

A large wooden windmill sculpture stands in a grassy park. The windmill has a tall, lattice-like wooden tower and a circular head with many thin, silver-colored blades. A large, triangular sign is attached to the side of the tower, featuring the word "HERITAGE" and some smaller text. In the background, there is a brick building, a playground, and an American flag. The sky is clear and blue.

City of Harrah Comprehensive Plan

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Section 1:

Community Snapshot

Introduction

The purpose of this community snapshot is to understand Harrah's background and context. This helps to identify the community's values, needs, and desires, all of which affect future growth and development. This section includes discussion of:

- City History
- Local Planning
- Demographics
- Housing Characteristics
- Economics



City History

The City of Harrah has a 2016 population of 5,714 residents (*U.S. Census American Community Survey*) and includes about 12.75 square miles located on the southeast edge of Oklahoma County. Present day Harrah was settled by Louis Navarre, a Potawatomi, in the early 1870s. E.W. Sweeney began operating a ferry and a bridge in the 1890s, which opened the area to travel and commerce. As the area's suitability for agriculture was realized, Frank Harrah purchased 40 acres from Louis Navarre in 1898, which he promoted as the new City of Harrah; the community incorporated in 1908.

The community's agricultural success led to the development of roads and a railroad stop, and, in 1923, the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company selected Harrah for an electric generating station; it remains a source of power and jobs for Harrah to this day. As the suburbs of Oklahoma City grew closer to Harrah in the 1950s, an effort was made to revive Harrah's unique history; the downtown was brought back from near abandonment, and local farms and orchards have once again become a source of agriculture and tourism.

Harrah has been known for its school system since the early 1900s, a factor that still attracts families to the City. Most recently, the City has begun prioritizing quality of life factors such as parks and coordinates with civic organizations and the historical society to organize annual events.

(Oklahoma Historical Society)

Local Planning

Previous planning efforts lay the foundation for future plans. This section provides an overview of the two existing planning documents for Harrah today – the Comprehensive Plan 2010 and the “Help Harrah Happen” Community Survey.

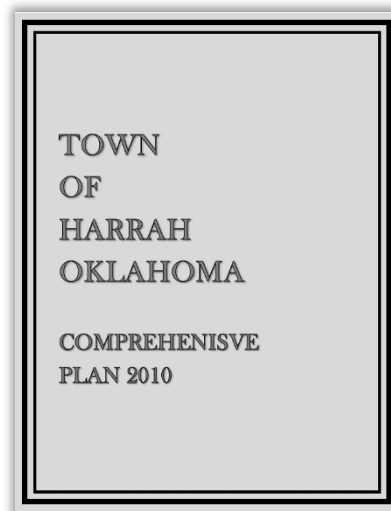
Comprehensive Plan 2010

In the early 1990s, the Town of Harrah staff prepared its “Comprehensive Plan 2010”, intended to be a long-range plan through the target year 2010. The 157-page document provides an in-depth look at existing factors and provides recommendations and policies related to land use, housing, public facilities, and public utilities.

The following is an excerpt of some of the policies recommended in the plan, many of which are similar to the recommendations of this plan; note that this is not an all-inclusive list.

Land Use Policies

1. Provide for a diversity of residential, industrial, commercial, educational and recreational uses which will contribute to the economic base and stability of the community by appealing to a wide socio-economic population range.
2. Provide policies which will lead to orderly growth and avoid the problems frequently caused by high density residential development and an oversupply of commercial development.
3. Encourage quality land uses and activities which are integrated into the image of the planning area.
4. Encourage residential, commercial and industrial development in appropriate and adequate areas of the planning area.



Commercial Policies

1. Encourage compatibility of land uses by reducing the conflict between commercial and less intense uses. Especially for residential by requiring commercial uses to screen their property either by opaque fencing or landscaping, and through proper zoning of compatible land uses.
2. Develop a further sense of community by initiating effective signal and sign control. Sign control or sign uniformity as to size, placement and design can reduce driver confusion and improve safety of the public.

Developmental Policies

1. Encourage the development of vacant land areas within the city limits, which are presently served by public utilities and facilities, with uses that are compatible with existing land uses.
2. Identify, recognize and utilize the physical characteristics and natural features of the planning area to determine suitability of areas for development and to protect the public health, safety and welfare.
3. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural resources and amenities of the planning area.
4. After city in-fill has occurred, facilitate the systematic urbanization of land by sequentially providing utilities and public services.

Public Facility and Utility Policies

1. Provide an adequate supply of potable water at reasonable cost to all areas of the community experiencing or planned for urban development.
2. Provide adequate facilities to protect the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the planning area.
3. Encourage quality public services and facilities that are properly maintained, cost effective and respond to the needs of the planning area and its inhabitants.
4. Encourage coordination between community planners, educational administrators and Board of Education members on all applicable planning matters.

“Help Harrah Happen” Community Survey

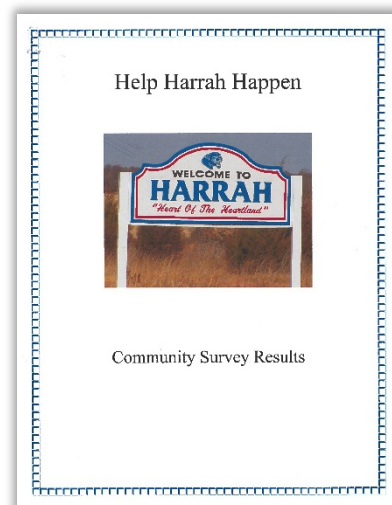
In 2006, the Oklahoma State University Extension Service conducted a public opinion survey to measure the attitude and preferences of Harrah-area residents regarding their community. The survey was mailed to 2,907 residents; 819 responses were received. Of those who participated, 67% were residents of the City.

Overall, 67% or more of participants reported being satisfied with the following municipal services:

- Road quality and maintenance,
- Libraries and schools,
- Emergency services, and
- Parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

It is also important to note that at least 33% of participants reported being dissatisfied with the following services:

- Shopping, and
- City government.



The following tables provide a summary of the survey results pertaining to topics addressed in this 2018 Regional Comprehensive Plan.

General Preferences:

| | Very or Somewhat Appealing | Somewhat or Very Unappealing |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Harrah as a place to live | 73.6% | 14.1% |
| City's location relative to services | 63.0% | 29.6% |
| Community spirit | 65.3% | 20.7% |
| Cleanliness | 76.9% | 27.7% |
| Parks, recreational facilities, and open space | 89.1% | 5.2% |
| Affordable places to live | 85.2% | 9.6% |
| Services for seniors and adults | 50.5% | 8.7% |
| Overall quality of life | 87.2% | 6.6% |
| Adequate growth management | 82.8% | 8.0% |
| More municipal services | 72.6% | 15.5% |

| | Very or Somewhat Appealing | Somewhat or Very Unappealing |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Revitalized Downtown area | 82.5% | 11.5% |
| More parks | 57.4% | 34.7% |
| More affordable housing | 66.8% | 24.8% |
| More retail | 84.5% | 10.5% |
| Sprawl as an issue | 78.9% | 9.6% |
| Urbanization/overcrowding | 82.6% | 9.6% |
| Maintaining infrastructure | 87.5% | 4.3% |
| Business growth | 88.4% | 6.2% |
| Recreational facilities | 83.0% | 12.2% |
| Quality of Downtown Business District | 88.3% | 6.9% |
| Services for seniors | 78.8% | 5.3% |
| Maintain cost of living | 92.5% | 2.8% |

Land Use:

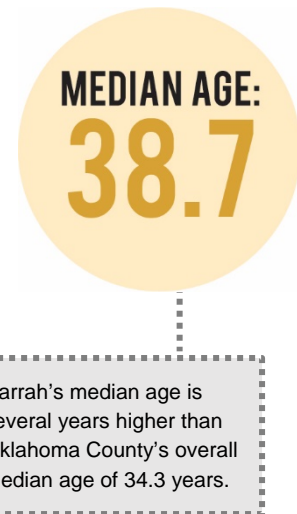
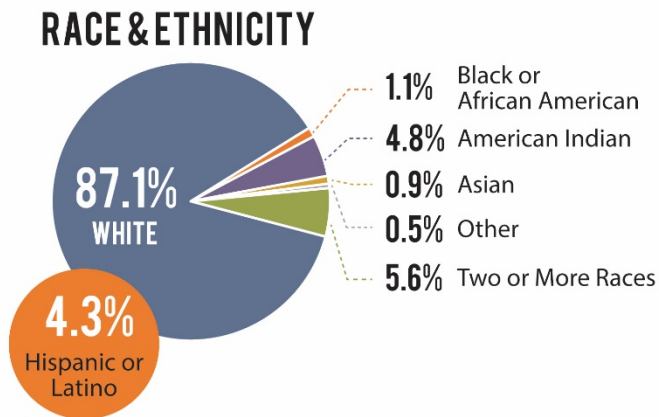
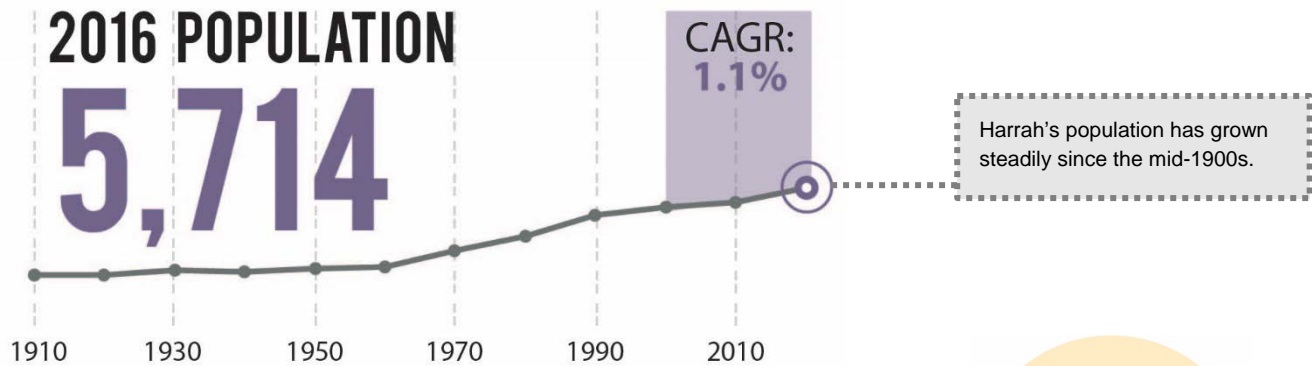
| | Very or Somewhat Satisfied | Somewhat or Very Dissatisfied |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Heavy industry | 37% | 52.5% |
| Light industry | 71.8% | 21.7% |
| Office | 76.9% | 15.6% |
| Residential | 83.4% | 10.2% |
| Local retail | 88.9% | 6.6% |
| Chain retail | 76.7% | 17.8% |
| Restaurants | 91.2% | 5.2% |
| Family entertainment | 84% | 11.6% |
| Tech | 68.6% | 23.4% |
| Medical | 88.7% | 5.6% |

Infrastructure and Services:

| | Very or Somewhat Satisfied | Somewhat or Very Dissatisfied |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Roads (quality and maintenance) | 68.3% | 27.3% |
| Lighting | 65.0% | 25.2% |
| Land planning | 46.6% | 28.8% |
| Senior services | 54.8% | 9.0% |
| Parks, recreation, and trails | 82.5% | 8.9% |
| Water | 41.8% | 16.0% |
| Wastewater | 39.8% | 13.9% |
| Of those dissatisfied, willing to pay user fees to improve services | Yes: 24.7% | No: 35.4% |

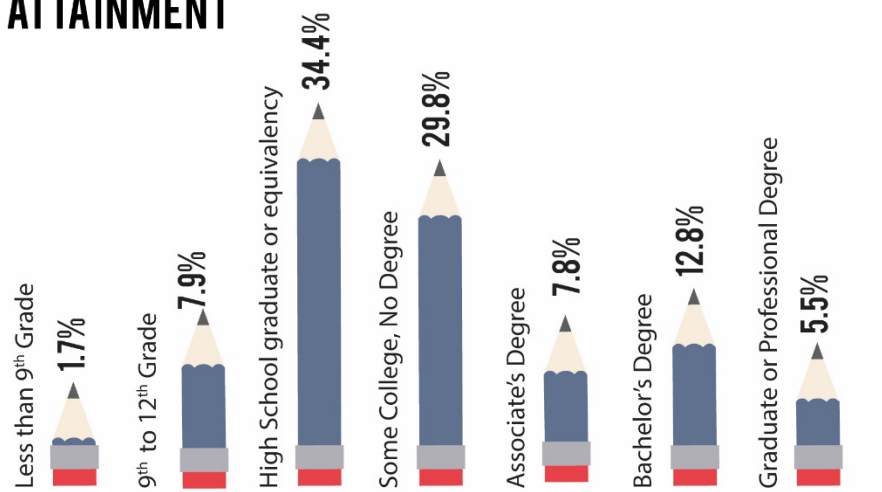
Demographics

Understanding population characteristics can help Harrah accommodate current and future needs with a higher degree of efficiency and accuracy. The following data reflects the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey.



Educational attainment can be indicative of the jobs, amenities, and services that are necessary and desirable to a community.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



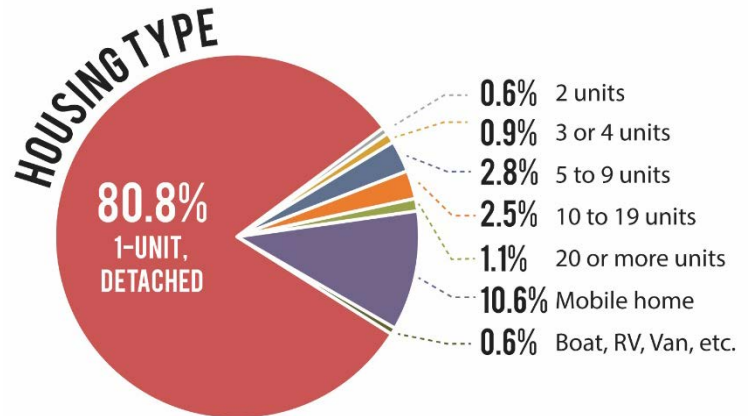
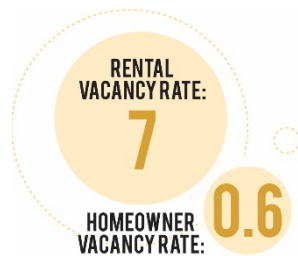
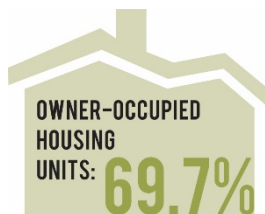
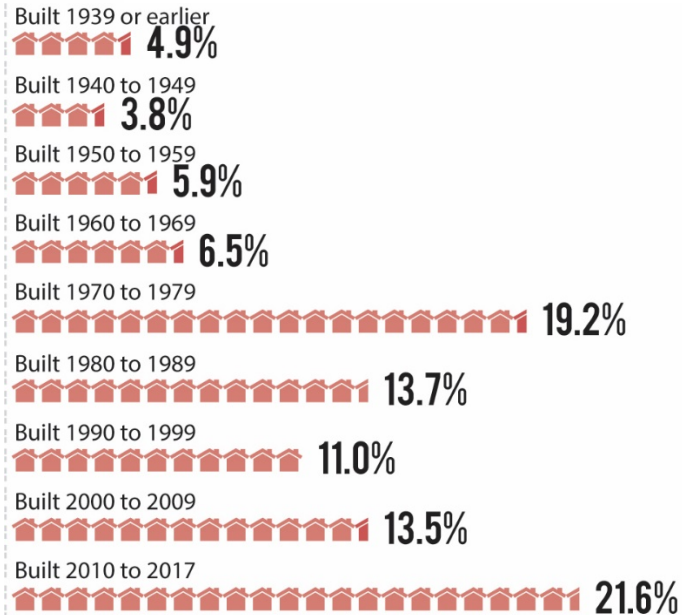
Housing Characteristics

Housing factors, such as age, type, occupancy rate, and value, are very important factors for communities to consider when planning for the future. The following data reflects the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey and the City's residential building permits.

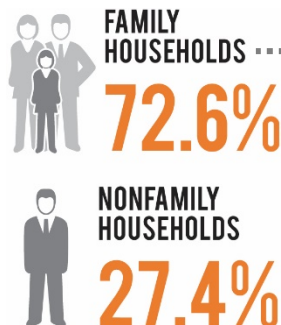
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

2,713

The age of the City's housing stock is important because housing units and neighborhoods inevitably deteriorate over time. Generally, new housing is more expensive and becomes less expensive as it ages, so a range of housing age is very important in maintaining a housing market that accommodates a range of incomes. A steady cycle of housing also ensures that neighborhoods age at different times.



The median home value in Harrah is \$145,300 compared to \$137,500 across Oklahoma County.

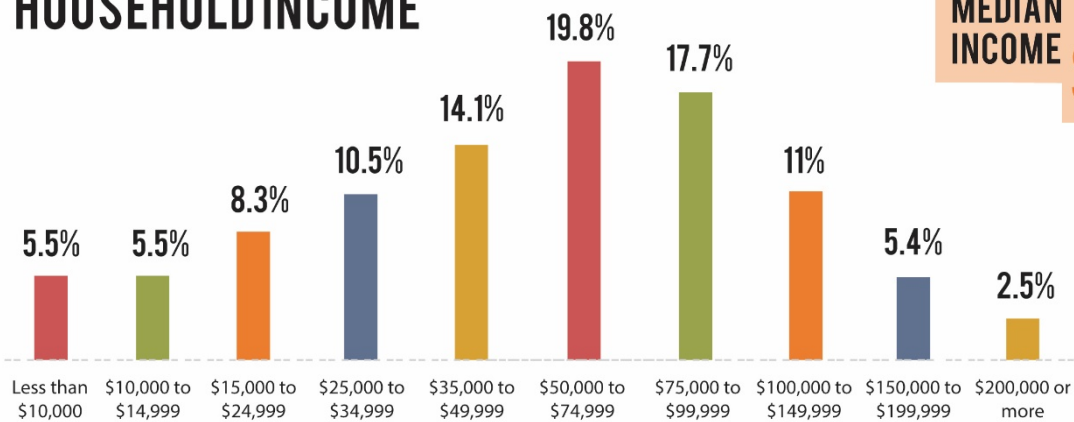


Family households are those with two or more related people living together, while nonfamily households are those with unrelated occupants.

Economics

Economic conditions are another important element of a baseline assessment, as they can shed light on a community's buying power, tax base, preferences for land uses, and likelihood of needing various social services. The following data reflects the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$56,995

The median household income in Harrah is \$56,995 compared to \$48,987 across Oklahoma County.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:



The unemployment rate in Harrah is 4.6% compared to 5.6% across Oklahoma County.



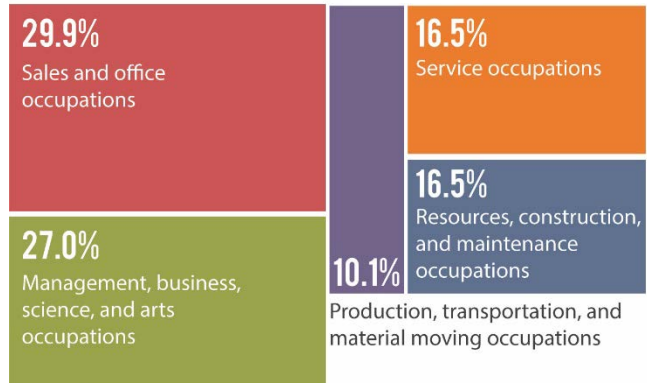
32.2
MINUTES

is the average commute time to work.

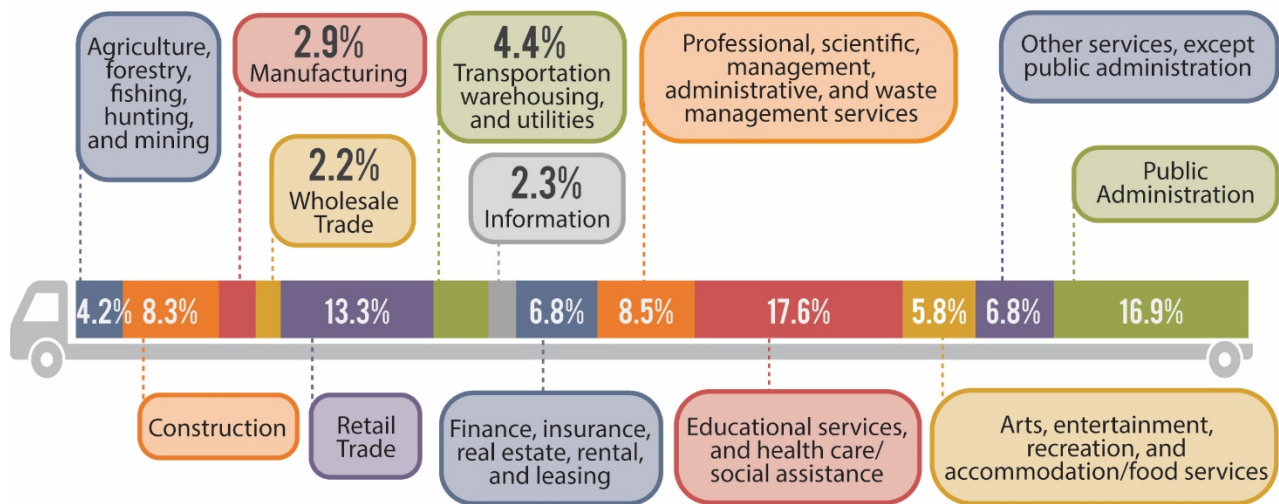
The average commute time in Harrah is 32.2 minutes compared to 20.9 minutes across Oklahoma County.

OCCUPATIONS

"Occupation" describes the particular job roles held by employed members of the community regardless of whether such jobs are located within the community.



INDUSTRIES



The term "industry" describes the grouping of similar economic activities. It is a measure of the distribution of employment sectors within a community.

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Section 2:

Vision

Introduction

A fundamental component of the comprehensive planning process involves identifying the vision of the community. The vision is the road map that guides decisions within the community and serves as the basis for the Plan's recommendations. Through the Plan, the community's vision guides local leaders and City Staff to determine whether decisions are ultimately in conformance with Harrah's long-term vision as determined by its residents. Harrah's vision for the future is identified through public input and through the previously discussed planning context in which the City exists.

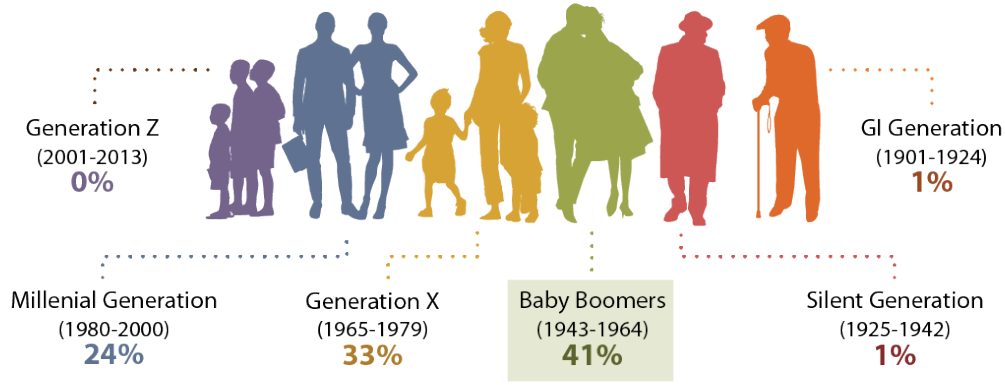
Public Input

In order for a comprehensive plan to be effective, it must be representative of the community. Ensuring that a plan represents the community's needs, desires, and vision for the future, is done by soliciting input from the project at every step of the planning process. In Harrah, this included an online survey and Advisory Committee; these elements are outlined in the remainder of this section.

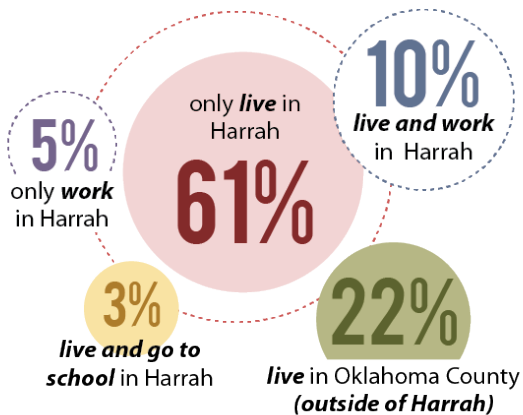
Online Survey

An online survey was posted to solicit public input from August to September 2017. During that period, 147 participants responded to the survey. The survey asked a range of questions about backgrounds, preferences, concerns, needs, and land uses.

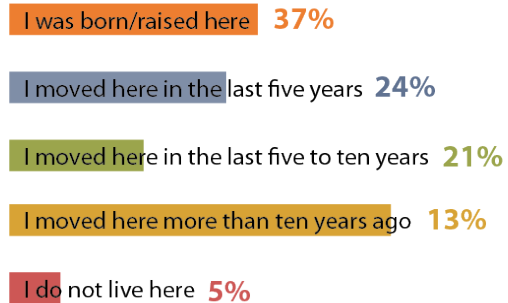
WHAT GENERATION ARE YOU A MEMBER OF?



WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOU?



HOW DID YOU COME TO LIVE HERE?



WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS?

- ✓ Natural amenities/rural atmosphere
- ✓ Location (proximity to OKC)
- ✓ Quality of life/sense of community
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Housing choices

76%
Good or Excellent

21%
Fair

3%
Poor or Other/No Opinion

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF LIFE?



QUALITY OR TYPE OF NONRESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (RETAIL, OFFICE, COMMERCIAL, ETC.)



is both the **greatest short-term** (1 to 3 years)
and long-term concern (5+ years) for
residents.

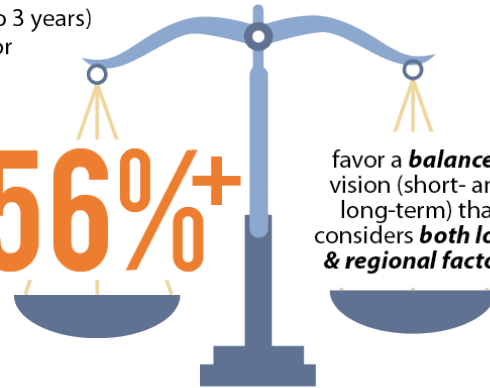
55%+

favor housing options,
employment, amenities,
and services for **families**.



56%+

favor a **balanced**
vision (short- and
long-term) that
considers **both local
& regional factors**



of households do
less than half
of their shopping
locally.



30%

would prefer to drive
less to buy goods
and services.



favor traditional **suburban-style
development** and estate homes,
ranches or ranchettes
(low density, single family).

65%+

favor the following **local and
regional** land uses:



60%

said some areas need
to be **redeveloped**.

favor **higher development
standards** even if it raises
the cost of development



Advisory Committee Meetings

October 26, 2017 | Project Kick-Off

The comprehensive planning consultants met with Harrah's Advisory Committee in October 2017 to formally kick off the City's comprehensive planning process. The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Introduce the Committee members and project consultants;
- Introduce the scope and purpose of the EOCP regional planning process and the comprehensive planning process;
- Present preliminary findings about the City's demographics;
- Review online survey results;
- Conduct a visioning exercise; and
- Conduct a discussion and facilitate an exercise regarding existing and future land uses in the City.



During the visioning and land use exercises, the Advisory Committee was asked questions intended to identify the values, needs, and desires of the community as well as where future development could or should occur. The Committee was given stickers corresponding to the City's existing land uses and a copy of the existing land use map. Members were asked to place the land use stickers on the map where they felt the corresponding uses would be appropriate or necessary in the future.

WHERE COULD OR SHOULD FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OCCUR?

Northwest:

Expansion of existing park

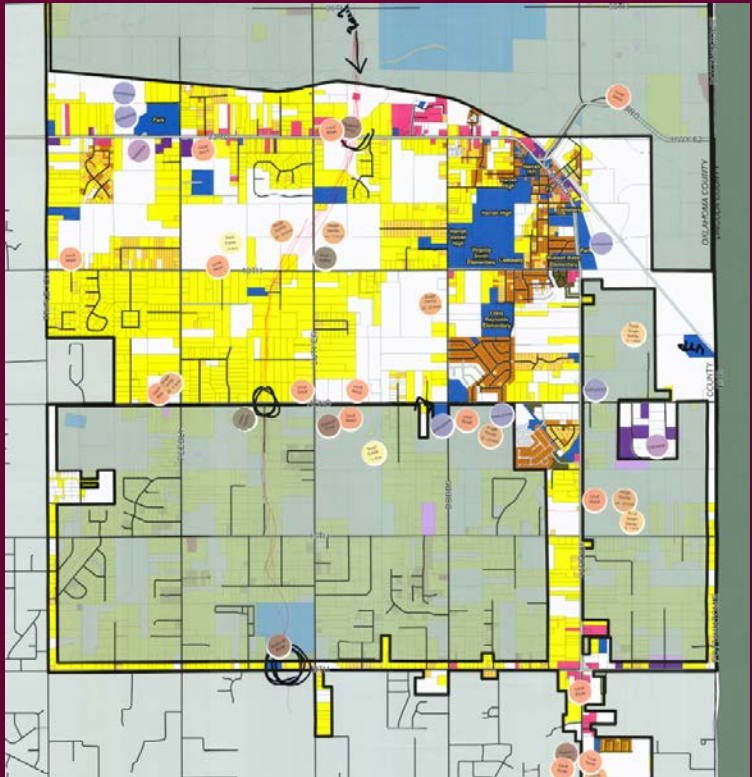
Turnpike:

Local and Regional Retail/Office/
Commercial along interchanges

Section line roads:

Local Retail/Office/Commercial

Single Family Residential infill around
existing neighborhoods



Advisory Committee Visioning Exercise



WHAT WORDS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY?

"Small town" is subjective


Tight-knit community; community events

Rural with cattle fields, but with amenities

Close to big city, enough amenities; bedroom community

Improving schools

Need an amenity, distinct charm, not too much uniqueness, don't want too strict or inflexible design standards



WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

Limited water and sewer infrastructure

Lack of commercial business space to rent; have to build it, not friendly to startups

Roads (maintenance), asphalt on sections; small maintenance budget

State and federal regulations; water supply and water rights

School quality

Lack of regulations in county "donut hole", state restrictions on annexation; no support for voluntary annexation



WHAT IS YOUR VISION?

Infill, increase density in the core

Provide services

Maintain rural feel on edges

Self-sustaining bedroom community

Destination for families

Take advantage of turnpike/access

Infill with micro-communities, not big-box

Walkable

Rural with amenities/services, childcare, micro parks, activities for children and teens, density in the core, high quality development and consistency of development



WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY'S VALUES?

Schools

Rural atmosphere

Families – young/growing

Outdoor activities and sports facilities

Fiscally and socially conservative

February 22, 2018 | Draft Review

The consultant team met with the Advisory Committee again in February 2018 to review and discuss a draft of the plan document. The Advisory Committee members provided important feedback and direction for revising the draft, which resulted in the final document for City Council consideration. Key topics discussed at the meeting included the following:

- Potential redevelopment of the former Cookieland Girl Scout Camp,
- Strong support for the proposed regional trail network,
- The importance of frontage roads along the new turnpike, and
- A desire for a “health and wellness” focus in the City, both to improve quality of life and to attract industry.



Focus Areas

Focus Areas are the specific topics that have emerged from the community's input. The topics described below represent the community's top goals for the City's future. To ensure that the recommendations further the community's interests, each recommendation references at least one Focus Area.



Fiscally Responsible

With limited resources and fiscally-conservative values, it is important to Harrah to ensure that City investments are well-planned and strategic to maximize results.



Sense of Community and Identity

Harrah's residents would like to maintain and enhance the existing sense of community, and to establish a more distinct community identity.



Economic Development

Economic development is important for several reasons – primarily providing employment and tax revenue to fund infrastructure improvements. The future Turnpike and Downtown are great economic development opportunities for the City.



Quality of Life

In Harrah, the term “quality of life” refers to providing recreational amenities, health and wellness opportunities, activities for children, housing variety, and local shopping/service amenities.



Rural Character

Maintaining the City's existing rural character is important to the community. This is important to consider when balancing economic development.

Section 3:

Land Use

Introduction

Many factors impact where and how land is developed in a community. These factors include how much land is developable, existing land uses and their distributions, and the community's needs and desires pertaining to housing, jobs, and amenities. Under the broad context of land use, this section discusses:

- Physical Constraints
- Existing Land Use
- Future Land Use
- Land Use Recommendations



Physical Constraints

Several physical factors, both natural and constructed, impact how the City can grow and develop. These factors include the City limits, bodies of water and floodplains, distribution of natural resources, and locations of major transportation networks.

Natural Constraints

River and Floodplain

The North Canadian River flows along the northern boundary of Harrah, cutting through the eastern edge City to the east of Downtown. Most of Harrah is not impacted by the location of the River, though there is a small portion of land within the City limits that is cut off from the rest of the City.

As a result of the North Canadian River's winding path, Harrah has a large amount of floodplain throughout the City limits; 1,278 acres are designated as floodplain by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Much of this land runs north-south through the middle of the City and along the far eastern section of the City following the North Canadian River. This is important because while floodplains can limit the availability of developable land, they can also serve as excellent spaces for parks, trails, or natural areas.

Topography

Corresponding with the floodplain that runs through the City, Harrah has a high point elevation of 1,220' and a low point elevation of 1,050'. This means that there is up to 170' of elevation differences in the City. The location of any significant slopes or changes in elevation will be important to consider in stormwater planning.

Constructed Constraints

City Boundaries

The current city limits currently span 8,160 acres, or 12.8 square miles. Approximately 58% of the City is developed. This indicates that the City can accommodate a significant amount of greenfield development within its current boundaries.

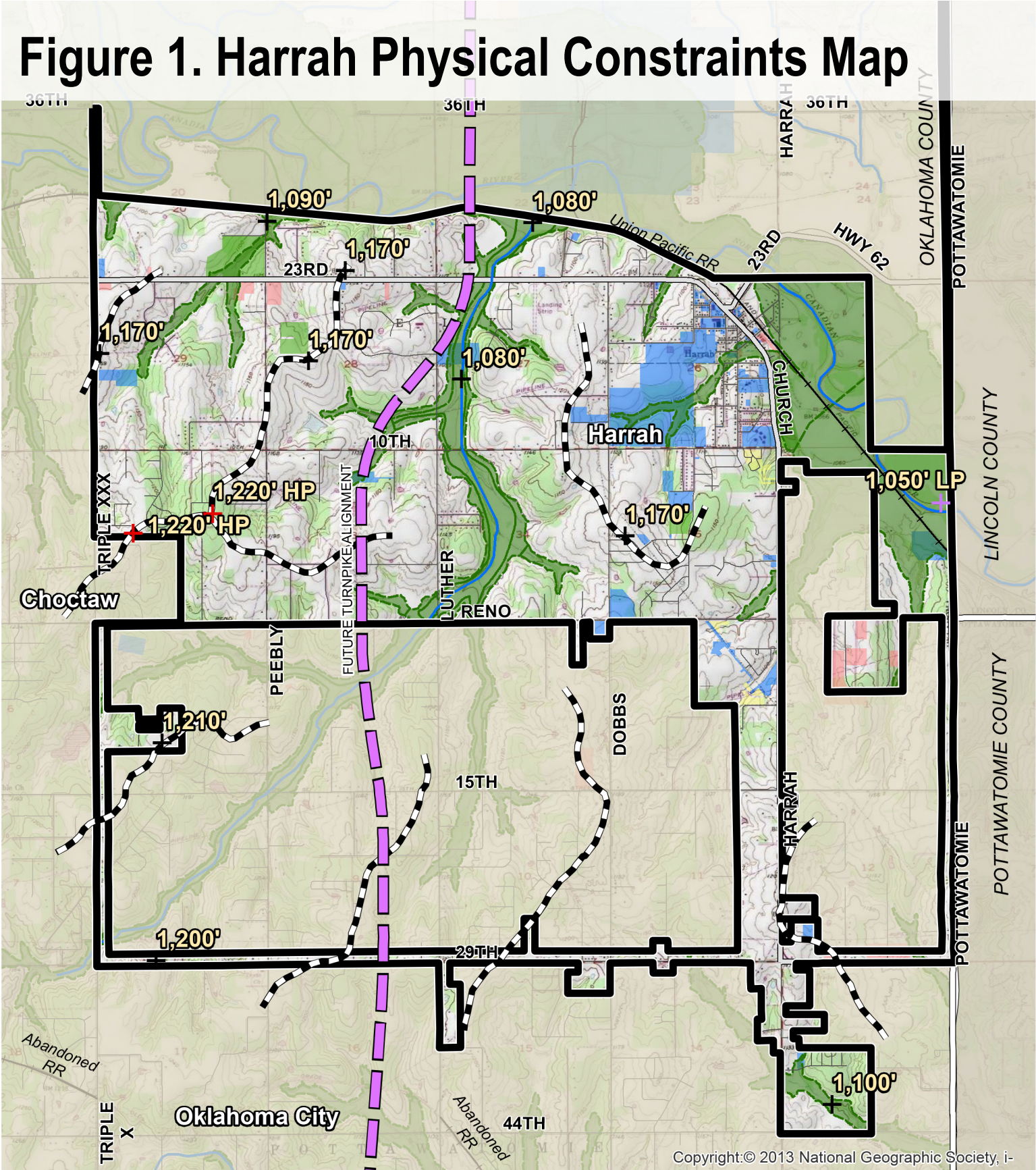
Railroad

An active Arkansas-Oklahoma (AOK) railroad track runs through Harrah, parallel to Church Street near Downtown. Rail lines are the reason many communities exist in their present locations and active lines support local commerce; however, the more active a railroad line is, the more of an impediment it can be to cross-town connectivity, a potential safety concern, and a potential noise nuisance.

Northeast Oklahoma County Loop

The anticipated Northeast Oklahoma County Loop, often referred to as "the Turnpike", will be a 21-mile turnpike connecting I-40 to I-44, and will pass through Harrah. The turnpike could be a development catalyst for the City, as businesses often open along major roadways. However, the Turnpike could also introduce new challenges associated with potential increases in traffic and growth.

Figure 1. Harrah Physical Constraints Map



- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Residential Areas | Harrah City Limits | Floodplain |
| Nonresidential Areas | Ridge Line | Railroad |
| Parks & Open Space | Spot Elevation | Streams and Rivers |
| Institutional/Public | High Point (HP) | Oklahoma County Line |
| I Turnpike Alignment | Low Point (LP) | |

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Existing Land Use

To accurately assess Harrah's future land use needs, it is important to analyze the City's present land use pattern. The pattern of land uses that exist today within the City has evolved to satisfy the requirements of the community as it has grown, both in geographic size and in population. This section of the plan provides documentation of the way in which the parcels within Harrah are currently being used. This will allow for land use recommendations to be tailored to the needs of the City's citizens.

To analyze the land use trends within Harrah, aerial photography supported by field verification was used to identify existing land uses in the preparation of this section. This survey was conducted for all areas within the existing City limits and each parcel of land was color-coded according to the various land use types. The information obtained from the survey is used herein to create the Existing Land Use Map and to discuss Harrah's current land use pattern.



Existing Land Use Patterns

- Current City limits: 8,160 acres, or 12.8 square miles.
- Harrah can accommodate growth – about 42% of the City is currently undeveloped.
- About 41% of the City is developed with residential uses, the majority of which are low density
- Nonresidential uses only account for 8% of the City limits, plus 7% for existing right-of way
- Higher intensity uses are concentrated along 23rd Street/Church Avenue/Harrah Road
- The City annexed a strip (also referred to as a "fence line") around portions of the existing City limits, which prevents other cities from encroaching into Harrah's boundaries.

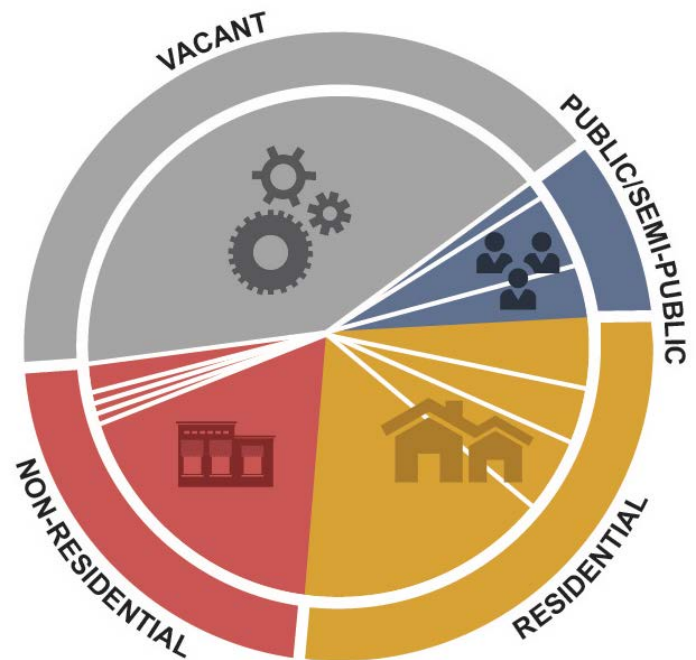
Existing Land Use Types and Distribution

The graphic to the right is a depiction of the land use types that exist in Harrah today, as shown on the Existing Land Use Map in

Figure 2. The categories correspond to the use descriptions below.

About 42% of the land within Harrah is categorized as Vacant. The largest developed land use is the Residential category – primarily the Rural Estate classification.

With relatively low amounts of higher density housing and nonresidential services, Harrah's land use character is generally a low-density development pattern and a rural atmosphere. The 23rd Street corridor and Downtown core are the City's activity centers and highest density areas.



VACANT | 42%

Vacant land has no readily visible or apparent use or is used for low intensity agricultural purposes.

INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC | 5%

Facilities that are accessible to the public, such as schools, churches, municipal buildings, cemeteries, and some medical facilities. Also includes support services, such as school bus storage lots.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE | 1%

Public park land, open space, and/or recreational areas located outdoors, including facilities such as tennis courts, public swimming pools, public pavilions, and basketball courts.

RIGHT-OF-WAY | 7%

Land dedicated to public use for streets, alleys, and rail lines.

INDUSTRIAL | 1%

Processing, storage, assembly, and/or repairing of materials. May range from light industrial with all activity occurring indoors, to heavy industrial with activity sometimes occurring outside.

LOCAL SERVICES | 2%

Provides goods or services that cater to the local community. Such goods and services are those that people do not travel more than a few miles to visit, if they are available locally. For example, medical offices, professional services, dry cleaning, coffee shops, beauty salons, and grocery stores.

REGIONAL SERVICES | 0%

Provides commodities or goods at a larger scale and cater to shoppers both within and outside of the community. Examples include big-box stores, national retailers, large grocery stores, chain restaurants, shopping centers, hotels, etc.

RURAL ESTATE | 33%

1 acre or larger; the largest residential classification. A very low density residential property, possibly serving agricultural purposes with an associated single-family dwelling.

RURAL SINGLE-FAMILY | 4%

½ to 1 acre; Larger lot subdivisions or ranchettes.

SINGLE-FAMILY | 3%

Smaller than ½ acre; Single dwelling units that are detached from any other dwelling unit, is built on-site, and is designed to be occupied by only one family.

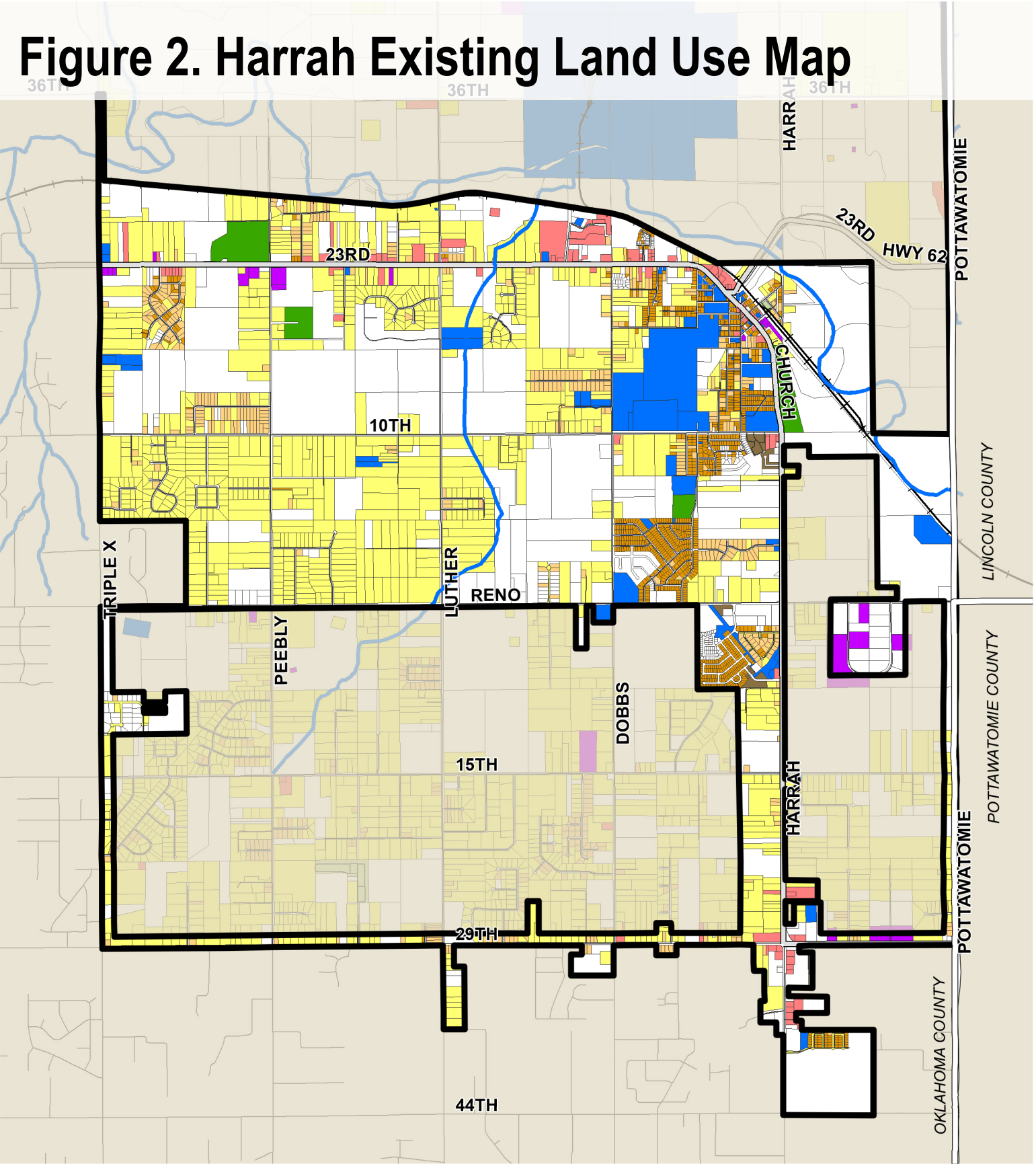
MULTI-FAMILY | <1%

Includes duplexes, townhomes, and higher density multi-family units.

MANUFACTURED HOMES | <1%

Individual dwelling units that are manufactured in a factory rather than on-site. Refers specifically to developments where manufactured homes are high in density, as opposed to a large property with a single manufactured dwelling unit.

Figure 2. Harrah Existing Land Use Map



| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Rural Estate (1+ acre) | Institutional/Public | Harrah City Limits | Railroad |
| Rural Single-Family (1/2 to 1 acre) | Local Services | County Line | Streams and Rivers |
| Single-Family (<1/2 acre) | Regional Services | | |
| Multi-Family | Industrial | | |
| Manufactured Home Park | Vacant | | |
| Parks & Open Space | | | |

1 Miles

N

Future Land Use

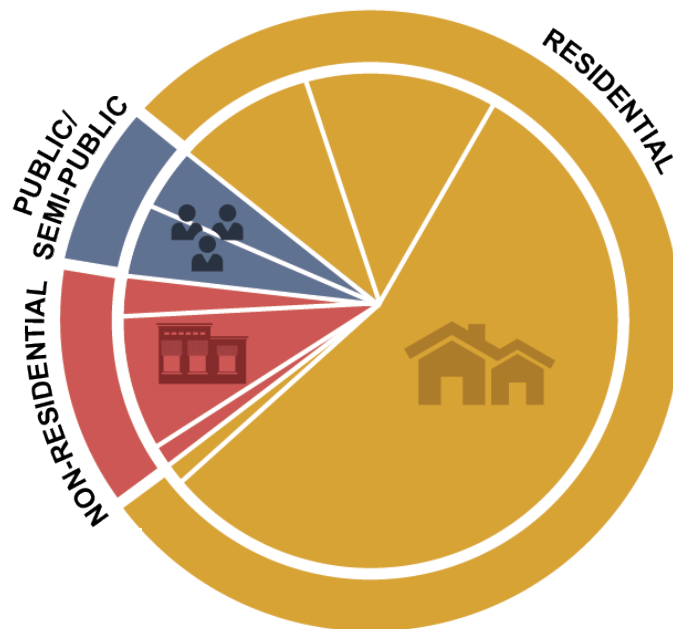
The Future Land Use Map, shown in **Figure 3**, is an illustration of the recommended land uses for Harrah. The Map is used to guide future decisions regarding zoning and development standards. The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map and does not change zoning or how a property can be used; the City's existing regulations remain in place until they are amended. As zoning changes occur over time, the new zoning classifications should generally be in alignment with the Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use Map can and should be reviewed regularly and revised in the future based on changes in demographics, market trends, and community preferences.

Future Land Use Types and Distribution

The graphic to the right is a depiction of the land use types that are proposed for Harrah's future, as shown on the Future Land Use Map in **Figure 3**. The categories correspond to the descriptions below.

The recommended land use composition seeks to retain the community's rural character while capitalizing on the economic development opportunity created by the new Turnpike. The largest classification will continue to be Rural Estate, followed by Rural Single-Family and Single-Family. This Map also proposes to continue building the Downtown core and pursuing economic development opportunities resulting from the new Turnpike.



INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC | 5%

Facilities that are accessible to the public, such as schools, churches, municipal buildings, cemeteries, and some medical facilities. Also includes support services, such as school bus storage lots.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE | 5%

Public park land, open space, and/or recreational areas located outdoors, including facilities such as tennis courts, public swimming pools, public pavilions, and basketball courts.

INDUSTRIAL | 1%

Processing, storage, assembly, and/or repairing of materials. May range from light industrial with all activity occurring indoors, to heavy industrial with activity sometimes occurring outside.

LOCAL SERVICES | 8%

Provides goods or services that cater to the local community. Such goods and services are those that people do not travel more than a few miles to visit, if they are available locally. For example, medical offices, professional services, dry cleaning, coffee shops, beauty salons, and grocery stores.

REGIONAL SERVICES | 3%

Provides commodities or goods at a larger scale and cater to shoppers both within and outside of the community. Examples include big-box stores, national retailers, large grocery stores, chain restaurants, shopping centers, hotels, etc.

RURAL ESTATE | 54%

1 acre or larger; the largest residential classification. A very low density residential property, possibly serving agricultural purposes with an associated single-family dwelling.

RURAL SINGLE-FAMILY | 14%

½ to 1 acre; Larger lot subdivisions or ranchettes.

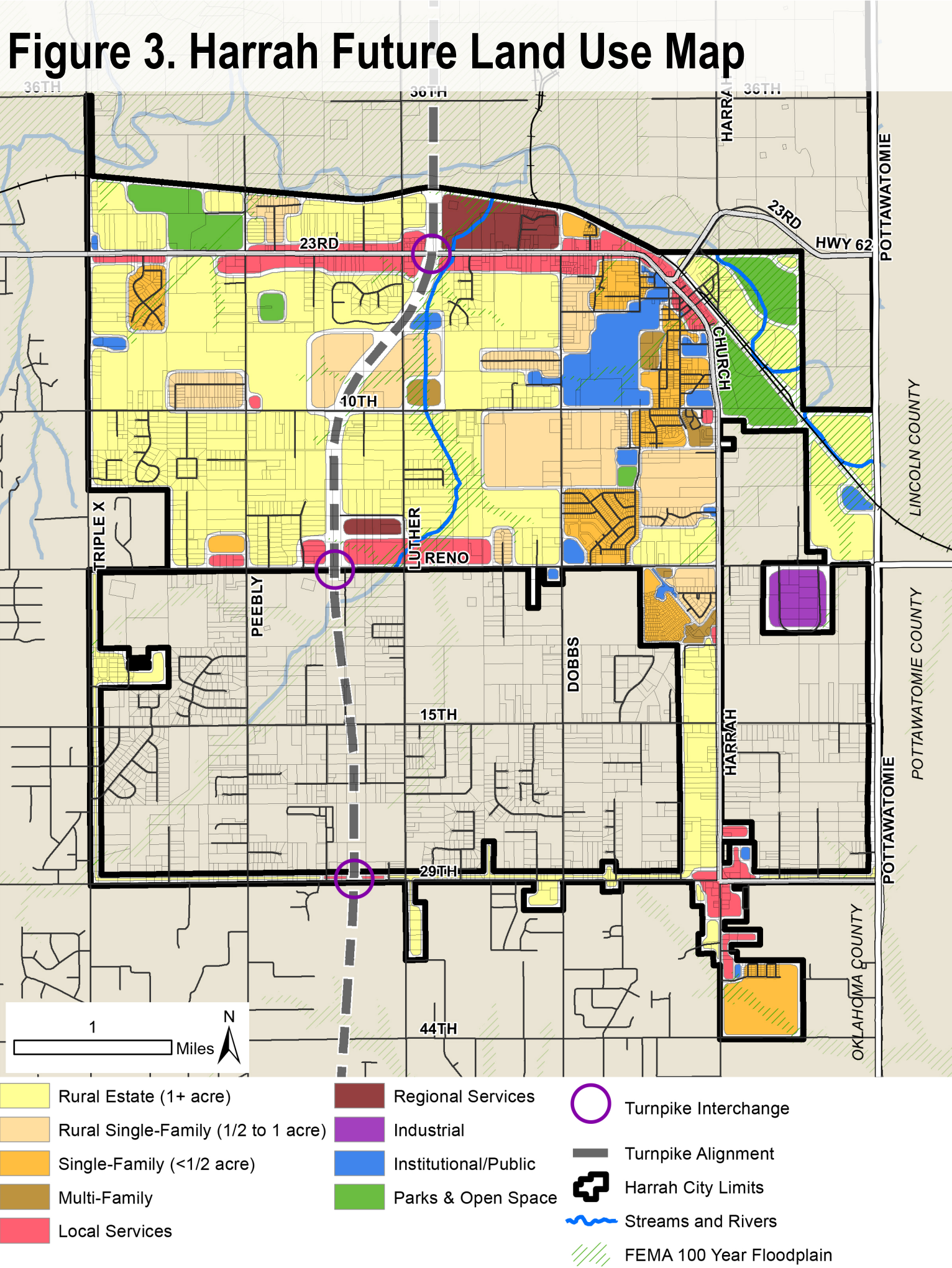
SINGLE-FAMILY | 10%

Smaller than ½ acre; Single dwelling units that are detached from any other dwelling unit, is built on-site, and is designed to be occupied by only one family.

MULTI-FAMILY | 1%

Includes duplexes, townhomes, and higher density multi-family units.

Figure 3. Harrah Future Land Use Map



Land Use Recommendations

This section identifies strategies, specific actions, that can be used to meet the land use-related needs and desires of the residents of Harrah. Each recommendation references the corresponding Focus Areas, as noted on page 22.

#1 | Ensure Land Use Compatibility

Focus Area(s):

“Compatibility” refers to whether neighboring uses are complementary in terms of building scale, building height, traffic generation, lighting, and noise. While the Future Land Use Map seeks to minimize the placement of incompatible uses, differences between use types are inevitable and transitions need to be appropriately planned. For example, a new industrial use may locate near an existing or planned residential development. The industrial use could be required to provide a buffer area and/or landscaping to screen the industrial activities from the homes or be limited in its hours of operations to eliminate overnight noise. While such regulations can place a burden on nonresidential and multi-family development, they also reduce nuisances and improves aesthetics, increasing property values and quality of life for the nearby residents.

These characteristics can be regulated through the City’s zoning regulations, which would need an amendment to include such regulations. Compatibility or adjacency standards typically require all or some of the following when nonresidential and multi-family development occurs adjacent to existing or planned single-family development:

- Lower nonresidential and multi-family building height within a certain distance
- Increased nonresidential and multi-family setbacks
- Buffering and/or additional landscaping
- Stricter conditions regarding lighting, signage, access, hours of operation, and design

Examples of Incompatible Development



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Economic Development



Rural Character



Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

#2 | Promote Low-Impact Development

Focus Area(s):   

Low-impact development (LID) refers to a design approach intended to minimize the environmental impact of development to the property and surrounding properties. LID design can help to reduce flooding, preserve the rural atmosphere, and reduce costs. The following design elements are examples of LID strategies that can be integrated into the City's zoning regulations to promote LID development:

- Dark skies initiatives
- Clustered housing within a development to preserve open space
- Permeable concrete and pavers
- Rain gardens or bioretention swales
- Preservation of tree canopies
- Use of a drip irrigation system or harvested rainwater
- Use of native and/or drought-tolerant landscaping with limited amounts of turf grass
- Use of solar or wind power sources
- Use of cool roofs (green or white)
- Preservation of open space, wetlands, and floodplain



#3 | Facilitate Downtown Enhancements

Focus Area(s):   

The downtown area is typically the heart of a city – a unique and iconic part of its identity. Preserving and enhancing Harrah's downtown is of the utmost importance.

Historically, from large cities to smaller towns, downtown was the heart and core of the community. It was where business was conducted and where residents went to shop, see a movie, and enjoy dinner.

During the second half of the 20th century, downtowns experienced a state of decline due to a variety of social and economic factors that caused cities to sprawl outward. Homes were built to accommodate the surge of family households in America. The automobile dominated American culture and shopping malls, and strip centers were built for automobile convenience. Commercial, office, and entertainment activity followed the outward growth of cities. Today, many downtowns are experiencing a remarkable resurgence because people identify these areas as a unique sense of place, which is often lost with typical suburban development.

Harrah is unique from many communities in Oklahoma because it already has an identifiable Downtown that provides access to entertainment, commercial, and civic activities. This puts Harrah in a position to capitalize on the resurgent demand for downtown destinations and amenities, which can be done by:

- Embracing and enhancing the sense of being downtown through land use density, streetscaping, pedestrian amenities, and building façade enhancements;
- Attracting more energy to Downtown by linking it to other community amenities, such as parks, schools, and civic uses;
- Facilitating the development of “stay and play” amenities, such as boutique hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues; and
- Spreading local and regional awareness of Downtown through wayfinding, community events, and marketing campaigns.



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Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life



Catalyst Project | Facilitate Downtown Enhancements

The proposed Downtown enhancements have been identified as a catalyst project, which is intended to be a big idea that could help the City create a spark for future development. Suggested steps for implementation are included below.

Define the Target Downtown Infill Area

Infill development utilizes existing infrastructure and adds to the area's vibrancy. The City should define the target Downtown infill area where future development should be focused and possibly incentivized.

Preserve Historic Structures and Character

Historic structures should typically be preserved when possible; however, some structures may be beyond repair or not consistent with the desired image. The zoning ordinance could be amended to require new development within Downtown's CBD zoning district to incorporate historic design elements.

Review the Appropriate Use Types and Forms

The CBD zoning district allows a wide range of uses, allowing any use allowed in C-1 and C-2 districts – some of which may not be ideal for a pedestrian-oriented downtown area. Many of the C-2 uses are commercial or light industrial uses, such as carpentry shops, building materials yards, and a research laboratory. The City may wish to amend the ordinance to allow only the uses allowed in C-1 in the CBD district to promote a more pedestrian-oriented area.

Development form is another important consideration in addition to use. Design enhancements, such as facades, awnings, canopies, landscaping, signs, windows. These elements are described in **#7 | Promote a Unique Brand for the City** and **#8 | Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations**.

Pedestrian and Bike Amenities

Pedestrian amenities make an area feel safe and inviting for walking. The most basic and essential of these amenities is adequate sidewalks and crosswalks. Crosswalks are built and maintained by the City, but sidewalks present opportunities for cost-sharing with property owners. To encourage the incorporation of pedestrian amenities in private developments, the City may wish to offer incentives or amend the zoning ordinance to require certain design elements within Downtown. Additionally, with the future enhancement of a local and regional trail system, it will be important that the Downtown to accommodate bike traffic. The City could incorporate a trailhead near Downtown, providing bike racks and other amenities. The City should also consider incorporate bicycle-friendly amenities such as bike lanes.



Emphasize Connections to Park Amenities

Only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile separate Downtown from Heritage Park. As discussed in **#6 | Expand Existing Parks** and Emphasize "Health and Wellness" Amenities, expanding the Park north to Downtown would allow the City to link its two most identifiable areas. However, connecting these amenities presents a possible challenge to the community, as the area between the two is already developed.

Buffer Downtown from Adjacent Areas

Some uses currently located near Downtown may not be aesthetically desirable in the future, such as the manufactured home parks and impound lot. The City may wish to work with the property owners to encourage relocation or to provide additional screening measures such as landscaping and masonry screening walls.

#4 | Support Business Space

Focus Area(s):  

Harrah currently has a limited amount of leasable commercial space, which can be a challenge for new businesses to located within the City. Building a professional office, retail, or other commercial space requires a significant up-front investment that many business owners cannot provide. Leasable commercial space helps to accommodate small businesses and start-ups, and also to attract smaller national businesses into the community.



Catalyst Project | Support Business Space

The proposed business space development has been identified as a catalyst project, which is intended to be a big idea that could help the City create a spark for future development. Suggested steps for implementation are included below.

Refine Commercial Space Needs

Work with local business owners, entrepreneurs, and the Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership to identify the needs and demands for commercial space in the Harrah area. Determine whether the desired space is targeted toward professional office, retail boutiques, incubators/coworking spaces/makerspaces for start-ups, or heavier commercial manufacturing.

Seek Potential Partners

Reach out to the local banking/investment community, business owners, educational programs, and the Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership to identify potential partners to share ideas, connections, costs, and other resources.

Identify a Target Location

Once the demand has been identified and any partners secured, the City should identify a target location for the space(s). Lower intensity uses may be desirable in Downtown, while heavier intensity uses would be more appropriate near the 23rd Street/Turnpike interchange.

Other City Initiatives to Incentivize

To incentivize the development, the City could waive development fees, fast-track the review/approval process, provide short-term tax abatements, help advertise the space and/or businesses, donate land, provide infrastructure, or engage in other public-private partnerships. The City currently offers benefits through the Harrah Industrial and Economic Development Trust.

#5 | Capitalize on Turnpike Nodes

Focus Area(s):    

With development of the Northeast Oklahoma County Loop (the Turnpike) officially underway, it is important for Harrah to capitalize on the development of the Turnpike, while preserving its small town feel and protecting the economic viability of Downtown.

While low density residential land uses are desired in Harrah, such land uses rarely produce the tax revenue to offset their use of infrastructure and services. Residential property taxes go to the State, while cities receive sales tax revenue. Because cities in Oklahoma rely heavily on revenue from sales taxes and because cities do not collect property taxes, nonresidential uses help to fund infrastructure improvements and city services to support residential areas. Moreover, there are some areas in Harrah where residential land use is not ideal, such as on land that will be adjacent to the future turnpike exits. These areas are the perfect opportunity for Harrah to facilitate nonresidential development, preserve other areas for residential uses, and strengthen the City's economy in the process.

The Turnpike will have three interchanges within Harrah – one at 23rd Street, one at Reno Avenue, and one at 29th Street. Of these locations, 23rd Street presents biggest opportunity because it is fully within the City and located along major corridor. For this reason, both the north and south sides of 23rd Street are proposed to develop as either Local or Regional Services from Peebly to NE 23rd/Highway 62. A large pocket of Regional nonresidential land uses is recommended between the Turnpike and Dobbs Road. This area meets the criteria for larger development, including large, relatively undeveloped tracts of land, frontage to a major roadway, and minimal proximity to residential uses.

The next most opportune interchange for Harrah is along Reno Avenue, where the north side of the roadway falls within the City limits. Here, Local Services is recommended to between Meadow Lane to the west and North Oak Road to the east.

The interchange located at 29th Street will be the most challenging because it is along the City's fence line, giving the City limited ability to regulate development. If the City wishes to play a role in how this interchange develops, it should consider working with property owners to initiate voluntary annexation in the fence line area (between Reno Avenue, 29th Street, Triple X Road, and Pottawatomie Road).

For all of the interchanges within the City's regulatory control, it should be assumed that development will be auto-oriented. This means that the City will need to plan for roads that can accommodate a higher volume of traffic. Depending on where residential development occurs, the City may also need to consider residential compatibility policies, traffic management elements on adjoining roadways (traffic calming, speedbumps, etc.), or buffers for sound and light. An overview of residential proximity standards can be found in **#1 | Ensure Land Use Compatibility**.



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Economic Development



Rural Character



Sense of Community and Identity



Quality of Life

#6 | Expand Existing Parks and Emphasize “Health and Wellness” Amenities

Focus Area(s):    

EOC Sports Complex

Located along 23rd Street west of Peebly Road, the EOC Sports Complex sits on about 75 acres of private land and provides four ballfields for baseball and softball tournaments. There is support within the community to further develop the recreational amenities to include a multi-purpose recreation facility and to potentially expand the park area in the future. Multi-purpose recreational facilities, also referred to as multi-generational centers, have activities and programming for all age groups and are usually around 50,000 square feet in size. Multi-purpose recreational facilities encompass an increasingly-wide range of amenities including sport courts, natatoriums, meeting rooms, and workout facilities. Through these amenities, a range of services are usually offered including afterschool care and summer camps, sports tournaments, classes and activities for seniors, community fitness programs, and public use of meeting rooms and event space. These amenities and programming opportunities compliment those currently at the Sports Complex and could further enhance Harrah’s quality of life.

Heritage Park Expansion with “Health and Wellness” Amenities

Highly visible and located to the east of Church Avenue between NE 10th Street and Navarre Street, Heritage Park sits on a combined 27.4 acres. The Park is amenity-rich with features including a pond, amphitheater, trails, pavilions, ball courts, and playgrounds, and passive space.

There is community support to enhance and expand the Park’s current footprint and connect it to other nearby areas of activity. One way to do this would be to expand the Park’s boundaries to NE 23rd Street to the north, the railroad tracks to the east and the city limits to the south. Full expansion to the north, south, and east would add approximately 105

acres for expanded park facilities. Expanding to the south and east could help the create a better link to the North Canadian River, perhaps through additional passive greenspace and a scenic overlook.

The term “health and wellness” refers to amenities designed to promote physical fitness, nutrition, relaxation, wellness, and overall health. Such amenities can improve the quality of life for existing Harrah residents, as well as attract future industries/employers and residents to the community. The conceptual design on the opposite page provides ideas for a potential location, amenities, and connections to the existing Heritage Park.

Existing Heritage Park Amphitheater



Potential River Overlook Area



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Economic Development



Rural Character



Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

HARRAH HEALTH & WELLNESS PARK





Catalyst Project | Expand Existing Parks

The proposed park expansions have been identified as a catalyst project, which is intended to be a big idea that could help the City create a spark for future development. Suggested steps for implementation are included below.

Needs Analysis

A fundamental part of planning for recreational amenities is identifying what amenities are needed. Conducting a needs analysis will help the City invest its money efficiently while providing the community with needed amenities. For the EOC Sports Complex Expansion, potential amenities to consider, include active and passives space, meeting rooms, sport courts, and aquatic facilities. For the Heritage Park “health and wellness” expansion, potential amenities could include trails, a community garden, fitness facilities, and meditation areas focused on natural features. A community survey is one of the easiest ways to conduct such an assessment. However, there are also consultants who can perform this type of work based on community demand and surrounding availability.

Site Selection and Purchase

The Future Land Use Map identifies over 240 acres for potential expansion Heritage Park and the EOC Sports Complex. However, the City and its partners should evaluate several options and communicate with property owners to identify interest and eventually select and buy a site. There are many resources available to buy and develop recreational facilities; these resources are described in the **Financing Options** section (page 64).

Image and Design

As a point of civic pride, multi-purpose recreational facilities should be visible and fit into the community's existing development patterns. In addition, these facilities should be located so that they serve as a hub to surrounding use, drawing activity into areas of the City where it can be complemented with other services and amenities. Because they are often associated with community branding and identity (see **#7 | Promote a Unique Brand for the City**), such facilities warrant design considerations such as architectural features, enhanced landscaping, and integration with the natural environment/river. In addition to design, multimodal connectivity and accessibility are important elements to consider. Such considerations include adequate parking and connections to sidewalks and trails.

Trailhead

Trailheads, discussed as part of recommendation **#11 | Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System** (page 48), should be considered and programmed in coordination with any expansion of Heritage Park. As a location where a trail begins or an entry point along a trail, a trailhead developed in Heritage Park could direct users towards Downtown and encourage spin-off uses such as restaurants, recreation-oriented retailers, or recreation rental facilities.

Park Master Plan

Harrah does not currently have a Park Master Plan, which is used to inventory existing amenities; examine the community's recreational needs and preferences; recommend, price, and prioritize projects; and serve as the basis for grants and funding. Should it decide to pursue a multi-purpose recreational center, the City should hire a park planning consultant to create a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan that is in compliance with the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department's funding requirements.



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Economic Development



Rural Character




Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

#7 | Promote a Unique Brand for the City

Focus Area(s): 

Communities need visual individuality to avoid becoming anonymous within a region. Anonymity can hamper efforts to spur economic development or develop a sense of place; given a choice, people often patronize businesses in places with strong character and identity, whether shopping for groceries, going out to eat, or running errands.

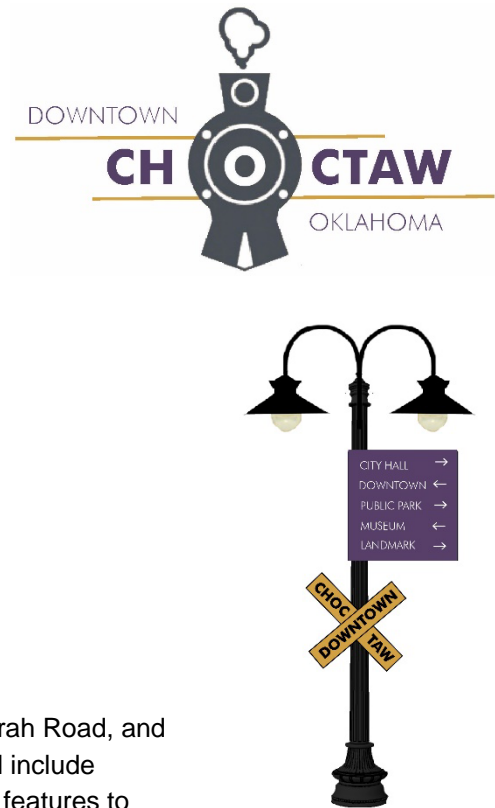
A branding package should include a color scheme, logo, font style, artistic style, and possibly a motto. The City should identify unique aspects of the community – perhaps the City's desirableness as a destination for families, its unique Downtown, or its recreational amenities – to highlight in these features.

A brand can be established and promoted through methods such as:

- Gateway entries into the City or specific neighborhoods,
- Design of directional and street signs, and
- Decorative banners on lamp posts.

Gateways should mark the entrances to Harrah along 23rd Street, Harrah Road, and at 29th Street along the Turnpike (see **Figure 6**). Such gateways could include monument signs, large-scale landscaping, lighting, artwork, and other features to define the area by highlighting the City's unique character.

Downtown Branding Examples from the City of Choctaw



#8 | Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations



Focus Area(s):

The use of design in a key area, such as Downtown or around the Turnpike nodes, can significantly strengthen sense of place and encourage economic development by attracting targeted businesses or industries to an area. Urban design elements should reflect the City's chosen brand (see **#7 | Promote a Unique Brand for the City**) and be of a consistent style.

Examples of urban design elements include:

- Pedestrian-oriented street furniture and signs
- Large windows along the sidewalk
- Decorative facades
- Fountains and monuments
- Enhanced crosswalks
- Increased landscaping at intersections
- Ornamental lighting

The City should first identify appropriate areas to implement urban design enhancements – likely at the Turnpike nodes at 23rd Street and Reno Avenue; along Church Avenue between Tim Holt Drive and Calvin Street; and Main Street between Tim Holt Drive and the railroad tracks. Additionally, potential development of the former Cookieland site could be an opportunity for urban design emphasis.

Urban design elements can be in the public realm (i.e., the City's responsibility, such as benches and lighting) or in the private realm (i.e., a property owner's responsibility, such as a sign or building façade). To encourage the incorporation of urban design elements in private developments, the City may wish to offer incentives for property owners to enhance their properties, such as fee waivers and accelerated permitting for improvement projects, special recognition from the City, or a façade improvement matching grant. The City could also amend the zoning ordinance to require certain design elements in new construction within Downtown.



Fiscally Responsible



Economic Development



Rural Character



Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

Section 4:

Facilitating Growth

Introduction

A driving principle of this Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership planning process is that growth is coming to eastern Oklahoma County and local communities should plan for it. Communities that do plan for growth allow themselves to be on the offensive, making it more likely that residents will benefit from growth. This section discusses the many factors that will be directly impacted by future population growth, such as roads and infrastructure.

- Regional Connectivity
- Existing Infrastructure
- Facilitating Growth Recommendations

Regional Connectivity

This section examines the City's transportation connections to the larger region.

23rd Street

23rd Street is one of the most important east-west roadways in Eastern Oklahoma County, connecting Harrah to Choctaw, Nicoma Park, and eventually Oklahoma City. It is a key roadway for daily commuters, both locally and regionally.

Northeast Loop

The anticipated Northeast Oklahoma County Loop, often referred to as "the Turnpike", will be a 21-mile turnpike connecting I-40 to I-44, and will be an important north-south corridor for eastern Oklahoma County. The Turnpike will have three access points within Harrah, which is a tremendous opportunity for the City. The planned exits are located at 23rd Street, Reno Avenue, and 29th Street. With development of the Turnpike officially underway, Harrah stands to see both the opportunity and challenges of higher traffic volume passing through the City.

North-South Streets

Triple X Road

Runs between the City limits of Choctaw and Harrah, servicing trips to and from the two cities before connecting to Turner Turnpike and Tom Steed Memorial Highway.

Luther Road

To the north, Luther Road connects to the Town of Luther, Highway 66, and Turner Turnpike. To the south, it connects to Tom Steed Memorial Highway.

Harrah Road

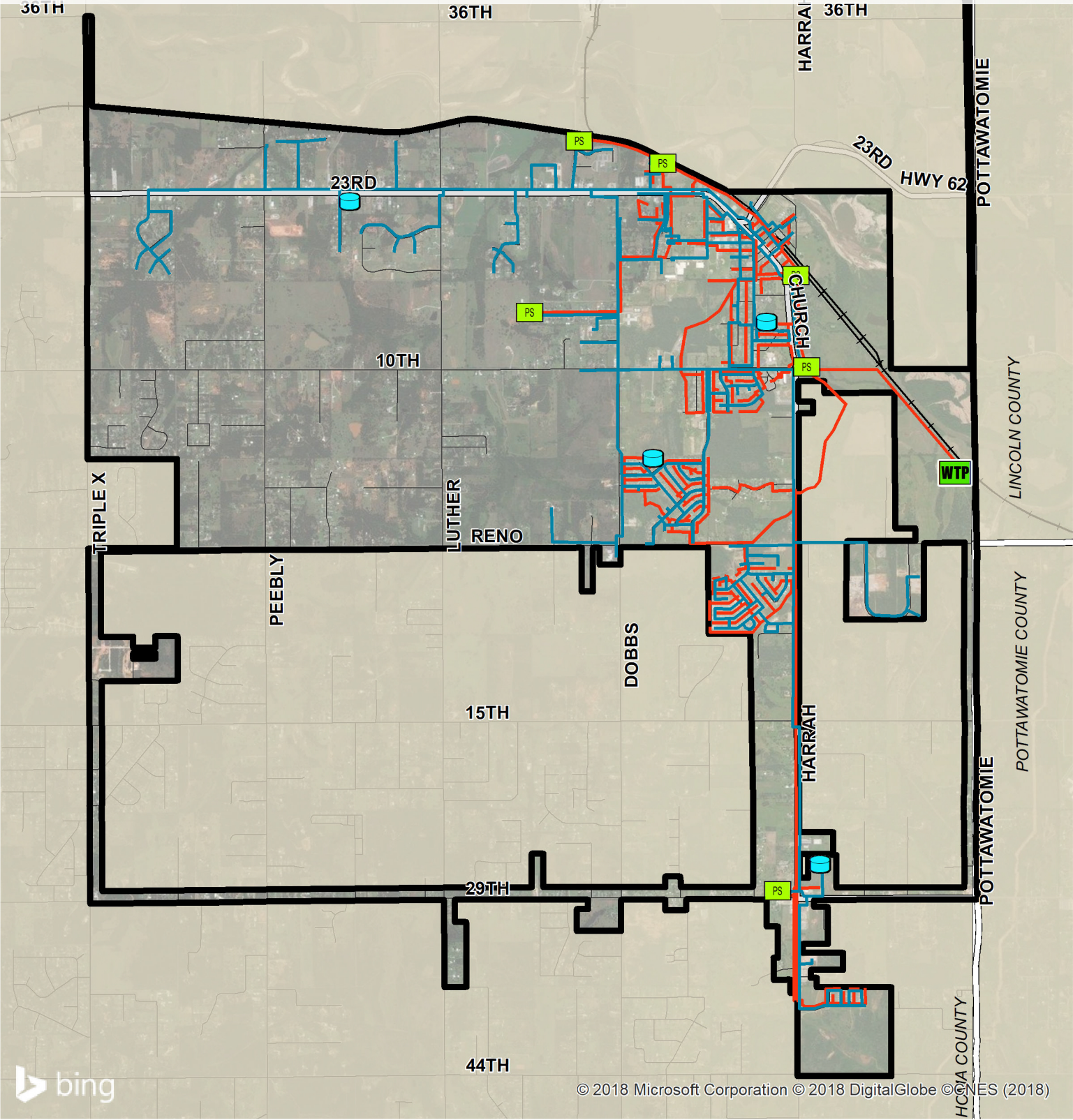
Harrah Road passes through Downtown, where it becomes Church Street. To the north, it connects to the Town of Luther, Highway 66, and Turner Turnpike. To the south it connects to Tom Steed Memorial Highway.

Existing Infrastructure

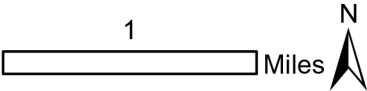
The City currently has 4- to 12-inch water lines serving areas along US 270, Church Street, and 23rd Street, supported by six wells and three water towers to provide water to the community. The City maintains Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping data for the City's water lines, hydrants, wells, and valves. The City has not completed a water master plan, which would identify improvements necessary to accommodate future growth and maintain existing assets.

The City currently has wastewater lines also serving areas along US 270, Church Street, and 23rd Street, supported by gravity mains, seven lift stations with associated force mains that deliver the wastewater to a wastewater treatment plant located on the east side of Harrah. The City also maintains Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping data for the City's wastewater lines, manholes, and lift stations. The City has not completed a wastewater master plan, which would identify improvements necessary to accommodate future growth and maintain existing assets.

Figure 4. Harrah Existing Infrastructure Map



- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Treatment Plant | Harrah City Limits |
| Water Supply | County Line |
| Lift Station | Railroad |
| Water Line | |
| Wastewater Line | |



Facilitating Growth Recommendations

This section identifies strategies to facilitate future growth in Harrah. Each recommendation references the corresponding Focus Areas, as noted on page 22.

#9 | Continue Coordination with ODOT and OTA

Focus Area(s):    

Developing and maintaining a good transportation network is important for creating a quality, sustainable transportation system. The City should actively stay engaged with the local and regional transportation organizations to implement the City's desired transportation initiatives. More specifically, the City should continue to coordinate with Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) on upcoming roadway projects, regional roadway planning initiatives, the development of the future turnpike, and grant funding opportunities.

Communication with OTA is useful to ensure the City is aware of upcoming projects. For example, utility work, installation of new sidewalks, or installation of and gateway feature could be timed with upcoming construction. Most importantly, the City should coordinate with OTA and Oklahoma County to ensure that frontage roads are in place along the Turnpike throughout Harrah.

To enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, the City should develop a pedestrian and cycling plan with ODOT and the Oklahoma Bicycling Coalition (OBC) to support alternative forms of transportation along major roadways and highways. Creating roadway designs that are sensitive to their context helps to improve safety and mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

To further the efforts recommended in **#7 | Promote a Unique Brand for the City**, the City should work with ODOT to implement City branding initiatives along major highways. Elements of the City's brand can be integrated into ODOT's facilities through the placement of signage or public art within the right-of-way, including a City logo on overpasses or similar infrastructure, or utilizing a particular color scheme.



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Economic Development



Rural Character





Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

#10 | Concentrate Development in the Core Areas

Focus Area(s):  

Nodes refer to areas of economic and social activity. In Harrah, nodes include Downtown, Heritage Park, and the future turnpike interchanges. As discussed in **#3 | Facilitate Downtown Enhancements** and **#5 | Capitalize on Turnpike Nodes**, concentrating higher density or nonresidential uses around these nodes helps stimulate much-needed economic development, generate sales tax revenue, prevents sprawl, and promotes a rural feel by preserving low density or rural areas elsewhere in the City. Moreover, concentrating development allows the City to provide infrastructure more efficiently. For these reasons, it is recommended that the City focus on creating nodes of development around all or some of the areas discussed above.

Downtown

A key element of enhancing Downtown will be ensuring that the businessowners have enough business to stay open. One way to do this is to facilitate nearby residential development. Higher density development, whether geared towards young professionals, empty nesters, or seniors, introduces demographics that are likely to patronize Downtown businesses.

Depending on economic demand and land availability, Downtown could potentially span from Harrison Avenue to Navarre Street. With existing Downtown development and adjacent residential and civic uses, building on the success of Downtown will rely on infill development. It is likely that future development would need to be horizontal as opposed to vertical to create a more continuous streetscape. Downtown infill should also incorporate high quality appearance and design enhancements because it is intended to be the focal point of the City. Downtown will need land uses that give visitors places to eat, gather, and shop. One- to two-story buildings should be encouraged in this area with the first floors for retail and commercial uses, second floors for business or residential uses.

Turnpike Interchanges




Local and Regional Services uses along NE 23rd Street and Reno Avenue are intended to concentrate both regional, highway-oriented developments and local, neighborhood-oriented nonresidential developments along key roadways and intersections. This serves multiple purposes as it will:

- Help preserve the downtown core for more boutique or pedestrian-oriented purposes,
- Concentrate areas of infrastructure demand,
- Serve as a transition and buffer between the turnpike and outlying neighborhoods, and
- Provides neighborhood services without residents having to travel into Downtown or leave the City.

Rural Character

The inward concentration of activity nodes frees up most of Harrah to preserve its rural character in the outer areas of the City. Floodplains are generally left for Rural Estate development. This, along with land use and design standards for the Turnpike nodes, will ensure that the City maintains a rural charm even as it grows in the future.

#11 | Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System

Focus Area(s):   

This Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership Regional Comprehensive Plan proposes a regional trail network throughout the eastern portion of the County. As shown in **Figure 5**, the proposed trail would connect the cities of Luther, Harrah, Choctaw, Nicoma Park, Midwest City, and Jones with a 55-mile route. The proposed route extends south from Luther along the new Turnpike to Harrah, then west along 23rd Street through Choctaw and Nicoma Park to connect to Midwest City's trail network; north along Choctaw Road, then jogging west along 63rd Street, north on Hiwassee, and east on Britton Road in Jones; then northeast along Hogback Road to complete the loop in Luther. A potential 12-mile Luther Road bike lane has also been indicated as an alternative or supplement to the turnpike trail.

This trail is proposed to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian users. Such a network could provide local recreation options and capitalize on the strong bicycling community present within the region. A regional trail connecting the cities with unique trailheads and connections into the heart of each community could be a significant generator of tourism and local sales tax revenue.

A trailhead signifies an entry point or other key location along a trail. In Harrah, a trailhead is proposed in the vicinity of the Church Avenue/23rd Street intersection. This location could provide a scenic overlook of the North Canadian River and open agricultural lands; a connection into Downtown Harrah for bicyclists or pedestrians to patronize local businesses; and a connection to Heritage Park and Harrah's local trails.

The trail network would likely include a mixture of on- and off-street trails and sidewalks. The segment along the new Turnpike would be fully separated from the roadway to protect users from high-speed traffic. The segments along Hogback Road and Hiwassee Road may be on-street with shared or dedicated bike lanes. (Note that on-street options cannot accommodate pedestrians, except when a sidewalk is provided over shorter distances.) Further study is needed to define an exact route.

While the Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership has initiated the idea and initial route, each city would be responsible for funding the construction of the trail. There are many organizations throughout Oklahoma that provide grant funding and support for trail construction, including Federal funding through the Oklahoma Trails Board.

Example of an On-Street Trail with a Dedicated Lane and Barriers



Example of Natural Surface Off-Street Trail



Example of an Off-Street Trail in Harrah



Fiscally Responsible



Economic Development



Rural Character

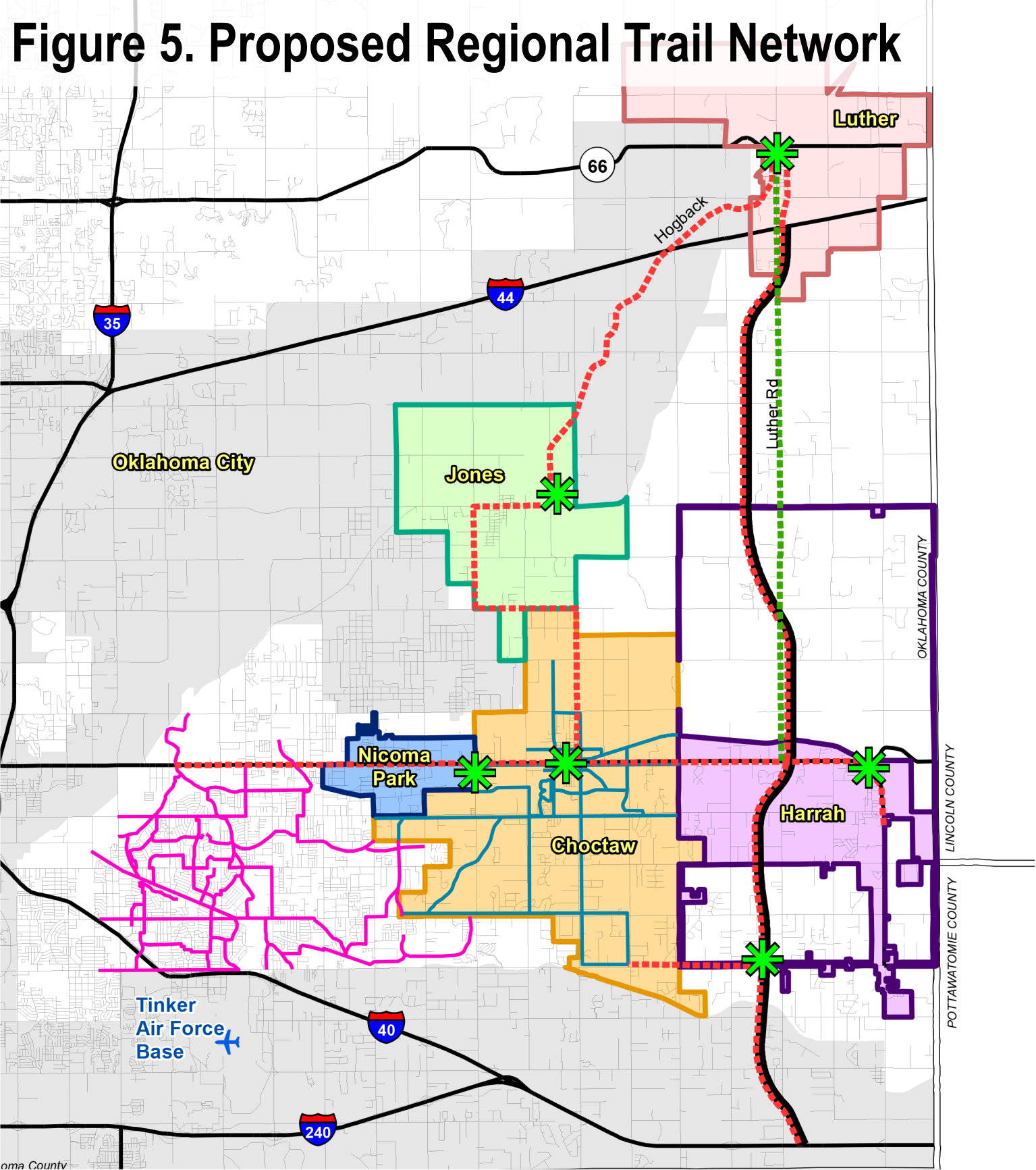


Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

Figure 5. Proposed Regional Trail Network



- Potential Trailheads
- Midwest City Trail System
- Choctaw Trail System
- EOC Trail
- Turnpike Alignment
- Potential Luther Road Bike Lane

#12 | Investigate Opportunities at the Former Cookieland Site

Focus Area(s):    

Cookieland Girl Scout Camp was located near the southwest corner of 29th Street and Luther Road. The camp was purchased by the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) in 2016 to accommodate the new turnpike construction. OTA purchased three parcels totaling approximately 108 acres; however, some of this land may remain undeveloped following completion of the turnpike as it is not needed to accommodate right-of-way. The City of Harrah should coordinate with OTA to investigate opportunities for the remaining portions of these tracts.

This land is very important to Harrah because it serves as an entryway into the City along the new turnpike and remains in a natural state. The City would like OTA to consider donating the remaining portions of land to the City, or provide the City the first option to buy the land. Alternatively, if OTA wishes to retain ownership of the land or sell the land to another entity, the City encourages voluntary annexation of the land into Harrah's city limits. Harrah wishes to see large portions of the land preserved and connected to the regional trail, balanced with limited commercial development along the turnpike. This would help the City to build its tax base, conserve the natural environment, and create a unique space along the proposed regional trail.

Former Cookieland Site



Source: Bing



Fiscally Responsible



Economic Development



Rural Character



Sense of Community
and Identity



Quality of Life

#13 | Plan and Prioritize Roadway Improvements

Focus Area(s):   

The Advisory Committee noted three areas of roadway improvements that could benefit Harrah:

1. Luther Road, Peebly Road, and Dobbs Road as section line roads in need of immediate attention. Since Oklahoma County maintains these roadways, a representative from Harrah should ensure ongoing coordination with the County to highlight the need for improvements on these roadways.
2. Traffic circulation around Harrah High School is a challenge due to congestion and queuing issues. Site reconfiguration or possibly school relocation to a lower density area of Harrah may be appropriate for consideration.
3. State Highway 270 currently runs south through Harrah, east on 29th Street into McLoud, then southeast toward Dale, terminating at Highway 177. As Harrah Road is widened to four lanes, it may be desirable for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to consider relocating SH 270 to extend along Harrah Road due to existing traffic volumes and easier access to Interstate 40.



#14 | Plan and Prioritize Water and Wastewater Improvements

Focus Area(s):   

The water and wastewater systems should be evaluated for capacity to serve proposed developments. The primary focus of the evaluation should be around providing fire protection to areas designated as commercial or industrial. Additionally, the systems may need to be extended to serve development where infrastructure does not exist.

It is recommended that the City conduct system-wide water and wastewater master plans and GIS mapping update. A robust GIS mapping database provides a powerful tool with regards to operations, maintenance, asset management, and future planning. An asset management program will assist the City in developing a proactive maintenance operating plan and can be incorporated with the master plan or completed as a standalone study. The master plan will allow the City to develop a perspective of short-term, and long-term system water demands, wastewater flows, capacity requirements, and identify areas with rehabilitation needs.

A water master plan should identify storage capacity needs for typical operations and fire emergencies. The plan should also include a recommended schedule to drill new wells based on capacity needs as well as remaining useful life of existing wells. The master plan should include recommended water system looping for redundancy and reliability, replacement of smaller diameter lines, and the addition of elevated storage as part of the short-term Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). CIP projects recommended should also include up-sizing smaller diameter lines and replacing aging infrastructure to better serve new development.

Additionally, a rate study is recommended to identify the financial impact of new development on the City's water and wastewater systems and develop a capacity fee to collect in order to assist with infrastructure budgetary needs for any future development.

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Section 5:

Action Plan

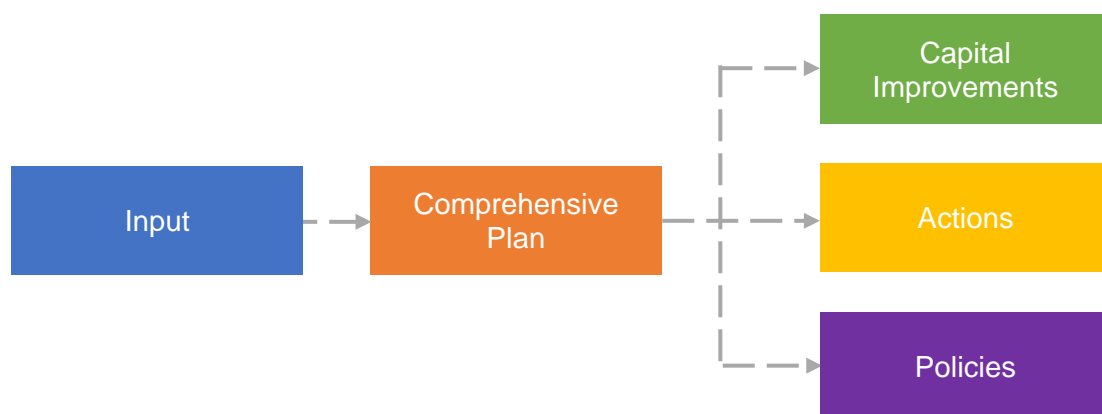
Introduction

This section outlines the action plan for implementing the Land Use Recommendations and Facilitating Growth Recommendations. The following subsections are included to help guide the next steps:

- Implementation Strategies
- Implementation Matrix
- Financing Options

Implementation Strategies

Successful communities establish a clear vision for their future and identify the steps necessary to achieve that vision. This section completes the Comprehensive Plan by providing implementation techniques and priorities that address the vision, recommendations and related policies established herein. This Action Plan is structured into a coordinated action program so that City leaders, staff, and other decision-makers can easily identify the steps that are necessary to achieve the vision for Harrah described within this Plan. It is also important to note that most communities cannot afford to complete all of the desired tasks at once; therefore, it is important to identify the top priorities that are most critical for achieving the vision. Many of these recommendations will take several years to complete, but this plan will help the City to identify the “low-hanging fruit” and allocate funding in future budgets for the costlier projects.



The Roles of the Comprehensive Plan

A Guide for Daily Decision-Making

The current physical layout of the City is a product of previous efforts put forth by many diverse individuals and groups. In the future, each new development that takes place – whether it is a subdivision that is platted; a home that is built; or a new school, church, or shopping center that is constructed – represents an addition to Harrah’s physical form. The composite of all such efforts and facilities creates the City as it is seen and experienced by its citizens and visitors. If planning is to be effective, it must guide each individual development decision. The City, in its daily decisions pertaining to whether to surface a street, to approve a residential plat, to amend a zoning ordinance provision, to enforce the building codes, or to construct a new utility line, should always refer to the basic proposals outlined within the Comprehensive Plan. The private builder or investor, likewise, should recognize the broad concepts and policies of the Plan so that their efforts become part of a meaningful whole in planning the City. The Future Land Use Map is particularly important for the City as it provides guidance and basis for the City’s decisions, protecting against undesirable or unfair practices, such as spot zoning.

Zoning and Subdivision

The usual processes for reviewing and processing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision plans provide significant opportunities for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Each zoning, development and subdivision decision should be evaluated and weighed against applicable recommendations and policies contained within this Comprehensive Plan. The Plan allows Harrah to review proposals and requests in light of an officially prepared document adopted through a sound, thorough planning process. If decisions are made that are inconsistent with Plan recommendations, then they should include actions to modify or amend the Plan accordingly to ensure consistency and fairness in future decision-making. Amending the subdivision ordinance and zoning ordinance represent two major, proactive measures that the City can take to implement Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

A Flexible and Alterable Guide

Harrah's Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a dynamic planning document – one that responds to changing needs and conditions. Plan amendments should not be made without thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration for long-term effects of proposed amendments. The City Council and other City officials should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies, and whether it will be beneficial for the long-term health and vitality of the City of Harrah.

Comprehensive plans are not rigid, unchanging documents. Once adopted, any element of a plan can be amended or changed if a petitioner demonstrates to the City Council that they have a better proposal that meets the community's vision.

Regular Review

Regular review of the Comprehensive Plan with respect to current conditions and trends should be performed. Such on-going, scheduled reevaluations will provide a basis for adjusting capital expenditures and priorities, and will reveal changes and additions that should be made to keep the Plan current and applicable long-term. Items that appear to need specific attention should be examined in more detail, and changes and/or additions should be made accordingly. By such periodic reevaluations, the Plan will remain functional, and will continue to give civic leaders effective guidance in decision-making. As Harrah grows, annual reviews should place particular attention on assessing the amount and location of nonresidential land uses shown on the Future Land Use Map (see **Figure 3**).

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission should include an agenda item twice per year to review the progress of the Comprehensive Plan implementation. This can be accomplished through an update from City staff on the progress of the action items, which action items are next, and any staff needs to complete upcoming actions. The Planning Commission should also make an annual recommendation to the City Council regarding which actions need moved into the upcoming year, or are completed and should be removed from the Plan.

Keeping it Current:

- Recommended annual review
- Comprehensive review and update every 5 to 7 years

City Council

The City Council should include an agenda item annually to amend the plan by removing the completed action items and assigning the planned actions for the upcoming year. Since the Planning Commission will be reviewing the Plan three times per year, the Planning Commission should make an annual recommendation to the City Council regarding the updates. This annual update of the plan by City Council should coincide with development of the City's annual budgeting process.

Comprehensive Review

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Comprehensive Plan should undergo a complete, more thorough review and update every five to seven years. The review and updating process should begin with a stakeholder committee similar to the one appointed to assist in the preparation of this Plan, thereby encouraging stakeholder input from the beginning of the process. Specific input on major changes should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders and major stakeholders, developers, merchants, and other citizens and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City. This input can be easily obtained by re-administering the online survey with every update of the Comprehensive Plan. An informed, involved citizenry is a vital element of a democratic society. The needs and desires of the public are important considerations in Harrah's decision-making process. Citizen participation takes many forms, from educational forums to serving on City boards and commissions. A broad range of perspectives and ideas at public hearings helps City leaders and the City Council to make more informed decisions for the betterment of the City as a whole. Harrah should continue to encourage as many forms of community involvement as possible as the City implements its Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Matrix

The following tables compile all the actions from each recommendation section into implementation tables. The information presented below is intended to summarize the recommendations throughout the Plan; see the recommendations within the referenced sections for more detail. These tables are to help the City Staff, City Council, community leaders, and other decision-makers with successful implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

| Land Use Recommendations and Tasks | Responsible Person(s) | Type | | | Timeline | | |
|--|--|--------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|
| | | Action | Policy | Budget | 1-5 Years | 6+ Years | On-Going |
| #1 Ensure Land Use Compatibility | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Amend the zoning regulations to require the following for nonresidential or multi-family development adjacent to existing or zoned single-family development: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased side/rear yard setbacks with enhanced landscaping to buffer between uses,Masonry screening walls to screen between uses,Reduced building heights near the shared property line, andRestrictions on lighting, hours of operation, and site access. | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | ● | | |
| 1.2 Consider adjacency impacts when hearing rezoning requests. | Council | | ● | | | | ● |
| #2 Promote Low-Impact Development | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Amend the zoning regulations to allow the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Clustered residential development to preserve open space within the development,Solar panels and roofing materials, andWind energy turbines (with a minimum setback equal to the height). | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | ● | | |
| 2.2 Amend the zoning regulations to require the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Full cut-off exterior light fixtures,Native and/or drought-tolerant landscaping, andPermeable surfaces for extra parking. | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | ● | | |
| #3 Facilitate Downtown Enhancements | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 Define the targeted infill area. | Staff to recommend; Council to decide | ● | | | ● | | |
| 3.2 Amend the zoning ordinance to require new development within the CBD zoning district to include historic design elements. | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | ● | | |

| Land Use Recommendations and Tasks | Responsible Person(s) | Type | | | Timeline | | |
|---|--|--------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|
| | | Action | Policy | Budget | 1-5 Years | 6+ Years | On-Going |
| 3.3 Determine the appropriate land use types in the CBD zoning district and amend the zoning ordinance as needed. Consider limiting uses to only C-1 uses instead of C-2 uses. | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | ● | | |
| 3.4 Define the important design characteristics for Downtown. | Planning Commission and Council to determine | ● | | | ● | | |
| 3.5 Plan for capital improvements and/or partnerships to enhance pedestrian and bike facilities in Downtown. | Council | ● | ● | ● | | | ● |
| 3.6 Prioritize connections from Downtown to park amenities. | Council | | ● | | | | ● |
| 3.7 As Downtown progresses, review the adjacent land uses and appearances for desirability. Plan for capital improvements to screen undesirable views and/or work with property owners to discuss voluntary relocation options. | Staff to recommend; Planning Commission and Council to determine | ● | ● | ● | | | ● |
| #4 Support Business Space | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Refine commercial space needs by conducting a community survey or market analysis. | Staff, Chamber of Commerce, and/or EOCP | ● | | | ● | | |
| 4.2 Seek potential partners for starting/operating the business space. | Staff, Chamber of Commerce, and/or EOCP | ● | | | ● | | |
| 4.3 Identify target locations for the business space. | Council | ● | | | ● | | |
| 4.4 Consider incentives such as expedited reviews, tax abatements, land donation, or other partnerships. | Council | ● | ● | ● | | | |
| #5 Capitalize on Turnpike Nodes | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 Plan for roads and other infrastructure to serve the Turnpike nodes. | Council | ● | ● | ● | | | ● |
| 5.2 Consider incentivizing voluntary annexation of the land around the nodes currently outside of the City limits. | Council | ● | | | ● | | |
| #6 Expand Existing Parks and Emphasize “Health and Wellness” Amenities | | | | | | | |
| 6.1 Conduct a needs analysis to identify amenity demand. | Council to assign Staff to research or retain a consultant | ● | | | ● | | |
| 6.2 Select expansion sites and purchase land. | Council | ● | | ● | | ● | |
| 6.3 Define the important design characteristics for the sites. | Planning Commission and Council to determine | ● | | | | ● | |
| 6.4 Incorporate a trailhead into the design at the Heritage Park expansion. | Staff or consultant to prepare park concept and site plans | ● | | ● | | ● | |
| 6.5 Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to coordinate long-term planning efforts. | Council to direct Staff or retain consultant | ● | | ● | | ● | |

| Land Use Recommendations and Tasks | Responsible Person(s) | Type | | | Timeline | | |
|--|--|--------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|
| | | Action | Policy | Budget | 1-5 Years | 6+ Years | On-Going |
| #7 Promote a Unique Brand for the City | | | | | | | |
| 7.1 Develop a branding package to include a logo, motto, and design details. | Staff or graphic design/marketing consultant | ● | | | ● | | |
| 7.2 Incorporate the brand within City materials, street signs, and throughout the community. | Staff | ● | ● | ● | | | ● |
| 7.3 Identify specific locations for gateway entry signs to define the community and allocate future funding for installation. | Staff to recommend; Council to decide | ● | | ● | | ● | |
| #8 Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations | | | | | | | |
| 8.1 Identify the area(s) appropriate for enhanced urban design elements. | Staff to propose; Planning Commission and Council to determine | ● | | | ● | | |
| 8.2 Identify an appropriate style (e.g., traditional or modern, wood or metal) for street furniture. | Staff to propose; Planning Commission and Council to determine | ● | | | ● | | |
| 8.3 Allocate future funding for landscaping and street furniture improvements within the designated urban design area. | Council | | | ● | | ● | |
| 8.4 Amend the zoning ordinance to require the following for nonresidential development within the designated urban design area: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Windows facing the sidewalks, andHigher quality building materials. | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | ● | | |

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| Facilitating Growth Recommendations and Tasks | Responsible Person(s) | Type | | | Timeline | | |
|---|--|--------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|
| | | Action | Policy | Budget | 1-5 Years | 6+ Years | On-Going |
| #9 Continue Coordination with ODOT and OTA | | | | | | | |
| 9.1 Appoint a Staff member to act as liaison to ODOT and OTA and attend meetings at least quarterly to stay informed on upcoming plans. | Staff and Council | ● | | | | | ● |
| 9.2 Develop a pedestrian and cycling plan with ODOT and the Oklahoma Bicycling Coalition. | Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve | ● | | | | ● | |
| 9.3 Request that the City's logo and branding materials be incorporated in future construction projects within Harrah. | Staff liaison to ODOT and OTA | ● | | | ● | | |
| #10 Concentrate Development in the Core Areas | | | | | | | |
| 10.1 Direct future nonresidential development to the 23 rd Street corridor, Downtown, or one of the Turnpike nodes. | Planning Commission and Council | | ● | | | | ● |
| 10.2 Consider the Future Land Use Map when evaluating rezoning requests to ensure density stays within the designated areas. | Planning Commission and Council | | ● | | | | ● |
| 10.3 Utilize water and wastewater infrastructure planning to ensure development is concentrated in the core areas. | Staff | | ● | | | | ● |
| #11 Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System | | | | | | | |
| 11.1 Maintain communication with the Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership on the status of the proposed regional trail. | Staff and EOCP | | ● | | | | ● |
| 11.2 Prioritize local trails and trailheads that connect to the proposed regional trail. | Council | | ● | ● | | | ● |
| #12 Investigate Opportunities at the Former Cookieland Site | | | | | | | |
| 12.1 Communicate the City's preferences to OTA. | Staff or Council | ● | | | ● | | |
| #13 Plan and Prioritize Roadway Improvements | | | | | | | |
| 13.1 Coordinate with Oklahoma County for maintenance of Luther Road, Peebly Road, and Dobbs Road. | Staff | ● | | | ● | | |
| 13.2 Work with the school district to evaluate opportunities for circulation improvements and/or long-term facility planning. | Staff | ● | | | ● | | |
| 13.3 Communicate the desire to relocate SH 270 along Harrah Road during the widening process to ODOT. | Staff | ● | | | ● | | |
| #14 Plan and Prioritize Water and Wastewater Improvements | | | | | | | |
| 14.1 Develop water and wastewater system master plans. | Council to retain consultant | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| 14.2 Update the City's GIS mapping system. | Staff and/or consultant | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| 14.3 Conduct a rate study and develop a capacity fee to assist with infrastructure financing for future development. | Staff and/or consultant | ● | | ● | ● | | |

“Big Ideas” Summary

Many topics in this Comprehensive Plan overlap with and influence each other. This is especially true of the catalyst projects, which are impacted significantly by physical features, development patterns, and regional connectivity. The purpose of **Figure 6. Harrah’s Big Ideas Map** is to identify the location of this Plan’s major recommendations and to illustrate their context within the community.



Connecting Heritage Park to Downtown would link the City’s two most iconic amenities. The connection could boost economic activity Downtown and expand the Park in the process. See **#6 | Expand Existing Parks and Emphasize “Health and Wellness” Amenities** on page 38.



Nodes are concentrated areas of activity or development. Nodes of nonresidential development should be encouraged around turnpike interchanges to generate tax revenue, provide amenities closer to neighborhoods, and preserve land elsewhere in the City for low density. See **#5 | Capitalize on Turnpike Nodes** on page 37 and **#10 | Concentrate Development in the Core Areas** on page 47.



Gateways mark key entrances into the City, and should be implemented as part of a broader branding initiative. See **#7 | Promote a Unique Brand for the City** on page 41.



Trailheads provide access to local and regional trail systems. A trailhead should be constructed in Harrah, ideally in a location that complements Heritage Park and/or Downtown. See **#6 | Expand Existing Parks and Emphasize “Health and Wellness” Amenities** on page 38 and **#11 | Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System** on page 48.

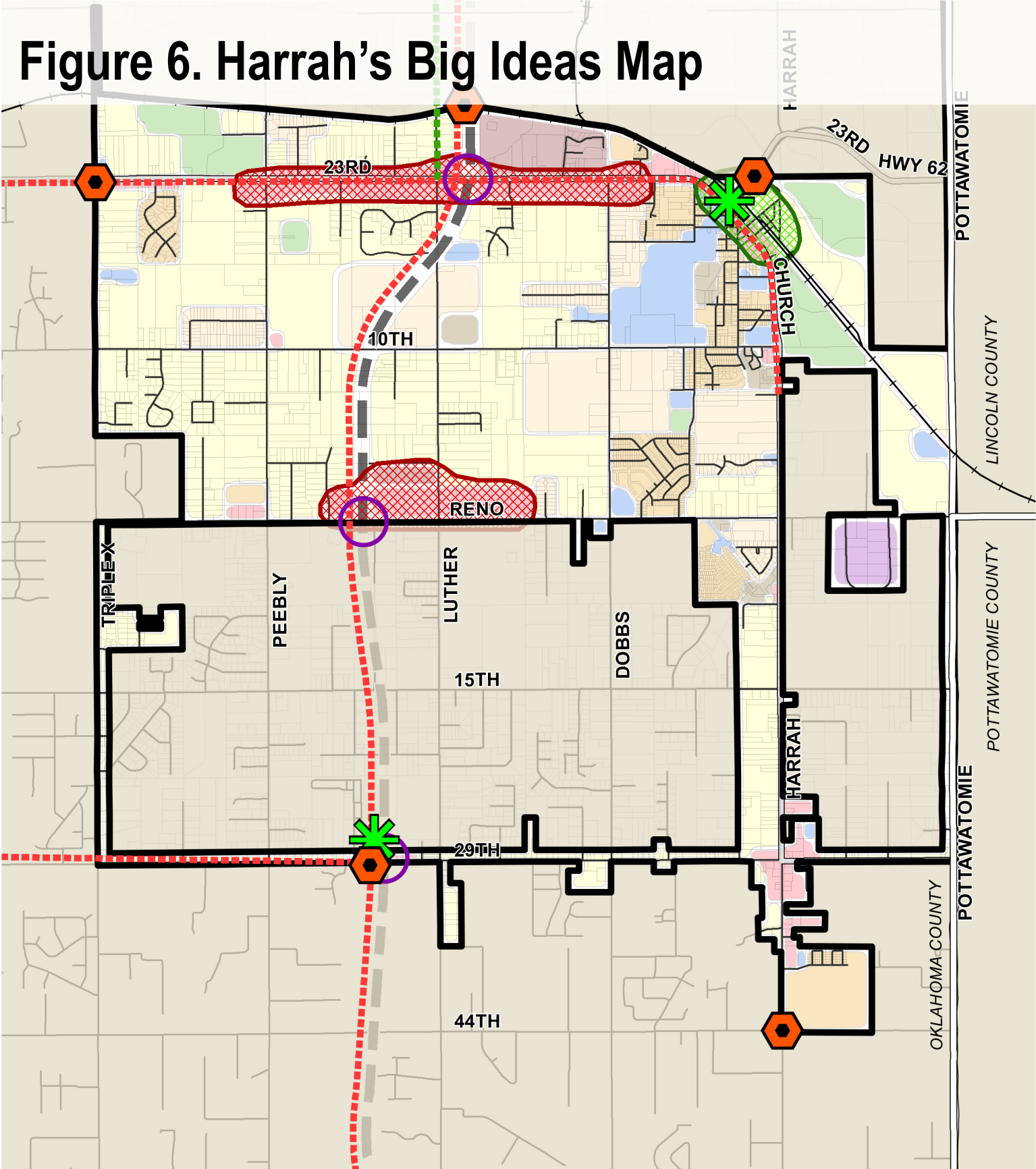


The Turnpike will have three interchanges within Harrah – one at 23rd Street, one at Reno Avenue, and one at 29th Street. These interchanges present opportunities for economic development. See **#5 | Capitalize on Turnpike Nodes** on page 37 and **#10 | Concentrate Development in the Core Areas** on page 47.



As part of the Turnpike, there is the possibility that a regional trail could be constructed in its right-of-way. This is an excellent opportunity to connect Harrah to the greater Eastern Oklahoma County region. See **#11 | Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System** on page 48.

Figure 6. Harrah's Big Ideas Map



Gateways



Potential Trailhead



Turnpike Interchange



Downtown and Park Enhancements



Turnpike Nodes

EOC Trail

Luther Road Bike Lane

Turnpike



Harrah City Limits

1

Miles



Financing Options

As Harrah plans future projects and initiatives to serve its community, it will be important for the City to assess how it will pay for these improvements. The following resources and tools may be useful to the City when implementing the Plan's recommendations.

Economic Development Authorities

Economic Development Authorities (EDAs) are often utilized in communities as a means of concentrating resources towards economic development and creating new jobs. The advantages to EDAs are that they may exist as a public entity (directly associated with municipal government) or may exist as a non-profit organization. EDAs may be created to promote and attract economic development for the Town as a whole, or they may be created to specifically address issues within a particular neighborhood or area within the community. EDAs often receive funding from both public and private sources and essentially act as an ambassador for the area that they serve. Advocacy and proactive outreach are important functions of EDAs in their attempt to explain and reach out to potential development and provide reasons and offer incentives for choosing to locate within the identified area. It is recommended that members of the EDA use this document as a guide in promoting and attracting development within the study area.

Municipal Bonds

Municipal bonds are often a way for cities to fund a variety of projects. In Oklahoma, the multi-year indebtedness can only be undertaken by legally designated special authorities. General obligation bonds are backed by the underlying credit of the City. This means that repayment can be made using a variety of sources of revenue available to the City. Debt financing through the issuance of municipal bonds is one of the most common ways to fund parks, recreation, and open space. This type of funding is a strategy wherein a municipality issues a bond and receive an immediate cash payment to finance projects and must repay the bond with interest over a set period of time ranging from a few years to several decades. Capital projects are often funded using revenue bonds which are amortized using utility revenue. These projects often include water service, sanitary sewer service, and stormwater projects. The availability of municipal bonding for parks and open space is often dependent upon the overall municipal needs financed by the City. Capital items such as purchase of land and physical improvements with a usable life expectancy of 15 to 30 or more years can be funded with municipal bonds.

Developer Requirements

This involves requiring new development to provide a dedication of land for parks (or fee-in-lieu of land), park development fees, and trail rights-of-way or easements to offset the City's costs.

Private Donations

This source of financial assistance would usually come from a citizen, organization, or business that has an interest in assisting with the development of the park system. Land dedication is not an uncommon occurrence when property is being developed. The location of a neighborhood park within a residential development offers additional value to residential units within that neighborhood, especially if the residential development is occupied by younger families with children. Once property is acquired through this method, the City should be prepared to improve the facility for use within a reasonable length of time.

Private donations may also be received in the form of funds, facilities, recreation equipment, art, or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued. A Parks Improvement Trust Fund may be set up to manage donations by service organizations, benevolent citizens, willed estates, and other donated sources. The purpose of this trust is to establish a permanent source of

principal value that will increase as donations occur. The principal cannot be decreased; however, the annual interest can be used for park development.

State, Federal and Nonprofit Grants and Loans

There are several state and federal grants and loans that provide funds to municipalities, counties, and other local units of government. Eligible projects include trails, water/wastewater infrastructure, stormwater, and beautification/revitalization projects. A listing of possible funding sources can be found in the following table.

| Funding Opportunity | Description |
|---|--|
| Water and Wastewater Infrastructure | |
| Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (ODEQ/OWRB) | Low-interest loan program for water infrastructure |
| Clean Water State Revolving Fund (OWRB) | Low-interest loan program for wastewater infrastructure |
| Water and Environmental Programs (USDA) | Multiple grant and loan programs earmarked for water and wastewater infrastructure |
| Community Development Block Grants (U.S. Department of Commerce) | Provides financing for public infrastructure, including water/wastewater, drainage, and streets |
| Financial Assistance Program (OWRB) | Low-interest loan program for water infrastructure projects |
| Rural Economic Action Plan Grants (OWRB) | Funds for municipalities for water infrastructure projects; priority for populations of less than 1,750 |
| Rural Economic Action Plan Grants (ACOG) | Funds available for water infrastructure; targeted for populations of less than 7,000 |
| Trails | |
| Recreational Trails (Oklahoma Tourism and Recreational Department) | Funding from the Federal Highway Administration to be used on recreational trails and trail-related projects |
| Surface Transportation Block Grant (ACOG) | Funding from the Federal government through ACOG; eligible projects include pedestrian facilities |
| Revitalization and Beautification | |
| Keep Oklahoma Beautiful | Grant funds are made available on a competitive basis to program affiliates for beautification projects |
| Brownfield Program (ODEQ) | A revolving loan program that provides funds to clean up contaminated properties |
| Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program (U.S. Department of Commerce) | Funding to help distressed municipalities “advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity” |

Public Improvements District (PID)

When authorized by City Council in compliance with state laws, new developments can establish a Public Improvement District (PID). As a taxing district, the PID provides funds specifically for the operation and maintenance of public facilities such as parks and major boulevards.

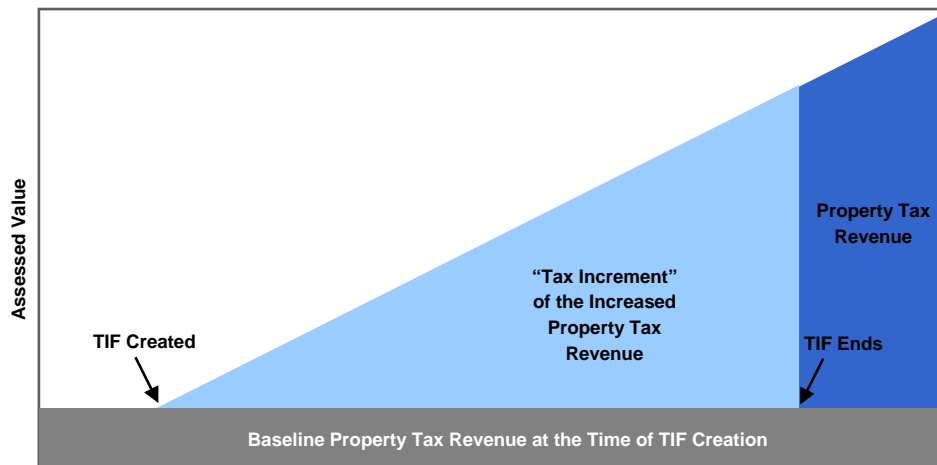
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF districts are used by local governments to finance public improvements in a defined area using the additional property tax revenues created by the increasing property values within the area. Such public improvements can include land acquisition, infrastructure, sidewalks, and other planning/engineering services. Because TIFs rely on an increase in property value, this tool is appropriate in areas where the property tax value is anticipated to increase (e.g., vacant land that will be developed for businesses). When an area is designated as a TIF district, the tax base is frozen at the current level. As development occurs within the TIF, the increased value of property, or the tax increment, is captured. The tax increments are posted to a separate fund to finance public improvements within the district.

The Government Finance Officers Association published *An Elected Official's Guide to Tax Increment Financing* (available at www.gfoa.org), which provides more detail on the following generalized steps for implementing a TIF:

- Step 1: Determine TIF feasibility
- Step 2: Create a (re)development plan for the designated area
- Step 3: Adopt the TIF
- Step 4: Implement the program for the set term
- Step 5: Evaluate and end the TIF

The City should begin with Step 1 to evaluate the feasibility and appropriateness of a TIF within Harrah.



Partnership with the School District and County

The City should investigate opportunities to share park facilities and their associated cost with both the local school districts and counties. The City, school districts, and counties have many common goals. Additionally, assets and costs can be shared between the entities to help meet each entity's specific needs. For example, the City may purchase land next to a future school site and a school district may install the facilities, such as a playground, which can be enjoyed by the entire community. As a result, the entire community benefits because each entity can generally save tax dollars than if a park site is developed independently.