



Town of Luther Comprehensive Plan



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Cover photo (top) of Luther Pecan Festival provided courtesy of Luther Register News and AiroSurf Communications

Section 1:

Community Snapshot

Introduction

The purpose of this **Community Snapshot** is to understand Luther'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:

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



Town History

The Town of Luther is located in the northeastern corner of Oklahoma County on the Lincoln County line. The Town is over 15 square miles in area, borders Oklahoma City to the southeast, and is the only EOCP community that does not border another partner municipality. Luther is the smallest of the study area municipalities by population, with a 2016 population of 1,237 residents (*U.S. Census American Community Survey*). The Town of Luther was named after Luther Jones (son of Charles Jones and the namesake of Luther Aldrich) and incorporated in 1905. Luther was served by two railroads (the St. Louis & Oklahoma City Railroad and the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway); however, both railroads suspended service to Luther following WWII.

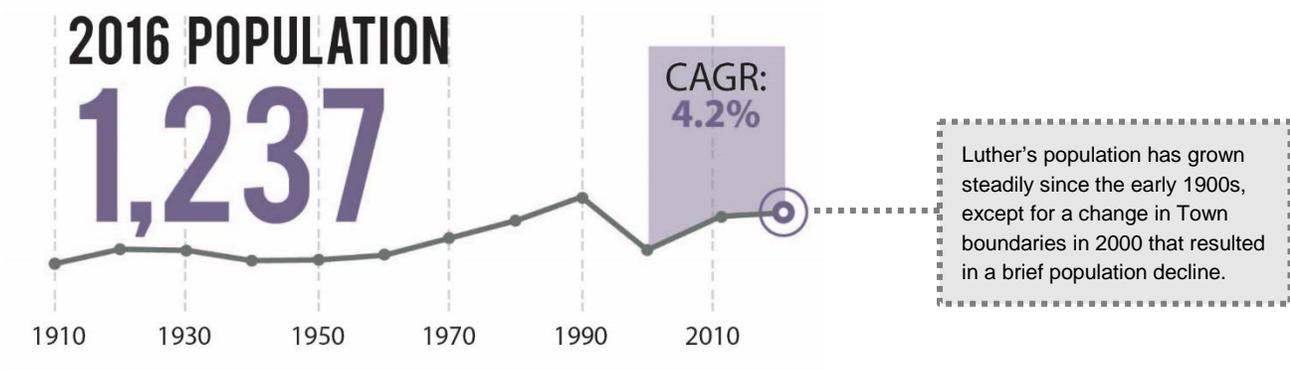
(Oklahoma Historical Society)

Local Planning

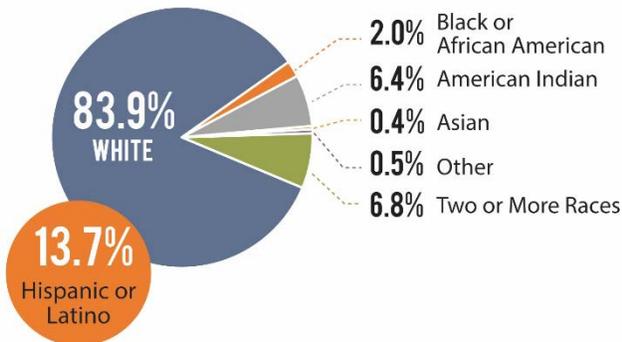
This Comprehensive Plan marks the first known major planning effort in Luther. As the Town grows, future planning efforts, such as thoroughfare or park plans, should be carried out in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan.

Demographics

Understanding population characteristics can help Luther 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.



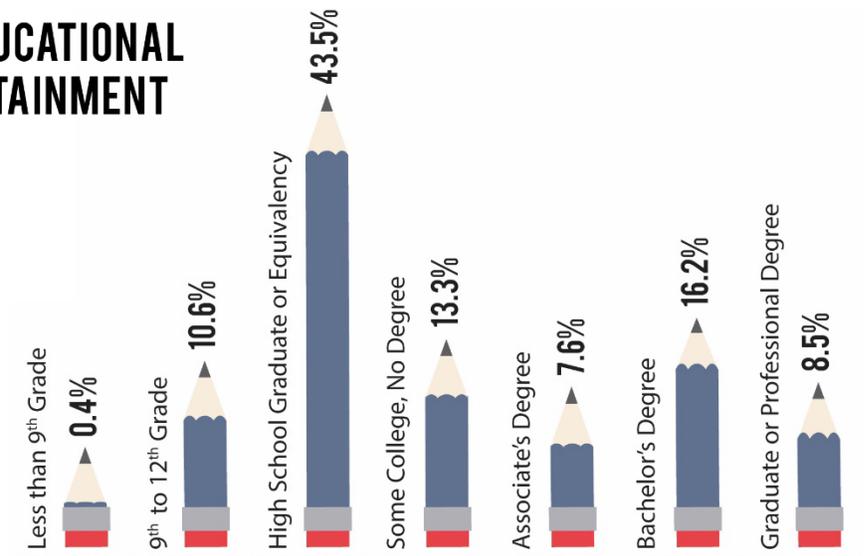
RACE & ETHNICITY



Luther's median age is slightly higher than Oklahoma County's overall median age of 34.3 years.

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

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



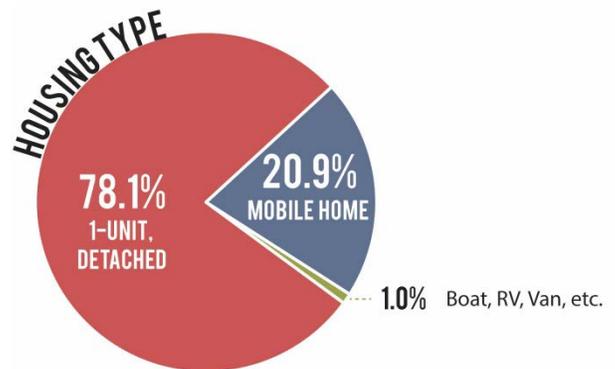
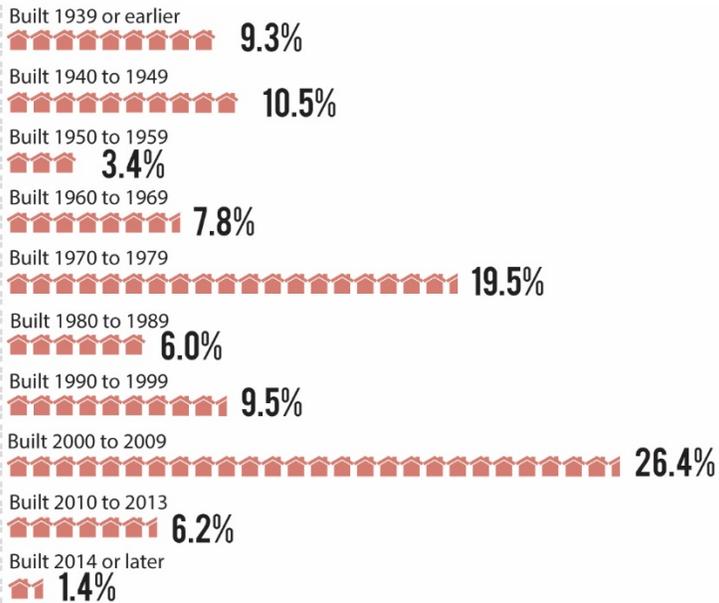
Housing Characteristics

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.

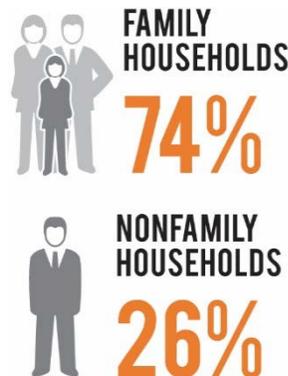
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

497

The age of the Town'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 Luther is \$124,000 compared to \$137,500 across Oklahoma County.

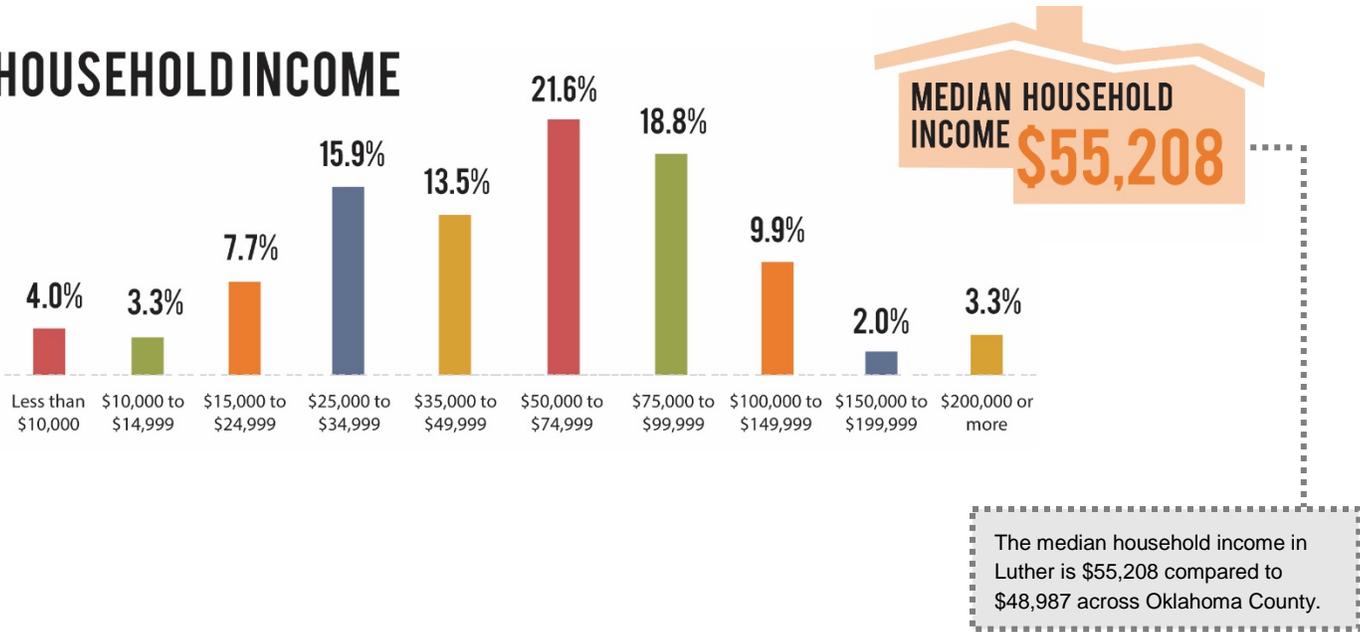


Family households are those with two or more related people living together, while nonfamily households are those with unrelated occupants.

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



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:



32.2 MINUTES

is the average commute time to work.

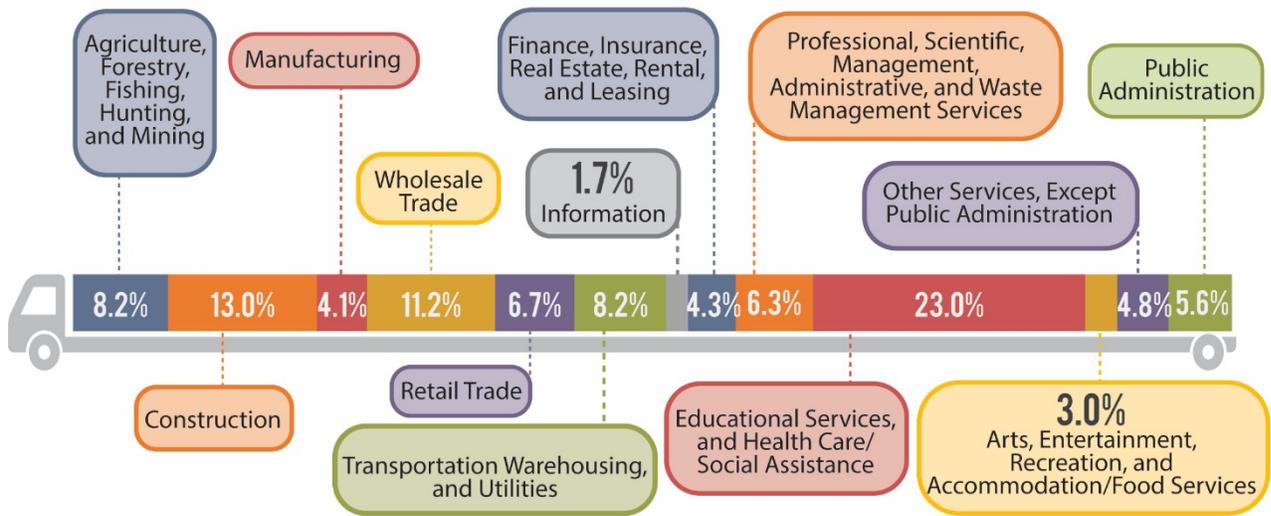
The average commute time in Luther is 32.2 minutes compared to 20.9 minutes across Oklahoma County.

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.

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 Town Staff to determine whether decisions are ultimately in conformance with Luther's long-term vision as determined by its residents. Luther's vision for the future is identified through public input and through the previously discussed planning context in which the Town exists.

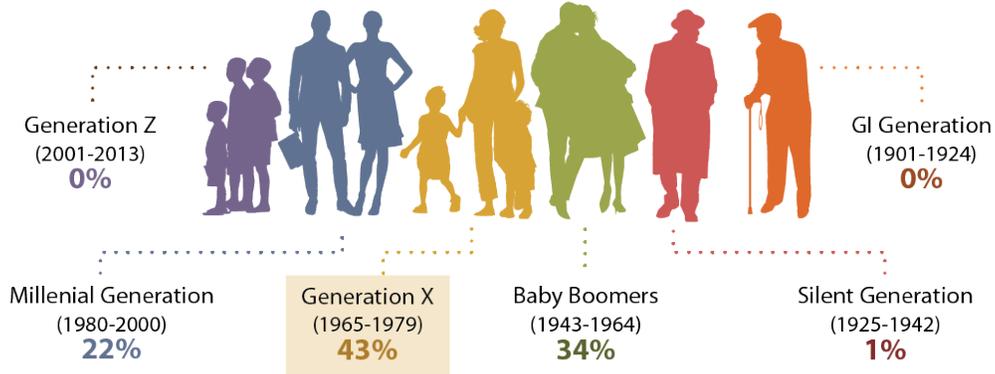
Public Input

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 Luther, this included an online survey, Advisory Committee, and independent public meetings; these elements are outlined in the remainder of this section.

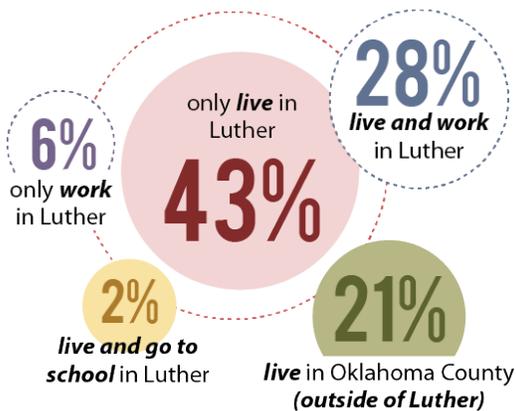
Online Survey

An online survey was posted to solicit public input from August to September 2017. During that period, 122 participants responded to the survey. The survey asked a range of questions about backgrounds, preferences, concerns, needs, and land uses.

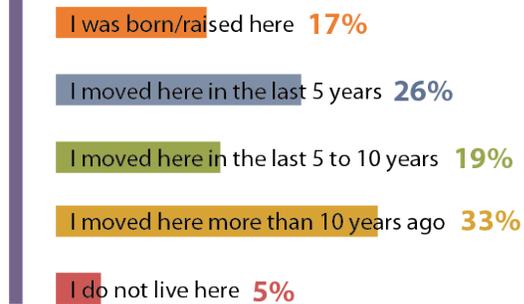
WHAT GENERATION ARE YOU A MEMBER OF?



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

54%
Good or Excellent

34%
Fair

12%
Poor or Other/No Opinion

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF LIFE?

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



is the **greatest short-term concern** (1 to 3 years) for residents.



MAINTAINING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY is the **greatest long-term concern** (5+ years) for residents.



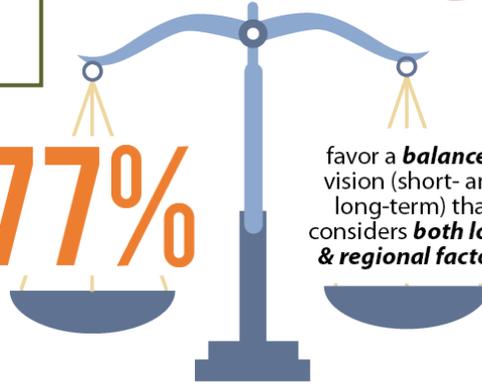
69%+

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



77%

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



89%

of households do **less than half** of their shopping locally.



34%

would prefer to drive less to buy goods and services.



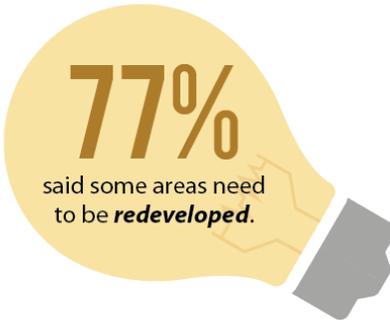
favor traditional **suburban-style development** and estate homes, ranches or ranchettes (low density, single family).

50%+

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



48%



77%

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

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

Advisory Committee Meetings

September 27, 2017 | Project Kick-Off

The comprehensive planning consultants met with Luther's Advisory Committee in September 2017 to formally kick off the Town'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 Town'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 Town.



DRAFT | May 21, 2018

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 Town’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?

Downtown:

Local retail and single family

Highway 66 leading into Downtown:

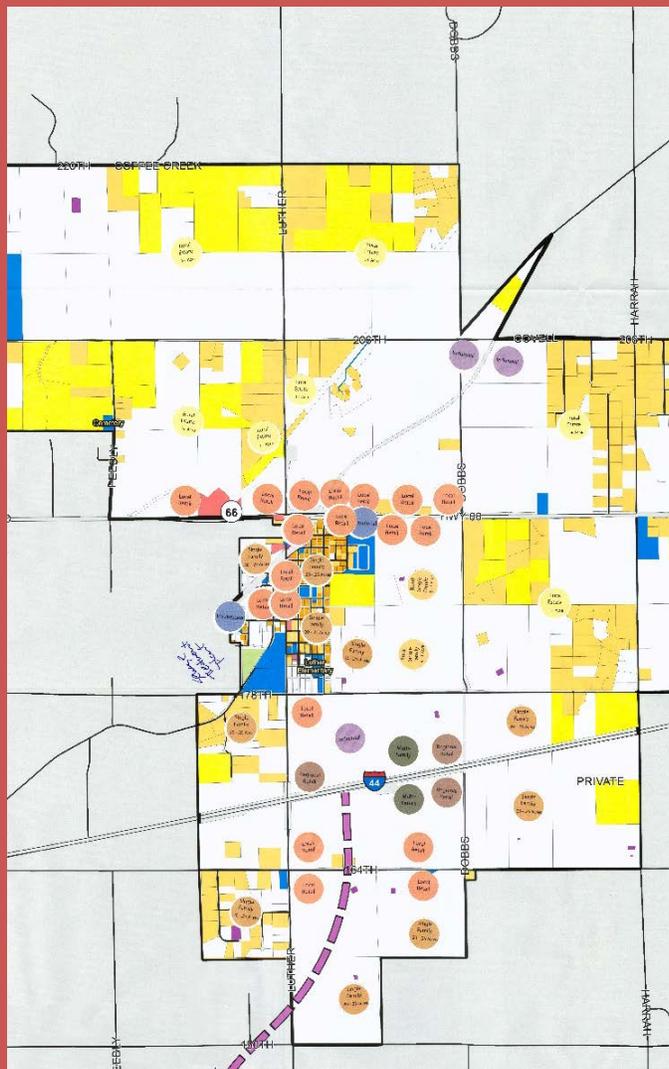
Local retail

Northeast Loop and Turner Turnpike:

Local retail, regional retail, and multifamily

Northern, western, and eastern portions of the Town:

Rural estate and rural single family



Advisory Committee Visioning Exercise



WHAT WORDS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY?

Growing; on the cusp of change, increased local interest

Small town that needs to be preserved

Rural; focus is moving back to agriculture in many places



WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

Perceived resistance to change; inefficient use of resources

No zoning map to correspond with ordinance

Undesirable uses in core area

Deteriorating structures; need for demolition

Ability to secure revenue and provide infrastructure

Unsure how to catalyze growth; limited existing amenities

Development-friendly, but no land use predictability; cumulative zoning

Hydraulic analysis needs to be considered

Signage and wayfinding for tourism



WHAT IS YOUR VISION?

Small ranchette homes

Higher quality nonresidential development (no strip development)

Spend money in town

Walkability and bikeability (66 to Turnpike)

Hotels near turnpike

Maintain rural atmosphere; preserve the core of Downtown; separate commercial areas; protect the character of Main Street

Distinct look and feel Downtown

Pride in being a Route 66 community

Commercial/tax base needs

No clutter on 66



WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY'S VALUES?

Desire to attract visitors and shopping/retail amenities

Be a place where visitors want to return

Local history, civic pride are valued

Desire to be "on the map"

Community events and locations (Pecan Festival, orchard, etc.)

February 21, 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 Town Council consideration. Key topics discussed at the meeting included the following:

- Turnpike alignment and access points,
- Desire for a community gathering space in Downtown, and
- Bike lanes and amenities.



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 Town's future. To ensure that the recommendations further the community's interests, each recommendation references at least one Focus Area.



Downtown

Downtown Luther is a unique and iconic part of the local identity. Preserving and enhancing this amenity is of the utmost importance.



Sense of Community and Identity

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



Rural Character

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



Quality of Life

In Luther, the term "quality of life" refers to creating a place where people want to live, work, and spend time. Important elements are housing options, recreational amenities, and local services.



Economic Development

Economic development is important for several reasons – primarily providing employment and tax revenue to fund infrastructure improvements. The future Turnpike, SH 66, and Downtown are great economic development opportunities for the Town.

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

Physical factors, both natural and constructed, impact how Luther can grow and develop.

Natural Constraints

Floodplain

There is a large amount of floodplain throughout the Town limits. Within Luther, 2,099 acres are designated as floodplain by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); much of this land runs through the central part of the Town. 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, Luther has high and low point elevations of 1,056' and 880' respectively. This means that there is up to 176' of elevation differences in the Town. The location of any significant slopes or changes in elevation will be important to consider in stormwater planning.

Constructed Constraints

Railroad

An active Stillwater Central Railroad (SLWC) railroad runs through the middle of Luther from northeast to southwest. The more active a railroad line is, the more of an impediment it can be to cross-town connectivity. With some development already existing in the northwestern portion of Luther, the railroad could become a barrier without an adequately connected network.

Northeast Oklahoma County Loop

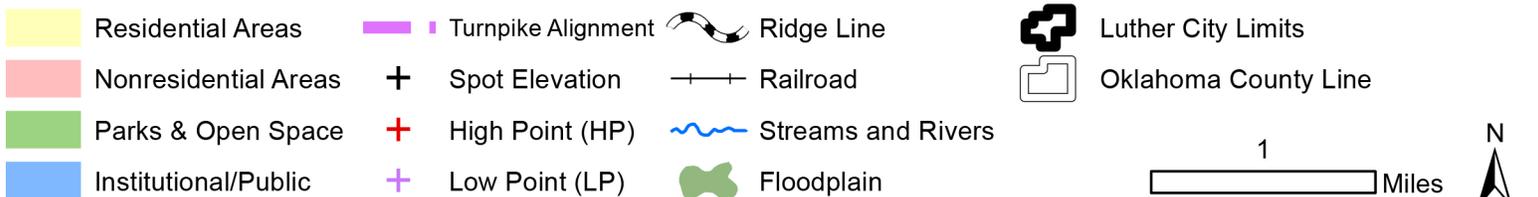
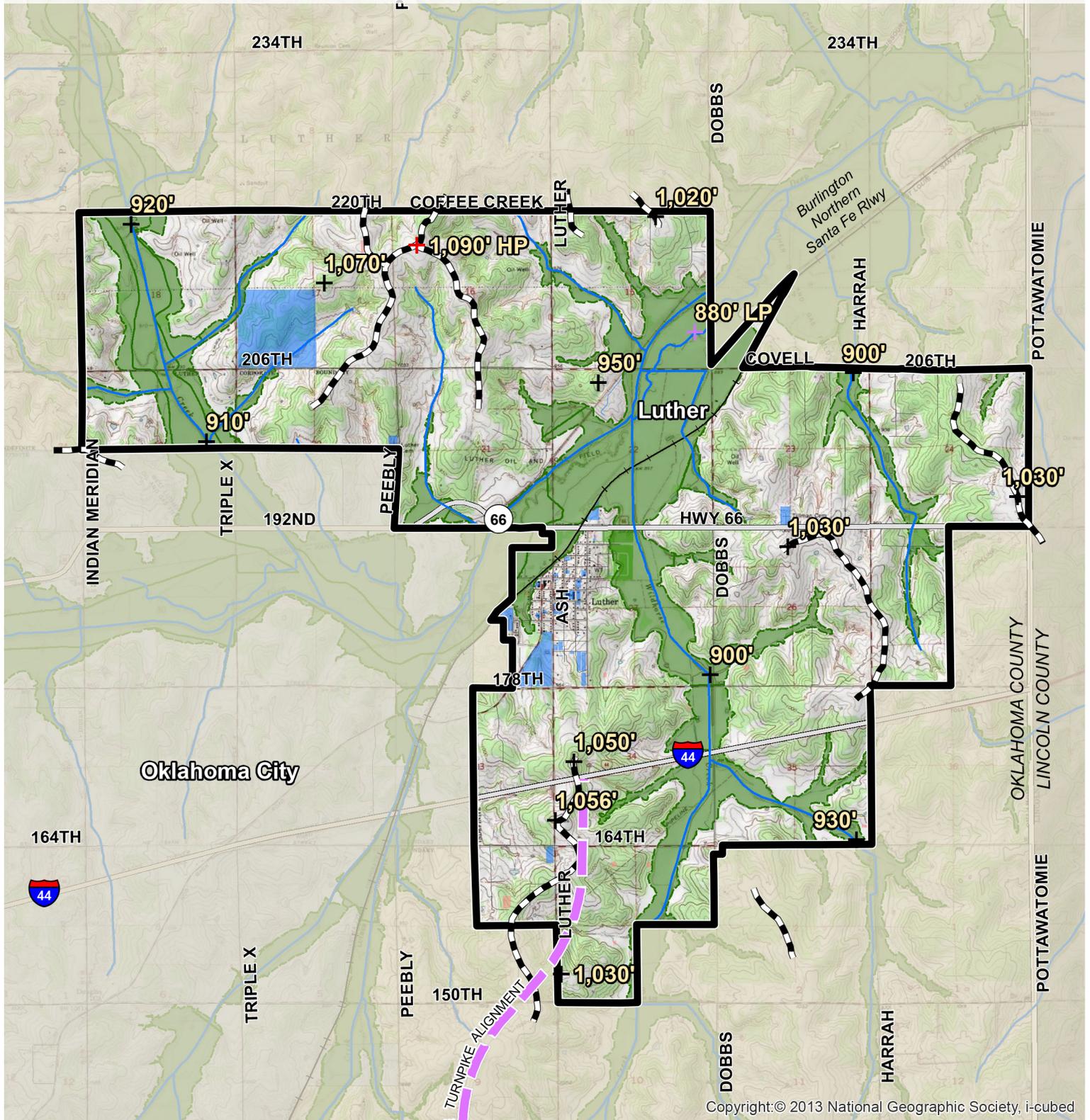
The anticipated Northeast Oklahoma County Loop, often referred to as “the Turnpike”, will be a 21-mile turnpike originating in Luther to connect I-40 to I-44; however, the Turnpike will not provide direct access via frontage roads to Luther in the near term.

Municipal Boundaries

Luther’s current municipal limits span 9,751 acres, or 15.2 square miles. Approximately 35% of the Town is developed, meaning the Town can accommodate a significant amount of greenfield development within its boundaries.



Figure 1. Luther Physical Constraints Map



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Existing Land Use

To accurately assess Luther's future land use needs, it is important to analyze the Town's present land use pattern. The pattern of land uses that exist today within the Town 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 Luther are currently being used. This will allow for land use recommendations to be tailored to the needs of the Town's citizens. To analyze the land use trends within Luther, 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 Town 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 Luther's current land use pattern.



Existing Land Use Patterns

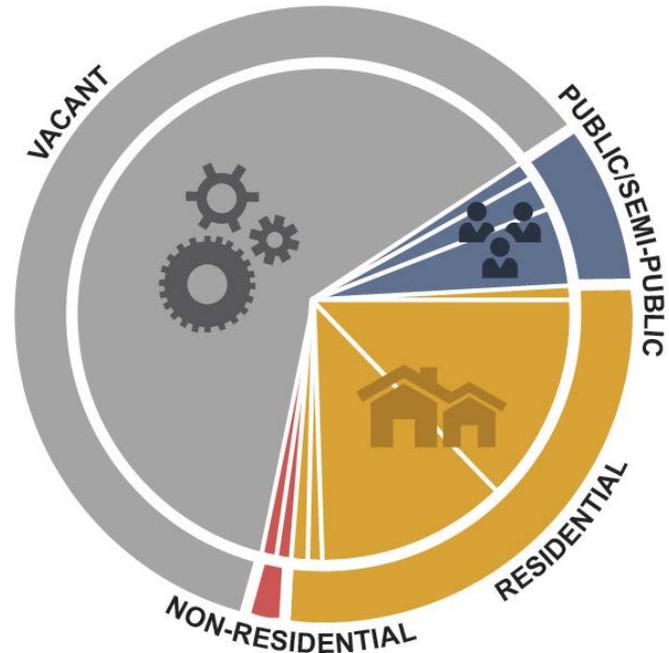
- Current town limits: 9,751 acres, or 15.2 square miles.
- Luther can accommodate growth - only 34.6% of the Town is developed.
- 75% of existing development is for residential uses, specifically low density
- Nonresidential uses only account for 1.4% of development.
- Most of the higher density development, including Downtown is located between Highway 66 and 178th Street.
- Larger lot residential development of a ½ acre or larger lots is spread throughout, with higher concentrations to the northwest and east.

Existing Land Use Types and Distribution

The graphic to the right is a depiction of the land use types that exist in Luther today, as shown on the Existing Land Use Map in **Figure 2**. The categories correspond to the use descriptions below.

About two-thirds of the land within Luther is currently categorized as Vacant. The largest developed land use is the Residential category – primarily the Rural Single-Family and Rural Estate classifications.

With relatively low amounts of higher density housing and nonresidential services, Luther's land use character is generally a low-density development pattern and a rural atmosphere. The Downtown core is the Town's activity center and highest intensity area.



VACANT | 66%

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

INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC | 2%

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 | 5%

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 | <1%

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 | 25%

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 | <1%

½ to 1 acre; Larger lot subdivisions or ranchettes.

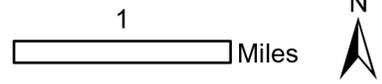
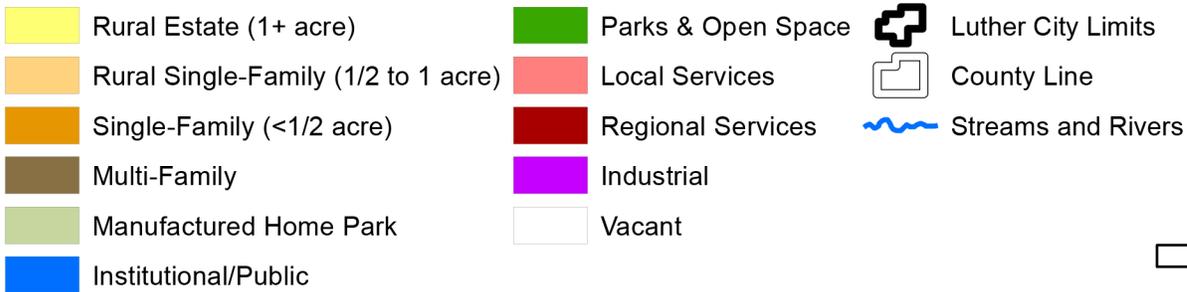
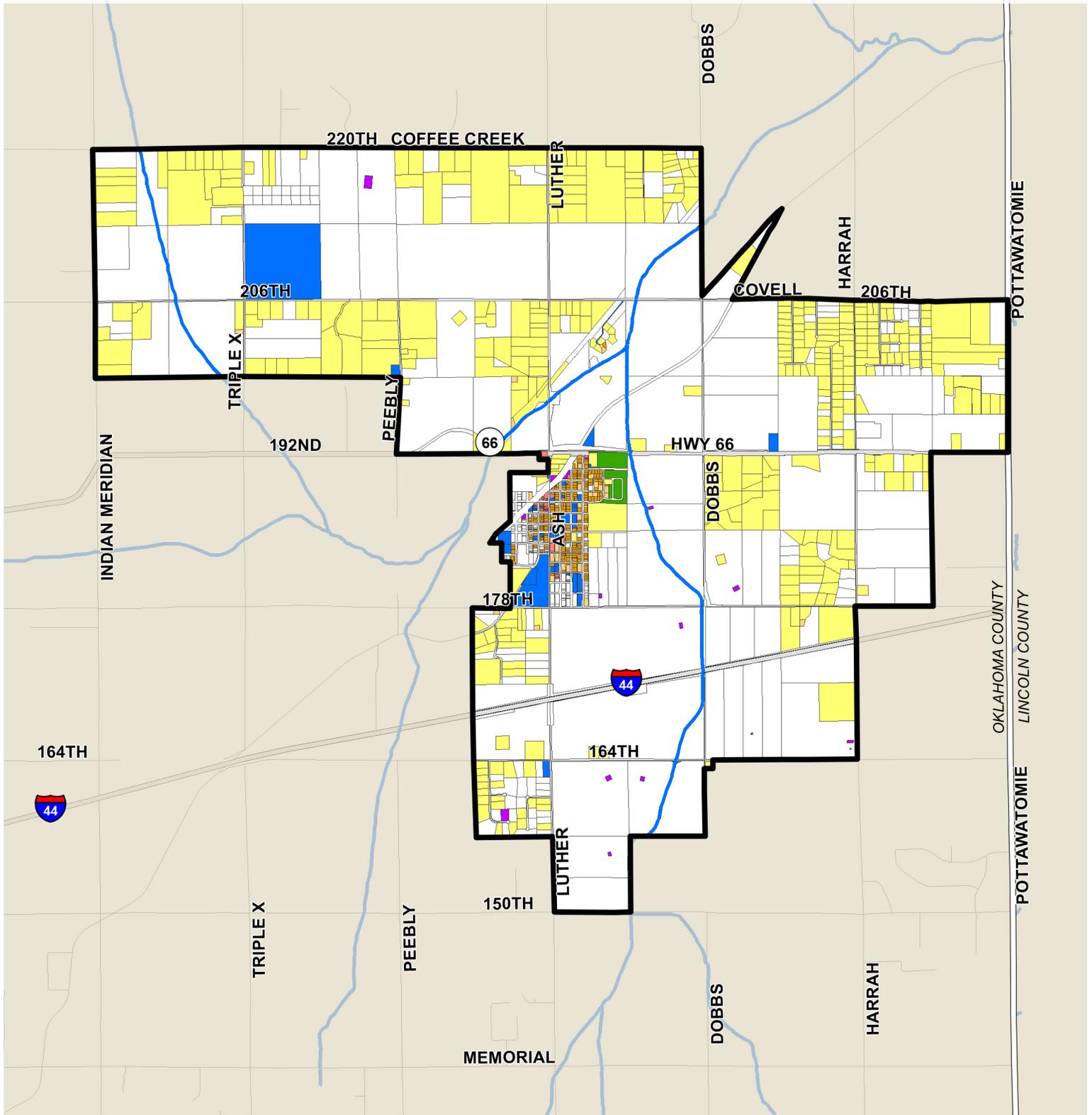
SINGLE-FAMILY | 1%

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.

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. Luther Existing Land Use Map



Future Land Use

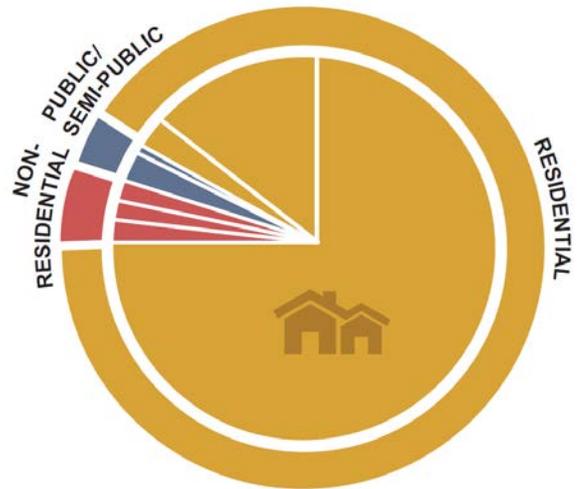
The Future Land Use Map, shown in **Figure 3**, is an illustration of the recommended land uses for Luther. The Map is used to guide future decisions regarding zoning and development standards. The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map and does not change zoning or how a property can be used; the Town's 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 Luther'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, with the largest category remaining as Residential, with about 93% of the Town proposed as one-half acre lots or larger. This Map also proposes continue building the Downtown core and pursuing economic development opportunities resulting from the new Turnpike.



INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC | 2%

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.

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 | <1%

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 | 76%

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

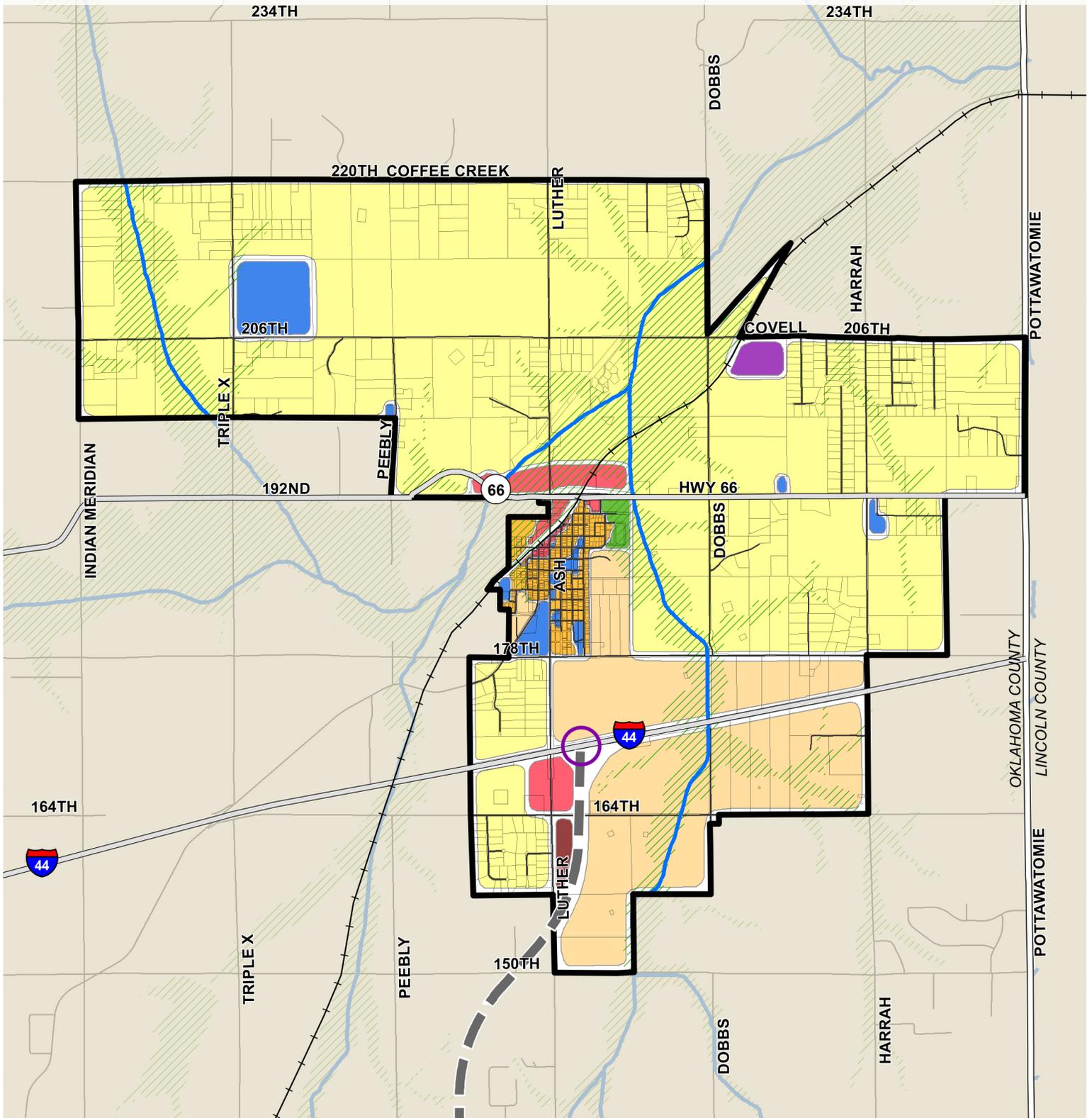
RURAL SINGLE-FAMILY | 17%

½ to 1 acre; Larger lot subdivisions or ranchettes.

SINGLE-FAMILY | 2%

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.

Figure 3. Luther Future Land Use Map



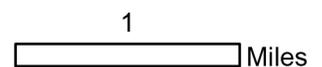
Land Uses

- Rural Estate (1+ acre)
- Rural Single-Family (1/2 to 1 acre)
- Single-Family (<1/2 acre)

- Local Services
- Regional Services
- Industrial
- Institutional/Public
- Parks & Open Space

- Turnpike Interchange
- Turnpike Alignment
- Luther City Limits

- Streams and Rivers
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain



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 Luther. Each recommendation references the corresponding Focus Areas, as noted on page 16.

#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 Town’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



Downtown



Rural Character



Economic Development



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 Town’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 | Encourage Historic Preservation

Focus Area(s):   

Luther has a number of well-preserved historic buildings. Many communities with a historic building inventory choose to promote and enhance their historic areas for the purposes of economic development and civic pride.

A historic preservation designation could be used to identify and protect structures of historic significance. Additionally (or alternatively), the Town may wish to consider implementing historic design standards in areas of historic character, which would ensure that future development is consistent with the existing historic character. Such regulations would entail amendments to the Town’s zoning regulations and the designation of a Historic Preservation Officer and/or Commission, who would be responsible for reviewing and approving proposals for new development or major renovations.

Examples of New Development with Historic Design Characteristics



#4 | Create a Central Gathering Space in Downtown

Focus Area(s): 

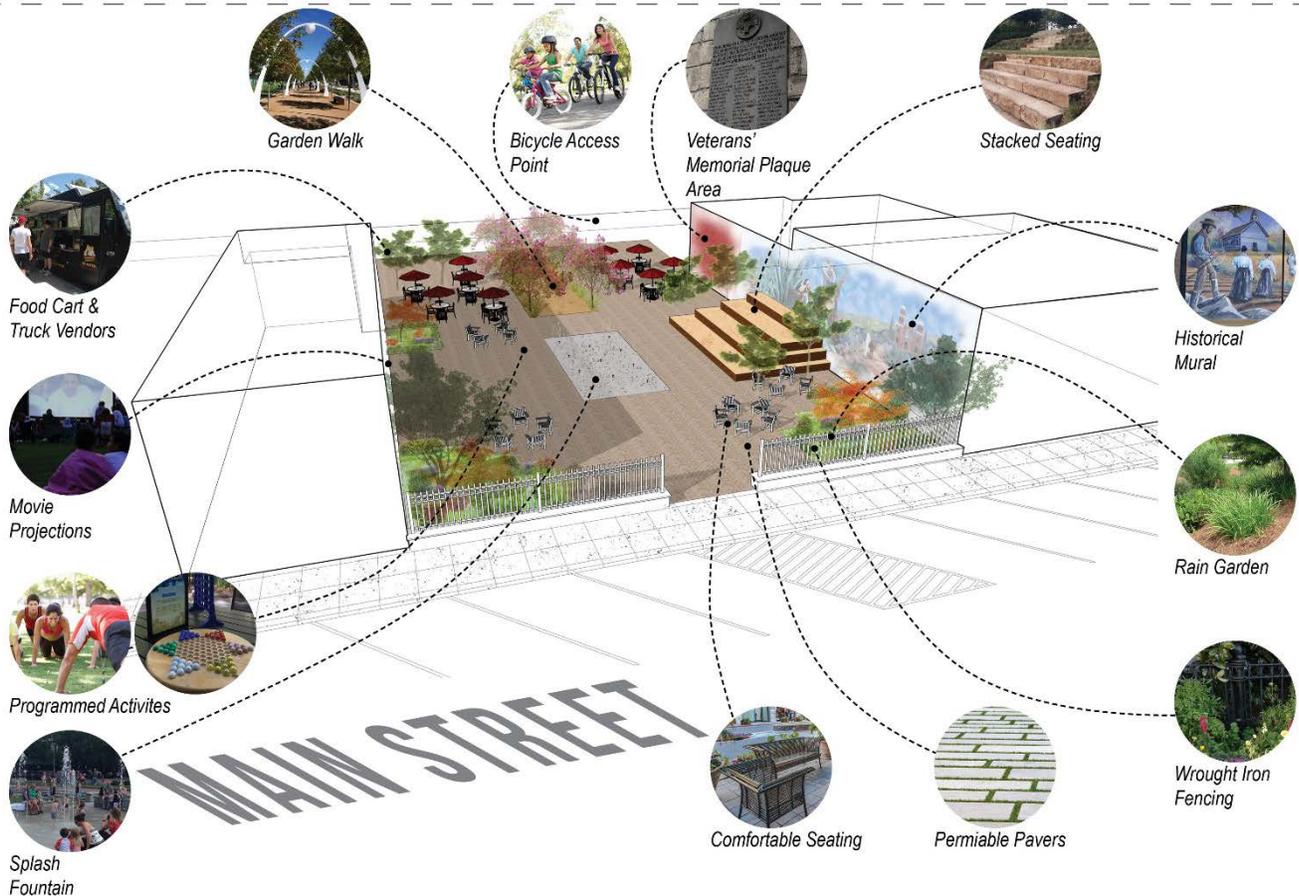
Public gathering space can allow for recreation activities, informal gatherings, and organized events. These spaces, whether for a small family reunion or a regional festival, can be as simple as pavilions in a park, or as ornate as a plaza with an amphitheater.

The Town can play a significant role in this endeavor by identifying and acquiring land to serve this purpose. There are several qualities that would be ideal for event and gathering space in Luther:

- Highly visible and centrally located, preferably in Downtown or between Downtown and Highway 66 to connect to the proposed regional trail system; and
- Large enough to provide flexible space, including year-round, community-oriented greenspace and special event space with infrastructure such as a stage, seating, pavilions, or plaza.



LUTHER VETERANS' MEMORIAL AND FREEDOM PARK



Catalyst Project | Create a Central Gathering Space in Downtown

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

Needs Analysis

A fundamental part of planning for public space is identifying what amenities are needed. Conducting a needs analysis will help the Town invest its money efficiently while providing the community with needed amenities. A community survey is one of the easiest ways to conduct such an assessment. However, there are also consultants who do this type of work based on community demand and surrounding availability.

Site Selection and Purchase

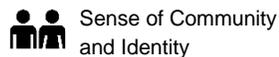
It is recommended that Luther select a site in Downtown or between Highway 66 and Downtown. The one-quarter acre parcel owned by the Luther Historical Society in the core of Downtown may be an ideal location for this concept. However, the Town should evaluate several options and communicate with property 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 54).

Image and Design

As a point of civic pride, gathering space should be visible and fit into the community's existing development patterns. These facilities should be located so that they serve as a hub to surrounding use, drawing activity into areas of the Town where it can be complemented with other services and amenities. Because they are often associated with community branding and identity (see **#6 | Create a Unique Brand for the Town**), 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.

Ensure On-Going Maintenance

Encourage local organizations to “adopt” the park to assist in fund raising and basic maintenance needs. Such organizations may include a Downtown business association, local Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops, faith-based organizations, or veterans’ groups.



#5 | Host Additional Community Events

Focus Area(s):    

Community events and attractions, especially those held in the Downtown, can help Luther achieve its goals related to Downtown and preserving the Town’s rural character – all while strengthening community pride and sense of place. In November 2017, the Town hosted the first annual Pecan Festival in Downtown Luther, celebrating pecan season and highlighting the local pecan orchard, Couch Farms.

Creating new, successful community events or expanding those that already exist often requires a substantial amount of funding, planning, coordination, and marketing – which is why smaller municipalities often choose to co-program events with various community groups or organizations.

Many community events that come to mind are large annual productions, such as the Pecan Festival. While hosting more of these festivals this is certainly a goal that Luther can aspire to, there are also opportunities for smaller events that may require fewer resources, such as movies in the park, small concerts, Downtown block parties with food trucks, or a farmers market.

Regardless of the size of planned events, Luther should identify opportunities (programming, funding, partnering, etc.) for another small event or series annually, with the plan of gradually expanding the number and size of events offered to the community.



Bottom photo provided courtesy of Luther Register News and AiroSurf Communications

 Downtown

 Rural Character

 Economic Development

 Sense of Community and Identity

 Quality of Life

#6 | Create a Unique Brand for the Town

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 Town should identify unique aspects of the community – perhaps Historic Route 66, or the #LutherLocal campaign – to highlight in these features.

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

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

Gateways should mark the entrance to Luther along Route 66, Turner Turnpike, Hogback Road, and Luther Road (see **Figure 6**). Such gateways could include monument signs, large-scale landscaping, lighting, artwork, and other features to define the area by highlighting the Town's unique character.

Downtown Branding Examples from the City of Choctaw



#7 | Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations

Focus Area(s):    

The use of design in a key area, such as Downtown, 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 Town’s chosen brand (see **#6 | Create a Unique Brand for the Town**) 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 Town should first identify appropriate areas to implement urban design enhancements – likely along Main Street beginning at SW 2nd Street and extending along NE 2nd Street; and along 1st Street between Apple Street and Ash Street.

Urban design elements can be in the public realm (i.e., the Town’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 Town 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 Town, or a façade improvement matching grant. The Town could also amend the zoning ordinance to require certain design elements in new construction within Downtown.



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 Town's transportation connections to the larger region.

Highway 66

Highway 66 is an important east-west highway for Luther, connecting to Oklahoma City to the west and Fort Smith to the east. This highway is nationally known as the historic "Route 66", extending from Illinois to California. It is a two-lane highway, with left- and right-turn lanes onto Luther Road. This roadway is currently being widened to incorporate shoulders of 12 feet, which can accommodate bicyclists. Highway 66, also referred to locally as Danforth Road, spans a distance of four miles through Luther. Downtown Luther can be easily accessed from Highway 66 by Luther Road or Dogwood Street.

Interstate 44

Passing through Luther, Interstate 44 (or "Turner Turnpike") connects Oklahoma City to Tulsa, and will be the terminus for the current Northeast Loop construction activity. Although the Turner Turnpike passes through Luther's Town limits, drivers must use Hogback Road outside of the Town limits to access Downtown Luther.

Northeast Loop

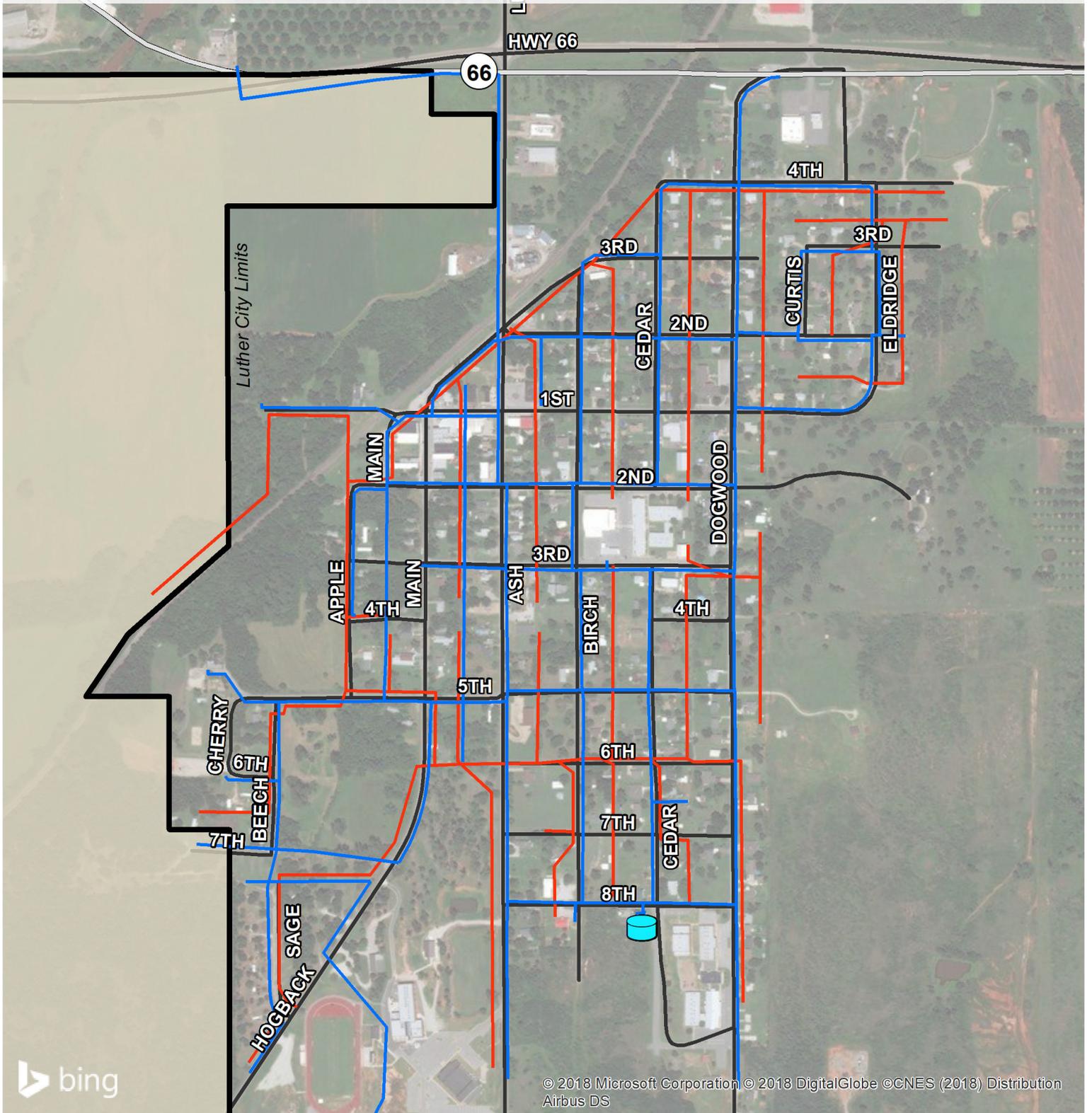
The anticipated Northeast Oklahoma County Loop, often referred to as "the Turnpike", will be a 21-mile turnpike connecting I-40 to I-44, which will terminate in Luther. This roadway will be an important north-south corridor for eastern Oklahoma County. At the present time, the Turnpike is not planned to have entry or exit points in Luther. Although there are no plans in place at this time, it is possible in the future that the Turnpike could extend through Luther, northwest toward Guthrie or Seward.

Existing Infrastructure

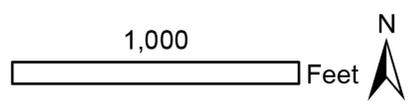
The Town currently has water lines serving much of the Downtown core area, supported by three wells and one standpipe for water storage. Each of the wells contain chlorination facilities. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping data for the Town's water lines, hydrants, wells, and valves was completed by ACOG in 2015. A Hydraulic Analysis/Master Plan was completed by Infrastructure Solutions Group/Mehlburger Brawley in September 2016. The report concluded that the system currently meets pressure requirements during average, max, and peak day usage. However, the system does not have adequate fire flow protection; does not meet hydrant minimum line size regulations; and does not meet minimum requirements for hydrant spacing.

The Town currently has wastewater lines serving much of the Downtown core area, supported by 4- to 8-inch gravity mains, two lift stations with associated force mains which deliver the wastewater to lagoons located on the south-west side of town. The Town has not completed a wastewater master plan, which would identify improvements necessary to accommodate future growth and maintain existing assets. GIS mapping data for the Town's wastewater lines, manholes, and lift stations was completed by ACOG in 2015.

Figure 4. Luther Existing Infrastructure Map



-  Water Supply
-  Water Line
-  Wastewater Line
-  Luther City Limits
-  County Line



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Facilitating Growth Recommendations

This section identifies strategies to facilitate future growth in Luther. Each recommendation references the corresponding Focus Areas, as noted on page 16.

#8 | Continue Coordination with ODOT and OTA

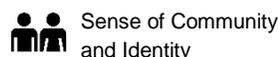
Focus Area(s):   

Developing and maintaining a good transportation network is important for creating a quality, sustainable transportation system. The Town should actively stay engaged with the local and regional transportation organizations to implement the Town’s desired transportation initiatives. More specifically, the Town 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 Town 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. If/when the Turnpike extends north through Luther, the Town should communicate its preferred alignment and access points (e.g., an exit on Highway 66) to OTA; it may be beneficial to initiate this discussion before any plans are made.

To enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, the Town 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 **#6 | Create a Unique Brand for the Town**, the Town should work with ODOT to implement town branding initiatives along major highways. Elements of the Town’s brand can be integrated into ODOT’s facilities through the placement of signage or public art within the right-of-way, including a Town logo on overpasses or similar infrastructure, or utilizing a particular color scheme.



#9 | 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 Luther, a trailhead is proposed on the west side of Luther Road, between Route 66 and 1st Street. This location could attract bicyclists from Route 66; provide a connection into Downtown Luther for bicyclists or pedestrians to patronize local businesses; and a location for the proposed gathering space (see **#4 | Create a Central Gathering Space in Downtown**). A low-intensity or passive recreational space would be a good use of this land, which is located within the floodplain and would be costly to develop.

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



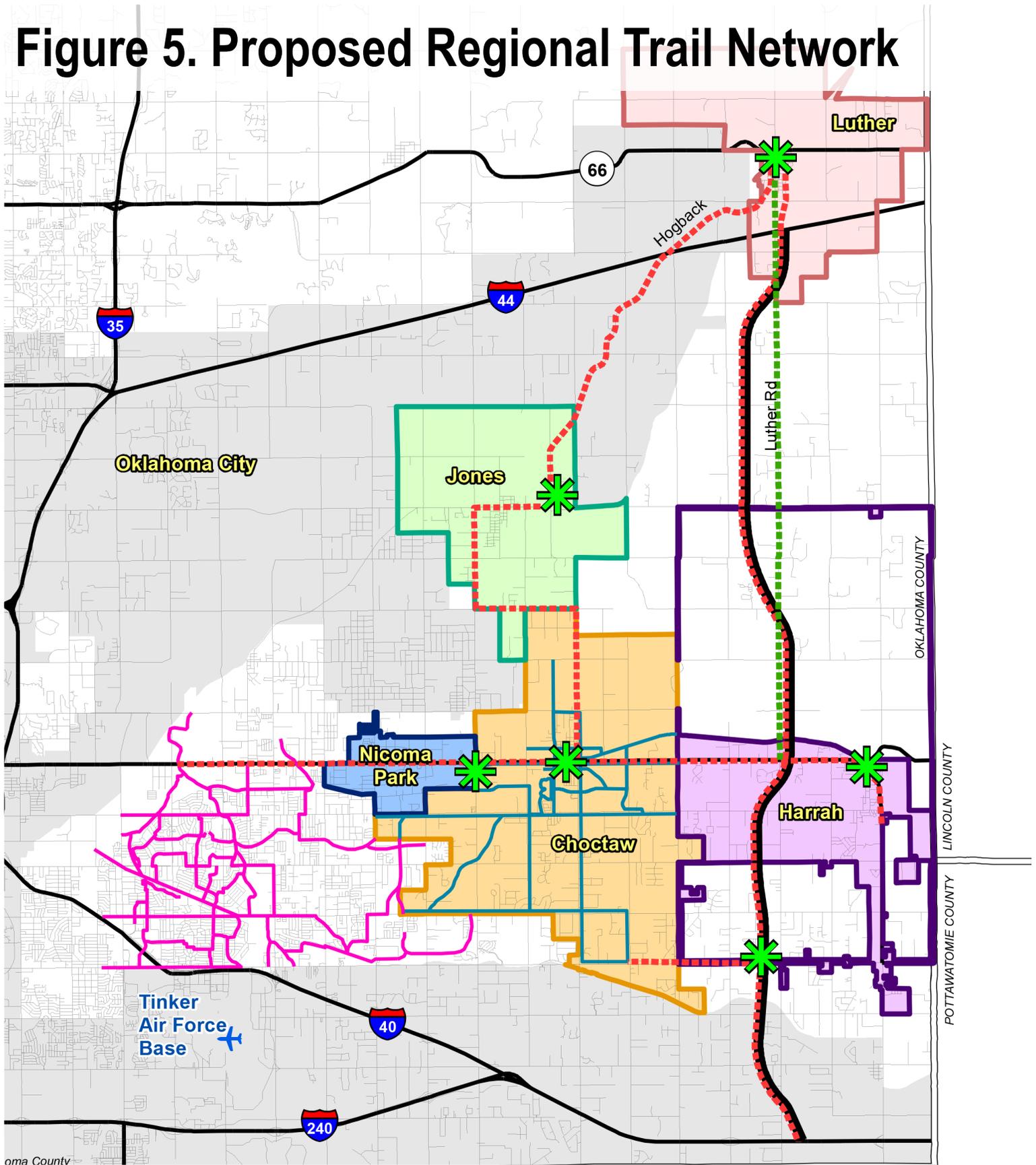
Example of Natural Surface Off-Street Trail



Example of a Concrete Surface Off-Street Trail



Figure 5. Proposed Regional Trail Network



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

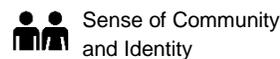
#10 | Concentrate Development in the Town’s Core through Downtown Expansion and Infill

Focus Area(s):     

Downtown Luther is the heart of the Town and is ideal for establishing a vibrant core for the community. Expanding and enhancing Downtown Luther is fundamental in creating an identity for the community. As shown in the Future Land Use Map in **Figure 3**, a significant portion of land located near the core is recommended to transition to Local Services.

Because much of the land surrounding Downtown is developed, redevelopment will be an important part of Downtown’s renaissance. “Infill” refers to new construction on a lot that was previously developed and is surrounded by developed properties. Infill is important because it helps to revitalize older areas of the Town while reducing infrastructure costs associated with new development. These areas generally already have roads and water/sewer lines in place, so there is no need to extend infrastructure services.

By focusing effort in the Town’s core, the Town will be fiscally-responsible when investing in the community. Focusing efforts in one area will have the result of reducing the need to spread resources between several projects which diminishes the overall impact on the community. Additionally, concentrating development in the Town core will allow to the rural areas to maintain their character without the disruption of commercial development.





Catalyst Project | Plan for Downtown Expansion and Infill

The proposed Downtown expansion and infill recommendation has been identified as a catalyst project, which is intended to be a big idea that could help the Town 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 Town should define the target Downtown infill area where future development should be focused and possibly incentivized. Once this area is identified, the Town communicate with property owners to identify their interest in developing or selling land. For high-priority parcels, the Town acquire property and work with a developer to construct buildings that meet the vision for Downtown.

Market Study and Land Use Study

While it is useful for the Town to know that it wants to expand Downtown, it will be even more important for the Town to understand which desires are realistic, given market trends and Luther's existing conditions. This will require a market study, which can identify the internal and external market demands for the types of industries that Luther wishes to attract. A market study can also be useful in identifying appropriate industries that the Town might not have considered. With this information, Luther can work with entities like the EOCP to identify and recruit ideal employers.

Upon completion of a market study, Luther should consider doing the following:

- Identify key parcels for development and specific companies to recruit for those spaces; and
- Align recruitment to targeted industries, start-ups, and spin-offs.

Incentives and Partnerships

Incentives play an increasingly important role in recruiting businesses. The Town should be prepared to partner with the economic development community to develop marketing materials and incentive packages, such as "fast tracked" development processes or fee waivers. Relevant partners will likely include the EOCP and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

Review the Appropriate Use Types and Forms

Downtown is currently zoned "B District (Business and Commercial)", which allows a wide range of land use types that may not be pedestrian-oriented or appropriate scale. The Town should consider creating a CBD zoning district that meets the vision for Downtown.

Development form is another important consideration that should be reflected within the zoning regulations. Design enhancements, such as facades, awnings, canopies, landscaping, signs, windows, are important elements in building the feeling of a downtown. These elements are described in **#7 | Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations**.

#11 | Plan and Prioritize Roadway Improvements

Focus Area(s):  

Luther relies on Oklahoma County, ODOT, and OTA to maintain roadways within the Town limits. The Advisory Committee expressed concern regarding the quality of road surfacing materials, as well as the lengthy timeline for the widening of SH 66. Representatives from the Town should maintain communications with these entities to convey these roadway needs for future consideration.

The Advisory Committee also commented on the need for sidewalk installation and improvements, particularly for school routes along Luther Road. Sidewalks should be planned and prioritized along school routes and within the Downtown to improve connectivity in denser areas.

Additionally, the Town may wish to amend its Planning, Zoning, and Development Ordinance to require sidewalks in future subdivisions. The Ordinance currently addresses sidewalks in Section 12-363 – “Sidewalks may be required along officially designated major streets. Sidewalks may be required along any minor streets where deemed essential for public convenience or safety by the planning commission. All required sidewalks shall be paved and shall be constructed in accordance with standards established by the town trustees.” This section could be amended to require sidewalks on at least one side of residential subdivision developments of at least ten lots, for example.

Example of a Meandering Sidewalk in a Residential Subdivision



#12 | Plan and Prioritize Water and Wastewater Improvements

Focus Area(s):  

The water master plan proposed six phases of water system improvements. Depending upon the timing and location of new development, the proposed improvement phases will need to be re-evaluated to better align with growth opportunities. Additionally, the Town may want to consider spurring development in strategic areas with the expansion of the water system. The wastewater system will need to be evaluated for capacity to serve proposed developments. The systems may need to be extended to serve development where infrastructure does not exist or the Town will need to identify where private septic systems will be utilized.

It is recommended that the Town conduct a system-wide wastewater master plan 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 Town 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 Town to develop a perspective of short-term, and long-term wastewater flows, capacity requirements, and identify areas with rehabilitation needs.

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

Section 5:

Action Plan

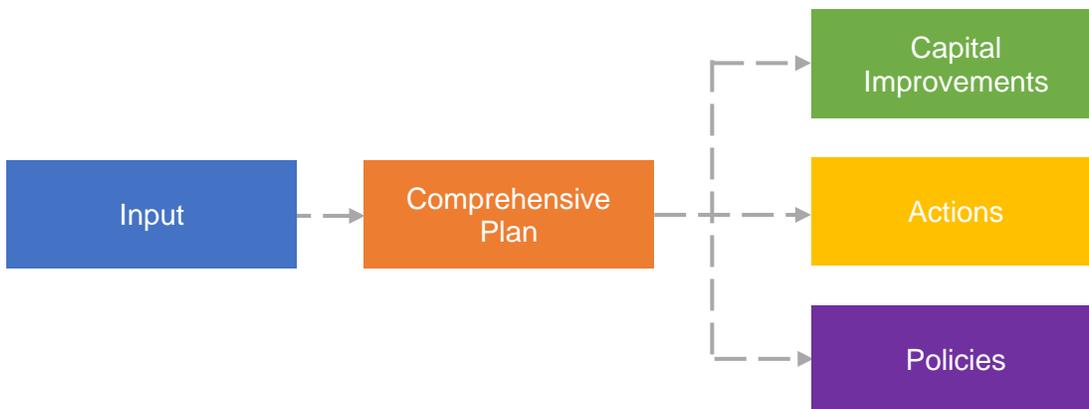
Introduction

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
- “Big Ideas” Summary
- 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 Town leaders, staff, and other decision-makers can easily identify the steps that are necessary to achieve the vision for Luther 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 Town 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 Town 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 Luther’s physical form. The composite of all such efforts and facilities creates the Town 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 Town, 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 Town. The Future Land Use Map is particularly important for the Town as it provides guidance and basis for the Town’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 Luther 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 Town can take to implement Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

A Flexible and Alterable Guide

Luther'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 Town Council and other Town 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 Town of Luther.

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 Town 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 Luther 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 Town 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 Town 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

Town Council

The Town 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 Town Council regarding the updates. This annual update of the plan by Town Council should coincide with development of the Town'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 Town. 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 Luther's decision-making process. Citizen participation takes many forms, from educational forums to serving on Town boards and commissions. A broad range of perspectives and ideas at public hearings helps Town leaders and the Town Council to make more informed decisions for the betterment of the Town as a whole. Luther should continue to encourage as many forms of community involvement as possible as the Town 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 Town Staff, Town 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, and Restrictions 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, and Wind 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, and Permeable surfaces for extra parking. 	Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve	●			●		
#3 Encourage Historic Preservation							
3.1 Formally identify the area of historic character.	Staff to identify area; Council to approve	●			●		
3.2 Develop guidelines or standards to ensure future development in that area is consistent with the historic character.	Staff to draft proposed text; Council to approve	●			●		
3.3 Create a Historic Preservation Commission or Officer designation to review new development or major renovations within the historic area.	Council to appoint position(s)	●			●		

Land Use Recommendations and Tasks	Responsible Person(s)	Type			Timeline		
		Action	Policy	Budget	1-5 Years	6+ Years	On-Going
#4 Create a Central Gathering Space in Downtown							
4.1 Conduct a needs analysis to identify local demand for specific amenities.	Staff to conduct a community survey, or Council to retain consultant	●			●		
4.2 Evaluate/select site and purchase land to accommodate the desired facility, ideally located between Downtown and Route 66.	Staff, Council, and EOCP	●		●		●	
4.3 Define the important design characteristics for the space and structures, including local branding, pedestrian and bike amenities, and possibly event space.	Staff to propose; Planning Commission and Council to determine	●				●	
4.4 Incorporate a trailhead into the space's design to connect to the proposed regional trail.	Staff or consultant to prepare park concept and site plans	●		●		●	
#5 Host Additional Community Events							
5.1 Designate a volunteer Events Committee to consider opportunities and plan seasonal and/or annual community events.	Council	●			●		
5.2 Evaluate opportunities for partnerships between the Town and local organizations/entities to co-host events.	Events Committee	●	●				●
#6 Create a Unique Brand for the Town							
6.1 Develop a branding package to include a logo, motto, and design details.	Staff or graphic design/marketing consultant	●			●		
6.2 Incorporate the brand within Town materials, street signs, and throughout the community.	Staff	●	●	●			●
6.3 Identify specific locations for gateway entry signs to define the community and allocate future funding for installation.	Staff to recommend; Council to decide	●		●		●	

Land Use Recommendations and Tasks	Responsible Person(s)	Type			Timeline		
		Action	Policy	Budget	1-5 Years	6+ Years	On-Going
#7 Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations							
7.1 Identify the area(s) appropriate for enhanced urban design elements.	Staff to propose; Planning Commission and Council to determine	●			●		
7.2 Identify an appropriate style (e.g., traditional or modern, wood or metal) for street furniture.	Staff to propose; Planning Commission and Council to determine	●			●		
7.3 Allocate future funding for landscaping and street furniture improvements within the designated urban design area.	Council			●		●	
7.4 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, and • Higher quality building materials. 	Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve	●			●		

Facilitating Growth Recommendations and Tasks	Responsible Person(s)	Type			Timeline		
		Action	Policy	Budget	1-5 Years	6+ Years	On-Going
#8 Continue Coordination with ODOT and OTA							
8.1 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	●					●
8.2 Proactively communicate with OTA to request future access into Luther from the new Turnpike.	Staff and Council	●			●		●
8.3 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	●				●	
8.4 Request that the Town's logo and branding materials be incorporated in future construction projects within Luther.	Staff liaison to ODOT and OTA	●			●		
#9 Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System							
10.1 Maintain communication with the Eastern Oklahoma County Partnership on the status of the proposed regional trail.	Staff and EOCP		●				●
10.2 Prioritize local trails and trailheads that connect to the proposed regional trail.	Council		●	●			●
#10 Concentrate Development in the Town's Core through Downtown Expansion and Infill							
10.1 Define the target Downtown infill and redevelopment area.	Staff to propose; Planning Commission and Council to determine	●			●		
10.2 Conduct a market study and land use study to determine the appropriate industries, identify potential locations, and align recruitment efforts accordingly.	Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve	●			●		●
10.3 Identify potential incentives and partnerships.	Staff and Council	●		●	●		●
10.4 Amend the zoning ordinance to limit the types of uses allowed in the core Downtown area and ensure quality development standards.	Staff or consultant to draft text; Planning Commission to review; Council to approve	●			●		
#11 Plan and Prioritize Roadway Improvements							
11.1 Maintain coordination with Oklahoma County, ODOT, and OTA to communicate concerns regarding roadway surfacing materials and expediting the SH 66 widening project.	Staff, Planning Commission, and Council	●			●		●
11.2 Identify areas of the Town's core for the installation of new sidewalks and improvements of existing sidewalks. Prioritize the areas based on proximity to schools and Downtown. Allocate future CIP funding for installation/improvements.	Staff, Planning Commission, and Council	●		●	●		●

Facilitating Growth Recommendations and Tasks	Responsible Person(s)	Type			Timeline		
		Action	Policy	Budget	1-5 Years	6+ Years	On-Going
11.3 Consider amending the Planning, Zoning, and Development Ordinance to require sidewalks in future residential subdivisions.	Planning Commission and Council to provide direction; Staff or consultant to prepare amendment text	●			●		
#12 Plan and Prioritize Water and Wastewater Improvements							
12.1 Prioritize the planned water system improvements to align with growth opportunities.	Staff and Council	●			●		
12.2 Develop a wastewater system master plan.	Council to retain consultant	●		●	●		
12.3 Update the City's GIS mapping system.	Staff and/or consultant	●		●	●		
12.4 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. Luther’s Big Ideas Map** is to identify the location of this Plan’s major recommendations and to illustrate their context within the community.



Downtown is one of Luther’s most important assets, and its continued renaissance relies attracting new visitors and businesses to Town. For these reasons, Downtown connectivity is vital. See **#3 | Encourage Historic Preservation** on page 27, **#7 | Incorporate Urban Design Elements in Key Locations** on page 32, and **#10 | Concentrate Development in the Town’s Core through Downtown Expansion and Infill** on page 40.



Nodes are concentrated areas of activity or development. A node of nonresidential development should be encouraged between the new Turnpike and Highway 44 to generate tax revenue, provide amenities closer to neighborhoods, and preserve land elsewhere in the Town for low density. See **#10 | Concentrate Development in the Town’s Core through Downtown Expansion and Infill** on page 40.



Gateways mark key entrances into the Town, and should be implemented as part of a broader branding initiative. See **#6 | Create a Unique Brand for the Town** on page 31.



Trailheads provide access to local and regional trail systems. A trailhead should be constructed in Luther, ideally in a location that complements Downtown. See **#4 | Create a Central Gathering Space in Downtown** on page 28 and **#9 | Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System** on page 38.



The Turnpike will have an interchange but will not provide direct access to Luther. Still, traffic from the Turnpike could be a boost for economic development. See **#8 | Continue Coordination with ODOT and OTA** on page 37

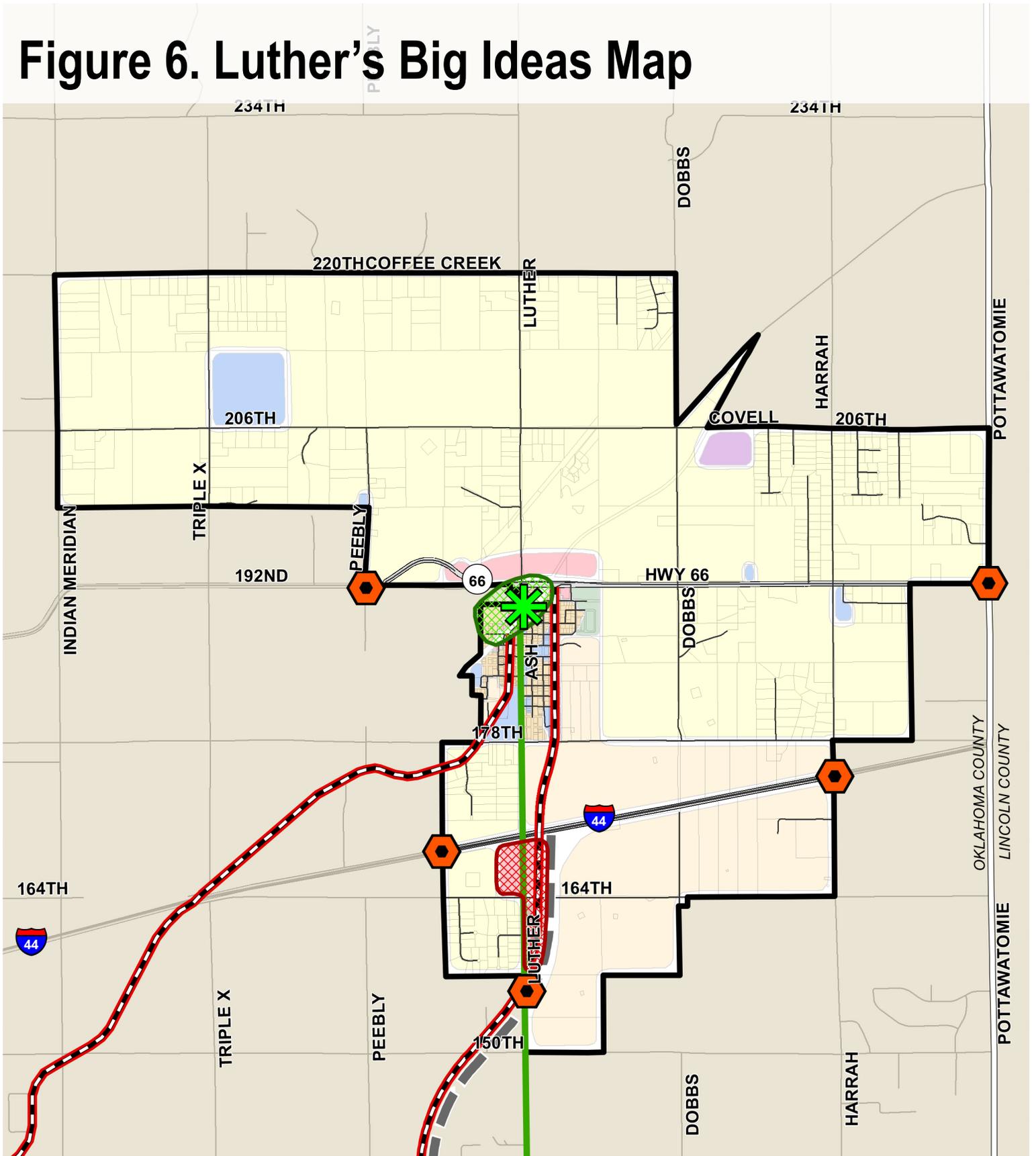


As part of the Turnpike, there is the possibility that a regional trail could be constructed in its right-of-way. This is an excellent opportunity to connect Luther to the greater Eastern Oklahoma County region. See **#9 | Plan for a Local and Regional Trail System** on page 38.

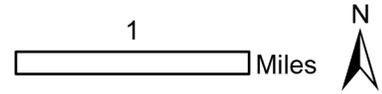


Although no plans have been made, nor are anticipated in the near future, the Turnpike could potentially be extended north through Luther at some point in the future. See **#8 | Continue Coordination with ODOT and OTA** on page 37.

Figure 6. Luther's Big Ideas Map



-  Gateways
-  Potential Trailhead
-  EOC Trail
-  Luther Road Bike Lane
-  Turnpike Alignment
-  Connection to Downtown
-  Turnpike Node
-  Luther City Limits
-  County Line



Financing Options

As Luther plans future projects and initiatives to serve its community, it will be important for the Town to assess how it will pay for these improvements. The following resources and tools may be useful to the Town 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 Town. This means that repayment can be made using a variety of sources of revenue available to the Town. 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 Town. 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 Town'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 Town 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 Town 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.

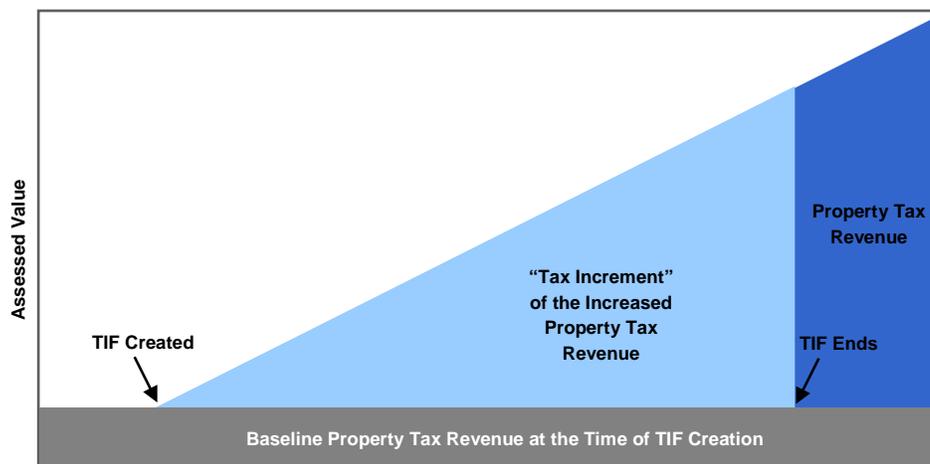
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

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 Town should begin with Step 1 to evaluate the feasibility and appropriateness of a TIF within Luther.



Partnership with the School District and County

The Town should investigate opportunities to share park facilities and their associated cost with both the local school districts and counties. The Town, 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 Town 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.