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Chapter 1: Our Vision

A vision is the first step toward understanding the past, recognizing existing circumstances, collectively deciding on a preferred scenario, and setting a course of action for realizing what is envisioned in the future. This Community Vision documents the citizens' expectations for "tomorrow" and forms a framework by which each individual element of this plan follows. It is long-range and intentionally idealistic as a means to stretch the imagination of what is possible. Casting a vision allows the community to come together to decide what it will be like in 20 years, and to put a plan in motion to achieve it.

Beginning in early 2004, the citizens and leaders of Altus began to tackle the difficult question of how best to plan for the long-term future of the community. While the community has had great success in its past and recent history, it is now confronted by a new era and a unique set of circumstances, which creates both opportunities and uncertainties. The decision was made for the community to decide on a course of action that offers the greatest likelihood of continued success. To do so, a shared vision of the preferred future is required to guide the community and its leaders over the next two decades and beyond. This plan acknowledges that cooperation and consensus-building among local and regional jurisdictions, agencies, and stakeholders is essential for realizing our vision of Altus in the Year 2025.

In response to this need, the City initiated the process of developing the "I Believe in Altus" Comprehensive Plan. The plan development process was designed to offer a unique opportunity for residents and community leaders to come together and engage in a dialogue about the future of the community. The purpose of this process was to create a vision for the future of Altus that reflects the hopes and aspirations of the residents, and is based on a realistic understanding of existing conditions and opportunities facing the community. A clear vision of what the community aspires to achieve is the first step in charting a path to address the complex decisions facing the community in both the near and distant future. Rather than simply reacting to events as they unfold, a shared vision will enable the community to develop a proactive plan for achieving the ideal future imagined by the community through this comprehensive planning process.

About this Plan

The Altus Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for long-range planning of Altus and its three-mile City-County planning area. It provides a broad context in

To have a vision means to look ahead: to imagine the future. The ability to imagine or dream the future – to create in our minds something beyond our present reality – is a distinctly human skill. History has shown that seeing something in the mind's eye is often the first step to actually achieving it.

As used in planning, visioning is a process by which a community envisions its preferred future. It chronicles the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of a community and helps citizens agree on what they want their community to become.

-Michael Chandler, Associate Professor and Community Planning Extension Specialist, Virginia Tech

Cities plan for many reasons, among them are to:

- Take advantage of the community's strengths and advantages while solving its limitations and challenges
- Protect the interests of property owners by determining in advance how, when, and where the community develops
- Direct rather than react to new development by timing and sequencing the improvement of infrastructure and provision of municipal services
- Seize economic opportunities through support of existing businesses, attraction of new industry, and fostering business start-ups
- Enhance the features that contribute to quality of life, such as parks and recreation areas, preservation of historic resources, conservation of natural resources, and quality public safety services
- Offer assurance as to the City's commitment to manage its future to ensure compatible and sustainable development

which local decisions may be made to foster a sustainable environment, a prosperous economy, and a high quality of life for all residents. It balances population, housing, and employment growth with the preservation of open space and prime agricultural lands as well as infrastructure needs.

Why Plan? - The decision to engage in a comprehensive planning process was done principally to exact control over the destiny of the community rather than reacting to change. This plan is a deliberate stance taken to proactively manage future growth and development as opposed to reacting to development proposals on a case-by-case basis without consideration of community wide issues and objectives. It has been since 1976 that Altus has conducted a comprehensive planning process and adopted a plan (refer to Appendix A - Vision 2020), which emphasizes the importance of this plan as a blueprint for the community's growth and development.

As part of the plan development process, a series of key person interviews were conducted to solicit the input of residents, which was invaluable toward understanding the underlying issues and needs of the area and specifically the values and priorities of those who know best – citizens, advisory board/commission members, neighborhood and civic organizations, community service organizations, business and industry leaders, major landowners and developers, and other community leaders. There were several reasons identified by these persons as to why Altus should plan, including:

- To maintain a "small-town atmosphere", quality schools, low rate of crime, and family-oriented facilities and activities, each of which contribute to the acclaimed excellent quality of life;
- To reverse the declining population trend by diversifying and strengthening the economy - considering the possible outcomes and impacts resulting from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) – thereby creating employment opportunities for the community's youth as well as those maturing in their careers;
- To reinvest in neighborhoods to sustain their integrity and create quality living environments, including consideration of adequate, available, and affordable housing for all persons;
- To redevelop "tired" areas of the community as a means to stabilize and increase the tax base as well as improve and enhance the appearance and image of the community;
- To ensure adequate community facilities and services, including

utility infrastructure (water, wastewater and drainage); fire, police and emergency medical services; school facilities; and parks and open space, that are necessary to support new development and further enhance quality of life;

- To make wise and fiscally-responsible decisions relating to the management of future development; and,
- To reach consensus on behalf of private and public interests as to the future vision of Altus and the proactive steps necessary to achieve success.

What is the Value of Planning? -

The process required to develop this plan was as valuable to the community as is the plan itself, since the plan is only a snapshot in time. The planning process involved major community decisions about how much and where growth will occur, the nature of future growth, and whether the community can afford to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this growth. This leads to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to "quality of life" will be affected.

This plan provides an opportunity for the elected and appointed officials to step back from the day-to-day issues and to clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create. The plan development process provided a chance to look broadly at programs for neighborhoods, housing, economic development, provision of public infrastructure and services, open space and environmental protection, and how these concerns relate to one another. The Altus Plan represents a "big picture" of the City and its planning area, which can be related to the trends and interests of the broader region as well as the State of Oklahoma.

Local planning is often the most direct and efficient way to involve members of the public in describing the community they want. The process of plan preparation provided a rare opportunity for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials as to their vision of the community and the details of how that vision is to be achieved. The plan resulted in a series of goals, objectives and actions that will guide the Planning Commission and City Council in administering development regulations; in the location, financing, and sequencing of public improvements; and, in guiding reinvestment and redevelopment efforts. The Plan also provides a means of coordinating the actions of many different departments and divisions within the City.

How will the plan be used? - The Altus Plan belongs to the community and its citizens who generously offered their time and talents to create it. The ability to implement the plan is directly correlated to the amount of citizen participation and the sense of ownership derived from the process. The plan contains many components and serves numerous functions such as providing information, identifying existing conditions and characteristics, and establishing local governmental policies and strategies. It is a definitive source of information regarding the existing and future conditions and characteristics of the community. By its nature, the plan is intended to serve all interests of the community and offers the following benefits:

The community forum, which was attended by over 200 residents, was a cornerstone of the public involvement program.

- It states the intentions of the City's governing body as to the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, which creates a level of certainty for landowners and developers;
- It establishes policy and provides guidance toward future development and redevelopment, which may be utilized by the Planning Commission, City Council and others in their decision-making;
- It identifies programs and initiatives in the form of specific recommendations, which may form a coordinated work program for the departments of the City;
- It identifies capital improvement needs and priorities, which may be utilized by management in annual budgeting and capital programming;
- It indicates the type, pattern, and density of future development and coordinates transportation and infrastructure improvements, which notifies the citizens of the pattern of development and its influence on private property; and,
- It serves as a blueprint for the area's future economic and physical development, which is useful to other local, State and Federal agencies engaged in the provision of programs, services and facilities.

Overview of the Vision Process

The Altus Comprehensive Plan was a 12-month process involving over 350 residents and community stakeholders who represent the diversity of the community and its leadership. A 16-person Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) led the process, offering their input to ensure the plan reflects the values and priorities of the community. The CPAC was charged with the responsibility of establishing the community's core values and its expectations for the visioning process. They were also involved in reviewing each of the plan elements and maps to offer their insight and ensure the plan is both realistic and able to be implemented.

The first step in the visioning process was to assess where the community had been in the past. This effort involved a review of planning documents and other demographic and socio-economic information, which served as the basis of Chapter 2, Community Profile. The profile offers a glimpse of where Altus has been in the past and where it is today. This analysis set the tone for community discussions and the overall visioning effort.

Small Group Interviews - The vision development process consisted of several opportunities designed to generate conversation among citizens regarding their current perceptions, but more importantly, their expectations for the future of Altus. The first opportunity was a series of small group interviews with community stakeholders, which occurred over the course of an entire day. In all, over 60 citizens participated in this process. The purpose of these small group interviews was to solicit the input of local residents concerning common perceptions, issues, problems, opportunities, constraints, assets, and challenges of the City and its larger planning area.

The input received through the interview process was used to formulate the Vision Statement. In addition, each of the plan elements were specifically crafted to address the issues, problems, and improvement needs that were identified through the interviews, in addition to the input received through the Community Forum and CPAC meetings. Interview participants were encouraged to speak candidly about their concerns as well as their vision for a positive future.

A series of open-ended questions were posed to each small group, including the following:

1. What do you consider to be the greatest assets of living and working in Altus?

Community Strengths

Residents identified the following assets during their participation in the vision development process:

- Family oriented
- Reasonable cost of living
- Small-town values
- Good education system
- Strong community leadership
- Attitude of citizens
- Higher education opportunities through Western Oklahoma State College and The Southwest Technology Center
- Medical facilities
- The reservoir area
- Livable neighborhoods
- Mix of home values
- Cleanliness
- Existence of Altus Air Force Base (AAFB)
- City-sponsored youth activities
- Proximity to Quartz Mountain and Lake Altus
- Low crime rate
- Community events and activities
- Friendly, welcoming people
- Remoteness
- Work ethic
- Faith-based community
- Quality park system
- Agricultural economy
- Proximity to the country
- Involvement of residents

Community Challenges

Along with the strengths of Altus, residents identified what they felt to be the most significant challenges confronting the community, including:

- "Tired" areas of the community
- Property maintenance
- Job opportunities for the community's youth
- The status of AAFB
- Remoteness
- Lack of cultural and recreation opportunities
- Distance from an international airport
- Few "nice" restaurants
- Limited retail shopping alternatives
- Lack of youth and senior activities
- Affordable housing
- Aging infrastructure
- Struggling downtown
- Limited tax base
- First impression of community
- Business signage
- Lack of landscaping and green space
- Declining population
- Long-term water supply

A vision without a plan is just a dream. A plan without a vision is just drudgery. But a vision with a plan can change the world.

2. What are the downsides, if any, to living and working in Altus?
3. What are the most important issues facing Altus today as well as what the community may confront in the future?
4. What do you envision Altus being and looking like in 20 years? What is your vision?
5. What are the "barriers" or obstacles to progress for the City?
6. What do you consider to be the highest priority improvement needs and/or projects over the next 0-10 years, and then longer term?
7. How might the City develop in a better and more fiscally responsible manner in the future?
8. In what ways could the City be more supportive of business growth and retention?
9. Where do you see the greatest potential for improving the appearance and image of the community? Where are good and not-so-good examples of quality development?

Community Forum - Another principal event of the visioning process was a Community Forum, which consisted of a three-hour evening event held at the Southwest Technology Center. During this forum, residents from throughout the community were invited to come together to identify their concerns for the future and to explore possibilities for making Altus a better place to live, work, and play. The meeting began with a presentation entitled, "I Believe in Altus - Envisioning Our Future," which explained the role of the Comprehensive Plan in guiding the community's important decisions as to how, when and where it grows. After the presentation, the large assembly of citizens attended a series of small group discussions focused on each of the plan elements, including: land use and growth, transportation, and quality of life (the latter entailing parks and recreation, community appearance, and other relevant topics).

In each of the discussion areas, participants expressed their thoughts and ideas concerning the future of the community. The community dialogue was recorded and the information compiled, together with the earlier interview input, to help create the Altus Comprehensive Plan.

Vision and Mission Statements

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was tasked with developing the overall vision and mission statements for the Comprehensive Plan. These statements are an important part of the process since they express the community's core values and what the ultimate outcome is expected to be. A vision statement identifies where the community intends to be

in the future or where it should be to best meet the needs of its residents. A vision incorporates a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of the community and uses this understanding to move it toward a greater purpose. A vision describes the community's preferred future. The overall vision of Altus is as follows:

Our Vision: By the Year 2025, Altus will have strengthened its tax base, providing citizens of all ages with ample economic opportunities, and will offer its residents affordable housing, livable neighborhoods, exemplary educational opportunities for life-long learning, plentiful cultural and entertainment activities, retail diversity, and a lifestyle second to none.

A mission is a general statement of the vision in word form. It is important to have a rich representation of the community's vision in all senses so the mission statement may be crafted in a manner that allows all persons to derive meaning from it, yet be precise enough to guide them towards achieving it. It is a statement of the role, or purpose, by which the community intends to serve its residents. It describes what the community does, who it serves, and what makes it unique. Altus's mission statement is as follows:

Our Mission: The City of Altus will continue to invest in its infrastructure, to ensure long-term adequate provision of water, wastewater, drainage and electrical utilities as well as public safety services (police, fire and EMS). The integrity of neighborhoods will be sustained through replacement of aging infrastructure, removal and redevelopment of dilapidated and "tired" structures, and empowerment of residents. The use and enforcement of up-to-date development ordinances and property codes will improve the maintenance and appearance of the community. The tax base will be stabilized and strengthened by helping businesses grow, adapting to new economies and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, which will offer employment and advanced opportunities for all ages. Improved employment opportunities will lead to increased community wealth and spending thereby expanding the market for retail and service-related businesses. The quality of life will be further enhanced with continuous improvement to the parks and recreation system and through expansion of community-supported youth programs, senior activities, and community gathering events. There will be heightened attention to preserving open space and the environment. Altus will be a community with a charming character, rich in history, culture, and family values.

Core Values:

During the key person and stakeholder interviews, participants were asked to use a single word (and in some cases more than one) to describe their vision of Altus in 20 years. The words used to describe their vision of the future served as the basis of this plan effort, ensuring their incorporation in the development of the goals and objectives, and particularly in the plan's action recommendations. The descriptive vision of Altus in the Year 2025 includes the following core values:

- Growth
- Progressive
- Safe
- Small-town
- Clean
- Green
- Forward-thinking
- Beautiful
- Wealth
- Infrastructure
- Educated
- Opportunities
- Balanced
- Friendly

These words chronicle the aspirations of this community, which is the first step in achieving the overall vision.

Building on Our Assets

Economic Opportunities

Quality Health Care

Higher Learning

Community Recreation

Livable Neighborhoods

A Glimpse of Our Future

Based upon our core values and overall vision and mission statements, a snapshot of our future would look like this:

★ Our economy is economically diverse and stable. We have been wise and proactive in steps to protect Altus Air Force Base (AAFB), which has led to its expansion and, thus, growth of our local economy. There are plentiful employment opportunities for our youth and for all residents as they mature in their careers. The existing businesses are actively supported while we continue to foster entrepreneurial business development and attract state-of-the-art companies that complement our local resources. Our workforce is well-educated and highly trained, made possible by strategic partnerships forged with the Altus School District, Western Oklahoma State College, and Southwest Technology Center. We have added value to our industries making them more productive and profitable for their entrepreneurs, as well as for the economic strength of the community and region. Altus has enlarged its regional presence by capturing a more significant share of spending and by diversifying our retail market base. Tourism helps to strengthen our local tax base through increased visits to our Western Prairie Museum and Quartz Mountain Arts and Conference Center.

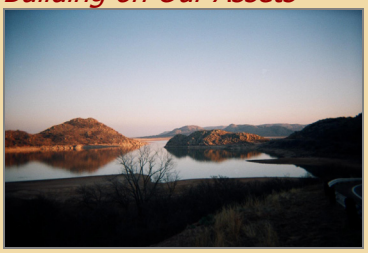
★ Our pattern of development has adhered to the Future Community Character Plan and followed the policies and principles set forth in the Altus Comprehensive Plan. We have guided development inward, focusing on the undeveloped areas that could be provided with urban services most readily and efficiently. In particular, we have benefited by directing development within the service area of our electric utility rather than in the peripheral areas that are served by competing electric providers. The urban growth plan worked effectively to prevent a haphazard and outward sprawling growth that would have been costly and blurred the boundaries between the urban and rural areas. Our emphasis on redevelopment and infill has improved property values, allowed adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties, and re-established the integrity of our older neighborhoods and districts. Downtown has benefited from the blending of uses (incorporating residential use above the first floor), redevelopment of inappropriate

uses, and continued aesthetic enhancement of the whole downtown district.

★ Our neighborhoods are one of our greatest assets. We have aggressively reinvested in our "tired" neighborhood areas and older housing structures returning them to quality living environments. Our diligence in condemning and razing dilapidated structures and creating standards that are amenable to infill and redevelopment has stabilized the integrity of our neighborhoods, improved community appearance, and reduced crime. Housing prices are within reach of our residents as we have created a variety of housing choices through innovative subdivision design. Our children are able to afford first homes, growing families are able to add-on to their homes or construct new houses to meet their changing needs, and seniors have a variety of living options. The housing types that are available accommodate a multitude of lifestyles and family structures, many of them near our places of work, shop, and play. Neighborhoods now have vast open spaces integrated into them, which creates character, conserves the environment, and preserves our highly valued small-town atmosphere. Even though new development has mixed uses and is more compact and efficient in the use of land and services, they are even more pleasant and successful as a result of good design. Each neighborhood is walkable as a result of an interconnected system of sidewalks and community trails, which provide connections to neighborhood parks, places of work, and other community gathering areas.

★ Our infrastructure system has been continuously improved through a staged program of rehabilitation, replacement, and timely expansion of our treatment plants. The extension of infrastructure has been sequenced to ensure that we grow in a fiscally responsible manner thereby leading rather than following development. We have continuously improved the water and wastewater systems to meet Federal guidelines and to provide the necessary operating capacities to serve expanded and new industries. The treatment plants have state-of-the-art technologies allowing us to closely monitor their performance and to make timely adjustments to maintain their operating efficiencies. Our electric utility has also been continuously improved and expanded to accommodate new development. The transportation

Building on Our Assets



Scenic Resources

Downtown Square

Community Facilities

Government Presence

Prime Farmland

"It is a needed plan and we're behind it."
- Mayor T. L. Gramling

"I think everybody that lives here has an obligation to take part in a project of this size that will form the future of Altus for the next 20 years."
- Riley "Nub" Smith

"The forum is for the people to tell us – the people on the Commission – what they think the City should look like, what it should have in it, and how it should be zoned."
-Winston Higgs, Chairman of the City Planning Commission

If you don't have a plan, how are you going to get where you need to be."
- Barbara Burleson, Planning Director

system has improved local and regional mobility, including not only a continued investment in roadways, but also through increased utilization of the public transit system and greatly improved walking environments. Our whole infrastructure system is a testament to this community's commitment to providing quality facilities and services, which has provided us with a competitive economic advantage over less prepared communities.

★ Our park and recreation system is simply second to none. We continued to invest in new community park facilities ensuring that they are conveniently accessible for all persons and offer the types of facilities and activities to meet the diverse needs of our citizens and visitors. We are partnered with the development community in the provision of neighborhood parks that provide close-to-home spaces and facilities for both children and adults. They have been designed with the individual neighborhoods in mind, including assurance of their compatibility with nearby homes. A trail system has been systematically developed, which now provides off-street connections to each and every park, school, and neighborhood throughout the community. Parks contribute to the identity for our neighborhoods and for the community as a whole. They are a large part of our quality of life and the character of our community.

★ Our environment has been protected and conserved. We now have a healthy and vibrant community with well-preserved open space, agricultural lands, and rural areas. We have protected the areas along the irrigation canal and within the flood prone areas, which have become focal points of the community. They have been integrated into neighborhoods and public spaces, making efficient use of natural resources for drainage purposes while serving as amenities. A preserve system has effectively protected native plants and animals that were being driven from the urban landscape. Parks, open spaces, and recreational lands reflect the native habitats of the area, which are frequented by native birds and other animal species. The ecology of the short grass prairie has been retained such that it is of great interest for eco-tourists now drawing visitors to the area for this purpose alone.

★ Our character and appearance, 20 years after the formation of our vision and the development of the "I Believe in Altus" Plan, is

recognized throughout the state for its unique identity. First and foremost, a priority emphasis on the appearance of gateways and corridors had a dramatic effect on the image of the community. Our gateways are denoted by significant entry features, extensive landscaping, roadway enhancements, and improved controls of the abutting land uses. We have elevated the awareness of aesthetics in the design of the roadway environs by incorporating more green space within the right-of-way, creating landscaped boulevards as arterial and collector roadways, upgrading the standards of roadway signage and lighting, investing in the appearance of bridges and structures, and simply better managing the visual appeal of public spaces. Through updated land use regulations, development adjacent to the corridors, within special districts, and throughout the community exhibit a character that better reflects the community's expectations. Through a collective effort of our businesses and residents – and adherence to our updated codes - the maintenance and upkeep of properties contribute to an enhanced community appearance. In addition, our businesses and neighborhoods have a renewed interest and pride of ownership that has led to added green space, more trees and shrubs, community gardens, and well-maintained private open space.

Statement of Goals

The input received from the community through the stakeholder interviews, community forum, and CPAC meetings was used in formulating the goals for each of the plan elements. For each goal, there are supportive objectives and action recommendations to guide the City's decisions and efforts toward attainment of the overall Community Vision. For more information about each of the goals and their objectives, refer to the applicable chapters of this plan.

The statements of goals for each component of the plan, excluding the Our Vision (Chapter 1), Community Profile (Chapter 2), and Implementation (Chapter 8) are as follows:

Land Use (Chapter 3)

- Compatible future land use planning to prevent undesirable encroachment into neighborhoods and around the air base and municipal airport
- Improved utilization and revitalization for enhancing the character and integrity of neighborhoods
- Well-managed development that is cohesive with existing uses, sensitive to the environment and

Goals identify how the community intends to address its issues, considering its historical success and its leadership, and in support of the mission and vision statements. Goals are designed to drive actions and are intended to represent the general end toward which an organizational effort is directed. Goals address issues in a general sense by stating overall policy intention that drives broad programmatic areas. A goal should provide a sense of what level of performance is expected, but it should not specify how the organization is to achieve the level of performance. Generally, there should be a goal assigned to each issue in the community. Goals link "downward" to objectives and specific action recommendations.

contributes to community character
- An attractive, highly livable community with a preserved small town character and a unique identity
- Policies, regulations, incentives and processes that consistently represent the vision and desired character of the community

Transportation (Chapter 4)

- Regional and statewide transportation facilities that provide improved access to the community
- A local transportation network that allows safe and efficient movement of people and goods
- Alternative modes of transportation to improve city-wide and regional mobility

Parks and Recreation (Chapter 5)

- Conservation of natural resources through parkland acquisition, open space preservation, and environmentally sensitive planning
- A balanced and wide variety of public parks, recreational areas, and open space in near proximity to all residents
- An interconnected system of trails and bikeways providing community connectivity
- Cooperative agreements and coordinated efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, educational bodies, and private sector entities

The heavily utilized walking/jogging path around the reservoir would benefit greatly from trail connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and throughout the community.

Community Appearance (Chapter 6)

- An enhanced pattern and form of development that contributes to community appeal
- Enhanced character of development adjacent to each major corridor
- Attractive gateways to the community and portals of special areas and districts
- Public buildings, spaces, and infrastructure that contribute to community form and appeal

Growth Capacity (Chapter 7)

- Compact development that may be efficiently served by public facilities and services.
- A well-managed pattern of development that is fiscally responsible.
- Logical sequencing and timely provision of adequate public facilities and services.
- Continuous improvement and delivery of high quality and reliable municipal services.

This assessment of demographic and socioeconomic factors is a snapshot of the community's past conditions and present characteristics, which provides an understanding of what the future may hold for Altus, Oklahoma. The findings of this analysis set the stage for more detailed evaluations of historic trends and future planning considerations as each element of the plan is assembled. This profile provides a basis for determining future land use requirements and demands for public facilities and services, but also allows advance planning to effectively guide future development in a desirable and fiscally responsible manner.

As home to Altus Air Force Base, the people of Altus are proud of their patriotic spirit and community heritage that is founded upon strong family values and civic pride. The people are its greatest asset, which was the first word spoken as to why Altus is chosen as a great place to live and work. It is also a community that has a reasonable cost of living, sound primary and secondary education system, safe and secure living environment, plentiful parks and amenities, a neighborly attitude toward outsiders, and forward-thinking, capable community leadership.

Altus is a community with a proud history. While the past continues to be embraced and celebrated today, made evident by the Museum of the Western Prairie and the Main Street Altus Program, this comprehensive planning process offers an opportunity for the community to remember its past, but, more importantly, to envision its future. While future actions are likely to depart from the previous course of events, the success of the community in achieving its vision will largely depend on its collective history and on recognizing the qualities that make this community home to over 21,000 persons.

Altus is a community that is committed to preserving its heritage while, at the same time, is focused and optimistic about what lies ahead. In planning for the future, Altus faces the challenges of sustaining and growing its economy, creating more employment opportunities for its youth, preserving and enhancing its community character, and balancing the demands placed on its fiscal resources to maintain and expand the infrastructure system. Before looking to the challenges of the future, however, it is important to get a sense of where Altus is right now by considering its history and current conditions.

This community profile offers an in-depth introduction to the City, which documents existing socioeconomic conditions and

Trends & Factors

- Altus is a hub of economic activity, serving the adjacent small communities and the surrounding area.
- Strong Healthcare, Professional Services, Public Administration, and Retail Trade industries contribute nearly 49 percent of the local employment.
- The Year 2000 Census population of 21,447 represents a 2.1 percent loss from 1990.
- Altus has had an average loss in population of 2.71 percent each decade since 1970, amounting to a net loss of 1,855 persons.
- The 1990s reflected a less significant population loss than in previous decades.
- The City's population has accounted for roughly 75 percent of Jackson County's population since 1960.
- The most optimistic Year 2025 projection reflects a population of 25,190, a 14.9 percent increase from 2000.

Trends & Factors

- In 2000, 67.8 percent of the population was White, 17 percent was Hispanic, and 9.7 percent was African American.
- The median household income in 1999 was $30,217, which is 90 percent and 72 percent of the state and nation, respectively.
- The average wage for employees in Altus is $24,679.
- In Altus, 78.3 percent of adults have a high school degree and 17 percent have a Bachelor's Degree.
- The unemployment rate in Altus in 2000 was 4.72 percent, which was lower than both the state and national averages.

demographic characteristics of the community pertaining to its historical and current population; the age, gender, and educational attainment of its people; and the economic position of the community and its businesses. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the community has grown since its settlement in the late nineteenth century, to identify its current characteristics and resources that will contribute to the envisioned future, and to analyze where the community appears to be headed in the future.

An important component of this chapter is the Year 2025 population projection, which will be used throughout the plan to project future land use demands, infrastructure capacity needs, and economic development strategies. An understanding of existing population characteristics and future population demands is essential in anticipating growth and the resulting demands on both the community and its accompanying facilities and services.

FIGURE 2.1
STATEWIDE LOCATION

Location

Altus is located in the heart of Oklahoma's Great Plains Country, in the southwestern portion of the state, as shown in **Figure 2.1, Statewide Location**. With a backdrop of the Quartz Mountains to the north and surrounded by rich, irrigated farmland, it lies 139 miles southwest of the state capital, Oklahoma City, and approximately 50 miles south of Interstate 40 and 50 miles west of Interstate 44. Access is provided north and south by U.S. Highway 283 and Oklahoma State Highway 44; east and west by U.S. Highway 62.

In the Beginning

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the area around Altus, with its vitamin-rich short grass, supported many forms of wildlife, including buffalo and antelope herds numbering in the thousands. These herds supported multiple Indian tribes and, particularly, the Wichita Indian Tribe, which numbered over 2,000 families.

In 1884, John McClearen bought land certificates for 1,100 acres in the vicinity of present day Altus. Two years later, McClearen, his son-in-laws, and families began farming the area and, soon after, they founded the town of Frazer, which consisted of a log cabin, a dugout, and two tents. The original settlement was located approximately 2.5 miles to the west of the present site of the City. A flood in 1891 destroyed Frazer and, shortly afterwards, the townspeople felt it was prudent to move the community to higher ground. Soon after, they found the present site and chose a new name "Altus," which means "altitude" or "high place," in Latin.

By 1900, Altus was a thriving town with five general merchandise stores, four grocery stores, one hardware store, drugstore, bank, hotel, and boarding house, a shoe shop, jewelry store, two millenary shops, two newspapers, a public and private school, and a church.

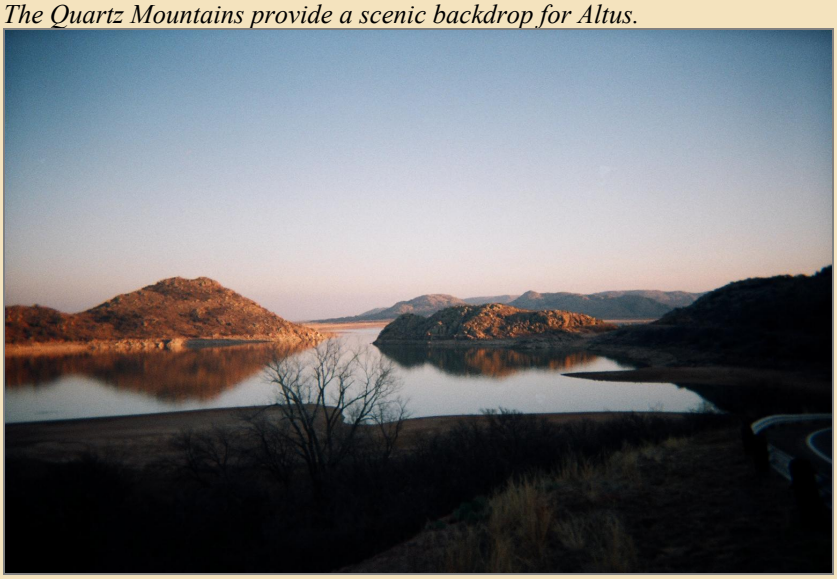
In 1904, Altus temporarily changed its name to Leger in an attempt to curry the good favor of a railroad executive whose family name was the same. In 1907, after the railroad committed to coming through town, the name was permanently changed back.

After the Oklahoma Territory became a state in 1907 and close to half million acres from "Old Greer County" was designated to form present day Jackson County, Altus was named the county seat, an important milestone in the history of the city. In 1909, once Altus had reached the required population of 2,000 persons, it became an incorporated city.

Main Street Altus, circa 1900

Altus grew slowly through World War I. Subsequent to the war, the agricultural economy grew rapidly, and Altus benefitted. While Altus suffered during the depression and the famed "Dust Bowl," which devastated Oklahoma, the population did not decline, as did that of Jackson County. Thus, the City was well positioned for a rebirth, which was helped along by the opening of the Altus Army Air Field (now Altus Air Force Base) in

The Quartz Mountains provide a scenic backdrop for Altus.



1943. In that year, the Field began training pilots to fly twin-engine aircraft during the war and, subsequently, most of the 5,377 graduates served in Europe during WW II. At the end of the war, the base was closed.

In 1953, the Air Force reactivated the Altus facility, bringing many new jobs and persons to the community and leading to the greatest decade of growth in the city's history.

Historical Population Change

Historical U.S. Census population figures for Altus, Jackson County, and the state of Oklahoma are displayed in **Table 2.1 – Historical Population, 1930 to 2000**. As displayed by this Table, from 1930 to 1950, the population grew incrementally from 8,459 in 1930 to 9,735 in 1950. In the 1950s, the population more than doubled – primarily as a result of the reactivation of Altus Air Force Base. The population continued to grow at a steady pace through the 1960s before hitting its high point of 23,302 persons in 1970. Since 1970, the population has slowly declined, with the largest percentage of decline occurring during the 1980s. The pace of decline, though not a desirable trend, slowed between 1990 and 2000. During this period, there was a net loss of 463 people, amounting to 2.11 percent of Altus' population. While a decline in population is not generally viewed favorably, the marginal decline in population coupled with a reduced percentage decline from the previous decade is not necessarily a negative indication of the future. Rather, other indicators may be more telling of the community's current and future economy.

Altus is the largest city in Jackson County, with a population of roughly 75 percent of the County's total population, which has remained steady since 1960. The population of the County, therefore, largely mirrored that of the City, as displayed in **Figure 2.2, City and County Historical**

TABLE 2.1
HISTORICAL POPULATION, 1930 TO 2000

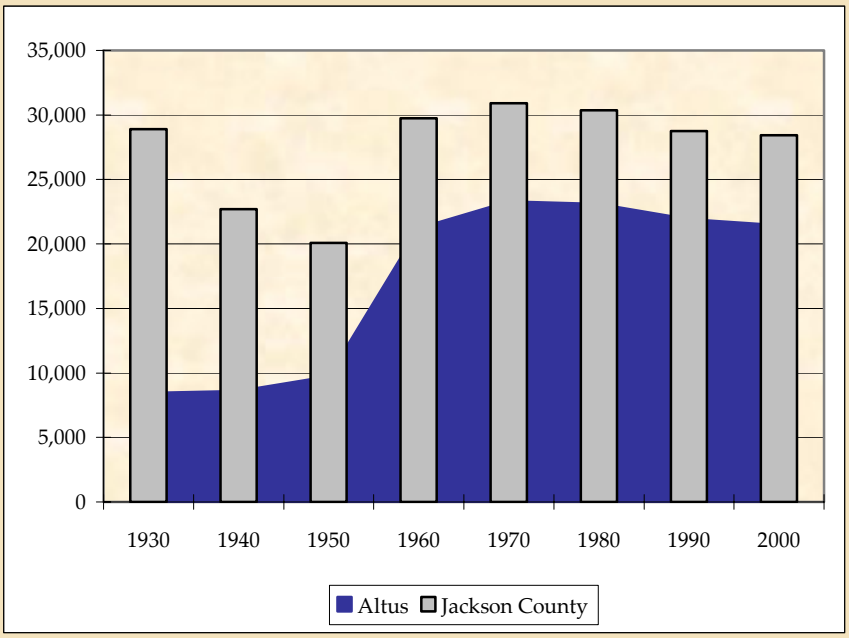
Altus			Jackson County			Oklahoma		
Year	Number	Change	Year	Number	Change	Year	Number	Change
1930	8,459		1930	28,910		1930	2,396,040	
1940	8,593	1.58%	1940	22,708	-21.45%	1940	2,336,434	-2.49%
1950	9,735	13.29%	1950	20,082	-11.56%	1950	2,233,351	-4.41%
1960	21,225	118.03%	1960	29,736	48.07%	1960	2,328,284	4.25%
1970	23,302	9.79%	1970	30,902	3.92%	1970	2,559,229	9.92%
1980	23,101	-0.86%	1980	30,356	-1.77%	1980	3,025,090	18.20%
1990	21,910	-5.16%	1990	28,764	-5.24%	1990	3,145,585	3.98%
2000	21,447	-2.11%	2000	28,439	-1.13%	2000	3,450,654	9.70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population. Similar to Altus, Jackson County had increases in population in the 1950s and 1960s of 48.07 percent and 3.92 percent, respectively. Prior to this, representing the flight to cities in search of opportunities during the 1930 depression era and the Dust Bowl, the County experienced a loss in population while Altus grew. In comparison to Altus, the smaller decline in County population in the 1990s, though minimal, may be an indication of City residents moving to the outskirts of town – which is a recent settlement pattern that exists throughout the country.

While the City was enjoying modest population increases during the 1930s and 1940s, the State population was declining. In the 1950s, both the State and Altus grew, though not proportionally. Since the 1970s however, the trend has reversed, with the State population growing steadily, while the City and County have been in slow decline. The growth of the State population offers a positive indication of opportunity for Altus and its primary market area. During the 1990s, the State grew its total population by 9.70 percent or by 305,069 persons, reaching a new high of 3,450,654 residents in the Year 2000 Census.

FIGURE 2.2
CITY AND COUNTY HISTORICAL POPULATION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 2.2
REGIONAL POPULATION

County	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change
Jackson County	30,902	30,356	28,764	28,439	-8.66%
Beckham County	15,754	19,243	18,812	19,799	20.43%
Caddo County	28,931	30,905	29,550	30,150	4.04%
Comanche County	108,144	112,456	111,486	114,996	5.96%
Cotton County	6,832	7,338	6,651	6,614	-3.30%
Custer County	22,665	25,995	26,897	26,142	13.30%
Greer County	7,979	7,028	6,559	6,061	-31.64%
Harmon County	5,136	4,519	3,793	3,283	-56.44%
Jefferson County	7,125	8,183	7,010	6,818	-4.50%
Kiowa County,	12,532	12,711	11,347	10,227	-22.54%
Stephens County	35,902	43,419	42,299	43,182	16.86%
Tillman County	12,901	12,398	10,384	9,287	-38.91%
Washita County	12,141	13,798	11,441	11,508	-5.50%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Illustrated in **Table 2.2, Regional Population**, is the population change in Jackson County over the last three decades compared to that of surrounding counties.

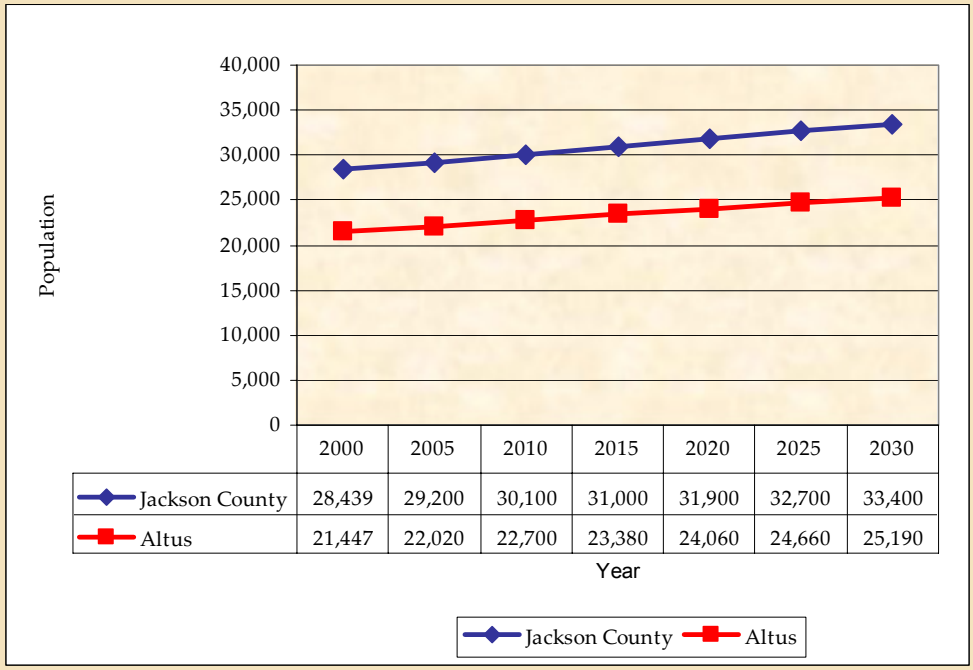
Population Projections

Population projections are an important component of the long-range planning process for the following reasons:

1. To evaluate a range of future population scenarios, enabling the community to identify the internal and external factors that may contribute to a population increase or decrease;
2. To adequately determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on the provision of public facilities and services, such as fire and police protection, water and wastewater facilities, transportation infrastructure, and municipal buildings:
3. To allow advance planning to effectively guide new development and appropriately direct available resources; and
4. To create a strategy to seize opportunity and overcome unforeseen challenges.

There are a variety of methods available for generating multiple projection scenarios, all of which rely – to varying degrees – upon historical trends. For instance, the Oklahoma State Data Center annually prepares population projections for the state, counties, and municipalities. Their projections utilize sophisticated models that consider historic patterns of in- and out-migration, as well as county-level rates of fertility (birth) and mortality (death). The State Data Center projections provide one possible estimate of the future population of Altus and Jackson County, as displayed by **Figure 2.3, City and County Projections**.

FIGURE 2.3
CITY AND COUNTY PROJECTIONS



	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Jackson County	28,439	29,200	30,100	31,000	31,900	32,700	33,400
Altus	21,447	22,020	22,700	23,380	24,060	24,660	25,190

Source: Oklahoma State Data Center

Displayed in **Table 2.3, Regional Projections**, are the State's projections for the County throughout the region surrounding Altus and Jackson County.

Among the varying techniques utilized to project the population are methods known as step-down, linear regression, geometric constant, and exponential growth. As shown in **Figure 2.4, Projected City Population Scenarios**, these statistical methods are useful to compare alternative forecasts for the Year 2025. The projected population ranges from 19,758 to 24,660 persons, with a middle ground of 20,014 persons.

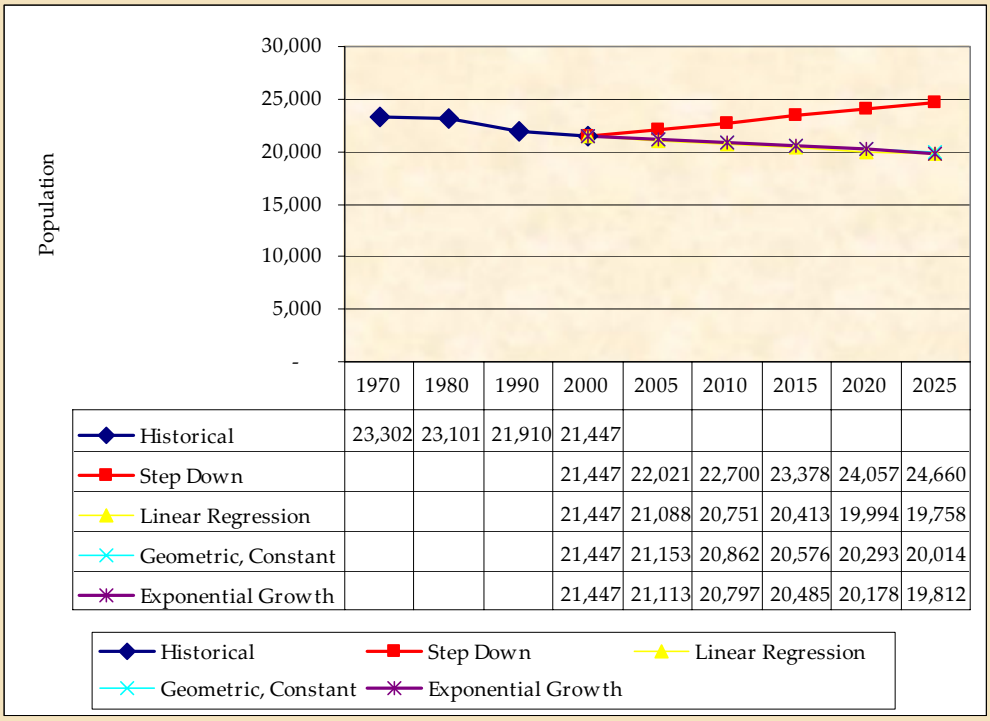
Linear projections involve a graphical projection of historical trends into the future. In this case, linear techniques of choice were simple "linear regression" and "exponential growth." Linear regression

TABLE 2.3
REGIONAL PROJECTIONS

County	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Change
Jackson County	29,200	30,100	31,000	31,900	32,700	10.70%
Beckham County	20,400	21,300	22,200	23,200	24,200	15.70%
Caddo County	30,300	30,800	31,400	32,100	32,600	7.06%
Comanche County	119,400	123,600	127,900	132,000	135,800	12.08%
Cotton County	6,500	6,600	6,600	6,700	6,700	2.99%
Custer County	26,900	27,700	28,500	29,000	29,600	9.12%
Greer County	5,900	5,900	5,900	5,900	5,900	0.00%
Harmon County	3,200	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,400	5.88%
Jefferson County	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,700	6,700	1.49%
Kiowa County,	10,000	9,900	9,900	9,900	10,000	0.00%
Stephens County	42,900	42,900	43,100	43,400	43,600	1.61%
Tillman County	9,200	9,200	9,300	9,400	9,500	3.16%
Washita County	11,700	11,900	12,100	12,300	12,400	5.65%

Source: Oklahoma State Data Center

FIGURE 2.4
PROJECTED CITY POPULATION SCENARIOS



	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Historical	23,302	23,101	21,910	21,447					
Step Down				21,447	22,021	22,700	23,378	24,057	24,660
Linear Regression				21,447	21,088	20,751	20,413	19,994	19,758
Geometric, Constant				21,447	21,153	20,862	20,576	20,293	20,014
Exponential Growth				21,447	21,113	20,797	20,485	20,178	19,812

Source: Lane Kendig, inc.

forecasts are straight-line projections of historical population. In a linear growth scenario, the same absolute number of additional persons is added to the population in each period. This results in a declining rate of growth over time since the same amount is being added to an ever-expanding base. Comparatively, exponential growth assumes a constant rate of growth in establishing a forecast.

In addition to the two linear projection techniques, the step-down method was used to project the City's population based on its share of the County's population in the Year 2000 (and since 1970). As shown in Figure 2.4 – Projected City Population Scenarios, the two linear techniques produced the lowest projections of 19,758 and 19,812 persons, respectively. The step-down technique produced the highest projection of 24,660 persons; the geometric technique resulted in a projected future population of 20,014 persons.

It should be noted that the State Data Center's projection, with an estimated Year 2030 population of 25,190 persons, offers the most optimistic outlook of all. Regardless of the projection source or method utilized, all answers reflect a continued challenge on behalf of the City, County, and State to sustain population in the coming years. This likelihood will be further addressed in forthcoming chapters of this plan.

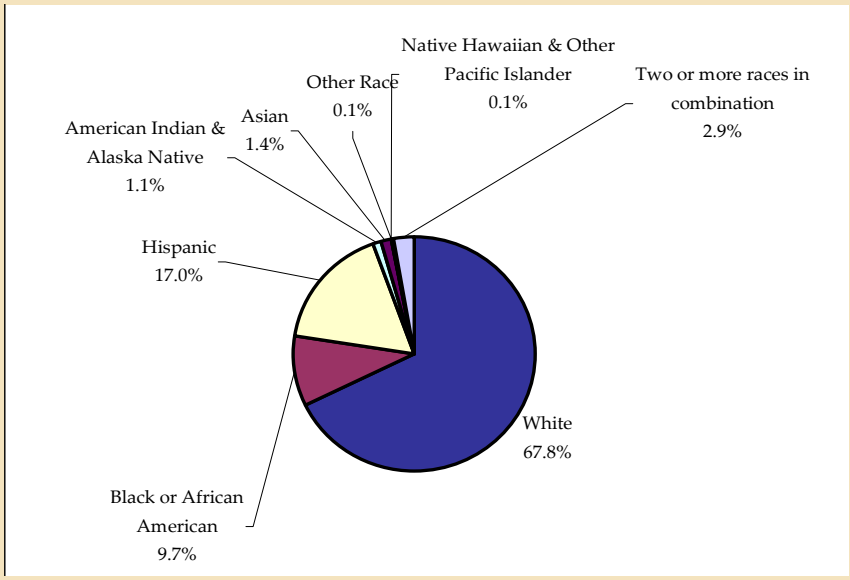
Using a "curve fitting" approach, whereas the historical trend line is matched with a "most likely" future scenario, either the geometric constant or linear regression methods would seem to offer the most likely future scenario. These two methods reflect a slight decrease in the population of 7.1 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively, through the year 2025. However, based upon the City's efforts to reverse the recent downward trend in population, the step-down method offers a more optimistic view of the future. Use of this approach offers the City an opportunity to plan for a higher future population, thereby allowing adequate planning for facilities and improvements. Therefore, the step-down method, reflecting a projected Year 2025 population of 24,660 persons, will be utilized for planning purposes throughout this plan.

Ethnic Composition

The ethnic characteristics of Altus are displayed in **Figure 2.5, Ethnic Composition of Altus**. This illustration displays that 67.8 percent of the population was "white," 17 percent Hispanic, and 9.7 percent African American; 5.5 percent comprised the remaining ethnicities of American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, those belonging to two or more races in

combination, and those classified as "other." According to the U.S. Census, the racial profile in Altus has shifted significantly over the last decade. Shown in **Table 2.4, Change in Racial Composition**, is the significant shift in ethnicity, which indicates that there was a 40.57 percent increase in Hispanics over the last decade, while all other racial groups declined. "Whites" reflected a loss of 2,216 persons, which was the largest decline in real numbers, while the American Indian and Alaska Native reflected a loss of 29.79 percent, the largest percentage decline.

FIGURE 2.5
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF ALTUS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The population of Altus is diverse and closely mirrors the diversity of the U.S. population. Nationally, 69.1 percent of the population is "white," with 11.9 percent African American and 12.5 percent Hispanic. In Altus, in the Year 2000, 67.8 percent of the population was "White," 7.5 percent African American, and 15.5 percent Hispanic. The increase in population of the Hispanic population is reflective of trends across the nation.

Household Composition

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, households are classified either as "family" or "non-family" units. Family units are defined as those with a married couple or a single head of household with or without children. Non-family households include those with one person living alone. The household

TABLE 2.4
CHANGE IN RACIAL COMPOSITION

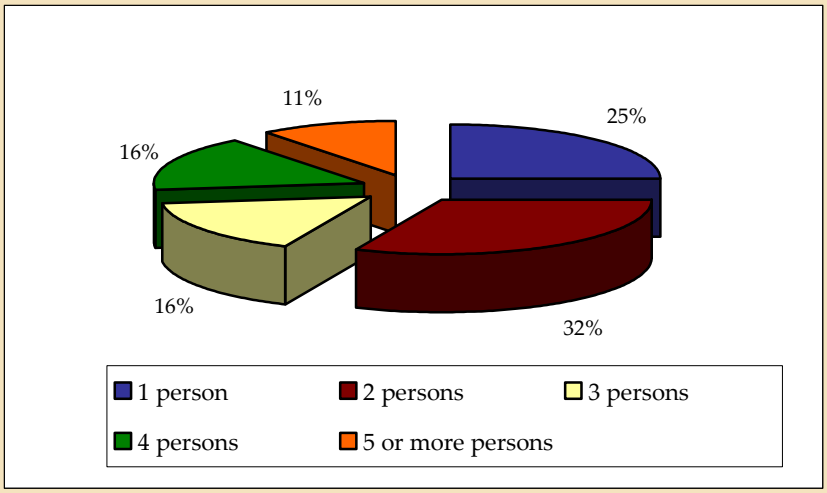
Ethnicity	Altus			Oklahoma		
	2000	1990	% Change	2000	1990	% Change
White	14,577	16,793	-13.20%	2,628,434	2,583,512	1.74%
Black or African American	2,085	2,670	-21.91%	260,968	233,801	11.62%
Hispanic	3,645	2,593	40.57%	179,304	86,160	108.11%
American Indian & Alaska Native	231	329	-29.79%	273,230	252,420	8.24%
Asian & Pacific Islander	321	368	-12.77%	49,139	33,563	46.41%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

composition of Altus is 71.26 percent family households and 28.74 percent non-family households.

The distribution of households by number persons is illustrated in **Figure 2.6, Household Size in Altus**. The largest segments of the population in Altus is in one-person (25 percent) and two-person (32 percent) households. Three- and four-person households each account for roughly 16 percent of the population, and households with five or more persons make up 11 percent of the population of Altus.

FIGURE 2.5
HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN ALTUS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Based upon a Year 2000 Census population of 21,447 persons and 7,896 households, Altus had an average of 2.72 persons per household, which is slightly above the national average of 2.67 persons per household.

Age and Gender Distribution

The distribution of Altus' population by age and gender is displayed in **Figure 2.7, Age and Gender in Altus**. As shown in this illustration, the "Under 5" and "20-24" age cohorts are the most populated. The peak in the "20-24" age group most likely reflects the student enrollment at Western Oklahoma State College. Students are counted toward the local population if they claim Altus as their permanent residence. The dramatic drop in population in the subsequent age category, "25 to 29," likely corresponds to the young adults who have left the community following college graduation. The population numbers return to earlier levels in the 30-44 age groups, indicating that a number of people who are leaving Altus in their twenties are returning in their thirties and forties to work and raise families. This bulge in population may also be attributed to new working age adults moving to town as a result of employment at Altus Air Force Base. Starting with the "45-49" age group, the population once again levels off in a typical fashion.

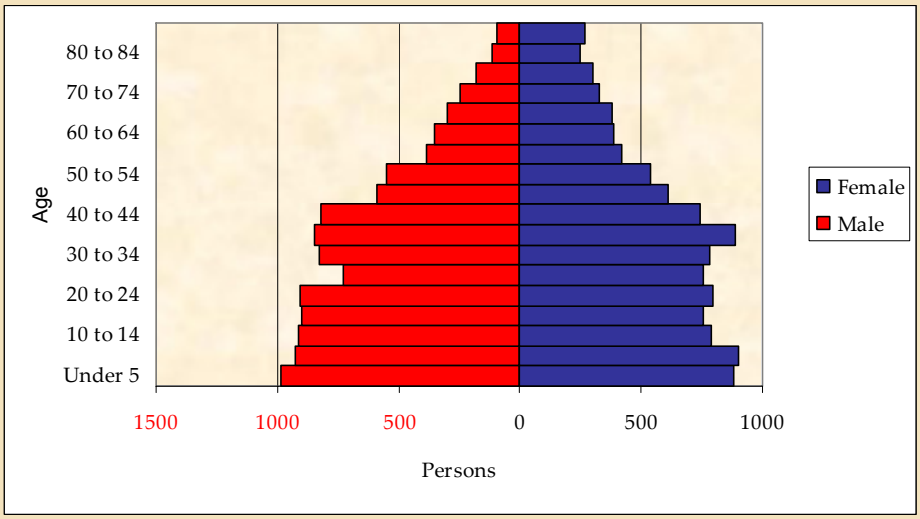
As shown by the age profile, assuming the age patterns remain similar in the coming years, the community may expect to have an aging population approaching the

upper-middle and retirement age cohorts. This would lead to an average older age over time, depending upon future trends in local birth rates and the age characteristics of persons migrating into the area. At the same time, the larger populations in the "Under 5" and "20-24" age cohorts is encouraging – meaning that the birth rate has been relatively steady over the last two decades and has started an upward trend since 1990.

Income

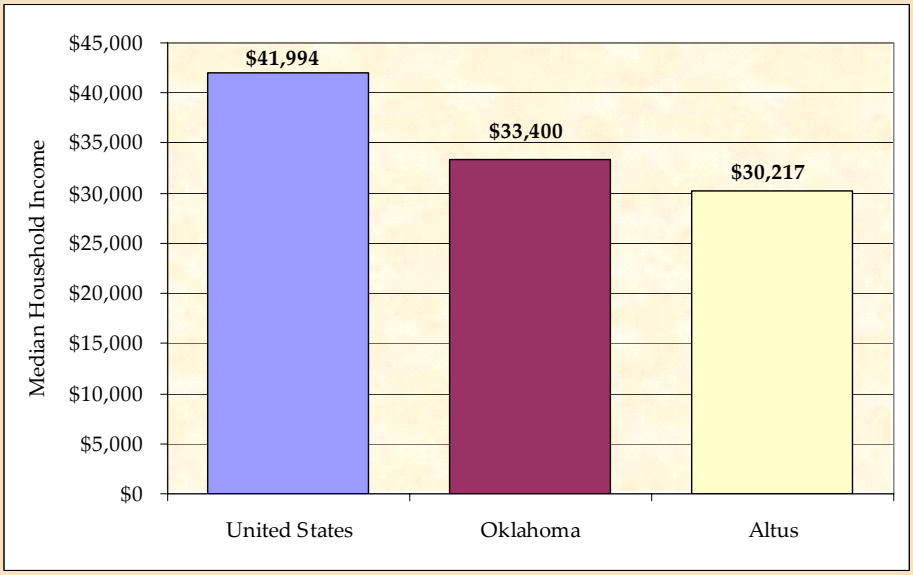
The most recent available income information for Altus is the 1999 median household income estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Accordingly, the median household income was estimated at $30,217 for Altus. By comparison, the median household income was $33,400 for Oklahoma and $41,994 for the U.S., as displayed in **Figure 2.8, Median Household Income in Altus**. Therefore, the median household income for Altus is roughly 72 percent and 90 percent of the national and State median household income, respectively. While median household income is well below the national average,

FIGURE 2.7
AGE AND GENDER IN ALTUS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 2.8
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN ALTUS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

the cost of living in Altus follows accordingly. For instance, as one measure, the median cost of a single-family home was $60,300 in 1999 (according to the Census) compared to a national average of slightly over $100,000, making homeownership more affordable in Altus than in many other parts of the country.

The Census Bureau also periodically releases estimates regarding the percentage of the population living in poverty. The estimated percentage of Altus residents living in poverty was 16.5 percent in the Year 2000, which was an 1.8 percent reduction from the 1990 figure of 18.3 percent. In numeric terms, this represented 3,548 persons living in poverty within the City. The estimated poverty percentages in Oklahoma and nationally in the Year 2000 were 14.2 percent and 12.4 percent, respectively. This data indicates that an above average number of Altus residents are categorized as living in poverty, compared to state and national numbers.

TABLE 2.5
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ALTUS

Level of Education	Altus		Jackson County		Oklahoma	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Less than 9th Grade	1,026	6.80%	1,349	8.94%	145,518	5.68%
9th to 12th Grade, no diploma	2,254	14.94%	2,966	19.66%	371,639	14.51%
High school graduate	4,081	27.05%	5,694	37.75%	804,123	31.41%
Some college, no degree	3,850	25.52%	5,199	34.46%	640,785	25.03%
Associates degree	1,285	8.52%	1,661	11.01%	131,804	5.15%
Bachelor's degree	1,612	10.69%	2,038	13.51%	315,545	12.32%
Graduate/professional degree	977	6.48%	1,224	8.11%	150,976	5.90%
TOTAL	**15,085**	**100.00%**	**20,131**	**100.00%**	**2,560,390**	**100.00%**

Source: Altus Public Schools

Educational Attainment

Data on the educational attainment of Altus residents is provided in **Table 2.5, Educational Attainment in Altus**. The percentage of persons with at least a high school education in Altus is 78.3 percent, which is slightly below that of state and national averages of 79.8 percent and 79.7 percent, respectively. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is 17 percent, which is also slightly below the state (18.2 percent) and national (22.3 percent) averages. Altus residents with an associates or graduate/professional degree are a larger percentage than that of the state as a whole.

Economy

Employment figures for 2000 are provided in **Table 2.6, Labor Force Statistics**.

Employment

Labor force figures for Year 2000 are provided in Table 2.6, Labor Force Statistics. The rate of unemployment was 4.72 percent in 2000, which is higher than the County (4.59 percent), but lower than the state (5.24 percent) and national (5.77 percent) averages. The labor force participation rate of 63.8 percent is higher than the County (63.37 percent), State (62.10 percent) and national (59.73 percent) numbers.

TABLE 2.6
LABOR FORCE STATISTICS

Labor Force Statistic	Altus	Jackson County	Oklahoma
Total Population 16+	15,773	21,081	2,666,724
Employed	7,980	11308	1,545,296
Unemployed	475	613	86,832
Armed Forces	1,608	1667	23,959
Total in Labor Force	10,063	13,360	1,656,087
Total Not in Labor Force	5,710	7,721	1,010,637
Unemployment Rate	4.72%	4.59%	5.24%
Labor Force Participation Rate	63.80%	63.37%	62.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The distribution of employees among different industries, comparing Altus with Jackson County and the State of Oklahoma, is shown in **Table 2.7, Employment by Industry**. In 2000, the sectors with the largest percentages of the employed labor force in Altus were Education, Health Care and Social Services (26.5 percent); Public Administration (13.8 percent); Retail Trade (12.5 percent); and, Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services (10.5 percent), which together represent 63.3 percent of all employed persons in the Altus. Retail Trade (15.5 percent) and Manufacturing (10.9 percent) were

TABLE 2.7
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Altus		Jackson County		Oklahoma	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	192	2.4	2,279	2.8	62,743	4.1
Construction	456	5.7	5,846	7.2	107,302	6.9
Manufacturing	611	7.7	8,805	10.9	193,887	12.5
Wholesale trade	112	1.4	2,714	3.4	52,807	3.4
Retail trade	994	12.5	12,543	15.5	185,789	12
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	385	4.8	3,486	4.3	85,769	5.6
Information	125	1.6	2,003	2.5	41,686	2.7
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	363	4.5	4,094	5.1	93,239	6
Professional, scientific, management, and administrative, etc.	328	4.1	6,416	7.9	113,063	7.3
Educational, health and social services	2,116	26.5	17,766	22	316,456	20.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	840	10.5	7,495	9.3	115,167	7.5
Other services (except public administration)	360	4.5	4,295	5.3	85,927	5.6
Public administration	1,098	13.8	2,972	3.7	91,461	5.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

the two industries with the highest employment in Jackson County. Within the State of Oklahoma, Education, Health and Social Services is the largest employer (by industry), which represents 20.5 percent of all employment in the state.

Between 1990 and 2000, the three areas where growth occurred included Manufacturing with a net gain of 213 workers or a 35 percent increase; Construction with a net gain of 216 workers or a 47 percent gain; and Public Administration with a net gain of 188 workers or a 17.1 percent gain. Industries that lost workers through the 1990s include Retail Trade with a 34 percent loss, Wholesale Trade with a 33 percent loss, and Agriculture related industries with a 20 percent loss.

Agricultural Economy

While the portion of the economy represented by the agricultural industry does not appear to be significant within the corporate limits of Altus (2.4 percent of the total in 2000), it is nonetheless an essential part of the county and local economy. As an example, in 2002 the market value of agricultural products alone amounted to $67,832,000 in Jackson County. This is in addition to the spin-off benefit to the economy resulting from tax revenues, the use of local supplies and services, and wages paid.

As shown in **Table 2.8, Agricultural Statistics**, the average total sales per farm in the Year 2002 amounted to just under one billion dollars ($92,667,000) in Jackson County, which was a 7.8 percent increase since 1997. While Jackson County's percent change was less than some of the surrounding counties, its average total sales per farm was the largest of the eight-county Southeast Oklahoma area. Similarly, the growth in average total income per

TABLE 2.8
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Jurisdiction	Average Total Sales Per Farm		Percent Change 1997 to 2002	Average Total Income Per Farm		Percent Change 1997 to 2002	Average Size of Farm	Estimated Market Value[1]	
	1997	2002		1997	2002			Per Farm	Per Acre
Oklahoma	50,623	53,498	5.68%	5,106	6,730	31.81%	404	285,730	699
Caddo	56,451	59,106	4.70%	6,018	8,582	42.61%	473	305,001	619
Comanche	28,222	27,687	-1.90%	2,879	5,071	76.14%	426	280,816	768
Cotton	66,896	77,642	16.06%	5,336	9,300	74.29%	358	364,626	522
Greer	32,835	34,839	6.10%	6,498	6,336	-2.49%	631	252,535	396
Harmon	59,685	69,038	15.67%	10,841	7,123	-34.30%	747	292,725	365
Jackson	**85,961**	**92,667**	**7.80%**	**7,260**	**9,996**	**37.69%**	**620**	**341,860**	**523**
Kiowa	68,660	75,496	9.96%	4,455	4,262	-4.33%	877	447,393	503
Tillman	59,509	90,319	51.77%	7,328	10,255	39.94%	818	481,095	547

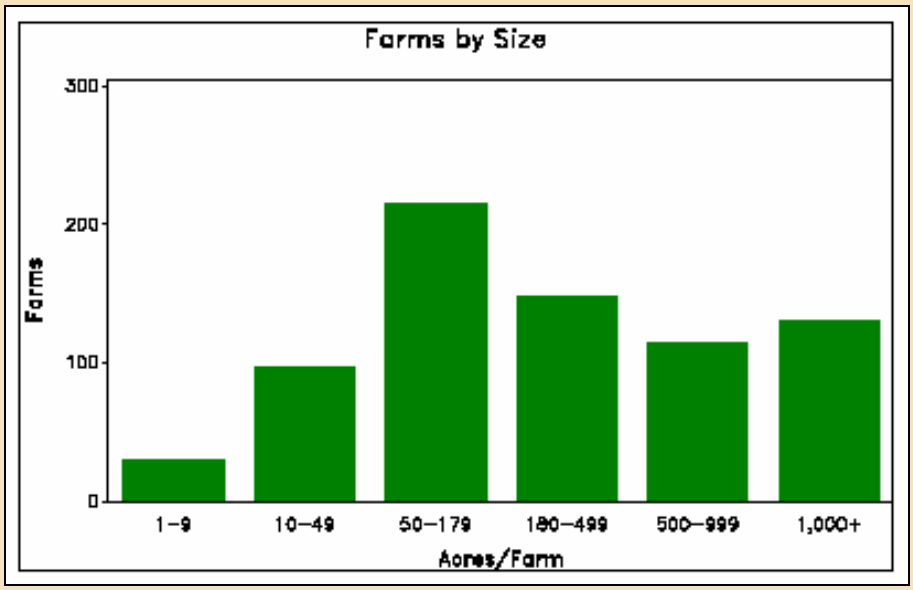
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

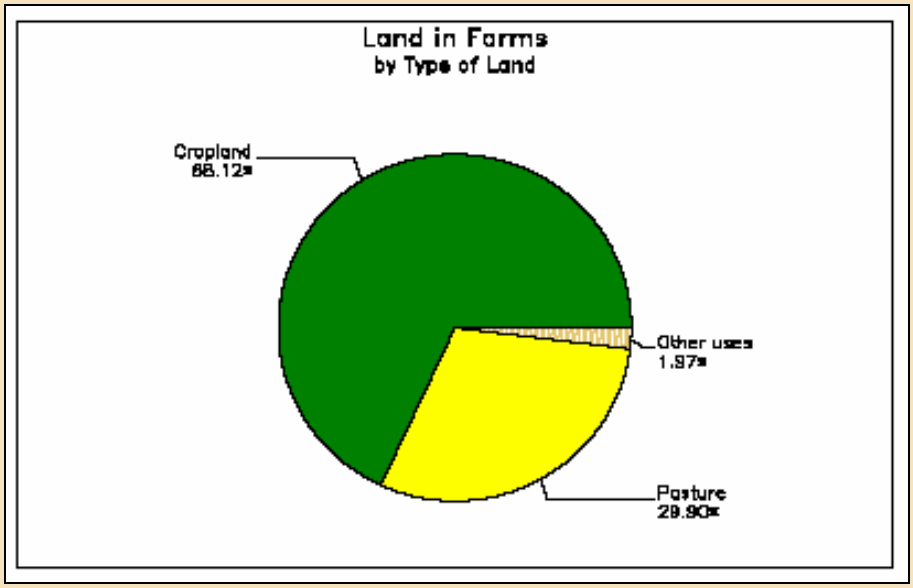
farm between 1997 and 2002 was less than some of the surrounding counties, but was a healthy 37.69 percent over the five-year period. Also, with an average total income per farm of $9,996,000 in 2002, other than Tillman County, the average total income per farm in Jackson County is the highest in Southwest Oklahoma. The estimated market value of land and buildings per farm in Jackson County was $341,860,000 ($523 per acre), which compares favorably with the other counties in the area. The average size of farm is 620 acreas in Jackson County, which is just under one square mile.

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, as displayed by **Figure 2.9, Census of Agriculture Statistics**, profile for Jackson County, the number of farms and acres of farmland both declined by roughly 10 percent between 1997 and 2002. However, the average market value of production per farm increased eight percent, from $85,961 in 1997 to $92,667 in 2002. Compared to other counties in the state, Jackson County ranked 20th in the total value of agricultural products sold, but 3rd in the value of crops sold. The county is ranked first (out of 25) in the state and 45th (out of 656) in the United States in the value of sales for cotton and cottonseed.

Other than cotton, the county is ranked 8th in the production of peanuts, 9th for wheat and 17th for sorghum in the state.

FIGURE 2.9
CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE STATISTICS





Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, County Profile

Wage Data

The mean wage for all occupations in Altus, according to the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission and based on wage data collected in 1999, 2000, and 2001, was $24,679. Mean wages for various occupations for Altus, the region, and the state are displayed in **Table 2.9, Wage Statistics**. In general, Altus wages are similar to those in the region, but less than the state; however, it should be noted that these numbers fluctuate significantly between occupations. For example, management positions in Altus, which include CEO's, managers, administrators, and superintendents, are paid a mean wage of $39,531, compared to $55,470 for the rest of the state. On the other hand, workers in installation, maintenance, and repair make a mean wage of $34,002 in Altus, compared to $31,260 in the rest of the state and $28,950 in the region. One conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that occupations that are in demand at the Altus Air Force Base tend to draw a higher income than similar occupations in the region and state, whereas occupations not affiliated with the Air Force Base are generally compensated at a level slightly below regional and state averages. The Air Force Base is, therefore, an important economic supplier for the community. According to the Oklahoma

TABLE 2.9
WAGE STATISTICS

Occupation	Mean Wages		
	Altus	Southwest Oklahoma	Oklahoma
Management	$39,531	$47,210	$55,470
Business & Financial	$36,053	$38,180	$42,460
Computer & Mathematical	$35,779	$41,880	$43,780
Architecture & Engineering	$39,649	$45,120	$50,630
Life, Physical, & Social Sciences	$42,997	$47,120	$42,370
Community & Social Services	$18,093	$25,140	$27,760
Legal	$22,923	$38,770	$61,570
Education, Training, & Library	$33,998	$29,470	$30,850
Arts, Design, Media, Sports, & Entertainment	$20,709	$23,360	$30,130
Healthcare	$39,032	$43,130	$44,170
Healthcare Support	$15,885	$16,640	$18,150
Protective Services	$21,493	$22,870	$27,050
Food Preparation & Serving	$13,852	$13,470	$14,390
Building & Grounds Maintenance	$15,393	$15,730	$16,750
Personal Care & Service	$21,460	$16,130	$18,120
Sales	$19,705	$20,580	$23,500
Office & Administrative Support	$20,462	$20,770	$23,390
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	$19,656	$18,550	$20,240
Construction	$26,279	$27,330	$28,440
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	$34,002	$28,950	$31,260
Production	$23,092	$24,450	$26,270
Transportation	$22,350	$20,890	$25,230
Total for all Occupations	$24,679	--	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment Security Commission regarding their projections of the future employment outlook in the state, the average growth rate between 1998 and 2008 for all occupations is projected to be 18.38 percent. Employment in Professional, Specialty Occupations is expected to increase at a faster rate of 24.26 percent and have more job growth than any other major occupation. High growth is also expected in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Services (22.93 percent); Service Occupations (20.65 percent); Marketing and Sales Occupations (19.73 percent); and Executive, Administrative, and Managerial Occupations (18.69 percent). Operators, Fabricators and Laborers (16.22 percent); Administrative Support and Clerical Occupations (13.55 percent); and Precision Products, Craft, and Repair Occupations (12.88 percent) are expected to grow slower than average.

TABLE 2.10
MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN ALTUS

Major Employers	Product/Service	Employees
Altus Air Force Base	Federal Installation	2484*
Altus Air Force Base (Civilian)	Federal Installation	2457*
Jackson County Memorial Hospital	Medical Services	825
Bar-S-Foods	Processed Meats	598
Wal Mart SuperCenter	Retail Store	490
Altus Public Schools	Educational Services	485
American Gypsum	Wallboard	260
Altus Athletic Manufacturing	Exercise Products	250
City of Altus	Municipal Services	220
United Supermarkets	Retail Grocery	150
A Passmore & Sons, Inc.	Trucking	130
3KB Transportation	Trucking	120
Western Oklahoma State College	Educational Services	100

Source: Altus Chamber of Commerce
* Altus Air Force Base Economic Impact Analysis, 2003

Major Employers

The largest employers in Altus in terms of their employment are displayed in **Table 2.10, Major Employers in Altus**. Altus Air Force Base is the largest local employer, offering approximately 2,484 jobs to the local workforce. In addition, the flight maintenance and civilian employment accounts for an extra 2,457 jobs, which brings the total base employment to 4,941, which is nearly 60 percent of the total employer persons in Altus. Other significant local employers include the Jackson County Memorial Hospital (825 employees), Bar-S-Foods (598 employees), the WalMart SuperCenter (490 employees) and Altus Public Schools (485 employees).

The pattern, arrangement, density, scale and site design characteristics of each land use contribute collectively to the overall visual character of the community. Therefore, individual land use decisions that are made over the course of time, whether involving zone changes for proposed new development, reuse or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, or major public facility and infrastructure improvements, each have a role in determining the future form and character of the community. The importance of character in creating the image of the community, which contributes to its economic development and desirability as a place to live and work, warrants planning - in advance – as to when, where and how the community develops in the future.

Each element of this Comprehensive Plan is inherently interrelated as each influences and is influenced by the other elements. Therefore, the concepts of land use and community character are integral to other components of the plan. For instance, the transportation system provides access to land for development, which helps to determine the use of land. The provision or lack of utilities can dictate the amount, location and timing of development. Design and development character impact community aesthetics and, thus, the quality of life enjoyed by area residents and the demand for development. Proximity to public facilities can impact public health and safety at specific locations and, as a result, impact the development potential of an area.

The preparation of this Land Use element involved examination of the community's historic growth and currently committed development, the pattern of existing development and the general types, densities and arrangement of uses. The general pattern of existing single-, two-family and multiple family residential; manufactured homes; neighborhood and general commercial; light and heavy industrial; parks and recreation; public/institutional; and agricultural/ undeveloped land use types were evaluated as to their contribution to overall community character. Additionally, the projected future population projection detailed in Chapter 2, Community Profile, was utilized to determine the acreage requirements of each community character type, which provided the framework for the Future Community Character Plan.

This element provides a vision for the future physical development of Altus and its three-mile planning area. Although the three-mile area is outside the city limits, as part of

"**BRAC**" is an acronym which stands for Base Reallocation And Closure (BRAC). It is the process the Department of Defense (DoD) has previously used to reorganize its installation infrastructure to more efficiently and effectively support its forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business.

An **Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ)** refers to the noise zones and the accident potential zones, which together form the AICUZ for an air installation. The AICUZ needs to be updated periodically when the number and type of aircraft operations change at an installation.

this plan, advanced planning provisions were made for this area in preparation for future annexation into the City of Altus. This vision as to how Altus will develop in the future was formed by the concerns and ideals expressed during the community forum by residents, civic leaders, land and business owners and other community stakeholders. The chapter begins by outlining the key issues relating to the community's existing and future land use and character, which is followed by goals and objectives and recommended actions to guide the community's ongoing land use decisions. The outcome of this process is the Future Community Character Plan, which visually depicts the intended arrangement, density and design characteristics of Altus's future development.

Key Land Use Issues

Based upon the analysis of existing land use conditions, an examination of current community character, prior plans and related reports, historic and recent land use trends and public input, there are a number of key issues that are expected to impact the future development of Altus. These issues are summarized by the following broad categories:

1. **Long-term sustenance and protection of Altus Air Force Base (AAFB)** – An ongoing issue that is particularly prominent as the Department of Defense (DoD) conducts its Base Reallocation and Closure (BRAC) review is the long-term viability of the air force base. The criteria used by the DoD in making a recommendation for closure or reallocation of military installations includes as its second highest criterion the "availability and condition of land, facilities and associated airspace at both existing and potential receiving locations," which relates to the protection of its airspace from encroaching land uses. This issue is of significance to the community in its future land use planning to safeguard the operating capacities of the military installation. Protection of the AAFB was a high priority concern that was clearly expressed by a broad cross section of citizens who attended the stakeholder interviews and community forum.

The DoD has issued compatibility guidelines for use in conjunction with military installations, which include recommendations for determining acceptability and permissibility of land uses. Areas within the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) are specified as to the maximum amount of noise exposure compatible for living and working areas. As a result,

the Joint Land Use Study recommends varying levels of development dependent upon their proximity to the base and its runways. Generally, the density of residential development is to range from one residential dwelling unit per twenty acres nearest the ends of the runways to one residential dwelling unit per acre as the distance from the ends of the runways increases. Furthermore, there is a recommended restriction of height limiting both structures and natural growth to no more than fifty feet. The zoning regulations adopted by Jackson County permits one dwelling unit per acre within an agricultural district, which is the zoning around the base. Increasing development within these areas and in proximity to the base will increase safety and quality of life concerns for residents, while also constraining the capabilities of the base to achieve its missions.

In addition to noise exposure considerations, the AICUZ guidelines also contain Accident Potential Zone (APZ) guidelines for the areas nearest to the ends of the runways. These guidelines encourage protective development measures through local land use planning and controls.

Sensitive planning around Altus Air Force Base is a significant priority for the community to retain its most significant employer.

According to a 2002 economic study, the total estimated economic impact of the base is $226 million annually, which accounts for one third of the employment in Jackson County and a combined annual payroll of $135 million.

2. **Increased utilization of vacant and underdeveloped areas** - Altus's older, established neighborhoods were designed using a traditional grid pattern of streets, smaller lot sizes and, in many cases, rural street sections with ditches rather than curbs and gutters. While more recent development is contemporary in its lot pattern with more curvilinear streets, urban street standards (curb and gutter) and patterned homes as the

The **Accident Potential Zone (APZ)** describes the area beyond the airfield runway where an aircraft mishap is most likely to occur if one occurs. It does not indicate a probability of an accident occurring, but is to be used for planning purposes. Based on historical data, aircraft accidents are most likely to occur near the airfield runway during aircraft takeoff and landing. An APZ is calculated for aircraft flight tracks to and from the airfield runway based on the number of aircraft operations.

prevailing housing style, the established neighborhoods offer intangibles relating to the community's history and culture, a range of housing sizes and styles and proximity to downtown and the original town area. Some neighborhood areas have maintained their integrity, while others require better utilization of vacant lots, street and sidewalk infrastructure improvements and general revitalization efforts. Attention is warranted within these areas to discontinue their relative neglect and offer opportunities for renewal and long-term sustainability.

As new development continues to occur, the more established areas face ongoing disinvestment and continued decline. Significant development potential exists in these areas, which already have existing public infrastructure – albeit aging and requiring rehabilitation - and readily available municipal services such as fire, police and emergency medical services. Neighborhood revitalization efforts, an infill of housing on vacant lots and redevelopment of existing areas will maximize the efficient use of resources and help to re-establish the integrity and vitality of the community's "tired" neighborhoods. Without an established effort to reinvest in these areas, the community may be plagued by continued decline of its housing stock, which often leads to other community ills.

The established neighborhoods may maintain their integrity with a concerted effort to reinvest, redevelop and revitalize.

3. **Well-managed, sensible and responsible future development** – Yet another important issue for the community is its long-term economic development. Residents of Altus communicated through the public involvement process the need to retain businesses and attract new development as a means to strengthen the economy and expand the local tax base. However, while the importance of continued development is paramount to the economic sustainability of the community – particularly faced with the prospect of losing the area's

largest economic generator – citizens recognize the importance of quality development in a growth pattern that is fiscally responsible. Continued outward growth in a sprawling pattern increases the demand for new municipal facilities and expanded service areas, which stretches community resources to extend public infrastructure, expand the capacities of distribution and treatment facilities and offer public safety services to an expanded area. There must, therefore, be a balanced consideration of achieving the community's essential economic development objectives, while recognizing the fiscal consequences associated with expanding the community service areas and boundaries.

Therefore, land use planning measures and growth policies must be enacted to effectively coordinate the provision of adequate public facilities and services, achieve a compact and sustainable development pattern that is compatible with existing development, contribute individually and collectively to the community's desired character and provide for a range of housing options and price ranges, while enabling the City to seize it's maximum economic development potential.

4. **Development and redevelopment that contributes to community character and livability -** Community character is vitally important to those who live in the community, which was clearly emphasized during the public involvement process. Residents desire a clean and well-kept community; plentiful parks, trails and recreational opportunities; attractive entrances, corridors and commercial districts; safe and livable neighborhoods; quality school and government facilities; and strict, yet reasonable, enforcement of codes. The character of the community is also important though, for those who pass through or visit Altus. From an economic development perspective, the first impression

Streetscape enhancements, such as those completed by the City along Broadway, contribute to the character and appearance of the community.

is a lasting impression. All of the desires expressed above are highly valued for both those who live or may live in the community.

Diligent code enforcement is an essential component for protecting the welfare of the community and achieving its vision

The character of new development coupled with revitalization and reinvestment of the community's more established areas will contribute to Altus as being a desirable place to live, work and play. It must be acknowledged, though, that character does not happen on its own. Rather, it must be carefully managed through individual land use decisions and appropriate, yet reasonable, development standards.

5. **Effective plan implementation and prudent use of development regulation** – Communities that are successful in achieving their vision are those who have a collective vision, consensus of direction, and a commitment to act. Without this resolve, plans are ineffective and lack the support necessary to realize their goals. Therefore, in order to achieve desirable development outcomes, there must be a firm commitment to abide by the policies and recommendations of the plan. The Future Community Character Plan and the goals, objectives and recommended actions to support it are intended to provide the guidance necessary to achieve the preferred type, pattern and density of future development, as well as the preferred character of the community. As conditions change over time, the plan will require periodic review and amendment to continue to reflect the City's economic development objectives, development policies and regulations and other long-range planning considerations.

Directly associated with the implementation of the plan is the enactment of incentives, standards and regulations to ensure compliance with the City's policies and overall community vision. While regulations impose

certain restrictions on the use of land, in the interest of all persons and the community as a whole, they are an essential component for realizing each of the values expressed by individuals during this planning process.

Regulations that are enacted must be fair, equally applied and contain a certain degree of reasonableness. There must also be diligence, though, in their enforcement so as to protect the interests of all persons – including those who are nearby or adjacent to the use – and to secure the overall vision of the community.

Goals and Objectives

The goals, objectives and subsequent action recommendations respond directly to the above issues, which were raised by citizens who participated in the community forum (January 29, 2004) conducted as part of the planning process. They also reflect the observations discovered through analysis of the various land uses within Altus and its planning area.

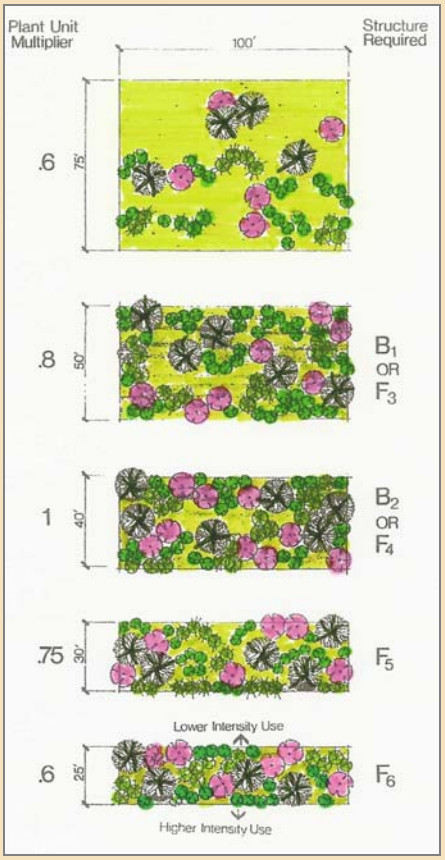
GOAL 3.1: Compatible future land use planning to prevent undesirable encroachment into neighborhoods and around the air base and municipal airport

Objective A: Encourage the development of compatible land uses, avoiding mixtures of incompatible uses in close proximity to one another without adequate performance measures.

Action 3.1.1: Utilize the Future Community Character Plan to guide decisions for proposed changes in zoning classification.

Action 3.1.2: Adopt decision criteria within the zoning ordinance allowing the Commission consideration of such factors as the conformance of the proposed use with the Future Community Character Plan, the character of the adjacent properties and the general vicinity, the zoning and use of nearby properties, the extent to which the proposed use is in harmony with or would detrimentally affect nearby uses and the suitability of the use for the property.

Action 3.1.3: Review the zoning map annually and make amendments, as necessary, to prevent shifting land use patterns from



A performance based buffering approach offers several options to achieve a required standard of opacity.

unnecessarily affecting existing uses.

Action 3.1.4: Establish bufferyard performance standards requiring compatibility measures (fencing, landform, distance, plant density, etc.) for adjacent uses, based upon measurable use intensity (floor area ratio, density, building height, open space ratio, etc.).

Action 3.1.5: Amend Section 18, Planned Unit Development District (PUD), to allow mixed use developments to be permitted by-right, including the integration of performance measures to ensure compatibility of use intensities, rather than requiring a rigorous conditional review process.

Buffering requirements are an effective way to physically separate and screen incompatible or undesirable adjacent uses.

Objective B: Establish effective controls for achieving compatibility of incompatible uses based upon their requisite intensities and impacts on adjacent and nearby uses.

Action 3.1.6: Identify intensity categories in the zoning ordinance – supplementing the standard zoning districts - thereby allowing compatibility provisions based upon the intensity of uses, rather than standard buffering between districts.

Action 3.1.7: Amend the zoning ordinance to include provisions for buffering, screening and residential protection - replacing the screening wall or fence (Section 4.6) and landscaping provisions (required in the multi-family and commercial districts) in the current ordinance - which would include specific requirements based upon the intensity and performance of individual uses. A menu of buffering requirements should be created dependent upon the intensity of adjacent uses and varying site conditions.

Action 3.1.8: Use vegetation or constructed screening to meet specified standards of performance, such as opacity and landscape density, as a means to avoid conflict

between incompatible land uses.

Action 3.1.9: Establish provisions and incentives (increased density) to encourage development clustering, which maintains or allows an increase of density in exchange for increased buffering between uses and permanent public open space within the development.

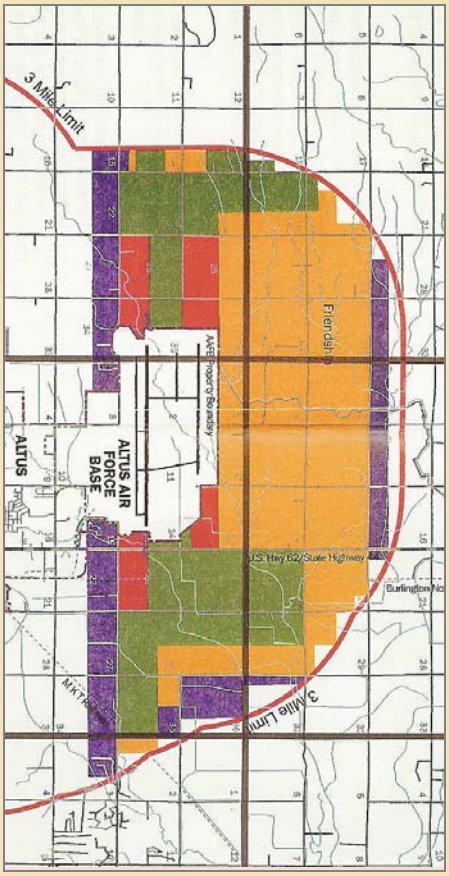
Action 3.1.10: Amend the community development code to require a peripheral open space easement, with the width determined by development density, as a means to ensure adequate separation and buffering between adjoining uses.

Action 3.1.11: Include provisions in the zoning ordinance requiring enlarged lot sizes and increased depths and rear/side yard setbacks when residential uses abut property that is reflected as nonresidential on the Future Community Character Plan or zoned for commercial or industrial use.

Objective C: Protect the long-term integrity of the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) and other areas that are sensitive to the mission and operations of the AAFB.

Action 3.1.12: Coordinate with Jackson County to narrow the gap between the current zoning regulations (one unit per acre restricted density) and the recommendations of the Joint Land Use Study, including consideration of provisions for sound attenuation, restrictions on vulnerable uses, and reduced density within the highly sensitive impact zones. Consideration should also be given to updating the regulations to account for the enlarged impact area due to the new runway, as well as the operations of training flights.

Action 3.1.13: Form an inter-jurisdictional partnership consisting of the City of Altus; Jackson County; the communities of Friendship, Blair, Martha and Headrick; and AAFB to create a unified zoning code for the areas within the compatibility use zones of the base. Potentially create an inter-jurisdictional governing body or review board with equal representation from each jurisdiction to oversee administration of the unified code in the



The compatibility use zones (reflected by the various colors) reflect degrees of impact associated with noise, vibration and other environmental impacts.
- Source: AAFB Joint Land Use Study

areas outside of the City limits.

Action 3.1.14: Conduct a detailed study to identify and analyze the numbers of units and persons currently affected by military operations and land ownership patterns within the sensitive areas, evaluate the degree of conflicts and identify amenable options for a suitable remedy to the long-term interests of the City, County, AAFB and all affected landowners.

Action 3.1.15: Adopt a policy regarding the provision of utilities by the City within the compatibility use zones, with specific criteria required to merit infrastructure extension or improvement.

Action 3.1.16: Collaborate with the County and AAFB to establish a fund, which may be used to leverage state and federal dollars, for use in property acquisition, securing easements and/or purchasing development rights, with priority given to the most affected areas.

Objective D: Establish boundaries for areas that are available for more intensive development compared to those areas that require sensitive development practices as a result of the compatibility use zones, municipal airport operations, flood prone areas and prime agricultural lands.

Action 3.1.17: Utilize the Future Community Character Plan for making decisions pertaining to the future use and density of development within environmentally sensitive areas.

Action 3.1.18: Adopt a policy as to the extent of urban service provision, including water, wastewater, electricity and transportation infrastructure. Subsequently, utilize the provision of infrastructure, to the extent practicable, as a means for guiding development to appropriate and suitable areas of future development.

Action 3.1.19: Encourage infill development on vacant and underutilized properties within the City limits (by use of incentives) as a means to maximize the efficiency of existing municipal facilities and services and avoid sensitive areas.

Action 3.1.20: Conduct a thorough review of the zoning map and the range of permitted uses within sensitive development areas and initiate zone changes, where appropriate, to prevent undesirable encroachment into these areas.

Action 3.1.21: Pursue open space preservation through conservation easements and ordinance provisions to minimize development impacts in sensitive areas.

Objective E: Strengthen the intergovernmental coordination and administration of plans and ordinances between the City, Jackson County and Altus AFB.

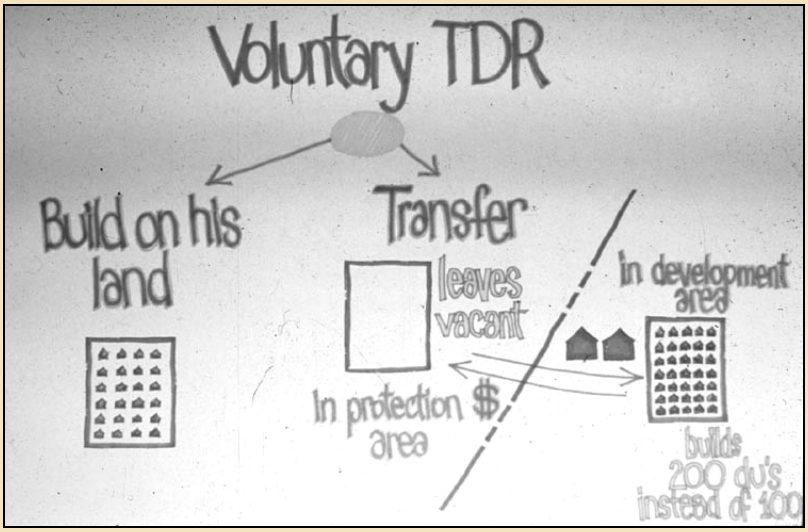
Action 3.1.22: Conduct a series of future planning workshops jointly between the City and County, including the Altus Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council and the Altus Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and County Commission, with the use of an independent facilitator, to identify opportunities for improved coordination, situations that merit joint review and enforcement and agreement on the goals and objectives for the region.

Action 3.1.23: Develop a process by which both the City and County review applications and prepare comments for development, building permits and utility improvements within a specified distance of the City.

Action 3.1.24: Adopt site capacity provisions within the zoning ordinance requiring set-aside for constrained development areas (including acres within rights-of-way and easements, sensitive areas such as the floodplain or proximate to the operational areas of the municipal airport and AAFB and areas required for public open space and recreation) so as to determine the suitable development capacity of sites.

Action 3.1.25: Incorporate provisions within the City's ordinances for clustering development, allowing a transfer of density from sensitive areas within a development to those that are more suitable.

Action 3.1.26: Adopt provisions to allow a transfer of development rights from sending zones – those that are within highly sensitive areas – to receiving zones where



Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a tool that allows the conveyance of development from one site to another to preserve sensitive lands.

higher density can be accommodated and that are more suitable for the environment.

GOAL 3.2: Improved utilization and revitalization for enhancing the character and integrity of neighborhoods

Objective A: Enhance existing neighborhoods and commercial areas that are "at risk" of decline.

Action 3.2.1: Identify the commercial and residential neighborhood areas that are experiencing or at risk for experiencing disinvestment and decline. Subsequently, establish targeted infrastructure improvement programs, funding and incentive programs and administrative assistance to aid in their redevelopment.

Action 3.2.2: Create infill and redevelopment standards within the zoning ordinance to resolve any difficulties by reason of nonconformance with current zoning standards, i.e. lot size, setbacks, required parking, etc., for improvement or redevelopment of properties.

Action 3.2.3: Develop a grant program for "self-help" rehabilitation of substandard housing units using government-funded programs and private resources, such as financing institutions and foundation funds.

Action 3.2.4: Establish an education and awareness program to inform persons with limited income about various affordable housing options.

Action 3.2.5: Establish a proactive code enforcement program that offers helpful assistance to property owners in complying with municipal codes.

Action 3.2.6: Examine the code enforcement processes and regulations and make necessary modifications to ensure that enforcement is fair, expedient and positive.

Action 3.2.7: Utilize non-entitlement, small cities' funds through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to leverage other funds and to implement projects and programs such as infrastructure repair, park development or removal of unsafe structures aiming to improve neighborhood conditions in areas of low to moderate income and in efforts to eliminate "slum and blight."

Action 3.2.8: Assist neighborhood groups in forming official organizations and provide

CDBG funds may be used for many kinds of community development activities including, but not limited to:

- acquisition of property for public purposes;
- construction or reconstruction of streets, water and sewer facilities, neighborhood centers, recreation facilities, and other public works;
- demolition;
- rehabilitation of public and private buildings;
- public services;
- planning activities;
- assistance to nonprofit entities for community development activities; and,
- assistance to private, for profit entities to carry out economic development activities (including assistance to micro-enterprises).

training and support to develop deed restrictions.

Objective B: Encourage infill development within the older neighborhoods and, particularly, on lots for which demolition has occurred or is planned to occur.

Action 3.2.9: Continue the proactive program for handling the condemnation, demolition and/or rehabilitation of substandard structures and underdeveloped property.

Action 3.2.10: Create provisions within the zoning ordinance allowing minor and major waivers of height and area requirements, such as the setbacks of principal and accessory structures, to allow infill housing that compliments the character and context of the surrounding neighborhood.

Action 3.2.11: Streamline the permit approval processes and allow fee exemptions for builders and organizations that utilize existing vacant lots in a manner that compliments and improves neighborhood character.

Action 3.2.12: Establish design guidelines that address building materials, roof pitch, façade treatment, porches, proportional dimensions, and other elements to ensure that new development and rehabilitation is consistent with the neighborhood character.

Objective C: Protect neighborhood character and conditions through sensible enforcement and periodic amendment of related codes.

Action 3.2.13: Enhance zoning, community development, and/or the building regulations to respond to the special site design needs of infill housing and rehabilitation.

Action 3.2.14: Establish programs such as Crime Watch, neighborhood clean-up, assistance with code enforcement and maintenance of public spaces and recreation areas.

Objective D: Reinvest in the infrastructure of the older areas

Entry monuments define an edge and form an identity for individual neighborhoods, which contributes to its character and that of the community.

A Community Housing Development Organization may:

- Serve as owners, developers and sponsors of projects undertaken with funds from a Participating Jurisdiction's (PJ) required 15 percent set-aside for CHDOs.
- Receive special assistance, such as predevelopment loans, technical assistance or operating funds, from a PJ that is not available to other types of organizations.
- Perform certain services as contractors to PJs.
- Contract with PJs in the same ways as other nonprofit sub-recipients.

Using a 15% set-aside, a CHDO acting as an owner, sponsor, or developer may undertake any of the following activities:

- Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of rental property;
- New construction of rental housing;
- Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of homebuyer property;
- New construction of homebuyer property;
- Direct financial assistance to purchasers of HOME-assisted housing sponsored or developed by a CHDO with HOME funds.

of the community, including street and utility improvements, parks and open space, sidewalks and trails and rehabilitation of the housing stock.

Action 3.2.15: Encourage the formation of gateways and entry monuments into each neighborhood and creation of distinguishable edges (open space, landscaping, fences and walls, etc.) that define neighborhood identity.

Action 3.2.16: Develop a neighborhood based Capital Improvements Program that corresponds to area needs, the community-wide CIP and the ability to obtain funding through the budget or other resources.

Action 3.2.17: Incorporate sidewalks into all neighborhoods through an annual improvement program and regular repair of those that impede safe pedestrian access.

Objective E: Promote the formation of organized neighborhood associations as instruments for revitalization.

Action 3.2.18: Assist in the creation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) that, as a nonprofit organization, can implement neighborhood revitalization projects and programs. Consider the necessity of developing a specialized CDC such as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) to best address housing issues.

Action 3.2.19: Engage participation in neighborhood improvement and revitalization efforts from entities such as churches, civic organizations, schools and businesses through programs such as neighborhood clean-up, home improvement and beautification.

GOAL 3.3: Well-managed development that is cohesive with existing uses, sensitive to the environment and contributes to community character

Objective A: Coordinate the timely provision and logical sequencing of infrastructure improvements.

Action 3.3.1: Prepare a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to schedule and program funds for public facilities and infrastructure services, which allow the City to direct its future growth concurrent with adequate infrastructure provision.

Action 3.3.2: Revisit and amend, as necessary, policies for cost sharing and/or impact fees to enable development in advance of municipal infrastructure provision while

effectively managing the timing and sequencing of new development.

Action 3.3.3: Adopt the growth policies in Chapter 7, Growth Capacity, relating to annexation and sensitive future development.

Objective B: Provide adequate space for both commercial and industrial development in areas that are environmentally suitable and capable of being efficiently served with infrastructure.

Action 3.3.4: Use the Future Community Character Plan in guiding zoning and land development decisions pertaining to appropriate locations for nonresidential uses such as offices, retail centers and industries, with adequate performance standards to buffer less intensive uses.

Action 3.3.5: Expand the community's industrial park in the southeast quadrant of the City bound by the commercial frontage along U.S. Highway 62 and Park Lane and the railroad right-of-way to the south and east.

Action 3.3.6: Initiate plans to form a business park on the east side of AAFB that complements the base, such as military-related industries and research and development.

Action 3.3.7: Expand the nonresidential use of the land north of U.S. Highway 62 adjacent to the railroad right-of-way along West Broadway.

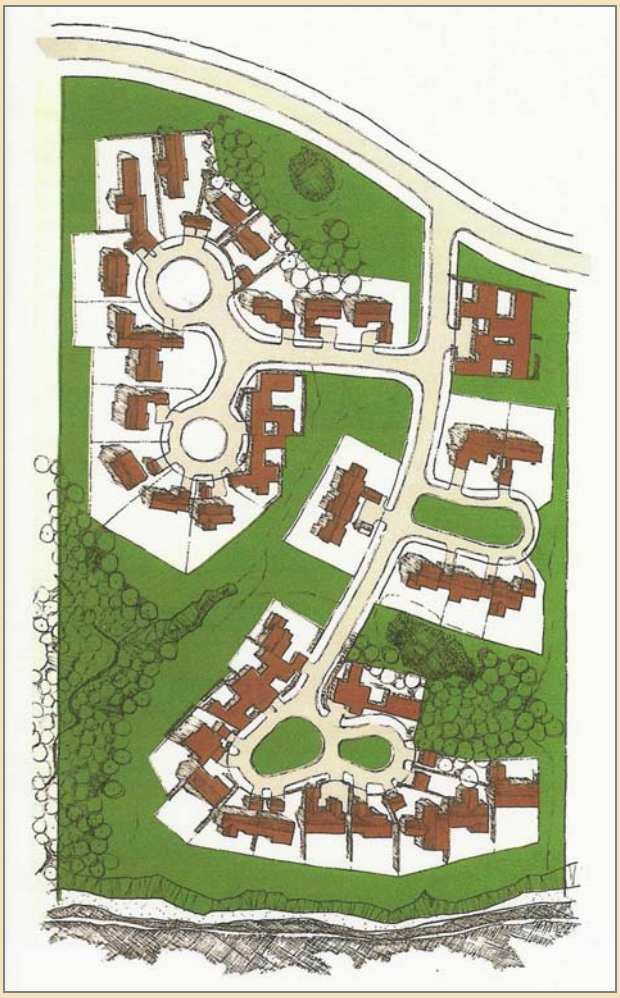
The Southwest Technology Center offers technical training and business and industry services to local students, adults and business leaders.

Action 3.3.8: Develop a research and technology park in the area north of the Southwest Technology Center and Western Oklahoma State College to build upon the educational resources of these local institutions.

Objective C: Respect the small town atmosphere and suburban character of the community.

Action 3.3.9: Establish a definitive edge to the community through annexation policy and conservation easements or farm land trusts.

Action 3.3.10: Place green space liberally throughout new development as a means of



Development clustering forms a suburban, rather than auto-urban, neighborhood character.

preserving the small town character of the area, providing pedestrian linkages throughout the development and adding recreational opportunities.

Action 3.3.11: Adopt development standards for the technology district (near Western Oklahoma State College) exhibiting a suburban commercial character, which provides for a "campus-like" setting with expansive (60 percent or more) permanent open space.

Action 3.3.12: Use gateway treatments such as monuments, fencing and landscaping around individual neighborhoods to distinguish their identity so as not to visually blend all neighborhoods into a monotonous composite of development.

Action 3.3.13: Incorporate character standards into the zoning ordinance including provisions for managing density, open space, floor area ratio, impervious cover and landscape surface.

GOAL 3.4: An attractive, highly livable community with a preserved small town character and a unique identity

Objective A: Create livable residential neighborhoods that reflect a safe, attractive and quality living environment.

Action 3.4.1: Preserve the suburban character of the established neighborhoods through compatible adjacent uses, infill development and redevelopment.

Action 3.4.2: Create a suburban (rather than auto-urban) character of newer neighborhoods by incorporating natural areas and vegetation into the development, planning for sufficient right-of-way width of arterial and collector streets to maintain green space adjacent to roadways, integrating permanent space for recreation and trails, establishing tree canopied

streets and limiting building coverage.

Action 3.4.3: Consolidate the five current residential zoning districts into a single residential district and adopt performance measures relating to minimum parcel size, an open space ratio, density, impervious surface coverage and setbacks to ensure compatibility. This approach maximizes market flexibility and compatibility, while minimizing requests for residential zone changes.

Action 3.4.4: Improve the walkability of neighborhoods with the installation of sidewalks concurrent with development, rehabilitation or placement of new sidewalks in the older neighborhoods and providing for connections to a community trail system.

Action 3.4.5: Consider anti-monotony regulations for newer development to limit the character impacts caused by patterned (model) home styles. This may require alternative elevations of models and use of varying rooflines, building materials and architectural detailing.

Action 3.4.6: Utilize an as-of-right mixed use district with established performance standards to reward the preservation of permanent open space, conservation of natural resources and provision of development amenities with incentive provisions for increased density.

Sidewalks aid in the walkability of neighborhoods and provide important connections between community destinations.

Action 3.4.7: Require the preservation of natural open space and linear greenways within and between developments to incorporate otherwise borrowed open space in the development design and to promote recreation opportunities.

Action 3.4.8: Incorporate sites for schools and other community facilities such as parks, public gardens and recreation centers within neighborhoods to form focal points, places for public gatherings and a sense of community.

Action 3.4.9: Coordinate closely with Jackson County, including provisons for City review and comment, to identify the areas outside the City limits that are intended to maintain a rural/countryside character and establish standards such as minimum lot size, open space protection and mandated clustering to sustain them.

Action 3.4.10: Establish zoning standards for suburban estate districts relating to minimum lot size, building heights, placement on the lot, fencing styles and locations to enhance the intended character of these large lot areas.

Action 3.4.11: Annex the areas that are to permanently remain as agricultural use around the periphery of the community, thereby preventing a proliferation of outward sprawling development and sustaining a small-town character.

Enhancing the urban character of downtown may include rerouting traffic, narrowing the streets, and improving pedestrian amenities.

Objective B: Enhance the Downtown to create an urban center as a community focal point and an economic destination.

Action 3.4.12: Further enhance the urban character of Downtown to increase building enclosure by maintaining a zero setback along the street, requiring a minimum height of new structures of no less than two stories, and filling in gaps in the street frontage around the Courthouse and for one block or more in each direction.

Action 3.4.13: Contribute to the enclosure around the Courthouse by incorporating a landscape median in Commerce Street (between Hudson and Main Street) and Hudson Street (between Broadway and Commerce Street). The median would also enhance pedestrian access in Downtown by providing a refuge in the middle of the wide street sections.

Action 3.4.14: Extend the streetscape improvements north and south along Main Street and east and west along

Broadway to further strengthen the identity of Downtown. Continue the improvements on each of the other streets throughout Downtown radiating outward from the Courthouse.

Action 3.4.15: Utilize awnings and overhangs to emphasize the pedestrian scale of the downtown street environment.

Action 3.4.16: Improve the pedestrian experience with kiosks, public art displays, sidewalk cafes and permitted street vendors.

Action 3.4.17: Install a way-finding system in the community to direct visitors to the Downtown and pedestrians to individual sites within the Downtown area such as the Courthouse, City Hall, the City Auditorium, etc.

Action 3.4.18: Maintain City and County government presence in the downtown with a long-term commitment for staff consolidation and expansion of office space.

Action 3.4.19: Use street trees, building design techniques, covered walkways and other treatments to minimize the effects of weather.

Action 3.4.20: Provide both functional and aesthetic connections between the Courthouse, City Hall and other activity centers and destinations in Downtown through unified design and pedestrian amenities.

Objective C: Enhance the auto-urban character of the Main Street (U.S. Highway 283) and Broadway (U.S. Highway 62) corridors and sustain the suburban character of Tamarack Street, Falcon Road, Park Lane, Veterans Drive, and Ridgecrest Road.

The use of increased open space adjacent to the street edge, monument signage and street trees enhances the driving experience of major corridors.

Action 3.4.21: Create performance standards for the districts and uses adjacent to the Main Street, Broadway, Tamarack Street, Falcon Road, Park Lane, Veteran's Drive and Ridgecrest Road to identify appropriate uses and establish enhanced site design standards such as increased open space (adjacent to

roadways and throughout the development), additional requirements for landscaping and screening, sign control, outdoor lighting standards, building placement and orientation, site access and circulation and building design and appearance.

Action 3.4.22: Utilize the Future Community Character Plan and zoning map to create condensed nodes of suburban commercial development, as opposed to sprawling patterns of strip development along the U.S. 62 and U.S. 283 corridors.

Action 3.4.23: Transition the commercial development character in Altus from auto-urban toward a suburban character with provisions for minimum open space ratios, maximum impervious surface ratios, floor area and building coverage ratios, internal and peripheral site landscaping, locating parking and buildings, tree preservation and buffering requirements.

Action 3.4.24: Establish development incentives to encourage dedication of open space easements adjacent to collector and arterial street rights-of-way, along the irrigation canal and other drainage courses and within major developments, which would be maintained in perpetuity by private entity.

Objective D: Further enhance the suburban character of the industrial districts.

Action 3.4.25: Establish performance standards to create a suburban character of the industrial park(s) with ordinance provisions for minimum lot size, minimum open space, floor area and building coverage ratios and maximum impervious surface coverage.

Action 3.4.26: Define the primary entrances and edges to the industrial district(s) and the research and technology park with streetscape treatments, gateways and monuments to enhance their identity and contribute to community character.

Acquiring sufficient right-of-way to accommodate trails and pedestrian ways enhances area mobility and community character.

Action 3.4.27: Incorporate a large scale amenity into the proposed research and technology park, such as a retention basin that may also serve as an aesthetic water feature.

GOAL 3.5: Policies, regulations, incentives and processes that consistently represent the vision and desired character of the community

Objective A: Conduct regular reviews and periodically amend the Comprehensive Plan and its implementing regulations to reflect changing conditions.

Action 3.5.1: Perform an annual staff and Planning Commission review of the Comprehensive Plan and make amendments, as necessary, to evaluate its consistency with recent zoning and land use decisions.

Action 3.5.2: Perform a comparative review of the zoning map with the adopted Future Community Character Plan and initiate zone changes as appropriate.

Objective B: Revise the ordinances to regulate and restrict development within sensitive development areas and other locations that are of critical importance to the physical and economic development of the community.

Action 3.5.3: Conduct a thorough review and critique of the zoning and community development codes, subsequent to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, to ensure their ability to enact its policies and objectives.

Action 3.5.4: Perform an annual review of the City's development codes and make amendments, as necessary, to reflect recent changes in development policy, as established by land use, zoning and growth policy decisions of the Planning Commission and City Council.

Community Character

There is an essential difference in evaluating the development pattern from the perspectives of land use as opposed to community character. Simply conducting an inventory of uses and classifying them according to their functional use, such as low and high density residential, office, commercial, industrial, and public/institutional uses does not account for the widely varying performance characteristics of individual uses that may otherwise be within the same land use category. The influence that uses exert on other uses and the impacts associated with their operations have important land use policy implications and, thus, must be handled differently to affect desirable development outcomes.

Community character is a system for evaluating the features of individual developments that collectively contribute to the overall character of the community. The components that distinguish the quality of development include more than its use and size to elements such as the amount of preserved open space and vegetation, the amount of imperviousness, the orientation of buildings and parking areas and the relationship of buildings (scale and bulk) to the site. Together with aesthetic enhancements such as the design of buildings, landscaping and screening, sign control and site amenities, the community character may be significantly improved.

The reservoir is among several features that are cited by residents as a highly valued asset to the community's small-town character.

To protect its character, this plan must articulate the land use components and development design elements that contribute to a "small-town" character. Once the plan establishes the goals and policies, the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations must be amended to ensure new development occurs in a manner that is consistent with the vision of the plan – and, more importantly, the community.

Character Considerations

Residents of Altus cite its small-town atmosphere, reasonable cost of living, access to quality primary and local higher learning institutions, plentiful parks and amenities and strong family values as its most valued assets. They enjoy the benefits of a small town located in a largely rural environment that is close to, yet far enough from, more populated areas. The expanse of open space surrounding the community and its agrarian use contribute to its small-town community character. Residents have a strong sense of pride in their community and enjoy it as a place to live and raise a family. This Comprehensive Plan must, therefore, translate these intangible values into future development and growth strategies so that future decisions enhance, rather than deteriorate, these community values.

As a result of the stable population over the course of the last four decades, there has only been a moderate amount of new development. The development that has occurred has primarily been new residential neighborhoods in the northern areas of the community, new public facilities such as the Southwest Technology Center and scattered commercial businesses. While these new developments contribute to the immediate and overall character of the community, there remains concern on behalf of the citizens as to aging public school and government facilities and, thus, the integrity and physical appearance of the community's built environment. Without a growing population brought about by the

expansion of existing businesses and development of new industry, there is concern for a continued decline in the social and economic stability of the community. Stagnant community growth may substantially alter the character of the community over time without a concerted effort to reinvest in older neighborhoods, rehabilitate the housing stock, revitalize business areas, provide development incentives and assistance for improving businesses and properties, upgrade and improve municipal infrastructure and enhance community livability with parks and amenities.

Even with a proactive approach to land planning and development design, there remains a natural impact to Altus's small-town character. Growth itself, while a positive indicator of economic stability and desirable for sustaining the integrity of the community, will eventually shift the character of the community. Acknowledging the benefits of growth and development, this plan must seek to sustain the traits that contribute most significantly to the valued character of Altus.

Community Form

There are two basic forms of communities, including a freestanding community like Altus that is isolated from its neighbors by the surrounding agricultural character. A freestanding community has an observed edge, enabling visitors to form an identity of the community. A composite community is formed when communities grow together, thereby making it difficult to identify one community from another. There are no clear edges, leaving each community without individual identity.

Creating a permanent identifiable edge to the community through gateway improvements, preservation of open space and protection of the rural character will collectively form an "edge" to the community, thereby giving it form and definition. Sporadic development stretching outside of the City limits along U.S. Highway

Gateways at community entry points define an edge and help to form a unique identity separating it from other jurisdictions.

Urban Commercial

Urban Residential

Auto-Urban Commercial

Auto-Urban Residential

Suburban Commercial

62 to the east – and to a lesser extent to the west – and to the north and south along U.S. Highway 283 blurs the entrance and sense of arrival into the community. Controlling both the pattern and type of development in these areas will help to form a positive first impression and signify a formal entrance into the community.

Types of Character

Altus has identified its vision as an attractive, family-oriented and small-town community. To implement this vision, a means of converting this statement of future intent to land use policies and development regulations must be formed. A community character analysis was used to characterize the existing development and to document the land use patterns and design elements that form the character of individual developments and the community. This approach allows the formulation of standards to achieve the desired community character.

Each of the community character types described below are present in Altus with varying degrees of significance. The more readily identifiable are the urban and auto-urban characters of the Downtown and the commercial development along Main Street and Broadway, the suburban character associated with most of the neighborhoods and the rural countryside and agricultural character of the areas surrounding the community. The range of community character types and their functions are as follows:

Urban Character - Urban areas are historically the center of commerce, culture and entertainment in the community. The features that contribute to an urban character similar to that found in Downtown are the proximity of uses to the public ways, with little or no building setbacks, and a strong pedestrian orientation at the sidewalk level. An urban center is designed to bring people into close contact where congestion and personal encounters are expected and essential. In an urban environment, congestion is viewed as an indicator of success, which is necessary for retail activities.

Urban spaces are "architectural," meaning that they are enclosed by buildings. The distance across a space in relation to building height is essential for creating an "urban" environment. If a distance-to-height (D/H) ratio exceeds four, there is a limited enclosure and, thus, an environment more characteristic of an auto-urban character.

The Downtown represents an urban character as a result of its orientation around the Courthouse square, high floor-to-site area ratios with zero

setbacks along the street front, uses that are common of today's downtown environments, and a mixed pedestrian and vehicular orientation. The urban character could be further enhanced by limiting traffic on Commerce and Hudson Streets, thereby reinforcing the emphasis on the pedestrian, rather than on the automobile. More apparent street crossings and pedestrian-related improvements such as raised crosswalks, a median refuge and accuated signals would help to improve the urban character.

Auto-Urban Character - This character type is most commonly associated with an automobile-oriented commercial or business strip. Fast food restaurants, gas stations and strip shopping centers like those found along U.S. Highways 62 and 283 are the dominant commercial images of an auto-urban character. Higher density residential uses such as attached and multiple family housing also have this character due to their density, relative amount of impervious surface devoted to buildings and parking lots, and increased building enclosure.

The primary difference in urban and auto-urban characters is the role of the automobile in its site design. Rather than buildings oriented to the street as in an urban setting, auto-urban environments are characterized by large parking lots surrounding the buildings. Although the development intensity of auto-urban areas is usually less than that found within an urban setting, this is commonly due to lower land values and design preference, rather than development regulation. Auto-urban uses require large amounts of space for high levels of automobile dependent interaction. As a result, buildings are generally constructed at the back of the site away from the roadway with multiple driveways and expansive parking areas dominating the front setback.

The impact of fully accommodating the automobile determines the character of an auto-urban environment. Auto-urban uses, with very few exceptions, consume more land for streets, parking and other vehicular use areas than is covered by buildings, which often exceeds a two-to-one ratio. This type of development design diminishes the importance of architecture and results in a reduction in open space and elimination of natural features.

Suburban Residential

Suburban Estate

Rural Countryside

Rural Agricultural

Natural

Suburban Character – This community character type is very different from the urban and auto-urban types. The distinguishing factors of a suburban character are increased open space and the preservation or use of vegetation within and between developments, which helps to create a more equal balance between building mass and "green mass." Rather than creating a sense of enclosure by buildings as in an urban environment, trees and vegetation form a very different sense of enclosure. Therefore, open space and vegetative cover are essential elements in creating a suburban space. The physical distinction between suburban and urban (or auto-urban) character is the level of use intensiveness or magnitude of activity affecting adjacent uses. Suburban environments are sought as relief from more intensive urban settings, thereby leading to the popularity of contemporary neighborhoods denoted for their larger lots, fenced yards and open areas.

Integration of permanent open space into development avoids the loss of temporary "borrowed" space when abutting development occurs.

All too often, the open space that forms a suburban character is simply land that is not yet developed. As in the case of many neighborhoods in Altus, particularly those that are on the edge of town and abut vacant land, the adjacent views that contribute to the "small-town" character of the community are temporary, rather than permanent. The natural open space and views of the landscape are borrowed from the adjoining land, which is, therefore, referred to as borrowed open space. Consequently, as additional development occurs abutting these existing neighborhoods, the character will also change. This is an important consideration as to the design of new subdivisions and whether they use the adjacent land or incorporated permanent open space into the development to sustain its original character.
In each of the neighborhoods in Altus, one-third to one-half of the homes have views of "open space" across the street or behind their lots. Additionally, the community is currently surrounded by agricultural land, which further contributes to

the value and enjoyment of homeowners and, thus, the small-town community character. Most of this space, however, is "borrowed" until it is developed, which often leads to a dissatisfaction of homeowners. Therefore, to maintain these views and achieve the community character expressed by the residents as being valued and desirable, this borrowed open space must be incorporated into each development. One means of achieving this character is by clustering development, thereby maintaining an equal or higher density while preserving permanent open space.

Estate – This suburban character type is not common to Altus, but there are a few examples such as along North Park Lane and north of the reservoir. An estate character requires low-density development on larger properties (typically one acre or larger), thereby producing a visual openness. Generally, open space and vegetation dominate views, while building elements are apparent, yet secondary, to the landscape. To achieve an estate character in open fields, the design of subdivisions must actively seek to imitate more rural areas through the use of rural street sections without sidewalks, rural fence types, hedgerows, natural vegetation along property boundaries and generous building setbacks.

Rural – This character class includes three character types - countryside, agricultural, and natural. The areas surrounding Altus are typical of a rural character as a result of the community's freestanding nature and the prevailing agricultural landscape. Similar to the transition from urban to suburban character classes, the visible distinction of the rural character class is the importance of the natural landscape – rather than buildings - as the dominant visual feature. Agricultural activities and natural areas are the dominant land use, rather than conventional suburban and estate residential development.

Countryside – This rural character type includes sparse residential acreages, which are often in the ex-urban (the area beyond the city limits) areas where the first signs of suburbanization are present. Examples of a countryside character may be seen in the outlying areas around Altus where dwellings are on larger acreages. The common fate of these areas is often an eventual conversion to a suburban estate (more dense) character as additional acreages are developed in near proximity to these rural areas. Very low intensities are needed to preserve a countryside character, which can be achieved by vegetative screening and locating homes where they are less visible.

A countryside character is established when residents seeking larger lots and vast open space construct estate dwellings in the rural areas.

The value of the estate and countryside characters is their general compatibility with the operations of the air force base as a result of their limited density of residential development. Use and preservation of these character types within the sensitive and critical areas may, therefore, be highly appropriate. These character types may be sustained through stringent limits on minimum lot sizes or permanent protection of open space.

Agricultural – The character of these rural areas is dominated by agricultural use where homes are an accessory to the farm. While agriculture may also be a dominant land use in countryside areas, which accommodate a rural residential lifestyle while allowing agricultural use to continue, in the rural areas it is the intended and nearly sole use. The landscape is accented by farmsteads, barns, rural fences and a virtually unbroken horizon, which contributes to its rural character.

Areas that exhibit an agricultural character are highly appropriate in the sensitive areas around the AAFB and municipal airport, provided there are adequate precautions for managing future density and other necessary restrictions on the heights of buildings and natural features.

Natural – The character of natural rural areas constrains development due to features such as streams and floodplain or large, heavily vegetated areas. These areas are limited in and around Altus due to the relatively flat topography and limited natural features.

Existing Community Character

Altus' existing character is largely suburban with an urban character in the immediate Downtown and an auto-urban character along the Main Street and Broadway commercial corridors. The three-mile planning area surrounding the city limits is predominantly rural in character, with a couple countryside areas and sparse agricultural-related businesses, which establishes the community's rural and small-town character.

Displayed in **Table 3.1, Existing Land Use and Community Character**, are the existing acreages of each community character type. For relational purposes, the land uses most commonly associated with the character types are also provided. The existing community character of Altus is illustrated in **Figure 3.1, Existing Community Character**.

Land Use Findings

- Altus is comprised of approximately 4,437 acres as shown in Figure 3.1, Existing Community Character. According to Table 3.1, Existing Land Use and Community Character, nearly 23 percent of the land is Rural Agricultural, which includes unplatted parcels and rights-of-way.
- The planning area outside of the City limits is largely of rural agricultural character, with a couple pockets of countryside (homes on larger acreages) and auto-urban (including the community of Friendship) development.
- High density (6,000 to 12,000 square foot lots) suburban residential development is the largest land use category, which includes just over 28 percent of the calculated land area. Medium- and low-density suburban residential uses together contribute roughly 6.5 percent of the total acreage.
- Auto-urban commercial development along Main Street and Broadway contribute roughly 8.5 percent of the total land use. Suburban commercial

Table 3.1
EXISTING LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community Character Types	Existing Land Use	City Limits	
		Acres	% of Total
Rural Agricultural	Agriculture	1019.94	22.99%
Suburban Estate	Single Family Estate (2 to 5 acre)	7.12	0.16%
Suburban Residential	Low (20,000 s.f. to 2 acres)	136.99	3.09%
	Medium (12,000 to 20,000 s.f.)	150.18	3.38%
	High (6,000 to 12,000 s.f.)	1254.58	28.27%
Suburban Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial	29.35	0.66%
Auto-Urban Residential	Up to 16 dwelling unit per acre	43.20	0.97%
Auto-Urban Commercial	General Commercial	376.74	8.49%
Auto-Urban Industrial	General Industrial	178.16	4.02%
Urban Commercial	Downtown	9.34	0.21%
Urban Residential	Low (Up to 5,000 s.f.)	0.00	0.00%
	High (10 to 40 dwelling unit's/acre)	94.96	2.14%
Special Use	Public and Institutional	338.18	7.62%
Open Space, Preserved	Parks and Recreation	270.71	6.10%

land use adds less than one percent.

- Public and institutional uses such as Western Oklahoma State College, the Southwest Technology Center and the Jackson County Courthouse contribute approximately 338 acres or 7.62 percent of the land area shown within Figure 3.1.
- The general pattern of development is indicative of a community designed for automobile travel. With rare exception, residential development is generally isolated from commercial activity with few points of connectivity. A continuing lack of connectivity and intended separation of land uses will result in a proliferation of strip commercial (auto-urban) development and limited access subdivisions.
- The sensitive development areas within the compatibility use zones of AAFB have largely been avoided to date, with the exception of rural agricultural uses and the auto-urban character of the town of Friendship. Protection of these areas is a priority for the community.
- The recent pattern of urban development has primarily occurred on the north side of Tamarack Road, outside of the floodplain areas and where there is generally adequate infrastructure.
- The rural character surrounding Altus on all sides offers a timely opportunity to establish a definable edge to the community, thereby avoiding a proliferation of strip commercial and industrial development along U.S. Highway 283 to the north and south and U.S. Highway 62 to the east and west.
- Open space accounts for slightly over six percent of all land use within the area. This land use consists of land devoted to public parks, the area around the reservoir and other open lands.

Future Planning Considerations

There are a number of important considerations that must be accounted for in developing the Future Community Character Plan. These features - both natural and man-made - will constrain the future pattern of development and must, therefore, be appropriately addressed to ensure sound development and sensitive land planning practices. The key features to be considered include:

- The railroad rights-of-way running along the western edge and traversing the southern areas of the community will pose a constraint to future residential development due to

issues of land use compatibility. Grade separated interchanges may be warranted in certain locations to improve area mobility, and grade crossing improvements are also an important public safety consideration.

- The floodplain areas that traverse the eastern portion of the community have generally been avoided to date and will continue to constrain future development without costly drainage improvements. Efforts to reduce the extent of the floodplain must be sensitive to area-wide and downstream conditions.
- Area topography limits the ability to efficiently serve new development with water and wastewater utilities. Generally, due to gravity flow conditions, the areas to the west and south of existing development will require costly lift stations to pump wastewater to the existing treatment plants. These areas are, therefore, less desirable for development.
- Additional on- and off-site detention and/or retention areas will be necessary as development continues in the north and northeastern portions of the community to prevent any additional downstream flooding. The location of these improvements must be determined in advance of ensuing development.
- The Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) and Accident Potential Zones for the air base, as well as the noise contours for the municipal airport, necessitate density and height restrictions to sustain their operations. These sensitive areas must be considered in planning the future land use.
- Care must be taken in the planning and design of development to manage stormwater runoff so as not to create undesirable silting or water quality issues in the irrigation canals. The location of the canals also present a constraint to future development regarding property access. Constructing multiple crossings of the canal is both costly and undesirable.
- There are artificial edges to the east (Altus AFB), west (railroad) and south (irrigation canal) of the community that currently separate the urban and rural areas. As development continues, a permanent edge may be warranted to protect the encroachment of prime agricultural lands, as well as to define the community form.
- The industrial areas are presently located along U.S. Highway 62 to the east and west of the community. These areas

must be adequately buffered from adjacent developable lands to allow future expansion without creating land use compatibility or community character issues.

- Existing and potential new development at the entrances to the community should be appropriately planned to reflect the desired image of the community. Where intensive nonresidential development is planned, there must be appropriate provisions to manage their character and appearance consistent with the community vision.
- A transportation bypass warrants consideration to reroute heavy truck traffic out of the Downtown area. The character of uses adjacent to a new roadway must be well planned in advance to manage the type and pattern of the future land use.
- There is an opportunity for development of a business and/or industrial park along the eastern edge of the air base, which could offer an opportunity for joint use of the runways.

Future Community Character

The essence of comprehensive planning is a recognition that the community does not have to wait to react to growth. Rather, it can determine where and under what circumstances growth will occur. Through active community support, the plan can ensure that new development meets certain standards and that it aids in achieving the desired community character.

Displayed in **Figure 3.2, Future Community Character Plan** is the overall, physical representation of the community's vision for its future urban form and development character. It encompasses themes that are important to quality of life in the community and strives to balance community character with objectives for economic development. It is a guide for managing growth in terms of the pattern, arrangement, density, scale and site design characteristics of development. As a guide for land development, the Future Community Character Plan captures and develops into policies and regulations the community's values regarding how, when and where Altus will grow in the future. This is significant since the findings and recommendations contained in this plan provide the basis for decisions pertaining to the City's zoning and subdivision ordinances, which are the primary tools to implement the plan.

Development Outlook

Presented in **Table 3.2, Future Allocation of Land Use and Community Character** is a notion of the space necessary to maintain the existing composition of land uses and community character types. For example, approximately 178.16 acres are allocated to auto-urban industrial activity. Industrial acreage represented 6.80 percent of all actively used acreage in Altus. If residents, business owners and civic leaders are satisfied with the current mix of land uses, then 2025 figures will hold the percentage of total land use dedicated to industrial activity constant at 6.80 percent. As a result, industrial activity will need to increase by at least 27 acres to support the projected future population of 24,660 persons.
In total, 2,618.80 acres are currently developed, meaning they are utilized for uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, or public/institutional activity. Land that is currently vacant, used for right-of-way, set aside for parks and open space or classified as rural development is excluded.

Without the excluded land uses, approximately 12.21 acres of actively used land are available for every 100 Altus residents. To maintain the current number of actively used acres per 100 residents, yet account

Table 3.2
FUTURE ALLOCATION OF LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community Character Types	Land Use	Current Acres	Percent of Total	Acres Per 100 Persons	Projected Acreage	Increase from Current
Suburban Estate	Single Family Estate (2 to 5 acre)	7.12	0.27%	0.03	8	1
Suburban Residential	Low (20,000 s.f. to 2 acres)	136.99	5.23%	0.64	158	21
	Medium (12,000 to 20,000 s.f.)	150.18	5.73%	0.70	173	22
	High (6,000 to 12,000 s.f.)	1254.58	47.91%	5.85	1443	188
Suburban Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial	29.35	1.12%	0.14	34	4
Auto-Urban Residential	Up to 16 dwelling unit per acre	43.20	1.65%	0.20	50	6
Auto-Urban Commercial	General Commercial	376.74	14.39%	1.76	433	56
Auto-Urban Industrial	General Industrial	178.16	6.80%	0.83	205	27
Urban Commercial	Downtown	9.34	0.36%	0.04	11	1
Urban Residential	Low (Up to 5,000 s.f.)	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0	0
	High (10 to 40 dwelling unit's/acre)	94.96	3.63%	0.44	109	14
Special Use	Public and Institutional	338.18	12.91%	1.58	389	51
TOTAL		**2618.8**	**0.00%**	**12.21**	**3011**	**392**

Source: Lane Kendig, inc.

for anticipated population growth, the actively used land must increase by 392 acres to 3,011 acres. Since vacant land currently accounts for approximately 528 acres, it appears that the projected additional acreage may be accommodated by requiring annexation of land within the planning area. Further, intensification and use of underutilized land would allow for a greater future population, although this would be a significant shift from the current, dispersed development trends.

Development Considerations

As Altus develops in the future, it must use the techniques and resources available to control the manner by which it grows. If the desired community character is, in fact, a small-town atmosphere, future development must portray a suburban (rather than auto-urban) character type. Key elements in forming this character will include:

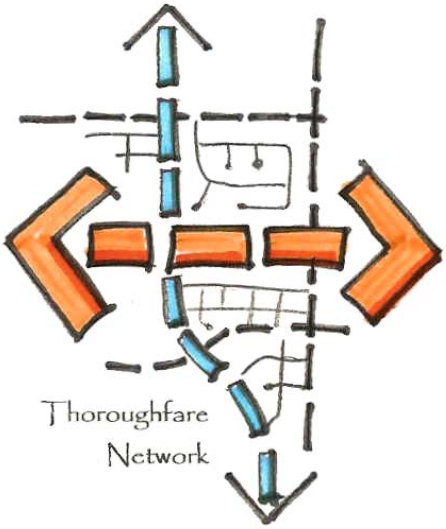
- An expanded Downtown that reflects a more urban (pedestrian-oriented) character;
- Suburban commercial nodes, as opposed to auto-urban strip centers lining the U.S. 62 and U.S. 283 corridors. A suburban node is distinct from a strip center by less emphasis on accommodating the automobile and more emphasis on architecture, enclosure of space and preservation of open space;
- Clustered neighborhood design and subdivision development that incorporates permanent open space into the development;
- Development that integrates neighborhood commercial and residential uses, offering convenient connections and access by walking, rather than by an automobile;
- A renewed emphasis on creating a walkable community environment with sidewalks along all streets and an interwoven trail network linking neighborhoods with schools, parks and other community facilities; and
- Infill development on vacant platted parcels, thereby re-establishing neighborhood integrity and forming a viable small-town living environment.

Thoroughfare development requires advanced planning to meet the community's requisite travel demands and to ensure safe and orderly movement of traffic within neighborhoods and throughout the community and region. In addition to meeting mobility needs, transportation system planning is also an essential element in the community's economic development. Access to, through and within the community, whether by air, rail, bus or automobile transportation, is vital for movement of both people and goods. A well-planned and regularly maintained transportation system also contributes to community character and appearance, as well as to the quality of life for residents.

The transportation system is made up of a network of corridors that connect neighborhoods with business districts within the community and externally to other communities and states. These corridors define the shape and pattern of development, as well as the impression left on tourists and residents. Although the automobile is the primary mode of transportation, with increased emphasis placed on the varying needs of residents, thoroughfare planning must look not only at the existing roadway network, but also at each of the other modes of transportation, as well, which together complete the community transportation system.

The transportation element of the Altus Comprehensive Plan establishes a system to accommodate local and regional travel demand through the Year 2020 and beyond. It is closely coordinated with each of the other elements of the plan to create a strong and successful area-wide transportation network. As a reflection of today's system of travel, the transportation element will focus largely upon the street system. However, it will also place renewed emphasis upon the ability to travel throughout the area without an automobile via walking, bicycling and the use of public transportation.

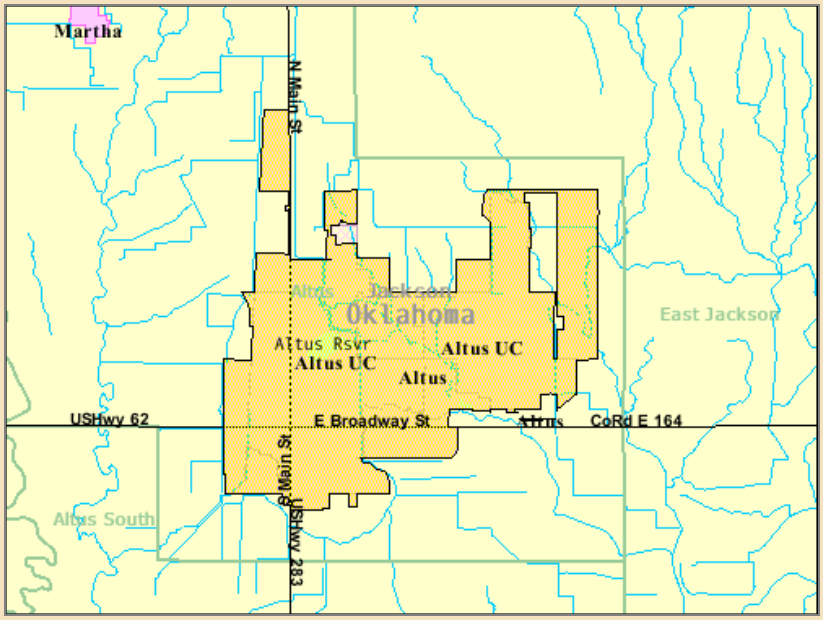
The purpose of this transportation chapter is to address area-wide mobility needs on all levels, from sidewalks and trails to local streets and neighborhood access to arterial roadways and highways. The principal aim of transportation planning is to ensure safe and efficient movement of people and goods. To achieve this end, this element includes a Thoroughfare Plan, which is the long-term plan for developing an overall system of thoroughfares for the City and within its three-mile planning area. The plan is to be used as a guide for securing needed rights-of-way and upgrading and extending the network of streets, roads and highways in an orderly and timely fashion.



Key Transportation Issues

In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), as well as the input received from nearly two hundred citizens who participated in the community forum, there were a number of key transportation-related issues identified, including the following:

1. **Improved regional and intra- and inter-state transportation mobility** – Located in the far southwest corner of the state, highway access to Altus is by way of U.S. Highway 62, which intersects with I-44 in Lawton to the east and extends westward through Altus and Lubbock, Texas terminating in El Paso, Texas. Access from the north and south is via U.S. Highway 283, which extends north intersecting I-40 and continuing through Kansas and into Nebraska. To the south of Altus it intersects with U.S. Highway 287 in Vernon, Texas and extends onward to the south in Texas. The segments of these roadways are improved to expressway standards through and on either side of Altus, but transition to rural highways with at-grade intersections beyond the improved sections in each direction.



Altus is located at the crossroads of U.S. Highways 62 and 283 in southwest Oklahoma.

While neither U.S. Highways 62 nor 283 are fully improved to expressway or interstate standards, their convergence is, nevertheless, of vital importance to the future of this community. While they are not significant connections in the national transportation system, compared to the interstates and fully improved expressways such as I-44 through Lawton, OK and U.S. Highway 287 between Dallas and Amarillo (located 35 miles south of Altus), they are the life lines to the local economy. Each makes important connections to I-44 to the east, I-40 to the north, and U.S. Highway 287 to the south, providing statewide, national and international access

throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. Therefore, continued improvement of these roadways is of importance for local travelers, but more importantly for supporting the economic stability of Altus and the surrounding rural region.

2. **An efficient, safe and convenient local transportation network** – The local transportation system is made up of a network of roads and streets, each designed with varying capacities and functions to move traffic within and around the community. Each street connection contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall system, making each individual link important. Therefore, dead-end streets, discontinuous roadways and those yet to be extended or improved cause traffic to be unnecessarily re-routed onto other streets that are not designed to function in this capacity. Of significance to an efficient system is the continuity of the street network.

   The continuity of the roadway network is well defined in the established areas of the community – generally south of Bradford Avenue and west of Park Lane - by nature of the section-line arterial roads and the grid of collector and local residential streets. This network is less defined, however, within the more recent developments and on the developing northern periphery of the community where newer subdivisions are being designed with a curvilinear street pattern, more cul-de-sacs and looping, discontinuous collector streets. While development is occurring in small phases, mirroring the community's housing market, it must, nevertheless, occur in a planned manner ensuring adequate roadway continuity and integration with the existing street network.

3. **Accessible alternative transportation modes** – A complete transportation system includes more than highways and streets to encompass other modes, such as air transportation, bus transport,

Bicycle and pedestrian ways contribute to the local transportation system offering public access within the community.

rail and freight transport, public transit, bicycling and walking. A combination of these modes, which collectively form a complete transportation system, is desirable to adequately support the widely varying needs of the community. These transportation needs range from children walking to school and persons using sidewalks or trails for recreational walking and jogging; to those who rely on public transportation or others for their personal mobility; to those traveling longer distances, thereby warranting bus or air travel; to the needs of businesses who are reliant upon an efficient and affordable transportation system to transport clients into, and products and services out of, the community, region, state and country.

By reason of its location and size, some modes of transportation in Altus are less viable than others. In these instances, as in the nearest commercial air service being two hours away in Oklahoma City or farther to Dallas, the community has an indirect, but nevertheless important, impact. Other modes, such as walking and bicycling, are highly viable in the community and may be achieved through regulations and capital investment.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals, objectives and action recommendations are designed to address the above issues, which were identified by citizens of the community through their participation in the community forum.

GOAL 4.1: Regional and statewide transportation facilities that provide improved access to the community.

Objective A: Coordinate with other governmental agencies to develop a regional, multi-modal transportation system.

- **Action 4.1.1:** Actively participate in regional and statewide transportation planning activities to promote funding of facilities and improvements that benefit Altus and southwest Oklahoma.
- **Action 4.1.2**: Coordinate with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to extend improvements of U.S. Highway 62 to the east between Altus and Lawton and to the west to U.S. Highway 287. Such improvements would enhance the safety and access of traffic into the community from the outlying smaller communities such as Duke, Gould and Hollis.

Action 4.1.3: Coordinate with ODOT to improve U.S. Highway 283 to expressway standards south to Vernon, Texas and north to intersection I-40 in Sayre.

Action 4.1.4: Form a coordinating group consisting of City, Jackson County, AAFB, and other regional representatives to promote transportation improvements that benefit Altus, the air base and the rural economy in southwest Oklahoma.

Objective B: Promote each of the area roadways for their historic and tourism significance.

Action 4.1.5: Coordinate with other counties, communities and agencies along the U.S. Highway 62 and 283 corridors to consider possible designation of one or both of these roadways as a scenic byway.

Action 4.1.6: Consider formation of a non-profit corporation consisting of members along one or both of the U.S. Highway 62 and 283 corridors, which will qualify for funding assistance upon designation as a National Scenic Byway and through other state tourism-related programs.

Action 4.1.7: Promote U.S. Highway 62 and U.S. Highway 283 as scenic and historical trail alternatives for tourists and area visitors.

Action 4.1.8: Install historical markers and other roadway signage along U.S. Highway 62 and U.S. Highway 283 within the community and its planning area, promoting them as highways of historic significance.

GOAL 4.2: A local transportation network that allows safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Objective A: Continuously improve and extend the network of arterial streets to serve both the short-term and long-range mobility needs of the community.

Action 4.2.1: Utilize the Thoroughfare Plan to formalize the alignment of a bypass route following Veteran's Drive along the east side of the community (including an extension north of Tamarack connecting to Heritage Road), Heritage Road to the north, Market Road on the west, and a new alignment one-half mile south of Ridgecrest Road. As an alternate, consider the option of following Main Street south from Heritage Road to Tamarack Road and then west to Market Road to avoid right-of-way constraints (existing

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has provided funding for almost 1,500 state and nationally designated byway projects in 48 states. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities.

The definition of "scenic" reaches beyond breathtaking vistas. All of America's Byways™ are "scenic," representing the depth and breadth of scenery in America - natural and man-made panoramas; electrifying neon landscapes; ancient and modern history coming alive; native arts and culture; and scenes of friends, families and strangers sharing their stories.

cemetery) at the intersection of Main Street and Heritage Road.

Action 4.2.2: Acquire necessary right-of-way for grade separated interchanges at the railroad and Veteran's Drive, Ridgecrest Road and Market Road, as well as a bridge over the irrigation canal to the north and south of the community.

Action 4.2.3: Plan to acquire sufficient right-of-way and manage driveway locations near the intersections of the proposed bypass and Broadway (east and west), Tamarack Road (east and west), Park Lane (north and south), Main Street (north and south) to accommodate acceleration and deceleration lanes, yield-only turn lanes and wide directional turning medians.

Action 4.2.4: Secure sufficient right-of-way in advance of development and concurrent with any building permit approvals within the City's three-mile planning area.

Action 4.2.5: Ensure that any new bridges on the bypass route are designed and constructed to a standard that will accommodate a minimum of five travel lanes, with increased weight limits to support trucks and over-sized equipment.

Action 4.2.6: Acquire right-of-way and extend arterial streets in strict adherence with the City's growth policies, as provided in Chapter 7, Growth Policies.

Action 4.2.7: Construct raised medians in the middle of the proposed bypass route, as well as each arterial street (subject to sufficient right-of-way and property access considerations in those portions already developed) as a means to control access, with appropriately spaced (not less than 1,320 feet apart along the bypass) median openings, allowing both left and right turning movements.

Raised medians offer the benefit of managing access along an arterial or collector roadway, while also enhancing its visual character.

Action 4.2.8: Conduct an alignment study to evaluate the constructability of connecting Falcon Road to Bradford Avenue at its intersection with Main Street.

Action 4.2.9: Acquire right-of-way to extend Veteran's Drive north of Tamarack and curving west to tie into Heritage Road, which will complete this segment of the proposed bypass.

Action 4.2.10: Amend the Community Development Code to provide alternative right-of-way and pavement widths for each roadway classification.

Action 4.2.11: Acquire right-of-way, as necessary, and improve Veteran's Drive to bypass standards (divided four-lane) south of Industrial Drive.

Action 4.2.12: Acquire additional rights-of-way at the intersections of arterial streets to accommodate a left-hand turning median and free-flow right-hand turns as traffic volumes warrant.

Action 4.2.13: Examine the alternative roadway cross-sections, or alternatively consider the use of street easements versus right-of-way acquisition, for that portion of Falcon Road from Main Street to Park Lane to remedy the right-of-way constraints.

Action 4.2.14: Acquire right-of-way, as necessary, and improve to arterial standards that portion of Falcon Road from North Park Lane to AAFB.

Action 4.2.15: Acquire right-of-way, as necessary, and improve Ridgecrest Road and Market Road to arterial standards.

Action 4.2.16: Acquire right-of-way, as necessary, and improve to arterial standards Tamarack Road west of Main Street to Market Road.

Objective B: Provide continuous collector roadways within and between neighborhoods and throughout the community.

Action 4.2.17: Concurrent with subdivision approval, require continuous collector roadways between all section-line arterials, aligning with existing collector roadway segments.

Action 4.2.18: Amend the Community Development Code to require one point of external access to an improved collector or arterial roadway for each 75 platted lots.

Action 4.2.19: Amend the Community Development Code to require submission of a general development plan showing the street pattern and general lot arrangement for multi-phase developments,

which shall be approved prior to plat approval.

Action 4.2.20: Amend the Community Development Code requiring small, single-phase developments to stub streets to the property line, with provision for temporary turn-arounds, to allow continuity of the local and collector street network.

Action 4.2.21: Construct mid-section collector road crossings of the irrigation canal to provide system continuity and improved neighborhood and community mobility.

Action 4.2.22: Extend Ranch Road North to the west, curving north and tying into Heritage Road and to the east of Park Lane tying into the proposed extension of Veteran's Drive.

Action 4.2.23: Extend Katy Drive to collector standards west of Main Street curving south and tying into Ridgecrest Road.

Action 4.2.24: Extend Joy Street to collector standards south along the railroad connecting to Ridgcrest Road.

Action 4.2.25: Extend a collector roadway aligned with Polk Street between Broadway and the proposed extension of Ranch Road North.

Action 4.2.26: Extend a collector roadway between North Park Lane and Veteran's Drive approximately one-half mile north of Falcon Road.

Action 4.2.27: Extend San Ann Drive from its termination east of North Park Lane eastward to Veteran's Drive.

Action 4.2.28: Extend Industrial Drive to the west and curving north to intersect Broadway on an alignment with Horizon Drive.

Action 4.2.29: Concurrent with subdivision approval, secure right-of-way for a collector roadway in the area bound by Main Street on the east, Western Oklahoma State College to the south, the railroad to the west and Heritage Road on the north.

Objective C: Provide for the safety of the traveling public.

Action 4.2.30: Install, connect and synchronize all traffic signals along arterial roadsways.

Action 4.2.31: Adopt access management regulations to restrict the number, location and spacing of driveways; street intersections; medians and median openings; marginal access roads; turn lanes; and acceleration/ deceleration lanes at major intersections.

Action 4.2.32: Require marginal access roads and/or cross access easements along all commercial frontage abutting

arterial and collector roads to minimize the number of driveways.

Action 4.2.33: Restrict the number of residential streets with access to arterial streets with required marginal access streets – similar to those along Main Street - or collector roadways.

Action 4.2.34: Install railroad crossing arms and applicable pavement markings and signage at all intersections with the railroad throughout the three-mile planning area, utilizing traffic volumes to prioritize the improvements.

Action 4.2.35: Conduct grade crossing studies to determine the feasibility and warrants for grade-separated interchanges with the railroad and arterial roadways, such as Main Street/U.S. Highway 283.

Action 4.2.36: Periodically conduct signal warrant studies as area travel volumes increase with new development.

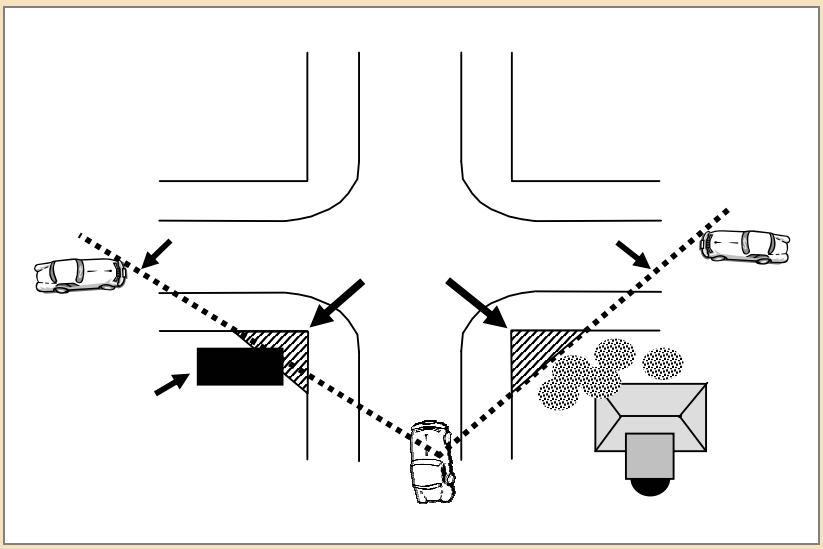
Action 4.2.37: Periodically conduct travel speed studies to determine appropriate speed restrictions, particularly in school zones and other pedestrian areas.

Action 4.2.38: Regularly conduct inspections to ensure there are clear views of all traffic control devices, including strict enforcement of visual obstructions within the site distance triangle at street intersections.

Action 4.2.39: Conduct an appraisal of all street signs including their placement, visibility and condition. Subsequently replace worn or illegible street signs.

Action 4.2.40: Install pedestrian and bicycle actuated traffic signals at intersections near schools and in other areas with high pedestrian traffic.

Action 4.2.41: Improve and regularly maintain street pavement markings and signage for all school safety zones. Consider installing traffic calming devices to slow traffic.



Intersections must remain free of any visual obstructions within the line of sight of vehicles (site distance triangle) approaching the intersection.

GOAL 4.3: Alternative modes of transportation to improve city-wide and regional mobility.

Objective A: Promote walking and bicycling as viable alternative modes of transportation.

Action 4.3.1: Allocate funds annually through the City budget and support, by provision of a local funding match, applications for grant assistance from the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department; the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (Transportation Efficiency Act of the 21st Century funds); and private funding sources.

Mid-block public access easements are necessary to provide direct connections between neighborhoods, trails and public open spaces.

Action 4.3.2: Adopt roadway cross-sections with a sufficient right-of-way width to accommodate off-street bike trails and pedestrian-ways.

Action 4.3.3: Amend the Community Development Code to require public access easements within developments that abut the conceptual trail network provided in Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation.

Action 4.3.4: Require within the Community Development Code mid-block public access easements for blocks in excess of five hundred feet (500′) in length that abut a park, school, trail or other public space.

Action 4.3.5: Conduct an inventory of sidewalks throughout the community and incorporate prioritized improvements within a multi-year capital improvement program (CIP). Alternatively, create an improvement program funded by private assessments.

Action 4.3.6: Require the construction of sidewalks concurrent with all building permits. Alternatively, in locations where there are no existing sidewalks, utilize a fee in lieu provision to be paid into a dedicated sidewalk improvement fund.

Action 4.3.7: Implement traffic calming improvements within neighborhoods to reduce speeds and discourage "cut-

through" traffic, thereby improving pedestrian safety.

Action 4.3.8: Install handicap accessible ramps; marked, signed and/or signaled pedestrian crossings; and pedestrian-actuated signal detectors at key locations, i.e. schools, library, public buildings, etc., throughout the community.

Action 4.3.9: Install medians/esplanades in arterial streets for use as a pedestrian refuge to shorten the unprotected distance across wider roadways.

Objective B: Provide for expanded air transportation services.

Action 4.3.10: Prepare a master plan for the Altus Municipal Airport to determine its long-range development plans.

Action 4.3.11: Review and amend, as necessary, the zoning regulations (use and height restrictions) within the airport influence area to protect its long-term operational interests from encroaching incompatible development. Consider measures such as a joint City-County development code, annexation or exercising the City's authority to extend its zoning regulations beyond its current three-mile planning limits.

Action 4.3.12: Conduct a survey and needs study to identify the regional demands for general aviation services.

Action 4.3.13: Seek assistance through the Southwest Technology Center, Western Okalahoma State College or other professional guidance to develop an airport marketing plan to promote use of the Altus/Quartz Mountain Regional Airport to persons and businesses throughout southwest Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle.

Action 4.3.14: Coordinate with AAFB to acquire an easement for joint use of a runway by aviation-related businesses that may be attracted to a new industrial airpark located adjacent to the east of AAFB.

Objective C: Seek ways to expand public transit services and improve alternative transportation options for residents of all ages.

Action 4.3.15: Operate a fixed route service within Altus tying together Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC), the Southwest Technology Center, shopping areas along Main Street and Broadway Street, Downtown Altus, and the major employment areas. Such intracity fixed route may interface with intercity routes providing county-wide public transportation.

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation authorized under the Economic Act of 1964 to attempt to alleviate poverty in Jackson, Harmon, and Greer Counties in southwest Oklahoma by helping low-income persons become self-sufficient. Established in 1965, SOCAG serves all low-income people regardless of race, color, sex, creed, or disability.

Dependence upon the automobile has not come without cost – a cost that is being realized in the form of increased taxes, reduced levels of public services, such as police and fire protection, less affordable housing, degradation of green space and environmentally sensitive areas, pollution of air and water and many other well-documented costs.

Action 4.3.16: Seek a dedicated funding source from the City, County, WOSC, the Southwest Technology Center, and local businesses and industries to operate a fixed route within the community.

Action 4.3.17: Form an interagency agreement with the City, County, the school district, and others for joint vehicle maintenenace, procurement, and driver training.

Action 4.3.18: Consider a contract arrangement with the school district for use of their drivers during the mid-day period.

Transportation Modes

Altus currently possesses each of the modes of transportation, which offer increased opportunities for expanding and improving the multi-modal options available to community residents and businesses. These opportunities described in the goals, objectives and actions represent improvements to economic development, community recreation, the environment and local quality of life.

Pedestrian tunnels beneath major roadways help to eliminate barriers to pedestrian mobility.

The term "multimodal" refers to the full range of transportation modes that together form the local and regional transportation system, including single occupant vehicles; multiple occupant vehicles such as ride sharing, van pools and public transit; walking and bicycling, as well as rail and air transportation. The existing improvements and services and the opportunities for enhancement are discussed below.

Pedestrian System Planning -

Bikeways, trails and sidewalks are part of the City's transportation system that serves the needs for pedestrian movement within and between neighborhoods, Downtown and other commercial districts, and to each of the schools, parks and other community facilities. Safe and well-maintained pedestrian facilities are particularly needed in the older neighborhoods that did not have sidewalks installed before they were

required by the City. Consideration must, therefore, be given to conduct an inventory and condition assessment to ensure proper and timely maintenance of sidewalk facilities, implement compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) and establish sidewalks and other pedestrian-ways in all neighborhoods. The City's ordinances must also restrict obstacles on sidewalks, such as parked vehicles and trailers, which hinder pedestrian mobility and safety.

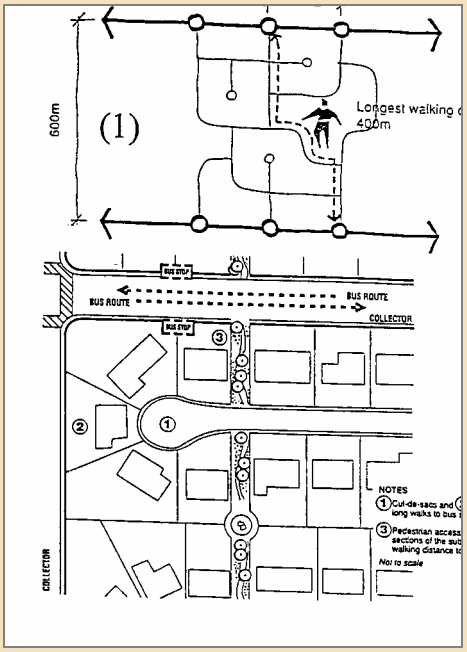
Eliminating barriers to pedestrian mobility is an important feature in planning for and developing an effective pedestrian network. The U.S. Highways 62 and 283 corridors, in particular, as well as each of the other major arterial roadways (Ridgecrest Road, Falcon Road, Tamarack Street, Park Lane and Veteran's Drive), railroads and the irrigation canal impose barriers to pedestrian access and mobility. These barriers must be overcome by access improvements, such as pedestrian tunnels, overhead bridges or well designed crosswalks and other provisions made during the course of roadway improvements and subdivision design. In addition, integrating schools, parks and appropriately scaled convenience retail shops within neighborhoods will contribute to lessening reliance on the automobile for short trips and, thus, improve opportunities for walking and bicycling.

Modern subdivision street patterns, such as the more recent developments north of Bradford Avenue are more auto-oriented than the older neighborhoods that have a traditional grid street pattern. A grid pattern is dense and regular, allowing pedestrians several choices of routes to parks and other walking destinations. The well-established neighborhoods, therefore, offer a lesson about creating walkable neighborhoods.

While curvilinear street patterns are appealing to homeowners,

Landscaped roadways aid in mitigating the impacts of the climate on pedestrian mobility and enhance the walking environment.

pedestrians have fewer choices of direct routes to destinations within or outside their subdivision. Rather, the pedestrian is left with the alternative of following streets that, at times, meander away from their destination. Similar to automobile traffic, pedestrians rely on a series of connecting paths to make their trips. These paths may include sidewalks, on-street bikeways and lanes, off-street trails and walkways, linear parks and connections or any other forms of linkage. Most importantly, the system of paths must be both connected and continuous.



Public access easements improve connectivity and enhance pedestrian mobility.

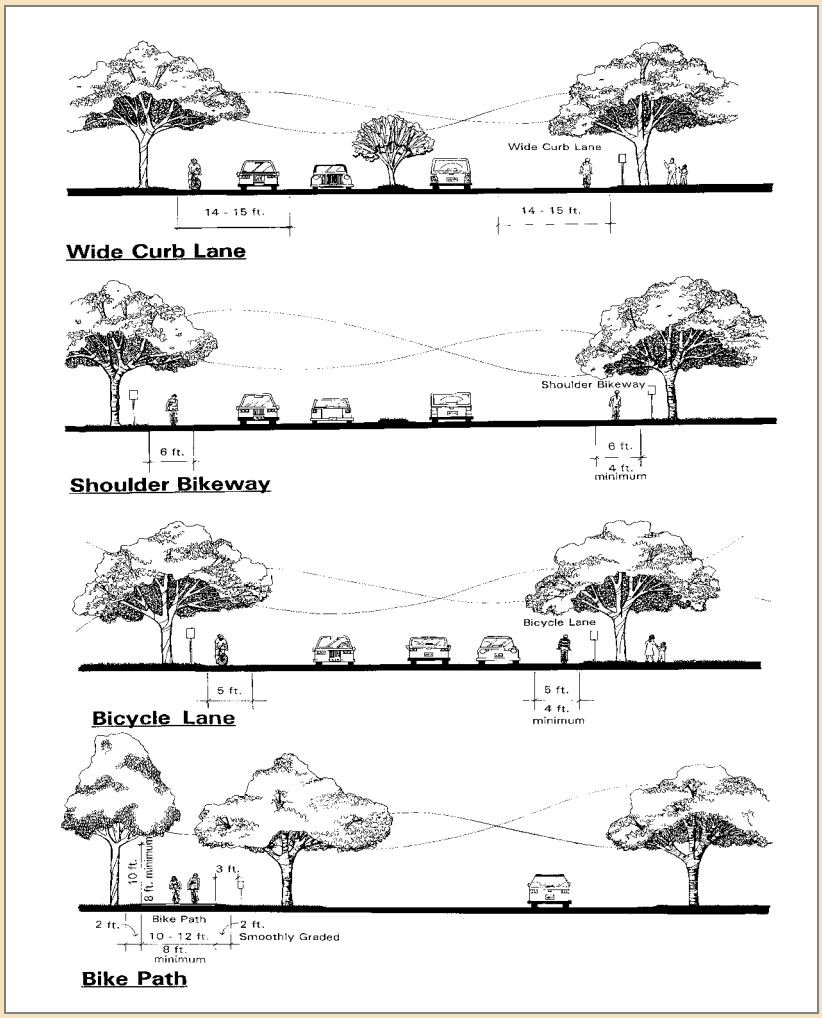
Climate also has an important influence on the pedestrian system. In southern Oklahoma where the weather is hot during the summer months, walking any significant distance may not be conducive or desirable. Thus, the nature of the walk becomes a factor. In terms of transportation and thoroughfare design, the design of the unoccupied public right-of-way becomes quintessential. Recommendations for designing walkable streets include:

- Cul-de-sac streets should be carefully managed to ensure they are not over utilized. Pedestrian linkages in the form of public access easements and walkways connecting parts of the neighborhood together and providing access to schools and parks must be required.
- Sidewalks and/or trails should be required in all new development, concurrent with street construction and installed in areas where they are not currently available. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of all arterial streets and collector roadways and on one or both sides of local residential streets. Trade-offs may be permitted in suburban estate and rural developments to allow off-street trails in lieu of sidewalks, thereby meeting the needs of walkers and bicyclers.
- Mid-block connections in the form of public access easements and walkways should be required to provide linkages between blocks and to common facilities such as parks and open areas. This is particularly important with contemporarily designed developments with curvilinear street patterns.
- Streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian connections and

public gathering areas should be designed to create sheltered areas from heat and inclement weather.

- Tree cover and other landscaping should be required along pedestrian paths for both aesthetic and environmental reasons. Trees provide shade and a sense of enclosure around pedestrian paths. Other vegetation, such as flowers and shrubs are also encouraged to further compliment the streetscape. To the extent practicable, native plant material that is more tolerant of local conditions should be used.
- The number of driveways and other property access points must be kept to a minimum to reduce the number of pedestrian and vehicular conflict points.

Bicycle Transportation – As new development occurs in the community, signed bicycle routes (shared right-of-way), designated and striped on-street bikeways and off-street bicycling and jogging trails should be developed to link major attractions and destinations throughout the community, including single-family neighborhoods and apartments, parks, schools, churches, the Downtown, AAFB, Southwest Technology Center and Western Oklahoma State College, the community center, major employment centers and shopping areas. In this way, bicycle routes can provide an alternative mode of transportation, while also serving the recreational needs of area residents.



Bikeways may be accommodated within the right-of-way as wide curb or shoulder lanes, striped lanes or separated paths.

Implementing bicycle improvements may be accomplished by way of highway funds used for the construction and development of bicycle paths wherever a highway, road or street is being constructed, reconstructed or relocated. Additionally, the irrigation canal, drainage corridors, parks and recreation areas and various other rights-of-way and easements that traverse Altus represent potential opportunities for development of future bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These opportunities can be incorporated as transportation enhancement projects, such as multi-use trails and scenic beautification areas. The conceptual trail and bikeway plan provided in Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation, should guide development and implementation of an interconnected network of bike and pedestrian facilities.

Public Transportation - Evaluated as a stand alone system, effective public transit systems are generally intended to supplement other modes of transportation. Balance among the various modes must be achieved based upon ridership demands. From a demand perspective, van or bus transportation is ideal for many demographic groups, including the elderly, young and persons on a limited or "fixed" income. Though there are exceptions, systems are typically designed to facilitate these primary groups.

Southwest Transit, operated under the Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, provides demand-response service during the week in Altus between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. In addition to the call-in-advance para-transit service, they also contract to provide transportation to several agencies and programs, including the Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Healthcare Authority, Altus Cab Company, the Head Start Program, as well as local day cares, nursing homes, and senior nutrition centers. They also provide an intercity connection to Jefferson Lines and Greyhound Bus Lines on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week. Currently, there are no fixed route or circulator services that operate on a schedule within the community. Such a route connecting Western Oklahoma State College, the Southwest Technology Center, shopping areas along Main Street and Broadway Street, Downtown Altus, and major employers would improve the transportation alternatives for many community residents. However, there is only limited Federal funding available for such service meaning that financial support would need to be

committed by each of the participating jurisdictions, agencies, and businesses.

Thoroughfare System Planning

Thoroughfare system planning is the process to assure development of the most efficient and appropriate street system necessary to meet existing and future travel needs. The primary objective of the Thoroughfare Plan is to ensure that adequate rights-of-way are preserved on appropriate alignments and of sufficient width to allow orderly and efficient improvement of thoroughfares. Proposed alignments are shown for planned new roadways and roadway extensions, but actual alignments will vary depending on the design of development and necessary amendments to the Thoroughfare Plan. Requirements for rights-of-way dedication and construction of street improvements must apply to all subdivision of land within the City and its three-mile planning area.

Thoroughfare Plan - The thoroughfare system of arterial and collector streets is displayed in **Figure 4.1 - Mobility Plan**. The Thoroughfare Plan shows approximate alignments for planned thoroughfares that will be considered in platting of subdivisions, right-of-way dedication, and construction of major roadways within the City and its three-mile area.

Some elements of the thoroughfare system will require additional rights-of-way and may ultimately be developed as two-lane or multi-lane roadways with various cross-sections. Some streets that are identified as collectors on the plan, such as A Street and Navajoe Street, will not necessarily ever be widened due to constrained right-of-way conditions. Instead, the collector designation reflected on the Thoroughfare Plan signifies their traffic-handling role in the overall street system and the importance of maintaining them and similar streets in superior condition to maximize their traffic capacity since they most likely cannot be improved to an optimal width and cross-section.

The Thoroughfare Plan does not show local residential streets because their function is to provide access to individual lots and developments and their alignments will vary according to individual development plans. Local residential street alignment should be determined jointly by the City and landowners as part of the subdivision review and approval process, in accordance with the Community Development Code.

Similar to local residential streets, collectors are required with new development, but are not shown in

Level of Service (LOS)
This is a scale that measures the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on such factors as maneuverability, driver dissatisfaction and delay.

- **LOS A** – Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.
- **LOS B** – Describes a steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed.
- **LOS C** – Denotes a reasonably steady, high volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on movement and speed and occasional backups on critical approaches.
- **LOS D** – Designates the level where traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function, but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.
- **LOS E** – Represents traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent stoppages. This congestion is considered severe, with longstanding queues and blocked intersections.
- **LOS F** – Describes unsatisfactory stop-and-go traffic with stoppages of long durations.

all places on the Thoroughfare Plan – particularly throughout the three-mile planning limits - since their alignments will depend on the surrounding street system and particular development plans. They are, nevertheless, essential to an efficient and effective transportation network and must not be overlooked during the subdivision review process. Collectors should be situated on a case-by-case basis to connect arterial streets with other collectors and local residential streets.

The Thoroughfare Plan will affect the growth and development of Altus since it guides the preservation of rights-of-way needed for future thoroughfare improvements. As a result, the plan has significant influence on the pattern of traffic movement and the desirability of areas for future development. While other elements of the plan look at foreseeable changes and needs over a 20-year period, thoroughfare planning requires an even broader perspective. Future changes in transportation technology, cost structure, service demand and long-term shifts in urban growth and development require a far-sighted and visionary approach for thoroughfare decisions.

Roadway Cross-sections

Roadway classifications reflect the functions that roadways serve as part of the street network. The cross-section of a roadway is related to traffic volume (vehicles per day and during peak periods), design capacity and level of service (LOS). The Community Development Code does not specify the cross-sections for different street classifications, but references conformance with the Altus Comprehensive Plan, City design standards and the Oklahoma Highway Department (for state and federal highways). Generally, the City's current standards range from a pavement width of 26 feet and a right-of-way width of 50 feet for local streets to a pavement width of 66 feet and right-of-way width of 100 feet for a five-lane roadway, which is determined by the Planning Commission through the subdivision review and approval process.

In the administration of the Thoroughfare Plan, unique situations will arise where development conditions and physical constraints conflict with the need for improving designated thoroughfares to the planned right-of-way and pavement width. Such special circumstances require flexibility in the administration of the plan. Minimum design criteria and special cross-sections may need

to be applied in constrained areas where conditions limit the ability to meet typical standards. Special roadway cross-sections must, therefore, be determined on a case-by-case basis when a unique design is necessary. Exceptions warranting technical approval must be handled by the City Engineer. Otherwise, the standard cross-sections should be applied in all developing areas and, whenever possible, in existing developed areas.

A single set of standards for development within the City versus that within the outlying planning area may be problematic where the character may be suburban within the City and rural in the County. Standards within the City limits, with rare exception, should reflect its suburban character, with provision for curb and gutter construction, sidewalks, street lighting, signage and sufficient open space. In the outlying areas where the character of development is suburban estate or rural countryside, for example, the standards must be varied to mirror the character, yet be designed for their environment. Sidewalks are not indicative of suburban estate or rural countryside development, but are certainly appropriate for suburban areas with typical lot sizes (6,000 to 9,000 square feet) and street patterns. In the case of the suburban estate (minimum one-acre lots) or rural countryside development (minimum five-acre lots) a trail that builds upon the rural character may be more appropriate as an alternative to sidewalks.

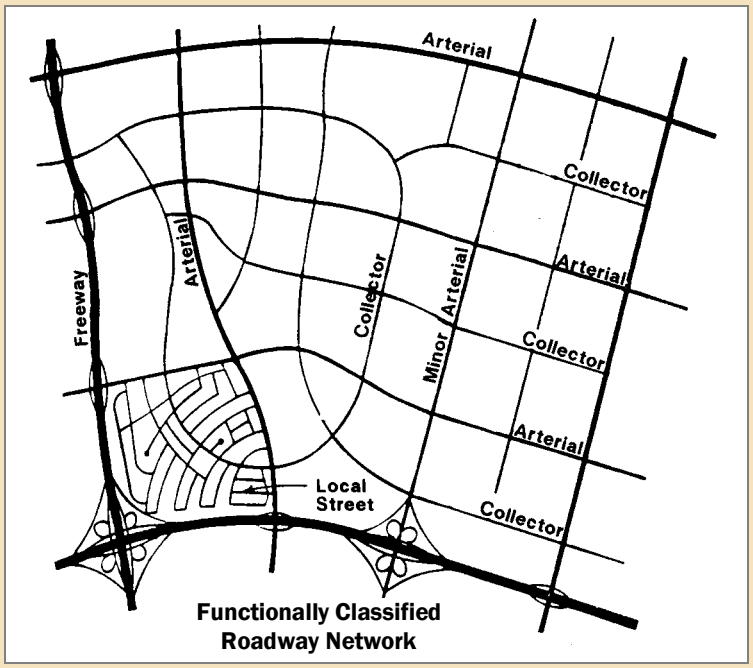
Classification of Roadways

The roads and streets in the planning area are grouped into functional classes according to their role for traffic movement and land access. Characteristics of each functional class of roadway differ to meet the corridor's intended purpose.

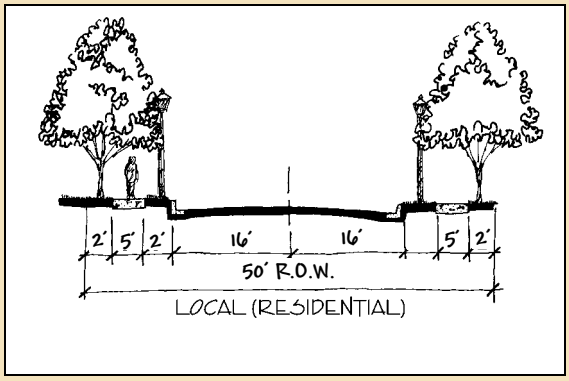
Local Residential Streets - The Thoroughfare Plan does not differentiate between local streets by assigning class. Instead, the plan proposes alternative street widths

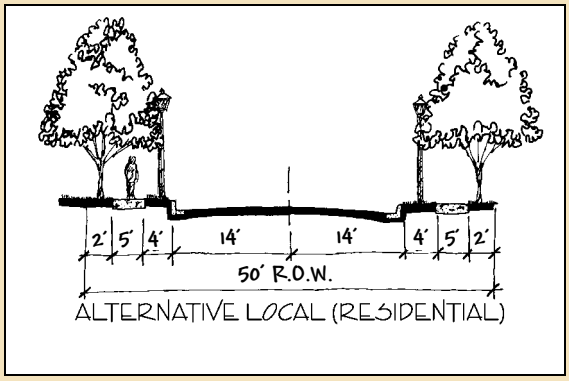
Preservation of right-of-way is important to:

- Avoid costly acquisition of developed land and structures on planned alignments and, thereby, reduce commercial and residential displacements;
- Prevent the foreclosure of desirable location options;
- Prevent inconsistent development standards of thoroughfares;
- Reduce costs;
- Permit orderly project development; and
- Minimize or avoid environmental, social and economic impacts.



A typical thoroughfare network includes various classifications of roads, each with a design function within the overall system.





Local residential streets maintain the current right-of-way with alternative pavement sections.

that may change according to such characteristics as on-street parking (one or both sides), building setbacks, choice of trails or sidewalks, anticipated traffic volumes and its urban, suburban or rural character.

Generally, the current standard for local residential streets is 50 feet of right-of-way with pavement widths ranging from 26 to 32 feet, which is decided during the subdivision review and approval process. The Community Development Code does not require sidewalks along local residential streets.

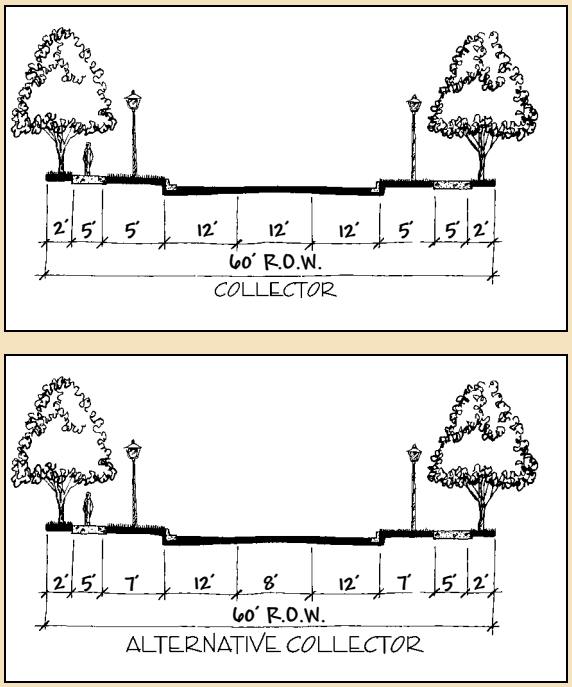
This plan proposes to require sidewalks on both sides of all streets. There are two alternate local street cross-sections, which maintain a 50-foot right-of-way. The first cross-section includes a pavement width of 32 feet with parking allowed on one or both sides. The alternate cross-section allows a reduced pavement width of 28 feet with on-street parking permitted on one side only. The City may also consider a sidewalk on only one side, thereby providing additional green space within the right-of-way. The reduced pavement width is designed for a road carrying immediate local traffic and is sufficient to accommodate fire apparatus, but offers the added benefit of neighborhood traffic calming. This approach is one of the defining principals of new urbanism, which is designed to create a pedestrian-scaled neighborhood with reduced street widths and building setbacks. The result of narrower streets is reduced travel speeds, an increased distance between the street and sidewalk and additional green space along the streetscape. In exchange for a reduction in the pavement width to 28 feet, the development must include provisions for upgraded subdivision fencing, street trees and other open space amenities.
Local streets may also be adapted to a suburban estate or rural countryside character to include an open or closed ditch system and trails, as opposed to curbs, gutters and sidewalks. As with collectors, the advantage continues to be a preservation of rural character, while the disadvantages include a reduced standard for rural development and potentially less effective stormwater management.

Classifications for alleys and marginal access streets are a

function of service and property access and, therefore, not included in the classification system of the Thoroughfare Plan. This is not to indicate that the plan ignores the possibility of alleys in a development. In fact, it recognizes the valuable contribution of alleys to the urban fabric and establishment of community character and proposes that they be used, as appropriate.

Collector Streets - The City's standard for collector streets is a pavement width ranging from 32 to 40 feet within 60 feet of right-of-way. Again, sidewalks are not required by the City's subdivision standards. The proposed cross-sections maintain 60 feet of right-of-way with pavement widths of 36 and 32 feet. The standard collector roadway will have a 36-foot pavement section with sidewalks on both sides. As an alternative, a developer willing to set aside additional green space and provide enhanced pedestrian pathways and/or street trees may request that the pavement width be reduced to 32 feet with parking permitted on one side only. A reduction in pavement width offers the following benefits:

- Reduced development costs by decreasing the amount of pavement for collector streets;
- Increased green space, adding an additional four feet total and two feet on each side of the roadway;
- Increased pedestrian safety by increasing the separation between the edge of the pavement and the sidewalk;
- Improved ability to locate the street within the right-of-way as a means to preserve trees and other natural features; and
- Reduced travel speed resulting from the perceived safety of driving on a narrower street (refer to traffic calming section later in this chapter).

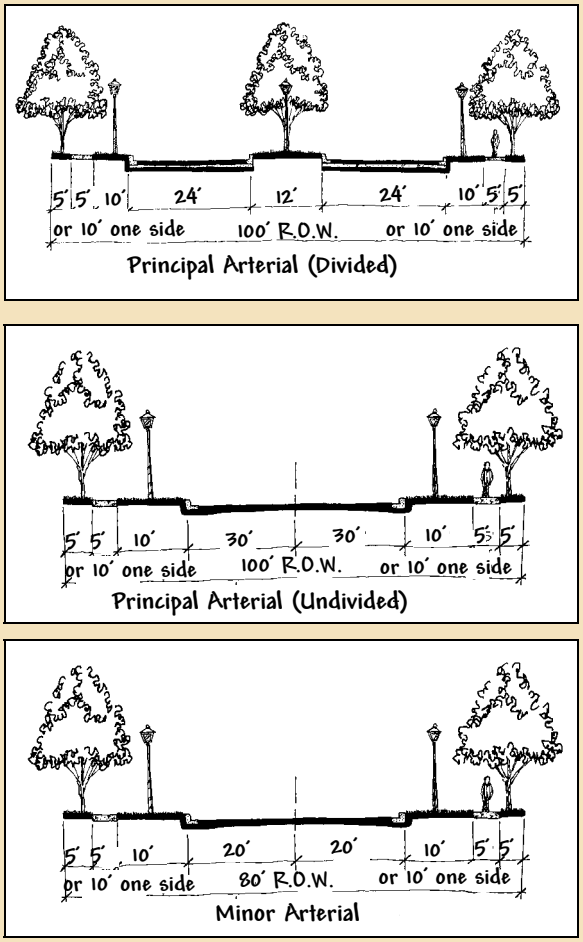


Collector roadways would maintain 60 feet of right-of-way with an alternate for a narrower cross section.

A street cross-section that is 32 feet wide provides two, 12-foot travel lanes and an eight-foot parking lane, which is sufficient to serve the traffic carrying capacity of a collector roadway.

Another option for rural development is collector roads without sidewalks or curb and gutter. This permits development to maintain the look and feel of a rural area, but similarly may not provide

the drainage system offered by roads with curb and gutter. In this character of development, significant green space and an interior trail system would be necessary to compensate for the loss of sidewalks. Pavement width would remain at the 36-foot requirement; however, rights-of-way must account for the increased space required for open or covered ditches.



Principal and minor arterials may be divided or undivided and may vary in widths.

Arterial Streets – Arterial streets currently range from 40 to 66 feet of pavement within 100 feet of right-of-way. This plan proposes three alternatives for arterial streets, including both divided and undivided sections. A principal arterial may include either an undivided 60-foot pavement section (with a center turn lane) or a 48-foot pavement section (two, 24-foot paved sections with a 12-foot median) within 100 feet of right-of-way. Sidewalks must be provided on both sides of all arterial streets. A 12-foot median/esplanade is sufficient in width to provide for decorative street lighting, landscaping, added green space and to accommodate a turn lane at intersections.

The third cross-section is for a minor arterial street, which is an undivided thoroughfare within 80 feet of right-of-way with a 40-foot pavement section. The 20 feet of right-of-way, excluding the width of pavement, provides space for decorative street lighting, landscaping and added green space. A minor arterial would also require sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Classification Criteria

Criteria used in determining the functional classifications of roadways are shown in **Table 4.1 - Functional Classification Criteria**. Classification is based on each roadway's functional role in the overall network and the existing and future travel patterns and areas served.

Table 4.1
Functional Classification Criteria

Criterion	Parkway	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector	Local Street
Functional Role	Entirely through traffic movement with no direct access to property.	Mobility is primary, access is secondary. Connects Freeways and other Arterials.	Connects Freeways, Principal Arterials and lower-classification roadways. Access is secondary.	Collects traffic destined for the Arterial network. Connects Arterials to Local Streets. Also land access.	Access is primary. Little through movement.
Roadway Continuity	Inter-city, regional and interstate.	Connects Freeways to lower-classification roadways. Connect major activity centers.	Connect Freeways and Principal Arterials to lower-classification roadways.	Continuous between Arterials. May extend across Arterials.	Discontinuous. Connect to Collectors.
Roadway Length	Usually more than 5 miles long	Usually more than 5 miles long	Usually more than 3 miles long	Varies from about 1/2 mile to 2 miles	Generally less than 1 mile long
Traffic Volumes	40,000 Vehicles per Day or more	20,000 to 60,000 VPD	5,000 to 30,000 VPD	1,000 to 15,000 VPD	100 to 5,000 VPD
Desirable Spacing	5 miles or more	2 miles or more	Generally 1/2 mile to 2 miles	Generally 1/4 to 1/2 mile	Varies with block length (at least 125 feet between)
Posted Speed	55 to 70 MPH	40 to 55 MPH	30 to 45 MPH	30 to 35 MPH or less	20 to 30 MPH
Access	Controlled access. Grade-separated interchanges and frontage/service roads.	Intersect with Freeways, Arterials, Collectors and Local Streets. Restricted driveway access.	Intersect with Freeways, Arterials, Collectors and Local Streets. Limited driveway access.	Intersect with Arterials and Local Streets. Driveways permitted.	Intersect with Collectors and Arterials. Driveways permitted.
On-Street Parking	Prohibited	Restricted	Restricted	Normally permitted	Permitted
Community Relationship	Define neighborhood boundaries.	Define neighborhood boundaries.	Define and traverse neighborhood boundaries.	Internal and traverse neighborhood boundaries.	Internal.
Through Truck Routes	Yes	Yes	Permitted	No	No
Bikeways	No	No	Limited	Yes	Yes
Sidewalks	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Arterial streets form an interconnecting network for community-wide movement of traffic. Although they usually represent only five to 10 percent of the total network, they typically accommodate between 30 and 40 percent of an area's travel volume. Since traffic movement, not land access, is the primary function of arterials, access management is essential to avoid traffic congestion and delays caused by turning movements for vehicles entering and

exiting driveways. Likewise, intersections of arterials with other public streets and private access drives must be designed to limit speed differentials between turning vehicles and other traffic to no more than ten to 15 miles per hour. Signalized intersection spacing must be sufficient to allow a variety of signal cycle lengths and timing plans that can be adjusted to meet changes in traffic volumes and maintain traffic progression (preferably one-third to one-half mile spacing).

The cross-sections of an arterial may vary from multi-lane roadways with three, four or five lanes to two-lane roadways in rural areas, such as those within the three-mile planning area where traffic volumes have not increased to the point that more travel lanes are needed. Functional classification is not dependent on the existing number of lanes since the functional role served by a roadway typically remains constant over time, while the roadway's cross-section is improved to accommodate increasing traffic volumes. Thus, lower-volume roadways that are continuous over long distances may function as an arterial in the rural areas.

Subdivision street layout plans and commercial and industrial districts must include collectors, as well as minor streets, in order to provide efficient traffic ingress/egress and circulation. Since collectors generally carry higher traffic volumes than local streets, they require a wider cross-section or added lanes at intersections with arterials to provide adequate capacity for through traffic and turning movements. However, since speeds are slower and more turn movements are expected, a higher speed differential and much closer intersection/access spacing can be used than on arterials. Collectors typically make up about five to ten percent of the total street system.

Local streets allow direct property access. Through traffic and excessive speeds should be discouraged by using appropriate geometric designs, traffic control devices, curvilinear alignments, off-setting streets and traffic calming techniques. Local streets generally comprise between 65 and 80 percent of the total street system.

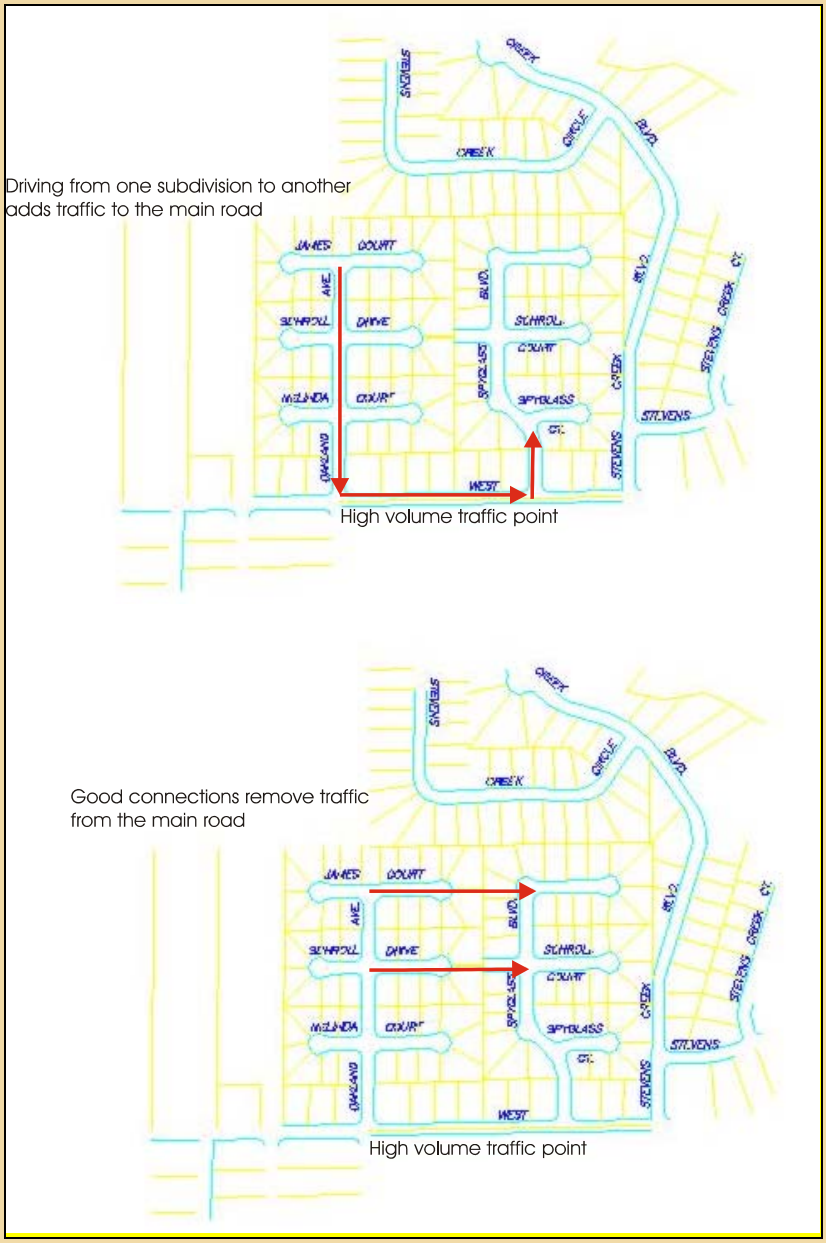
Requirements and Standards

This section outlines criteria for certain characteristics of street and land development. These criteria supplement or expand upon the Community Development Code. These policies should be regulated through ordinance provisions to ensure proper implementation.

- **Location and alignment of thoroughfares** - The general location and alignment of thoroughfares must be in

conformance with the Thoroughfare Plan. Subdivision plats must provide for dedication of needed rights-of-way for thoroughfares within or bordering the subdivision. Any major changes in thoroughfare alignment that are inconsistent with the plan require approval by the Planning Commission through a public hearing process. A major change includes any proposal that involves the addition or deletion of a designated thoroughfare or changes in the planned alignment of thoroughfares that would affect parcels of land other than the subject tract.

- **Location and alignment of collectors** - Generally, to adequately serve their role to collect traffic from local residential streets and distribute it to the arterial street system, collectors should be spaced approximately one-half mile between arterial streets. The actual alignment of collectors will be determined through the subdivision review and approval process.
- **Roadway continuity** – To maximize mobility, it is essential that collector streets traverse adjacent neighborhoods to provide access and circulation not only within, but also between neighborhoods. Collector streets must connect bounding arterials, rather than allowing development street systems with no points of ingress/egress other than a primary entrance.

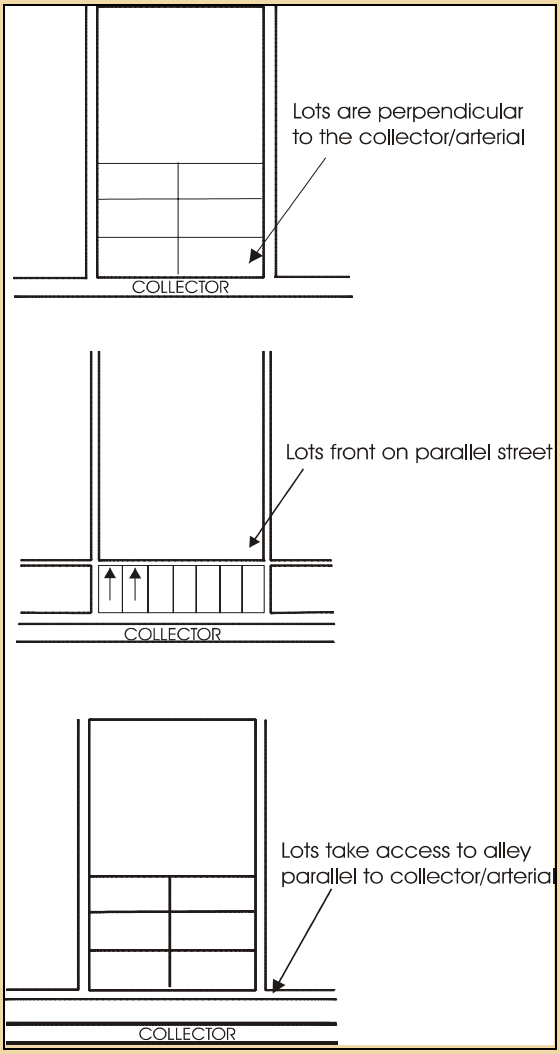


Continuous collector streets and other internal street connections are necessary to improve mobility and the efficiency of the street network.

- **Right-of-way and pavement width** - The pavement and right-of-way width for thoroughfares must conform to minimum standards unless the City grants a waiver using formalized criteria. Subdivisions that are bordered by an existing thoroughfare with an insufficient right-of-way width must be required to dedicate land to compensate for any deficiency of that thoroughfare. When a new thoroughfare extension is proposed to connect with an existing thoroughfare that has a narrower right-of-way, a transitional area must be provided to taper the right-of-way and/or pavement width.
- **Continuation and projection of streets** – Existing streets in adjacent areas must be continued and, when adjacent to an undeveloped area, the street layout must provide for a continuation of streets into the undeveloped area. In particular, the arrangement of streets in a new subdivision must make provision for continuation of right-of-way for existing streets in adjoining areas - or where new streets will be necessary for future public requirements on adjacent properties that have not yet been subdivided. Where adjacent land is undeveloped, stub streets must include provisions for temporary turnarounds.
- **Location of street intersections** - New intersections of subdivision streets with existing thoroughfares must be planned to align with existing intersections, where feasible, to avoid creating off-set or "jogged" intersections and to provide for continuity of existing streets, especially collector and arterial streets.
- **Angle of intersection** – The angle of intersection for streets must be as near to a right angle as possible. Corner radii must be required at the acute corner of the right-of-way line to provide adequate sight distance at intersections.
- **Off-set intersections** – Off-set or "jogged" street intersections must have a minimum separation of two hundred twenty-five feet (225') between the centerlines of the intersecting streets.
- **Cul-de-sacs** - Through streets and tee-intersections are preferable to cul-de-sacs. Care must be taken so as not to over utilize cul-de-sacs, which limits through access, restricts pedestrian circulation, increases response times and confuses motorists. However, when cul-de-sacs are used, they may have a maximum length of no more than five hundred feet (500'),

with a paved turnaround pad of at least one hundred feet (100′) and a right-of-way diameter of one hundred twenty feet (120′) in residential areas and one hundred eighty feet (180′) diameter on a street with a two hundred foot (200′) right-of-way diameter in nonresidential areas. A cul-de-sac with an island must have a diameter of not less than one hundred fifty feet (150′).

- **Residential lots fronting on arterials** - Subdivision layout must avoid creating residential lots that front on an arterial street. Lots must be accessed from a local residential street within or bordering the subdivision or, alternatively, an auxiliary street designed to accommodate driveway traffic.
- **Residential lots fronting on collectors** - Subdivision layout must minimize (and preferably avoid) the arrangement of lots to access collector streets, particularly within one hundred eighty feet (180′) of an intersection. To the extent practicable, lots must be accessed from local residential streets.
- **Geometric design standards and guidelines** - Other requirements and guidelines for the geometric design of thoroughfares and public streets are provided in the Community Development Code and City design standard. This includes special provisions for lot width and building setbacks on corner lots to preserve sight distances at adjacent intersections.
- **Private streets** - The City must not approve a plat containing private streets unless adequate precautions are guaranteed to ensure minimum standards of construction, necessary space for utilities and street widening, sufficient room for maneuvering emergency vehicles and appropriate pedestrian circulation and emergency access.
- **Sidewalks** – Within subdivisions, sidewalks must be installed on at least one side of local residential streets and on both sides of all collector and arterials streets unless provisions are made and assurances committed for an internal trail system.



The layout of lots contributes to the traffic carrying capacity, safety and efficiency of collector streets.

Access Management

Access management is an important component of the thoroughfare management process. Access management is the coordination between land access and traffic flow. Its basic premise is to preserve and improve the operating capacity, performance and safety of the major street system. It manages congestion on existing transportation facilities and protects the capacity of future transportation systems by controlling access from adjacent development. Properly utilized, it can eliminate the need for street widening or right-of-way acquisition.

Techniques to accomplish access management include limiting and separating vehicle (and pedestrian) conflict points, reducing locations that require vehicle deceleration, removing vehicle turning movements, creating intersection spacing that facilitates signal progression and providing on-site ingress and egress capacity. In addition, regulation focuses on the spacing and design of driveways, street connections, medians and median openings, auxiliary lanes, on-street parking and parking facilities, on-site storage aisles, traffic signals, turn lanes, freeway interchanges and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The following access management strategies may be used to coordinate the access needs of adjacent land uses with the function of the transportation system:

- **Intergovernmental coordination** - Access management is most effective as a regional strategy that involves members of local, state and federal organizations involved in the design of area roadways. Through coordinated efforts, such as the design and improvements of U.S. Highway 283, access management can even further add to the efficiency of local thoroughfares.
- **Separate conflict points** - Two common conflict points are driveways and adjacent intersections. Spacing driveways so they are not located within near proximity to intersections or other driveways is a method to achieve access management objectives.
- **Restrict turning movements at un-signalized driveways and intersections** - Full movement intersections can serve multiple developments through the use of joint driveways and cross-access easements. Turning movements can be restricted by designing accesses to limit movements or by the construction of raised medians that can be used to provide turn lanes.

- **Establish design standards** - Design standards within the Community Development Code addressing the spacing of access points, driveway dimensions and radii, sight distance and the length of turn lanes and tapers are effective mechanisms for managing the balance between the movement of traffic and site access.
- **Locate and design traffic signals to enhance traffic movement** - Interconnecting and spacing traffic signals to enhance the progressive movement of traffic is another strategy for managing mobility. Keeping the number of signal phases to a minimum can improve the capacity of a corridor by increasing green bandwidth.
- **Remove turning vehicles from through travel lanes** - Left and right turn speed change lanes provide for the deceleration of vehicles turning into driveways or other major streets and for the acceleration of vehicles exiting driveways and entering major highways.
- **Encourage shared driveways, unified site plans and cross access easements** - Joint use of driveways reduces the proliferation of driveways and preserves the capacity of major transportation corridors. Such driveway arrangements also encourage sharing of parking and internal circulation among businesses that are in close proximity.

Traffic Calming

An approach to decrease the amount of "non-local" traffic in residential areas is by adopting traffic calming programs, which are aimed at controlling cut-through traffic, speeding on neighborhood streets, and driving that threatens the safety of other drivers and pedestrians.

Traffic calming measures are instrumental in providing livable neighborhoods where residents feel safe walking, biking and playing. Traffic calming is defined as "the combination of physical features that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users." In addition to addressing motor vehicle issues, traffic calming can also involve objectives such as improving aesthetics, promoting urban renewal, reducing crime and increasing water filtration into the ground.

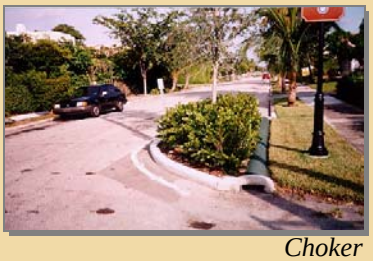
The broad goals for traffic calming include increasing quality of life, incorporating the preferences and requirements of nearby residents and others who use the area adjacent to streets and intersections, creating safe and attractive streets, helping to reduce the negative effects of motor vehicles on the environment (pollution, urban sprawl, etc.) and

Flat-top speed hump

Roundabout

Narrowed entrance

Street closure



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promoting walking and bicycle use. More specific objectives are to:

- Achieve slower speeds for motor vehicles;
- Reduce collision frequency and severity;
- Increase safety and the perception of safety for non-motorized users of the street;
- Reduce the need for police enforcement;
- Enhance the street environment (streetscaping, etc.);
- Increase access for all modes of transportation; and
- Reduce cut-through traffic through neighborhoods.

Traffic calming is accomplished through a combination of measures that control both traffic speed and volume. Volume controlled measures include street closures, restrictive one-way streets and turn restrictions. These measures are effective in reducing traffic on streets; however, such measures do not reduce speed and often result in the diversion of unwanted traffic onto other residential streets. Speed controlled measures are important in reducing injury accident rates. They also increase walking and bicycling on streets. Speed control measures should be designed into the community through urban design and land use features such as smaller setbacks, street trees, short streets, sharp curves, center islands, traffic circles, textured pavements, and flat-top speed humps.

Plan Implementation

Implementation of thoroughfare system improvements occurs over time as the City grows and builds toward the ultimate thoroughfare system reflected in the Thoroughfare Plan. The fact that a future thoroughfare is shown on the plan does not commit the City to a specific timeframe for construction, or that the City will build the roadway improvement. Individual thoroughfare improvements may be constructed by a variety of implementing agencies, including the City, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), as well as Jackson County, private developers, intra-governmental agencies and land owners for sections of roadways located within or adjacent to their property. Road construction can be implemented by individual entities or in partnership, as is the case for construction of roads that are included in the State Transportation Improvement Program.

The City, County, and ODOT, as well as residents, land owners and developers, can utilize the Thoroughfare Plan in making decisions relating to planning, coordination and programming of future development and transportation improvements. The City should utilize the plan as a means of coordinating with the State to place projects on the

Transportation Improvement Program. Review of preliminary and final plats for proposed subdivisions in accordance with the City's Community Development Code must include consideration of compliance with the Thoroughfare Plan in order to ensure consistency and availability of sufficient rights-of-way for the general roadway alignments shown on the plan. It is of particular importance to provide for continuous roadways and through connections between developments to ensure community-wide mobility. By identifying thoroughfare locations where rights-of-way are needed, land owners and developers can consider the roadways in their subdivision planning, dedication of public rights-of-way and provision of setbacks for new buildings, utility lines and other improvements located along the right-of-way for existing or planned thoroughfares.

Chapter 5: Parks & Recreation

Parks and recreation facilities are an integral part of the public infrastructure system, equaling the importance of water and wastewater systems and police and fire protection in terms of their relevance to quality of life. Foresight and preparedness is, therefore, of utmost importance to adequately plan to satisfy the needs and desires of citizens - both now and in the future. The framework of this chapter is intended to guide the City's decisions as to the enhancement of the existing parks and trails and the ongoing development of new facilities to pace future changes in population, demographics, and development.

The purpose of this Parks & Recreation chapter is to determine the community's current and future needs for improving its existing parks and providing adequate areas and facilities to meet its short- and long-term needs. This plan element forms the policy direction of the City pertaining to the timing of park development, their placement within the City and planning area, the type and quality of facilities, and the method by which enhancements and improvements are funded. It guides the City's planning efforts for developing a "first class" public parks and recreation system, while directing private contributions through provision of active recreation areas and open space to meet the requisite needs of new development. This chapter addresses the availability, quality, type, size, and location of leisure and recreation opportunities to meet the needs of Altus's residents and visitors.

Parks and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy, quality and sustainable community environment. They provide necessary components in human existence for events outside of the home, after work, and beyond school activities. Whether for passive or active use, park areas and recreation facilities are an important part of everyday life. Much like streets and sidewalks, water and wastewater lines, drainage facilities, police and fire equipment, and other municipal facilities and services, and parks and open space are an integral part of the municipal infrastructure. Therefore, they warrant an equal level of attention and commitment of resources to adequately acquire, construct, operate, and maintain.

A comprehensive and interrelated system of parks and recreation opportunities that respond to the needs and values of the local residents contribute to a community's quality of life and livability. Parks and recreation opportunities contribute to the health of residents, provide a variety of recreational and educational activities for all ages, and preserve

Parks & Recreation Planning Principles

- All residents and visitors will have unrestricted access to public park areas and recreational facilities regardless of their age, gender, race, income, cultural background, housing environment, or handicap;
- Public recreation will be highly coordinated with other organizations and programs, including Jackson County, the school district, civic clubs, athletic organizations, private entities, and others to avoid duplication and encourage cooperation;
- Public recreation will incorporate other public services such as education, health and fitness, transportation, and leisure;
- Facilities will be well planned and coordinated to ensure adequate adaptability to future needs and requirements;
- There will be an established process and procedure for acquiring land for future parks and recreational areas and facilities prior to development; and
- The design of spaces and facilities will encourage the most efficient utilization of land and will consider the needs, desires, and opinions of the intended users.

Parks planning is important because a system of parks that is planned, well-managed, and adequately funded will help the City:

- attract and sustain quality development;
- enhance real estate values;
- contribute to improved community health;
- enhance the enjoyment and quality of life of residents and visitors;
- attract new residents and tourists to the community, thereby aiding in the City's economic development;
- prevent youth mischief and crime by providing recreational opportunities and programs;
- provide a variety of active and passive recreational activities for all persons; and
- preserve and enhance the quality and integrity of the natural environment.

and enhance the quality and integrity of the natural environment. Parks and recreation opportunities are also significant in attracting visitors to the community and, thus, contribute to local tourism and economic development.

There are several reasons why this chapter is important, among them are the following:

- First and foremost, invest in the community's livability and quality of life, which contribute to its economic development and attractiveness as a place to live and conduct business;
- Improve the quality and appearance of the community's public spaces, which help form a positive and desirable image of Altus to visitors and investors;
- Provide areas and facilities for the community's youth, as well as its adults and seniors, to meet their active and leisure recreation needs;
- Contribute to a healthful community life by enabling citizens to utilize parks and trails for sport and exercise;
- Satisfy the interests of local recreation leagues and activity groups who utilize these facilities for athletic events and social interaction;
- Improve the safety and utilization of the existing parks by making necessary improvements and desired enhancements;
- Form decision criteria for acquiring and developing new parks, including their type, design, location, spacing, and methods of financing;
- Provide adequate areas and facilities within close proximity to all persons, including a diverse range and type of parks to meet the individual needs of citizens; and
- Preserve valued open space and sensitive lands for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Key Parks & Recreation Issues

In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), as well as the input received from over two hundred citizens who participated in the community forum, there were a number of key parks and recreation issues identified, including the following:

1. **Resource conservation and preservation** – There are areas interspersed throughout the community and around the larger planning area (extending three miles outside the City limits) that possesses valuable natural resources warranting protection. Lands along and adjacent to the irrigation canal that bisect the community from north (originating at Lake Altus) to south, within the floodplain

and flood prone areas stretching from North Park Lane to Veteran's Boulevard between Tamarack Road and Broadway, as well as prime agricultural lands surrounding the community, offer opportunities for resource conservation and land preservation. While these areas are sensitive to urban development, they may be utilized to fulfill other community objectives, such as environmental protection, open space preservation, and sound resource management.

Residents of Altus are interested in forging a community that is both unique and attractive. There were numerous comments received through the key person interviews and community forum regarding the desire for more green space integrated into development with linear greenways and trails connecting them. This objective may be achieved by adopting sound environmental conservation and responsible land development practices. Sensitive areas along the canal and within the floodplain and prime farmlands may be incorporated into developments as a natural amenity, while sustaining their resource function. Doing so requires a regulatory system that balances development efficiency and resource

Development clustering is a land development technique that integrates natural resources as permanent open space.

protection. Through innovative land planning, resources may be preserved and effectively integrated into development without compromising private interests.

2. **Balanced, convenient, and accessible parks** – The key to a successful and a well-utilized system of parks is an even distribution of recreation areas and public open spaces throughout the community, including the newer development areas north of the reservoir and the well-

"People, even today, want to get away from the noise and confusion of daily life and want to do so on their own. It is not enough for a parks department to offer structured recreational activities. People need to have a place where they can go to stroll or lie in the grass or bicycle whenever the mood strikes them and not just when it is a scheduled activity."

- Alexander Garvin in "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: A Twenty-first Century Agenda"

established neighborhoods south of Falcon Road and Bradford Avenue (particularly west of Main Street) and even further south of Broadway. In this way, all residents may have convenient access to open spaces, thereby meeting their active and passive recreation needs. It is also important that these individual parks are located and designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, provide safe and convenient access, and incorporate the equipment and facilities desired by its users. Depending upon demographics and the availability of other facilities, some neighborhoods may be more interested in active facilities, such as basketball courts and play fields, while others desire passive activities, such as trails, nature areas, and picnic tables. For this reason, it is essential to include the end-users in the planning and design phases of park development.

Quartz Mountain and Lake Altus provide recreational opportunities for the residents of Altus as well as the larger region and state.

A true "system" of parks offers a wide range of public spaces, including large-scale facilities intended for persons within the larger region (generally within a one-hour driving distance), such as Quartz Mountain and Lake Altus; facilities for use by the whole community (typically within a one-mile radius) like Hightower, Shadid, and Cole Heights Parks; and those similar to Indian Hills Park that are used by the surrounding neighborhood, as well as small playlots for use by an individual development, such as an apartment complex or activity center. The value of an adequate park system is its ability to meet the individual needs of all persons.

The term "balanced" refers to a combination of indoor and outdoor facilities ,as well as an adequate assortment of different types of activities (both passive and active) to meet the recreational needs of residents year-round. Given the warm

climate during the summer months, it is particularly important to offer indoor (or sheltered) facilities and programs that are conducive to the weather conditions.

3. **Linking parks, schools, and neighborhoods** – A system of parks and recreation areas is not complete without linear linkages between facilities and connections to neighborhoods, schools, and other public use facilities. While the areas within the right-of-way of the irrigation canal are currently used only for canal maintenance, they are ideal for pedestrian walkways and bike trails connecting each of the City's parks, neighborhoods, schools, and other community destinations (Downtown, AAFB, Western Oklahoma State College, Southwest Technology Center, etc.). The canal has the potential to serve as the spine of a community-wide trail system. Lateral connections to the canal trail could be developed within the wide rights-of-way of many of the local streets, such as Hudson Street, and especially within the alleyways that are common in the northwest quadrant of the community. Use of existing public ways, as well as excess rights-of-way along the railroads, utility and drainage easements, and wide shoulder lanes along arterial streets and rural roadways, may offer safe and convenient connections between each of the parks and public areas.

The gymnasium in Cole Heights Park is an excellent example of an indoor facility that is shared with the school district.

An interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities serves as a form of recreation and exercise and has an added benefit as an alternative mode of transportation. Through the community meetings, residents expressed a desire to develop a community-wide trail system. The system would connect the existing trail segments on the north side of Tamarack Road adjacent to Western Oklahoma State College and the Southwest Technology Center, around the reservoir, and along the south side of Ridgecrest Road between

The existing trails on the campus of Western Oklahoma State College offer an opportunity for connection to a community-wide trail network. Students could then visit the campus by way of walking or bicycling.

Main Street and Navajoe Street. It would also make use of on-street bike lanes/routes in areas where off-street paths are not feasible. However, off-street trails and linkages are preferred since they allow for uninterrupted pedestrian movement to and through the park system and protect users from busy development areas and associated vehicular traffic.

4. **Coordination, collaboration and adequate funding** – Aging infrastructure, changing demographics, and increased demand for recreational programs and facilities have strained the resources of Altus, Jackson County, the school district, and other public entities. Inter-governmental agreements and public-private partnerships create opportunities to use tax-dollars wisely, utilize land efficiently, and conserve precious environmental resources. Joint acquisition, development, and ongoing maintenance of public spaces leverage additional resources. Coordination and collaboration among agencies (such as Jackson County, the Altus School District, Western Oklahoma State College, the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District, and other local agencies and organizations) is of mutual benefit for all interests. It eases the burden on public tax dollars and enhances the quality of areas and facilities.

A collaborative approach to parks and recreation planning requires communication and coordination among all vested entities and interested parties. Through agreements created between public agencies, as well as partnerships with the private sector, the parks and recreation system benefits in its quality and affordability. Joint acquisition, construction, ongoing operation, and maintenance allow efficient use of public dollars, while ensuring that facilities are coordinated and connected.

Unfortunately, the funding for parks and recreation is often a lesser priority in comparison to water, wastewater and drainage facilities, and safety sensitive services such as fire and police protection. However, parks and public open areas are equally important forms of public infrastructure. While funding for the primary public facilities and services demand sufficient funding to avoid failing conditions, the dollars available for parks and recreation are less certain. Identifying a dedicated funding source, such as the hotel/motel tax, and effectively leveraging state and federal grant funds is important to develop and sustain an adequate parks and recreation system.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals, objectives, and action recommendations are designed to address the above issues, which were identified by citizens of the community through their participation in the key person interviews and community forum.

GOAL 5.1: Conservation of natural resources through parkland acquisition, open space preservation, and environmentally sensitive planning.

Objective A: Encourage the conservation of environmentally sensitive areas (i.e. streambeds and floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and areas with soil limitations) and encourage conservation through development incentives, regulations, and policies.

Action 5.1.1: Seek to acquire highly sensitive lands and conservation sites, such as those within the floodplain areas and adjacent to the irrigation canal, to preserve as public open space or recreation areas.

Action 5.1.2: Develop a "land-bank" program in which owners of properties in the floodplain are encouraged to deed their land to the "bank" to ensure long-term conservation, which would be

Land adjacent to drainage channels and floodplain areas may be better utilized as linear greenways and trail linkages throughout the community.

Development may occur in harmony with the environment by balancing use intensity with resource protection.

offset by incentives for increased development density or other favorable dimensional allowances.

Action 5.1.3: Integrate site capacity calculations into the development ordinances to quantify the allowable density that can be accommodated on an environmentally constrained site.

Action 5.1.4: Identify the boundaries of the regulatory floodways and consider acquisition through fee-simple or conservation easement methods.

Action 5.1.5: Identify areas of repetitive structure flooding, if any, where mitigation activities may result in publicly owned open space.

Action 5.1.6: Amend the subdivision regulations to allow the use of development clustering (30% open space), conservation (50% open space), and preservation (80% open space) subdivision techniques, which allow flexibility in lot size, setbacks, and other area standards to increase open space, preserve natural areas, and set aside land for sensitive areas.

Action 5.1.7: Preserve the environmental quality of the irrigation canal and the floodplain areas by protecting valuable open space, improving drainage and water quality, and providing sensitive eco-recreational facilities.

Action 5.1.8: Enforce sound floodplain management practices to maintain the water carrying capacity of drainage ways, channels, and floodplain areas.

GOAL 5.2: A balanced and wide variety of public parks, recreational areas, and open space in near proximity to all residents.

Objective A: Accommodate the current and future needs of residents by providing a system of playlots and neighborhood and community parks.

Action 5.2.1: Develop an even distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community – consistent with Figure 4.1, Mobility Plan - that will provide equitable opportunities and convenient access for all citizens.

Action 5.2.2: Acquire 26 acres for the development of neighborhood parks within the areas that are either currently deficient or expected to develop as residential use to

meet the current and future parks and recreation demands (refer to Table 5.5, Existing Acreage vs. Future Demand).

Action 5.2.3: Require the inclusion of playlots within high density residential development to fulfill the Year 2025 two-acre demand for small park facilities.

Action 5.2.4: By the Year 2025, aim to comply with the maximum standards of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) for each classification of park, which would result in an additional 4.6 acres of playlots, 50.3 acres of neighborhood parks, and 3.5 acres of community parks.

Action 5.2.5: Acquire lands within the future growth areas (refer to Chapter 7, Growth Capacity) for parks and recreation facilities, public open space, and conservation areas in advance of ensuing development.

Action 5.2.6: Amend Sec. 30-12, Parks and Open Space, within the Community Development Code to allow dedication (or development) of parkland, pursuant to established standards. The amount of dedicated acreage must be tied to the requisite demand placed on the parks and recreation system by the development (typically calculated as one acre for each "x" number of dwelling units), based on the proposed subdivision in its entirety and not by sections or phases. In certain instances, such as when there are adequate existing facilities, the City must have the authority to deny land dedication in favor of a fee contribution.

Action 5.2.7: Amend the fee contribution required by the current provision within the Community Development Code to account for a specified number of dwelling units, which establishes a rational nexus between the demand being placed on the system and the required fee to be dedicated for public purposes.

Action 5.2.8: Establish a series of park zones for which fees in lieu of land for development within an individual zone may be used to acquire land, expand or improve existing parks, or construct new parks. Such zones shall provide proof that any park is within a convenient distance from any residence located within the zone. The primary costs of parks should be borne by the residential property owners who, by reason of the proximity of their property to such parks, shall be the primary beneficiaries of such facilities.

The Mission of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is "to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people."

NRPA's Values - Parks and recreation:

- Enhances the human potential by providing facilities, services and programs that meet the emotional, social and physical needs of communities.
- Articulates environmental values through ecologically responsible management and environmental education programs.
- Promotes individual and community wellness that enhances the quality of life for all citizens.
- Utilizes holistic approaches to promote cultural understanding, economic development, family public health and safety, by working in coalitions and partnerships with allied organizations.
- Facilitates and promotes the development of grassroots, self-help initiatives in communities across the country.

Action 5.2.9: Establish additional provisions within the parkland dedication requirements pertaining to allowable credits toward fulfilling the requirements for both encumbered and unencumbered facilities such as ponds and lakes, detention areas, golf courses, and other site amenities.

Action 5.2.10: Establish a special fund, known as the Parkland Dedication Fund, for the deposit of all sums paid in lieu of parkland dedication. Funds should only be released upon City Council approval of a plan to utilize the funds to build or enhance a park within the park zone from which the funds originated. The City should account for all sums paid in lieu of land dedication with reference to the individual plats involved. Any funds paid in lieu of land should be expended on a first in/first out basis for each area.

The attractive appearance of Hightower Park signifies the importance of parks to the community and portrays a positive impression for visitors.

Objective B: Sustain and improve the quality condition and attractive appearance of public areas and facilities with an aggressive maintenance program.

Action 5.2.11: Conduct formalized annual physical condition assessments of each park and recreation facility to identify repairs and improvements and to determine the financial commitment required.

Action 5.2.12: Perform regular safety inspections to identify potentially harmful or dangerous conditions and create an itemized list of repairs and improvements.

Action 5.2.13: Provide adequate funding and resources to perform ongoing maintenance and repairs and to construct needed improvements at existing and future parks and recreation facilities.

Action 5.2.14: Establish a "Friends-of-the-Park" program to solicit neighborhood involvement in maintaining and policing public parks and open space

areas, such as public gardens and esplanades.

Action 5.2.15: Add additional overhead and/or walkway bollard lighting in each of the parks to enhance early morning and evening use of the parks and to promote park safety.

Action 5.2.16: Improve accessibility for disabled and handicapped users by adding sidewalk curb cuts and ramps, wheelchair accessible sidewalks and trails and providing accessible facilities, such as drinking fountains, trail surfaces, and play equipment.

Action 5.2.17: Replace or construct new park signs that are uniform in appearance with maintenance-free landscaping or xeriscape plant materials around the base.

GOAL 5.3: An interconnected system of trails and bikeways providing community connectivity.

Objective A: Provide an interconnected system of paths, trails, lanes, and routes that are multipurpose, accessible, convenient, and connect to residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, workplaces, major open spaces, and other destinations.

Action 5.3.1: Utilize rights-of-way, easements, and natural drainage courses for nature trails to link the City's parks and recreation areas.

Action 5.3.2: Pursuant with the conceptual trail network displayed on Figure 4.1, Mobility Plan, construct trails and sidewalks to connect the existing pathways around the reservoir, on the campuses of Western Oklahoma State College and the Southwest Technology Center, and along Ridecrest Road to tie together the parks with each neighborhood, school, and community activity area.

Action 5.3.3: Coordinate with the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District and the United States Bureau of Reclamation for use of the right-of-way adjacent to the irrigation canal as a trail

The right-of-way of the irrigation canal could provide for an off-street recreational trail that would be the spine of a community-wide trail network.

alignment, which would offer an off-street connection from Lake Altus through the entire community.

Action 5.3.4: Adopt a policy for the conversion and use of floodways and drainage channels, abandoned railroad corridors, underutilized or vacant alleys, and other rights-of-way and easements as trails and walking connections.

Action 5.3.5: Regularly submit applications for federal grants through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and other available programs to leverage funds for bikeway planning and development.

Action 5.3.6: Establish incentives and standards for developments adjacent to any of the future trail segments, or along other viable connections, to dedicate recreation easements for public use.

Action 5.3.7: Require sidewalk and trail locations to be shown on preliminary plats to allow pre-development review and post-construction inspection of plan conformance.

Action 5.3.8: Prepare a sidewalk improvement program to repair, replace, or install new sidewalks where they may be used as a connection to the community-wide trail network.

Action 5.3.9: Amend the subdivision regulations to require access easements when adjacent to any existing or proposed future segment of the trail network or when along any potential linear linkage that may provide access between the neighborhood and an activity area.

Action 5.3.10: Coordinate with Jackson County and/or the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to install shared right-of-way signage and maintain adequate shoulders along U.S. Highways 62 and 283 to

The alleyways in the neighborhoods west of Main Street and north of Bradford Avenue offer opportunities for improvement and use as trails.

accommodate avid distance cyclists.

GOAL 5.4: Cooperative agreements and coordinated efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, educational bodies, and private sector entities.

Objective A: Form mutually beneficial partnerships with and among the public and private sectors to expand and improve the provision of services and facilities.

Action 5.4.1: Develop agreements with and between the City of Altus, Jackson County, the Altus School District, Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC), the Southwest Technology Center (SWTC), and the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District to include joint acquisition of land and effective use of public buildings and facilities.

Action 5.4.2: Establish programs for lease/purchase, tax incentives, and public maintenance to entice private sector participation in park system development.

Action 5.4.3: Encourage private sector participation in the provision of parks and recreation opportunities by permitting innovative land development practices (clustering, conservation, and preservation development) and creating incentives that will result in an efficient utilization of land and provide greater opportunities for the provision of open space and preservation of the natural environment.

Public easements providing access to adjacent community parks and trails are an integral element of park and trail system development.

Action 5.4.4: Encourage educational institutions such as WOSC, SWTC, and the school district, as well as the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District and nonprofit organizations to acquire, manage, and operate parks and open space conservation areas.

Action 5.4.5: Establish alliances with local churches and other institutions for use of their facilities, as available, in exchange for contributions and improvements.

Action 5.4.6: Establish lines of communication with citizens to assist in the planning, design, and development of parks within their respective neighborhoods.

Objective B: Provide for an adequate, "first class" parks and recreation system by providing adequate resources, funding, and attention.

Action 5.4.7: Identify all potential funding sources, including Federal, State, County, City, and School District programs and budgets; donated and volunteer resources; and revenue sources, such as user fees, exactions, fee-in-lieu of land, etc.

Action 5.4.8: Develop a formalized capital improvement program for parks and recreation areas and facilities and identify a five-year plan of priority improvements and sources of funds.

Action 5.4.9: Regularly prepare nominations and applications to qualify for grant assistance or other funding arrangements to finance annual capital improvements.

Action 5.4.10: Consider establishing a recreation district, as applicable, which has the authority to levy a tax to generate revenue toward the development and improvement of areas and facilities.

Action 5.4.11: Conduct a regulation-length 18-hole municipal golf course feasibility study.

Available Funding Techniques:

- Current revenue
- Reserve funds
- Enterprise and revenue funds
- General obligation bonds
- Lease-purchase
- Eminent domain
- Authorities and special districts
- Sales tax
- User fees
- In-kind services and volunteer participation
- State and federal assistance
- Land donation
- Trust fund
- Private financing
- Land dedication
- Fee-in-lieu of development
- Tax deferral
- Tax reductions

Facility Inventory

The foundation for establishing an adequate, "first-class" parks and recreation system begins with the availability, location, and condition of the existing city-owned parks and recreation areas. In determining the need for additional parkland, recreational facilities, and park-related improvements, the first step is to assess the level of sufficiency of the existing parks in meeting the needs of the community. This assessment is done first by comparing the acreage of parks to standards for cities of comparable size and, secondly, by soliciting the input of citizens.

Integral to park planning is a thorough evaluation of the existing system. Each park must be evaluated in terms of its proximity to its users, its safety and accessibility, the availability and condition of its equipment and facilities, and its utilization.
The City currently offers an assortment of parks that provide opportunities for a typical variety of activities, which are depicted in

TABLE 5.1
Facility Inventory

Park Name	Size (acres)	Classification	Animal Springs	Backstop	BBQ Grill	Baseball Field	Basketball Court	Batting Cage	Benches	Bleachers	Bicycle Rack	Checkerboard Table	Concession Stand	Concrete Pad	Display	Drinking Fountain	Dugout	Fountain	Gazebo	Jungle Jim	Lights	Merry-go-round	Monkey Bars	Parking (gravel)	Parking (paved)	Pavilion	Picnic Table	Playgrounds	Restrooms	Scoreboard	Scorekeeper Stand	See-saw	Slide	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Swing Set	Tennis Courts	Trash Cans	Volleyball Poles/Nets
Altus Soccer and Tennis Club	4.64	Special Use							8					2							25				x												6	3	
Ashley Park	1.60	Playlot																																					
Bill Luderson Park	28.00	Special Use																																8					
Cole Heights Park	31.94	Community			6		1							1	1	1					3	4	1	x	x		6					2	2			4		4	
- Ball Fields	--	--		9					8	20			3				18				156			x	x		3		1	9	9							3	
Davis Park	9.46	Special Use							1												1	1	1	x		1							1					1	
English Village Park	2.58	Neighborhood		1	1		1														1	1				1							1			1		1	
Hairston Park	1.00	Playlot																																					
Heritage Park	2.53	Neighborhood			1																1	1											1			2		1	
Heritage Way Park	3.00	Neighborhood																																					
Heritage Way Park #1	3.00	Neighborhood																																					
Hightower Park	12.30	Community							9			1			1	1		1	1	2	27	1			x		3		3				1		1	2		14	
Indian Hills Park	4.02	Neighborhood																		1	5	1			x	1	1						1	1		2		3	2
Kiwanis Park	7.94	Special Use		1				3		1			1				4				28			x						1								2	
Shadid Park and Disc Golf	75.53	Community	6		11		1		1		2								1		15	3	1			10		3				1	2			6		13	3
Southwest Park	1.20	Neighborhood					1														4	1		x		1	1									1		1	
Totland Park	2.68	Neighborhood			1																1	1	1	x		1										3		1	
University Heights Park #1	3.75	Neighborhood			1	1	1														4	1			x	1										1			2
University Heights Park #2	0.20	Playlot																																					
Wilson Park	0.96	Neighborhood		1	1		1														4					1	1						1			1		1	

Table 5.1, Facility Inventory. The parks that are owned and maintained by the City include a total of 196.33 acres of land. The acreage is divided into three community parks (Cole Heights, Hightower, and Shadid) offering 119.77 acres; nine neighborhood parks (English Village, Heritage, Heritage Park Way, Heritage Park Way #1, Indian Hills, Southwest, Totland, University Heights #1, and Wilson) totaling 23.72 acres, three playlots (Ashley, Hairston, and University Heights Park #2) adding 2.8 acres; and four special use facilities (Altus Soccer and Tennis Club, Bill Luderson, Davis, and Kiwanis) contributing 50.04 acres.

Shown in Table 5.1, Facility Inventory, is a detailed listing of each park, its size, and a description of each recreational facility. The inventory ranges from items such as concession stands to athletic fields and courts, restroom facilities, and play equipment. The inventory helps to identify the facilities that are common in each park, but, perhaps more importantly, those that are not available, yet desired. The items that are the most common include BBQ grills, basketball courts, benches, lighting, and a variety of playground equipment such as merry-go-rounds, slides, swings, and spring animals.

Park Classification

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish nationally applicable

criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and open space. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The needs and desires of the citizens of Altus justify continued development of parks, recreation, and open space to meet the specific needs and requirements of the community.

While national standards are useful, it is important to ensure they are reasonable for the community given considerations such as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, socioeconomics, climate, natural environment, and other considerations. Leisure and recreation values are unique to each municipality; therefore, it is important that the standards represent the interests and desires of the community.

A variety of types and sizes of parks and recreation facilities and activities are recommended to satisfy the diverse interests of the population, to ensure adequate and equal opportunity for all persons, and, ultimately, to encourage use by all population groups. The classifications of parks needed to meet the diverse needs of the community are as follows:

Playlots are intended for active recreational use of immediate property owners, such as within apartment complexes and planned communities. There are no specific criteria to guide development of playlots, although they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of the immediate development. User input should be a primary determinant for developing playlots. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

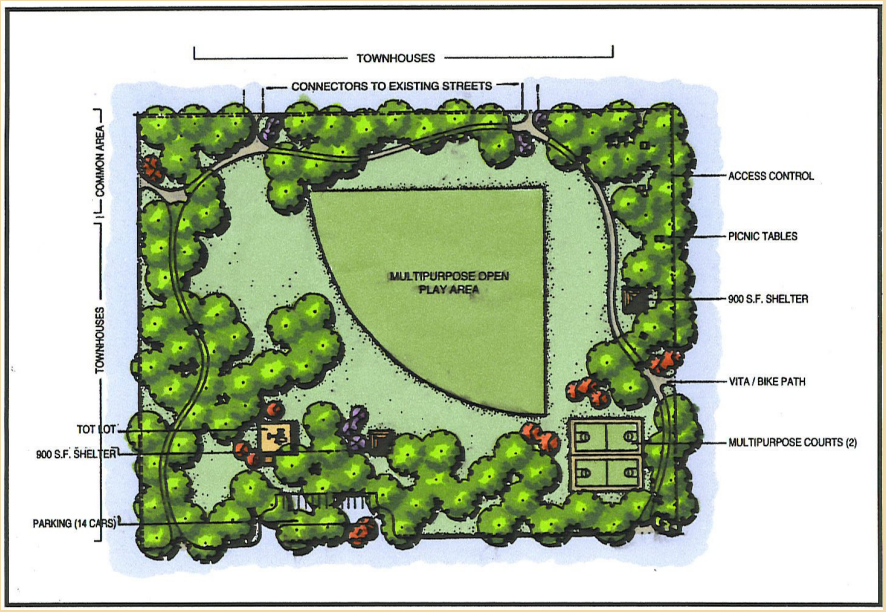
- picnic tables with covers
- perimeter sidewalks
- shade trees and native landscaping
- drinking fountain
- security lighting
- a multipurpose open play area
- playground equipment (up to 15 children)
- perimeter fencing or landscaping
- benches
- on-street parking
- trash receptacles
- curb cuts and crosswalks

Neighborhood parks should have facilities and improvements to accommodate use by neighborhoods within one-quarter to one-half mile of the park. Ease of access from surrounding neighborhoods, central location, and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing neighborhood parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and, therefore, should have a blend

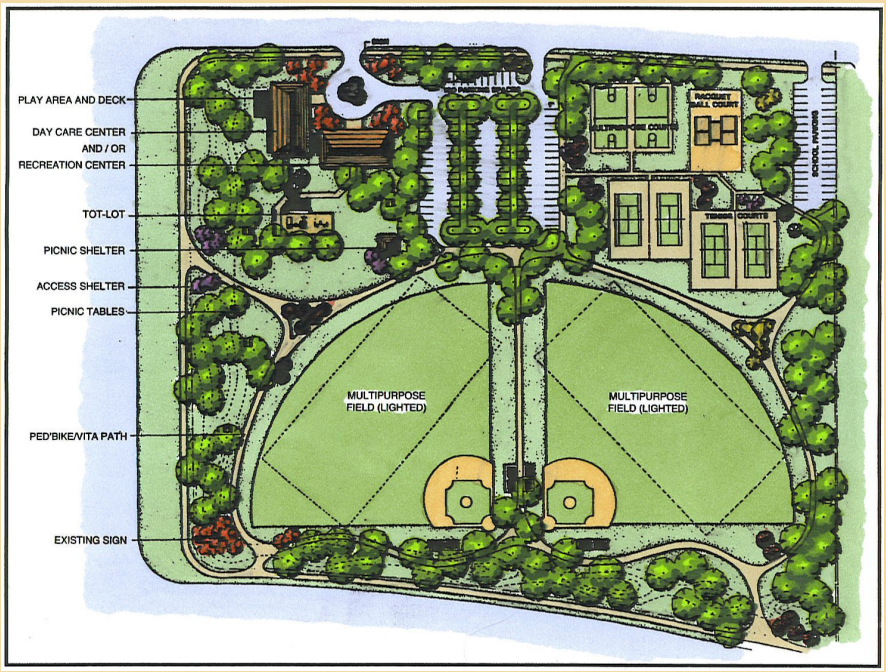
of passive and active facilities. It is highly desirable to include neighborhood residents in the park design process to ensure it is compatible and accounts for the desires of its intended users. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- picnic tables with covers
- barbeque pits
- sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- shade trees and native landscaping
- drinking fountain(s)
- security lighting
- a multipurpose open play area
- multipurpose play courts
- playground equipment and/or a playscape (up to 25 children)
- perimeter fencing or landscaping
- benches
- restrooms
- on- or off-street parking
- trash receptacles
- curb cuts and crosswalks

Community parks are to provide active and passive recreation for citizens generally within one mile. The facilities and improvements must be planned and designed for heavy use by persons of all ages. Where feasible, community parks should be located adjacent to a greenway to provide an off-street linear linkage from other areas. Neighborhood and



A typical neighborhood park includes a variety of passive and active facilities for nearby users.



Community parks are intended for community-wide use, generally within a one-mile service area.

Source: Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, NRPA

community input should be a primary determinant of the development program for a community park. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- picnic tables with covers
- barbeque pits
- sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- mountain biking trails
- exercise stations (optional)
- shade trees and native landscaping
- drinking fountains
- security lighting
- multipurpose open play areas
- multipurpose courts
- playground equipment and playscape (up to 50 children)
- bicycle racks
- perimeter fencing or landscaping
- street signs indicating "children at play"
- benches
- trash receptacles and enclosures
- curb cuts and crosswalks
- tennis courts
- basketball courts
- softball and little league fields with bleachers
- soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts
- sand volleyball courts
- swimming pool
- covered pavilions
- performance stage (optional)
- restrooms
- fencing for ball fields and athletic courts
- a concrete surface for a general play area
- off-street parking

Open space, such as the traffic island at the intersection of Powell Drive and Paseo De Vida north of the Reservoir, adds to the "greenness" of the community and contributes to neighborhood character.

Open space areas include reserved public lands dedicated as permanent open space. These lands are generally owned by the local government or dedicated through private instrument as a development reserve. They are typically undeveloped and used for informal activities. They may also serve as flood collection areas during major storm events. Other examples of open space areas include easements for drainage basins, excess rights-of-way, greenways, and street esplanades.

Facility Standards

As parks and recreation sites are evaluated for acquisition and development, it is important for the City to have a standardized list of

facilities and equipment desired for each type of park to assess the development feasibility of each site, as identified in the park classification system above. There are important considerations in developing parks including the size, shape, and orientation of the site; pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access and parking; adjoining land use; development constraints such as grades, poor drainage, and flooding; environmental impacts; and the anticipated use of the park. In assessing the feasibility of a site, each of these considerations is important.

Displayed in **Table 5.2, Facility Development Standards**, are the standards for each type of park, which may be used to determine the locations, size, and other characteristics of future parks. Provided in **Table 5.3, Facility Development Guidelines**, are guidelines for developing park facilities and improvements, which identify the requisite space and dimensional requirements, orientation, and the applicable service radius and required units per 1000 persons.

Needs Assessment

To assess the adequacy of the existing parks and recreation supply, it is necessary to look at existing population, and the supply of parks provided by existing facilities, and relate them to planning standards for desirable levels of service. In addition, it is necessary to consider forecasts in population to determine future needs and to identify deficiencies of the system.

The assessment of need for neighborhood and community parks varies according to the purpose and use of the facilities. Community parks are intended to function on a large-scale basis, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community, which may be within an urban area or a developed rural area. They are typically larger in size (10+ acres) and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events, such as picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, ball fields, and other larger scale activities. Ensuring adequate and equitable recreation and leisure opportunity for all citizens is the objective of community parks.

The use of neighborhood parks is intended for the residents of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods. Having service areas that encompass the entire planning area is not as important for neighborhood parks. Rather, the focus is on the residential neighborhoods within a reasonable walking distance. Complete service area coverage is not necessary for neighborhood parks; rather, it is more important to have a well-distributed system to serve the parks and recreation needs of nearby residents. An acceptable walking distance to neighborhood parks is four to eight blocks.

Table 5.2
Facility Development Standards

Classification	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1,000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Playlot	Small areas intended primarily for the use of children (toddlers to age 9) containing play equipment, swings, slides, sandboxes, and benches.	Less than 1/4 mile radius.	1000 square feet - 1 acre.	0.1 - 0.3 acres.	Within neighborhoods and close to apartments, townhouses, or housing for the elderly.
Open Space	Passive areas in a landscaped or natural state in or near urban areas. May provide bicycle, hiking, and nature trails as a feature or as part of a larger system.	No applicable standard.	Varies.	.75 - 1.0 acres.	Natural lands, watershed and waterfront, forests, landscaped borders, parkways, and boulevards, corner parks, medians, downtown aesthetic parks, plazas, and malls.
Neighborhood Park	Landscaped natural park of limited size primarily for passive recreational needs of all ages, but with designated active areas. Provides scenic and aesthetic value including open lawn space, shrubbery, small picnic areas, nature walks, and areas for court games if not provided nearby.	1 to 2 mile radius (serves entire neighborhoods).	2 - 9 acres.	1 acre.	Should be located in the center of a multiple -family dwelling neighborhood or nearby site.
Community Park	A large natural and/or landscaped area to provide urban dwellers an escape from city congestion without traveling a large distance. Provides both intensive and passive uses. Typical facilities include a swimming pool, picnic areas, paths, game courts, gardens, natural areas, pavilion, ample parking, and restrooms.	Within 30-minutes.	10-50 acres.	5 acres.	Designed to accommodate a large number of people and a wide variety of activities.

Table 5.3
Facility Development Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Basketball **1. Youth** **2. High School** **3. Collegiate**	2,400-3,036 sq. ft. 5,040-7,280 sq. ft. 5,600-7,980 sq. ft.	46′- 50′ x 84′ 50′ x 84′ 50′ x 84′	Long axis north-south	1 per 10,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.
Soccer	1.7 - 2.1 Ac.	195′ to 225′ x 330′ to 360′ with a minimum clearance of 10′ on all sides.	Fall season – long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 10,000 persons.	1 - 2 miles.	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 sq. ft. for a single court (2 acres for a complex).	36′ x 78′; 12′ clearance on both sides; 21′ clearance on both ends.	Long axis north-south.	1 court per 2,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood/community park or adjacent to a school site.
Volleyball	Minimum 4,000 sq. ft.	30′ x 60′. Minimum 6′ clearance on all sides.	Long axis north-south.	1 court per 5,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Same as other court activities (e.g. badminton, basketball, etc.).
Football	Minimum 1.5 ac.	160′ x 360′ with a minimum of 6′ clearance on all sides.	Fall season – long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minutes travel time.	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.
Multiple-Use Recreation Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)	9,840 sq. ft.	120′ x 80′	Long axis of courts with primary use is north-south.	1 per 10,000 persons.	1 - 2 miles.	In neighborhood or community parks.
Open Space	Minimum of 40 percent undeveloped per park	N/A	N/A	5 acres per 1,000 persons.	30 minute travel time.	Within neighborhood and community parks or stand alone.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*

Table 5.3 (Continued)
Facility Development Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
1/4 Mile Running Track	4.3 acres.	Overall width - 276′. Length - 600.02′. Track width for 8, 4′-lanes is 32′	Long axis in sector from north to south to northwest to southeast with finish line at northerly end.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	Usually part of high school or in community park complex in combination with baseball, soccer, etc.
Baseball **1. Official** **2. Little League**	3.0 - 3.85 acres minimum. 1.2 acres minimum.	Baselines – 90′. Pitching distance – 60-1/2′. Foul lines - 320′ min. Center field – 400′+. Baselines – 60′. Pitching distance – 46′. Foul lines – 200′. Center field – 200′-250′.	Locate home plate so the pitcher is throwing across the sun and the batter is not facing it. Line from home plate through pitcher's mound runs east-northeast.	1 per 5,000 persons. Lighted – 1 per 30,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields should be part of a community park or sports complex.
Softball	1.5 - 2.0 acres.	Baselines – 60′. Pitching distance – 46′ min.; 40′ – women. Fast pitch field radius from plate – 225′ between foul lines, slow pitch – 275′, men; 250′, women.	Same as baseball.	1 per 5,000 persons (if also used for youth baseball).	¼ - ½ mile.	Slight difference in dimensions for 16″ slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.
Trails	N/A	Maximum 10′ width, maximum average grade 5% not to exceed 15%. Capacity: Rural trails – 40 hikers/day/mile Urban trails – 90 hikers/day/mile.	N/A	1 system per region.	N/A	Located in greenways, natural areas and parks, and along drainage ways, levees, and utility easements. Their purpose is to accommodate walkers, joggers, and bicyclists away from traffic.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*

Table 5.3 (Continued)
Facility Development Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Archery Range	Minimum 0.65 acre.	300′ length x minimum 10′ between targets. Roped, clear areas on side of range minimum 30′, clear space behind targets minimum of 90′ x 45′ with bunker.	Archer facing north (± 45°).	1 per 50,000 persons.	30 minute travel time.	Part of a regional/ metro park complex.
Handball (3 - 4 wall)	800 sq. ft. for 4-wall; 1,000 sq. ft. for 3–wall.	20′ x 40′ – Minimum of 10′ to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum 20′ overhead clearance.	Long axis north-south. Front wall at north end.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	4-wall usually indoors as part of multipurpose facility. 3-wall usually outdoors in park or school setting.
Badminton	1,620 sq. ft.	Singles – 17′ X 44′ Doubles - 20′ X 44′ with 5′ unobstructed area on all sides.	Long axis north-south.	1 per 5,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Usually in school, recreation center, or church facility. Safe walking or bike access.
Field Hockey	Minimum 1.5 acres.	180′ x 300′ with a minimum of 10′ clearance on all sides.	Fall season – long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.
Swimming Pools	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually ½- to 2-acre site.	Teaching – min. of 25 yards x 45′ even depth of 3 to 4 feet. Competitive – min. of 25m x 16m. Minimum of 27 square feet of water surface per swimmer.	None – although care must be taken in siting of lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 to 30 minute travel time.	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive, and recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*

Resources vs. Needs

A combination of a standard-based and demand-based approach was utilized to assess the need for additional parks and recreation areas and facilities within Altus. The demand-based approach entailed input from the key person interviews and community forum. Utilizing NRPA standards, the acreage of parks and recreation areas needed in the community are as displayed in **Table 5.4, Recommended Area Standards**. The need for additional parks and recreation acreage is determined by applying the recommended standards to the existing and projected future population of the planning area.

Current Needs - As shown in Table 5.4, Recommended Area Standards, the standards range in size per 1,000 persons. Based upon a 2000 Census population of 21,447 persons, the total acreage needed ranges from approximately 88 to 178 acres. The recommended need is a total of 133 acres devoted to playlots, neighborhood parks, and community parks. Currently, the City maintains 146.29 acres of parks and recreation areas, plus an additional 50.04 acres devoted to special facilities such as the Altus Soccer and Tennis Club, Bill Luderson Park, Davis Park, and Kiwanis Park. These latter facilities are different from the other parks in that they are used for special purposes, such as athletic fields, by certain segments of the population. Since they are not typically utilized by all persons on a daily basis, they are not included in the total parks and recreational acreage for the purpose of this analysis. Of the recommended acreage - according to national standards - Altus currently has nearly 110 percent of the acres needed. However, while there is an existing surplus of 34 acres of

Table 5.4
Recommended Area Standards

Classification	Standard	Low	High	Recommended
Playlot	0.1 to 0.3 acre/1,000 persons	2.1	6.4	4.3
Neighborhood Park	1 to 3 acres/1,000 persons	21.5	64.3	42.9
Community Park	3 to 5 acres/1,000 persons	64.3	107.2	85.8
Total		**87.9**	**178.0**	**133.0**

Note: Based upon a Year 2000 population of 21,447 persons

Table 5.5
Existing Acreage vs. Future Demand

Classification	Existing Supply	Acres Needed		Surplus/(Deficiency)	
		Current	Year 2025	Current	Year 2025
Playlot	2.80	4.30	4.90	1.5	2.1
Neighborhood Park	23.72	42.90	49.30	19.2	25.6
Community Park	119.77	85.80	98.60	(34.0)	(21.2)
Total	**146.29**	**133.00**	**152.80**	(13.3)	6.5

Note: Based upon a Year 2025 projected population of 24,660 persons
Source: Lane Kendig, inc.

community parks, there is a 19-acre deficiency in neighborhood parks and a 1.5-acre deficiency of playlots. Therefore, while the City currently meets the total recommended need, playlots and neighborhood parks are deficient.

Future Demands - Displayed in **Table 5.5, Existing Acreage vs. Future Demand**, is a tabulation of the recommended supply necessary to support the projected future population of 24,660 persons (refer to Chapter 2, Community Profile). Again, while the existing acreage of community parks is sufficient to meet the Year 2025 need and there are only 6.5 total acres needed, the acreage of playlots and neighborhood parks will be deficient. Therefore, to meet national standards, the City will need to acquire and develop an additional 2.1 acres for playlots and 25.6 acres of neighborhood parks.

Park Service Areas

Evaluating service areas is an effective means of identifying geographic areas that have sufficient park areas available, but, more importantly, of identifying those in need of additional parks and recreation areas and facilities. The existing inventory of playlots, neighborhood parks, community parks, and schools is shown in **Figure 5.1, Parks and Recreation Inventory**.

Community parks have a primary service area of one mile, meaning that a majority of persons utilizing these area-wide parks generally reside within this area. The secondary service area extends two miles from the park to account for user patterns associated with the types of activities and facilities available in the community parks, such as little league athletic fields that draw participation from throughout the community.

Illustrated in **Figure 5.2, Park Service Areas**, are the service areas of the three community parks including Cole Heights Park, Hightower Park, and Shadid Park and Disc Golf. These three facilities contribute 119.77 acres to the current inventory of areas and facilities. As exhibited, a large majority of the most populated areas is within the service areas of the community parks. The far northernmost and westernmost areas of the City are currently deficient in the availability of community parks. Since there are no community parks outside of the corporate limits, there will be significant needs for these facilities concurrent with future development.

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity within close proximity to their neighborhoods. The method of

Site Selection Factors:

Topography:
- Minimum 50 percent of site should have a maximum gradient of four percent with runoff drained from developed areas.
- Desirable views should be preserved and protected.

Soils:
- Natural topsoil should be suitable for turf grasses and trees.
- Area should be protected from soil erosion.

Vegetation:
- Natural or landscaped vegetation should include grass and trees with hardy, low-maintenance species.
- Significant individual specimens or unique wildlife habitats are desirable.
- Irrigation systems should be provided for intensively utilized areas.

Access and Location:
- Should be readily accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles;
- Should have collector street frontage;
- Access to linear linkages are highly desirable;
- Should be centrally located; and
- Neighborhood park/school sites are highly desirable, as long as the public usage does not interfere with school activities.

determining the need for neighborhood parks is quite different from an assessment of need for community parks. Whereas community parks are designed for large-scale, area-wide events and activities, neighborhood parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. The level of activity is limited as a result of the size and location of these parks and the equipment and facilities available. Neighborhood parks should be within a short walking distance (typically one-half mile or less) for the residents of one or more neighborhoods, thereby encouraging use and promoting convenience, ease of access, and walking safety for neighborhood children.

Neighborhood facilities similar to Heritage Park represent the most significant need in the community - both now and in the future.

The size of neighborhood parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition, and intended use. One or two vacant lots or several acres may both adequately serve the needs of a neighborhood if there is an even distribution of parks and sufficient facilities and equipment available. National standards recommend a minimum neighborhood park size of five acres assuming an adequate and even distribution. Although a 10-acre park may accommodate ball fields and larger recreation and open space areas, two parks that are five acres in size may equally and, perhaps better, serve the need, while providing a broader distribution of neighborhood parks.

Illustrated in Figure 5.2, Park Service Areas is the effective service areas of the nine neighborhood parks, including English Village Park, Heritage Park, Heritage Way Park, Heritage Way Park #1, Indian Hills Park, Southwest Park, Totland Park, University Heights Park #1 and Wilson Park. These nine parks provide 23.72 acres for use by area residents. In addition to the neighborhood parks, also shown are the service areas of the community parks because they serve as neighborhood parks for the adjacent residents.

The service area for neighborhood parks is divided into primary and secondary areas. The primary service area is one-quarter mile; the secondary service area is one-half mile. As displayed in Figure 5.2, Park Service Areas, the one-quarter mile service area coverage of the existing neighborhood parks is distributed through many of the more densely populated areas of the community. However, there are several neighborhood areas, particularly south of Walker Street and east of Main Street, between C Street and Tamarack Road west of Main Street, and east of Main Street south of Heritage Road that are not within acceptable proximity to a neighborhood park.

Achieving a system of neighborhood and community parks that is uniformly distributed may be accomplished in several ways, including pre-development acquisition by the City, dedication requirements concurrent with subdivision approval, public/private partnerships, and other strategies. While the provision of community parks is generally agreed to be the responsibility of the government entity, there is much less certainty about the responsibility of the entity to provide parks for private development. Requiring the dedication of parkland concurrent with a final plat or a development site plan is a sound method to assure adequate park areas consistent with the demand and impact placed on the public parks system by new development.

Joint Use of School Facilities

School playgrounds, athletic fields, and courts provide additional park and recreation areas and, if accessible to the public, will enhance the number and availability of neighborhood parks within the City. A reciprocal agreement has been in place for some time, primarily for the use of gym and pool facilities. However, a reciprocal agreement should address joint purchase, use, and maintenance of school grounds and equipment, which would be mutually beneficial to the School District and the City. The sharing of these public resources enables greater efficiency and minimizes duplication.

Static displays, such as Locomotive No. 1615, enhance community heritage and the educational value of the parks and recreation system.

As displayed in Figure 5.2, Park Service Areas, the school sites contribute to the service area coverage of the neighborhood parks. While there is some degree of overlap with the neighborhood park facilities, they serve some areas that are not well-served by existing neighborhood park facilities. If an expanded joint use agreement can be reached between the City and the School District, the coverage of park facilities can be expanded to better serve the area neighborhoods. Joint use of facilities and inter-jurisdictional agreements reap benefits for all parties and may result in the establishment of park and recreation facilities in unincorporated areas.

Parks & Recreation System Plan

The general plan for future development of Altus's parks and recreation system was developed through evaluation of existing conditions, planned improvements, and projected future needs based upon anticipated development and increases in population. A future plan for the development of parks and recreation areas is shown in **Figure 3.2 – Future Land Use Character Plan**. The plan shows the generalized location of proposed neighborhood and community parks.

To develop a system of neighborhood and community parks that will adequately serve the existing and projected future parks and recreational needs of the community, the City needs to acquire and develop parks within the identified deficiency areas, as shown on the System Plan. These parks will help to achieve full service area coverage of community parks and an even distribution of neighborhood parks.

The master plan is a valuable resource that should be used on a continuous basis in guiding the parks and recreation development program. The goals, objectives, and recommended actions of this chapter should be referenced in other planning studies and development proposal reports to ensure consideration of existing and planned public parks and recreation areas and open space. As new residential subdivisions are platted and developed, there should be allowances for sufficient land capable of being developed for public park and recreation uses.

Trails and Bikeways

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities serve not only as alternative modes of transportation, but also as important forms of recreation. Therefore, a safe and efficient network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be developed in coordination with the

Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Skilled bicyclists usually prefer to travel along the street system and, where possible, should be accommodated through striped bike lanes or extra wide curb lanes on arterials and collectors. The majority of bicyclists, though, is less skilled and needs to be separated from high speeds and high volume traffic through the use of off-street bike lanes and paths. Local and collector streets are suitable for use by most adult bicycle riders, while minor arterial streets are suitable for limited use by bicyclists due to higher traffic volumes and higher speeds. Further information on pedestrian and bicycle facilities is provided in the Transportation element.

A conceptual plan for trail and bikeway system development is included in **Figure 4.1 – Mobility Plan**. A system of off-street bike and hike trails should be developed to link major attractions and destinations such as neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other popular locations. The proposed system of bike routes should also connect to existing trails and routes and should be designed and constructed in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Greenways and park and connector trails are also instrumental in creating a cohesive park and recreation system. The NRPA defines park trails as "multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas." Park trails are important to the trail system and can be utilized for hiking, walking, jogging, and bicycling. Trails throughout parks and greenways serve to tie parks together and allow for safe and efficient pedestrian movement throughout the park system. Opportunities for park trails in Altus include abandoned railroads, utility rights-of-way, excess rights-of-way and alleyways, and along the irrigation canal. Connector trails allow for pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from parks.

Constructed incrementally over time, an off-street trail network provides safe and convenient access throughout the community.

The Parks and Recreation System Plan reflected in Figure 3.2, Future Land Use Character Plan includes a network of bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks. The proposed bicycle and pedestrian network utilizes a variety of trail sections, including trails along natural courses, shoulder bikeways, and sidewalks in restricted areas. The trail system plan is coordinated to ensure continuity and connections between sidewalks and trails. Future subdivisions and development will be linked to the trail system through appropriate sidewalk connections. The plan utilizes opportunities along the floodplain for greenways and trails and connects existing parks and trails, creating a cohesive recreation system.

Chapter 6: Community Appearance

The image and appearance of Altus are important to its livability and hence, it's physical and economic development. Residents recognize the value of an impressionable community and are committed to its betterment. They desire welcoming entryways, attractive corridors, unique and inviting districts, pleasant and quiet neighborhoods, beautiful parks and public open spaces, well-kept properties, and a community presence that exhibits its unending pride. There is a keen awareness that qualities such as charm and character do not just happen; rather, they require the involvement of the whole community to make improvements - both individually and collectively – to achieve the overall vision.

The physical character of Altus is, perhaps, the single most evident glimpse of its economic viability, government proactiveness, and civic pride. The initial impression of the community is formed by the quality appearance of its physical development, including the nature of community aesthetics; condition of municipal facilities and spaces; amount of public open space; maintenance of roadways and public infrastructure; and the overall attractiveness of the community. The appearance of the community contributes to quality of life and livability for those who reside in Altus, as well as those who may be making an investment or relocation decision.

Simply put, beauty adds value to the community. The appearance of a community is one of the foremost influences of value and, hence, one of its most regarded assets. Residents take pride in their community and its attractive and interesting places. Businesses also like to locate in attractive environments, which improve their ability to recruit employees, host clients and investors, and continue to invest in their facilities.

The appearance of a community is formed by many factors. While some areas rely on the beauty of their natural environment, such as the mountains of Colorado and the oceanside of California, others must focus their attention toward the design of their public spaces, municipal buildings, and infrastructure, while taking a proactive stance to ensure their land use standards deliver quality development outcomes. Without focusing attention on the quality and sustainability of physical development, character is left to chance, leaving little opportunity for the community to control the destiny of its appearance.

The character and appearance of Altus are of top priority according to a broad cross section of the community that participated in the key person interviews and community forum. Residents

Citizen Comments Relating to Community Appearance

- More trees and landscaping throughout the community
- Parks in all areas of the community
- Enhance the entryways
- Limit and improve the signage along the corridors
- Extend the decorative lighting in each direction from Downtown
- Raze dilapidated buildings and redevelop the land
- Add landscaped medians on Broadway
- Require green space within all developments
- Revitalize older properties
- Enforce codes for property upkeep and maintenance
- Require underground utilities
- Enhance the reservoir area
- Continue to enhance Downtown
- Improve all community facilities
- Limit mobile storage containers
- Regular community-wide clean-up
- Improve our first impression
- Reinvest in our "tired" areas
- Create community gateways
- Improve our community identity
- Create community gardens

Monuments like that in Hightower Park add to community identity.

recognize the importance of quality of life in the success of their economic development and, therefore, both desire and expect quality new development and redevelopment. There is a strong desire to improve the entrances to the community with distinctive gateways, enhance the roadway environs with streetscape improvements, increase the amount of green space adjacent to the rights-of-way, add more landscaping and screening of parking and storage areas, control the size and location of signage, incorporate more public displays of art and community history, better manage the appearance of structures and vacant properties, and diligently enforce the City's codes.

In addition to aesthetic enhancement and urban design treatments such as those described above, there is also concern for the character and form of individual developments, which contribute to the collective appearance of the community. Considerations include:

- placement of the building on a site in relation to the street right-of-way;
- setbacks of the parking area from the street right-of-way, thereby creating a streetscape;
- bulk and scale of buildings in relation to the site and adjacent properties;
- density of residential uses (measured in units per acre);
- intensity of nonresidential uses (measured in floor area);
- amount of public open space retained within residential development;
- amount of open space (impervious area) and landscaping within nonresidential development; and
- preservation and protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.

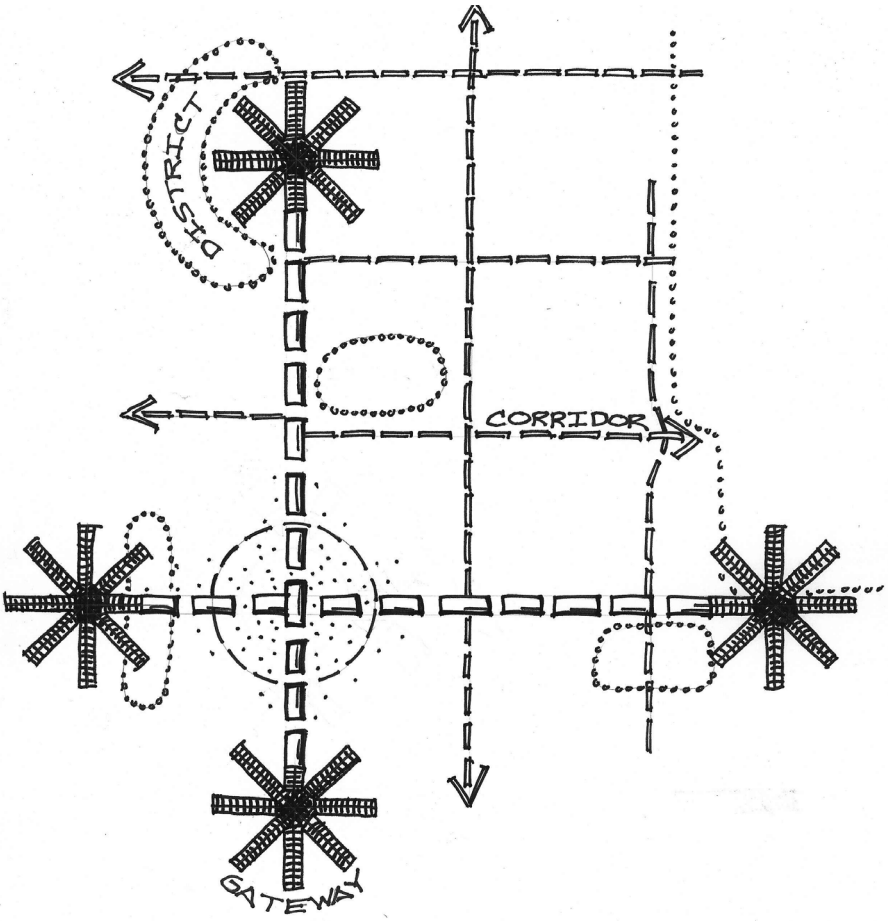
This chapter presents a vision of the future form of Altus – and a series of action steps to achieve that vision. It is designed as a guide for City departments and appointed and elected officials that are active in formulating programs and priorities to influence the development, redevelopment, and conservation of the community. The primary means of implementing this plan will be by way of amended ordinances, such as the zoning ordinance and community development code, and

its guidance in the conduct of normal City activities.

The focus of this chapter is the character and appearance of Altus, which emphasize how the physical elements of individual corridors and districts fit together to form a unified whole community. It also expresses how the framework of the community ties important locations together and helps orient people within the community, how new construction relates to the physical elements already in place, how districts and neighborhoods are to function and be designed, and how government processes work to effectively achieve these goals.

This chapter focuses on character and design issues and is intended as a vision for the future of Altus. The vision emphasizes the primary attributes of the community, the features that make it special, the policies that can improve its valued assets, and how character and design may be used to improve the community appearance. This plan is important because:

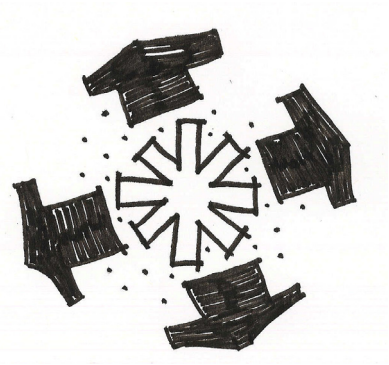
- Sensitive design and development policies can enhance the livability and quality of life in Altus, which provide an important economic development advantage.
- Good design and quality development increase property values and, therefore, tax revenues.



- A community with character and charm has been demanded by the public, which articulated their desire for an enhanced community appearance through their involvement in the comprehensive planning process.
- An attractive community is achievable as the City uses its financial resources, regulatory means, strategic policy decisions, and its own sense of design on public projects to influence private development.

Community Appearance Issues

In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), input received from interviews with over sixty stakeholders, and the input of over two hundred citizens who participated in the community forum, there were a number of key appearance issues identified, including the following:



1. **Development pattern and form that contribute to visual appeal** – The evolution of development in Altus has grown outward from the crossroads of U.S. Highway 62 and U.S. Highway 283, which is the City's center and point of focus. The east-west alignment of U.S. 62 and north-south orientation of U.S. 283 has led to a grid street system, with the principal arteries spaced evenly on the mile section lines. As a result of local and regional traffic patterns and volumes, higher land values exist adjacent to the thoroughfares leading to their more intensive nonresidential use. Therefore, Broadway and Main Street have generally developed with commercial uses and industrial use at the community's eastern and western gateways. The zoning adjacent to Broadway and Main Street, and increasingly along Falcon Road and Tamarack Road, has contributed to the prevailing nonresidential use. Additionally, the land development pattern has contributed to the strip commercial use along the corridors by setting residential development a limited distance from the arterial roadway frontage, which limits the site development alternatives of the property.

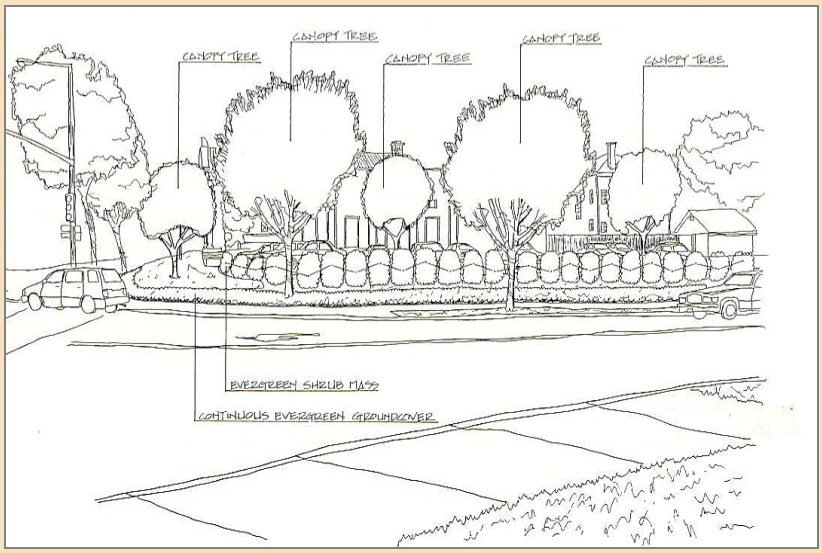
Commercial zoning and land development practices along each of the major corridors has lead to a pattern of strip commercial use.

Development along each of the community's corridors is predominantly general retail use. By reason of the front setback requirements (50 feet minimum front yard setback from highway and arterial street rights-of-way) and the side (minimum 25 feet) and rear (minimum 10 feet in the C-2 and C-3 districts) setbacks, the

buildings are constructed toward the rear of the site – closest to the abutting residential uses in most cases – with the required parking adjacent to the street. The resulting street environment is a patchwork of parking lots for each individual business with, in many cases, multiple property entry and exit points. Signage for each of the businesses shares the limited space immediately adjacent to the street with power and light poles, sidewalks, traffic devices and street signs, and other public displays. Without parking lot setback requirements and clearly defined landscaping provisions to form an edge between the street environment and the abutting properties, as well as to screen the undesirable views of large parking areas, the aesthetic appearance along the highly traveled corridors lacks character and appeal.

Due to the land development regulations and the resulting patterns of use, the commercial office and retail development adjacent to the thoroughfares directly abut low density residential neighborhoods. In many cases, the residential and nonresidential structures, with varying degrees of incompatibility, may be separated by as little as 20 feet (as in the "R-1T" Townhouse Residential District). The only required screening between properties, regardless of the use intensity, is a six- to eight-foot fence and an undefined amount of shrubbery or other plant materials in a landscape strip of an unspecified width in the C-2, Convenience Commercial District. In the two industrial districts, there are only increased side and rear setback requirements when adjacent to a residential district with no provisions for screening and buffering.

2. **Enhanced corridor environments** – As described by the previous issue statement, the appearance of the corridors is, perhaps, the most significant



Sufficiently screened parking areas form an edge between the public and private realms and create an attractive streetscape environment.

issue pertaining to community appearance. After all, these are the most highly traveled roadways in the community, carrying both those who travel them daily and those who are introduced to the community for the first time. The appearance of the corridors may be characterized, first, by their wide street sections (ranging from 48 to 60 feet or more in pavement width) and, secondly, by large building setbacks and expanses of parking adjacent to the street, limited provision of green space or landscaping, multiple points of ingress and egress interrupting the pedestrian ways, a proliferation of signage (in many cases over-sized for the site) with little consistency as to its placement and size, and widely varying building styles and use of materials. Achieving enhanced corridor environments involves policies, programs, regulations, and incentives addressing each of the contributing factors. Enhancement of a single factor will help, but will not result in a positive visual impact. Instead, each of the factors must be handled together to revitalize and re-establish a desired character and appearance.

The roadway environs are within the purview of the public sector as to their design, appearance and maintenance.

There are two separate, yet related, components involved in improving the appearance of corridors. First is the street right-of-way itself, which is owned and controlled by either the City, as is the case for Veterans Drive, North Park Lane, Heritage Road, Tamarack Road, Falcon Road, Bradford Avenue and Ridgecrest Road, Jackson County for Market Road, or the State Department of Transportation for U.S. 62/Broadway and U.S. 283/Main Street. Within the public right-of-way, the design of the pavement surface, including whether the roadway is undivided or divided by a raised median, improved with curb and gutter, or constructed of asphalt or concrete, contributes to the appearance of

the corridor. Maintenance of the pavement surface, as well as the open space within the right-of-way, is also significant to its visual appeal. The preservation of natural features, such as vegetation and wetlands, and provision of green space and landscaping helps to soften the roadway environs and enhance views. The design of structures such as bridges and overpasses, retaining walls, and drainage improvements are also important elements in the overall design scheme. Each of these improvements is largely at the discretion of the City (in coordination with ODOT for the state-owned facilities).

The second component involves private property, which must be either regulated or provided with incentives to achieve the desired development outcomes. Typically, regulations and standards pertaining to building appearance, signage, landscaping, screening and buffering, and open space are applied city-wide or to the properties within a certain distance of specified corridors. Incentives for compliance with the standards may include automatic approval, increased density (for residential uses) or intensity (for nonresidential uses), relaxed parking requirements, reduced dimensional standards, or financial participation through grants or when done in conjunction with a public infrastructure improvement.

The design of the roadway environs contribute significantly to community character and identity.

3. **Transportation facilities that are sensitive to the environment and contribute to community character** – While transportation facilities are commonly viewed purely for their function of moving traffic, they also contribute significantly to the form and character of the community. The extension and improvement of roadways (and the availability of utilities) commonly act as an impetus for development. They also frame the areas of future development. Therefore, transportation improvements must be closely coordinated with the

community's growth plan to ensure it is consistent with its growth policies and future development intentions. The alignment of roadways is also important to ensure that development occurs in the areas that are most suitable (and desirable) for it and is able to adequately preserve valued natural features and sensitive lands.

The design of transportation infrastructure contributes to the appearance of the community, whether it involves protection of the landscape, preservation of open lands, the use of landscaped medians for traffic management, or the design of bridges, overpasses, and retaining walls. Therefore, it is essential for the community to be cognizant of the visual impact of its transportation improvements. Crossings of the irrigation canal, construction of grade-separated overpasses, and the use of medians in appropriate locations along U.S. 62/Broadway, U.S. 283/Main Street and other arterial roadways each offer opportunities for the community to enhance its character.

Significant gateway improvements portray an image of the City and serve as a formal entry and welcome to the community.

4. **Well-defined community gateways and district portals –** Based on the comments received from residents who participated in the key person interviews or small-group issue identification sessions held during the community forum, the appearance of the community entrances is important. Residents are proud of their community and would like to portray a positive first impression on those who visit or pass through the community for the first time. The entrances offer opportunities to establish an image, communicate community values, and attract attention to local attractions and destinations. Formal points of entry (or gateways) also define the boundaries to distinguish it from territory outside of its jurisdiction. Simply put,

gateways help to form the community's physical identity.

Altus is somewhat unique in that it has four distinct entrances. Travelers other than local residents enter the community either on U.S. 62 from the east or west or on U.S. 283 from the north or south. Therefore, formal gateway improvements can be focused at these four locations, with less significant entrance treatments at each of the other arterial roadways, e.g. Heritage Road, North Park Lane, Ridgecrest Road, etc. The entrance from the east (along U.S. 62) benefits from its proximity to Altus Air Force Base, which is a large part of the community's identity and reason for its statewide and national recognition. The entrance from the north (along U.S. 283) passes by Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) and the Southwest Technology Center (SWTC), each of which are attractive facilities on large well-groomed grounds. The entrances from the west and south do not have notable public facilities – with the exception of the potential redevelopment of the depot – and also pass through "tired" areas of the community.

Entryway enhancement to establish formal gateways include improvements to the roadway, such as a landscaped median, increased green space, preservation of natural features and vegetation, and special pavement treatments; significant entry monuments; liberal open space and well-designed landscaping; upgraded lighting standards; way-finding signage; and well-maintained and attractive adjacent properties. Currently, other than the small "Welcome to Altus" sign located at the northern entry, and the potential static display at the south gate of AAFB, there are no special treatments at the entrances to the community. Also, the pattern of use continues to stretch outward along the two highways, such as the movie theater to the north, thereby blurring the edge to the community. A definitive boundary must be established to differentiate between City and County development.

In addition to the gateways to the community, there are also multiple opportunities for enhancement of special district portals. Examples include

notable areas that distinguish themselves by way of their character, such as Downtown, AAFB, the "technology campus" around WOSC and SWTC, the area around Jackson County Memorial Hospital, the reservoir, the industrial park, and individual neighborhoods. Portals to these districts create identity, form a sense of belonging for those who visit or live there, and create additional opportunities for aesthetic enhancement around the community.

5. **Attractive public buildings, spaces and infrastructure** – The City, Jackson County, Altus School District, AAFB, WOSC, SWTC, and other public or semi-public entities and agencies have the opportunity to lead by example. There are several models of highly attractive and notable structures and properties that contribute to the character of the community. For instance, the Jackson County Courthouse, the Downtown Square, City Auditorium, Museum of the Western Prairie, Imagination Station, WOSC and SWTC, the City Reservoir, Hightower Park, and other individual buildings and neighborhoods are local landmarks that communicate to the public a message of community pride and heritage. These facilities must be acknowledged for their presence and contribution to the fabric of the community by continued diligence in their upkeep and preservation.

The City Auditorium is a fine example of a notable community landmark that communicates the City's commitment to quality public facilities.

Each of the above mentioned local landmarks required a substantial investment on behalf of the City or their sponsoring entity or agency. These investments pay dividends, not only in their functional use, but also by way of giving the community form. The quality of public buildings, spaces, and infrastructure is reflective of how the community views itself and the priority placed on its presence within the local region,

state, and nation. It is, therefore, warranted for the community to concern themselves with the form of improvements, as well as their function.

Public expenditures often lead to private investment. For example, streetscape enhancements commonly result in improvements to the adjacent properties. Once an individual owner commits to upgrade the appearance of their property, the action tends to spur other improvements and investments of nearby land or business owners. For instance, extending the streetscape enhancements in each direction from Downtown, making significant improvements such as the property reclamation near the south gate of AAFB, and the planned widening of North Park Lane each offer opportunities to leverage investment by the private sector. While resources are always limited, increasing the investment to include enhancements, such as landscaping, pedestrian ways, decorative lighting, and other amenities ,will benefit in the long-term by a resulting increase to the tax base and enhancement of community character and identity.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals, objectives, and action recommendations are designed to address the above issues, which were identified by citizens of the community through their participation in the key person interviews and community forum.

GOAL 6.1: An enhanced pattern and form of development that contributes to community appeal.

Objective A: Create a land development pattern that is conducive to a suburban versus auto-urban character.

Action 6.1.1: Allow nonresidential development to continue adjacent to the thoroughfares, such as Tamarack Road west of North Park Lane where the land development pattern is pre-established. In undeveloped areas where the pattern is yet to be established, focus nonresidential uses in modes at the intersections of arterial streets, rather than have narrow commercial strips lining each thoroughfare.

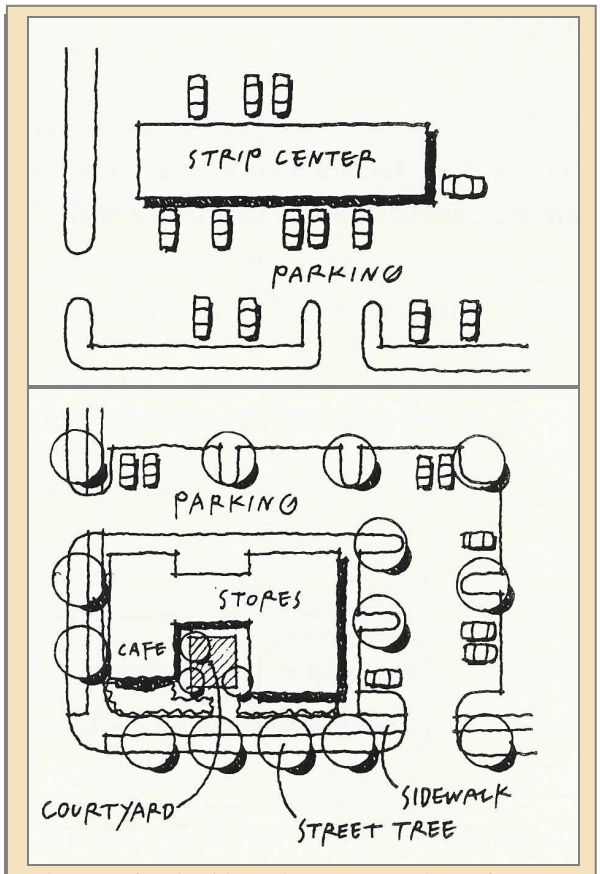
Action 6.1.2: Protect the traffic carrying capacity and the pattern of land use along the yet to the developed arterial streets, such as Veterans Drive and portions of Falcon Road, Tamarack Road, North Park Lane, and Heritgate Road, by

strictly adhering to the policy precedence of the Future Community Character Plan.

Action 6.1.3: Allow higher densities of residential land use immediately adjacent to the arterial streets to improve efficiency and enhance development feasibility.

Action 6.1.4: Adopt decision criteria within the zoning ordinance allowing denial of zoning amendment requests beyond the fenceline boundary (refer to Chapter 7, Growth Policies) at the periphery of the community on the basis of premature development.

Action 6.1.5: Include in the decision criteria for zoning amendments the pattern of future use formed by zoning requests so as to avoid strip commercial development patterns.



The use of a "build-to" line versus a large front yard setback shifts the placement of parking, thereby forging a very different corridor environment.

GOAL 6.2: Enhanced character of development adjacent to each major corridor.

Objective A: Improve the appearance of the major roadway corridors.

Action 6.2.1: Amend the front and side yard setback requirements in the C-1, C-2 and C-3 commercial districts from 50 feet and 25 feet to a 10-foot "build-to" line. Subsequently, establish extensive landscaping and green space standards, as well as building orientation and articulation requirements to manage the appearance of building walls adjacent or within public view of street rights-of-way.

Action 6.2.2: Require the placement of parking in the side and rear yards of sites abutting arterial street rights-of-way.

Action 6.2.3: Adopt performance-based bufferyard requirements to adequately protet abutting properties from the impacts associated with parking and vehicular use areas.

Action 6.2.4: Establish minimum parking lot setback requirements to form a streetscape green space that is sufficient in width to accommodate monument signs, trees, and parking lot screening.

Action 6.2.5: Amend the zoning ordinance to clearly specify

the definition of landscaping (to include trees and shrubs – not grass and ground cover) and the requisite standards for placing trees and shrubs within a required streetscape buffer separating the street and parking lot. Also, specify the landscaping required on all sides of the site separating it from adjacent properties.

Action 6.2.6: Establish requirements for the provision of raised islands within parking areas (such as one island of a specified size for each 15 or 20 parking spaces) with specifications for canopy trees, shrubbery, and ground cover.

Action 6.2.7: Amend the current zoning ordinance provision of maximum percent coverage in the high density residential, commercial, and industrial districts to include impervious surface ratio, floor area ratio, and landscape surface ratio requirements.

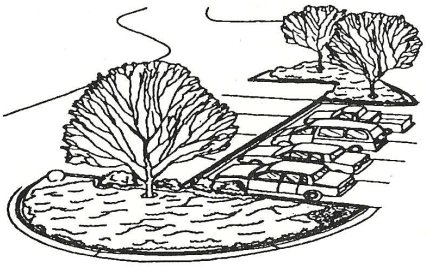
Action 6.2.8: Amend the sign ordinance to require monument versus pole signs. Subsequently, establish an amortization period whereby all existing pole signs must be replaced within a specified period of time.

Action 6.2.9: Require submittal of a master sign plan for all multiple use and multiple tenant developments.

Action 6.2.10: Adopt ordinance provisions requiring that stored materials must be screened 100 percent from public view. Furthermore, specify the percentage of area that may be used for the display of outdoor merchandise, as well as its location on the site (typically abutting the building), enclosure separating it from other use areas, and the height of stacked materials, among other applicable requirements.

Action 6.2.11: Regulate outdoor sales, such as flea markets and ongoing garage sales, by limiting their duration and occurrences within a year and other requirements such as setbacks, signage, parking,

Islands within parking areas direct the circulation of traffic and provide for much needed open space and landscaping.



Master sign plan submittal requirements can allow individual freedom, yet result in consistent signage of multiple tenant centers.

and provison of public restrooms.

Objective B: Enhance the nature of second generation development.

Action 6.2.12: Establish ordinance provisions requiring building additions in excess of a specified percentage (commonly five to ten percent) to comply with the site development standards (as amended).

Action 6.2.13: Adopt redevelopment standards allowing specified waivers of height and area regulations so as not to constrain improvements and expansion of existing businesses.

Action 6.2.14: Establish a revolving loan property improvement fund to provide financial assistance to businesses wishing to improve or expand their property.

Action 6.2.15: Organize a public education campaign regarding property maintenance and environmental codes and establish an annual amnesty program for code violators. Volunteer to assist property owners in identifying violations.

Action 6.2.16: Establish incentives for compliance with the site development standards (as amended), including automatic approval, increased density/intensity, and waivers of other specified standards.

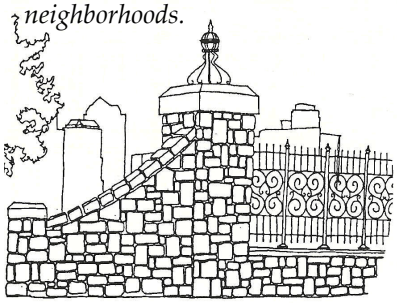
Objective C: Adopt building standards city-wide and along specified corridors.

Action 6.2.17: Amend the existing zoning provisions pertaining to metal buildings to increase the percent of coverage of decorative building materials when within a specified distance of an arterial street (commonly 300 feet). Establish limited review procedures whereby approval is automatic if there is compliance with the clearly written design standards in the code.

Action 6.2.18: Adopt standards requiring pitched versus flat roofs, as well as articulated wall surfaces and fenestration, particularly those abutting U.S. 62 and U.S. 283.

Action 6.2.19: Coordinate with local banks to make available low interest façade improvement and property enhancement loans.

Portals help to define boundaries of districts and neighborhoods.



GOAL 6.3: Attractive gateways to the community and portals of special areas and districts.

Objective A: Establish an edge and identity to the community via gateway treatments.

Action 6.3.1: Coordinate with the Altus Metropolitan Area

Planning Commission to restrict off-premise advertising signs within a specified distance of the City limits along U.S. 62 and U.S. 283.

Action 6.3.2: Acquire public easements or rights-of-way at the selected gateway locations along U.S. 62 and U.S. 283 and, secondly, at each of the arterial roads entering the community.

Action 6.3.3: Design and construct significant gateway monuments at each location, including landscaping, lighting, and other aesthetic treatments.

Action 6.3.4: Coordinate with ODOT to construct a raised median at each of the entrances, which may be used for additional landscaping, green space, and monuments. Also coordinate regarding special pavement treatments at the gateways, such as tinted and textured concrete.

Action 6.3.5: Adopt special zoning provisions within a specified distance of the gateways regarding allowable uses and specific site design criteria.

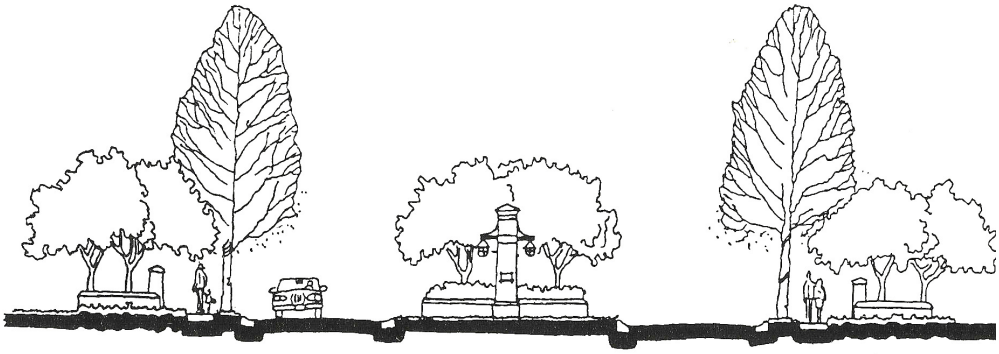
Action 6.3.6: Initiate redevelopment and enhancement projects at the west and south entrances to the community, including public infrastrcuture improvements and enforcement of code violations.

Objective B: Designate the locations for portal entry features.

Action 6.3.7: Work with business and property owners to acquire easements and construct monuments, fencing, landscaping, and other amenities at the portal sites.

Action 6.3.8: Require new subdivisions (and new phases) to install monuments at all entries and consistent fencing along the outer periphery of the development.

Action 6.3.9: Establish maintenance responsibilities in perpetuity for all common improvements and grounds.



Gateway treatments such as a wide landscaped median, entry monuments, and extensive landscaping create a sense of arrival into the community.

GOAL 6.4: Public buildings, spaces, and infrastructure that contribute to community form and appeal.

Objective A: Diligently maintain and improve buildings and grounds.

Action 6.4.1: Make additional improvements to notable buildings and facilities, such as an amphitheater at the reservoir and water slide(s) adjacent to the pool in Hightower Park, to further their identity and attraction for residents and visitors.

Action 6.4.2: Redevelop and adapt a new use for the depot to create a landmark along south Main Street.

Action 6.4.3: Install additional streetscape improvements, restore and enhance the building facades, introduce historical kiosks and monuments, provide way-finding signs and displays, and add other amenities to the Downtown Square.

Action 6.4.4: Partner with the school district to pass a bond election for building restoration and facility improvements at each of the school campuses.

Objective B: Encourage the preservation of open space to enhance the aesthetic quality and natural beauty of Altus.

Action 6.4.5: Establish development incentives, such as reduced street widths and increased density, to encourage dedication of open space easements adjacent to collector and arterial street rights-of-way, along creeks and drainage ways, and within major developments.

Action 6.4.6: Acquire a triangular area as part of the right-of-way at all new or reconstructed intersections to be used as public open space.

Development clustering is a land development technique that integrates natural resources as permanent open space.

Action 6.4.7: Create incentives through public financial participation or City maintenance for the use of boulevards as collector roadways. Also encourage traffic islands similar to Powell Drive for use as neighborhood open space and portal entry features.

Action 6.4.8: Inventory all unused government property and use it for public gardens and open space.

Action 6.4.9: Establish ordinance provisions allowing cluster (30 percent open space), conservation (50 percent open space) and preservation (80 percent open space) development by right, thereby preserving open land in perpetuity within new development.

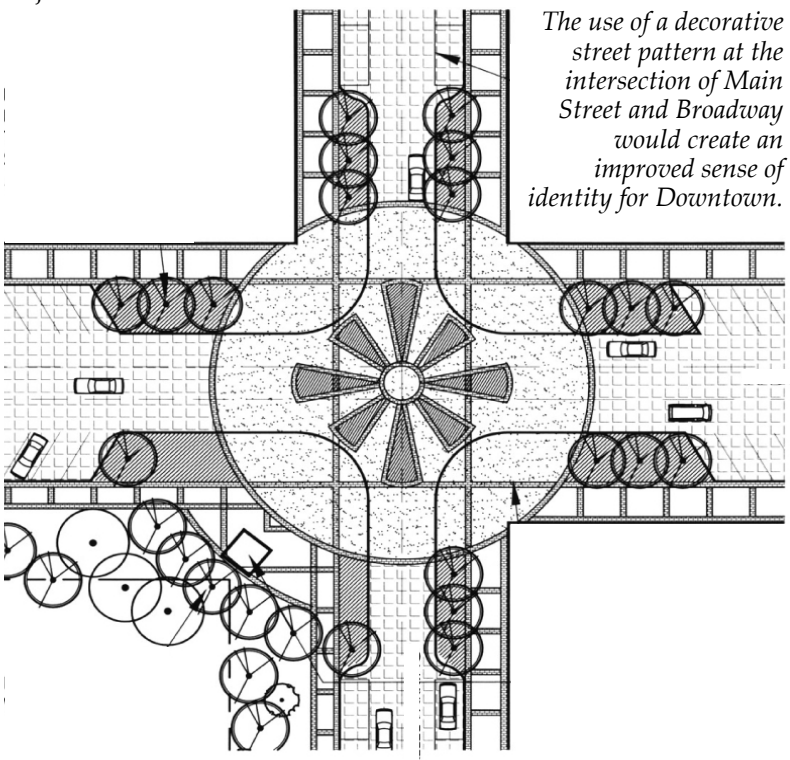
Action 6.4.10: Acquire excess rights-of-way, vacated alleys and easements, areas beneath overhead power lines, irregularly-shaped parcels, and other non-developable parcels for utilization as playlots and public open space.

Objective C: Upgrade the appearance of public streets.

Action 6.4.11: Coordinate with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) in the design of future interchanges/major intersections, bridges and overpasses, retaining walls, signage and lighting standards, and other improvements to include consideration of enhanced aesthetics and community character.

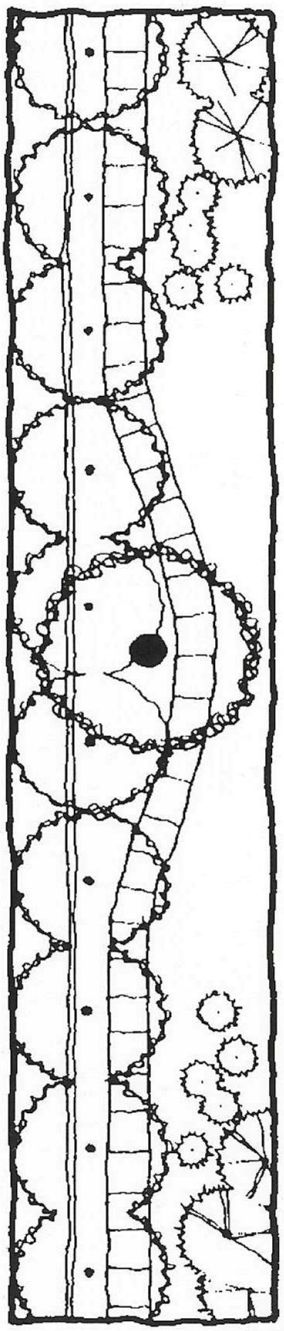
Action 6.4.12: Coordinate with ODOT to construct landscaped medians along U.S. 62 and U.S. 283 for traffic management and aesthetic purposes.

Action 6.4.13: Amend the design standards for the right-of-way width of arterial and collector streets to acquire sufficient additional rights-of-way to include increased green space and buffer zones from adjacent land uses.



The use of a decorative street pattern at the intersection of Main Street and Broadway would create an improved sense of identity for Downtown.

Landscaping within the streetscape buffer enhances the experience for the driver and pedestrian.



Action 6.4.14: Install unique pavement patterns at key intersections in the community, such as Broadway/Main Street, Veterans Drive/Broadway, Veterans Drive/Falcon Road and Tamarack Road/Main Street.

Action 6.4.15: Acquire land for permanent open space along U.S. 62, U.S. 283, and each of the other arterial streets to visually enhance the "openness" of these corridors.

Action 6.4.16: Include sidewalks, bikeways/trails, medians, landscaping, and upgraded lighting as part of each capital street project.

Action 6.4.17: Adopt standards for preserving tree lines and mature individual trees in planning the alignments of new roadways, with guidelines for adequately protecting them during construction.

Action 6.4.18: Use natural drainage improvements versus concrete lined channels.

Action 6.4.19: Upgrade the appearance of roadway structures, such as bridges and retaining walls, with the use of decorative materials and other unique features.

Community Framework

The overall character of the community is derived by the collective appearance of individual areas. Rather than evaluating the character and appeal of each neighborhood or roadway individually, the community may be organized into community framework areas. The design principles and character improvements described in this plan element may be applied universally to the four framework areas, which together form the aesthetic fabric of the community.

The framework areas, which are unique to Altus, include the following:

- **Corridors** provide connections for people, commerce, and infrastructure, as well as the natural systems. The corridors provide the visual and functional imagery of the community at large. In other words, the impression made by the corridors largely represents the image of the community as a whole. The design and appearance of the community's corridors is, therefore, significant in forming a positive experience and a lasting image for those who visit or pass through Altus. The general principles for enhancing the community's corridors include: enclosing or framing each street with the use of the natural (trees

and vegetation) and built (buildings) environments; arranging buildings and parking areas to complement the streetscape, placing emphasis on form, as well as function; balancing the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists with that of automobiles; substantially enhancing the overall level of design quality; and creating an improved visual setting for local commerce.

As displayed by **Figure 6.1, Community Framework Areas**, the corridors are divided into three categories, including primary, secondary, and natural corridors. The primary corridors include the two U.S. Highways (62 and 283), while the secondary corridors are the arterial streets that are currently developing with a nonresidential pattern of land use. The pattern of use is generally well-established along the primary corridors, which is a blend of residential and nonresidential development. The secondary corridors are less developed and, thus, offer opportunities for character enhancement. The natural corridor is along the irrigation canal, which offers an opportunity for an off-street connection, as discussed in Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation.

- **Districts** represent the places that are unique and have individual identity. These are the places that commonly attract people for specific purposes, such as education, shopping, government, public gatherings, entertainment, employment, and health care. They represent a common place where people come together for a variety of reasons. They are each unique in their physical character by way of their use, the density (units per acre) and intensity (bulk, scale and height) of the development, the architectural style, or other distinctive features and amenities. The general principles for establishing stronger identities of the community's

The Downtown Square is the most recognizable "district" as a result of its development character and its focus around the County Courthouse.

districts include exploiting their visual distinctness with portal features and treatments (monuments, fencing, landscaping, signage, etc.); creating an individual, yet consistent, architectural style; enhancing the streetscape environs for pedestrian use; and promoting a common identity through signage and other means.

The districts include the downtown square and the surrounding commercial area, which is the community crossroads and center of county and city government; the educational district around Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) and the Southwest Technology Center (SWTC), as well as the area proposed as a technology campus immediately adjacent to the north of WOSC (refer to Figure 3.2, Future Land Use Character Plan); the natural and recreational area around the reservoir; Altus Air Force Base; and the industrial park and developing industrial area adjacent to Market Road. Each of these areas is unique as to their use and represents a distinctive character.

The portal into "The City Park" is an example of an entryway treatment into a district or special place in the community.

- **Gateways and portals** are intended to help in creating identify for the community as a whole, as well as each individual district. They are visual icons that are designed to attract attention and portray an image or message. For entrants, they are an introduction to the area. They shape the identity and form a sense of belonging for those who live or work within the boundaries of the district. The physical improvements give form and establish an edge to the districts.

The gateways are represented in Figure 6.1, Community Framework Areas, with the large asterisks, which are located at the four primary entrances to the community along U.S. Highways 62 and 283. These areas represent

significant opportunities for the community to introduce itself to those entering the community, which may include entry monuments; distinctive roadway treatments, such as a heavily landscaped medians and decorative pavement alterations; trees and other landscaping to denote points of entry; appropriate land uses and higher standards of development; and amenities such as increased green space, public art displays and sculptures, water features or fountains, and signage.

- **Peripheral areas** represent the surrounding rural lands, which provide imagery and function of agrarian and natural activities that support the urban environment. These areas help to define the urban form of the community and distinguish between urban development and the non-urban rural environment. The peripheral areas are largely undisturbed by development, with the exception of farmsteads that establish the rural landscape. The presence of this area is as important to the community image as its urbanized area, particularly in the Great Plains Country that is known for its flat, yet gently rolling, open terrain.

The peripheral areas are as much a part of the Altus identity as the community itself.

Strategic Directions

This plan offers guidance for enhancing the aesthetic quality of each of the community framework areas. Some of the guidance is general, which may be applied in all areas of the community, while others are focused on specific types of improvements, e.g. monument signage, hipped roofs, etc. While there are graphic illustrations for recognizable locations within the community, the recommendations are not solely for these areas, but are intended to apply universally to each of the other areas within the common framework. For instance, the guidance offered for enhancing the U.S. Highway 62 corridor (taken near the intersection of Jackson Street) applies for all sections of the corridor, not just this location. The

guidelines are also structured such that they apply regardless of the adjacent use. Whether the abutting use is residential, commercial, or industrial, such improvements as raised medians, landscaping and screening, decorative lighting, and other enhancements within the public right-of-way apply.

Public vs. Private Realms

Enhancement within the framework areas includes recommendations for improvement within both the public and private realms. There are enhancements that may significantly alter the appearance of corridors that are within the control of the government, including all levels of government (City, County, State and Federal), which are those areas within the rights-of-way. Conversely, the areas outside the public rights-of-way are held by private interests, which require partnership and regulation to manage their design and appearance. The enhancements that are within the control of the government are those within the public street rights-of-way, such as the following:

- right-of-way width
- cross-section type (divided or undivided)
- street design (ditch or curb-and-gutter)
- pavement type
- amount of green space (extra right-of-way outside of the pavement width)
- preserved vegetation or natural features
- pedestrian amenities (trails, benches, etc.)
- street lighting
- design of traffic control devices (signals and signs)
- public art displays
- monuments and other amenities

There is a wide array of improvements within the corridor and district framework areas that require participation on behalf of the private sector. These improvements may include property enhancements such as the following:

- development intensity, such as the building bulk, height, and scale (nonresidential use)
- development density and open space (residential use)
- site design issues, such as building and parking lot placement
- building setbacks and other dimension requirements
- design of principal and accessory buildings
- amount of landscape surface (inversely, the amount of impervious surface area)
- landscaping of the parking area and around the periphery of the property
- buffering between adjacent uses
- screening of parking and vehicular use areas, outdoor

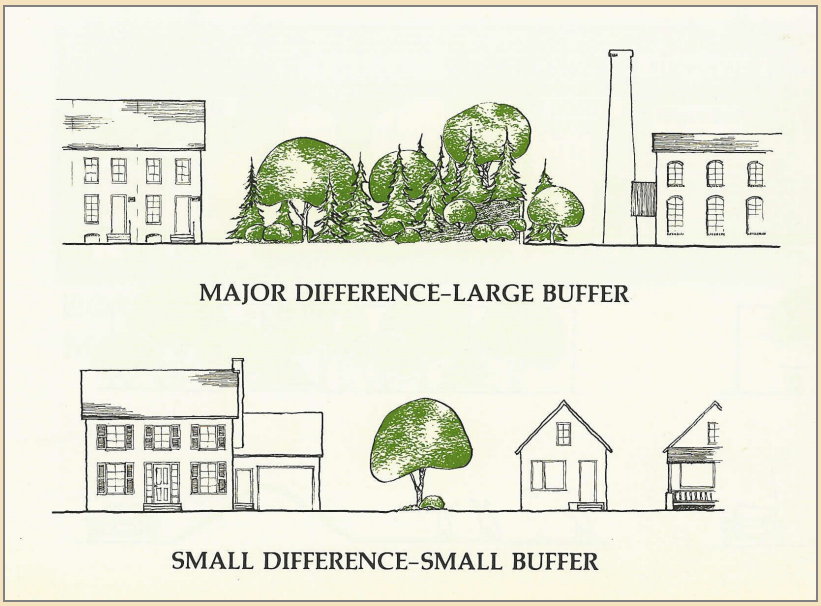
storage areas, and building- or ground-mounted mechanical equipment
- building design (materials, roofline, wall articulation and fenestration, etc.)
- sign type, size, and location
- property maintenance standards
- pedestrian improvements (sidewalks along the street frontage)

Generational Development

Development occurs in generations, including a first generation as property is first developed on raw land and a second generation when it is, in any way, altered or improved. First generation development offers the most significant opportunity for the community to proactively manage its appearance. In other words, having the ordinances and standards in place will allow the community to immediately realize an improved quality of development as each project is constructed. The peripheral rural areas are the epitome of first generation growth. These areas represent land that is yet to develop for which its preservation and protection will allow a sustained rural character.

Enhancing second generation development occurs over an extended period of time and with much less impact on the visual environment. Generally, most uses will remain, meaning that their influence on the character and appearance of the built environment will also remain, with, perhaps, minor enhancements and alterations over time, such as painting, maturing vegetation, and small building additions. Second generation development typically occurs in one of three ways including:

- **Infill development** of vacant or underutilized lots, which must be carefully managed to ensure the character of the surrounding established neighborhoods is not altered by the density or intensity of the proposed infill project. Infill standards must be in place to regulate the density and intensity of the infill development such that it is compatible with the abutting uses, with appropriate



Bufferyards must require different treatments depending upon the intensity of the adjacent uses.

As dilapidated structures are condemned and demolished, standards for redevelopment will be paramount to maintain a consistent character.

bufferyard standards to adequately buffer uses of varying intensities.

- **Redevelopment** involves substantial renovation, demolition, or complete reconstruction of an existing building. As older developments become economically obsolete or structurally substandard, the property they occupy becomes more valuable than the building itself. In this case, the building is typically razed and the newly vacant property is redeveloped with a contemporary use. This will become increasingly apparent in Altus as buildings are condemned, acquired, and demolished around the community. As sites become available in areas of the community already well-served by infrastructure, redevelopment opportunities will increase.
- **Intensification** of sites refers to the addition of buildings or activities to already developed properties. As land becomes more valuable over time and greater efficiency is required to remain competitive in the marketplace, parking lots and other underutilized lands will become too valuable to be non-revenue generating. Intensification will most likely occur in Altus due to changing economic conditions, rather than a diminished availability of developable land.

As second generation development emerges, public policy must adjust to accommodate it. Most importantly, infill, redevelopment, and intensification must happen in a manner that protects the character of existing development. Support of second generation development must also occur through incentives that encourage the economic opportunities associated with redevelopment, as well as through streamlined regulations that permit it to happen.

Effective and reliable standards that are supported by the community are the tools needed to protect neighborhoods, while allowing development of corridors and

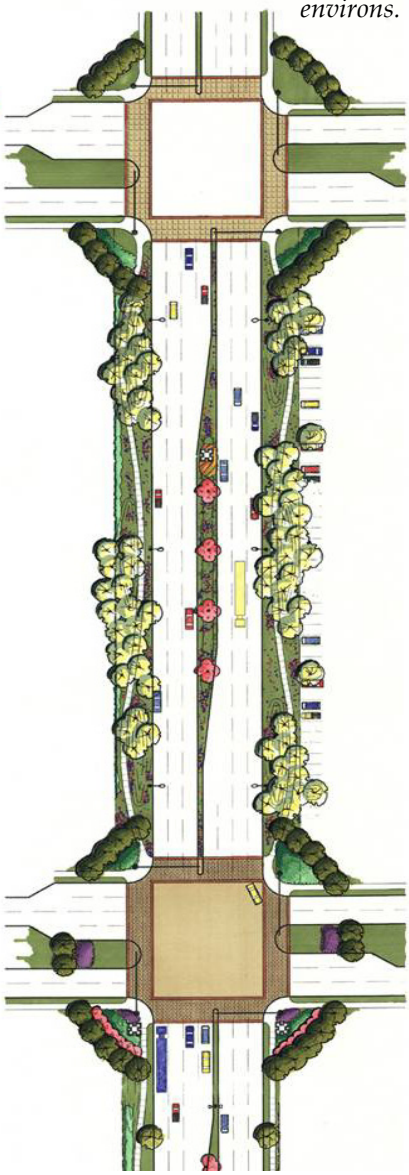
districts. The net result is an improvement in community livability, increased property values, an enhanced community character and image, and an improved desirability as a place to live, work, and play.

Streetscape Enhancement

As described above, there are a myriad of enhancements that can occur with the public street right-of-way. As displayed in **Figure 6.2, Public Realm Improvements**, the recommended design principles include the following:

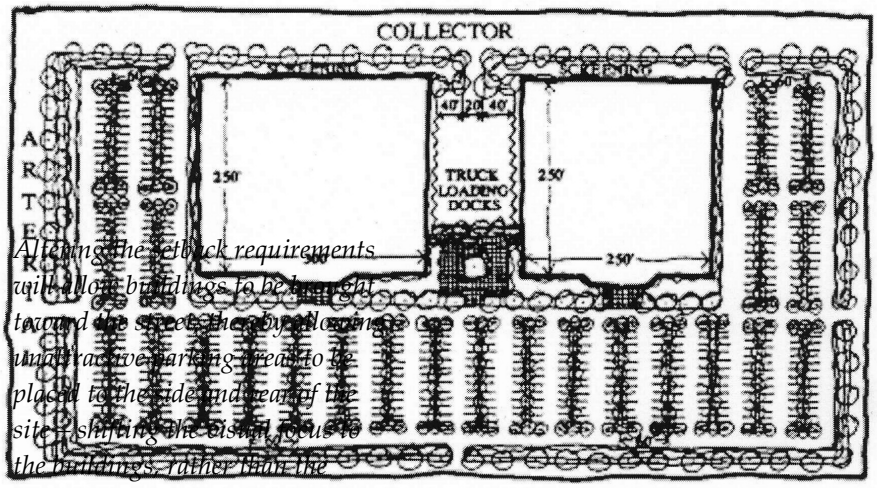
- First and foremost, the inclusion of a raised median is of high priority. From a traffic perspective, a median is highly effective as an access management improvement. Medians have been shown to slow traffic speeds, reduce turning movements, and minimize the impedance of traffic flow. Aesthetically, they break up the wide expanse of pavement (measuring between four and five lanes – 48 to 60 feet in width) by creating space for grass, groundcover, shrubbery, trees, and other amenities.
- Street trees both within the median and the outer streetscape areas abutting the roadway allow a canopy to be formed over the roadway, which significantly alters the driver's perspective of the roadway environs. These trees also provide shade for the abutting properties. Ornamental trees may also be used for their colorful appearance during certain times of the year. The species of street trees must be carefully selected by the re-activated Tree Board for use along the street, including those that are tolerant of this intensive environment, as well as those whose roots co-exist well with streets and sidewalks.
- A streetscape buffer area adjacent to the back of the curb on either side of the street pavement is also a vital component. This area creates separation between the public and private realms and provides space for more "green" adjacent to the roadway. This area may be planted in grass or some form of groundcover or may include rock or mulch in some locations, which helps to alter the monotony of the street and create visual interest. This area also creates a feeling of safety for pedestrians walking along a busy street.
- One of the most significant challenges of an auto-urban corridor is the usefulness of sidewalks. Pedestrian ways that are continuously interrupted by wide driveways with undefined edges form major barriers for users. The sidewalk environment must be both safe and pleasant in order for it to be well used. Limiting the number, width, and location of new driveways,

Streetscape enhancement largely involves an increase in the amount of "green" along the roadway environs.



consolidating numerous existing driveways, and defining the edges with curb cuts and patterned crossings helps to create a more appealing pedestrian environment.

- The use of decorative street lamps helps to form a unique community identity, separate from the typical standard installed by departments of transportation and utility and public works providers. While fixtures of different heights and sizes may be warranted for different districts, such as within the downtown versus the outer segments of Broadway and Main Street, it is vitally important that all street lamps are consistent in their style. The use of banners affixed to the lamp posts also allows the community to personalize itself by advertising upcoming activities or historical events.



Altering the setback requirements will allow buildings to be brought toward the street, thereby locating unattractive parking areas to be placed to the side and rear of the site. This shifts the visual focus to the buildings, rather than the parking lot.

Development Enhancement

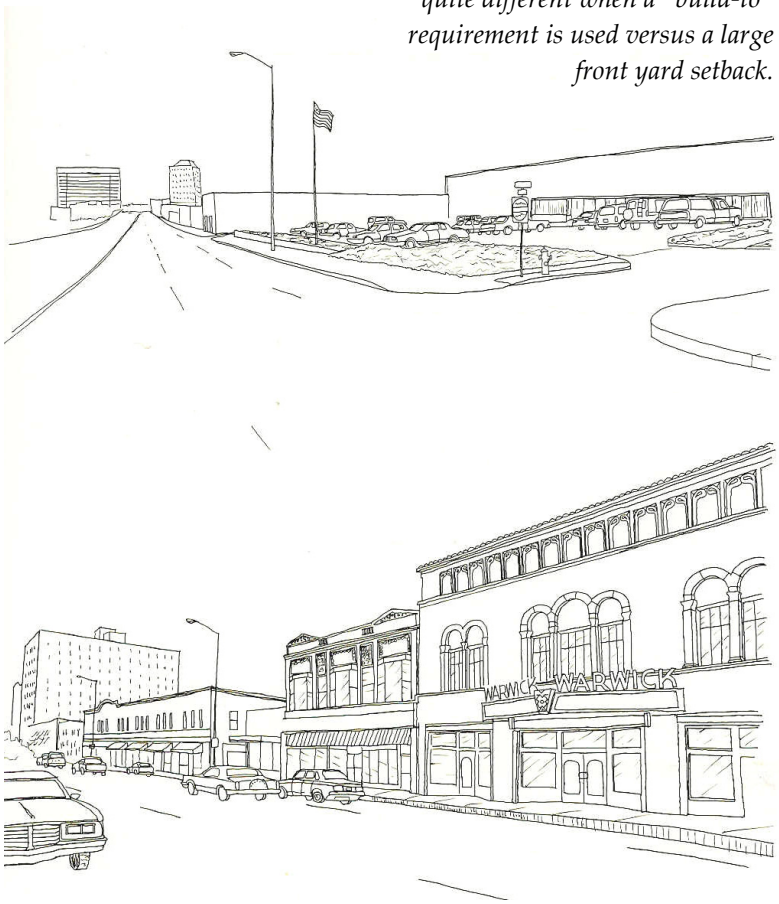
Outside of the public street rights-of-way, there is an assortment of opportunities for improving the appearance of districts and development adjacent to corridors. As displayed in **Figure 6.3, Private Development Guidelines**, the recommended design principles for private properties are as follows:

- An edge between the public and private realms may be formed in part by the streetscape buffer area adjacent to the property line and by shrubbery, which is used to screen the parking lot from public view. This edge defines the limits between public and private property and helps to form an identity for the development. Trees within the streetscape buffer area contribute to forming the edge, which is also part of the public realm street environment.
- In addition to the green space and landscape edge within the streetscape buffer abutting the street, islands placed throughout parking areas, each with trees, shrubbery, and ground cover, provide much needed landscape open space and shade. Islands are also useful in directing site access and circulation within the parking lot. Interior parking lot landscaping softens the visual

effects of large parking areas and helps to manage the microclimate caused by extreme temperatures radiating from the pavement.

- The layout and arrangement of parking areas contributes to the appearance of sites. Rather than being located entirely in front of the building, within full view of the adjacent corridor, their placement to the side and rear of the building is preferable. Their design is important for functional purposes, but also in terms of site aesthetics. Rather than having rows of parking bays perpendicular to the street right-of-way, to the extent practicable, they should be arranged parallel with the street or, if possible and depending on the shape of the site, at an acute angle.
- Monument versus pole signage greatly improves the street frontage of development. Monument signs are also more effective as they are within the normal sight line of drivers versus being elevated high above ground level. Monument signs should be constructed to complement the materials used on the principal structure and should have planting beds and ground cover around their foundation.
- Building standards pertaining to the use of certain materials, similar to "metal building" provisions in the current ordinance, vertical relief, wall articulation, and fenestration, all contribute to creating attractive development. As displayed in Figure 6.3, Private Development Guidelines, the incorporation of vertical relief with tower-like structures in the center and at each end of the L-shaped commercial center may serve to transform the quality appearance of an otherwise ordinary development.
- The use of a maximum versus minimum front building line (forming a build-to line) helps to draw the buildings closer to the street environment, thereby

The street environment becomes quite different when a "build-to" requirement is used versus a large front yard setback.



providing increased street enclosure and business exposure. By doing so, the street environment may be more visually intriguing – not quite so vague and monotonous – and the building, rather than the parking lot, serves as the focal point. Integration of building standards becomes paramount to ensure that the building wall closest to the street is interesting and not a long, uninterrupted wall surface. The landscaping is also important to adequately vegetate adjacent to the near wall surface.

- Outdoor lighting standards contribute to the nighttime appearance of development. Without regulations to ensure an appropriate light intensity, light pollution will diminish the quality viewing of the nighttime sky, light spillover with impact adjacent properties, and light glare may create harmful conditions along the adjacent street. The height and style of on-site lighting also contribute to the character of development.
- Hipped versus flat roofs add an architectural dimension that enhances the character of development. Hipped roofs also have surfaces for the use of building materials, such as standing-seam metal panels that are available in a variety of colors, which the City may want to regulate to avoid unusual or garish colors. In addition, the inclusion of dormers and other building features help to establish a building style that improves on what, otherwise, may be an ordinary "box-like" structure.
- Flags may be used for the purpose of casting an identity, such as one displaying a business emblem or logo. However, it is important that they are regulated as a sign so as not to allow their overuse or their placement in numbers so as to obstruct the view or attention of passing motorists.

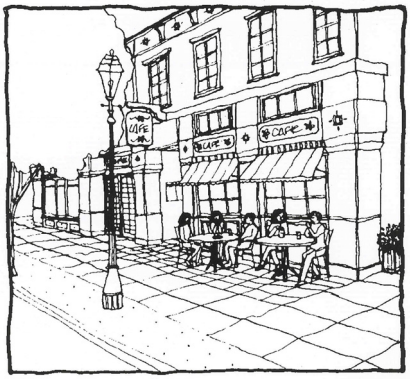
Shown in **Figure 6.4, Streetscape Enhancement**, is a specific example of how an existing area may be entirely transformed with the use of streetscape enhancements. The improvements include converting worn and unused pavement to a grassy lawn; forming a definitive edge with a visual screen of shrubbery abutting the vehicle display area; adding a sufficient number of trees to provide shade and soften the visual impact of a long row of trucks without obstructing their public view; adding an entry monument for identifying the business and a monument sign to display advertisements; incorporating pedestrian improvements such as a curved sidewalk, bollard lighting, and a patterned driveway crossing;

planting street trees and other vegetation within the streetscape buffer; and including decorative street lamps and banners that are consistent with others throughout the community. These few improvements completely alter the image and design of this single property. When they are applied along longer segments of a corridor, they have a cumulative effect that changes the impression and character of a corridor and each adjacent development.

District Identity

Each district has its own identity by nature of its land uses and their intensiveness, building scale and height, architectural style(s), signage, natural features, street improvements, amenities, and other physical elements. In many cases, however, existing districts do not have a unique identity because there has not been a concerted effort on behalf of the area owners to organize and create a collective vision for the larger district. Therefore, these areas lack a clear identity and do not contribute to community character as significantly as they could through better design.

Highly recognized areas are known for their ability to communicate their identity, which occurs largely through the design of buildings and spaces. An example within Altus is the Downtown Square, which largely forms its identity around the Jackson County Courthouse. While there are several notable features, businesses, and destinations within the larger downtown area, they are rather nondescript and not well-integrated with the identity of Downtown. The method of access to and between each site is almost exclusively via the automobile, made apparent by the wide streets and an environment that is not attractive for pedestrian traffic.



Outdoor activities such as sidewalk cafes, art displays, and street vendors are important for creating an urban environment.

Displayed in **Figure 6.5, Downtown Possibilities**, are enhancements that will help to create a distinct identity for Downtown. Since there is such a

The street environment must be attractive for pedestrians, including its aesthetics and amenities, as well as its use.

wide street section on Commerce Street, there is an opportunity to construct a landscape median in the center of the street. The median would serve as a pedestrian refuge, shortening the unprotected walking distance across the street. It could also be used for additional street trees, landscaping, decorative street lamps, and a portal monument for the Downtown Square. A raised pedestrian crosswalk constructed with a unique pavement color and design would designate the pedestrian walkway and act as a traffic-calming device. Other possible improvements include upgraded street lighting and decorative mast arms and extensive landscaping throughout the district. Restoration of the building facades around the Square and throughout the larger downtown district would help to display its historic significance and economic vitality. Use of the upper stories for residential dwellings would add a 24-hour presence to the area, offering increased security and a market to support retail and service-related uses. The sidewalk frontage should be oriented to pedestrians with retail and entertainment uses to attract their patronage. The government presence will continue to be a strength of the area, which brings employment to Downtown and draws residents to the area to conduct government-related business. It is important that Downtown continue to be the core of government activity to serve as an economic anchor.

Establishing Downtown as a destination for business, entertainment, and living will attract both residents and visitors.

Chapter 7: Growth Policies

In order for Altus to realize the future envisioned by its residents and leaders, it must have a balanced strategy for achieving economic growth while guiding development in a pattern that is fiscally responsible. Doing so will require preparedness and pro-activeness both in terms of its advanced facility planning and future land use management. This element establishes a policy framework that is designed to guide decisions relating to timely extension of adequate infrastructure, provision of quality municipal services, and a logical sequencing of future development.

This chapter is closely related to other elements of this plan addressing land use and community character, parks and recreation, and transportation as they relate to expected growth and the community's capacity to meet the ongoing demands for providing public facilities and services. The analysis and findings presented in this chapter are based primarily on known factors regarding the existing utility infrastructure systems (water, wastewater, drainage, solid waste, and electric), programmed and anticipated utility improvements, existing staffing and service capabilities of the police and fire departments, and the City's projected change in population. A general conclusion is that the community is in relatively good shape to serve its existing and future development, and also to accommodate new and in-fill development and population within its jurisdiction over the next 20 years.

In addition to analyzing the City's capacity to support future changes in population or shifts in its land use pattern, this chapter also establishes a policy framework for managing future development in a manner that is wise and fiscally responsible. Without a proactive stance to ensure that development occurs in a logical and sequential pattern, it will continue to be driven solely by market forces, which does not necessarily occur in a manner that can be efficiently served with adequate public facilities and services.

Altus has witnessed a modest decline in its population over the course of the last three decades. However, it has continued to see new development, primarily to accommodate new housing stock for maturing residents and to meet the requisite housing market of the community as a result of its changing demographics. Naturally, this new development has occurred around the periphery of the community (primarily to the north) leaving pockets of undeveloped land. The community has also seen a few rural subdivisions within the

"Without a proactive stance to ensure that development occurs in a logical and sequential pattern, it will continue to be driven solely by market forces, which does not necessarily occur in a manner that can be efficiently served with adequate public facilities and services."

outlying area around the periphery of the community. These observed patterns of development, albeit of reasonable proportion, is the reason for this analysis.

Altus, like most rural communities, is increasingly challenged by limited fiscal resources. While it benefits economically by the presence of Altus Air Force Base and its status as a hub of rural business activity, without population and employment growth, the local economy is sustaining itself but not growing. It is, therefore, essential for the City to evaluate its pattern of development and seek ways to improve the efficiency of its service provision and its effectivenessly in delivering quality, reliable, and adequate facilities and services to its population.

The original town site was developed on a grid street system.

Key Growth Policy Issues

The following issues pertain to the City's capacity to provide adequate facilities and services and ability to manage future development. The findings are based on analysis of the existing land use and expected future development pattern, planned improvements of the water, wastewater, solid waste and electrical systems, police and fire capabilities and service areas, and both short-term and long-range strategies to manage future growth. These issues are summarized into the following broad categories:

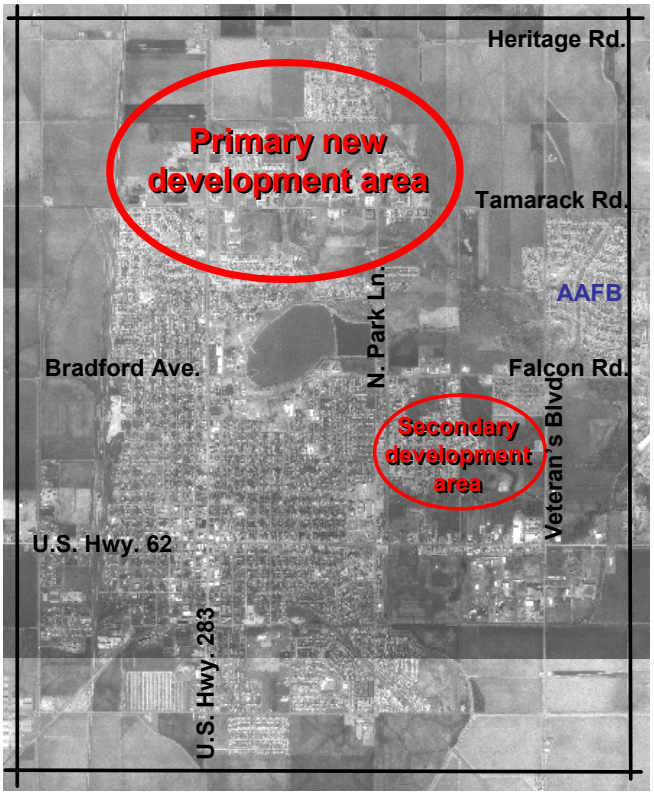
1. **Efficient utilization of public facilities and services** – The City's pattern of development over the course of its history has naturally grown outward from the Jackson County Courthouse – what is now Downtown. The City's earlier development was generally compact as a result of the grid street system, traditionally smaller lots and home sizes, and less reliance on the automobile. More recently, development reflects a contemporary design with curvilinear street systems, the use of cul-de-sacs, and larger more irregularly shaped lots. With the increased reliance on the automobile, the development pattern has naturally spread outward. The

result of this, which is apparent in Altus albeit at a lesser scale, is that development occurs in a sprawling pattern leaving sizable pockets of undeveloped land to separate older and new neighborhoods.

In Altus, the more recent development has occurred around the periphery of the community, primarily to the north of Falcon Road and to a lesser extent east of North Park Lane (south of Falcon Road). While this development is generally contiguous to the established development of the community, it has nonetheless required costly expansion of the City's infrastructure systems and provision of municipal facilities and services (police, fore, parks, library, etc.). It has also left large areas of the community undeveloped, particularly east of North Park Lane and north of Falcon Road.

One of the more significant reasons for the City's pattern of development is caused by the extent of the 100- and 500-year floodplains – and other localized flooding conditions – that affect these undeveloped areas. Rather than confront the costly engineering requirements to develop them, developers have naturally opted for less encumbered and more readily buildable areas. The outcome has enlarged the corporate limits and necessitated the expansion of facilities and extension of services.

Contributing to the difficulty of developing constrained land is the structure of the current zoning requirements. In brief, a certain density must be achieved to make the development of a site feasible. Under a conventional zoning system – as is the case in Altus – where the allowable density is a function of the required minimum lot size, the introduction of any constraining feature, whether it is topography, soil conditions, or natural features such as a stream and its associated floodplain, results in a net loss of density. Without a mechanism to adequately compensate for what equates to a



development penalty, the only alternative to achieve equitable development efficiency is to reduce lot size. Smaller lots and increased density is, thus, the common approach for recovering the net loss of buildable lots. A typical outcome is an encroachment into the floodplain raising additional development and stormwater issues. Also, increasing the density above that found in adjacent development alters the character of the neighborhood thereby raising concerns for reduced property values and other commonly associated impacts.

Overcoming the obstacles for developing constrained sites requires regulatory provisions that are amendable to infill development. Alternative development types, such as clustering, conservation and preservation development (as discussed in Chapter 3, Land Use) offer opportunities to maintain development efficiency and character by incorporating sufficient land into the subdivision design to preserve sensitive areas, conserve natural features, and sustain pre-development stormwater run-off conditions. On smaller non-residential infill sites, the standards may include provisions for off-site regional detention, limitation on the allowable impervious surface areas, and maximum floor area considerations.

Development efficiency may be maintained and the character sustained with the use of conservation development techniques.

One of the primary tenets of the "Smart Growth" movement is provision for infill development and redevelopment. The intent of these planning policies and principles is to allow more compact and efficient development patterns thereby minimizing the common sprawling development pattern. While Altus's development has not been such that sprawl is a paramount issue or of severe local consequence, it is nonetheless an important land use planning consideration that warrants advanced planning. Since the community has not been experiencing a significant

amount of new development in recent years, it is timely to establish a policy framework and regulatory means to ensure a wise and fiscally responsible pattern of future growth.

2. **A sequential pattern of development that is timed to occur concurrent with the provision of adequate public facilities and services** – A majority of the more dense urban development has occurred within the city limits, or in some cases directly abutting or in near proximity to them with a request for annexation. The benefit to the owners of these properties for being within the city limits is the availability of urban infrastructure (water, sewer, solid waste, drainage and electric improvements), services (police and fire services, among others), and the City's authority to regulate development through its zoning and community development (subdivision) ordinances. These services, however, come with a cost, which increases development and housing costs.

   As a result of the above circumstances, and the availability of water and electricity from rural providers, development is able to occur in the periphery of the City's planning area, which is not feasible for annexation or provision of municipal services. Subdivisions are able to develop in these areas without annexing into the City, meaning they avoid the payment of the City's electrical utility, required compliance with the City's building code, and connection to City utilities, among other requirements. Therefore, this is an attractive development option that offers a suburban estate or rural living environment in convenient proximity to the City, yet at a reduced development cost.

   There are both practical and policy issues associated with peripheral development. The more significant issues relate to the inability of the City to promote orderly growth and urbanization by coordinating development with the provision of facilities and services. Another common issue with development occurring outside the city limits is a limitation for expanding the electrical utility revenue in line with increasing service demands. This is especially important since residents and businesses outside the City benefit from access to public facilities and services, such as parks and libraries, but do not share in the tax burden associated with constructing and

Smart Growth Goals:

- **Neighborhood Livability** - A central goal of smart growth is the quality of neighborhoods. They should be safe, convenient, attractive, and affordable. Sprawl development too often forces trade-offs between these goals. Some neighborhoods are safe but not convenient. Others are convenient but not affordable. Too many affordable neighborhoods are not safe.
- **Better Access, Less Traffic** - One of the major downfalls of sprawl is traffic. By putting jobs, homes, and other destinations far apart and requiring a car for every trip, sprawl makes everyday tasks a chore. Smart growth's emphasis on mixing land uses, clustering development, and providing multiple transportation choices helps us manage congestion, pollute less and save energy. Those who want to drive can, but people who would rather not drive have choices.
- **Thriving Cities, Suburbs and Towns** - Smart growth puts the needs of existing communities first. By guiding development to already built-up areas, money for investments in transportation, schools, libraries, and other public services can go to the communities where people live today. This is especially important for neighborhoods that have inadequate public services and low levels of private investment. It is also critical for preserving what makes so many places special—attractive buildings, historic districts and cultural landmarks.

Smart Growth Goals:

- **Shared Benefits** - Divisions by income and race have allowed some areas to prosper while others languish. As basic needs such as jobs, education, and health care become less plentiful in some communities, residents have diminishing opportunities to participate in their regional economy. Smart growth enables all residents to be beneficiaries of prosperity.
- **Lower Costs, Lower Taxes** - Opening up green space to new development means that the cost of new schools, roads, sewer lines, and water supplies will be borne by residents. Sprawl also means families have to own more cars and drive them further. This has made transportation the second highest category of household spending, just behind shelter. Taking advantage of existing infrastructure keeps taxes down. And where convenient transportation choices enable families to rely less on driving, there's more money left over for other things, like buying a home or saving for college.
- **Keeping Open Space Open** - By focusing development in already built-up areas, smart growth preserves rapidly vanishing natural treasures. From forests and farms to wetlands and wildlife, smart growth lets us pass on to our children the landscapes we love. Communities are demanding more parks that are conveniently located and bring recreation within reach of more people. Also, protecting natural resources will provide healthier air and cleaner drinking water.

- Source: Smart Growth America

maintaining these facilities and services. A sprawling pattern of development stretches resources and increases costs for providing services while burdening the capacities of infrastructure systems that are not adequately designed to support such development.

The benefit of State law providing the authority – as an advisory board - for the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission to regulate development within three miles of the City limits lends the ability – with effective City-County coordination - to manage growth. While landowners can acquire utilities from providers other than the City, the implementation of zoning allows the community to control the pattern, type, density, and timing of development within three miles of its city limits. Therefore, through land use policies and coordinated City-County regulations, development may be timed concurrent with the provision of improved facilities and services. This, in effect, allows the City to fulfill its obligation to protect the public health, safety and welfare. (Refer to the "Growth Sequencing" section for more information.)

It is important to acknowledge the influence of public investments on private development activities. As commonly stated, the three most important factors in real estate development are location, location, and location. The importance of location is derived, at least in part, by the presence and availability of infrastructure such as streets and utilities. Therefore, where there are readily accessible facilities, land values escalate and development shortly follows. This is an important consideration as the City, County, and State consider such improvements as a bypass route. Location of such a significant transportation facility will likely attract development, which could serve as an impetus for sprawling growth. A decision as to the location of the bypass, therefore, has land use implications that warrant consideration. From a growth management perspective, this plan promotes a bypass alignment that closely bounds the community. Such a decision would promote a more compact development pattern and prevent a sprawling pattern of development.

3. **Sustainable provision of quality, reliable infrastructure facilities** – Altus's population

since 1970 has been generally stable, with a modest decline. Therefore, infrastructure planning has not focused on increases in plant capacities and extensions of water distribution and wastewater collection mains, but on updating its aging infrastructure, solving issues such as the inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the sanitary sewer system, and complying with Federal permitting regulations. While infrastructure has been extended to serve new development, a majority of the City's investment in its utility systems has been improvements to its quality and reliability.

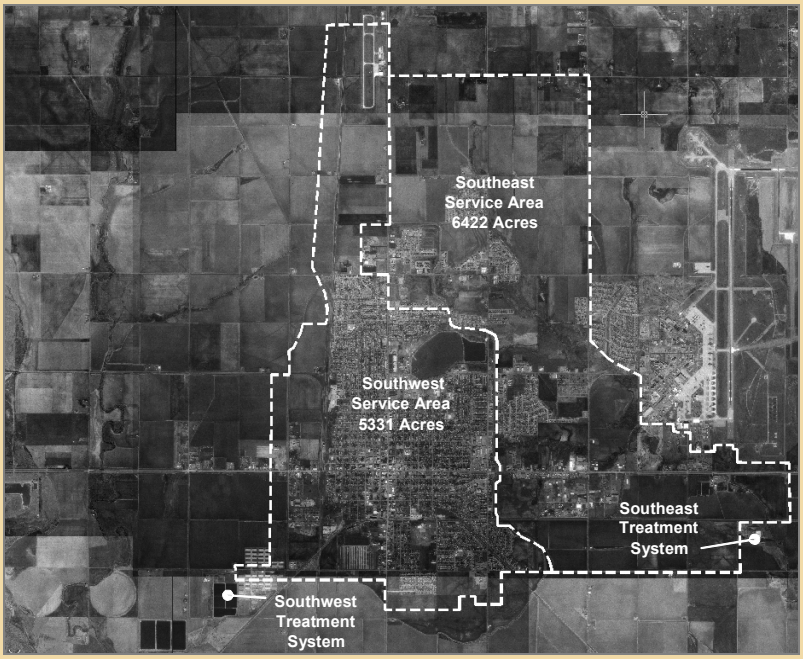
Water Supply and Distribution - The supply of water is a significant long-term issue for the community, which must be planned well in advance of future needs. The primary source of potable water currently is surface water from Tom Steed Reservoir, located approximately 20 miles east of Altus. The City can also draw water from the W.C. Austin dam situated 18 miles north of the community as well as from the City Reservoir adjacent to the water treatment plant. These surface water sources provide a relatively sufficient quantity of water.
The Round Timber Well Field located north of Vernon, Texas has been a significant supplemental supply source in the past. Well water from the fields was blended with the surface water as a means to reduce the *THM potential*. However, as a result of high maintenance and pumping costs and concern of nitrate levels, use of the well fields has largely been abandoned. Should the City decide to seek additional ground water supply, the rights must be reserved in the near term to ensure a supply of water that fulfills the City's ultimate needs.

With completion of the $11 million *reverse osmosis* water treatment plant, the City will have an abundant supply of water (a combined production capacity of 18 million gallons per day) at a centrally located plant, which will provide a sufficient quantity of water to support the expected future population and industrial expansion. In fact, assuming 140 gallons per person per day, the City could supply a sufficient quantity of water for 48,000 persons. Therefore, the quantity of water is not of issue for the future of the community. In addition, the technology of the reverse osmosis plant is reportedly adequate to manage any future regulatory changes.

"**THM Potential**" is an estimate of the maximum quantity of the trihalomethane (THM) by-products formed during the chlorination of natural waters. The four compounds commonly included in this class are chloroform, dichlorobromomethane , chlorodibromomethane , and bromoform. These compounds are known carcinogens.

Reverse osmosis, also known as hyperfiltration, is the finest filtration known. This process will allow the removal of particles as small as ions from a solution. Reverse osmosis is used to purify water and remove salts and other impurities in order to improve the color, taste or properties of the fluid. It can be used to purify fluids such as ethanol and glycol, which will pass through the reverse osmosis membrane, while rejecting other ions and contaminants from passing. The most common use for reverse osmosis is in purifying water. It is used to produce water that meets the most demanding specifications that are currently in place.

Water Storage – Recommended water storage for emergency situations is two to four days demand plus a sufficient volume to sustain adequate fire flows for a significant fire. A four-hour fire using four hydrants with a delivery rate of 1,500 gallons per minute would use 1.4 million gallons. Based upon the current population and daily water demands plus the above fire flow demands, this equates to a total of 7.7 million (two-day demand plus adequate fire flow) to 13.9 million (four-day demand plus adequate fire flow) gallons. Based upon a projected increase in population – from 21,447 to 25,190 persons in the Year 2030 – the future storage requirements will be 8.6 million to 15.8 million gallons. The current storage capacity is 5.5 million gallons, which is 56 percent and 287 percent deficient, respectively.



The service areas and locations of the Southwest and Southeast treatments systems are as shown above.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment – The most significant issue confronting the City from the perspective of water supply is its capacity to handle the discharge of wastewater from the new reverse osmosis plant. At full capacity, the projected wastewater from the plant will be 1.69 million gallons per day (MGD). In addition, the new plant will transfer an additional 0.20 MGD of discharge water from the conventional treatment system, which results in a total wastewater discharge of 1.89 MGD.

The total flow to the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) when the reverse osmosis plant is at full operating capacity will be 3.69 MGD, Combined with an assumed growth in population, the total flow to the Southeast WWTP is estimated at 4.08 MGD, which is 1.0 MGD above its design flow.

Any type of growth whether it is new residential or

nonresidential (commercial or industrial) growth will have an impact on the wastewater treatment facilities. Based upon the projected population examined in Chapter 2, Community Profile, for the purposes of this analysis there are two scenarios. The first assumes a uniform distribution of added population across the community, which mirrors the objectives of this plan relating to revitalization and infill development. This scenario assumes a proportional division between the Southwest and Southeast WWTP systems. This would result in a requisite increase of 0.17 and 0.15 MGD, respectively. Based on this assumption, without considering industrial growth affecting the Southwest WWTP, an expected increase of flow would be 7.4 percent above current flow levels. This additional flow could be effectively handled by the existing system without requiring a capacity expansion. Therefore, the anticipated growth will not likely have a significant impact on the Southwest WWTP.

The second growth scenario assumes that new residential development will continue to the north and industrial expansion and development will also occur within the service area of the Southeast WWTP. The demand for this growth is equal to the estimated 1.38 MGD of reserve capacity available at the Southeast WWTP. This assumes that the water stream from the new reverse osmosis plant is as originally reported and there is no expansion to the existing industrial area. The total estimated flow to the Southeast WWTP resulting from increased residential development, expansion of the Bar-S plant, and the reverse osmosis wastewater flow is 4.08 MGD. Therefore, the volume of wastewater from the reverse osmosis plant will control the amount of residential capacity available at the Southeast WWTP to support new residential and nonresidential development.

A common problem of municipal wastewater infrastructure systems, particularly resulting from aging infrastructure (pipes, valves and manholes) is the inflow and infiltration (I/I) of stormwater into the sanitary sewer lines. The most significant impact associated with I/I problems is the burden placed on the WWTP to treat increased volumes of waste water. A proactive program is, therefore, warranted to address these issues by

replacing sewer mains concurrent with major road projects as well as an ongoing program of televising sewer lines in known problem areas to identify needed improvements. A formalized capital replacement/rehabilitation program is needed to readily upgrade the reliability of the wastewater collection system.

A reduction of inflow and infiltration into the wastewater collection system is a key for recovering the treatment capacity of the existing system. The total average daily flow to the plants is 4.1 MGD, which equates to 190 gallons per person per day. This average flow is nearly double the design flow recommended by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). There has not been a detailed inflow and infiltration study conducted in the City in the last four decades. Reducing the infiltration could potentially reduce the flow to the plants by 60 percent, or more.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal – The next step in preparing the landfill for final reclamation is to apply a final cover - or cap - over portions of the site. A 19-acre portion of the original landfill construction will require a final cap as disposal activities shift to the 2003 lined disposal site. A subsequent step will be to construct the next three-acre lined cell, which will complete the north-to-south progression along the west side of the landfill. This cell will not have the life of previous cells due to its location in the corner of the permitted boundary.

The permitted landfill site could function for at least another decade, providing sufficient cover material is available. The City has approval for testing of an alternate final cover, which may provide additional options for use of cover material. Implementation is contingent on funding.

In light of rising fuel costs and increasing maintenance, the daily transportation of solid waste to the landfill warrants reconsidered. A solid waste transfer facility may be a feasible solution that should be further studied and explored.

Electrical Distribution System - The City's electrical service area is limited for expansion by competing electrical service providers. Therefore, possible expansion of the system to meet future growth outside of the

service area limits is limited. Since this is a municipal revenue producing utility, it is essential for the community to direct its future growth to occur within the service area of its electric utility.

The electric distribution system is aging, which will create additional maintenance issues and increasing costs in the future. To address anticipated future issues, the system has recently been mapped, which will allow development of a geographically referenced database and map denoting the age of the infrastructure, date and location of repairs and new installations, and other essential information. As an outgrowth of this effort, an annual repair and replacement program is being planned by the Electric Department.

Converting older areas of Altus to underground service would reduce maintenance costs and other important objectives of this plan, such as those identified in Chapter 6, Community Appearance, but would incur considerable expense in the relocation of the service meters. Underground service would place the meters in the alleys either at the property line or within a utility easement. Altus Power or the property owner would have to pay for the change in service connection from the house to the meter riser at the property line.

Storm Water Management - Due to the flat terrain and the presence of natural drainage features, the community has expansive areas that are within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated floodplains and flood prone areas. This results in periodic flooding during storm events, the severity of which depends on the size, duration, and nature of the event. The City adopted a regional detention policy nearly a decade ago, which has helped to remedy the more significant drainage issues. An evaluation

The reservoir serves as a regional detention facility and is a vital part of the City's flood protection system.

should be undertaken to determine the relative effectiveness of the detention policy. Performance and drainage design policies and standards should also be reviewed and updated.

The design of development significantly influences the volume of stormwater that is generated, and its means of collection and conveyance. The density and intensity of development, measured in terms of units per acre and ratios of open space and impervious surface coverage, contribute to both localized and community wide flooding conditions. Generally, the means for managing stormwater is to require the design of subdivisions and non-residential sites to comply with predevelopment run-off conditions. Development types discussed in Chapter 3, Land Use, such as cluster, conservation, and preservation development allow densities that are proportional to the capacity of the land to support urban development while conserving site resources and preserving sufficient land for stormwater collection, holding, and aquifer recharge.

4. **Sustaining the provision of quality municipal services –** Although Altus has not been experiencing growth in its population, it is nonetheless important that the City continue to invest in its police and fire protection services to meet constantly changing needs. There is a high expectation on behalf of the public to feel safe and secure from the threats of criminal activity and fire hazards. This inherent expectation places an ongoing burden on the police and fire departments to stay current with the latest technology and training, upgrade equipment and communication systems, and maintain a visible presence in the community. The result is of fiscal consequence caused by the demand for added personnel and costly new capital facilities and equipment.

As new development occurs within and around the periphery of the community, the organization and administration of the departments must change to accommodate increased calls and demand for services over an expanded area. While the service area of the Police Department is the city limits, the Fire Department provides service throughout Jackson County, with mutual aid

agreements with numerous volunteer and small town departments. While much of their attention is devoted to the corporate limits, they have an obligation to the public for offering assistance well beyond the City. The extent of development that occurs outside the City limits – within the three mile planning area – is, therefore, highly relevant from a public safety perspective. The ability to respond to a call in a timely manner is largely dependent upon the proximity to an adequately equipped and manned fire station or police sub-station. In the case of a fire, the availability of a sufficient quantity and pressure of water are also valid considerations. The density of development (the number of dwelling units and persons affected) that occurs in the outlying rural areas has real implications for the provision of adequate public safety services.

In addition to public safety services, the municipal administration of the City will likely require changes over time to respond to shifts in demands. This may require added personnel or a reassignment of staff along with the associated impacts concerning the needs for space, equipment, and facilities. Consideration may be warranted for future expansion of City Hall or possible construction of a new municipal facility.

Goals and Objectives

The goals, objectives and subsequent action recommendations respond directly to the above issues, which were discovered through technical analyses of the existing land use and projected future development patterns, existing capacities and planned improvements of the water, wastewater, electrical and drainage systems, and identified public service needs. They also reflect the issues and concerns raised by residents through the public involvement process.

GOAL 7.1: Compact development that may be efficiently served by public facilities and services.

Objective A: Revise the development regulations to allow efficient types and patterns of development.

- **Action 7.1.1**: Create suburban residential districts to allow cluster development by right rather than requiring a Planned Unit Development (PUD).
- **Action 7.1.2**: Use a density factor in the zoning regulations (versus gross density based on minimum lot size), which will protect the capacity of the site to support the development,

preserve natural features and sensitive areas, and maintain a land use character consistent with adjacent development.

Action 7.1.3: Create zoning regulations to encourage increased open space, such as planned, conservation, and preservation development.

Action 7.1.4: Amend the community development code to include provisions regarding the allowable dimensions and proportions of lots.

Action 7.1.5: Create districts allowing mixed use to encourage increased density and more walkable developments.

Action 7.1.6: Create density bonuses to act as an incentive for infill development thereby increasing development efficiency and feasibility.

Action 7.1.7: Incorporate connectivity requirements into the subdivision regulations to manage the number of cul-de-sacs within development.

Action 7.1.8: Create non-residential infill development standards pertaining to allowable provisions for stormwater detention and requirements for acceptable impervious surface coverage and floor area.

Action 7.1.9: Adopt redevelopment standards so as not to prevent the reuse, redevelopment, or intensification of uses within the established urbanized area of the community.

Objective B: Protect the character of development adjacent to infill sites.

Action 7.1.10: Require a blending of lot sizes within residential developments to accommodate a variety of housing types and price ranges.

Action 7.1.11: Incorporate floor area provisions in the zoning ordinance to manage the proportion of the house footprint to the lot thereby controlling home size and, thus, price.

Action 7.1.12: Establish infill development standards

Infill development on vacant and recovered sites must have standards to ensure a compatible and consistent character with the neighborhood.

concerning density, intensity and other dimensional requirements to maintain a consistent character with adjacent existing development.

Objective C: Adopt a policy regarding the provisions of infrastructure to candidate infill development sites.

Action 7.1.13: Extend adequate infrastructure to serve infill development tracts and sites.

Action 7.1.14: Prioritize capital projects that will benefit undeveloped sites that will increase density and the efficiency of the infrastructure system.

GOAL 7.2: A well-managed pattern of development that is fiscally responsible.

Objective A: Manage the City's pattern of development concurrent with the provision of adequate facilities and services.

Action 7.2.1: Utilize the Growth Sequencing Plan (outlined later in the chapter) to approve or disapprove zone change requests within the managed growth area around the periphery of the community.

Action 7.2.2: Strictly adhere to the criteria in this plan pertaining to requested amendments to the Growth Sequencing Plan.

Mixed use districts lead to more compact development allowing increased density and efficient use of infrastructure and services.

Action 7.2.3: Annually (or bi-annually) monitor and assess the results of the Growth Sequencing Plan and make adjustments as necessary to alter the boundaries of the managed growth area and the permitted densities.

Action 7.2.4: Develop a fiscal impact model whereby the City can quantify the fiscal consequences of development and subsequently adopt policies to ensure responsible outcomes.

Objective B: Expand the City limits by phasing the incorporation of land within the urban area as adequate infrastructure and municipal services are available and development approval is requested.

Transferable Development Rights – A program, either voluntary or in some instances mandatory, that can relocate potential development from areas where proposed land use or environmental impacts are considered undesirable (the sending area) to another site (receiving area) chosen on the basis of its ability to accommodate additional units of development beyond that for which it is zoned, with minimal environmental, social and aesthetic impacts.

Density Bonus – The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or another location. In some communities, a density bonus is allowed for housing development that dedicates a certain percentage of its units to affordably priced housing.

Action 7.2.5: Require that all uses within the urban area annex into the City limits.

Action 7.2.6: Establish as a condition of annexation that the subject parcel must be contiguous to the City limits for a dimension of not less than 25 percent of its boundaries.

Action 7.2.7: Formulate criteria requiring annexation to conform to the Growth Sequencing Plan.

Action 7.2.8: Adopt zoning concurrent with annexation that is consistent with the managed growth area of the plan.

Objective C: Adopt regulations and standards to implement the Growth Sequencing Plan.

Action 7.2.9: Establish density bonuses for the zoning districts within the urban area to effectively increase their density and efficient provision of services.

Action 7.2.10: Adopt a system of zoning districts that allows increased density in exchange for other community goals, such as more open space.

Action 7.2.11: Establish zoning and subdivision requirements controlling the placement of principal and accessory structures on countryside (larger) lots to allow re-subdivision and increased density in the future.

Action 7.2.12: Incorporate transferable development rights (TDR) into the zoning ordinance to allow a transfer of density from the rural growth area to the urban area.

Action 7.2.13: Require the construction of improvements within the rural growth area to conform to specified development standards, i.e. widths of right-of-way and pavement, and technical design specifications.

Action 7.2.14: Formulate decision criteria for consideration of zone changes within the managed growth area.

GOAL 7.3: Logical sequencing and timely provision of adequate public facilities and services.

Objective A: Utilize the provision of facilities and services to guide the timing and sequencing of future development.

Action 7.3.1: Utilize the Growth Sequencing Plan in prioritizing capital infrastructure improvements thereby using capital investment to direct future development.

Action 7.3.2: Incorporate adequate public facilities provisions into the development code requiring

the availability of facilities and services concurrent with the timing and density/intensity of development.

Action 7.3.4: Determine the design capacities of road and utility systems as a basis for restricting development that exceeds the established thresholds.

Action 7.3.5: Adopt strict utility extension policies tied to impact fees that are proportional to the provision of infrastructure to areas without existing facilities and services.

Action 7.3.6: Establish a strict policy whereby municipal facilities will not be extended to areas outside of the urban area.

Action 7.3.7: Establish a formalized annual rehabilitation and replacement program for the water distribution and wastewater collection systems within the urban area.

Action 7.3.8: Establish a fee basis for the provision of police, fire, and advanced ambulance services outside of the City limits.

Action 7.3.9: Establish a resident and non-resident user fee structure for use of the library, reservation of park facilities, and other community facilities.

Objective B: Develop a plan to meet current maintenance needs while incoporating future growth and planning in all operations of the water system.

Action 7.3.10: Build a complete inventory of the existing system to include age and condition of lines, valves, fire hydrants, and appertenances. This inventory will help determine CIP projects.

Action 7.3.11: Develop a computer model of the existing system with the goal of identifying line size increases to be incorporated with CIP projects to meet ISO fire flow protection guidelines.

Action 7.3.12: Develop a water storage policy with the goal of identifying minimum storage requirements to meet ISO fire flow protection guidelines plus reserve storage (four days recommended) for emergency supply, which will guide storage requirements for future growth.

Action 7.3.13: Require that all future water line extensions be sized in accordance to the Comprehensive Plan recommendations to facilitate future growth.

Action 7.3.14: Establish a plan to reimburse developers for the cost difference for line size increases necessary to support other future growth areas.

Impact Fees – A payment of money imposed by the City on development activity as a condition of granting development approval and/or a building permit in order to pay for the planned facilities needed to serve new growth and development activity. Impact fees may be levied for roads, water, sewer, drainage, parks, schools and other public facilities requiring significant investment.

Action 7.3.15: Launch a public awareness program to educate the public as to the benefits of proper stewardship of water resources.

Action 7.3.16: Identify those portions of the service area that are not adequately served by the water distribution network and furnish the required system capacities to these areas.

Objective C: Develop a plan to repair and replace aging sewer lines and incoporate future growth and planning in all operations of the sanitary sewer collection system.

Action 7.3.17: Build a complete inventory of the existing system to include age and status of lines, valves and appertenances. This inventory will help determine CIP projects.

Action 7.3.18: From the inventory, develop an annual CIP project list to replace aging and deteriorated sewer lines and manholes.

Action 7.3.19: Conduct a comprehensive investigation that may include inflow and infiltration analysis to attempt to determine the source of the high wastewater flows observed.

Action 7.3.20: Require that all future sewer line extensions be sized in accordance to the Comprehensive Plan recommendations to facilitate future growth.

Action 7.3.21: Establish a plan to reimburse developers for the cost difference for line size increases necessary to support other future growth areas.

Action 7.3.22: Identify "best management practice" piping, manhole, bedding and backfill materials, and incorporate their use into a revised technical specification for use on all new construction projects. Subsequently implement a testing and inspection program to ensure adherence to construction method and material specifications for all projects.

Action 7.3.23: Identify and eliminate all unauthorized connections to the wastewater collection system. Subsequently prepare a public awareness program to alert the public to the illegality of unauthorized dumping into the wastewater system and its associated costs to the City.

Objective D: Conduct a comprehensive review of the capacity and deficencies of the Southwest and Southeast wastewater treatment plants.

Action 7.3.24: Conduct a detailed study of the Southwest WWTP to determine the depth and quantity of accumulated

sludge in the existing lagoons. This study should also include an analysis of the existing aeration system in the primary treatment lagoons.

Action 7.3.25: Determine an accurate functional capacity of the Southwest WWTP System and changes necessary to support future growth.

Action 7.3.26: Conduct a detail assessment of the wastewater from the reverse osmosis (RO) water plant to determine best management practices. The study should also include a determination of the best method for distributing the wastewater between the plants, either on a seasonal level or a demand level as well as operational changes and modifications to the existing wastewater plants to accommodate the RO wastewater. Alternative methods of RO wastewater management need to be assessed.

Objective E: Provide long term reliable electrical service with sufficient reserve to meet future growth potential.

Action 7.3.27: Build a complete inventory of the existing system to include age and condition of all primary, secondary, and service lines. This inventory will help determine future maintenance and and areas requiring upgraded service.

Action 7.3.28: Develop a computer model of the existing system with the goal of determining the status of the existing system to meet present and future demands. The model will also help determine if a future Northeast Altus Substation will be necessary.

Action 7.3.29: Coordinate with Altus AirBase to determine the potential of a Northeast Altus Substation that can provide a backup power source to Altus Air Force Base.

Action 7.3.30: Conduct a study to determine the long-term costs and benefits for the installation of underground

A study to evaluate the feasibility and assess the costs of placing overhead electrical service underground is a recommendation of this plan.

electrical service in place of existing overhead power lines. The study should determine if the cost of relocating the consumer's meter from the house to the property line can be paid by the City and still provide benefit in the long-term.

Objective F: Review the drainage policies from a City-wide perspective to determine the level of compliance with the drainage policies and standards.

Action 7.3.31: Review current policies and determine the effectiveness of regional detention and the service areas.

Action 7.3.32: Develop a specific set of local drainage performance standards that will provide for compliance in all areas of the community.

Action 7.3.33: Require uniform design practices that require development runoff at all storm freqencies to meet pre-existing runoff conditions.

Action 7.3.34: Create a uniform set of standard details to be used in future construction that reduces maintenance and are specific to local conditions.

Action 7.3.35: Consider preparation of uniform City-wide *NPDES Phase II* guidelines for new construction that disturbs areas greater that one acre in size.

Objective G: Ensure the future useful economic life of the landfill.

Action 7.3.36: Review the operational costs at the landfill in comparison with tipping fees as well as a comparions with tipping fees being charged at other area landfills and waste transfer stations.

Action 7.3.37: Compare the operational costs of hauling the waste directly to the landfill by each santitation truck with the costs of building a solid waste transfer station and reducing transportion the waste hauling costs.

Action 7.3.38: Review current policies regrading placement of waste by general contractors in neighborhood waste containers. This waste is hauled by the City at no expense to the waste generator.

Action 7.3.39: Review check-in policies at the landfill regarding verification of a City address for free disposal.

Action 7.3.40: Create a fund with annual contributions, based on the remaing life of the landfill, so the 30-year post-closure monitoring costs will not be a burden in the future.

"**NDPES Phase II**" regulations expand the existing NPDES stormwater program (Phase I) by addressing stormwater discharges from small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and construction sites that disturb 1 to 5 acres. Construction activities (including other land-disturbing activities) that disturb one acre or more are regulated under the NPDES stormwater program. On March 10, 2003, new regulations came into effect that extended coverage to construction sites that disturb one to five acres in size, including smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development or sale. Sites disturbing five acres or more were regulated previously.

Action 7.3.41: Begin planning and budgeting for the closure of the old unlined section of the landfill. This 19-acre site will soon be required to close as operations shift from the current use areas to the new lined portion constructed in 2003.

Action 7.3.42: Initiate soil testing to determine if the existing cover material will meet the permeability requirements for cover material. From the results of the soil testing, determine the scope of work necessary to close this portion of the landfill.

Action 7.3.43: Budget for testing of alternative forms of daily cover materials to reduce the volume of earth required.

Action 7.3.44: Begin an annual funding set-aside fot the future Tier II gas emission study required when the landfill volume approaches 2.5 million cubic meters (3.25 million cubic yards).

GOAL 7.4: Continuous improvement and delivery of high quality and reliable municipal services.

Objective A: Ensure that the level of public safety is maintained with an appropriate balance to protect the community and its citizens.

Action 7.4.1: Conduct a facility space study to identify the current needs of the public safety departments and future requirements to maintain sufficient facilities for the police, fire, and emergency management departments to protect City personnel and the public.

Objective B: Provide for the ongoing needs of the police department to ensure adequate protection of the population.

Action 7.4.2: Periodically review the department's personnel needs and hire additional staff to accommodate an expanded service area and increased calls for service. Use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) staffing survey as a measurable comparison for full-time law

Innovative policing programs such as the former Southwest Side Project are essential to the improvement of the community's quality of life.

enforcement professionals, the department currently needs four additional officers. Based upon the projected future population of 25,190 persons, an additional 12 officers will be needed by the Year 2030. An assessment of peer communities may also be used as a measurable comparison for staffing needs.

Action 7.4.3: Conduct a facility space study to identify the department's current needs and future requirements (combined with those of the Fire Department) including consideration of sufficient office space, storage space, and specific measures to protect the City's emergency services communication hub from severe weather incidents or other disasters.

Action 7.4.4: Establish a formalized replacement and procurement program for vehicles and equipment to keep pace with state-of-the-art law enforcement technology and capabilities. Consider use of earmarked court funds, which are generated by the department.

Action 7.4.5: Provide continuous training and education programs to meet and maintain the standards of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations.

Action 7.4.6: Support the department's involvement in community relations and special programs, such as National Night Out, Neighborhood Watch, finger printing and DNA sampling for children, as well as public speaking, department tours, and fairs.

Objective C: Sustain the fire protection capabilities of the Fire Department.

Action 7.4.7: Periodically review the fire staffing needs and hire additional firefighters as needed. Use of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) department profile indicates that an additional two firefighters are currently needed. Based upon the projected future population of 25,190 persons, an additional eight fire personnel will be needed by the Year 2030. An assessment of peer communities may also be used as a measurable comparison for career staffing needs.

Action 7.4.8: Plan in advance of ensuing development to acquire a station site for optimizing future response times, particularly considering recent development on the north side of the community.

Action 7.4.9: Establish guidelines for regular scheduling of vehicle and protective

equipment replacement to maintain or exceed standards. For instance, each of the department's engines are near their useful life and due for replacement in the near future.

Action 7.4.10: Invest in the capability to respond to hazardous materials incidents with the acquisition of a HazMat trailer and the requisite vehicle storage, training and staffing necessary to operate the service.

Action 7.4.11: Comply with the new directives and requirements of Title V, Emergency Preparedness and Response, of the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

Action 7.4.12: Continuously invest in firefighting apparatus such as self-contained breathing apparatus, personal protective equipment, and fire hose and appliances.

Action 7.4.13: Support the department's efforts to convey the message of fire prevention through efforts such as open houses and video presentation.

Action 7.4.14: Invest in state-of-the-art firefighting equipment and sufficient water supply infrastructure to continuously improve the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.

Action 7.4.15: Offer regular advanced training opportunities to all firefighters to improve personal skills and departmental capabilities.

Utility Systems Overview

Water Distribution System - The City maintains approximately 150 miles of water lines and 1950 valves in the water distribution system. There are five water storage facilities, including three elevated water tanks providing 1.5 million gallons and the treatment plant clear wells that have a capacity of four million gallons. A total storage capacity of 5.5 million gallons is available. The two pumping stations at the water plant can pump a total of 17 million gallons per day at full capacity.

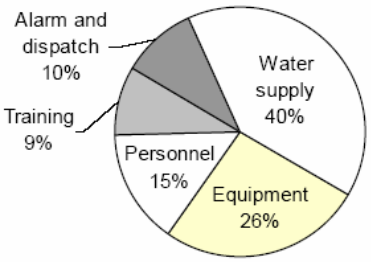
Replacement and upgrading of water lines has occurred as part of every major roadway project. In addition, other water lines are being replaced as part of an on-going Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which provides 50 percent matching funds. Neighborhoods in the southeast part of the community have benefited from the CDBG program.

The last major distribution project was the Heritage Road water line loop (1994), which increased supply and pressure to Northeast Altus and postponed the need for a water tower in the northern area of the community. Other on-going projects

Insurance Services Office (ISO) collects information on public fire protection and analyzes the data using a Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). ISO assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents the best public protection, and Class 10 indicates less than the minimum recognized protection.

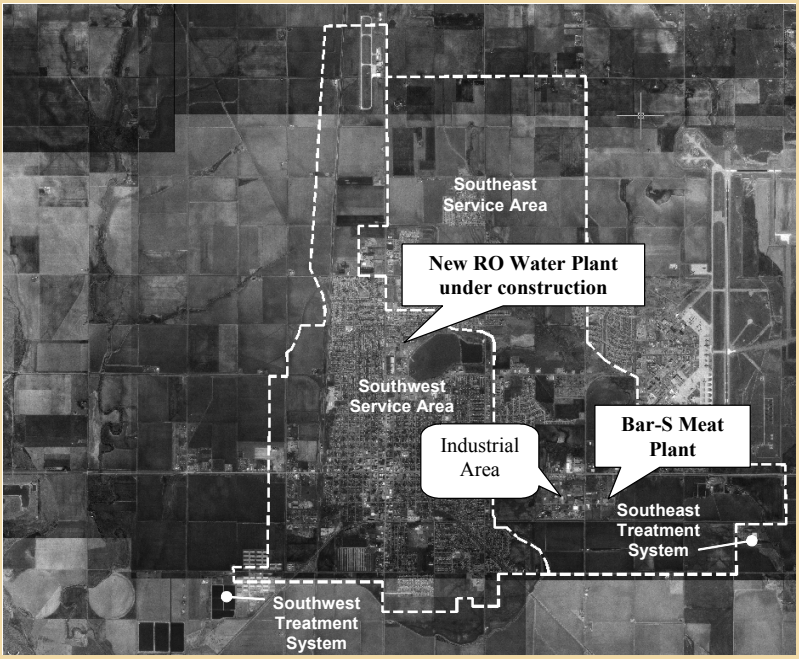
By classifying a community's ability to suppress fires, ISO helps communities evaluate their public fire protection services. The program provides an objective, countrywide standard that helps fire departments in planning and budgeting for facilities, equipment, and training. And by securing lower fire insurance premiums for communities with better public protection, the PPC program provides incentives and rewards for communities that choose to improve their firefighting services.

ISO Fire Rating Factors



include the East Broadway water line replacement, starting at Veterans Drive and extending west roughly one-half mile as well as the CDBG Phase III water line replacement project in the west part of the community, south of Bradford Avenue. Portions of the distribution system have been in operation for nearly 100 years and are, therefore, showing the effects of age.

Wastewater Treatment - The City operates two distinct wastewater treatment systems. Each plant services roughly one-half of the community's area. The Southwest wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) operates as a facultative lagoon system with land application (irrigation with treated wastewater) that services the original town of Altus as well as most of the older established areas of the community. By comparison, the Southeast WWTP is an extended aeration system, which services generally the northeast and east portions of the community, including Altus Air Force Base and the southeast industrial areas. Both treatment systems have bypass holding ponds for buffering high wet weather flows. The service areas and both system locations are shown in location map provided in the graphic below.



This graphic illustrates the locations of significant wastewater generators with respect to the wastewater treatment plant service areas.

Southwest WWTP - The Southwest Treatment System was first constructed in the early 1960's. The original system consisted of completely mixed aerated primary lagoons with secondary treatment lagoons. Additional lagoons and the land application system were added in the 1970's to meet population growth. The plant consists of six treatment lagoons, which include an aerated primary lagoon, five secondary lagoons, three irrigation storage lagoons, and a wet weather equalization pond. Land application covers three sites containing a total of 293 acres. Annual irrigation consumes approximately 197 million gallons. Average daily flow is 2.3 MGD with influent BOD5 values

around 220 mg/l. This plant provides efficient treatment with low power consumption at the expense of a large land area.

The accumulation of sludge in the southwest system is significant. As a result, this system has no additional capacity available to meet future growth and industrial discharge. Sludge removal will be necessary to restore treatment capacity and to provide growth capacity.

The southwest system in currently at capacity and is under an Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) Notice of Violation (NOV) and an Administrative Consent Order. Winter discharges have been higher than allowed by the current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
Full system hydraulic capacity with existing irrigation sites is estimated at 2.97 MGD. After sludge removal, the system will have a reserve capacity of about 0.70 MGD. This should be more than adequate to meet the projected future population of the community.

The aeration in the primary lagoon should be reviewed and upgraded to meet current ODEQ standards. The primary lagoon may need to be partitioned to reduce the hydraulic residence time and improve primary treatment. Multiple primary aerated lagoons will allow for service and sludge removal without loss of primary treatment

The system will require review to determine the impact of wastewater influent from the RO water plant, should the City divert some of the RO wastewater discharge to this system.

Southeast WWTP - The Southeast treatment plant is an extended aeration facility constructed in the early 1970's. The original plant consisted of two extended aeration basins followed by a first-stage clarifier and then by a second-stage *clarifier-flocculator*. This system was designed for removal of nutrients that could reduce oxygen available to aquatic life in the streams receiving the wastewater plant discharge. The smaller first-stage clarifier removed biological solids and returned the biological solids as activated sludge to the *headworks*. The larger, second-stage clarifier-flocculator used lime precipitation for removal of nutrients as well as any carry over from the first stage clarifier.

In 1994, an additional aeration basin with a capacity of 1.0 MGD was added to increase the capacity of the plant to accommodate industrial expansion associated with the establishment of the Bar-S Plant. During this time period, almost 400 residential lots were also developed in the southeast service area. The

"**Clarifier-Flocculater**" is a typically a large circular concrete basin that creates an area of very low vertical velocities. The low velocities allow solids to settle to the bottom of the basin. Chemicals are sometimes added to facilitate the settling of solids and the Clarifier becomes a Flocculator. These settled solids are referred to as activated sludge. Returning the activated sludge to mix with the incoming wastewater "jumpstarts" the biological treatment and improves the treatment efficiency and quality.

system is currently treating an average of 1.8 MGD with a BOD5 loading of 260 mg/l and ammonia concentration about 30 mg/l. This plant can treat a higher volume of wastewater than the Southwest WWTP with a smaller plant. However, this site uses much more power than the Southwest Plant.

The Southeast System has a reserve flow capacity of 1.28 MGD. Hydraulic capacity is primarily limited by surface loading rates on the clarifiers. The oxygen supplied by the aerators will limit the maximum biological treatment. The sludge beds can accommodate up to a 20 percent increase in biological growth.

Biological treatment is a function of the volume and horsepower available in the aeration basins. An increase in horsepower - in the aeration basins - can provide additional biological treatment. Excessive horsepower can cause floc-shear and create poorly settling sludge. The maximum horsepower for floc-shear is shown, but is not normally of concern for extended aeration systems.

Flow controls at this plant are not functioning and/or have been disabled. As a result, the flows are not balanced evenly between the aeration basins and the clarifiers. *Solids washout* can occur at low flows, in the small clarifier, due to uneven distribution. Washouts may also occur at flows above 2.67 MGD through the clarifiers, resulting in higher Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and BOD5 values in the effluent discharge.

The Southeast system will soon receive wastewater from the new RO water treatment plant. If the projections in this report are correct, this system could be operating above estimated design limits, without consideration of additional population or industrial growth. The water treatment plant wastewater presents no biological demand and serves to dilute the total wastewater to the Southeast system.

The addition of the reported 1.08 MGD wastewater stream from the RO water treatment plant will place the Southeast WWTP near hydraulic capacity. A reserve average daily flow of 0.20 MGD will remain. The bypass holding pond can provide a short-term buffer for the incoming flows above this capacity. Influent flows above the 1.38 MGD reserve capacity may hydraulically overload the system.

An additional clarifier may become necessary, depending on variations of sludge conditions. Sludge conditions may change depending on the volume of flow from the RO water treatment plant and the

"**Solids washout**" is a term for a condition in a mechanical wastewater treatment plant in which wastewater velocities thru the plant are sufficiently high enough to prevent the settling of biological solids. These high velocities can push the solids completely thru the treatment plant causing discharge limits to be exceeded.

characteristics of the RO wastewater. Operation of the plant will have to be changed to accommodate the additional hydraulic loading to maintain adequate biological treatment. The mixed liquor suspended solids concentration may have to be varied to accommodate the higher hydraulic loading and still maintain adequate biological treatment. Adjustments will be based on a combination of factors, including sludge settling characteristics in the clarifiers and return activated sludge concentrations. Plant operation may need to be changed seasonally to accommodate higher water plant discharge during the summer months.

The quality of the RO wastewater may have other impacts on the treatment process. High chloride levels or extremes of pH values could disrupt biological activity, reducing the treatment levels. Disruptions of the biological activity could create additional problems with sludge processing. The sediments and debris flushed from the water plant pre-treatment process will impact the characteristics of the biological solids produced by this plant.

As part of the water treatment plant expansion, modifications for this system are anticipated. These improvements include major additions, such as a grit chamber, upstream from the head works and a third clarifier, downstream, to reduce the surface loading on the existing clarifiers. Other improvements include modification to the aeration splitter box and to the distribution box from the west aerators to better balance the flow through the system. More extensive modifications may be required if the anticipated flows from the water plant are greater than expected.

Sanitary Sewer Collection System

- Like the water system, the sanitary sewer collection system is showing the signs of age. There are approximately 1320 manholes and 125 miles of sewer line being maintained by the City. The last major trunk line extension was the West side trunk sewer designed in 1997. This trunk line eliminated the Indian Hills pump station and provided gravity sewer to the Altus Municipal Airport. The only ongoing project is the replacement of a portion of the 8-inch gravity line with an 18-inch gravity line along Park Lane to accommodate the wastewater discharge from the new Reverse Osmosis (RO) water treatment plant.

Waste Collection and Disposal -

Solid waste collection is a service provided by the City. The Sanitation Department maintains a fleet of six packer trucks transporting approximately 80 tons of solid waste every working day to the Altus

Municipal Landfill. The landfill is located eight miles west and nearly two miles north of Altus, on U.S. Highway 62.

Altus completed a five-acre lateral expansion at a cost of $650,000 in October of 2003. This expansion will provide Altus with approximately five more years of operational capacity before the next expansion. Plans have already been completed and approved for an additional three-acre expansion, pending funding and demand at the landfill. The landfill had an original life expectancy of 20 years (1983 to 2003). High increases and changes in technology and regulations have extended the life of the landfill.

Future issues will include providing cover for the lined portions now in use and a Tier II gas emission study to determine actual gas emission levels, if any. This study will become necessary as the landfill volume approaches 2.5 million cubic meters (3.25 million cubic yards) in about 2020.

Electrical Distribution - Altus Power is a member of the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority (OMPA). Altus and other surrounding cities and towns pooled resources in the early part of the last century to form OMPA. The goal was to provide reliable electrical power to their citizens. This commitment cost the members more for electricity in the early years than from other sources. However, OMPA members are now benefiting from the foresight of the founding members with lower electrical supply rates than if they were purchasing from other sources.

Electrical service is provided free to residential developers and usually at no cost to businesses meeting certain criteria. Altus Power is the only city utility bearing the full cost of expansion.

Storm Water Management - In 1992, the City undertook a major drainage study to summarize drainage conditions throughout the community and provide a guide for regional detention facilities. Regional detention facilities were proposed as an alternative to many smaller commercial and residential subdivision detention ponds that were being constructed. The individual detention ponds were being donated as public park lands and required maintenance by the Parks and Recreation Department. The intent of regional facilities was to provide greater reduction in flooding and to consolidate maintenance. Funding for regional detention was to come from developer paid fees for drainage. The City has benefited by not having the maintenance of numerous small detention ponds.

The Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority (OMPA), headquartered in Edmond, Oklahoma, is a State governmental agency created to provide wholesale electricity to cities and towns that own and operate their municipal electric systems. OMPA was established by the Oklahoma Legislature on June 2, 1981. The Authority's principal objective is to provide an adequate, reliable and economical supply of electrical power and energy to member municipalities and public trusts.

OMPA, which became the newest power supplier in Oklahoma on July 1, 1985, currently serves 34 of the 64 municipally-owned systems. By working together, the members maximize efficiencies in transmission and production of power. They jointly plan, finance, own and operate electric generation and transmission facilities. OMPA members are joint owners in power generating facilities in Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma.

The first regional detention facility was privately built for the Quail Run Addition. The Quail Run detention facility began construction in 1983, which covers an area of approximately 24 acres. The developer has continually excavated and increased the capacity of the pond as development has continued. Final construction is now occurring as the development reaches completion.

The Northwest detention facility, located west of the railroad tracks and south of Tamarack Road, reduced flooding in Northwest Altus, along Cherokee Strip, and in the vicinity of Hollywood and Vine Streets. These areas were subject to standing water in the streets for several hours after heavy rains.

The City Reservoir is a detention facility known as DP4, which captures runoff from an area north of the City extending nearly to Martha Wye on U.S. Highway 282. Construction of the DP4 project included a new box culvert under Tamarack Road and channel improvements from Tamarack Road to Park Lane, along the west side of the Lugert-Altus Irrigation Canal. The flooding of Tamarack Road was virtually eliminated by this project.

DP4 is a complex facility that includes additional detention in the City Park area west of the actual detention pond site and uses 1.5 feet of depth in the City reservoir for maximum storage. The detention pond was constructed by building an embankment with a spillway from the City Reservoir to the Lugert-Altus Canal along the west side of Park Lane. The outlet structure for this facility uses a staged discharge to maximize detention over a range of storm events. Low flows are handled by a single 30-inch outlet pipe. As the runoff increases and DP4 fills, a second 30-inch pipe comes into service, which is followed by a series of pipes that will transfer water into the City Reservoir for a substantial increase in storage. A 140-foot spillway is provided for emergency overflow.

DP4 provided a wider passage for runoff from the Heritage Homes Addition and all but eliminated backwater flooding in Quail Run Addition and along Park Lane. Additional relief for flooding along Veterans Road and Falcon Road near the Main Gate to Altus Air Force Base is another benefit.

The Heritage Road detention pond, also known as DP32, helps protect the Heritage Estates, Heritage Homes Acres, and Heritage Way Additions. DP32 was designed and built to accommodate other public uses. The unusual looking parking lot serves as the spillway for this facility. The Street Department has recently installed a sluice gate to the

outlet structure, which has improved the performance of the detention pond.

Other proposed regional detention sites have been studied. These include DP9 at the northwest corner of Falcon Road and Veterans Road and the Southeast detention site north and west of Broadway (U.S. 62) and Veterans Drive. Regional detention facilities have provided relief from street flooding and have helped to manage increase runoff from growth within the City. These detention ponds also help protect Altus from nearly 10 square miles of rural drainage that passes through the City limits.

Sensible Future Development

Typical development patterns are based upon the simple notion of creating development that is both marketable and profitable. Often, little thought is given to the cumulative impact of development until it has occurred and the impacts are realized. Sprawl is defined as an inefficient consumption of land that spreads from urban areas to undeveloped rural land that results in an inefficient use of infrastructure. While sprawl is marketable to the general public, equating to larger lots and lower home prices, as well as the financial institutions that fund development projects, from the perspective of the community it is short-sighted and of long-term consequence.

In recent years, communities are adopting development practices that still allow for marketability and profit, but also aid the community in achieving efficiency and improving quality of life. While the popular term of "Smart Growth" has been attached to this notion, it is really nothing more than sensible planning that better reflects the interest of the community and its residents. The tenets of planning for sensible development seek to balance the need to support economic development while protecting the environment, directing development to the areas for which public services and utilities are readily available, encouraging infill development on vacant or underutilized properties where existing infrastructure may be more efficiently utilized, promoting a more compact development pattern to reduce the need for costly infrastructure and minimize the loss of raw productive land, maintaining a highly efficient street network and infrastructure systems, and providing community gathering areas and pedestrian-friendly destinations.

The goal for Altus is certainly not to limit or slow development activity. Rather, the objective is to seize its economic development opportunities while carefully

Statistics on the Sprawling of America

Over a 20-year period, the 100 largest urbanized areas sprawled out over an additional 14,545 square miles. That was more than 9 million acres of natural habitats, farmland and other rural space that were covered over by the asphalt, buildings and subdivisions of suburbia.

managing the location and pattern of growth and rewarding those who place an emphasis on the community's values.

A policy framework is useful to guide decisions about the timing and pattern of future development. These policies may be used to either support or deny applications for development around the periphery of the community where facilities and services are not readily available or capable of supporting increased development densities. Policies for helping the community achieve attractive and fiscally responsible future development include:

Policy 1: The efficiency of existing infrastructure must be maximized by directing development to occur within the designated "urban area" (which coincides with the Altus Power service area) rather than allowing peripheral development in the "rural" areas that require costly infrastructure extensions.

Policy 2: Future growth will occur in more compact development patterns where infrastructure is readily available and its efficiency is greatly improved.

Policy 3: Development will be staged in a deliberate sequence so as to enable timely provision of adequate public facilities and services. Incentives will be provided to encourage

Case Study: The Costs of Sprawl

A 1992 study by the Center for Urban Studies at Rutgers University pegged capital costs (roads, water, sewer, schools) attributable to sprawl development patterns at $1.3 billion over 20 years. Additional operating and maintenance costs of $400 million annually were also linked to sprawl development. Capitalized at current borrowing rates, these annual O&M costs translate into an additional $7-8 billion price tag for sprawl over 20 years. The Rutgers study suggested if 500,000 new residents arrive in New Jersey in the next two decades, each house will cost $12,000-$15,000 more because of sprawl development than would be the case if development patterns were more compact.

In a 1989 monograph for the Urban Land Institute, James Frank, associate professor of urban and regional planning at Florida State, estimated a $48,000 per house sprawl "premium" for providing services to a three unit per acre development located ten miles from central facilities and employment centers. By contrast, the same costs for a home in a 12-unit per acre development, located closer in, with an equal mix of townhouses, garden apartments, and single family homes, would be 50 percent lower.

Development costs vary with lot sizes, distance to central facilities, proximity to existing development, community demographics, existing service capacity, and the requirements of local codes and standards. Yet numerous studies dating back to 1955 all point toward a similar conclusion: sprawl is a significant burden on both homebuyers and taxpayers.

Who Pays for Growth?

While "on-site" development costs (e.g. sidewalks, sewer laterals, etc.) are passed on to buyers by developers as part of the price of a home, sprawl-related costs that are "off-site" (trunk sewers, water mains, schools, fire stations, treatment plants, widening roads, etc.) are paid by everyone. While some governments are now charging "impact fees" to developers for "hooking up" to community infrastructure, it is frequently the case that the full costs of off-site infrastructure go unpaid, and, as a result, everybody pays -- indirectly.

Recapturing the Costs of Sprawl

Many communities across the U. S. now charge impact fees for schools, roads, sewers, etc. According to Jim Nicholas, one of the country's foremost experts, these fees can range up to $50,000 on a single-family home in some parts of country, while, in other parts, impact fees are non-existent. The average impact fee for a single-family home is $10,000, but is growing at a rate of 20% per year. Some jurisdictions, such as Tallahassee, Florida and DuPage County, Illinois, have begun to move toward geographically variable fees. Others in Florida and California are selling "pre-paid subscriptions" to landowners and developers who plan on hooking into public service systems within the next 20 years.

- Kevin Kasowski

development of vacant and underutilized areas that are already served by infrastructure before development occurs in the fringe and peripheral areas of the community.

Policy 4: The outlying rural areas and natural amenities will be preserved as agricultural lands or permanent open space and, thus, protected from the encroachment of premature urban development, particularly within the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) of the Altus Air Force Base (AAFB).

Policy 5: Partnerships will be established with other jurisdictional authorities and service providers, such as Jackson County, AAFB, and area utility providers, to develop long-term growth management strategies that will conserve resources and sustain adequate service provision.

Policy 6: A mixing of uses will be encouraged through zoning allowances and requirements thereby bringing neighborhoods and businesses together to form more compact centers of community activity and creating opportunities for social interaction.

Policy 7: The development of water and wastewater systems must be closely coordinated with the planned pattern of new development and in areas that are suitable and desirable for future growth.

Policy 8: Adequate facilities and services will be constructed and sustained to meet the increasing public need, in strict adherence to the City's growth sequencing plan.

Policy 9: Relationships will be formalized with governmental and other entities through joint projects, inter-local agreements and memoranda of understanding to provide more cost effective coordination of services and growth management policies.

Policy 10: Preservation measures will be enacted to protect sensitive lands and conserve environmental resources.

Growth Sequencing Plan

Evolving land use patterns within and around the community have exhibited sprawl characteristics. While the amount of development is not such that it is highly apparent or reached proportions that it is of primary concern, it is nonetheless an important land use planning consideration that will – over time – have implications on the public health, safety, and welfare. Sprawl is a highly inefficient pattern of growth. Costs associated with the provision of both capital and social infrastructure are much higher than they are for more compact patterns of development. This is particularly

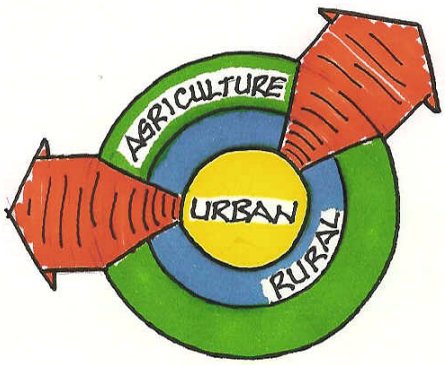
relevant and important when the community is confronted by limited fiscal resources and increasing demands for service.

Sprawl has many costs. In addition to its fiscal consequences, it encourages the degradation of natural resources by prematurely committing areas to the impacts of urban development. Phased, orderly growth mitigates this situation by comprehensively addressing the impacts of development on the natural systems. Leap-frog development is piecemeal in nature, which is detrimental to any type of comprehensive framework.

Another significant aspect of sprawl is the tendency toward strip commercial development, such as that seen along U.S. Highway 62, U.S. Highway 283 and increasingly along Tamarack Road, Falcon Road, and other arterial roadways. This pattern of development occurs as infill between sprawled developments. As an example, since construction of Veteran Drive as an eastern bypass development has continued to stretch outward to this transportation artery, as seen by the strip commercial development extending along both Falcon Road and Tamarack Road. This form of development has a multitude of negative impacts, including traffic safety, community aesthetics, and impacts on adjacent land uses. While many of these impacts are commonly handled by regulatory means, land use policies offer an approach to prevent rather than remedy the problem.

Managed Growth Areas – The principal strategy for managing the future growth of the community is the concept of a Managed Growth Areas (MGA). The underlying premise of this approach is simply to direct development to areas that are either currently served or may be readily provided municipal facilities and services within the time horizon of this plan. The MGA concept is based upon a desire to have Altus grow in a responsible manner, with infrastructure provided economically and efficiently, and surrounding agricultural lands protected from unwarranted and premature conversion to urban land use. This approach would also direct development within the service area of Altus Power, which results in a positive economic gain –rather than leak - for the community.

To implement the MGA concept, the area within the Altus Power service area that is outside of the current City limits is designated as the rural area, which relates to the permitted densities and intensities of development in this fringe area. The area within the current City limits, including the areas that are yet to be developed, is designated as the urban area, which is the preferred near-term growth area. The



designated growth areas are as follows:

Agricultural Area – The purpose of this MGA is to preserve land for agricultural uses. The intention of this designation is consistent with the stated purposes of the "A", Agricultural district, which is to:

- "provide for the continued use of land for predominantly agricultural purposes";
- "preserve undeveloped areas until they can feasibly be developed to urban standards and with adequate public safeguards of health, safety, etc.; and,
- "restrict development in areas subject to severe inundation until such time as it can be shown that these areas are no longer subject to flooding".

Designation as an "agricultural area" preserves the agricultural use of the property.

The designated agricultural area, as displayed in **Figure 7.1, Growth Sequencing Plan**, generally includes those properties that are zoned "A", used for agricultural purposes, and located outside of the Altus Power service. Development within this area would be permitted at a density that preserves its character. To do so, this area requires a minimum open space ratio ranging from 65 to 94 percent depending on the intensity of development.

Preserving the agricultural character and directing development to areas that may be more efficiently served with utilities is a primary goal of the MGA concept.

Policies for the Agricultural Area

- The land use pattern within the designated agricultural area will reduce the consumption of land and concentrate growth within the urban area and, secondly, within the rural area.
- Designated agricultural areas will not be considered for annexation by the City or considered for urban development.
- A program authorizing the transfer or purchase of development rights may be established for the designated agricultural area.
- Development rights within the agricultural area may only be transferred to other parts of the

area or to the designated rural area.

- Urban infrastructure improvements and municipal services will not be extended to serve the designated agricultural area.
- Existing processing operations and intense agricultural uses will be protected from encroaching development so as to prevent impacts on neighboring uses and to allow for their long-term viability and continued operation.
- Compatible land uses, which support utilization of the resource and minimize conflicts among uses, will be required adjacent to the designated agricultural areas.
- Agricultural operations will implement best management practices to reduce environmental impacts and mitigate any unavoidable impacts.
- Development within the agricultural area will strictly adhere to the requirements and standards of the development regulations, as amended.

Rural Area – Within this area, development would be restricted to preserve a rural land use pattern by allowing low density residential units. This area is within the service area of Altus Power but beyond the extent of growth necessary to support the expected volume of future development. The rural area would permit varying intensities of residential development subject to standards for minimum open space and maximum density.

Land uses permitted in the rural area, which is generally around the fringe of the community, are designed to accommodate more intensive development in the future. In other words, the lot sizes, placement of structures on the lots, and the design of the infrastructure systems are such that re-subdivision and intensification may occur in the future. The designated rural areas in Figure 7.1, Growth Sequencing Plan, are generally immediately abutting the City limits. Development within this area would be permitted at a density that preserves its rural character. Minimum open space ratios ranging from 65 to 90 percent would be required.

Policies for the Rural Area

- Permitted land uses will be limited to very low densities with significant areas designated as permanent open space, ranging from 65 to 90 percent dependent upon the development type and density.
- Institutional uses or public facilities will not be permitted.
- Any land within the designated rural area will not be considered for urban development.

- Transfer of density from rural area properties to other rural area properties may be authorized.
- A rural level of service will be defined for the provision of infrastructure, which may be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements such as septic systems and rural roads. Development that exceeds the defined rural level of service will not be permitted.
- Urban services will not be extended within the rural area without advanced approval of the City, consistent with the Growth Sequencing Plan, as amended from time to time, and subject to the policies and provisions of this plan.
- Growth within the urban area will be considered as to its impact on the rural area so as not to cause infrastructure facilities to be improved to urban standards.
- To preserve rural character, natural features such as water bodies and significant wetlands, scenic resources, and habitat areas will be afforded long-term protection, minimize environmental degradation, and enhance environmental quality.
- Resource-based industries such as farming will be encouraged to continue and expand as needed.
- Residents in the designated rural areas should anticipate lower levels of public services and infrastructure than that available within the urban area.
- Trail corridors, habitat networks, recreational areas and scenic resources will be linked wherever possible.
- New development will be clustered at the edges of agricultural fields to minimize the consumption of agricultural land and possible conflicts with current or future farming activity.
- The designated rural areas will be designed and constructed in a manner to allow re-subdivision and intensification in the future.
- Designated rural areas will not be considered for annexation by the City until such time as the City determines the area to warrant urban development and the associated extension of municipal facilities and services.
- The City will coordinate the provision of facilities and services that protect basic public health and safety, but urban infrastructure will not be extended to serve the designated rural areas.
- Rural areas will retain a high proportion of undisturbed soils to maintain groundwater recharge and high water quality.
- Standards for rural water service will assure adequate quality and quantity for domestic supply consistent with rural residential densities.

- Development within the rural area will strictly adhere to the requirements and standards of the development regulations, as amended.

Urban Area – This area is intended to accommodate the City's urban development during the horizon of this plan. To achieve this end, within this area is where capital improvements and facilities are planned. It permits all types of development, including residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses.

The boundaries and size of the urban area is based upon the area necessary to accommodate all new residential dwelling units within the City during the horizon of this plan, and the ability of the City to efficiently provide urban infrastructure.

The urban area consists of those areas that are permitted to develop to urban levels of density or intensity either presently or over the course of the horizon of this plan. It is generally planned to be consistent with the fiscal ability of the City to provide capital infrastructure to accepted standards for urban development, which are outlined in this and other elements of this plan. The essence of the managed growth plan is concentrating the City's capital resources to provide a level of urban facilities to the urban area during the time period of this plan.

Policies for the Urban Area

- The provision of urban services will be available during the horizon of this plan.
- Infrastructure investments will be channeled to support the growth sequencing plan and the Future Community Character Plan.
- Areas within the urban area that are not incorporated will be annexed prior to development.
- Lands included in the urban area may only include those for which infrastructure may be efficiently and cost-effectively provided, including roads, water, sanitary sewer, electricity, storm drainage, schools, and other urban governmental services.
- Growth will be directed to the urbanized areas with existing infrastructure capacity, secondly, to areas that can be readily and efficiently served by infrastructure improvements, and last, to areas requiring major infrastructure improvements.
- Land outside of the urban area and within the designated rural area may transfer development rights and density to the urban area, subject to the provisions of the development code, as amended.
- Development within the urban area shall strictly adhere to the requirements and standards of

the development regulations, as amended.

Infrastructure Provision

An effective approach for managing the type, pattern, and density of the community's future growth is allowing development to occur only as adequate municipal facilities are available. One means of ensuring that growth occurs in areas where infrastructure is either present or desired includes the creation of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). Also known as concurrency requirements, this mechanism ensures that infrastructure is available prior to or concurrent with development.

Adequate public facilities ordinances require applicants for new development to demonstrate that facilities and services will be available to serve the project at the time the development is available for occupancy. Utilizing this system, the community is able to adopt level-of-service standards, which can be used as criterion for approving or denying applications, depending on conformance to the standards. Issuance of building permits is based upon the established existence of public improvements or capital facilities. As an alternative, higher impact fees and greater developer participation in infrastructure construction and financing may be necessary to shorten development timeframes.

This approach is both practical and defensible. The key to effectively employing this system is being rational in making determinations as to the adequacy or inadequacy of public facilities. The strength of this approach is its ability to allow the community to establish a direct, causal link between the provision of public facilities and the public health, safety and welfare. The general components of an adequate public facilities ordinance include:

- Determining a service threshold or point at which demand exceeds the desired capacity of public facilities, whether it is water and wastewater systems, roadways, parks, or schools. Generally, the difference between the established threshold and the existing level of service is the amount available to a development.
- Determining if there are projects that will be exempted or receive flexibility in meeting the threshold requirements by way of achieving other community objectives, such as infill development, mixed use, affordable housing, etc.
- Determining the measures to remedy situations when the threshold is exceeded, including delay of development until such time as the project no longer

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO) tie or condition development approvals to the availability and adequacy of public facilities. Adequate public facilities are those facilities relating to roads, sewer systems, water supply and distribution systems, schools, and fire protection that meet adopted level of service standards.

exceeds the threshold, reducing the project's impact to the point that it meets requirements, or mitigating the impact of the project by upgrading public facilities or infrastructure.

- Reserving the amount of capacity projected for a development during the time between approval of a project and its completion, which counts against the total capacity of public facilities in future applications for development. An expiration date for approved projects may be necessary so as not to unnecessarily burden or deny other projects.

Annexation

Annexation allows the community to extend its municipal services, regulations, voting privileges, and taxing authority to new territory. It is a mechanism provided under State law for promoting orderly growth and urbanization by coordinating private land development with construction or improvement of public facilities (streets, water, sewer, electricity, drainage, etc.) and provision of adequate public services through phased expansion of the City's corporate limits.

The City's annexation program should include an ongoing process of appropriate planning and preparation for future annexations in compliance with the requirements of State law and consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. The City should conduct studies periodically to identify and monitor prime growth areas within the three-mile planning area, particularly adjacent to major transportation corridors within the designated urban area, where the City's land use management capabilities are most needed. These studies should consider anticipated infrastructure improvements that may create an opportunity or demand for new urban development. Based on these studies and evaluation of potential annexation options, an annexation plan should be developed and periodically updated, which would become the basis for developing annual or periodic annexation proposals. The annexation plan should identify specific properties targeted for eventual incorporation, and should be based on careful research as to the available utilities and infrastructure and existing land use in the area. Potential constraints to the development of infrastructure or extension of services should be a primary consideration, such as flood plain areas, areas within the AICUZ of Altus Air Force Base, and the potential limits of gravity wastewater service. Coordination with utility providers may be necessary to determine future service areas and the potential need for service agreements.

The annexation planning process should be conducted in conjunction with annual review and updates to this Comprehensive Plan. The Future Community Character Plan and other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan should be updated, as needed, to support the City's annexation program. Timely preparation of an annexation plan is essential to identify properties within the designated urban area that are in the City's interest to annex prior to development.

In addition to preparing for City-initiated annexations, the City should establish clear policies and guidelines to determine when future land owner petitions for annexation within the designated urban area will be accepted. Potential considerations include:

1. the results of a fiscal impact assessment;
2. proximity to the City's existing service areas and the feasibility of extending adequate facilities and services in a timely manner;
3. capital budget limitations; and,
4. intangible costs and benefits.

Annexation Policies - As a general policy statement, annexation should occur prior to or concurrent with development of the designated urban area to properly plan for and coordinate the extension of adequate public facilities and services. The following policies should be considered in guiding the City's decisions for annexing additional territory:

Policy 1: The City will annex territory in strict adherence with the Growth Sequencing Plan and in accordance with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan. Only property within the designated urban area will be considered for annexation.

Policy 2: The City will anticipate and effectively manage its long-term pattern of growth in a forward-looking and fiscally responsible manner, while balancing the needs of current residents and existing infrastructure investments.

Policy 3: The City will ensure that future growth is closely coordinated with infrastructure investments, compatible with existing development, environmentally sensitive, and fiscally responsible.

Policy 4: The City will establish criteria for considering the suitability of requested extensions to the corporate limits within the designated urban area.

Policy 5: The City will prepare and maintain an annexation plan and conduct associated service planning for gradual expansion of the corporate limits and extension of municipal facilities and services, where determined feasible and beneficial to the City. The plan will be periodically

updated to account for changing development conditions and new infrastructure development.

Policy 6: In order to maximize the efficiency of the existing infrastructure, the City will direct growth toward developable and under-utilized areas within the current corporate limits and the designated urban area before additional territory is considered for annexation.

Policy 7: Following infill of undeveloped portions of the corporate limits and the designated urban area, the City will focus its annexation strategy toward the growth areas at the fringe of the current urban area to extend municipal services and manage development quality.

Policy 8: The City will use fiscal impact analyses to assess the projected costs of providing municipal services and weigh them against the anticipated revenues of each annexation proposal, whether initiated by the City or a property owner. Fiscal impacts will be assessed on a multi-year time frame, recognizing that first-year costs may exceed revenues because of up-front service extension costs and capital expenditures as well as the lag time before initial collection of taxes and fees. Intangible benefits of proposed annexations will also be evaluated.

Policy 9: The City will utilize its annexation authority to extend its jurisdiction to encompass critical areas, such as major transportation corridors, public facilities, and areas provided municipal services subject to the policies of this plan, which may require regulatory protection and control of development.

Policy 10: Where short-term annexation is not feasible, the City will consider the option of negotiated agreements with land owners, developers, or other entities in lieu of annexation to provide for interim service arrangements, cost-sharing or fee mechanisms, and potential adherence to development guidelines to ensure desired development outcomes in areas subject to possible future incorporation.

Annexation Criteria - Important criteria for use in considering whether annexation of land is warranted and fiscally responsible include the following:

- The subject parcel(s) are within the designated urban area.
- The land requested for annexation is certified to be within the City's utility service area, with proven feasibility of efficiently extending water and sewer mains and electricity lines.
- All parcels could be adequately served by municipal police, fire, ambulance, and road

maintenance meeting City standards.

- All public improvements, off-site as well as on-site, necessary to serve the density of the annexed area will be constructed and financed in accordance with City standards and policy.
- As determined by the City, the actual financial impact for providing police, fire, road maintenance, electricity, and other public improvements is favorable to the tax base and offsets the necessary costs.

Public Services

Police Department - The Police Department operates out of its headquarters located at 121 North Grady Street. The facility consists of administrative offices, three interview rooms, a property/evidence room, records space, a two care garage; reception/secretarial area; an impound lot; and outdoor range facilities. There is a secure holding facility that does not meet standards and, therefore, not used. All persons are transported to Jackson County facilities.

The Department currently has a total staff of 63, which is divided into five divisions, including administration, traffic, detectives, animal control, and communications. There is a chief, one assistant chief, one captain and two secretaries in the administrative division. Within the traffic division there are three captains, six lieutenants, 25 patrol officers and two canine officers. The detective division is composed of a captain, one lieutenant, four detectives and a secretary. Communications includes eight dispatchers, three communication specialists, and a supervisor. A supervisor and two officers make up the animal control division.

The Police Department is actively involved in several community relations and policing programs, including Neighborhood Watch, community meetings, finger printing and DNA sampling for children, school programs, as well as public speaking, tours for scout groups and others, and fairs.

Since 1990 the Police Department has been facing increased demand for its services, based upon available data produced by the Department. In 1990, the total number of calls was 17,400 compared to 47,888 in 2003, which reflects 275 percent increase in calls. Since 1999 when there were 41,925 calls there has been an increase of 14 percent to 47,888 calls. Based upon the call statistics through May of 2004, it appears there may be over 51,000 calls this year continuing this upward trend. With increased demand on services, officers' case loads have risen. Demand on services is expected to

continue at the same level with possible increases, which will require periodic review of their staffing. Additional space may also be needed to accommodate their services.

A survey conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of cities with a population between 10,000 and 24,999, showed an average of 2.1 full-time law enforcement officers per 1,000 citizens (Crime in the United States 2002, Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation). Based upon a Year 2000 population of 21,447 persons, the department should have 45 full-time enforcement officers. Therefore, based upon the current staffing of 41 full-time law enforcement officers the City is currently short four officers, according to the FBI survey. If the City desires to maintain such a standard in the future to meet the service needs, the department will need to hire additional employees concurrent with its population. Based upon a projected Year 2030 population of 25,190 persons, the department will need 53 full-time officers.

Fire Department - The Fire Department consists of 32 full-time employees, including a Fire Chief, three Assistant Chiefs, one Fire Marshall, three Captains, three Lieutenants (also drivers), three drivers, and 18 career (versus volunteer) firefighters. The department does not have volunteer or part-time staff. Their service area is approximately 250 square miles including the City limits and extending through Jackson County and the surrounding counties. They maintain mutual aid agreements with Altus Air Force Base (AAFB) and each of the rural volunteer and small communities departments, including, but not limited to, Eldorado, Duke, Blair, Olustee, Elmer, Mangum, Frederick, and other rural areas and communities.

The Department currently operates out of two stations including the main station located on North Spurgeon and a second station at 1901 North Main Street. The City has and continues to evaluate plans for possible location of a third station in the northeast part of the City, near the Jackson County EMS facility. This possible new station would improve service coverage and reduce response times.
Since 1999, the Department has responded to between 631 and 707 calls annually, which include structural and other fires, rescue/emergency medical, false alarms, mutual aid, hazardous material, and other responses. Fire calls are the most common and significant, ranging from 23 to 31 percent of the total annual call responses. Responses classified as “other”, which are for a variety of purposes other than those specifically classified, account for 26

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) was created in 1896 as a standards making body. Today, over 66,000 fire safety professionals belong to the NFPA, the world's largest and most influential fire safety organization. NFPA has published almost 300 codes and standards with the mission of preventing the loss of life and property. Topics include fire prevention equipment, extinguishing systems, inspection, residential and commercial dwellings, safety of flammable gases, and the very important National Electrical Code.

to 36 percent of the total annual calls. Generally, the total number of calls has remained consistent over the course of the last five years, ranging from a high of 707 calls in 1999 to a low of 631 calls in 2003.

The Main Station is staffed with administrative personnel and six firefighters. It is equipped with two engines, one ladder truck, a quick response unit for grass and brush fires, and a special (heavy) rescue trailer. The station on North Main Street has one command vehicle, an engine, one brush rig and one light rescue vehicle. This station is staffed by two firefighters.

The Department has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 5 within the City. The ISO rating in the outlying areas varies according to the staffing and equipment availability of the volunteer and small community stations. ISO bases its rating on a scale of 1 to 10 with one being the best and 10 being considered unprotected. To receive this rating the Fire Department is evaluated on the quality of fire equipment and personnel, water availability, and proper communications among other specific criteria.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) publishes data on career and volunteer firefighters across the nation. NFPA conducted a survey of fire departments for U.S. fire experience. The survey includes data pertaining to a ratio of career firefighters per 1,000 inhabitants. These rates are based on data reported by the NFPA and do not reflect recommended rates or a defined fire protection standard. However, they do provide information for comparisons with fire departments in similar sized communities.

According to the survey of fire departments protecting a population of 10,000 to 24,999 residents, median rates of career fire fighters per 1,000 people was 1.60. Based upon a Year 2000 U.S. Census population of 21,447 persons, the City needs 34 career firefighters. The City currently has 32 career firefighters, meaning that there is a current need for an additional two firefighters. Based upon the expected future population, as examined in Chapter 2, Community Profile, the City will need 40 fire personnel to support an estimated future population of 25,190 persons in the Year 2030. It is important to note that the rates of a particular size of community may vary due to variations in specific circumstances and policies, such as unusual structural conditions, type of service, geographic dispersion, and other factors.

As development continues and land use patterns shift in the future, there

will likely be requirements for additional firefighters and station locations in order to sustain and improve level of service.

Chapter 8: Implementation

Implementation is the most important part of the planning process because it is the point at which the Comprehensive Plan transitions from policy into practice. Implementation is when general concepts identified during the course of the plan development process take shape and are developed into actual projects and programs. Goals, objectives, and recommended actions that are visionary in the plan are transformed into detailed regulations, programs, capital improvements, agreements, studies, incentives, and other types of implementation activity.

Plans that are effective in achieving their goals and objectives include an implementation framework that outlines the general strategies, directions, and priorities of the community. The purpose of this plan is to identify a course of policy direction for the community, which is then used to make specific decisions as to the actions that must be taken, the department or agency responsible for the initiatives, the actual process and timeframe for completion, and the source of funds necessary to implement the recommendation. Therefore, the role of this plan is to form the construct by which specific decisions may be made. Without strategic direction and an organizational approach, well-intentioned plans are commonly unsuccessful in seeing their vision become reality. To avoid this outcome, this implementation plan includes an overall strategy that will evolve as the plan matures over the course of time.

Tenets of Successful Implementation

Those communities who are successful in implementing their plans and achieving the vision are those who are able to secure the following:

- **Commitment** - The most important aspect of this implementation program is the commitment of the City's leadership. This involves those who are elected to serve the community, such as: the Mayor and City Council; those appointed to positions of influence in the community's development, like the Planning Commission; and those who are in positions to guide the decisions being made, such as the City's department directors and staff. Commitment reaches beyond these individuals, however, to include those who have a vested interest in how the community develops, namely citizens, landowners and developers, business owners and managers, civic clubs and organizations, and other key

Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go forth in action; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny.

- Tyron Edwards

"Each department, staff person, board, commission, and committee of the City has an obligation to use this plan in guiding their decisions and priorities."

stakeholders. These are the groups and individuals who will contribute the resources necessary to achieve the short-range objectives and long-term visions of the plan. To build this constituency of persons, this plan involved the public through an involvement program including a community forum, key person interviews, citizen committee meetings, and workshops with the City's appointed and elected officials. This constituency must be maintained and empowered to implement the plan on an ongoing basis.

- **Credit** – It is important for the plan to be cited for its role in decision-making and credited for its leads to success. To ensure successful implementation, all City departments must embrace the plan and incorporate its recommended actions in their annual budgets and work programs. For example, the City departments may contribute to its implementation with infrastructure such as streets, water and wastewater facilities, and storm drainage improvements that are consistent with the plan's policies and recommendations. The Parks and Recreation Department may pursue local, state, and federal funding assistance through land dedication, partnerships, and grants to systematically expand and enhance parks, trails, and open space concurrent with new development and in accordance with the Parks and Recreation System Plan. Each department, staff person, board, commission, and committee of the City has an obligation to use this plan in guiding their decisions and priorities, which must be ensured by the City Council.
- **Involvement** – Citizens were the cornerstone of the plan development process. Their involvement is even more essential to ensure success of the plan. After all, they are the ultimate beneficiaries of the plan's success. For the plan to be successfully implemented, it must continue to enjoy the support and understanding of the community at large and, specifically, the civic leaders. Therefore, leaders must pledge their support to maintain public involvement, community awareness, and a commitment to uphold the values and policies of the plan. Advisory committees, public meetings and community workshops, open houses and public forums, newsletters and media releases, and public notices should be used to inform and involve citizens in every step of the implementation process.
- **Effective guidance** - This plan is designed for use on a daily basis to guide the overall growth and

economic development of the community. It is intended to guide staff in their efforts to manage their individual departments, annual work programs, and capital improvement projects. It is also a document that should be highly visible in the decision-making process of the City Council, being referenced often as the community's policy statement and long-range plan. In addition to its use by the City, it is also designed for use by other agencies such as Altus Air Force Base (AAFB) and the Altus Metropolitan Area Planning Commission as well as the private sector as they make investment decisions in the community. The plan offers the community's commitment for its future, which must, in turn, offer businesses and property owners sufficient confidence in their decisions. The plan should be a definitive source of information and act as a valuable resource for both the public and private sectors. The Future Community Character Plan (Figure 3.2), Thoroughfare Plan (Figure 4.1), and Parks and Recreation System Plan (Figure 5.3) each must be utilized in reviewing development project proposals, as well as investing in community infrastructure and provision of municipal services. The overall community vision and the goals and objectives articulated in each element of the plan should be referenced in other related studies and projects to ensure consideration of the plan in all essential functions and operations of City government.

- **Integrative Planning** - Opportunities for integrating the plan's recommendations into other business practices and programs of the City, County, and other government entities are a vital element toward widespread recognition of the plan as a decision-making tool. For instance, the recommendations should be widely used in decisions pertaining to: infrastructure improvements; proposed new development and redevelopment; expansion of public facilities, services and programs; and the annual capital improvement and budgeting process. The plan should be referenced often to maintain its relevance to local decisions and to support the decisions that are being made.
- **Regionalism** - The City is in the position to coordinate the implementation tasks associated with this plan. However, since the decisions that are made will impact the County and the larger region implementation of the plan should not rest solely on the City. Instead, the vast array of stakeholders that will play a role

"Opportunities for integrating the plan's recommendations into other business practices and programs of the City, County, and other government entities are a vital element toward widespread recognition of the plan as a decision-making tool."

"In and of itself, the plan is capable of accomplishing very little. Rather, community leaders and citizens must assume ownership in the plan to see that it is successfully implemented."

in the future of the community and region should all participate in its implementation. Entities such as the City of Altus, Jackson County, Altus Air Force Base, Altus School District, Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, and the State of Oklahoma should all be heavily involved in varying capacities toward the implementation of the plan's initiatives. Their involvement may be through funding participation, planning coordination, project management and administration, regulation and enforcement, or shared provision of facilities and services, among other actions. In addition to the cooperation that currently occurs, a renewed commitment by each entity to form regional alliances and partnerships must be formed and sustained to maximize the benefits of regionalism.

- **Evaluation and monitoring** - This plan will require periodic review and amendment to ensure that the goals, objectives, and recommendations reflect the changing community needs and attitudes. In and of itself, the plan is capable of accomplishing very little. Rather, community leaders and citizens must assume ownership in the plan to see that it is successfully implemented. Great care must be taken to ensure that the recommended actions of this plan are viable and realistic as they relate to the City's adopted and approved plans, policies, programs, and budget. Progress reports provided to the City Council on a quarterly and annual basis will be important to allow continuous monitoring of the plan's implementation and accomplishments.
- **Success** - A strategy used by successful organizations is to seek results early in the implementation process. By doing so, stakeholders are able to see the benefits of their involvement. Momentum is a result, which naturally solicits more involvement by persons desiring to be involved in a successful program. In this implementation plan there are various recommendations that do not bear significant budgetary obligation. These programs and activities provide an immediate opportunity to make an impact on the community and, thus, on the successful implementation of this plan. Success is a powerful tool and should, therefore, be given consideration to ensure that successes are consistent throughout the implementation process.

Organizational Structure

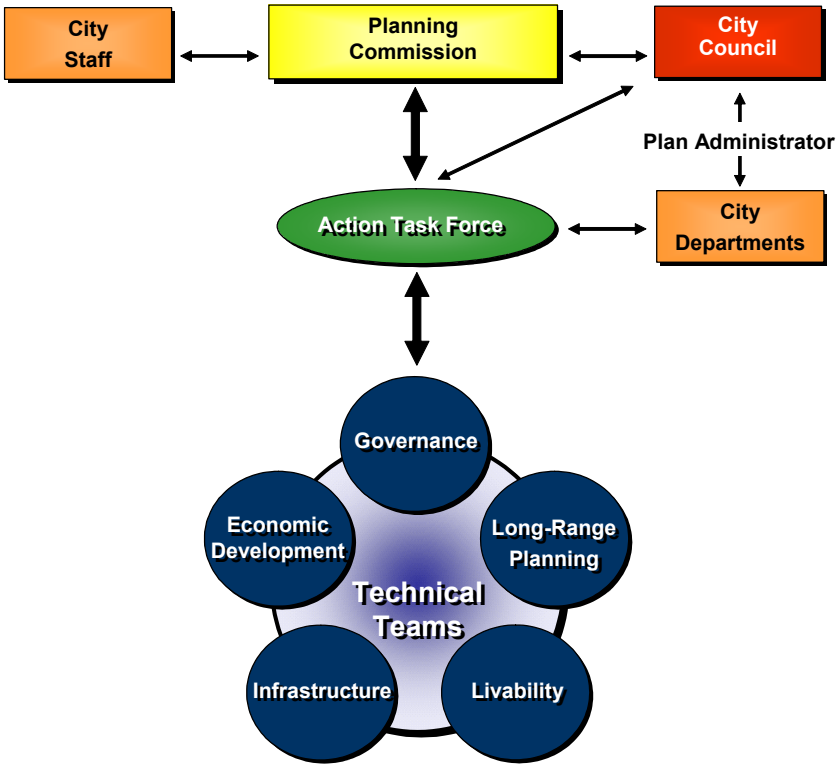
The City has made an investment in the preparation of this plan. This

commitment to long-range planning signals its foresight and preparedness to find creative solutions to issues and to proactively manage future development and redevelopment in a fiscally responsible manner. This plan was developed over the course of one year. The planning process was carefully designed to involve citizens at every juncture to decide their preferred future and make commitments to support the plan's recommendations and initiatives. With the level of resources committed by the City and the amount of effort devoted to the process by residents, there is a high expectation for its implementation. The plan is expected to guide each decision about the physical and economic development of the community and must, therefore, maintain its presence as a "blueprint" for the future of Altus.

City Council Roles - The City Council must be the central focus of the plan's implementation program. Its responsibilities will be to decide and establish the priorities and timeframes by which each action will be initiated and completed. As the governing body, it is also responsible for consideration of the funding commitments that will be required to realize the community's vision, whether it involves capital improvements, new facilities and expanded services, additional staffing, more studies, or programmatic changes such as the City's development codes and procedures.

The Council will also play a significant role in the ability of entities to carry out regulatory, programmatic, and capital improvements cited in the plan. In many cases, the City Council will be offering final approval of projects and their costs during the budget process. The ability to provide resources for many of the tasks required to implement the plan will rest largely with the City Council.

Many of the tasks presented as action statements will require the participation of various City



"The City Council is commonly one of checks and balances relative to the actions by the Planning Commission. While this should remain the case, the Comprehensive Plan seeks stronger roles from the City Council, including coordination and implementation of specific actions."

departments and outside partners. The City Council can ensure that departments continue to follow the spirit and policies of the plan and implement the needed actions. Active support of the City Council will also be a strong signal to potential private and public partners that the elected officials believe in the merits of the plan.

The City Council is ultimately responsible for authorizing implementation projects and activities, as well as ensuring their consistency with the plan and its policies. They will direct the Planning Commission, manage the Plan Administrator and departmental staff, and oversee the activities and progress of the Action Task Force.

Planning Commission as Facilitators - The momentum that has swelled during the course of this process must not be allowed to falter once the plan has been adopted. Concurrent with the approval of the plan, the City Council should clearly state their expectations for the role of the Planning Commission in the management and oversight of the plan implementation program. As the appointed commission responsible for the community's growth and development, they must be given the charge to oversee implementation and empowered to make ongoing decisions without necessitating City Council review at every decision point. Rather, an annual program of implementing actions must be established by the City Council, upon recommendation of the Planning Commission, with adequate resources and direction to successfully accomplish the program tasks.

The Planning Commission should prepare an **Annual Report of Progress** for submittal and presentation to the Mayor and City Council. The status of implementation for each programmed task of the Comprehensive Plan must be central to this report. Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year should be recognized and recommendations should be made for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the coming year. The annual report should be coordinated with the annual budgeting process to allow recommendations to be available early in the budgeting process and requests for capital improvements and major programs to be reviewed.

Several tasks set forth in this implementation plan will be the responsibility of the Planning Commission. Preparation of necessary studies, ordinances, and some programmatic initiatives will likely be completed by the Planning

Commission prior to submission to the City Council. In other cases, the Planning Commission will play a strong role as the "plan facilitator" overseeing the process and monitoring its progress and results. Together, City staff and the Planning Commission must be responsible for ensuring that the plan impacts daily decisions and actions by other stakeholders.

Formation of an Action Task Force – Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require a task force that is solely dedicated to carrying out the plan's programs and activities. While the Planning Commission will play an important role as an intermediary, it does not have sufficient time to devote to an effort that will require 100 percent attention. Therefore, an Action Task Force must be appointed by the City Council, who will be the day-to-day managers of the implementation program. The task force will report directly to the Planning Commission, who will consider their requests and make recommendations to the City Council as necessary. They will also directly interact with a committee of department managers, who will provide the necessary technical input and guidance for the program tasks and activities. The role of the Action Task Force is to refine and prioritize the Implementation Plan, initiate action and see it through to completion.

While the implementation plan is a beginning, the Action Task Force will be charged with the role of honing specific actions beyond the information provided in the plan. The task force will determine methods or programs to be used to implement the proposed actions, specifically identifying which agencies and/or departments will be responsible for their implementation, estimating costs, identifying proposed sources of funding, and establishing time frames in which the recommended actions will be accomplished.

Under the umbrella of the task force should be a series of technical teams, who provide technical competence in the following areas:

- **Governance** – This team will be responsible for the necessary coordination with the City Council on tasks requiring their direct involvement and decisions. They will also communicate with the technical staff of the County, AAFB, school district, and other local, regional, statewide, or federal agencies and organizations. Their primary role will be intergovernmental coordination to ensure projects are consistent with the objectives and missions of other agencies and to negotiate amenable terms and agreements, as necessary. They will also be charged with identifying opportunities to collaborate on projects that may

Membership of the Action Task Force should include representatives of the following:

- Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (two minimum)
- Planning Commission (non-voting)
- City Council (non-voting)
- Jackson County
- Altus School District
- Chamber of Commerce
- Altus Main Street
- Development and business communities
- Other public agencies and institutions
- Leaders from organized neighborhoods and civic groups
- Residents of the City and the three-mile planning area

be jointly funded, constructed, or operated.

- **Infrastructure** – Any improvement or project dealing with infrastructure will require the attention and effort of this team. The members of the team will require technical knowledge and expertise with utility and other infrastructure systems, as well as with their means and methods of funding. They will work closely with each of the other technical teams to coordinate needed infrastructure improvements. The recommended actions outlined in Chapter 4, Transportation, and those pertaining to facilities and service improvements in Chapter 7, Growth Policies, would be within the purview of this team.
- **Economic Development** – This technical team will play an active role in pursuing projects that contribute to the community's economic development. They will coordinate closely with the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council as well as with local businesses and developers. Their role will be to coordinate the tasks of the other technical teams in a manner that will benefit existing business and new investors in the community.
- **Planning** – This technical team will be a working arm of the Planning Commission, assuming the responsibility for implementing their projects and initiatives. They will coordinate closely with the Plan Administrator and maintain a line of communication with the community to monitor shifting priorities and needs. For instance, this would be the team that would facilitate the code redrafting process, acting in a role to gauge the public's acceptance of new requirements and restrictions. The primary responsibilities of this team are the recommended actions in Chapter 3, Land Use, and the policy related matters in Chapter 7, Growth Policies.
- **Livability** – This is the technical team that will be responsible for taking on the implementation initiatives for such projects and improvements as parks and public open space, trails and bikeways, gateways and corridor enhancement, and overall community appearance. Any of the recommendations in Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation, and Chapter 6, Community Appearance, would be within the realm of responsibility for this technical team.

The overall scope of work of the Action Task Force should be short term – no more than five years – and should also include annual work programs. The product of the task

force should be a **strategic proposal** for the actions to be initiated and/or accomplished within the year or the five-year horizon of the implementation program. Departments and organizations charged with completing tasks, or aiding in their completion, can use the proposal in the budget process and in determining other needed resources. The City Council and other governing bodies can utilize the proposal for overall budget and resource decisions, as well as establishing benchmarks for departmental performance.

Livability was the most often mentioned subject of residents and, thus, a high priority for the future.

Administering the Plan – Similar to the necessity for an Action Task Force, there must also be a staff person that is dedicated to plan implementation. The capacity of current staff to administer the plan and to provide the necessary support to the Planning Commission, Action Task Force and its technical teams, other City departments, and the City Council is limited given the demanding responsibilities of the current position. Therefore, it is essential for the community to either assign - or reassign - an existing staff person or hire additional personnel to assume this momentous task.

The **Plan Administrator** will manage the administration and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. This person would closely coordinate with the other departments, as well as provide direct support to the Action Task Force and its technical teams. The importance of this plan in the future of the community warrants a high level of attention and commitment to ensure successful implementation.

An Ongoing Role for Residents – Citizens of Altus contributed to development of the plan's goals, objectives, and actions by participating in public meetings, small group interviews, and their involvement on the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). The ideas and comments contributed by citizens during the plan's development process were incorporated and shaped the resulting proposals and recommendations.

Citizens must continue their commitment to the community's future for this plan to be successfully implemented.

Citizens should continue to be involved in implementation and maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission, stakeholder groups, public meetings and community workshops, public forums, newsletters, media releases, and public notices are all mediums that should be utilized to inform and involve citizens in the planning process. Actual methods and activities for public participation should be carefully chosen and structured to yield meaningful and effective involvement.

Plan Accountability

In order for the plan to sustain its level of influence in the community's decision-making processes, there must be an implementation structure that requires accountability. Without a system of accountability, it will be difficult to evaluate and monitor the status of individual initiatives, as well as the overall success of the implementation program. A means of regular reporting will be necessary to maintain constant communication between each of the implementing bodies. Regular and periodic status reports will allow continuous monitoring and, thus, modifications to account for unforeseen circumstances.

A good plan is one that continues to reflect the current conditions and character of the community. As new issues arise, the Comprehensive Plan will require modifications and refinements to remain relevant and resourceful. Over time, some action statements will be found impracticable or outdated, while other plausible solutions will emerge. Refinements and changes should occur consistently, but with minor changes occurring annually and more significant modifications taking place every five years. In some cases, simple changes to action statements may be necessary. In others, entire goals may need to be modified. Even the overall vision of the plan should be consistently scrutinized to ensure that it is reflective of the hopes and needs of the community.

Annual plan evaluations will provide the opportunity for regular review and preparation of minor plan updates and revisions such as changes to future community character designations, implementation of actions, and review of plan consistency with ordinances and regulations. Plan evaluations should be prepared and distributed in the form of an appraisal report, with recommendations for necessary amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Identification of potential plan amendments should be an ongoing process by the Planning Commission, as well as City staff, throughout the year. Requests for an evaluation and subsequent plan amendments may also be submitted by citizens, property owners, community organizations, and other governmental entities. Proposed plan amendments resulting from an evaluation report should be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and adopted in a manner similar to the plan itself. This process includes public hearings and consideration of action by the Planning Commission and City Council.

An **Evaluation and Appraisal Report** should be prepared every five years. Each report will ensure renewal and continued use of the plan by the Planning Commission, City Council, and staff. Annual evaluations and resulting plan amendments from the previous four years should be incorporated into the next plan update. An evaluation and appraisal process will be a significant undertaking involving public officials, City departments, stakeholders, and citizens. The result of the evaluation and appraisal report will be a revised comprehensive plan for the City, including identification of new or revised information that may result in an updated vision, policies, goals, objectives, and action statements.

Evaluation Procedures - To ensure successful long-term implementation of the Comprehensive Plan vision, goals, and objectives, the City must monitor the plan on a continuous basis. Therefore, the City will assess the individual and cumulative impacts of all proposed plan amendments to determine their degree of consistency. An annual evaluation report will be prepared describing the individual and cumulative impacts upon the City's facilities and service provision caused by amendments to the Future Community Character Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, Parks and Recreation System Plan, and other improvements.

The City will review and update, as necessary, the base data contained in Chapter 2, Community Profile, on a periodic basis, but, in any case, during the plan's five-year

While changes are necessary, any change should be strongly considered for its long-term impact upon the community and the guiding vision. Adjustments should be thoroughly documented and justifiable to both the general public and the community's leadership. The vision should remain the central theme and provide a unifying element. The plan's value rests in the pledge of citizens and leaders to follow the vision for the future and to apply that consensus toward sustained efforts that focus on the betterment of the community.

evaluation and appraisal report. The emphasis will be on updating the data and analysis that directly support the goals and objectives of the plan such as the population projection, analysis of the availability and capacity of public facilities and services, and the analysis of the growth pattern.

The evaluation and appraisal report will include recommendations for new or modified goals, objectives, policies, and actions, which will be based upon the updated base data and an evaluation of the successful achievement of the plan's objectives. Unforeseen constraints or obstacles relative to each objective will be identified, along with remedial actions. The following will be addressed during the evaluation process:

- **Changing conditions and characteristics** – Each goal, objective, policy, and action will be reviewed considering shifts in demographics and recent trends.
- **Ability to implement** – Individual statements or sections of the plan will be reviewed and rewritten, as necessary, to ensure that it provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcomes.
- **Consistency and conflict** – Any conflicts between policies or objectives that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan will be identified and resolved. The evaluation and review will be designed to ensure consistency of the plan's direction.
- **Status review** – As conditions change over the course of time it will be necessary to re-evaluate the timeframes for implementing the individual actions of the plan. Some may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances, while others may become less important to achieving the vision and development objectives of the City.
- **Responsibility** – Based upon organizational, programmatic, and procedural factors, as well as the status of previously assigned tasks, the implementation task assignments will be reviewed and altered to ensure timely accomplishment of the plan's recommended actions.
- **Funding analysis** – Based upon the required funding to complete the recommended actions, an analysis and estimate of necessary funding will be performed, which will be conducted to coordinate with the annual budgeting process. The funding analysis will identify possible sources of funds and potential partnerships that may be forged to cost-share the expenditures.

- **Impact assessment** – Changes in laws, procedures, and missions may impact the ability of the community to achieve its goals. Therefore, this review will assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation and, subsequently, make revisions to strategies.

The Planning Commission is the body responsible for conducting the evaluation and appraisal process. The annual evaluation should occur immediately following adoption of the City's annual budget, which reflects the priorities for capital improvements and other expenditures.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Intergovernmental cooperation refers to any arrangement between two or more jurisdictions such as the City of Altus, Jackson County, Altus School District, Altus Air Force Base, the State of Oklahoma, and other governmental or non-governmental public agencies to communicate visions and coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It may be as simple as regularly sharing information or it may involve entering into intergovernmental agreements to share resources such as buildings, facilities and equipment, staff, and revenue. In some locales, it has evolved into consolidation of services and jurisdictions.

Intergovernmental cooperation is becoming more important as each jurisdiction struggles with increased service demands and limited resources. Issues tend to be common across jurisdictional boundaries, affecting more than one community or region. For example, air and water pass over the landscape regardless of boundaries so that one jurisdiction's activities greatly impact the jurisdictions that are downwind or downstream. Continually increasing communication technologies and improved mobility mean that people, money, and resources move freely across jurisdictions. For instance, those traveling to and through Altus use a network of transportation routes and modes, which include those that are owned by a variety of other jurisdictions. Therefore, it is essential that there is communication and coordination between entities to provide the infrastructure and services necessary to function effectively.

Frequently, the actions of one jurisdiction impact others. Increasingly, jurisdictions are acknowledging that vital issues are regional, rather than local, in nature. Watersheds and other ecosystems, economic conditions, land use, transportation patterns, housing, and the effects of growth and change

Intergovernmental Entities

The following is a list of some of the jurisdictions, quasi-governmental units, and private service organizations that may impact the community.

- State and Federal agencies
- Altus Metropolitan Area Planning Commission
- Jackson County
- Altus School District
- Altus Air Force Base
- Western Oklahoma State College
- Southwest Technology Center
- Lugert-Altus Irrigation District
- Oklahoma Department of Transportation
- Southwest Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA)
- Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority
- Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc.
- Oklahoma Water Resources Board
- Quartz Mountain State Park
- Altus Municipal Airport
- Chamber of Commerce
- Soil and water conservation districts

Intergovernmental relationships can help improve cooperation by:

- Providing an opportunity and reason for communicating with other jurisdictions and agencies;
- Getting jurisdictions thinking about the intergovernmental impacts of their actions;
- Offering a forum for discussing intergovernmental issues and resolving conflicts;
- Helping to ensure that the community's actions are consistent with those of other governmental jurisdictions and agencies; and
- Providing ongoing opportunities for cooperation as the plan is implemented, monitored, and updated.

- A Guide to Preparing the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element of a Local Comprehensive Plan, Wisconsin Department of Administration

are issues that cross the boundaries of the community and impact not only Altus, but also Jackson County and the larger region. The economic health of Altus and its region are innately interconnected, meaning that the success of one is largely dependent on and, thus, responsible for the success of all.

Benefits of Cooperating – There are widely ranging benefits of cooperation depending on the amount and level of same, some of which include:

- **Cost savings** – First and foremost, cooperation can and does save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication of services. It may also offer opportunities to provide facilities and services that may not be possible to provide individually, such as convention or major recreation facilities and other significant capital investments.
- **Solving larger issues** – There are many issues that are beyond the control of each individual jurisdiction and require cooperation to address. Examples of these issues may include such things as flooding conditions, major transportation improvements, and economic development, among others.
- **Predictability** – Decisions and outcomes that are predictable are of great benefit to residents, businesses, land owners, and others. Any opportunity to coordinate to resolve potential disputes or conflicts with other jurisdictions that may impact the community will save time and money.
- **Mutual understanding** – As jurisdictions work together and become more acquainted with the vision and preferred outcomes of other entities, they may work together to achieve common goals and interests.
- **Enhanced public service** – Those who benefit the most from intergovernmental relationships are their constituents. Increased and improved services may be provided at reduced cost when jurisdictions eliminate duplication and work together.

Issues that are of particular interest and relevance to Altus and other jurisdictions for which intergovernmental cooperation is warranted include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **The availability of quality, affordable housing** and an assortment of living options are a result of land values, utility availability, and regulations pertaining to required minimum lot sizes, setbacks, building heights, lot coverage, and other dimensional requirements. If less expensive housing options are available in areas where facilities

and services are made available with limited restriction, then the pattern of development will likely occur in the peripheral areas. Cooperation between the regulations of the City and County is needed to result in a fiscally responsible pattern of development.

- **Transportation facilities** such as streets, sidewalks, and trails extend between the City and County, which means that there must be cooperation to ensure that there are sufficient rights-of-way preserved to allow continuity of the major thoroughfare system, that collector and local streets are extended between subdivisions, and that sidewalks and trails are continuous. To do so, there must be consistent planning procedures and design standards.
- **Regional transit** is vital to serve the needs of the entire region, such as individuals from the outlying smaller communities who desire public transit access to the hospital and other trip purposes. Cooperation is needed between transit providers to make connections between systems, thereby creating opportunities for increased regional mobility. This requires coordination of scheduling,
- **Stormwater flows** across the landscape without regard to jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, stormwater generated as a result of development and increased impervious surfaces can worsen flooding downstream. Coordination is, therefore, necessary to carefully manage the type and extent of development in flood prone and sensitive areas through land use planning and regulation.
- **Utility provision** leads to the feasibility of development. If there are adequate services available - regardless of the provider - development may occur without regard for other community objectives. Coordination between the City and other utility providers must occur in order for the City to control its pattern of development.
- **Environmental corridors** such as drainageways offer opportunities for linear connections and linkages between areas of the City and County. Without cooperation, these natural areas will be interrupted by development and other improvements, thereby denying the ability to connect these natural systems.
- **Economic development** affects the entire region. Therefore, it is in the interests of the region to coordinate the efforts to sustain and grow existing business, as well as attract new businesses and foster start-ups. This may include assistance in assembling

economic trend data and a strategic vision for the area as a whole. It could also include revenue sharing arrangements so that all jurisdictions gain from economic development.

Implementation

This comprehensive plan is intended as a working document that will impact the way the community manages its future growth and economic development. This plan presents a blueprint for action that provides clear direction to decision-makers as they manage the operations of the City in the coming years. The intent of the implementation program is to achieve the goals and objectives that embody the City's commitment that is the result of this intensive effort. While the primary responsibility for implementation rests with the City Council, it must involve a host of other individuals and agencies working in partnership to be successful. The plan may be implemented in the following ways:

- **Updating regulations** – The Comprehensive Plan includes numerous recommendations for amending the current development ordinances to accomplish the community vision. The plan may be used as the policy framework to support these changes and the decisions resulting from the new or revised regulations.
- **Land use decisions** – Every decision that is made by the City Council will affect the community's land use, whether it is the extension of infrastructure, growth policies, or economic development incentives. This plan may be used to guide these decisions, as well as those that are made in response to development proposals.
- **Capital improvements** – The plan may be used to coordinate the provision of public facilities and services and for establishing priorities and timeframes for municipal investments and improvements. It is essential that there is close coordination between infrastructure improvements and the City's growth plan in order to effectively manage development.
- **Economic incentives** – The City's Community Character Plan may be used as a basis for deciding economic incentives, thereby encouraging businesses to locate in areas where facilities and services exist or are readily available. Infill development areas and redevelopment sites should receive incentives, as well, to direct new economic opportunities in areas that can be most efficiently serviced by utilities and infrastructure.
- **Private investments** – Land owners and developers may use the plan in making decisions

about private investments to ensure that new development is consistent with the community land use plan and compatible with existing neighborhoods and establishments.

- **Personnel** – Successful implementation of this plan will impact requirements for staffing. Since the current staff is fully occupied with ongoing responsibilities, new or redefined positions are warranted to concentrate sufficient attention to the plan's recommendations.
- **Funding** – Implementation of the plan will require adequate funding, which may come from current revenue sources, a dedicated funding source, or outside grant funds from the state and federal governments. Annual appropriations and capital improvement funds will likely require reallocation to implement the plan's recommendations.

Action Plan

The action plan outlined below includes the individual tasks that are to be accomplished within the next five years. The priorities are established by the identified timeframe. To ensure accountability, a lead agency is identified, who may coordinate with other agencies to accomplish the task, but who is ultimately responsible for its timely and successful implementation. A primary source of funds is also identified, which may be matched with other funds such as state and federal grants, dedications, and in-kind services. The abbreviations for the funding sources and lead agencies are as follows:

Funding Sources

CD Community Development Block Grant
CIP Capital Improvement Program
DQ Department of Environmental Quality
EPA Environmental Protection Agency
GF General Fund
GR Grant
OB Operating Budget
PR Private
SA Street and Alley Fund
ST State Highway Department
SW Southwest Oklahoma Development Authority
TE Transportation Equity Act

Lead Agencies

CC City Council
ED Engineering Department
FD Fire Department
MPC Metropolitan Area Planning Commission
PD Police Department
PL Planning
PR Parks and Recreation
PW Public Works
PC Planning Commission
ST Street Department

Action Recommendation	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007-09	Lead Agency	Source of Funds
Land Use					
1. Draft interim development regulations prior to preparation of the Unified Development Code	✓			PL, PC, CC	GF
2. Unified Development Code (zoning, subdivision, landscaping, and appearance ordinances) and new zoning map (3.1)	✓			PL, PC, CC	GF
3. City-County unified development code for the compatibility use zones (3.1.13)	✓			PL, PC, MPC	GF
4. Infill and redevelopment standards (3.2.2)	✓			PL, PC	GF
5. Formation of Official Neighborhood Organizations (3.2.8)			✓	PL, PC, CC	--
6. Neighborhood-based Capital Improvement Program (3.2.16)			✓	PL, CC	CIP
7. Commerce Street landscape median (3.4.13)		✓		CC	CIP
8. Extend streetscape improvements along Main Street, Broadway, and Veterans Drive/Tamarack (3.4.14)	✓			ST, CC	CIP, SA, T21
Transportation					
9. Accept dedication and acquire rights-of-way (as needed) concurrent with development along the bypass route and at major intersections with arterial roadways and railroads (4.2)	✓	✓	✓	PL, ED	CIP
10. Construct a raised median in the middle of U.S. 62 at the east community entrance (4.2.7)			✓	ED, ST	CIP
11. Synchronize traffic signals – Phase One (4.2.30)			✓	ED, ST	SA, ST
12. Access management regulations (4.2.31)		✓		PL, PC	GF

Action Recommendation	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007-09	Lead Agency	Source of Funds
Transportation cont'd					
13. Sidewalk inventory and capital improvement program (4.3.5)	✓			ST	CD, CIP, SA
14. Update technical design standards	✓			PL, ED	GF
Parks and Recreation					
15. Acquire and develop a five acre neighborhood park in an identified priority need area (5.2.2)			✓	PR, CC	CD, CIP, GR, PR
16. Amend Sec. 30-12, Parks and Open Space, Community Development Ordinance (5.2.6-10)	✓			PL, PR, PC	GF
17. Secure an agreement for use of either the irrigation canal or vacated railroad right-of-way for a community trail (5.3.3)		✓		PR, CC	CIP, GR
18. Establish formalized joint use agreements with the Altus School District, WOSC, and SWTC (5.4.11)	✓			PR, CC	--
Community Appearance					
19. Unified Development Code - setbacks, bufferyards, landscaping, screening, outdoor sales (6.2)	✓			PL, PC, CC	GF
20. Sign ordinance amendment (6.2.8)	✓			PL, PC, CC	GF
21. Construct gateway treatments along U.S. 62 at the eastern entrance (6.3.3)		✓		PL, CC	CIP, ST
22. Reservoir master development plan (6.4.1)	✓			PL, PR	GF
23. Depot master plan and schematic design	✓			PL, PR	GF
24. Conduct a municipal golf course feasibility study (5.4.11)	✓			PR, CC	GF

Action Recommendation	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007-09	Lead Agency	Source of Funds
Growth Policies					
25. Main Street and Broadway intersection pavement design (6.4.14)		✓		ED, ST	CIP, ST
26. Policy resolution for extent of urban infrastructure and service provision (7.3.6)		✓		CC	--
27. Formalized rehabilitation and replacement program for water and wastewater systems (7.3.7)		✓		PW, CC	CIP
28. Evaluate capacity of water storage facilities	✓			PW	--
29. NPDES Phase II storm water implementation (7.3.35)			✓	PW	--
30. Study operational changes of the SE WWTP to accommodate the RO water plant	✓			PW	EPA, DQ
31. Inflow and infiltration study (7.3.18)	✓			PW	CIP, EPA, DQ
32. Drainage policy review and performance standards (7.3.31)	✓			PW	--
33. Solid waste transfer station feasibility study (7.3.37)		✓		PW, CC	GF
34. Public safety facility space study (7.4.2)			✓	PD, FD, CC	GF
Implementation					
35. Appoint (or reassign) a Comprehensive Plan Administrator	✓			CC	OB
36. Appoint Action Task Force and Technical Teams	✓			CC	--
37. Evaluation Report	✓	✓	✓	PL, PC	--
38. Evaluation and Appraisal Report			✓	PL, PC	--