

M Y T A H L E Q U A H 2 0 4 0

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

F I N A L R E P O R T



TAHLEQUAH

O K L A H O M A

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Citizens of Tahlequah

Sue Catron, Mayor

Alan Chapman, City Administrator

Taylor Tannehill, Planning and Development Director

Jason Nichols, Former Mayor

Ed Carr, Former City Administrator

Clint Johnson, Former Planning and Development Director

Tahlequah City Council

Bree Long, Ward 1

Dower Combs, Ward 2

Stephen Highers, Ward 3

Trae Ratliff, Ward 4

Joshua Bliss, Former Ward 4

Tahlequah Planning & Zoning Commission

Michael Torkelson, Ward 1

Gary Cacy, Ward 2

Robert Batson, Ward 3

Ryan Cannonie, Ward 4

Suzanne Myers, At Large

Susan Ryals, Former Ward 1

Nancy Dyson, Former Ward 3

John Marzullo, Former At Large

Project Team: Crafton Tull

Dave Roberts, ASLA

Julie Luther Kelso, AICP, ASLA

Mark Seibold, AICP, AIA

Austin Paul, AICP

Paul D'Andrea, P.E.

My Tahlequah 2040 Steering Committee

Stephen Highers, City Councilor

Susan Ryals, Planning Commission Chairperson

Todd Mutzig, Small Business Owner

Val Dobbins, Tahlequah Public Schools/BEST Coalition

Drew Haley, Main Street Association Director

Craig Clifford, NSU Biology Professor

Cameron Greenhaggen, Small Business Owner-Entrepreneur

Josh Hutchins, Small Business Owner-Tahlequah Recycling Inc.

Sarah Johnson, Real Estate

Kendra Sweet-Malley, Help In Crisis

Elizabeth Montgomery-Anderson, NSU-Student SRTS Member

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Angela Tinsley, Property Solutions

Russell Sain, Century 21

Amy Cochran, Cochran Real Estate

Marcus Bruner, NEO Health

Anna Knight, Cherokee Nation Small Business Administration

Brian Hail, Cherokee Nation Health Services

Jim Wilson, Oklahoma State Senator

Cindy L. Morris, Chamber of Commerce President

Carol Choate, Cherokee County Health Services Council

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY



The City of Tahlequah straddles the windswept plains of Oklahoma and the hilly river country of the Arkansas Ozarks. Situated along the bank of the Illinois River. This quaint town boasts a historic past that harkens back to the beginning of the written Cherokee language created by Sequoyah in the late 1810's and a present day center of learning at Northeastern State University situated adjacent to downtown. Most people in the region also know Tahlequah from floating the scenic Illinois River at least once in their past or spent time on Tenkiller Ferry Lake. From education, history, recreation and business, Tahlequah has much to offer.

Tahlequah is part of the Green Country region of Oklahoma and was established as a capital of the 19th-century Cherokee Nation in 1839, as part of the new settlement in Indian Territory after the Cherokee Native Americans were forced west from the American Southeast on the Trail of Tears. The City of Tahlequah is the oldest municipality in Oklahoma by virtue of an incorporation act by the Cherokee National Council of 1843, more than half a century before Oklahoma gained statehood.

It is the county seat of Cherokee County. The main campus of Northeastern State University is located in the city. Tahlequah is the capital of the two federally recognized Cherokee tribes based in Oklahoma, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians and the modern Cherokee Nation.

Tahlequah's Name

The name, according to legend, derives from the Cherokee word "Ta'ligwu" meaning "just two," or "two is enough." The "two" refers to a meeting between elders that presumably took place shortly after the Trail of Tears. Three tribal elders had planned to meet to determine the location of the Cherokee Nation's permanent capital. Two elders arrived and waited for the third. As dusk approached, they decided that "two is enough."

A more likely origin for the name is that it is named for an ancient eastern Cherokee town of Great Tellico, the English spelling of Cherokee Talikwa, the meaning of which is lost, according to James Mooney, although some trace it to the word tel-i-quah which is interpreted as "plains."

INTRODUCTION

TAHLEQUAH TODAY

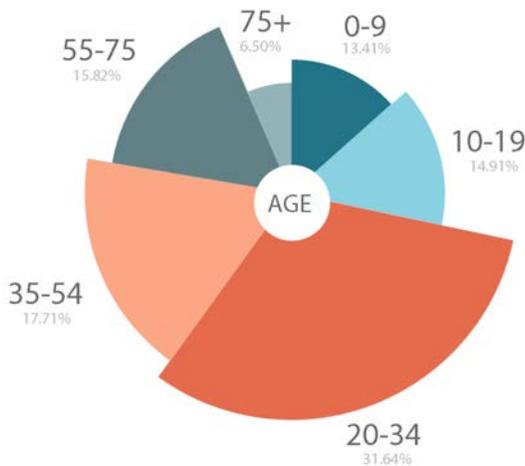
Demographics

Tahlequah, like many towns in the region, is richly diverse with citizens from different nationalities, age groups and backgrounds. At the outset of the project, the following data was compiled (from the American Community Survey):

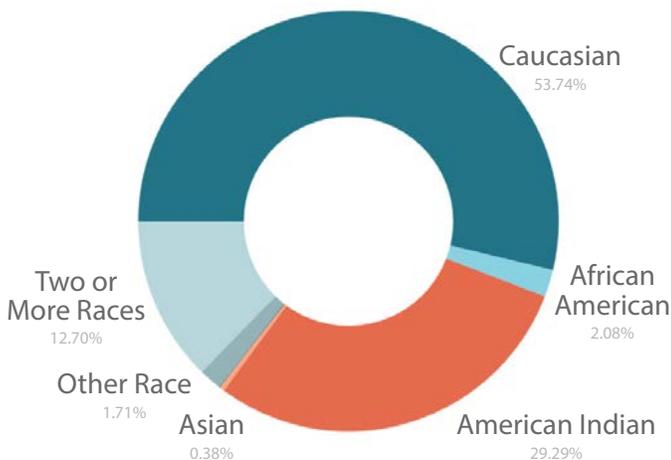
Population:

- The population of Tahlequah was estimated in 2015 to be 16,354. This represents a population change of over 14% since 2000. The demographic breakdown is as follows:
- Males: 49.6%/ Females: 50.4%
- There are more individuals in the age group 20-34 years than any other age groups, resulting in a relatively young population, with the 35-54 age group following second in total numbers.

AGE DISTRIBUTION



RACE



- Tahlequah has a higher percentage of American Indian population than State and National averages.

Households:

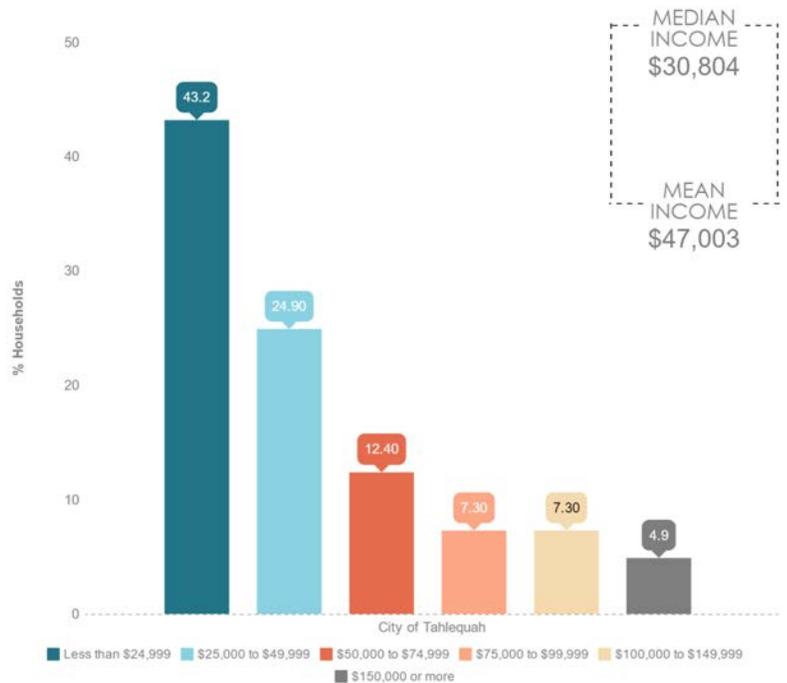
- 43.2% households earn less than \$24,999 per year
- Tahlequah has 5,536 Occupied Households, with an average of 2.95 persons per household
- The median income is lower than the State and National median incomes.

Employment:

- Tahlequah has a higher percentage of unemployed population in the labor force than the State average.
- There are more families/households earning less than \$25,000 annually than State and National averages.

For a more complete demographics report, please refer to Appendix A.

INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD



TOTAL POPULATION
16,354



TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS
5,536



PESONS PER HOUSEHOLD
2.95

INTRODUCTION

TAHLEQUAH TODAY

Cherokee Nation

The Cherokee Nation is the federally-recognized government of the Cherokee people and has inherent sovereign status recognized by treaty and law. Headquartered in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation has a tribal jurisdictional area spanning 14 counties in the north-eastern corner of Oklahoma.

With more than 355,000 citizens, over 11,000 employees and a variety of tribal enterprises ranging from aerospace and defense contracts to entertainment venues, Cherokee Nation's economic impact in Oklahoma and surrounding areas is more than \$1.5 billion annually. We are one of the largest employers in northeastern Oklahoma. We are the largest tribal nation in the United States. (Source Wikipedia.org: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherokee_Nation)

Community Leadership

Tahlequah is supported by three unique community and institutional pillars. The City of Tahlequah, a municipal government lead by the Mayor and City Manager; the Cherokee Nation, a tribal government lead by its Chief and Northeastern State University, an institution of higher education directed by its Cabinet (President led) and Executive Council. Each one of these entities have played and continue to play a role in shaping Tahlequah success based on each group's set of values and needs. Tahlequah will continue to thrive when the collaboration between all three work in concert for its betterment.

This close working relationship will be strengthened by each entity contributing to future programs both financially and through ongoing staff support. This perfect storm of strong and capable leadership, coupled with persistent economic and social challenges has created an opportunity for collaboration that is unprecedented in the State of Oklahoma. These challenges outlined in this Comprehensive Plan, are within the realm of possibility, if each entity will commit to a series of programs, and put the greater good of the community first.

Community Assessments

For further discussion, please refer to Section Seven: Plan Elements.

Land Use

The current land area of Tahlequah is approximately 12.45 square miles with a population of 16,496 (2014 estimate) with a density of 1,300 people per square mile (source: City-Data.com). Commercial uses are predominantly along Muskogee, Downing, and in the downtown core, with the Northeastern State University (NSU) campus located just north of downtown. Most residential areas are adjacent to the main north-south corridors. The business park is located northwest of downtown off the Highway 51 bypass near the regional airport. Very few land uses of note are along the western half of the bypass. There is a notable amount of land in institutional land uses, predominately NSU, Cherokee Nation holdings, City property, and public schools.

Community Character

Tahlequah enjoys the reputation of a "small town feel" combined with the status of being a recreational destination (floating the Illinois River) however, improvements to wayfinding and the gateways into town as well as walkability in many areas of town should be upgraded by the plan recommendations

Transportation

Vehicular transportation, according to Tahlequah residents, needs to be improved. Traffic flow and congestion occurs on the south end of Muskogee where the larger retail centers are located. Truck traffic is low since there is limited interstate access into and from town. The residents desire alternative transportation and various parts of town, including more trails extending beyond the well-used greenway near downtown.

INTRODUCTION

TAHLEQUAH TODAY

Housing & Neighborhoods

The few new neighborhoods that have been built in the recent past have been predominantly south of downtown. Some neighborhoods north and west of NSU are showing evidence of neglect, and in pockets, spread throughout the city in neighborhoods built prior to WWII. New neighborhoods and renovated homes may be needed if population growth due to medical expansion and the new casino increase housing demands in town.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Tahlequah Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining and spotlighting the natural beauty of approximately 203 acres of parks and open space which includes the 11 city parks. This accounts for the 12.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which is in line with other communities of a similar size nationally. The newest park is the Anthis Brennan Sports Complex on the north east side of town which supports various league and active recreations on a regional scale, while nearby Phoenix Park supports softball with numerous fields. The City Golf Course is located just west of the Airport Parkway. The greenway, near downtown, starts at Norris Park near the NSU campus and continues south to Keetoowah.

Utilities, Infrastructure, & Community Facilities

The Tahlequah Public Works Authority purpose is to provide, furnish, and supply to the City of Tahlequah and its surrounding area electrical, water, and sewer services. They overlap with City of Tahlequah services that provide and maintain gas, roads, trash pickup and emergency services.

Economic Development

Promoting Tahlequah as a tourist destination and identifying ways to promote business and industry that create new jobs and retaining existing businesses are economic development initiatives that are currently in place. Additional healthcare opportunities, Northeastern State University, and the Cherokee Nation are the primary employment centers in town. The largest economic development challenge that faces Tahlequah is the lack of rail service and limited interstate freight access to and from the Business Park on the west side of town.

Capital Improvements

The City is focused on various infrastructure projects as well as maintenance of existing systems within the city limits. Expansion of current service will need to occur to the east to support growth at the medical center and to the south to support the future casino development. Ongoing capital improvements conducted by Tahlequah Public Works Authority (TPWA) are closely aligned with the on-the-ground needs to maintain existing assets. Better coordination between the City and TPWA will result in a better alignment of resources with ongoing economic development efforts. It is critical that the City of Tahlequah and all its government entities coordinate activities to streamline project delivery, and support economic development efforts.

Note: This Report references various sources (mentioned accordingly) solely for the purpose of documentation and understanding the City of Tahlequah, OK.

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SECTION TWO

PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

WHY A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?



PURPOSE

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to establish a collective vision that informs all planning decisions. This vision should be the basis for coordinating physical development and policy decisions in order to assist in guiding the community's forward progress. This planning tool will not only be a blueprint for growth and land use change, it will also illustrate how the many factors that influence life in Tahlequah should work in concert to ensure a cohesive community committed to delivering a high quality of life for its residents. The planning process has included public involvement and stakeholder input to direct the creation of comparable development scenarios that lead to implementation strategies to guide future decision-making.

The Plan seeks to answer three questions:

1. Where are you now?
2. Where to do you want to go?
3. How do you get there?

The answers guide context-sensitive solutions to enforce a community's sense of place after evaluating multiple trade-offs to determine the community's priorities. The City of Tahlequah has maintained the "quaint small town feel" while continued growth brings news amenities for both residents and visitors alike. The quality of life that exists must remain at the core of the community's priorities so this once historic settlement can become an even better place to live, work and play for future residents and tourists who come looking to experience all that Tahlequah has to offer.

PLANNING PROCESS ORGANIZATION

STEERING COMMITTEE

Twenty-one individuals that represent a cross section of leaders from the community, in addition to city staff, was selected to represent the citizens of Tahlequah and act as decisions makers to lead the comprehensive planning process. Their diverse backgrounds ranged from Civic leaders, Cherokee Nation representatives to community Health professionals, Realtors, NSU professors and local small business owners. Their role was to ensure equity in decisions making, communicate to and obtain support from stakeholders, citizens and politicians, champion the planning initiatives, resolve obstacles and support the final plan at City Council adoption. The committee developed the plan's vision, goals and objectives in the numerous meetings in the early part of the planning process (see Section 3).

The Steering Committee directed the planning process by providing detailed knowledge of Tahlequah, that only a local who lives and works in town would know, as well as providing direction to guide the plan outcomes. Prior to meetings with the public at night, the Planning

Team met with the steering Committee during the day to get feedback on each step of the process. The insight they provided was the input needed to fine tune the evening's presentation.

The Steering Committee worked to craft the plan's vision and goals that were then presented to the public. Their thoughts and feedback represented a good cross section of the town's leaders since, as discussed above, their point of view with respect to their positions at businesses, institutions or agencies were so diverse.

The committee worked with the planning team during the charrette on scenarios creation. The committee also directed prioritization efforts and ranked key projects that could bring positive change in the community.

Later in the planning process the Steering Committee guided the development of key action items and policies that are found in the different plan element sections of the master plan document.



PLANNING PROCESS ORGANIZATION



PUBLIC INPUT

The citizens of Tahlequah that are affected by the plan are the ones the consultants need to hear from during the planning process. That is why the Comprehensive Plan process included public surveys, numerous public meetings, stakeholder meetings and a multi-day charrette. A team of consultants can visit a town, analyze maps and drive every road but they still won't have the information they need until they hear from the residents. The best input is from face to face interaction with local residents after a meeting with maps taped to the walls for reference.

Public Meetings

The first public meeting, which was very well attended by over 140 citizens, was the project kick-off meeting. The planning team presented the reason for a comprehensive plan, the planning process, current demographics and trends for the region, and existing conditions assessments. The public participated in two exercises: a Preserve/Enhance/Transform exercise and a "I want Tahlequah to be..." visioning exercise.

The second and third public meetings bookended a week-long charrette (see below). Participants created planning scenarios, ranked the priorities of each plan element on spectrum boards, and voted on three preliminary scenarios.

PLANNING PROCESS ORGANIZATION

The fourth public meeting presented the refined planning scenarios to seek consensus from the attendees on their preferred scenario that would lead the team to development of the framework plan. Subsequent meetings were related to the adoption of the comprehensive master plan.

Charrette Week

A four-day charrette was held with the public and the Steering Committee to establish planning scenarios. It was kicked off by a public meeting on the first night (60 attendees). Stakeholder interviews continued throughout the week, two Steering Committee meetings (with 35 attendees) were held to review progress, and the week concluded with a public meeting on the final night. The large number of residents that turned out for both the first and last public meetings exceeded expectations. In addition, a pop-up session at the NSU student union resulted in valuable input from several students. See Section Four for more information.

Stakeholder Interviews

The purpose of the three days of interviews was to gather detailed information that key citizens might have pertaining to a certain location of town or information that represented a group's direction (i.e. NSU's future plans). The 31 interviews with 52 interviewees defined as: landowners, community groups, public servants, elected officials, investors, developers, or other individuals who may have a direct interest in the planning outcome. The planning team used a standardized questionnaire to obtain input regarding various aspects, attributes and future trends for the City of Tahlequah. Some of the interviews were one on one while others were held in a small group setting. See also Section Four for more information. A summary of these results is located in Appendix B.

Community Survey

The public online survey included twenty seven questions about life in Tahlequah, issues the city faces, levels of satisfaction of aspects of the community, future types of developments and use of current and projected use of future parks and facilities. The 550 responses, a statistically accurate number (5.4% margin of error which provided a 99% confidence level), provided valuable input that helped shape the direction of the scenarios and inform planning solutions presented later in the process. The full survey results are located in Appendix C.



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SECTION THREE

VISION & GOALS

VISION & GOALS

INFORMING THE VISION & GOALS: PUBLIC INPUT

Preserve - Enhance - Transform

A second input exercise, entitled Preserve / Enhance/ Transform, encouraged participants to use dots to indicate their suggested actions for various areas of town. “Preserve” areas were indicated with green dots, meaning that area or element is important, functioning well, and should remain as it is or be strengthened. The areas that received the most green dots included downtown, the NSU campus, the Town Branch greenway, and a few parks. The yellow dot (Enhance) was used to locate areas or elements of town that could use an update or enhancement. These areas worked well but were possibly in need up updates, changes, or renovations to make them function better or become a stronger asset in the future. The “Enhance” areas were downtown, schools, the business park, River Park, and certain intersections that could use some design attention. The final dot was red (Transform) for the areas or elements in town that were in need of a transformation. These included dangerous or high traffic intersections, unsightly corridors, or areas of town in need of redesign. The three predominate red dots were sections of Muskogee Street, Downing Street, and Phoenix Park. The lists below provide more detail to each areas with additional thoughts by meeting participants.



PRESERVE

- Downtown
- Historic sites
- Cherokee Nation
- Norris Park
- Existing Branch Creek walking trails

ENHANCE

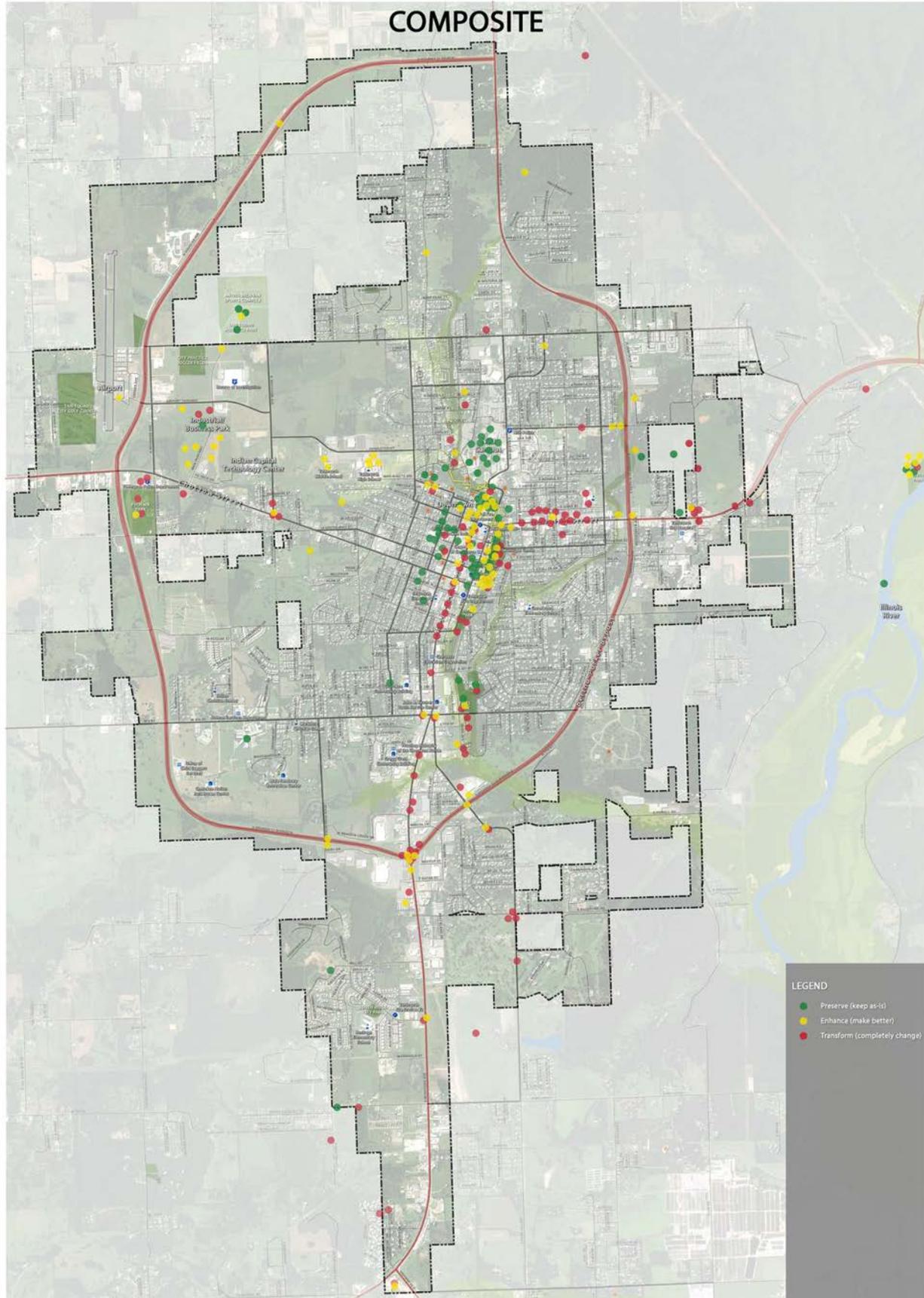
- Skate Park
- Sidewalks
- Muskogee
- Downing
- City parks
- Bypass (develop)
- Downtown walkability
- Business Park
- Skate Park
- City Streets/Intersections/Traffic
- Access to River Park
- High School

TRANSFORM

- Sidewalks throughout
- Affordable housing
- Traffic flow/volume
- Town Branch Creek water quality
- Create a complete greenway
- Old dump (mountain biking)
- Form of government
- Vacant commercial buildings
- Trails, bike paths, parks
- Walkability
- Downtown vibrancy

VISION & GOALS

INFORMING THE VISION & GOALS: PUBLIC INPUT



Preserve - Enhance - Transform Composite Results: Public Meeting #1

VISION & GOALS

INFORMING THE VISION & GOALS: PUBLIC INPUT

Survey Input

As introduced in Section Two, a community survey was completed by 550 respondents which provided valuable insight on life in Tahlequah as well citizens' desires for the future. Below are a sample of some of the questions posed to the residents. Full survey results are located in Appendix C.

Q5: What do you like most about living in the City of Tahlequah? (write-in responses)

The most Common answers included the following:

- Downtown
- Activities
- Small town
- Natural Beauty
- Friendly
- College Town

Q6: What do you like least about living in the City of Tahlequah? (write-in responses)

The most common answers included the following:

- Traffic
- Lack of Restaurants/Shopping
- Roads
- Jobs
- Trash

Q7: What do you say is the most critical issue facing the City of Tahlequah today? (write-in responses)

The most common answers included the following:

- Schools
- Growth
- Infrastructure
- Education
- Jobs
- Poverty

Q8: What do you think of the current growth rate in the City of Tahlequah?

The overwhelming response at 60% was "About Right"

Q10: Which of the following type of developments would you like to see more of in City of Tahlequah?

More:

- Entertainment / Attractions
- Restaurants
- Industries
- Retail Centers

Fewer:

- Mobile Homes
- Luxury Homes
- Apartments

Q25: What FOUR of the following recreational facilities are most important to your household?

- Walking & Biking Trails
- Large Community Parks
- Small Neighborhood Parks

The community survey responses indicated adequate levels of satisfaction with safety, medical facilities, housing, schools, arts and entertainment, environmental quality, and the appearance of the city and neighborhoods. Lower levels of satisfaction were indicated for the availability of well-paying jobs, quality of infrastructure, availability of alternative transportation options, walkability, and shopping opportunities.

Similarly, the most highly rated aspects of the community in terms of importance included safety, adequate medical facilities, quality of schools, and quality of infrastructure, with lower levels of importance placed on aging neighborhoods, shopping opportunities, and selection of retail goods and services (Question 9).

The dissatisfaction related to the availability of well-paying jobs was further perceived by respondents as having adequate opportunities for high school students and high school graduates, with perceptions of jobs availability declining notably with career/technical training certification, college graduates, mid-career workers, seniors, and the disabled (Question 16).

VISION & GOALS

INFORMING THE VISION & GOALS: STEERING COMMITTEE INPUT

ELEMENT	PRESENT STATUS	FUTURE GOAL
Land Use	Tahlequah is a community with mixed zoning and lack of code enforcement and planning regulations.	We are focused on growth, opportunity, and organized investment in planning.
Community Character	We are a community that is 'quaint', historical, and unique with potential for community engagement.	We are a diverse, inclusive community focused on culture, history, uniqueness, education and health.
Transportation	We are a community with challenging traffic and limited transportation options.	Developing alternative transportation networks, including accessibility, is vital to Tahlequah's goal of becoming a vibrant, growing and healthy community.
Utilities, Infrastructure & Community Facilities	We are a community with inadequate utility networks and infrastructure that is inadequate for future needs.	The future of Tahlequah's growth is dependent on a resilient and robust utility infrastructure.
Housing and Neighborhoods	We are a community that is working to overcome obstacles of poverty, apathy, and fear of unknown towards a progressive, innovative, and vibrant future.	We are going to become a destination for education, healthcare, and tourism focused on growth with relevant, safe, and healthy neighborhoods.
Parks, Recreation and Trails	Tahlequah has rich opportunities for tourism and unique economic development that is limited by poverty and lack of local involvement.	We will be a natural path to the river park that encourages healthy involvement in local commerce and tourism.
Sample: Economic Development	Tahlequah is a proud community searching for quality jobs, a strong economy, and a diverse workforce.	The City encourages tourism and is committed to growing local businesses.

VISION & GOALS

VISION & GOALS STATEMENTS

VISION

The Vision is a description of what the community wants to be, or how it wants the world in which it operates to be (i.e. an “idealized” view of the world). It is a long-term view and concentrates on the future. It can be emotive and is a source of inspiration. The Vision Statement the Steering Committee crafted is as follows:

“Tahlequah aspires to be a thriving community that is fiscally accountable, a healthy place for residents of all age and a vibrant destination for visitors while maintaining its small town feel.”

GOALS

Planning Goals are desired results that a community foresees, plans and commits to achieve. They are a desired outcome or end point. Each plan element includes a series of goals.

Land Use

1. Promote diversity in land use types
2. Encourage growth opportunities that reinforce Tahlequah’s community character
3. Promote an organized investment in planning

Community Character

1. Promote new development options while maintaining the small town feel
2. Support cultural cooperation and offerings that honors Tahlequah’s diverse history
3. Improve gateways, corridors, and edge treatments to promote the City’s image

Transportation

1. Promote options to accommodate multiple modes of transportation on city streets
2. Retrofit roads and signalization to keep pace with growth and increased traffic demands
3. Focus on safe accessible routes for all users

Utilities & Infrastructure

1. Improve current infrastructure to keep pace with the community’s growth

2. Manage and improve utilities over time through phased implementation
3. Continue to monitor and improve Tahlequah’s green infrastructure with regard to surrounding ecosystems

Housing & Neighborhoods

1. Consider infill redevelopment options for downtown
2. Promote reinvestment in historic housing stock
3. Identify strategic locations for new housing developments as the town continues to grow

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

1. Identify park and recreational needs to keep pace with the growth of Tahlequah
2. Establish connections between parks, the campus, neighborhoods, and downtown
3. Promote healthy living for all Tahlequah residents

Economic Development

1. Champion existing local businesses that are consistent with the expressed vision
2. Promote job creation to capture and maintain college graduates
3. Encourage tourism that supports the community character of Tahlequah

SECTION FOUR

SCENARIOS

SCENARIOS

IDEA GENERATION



CHARRETTE

A charrette, or workshop, is designed to be an intensive period of time during which the community expresses ideas, further defines its vision for the future, establishes its priorities, and begins to evaluate future outcomes.

During a week-long charrette in Tahlequah, the consultant team, the steering committee, city staff, and the community developed numerous scenarios for the future of Tahlequah. The input received during the charrette led to the creation of three initial scenarios, which were further refined and evaluated.

Scenarios consider differing community outcomes, based on assumptions regarding priorities, policies, and political support. Each option explores growth and development forms. All scenarios are guided by public input (public meetings, interviews, steering committee, survey, citizen scenarios), and each compares potential outcomes based on choices made.

Twelve Scenarios

Early in the charrette process, a public kickoff meeting was held during which participants created scenarios based on their vision for the future of Tahlequah. Twelve groups created a scenario, and each group presented their ideas during the meeting. Most scenarios addressed the features that give Tahlequah its form and contribute either positively or negatively to its character, including major roads, the greenway, downtown, schools, the business park, and future growth areas.

Areas of Consensus

Some commonalities emerged in each of the twelve scenarios. These common values were determined to be “areas of consensus” which should be reflected in growth scenarios moving forward. These items included:

- Support downtown
- Connectivity and walkability
- Completion of greenway
- Wayfinding
- Job creation
- Traffic at the bypass and Muskogee Avenue
- Code enforcement

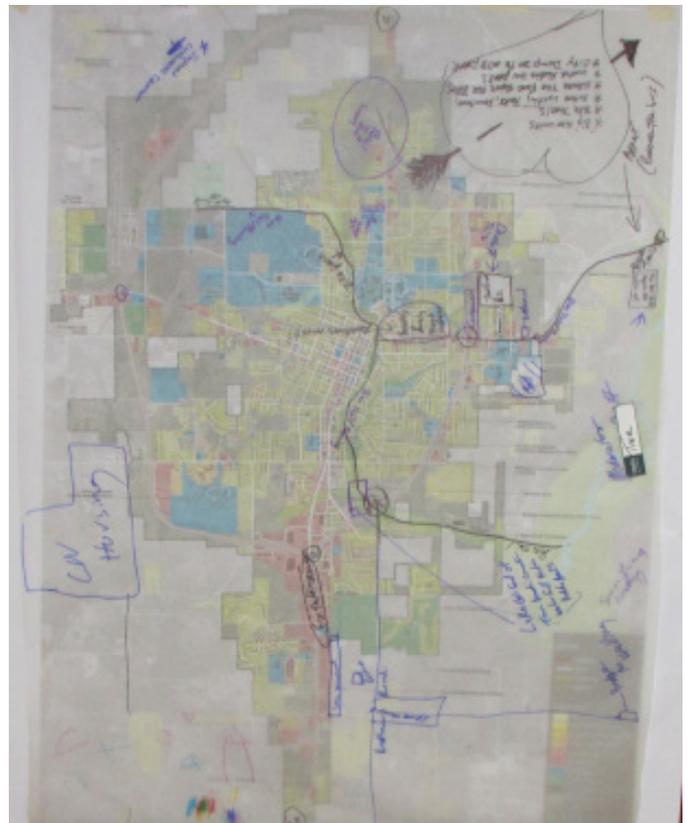
Areas of Multiple Viewpoints

The meeting participants also had differing views on several issues. These “areas of multiple viewpoints” were identified, discussed, and explored in various solutions during the charrette week as three preliminary scenarios were subsequently developed. These items included:

- Downing Street
- Parking in downtown
- Impact of socioeconomic conditions
- Impact of the casino and health clinic
- Housing choice
- Methods to attract and retain young talent

SCENARIOS

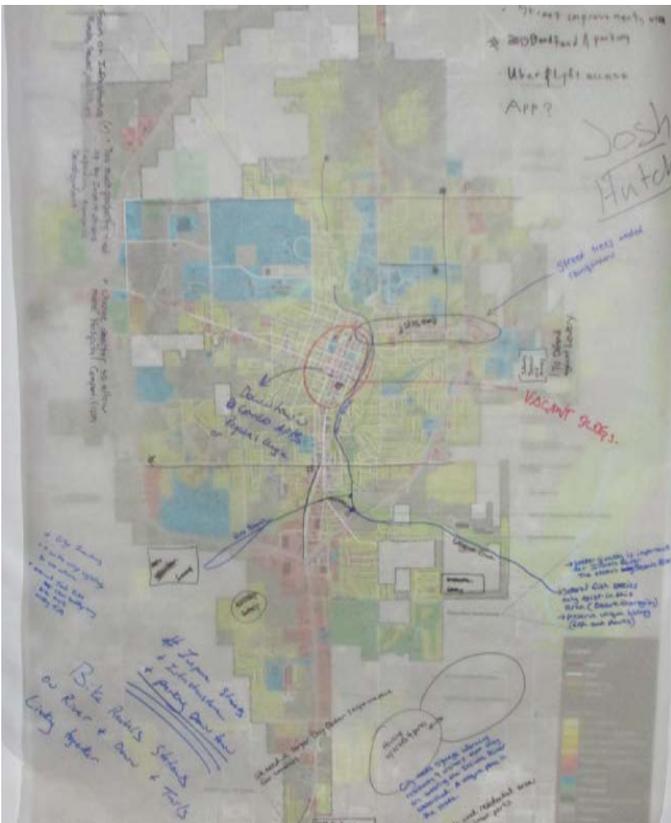
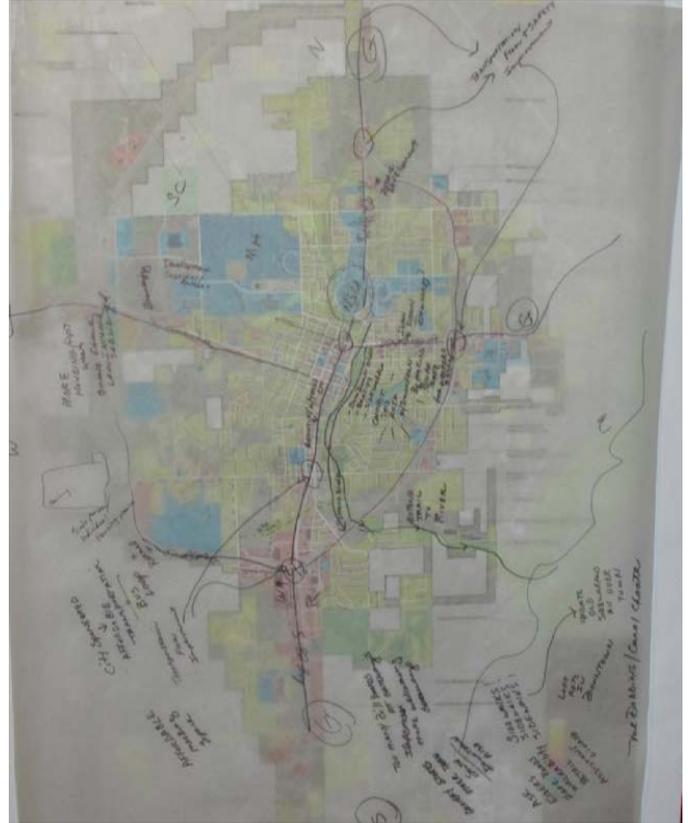
IDEA GENERATION



Scenarios #1-4 of 12 developed at the kickoff meeting of the charrette.

SCENARIOS

IDEA GENERATION



Scenarios #9-12 of 12 developed at the kickoff meeting of the charrette.

SCENARIOS

IDEA GENERATION



Stakeholder Interviews

During the charrette week, the consultant team conducted 29 one-on-one interviews with community and business leaders, activists, and elected officials. These interviews provided insight to existing conditions and relationships within the community, unrealized opportunities, current constraints, and future aspirations.

Several interviewees expressed optimism about Tahlequah, while recognizing some of the issues the City faces as it grows and matures. They indicated concerns about limited job opportunities, poverty, crime, and drug problems, while hoping to capture economic development opportunities from successes in northwest Arkansas as well as Tahlequah's natural setting, cultural amenities, and small-town character. Emphasis was placed on the importance of building and maintaining good relationships between the City, NSU, and Cherokee Nation, while attracting and retaining young professionals with jobs and quality of life. Downing and Muskogee were both thought to need improvements, though the nature of such improvements varied by respondent.

The summary of stakeholder interview responses is available in Appendix B.

NSU Pop-Up

The consultant team conducted a pop-up input session at the NSU Student Center during the charrette week. Students were asked if they would like to live in Tahlequah upon graduation, what things they would like to see in Tahlequah in the future, and what current amenities they most often frequent. They were also asked to provide input regarding their vision for the future of the city.

When asked what they do for recreation, several answers related to indoor activities, to hobbies, to socialization, or to outdoor activities, such as hiking, exercise, swimming, sports, using the trails, or going to the river.

When asked whether they would continue to live in Tahlequah upon graduation, students typically responded "no" if they needed to leave for further study, travel, or job opportunities. They typically responded "yes" because they like the small town, the beauty, and the atmosphere with a common caveat of finding employment.

SCENARIOS

IDEA GENERATION

Responses for desired amenities were largely related to increased food, retail, and entertainment options, but also included a desire for sidewalks/crosswalks, safety/security, public transportation, bike lanes, parks, and jobs. A complete list of comments is located in Appendix D.

During the charrette week, the following perceptions were expressed by participants:

- Not enough high-end housing
- Not enough entertainment options
- Market-rate/affordable housing is low-quality
- All retail options are on the south side of town

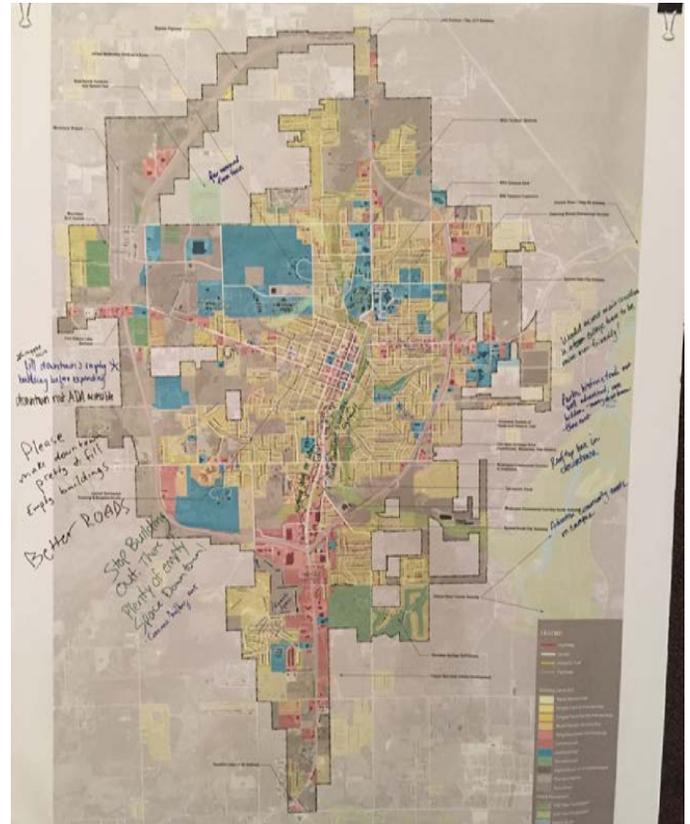
Big Ideas from the Charrette Week

Several themes emerged during the charrette that were consistently expressed and supported. These themes reflect both general and specific issues, and were carefully considered in the development of preliminary scenarios during the charrette.

- Opportunity for increased coordination between the City, Cherokee Nation, and NSU in multiple aspects
- Quality of life that protects small-town character but provides for growth
- Find a balance between small mom & pop businesses and national chains
- Capitalize on recreational opportunities by drawing tourism into Tahlequah
- Trails should serve people of all ages and abilities and provide connectivity
- On-street parking in downtown should be a shared resource
- Protect natural resources
- Preserve historic character

Closing Night Presentation

At the conclusion of the charrette, another public meeting was held to review the findings of the week and discuss the three scenarios that were developed during that time (see page 34). In addition, participants also responded to a Priority Spectrum exercise, detailed on page 32.



NSU Pop-Up student comments



Preliminary scenarios development

SCENARIOS

IDEA GENERATION

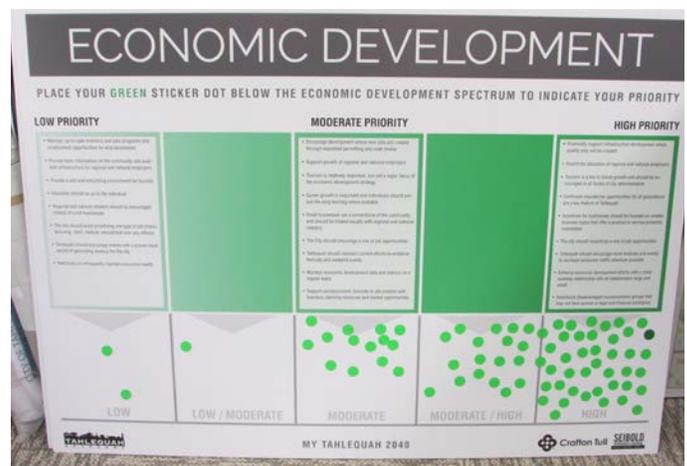
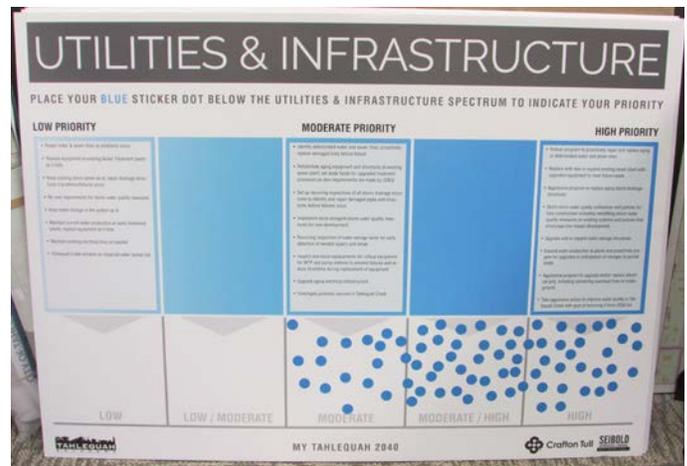
- Create a brand and marketing campaign citywide, to include a new logo reflective of the community's history, culture, and values
- Create a wayfinding plan to develop a hierarchy of signage
- Minimal architectural design standards for materials and color in specialized areas of town

High Priority:

- Architectural, landscaped gateways at primary entries, with smaller gateways to denote special areas of town
- Major corridors into the city include pedestrian access, street trees, lighting, and banners to reflect special events and community pride
- Incentivize small businesses (attraction and retention) in downtown; enhanced treatment of public spaces such as streetscapes, plazas, parks, and public art
- Create a joint leadership task force comprised of leadership from the City and NSU to focus on recruitment and retention of students and young professionals
- Establish a comprehensive program to build a sidewalk network to connect downtown to surrounding areas
- Create brands and logos/signage for various districts within the city, while continuing to market the city-wide brand
- Plan and implement a wayfinding program to direct residents and visitors to various community amenities
- Establish architectural guidelines which are specific to individual districts or types of development

In general, "Low Priority" treatments assume maintaining an "as-is" or baseline approach to each subject area. "Moderate Priority" treatments reflected a slight increase, while "High Priority" treatments assumed a targeted effort to increase the current level of focus given to that topic.

The voting results are shown in Tables 7.1 & 7.2 and described on page 96. The characteristics from the highest-ranked categories for each Priority Spectrum board are included within its corresponding Plan Element in Section Seven. A full list of Priority Spectrum Board outcomes is located in Appendix E.



SCENARIOS

OUTCOMES: PRELIMINARY SCENARIOS

Three preliminary scenarios emerged from the input provided throughout the charrette week and the big ideas that could be consolidated into a coordinated direction for the future of Tahlequah. These were labeled “Redefine”, “Refocus”, and Re-create”. “Redefine” organizes the community by identifiable, self-supporting neighborhood districts which share larger community resources. “Refocus” directs attention to redevelopment and reinvestment within existing community assets and infrastructure, rather than on new or expanded development. “Re-create” organizes the community around green space, recreational, tourist, and environmental aspects of Tahlequah and focused the future on placemaking. Each scenario embraced the “Areas of Consensus” that were expressed throughout the week (described above), and explored alternatives to future growth.

REDEFINE

Within “Redefine”, unique districts form the basis for this development scenario. With a combination of housing, commercial and recreation activities, **each district maximizes its inherent qualities of the neighborhood and creates an identity** with names, branding and a geographic reference to its “center”. Each part of town forms a unique and special district.

Key Elements

- Complete Neighborhoods
- Quality over Quantity
- Identity and Ownership

REFOCUS

The “Refocus” Scenario focuses on **reinvestment in existing properties** by filling in the spaces between existing buildings and businesses as well as potential developable sites near downtown that might be underdeveloped or abandoned. Maintain the historic character of downtown by adopting design and development standards that follow a common urban form.

Key Elements

- Form-Based
- Flexible uses for new and old buildings
- Allow redevelopment of adjacent properties

RE-CREATE

“Re-create” capitalizes on the existing greenway network and **reorients current development to embrace a system of green infrastructure improvements** that balance the natural and man made aesthetics of the city, reduce impacts of storm water, and place importance on moving people in multiple modes.

Key Elements

- Amenities Focused
- Strong Connectivity
- Healthy Lifestyles

PRELIMINARY SCENARIOS RESULTS

The three preliminary scenarios were presented at the closing night public meeting during the charrette. Participants identified their preferred scenario by dot voting. The intent of the exercise was to identify which two scenarios should be developed further. The results were as follows:

Redefine: 31 votes

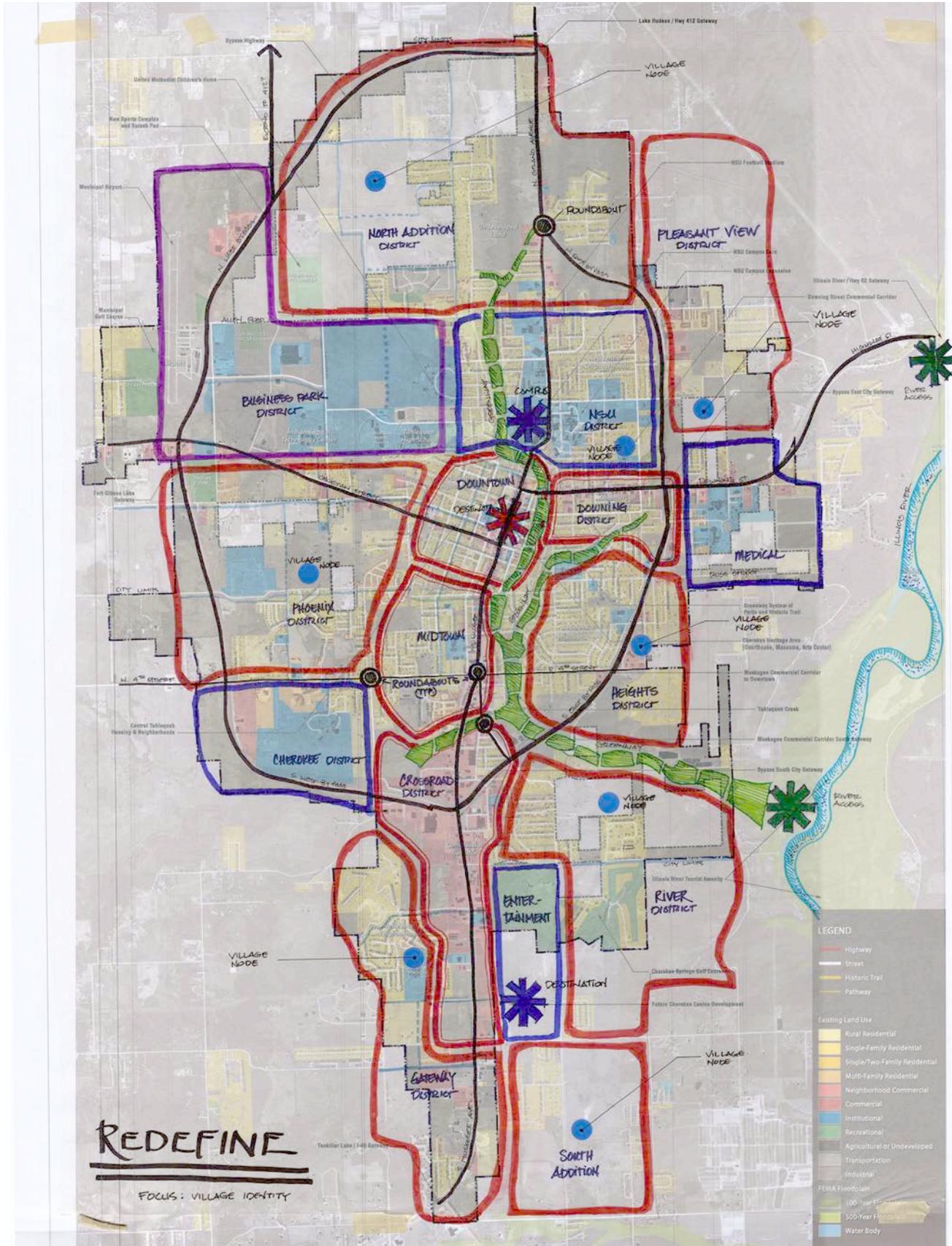
Re-create: 58 Votes

Refocus: 44 Votes

Based on the voting results, “Re-create” and “Refocus” were developed further. Certain aspects of “Redefine”, namely the smaller village centers, were incorporated into the refinement of the “Re-create” scenario.

SCENARIOS

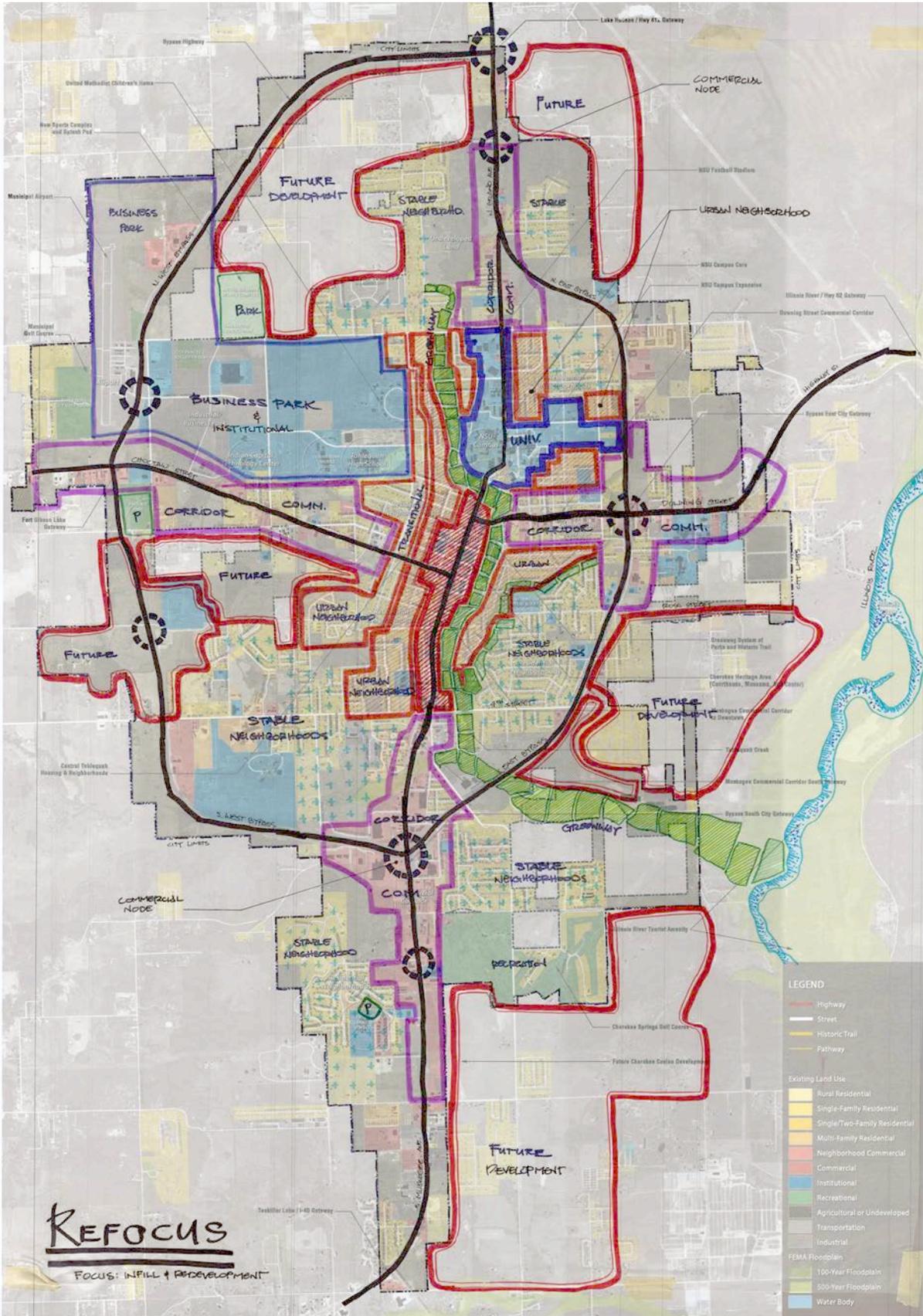
OUTCOMES: PRELIMINARY SCENARIOS



REDEFINE Scenario

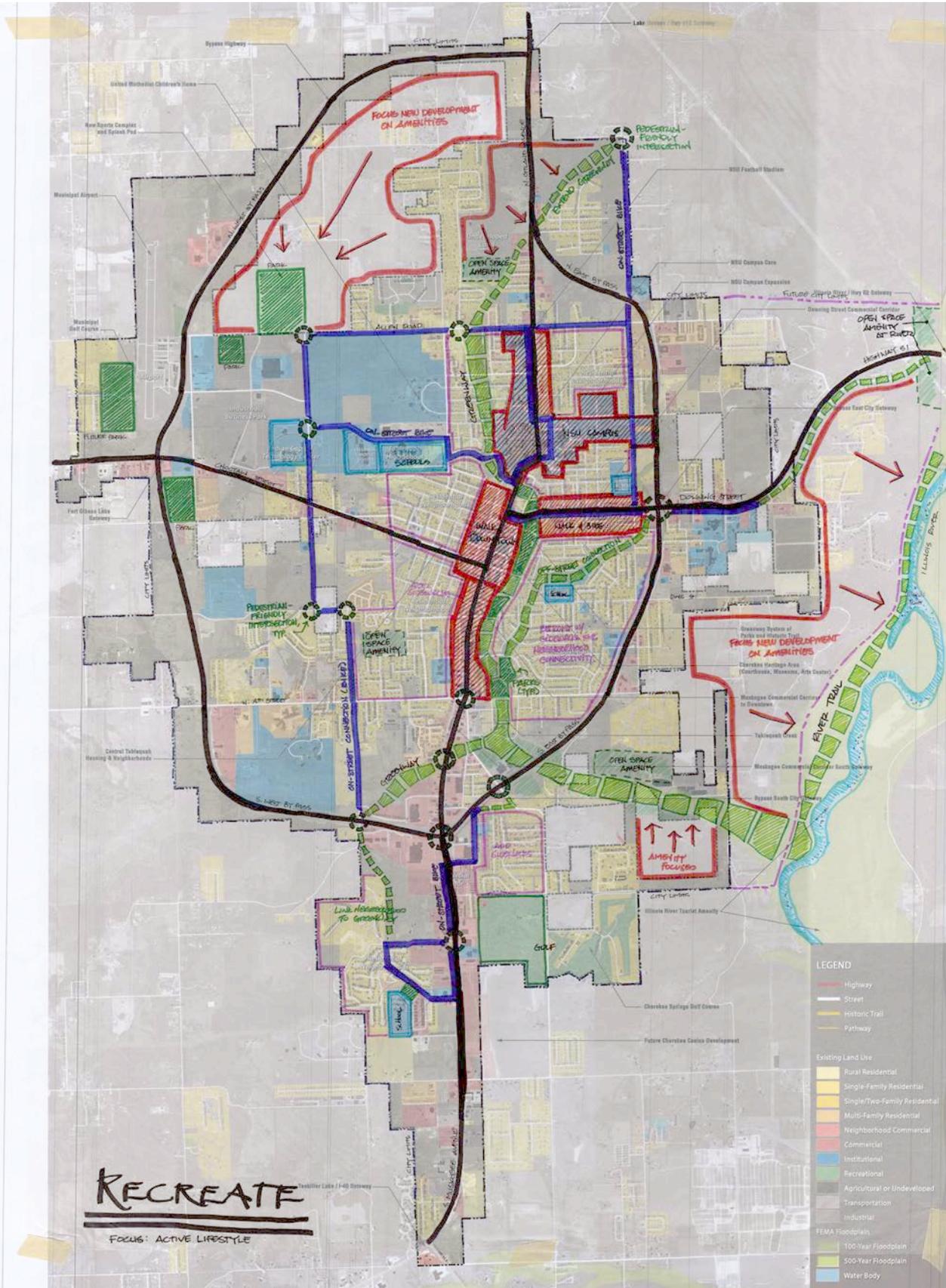
SCENARIOS

OUTCOMES: PRELIMINARY SCENARIOS



SCENARIOS

OUTCOMES: PRELIMINARY SCENARIOS



RECREATE Scenario

SCENARIOS

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SCENARIOS

SCENARIOS REFINEMENT



Following the charrette, scenarios were refined and developed into three new options for comparison and measurements of meeting the expressed community values.

These three new scenarios included

1. **Baseline / Status Quo:** a baseline scenario assuming no significant changes in growth and development approaches, policies, or directives.
2. **Re-Create:** Further development of the preliminary scenario focused on the expansion and focus on recreational and tourism amenities, with the addition of the village centers which were introduced in the Redefine preliminary scenario.
3. **Refocus:** Further development of the preliminary scenario focused on the reinforcement of the existing commercial center and existing housing stock, with less emphasis on outward expansion.

As the scenarios were further refined, certain characteristics were assumed universally for each of the scenarios:

Common Characteristics of the Future Tahlequah

- An additional 4,000 people are projected to live in Tahlequah by 2040.
- Based on the existing average of 2.32 people per household in Tahlequah = approximately 2,000 additional housing units.
- Property taxes fund the county, school district, and "other"; no portion of the property tax is dedicated to city government.
- Of the Tahlequah's 9.5% sales tax, 4.5% is levied by the State, 1.75% by Cherokee County, and 3.25% by the City of Tahlequah.
- Per Oklahoma law, the sales tax on building materials goes to the location that a structure is constructed. This is a one-time benefit. It is assumed, in general terms, that the City receives approximately \$6,000

per house and \$3,000 per dwelling unit of an apartment complex.

- In 2015, average retailers generated approximately \$115 per square foot of retail space
- If new housing units (single-family and multi-family) average 1,800 square feet (s.f.), then approximately 360,000 square feet of retail can be accommodated, calculated as follows:
 1. 1,800 s.f. x 2,000 units = 3,600,000 s.f. of new residential use
 2. If 10% of retail s.f. (excluding entertainment) can be supported per s.f. of residential use, this translates to 360,000 s.f. of new retail that can be supported by 3,600,000 s.f. of new residential development.

Common Assumptions (for all refined scenarios)

- Compares Existing vs. Future Uses (Residential, Non-Residential, Recreational, Institutional/Exempt)
- Vacant or undeveloped properties are not "down zoned" from existing zoning in future build-out scenarios
- Institutional/Exempt uses are not generating sales tax or property tax, but do provide employment opportunities (examples include churches, schools, government, and tribal). All non-residential properties in such ownership are classified as "Institutional", regardless of zoning or use.
- Properties zoned "Industrial" that are selling a product to the general public upon which sales taxes are collected are classified as "Commercial" (existing land use) or "Non-Residential" (Scenarios 1 & 2) for purposes of this analysis. All other industrial uses are classified as "Industrial".
- "Future Infill Residential" applies to future residential properties under 2 acres, to differentiate single infill residential units from larger residential developments.

SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1: BASELINE / STATUS QUO

Growth based on market demands form the basis for this scenario. With most of the focus on commercial uses south of the loop, downtown remains stagnant while Downing Street continues to decline. Development on the edges of town creates traffic issues.

Key Elements

- Follows suburban development patterns
- Growth driven by private development
- Focused on commercial uses south of the loop

Stable growth based on existing patterns.

Attributes

Continue to manage growth driven by private industry, selectively integrate planning elements that return value to the community based on critical needs. Support increased traffic demand with synchronized signalization and development along loop and south Muskogee.

- Follows past patterns of development.
- Some investment in downtown but, some historic buildings lost to parking lots.
- Downtown housing is limited, apartments on edge of town create congestion.
- Continued decline of Downing.
- Increase in activity on Ross, creating vehicular conflict.
- Increased residential activity on South side of town (outside of loop).

Trade-offs

- Growth will follow current patterns, and track closely with the growth of neighboring communities.
- Continued growth of franchise architecture, and national chains.
- Economic diversity will remain low, job growth and incomes will track with population growth.
- Incremental housing and commercial development will continue to expand the boundary of Tahlequah potentially weakening downtown.

Technical Considerations

In addition to the Common Characteristics and Common Assumptions described above, the following Characteristics and Assumptions are applied to the Baseline / Status Quo / Do Nothing Scenario.

CHARACTERISTICS

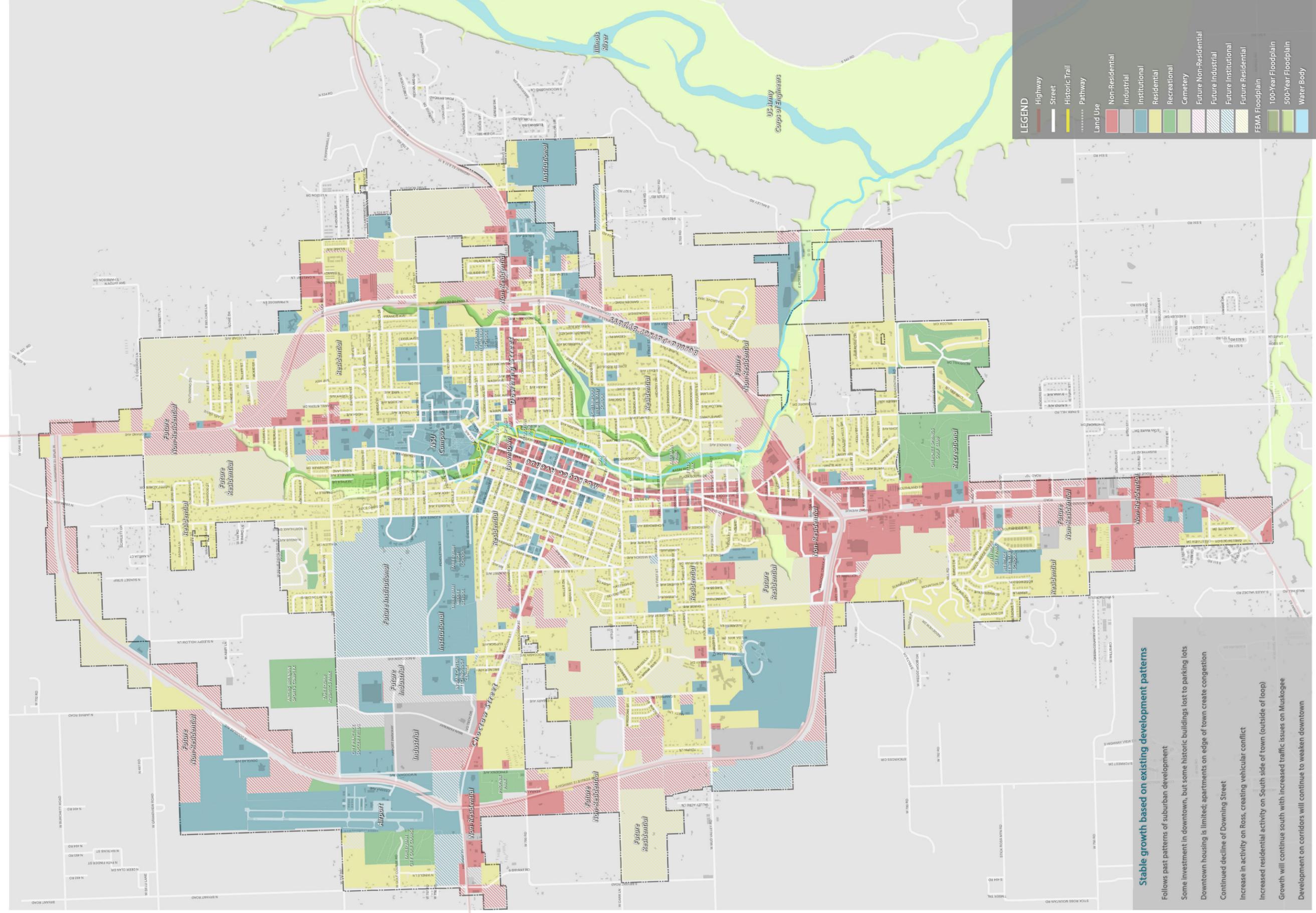
- Suburban-Style Residential Density: allows one-acre lots (sprawl) within the city limits
- Suburban-Style Commercial Development: Allows unchecked development of non-residential uses, which increases sales taxes in the short term but 1.) allows the continued deterioration of downtown and 2.) leads to the eventual demise of struggling existing retail in other areas of town, likely aging commercial corridors
- Approximately 360,000 square feet of retail can be supported by the addition of 4,000 people (see Common Assumptions, above).
- Suburban-Style Retail Development: Most communities see a 20%-30% building-to-site ratio.

This translates to approximately 40 acres of non-residential sites to accommodate 360,000 s.f. of retail space that can be supported based on population projections of an additional 4,000 people.

- If all new retail is built at a 20% building-to-site ration (suburban-style development), results can include
 1. an increased burden on infrastructure (larger lot sizes require more pavement and utilities).
 2. increased traffic (development patterns that encourage, if not require, automobile access).

ASSUMPTIONS (include all Common Assumptions on page 39, with the following additional items)

- Existing land uses are maintained (rural residential is projected to remain residential; no redevelopment to non-residential uses are assumed, even if allowed by zoning)
- Future Institutional uses are assigned to vacant parcels based on current ownership; as such, regardless of future development, they are considered "exempt" (i.e. churches, schools, government, tribal ownership)



Stable growth based on existing development patterns

- Follows past patterns of suburban development
- Some investment in downtown, but some historic buildings lost to parking lots
- Downtown housing is limited; apartments on edge of town create congestion
- Continued decline of Downing Street
- Increase in activity on Ross, creating vehicular conflict
- Increased residential activity on South side of town (outside of loop)
- Growth will continue south with increased traffic issues on Muskegoe
- Development on corridors will continue to weaken downtown



SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1: BASELINE / STATUS QUO

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SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1: BASELINE / STATUS QUO

- Vacant or agricultural parcels that are not currently zoned are assigned either residential or non-residential future land uses, according to market likelihood
- No physical expansion or annexation
- Maintain current suburban residential density of 2.67 DU/Acre, assuming new residential will be built in a similar fashion.

OUTCOMES

- Pervasive suburbanization without incentivizing downtown development devalues properties and continues the erosion of downtown.
- Market-driven development is unplanned, asymmetric, inconsistent, not led by the City but rather developer-driven at the City's cost over the long-term.

SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 2: RE-CREATE

Capitalizing on the existing greenway infrastructure to connect people to amenities, this scenario puts the focus on alternate transportation options and active living. Current development and new village nodes of commercial and new housing types are linked via an on-road and off-road transportation network.

NOTE: "Redefine," the scenario with the fewest votes, becomes integrated with "Recreate" in the Refined Scenarios to add village centers throughout a connected community. Note incorporation of Village Centers from Charrette Scenario "Redefine".

Key Elements

- Quality of life and health focused
- Connectivity to amenities
- Development nodes with neighborhood services

Enhance and develop connections with the natural environment

Attributes

Capitalizing on the existing greenway network and reorienting current development to embrace a system of green infrastructure improvements that balance the natural and man made aesthetics of the city, reduce impacts of storm water, place importance of pedestrian circulation above vehicular traffic.

- Focus on core health outcomes: walkability, biking, and neighborhood connectivity.
- Develop connections for tourist economic activity with each element of the city
- Enhance natural features, and connections leading to the natural green corridors.
- Link neighborhoods to a park or green space within the loop, create network of green spaces where housing density can increase.

Trade-offs

- Economic activity not focused on downtown, but the connection between downtown and recreation opportunities across the city.
- Activity on the river is accessible to city residents, but guided toward capturing tourist expenditures.
- Downtown will experience increase in seasonal activity that should reduce the negative impacts of reduced student population.

Technical Considerations

In addition to the Common Characteristics and Common Assumptions described above, the following Characteristics and Assumptions are applied to the Re-Create Scenario.

CHARACTERISTICS

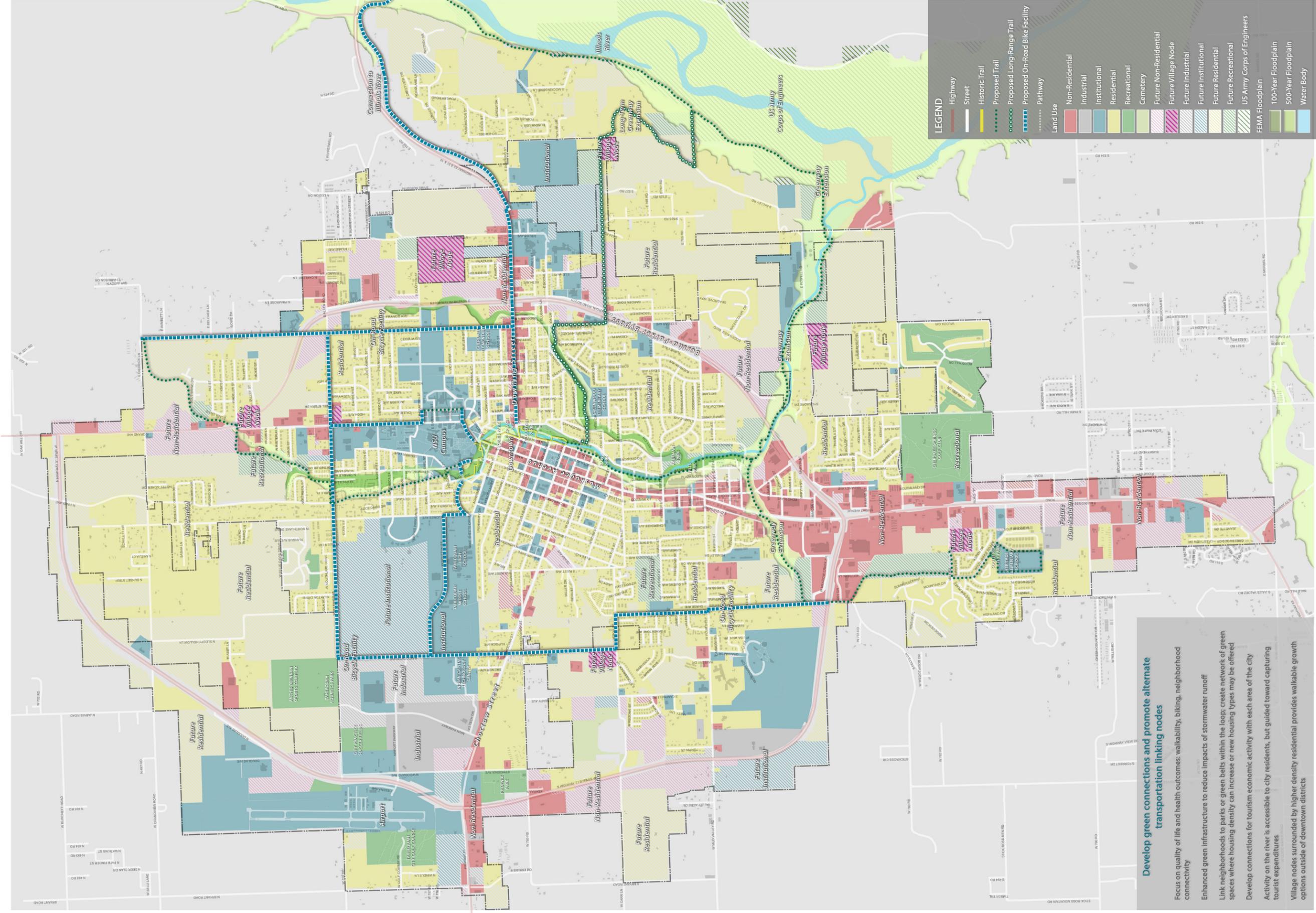
- Higher-density housing along green spines (housing types that are less of a burden to city services)
- Slight increase in overall residential density to allow increased density along greenways = 3.0 DU/acre (existing overall density is 2.1 DU/Acre, while density of SF neighborhoods ONLY is higher, at 2.67 DU/Acre)
- Average residential density in Village Node = 3.0 DU/acre: encourage mixed-use or missing middle housing, rather than solely smaller-lot neighborhoods.
- Village Center non-residential uses shall support nearby residential uses and not compete with downtown (80,000 SF retail over each of 4 Village Nodes)
- Commercial infill/redevelopment near downtown, along existing designated commercial corridors
- Commercial expansion only into Village Nodes, with the exception of those undeveloped properties already zoned commercial that wish to develop as such.

ASSUMPTIONS (including all Common Assumptions on page 39, with the following additional items)

- Assumptions a. and b. from Scenario 1 "Status Quo"
- Vacant or agricultural parcels that are not currently zoned are assigned based on the desired outcomes for this scenario
- The assignment of "village nodes" to be comprised of non-residential uses with supporting higher density residential uses
- Recreational amenities such as trails, parks, and on-road bicycle connections have been identified
- Physical expansion includes infill of "donut holes" within existing city boundary, as well as expansion east toward the Illinois River

OUTCOMES

- With increased activity, the City builds on its own momentum, increasing retail traffic in downtown and leading to residential development in downtown.
- On City-led projects, owners/developers benefit from increased property values on adjacent lands.



Develop green connections and promote alternate transportation linking nodes

Focus on quality of life and health outcomes: walkability, biking, neighborhood connectivity

Enhanced green infrastructure to reduce impacts of stormwater runoff

Link neighborhoods to parks or green belts within the loop; create network of green spaces where housing density can increase or new housing types may be offered

Develop connections for tourism economic activity with each area of the city

Activity on the river is accessible to city residents, but guided toward capturing tourist expenditures

Village nodes surrounded by higher density residential provides walkable growth options outside of downtown districts

MY TAHLQUAH 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Scenario 2: Recreate

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October 17, 2017



1.0

SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 2: RE-CREATE

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SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 2: RE-CREATE

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SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 3: REFOCUS

Focus on reinvestment in existing properties by filling in the spaces between existing buildings and businesses as well as potential developable sites near downtown that might be underdeveloped or abandoned. Maintain the historic character of downtown by adopting design and development standards that follow a common urban form.

Key Elements

- Form-Based
- Flexible uses for new and old buildings
- Allow redevelopment of adjacent properties

Districts created to enhance quality of places.

Attributes

Unique districts form the basis for this development scenario. With a combination of housing, commercial and recreation activities, each district maximizes its inherent qualities of the neighborhood and created an identity with names, branding and a geographic reference to its “center”

- Create complete neighborhoods and realistic districts that have unique characteristics.
- Strong commercial downtown.
- Reinvestment in districts linked to economic activity.
- Enhance the quality of place within each district and focus on economic intensity.
- Allow scale of district to define development patterns, and regulations.
- Future investment is centered on infill of underutilized properties, flexible zoning uses, and mixed use where appropriate.
- Create housing opportunities on any property in downtown, with base zoning on first floors.
- Flexible parking linked by sidewalks and street lighting.

Trade-offs

- No particular district has more or less focus, except for downtown.
- This “strength from within” scenario draws heavily from the existing property owners wanting to

maintain their investments and grow an organic Tahlequah experience.

- This scenario closely defines the current economic centers, and provides reliable planning and zoning structure to reduce conflict with future land use changes.

Technical Considerations

In addition to the Common Characteristics and Common Assumptions described above, the following Characteristics and Assumptions are applied to the Refocus Scenario.

CHARACTERISTICS

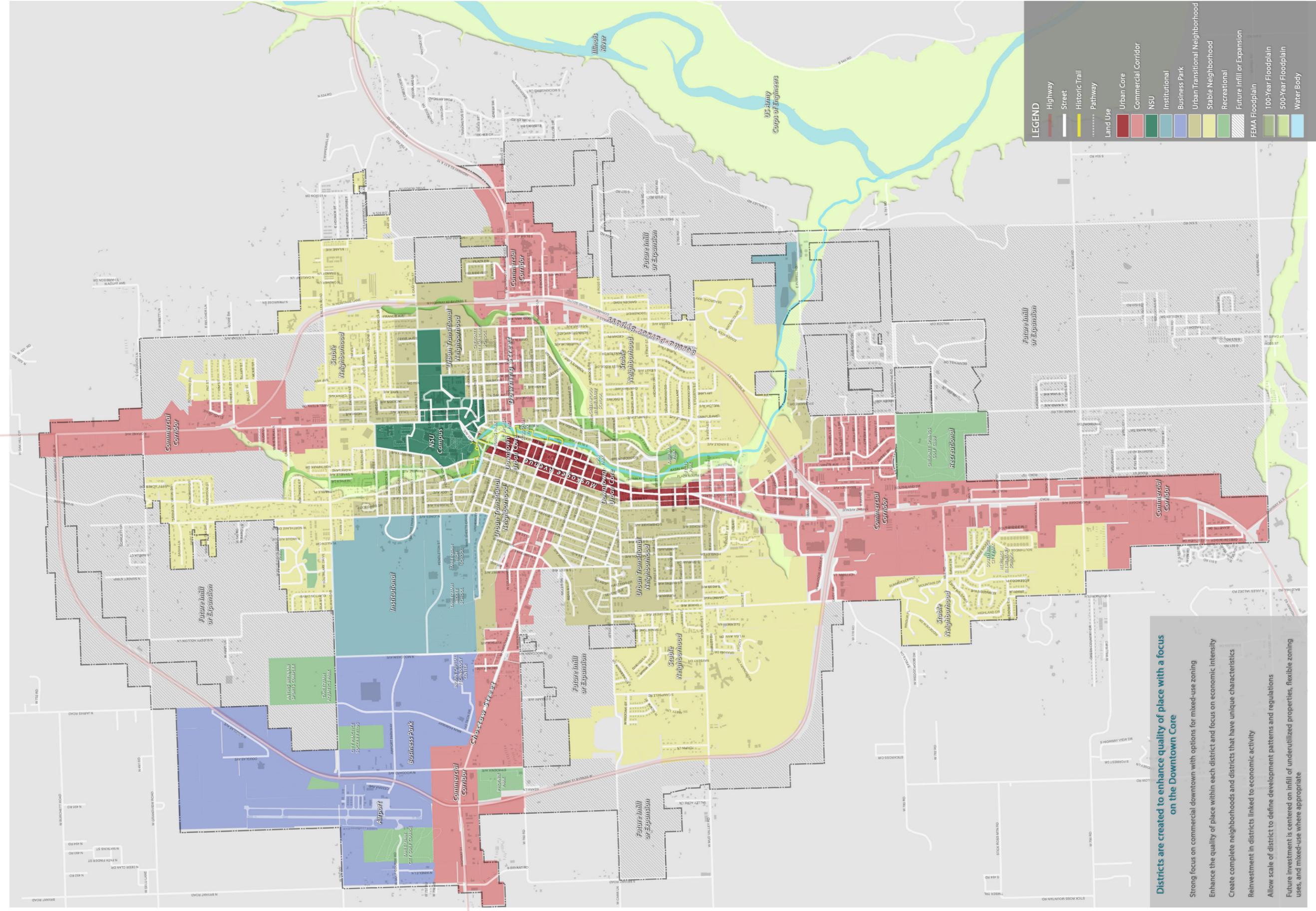
- Inward focus
- Increased density
- Infill development
- ½ mile from downtown, Downing, NSU are focus for redevelopment New target density of 8 DU/acre (urban transitional neighborhood)
- Downtown doubles density to between 8-10 dwelling units per acre

ASSUMPTIONS (including all Common Assumptions on page 39, with the following additional items)

- Unassigned Residential Reserve areas are assumed to develop at 80% residential; these develop at 2.67 DU/Acre (current residential density)
- Growth and Expansion approach: fill in missing “donut holes”, grow to the east slightly, notable expansion in the southeast.

OUTCOMES

- Increased density will provide a reduction in car use and increasing foot traffic to support downtown businesses.
- Opportunities for healthy and stable housing densities will serve as a model for other areas of the city that will experience selective housing densities.
- The increasing focus on the existing “urban” environment will preserve open space for future growth, trails, and housing choices that will match market demand.
- A shared understanding among downtown property owners that success will be incremental, but will benefit everyone.



Districts are created to enhance quality of place with a focus on the Downtown Core

- Strong focus on commercial downtown with options for mixed-use zoning
- Enhance the quality of place within each district and focus on economic intensity
- Create complete neighborhoods and districts that have unique characteristics
- Reinvestment in districts linked to economic activity
- Allow scale of district to define development patterns and regulations
- Future investment is centered on infill of underutilized properties, flexible zoning uses, and mixed-use where appropriate

MY TAHLEQUAH 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Scenario 3: Redefine



October 17, 2017



SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 3: REFOCUS

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SCENARIOS

METRICS

Values Comparison

Values are compared based on project goals and objectives, to compare which goals are met by each scenario. While Status Quo meets very few goals, Recreate and Refocus meet numerous stated goals.

Table 4.1: Values Comparison

GOAL	Scenario 1: Status Quo	Scenario 2: Recreate	Scenario 3: Refocus
Land Use			
Promote diversity in land use types	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Encourage growth opportunities that reinforce Tahlequah's community character	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Promote an organized investment in planning	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Community Character			
Promote new development options while maintaining the small town feel	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Support cultural cooperation and offerings that honor Tahlequah's diverse history	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Improve gateways, corridors, and edge treatments to promote the City's image	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Transportation			
Promote options to accommodate multiple modes of transportation on city streets	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal
Retrofit roads and signalization to keep pace with growth and increased traffic demands	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Focus on safe accessible routes for all users	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal
Utilities & Infrastructure			
Improve current infrastructure to keep pace with community's growth	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Manage and improve utilities over time through phased implementation	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Continue to monitor and improve Tahlequah's green infrastructure - surrounding ecosystems	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal
Housing & Neighborhoods			
Consider infill redevelopment options for downtown	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Promote reinvestment in historic housing stock	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Identify strategic locations for new housing development as the town continues to grow	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Parks, Recreation & Trails			
Identify park and recreational needs to keep pace with the growth of Tahlequah	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Establish connections between parks, the campus, neighborhoods, and downtown	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Promote healthy living for all Tahlequah residents	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal
Economic Development			
Champion existing local businesses that are consistent with the expressed vision	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Promote job creation to capture and maintain college graduates	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario meets this goal
Encourage tourism that supports the community character of Tahlequah	Scenario does not meet this goal	Scenario meets this goal	Scenario does not meet this goal

Scenario meets this goal
 Scenario does not meet this goal

SCENARIOS

METRICS

Physical Expansion

Physical expansion is compared between scenarios to compare how population growth will be accommodated (inwardly-focused or outwardly-focused) and where new growth should be directed.

Scenario 1: Status Quo

- No expansion or annexation

Scenario 2: Recreate

- Annex “donut holes”
- Grow toward the Illinois River

Scenario 3: Refocus

- Annex “donut holes”
- Grow eastward, particularly in south Tahlequah

Population Capacity

Population capacity is based on the assumed capacity of each scenario upon build-out. Status Quo capacity follows Tahlequah trending growth projections, while Recreate and Refocus allow for high population capacities due to limited expansion and the allowance of higher residential densities in targeted areas. Scenario 1 tracks roughly with the 2040 projected population, with Scenario 2 potentially accommodating approximately 7,400 more people and Scenario 3 potentially accommodating 15,400 more people than Scenario 1. These estimates are based on the assumptions of land use as illustrated in each Scenario description, located on pages 39-48.

Fiscal Impacts

Fiscal impacts are based on land use, infrastructure, and policy. Refer to the Framework Plan Economic Snapshot for an example.

Outcomes

The subsequent Framework was developed as a combination of Scenarios 2 and 3, with an emphasis on redevelopment and infill development within the city center, while enhancing the city's focus on natural resources and greenway opportunities as an opportunity for focusing future development. See Section Five for more information.

SCENARIOS

METRICS

Table 4.2: Population Capacity Comparison

CONDITION	POPULATION PROJECTION / CAPACITY	DENSITY
<p>Tahlequah Trending Growth Existing Population: 16,354 2040 Projected Population (high): 21,326 Approximate new households: 2,143</p>		2.1 DU/Acre
<p>SCENARIO 1: Status Quo Buildout Population: 22,900 Approximate new households: 2,800</p>		2.67 DU/Acre
<p>SCENARIO 2: Recreate Buildout Population: 30,300 Approximate new households: 5,700</p>		2.67 DU/Acre
<p>SCENARIO 3: Refocus Buildout Population: 38,300 Approximate new households: 9,450</p>		2.67 DU/Acre

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SECTION FIVE

FRAMEWORK PLAN

FRAMEWORK PLAN

ORGANIZATION

The Framework Plan was developed from the combination of the Re-Create and Redefine scenarios. This plan, as described below, creates the framework from which each of the plan elements (land use; community character; transportation; housing & neighborhoods; parks, recreation, open space, & trails; utilities, infrastructure, & community facilities; economic development; and capital improvements are based.

PLACE TYPES

Since the inception of zoning in the 1920s, city planning efforts have largely focused on the separation of and type of land uses. This was done largely in the interest of public health, and fulfilling the need to separate residences from industrial uses and their by-products. During the decades following the two World Wars, a rapid pace of development coupled with the dominance of the automobile and the desire to separate land uses resulted in sprawl around most urban areas of America.

By turning the focus away from a land-use dominated planning approach and considering the desired form and arrangement of communities, current planning approaches return to the pre-war patterns that emphasize the creation of a pedestrian-scaled environment in which compatible mixes of land uses are encouraged.

To this end, planning solutions are focused around the types of places that form our communities and the inherent characteristics that are associated with each “place type.” These include neighborhoods, corridors, centers/cores, and special districts.

Patterns of development occur differently within each “place type”; neighborhood development is often times notable different from corridor development, for example. Place types set the framework for development strategies, including design overlay districts, urban design guidelines, or form-based code. Planning by place types can result in the appropriate layout of people places.

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods as they relate to Place Types refer to the predominantly residential areas in which we live. The definition of neighborhood is not exclusive of form, location, or age. Located within neighborhoods may be support services such as dry cleaners, local markets/bakeries/restaurants, neighborhood-scale retail, parks, schools, churches, and/or civic buildings.

In Tahlequah, neighborhoods are distinguishable by age, location, demographics, and layout. For planning purposes, neighborhoods have been classified into three types: stable, urban transitional, and infill (or future).



Neighborhoods



Corridors

FRAMEWORK PLAN

ORGANIZATION

Corridors

Corridors are the travel and transportation networks throughout a community. Though the most common form of corridors are for vehicular travel (streets), these may also include railroads, trails, and waterways. Land uses along corridors vary widely, and many times feature a multitude of development types, scales, and forms. Corridors can be one of the most challenging Place Types to plan while maintaining both economic viability and aesthetics. Of the four Place Types, mid-century corridors have, in general, experienced the greatest decline and are at the center of many revitalization efforts across the country. Many corridor developments have utilized suburban-oriented zoning and subdivision regulations that have resulted in multitudes of sprawling roadways consumed by strip development where the car is dominant and pedestrians are virtually ignored.

The same holds true in Tahlequah. Once beyond downtown Tahlequah, corridor form quickly changes to an auto-centric pattern with standard suburban-type development, varying in age, condition, and economic stability. Two major corridors considered in the Framework plan include Downing and Muskogee, although emerging corridors such as Choctaw, Ross, and Allen should be carefully planned in terms of the desired form of future development.

Centers/Cores/Nodes

The centers or cores of most communities are easily discernible: many times they are the central business district, but may also be a neighborhood center or a regional center. Centers or cores typically feature a more dense pattern of development with a variety of uses, often in a mixed-use environment. Centers or cores are destinations within a community, and often time contain exterior civic spaces landmarks.

Tahlequah has a strong, discernible primary central core: downtown. Downtown is anchored by NSU, and is served by three important corridors: Muskogee, Downing, and the Town Branch Creek Greenway. The convergence of all of these features reinforces the downtown's sense of place.

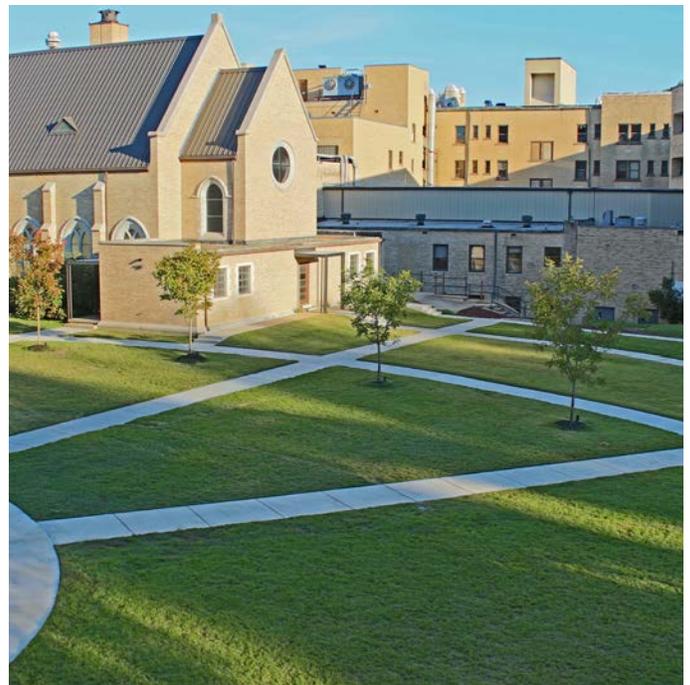
Special Districts

Special districts are non-residential areas of a single use. Common examples include airports, water ports, or industrial areas, but may also be large corporate campuses, institutional areas, college campuses, or other assimilations of non-residential property.

Tahlequah's special districts include NSU, the business park, the large high school and middle school campuses, the airport, and the large Cherokee Nation institutional landholdings.



Centers/Nodes



Special Districts

FRAMEWORK PLAN

ORGANIZATION

FORM

The Framework Plan was created based on the Re-Create and Refocus scenarios, therefore, its general form is heavily influenced by the City's natural systems of open space, waterways, and natural features, while particular emphasis is placed on the Refocus scenario's infill and redevelopment opportunities within the bypass loop. Further framework opportunities are organized by Place Type, and those areas of change that can be affected within each one. Focusing change within the community on specific areas that can enhance quality of life while supporting economic development in incremental steps can spur private investment and infill or redevelopment.

The framework plan is organized to identify the existing and proposed centers and nodes. Additional neighborhood retail centers are identified to support residential areas with basic services in an effort to reduce concentrated commercial corridor development (such as South Muskogee) while reducing the heavy traffic demand to a few points in town. It is important to note that these small retail centers should not be designed to compete with downtown. Further, such centers will not eliminate residents' need to travel to South Muskogee for larger-scaled, regional services.

Supporting each node are neighborhoods. As noted earlier, neighborhoods within the framework plan have been identified as urban transitional, stable, or infill. Policies and guidance are provided within the Housing & Neighborhoods Plan Element in Section Seven, while specific interventions that are critical first steps related to the stabilization and promotion of neighborhoods are located in Section Six.

Neighborhoods, Nodes, and Special Districts are all connected by Corridors. Within the Framework Plan, areas of Downing and Muskogee are identified for targeted redevelopment, while additional streets are identified for future bicycle and/or pedestrian improvements. Current and future greenways or off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails are also reflected on the Framework Plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles directed the form of the Framework Plan:

1. Focus on Reinvestment

The Framework Plan prioritizes reinvestment in existing infrastructure, neighborhoods, and developments over investment in projects that require new investment in infrastructure and public services. Such priorities may include

- Downtown reinvestment
- Reinvestment and infill in aging neighborhoods
- Support for local businesses
- Infrastructure maintenance and upgrades

2. Focus on Health & Recreation

The Framework Plan emphasizes an interconnected pattern of development, creating opportunities for multi-modal transportation options and reinforcing healthy lifestyles. Such areas of emphasis include

- Incentives for walkable development patterns
- Continued expansion of greenway
- Addition of on-road bicycle facilities to encourage non-motorized transportation
- Growth toward the Illinois River
- Continued sidewalk connectivity efforts

3. Focus on Tourism

The Framework Plan recognizes the value of tourism and the opportunities that are available in or near Tahlequah. To that end, the plan encourages

- Partnership building with recreation providers
- Creation of infrastructure and marketing efforts to draw tourists into Tahlequah for dining, retail, hospitality, and recreation options

FRAMEWORK PLAN

AREAS OF CHANGE & AREAS OF CONTINUED MAINTENANCE

Two types of action were recognized within the Framework Plan. The first are the areas of change, which are further addressed in Chapter 6: Specific Interventions. These areas of change seek to enhance traditional development types, target redevelopment efforts, and ready other areas for future redevelopment. Areas of continued maintenance do not imply inactivity, rather, these areas are specifically in need of policies and actions to support their continued success. Furthermore, the Steering Committee indicated the level of change desired for specific quality of life drivers within Tahlequah, see pages 68-69 for a complete description.

Areas of Change

The Framework Plan outlines the following specific areas of change. These are highlighted on the Framework Plan Map on page 61. Areas of Change are further explained and detailed within Section Six: Specific Interventions and the associated Plan Elements in Section Seven.

- Infill and Redevelopment: Downing Corridor
- Infill and Redevelopment: Muskogee Corridor
- Greenway development and off-road connectivity to the Illinois River
- Infill housing and associated incentives
- Diversity of housing product types
- Commercial and residential densities to promote walkability, centers of activity, opportunities for social interaction and community building
- Development patterns and codes, retail attraction (national vs. support for local business), business incubators, and industry attraction

- Multi-modal transportation options, municipal street connectivity, and access

Areas of Continued Maintenance

The Framework Plan recognizes the areas of Tahlequah that function well in the current environment, and that should be supported and promoted for the continued success of the community, including the following:

- Downtown
- Community cultural destinations, special events, and entertainment
- Community recreational destinations
- Stable housing stock
- Local business success
- Relationships with NSU, Cherokee Nation



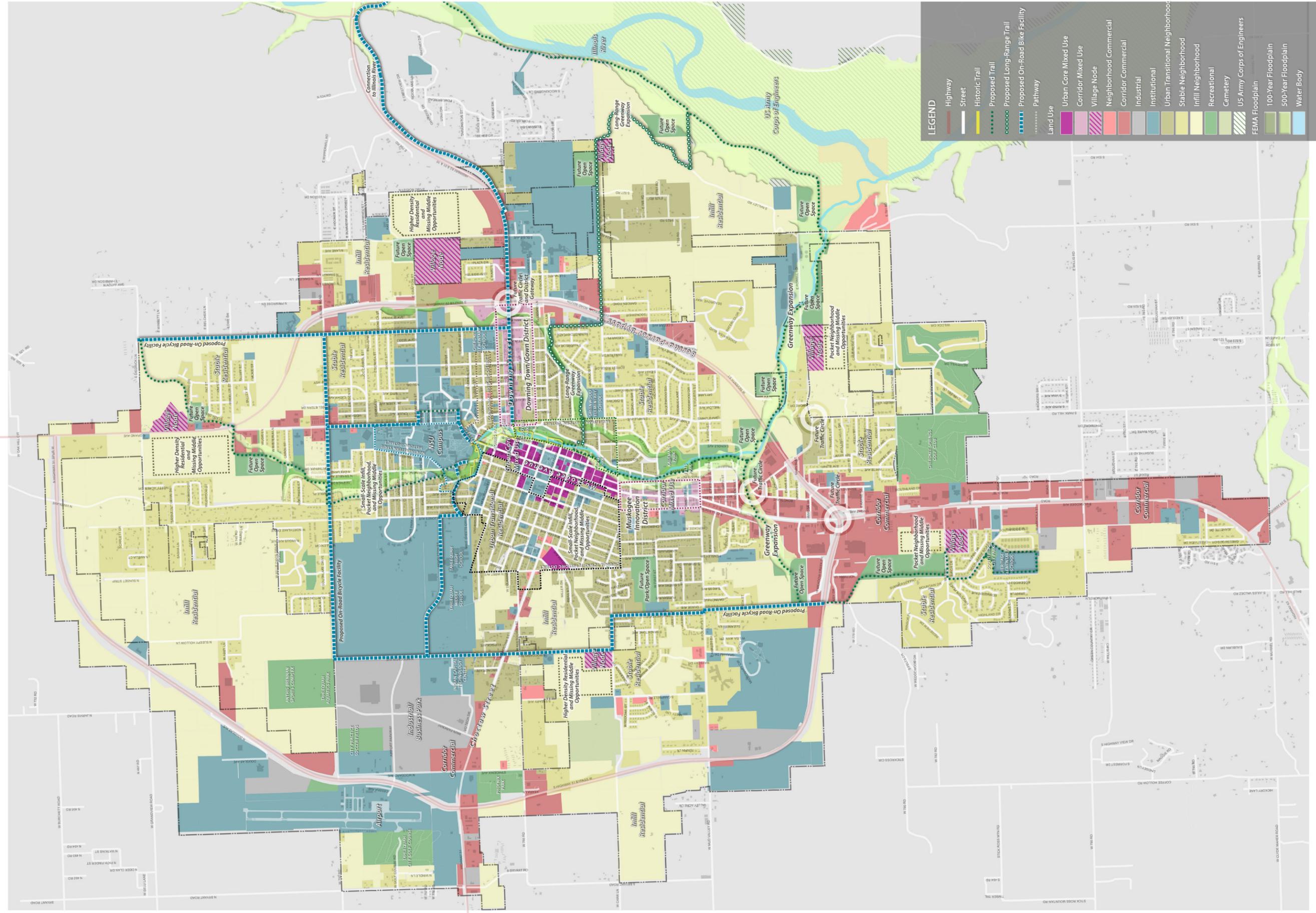
OUTCOMES

Each Plan Element (see Section Seven) works in accordance with the Framework Plan. Outcomes are described in terms of physical change/form, actions, and policies. Additional specific changes that affect multiple Plan Elements are addressed in Section Six: Specific Interventions, and include Key Action Steps and Policy Implications.

FRAMEWORK PLAN

FRAMEWORK PLAN MAP

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MY TAHLEQUAH 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

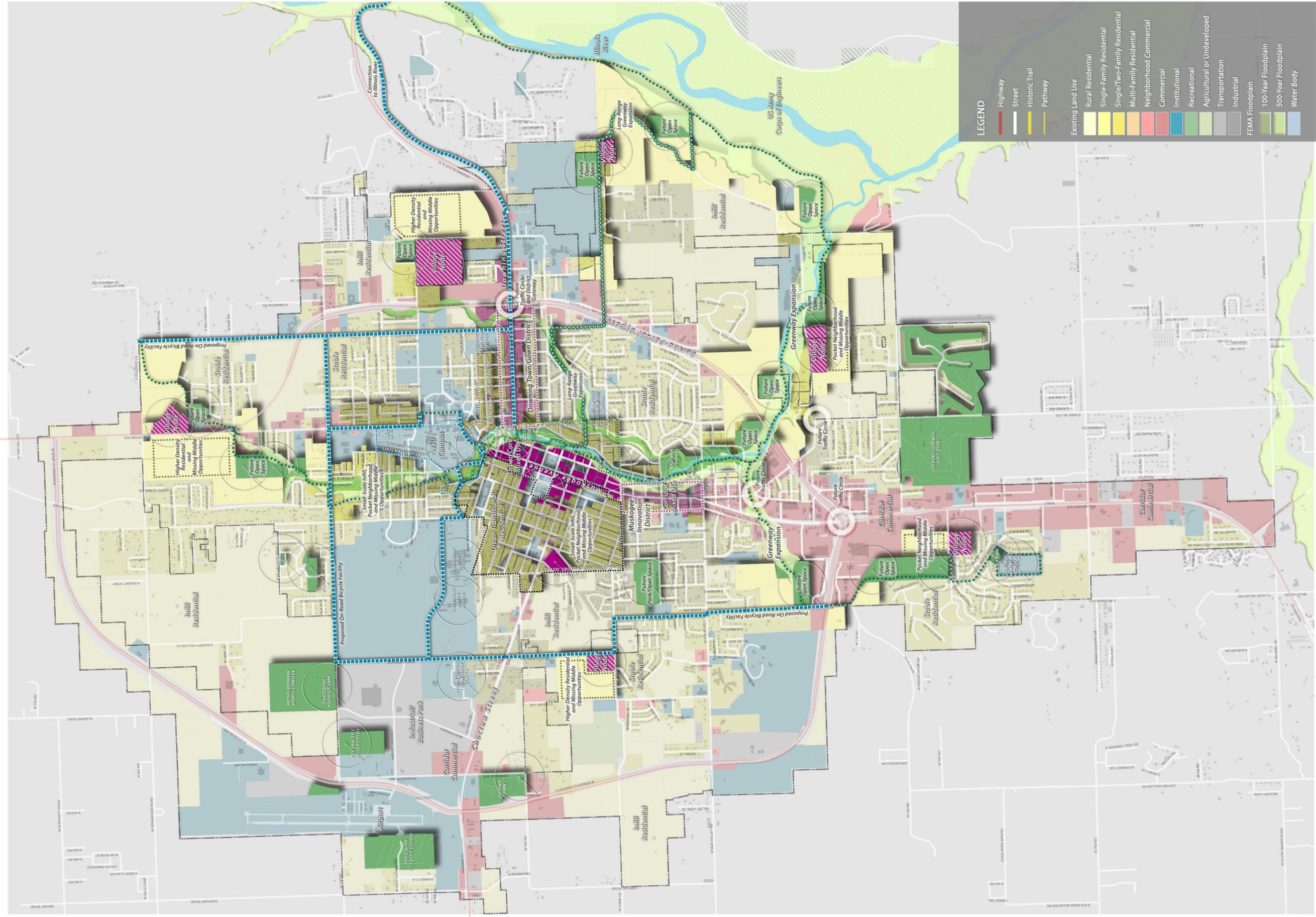
Framework Plan



FRAMEWORK PLAN

FRAMEWORK PLAN MAP: AREAS OF CHANGE

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MY TAHLQUAH 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Framework Plan: Areas of Change



LEGEND

- Highway
- Street
- Historic Trail
- Pathway

Existing Land Use

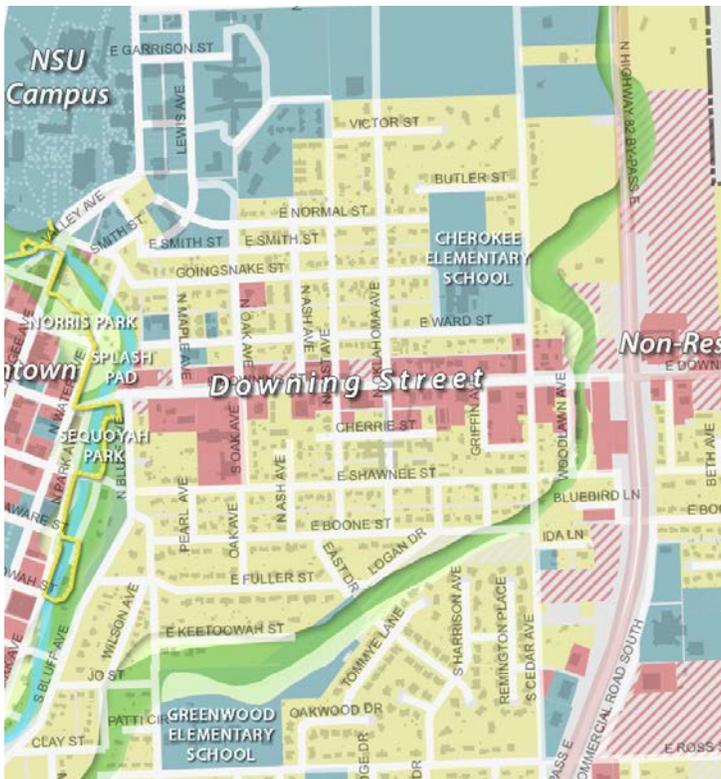
- Rural Residential
- Single-Family Residential
- Single/Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Recreational
- Agricultural or Undeveloped
- Transportation
- Industrial
- FEMA Floodplain
- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Water Body

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FRAMEWORK PLAN

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: DOWNING EXAMPLE

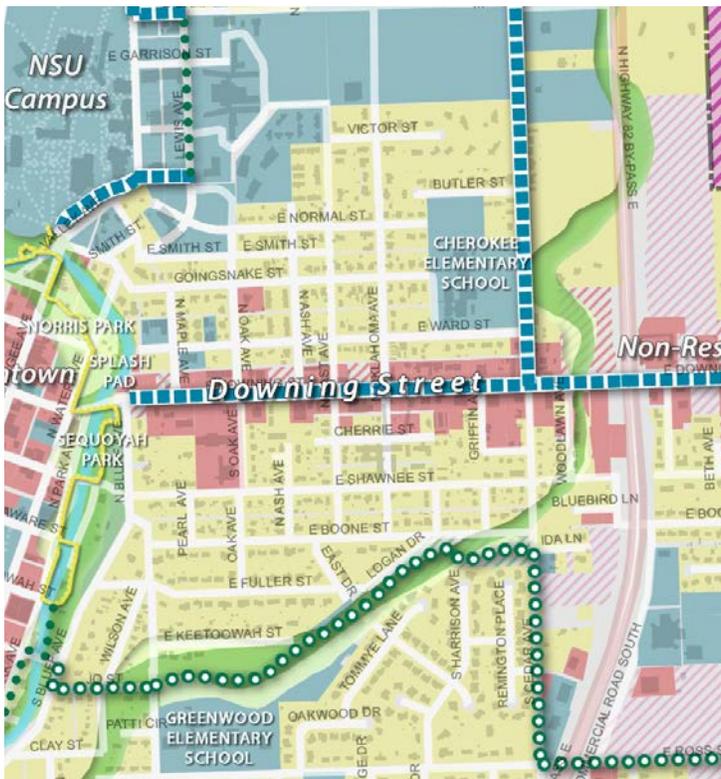
Downing Street is a high traffic connector that has the potential for increased commercial activity if certain environmental challenges can be eliminated. Connecting streets like Downing should be the heart of adjacent neighborhoods with a mix of business types that are easily accessible and attractive. This exercise compares the potential economics outcomes of the corridor based on various changes to the physical environment, detailed below.



Existing Conditions

Downing has suffered from years of challenges created by the physical design of Highway 62. It is currently characterized by:

- 9.11 acres of commercial
- 6.6 acres of buildings (20% utilization ratio)
- \$233,868.00 Tax Collections*
- Declining investments
- Limitations by current zoning
- Third Tier commercial district
- A place to drive through to get to downtown
- Difficulty with access, speed of traffic, no safe pedestrian features
- Relatively little future investment incentives or motivation for change
- Multi-modal transportation options, municipal street connectivity, and access



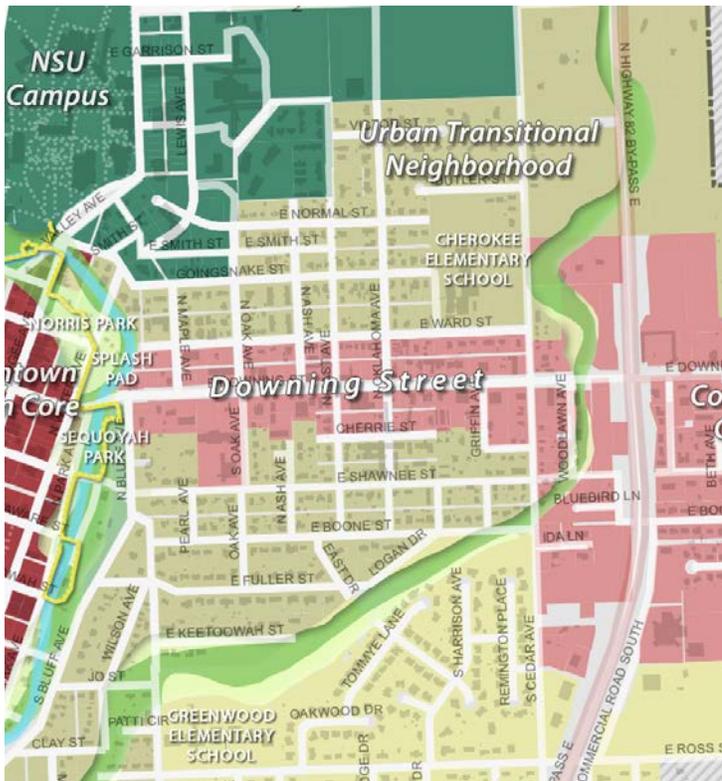
Scenarios 1 & 2 (from Section Four)

With minor changes to the zoning code more land is available for development without any increase in commercial land. With fewer restrictions on the mix of residential and commercial uses, commercial activity will increase while reducing vehicular traffic. These scenarios are characterized by:

- 52.35 acres developable
- 8.25 acres of buildings (20% utilization ratio)
- \$292,039 Tax Collections*
- \$58,171 improvement
- Maintain current business environment, with aesthetic improvements.
- Highlights infill opportunities with minimal code changes
- Same utilization, but infill of underdeveloped lots.

FRAMEWORK PLAN

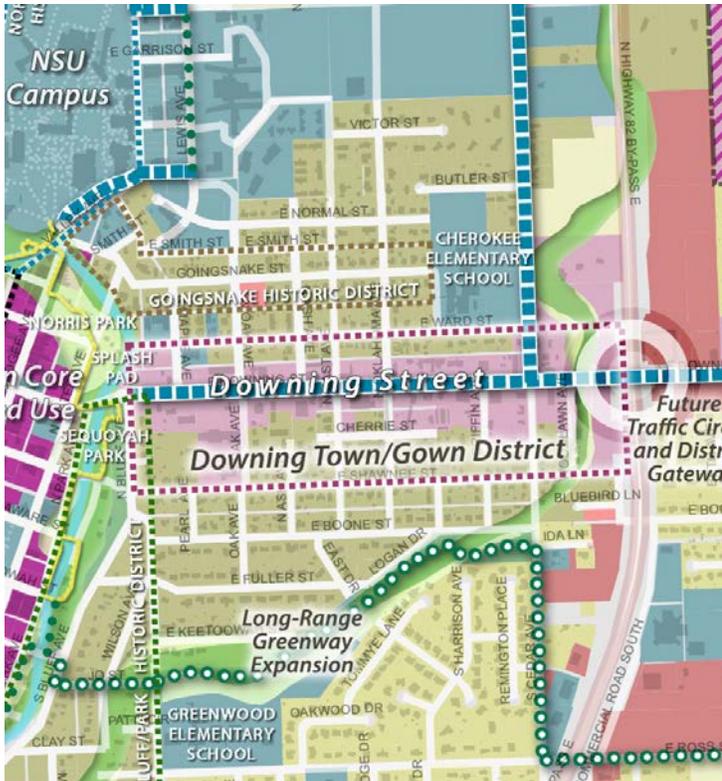
ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: DOWNING EXAMPLE



Scenario 3 (from Section Four)

A more intensely redeveloped Downing Street will engage with NSU, the bypass and downtown Tahlequah. This scenario is characterized by:

- 52.35 Acres developable
- 8.25 Acres of Buildings (50% utilization ratio)
- \$730,098 Tax Collections*
- \$496,230 improvement
- Expansion to north of Downing toward University.
- More uniform development pattern
- Increased lot sizes, but conflict with neighborhood
- Higher utilization (more buildings on each lot)



Framework Plan

The hybrid scenario is the most likely with no increase in commercially zoned property, but provides private sector benefit of increased density, reductions in required parking, and more flexibility in the zoning requirements. The Framework Plan is characterized by:

- 49.11 Acres of commercial
- 9.9 Acres of buildings
- \$876,115 Tax Collections (50% utilization ratio)
- \$642,250 improvement
- Same land area, increased density, and shared parking
- Focus on pedestrian and bike circulation
- Multi-story buildings and mixed uses
- Preservation of north and south neighborhood boundary

SECTION SIX
SPECIFIC
INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

AFFECTING CHANGE

Implementing a comprehensive plan consists of incremental changes in three manners:

1. Changes at the policy level to ready the City for new development or redevelopment,
2. Incentivizing redevelopments within targeted areas to strengthen such areas, and
3. Capital improvements to create, expand, or renovate infrastructure and public projects.

Tahlequah is uniquely positioned as the county seat of Cherokee County as well as the capital of the Cherokee Nation and the Keetoowah Tribe, therefore coordination between each governing body (city, county, and tribal governments) is critical to implementing the plan in a successful manner. Issues affecting each group do not end at jurisdictional boundaries. Continued coordination to achieve overarching goals while providing community and infrastructure services is imperative to expanding and reinforcing the area's assets.

The Framework Plan outlines specific areas of change, which can be grouped into the following Place Type categories (Corridors, Nodes, Neighborhoods, and Districts) as described in Section 5:

Corridors

- Downing Corridor: Infill and Redevelopment
- Muskogee Corridor: Infill and Redevelopment
- Greenway development and off-road connectivity to the Illinois River
- Multi-modal transportation options, municipal street connectivity, and access

Neighborhoods

- Infill housing and associated incentives
- Diversity of housing product types (addressed by Urban Transitional, Stable Residential, or Residential Reserve categories)

Nodes

- Downtown Tahlequah: continued focus and support
- Village Centers: Commercial and residential densities to promote walkability, centers of activity, opportunities for social interaction and community building

- Development patterns and codes, retail attraction (national vs. support for local business), business incubators, and industry attraction.

In addition to the specific areas of change outlined above, the following institutions are also vital to the success of the Comprehensive Plan and Tahlequah as a whole, although self-governing and not implemented by the City:

- NSU
- Cherokee Nation

DEGREES OF CHANGE

In order to prioritize which areas are most important for affecting change, the consultant worked with the Steering Committee to establish the degree of change desired within each of the following areas:

Corridors

- Downing Corridor
- Muskogee Corridor
- Greenways
- Bike Routes

Nodes

- Downtown
- Village Centers

Neighborhoods

- Urban Transitional Neighborhoods
- Stable Neighborhoods
- Residential Reserve

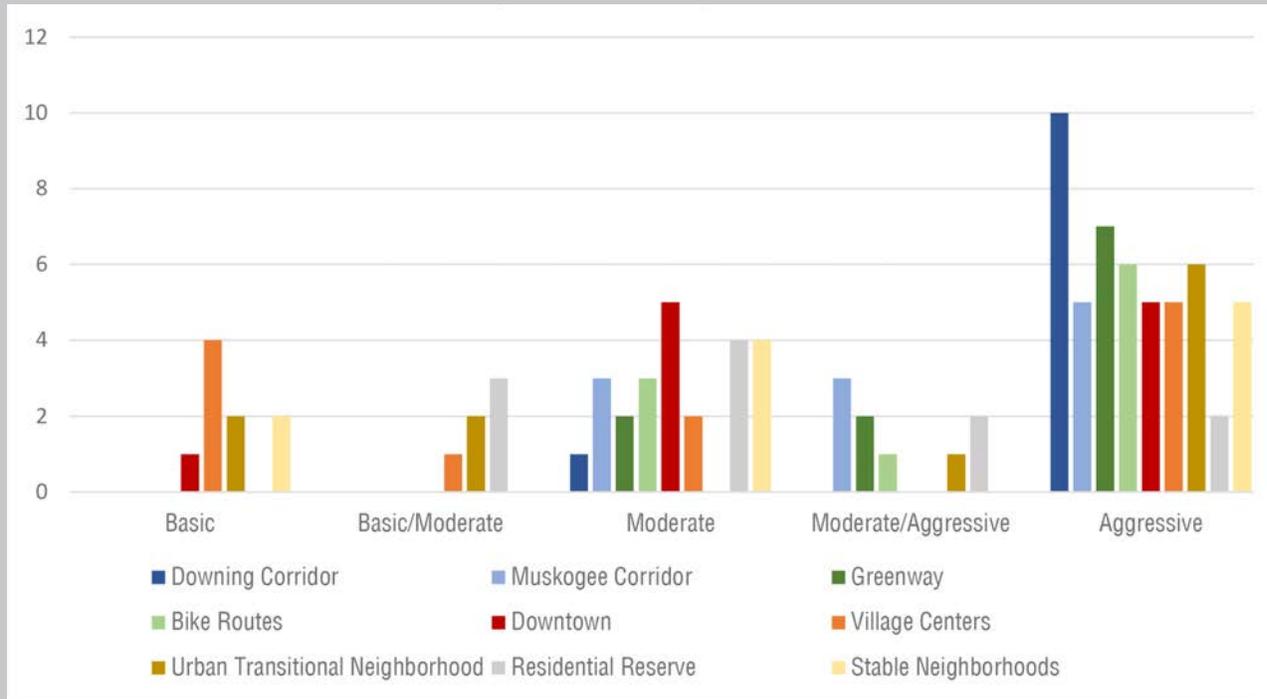
Each area above was ranked on the degree of change desired, ranging from Basic (small-scale public investment and improvements), Moderate (mid-range public investment, improvements, policy changes, and partnerships), to Aggressive (higher levels of public investment, improvements, policy changes, partnerships, and ordinances).

The results from this exercise are depicted in Table 6.1: Degrees of Change Results and are summarized on the following page.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

AFFECTING CHANGE

Table 6.1: Degrees of Change Results



Downing: High level of public investment priority, entry gateways, ADA-compliant sidewalks and intersections, wayfinding and signage, TIF District, streetscape elements (trees, lighting, benches), form-based code, complete street

Muskogee: High level of public investment, gateways and wayfinding, ADA-compliant sidewalks and intersections, streetscape (trees, lighting, benches), form-based code

Greenways: South - NSU to 7th Street, East - 7th Street to River, North & East - NSU to Diedrick, 12' asphalt path, wayfinding and signage, benches, shade trees, and lighting

Bike Routes: Sharrows, on-road bicycle lanes, protected bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, acquire right of way for multi-use paths, complete streets ordinance

Downtown: Mid to high level of public investment, business improvement district, design overlay district or form-based code, wayfinding and signage, parking maximums, street trees, benches and lighting.

Village Centers: Mid level of public investment, mixed-use development, density tolerance regulations, design overlay district, parking maximums, street trees

Urban Transitional Neighborhoods: Infill regulations, historic district boundary and design guidelines adopted, density allowances or bonuses, missing middle housing, pocket neighborhoods, architectural control guidelines, mixed-use/mixed-income.

Residential Reserve (new development): Public infrastructure, complete streets, cluster developments, density allowances, accessory dwelling units

Stable Neighborhoods: Continued maintenance, code support for rental housing, sidewalks and trails access, accessory dwelling units, urban agriculture, low-impact design/storm water management

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: POSITIONING FOR CHANGE

The following Specific Interventions are project-level, incremental changes that are individually focused. These differ from each of the Plan Elements described in Section Seven, which address issues at the city-wide level on a related topic (housing, community character, transportation, etc.). Each Specific Intervention has the potential to affect change across multiple Plan Elements, and have been cross-referenced where nuances exist. These Specific Interventions have been organized broadly by Place Type, and are as follows:

1. Specific Interventions: Positioning for Change

- Slow and Steady Change
- City Planning Administration
- Assumption Statements
- Tahlequah Challenges: National Economic Issues
- Tahlequah Challenges: Poverty

2. Specific Interventions: The Economic Value of Tourism

3. Specific Interventions: Corridors

- Downing Corridor
- Muskogee Corridor
- Greenways
- Bike Lanes and Routes

4. Specific Interventions: Nodes

- Downtown
- Village Centers

5. Specific Interventions: Neighborhoods

- Urban Transitional Neighborhood
- Stable Neighborhoods
- Residential Reserve

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: POSITIONING FOR CHANGE

Slow and Steady Change

Municipal governance is an exercise in patience and perseverance. The duty to maintain the public trust to administer services is a noble endeavor, and rests in the diligent work of countless staff, administrators and public officials.

Adopting new policies that change the priorities of the community must be conducted with appropriate cost-benefit analysis, and should avoid being arbitrary. Avoiding political whims is a challenge for new city leaders, but the best results come from slow and steady change that follows a clear understanding of the community's priorities and limits. Where cities find the most success is identifying unrealized opportunities that already exist, and supplementing an existing effort to reduce conflict, and speed up the return on investment.

Tahlequah should be prepared to roll out policy changes and provide support with education, documentation, and effective communication with the public and business leaders. The implementation of change requires patience and support from all levels of government. Even if a program is not administered in one area of city government, it is important for all employees to be familiar with the change potential and be an advocate to the community at large.

City Planning Administration

The administration of the municipal code is a thankless, but incredibly important job. A planner must exercise a broad understanding of the code, and navigate the political climate assisting property owners that choose to invest in the community. A city planner will have to wear many hats, and will advocate for the best practices, but recognize the reality of the development proposals and find opportunities to make incremental improvements.

In order to stay competitive with other places to live and work, Tahlequah must create its own unique offering and support the organic culture of place.

Assumption Statements

The purpose of assumption statements is to frame the development of the long-term potential for change in terms that can be modified going forward based on the difference between the current intensity of development and full build-out. These assumption statements help to narrow the focus toward a solution that closely follows reality, but also sets out a bold vision for the future.

- Ex. A "mixed use downtown" is more likely to have multi-story development than properties further away from the Town Center.
- Walking between businesses is pleasant when there is plenty of time to stroll and look around.
- Cities have the power to unlock financial capacity

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: POSITIONING FOR CHANGE

from within their own communities with creative project development, and community-wide initiative.

- Example: University housing is dramatically cheaper than neighboring off-campus housing options. The student population has declined in recent years and a couple of dorms are not currently occupied as a result. The University and the private property owners are in competition for tenants, but that competition has created an unmarketable housing stock.
- The assumption regarding on-campus vs off-campus housing is this; The University will continue to maintain a stable residential population at below-market rental rates. As student population increases, some outflow of students to off-campus housing will result in an increase in occupancy rates for housing, but will not significantly increase the demand for more housing within the City of Tahlequah.

Tahlequah Challenges: National Economic Issues

Current Economic conditions pose challenging headwinds for further growth of retail and manufacturing concerns. The continued erosion of brick and mortar retailing will require cities to recalibrate their funding model. This is no small task, given the limitations cities have when forced to compete with other cities for the same dollars under severe investment constraints.

Cities can hedge their potential losses by promoting and sustaining affordable housing as a core tenant of community development. The availability and supply of below market rate housing is necessary to keep people invested in the community, and on a stable career path.

When homeownership rates begin to fall, and the sale of existing homes are slow, there is a disincentive to sell property to a potential homeowner, and it is therefore made available for rent until market conditions recover and allow for a reasonable return on investment.

Tahlequah Challenges: Poverty

“The concentration of poverty is growing rapidly, and does not solve itself”

45.3% Owner-occupied housing units	63.9% Statewide
34.3% Poverty	12.7% Statewide
\$30,804 Median Household Income	\$53,889 Statewide
Total Retail Sales per capita	\$13,174

(Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5 year Profiles)

\$585 Median Gross rent

\$928 Statewide

Lower than average rent costs

Weak housing market caused by low university housing prices which depresses rents, which contributes to limited reinvestment for improvements.

Each of these factors drive down quality and subsequently potential for reinvestment.

Key Action Steps

1. City Coucilors are encouraged to create written priorities each year to support the activities of staff, provide oversight, and review progress leading toward the conclusion, or sun-setting of a policy or goal. Oversight and feedback are the simplest and most effective ways of maintaining momentum for a long-term project and determining the degree of success that can be assigned to the participants.
2. Projects should be approached with clear goals and objectives that position the project for success, and increase support across municipal divisions to execute the project.
3. The City should constantly seek opportunities to partner with existing businesses to facilitate improvements in operations or facilities, and offer assistance where the private sectors may fall short.
4. Create a culture of small scale, incremental improvements in workforce development.
5. Employment center for job training, and resume building.
6. Addiction Services, Family Planning, Life skills development.

Conclusions & Policy Implications

1. Maintain conservative fiscal policies and invest in energy efficient buildings and facilities that will reduce the long-term cost of operations and maintenance of buildings.
2. Approach rehabilitation and reuse of existing infrastructure wherever possible to reduce the outlay of capital for buildings. But, perform operations and maintenance activities according to the best practices and warranty recommendations.
3. Partner with Tribes and NSU to share resources and cross fund services to remove redundancies.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: ECONOMIC VALUE OF TOURISM



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF TOURISM

Tahlequah's unique topography and access to the Illinois River are not fully realized. Without annexing, or purchasing additional property, Tahlequah should take ownership of the Illinois River experience through branding and marketing to future visitors. The potential to use and experience the river, even for limited recreational purposes will be important to cement the relationship between the River and Downtown Tahlequah. It is vital to "own" the history of the River and provide strategic retail opportunities in Downtown that reflect that experience. As the River and various recreational activities gain traction, the City should actively pursue the purchase of key properties that will further the goal of long term access to the Illinois River and Greenway Trails

Increasing tourism activities is an essential component in this economic development plan. Tourist activity provides an increase in sales tax collections while having very little negative impacts to the long-term development of the City.

Tourist dollars coupled with University events will attract visitors seeking a rich cultural experience. The

experiences sought by groups differ from that of families and couples. A healthy mix of indoor and outdoor events provide opportunities that will not entirely depend on good weather.

There are limited activities for children, which has an impact on the perception by parents that Tahlequah is a destination for school age activities. With thoughtful engagement, the trail and river systems can be enhanced to include biological educational opportunities.

There should be sufficient activities to keep tourists busy in downtown Tahlequah for 3-4 hours. A weekend tourist spending 4 hours in Tahlequah has the potential to purchase two meals, walk around downtown, and visit a variety of businesses.

Key Action Steps

1. Sponsor trail design and construction workshops (similar to the ones at OU)
2. Create outdoor events along creeks. Essentially beta-test equipment, water worthiness of various equipment types and train people how to use and navigate in the water.
3. Create network of trails, with trailheads and "icons" at the intersections.

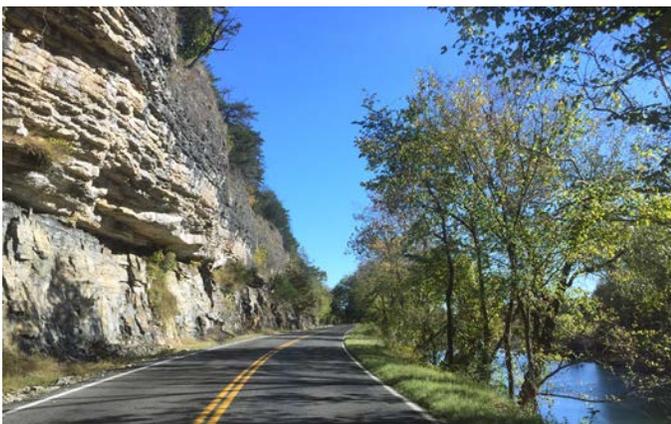
SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: ECONOMIC VALUE OF TOURISM

4. Schedule creek clean-up days with volunteer groups to sponsor segments of Tahlequah Creek in conjunction with ongoing clean water initiatives.
5. Create seasonal positions for Trail Maintenance, trail head improvements, and ambassador program.
6. Create maps, guides, and online resources for adventure spots outside of Tahlequah. These maps should indicate clearly the relationship between the river and downtown Tahlequah.
7. Provide signage along Highways leading into Tahlequah with “X miles to downtown Tahlequah”
8. Create an art project that will solicit barns and private property for signage with “visions of Tahlequah” branding and design.
9. Provide for float trip related items in Downtown to support float trip and trail amenities.

Conclusions & Policy Implications

1. Support growth of recreation industries and provide a platform for existing residents to easily engage in outdoor activities through municipal sponsorship, training exercises, or grants for community groups to operate and maintain recreational features.
2. Continue the branding of wayfinding and signage from city streets to off-road trails and water activities.
3. Conduct an Alternatives Analysis roadway improvements to determine the potential impact of a new destination along the Illinois River.
4. The City of Tahlequah has a vested interest in increasing the capacity for job creation that will lead to an increase in the median household income. By increasing the household income, residents will have an increased capacity for transiting to housing that will match their new income levels. This increase in household income will have a series of potential impacts that will include an increase in housing choice, retail development, real estate, school enrollment, and infrastructure development.



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

I. Downing Corridor (Bluff to Hwy 82 Bypass)

Downing Street has experienced a long list of challenges that continue to plague the street today. The physical condition and perception of Downing Street would be considered a C+ or B- according to residents. The corridor lacks a defining series of businesses that form a “place.” Without a unique place, the road serves to pull people through the corridor and does not encourage them to stop.

Speed along the corridor is an issue. The speed is largely a result of the design of the roadway. The design is a result of its designation as a State Highway.

The general “look” of the corridor is not intentional, but a result of decades of differing zoning rules and financial disinvestment. One important element that is unique to Eastern Oklahoma and Tahlequah especially, is the presence of a tree canopy that is so common to the area. The removal of trees and landscaping was not an intentional program, but a result of individual property owners attempting to reduce cost of maintenance of their properties, then choosing to not replant when trees or shrubs die. It is common for commercial areas to have less landscaping because of parking lots and the larger size of buildings. Downing is especially challenged because of the width of the road itself and the legacy of setbacks that restricted the space between the fronts of buildings and the available right-of-way, and forced new buildings to be built farther from the street creating a glut of parking between the road and the entrance to businesses.

The architectural character also shares this inconsistency. Buildings constructed during the 1940’s and 50’s responded to a narrower roadway, with much less traffic. Later buildings using concrete block and brick provided fewer openings for windows and doors, and were largely bulky and unresponsive to the road. Metal buildings built during the 80’s and 90’s continued the trend of minimal investment and hard surfaces that requires little maintenance.

Downing Street has a dual role of providing services for the surrounding neighborhoods, but also as a vital connector between the Illinois River and Downtown Tahlequah. This connection is critical to the overall

plan of improving the appearance of the community to visitors that use the river and other recreation facilities East of Tahlequah.

Downing should be a corridor that is consistent with the other parts of Tahlequah, providing opportunities for businesses to thrive, and for consumers to feel comfortable shopping and visiting businesses. Minor improvements will have a dramatic impact on the appearance of Downing, and will begin to reverse the decades-long trend of active and perpetual decline. These changes will support the goal of creating a place that is comfortable to walk, accommodate bicyclists, and promote accessibility for people with disabilities.

These challenges will largely be accomplished by individual residential and business owners working together to improve their properties. It is important to have a standard of care that is created by the community instead of imposed by City Hall. Businesses must recognize that they each play a role in improving Downing, and every small effort will have an exponential impact on the overall environment. The City of Tahlequah can lead redevelopment by supporting businesses with pilot projects and improvements in the public right-of-way

Key Action Steps: Downing

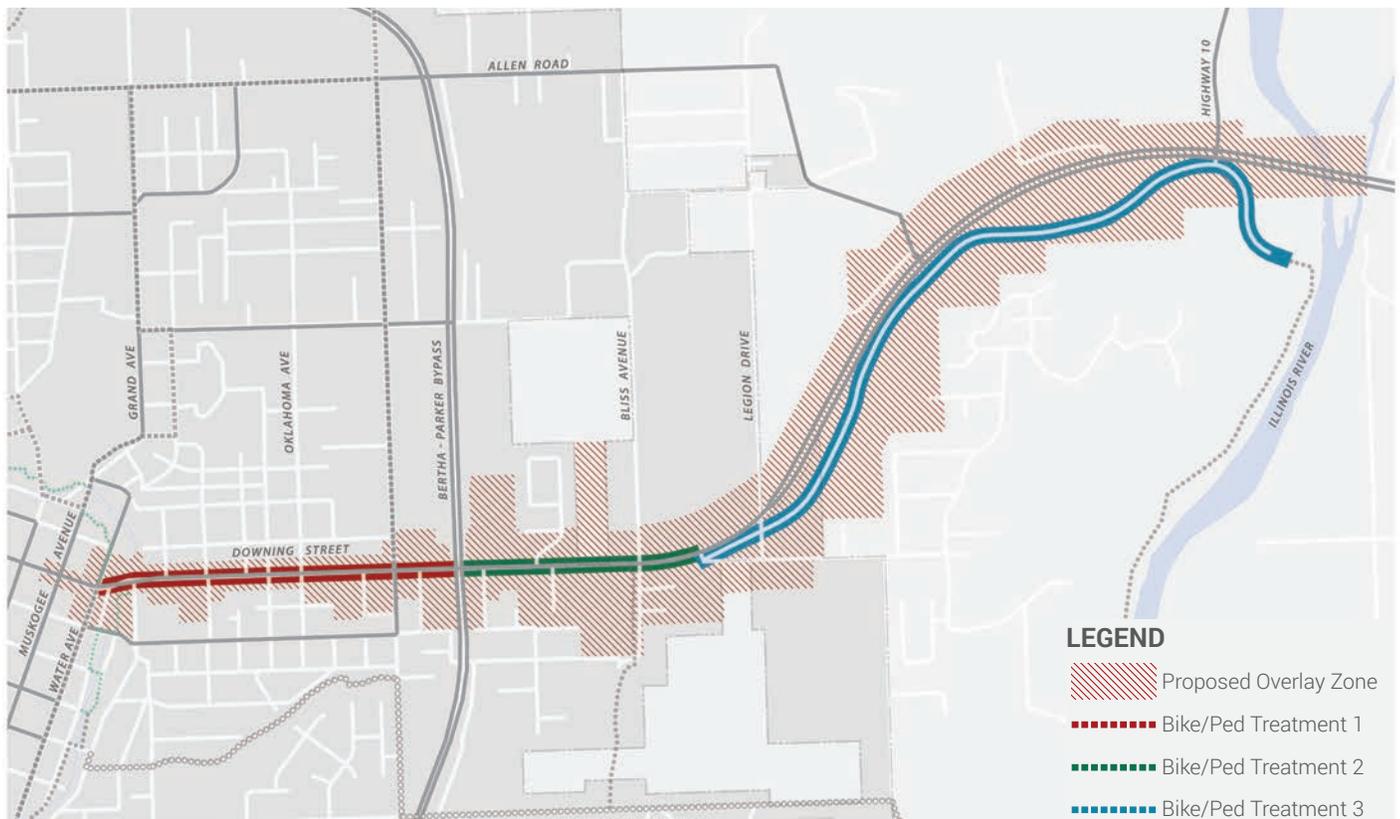
1. Establish site planning guidelines that provide a template for integrating site features including sidewalks, landscaping, building and window signage, architectural facade elements, parking and loading, trash services, and controlled vehicular access.
2. Create Tree Bank that provides financial support for trees and landscaping planted by private property owners in designated landscape-poor corridors.

Conclusions & Policy Implications: Downing

1. Conduct an Alternatives Analysis roadway improvements to determine the potential impact of new development along Downing.
2. Incorporate comprehensive landscaping into all site planning applications, and incentivize property owners to create landscaping plans that will satisfy the concerns identified by Tahlequah residents.
3. Systematize signage regulations and provide opportunities for above ground signage that has a high architectural character.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS



Downing Street Overlay District and Street Improvements

Downing Overlay District Recommendations

1. Allow mixes of residential and commercial uses within the same building or building footprint, without the specific “Intensity of Use” requirements of R-3.

Modify 12-240: R-3 Multiple-Family Dwelling District Area Regulations to allow zero lot lines for Multifamily Dwelling Units on parcels collocated with C1 and C2 Zoning Districts where housing densities achieve an aggregate of 10 or more dwelling units per acre or portion thereof.

Incentives for encouraging this type of development could be; a reduction in building permit costs to be charged for only the ground floor square footage, enhanced permitting ahead of other projects, and expedited site plan and permitting review.

2. Revise Use Units (names of business types) within the C-2 to those that support the current economic conditions.

Use Units are sprinkled throughout each zoning district. These should be coded numerically and then a separate table created that references those numbers. Example “Antique shop, Baby Shop, Barbershop, Bakery goods Store, Appliance store, Book or Stationary Store” should all be called “Light Retail” with no outdoor display of goods, and no harmful or noxious odors.

3. Limit Open Display in C-3 within 60’ or more of Downing right-of-way.

This only applies to a couple of parcels but should also restrict new C-3 zoning to areas that will be annexed into the City of Tahlequah. C1 or C2 zoning should be appropriate (allowing mixed uses of residential and commercial) along the highway.

4. Annex property east of existing municipal boundary to include both sides of the Illinois River bridge along Highway 62.

No specific code changes are needed along Bike/ Ped Treatment 3 at this time.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

Proposed Design Treatments: Downing

Treatment 1: West Section

Muskogee Avenue on the west end to Bertha Parker Bypass (Hwy 51) on the east

Existing Condition

The entire West Section of Downing is a 4-lane cross section. Sidewalks on both side of Downing begin at Woodlawn Ave. and continue intermittently west until Muskogee and beyond, located next to either the curb or set back depending upon the business and age of the development. Most commercial buildings are set back from the curb approximately 35' with the visible exception of the Save A Lot that is much closer (less than 15 feet) to the road. The center brick paved median starts again after the Hwy 82 turn lanes (at Woodlawn Ave) and runs west for one block, ending just before the North Cedar Avenue intersection. There are currently no existing street trees in this section.



Proposed Intervention

The goal in the west section is to make Downing Street a complete street where it is closest to downtown and the NSU campus to encourage alternate transportation options. A more walkable and bikeable environment will tie it to the downtown retail and encourage more use along the corridor. By reconfiguring the road to include continuously connected sidewalks, this section of the corridor becomes more walkable. Managing the number of vehicular curb cuts will reduce the number of possible vehicle and pedestrian conflicts as well as the number of turning movements. The probability of conflicts (either vehicular and vehicular or vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle) is higher where there is no definition of vehicular entry along private frontages. If that same property provided one or two controlled points of access to parking for that business, the non-motorized users will know where the conflict areas are and react accordingly.

Streetscape beautification with landscape (trees and turf) will further enhance the corridor and provide shade for pedestrians. The trees visually narrow the corridor with canopies to frame the views east and west rather than the current wide-open expanse of a four-lane corridor. See page 78 for more information.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

Treatment 2: Central Section

Bertha Parker Bypass (Hwy 82) on the west end to Legion Drive along Old River Road on the east

Existing Condition

The four-lane cross section with no center turn lane occurs in the Central Section of Downing Street. A narrow brick paved median begins after the turn lanes at Bertha Parker Bypass and runs approximately 900 feet to the turn lanes at Bliss Avenue on the east end. Commercial buildings are set back from the curb 34' or further, with many of the lots having parking between the street and the buildings. No sidewalks exist on either side of this central section from Legion Drive to Hwy 82. East of Bliss Avenue to Legion Drive has the same 4-lane cross section but changes just after Legion where a divided median of turf continues to the Illinois River Bridge. There are currently no existing street trees in this section.

Proposed Intervention

A new 10-foot wide multi-use path will run along Downing Street starting at Bertha Parker Bypass. The location should be determined in coordination with signalization and crosswalks along Highway 82 and Highway 62 to ensure safer access for pedestrians and bicycles. Crosswalks and signalization are proposed at the Hwy. 82 and Hwy. 62 intersection to ensure that bicycles and pedestrians can have safe access to the new multi-use path. The path will continue, in the right of way, between the street and the business parking. The east end of the Central Section has more room for the path since the existing parking at Armstrong Bank and the Northeastern Health Facility are both well off the road. The existing sidewalk in front of Armstrong Bank will be widened to achieve the desired 10 foot width. The multi-use path will continue to Bliss Avenue crosswalks on the east end of this section.

The path will continue on Downing east from the Bliss Avenue crosswalks to Legion Drive, again in front of the businesses between the street and the parking. This new path will be in the right of way, where the current concrete drainage swale is located, which will be redesigned as a subsurface drainage line in the same location below the new path. The path will transition to a sharrow on Old Highway US 62 going east (see East Section below). See page 78 for more information.



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS



Downing Street Prototypical Treatment 2: Central Section

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS



Treatment 3: East Section

Legion Drive on the west end, along Old River Road, to the Illinois River on the east

Existing Condition

Downing Street east of Legion Drive, as mentioned above, gains a wide grass median as it continues to the Illinois River Bridge Highway 10 terminates at Highway 51 just west of the bridge with a crossing to the south to a two lane meandering Old US Hwy 61. The Old Highway runs parallel to Highway 51 before merging back into Downing close to Legion Drive. Old US Highway 62 also leaves the 51 & 10 intersection and runs east to the Illinois River where it is labeled S. 540 Road. This small road affords a low traffic option for connections to the River Park owned by the City of Tahlequah. There are no buildings adjacent to Downing on the East Section. There are also no existing street trees in this section, except for those that are along the sides of Old Highway US 62.

Proposed Intervention

The proposed solution for the East section (starting at Legion Drive) is use Old Highway US 62 with sharrow markings to have bicycle access continue east to terminate at the City's Riverfront Park on the Illinois River. As an off-road multi-use trail on the south side of Downing ends at Legion Drive, signage will need to be installed to signify the transition for non-motorists, along with sharrow markings, to integrate cyclists on the roadway. Since the design speed and traffic volume on the Old Highway is low and few land uses exist, there should be little issue with bicycle access from Legion to the River.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS



II. Muskogee Corridor (South to Fourth)

Muskogee transitions from a downtown “Main Street” style corridor at the North end, to a fully suburban style corridor between South and Fourth Streets. This occurred slowly as commercial development extended from downtown toward the highways to the South. The transition from these two types of development patterns was historically gradual and inconsistent, but exists today as a mixture of business types, with no clear identity or cohesive pattern.



Vacant and underutilized properties are the largest drag on success of the corridor. Because these blocks do not have a strong character, they are seen as a pass-through between downtown, and the intersection of Highway 62/51 and the larger commercial district South of the bypass. Similar to Downing, the lack of investment over the years has led to long-term declines in these commercial structures. Also, the lack of diversity of business types contributes to the low volume of activity that further alienates existing businesses and contributes to the sense that some occupied buildings are left deserted.



This nearly ½ mile of Muskogee is critical to the success of downtown and the neighborhoods that flank each side. If the sidewalks and access management were organized properly, then pedestrians would have a clear path to walk, and feel safe doing so. Parking spaces, driveways, paved parking lots, abandoned cars, and lack of sidewalks all contribute to the negative pedestrian experience. Not only is it unsafe to walk, it is nearly impossible to do so without navigating a host of physical barriers. These barriers aside, access management and the designation of sidewalks will require accessibility modifications to buildings that do not have adequate access from parking areas to the entrances of buildings. With limited right-of-way, all of these competing needs must be designed to fit in the available space.



As a connector to downtown Tahlequah, these blocks represent a transition between development patterns that could either extend the suburban character into downtown, or extend the downtown experience further south. It is clearly understood that the downtown character offers a stronger model for development and should be used as the pattern for future change. Improvements should begin with clearly identified sidewalks, transitions at intersections, and signage reminding adjacent property owners that subsequent improvements may have an impact on their undeterred access to the streets.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

Key Action Steps: Muskogee

1. Identify and create a Sidewalk Improvement Plan that will eliminate barriers and create a literal pathway along both sides of Muskogee. Create Sidewalk Improvement Plan with block by block details of barriers, limitations, transitions, and challenging topography.
2. Strictly enforce access management and eliminate pavement in the public right-of-way that is used for private parking of vehicles.
3. Adopt sidewalk standards for slope, cross slope, transitions, and design quality.
4. Empower code enforcement staff to conduct on-site reviews of existing conditions with property owners and advise them of future changes, and the impact of new site planning standards that will change the current use of the public right-of-way for private purposes.
5. Require all commercial building permits to show sidewalk and landscape features as requirements for obtaining an occupancy permit.
6. Require driveway permits that limit the amount of paving across the front of businesses, to just that which is necessary for ingress / egress from the public right-of-way.

Conclusions & Policy Implications: Muskogee

1. Sidewalks are to be maintained by the private property owner according to city standards. Private property owners may solicit the City of Tahlequah for design assistance and inspections.
2. Eliminate private use of the public right-of-way for parking. Remove asphalt and concrete used as paving and restripe existing paved areas to use as dedicated sidewalks. Exemptions will be granted for on-street parking that conforms to the district or neighborhood master plan.
3. Revocable permits are issued for any private improvement in the public right of way, permits may be revoked for such improvements as deemed necessary by utility providers. Replacement of improvements shall be the responsibility of the property owner according to a newly established revocable permit.



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

III. Greenways: Town Branch expansion)

The Tahlequah Creek Greenway and Town Branch Creek Greenway are extraordinary assets for Tahlequah. Nowhere in Oklahoma is there such an attractive and accessible natural element running through the heart of a historic downtown. The Greenway, the banks, and the connection to the city form an invaluable attribute that should be the reorienting element guiding future land use and recreation investments moving forward.

This greenway plan, and each of its components, will provide property owners adjacent to the Greenway the resources they need to understand the impacts of the greenway development, and tackle the technical barriers to development. Working closely with the City of Tahlequah, residents will be able to see the vision established by this plan, and mobilize to maximize the potential of this incredible asset.

All property owners which own property in Flood Zone A or AE will need to be aware that future development in the designated floodplain will be limited, and additional investments should be coupled with an understanding of the risks involved.

The City of Tahlequah will benefit from creating a Storm water, Trails and Maintenance Program (STAMP). This program will incentivize property owners that dedicate access to creeks and rivers for storm water maintenance, trails access, bank stabilization, and water quality projects conducted by the City, County or State agencies.

NOTE: The complete network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (both on- and off-road) is located in Section Seven, Element 5: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails.

Town Branch North: E. Diedrick Ln./W. Grandview Road to NSU Campus

The greenway along the west boundary of the NSU Campus running north is much more developed than the Southern segment and intersects with neighborhood streets at regular intervals. Residential property along this greenway encroaches on the floodplain and poses a long-term liability for inhabitants. A special area plan, mentioned later, will be important to addressing these concerns.

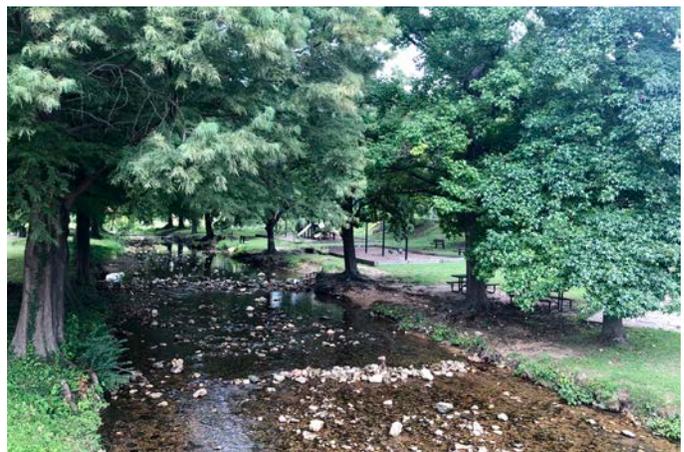
Town Branch South: NSU to Bypass (Hwy 62)

The primary and most visible connection to the creek is between the NSU Campus on the north end, and Bypass Road/Highway 62 on the South. This corridor is impinged by physical development and poses the greatest challenge to redevelopment. Current programs to remove blighted housing and secure property adjacent to Town Branch should be continued and expanded where possible.

The opportunity to encourage sensitive redevelopment near the creek will eliminate significant blight along the Town Branch Greenway and provide cohesive redevelopment that separates the Greenway from the more “urban” development in Downtown and on Campus.

Bypass (Hwy 62) to River

The south leg of the Tahlequah Creek Greenway Trail is from Bypass (Hwy 62) past the municipal treatment plant and to the future River Trailhead along the Illinois River. This segment is largely undeveloped and has the highest potential for successful completion due to the limited number of property owners and street crossings.



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

Felts Park Greenway to E. Bypass (Hwy 82)

The greenway surrounding the Tahlequah Senior Citizens Center traces North through the Greenwood Elementary Neighborhood, and in future phases, could continue to the Northeast crossing Downing at E. Bypass (Hwy 82). In the future, the greenway may continue north approximately ¼ mile past Crafton Street.

This corridor is important because there is a largely undeveloped green space behind many of the residential lots, and the Greenway is not used in a way that engages the neighborhood or serves as a connection between the neighborhood, Downing, or The Town Branch Greenway.

There is a potential cross connection at Jo Street and S. Bluff Ave between the Felts Park Greenway and Town Branch Greenway. This connection would use 1 block of on-street protected trail between Wilson Ave and S. Bluff Ave and will include a steep grade when connecting between S. Bluff Ave and S. Park Ave.

Steep Terrain Nature Preserve / Eastern Park

Between the Eastern boundary of Tahlequah and the Illinois River is a unique landscape that would be ideal for walking trails, mountain bike trails, nature walks, and a variety of other recreational activities. This area is not developable due to the steep terrain, and largely inaccessible by motor vehicle. The only practical use of this area is as a nature preserve and passive recreational activities that could supplement development of the greenways, river activities, and downtown restaurants and shops. Access to this area can occur at various points along the Illinois River; to the north along State Highway 62, near the end of East Ross Street, and along the South at Powell Road.

Greenway and Trail Components

12' Asphalt Path

A wide path with walking, and biking, is important to allow a variety of users to have full access to the trail. Depending on the changes in grade, the overall width of the trail bed can vary slightly to smooth out any rough areas and accommodate storm water drainage that would cross the trail.

Wayfinding and Signage

The greenway trail system should identify distances from the intersection of Town Branch Creek and Muskogee Avenue in downtown, and have intermediate measurements along each segment.

Rest Stations

Toilets and water fountains, along with regularly spaced benches and shade trees are important to the overall usability of the trail network.

Lighting

Regularly spaced safety lighting is critical to establishing the trails as a safe place to exercise. Safety lighting along with video surveillance can provide additional security features that have shown to prevent vandalism, and deter criminal behavior.

Example Greenway Zoning District Language

GREENWAY DISTRICT

§ 12-310 GENERAL DESCRIPTION. This Green Belt District is established as a district in which the principal use of the land is for flood control. Any piece of land that is subject to flooding or that water tends to stand can be established as a Green Belt District. (Ord. 8/19/74)

§ 12-311 USES PERMITTED. The following are permitted uses:

- A. Playground or public park as long as only a fixed percentage of the area, as set by the planning commission, is covered with cement, gravel, asphalt or similar ground cover;
- B. Biking trails; and
- C. Hiking trails.
- D. Special Use Permits for Commercial and Recreational uses incidental to Greenway Protection and Public Recreation.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS

Key Action Steps: Greenways

1. Create Greenways Ordinance to protect certain uses, and prohibit others, establish fines and support positive development along designated greenway corridors.
2. Establish healthy greenways through reductions in household waste entering into waterway, and annual community clean up festivals.
3. Increase recreational activities in low pools; kayak training, fly fishing demonstrations, etc.
4. Encourage retail and commercial uses that front directly onto Greenway trail and utilize on-street parking and well landscaped lots to hide cars.
5. Create demonstration projects along creek for filtering and cleaning storm water runoff prior to entering waterways.
6. Identify all properties within ½ mile of NSU campus and Downtown Tahlequah that are adjacent to Zone A floodplain.
7. Provide property owners documentation to create LOMA (Letter of Map Amendment) for buildings that are outside of the floodplain.
8. Properties that are partially, but not completely covered by Zone A are potentially developable as multi-family housing where the new base flood elevation would be at least 1' above Zone A.
9. Create recognition program for property owners that dedicate easements to the Storm water, Trail, and Maintenance Programs (STAMP). The assessed value of the property dedicated to the trail easement.

10. Identify parcels that are unbuildable, have steep slopes, or are adjacent to creeks or streams and create a strategic plan for dedication of land, or purchase.

11. Acquire Easements or ROW for Multi-Use Paths

"When a trail or trail extension, as identified in the Tahlequah Comprehensive Plan, subdivision plat, or Trails Plan that has been adopted by Planning Commission, and is located on the subject property, the Planning Commission is authorized to require that no less than a 12 feet (12') up to 20 feet (20') easement be provided for the purposes of storm water maintenance, trails access, bank stabilization, and/or to protect water quality. This easement shall be contiguous with adjacent easements to provide a uniform development plan."

Private property owners directly abutting this dedicated easement are provided non-motorized access to the easement via a gate or similarly secured opening between private property and the easement. This shall not provide adjacent property owners the ability to trespass on private property to gain access to the easement without express written permission by the property owner. The property owner shall have the right to disallow access at any time, with or without notice.

Conclusions & Policy Implications: Greenways

1. Adopt Trail Plan and Incorporate property acquisition and easements into annual budget.
2. Adopt ordinance that allows the City of Tahlequah to receive easements via donation or through purchase for the purposes of utility and trail access.
3. Notify adjacent property owners of trail plans and potential impacts.



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: CORRIDORS



Bicycle Lanes in Little Rock, AR (photo credit: ARDOT)



Cycle Track in Springdale, AR

IV. Bike Facilities & Complete Streets

Every street should be a safe place for bicyclists. Tahlequah has a higher than average rate of bike riders, and many riders use the bicycle as the primary form of transportation throughout the year.

NOTE: The complete network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (both on- and off-road) is located in Section Seven, Element 5: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails.

Sharrows

On-street directional markings identifying a shared bike path are called sharrows. They indicate that the road is available for use by bicyclists and vehicles alike. This means that vigilance is necessary for automobile drivers who may believe that the street is only used by cars. A sharrow is not required to indicate to drivers their requirement to share the road, but is a good reminder of the safety precautions necessary for safe and easy flow of traffic. Sharrows are generally utilized on roads with lower traffic volumes and in areas where roadway widths prevent the appropriate application of bicycle lanes.

Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle lanes are dedicated areas along a roadway for bicycles. Bicycle lanes should be placed in each direction of travel, and each bicycle lane should be 5'-6.5' in width, with a minimum width of 4' (not recommended). Bicycle lanes should be utilized along roads with higher traffic volumes than those with sharrow markings. Protected bicycle lanes include additional striping width between bicycle and vehicular traffic or vertical buffers between the two.

Cycle Tracks / Two-Way Protected Bike Lanes

A cycle track is a two-way protected bike lane that is separated from any other traffic with a short vertical barrier, and whose width accommodates bicycle travel in both directions (10'-12' wide).

Complete Street Ordinance

A complete streets ordinance has been adopted, but a series of updates to the Subdivision Regulations and Street design standards will facilitate the implementation of the ordinance. Subdivision regulations work best when the standards are clearly defined, and reflect the long term objectives of the City. The ability for developers to create subdivisions within the city must take into account available land areas, topography, and the financial cost of creating large-scale subdivisions.

Key Action Steps: Bike Facilities & Complete Streets

1. Adopt an ordinance requiring a 3' minimum passing distance between a motorized vehicle and a bicycle, and educational material to support the public awareness campaign.
2. Modify current roadway standards to include bike facilities, crossing details, and other bike infrastructure that meets the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). See Section Seven for more information.

Conclusions & Policy Implications: Bike Facilities & Complete Streets

1. Use Future Transportation Plan to identify necessary street connections not yet established.
2. Create Transition Plan for intersections that do not comply with ADA, but require sidewalk access.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NODES



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NODES

I. Downtown

As described in Section Five: Framework Plan, Nodes are places with a high intensity of activity. The most successful nodes are those which offer a variety of uses and experiences: commercial uses, including retail and restaurants offering opportunities to shop, dine and mingle; residential intermixed or within a short walking distance; and open spaces for gatherings as well as programmed and passive activities. Recognizing the importance of nodes within a community changes the way we plan for, reinforce, and encourage uses within them. Development standards that may be utilized in single-use areas of a community may not apply directly to a node, and making the appropriate adjustments to promote increased activity within nodes should be the primary goal.

Existing Buildings

Tahlequah's downtown serves as its primary node. Much effort has been made to reinforce and promote this area, seeing increased success in recent years. As first floor spaces have become more utilized, the need for second floor spaces is on the rise.

Incentives can include strategies to reduce or eliminate permit fees, reduce business licenses for a defined period of time, or reduce parking requirements for buildings that

create a mix of uses. The City of Tahlequah can further support improvements by creating an assessment of all underutilized upper floor spaces within Downtown to allow even access to information and City services. The City can then convene a focus group of building owners, current tenants, building inspectors, code officials, fire marshal, Tahlequah police, and insurance agents to discuss the impacts of upper floor development. Some variances are allowed by building code officials using the Existing Building Code. This code is designed to accommodate the increasing need for older buildings to comply with the intent of the health, safety, and welfare requirements of the code, but allow uses of spaces that would be non-compliant according to the International Building Code.

This need for flexibility in the building code will unlock the potential for downtown revitalization, and even encourage property owners of adjacent buildings to renovate and establish a new occupancy because of the lessons learned from prior applicants. The increase in activity will stabilize vacant buildings, increase the rental value, and increase human activity into and out of adjacent businesses.

Business Improvement Districts

A Business Improvement District is an internally funded mechanism from which property owners agree to assess their property and buildings for a specific value with

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NODES

the funds collected among all of the property owners in the district and used for qualified improvements. A BID does not change or alter the existing tax structure, but adds a small increment to the existing businesses within the District. Those businesses would then benefit from the collective use of proceeds that they would not otherwise afford on their own. Additionally, a separate board is created that allows property owners to direct funding toward projects that would not be funded by the City of Tahlequah.

BID's are effective at coordinating marketing efforts for festivals and large scale events as well as organizing district-wide promotions for business owners.

Wayfinding & Signage

Lifelong residents of Tahlequah know their way around town quite well. New students and tourists though will benefit from indicators that remind them which street is the best way downtown, to the river, or to cultural sites around town. Wayfinding is not just for indicating how far away something is, but to advertise the significance of each place among the array of other signage that competes for our attention. It's not enough to be a part of the landscape, but to create a significant experience that sets Tahlequah apart from other communities. The use of the Cherokee language in existing signage should be embraced by the community and expanded where appropriate.

A comprehensive wayfinding system should closely adhere to the following goals and objectives.

3. Focus on Downtown Tahlequah supporting downtown businesses
4. Utilize creative outlets for 'Love Tahlequah' and finding the 'Heart of the City'

Downtown Parking

There is anecdotal evidence that there is not enough parking in downtown Tahlequah. While it may appear that there is not enough parking in front of each business for the volume of customers at certain restaurants and stores, there are plenty of empty parking spaces a block away. Downtowns thrive off of pedestrian traffic, and parking then walking a few blocks has an extraordinary benefit to personal health, and the health of downtown. **Downtown Tahlequah would benefit from a complete downtown parking study**

to identify all available street frontage available for on-street parking, and spots that may be "missed" due to poor driveway or access design. By identifying parking spaces in the public right-of-way within two or three blocks of the Downtown District, businesses can improve accessibility and increase pedestrian traffic to benefit downtown businesses.

Residential properties near downtown are advised to maintain existing off-street parking spaces so that the increase in on-street parking does not unnecessarily burden their neighborhood streets. Any place clear of obstructions from driveways or intersections would be eligible for on-street parking.

A strict limitation should be placed for paved parking in the right-of-way that is not a designated on-street parking space. Numerous intrusions into the public right-of-way have eroded the distinction between street paving and parking lots. The space between the curb edge and the adjacent property line is vital to include sidewalk accessibility, utility access, landscaping, and support the ongoing improvements of the storm water management system. As roadway improvements are implemented, all existing paved parking surfaces should be removed and replaced with a standard sidewalk and curbed edge.

Parking Maximums

Parking maximums are the opposite of what has been required for many years. The goal of parking maximums is to limit the capital (and land) expenditure required by municipalities and allow for shared parking across businesses and spaces in the public right of way.

Street Trees and Landscaping

The benefits of incorporating trees into existing neighborhoods and businesses has proven to improve aesthetics, promote safer pedestrian zones, and create a more pleasant pedestrian environment. Street trees integrated in the public right-of-way provide a safety barrier between automobile traffic and sidewalks with the added benefit of seasonal foliage, shade, and alleviating storm water inundations. Reintroducing street trees is not as easy as digging a hole though. Underground and overhead utilities have to be identified, tree species has to be considered, and where appropriate irrigation may be necessary to sustain the tree during its first few years after planting.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NODES

Because many businesses and residential properties are located on relatively small lots – especially in downtown - the importance of the individual tree is important in the context of the larger tree canopy that is native to Tahlequah. Re-establishing this tree canopy can only happen one tree, or one street segment, at a time.

Retrofitting older strip centers and commercial buildings will be critical to maintaining viable commercial activity in Tahlequah. Older properties that do not have street trees or haphazard access to roadways will have to be systematized to control traffic and provide safe pedestrian crossings. Building setbacks using a combination of public right-of-way and private property for “front door parking” will have to be redesigned. Existing parking lots need to be retrofitted with tree wells (rain gardens / bioswales) that can allow the parking lots to become pervious surfaces. Allowing rainwater to drain into bioswales can reduce chemical runoff from cars with leaks and collect trash and debris prior to entering the streams and creeks.

Key Action Items: Downtown

1. Explore the creation of Business Improvement Districts (BID) to fund projects outside of the municipal budget that may need more flexibility and freedom to incentivize unique projects.
2. Actively pursue a healthy tenant mix that does not have duplication or unnecessary competition between like business types. Create opportunities for experience based businesses (arcades, art galleries, board game bars/restaurants), and businesses that are family friendly.

3. Work closely with building code officials to encourage use of 2nd floor spaces above existing businesses. Explore variances that will allow for redevelopment of upper floors that will lower the barrier to occupation.
4. Create Downtown Master Plan that will provide a visual reference for present and future improvements that will support retailers.
5. The impact of parking maximums creates better site planning by designers and more available land for landscaping, outdoor patios, storm water mitigation and interior commercial space. Parking maximums allow developers and business owners more flexibility in designing a site plan that meets their individual needs instead of a broadly prescribed metric.

Conclusions & Policy Implications: Downtown

1. Downtown Tahlequah is a unique place that will need special rules and freedoms to thrive.
2. The challenges facing brick and mortar retail will continue to erode the economic strength of many downtowns. Tahlequah is dedicated to supporting the experience of Downtown and focusing time and resources on projects that promote pedestrian traffic and increase the resiliency of downtown businesses.
3. Parking maximums are popular in urban environments where leasable indoor square footage generates income, while parking spaces provide for employees and customers do not provide a real return on investment. Yes, businesses will still need parking and loading spaces, but they no longer need a broadly applied minimum parking requirement that does not reflect their individual business needs.



SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NODES

II. Village Centers

Village Centers, like downtown, are nodes of multiple uses and opportunities for placemaking and community interaction. On a smaller scale than downtown, the function of a village center is to provide neighborhood services in a walkable format, incorporated with residential development or integrated in a connected manner to the neighborhoods they serve. Appropriate locations of future village centers are located in Section Five: Framework Plan.

Mixed Use Development

Early zoning codes (also known as Euclidean zoning) restricted the types of uses that were allowed within each zoning district, limiting the economic viability of properties that were not zoned to allow the widest variety of uses. Over time, changes to the code allowed for a cascade of uses to exist within the most broadly defined districts. The separation of districts meant that there would be a clear separation between commercial and residential zoning uses. Required setbacks between the two further exacerbated these disparities and created monolithic zoning districts, most with only a handful of allowed uses. Over a period of years, a disparity was created between entire quadrants of a city where one activity was allowed (broad commercial uses) and where it was prohibited. The areas with the most flexibility in zoning and land use adapted more quickly, and maintained their economic viability.

The concept of mixed uses is most easily described by the type of development that existed in the early 1900's, where the shop keeper would conduct business on the first floor, and live upstairs. Mixed use is important because it allows more dense development and less separation between uses (thus increasing the ease of walkability) while allowing development types, such as downtown, that have been virtually impossible to build by current Euclidean zoning codes. Furthermore, such single-use codes' purpose is no longer as valid, since large scale industrial uses are no longer the environmental threat they once were.

Design Overlay District

The long term goal of creating a design overlay district is to maintain the unique character of a place, and set a high standard for new construction and renovations. A well-functioning design overlay provides for a variety of architectural and material uses, and limits materials

or features that do not meet the standards set forth in the design documents. As permit applications are filed, the zoning commission will review the design drawings and determine if the proposed building achieves the goals of the district. Once a series of projects have been developed, the design review documents should be reviewed for compliance and applicability.

As a zoning district, the planning commission has the power to deny applications and make recommendations directly to City Council for actions that the board believes would harm the quality and character of the district. The district will benefit from having a mix of property owners, design professionals, and individual private developers.

The Design Overlay District could have a detrimental effect on private investment if there are too many restrictions on material use, or onerous design review processes. It is important to strike a balance between good design, and simplicity of the application of core principles.

Key Action Items: Village Centers

1. Establish a range of uses (Indoor Retail, Business Services, Restaurants, Food and Beverage, Dry Cleaners, Barbers / Salons) that are commonly associated with a Village Center. Provide for a mix of tenants and support a healthy tenant mix.
2. Create a Design Overlay District. Annually or regularly review applications for compliance and determine if changes need to be made that will increase the standards, or amend the requirements.

Conclusions & Policy Implications: Village Centers

1. Village Centers should be treated as stand-alone commercial enterprises that have very little competition within the surrounding area. Too much competition will erode the value of the tenants and saturate the market. Commercial tenants will enjoy the exclusivity, but will ultimately have to respond to market conditions to survive.
2. By regulating the relationship between limited commercial enterprises adjacent to housing, Tahlequah will create a model for commercial and residential that can work closely together and support each other. Potential conflict between businesses and residents should be outlined through design guidelines and site plan requirements to avoid public outcry, and subsequent political turmoil.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NEIGHBORHOODS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods within this plan are characterized in three distinct types. These types of neighborhoods are intended to capture the broad spectrum of residential uses into distinct groups that have similar characteristics.

I. Urban Transitional Neighborhoods

Urban Transitional neighborhoods represent older housing stock located within the early plats of the City, predominately near downtown and NSU, and laid out in a grid or rotated grid pattern. These areas include housing types of varying styles, age, size, and condition. Urban Transitional neighborhoods accommodate an equally diverse population in terms of age, culture, and income. The stability and success of these neighborhoods is vitally important to the community overall.

Historic District Boundary & Design Guidelines Adopted

A Historic District Ordinance was passed in 1995, and Historic Preservation Zoning is established in the Chapter 8 of the City's Zoning Code. Complete the process of adopting a boundary to indicate the extents of the Historic District, as shown in Section Seven, Figure 7.10. Design guidelines will offer residents information on operating and maintaining their properties, careful renovation of existing structures and examples for integrating new homes and businesses into a sensitive historic context.

Special Area Plan – University West Campus

A special area plan between North Street on the northern boundary, Academy/Morgan Street on the south, Seminary Ave on the east, and North Jones Ave on the west should be conducted to create a connection between Tahlequah High School, Central Academy, NSU, and Downtown Tahlequah. This area is not uniquely identified in the NSU campus master plan because of the barriers identified below, but offers a unique opportunity to accommodate future campus growth, housing choice, and recreational benefits that would be unique to Tahlequah.

This is important because of the challenging terrain, floodplain, limited access, pedestrian access, and similar uses surrounding this area. This residential area West of the creek is more appropriate as a mix of multi-family housing, quad-plex and multi-story apartments. This area is away from large traffic corridors but well

connected along the periphery. Low housing density toward the north of this area and the general condition of the structures lends this area to substantial redevelopment in the coming years.

Three low-water crossings exist at Spring Street, Circle Street/Smith Street, and Minor Street that should be evaluated for removal and upgrade. Improvements to these bridges should incorporate pedestrian crossings, lighting and wayfinding information to accompany development of the trail network.

An extensive sidewalk and trail network within this area should be enhanced to support the scenic landscape, and the close proximity to NSU, and downtown.

The incremental buyout of property in the West Campus area should involve both the City of Tahlequah and NSU leadership. Existing property owners should be advised if their property is in the designated flood plain and take appropriate actions to seek accommodations outside of the floodplain.

Market conditions will determine which housing types are most attractive to the community. A healthy mix of housing options is important to provide opportunities for individuals at all income levels to realize the dream of homeownership. For university students, there is little demand for single family homes, but the neighborhoods surrounding the campus are dominated by single family residences. In the next 5-10 years these properties will transition from Single Family homes into multi-family apartments. The development of new multi-family housing should be consistent with this plan, and occur on lots adjacent to the university first, and expand linearly away from the University campus. While new housing density is encouraged, development should be consistent with the needs of the community, and not create "spot" density that isolates existing single family housing. Multi-family housing near the University should accommodate 100% of necessary parking on site, and be consistent with the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Action Items: Urban Transitional Neighborhoods

1. Provide opportunities within R-2 for Accessory Dwelling Units
2. All multi-family housing should construct sidewalks that connect across all public right-of-ways.
3. Create pathway for R-2 and R-3 zoning within ¼ mile of campus.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: NEIGHBORHOODS

Conclusions & Policy Recommendations: Urban Transitional Neighborhoods

1. Reposition the City Planning Department to actively engage property owners and private developers early in the feasibility and design of new projects.
2. Encourage redevelopment or demolition of properties that are functionally obsolete.

II. Stable Neighborhoods

Stable neighborhoods constitute the majority of Tahlequah. Well maintained, home-owner occupied structures serve a variety of income levels with families transiting up into larger homes to accommodate their family needs and empty nesters downsizing to right-size their new normal. Stable neighborhoods are the fabric of the community that will continue to serve majority of housing needs.

Action Items: Stable Neighborhoods

1. Provide active code enforcement within stable neighborhoods to keep the properties in good working condition.
2. Support development of landscaping and reforestation through tree bank grants and tree giveaways.
3. Support local agriculture through compost pile demonstration, backyard garden tours, and discuss the possibility of having limited agricultural uses (Urban Chickens) on lots that meet a certain size and setback from neighbors.

Conclusions & Policy Recommendations: Stable Neighborhoods

1. Continue to monitor and track development within existing neighborhoods.



2. Support infill development with homes that exhibit a high standard of construction and workmanship.
3. Support development of urban agriculture and encourage property owners to exercise the best use of their property.

III. Residential Reserve (New Development)

Properties designated as residential reserve are intended to be left fallow until such time as housing demand has peaked in the Urban Transitional and Stable Residential neighborhoods. Residential Reserve areas must provide a greater return on investment to the City of Tahlequah than the cost of running sewer and water services. Impact fees may need to be reassessed on a regular basis to determine if the benefits of development exceed the cost. By preserving space for future growth, demand for property near downtown will be greater and support the long-term goal of increasing commercial and residential densities.

Action Items: Residential Reserve

1. Continue to assess the cost/benefit of Impact Fees and associated project components required to accommodate new residential growth.

Conclusions & Policy Recommendations: Residential Reserve

1. Pressure to develop greenfield sites should be delayed until the urban core and surrounding neighborhoods have matured.
2. When development of greenfield sites is determined to be in the best interest of the City of Tahlequah, the development should strictly adhere to the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent updates made thereafter.



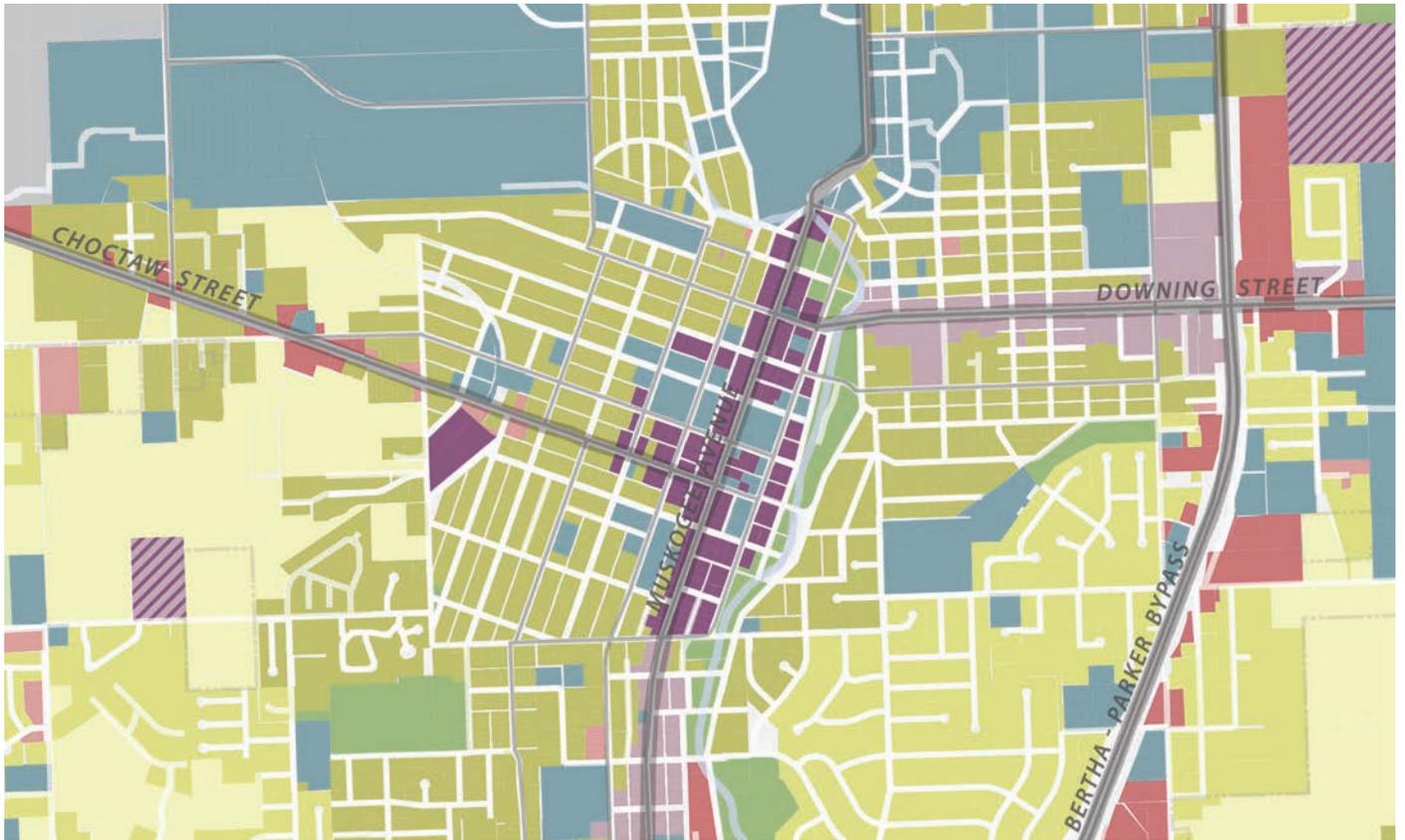
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SECTION SEVEN

PLAN ELEMENTS

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PLAN ELEMENTS ORGANIZATION



The Comprehensive Plan addresses each of 8 Plan Elements independently. These Elements include:

1. Land Use
2. Community Character
3. Transportation
4. Housing & Neighborhoods
5. Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails
6. Utilities, Infrastructure, & Community Facilities
7. Economic Development
8. Capital Improvements

PRIORITY SPECTRUMS BY PLAN ELEMENT

To gauge the intensity of focus and degree of change desired within each Plan Element, Priority Spectrum boards were created that indicate outcomes of low, moderate, and high degrees of focus. Charrette participants indicated their outcome preferences for each plan element by voting on each board independently. The outcomes of the voting process are depicted graphically, below. Most elements fell between the moderate to high degrees of change and focus. Parks, Recreation & Trails and Economic Development received the greatest number of “high” votes, as compared to each of the other plan elements.

The same voting results are displayed in two graphic formats. The first, Table 7.1, depicts the results by category: low, low to moderate, moderate, moderate to high, and high. Each plan element is depicted by its corresponding board color, and result clusters indicate a clear desire for change across all subject areas within Tahlequah.

PLAN ELEMENTS ORGANIZATION

Table 7.1: Priority Spectrum Results: Number of Responses per Priority Area

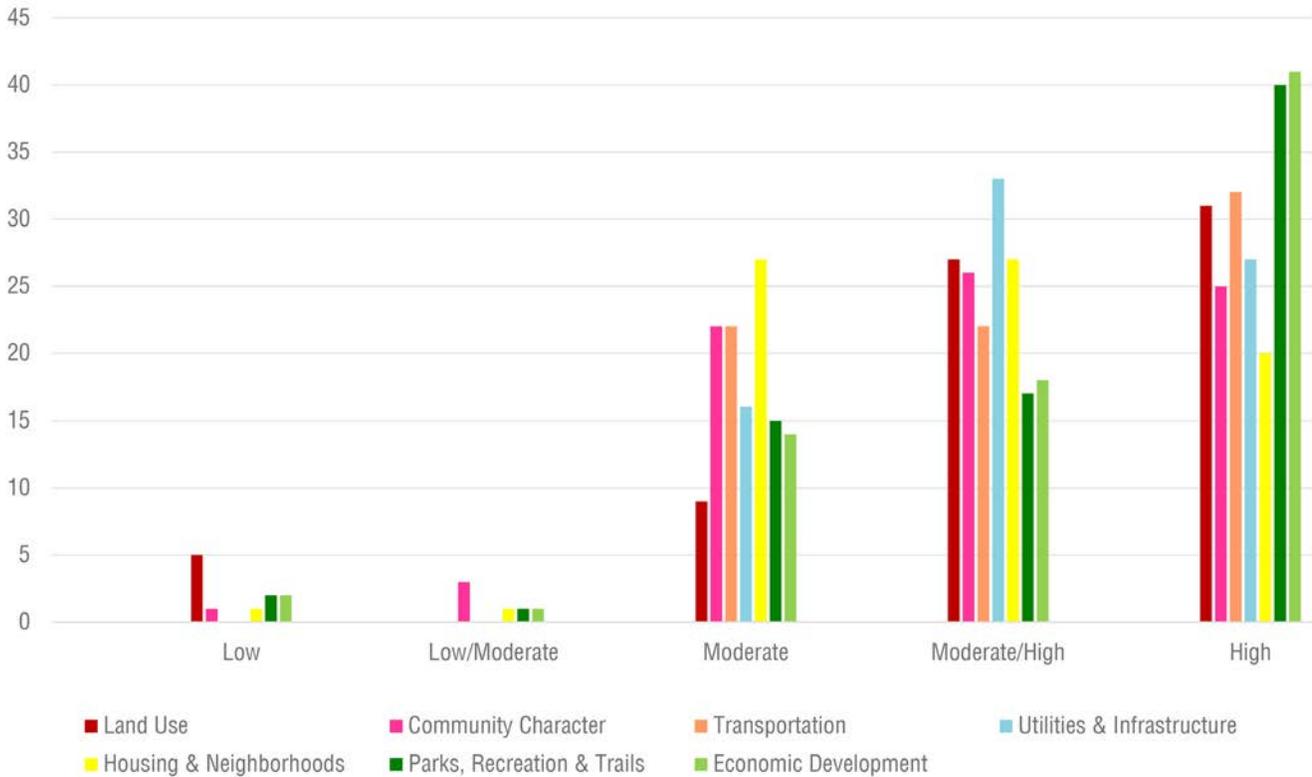
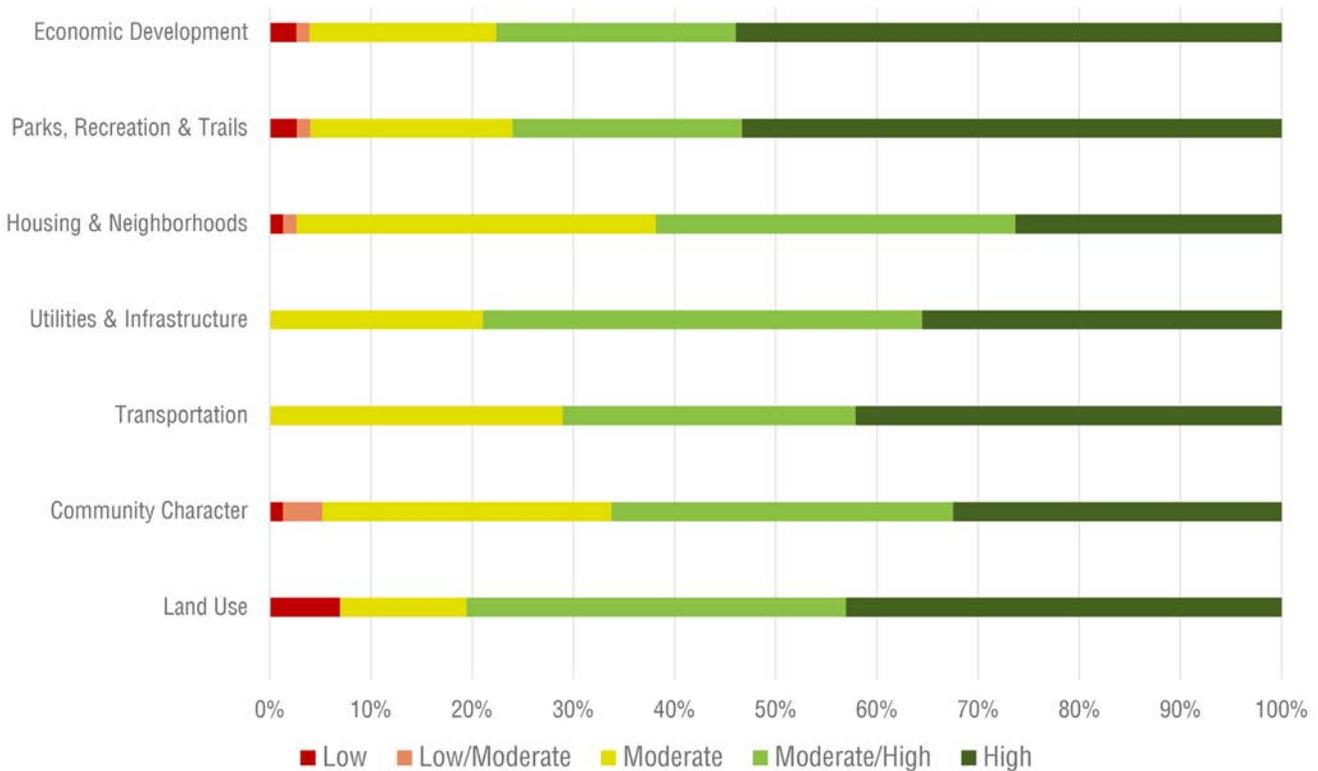


Table 7.2: Priority Spectrum Results: Percent of Responses per Priority Area



PLAN ELEMENTS

ORGANIZATION

The second format, Table 7.2, displays each plan element's results individually, so the degree of change desired for each element can be more clearly understood. For example, Utilities and Infrastructure received no "low" or "low to moderate" votes, but received a large number of "moderate to high" and "high" votes.

The outcomes of each Priority Spectrum board are described within each corresponding Plan Element in the following pages.

The outcomes of each board directed the actions and policies established for each of the plan elements.

PLAN ELEMENT ORGANIZATION

Each of the eight plan elements are arranged in the following order.

Overview

Each plan elements begin with an overview to describe the purpose and intent of the element.

Community Assessment

Community assessments were conducted early during the project process to assess the current conditions of each topic within Tahlequah. These assessments utilized data received from the City, consultant analysis, and comparison to other communities

Steering Committee Direction

The Steering Committee outlined specific directives for each plan element. Each element includes a concise directive (or vision) statement pertaining to the specific topic area.

Plan Element Goals

The Steering Committee, along with City staff and the consultant team, developed a set of goals for each plan element.

Priority Spectrum

The public and the steering committee indicated their desired degree of priority for each plan element throughout the charrette. Each "degree" included corresponding levels of staff attention, funding, regulation, and action. The corresponding priority spectrum results for each individual element with their associated outcomes are presented. This prioritization exercise provides important feedback for desired outcomes and action steps.

Issues, Observations, & Discussion

Issues and observations are created by the consultant team based on issues identified by the public (through surveys and public meeting exercises) as well as community assessments. Discussion follows each Issue or Observation to describe their interrelationships, considerations, approaches, and implications.

Plan Element Outcomes

Plan Element Outcomes describe how the plan responds to its corresponding goals, public input, and issues & observations.

Action Items

Action items, identified by the consultant team and Steering Committee, indicate the necessary steps to move each Element forward through implementation. Action items are time dependent, specific to a unique task, and provide a time and material deadline that clearly indicates that the Action Item is complete. Action items are written

Policies

Policies are directive statements for elected and appointed leadership to follow during the decision making process related to the growth, development, and redevelopment of the City. In the event that a policy is no longer valid, Planning Commission and City Council may each forward language to modify or remove from a policy statement.

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PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: LAND USE

The definition of land use planning is a ‘system to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest.’ In other words, meet the needs of the present while conserve resources for the future generations. When agricultural land gives way to subdivisions or commercial endeavors, is that the best and most appropriate use for the site with an eye toward the future needs of the community. Changes of land uses can be slow, but in the big picture, need to be deliberate. This element focuses on how to diversify land use types and grow strategically.

By establishing policies that give direction to future land use decisions in order to meet the vision and goals of the community, Tahlequah can continue a pattern of incremental growth and change.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

To assess land use you have to understand how the city grew and why certain land use types are located where they are. Theodore Roosevelt said, “The more

you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.”

Downtown once laid at a crossroad in the center of Tahlequah. Over time, the bypass pulled commercial growth predominately south and east. When the Cherokee Casino development is complete, the southern push will be fully realized.

Residential growth has been slow over the past 50 years in the city proper. The newer subdivisions have been located on the northern and southern ends of town. The south end followed the commercial push and included single family and multifamily developments.

Today, the land use breakout is roughly as follows:

- Approximately 2,500 acres of undeveloped land
- Approximately 2,700 acres of existing residential land use
- Approximately 1,100 acres of existing commercial and industrial land use

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

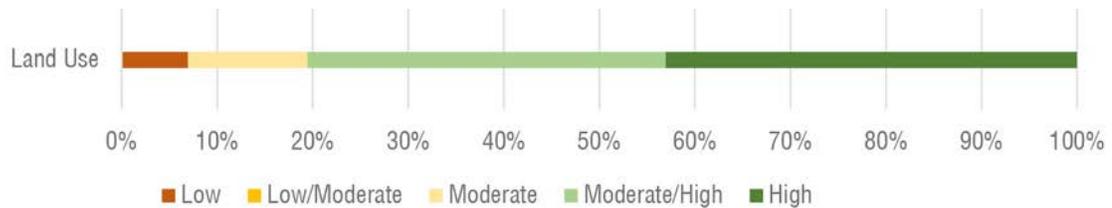
STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

"We are focused on growth, opportunity and organized investment in planning."

PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

1. Promote diversity in land use types
2. Encourage growth opportunities that reinforce Tahlequah's community character
3. Promote an organized investment in planning

Priority Spectrum Exercise Voting



PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: High

- Strategic growth is anticipated and allows the proactive provision of public services and facilities
- Incentives are provided that encourage a mix of land uses citywide that support the fiscal health of the community
- Mixed land uses are allowed per parcel, such as mixed-use development (example: commercial at street level with office or residential above within the same structure)
- Plan for appropriate density options based on location and infrastructure throughout the city
- Hybrid zoning, incorporating principles of single-use zoning with form-based, performance, or incentive zoning to integrate the best elements of each approach into one code
- Maximum block lengths are regulated, promoting a higher degree of connectivity and walkability
- Parking regulations in accordance with specific land use types, form, and available public or shared parking opportunities
- Proactive code enforcement



Land use and transportation decisions have a direct impact on community character.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

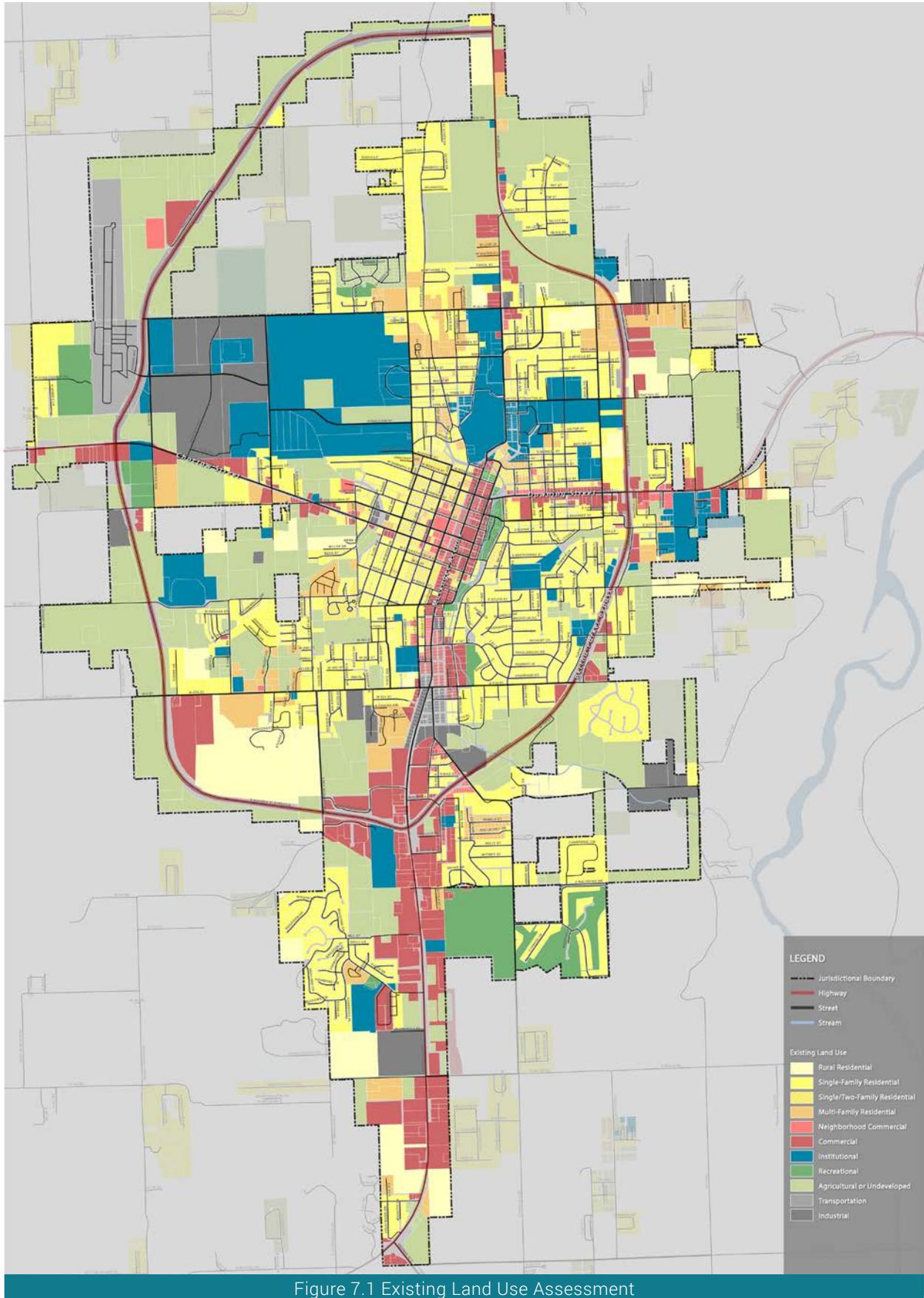


Figure 7.1 Existing Land Use Assessment

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

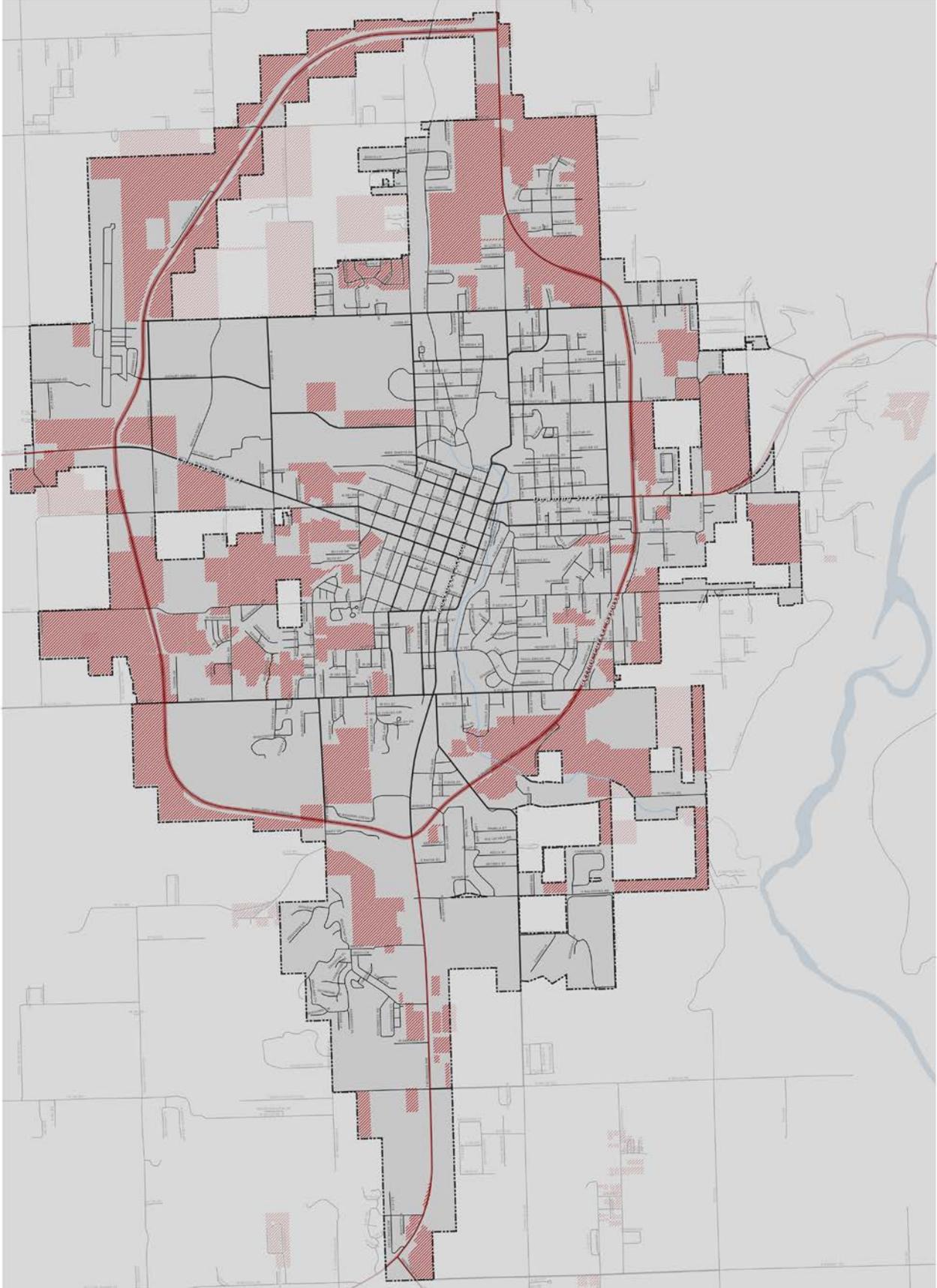


Figure 7.2 Existing Undeveloped Properties Assessment

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

PLAN ELEMENT OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

The proposed Land Use Plan is the culmination of the Framework Plan, which was developed through community input at the charrette and developed through multiple scenarios. The plan is organized around the structural context of placemaking: Nodes, Corridors, Neighborhoods, and Districts. As a result, future opportunities for village centers are indicated, and mixed uses in downtown are encouraged. Residential areas are depicted as related to their predominate characteristics, rather than specific densities. All non-tax producing non-public properties are grouped as one, to communicate where these areas exist in large land areas. The land use element is intertwined with each of the subsequent elements in this section, and the relationships between the designated use of land, development types, and city regulations are explored in more detail.

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1. General

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. The City of Tahlequah does not have significant housing densities near downtown or near NSU that would contribute to a thriving and walkable downtown.
- ii. The City of Tahlequah does not have a clear connection to the Illinois River, a resource that can promote and reinforce recreational, economic development, and community character opportunities. Expansion toward the river to embrace such opportunities should be considered.
- iii. The City of Tahlequah has a good supply of vacant land within it's municipal borders or by annexing "donut holes" to accommodate future developments.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Existing land use ratios within the city limits are 35% residential, 34% undeveloped, 14% institutional, 7% commercial/office, 6% recreational, and 4% industrial. The Framework Plan (and resulting Future Land Use Plan) assumes land uses at build out, including those areas of "donut holes" that are currently not part of the City of Tahlequah but are surrounded by it. The resulting future land use ratios are as follows: 58% residential (urban transitional neighborhood, stable neighborhood, or future infill neighborhood), 18% institutional, 10% non-residential (neighborhood commercial, corridor commercial), 8% recreational, 4% industrial, and 2% mixed use (urban core mixed use, corridor mixed use, or village node).

ii. Population projections were completed with three sets of growth assumptions. The lowest growth rate, based on existing population growth between the years 2010 -2015 was +0.76%, resulting a population of 19,359 by the year 2040. The medium growth rate was +0.87%, based on population growth in Tahlequah between 2000-2015, resulting in a 2040 population of 19,514. The highest growth rate of +1.18% was based on the growth rate of Tahlequah between the years of 2010-2014, resulting in a 2040 projected population of 21,326. Each of the scenarios developed as well as the resulting Framework Plan can accommodate the projected 2040 population within the existing city limits with the infill annexation of "donut holes".

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. The Future Land Use Plan does not "down zone" or reduce the capacity of currently zoned parcels.
- b. The Plan strongly encourages infill development and redevelopment, particularly in a mixed-use pattern where applicable.
- c. The primary two focus areas of the Future Land Use Plan prioritize infill development and redevelopment over greenfield development, and the establishment of green spines throughout the community, linking neighborhoods to schools, recreational, and commercial uses.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

ii. Future Land Use Descriptions

General

Land uses are categorized based on the function they are intended to serve and the corresponding policies to address them. Functionality is based on four place types:

- Neighborhoods,
- Corridors,
- Nodes, and
- Special Districts.

Refer to page 56 for more information on place types and their intent. Appropriate specific uses within each land use category below should be determined based on the proposed form of development, the desired outcome for each place type, and its impact in supporting economic development and community character, rather than a prescriptive list of approved uses without regard for form, layout, and character.

Neighborhoods

Urban Transitional Neighborhood

An Urban Transitional Neighborhood is characterized by traditional small lots organized along a grid of streets with access along the front along the main road, and potential access along the alleyway as well. These neighborhoods are typically located surrounding a downtown core commercial area. In the Urban Transitional Neighborhood multi-family and single family uses can be located directly next to each other as long as the architectural character of the new project adequately reflects the character of the existing neighborhood. An Urban Transitional Neighborhood may be more directly affected by its immediate surroundings, to which it is well-connected. Refer to page 148 (Housing & Neighborhoods) and page 90 (Specific Interventions) for more information.

Stable Neighborhood

A Stable Neighborhood is characterized as slightly newer residential neighborhoods typically developed in a single-use, suburban format. These neighborhoods may not be well-connected to their surroundings. Refer to page 150 (Housing & Neighborhoods) and page 91 (Specific Interventions) for more information.

Residential Reserve

Residential Reserve indicates areas that may be infilled with proposed residential development at varying densities at some point in the future. Residential reserve areas and dedicated open space serve the same purpose to concentrate development in areas that need revitalization, and to put market pressure on undeveloped parcels that may have been skipped over during earlier housing developments. Priority should be given to infill parcels over outlying developments that require the extension of city services. Refer to page 150 (Housing & Neighborhoods) and page 91 (Specific Interventions) for more information.

Nodes

Urban Core Mixed Use

The largest and most prominent node within Tahlequah is downtown. Like most traditional downtowns, the central business district is supported by a mix of uses. Though predominantly commercial, it is strongly supported by institutional, residential, and recreational uses. In many cases, this mix of uses occurred within the same building, a practice that was essentially outlawed with the advent of zoning codes but one that is encouraged in many forms of its present-day versions, known as Form-Based Code. Mixed-use developments are supported and encouraged within each land use within the “nodes” category, as well as one “corridors” category. Refer to page 86 (Specific Interventions) for more information on specific interventions for downtown, within the Urban Core Mixed Use District, and page 117 (Community Character).

Village Node

Village Nodes are neighborhood-scaled developments that allow and encourage mixed-use developments. These can either be stand-alone or incorporated into surrounding residential developments to create a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). The intent of the village node is to encourage smaller commercial centers that are supported by surrounding development in a pattern that promotes walkability and placemaking, as opposed to an extension of corridor commercial development that does not have the intent of identifying and reinforcing smaller neighborhood communities throughout the city. Refer to page 89 (Specific Interventions) and page 117 (Community Character) for more information, including examples of compatible uses.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

Corridors

Corridor Mixed Use

Corridor development may often begin as sporadic residential development, which transitions to non-residential uses as the town expands and increased demands for commercial development gravitates toward high-traffic corridors. The earliest corridor expansions from downtown were predominantly developed on smaller lots with shorter block lengths and enhanced transportation network connectivity. Such corridors are appropriate for accommodating mixed-use buildings and developments as infill and redevelopment pressure occurs. In Tahlequah, these areas specifically include Downing from downtown to the bypass, and Muskogee from South to 4th. Refer to pages 74-81 (Specific Interventions) and pages 119-120 (Community Character) for more information.

Corridor Commercial

The most widely commercial land use, Corridor Commercial, is characteristically large-parcel, corridor-oriented development which is disconnected from adjacent parcels. In Tahlequah, corridor commercial uses dominate Muskogee in use, form, and character. This type of commercial development concentrated along high-traffic corridors often results in larger traffic volumes which discourages safe active mobility as a result. The lack of interconnectivity additionally increases the traffic stress of the corridor along which it is situated. This land use should be utilized sparingly and with appropriate countermeasures (such as along interconnected street/grid networks) to avoid such concentrations in future development. Refer to page 80 (Specific Interventions) and pages 119-120 (Community Character) for more information.

Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood commercial primarily identifies existing commercial parcels that are independent of larger commercial corridors and are surrounded predominately by residential uses, but are not necessarily serving as a neighborhood hub, as described in Village Nodes, above.

Special Districts

Industrial

Industrial uses include the manufacturing, assembly, production, and/or distribution of goods. Refer also to Plan Element 7: Economic Development.

Institutional

Public, semi-public, tribal, or faith-based uses, including schools, colleges/universities, government or tribal offices, courthouses, hospitals, libraries, museums, churches, group living facilities, or other tax exempt uses of property. Refer also to pages 183-186 and page 190 (Utilities, Infrastructure, and Community Facilities) for additional information regarding community facilities.

Support

Recreational

Recreational uses include parks, community recreational facilities, open spaces, greenways, and nature preserves. These uses should be connected to each other as well as to adjacent uses to the extent possible to encourage walkability/bikeability. Recreational uses are of particular importance in Tahlequah, which benefits from nature-based tourism attractions including the Illinois River and Lake Tenkiller. Refer to page 72 and pages 82-85 (Specific Interventions) and pages 155-182 (Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails) for more information.

Cemetery

Public or private cemetery.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

iii. Action Items

1.1.A.01

Modify development codes to allow by-right housing densities that achieve 20-30 dwelling units per acre in Downtown Tahlequah as well as within ¼ mile of downtown and the NSU campus.

1.1.A.02

Update in zoning to permit mixed use according to plan.

1.1.A.03

Modify development codes to allow mixed residential and commercial uses by-right in Downtown Tahlequah.

1.1.A.04

Annex Hwy 62 to the Illinois River to create a physical connection between the City and the river.

1.1.A.05

Annex open gaps within City limits to create a contiguous land area within the City limits.

1.1.A.06

Require approved plats to be submitted digitally in georeferenced CAD or GIS format.

iv. Policies

1.1.P.01

Changes in land use should be consistent with the most recent comprehensive plan, or amendment.

1.1.P.02

Tahlequah provides thorough community development services that promote commerce and protect the small town character.

1.1.P.03

Tahlequah will maintain sufficient inventory of land uses that reflect the local economy.

1.1.P.04

Focus should be given to stabilizing existing commercial and residential properties prior to encouraging greenfield development of such uses.

1.1.P.05

Tahlequah supports the annexation of properties between the east boundary of Tahlequah and the Illinois River.

Topic 2. Residential

(See also Housing & Neighborhoods Plan Element)

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Existing neighborhoods that show signs of deterioration may not be able to be renovated and repurposed. Many homes built after WWII are no longer marketable and should be torn down and repurposed into new housing. A distinction should be drawn between historic structures that embody high quality craftsmanship, and homes that no longer qualify as a minimally acceptable structures.

ii. Reducing the “worst” of the housing stock will remove some of the marginal housing that exist and bring rent prices into a more acceptable range.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Low rents serve as a negative contributor to neighborhood character by not returning income that would be used to operate and maintain the houses in good working order. Only 2-3 homes per block can contribute to the overall feeling that the neighborhood is deteriorating. This has negative impacts on surrounding properties that are well maintained.

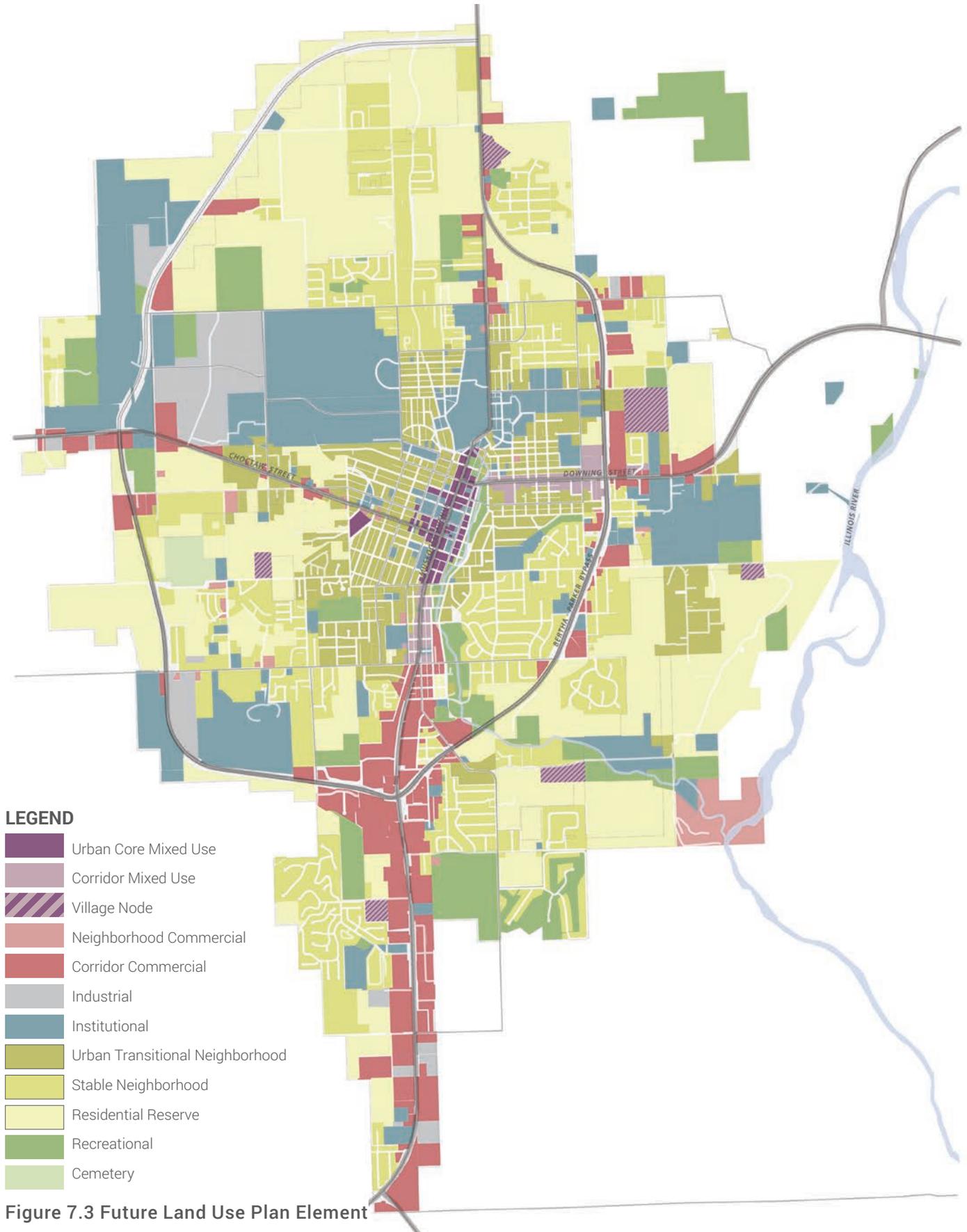
ii. Mixed income and mixed density neighborhoods will provide diversity in housing choice, and can maintain a larger percentage of home owner occupied structures.

iii. Properties that are a source of code complaints, and fines are more of a drag on the neighborhood than merely the cost of administering the code action. The derelict properties put downward pressure on property values that further depresses adjacent properties, and subsequently the neighborhood as whole. This trend is only reversed by demolishing a property, or inducing redevelopment with the remaining infrastructure in place. This inducement has the potential to upset the financial structure that exists in some neighborhoods, with reduced rent creating an inability for property owners to afford subsequent investments.

iv. The renovation of an existing house from a derelict to functional property has the effect of potentially stabilizing a declining neighborhood, and spurring a

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE



LEGEND

- Urban Core Mixed Use
- Corridor Mixed Use
- Village Node
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Urban Transitional Neighborhood
- Stable Neighborhood
- Residential Reserve
- Recreational
- Cemetery

Figure 7.3 Future Land Use Plan Element

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

secondary flight of poor tenants to areas more suitable to their preferred living conditions.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Create zoning district uses that allow mixed-density neighborhoods.

ii. Action Items

1.2.A.01

Create zoning that allows mixed-density neighborhoods.

1.2.A.02

Support Code Enforcement that exceeds the minimum standards and supports a higher standard of care.

iii. Policies

1.2.P.01

Residential properties will be attractive and well maintained by property owners.

1.2.P.02

All new housing should be connected to City water and City sewer services.

1.2.P.03

Properties adjacent to riparian corridors, creeks, streams, and water features should employ flood protection practices, and protect water quality.

1.2.P.04

Neighborhoods within ½ mile of downtown Tahlequah, and NSU are encouraged to have housing densities that support reduced dependence on automobile trips.

1.2.P.05

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) are encouraged in the original town plat of Tahlequah.

1.2.P.06

Multi-family housing is a vital component of Tahlequah and is most appropriate near Downtown Tahlequah, Downing Street, Muskogee Avenue and intersections of the bypass.

Topic 3. Commercial

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. There is currently an oversupply of commercial land, and particularly a large volume of vacant and underutilized buildings. Increasing intensity of uses within current zoning districts will reduce development costs and provide opportunities to reinvest in existing buildings.

ii. As economic conditions have changed in the past 20-30 years, new building types are necessary to accommodate the new business models. Older buildings may have a function in the new economy, but will require significant changes.

iii. A minimal increase in landscape, and site planning standards, when evenly applied, will improve aesthetics and stabilize deteriorating properties.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Old types of businesses once allowed in the zoning code no longer exist, and new business types are not allowed. A significant modification of the zoning code will allow for business to grow and thrive.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Allow for mixed use by right in the Downtown Overlay District.

ii. Action Items

1.3.A.01

Create a design overlay district for Muskogee (South to Fourth) with unique characteristics to that corridor.

1.3.A.02

Create a design overlay district for Downing from Town Branch to Illinois River with unique characteristics to that corridor.

1.3.A.03

Update Subdivision Regulations to require mutual access between commercial properties.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

iii. Policies

1.3.P.01

Commercial development will provide mutual access between properties to support a resilient transportation network.

1.3.P.02

Mixed Uses of residential, office, and commercial are strongly encouraged in downtown Tahlequah.

1.3.P.03

Effective right-of-way management should prevent full paving from extending from the roadway edge to the face of building.

1.3.P.04

Driveway management and curbed access (i.e. access management) from roadways should be uniform and provide pedestrian safety features.

Topic 4. Industrial

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Industrial development is less about heavy industries, and more closely aligned to tech and customer service industries. The common theme among many residents is that “Tahlequah is not on the road to anywhere directly” meaning that without rail infrastructure and an interstate highway, it lacks the common attributes that other larger industrial cities naturally possess.

ii. Tahlequah does have an abundance of clean fresh water. This resource is not fully utilized for industrial purposes. Large water users and agricultural food producers are high targets for new industries.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Trying to recreate heavy industry is not likely in Tahlequah

ii. Cybersecurity programs through NSU are a good starting point for public private partnerships between business, industry, and the student workforce.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Encourage new industries that have low environmental impacts and are closely aligned with NSU programs and medical support services.

ii. Action Items

1.4.A.01

Attract tenants to the Business Park; rebrand Business Park to attract tech-related companies, call centers, etc. (diversify tenants)

1.4.A.02

Identify horizontal and vertically aligned components that are feed stocks for other major industries in fields related to existing industries.

iii. Policies

1.4.P.01

Driveway management and curbed access (i.e. access management) from roadways should be uniform and provide pedestrian safety features. Roadways in the industrial park should be sufficient to provide safe and efficient transport of goods and resources.

1.4.P.02

Support industries with financial resources that match their individual needs. Avoid blanket incentive programs that do not provide a direct return on investment to the City of Tahlequah.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

Topic 5. Recreational

(See also Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Plan Element)

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Importance of providing park land

a. Parks serve Tahlequah residents by providing different types of park land and facilities for various recreational activities. Common park types include:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

b. Alternate transportation options in a city-wide network can connect parks, schools, neighborhoods, and downtown to the natural resources.

- Greenways: refer to Parks, Recreation Open Space and Trails Element for more information
- Bicycle Network: refer to Parks, Recreation Open Space and Trails Element for more information

c. Preserved open space contributes to a community's quality of life: refer to Community Character Element for more information.

d. Parks and recreation opportunities support and expand tourism and economic development: refer to Economic Development Element and Specific Interventions for more information.

ii. Parkland distribution

a. Service areas: Not all areas of town are able to have all types of parks, nor is that distribution always appropriate. Pocket parks can be retrofitted into existing neighborhoods on a vacant parcel, providing opportunities for a playground, a plaza, or passive recreational space. Neighborhood parks require more land and should have even distribution where land permits. Space should be planned and acquired for them in advance of residential development, if no Parkland Dedication Ordinance is in place. The City is well-served by community parks with the addition of the Anthis Brennan Sports Complex and the Aquatics Park but will need to provide land for additional community parks as the city's population increases (by 2040).

b. Greenways: Proposed greenway extensions in Tahlequah are achievable since an existing drainage system runs north-south like a spine through the city. The current Town Branch Greenway near downtown is in the middle of that spine. Undeveloped land within a floodplain can accommodate trails, since no structures are needed to support the land use.

B. DISCUSSION

i. The value of a neighborhood is greater when located near an amenity like a park or trail.

ii. Public school land and playgrounds should be considered as valuable open play space when looking at a City's park network.

iii. Parks need to differ in size and offerings based on needs and available land.

iv. Additional park land and uses should be identified and understood prior to any future annexation or city boundary changes to stay ahead of the growth curve.

v. Parks along the Illinois River should be connected by trails for access.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Some of the future neighborhood and/or pocket parks shown on the Parks, Recreation Open Space, & Trails Element graphic align with future Village Centers locations - refer to the Community Character Element graphic for this relationship.

ii. Action Items (Refer to the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element for more detailed information)

1.5.A.01

Identify floodway land for future trail connections.

1.5.A.02

Create codes that protect green space, specifically along riparian areas.

1.5.A.03

Pocket Parks should be implemented in association with infill & redevelopment areas.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

1.5.A.04

Neighborhood Parks should be implemented throughout the City's residential areas.

1.5.A.05

Community Parks should be anticipated to meet the needs of future population growth.

1.5.A.06

Greenways and the Bicycle Network should be implemented in close coordination with parks, recreation facilities, and open space plans.

iii. Policies

1.5.P.01

Develop and maintain parks and recreation programs to support healthy lifestyles and increase tourism.

1.5.P.01

Pedestrian access between neighborhoods and public trails should be dedicated to the City of Tahlequah.

1.5.P.03

Trail connections should provide for a comprehensive trail network.

Topic 6. Zoning Implications

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Cascading Zoning uses are confusing and inconsistent with current economic conditions.

ii. Separations between commercial and residential uses on the same property create unnecessary barriers to current development patterns.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Allowing multi-family housing units into commercial zones should be allowed by-right in areas designated as mixed-use corridors. This mix of commercial and residential is vital to achieving sustainable housing densities and providing affordable housing options.

ii. The City of Tahlequah is the regulatory authority for land use, and therefore has the opportunity to lead the development discussion with progressive policies and actions to support the development community. As infill development begins to transform vacant and underutilized properties, the perception of Tahlequah will improve, further strengthen downtown businesses, and sustain forward momentum.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Infill development will create opportunities that were previously unavailable. By further reducing the requirement for single use on-site parking more land is available for rentable spaces. Integrating sidewalks, landscaping, and pedestrian features will support of overall goals of making Tahlequah a friendly, walkable place that serves all of its' residents. As older buildings are demolished or repurposed, it is important to support this private investment with examples of successful building types in other communities that achieve a high level of quality and character.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

ii. Action Items

1.6.A.01

Create unique Corridor Mixed Use Zoning Classifications for Downing Ave. and Muskogee Ave. that improve economic opportunity, simplifies zoning restrictions, and enhance community character by:

- a. Adopting comprehensive site planning and development standards.
- b. Reducing front, rear, and side yard setbacks to allow for larger developable land area.
- c. Allowing flexibility in material uses but restricting certain materials inconsistent with enhanced community character.
- d. Reducing parking requirements in exchange for increased pedestrian and bicycle features.

1.6.A.02

Modify R-2 district non-conforming uses in Downtown Residential Neighborhoods to provide for greater lot coverage, smaller lot areas, reduced frontage, and improved parking in the public right-of-way.

1.6.A.03

Limit use of Planned Unit Developments and Special modifications that erode the fair regulation of zoning standards.

1.6.A.04

Limit creation of new non-conforming uses through city-lead planning and zoning actions.

1.6.A.05

Allow short term residential rentals (less than 30 days) that will be licensed, permitted, and inspected to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public. A special zoning classification for these rentals would provide clarity and openness through the permitting process.

1.6.A.06

Create new zoning ordinance to eliminate cascading zoning uses.

iii. Policies

1.6.P.01

Land Use changes conform with the Comprehensive Plan, and subsequent amendments. Proposals inconsistent with this plan will require an adoption of amendments to maintain the integrity of the Future Land Use Plan Element of this plan.

1.6.P.02

Zoning definitions and uses are consistent with the current economic climate and support growth of existing businesses and urban housing density.

1.6.P.03

Zoning changes serve to protect the public from unnecessary harm and/or economic loss, and allow the thorough review of future uses that conform with the long term vision set forward in this Comprehensive Plan.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

What is community character and why is it important? How does one define the heart of the community, its special places and the reflection of the values regarded by its population? The definition of character, according to Lexicon Webster Dictionary is “a distinctive trait, quality of attribute,” something’s essential quality or nature,” and “reputation.”

A town’s community character is a collection places, experiences and elements that make them different than any other town. It’s the town’s brand, how they present their community to visitors and residents alike. Community character is vitally important when considering how a town or region can capitalize on tourism or how they can attract new business or industry to the area. What quality of life elements do they have that sets them apart from other communities in the area?

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Assessing community character involves the assimilation of and merging of expressed values and physical attributes. Tahlequah has many existing community character assets that speak to the uniqueness of the town. From cultural/historical related elements like to the Cherokee Nation’s headquarters and NSU’s Seminary Hall, to natural and tourism assets like the Illinois River adjacent to town, and the greenway trail that extends from NSU south through town.

The transportation network of a downtown grid with the perimeter loop around town can be considered a community character element. Tahlequah’s downtown commercial activities just south of the NSU campus is also considered a community character asset. These elements should be expanded via connections throughout the community, through wayfinding to direct visitors, by including better access so all residents and guests who wish to enjoy the amenities.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

What is the purpose of assessing community character?

- Reinforcing what makes Tahlequah unique or notable
- Promoting a local economy
- Intentionally building upon existing assets throughout all other city systems (land use, parks, transportation, housing, development, etc.)
- Retention of young talent and attracting new residents

How is community character assessed?

The best way to understand how to highlight Tahlequah's community character is to first assess what makes it distinctive. That can be done by looking at the city from 10,000 feet by seeing how it is perceived as a whole. When visitors come to town where do they go and why. Do they feel safe? Find their way easily? What impressions do visitors get when entering downtown vs. coming and going from an event at NSU or Tahlequah High School?

The following are the community character areas assessed in Tahlequah:

- Nodes (downtown / village centers)
- Corridors (Downing / "Middle" Muskogee / South Muskogee)

- Neighborhoods
- Branding (Districts - NSU, Cherokee Nation (the Institutions impact on city / casino etc), healthcare/medical)
- Gateways / Wayfinding / Landscape
- Cultural Opportunities (Cultural draws, Illinois River)
- Festivals & Events

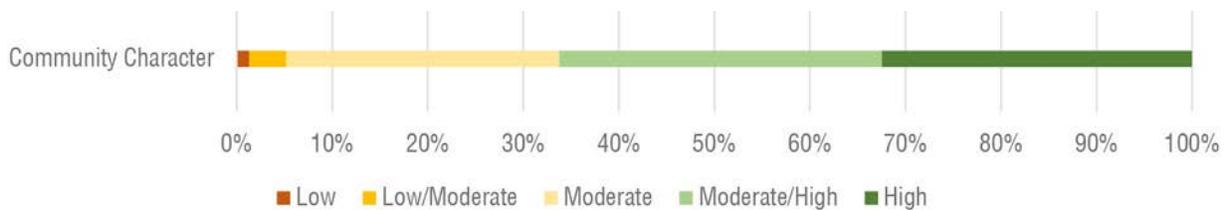
STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

"We are a diverse, inclusive community focused on culture, history, uniqueness, education and health."

PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

1. Promote new development that will maintain the small town feel
2. Support cultural cooperation and offerings that honors Tahlequah's diverse history
3. Improved gateways, corridors, and edge treatments to promote the City's image
4. Improved housing aesthetics and maintenance

Priority Spectrum Exercise Voting



PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: Moderate-High

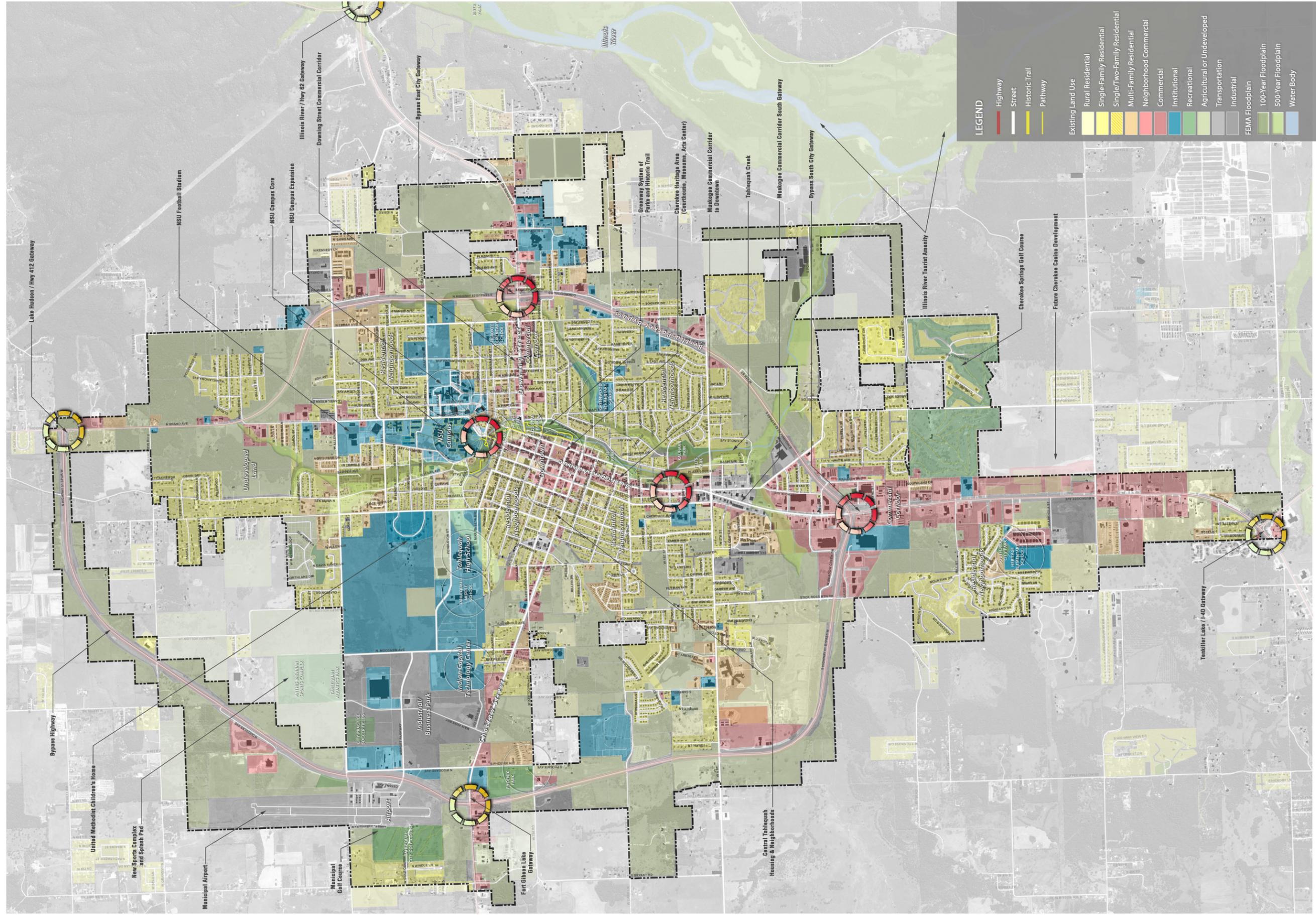
Moderate:

- Moderately landscaped and enhanced gateways are located at primary city entries
- Entry corridors into the city include pedestrian access (sidewalks) and basic streetscape treatments
- Stabilize and increase investment in downtown; basic aesthetic treatments to public spaces in downtown
- Establish a committee to represent both NSU and the City to focus on joint efforts to benefit the City and the University

- Encourage sidewalk construction to promote walkability along corridors with no pedestrian access
- Create a brand and marketing campaign citywide, to include a new logo reflective of the community's history, culture, and values
- Create a wayfinding plan to develop a hierarchy of signage
- Minimal architectural design standards for materials and color in specialized areas of town

High:

- Architectural, landscaped gateways at primary entries, with smaller gateways to denote special areas of town



LEGEND

- Highway
 - Street
 - Historic Trail
 - Pathway
- Existing Land Use**
- Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Single/Two-Family Residential
 - Multi-Family Residential
 - Neighborhood Commercial
 - Commercial
 - Institutional
 - Recreational
 - Agricultural or Undeveloped
 - Transportation
 - Industrial
 - FEMA Floodplain
 - 100-Year Floodplain
 - 500-Year Floodplain
 - Water Body

MY TAHLEQUAH 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community Character Assessment



March 7, 2017



PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

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PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Major corridors into the city include pedestrian access, street trees, lighting, and banners to reflect special events and community pride
- Incentivize small businesses (attraction and retention) in downtown; enhanced treatment of public spaces such as streetscapes, plazas, parks, and public art
- Create a joint leadership task force comprised of leadership from the City and NSU to focus on recruitment and retention of students and young professionals
- Establish a comprehensive program to build a sidewalk network to connect downtown to surrounding areas
- Create brands and logos/signage for various districts within the city, while continuing to market the city-wide brand
- Plan and implement a wayfinding program to direct residents and visitors to various community amenities
- Establish architectural guidelines which are specific to individual districts or types of development

The priority spectrum results graphic above depicts how important community character is to the residents of Tahlequah. The green bar represents the number of “high priority” votes, with the orange bar indicating “low priority” votes.

PLAN ELEMENT OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

The Community Character Plan Element creates identifiable areas of town with characteristics that inspire and encourage social interaction. Such spaces can be created in nodes (a space with multiple uses and connectivity to allow movement in multiple modes), along corridors, and within neighborhoods; each employing a specialized set of techniques and practices.

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1. Nodes

(see also Specific Interventions, Land Use Element, Economic Development Element)

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Downtown Tahlequah is the heart and soul of the city. The home of the Cherokee Nation, center of learning at Northeastern State University and the center of commerce for the past 179 years. Downtown Tahlequah will remain the economic and cultural center of the community and draw upon its history to chart a new course for the next century.

Downtown is Tahlequah’s strongest defining community character location, as it includes the following elements:

- Historic structures
- Public open spaces
- The Cherokee Nation
- Northeastern State University campus
- Downtown business owners

ii. Village Centers are mixed use locations that support their surrounding neighborhoods with goods and services on a smaller local scale. A typical village center could include the following neighborhood supported elements:

- Cafe with sidewalk dining
- Bakery / coffee shop
- Branch bank
- Dry cleaner
- Branch library or bookstore
- Bar or restaurant with after hour options
- Offices (insurance, real estate, etc)
- Small village green for gathering
- Safe walkable environment with site amenities

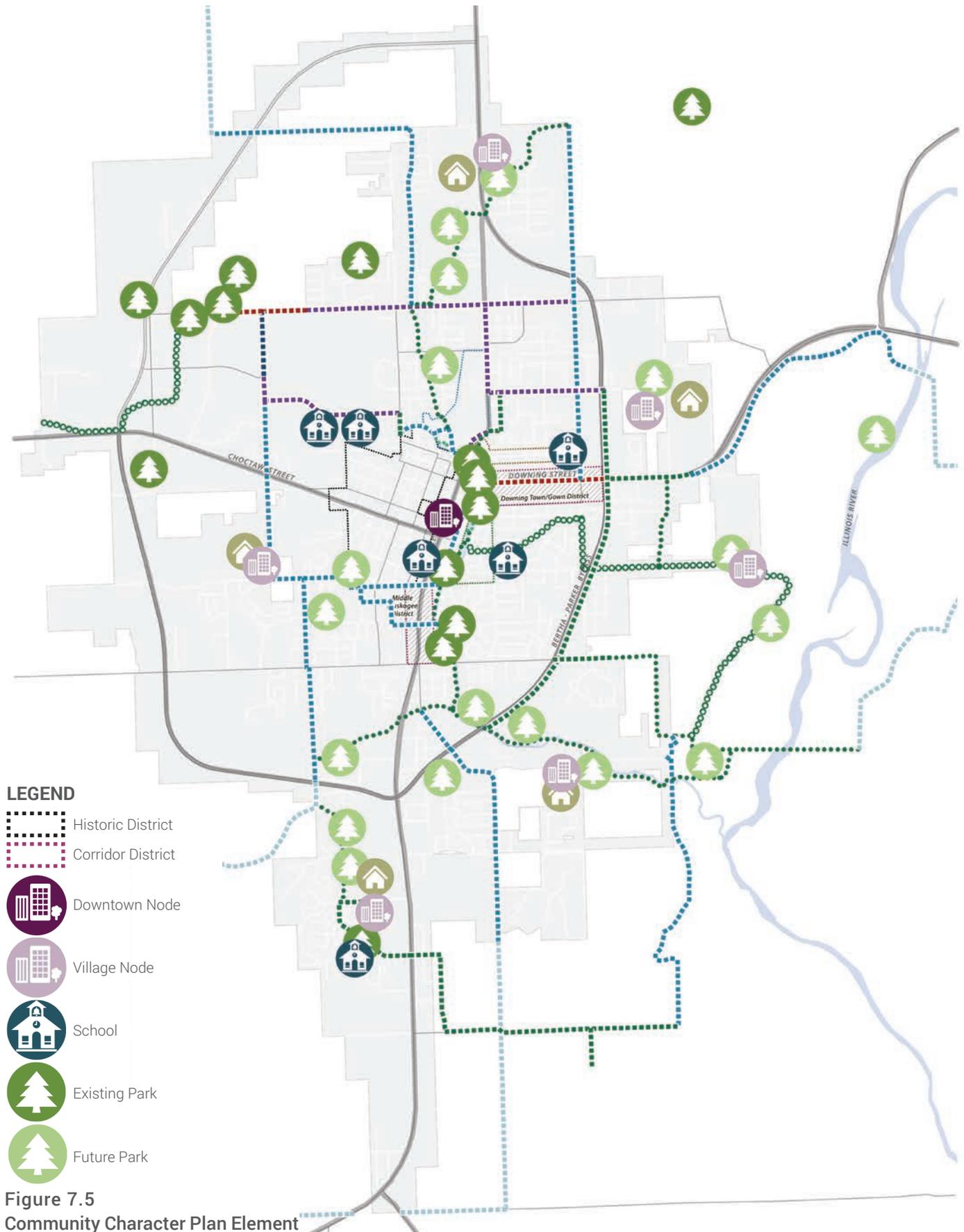
B. DISCUSSION

i. People gauge the health of a community by the health of it’s downtown. It truly is the heart of a community.

ii. Nodes contribute to community character of a city by providing destinations that attract people during work hours and after hours and on weekends. There are live/work/play elements in a node which provides the ‘third place’ - that often missing ‘play’ piece of the equation.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER



LEGEND

- Historic District
- Corridor District
- Downtown Node
- Village Node
- School
- Existing Park
- Future Park

Figure 7.5
Community Character Plan Element

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

iii. Many residents shop for groceries and other weekly supplies at large retail stores on South Muskogee. Few other areas of town carry what they need in volume.

iv. Village Centers are important because they provide neighborhood-scaled destinations that have unique character of the surrounding area while reducing trips to larger districts. Nodes should always be in support of, but not detract from, the downtown.

v. Village centers provide a location to introduce the 'missing middle' housing: a higher-density residential option which expands the housing choices in Tahlequah.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. All efforts to create community character should be in a fashion that reinforces economic development, civic pride, and public investment in downtown.

b. The plan has distributed the village centers around town so residents have to travel less distance for certain goods which means less traffic in one area (example: South Muskogee).

c. Village Centers have been distributed across Tahlequah to serve nearby residential neighborhoods as well as the infill developments that occur within the new nodes.

iii. Action Items

2.1.A.01

Introduce nodes to provide opportunities for placemaking for economic development.

2.1.A.02

Activate streets with patios, window displays, and landscaping encourage pedestrian activity and promote the economic strength of downtown Tahlequah. Update zoning code to simplify the process of allowing private improvements in the public right of way, and rules regulating those improvements. Provide no-cost permits for cafe seating, umbrellas, and non-permanent fixtures.

2.1.A.03

Downtown improvements should prioritize pedestrian safety to increase store visibility and trips by foot for customers, with attention to accessibility for all users.

iii. Policies

2.1.P.01

Form based codes added to city land use and zoning code and subdivision regulations promote mixed use developments.

2.1.P.02

Village Centers will be contextually sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods to create an identity to the area of town.

2.1.P.03

Village nodes provide increased walkability and bikeability throughout the city.

Topic 2. Corridors

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Downing: Today's corridor does not contribute to the community character of Tahlequah in a favorable way. Downing provides no orientation to downtown, no indication of culture or uniqueness, but rather shows a dated version of town that has declined over the decades with missing buildings, vacant spaces, and more pavement than open storefront. Refer to Section Six, Specific Interventions, for corridor recommendations.

ii. Middle Muskogee: This section of the Muskogee corridor (south of South Street) does not contribute to the community character of town in a favorable way. The impression one gets when entering downtown from the south is that of unchecked growth promoted by vehicular values rather than safe pedestrian access. The buildings are less historic with odd spacing between lots and little focus on curb appeal.

iii. South Muskogee: The character this section of the corridor portrays is one of speed, volume, and convenience, rather than attention to design for all users. In this section, designed for vehicular travel, how fast one can get in and out with all their needs met is the goal. Community Character is non-existent. This location could be "Anywhere USA". It may represent capitalism or consumer spending to some, but unfortunately it's not a sustainable model of development long-term.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

iv. Greenways: The current (and future expansion to the) greenway speaks volumes about the community's character. It puts an emphasis on integrating nature into the built environment of downtown while maintaining a drainage channel, existing trees, pedestrian movement through connected open spaces, and trailheads for access. The greenway makes a statement of sustainability not related to speed, convenience, or profit. It tells the visitor and resident that they have 'green and healthy' transportation options that are environmentally friendly.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Corridors can contribute to Community Character in the following ways:

- Introduce the visitor to the community as they transition from City limits to downtown.
- Set the stage for what the community values (architectural elements, trees, site amenities, history, culture).
- Provides safe access for all users: motorists, cyclist, pedestrians.
- Provides clues to the visitor on growth or decline.
- Displays an assemblage of businesses which reflects on the focus of the community while meeting the needs of its residents and visitors.

ii. Well-designed corridors create a pleasant driving experience, free from distractions or unsafe elements.

- Slowing traffic down helps the viewer see other vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians which reduces the chance of accidents.
- Slowing traffic down also allows the motorist to see the retail offerings on the corridor, increasing their chance to stop and shop.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Provides a framework for corridor improvements along Downing Street
- b. Provides a framework for corridor improvements along Middle Muskogee.

c. Provides a framework for greenway improvements and trail connections to a greater alternative transportation network throughout the city.

ii. Action Items

2.2.A.01

Redesign Downing to become a complete street, refer to Specific Interventions: Corridors in Section Six.

2.2.A.02

Careful attention given to "Middle Muskogee" should result in a improved cross section that includes sidewalks, proper handicap access, and streetscape elements, to make it resemble its function as a city street gateway to downtown. Also refer to Specific Interventions: Corridors in Section Six.

2.2.A.03

Improvements to the South Muskogee corridor should include a detailed traffic study prior to changes to the road network or cross section. A roundabout at the Bypass may be one design solution explored. Refer to the Transportation Element in Section Seven.

2.2.A.04

For specific recommendations on current and future greenways, please refer to the Parks & Recreation, Open Space and Trails Element in Section Seven.

2.2.A.05 Implement the Complete Streets Policy.

iii. Policies

2.2.P.01

Commercial corridors are treated with higher importance because of their economic value, aesthetic appeal, and serve as a buffer to Urban Transitional Neighborhoods.

2.2.P.02

Corridors create shared economic activity that strengthens community and collectively improve the city of Tahlequah.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Topic 3. Neighborhoods

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Urban Transitional Neighborhoods: May be home to some historic structures, but many are built in a variety of mixed architectural vernacular that may not communicate that the current residents have a strong sense of community pride. Much of the housing stock adjacent to the NSU campus is rental property.

ii. Stable Residential Neighborhoods: Housing stock in the second ring from downtown (outside of Urban Transitional) doesn't currently have many options for retail or services close by until future Village Centers are strategically located. The character of these areas are largely determined by the age and quality of the structures which differs from neighborhood to neighborhood.

iii. Residential Reserve: represents the future growth ring to be developed at a later date. The character of this zone is to be determined. Much of it is currently pastures or raw land.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Neighborhoods can contribute to community character in the following ways:

- Architectural styles representing the time period of when the neighborhood was constructed.
- Lot layout and density: the size and building configurations
- Streetscape: trees, presence of sidewalks, treatment of utilities, etc.
- People: activity, interaction, and neighborly love speak volumes for the character of a neighborhood.

ii. Urban Transitional surrounds the downtown, which is the node that supports those areas. The more retail variety offered on Muskogee and Downing, the less likely those residents are going to drive south for their goods and services.

iii. Pocket neighborhoods will provide a different option for density and architectural character in the Urban Transitional areas.

iv. The 'missing middle' can be addressed in the Urban Transitional areas as well.

v. Stable Residential is less rental property than the Urban Transitional, likely due to location, age, and condition of structures.

vi. Some areas of the Stable Residential have parks or open spaces in close proximity that improve the area's community character.

vii. Residential Reserve can integrate open space needs into the development pattern as best fits based on existing conditions of the area.

viii. A good example of a neighborhood unit that is ripe for infusion of a mixed use Village Center is located on the south end of town west of US Hwy 62 and south of Mills Road. This node currently includes a local school, park, residences and after implementation of the plan, mixed use zoning with small commercial, higher density residences, and even office, if applicable. All this in a walk radius of less than 10 minutes and will be further connected to other areas of the city via the trail network.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes (see also Housing and Neighborhoods Element)

a. Urban Transitional: Plan provides a framework for improvements to the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. The character of this area will change as the vibrancy of downtown and Downing improve.

b. Stable Residential: The character of this area will improve when small scale services in the added Village Center is introduced into a walkable environment.

c. Residential Reserve: No master planned improvements to these areas that are more than 15 years away from development. Refer to the Housing & Neighborhood Element in this section of this document.

ii. Action Items

2.3.A.01

Create design standards in Subdivision Regulations for neighborhood blocks, sidewalks, and alleyway access that protect pedestrians and bicyclists.

2.3.A.02

Support preservation of existing homes with permit and inspection assistance.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

iii. Policies

2.3.P.01

Designs for infill housing using “missing middle” housing types and pocket neighborhoods will have a positive impact on the community character of the Urban Transitional areas.

2.3.P.02

Improvements to “Middle Muskogee” will impact the adjacent Urban Transitional areas.

2.3.P.03

Improvements to Downing Street will impact the adjacent Urban Transitional areas.

2.3.P.04

Village Centers to be incorporated into strategic locations in the Stable Residential areas on currently vacant land.



Topic 4. Branding

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Northeastern State University has its own brand, independent from the City’s brand, yet both are intrinsically interconnected. If NSU grows, so does the City and potentially “main street” just outside its gates. The role that NSU plays in the City’s success cannot be understated.

ii. Cherokee Nation is an institution that is interconnected to the City, much like NSU, but in a different way. Tahlequah is the capital of the Cherokee Nation much like Washington, D.C. is the capital of the U.S. Employees of the Cherokee Nation leadership councils live and work in Tahlequah, as do her citizens. The Cherokee Nation is a large landowner in the City, which impacts and benefits the surrounding uses as well as the residents that call some of these locations home. Future impacts will be the new casino on South Muskogee with its surrounding recreation and commercial amenities. This draw will attract locals and visitors to town who will spend money on local hotels, restaurants, and other goods and services. The casino will employ some residents of Tahlequah as well.

iii. Healthcare / Medical: The Cherokee Nation and the Northeastern Health System facilities are located east of town off Downing. The future expansion of the Cherokee Hospital south to E. Ross Street will provide new jobs, add residents to the City, and ultimately impact traffic both on Downing and Hwy 62 Bypass.

iv. Downtown: The architectural character of the buildings and the retail options of downtown should be better promoted. Visitors that find their way to downtown will be impressed with what they find, but wayfinding signage is needed as well as a strong branding campaign.

v. Illinois River: The greatest natural amenity in northeast Oklahoma is the Illinois River. Tourists and recreational enthusiasts travel for miles to float this body of water from May through September each year.

vi. The rolling hills and wooded areas of this region offer hikers and campers as well as mountain bikers a great opportunity to visit the area.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER



B. DISCUSSION

- i. NSU's 2,000 acre campus contains over 7,000 students plus faculty and staff, which translates to a community within the City. Downtown is literally next door to this population.
- ii. The right retail offerings on Downing Street would be perfectly located to attract and capitalize on university related sales.
- iii. Shouldn't the Downtown have its own unique brand or be part of Tahlequah as a whole?
- iv. The healthcare campuses are located just east of downtown on Downing Street, but the Bypass separates the two. How can downtown draw those employees to after work events or dining?
- v. When asked why visitors might come to Tahlequah, answer heard more than any other comment was to "float the Illinois River," yet the City is physically and fiscally disconnected from this great tourist amenity.
- vi. Does the City or Chamber promote its brand when the City Parks Department or the High School hosts tournaments or large sporting events located on the west side of town?

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. TIF District improvements to Downing Street will provide branding opportunities for the City with NSU.
- b. Renewed focus on downtown physical and economic improvements
- c. Connections throughout community via trail and on-street bicycle network can support a healthy living/alternative transportation rebranding campaign.

ii. Action Items

- 2.4.A.01
Coordinate with NSU for joint effort branding efforts aimed at students and faculty/staff for campus life connections to downtown and future Downing Street opportunities.
- 2.4.A.02
Establish a 'stay to live/work/play in Tahlequah' campaign aimed at retaining NSU graduates.
- 2.4.A.03
Establish a rebranding campaign that focuses on downtown to "buy local" that supports the downtown businesses.
- 2.4.A.04
Utilize outlets for 'Love Tahlequah' and finding the 'Heart of the City'
- 2.4.A.05
Continue to promote Tahlequah as a proud, hard-working community with a relevant history and active downtown.

iii. Policies

- 2.4.P.01
Tahlequah promotes Cherokee and English translations of public monuments and signage throughout the community.
- 2.4.P.02
Tahlequah is dedicated to diversity and promoting a strong community composed of people from all backgrounds and all cultures.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Topic 5. Gateways / Wayfinding / Landscape

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Gateways

a. There are four primary entries into town: North on 82 at 51 Bypass, East on 62/51 at Hwy 10 (west side of Illinois River), South on Hwy 62 at 82 intersection and West on 51 at the Bypass. None of the four have gateways to signify entry into the City of Tahlequah. Some of these entries are beyond the actual City limits, but are worthy of gateways to draw visitors in.

ii. Wayfinding

a. Visitors floating the Illinois River would enter the east side of town on Hwy. 62, but have few indicators of activity areas, cultural attractions, historical sites, or downtown offerings.

b. Visitors to town from the South (from Lake Tenkiller or via I-40) have few indicators of areas of interest in Tahlequah. Their first introduction to town will be strip developments and car dealerships before they find the bypass for options to go around town or continue to downtown.

c. Internal wayfinding to the medial/healthcare campuses on the east side of town need to be strategic to provide access opportunities that will alleviate traffic congestion.

d. When the Anthis Brennan Sports Complex or the High School hosts tournaments or large sporting events, visitors need to know how to get downtown or know what downtown offers. Many are likely to take the bypass south to the hotels and chain food locations, yet downtown boasts more 'only found in Tahlequah' offerings.

iii. Landscaping

a. More street trees in Tahlequah would provide an impact that would translate into aesthetic, economic, and environmental benefits.

b. Buffer plant material should be utilized to screen unsightly parts of commercial businesses like loading docks, dumpsters, and service areas when adjacent to rights-of-way or residential neighbors.

c. Screening plant material between the parking and public right of way is non-existent in most areas.

d. Preservation of existing trees is not only important to the environment but also critical in Oklahoma due to the lack of mature stands of trees in most parts of the state.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Primary Gateways can take the form of architectural elements such as monument signs or even public art elements. The purpose is to signify an entry point into a town to establish a brand, logo or feature that is later carried forward by secondary gateways and wayfinding signage for directional cues.

ii. The gateways at each of the main entrances to Tahlequah need consistent branding to identify when someone has arrived and left the City.

iii. New gateways should include attractive landscaping and lighting to accent the signage, consistent with the other gateway designs.

iv. Visitors to town, especially seasonal guests using the Illinois River, may not know where downtown or other points of interest (cultural, historical, recreational) are located.

v. Wayfinding should consider visitors from all four entries into town on the north, south, east, and west corridors.

vi. Utilizing interpretive signage along Town Branch, an organizing element for the entire community, provides information on water quality and the life cycle of water along the trail system. This form of educational wayfinding can provide teaching opportunities surrounding water quality and storm water management.

vii. Internal wayfinding to the medial/healthcare campuses on the east side of town need to be strategic to provide access opportunities that will alleviate traffic congestion.

viii. Street trees along main corridors, like Downing and Muskogee, that lead into downtown will provide seasonal interest, shade for pedestrians, and direct visitors into town from the gateways.

ix. Street trees should be paired across the street from each other with the same species planted on each corridor for a consistent canopy over the road. Cross streets should change species to provide interest.

x. Shrubs planted between the road and the parking

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ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

lot of commercial properties will help soften the visual impact of cars in the parking areas.

xi. Shade trees planted in islands within the parking lots of commercial lots will reduce the City's heat island effect caused by large expanse of un-shaded asphalt lots.

xii. Efforts to save and support existing trees prior to new construction should be strengthened to ensure more mature stands of trees thrive near and within commercial developments in Tahlequah.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Gateways: Primary gateway locations in four entries into town (north, east, south, west) as noted on the Community Character Assessment graphic.
- b. Wayfinding: Secondary gateways at key locations noted on the Community Character Assessment Graphic at the bypass on South Muskogee and at the bypass on Downing.
- c. Landscaping: Street trees should be introduced on Downing starting at the bypass and continuing on both sides of the road to the west into downtown. Street trees should also be introduced on Muskogee at 6th Street continuing on both sides of the road into downtown to the north.

ii. Action Items

2.5.A.01

Implement the existing Wayfinding Plan that directs visitors to points of interest in Tahlequah.

2.5.A.02

Focus wayfinding strategies on Downtown Tahlequah to support downtown businesses.

2.5.A.03

Coordinate with ODOT to provide signage leading into the City with "x" miles to downtown Tahlequah.

2.5.A.04

Add wayfinding signs along greenway trails to signify distances traveled as well as interpretive signs to educate trail users on water quality, value of nature, and storm water management.

2.5.A.05

Revisit and enhance the sign ordinance as well as the billboard ordinance.

2.5.A.06

Acquire land or easements at primary and secondary gateway locations (see above in Topic 5. Gateway Observations) for monument signage, landscaping, and lighting.

2.5.A.07

Upgrade the landscape ordinance to require increased amounts of plant material in the following categories:

- a. Street Tree requirements for new developments and commercial lots
- b. Parking lot tree planting requirements for commercial lots
- c. Existing tree preservation requirements.
- d. Screening plant material requirements for perimeter buffers, loading docks, and dumpsters.
- e. Shrub requirements for parking lot frontage screening along public right-of-ways

2.5.A.08

Limit the option of off-site monument signage to strategic gateway signs in key locations as shown on the Framework Plan.

iii. Policies

2.5.P.01

Signage should reflect the shared cultural and historic character of Tahlequah.

2.5.P.02

Commercial signage should be attractive and high quality.

2.5.P.03

Landscaping should be evenly integrated into commercial projects as stated above in Action Item 2.5.A.07.

2.5.P.04

Existing trees, groves and forests should be preserved, and existing development should provide opportunities for reintroduction of tree cover.

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Topic 6. Cultural Opportunities

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Notable historical sites include Cherokee National Supreme Court Museum (Main Street), Cherokee National Prison (downtown), Cherokee Heritage Museum (Park Hill), Murrell Home Park (Park Hill), John Ross Museum (Park Hill).

ii. Signage with English letters and Cherokee syllabary: The signs in town (street signs, stop signs, no parking signs, etc.) are in both English as well as Cherokee syllabary.

B. DISCUSSION

i. The City of Tahlequah has historical significance as it was established as a capital of the 19th-century Cherokee Nation in 1839, as part of the new settlement in Indian Territory after the Cherokee Native Americans

were forced west from the American Southeast on the Trail of Tears.

ii. The written Cherokee dialect is a syllabary invented by Sequoyah to write the Cherokee language in the late 1810s and early 1820s. Current signage in the city utilize both English letters and Cherokee syllabary.

iii. Northeastern State University is the oldest institution of higher learning in the state of Oklahoma as well as one of the oldest institutions of higher learning west of the Mississippi River.

iv. There is a good relationship between NSU and the City of Tahlequah and a good physical connection since Main Street ends where NSU's front gates begin.

v. It is a common perception that many NSU graduates leave Tahlequah after graduation due to lack of employment opportunities.



PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Improved connections between NSU campus and downtown on Muskogee Avenue.
- b. Improved connections between NSU campus and Downing Street.
- c. Trail and on-street bicycle network to make connections throughout town will provide alternative transportation option/connections to Cherokee owned housing in southwest Tahlequah.
- d. Development and circulation improvements in south Tahlequah at new casino and resort location.

ii. Action Items

2.6.A.01

Strengthen the town/gown relationship through volunteerism, project teaming, and coordination with Tahlequah Alliance.

2.6.A.02

Align workforce needs with NSU graduate degrees to retain graduates after degree completion.

iii. Policies

2.6.P.01

Language diversity is a proud element in Tahlequah and should be preserved and promoted.

2.6.P.02

Tahlequah supports attractive buildings and unique architectural character.

2.6.P.03

Establish a job fair to bring college students together with local employment centers to foster and support a graduate retention program.

Topic 7. Festivals & Events

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. The following festivals / events are held annually in town:

- Red Fern Festival (last week of April)
- Main Street First Fridays (April - Nov)
- Movies in the Park (May)
- Cherokee National Holiday celebrating the signing of the Cherokee Nation Constitution (early Sept.)
- Keetoowah Cherokee Celebration (early Oct)
- Green Country Roots Festival (NSU Event Center-early Oct)
- V-Dubs on Main Car Show (early Oct)
- Antique Agriculture Festival (Murrell Plantation - early Oct)
- Main Street Veterans Day Parade (early Nov)
- Main Street Christmas Parade (early Dec)

ii. Illinois River Events: Private businesses like Falcon Floats concert series capitalizes on the tourism generated by the natural draws in the area.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Festivals promote the local businesses by hosting an event that brings the community together to celebrate as neighbors.

ii. The list and dates above show a few late Spring and many Fall festivals. There may be room on the calendar for Summer gathering events. Winter events other than Christmas are difficult due to weather constraints.

iii. Tourism: It is estimated that an annual average of 180,000 visitors float the Illinois River near Tahlequah. The economic impact is \$9 million per NewsOk Article by Debra Davis in 1996. It is quite possible these numbers could be dramatically increased 12 years later.

iv. The City and/or Chamber of Commerce do not currently have strong connections to private outfitters along the Illinois River. Neither have expressed strategies in place to bring the recreational visitors from the River to downtown during high volume float months (May to September).

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

v. Camping, hiking and mountain biking opportunities should be investigated and promoted in the area since they combine well with the demographics that enjoy river floating.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Improve gateways into town and wayfinding through town to direct visitors to key locations in and around the City.

b. Create a network of trails with extensions for connections to the Illinois River

c. Extend the Greenway to connect parks south of Choctaw Street to expand open space opportunities for other event locations.

ii. Action Items

2.7.A.01

Strengthen and promote a robust Festival & Events programs

2.7.A.02

Establish a joint NSU + City Festival or event held at Norris Park or other downtown location to bring town & gown groups together.

2.7.A.03

Celebrate NSU's birthday with an City-sponsored event in downtown and brand it as a community connections event.

2.7.A.04

Establish a Greenway 5k run with proceeds to benefit City parks and downtown merchants.

2.7.A.05

Coordinate between Parks & Recreation Department, School District, and Downtown merchants for advertising material at the sports complex or high school tournaments to direct visitors to downtown with discounts or promotional activities.

2.7.A.06

Coordinate with multiple float trip vendors to establish a presence in a Downing or Muskogee storefront to draw visitors to downtown businesses. Connection may include Chamber incentives or negotiated discounts with local restaurants.

2.7.A.07

Create a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Tahlequah to include current Main Street property owners.

2.7.A.08

Establish a take-out float location near where Tahlequah Creek intersects the Illinois River.

iii. Policies

2.7.P.01

Tahlequah supports Festivals and Events through streamlined permitting and safety reviews, promotion, and financial support.

2.7.P.02

An expanded and improved city-owned park on the Illinois River will enhance existing recreation opportunities and provide a platform for new business creation.

2.7.P.03

New recreation hubs are created by the City of Tahlequah by purchasing property, obtaining easements, and/or facilitating property transfers where it is in the best interest of establishing a comprehensive Trail and Recreation Plan.

2.7.P.04

Sustain the highest level of maintenance at parks or open spaces used as festival locations for safe attractive events.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation in all modes, whether vehicular, cycling or pedestrian facilities, needs to be viewed as a cohesive network that works in concert with the surrounding land uses and destination in the community. There is no one size fits all on every street. Some corridors work well as a complete street with all modes included (vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian together) while other corridors cannot support all three safely. Another example is a bicycle network that connects neighborhoods to the greenway or surrounding parks, but is not appropriate along the bypass.

The transportation plan element establishes policies that give direction to transportation decisions for all modes of transportation (vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian) that will serve to move forward the vision and goals.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Assessment of a community's transportation network considers the current connectivity of the road, sidewalk and bike paths as well as assessing the physical condition of the facilities. Tahlequah has a bypass that loops the city while internal arterials and collectors that work as a grid to connect different areas of town. Streets near the downtown core form a grid that promotes a distributed traffic pattern. Newer areas of town, primarily on the south and north ends, have more cul-de-sacs and collectors as well as dead end streets limiting connections to surrounding areas. Additionally,

- In 2013, the HUB study showed over 25% of pavements were in need of rehab or reconstruction
- Some of these streets are arterials and collectors for prime commercial and industrial development areas, or are gateway roads into the city.
- The city has 7 major street projects designed and awaiting bid for construction as funding is available.
- In the time since the plan was developed it is likely that some of the marginal streets have now slipped into the "immediate repair" category.

PLAN ELEMENTS

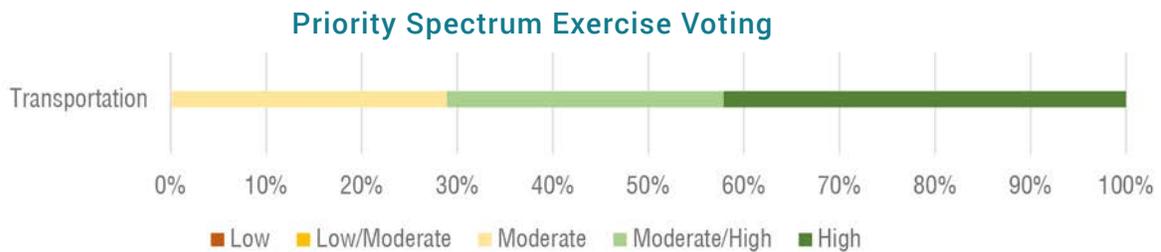
ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

“Developing alternative transportation networks, including accessibility, is vital to Tahlequah’s goal of becoming a vibrant, growing and healthy community.”

PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

1. Promote options to accommodate multiple modes of transportation on city streets
2. Retrofit roads and signalization to keep pace with growth and increased traffic demands
3. Focus on safe, accessible routes for all users



PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: High

- Aggressively pursue bond issues; aid funding to rehabilitate and replace aging streets citywide
- Upgrade pedestrian facilities citywide, including street section changes for traffic calming & pedestrian safety
- Design of new streets and revisions to existing streets that encourage pedestrian access, walkability, and alternative transportation
- Well-developed and accessible public transportation system
- Implement Complete Streets ordinance (streets proactively designed for shared use between pedestrians, cars, public transit, and bicycles)
- Integrated traffic signals and street system designed to manage traffic flow, rather than constant widening to keep up with concentrations of traffic
- Robust wayfinding system to help visitors and travelers
- Expand trails system to connect key points of interest; enhance access and experience for users of parks and recreational areas

PLAN ELEMENT OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

The transportation element focuses on ways to ensure that all areas of town are well supported by all modes of transportation. The big picture of this element is providing all residents and visitors a safe way to get from one location in town to another efficiently, enjoyably, and safely in whatever travel mode is appropriate. The ideal transportation network provides a variety of network and mode options that are effective and safe.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

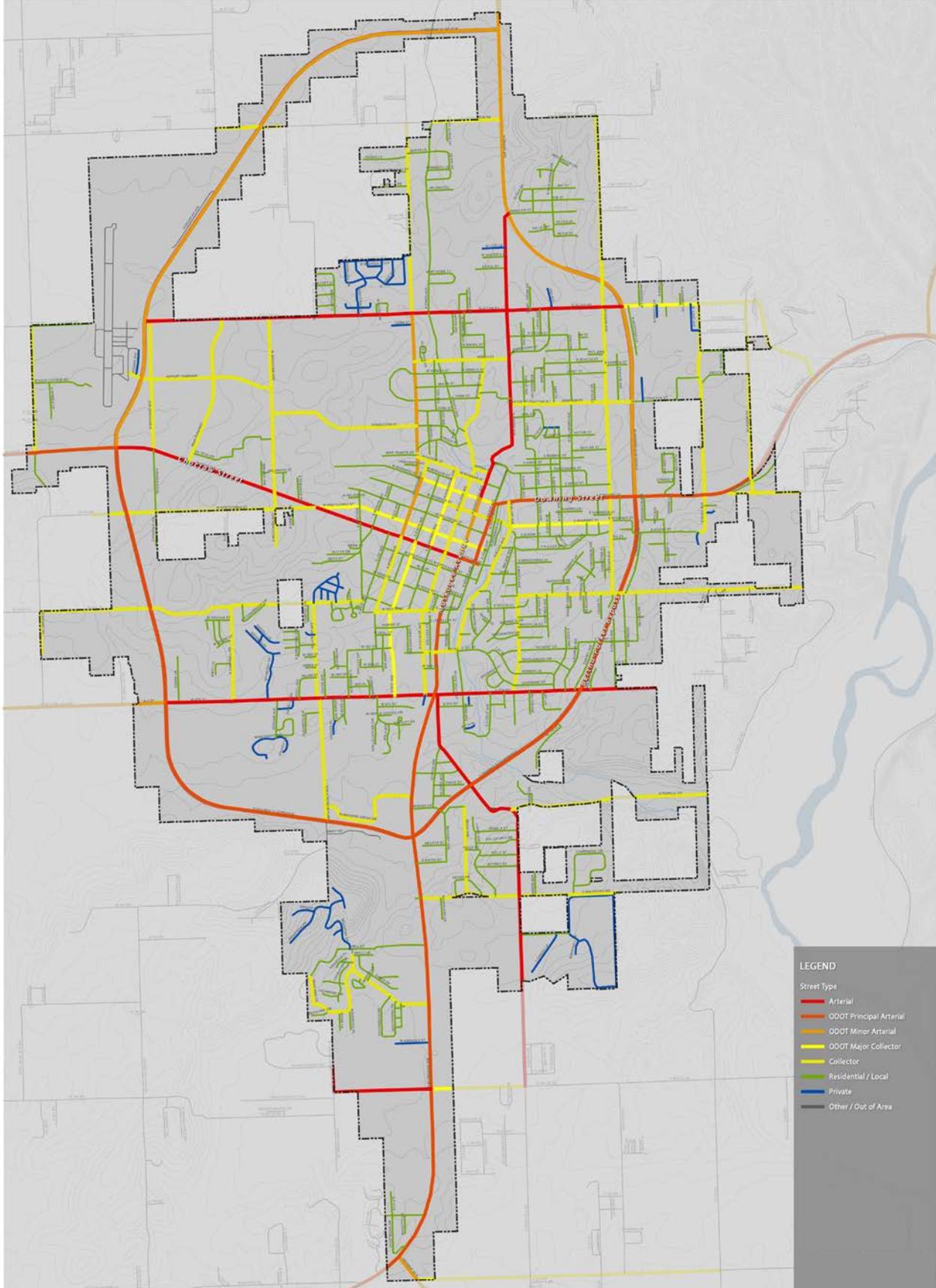
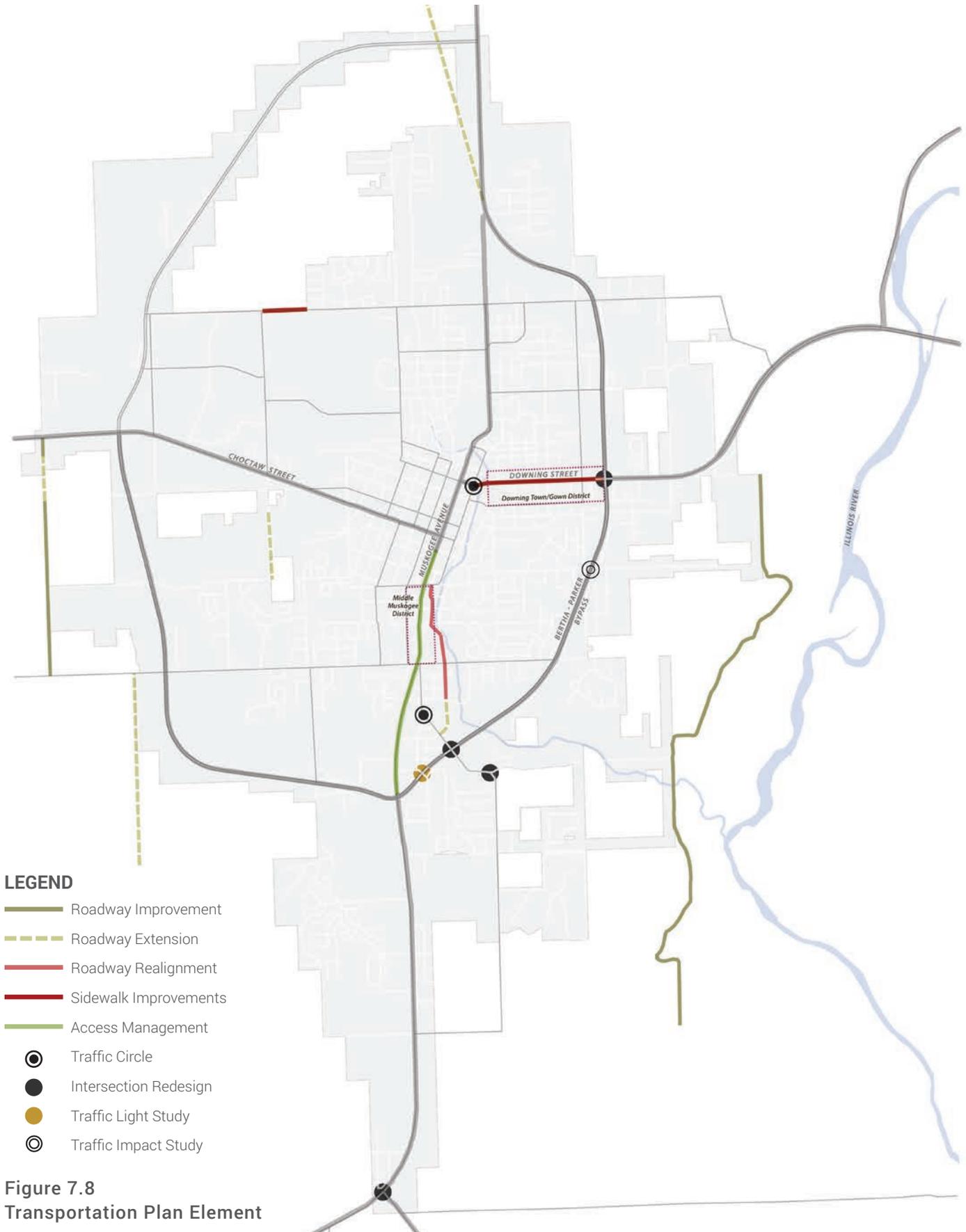


Figure 7.6 Existing Transportation Assessment: Functional Classification

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION



LEGEND

- Roadway Improvement
- - - Roadway Extension
- Roadway Realignment
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Access Management
- Traffic Circle
- Intersection Redesign
- Traffic Light Study
- Traffic Impact Study

Figure 7.8
Transportation Plan Element

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1. Street Network & Interconnectivity

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. The grid of streets in Tahlequah is valuable for providing easy access to property and a diffuse network of streets. Some bottlenecks exist that limit north-south circulation.

ii. Limited street connectivity south of Bypass along Muskogee/Highway 62 creates significant congestion that must be alleviated. This limited access area will require development of new and expanded roadway options parallel to Highway 62.

iii. Stick Ross Road is a rural road outlet that is outside of the City of Tahlequah but serves as a relief to the congestion on Muskogee. This outlet meets Highway 10/62 at Coffee Hollow Road.

iv. Traffic congestion during “rush hour” has an impact on the economic strength of Tahlequah by displacing traffic from commercial corridors to rural roads. Residents of Tahlequah expressed frustration that there is too much congestion along South Muskogee, and business owners in downtown expressed frustration about too little traffic to support business along North Muskogee. This disparity is a direct cause of limited secondary access points created by the desire to remove heavy truck traffic from downtown, the subsequent creation of the Bypass loop, compounded by the limits created by surrounding topography (hills and creeks).

v. Businesses throughout Tahlequah have frequently paved the surface of their parking lots to include the space between the property line and the curb edge along the street. This was usually done to remove burdensome grass strips that would have to be maintained by the business owner. After years of subsequent repavings, the parking began to fully encroach on sidewalks, and other vehicular driveways. These private improvements in the public right-of-way are a barrier to a comprehensive sidewalk system.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Future roadway connections to reduce congestion may be limited because of restrictions created by existing development. A solution must be found that will accommodate additional increases in vehicular traffic to match population changes.

ii. Additional traffic through downtown does not necessarily benefit local businesses, but increased access to on-street parking that encourages foot traffic will support economic stability.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Adopt resolution to establish a sunset date when any non-conforming parking in the public right-of-way will be scheduled for removal.

b. Issue revocable permits for private improvements in the right-of-way and maintain inventory of permitted and non-permitted improvements.

c. New subdivisions should eliminate cul-de-sacs unless topography or a body of water prevents a roadway from connecting to another neighborhood.

d. Work closely with Cherokee County to improve roadways parallel to South Muskogee that will reduce congestion.

ii. Action Items

3.1.A.01

Eliminate existing and prohibit new paving in the right-of-way that is not consistent with an approved site plan.

3.1.A.02

Enforce driveway permits and mutual access between commercial businesses.

3.1.A.03

Eliminate broad uncontrolled curb openings from city streets onto private property.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

3.1.A.04

Increase connections and access of roadways.

- a. Realign and redevelop new contiguous roadway along Basin/Water Streets to connect between Park Hill Road and Downing. This road will use a combination of existing right-of-way and new points of access that reduce turning geometry at challenging intersections.
- b. Eliminate low water crossings along northern Town Branch near NSU. (3 locations)
- c. Extend Moccasin Road to Fox, completing a north-south connection from Allen Road to Fox Street on Tahlequah's west side.
- d. Connect Coffee Hollow Road to West Mud Valley Road. (1 mile)
- e. Connect West Mud Valley Road to Highway 51 along South Bryant Road. (1.5 miles)
- f. Connect East Willis Road along the fringe of the Illinois River along South Nalley Road to connect with Downing Street near Highway 62/51/10 (4.1 Miles). This connection should support the protection of a preservation buffer that would limit development along this corridor and protect current property owners.

3.1.A.05

Require neighborhood streets to connect to adjacent neighborhood streets.

3.1.A.06

Require a minimum of 2 entrances per neighborhood development (on separate streets, where possible) to distribute traffic and maintain connectivity.

iii. Policies

3.1.P.01

Tahlequah establishes and enforces standards for vehicular travel and access to private property that reduces congestion and provides accessible means of ingress and egress.

3.1.P.02

Tahlequah is dedicated to reducing congestion and

providing a resilient transportation network that supports economic growth.

3.1.P.03

Infrastructure investments are orderly and support an open street network.

Topic 2. Street Classifications & Function

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. The existing street master plan is based on a hierarchical street system of residential, collector, and arterial streets rather than an interconnected, distributive system.
- ii. The density of an interconnected, distributive street network is evident in and around older areas of Tahlequah, including downtown, NSU, and older neighborhoods. The network becomes more hierarchical in newer areas, such as South Muskogee, resulting in more concentrated traffic volumes along fewer roads. This changing pattern of street network development over time is typical in most U.S. cities.
- iii. Road improvement decisions likely occur in a reactive manner, based on traffic volumes and congestion, rather than a proactive manner with the intent of minimizing congestion points by creating a well-connected street network.

B. DISCUSSION

- i. As mentioned in Topic 1, an interconnected street network can alleviate congestion issues by de-emphasizing certain streets for access and distributing traffic across a network with more route options.
- ii. As further discussed in Topic 3, the street classification system should include alternative transportation options within standard street cross sections.
- iii. The location and interconnectivity of collector streets is an important factor to increasing route options across the city to more evenly distribute traffic.
- iv. Complete streets (streets with pedestrian and bicycle facilities) accommodate multiple modes of transportation, and future complete streets or complete street conversions to existing streets should be identified on the street master plan.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Move from a hierarchal street network classification system to a distributive network with the outcome of reduced traffic congestion in mind.

ii. Action Items

3.2.A.01

Update traffic counts to identify areas of the city that could benefit from additional connectivity alternatives.

3.2.A.02

Include standard street cross sections in the Master Street Plan for the following street types: Complete Streets, collectors with bicycle lanes, residential or collector streets with sharrows, and collectors or arterials with protected bicycle lanes or cycle tracks.

3.2.A.03

Coordinate with Cherokee County and the Cherokee Nation on strategic road upgrades or connections that occur across jurisdictions.

3.2.A.04

Study the potential impacts of the new Casino on traffic at Park Hill Road and Bypass, as well as the potential impacts of the new outpatient hospital on traffic at Ross Street and Bypass.

3.2.A.05

Partner with Cherokee County to connect Stick Ross Road (W780 Rd) to Mud Valley Road (4th Street) via N4500 Rd West of Highway 51 Bypass.

3.2.A.06

Partner with Cherokee County to connect and align River Rd. and S. Nally Rd. from Willis Road, Powell Road, and Highway 62/Downing.

iii. Policies

3.2.P.01

Comprehensive street connectivity is a priority over cul-de-sacs and loop road developments.

3.2.P.02

Congestion is mitigated by providing safe and well maintained roadways that provide alternatives to major roadways.

Topic 3. Alternative Transportation Options

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Tahlequah, like many American cities, has a transportation network that is highly auto-oriented and vehicular dependent.

ii. Tahlequah has a higher percentage of housing units who have only one vehicle than the state of Oklahoma. Conversely, Tahlequah has a lower percentage of housing units that have two or three vehicles than the state of Oklahoma.

iii. High student population generated by NSU suggests that a more complete bicycle and pedestrian network would be beneficial to the residents of Tahlequah.

iv. Currently, few transportation facilities exist for bicycles and pedestrians. Sidewalks occur more frequently in closer proximity to downtown and NSU.

v. Residents have expressed the desire for more bicycle and pedestrian facilities through public input means throughout the comprehensive planning process.

B. DISCUSSION

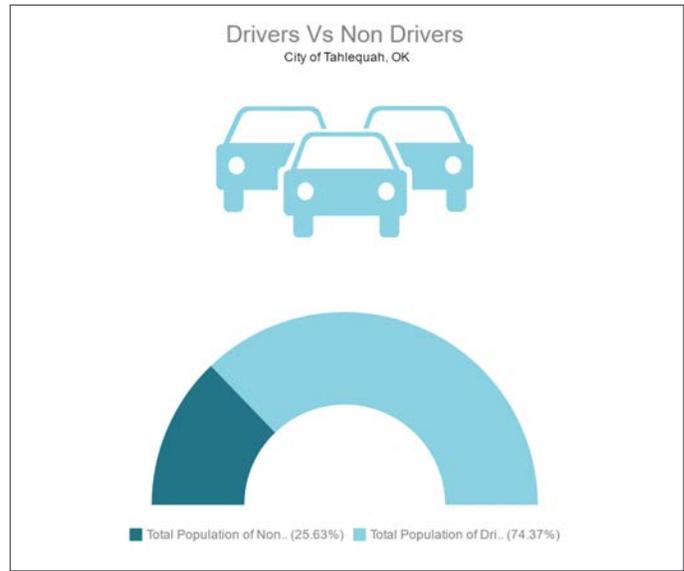
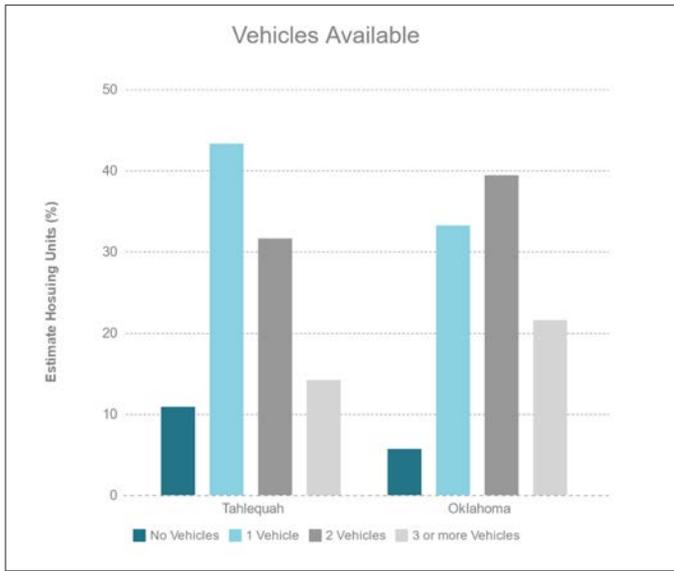
i. Providing alternative transportation options can lower the number of trips taken by vehicles, potentially decreasing congestion.

ii. Increased mobility options increase access for all, across age groups, income, and physical ability.

iii. The appropriate application of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is based on several factors, including need (population centers and relevant destinations), desired outcomes (fulfilling transportation needs verses recreational opportunities), and safety (traffic volumes, speed limits, roadway design, etc.). Further discussion of appropriate facilities is located in Element 5: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails/Community Assessment/Bicycle Facilities Suitability, as well as in Element 5/Topic 5/ Recommendations/On-Road Bicycle Network.

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C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Refer to Element 5 within Section Seven for the bicycle and pedestrian plan, which provides on- and off-road alternative transportation network opportunities. The plan provides an interconnected system across the community, serving destinations such as schools, neighborhoods, parks, and commercial centers.

ii. Action Items

3.3.A.01

Include standard street cross sections for the following street types: Complete Streets, collectors with bicycle lanes, residential or collector streets with sharrows, and collectors or arterials with protected bicycle lanes or cycle tracks. See also Action 3.2.A.02.

3.3.A.02

Implement specific bicycle facilities as described in Element 5: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails; Topic 5, Plan Outcomes.

3.3.A.03

Refer to Topic 4 of this section for specific actions related to sidewalks and accessibility.

iii. Policies

3.3.P.01

Pedestrian safety and bicycling infrastructure are first priority, and transportation funding reflects this prerogative.

3.3.P.02

Pedestrian crosswalks are designed to city standards, intentionally continuous and properly maintained.

Topic 4. Sidewalks & Accessibility

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Location: Sidewalks presence, widths, and conditions vary from one area of town to another. Some of this is due to topography or age of the area but some is due to land use as well.

a. Downtown Core & South to Bypass: The sidewalks on both sides of North Muskogee Avenue from the NSU campus to Chickasaw Street are a great example of appropriate sidewalk treatments. Paving patterns and curb cuts for accessibility are typical throughout. However, south of Chickasaw Street the sidewalks are part of many parking areas or nonexistent. When vehicular traffic can pull off the road into a parking area at any point along the right of way, the pedestrian has no warning. When

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ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

access points are designated by drives to limit vehicular entry, the pedestrian is far safer. Much of south Muskogee has potential for vehicular/pedestrian conflict since access management is not in place.

b. East of Downtown: Most neighborhood streets north and south of Downing Avenue have sidewalks. They are older to match the age of the neighborhood, and some are in need of repair. Bliss Avenue, passing through the Cherokee Nation Hospital, has sidewalks on both sides of the Street, which allows good access to the buildings from the parking lots on the adjacent side of Bliss. Further east, near the Illinois River, some older neighborhoods lack walks, as they were rural when constructed. However, a newer subdivision off Robert Frank Lane has walks on both sides of the street.

c. North of Downtown: The north end is predominately rural in nature but a few neighborhoods within the City limits exist. The subdivision east of the bypass at the end of North Garland lacks sidewalks on either side of the street. The same holds true for the neighborhoods north and south of Grandview Road on either side of Jones Avenue.

d. West of Downtown: Directly west of downtown is Choctaw Street with heavy commercial and industrial lots nearby. The neighborhoods that lie south of West Fox Street have sidewalks predominately on both sides of the street.

ii. Connectivity

a. Connectivity of sidewalks is vitally important when looking at the city from an accessible point of view. Imagine trying to navigate a wheel chair through a parking lot where a car can enter at any point. Then imagine the next property is all turf with no parking at all. The connectivity is nonexistent. This is the case in the midtown area south of Chickasaw Street. Connectivity north and south along Muskogee is great from NSU's campus gate to Chickasaw then difficult heading south.

b. Tahlequah has connected sidewalks on many of the streets surrounding the downtown, both on north-south avenues and east-west streets. However, many of the roads east and north of NSU lack sidewalks. This is ironic since this area of town

is predominately student housing and close enough to campus for students to walk.

c. Downing east from Downtown has sidewalks until it reaches the Bertha Parker Bypass. East of that, the walks are sporadic on both sides of Downing Street. Newer neighborhoods, like south of Ross Street do not have sidewalks. However, the newer neighborhood south of Mill Road, on the very South end of town, have walks on both sides of the street.

d. Many east-west roads have sidewalks. 4th Street, Pendleton Street, and portions of Downing Street have sidewalks. Connectivity to the north and south off these east-west sidewalks is hit or miss depending upon the era the lots were developed. More are in place in the downtown core than elsewhere.

iii. Intersections

i. Safety is a primary concern where motorists and pedestrians interact, and intersections are the most dangerous if not properly signalized or signed. Downtown intersections are well-marked and signalized until one gets south of Chickasaw Street. Painted crosswalks are worn or missing on both side streets (along Muskogee) and across Muskogee in this area continuing south to the bypass. Travel for pedestrians is already hazardous since access management is poorly defined (see above), so lack of crosswalks sends a message of danger to any trying to travel south by foot or wheelchair on lower Muskogee.

ii. Pedestrian crossings at oversized intersections, like the bypass at Muskogee or at Downing, pose a threat to pedestrians. The timing for the crosswalk symbol is usually too short and the lack of crosswalk paint diminishes the importance of crossing safety. Per the suggested corridor improvements to Downing Avenue (see Section Six: Specific Interventions), the intersection at the bypass needs to be addressed to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can navigate it safely. The same holds true for any bicycle route crossing primary roads like Allen Road, Choctaw Street, or 4th Street.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Sidewalks are an essential element in creating a safe and walkable city. Areas surrounding key community facilities should be high priorities for the development of sidewalks. Tahlequah Public Schools, NSU, Downtown Tahlequah, Downing Street and Muskogee Avenue are all high priority.

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ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

ii. The cost of maintaining a city-wide sidewalk system is too burdensome for the City of Tahlequah, and must be shared with the private sector. It is common among municipalities the size of Tahlequah for the City to fund a majority of sidewalk construction and transfer responsibility for long term maintenance to individual property owners.

iii. Commercial properties differ widely by how they are accessed, but based the legal requirements all commercial structures must be ADA accessible.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Selectively conserve properties with challenging topography near the Illinois River for passive recreational trails, and conservation activities. These properties should be connected to the broader sidewalk system.

ii. Action Items

3.4.A.01

Adopt a Sidewalk Policy to create continuous connections along city streets.

3.4.A.02

Evaluate ADA compliance and create and adopt Transition Plan to integrate accessibility features across the City of Tahlequah as projects permit.

3.4.A.03

Inventory existing sidewalk conditions and areas that require increased accessibility.

3.4.A.04

Pass an Access Management Ordinance for all commercial properties.

3.4.A.05

Continue Safe Routes to Schools access and connectivity projects.

3.4.A.06

Bring Muskogee Avenue into ADA compliance from downtown to the Bypass.

iii. Policies

3.4.P.01

Tahlequah supports a comprehensive sidewalk network and will partner with neighborhood groups to install sidewalks in where demonstrable need is highest.

3.4.P.02

It is the responsibility of the residential property owner to maintain sidewalks after installation.

3.4.P.03

New residential and commercial developments will be required to install sidewalks along the extents of the public right-of-way.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

Topic 5. Development Patterns to Promote Effective Transportation

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Tahlequah is the plant nursery capital of the State. Transportation projects should have thoroughly integrated landscaping and natural design features that highlight this abundant resource. The positive impacts of landscaping integrated with transportation improvements will also improve storm water management, reduce the urban heat island effect, and improve aesthetics.

ii. Tahlequah has adopted a Complete Streets ordinance, but has not created engineering design details to update roadway sections and construction standards for new subdivisions. Developers and Home Builders should be aware of the Complete Streets policies.

iii. It is widely understood that vacant properties are a drag on the surrounding properties and should be maintained in good working order. Abandoned properties create an attractive nuisance that is detrimental to community character and should be assessed at a rate equal to buildings that are in good working order.

iv. Roundabouts have become an increasingly acceptable design for easing intersection traffic and smoothing out the flow of vehicles. Wait times are reduced, and drivers experience fewer dangerous lane-crossing maneuvers.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Supporting housing density and safe pedestrian features surrounding downtown Tahlequah and NSU will reduce vehicle trips and ease congestion.

ii. The creation of a Business Improvement District as a supplement to Main Street will generate revenue that will promote and support Downtown businesses.

iii. Owners of vacant and abandoned buildings should recognize that assessments on properties must increase to pay for services that are shared by all Downtown Tahlequah property owners.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. New housing and commercial development should focus on infill opportunities.

b. Vacant and Abandoned properties should have an increasing level of financial assessment and contribution to a common development fund to offset the loss of revenue caused by

c. Replace parking minimums with parking maximums and remove individual parking requirements from Downtown Tahlequah.

ii. Action Items

3.5.A.01

Integrate landscaping and agricultural assets into public improvements.

3.5.A.02

Resolve conflicts between the Complete Streets Policy and subdivision regulations as related to block length, sidewalks, etc.

3.5.A.03

Improve intersections with challenging geometry and deteriorating roadway edges to maintain storm water infrastructure and pedestrian safety.

iii. Policies

3.5.P.01

Traffic congestion is minimized by intersection redesigns, including roundabouts where appropriate, using signalization timing technologies, and peak ridership reduction solutions.

3.5.P.02

Street connectivity in residential subdivisions is maintained by eliminating variances through the Preliminary and Final Plat process.

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PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Quality housing is **the** essential element in a community that unlocks economic opportunity, lifelong investment, and is the cornerstone by which many important life decisions are based. A neighborhood is composed of a series of individual housing decisions that when taken together, form a cohesive unit that is distinguishable from any other place. The quality of housing is directly related to the quality of neighborhoods, and is therefore the key indicator of improvement or deterioration.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Housing developments in Tahlequah have been sporadic in past decades, with many residential neighborhoods reaching the end of their life cycle. Neighborhoods that exhibit decay are becoming prevalent west of NSU, and in pockets spread throughout the neighborhoods built prior to WWII. There is no consistent area of blight, but there are individual lots and blocks that will require significant redevelopment in the coming 10-15 years. Redevelopment in these areas will be challenging until

a large majority of properties become due for renewal.

Housing at the University has been below market rate, and the permanent student population has declined in recent years.

How do we assess entire neighborhoods?

- Housing type, density, affordability, and access
- Historic character
- Age of structure
- Condition from windshield survey
- Vacant and dilapidated buildings
- Code enforcement actions

What is the purpose of the neighborhood assessment?

- Determining the availability of Housing Choices
 - Price per square foot, and monthly rental rates.
 - The assessment identified the mix of housing types, their overall condition, the basis by

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

which improvements would render the housing marketable, and the strength of the housing market based on recent sales and transaction trends.

- Tahlequah has not experienced a high degree of suburban housing development largely due to the limits of water and sewer service. The housing is relatively accessible along major corridors, but housing along South Muskogee is burdened by the high volume of commercial traffic frequenting big box stores on a regular basis.
- Determine the capacity for change during a 20-year horizon

Assessment Outcomes

The housing and neighborhood assessment identified the visible challenges to maintaining quality housing stock that are a result of low rent prices, and limited home ownership. These are subsequently an indicator of the pervasive poverty that exists in Tahlequah. Simply addressing the housing issue alone will not raise incomes, create quality jobs, or increase the demand

for different housing types. Much of the economic challenges that affect housing are outside of the control of the municipal government, but with proper advocacy and leadership, the symptoms of deterioration -evidenced by the condition of substandard housing stock- can be reversed and begin to create pride in the community as a first step to transforming the broader housing market.

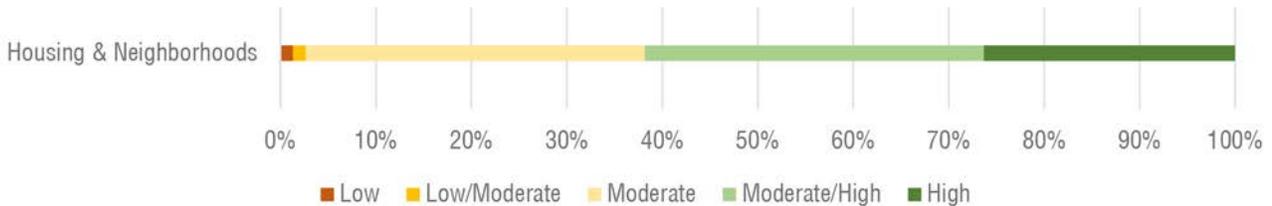
STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

“We are going to become a destination for education, healthcare, and tourism focused on growth with relevant, safe and healthy neighborhoods.”

PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

- 1.Weigh alternative infill redevelopment options for downtown
- 2.Promote reinvestment in historic housing stock
- 3.Identify strategic locations for new housing developments as the town continues to grow

Priority Spectrum Exercise Voting



PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: Moderate

- Let developers and homebuilders determine types and locations of housing options
- Pursue code enforcement actions on a complaint basis
- Provide guidance and limited support for development of affordable housing units according to citywide housing plans
- Encourage incremental development of sidewalk infrastructure
- Provide information for privately maintained landscaping that avoids conflicts with existing utilities & infrastructure
- Support a mix of housing types according to future population estimates and annual permit data
- Encourage open space and areas for future development according to housing demand
- Maintain current standards for neighborhood street and driveway development
- Encourage housing densities near downtown/campus that reduce transportation conflicts

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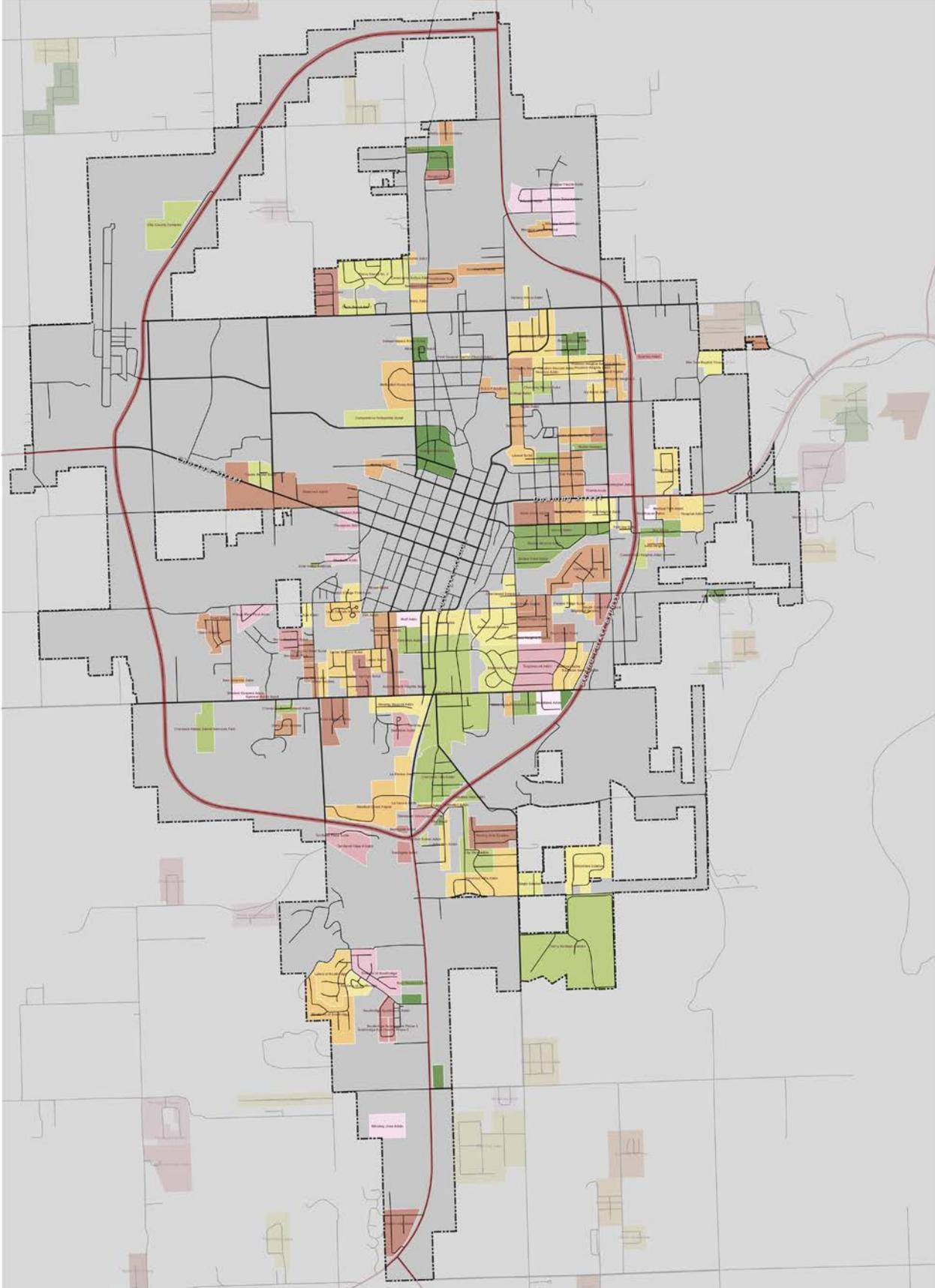


Figure 7.9 Existing Neighborhoods Assessment

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PLAN ELEMENT OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

Tahlequah residents that participated in the planning sessions indicated that large scale changes to the housing and neighborhood policies were not necessary. Housing stock does have some challenges regarding long-term maintenance, but generally neighborhoods are well kept for their age and satisfy the needs of the community at large.

The housing conditions assessment is based on the widely available U.S. Housing and Urban Development assessment matrix.

Determined both the capacity for raw land for development, the availability of developable lots with appropriate infrastructure, and the vacancy of existing housing both for rent and for sale.

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1. Overall Issues

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Substandard Housing is an ongoing challenge to the growth and development of new housing choices in Tahlequah, and an indicator of poverty. The disparity between home owner occupied substandard housing and rental housing is an essential distinction. Owner occupied housing stock that is deteriorating and in need of major repair has become a national issue that requires public and family support to solve. Substandard rental housing is entirely a matter of choice - or lack thereof - among competing options within a range of limited financial resources. There are very few options for alternative housing on a limited budget, and tenants are more likely to continue in substandard conditions than relocate to a new residence at great personal expense. This is not an acceptable choice among downward economic pressures. This least-lost activity is unregulated and unobserved by local authorities.

ii. Infill and Redevelopment The opportunities for infill housing and development are more complicated than greenfield development, but using existing utilities on already platted lots coincide with the larger need to increase the vibrancy of neighborhoods near downtown Tahlequah, NSU, and Downing Street. Infill opportunities will overcome the perceived challenges by maintaining high construction and material standards, maximizing developable areas with multi-story dwellings, and orienting parking where it has minimal impact on public streets. Tear-downs are common in older neighborhoods where the housing may be substandard, or lack the features current buyers are seeking. Tear-downs serve as a gentrifying element in many communities

that force out existing residents to be replaced by larger homes on relatively small lots. There are few opportunities to restrict tear-downs, but a historic designation surrounding Downtown Tahlequah would provide oversight and some level of alternatives exploration prior to demolition.

iii. Zoning Code Updates The zoning code uses a cascading format that unintentionally allows land uses where they may not be appropriate. The easiest fix for this problem is to redefine the uses allowed within each district and exclude uses that are no longer valid. This action may create some non-conforming uses, but the effort to simplify the code should not be constrained by a small number of well documented anomalies.

iv. Open Space Planning Planning for open space can be a difficult exercise, but when approached as a vital community asset, can create unbelievable returns for the community. The value of undeveloped property does not correspond with market conditions, and parkland is always prone to incremental development that can erode the value of the open space. Dedicating open space is integral to the establishment of successful neighborhoods, and creates a balance as increasing housing densities are proposed.

v. Unplatted Property The persistence of unplatted lots is an administrative and financial burden on both property owners, Cherokee county, and the City of Tahlequah. Once lots are platted their boundaries are more easily recorded and accessed to determine development limitations. As development pressures increase it is especially important to simplify the development process for all parties involved.

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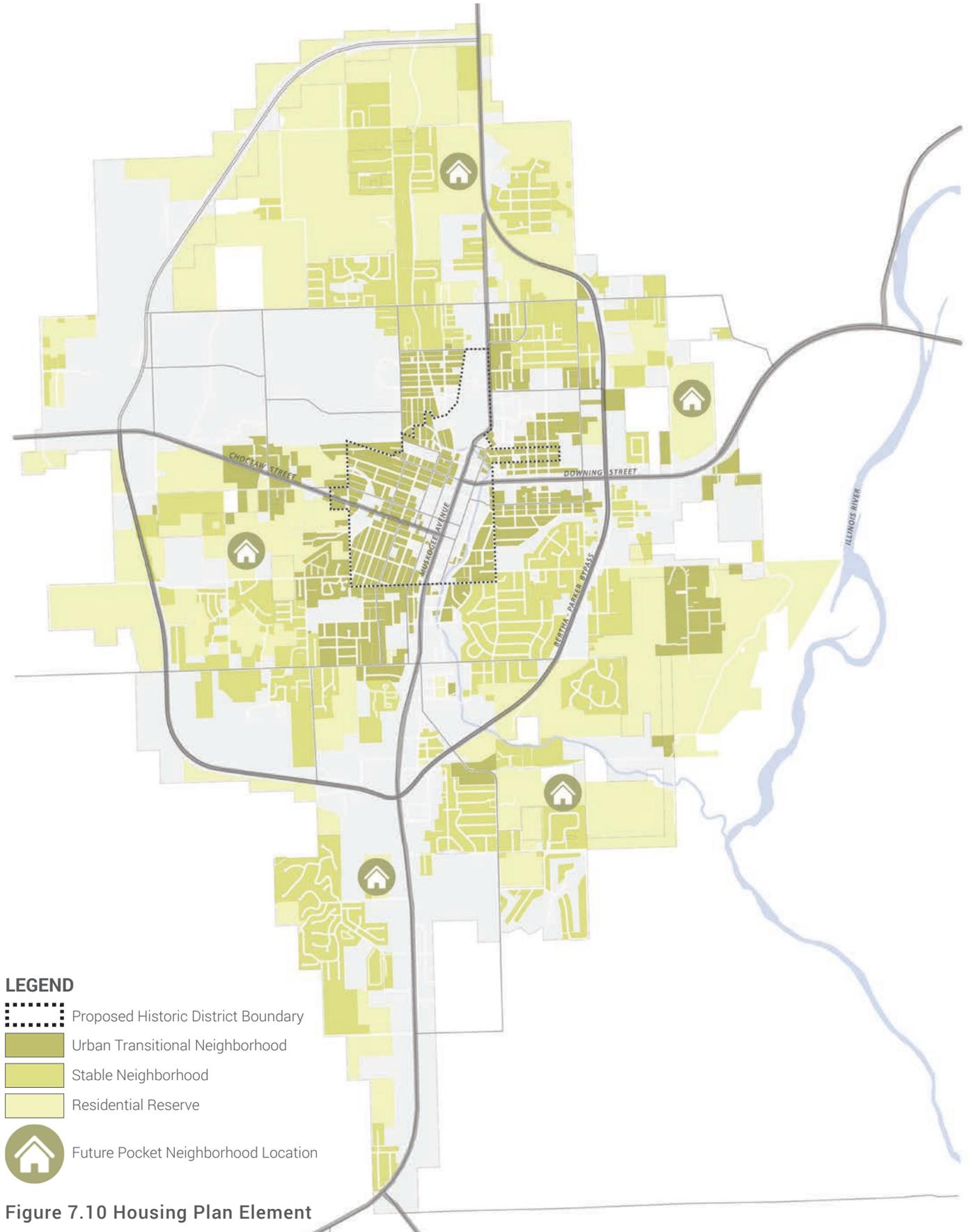


Figure 7.10 Housing Plan Element

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vi. Design Guidelines Architectural design guidelines are a popular way of preserving the historic character of a community within specified districts, and maintaining visual cohesion between properties. Widely adopted architectural guidelines restrict a palate of materials that have primarily industrial or agricultural applications, and promote the use of materials that have similar appearance and performance of buildings that exhibit a high quality of design. Most guidelines focus on preserving individual properties within the context of historic properties. Design guidelines are important when there is a wide disparity between older deteriorating housing, and new housing options that are of a different scale and proportion to older buildings.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Tahlequah is a relatively stable market, with seasonal reductions in housing demand that have a drag on rental rates, and sales tax collections.

ii. There are too many vacant and underutilized buildings in the Tahlequah region to create sufficient demand for renovation and improvement of currently vacant structures, or the growth and development of new structures. This assumption does not apply to corporate franchises that do not have a presence in the Tahlequah market. These interests once had a 0% presence and upon completion of their project have a 100% presence. Compounding the challenges to the downtown is the fact that new businesses further saturate the options available to consumers, and therefore other locally and non-locally owned businesses share in the reduction of traffic.

iii. Cities have a vested interest in maintaining and preserving the quality and capacity for real estate to

hold its value over a long period of time. The exercise of zoning code enforcement actions is the single greatest indicator of a quality community, and has the power to transform under performing properties into high-quality investments. The role municipalities play in the larger community development space becomes challenging when codes are unevenly applied, or only on a compliant basis.

iv. The balance of affordability and market dynamics. There is a disincentive to building new housing in Tahlequah due to the low rental rates, the seasonality of university student housing, and the limited housing choices on both the low end and high end.

v. Form based design guidelines have the potential to unify the development community toward an urban pattern that will increase flexibility in building uses, and be resilient to changing economic conditions. This is done by maximizing buildable area, allowing for mixed uses within one building. Form based codes are primarily concerned with the physical shape of the building instead of the uses located within the buildings. Form based codes should be limited in their area of application to not unnecessarily burden properties from redevelopment that may not meet stringent physical boundaries.

vi. Addressing the issues of housing choice and quality do not deal with the underlying concerns of poverty. Some communities have endeavored on neighborhood revitalization, but without a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of poverty, the same issues remained after revitalization effort was concluded. The following action plan is a primer for bringing together a diverse group of community leaders that will be tasked with identifying and addressing the root causes of poverty.



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C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. The City of Tahlequah should establish rules that any development created prior to the adoption of current Zoning and Subdivision regulations be subject to review by Planning Commission if it deemed existing, non-conforming under existing regulations. No hardship need be established, but the City of Tahlequah should offer property owners recommendations through the public hearing process to address issues that may impact mortgage or banking transactions in the future.

b. Integrating small scale agriculture policies into a comprehensive plan may not seem obvious at first, but supporting private property owners to make productive use of their land is a long lost tradition in the United States that is due for renewal. Zoning codes in many communities have prohibited the use of residential property for commercial gardens when those operations exceed the limitations of personal consumption and literally grow into a commercial enterprise. Due to the politically sensitive topic of private property rights, communities have refrained from establishing rules regulating backyard gardens, and have operated on a complaint basis when a property owner's garden gets out of hand.

c. Encouraging non-commercial backyard gardens is an important component to the overall health and wellness of a community. As a basic human endeavor, planting a garden contributes far more than it detracts from community character. As the community gardening movement grows, the city, working with local garden groups should support

garden tours, educational opportunities and facilitate annual events that support the Farmers Market.

ii. Action Items

4.1.A.01

Create program to voluntarily inspect rental properties upon request for health, safety, and welfare status check according to adopted codes.

4.1.A.02

Allow hens (chickens) in R-2 and R-3 zoning §12-222, but prevent the size of garden structures to a total percentage of lot coverage, and a height not to exceed the height of the primary structure. Limit size of garden plots in multi-family housing units to no more than 50% of lot size.

4.1.A.03

Transform vacant and abandoned buildings into productive use.

iii. Policies

4.1.P.01

Planning Commission will establish procedures for replatting existing lots, new subdivisions, and creation of all new lots according to existing plat procedures.

4.1.P.02

Tahlequah allows accessory dwelling units in R-2 and R-3 districts.

4.1.P.03

Tahlequah allows mixed use zoning in C-1 and C-2 districts.



PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Topic 2. Urban Transitional Neighborhoods

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. An Urban Transitional Neighborhood is characterized by traditional small lots organized along a grid of streets with access along the front along the main road, and potential access along the alleyway as well. A mixed-use designation does not mean that it is appropriate to open a business within the core of a residential neighborhood, but that since the neighborhood is in close proximity to the established commercial center of the city, certain considerations are necessary to ease conflicts between the two uses. In the Urban Transitional Neighborhood multi-family and single family uses can be located directly next to each other as long as the architectural character of the new project adequately reflects the character of the existing neighborhood.

ii. Code enforcement is one of the most challenging positions in municipal government. This individual (or group) is responsible for maintaining the peace, resolving conflicts, and articulating to the public how code violations were discovered, and what methods of remediation are available. Maintaining the quality and character of a neighborhood is not achieved by policy alone, but with careful engagement of community leaders and residents at every level.

iii. The strength of code enforcement is the transparency and collaboration between municipal divisions to support the overall community goals. Code enforcement will take the lead on many of the issues, but will require support from everyone. The most obvious and pervasive challenge to Tahlequah is the character of rental housing. Many of the older structures near downtown and adjacent to NSU exhibit significant deterioration and contribute to the perceived decline of the neighborhoods that has a multiplying downward effect on quality, price, and long-term value.

iv. The challenge to the quality of housing is due to the low rent structure created by the seasonality of NSU housing, and the lack of diversity of middle income housing.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Marginal neighborhoods are those that slowly transform from majority home owner occupied, to approximately 50% rental. There are no specific metrics that

can determine the quality of a neighborhood based purely on rental status, but copious evidence suggests that once a group of homes become maintained poorly, they have a depressing effect on surrounding houses further exacerbating the differences between rental and home owner occupied. Municipalities do not have the ability to restrict a person from renting their home, but the types and sizes of homes fall into a narrow band or property types.

ii. The proliferation of single family homes has squeezed out a common housing type that is making a return to American cities. The development of 4 and 6 unit apartment buildings on a standard 50'x140' lot is gaining popularity in cities that have experienced significant suburban sprawl. Key features that contribute to the development of the middle housing densities are; Functional alleys that provide opportunities for parking and open space, zoning codes that allow for different densities on lots adjacent to single-family.

iii. Tahlequah will benefit from active code enforcement for derelict properties that bring down the value of existing neighborhoods. A well maintained property is not just an aesthetic issue, but also contributes to the health of an entire neighborhood. Ponding water can contribute to the growth of mosquito populations, inoperable vehicles can leak fluids into the groundwater supply, and broken windows can create an attractive nuisance that will accelerate declines in property values.

iv. The floodplain that corresponds with Town Branch Creek west of NSU should be abated and cleaned. Housing bordering Town Branch creek negatively impacts development of NSU and downtown Tahlequah.

v. Empty lots and underdeveloped areas near Downtown Tahlequah and NSU are prime for redevelopment into new medium density housing and "missing middle" housing, where appropriate. Empty lots adjunct to historic homes should be infilled with new housing that is appropriate to the character and scale of the older homes.

Older homes are characteristically smaller in scale than current homes, and were built with exterior detached garages. In these areas it is important to maintain setbacks similar to older homes, restrict heights of new structures to match neighborhood character and push garage doors behind the main façade of house facing the street.

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C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Permit mixed density and mixed income neighborhoods (missing middle, pocket neighborhoods, accessory dwelling units, cluster developments).
- b. Promote infill with higher density near new commercial nodes.
- c. Designate where short term rentals are allowed. Short term rentals are defined as less than 30 days, would have stipulated parking requirements and may have a stipulated quiet hours designation.
- d. Modify the zoning code for accessory dwelling units for aging in place / rental options to allow an accessory dwelling unit on lots less than 7,000 square feet, and without the additional 2,000 square feet per unit.
- e. Adopt historic district boundary to accompany Historic Preservation ordinance ("Original Townsite Historic District Blocks 10-30).
- f. Extend protections to historic neighborhood and incentives for improvement existing houses.

ii. Action Items

4.2.A.01

Pass an ordinance establishing the Historic District, as described in the 1997 Historic/Architectural Reconnaissance Survey, within which the rules of Chapter 8 Historic Preservation Zoning of the Planning, Zoning & Development Code will be applied. District boundaries are depicted in Figure 7.10.

4.2.A.02

Create and pass an ordinance establishing architectural and site guidelines for development, redevelopment, and renovation within the Historic District, established in Action 4.2.A.01.

4.2.A.03

Create "renters guide" for municipal services, and roles and responsibilities of renters.

4.2.A.04

Hold regularly scheduled clean-up days with bulk trash pickup for large and unsightly debris, and yard trash.

4.2.A.05

Establish a low-interest loan program for homeowners needing code upgrades, and inspections.

4.2.A.06

Leverage new market-rate and affordable residential development with support from the City of Tahlequah and Cherokee County on undeveloped and marginal land.

4.2.A.07

Build a coalition of Real Estate Agents, Property owners, Bankers, Landscape contractors, and home builders to work closely with the City of Tahlequah to identify problem areas and support tenants as they improve their properties to an acceptable standard.

4.2.A.8

Enforce restrictions on gardens that are overrun, untended, or potentially harbor mosquito populations or feral animals.

4.2.A.09

Develop Landscape Guidelines to prevent and abate invasive plant species, non-native plantings, or gardens that impose on adjacent property owners.

iii. Policies

4.2.P.01

The City of Tahlequah promotes and supports Fair Housing Standards and recognizes property owners that maintain high quality housing.

4.2.P.02

The City of Tahlequah recognizes the importance for backyard gardens for personal use, and supports programs that promote food security and healthy lifestyles.

4.2.P.03

Tahlequah supports residents' needs for affordable housing choices and works closely with property owners and property management companies to streamline inspections and utility services.

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Topic 3. Stable Neighborhoods

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. Homeowners in Tahlequah take pride in maintaining their homes and property.
- ii. Neighborhoods within ¼ mile of the Greenway Trails should have safe and dedicated pedestrian access to connect to the trails system and Downtown Tahlequah.

B. DISCUSSION

- i. Residential developments should have complete streets, sidewalks, and trails, and be integrated into the natural environment.
- ii. Established neighborhoods should have the ability to include an accessory dwelling unit on the same lot as the primary home where that unit meets setback and development guidelines.
- iii. Individual properties are attractive, and support community-wide goals of reducing debris and deterioration.
- iv. Neighborhoods are well landscaped, accessible, walkable, and safe.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

Closely monitor sales and rental of housing within stable neighborhoods. A high degree of turnover within a neighborhood is a signal of economic distress, or of persistent maintenance issues.

ii. Action Items

4.3.A.01

Encourage planting of canopy trees and understory trees to enhance the quality of neighborhoods.

4.3.A.02

Limit storage of recreational vehicles to enclosed structures, or behind the main facade of the home.

4.3.A.03

Fully staff code enforcement needs to eliminate blight conditions and nuisances that deteriorate neighborhood quality.

iii. Policies

4.3.P.01

Tahlequah recognizes that a person's home is their single greatest investment, and supports well-maintained neighborhoods free of trash, debris, and litter.

4.3.P.02

Tahlequah supports a range of housing types and income levels within each neighborhood.

Topic 4. Residential Reserve

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. The value of reserving areas for future development will allow the City of Tahlequah to designate densities that will be most appropriate to the future needs of the residents. Our current demand models may indicate

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that a particular density will be most likely to serve the market, but changes in economic and development patterns in the next 10-15 years may create a need that we cannot anticipate today. Preserved areas provide opportunities for future growth, at a significant density that can be determined by future residents according to this, and subsequent plans.

ii. Residential reserve areas and dedicated open space serve the same purpose to concentrate development in areas that need revitalization, and to put market pressure on undeveloped parcels that may have been skipped over during earlier housing developments.

iii. Cluster developments and Pocket neighborhoods are innovative ways to protect open space and accommodate development of new housing.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Future residential development should increase access across the community with roadway and trail connections. This development should also enhance access to parks and open space.

ii. There is demand for new residential housing that would satisfy the executive-style home market. The total volume of executive homes would remain relatively low compared to the need for market rate properties, but individuals seeking a transition to larger more spacious lots are moving to Ft. Gibson, Broken Arrow, or other peripheral communities to Tulsa and commuting back into Tahlequah. There is not enough statistical evidence to determine the exact demand, but it could be as many as 10-14 new executive-style homes per year providing as much as \$3,500,000 in total construction per year. The volume of homes could increase once the proposed health care and entertainment facilities are completed.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Encourage and promote development where it is identified in this plan.
- b. Protect residential reserve areas for future development while supporting infill development and redevelopment of blighted areas.

ii. Action Items

4.4.A.01

Restrict development that has negative impacts on storm water quality or impedes designated floodplains.

4.4.A.02

Prohibit development that does not conform to the comprehensive plan elements.

4.4.A.03

In instances where a potential land use would benefit the City of Tahlequah but conflicts with this plan, prepare, or cause to be prepared a comprehensive plan amendment.

iii. Policies

4.4.P.01

Tahlequah is dedicated to preserving space for future uses, and encouraging housing densities in existing neighborhoods that contribute to a healthy urban environment.

4.4.P.02

Tahlequah seeks to maintain the small town character, but prepare for economic and housing growth.

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Topic 5. Innovative Housing Solutions

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. There are far more housing and development options than just Single Family houses and Apartments. The changing family profile, and the realities of homeownership under challenging economic conditions have created a demand for housing types that do not fit neatly within either of the traditional types. New housing designs are intended to reduce the same-ness created by uniformly applied subdivision regulations. By varying lot sizes, reducing block lengths, and allowing setbacks to vary according to topography and lot size are steps toward creating opportunities for missing middle housing.

ii. Not only should the lots and housing types vary, but developers should be aware of the long-term impacts of create a "single use subdivision." The development community should be allowed to vary a portion of their developments to allow for smaller than normal lot sizes as long as those lots accommodate housing types that match the median household income.

iii. Creating a mixed income neighborhood is inherently more difficult from a policy point of view, but will allow for upward mobility within a neighborhood for those willing to make the investment.

iv. The topography surrounding Tahlequah is incredible. The steep hills and interconnected greenways provide opportunities for residential subdivisions to incorporate the undevelopable parts of the city into each subdivision instead of designing those green spaces into isolation.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Cluster Developments. Tahlequah will benefit from incorporating cluster developments as an acceptable development pattern within the subdivision regulations. A cluster development allows for flexibility in designing lots and blocks that concentrate homes on developable land, preserving areas that have attractive natural features. The same ultimate density is achieved on a per unit acre basis, but less land area is disturbed, and property owners can now benefit from the shared open space, trails, or whatever recreational use they deem appropriate. Cluster developments are common along steep embankments, creeks and streams, and low lying areas where floodplains are present.

Smaller parcels within cluster developments should adhere to zoning setbacks of a currently adopted zoning district for the purposes of simplicity of long-term administration of the zoning code. Depending on the ownership structure of the development though, a parcel could simply be the land area under the house that follows the footprint of the structure. A HOA would be required to fund the shared open space, and maintain private improvements not owned by the individual tenants.

By altering the maximum allowable density requirements, successful cluster development will enhance the environment surrounding the development. Cluster developments can create unique opportunities on previously undevelopable properties. Platting requirements will need to be modified to designate specific uses in the newly preserved land, and to provide protections against default in ownership by a property owners association. The City of Tahlequah should weigh the economic and maintenance impacts of accepting the open space as a public park or conservation area.

An Urban Cluster Development is also possible where there is limited development area along riparian corridors and steep slopes. Urban Cluster development should include multi-story development, and relatively minimal site development. Parking may be allowed within the floodplain, but the property owner/developer should provide residents information regarding the flood potential prior to occupancy. An Urban Cluster Development should allow private property owners opportunities to convey maintenance and development of the floodplain to the City of Tahlequah. The City would then be able to provide maintenance to trails, floodplain areas and utilities located in the easements.

To further the benefits of a comprehensive Low Impact Development (LID) strategy, cluster developments should include Rain Gardens and Bioswales to further reduce the impact of storm water inundations and pollution on local streams and creeks.

Cluster development requires a close negotiation between the City of Tahlequah and property owners/developers. The overall density should not exceed that of a traditional development per unit acre unless the property under consideration is within walking distance (1/4 mile) of downtown or NSU.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

ii. Pocket Neighborhoods Another development pattern that is growing in popularity, but has encountered resistance during platting and permitting phases are pocket neighborhoods. A pocket neighborhood allows for smaller homes to be organized around a common open space with parking to the side or along the edge of a property. By collecting the parking in one area, more space is available in common areas, and between homes. Pocket neighborhoods are similar to Cluster developments, but do not necessarily include and offset of open space to achieve the density desired. Pocket neighborhoods are usually held in private ownership of the dwelling unit, where the POA owns the open space, parking lots and other amenities to fund perpetual maintenance. Special consideration is needed for fire protection and access where the fronts and side yards of dwellings are not accessible from a public right-of-way.

iii. Accessory Dwelling Units Housing options have become more limited in the last few decades across the United States. The ubiquitous pattern of suburban single family neighborhoods and 16 unit apartment buildings has created a gap in housing supply. Stand-alone 4 and 6 unit apartment buildings that once occupied neighborhood lots adjacent to single family residential lots became less popular, and have nearly been zoned out of existence. This is due to the definition of “duplex” and “multi-family” established in the building codes, and the fear that “bad density” allowed above 2 units per lot would create a nuisance to the neighborhood.

The International Residential Code covers 1 and 2 family dwellings. Above 2 units, the International Building Code prevails. The fire rating requirements, sprinkler installation and financing alternatives all contributed to barriers to development of 4 and 6 unit apartment buildings. The trend is reversing though. Communities across the country are reintroducing a small scale option to urban infill through the use of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) that accompany a primary structure on one lot. These can be in the form of a garage apartment or stand alone structure in the back or side yard of an existing home. Sometimes called “granny-flats” or “guest houses” these dwelling units are fully code compliant with a kitchen, HVAC service and exterior

door access. Units can be arranged as an efficiency unit with no separation between the kitchen/living and bedroom, or with a door creating a separated bedroom. Although the internal arrangement of the ADU is not critical to the larger decision of whether they should or should not be allowed, but certain design considerations must be addressed during the permitting approval phase to prevent any undue hardship on adjacent property owners, or potential occupants of the ADU.

1. No more than two persons per unit.
2. Dwelling Unit shall be not less than 400 square feet and no more than 1200 square feet, or 75% of the main structure, whichever is lesser.
3. Must be located on the same lot as the owner's primary residence, and on a combined meter.
4. If the Primary Dwelling is subsequently offered for rent, the property must be registered with the City of Tahlequah if the ADU is not metered separately.
5. No more than one ADU on interior lots, and no more than two ADU's on corner lots.
6. ADU's should be fully compliant with current build code.

iv. Setting a neighborhood-wide density target is counter to many regulations that limited the maximum number of units allowed per acre. The long term benefits of well-managed housing densities are evident in historic neighborhoods, and walkable places that are safe for pedestrians and reduce dependence on automobile travel. Housing densities alone are not enough to create a walkable environment, but must be integrated with a grid of streets – very few or no cul-de-sacs – sidewalks, low vehicle speeds, housing that engage the street with porches and stoops, as well as landscaping that provide shade.

Healthy housing densities will depend on the neighborhood and proximity to Muskogee Ave., Downing Street, NSU, Downtown Tahlequah and places where major corridors intersect.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. The City of Tahlequah will have to engage the development community in collaborative learning activities to determine how to integrate creative housing solutions into the existing Tahlequah housing fabric. It is important to engage housing industry leaders and allied professionals in discussions that will determine the final regulation and policy changes.

b. Changes in the housing regulations will balance more freedom being granted to the development community, but trade-off other needs to create a complete neighborhood environment.

ii. Action Items

4.5.A.01 Establish pilot projects on University West Campus according to Special Area Plan. This pilot plan should allow for flexibility in housing types to meet the needs of NSU students and families.

4.5.A.02

Adopt subdivision regulations allowing cluster developments with varied lot sizes, shared open space, and reduced setbacks.

4.5.A.03

Require bioswales, rain gardens, and other Low Impact Development techniques to control the impact of Storm water.

4.5.A.04

Provide revocable permits for limited garden development in the public right-of-way where it contributes to ongoing Low Impact Development efforts, and does not affect public utilities.

4.5.A.05

Modify Zoning District uses and Subdivision Regulations to incorporate Pocket Neighborhoods, Cluster Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units where appropriate.

iii. Policies

4.5.P.01

The City of Tahlequah encourages a mix of housing types, and creative development patterns that provide for the goals of increasing affordable housing, accessibility to persons with disabilities, and off-campus student housing near NSU and Downtown Tahlequah.

4.5.P.02

The City of Tahlequah supports complete neighborhoods with a mix of diverse housing types, sidewalks, low impact development features, interconnected streets, and dedicated undeveloped open spaces.

4.5.P.03

The City of Tahlequah promotes higher housing densities near Downtown Tahlequah and NSU, and encourages redevelopment on existing single family lots within existing neighborhoods.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, & TRAILS

The purpose of this element is to analyze the current state of the park system and make recommendations for the future growth and development of the park system and trail network as the city develops outward and redevelops inward over the next 20 years, providing opportunities for citizens of and visitors to Tahlequah, reinforcing the area's natural character and economic potential.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The parks, recreation, open space, and trails assessment is broken into two categories: 1.) parks and separated trails, and 2.) on-road bicycle facilities.

Existing Parks & Trails

Parks are generally characterized by the role they serve within the community. They can typically be categorized as follows:

1. **Pocket Parks or Plazas** are usually under 1 acre in size. Pocket parks are more often located in neighborhoods and offer basic open space amenities, such as an open play area, a playground, benches, and shade. Pocket parks can often be introduced into established neighborhoods where a vacant lot exists. Plazas usually occur in more urbanized areas or commercial areas and may include formal or informal art, gathering spaces, performance spaces, benches, shade, and lighting.
2. **Neighborhood Parks** are usually 1-5 acres in size, and serve the neighborhood(s) in which they are located. Ideally, these parks are accessible by pedestrians and/or cyclists and therefore minimal parking is needed. These parks usually serve those within a 5-minute walk, or ¼ mile radius. Such parks often times include a playground, areas for open play, one or two practice sports fields (baseball or soccer are most common and may be configured as a multi-purpose fields), benches, shade, and water.
3. **Community Parks** serve a larger area within the community, and as such, are usually 20-50 acres in size. These are often sports complexes, aquatic

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

parks, or specialized open space areas or preserves. These parks often include support facilities for spectators, such as benches or bleachers, playgrounds, interior walking trails, shade, water fountains, and restrooms. Many times these are drive-to parks, serving a 2-mile radius or larger.

4. **Regional Parks** serve a region larger than the municipality itself. These may include Corps of Engineers parks, State Parks, or municipal parks that offer a unique attraction, often affiliated with the natural environment, but not necessarily so.

Currently, Tahlequah is served by 11 municipal parks, containing 203 acres of parks and open space. When assessing and comparing park systems, the availability of parks is considered in two ways: quantity and distribution. Quantity is often expressed as either the number of acres of land per 1,000 people, or the number of people that one facility serves. The first is frequently used when referring to park land, and the second while referring to specific park facilities, such as a baseball field, aquatic center, or playground. Tahlequah currently has 12.4 acres of park land per 1,000 people; a number that is consistent with other cities of similar size in surrounding states (per NRPA Park Metrics). However, this number does not indicate how parks are serving the population based on their size, their distribution, or their programming.

The second way that parks are assessed refers to their distribution, or their availability to residents. This is

particularly important when considering the distribution of neighborhood parks, which by their name, serve residents within their proximity. Often times, parks are located along drainage ways considered unsuitable for other development, and such is the case in Tahlequah. Several smaller parks are strung along Town Branch Creek, offering a great amenity connected by trails or walking paths to traverse from one park to the next. Likewise, there are other recreational opportunities located in the northwest quadrant of the city. However, there are several areas of Tahlequah that are woefully under served by neighborhood parks. When considering the implementation of future parks, early land acquisition (especially for larger community parks) is easier than acquisition after development is already in place that has a need for parks. Infill of pocket parks and neighborhood parks, in some cases, can be achieved by utilizing vacant lots within a neighborhood or in conjunction with redevelopment or revitalization efforts.

Existing trails in Tahlequah include the Town Branch Greenway, located east of downtown. This trail runs from the southwest corner of the NSU campus to Keetoowah, with the expansion opportunity to link two additional city parks to its south (Ross Park and Kaufman Park). Tahlequah has the opportunity to utilize its system of creeks and streams leading to the Illinois River to create a substantial north-south connection through the center of the city, and a secondary east-west connection along the south central area of town. The addition of an on-street bicycle network could create an interconnected system for alternative transportation.



Ross City Park



Town Branch Greenway

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

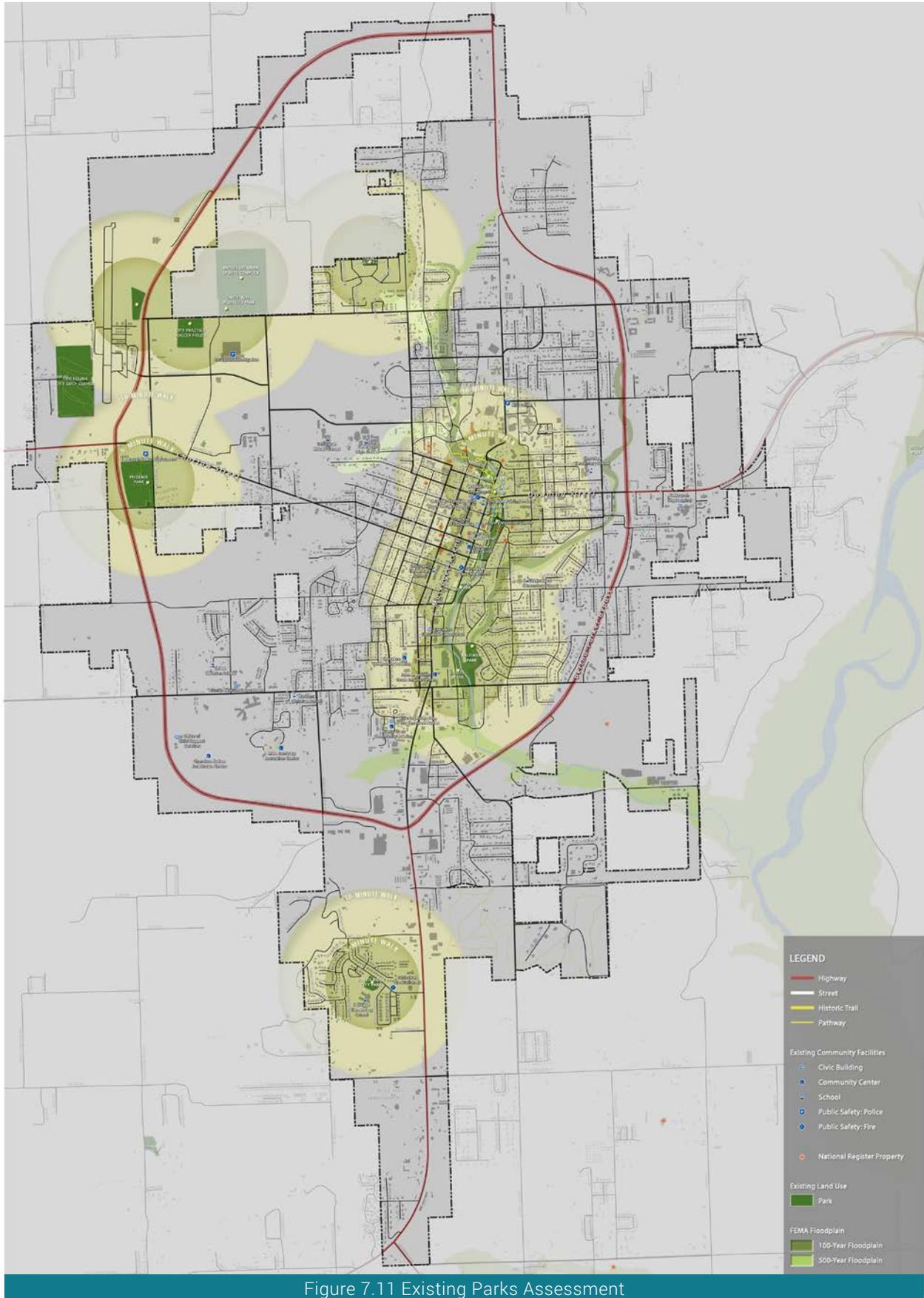


Figure 7.11 Existing Parks Assessment

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Bicycle Facilities Suitability

Currently, Tahlequah has very few on-road bicycle facilities. When considering what streets may be suitable for bicycle facilities, two important factors must be considered: 1.) desired destinations that should be accessible by bike or alternative transportation, and 2.) the safest and most efficient way to accommodate non-vehicular travel. Creating an on-street bicycle network throughout a community serves a transportation need. Recreational needs are generally accommodated along separated trails, at large public land facilities, or in rural areas where traffic volumes are considerable lower. Linking relevant destinations within a transportation network includes obvious locations such as schools (including NSU) and parks, but also includes residential neighborhoods and certain commercial destinations, such as grocery stores or employment centers.

The second factor to consider with bicycle facility suitability is the appropriate facility type. These are characterized as follows:

1. **Sharrows** are “share the road” arrows that are painted in the center of each lane of vehicular travel. These markings indicate to motorists that bicycles have equal access to the lane. These are best utilized along low-traffic (under 5,000 VPD, under 2,500 VPD preferred), lower-speed (35 mph or less, under 30 mph preferred) streets, such as residential streets.
2. **Bicycle Lanes** are separated lanes dedicated to bicycle use,
 - **Traditional Bicycle Lanes** are generally utilized along local streets with higher traffic volumes than those suitable for sharrows. Bicycle lanes can also be utilized where traffic speeds are higher than 35 mph, depending on the width of the bicycle lane (4'-6' for slower speed roads, up to 10' for higher speed roads). When implementing bicycle lanes, there should always be one lane in each direction of traffic flow. A single bicycle lane along a two-way street does not accommodate bicyclists.
 - **Protected (or Buffered) Bicycle Lanes** are bicycle lanes that have an added horizontal or vertical buffer, such as an extra 2' of striped, hashed

width between the outside of the bicycle lane and the inside of the vehicular lane (horizontal), or a collapsible vertical bollard separating the two modes of transportation. Higher speed local streets (40-50 mph) have an increased need for a protected bicycle facility.

- **Cycle Tracks** are dedicated travel lanes for bicycles that occur along one side of a street and accommodate bicycle traffic in both directions. A cycle track features its own continuous center dashed line, to indicate directional flow along it and a vertical barrier (collapsible bollards) to separate it from vehicular traffic. A cycle track should be 12' wide to accommodate two-way bicycle traffic.
 - **Complete Streets** are those that accommodate multiple modes of transportation with dedicated space for each. This might include vehicular lanes, bicycle lanes (included protected lanes or cycle tracks), bus pull-off areas, on-street parking, and accessible sidewalks and intersections.
3. **Bicycle Routes** are signed routes indicating to motorists that bicycles may be present. These are often found in rural areas along roads with low average daily traffic counts (under 5,000 VPD).
 4. **Off-road facilities**, such as multi-use trails are sometimes part of the overall transportation network in areas where on-road facilities cannot be accommodated safely or efficiently.

Further criteria are located in the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

To assess the suitability of each facility type, the following metrics are considered:

- Average Daily Traffic
- Existing Shoulder Availability and Condition
- Pavement Width and Number of Vehicular Lanes
- Jurisdiction
- Vehicular Capacity

Complete bicycle networks promote alternative transportation uses, promote healthier lifestyles, and add to the character and quality of life in thriving communities.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

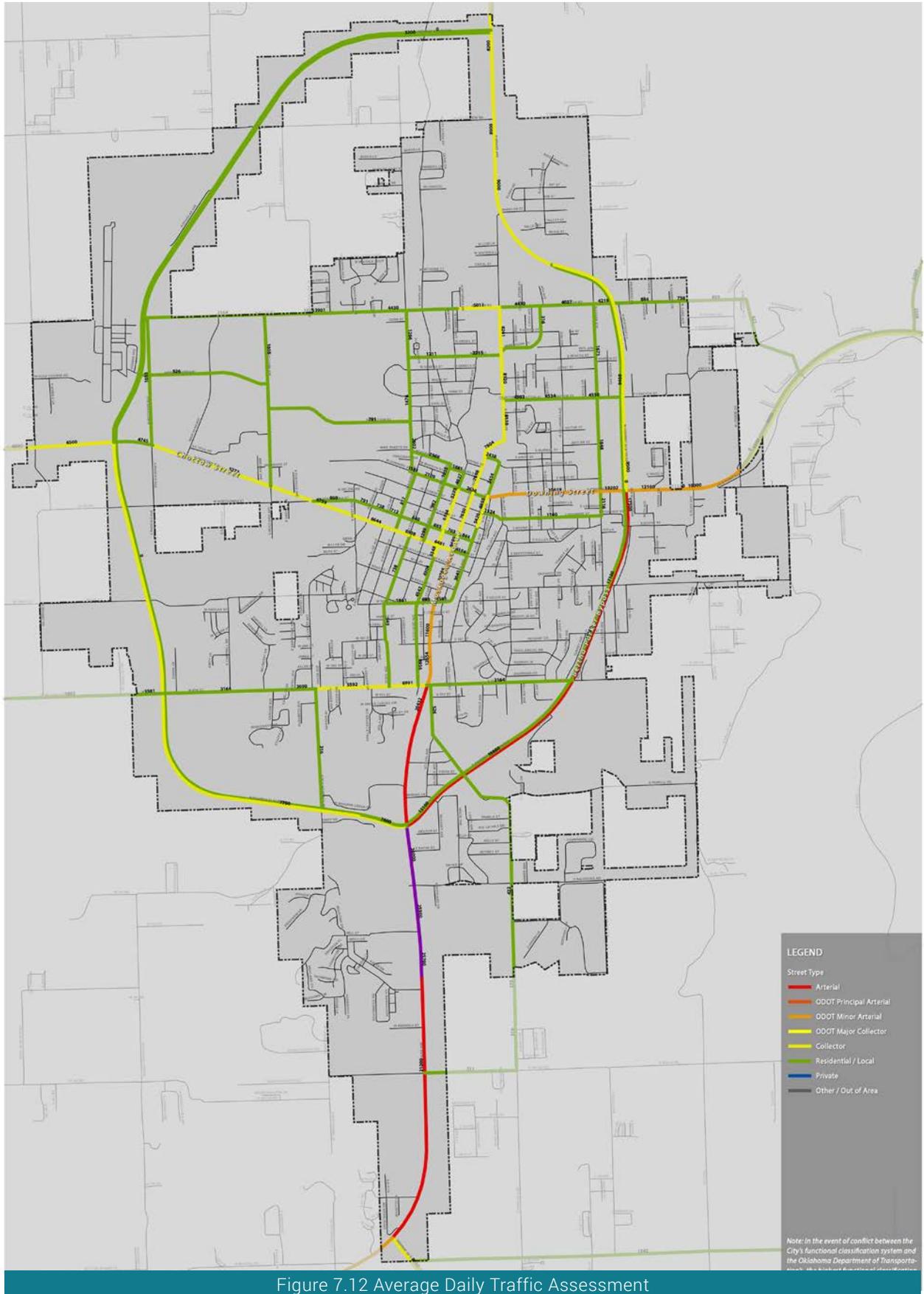


Figure 7.12 Average Daily Traffic Assessment

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

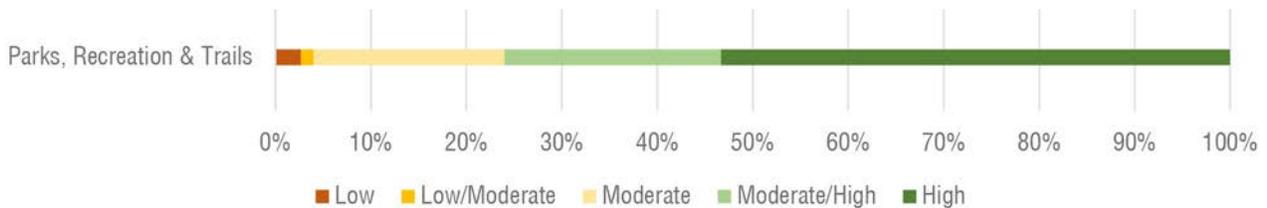
STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

“We will be a natural path to the River Park that encourages healthy involvement in local commerce and tourism.”

PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

1. Identify park and recreational needs to keep pace with the growth of Tahlequah
2. Establish greenway connections between parks, the campus, neighborhoods, and downtown
3. Promote healthy living for all Tahlequah residents

Priority Spectrum Exercise Voting



PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: High

The High Priority category includes the following example directives:

- Acquire vacant lots or derelict properties to infill existing residential areas with mini parks or playgrounds
- Encourage neighborhood park development within walkable distances of every neighborhood
- Proactively acquire land for community parks prior to residential development, reserving space for community parks within key locations within the city
- Implement a robust on- and off- street trails network
- Establish a dedicated capital improvements program to fund upgrades and replacement of obsolete recreational facilities
- Fully-funded programs are run by a dedicated full-time staff member(s)
- Acquire open spaces worthy of preservation or protection
- Targeted program for distribution of parks within appropriate distances from schools and neighborhoods, connected by a network of trails and bicycle facilities

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails element received the second highest number of votes in the “high” category (over 50% of all voters), outperformed only by responses to the Economic Development Element.

PLAN OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan locates parks and trails throughout the city to serve the residents of Tahlequah, sets standards to position for future population growth, and reserve land for future facilities and off-road connections, contributing to community character and encouraging economic development through tourism. The plan considers existing levels of service of current parks and recreation facilities and utilizes community feedback to determine standards for the future parks system.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1: Green Space Organization

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Town Branch Greenway: The existing Town Branch Creek Greenway provides recreation opportunities for residents and visitors to Tahlequah, connecting multiple destinations.

a. This structure is most apparent in downtown, through the NSU Campus, and into traditional neighborhoods east and south of downtown to Fourth Street.

b. Four neighborhood parks, the Splash Pad, and two elementary schools are located along this corridor. One neighborhood park, three community parks, and one municipal golf course are not located along this corridor.

c. 4.5 miles of trails have been constructed (including individual loop trails within parks), with the opportunity to expand southward to Kaufman Park.

d. Opportunities for connections and future green spaces along this corridor can be expanded north past Allen Road and south and east to the Illinois River and the US Army Corps of Engineers property via Tahlequah Creek.

ii. Additional parks are located in the northwest quadrant of town. Existing parks are limited in other quadrants of the City, unless they are those associated with the system of waterways within Tahlequah.

iii. Overall current park land level of service is 12.4 acres per 1,000 people. This level of service aligns closely with communities of similar size in surrounding states.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Opportunity: The City, as well as Tahlequah residents, realize the unique opportunity presented along this corridor by the greenway and opportunity for future parks. The City owns several parcels along the greenway that are undeveloped or unprogrammed open space.

ii. Community Support: The greenway is widely supported among residents:

a. The greenway was rated as “High” in the Priority Spectrum exercise and was ranked as the “most important in terms of a policy perspective” of all Plan Elements by the Steering Committee.

b. Furthermore, 74% of community survey respondents indicated that the availability of alternative transportation opportunities (such as sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and public transit) was “very important” or “important” (67% were “dissatisfied” or “strongly dissatisfied” with the current availability of these facilities).

c. 73% of community survey respondents indicated that walkability was “very important” or “important” (54% were “dissatisfied” or “strongly dissatisfied” with the current level of walkability in Tahlequah). The highest rated responses (the top four, from highest to lowest) to why community survey respondents didn’t walk or bike more often were 1.) the lack of sidewalks or bike facilities, 2.) motorists don’t exercise caution around cyclists, 3.) dangerous intersections, and 4.) sidewalks or bike facilities were in poor condition or unsuitable, .

d. 71% of community survey respondents indicated that they had a NEED for walking and biking trails, and 69% said their needs were less than 25% met. 58.5% said that walking and biking trails were one of the four most important parks and recreation facilities important to their household (walking and biking trails received the highest percentage of responses to this question).

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

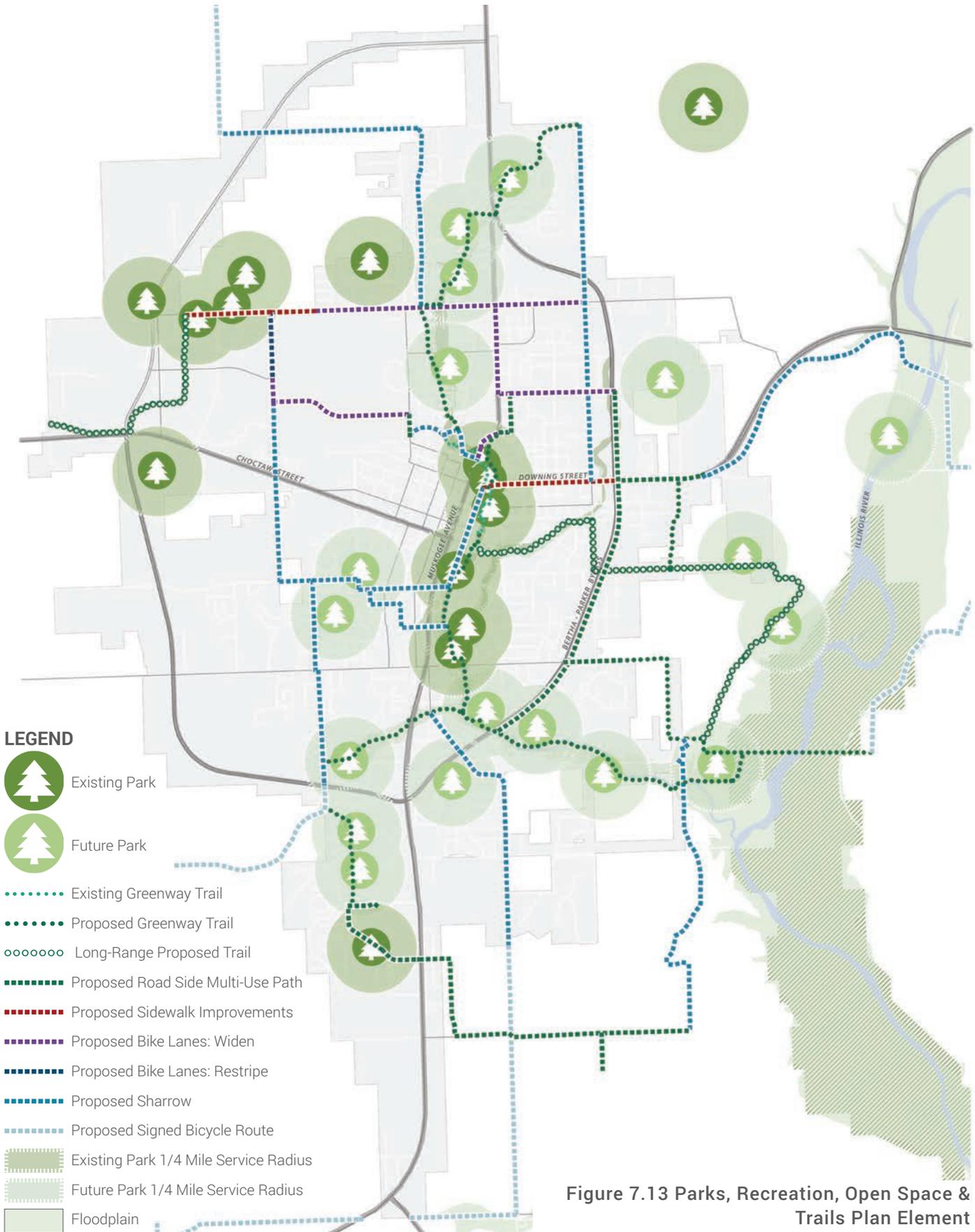


Figure 7.13 Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan Element

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. The comprehensive plan expands the organization of open space further along Town Branch Creek, Tahlequah Creek, and their tributaries.

b. Additional open spaces are proposed along trails or bicycle facilities on the west and south sides of town.

c. Also see Section Six: Specific Interventions: Corridors for more information.

ii. Action Items

5.1.A.01

Create a green space protection policy along drainage & waterways

5.1.A.02

Selectively conserve properties with challenging topography near the Illinois River for passive recreational trails and conservation activities.

5.1.A.03

Continue to acquire and/or secure access easements to properties along Town Branch to complete the Comprehensive Trails System. These include any property deemed suitable, adjacent to Town Branch or Tahlequah Creek, from the NSU campus to the Illinois River.

iii. Policies

5.1.P.01

Large areas of land are preserved for parks, undisturbed meadows, and natural forest.

5.1.P.01

Providing recreational opportunities and alternative modes of transportation via multi-use trails is a focus of the City.

Topic 2. Pocket Parks & Plazas

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Definitions: Pocket parks are smaller-format open spaces (under 1 acre for purposes of this plan); these small open spaces are most powerful and effective when interconnected and/or surrounded by dense development.

ii. Plazas and gathering spaces within the urban environment

a. Norris Park, located in the heart of downtown, provides gathering space for numerous community events and celebrations and should receive a high level of maintenance.

b. The Farmer's Market pavilion in downtown offers opportunities for gathering and events.

iii. Distribution: There are currently 8.5 acres of pocket parks in Tahlequah distributed across 4 parks. These parks include Norris City Park, Ross City Park, South Ridge City Park, and the Splash Pad. Three of these are located in or near downtown, while South Ridge Park is located near Heritage Elementary School in southern Tahlequah.

iv. Existing Level of Service (LOS): There are currently 0.52 acres of pocket parks per 1,000 residents. While this is an appropriate level of service for this park type, that should not discourage the future development of pocket parks in appropriate locations as opportunities arise.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Community Support: Of all the existing parks in Tahlequah, Norris Park was the most visited park in the past year, according to respondents of the community survey. When asked which two parks people had visited the most in the past year, 78% had visited Norris Park, followed by 23% visiting Sequoyah Park and 15% visiting Anthis Brennan Sports Complex. 16.5% had visited the splash pad, with remaining parks receiving lower response rates. It is notable that three of the four most visited parks are located in or adjacent to downtown.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS



Norris Park is one example of a pocket park in Tahlequah

ii. Reasoning for Target LOS: Level of service (LOS) is useful as a guide to track park land growth relative to population increases. It should supplement demand-based needs (referring to recreational needs expressed by the community) and be utilized for projecting future park land and facility needs for budgeting and acquisition purposes. Once land is developed, the opportunity to acquire open space for public benefit has passed. Current levels of service for each park type is assessed and compared to peer communities. Target levels of service are determined based on public input and support for various park types. Based on the target LOS, both current and future needs can be determined in order to meet the goals established.

For pocket parks, the Target LOS is to remain consistent with the current LOS (0.52 acres per 1,000 people). This translates to a small current deficit of 1.6 acres, and a projected deficit of 2.6 acres in the year 2040, as population increases.

iii. Appropriate locations: Pocket parks are most appropriate in a more urbanized context, whether among commercial areas such as downtown, or in mature neighborhoods surrounding it. Older neighborhoods tend to be more dense with smaller lot sizes and connected with a flexible grid street network. Pocket parks are easily retrofitted into such areas by securing one or two vacant lots.

iv. Appropriate programming/design: Pocket parks can be as basic as green space with shade, benches, and sidewalks. The addition of playgrounds, shelters,

splash pads, or level open play fields are also appropriate. Pocket parks in more commercialized areas tend to reflect their siting by providing more urban features such as plazas, bandstands/performance space, formal or informal public art, and lighting.

v. Other future opportunities for pocket park placement: Future pocket parks should be included in the development of, or connected to, Village Centers or mixed use buildings.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Incorporate pocket parks and playgrounds where infill or redevelopment areas occur (where neighborhood parks of 1-5 acres are not feasible or space is not available) to provide outdoor recreation resources for nearby residents. These can be retrofitted where one or two adjacent vacant lots occur within Urban Transitional or Stable Neighborhoods. Refer to Appendix F.

b. Generally, smaller, disconnected parks and playgrounds have a larger maintenance cost per acre than their neighborhood and community park counterparts. This is primarily due to labor costs mobilizing, maintaining, then reloading and traveling to the next property. These costs can be reduced by engaging community stakeholders and property owners associations through an “adopt a park” program.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

TABLE 5.1: PROJECTED NEEDS based on CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE

TYPE	CURRENT SIZE RANGE	CURRENT ACRES PER PARK TYPE	CURRENT LOS: ACRES/1000 POP (2018)	PROJECTED NEED	PROJECTED NEED
				YEAR 2030	YEAR 2040
				based on CURRENT LOS (2030)	based on CURRENT LOS (2040)
<i>Population</i>			16,354	19,468	21,326
Mini Parks	0.25-0.5 ac.	8.5	0.52	1.62	2.58
Neighborhood Parks	0.5-1 ac.	41	2.51	7.81	12.46
Community Parks	varies	155	9.48	29.51	47.12
Regional Parks	varies	0	0.00	0.00	0.00

TABLE 5.2: PROJECTED NEEDS based on TARGET LEVELS OF SERVICE

TYPE	TARGET SIZE RANGE	TARGET LOS STANDARD: ACRES/1000 POP	CURRENT NEED	PROJECTED NEED	PROJECTED NEED
			YEAR 2018	YEAR 2030	YEAR 2040
			based on TARGET LOS STANDARD	based on TARGET LOS STANDARD	based on TARGET LOS STANDARD
<i>Population</i>			16,354	19,468	21,326
Mini Parks	0.5-1 ac.	0.52	0.00	1.62	2.59
Neighborhood Parks	1-5 ac.	3.0	8.06	17.40	22.98
Community Parks	20-50 ac.	10.0	8.54	39.68	58.26
Regional Parks	100+ ac.	2.0	32.71	38.94	42.65

2015 US Census Bureau Estimate: 16,354

ii. Action Items

5.2.A.01

Encourage the development of Pocket Parks, programmed or not, along greenways to fill in “missing teeth” particularly along waterways.

5.2.A.02

Regularly incorporate pocket parks and playgrounds in redevelopment areas so that no house is more than ½ mile from a dedicated open space.

5.2.A.03

Strategically place pocket parks in areas that are otherwise under served by open space, but do not locate them arbitrarily.

5.2.A.04

Continue to maintain Norris Park in downtown at a

high level to reflect community pride and vibrancy of the downtown core.

5.2.A.05

Plazas and other gathering spaces should be considered in areas where Village Nodes and Future Open Space occur in close proximity to activate spaces beyond traditional business hours.

iii. Policies

5.2.P.01

Tahlequah provides educational opportunities to residents and businesses for ongoing pocket parks and plaza maintenance activities.

5.2.P.02

Tahlequah provides adequate funding to support park activities.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS



Felts City Park



Sequoyah City Park

Topic 3. Neighborhood Parks

OBSERVATIONS

i. Definition & Programming: Neighborhood Parks are usually 1-5 acres in size and serve surrounding residential neighborhoods (usually within a 5-minute walk, or ¼ mile radius). These should be walk-to facilities with little parking required, and programmed for relatively unstructured activities. Typical facilities may include a playground, open play field / backstop / goals, loop walking trails, shade, benches, and water.

ii. Quantity: There are currently 4 neighborhood parks totaling 41 acres in Tahlequah (based on size): Sequoyah City Park, Kaufman City Park, Felt's City Park, and the practice soccer fields. However, the practice soccer facility on Allen Road functions more as a small community park rather than a neighborhood park.

iii. Existing Level of Service (LOS): The existing level of service of neighborhood parks is 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. This is an appropriate level of service. However, the distribution of these parks reflects significant service gaps for many residential areas.

iv. Distribution: Three of the four existing neighborhood parks are located along Town Branch Creek (Sequoyah, Kaufman, and Felt's), while the practice soccer facility is located in the northwest quadrant of the city.

As noted earlier, the practice soccer facility does not function as a neighborhood park. Therefore, the only area of Tahlequah served by neighborhood parks is the central neighborhoods between Downing and 4th.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Community Support: 62% of respondents to the community survey indicated that they had a need for neighborhood parks, but only 21% said that their need was being 100% met. 24% said their need was 75% met, 26% said their need was 50% met, 19% said their need was 25% met, and 11% said their need was not met at all. The four most important park facilities to respondents' households were walking and biking trails, community parks, neighborhood parks, and playground equipment, in that order.

ii. Reasoning for Target LOS: Level of service (LOS) is useful as a guide to track park land growth relative to population increases. It should supplement demand-based needs (referring to recreational needs expressed by the community) and be utilized for projecting future park land and facility needs for budgeting and acquisition purposes. Once land is developed, the opportunity to acquire open space for public benefit has passed. Current levels of service for each park type is assessed and compared to peer communities. Target levels of service are determined based on public input and support for various park types. Based on the target

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

LOS, both current and future needs can be determined in order to meet the goals established.

For neighborhood parks, the Target LOS increases to 3.0 acres per 1,000 people, a slight increase from the existing LOS of 2.5 acres per 1,000 people. This translates to a small current deficit of 8 acres, and a projected deficit of 23 acres in the year 2040, as population increases. The current deficit of 8 acres translates into approximately 2-8 additional parks needed currently (depending on size), but given the notable service gaps within existing residential areas, an additional 2 parks will not meet current need.

iii. Appropriate locations: As discussed immediately prior, many residential areas are insufficiently served by neighborhood parks. Much like pocket parks discussed in Topic 2, existing residential areas should be retrofitted where possible to facilitate this need. Retrofitting efforts can happen in conjunction with those of Pocket Parks, so there is not an unnecessary duplication of park service. For example, in downtown neighborhoods with lots ranging in size from 7,500 s.f. to 10,000 s.f., an infill park opportunity on one or two adjacent lots would consist of a pocket park. By strategically programming the pocket park, it can accommodate a neighborhood park role. Similarly, infill park opportunities in neighborhoods with slightly larger lots may result in a neighborhood park. In future neighborhoods, adequate room should be reserved by the developer for the inclusion of a neighborhood park that is walkable from the entire neighborhood. This also requires that sidewalks or adequate multi-use trails are provided.

iv. Appropriate programming/design: Neighborhood parks should include play equipment, benches, shade, water, and open play areas. Where space allows, multi-purposed practice field(s) with a backstop and goals may be provided, as may courts such as tennis, basketball, or sand volleyball. Splash pads are also commonly located within neighborhood parks.

v. Other future opportunities for placement of neighborhood parks: Within the context of the Framework Plan in the effort to expand the reach and interaction with the greenway, several locations for future parks have been indicated. These locations are not specific, but rather refer to remaining undeveloped parcels of land. Actual park sizes and programs are to be determined as parcels are secured, with the intent to continue to add stops and destinations for recreation along the greenway.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Incorporate neighborhood parks in existing neighborhoods (where land can be acquired to do so) to provide outdoor recreation resources for nearby residents. These can be retrofitted where one or two adjacent vacant lots occur within Urban Transitional or Stable Neighborhoods. See also Topic 2: Pocket Park Recommendations. Refer to Appendix F.
- b. Acquire land and develop neighborhood parks along the greenway as it is expanded south and east, prior to residential development.
- c. This plan considers the proposed parks per previous studies and accommodates all with the exception of two in close proximity: one on the east side of the Bypass at Mission and First, and one on the west side of the Bypass along East Fourth.

ii. Action Items

5.3.A.01

Facilitate the development of Neighborhood Parks, initially programmed or not, along greenways to fill in “missing teeth” particularly along waterways.

5.3.A.02

Regularly incorporate neighborhood parks and playgrounds in redevelopment areas so that no house is more than ½ mile from a dedicated open space. It is not necessary to duplicate this service with Pocket Parks, but rather incorporate whichever park type can be accommodated within the infill or vacant space available.

5.3.A.03

Strategically place neighborhood parks in currently unserved residential areas, but do not locate them in areas already served by another neighborhood park.

5.3.A.04

Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance requiring developers to dedicate 0.04 acres per dwelling unit or \$796 in-lieu fees per dwelling unit. The City of Tahlequah will provide such in-lieu-of facilities within a reasonable distance from the development.

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iii. Policies

5.3.P.01

Tahlequah recognizes that Neighborhood parks serve as an important resource for residents and families.

5.3.P.02

Tahlequah adequately funds amenities for parks that provide comfort, encourage use, and maintain safety for residents.



Anthis-Brennan Family Sports Complex

Topic 4. Community Parks

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Definition & Programming: Community parks are generally over 20 acres in size, serve the community within a 2-mile radius, and are drive-to facilities. They typically include formal sports fields with seating, walking trails, playgrounds, open play fields, shade, water, benches, lighting, and restrooms.

ii. Quantity: there are currently three community parks (including the municipal golf course) totaling 155 acres. Anthis-Brennan Sports Complex and Phoenix Park are two traditional community parks in Tahlequah.

iii. Existing Level of Service (LOS): There are currently 9.48 acres of community parks per 1,000 residents. If the golf course is removed, there are 85 acres total, translating to 5.2 acres per 1,000 residents. The range of 5-8 acres of community parks per 1,000 residents is typical.

iv. Distribution: Existing community parks are located on the west side of Tahlequah.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Community Support: 63% of respondents to the community survey indicated that they had a need for community parks, but only 20% said that their need was being 100% met. 35% said their need was 75% met, 28% said their need was 50% met, 12% said their need was 25% met, and 5% said their need was not met at all. The four most important park facilities to respondents' households were walking and biking trails, community parks, neighborhood parks, and playground equipment, in that order.

ii. Reasoning for Target LOS: Level of service (LOS) is useful as a guide to track park land growth relative to population increases. It should supplement demand-based needs (referring to recreational needs expressed

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

by the community) and be utilized for projecting future park land and facility needs for budgeting and acquisition purposes. Once land is developed, the opportunity to acquire open space for public benefit has passed. Current levels of service for each park type is assessed and compared to peer communities. Target levels of service are determined based on public input and support for various park types. Based on the target LOS, both current and future needs can be determined in order to meet the goals established.

For community parks, the Target LOS is 10 acres per 1,000 people. This Target LOS is based on the assumption that the golf course is included in the Existing LOS of 8.5 acres per 1,000 people, meaning an increase of 1.5 acres per 1,000 people for community parks. If the golf course was not included in this number, then the Existing LOS would be 5.2 acres and the Target LOS would be 6.7 acres per 1,000 people. This translates to a current deficit of 33 acres, and a projected deficit of 43 acres in the year 2040, as population increases. The current deficit could be accommodated with the addition of 1 community park in the near future, but the important target to work toward is anticipating the eventual need for 1-2 community parks by 2040. This should be a longer-term target, since Anthis Brennan offers newer facilities that are accommodating current demand.

iii. Appropriate locations: Current community parks are located on the west side of Tahlequah. While opportunities for a community park on the east side of Tahlequah (particularly in undeveloped areas along the greenway expansion) should not be ignored, it is more important that neighborhood parks be infilled in western Tahlequah than new community parks be added in eastern Tahlequah.

iv. Appropriate programming/design: Not all community parks are sports complexes or aquatic centers. While increased need for these facilities should be accommodated within community parks, this park type can also accommodate other forms of recreation, including mountain bike trails, pump tracks, nature trails, natural open space, or water-related activities. These types of program elements may be more appropriate along greenway expansion areas than traditional sports fields.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Community parks may be incorporated to the overall development of greenway expansion, if opportunities exist. Community parks in these areas should be programmed to be contextually appropriate. High-impact uses (sports fields with high noise and light levels) may not be appropriate along a more nature-oriented system of parks and trails. Refer to Appendix F.

b. The provision of new community parks is of secondary importance to the need to provide neighborhood parks throughout much of the city.

ii. Action Items

5.4.A.01

Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance requiring developers to dedicate 0.04 acres per dwelling unit or \$796 in-lieu fees per dwelling unit. The City of Tahlequah will provide such in-lieu-of facilities within a reasonable distance from the development.

5.4.A.02

Explore opportunities for the acquisition of property for future community parks, even if the intent is to leave them undeveloped for some time. This strategy would be beneficial to employ particularly in southeast Tahlequah.

iii. Policies

5.4.P.01

Community parks serve as an activity center for the city and support festivals, trails, and passive recreational activities.

5.4.P.02

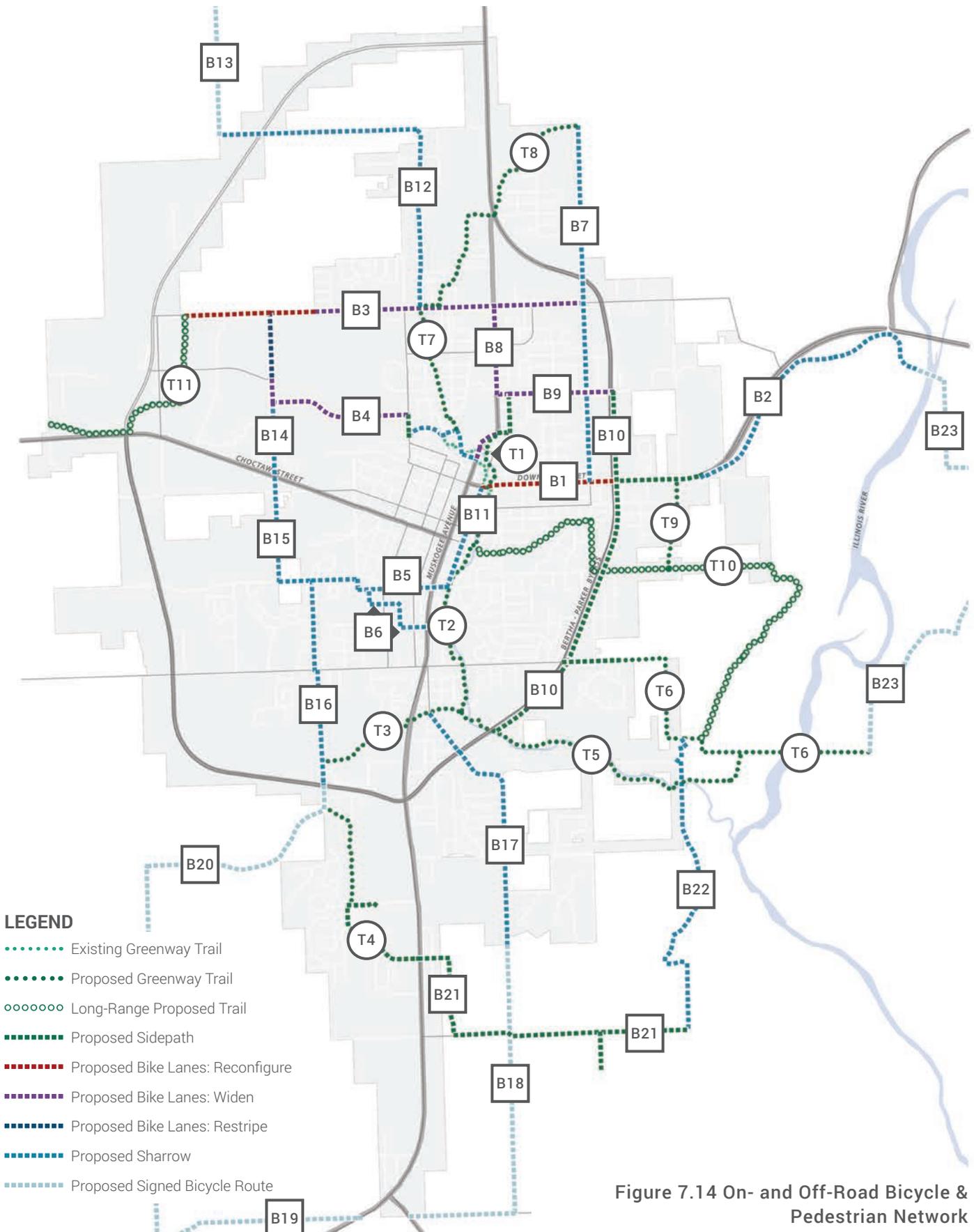
The City of Tahlequah, along with community and business leaders recognize the importance of community parks and promote activities that increase use and provide an outlet for various types of recreation.

5.4.P.03

Tahlequah is dedicated to creating a comprehensive system of trails, sidewalks, and accessibility features that connect each type and size of park.

PLAN ELEMENTS

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LEGEND

- Existing Greenway Trail
- Proposed Greenway Trail
- o-o-o-o-o Long-Range Proposed Trail
- Proposed Sidepath
- Proposed Bike Lanes: Reconfigure
- Proposed Bike Lanes: Widen
- Proposed Bike Lanes: Restripe
- Proposed Sharrow
- Proposed Signed Bicycle Route

Figure 7.14 On- and Off-Road Bicycle & Pedestrian Network

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Topic 5. Local Opportunities & Connections

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. A unique opportunity exists for extending the connection between downtown Tahlequah and the Illinois River will be a loop trail around the east side of Tahlequah through the undeveloped and unincorporated areas back along Downing Street. This area is dominated by steep terrain and has very little potential for development.
- ii. There is an opportunity to create trail connectivity north and south along Tahlequah Creek to join residential and commercial development in north Tahlequah to Heritage Elementary School in south Tahlequah.
- iii. Additional opportunities to connect to schools, parks, neighborhoods, and commercial centers distributed at greater distances in west Tahlequah can be made via bicycle lanes and sharrows.

B. DISCUSSION

- i. Creating an interconnected alternative transportation network around the city that consists of both on- and off-road facilities expands mobility options for the entire population, while giving mobility opportunities to non-drivers.
- ii. Successful greenways, trail networks, and bicycle networks connect relevant destinations across the community, spanning various land use, demographic, and economic situations..

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Greenway / Multi-Use Trail Segments expand the current greenway in downtown north and south. Additionally two east-west greenways are proposed: one along Ross Branch from Stick Ross Mountain Road to Tahlequah Creek and the Illinois River, and one connecting 4th Street to points east and south and crossing the Illinois River to access the proposed mountain bike park. Two longer-term connections are proposed as well: one along Town Branch / Tahlequah Creek from Keetoowah to the Illinois River and another connecting Anthis Brennan Park to the golf course (Refer to Framework Plan, Parks Element graphic). Also refer to Specific Interventions: Corridors, in Section 06.

T1 Town Branch Creek from Sequoyah Park north to NSU

Purpose: The extension of the existing trail north along the creek provides an off-road connection from the Sequoyah Park to the community splash pad, Norris Park, and the eastern side of the NSU campus, providing an alternative to on-street connections to reach the same destinations. An enhanced at-grade crossing of Downing at Water is likely necessary until a grade separated crossing can be accommodated.

Destinations: Sequoyah Park, Splash Pad, Norris Park, NSU.

T2 Town Branch / Tahlequah Creek from Sequoyah Park south to Ross Branch

Purpose: The extension of the existing greenway south to Ross Branch connects Ross Park, Kaufman Park, and Felts Park to downtown, creating a series of destinations along the water. Segments of this greenway are only a couple of blocks east of Muskogee, where in conjunction with infrastructure improvements along the road, can help incentivize redevelopment in the heart of Tahlequah just south of downtown.

Destinations: Ross Park, Kaufman Park, Felts Park, "Middle Muskogee" redevelopment area, future greenway expansion east to Greenwood Elementary School, Ross Branch greenway.

T3 Ross Branch from Tahlequah Creek west to Stick Ross Mountain Road

Purpose: The Ross Branch Greenway would provide a major east-west connection between Stick Ross Mountain Road and the Illinois River.

Destinations: Connections via Stick Ross Mountain Road to schools and future parks north and south, a future park along Ross Branch Greenway, commercial areas along Middle Muskogee, and connection to Tahlequah Creek north to downtown.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

T4 Ross Branch from Stick Ross Mountain Road south to Heritage Elementary and Muskogee Ave

Purpose: Providing connectivity from southern residential areas to downtown is an opportunity to be pursued while undeveloped land is still present. A connection from Stick Ross Road past Fisher can be established via a multi-use trail traveling south to Heritage Elementary and on to Muskogee Elementary to join segment B20.

Destinations: Connections via Stick Ross Mountain Road to schools and future parks north and south, a future park along this proposed trail extension, a future village node, South Ridge Park, Heritage Elementary, and the Cherokee Casino via segment B20.

T5 Ross Branch from Tahlequah Creek east to the power line easement and segment T6

Purpose: Extending the Town Branch / Tahlequah Creek Greenway south and east across the bypass, this alignment can provide connections between future residential and commercial development into downtown and eastward to the Illinois River upon joining segment T6.

Destinations: Future parks, future development, Illinois River via segment T6.

T6 4th Street / Powerline Easement / Illinois River Bridge / Future Mountain Bike Park

Purpose: Provide a connection from Tahlequah east to the proposed Mountain Bike Park, located east of the Illinois River and south of the powerline easement.

Destinations: Mountain Bike Park, Illinois River.

T7 Town Branch / Tahlequah Creek from Norris Park north to the Bypass

Purpose: Extending the Town Branch / Tahlequah Creek Greenway north past NSU to the bypass provides a major connection and redevelopment/infill development incentive to this important area of Tahlequah. The floodplain eventually ends at the bypass, where a multi-use trail can complete the network to Cedar and Diedrick Lane.

Destinations: Downtown, NSU, a future park, and future residential areas.

T8 Multi-Use path from the Bypass at Wheeler to Diedrick Lane

Purpose: This multi-purpose trail would complete the loop through Tahlequah from the Tahlequah Creek Greenway to Cedar.

Destinations: A future Village Center, a future park, future residential areas, and completing the network at Cedar / Diedrick.

T9 Multi-Use path from Downing to Ross (Medical Campuses)

Purpose: This trail provides a connection through the medical campuses to link Downing to Ross.

Destinations: Northeastern Health System, Cherokee Nation WW Hastings Hospital.

T10 Long Range Multi-Use Path from the greenway at Choctaw east to the Illinois River

Purpose: This connection provides a method by which to move from downtown east to the Illinois River via segment T6.

Destinations: Downtown, Greenwood Elementary School, medical facilities (hospitals and doctors' buildings), two future parks, a future Village Center, future residential, and the Illinois River.

T11 Long Range Multi-Use Path from Anthis Brennan to the Municipal Golf Course

Purpose: Provide a connection between Anthis Brennan and the municipal golf course via Pecan Creek.

Destinations: Anthis Brennan, Tahlaquatics, municipal golf course.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

b. On-Road Bicycle Network Segments work with the multi-use trail and greenway system to complete connections throughout the areas of Tahlequah that are not in proximity to drainage systems. (Refer to Framework Plan and Parks Element graphics). The On-Road facility types proposed include the following:

Proposed Reconfiguration - Reconfiguring roadways to allow space for bicycle lanes can be accommodated through restriping, narrowing vehicular lanes, or eliminating a lane. In many cases, this can be achieved by restriping the roadway and creating two 6' bike lanes from a 12' vehicular lane that has been removed. Vehicular lanes can be as narrow as 10', while the center turn lane should be 12' wide. Bicycle lanes should be 5-6' in width, with more width preferred along busier streets. Three-lane roads can usually accommodate traffic volumes up to 15,000 vehicles per day (VPD).

Proposed Bike Lanes: Restripe - In some cases, bicycle lanes can be accommodated by restriping the existing road cross section. This can occur on street widths as narrow as 30', with two 10' travel lanes and two 5' bicycle lanes. Bike lanes are appropriate on roads where posted speed limits or traffic volumes are too high for Sharrows (see below). Bike lanes are generally appropriate on roads with posted speed limits of 25-45 MPH.

Proposed Bike Lanes: Widen - In some cases, existing road cross sections are too narrow to accommodate

bicycle lanes in each direction of travel. In cases where vehicular volume or posted speed limits are too high for sharrows (see below), it may be necessary to widen the road in order to accommodate multi-modal transportation options.

Proposed Sharrow - Sharrows are "Share the Road Arrows" that are placed in vehicular lanes in each direction of travel, signaling that cyclists may be present in the shared lanes. These often occur on lower-volume (up to 5,000 VPD), lower-speed (up to 35 MPH) roads.

Proposed Signed Bicycle Route - Signed bicycle routes generally occur in rural areas with lower traffic volumes. This signage alerts drivers to the potential presence of cyclists.

Proposed Sidepath - Sidepaths are multi-use trails or wide sidewalks (12' typical width) that accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians within a road right-of-way but separated from the road itself via a grass or landscape buffer. They provide enhanced safety, often in a space-saving configuration as compared to a street that includes separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities (such as both bike lanes and sidewalks). Sidepaths are essentially multi-use paths located within a street right-of-way.

In several cases, a combination of facility types are suggested along a route, based on the appropriateness of the environment.



Town Branch Greenway

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

B1

East-West Connection: Downing from Downtown east to the Bypass

Jurisdiction: ODOT

Recommended Facility: Signed Bike Route and Sidewalks

Recommended Cross Section: 4 vehicular lanes; sidewalks in each direction of travel.

Destinations: Downtown, Town Branch Greenway, nearby Cherokee Elementary School

B2

East-West Connection: Hwy 62 from the Bypass east to Old Hwy 62 and the Illinois River

Jurisdiction: ODOT

Recommended Facility from Bypass to Old Hwy 62: Multi Use Path

Recommended Multi Use Path Application: 12' separated path along the south side of Hwy 62

Recommended Facility along Old Hwy 62: Sharrow

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel

Destinations: Medical facilities, Illinois River, Riverside Park

B3

East-West Connection: Allen Road from Anthes Brennan to Cedar

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Reconfiguration: Bicycle Lanes (widen)

Recommended Cross Section: 3 vehicular lanes (1 vehicular lane in each direction of travel with a continuous left turn lane or median), bicycle lanes in each direction of travel. From Moccasin Ave to Sleepy Hollow Lane, the four-lane road can be reduced to a three-lane road with bicycle lanes in each direction of travel by restriping. From Sleepy Hollow Lane to Cedar, Allen Road will have to be widened to accommodate bicycle lanes in each direction of travel.

Destinations: Anthis Brennan Sports Complex, Tahlaquatics, Greenway access near Vinita (south to NSU or north to future park, Diedrick Lane), access to NSU via Grand, north-south access via Cedar.

B4

East-West Connection: Pendleton from Moccasin to Vinita / Seminary / NSU trail

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility along Pendleton: Bicycle Lanes (street widening)

Recommended Bicycle Lanes Cross Section: 3 vehicular lanes (1 vehicular lane in each direction of travel with a continuous left turn lane or median), bicycle lanes in each direction of travel. A sidewalk exists along the south side of Pendleton to accommodate pedestrians.

Recommended Facility along Jones from Pendleton to Circle: Multi-Use Path

Recommended Multi-Use Path Application: Since this segment is a short connector from Circle St. to Pendleton, and land is largely undeveloped along the west side of the road, a 10-12' separated multi-use path is recommended as a cost savings option to on-road bi-cycle lanes requiring a road widening for a short distance.

Recommended Facility along Circle St, Smith St, and Seminary Ave: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel. An alternative sharrow route could continue the connection between Tahlequah Schools and NSU by continuing east along Pendleton, Vinita, and Seminary Ave.

Destinations: Anthis Brennan via Moccasin, Tahlequah Middle School, Tahlequah High School, NSU, Downtown, Town Branch Greenway

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

B5

East-West Connection: Fox and South from Moccasin extended to Water

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

Destinations: A future Village Center, a future park, Ross Park, Town Branch Greenway

B6

Predominately East-West Connection: Basin Ave to W South St via First St, Cherokee Ave, Parker St, and Mission Ave.

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

Destinations: Mission Park, Ross Branch future greenway (segment T2).

B7

North-South Connection: Cedar from Downing to Diedrick Lane

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

Destinations: Downing Complete Street, Cherokee Elementary School, NSU via Crafton Street, west link to Anthis Brennan via Allen, northern multi-use trail terminus at Diedrick Lane.

B8

North-South Connection: Grand / Valley from Spring to Allen

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility along Valley from Spring to Normal: Bicycle Lanes (widen)

Recommended Cross Section: 2 vehicular lanes and 2 bicycle lanes (one in each direction of travel). This can be accommodated in as little as 30', with two 10' vehicular lanes and two 5' bicycle lanes. This recommendation is based on the need for alternative transportation options connecting NSU throughout the rest of the bicycle and pedestrian network, and a traffic volume that is higher than acceptable levels for sharrows.

Recommended Facility connecting to and along Lewis Ave: Multi-Use Path

Recommended Multi-Use Path Application: Lewis is planned to be closed to vehicular traffic, making it a pedestrian and bicycle street. Ideally, the street will be striped to indicate a cycle track on one side (12' minimum width for two-way bicycle traffic) and pedestrian use on the other.

Recommended Facility along Crafton from Lewis to Grand, and along Grand from Crafton to Allen: Bicycle Lanes (widen)

Recommended Cross Section: Same as Valley, above (also in B7)

Destinations: Downtown, Town Branch Greenway, NSU, Anthis Brennan via Allen

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

B9

East-West Connection: Crafton St from Grand to Bertha Parker Bypass

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Bicycle Lanes (Widen)

Recommended Cross Section: 2 vehicular lanes (1 in each direction of travel), bicycle lanes in each direction of travel. May maintain on-street parking along NSU athletic facilities, if necessary, but relocation of parking is recommended to reduce user conflict of vehicular backing movements. Road widening is required if parking is retained or where it does not currently exist to create a 36' roadway width.

B10

North-South Connection: Bertha Parker Bypass from Crafton Street to Ross Branch (segment T5)

Jurisdiction: ODOT

Recommended Facility: Sidepath

Recommended Cross Section: 12' Multi-Use Sidepath along the east side of the bypass, separated by a 10' minimum buffer.

Destinations: Ross Branch, connectors to downtown, hospitals, and existing residential neighborhoods.

B11

North-South Connection: Water Ave from Downing to South

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel. Water Ave has a notable amount of current bicycle use. The addition of sharrows will remind vehicular traffic to watch for cyclists.

Destinations: Downing St, Downtown, Historic District, Sequoyah Park, Splash Pad, Town Branch Greenway

B12

North-South and East-West Connection: Jones Ave from Allen to Grandview, and Grandview Rd from Jones to Jarvis

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel. This route has a notable amount of current bicycle use, likely by recreational cyclists leaving Tahlequah for longer road rides. The addition of sharrows will remind vehicular traffic to watch for cyclists.

Destinations: Rural road cycle routes, Allen Road bicycle lanes

B13

North-South Connection: Jarvis Rd from Grandview to points north

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County

Recommended Facility: Signed Bike Route

Recommended Signed Bike Route Application: Signed Bike Routes generally occur in rural areas with lower traffic volumes. This route has notable bicycle use, likely by recreational cyclists seeking longer road routes. Signage alerts drivers to be aware of cyclists.

Destinations: Recreational points north, City of Tahlequah bicycle and pedestrian network.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

B14 North-South Connection: Moccasin from Allen to Choctaw

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility from Allen to Pendleton: Bicycle Lanes

Recommended cross section: 2 vehicular lanes and 2 bicycle lanes (one in each direction of travel). This can be accommodated in as little as 30', with two 10' vehicular lanes and two 5' bicycle lanes. This recommendation is based on the need for dedicated bicycle facilities connecting Tahlequah schools along Pendleton to Anthis Brennan Park. From Allen to Airport Parkway, the road can be restriped to accommodate two 13' vehicular lanes and two 6' bicycle lanes. A safer bi-cycle lane application would reduce vehicular lanes to 12' and creating two 7' buffered bicycle lanes. From Airport Parkway to Pendleton, the road should be widened to accommodate two 11' vehicular lanes and two 6' bicycle lanes. A preferred alternative design solution, if feasible, includes a 12' multi-use path along the east side of Moccasin from Pendleton to Allen, which accommodates both bicycle and pedestrian traffic between the schools and the park, with appropriate high visibility crosswalks and flashing yellow beacons at the intersection of Allen and Moccasin for safe crossing.

Recommended Facility from Pendleton to Choctaw: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

B15 North-South Connection: Moccasin from Choctaw to Fox

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

Destinations: Choctaw, future Village Center

B16 North-South Connection: Hillcrest / Stick Ross Mountain Road from Fox to Fisher (including future roundabout or other intersection improvements at Fourth St. to remove dogleg between Hillcrest and Stick Ross Mountain)

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

Destinations: Two future parks, future Ross Branch greenway, commercial areas at the Bypass

B17 North-South Connection: Park Hill from Echota to city limits of Tahlequah

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah

Recommended Facility: Sharrows

Recommended Sharrow Application: Sharrow striping occurs in the center of each vehicular lane, for each direction of travel.

Destinations: Future parks, future greenway expansion, Middle Muskogee commercial, Golf Course, points south of Tahlequah

B18 North-South Connection: Park Hill from city limits of Tahlequah to Murrel

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County

Recommended Facility: Signed Bicycle Route

Recommended Signed Bike Route Application: Signed Bike Routes generally occur in rural areas with lower traffic volumes. This route has notable bicycle use, likely by recreational cyclists seeking longer road routes. Signage alerts drivers to be aware of cyclists.

Destinations: City of Tahlequah, points south of Tahlequah

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

B19 North-South Connection: Murrel from Stick Ross Mountain to Park Hill

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County

Recommended Signed Bike Route Application: Signed Bike Routes generally occur in rural areas with lower traffic volumes. This route has notable bicycle use, likely by recreational cyclists seeking longer road routes. Signage alerts drivers to be aware of cyclists.

Destinations: City of Tahlequah, points south of Tahlequah

B20 North-South Connection: Stick Ross Mountain Rd from Bypass to Murrel

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County

Recommended Signed Bike Route Application: Signed Bike Routes generally occur in rural areas with lower traffic volumes. This route has notable bicycle use, likely by recreational cyclists seeking longer road routes. Signage alerts drivers to be aware of cyclists.

Destinations: City of Tahlequah, points south of Tahlequah

B21 East-West Connection: from Southridge Road at Muskogee / Casino drive / E Willis Road to S 530 Rd.

Jurisdiction: City of Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, Cherokee County

Recommended Facility: Sidepath

Recommended Cross Section: 12' Multi-Use Sidepath along the east side of the bypass, separated by a 10' minimum buffer.

Destinations: Cherokee Casino, Cherokee Heritage Center, Cherokee National Museum

B22 North-South Connection: S 530 Rd. from E Willis Rd to E Nalley near the electric substation (segment T6)

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County

Recommended Facility: Sharrows (upon road paving). Intermediate facility: Signed Route (gravel road).

Recommended Application: This connector route joins the Cherokee Nation's cultural amenities to the future segment T6 crossing the Illinois River to the future Mountain Bike Park. For the foreseeable future, this natural surface road should be designated as a signed route. If the road is paved in the future, sharrows should be marked on the pavement until traffic volumes warrant dedicated bicycle facilities, such as bicycle lanes, a cycle track, or a sidepath.

B23 North-South Connection: S 540 Rd / E 760 Rd / S 543 Rd / S 540 Rd from the future Mountain Bike Park to the future Illinois River Bridge at segment B2.

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County

Recommended Facility: Signed Route

Recommended Application: This connector route joins the future Mountain Bike Park along the east side of the Illinois River to the northern segment B2 at Riverside Park. For this route to be a feasible connector, two crossings over the Illinois River are required, making this a long-term route.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

ii. Action Items

5.5.A.01

Annex, acquire property, or secure perpetual easements to extend greenway to Illinois River along Town Branch and Tahlequah Creek, as well as to extend the greenway north to the bypass.

5.5.A.02

Acquire property to create a greenway along Ross Branch from Stick Ross Mountain Road to the Illinois River.

5.5.A.03

Acquire property or access easements to extend the multi-use trail south from Fisher Road to Heritage Elementary.

5.5.A.04

Acquire property or access easements to extend a multi-use trail northeast from the bypass near Wheeler to Diedrick/Cedar.

5.5.A.05

Identify utility easements that can be used as potential trails if access easements are obtained.

5.5.A.06

Establish procedures to acquire trail easements during development actions.

5.5.A.07

Incorporate the on-road bicycle network into the Street Master Plan to accommodate bicycle facilities with infrastructure improvements as specified in Plan Outcomes, above.

5.5.A.08

Incorporate the on-road bicycle network into the City's Capital Improvements Plan to create the network in connected segments.

5.5.A.09

Provide signage or educational campaign regarding Oklahoma §47-11-1208 "A. When overtaking and passing a bicycle proceeding in the same direction, a person driving a motor vehicle shall exercise due care by leaving a safe distance between the motor vehicle and the bicycle of not less than three (3) feet until the motor vehicle is safely past the overtaken bicycle."

iii. Policies

5.5.P.01

Tahlequah maximizes access to creeks and rivers with connections between neighborhoods and subdivisions.

5.5.P.02

Tahlequah supports the use of city streets by bicyclists and the development of on-road bicycle facilities.



Town Branch Greenway

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Topic 6. Regional Opportunities & Connections

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. There is no strong connection between the outfitters that operate on the Illinois River and the economic center of Tahlequah. See also "Specific Interventions: The Economic Value of Tourism," page 72.
- ii. Opportunities for connection to the large nature preserves northeast of Tahlequah could bring increased tourism to Tahlequah.
- iii. Opportunities to attract Lake Tenkiller visitors into Tahlequah could further strengthen Tahlequah's position as a hub for recreational activity.
- iv. Local recreation-based shops in town have loyal customers that enjoy the social and recreational aspects of the sport.

B. DISCUSSION

- i. The value of attracting regional tourists to Tahlequah is to capture the sales tax of products they purchase and encourage activity in the Downtown area. By elevating connections to other outdoor activities, the subsequent return trips to Tahlequah for other events will be more likely.
- ii. Multiple outdoor recreational activities will promote longer tourist stays or more frequent visits. Mountain biking courses, hiking trails, river floating, and lake usage all go hand in hand.
- iii. Tahlequah's diverse terrain appeals to both mountain bikers (east of town) and road cyclists (on flat rural roads west of town).
- iv. Coordinate with the local skate shop to accommodate their customers.
- v. Paddle boarding on lakes and rivers is becoming increasingly popular in the U.S.
- vi. Students and non-college residents enjoy recreational running. In addition to the other running events (such as the Freedom From Cancer 5k and Bird 5k). A joint ventured running event like a 5k, 10k, or half marathon would bring the community together and promote support of downtown merchants.

- vii. Adding hotel and/or bed & breakfast options near downtown will ensure visitors stay and eat there rather than leaving town for a less unique experience.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Addition of parks on the Illinois River as well as extension of the greenway to connect to the river.
- b. Addition of a trail along the Illinois River and extension of the greenway to connect to the river.

ii. Action Items

5.6.A.01

Consider the acquisition and development of a mountain bike course in large natural areas on the Northeast and East sides of town.

5.6.A.02

Establish long-distance signed bike routes west of town for to attract out-of-town road cyclists. Connections to other communities strengthens these routes as destinations for cyclists.

5.6.A.03

Coordinate with NSU to joint host a 5k, 10k or half marathon in Tahlequah that starts and ends at Norris Park.

5.6.A.04

Acquire river front property according to this plan for trail easement and new parks along the Illinois River.

iii. Policies

5.6.P.01

Tahlequah is poised to capitalize on recreation opportunities with adequate staff support, funding, and resources to attract and retain visitors.

5.6.P.02

Tahlequah is the center of commerce for adventure sports and maintains that position through dedicated funding and ongoing maintenance of existing facilities.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS



Norris Park in downtown Tahlequah

Topic 7. Relationship to Livability/Quality of Life, Tourism, and Economic Development

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Parks reflect a community's values. How a community envisions, plans, and utilizes its park facilities is a direct indicator of its values, whether the community is a young suburban city focused on sports fields and playgrounds, an urban core preserving historic open spaces, or an environmentally-conscious town concerned with conserving its natural amenities.

ii. Parks reinforce a community's social fabric. By providing gathering spaces, venue or public events spaces, or simple open green spaces for relaxation and recreation, parks provide spaces which bring the community together.

iii. Parks encourage a community's health and well-being. Safe, well-maintained, and well-programmed parks provide places for people to exercise, play, or unwind both physically and emotionally. A return to nature can be just what the body and mind need to offset the stress of everyday life.

iv. Parks stimulate tourism. A town's tourism portfolio is greatly expanded by urban plazas, downtown greenway, sports complex and adjacent river or lake activities. Tourist have the option to enjoy the parks, participate in a tournament for a day or stay longer to enjoy the river/lake-related recreation.

v. Parks promote economic growth. Parks provide relief from urban development, a green oasis of sorts, that can increase surrounding property values, stimulate tourism, and stimulate economic growth by providing open spaces for special events and tournaments. A symbiotic relationship exists between a walkable downtown, a campus and trails along a creek. The restaurants and brewpubs are the gathering space where town and gown meet in the middle.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Each area of town should have a park or open space in that area so the residents can access it without having to drive long distances to enjoy active or passive recreational opportunities.

ii. As mentioned in the Community Character Element: Festivals & Events topic, the downtown merchants are missing out on tourism dollars each summer when visitors come to float the Illinois River but bypass town on their way in or out.

iii. Tahlequah residents expressed a desire to expand their greenway/trail network to connect their downtown to neighborhoods, other parks and schools.

iv. Expanding park offerings is something residents support but the maintenance of those new facilities is something that must be planned for.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 5: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Strategic addition of new parks sites to keep pace with community growth so each area of town has access to a park or open space.

b. Addition of parks on the Illinois River as well as extension of the greenway to connect to the river.

c. Expanded trails and on-street bicycle facility network to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks and the downtown.

ii. Action Items

5.7.A.01

Establish a bike share program in partnership with NSU once the trail network is expanded.

5.7.A.02

Publish a trails map depicting current and major planned trails and bicycle facilities.

5.7.A.03

Build partnerships with private recreational providers (bike shops, float operators, skate shops etc.)

5.7.A.04

Ensure that the Parks & Recreation Department budget increases with each addition to the greenway and/or new parks to provide the adequate maintenance.

5.7.A.05

Assign different levels of maintenance to different areas of each park or open space then train staff to understand the difference between entries, heavy public use and natural areas that require less intense care.

iii. Policies

5.7.P.01

Tahlequah is dedicated to creating a comprehensive parks and open space network that increases the health and welfare of residents.

5.7.P.02

Recreation facilities promote health and wellness, and connect residents to outdoor activities.

5.7.P.03

Establish a parks and grounds maintenance level matrix for each park and open space with corresponding budgets based on those approved levels.



Tahlequah Skate Park

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

As growth occurs, so must the city's infrastructure, to keep pace with the changes in population and land use. The roads must accommodate transporting more residents while the storm drainage, water system, and sanitary sewer system must be able to serve the current and future population changes. Likewise, community facilities need to serve the needs of the Tahlequah residents and visitors. Each of these services are a vital component of a thriving community.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The existing conditions included in this element are streets, storm drainage, municipal water system, municipal sanitary sewer system and community facilities. Many times the utility systems and streets work in tandem, as they are often located in the same right of way. Low impact development with regard to streets and storm drainage can provide best management practices, which will often directly affect the environmental

sensitivity of the solution as well as the project's overall return on investment. Currently,

Streets

- 25% of pavement in need of rehab or reconstruction (source: HUB 2013)
- Some of these are arterials and collectors with development potential or are gateways into the City
- Some streets in the "marginal" category may have slipped into the "immediate repair" category since plan completion
- 7 major street projects awaiting construction funding

Storm Drainage

- No known capacity issues in system, unless a large storm event coincides with surge in the Illinois River
- No reported structural deficiencies in need of immediate correction
- Detention policy is in place
- Water quality is biggest issue
- Very few water quality BMP's are implemented with new development

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Tahlequah Creek is on the 303d list
- Much needed storm water management farther up the watershed from creeks and streams. No Low Impact Development Standards adopted.

Municipal Water System

- Raw water sources are Illinois River and Lake Tenkiller
- Over 1 million feet of water line; 22% is 4" or less
- 6" min. water line size for new installations
- No current capacity or maintenance issues
- 6.5 MGD between 2 WTPs to be expanded to 11.5 MGD by 2022.
- Average usage is 1.4 MGD
- Over 6 MG of storage available in system
- Based on storage and pressure, growth to the north and west sides of the city are most easily accommodated

Municipal Sanitary Sewer System

- WWTP rated for 2.5 MGD, adequate until population approaches 25,000
- No consent orders from ODEQ
- Rehab program for old lines in place
- Old lines are monitored and replaced if problems are found
- 6" min. sanitary sewer line for new installations, with most being 8" and up

Community Facilities

The City of Tahlequah has many valuable historic structures that should be preserved. Challenges to maintaining these buildings range from structural and foundation problems, HVAC/Electrical issues, ADA accessibility, and finding new uses for smaller and often obsolete spaces. Nonetheless, these buildings require time and attention to preserve, and financial resources to respond to maintenance issues.

STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

"The future of Tahlequah's growth is dependent on a resilient and robust utility infrastructure."

PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

1. Improve current infrastructure to keep pace with the community's growth
2. Manage and improve utilities over time through phased implementation
3. Continue to monitor and improve Tahlequah's green infrastructure with regard to surrounding ecosystems

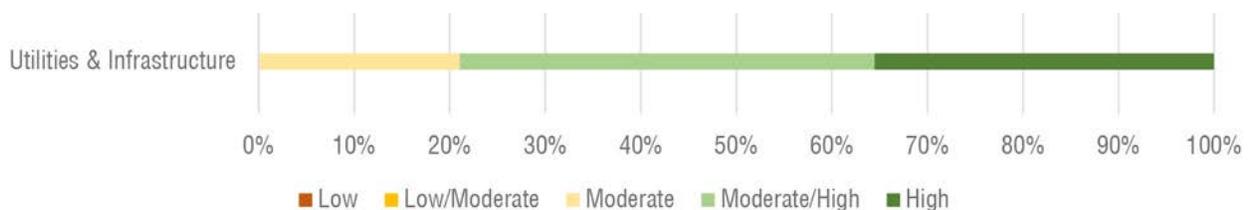
PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: Moderate-High

Moderate

- Identify deteriorated water and sewer lines; proactively replace damaged lines before failure
- Rehabilitate aging equipment and structures at existing sewer plant; set aside funds for upgraded treatment processes as new requirements are made by ODEQ
- Set up recurring inspections of all storm drainage structures to identify and repair damaged pipes and structures before failures occur
- Implement more stringent storm water quality measures for new development
- Recurring inspection of water storage tanks for early detection of needed repairs and rehab
- Inspect and stock replacements for critical equipment for WTP and pump stations to prevent failures and reduce downtime during replacement of equipment
- Upgrade aging electrical infrastructure
- Investigate pollution sources in Tahlequah Creek

Priority Spectrum Exercise Voting



PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

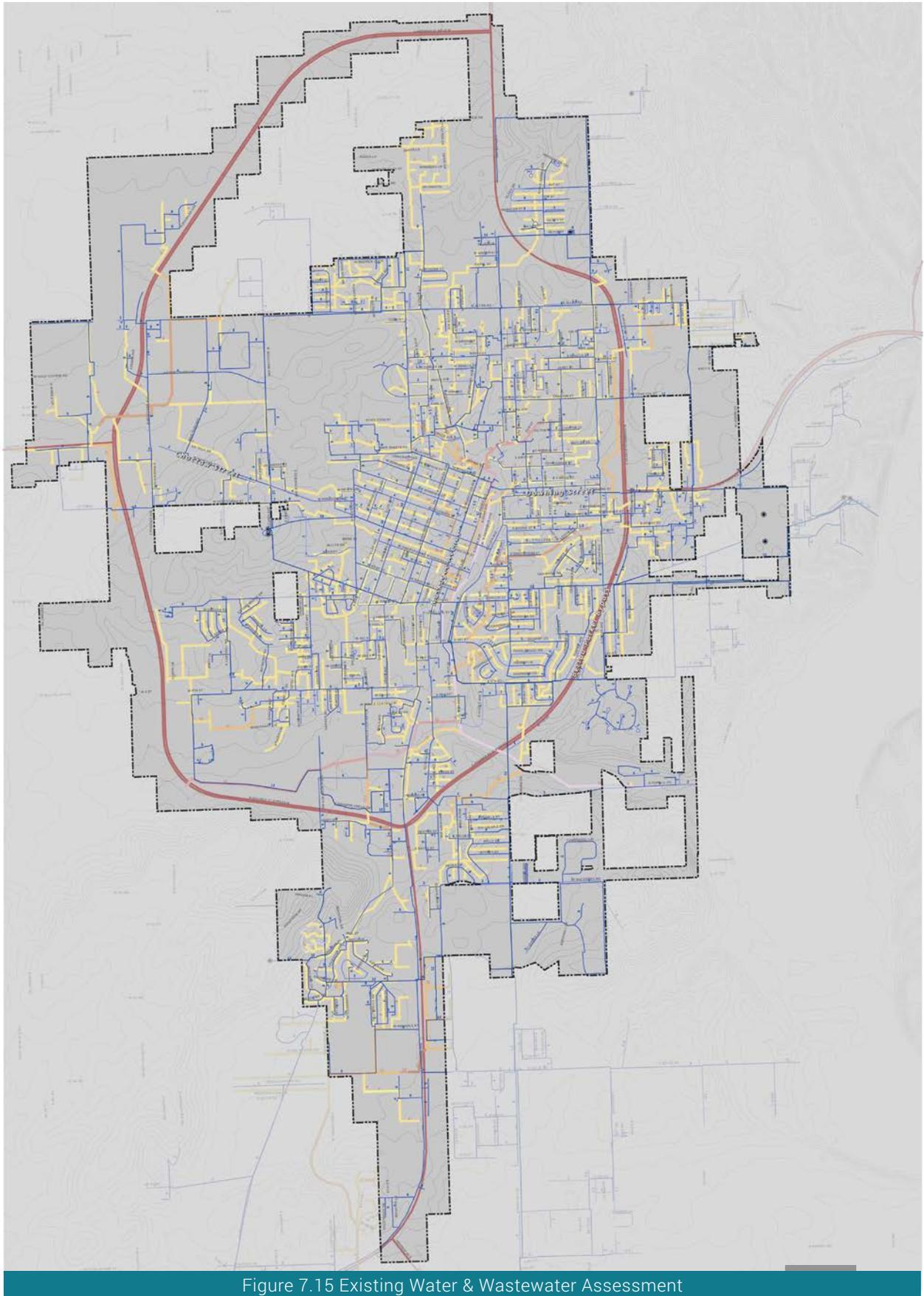


Figure 7.15 Existing Water & Wastewater Assessment

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

High

- Robust program to proactively repair and replace aging or deteriorated water and sewer lines
- Replace with new or expand existing sewer plant with upgraded equipment to meet future needs
- Aggressive program to replace aging storm drainage structures
- Strict storm water quality ordinances and policies for new construction including retrofitting storm water quality measures on existing systems and policies that encourage low-impact development
- Upgrade and or expand water storage structures
- Expand water production at plants and proactively prepare for upgrades in anticipation of changes to permit limits
- Aggressive program to upgrade and/or replace electrical grid, including converting overhead lines to underground
- Take aggressive action to improve water quality in Tahlequah Creek with goal of removing it from 303d list

PLAN ELEMENT OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

Tahlequah must have a robust utility infrastructure in order to grow. Population growth, land use changes, and utility infrastructure are intricately related. Furthermore, the need for more quality community facilities is predicated on population growth in an area of town that lacks an existing facility. As such,

1. The City must actively engage with Tribes the location of new housing, based on a community-supported plan, to address subsidized infrastructure impacts, and
2. The City must understand the financial impacts/costs of developments to the City over the near-, mid-, and long-term horizons prior to approving them.

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1. Streets

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. Street maintenance is the most common transportation priority for Tahlequah residents. The quality of the street surface and edge condition is directly related to safety, and vehicle speed.
- ii. Streets that incorporate sidewalks and storm water management features provide the best accessibility and provide the fewest interruptions that impede access.
- iii. Much of the congestion in downtown Tahlequah is created by poor signal timing along Muskogee Avenue. This congestion has a series of subsequent impacts;
 - Because access into and out of parking spaces along Muskogee is obstructed by idling cars, parking is difficult to access.
 - Drivers understand that lights create long wait times, and speeding vehicles contribute to unsafe conditions when lights turn yellow.
 - Unsafe driving conditions make pedestrians also feel unsafe. The same signal timing issues impact crosswalk timing, further creating a barrier to a healthy walkable environment for pedestrians.
- iv. Limited secondary access through another North-South oriented street forces drivers to use Water Street and Basin/Bluff Streets which creates safety issues on those streets. Realigning Basin and Water to form a contiguous North-South corridor is necessary.
- v. The inconsistent intersection standards and roadway sections throughout Tahlequah create difficult turning geometries
- vi. Improving access into and out of downtown Tahlequah will reduce congestion and increase the performance of the existing street grid.
- vii. Careful right-of-way design is vital to supporting storm water management and floodplain management.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

B. DISCUSSION

- i. Pavement repair is conducted on an as-needed basis.
- ii. Pavement edge protection will improve the life cycle of intersection paving and create a safer environment for pedestrians and motorists.
- iii. Pavement edge protection may require regrading and storm water management projects at intersections with challenging terrain.
- iv. Street maintenance has a direct impact on storm water drainage and curb design and storm water features should be integrated into the design of all new roadway repair and improvements.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Continue to improve the road network that includes streets, sidewalks, and bike paths where applicable and link commercial and residential areas to community destinations.
- b. Support the implement of Low Impact Development Standards in street design for environmental best management practices.
- c. Support the incorporation of accessible solutions on sidewalks along length of Muskogee beyond just the downtown core.

ii. Action Items

6.1.A.01

Provide curb and gutter for existing roads with adjacent steep grades.

6.1.A.02

Implement synchronized signalization along Muskogee Ave.

6.1.A.03

Realign Water Street and Basin Ave to create a contiguous connection between Park Hill Road and Chickasaw Street according to the Future Transportation Improvement Plan, Figure 7.8, page 132.

6.1.A.04

Include the entire right-of-way (both sides of the street) adjacent to parks, riparian corridors, and drainage systems as critical components of the comprehensive landscape and trails system design.

6.1.A.05

Adopt Low Impact Development Standards as standard details in Street Section details sheets.

6.1.A.06

Incorporate contiguous sidewalks and accessibility features on both sides of Muskogee Avenue.

iii. Policies

6.1.P.01

Tahlequah is dedicated to managing street performance and level of service to support healthy, safe, walkable neighborhoods, and commercial districts.

6.1.P.02

Tahlequah supports ongoing operation and maintenance of roadways that reduces long-term financial costs.

6.1.P.03

Tahlequah is dedicated to implementing complete streets policies.

Topic 2. Storm Drainage

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Low Impact Development Flooding is a common and devastating event that is largely avoidable with good planning policy and implementation. Encroachment on flood zones has occurred incrementally over many years, and communities across the country are left with a legacy of development that suffers from regular flood inundation, with little recourse other than wholesale buyouts of the properties and a moratorium on redevelopment. Alternative storm water management practices have developed in recent years that can alleviate some of the incidents of flooding, and provide opportunities to improve natural stream function, remove pollutants, improve bank stability, restore plant diversity, and connect greenways used for recreational and maintenance purposes.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

ii. Low impact development (LID) refers to “systems and practices that use or mimic natural process that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of storm water in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.”¹ Rain Gardens and Bioswales are both terms used to describe types of LID features.

B. DISCUSSION

i. In practice the Low Impact Development (LID) strategy relies less on large scale storm water detention structures and more on smaller scale collection basins evenly spaced throughout neighborhoods and commercial parking lots. Rain Gardens integrated into parking lots can provide a dual benefit of incorporating landscaping into otherwise bare open spaces, and supporting the comprehensive storm water management strategy. Bioswales are usually incorporated into the public right-of-way between private property and the roadway edge. Both designs have features that are beneficial beyond just storm water mitigation.

ii. LID should be integrated into Engineering Standards, Site Planning requirements and the landscape ordinances to successfully integrate the design, engineering, and permitting of these systems.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Clean and safe water is an absolute necessity for all functions within the City of Tahlequah. Water is also a recreational feature that generates income for local businesses and is an integral part of this comprehensive plan.

b. Residents are encouraged to maintain water quality by limiting uses of fertilizers and lawn chemicals, and disposing of household chemicals at an approved facility, and wherever possible preventing animal waste from entering creeks and streams.

c. Commercial and Industrial properties can promote storm water quality by using the same methods mentioned above in addition to capturing parking lot oil and debris before effluent leaves the property.

d. Distributed storm water collection and detention practices will support groundwater recharge and improve water quality downstream.

ii. Action Items

6.2.A.01

Adopt Design Standards for landscaping, bioswales, rain gardens, and urban tree wells that can be inserted into building permits.

6.2.A.02

Create citywide inventory of LID structures that contribute to city-wide storm water management plan

6.2.A.03

Use wayfinding and signage to educate the public on the downstream impacts of pollution with a “This water drains to the Illinois River” campaign.

6.2.A.04

Update, modify and complete the Tahlequah Public Works Authority Long Range Plan 2011-2031 for Water - Wastewater - Electric.

iii. Policies

6.2.P.01

Tahlequah is dedicated to protecting the waters of Tahlequah through proactive pollution control.

6.2.P.02

Tahlequah will mitigate the impact of flood waters by adhering to design standards and implementing sensible regulations.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Topic 3. Municipal Water System

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. Raw water comes from two sources, the Illinois River and Lake Tenkiller.
- ii. Reported peak 7.2 MGD production is almost at capacity. The average production is 4.5-5 MGD.
- iii. New commercial/institutional growth will require increased capacity on East and South sides of Tahlequah.

B. DISCUSSION

- i. Water quality issues have largely been mitigated, but should be monitored according to ODEQ guidelines.
- ii. Planning priority is to use existing infrastructure and focus on infill development wherever possible before further expansion of sewer and water systems.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Limit expansion of the municipal water system to projects that support the overall economic development and land use goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

ii. Action Items

6.3.A.01

Continue to operate and maintain equipment to high level of service according the best management practices.

6.3.A.02

Create and publish Capital Improvement Plans for new and improved infrastructure systems to inform the public and businesses of ongoing maintenance activities.

iii. Policies

6.3.P.01

Infill development and maintenance of existing infrastructure is a higher priority than new and expanded service for greenfield developments.

6.3.P.02

A close working relationship with ODEQ is vital to maintaining compliance.

Topic 4. Municipal Sanitary Sewer System

A. OBSERVATIONS

- i. Sewer plan is near its end of life and will require replacement and modification according to HUB Engineering Study.
- ii. Existing site could accommodate increase from 2.5 MGD average to 8-9 MGD.
- iii. Digester that is no longer in service could be rehabilitated and brought back online.

B. DISCUSSION

- i. Mixed storm water and sewer flows are still an issue.
- ii. Reducing storm water inundation into sanitary sewer lines would improve performance.
- iii. Sewer lines below 6" should be eliminated and should be standard 8" and larger for new installations.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. Support land use planning with infill development with special projects along redevelopment sites and corridors.
- b. Align priorities of maintenance with other economic investments made my Cherokee Nation and NSU.

ii. Action Items

6.4.A.01

Continue to operate and maintain equipment to high level of service according the best management practices.

6.4.A.02

Create and publish Capital Improvement Plans for new and improved infrastructure systems to inform the public and businesses of ongoing maintenance activities.

iii. Policies

6.4.P.01

Infill development and maintenance of existing infrastructure is a higher priority than new and expanded service for greenfield developments.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

6.4.P.02

A close working relationship with ODEQ is vital to maintaining compliance.

Topic 5. Community Facilities

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Residents expressed interest in a Community Recreation facility similar to a YMCA that would provide group classes, exercise and weight training as well as community rooms that could be used for events.

ii. The Armory serves as a vital public gathering place and central location for various community activities.

iii. There is a strong physical relationship between the Armory, Town Branch, Downtown Tahlequah, Sequoyah Park, Cherokee Capitol Square, and the Cherokee National Peace Pavilion. These spaces can serve as a broad public space for a variety of events and festivals.

iv. The comfort stations in Norris Park need rehabilitation.

B. DISCUSSION

i. The existing festivals and events are a great way to engage the public and encourage visitors to Tahlequah.

ii. Minor improvements to Town Branch will create an environment that does not exist anywhere else in Oklahoma. Town Branch can serve a variety of purposes and the completion of the Trails System will be an enormous connector for each of the public facilities along the Branch.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Continue to operate and maintain public facilities and dedicate staff time to regular inspection and reporting of conditions.

b. Provide information for the public that would like to rent facilities, and hold public events.

ii. Action Items

6.5.A.01

Perform ADA compliance audit for all municipal facilities.

6.5.A.02

Use Tahlequah Alliance as the organizer for community facility needs to avoid duplication and saturation.

iii. Policies

6.5.P.01

Tahlequah is a community that hosts a wide range of cultural, arts, and entertainment events. Community facilities are well maintained and adequate for a thriving population.

6.5.P.02

Tahlequah is a center for a variety of recreational, cultural and entertainment activities. Tahlequah supports tourism and promotes opportunities for visitors to engage in the arts and culture unique to Eastern Oklahoma.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this element is to give direction to future policy, regulating and funding decisions that will serve to move forward the vision and goals.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The economic development assessment considers the existing activities that support the creation of new jobs, promoting Tahlequah as a destination outside of the community, and identifying economic needs that require minimal intervention. The core assets in Tahlequah are NSU, and the Cherokee Tribe while the core challenges are low median personal income and limited industries or businesses that export products outside of Tahlequah. The assessment focused on the following economic activities:

- Strong Economic engine with NSU, City, Tribe and Businesses as partners
- Focus on reduction of sales tax loss to other cities
- Capture tourism experiences
- Festivals, community-wide events, and “see-and-do activities”
- Growing quality jobs
- Linking housing choices with income and cost of living data
- Highlighting the unique features of Tahlequah that will sustain economic growth.

STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION

“The City encourages tourism and is committed to growing local business and creating a healthy job market.”

PLAN ELEMENTS

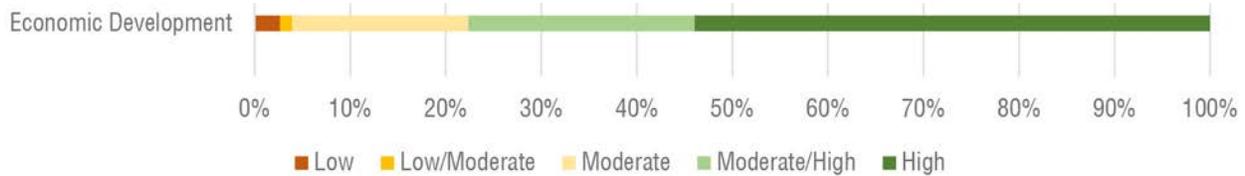
ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



PLAN ELEMENT GOALS

1. Fund Strategic Tahlequah Alliance with Chamber, NSU, Tribes, and City of Tahlequah
2. Champion existing local business and unmet market sectors
3. Incentivize job creation to retain recent college graduates
4. Capitalize on tourism that supports the community character of Tahlequah
5. Reduce poverty and increase access to job training
6. Create programs for volunteerism and the innovative use of the sharing economy

Priority Spectrum Exercise Voting



PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS

Result: Highest

- Financially support infrastructure development where quality jobs will be created
- Incentivize relocation of regional and national employers
- Tourism is a key to future growth and should be encouraged in all facets of city administration
- Continued educational opportunities for all generations are a key feature of Tahlequah
- Incentives for businesses should be focused on smaller business types that offer a product or service presently unavailable
- The city should incentivize a mix of job opportunities
- Tahlequah should encourage more festivals and events to increase consumer traffic wherever possible
- Enhance economic development efforts with a close working relationship with all stakeholders large and small
- Incentivize disadvantaged socioeconomic groups that may not have access to legal and financial assistance

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

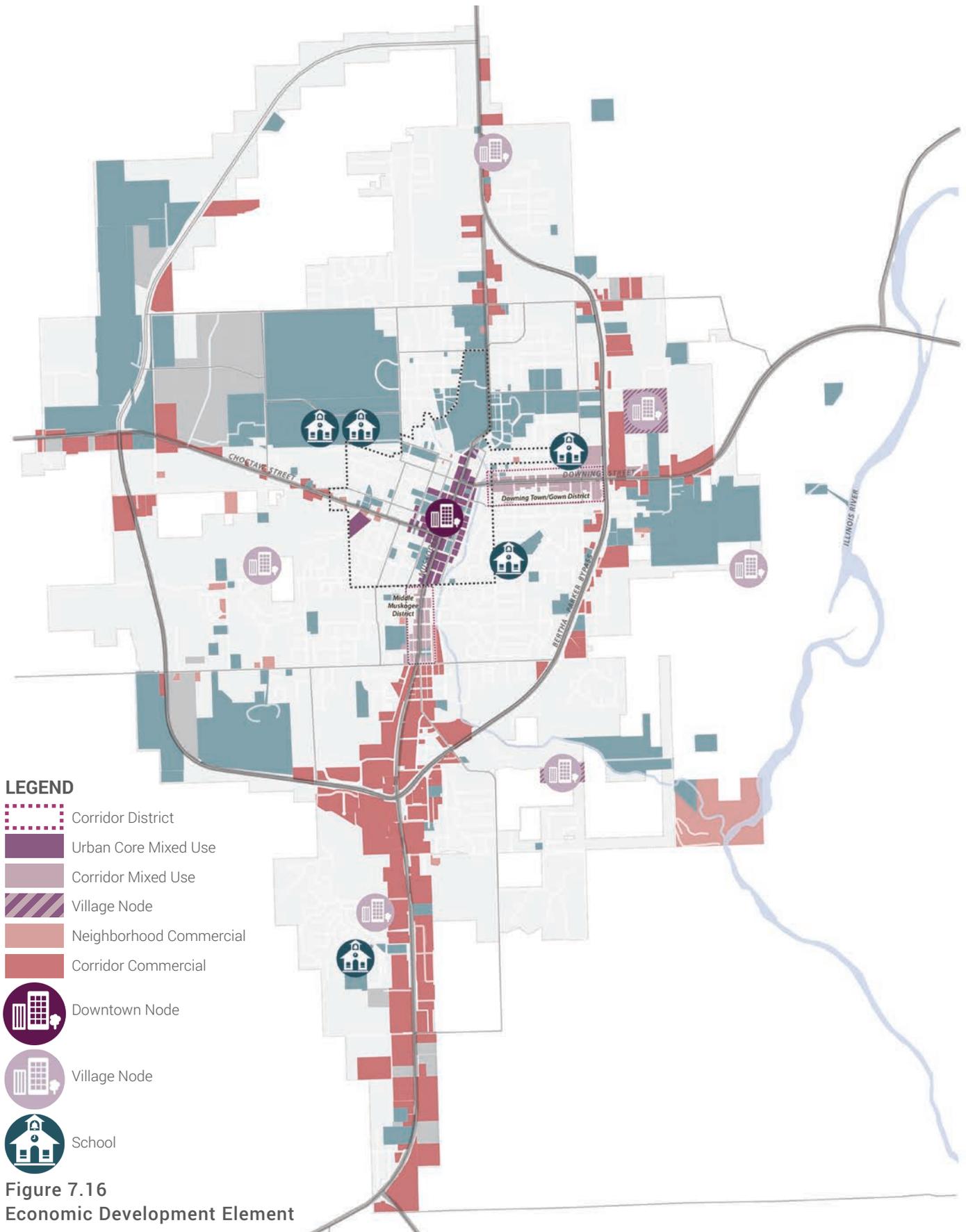


Figure 7.16
Economic Development Element

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PLAN ELEMENT OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

Economic Development is a persistent and ongoing effort to improve the economic and social well being of a community by creating new jobs and expanding opportunities for growth. In Tahlequah, Economic Development efforts have been focused on attracting new employers, locating national retail chains, maintaining locally owned businesses, and increasing tourist activity to area attractions.

OBSERVATIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1. Tahlequah Economic Alliance

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. The City of Tahlequah operates as a monopoly on municipal services, but works jointly with Tahlequah Public Schools, NSU, the Cherokee Nation, Cherokee County, the Chamber of Commerce, and the broader Business community to serve the Tahlequah region with essential resources.

ii. Tahlequah currently functions as four or more individual communities sharing common space and common resources. These communities align in many aspects, but differ in their individual outcomes. Each of the entities mentioned above must measure their financial issues and opportunity potential against their own budgets and resource constraints. Each entity must be aware of their own deficiencies and be responsive when a close partner is positioned to support or complete a stated goal on their behalf. Attempting to create a coalition between these tectonic institutions will be a challenge, but one that will provide extraordinary returns to the community.

iii. No outside observer of Tahlequah creates a distinction between one service provider or another when observing the community from a distance. Because each of the large and influential entities have differing missions and populations to serve there is little motivation to collaborate on projects that will bring the community together. The goal of this plan is to identify potential topics of collaboration and lower the barriers to creative sharing that is the hallmark of communities that have a thriving ecosystem of collaboration to achieve their goals.

iv. The Alliance is necessary to bring together these asymmetrical resources embedded within each community to serve a greater purpose.

B. DISCUSSION

i. Alliance stakeholders should leverage their individual resources to affect change where they can contribute the most. This win-win-win-win scenario is unlike any other across Oklahoma or the United States. The potential for success is unbound, but the status quo will remain until each entity contributes according to a unified plan.

ii. The Alliance will benefit from Human-Centered Design education that positions the challenge as less of a budgetary or environmental issue, but one that can be solved by understanding behaviors of the affected population.

iii. No element of this plan will come to fruition without champions to lead the effort. These individuals can be from any walk of life, any employment scenario and from any background. What is important is that they are motivated, promote Tahlequah with enthusiasm and work to accomplish the goals of the community. Tahlequah has the potential to lead the State of Oklahoma in tourist activity, cultural amenities, and creating career paths that link college and workforce opportunities. These seemingly disparate ideas require the development and appreciation of leadership from within the community. There is no single activity that can create the culture of success needed to transform Tahlequah. It will occur simultaneously following the rise of entrepreneurship, community investment, and leadership among existing business owners to foster the next generation of leaders.

iv. Focusing growth on products and services that can be exported from Tahlequah will be critical to the long-term success of the community. Value added products that compete on a national level with other industrial or consumer markets will distinguish Tahlequah among communities in the region. Examples of types of businesses that can be successful in Tahlequah are:

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Outdoor products, hunting, fishing, water recreation
2. Home and Garden, landscaping and patio/pool products
3. Technologies requiring customer service personnel
4. Biomedical and Healthcare related products
5. Supplemental technology services to large-scale retailers.

v. These market segments are already present in Tahlequah in a small form, but could be exploited to reach a larger market, and capture as much of the tourist inflow as possible.

vi. The successful implementation of this plan will depend on how accessible it is to the general public and how often it is referenced as a guide for future planning decisions. No plan is perfect, but it is least effective when sitting on the shelf.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

- a. The Alliance will foster collaboration and support for each entities individual efforts.
- b. Engage the NSU student body, the faith community, and social organizations in seasonal clean-up and improvement opportunities. Leveraging volunteer labor is a critical way of building relationships within the community and instilling pride in preserving resources.

ii. Action Items

7.1.A.01

Establish an annual financial allocation to support a staff member to represent the Tahlequah Alliance, and accomplish the specified goals.

7.1.A.02

Any activity that is identified as a pressing need without a clear leader or responsible party.

iii. Policies

7.1.P.01

The Alliance is dedicated to teamwork and collaboration and unlocking the potential of business and industry.

7.1.P.02

The Alliance jointly contributes to the goals of the adopted Economic Development Action Plan.

Topic 2. Workforce Development

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. High unemployment rates contribute to a reduced potential for economic success among individuals with High School only or less than High School education.

ii. Tahlequah does not have a fully developed pipeline of businesses that are expanding job roles among existing staff.

iii. Historic lack of key industries has created a legacy of dependence on service sector, and major institutional employers.

iv. Limited entrepreneurship potential for tech and biomedical employers pushes qualified workers to other cities.

v. Existing agricultural industries require seasonal and low-wage workers that offer limited opportunities for career advancement.

vi. Downtown businesses do not benefit from everyday activity by current residents because of a lack of product-tenant mix, perceived parking limitations, and vacancies in the urban fabric that detract from a healthy walkable environment.

vii. Tahlequah has access to water resources that are not available to other municipalities. This is a resource that, coupled with preservation and conservation activities will position Tahlequah as leaders in the water technology field.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

B. DISCUSSION

i. Tahlequah is viewed positively among other cities in Oklahoma, and with all the major attractions that currently exist, it is a cultural destination as well as a tourist destination.

ii. Tahlequah should not focus attention on attracting large scale manufacturing or heavy industry. Tahlequah is uniquely positioned between the Fayetteville and Tulsa markets to provide multiple MSA's a selection of specialty industries that support more developed employment sectors in those cities.

iii. The enrolled NSU student body as a whole does not contribute statistically to full time employment numbers in Tahlequah. Those who are working full time and going to school are working very hard indeed, but there are more students that would seek part-time, or micro-employment opportunities if the opportunity were available. The underutilized man hours could be as much as 12 hours per week for roughly 50% of the student population. Assuming 3,000 students participating for 9 months of the year. This would equate to the economic potential of an additional 623 full time employees during the semesters. On a contract basis, this potential work effort could be performed for local businesses by students without additional overhead or benefit expenses to the businesses. The students would be responsible for reporting their earnings to the IRS.

iv. The opening of the Outpatient Health Center and the Cherokee Casino offer a dramatic shift in economic development opportunities across the City of Tahlequah.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

The following recommendations are not specific to the City of Tahlequah, but should work to align the missions of organizations that serve in an economic development capacity in the Tahlequah region. The City of Tahlequah should focus on workforce development outcomes that are measurable and realistic. Workforce development requires a unique understanding of the dynamics within the State, and National economies, coupled with the latent capacity for growth within local businesses and

industries. Job growth is best facilitated by a brokered relationship between businesses seeking to expand, and institutions positioned to support increased employment. Smart companies reinvest their available capital to support their growth trajectory, but an increase in employment often takes outside infusions of capital to purchase new equipment for staff to operate, or new facilities to alleviate operational stress. Each business is different, and

- Commit to economic development programs that will have support for at least 10 years or a longer horizon so training and development practices will have sufficient time to provide results.
- Define within the Industrial Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and City of Tahlequah measurable job creation goals.
- Identify businesses with expansion or relocation needs that will increase employment. Provide capital, land, financing support, or low interest loans to facilitate growth.
- Facilitate job training programs to support key employment sectors,
- Focus on suppliers and feed stocks for key employment sectors:
 - High-tech and Cybersecurity,
 - Medical administrative support and biomedical devices and other specialty medical services,
 - Specialty farming operations to support regional food production
 - Hospitality related services,
- Support part-time and contract employment to provide resume building opportunities and discipline in maintaining a quality workforce pipeline,
- Utilize the NSU and Tahlequah labor pool to create micro-employment and part time employment opportunities that can develop into full-time employment.
- Collect resources for the designated Opportunity Zone for Tahlequah. This zone has special taxing provisions that will encourage investment and enhance economic development opportunities.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ii. Action Items

7.2.A.01

Identify major employment sectors in the Tulsa, Fayetteville, Ft. Smith, and Oklahoma City markets and create a list of supply chain projects that lack local representation. Where there is overlap in industry sectors between cities, contact product development leaders and tailor an incentive package to match their growth needs.

7.2.A.02

Use the increase in medical center activity to attract affiliated business types that increase sales tax, and new employment opportunities. Strategic marketing for hotels, medical office buildings, restaurants, and entertainment will provide a supportive ecosystem for the growing medical sector.

7.2.A.03

Incentivize academic programs, and certifications for job fields that support medical and high-tech industries.

7.2.A.04

Create program to support locally based employers that hire part-time and contract labor to provide workers new and interdisciplinary work experience.

7.2.A.05

Create Tahlequah Alliance with formal bylaws, financial support and clearly defined action items. The Alliance should consist of all major institutions; City of Tahlequah, NSU, Chamber of Commerce, Cherokee Nation and the United Keetoowah Band as well as other organizations seeking to advance opportunities in Tahlequah.

7.2.A.06

Define job creation goals, with timelines and steps toward achievement for economic development entities.

7.2.A.07

Establish capacity for financial incentives and procedures for providing incentives to businesses through an open and accessible public process.

7.2.A.08

Monitor business health through monthly sales and statistic reporting for beneficiary businesses, facilitate marketing and promotion campaigns, and raise awareness of locally made products to regional suppliers.

7.2.A.09

Create a "Made in Tahlequah" logo/sticker for items produced from Tahlequah products and services.

7.2.A.10

Utilize the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act adoption of the Federal Opportunity Zones for the Census Tract 40021978100 that covers the east and south edges of Tahlequah. This tract borders Water Street on the West and the Illinois River on the East.

iii. Policies

7.2.P.01

The City of Tahlequah is dedicated to reducing unemployment and eliminating poverty.

7.2.P.02

The Tahlequah Industrial Authority and the City of Tahlequah work jointly to identify growing industries and align municipal investment opportunities to match workforce needs.

7.2.P.03

Tahlequah supports local businesses create quality jobs and reinvest in the future.

7.2.P.04

The City of Tahlequah works closely with the Chamber of Commerce, Tribal Governments, NSU, and the Eastern Workforce Investment Board to create pathways to full time employment.

7.2.P.05

Tahlequah invests in growth, and uses patient capital to provide a reasonable return on investment to serve the public interest.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7.2.P.06

Tahlequah leverages all available resources to serve workforce development.

7.2.P.07

Tahlequah recognizes the need for part-time and short term employment so that residents can build work experience and show increasing levels of responsibility.

7.2.P.08

Financial incentives to support new and expanding businesses are used strategically, and granted special consideration by City Council.

Topic 3. Maintaining Vibrant Retail

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Downtown retail will require increased pedestrian activity coupled with access to parking within a reasonable walking distance to the commercial core.

ii. Pedestrians will feel comfortable walking where there are urban design features that make them feel safe. Without park benches, landscaping, street lights, and active storefront windows, the pedestrian experience is harsh and unwelcoming.

iii. Downtown businesses expressed concern that there was not sufficient parking, yet there is adequate parking spaces available in Downtown, but those spaces may be 1 or more blocks away. Customers need to be educated on the scarcity of parking and be comfortable walking to each store. As businesses improve their facades and street interface, the walk experience will improve.

iv. Business owners should update and change window displays on a regular basis to use their limited street frontage to engage customers and activate the sidewalks.

v. An exemption should be granted in the zoning code to allow the exterior display of certain items for sale by a business as long as they are returned to the interior of the business before closing. Sidewalk cafes, seating, umbrellas, benches and planters should be exempt from the hourly requirements, but should be respectfully secured during overnight hours.

B. DISCUSSION

i. A healthy tenant mix including food and drink, arts, cultural amenities, and daily needs are important to providing Tahlequah residents an opportunity to explore while they are downtown. The size of downtown Tahlequah prevents large-scale retailers from locating in the traditional downtown along Muskogee, but there is sufficient potential for development of parcels along secondary streets on underdeveloped square footage above and behind existing businesses.

ii. Existing property owners must recognize their responsibility to maintain their properties and work to enhance the Downtown Tahlequah experience wherever possible.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

Downtown businesses must distinguish itself from similar businesses in Tahlequah by offering a value-added experience. Because there is only one “Downtown” businesses must exceed expectations and provide an experience that is unique to the time and place. National declines in retail do not have to predetermine the outcome of all retail establishments, but local retailers have an added burden of offering products and services that cannot be found online.

- Provide building code and inspection support for businesses that may have ongoing building code challenges. Support redevelopment by offering non-binding recommendations for rehabilitation and renovation that would bring the buildings into code compliance.
- Ask building owners with vacant buildings and vacant storefronts to allow NSU students and local artists to create window displays that can support existing events and festivals as well as a dedicated monthly art walk. Business owners should share in the expense of creating the displays, with the interest created by the walks as a marketing expense for their properties.
- Customers miss the opportunity to visit many downtown businesses because they are not open after 5pm.

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ii. Action Items

7.3.A.01

Permit limited exterior display of retail items in Downtown Tahlequah during business hours. Permit by-right sidewalk cafes, umbrella, benches and planters according to City of Tahlequah policies.

7.3.A.02

Encourage businesses to shift hours later into the evening so that customers with a 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work schedule have an opportunity to visit the business.

7.3.A.03

Create storefront art displays to activate the facades of buildings.

7.3.A.04

Provide code interpretation and support for challenging building code issues that create hardships to redevelopment.

7.3.A.05

Encourage use of the Existing Building Code.

7.3.A.06

Permit short term occupancy and access to downtown buildings that participate in a citywide arts experience.

iii. Policies

7.3.P.01

Tahlequah supports local retailers and supports tenants maintain a vibrant retail environment.

7.3.P.02

Tahlequah is committed to increasing activity and opportunities for new businesses to locate in Downtown.

Topic 4. Tourism

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Tourism is the lowest cost / high return activity that a city can use to spur economic growth.

ii. Visitors to the Illinois River and Lake Tenkiller often bypass downtown Tahlequah and instead spend time and money outside of the City limits, reducing the impact of tourism on the local economy.

iii. Tahlequah is successful at attracting festival goers to the variety of events held in and around Tahlequah.

iv. The proposed Cherokee Casino will be a large scale event and entertainment attraction that will provide overflow benefits to Tahlequah.

v. The Cherokee Nation and the Cherokee Heritage Center are significant cultural destinations that should be marketed as key assets of Tahlequah.

vi. The J.T. Nickel Family Nature and Wildlife Preserve is a vast forest area operated by the Nature Conservancy. This resource is largely unexplored and is the host to guided tours and eco-tourism groups.

vii. Sparrow Hawk Public Hunting Area (Primitate Trail Area) has a deed restriction that requires the Department of Wildlife to allow public hunting according to the rules established by the commission

viii. Tahlequah is the plant nursery capital of the US, and has the potential to use this resource to create gardens, and arboretum, or horticultural displays that reflect the diversity of flora across Eastern Oklahoma. Similar to Muskogee's Azalea Festival.

ix. Undeveloped land between the eastern-most developed portion of Tahlequah and the Illinois River provide an ideal opportunity to preserve land that will likely never be developed due to topographic challenges. Residents in this area can be assured that preservation will maintain this undeveloped area as a nature preserve. This area could have limited vehicle access and a trails system that could connect various points along the eastern municipal boundary of Tahlequah. More on this topic is included in the Parks, Rec, Open Space and Trails section.

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ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

B. DISCUSSION

i. Attracting visitors to Tahlequah raises the profile of the City and serves to frame public opinion that Tahlequah is a progressive city, with a thriving Town and Gown relationship that is further enhanced by a strong relationship to local Tribal Governments.

ii. Tourism development has the added benefit of increasing economic activity for local businesses and sustaining attractions that are available to permanent residents that increase the quality of life.

iii. Tourist activities will become a valuable amenity to the health care system while family and friends of patients seek a respite from caregiving activities.

iv. Outdoor tourist attractions also serve to increase the health outcomes of residents by establishing a pattern of recreational opportunities located throughout the community. Not merely a single community health facility but a combination of passive and active resources that serve many audiences.

v. Sparrow Hawk, Cherokee, and Cookson Public Hunting areas are operated by the Department of Wildlife and require annual passes in order to have access to the areas. Access is granted by purchasing a Hunting, or Fishing license or through a Conservation Passport that can also be used at 9 other Wildlife facilities in the State of Oklahoma. The costs for these permits are

3 day Conservation Passport	\$15
Annual Conservation Passport	\$26
Hunting and Fishing	\$42
Hunting or Fishing individually	\$25

vi. These Wildlife Department areas are closed to non-hunting activities during designated hunting seasons, but available for hiking, mountain biking, bird watching and numerous other uses outside of hunting season with a Conservation Passport.

vii. Cherokee Tribal members receive a yearly hunting and fishing pass for free which also allows access to Department of Wildlife facilities year around.

viii. The Cookson Public Hunting Area is considered to be one of the most underused and appreciated natural resources in Eastern Oklahoma.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

Many of the ideas generated during the public meetings were focused on promoting the existing assets in Tahlequah and around Tahlequah and finding a way to tell the story of the place that is so special. All of the groundwork is in place to position Tahlequah as the trails and recreational capital of the State. Much of the work needed is not capital intensive, but requires clear and persistent communication on the single message of Tahlequah's existing assets. Presently there is no coordinated voice to collect and share this information and no single "place" to get all of the information.

- Capitalize on the Town Branch Trail system to extend the tourist experience, and orient businesses to face the creek and provide patios and exterior public spaces to bring the public and private spaces together. Redevelop parcels through the right-of-way acquisition process to create new businesses along the trail.
- Study the potential for modifying the depth of Town Branch in specific locations to create a seasonal test facility for fishing, canoing, and kayak adventures.
- Create special events that use the water in Town Branch creek for multiple activities; Rubber Duck races, Floating Lantern light memorials, concerts, as well as leisurely walks by the creek.
- Create kiosk in the one-stop shop for information on the Tahlequah Trails system, Sparrow Hawk, Cookson, and Cherokee Hunting Areas, Fort Gibson Lake, Lake Tenkiller, Illinois River and the J.T. Nickel Nature and Wildlife Preserve.
- Acquire property at the intersection of Hwy 62 and Hwy 10 for a gateway sign, tourism stop, bike trail head, or other outfitting services to integrate ecotourism with local Tahlequah businesses.

ii. Action Items

7.4.A.01

Develop comprehensive wayfinding, signage, and directional support to draw attention to Downtown Tahlequah.

7.4.A.02

Create a one-stop tourist shop should be created to bring adventurers to Downtown Tahlequah. Capture

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ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

tourist traffic by creating a centralized outdoor recreation hub where information for float trips, hiking trails, lake activities, along with other outdoor products are for sale.

7.4.A.03

Petition the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife to create a dedicated Wildlife and Recreation Exhibit as a component of the one-stop shop in Downtown Tahlequah. This facility would become an authorized licensed dealer with the Department of Wildlife to purchase hunting, fishing, and conservation passports.

7.4.A.04

Establish easement and property tax incentive procedures for acquiring land to be used for recreational trails and conservation. Identify parcels or portions thereof and continue to secure land that would benefit a comprehensive trails system.

7.4.A.05

Create trails management training and maintenance group to support growth and development of a comprehensive trails system.

iii. Policies

7.4.P.01

Tahlequah is dedicated to a welcoming and vibrant tourist experience that supports local businesses.

7.4.P.02

Tahlequah recognizes the importance of tourism and supports recreational activities outside of the Municipal boundary.

7.4.P.03

Tahlequah is regional destination for outdoor activities and promotes the Town Branch trail system as the organizing element to attract tourists and provide accessible recreation to Tahlequah residents.

7.4.P.04

Tahlequah recognizes private property rights and balances individual privacy issues with the broader goal of creating a comprehensive trail network. The trail network achieves the community goal of a safe

and well maintained trail system that is open to everyone and can provide direct access to those trails by private property owners and their neighbors.

Topic 5. Downtown Destinations

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Downtown Tahlequah is rich in architectural and cultural history. In order to preserve this history and build for the next generation, Tahlequah will need to accommodate a wider range of uses within the existing urban fabric.

ii. Currently zoning allows for a cascade of uses, which simply means that uses within the existing C-3 commercial district allows uses permitted in the C-2 district, and subsequently within the C-2 district R-3/ multi-family uses are allowed. In essence this allows for construction of a single family residential structure in downtown. While this is incompatible with the long-term vitality of the historic downtown, it is technically allowed by code.

B. DISCUSSION

i. A Downtown Master Plan will provide business owners and city officials a playbook by which both public and private sector players can align investments, and address long-standing problems.

ii. Create an interpretive arts destination similar to Meow Wolf in Santa Fe, or Factory Obscura in Oklahoma City.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

There is only one Downtown Tahlequah. The long history and potential for economic growth are key assets that downtown businesses can enjoy. Challenges still exist for limited service and specialty retailers that are forced to compete with online retailers. There is no one solution that will protect these businesses from continued erosion to online sales, but with strong marketing and a coordinated downtown revitalization effort, businesses can expect to see increasing sales as vacant and abandoned buildings are renovated into new uses.

- Identify opportunities for housing units above existing businesses.
- Facilitate the development of a downtown hotel and conference center.

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ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Modify streetscapes to include sidewalk patios, bicycle racks, landscaping, pedestrian crosswalks and localized wayfinding for downtown businesses.

ii. Action Items

7.5.A.01

Create, adopt and adhere to a Downtown Master Plan to address specific physical and social challenges that will require coordination between the City and business owners.

7.5.A.02

Continue to remove barriers to redevelopment of underutilized buildings and empty lots.

7.5.A.03

Create Downtown Tourist Hub that represents the full spectrum of activities, cultural amenities, and entertainment options within the Tahlequah region.

7.5.A.04

Realign zoning districts to reduce the uses allowed within each district and update language to correspond with common land uses in the modern economy.

iii. Policies

7.5.P.01

Tahlequah is dedicated to maintaining existing businesses and expanding economic capacity.

7.5.P.02

Tahlequah encourages infill development and supports housing and commercial densities that create a contiguous urban environment.

7.5.P.03

Continue to support marketing and promotion of Downtown Tahlequah events.

Topic 6. Harnessing New Technologies

A. OBSERVATIONS

i. Industries related to the medical and health fields are showing increasing resiliency to economic fluctuations. Medical device manufacturing combines low-tech and high tech market segments and offer job growth and investment opportunities across a wide range of income levels.

ii. Industries related to the scarcity of resources in the broader national economy will have increased importance in the future. As fluctuations in weather create economic disparity

- Water
- Cybersecurity
- Food Security
- Health and Wellness

iii. Recent advances in “smart city” technologies are providing increased access to information

Support entrepreneurship culture with small business incentives and start up support through a partnership with Career Tech, Chamber of Commerce, the Eastern Workforce Investment Board, and City of Tahlequah.

Municipal services are becoming increasingly more transparent and accessible to the general public. Prepare municipal departments for online accessibility for documents, data, and resources that are available to the City Council during public meetings.

Establish strict privacy protocols for personal data collected by the City of Tahlequah and have clearly defined procedures for making certain data public. (ex. High grass and weed complaints, code enforcement issues, zoning code violations, criminal activity, automobile accidents)

PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

B. DISCUSSION

i. Cities will be the leaders in civic innovation in the next 20 years to deliver core services at a reduced cost with increasing reliability. This unseemly challenge will not be borne alone by Tahlequah, but by a wide variety of cities that are embracing technology and discovering new ways of delivering services using sophisticated technology networks.

ii. Civic innovation will include water system monitoring, electrical grid capacity, demand driven signal light adjustments, smart metering, community policing, and unified fire detection networks that alert fire fighters before 911 is dialed. These systems are in their early stages of development, but provide a snapshot into the future of cities, and the potential connectivity that must be navigated by our current analog networks.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Plan Outcomes

a. Establish pilot programs for technologies that have the highest potential for return on investment with the least intrusion on customer service. These pilot programs may include development center self-reporting, automated water and trash billing, or wearable cameras for police and fire personnel. None of these pilot programs on their own will be a phase change in municipal management, but will be a good first step in embracing new technologies.

b. The City of Tahlequah should continue to maintain building permit, development, and infrastructure reporting systems to increase public awareness. Providing a high level of service and openness to public data will foster sharing and innovation with entrepreneurs and new businesses.

ii. Action Items

7.6.A.01

Update or remove building permit data from 2009-2011 from the City website.

7.6.A.02

Continue to maintain public data that supports long-term economic development activities.

7.6.A.03

Create pilot programs centered around high return on investments with low impact on customer service.

iii. Policies

7.6.P.01

Tahlequah protects the privacy of residents personal data and has clearly defined protocols when data is shared on a public portal. Public hearings are held each year to review privacy protocols and audits of privacy performance.

7.6.P.02

Tahlequah supports application of new technologies that promote civic engagement and enhance customer service.

7.6.P.03

Tahlequah is actively engaged in civic innovation and creates pilot programs to reduce cost of delivering core services and maintains high levels of customer service.

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PLAN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT 8: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



PLAN ELEMENT PURPOSE: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The purpose of the capital improvement element is to establish policies that give direction to capital expenditures on existing and proposed infrastructure projects as well as maintenance of existing systems with an eye toward extending services to new areas.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) is essential to effectively prioritize major projects to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of effort. As a fiscal management tool, the CIP will identify the timeline and resources necessary complete projects according to the goals identified within each project. The CIP in Tahlequah is unique because of the various partner entities that support and work closely with the City of Tahlequah. With strong partners in the Cherokee Nation, NSU, and Cherokee County, the Tahlequah Industrial Authority, TPWA, and ODOT, major projects have multiple levels of review before a project begins. My Tahlequah 2040

Actions and Policies are the basis for the long-term CIP strategy. By identifying long term development patterns the City of Tahlequah can anticipate future needs and make incremental improvements toward the plan with available resources. These Actions and Policies are located at the end of each Plan Element located in Section Seven, as well as in the implementation tables located in Section Eight. Additional Actions & Policies can also be found in Section Six: Specific Interventions.

Gaps in priorities are created where there is not a clear “owner” of a project. Examples of this are roadway improvements that fall outside of the City of Tahlequah municipal boundary, and within Cherokee County. These roadways identified in Plan Element 3: Transportation offer a clearly identified future planning need, but coordination is necessary between different entities to facilitate this shared responsibility and funding for these critical projects. Because an individual project may not directly benefit the “owning” entity, it is important for each group to work together on projects as they are identified, and follow the long-term plan.

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SECTION EIGHT
IMPLEMENTATION

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IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

The following implementation tables are the action steps for the future of Tahlequah. Each action or policy within the tables are numbered to align with element recommendations.

The first item number refers to the Element (see list below) and the second number is the Topic Group. The third letter is “A” or “P”, designating an Action or Policy. The last two numbers are the Recommendation.

Each table also annotates which Topic Group it came from, corresponding with the Elements. Each recommendation includes the responsible party to carry out the recommendation, followed by a timeline to indicate when the action should be accomplished. In some cases, there are multiple parties that can help accomplish the recommendation, and some items are multi-faceted so the timeline is spread over multiple years. “Ongoing” indicates that the effort occurs on a regular basis or over the horizon of the Comprehensive Master Plan. TBD refers to “To Be Determined” such as where a future developer will address a particular recommendation.

The Elements that make up the Implementation Tables include:

- Element 1: Land Use
- Element 2: Community Character
- Element 3: Transportation
- Element 4: Housing & Neighborhoods
- Element 5: Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails
- Element 6: Utilities, Infrastructure & Community Facilities
- Element 7: Economic Development

The Elements correspond with the Steering Committee’s areas of focus. Each recommendation should be integrated within each responsible party’s annual work plan and appropriate department budget, until the recommendations are completed or the Comprehensive Plan is reviewed and updated.

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
1.1		Land Use: General		
1.1.A.01	Action	Modify development codes to allow by-right housing densities that achieve 20-30 dwelling units per acre in Downtown Tahlequah as well as within ¼ mile of downtown and the NSU campus.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.1.A.02	Action	Update in zoning to permit mixed use according to plan.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.1.A.03	Action	Modify development codes to allow mixed residential and commercial uses by-right in Downtown Tahlequah.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.1.A.04	Action	Annex Hwy 62 to the Illinois River to create a physical connection between the City and the river.	City Council	Immediate
1.1.A.05	Action	Annex open gaps within City limits to create a contiguous land area within the City limits.	City Council	3 - 7 years
1.1.A.06	Action	Require approved plats to be submitted digitally in georeferenced CAD or GIS format.	Planning Department	Immediate
1.1.P.01	Policy	Changes in land use should be consistent with the most recent comprehensive plan, or amendment.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.1.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah provides thorough community development services that promote commerce and protect the small town character.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.1.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah will maintain sufficient inventory of land uses that reflect the local economy.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.1.P.04	Policy	Focus should be given to stabilizing existing commercial and residential properties prior to encouraging greenfield development of such uses.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.1.P.05	Policy	Tahlequah supports the annexation of properties between the east boundary of Tahlequah and the Illinois River.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.2		Land Use: Residential		
1.2.A.01	Action	Create zoning that allows mixed-density neighborhoods.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.2.A.02	Action	Support Code Enforcement that exceeds the minimum standards and supports a higher standard of care.	Planning Department, Elected Officials	Immediate
1.2.P.01	Policy	Residential properties will be attractive and well maintained by property owners.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.2.P.02	Policy	All new housing should be connected to City water and City sewer services.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.2.P.03	Policy	Properties adjacent to riparian corridors, creeks, streams, and water features should employ flood protection practices, and protect water quality.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
1.2.P.04	Policy	Neighborhoods within ½ mile of downtown Tahlequah, and NSU are encouraged to have housing densities that support reduced dependence on automobile trips.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.2.P.05	Policy	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) are encouraged in the original town plat of Tahlequah.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.2.P.06	Policy	Multi-family housing is a vital component of Tahlequah and is most appropriate near Downtown Tahlequah, Downing Street, Muskogee Avenue and intersections of the bypass.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.3		Land Use: Commercial		
1.3.A.01	Action	Create a design overlay district for Muskogee (South to Fourth) with unique characteristics to that corridor.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.3.A.02	Action	Create a design overlay district for Downing from Town Branch to Illinois River with unique characteristics to that corridor.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.3.A.03	Action	Update Subdivision Regulations to require mutual access between commercial properties.	Planning Department	Immediate
1.3.P.01	Policy	Commercial development will provide mutual access between properties to support a resilient transportation network.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.3.P.02	Policy	Mixed Uses of residential, office, and commercial are strongly encouraged in downtown Tahlequah.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.3.P.03	Policy	Effective right-of-way management should prevent full paving from extending from the roadway edge to the face of building.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.3.P.04	Policy	Driveway management and curbed access (i.e. access management) from roadways should be uniform and provide pedestrian safety features.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.4		Land Use: Industrial		
1.4.A.01	Action	Attract tenants to the Business Park; rebrand Business Park to attract tech-related companies, call centers, etc. (diversify tenants)	Chamber, Industrial Authority	Immediate
1.4.A.02	Action	Identify horizontal and vertically aligned components that are feed stocks for other major industries in fields related to existing industries.	Chamber, Industrial Authority	1 - 3 years Ongoing
1.4.P.01	Policy	Driveway management and curbed access (i.e. access management) from roadways should be uniform and provide pedestrian safety features. Roadways in the industrial park should be sufficient to provide safe and efficient transport of goods and resources.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
1.4.P.02	Policy	Support industries with financial resources that match their individual needs. Avoid blanket incentive programs that do not provide a direct return on investment to the City of Tahlequah.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
1.5 Land Use: Recreational				
1.5.A.01	Action	Identify floodplain land for future trail connections	Planning Department	Immediate
1.5.A.02	Action	Create codes that protect green space, specifically along riparian areas.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
1.5.A.03	Action	Pocket Parks should be implemented in association with infill & redevelopment areas.	Planning Department	Ongoing
1.5.A.04	Action	Neighborhood Parks should be implemented throughout the City's residential areas.	Planning Department	Ongoing
1.5.A.05	Action	Community Parks should be anticipated to meet the needs of future population growth.	Planning Department	Ongoing
1.5.A.06	Action	Greenways and the Bicycle Network should be implemented in close coordination with parks, recreation facilities, and open space plans.	Planning Department	Ongoing
1.5.P.01	Policy	Develop and maintain parks and recreation programs to support healthy lifestyles and increase tourism.	Parks Department	Ongoing
1.5.P.02	Policy	Pedestrian access between neighborhoods and public trails should be dedicated to the City of Tahlequah.	Staff, Developers, Planning Commission	Ongoing
1.5.P.03	Policy	Trail connections should provide for a comprehensive trail network.	Staff, Developers, Planning Commission	Ongoing
1.6 Land Use: Zoning Implications				
1.6.A.01	Action	Create unique Corridor Mixed Use Zoning Classifications for Downing Ave and Muskogee Ave. that improve economic opportunity, simplifies zoning restrictions, and enhance community character by	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
a		Adopting comprehensive site planning and development standards.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
b		Reducing front, rear, and side yard setbacks to allow for larger developable land area.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
c		Allowing flexibility in material uses but restricting certain materials inconsistent with enhanced community character.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years
d		Reducing parking requirements in exchange for increased pedestrian and bicycle features.	Planning Department	1 - 3 years

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 1: LAND USE

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
1.6.A.02	Action	Modify R-2 district non-conforming uses in Downtown Residential Neighborhoods to provide for greater lot coverage, smaller lot areas, reduced frontage, and improved parking in the public right-of-way.	Planning Department	Immediate
1.6.A.03	Action	Limit use of Planned Unit Developments and Special modifications that erode the fair regulation of zoning standards.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
1.6.A.04	Action	Limit creation of new non-conforming uses through city-lead planning and zoning actions.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
1.6.A.05	Action	Allow short term residential rentals (less than 30 days) that will be licensed, permitted, and inspected to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public. A special zoning classification for these rentals would provide clarity and openness through the permitting process.	City Council, Planning Commission	Immediate
1.6.A.06	Action	Create new zoning ordinance to eliminate cascading zoning uses.	Planning Commission	Immediate
1.6.P.01	Policy	Land Use changes conform with the Comprehensive Plan, and subsequent amendments. Proposals inconsistent with this plan will require an adoption of amendments to maintain the integrity of the Future Land Use Plan Element of this plan.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years Ongoing
1.6.P.02	Policy	Zoning definitions and uses are consistent with the current economic climate and support growth of existing businesses and urban housing density.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years Ongoing
1.6.P.03	Policy	Zoning changes serve to protect the public from unnecessary harm and/or economic loss, and allow the thorough review of future uses that conform with the long term vision set forward in this Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
2.1		Community Character: Nodes		
2.1.A.01	Action	Introduce nodes to provide opportunities for place-making for economic development.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years
2.1.A.02	Action	Activate streets with patios, window displays, and landscaping encourage pedestrian activity and promote the economic strength of downtown Tahlequah. Update zoning code to simplify the process of allowing private improvements in the public right of way, and rules regulating those improvements. Provide no-cost permits for cafe seating, umbrellas, and non-permanent fixtures.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years
2.1.A.03	Action	Downtown improvements should prioritize pedestrian safety to increase store visibility and trips by foot for customers, with attention to accessibility for all users.	Planning Commission	Immediate
2.1.P.01	Policy	Form based codes added to city land use and zoning code and subdivision regulations promote mixed use developments.	Staff, Elected Officials	1 - 3 Ongoing
2.1.P.02	Policy	Village Centers will be contextually sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods to create an identity to the area of town.	Staff, Elected Officials	3 - 7 Ongoing
2.1.P.03	Policy	Village nodes provide increased walkability and bikeability throughout the city.	Staff, Elected Officials	3 - 7 Ongoing
2.2		Community Character: Corridors		
2.2.A.01	Action	Redesign Downing as a complete street, refer to Specific Interventions: Corridors in Section 06.	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years
2.2.A.02	Action	Careful attention given to "Middle Muskogee" should result in a improved cross section that includes sidewalks, proper handicap access, and streetscape elements, to make it resemble its function as a city street gateway to downtown. Also refer to Specific Interventions: Corridors in Section 06.	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
2.2.A.03	Action	Improvements to the South Muskogee corridor should include a detailed traffic study prior to changes to the road network or cross section. A roundabout at the Bypass may be one design solution explored. Refer to the Transportation Element in Section 07.	TPWA, Planning Department	7 - 15 years
2.2.A.04	Action	For specific recommendations on current and future greenways, please refer to the Parks & Recreation, Open Space and Trails Element in Section 07.	Parks Department	Immediate - Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
2.2.A.05	Action	Implement the Complete Streets Policy.	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years
2.2.P.01	Policy	Commercial corridors are treated with higher importance because of their economic value, aesthetic appeal, and serve as a buffer to Urban Transitional Neighborhoods.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.2.P.02	Policy	Corridors create shared economic activity that strengthens community and collectively improve the city of Tahlequah.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.3 Community Character: Neighborhoods				
2.3.A.01	Action	Create design standards in Subdivision Regulations for neighborhood blocks, sidewalks, and alleyway access that protect pedestrians and bicyclists.	Planning Commission	Immediate
2.3.A.02	Action	Support preservation of existing homes with permit and inspection assistance.	Code Enforcement, Planning Department	1 - 3 Ongoing
2.3.P.01	Policy	Designs for infill housing using “missing middle” housing types and pocket neighborhoods will have a positive impact on the community character of the Urban Transitional areas.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, City Council	3 - 7 years
2.3.P.02	Policy	Improvements to “Middle Muskogee” will impact the adjacent Urban Transitional areas.	Staff, Elected Officials	3 - 7 years
2.3.P.03	Policy	Improvements to Downing Street will impact the adjacent Urban Transitional areas.	Staff, Elected Officials	3 - 7 years
2.3.P.04	Policy	Village Centers to be incorporated into strategic locations in the Stable Residential areas on currently vacant land.	Staff, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years
2.4 Community Character: Branding				
2.4.A.01	Action	Coordinate with NSU for joint effort branding efforts aimed at students and faculty/staff for campus life connections to downtown and future Downing Street opportunities.	NSU, Staff, Elected Officials	Immediate
2.4.A.02	Action	Establish a ‘stay to live/work/play in Tahlequah’ campaign aimed at retaining NSU graduates.	Chamber, NSU, Main Street	1 - 3 years
2.4.A.03	Action	Establish a rebranding campaign that focuses on downtown to “buy local” that supports the downtown businesses.	Chamber, NSU, Main Street	1 - 3 years

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
2.4.A.04	Action	Utilize outlets for 'Love Tahlequah' and finding the 'Heart of the City'	Chamber, NSU, Main Street	1 - 3 years
2.4.A.05	Action	Continue to promote Tahlequah as a proud, hard-working community with a relevant history and active downtown.	Chamber, City Council	Ongoing
2.4.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah promotes Cherokee and English translations of public monuments and signage throughout the community.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.4.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to diversity and promoting a strong community composed of people from all backgrounds and all cultures.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.5		Community Character: Gateways/Wayfinding/Landscape		
2.5.A.01	Action	Implement the existing Wayfinding Plan that directs visitors to points of interest in Tahlequah.	Planning Department, Public Relations	Immediate
2.5.A.02	Action	Focus wayfinding strategies on Downtown Tahlequah to support downtown businesses.	Chamber, Planning Department	Immediate
2.5.A.03	Action	Coordinate with ODOT to provide signage leading into the City with "x" miles to downtown Tahlequah.	TPWA	1 - 3 years
2.5.A.04	Action	Add wayfinding signs along Greenway trails to signify distances traveled as well as interpretive signs to educate trail users on water quality, value of nature, and storm water management.	TPWA	Immediate
2.5.A.05	Action	Revisit and enhance the sign ordinance as well as the billboard ordinance	Planning Department	Immediate
2.5.A.06	Action	Acquire land or easements at primary and secondary gateway locations (see above in Topic 5. Gateway Observations) for monument signage, landscaping, and lighting.	City Council	1 - 3 years
2.5.A.07	Action	Upgrade the landscape ordinance to require increased amounts of plant material in the following categories:	Planning Commission	Immediate
a		Street Tree requirements for new developments and commercial lots.	Planning Commission	Immediate
b		Parking lot tree planting requirements for commercial lots.	Planning Commission	Immediate
c		Existing tree preservation requirements.	Planning Commission	Immediate
d		Screening plant material requirements for perimeter buffers, loading docks, and dumpsters.	Planning Commission	Immediate
e		Shrub requirements for parking lot frontage screening along public right-of-ways.	Planning Commission	Immediate

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
2.5.A.08	Action	Limit the option of off-site monument signage to strategic gateway signs in key locations as shown on the Framework Plan.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years
2.5.P.01	Policy	Signage should reflect the shared cultural and historic character of Tahlequah.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.5.P.02	Policy	Commercial signage should be attractive and high quality.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.5.P.03	Policy	Landscaping should be evenly integrated into commercial projects as stated above in Action Item 2.5.A.07.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.5.P.04	Policy	Existing trees, groves and forests should be preserved, and existing development should provide opportunities for reintroduction of tree cover.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.6 Community Character: Cultural Opportunities				
2.6.A.01	Action	Strengthen the town/gown relationship through volunteerism, project teaming, and coordination with Tahlequah Alliance.	NSU, Staff, Elected Officials	Immediate
2.6.A.02	Action	Align workforce needs with NSU graduate degrees to retain graduates after degree completion.	Chamber, NSU	1 - 3 years
2.6.P.01	Policy	Language diversity is a proud element in Tahlequah and should be preserved and promoted.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.6.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah supports attractive buildings and unique architectural character.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.6.P.03	Policy	Establish a job fair to bring college students together with local employment centers to foster and support a graduate retention program.	NSU, Staff, Elected Officials	Immediate
2.7 Community Character: Festivals & Events				
2.7.A.01	Action	Strengthen and promote a robust Festival & Events programs	Chamber, City Council, Main Street	Ongoing
2.7.A.02	Action	Establish a joint NSU + City Festival or event held at Norris Park or other downtown location to bring town & gown groups together.	Chamber, City Council	Immediate
2.7.A.03	Action	Celebrate NSU's birthday with an City-sponsored event in downtown and brand it as a community connections event.	Chamber, City Council, Main Street	Immediate
2.7.A.04	Action	Establish a Greenway 5k run with proceeds to benefit City parks and downtown merchants.	Chamber, City Council, Main Street	Immediate

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
2.7.A.05	Action	Coordinate between Parks & Recreation Department, School District, and downtown merchants for advertising material at the sports complex or high school tournaments to direct visitors to downtown with discounts or promotional activities.	Staff, TPS, City Council, Chamber	Immediate
2.7.A.06	Action	Coordinate with multiple float trip vendors to establish a presence in a Downing or Muskogee storefront to draw visitors to downtown businesses. Connection may include Chamber incentives or negotiated discounts with local restaurants.	Chamber	Immediate
2.7.A.07	Action	Create a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Tahlequah to include current Main Street property owners.	Chamber, City Council	1 - 3 years
2.7.A.08	Action	Establish a take-out float location near where Tahlequah Creek intersects the Illinois River.	Chamber	1 - 3 years
2.7.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah supports Festivals and Events through streamlined permitting and safety reviews, promotion, and financial support.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
2.7.P.02	Policy	An expanded and improved city-owned park on the Illinois River will enhance existing recreation opportunities and provide a platform for new business creation.	Staff, Elected Officials	3 - 7 years
2.7.P.03	Policy	New recreation hubs are created by the City of Tahlequah by purchasing property, obtaining easements, and/or facilitating property transfers where it is in the best interest of establishing a comprehensive Trail and Recreation Plan.	Staff, Elected Officials	3 - 7 years
2.7.P.04	Policy	Sustain the highest level of maintenance at parks or open spaces used as festival locations for safe attractive events.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
3.1		Transportation: Street Network & Interconnectivity		
3.1.A.02	Action	Eliminate existing and prohibit new paving in the right-of-way that is not consistent with an approved site plan.	TPWA, Planning Department	Immediate
3.1.A.03	Action	Enforce driveway permits and mutual access between commercial businesses.	TPWA, Planning Department	Immediate
3.1.A.03	Action	Eliminate broad uncontrolled curb openings from city streets onto private property.	TPWA, Planning Department, Developers	1 - 3 years, Ongoing
3.1.A.04	Action	Increase connections and access of roadways.	TPWA, Planning Department, Developers	Immediate
a		Realign and redevelop new contiguous roadway along Basin/Water Streets to connect between Park Hill Road and Downing. This road will use a combination of existing right-of-way and new points of access that reduce turning geometry at challenging intersections.	TPWA, Planning Department, Developers	1 - 3 years
b		Eliminate low water crossings along northern Town Branch near NSU. (3 locations)	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years
c		Extend Moccasin Road to Fox, completing a north-south connection from Allen Road to Fox Street on Tahlequah's west side.	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
d		Connect Coffee Hollow Road to West Mud Valley Road. (1 mile)	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
e		Connect West Mud Valley Road to Highway 51 along South Bryant Road. (1.5 miles)	TPWA, Planning Department	7 - 15 years
f		Connect East Willis Road along the fringe of the Illinois River along South Nalley Road to connect with Downing Street near Highway 62/51/10 (4.1 Miles). This connection should support the protection of a preservation buffer that would limit development along this corridor and protect current property owners.	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
3.1.A.05	Action	Require neighborhood streets to connect to adjacent neighborhood streets.	Planning Department	Immediate
3.1.A.06	Action	Require a minimum of 2 entrances per neighborhood development (on separate streets, where possible) to distribute traffic and maintain connectivity.	Planning Department	Immediate
3.1.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah establishes and enforces standards for vehicular travel and access to private property that reduces congestion and provides accessible means of ingress and egress.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
3.1.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to reducing congestion and providing a resilient transportation network that supports economic growth.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
3.1.P.03	Policy	Infrastructure investments are orderly and support an open street network.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
3.2		Transportation: Street Classification & Function		
3.2.A.01	Action	Update traffic counts to identify areas of the city that could benefit from additional connectivity alternatives.	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years
3.2.A.02	Action	Include standard street cross sections in the Master Street Plan for the following street types: Complete Streets, collectors with bicycle lanes, residential or collector streets with sharrows, and collectors or arterials with protected bicycle lanes or cycle tracks.	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years
3.2.A.03	Action	Coordinate with Cherokee County and the Cherokee Nation on strategic road upgrades or connections that occur across jurisdictions.	TPWA	1 - 3 years
3.2.A.04	Action	Study the potential impacts of the new Casino on traffic at Park Hill Road and Bypass, as well as the potential impacts of the new outpatient hospital on traffic at Ross Street and Bypass.	TPWA	1 - 3 years
3.2.A.05	Action	Partner with Cherokee County to connect Stick Ross Road (W780 Rd) to Mud Valley Road (4th Street) via N4500 Rd West of Highway 51 Bypass.	TPWA	3 - 7 years
3.2.A.06	Action	Partner with Cherokee County to connect and align River Rd. and S. Nally Rd. from Willis Road, Powell Road, and Highway 62/Downing.	TPWA	3 - 7 years
3.2.P.01	Policy	Comprehensive street connectivity is a priority over cul-de-sacs and loop road developments.	Staff, Elected Officials	Immediate & Ongoing
3.2.P.02	Policy	Congestion is mitigated by providing safe and well maintained roadways that provide alternatives to major roadways.	Staff, Elected Officials	Immediate & Ongoing
3.3		Transportation: Alternative Transportation Options		
3.3.A.01	Action	Include standard street cross sections for the following street types: Complete Streets, collectors with bicycle lanes, residential or collector streets with sharrows, and collectors or arterials with protected bicycle lanes or cycle tracks. See also Action 3.2.A.02.	TPWA	Immediate
3.3.A.02	Action	Implement specific bicycle facilities as described in Element 5: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails; Topic 5, Plan Outcomes.	TPWA	1 - 3 years Ongoing
3.3.A.03	Action	Refer to Topic 4 of this section for specific actions related to sidewalks and accessibility.	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
3.3.P.01	Policy	Pedestrian safety and bicycling infrastructure are first priority, and transportation funding reflects this prerogative.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
3.3.P.02	Policy	Pedestrian crosswalks are designed to city standards, intentionally continuous and properly maintained.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
3.4 Transportation: Sidewalks & Accessibility				
3.4.A.01	Action	Adopt a Sidewalk Policy to create continuous connections along city streets.	Planning Commission	Immediate
3.4.A.02	Action	Evaluate ADA compliance and create and adopt Transition Plan to integrate accessibility features across the City of Tahlequah as projects permit.	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
3.4.A.03	Action	Inventory existing sidewalk conditions and areas that require increased accessibility.	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
3.4.A.04	Action	Pass an Access Management Ordinance for all commercial properties.	Planning Commission	Immediate
3.4.A.05	Action	Continue Safe Routes to Schools access and connectivity projects.	TPWA, Planning Department	Immediate Ongoing
3.4.A.06	Action	Bring Muskogee Avenue into ADA compliance from downtown to the Bypass.	TPWA, Planning Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
3.4.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah supports a comprehensive sidewalk network and will partner with neighborhood groups to install sidewalks in where demonstrable need is highest.	Staff, Elected Officials Public Works	Ongoing
3.4.P.02	Policy	It is the responsibility of the residential property owner to maintain sidewalks after installation.	Residents	Ongoing
3.4.P.03	Policy	New residential and commercial developments will be required to install sidewalks along the extents of the public right-of-way.	Staff, Developers	Ongoing
3.5 Transportation: Development Patterns to Promote Effective Transportation				
3.5.A.01	Action	Integrate landscaping and agricultural assets into public improvements.	Residents	1 - 3 years Ongoing
3.5.A.02	Action	Resolve conflicts between the Complete Streets Policy and subdivision regulations as related to block length, sidewalks, etc.	Planning Commission	Immediate
3.5.A.03	Action	Improve intersections with challenging geometry and deteriorating roadway edges to maintain storm water infrastructure and pedestrian safety.	TPWA, Planning Department	3 - 7 years
3.5.P.01	Policy	Traffic congestion is minimized by intersection redesigns, including roundabouts where appropriate, using signalization timing technologies, and peak ridership reduction solutions.	TPWA, Planning Department	Ongoing
3.5.P.02	Policy	Street connectivity in residential subdivisions is maintained by eliminating variances through the Preliminary and Final Plat process.	Staff, Planning Commission	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
4.1		Housing & Neighborhoods: Overall Issues		
4.1.A.01	Action	Create program to voluntarily inspect rental properties upon request for health, safety, and welfare status check according to adopted codes.	Planning Department, Code Enforcement	Immediate
4.1.A.02	Action	Allow hens (chickens) in R-2 and R-3 zoning §12-222, but prevent the size of garden structures to a total percentage of lot coverage, and a height not to exceed the height of the primary structure. Limit size of garden plots in multi-family housing units to no more than 50% of lot size.	Elected Officials	1 - 3 years
4.1.A.03	Action	Transform vacant and abandoned buildings into productive use.	Residents	3 - 7 years Ongoing
4.1.P.01	Policy	Planning Commission will establish procedures for replatting existing lots, new subdivisions, and creation of all new lots according to existing plat procedures.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.1.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah allows accessory dwelling units in R-2 and R-3 districts	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.1.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah allows mixed use zoning in C-1 and C-2 districts	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.2		Housing & Neighborhoods: Urban Transitional Neighborhoods		
4.2.A.01	Action	Pass an ordinance establishing the Historic District, as described in the 1997 Historic/Architectural Reconnaissance Survey, within which the rules of Chapter 8 Historic Preservation Zoning of the Planning, Zoning & Development Code will be applied. District boundaries are depicted in Figure 7.10.	Planning Commission	Immediate
4.2.A.02	Action	Create and pass an ordinance establishing architectural and site guidelines for development, redevelopment, and renovation within the Historic District, established in Action 4.2.A.01.	Planning Commission	1 - 3 years
4.2.A.03	Action	Create "renters guide" for municipal services, and roles and responsibilities of renters.	Code Enforcement, Residents	1 - 3 years
4.2.A.04	Action	Hold regularly scheduled clean-up days with bulk trash pickup for large and unsightly debris, and yard trash.	Residents	Immediate
4.2.A.05	Action	Establish a low-interest loan program for homeowners needing code upgrades, and inspections.	Code Enforcement, Planning Department, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
4.2.A.06	Action	Leverage new market-rate and affordable residential development with support from the City of Tahlequah and Cherokee County on undeveloped and marginal land.	Planning Department, Developers	3 - 7 years

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
4.2.A.07	Action	Build a coalition of Real Estate Agents, Property owners, Bankers, Landscape contractors, and home builders to work closely with the City of Tahlequah to identify problem areas and support tenants as they improve their properties to an acceptable standard.	Planning Department, Developers	1 - 3 years Ongoing
4.2.A.08	Action	Enforce restrictions on gardens that are overrun, untended, or potentially harbor mosquito populations or feral animals.	Code Enforcement	Immediate Ongoing
4.2.A.09	Action	Develop Landscape Guidelines to prevent and abate invasive plant species, non-native plantings, or gardens that impose on adjacent property owners.	Planning Department	Immediate
4.2.P.01	Policy	The City of Tahlequah promotes and supports Fair Housing Standards and recognizes property owners that maintain high quality housing.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.2.P.02	Policy	The City of Tahlequah recognizes the importance for backyard gardens for personal use, and supports programs that promote food security and healthy lifestyles.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.2.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah supports residents' needs for affordable housing choices and works closely with property owners and property management companies to streamline inspections and utility services.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.3		Housing & Neighborhoods: Stable Neighborhoods		
4.3.A.01	Action	Encourage planting of canopy trees and understory trees to enhance the quality of neighborhoods.	Residents	1 - 3 years Ongoing
4.3.A.02	Action	Limit storage of recreational vehicles to enclosed structures, or behind the main facade of the home.	Residents	Immediate Ongoing
4.3.A.03	Action	Fully staff code enforcement needs to eliminate blight conditions and nuisances that deteriorate neighborhood quality.	Code Enforcement, Elected Officials	Immediate Ongoing
4.3.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah recognizes that a persons home is their single greatest investment, and supports well maintained neighborhoods free of trash, debris, and litter.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.3.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah supports a range of housing types and income levels within each neighborhood.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.4		Housing & Neighborhoods: Residential Reserve		
4.4.A.01	Action	Restrict development that has negative impacts on storm water quality or impedes designated floodplains	Storm water, Planning Department	Immediate
4.4.A.02	Action	Prohibit development that does not conform to the comprehensive plan elements.	Planning Department, Developers	Immediate

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 4: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
4.4.A.03	Action	In instances where a potential land use would benefit the City of Tahlequah but conflicts with this plan, prepare, or cause to be prepared a comprehensive plan amendment.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	Immediate
4.4.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to preserving open space for future uses, and encouraging housing densities in existing neighborhoods that contribute to a healthy urban environment.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.4.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah seeks to maintain the small town character, but prepare for economic and housing growth.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.5		Housing & Neighborhoods: Innovative Housing Solutions		
4.5.A.01	Action	Establish pilot projects on University West Campus according to Special Area Plan. This pilot plan should allow for flexibility in housing types to meet the needs of NSU students and families.	NSU, Planning Department, Planning Commission	1 - 3 years
4.5.A.02	Action	Adopt subdivision regulations allowing cluster developments with varied lot sizes, red open space, and reduced setbacks.	Planning Commission	Immediate
4.5.A.03	Action	Require bioswales, rain gardens, and other Low Impact Development techniques to control the impact of Storm water.	TPWA, Planning Department, Developers	Immediate
4.5.A.04	Action	Provide revocable permits for limited garden development in the public right-of-way where it contributes to ongoing Low Impact Development efforts, and does not affect public utilities.	Code Enforcement, Planning Department	Immediate
4.5.A.05	Action	Modify Zoning District uses and Subdivision Regulations to incorporate Pocket Neighborhoods, Cluster Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units where appropriate.	Planning Commission	Immediate
4.5.P.01	Policy	The City of Tahlequah encourages a mix of housing types, and creative development patterns that provide for the goals of increasing affordable housing, accessibility to persons with disabilities, and off-campus student housing near NSU and Downtown Tahlequah.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.5.P.02	Policy	The City of Tahlequah supports complete neighborhoods with a mix of diverse housing types, sidewalks, low impact development features, interconnected streets, and dedicated undeveloped open spaces.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
4.5.P.03	Policy	The City of Tahlequah promotes higher housing densities near Downtown Tahlequah and NSU, and encourages redevelopment on existing single family lots within existing neighborhoods.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 5: PARKS & TRAILS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
5.1		Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Green Space Organization		
5.1.A.01	Action	Create a green space protection policy along drainage & waterways	Parks Department	Immediate
5.1.A.02	Action	Selectively conserve properties with challenging topography near the Illinois River for passive recreational trails and conservation activities.	Parks Department, Elected Officials	3 - 7 years
5.1.A.03	Action	Continue to acquire and/or secure access easements to properties along Town Branch to complete the Comprehensive Trails System. These include any property deemed suitable, adjacent to Town Branch or Tahlequah Creek, from the NSU campus to the Illinois River.	Parks Department, Elected Officials	Immediate
5.1.P.01	Policy	Large areas of land are preserved for parks, undisturbed meadows, and natural forest.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.1.P.02	Policy	Providing recreational opportunities and alternative modes of transportation via multi-use trails is a focus of the City.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.2		Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Pocket Parks & Plazas		
5.2.A.01	Action	Encourage the development of Pocket Parks, programmed or not, along greenways to fill in “missing teeth” particularly along waterways.	Parks Department, Developers	Immediate
5.2.A.02	Action	Regularly incorporate pocket parks and playgrounds in redevelopment areas so that no house is more than ½ mile from a dedicated open space.	Parks Department, Developers	Immediate
5.2.A.03	Action	Strategically place pocket parks in areas that are otherwise under served by open space, but do not locate them arbitrarily.	Parks Department, Developers	Immediate
5.2.A.04	Action	Continue to maintain Norris Park in downtown at a high level to reflect community pride and vibrancy of the downtown core.	Parks Department, Elected Officials	Immediate Ongoing
5.2.A.05	Action	Plazas and other gathering spaces should be considered in areas where Village Nodes and Future Open Space occur in close proximity to activate spaces beyond traditional business hours.	Parks Department, Developers	3 - 7 years Ongoing
5.2.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah provides educational opportunities to residents and businesses for ongoing pocket parks and plaza maintenance activities.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.2.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah provides adequate funding to support park activities.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 5: PARKS & TRAILS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
5.3		Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Neighborhood Parks		
5.3.A.01	Action	Facilitate the development of Neighborhood Parks, initially programmed or not, along greenways to fill in "missing teeth" particularly along waterways.	Parks Department, Developers	3 - 7 years
5.3.A.02	Action	Regularly incorporate neighborhood parks and playgrounds in redevelopment areas so that no house is more than ½ mile from a dedicated open space. It is not necessary to duplicate this service with Pocket Parks, but rather incorporate whichever park type can be accommodated within the infill or vacant space available.	Parks Department, Developers	3 - 7 years
5.3.A.03	Action	Strategically place neighborhood parks in currently unserved residential areas, but do not locate them in areas already served by another neighborhood park.	Parks Department, Developers	3 - 7 years
5.3.A.04	Action	Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance requiring developers to dedicate 0.04 acres per dwelling unit or \$796 in-lieu fees per dwelling unit. The City of Tahlequah will provide such in-lieu-of facilities within a reasonable distance from the development.	Parks Department, Developers	1 - 3 years
5.3.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah recognizes that Neighborhood parks serve as an important resource for residents and families.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.3.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah adequately funds amenities for parks that provide comfort, encourage use, and maintain safety for residents.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.4		Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Community Parks		
5.4.A.01	Action	Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance requiring developers to dedicate 0.04 acres per dwelling unit or \$796 in-lieu fees per dwelling unit. The City of Tahlequah will provide such in-lieu-of facilities within a reasonable distance from the development.	Parks Department	1 - 3 years
5.4.A.02	Action	Explore opportunities for the acquisition of property for future community parks, even if the intent is to leave them undeveloped for some time. This strategy would be beneficial to employ particularly in south-east Tahlequah.	Parks Department	1 - 3 years
5.4.P.01	Policy	Community parks serve as an activity center for the city and support festivals, trails, and passive recreational activities.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.4.P.02	Policy	The City of Tahlequah, along with community and business leaders recognize the importance of community parks and promote activities that increase use and provide an outlet for various types of recreation.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 5: PARKS & TRAILS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
5.4.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to creating a comprehensive system of trails, sidewalks, and accessibility features that connect each type and size of park.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.5 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Local Opportunities & Connections				
5.5.A.01	Action	Annex, acquire property, or secure perpetual easements to extend greenway to Illinois River along Town Branch and Tahlequah Creek, as well as to extend the greenway north to the bypass.	City Council	Immediate
5.5.A.02	Action	Acquire property to create a greenway along Ross Branch from Stick Ross Mountain Road to the Illinois River.	City Council	Immediate
5.5.A.03	Action	Acquire property or access easements to extend the multi-use trail south from Fisher Road to Heritage Elementary.	City Council	Immediate
5.5.A.04	Action	Acquire property or access easements to extend a multi-use trail northeast from the bypass near Wheeler to Diedrick/Cedar.	City Council	Immediate
5.5.A.05	Action	Identify utility easements that can be used as potential trails if access easements are obtained.	Parks Department, Public Works Department, TPWA	1 - 3 years
5.5.A.06	Action	Establish procedures to acquire trail easements during development actions.	Parks Department, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years
5.5.A.07	Action	Incorporate the on-road bicycle network into the Street Master Plan to accommodate bicycle facilities with infrastructure improvements as specified in Plan Outcomes, above.	Parks Department, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years
5.5.A.08	Action	Incorporate the on-road bicycle network into the City's Capital Improvements Plan to create the network in connected segments.	Parks Department, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years
5.5.A.09	Action	Provide signage or educational campaign regarding Oklahoma §47-11-1208 "A. When overtaking and passing a bicycle proceeding in the same direction, a person driving a motor vehicle shall exercise due care by leaving a safe distance between the motor vehicle and the bicycle of not less than three (3) feet until the motor vehicle is safely past the overtaken bicycle."	Parks Department, Public Works Department, TPWA	Immediate
5.5.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah maximizes access to creeks and rivers with connections between neighborhoods and subdivisions.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.5.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah supports the use of city streets by bicyclists and the development of on-road bicycle facilities	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 5: PARKS & TRAILS

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
5.6		Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Regional Opportunities & Connections		
5.6.A.01	Action	Consider the acquisition and development of a mountain bike course in large natural areas on the Northeast and East sides of town.	City Council	Immediate
5.6.A.02	Action	Establish long-distance signed bike routes west of town for to attract out-of-town road cyclists. Connections to other communities strengthens these routes as destinations for cyclists.	City Council	1 - 3 years
5.6.A.03	Action	Coordinate with NSU to joint host a 5k, 10k or half marathon in Tahlequah that starts and ends at Norris Park.	Parks Departments, NSU, Advocacy Groups	1 - 3 years
5.6.A.04	Action	Acquire river front property according to this plan for trail easement and new parks along the Illinois River.	City Council	Immediate
5.6.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is poised to capitalize on recreation opportunities with adequate staff support, funding, and resources to attract and retain visitors.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.6.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah is the center of commerce for adventure sports and maintains that position through dedicated funding and ongoing maintenance of existing facilities.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.7		Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails: Relationship to Livability/Quality of Life, Tourism, and Economic Development		
5.7.A.01	Action	Establish a bike share program in partnership with NSU once the trail network is expanded.	NSU, City Council	3 - 7 years
5.7.A.02	Action	Publish a trails map depicting current and major planned trails and bicycle facilities.	Chamber, Parks Department	1 - 3 years
5.7.A.03	Action	Build partnerships with private recreational providers (bike shops, float operators, skate shops etc.)	Chamber, Parks Department	1 - 3 years
5.7.A.04	Action	Ensure that the Parks & Recreation Department budget increases with each addition to the greenway and/or new parks to provide the adequate maintenance.	City Council	1 - 3 years
5.7.A.05	Action	Assign different levels of maintenance to different areas of each park or open space then train staff to understand the difference between entries, heavy public use and natural areas that require less intense care.	Parks Department	Immediate
5.7.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to creating a comprehensive parks and open space network that increases the health and welfare of residents.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.7.P.02	Policy	Recreation facilities promote health and wellness, and connect residents to outdoor activities	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
5.7.P.03	Policy	Establish a parks and grounds maintenance level matrix for each park and open space with corresponding budgets based on those approved levels.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
6.1		Utilities, Infrastructure, and Community Facilities: Streets		
6.1.A.01	Action	Provide curb and gutter for existing roads with adjacent steep grades.	TPWA, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
6.1.A.02	Action	Implement synchronized signalization along Muskogee Ave.	TPWA, Public Works Department	3 - 7 years
6.1.A.03	Action	Realign Water Street and Basin Ave to create a contiguous connection between Park Hill Road and Chickasaw Street according to the Future Transportation Improvement Plan, page 132, Figure 7.8.	TPWA, Public Works Department	3 - 7 years Ongoing
6.1.A.04	Action	Include the entire right-of-way (both sides of the street) adjacent to parks, riparian corridors, and drainage systems as critical components of the comprehensive landscape and trails system design.	TPWA, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
6.1.A.05	Action	Adopt Low Impact Development Standards as standard details in Street Section details sheets.	TPWA, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years
6.1.A.06	Action	Incorporate contiguous sidewalks and accessibility features on both sides of Muskogee Avenue.	TPWA, Staff	1 - 3 years
6.1.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to managing street performance and level of service to support healthy, safe, walkable neighborhoods, and commercial districts.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.1.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah supports ongoing operation and maintenance of roadways that reduces long-term financial costs.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.1.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to implementing complete streets policies.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.2		Utilities, Infrastructure, and Community Facilities: Storm Drainage		
6.2.A.01	Action	Adopt Design Standards for landscaping, bioswales, rain gardens, and urban tree wells that can be inserted into building permits.	City Council	Immediate
6.2.A.02	Action	Create citywide inventory of LID structures that contribute to city-wide storm water management plan	TPWA, Public Works Department	1- 3 years Ongoing
6.2.A.03	Action	Use wayfinding and signage to educate the public on the downstream impacts of pollution with a "This water drains to the Illinois River" campaign.	Public Works Department	1 - 3 years
6.2.A.04	Action	Update, modify and complete the Tahlequah Public Works Authority Long Range Plan 2011-2031 for Water - Wastewater - Electric.	TPWA, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
6.2.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to protecting the waters of Tahlequah through proactive pollution control.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.2.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah will mitigate the impact of flood waters by adhering to design standards and implementing sensible regulations.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 6: UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
6.3		Utilities, Infrastructure, and Community Facilities: Municipal Water System		
6.3.A.01	Action	Continue to operate and maintain equipment to high level of service according the best management practices.	TPWA, Public Works Department	Ongoing
6.3.A.02	Action	Create and publish Capital Improvement Plans for new and improved infrastructure systems to inform the public and businesses of ongoing maintenance activities.	TPWA, Public Works Department	Immediate Ongoing
6.3.P.01	Policy	Infill development and maintenance of existing infrastructure is a higher priority than new and expanded service for greenfield developments.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.3.P.02	Policy	A close working relationship with ODEQ is vital to maintaining compliance.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.4		Utilities, Infrastructure, and Community Facilities: Municipal Sanitary Sewer System		
6.4.A.01	Action	Continue to operate and maintain equipment to high level of service according the best management practices.	TPWA, Public Works Department	Ongoing
6.4.A.02	Action	Create and publish Capital Improvement Plans for new and improved infrastructure systems to inform the public and businesses of ongoing maintenance activities.	TPWA, Public Works Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
6.4.P.01	Policy	Infill development and maintenance of existing infrastructure is a higher priority than new and expanded service for greenfield developments.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.4.P.02	Policy	A close working relationship with ODEQ is vital to maintaining compliance.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.5		Utilities, Infrastructure, and Community Facilities: Community Facilities		
6.5.A.01	Action	Perform ADA compliance audit for all municipal facilities.	Parks Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
6.5.A.02	Action	Use Tahlequah Alliance as the organizer for community facility needs to avoid duplication and saturation.	TPWA, Parks Department	1 - 3 years Ongoing
6.5.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is a community that hosts a wide range of cultural, arts, and entertainment events. Community facilities are well maintained and adequate for a thriving population.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
6.5.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah is a center for a variety of recreational, cultural and entertainment activities. Tahlequah supports tourism and promotes opportunities for visitors to engage in the arts and culture unique to Eastern Oklahoma.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
7.1		Economic Development: Tahlequah Economic Alliance		
7.1.A.01	Action	Establish an annual financial allocation to support a staff member to represent the Tahlequah Alliance, and accomplish the specified goals.	Elected Officials	Immediate
7.1.A.02	Action	Any activity that is identified as a pressing need without a clear leader or responsible party.	Chamber, Elected Officials	Immediate
7.1.P.01	Policy	The Alliance is dedicated to teamwork and collaboration and unlocking the potential of business and industry.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.1.P.02	Policy	The Alliance jointly contributes to the goals of the adopted Economic Development Action Plan.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2		Economic Development: Workforce Development		
7.2.A.01	Action	Identify major employment sectors in the Tulsa, Fayetteville, Ft. Smith, and Oklahoma City markets and create a list of supply chain projects that lack local representation. Where there is overlap in industry sectors between cities, contact product development leaders and tailor an incentive package to match their growth needs.	Chamber	1 - 3 years
7.2.A.02	Action	Use the increase in medical center activity to attract affiliated business types that increase sales tax, and new employment opportunities. Strategic marketing for hotels, medical office buildings, restaurants, and entertainment will provide a supportive ecosystem for the growing medical sector.	Chamber	1 - 3 years
7.2.A.03	Action	Incentivize academic programs, and certifications for job fields that support medical and high-tech industries.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.2.A.04	Action	Create program to support locally based employers that hire part-time and contract labor to provide workers new and interdisciplinary work experience.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.2.A.05	Action	Create Tahlequah Alliance with formal bylaws, financial support and clearly defined action items. The Alliance should consist of all major institutions; City of Tahlequah, NSU, Chamber of Commerce, Cherokee Nation and the United Keetoowah Band as well as other organizations seeking to advance opportunities in Tahlequah.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.2.A.06	Action	Define job creation goals, with timelines and steps toward achievement for economic development entities.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
7.2.A.07	Action	Establish capacity for financial incentives and procedures for providing incentives to businesses through an open and accessible public process.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.2.A.08	Action	Monitor business health through monthly sales and statistic reporting for beneficiary businesses, facilitate marketing and promotion campaigns, and raise awareness of locally made products to regional suppliers.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.2.A.09	Action	Create a "Made in Tahlequah" logo/sticker for items produced from Tahlequah products and services.	Chamber, Elected Officials	Immediate
7.2.A.10	Action	Utilize the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act adoption of the Federal Opportunity Zones for the Census Tract 40021978100 that covers the east and south edges of Tahlequah. This tract borders Water Street on the West and the Illinois River on the East.	Chamber, Elected Officials	Immediate
7.2.P.01	Policy	The City of Tahlequah is dedicated to reducing unemployment and eliminating poverty.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.02	Policy	The Tahlequah Industrial Authority and the City of Tahlequah work jointly to identify growing industries and align municipal investment opportunities to match workforce needs.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah supports local businesses create quality jobs and reinvest in the future.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.04	Policy	The City of Tahlequah works closely with the Chamber of Commerce, Tribal Governments, NSU, and the Eastern Workforce Investment Board to create pathways to full time employment.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.05	Policy	Tahlequah invests in growth, and uses patient capital to provide a reasonable return on investment to serve the public interest.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.06	Policy	Tahlequah leverages all available resources to serve workforce development.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.07	Policy	Tahlequah recognizes the need for part-time and short term employment so that residents can build work experience and show increasing levels of responsibility.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.2.P.08	Policy	Financial incentives to support new and expanding businesses are used strategically, and granted special consideration by City Council.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.3 Economic Development: Maintaining Vibrant Retail				
7.3.A.01	Action	Permit limited exterior display of retail items in Downtown Tahlequah during business hours. Permit by-right sidewalk cafes, umbrella, benches and planters according to City of Tahlequah policies.	Planning Department, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
7.3.A.02	Action	Encourage businesses to shift hours later into the evening so that customers with a 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work schedule have an opportunity to visit the business.	Chamber	Immediate
7.3.A.03	Action	Create storefront art displays to activate the facades of buildings.	Chamber	Immediate
7.3.A.04	Action	Provide code interpretation and support for challenging building code issues that create hardships to redevelopment.	Planning Department, Code Enforcement	Immediate
7.3.A.05	Action	Encourage use of the Existing Building Code.	Planning Department, Code Enforcement	Immediate
7.3.A.06	Action	Permit short term occupancy and access to downtown buildings that participate in a citywide arts experience.	Planning Department	Immediate
7.3.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah supports local retailers and supports tenants maintain a vibrant retail environment.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.3.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah is committed to increasing activity and opportunities for new businesses to locate in Downtown.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.4 Economic Development: Tourism				
7.4.A.01	Action	Develop comprehensive wayfinding, signage, and directional support to draw attention to Downtown Tahlequah.	Chamber, Planning Department	Immediate
7.4.A.02	Action	Create a one-stop tourist shop should be created to bring adventurers to Downtown Tahlequah. Capture tourist traffic by creating a centralized outdoor recreation hub where information for float trips, hiking trails, lake activities, along with other outdoor products are for sale.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.4.A.03	Action	Petition the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife to create a dedicated Wildlife and Recreation Exhibit as a component of the one-stop shop in Downtown Tahlequah. This facility would become an authorized licensed dealer with the Department of Wildlife to purchase hunting, fishing, and conservation passports.	Chamber, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.4.A.04	Action	Establish easement and property tax incentive procedures for acquiring land to be used for recreational trails and conservation. Identify parcels or portions thereof and continue to secure land that would benefit a comprehensive trails system.	Staff, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years
7.4.A.05	Action	Create trails management training and maintenance group to support growth and development of a comprehensive trails system.	Parks Department	1 - 3 years

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
7.4.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to a welcoming and vibrant tourist experience that supports local businesses.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.4.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah recognizes the importance of tourism and supports recreational activities outside of the Municipal boundary.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.4.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah is regional destination for outdoor activities and promotes the Town Branch trail system as the organizing element to attract tourists and provide accessible recreation to Tahlequah residents.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.4.P.04	Policy	Tahlequah recognizes private property rights and balances individual privacy issues with the broader goal of creating a comprehensive trail network. The trail network achieves the community goal of a safe and well maintained trail system that is open to everyone and can provide direct access to those trails by private property owners and their neighbors.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.5		Economic Development: Downtown Destinations		
7.5.A.01	Action	Create, adopt and adhere to a Downtown Master Plan to address specific physical and social challenges that will require coordination between the City and business owners.	Planning Department, Elected Officials, Downtown Merchants Association, Chamber	1 - 3 years
7.5.A.02	Action	Continue to remove barriers to redevelopment of underutilized buildings and empty lots.	Planning Department, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years
7.5.A.03	Action	Create Downtown Tourist Hub that represents the full spectrum of activities, cultural amenities, and entertainment options within the Tahlequah region.	Chamber, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years
7.5.A.04	Action	Realign zoning districts to reduce the uses allowed within each district and update language to correspond with common land uses in the modern economy.	Planning Department, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years Ongoing
7.5.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah is dedicated to maintaining existing businesses and expanding economic capacity.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.5.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah encourages infill development and supports housing and commercial densities that create a contiguous urban environment.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.5.P.03	Policy	Continue to support marketing and promotion of Downtown Tahlequah events.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE - ELEMENT 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
7.6		Economic Development: Harnessing New Technologies		
7.6.A.01	Action	Update or remove building permit data from 2009-2011 from the City website.	Planning Department	Immediate
7.6.A.02	Action	Continue to maintain public data that supports long-term economic development activities.	Mayor's Office, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.6.A.03	Action	Create pilot programs centered around high return on investments with low impact on customer service.	Mayor's Office, Elected Officials	1 - 3 years
7.6.P.01	Policy	Tahlequah protects the privacy of residents personal data and has clearly defined protocols when data is shared on a public portal. Public hearings are held each year to review privacy protocols and audits of privacy performance.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.6.P.02	Policy	Tahlequah supports application of new technologies that promote civic engagement and enhance customer service.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing
7.6.P.03	Policy	Tahlequah is actively engaged in civic innovation and creates pilot programs to reduce cost of delivering core services and maintains high levels of customer service.	Staff, Elected Officials	Ongoing

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APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS

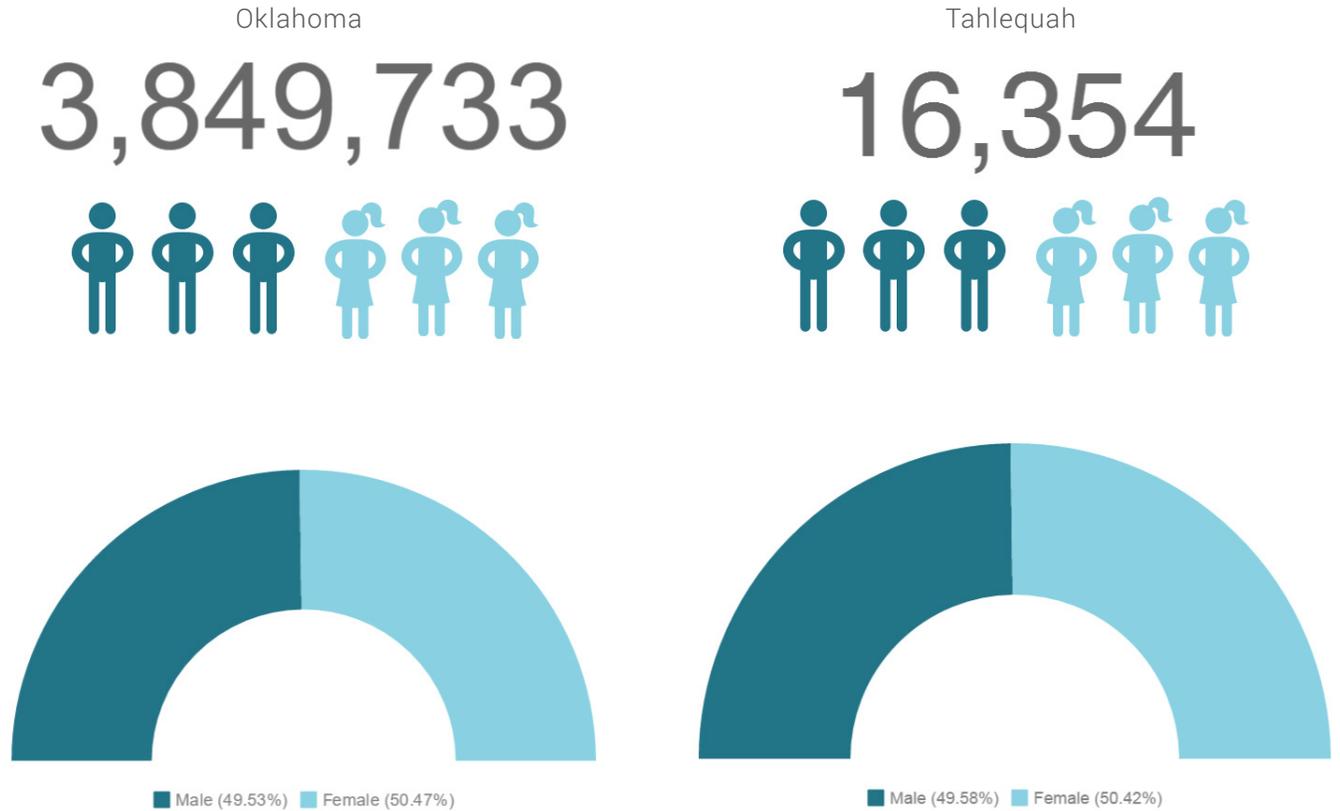
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APPENDIX A

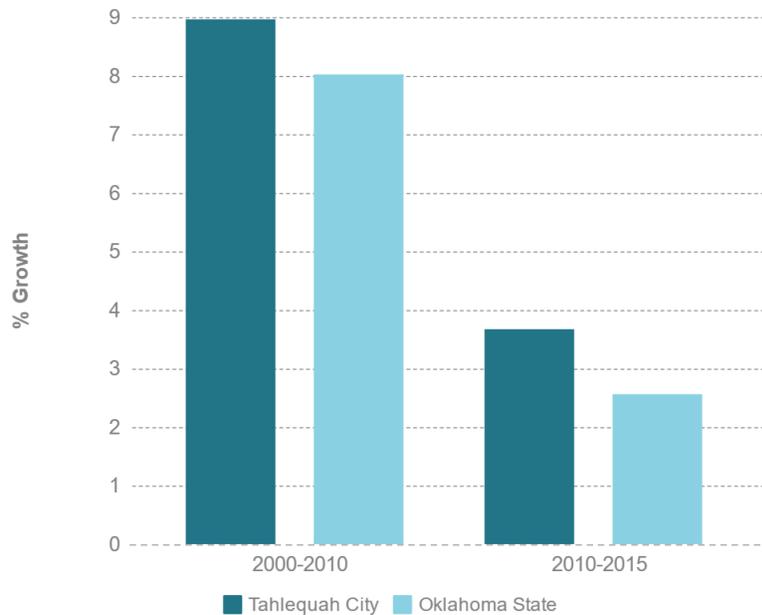
DEMOGRAPHICS

OKLAHOMA (STATEWIDE) AND TAHLEQUAH COMPARISON

1. Total Population and Male-Female Ratio (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



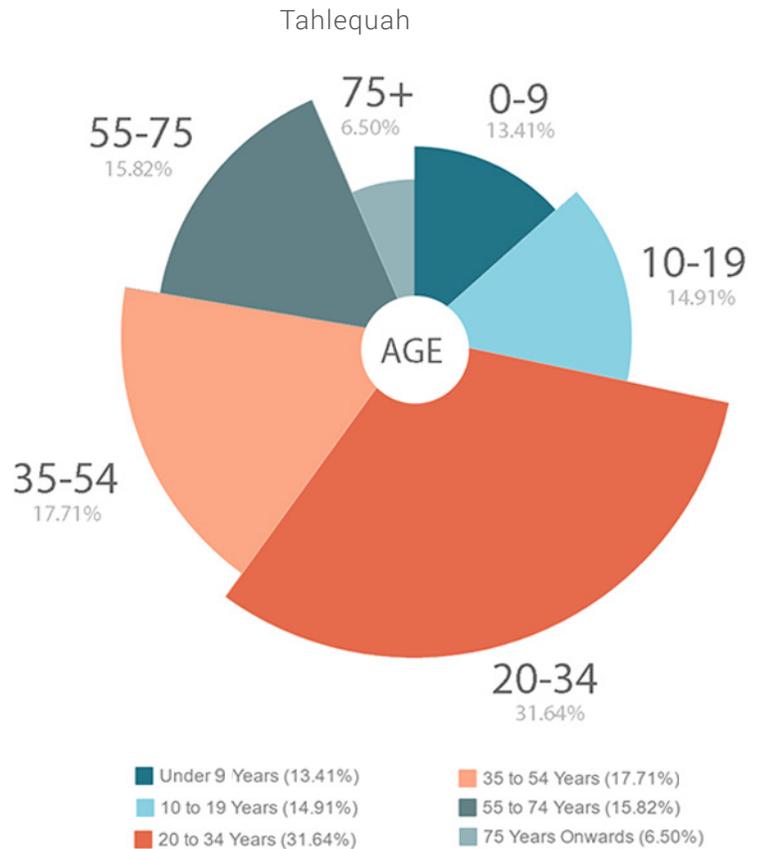
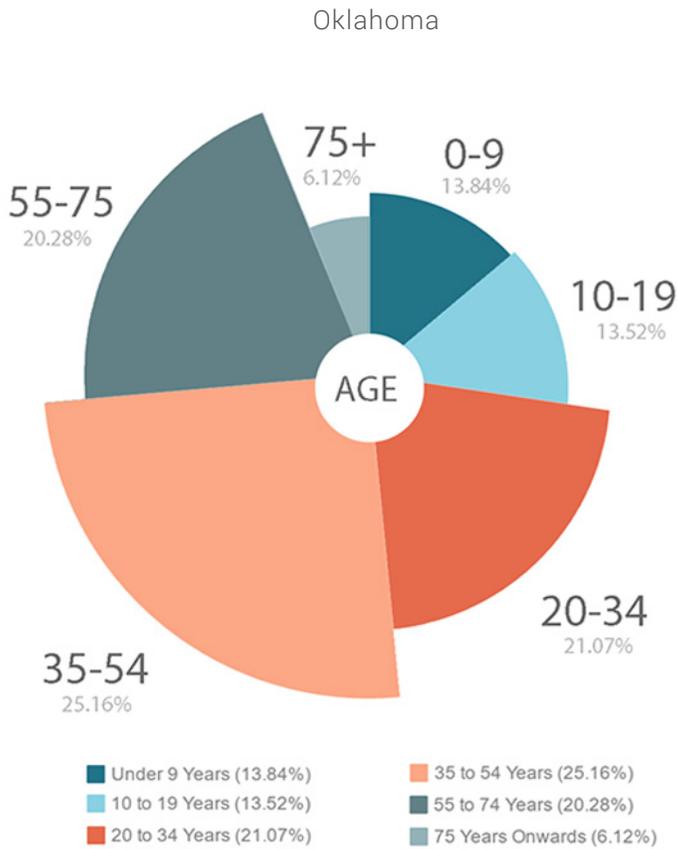
2. % Change in Population (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



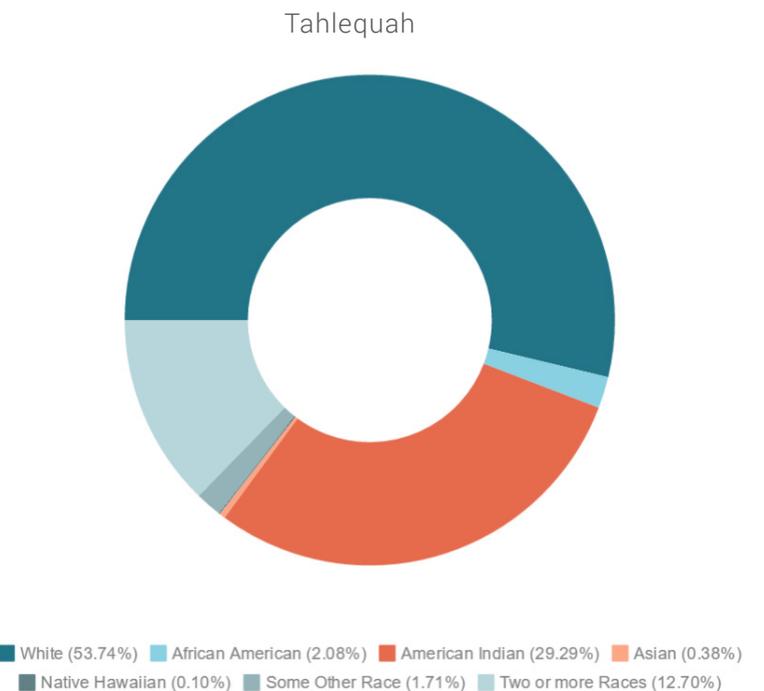
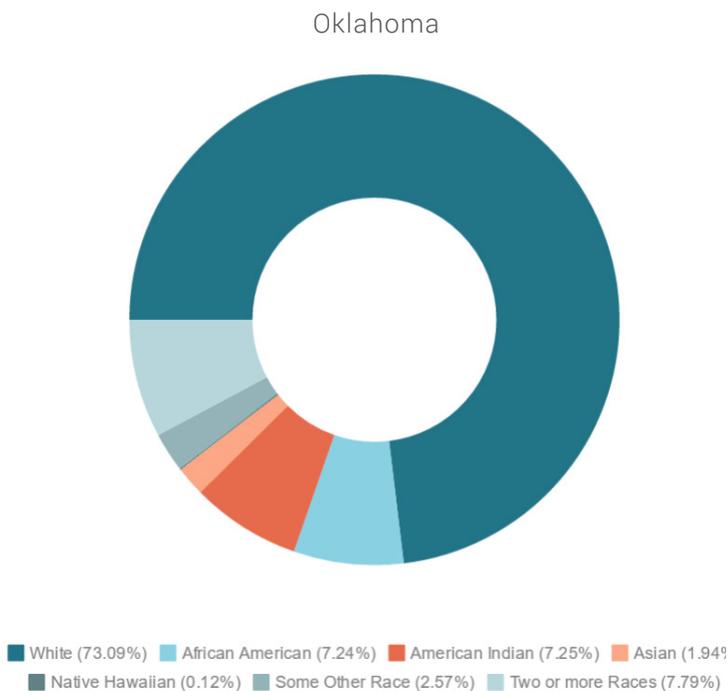
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3. Age Distribution (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



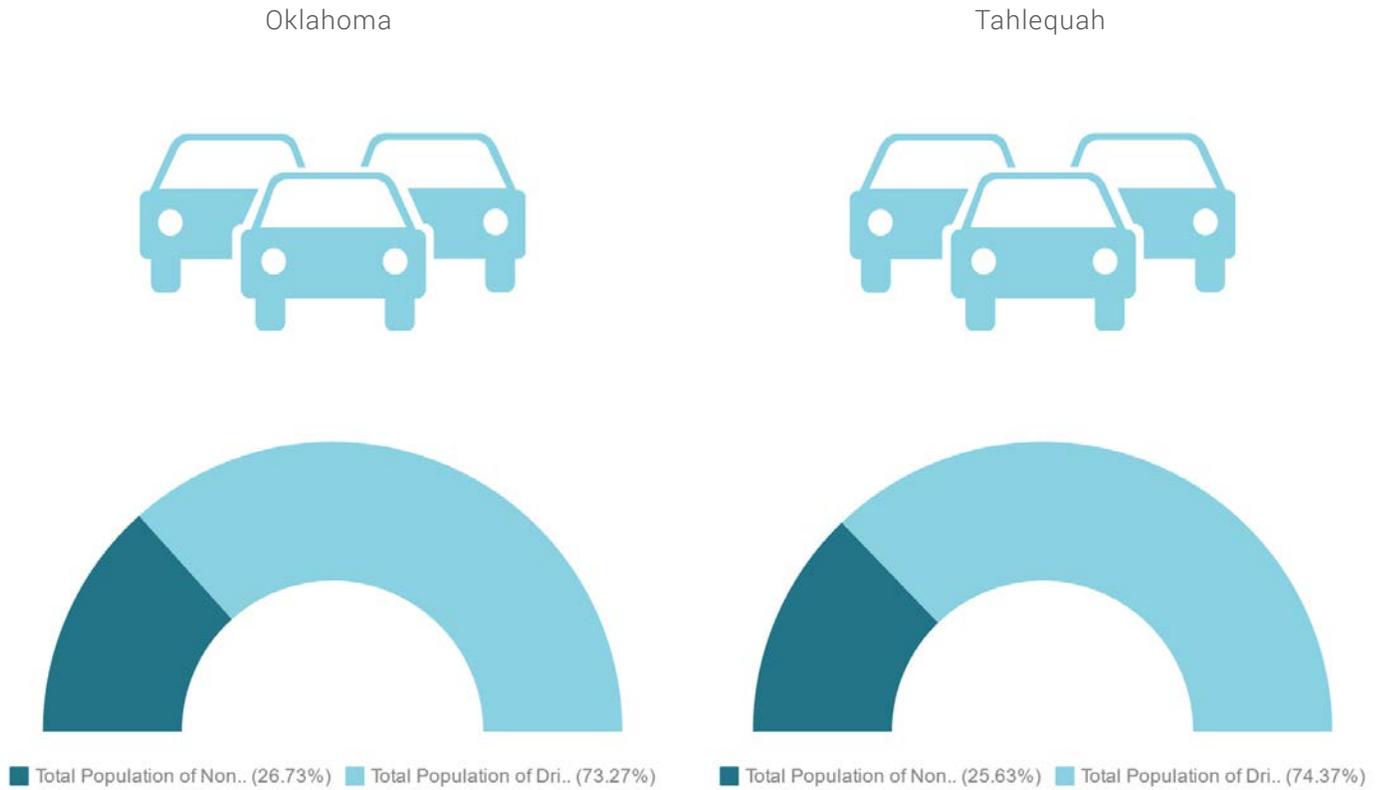
4. Racial Origins and Statistics (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



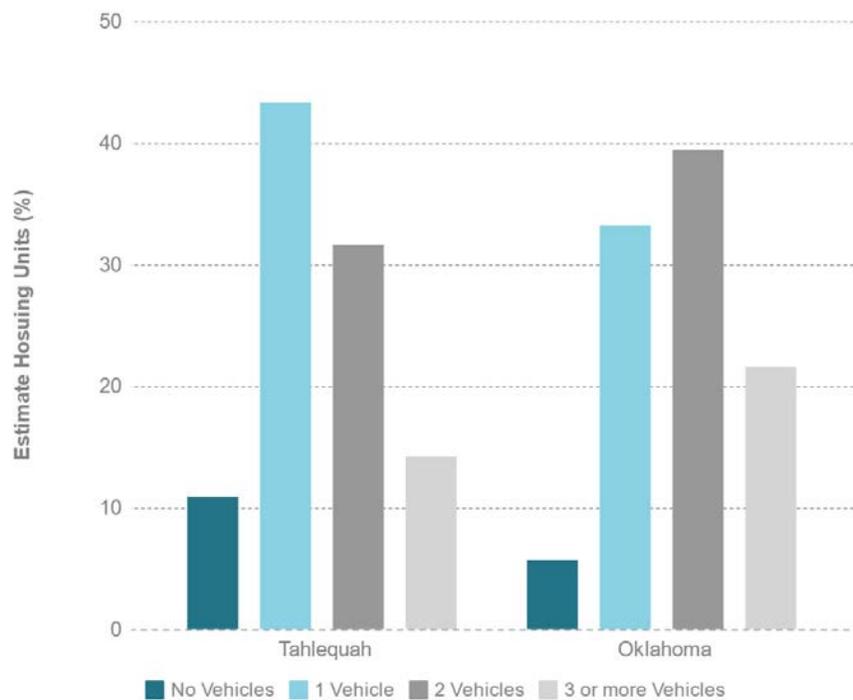
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5. Population of Drivers vs. Non-Drivers Based on Age (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



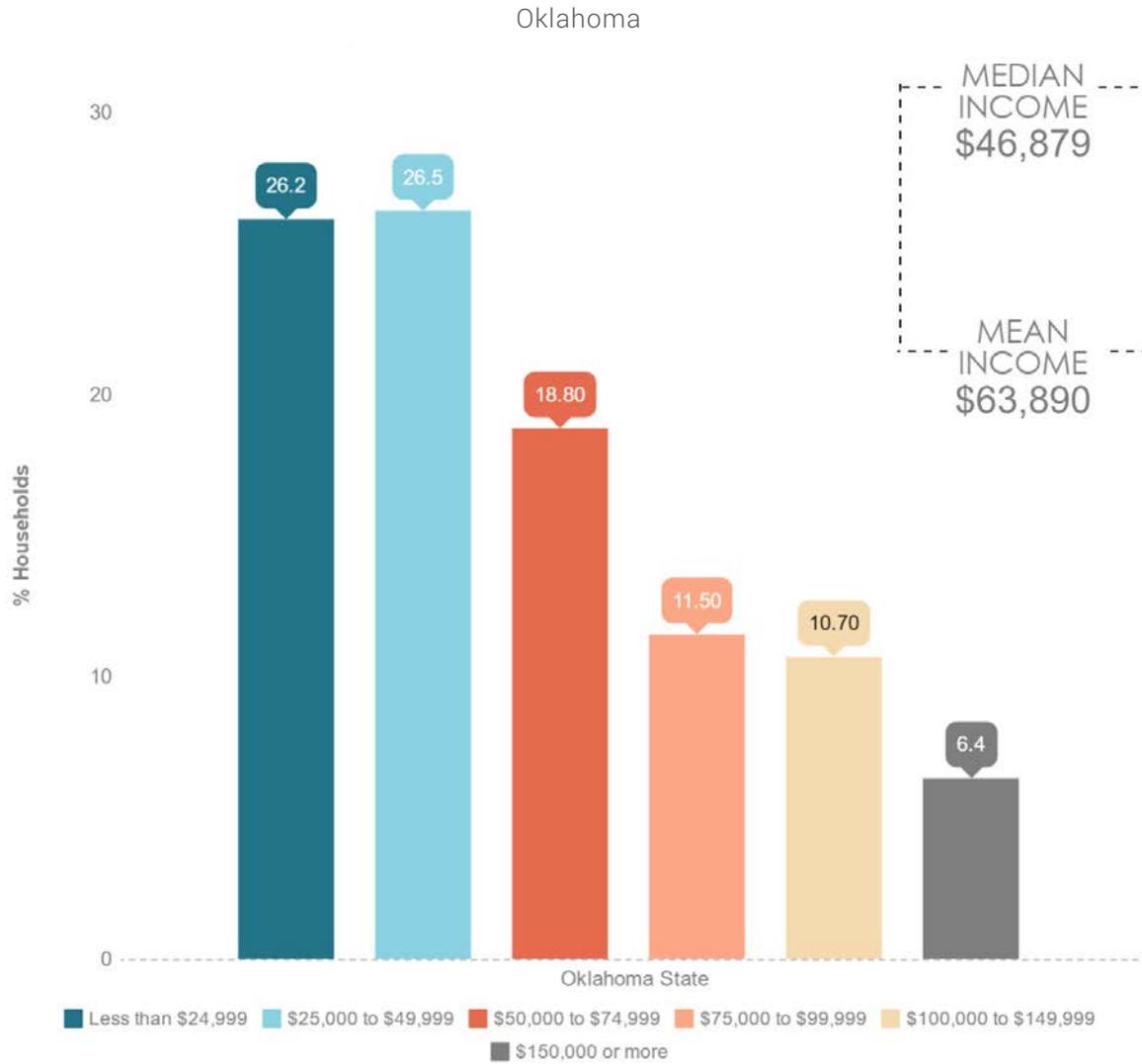
6. Vehicles Available per Household (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



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7. Income per Household (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



TOTAL POPULATION
3,849,733



TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS
1,455,321

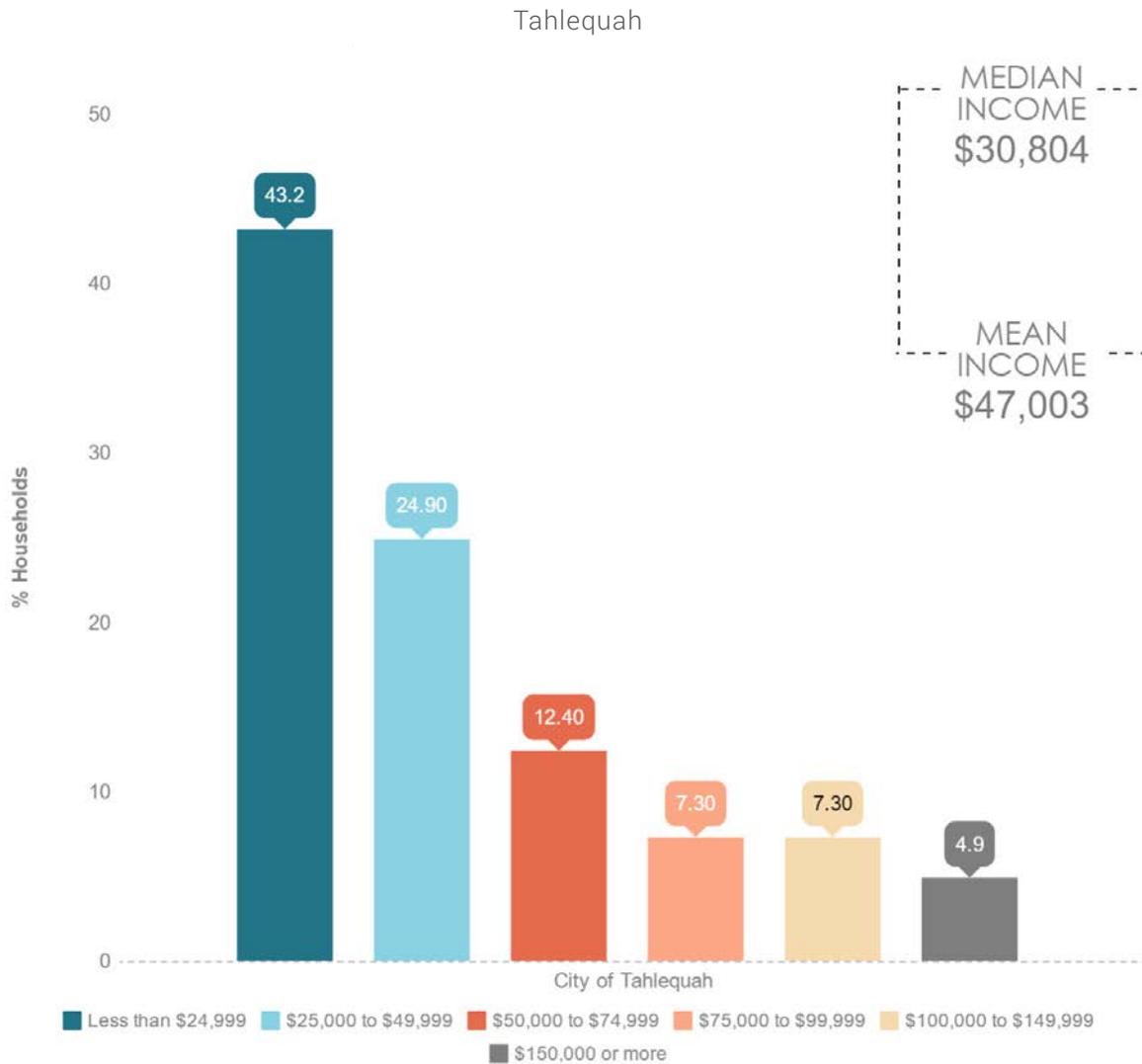


PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD
2.64

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7. Income per Household, continued (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



TOTAL POPULATION
16,354



TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS
5,536

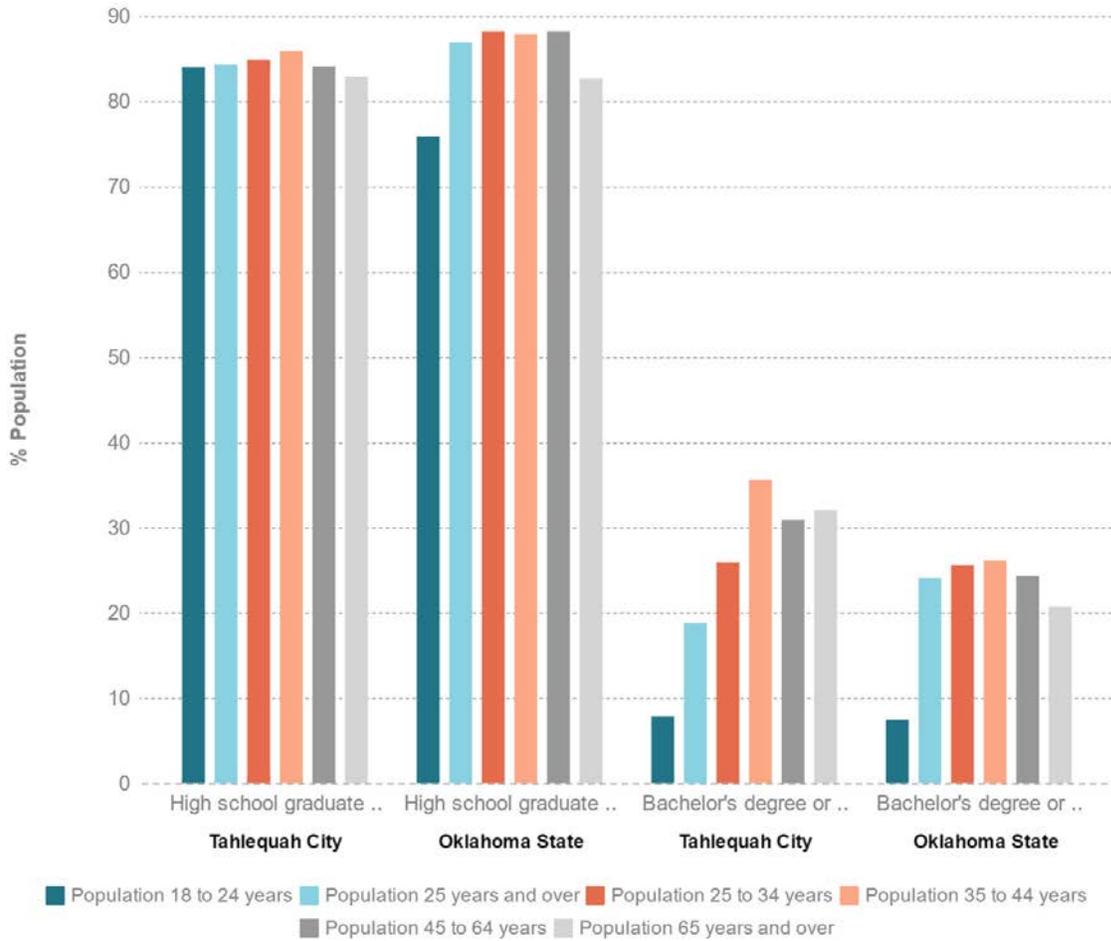


PESONS PER HOUSEHOLD
2.95

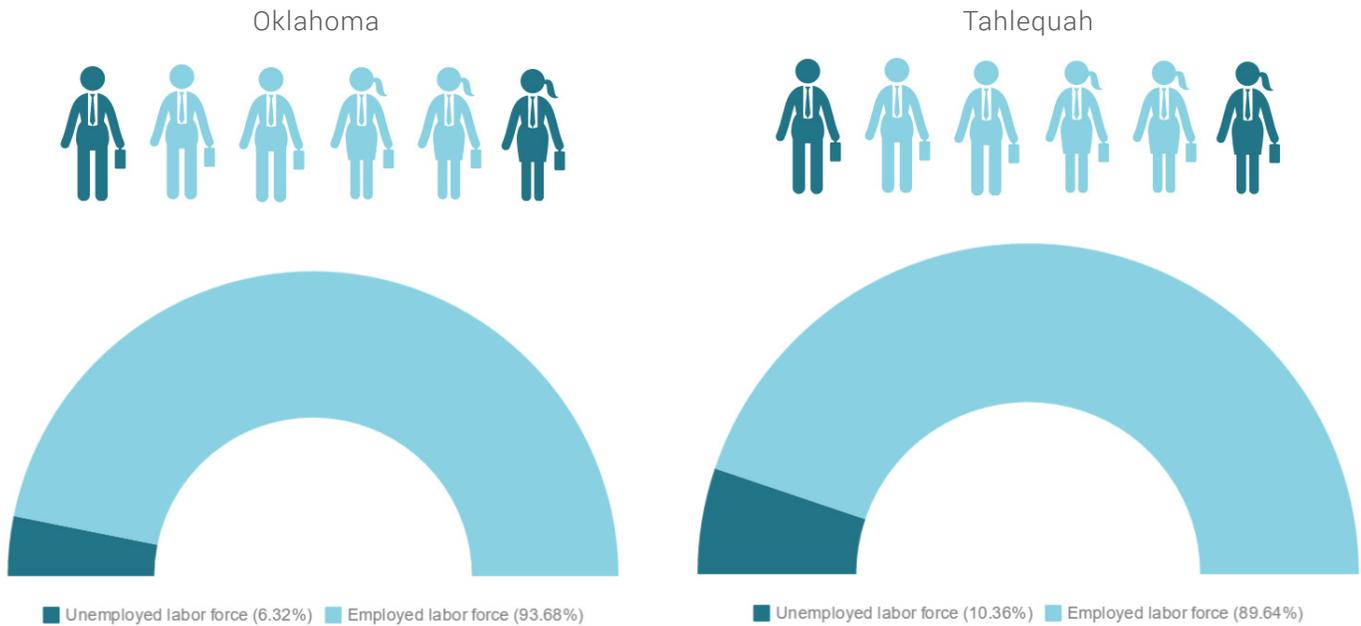
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8. Educational Attainment (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



9. Employment Status (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)

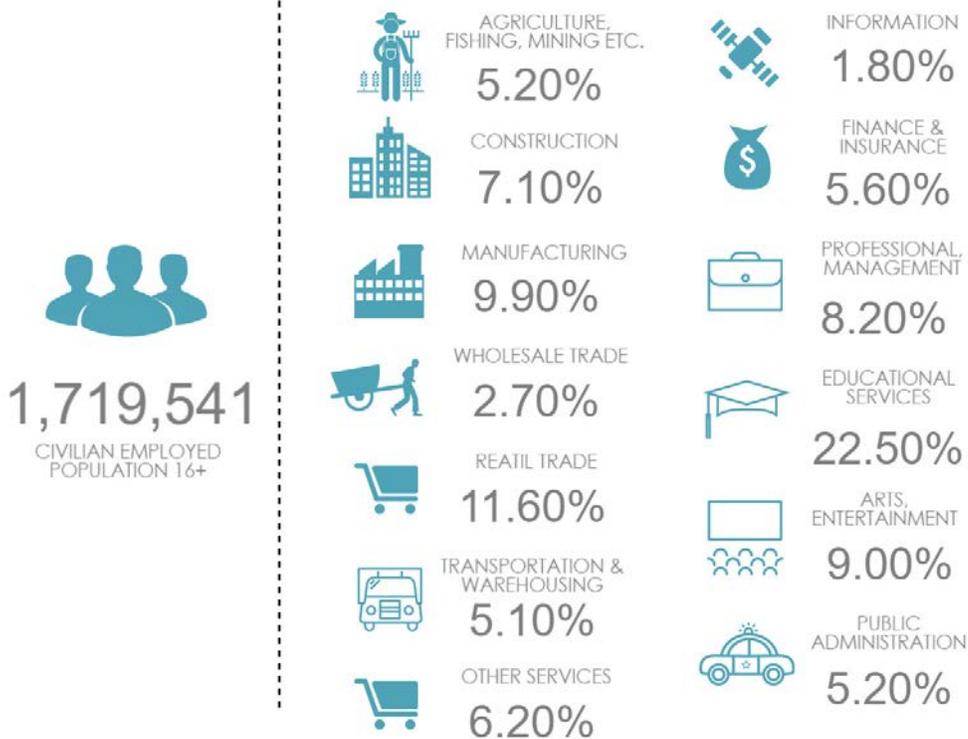


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10. Industry by Type Employment Opportunities (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)

Oklahoma



Tahlequah



APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS

11. Community Characteristics (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)

Oklahoma


1,705,849
 WORKERS 16+


21.3 MINS
 MEAN TRAVEL TIME
 TO WORK


 CAR, TRUCK OR VAN
 DRIVE ALONE
82.50%


 CAR, TRUCK OR VAN
 CARPOOLED
10.40%


 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
 (EXCLUDING TAXICAB)
0.50%


 WALKED
1.80%


 OTHER MEANS
1.3%


 WORKED AT HOME
3.50%

Tahlequah


6,337
 WORKERS 16+


18 MINS
 MEAN TRAVEL TIME
 TO WORK


 CAR, TRUCK OR VAN
 DRIVE ALONE
81.60%


 CAR, TRUCK OR VAN
 CARPOOLED
9.20%


 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
 (EXCLUDING TAXICAB)
1.30%


 WALKED
5.20%


 OTHER MEANS
0.7%

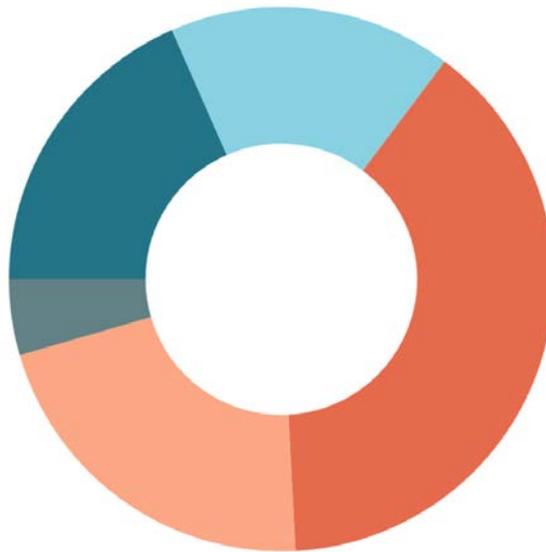

 WORKED AT HOME
2.10%

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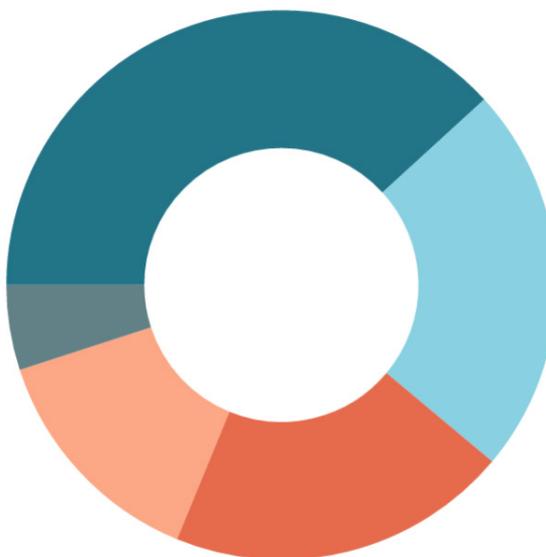
12. Travel Time needed to reach Work Places (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)

Oklahoma



■ Less than 10 MINS (18.42%) ■ 10 TO 14 MINS (16.82%) ■ 15 TO 30 MINS (38.94%)
■ 30 TO 59 MINS (21.32%) ■ 60 OR MORE MINS (4.50%)

Tahlequah

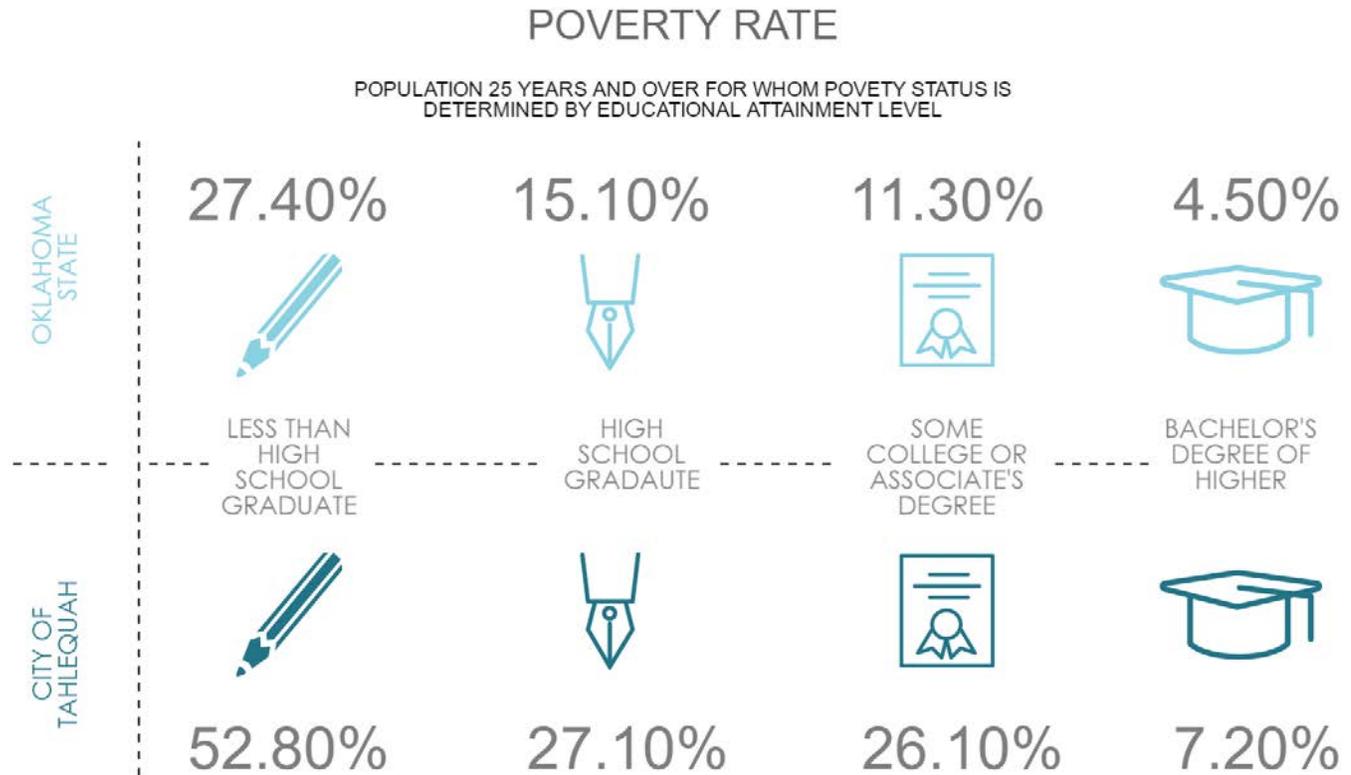


■ Less than 10 MINS (38.20%) ■ 10 TO 14 MINS (22.90%) ■ 15 TO 30 MINS (20.10%)
■ 30 TO 59 MINS (13.80%) ■ 60 OR MORE MINS (5%)

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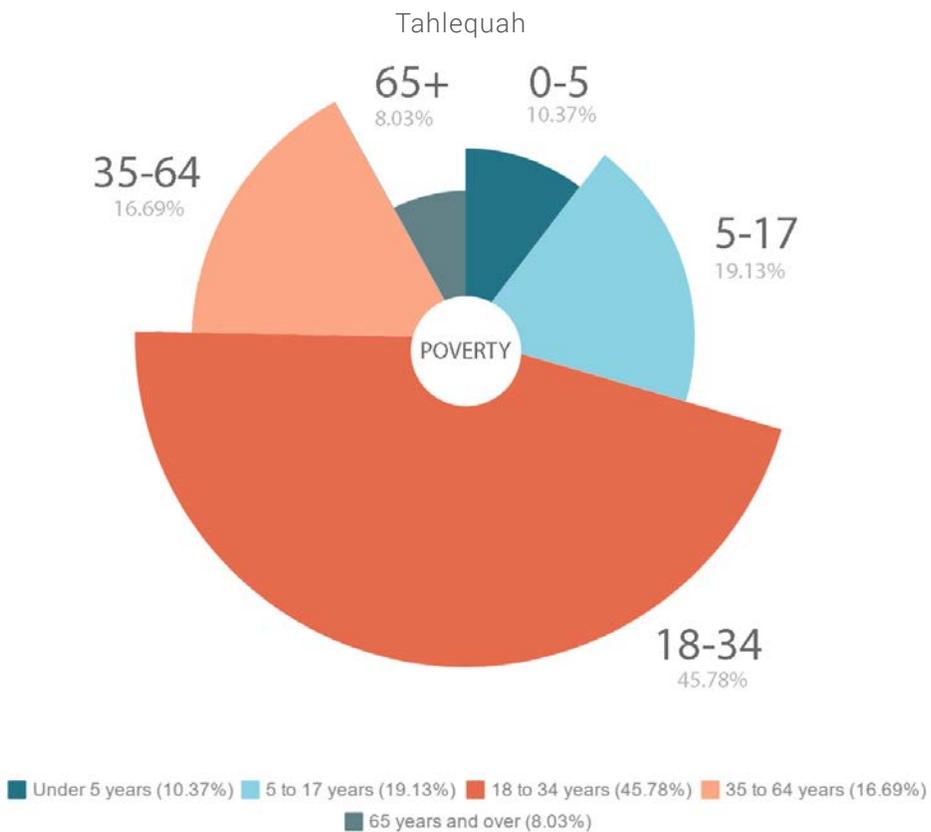
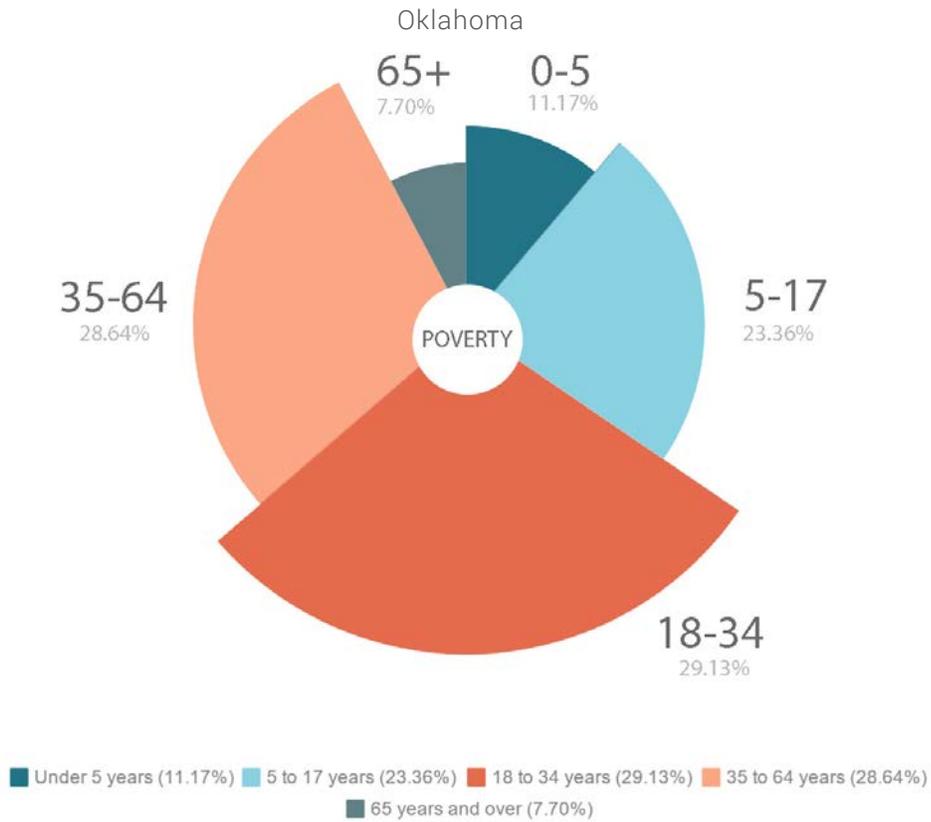
13. Poverty Rate based on Educational Attainment (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



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DEMOGRAPHICS

14. Poverty Status per Age Group (Oklahoma – Tahlequah)



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APPENDIX **B**

STAKEHOLDER
INTERVIEWS
SUMMARY

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APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

GENERAL

1. Are you, or is your organization, involved in any past, current, or pending studies or initiatives that could impact the City of Tahlequah either directly or indirectly? Please describe.

- Yes, Plant Study w/ HUB, electrical (Guernsey)
- Yes, History Trail, street reconstruction, new streets, sidewalks
- Yes, Ross Street project towards hospital expansion, Widening w/ extra section improvements. Mud Valley Road west side another widening/drainage.
- Health Assessment Surveys (within last year), addiction and suicide prevention, tobacco surveys
- Salary analysis
- Nothing recent
- NSU campus masterplan
- Industrial park layout, Cherokee springs gas line
- Chamber vision study
- Part of Chamber vision plan
- Yes
- No. Workforce data from state, take regional approach
- No. Nothing in city limits
- Data for NSU?/ But it is not easy to use because it leads the outcome
- Gap analysis, Cherokee..
- No, school is its own world
- Chamber Committee
- Bike paths in 90s, suggestions of what needs to be done
- School Board President & Hospital Foundation Board
- 4th one in 25 years
- Historic/Architectural Reconnaissance survey -1997, walking tour brochure, National Register visits & properties(downtown Main Street didn't qualify) CLG city for 7 years but not code enforced.

2. Do you own or represent property and / or a business in Tahlequah? If so, what type of land use or business concerns might you have? Also, how long have you owned the property?

- Wife owns a home business
- No
- Davis Oil Company and Cherokee, Live in the County
- Yes and Yes
- Rent in downtown (@ Sequah Park)
- NSU, lives in county – North
- Yes, live in town/dental
- Live in county, live on Ft. Gibson Lake
- Lives in town, works for Cherokee nation
- Live and work, grew up here
- Yes, owned property 2 years
- Live in town, work at home/ company is in Salisaw
- Live in town (63 yrs, 32 yrs)
- Both, county, from 1978, work at NSU with law practice 19 yrs
- Lived here since 1959, Real Estate and construction background
- No
- No, Son in law owns gym facility. Aerofit.
- Convention planning business (used to)
- Yes
- No
- Yes, Century 21
- Yes
- Yes, bike shop
- Yes, Branch, Sam & Ellas
- Bankfirst
- Repaving/drainage. Huge potholes around business, not pedestrian friendly, don't own property but restaurant for 15 years.
- Residential – mostly owned, maybe 2 renters, 14 year development, duplexes all rentals, too many neighborhoods – should be one

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

3. Please share any local issues within the city of which you are aware and feel is important for us to understand, or which may impact future planning decisions. Such issues may include local politics, activities of special interest groups, plans for developments within the city, local bond elections, etc.

- Not pedestrian friendly but lots of pedestrian traffic (especially south), Low hanging limbs, couple of houses on hill by tower have low pressure.
- Yes, politics, delays on bond projects
- Casinos, hospital expansion, speed access to those, street maintenance, Ross and Mud Valley are partnerships between city and county and Cherokees. (Federal Funds). Other projects have used tribal funds. Cherokee Nation takes lead. Cities Role is planning. ODOT primarily used for these.
- North highway re-alignment may effect convenient stores, only right turn off by pass may effect entry and exit to Ross Clinic, main entry south.
- Bond issue – public needs education
- In second bond for streets, complete sports park.
- City partnered with NSU for event center/road projects at stadium
- No sports complex (2 Bonds) future – extend parks, pool facility good but people not happy with the hours and rules.
- TPWA – movement to do water facility improvement, could be utility rate increase
- 2nd feed into Tahlequah, parallel OG&E line. Gas Line (10 Mil)
- TPWA – bond to expand water facility to fund infrastructure capacity +/-30mil.
- Many bond issues have failed (lack of tax support), break in political ties (mayor v Josh)
- Create customized training – transportation systems. Welding course is good program
- Equality (equal playing field), good ole boy club
- Sales tax increase for roads. 7-8 years ago
- Urban renewal & housing redevelopment of poor conditions. Lots of rental & run down area
- Take care of development, hyper-low income, staffing and communications outreach
- Consistent administration of ordinances
- Tribe, NSU, and City do not work close enough together.
- NSU enrollment is down. NSU is not as active as they used to be- less student traffic.
- Poor, wide range of people along the socioeconomic spectrum.
- Not into local politics, squeaky wheel on Facebook, lots of negative aspects & impacts with bad attitudes
- Not enough funding for sidewalks – Heritage Elementary no sidewalks, Traffic block because of school drop off/pick up – blocks firehouse. Would be next bond issue – after current bond. Schools and new developments need to require.
- Spot rezoning (on attachment) damaging to marketing or tourism for city – in original Town Site

COMMUNITY CHARACTER / QUALITY OF LIFE

1. How would you describe the City of Tahlequah today? (physical character, general quality of life, etc.) What changes have you noticed?

- Gotten bigger, traffic increased, especially south of town, need street repairs. *TPWA shares cost for lighting construction (install and maintenance), City just pays electric usage.
- I spent time on the hospital board, was a teacher, and on city council. Healthcare has improved (access to), need street improvements, education is improving, very good quality of life. KATS Transportation system provides low cost public transit through non profit community group. Oklahoma production center takes in disabled adults, creates jobs, provides training & housing. Cherokee County Community Sentencing Council – works with DA to take in nonviolent 1st time offenders and help them with education and job searches
- Growing small town feel. North end expanding would like to see revitalization elsewhere like downtown in the park concerts. Norris Park Activities are a huge benefit, feels North end expansion is due to

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

this. City needs to proactively abate old dilapidated structures to make room for new.

- Downtown investment has been great/ new park! New Cherokee clinic (470,000 sqft out patient) Need to extend down Muskogee – more shops may need parking areas.
- Poor road and trash issues, enforcement of city codes, infrastructure investments made but staff to support is lacking, small town values, good place to live, Rivers and parks.
- Very good place to live
- Awesome – raise a family, growing with high end & commercial growth
- Industrial park board & new building for businesses (robotics/tech park/med park)
- Tahlequah has outgrown infrastructure, street improvements have to keep up, they were not designed for this growth. Growth much needed to go to NW & NE
- Small town charm/NSU anchors city/good Indian Nation & healthcare = Stable economy. Good growth, manage with cooperation. Must have planning to manage growth
- Cherokee nation, Cultural Tourism, Float river and lake, low hotel/motel tax is low+/-4%
- Tale of Two Cities – North is historic/walkable. South is unwalkable & big boxes. Festival- Big jim cycle rally at same time as Bike, blues, and BBQ in Fayetteville
- Small town feel, safe, good town to raise children, many changes – mostly good, rush projects w/o good planning, Lowest bid contracts don't do good work
- Changing for the better, younger getting involved in politics. Owned restaurant, few students came(no money/no social) no night activity. Nancy has created a non profit organization
- Growing – Not planned, quality of life good, lack of funding causes issues, students work full time and take classes
- TPWA will likely stop donation to medical clinic (to City). TPWA furnish water and sewer
- Cherokee are building their own transmission line. 75% from Cherokee Nation
- Historical and cultural, small town feel, growing, Live-eat-play
- Good, know your neighbor, too much traffic
- Easy to live, simple life, small
- Progressive vision – east sales pitch. May have hard time keep (basic growth)
- Small town, great opportunities, poor
- Needs maintenance
- Potential
- Average, not maintained changes, not much change
- Quality of life is good, hidden gem with the natural features
- Its more professional now to larger pool of younger people
- Beautiful, safe, kids can play outside, know neighbors, more franchises (good), growth – shopping, business, would like Target.
- Tahlequah is “ok” good potential for city of this size & W/NSU needs sidewalks for public health reasons, not bike friendly, no access for bikes/ ped from southern development to campus/downtown. Creek not utilized for recreation, no pool close to residential, no public basketball, tennis, playgrounds, need community center, active park by middle school is under utilized.
- People – good, trash problems, lack of arteries in and out of city, need more code enforcement on rental properties, lots of slum lords, Doesn't offer enough commercial shipping or restaurant options

2. What are some trends or changes taking place in Northeastern Oklahoma that interest or concern you? How long have they been happening?

- Interests: Tourism, more natural resource awareness, more outside activities, biking, golfing, fishing. Concerns: Drug Abuse
- Slow job growth, need job creation, industry growth has been sporadic, maybe partner to use Cherokee facilities in industrial park.
- Walk and bike access, river improvements
- Grove, OK: Grand Lake, Muskogee: Downtown improvements. Drugs/property crimes
- Splash pads
- Continual growth and bleed off of NWA Growth. Land value high(expensive to live here)

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Fort Gibson school Wayfinder(suburb), Muskogee growing. E.D. in Downtown
- Railroad and industry help employ other surrounding towns (Stillwater).
- State is going broke. Effects rural OK, Young generations are leaving for jobs elsewhere
- Must get county commissioner to buy into hotel/motel tax to be county wide
- Concern: Northwest AR growth has left North East OK behind, hard to compete. Tahlequah needs to capture some of the E.D. \$
- Crime issues – Crime in Muskogee & Tulsa, Meth drug trend. Develop more parks/trails for families.
- Fort Gibson: fixed up downtown, Muskogee: chain restaurants, Siloam Spring: downtown
- Muskogee has improved the mall/downtown, very political. Fort Gibson –schools, Stillwater has some progress
- Older people don't like change.
- None, active events
- New sports facilities
- Loss of funding for state parks would hurt, tourism investment depends on
- Lots of momentum on certain segments
- Old money (good ole boy) is less involved now than past
- not a lot of new spec homes
- Better small businesses
- Downtown is dying, liquor on sunset, restaurants closed on Mondays. * Sparrow area must have hunting licenses
- Downtown in business in past 18 months is a concern
- Better communication is happening now
- Last 5 years – decrease in business, could be political factors, would like more walk through business.
- More emphasis on health, hospitals & NSU still hiring, new development 350 new jobs, homeowners prices experienced increase over housing bubble
- Quality of Illinois river has gotten worse, drinking water and tourism, lack of support for education

3. What cities or towns that you have lived in or visited did you admire and what was it about these communities that impressed you?

- Lebanon, MO: old fashioned streetlights. Food trucks, entertainment/concerts (Herd on Hurd-Edmond, OK)
- Eureka Springs: cleanliness, streets and walks, walkable and bike friendly. OKC Bricktown – Restoration of buildings, pedestrians & bikes, attractions to draw people
- Van Buren Arkansas: Downtown area, reminded me of Tahlequah with better infrastructure, Tulsa's downtown.
- Siloam Springs: downtown, and Fayetteville: Dickson Street
- Fort Smith, AR has small town feel on large city. Harrison, AR is historic. Miami OK, Historic Route 66.
- Fayetteville: Aesthetics; Siloam Springs: Downtown
- Owasso: shops close by, Stillwater
- Branson, good roads and walks. Fayetteville, clean college town
- Fayetteville, clean
- Fayetteville, Grand Rapids Michigan, Siloam Springs, Muskogee
- Austin, TX: Musical community with downtown corridor. Fayetteville, Dickson St.
- Durango: outfitters start at Main Street for float trip. Bonterville: trails
- Tulsa, the Gathering Place and river trail; Fayetteville, Bike and Ped close to campus
- Fayetteville: trails, Ashville, NC: hip activities
- Kansas City: Walkability and public transit, Vancouver: eco-friendly with bike and ped trails
- Rogers, AR
- Eureka Springs, Durango, Eugene, Cherokee Springs
- Tulsa, Broken Arrow
- Durango
- Pryor
- Bentonville
- Tulsa, OKC, Bricktown, Gathering Place
- Small version of Fayetteville

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Like Broken Arrow: parks and clean roads, Rose District, Tulsa: Utica Square, Cherry Street (quaint), OKC, Bricktown: trendy, contemporary
- Baltimore, DC & between beltway: population is diverse, different options of things for entertainment. Small, Lawrence Kansas, More walkable, bars downtown, mix retail, food
- Eureka Springs: little shops lining streets; Guthrie: capitalizing on history, buildings & history of town. Durant: zoned to keep avenues and boulevards in place
- Shared resources, good neighborhood
- Tourism
- Better aesthetic
- Trails and facilities to stretch their legs, general open space
- Parking behind businesses
- Recreation
- Main Street in Broken Arrow, grants for development (incentives), expand downtown into Muskogee.
- Nightlife for more mature crowd, restaurants that also dancing, shows of music, create more mixed use spaces. Create more visitor friendly art opportunities
- Zoning like Durant , tourist shops

What attributes from these places would you like to see in Tahlequah?

- Better streets and sidewalks, less trash, town branch creek developed and cleaned.
- Major trash problem on loop road. More bike and pedestrian friendly, complete street
- Ordinances in place, Doesn't like Downing as a bike corridor
- Infrastructure upgrades, cleanliness, tidiness
- Walkability, shops, Aesthetics
- Assets for tourism
- Siloam Springs-downtown
- More retail options
- Clean town, good roads, and walks
- Fayetteville street lights, businesses
- Siloam – downtown with highways around. Muskogee -T.I.F. district with rebranding
- Music/food
- Fayetteville – walkability and downtown
- Gathering place, river trail, bike and ped paths close to campus.
- downtown activities
- Tahlequah is not walkable
- Better entertainment
- Like it the way it is.
- Eureka Springs – downtown character (1900's) Durango- River, walkable Eugene, mix of pedestrian and autos
- Nice downtown
- .
- Nice little town
- Good perception of town and activities. All positive comments. Very accurate, with right leadership could be even better
- His family from out of town liked it. His mother is moving here. Downtown and parks are attractive, outsiders like atmosphere. Father is mayor of Nowata and tries to model Nowata after Tahlequah.
- A place to float the river, “poor little town”, poor schools
- Illinois River, Lake, Cherokee Nation, NSU
- Illinois River draw
- River town – come to float. Red Fern Festival (April, last weekend)
- River/NSU/Indian nations, tourism
- River, Indian Nation, NSU
- River – not capturing tourism, Cherokee Nation, NSU
- “Where is that” – float the river
- River run, NSU, Cherokee Nation
- Small town mentality – Cherokee nation is all they have
- NSU, River/lakes, cool town, coordination with river.

4. How is Tahlequah perceived in Oklahoma by people living outside of Tahlequah? Is this an accurate perception or not?

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Pretty town/river recreation. NSU and Cherokee Nation
- Suitable for its size.
- Good, people who feel stuck have a bad attitude, (low education, few opportunities, no jobs)
- Affordable, small town feel
- Lake, float the river
- River, NSU, Tribe capitol
- Cute and friendly, deep culture, but has struggles
- Quality of life
- Sort of back water hick town.
- Red neck country not accurate, more money than perceived, needs to be put to use. Want indoor rec facility
- Known for summer fun, big school feel for smaller community
- Cherokee Nation, NSU – good things. Not on the way to any place – need to grow good perceptions of other things

5. How would you rate the following community elements and issues in Tahlequah? Rank these regarding your understanding of their health from one to five, one (1) being in the best condition, three (3) being average, and five (5) being the most in need of intervention.

ELEMENT	AVERAGE RATING
Overall Quality of Life	2.6
General Economic Health	3.0
Local Business Environment	3.0
Regional Business Environment	3.2
Livable Neighborhoods	3.1
Parks and Recreation	2.6
Active Recreation (sports fields, etc.)	2.4
Passive Open Space (lakes, picnic areas, etc.)	2.6
Community Programs (recreational programs, leagues, etc.)	3.0
Trails / Pedestrian Connections	3.6
Regional Cooperation	2.8
Transportation Network	3.9
Education	2.8
Sustainability	3.1

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

6. Name three assets that separate Tahlequah from other Northeastern Oklahoma communities in providing a desirable quality of life.

- NSU, Scenic River and Tenkiller Lake, Cherokee Nation Headquarters
- NSU, Access to Illinois and Tenkiller Lake, Educational System
- Cherokee Nation opportunities, University Influence, Lakes and River access
- Capitol of Cherokee (History/Culture), Quality health care, river access
- River/Floating, Capitol of Cherokee Nation (4 day holiday in Sept.), Top quality police and fire
- River, Lake Tenkiller, NSU (River park needs improvements)
- Lake, River, NSU
- Rivers and lakes, NSU, Indian nations
- 30 min. to 3 lakes, River, utilities(cheapest in state)
- Economic stability, NSU, Cherokee Nation
- River, NSU – college, Cherokee Nation
- Close community-short travel times, recreation-rivers and lakes, safe town
- Lakes, river, NSU
- River, lake, NSU
- Medical center, sports park
- Quality of life, cultural/historical/older connection, partnerships. WBS, K12, Workforce Investment Board
- Cherokees, small town feel
- Base rate of \$9.50 wage for tribes, tourism, NSU
- Tribe, NSU, Lakes and rivers – clean water
- NSU – Schools, Tribe, business community
- Tribe, NSU, businesses
- Natural resources, lake people are a plus, cabin owners.
- Natural environment, NSU & Tribe
- Attractiveness of recreation (appearance)
- North Alliance, schools & neighborhoods, variety of shops
- Small tight knit community, school district has

good teachers & potential, open communication & accessibility of council, city employees, mayor

- River, NSU, 2 hospitals
- Education, public schools & NSU, River & lake (recreation), heritage (Cherokee)

7. What methods do you envision to attract or retain young adults to return to their hometown following any post-secondary education?

- Job creation, improved infrastructure, growth, entertainment, stayed for hunting, fishing, recreation, bring people here with nearby opportunities in Muskogee and Pryor
- Attract businesses to provide good wages (Jobs), Industrial parks, city, NSU and Technology Center need to work together (clean business) These groups do not work together (add Cherokee Nation to this list)
- Nightlife, Recreational activities, need good jobs to bring them back
- Quality jobs for grads, shopping, Education k-12, trails
- Jobs to provide career opportunities, good housing, need better schools, health care improvements
- Aesthetics and activities, jobs.
- Align industry with education pieces (not research), blue-collar graduates. Vo tech does provide service job positions.
- Align jobs to professional degrees
- More jobs, send some guys to vo tech
- NSU attracts them; some stay because they like the area
- Job creation=attraction, some young adults don't feel that their lifestyles
- Quality of life, can work anywhere from home (tech jobs), Hospital & medical jobs/Cherokee jobs
- Jobs to keep them – must be competitive pay or room for promotions. Must have activities – trails, rec, entertainment
- College students have debt – need good jobs. Business and brew pubs
- Jobs that pay will keep them here. Some medical degrees, team with vo-tech?

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Cost of living and cost of tuition is low but after graduates leave. Must bring higher income level of income to this area
- Jobs – professional opportunities – stay to work for tribe, healthcare. 4 yrs – career ladders, building construction
- New manufacturing jobs (Tahlequah-Tulsa)
- Jobs (mid-range), hospital
- Jobs and employment
- Find activities for people to do (21-40), Young professionals and families. Life style amenities, bars, shops
- No jobs, medical field helps, *bachelor degrees hold no purpose
- Other successful businesses, need tech jobs, not enough jobs, work for yourself
- Recurrent jobs, entertainment district, quality of life amenities, Just one “bar” to socialize, more music
- Jobs (career jobs other than Cherokee)
- Night life, activities, job opportunities, regional corporate opportunities
- Trail system, casino event center bringing in good shows like Hard Rock in Catoosa, nightlife options, better schools, business or casino giving back to community/schools, sustainability plan
- Jobs, shopping, restaurants
- Downing: Road diet. Muskogee: Street trees, Way finder, code enforcement to police code issues, signage issues
- Downing needs help: aesthetics, Muskogee at South end needs help.
- North half of Muskogee ok, Downing needs a clean up, move people East to West.
- Horribly for both (function & look), Muskogee is in bond for repairs, Allen is ready to widen (for 6 yrs)
- Functions well for cars only, avoid Muskogee in afternoon traffic
- Neither work well nor look good. No corridors into town are up tp par with what this town looks like.
- Ugly and need fixed, need to draw college students to Downing
- Downing corridor does not entice you to go into downtown. Muskogee doesn’t function well/will widen to 5 lanes on south side.
- Downing: needs help, bad impression upon entry. Needs pedestrian friendly options w/sidewalks. Muskogee: odd business at mid town, no walkability below old town.
- Downing (old area)– make look like N Muskogee, Muskogee – empty businesses along middle
- Downing: Traffic/unsafe for pedestrians, road diet, is it pedestrian? Business? Muskogee: traffic issues at Bypass, people speed

8. What do you think about Tahlequah’s main corridors (Muskogee & Downing)? What are some possible solution to the way they look and function?

- East Downing – repair, Medians, sidewalks all the way to Cedar Street, Entertainment. Muskogee – Repair new striping, street commissioner not involved in much planning, medians. Access issues – Limit access maybe, new lighting for dark streets.
- They need help, businesses close to road makes change difficult. Peak traffic results in accidents near city entries, bike and pedestrian access and AH transportation are important going forward. If bikers and pedestrians felt safe there would be more of that type of traffic.
- Bikeability/walkability, remove old buildings, get rid of drug spots (cooking meth at small hotels in Muskogee. Welcome Center, trees, bikes
- Downing: Opposed to adding bike lanes, use grid next (north and south). Muskogee: widening at 4th to bypass needs to happen soon. Spend bonds.
- People avoid Muskogee. Stop lights. Two lanes. Turning issues. High school and school schedules. Bad parking and lighting designs. Old buildings. Disrepair.
- Muskogee: South is main drive, no turn lanes which causes traffic problems. Downing: Expand city limits.
- Hit and run to NSU is good, south of 4th needs help, Downing seems forgotten (no code enforcement)
- Muskogee: Street lights, parking. Downing: LED Streetlights, wayfinding, sidewalks. Not convinced the road diet is a good idea
- Downtown needs to be revitalized
- Highways need signage to create destinations, downing is untapped and needs attention. Aesthetics

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- could be a tangible benefit
- Need uniform look for facades, full character, fairness in signage, more walkability options, connections to other places
- Downing: entry architecture, street lights, cross walks and safe places to visit, aesthetics. Muskogee: trash can sand maintenance.
- The bump-outs caused a problem on Muskogee
- Downing: positive, older homes need torn down/revitalized, clean streets
- Muskogee: sidewalks, turn lanes, widening. Downing: not bad, might need left turn lane, get multi-use path next to street
- Muskogee: bottlenecks in south, need alternate routes. Downing: Under-utilized

- gas/utilities, Bad- Manufacturing
- Somewhat agree. If chain yes
- Agree
- Somewhat agree. Depends on type, low income
- Somewhat Disagree. Type of business??
- Agree. Depends
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree. Several issues (turnover, entertainment)
- Agree. Property values
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Agree. Depends on the business
- Agree. A lot of potential
- Agree. So much opportunity, lots of space
- Somewhat Agree.
- Somewhat Disagree. Not enough traffic to establish and make worthwhile.
- Somewhat Agree. Casino might bring in new profitable businesses
- Somewhat Disagree. Because low income county & city

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Tahlequah is an economically attractive environment for starting or locating a business.

Agree
Somewhat Agree
Somewhat Disagree
Disagree
Not Sure

Why?

- Agree, For the right business
- Agree, Diverse culture and demographics.
- Somewhat Agree.
- Somewhat, small businesses or larger industry. No trains
- Disagree, Cost to start here and slow returns.
- Disagree.
- Somewhat agree. Resources – draw (lake ,river, NSU population)
- Somewhat Disagree. Depends on business, not manufacturing.
- Somewhat Disagree.
- Somewhat agree. Depends on business
- Somewhat agree/somewhat disagree. Good- cheap

2. What kinds of businesses do well, and what kinds suffer in the local business environment?

- Do well: service, industry, restaurants, plumbers, electricians, all construction. Suffer: print shops, smaller convenience and hardware since big box moved in
- Do well: nice restaurants, groceries, dollar store, gas stations, sporting goods, nail salon/massage. Suffer: very specialized retail, high dollar retail
- Do well: chain restaurants, suffer- mom and pop type restaurants. A lot of them, high competition.
- Do well: Jewelry, oil, law firm, real estate. Suffer: Mom and pop shops/ Tannie(?)
- State Highway 51 to Waggoner for Trucks, no trucks now.
- Well: restaurants, poor: compete with Walmart and fail
- Do well: restaurants, Walmart. Poor: contractors/homebuilders
- Do well: medical/Walmart/call centers. Poorly:

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

manufacturing/distribution

- Competition to Lowes or Walmart fails
- Do well: retail/restaurants. Poor: Manufacturing
- Good technology or medical? Manufacturing/shipping=bad
- Do well: Food, medical research/tech facility. Aqua culture?? Poor: Retail suffers, Manufacturing NO.
- Do well: restaurant chains, hotels. Poor: seasonal businesses
- Fast food and boutiques ok, toy store didn't work
- Retail can't compete with Walmart. Faust owns buildings for rent at plaza
- Not retail or food, Manufacturing to support lots of jobs. River is saturated with tourism business.
- Retail suffers from competition from Tulsa and internet. Needs more choices.
- Owners that pay attention or hustle, model is not stable – depends on fed funds.
- No where to buy clothes, lots of the same things.
- Chains do well, lots of Mexican food options, Chili's does well
- Customer services do well (glass, car audio, etc), electronics and sports and outdoor stores.
- Need more food options
- Any could do well if they ran it right, not everyone is cut out to run a business. It is a tight retail market but it is spread out.
- Restaurants hurt, Neds is successful Wed-Sat.
- Chains do well, mom and pops suffer
- Do well: Reasor's, Walmart, Walgreens, chains w/ sales/discounts, coffee shops and other low cost stores. Suffer: boutiques, restaurants(small ones), auto parts
- Suffer: small retail, boutiques, maybe restaurants of mismanaged, too much Mexican and Chinese food. Do well: Walmart, dollar stores, chain restaurants
- Do well: fast food, chains, large low cost retail. Poor: retail selling things not in demand every day, boutiques

3. What are the greatest resources that Tahlequah has to offer for locating, expanding, relocating, and/or stabilizing employment opportunities in the area? What attributes of Tahlequah will be able to offer these resources? What is missing?

- Resources – quality of life, health care, recreation, votech, and other education, casinos Missing-Highways North, East, and West need improvement. People don't seek training opportunities, need railroad and shipping paths to serve industry. Industrial Park primed for development!
- Presence of college is an asset, needs infrastructure and access, expanded sewer services to the north.
- Health care, work force – NSU
- Work force – NSU, Job core, vo tech
- Cherokee nation's presence, single biggest group.
- Utility costs are low, gas most affordable in US
- Need skilled work force, NSU & votech need more funds. Plenty of water and gas.
- Affordable utilities, support from Cherokee Nation, Blue collar trades on the rise
- Cherokee Nation small business lending (2 mil last yr), Cherokee Nation work force (career services), Cherokee Nation created culinary program to supply casino with cooks.
- ICTC (Indian capitol Tech Center) = votech, affordable housing, subsidies, Labor pool
- Research and Business park should be the name of the industrial park. Food manufacturing could be produced – 14 counties via Cherokee.
- Affordable for employees (both rental and own), easy access to surrounding towns, lakes and rivers close.
- Affordable utilities, cost of living
- Cherokee Nation to add conference space at new hotel
- Workforce at NSU and Cherokee Nation
- CNI
- Distribution or manufacturing, roadways are a barrier
- NSU, tribe
- Have workforce, but for certain, dollar thrift rent a car
- River is an attraction, education system, health system jobs

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Be a feeder to other industrial parks. C3 call center
- Code maintenance (rotting and deteriorating), NSU buildings boarded up, Focus on what creates jobs.
- A site locator, business advisor, combo of city/ Chamber/NSU, entertainment center
- Tribe could do more, K-12 is a gem
- Recreation, water activities, cost of living
- Casino(supposed to be) Cherokee Nation Hospital, preserve old buildings & businesses
- Cherokee Nation work program & retaining, Job Corps – trade & culinary. NSU
- Tourism, river, lake, heritage, healthcare, opportunities for businesses with the elderly, encourage aging in place

4. What do you perceive to be Tahlequah's greatest opportunities and greatest threats (barriers to investment)?

Opportunities

- Cheap land. NSU is good for rental property, food trucks.
- Proximity to Arkansas and Tulsa
- Millennials coming up, enhance downtown, walkability
- Draw of commercial
- Workforce
- Nursery Industry, NSU as a draw 9mo/year, outfitters at the river
- Medical industry, maybe partner with OU & OSU
- Health care and casinos
- Cherokee Nation & NSU support (funding)
- People (educate) & uneducated labor pool, quality of life to start businesses
- Tourism – must capitalize, need wayfinding.
- Affordable business sites – business park, large properties.
- Illinois watershed
- Ross Street is critical. Park Hill to Basin to Water (alternate route to NSU)
- Good relationship with NSU and city, electronic

- billboards, tearing down old houses
- Small town, need roadway standards, setbacks on main corridor
- Shopping (specialties, furniture, electronics. "My Tahlequah" clean up effort
- Over-qualified persons, so much talent, 'green district'
- Hospital & Hasting Hospital
- Shuttle people from city to river, park and go downtown, creek and trails, Center of tribe, no nightlife, needs it
- Arts and entertainment, help running the businesses, force inspections
- Big party site at the river – shower and changing site, drying stations. Student NSU volunteer program. Catering to tourism, keeping students here.
- Downtown hotel and ambassador hotel. More restaurants, clubs, bars
- People support projects (through taxes) because it helps everyone. The downtown ladies shops, kitchen supply, healthcare, good cost of living
- Room for growth, 50/50 community openness to growth and change.
- Could do a adopt a street program
- Long-term care (in home care), good nursing homes, tourism, jobs other than fast food, higher end retail jobs

Threats

- Highway access, high speed internet not available
- Not close to major highways, no rail system.
- Non growth, resist change
- Trucking/rail, shipping access way finding, can't find assets
- Lack of skilled workforce, Can't start an affluent business
- Expensive home costs. Need to widen Hwy 82 to 412 for freight
- NSU may be threatened id OSU & OU connect to the medical facilities. NSU has lack of funding. Campus enrollment effects restaurants and other goods and services.
- Can City keep up with the growth, infrastructure issues.

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Cherokee nation and NSU make moves that the city must react to.
- Poor paying jobs (pay scale), school facilities poor in Tahlequah. Need a better transportation system.
- Proximity – hard to get to& from
- Majority of population is students (perceived not true)
- Local businesses don't embrace students. Students don't have disposable income, commuter college
- Road network from NWA, no rail, no water shipping
- Roads and infrastructure, bypass is unattractive, better landscaping
- Lack of bike infrastructure, ownership of roads – road maintenance, new bypass (to Grandview and 51 spur)Closed access limits access & increased speed, traffic jams
- Tahlequah city does the bare minimum (property management), lack of pride, property of unrealistic value, and people own everything (so its empty) vacant buildings
- Not enough good enforcement, lack of industry, RR or major highways
- Bathrooms that no one takes care of, door handle on armory, trash everywhere, Code enforcement and staff, no hotels downtown, have to go out of the way to get here.
- Not pro-business city, a few people own a lot of property, city focuses on quality of life, but needs refocus on redeveloping worn out properties. Businesses need to innovate, tribe is a bit territorial
- Tribe may not have enough support to schools, hotel tax is too low. Alcohol sales on Sunday
- Summer is actually a slow time
- The good ole boy network used to run town, needs to be cleaned up – bad perception. Weak, 4 lane road out of town, not enough to do, its not on its way to anywhere
- Room for growth – hard for small businesses with competition
- People don't want to do the work to clean up & improve area and city. Need to enforce clean up, maintenance, code enforcement, separate appropriate zoning categories
- Aging population, bad connectivity for industry, attraction to fast food and low cost stores

5. Of the following land use and development types, which could play a larger role in the economy of Tahlequah? Please pick your top three (3) choices.

TYPE	TOTAL VOTES	RANK
Distribution	5	
Research and Development	4	
Light Industrial	10	3
Office	0	
Corporate Campuses	3	
Large Employment Centers	3	
Retail	14	1
Mixed Use (pedestrian-oriented retail and/or office on the ground floor, office or residential above)	10	3
Entertainment, cultural, or sports facilities	13	2
Lodging (hotel/motel)	3	
Institutional (government offices and facilities, educational buildings)	3	
Green Industry (green products manufacturing, design, recycling, microbreweries, garden centers, natural foods, etc.)	7	4

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

6. What is the level of cooperation between the City, the Tribes, the NSU campus and the business community?

Excellent
Good
Average
Poor

- Good. But could be better, sewer rehab project with Cherokees
- Excellent. City provides manpower for help to NSU
- Average. Just need more coordination.
- Good. Worked together for years for nursing school
- Good.
- Good
- Excellent
- Good
- Good. Each does what they want and city depends on it.
- Good. Good layer of thin ice – good communication & collaboration but it may not always be there
- Excellent
- Good
- Community needs to embrace the student body (needs activities)
- Excellent
- Good. Could be better. NSU has little interaction with City or Chamber
- Good
- Good/Excellent
- Good. Could improve
- Poor. Own agenda
- Good
- Good. Lean on Cherokee and NSU a lot
- Good. Could be more
- Average
- Poor
- Poor. Poor now, used to be better
- Good

- Average
- Average
- Good

CLOSING DISCUSSION

1. What do you think should be at the top of the list of desired outcomes for the Tahlequah Comprehensive Plan and its process?

- Clear growth strategies with prioritized needs
- Recruit Business and Industry jobs
- Jobs
- Connecting south end to downtown/east and west, revitalize downtown, Enhance to river
- Action steps; goals or objectives. Enlighten city government and public.
- Parks and recreation strategies; adult sports. Need baseball and softball, should be added
- Vision (direction the city is heading in) transportation, protecting resources
- Community input, what they want
- Plans for beautification, ownership of outcome
- Map to achieve managed growth, benchmarks with action steps by year - flexible
- Usable, easy to understand outlines, action steps from moving the city forward in the right direction, a document that can succeed even with council turnover.
- Downtown connection to river and Hwy 51 (priority), alternate transportation, community character, tourism.
- Goals broken into terms. Look at short term items that is community driven that the city can achieve
- What will convince people to buy into process & solutions. Tracking careers, connect thru town, parks.
- Make sure environment is protected. Manage growth with impact on water quality/sewage (meet scenic river criteria)
- Improvements to roads
- Better communication, people staying and returning

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- New residential developments, lack of permitting/ only require flood permits
- Everyone wants a roadmap to follow
- Actual change on the ground
- Problem is development in city codes, permits, and fees, county hotel/motel tax
- Better communication among businesses (leaders and members)
- Downing improved, trails finished instead of just talked about, alcohol on Sundays, traffic at Walmart
- Need to finish the projects
- Long range plans for land use and development
- More cooperation between groups – poor resources, more greenery, parks, attractions
- Walkability – health, walk to stores (increase sales), walk to work (increase income)
- Preserve historic assets Tahlequah already has. Opportunities for employment, develop downtown historic area, improved transportation
- Low-impact development techniques, Green space, student water retention
- Tahlequah’s future is tied to the success of the medical complex
- More people, retail options will improve, industrial growth w/ waterways
- Recreational; Tribe to expand
- Same but better
- Finish the work
- Hospital and tribe could play a bigger role
- Community first and each individual person later
- Don’t know, depends on how it is implemented and follow through.
- OKC, Bricktown, river improvements, recreation hub.
- Udated (like Rose District), cultural (performing Arts Center), growth (population).
- Still the same, more recreation and connection, more schools and jobs
- Vibrant, diverse, clean and welcoming, more prosperous

2. Twenty years from now, what kind of community do you envision Tahlequah to be? (List three words to describe the future)

- Bigger attractions, service oriented, progressive, proactive entertainment
- Traditional, growth potential, Healthy
- Expanded, hometown feel, improved lifestyle
- Historical, livable, safe, sustainability
- Desirable, home
- Quality options, tournaments
- Vibrant, historic, influential
- Larger, revitalized, village feel
- Attractive, large city, entertainment driven
- Maintained, managed
- Flourishing, clean, sustainable
- Livable, walkable, bikeable
- Bigger, financially stable, less reliant on Cherokee Nation

3. What will be the biggest obstacles to advancing this vision?

- Lack of developer investment/incentive
- Educating the public, leaders who share vision. Tried Federal funding but ran out into problems getting required bank account #, open to ODOT funding.
- Age of community
- Expense
- Jobs, continual investment. Must move forward with issues.
- Leadership must carry it forward, even with new leaders.
- Expense.
- Finance: must invest in education to draw industry and talent (drives change)
- Money and time
- Money/funding
- Change the culture of Tahlequah

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

- Mindset, poverty
- Financial, support of leaders
- Finances into Tahlequah, residents make money here, spend money here
- Lack of education at City maintenance, funding, politics
- Mentality of future leaders, nothing is free.
- Pride, general economy
- Traffic (total volume), utilities (water and gas)
- Jobs that match the cost of living, opportunity is available, but still selective to certain players. Folks have given up because of previous failed attempts.
- Listen to people first
- Town needs to improve to understand the positive steps that have been made and have pride in the good things.
- Sales tax base, lack of pride.
- Unfairness, general public- communication issues, political upheaval (chamber)
- No follow through on existing initiatives
- Tribe buying property sucks energy from the tax base. No uber or transportation options for night life.
- People who resist change, creating solid relationship to contribute to funding
- Education system – won't move w/ bad schools
- Lack of community vision and agreement

Additional comments and/or suggestions

- Red Fern Festival and Bike Rally....Town Festivals
- New jobs at health clinic 1st yr = 100 ppl.. 100,000 new jobs total
- Trash pick up.
- Check on undeveloped 25 acres by high school at Methodists home
- poverty drives drug problems
- 82 Highway concern
- Edgewateraddition.com
- Tahlequah squeaky-wheel Facebook group

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APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

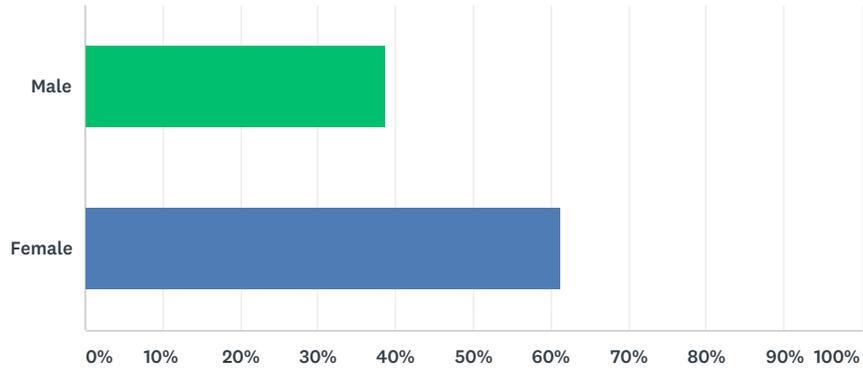
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APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q1 What is your gender?

Answered: 545 Skipped: 5



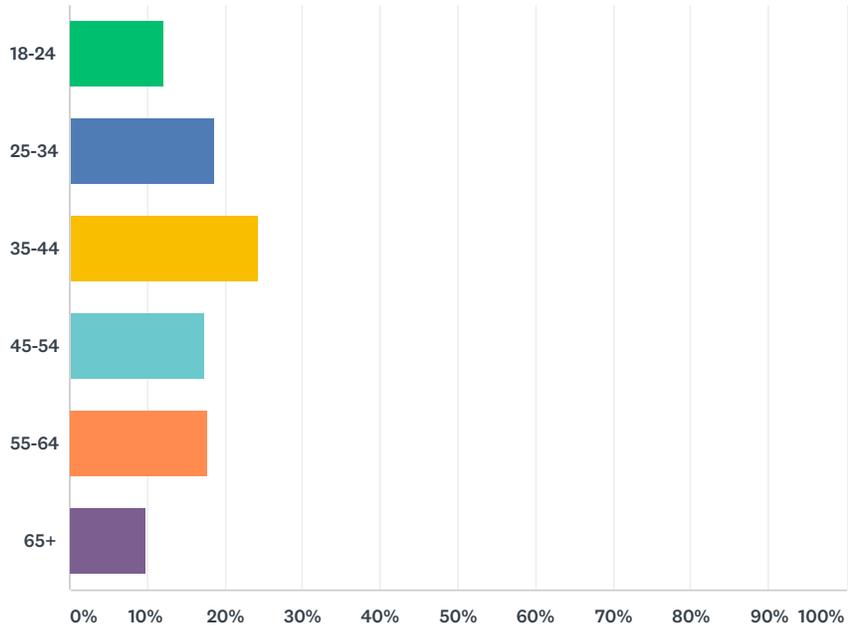
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	38.72%	211
Female	61.28%	334
TOTAL		545

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q2 What is your age?

Answered: 544 Skipped: 6



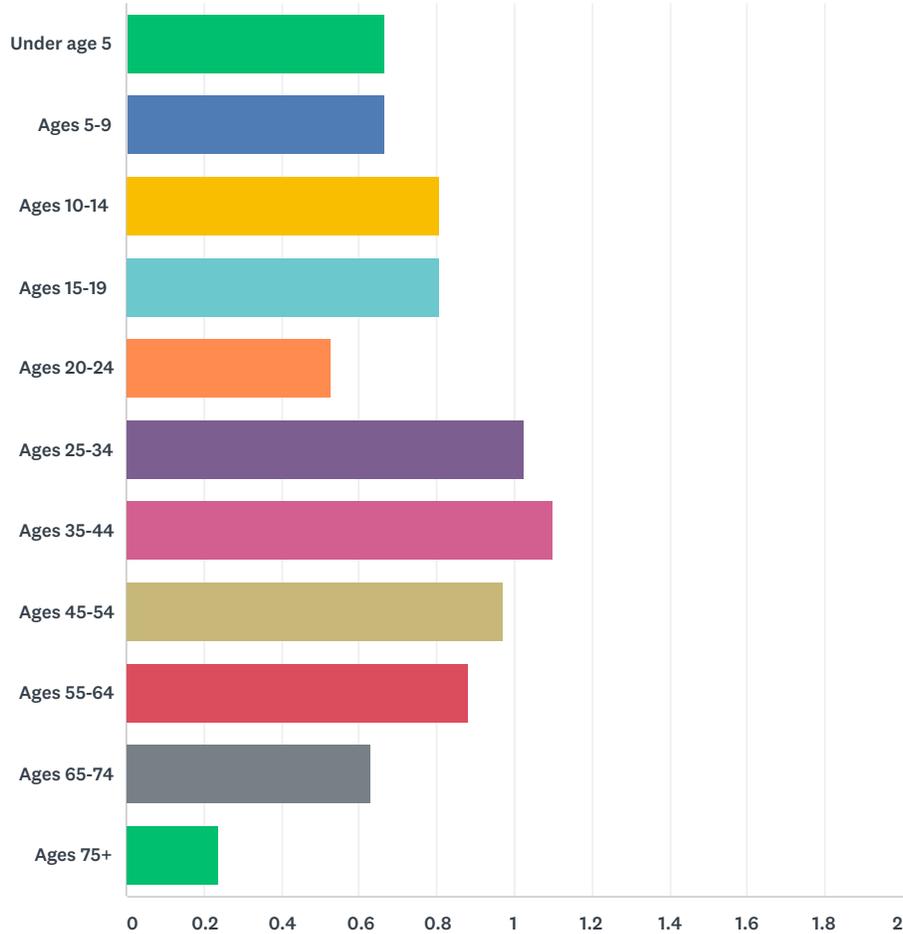
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-24	12.13%	66
25-34	18.57%	101
35-44	24.26%	132
45-54	17.46%	95
55-64	17.83%	97
65+	9.74%	53
TOTAL		544

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q3 Counting yourself, how many people in your household are the following ages?

Answered: 544 Skipped: 6



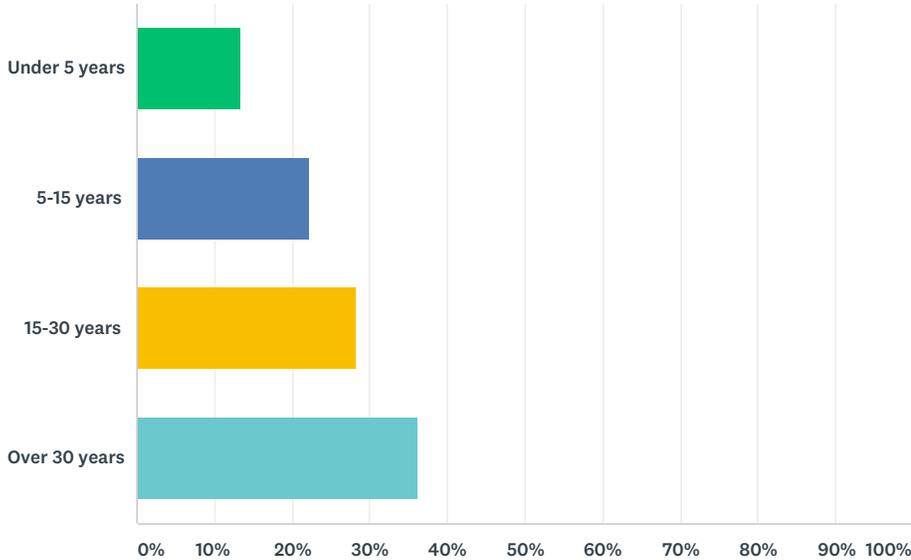
ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Under age 5	0.65	126	189
Ages 5-9	0.65	129	194
Ages 10-14	0.80	161	199
Ages 15-19	0.80	147	182
Ages 20-24	0.50	74	140
Ages 25-34	1.00	221	216
Ages 35-44	1.10	271	246
Ages 45-54	0.95	209	215
Ages 55-64	0.85	169	191
Ages 65-74	0.60	92	146
Ages 75+	0.20	25	105
Total Respondents: 544			

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q4 How long have you lived in Tahlequah?

Answered: 545 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 5 years	13.39%	73
5-15 years	22.20%	121
15-30 years	28.26%	154
Over 30 years	36.15%	197
TOTAL		545

Q5 What do you like most about living in the City of Tahlequah?



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q6 What do you like least about living in the City of Tahlequah?

Activities Public Transportation Tahlequah Progress Park Codes
Places Cherokee Nation Shopping Live
Restaurants Poverty Town Trails Traffic
Growing Roads Boy System Streets Crime Rate
Trash Low Jobs Resources Drugs Yards and Businesses Houses
Bike

Q7 What would you say is the most critical issue facing City of Tahlequah today?

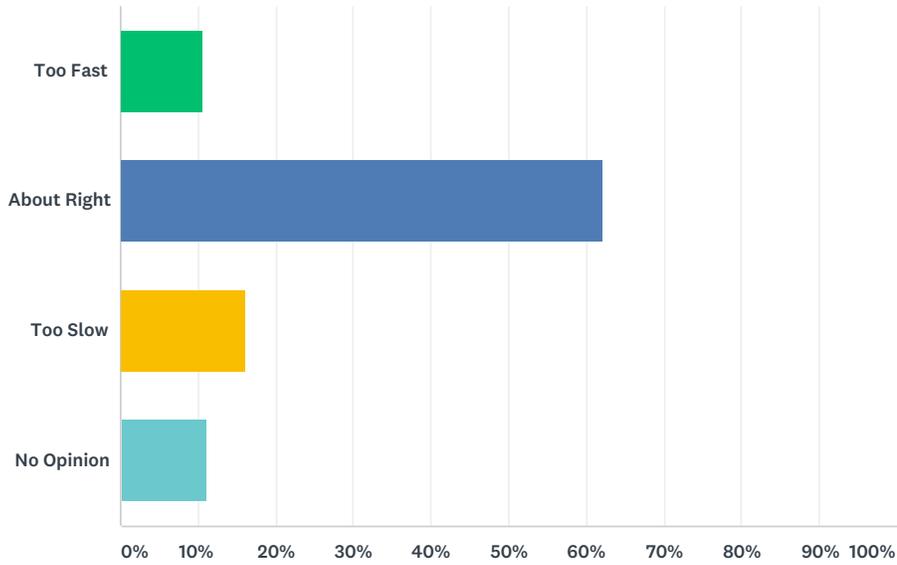
Crime Young Professionals Live Critical Issue Tahlequah
Transportation Schools Code Enforcement Drugs
Health Care Roads Money Jobs Budget Cuts
Growth Amount Infrastructure Run
Streets Restaurants Businesses Communication
Education Empty Buildings Poverty Long Term Planning
Small Town City Government

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q8 What do you think about the current growth rate in City of Tahlequah?

Answered: 541 Skipped: 9



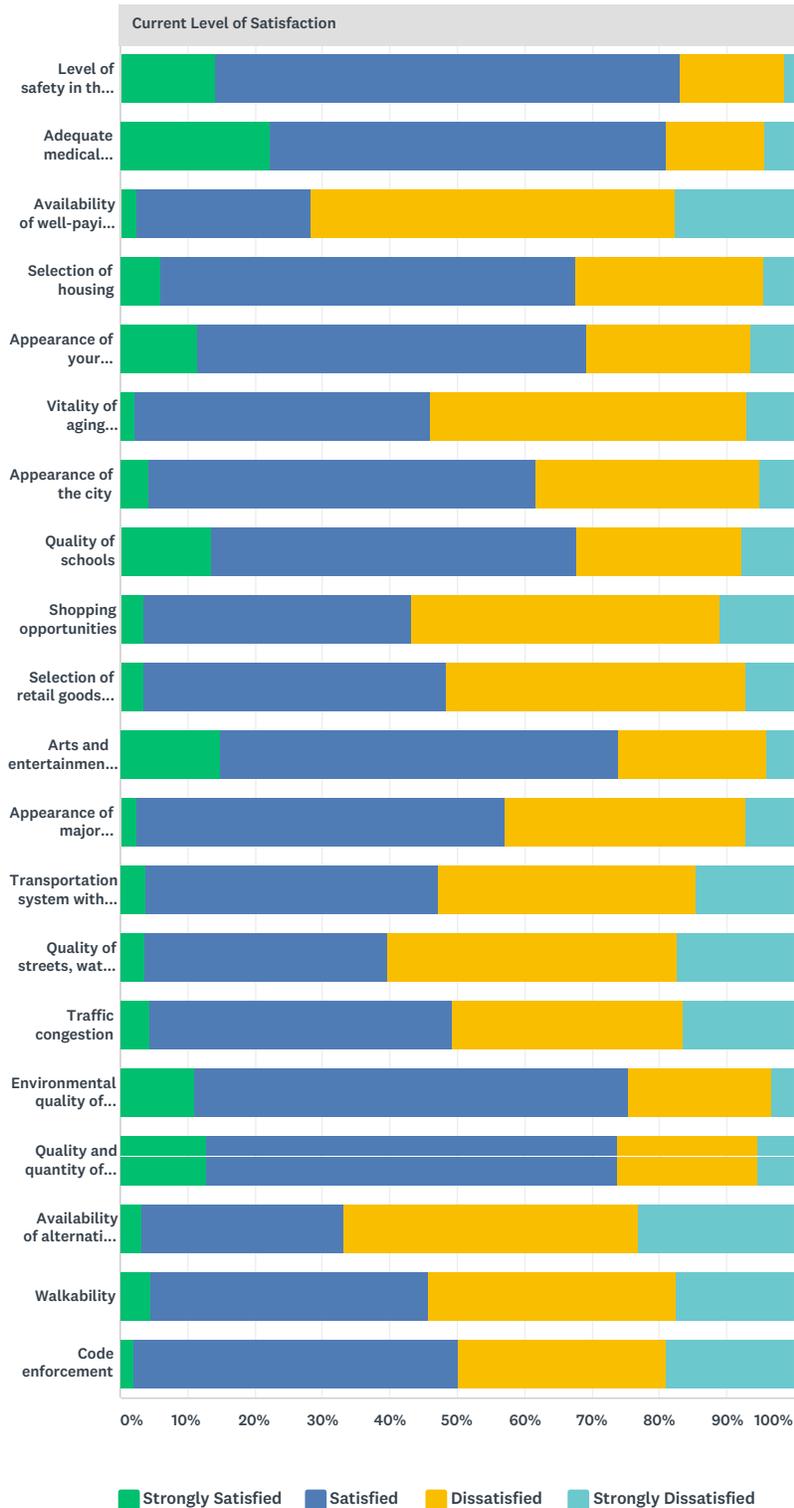
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Too Fast	10.72%	58
About Right	62.11%	336
Too Slow	16.08%	87
No Opinion	11.09%	60
TOTAL		541

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q9 Presently, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of living in Tahlequah? How important is each factor to you and your household? From mobile device, pan to the right to answer level of importance question.

Answered: 543 Skipped: 7

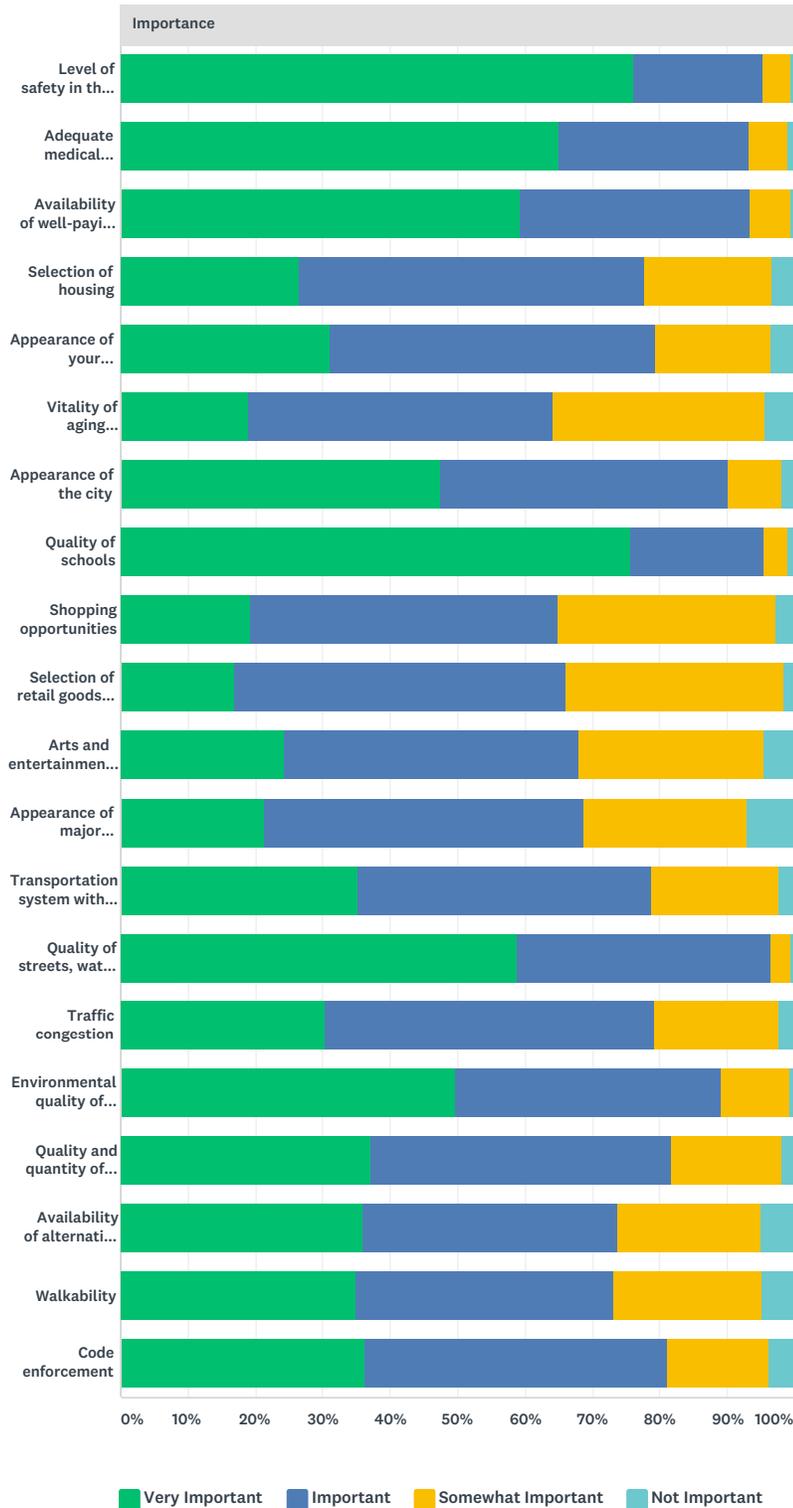


APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

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Answered: 543 Skipped: 7



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

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Answered: 543 Skipped: 7

Current Level of Satisfaction					
	STRONGLY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	STRONGLY DISSATISFIED	TOTAL
Level of safety in the community	13.97% 75	69.09% 371	15.46% 83	1.49% 8	537
Adequate medical facilities	22.24% 119	58.69% 314	14.58% 78	4.49% 24	535
Availability of well-paying, diverse job opportunities	2.43% 13	25.79% 138	54.02% 289	17.76% 95	535
Selection of housing	6.03% 32	61.39% 326	27.87% 148	4.71% 25	531
Appearance of your neighborhood	11.49% 61	57.63% 306	24.48% 130	6.40% 34	531
Vitality of aging neighborhoods	2.29% 12	43.62% 229	47.05% 247	7.05% 37	525
Appearance of the city	4.29% 23	57.28% 307	33.21% 178	5.22% 28	536
Quality of schools	13.42% 71	54.25% 287	24.57% 130	7.75% 41	529
Shopping opportunities	3.38% 18	39.85% 212	45.68% 243	11.09% 59	532
Selection of retail goods and services	3.39% 18	45.01% 239	44.44% 236	7.16% 38	531
Arts and entertainment/cultural offerings	14.82% 79	59.10% 315	21.95% 117	4.13% 22	533
Appearance of major commercial corridors	2.49% 13	54.49% 285	35.76% 187	7.27% 38	523
Transportation system with easy access throughout the city	3.77% 20	43.40% 230	38.11% 202	14.72% 78	530
Quality of streets, water, sewer, and other infrastructure	3.55% 19	36.07% 193	42.80% 229	17.57% 94	535
Traffic congestion	4.51% 24	44.74% 238	34.21% 182	16.54% 88	532
Environmental quality of water and open spaces	11.11% 59	64.22% 341	21.28% 113	3.39% 18	531
Quality and quantity of parks and recreation facilities	12.92% 69	60.67% 324	20.97% 112	5.43% 29	534
Availability of alternative transportation opportunities (sidewalks, bicycle facilities, public transit)	3.21% 17	29.87% 158	43.86% 232	23.06% 122	529
Walkability	4.68% 25	41.20% 220	36.70% 196	17.42% 93	534
Code enforcement	1.92% 10	48.27% 251	30.77% 160	19.04% 99	520

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

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Answered: 543 Skipped: 7

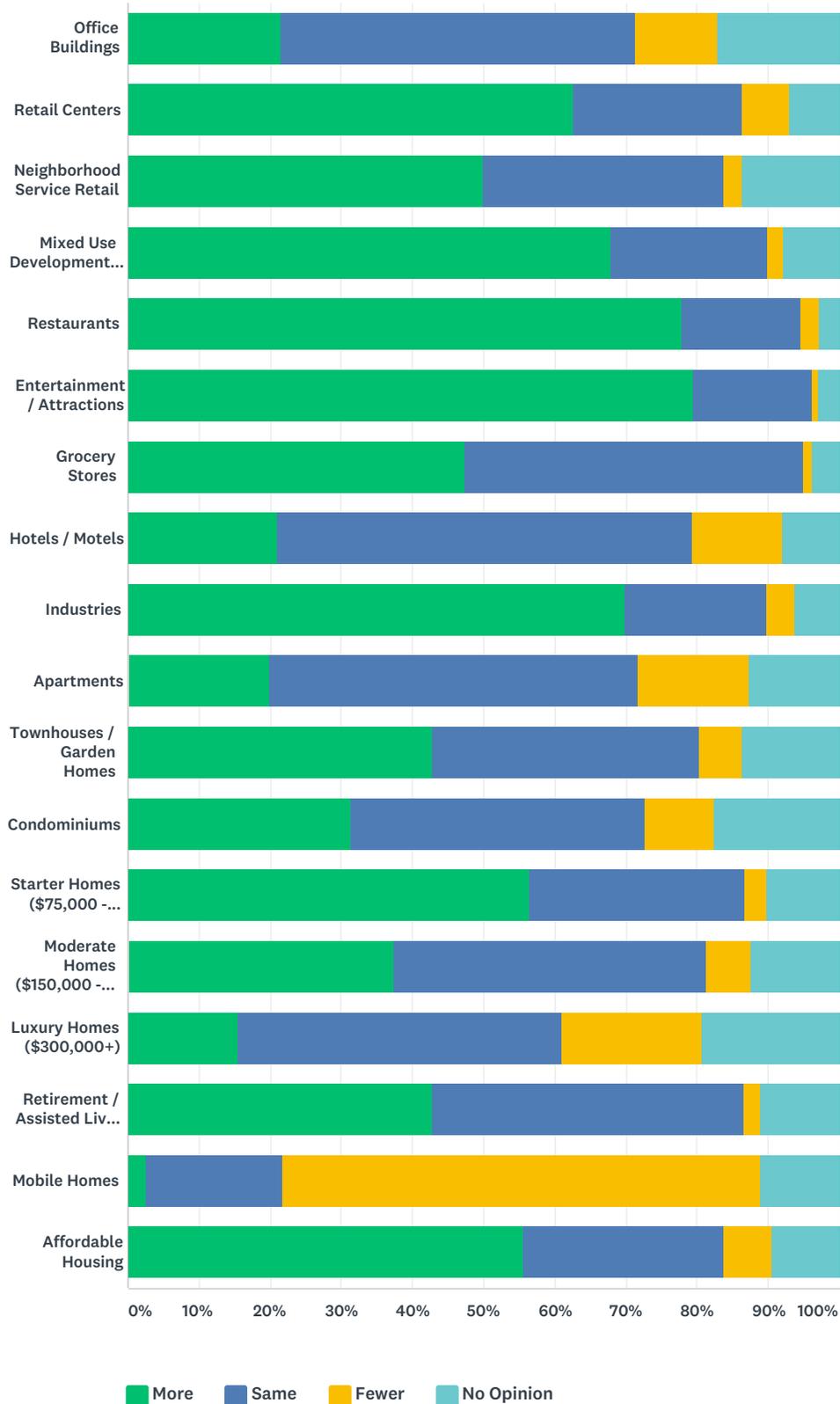
Importance	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Level of safety in the community	76.13% 303	19.10% 76	4.27% 17	0.50% 2	398
Adequate medical facilities	64.97% 256	28.17% 111	5.84% 23	1.02% 4	394
Availability of well-paying, diverse job opportunities	59.18% 232	34.18% 134	6.12% 24	0.51% 2	392
Selection of housing	26.41% 103	51.28% 200	18.97% 74	3.33% 13	390
Appearance of your neighborhood	31.03% 121	48.21% 188	17.18% 67	3.59% 14	390
Vitality of aging neighborhoods	18.85% 72	45.29% 173	31.41% 120	4.45% 17	382
Appearance of the city	47.44% 185	42.82% 167	7.69% 30	2.05% 8	390
Quality of schools	75.72% 290	19.58% 75	3.66% 14	1.04% 4	383
Shopping opportunities	19.28% 75	45.50% 177	32.39% 126	2.83% 11	389
Selection of retail goods and services	16.84% 65	49.22% 190	32.38% 125	1.55% 6	386
Arts and entertainment/cultural offerings	24.23% 94	43.56% 169	27.58% 107	4.64% 18	388
Appearance of major commercial corridors	21.26% 81	47.51% 181	24.15% 92	7.09% 27	381
Transportation system with easy access throughout the city	35.16% 135	43.49% 167	19.01% 73	2.34% 9	384
Quality of streets, water, sewer, and other infrastructure	58.87% 229	37.53% 146	3.08% 12	0.51% 2	389
Traffic congestion	30.41% 118	48.71% 189	18.56% 72	2.32% 9	388
Environmental quality of water and open spaces	49.61% 192	39.53% 153	10.08% 39	0.78% 3	387
Quality and quantity of parks and recreation facilities	37.14% 143	44.68% 172	16.10% 62	2.08% 8	385
Availability of alternative transportation opportunities (sidewalks, bicycle facilities, public transit)	35.84% 138	37.92% 146	21.30% 82	4.94% 19	385
Walkability	34.96% 136	38.05% 148	22.11% 86	4.88% 19	389
Code enforcement	36.10% 139	44.94% 173	15.06% 58	3.90% 15	385

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q10 Which of the following types of developments would you like to see more of in City of Tahlequah, keep at the same level, or see fewer of?

Answered: 542 Skipped: 8



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q10 Which of the following types of developments would you like to see more of in City of Tahlequah, keep at the same level, or see fewer of?

Answered: 542 Skipped: 8

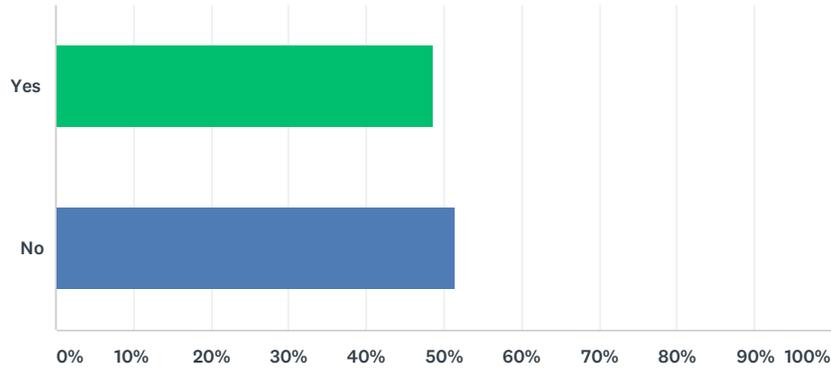
	MORE	SAME	FEWER	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Office Buildings	21.46% 115	49.81% 267	11.75% 63	16.98% 91	536
Retail Centers	62.64% 337	23.61% 127	6.69% 36	7.06% 38	538
Neighborhood Service Retail	49.91% 265	33.90% 180	2.64% 14	13.56% 72	531
Mixed Use Development (Live / Work / Play)	67.97% 365	21.97% 118	2.23% 12	7.82% 42	537
Restaurants	77.84% 418	16.76% 90	2.61% 14	2.79% 15	537
Entertainment / Attractions	79.52% 427	16.76% 90	0.74% 4	2.98% 16	537
Grocery Stores	47.31% 255	47.68% 257	1.11% 6	3.90% 21	539
Hotels / Motels	21.00% 113	58.36% 314	12.64% 68	7.99% 43	538
Industries	69.85% 373	19.85% 106	4.12% 22	6.18% 33	534
Apartments	19.81% 106	51.96% 278	15.51% 83	12.71% 68	535
Townhouses / Garden Homes	42.72% 229	37.69% 202	5.97% 32	13.62% 73	536
Condominiums	31.32% 166	41.32% 219	9.62% 51	17.74% 94	530
Starter Homes (\$75,000 - \$150,000)	56.34% 302	30.41% 163	2.99% 16	10.26% 55	536
Moderate Homes (\$150,000 - \$300,000)	37.41% 199	43.98% 234	6.20% 33	12.41% 66	532
Luxury Homes (\$300,000+)	15.54% 83	45.51% 243	19.66% 105	19.29% 103	534
Retirement / Assisted Living Housing	42.83% 227	43.77% 232	2.26% 12	11.13% 59	530
Mobile Homes	2.60% 14	19.11% 103	67.16% 362	11.13% 60	539
Affordable Housing	55.60% 298	28.17% 151	6.72% 36	9.51% 51	536

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q11 Are there adequate housing choices for market rate / affordable housing?

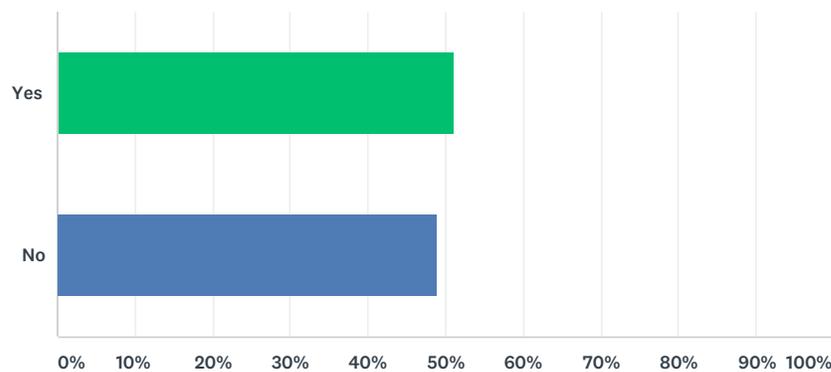
Answered: 525 Skipped: 25



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.57%	255
No	51.43%	270
TOTAL		525

Q12 Are there adequate choices in the single-family home market?

Answered: 523 Skipped: 27



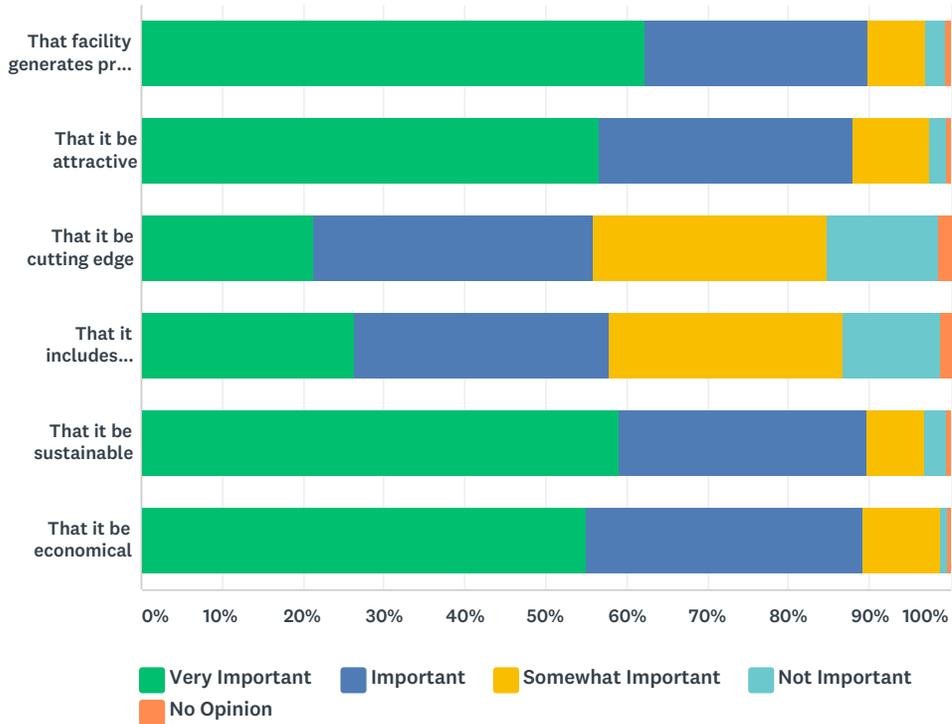
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	51.05%	267
No	48.95%	256
TOTAL		523

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q13 In constructing future city facilities, how important or unimportant are the following issues?

Answered: 541 Skipped: 9



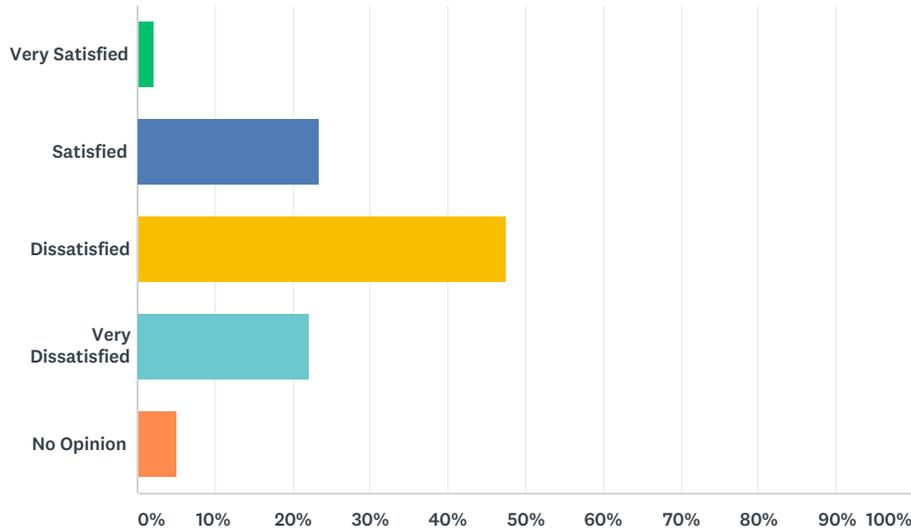
	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	NO OPINION	TOTAL
That facility generates pride in the community	62.34% 336	27.46% 148	7.24% 39	2.41% 13	0.56% 3	539
That it be attractive	56.69% 305	31.23% 168	9.48% 51	2.23% 12	0.37% 2	538
That it be cutting edge	21.31% 114	34.58% 185	28.79% 154	13.83% 74	1.50% 8	535
That it includes significant amounts of landscaping	26.39% 142	31.41% 169	29.00% 156	12.08% 65	1.12% 6	538
That it be sustainable	59.11% 318	30.67% 165	7.06% 38	2.79% 15	0.37% 2	538
That it be economical	54.95% 294	34.21% 183	9.72% 52	0.75% 4	0.37% 2	535

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q15 In your opinion, how satisfied are you with the availability of adequate job opportunities in Tahlequah?

Answered: 539 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Satisfied	2.04%	11
Satisfied	23.38%	126
Dissatisfied	47.50%	256
Very Dissatisfied	22.08%	119
No Opinion	5.01%	27
TOTAL		539

Q14 Does anyone in your household work outside of City of Tahlequah? If Yes, why? (lack of employment base in City of Tahlequah, better salary outside City of Tahlequah, specialized job located elsewhere, personal preference, other)

Answered: 513 Skipped: 37

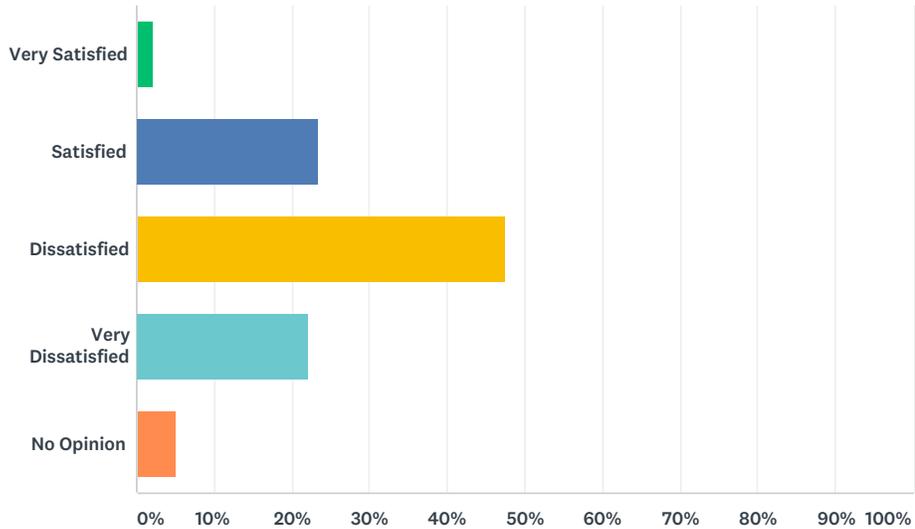
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (If Yes, please explain why.)	31.97%	164
No (Please type "No" if your answer is No.)	70.37%	361

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q15 In your opinion, how satisfied are you with the availability of adequate job opportunities in Tahlequah?

Answered: 539 Skipped: 11



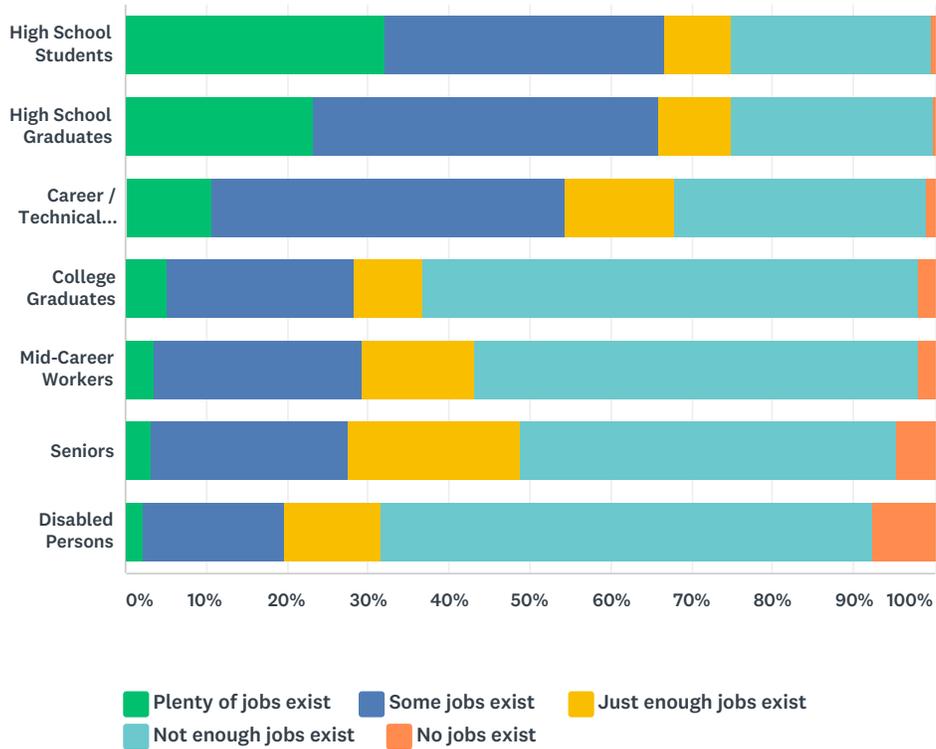
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Satisfied	2.04% 11
Satisfied	23.38% 126
Dissatisfied	47.50% 256
Very Dissatisfied	22.08% 119
No Opinion	5.01% 27
TOTAL	539

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q16 To what degree are jobs available that meet the qualifications of the following groups?

Answered: 530 Skipped: 20



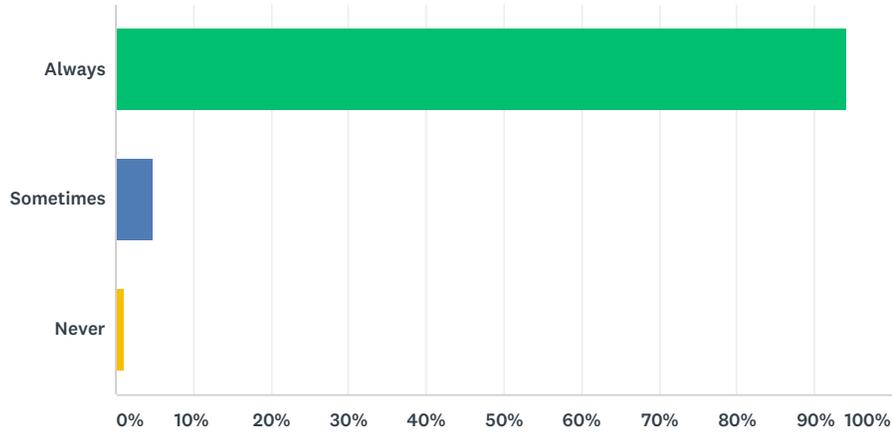
	PLENTRY OF JOBS EXIST	SOME JOBS EXIST	JUST ENOUGH JOBS EXIST	NOT ENOUGH JOBS EXIST	NO JOBS EXIST	TOTAL
High School Students	32.11% 166	34.62% 179	8.12% 42	24.76% 128	0.39% 2	517
High School Graduates	23.22% 121	42.61% 222	9.02% 47	24.95% 130	0.19% 1	521
Career / Technical Training Certification	10.56% 55	43.76% 228	13.63% 71	31.09% 162	0.96% 5	521
College Graduates	5.31% 28	22.96% 121	8.54% 45	61.10% 322	2.09% 11	527
Mid-Career Workers	3.64% 19	25.67% 134	13.79% 72	54.79% 286	2.11% 11	522
Seniors	3.29% 17	24.22% 125	21.32% 110	46.51% 240	4.65% 24	516
Disabled Persons	2.17% 11	17.52% 89	11.81% 60	60.83% 309	7.68% 39	508

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q17 Do you have access to a personal, motorized vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle, etc.)?

Answered: 541 Skipped: 9



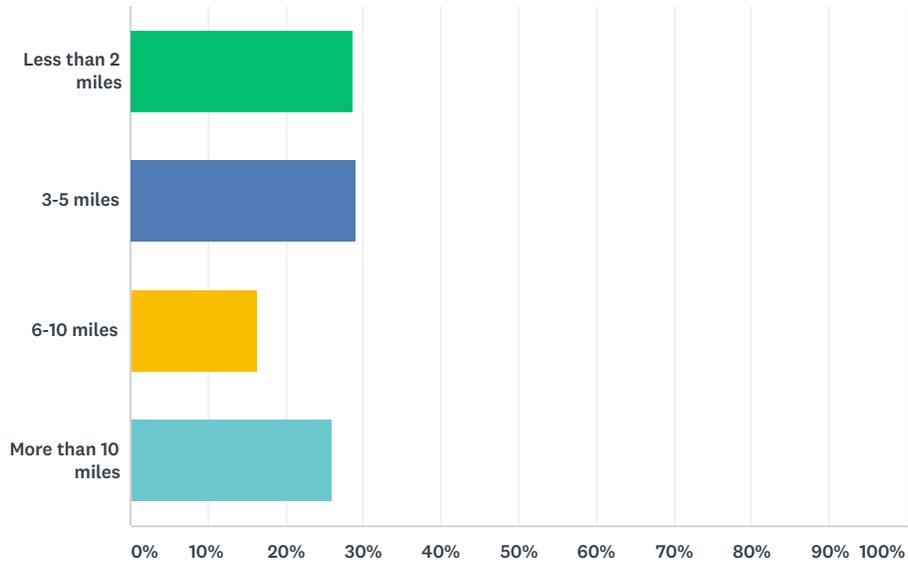
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	94.09%	509
Sometimes	4.81%	26
Never	1.11%	6
TOTAL		541

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q18 What is the distance of your commute to work or school?

Answered: 516 Skipped: 34



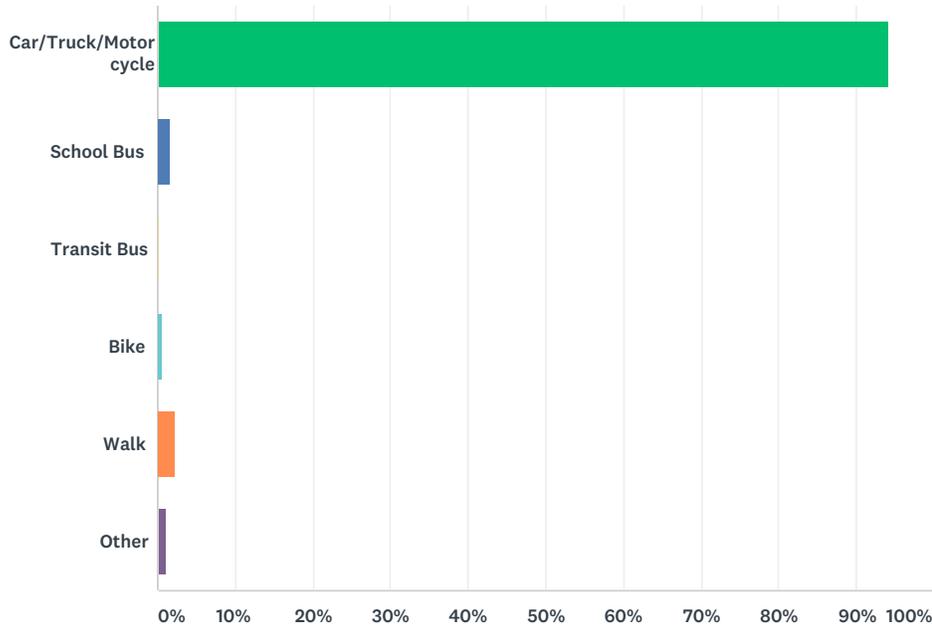
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 2 miles	28.68%	148
3-5 miles	29.07%	150
6-10 miles	16.28%	84
More than 10 miles	25.97%	134
TOTAL		516

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q19 What mode of transportation do you use for the longest part of your trip to school or work?

Answered: 528 Skipped: 22



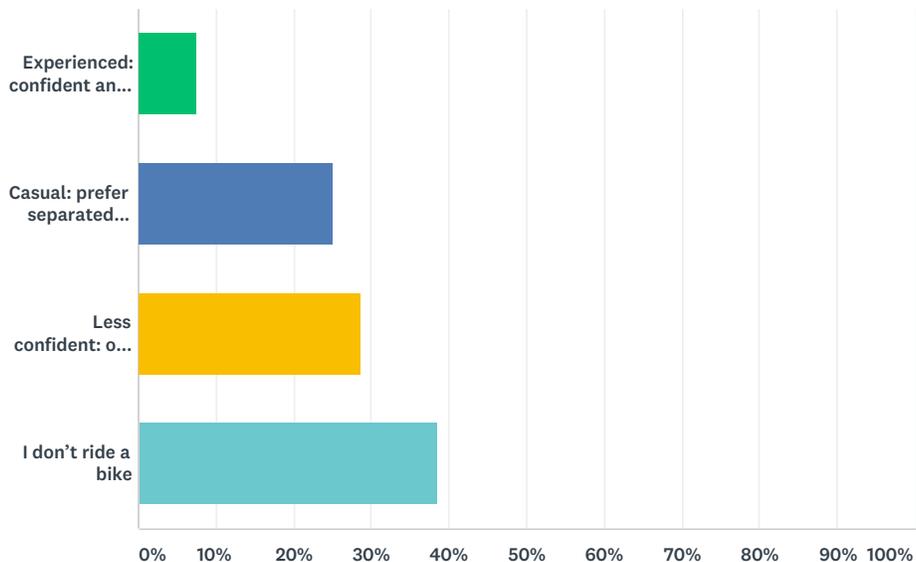
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Car/Truck/Motorcycle	94.13%	497
School Bus	1.70%	9
Transit Bus	0.19%	1
Bike	0.57%	3
Walk	2.27%	12
Other	1.14%	6
TOTAL		528

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q20 How would you describe your bicycling comfort level?

Answered: 537 Skipped: 13



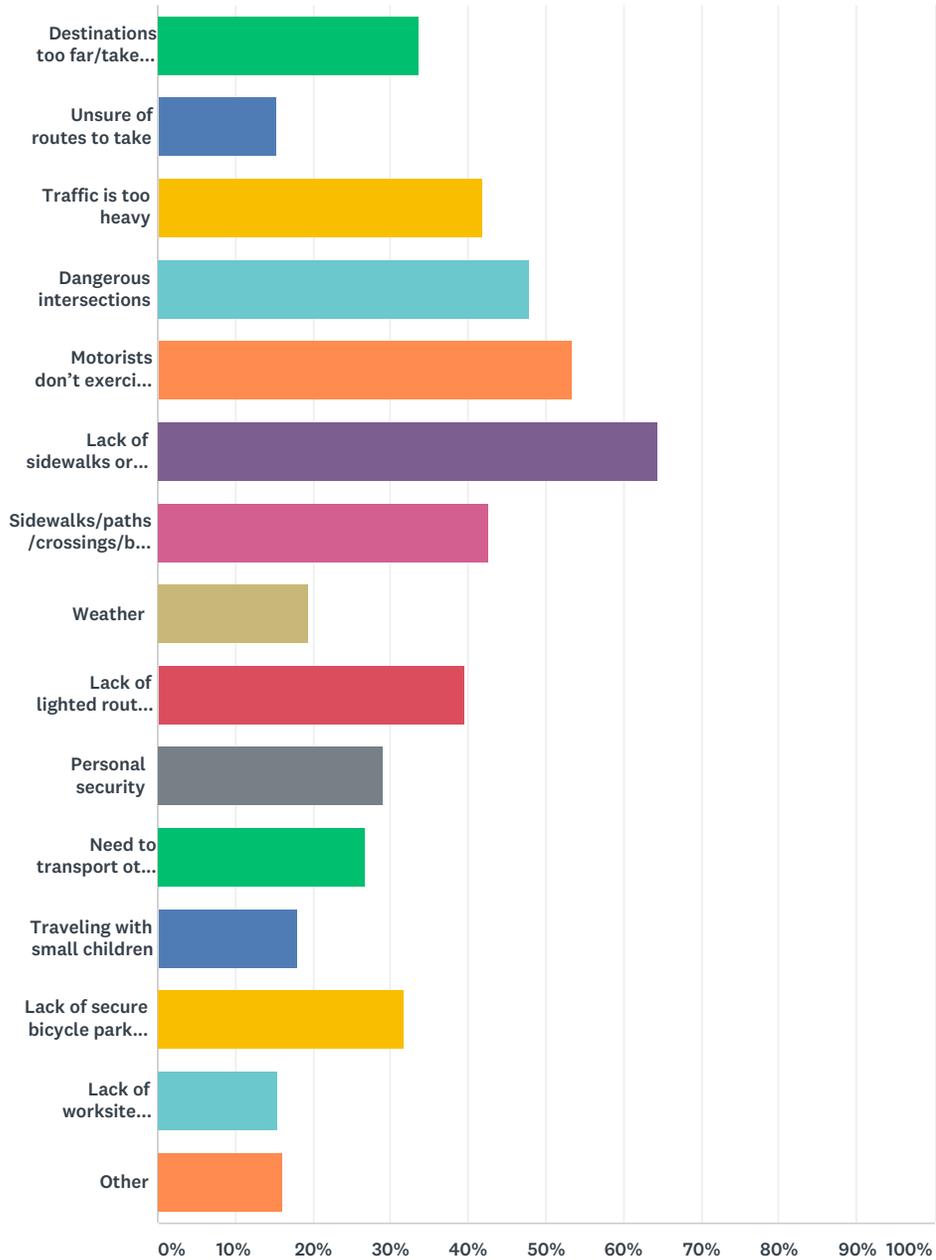
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Experienced: confident and comfortable riding with traffic on the road in most traffic situations	7.64%	41
Casual: prefer separated paths, but will ride on some roads where space is available and traffic is manageable	25.14%	135
Less confident: only feel safe on separated paths with few traffic crossings and local streets	28.68%	154
I don't ride a bike	38.55%	207
TOTAL		537

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q21 What keeps you from walking or biking more often? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 528 Skipped: 22



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q21 What keeps you from walking or biking more often? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 528 Skipped: 22

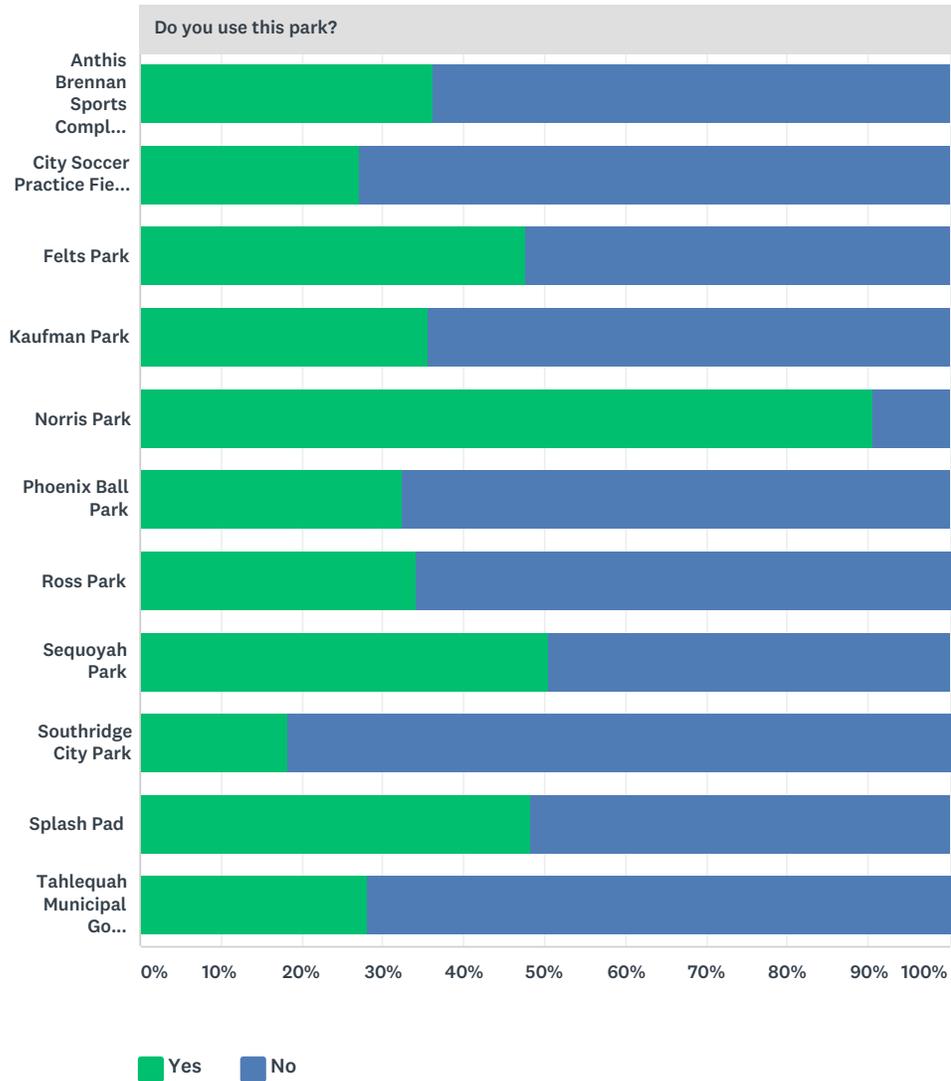
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Destinations too far/takes too long to bike	33.71%	178
Unsure of routes to take	15.34%	81
Traffic is too heavy	41.86%	221
Dangerous intersections	47.92%	253
Motorists don't exercise caution around cyclists	53.41%	282
Lack of sidewalks or bike facilities (bike lanes, paths, wide shoulders, etc.)	64.39%	340
Sidewalks/paths/crossings/bike facilities are in poor condition or unsuitable	42.61%	225
Weather	19.51%	103
Lack of lighted routes or paths	39.58%	209
Personal security	29.17%	154
Need to transport other people or things	26.70%	141
Traveling with small children	17.99%	95
Lack of secure bicycle parking or bike racks	31.82%	168
Lack of worksite amenities (showers, lockers, etc.)	15.53%	82
Other	16.10%	85
Total Respondents: 528		

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q22 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following local parks?

Answered: 533 Skipped: 17

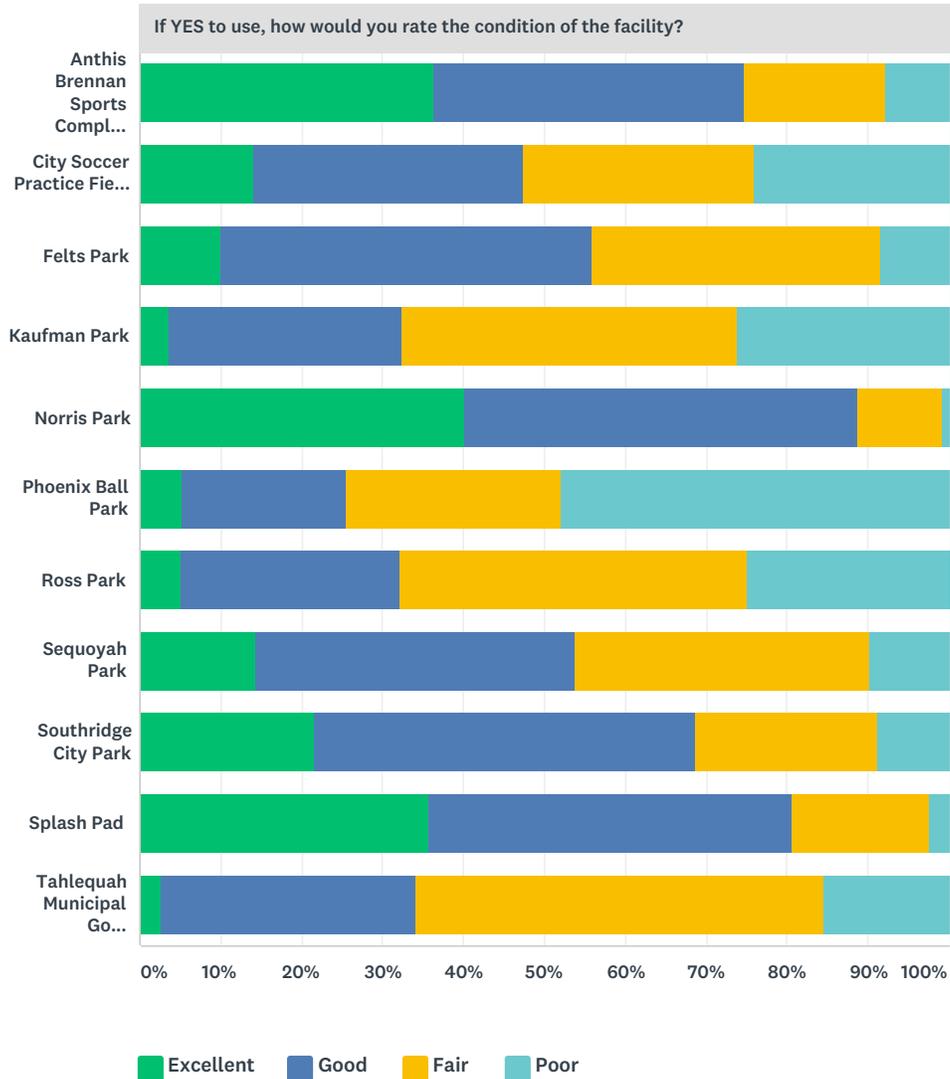


APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q22 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following local parks?

Answered: 533 Skipped: 17



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q22 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following local parks?

Answered: 533 Skipped: 17

Do you use this park?			
	YES	NO	TOTAL
Anthris Brennan Sports Complex (north of Allen)	36.11% 182	63.89% 322	504
City Soccer Practice Fields (south of Allen)	27.15% 136	72.85% 365	501
Felts Park	47.60% 238	52.40% 262	500
Kaufman Park	35.56% 176	64.44% 319	495
Norris Park	90.65% 475	9.35% 49	524
Phoenix Ball Park	32.38% 159	67.62% 332	491
Sequoyah Park	50.30% 249	49.70% 246	495
Southridge City Park	18.24% 89	81.76% 399	488
Splash Pad	48.21% 242	51.79% 260	502
Tahlequah Municipal Golf Course	28.07% 137	71.93% 351	488

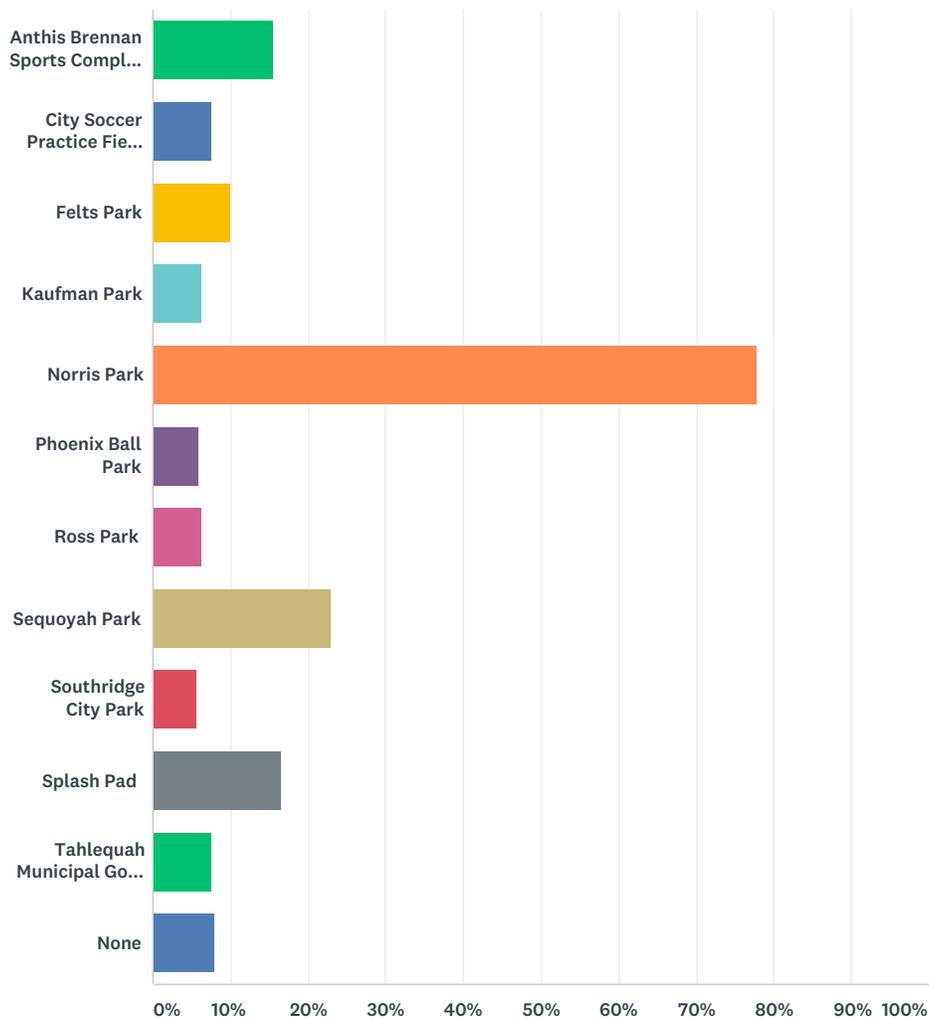
If YES to use, how would you rate the condition of the facility?					
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	TOTAL
Anthris Brennan Sports Complex (north of Allen)	36.27% 70	38.34% 74	17.62% 34	7.77% 15	193
City Soccer Practice Fields (south of Allen)	14.00% 21	33.33% 50	28.67% 43	24.00% 36	150
Felts Park	10.00% 24	45.83% 110	35.83% 86	8.33% 20	240
Kaufman Park	3.65% 7	28.65% 55	41.67% 80	26.04% 50	192
Norris Park	40.22% 181	48.44% 218	10.44% 47	0.89% 4	450
Phoenix Ball Park	5.20% 9	20.23% 35	26.59% 46	47.98% 83	173
Ross Park	4.97% 9	27.07% 49	43.09% 78	24.86% 45	181
Sequoyah Park	14.29% 35	39.59% 97	36.33% 89	9.80% 24	245
Southridge City Park	21.57% 22	47.06% 48	22.55% 23	8.82% 9	102
Splash Pad	35.68% 86	44.81% 108	17.01% 41	2.49% 6	241
Tahlequah Municipal Golf Course	2.68% 4	31.54% 47	50.34% 75	15.44% 23	149

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q23 Which TWO of the parks have you or members of your household used the most during the past year?

Answered: 533 Skipped: 17



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q23 Which TWO of the parks have you or members of your household used the most during the past year?

Answered: 533 Skipped: 17

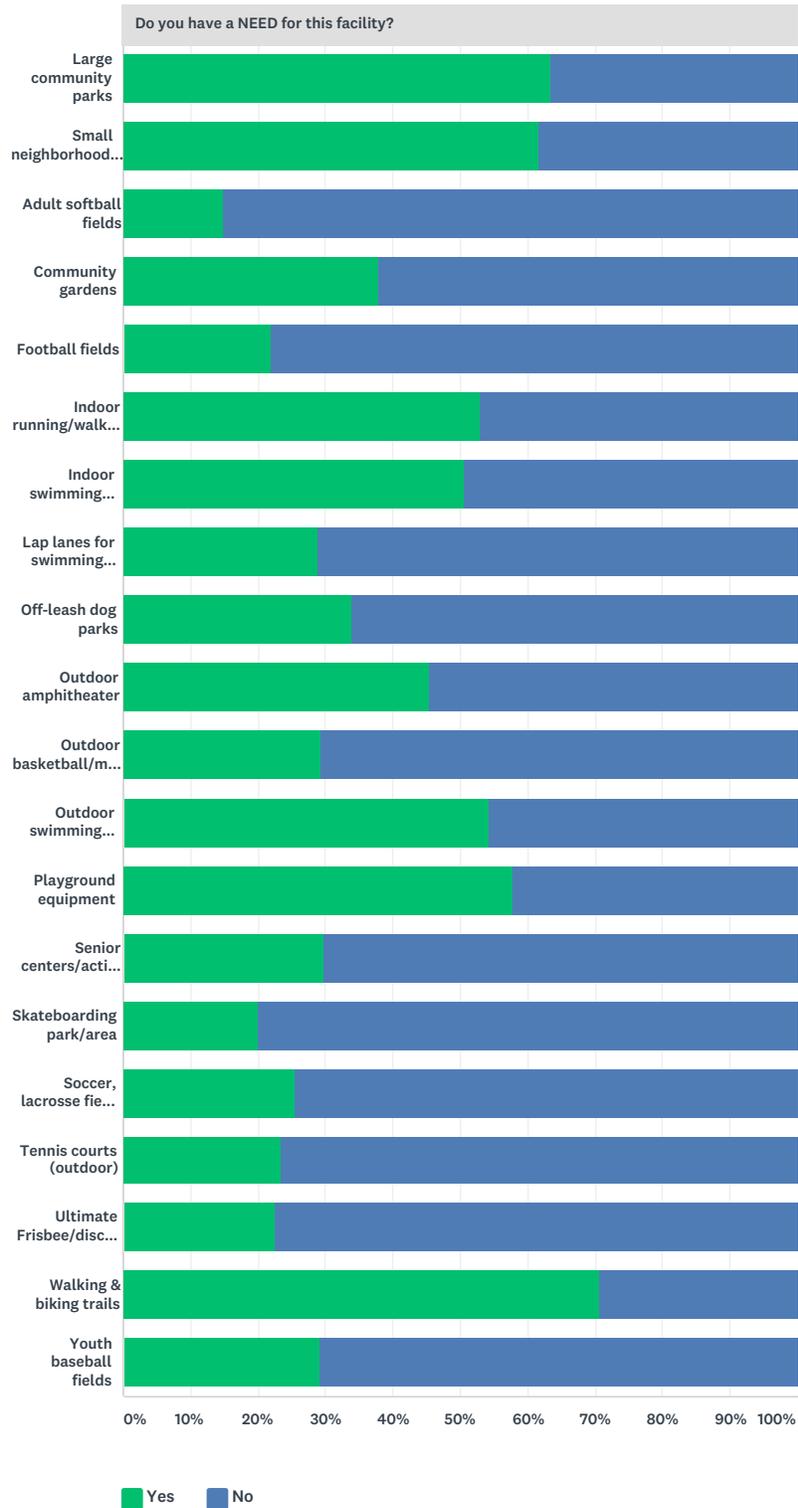
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Anthis Brennan Sports Complex (north of Allen)	15.38%	82
City Soccer Practice Fields (south of Allen)	7.50%	40
Felts Park	9.94%	53
Kaufman Park	6.19%	33
Norris Park	77.86%	415
Phoenix Ball Park	5.82%	31
Ross Park	6.38%	34
Sequoyah Park	23.08%	123
Southridge City Park	5.63%	30
Splash Pad	16.51%	88
Tahlequah Municipal Golf Course	7.50%	40
None	7.88%	42
Total Respondents: 533		

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q24 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following recreation facilities? If yes, please rate all the facilities of this type in Tahlequah in terms of how well your needs are being met, as indicated below.

Answered: 497 Skipped: 53

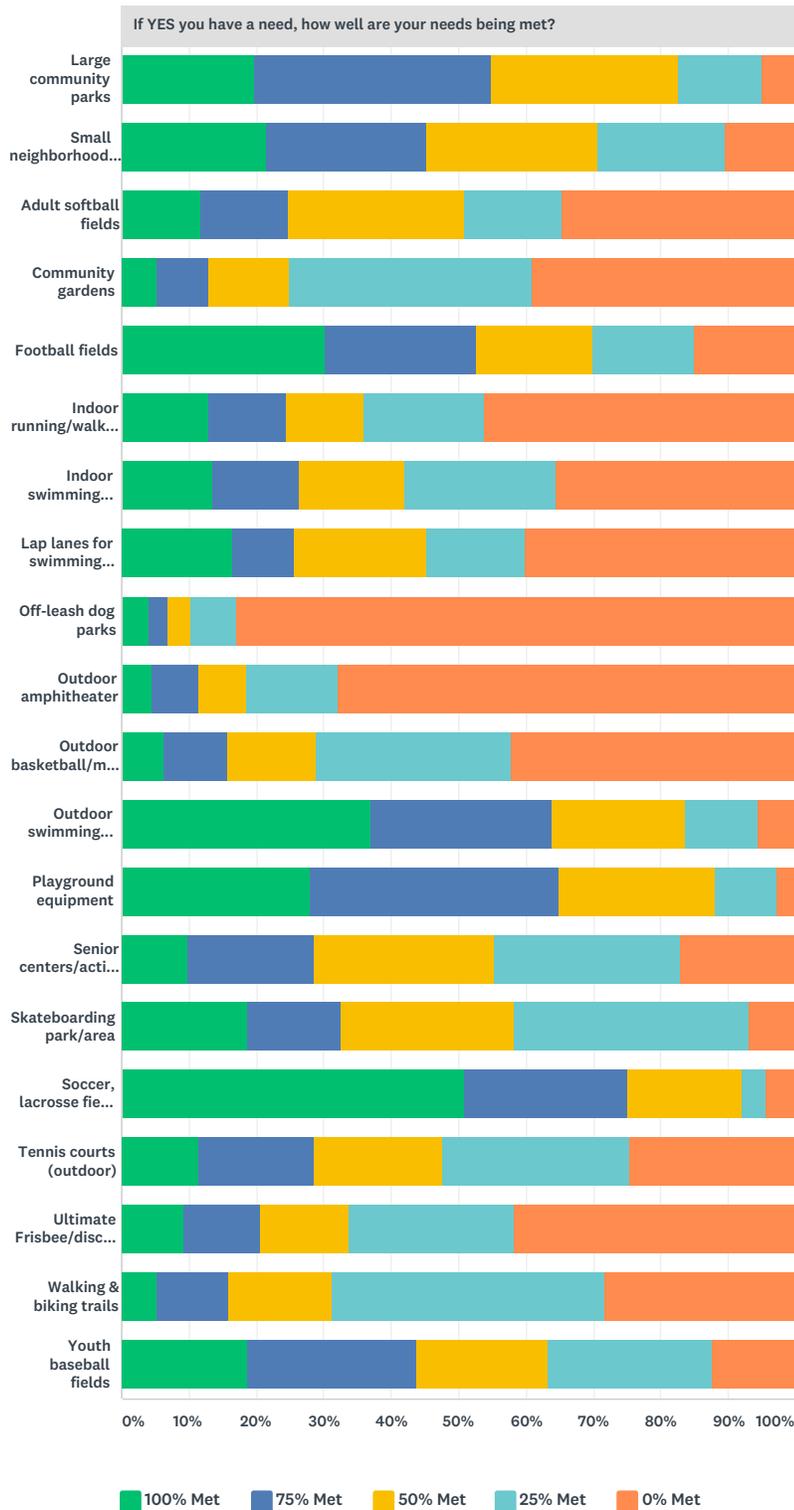


APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q24 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following recreation facilities? If yes, please rate all the facilities of this type in Tahlequah in terms of how well your needs are being met, as indicated below.

Answered: 497 Skipped: 53



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q24 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following recreation facilities? If yes, please rate all the facilities of this type in Tahlequah in terms of how well your needs are being met, as indicated below.

Answered: 497 Skipped: 53

Do you have a NEED for this facility?			
	YES	NO	TOTAL
Large community parks	63.44% 288	36.56% 166	454
Small neighborhood parks	61.71% 282	38.29% 175	457
Adult softball fields	14.81% 64	85.19% 368	432
Community gardens	37.87% 167	62.13% 274	441
Football fields	21.86% 94	78.14% 336	430
Indoor running/walking track	52.94% 234	47.06% 208	442
Indoor swimming pools/aquatic center	50.56% 227	49.44% 222	449
Lap lanes for swimming (indoor)	28.84% 124	71.16% 306	430
Off-leash dog parks	33.94% 149	66.06% 290	439
Outdoor amphitheater	45.43% 199	54.57% 239	438
Outdoor basketball/multi-use courts	29.31% 124	70.69% 299	423
Outdoor swimming pools/aquatic center	54.30% 240	45.70% 202	442
Playground equipment	57.81% 259	42.19% 189	448
Senior centers/activity space	29.66% 129	70.34% 306	435
Soccer, lacrosse fields (outdoor)	25.47% 109	74.53% 319	428
Tennis courts (outdoor)	23.43% 101	76.57% 330	431
Ultimate Frisbee/disc golf	22.51% 97	77.49% 334	431
Walking & biking trails	70.74% 324	29.26% 134	458
Youth baseball fields	29.13% 127	70.87% 309	436

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q24 Have you or any member of your household used any of the following recreation facilities? If yes, please rate all the facilities of this type in Tahlequah in terms of how well your needs are being met, as indicated below.

Answered: 497 Skipped: 53

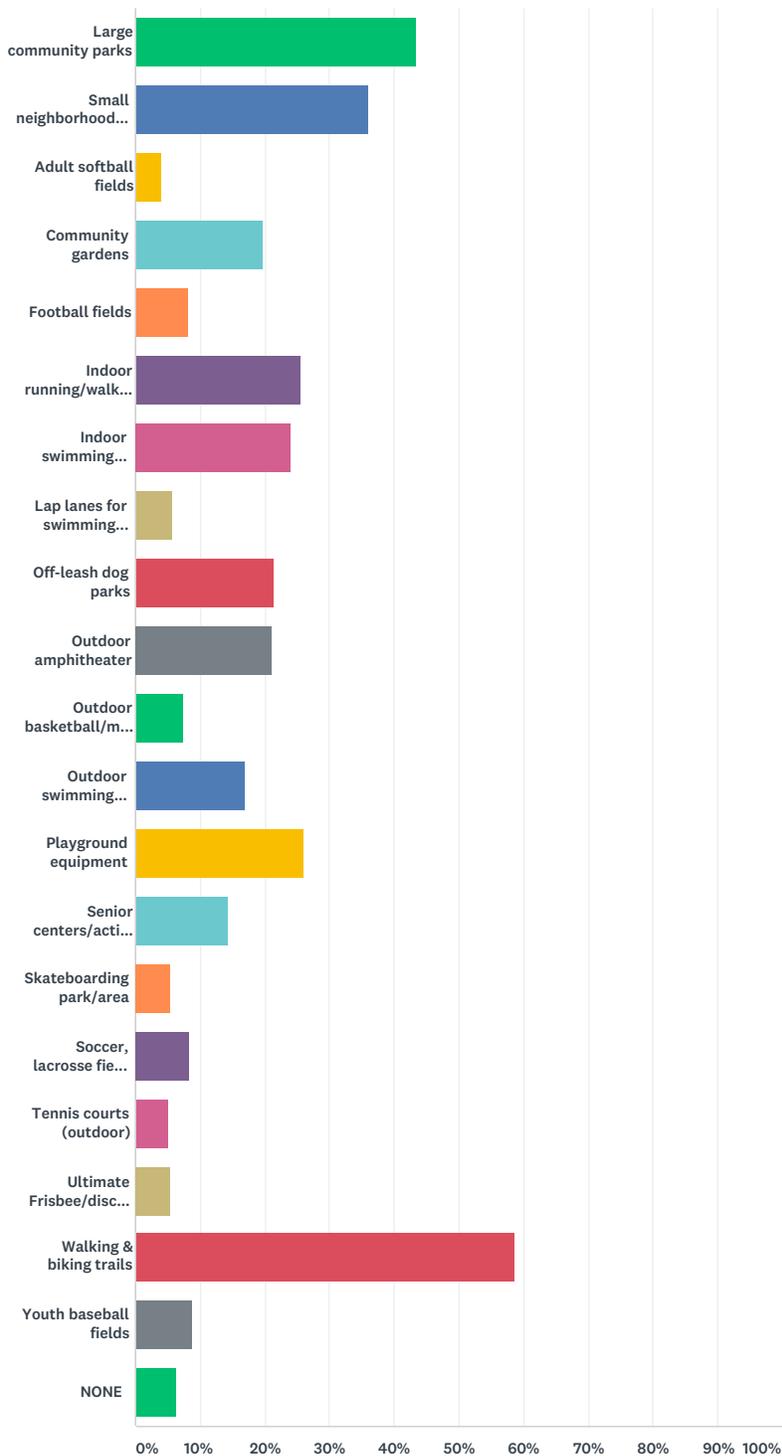
If YES you have a need, how well are your needs being met?						
	100% MET	75% MET	50% MET	25% MET	0% MET	TOTAL
Large community parks	19.64% 54	35.27% 97	27.64% 76	12.36% 34	5.09% 14	275
Small neighborhood parks	21.43% 57	23.68% 63	25.56% 68	18.80% 50	10.53% 28	266
Adult softball fields	11.59% 8	13.04% 9	26.09% 18	14.49% 10	34.78% 24	69
Community gardens	5.13% 8	7.69% 12	12.18% 19	35.90% 56	39.10% 61	156
Football fields	30.11% 28	22.58% 21	17.20% 16	15.05% 14	15.05% 14	93
Indoor running/walking track	12.89% 29	11.56% 26	11.56% 26	17.78% 40	46.22% 104	225
Indoor swimming pools/aquatic center	13.36% 29	12.90% 28	15.67% 34	22.58% 49	35.48% 77	217
Lap lanes for swimming (indoor)	16.39% 20	9.02% 11	19.67% 24	14.75% 18	40.16% 49	122
Off-leash dog parks	4.11% 6	2.74% 4	3.42% 5	6.85% 10	82.88% 121	146
Outdoor amphitheater	4.35% 8	7.07% 13	7.07% 13	13.59% 25	67.93% 125	184
Outdoor basketball/multi-use courts	6.25% 8	9.38% 12	13.28% 17	28.91% 37	42.19% 54	128
Outdoor swimming pools/aquatic center	36.96% 85	26.96% 62	19.57% 45	10.87% 25	5.65% 13	230
Playground equipment	27.89% 70	37.05% 93	23.11% 58	9.16% 23	2.79% 7	251
Senior centers/activity space	9.76% 12	18.70% 23	26.83% 33	27.64% 34	17.07% 21	123
Skateboarding park/area	18.60% 16	13.95% 12	25.58% 22	34.88% 30	6.98% 6	86
Soccer, lacrosse fields (outdoor)	50.89% 57	24.11% 27	16.96% 19	3.57% 4	4.46% 5	112
Tennis courts (outdoor)	11.43% 12	17.14% 18	19.05% 20	27.62% 29	24.76% 26	105
Ultimate Frisbee/disc golf	9.18% 9	11.22% 11	13.27% 13	24.49% 24	41.84% 41	98
Walking & biking trails	5.19% 16	10.71% 33	15.26% 47	40.58% 125	28.25% 87	308
Youth baseball fields	18.75% 24	25.00% 32	19.53% 25	24.22% 31	12.50% 16	128

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q25 Which FOUR of the following facilities are most important to your household?

Answered: 521 Skipped: 29



APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY SURVEY

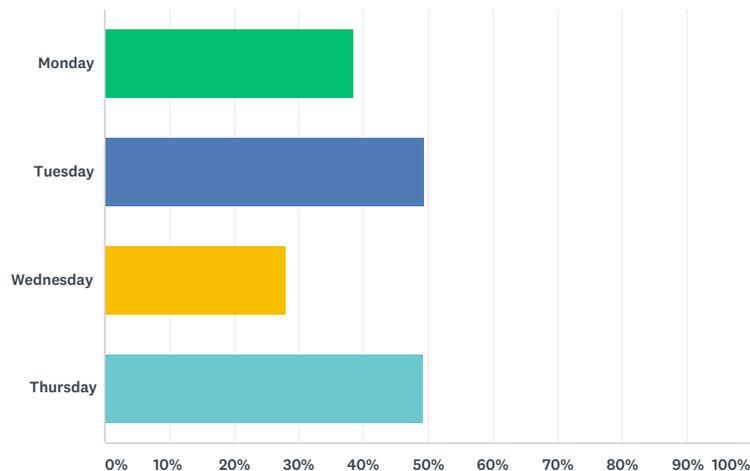
Q25 Which FOUR of the following facilities are most important to your household?

Answered: 521 Skipped: 29

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Large community parks	43.38%	226
Small neighborhood parks	35.89%	187
Adult softball fields	4.03%	21
Community gardens	19.77%	103
Football fields	8.25%	43
Indoor running/walking track	25.53%	133
Indoor swimming pools/aquatic center	23.99%	125
Lap lanes for swimming (indoor)	5.57%	29
Off-leash dog parks	21.31%	111
Outdoor amphitheater	21.11%	110
Outdoor basketball/multi-use courts	7.29%	38
Outdoor swimming pools/aquatic center	16.89%	88
Playground equipment	25.91%	135
Senior centers/activity space	14.20%	74
Skateboarding park/area	5.37%	28
Soccer, lacrosse fields (outdoor)	8.45%	44
Tennis courts (outdoor)	4.99%	26
Ultimate Frisbee/disc golf	5.37%	28
Walking & biking trails	58.54%	305
Youth baseball fields	8.83%	46
NONE	6.33%	33
Total Respondents: 521		

Q26 What evening(s) during the week would be the most convenient for you to attend public meetings to gather input for the Comprehensive Plan? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 503 Skipped: 47



APPENDIX D

NSU POP-UP INPUT

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APPENDIX D

NSU POP-UP INPUT

Question1: What recreation do you do in your spare time?

- Basketball
- Parks
- Horseback riding
- Sleep
- Drip
- Go to the river
- Play World of Warcraft
- Play ice hockey
- Tennis
- Working out
- Running
- Soccer
- Drive to Muskogee for food
- Play video games, play recreational sports and play music
- Play games
- Video games
- Watch animation movies
- Reading
- Gym
- Outdoor adventure: waking, hiking, using trails.
- River Park
- Walking in downtown
- Go the river
- WhataBurger
- Phat Philly's
- Reading
- Netflix
- Hiking
- Sports
- Hiking
- Tennis
- Reading
- Sleeping
- Netflix
- Sleep
- Reading
- Walking
- Swimming
- Playing games
- Netflix
- Walking
- Hiking
- Ballroom dance
- Skate boarding
- What is a "spare time"?
- Study
- Hike
- Swimming
- Rugby
- Rugby
- Cycling
- Acting
- Video games
- Dance
- Exercise
- Video games
- Soccer
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Sleep
- Dance

APPENDIX D

NSU POP-UP INPUT

Question 2: Would you live in Tahlequah upon Graduation? Why or Why not?

- Potentially, because it is definitely a growing city but not enough recreational activities.
- Maybe, I'm going to try to get a master's in education. Therefore, I could teach and go to school.
- No, but its cause I want to travel, not because of state of Tahlequah.
- Already do, but not long-term plan as of now. Not enough interesting areas for young professionals right now.
- Already graduated, but I am planning to return home to the City of Tulsa as it will be metro in near future.
- Want to return after Dental School to work for Cherokee Nation; it's a great place to live!
- No not many opportunities for young professionals. Wish there was no urban sprawl.
- No my profession will take me away from home.
- If I coach, then yes.
- No moving soon.
- Probably not, as I am from here.
- Maybe more than likely not.
- I am not sure. It depends on where I can find work.
- Maybe if it grows more.
- No, I wish to work in the Bahamas.
- No not enough vegan lifestyle options.
- Yes, it's cheap.
- Yes, homely atmosphere and beautiful scenery.
- Hard to find careers as there are no big corporations or businesses like in Tulsa, OK.
- Yes, if I could find a job!
- Yes, if I could find a good job.
- Yes if I can find a job!
- No its not home.
- No, there aren't enough opportunities. I prefer a more urban/ suburban setting. A wider variety of services.
- Yes, feels like home.
- Yes, for my masters program
- Probably not. There is not a theater for me to act at.
- Nope, I want to explore the world.
- No, I want to travel. In addition, I want to work for a big corporation. We don't really have any.
- No, my field of study leads out of state.
- Yes.
- Maybe, if there was more to do overall.
- No narrow job market
- Yes, I like small towns.
- Yes, love this town.
- No my job includes traveling.

Question 3: What services or amenities should Tahlequah have?

- Disc golf course
- Sidewalks
- Trails
- Recreation center
- Sidewalks
- Police dispatches with more training
- WhataBurger
- Better crosswalks
- Bigger shopping center
- More shopping centers
- Jimmy John's
- More shopping downtown
- More businesses in downtown
- More public transportation opportunities
- A shopping mall
- Skating rink

APPENDIX D

NSU POP-UP INPUT

Question 3: What services or amenities should Tahlequah have? (continued)

- Mall
- Food places
- Bike lanes
- Food places
- Playgrounds are underdeveloped- not enough places for kids to go especially in the winter
- Curb Side
- Recycling
- Public transportation for college students
- Movie Theater
- Library
- Sidewalks
- Dedicated theatre or performing arts center
- Wendy's
- Chipotle
- There needs to be more focus on parks and nature
- Donut shop
- Vegan restaurants
- VR arcade
- WhataBurger
- WhataBurger
- ADA accessibility
- Uber
- Raising Cane's!!!
- Dog Park
- Hobby Lobby
- IHOP
- Cheddar's
- Chick-fil-A
- Popeyes
- Costco
- Orange Leaf - Really good Chinese buffets
- IHOP
- Reasonable steak house
- Cherry Berry
- Water park
- Paintball
- Paintball
- Lazer
- Cane's Chicken
- Wing Stop
- Olive Garden
- Olive Garden
- Olive Garden
- Lighted tennis court
- Cheesecake Factory
- Rugby pitch
- Professional theater
- Starbucks
- Water park
- More retail (ex: clothing)
- More retail
- Sam's Club
- JCPenney
- Better soccer fields
- Variety in food
- Jobs
- Jobs
- Food
- Shopping places
- A mall
- Ross
- Marshall
- TJ Maxx
- More plays
- More events in the downtown
- Better night life

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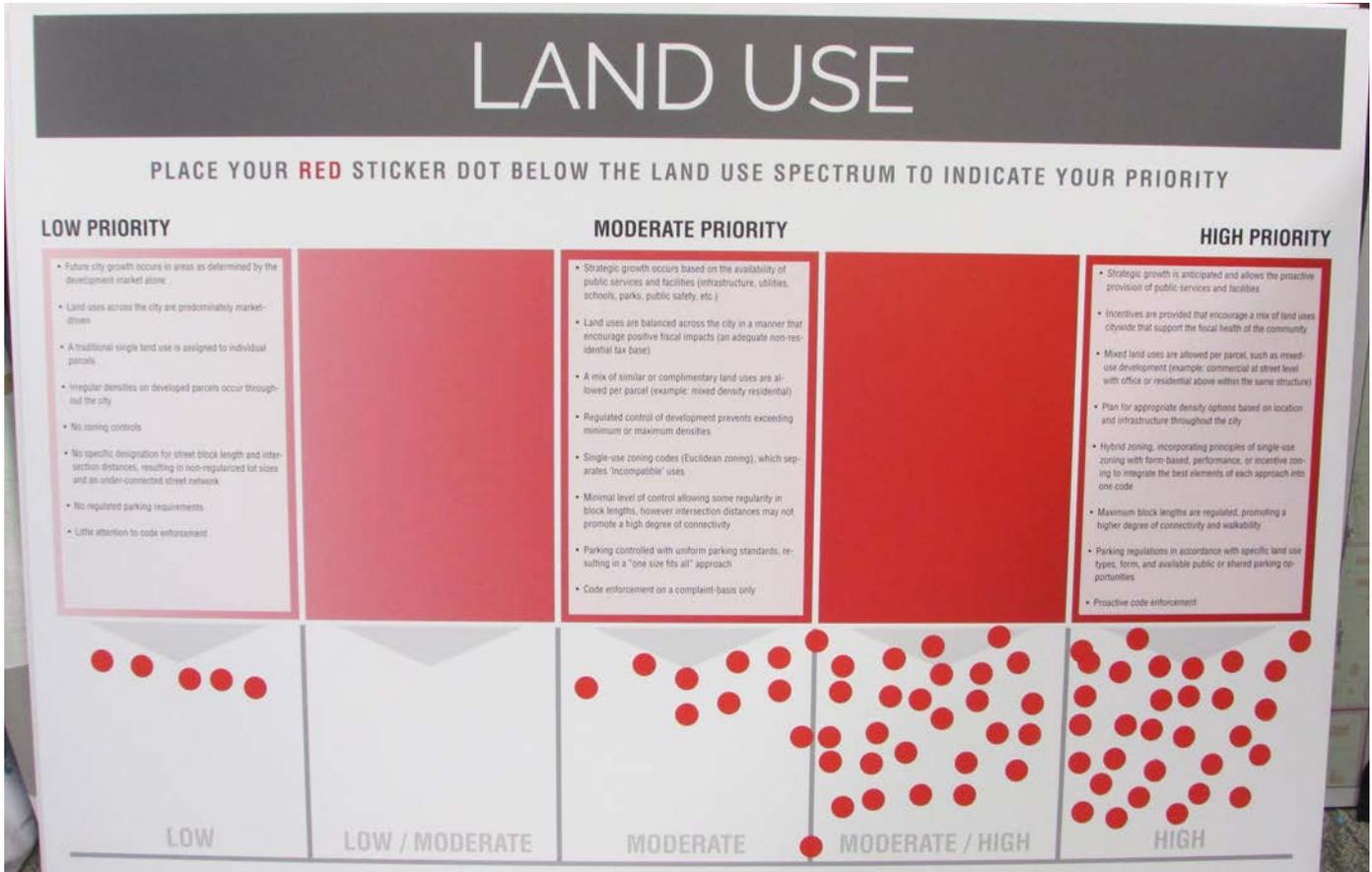
APPENDIX E

P R I O R I T Y S P E C T R U M
R E S U L T S

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APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- Future city growth occurs in areas as determined by the development market alone
- Land uses across the city are predominately market-driven
- A traditional single land use is assigned to individual parcels
- Irregular densities on developed parcels occur throughout the city
- No zoning controls
- No specific designation for street block length and intersection distances, resulting in non-regularized lot sizes and an under-connected street network
- No regulated parking requirements
- Little attention to code enforcement

MODERATE PRIORITY

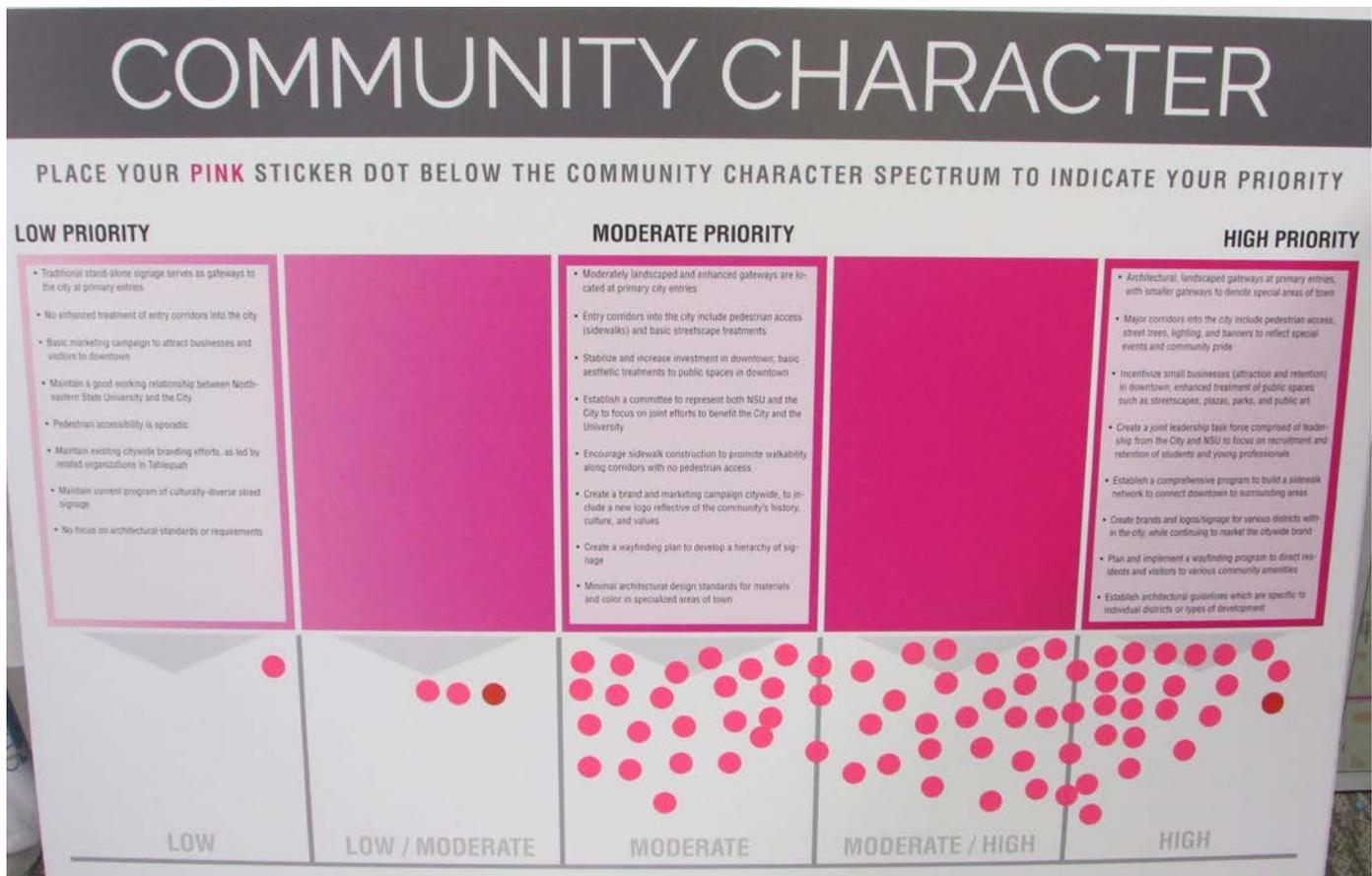
- Strategic growth occurs based on the availability of public services and facilities (infrastructure, utilities, schools, parks, public safety, etc.)
- Land uses are balanced across the city in a manner that encourage positive fiscal impacts (an adequate non-residential tax base)
- A mix of similar or complimentary land uses are allowed per parcel (example: mixed density residential)
- Regulated control of development prevents exceeding minimum or maximum densities
- Single-use zoning codes (Euclidean zoning), which separates 'incompatible' uses
- Minimal level of control allowing some regularity in block lengths, however intersection distances may not promote a high degree of connectivity
- Parking controlled with uniform parking standards, resulting in a "one size fits all" approach
- Code enforcement on a complaint-basis only

HIGH PRIORITY

- Strategic growth is anticipated and allows the proactive provision of public services and facilities
- Incentives are provided that encourage a mix of land uses citywide that support the fiscal health of the community
- Mixed land uses are allowed per parcel, such as mixed-use development (example: commercial at street level with office or residential above within the same structure)
- Plan for appropriate density options based on location and infrastructure throughout the city
- Hybrid zoning, incorporating principles of single-use zoning with form-based, performance, or incentive zoning to integrate the best elements of each approach into one code
- Maximum block lengths are regulated, promoting a higher degree of connectivity and walkability
- Parking regulations in accordance with specific land use types, form, and available public or shared parking opportunities
- Proactive code enforcement

APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- Traditional stand-alone signage serves as gateways to the city at primary entries
- No enhanced treatment of entry corridors into the city
- Basic marketing campaign to attract businesses and visitors to downtown
- Maintain a good working relationship between Northeastern State University and the City
- Pedestrian accessibility is sporadic
- Maintain existing citywide branding efforts, as led by related organizations in Tahlequah
- Maintain current program of culturally-diverse street signage
- No focus on architectural standards or requirements

MODERATE PRIORITY

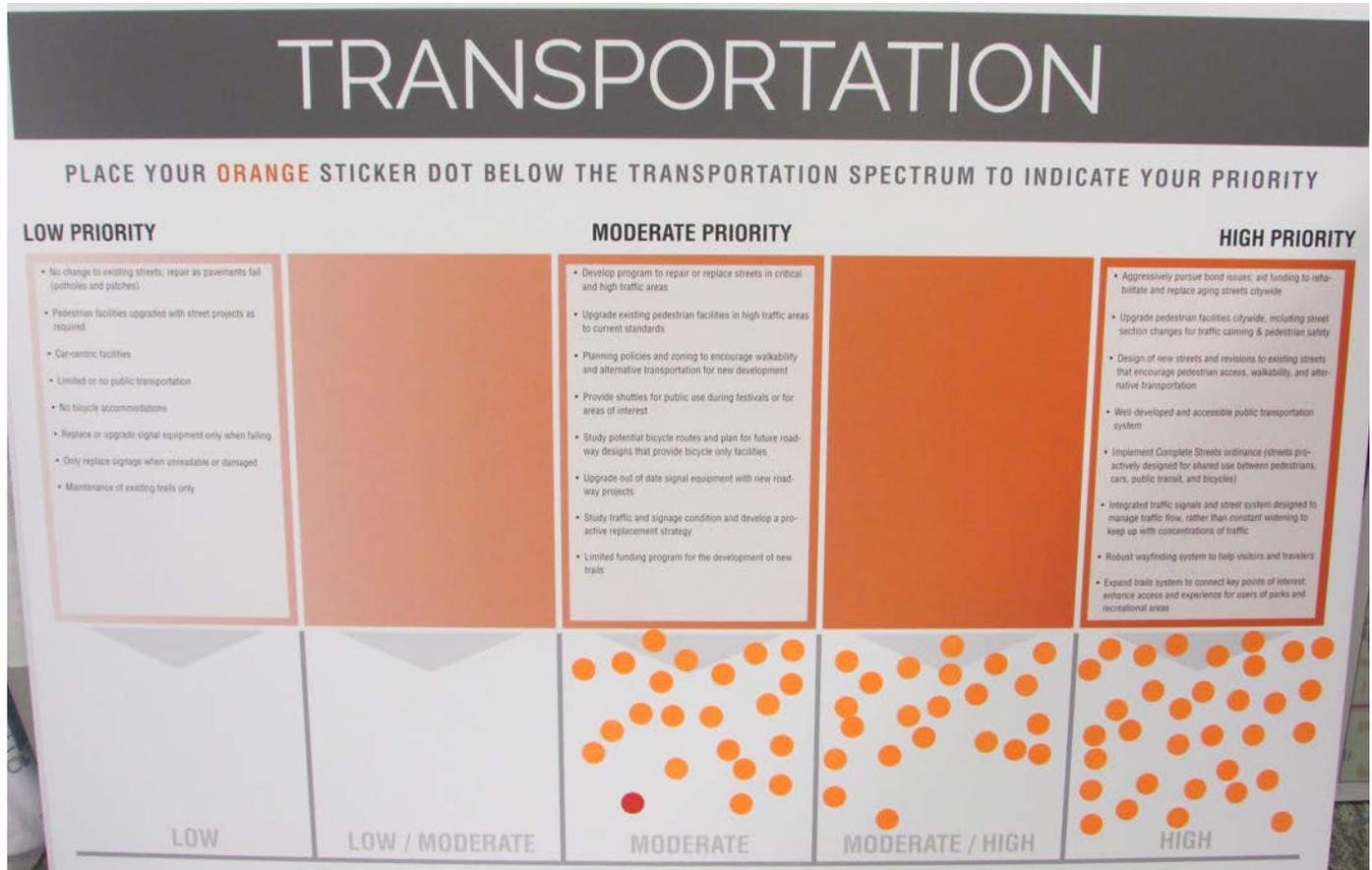
- Moderately landscaped and enhanced gateways are located at primary city entries
- Entry corridors into the city include pedestrian access (sidewalks) and basic streetscape treatments
- Stabilize and increase investment in downtown; basic aesthetic treatments to public spaces in downtown
- Establish a committee to represent both NSU and the City to focus on joint efforts to benefit the City and the University
- Encourage sidewalk construction to promote walkability along corridors with no pedestrian access
- Create a brand and marketing campaign citywide, to include a new logo reflective of the community's history, culture, and values
- Create a wayfinding plan to develop a hierarchy of signage
- Minimal architectural design standards for materials and color in specialized areas of town

HIGH PRIORITY

- Architectural, landscaped gateways at primary entries, with smaller gateways to denote special areas of town
- Major corridors into the city include pedestrian access, street trees, lighting, and banners to reflect special events and community pride
- Incentivize small businesses (attraction and retention) in downtown; enhanced treatment of public spaces such as streetscapes, plazas, parks, and public art
- Create a joint leadership task force comprised of leadership from the City and NSU to focus on recruitment and retention of students and young professionals
- Establish a comprehensive program to build a sidewalk network to connect downtown to surrounding areas
- Create brands and logos/signage for various districts within the city, while continuing to market the citywide brand
- Plan and implement a wayfinding program to direct residents and visitors to various community amenities
- Establish architectural guidelines which are specific to individual districts or types of development

APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- No change to existing streets; repair as pavements fail (potholes and patches)
- Pedestrian facilities upgraded with street projects as required
- Car-centric facilities
- Limited or no public transportation
- No bicycle accommodations
- Replace or upgrade signal equipment only when failing
- Only replace signage when unreadable or damaged
- Maintenance of existing trails only

MODERATE PRIORITY

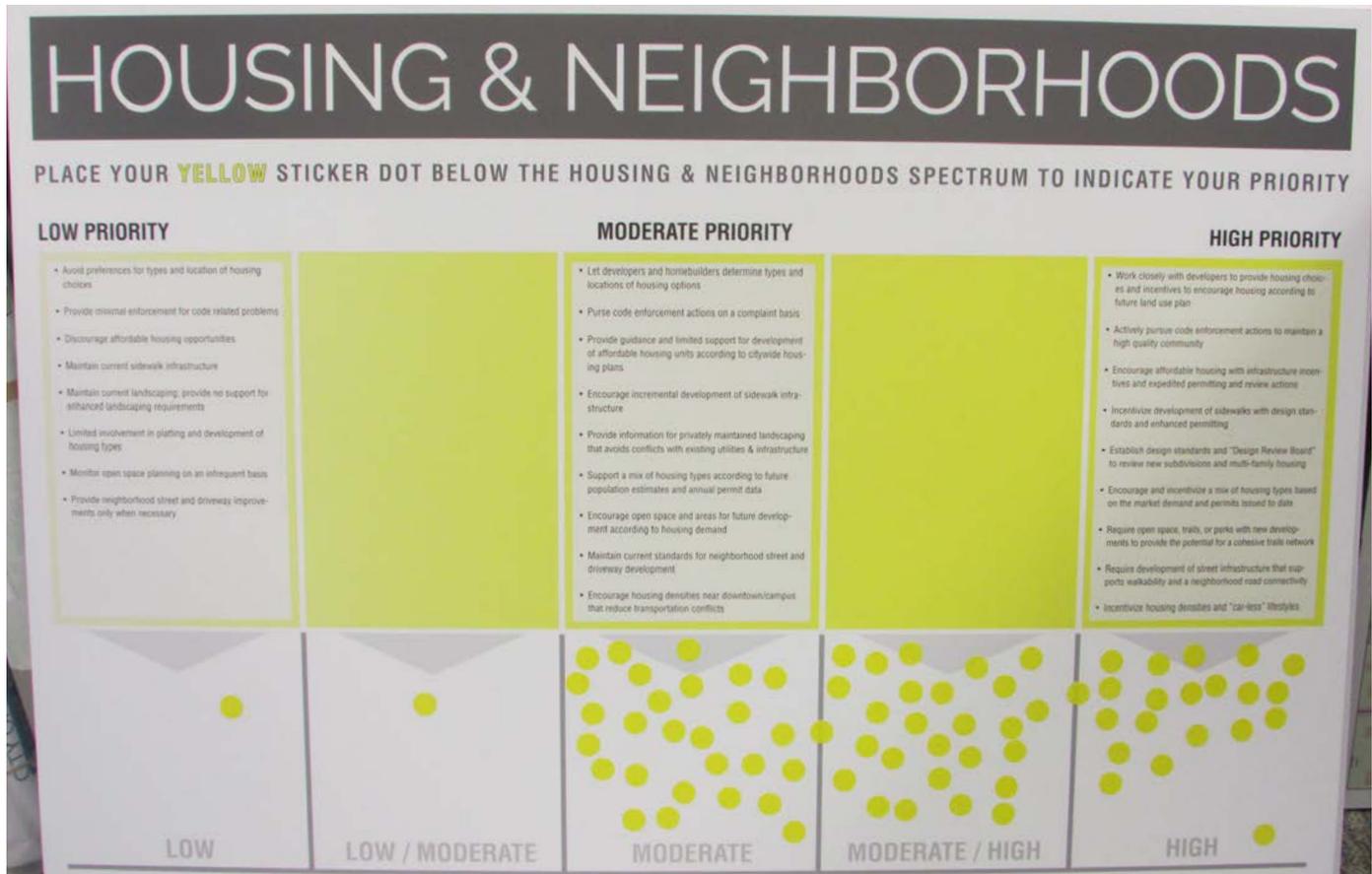
- Develop program to repair or replace streets in critical and high traffic areas
- Upgrade existing pedestrian facilities in high traffic areas to current standards
- Planning policies and zoning to encourage walkability and alternative transportation for new development
- Provide shuttles for public use during festivals or for areas of interest
- Study potential bicycle routes and plan for future roadway designs that provide bicycle only facilities
- Upgrade out of date signal equipment with new roadway projects
- Study traffic and signage condition and develop a proactive replacement strategy
- Limited funding program for the development of new trails

HIGH PRIORITY

- Aggressively pursue bond issues; aid funding to rehabilitate and replace aging streets citywide
- Upgrade pedestrian facilities citywide, including street section changes for traffic calming & pedestrian safety
- Design of new streets and revisions to existing streets that encourage pedestrian access, walkability, and alternative transportation
- Well-developed and accessible public transportation system
- Implement Complete Streets ordinance (streets proactively designed for shared use between pedestrians, cars, public transit, and bicycles)
- Integrated traffic signals and street system designed to manage traffic flow, rather than constant widening to keep up with concentrations of traffic
- Robust wayfinding system to help visitors and travelers
- Expand trails system to connect key points of interest; enhance access and experience for users of parks and recreational areas

APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- Avoid preferences for types and location of housing choices
- Provide minimal enforcement for code related problems
- Discourage affordable housing opportunities
- Maintain current sidewalk infrastructure
- Maintain current landscaping; provide no support for enhanced landscaping requirements
- Limited involvement in platting and development of housing types
- Monitor open space planning on an infrequent basis
- Provide neighborhood street and driveway improvements only when necessary

Moderate Priority

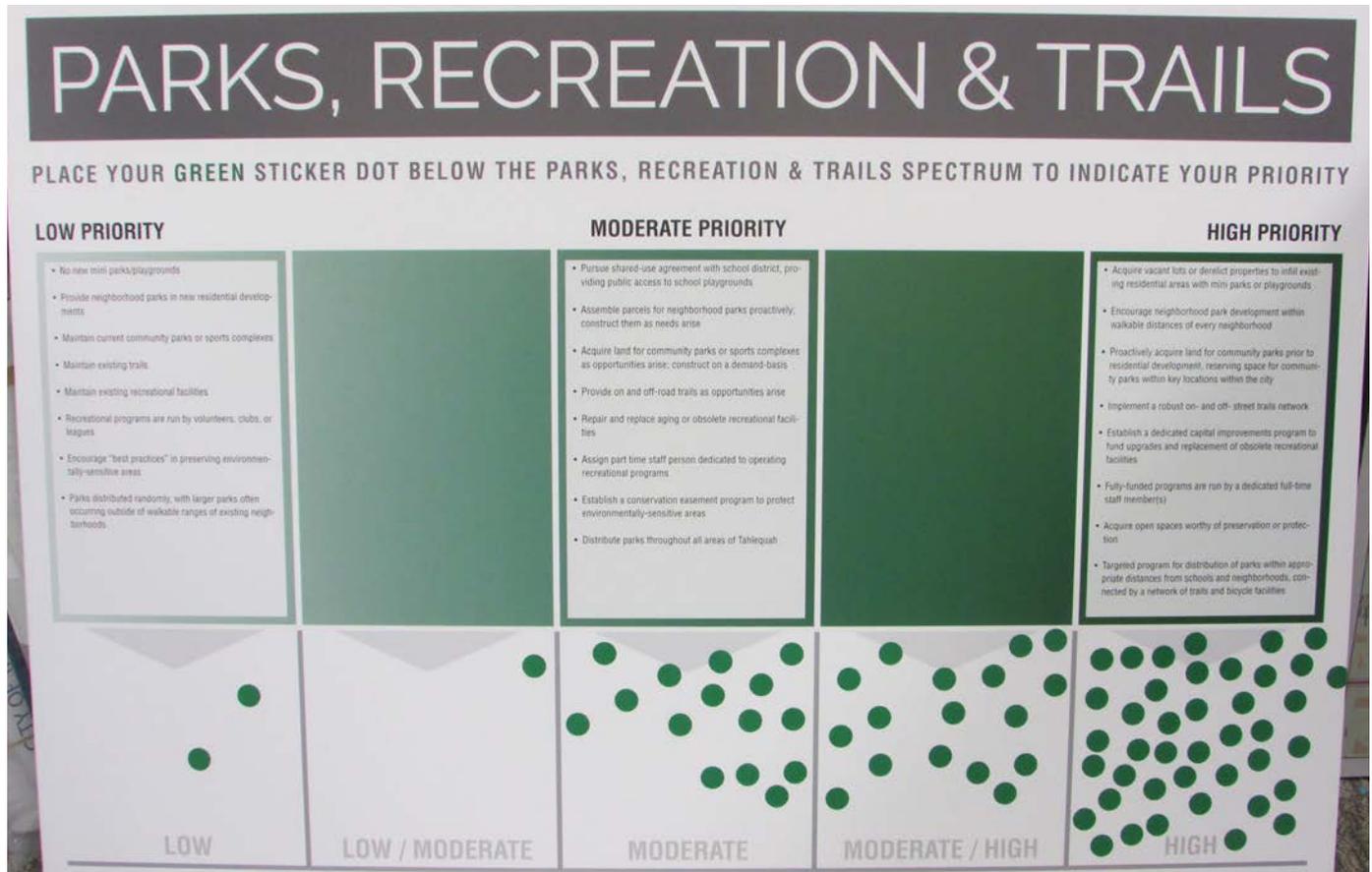
- Let developers and homebuilders determine types and locations of housing options
- Purse code enforcement actions on a complaint basis
- Provide guidance and limited support for development of affordable housing units according to citywide housing plans
- Encourage incremental development of sidewalk infrastructure
- Provide information for privately maintained landscaping that avoids conflicts with existing utilities & infrastructure
- Support a mix of housing types according to future population estimates and annual permit data
- Encourage open space and areas for future development according to housing demand
- Maintain current standards for neighborhood street and driveway development
- Encourage housing densities near downtown/campus that reduce transportation conflicts

High Priority

- Work closely with developers to provide housing choices and incentives to encourage housing according to future land use plan
- Actively pursue code enforcement actions to maintain a high quality community
- Encourage affordable housing with infrastructure incentives and expedited permitting and review actions
- Incentivize development of sidewalks with design standards and enhanced permitting
- Establish design standards and "Design Review Board" to review new subdivisions and multi-family housing
- Encourage and incentivize a mix of housing types based on the market demand and permits issued to date
- Require open space, trails, or parks with new developments to provide the potential for a cohesive trails network
- Require development of street infrastructure that supports walkability and a neighborhood road connectivity
- Incentivize housing densities and "car-less" lifestyles

APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- No new mini parks/playgrounds
- Provide neighborhood parks in new residential developments
- Maintain current community parks or sports complexes
- Maintain existing trails
- Maintain existing recreational facilities
- Recreational programs are run by volunteers, clubs, or leagues
- Encourage "best practices" in preserving environmentally-sensitive areas
- Parks distributed randomly, with larger parks often occurring outside of walkable ranges of existing neighborhoods

MODERATE PRIORITY

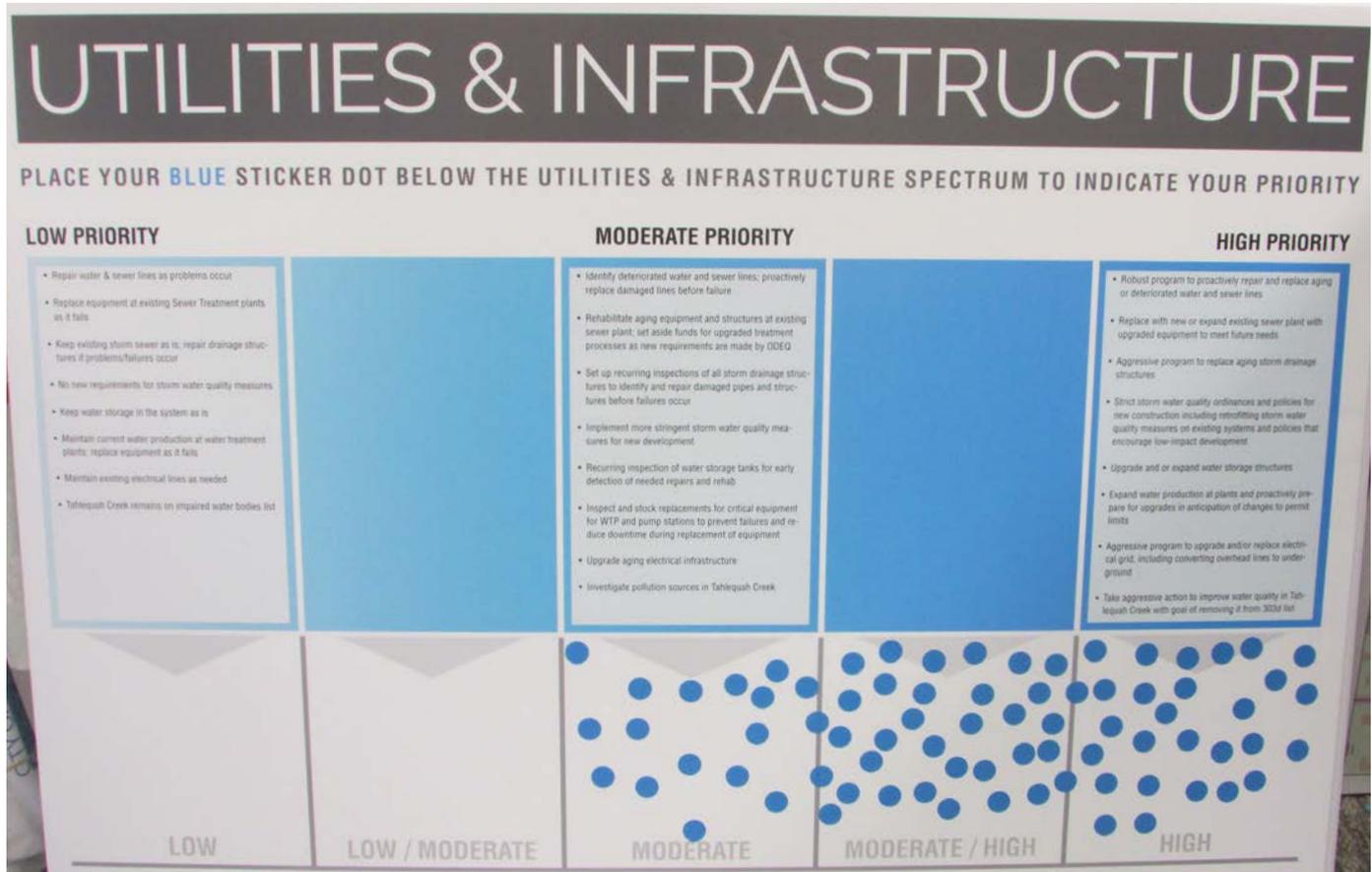
- Pursue shared-use agreement with school district, providing public access to school playgrounds
- Assemble parcels for neighborhood parks proactively; construct them as needs arise
- Acquire land for community parks or sports complexes as opportunities arise; construct on a demand-basis
- Provide on and off-road trails as opportunities arise
- Repair and replace aging or obsolete recreational facilities
- Assign part time staff person dedicated to operating recreational programs
- Establish a conservation easement program to protect environmentally-sensitive areas
- Distribute parks throughout all areas of Tahlequah

HIGH PRIORITY

- Acquire vacant lots or derelict properties to infill existing residential areas with mini parks or playgrounds
- Encourage neighborhood park development within walkable distances of every neighborhood
- Proactively acquire land for community parks prior to residential development, reserving space for community parks within key locations within the city
- Implement a robust on- and off- street trails network
- Establish a dedicated capital improvements program to fund upgrades and replacement of obsolete recreational facilities
- Fully-funded programs are run by a dedicated full-time staff member(s)
- Acquire open spaces worthy of preservation or protection
- Targeted program for distribution of parks within appropriate distances from schools and neighborhoods, connected by a network of trails and bicycle facilities

APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- Repair water & sewer lines as problems occur
- Replace equipment at existing Sewer Treatment plants as it fails
- Keep existing storm sewer as is; repair drainage structures if problems/failures occur
- No new requirements for storm water quality measures
- Keep water storage in the system as is
- Maintain current water production at water treatment plants; replace equipment as it fails
- Maintain existing electrical lines as needed
- Tahlequah Creek remains on impaired water bodies list

MODERATE PRIORITY

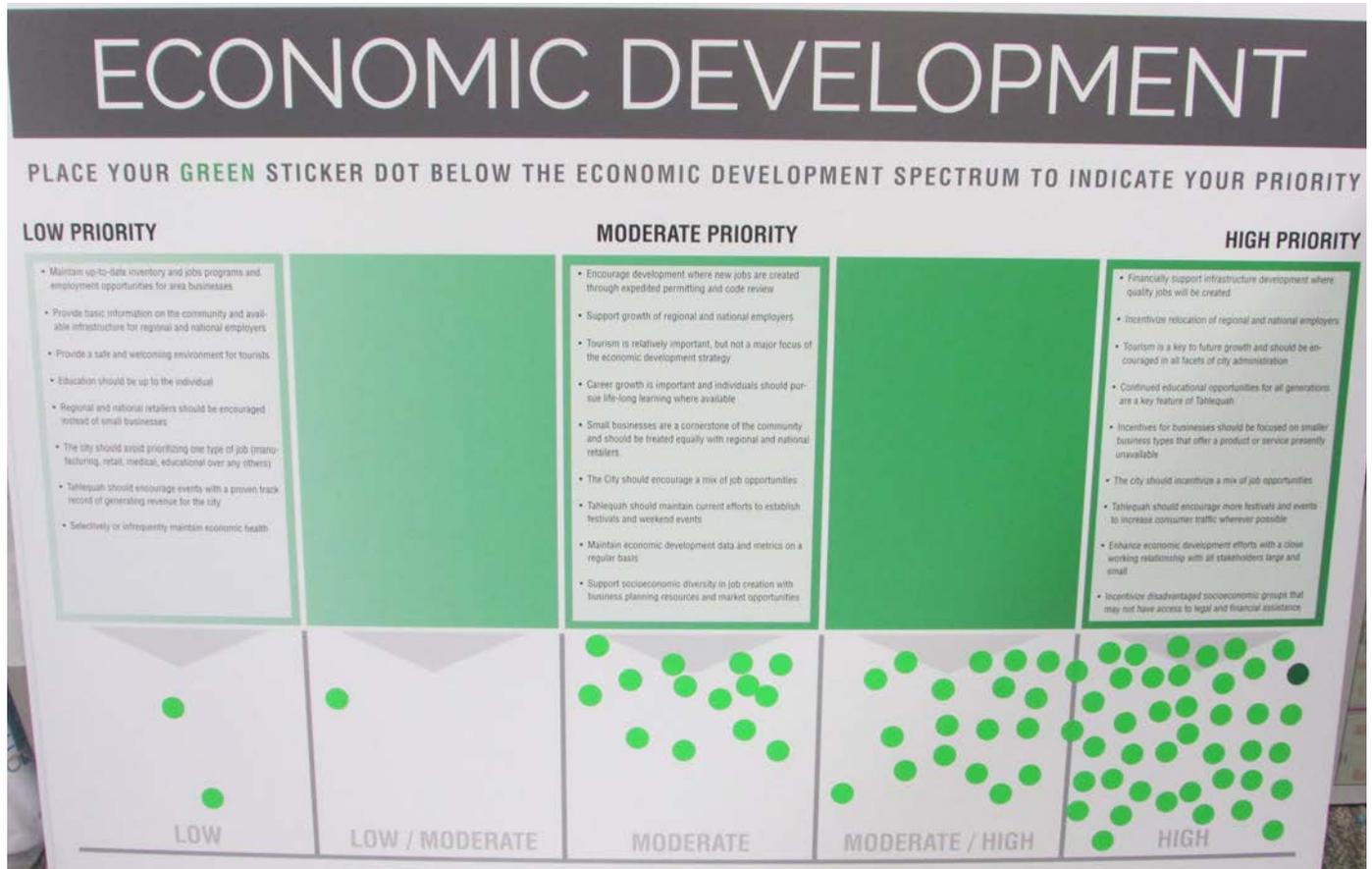
- Identify deteriorated water and sewer lines; proactively replace damaged lines before failure
- Rehabilitate aging equipment and structures at existing sewer plant; set aside funds for upgraded treatment processes as new requirements are made by ODEQ
- Set up recurring inspections of all storm drainage structures to identify and repair damaged pipes and structures before failures occur
- Implement more stringent storm water quality measures for new development
- Recurring inspection of water storage tanks for early detection of needed repairs and rehab
- Inspect and stock replacements for critical equipment for WTP and pump stations to prevent failures and reduce downtime during replacement of equipment
- Upgrade aging electrical infrastructure
- Investigate pollution sources in Tahlequah Creek

HIGH PRIORITY

- Robust program to proactively repair and replace aging or deteriorated water and sewer lines
- Replace with new or expand existing sewer plant with upgraded equipment to meet future needs
- Aggressive program to replace aging storm drainage structures
- Strict storm water quality ordinances and policies for new construction including retrofitting storm water quality measures on existing systems and policies that encourage low-impact development
- Upgrade and or expand water storage structures
- Expand water production at plants and proactively prepare for upgrades in anticipation of changes to permit limits
- Aggressive program to upgrade and/or replace electrical grid, including converting overhead lines to underground
- Take aggressive action to improve water quality in Tahlequah Creek with goal of removing it from 303d list

APPENDIX E

PRIORITY SPECTRUM RESULTS



LOW PRIORITY

- Maintain up-to-date inventory and jobs programs and employment opportunities for area businesses
- Provide basic information on the community and available infrastructure for regional and national employers
- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for tourists
- Education should be up to the individual
- Regional and national retailers should be encouraged instead of small businesses
- The city should avoid prioritizing one type of job (manufacturing, retail, medical, educational over any others)
- Tahlequah should encourage events with a proven track record of generating revenue for the city
- Selectively or infrequently maintain economic health data

MODERATE PRIORITY

- Encourage development where new jobs are created through expedited permitting and code review
- Support growth of regional and national employers
- Tourism is relatively important, but not a major focus of the economic development strategy
- Career growth is important and individuals should pursue life-long learning where available
- Small businesses are a cornerstone of the community and should be treated equally with regional and national retailers
- The City should encourage a mix of job opportunities
- Tahlequah should maintain current efforts to establish festivals and weekend events
- Maintain economic development data and metrics on a regular basis
- Support socioeconomic diversity in job creation with business planning resources and market opportunities

HIGH PRIORITY

- Financially support infrastructure development where quality jobs will be created
- Incentivize relocation of regional and national employers
- Tourism is a key to future growth and should be encouraged in all facets of city administration
- Continued educational opportunities for all generations are a key feature of Tahlequah
- Incentives for businesses should be focused on smaller business types that offer a product or service presently unavailable
- The city should incentivize a mix of job opportunities
- Tahlequah should encourage more festivals and events to increase consumer traffic wherever possible
- Enhance economic development efforts with a close working relationship with all stakeholders large and small
- Incentivize disadvantaged socioeconomic groups that may not have access to legal and financial assistance



TAHLEQUAH

OKLAHOMA