 1939, with the exception of the 1970s, has contributed between 10% and 19% of Muskogee’s housing stock.
► The City’s most significant period of growth took place between 1970 and 1979 when nearly 4,500 housing structures were built, representing nearly one-quarter of all units in the City.
New Construction Permits

Data for new construction permits for residential units were gathered for the City of Muskogee as well as the neighboring community of Fort Gibson. Permitting activity in Muskogee nearly tripled from 2005 to 2007, but has since dropped significantly to 15% of that 2007 high mark and less than half of 2005 levels. Permitting activity for multi-family units, which comprise a small portion of the local market, has been relatively flat with the exception of an uptick in activity in 2006.

► New construction permits issued between 2005 and 2009 indicate that the majority of recent housing constructed in the City has been comprised of detached single family home development.

► There were two multi-family projects with a combined total of 16 units built in the City between 2005 and 2009.

► 109 units were permitted in 2007, marking the peak of housing activity in Muskogee with 34.7% of all units permitted between 2005 and 2009.

► Units permitted in the City of Muskogee made up over 92% of all units permitted in Muskogee County. There were 24 units permitted in nearby Fort Gibson in 2005.

Muskogee County Home Sales

In a healthy, stable market the characteristics of new development such as size, unit mix, and pricing often serve as the best gauge for assessing housing affordability and demand within the local market. There are few new residential developments currently being marketed in the area and, as indicated by building permit data, the number of new construction units entering the market has declined significantly since 2007. Given the current downturn in the housing market, the resale of existing homes offers the best means of understanding housing demand in the Muskogee area.

The table below provides data from the Oklahoma Association of Realtors regarding the number of home sales and average sale price for Muskogee County. As indicated by building permit data, properties in the City of Muskogee make up the large majority of the Muskogee County market. Sales data is provided for all units including single-family detached, single-family attached and multi-family units.

As indicated in the chart, the effects of the downturn in the national housing market have been more limited within the local market. Within Muskogee County, sales prices have remained stable and the number of sales has experienced a moderate decline.

► Between 2005 and 2009, the average sales price of a home in Muskogee County increased by 5.6% to $84,259 in 2009.

► The number of homes sold in 2009 (651) is 24.1% less than the number of sales in 2005 and 13.3% less than in 2008.

► The median sales price of $88,453 for homes sold in the first quarter of 2010 indicates that sales prices are remaining relatively steady.

Residential Market Summary

The Muskogee area housing market has been relatively insulated from the downturn in the national housing market and home prices in Muskogee are near pre-recession levels. Growth in the number of households within the City of Muskogee and larger area is expected to be flat over the near term. This indicates that demand for new housing will be limited to the replacement of existing homes within Muskogee, nearly 40% of which were constructed over 50 years ago. It is also anticipated that older households aged 55 and up will increase in proportion within Muskogee, potentially increasing demand for multi-family housing in the community.
Retail Market

The potential for retail development at any given location is influenced by several factors including local and regional retail demand, the health of the local commercial districts, the location of surrounding commercial nodes, and the consumer expenditure patterns of the market area population.

Retail Business Inventory

In 2010, it is estimated that the City of Muskogee is the current location of approximately 459 retail businesses. There are a variety of retailers present within the City including over 119 restaurants and drinking establishments (25.9%), 60 motor vehicle and parts dealers (13.1%), and 59 miscellaneous retailers (12.9%). In addition to Downtown Muskogee, which is the location of the Arrowhead Mall, the largest concentrations of retail space are located along the Shawnee (Highway 62) Corridor and along Highway 69.

Traffic Counts

National retailers adhere to a specific of standards when evaluating a potential site. One determining factor is a location’s Average Daily Traffic (ADT). The ADT figure measures the average volume of traffic on a given street on any given day. Retailers typically look for an ADT count of between 20,000 and 30,000 when deciding if a particular site is good for future development. Based on these standards, there are several areas throughout the City which may be suitable locations for large format national retailers to consider. Based on the aforementioned criteria, these areas are also the current location of the City’s major retail centers.

Sites located along these major roadways will represent some of those most likely to undergo commercial development and reinvestment. When assessing the potential for commercial development, other factors in addition to traffic counts must also be taken into consideration. While a site may have high traffic counts, site characteristics such as lot depth or size, existing structures, access, or adjacent uses may limit its potential to accommodate successful commercial development. Conversely, other advantages a site offers may make a site with less favorable traffic counts an attractive place for new commercial development.

► Shawnee Avenue (US 62 / OK-16) is a primary east-west arterial that travels through the northern portion of the City. Shawnee has an estimated ADT count of 21,000 as it enters Muskogee from the east near the Arkansas River. This count decreases to 18,000 to the west of 41st Street and then increases to over 32,100 vehicles per day to the east of Main Street. As Shawnee approaches 32nd Street (US 62/69) traffic counts are near 16,000.

► 32nd Street (US 62/69) is the City’s primary north-south corridor. The corridor’s estimated ADT is over 21,000 to the south at Arline Street. Traffic counts decrease to 18,500 per day to the north of Shawnee Avenue.

► Main Street (US Business 62) is the primary roadway through Downtown Muskogee. This route has an ADT of approximately 14,400 as it approaches Shawnee Avenue. Closer to Downtown Muskogee, to the south of Okmulgee Avenue, traffic counts drop to an estimated 9,500.

► Peak Boulevard (OK-165) is an east-west arterial serves the southern and southwestern portions of the City. Peak has an estimated ADT of between 10,000 and 16,000 with the highest traffic counts occurring near Main Street.

► York Street is planned for future widening and improvements from Hancock to Peak. This will likely result in an increase in future commercial development potential along this north south arterial. Traffic counts along York Street range between 7,200 and 11,000 ADT.

![Business Inventory City of Muskogee, 2010](image-url)
Competitive Retail Context

The potential for retail demand is based on several factors, perhaps the most significant being travel time. Consumer decisions are motivated by the amount of time that it takes to get from point to point. A site located two miles from a heavily populated subdivision may take longer to get to than a site five miles away due to traffic, road infrastructure, highway access, at-grade train crossings and other influences. The relationship of retail concentrations is equally impacted by these influences. A particular retailer may have two stores located relatively close together in terms of mileage, but when measured in travel time, they are catering to entirely different market areas.

Exactly how far a consumer will travel and where retailers are located, is primarily dictated by store type and characteristics of a retail node. The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and The Urban Land Institute (ULI) categorize shopping centers utilizing several criteria. The following is an overview of shopping center classifications.

- **Large regional and super regional malls** containing department stores (Macy’s, Nordstrom), fashion and apparel (Talbots, Ann Taylor) and home furnishings (Restoration Hardware, Crate and Barrel) attract customers from a trade area that can extend up to 25 miles.
- **Lifestyle Centers** include some of the same users as Regional Malls, including large format bookstores (Barnes & Noble) but do not have anchors. The typical trade area is approximately 8 to 12 miles.
- **Community Centers** include big box discount stores (Target, Kmart), home improvement stores (Home Depot, Lowe’s), Sporting Goods (Sports Authority, Dick’s) and attract from a three to six mile trade area.
- **Neighborhood Centers** typically attract from within three miles or a drive of less than 10 minutes and are anchored by a grocery store (e.g. Homeland).

Retail Context

Defining the retail market for the study area requires understanding the context in which development would reasonably occur. The residents of Muskogee are served by two primary commercial corridors as well as Downtown Muskogee.

Downtown Muskogee is generally defined as the commercial area centered around the intersection of Main Street and Okmulgee Avenue. In addition to several smaller shops and restaurants, Downtown Muskogee is the location of Arrowhead Mall, a 433,000 square foot regional mall anchored by Sears, Dillard’s and JC Penney.

The Shawnee Avenue (Highway 62) corridor is the City’s most significant commercial corridor. This roadway has several community shopping centers and big box retailers including:

- Curt’s Center is a 408,000 square foot strip center located on the northwestern corner of York Street and Shawnee Avenue. Its anchors include Hobby Lobby, Big Lots, Dollar General, Hancock Fabrics and Hastings’ Books.
- Northpointe Shopping Center is a 150,000 square foot center that is largely occupied by Bacone College and the VA. Its former anchors included Boy Howdy and Wal-Mart, the latter of which moved to a larger supercenter store located in the River City Plaza shopping center located at 6th Street and Shawnee. Current in-line tenants at the Northpointe Shopping Center include Little Caesars and a nail salon.
- River City Plaza is a 252,000 square foot center anchored by a Wal-Mart Supercenter, Best Buy, Petco, and Dress For Less.
- K-Mart and Orscheln Farm & Home, in addition to a small strip center are located at the northeast corner of Main Street and Shawnee Avenue.
- A Staples and a Lowe’s are located on the south side of Shawnee Avenue across from Muskogee High School.

The intersection of 32nd Street (US 62/69) and Okmulgee Avenue (US 64) is the location of several neighborhood shopping centers including the 74,000 square foot Honor Heights Shopping Center and a Walgreen’s. Muskogee Shopping Center is located to the south of this intersection at Arline Avenue and 32nd Street. The Muskogee Regional Medical Center, located to the southwest of 32nd Street and Okmulgee Avenue, serves as the anchor for commercial centers in this portion of Muskogee.
Estimating Retail Demand
The retail market area is roughly defined as the area located within a 20 minute driving distance of the intersection of Main Street and Okmulgee Avenue in Downtown Muskogee. This area incorporates not only the City of Muskogee, but the retail concentrations found in neighboring communities. In the following section of market analysis, the potential for retail development has been assessed by comparing estimated spending by households within this market area to the existing supply of retail space. A similar analysis is also carried out utilizing household and retail inventory estimated for the City of Muskogee.

Retail Gap Analysis
The following analysis uses a comparison of projected spending by market area households to the existing supply of retail space to assess the potential for retail development in these two study areas. This ‘gap’ analysis provides an indication of “surplus” or “leakage” within a given retail category. The presence of a surplus within a given retail category suggests that there is at least enough retail space to accommodate demand for the range of goods and services provided by stores in that category. Conversely, leakage indicates that demand exceeds supply and consumers are spending dollars outside of the market area.

This leakage could potentially be recaptured and may represent a commercial opportunity within the market area. It is important to distinguish between support in the market and development potential of a specific site or location. The availability of alternative sites, specifications of particular retailers, the number of projects actively pursuing tenants and similar issues can affect whether market potential translates to development potential.

City of Muskogee
In older established urban environments such as Muskogee, it is not uncommon for the market area to appear saturated in particular retail categories. This, however, does not adequately reflect or convey the true development potential of the area. Opportunities exist for redevelopment of existing underutilized or obsolete space, underperforming stores and retail nodes with poor visibility and/or access. Through the improvement and reconfiguration of these sites and properties, new development can be accommodated including the relocation or repositioning of an existing tenant or business. In addition, market areas and opportunities are not beholden to municipal boundaries. Therefore, as commercial areas are redeveloped and improved, the ability to recruit and capture users from other locations within the market is greatly enhanced.

Commercial development potential is also enhanced by employment centers and activity generators. The presence of large employers creates an additional market for restaurants and retailers to accommodate the demands of an increased daytime population. As additional businesses and users such as the Veterans Administration continue to expand or move to Muskogee, the potential for new development will be further enhanced. The influx of new workers accompanied by growth in the greater market area will have a positive impact on future development potential in the City.
Retail Market Summary

Given current and near term market conditions, this may be an appropriate time to enhance the appearance and function of existing commercial districts and work with business and property owners to make improvements to properties whenever necessary. Reinvestment and redevelopment should be encouraged over further outward expansion and new development. Areas surrounding large employment centers such as the Muskogee Regional Medical Center and VA may represent the most viable locations for commercial enhancement and redevelopment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Group</th>
<th>City of Muskogee</th>
<th>Secondary Market Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail Trade and Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>($118.9)</td>
<td>($57.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail Trade</td>
<td>($83.6)</td>
<td>($30.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>($35.3)</td>
<td>($27.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retail Gap Analysis
City of Muskogee & Secondary Market Area, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Group</th>
<th>City of Muskogee</th>
<th>Secondary Market Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle &amp; Parts Dealers</td>
<td>($8.5)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings Stores</td>
<td>($2.9)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics &amp; Appliance Stores</td>
<td>$2.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building &amp; Garden Equip. &amp; Supply Stores</td>
<td>($62.5)</td>
<td>($66.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail Trade</td>
<td>($83.6)</td>
<td>($30.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>($35.3)</td>
<td>($27.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Stores</td>
<td>$39.1</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>$39.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty Food Stores</td>
<td>($0.1)</td>
<td>$0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer, Wine, &amp; Liquor Stores</td>
<td>($0.7)</td>
<td>($0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Personal Care Stores</td>
<td>($3.9)</td>
<td>($0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline Stations</td>
<td>($11.5)</td>
<td>($8.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores</td>
<td>($2.4)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores</td>
<td>($0.8)</td>
<td>($1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Merchandise Stores</td>
<td>($34.9)</td>
<td>($20.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</td>
<td>($1.9)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonstore Retailers</td>
<td>$4.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>($35.3)</td>
<td>($27.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Potential is based on average annual sales per square foot of $350.

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, ULI, and Houseal Lavigne Associates
Labor, Employment & Industrial Market Overview

The Muskogee City County Port Authority has the responsibility to implement economic development programs to assist companies in establishing new facilities, relocating existing facilities, or expanding current facilities in the Muskogee area. The City County Port Authority has benefitted the Muskogee area greatly through its efforts to expand the City’s inventory of industrial properties and attract quality employers.

The City County Port Authority facilitated a total of 38 projects from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce in 2009, representing a $396 million investment in the community. These projects could result in more than 4,100 new jobs within the Muskogee area with a total annual payroll of approximately $148 million.

Employment by Industry

The City of Muskogee and Muskogee County are located within the Eastern Workforce Investment Area (WIA) of Oklahoma. In 2009, this area had an estimated workforce of nearly 129,000. As indicated in the table on the following page, between 2009 and 2018, the Eastern WIA is projected to gain nearly 12,700 jobs, representing a 9.9% increase in employment and annual growth rate of slightly less than 1%. While several industries are expected to shrink or remain flat with regard to total employment, there are several that are projected to experience double-digit growth over the 10 year.

► Government industries are projected to grow by 11.5% with the addition of 3,275 jobs over this time period. Much of this growth is likely to occur in the City of Muskogee given the large concentration of federal and county government employers.

► An additional 2,919 (22.3%) jobs are projected to be created in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. The City of Muskogee has three hospitals, providing jobs to thousands, and employment growth in this sector will likely build on these existing employment centers.

► The largest proportionate gains are expected to occur in the Real Estate and Rental & Leasing (27.7%) and Educational Services (28.3%) sectors.

► The Manufacturing sector is projected to decline slightly (-2.5%) with the anticipated loss of 278 jobs.

Muskogee County is anticipated to gain over 2,900 jobs between 2009 and 2018 based on its share of total WIA employment in 2009. Muskogee is the largest community within Muskogee County and the Eastern WIA, so much of the projected growth will likely occur within or near the City of Muskogee. Given the City’s significant concentration of employers in the Government and Health Care and Social Assistance sectors, employment growth within the City of Muskogee may be larger than would be expected based on its current share of regional workforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2009 Employment</th>
<th>2018 Employment</th>
<th>Total Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
<th>Average Annual Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>28,557</td>
<td>31,832</td>
<td>3,275</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>13,115</td>
<td>16,034</td>
<td>2,919</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>13,015</td>
<td>15,782</td>
<td>2,767</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8,427</td>
<td>9,762</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Support &amp; Waste Mgmt. &amp; Remediation Svcs.</td>
<td>5,685</td>
<td>6,573</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate &amp; Rental &amp; Leasing</td>
<td>3,124</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>9,083</td>
<td>9,794</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>3,792</td>
<td>4,366</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>3,432</td>
<td>3,861</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>2,347</td>
<td>2,663</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>1,216</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (except Public Administration)</td>
<td>6,157</td>
<td>6,516</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</td>
<td>3,043</td>
<td>3,913</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>(35)</td>
<td>(2.9%)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &amp; Hunting</td>
<td>11,629</td>
<td>11,590</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>(0.3%)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>(49)</td>
<td>(5.3%)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Companies &amp; Enterprises</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(69)</td>
<td>(22.2%)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>(126)</td>
<td>(23.1%)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>11,094</td>
<td>10,816</td>
<td>(278)</td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>1,721</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>(300)</td>
<td>(17.4%)</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128,778</td>
<td>141,477</td>
<td>12,699</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>1,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Muskogee County Employment

- 2009 Workforce: 29,653
- 2009 Share of Eastern WIA Workforce: 23.0%
- 2009 - 2018 Estimated Growth: 2,924

Source: Eastern Workforce Investment Area, EMSI Complete Employment - Fall 2008
Major Employers
As indicated in the table below, major employers in Muskogee are concentrated in three sectors: government, manufacturing, and retail trade. The City has approximately 28 businesses employing 100 workers or more.

Manufacturing has a significant presence in Muskogee. The City’s largest employer is Georgia-Pacific which employs 1,350 and manufactures paper products. Other larger manufacturing businesses include Dal-Tile (575), Acme Engineering (251), Owens-Illinois (230), Whitlock Packaging (200), V&M TCA (190), American Foundry (150), Love Bottling Company (135), and Graham Packaging (131).

As a county seat, there are a significant number of local jobs in the Government industry including the approximately 700 individuals collectively employed by the City and County of Muskogee. The Federal government’s Veterans Administration also employs an estimated 1,265 in addition to 839 at the Veterans Affairs Hospital. The Retail Trade industry also employs a significant number of people in Muskogee. Large employers in this industry include Wal-Mart (450), Dillard’s (128), and Sears (102).

Where Workers Work
The figures on the following page depict where people who work in the City of Muskogee live within the region as measured by the number of workers per square mile (See ‘Labor Shed’). The labor shed data discussed here is from 2008 and is the most recent year for which this data is available. The City’s labor shed is relatively dispersed. In 2008, approximately 57% of the City’s 20,526 jobs were performed by non-residents. Conversely, approximately 43% of the jobs offered in Muskogee are performed by workers who also live in the City of Muskogee. Approximately 3.5% of Muskogee’s labor force is composed of residents from Tulsa. No other communities within the region have a significant proportion (greater than 3%) of residents working within its boundaries. It is estimated that approximately 60% of Muskogee’s workforce resides in Muskogee County while another 6.3% reside in Tulsa County and 5.9% reside in Cherokee County.

The figure also highlights where residents of the City of Muskogee work within the region as measured by the number of workers per square mile (See ‘Commuter Shed’). The commuter shed data discussed here is from 2008 and is the most recent year for which this data is available. The City’s commute shed is more widely dispersed than its labor shed. Nearly 53% of Muskogee residents work within the City of Muskogee and 11% are employed in the City of Tulsa. No other location has a significant proportion (greater than 3%) of Muskogee residents working within its boundaries. It is estimated that approximately 60% of the City’s residents have jobs located within Muskogee County, while another 14.7% are employed in Tulsa County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Employers (100+ Employees)</th>
<th>City of Muskogee, 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia-Pacific</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Veterans Administration</td>
<td>Federal Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskogee Regional Medical Center</td>
<td>Medical Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskogee Public School District</td>
<td>Public School System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Veterans Hospital</td>
<td>Medical Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dal-Tile</td>
<td>Porcelain Tiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Muskogee</td>
<td>City Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG&amp;E Electric Services</td>
<td>Electric Utility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acme Engineering</td>
<td>Ventilation Equipment Mfg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucks For You</td>
<td>Trucking Contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Country Behavioral Health</td>
<td>Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens-Illinois</td>
<td>Glass Containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Muskogee</td>
<td>County Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitlock Packaging</td>
<td>Beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOR</td>
<td>Multi-Service Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V&amp;M TCA</td>
<td>Oil Well Drilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald’s</td>
<td>Fast Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilldale School District</td>
<td>Public School System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Foundry</td>
<td>Steel Castings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Bottling Company</td>
<td>Beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captive-Aire Systems</td>
<td>Ventilation Equipment Mfg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Packaging</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkview School for the Blind</td>
<td>State School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sephora</td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dillard’s Department Store</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom Seating</td>
<td>Restaurant Seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT&amp;T</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sears Department Store</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Greater Muskogee Development Corporation
Industry Clusters

The Eastern Workforce Investment Board provided the Muskogee City County Port Authority with an Industry Overview Report for the fourth quarter of 2009. Data from this report has been used in the following industry cluster analysis. An industry cluster, as used in this analysis, is defined as a group of related industries that have concentrated within a given area. The presence of an industry cluster demonstrates a region’s competitive advantage for businesses within related industries that will likely benefit from proximity to one another. The advantages of this co-location might include shared inputs or skilled labor pool, close relationships between suppliers and buyers, and the ability to exchange complementary services.

This analysis utilizes a series of benchmarks calculated from employment data provided by the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission to identify industry clusters that may have a competitive advantage in the Muskogee County area. As seen in Table below, these benchmarks include wage levels, employment growth (in both absolute and relative terms), and employment concentration (referred to as a location quotient).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2009 Jobs</th>
<th>2010 Jobs</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Current Earnings Per Worker</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Regional Location Quotient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, natural resources, and mining</td>
<td>2,113</td>
<td>2,112</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>$27,074</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>$36,832</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and health services</td>
<td>5,045</td>
<td>5,235</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>$38,773</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial activities</td>
<td>1,809</td>
<td>1,875</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>$29,903</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>7,893</td>
<td>7,979</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>$58,897</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
<td>$43,037</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and hospitality</td>
<td>2,876</td>
<td>2,915</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>$12,966</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,986</td>
<td>4,044</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>$55,803</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>1,556</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
<td>$20,798</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and business services</td>
<td>3,907</td>
<td>3,082</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>$25,798</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37,924</td>
<td>38,459</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>$39,927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EMSI Complete Employment - 4th Quarter 2009; Greater Muskogee Development Corporation

A location quotient (LQ) is a measure that is used to gauge the employment concentration of a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group within a given area as compared to the larger region or nation. The LQ of industries within an area can reveal what makes that particular geography unique in comparison to the regional or national average.

A LQ value of greater than 1 indicates that a study area has more jobs than the national average for a given industry. Conversely, a value of less than 1 indicates that while the industry is important to the local economy, its impact is not as great. For this analysis, the LQ was calculated for industries within Muskogee County by comparing regional employment levels to employment levels in the larger State of Oklahoma.
Within a given industry cluster, the three factors of growth, earnings, and employment concentration combine in various arrangements at varying degrees. These different combinations have been used in this analysis to classify industry clusters into one of three types:

► Potentially Emerging Clusters are characterized by strong growth, but a low concentration. Industry clusters that are considered potentially emerging include Financial Activities and Professional and Business Services. These clusters both have an earnings per worker value of nearly $30,000. The relatively small proportion of Muskogee County jobs in these clusters and their projected near-term growth indicate that additional businesses within these clusters are likely to emerge.

► Important Growth Clusters are characterized by a strong concentration and fast employment growth. Industry clusters within this category include Education and Health Services. This cluster is among the highest paying within the region with earnings per worker values at nearly $39,000 per year.

► Mature Clusters are characterized by a strong concentration, but moderate employment growth. Mature clusters within Muskogee County include Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Government; Construction; and Manufacturing. Given that Muskogee is the county seat, it is likely that a significant portion of the jobs in the Government cluster will occur within the City. Despite a long-term decline in manufacturing throughout the nation, and recession that has caused contraction within the construction industry, these industries are projected to experience growth in the Muskogee region. Earnings are also relatively high among these mature clusters, particularly within Manufacturing and Government, where the current annual earnings per worker are estimated to be $56,000 and $59,000 respectively.

It is estimated that employment in Muskogee County will have increased by 535 jobs in the year 2010 over 2009. Given the City of Muskogee’s significance within the region, it is likely that much of this growth is occurring in the City. The projected growth and location quotient data indicate that there are some opportunities for economic development and quality job growth outside of the retail trade sector. The significant presence of government facilities and health service providers in the City may represent the strongest assets on which to build future economic growth and development. Jobs in these clusters are relatively high paying and are typically full-time positions.

Overview of Industrial Market

Muskogee is located on the southeastern periphery of the Tulsa industrial market as defined by CB Richard Ellis, a nationally recognized provider of commercial and industrial real estate research. Though Muskogee is not within the Tulsa market, trends occurring within the Tulsa market impact and are indicative of local industrial market activity.

The chart below summarizes vacancy and lease rate statistics for the Tulsa industrial market.

![Industrial Market Vacancy and Lease Rates](image)

The industrial market within the Tulsa region has not proved immune to the economic downturn affecting the larger nation.

► As of December 2009, the most recent period for which data is available, the Tulsa market had a total inventory of 59.7 million gross square feet with approximately 5.3 million square feet of available space.

► While vacancy rates dropped to near 4% for several quarters in 2007 and 2008, several consecutive periods of negative absorption increased the year-end 2009 vacancy rate to 8.9%. This represents a nearly 100% year-over-year increase in vacancy since the vacancy rate of 4.5% at year-end 2008.

► Lease rates within the Tulsa region have remained steady, ranging between $4.50 and $4.75 since December 2007. However, introductory offers for one to three months of free rent have become commonplace.

Employment projections within the manufacturing sector indicate that the need for industrial space will be flat in the near term, with the exception of demand generated by existing companies looking to upgrade or relocate. Local efforts within the Muskogee area should be focused on supporting the retention of existing businesses and recruiting targeted industries with the potential for job growth that complement established industries within the region.

With the Port of Muskogee and additional available land proximate to the airport, the City is well positioned to compete and capture a proportionate share of the market.

Labor, Employment & Industry Market Overview

Despite increases in vacancy rates and negative absorption, the Tulsa market is performing better than most other markets across the nation. However, the amount of available space and overall soft demand decreases the likelihood of new speculative industrial construction in the near- to mid-term. Any activity will likely be in the form of a build-to-suit project for a specific end-user.
Community outreach efforts provide important insight on local issues, concerns, and opinions from residents, community leaders, and the business community. This section summarizes the outreach efforts that have been completed so far.

- **Project Website**
  - Community Questionnaires
  - Issues Mapping
- **Project Initiation Meeting**
- **Community Workshop**
- **Key Person Interviews**
- **Neighborhood/Ward Workshops**

### Project Website
To assist in community outreach, and overall communication of the planning process, a project website has been created that is linked to the City’s website. The project website provides visitors information on how to stay involved, a calendar of dates and times for future meetings, and posted copies of all documents that are produced for public review and comment. The Project was active throughout the entire planning process.

### On-Line Questionnaires
On-line questionnaires were posted on the project website and publicized by the City. One questionnaire was designed for residents, and the second was designed for business owners and managers. The questionnaires were provided to the community to supplement other community outreach efforts and are not intended to be a scientific survey instrument. Both questionnaires remained open and available throughout the planning process.

### Community Issues Mapping
An on-line community issues mapping tool was posted on the project website to provide yet another opportunity for public participation in the process. The community issues mapping tool allowed residents to identify, map, and provide comments on specific, or general, areas of concern within the City. Using a legend with “points of interest” categories, users were able to categorize locations in the City that were viewed as opportunities, threats, or assets. Maps created by users were considered as part of the planning process.
Project Initiation Meeting
The planning process began on June 1, 2010 with a meeting and workshop with members of the City’s Planning and Zoning Commission. Six commissioners were in attendance and participated in the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review the benefits for an updated Comprehensive Plan, the planning process, and the role of the Planning and Zoning Commission in the process.

The meeting concluded with a workshop that allowed Commissioners to provide their input regarding the City and the Comprehensive Plan/Future Land Use Plan. The following is a summary of the results from the four (4) questions that were used to facilitate the workshop.

Question 1: Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the City of Muskogee
The following are the main issues and/or concerns that were cited by members of the Planning and Zoning Commission:

Need for Economic Development
Commissioners expressed an overall desire to see economic development improved in the City. The City should maximize its strengths, such as the airport and its proximity to multi-modal transportation opportunities. Several Commissioners discussed how there is a need for attracting more jobs and specifically more high-paying jobs into the community.

Code Enforcement Issues
Many noted how significant code enforcement issues were within the community. Several examples of code violations were given including vehicles parked on front lawns, structures in need of repair and maintenance, garbage/litter/debris, and unmowed lawns.

Poor City Appearance/Image
In general, several Commissioners noted the City had a poor appearance, especially within its Downtown and along its primary commercial corridors. The use of metal buildings, and temporary signs within these highly visible areas were examples of issues that create the City’s poor image.

Perceived Muskogee Public School District Image
Members discussed perceived problems with the school district and how that perception is impacting growth and community pride.

Poor Condition of Several Residential Neighborhoods
Large stocks of blighted homes exist throughout several residential neighborhoods. Commissioners noted that several homes have been burnt, are vacant/abandoned, or are in serious need of repair especially within the Original Town Site. A Commissioner also stated that there is a need to improve residential neighborhoods on the west side of Muskogee.

Condition of City’s Infrastructure and Transportation System
Commissioners expressed concerns regarding the City’s infrastructure, streets, and the impact State Highways have on local streets. Specifically the poor condition of streets and sidewalks throughout the City was mentioned several times. It was also noted that the Downtown lacked pedestrian amenities and that the area does little to encourage walking and shopping.

Growth Issues
Concerns were noted regarding future growth of the City. Specific issues included the need and cost of servicing new growth areas, and how important a long-range plan was for Muskogee to grow. A Commissioner stated that future annexations should not just be thought of as additional retail sales tax revenue sources, but also as additional service and infrastructure costs.

Question 2: List, in order of importance, the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.
According to the Commissioners, the most important issues discussed were the perceived problem with the school district, potential future growth/annexations, a need for more economic development, the large stock of blighted/vacant homes, the poor condition of the Original Town Site, the overall lack of cleanliness within the City, the poor appearance of signs and gateways leading into Muskogee, and significant code enforcement issues.

Question 3: Identify three (3) specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken.
Commissioners identified the following specific projects or actions they would like to see undertaken: Solve the school district’s perception issue; create a positive (public image) campaign that includes community input; develop an economically viable plan to redevelop blighted homes; improve code enforcement; and develop an “events” venue to draw visitors into the City.

Question 4: What are the primary strengths and assets of the City?
The following are the primary strengths and assets of the City as identified by the Commissioners: Muskogee is a small town without the problems of larger cities; there is a small town atmosphere; the parks and opportunities for outdoor recreation including Love-Hatbox Field, the educational facilities; the Castle of Muskogee, proximity to the major transportation system especially for industry; the Downtown (parts); the residents; the City is a “college town”; proximity to Tulsa; and the low cost of living.
Community Workshop

The first community workshop was held with Muskogee residents at the Public Library on June 2, 2010. Approximately 25 residents and City Staff were in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to review the need for, and the benefits of an updated Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. In addition, there was a review of the planning process as well as a discussion regarding upcoming events, meetings, and opportunities for residents to participate in the process over the next 10 to 12 months. The meeting concluded with an exercise that allowed residents to provide their input early in the planning process. The following is a summary of the results from the four (4) questions that were used to facilitate discussion.

Question 1: Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the City of Muskogee

The following is a summary of the main issues and concerns that were raised by those in attendance:

Future Growth/Annexations

Attendees noted several issues related to future growth and annexations including: the desire to see the City’s boundaries expanded to help control future growth; the need to have more industrial properties “shovel ready”; and the need for new warehouse space to attract businesses. There was also concern regarding a perceived lack of available industrial land in the Port of Muskogee. Attendees noted that the City should grow outwards, but also focus on “infill” development, especially within the Downtown area.

Condition of Many Residential Neighborhoods

A number of concerns were raised regarding the condition of many of the City’s residential neighborhoods. Residents were concerned with the large number of blighted, vacant, and abandoned homes. Those in attendance stressed the importance of code enforcement as a tool to improve the condition of the neighborhoods. Attendees identified the desire for the City to have better control over rental properties. It was noted that future residential developments should include housing that is affordable, and built for middle-income households. There was also a desire to see more housing added within the Downtown to create a mixed-use/town center environment.

Image and Overall Appearance

Several in attendance noted issues and concerns related to the City’s image and overall appearance. Specific areas of concern included a perceived poor image along the primary corridors leading into Muskogee, the Downtown, and within the Original Town Site. One idea proposed to improve the City’s appearance was to create a new Streetscape Plan for the Downtown area. It was also stated that rehabilitation of historic properties should be undertaken to preserve important and architecturally significant buildings. The issue of garbage and litter throughout the City was mentioned frequently. Attendees also noted that improved code enforcement (i.e. additional personnel) was needed throughout the City. Other issues related to image included high levels of crime; and the poor condition of certain parks. Some attendees wanted to see parks improved with new facilities and increased maintenance.

Economic Development

The need for more jobs was mentioned by the majority of attendees as a key issue; specifically, more high-paying jobs and a desire to see additional industry/businesses locate in Muskogee. It was noted that additional jobs would improve resident income and begin to end poverty in the City. It was also stated that new businesses would improve the City’s cash flow/budget. In addition to the issue of job creation, attendees also expressed economic development issues related to land use, taxes, and funding. There is a desire for the City to improve land uses along Highway 69 to capitalize upon the vehicles and truck traffic along that corridor. Attendees would like to see the Civic Center used more and new uses developed adjacent to the Civic Center such as retail, restaurants, and hotels to create an entertainment/destination area.

Aging Infrastructure and Facilities

The City’s aging infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, roads, and sidewalks) was mentioned several times as an important issue for the City to address. Other infrastructure issues included the desire to correct flooding problems. Related to the City’s aging infrastructure, attendees would like to see the Fairgrounds improved and promoted more as an asset for the entire community. Some also noted that the City should convert abandoned rail lines into recreational multi-use trails and that grants should be sought to fund their construction and on-going maintenance. Attendees also noted the desire for the City to provide more activities for youth, teens, and seniors.

Need for Improved Planning Coordination

Attendees would like to see the City and the County work together to create improved long-range planning that benefits the entire community. In addition to planning coordination, attendees would like to see more planning studies completed, specifically for the corridors and the downtown. The need for a planning document like the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map was stated by several attendees as an important project for the City to undertake. An attendee noted that planning is important to ensure that industrial development is not located adjacent to single-family homes.

Question 2: List, in order of importance, the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.

Although attendees were asked their three most important issues, a greater number of important issues were provided; therefore, all of the top issues noted are listed. According to those in attendance, the most important issues discussed were the City’s aging infrastructure; the lack of effective code enforcement; the need to improve economic development and the funding to undertake economic development activities; the overall poor image and perception of the City; apathy of some residents; the need to increase the sales tax base; the need to improve technology infrastructure city-wide; the deterioration of the Original Town Site; and the desire to see improved planning coordination between the City and the County.

Question 3: Identify three (3) specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken.

Attendees identified several projects or actions that should be completed including the following:

Economic Development Projects: The need to improve sales tax generation and specifically the development of more retail shopping in the south side of Muskogee; the dedication of tax for economic development (i.e. a funding mechanism created for implementing economic development strategies); and the need to create a hotel/motel tax.

Residential and Neighborhood Projects:

The removal of blighted structures; and the creation of incentives for rehabilitating residential structures for new homebuyers.
Transportation and Infrastructure Projects:
The reconstruction of all rail crossings; new infrastructure to service industry and growth; the rehabilitation of the sanitary and storm sewer system; installation of a new light at Court/Main Streets; create an improved recycling program (for both residential and industrial); build a riverwalk; and relocate the river crossing tower.

Planning Studies:
New planning studies should be completed for the City’s corridors and for the Downtown area.

Community Facilities and Services:
The development of Love-Hatbox Park for supporting tourism; improvement of pedestrian access on the south side of Civilian Park; the need to rehabilitate the streetscape in the Downtown; supporting Muskogee Partnering Groups (MPG); and the desire for the City to hold new community-wide events.

Question 4: What are the primary strengths and assets of the City?
The following are the primary strengths and assets of the community as identified by those in attendance: proximity to the transportation system (rail, airport, water, and interstate system); infrastructure (electric, gas, water); vehicular and truck traffic along Highway 69 and the Turnpike; existing parks including Love-Hatbox Park; the City’s geographic location and proximity to Tulsa; Muskogee’s history and small town charm; healthcare facilities; the low cost of labor; the school system; the Port of Muskogee; nearby wealthy tribes; local manufacturers; the Federal government (VA/SSA); and the areas lakes and rivers.

Key Person Interviews
As part of the community outreach phase for the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map update confidential interviews were conducted with key individuals to discuss issues and opportunities within Muskogee. Twenty individuals were interviewed based on their various interests and insights into the community. Persons interviewed included elected and appointed officials, business owners, City staff, and residents. Interviews were conducted on June 2nd and 3rd at City Hall with some follow up by phone. Each interview was between 30 and 45 minutes in length. Interviewees were asked a series of questions to help facilitate discussion. However, specific questions germane to each person were asked in order to ascertain information relevant to individual expertise and experience. Overall responses are summarized below.

1. How would you define/describe the character of Muskogee?
The majority of interviewees described the character of the City as being a mix between a historic, small-town where everyone know one another and a more modern community with opportunities for redevelopment and growth. Many also defined the City as being very diverse with regard to its economic and racial composition. The City was also described as an excellent place to raise a family.

2. What do you believe are the primary assets and advantages of Muskogee?
The City’s location and transportation network (interstate access, airport, water access, rail) where indicated as strengths. The rich history of the community and the residents and businesses were also cited. The availability of excellent health care, recreational facilities and overall quality of life were discussed as advantages as well. The Port of Muskogee and the Marina were examples of recent developments that are significant assets.

3. What do you believe are the primary weaknesses and disadvantages of Muskogee?
Primary weaknesses included a need for higher wage jobs; need for additional retail development along corridors other than Shawnee; lack of activity Downtown; and the condition of many residential neighborhoods. Also, although location was mentioned as an asset by some, others felt that proximity to Tulsa actually is an impediment to attracting development. In addition it was also mentioned that the Civic Center has difficulty competing with Tulsa for events. Civic Center issues, however, were also linked to the lack of restaurants and other attractions Downtown.

4. What do you consider to be the single most important issue confronting the City today?
While there was not a single issue defined by all interviewees, there were a few things that were commonly cited: Code enforcement within residential neighborhoods (related to the overall condition of homes and property); lack of economic development (particularly Downtown); and city finances and revenue. It was generally acknowledged that it was difficult to improve some of the negative elements without investment of city resources.

5. If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement within Muskogee, what would it be?
Interviewee’s responses ranged from a desire to undertake aesthetic improvements to bringing in major headquarter properties to facilitate job creation. Ideas included: expanding the Port, developing the Downtown, cleaning up residential neighborhoods and improving the schools.

6. What are your primary concerns regarding growth and development of the area?
The ability to extend and supply infrastructure was cited as a major concern. Others spoke of the need to “shore up” and improve existing areas within the core of the city before planning for annexation. Their concern was that attention will be drawn away from the neighborhoods that are in need of redevelopment. Others voiced concern regarding traffic and the ability to accommodate increased usage. Some could best be described as cautiously optimistic; they were excited about the potential reinvestment into the city as a whole, but concerned over the potential implications of further straining the City’s infrastructure.
Neighborhood/Ward Workshops

The second public meeting held with Muskogee residents was a Neighborhood/Ward Meeting that was held at the Public Library on August 5, 2010. Approximately 20 residents attended and participated in the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review the need for, and the benefits of, an updated Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. In addition, there was a review of the planning process as well as a discussion regarding upcoming events, meetings, and opportunities to participate in the process.

The focus of the meeting was to conduct a workshop with attendees to identify issues, opportunities and strengths within their own neighborhood or ward. The intent of the meeting was to build upon the input received at the previous Community Workshop held in June. That meeting allowed for more city-wide issues and opportunities to be identified, while the intent of this meeting was to allow for more detailed discussion at the Ward/Neighborhood level.

The following is a summary of the results from the four (4) questions that were used to facilitate the workshop.

Question 1: Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting your ward or neighborhood.
The following is a summary of the main issues and concerns that were raised by those in attendance in each neighborhood/ward:

Ward One (east of Main Street, north of Okmulgee Avenue):
Attendees from Ward One identified the following as issues and concerns:

Ordinance and Code Enforcement Issues
Attendees from Ward One would like to see the City improve its enforcement of codes and ordinances. Specific issues included unkempt front lawns, burnt and blighted homes, vacant homes, and dead vehicles parked on streets and front yards.

Transportation and Circulation Issues
Attendees in Ward One identified a number of issues with transportation and circulation. Specific issues included a “dip” in the road at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Hayes Street, sink holes, the poor condition of all streets especially Gibson Street, and the poor circulation of frontage roads along Shawnee Avenue intersecting with York Street, and Old Shawnee Street.

Infrastructure Issues
Attendees identified issues related to the neighborhood’s lack of street lights, and poor water pressure.

Ward Two (east of Main Street, south of Okmulgee Avenue):
Attendees from Ward Two identified the following issues or concerns in their neighborhood:

Ordinance and Code Enforcement Issues
Attendees from Ward Two would like to see the City improve its enforcement of codes and ordinances in their neighborhood. Specific issues included dilapidated structures, rundown homes, cars in yards, the noise from the speedway, weeds and litter, and unkempt grass on the west end of Turner Street.

Transportation and Circulation Issues
Attendees in Ward Two identified a number of issues with transportation and circulation. Specific issues included dilapidated structures, rundown homes, cars in yards, the noise from the speedway, weeds and litter, and unkempt grass on the west end of Turner Street.

Economic Development Issues
Attendees from Ward Two wanted the City to improve the economy and number of quality businesses within their neighborhood. A specific desire was to attract a new quality grocery store.

Appearance Issues
Attendees from Ward Two would like to see the overall appearance of the City, as well as their own neighborhood improved. Specific issues included the condition of flags, trash on streets, recent tree trimming has ruined trees over power lines, and several parking lots are unsightly.

Other issues included the need to remove pit-bulls, the foul odors from the industrial areas, the presence of a continuous garage sale on North Country Club Road, the condition of the stockyard property, and the need to attract a quality grocery store.

Infrastructure Issues
Attendees in Ward Two identified issues related to infrastructure including the need to fix stormwater issues (especially on Georgia Street, east of York Street), the lack of appropriately sized utilities, and the need to ensure that existing roads can support current and future zoning.

Parks and Recreation Issues
Parks and recreation issues included the need for more sports practice areas on the east side of the City, the ad hoc development that occurs just outside of the City limits, and the need to require new parks and/or recreation areas as part of new housing developments.

The following is a summary of the main issues and concerns that were raised by those in attendance in each neighborhood/ward:
Ward Three (west of Main Street, south of Okmulgee Avenue):

Attendees from Ward Three identified the following as issues or concerns confronting their neighborhood:

**Ordinance and Code Enforcement Issues**

Attendees from Ward Three would like to see the City improve its enforcement of codes and ordinances. Specific issues included run down homes, drug houses, vacant homes, front yards that need to be maintained, old cars that have out-of-date tags, trash and litter, graffiti, and weeds. Attendees also identified the need for better bus service including additional routes.

**Infrastructure Issues**

Attendees identified infrastructure issues dealing with a lack of sidewalks, and water flooding in residential areas.

Other issues noted included the need for more museums, and more housing in the range of $100,000 to $200,000 in the west end of the City.

**Transportation and Circulation Issues**

Attendees in this neighborhood identified a number of issues related to transportation. Specific issues included traffic moving through the City, railroad noise, traffic on Okmulgee Avenue, speeding through residential areas and the lack of speed limit signs, traffic issues at the 40th Street signal, people in motorized wheelchairs driving on the streets, and the need for better bus service including additional routes.

**Appearance and Image Issues**

Overall the neighborhood is unattractive and has a poor image. Specific issues included a lack of sidewalks, a lack of quality facades and properties, and that historic homes are being neglected.

**Economic Development Issues**

Attendees from Ward Three wanted the City to improve the number of quality businesses within their neighborhood. Specific issues included the need to attract a new quality grocery store, and the need to improve the appearance of business facades and properties.

Transportation and Circulation Issues

Attendees in this neighborhood identified a number of issues related to transportation. Specific issues included traffic moving through the City, railroad noise, traffic on Okmulgee Avenue, speeding through residential areas and the lack of speed limit signs, traffic issues at the 40th Street signal, people in motorized wheelchairs driving on the streets, and the need for better bus service including additional routes.

**Infrastructure Issues**

Attendees identified infrastructure issues dealing with a lack of sidewalks, and water flooding in residential areas.

Other issues noted included the need for more museums, and more housing in the range of $100,000 to $200,000 in the west end of the City.

**Ordinance and Code Enforcement Issues**

Attendees from Ward Four would like to see the City improve its enforcement of City codes and ordinances. Specific issues included tall weeds and grass, homes that need to be demolished, absentee property owners, empty homes falling down, the need for historic preservation, and the need for slumlord strategies.

**Appearance and Image Issues**

Overall the neighborhood is unattractive and has a poor image. Specific issues included trash dumped on the side of streets, gang signs that need removing, lack of proper care given to Honor Heights Park (not enough done to make it a destination), and the need for neighborhood schools.

Transportation and Circulation Issues

Attendees in this neighborhood identified a number of issues related to transportation. Specific issues included traffic moving through the City, railroad noise, traffic on Okmulgee Avenue, speeding through residential areas and the lack of speed limit signs, traffic issues at the 40th Street signal, people in motorized wheelchairs driving on the streets, and the need for better bus service including additional routes.

**Infrastructure Issues**

Attendees identified infrastructure issues dealing with a lack of sidewalks, and water flooding in residential areas.

Other issues noted included the need for more museums, and more housing in the range of $100,000 to $200,000 in the west end of the City.

Question 2: List, in order of importance, the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.

According to those in attendance, the most important issues discussed were the City’s aging infrastructure (including streets, sidewalks, and sewers); the lack of effective code enforcement; the poor sense of community; and the need to improve economic development. The following is a summary of the most important issues identified by attendees from each ward:

**Ward One Top Issues:**

A lack of code enforcement; the need for slumlord strategies; a lack of quality grocery stores; use of drugs; the poor condition of roads and infrastructure including sidewalks, streets, and sewers; foul odors from industrial uses; the lack of historic preservation; poor zoning ordinances; no sense of community; the poor appearance of malls and Highway 69; and a lack of neighborhood amenities.

**Ward Two Top Issues:**

A lack of sidewalks; the poor condition of roads and infrastructure including sidewalks, streets, and sewers; traffic near Grant Foreman Elementary School; property issues including burnt homes, weeds, and disrepair; a lack of code enforcement; the need for more economic development; the condition of commercial centers; a lack of sports facilities on the eastside of the City; and the lack of a shopping venue on the southside of the City.

**Ward Three Top Issues:**

The noise from the speedway; the poor condition of streets; homes are in need of maintenance; a lack of sidewalks; a lack of code enforcement; no sense of community; no quality grocery store; high crime; the need for new businesses; vacant buildings; speeding in residential areas; and flooding.

**Ward Four Top Issues:**

A lack of consistent code enforcement; poor current zoning and development standards; poor pedestrian/bicycle circulation; roads, sidewalks, and infrastructure in poor condition; a lack of preservation efforts for historic homes; the need for more economic development; graffiti; and there is no sense of community.
Question 3: Identify three (3) specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken in your Ward/Neighborhood. Attendees identified several projects or actions that should be completed in their Ward/Neighborhood including the following:

Ward One:
Residents in attendance from Ward One identified the following projects:
► Clean up debris/junk; improve code enforcement; end crime and drugs; secure pit bulls; attract a quality grocery store; repave Gibson Street; remove the foul odors from the industrial area; extend Gibson Street to the westside of the City; clean up and beautify the commercial uses and motels along Shawnee Avenue; build a larger indoor building at Civitan Park; address noise complaints; improve code enforcement; address zoning; support downtown development; and improve transportation.

Ward Two:
Residents in attendance from Ward Two identified the following projects:
► Improve traffic control around Grant Foreman, and from Hancock through Highway 69; repair streets and install new storm drains; improve code enforcement; construct community gardens; install sidewalks; widen York Street south of Hancock; repave Hilltop Avenue; develop an entertainment district near the Music Hall of Fame; and widen the intersection of South Cherokee and Peak Boulevard.

Ward Three:
Residents in attendance from Ward Three identified the following projects:
► Remove vehicles that no longer run from front yards and along roads (i.e. Main Street); attract a quality grocery store; maintain the bike trails; increase police presence; improve people’s yards; enforce speeding in residential areas; eliminate flooding; review City staff performance; construct sidewalks; and attract quality restaurants.

Ward Four:
Residents in attendance from Ward Four identified the following projects:
► Enact a new zoning ordinance; require landlord registration; allow citizens to give citations for code enforcement; maintain Honor Heights Park; install infrastructure moving west; remove gang signs; require owner-occupancy of single-family homes in historic districts; develop downtown; preserve and assist in keeping historic homes; replace sidewalks; maintain front yards; pick up trash from right-of-ways and streets.

Question 4: What are the primary strengths and assets of your Ward/Neighborhood? At the conclusion of the meeting, those in attendance were asked to focus upon the strengths of their neighborhood. The following are the primary strengths and assets for each of the wards as identified by those in attendance:

Ward One Strengths:
► Access to the Arkansas River; proximity to the Turnpike; Civitan Park; and the School for the Blind.

Ward Two Strengths:
Hilldale School District; businesses; grocery store; a nice part of town (although one attendee noted the area was stable; and another stated it was rundown); proximity to major streets; the new park; and the low crime rate.

Ward Three Strengths:
Access to the hospital; Love-Hatbox Sports Complex; churches; the Civic Center; Country Music Hall of Fame; proximity to Highway 69; clean front yards; part of Historic Muskogee (Old Town) and walking trails.

Ward Four Strengths:
Historic properties; areas of beautiful homes; Founders Place and Kendall Place; Honor Heights Park; large trees; and Downtown.

Summary of Community Outreach
The following are the key issues, concerns, and strengths as identified by the public. A more detailed discussion and analysis of issues, concerns and strengths are included at the end of this report.

Issues and Concerns
► Need for Economic Development
► Code Enforcement Issues
► Poor City Appearance/Image
► Perceived Muskogee Public School District Image
► Future Growth/Annexations
► Condition of Many Residential Neighborhoods
► Aging Infrastructure and Facilities
► Need for Improved Planning Coordination

Strengths
► Residents
► Small-town atmosphere, history, and character
► Parks and recreation, lakes, and rivers
► Schools
► Proximity to transportation system (rail, airport, water, interstate)
► Proximity to Tulsa
► Low cost of living
► Historic districts
► Port of Muskogee and local manufacturers
► Downtown (as a foundation to improve upon)
► Infrastructure system (electric, gas, water)
► Healthcare facilities
► The Federal government (VA/SSA)
Visioning Session/Charette and Community Workshop

A visioning workshop was held with residents on October 21, 2010 at the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame. Approximately 25 residents were in attendance and participated in the visioning workshop.

The structure of the visioning workshop allowed for residents, business owners, elected and appointed officials, members of the consultant team, and others to work together in creating a vision for the future of Muskogee and its planning jurisdiction.

The workshop included both small and large group working sessions to review and discuss conditions and potentials with the City. Small “breakout” groups worked together to develop “visions” for the future of Muskogee. The meeting concluded with general agreement regarding the long-term role and character of the City and the projects and improvements that will be desirable in the future.

Attendees were divided into four (4) smaller groups to create their visions. To assist each group in thinking about all areas and issues/opportunities in the City and its larger planning area, the following suggested topics for discussion were provided:

► Residential Development
► Community Facilities
► Transportation
► Parks, Open Space and Recreation
► Commercial/Retail/Shopping
► Image and Identity

A summary of the statements and vision prepared by each of the groups follows.

Group One Recommendations

► To improve residential neighborhoods the group suggested: tearing down derelict homes; promote pride in ownership; add infill in the Original Town Site; create an assistance program; redo properties in historical districts; add a trolley tour of historic homes; and improve outlying areas such as Grandview.

► Group One suggested the following ways to improve community facilities: construct a new swim club; build a new post office; rebuild a new library downtown; construct a new City Hall/Police Station; build a youth recreation building; improve Rotary Park; and work with the School Districts to ensure schools are maintained.

► To improve transportation the group recommended: improving public transit; build sidewalks; create an east-west corridor for bikes/peDESTrians only; create a walking trail from the mall; create a new central parking area; and provide good lighting.

► The group suggested the following to improve the commercial/shopping/retail environment in the City: attract new businesses to locate in the Downtown including a grocery store, restaurants, coffee shops, chocolate shops, gift shops, hardware stores, book stores; and Eastside Boulevard needs to be improved.

► To improve the City’s image and identity the group recommended: create a community concert series; promote music in schools; develop interest in the City’s history; and become bicycle friendly.
Group Two Recommendations
► The group provided the following as recommendations to improve residential neighborhoods: enact landlord licensing; provide assistance to undertake exterior rehabilitation for qualified homeowners; promote new/infill residential; require setbacks; look for smart growth; look into ways to provide infrastructure; encourage left apartments in multi-story buildings.
► The group suggested the following to improve community facilities in Muskogee: build a new library at its current location; construct satellite libraries in needed areas; encourage female firefighters; and keep the Fair Grounds at its current location, however, the facilities should have more diversified use.
► To improve transportation the group suggested: adding bike lanes throughout the City; improve public communication about the availability of the bus routes and schedule; add more efficient bus routes; and distribute free/low cost bus tickets based upon need.
► To improve parks and recreation the group suggested that the Parks and Recreation Department add a splash pad and a butterfly garden at Beckman Park.
► To improve economic development the group suggested that the City enact a higher hotel/motel tax to be used for economic development and tourism. The group would also like to see a better attitude and more collaboration between residents and organizations to improve the identity and image of Muskogee.

Group Three Recommendations
► The group would like to see residential neighborhoods improved by adding new sidewalks and park sites; constructing more middle to upper class housing in a variety of types including single family, duplexes, patio homes, and apartments.
► The group would like the City to explore the potential for gated residential communities in Muskogee.
► To improve community facilities the group suggested: moving the fairgrounds; building a new amphitheatre at Civic Park; and constructing a new community meeting facility that can accommodate groups of 50-100 people.
► To improve transportation the group recommended new bus shelters be construct that include posted bus routes.
► The group would like to see a new grocery store constructed at the intersection of Denison Avenue and 4th Street.
► The group questioned whether it was in the City’s best interest to annex unincorporated property.

Group Four Recommendations
► The group identified a number of residential neighborhoods that were in need of revitalization and provided recommendations to improve the areas such as encouraging new planned developments to replace vacant structures.
► To improve community facilities the group recommended: the construction of a new Library within the Downtown area; the addition of more practice fields at Robinson Park; and the relocation of the Fairgrounds to Love-Hatbox Sports Complex.
► To improve pedestrian walkability the group recommended that new pedestrian crosswalks be installed at the intersection of Denison Avenue and 4th Street.
► To improve transportation with the community the group recommended: improving access to the Muskogee Turnpike; constructing a protected left turn lane at the intersection of Main Street and Okmulgee Avenue; and converting 4th Street to two-way traffic with the addition of a bike lane and designated bus stop areas.
► The group would like to see a new grocery store constructed at the intersection of 4th Street and Denison Avenue.
► To improve the image of the City, the group would like to see improved streetscaping and a more diverse marketing campaign created to promote the assets of Muskogee.
The Vision is intended to be a retrospective that chronicles the accomplishments and achievements that have occurred in the City of Muskogee since the new Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2012. The Vision incorporates the main ideas and recurring themes discussed throughout community meetings including the key person and stakeholder interviews, meetings with City staff and elected and appointed officials, community workshops, and the visioning charrette.

City of Muskogee Vision

The Vision on the following pages provides a foundation for the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations contained in the new Comprehensive Plan. It is written as a retrospective in the year 2031 which paints the picture of what changes and improvements have happened over the last 20 years since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted.
IN THE YEAR 2031…

Muskogee has seen dramatic change and has reemerged as a great American City. With quality schools, parks and leadership it is a desirable place to live, and THE place to do businesses. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, exciting destinations attract visitors, and a business friendly environment creates jobs and investment.

While considerable change has occurred over the last 20 years, the improved entrances into the community immediately signify to visitors that Muskogee is an attractive and inviting City. At each major gateway to Muskogee new high-quality entrance features including new signage, decorative lighting, landscaping and public art have been installed. These gateway features are complemented by the consistent streetscaping that has been installed throughout the City’s main corridors which create an immediate image and identity for the entire City of Muskogee. The private sector has followed suit and has worked with the City to improve overall property appearance, particularly as it relates to buildings, signage and parking areas. Guided by new Design and Development Guidelines, new investment has not only improved the appearance of the community, it has resulted in additional businesses locating in the city, and more customers are making Muskogee their shopping destination.

The City is home to many community events and festivals held throughout the year, showcasing the proud history and culture of the great City of Muskogee. Anchoring the community’s tourism is the new “museum campus” in Downtown, near the Civic Center. The museum campus, comprised of War Memorial Park, the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame and the Three Rivers Museum, contributes significantly to the vibrancy of Downtown and its role as the heart of the community. As part of the new “museum campus” the City has worked with other government entities to relocate or stay Downtown, constructing new buildings, facilities and campuses in the City’s center. Not long ago, facilities such as the library were located on the fringe of the Downtown. Today, Downtown Muskogee is the location of almost all things “civic” and residents can park in one place and visit any civic venue they need.

Realizing a long term objective, the City was able to secure grant funding to relocate the War Memorial Park and the USS Batfish to Downtown, where it is the center piece of the museum campus. Although costly, grant funding and the hard work of many, made it possible to relocate the USS Batfish, making national headlines and greatly improving its visitation and exposure. Truly a sight to see, the “Champion Submarine-Killing Submarine of World War II” sits majestically in a new downtown park, where it has helped to dramatically transform Downtown Muskogee into a destination for the community and beyond.
While some key projects have had a catalytic effect, Downtown Muskogee’s reemergence can be equally credited to numerous developments and improvements that have, together, incrementally improved Downtown. Once again the “center” of town, Downtown Muskogee is a vibrant destination for shopping, dining, working, and living. The area has experienced reinvestment of all types, including public and private. New mixed-use buildings have added commercial stores, office space, and residential units Downtown, and new public investments have demonstrated to the development community that the City is committed to Downtown’s revitalization.

The new residential components of the mixed-use development in the Downtown has expanded housing choices in the community, while at the same time provided a local population to support both existing and new businesses. The addition of streetscape enhancements has improved the pedestrian realm and has made Downtown even more pedestrian-friendly with improved and interconnected sidewalks, ADA accessible features and ramps, pedestrian crosswalks, wayfinding signage, benches, trash cans and street trees. Connectivity between the Downtown and Arrowhead Mall has also improved with the addition of new sidewalks, wayfinding signage, and consistent streetscaping elements that have “united” the two major shopping areas.

One of the more noteworthy accomplishments achieved over the last few years has been the consolidation and relocation of the Veteran’s Administration to a new Downtown office building. The new “VA” building is an attractive landmark that joins the BOK building in Muskogee’s skyline. Prior to the consolidation, Veteran’s Administration facilities were scattered throughout the City, some with parking problems in adjacent neighborhoods. The new consolidated office has increased the agency’s efficiency, employee morale has improved, and conflicts with non compatible uses such as residential properties have been eliminated. The VA offices, along with other employers that have located in the Downtown area, has added significantly to the daytime population, and helped foster a new dining and entertainment district, including a new hotel, located near the Civic Center and Museum Campus. With lodging and entertainment nearby, the museums are flourishing, and the Civic Center is now hosting more conventions and tradeshows, and more events and concerts - truly a “hot-ticket” in town.

Complementing the community’s museums are the City’s historic districts, which are once again a source of pride and tourism. In concert with the stabilization and improvement of the residential areas in the Original Town Site several years ago, home owners within the historic districts began improving and restoring their properties. With the assistance of the City, property owners have utilized Federal and State Rehabilitation Tax Credits to restore the architectural character and details of homes and subsequently entire neighborhoods. The City actively promotes its historical neighborhoods, and today, it is not uncommon to see pedestrians walking with maps and cameras through these restored historic districts on architectural walking tours.

Working closely with the school districts and the community, the performance, image and reputation of the schools has improved. Through improved staffing, curriculums and marketing campaigns, complemented by reinvestment in school facilities, the “Muskogee Public Schools/Hilldale Public Schools” is no longer a divisive issue in the community. Today, both school districts are excellent, on par with one another, providing quality education to the children of Muskogee. The result of the improved school system has been profound. Not long ago, nearly all new development and investment in the community was locating in areas to the south, within Hilldale Public School territory. The southern growth was straining City infrastructure and causing disinvestment within older areas further compounding decline. With local, state and federal assistance, school districts are no longer a factor of consideration for new development or home buying. This has resulted in more young families moving to all areas of Muskogee and helped greatly to stabilize and improve areas within the Original Town Site.
Also contributing to the stabilization of the City’s residential areas has been more consistent code enforcement; relocating, removing and reducing land use conflicts; improved neighborhood safety through consistent and cooperative efforts between the Police Department, County, Emergency Management Service, and Fire Department. Reinvestment and curb appeal strategies designed and focused on restoring a healthy housing market has allowed for the financing of home repairs and maintenance, and attracted homeowners to the community. The result has been a renaissance in the City’s neighborhoods, which are now described as a place where neighbors know one another, and are “neighborly” – looking out for each other and getting together to address issues affecting their neighborhoods and investments. Today, neighbors will confidently address neighborhood issues in a way that protects their neighborhood and furthers its health. Assisting this grassroots effort, the City of Muskogee continues to support its residents by promoting infill development on vacant parcels, redevelopment of dilapidated structures, and ensuring all neighborhoods are well served by community infrastructure – namely schools, churches and parks.

Although single-family residential homes are still the predominant type of housing in Muskogee, the City has worked to ensure that a mix of all housing types have been constructed in order to provide housing options for everyone in all stages of life. Throughout the City, one can find residential developments designed for seniors, residential units for young professionals, and stable healthy neighborhoods for families with young children.

As much as ever, City parks are an important recreational, social, and aesthetic component of the Muskogee community. The City continues to work with residents to prioritize park and recreation improvements and new facility construction to ensure that the benefits of parks and recreation are indeed “endless”.

An early accomplishment after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan was the capital improvement program, or CIP, created to address the City’s infrastructure problems. Using this CIP as a guide, the City has been able to improve infrastructure throughout the community, in a manner that is prioritized, phased, and sustainable. The CIP has also greatly assisted the City in leveraging grants and other funds to assist with the improvements, including repairs and updates to the City’s transportation network. Guided by a “complete streets” approach, the streets in the City are efficient and safe for all modes of travel – including driving, walking, biking, and public transit. Access points along some of the City’s key commercial corridors have been reduced, one-way streets in the Downtown have been removed, and an improved, coordinated and intelligent traffic signal system synchronizes intersections to improve flow.

The City continues to preserve, protect and capitalize upon one of its most unique assets - the Arkansas River, which provides the City with both recreational and industrial opportunities. Providing a venue for much of the waterfront recreation is Three Forks Harbor, a premier community facility situated on the river’s east bank. Across the river on the west bank, is the Port of Muskogee, a critical connection between the City’s industry and the McClellan-Kerr Navigation System which allows freight to be transported to the Gulf Coast and around the world. Working with the Port, the Army Corps of Engineers, the State, and other agencies, the City has expanded the Port’s operations and the industrial base that is reliant on river access.
Section 4 Goals and Objectives

The City of Muskogee’s Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map is an expression of what the community desires Muskogee to become in the future. Through recommendations and established goals and objectives, the Plan provides a flexible policy guide for decision-making and community action.

This section presents the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and objectives which provide the framework for future planning recommendations, policies as well as potential projects and actions.

**Goals** describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.

**Objectives** describe more specific actions that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

Together, the goals and objectives provide specific direction and establish the broad picture of what the City of Muskogee wants to accomplish within its Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. Goals and objectives combine to provide direction, and serve as a guide for evaluating specific projects and land use alternatives.

The goals and objectives presented in this section are based on: a) input from residents; b) input from business owners and managers; c) discussions with community leaders and facility providers; d) input from City staff and the Planning Commission; e) input from boards, authorities, committees, and commissions; and f) feedback from on-line questionnaires and comment forums.

The City of Muskogee, Oklahoma Comprehensive Plan & Future Land Use Map

Section 4 - Goals & Objectives Page 37
Image and Identity

Goal 1
Maintain and promote a positive image and identity for the City that is distinct and reflective of Muskogee’s unique heritage and history.

Objectives
1. Continue to work with other agencies and property owners to “tell the story” of Muskogee’s history by supporting the different museums and cultural amenities within the City centered upon its Native American heritage and country music roots, as well as its historical districts, murals, and “guitar sculptures.”
2. Working with appropriate agencies and museums, explore the creation of a “museum” campus in Downtown Muskogee.
3. Explore the potential and feasibility of relocating the USS Batfish and the War Memorial Park to the Downtown area to create synergies from other Downtown museums and destinations and to improve its visibility and access.
4. Work with economic development agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce, Port of Muskogee, and Downtown Muskogee to develop a marketing campaign to promote the advantages and benefits of living, working, doing business in, or visiting the City.
5. Maintain and improve the quality of designated historic districts and the homes within them, through grants, streetscaping and other economic development efforts.
6. Continue to implement and update the City’s wayfinding signage program and ensure signs are attractive and current, and that all key community facilities, museums, parks, and other destinations are identified.
7. Improve communication with residents in an effort to increase awareness of, and participation in, programs, services and events within the City.
8. Support a variety of different tourism activities to maximize visitors to the area year-round including, but not limited to, museums, parks, music, historic districts, entertainment facilities, and eco-tourism.
9. Work with the School Districts and educational institutions (colleges and universities) to assist in marketing and promoting the excellent schools educational opportunities along with other strengths and assets to the Muskogee community and beyond.
10. Continue to support and encourage residents, businesses, organizations, and groups that enrich the arts and culture of the community.
11. Continue to support existing programs and events and develop new events such as community festivals and holiday events and gatherings recognizing that these programs and events bring the community together, foster civic pride and create a sense of unity.

Goal 2
Improve the community’s image through attractive, high-quality development, redevelopment and reinvestment and public projects

Objectives
1. Encourage compatible and high-quality design and construction for all development/redevelopment with an emphasis on site design, building orientation, architecture, building materials and site improvements.
2. Provide for consistent and high-quality maintenance of all local streets, parkways, sidewalks, water towers and other visible municipal infrastructure.
3. Establish an incentive and loan program to encourage private property owners to implement landscaping, façade and signage improvements to their sites, buildings and businesses.
4. Strictly enforce landscaping, screening and signage requirements.
5. Strictly enforce property maintenance requirements for all land uses in the City.
6. Develop and implement landscaping and tree planting and maintenance programs that beautify the residential and commercial areas of the City and provide for maintenance programs.
7. Encourage the use of public art in development projects and in public areas to promote and help establish the community’s identity.
8. Review development controls to ensure that they require appropriate screening of public utilities, dumpsters, rooftop equipment, etc.
10. Implement a unified streetscape package along the City’s key corridors and districts to improve the community’s appearance and strengthen Muskogee’s “brand” through benches, landscaping, trash cans, streetlights, bike racks, way finding signage, and other amenities and provide for maintenance programs.
11. Create gateway features consisting of signage, walls, sculptures, pylons, fountains, lighting, monuments, and/or landscaping at key locations within the community to announce entry into Muskogee.
Transportation and Circulation

Goal 1
Improve the safety and efficiency of vehicular and pedestrian movement and improve connectivity within the City.

Objectives
1. Identify and continue to support roadway extension projects that enhance local circulation and connections to the larger region.
2. Identify and improve problematic intersections through realignment and enhanced signalization, signage, and streetscape.
3. Work with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to improve traffic flow and circulation along routes under its jurisdiction.
4. Eliminate unnecessary curb cuts throughout on all arterial roads to improve the safety and efficiency of vehicular movement.
5. Expand the downtown wayfinding signage program to direct motorists to key retail centers, office complexes, industrial areas, community facility destinations, and other points-of-interest throughout all areas of the City.
6. Budget for on-going maintenance and repairs of City-owned streets as part of the Capital Improvement Plan.
7. Through wayfinding and improved route marking, strive to increase the utilization of the Columbus Avenue overpass as an alternative to constructing a costly grade separation of Martin Luther King Drive.
8. Promote the development of “Complete Streets” that safely accommodate all modes of travel along the City’s key corridors.
9. Minimize and discourage non-local traffic within residential neighborhoods through better land use arrangements, signage, and parking lot configuration and access.
10. Promote and support Three Forks Harbor as a community facility that provides public access to the waterway for recreational boaters.
11. Continue to implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Departments Trails Plan, making updates and revising as necessary.
12. Continue to link parks and open space through the expansion of the local multi-use trail system.
13. Establish local trail connections to the larger trail network and regional parks and natural areas.
14. Work with school districts and residents to create safe “walk to school” routes, and identify critical “gaps” in the sidewalk system and establish a program to construct new sidewalks in established areas of the City where the sidewalk network is incomplete.
15. Ensure that all new development provides sidewalks and sufficient street lighting to promote pedestrian circulation and enhance pedestrian safety.

Goal 2
Continue to provide a world-class transportation network comprised of all modes of travel to maintain Muskogee’s locational benefits that help retain and attract business, industries and other employment uses.

Objectives
1. Identify and continue to support roadway extension projects that enhance Muskogee’s regional connections to the larger region.
2. Work with Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority to ensure the City of Muskogee maintains necessary and appropriate access to the Muskogee Turnpike and other routes under their jurisdiction, including Peak Boulevard and U.S. Route 69 (32nd Street).
3. Support the provision of adequate and necessary railroads and railroad infrastructure to support and attract industrial businesses to the City.
4. Continue to work with railroad companies to ensure railroad crossings are safe, properly maintained or improved whenever necessary.
5. Support the continued operation of the Port of Muskogee and Davis Field Airport as a unique economic development and transportation assets for the community.
6. Explore the cost and benefit of an interchange at Davis Field Road and the Muskogee Turnpike as a means of providing Davis Field Airport with direct access to the highway.

Goal 3
Expand the availability and use of public transit throughout the City.

Objectives
1. Promote the availability and benefits of public transit to residents and businesses.
2. Support Muskogee County Transit and its bus service and routes within the City and the connections they provide to employment and shopping destinations.
3. Work with the Muskogee County Transit to improve and expand bus service routes to better meet the needs of residents and employers.
4. Install attractive bus shelters along all major routes and work with Muskogee County Transit to ensure they are visually compatible with other streetscaping improvements.
5. Work with Muskogee County Transit to improve usability of the system, by posting up-to-date bus schedule and route information at all bus shelters and designated stops.
6. Encourage Muskogee County Transit to provide bus service to all major employment centers within the community, including business and industrial parks.
Community Facilities

Goal
Continue to provide high-quality City services and maintain adequate infrastructure and utilities throughout the community.

Objectives
1. Work with other public agencies, including the County, Library and the local school districts, to maintain adequate sites and facilities.
2. Ensure adequate levels of fire and police protection throughout the City and work with City departments and Muskogee County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) to ensure that emergency vehicles can effectively serve all areas of the City, exploring potential new station locations if necessary in the future.
3. Coordinate annexations and development plans with community service and facility providers to ensure adequate levels of community services in Muskogee’s growth area and the rest of the City.
4. Maintain adequate sites for City Hall, the City Payment Center, Police Station, Public Works, Fire Stations, and other City facilities; constructing, renovating, expanding, and relocating facilities when necessary.
5. Improve and expand specialized facilities and services for senior citizens and youths.
6. Work with others to seek appropriate locations for specialized facilities and services for senior citizens, youth and disadvantaged populations.
7. Work with the school districts to review the existing parking facilities, buildings, drop-off/pick-up areas, and bus parking, including ingress and egress to ensure they are adequate and if not, identify opportunities for improvement.
8. Work with the school districts to ensure proper buffering surrounding school facilities and provide safe and adequate access to all school sites.
9. Work with Muskogee Public Schools to address real or perceived issues with the District’s effectiveness, image, and reputation in an effort to foster development and reinvestment in all areas of the City.
10. Continue to work with and support the colleges and institutes of higher learning in their provision of expanded educational opportunities within the City of Muskogee.
11. Coordinate and cooperate with other public agencies to maintain adequate and appropriate sites and facilities for the provision of public services.
12. Continue to conduct a comprehensive life cycle assessment for City buildings, equipment, vehicles, facilities, and properties and develop/revise a multi-year maintenance plan and on-going maintenance program.
13. Identify funding sources such as grants to pay for the construction of new City facilities.
14. Increase efforts to identify alternative sources of funds such as grants to fund a wide range of public projects including, but not limited to City facilities, parks and recreation enhancements, transportation improvements, economic development related projects, and social services.
15. Provide reliable infrastructure to the residents and businesses within the community including electricity (power and substation locations), water supply and distribution, sanitary sewers, stormwater, and telecommunications.
16. Review City service levels to determine appropriate staffing levels and/or consultant/contractor support for all City departments.
17. Continue to budget for and implement improvement, expansion and maintenance of infrastructure provided by the City of Muskogee.
Parks, Open Space and the Environment

Goal
Protect, enhance, and expand the City’s parks, open space, and environmental features to improve the community’s health, environment, appearance, character, and quality of life.

Objectives
1. Establish a Park Land Dedication Requirement to acquire park sites in new residential developments and/or a fee-in-lieu contribution where park donations are not desirable to fund the purchase and development of other park sites in the City.
2. Annually review and revise the cash in lieu of a parkland dedication to ensure cash donations accurately reflect the true cost of improved parkland.
3. Explore opportunities for new park sites in older, developed neighborhoods within the City with current park deficiencies.
4. Work with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to plan and budget for expansion or improvement of existing parks.
5. Improve the Arkansas River as a public amenity through public access and open space acquisition.
6. Continue to link parks and open space with the multi-use trail system.
7. Continue to work with the local school districts and private recreation providers to provide appropriate recreational facilities and activities for residents.
8. Work with the County and the State of Oklahoma to identify and accurately map the floodplain and work with property owners to identify a plan to minimize or eliminate flooding issues.
9. Require appropriate setbacks and buffering from creeks and floodways to minimize flooding issues and improve water quality.
10. Promote the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Smart Growth planning and construction techniques for new development and redevelopment sites.
11. Encourage new development in the City to pursue and obtain LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.
12. Promote local “environmentally-friendly” programs for residents, including recycling, water conservation, the use of renewable resources, and the use of public transit.
13. Adopt site lighting criteria to maintain safe light levels while avoiding off-site light spillage and night sky pollution.
14. Create a City of Muskogee “Green Awards” program that recognizes innovative green building projects and initiatives.
15. Promote the addition of new public gathering spaces and plazas within the redevelopment of the Downtown and provide for proper maintenance.
Residential

Goal 1
Provide a housing inventory and living environment that supports the local population and accommodates future growth while improving the overall health, quality, image and character of Muskogee.

Objectives
1. Promote residential development and redevelopment of a variety of housing and dwelling unit types and densities in accordance with the Land Use Plan, and ensure the Zoning Ordinance and other regulatory tools are updated appropriately.
2. Accommodate residential renovation and redevelopment through a consistent, expedient and thorough permitting process.
3. Encourage new development and infill development that is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential neighborhoods.
4. Favor "in-fill" development within the City’s existing corporate limits over development which would require annexation and the extension of municipal services.
5. To the extent possible, locate future multi-family developments within Downtown Muskogee, to enliven Downtown and provide densities that can support Downtown businesses.
6. Establish comprehensive guidelines and standards to improve the physical appearance of new residential neighborhoods, including architectural style, building materials, bulk, setbacks and landscaping requirements.
7. Protect residential areas from the adverse impacts of adjacent incompatible land uses.
8. Promote the repositioning of incompatible land uses in predominantly residential areas.
9. Ensure that residential areas have adequate buffering and/or screening from incompatible adjacent land uses.
10. Diversify the housing stock by allowing appropriately sized and scaled townhomes, condominium and senior housing development throughout the City.
11. Promote the creation of new residential neighborhoods that are visually appealing and incorporate a wider range of architecture.
12. Ensure that residents can safely walk or bike through their neighborhoods and have convenient access to local commercial areas, parks, and community facilities.
13. Ensure residential densities offset the cost of providing municipal services.
14. Preserve sound existing housing through regular, active code enforcement, and preventative maintenance programs.
15. Inventory and remove blighted and unsafe structures.
16. Develop a home renovation guide to assist residents with rehabilitation through a variety of programs and sources such as loans, tax abatements, down payment assistance and design assistance.
17. Develop a curb appeal incentive program to encourage upkeep and appearance of existing residential areas including both homes and landscaping.
18. Investigate programs or financial assistance programs which will aid residents in making property improvements.
19. Develop a series of varying floor plans, elevations and cost estimates for different styles and types of homes that are compliant with all City codes and ordinances which can be built on lots within the Original Town Site.
20. Provide assistance to local residents to create neighborhood associations and organizations to provide a unified voice of issues affecting their neighborhoods.

Goal 2
Stabilize and improve Muskogee’s older residential areas, primarily located within the Original Town Site, to protect property values and investments and improve the overall health and safety of residents.

Objectives
1. Work with the community to identify and formalize distinct neighborhoods within the Original Town Site.
2. Promote the rich history of the neighborhoods and Original Town Site.
3. Create a detailed housing revitalization plan to identify neighborhood specific strategies to improve living conditions and increase housing values.
4. Preserve sound existing housing through regular, active code enforcement, and preventative maintenance programs.
5. Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and the adverse impacts of adjacent non-residential activities.
6. Improve opportunities for home ownership and home improvement through a variety of programs and sources such as loans, tax abatements, down payment assistance and design assistance.
7. Explore opportunities between private, public and not-for-profit agencies to make available dwelling units or financing options for low and moderate income individuals and families.
8. Consider the implementation of Neighborhood Watch Programs and encourage efforts to reduce crime and increase community awareness of public safety.
9. Improve infrastructure throughout all residential areas including streets and pavement condition, sidewalks, and utilities such as water and sewer services.
10. Establish community outreach efforts and assistance programs to assist in the maintenance of homes and properties.
11. Provide assistance to local residents to create neighborhood associations and organizations to provide a unified voice of issues affecting their neighborhoods.
12. Encourage active participation in neighborhood associations and other activities that promote communication among neighbors and residents.
13. Promote the creation of newsletters and other neighborhood level communications to share information, address neighborhood issues and encourage neighborliness.
14. Promote opportunities for neighbors to “get to know” one another by organizing and hosting events and social activities at neighborhood parks and schools.
15. Work with local businesses, churches, schools and other entities to organize neighborhood clean-ups and beautification days.
16. Encourage residents to keep trash cans and recycling bins in the rear of the property.
17. Create a network of “neighborhood parks” and interconnected off-street trails that provide recreational and gathering opportunities for residents and neighborhoods.
18. Inventory and remove blighted and unsafe structures.
19. Promote the improvement and rehabilitation of deteriorating housing properties.
20. Develop a home renovation guide to assist residents with maintenance and upkeep of their homes, providing alternatives and cost estimates for common renovations.
21. Develop a curb appeal incentive program to encourage upkeep and appearance of existing residential areas including both homes and landscaping.
22. Investigate programs or financial assistance programs which will aid residents in making property improvements.
23. Develop a series of varying floor plans, elevations and cost estimates for different styles and types of homes that are compliant with all City codes and ordinances which can be built on lots within the Original Town Site.
Commercial

Goal 1
Maintain areas of healthy commercial development throughout the City that provide a range of goods and services to local residents and attract shoppers from outside the City.

Objectives
1. Continue to support local economic development efforts of the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Muskogee, Inc. to retain, expand, and attract businesses to Muskogee.
2. Maintain a range of retail and service commercial activities throughout the City primarily within nodes along the commercial corridors and within Downtown.
3. Improve the land use pattern and zoning districts throughout the City’s commercial areas to improve the use, appearance, and cohesiveness of development.
4. Support and encourage all retail, office, and service commercial activities to be organized by use and concentrated within or near areas of complementary uses to create districts and clusters of complimentary uses.
5. Consider additional incentives such as sales tax rebates, TIF, SSA, and business district funds to attract and initiate commercial development at select areas of the City.

Goal 2
Enhance the appearance and function of the City’s commercial areas.

Objectives
1. Establish design and improvement standards for commercial areas to guide the scale, appearance, orientation, and overall character of new development.
2. Ensure adequate site landscaping in all commercial areas and implement a coordinated streetscape improvement program along the City’s major corridors to enhance the overall character and appearance of the corridor commercial areas.
3. Coordinate shared vehicle access with the intention of reducing curb cuts and promoting shared parking areas and internal cross access within Downtown and along commercial corridors.
4. Initiate programs to encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older commercial buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete including improvements to facades, signage, streetscaping, landscaping, and parking areas.
5. Ensure that new commercial development and redevelopment is designed in scale with, and complementary to, adjacent development.
6. Enhance major commercial corridors with streetscaping and gateway improvements.
7. Promote and require landscaping within commercial areas and require the upkeep of parking lots, opaque screening of service areas, drives, buildings, and incompatible uses.
8. Ensure that all commercial development is effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential uses.
9. Where applicable, require the design of new commercial developments to incorporate public amenities such as parks, plazas, arcades and connections to existing or proposed trails.
10. Implement a more systematic and proactive property maintenance and code enforcement process in commercial areas of the City.
**Industrial Goal**

Improve and support the existing business and industry within the City as high quality locations for industrial, light industrial, high-tech office, office park, and commercial service uses.

**Objectives**

1. Support the continued operation of the Port of Muskogee and Davis Field Airport.
2. Continue to support and assist local economic development efforts of the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, the Port of Muskogee and others to retain, expand, and attract industrial businesses to Muskogee.
3. Assist the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, Port of Muskogee and others in their efforts to market and promote the city, local businesses, and development opportunities.
4. Encourage the Port of Muskogee to routinely audit the needs of existing businesses, including current tenants in the Port, to assess their operations and be sure they are aware of the cost savings attributable to barge transportation and the transload services provided by the Port’s terminal operators. Undeveloped lands in the Port should be reserved for new or expanding local businesses who require access to the waterway.
5. Ensure the Port of Muskogee is adequately serviced by infrastructure necessary to retain and attract industry and employment.
6. Support future expansion, reconfiguration and modernization of the Port of Muskogee to ensure the facility remains adequate.
7. Ensure the provision of adequate and necessary roads, highway access, railroads and railroad infrastructure to retain, support and attract industrial businesses to the City.
8. Ensure adequate infrastructure exists within all existing and future industrial areas including telecommunications (voice/data), water, wastewater, electricity, stormwater detention, etc.
9. Improve circulation, exposure and visibility to the Port of Muskogee and other industrial parks by installing improved gateway features and directory signage listing businesses.
10. Require all industrial development to meet specific applicable performance standards for noise, air, odor and any other forms of environmental pollution.
11. Ensure that new or expanded industrial uses are concentrated in areas of similar or compatible use in general compliance with the Land Use Plan.
12. Work cooperatively with existing industrial businesses situated outside the areas designated as “Industrial” to relocate to more appropriate locations in the City, prioritizing those uses that are situated within, and negatively affecting, residential neighborhoods.
13. Designate truck routes to serve all industrial areas and require utilization of these routes to prevent industrial traffic from using residential streets.
14. Improve the appearance of the existing business and industrial areas including buildings, parking areas, and screening/buffering.
15. Ensure that all business and industrial uses are effectively screened from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way, through the use of screening and buffering with landscaping, fencing, or a combination of the two.
16. Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of functionally obsolete industrial buildings to accommodate more appropriate and market viable uses.
17. Decommission, demolish and clear the sites of blighted and vacant industrial properties.
18. Encourage and facilitate the remediation and redevelopment of brownfields.
19. Encourage new development to utilize “green technology” and Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as green rooftops, solar energy, and green paver parking lots to reduce stormwater runoff and improve stormwater quality.
20. Through annexation of surrounding properties and execution of the Land Use Plan, protect the Davis Field Airport from residential encroachment and other incompatible land uses that could impact its current and future operation.
Intergovernmental and Organizational Cooperation

Goal
Continue to communicate, coordinate, and work with Muskogee County, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), public school districts, the Port of Muskogee, Greater Muskogee Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Muskogee Inc., the City of Muskogee Foundation and others to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

Objectives
1. Maintain positive channels of communication and encourage collaboration with, and between, all public and quasi-public agencies and community service providers to ensure better coordination of projects, better coordination of long-range plans, provision of efficient and cost effective services, use of shared resources to reduce or eliminate the duplication of services.
2. Coordinate with Muskogee County, ODOT, adjacent communities, and others to assist in realizing mutual objectives and addressing issues such as traffic that transcend municipal boundaries.
3. Assist, when appropriate, other agencies and organizations seeking grants and alternative funding sources undertaking projects or actions consistent with City goals.
4. Continue to support and assist local economic development efforts of the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, the Port of Muskogee and others to retain, expand, and attract businesses to Muskogee.
5. Assist the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce and others in their efforts to market and promote the City, local businesses, and development opportunities.
6. Work with other agencies, including City Departments, to establish appropriate impact fees that capture all of the associated expenses for new development.
7. Coordinate the review and input of new development proposals with all City Departments and affected public agencies, including the Fire Department, School Districts, and Parks Department.
Growth Management

Goal
Slowly and methodically promote appropriate growth and development within Muskogee’s growth areas as the City grows outwards discouraging leap-frog development and the premature conversion of farmland, being mindful of the cost of extending utilities and providing necessary community services.

Objectives
1. Encourage, promote, and direct development and redevelopment within already built-up areas, prioritizing the Original Town Site.
2. Consider adjacency and concurrency requirements to prevent “leap frog” development.
3. Coordinate the review and input of new development proposals with all City Departments and affected public agencies, including the Fire Department, School Districts, and Parks Department, ensuring adequate services are available for new growth.
4. Limit the City’s share (if any) in the cost of providing public utilities and services to an amount justified by the community-wide benefits received.
5. Work with other agencies, including City Departments, to establish appropriate impact fees for the extension of necessary utilities and infrastructure, capturing all of the associated expenses for new development.
6. Coordinate sizing and routing of sewer and water extensions with the City’s long-range plans for new growth and development, allowing for incremental or phased improvements.
7. Continue to work with regional agencies, such as Muskogee County and the Eastern Oklahoma Development District (EODD) to coordinate development policies for areas outside of incorporated Muskogee, including the exploration of a joint review/approval process for zoning related concerns in areas within 2 miles of the City’s municipal limits.
8. Develop a detailed growth plan and strategic annexation policies, prioritizing the annexation of unincorporated areas completely surrounded by the City of Muskogee.
9. Require developers in future growth areas to oversize utilities and infrastructure to accommodate other planned growth and development and permit and facilitate the reimbursement of over sizing costs borne by the initial developer through recapture agreements.
10. Require developers to donate land and/or money to ensure the provision of necessary land for public improvements and facilities, in coordination with the district or service provider.
11. Continue to budget for and implement improvement, expansion and maintenance of infrastructure provided by the City of Muskogee.
Fiscal and Economic Development

Goal
Achieve economic prosperity by strengthening the fiscal climate of the City through the balanced diversity of retail, commercial, office and industrial uses.

Objectives
1. Maintain an appropriate balance of sales tax generating uses including retail and service uses.
2. Maintain a diverse tax-base comprised of a well balanced mix of uses, including residential, commercial and industrial land uses.
3. Encourage the maximization of retail sales tax generating uses in all commercial corridors and Downtown.
4. Renovate or redevelop aging shopping centers and commercial areas in order to maximize their contribution to the City's tax base.
5. Consider additional incentives such as sales tax rebates, TIF, SSA, and business district funds to attract and initiate commercial development at select areas of the City.
6. Promote the availability and use of Federal and State Rehabilitation Tax Credits to historic sites and districts to fund renovation, rehabilitation, modernization and expansion.
7. Identify additional small business assistance programs to stabilize and improve conditions for existing businesses.
8. Promote Muskogee’s locational advantages and key transportation facilities, including the Port of Muskogee and Davis Field Airport, as important industrial assets for the City.
9. Seek opportunities for new employment growth through the retention and expansion of employers.
10. Continue to work with the local business community and coordinate outreach activities that provide regular opportunities for communication between businesses and City staff/elected and appointed officials.
11. Work with property owners, real estate professionals, the Greater Muskogee Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Muskogee Inc., Port of Muskogee, and others to market and attract residents, developers, tourists, businesses and industry.
12. Support and promote the efforts of the Greater Muskogee Chamber of Commerce, Port of Muskogee, Downtown Muskogee Inc., and others to market and promote local businesses.
13. Promote the addition of new office and retail development in the City, particularly in the commercial corridors and the Downtown area.
14. Identify resources for the maintenance of the City’s physical facilities including buildings, properties, and infrastructure.
15. Accommodate renovation and redevelopment through an expedient and flexible, yet thorough permitting process.
16. Work cooperatively with the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Muskogee Inc., business and property owners to establish a “Muskogee Downtown Business Association/Task Force” to help promote, coordinate, and undertake downtown focused economic development initiatives, including a detailed Downtown Master Plan.
17. Promote the use of tax credit incentives and other grant programs to fund renovation and expansion.
18. Develop and implement a detailed economic development plan, including a strategic branding, marketing and recruitment plan, to attract targeted businesses and/or clusters to the City of Muskogee.
Plan Administration

Goal 1
Implement, monitor progress, and update the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map on a regular basis.

Objectives
1. Undertake an annual review and maintain an action plan to prioritize objectives and monitor success.
2. Utilize the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map on a daily basis.
3. Obtain funding and financial resources to assist in implementing components of the Plan.
4. Consider input from, and cooperate with the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Chamber of Commerce, authorities, boards, commissions, school districts, local organizations, and individuals to implement the recommendations of the Plan.
5. Post a copy of the final Plan on the City’s website and provide hardcopies available for view (or purchase) at City Hall and the Library.

Goal 2
Review and update as needed the City’s regulatory controls to foster high quality, appropriate, contemporary and attractive development.

Objectives
1. Undertake a detailed review of the City’s ordinances and development controls to ensure that the Plan’s goals and objectives are supported, and permitted, under City requirements.
2. Update the City’s zoning ordinance and zoning map to accommodate the various land use and development recommendations of the Land Use Plan.
3. As part of the zoning ordinance update consolidate the number of zoning districts into a smaller number of districts with increased flexibility.
4. Establish a process for the regular review and update of the City’s zoning ordinance to meet the changing needs of the community.
5. Consider Design and Development Guidelines to foster high-quality, attractive, and compatible development.
Section 5 Future Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan provides policies and identifies appropriate land uses for the future development of the City of Muskogee and its growth areas. The Land Use Plan is based on sound community planning principles, as well as several factors and influences, including the Vision, Goals and Objectives identified for the Muskogee community; market and demographic analysis; and an assessment of existing conditions including the established developed areas and infrastructure of the City and its planning jurisdiction. The Plan provides a general assessment of land use potential and recommendations for what types of land uses will best meet the needs of the community in the long-term.

As much of the community is well established, the Land Use Plan builds upon the existing land use pattern in the City and its larger planning area. In general, the plan strives to promote a compatible land use pattern that promotes reinvestment in the Original Town Site, promotes managed outward growth and discourages the premature conversion of agricultural land and open space, while focusing upon infill and redevelopment opportunities. The Plan also emphasizes the stabilization, enhancement and protection of residential neighborhoods, the provision of community facilities, and the preservation and enhancement of desirable environmental features such as streams, wooded areas, and wetlands.
Use and Purpose

A goal of the Land Use Plan is to assist staff, residents, businesses, and elected and appointed officials in making future land use and development related policy decisions. While the Land Use Plan is specific enough to provide guidance on land-use decisions, it is also flexible enough to allow for individual negotiations and the consideration of creative approaches to land development that are consistent with the overall policies and guidelines included in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Plan is intended to be a general guide to growth and development within Muskogee and is not a development plan of rigid and finite recommendations. The Land Use Plan presents recommendations for improving and enhancing existing areas within the City’s current municipal boundaries through better organization of land uses, as well as, for areas beyond Muskogee’s corporate limits should a city – county cooperative regional planning commission later be established as provided by Oklahoma Law (Title 11 – Cities and Towns, Section 46-101 et seq., Regional Planning Commissions, Oklahoma Statutes). This Plan allows for individual negotiations and the consideration of creative approaches to land development that are consistent with the policies and guidelines included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Building on Muskogee’s existing land use patterns, the goal of the Land Use Plan is to reinforce the historic character of Downtown Muskogee and the Original Town Site and strengthen the positive characteristics of the residential neighborhoods while supporting and improving the commercial and industrial development throughout the City. As Muskogee continues to experience infill development, redevelopment, and outward growth, the Land Use Plan should be used by City Staff, residents, businesses, and elected and appointed officials as a general guide to inform future decision making.

Flexibility

Recognizing the City’s infrastructure constraints, this Plan strives to prevent over extending utilities and the premature conversion of agricultural land and open space. Instead its primary focus is on promoting programs and policies for improving and maintaining existing residential, commercial, agricultural and open space areas. As development occurs, it is important that residents, City officials and staff remain flexible with regard to what land uses are deemed appropriate for a given area. This is especially true of the City’s growth areas, beyond Muskogee’s existing City limits. While these areas will likely be predominantly comprised of single-family residential uses, they should also contain other types of land uses including multi-family development, commercial centers, schools, park, office development, churches, and other uses essential to meeting the needs of future residents.

Land Uses

The Land Use Plan identifies the appropriate uses throughout incorporated Muskogee and its growth areas that will result in the community’s orderly and efficient development. The primary land uses identified in the Land Use Plan include three residential uses, three commercial uses, two industrial uses, parks and open space, agricultural, and public and semi-public uses.

Residential Land Uses

Residential uses occupy the majority of the land within the City’s incorporated areas and Muskogee should continue to develop as a primarily residential community. The City of Muskogee currently contains a variety of housing options including single-family detached, single-family attached, multi-family, mobile home, and senior housing. Future residential development should further expand local housing options and enhance the image of Muskogee as a desirable place to live, and raise families.

Single Family Residential

Single-Family Residential areas should consist primarily of single-family detached homes on lots subdivided and platted in a planned manner. Single-Family Residential is the predominant type of land-use in the City, and should continue to be so.

Transitional Residential

Transitional Residential areas should consist primarily of single-family attached units, including duplexes and townhomes, however multi-family structures may be appropriate and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The purpose of this land use is to provide a more dense residential area, promoting smaller units less desirable for families, to effectively create a transitional area between intense commercial uses, busy corridors and the adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods. Transitional residential areas also assist in diversifying the City’s housing stock, providing opportunities for first-time home buyers and empty nesters.

Multi-Family

Multi-Family Residential areas should consist of condominiums, apartments, and senior housing developments. Presently multi-family residential areas are located throughout the community, primarily adjacent to commercial uses and the City’s commercial corridors. It is recommended that the City promote multi-family development to occur in a more coordinated and organized fashion, in areas identified as multi-family residential in the land use plan.
Residential Recommendations and Policies

Neighborhood Stabilization and Maintenance

The age, condition, and type of housing stock varies greatly throughout the community. A wide variety of housing types exist, including single-family detached, single-family attached (duplexes), multi-family (apartments), and mobile homes. While there are homes and neighborhoods that are in excellent condition, and well-maintained, there are also large areas where homes are in poor condition. This is especially evident for several properties within or near the Original Town Site (OTS). In these areas a significant portion of the housing stock is vacant, blighted, and/or in need of improvement or in some cases demolition. These homes create a poor image, identity and appearance for the neighborhoods. The condition of these homes can also lead to unsafe living conditions, unhealthy living environments, and lower the property values of nearby homes.

Recommendations

Recognizing this issue, the City has worked with the community to create maintenance assistance and demolition programs including a Neighborhood Redevelopment Program. The City should continue to implement such programs and also continue to implement code enforcement for structures and property maintenance (i.e. moving). The following are additional strategies and policies for the City to consider working towards neighborhood stabilization:

- The City should seek to increase lot sizes, working with property owners and developers to widen residential parcels through acquisition of adjacent parcels as redevelopment occurs. This strategy can assist in combating and removing blighted homes, while at the same time allow lots to be “resized” and expanded to better meet contemporary housing products and market demands.
- To further stabilize residential neighborhoods, redevelopment of “in-fill” sites should be encouraged wherever possible. In an effort to promote infill development, the City should consider implementing incentive programs. The City of Milwaukee’s “New Home Catalogue” is an excellent example of one such program. Milwaukee’s program offers builders/buyers original house plans at no charge for vacant “in-fill” lots. The house plans are specifically designed to meet city building standards, and therefore the permit process and construction can be expedited.
- The City should proactively demolish vacant structures, and acquire and hold the property in land banks, for either open space/parkland or to facilitate redevelopment. These land banks could help create smaller neighborhoods with more green spaces and improved neighborhood amenities such as playgrounds and urban gardens or be sold or conveyed to developers to incentivize redevelopment.
- Zoning standards, development regulations, and design guidelines should be established to prescribe a specific built form and quality-design for all new residential developments. New residential homes should be designed to “blend in” with adjacent homes and the surrounding neighborhood. Improved zoning and development regulations should be created to encourage high-quality design and construction for all residential developments throughout the City.
- Redevelopment should first target entire blocks whenever possible, as opposed to piecemeal, lot by lot, redevelopment. Through land banking and developer incentives, larger block redevelopment can provide developers and builders with economies of scale; assist in realizing other objectives (i.e. increasing lot sizes); and, stabilize larger areas, blocks or neighborhoods. While block-by-block reinvestment is more speculative from a financial perspective, it provides a comfort level to both buyers and investors through sharing in the risk with the potential for larger immediate and longer-term benefits.
- Where considered necessary and appropriate by the City and the Parks and Recreation Department, the City could explore actively acquiring vacant properties in residential neighborhoods to create neighborhood “lot lots” or small parks. Corner lots and block ends provide the best opportunities for these spaces allowing them to be highly visible and easily accessible with minimal impact on adjacent homes. It is also important that these small pocket parks are well maintained with appropriate lighting. These greens may be open space areas, or they may include playgrounds, shelters, and community gardens.

Code Enforcement

Although the City’s staff and enforcement officers continue to enforce city codes, a very high number of residential structures and properties are not up to minimum standards. As a result, the appearance and image of the community and its neighborhoods are impacted, and quality of life and property values threatened.

Recommendations

Understanding that issuing fines to residents, especially in low income areas, is a sensitive issue; allowing a home in neglect to impact others is simply not fair to the community as a whole. The City should continue to budget for and support staff in undertaking consistent and effective code enforcement throughout the community. Although the City does enforce its current building and property codes, the City should seek funding sources and increase resources to improve enforcement capabilities and effectiveness. Additional funds would allow the City to hire and train more inspectors and code enforcement officers allowing more frequent and regular inspections of a larger number of properties. The City should also explore the potential of utilizing police officers to conduct code enforcement, or privatizing portions of the service.
**Historic Architecture**
The historic and architecturally significant homes within the City, primarily within its four historic districts, add greatly to the community’s character. The historic districts, along with their marketing and promotion, are key to the character of Muskogee, preserving and protecting the City’s rich history and providing tourism opportunities.

**Recommendation**
The City should work with property owners to assist in identifying, rehabilitation programs (i.e. tax incentives) and programs to preserve these homes and districts. The City should also continue to assist in promoting these homes and districts as well as opportunities for tourism, including bed and breakfasts and walking tours.

**Infrastructure**
Sections of the City’s existing infrastructure and utilities are in poor condition and are in need of repair and upgrades. Local streets (including pavement and curbs), sidewalks and other infrastructure, including water, sewer, and electric serving many residential areas in the OTS are outdated and in need of upgrades. The lack of reliable or up-to-date infrastructure is a significant issue for property owners. The disinvestment, or appearance of disinvestment, by the City and Utilities, can lead property owner disinvestment in their homes and neighborhoods, creating a poor image and unhealthy living environments.

**Recommendations**
The City should continue to budget for, and undertake, necessary infrastructure improvements and upgrades whenever feasible. To provide focus and priority to the program, the City (and appropriate agencies) should inventory and assess all infrastructure to facilitate planning and prioritizing improvements. The City should also coordinate with utility companies to ensure that adequate, high-quality infrastructure is provided in all areas of Muskogee, including the City’s growth areas.

**Manufactured/Mobile Homes**
Manufactured and/or mobile homes are structures built on a semi-permanent chassis and transportable in one or more sections. These homes contain all necessary plumbing, heating, air conditioning and electrical systems, and designed to be used as a dwelling with, or without, a permanent foundation, when connected to all required utilities. Unlike conventional homes, mobile homes have limited investment capabilities, and unlike houses, which appreciate in value, most mobile homes depreciate over time similar to an automobile.

Mobile homes and mobile home parks/communities are located in Muskogee’s periphery both near the City’s corporate limits, and outside in unincorporated areas of the City’s larger planning jurisdiction. In addition to these more formalized communities, several individual mobile homes are located on residential lots throughout the OTS. Mobile homes provide affordable housing options for residents but can detract significantly from the community’s appearance and character. Also, similar to the other types of housing in the community, there are mobile homes that are in disrepair, and the poor condition of many of the City’s mobile homes creates an unattractive and in some cases an unsafe atmosphere.

**Recommendation**
Whether the City continues to permit mobile homes within its corporate limits is a policy decision beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan and warrants careful consideration by City officials. At a minimum, mobile homes should be limited to formalized and planned mobile home parks which are subdivided, platted, and sites owned by the owner of the mobile home. The City should also establish minimum sizes for the mobile home units; require running gear, tongue, axles, and wheels be removed; require skirting on all sides of the homes; and strictly regulate maintenance and upkeep. Should these, and other desired requirements, fall beyond the City’s police powers, the City work with mobile home park operators/developers to establish strict covenants, conditions and restrictions (CCRs) which they would administer and police to ensure the areas remain safe, healthy and attractive.

**Multi-Family Residential Uses in the Downtown**
Currently, there are few, multi-family residential units in the Downtown area. The current lack of multi-family housing in the Downtown does not support the City’s vision for the Downtown to be an exciting and vibrant mixed use environment. A dense population of residents and employees is needed to sustain businesses and contribute to an active pedestrian environment and sustainable city core.

**Recommendation**
The City should promote orderly growth and development through the clustering of like uses. Multi-family development should be strategically reserved to help revitalize Downtown and as a transitional land use between single family areas and other incompatible uses. To this end, the Land Use Plan identifies areas appropriate for multi-family development. In addition to new development, the City should work with property owners of existing multi-family units/complexes to assist in identifying maintenance programs that can provide funds designed to aid homeowners and landlords in improving the condition of their properties.

The City should encourage all future multi-family developments to occur within Downtown as part of mixed-use projects to aid in its revitalization. By limiting new multi-family development to mixed-use buildings in Downtown, or as stand-alone multi-family projects within the Downtown’s periphery, the City can begin to promote a dense population near the City’s core that would help to create a market for retail and entertainment uses.
Commercial Land Uses

Commercial land uses should contain a mix of business providing goods and services to the residents of Muskogee, visitors from outside the area, and motorists passing through the community. The Land Use Plan designates the following types of commercial in the City: Neighborhood Commercial, Regional/Corridor Commercial; and Downtown Commercial.

Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial areas are the least intense type of commercial land use. They are intended to provide daily goods and services conveniently to local residential neighborhoods. They should be of smaller scale and intensity, and be comprised of a mix of uses that do not attract shoppers from the larger region. Given the nature of neighborhood commercial, these uses are often adjacent to residential properties, and should be developed appropriately, minimizing their impact on nearby residential areas.

Regional/Corridor Commercial

The Regional/Corridor Commercial designation is an intense commercial land use consisting of larger commercial properties along the City’s primary streets. These areas are intended to contain businesses or shopping centers that cater to the automobile, such as big box retailers, wholesale commercial, car sales, general commercial, and other similar businesses. Given the mix and intensity of uses, these areas should draw from the larger region, servicing the entire City and beyond.

Downtown Commercial

As the City’s center and focus of a range of activities from civic and business to entertainment and residential, the downtown should provide for an appropriate mix of land uses. Mixed-use buildings should be encouraged to accommodate first floor retail/restaurant uses with office or residential above. Just as multi-family residential should be strategically placed, the focus of mixed-use development should be Downtown.

Commercial Recommendations and Policies

Downtown Revitalization

By all accounts, Downtown Muskogee was a bustling central business district at the beginning of the 20th Century. However, similar to many downtowns across the Nation, Downtown Muskogee experienced disinvestment, due largely in part to the introduction and proliferation of the automobile. Newer, more “convenient” commercial development was more easily accommodated in areas outside of the Downtown, where businesses could cheaply provide ample and convenient parking. Parking in Downtown on the other hand, was limited to small lengths on the street or in public lots, requiring longer walks to businesses.

Today, Downtown is comprised of a mix of businesses, and with the exception of Arrowhead Mall, most are locally owned ventures. Arrowhead Mall is located on the north side of Downtown, but has very little connection to the area. Arrowhead Mall offers 60 stores and services, many of which are national retailers. It caters to the automobile and is not pedestrian friendly. Despite this fact, the mall is viewed as a positive asset to the community in that it provides a variety of needed retail uses and services.

Over the last decade, a national trend of downtown revitalization is occurring with the realization that pedestrian-oriented shopping districts and downtowns offer character and atmosphere that cannot be provided in other commercial areas or easily manufactured. Although Downtown Muskogee is not as vibrant as it once was, it too is experiencing increased attention and reinvestment. Downtown Muskogee Inc. continues its efforts to attract and retain businesses along with assistance from the City.

Recommendation

The City should continue working with Muskogee Downtown Inc. in its efforts to revitalize the downtown. In order to provide better direction and guidance for future development/re-development, it is recommended that a separate and detailed ‘Downtown Plan’ be prepared. Although the Comprehensive Plan provides recommendations for Downtown, comprehensive plans by nature are more broad and general, and do not include the type of specific, and strategic, recommendations that a more detailed and focused plan would provide.

The Downtown Plan should build upon the numerous public uses including City Hall, Muskogee County, and the Veteran’s Administration, and capitalize on important activity generators such as Arrowhead Mall and the Civic Center. It should provide specific projects and actions necessary to revitalize Downtown, and identify opportunities for mixed use development, including new retail, office and entertainment uses, and accommodate most of the demand for multi-family housing in the community.
Appearance of Commercial Corridors

Muskogee’s commercial corridors carry large volumes of traffic, around, and through the City. Many highly visible buildings, parking areas, and business signs along these corridors are unattractive and detract from the community’s appearance and reputation. Many building facades are outdated or unsightly, and most parking areas lack sufficient landscaping (perimeter and interior). Excessive lighting and deteriorating pavement also contribute to the negative appearance of these areas.

Recommendations

Not only do the commercial corridors provide shopping opportunities to residents, but they also assist in shaping perceptions of the community to motorists passing through. It is important that these areas remain attractive and welcoming. To this end, it is recommended that the City consistently enforce its City codes and ordinances. In addition, detailed design and development guidelines would assist in improving the appearance of these areas. By providing recommendations to assist developers in building high quality attractive development, guidelines can help incrementally improve these corridors as new development and investment occurs.

Another program the City should explore is implementing a facade improvement rebate program. This program would assist businesses in making appropriate improvements to their signage to meet City requirements with the City assisting in financing the improvements.

Business Signage

The lack of consistency among business sign types, sizes, and locations creates a cluttered appearance that detracts from the aesthetics of the commercial corridors. The effectiveness of individual business signs are reduced due to excessive clutter.

Recommendations

As part of the City’s Zoning Ordinance Update, the City should work with the community and business owners to create an ordinance that improves the type, size, and appearance of business signs. Also, similar to the facade rebate program, the City may consider a signage rebate program. This program would assist businesses in making appropriate improvements to their signage to meet City requirements with the City assisting in financing the improvements.

Industrial Land Uses

The Land Use Plan for the City of Muskogee identifies a considerable amount of land dedicated to industrial uses. Industrial areas including business parks and heavy industry are critical components of the local economy. They provide tax revenue to the City and more importantly, jobs to residents.

The Land Use Plan designates the following types of industrial in the City: Light Industrial/Business Park and Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing.

Light Industrial/Business Park

Light Industrial and business parks are less intensive industrial uses that do not overtax municipal facilities and infrastructure. Light industrial uses should consist of smaller service- and consumer-oriented businesses as opposed to large manufacturers. While light industrial uses are desirable and contribute to the economic health of the community, they can also negatively impact the environment and the quality of life for residents living in adjacent properties. Accordingly, the Land Use Plan identifies a land use arrangement that seeks to minimize land use conflicts, promoting separation from residential areas.

Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing

Heavy Industrial areas are major, regional employment areas of intense, concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses which cannot be easily mixed with other types of uses. Areas identified as Heavy Industrial should be reserved for manufacturing, industry and related uses. Provision of adequate public facilities and services, including good access to the region’s transportation system is critical to the success of manufacturing/industrial centers. Light industrial, business parks, offices, retail uses should be discouraged within these areas, however neighborhood commercial uses providing convenient uses to employment centers may be appropriate in some locations.

Industrial Recommendations and Policies

Port of Muskogee

The Port of Muskogee is a multi-modal transportation facility that offers industry the option of utilizing the most cost-effective combination of barge, rail and truck transportation for the acquisition of raw materials and the distribution of finished products. In accordance with Title 82 of the Oklahoma Statutes, the Mayor and Council of the City of Muskogee together with the Board of Commissioners for Muskogee County authorized the creation of the Muskogee City-County Port Authority, as an agency of the State of Oklahoma, to oversee the development of lands adjacent to the waterway. As statutorily mandated, the Muskogee City-County Port Authority adopted a comprehensive plan of development for the Port of Muskogee. The Port’s Master Plan was created in collaboration with the City of Muskogee, Muskogee County and the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. To date, the lands within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Port of Muskogee have been reserved for industries that provide transloading services or need access to the waterway and/or the multi-modal transportation assets in place.

The Port of Muskogee is also located in a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ #164). The following is a description of a Foreign Trade Zone and its benefits:

- Foreign-Trade Zones are a U.S. Customs Duty Management Program where manufacturers and distributors located in Foreign Trade Zones – since for Customs purposes, are considered to reside outside the U.S. –benefit from cost savings and flexibility.
- Businesses engaged in international trade within these Zones benefit from special customs procedures when importing and when warehousing, manufacturing, or assembling with imported goods that remain in bond under Customs Control.
- Subzones may be established for single purpose manufacturing/fabricating and distribution operations.
There are four Foreign Trade Zones in Oklahoma: the Port of Muskogee, the Tulsa Port of Catoosa, the Port Authority at Will Rogers World Airport of the Greater Oklahoma City Area (FTZ #106), and the International Business Park in Durant.

Benefits to businesses located in Foreign Trade Zones include:

► Ability to hold most merchandise subject to quotas until the quota opens and/or the ability to bring such goods into the Foreign Trade Zone and subsequently re-export them.
► Increases flexibility with just-in-time delivery, quotas, and reduced customs delays.
► Duty elimination on a) Previously imported material, which is re-exported; b) Rejected, scrapped, waste, or return-to-vendor imported material; and, c) the Sales of imported materials or finished products containing imported components to companies operating in other U.S. Foreign Trade Zones.
► Duty reduction by a) Manufacturing in the U.S. and selling domestically; and, b) Utilizing pick-and-pack operations where the “set” has a lower duty rate than the individual pieces.

**Davis Field Airport**

Davis Field Airport is a 1,622 acre general aviation airport owned by the City of Muskogee. The airport is located on U.S. Highway 64 at the southern end of the City’s municipal limits. The airport can accommodate light through heavy transport type jet aircraft. In addition to current airport operations there are areas available for future industrial development adjacent to airport facilities.

**Industrial Uses in Residential Neighborhoods**

Many heavy industrial uses are located within single-family residential neighborhoods, particularly within the Original Town Site (OTS) near the rail lines. Many of these industrial businesses have outdoor storage, repair bays, and fuel whose appearance, light, noise, and odors make them incompatible with residential uses. This unaesthetic appearance for the neighborhoods can detract from quality of life and impact home values. In addition, these industrial businesses attract heavy truck traffic through residential neighborhoods which results in an increased deterioration of local streets and safety concerns.

**Recommendation**

The City should plan for the long-term separation of incompatible land uses, working cooperatively with existing industrial businesses which operate within/adjacent to residential neighborhoods to relocate to more suitable industrial sites elsewhere in Muskogee. As a short term solution, the City should actively enforce its codes and ordinances as an effort to minimize the impact on residential areas and encourage businesses to install landscaping, board-on-board fencing, and other buffering techniques to better insulate residential areas.

**Supporting Land Uses**

Completing the mix of land uses within the City are different supporting land uses that accommodate public facilities and municipal infrastructure, utilities, parks and open space, and areas for future growth and development. Each of the different land uses are described below.

**Public/Semi-Public**

Public and semi public uses include public facilities or municipal infrastructure. This designation includes a number of existing government and institutional facilities including Muskogee City Hall, the Police Station, fire stations, schools, County facilities, and religious institutions. These uses provide necessary community services and infrastructure while adding to the overall quality of life for residents. Community facilities that are expected to attract a high volume of visitors such as City Hall and County Offices should be located within the Downtown area. Public/semi-public uses in other areas of the City including residential areas should be well-buffered from adjacent residential properties whenever feasible.

**Parks and Open Space**

The parks and open space land use designation includes both public and private open space, including city parks, public and private golf courses. The City should continue to maintain and improve its existing parks while looking for opportunities to acquire new high-quality open space in areas that are currently underserved by parkland or in areas that include important environmental features such as creeks, property within the floodplain, and heavily wooded areas, which are also identified as Open Space on the Future Land Use Plan.

**Recommendation**

The City should continue to support the Port of Muskogee’s development in accordance with the Master Plan of Development for the Port of Muskogee. The City should encourage the Port of Muskogee to routinely audit the needs and operations of existing businesses, including current tenants in the Port, to be sure they are aware of the cost savings attributable to barge transportation and the transload services provided by Port terminal operators. The end goal should be to maximize the efficiency of sites and land within the Port to make excess property available to new or expanding businesses who require access to the waterway.

**Recommendation**

The City should continue to support the Port of Muskogee’s development in accordance with the Master Plan of Development for the Port of Muskogee. The City should encourage the Port of Muskogee to routinely audit the needs and operations of existing businesses, including current tenants in the Port, to be sure they are aware of the cost savings attributable to barge transportation and the transload services provided by Port terminal operators. The end goal should be to maximize the efficiency of sites and land within the Port to make excess property available to new or expanding businesses who require access to the waterway.
Agricultural/Growth Areas
The agricultural land use designation identified in the Land Use Plan primarily represents Muskogee’s existing agriculture activities and its potential growth areas. Today, many of these areas consist of farms, farmsteads, and single family homes on large lots (4-acres or more), without City utilities with well and septic service.

In addition to residential uses there are some commercial service uses, and light industrial uses within these agricultural areas at the intersections of major streets outside the City’s limits. The potential does exist for the City to experience new growth in the more remote areas of the City and within the City’s extraterritorial planning area (areas outside of the current City limits), but growth should first occur in areas already within the City.

Given current economic conditions and a large amount of undeveloped land within the City, continued agricultural use outside the City’s corporate limits should be promoted. If development pressures begin to influence these areas, the areas should develop as predominantly residential, with commercial nodes at key intersections. Additionally, growth pressures in these areas should serve as an indicator to the City that a new Comprehensive Plan update is needed.

Potential Growth
Although the City has the opportunity to grow beyond its current municipal boundary, the City should carefully consider all expected costs associated with new growth and annexations prior to annexing new properties. Growth will require the provision of the extension of city services and infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.), parks, schools, streets and other utilities.

Recommendations
To achieve the vision desired by City leaders and residents, the City of Muskogee should first focus redevelopment efforts and investment dollars into the City core. As a part of these efforts, the City should explore “right-sizing” or shrinking, in two key areas of the City: 1) the residential areas north of Shawnee Avenue west of Main Street, and 2) the residential areas south of Shawnee Avenue and north of the abandoned railroad right-of-way. In each of these areas the City should study and assess the current conditions to determine if: a) they are still appropriate for single-family residential; b) a sufficient number of houses remain to cost-effectively provide city services; and c) there remains a sufficient density to foster a healthy active neighborhood.

The City’s growth strategy should be to grow outwards from the core by prioritizing the redevelopment of vacant lots and vacant parcels within the DTS and municipal limits. Growth outside of these areas should be allowed only under careful consideration and examination, particularly in terms of expected service and infrastructure costs.

With the exception of areas around the college campuses on the City's northeast side, all new multi-family development should be directed towards the City’s Downtown. Downtown is centrally located within the City, and is well served in all directions of regional transportation arteries. Establishing higher densities in downtown is critical to the effort of Downtown revitalization.

Image and Identity Recommendations
The City can strengthen its image and identity through land use planning and supporting recommendations and policies. Identified below is a list of ways the City can improve upon its image and character as it relates to land use and development.

► By promoting orderly growth.
► Separating incompatible land uses and protecting residential areas.
► Improving the image of the community through better architecture and higher-quality construction.
► Consistent, effective, and expanded code enforcement.
► Promoting redevelopment and reinvestment in the Downtown, strengthening the area as the heart of the City.
► Transforming Downtown into an attractive and exciting destination for residents and visitors from throughout the region and beyond.
► Continuing to undertake programs that stabilize, enhance and protect all residential neighborhoods.
► Supporting community service providers to provide necessary, high-quality facilities throughout the City that strengthens the image and identity of Muskogee for residents and visitors.

Sustainability Recommendations
Through land use and development plans, policies and recommendations, the City of Muskogee can promote and support sustainability. Identified below is a list of ways the City can become more sustainable through land use and development decisions.

► Promoting a mix of land uses throughout the community to support economic sustainability.
► Encouraging public agencies and private developers to implement “best management practices” (BMPs).
► Encouraging public agencies and private developers to use green building techniques and encourage Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.
► Ensure that key community service providers such as City and County facilities, Museums, the Library and Post Office remain the Downtown to strengthen the area.
► Promoting mixed-use developments and multi-family units in the Downtown which can reduce reliance on the automobile, support local businesses, and improve resident health by promoting walkability.
► Continue to protect the historical districts and work with property owners to identify potential programs to assist in maintaining historic homes.
► Acquire new parks and open space as recommended in the Land Use Plan to protect high-quality environmental features such as creeks, floodplain and heavily wooded areas.
► Prevent the premature conversion of farmland and discourage sprawl by encouraging infill development within the City’s core over new growth outside the City’s municipal limits.
Land Use Plan City of Muskogee

The Land Use Plan provides policies and identifies appropriate land uses for the future development of the City of Muskogee and its growth areas. The Land Use Plan is based on sound community planning principles, as well as several factors and influences, including the Vision, Goals and Objectives identified for the Muskogee community, market and demographic analysis; and an assessment of existing conditions including the established developed areas and infrastructure of the City and its planning jurisdiction. The Plan provides a general assessment of land use potential and recommendations for what types of land uses will best meet the needs of the community in the long-term.

The Land Use Plan identifies the appropriate uses throughout incorporated Muskogee and its growth areas that will result in the community’s orderly and efficient development. The primary land uses identified in the Land Use Plan include three residential uses, three commercial uses, parks and open space, public utilities, and public and semi-public uses.

Land Use Legend

- **Single-Family Residential** areas should consist primarily of single-family detached homes on lots subdivided and platted in an organized and planned manner.

- **Light Industrial** and business parks are less intensive industrial that should consist of smaller service- and consumer-oriented businesses to minimize land use conflicts from residential areas.

- **Multi-Family Residential** areas should consist of condominiums, apartments, and senior housing developments, with future multi-family development promoted within Downtown as a component of mixed-use buildings.

- **Local Commercial** areas are intended to provide daily goods and services conveniently to local residential neighborhoods. They should be of smaller scale and intensity, and be comprised of a mix of uses that does not attract shoppers from the larger region.

- **Regional/Corridor Commercial** designation is an intense commercial land use consisting of larger commercial properties along the City’s primary streets. These areas are intended to contain businesses which draw from the larger region, servicing the entire City of Muskogee and beyond.

- **Public and Semi-Public** uses include public facilities or municipal infrastructure. This designation includes a number of existing government and institutional facilities including Muskogee City Hall, the Police Station, fire stations, schools, County facilities, and larger religious institutions.

- **The Parks and Open Space** land use designation includes public and private open space of all types, including city parks, public and private golf courses, and creeks.

- **The Agricultural** land use designation identified in the Land Use Plan represents Muskogee’s existing agriculture activities and its potential growth areas. These areas that today consist of farms, farmsteads, and single family homes on large lots, most with well and septic service.

- **Downtown** areas should consist of a mix of land uses, contained in mixed-use buildings. Mixed-use buildings should be multi-story with commercial uses on the ground floor and office uses or residential units above.

- **Heavy Industrial** areas are major, regional employment areas of intense, concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses which cannot be easily mixed with other types of uses.

- **Conveniently Accessible from All Areas, Downtown Muskogee should consist of a mix of land uses, contained in mixed-use buildings. Mixed-use buildings should be multi-story with commercial uses on the ground floor and office uses or residential units above.

- Although development can occur within the **Flood Plain**, the City should direct development in the short term to more easily developable sites.

- **Star Hall** Hospital

- **School**
The Shawnee Corridor is well suited to provide for regional commercial uses. The corridor is easily accessible, traffic counts are ideal for businesses, and the parcels have sufficient lot depth to accommodate big box and other types of intense commercial development.

The City should continue its efforts to revitalize downtown Muskogee. Downtown should have a strong pedestrian orientation. Commercial uses should proliferate downtown, within retail, restaurants and entertainment uses on the ground floors of mixed-use buildings. Parking should be provided in centralized parking lots and structures, allowing sites to maximize their buildable area.

The commercial areas around downtown Muskogee are organized in a linear fashion along downtown’s approach corridors. These areas should complement, not compete with downtown businesses.

As a key north-south route through the City, York Street has high traffic counts. However, the lot depths and proximity to residential neighborhoods make this corridor better suited for neighborhood level commercial.

The opportunity exists for two commercial nodes to be constructed along the Muskogee Turnpike – at Gibson Street and Chandler Road. These commercial nodes could provide goods, services and lodging to Turnpike traffic.

This area should develop as a more intense commercial node promoting business and uses which can capitalize on, and complement, the Creek Nation Casino of Muskogee.

This area should continue to be comprised of professional office uses anchored by the hospitals, and commercial retail and service uses that cater to visitors, employees and nearby residents.

Scattered throughout the community are well established, smaller commercial nodes. These areas should continue to provide close-to-home shopping for nearby residents.

Commercial Areas Plan City of Muskogee

Commercial land uses should contain a mix of business providing goods and services to the residents of Muskogee, visitors from outside the area, and motorists passing through the community. The Land Use Plan designates three types of commercial in the City: Local Commercial, Regional/Corridor Commercial, and Downtown Commercial. This figure builds on the Land Use Plan’s designations, providing more specific goals and recommendations for each commercial area in the City. These recommendations are further supplemented on more detailed Corridor Plans and a Downtown Plan later in this section.

Map Legend

- The Shawnee Corridor is well suited to provide for regional commercial uses. The corridor is easily accessible, traffic counts are ideal for businesses, and the parcels have sufficient lot depth to accommodate big box and other types of intense commercial development.
- The City should continue to its efforts to revitalize the Downtown Muskogee. Downtown should have a strong pedestrian orientation. Commercial uses should proliferate downtown, within retail, restaurants and entertainment uses on the ground floors of mixed-use buildings. Parking should be provided in centralized parking lots and structures, allowing sites to maximize their buildable area.
- The commercial areas around Downtown Muskogee are organized in a linear fashion along Downtown’s approach corridors. These areas should complement, not compete with Downtown businesses.
- As a key north-south route through the City, York Street has high traffic counts. However, the lot depths and proximity to residential neighborhoods make this corridor better suited for neighborhood level commercial.
Industrial Areas Plan City of Muskogee

The Land Use Plan for the City of Muskogee identifies a considerable amount of land dedicated to industrial land uses. Industrial areas including business parks and heavy industry are critical components of the local economy. They provide tax revenue to the City and more importantly, jobs to residents. The Land Use Plan designates the following types of industrial in the City: Light Industrial/Business Park and Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing. This figure builds on the Land Use Plan’s designations, providing more specific goals and recommendations for each of the City’s industrial areas. These recommendations are further supplemented on more detailed Corridor Plans and a Downtown Plan later in this section.

Map Legend

- The City should provide a limited amount of industrial on its north and west side to accommodate large commercial service uses not desirable on commercial corridors, such as storage facilities, kennels, and landscape supply companies.
- A large industrial area at the intersection of Highway 64 and Peak Boulevard has access to rail and the highway system. The large parcels and isolation from established residential areas make this an ideal location for heavy industrial uses.
- This industrial area is well positioned for access to Peak Boulevard and the Muskogee Turnpike. The development of this area must be cognizant of nearby residential uses. Development should stabilize airport access, and consist of “business-park” type uses which have less of an impact on other uses.
- A well established industrial area on City’s north side benefits from highway and rail access, and an emerging area could benefit from close proximity to the hospital. Its location along Shawnee Boulevard however, makes this area highly visible to traffic. It is important that this industrial area be well maintained and attractive as possible given the corridor’s role as a community gateway.
- The uses in this large industrial area should vary in intensity depending on their location. West of the Muskogee Turnpike, industrial uses should be less intense as it approaches existing and planned residential areas. On the east side of the Turnpike however, these areas are isolated and ideal for heavy industrial uses.
Subareas & Corridors City of Muskogee

Building on the Land Use Plan, more detailed Subarea and Corridor Plans have been developed for the City’s key corridors and the Downtown Area. While these subarea plans do not represent a complete and detailed study, they do provide more detailed recommendations for these important areas of the City as well as examples of the specific application of some of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Subarea and Corridors Plans include: 32nd Street/Highway 69, Shawnee Boulevard, York Street, Peak Boulevard, Main Street, Okmulgee Street/Chandler Road and Downtown.

Shawnee Avenue is the on the north end of the City and is the location of much of the City’s recent commercial development. Large sites, easy access and high traffic counts make this Corridor the destination for big box retail.

York Street is a narrow corridor west of the Original Town Site. While most of the corridor is built out, a planned widening at the south end of York Street provides development potential near the intersection of Peak Boulevard.

Main Street passes through the City and Downtown. North of Shawnee Boulevard, the development of the corridor will likely be influenced by the new hospital. South of Shawnee, auto-oriented businesses anchor a healthy commercial district that transitions to Downtown. There are opportunities for commercial revitalization south of Downtown, and sites for heavy industrial uses at its intersection with Peak Boulevard.

Okmulgee Street/Chandler Road passes east-west through the City and the Original Town Site. It is lined with a mix of land uses, and has several key commercial nodes along its length. The Corridor Plan seeks to provide strategic improvements along the Corridor to improve its commercial vitality while maintaining traffic flow.

Downtown Muskogee is a complex area critical to the City. Recommendations provided within this Plan should serve as the foundation for a more detailed Downtown Master Plan which should be considered necessary due to the fact that revitalizing the area is such an important goal which will require the collaboration of multiple property owners, groups, and organizations. Although the Comprehensive Plan addresses aspects of Downtown, comprehensive plans by nature are more broad and general, and do not provide the specific and strategic recommendations, of a dedicated Downtown Master Plan. The City should work with Downtown Muskogee Inc., elected and appointed officials, residents and business owners, to create a standalone Downtown Master Plan that will provide a visionary, yet viable plan.
Strengthen and expand the commercial approaches to medical offices to capitalize upon the proximity to the hospitals. Medical offices in this area should be designed in campus settings if feasible. Other appropriate uses in this area include retail and commercial uses catering to medical and health services such as pharmacies.

Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as properties within floodplains, wetlands, and heavily wooded areas. These areas would provide public open space, allow opportunities for trails, and protect wetlands and wetlands which would lower or negate potential flooding issues.

The city of Muskogee has a Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map that outlines the future development of the city. The plan aims to guide future land use decisions and ensure that the city's growth is sustainable and compatible with its natural resources and community goals.

Install gateway features to announce arrival into the City of Muskogee. Gateway features should include attractive signage, decorative lighting, quality landscaping, and public art. Gateway features should be consistent throughout the community and although they can be unique, should share the same design elements to create a unified theme.

Remove the current turning lanes that do not provide access to adjoining properties and replace with a landscaped median that will greatly improve the appearance of the corridor.

Strengthen and expand the existing medical offices to capitalize upon the proximity to the hospitals. Medical offices in this area should be designed in campus settings if feasible. Other appropriate uses in this area include retail and commercial uses catering to medical and health services such as pharmacies.

Corridor commercial fronting Highway 69 should be well-screened and buffered from adjacent residential areas. Cross-access between commercial uses and shared accessways to minimize unnecessary curb cuts should be encouraged. Structures, signs, and surface parking areas should be attractive and well-maintained.

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Preserve agricultural land wherever possible and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Limited amounts of single-family residential, industrial and commercial service areas should be encouraged. These areas would provide public open space, allow opportunities for trails, and protect wetlands and wetlands which would lower or negate potential flooding issues.

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The city of Muskogee has a Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map that outlines the future development of the city. The plan aims to guide future land use decisions and ensure that the city's growth is sustainable and compatible with its natural resources and community goals.
Strengthen the commercial node with highway commercial uses such as hotels, restaurants, and shopping centers. Highway commercial uses would capitalize upon their proximity to the interstate system and the nearby Muskogee Castle. Require cross-access between parking areas and encourage pedestrian connectivity between properties. Adequate buffering and screening should be installed between residential and non-residential uses to minimize any negative impacts.

Preserve agricultural land wherever possible, and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Limited amounts of single-family residential, industrial and commercial service are also appropriate in agricultural areas.

Working with the County and others, the City should explore the acquisition of this site for regional open space and preserve the woods, the creek and floodplain. Existing universities, colleges, and schools should be supported in this area and the City should encourage these existing educational facilities to remain and expand in these locations.

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Work with ODOT to improve this key intersection in the community by acquiring the unnecessary and excessive right-of-way. Reserved for a larger interchange that will likely never be built, a substantial area of land could be made available for commercial development at this key intersection. If developed, sightlines and views to the existing shopping center and hotels to the south should be preserved.

The Shawnee Avenue Corridor Plan City of Muskogee

Regional commercial is appropriate in this area. Uses that cater primarily to residents, not motorists, such as movie theaters, community churches, big box retail, universities/collages, and hotels are appropriate. The primary market for these uses is Muskogee residents, however, because of the visibility from Shawnee Avenue, can also attract motorists.

This commercial development is an example of a model development in the community. The development, site design, architecture, and property represent the types of development that should exist along the corridor.

Preserve agricultural land wherever possible, and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Existing universities, colleges, and schools should be supported in this area and the City should encourage these existing educational facilities to remain and expand in these locations.

The intersection of Main Street and Shawnee Avenue is a key intersection in the community and existing uses may not be maximizing the site’s potential. Redevelopment of the K-Mart site should be a priority as its redevelopment could serve as a catalyst for investment in the area.

Explore “rightsizing” strategies in the residential areas south of Shawnee Avenue north of the railroad. Vacant and derelict buildings have been torn down and now streets and infrastructure are excessive.

The proposed development is an example of a model development in the community. The development, site design, architecture, and uses, represent the types of development that should extend east towards the intersection of Shawnee Avenue and Country Club Road.

Install wayfinding to direct visitors to the Downtown, hospital, and other key destinations. Wayfinding signage should be consistent throughout the community and although they can be unique, should share the same design elements as the gateway features.

Preserve agricultural land wherever possible, and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Existing universities, colleges, and schools should be supported in this area and the City should encourage these existing educational facilities to remain and expand in these locations.

Regional commercial is appropriate in this area. Uses that cater primarily to residents, not motorists, such as movie theaters, community churches, big box retail, universities/collages, and hotels are appropriate. The primary market for these uses is Muskogee residents, however, because of the visibility from Shawnee Avenue, can also attract motorists.

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Work with ODOT to improve this key intersection in the community by acquiring the unnecessary and excessive right-of-way. Reserved for a larger interchange that will likely never be built, a substantial area of land could be made available for commercial development at this key intersection. If developed, sightlines and views to the existing shopping center and hotels to the south should be preserved.

The area northwest of the intersection should be designed as public open space that is an extension of the floodplain and wooded area that exists today. This area should include a “bayouhead” with parking and direct access to a multi-use trail that connects to the larger city-wide trail system.

The intersection of Main Street and Shawnee Avenue is a key intersection in the community and existing uses may not be maximizing the site’s potential. Redevelopment of the K-Mart site should be a priority as its redevelopment could serve as a catalyst for investment in the area.

Explore “rightsizing” strategies in the residential areas south of Shawnee Avenue north of the railroad. Vacant and derelict buildings have been torn down and now streets and infrastructure are excessive.

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Preserve agricultural land wherever possible, and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Limited amounts of single-family residential, industrial and commercial service are also appropriate in agricultural areas.

Working with the County and others, the City should explore the acquisition of this site for regional open space and preserve the woods, the creek and floodplain. Existing universities, colleges, and schools should be supported in this area and the City should encourage these existing educational facilities to remain and expand in these locations.

Install gateway features to announce arrival into the City of Muskogee. Gateway features should include attractive signage, decorative lighting, quality landscaping, and public art. Gateway features should be consistent throughout the community and although they can be unique, should share the same design elements to create a unified theme.

Work with ODOT to improve this key intersection in the community by acquiring the unnecessary and excessive right-of-way. Reserved for a larger interchange that will likely never be built, a substantial area of land could be made available for commercial development at this key intersection. If developed, sightlines and views to the existing shopping center and hotels to the south should be preserved.
York Street Corridor Plan City of Muskogee

- Minimize or remove unnecessary or duplicate access points. Reducing the number of curb cuts will improve circulation, turning movements, and safety for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Increasing screening and buffing between commercial uses and adjacent residential areas. Screening and buffing may include additional landscaping, fencing, increased setbacks, or some combination of these techniques.
- Promote the development of a commercial node at the intersection Peak Boulevard and York Street to cater to nearby residents and motorists traveling along Peak Boulevard.
- Construct a new multi-use trail providing connectivity between this area and Downtown and other community facilities, shopping areas, and employment centers.
- Strengthen this commercial node with neighborhood commercial uses that primarily serve the daily shopping needs of nearby residents. Appropriate buffing and screening should be installed to minimize any negative impact on adjacent residential properties such as noise, air, or light pollution.
- Intersecting York Street from Hancock Road to two lanes in each direction to improve traffic flow and circulation through this area. Install streetscaping elements, including sidewalks and street trees within the public right-of-way.
- Improve the overall appearance of the corridor through additional streetscaping. Work with existing property owners to improve their structures and sites and require new developments to be attractive consisting of high-quality architecture and design.
- Promote the development of a commercial node at the intersection Peach Boulevard and York Street to cater to nearby residents and motorists traveling along Peach Boulevard.
Install gateway features to announce arrival into the City of Muskogee. Gateway features should include attractive signage, decorative lighting, quality landscaping, and public art. Gateway features should be consistent throughout the community and although they can be unique, should share the same design elements to create a unified theme.

Encourage industrial businesses in this area to use “green building” technologies including best management practices to preserve the nearby floodplain and creeks and to create a model for green industrial development.

Develop the area surrounding the interchange as a key gateway into the City. Existing uses in this area should remain including the casino, offices, and service stations and attract new highway commercial uses such as hotels and restaurants that will capture the excellent access and visibility.

Promote a commercial node at this interchange that consists primarily of commercial uses that serves the daily shopping needs of nearby residents.

Floodplain and heavily wooded areas along Coody Creek should be preserved and protected. These areas are ideal for multi-use trails and passive recreational amenities such as picnic shelters. Open space areas such as these are also ideal for buffering between residential and non-residential uses.

Multi-family housing should be used as a transitional use between single-family detached residential neighborhoods and non-residential uses. Industrial and commercial uses should be well buffered and screened from adjacent residential areas. Appropriate screening and buffering should be required to minimize any negative effects such as light, noise, or sound pollution.

Develop a multi-use trail system within the existing open space along Coody Creek. The trail should cross Peak Boulevard using the existing pedestrian bridge near Hilldale Elementary School.

Continue the pattern of predominately single-family detached neighborhoods south. Street connectivity and pedestrian linkages between neighborhoods will create a sense of community and provide efficient vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

Peak Boulevard Corridor Plan City of Muskogee

Under PC Review

Consider eliminating access to Peak Boulevard from Cherokee Street, routing traffic along the better aligned and positioned intersection at Cherokee Drive.

Improve the overall appearance of the corridor through additional infill development. Work with existing property owners to improve their structures and sites and require new developments to be attractive consisting of high-quality architecture and design.
Main Street/Highway 64 Corridor Plan City of Muskogee

The intersection of Main Street and Shawnee Avenue is a key intersection in the community; however, it is currently under-performing in terms of quality of businesses and overall appearance. Redevelopment of the old K-Mart property should be a priority. In addition, install wayfinding to direct visitors to the Downtown, hospital, and other key destinations.

Corridor commercial uses should be well screened and buffered from adjacent residential areas. Cross-accesses between commercial uses and shared accessways to minimize unnecessary curb-cuts should be encouraged. Structures, signs, and surface parking areas should be attractive and well-maintained.

Commercial uses fronting Main Street outside of the Downtown area should be relocated to commercial nodes to consolidate commercial uses and eliminate vacant commercial properties and structures. Future development in this area should include multi-family, office, or commercial service uses.

Improve intersection to include streetscaping elements such as landscaping, pedestrian scaled lighting, and highly visible pedestrian crosswalks.

Install wayfinding to direct visitors to the Downtown. Wayfinding signage should be consistent throughout the community and although they can be unique, should share the same design elements as the gateway features.

Wayfinding and heavily wooded areas along Coody Creek should be acquired for preservation. These areas are ideal for multi-use trails and passive recreational amenities such as picnic shelters. Open space areas are ideal for buffering between residential and non-residential uses.

Promote a commercial node at this intersection that consists primarily of commercial uses that serves the daily shopping needs of nearby residents.

Encourage industrial businesses in this area to use "green building" technologies including best management practices to preserve the nearby flood-plain and creeks and to create a model for green industrial development.

If the Fairground remains access should be improved by constructing direct access to Main Street. If however, the Fairground ceases to exist the property should be acquired for public open space and recreational purposes.

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Wayfinding and heavily wooded areas along Coody Creek should be acquired for preservation. These areas are ideal for multi-use trails and passive recreational amenities such as picnic shelters. Open space areas are ideal for buffering between residential and non-residential uses.
Preserve the architecturally and historically significant homes along this portion of Okmulgee Avenue. The unique character of these homes creates a unique and attractive entrance into the Downtown area.

Improve the overall appearance of the corridor through additional streetscaping. Work with existing property owners to improve their structures and sites and require new developments to be attractive consisting of high-quality architecture and design.

Create a neighborhood commercial node that includes businesses that cater primarily to the daily shopping needs of nearby residents. Include appropriate screening and buffering between commercial and residential areas.

Strengthen the existing predominately single-family residential neighborhood. Regularly monitor neighborhoods to identify cut-through traffic and install traffic calming measures if necessary.

Strengthen and expand the existing medical offices to capably serve the downtown area. Medical offices in this area should be designed in campus settings if feasible. Other appropriate uses in this area include retail and commercial uses catering to medical and health services such as pharmacies.

Create an on-street bike lane along Broadway Avenue to provide bicycle connection to Downtown.

Preserve agricultural land wherever possible, and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Limited amounts of single-family residential, industrial and commercial service are also appropriate in agricultural areas.

Expand Love-Hatbox Park to the east to increase its presence along Highway 69 and to the northeast to add additional park acreage which would further establish the park as a regional sports complex.

Remove the current turning lane that does not provide access to adjoining properties and replace with a landscaped median that will greatly improve the appearance of the corridor.

Construction on-street bike lane along Broadway Avenue to provide bicycle connection to Downtown.

Improve the overall appearance of the corridor through additional streetscaping. Work with existing property owners to improve their structures and sites and require new developments to be attractive consisting of high-quality architecture and design.

Create a neighborhood commercial node that includes businesses that cater primarily to the daily shopping needs of nearby residents. Include appropriate screening and buffering between commercial and residential areas.

Remove the current turning lane that does not provide access to adjoining properties and replace with a landscaped median that will greatly improve the appearance of the corridor.

Strengthen the existing predominately single-family residential neighborhood. Regularly monitor neighborhoods to identify cut-through traffic and install traffic calming measures if necessary.

Create a neighborhood commercial node that includes businesses that cater primarily to the daily shopping needs of nearby residents. Include appropriate screening and buffering between commercial and residential areas.

Strengthen and expand the existing medical offices to capably serve the downtown area. Medical offices in this area should be designed in campus settings if feasible. Other appropriate uses in this area include retail and commercial uses catering to medical and health services such as pharmacies.

Create an on-street bike lane along Broadway Avenue to provide bicycle connection to Downtown.

Preserve agricultural land wherever possible, and support agriculture within the community especially within the potential growth areas. Limited amounts of single-family residential, industrial and commercial service are also appropriate in agricultural areas.
Install gateway features to announce arrival into the City of Muskogee. Gateway features should include attractive signage, decorative lighting, quality architecture and design.

Industrial uses are appropriate in this location capitalizing upon proximity to the interstate system and visibility from the Turnpike. Industrial businesses should be encouraged to use "green building" technologies including best management practices to preserve the nearby floodplain and creeks and to create a model for green industrial development.

Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as properties within floodplains, wetlands, and heavily wooded areas. Best management practices should be implemented to improve the overall appearance of the corridor through additional streetscaping. Work with existing property owners to improve their structures and sites and require new developments to be attractive, consisting of high-quality architecture and design.

Create a commercial node with highway commercial uses such as hotels, restaurants, service stations, and shopping. Highway commercial uses would capitalize upon their proximity to the interstate system. Require cross-access between parking areas and encourage pedestrian connectivity between properties. Adequate buffering and screening should be installed between residential and non-residential uses to minimize any negative impacts.

As a key neighborhood intersection in the eastern portion of the community, the intersection of York Street and Chandler Road should be strengthened. Large commercial shopping centers and national retailers should be located in this area. Cross-access between parking areas should be implemented to improve circulation. Appropriate buffering and screening should be installed to minimize any negative impact on adjacent residential properties such as noise, air, or light pollution.

Strengthen the existing predominantly single-family residential neighborhood. Regularly monitor neighborhoods to identify cut-through traffic and install traffic calming measures if necessary.

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Commercial uses are appropriate fronting Chandler Road with single-family residential behind. However, the appearance of the businesses should be attractive and outdoor storage areas and parking areas should be screened and well landscaped. Install appropriate screening and buffering between residential and non-residential uses. Cross-access should be provided between adjacent businesses and duplicates or unnecessary curb cuts should be removed to improve circulation and turning movements.

Create a neighborhood commercial node that includes businesses that cater primarily to the daily shopping needs of nearby residents. Include appropriate screening and buffering between commercial and residential areas.

This pocket of single-family homes is poorly located between industrial uses and rail lines; however, because of its proximity to Downtown and Spaulding Park this area should be a priority for improvement. To make a more significant improvement, vacant single-family homes should be redeveloped block by block instead of parcel by parcel.

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Additional streetscaping is recommended throughout the entry Downtown to create a walkable and attractive area. The City should create a detailed Streetscaping Plan for the Downtown that would provide specific guidelines and recommendations. New streetscaping should include additional trees, landscaping, community banners, decorative lighting, highly visible pedestrian crosswalks, and ADA accessible sidewalks.

New infill developments should continue the streetwall that already exists throughout most of the Downtown. A streetwall is a continuous rise of buildings that is located at or near the sidewalk. Large gaps in the streetwall can discourage pedestrian traffic, reduce traffic volumes, and create unnecessarily high maintenance costs. In areas where gaps in the streetwall are unavoidable, such as in front of large shopping centers, a combination of landscaping, decorative fencing, and masonry/stone walls should be used.

Downtown Muskogee consists of a traditional urban street grid system; however, there are gaps and unnecessary streets in this system. The City should evaluate if 5th Street south of the Fire Station is necessary to establish a new north-south connection with the residential neighborhood to the south. In addition, the City should explore the potential of eliminating North 2nd Street, which would allow for the right-of-way to be included in the creation of larger redevelopment sites fronting Main Street.

The area north of Broadway Avenue and south of the Arrowhead Mall should consist predominantly of office uses. The addition of office uses into the Downtown would increase the amount of employees, visitors and potential shoppers that would be attracted to the area throughout the day. Office spaces such as attorneys, accountants, and other professional services would be a natural extension of the current County and civic uses.

The City should work with the mall to implement a variety of improvements to strengthen its economic vitality, appearance, and connectivity to the rest of Downtown. Reconfiguring the Mall’s ring road to create larger outlets, encouraging commercial/retail uses to locate within the outlets to front Main Street and Division Avenue, and an improved pedestrian environment with walkways from Downtown along Third and Fourth Streets leading to the entrance of the mall shall be explored.

The City should continue to explore the long-planned grade separated rail crossing between Martin Luther King Boulevard and Gibson Street to determine if it is both necessary and feasible. Additional north-south crossings in the Downtown would improve circulation but are likely to be expensive projects due to their land acquisition and construction costs.

The City should encourage universities and colleges to open downtown campuses that would not only attract students and faculty into the Downtown but would also increase the demand for student housing in the area.

Opportunities exist at key entry points within the Downtown to install new gateways features. New gateways placed at key locations would help to create a unique sense of place and would strengthen the identity of Downtown Muskogee. Gateway features should include attractive signage, high quality landscaping, decorative lighting, and architectural/elemental public art.

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Mixed-use buildings should incorporate active uses on ground floor such as retail, restaurants or entertainment, sales, with office and service uses or residential units on upper floors. Office uses do not typically generate pedestrian activity or attract walk-in customers, but are not desirable on the ground floors of mixed-use buildings. Commercial retail uses are a key component of the Downtown because they are an “active” use that will attract casual shoppers and captivate on “walk-by” traffic.

Downtown Plan City of Muskogee

Prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates

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Downtown Catalytic Projects For Consideration

Entertainment District
The City should promote parcels along Okmulgee Avenue for entertainment/restaurant/hotel uses that would build off of the Civic Center and the Roxy Theatre. These uses would cater to visitors of the Civic Center and the vehicular traffic along Okmulgee Avenue as well as the potential visitors to the recommended civic/museum district. A “restaurant row” would cater to the other businesses in Downtown especially the lunch hour and after business crowd. This District would be the heart of the City’s entertainment and nightlife scene that would create a vibrant and exciting 24/7 Downtown.

Civic District/Museum Campus
The City should work with other governmental agencies such as the County, other Districts, and museums, to locate south of Okmulgee Avenue. A new Civic Center/City Hall including a new payment center and all of its associated parking would improve efficiencies and would allow for new redevelopment opportunities at the current City Hall and payment center sites. A new linear park should be developed that would replace the current payment center and underutilized industrial properties to Elgin Street. A linear park would create outdoor community gathering space and would also improve the visual and physical connection between the Downtown and the museum campus. In addition to the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame and the Three Rivers Museum, the City should work with other museums and the library to locate in this area.

USS Batfish
The City should pursue grants that would fund the relocation of the USS Batfish to the new linear park. Although likely a massive logistical undertaking, it may not be impossible especially if the necessary funds are provided. Although incremental projects are necessary to revitalize the Downtown, some catalytic projects, such as relocating the USS Batfish are necessary to help jumpstart the area. With the USS Batfish as the anchor of the new museum campus, the Downtown is likely become a regional and possibly national tourist destination.

Multi-Family
The City should work with residential developers to strongly encourage all future multi-family developments to only occur within the Downtown area. Locating multi-family units in the Downtown has numerous benefits including the creation of a truly walkable living environment, and the potential for residents to be able to walk to employment and shopping areas. Currently, many multi-family residential developments outside of the Downtown suffer from a physical separation from shopping and employment areas. This results in the need for residents to travel by car to get to work and to shopping areas. Multi-family developments outside of Downtown, especially those on the periphery of the city limits, also add to urban sprawl and increase City infrastructure/service costs.
Section 6 Transportation Plan

The City’s transportation and circulation system is one of its greatest strengths and assets. The system is truly intermodal, providing local access for vehicles and pedestrians and to outside destinations via roadways, railways, airways and waterways. However, several issues and concerns related to the City’s roadways, traffic, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation were identified throughout the community outreach process for the Comprehensive Plan. Comments from the community indicated that the existing network of streets and trails is insufficient to accommodate the travel needs of the existing population. Several enhancements and new connections are needed, not only to better serve current residents and businesses, but to ensure efficient circulation throughout the City in the future. The Transportation Plan, in conjunction with the Community-wide Land Use Plan, seeks to address these concerns and promote appropriate and necessary improvements within the City of Muskogee and surrounding area.

The existing street system within the City is well established, but system recommendations can improve overall circulation. The Transportation and Mobility Plan focuses on the coordination and optimization of all modes of travel within the City, including vehicular, bicycle, walking and transit services. The Transportation and Mobility Plan includes specific recommendations for motorized and non-motorized travel, parking, circulation and linkages between key areas of the City.
**Functional Classification of Streets**

Streets within Muskogee can be classified according to their character and intended service in a Functional Classification System. Functional classification allows an understanding of the City’s street hierarchy which contains the following types of streets: local, collector (rural and urban), principle arterial, minor arterial, and the Turnpike.

**Local Streets**

Local streets provide direct access to properties and are typically designed for short trips at low speeds and are located within residential neighborhoods. According to the City’s Subdivision Regulations, local streets are classified as Types A, B or C.

- **Type A**: Required to be paved with concrete and must have sidewalks. Sidewalks are required on both sides of any type “A” public or private street improvement. Sidewalks must meet all ADA requirements and be constructed in accordance with applicable standard specifications of the City.

- **Types B and C**: Required to be paved with asphalt and have narrower lanes however, sidewalks should be required on both type “B” and “C” streets as well. The use of the type “B” and “C” street improvement are limited to specific zoning districts.

**Collector Street (Urban and Rural)**

Collector streets prioritize access to property over mobility and are more locally-oriented. Collectors connect local streets to arterials to create an efficient system of traffic movement. In essence, they “collect” traffic from neighborhoods and carry it to the arterial street system.

**Arterials (Principal and Minor)**

Arterial streets are major streets that collect and distribute traffic to and from collector streets. Arterial streets carry large volumes of traffic and are normally controlled by traffic signs and signals at major intersections.

There are two types of arterial streets in the City: principle and minor. Primary arterials are generally wider, faster and have limited access along the route to allow travel to and through an area. Secondary arterials have a lower design speed and generally have more points of access and egress.

**Turnpike**

The Turnpike is a toll road that runs through eastern Oklahoma and travels through the eastern portion of Muskogee. To permit the movement of local traffic in the City of Muskogee, the section between US-62 and SH-165 is designated a free expressway. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), Planning & Research Division, reports that nearly 17,000 vehicles travel on the Muskogee segment of the Turnpike. In Muskogee interchanges currently exist at Shawnee Avenue, Gibson Street, Chandler Road, Harris Road, and Hancock Road (southbound only).

**Recommendations**

The City of Muskogee should continue to ensure the City is served by a comprehensive network of all street types, constructing and/or widening existing streets when necessary. A recent pavement study conducted by the City’s Department of Public Works assessed street conditions throughout the City, and will be used in the years ahead to identify and prioritize streets for resurfacing. Used in concert with this Transportation Plan, future repair and preventative maintenance along with key capital projects and system improvements will ensure the City’s roadways are capable of handling traffic volumes that exist today and are poised to be upgraded to accommodate future growth.

**Other Transportation Issues & Recommendations**

**Access Management**

Better access management along the City’s street can assist in decreasing accidents, improving efficiency, and enhancing the look and character of corridors throughout the City. Access management is a set of proven techniques that help do the following:

- Reduce the number of crashes and improve safety;
- Reduce traffic congestion;
- Preserve the flow of traffic;
- Preserve the public investment in roads; and,
- Enhance the value of private land development.

Along most of the City’s major corridors, almost every individual business has its own, separate curb cut, often within close proximity to a neighboring property’s access. By no means is this issue of poor access management unique to Muskogee. Throughout the county, past development practices fostered this access pattern along commercial corridors, seriously compromising the safety and efficiency of traffic.

To correct this issue, the City should embrace the key principles of access management when making land use and development decisions. In addition, the City should actively identify redundant access points and opportunities for cross access between adjacent businesses, and consolidate driveways, reducing the number of access points along major roadways. Through these efforts, the City can improve a roadway’s ability to accommodate traffic and defer, if not prevent, the need to widen streets.

**Recommendations**

Access management improves safety and traffic flow for both automobiles and pedestrians. The following are key access management strategies.

- Improve access management along collector and arterial routes. Access management strategies may include: restricted access driveways (right-in/right-out) which limit the number of conflict points; reducing the number of curb cuts or driveways; supporting shared drives; and, requiring whenever possible aligned drives on the opposite sides of streets.

Reduce the number of access points along major roadways to improve flow, driver comfort and safety. Every effort should be made to limit the number of driveways along major roadways, encouraging full access from adjacent cross streets. Frontage drives, rear service drives, shared driveways, and connected parking lots should be used to minimize the number of access points, while being respectful to the a property owner’s right to reasonable access.

prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates
Gateways

Key entry points into the City lack easily identifiable community gateway signs. Without gateway signage and features along the City’s key corridors, it is difficult for visitors to identify that they are in Muskogee. This results in a lost opportunity to instantly portray a positive image of the City of Muskogee. The intersection of Highway 69 and Shawnee Avenue is one of the City’s primary entry points. Many visitors from Tulsa and other areas exit the Muskogee Turnpike on Highway 69 and head south toward the City of Muskogee. Currently, the traffic at this intersection of two arterial streets is controlled by a traffic signal, although large amounts of right-of-way were secured some time ago with the intent of constructing an expressway-like cloverleaf interchange. Today, and into the foreseeable future, an interchange is not needed and excessive considering traffic volumes.

Recommendation

The City should install new gateway features at key entry points into the community as identified on the Transportation Plan. New gateway features at these locations would assist greatly in improving Muskogee’s image and appearance.

At the intersection of Shawnee and Highway 69, the wide right-of-way provides an excellent opportunity to create a memorable and attractive entrance into the community. Working within the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), the City should acquire the excessive and unnecessary right-of-way to accommodate commercial development, reserving a small area to construct an attractive gateway to Muskogee.

Parking

While parking is generally not an issue in most areas of the community, there are some businesses and offices that have inadequate parking including the Veterans Administration offices at Okmulgee Avenue and East Side Boulevard. When a business cannot provide sufficient parking for its customers, it can be detrimental to the commercial viability of that business. This is why most commercial uses will ensure they have adequate parking for their customers regardless of zoning requirements. However, when a business or office use cannot provide parking for its employees, they may be unaware of the negative impact on neighboring businesses or nearby neighborhoods.

If a business cannot accommodate parking for its employees, their employees will seek out parking where parking is available, including nearby neighborhoods and businesses – neither of which is an adequate solution. When employees park in areas for adjacent and nearby businesses, they occupy spaces for the potential customers of those businesses, and begin to impact their operations and sales. When employees park on-street in nearby neighborhoods, they begin to create conflicts with residential areas, including non-local/cut-through traffic.

Recommendation

The City should review and update its off-street parking requirements to ensure that they are appropriate and provide sufficient parking for businesses. According to City staff, the Veterans Administration offices are compliant with existing parking requirements. However, given the current parking situation, it is clear that the ordinance does not adequately accommodate parking for some types of businesses, such as call centers, that have a higher number of employees per square foot. Since the City’s parking requirements use a square footage calculation (i.e. 1 space for every 250 s.f.), businesses with large amount of employees, such as a call center, will have insufficient parking.

Although the Veterans Administration is used as an example, the issue of a lack of parking exists in several other locations throughout the community. Identified below are recommendations to improve off-street parking throughout the City:

► The City should evaluate its off-street parking requirements and ensure the number of parking spaces reflects the type of uses, including call centers and other businesses that have a higher number of employees per square foot than other commercial uses.
► The City should work cooperatively with the Veterans Administration and other businesses with insufficient parking to identify opportunities to consolidate and improve parking areas.
► Given topography and land availability, the City should encourage the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center to construct parking structures as needed to accommodate their parking needs.

Public Transit

Since 1986 Muskogee County Transit has been providing public transportation in Muskogee County and the City of Muskogee. The County Transit provides fixed routes within Muskogee and demand response trips into the City from outlying communities such as Haskell, Boynton, Taff, Fort Gibson, Warner, Porum and Webber Falls, with daily trips for senior citizens and those with disabilities to different nutrition sites in the area. In addition to public transit, taxi service is also available 24 hours per day and tickets are half price through a contract with the taxi cab company. Flexible route service is available 12 hours per day, Monday through Friday in the City of Muskogee and 8 hours on Saturday. The flexible routes include two 24 passenger trolleys.

Recommendation

Public transportation is an important and valuable service to the community. The City should continue to work with, and support Muskogee County Transit in their efforts to provide public transit and continue to assess influences or changes in transit demand such as development of new employment or retail centers.
Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation within the City is accommodated through a network of sidewalks and trails. City sidewalks are along most streets and provide the primary means by which pedestrians can safely move through the community. Although sidewalks are generally located throughout the City, several “gaps” in the network do exist.

Trails provide off-street, alternative routes that serve both a mobility and recreational function. Although the City has a comprehensive Trails Plan in place for constructing an interconnected trail system, today there are many areas within the City that lack trail access.

Recommendation

The City should conduct a comprehensive inventory of all sidewalks in the City, and identify sidewalk “gaps” or missing segments. Based on this inventory, the City should seek to complete the sidewalk network, building new sidewalks where needed prioritizing areas near schools, churches, shopping areas, and Downtown.

The City should also continue to implement the recommendations of the Trails Plan and consider the new strategies presented in the Parks, Open Space and Environmental Features Plan to improve upon the trail system which generally includes new trails and routes along abandoned rail lines, collector and arterial streets, creeks, and within segments of the 100-year flood plain.

Rail

Numerous rail lines transect the City of Muskogee, providing railroad access to many of the City’s industrial areas. The rail access is an amenity for industrial areas and can serve to attract and retain local businesses that rely on rail access for the movement of freight. There is no passenger rail service in the City of Muskogee.

While rail is a benefit to the City’s economy and economic development efforts, at-grade rail crossings can impact efficient flow of traffic throughout the City and where no crossings exist, the railroads can create barriers, sectioning off areas of the City. The City has already addressed many key crossings, with viaducts along Shawnee Avenue, Callahan Street, Cincinnati Avenue, Peak Boulevard, and Main Street, however other areas may benefit from grade-separation.

Recommendations

The City should continue to monitor traffic conditions within the City and identify potential grade-separations understanding the significant cost of the improvement. Connecting Martin Luther King Drive with Gibson Street is an example of a potential project that would improve east-west connectivity between the Downtown and the residential neighborhoods to the east; however, such a capital project would likely include considerable construction and land acquisition costs.

The City should also explore the potential of constructing a grade-separated crossing along the access road into Three Forks Harbor. Currently trains bringing coal to the Muskogee Generating Station often block the only access for the harbor. According to Port officials, trains can block access several times a day for considerable periods of time.

Air (Davis Field Airport)

Davis Field Airport is a 1,622 acre Regional Business Jet Airport owned by the City of Muskogee. The airport is located on Highway U.S. 64 at the southern end of the City’s municipal limits. The airport can accommodate light through heavy transport type jet aircraft. In addition to current airport operations there are areas available for future industrial development adjacent to airport facilities.

Recommendations

The City should continue to support airport operations and actively market adjacent properties for new industrial businesses. The City should also explore working with the State to improve access to the airport, whether through a new interchange at Davis Field Road and the Muskogee Turnpike, or improving the intersection of Gillick Street and Peak Boulevard. Improved access would better link the airport to other industrial areas, the Port of Muskogee, rail and the interstate system.

Water (McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System)

The City’s location along the Arkansas and McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System provides Muskogee with a unique mode of transportation. The Port of Muskogee provides sea port access along this waterway, and is one of the most inland river port routes in the United States.

The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System originates at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa and runs southeast through Oklahoma and Arkansas to the Mississippi River. Though it primarily follows the Arkansas River, it also follows portions of the Verdigris River in Oklahoma and the White River in Arkansas. It also includes the Arkansas Post Canal that connects the Arkansas and White Rivers.

The length of the system is 445 miles from the head of navigation at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa to the Mississippi River. Beginning at the Port of Muskogee, it takes a commercial towboat and barge tow four to five days to travel the entire system and seven to ten days to get to New Orleans.

The multi-purpose river navigation system was created by the federal government through the construction of locks and dams. The navigable waterway allows commercial barge traffic and recreational boaters access to river ports along the Arkansas, the Mississippi River and its tributaries and the seaports of the world via the Gulf of Mexico.

The McClellan-Kerr system provides a variety of benefits including navigation, water supply, fish and wildlife conservation, recreation, and hydropower generation. The McClellan-Kerr is part of the Arkansas River Basin Project, which provides flood control through the use of a series of upstream reservoirs.
The river system is also an important employment generator for the region. Along Muskogee’s three miles of waterfront, private industry has invested more than $2 billion in their plants and equipment, creating more than three thousand jobs.

Port of Muskogee
The Port of Muskogee is a multi-modal transportation facility located on the Arkansas River portion of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, linking Oklahoma with major river ports in the U. S. and seaports around the world via the Gulf of Mexico. The Port and its industrial parks are currently the home of many heavy industrial businesses that rely upon waterway access. The Master Plan of Development for the Port of Muskogee has been approved by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (now dissolved), the City of Muskogee and Muskogee County. In accordance with the Master Plan, lands within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Port have been reserved for those industries that require waterway access.

Recommendation
The City should continue to support the Port of Muskogee’s development in accordance with the Master Plan of Development for the Port of Muskogee. The City should encourage the Port of Muskogee to routinely audit the needs and operations of existing businesses, including current tenants in the Port, to be sure they are aware of the cost savings attributable to barge transportation and the transload services provided by Port terminal operators. The end goal should be to maximize the efficiency of sites and land within the Port to make excess property available to new or expanding businesses who require access to the waterway.

Three Forks Harbor
Three Forks Harbor, a safe harbor and mixed-use port development, located on the east bank of the Arkansas River, provides public access to the navigation system for recreational boaters. Amenities at Three Forks Harbor include a public boat launch, a full service marina and ship’s store, transient boat slips, transient boat yard, and a one-hundred ton Marine Travel Lift. The offices of the Muskogee City-County Port Authority are located in the River Center at Three Forks Harbor. Three Forks Harbor and the River Center host a number of special events including, Kids Fishing Rodeo, Cardboard Boat Regatta and River Rumba. These and other events at Three Forks, attract local residents and many visitors to the City of Muskogee.

Recommendation
The City should continue to support the further development and use of Three Forks Harbor and the efforts of the Muskogee City-County Port Authority, the Chamber of Commerce and others to provide recreational benefits to the local residents and attract visitors to the City of Muskogee.

Image and Identity Recommendations
The City can strengthen its image and identity through attractive corridors, parking areas, and well-maintained streets and sidewalks. The following recommendations will assist the City in creating an attractive and positive image for the community through transportation improvements:

► Continue to budget for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of streets and sidewalks.
► Bury, or relocate, overhead utility lines along arterial corridors.
► Work with property owners to remove broken or empty business signs.
► Improve the appearance of off-street parking areas to include landscaped islands and pedestrian crosswalks.
► Implement a streetscape plan along key corridors throughout the community and include street trees, pedestrian crossings, decorative light standards, light post banners, and pedestrian amenities such as benches and wayfinding signage.
► Work with the State to improve the right-of-way and appearance of State controlled streets within the City.
► Install gateway features at key entrance points into the community including along the Muskogee Turnpike.
► Continue to create an interconnected trail system and market the City as a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community.
► Continue to support and market the Port of Muskogee, the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System and Three Forks Harbor as important economic development assets.
► Support and market Davis Field Airport to attract business and visitation and strengthen the identity of the City.

Sustainability Recommendations
The City should implement the following transportation and circulation recommendations to support sustainability:

► Support the enhancement, accessibility and use of public transit.
► Implement the recommendations of the City’s Trail Plan to promote bicycling and walking.
► Encourage mixed-use development in the Downtown to create activity and support residents working, shopping, and recreating within walking distance of their home.
► Include “best management practices” and green building techniques such as pervious paver parking lots and the use of native plantings in drainage systems.
Transportation Plan City of Muskogee

The City’s transportation and circulation system is one of its greatest strengths and assets. The system is truly intermodal, providing local access for vehicles and pedestrians and to outside destinations via rail, air, and boat. However, several issues and concerns related to the City’s roadways, traffic, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation were identified throughout the community outreach process for the Comprehensive Plan. Comments from the community indicated that the existing network of streets and trails is insufficient to accommodate the travel needs of the existing population. Several enhancements and new connections are needed, not only to better serve current residents and businesses, but to ensure efficient circulation throughout the City in the future. The Transportation Plan, in conjunction with the Community-wide Land Use Plan, seeks to address these concerns and promote appropriate and necessary improvements within the City of Muskogee and surrounding area.

Map Legend
- Port Authority of Muskogee & Three Forks Harbor
- Proposed Interchange
- Recommended Interchange
- Existing Pedestrian Bridge
- Potential Grade Separated Rail Crossing
- Gateway Opportunity
- Widen Street
- Improve/Eliminate Unnecessary Turnlane
- Muskogee Turnpike
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Urban Collector Streets
- Rural Collector Streets
- Local Streets

Davis Field Road Turnpike Connection

prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates
Section 7 Community Facilities

Community facilities provide vital services to the Muskogee community and are key contributors to the quality of life enjoyed by residents and the experience of visitors. Community services and facilities include public and quasi-public uses provided by the City, the County, other governmental districts, organizations, and religious institutions.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan highlights Muskogee’s community facilities and presents recommendations to help ensure high-quality facilities and services are available and desirable throughout the City today and in the future. The recommendations presented in this section support existing community facilities and services while encouraging new desirable facilities to locate in the City, and providing strategies and recommendations to ensure the City continues to be well served as it grows and is revitalized.

The Community Facilities Plan presents general policies and guidelines for community facilities; however, it is not intended to supersede goals and policies of other agencies, or substitute for the more detailed planning which should be undertaken by the City and other service agencies and organizations such as the County and the school districts. Since many of the community facilities are not under the control or direction of the City of Muskogee, it is important that the City maintain active communication and coordinate planning efforts with other agencies including the local service providers such as the school districts and library, Muskogee County, state and federal agencies and others. The generalized locations of future community facilities, such as schools or fire stations, do not preclude the need for the more detailed planning, programming, and site selection which fall within the purview of each respective agency of organization. Rather, these recommendations underscore the need for the City to work with other service providers to accommodate the appropriate expansion of community facilities within the City.
There are two primary public school districts in the City: Muskogee Public Schools and Hilldale Public Schools. The Muskogee Public Schools district serves most of the City, and a large portion of Muskogee County. Hilldale Public Schools services a smaller area on the City’s south side, as well as areas within Muskogee County south of the City limits. In addition to the public school system, the City has a number of private schools and colleges. These institutes attract students, visitors, and employment opportunities within the community. These schools also add to the quality of life and character of Muskogee and therefore the City should continue to coordinate and cooperate with these institutions to plan for future growth in the community.

### Muskogee Public Schools

The Muskogee Public School (MPS) District has provided educational opportunities for more than 110 years for the City. The student population is currently 6,251 who attend these public schools and facilities:

- Muskogee High School, 3200 East Shawnee Avenue
- A. R. 7th & 8th Grade Center, 402 N. “S” Street
- Rougher Alternative Academy, 600 Altamont Street
- B.F.S.A., 300 Virgil Mathews Drive
- Cherokee Elementary, 24 & Estelle Street
- Creek Elementary, 200 South Country Club Road
- Grant Foreman Elementary, 800 Bacon Street
- Harris Jobe Elementary, 2809 N. Country Club Road
- Irving Elementary, 1100 N. “J” Street
- Pershing Elementary, 301 N. 54th Street
- Sadler Elementary, 800 Altamont Street
- Tony Goetz Elementary, 2412 Haskell Boulevard
- Whittier Elementary, 1705 Cincinnati Street
- Child Nutrition Services, 1700 Beacon Street
- Early Childhood Center, 901 Emporia

Muskogee Public Schools (MPS) District officials have reported that the School District is currently under its capacity; however, they do anticipate increased enrollment over the next five years. Currently, the school district is preparing a long-range facility improvement plan to provide quality school facilities to their residents and children. Once the MPS District’s long-range facility improvement plan is complete, the City should work with the School District to coordinate relevant recommendations that may affect land use decisions especially in terms of potential new school sites.

As the City makes efforts to revitalize Downtown, the Original Town Site, and other areas of the City, it will be key that Muskogee Public Schools can accommodate new school children. Therefore, it is important that the City maintain active channels of communication with the School District and coordinate plans and goals to ensure that additional students can be accommodated and that new growth is anticipated by the school system.

### Hilldale Public Schools

The Hilldale Public School District serves the southern section of the City and County with an elementary school, a middle and high school. The schools are as follows:

- Hilldale Lower and Upper Elementary Schools, 315 East Peak Boulevard
- Hilldale Middle School, 400 E 43rd Street South
- Hilldale High School, 300 E 43rd Street South

The District’s Administration Office is also located within the high school. The City should continue to coordinate with Hilldale Public Schools to ensure that potential new growth in the district is part of the school’s long range plans, especially with regard to potential new school sites.
Colleges and Institutes of Higher Learning

Muskogee is home to four institutions providing college credit and opportunities for higher learning including: Northeastern State University, Connors State College, Indian Capital Technology Center-Muskogee Campus, and the private Bacone College, the oldest college in Oklahoma.

Indian Capital Technology Center
The Muskogee Campus of Indian Capital Technology provides occupational training for secondary and post-secondary students. According to school representatives, all of the facilities are at capacity, however, additional students could be served on-site with campus expansion.

Connors State College
Connors State College is public college founded as an agricultural high school in 1908. The College offers degrees up to the Associate’s degree level. Connors State College has three campus locations consisting of the main branch in Warner, and the remaining two campuses in Muskogee. The Muskogee Downtown campus is located in the C.N. Haskell Building at the intersection of Second and Court Streets, and the Muskogee Port Campus is located at 2501 North 41st Street East.

Connors State College, in coordination with Northeastern State University (NSU), is constructing a new Connors State College building on the NSUM Campus. The new 10,000 square foot building will house a library, bookstore, and faculty office space.

Bacone College
Bacone College is a private four-year liberal arts college founded in 1880 as the Indian University by Almon C. Bacone. Bacone College is the oldest continuously operated institution of higher education in Oklahoma. The college has strong historic ties to various tribal nations, including the Cherokee Nation and the Muscogee Creek Nation, and the American Baptist Churches.

Northeastern State University (NSU) - Muskogee
NSU-Muskogee is a branch campus of Northeastern State University whose main campus located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The City of Muskogee, using sales tax money, built the original building at 2400 West Shawnee. The University provides upper division and graduate level courses. The school currently offers classes in education and business and serves approximately 600 students.

According to a university representative, the campus is under capacity during the day as most classes are offered in the evenings when the campus is near capacity. This is expected to change in the future however when Connors State College opens their new facility on the NSUM campus. The representative expects that the campus will operate over capacity with the addition of that new facility.

These institutes attract students, visitors, and employment opportunities within the community. The Comprehensive Plan should identify potential opportunities for land use recommendations near these institutions to capitalize upon their presence.

Oklahoma School for the Blind
This school provides education options for blind or visually impaired students from infancy to age 21. According to the school there are 120 students enrolled.

Recommendations
Schools educate the community’s youth and prepare them for post-secondary education and the workforce. The quality of schools and education provided in a community is one of the most important community services and often provides a direct correlation to property values. It is also a criteria used by businesses and industries looking to relocate or establish themselves in a new community. The ability to offer quality schools to the families of prospective employees is an important consideration for corporations and businesses, particularly those seeking to relocate its operations or key employees.

Given the importance of schools to the community, the City should work closely with the public school districts to assist the schools in continuing to provide high-quality education and facilities and to expand existing facilities or construct new facilities when necessary. Furthermore, the City should make it a key objective to eliminate the divisive issue of Hilldale Schools vs. Muskogee Schools which is contributing to the disinvest in the Original Town Site. By having two quality school districts, on par with one another, the decision of where to build new homes will no longer be decided by schools, and all areas of the community will benefit.
City of Muskogee

The City of Muskogee provides many critical services to the community through a number of community facilities located throughout the City. Key City services include the city administration, public works, infrastructure, and emergency and safety support services. During the planning process, the City’s various departments were asked to offer their input with regard to current and anticipated needs. Feedback received is reflected below.

City Hall

City Hall is located in Downtown Muskogee, at 229 West Okmulgee Street. The current City Hall was built more than eighty years ago houses a number of departments. As a facility critical to the City’s operation, it is recommended that the City periodically review their current and future administrative operations to determine if the current City Hall is appropriate in terms of size and function. It is always determined that a new City Hall is required to provide high-quality services residents, the new facility should remain within the Downtown area as it contributes to the activity of the area and helps promote the importance of Downtown to the Muskogee community.

Payment Center

The City’s Payment Center is located west of City Hall and consists of multiple drive thru lanes. The facility occupies a highly-visible site in the Downtown area that should be considered for redevelopment. If redevelopment occurs, the Payment Center should be relocated to another area near City Hall.

Water

The City’s Water Distribution Department is responsible for repairing and replacing water mains and service connections to the residents of Muskogee and surrounding communities. The water distribution facility is located at 1239 Chicago Street. The City should continue to monitor the water system and make necessary upgrades and repairs whenever feasible. The new 5-Year Temporary Sales Tax should assist the City in budgeting for water service repairs.

According to Fire Department officials, the water distribution system and supply is adequate. More than 2,100 fire hydrants are located within the City fed from 6-inch or larger mains. Water flows meet national requirements; however some hydrants are located on dead-end lines and in outlying areas.

Recommendation

As the City experiences outward growth it is important to ensure fire protection is adequate. The updated Plan will include any long-term growth plans of the Fire Department to ensure quality fire protection services throughout all areas of the City. The City should also continue to work with and through the Fire Department to coordinate any long-term growth plans to ensure quality fire protection services throughout all areas of the City.

Public Safety & Emergency Services

Fire Department

For over a century the Muskogee Fire Department has protected its citizens from fire and emergencies. The Muskogee Fire Department is dedicated to providing quality, timely, and professional emergency services to those who live in, work in, and visit the City of Muskogee. The Fire Department is headquartered at 505 Columbus Street and in addition operates the following facilities:

- Station 1 & MFD Office – 515 & 505 Columbus
- Fleet Maintenance Shop – 303 Owen Street
- Station 3 – 2603 Border
- Station 4 – 100 S. County Club Road
- Station 5 – 1706 N. York
- Station 6 – 513 E. Peak Blvd
- Station 7 – 200 N. 40th Street
- Training Tower/Facility – Muskogee Fairgrounds

An ISO (Insurance Services Office) Rating indicates how well a community is protected in the event of a fire. The ISO rating has a direct effect on the insurance premiums for homes and commercial buildings. The ISO Rating runs along a scale from 1 to 10, with the lower the rating meaning the better the insurance rates. The City of Muskogee Fire Department’s ISO Rating is 2 which is an excellent rating.

Muskogee County Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

Muskogee County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provides ambulance and emergency service throughout the community. Muskogee County EMS began operations in 1982, and at that time was limited to a response area of only rural Muskogee County. In 1986, the service area expanded to include the City of Muskogee and it became the sole-source ambulance provider for both the City and the County. MCEMS is headquartered at 200 Callahan Street in Muskogee, and there are stations providing EMS response on both the east and west sides of Muskogee.

Recommendation

Emergency Services are an important community service to the City and County. As an emergency responder, the timeliness of their response is critical to their service. To this end, the City should support the continued operation of the Muskogee County Emergency Medical Service and promote the appropriate expansion of the EMS. Furthermore the City should encourage the EMS to be proactive in their planning, ensuring that Muskogee’s growth areas are well served.
Muskogee Public Library

Muskogee Public Library is a part of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System (EODLS) whose mission statement reads “Libraries = Life Long Learning”. The Library is currently located at 801 W. Okmulgee. The Library leases the building and is looking for an opportunity to construct its own facility. When the district was formed in the early 1970’s all of the cities in the EODLS agreed to provide an adequate facility for a library and the district would provide the library service. The library would like a new building in the Downtown area to better serve residents of Muskogee, and has recently received a planning grant to begin the process of designing and constructing their new library facility.

Recommendation

The City should work with the Library to encourage the District to remain in the Downtown area. If a new building is constructed elsewhere in the Downtown, the City should identify future uses for the existing library facility. Future uses may include a new City Hall or administrative offices, or a facility for community events and meeting space.

Muskogee County Facilities

The City of Muskogee is the County Seat for Muskogee County. As the County seat, Muskogee is home to all of the County’s offices and services. The County operations bring visitors, employees, and associated businesses into Downtown Muskogee where a number of the facilities and offices are located, including: the County/City Detention facility, and the County District Court.

Recommendations

The City should continue to coordinate with the County to plan for potential expansion, relocation, or construction of facilities. The City should also work with the County to ensure that their facilities remain in the Downtown area.

Religious Institutions

The City of Muskogee has a number of religious institutions located throughout the community. Religious institutions contribute to the quality of life for residents and visitors and underscore the importance of religion in the community. These religious institutions are located throughout all areas of the City and consist of almost all denominations. In addition to places of worship, there are cemeteries scattered throughout the City. Some are small, while others are larger cemeteries serving the City like Greenhill Cemetery, Frozen Rock Cemetery, Memorial Park Cemetery, and Booker T. Washington Cemetery.

Recommendations

The City should continue to work with religious institutions to ensure that they remain in the community, however; that any negative effects such as increased traffic or parking on residential streets is minimized. In addition, as tax-exempt facilities, the City should work cooperatively with these institutions to ensure prime commercial and industrial real estate, which has the ability to strengthen the community’s tax base and provide jobs, are not used for religious institutions and churches.

Healthcare

The City of Muskogee is well served by healthcare. Within the City there are a number of medical offices and hospitals that provide healthcare services to residents and the larger region including the recently constructed Muskogee Community Hospital, Muskogee Regional Medical Center (MRMC), Solara Hospital Muskogee, and the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center.

Recommendations

The City should continue to work with healthcare providers to ensure that they remain in the community and that they continue to provide high-quality medical services. In addition to the overall recommendation to support medical services, the City should work closely with the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center to improve parking on its property. The City should encourage the medical center to consider a new parking structure to increase visitor and staff parking opportunities.
Museums
Much of the City’s rich history has been preserved, described and showcased in a number of different museums and ceremonial areas that exist within the community.

Recommendations
The City should continue to work with the organizations to ensure that they remain in the community and that future expansion plans are accommodated. The City should also work closely with the museums and organizations to consider the creation of a “museum campus” within the Downtown area. Locating several museums within walking distance in the Downtown area would have the potential of increasing visitor attendance, visibility, and provide for shared parking facilities and marketing/promotion campaigns.

Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame and Museum
In 1996 the Oklahoma State Legislature designated Muskogee as the site of the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame Museum. On an annual basis since 1997, The Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame has honored some of the world’s most notable talents. The mission of the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame & Museum is “to preserve and promote Oklahoma music by educating the public about Oklahoma’s rich and diverse music history, celebrating those who have achieved success, and promoting the development of new and aspiring artists.” In 2003, the organization entered into a long-term lease agreement with the City of Muskogee, and began the renovation of The Frisco Freight Depot. The building will be further renovated and expanded and a new building is planned to the south. A representative of the museum has stated that the renovated museum will require additional parking on the east side of Third Street and Elgin Street.

War Memorial Park and Museum, and USS Batfish
The USS Batfish, a WWII submarine, is the centerpiece of War Memorial Park. The park also includes an army tank, cannons and missiles, and the Walk of Honor. The park and its amenities are excellent; however, its location is rather isolated and can be difficult for visitors to find. The City should work with the museum to consider relocating into a new downtown “museum campus”. Although the logistics and costs associated with moving the USS Batfish are expected to be significant, if alternative Federal or State funds can be obtained, the relocation would be a tremendous asset for the community. If this goal comes to fruition, the USS Batfish could become the centerpiece of a potential “museum campus” and would have a catalytic effect on the entire Downtown area.

National Register of Historic Places
Four historic districts exist within Muskogee: Kendall Place Historic District; Depot and Freight Historic District; Founders’ Place Historic District; and the Downtown Historic District. In addition to the four individual districts, 47 historic sites are also located throughout the City including the Baltimore Hotel, Central Baptist Church, the Esco Building, and First Baptist Church. Administered by the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

Recommendation
The City should encourage property owners in these Historic Districts to maintain their homes and to encourage adaptive reuse/renovation as opposed to removal and reconstruction. The City should also support the creation of historical walking tours and historical marketing materials to communicate the history of these structures.

Economic and Business Development
The City should continue to support the economic development efforts led by the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, Muskogee City County Port Authority, and Downtown Muskogee, Inc. These organizations work closely with the City to attract new businesses as well as to retain, expand and promote existing businesses.

City of Muskogee Foundation
Foundation funding was secured in March 2007 when Capella Healthcare entered into an agreement with the Muskogee Regional Health Center Trust Authority, a public trust, to lease Muskogee Regional Medical Center for 40 years. City officials created the City of Muskogee Foundation as a nonprofit corporation from the net proceeds of this sale. In general, the goal of the Foundation is to develop and assist programs and projects in the community that improves quality of life. In 2010, the Foundation allocated $3.5 million for grants to improve the City.

Entertainment
The City’s heritage in entertainment, particularly in country and western music, has helped to support the establishment of entertainment uses in the Downtown Area. Entertainment uses provide employment opportunities, attract visitors into the area, and promote the cultural and artistic aspects of the community.

Recommendation
The City should support these entertainment facilities and work to attract new entertainment uses to open in the community, especially within the Downtown area.
Fraternal Organizations
A number of fraternal organizations are located throughout the City. Examples of local fraternal organizations include the Masonic Temple, Fraternal Order of Eagles, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Recommendation
The City should work with fraternal organizations to ensure that they remain in the community and that they are located in appropriate areas that have minimal negative effects on adjacent properties and neighborhoods such as increased traffic or parking on residential streets.

Image and Identity Recommendations
The City can strengthen its image and identity by ensuring that high-quality and attractive community facilities exist within Muskogee. Quality services and facilities will improve the quality of life for residents and attract visitors to the area. The following are recommendations for the City to consider when planning for community facilities and services in the community that will strengthen the overall character of Muskogee:

► Continue to budget for the ongoing maintenance and improvements of City services and facilities.
► Work with other governmental agencies, organizations and religious institutions to support their plans for expansion and improvement.
► Ensure that future expansion plans are well-planned and designed to lessen any negative impacts on adjacent properties or neighborhoods such as over parking.
► Work with other agencies to market the community facilities and services to ensure that residents and visitors are aware that they exist in the community.

Sustainability Recommendations
As new community facilities are constructed or as existing facilities are renovated, the City should work with community service providers to ensure that they support economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability. The following are recommendations the City should implement to support sustainability:

► Ensure high-quality community facilities exist in the City to attract visitors to the area that will add to the economy and will support local businesses.
► Include “best management practices” and green building techniques such as pervious paver parking lots and native plantings.
► Encourage the construction of LEED certified buildings.
► Encourage the addition of energy saving construction techniques and the use of solar or wind energy sources.
► Work with other agencies to ensure that community facilities and services exist in Muskogee that promote the City’s arts, culture, and history.
► Ensure that community facilities are located throughout the community so that they are easily accessible to all residents of Muskogee.
► Work with museums to create a “museum campus” in the Downtown area to establish an area where each museum can cross promote and build experiences increased visibility and attendance by being in proximity to each other.
The City is served by community facilities that foster a sense of community, provide important services, and enhance functionality for the community. An inventory of existing community facilities reveals the high amount of important facilities that are spread across the city. Schools, fire stations, museums, hospitals, and government buildings are a few of the many facilities serving residents.

**Community Facilities**
- City Hall
- Water Distribution (public works)
- Fire Station #1 & MFD Office
- Environmental Control (public works)
- Station #3
- Station #4
- Station #5
- Station #6
- Station #7
- Training Tower (on Fairgrounds)
- Library
- Water Plant (public works)
- Pollution Control (public works)
- Streets and Sanitation (public works)

**Schools/ Educational Facilities**
- Muskogee High School
- A.R. 7th & 8th Grade Center
- Roughers Alternative Academy
- B.F.S.A.
- Cherokee Elementary
- Creek Elementary
- Grant Foreman Elementary
- Harris Jobe Elementary
- Irving Elementary
- Pershing Elementary
- Sadler Elementary
- Tony Goetz Elementary
- Whittier Elementary
- Early Childhood Center
- Saint Joseph Catholic School
- Indian Capital Technology Center
- Bacone College
- Northeastern State University (NSU)
- Connors State College
- Oklahoma School for the Blind
- Hilldale Elementary School
- Hilldale Middle School & High School

**Museums & Entertainment Facilities**
- Five Civilized Tribes Museum
- War Memorial Park & Museum & USS Batfish
- Three Rivers Museum
- Atalas Lodge Museum
- Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame & Museum
- Thomas Foreman Historic Home
- Civic Center
- Muskogee Little Theater
- The Roxy Theater
- Muskogee Fairgrounds
- Castle of Muskogee

**Hospitals**
- Muskogee Community Hospital
- Muskogee Regional Medical Center
- Solara Hospital
- Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center

**Cemeteries**

**County Facilities**
- County/City Detention Facility
- County District Court
- County Court Offices
- Muskogee County Headstart School
- Muskogee County EMS
- County Sheriff

**Federal Facilities**

**Community Centers**
- Martin Luther King Center
- Kiwanis Senior Center
- Muskogee Swim and Fitness Club
- Muskogee Teen Center

**Other Key Facilities**
- Davis Field Airport
- Port of Muskogee
- Three Forks Harbor

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prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates
Section 8 Parks & Open Space Plan

Parks, open space and environmental features contribute significantly to the City's appeal, overall quality of life, image, character, desirability, and aesthetics. Public parks and open space provide places for residents and visitors to recreate and enjoy nature. Within the City, public parks and formalized open space areas are provided primarily by the Parks and Recreation Department and schools/School Districts.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan presents the plan, policies and recommendations which pertain to parks, open space and environmental features which generally seek to preserve and protect important and sensitive environmental features and to provide adequate open space and recreation to the community, acquiring and developing park sites when necessary.
Public Parks and Open Space
Muskogee Parks and Recreation Department
Led by its Parks and Recreation Department the City should continue to provide high quality parks and recreation facilities that area easily accessible to all residents. Currently, the City’s Parks and Recreation Department owns and maintains 17 parks and recreational facilities totaling approximately 340 acres. As the City experiences infill development and outward growth, the City should continue to identify areas where new parks and recreation facilities are needed.

Continue Park Maintenance and Renovations
In addition to acquiring new parks and open space the City should continue to budget for and undertake ongoing maintenance to existing parks whenever feasible. To assist in funding park improvements the City should continue to seek alternative funding such as grants through the Muskego Foundation and parks and recreation grants administered by the State (discussed in more detail in the Implementation Section).

Acquire New Public Open Space
To effectively guide the long-range provision of park and recreation for the community, it is recommended that the City build on this Comprehensive Plan with a detailed Parks and Recreation Master Plan. A more specialized planning effort would greatly assist the City in prioritizing park improvements and potential land acquisitions. To provide initial direction to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and to guide the City in the interim, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Within new developing areas, the City should work with developers to centrally locate new neighborhood parks within new residential subdivisions.**

- **Within existing under-served and built-out areas such as the Original Town Site, the City should consider expanding small neighborhood park sites by acquiring vacant lots to create parks large enough to accommodate neighborhood level recreation.** Ideally, the new park site would include a playground, open space, and possibly a neighborhood garden. The intent is to create a gathering place for the neighborhood that provides opportunities for residents to interact and to help strengthen a sense of community.

- **The City should prepare an acquisition plan and strategy to acquire larger open space areas as identified on the Land Use Plan for regional parks.** Areas recommended for future regional parks are generally undeveloped and consist of heavily wooded areas, floodplain, and/or wetlands. The City should explore acquiring these properties on their own, or work with other entities, such as the County, to purchase these larger areas and to ultimately create public open space.

- **The City should explore the acquisition of property along the Arkansas River to preserve and protect this important environmental feature, while at the same time ensuring ongoing public access to the riverfront.** Acquiring property along the river would help to strengthen the community’s connection to the river and provide opportunities for both passive and active recreational activities.

- **The City should explore the creation of a new Downtown park to serve as a community focal point to anchor a new museum and civic campus.** New or existing government and civic buildings such as City Hall and a Library could face the open space area which would be ideal for community events and gatherings. The addition of a potential “museum campus” with a relocated USS Batfish anchoring the park would instantly create a catalyst site in the Downtown area.

- **The City should pursue opportunities to expand existing City parks through acquisition of adjacent properties.** For example, an opportunity exists to expand Love-Hatbox east toward Highway 69. This would increase the park’s visibility and improve its access, while at the same time providing opportunities for recreation. In addition, several other existing parks are located adjacent to vacant or undeveloped properties that would easily accommodate parkland acquisition and expansion of existing parks.

Love-Hatbox Sports Complex
The City is currently conducting a study for the Love-Hatbox Sports Complex. Pending the results of the study, Love-Hatbox could become more intensely developed with leisure amenities, strengthening its role as a community destination and important connection for the City’s trail network.

- **Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance**

It is possible for the City to acquire new park land within its growth areas through developer donation. While a developer should recognize the value of open space and parkland to a residential subdivision, only the most responsible developers will provide parkland unlimted. To ensure new growth does not compromise existing park service levels or overburden the park system and to ensure the residents continue to be well served by parks and recreation, the City should consider adopting a parks land dedication ordinance. A park land dedication ordinance would be tied to the City’s subdivision regulations, and when land is subdivided, require a developer to dedicate suitable land for parks and open space within the subdivision. The amount of park and/or open space required in the subdivision should depend upon the need for open space based upon the expected number of new residents. Typically this requirement is stated as an amount of acreage for every one thousand new persons of the total population projected (i.e. 10 acres per every 1,000 residents).

- **In addition the land dedication ordinance should contain a cash-in-lieu of parkland provision, substituting a cash donation in exchange for land dedication.** This provision allows for smaller scale development, such as infill, which typically do not generate a large enough park site to be usable to contribute cash to fund park development in other parks throughout the City.

Preserve Environmental Features
Whenever feasible, the City should acquire environmentally sensitive areas such as those that consist of, or contain, creeks, floodplain, wetlands and heavily wooded areas. Throughout the City, these natural features can be found on both developed and undeveloped land, and contribute significantly to the character of the community and local ecosystems. In some instances, the wooded areas are owned by public agencies such as the Parks and Recreation Department; however, the majority of the wooded areas are located throughout the residential portions of the Original Town Site, on tracts of undeveloped land, and within unincorporated areas.

Preserving environmental areas benefits the community by protecting the environment, providing public open space, and by minimizing potential flooding issues. Acquiring property in the floodplain for public open space will remove the potential of future developments in flood prone areas. Another benefit to acquiring floodplain property is that the system of greenways would result in a linear park that would be ideal for the creation of a multi-use trail system.

Address Flooding
Some areas of the community are prone to flooding on a regular basis creating safety concerns and causing property damage. This has resulted in a heightened concern among some residents over the City’s stormwater control and management. The extent of the flooding varies with minor flooding typically occurs within streets, and more major flooding occurring near creeks and other low-lying areas. Measures the City can take to improve conditions include prohibiting development within floodplains or wetlands and exploring the feasibility of constructing regional detention facilities to collect and release stormwater at manageable rates.

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Implement the City’s Trail Plan

Prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates
In 2004, the City created a Trails Plan that identified existing and proposed new on-street and off-street trails throughout the City with off-street routes proposed along abandoned rail lines, creeks and floodplains, and on-street routes along collector and arterial streets. The Trails Plan recommends approximately 52 miles of off-road multi-purpose trails divided into three phases of construction (near term 0-5 years, midterm 5-10 years, and long-term 10-15 years). The Trails Plan also proposed approximately 15 miles of new on-street “linkages” throughout the City, divided into two phases of construction (near term and mid-term).

Overall, the Trails Plan presents a comprehensive long-range plan and implementation strategy for providing an interconnected trails system throughout Muskogee. The planning effort is recent and its recommendations are consistent with current community goals and contemporary best practices. It is recommended that the City continue to follow the recommendations of the Trails Plan; however, these additional recommendations should be considered as well:

► Consider utilizing the existing pedestrian bridge over Peak Boulevard as a north-south trail connection. The City’s existing Trail Plan recommends that the Coody Creek East Trail, located in the southern section of the City, cross Peak Boulevard at the Coody Creek intersection. Renouring the trail to cross Peak Boulevard over the pedestrian overpass near Hilldale Elementary School utilizes existing infrastructure and is a safer, grade separated crossing.

► To improve the use of the multi-use trail system, the City should create a City-Wide bicycle route/signage program. Installing directional and wayfinding signage along trails (both for on-street and off-street), and at key locations such as trail heads and at street crossings will improve the visibility of the trail routes and improve circulation.

► Consider building a trail head at the tourist information center northeast of the Highway 69 and Shawnee Avenue intersection. A trail head located in this location would create a highly visible entrance to the recommended trail system that would be a key connection between the Centennial Trail and Honor Heights Park, and link the City of Muskogee and the Arkansas River trail systems. The trail head should include parking, restrooms, shelter, drinking fountain, and directional/wayfinding signage. A new trail should be constructed from this site north along the floodplain to connect with a recommended trail running along the Arkansas River.

► Construct an on-street trail system along 3rd Street to connect the Centennial Trail South with the planned Centennial Trail North through the Downtown. Fourth Street and Seventh Street are also potential locations for the trail connector.

Image and Identity Recommendations
Offering high-quality parks and recreation within the City will strengthen the image and identity of Muskogee. Continuing to provide attractive and popular parks and open space areas will improve the quality of life for residents and attract visitors to Muskogee. The City should undertake the following recommendations to strengthen the City’s image through quality parks and open space:

► Budget for and undertake ongoing maintenance and improvements to parks and recreational facilities.

► Market the City’s parks, open space, environmental features and recreational amenities to both residents and visitors.

► Support the use of larger parks and sports complexes such as Love-Hatbox Sports Complex to hold regional tournaments and sporting events.

► Create an interconnected trail system that will support walking and biking throughout the community which will also attract visitors to the area.

Other Open Space
The City’s park system is supplemented by private open space such as golf courses, schools, colleges, churches, and homeowners associations. In addition to acquiring and maintaining public parks and open space, the City should continue to support other agencies and organizations that provide private open space and recreation opportunities to residents.

► Consider building a trail head at the tourist information center northeast of the Highway 69 and Shawnee Avenue intersection. A trail head located in this location would create a highly visible entrance to the recommended trail system that would be a key connection between the Centennial Trail and Honor Heights Park, and link the City of Muskogee and the Arkansas River trail systems. The trail head should include parking, restrooms, shelter, drinking fountain, and directional/wayfinding signage. A new trail should be constructed from this site north along the floodplain to connect with a recommended trail running along the Arkansas River.

► Construct an on-street trail system along 3rd Street to connect the Centennial Trail South with the planned Centennial Trail North through the Downtown. Fourth Street and Seventh Street are also potential locations for the trail connector.

Sustainability Recommendations
Beyond environmental sustainability, parks and open space can also contribute to other aspects of sustainability, including economic sustainability and cultural sustainability. To these ends the City should consider the following recommendations when constructing or renovating parks and recreation facilities to support sustainability:

► Ensure high-quality parks and recreational facilities exist in the City to attract visitors to the area that will add to the economy and support local businesses.

► Support the use of Love-Hatbox Sports Complex for regional tournaments and sporting events that attracts visitors which benefit local businesses.

► Include “best management practices” and green building techniques such as pervious paver parking lots and the use of native plantings.

► Encourage the construction of LEED certified buildings.

► Encourage the addition of energy saving construction techniques and the use of solar or wind generating energy sources.

► Continue to hold community events and festivals at public parks to support quality of life and to attract visitors to the area.
This final section describes specific actions required to carry out the recommendations and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map including potential implementation techniques and resources. This section also provides the detail necessary to allow the City to track the progress and effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map and maximize its usefulness as a tool to achieve the community’s vision.

In order for the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map to be fully implemented, it must be based on a strong partnership between the City and other public agencies, governmental bodies, districts, residents, local business owners, the development community, and others.

The Implementation section is intended as a “road map” for City staff and elected and appointed officials to use in their efforts to realize the vision set forth in this document. It is also a reference for other stakeholders and interested parties, such as residents, business owners, community organizations, and potential developers to use as a tool to work together to support and improve the City of Muskogee.
Administrative Actions
The following are actions that the City should undertake as administrative items to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map
The document should become the City’s official policy guide for improvement and development within Muskogee and its planning jurisdiction for the next 10 to 15 years. The Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map should be adopted by the City’s Planning Commission and City Council and then used on a regular basis by City staff, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals within Muskogee. Once adopted, the document should be made available on the City’s website and hardcopies should be provided at City Hall and Public Library for viewing and purchase.

Promote Cooperation & Participation
In addition to carrying out the administrative actions and public improvement projects called for in the document, the City should lead in promoting the cooperation and collaboration needed to implement the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. Other potential “partners” should include:

Private developers and property owners, who should be encouraged to undertake improvements and new construction that conform to the document and enhance the overall quality and character of Muskogee; and

Other governmental and service districts, such as the County, the school districts, Universities/Colleges, the Civic Center, the hospitals, the Veteran’s Administration, utility companies, the Port of Muskogee, the Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Muskogee Foundation, the museums, and others;

Update and/or Revisit the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map on a Regular Basis
It is important that the new Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map not be a static document. If local attitudes change or new issues arise which are beyond the scope of the current document, the document should be revised and updated accordingly. Although a proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map can be brought forth by petition at any time, the City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan every one to two years as part of annual budgeting and goal setting.

Work to Refine Zoning Ordinance and Development Controls
The City should review and update internal processes where necessary, removing obstacles to the Plan’s recommendations and implementation. A review of existing zoning codes and development controls to assess policies and procedures that need to be revised to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan is an important first step. The City should ensure that the updated zoning ordinance will allow and promote the types of development desired within the community, as presented in the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

Implementation Strategies
The Plan recommends key strategies to assist the City in implementing the recommendations and vision for the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. The implementation strategies include a variety of tasks that involve working with other governmental agencies, private property owners and developers, and internally with City staff and elected/appointed officials.

Prepare and Action Agenda
The City should prepare an implementation “action agenda” which highlights the improvement and development projects and activities to be undertaken during the next few years. For example, the “action agenda” might consist of:

► A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken;
► The priority of each project or activity;
► An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and
► The possible funding sources and assistance programs that might potentially be available for implementing each project or activity.

Audit Internal Processes
Although the economic climate has experienced a significant downturn, the City should take this opportunity to review and update their current internal processes, including the process for subdivision, rezoning, signage, building permits, and annexations. An audit of these internal processes should identify opportunities to improve efficiency and remove hurdles or obstacles to redevelopment and reinvestment.
The following are the highlights of the standards:

► Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property that requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site, or to use a property for its original purpose.

► The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site shall not be destroyed.

► All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products or their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.

► Changes that may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment.

► Distinctive stylistic features that characterize the building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

► Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.

► The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible.

► Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.

► Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when they do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material and such design is compatible with the character of the property and the neighborhood.

► Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

**Funding and Financial Strategies**

Many of the projects, recommendations, policy changes, and improvements called for in the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or can be funded through normal municipal programs. Other projects, however, may be costly and benefit from, or require, special technical and/or financial assistance.

A description of the potential preliminary funding sources available is summarized below. It should be noted that funding programs are constantly changing. It is therefore recommended that the City periodically inventory and research available grants, programs and agencies to identify new opportunities that may become available.

**Federal Funding for Redevelopment and Reinvestment**

The programs associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, namely the TIGER grant program and Build America Bonds program, are no longer available. However, moving forward, it is likely that the Federal Government will continue to develop and support a range of new grant programs and subsidies to encourage redevelopment. The City should continue to monitor federal programs that could potentially be used to improve Muskogee’s infrastructure, roads and various public services.

There are several areas throughout the community that could benefit from reinvestment and, given the City’s history of receiving grants and other funding, it is likely that portions of Muskogee would qualify for various federal funding programs in the future.

**Facade Improvement Programs**

**Administrator:** City of Muskogee

**Description:** Façade Improvement Programs can be used to help improve and retain existing businesses by offering low interest loans or grants earmarked for improving the exterior appearance of designated properties. A façade improvement program provides financial and technical assistance to owners that invest in the aesthetics of their property. This program is targeted at existing buildings in areas that may look dated or run down. Such programs are often credited with sparking revitalization in downtowns and commercial corridors. Programs may be funded through Community Development Block Grant funds, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, or Special Service Area (SSA) districts. Façade improvement programs typically operate as a matching grant or as a rebate program payable once construction is complete.

**Potential Use:** To assist existing property owners and businesses in Muskogee improve the appearance of their structures and properties.
**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

**Administrator:** State of Oklahoma

**Description:** Many states have successfully used tax increment financing to promote redevelopment through public/private partnerships. Tax increment financing (TIF) is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. Areas eligible for TIF must either be classified as (1) a reinvestment area, (2) an historic preservation area, (3) an enterprise area, or (4) any combination thereof. The use of TIF is a potential mechanism for facilitating development within the boundaries of a designated TIF District.

**Potential Use:** TIF funds can be used for infrastructure, public improvements, land assemblage and in offsetting the cost of development – including but not limited to engineering, stormwater and other site-related issues.

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**City of Muskogee Foundation**

**Administrator:** City of Muskogee Foundation

**Description:** The City of Muskogee Foundation has four primary focus areas for grants: Economic Development, Education & Empowerment, Health and Wellness, and Quality of Life. Grant committees from each focus area have established unique missions as well as general and specific types of funding. However, funding priority for all focus areas will be given to organizations primarily serving the citizens of Muskogee, Oklahoma.

The grant application procedure is a two-step online process starting with a letter of inquiry. While there is no limit on the amount requested, the request should remain within the spending policy set each December by the Board of Directors. In 2011, a total of $4 million has been allocated for grants.

**Quality of Life Grants Committee**

**Mission:** The mission of the Committee is to provide support for programs and initiatives that improve and develop opportunities to enhance "live, work and play" for residents and guests of the Muskogee community.

**Types of Funding:** Consideration will be given for multiple types of funding designed to meet the priority considerations of this committee.

**Specific Funding:** For the next five years (2011-2015) priority consideration will be given to initiatives relating to the Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan, elimination of generational poverty, and collaborative approaches for teen pregnancy prevention. Additional consideration will be given to fund specific needs such as resource materials, publications, medical treatments, and new health and wellness initiatives or pilot projects, as resources allow.

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**Economic Development Grants Committee**

**Mission:** The mission of the Economic Development Committee is to assist and implement economic development activities designed to increase and support job opportunities and investment in our community.

**Types of Funding:** Consideration will be given for multiple types of funding such as capital, incentives, infrastructure, studies, and other opportunities that help the committee meet its mission.

**Specific Funding:** Priority consideration will be given to quality job creation, the promotion of destination tourism, and other opportunities that increase tax revenues to the City of Muskogee.

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**Education & Empowerment Grants Committee**

**Mission:** The mission of the Education & Empowerment Grants Committee is to enhance foundational learning in our community by funding educational experiences that are responsive to changing community needs and maximize the learning potential of every resident from pre-K through career, preparing them to succeed in the 21st century.

**Types of Funding:** Consideration will be given for multiple types of funding designed to meet the priority considerations of this committee.

**Specific Funding:** Priority consideration will be given to 6th-8th grade programs that encourage personal and leadership development skills that lead to high school success and graduation, as well as school programs that encourage the integration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Priority consideration will also be given to programs that support parental involvement in early childhood education.

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**Health and Wellness Grants Committee**

**Mission:** The mission of the Health and Wellness Grants Committee is to provide assistance for programs and initiatives which focus on the health and wellness of the citizens of Muskogee. Priority consideration for the next five years will focus on the Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan, elimination of generational poverty, and collaborative approaches to teen pregnancy prevention.

**Types of Funding:** Consideration will be given for multiple types of funding designed to meet the priority considerations of this committee. With Board approval, the committee reserves the right to fund preliminary workshops, write a Request for Proposal, hire a coordinator, and work in conjunction with other organizations to meet its funding priorities.

**Specific Funding:** Priority consideration will be given to initiatives relating to the Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan, (including tobacco prevention, obesity reduction through increased physical activity and better nutrition, and children’s health) as well as initiatives relating to the elimination of generational poverty (such as the Bridges Out of Poverty model). Collaborative approaches for teen pregnancy prevention will also be considered. Additional consideration will be given to fund specific needs such as resource materials, publications, medical treatments, and new health and wellness initiatives or pilot projects, as resources allow.
Transportation and Circulation Grants
SAFETEA-LU

Administrator: Federal Government

Description: The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was created in 2005, however, the future of the Act is uncertain and it is awaiting the passage of a new Transportation Bill. SAFETEA-LU addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today including improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment. SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities.

Potential Use: Fund transportation projects within Muskogee such as improved signalized intersections, crosswalks, pedestrian bridges, grade separated crossings, and public transit.

Safe Routes to School
Administrator: Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)

Matching Funds: Projects do not require a local match

Description: The Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) is designed to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative; and to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

The SRTS program is a reimbursement program and therefore the proposed project must be selected, approved, programmed, and contracted with the ODOT prior to the expenditure of any funds included in the request. Safe Routes to School projects do not require a local match.

Potential Use: The construction of sidewalks with access to schools in Muskogee.

Outdoor Recreation and Environment
Land and Water Conservation Fund
Administrator: National Park Service (NPS)

Description: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act was enacted in 1964 to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources for all citizens of the United States of present and future generations. The LWCF Act established a funding source for both Federal acquisition of authorized national park, conservation and recreation areas and for grants to State and local government to help them acquire, develop and improve outdoor recreation areas. Areas funded through LWCF grants must be maintained for recreation use in perpetuity. Thus, the LWCF assures that funded areas will be available for future as well as present generations. The program encourages conservation of key open spaces, such as riverfronts, forests, and wetlands. However, the program usually requires that lands purchased with grants be made accessible to the public for appropriated recreation uses. From Oklahoma’s allocation of LWCF funds, 50/50 matching grants are offered to eligible applicants for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation projects.

Eligible expenses must first be paid by the project sponsor. These expenses can then be reimbursed with grant funds at 50%. Approved projects are given a two-year time frame for completion. Eligible developments for reimbursement must be made within this time frame. The project should be in accordance with Oklahoma’s Statewide Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP identifies statewide conservation and recreational needs and devises a program to meet these needs. However, a locally-based master plan which identifies the current project as an outdoor recreational need for the community can override the SCORP. The relevant portion of the master plan should be included with the grant application.

Potential Use: To acquire new open space and to develop open space with recreational amenities.

Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program
Administrator: Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Federal Highway Administration

Description: The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a state-administered, federal-aid program managed through the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Federal Highway Administration in consultation with the Department of the Interior. So far, Oklahoma has granted almost seven million dollars for statewide trail projects. The RTP is a reimbursement-type grant program that provides for an 80% federal share and 20% non-federal share for each project. Additional federal funds may be used to provide up to 95% of the total project amount. Reimbursable project costs include land acquisition, labor and material costs, service contracts, design and engineering services and purchase or rental of equipment. The value of any donated items can also be included.

Potential Use: It is the intent of the RTP that funds are to be used on recreational trails and trail-related projects. Permissible Uses include trail maintenance and restoration, land acquisition, construction of new trails, trail access for persons with disabilities and development of trailhead and trail-side facilities.
Cultural Grants

Oklahoma Arts Council Strategic Plan

Administrator: Oklahoma Arts Council

Description: These three programming components relate directly to the Oklahoma Arts Council’s strategic plan and are necessary for reporting to the Legislature and to the National Endowment for the Arts on the state of the arts in Oklahoma. Qualifying organizations are Oklahoma non-religious, non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations, local and tribal governments, public libraries, public school districts, colleges and universities.

Potential Use: Eligible projects will fall under one of the following:

► Community Arts Programs supports community based arts activities and events such as performance, exhibitions, festivals, etc. which advance, promote or support the cultural and economic development of Oklahoma.

► Arts Education in Schools support programming taught by qualified arts instructors that develops students’ skills and knowledge in dance, drama, music, visual arts, traditional arts or creative writing.

► Arts Learning in Communities support arts instruction, classes and workshops for participants of all ages, abilities and life circumstances where a predominant amount of the participant’s time is devoted to the creative arts process.

Economic Development and Business Grants

Community Development Block Grant/ Economic Development Infrastructure Financing (CDBG/EDIF) Program

Administrator: Oklahoma Department of Commerce

Description: The Community Development Block Grant/Economic Development Infrastructure Financing (CDBG/EDIF) program provides public infrastructure financing to help communities grow jobs, enable new business startups and expansions for existing businesses.

The national objective of this program is the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities principally for people earning low to moderate incomes. The state program will achieve this national objective by funding projects in which at least 51 percent of the new jobs created are made available to low and moderate income individuals.

Potential Use: Publicly owned and maintained improvements that will provide basic infrastructure services to a new or expanding business, including water, wastewater, transportation improvements, and rehabilitation and new construction of publicly owned industrial buildings.

Oklahoma Community Economic Development Pooled Finance

Administrator: Oklahoma Development Finance Authority

Description: The Community Development Block Grant/Economic Development Infrastructure Financing (CDBG/EDIF) program provides public infrastructure financing to help communities grow jobs, enable new business startups and expansions for existing businesses.

The national objective of this program is the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities principally for people earning low to moderate incomes. The state program will achieve this national objective by funding projects in which at least 51 percent of the new jobs created are made available to low and moderate income individuals.

Potential Use: Publicly owned and maintained improvements that will provide basic infrastructure services to a new or expanding business, including water, wastewater, transportation improvements, and rehabilitation and new construction of publicly owned industrial buildings.

Oklahoma Quality Jobs Incentive Program

Administrator: Oklahoma Development Finance Authority

Description: Oklahoma’s successful Quality Jobs Incentive Program promotes job growth and helps improve company bottom lines by injecting cash back into businesses as they expand and create new jobs in Oklahoma. This innovative program gives qualifying enrolled companies quarterly cash rebates of up to five percent (5%) of taxable wages for up to 10 years. New legislation allows companies in the program who expand again to receive up to 6% wage rebates based on meeting certain criteria. This program is open to manufacturers and certain service companies with a new payroll investment of $2.5 million or more. A lower payroll threshold is available to businesses in certain industries or as a result of location in targeted areas.

► High Impact Program - Lowers annualized payroll threshold to $1 million for businesses that produce new direct jobs to the State that are equal to or greater than 1% of the total labor force of the county in which they locate. Payout is 2.5% of taxable wages for up to 6 years.

► Small Employer Program - Allows qualifying small businesses (90 employees or less) to receive up to a 5% cash-back incentive for up to 7 years to locate or expand in Oklahoma.
Oklahoma Investment/New Jobs Tax Credits  
Administrator: Oklahoma Development Finance Authority  
Description: Investment/New Jobs Tax Credits provide growing manufacturers a significant tax credit based on either an investment in depreciable property or on the addition of full-time-equivalent employees engaged in manufacturing, processing, or aircraft maintenance. Tax credits accrue and may begin to be claimed on July 1, 2012. A five-year tax credit on the greater of 1% per year of investment in qualified new depreciable property or a credit of $500 per year per new job, doubled in an Enterprise Zone. These credits are open to manufacturers with a sales tax exemption permit who are not participants in the Quality Jobs incentive program.

Oklahoma PrimeWIN  
Administrator: Oklahoma Development Finance Authority  
Description: The only incentive of its kind in the nation, PrimeWIN provides a cash benefit and a certified subcontractor base for federal prime contractors. PrimeWIN is a performance-based program that requires subcontracting with an Oklahoma workforce that offers federal prime contractors a cash rebate of up to 2% of the Oklahoma workforce loaded labor cost. Cash incentives are paid quarterly for a maximum of 10 years by the Oklahoma Tax Commission. This incentive provides contractors with an easy-to-access conduit to hundreds of pre-certified subcontractors assuring productivity and quality while meeting schedule demands.

Potential Use: Provide affordable lease space for new businesses in mixed-use project in Downtown Muskogee.

American Indian Land Tax Credit  
Administrator: Federal Government  
Description: Businesses locating or expanding in areas with Native American heritage benefit by accelerated depreciation of investment and by employment tax credits when employing tribal members or their spouses. Federal legislation clarifies the location of special American Indian lands in Oklahoma that qualify for related tax credits benefiting new and established businesses in Oklahoma. The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 includes extension through Dec. 31, 2011 of the tax incentive for businesses locating on former Indian lands. Benefits of the credit include:

► Accelerated Federal Property Depreciation Schedule.
► Federal Employment Tax Credits of up to $4,000 per qualifying employee per year.
► Savings of up to 35% to 40% in depreciation of equipment.

Potential Use: Funds will be expended for projects which provide a substantial economic benefit to the state through any of the following:

► Creation of new jobs that offer a basic health benefit plan, as defined in the Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program Act;
► Maintenance of existing jobs that are at risk for termination;
► Investment in new real property, plant or equipment or in the improvement or retooling of existing plant or equipment; or
► Additional revenues in either ad valorem, income or sales and use taxes.

Business Incubators  
Administrator: Oklahoma Department of Commerce  
Description: Business incubators are facilities designed to accelerate the development and success of start-up and existing businesses. By providing affordable lease space and a wide array of on-site managerial, administrative and financial services, the incubator assists entrepreneurs and small business owners in overcoming challenges faced in the marketplace. Incubators provide leasehold space for a wide range of tenants in service and light manufacturing industries, as well as firms conducting research and development activities.

Potential Use: Continue to work with Downtown Muskogee Inc, to improve the Downtown area through numerous projects including a detailed Downtown Plan, streetscaping, and marketing efforts.

Main Street Program  
Administrator: Oklahoma Department of Commerce and Downtown Muskogee, Inc.  
Description: For 25 years, Oklahoma’s Main Street program has been adding new life back into the heart of communities across the state. Combining historic preservation and downtown revitalization efforts with powerful economic stimulation, Main Street restores the core assets of our communities and enhances the quality of life for citizens. Based on the National Main Street Center’s guiding principles and nationally recognized Four-Point Approach, the program offers a practical strategy scaled for each local community. Main Street promotes public and private partnership and local leadership, commitment, and synergy while delivering tangible and intangible benefits to communities.

Potential Use: Continue to work with Downtown Muskogee Inc, to improve the Downtown area through numerous projects including a detailed Downtown Plan, streetscaping, and marketing efforts.
Residential and Neighborhood Improvements
The Neighborhood Stabilization Program Three (NSP3)

Administrator: Department of Housing and Urban Development

Description: On October 19, 2010, HUD released a Neighborhood Stabilization Program Three (NSP3) notice with the requirements for a new allocation of NSP funding that was authorized under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. These targeted funds will be used to purchase foreclosed homes at a discount and to rehabilitate or redevelop them in order to respond to rising foreclosures and falling home values. Although both NSP1 and NSP3 share similar program goals, NSP3 does contain additional requirements and restrictions over its predecessor NSP1 program. Eligibility standards under NSP1 are considerably different than the eligibility standards under NSP3. Eligible projects under NSP1 may NOT be necessarily eligible under NSP3.

Potential Use: Purchase foreclosed homes and rehabilitate or redevelop.

Human Development Program Funding

Administrator: Funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on an annual basis and administered by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

Description: Human Development programs are designed to assist low-income individuals and families make healthy transitions in their lives and consequently achieve and sustain a better life. In total, more than $20 million is appropriated to support programs that help empower Oklahoma’s neediest families to overcome hardship and move toward self-sufficiency.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce administers Human Development funding programs to support communities, agencies, and individuals improve the quality of life in Oklahoma. For many programs, state appropriated funds are distributed equitably to the Community Action Agencies (CAAs) serving all 77 Oklahoma counties. This funding supports the programs and services CAAs provide to homeless, mentally ill, handicapped, elderly, and other low-income individuals and families. Each program has unique eligibility requirements, application processes and deadlines for making application for services that are defined by the CAA administering the program.

Examples of three programs are outlined below:

- Continuum of Care Programs - A Continuum of Care system is designed to address the critical problem of homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system to address those needs.

- Emergency Shelter Grants - The Emergency Shelter Grant program is a component of the state’s Continuum of Care system designed to alleviate homelessness in Oklahoma. ESG programs enable homeless individuals and families to move toward independent living by providing emergency housing and supportive services.

- Multipurpose Senior Center Program - This program is designed to help improve, construct, and support community facilities that provide a broad spectrum of services including health, social, and nutritional group activities for senior citizens over the age of 60.

Potential Use: From immediate emergency needs, such as food and shelter, to comprehensive social and economic provisions that foster self-sufficiency.