PEC

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CITY OF
LIBERAL
KANSAS

ORDINANCE NO. 4637

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION OF THE "LAUNCH LIBERAL" 2025-2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR LIBERAL, KANSAS.

WHEREAS, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747, et seq., the Liberal Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (the "Commission") is authorized to make and amend a comprehensive plan for the Liberal planning area; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of K.S.A. 12-747, the Commission did publish notice on June 17, 2025 and, thereafter, held a public hearing on July 10, 2025 to consider a recommendation to adoption the *Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan* (the "Plan"); and

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2025, the Commission approved a recommendation to adopt the Plan and a certified copy of the Plan has been submitted to the governing body of the City of Liberal (the "City") with their recommendation for adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of Liberal, Kansas, finds it advisable to adopt the *Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan*.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF LIBERAL, KANSAS:

Section 1. Plan Approval. The *Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan*, dated July 10, 2025, as recommended for adoption by the Commission, which is certified and on file in the office of the City Clerk, is hereby approved as the official comprehensive plan for the City of Liberal, Kansas.

Section 2. Distribution. An attested copy of the Plan shall be sent to all other taxing subdivisions in the planning area requesting a copy as required by K.S.A. 12-747(c).

Section 3. Annual Review. At least once a year, the Commission shall review or reconsider the Plan or any part thereof and may propose amendments, extensions or additions which shall be adopted in the same manner as the original comprehensive plan, as required by K.S.A. 12-747(d).

Section 4. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force from and after its adoption by the governing body of the City, approval by the Mayor, and publication once in the official newspaper of the City.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Governing Body of the City of Liberal, Kansas, on this 12th day of August, 2025.

/s/ Jose Lara, Mayor
ATTEST: /s/ Alicia Hidalgo, MMC, City Clerk

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Comprehensive planning is only as good as those that participate in the planning process. The time, technical expertise, community dedication, and guidance of all the below participants was critical in the development of the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

MAYOR & CITY COMMISSION

Jose Lara, Mayor
Matt Landry, Vice Mayor
Jeff Parsons
Janeth Vazquez
Ron Warren

PLANNING COMMISSION & BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Steve Merz, Chairman
Edgar Ortuno, Vice Chairman
Nick Schwindt
Jason Ingland
Jeremy Benton
Jeff Hall
Nick Schwindt

Jairo Vazquez
Arlene Rosales, Administrative Assistant

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CORE TEAM (CPCT)

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Jeff Parsons, City Commission
Steve Merz, Planning Commission & Board of Zoning Appeals
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Jairo Vazquez
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Earl Watt
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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Section 1 provides the foundation from which the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan is based. This section explains how the Plan came to be, why it is necessary, and how it should be integrated into daily decisions.

CONTEXT

In 2023, the City of Liberal embarked on the creation of a new comprehensive plan – a guiding document that describes a vision and framework for the community's development over the next ten years. City leaders in Liberal recognized the importance of having a community-driven blueprint to help guide the future.

The Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan is the result of considerable analysis and study of the community as it exists today, as well as significant collaboration, participation, and input from Liberal residents and stakeholders throughout the planning process.

Liberal, the county seat of Seward County, is in southwest Kansas located approximately 1.5 miles north of the Oklahoma border and approximately 60 miles east of Colorado. The largest City in Kansas, Wichita, is approximately 3.5 hours by vehicle from Liberal. The City occupies approximately 13.6 square miles – or 8,720 acres – of land. Major roadways traversing Liberal are US 54 east to west (Pancake Boulevard within the City limits), Kansas Avenue north to south, Western Avenue north to south, and US 83 (County Estates Road within the City limits). The study limits for the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan include the incorporated City limits and the land designated as the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).
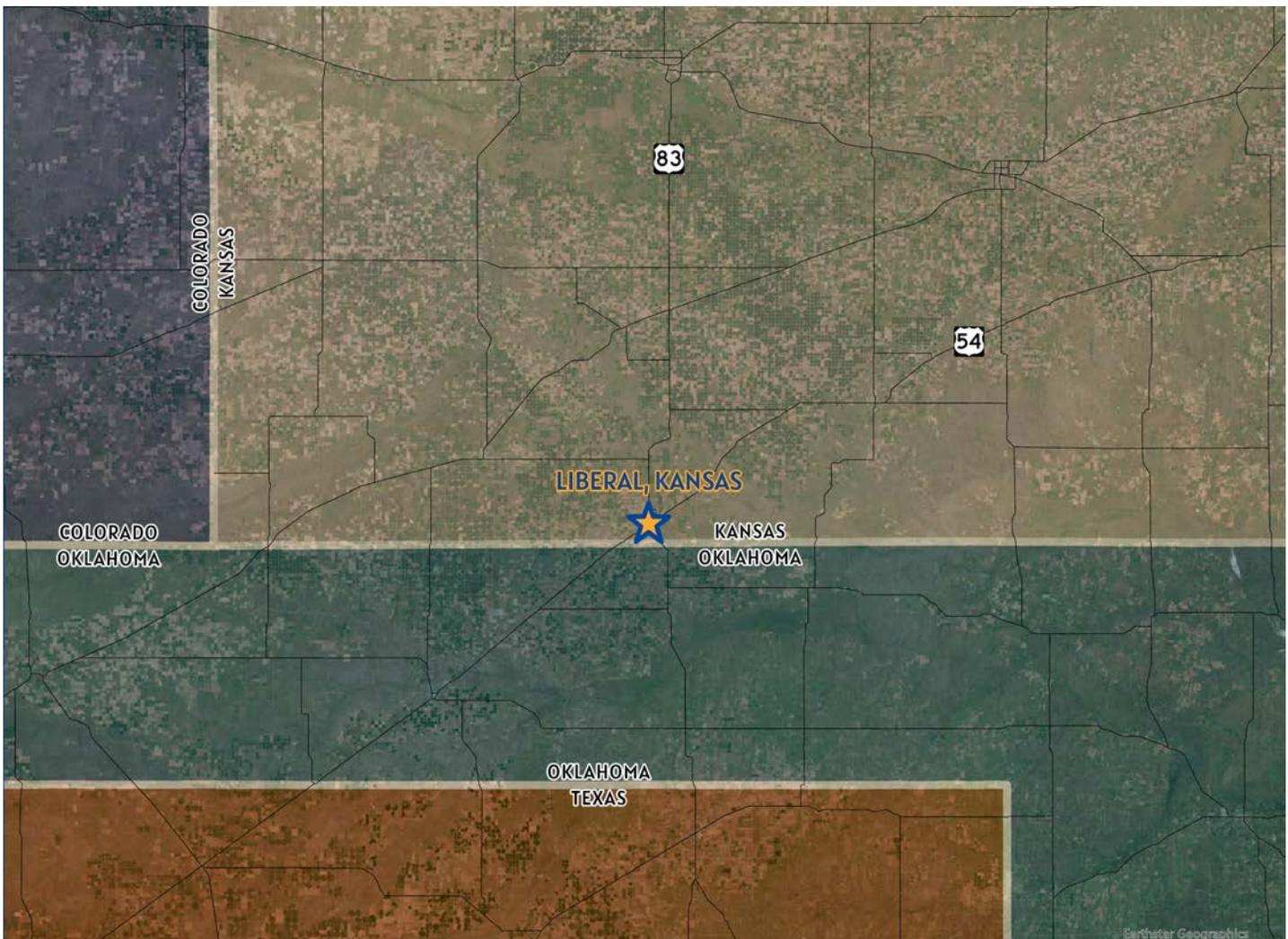

REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURPOSE

The updated comprehensive plan will serve as the City's road map for adopting new policies and initiatives that achieve its identified vision. Implementing these changes will require coordinated effort between City departments, residents, and other partners engaged throughout the planning process. The Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan will assist the City Commission in making well-informed decisions regarding land use and capital improvements – decisions that will have long-lasting impacts on how Liberal grows and develops. Equally important, the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan can help communicate the community's aspirations and goals to private sector investors, local institutions, businesses, and residents.

From a practical standpoint, the Launch Liberal 2035 plan will serve as a playbook for local officials to understand the appropriate types of development and land uses in the City, realizing that each new development or redevelopment project creates a lasting impact on the City's design, built form, economic well-being, and quality of life.

It is important to note that a comprehensive plan does not replace zoning regulations, development codes, capital improvement programs, or other regulatory documents. Instead, the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan will serve as the foundation for updates to those policy documents and implementation tools.

Comprehensive plans should be reviewed and revised regularly to respond to shifts in economic or demographic conditions, changes in state and federal law, the impacts of existing policies and past decisions, and new implementation tools or resources that would benefit the desired outcomes of the plan. At least once a year, the Planning Commission should review or reconsider the plan or portions of the plan and may propose amendments. Without regular evaluation and monitoring of progress, the plan will lose its effectiveness in achieving and upholding the shared vision for Liberal.

PLANNING AREA MAP
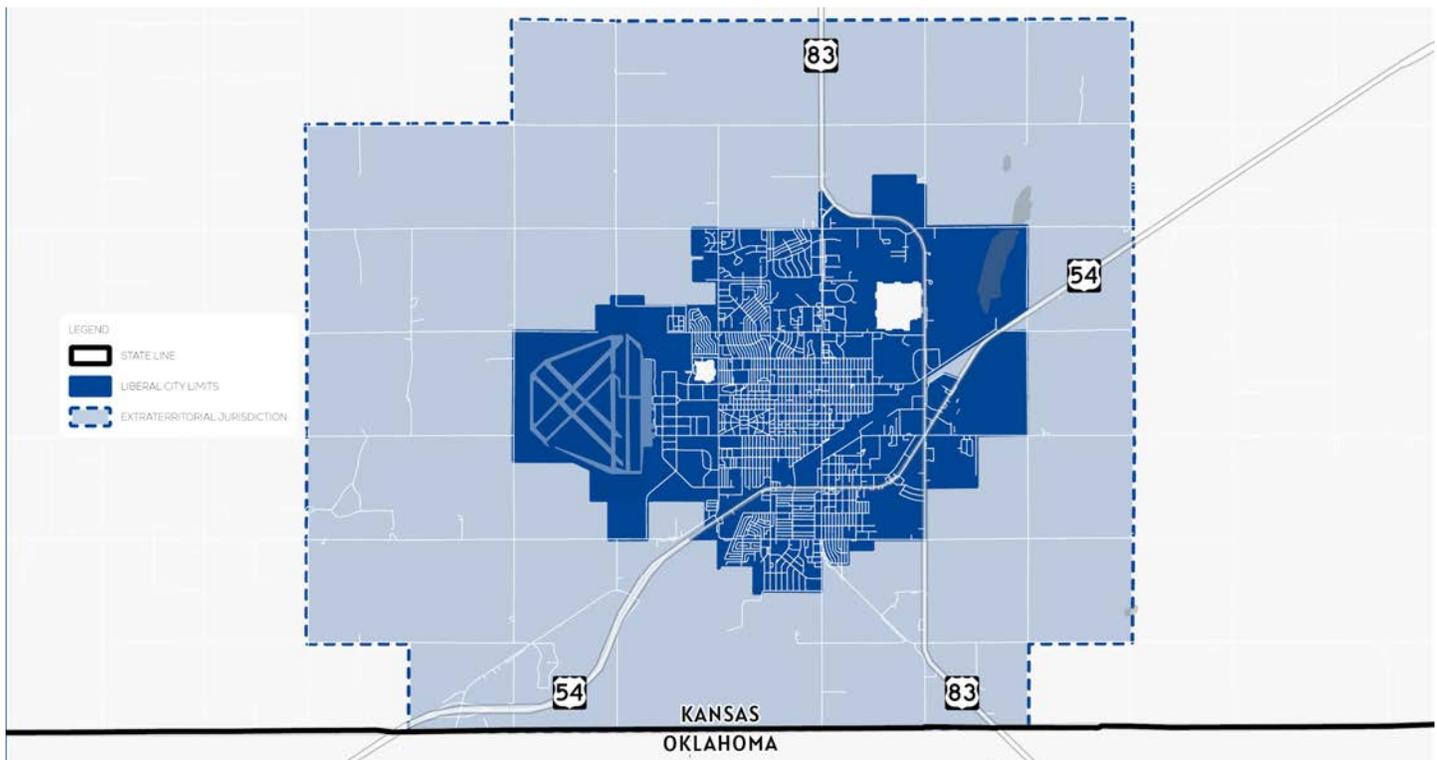
In summary, the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan serves several key purposes:

FUTURE VISION

This plan represents public consensus on Liberal's desired long-term future. It is the fundamental guiding planning document for the City Commission, Planning Commission & Board of Zoning Appeals, City departments, and other partner agencies and organizations.

LAND USE & GROWTH FRAMEWORK

This plan provides a land use and growth strategy that promotes the highest and best use of land while attempting to reduce land use conflicts. It aims to increase the benefits land can provide in terms of residential and employment opportunities, transportation options, and recreation and open space. Benefits must also be sustainable so that current and future generations of Liberal residents and stakeholders can thrive in the community.

QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK

This plan provides a quality of life strategy that promotes investments in parks, sidewalks, trails, public infrastructure, placemaking, community identity, community connection, arts and culture, and other quality of life amenities that are essential to ensuring a livable and desirable environment.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT GUIDE

The Liberal City Commission and City departments should use this plan to guide decision-making regarding capital improvements and investments in community facilities and infrastructure. Other investments may involve specific area management and enhancement efforts (high-value corridors, neighborhoods, etc.), community design and placemaking initiatives, neighborhood conservation, arts and culture, and historic preservation. The City is also encouraged to seek grant opportunities and other funding sources at the regional, state, and federal levels.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT GUIDE

Developers, industries, entrepreneurs, and others interested in investing in Liberal can use this plan to gain insight on land use policies and development opportunities. This type of community stakeholder will view sound long-range community planning as critical to ensuring the viability, stability, and long-term success of their projects and investments in Liberal.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan prioritizes specific planning actions and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the City Commission, City departments, and other partners in the implementation of the plan. The plan also identifies other stakeholders that could play a substantial role in the future implementation of the plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL

The process of creating this plan provided an opportunity for local leaders and residents to understand and evaluate community strengths and weaknesses, and to craft a high-level vision, goals, and strategies for addressing critical community issues.

PLANNING PROCESS & ORGANIZATION

Preparing the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan involved a XX-month, multiple phase planning process starting in October 2023 and ending in Month 20XX.

PHASE 1: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The first phase included a review of previous planning documents and policies, land use conditions, demographic trends, and local development opportunities and constraints.

PHASE 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Although identified as a specific phase of the planning process, community engagement was carried out throughout the entire project calendar. A series of focus group events and listening sessions, pop-up community events, a community survey, stakeholder group events, and City leadership engagement were prioritized to ensure the planning vision created is reflective of all community voices.

PHASE 3: PLANNING

Following the community assessment and initial phases of the community engagement process, considerable time and effort were invested to establish a community vision. Once the vision was identified, the planning team worked to develop community goals, policies, and strategies through continued analysis and community dialogue.

PHASE 4: REFINE, ADOPT, & IMPLEMENT

During this phase, the final review of the plan occurred, followed by the official plan adoption process. The consultant team will provide plan review and updates at the 6-month and 12-month anniversaries of plan adoption.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CORE TEAM

The planning process utilized a Comprehensive Plan Core Team (CPCT) consisting of City staff and elected and appointed officials. The CPCT was the primary technical sounding board for the planning effort and was utilized throughout the process to provide insight and information to the Consultant Team in the direction and recommendations of the plan. The CPCT committed to:

- Serving as an internal and external champion of the planning effort. Encouraging residents and other stakeholders to fully participate in the planning process.
- Representing their subject matter expertise.
- Being honest in their comments and suggestions, and always remembering that the goal of the planning process is to keep the entire community's best interests in mind.
- Keeping an open mind and remaining mindful and respectful of others' thoughts and values when they differ from their own.
- Participating fully in all discussions and activities throughout the duration of the planning process.

CPCT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

The planning process also utilized a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) made up of property owners, students, business owners, interested residents, developers, and more to act as a primary community sounding board throughout the planning process. The formation of the CPSC was strategic to ensure a diverse representation of voices (age, interests, geography, background, demographics, etc.). The CPSC committed to:

- Being honest in their comments and suggestions, and always remembering that the goal of the planning process is to keep the entire community's best interests in mind.
- Keeping an open mind and remaining mindful and respectful of others' thoughts and values when they differ from their own.
- Participate fully in discussion and activities throughout the duration of the planning process.

CPSC

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan is organized into five sections and four appendices. The first section explains how the Plan came to be, why it is necessary, and how it should be integrated into daily decisions. Section 2 describes the value statements and goals that set the tone and theme for the Plan's implementation strategies.

Sections 3 and 4 provide the Plan's recommendations related to future land use, built environment development, and quality of life amenities. These sections deliver recommendations to guide Liberal as the City works to achieve this Plan's vision.

Section 5 outlines the City's action plan for carrying out community goals. Action by action, it describes the task at hand, who is responsible for participating in its successful completion, what timeline the task should be completed within, and what value it supports.

Lastly, the appendices cover detailed background information that was considered comprehensively to form the plan. The four appendices include an in-depth assessment of the community (Appendix A), summaries of existing plans and studies (Appendix B), a full recap of the community engagement events and findings (Appendix C), and the full results of the community survey (Appendix D).

SECTION 1 – Introduction
SECTION 2 – Value Statements & Goals
SECTION 3 – Land Use & Growth Framework
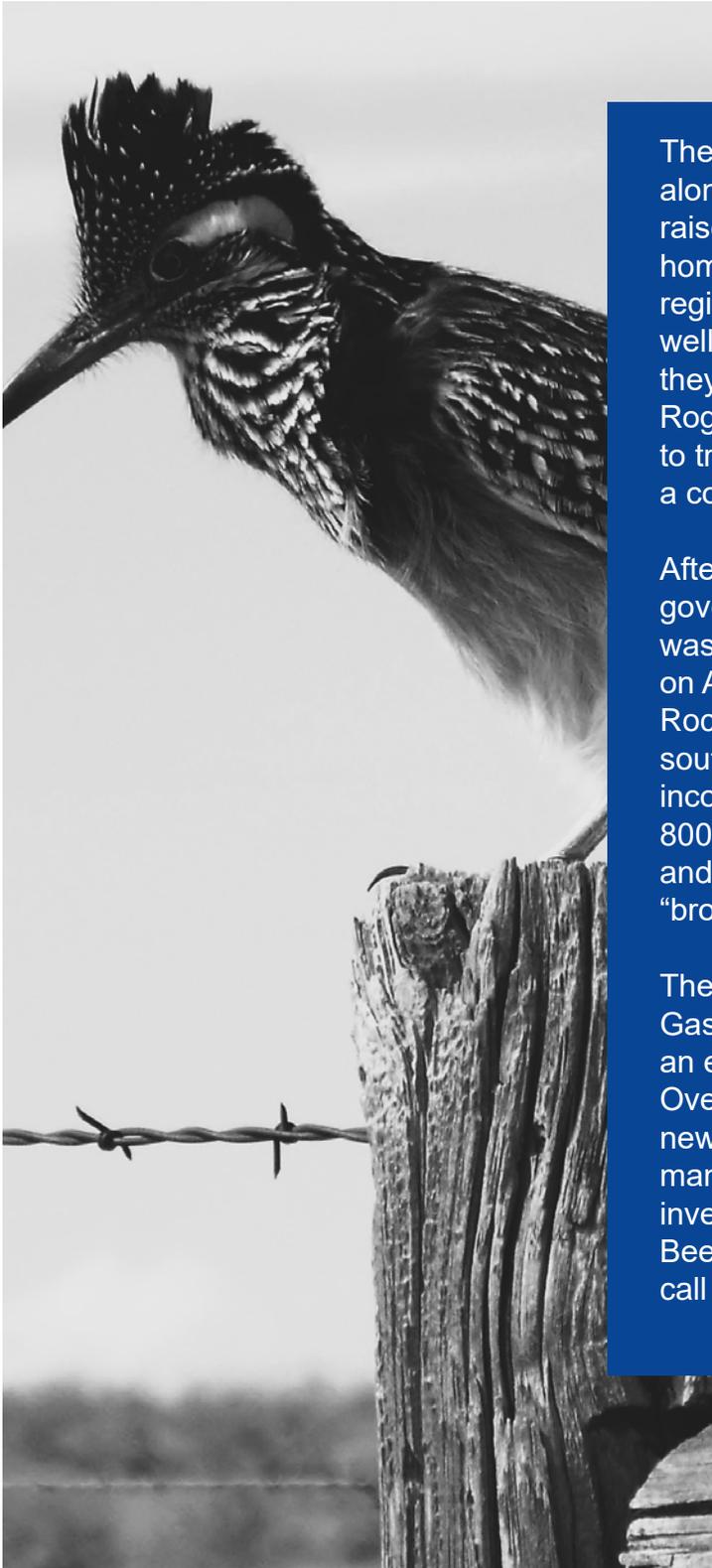**SECTION 4** – Quality of Life Framework
SECTION 5 – Implementation Plan

APPENDIX A – Community Assessment
APPENDIX B – Summary of Relevant Plans & Studies
APPENDIX C – Community Engagement Summary
APPENDIX D – Community Survey Report

The earliest inhabitants of Seward County settled along the Cimarron River in the late 1870s to raise livestock along lush prairie grasslands. One homesteader, S.S. Rogers, settled in the Southern region of the county, where he hand-dug a 90-foot well and welcomed cattlemen and passersby as they traversed the high plains. Generous in nature, Rogers was known for offering water from his well to travelers. "That's mighty liberal of you," became a common reply to his kind hospitality.

After Rogers opened a general store and the government built an official post office, the townsite was aptly named Liberal, and plots were opened on April 13, 1888. The timing was just right, as the Rock Island railroad decided to detour its route south through Liberal. Within a year, Liberal was incorporated as a 3rd class city with a population of 800 residents. The vital connection to the railroad and nearby water resources made Liberal the "broom corn capital of the world" for several years.

The 1920s brought the discovery of the Hugoton Gas Field, with oil found soon after, making Liberal an energy-producing giant in the high plains region. Over time, the growing population gave rise to new agriculture and energy industries, aircraft manufacturing, strategic highway infrastructure investments, and the establishment of the National Beef packing plant. Today, nearly 20,000 residents call Liberal home.

SECTION 2

VALUES STATEMENTS & GOALS

Section 2 describes the value statements and goals that set the tone and theme for the implementation strategies of the Plan.
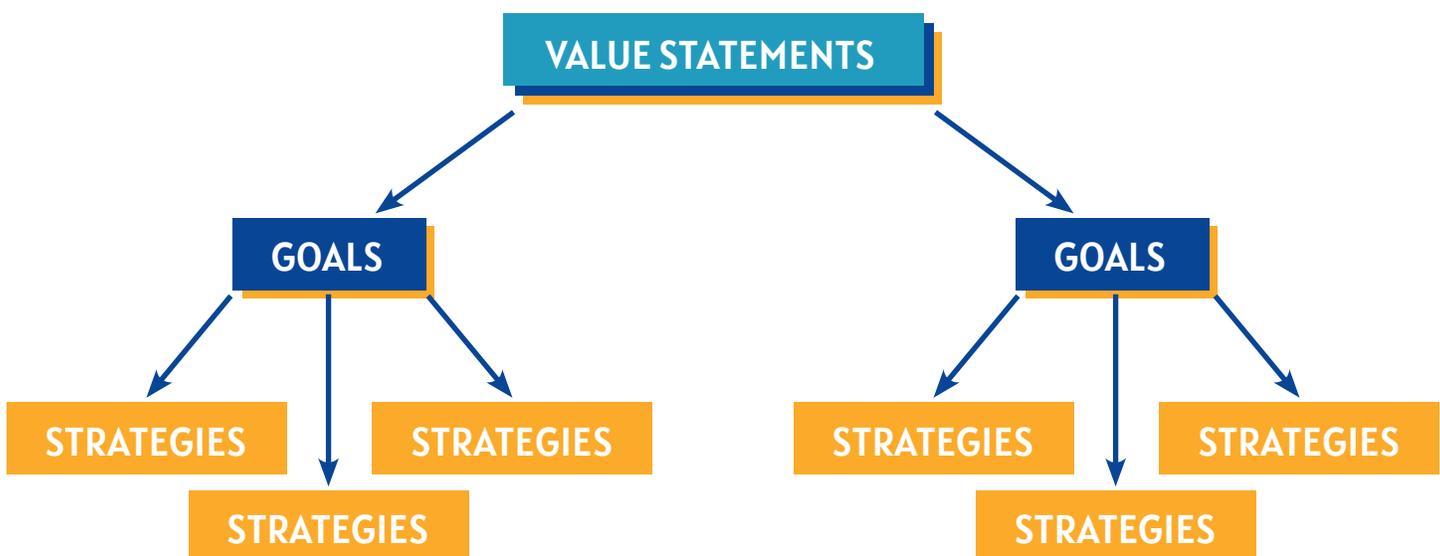
VALUE STATEMENTS & GOALS

Section 2 of this plan serves to summarize Liberal's standards and ethics- it represents the overarching ideals of the City. The following value statements were a result of the Community Engagement process, meaning they came from the stakeholders of Liberal themselves, and have been infused with planning expertise and key findings from the Community Assessment phase. They guide the goals and strategies this plan recommends. Using this framework allows this document to serve as a modern best-practice guidebook for Liberal, grounded in its own values.

As shown in Appendix C, this plan had extensive community engagement, interacting with stakeholders from Liberal at eleven different events from April to September of 2024. While this provides a breadth of information, it does not address every individual opinion and does not claim to be all encompassing. For instance, the response rate from Hispanic and Latino/a populations was much lower than their share of the actual population. This was taken into consideration when drafting the plan and is the reason one of the recommendations is to create more robust Spanish communications. While not without its shortcomings, the value statements and goals in this plan have been developed with and for the citizens of Liberal.
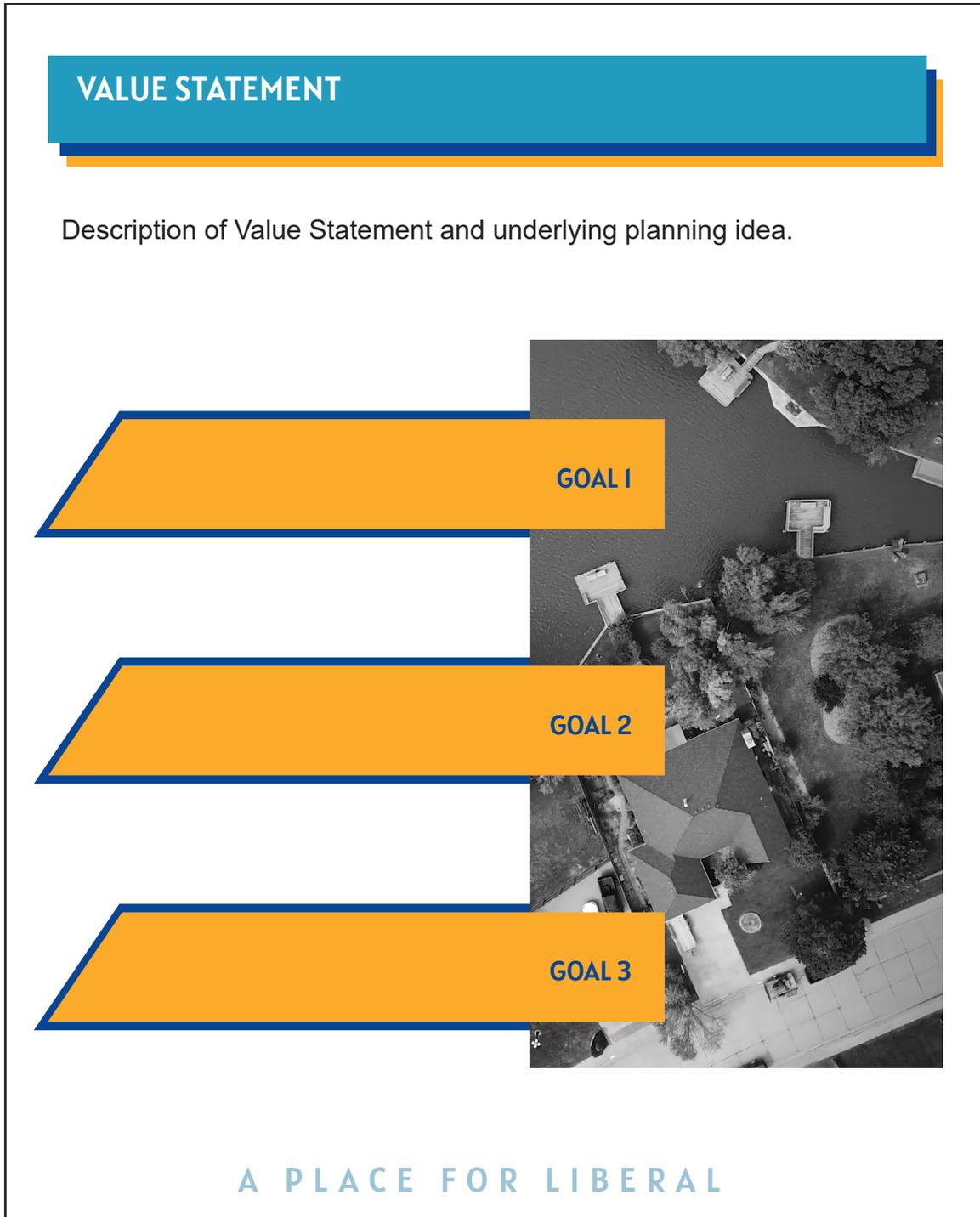
VALUE STATEMENTS express a common belief or principle found in Liberal. These ideas were often discussed at multiple different events and with gusto. They should be guiding principles that can aid future decisions in all aspects of the city. Launch Liberal 2035 expresses five value statements for the City.

GOALS are target points that support each value statement. They are guard rails that can serve to orient action from the City. Goals are intentionally broad to allow for creativity and flexibility while Liberal develops towards its values. There are three goals under each value statement for this plan.

STRATEGIES are concrete and actionable steps Liberal can take to meet its goals and uphold its values. The strategies for each goal are extrapolated and analyzed in Section 5 of this document – the Implementation Plan.

The diagram below showcases how the value statements and goals are to be read in the following pages- value statements are listed at the top of the page with pertaining goals in the yellow flags below. The strategies for each goal are listed in Section 5 - Implementation Plan.

VALUE STATEMENT

Description of Value Statement and underlying planning idea.

GOAL 1

GOAL 2

GOAL 3

A PLACE FOR LIBERAL

LIBERAL WILL HAVE SAFE AND ATTAINABLE HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS AT ALL STAGES OF LIFE.

Allowing residents of Liberal to remain in the City after high school or college, raise a family, and age in place is key to maintaining the feeling of "home" that Liberal has. While housing attainability is a national issue, the State of Kansas and Liberal specifically are in prime position to retain citizens and offer a more affordable but equally attractive lifestyle. Liberal's development community is already bringing more rooftops to the area, and this can be enhanced to ensure Liberal is built by its own citizens. Providing options for residents at every age increases satisfaction and can deepen citizens' sense of belonging.

GOAL 1: Revitalize existing vacant and/or dilapidated housing

GOAL 2: Eliminate barriers to encourage a mix of quality housing options within the community

GOAL 3: Amplify the creation of a local development community that is responsive to local housing needs

A PLACE TO LIVE

LIBERAL WILL BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY PROVIDING AN EFFICIENT, SAFE, FUNCTIONAL, AND PLEASANT EXPERIENCE FOR ALL TRANSPORTATION USERS.

Whether traveling by car, bicycle, foot, or public transit, every citizen in Liberal deserves to be safe and mobile. Increasing transportation options for citizens increases quality of life and makes a safer and healthier community – physically, socially, mentally, and financially. Creating optimal connections throughout the City can also aid in resident satisfaction. Children and the aging population benefit from these improvements as well by providing a level of independence that they do not have when they must rely on a driver. Improving connectivity is a smart financial decision – strong pedestrian infrastructure has been shown to increase property values, especially along main corridors. As roadways are maintained and reconstructed, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian paths can be added to minimize overall project costs. Focusing on core downtown and main street areas, like Pancake Boulevard and Kansas Avenue, will help increase property values and make Liberal's commerce more attractive to locals and visitors alike. Additionally, tweaking small elements of street design can aid in safety for all citizens, those in and out of vehicles.

GOAL 1: Continue to emphasize the development of multi-modal transportation options for all citizens

GOAL 2: Assess, improve, and maintain the existing roadway system to support current and future needs

GOAL 3: Increase the safety of vehicular traffic in the community

A CONNECTED PLACE
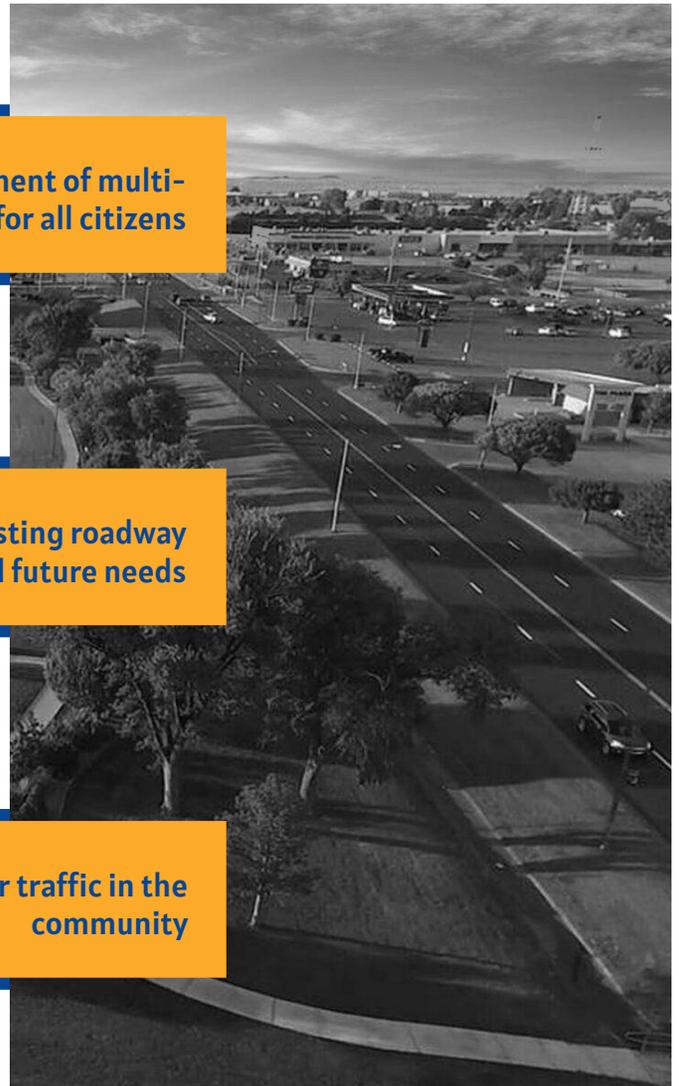
LIBERAL WILL FEATURE UNIQUE AND IDENTIFIABLE PLACES AND SPACES THAT FURTHER COMMUNITY PRIDE.

A common discussion point during the community engagement phase of this plan was that Liberal does not have a distinctive brand or identity. Using the lens of placemaking in projects can start to turn that tide. Placemaking can provide iconic experiences that draw in visitors and instill pride in citizens. This can take many forms, from coordinated neighborhood clean ups to adding flower baskets downtown, to large economic development projects. Liberal's placemaking can have a distinctive flavor that separates it from other peer cities – its culture. Embracing the Hispanic and Latino/a influences in Liberal can lead to dynamic development and increase community pride, while still honoring the City's past. The founding of Liberal began with a welcoming spirit, which can be continued and emphasized for the generations that will continue to call Liberal home.

GOAL 1: Emphasize and embrace the cultural identity of Liberal as a source of pride

GOAL 2: Support placemaking efforts that enhance the community character of Liberal

GOAL 3: Encourage growth at key activity centers and corridors that enhance the appearance and character of Liberal

A DISTINCTIVE PLACE

LIBERAL WILL BE A COMMUNITY OF GREAT AND CONNECTED PARK SPACES WITH ENJOYABLE RECREATION OPTIONS.

A great asset to Liberal is its current park system. Protecting the City's parks will be key to maintaining the quality of life residents expect. Several stakeholders brought up the high standard of the parks in the City and had ideas for improving them even further. These parks provide spaces for recreation, help the environment, and act as communal places where residents can get to know one another outside of home and work - also known as "third places". Furthermore, they are a great benefit to neighboring property values and will aid in attracting more residents to Liberal. A large part of the City is already within a 10-minute walk to a park; however, some areas are outside of this boundary, and in need of additional local park space. Special attention should be given to these neighborhoods as new park plans develop (See Map A.6 in Appendix A).
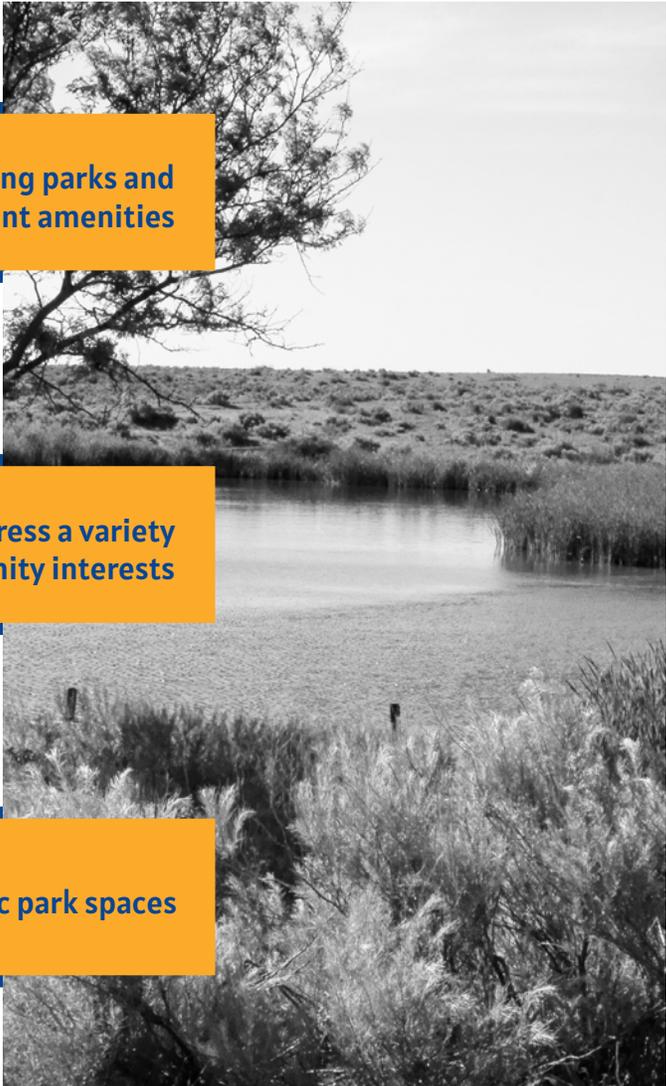
GOAL 1: Emphasize the maintenance of existing parks and expand current amenities

GOAL 2: Offer recreation opportunities that address a variety of community interests

GOAL 3: Improve access for all residents to public park spaces

A PLACE TO PLAY

LIBERAL WILL HAVE A STRONG ECONOMIC BASE WITH A DIVERSE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN.

While home to many great local businesses, stakeholders indicated a desire for a more robust commercial menu. Increasing the types of businesses in Liberal will add to job prospects, increase quality of life, and provide additional stabilization to the economy. Pairing commercial and workforce development can aid to secure Liberal's population and create a regional attraction for people looking for a place to live. Focusing on downtown will help curb sprawl, encourage reinvestment in Liberal, and increase community pride.

GOAL 1: Encourage growth of commercial, retail, office, and industrial uses

GOAL 2: Expand workforce development and employment opportunities for all individuals, especially young adults

GOAL 3: Activate downtown through the investment in public spaces, infrastructure, and events

A PLACE FOR OPPORTUNITY
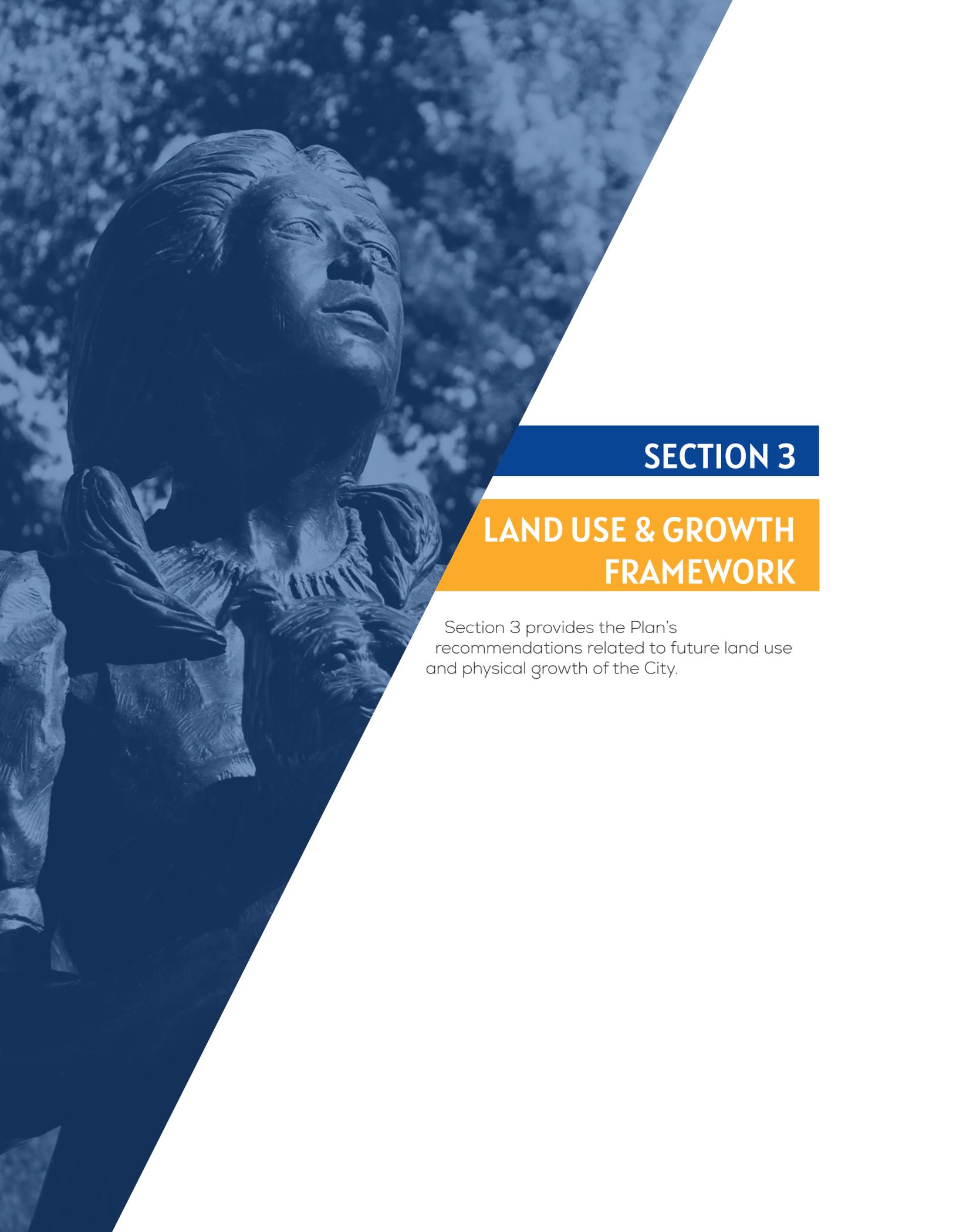
SECTION 3

LAND USE & GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Section 3 provides the Plan's recommendations related to future land use and physical growth of the City.

PLACE-BASED APPROACH

Communities are more than just a location or spot on a map. Communities are a unique collection of qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, natural, and social – that provide meaning, purpose, and identity. This sense of "place" is what makes our physical environment valuable. Places have a strong identity and character that is felt by residents and visitors. A focus on place creation is a way to shape the future of communities by focusing on the look and feel of the built environment as opposed to focusing only on land uses.

Our approach to future built environment planning utilizes a 'place-based approach' for land use and development patterns. The emphasis for this approach is that future physical development will be based on **character of the built environment** and site design rather than exclusively relying on general or specific use of land. A traditional land use map that separates uses does not consider the complex fabric of a community. Traditional land use maps can result in less flexibility, restricting a community's ability to adapt to local trends and new local patterns, leading to inefficient and undesirable community development patterns. Utilizing the place-based approach allows development to occur in conformance with the community's vision *over time* as opposed to a *particular moment in time*.

Three levels of analysis are utilized in our place-based approach:

3 — PLACE TYPES

2 — ELEMENTS OF PLACE

1 — CHARACTER CONTEXT ZONES
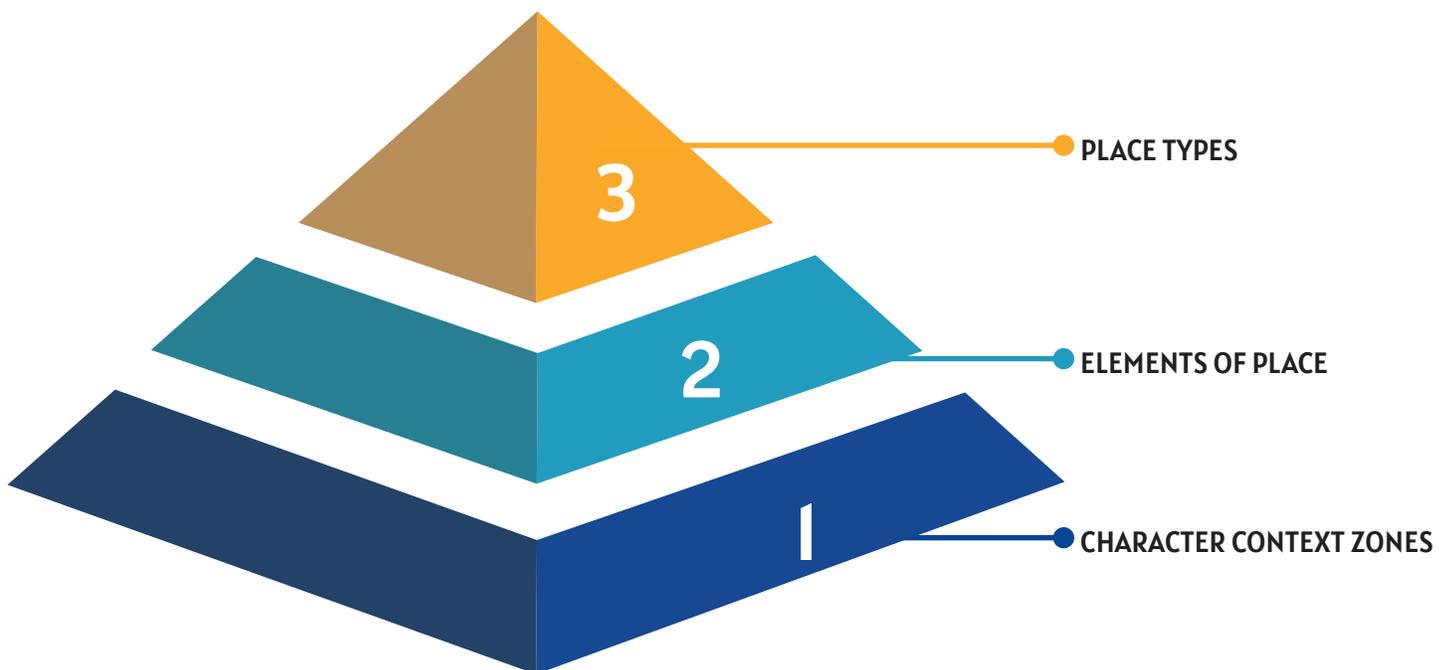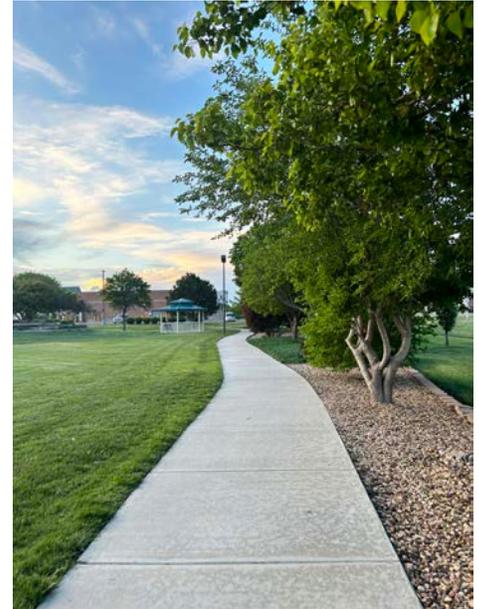
CHARACTER CONTEXT ZONES

The overarching principle behind Character Context Zones is that development should differ depending on the surrounding context. For example, in a more rural setting, there is more natural open space. In a suburban setting, there are similar amounts of open space, built space, and transportation infrastructure. Lastly, in an urban setting, built space is the predominant experience. The figures below illustrates this concept.

RURAL
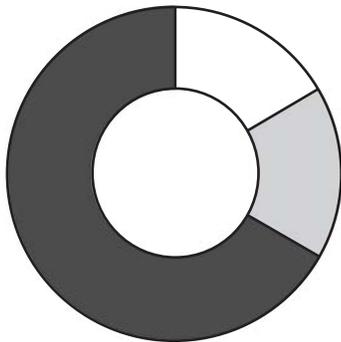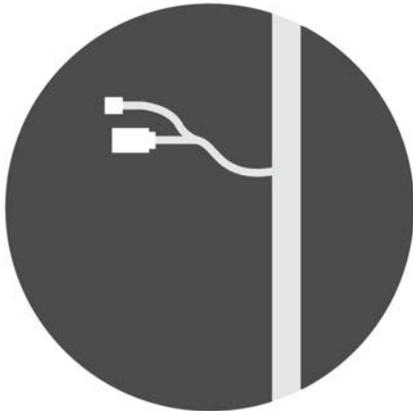
- Open Space
- Car Space
- Built Space

SUBURBAN
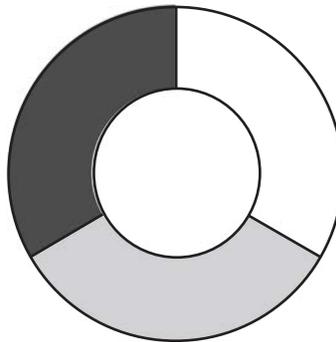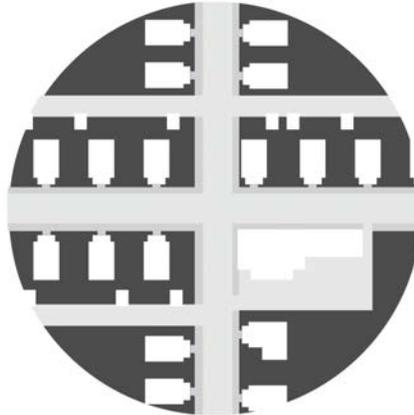
- Open Space
- Car Space
- Built Space

URBAN
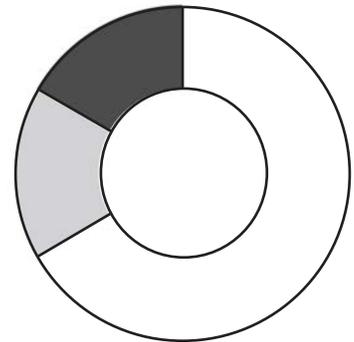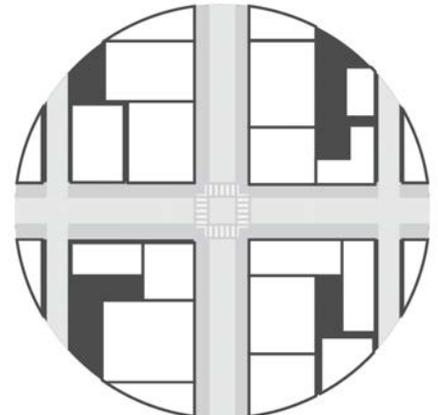
- Open Space
- Car Space
- Built Space

RURAL

In the Rural Context Zone there is not a significant amount of development. Primarily, supported land uses include farming/agricultural, natural open space, and low-density development. It is not anticipated that infrastructure such as potable water and sanitary sewer are currently available or will be extended in the future. These areas are likely served by rural roadway cross sections (ditch drainage, no sidewalks, etc.).

| ditch | drive lane | drive lane | ditch |
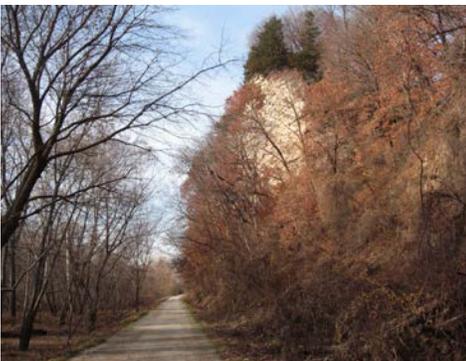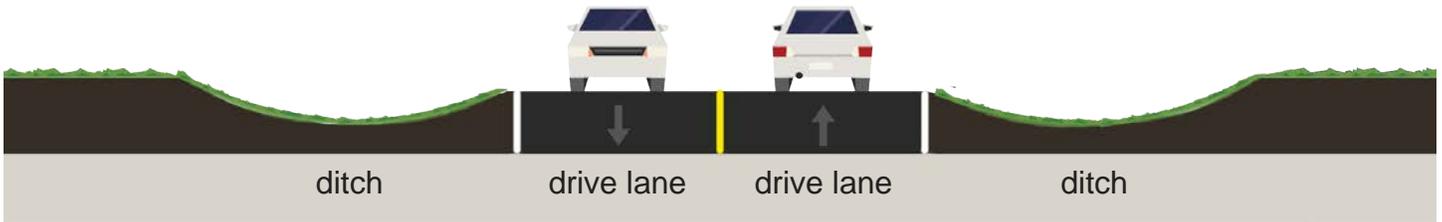
The Suburban Context Zone reflects a built environment that consists of low-to-moderate density residential neighborhoods, supportive non-residential centers, and areas supporting offices and light industrial services. Areas throughout the community identified as suburban are typically segmented in specific and separate land uses and focus on transitions between development types. Nonetheless, the Suburban Context Zone should look to promote quality of life elements such as walkability and placemaking efforts like the Urban Context Zone just at different scales and intensities.

sidewalk   drive lanes   buffer & bike lane   parking   sidewalk
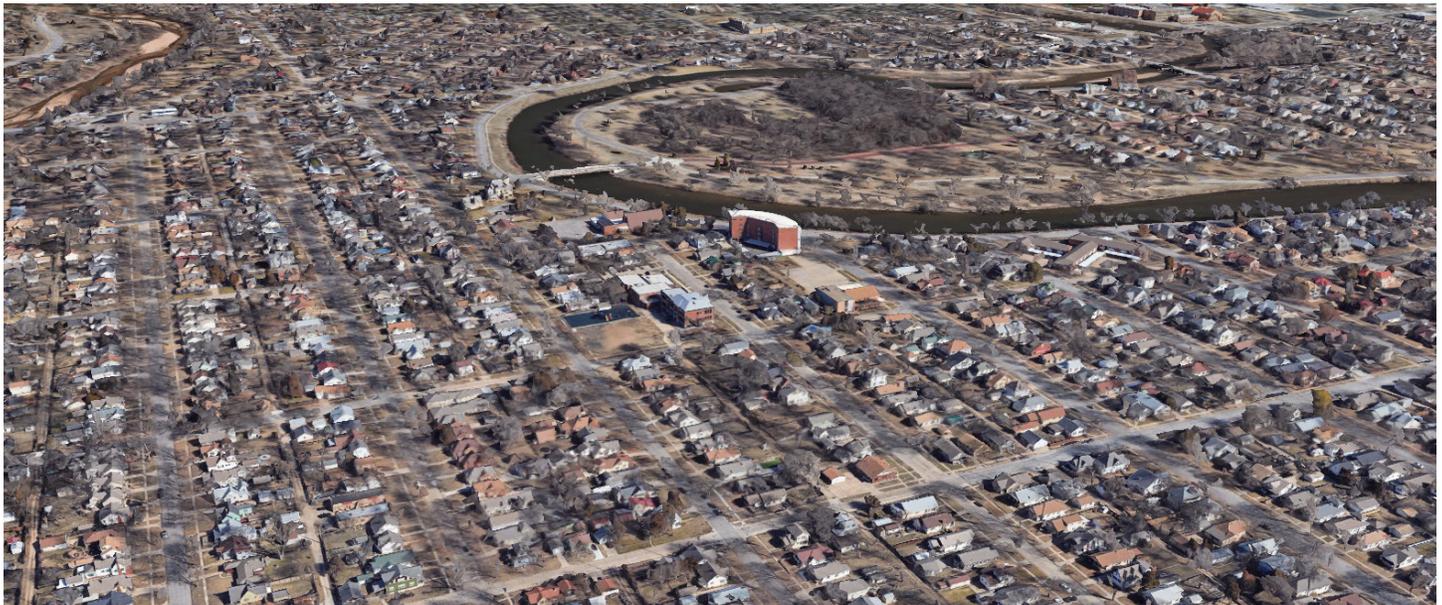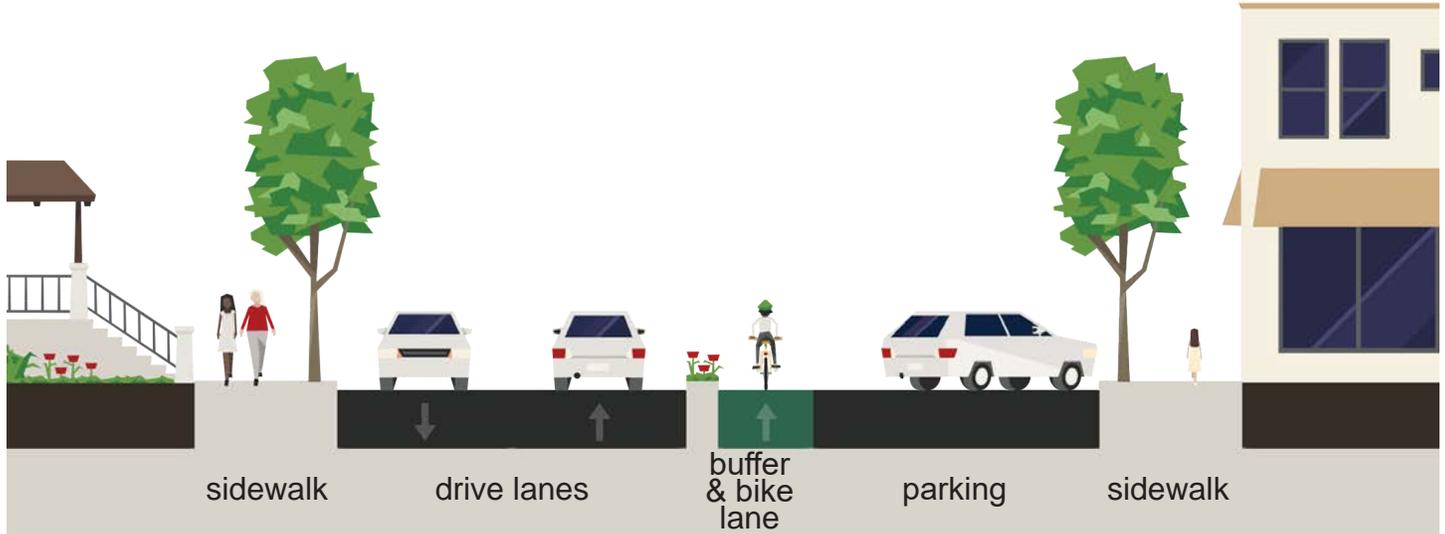
The Urban Context Zone focuses on areas of the community that can support higher density development patterns. The Urban Context Zone aims to create balance when combining land uses within an area, a specific development site, or building. Additionally, the Urban Context Zone promotes quality of life elements such as walkability and placemaking efforts.

+ amenity zone | parking | bike lane | drive lanes | bike lane | parking | + amenity zone
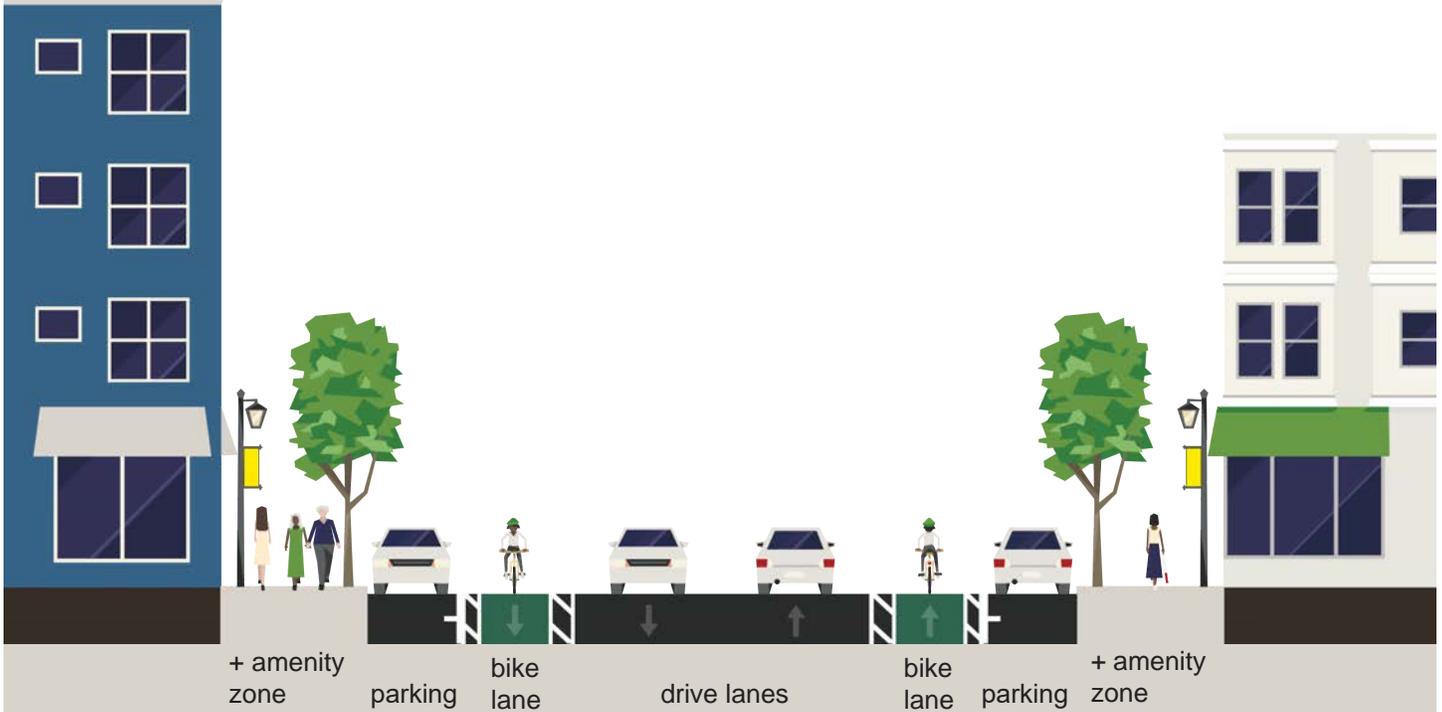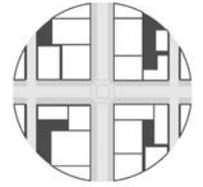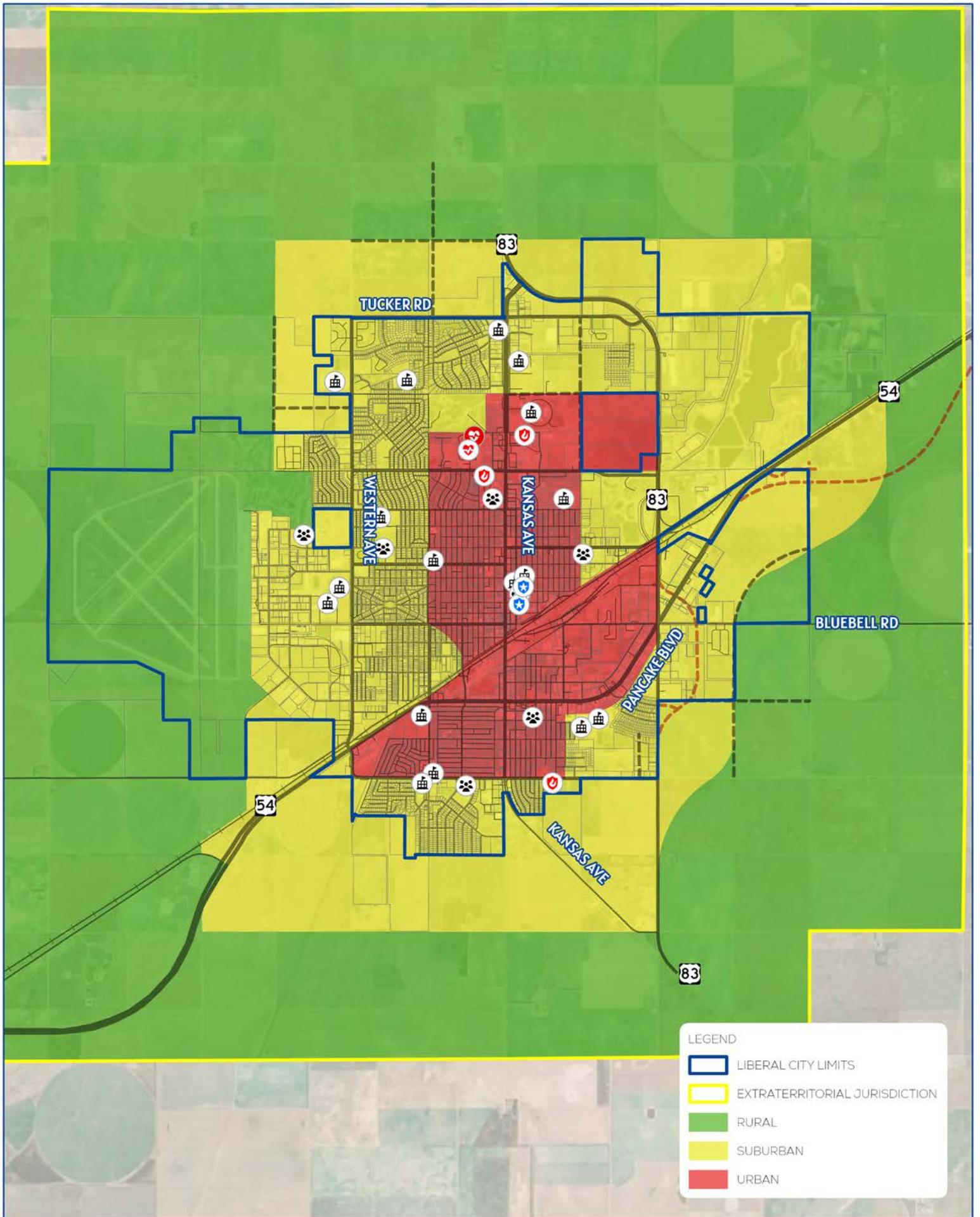
Legend

- LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION
- RURAL
- SUBURBAN
- URBAN

TUCKER RD

WESTERN AVE

KANSAS AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

83

54

MAP 3.1 | CHARACTER CONTEXT ZONES

0   0.5   1
Miles

ELEMENTS OF PLACE

Whether our focus is rural, suburban, or urban, our goal is the creation of places. For places to be created, certain elements must exist. The elements may be utilized in different scales and intensities but are nonetheless present in each Context Character Zone. We utilize four major elements of place: Green Spaces, Corridors, Complete Neighborhoods, and Centers. With few exceptions, each element will be represented in each context zone and will contain multiple place types.

GREEN SPACES

Undeveloped land preserved for environmental and/or recreational benefit. Green spaces may have conditions making them unsuitable for development or they may be undeveloped due to intentional preservation. These may include areas of elevated flood risk, those containing natural monuments, or areas of ecological significance. Depending on context, green spaces can be completely undeveloped (preserved) or can be developed as park and recreation assets.

CORRIDORS

Corridors provide for the movement of people and goods within and outside of the city, including streets, roads, highways, rail lines, and trails. They connect areas/destinations within a community. Corridors are represented at various scales and can reflect varying forms of development based on the surrounding context.

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Residentially focused areas with safe and convenient access to daily needs. Complete neighborhoods are connected internally and externally and can include various scales and forms of residential development. Community, recreation, and green spaces are embedded in the neighborhood.

CENTERS

A critical mass of activity ranging in scale and intensity based on the surrounding context.

GREEN SPACES

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

PLACES

CORRIDORS

CENTERS

PLACE TYPES

The third and final level of analysis in our place-based approach utilizes 'place types'. Place types describe and illustrate the desired character to guide future growth and development. Place types organize future patterns for a community, set a desired community fabric, promote a competitive environment, and encourage greater land use diversity. The place type framework builds on the idea of establishing unique and desirable places that are essential to a complete community that is harmonious, inviting, and resilient. Place types are not necessarily concerned with the specific use of each parcel in a community, but rather focus on collective uses for areas with the overall ambition to establish places.

Our approach identifies and describes 11 place types within the community that, together, accommodate a full range of land use types. The bullet points below summarize the defining attributes that comprise each place type. The table below lays out where each place type is applicable.

PLACE TYPES

1. Natural Conservation
2. Parks & Recreation Asset
3. Rural Neighborhood
4. Traditional Neighborhood
5. City Neighborhood
6. Neighborhood Corridor
7. City Corridor
8. Neighborhood Center
9. Industry & Logistics Center
10. Institutional & Employment Center
11. City Center

PLACE TYPE ATTRIBUTES

The following pages show several attributes that comprise each place type:

- **LAND USES** are a list of land uses appropriate within the place type. This list is representative only, and the community may determine that additional land uses, similar in nature, may be compatible with the place type designation.

- **ZONING DISTRICTS** identifies Liberal's existing zoning districts that may support some or all the identified land uses.

- **DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS** are intended to guide development in a manner that is consistent with the character of the place type.

	RURAL	SUBURBAN	URBAN
GREEN SPACE	Natural Conservation	Parks & Recreation Asset	Parks & Recreation Asset
CORRIDORS	-	Neighborhood Corridor	City Corridor
COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS	Rural Neighborhood	Traditional Neighborhood	Traditional Neighborhood City Neighborhood
CENTERS	Industry & Logistics Center	Neighborhood Center Institutional & Employment Center Industry & Logistics Center	City Center Institutional & Employment Center

LEGEND

- ▭ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- PARKS & RECREATION ASSET
- TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
- CITY NEIGHBORHOOD
- NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR
- CITY CORRIDOR
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- CITY CENTER
- INSTITUTIONAL & EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- INDUSTRY & LOGISTICS CENTER
- RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

TUCKER RD

15TH ST

WESTERN AVE

KANSAS AVE

2ND ST

PINE ST

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

Maxar

MAP 3.2 | FUTURE LAND USE

0   0.5   1 Miles
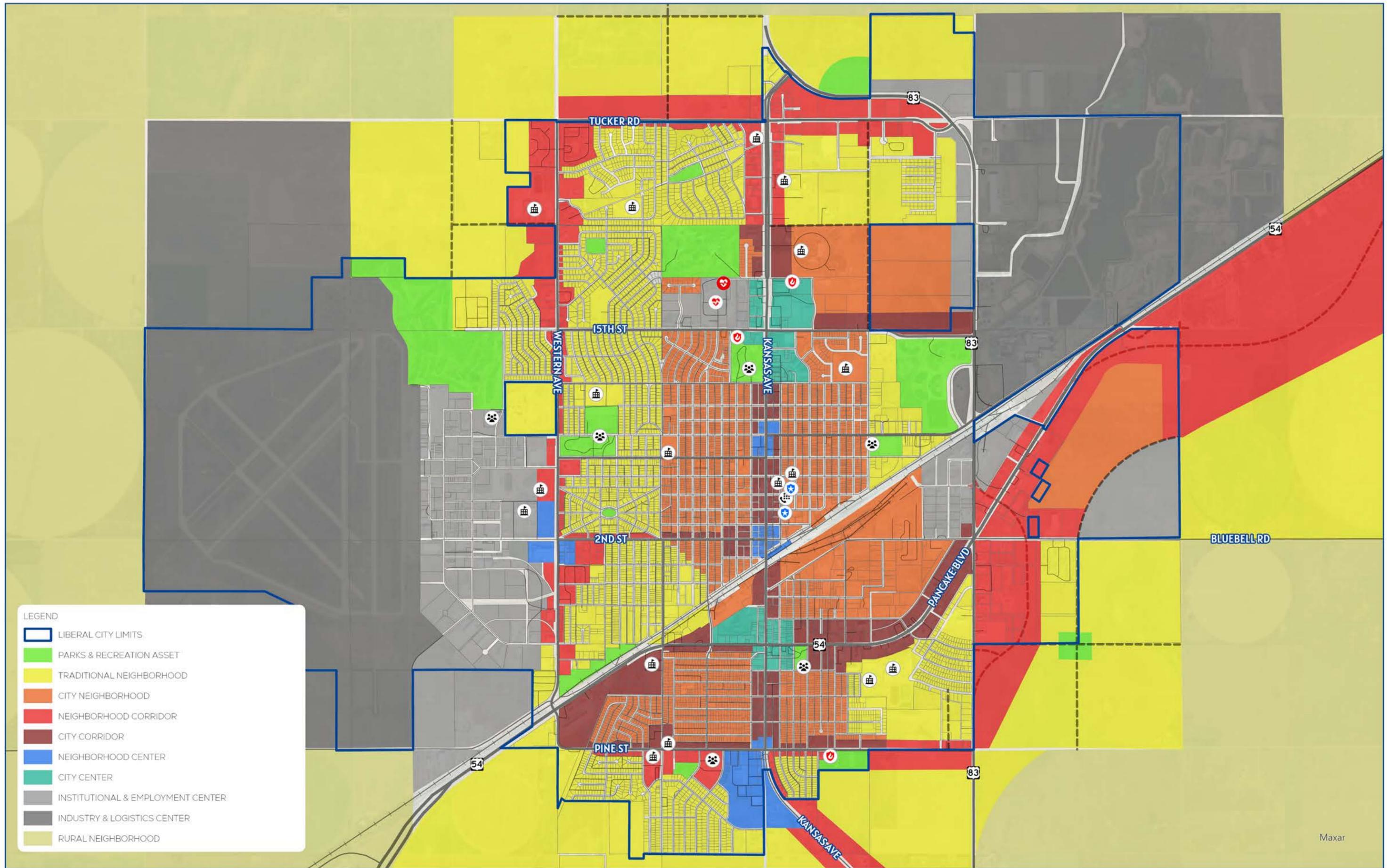
PARKS & RECREATION ASSET

Parks & Recreation Assets represent land dedicated to parkland, including neighborhood, community, and regional facilities, as well as cemeteries, and land utilized for sports, active play, and recreational uses. Supportive uses, such as small-scale commercial, may be compatible depending on context.

natural open space

neighborhood playgrounds

landscaped trails
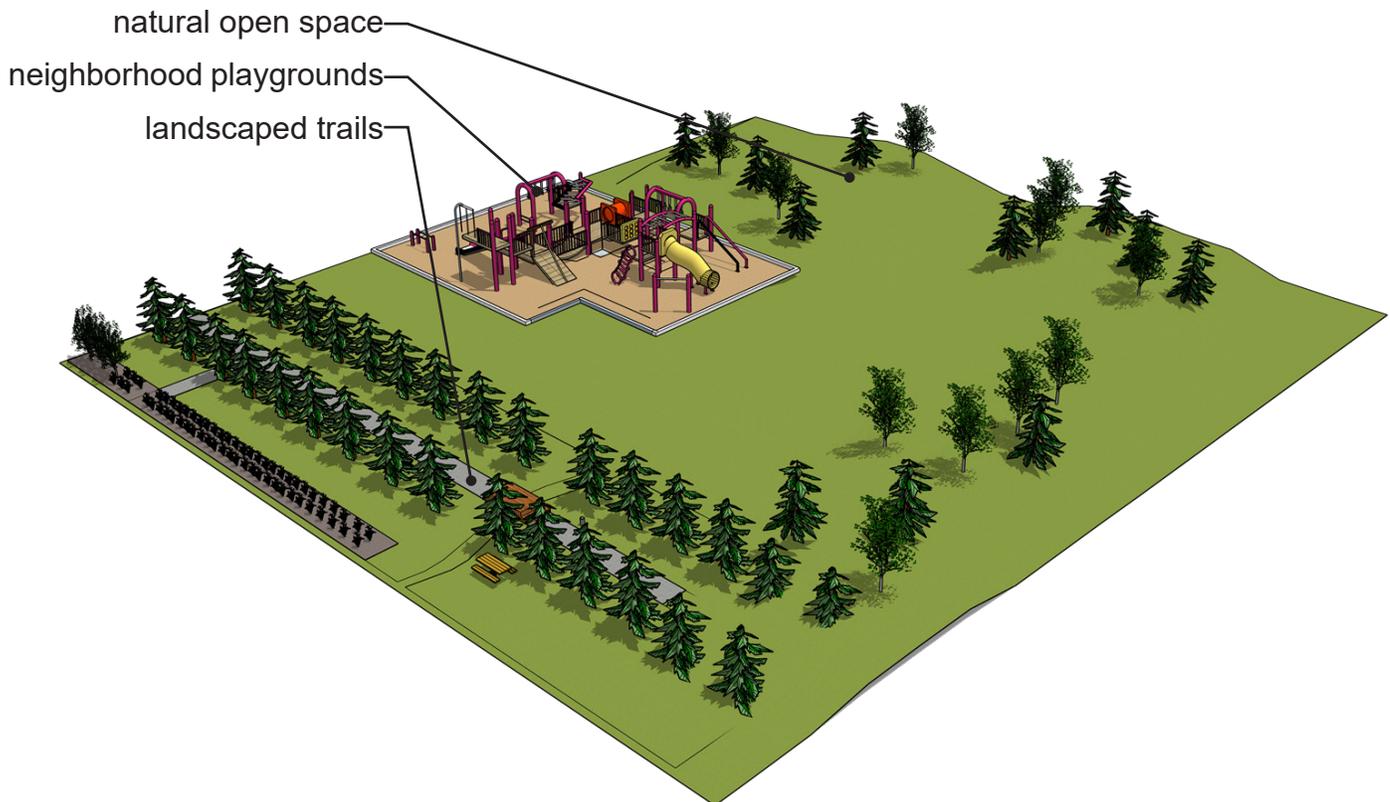
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Parks & Recreation assets are easily accessible and streets leading to these places will encourage safe access for all users, especially those walking and biking. It is important that adjacent residential developments and educational facilities have deliberate connections to Parks & Recreation Assets. Depending on the scale and intensity of the Park & Recreation Asset, access needs may vary between arterial, collector, or local street access. Parking needs will also vary depending on the scale of use and the site's traffic levels. Typical buildings in this place type includes recreation facilities, shelters, restroom and locker room facilities, maintenance buildings, and small-scale accessory commercial such as concession stands. Active uses and structures are located to provide minimal impact to sensitive environmental features.

LAND USES

- Agritainment
- Open Space/Conservation
- Rewilding
- Vertical Agriculture/Greenhouses
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Golf Courses
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks
- Community/Regional Parks

PARKS & RECREATION ASSETS IN LIBERAL
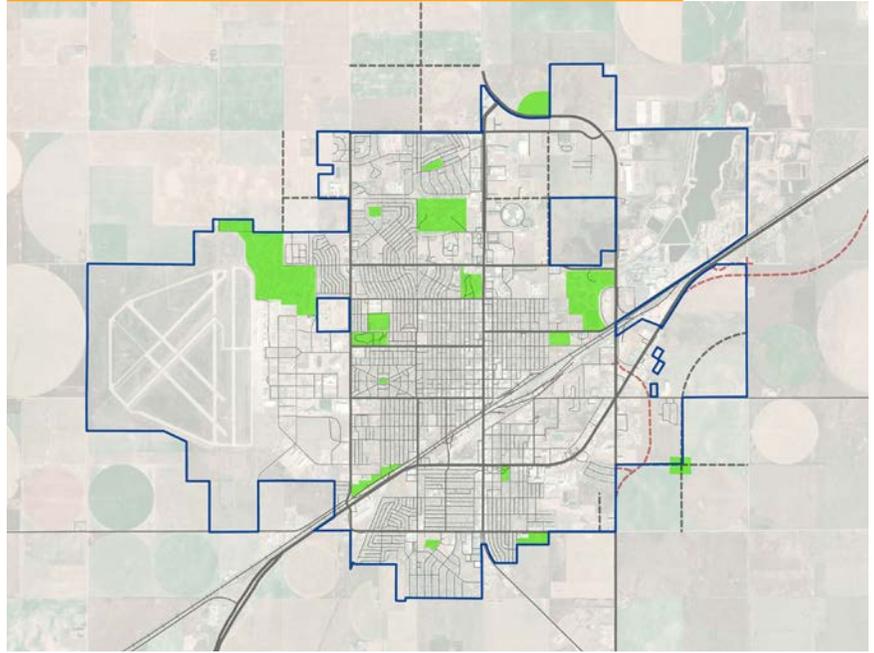
ZONING DISTRICTS

- A-L Agricultural
- R-1 Single Family Dwelling
- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- TT-P Travel Trailer Park District
- MH Manufactured Home
- MP Manufactured Home Park
- C-O Commercial Office Building
- C-1 Neighborhood Shopping
- C-2 General Commercial
- C-3 Core Commercial

PRECEDENT IMAGES

RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Rural Neighborhoods contain low-density residential land with large lot sizes, sometimes spread between agricultural land uses. There are vast open spaces with various geographical assets, including creeks, rivers, and forest land. There is limited infrastructure, and utilities may be connected to the county instead of the city. Connectivity to the city exists on arterial roads, with few collector and local roads.

natural open space

tree rows

single-family
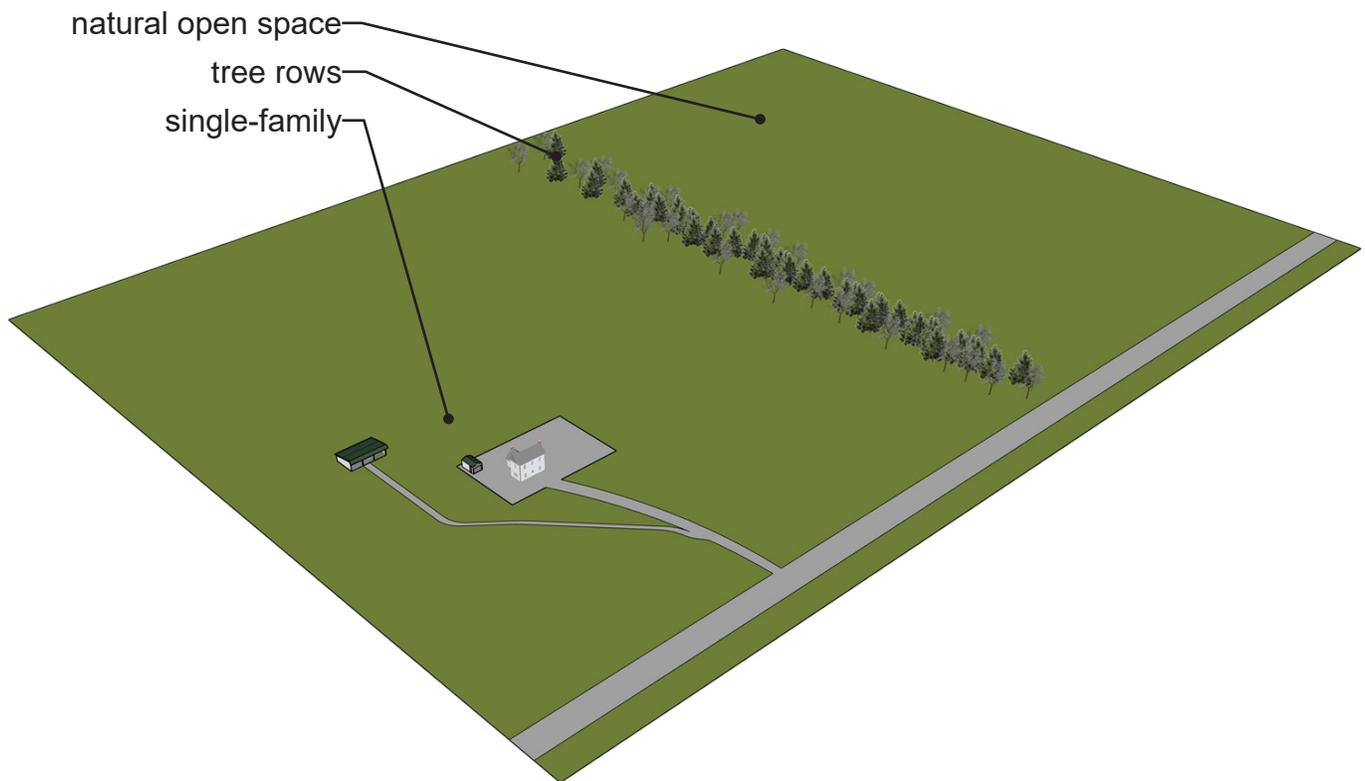
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Development is not typically significant within the Rural Neighborhood place type and open space is substantial. It is not anticipated that infrastructure such as potable water and sanitary sewer are currently available or will be extended in the future, so uses are generally served by on-site water and sewer. These areas are likely served by rural roadway cross sections with open ditches and limited pedestrian infrastructure.

LAND USES

- Agriculture
- Agritainment
- Open Space/Conservation
- Rewilding
- Neighborhood/Community Gardens
- Vertical Agriculture/Greenhouses
- Single-Family Residential
- Small-Scale/Start-Up Commercial
- Religious Assemblies
- Golf Courses
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks
- Community/Regional Parks
- Public Safety

RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD IN LIBERAL
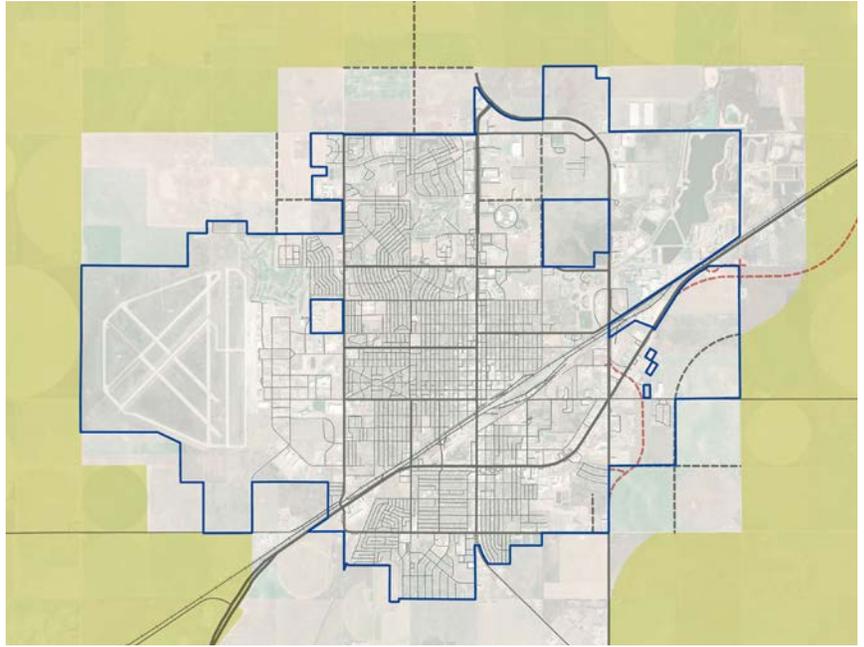
ZONING DISTRICTS

- A-L Agricultural
- R-1 Single Family

PRECEDENT IMAGES

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

This place type is generally where most people live, and provides local access to goods and services, reducing lengthy commute times, and promoting walkability. It consists predominantly of single-family dwellings. Other types of dwelling units exist, including the occasional townhouse, two-family dwelling, accessory dwelling unit, and small multi-family structures. Neighborhood parks, schools, and churches are dispersed throughout to serve nearby residents. These neighborhoods can follow a gridded block pattern or curvilinear streets and are well connected internally with sidewalks and trails.

single-family
playground
bank
ADU
townhomes
church/schools
two-family
connected streets and sidewalks
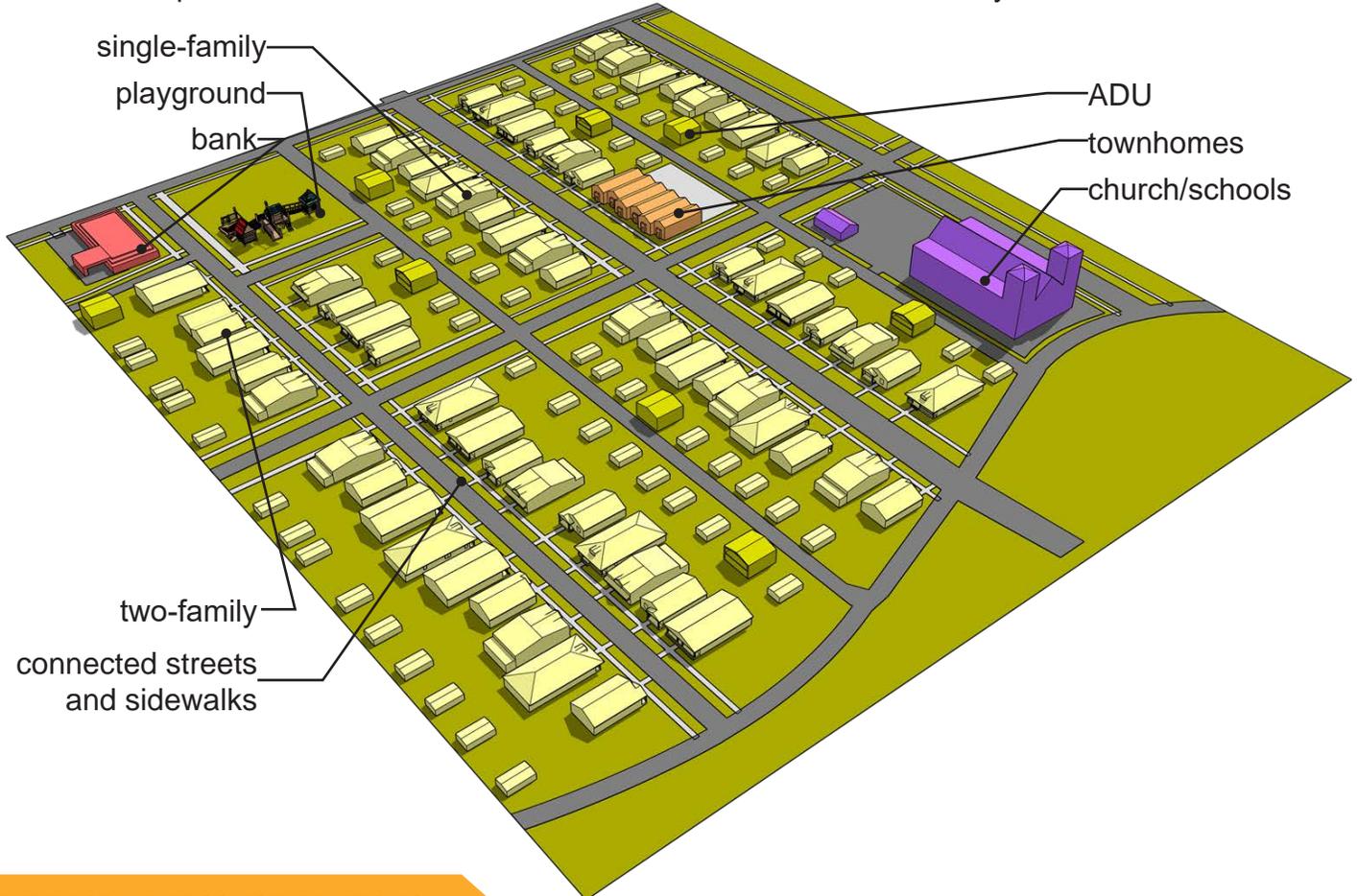
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Community character and the compatibility of adjacent land uses are important considerations in the Traditional Neighborhood place type. Many of the individual neighborhoods in this place type have unifying characteristics. Higher intensity commercial or industrial uses should be buffered from Traditional Neighborhoods whenever possible. In this place type, detached single-family dwellings have relatively uniform setbacks. Front yards and tree-lined sidewalks are found between residences and the street, and individual back yards are commonly found for each residence. As such, private yards are typical open spaces in this place type, but small parks and recreation facilities are also important features. Single-family detached dwelling units are of various forms, i.e. alley-loaded, detached garages, etc. Accessory dwelling units are typically allowable. Non-detached dwelling types in Traditional Neighborhoods are architecturally consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and are generally located along busier streets. Neighborhood design can include on-street parking and/or small common parking lots throughout to mitigate off-street parking requirements. The typical building height for all structures is two stories or less. Traditional Neighborhoods have a well-connected local street network that provides safe access for all users. Routes to parks, schools, and other community amenities are prioritized.

LAND USES

- Open Space/Conservation
- Neighborhood/Community Gardens
- Single-Family Residential (Detached)
- Single-Family Residential (Attached)
- Multi-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- Vertical or Horizontal Mixed-Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Small-Scale/Start-Up Commercial
- Primary Education
- Higher Education
- Religious Assemblies
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks

ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-1 Single Family
- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- MH Manufactured Home
- MP Manufactured Home Park
- C-O Commercial Office Building
- C-1 Neighborhood Shopping
- C-2 General Commercial

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD IN LIBERAL

PRECEDENT IMAGES

CITY NEIGHBORHOOD

City Neighborhoods are typically characterized by a diverse range of residential housing types and supportive neighborhood commercial. The place type includes single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use dwelling types (i.e. buildings with ground floor non-residential uses and residential uses on subsequent floors). Neighborhood retail and office uses are integrated into the neighborhood fabric. These neighborhoods will follow a gridded block pattern with alleys, tree-lined streets, and a well-connected sidewalk network that allows residents to walk to neighborhood amenities.
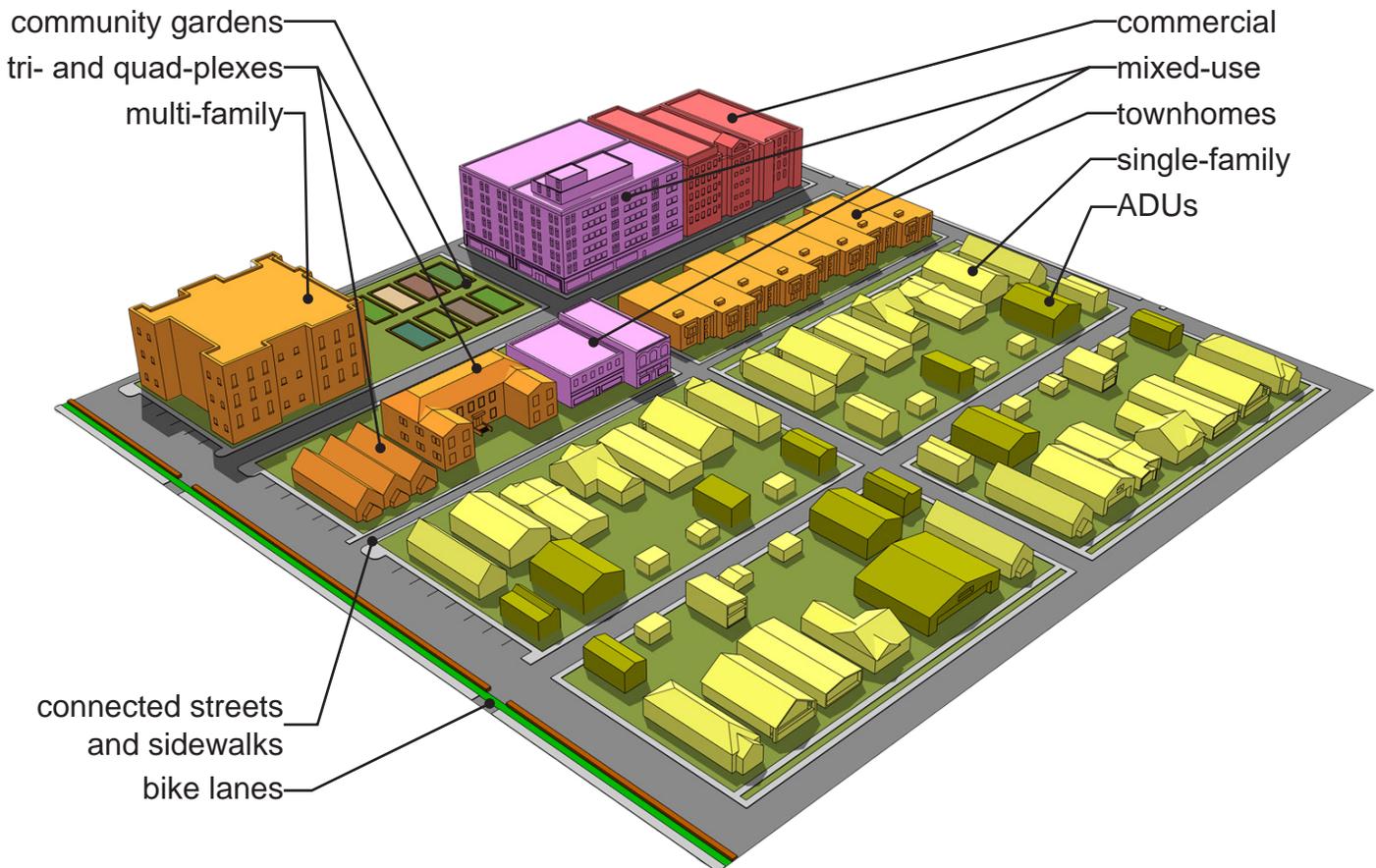
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

City Neighborhoods typically serve as a transition between lower density development and higher intensity commercial or mixed-use centers. The street network is well-connected and designed to support multiple modes of travel. Shade trees and wider sidewalks make walking in City Neighborhoods attractive and enjoyable. Buildings typically have smaller setbacks than in the Traditional Neighborhood, and are typically two stories or less, though some three- to five-story buildings may exist. Taller multi-family buildings are located along busier streets, with shorter residential buildings on local streets. Private front and back yards are provided for detached single-family or two-family dwellings. Multi-family dwellings are served by common open space provided for individual developments. Parks and recreation facilities and natural open space are important features in City Neighborhoods. On-street parking is oftentimes appropriate and encouraged to minimize surface parking lots. When off-street parking is deemed necessary, surface parking lots should be screened from the street by being located behind buildings.

LAND USES

- Open Space/Conservation
- Neighborhood/Community Gardens
- Single-Family Residential (Detached)
- Single-Family Residential (Attached)
- Multi-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- Multi-Family Residential (Mid-Rise)
- Vertical or Horizontal Mixed-Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Small-Scale/Start-Up Commercial
- Primary Education
- Higher Education
- Religious Assemblies
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks
- Public Safety

ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-1 Single Family
- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- MP Manufactured Home Park
- C-O Commercial Office Building
- C-1 Neighborhood Shopping
- C-2 General Commercial
- C-3 Core Commercial

CITY NEIGHBORHOOD IN LIBERAL
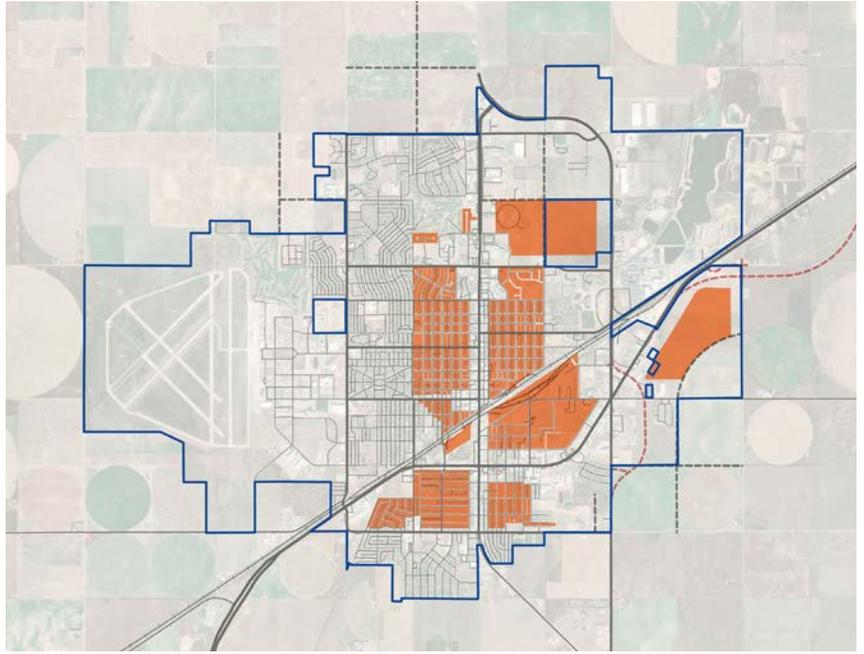
PRECEDENT IMAGES

NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR

Generally, this place type has a linear configuration as it is located along major commercial streets. Businesses along Neighborhood Corridors tend to have similar uses as found in Neighborhood Centers but have different access and connectivity. The mixture of uses includes local-serving small-scale commercial, and mixed-use, single-family residential, and low-rise multi-family residential. Neighborhood Corridors should be walkable in nature by providing safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, with sidewalks, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, and landscaping. Restaurants, small shops, and local services are common in this place type. Neighborhood Corridors are typically smaller in overall size and scale compared with City Corridors and oftentimes extend short distances from street intersections. Neighborhood Corridors often serve as buffers between land uses of varying intensities.

- small scale multi-family
- small scale mixed-use
- commercial
- grocery store
- church
- bank
- streetscaping
- pedestrian scale lighting
- bike lane
- on-street parking
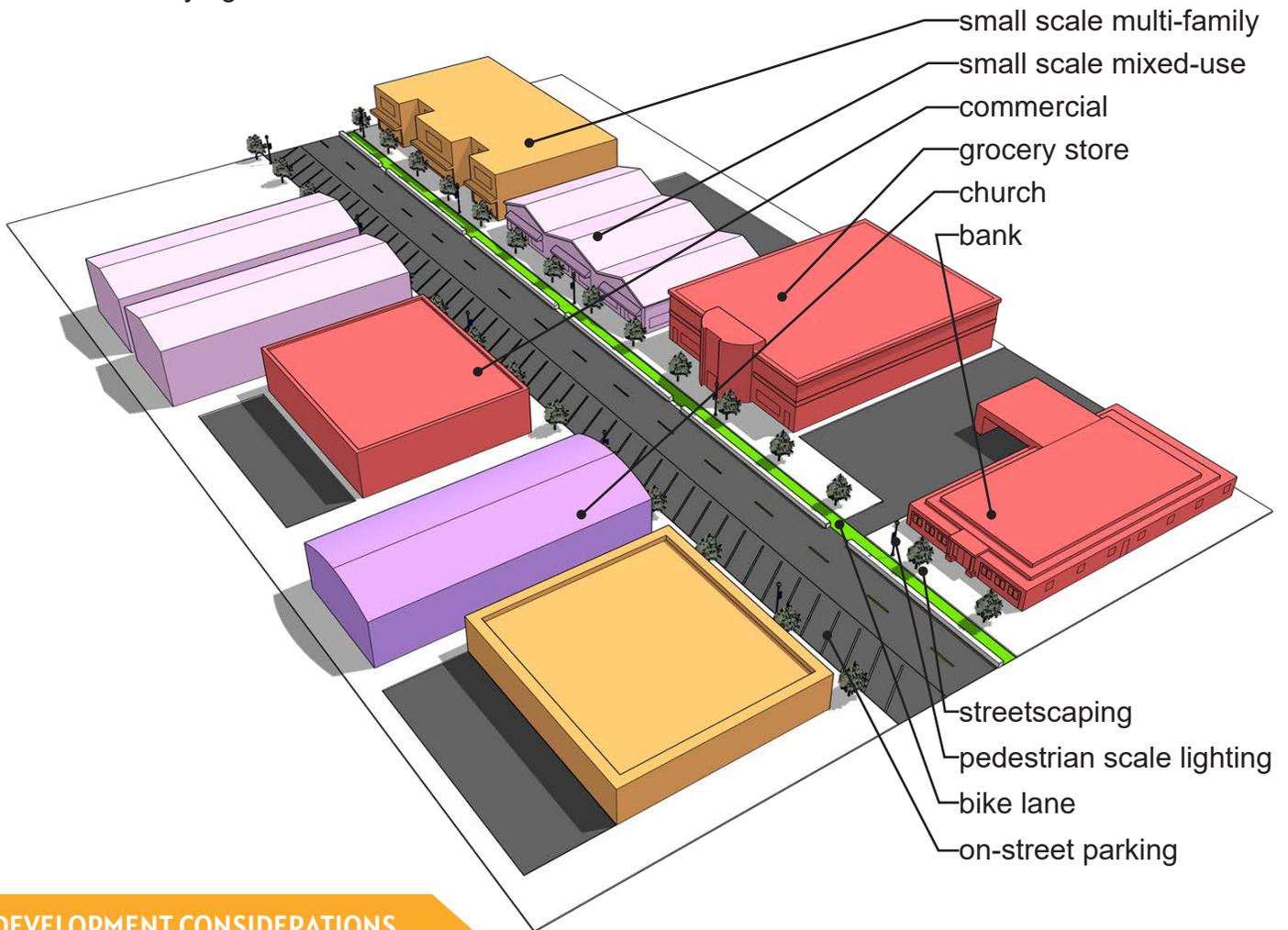
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

An important element of this place type is a walkable, landscaped right-of-way that balances vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian design elements. While uses and sites are generally automobile-oriented, streets are landscaped to soften edges and designed to calm traffic in order to accommodate comfortable travel by all modes of transportation. Sidewalks on both sides of the street with landscape buffers, and mid-block crossings are common. Neighborhood Corridors typically include low-rise structures oriented to the street, arranged in short two- to four-block spans amongst single-family residential (detached and attached) and low-rise multi-family residential. The typical building height is two or fewer stories. Some sites may include accessory drive through facilities and gas pumps. Off-street parking should be located behind buildings, screened from the street.

LAND USES

- Open Space/Conservation
- Neighborhood/Community Gardens
- Single-Family Residential (Detached)
- Single-Family Residential (Attached)
- Multi-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- Vertical or Horizontal Mixed-Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Small-Scale/Start-Up Commercial
- Primary Education
- Higher Education
- Religious Assemblies
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks
- Community/Regional Parks
- Public Safety

ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-1 Single Family
- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- C-O Commercial Office Building
- C-1 Neighborhood Shopping
- C-2 General Commercial

NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR IN LIBERAL
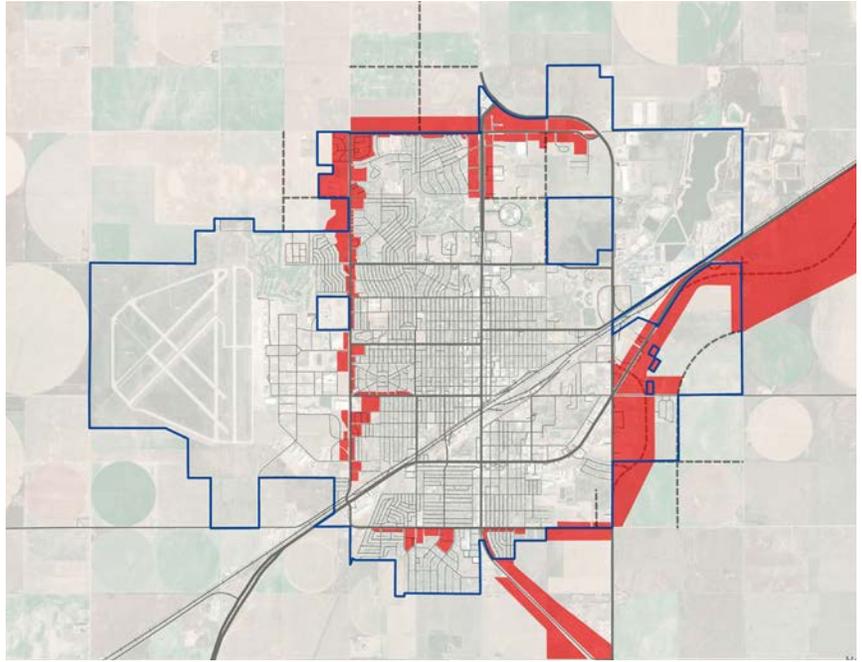
PRECEDENT IMAGES

CITY CORRIDOR

City Corridors are found along a community's busiest streets and provide for a range of activities. City Corridors look to leverage the economic potential of traffic (all modes) and help to minimize land use incompatibilities by containing a variety of uses in manageable areas. Amenities such as sidewalks, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, and landscaping should be emphasized to accommodate non-vehicular traffic. These accommodate a wide range of commercial and mixed-uses, such as retail, restaurants, service, employment, and multi-family residential. Commercial uses of varying intensities, from local to regional attractions are appropriate. Mixed-use development, both vertical and horizontal, and institutional uses can be suitable in this place type as well.

large windows on first floors

street trees

pedestrian scale lighting and benches

road diets

bike lanes

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

City Corridors should focus on infill development and redevelopment that promotes the City as a destination as they often shape the first impression of the City. Special attention should be given to consistent streetscaping, signage, and development standards. Commercial buildings are located toward the front of properties along City Corridors, to showcase community character and business vitality, instead of parking lots. Buildings may be up to five stories but are largely dependent on compatibility with adjacent land uses and step down near lower density residential uses. Where possible, ground floor, street-facing facades have storefront doors and windows that provide interest for pedestrians, and parking lots are screened from the street with trees and landscaping buffers. Drive-through facilities are often located along City Corridors, but special attention should be given to design that mitigates nuisances to surrounding property owners. Open space within a City Corridor is typically provided by common public areas or institutional uses. Existing curb cuts along the primary street are consolidated to alleviate congestion with vehicles and pedestrians. Whenever possible, cross-access easements, and shared parking should be utilized to make it easy to travel from business to business without driving. While auto oriented in nature, major arterial streets should provide opportunities for safe walking and cycling to jobs and nearby destinations. Sidewalks are wide and leave adequate space for lighting, street trees, and pedestrian activity. Crosswalks are located at all major intersections although mid-block crossing are appropriate in certain instances. Special consideration should be given to the compatibility of uses along a City Corridor when adjacent to residential uses to manage noise, light, and traffic.

LAND USES

- Multi-Family Residential (Low Rise)
- Multi-Family Residential (Mid Rise)
- Vertical or Horizontal Mixed Use
- Regional/Destination Commercial
- Hotels/Lodging
- Office/Business Park/Flex
- Primary Education
- Higher Education
- Religious Assemblies
- Entertainment
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Pocket/Neighborhood Park
- Community/Regional Park
- Public Safety

CITY CORRIDOR IN LIBERAL

PRECEDENT IMAGES

ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- MP Manufactured Home Park
- C-O Commercial Office Building
- C-2 General Commercial District
- C-3 Core Commercial District
- I-P Industrial Park District
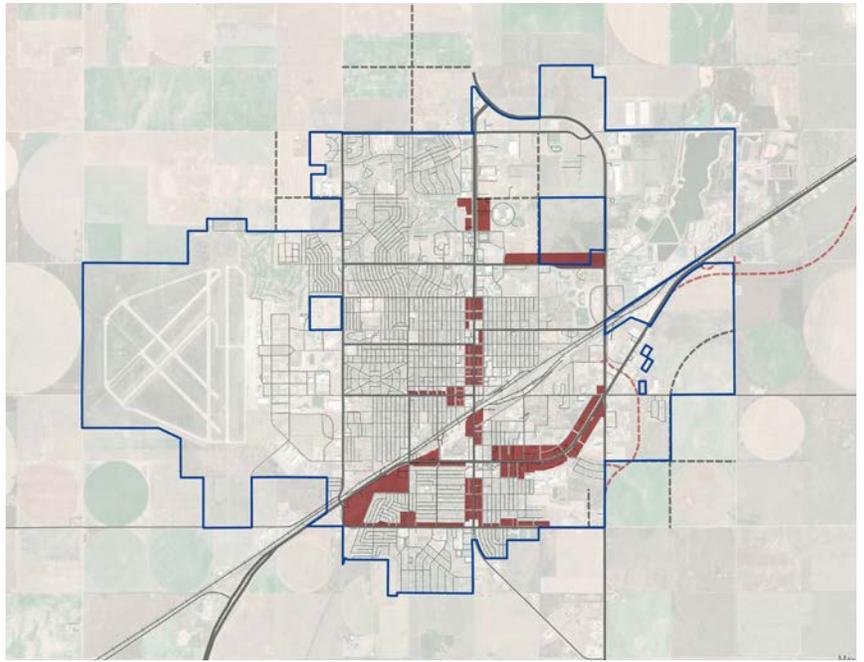
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Typically found at intersections of two or more streets, Neighborhood Centers provide places that have a pedestrian-friendly focal point of activity where nearby residents can access most of their daily needs. Businesses capable of attracting visitors from a larger region are better suited in other place types, such as the City Center, as they can generate undesired traffic. This place type is characterized by low-rise commercial, residential, civic/institutional, and mixed-use structures in a pedestrian-oriented environment. Neighborhood Centers may also include schools, community centers, and other civic/cultural facilities. These centers provide opportunities for smaller-scale, mixed-use buildings that include retail and service uses on the ground floor with residential or office uses on the upper floor(s). Retail centers are limited within the place type. Neighborhood Center uses should be compatible with the adjacent residential areas and contribute to neighborhood character, viability, and attractiveness.

small multi-family
ADUs
single-family
bank
church
school
mixed-use
small multi-family
commercial
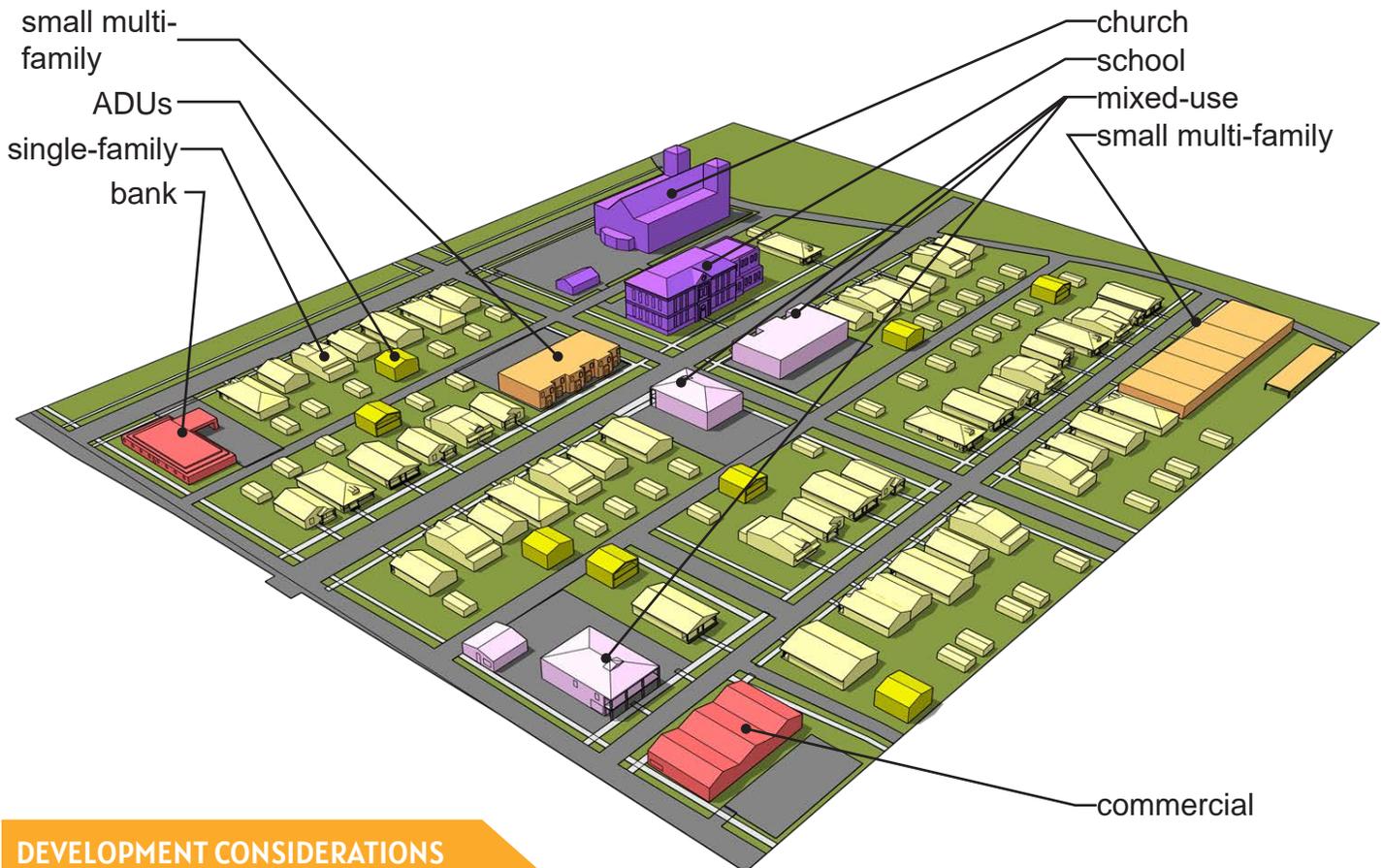
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Careful attention should be given to potential land use conflicts with adjacent areas as Neighborhood Centers are oftentimes nestled within residential uses. Because of the mix of uses within a Neighborhood Center, buffering and screening should be considered when desired uses are deemed in conflict with existing adjacent uses. Neighborhood Centers should be easily and directly accessible from nearby neighborhoods to encourage non-vehicular transportation and to support the concept of a complete neighborhood. The street network should be designed to encourage slow speeds and provide ample pedestrian facilities. Street trees and other pedestrian focused amenities should be prioritized, i.e. pedestrian scale lighting, furnishings, etc. Buildings should use large windows at the ground level in order to support a vibrant pedestrian environment. This place type will oftentimes include improved open spaces such as plazas, patios, and courtyards that offering welcoming effects. It is also encouraged to brand neighborhood centers uniquely to further emphasize a sense of place.

LAND USES

- Open Space/Conservation
- Neighborhood/Community Gardens
- Single-Family Residential (Detached)
- Single-Family Residential (Attached)
- Multi-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- Vertical or Horizontal Mixed Use
- Community/Lifestyle Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Small/Start-Up Commercial
- Primary Education
- Higher Education
- Religious Assemblies
- Entertainment
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks
- Public Safety

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER IN LIBERAL

PRECEDENT IMAGES

ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-1 Single Family Dwelling
- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- MP Manufactured Home Park
- C-1 Neighborhood Shopping
- C-2 General Commercial
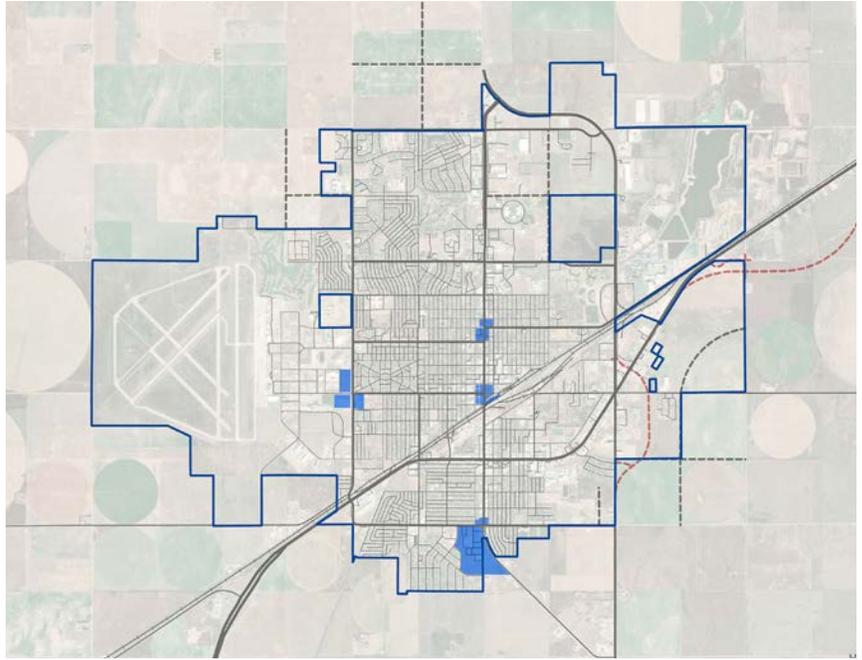
CITY CENTER

City Centers are designated along key corridors, seeking to leverage transportation systems and economic development potential. They oftentimes draw users from multiple neighborhoods and surrounding areas – becoming a regional draw. This place type provides a concentration of primarily commercial activity in a well-connected, walkable environment to provide access to goods, services, dining, entertainment, and residential variety. Some multi-family and office may be appropriate in this place type. Most commonly, City Centers include larger-scale tenants, restaurants, commercial retailers, mixed-use developments, and office uses. Adjacent uses could include various scales of mixed-use buildings and denser residential uses with appropriate pedestrian connectivity. This place type is often centered around a community anchor, such as a large employer and/or community or regional shopping center. This is a diverse place type where a higher intensity mixture of uses exists. Housing may be found in this place type, likely as a complementary use for area employers.
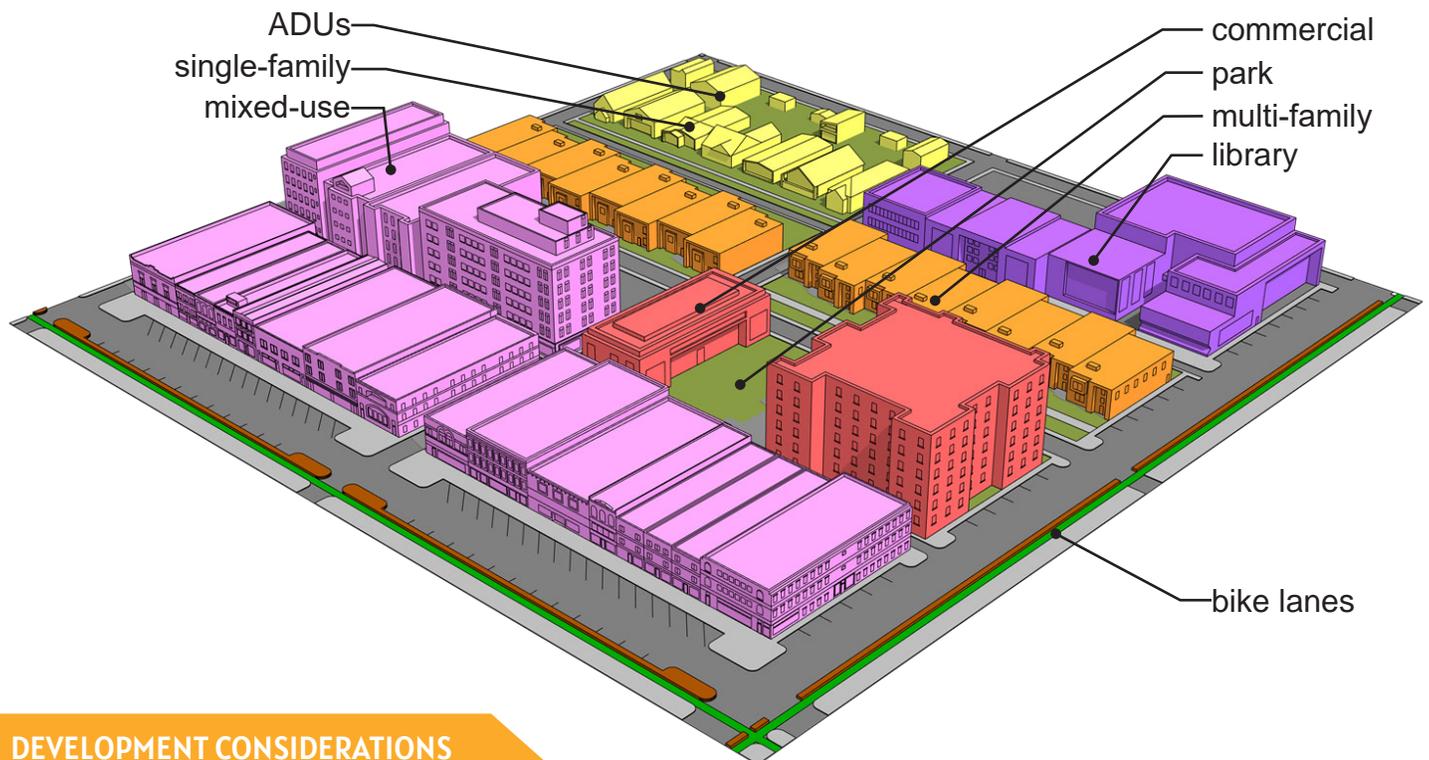
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

City Centers are busy areas, hosting an intense mixture of land uses. Where City Centers abut more traditional residential uses, buffering should be implemented to help protect the City's neighborhoods. City Centers are typically located at or near key intersections or on major arterials with easy access and direct connections to nearby residential neighborhoods. With a well-connected street network with small blocks and walkable connections between destinations, this place type fosters a "park once" environment. As such, shared parking arrangements, on-street parking, and structured parking are desirable to ensure that surface parking lots do not dominate the environment. Further, strategic siting of transit assets should be prioritized. The typical structure in a City Center is five stories or less, and ground floors have a high degree of transparency provided by large windows and glass doors on storefronts. Special attention to activating the first "16 Feet" should be prioritized – 16 feet out from a building facade and 16 feet from the ground up. Public open space is a key feature of City Centers, and plazas, patios, centrally located parks, parklets, and natural open spaces are common. Regular street trees and pedestrian improvements such as benches, and patio seating are common. Street design should place pedestrian experience and safety above vehicular speed, street capacity, and driver delay.

## LAND USES

- Open Space/Conservation
- Single-Family Residential (Detached)
- Single-Family Residential (Attached)
- Multi-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- Multi-Family Residential (Mid-Rise)
- Vertical or Horizontal Mixed-Use
- Regional/Destination Commercial
- Medical Campus/Hospital
- Hotels/Lodging
- Office/Business Park/Flex
- Light Industrial
- Primary Education
- Higher Education
- Religious Assemblies
- Entertainment
- Community/Recreation Centers
- Civic/Cultural Facilities
- Pocket/Neighborhood Parks
- Community/Regional Parks
- Public Safety

CITY CENTER IN LIBERAL

PRECEDENT IMAGES

ZONING DISTRICTS

- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- C-3 Core Commercial
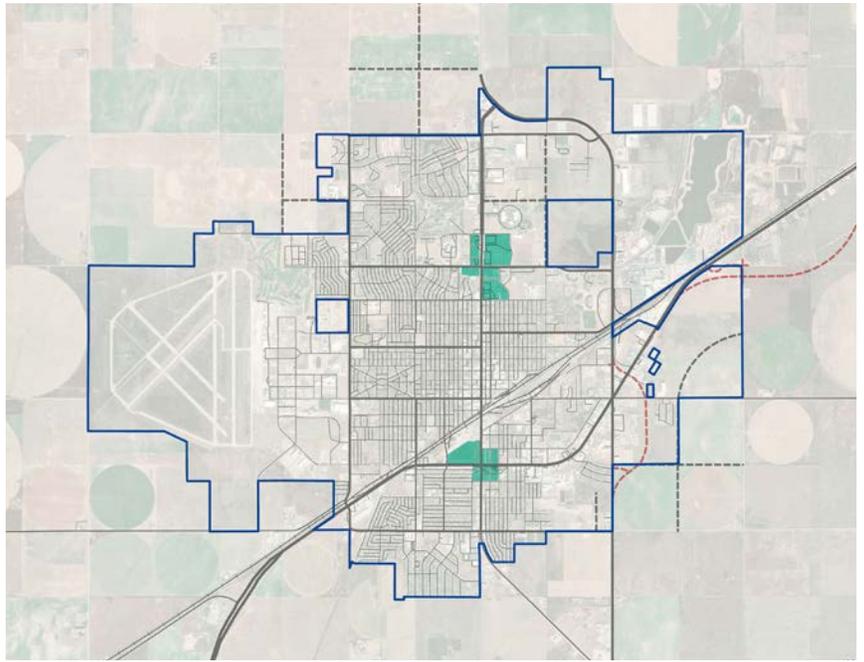
INDUSTRY & LOGISTICS CENTER

Industry & Logistics Centers contribute to the local and regional economy by accommodating places of employment for a range of uses related to logistics, production, research, distribution, and manufacturing. They oftentimes have direct connections to regional transportation assets making it easier to draw employees and distribute products. This place type is usually characterized by large-scale, single-story buildings. Parcels are generally large with buildings located on the interior of the site, surrounded by service areas, parking, and buffers to provide transitions to adjacent uses.

open green space
main transportation corridor
large warehouses
staging and storage
landscape buffers
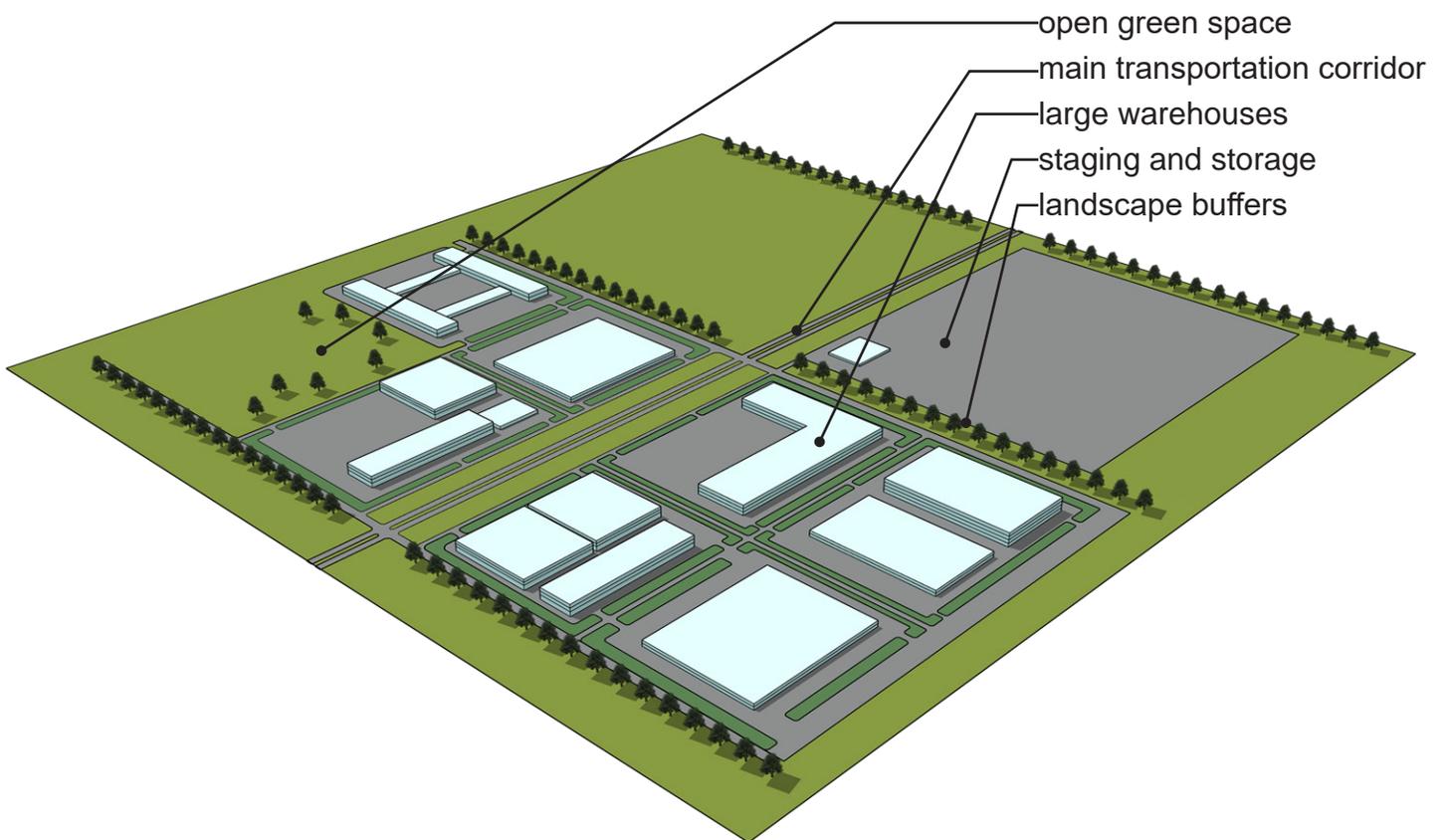
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

This place type can host an intense mixture of land uses. Where Industry & Logistics Centers are adjacent to more traditional residential uses, separation should be maximized, and buffering emphasized. The typical structure is a high-bay, single-story building although they can range widely in size and scale depending on their use. Long, continuous buildings are often found in this place type compared to other place types. Street design should accommodate large trucks, but accommodation for non-vehicular street users should be provided. Where feasible, freight/truck routes should be separated from other transportation users. If transit service is available, mobility hubs should be provided to accommodate pick-up and drop-off areas, bike parking, and rideshare options.

LAND USES

- Open Space/Conservation
- Community/Lifestyle Commercial
- Medical Campus/Hospital
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing
- Public Safety

INDUSTRY & LOGISTICS CENTER IN LIBERAL
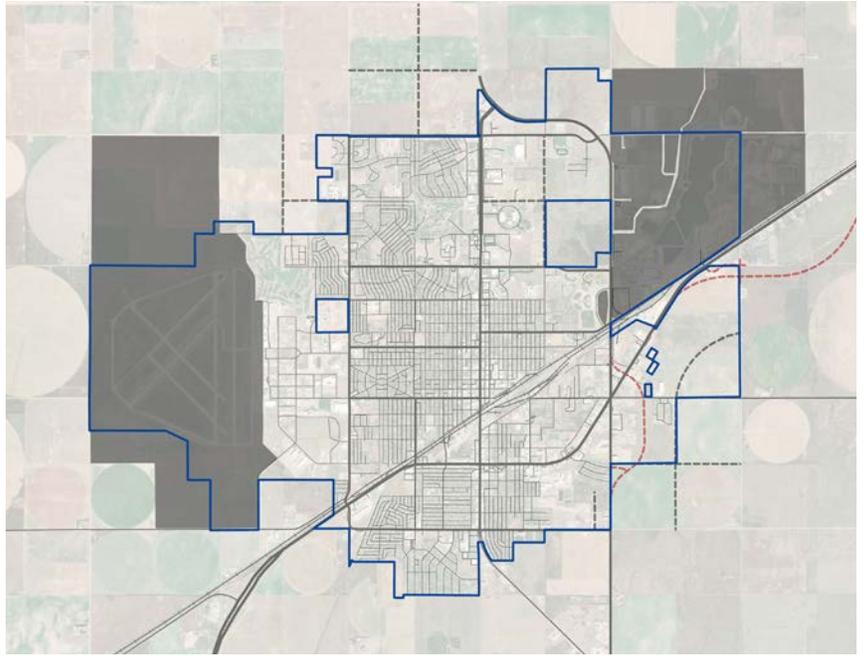
ZONING DISTRICTS

- PUD Planned Unit Development
- C-2 General Commercial
- I-P Industrial Park
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Heavy Industrial
- I-2A Heavy Industrial

PRECEDENT IMAGES

INSTITUTIONAL & EMPLOYMENT CENTER

Institutional & Employment Centers contribute to a community's economic vitality by providing mixed-use places that oftentimes include business parks, educational facilities, and complementary retail and dining uses. Light manufacturing, offices, studios, medical facilities, research facilities, and restaurants are examples of appropriate uses. Given the variety of uses in the place type, buildings and uses must be carefully integrated. These centers can attract a significant number of employees and visitors from outside of the community. They oftentimes have direct connections to regional transportation assets making it easier to draw employees and visitors from throughout the greater region. While access to main transportation assets is needed by large employers, portions of roadway frontage along these areas may be utilized by smaller retailers or service providers. Green space may be limited within this center but should be incorporated as a softening effect to enhance the overall attractiveness and vitality of an area.

hospital

supportive industry

connected street network
landscape buffers
open green space

multi-family
single-family

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Like the Industry & Logistics Center, Institutional & Employment Centers can host an intense mixture of land use. Therefore, consideration should be given to the land use compatibility with adjacent areas. Where Institutional & Employment Centers abut residential uses, buffering should be implemented and commercial traffic flow should be planned to help protect the City's neighborhoods. Buildings range widely in size and scale depending on their context and use. The typical building is not more than two stories, though some taller buildings may be present. Parking lot screening and on-site landscaping are important in establishing the high-quality and attractive character of the area. Special attention should be given to design that promotes the unique character of the center. The street network within this place type is well-connected to serve all travel modes, while accommodating large trucks on busier streets and direct access to commercial sites. Transit accommodation should be provided. Because of this place type's ability to draw visitors regionally, surface parking should be carefully designed as to not dominate the built environment. Open space within this place type is typically provided by common public areas or institutional uses, and can be recreational facilities, picnic areas, and/or walking trails to be used by employees, students, or other patrons. Natural buffers are often used to separate large sites and buffer uses deemed to be in conflict.

LAND USES

- Community/Lifestyle Commercial
- Medical Campus/Hospital
- Hotels/Lodging
- Office/Business Park/Flex
- Light Industrial
- Higher Education
- Public Safety

INSTITUTIONAL & EMPLOYMENT CENTERS IN LIBERAL:
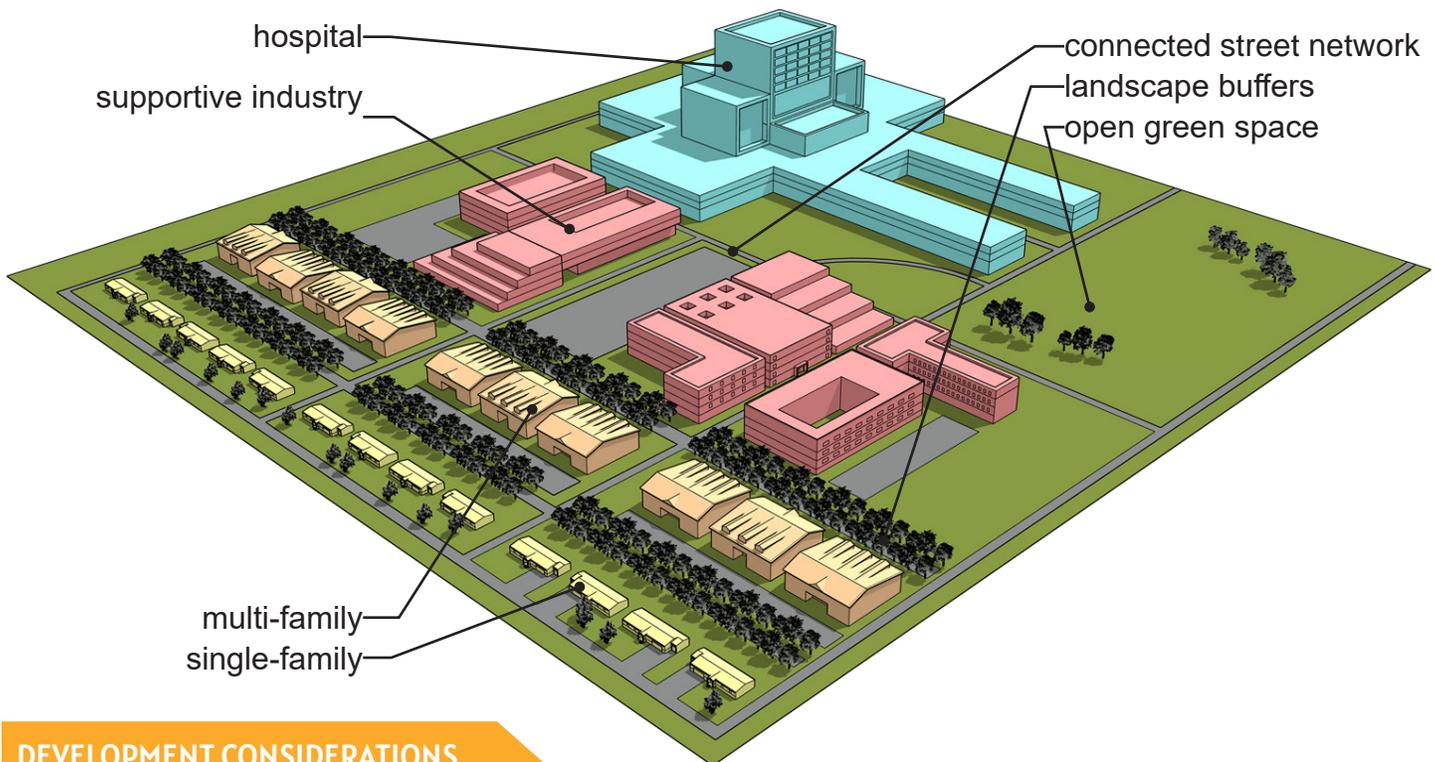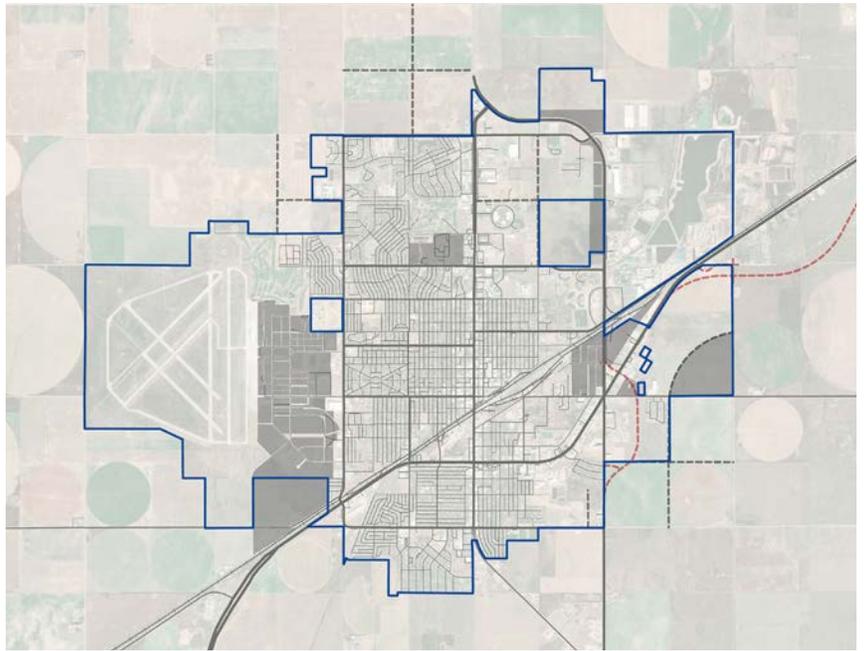

ZONING DISTRICTS

- PUD Planned Unit Development
- C-2 General Commercial
- I-P Industrial Park
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Heavy Industrial
- I-2A Heavy Industrial

PRECEDENT IMAGES
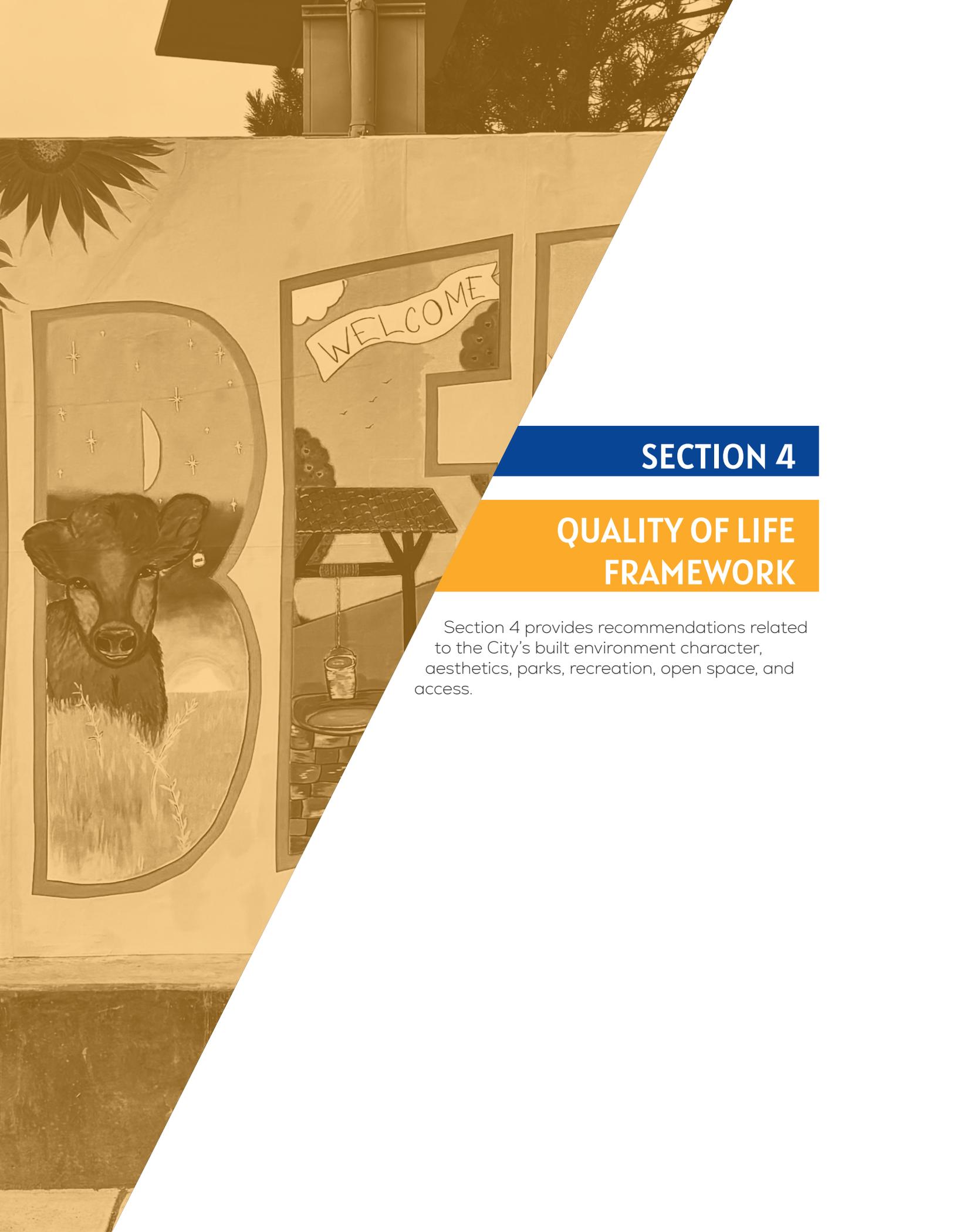
QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK

Section 4 provides recommendations related to the City's built environment character, aesthetics, parks, recreation, open space, and access.

QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK

Quality of life is the measure of overall well-being and satisfaction of Liberal residents and visitors. It can encompass many dimensions, including:

- Physical Environment: Cleanliness, air and water quality, green spaces, amenities, and connectivity.

- Infrastructure: Efficient public transportation for all types of users, well-maintained streets, access to quality and quantity of water, sanitary sewer, effective drainage, and amenities.

- Social Factors: Community engagement and cohesion, social services, and inclusivity.

- Economic Opportunities: Employment prospects, income levels, and cost of living.

- Healthcare and Education: Quality and accessibility of medical facilities and educational institutions and opportunities.

- Safety and Security: Low crime rates and effective community policing.

- Cultural and Recreational Activities: Access to arts, entertainment, sports facilities, and cultural institutions.

This is not an exhaustive list but a sampling of dimensions that collectively shape the quality of life in all communities. This Plan sets forth a concentration on parks, recreation, open space, access, aesthetics, and character as key quality of life aspects for the City to focus on over the next 10 years.

A well designed, maintained, and operated parks, recreation, and open space system provides numerous benefits to a community spanning social, economic, environmental, and health-related dimensions. Investing in a strong system ultimately strengthens the fabric of a community, make its healthier, more equitable, more financially resilient, and more sustainable.

Transportation is often referred to as the movement of goods and services within a defined area. Although similar, this Plan uses the term "access" in place of transportation, as access provides a better framework to understand transportation systems from the human perspective. A well-planned access system aims to improve the experience of drivers, walkers, public transportation users, and bicyclists to ensure a well-connected community for all ages and abilities.

A concentration on the aesthetics and character of a community is an approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces that focuses on creating vibrant, engaging, distinguishable, and inclusive environments. The goal is to transform ordinary areas into lively, community-focused places that people want to visit, interact within, and enjoy. High-quality public spaces enhance the overall quality of life for residents and visitors, encourage social interaction, aid economic development, foster community pride, and communicate a community identity.

Map 4.1 Quality of Life serves as the comprehensive guide to this Plan's physical Quality of Life recommendations. Maps and exhibits refined for each category detailed in this Plan are included throughout this Section.
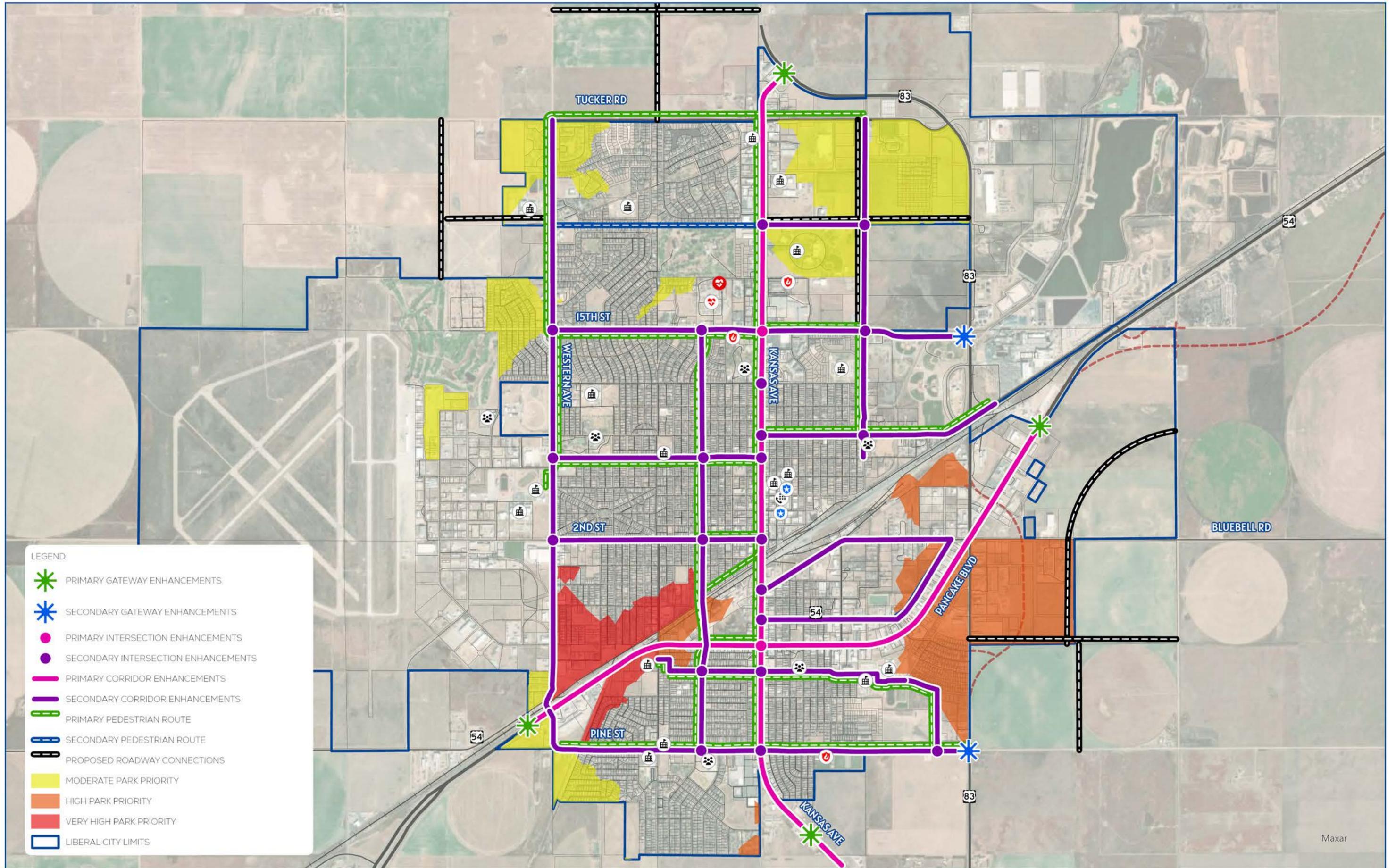
LEGEND

- ✳ PRIMARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS
- ✳ SECONDARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS
- ● PRIMARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS
- ● SECONDARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS
- ▬ PRIMARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS
- ▬ SECONDARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS
- ▬ PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- ▬ SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- ▬ PROPOSED ROADWAY CONNECTIONS
- ▮ MODERATE PARK PRIORITY
- ▮ HIGH PARK PRIORITY
- ▮ VERY HIGH PARK PRIORITY
- ▯ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

Maxar

MAP 4.1 | QUALITY OF LIFE

0   0.5   Miles

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

A well designed, maintained, and operated parks and recreation system provides numerous benefits to a community, spanning social, economic, environmental, and health related dimensions. Social benefits included increased community cohesion, youth engagement, and cultural opportunities. Economic benefits included property value stability, tourism, local business support, and job creation. Environmental benefits include improved air and water quality, wildlife habitat, and climate resilience. The opportunities for physical activity, mental health, and safe places for play can improve the health and wellness of a community. These spaces can also serve as outdoor classrooms where the community can learn about nature, conservation, and sustainability. Active, well-used spaces can have a positive impact on overall crime reduction, while structured activities have been shown to reduce juvenile delinquency. Last but not least, these places improve the aesthetic value of our communities by enhancing visual appeal and providing places for communities to gather.

EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

As detailed in Appendix A, there are currently 2,795 acres of park space within the City of Liberal. This includes various pocket parks such as Tobias Park, multiple neighborhood parks such as Harrison Circle Park, and community parks such as Light Park. Additionally, the 2,308 acre Arkalon Park, located 10 miles west of Liberal in the Cimmaron River Valley offers regional users camping sites, playground equipment, volleyball, picnic areas, multiple fishing ponds, bird watching opportunities, and nature trails.

Adventure Bay Family Water Park, located at Light Park, is southwest Kansas' largest water park facility. Detailed in its 2025 Activity Book, the Liberal Recreation Department offers many opportunities ranging from both youth and adult sports, summer camps, Lego tournaments, holiday events, and much more.

According to ParkServe®, 78% of Liberal residents live within a 10-minute walk of a public park.

PROPOSED PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PRIORITY AREAS

Map 4.2 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Priority Areas was developed using the Trust for Public Land's ParkServe® information. ParkServe® establishes priority areas by analyzing a combination of demographic and environmental factors at the census block group level. The analysis includes population density, low-income household density, people of color density, community health indicators, urban heat islands, and pollution burden, essentially prioritizing areas with high need for park access based on factors like socioeconomic disadvantage and environmental stress. Further, these areas represent the 22% of Liberal residents not currently within a 10-minute walk to a public park. In addition to maintaining its current parks, recreation, and open space system, new investment should be coordinated with these identified priority areas.
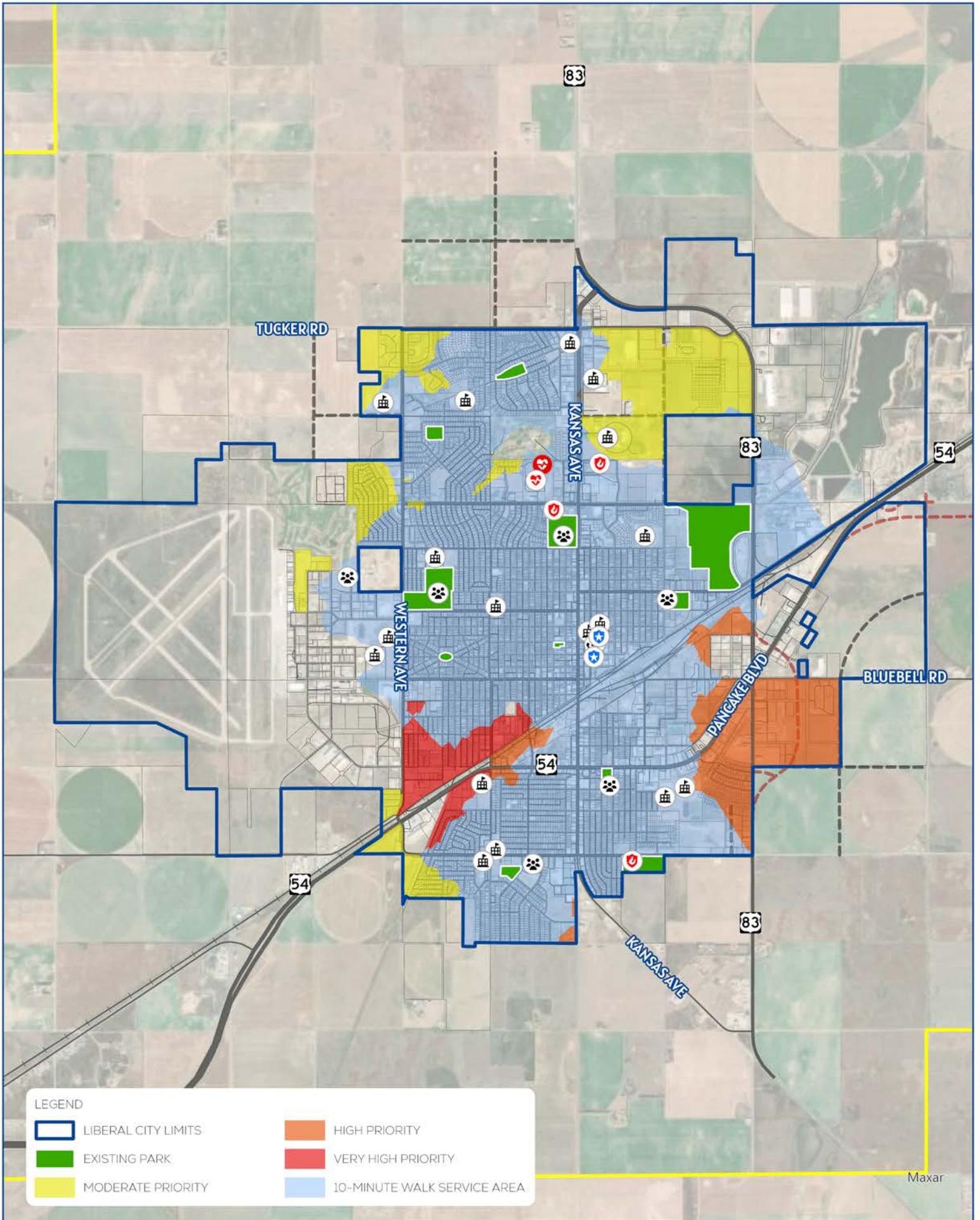
LEGEND

LIBERAL CITY LIMITS		HIGH PRIORITY	
EXISTING PARK		VERY HIGH PRIORITY	
MODERATE PRIORITY		10-MINUTE WALK SERVICE AREA	

MAP 4.2 | PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PRIORITY AREAS

0   0.5
Miles

Maxar

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

83

54

83

54

ACCESS

Transportation is commonly defined as the movement of goods and services within a defined area. In order to reframe the focus of our transportation system to a more human perspective, this Plan uses the term "access" in the place of "transportation". Access is defined as connecting people with destinations. Access is concerned with whether we can reach goods, services, and activities such as schools, jobs, grocery stores, restaurants, doctors, hospitals, shops, concerts, parks, nature trails, and friends. This section primarily focuses on pedestrian access throughout the City, but consistent attention should be given to the vehicular access system as well.

People often remember their younger years with fondness – being able to walk to a friend's house, riding bikes with friends, or walking to a friend's dorm or the cafeteria while in college. Some people walk for exercise capitalizing on the proven health benefits. Others navigate cities outside of vehicles for more practical reasons – avoiding the additional expenses associated with owning, operating, and maintaining a vehicle, too young to be licensed, or those that may be dealing with physical limitations. In 2024, the Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement reported that 9% of American adults aged 18+ do not have a driver's license, which is approximately 20.76 million people. Additionally, almost 18% of the United States is under the age of 16, which means nearly 30% of the country's population has to rely on more than personal vehicles to independently navigate their community.

> THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF TRANSPORTATION IS TO "BRING PEOPLE OR GOODS TO PLACES WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED, AND TO CONCENTRATE THE GREATEST VARIETY OF GOODS AND SERVICES WITHIN A LIMITED AREA WITHOUT MAKING IT NECESSARY TO TRAVEL. A GOOD TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MINIMIZES UNNECESSARY TRANSPORTATION AND IN ANY EVENT, IT OFFERS A CHANGE OF SPEED AND MODE TO FIT A DIVERSITY OF HUMAN PURPOSES."
> -Lewis Mumford, *The Highway and the City*

EXISTING ACCESS

According to the most up-to-date data provided by the City, parts of Liberal are very well connected with pedestrian infrastructure. Details regarding the existing streets, including functional classification, traffic volume, and crash data is available in Appendix A. Map 4.3 Existing Access shows the current location of streets, sidewalks, and trails. The railroad, US-54, and US-83 traversing the City present significant benefits for regional transportation and vehicular movement but also significant obstacles for local connections that must be taken into consideration.

PROPOSED ACCESS

As opposed to analyzing the current sidewalk and trails system with the goal of identifying specific missing segments, this Plan looks to identify significant routes for the City to concentrate more refined assessment and direct public investments towards. This is not meant to indicate that other routes and identified projects should be ignored but purely offers the City a framework to set priorities. As the definition of access provided previously would indicate, the routes as depicted on Map 4.4 Proposed Access were identified within the framework to link Liberal residents with goods, services, and activities.

PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

Primary Pedestrian Routes form the backbone of pedestrian infrastructure in the City. They are anticipated to be the most heavily used pathways, connecting major destinations such as shopping districts, schools, parks, and neighborhoods. They typically offer enhanced facilities like wider multi-use pathways, pedestrian crossings, lighting, benches, and signage to accommodate higher pedestrian traffic, encourage use, and ensure safety and comfort.

SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

The identified Secondary Routes may very well become Primary Routes, assuming the same form and function but present unique challenges. The identified Secondary Routes are ambitious in nature and will be dependent on future development or redevelopment activity.

The addition of an off-street pathway adjacent to the Liberal Country Club and existing residential neighborhood to the west is envisioned to connect Kansas Avenue to Western Avenue providing a more direct and off-street connection between two important corridors as envisioned in Section 3. In addition to providing general access to the goods, services, and activities available within these corridors, specific points of interest are Seward Community College on the east and Eisenhower Middle School at the west of this connection. Further, Section 3 sets forth a vision for a new City Neighborhood development east of Seward County Community College that this route would provide access to. This should be considered a Primary Route for analysis and investment as development occurs on and east of the Community College property.

The pedestrian improvements located north of Pancake Boulevard, east of Kansas Avenue, west of Country Estates Road, and south of the railroad are dependent on the redevelopment of this area as another City Neighborhood place type. Currently, this area is primarily vacant, industrial, with some residential uses. Its prime location at the doorstep of Liberal, and its current built condition, make it a worthwhile redevelopment candidate. In the event of redevelopment, this internal network should be elevated to a Primary Route deserving of considerable analysis and investment.

PROPOSED ROADWAY CONNECTIONS

Although a detailed assessment of the City's street system was not undertaken, the City should continue to monitor the condition and function of its vehicular access network. For the City's use in planning new connections as development occurs, preliminary alignments for new street connections is reflected on Map 4.4 Proposed Access. It is expected that final alignments of the proposed roadways will be ultimately decided during further analysis completed as part of development or redevelopment projects in coordination with private entities. Additionally, the City should review its typical street sections, including right-of-way width, travel lane width, amenities, lighting, and streetscaping as it continues to maintain existing streets and build new roadway connections.
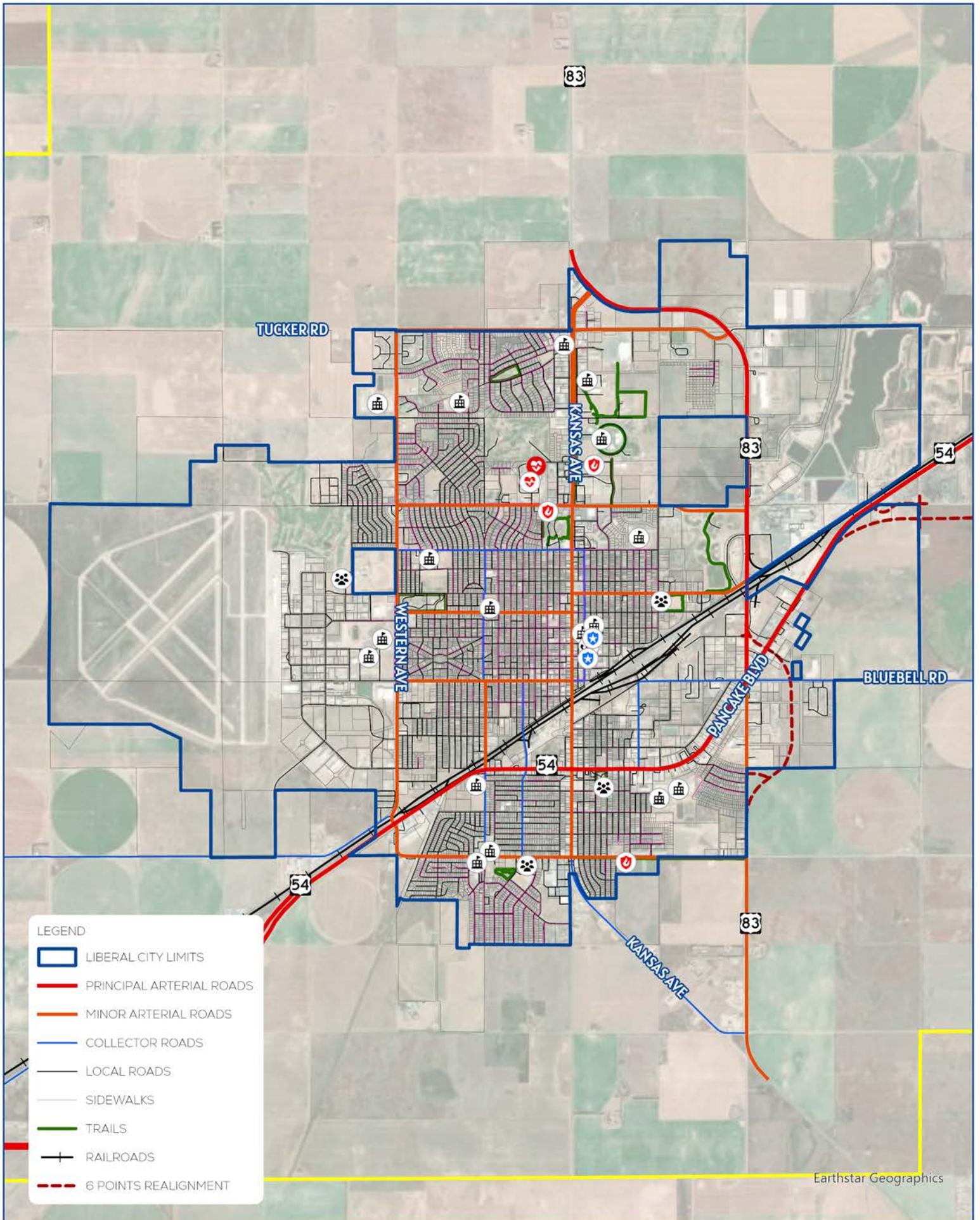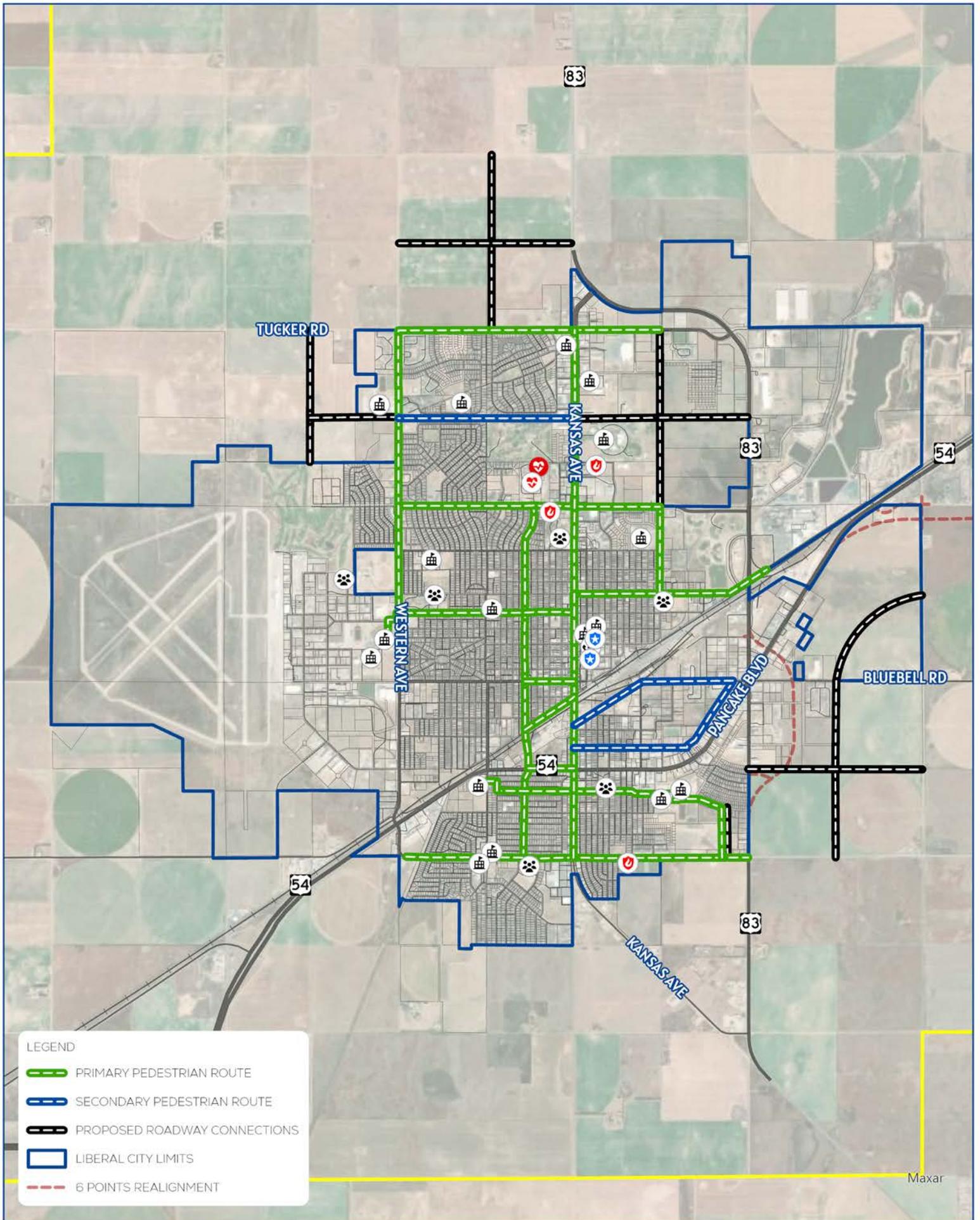
LEGEND

- ☐ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- ▬ PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROADS
- ▬ MINOR ARTERIAL ROADS
- ▬ COLLECTOR ROADS
- ▬ LOCAL ROADS
- SIDEWALKS
- ▬ TRAILS
- ┼ RAILROADS
- ▬ ▬ 6 POINTS REALIGNMENT

MAP 4.3 | EXISTING ACCESS

0   0.5
Miles

Earthstar Geographics

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

LEGEND
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- PROPOSED ROADWAY CONNECTIONS
- LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- 6 POINTS REALIGNMENT

MAP 4.4 | PROPOSED ACCESS

0   0.5   1
Miles

Maxar

AESTHETICS & CHARACTER

Even small design details can greatly increase the sense of belonging to a **place.** Each action that changes a simple **space** into a **place** is called placemaking and represents a primary action communities can undertake to improve the aesthetics and character of their built environment. Placemaking is the creation of places where people feel connected to their community and each other. A main street with flower baskets, benches, and local flags creates a much different feeling than the same street with purely utilitarian features focused exclusively on the vehicle's experience. A captivating entry sign into a community can become a focal point for visitors and residents alike, instilling pride and the feeling of being somewhere easily identifiable and special. Placemaking projects are often very small and inexpensive but can be monumentally impactful. These places can increase interest and activity leading to continued private investment. The most important aspect of placemaking is that it is concentrated at the human scale. Although placemaking can use various mediums, this Plan concentrates on the identification of improvements within the public realm – spaces the City has ultimate control over.

CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

While all public roadways should receive some level of aesthetic enhancement, this Plan identifies key corridors the City should focus on. Kansas Avenue and Pancake Boulevard (US-54 within the City limits) are especially important corridors in Liberal. Depicted on Map 4.5 Aesthetics & Character as Primary Corridor Enhancements, these roadways should receive the highest level of enhancements, including street trees, decorative/landscape medians, pedestrian lighting, pedestrian pathways, branded street light banners, and more.

Multiple roadways are identified as Secondary Corridor Enhancements. Similar to Kansas Avenue and Pancake Boulevard, these segments represent significant access routes for vehicles and pedestrians alike although they may not carry the same amount of users or provide access to the same intensity of land uses. The City should focus on similar treatments in these corridors but at a lesser scale and/or intensity.

Enhancement projects can vary greatly in complexity and cost. Projects can be standalone streetscaping projects, but oftentimes are coordinated with planned roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects. Many of the Proposed Access improvements (Map 4.4) articulate with these proposed corridor enhancements offering opportunities to coordinate implementation projects.

INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

Primary Intersection Enhancements are generally located where two Primary Corridor Enhancement roadways intersect, such as the intersection of Kansas Avenue and Pancake Boulevard. Further, significant intersections representing the confluence of Primary Corridors and Secondary Corridors may also justify Primary Intersection Enhancements based on unique circumstances.

Primary Intersection Enhancements generally feature improvements that complement the overall image of Liberal. These intersections should feature high quality pavement, pedestrian focused improvements, and enhanced signage and landscaping that is well maintained. Popular treatments at these intersections also often includes different pavement types (bricks, stamped concrete), painted crosswalks, and may also include different geometries such as roundabouts or traffic circles.

Secondary Intersection Enhancements are generally located at the confluence of two Secondary Corridor Enhancement roadways. While these intersections may be less impactful, they should still highlight the significance of the intersection as a hub of activity through smaller scale and/or less intense improvements but using the same style language as Primary Intersection Enhancements.

This Plan envisions implementation of intersection enhancements to be done in coordination with corridor enhancements and access improvements, although standalone intersection enhancements can be viable projects.

GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

Gateway enhancements should be located at high-traffic nodes to welcome visitors and clearly identify entry points into the City or entry points into distinct areas or districts within the City. The style of Primary Gateways should communicate the desired branding for the City, while Secondary Gateways should communicate the same City branding but indicate the arrival at an identifiable area within the City. Best practice suggests that gateways should be developed as a family – including both Primary Gateways and Secondary Gateways to ensure consistent style language.
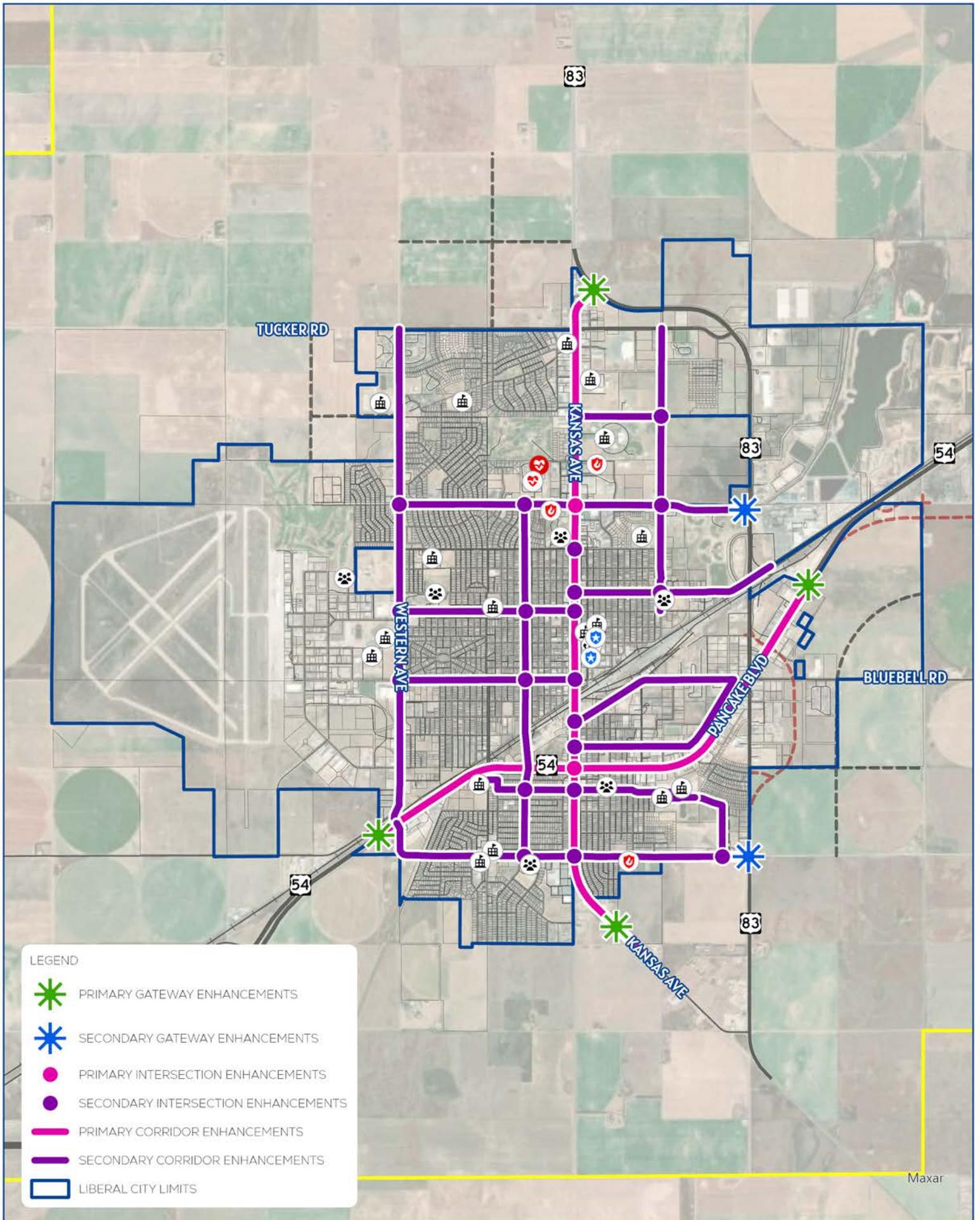
LEGEND

✳ PRIMARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

✳ SECONDARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

● PRIMARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

● SECONDARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

━━ PRIMARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

━━ SECONDARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

▭ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

Maxar

MAP 4.5 | AESTHETICS & CHARACTER

0   0.5   1
Miles

PANCAKE BOULEVARD

US-54, known as Pancake Boulevard within the City limits, is the main entry point into the City from the east and west and serves as a primary first impression of the City. Based on its current function, Pancake Boulevard is a strong candidate for physical improvements reflective of its significance to the City. However, because it is on the State system, curb to curb renovations can be difficult and oftentimes rely on non-local coordination. Focusing on improvements between the curbs and the front of buildings is generally more feasible in the short term. Currently, the physical attributes behind the curb create an environment that is not welcoming to pedestrians or vehicles. Options may include using street trees that optically narrow the street to better control vehicular speeds, provide a buffer between vehicles and pedestrians, and generally increase the aesthetic appeal of the corridor. Many of these improvements can also encourage development and redevelopment activity.
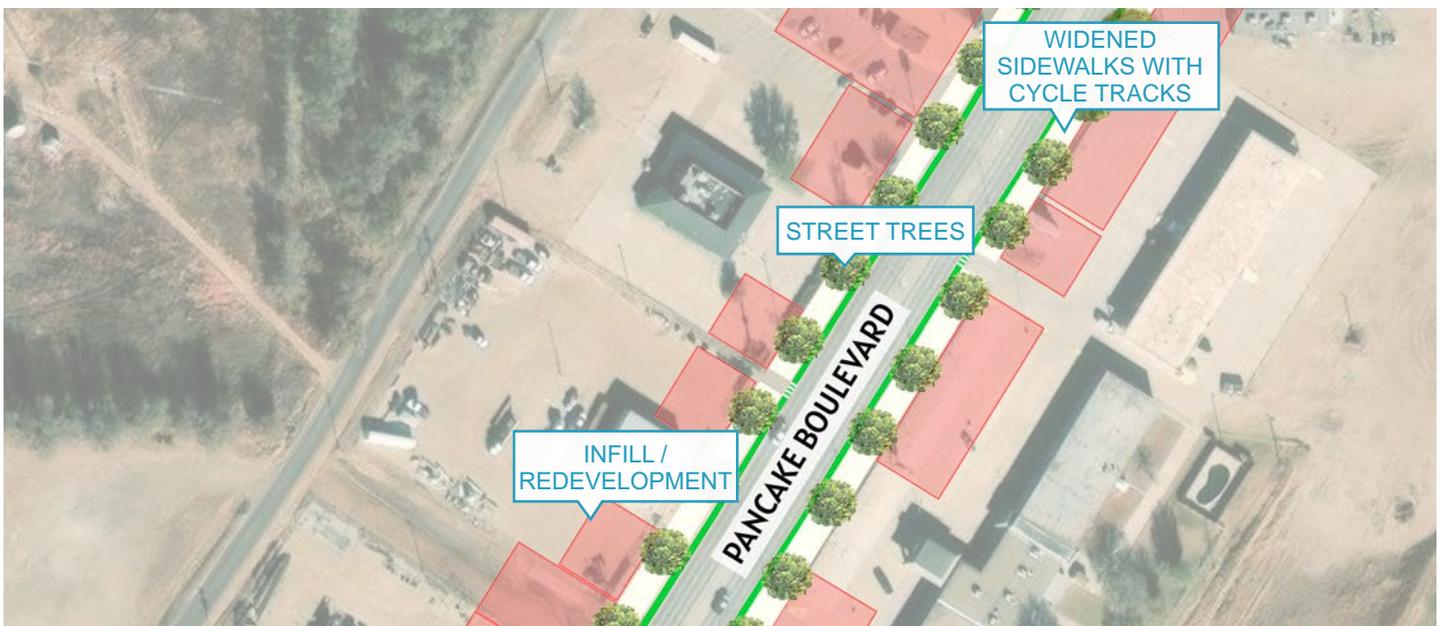
Kansas Avenue functions in a variety of ways for the City. Most notably, Kansas Avenue is the primary artery providing access to Liberal's historic downtown core. The north end of Kansas Avenue hosts large-lot, big box commercial as well as Seward Community College. As a result of the differing land uses and physical environment, the strategies for future improvements along this key corridor will look different for different segments.

In the context of the downtown core area, the City's goals should be focused on infill and redevelopment activity, including second story living units, providing a comfortable and safe pedestrian experience, and increasing general streetscaping elements in order to solidify Liberal's downtown presence, vitality, and resilience.

STREET TREES

SECOND FLOOR DEVELOPMENT

ENHANCED MID-BLOCK CROSSWALKS

ANGLED PARKING

PARKING ON BOTH SIDES OPTION

STREET LIGHTS WITH BANNERS AND FLOWER BASKETS

SEPARATED BIKE LANE

BIKE LANE OPTION
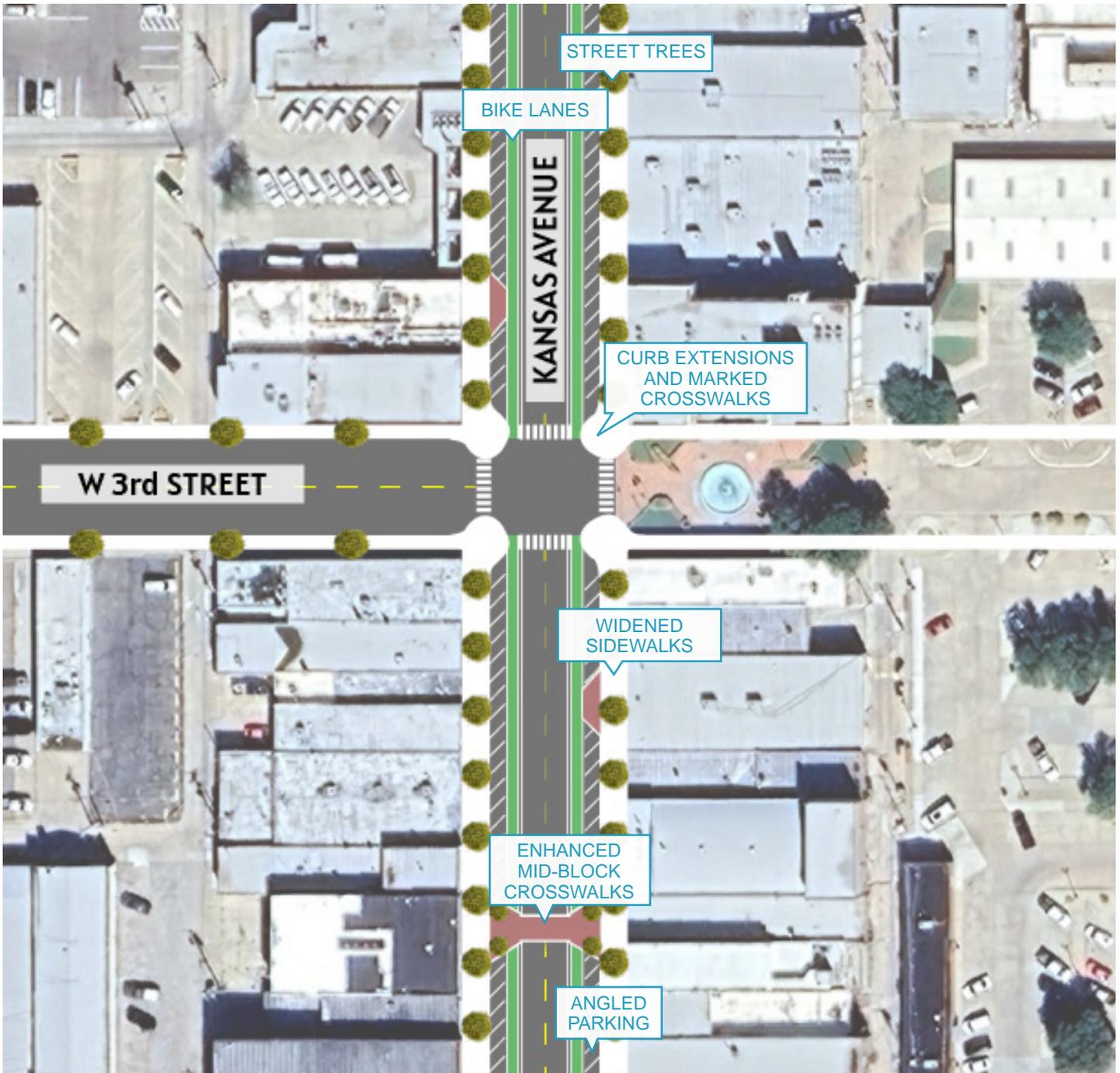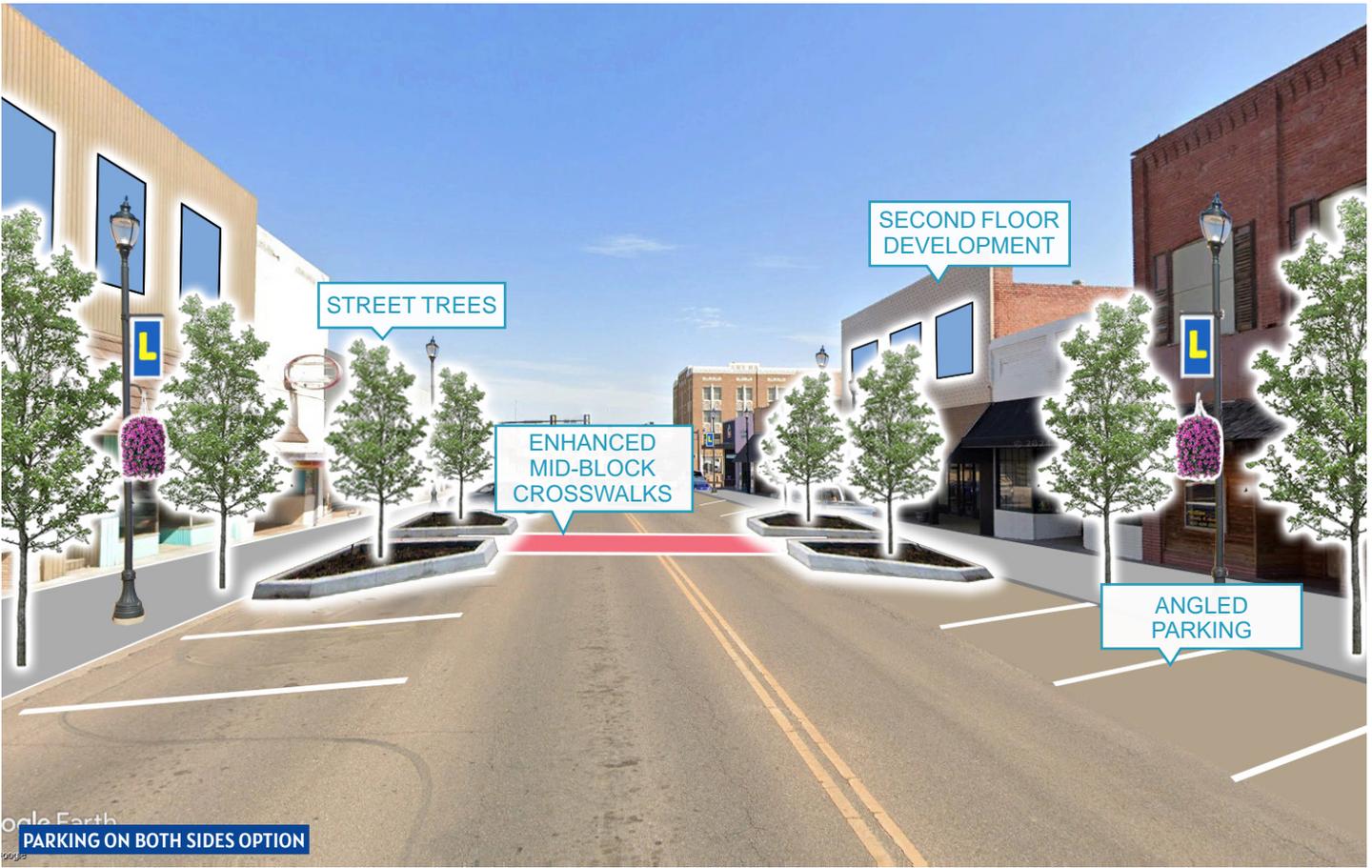
Kansas Avenue begins to take a different form north of 15th Street. It widens greatly, includes generous shoulders, has large center medians, and buildings are set back much further from the street. These elements present challenges for creating unique and comfortable places, in addition to potentially creating safety concerns – for both vehicles and pedestrians. These conditions make this segment of Kansas Avenue a prime candidate for physical improvements. Although physical improvements to the roadway may be merited, they can also be prohibitively expensive. The east side of Kansas Avenue includes a sidewalk with trees, which is an opportunity to build upon. Instead of physically narrowing the roadway, an alternative option is to optically narrow it with additional tree plantings between the pavement edge and sidewalks in addition to within the existing median. Adding a sidewalk on the west side of the street should be considered. Reallocation of excess pavement space (large shoulders) into on-street separated bike facilities is a popular strategy. In order to further encouraging pedestrian use of this segment, pedestrian-scale crossings should also be considered at strategic locations. Where feasible, underutilized parking lots and undeveloped property directly abutting the right-of-way should be encouraged to develop further as well.

MEDIAN TREES

SIDEWALK

BIKE LANE

BIKE LANE OPTION

STREET TREES

INFILL / REDEVELOPMENT

MULTI-USE PATH

MULTI-USE PATHWAY OPTION
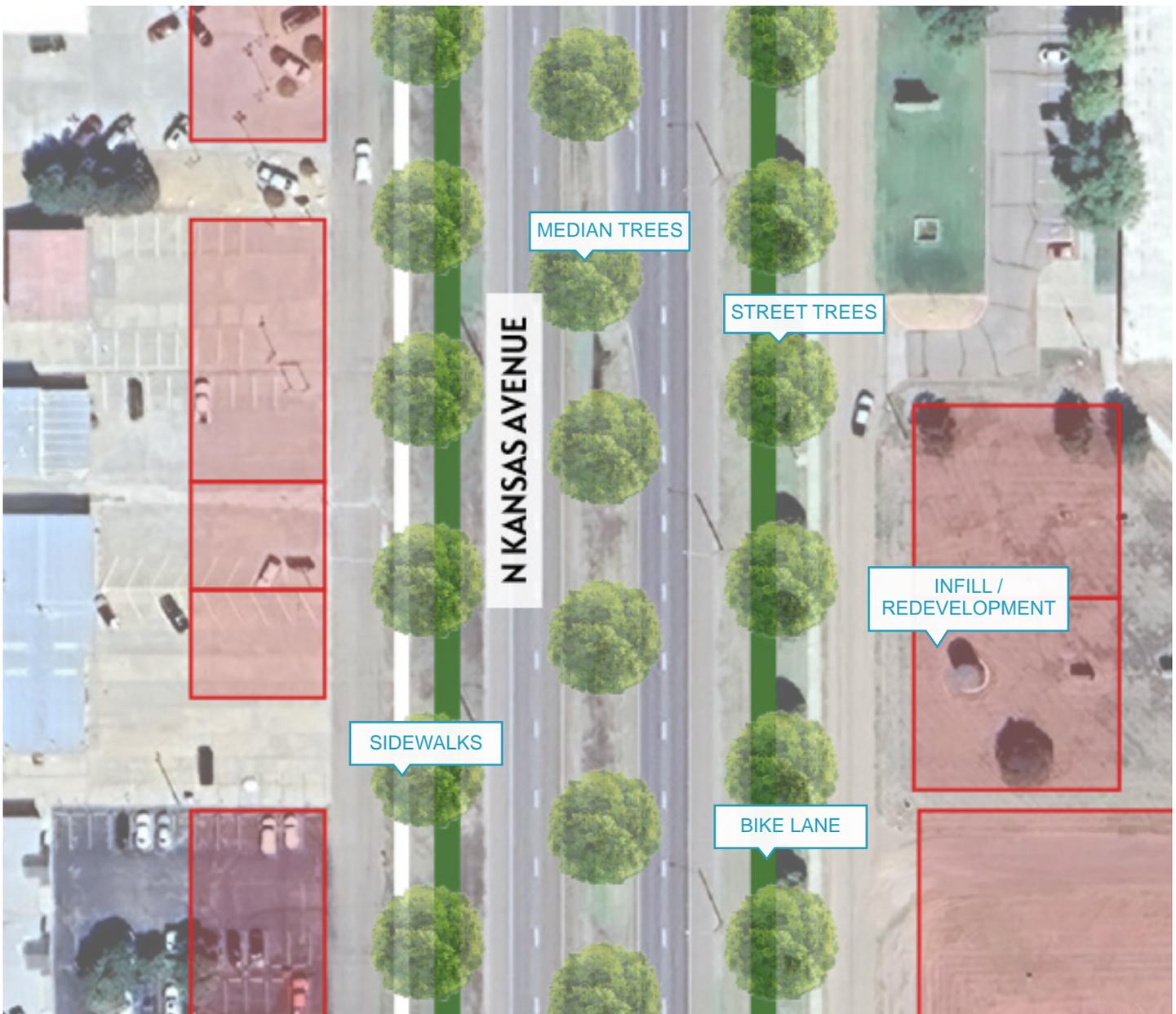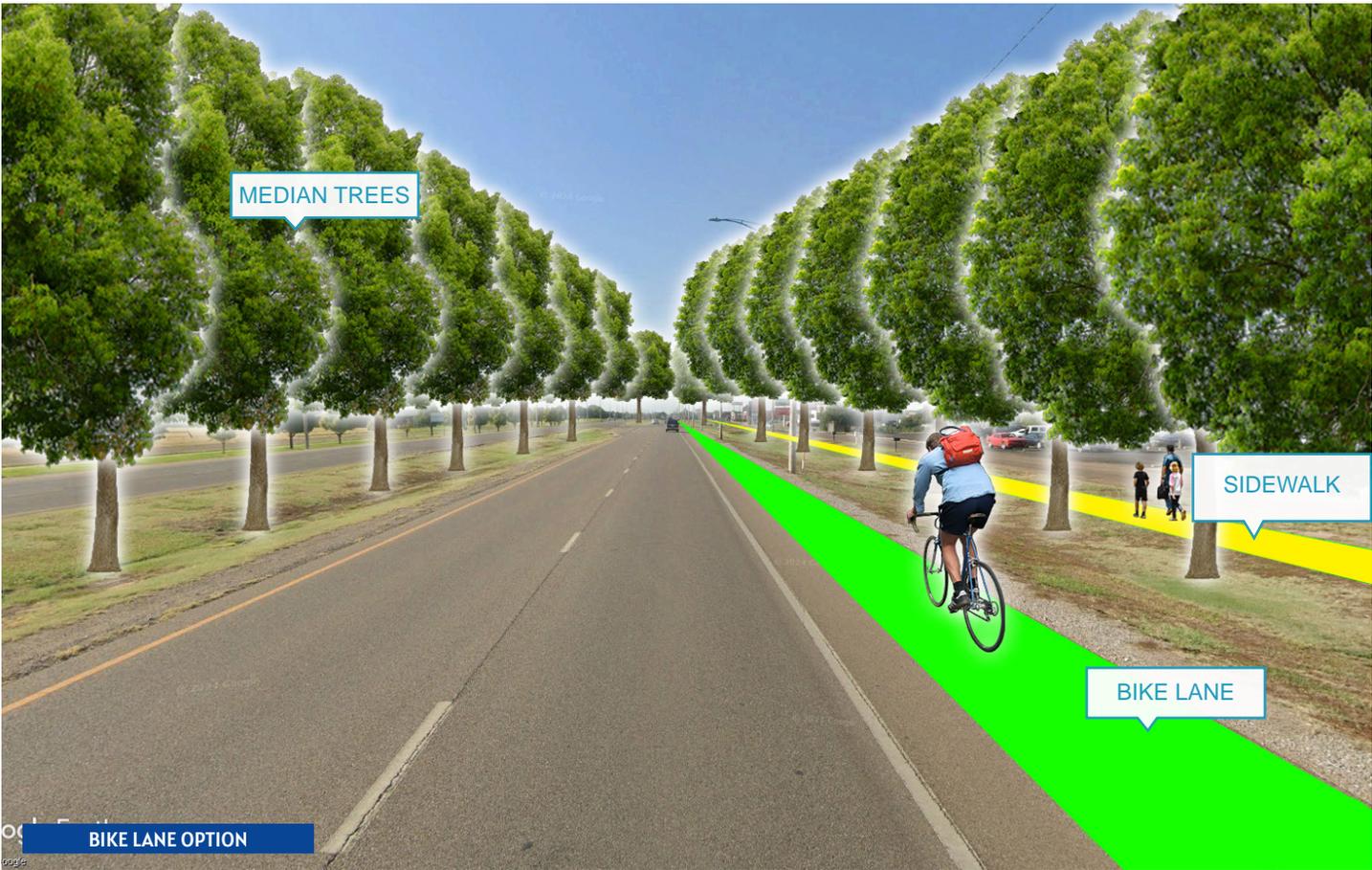
According to Map 3.2 Future Land Use, 15th Street is envisioned to become a key corridor for future development in Liberal, especially east of Kansas Avenue. 15th Street currently provides primary access to both Southwest Medical Center and Seward County Community College resulting in this area serving as a key destination for residents and visitors. East of the College campus is approximately 160 acres of currently undeveloped real estate that has significant frontage on to both 15th Street and Country Estates Road (US-83). Based on its proximity to the College, this area could become a key center of activity for both residents and visitors. A destination development on this property would serve as a gateway into the City, and as such, care should be taken at potential improvements at the intersections of 15th Street and Country Estates Road (US-83) and 15th Street and Kansas Avenue.

INFILL / REDEVELOPMENT

STREET TREES

MEDIAN & TURN LANES

BIKE LANE & SIDEWALK
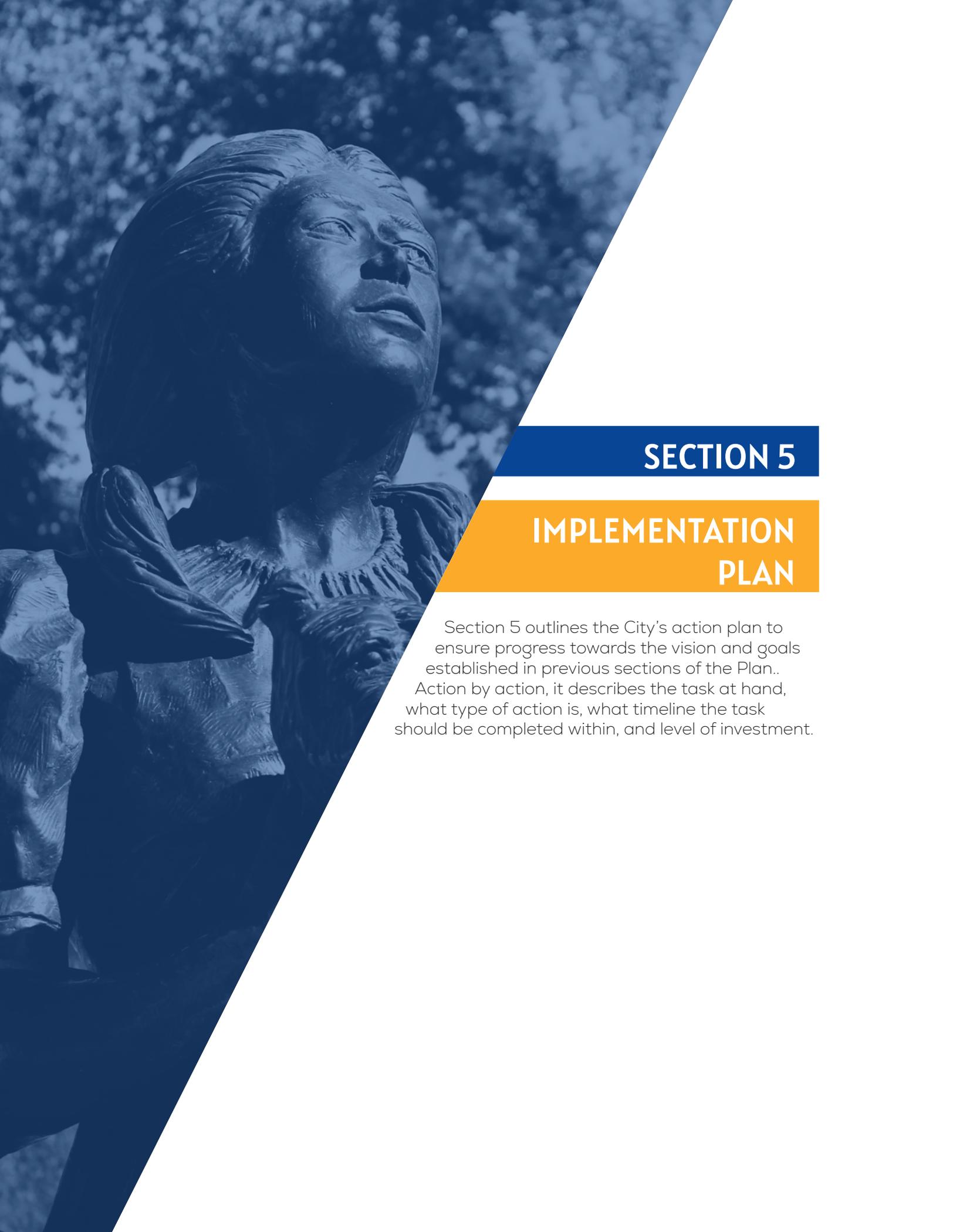
SECTION 5

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Section 5 outlines the City's action plan to ensure progress towards the vision and goals established in previous sections of the Plan.. Action by action, it describes the task at hand, what type of action is, what timeline the task should be completed within, and level of investment.

OVERVIEW

The implementation plan serves as a guide for putting Launch Liberal 2035 into action. These next pages build off the other sections and appendices of the Plan. Section 2: Value Statements & Goals was created after completing a robust Community Assessment (Appendix A), a comprehensive review of the City's existing plans and studies (Appendix B), and multiple community engagement events (Appendix C). These foundational steps in the planning process culminated in the establishment of the ambitions of the City over the next 10 years. This section, the Implementation Plan, is tasked with providing a road map for achieving these ambitions.

VALUE STATEMENTS

GOALS → **STRATEGIES** / **STRATEGIES** / **STRATEGIES**

GOALS → **STRATEGIES** / **STRATEGIES** / **STRATEGIES**
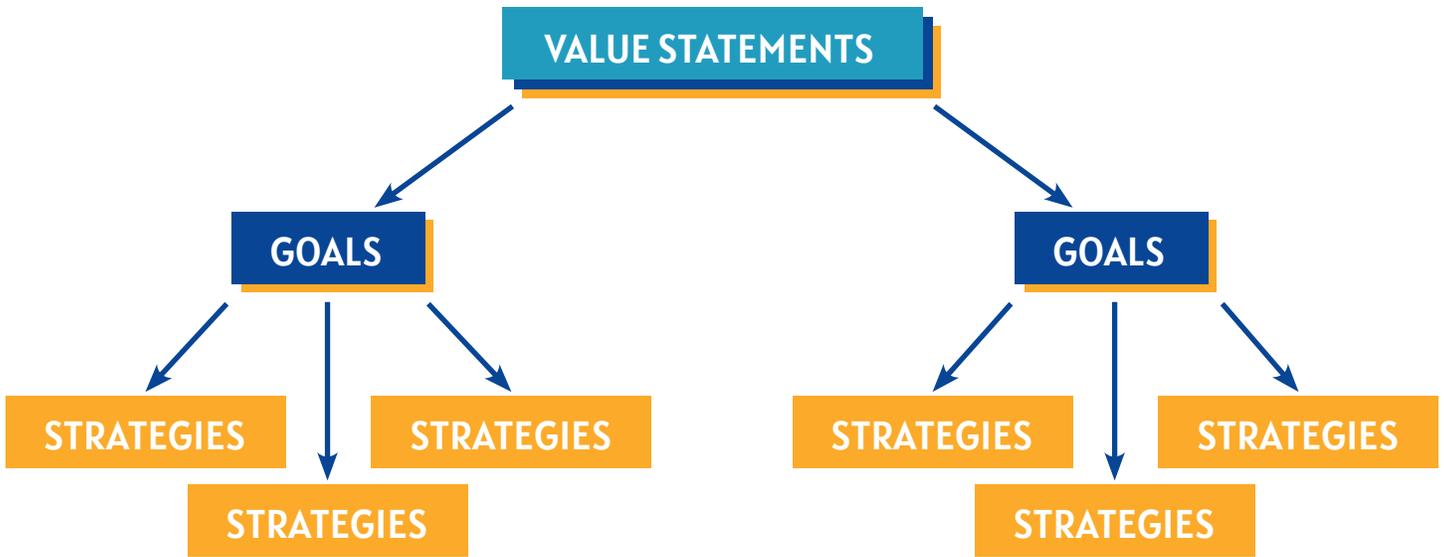
The Implementation Plan sets forth a section for each VALUE STATEMENT established in Section 2 of this Plan. Within each Value Statement, several GOALS were set. In order to make progress towards each goal, the Implementation Plan then sets forth the specific STRATEGIES to guide the City.

The STRATEGY column describes the action to be taken and assigns a unique identifier for ease of user reference.

The TYPE column indicates the type of strategy, and utilizes four categories:

STUDY — Requires further analysis to determine the most appropriate solution(s).

OPERATIONS — Requires new or modified internal processes.

REGULATION — Requires Governing Body approved modifications to existing City code(s).

POLICY — Requires a new or modified City program or policy.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION — Requires physical construction of a project.

Columns are included for both the recommended TIMING to begin the strategy and the expected level of INVESTMENT.

TIMING

Immediate

Short-Term

Long-Term

Continuous

INVESTMENT

No Significant Additional Cost

Less than $10k

$10K-$100K

More than $100K

A CONNECTED PLACE

LIBERAL WILL BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY PROVIDING AN EFFICIENT, SAFE, FUNCTIONAL, AND PLEASANT EXPERIENCE FOR ALL TRANSPORTATION USERS.

GOAL I: CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR ALL CITIZENS.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
ACP-1.1	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and assess existing roadway design standards to ensure they are complimentary			
ACP-1.2	Ensure that the Access Map set forth in this Plan is incorporated into the development review process when new roadways are required/proposed			N/A
ACP-1.3	Design and construct improvements to Kansas Avenue and Pancake Boulevard reflective of the Quality of Life section of this Plan			
ACP-1.4	Fill in missing pedestrian connections along Primary Pedestrian Routes as set forth in this Plan in addition to pedestrian amenities, i.e. bike racks, benches, pedestrian scale lighting, etc.			
ACP-1.5	Conduct a Bike and Walk Audit to identify areas of specific need			
ACP-1.6	Partner with schools, not-for-profits, government agencies, and businesses to educate people about bicycling and walking			N/A
ACP-1.7	Coordinate with state and federal agencies to design and construct the at-grade separation at Pershing Avenue or Western Avenue and the railroad			
ACP-1.8	Coordinate with local partners to advocate for the development of Secondary Pedestrian Routes set forth in this Plan			N/A
ACP-1.9	Require all new residential development to provide multiple local street and pedestrian access points to surrounding development			N/A
ACP-1.10	Ensure bus shelters are available at all bus stops			

GOAL 2: ASSESS, IMPROVE, AND MAINTAIN THE EXISTING ROADWAY SYSTEM TO SUPPORT CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
ACP-2.1	Pursue stable funding to support continuous and long-term maintenance and improvement of transportation system (impact fee, sales tax, bond financing, etc.)	(people/gear icon)	(clock icon)	N/A
ACP-2.2	Complete an updated pavement condition assessment, develop a preservation program, and establish routine condition reassessments	(chart/magnifier icon)	(clock icon)	$$
ACP-2.3	Improve 15th Street corridor to enclose drainage to improve aesthetics and provide amenity zone	(alert icon)	(clock icon)	$$$
ACP-2.4	Coordinate improvements to traffic operations within proximity to school locations and at school sites during pick-up and drop-off times	(people/gear icon)	(clock icon)	N/A

GOAL 3: INCREASE THE SAFETY OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IN THE COMMUNITY.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
ACP-3.1	Establish annual traffic crash review program to identify priority improvement areas	(people/gear icon)	(clock icon)	N/A
ACP-3.2	Design and construct safety improvements to Kansas Avenue corridor reflective of best practices, the place type framework of this Plan, and the Quality of Life section of this Plan	(alert icon)	(clock icon)	$$$
ACP-3.3	Design and construct safety improvements to Pancake Boulevard corridor reflective of best practices, the place type framework of this Plan, and the Quality of Life section of this Plan	(alert icon)	(clock icon)	$$$
ACP-3.4	Develop a toolkit of inexpensive and quick-build projects to increase roadway safety for all users (pavement markings, speed tables, painted crosswalks, curb extensions, plantings, etc.)	(shield icon)	(clock icon)	$$
ACP-3.5	Assess all existing four-lane roadways for potential reallocation of pavement (road diets)	(chart/magnifier icon)	(clock icon)	$$
ACP-3.6	Implement the strategies included in the regional and local Safe Streets for All Action Plans	(people/gear icon)	(cycle icon)	N/A

LIBERAL WILL FEATURE UNIQUE AND IDENTIFIABLE PLACES AND SPACES THAT FURTHER COMMUNITY PRIDE.

GOAL 1: EMPHASIZE AND EMBRACE THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF LIBERAL AS A SOURCE OF PRIDE.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
ADP-1.1	Continue to provide language translated options in all City events and notices	👥	↻	N/A
ADP-1.2	Emphasize community events to increase community connections	👥	↻	N/A
ADP-1.3	Develop a mural program to link local artists and local businesses, and consider supporting with grant funding	📋	🕐	$$
ADP-1.4	Review regulations to ensure that no elements exist that discourage/prohibit the expression of culture	⚖	🕐	N/A
ADP-1.5	Continue efforts to brand Downtown Liberal as the community and cultural center of the City	👥	↻	N/A

GOAL 2: SUPPORT PLACEMAKING EFFORTS THAT ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY CHARACTER OF LIBERAL.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
ADP-2.1	Add banners and/or flower baskets to street light poles where permitted, but specifically along Primary & Secondary Aesthetic Corridors set forth in this Plan	⚠	🕐	$$
ADP-2.2	Develop a community wayfinding program to direct to key destinations	📋	🕐	$$
ADP-2.3	Encourage neighborhoods to make gateway improvements to instill both City-wide and neighborhood specific pride	📋	🕐	N/A
ADP-2.4	Develop gateway signage program and complete projects in conformance with the Quality of Life section of this Plan	⚠	🕐	$$$
ADP-2.5	Assess existing zoning regulations related to signage requirements to ensure alignment the goals of this Plan	👥	🕐	N/A
ADP-2.6	Require street trees along arterial, collector, and local streets during the development process and during City roadway projects	📋	↻	N/A
ADP-2.7	Consider policy to require public art/ amenities as part of all capital projects	📋	🕐	N/A

GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE GROWTH AT KEY ACTIVITY CENTERS AND CORRIDORS THAT ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER OF LIBERAL.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
ADP-3.1	Encourage retail and commercial growth along Kansas Avenue, Pancake Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Pine Street	📋	🔄	N/A
ADP-3.2	Encourage the development/ redevelopment south of the railroad tracks, east of Kansas Avenue, north of Pancake Boulevard, and west of Country Estates Boulevard	📋	🔄	N/A
ADP-3.3	Encourage the development of the property directly east of Seward County Community College reflective of the Future Land Use Map included in this Plan	📋	🔄	N/A

LIBERAL WILL HAVE SAFE AND ATTAINABLE HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS AT ALL STAGES OF LIFE.

GOAL 1: REVITALIZE EXISTING VACANT AND/OR DILAPIDATED HOUSING.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APL-1.1	Complete a City-Wide Housing Plan that identifies existing conditions and specific short-term and long-term goals and strategies			
APL-1.2	Continue to emphasize/market the existing local Home Repair Program			N/A
APL-1.3	Consider the creation of a Rental Registration and Inspection Program			N/A
APL-1.4	Ensure that code enforcement efforts are efficient and available resources are adequate			N/A
APL-1.5	Factor location into the capital planning process to ensure public investments are aimed at encouraging private investment/reinvestment at identified areas of the City			N/A
APL-1.6	Consider the establishment of a land bank			N/A

GOAL 2: ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO ENCOURAGE A MIX OF QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APL-2.1	Streamline permitting process by identifying and removing inefficiencies with the goal of residential permit issuance under 24 hours			N/A
APL-2.2	Assess existing zoning regulations related to residential uses and bulk/development standards (i.e. minimum lot sizes, required yards, maximum lot coverage, maximum height, etc.)			N/A
APL-2.3	Assess required off-street parking requirements to ensure they reflect modern best practices			N/A

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APL-2.4	Assess existing funding of public infrastructure policies (special assessment policies) to ensure cost-sharing between developers/owners and the City reflects the City's goals			N/A
APL-2.5	Coordinate with school district to plan for new school locations when and where needed			N/A
APL-2.6	Promote pedestrian connectivity within neighborhoods and linking neighborhoods to surrounding areas and destinations during the development review process			N/A
APL-2.7	Update existing subdivision regulations to encourage implementation of this Plan			N/A
APL-2.8	Complete a water master plan to ensure future supply is adequate for housing goals			$$
APL-2.9	Complete a sanitary sewer system master plan to ensure system is adequate for housing goals			$$

GOAL 3: AMPLIFY THE CREATION OF A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APL-3.1	Revise existing zoning regulations to encourage accessory dwelling units by allowing in identified residential zoning districts			N/A
APL-3.2	Develop pre-approved house and accessory dwelling unit plans and a related program			$$$
APL-3.3	Create and market how-to guides and process flowcharts to provide easily accessible and understandable information for those wishing to do housing projects from new subdivisions to single-lot projects			N/A
APL-3.4	Assess existing economic development policies and/or create new policies (New Construction Housing Incentive, First-Time Homebuyer Program , RHID, TIF, NRP, etc.) aimed specifically at housing needs			N/A
APL-3.5	Establish a neighborhood forum with HOAs and neighborhood organization to discuss issues and opportunities			N/A
APL-3.6	Coordinate strategic housing strategies with Seward County Development Corporation			N/A

LIBERAL WILL HAVE A STRONG ECONOMIC BASE WITH A DIVERSE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN.

GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL, RETAIL, OFFICE, AND INDUSTRIAL USES.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APO-1.1	Promote Liberal as a destination for commercial, retail, office, and industrial uses	👥⚙	🔄	N/A
APO-1.2	Create strategies for developing or redeveloping vacant and underutilized properties in a manner that is more productive and reflective of this Plan	📋	🔄	N/A
APO-1.3	Identify and target innovative and niche businesses, including an emphasis on small manufacturing/industrial businesses, to establish in Liberal through the use of appropriate incentives and public investments	👥⚙	🔄	N/A

GOAL 2: EXPAND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS, ESPECIALLY YOUNG ADULTS.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APO-2.1	Develop a streamlined process to facilitate the opening of a business in Liberal for local entrepreneurs	👥⚙	🔄	N/A
APO-2.2	Provide quality housing options for employees to live and retail and entertainment options to become regionally competitive	📋	🔄	N/A
APO-2.3	Create and/or promote apprenticeship programs for targeted workforce segments	📋	🕐	N/A
APO-2.4	Consider the creation of incentives aimed at local talent retention	📋	🕐	N/A

GOAL 3: ACTIVATE DOWNTOWN THROUGH THE INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND EVENTS.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APO-3.1	Encourage the use of Reinvestment Housing Incentive Districts to promote upper story residential units in the Downtown area	📋	🕐	N/A
APO-3.2	Promote Downtown Liberal as the hub for new and local businesses	👥	🔄	N/A
APO-3.3	Ensure that live-work spaces are permitted and encouraged downtown	👥	🕐	N/A
APO-3.4	Assess off-street parking requirements to ensure they are aligned with overall downtown goals	⚖️	🕐	N/A
APO-3.5	Identify opportunities to provide community services and programs in downtown	👥	🔄	N/A
APO-3.6	Develop downtown specific branding and wayfinding	⚠️	🕐	$$$
APO-3.7	Ensure downtown remains consistently activated by supporting annual and seasonal community events	👥	🔄	N/A
APO-3.8	Support developments and projects that enhance walkability to and within downtown	👥	🔄	N/A
APO-3.9	Ensure zoning regulations encourage active and desirable uses in downtown while prohibiting inactive uses such as storage	⚖️	🕐	N/A
APO-3.10	Develop a facade improvement program for downtown buildings	📋	🕐	N/A
APO-3.11	Invest in public spaces within downtown to encourage private investment	⚠️	🕐	$$$

A PLACE TO PLAY

LIBERAL WILL BE A COMMUNITY OF GREAT AND CONNECTED PARK SPACES WITH ENJOYABLE RECREATION OPTIONS.

GOAL 1: EMPHASIZE THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PARKS AND EXPAND CURRENT AMENITIES.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APP-1.1	Pursue stable funding to support continuous and long-term maintenance and improvement of parks and recreation system (sponsorships, impact fees, user fees, sales tax, bond financing, etc.)			N/A
APP-1.2	Develop a program with local artists to install public art in existing and future parks			N/A
APP-1.3	Develop a landscape standard for existing and future parks that emphasizes native plantings that require less maintenance effort and cost			N/A
APP-1.4	Benchmark parks and recreation system using the National Recreation and Park Association annual agency performance review data			N/A

GOAL 2: OFFER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT ADDRESS A VARIETY OF COMMUNITY INTERESTS.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APP-2.1	Complete a Parks & Recreation System Master Plan to guide future development of parks and recreation facilities			$$
APP-2.2	Promote diversity in park type and amenities to allow for a variety of recreation opportunities			N/A
APP-2.3	Create development standards for each park typology to guide future development and improvement efforts			N/A
APP-2.4	Assess ability to provide public wi-fi at parks and facilities			N/A

GOAL 3: IMPROVE ACCESS FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO PUBLIC PARK SPACES.

	STRATEGY	TYPE	TIMING	INVESTMENT
APP-3.1	Review land dedication requirements during development projects to ensure adequate future park and open space is provided			N/A
APP-3.2	Explore shared use agreements with the school district for public access to outdoor recreational and sports facilities			N/A
APP-3.3	Explore opportunities to provide all-inclusive play equipment in all parks and facilities			N/A
APP-3.4	Pursue opportunities to provide new park and open space within the priority areas included in this Plan using the 10-minute walk goal			N/A
APP-3.5	Ensure public transportation routes are designed with park and open space access in mind			N/A
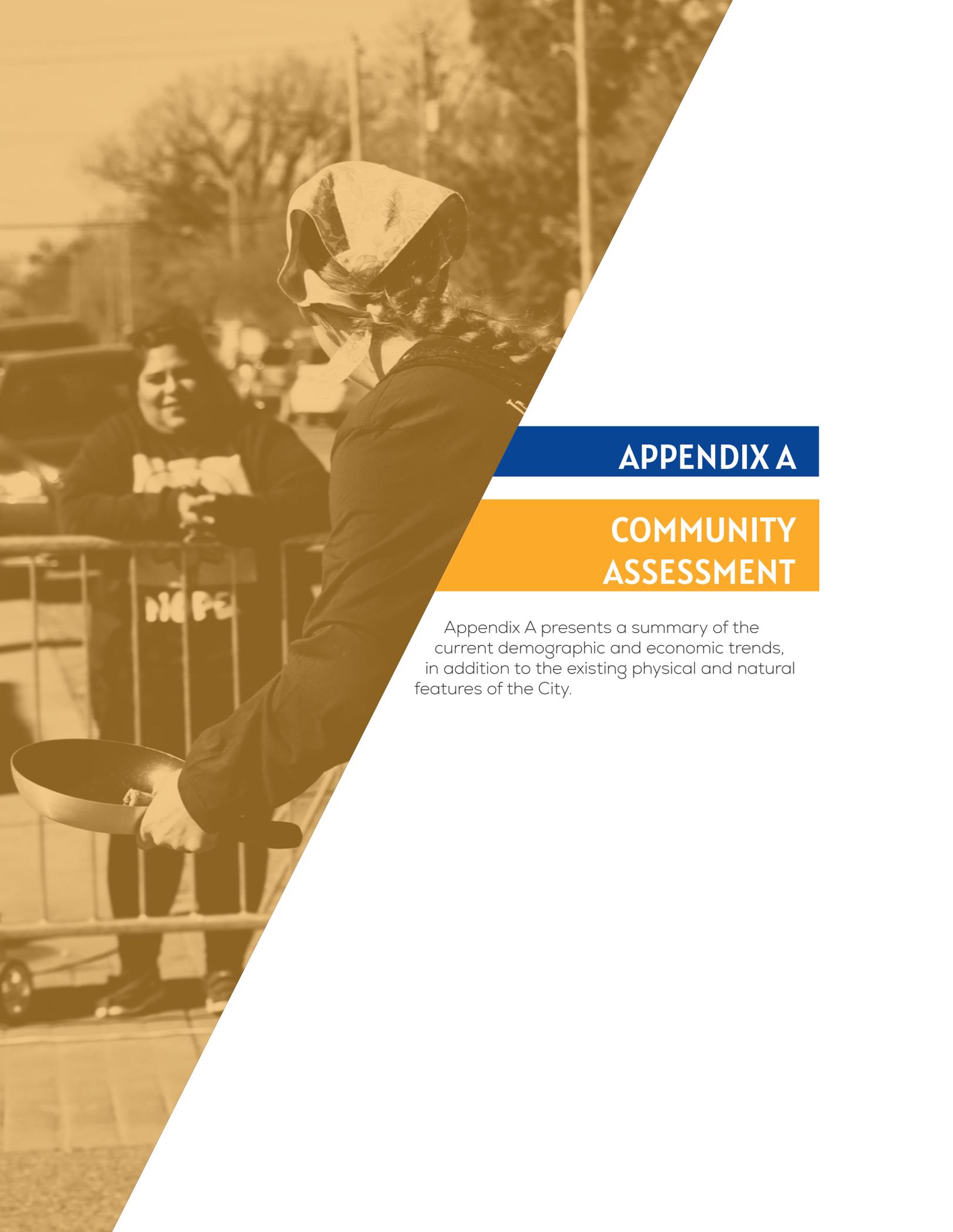
Appendix A presents a summary of the current demographic and economic trends, in addition to the existing physical and natural features of the City.
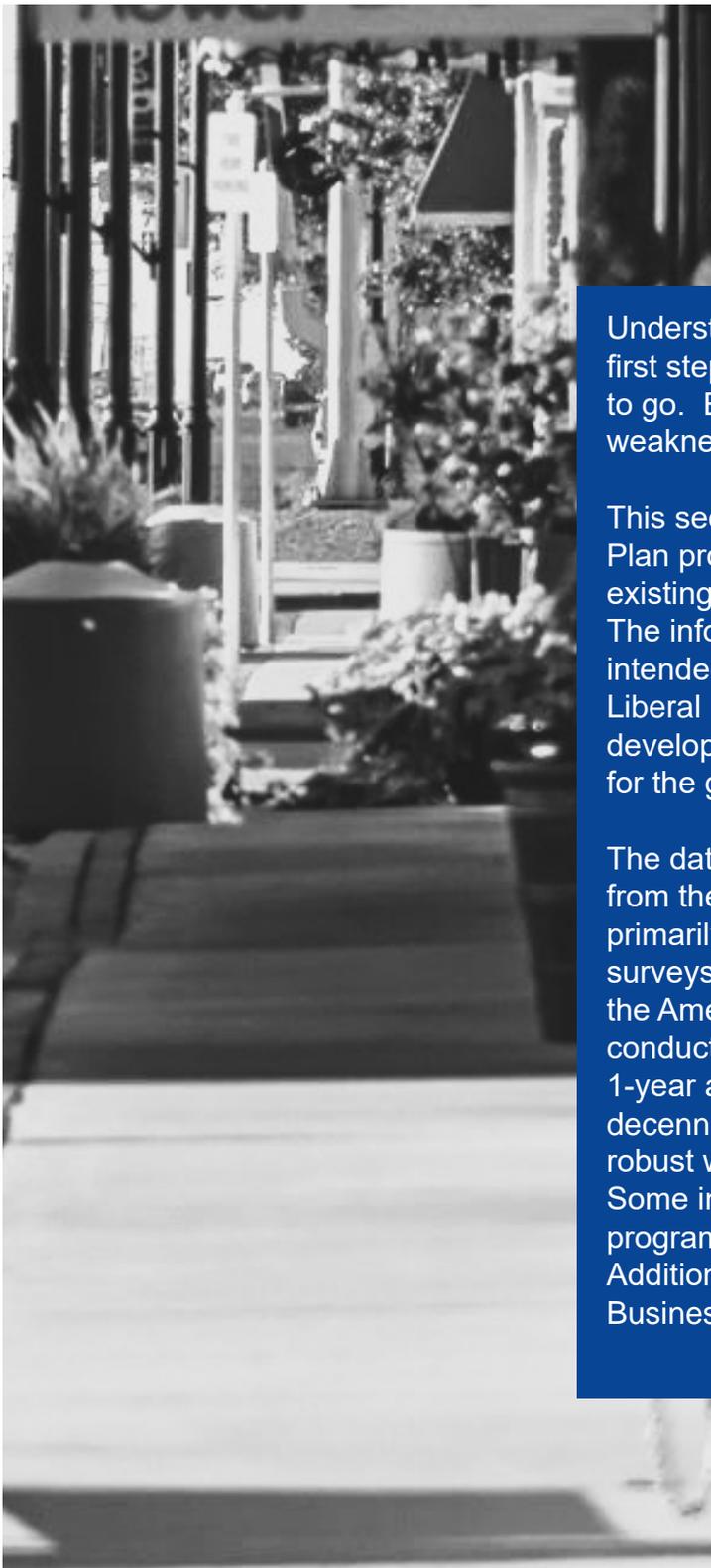
Understanding where a community is now is a critical first step in developing a road map for where it wants to go. Every community has its share of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities.

This section of the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan provides an inventory and assessment of the existing conditions at the time of this plan's development. The information contained within this appendix is intended to function as a snapshot of where the City of Liberal is now. The data collected and analysis done in developing this information also serve as a foundation for the goals and strategies recommended throughout.

The data provided in this appendix is primarily derived from the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Census Bureau primarily collects data through two programs: decennial surveys conducted at the start of each decade, and the American Community Survey (ACS) which is conducted annually. ACS information is provided in 1-year and rolling 5-year estimates. Information from the decennial census is generally considered to be more robust while ACS information fills the gaps in between. Some information is only obtainable in one or the other program, as the data collected through the two varies. Additional information was also collected through ESRI Business Analyst.

EXISTING LAND USE

Liberal is in southwest Kansas and is the county seat of Seward County. The City occupies approximately 13.6 square miles – or 8,720 acres – of land. Major roadways traversing Liberal are US 54 east to west (Pancake Boulevard within the City limits), Kansas Avenue north to south, Western Avenue north to south, and US 83 (County Estates Road within the City limits). As depicted in Map A.1, land uses along Kansas Avenue are mostly commercial. Land uses along Pancake Boulevard are primarily commercial and industrial. Most residential land uses are between Western Avenue and Kansas Avenue, both north and south of US 54.

Liberal's current land uses reflect residential throughout the City. Vacant, open space, and recreational land uses are generally located on the outer edges of the City. Significant industrial uses exist west of Western Avenue, along the US 54 corridor, and east of US 83. Institutional uses (education, public administration, and health care) exist predominantly north of US 54. Portions of Liberal remain undeveloped, with large undeveloped tracts of land located mostly in the northeast and east portions of the existing City limits.

LAND USE	ACRES	%
Single & Two Family Residential	1173.7	13.5%
Multi-Family Residential	87.5	1.0%
Manufactured Homes	187.5	2.1%
Commercial	484.9	5.6%
Industrial & Manufacturing	730.8	8.4%
Transportation, Communication, Information, & Utilities	1602.9	18.4%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	412.5	4.7%
Education, Public Administration, Health Care	576.2	6.6%
Vacant, Open Space, & Agriculture	3463.5	39.7%

KEY FINDINGS

There are no recognized standards to determine if a community has a healthy mix of land uses, as each community is unique. 5.6% of land within the City is in commercial use, which may indicate a potential shortage of shopping, restaurants, medical, commercial service, and office establishments. Approximately 40% of land is classified as vacant, open space, and/or agricultural, which is significantly higher than other similar communities. Although many factors may explain why each tract of land is not currently developed and whether these tracts can ultimately be developed, this result would initially indicate that the existing City limits has sufficient availability for new development. Industrial and manufacturing also outpace the rates evident in other communities.

LEGEND
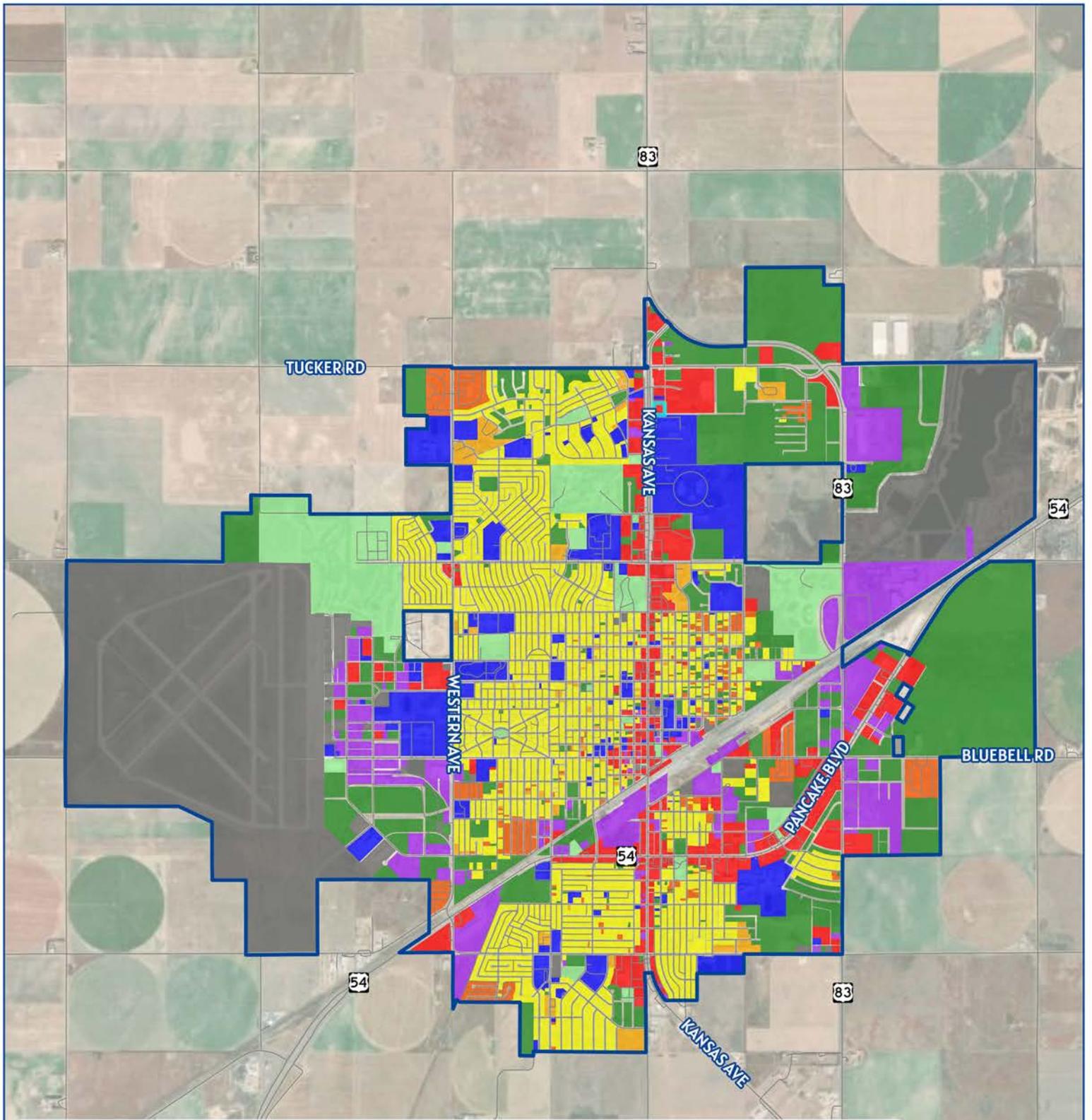
- LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- SINGLE & TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MANUFACTURED HOMES
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL & MANUFACTURING
- TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION, AND UTILITIES
- ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATION
- EDUCATION, PUBLIC ADMIN., HEALTH CARE, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS
- VACANT/OPEN SPACE/AGRICULTURE

Earthstar Geographics

MAP A.I | EXISTING LAND USE

0   0.5   1
Miles

EXISTING ZONING

Zoning is the primary tool used by communities to regulate development. Zoning codes typically address what can be built, where it can be built, and how. The standards in a community's zoning code are one of, if not the, central elements that determine the composition of the built environment in any given community. As such, a well-organized and thought-out zoning code is a crucial component to the look and feel of a community.

The Liberal Zoning Ordinance was first established in 1967, the latest version having been revised in February of 2023. Each property within the City limits has a zoning district classification, which determines what types of uses are permitted, the process (if any) required to permit them, and the general layout of how the property must develop.

The majority of the City of Liberal is zoned as one of the "base districts" found within the regulations; only a handful of properties are governed by a Planned Unit Development or subject to an Overlay District. There are 16 Zoning Districts found within the Code. The table below depicts the current districts by acreage.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ZONING AND LAND USE?

Zoning districts specifically define and regulate what kinds of uses are allowed on specific parcel and outline the City's development requirements.

Land use reflects the current or desired development pattern in each area.

ZONING DISTRICT	ACRES	%
A-L Agricultural	742.3	8.5%
R-1 Single Family Dwelling	1443.3	16.6%
R-2 Two-Family Dwelling	432.0	5.0%
R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling	1225.5	14.1%
PUD Planned Unit Development	59.2	0.7%
MH Manufactured Home	15.0	0.2%
M-P Manufactured Home	195.4	2.3%
TT-P Travel Trailer Park	0.0	0.0%
C-O Commercial Office Building	0.0	0.0%
C-1 Neighborhood Shopping	26.6	0.3%
C-2 General Commercial	951.3	11.0%
C-3 Core Commercial	85.3	1.0%
I-P Industrial Park	713.8	8.2%
I-1 Light Industrial	631.3	7.3%
I-2 Heavy Industrial	1252.8	14.4%
I-2A Heavy Industrial	909.3	10.5%

The following is a summary of the Articles that comprise the current Zoning Ordinance.

ARTICLE I	Contains introductory provisions for the Zoning Ordinance such as where it sits within the overall City Code structure, the jurisdiction it covers, and the purpose of the document. **Title, Purpose, Authority and Jurisdiction**
ARTICLE II	Provides the rules for interpretation of standards and terminology contained within the Zoning Ordinance. Clarifies how to handle conflicting provisions, use of tenses, vesting rights, and other details. **Interpretation, Construction and Definitions**
ARTICLE III	Contains a list of terms found within the Zoning Ordinance along with a brief description/definition for each. **Rules and Definitions**
ARTICLE IV	Lists the base zoning districts of the Zoning Ordinance and states that the Zoning District Map is the authoritative reference for their boundaries. Additional guidance is provided for rezoning properties recently annexed into the City and rules for interpretation of zoning district boundaries. **Districts and Boundaries**
ARTICLE V – XV	Provides standards for the 16 base zoning districts found within the Zoning Ordinance. Some of the standards described in these Articles are use regulations, intensity/density of development, height regulations, and setback restrictions. **Zoning Districts**
ARTICLE XVI	Describes the rules and regulations, process for evaluating and permitting, and classification system for signs within the City. Utilizes text, images, and tables. Standards vary between the various zoning districts. **Signs**
ARTICLE XVII	Covers topics such as: location, design, maintenance, surfacing materials, calculation standards, and required amount of parking spaces. Parking is primarily assessed based on the land use associated with a development. **Parking**

ARTICLE XVIII

Provides standards associated with minimum building requirements (dwelling units, mobile homes, motels, tents), moving structures from one location to another, and minimum building elevations.

Buildings and Uses Affected

ARTICLE XIX

Details specific development standards that apply to the airport and surrounding area. The intent of this section is to eliminate or mitigate hazards associated with takeoff and landing of aircraft.

Airport Regulations

ARTICLE XX

The first section of this Article provides general development standards such as accessory structure design and location, temporary buildings and signs, and exceptions to default height and setback standards. Subsequent subsections provide standards for: fences, setbacks, sidewalks, home occupations, and more.

Additional Height, Area, & Use Regulations

ARTICLE XXI

Describes the application and review criteria for landscaped areas. Provides standards related to review processes, landscape buffers, parking lots, surfacing materials, installation and maintenance, and more.

Landscaping

ARTICLE XXII

Describes the process for evaluating and reviewing developments that predate the adoption of the Code.

Nonconforming Uses

ARTICLE XXIII

States that the City Building Inspector is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the requirements for Certificates of Occupancy, platting requirement, penalties for violations, and the department responsible for utility inspections.

Enforcement, Violation, and Penalty

ARTICLE XXIV

Establishes and outlines the powers and duties of the Board of Zoning Appeals. Provides standards for evaluating Variances and exceptions to the Zoning Ordinance.

Board of Zoning Appeals

ARTICLE XXV	Details the application and review criteria for applications proposing an amendment to the Zoning District Map and/or amendment to the Zoning Ordinance standards. **Amendments**
ARTICLE XXVI	Validates the existence of the Zoning Ordinance within the City Code and states the date in which it was first adopted. **Validity**
ARTICLE XXVII	An image showing the minimum standards for evaluating sight triangles. **Attachments (Sight Triangle)**

KEY FINDINGS

38.1% of the City is currently zoned residential, 12.2% commercial, 40.4% industrial, and 0.7% has custom zoning (PD – Planned Unit Development). As the zoning district name would indicate, the core commercial corridor in Liberal is along Kansas Avenue north of US 54-400. C-2 General Commercial zoning prominently exists along Kansas Avenue (outside of the Core Commercial area) and along Pancake Avenue. The most intense zoning (industrial) is dominant west of Western Avenue and east of US 83/County Estates Road. Generally, more intense zoning types, such as commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential, are located along the major transportation corridors. There seems to be a disconnect between the amount of land zoned R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling (1,225.5 acres) compared to the amount of land currently in multi-family use (87.5 acres). It should also be noted that the City does not have a specific zoning designation for parks or recreational uses. Parks are currently either located in areas zoned A-L Agricultural or within another base zoning district. Two existing zoning districts (TT-P Travel Trailer Park and C-O Commercial Office Building) are not currently evident anywhere in the City.

LEGEND

▭ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS	▮ LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	▮ SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING
▮ AGRICULTURAL	▮ HEAVY INDUSTRIAL	▮ TWO FAMILY DWELLING
▮ NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING	▮ INDUSTRIAL PARK	▮ MULTIPLE FAMILY DWELLING
▮ GENERAL COMMERCIAL	▮ MOBILE HOME PARK	
▮ CORE COMMERCIAL	▮ PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	

MAP A.2 | EXISTING ZONING

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Miles

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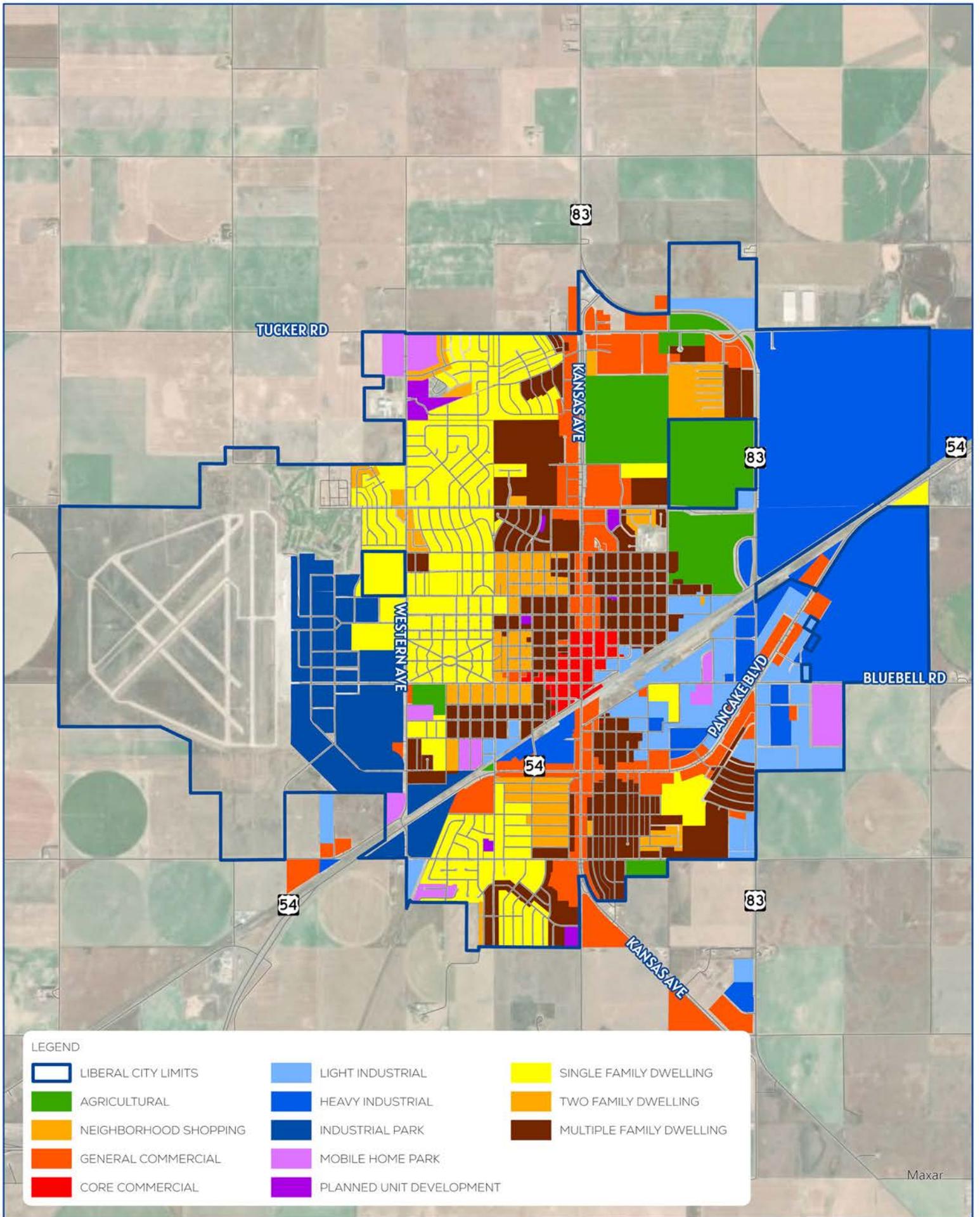
EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

SCHOOLS

The City of Liberal is served by USD 480. Currently, there is one pre-kindergarten facility, five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, USD 480 has a total student enrollment of 4,659 students, employs 337 classroom teachers, and has a student-teacher ratio of 13.82.

Liberal is also home to Seward County Community College, which was founded in 1969 with an enrollment of 331 students. Currently, over 2,000 students attend the College either on-campus or online. Per the College's website, the current student-faculty ratio is 15 to 1 and the college had the fastest growing enrollment for Kansas colleges in 2022.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Liberal City Hall is located at 324 N. Kansas Ave. and currently houses many City departments. The Liberal Recreation Department operates various community recreation facilities, including an indoor gym, batting cages, game room, golf simulator, shooting simulator, Lego blocks, and a robotics program. Adventure Bay Water Park, located at 1115 N. Kansas Ave., is one of Southwest Kansas' largest water park facilities. The Liberal Fire Department includes 21 full-time employees operating out of two 24-hour stations – one north and one south of US 54. Seward County Fire Rescue also operates out of a Liberal location. The Liberal Police Department is headquartered at 325 N. Washington Ave. Liberal and Seward County operate a joint Emergency Communications department located at 501 N. Washington Ave. Southwest Medical Center operates in Liberal as a not-for-profit acute care hospital at 315 W. 15th St. Seward County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operates one staffed unit located just east of the Southwest Medical Center. Seward County EMS has an additional four ambulances that are manned by crew members from home that respond to the station when a call comes in when the first-out vehicle is deployed elsewhere.

KEY FINDINGS

Although detailed analysis of level of service provided by each of these community facilities transcends the scope of this plan, generally, leaders at the city, county, and school district levels should remain diligent in continuously assessing their ability to maintain services levels as the population, geography, and demographics of the community change.
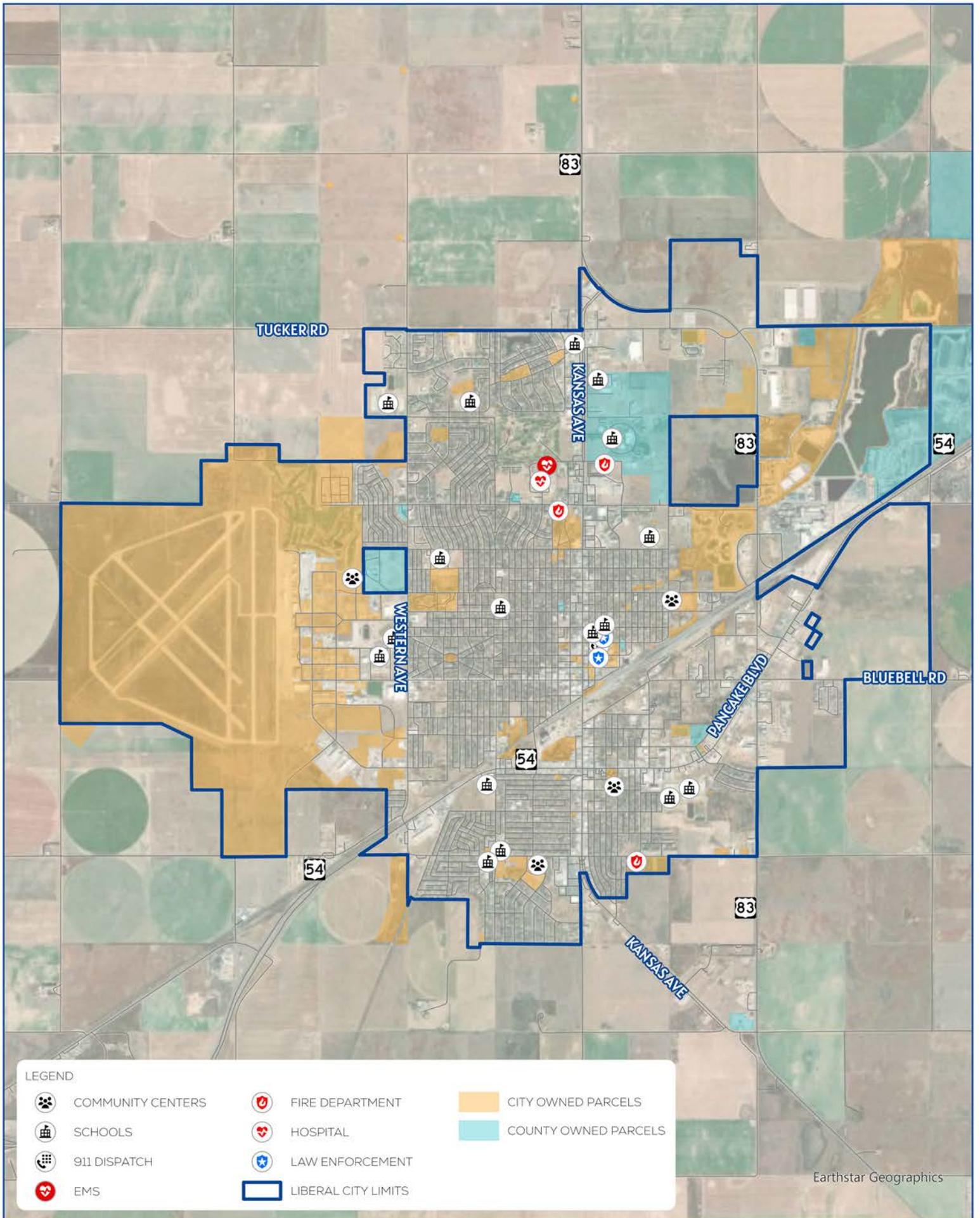
LEGEND

🐾	COMMUNITY CENTERS	🔥	FIRE DEPARTMENT		CITY OWNED PARCELS	
🏫	SCHOOLS	❤️	HOSPITAL		COUNTY OWNED PARCELS	
☎️	911 DISPATCH	⭐	LAW ENFORCEMENT			
💗	EMS		LIBERAL CITY LIMITS			

Earthstar Geographics

MAP A.3 | COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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Miles

EXISTING PARKS & OPEN SPACE

This section provides an inventory of the existing parks within the City of Liberal and categorizes them based on size and the amenities they provide.

2,795 acres of parks within the City of Liberal were identified and classified based on the system outlined below. The parameters outlined here are best used as a general reference–for example, a Neighborhood Park is not strictly limited to 10 acres or less and some may be slightly larger.

POCKET PARKS

- Up to 1 acre
- One amenity (playground, tennis court, passive recreation, etc.)
- No or limited green space
- No dedicated parking
- Intended to serve a single purpose or accessory to primary land use

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- 1 to 10 acres
- One or more amenities
- Some amount of green space
- Limited dedicated parking
- Intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood

COMMUNITY PARKS

- 10 to 50 acres
- Multiple amenities
- Notable amount of green space
- Dedicated parking
- Intended to serve the community at large either through scale or specialty

REGIONAL PARKS

- 50+ acres
- Many amenities or a significant amount of one or more amenities
- Substantial green space
- Intended to draw from outside the community

POCKET PARKS	NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	COMMUNITY PARKS	REGIONAL PARKS
ACREAGE: 3.2	ACREAGE: 52.9	ACREAGE: 430.0	ACREAGE: 2,308.2
Cooper Park Tobias Park Tourist Information Park	Harrison Circle Southlawn Park County Club Park – East Mary Frame Park McCray Park Oliver Brown Park County Club Park – West Mahuron Park	Lambert Family Soccer Club Leete Family Park Blue Bonnet Park - North Blue Bonnet Park - South Light Park Liberal Sports Complex/National Beef Sports Complex Willow Tree Golf Course	Arkalon Park

KEY FINDINGS

The City of Liberal provides a substantial amount of total park acreage to its residents and the region. Park offerings include walking paths, open green space, playgrounds, and athletic fields. From pocket parks to a 2,308-acre regional park, parks of all sizes and classifications exist in the area. Arkalon Park, located in the Cimarron River valley and 10 miles northeast of Liberal on US-54, provides camping, fishing, birding, and hiking opportunities for the region. Although specific service area analysis transcends the scope of this plan, the City needs to remain cognizant of park amenities inside its core areas and oldest neighborhoods.

LEGEND

LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

CITY OWNED PARKS

COMMUNITY

NEIGHBORHOOD

POCKET

REGIONAL

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

83

54

Earthstar Geographics

0   1   2   3 Miles

Map labels:
- 83
- TUCKER RD
- KANSAS AVE
- 83
- 54
- WESTERN AVE
- PANCAKE BLVD
- BLUEBELL RD
- 54
- 54
- 83
- KANSAS AVE
- Earthstar Geographics

LEGEND

☐	LIBERAL CITY LIMITS	■	POCKET
■	COMMUNITY	■	REGIONAL
■	NEIGHBORHOOD		

MAP A.5 | EXISTING PARKS - CITY
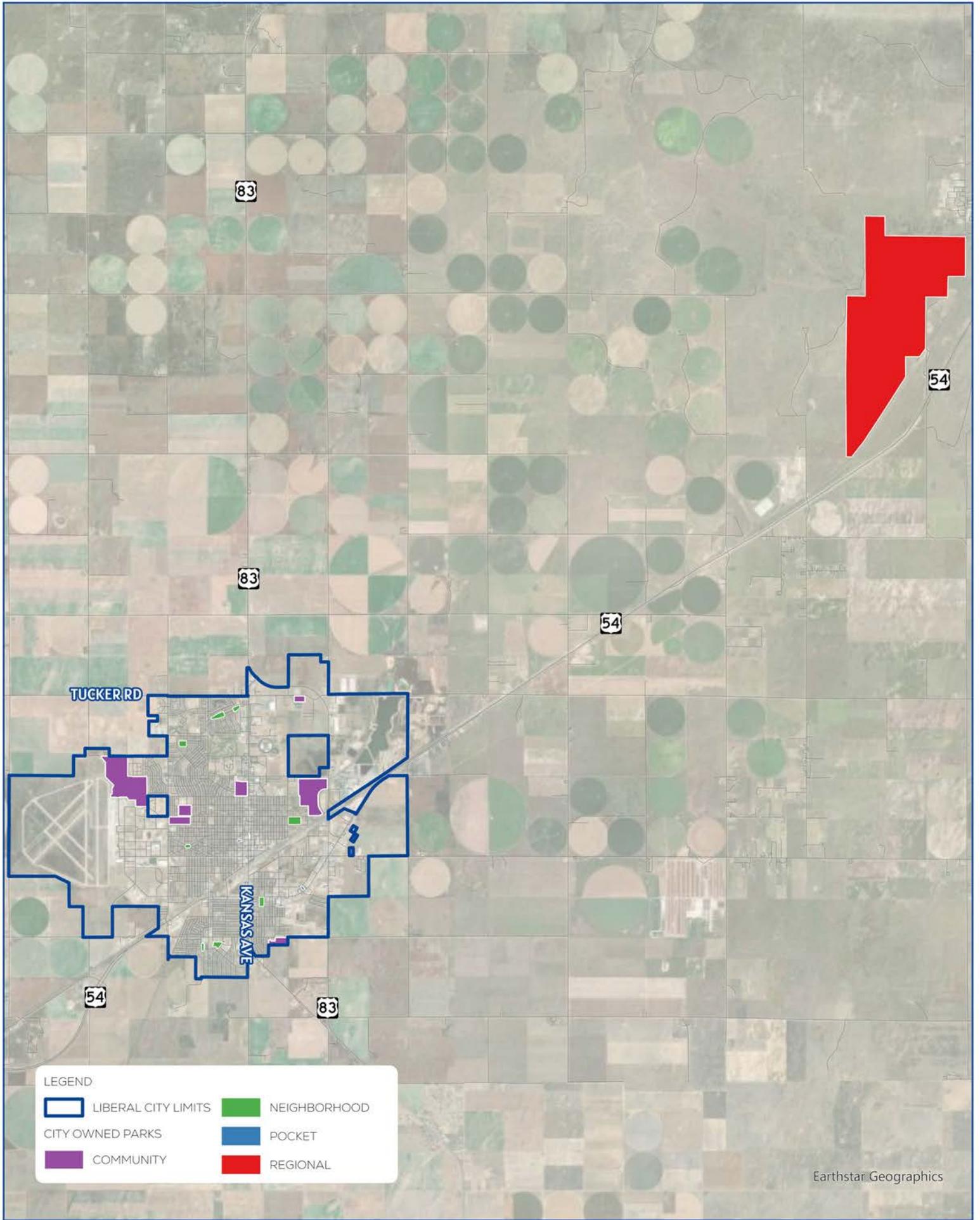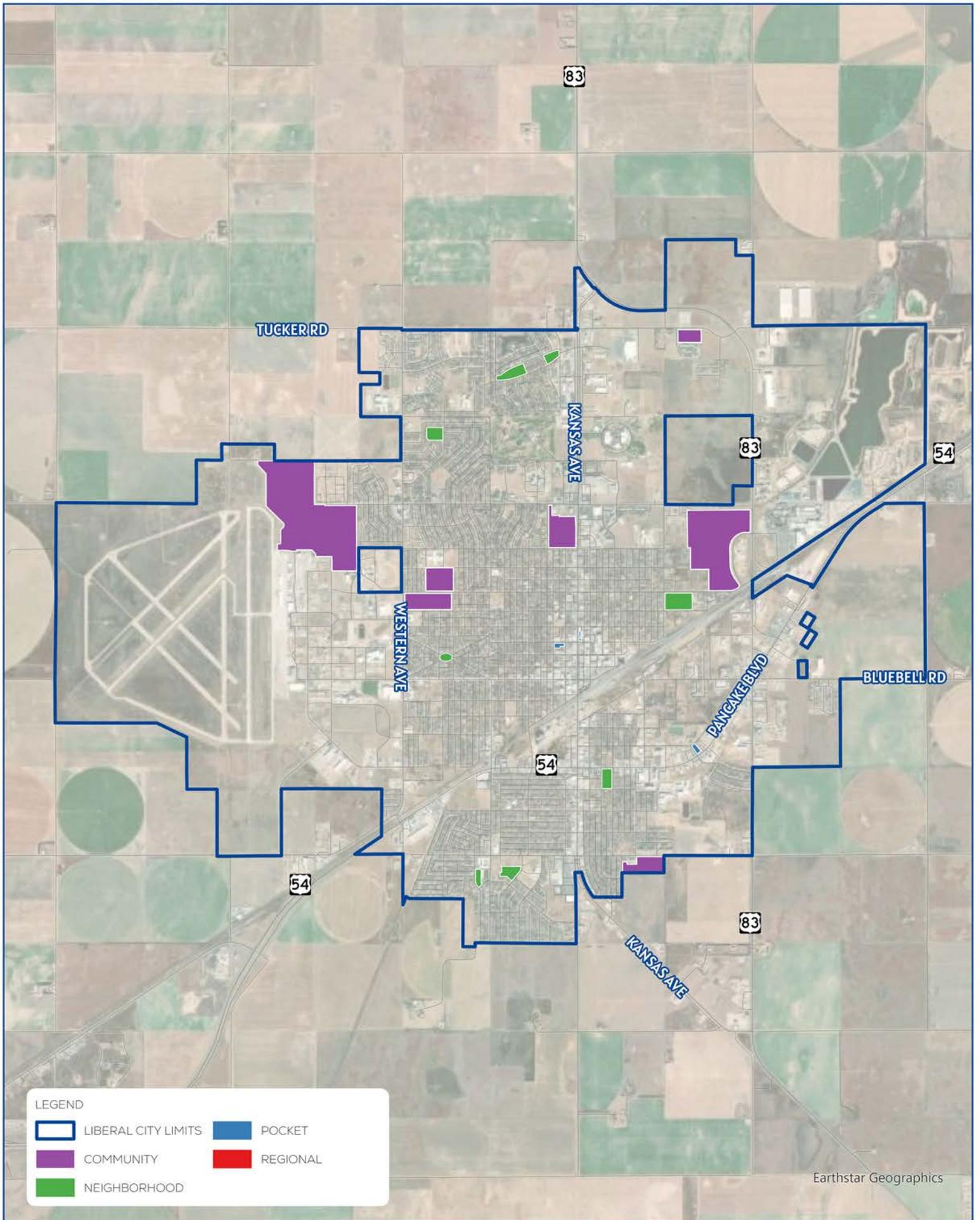
0   0.5   1
Miles

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

STREETS

The City's roadway network consists primarily of streets constructed as residential neighborhoods and reflects a conventional grid network, as shown in Map A.6. Conventional grid patterns maximize the number of through streets and provide a high level of connectivity compared with modern dendritic hierarchical street networks, which are generally characterized by major roadways (arterials and collectors) combined with local roadways with cul-de-sacs.

Grid street networks can provide immense value to a community's transportation system through the increased number of through streets, which can positively impact the function of arterial and collector streets.

The primary regional east-west access roadway is US 54 (Pancake Boulevard), which runs through the southern portions of the City, and connects residents to the other regional roadways. The primary north-south access roadway is US 83 (Country Estates Road).

The segment of road with the highest daily traffic is along Pancake Boulevard near Kansas Avenue, which is in the core commercial area of the City. As of 2021, just over 12,000 vehicles utilize this portion of the street system each day. Other areas that experience more than 10,000 daily vehicles are Kansas Avenue near 8th Street, Kansas Avenue at 15th Street, and Country Estates Road near 8th Street.

One of the benefits of a street system that retains a primary conventional grid layout is the dispersion of traffic provided by multiple through streets. Outside of the locations listed above, no other street segment experiences over 10,000 vehicles per day, which contrasts with similar sized communities that depict a more curvilinear, or dendritic hierarchical street network.

SIDEWALKS & TRAILS

The Liberal Area Coalition for Families completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2018. This plan contained, in part, an inventory of and recommended strategies for sidewalk and trail infrastructure.

Over 222 miles of roadway were evaluated for sidewalk conditions. Of the 222 miles examined, 144 miles (65%) lacked sidewalks of any kind. Of the sidewalks that did exist (77.5 miles),

WHAT IS A ROAD?
Roads are efficient **connections between two places**. They focus on higher speeds with limited access (intersections).

WHAT IS A STREET?
Streets are instrumental in the **creation of places**. A properly designed street will generally have slower speeds, have dedicated space for non-vehicular users, and embrace the complexity that all desirable places exhibit.

WHAT IS A STROAD?
Stroads are **street/road hybrids**. Stroads do not move vehicles efficiently, and they do not participate in the creation of desirable places.

the plan stated that .71 miles were in non-functional condition and needed replacement, 56.5 miles were classified as repairable, and 20.3 miles were in good condition and needed no work.

The plan also provided a general cost assessment for repair and replacement, which totaled $30,922,150 for 1,173,554 linear feet of sidewalk, and included recommendations for targeted projects to increase bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in key corridors.

Trails were also inventoried as a part of this plan. Trails, as opposed to sidewalks, do not necessarily correspond to public right-of-way, and have more flexibility in how they connect different locations within a community. Trails can serve more than one purpose as they may function as a transportation corridor for travel from Point A to Point B (such as connecting a neighborhood to a shopping center), or they may serve as a recreation amenity (biking, walking, running), or both.

At the time, approximately 8.45 miles of trails were identified within the City of Liberal. An additional 13.2 miles were proposed in targeted areas.

TRAFFIC CRASHES

Traffic crash data from 2013-2023 provided by the Kansas Department of Transportation was analyzed. Over this period, total annual average crashes were 338 or 0.93 crashes per day. Crashes in the City were generally on the decline from 2013 through 2018, but an increase in crashes was evident in 2019. This trend was realized in many communities throughout the United States and largely coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Crashes have decreased in the City each year since 2019, although 2023 crashes (258) still exceed the ten-year low set in 2016 (233). The Kansas Avenue corridor has the highest crash incidence rate along with the intersections of Pancake Boulevard and Country Estates Road and Pancake Boulevard and Western Avenue.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
385	357	347	233	270	281	335	325	315	274	258
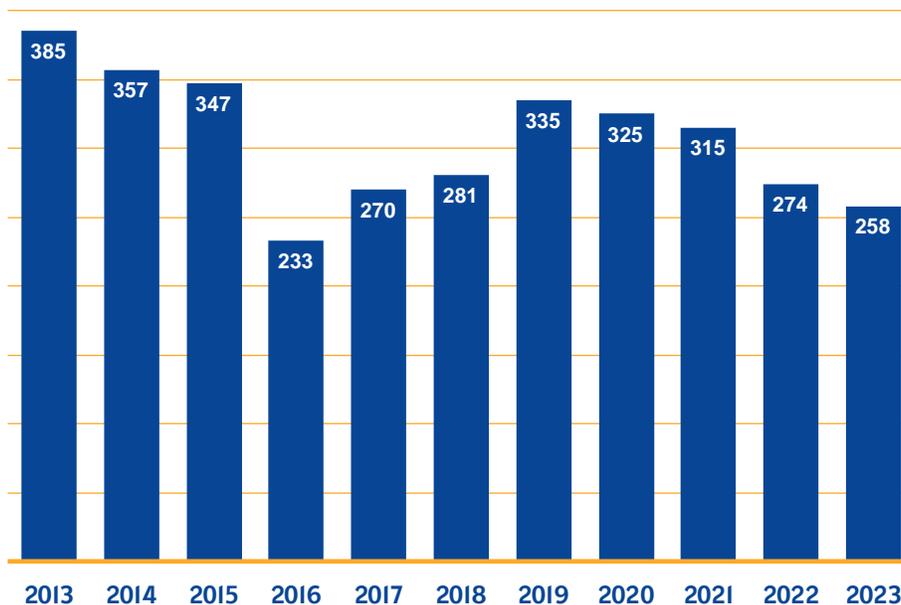
TOTAL CRASHES BY YEAR (2013–2023)

3,052	309	19
PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY	INJURY	FATAL

CRASH SEVERITY (2013–2023)

The conventional grid pattern of the City's transportation network is a significant advantage that should be embraced for its extensive connectivity benefits. Liberal also operates a public transit service, which should also be commended. Furthermore, the City should continue to implement the recommendations of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to continue the encouragement of non-vehicular transportation. Developing and maintaining a current inventory of active transportation assets in both geographic and attribute-based forms should be a priority. With the current traffic volumes, very few major street expansion projects are expected. Investments in the street network should focus on Complete Street improvements, stroad identification/conversion, all mode crash mitigation, and rehabilitation/maintenance.
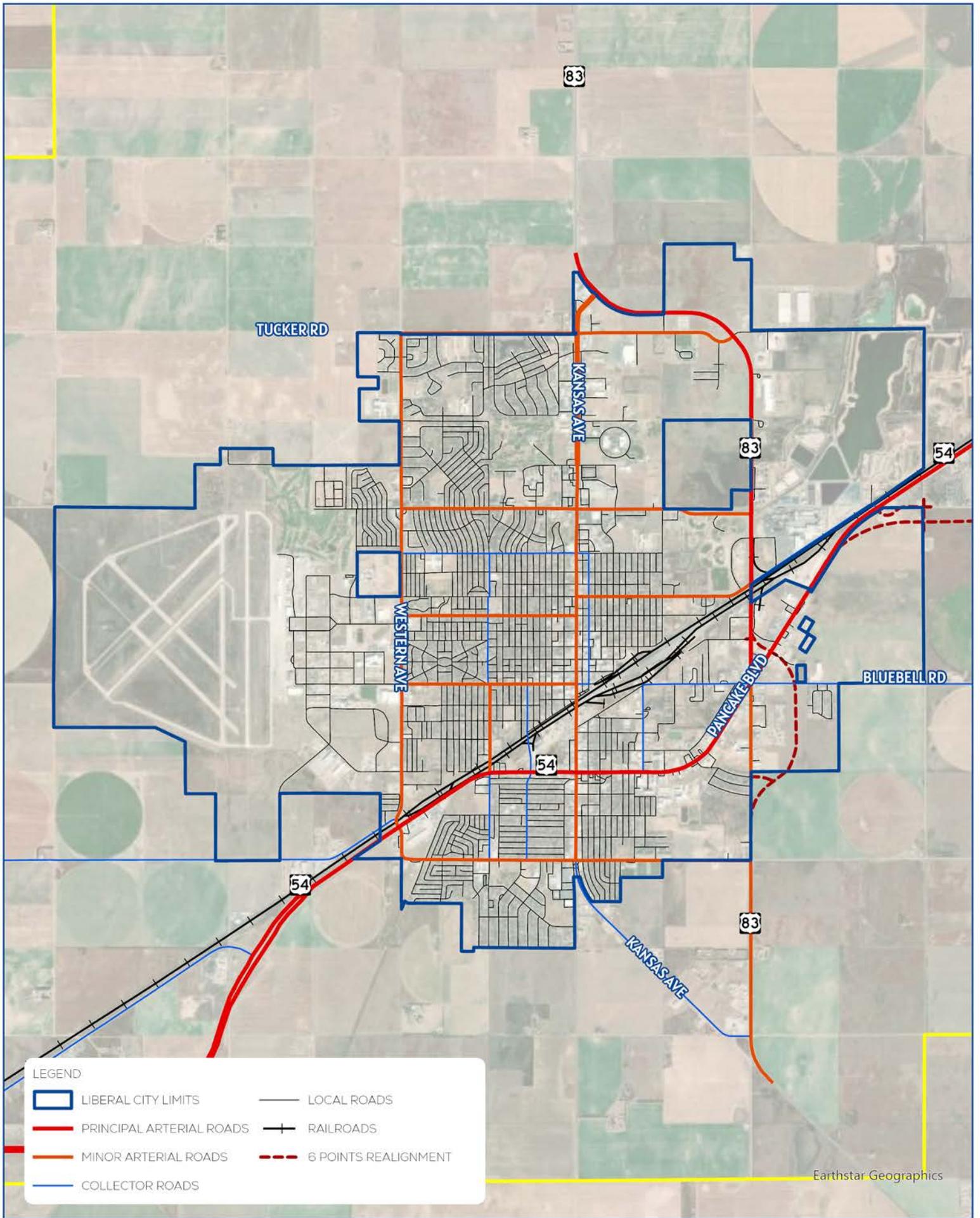
LEGEND

	LIBERAL CITY LIMITS		LOCAL ROADS
	PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROADS	+	RAILROADS
	MINOR ARTERIAL ROADS	- - -	6 POINTS REALIGNMENT
	COLLECTOR ROADS		

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

Earthstar Geographics

MAP A.6 | TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

0   0.5
Miles

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

83

54

WESTERN AVE

83

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

54

54

KANSAS AVE

83

LEGEND

TRAFFIC VOLUME (AADT)

- 0 – 5,000
- 5,001 – 10,000
- 10,001 – 20,000

LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

Maxar

MAP A.7 | TRAFFIC VOLUME

0   0.5
Miles

LEGEND

▭	LIBERAL CITY LIMITS	——	LOCAL ROADS
——	PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROADS	+—+	RAILROADS
——	MINOR ARTERIAL ROADS		SPARSE
——	COLLECTOR ROADS		
——	MAJOR ROADS		DENSE

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

Maxar
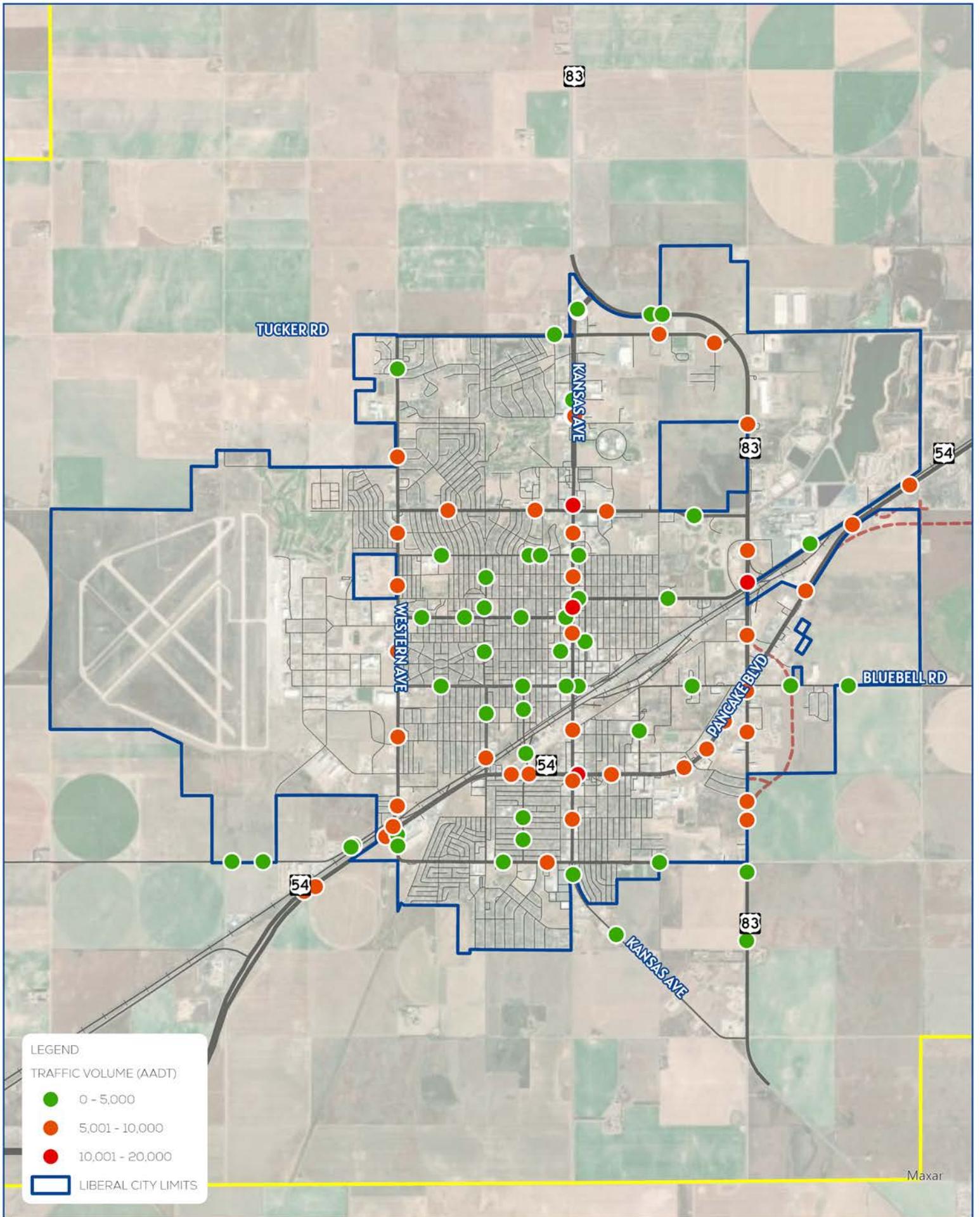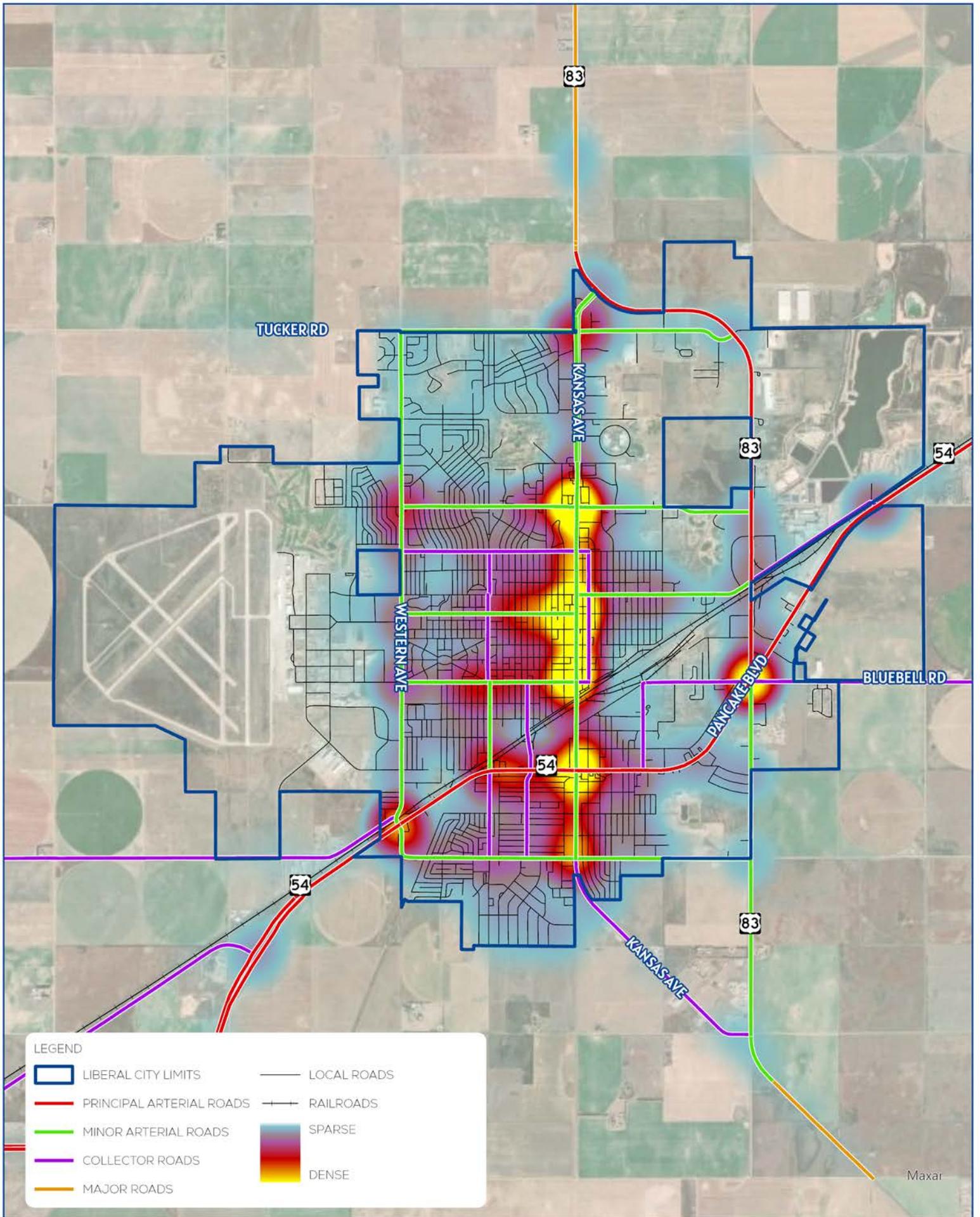
MAP A.8 | TRAFFIC CRASHES

EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The natural environment is a critical consideration for future community planning efforts for multiple reasons, including its impact on developable areas, natural hazard risk mitigation, the efficiency of ecological services, and more. This subsection of the plan briefly describes the environmental features of Liberal and the existing risks and opportunities associated with the natural landscape of the area. The existing natural features within and surrounding Liberal are illustrated in Map A.9. Despite a history of drought and water supply concerns in Liberal, there are several natural water features and associated flood risks throughout the area.

FLOODWAYS & FLOODPLAINS

Flood risk has been mapped throughout the City through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA typically identifies flood-prone areas through detailed hydrologic and hydraulic modeling and occasionally through approximate methods to assist with planning, management, and risk assessment within watersheds.

Based on FEMA's assessments, portions of Liberal reside within flood hazard zones. Areas of increased flood risk are primarily north of the US 54 corridor and in the southwest and northwest portions of the City. The core portions of the City north of US 54-400 are primarily encumbered by the 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard Zone (500-year event), although 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard Zones (100-year event) are evident within the current City limits. Notably, regulated floodways are not currently mapped, and the requirement for further study during development/redevelopment projects should be expected.

KEY FINDINGS

The floodplain evident within the City has the potential to impact development, redevelopment, and overall land uses in the future. The water bodies interspersed throughout the City can act as neighborhood attractions in addition to serving utilitarian drainage and biodiversity uses.

LEGEND

LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

0.2% ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD HAZARD

1% ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD HAZARD

FUTURE CONDITIONS 1% ANNUAL CHANCE
FLOOD HAZARD

REGULATORY FLOODWAY

AREA WITH REDUCED RISK DUE TO LEVEE

SPECIAL FLOODWAY

STREAMS

WATERBODIES

Earthstar Geographics

MAP A.9 | ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES
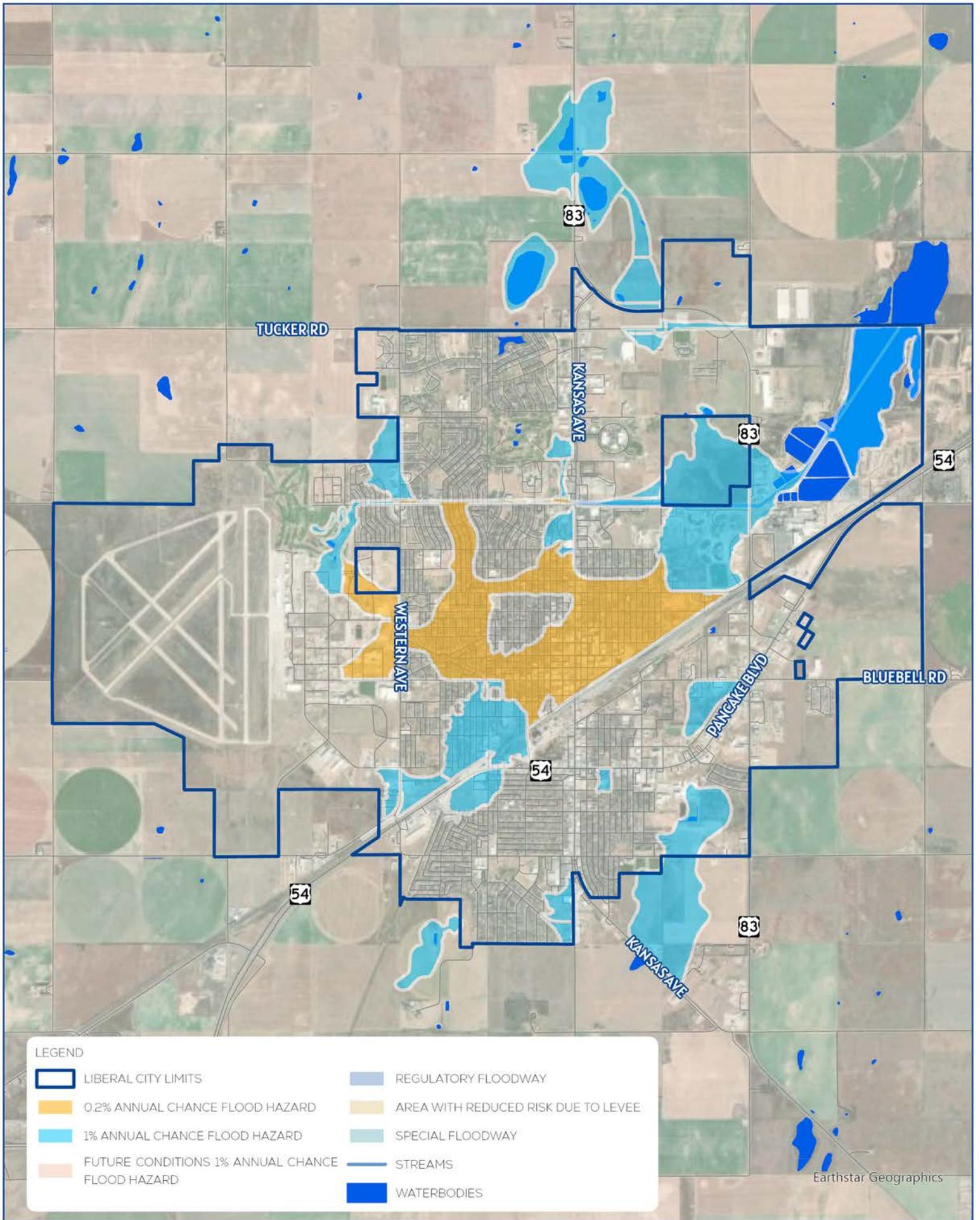
0   0.5   1
Miles

EXISTING UTILITIES

To ensure the proper infrastructure for future development, redevelopment, and maintenance, it is necessary to review the existing infrastructure within the City. The following maps illustrate the existing utilities within the City of Liberal.

WATER

Water mains throughout Liberal are owned and maintained by the City. The City has access to water to accommodate expected future growth. The City operates 20 wells throughout the City to access its primary supply of water: groundwater from the Ogallala or High Plains Aquifer.

SANITARY SEWER

The City of Liberal operates a single wastewater treatment plant and maintains several miles of public sanitary sewer mains. The City's collection system includes both gravity sanitary sewer mains and multiple lift stations.

STORMWATER

The City of Liberal is not currently required to maintain a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Storm sewer infrastructure exists within the City, although a comprehensive inventory does not exist (it is currently in development).

ELECTRICITY

The City's electric services are provided by Southern Pioneer Electric Company, a member-owner of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, which serves as Southern Pioneer's wholesale power and transmission provider.

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is provided to the City via underground transmission lines by Black Hills Energy.

KEY FINDINGS

Although detailed analysis of the City's public infrastructure systems transcends the scope of this plan, the City should prioritize the continuous assessment of its sanitary sewer, wastewater treatment, potable water production and distribution, and stormwater/drainage management facilities. Developing and maintaining a current inventory in both geographic and attribute-based forms should be a priority.
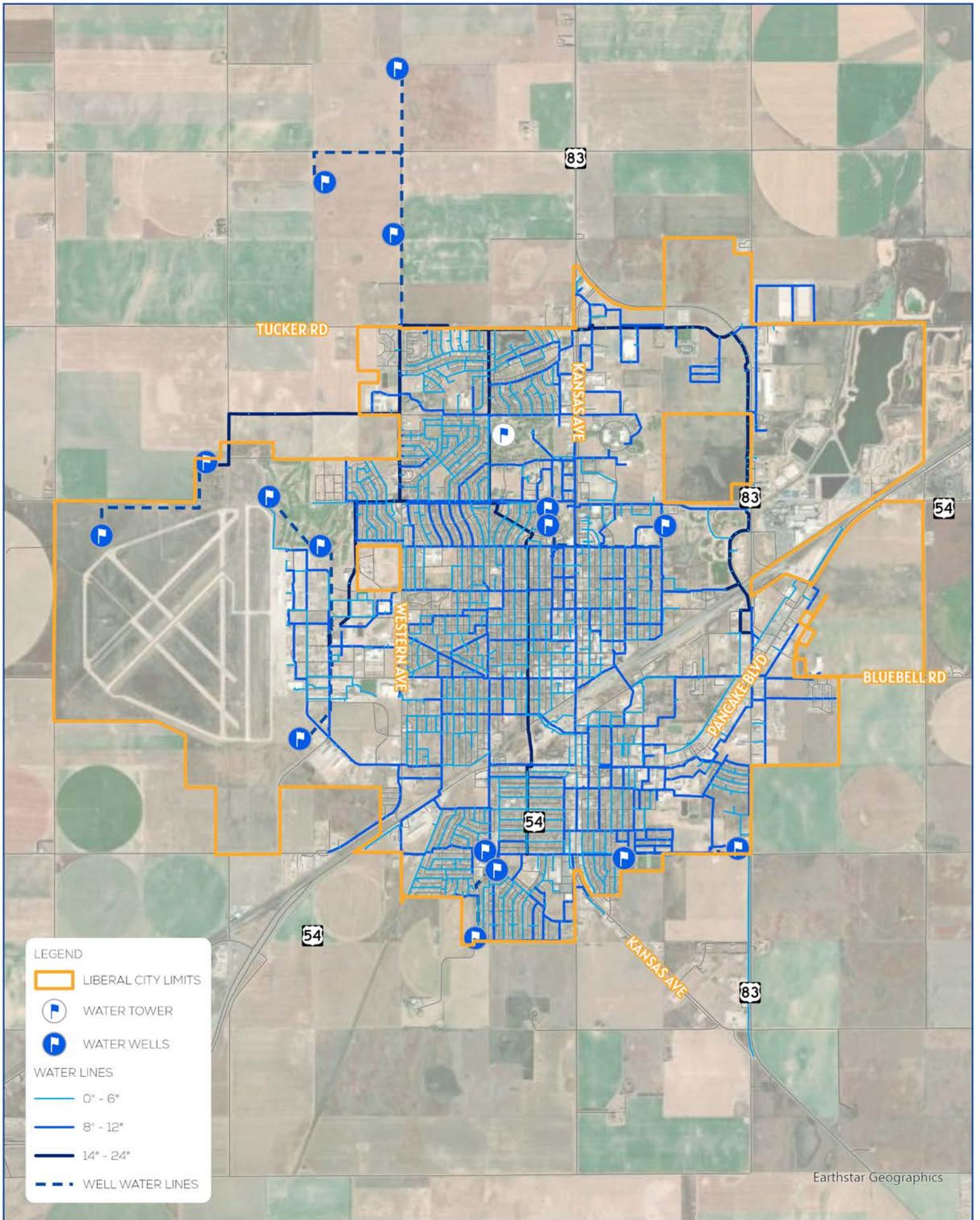
LEGEND

- **LIBERAL CITY LIMITS**
- **WATER TOWER**
- **WATER WELLS**

WATER LINES

- 0" - 6"
- 8" - 12"
- 14" - 24"
- WELL WATER LINES

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

83

54

54

83

54

Earthstar Geographics

MAP A.10 | WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

0   0.5   1
Miles

LEGEND

▢ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS	— 6"	— 18"	
▢ WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT	— 8"	— 21"	
⬤ LIFT STATIONS	— 10"	— 24"	
SANITARY SEWER MAIN	— 12"	— 36"	
— UNKNOWN	— 15"	— OTHER	

0   0.5   1 Miles
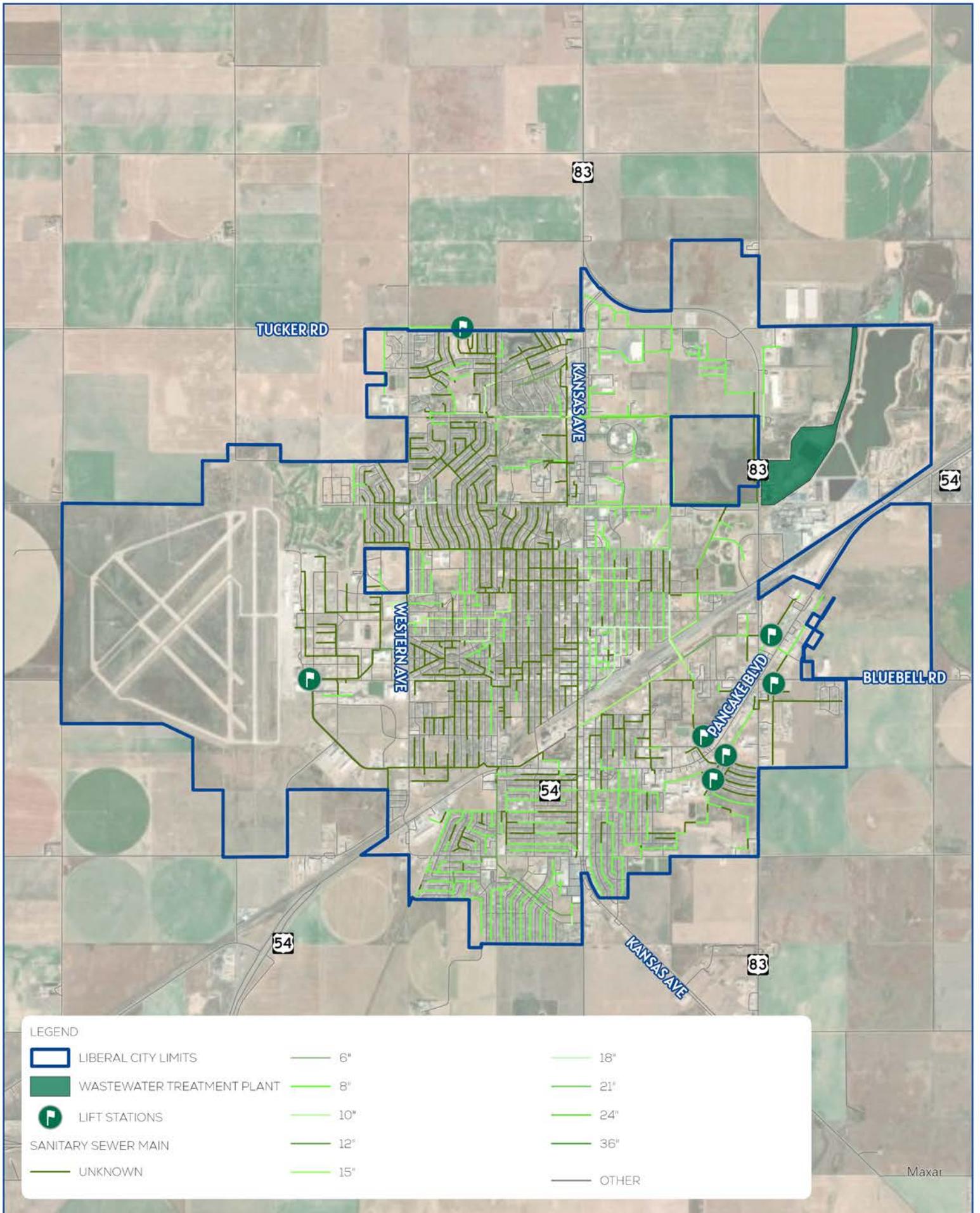
DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

As of 2022, the population of the City of Liberal was 19,099. Recent trends show a gradual decline in overall population since 2015, when it was at an all-time high of 20,819.

| 1980 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2022 |

16,573   19,666   20,525   19,825
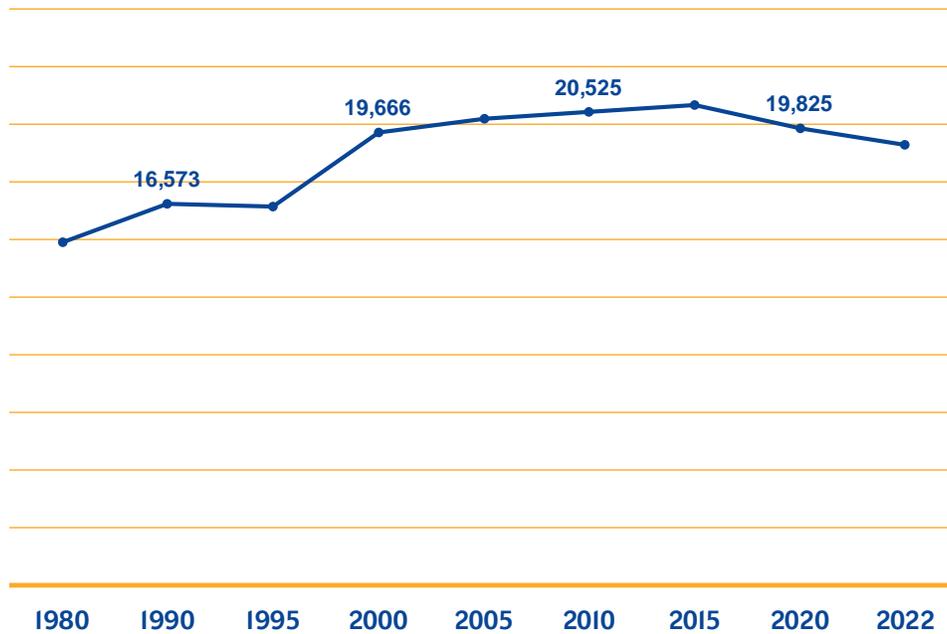
LIBERAL POPULATION (1980-2022)

Liberal comprises approximately 87% of Seward County's population. As a result, growth rates between the City and the County show a strong correlation over the past several decades. The graph below demonstrates the relationship between the City of Liberal and Seward County in terms of overall population since 1980.

18,743   22,510   22,952   21,964

16,573   19,666   20,525   19,825

| 1980 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2022 |

Seward County   Liberal
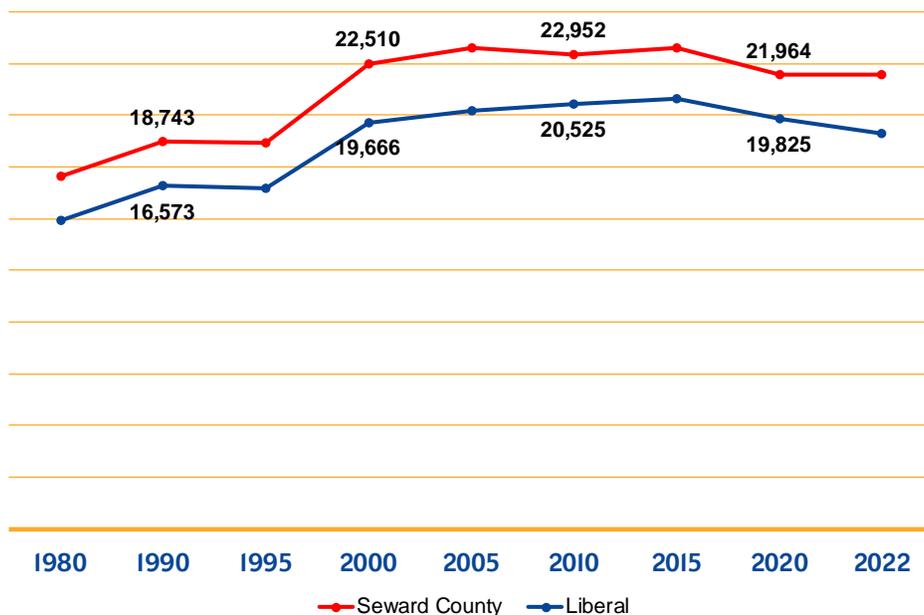
LIBERAL & SEWARD COUNTY POPULATION (1980-2022)

Understanding the population growth potential of Liberal is a key factor in planning for the City's future. Four different projection models were used to assess its potential growth. Linear regression is a trend extrapolation technique that projects future values as a straight line trend. For this analysis, two linear regressions were utilized – one using input data from 1910 onward and another using from 1990 onward. The average growth technique established the average 5-year growth value between 1990-2020, which was +4.4 for Liberal. The adjusted average forecast removed the growth value from 2000 as an outlier, resulting in a new 5-year average growth rate of 1.9%. It should be noted that projections of these types are based on historic population growth rates applied to the most recent data 'anchor point,' which in this case was the 2020 Decennial Census rather than the 2022 population estimate.

These results return a projected population count by the year 2050 between 27,714 and 22,219. The average of these projections results in a projected population count of 25,249 in the year 2050, an increase of 27.4% from the population reflected during the 2020 Census. If realized, this represents an annual population growth of approximately 181 people (approximately 0.9% annual growth rate).
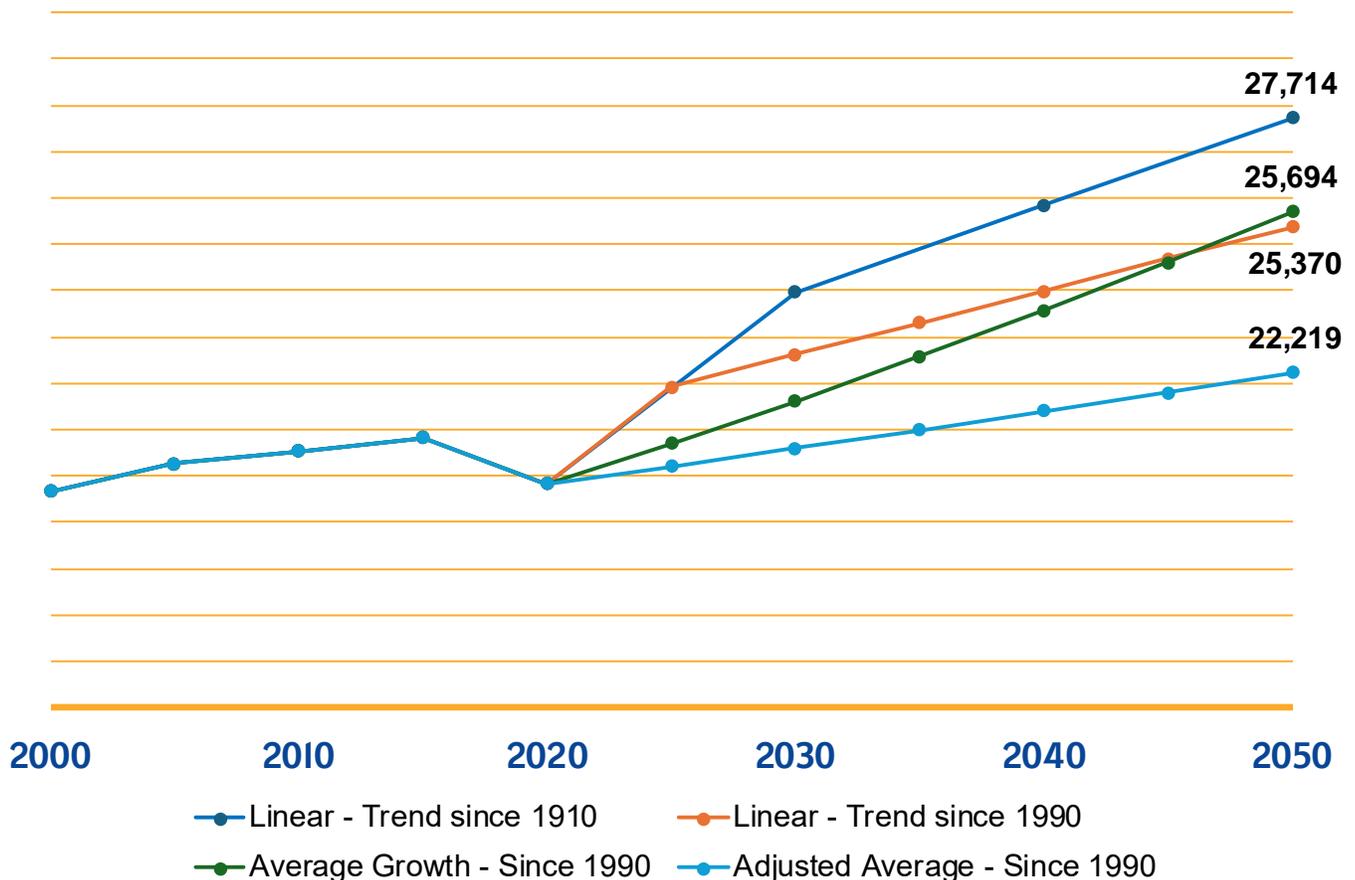
METHOD	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Linear - 1910	19,666	20,257	20,525	20,819	19,825	-	23,964	-	25,839	-	27,714
Linear - 1990	19,666	20,257	20,525	20,819	19,825	21,921	22,611	23,301	23,990	24,680	25,370
Average - 1990	19,666	20,257	20,525	20,819	19,825	20,701	21,615	22,569	23,566	24,607	25,694
Adj. Average - 1990	19,666	20,257	20,525	20,819	19,825	20,205	20,593	20,988	21,391	21,801	22,219

LIBERAL POPULATION FORECAST (2020-2050)

While these figures are useful in projecting a possible future population for the community, they come with certain caveats. One such caveat is that the recent downward trend in population is reversed in these models as the historical growth rates are applied from the starting point of 2020. Many factors impact population changes, including but not limited to economic trends, development projects, migration rates, and birth/death rates.

AGE & SEX

Approximately 52% of the population of Liberal is male and 48% female. Liberal is noticeably younger than the overall population of Kansas. 49.3% of Liberal's population is under the age of 30, compared to 40.8% of the Kansas population. 75.2% of Liberal's population is under 50, compared to 65.4% of the Kansas population.

When compared to the 2010 population, we can see that Liberal is aging slightly. In 2010 approximately 52.4% of the population were under 30 and 78.4% were under 50.

Overall, Liberal has experienced a population decline of 1,426 or 6.9% from 2010. Change by age group is presented in the following table. Notably, based on both total count and percentage, the decline in total population is most represented by age groups 29 years and younger. Furthermore, the City experienced significant population growth of those aged 60-64 (+684 or +101.6%).

AGE GROUP	2010 POPULATION	2022 POPULATION	CHANGE (#)	CHANGE (%)
Under 5 years	2,095	1,686	-409	-19.5%
5 to 9 years	1,868	1,793	-75	-4.0%
10 to 14 years	1,622	1,558	-64	-3.9%
15 to 19 years	1,808	1,438	-370	-20.5%
20 to 24 years	1,748	1,535	-213	-12.2%
25 to 29 years	1,617	1,399	-218	-13.5%
30 to 34 years	1,406	1,452	46	3.3%
35 to 39 years	1,399	1,094	-305	-21.8%
40 to 44 years	1,276	1,292	16	1.3%
45 to 49 years	1,248	1,107	-141	-11.3%
50 to 54 years	1,135	986	-149	-13.1%
55 to 59 years	926	582	-344	-37.1%
60 to 64 years	673	1,357	684	101.6%
65 to 69 years	484	558	74	15.3%
70 to 74 years	397	440	43	10.8%
75 to 79 years	325	256	-69	-21.2%
80 to 84 years	246	281	35	14.2%
85 years and over	252	285	33	13.1%
TOTAL	**20,525**	**19,099**	**-1,426**	**-6.9%**

RACE & ETHNICITY

At 44.3%, a plurality of Liberal's population is white alone. 34.6% of the population identify as another race, and 21.1% identify as two or more races. Note that ethnic identity is counted separately from race by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Most of the population (12,649 of 19,099) identify as Hispanic or Latino, representing 66.2% of the City population. This is much higher than found across the State of Kansas in which individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino comprise 12.6% of the overall population. Notably, the City of Liberal has increased in racial diversity since 2010 as evident by the 24.3% decrease in the White Alone category, which is largely contrasted with the 17.9% increase in the Two or More Races category.

RACE	2010 LIBERAL	2022 LIBERAL	2022 KANSAS
White Alone	68.6%	44.3%	79.8%
Black of African American Alone	3.7%	3.4%	5.6%
Native Indian & Alaska Native Alone	0.8%	1.2%	0.7%
Asian Alone	2.9%	2.7%	3.0%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Some Other Race	20.6%	27.1%	3.5%
Two or More Races	3.2%	21.1%	7.3%
ETHNICITY	2010 LIBERAL	2022 LIBERAL	2022 KANSAS
Hispanic or Latino	58.7%	66.2%	12.6%
Not Hispanic or Latino	41.3%	33.8%	87.4%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median income for households in Liberal in 2022 was $55,602 (Kansas overall was $69,747). As shown in the table, incomes increased from 2010 for all types of households. Compared with Kansas overall, only nonfamily households outperformed the state median income.

CATEGORY	2010 LIBERAL	2022 LIBERAL	2022 KANSAS
Household Income	$40,247	$55,602	$69,747
Family Income	$44,167	$68,688	$89,535
Married-couple Family Income	$49,910	$77,410	$102,812
Nonfamily Households	$28,262	$42,934	$40,520

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The figures provided in the table show the educational attainment of Liberal residents aged 25 and older. High school graduation rates increased from 2010, though rates of those with a bachelor's degree or higher fell over the same period. Liberal's educational attainment levels fall short of the statewide rates, which, in addition to being higher in 2022, also showed moderate increases between 2010 and 2022.

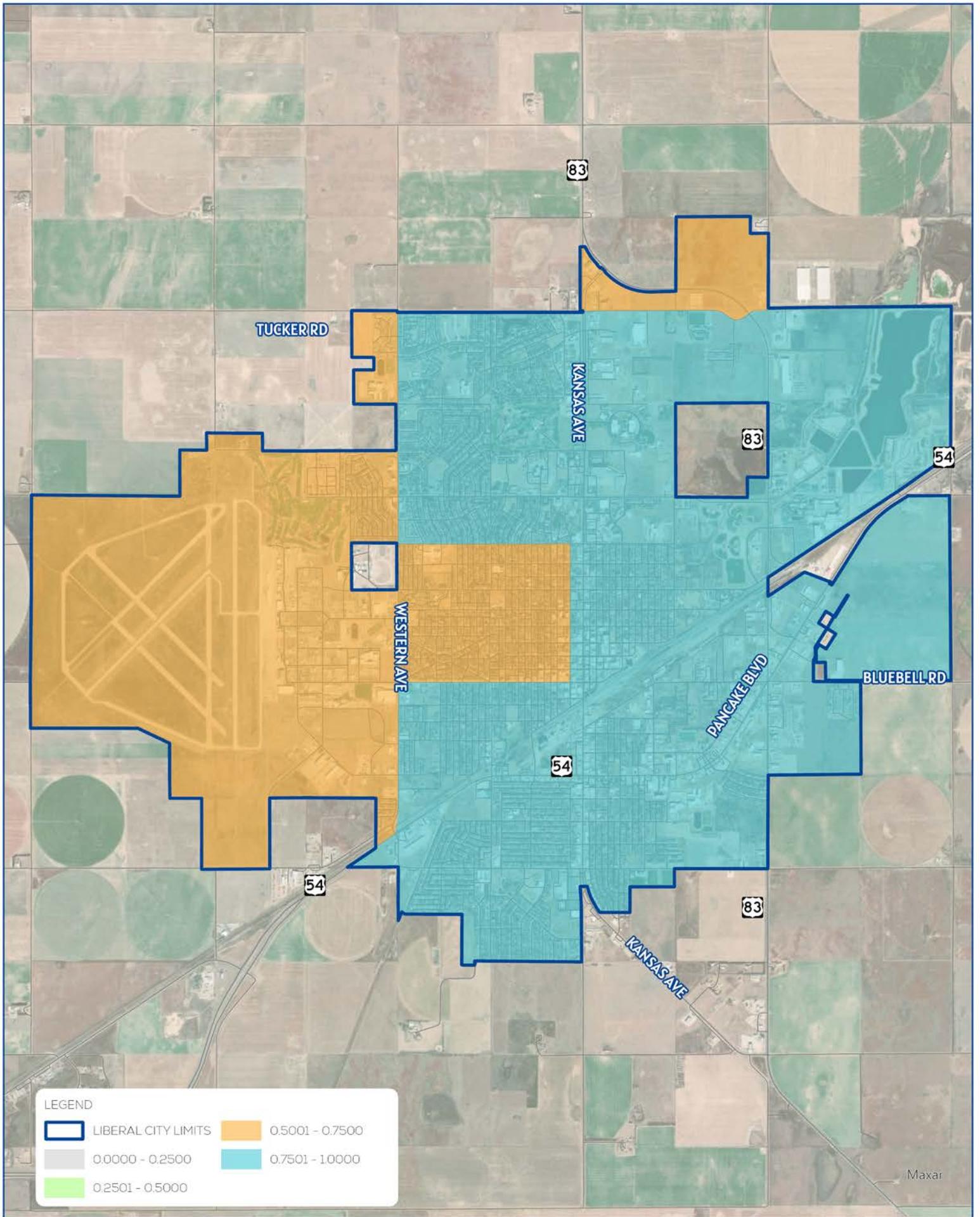| LEVEL	2010 LIBERAL	2022 LIBERAL	2022 KANSAS
Less than 9th Grade	21.1%	18.3%	3.5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	11.8%	12.8%	4.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.6%	31.5%	25.7%
Some college, no degree	16.6%	20.0%	22.5%
Associates degree	6.4%	8.1%	8.9%
Bachelor's degree	7.8%	6.8%	21.7%
Graduate or professional degree	4.8%	2.6%	13.0%
High school graduate or higher	67.1%	69.0%	91.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	12.5%	9.4%	34.7%

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses U.S. Census Bureau data to determine the social vulnerability of every census tract within the United States. The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) ranks each tract on 15 social factors, including poverty, lack of vehicle access, and crowded housing. It groups these factors into four related themes: 1) socioeconomic status, 2) household characteristics, 3) racial and ethnic minority status, and 4) housing type/transportation. The SVI can help public health officers, city officials, and local planners better prepare for and respond to emergency events like natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or exposure to dangerous chemicals. The possible scores range from 0 – the lowest vulnerability – to 1, the highest vulnerability.

According to the CDC, the City of Liberal falls within two ranges of the overall SVI. The western and northernmost portions of the City fall within the 0.5001 – 0.7500 range, and the eastern portion of the City fall within the 0.7501 – 1.0000 range. This indicates very high levels of social vulnerability.

KEY FINDINGS

The City of Liberal experienced population growth until 2015 and has been experiencing population decline since then. 49.3% of Liberal's current population is under the age of 30, compared to 40.8% of the Kansas population. Notably, the population decline experienced since 2015 is most represented by a decline in the same group – those under the age of 30. This trend needs continuous monitoring. The population in Liberal is less educated than the general population in Kansas. 69.0% of Liberal residents have attained high school graduation or higher compared to 91.8% statewide. Generally, the levels of educational attainment in the City have displayed a positive trend since the 2010 Census. Household incomes have been trending up since 2010, but still generally fall short of statewide incomes. The City is substantially more diverse than the State of Kansas and has been displaying a trend of increased diversity since 2010. 66.2% of the City is ethnically Hispanic or Latino, which far outpaces the 12.6% evident statewide. Liberal ranks low on the Social Vulnerability Index, indicating that the City's residents are vulnerable to multiple social factors, including poverty, lack of vehicle access, crowded housing, etc. According to the CDC, Liberal is less likely to be resistant in an emergency event like a natural disaster or disease outbreak.

LEGEND

LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

0.0000 – 0.2500

0.2501 – 0.5000

0.5001 – 0.7500

0.7501 – 1.0000

TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

83

83

54

54

54

83

0   0.5   1
Miles

Maxar

MAP A.12 | SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

OCCUPANCY

The total number of housing units has increased in Liberal by 158 since 2010 (from 7,118 to 7,276). The number of occupied units decreased by 399 units (from 6,623 to 6,224), and the number of vacant units increased by 557 (from 495 to 1,052).

Compared to data aggregated from across Kansas, Liberal has higher per capita rates of vacant and rental units, with lower rates of owner occupied and overall occupied units.

Note that in the table below the columns for Change Since 2010 and Relative to Kansas are comparisons of the rates of the indicated housing types, rather than comparison of the raw numbers between the two.

HOUSING UNITS	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	CHANGE SINCE 2010	KANSAS % OF TOTAL
Occupied Units	6,224	85.5%	-7.5%	89.8%
Owner Occupied Units	3,891	53.5%	-5.1%	60.1%
Renter Occupied Units	2,333	32.1%	-2.4%	29.8%
Vacant Units	1,052	14.5%	+7.5%	10.2%

In 2022-2023 the City of Liberal completed a Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) provided by the Kansas Department of Commerce. The information provided in this section is based on U.S. Census Bureau data but may not fully reflect the realities faced by the community. The HAT report indicated that housing availability was very constrained with only about 10 total units available at the time.

BUILD TRENDS

Approximately 77.7% of Liberal's housing is over 40 years old. By decade, the 1950s and 1960s saw the highest building activity, followed by a slowdown starting in 1990. The first decade of the 21st century saw the lowest building activity in the City's history, followed by a rebound in 2010-2019. Building activity has been minimal since 2020.

PERIOD	% OF EXISTING HOUSING BUILT
1939 or before	6.1%
1940-1949	4.7%
1950-1959	19.2%
1960-1969	19.1%
1970-1979	17.4%
1980-1989	11.2%
1990-1999	8.9%
2000-2009	4.0%
2010-2019	9.5%
2020 or after	0.0%

The data provided in the table below (excluding Median Contract Rent) pertains to Owner Occupied Units with a Mortgage as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (as opposed to Owner Occupied Units without a Mortgage).

Census data indicates that housing values in Liberal have increased substantially since 2010. The median household income has increased at a slightly higher rate than costs, resulting in a slight reduction in the cost of housing relative to income. Housing costs relative to income in Liberal is slightly higher than the State (18.4% for Kansas compared to 21.7% for Liberal). Notably, the reduction in income compared to housing costs decreased more throughout the State than is evident for the City (-2.12% compared to -0.3%).

	2010 LIBERAL	2022 LIBERAL	2022 KANSAS
Median Housing Value	$89,900	$155,700	$212,300
Median Household Income	$51,553	$79,375	$103,083
Median Housing Costs	$943	$1,438	$1,580
% Housing Cost of Income	22.0%	21.7%	18.4%
Median Contract Rent	$460	$692	$767

Comparing the rates of owner occupancy with a mortgage to owner occupancy without a mortgage reveals that Liberal has more owner-occupied units without a mortgage than with a mortgage (2,078 to 1,813). This is the inverse of what is found when looking at the same rates across Kansas, where most owner-occupied units have mortgages.

	% OF TOTAL UNITS		% OF OCCUPIED UNITS		% OF OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	
	WITH	WITHOUT	WITH	WITHOUT	WITH	WITHOUT
Liberal	24.9%	28.6%	29.1%	33.4%	46.6%	53.4%
Kansas	24.8%	25.2%	38.8%	28.1%	58.0%	42.0%

Total households in Liberal have decreased by 503 since 2010 (-7.5%). The average size of a household in Liberal has increased slightly from 2010 (from 2.93 to 3.00). This slight increase is driven by the increase in household size for Family Households (from 3.42 to 3.80) vs Non-Family Households (from 1.37 to 1.19). Liberal still has more Family Households than Non-Family Households, although the gap between the two has narrowed from 2010 to 2022.

	2010 LIBERAL	2022 LIBERAL	2022 KANSAS
Total Households	6,727	6,224	1,148,635
Average Size	2.93	3.00	2.48
Family Households	4,900	4,056	732,890
Average Size	3.42	3.80	3.10
% of Total	72.8%	65.2%	63.8%
Non-Family Households	1,827	2,168	415,745
Average Size	1.37	1.19	1.24
% of Total	27.2%	34.8%	36.2%

Although the total number of housing units has increased in Liberal by 158 since 2010, the number of existing housing units that are vacant increased by 557. Compared with statewide data, the City has more vacant housing units as a percentage of total housing units (14.5% compared to 10.2%). Lastly, the percentage of owner-occupied units in Liberal (53.5%) has decreased since 2010 (58.6%) and falls short of the State of Kansas percentage (60.1%).

Importantly, this does not necessarily mean that new residential units should not be added. Increasing vacant units may indicate housing supply outpacing demand, or alternatively, the existing housing stock's age and condition isn't meeting market needs. Promoting greenfield development, infill development, and adaptive reuse should all be prioritized.

The City on average adds 10.0% to its housing stock each decade. Activity has decreased notably since 1990, of which 2010-2019 depicts an encouraging rebound. However, house building activity has been minimal since 2020.

Both median housing value and median household incomes have increased dramatically since 2010, which is also evident at both the federal and state levels. Increases to housing values without commensurate increases to incomes can present home affordability concerns as a higher percentage of a household's income must be dedicated to housing costs. For Liberal, a slight decrease in the percent of income dedicated to housing was evident from 2010 to 2022 (22.0% compared to 21.7%). This is a positive trend, but notably, Liberal residents are still dedicating a higher percentage of their incomes to housing costs compared with the statewide results (18.4%).

Notably, of housing units that are owner-occupied, 53.4% do not currently have a mortgage. This is the opposite of what is seen statewide and may indicate that Liberal has long-tenured residents and/or a less than desirable purchasing market.

Total households in Liberal have also decreased since 2010, although the average household size has increased. This decrease in total households is largely represented by a decrease in the number of family households (-17.2%). Conversely, non-family households increased between 2010-2022 (+18.7%). This may indicate a higher demand for more diverse housing options if this trend continues.

WHAT IS GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT?
Typically refers to any kind of real estate **development in previously undeveloped areas**. Development projects can be any variety of land use, residential, commercial, industrial, etc. It is the previous state of the land that determines whether a new development is a greenfield development.

WHAT IS INFILL DEVELOPMENT?
Typically refers to any kind of real estate **development on previously unused or underutilized land located within a developed area**. The primary difference between infill and greenfield development is the surrounding context of the property being developed.

WHAT IS ADAPTIVE REUSE?
A form of redevelopment that looks to **make use of existing buildings** for purposes other than what was originally intended. The conversion of a vacant office building to residential apartments is an example of adaptive reuse.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Psychographics are a way to categorize and describe groups of people based on a blending of factors that contribute to their lifestyle characteristics, especially as they relate to their spending tendencies. This type of categorization considers factors such as spending power, values, interests, social class, geographic location, age, educational attainment, and more. This system provides a way to describe groups of people in ways that consider more than just Census derived demographic, income, and housing data.

The categories, descriptions, and traits indicated in this section are taken from the ESRI developed Tapestry Segmentation system. The top 3 segments for Liberal are provided below.

FORGING OPPORTUNITY	RUSTBELT TRADITIONS	FRONT PORCHES
55.85% OF HOUSEHOLDS	12.5% OF HOUSEHOLDS	9.1% OF HOUSEHOLDS
DESCRIPTION		
Family is central within these communities, bringing rich traditions to these neighborhoods in the urban outskirts. Dominating this market are younger families with children or single-parent households with multiple generations living under the same roof. These households balance their budgets carefully but also indulge in the latest trends and purchase with an eye to brands. Most workers are employed in skilled positions across the manufacturing, construction, or retail trade sectors.	The backbone of older industrial cities in states surrounding the Great Lakes, Rustbelt Traditions residents are a mix of married-couple families and singles living in older developments of single-family homes. While varied, the workforce is primarily white collar, with a higher concentration of skilled workers in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care. Rustbelt Traditions represents a large market of stable, hardworking consumers with modest incomes but an average net worth of nearly $400,000. Family oriented, they value time spent at home. Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.	Front Porches is a blend of household types, with more young families with children and more single households than average. More than half of householders are renters, and many of the homes are older townhomes or duplexes. Friends and family are central to Front Porches residents and help to influence household buying decisions. Households tend to own just one vehicle, but it is used only when needed.
TRAITS		
• While the majority finished high school, over 40% have not. • Labor force participation is slightly lower at 61%. • More than one in four households is below the poverty level. • Residents balance their budgets carefully by spending only on necessities and limiting activities like dining out. Many have no financial investments or retirement savings, but they have their homes.	• Most have graduated from high school or spent some time at a college or university. • Labor force participation slightly higher than the US at 67%. • While more income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts. • Family-oriented consumer who value time spent at home. • Most have lived, worked, and play in the same area for years. • Budget-aware shoppers that favor American-made products. • Read newspapers, especially the Sunday editions.	• Composed of a blue-collar workforce with a strong labor force participation rate. • Price is more important than brand names or style to these consumers. • With limited incomes, these are not adventurous shoppers. • They would rather cook a meal at home than dine out. • They seek adventure and strive to have fun.

LifeMode Group: Sprouting Explorers

Forging Opportunity

Households: 1,289,900

Average Household Size: 3.62

Median Age: 28.9

Median Household Income: $38,000

WHO ARE WE?

Family is central within these communities, bringing rich traditions to these neighborhoods in the urban outskirts. Dominating this market are younger families with children or single-parent households with multiple generations living under the same roof. These households balance their budgets carefully but also indulge in the latest trends and purchase with an eye to brands. Most workers are employed in skilled positions across the manufacturing, construction, or retail trade sectors.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Family market; over a third of all households are married couples with children, with a number of multigenerational households and single-parent families; household size is higher at 3.62.

- While most residents live in single-family homes, almost 10% of householders reside in mobile home parks.

- Homes are owner occupied, with slightly higher monthly costs (Index 103) but fewer mortgages (Index 83).

- Most are older homes, nearly 60% built from 1950 to 1989.

- Most households have one or two vehicles; many commuters carpool or walk to work (Index 145).

- *Forging Opportunity* residents live within the urban periphery of larger metropolitan areas across the South and West.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- While a majority finished high school, over 40% have not (Index 321).

- Labor force participation is slightly lower at 61%.

- More than one in four households is below the poverty level (Index 183).

- Residents balance their budgets carefully by spending only on necessities and limiting activities like dining out.

- Many have no financial investments or retirement savings, but they have their homes.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.
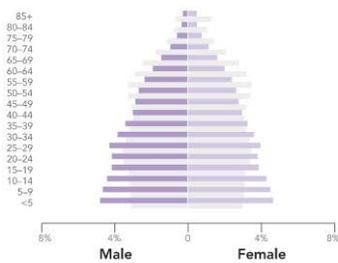

AGE BY SEX (Esri data)
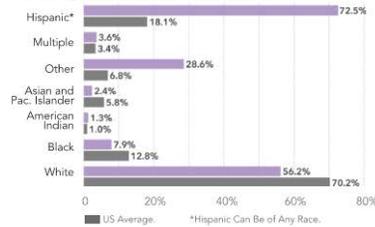
Median Age: 28.9 US: 38.2

Indicates US

RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

Diversity Index: 80.6 US: 64.0

Race/Ethnicity	Segment	US Average
Hispanic*	72.5%	18.1%
Multiple	3.6%	3.4%
Other	28.6%	6.8%
Asian and Pac. Islander	2.4%	5.8%
American Indian	1.3%	1.0%
Black	7.9%	12.8%
White	56.2%	70.2%

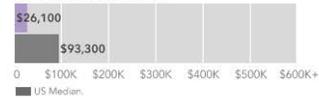US Average. *Hispanic Can Be of Any Race.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.
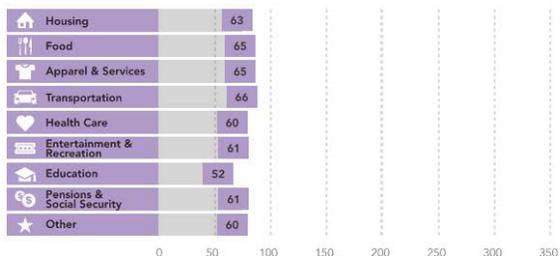
Median Household Income

$38,000
$56,100

Median Net Worth

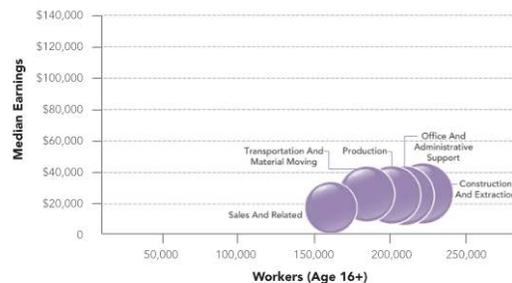$26,100
$93,300

US Median.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.

Category	Index
Housing	63
Food	65
Apparel & Services	65
Transportation	66
Health Care	60
Entertainment & Recreation	61
Education	52
Pensions & Social Security	61
Other	60

OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Residents shop at discount and department stores like Walmart, Dollar General/Family Dollar, and JC Penney for baby and children's products.

- Many households subscribe to satellite television to watch their favorite programs.

- Magazines are extremely popular sources of news and the latest trends, including women's fashion, bridal, and parenthood types of magazines.
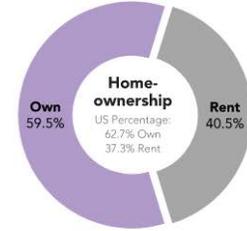
HOUSING

Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.
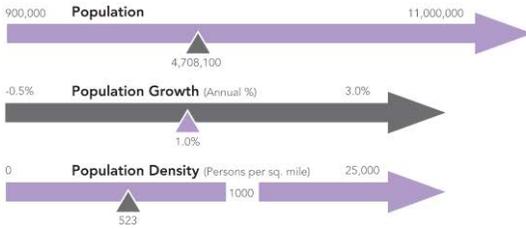
Typical Housing:
Single Family

Median Value:
$92,200

US Median: $207,300

Home-ownership
US Percentage:
62.7% Own
37.3% Rent

Own 59.5%
Rent 40.5%

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total population, average annual population change since Census 2010, and average density (population per square mile) are displayed for the market relative to the size and change among all Tapestry markets. Data estimated by Esri.

Population
900,000 — 11,000,000
4,708,100

Population Growth (Annual %)
-0.5% — 3.0%
1.0%

Population Density (Persons per sq. mile)
0 — 25,000
1000
523

ESRI INDEXES

Esri developed three indexes to display average household wealth, socioeconomic status, and housing affordability for the market relative to US standards.

0 — **42** — 350
Wealth Index

0 — **34.5** — 100
Socioeconomic Status Index

0 — **191** — 350
Housing Affordability Index
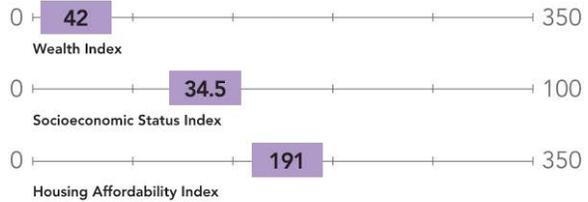
SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Forging Opportunity* Tapestry Segment by households.
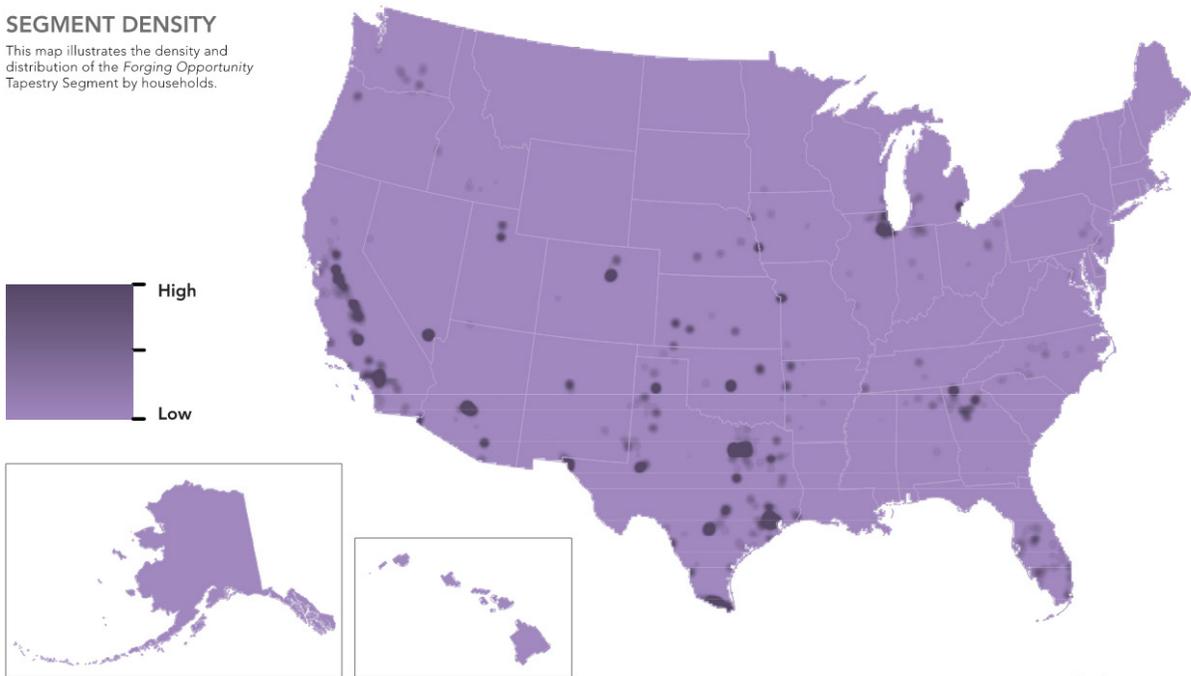
High

Low

For more information
1-800-447-9778
info@esri.com
esri.com

esri | THE SCIENCE OF WHERE®

Rustbelt Traditions

5D

Households: 2,716,800

Average Household Size: 2.47

Median Age: 39.0

Median Household Income: $51,800

WHO ARE WE?

The backbone of older industrial cities in states surrounding the Great Lakes, *Rustbelt Traditions* residents are a mix of married-couple families and singles living in older developments of single-family homes. While varied, the workforce is primarily white collar, with a higher concentration of skilled workers in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care. *Rustbelt Traditions* represents a large market of stable, hardworking consumers with modest incomes but an average net worth of nearly $400,000. Family oriented, they value time spent at home. Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Almost half (46%) of the households are married-couple families, similar to the US (48%), most without children (also similar to the US); the slightly higher proportion of singles (Index 105) reflects the aging of the population.

- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.47.

- They are movers, slightly more mobile than the US population (Index 109), but over 70% of householders moved into their current homes before 2010.

- Most residents live in modest, single-family homes in older neighborhoods built in the 1950s (Index 224).

- Nearly three quarters own their homes; nearly half of households have mortgages.

- A large and growing market, *Rustbelt Traditions* residents are located in the dense urban fringe of metropolitan areas throughout the Midwest and South.

- Most households have one to two vehicles available.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Most have graduated from high school or spent some time at a college or university.

- Labor force participation slightly higher than the US at 67%.

- While most income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts.

- Family-oriented consumers who value time spent at home.

- Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.

- Budget-aware shoppers that favor American-made products.

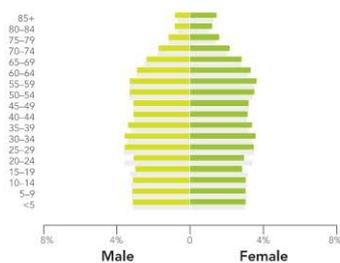- Read newspapers, especially the Sunday editions.

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry
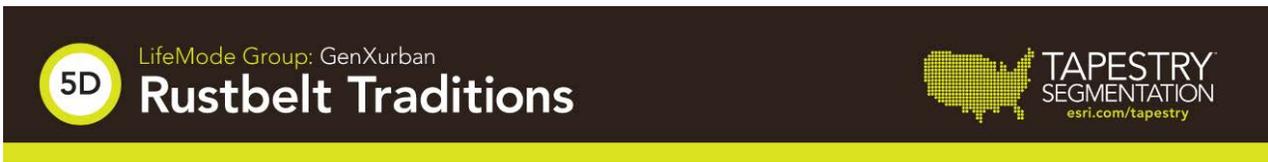
AGE BY SEX (Esri data)
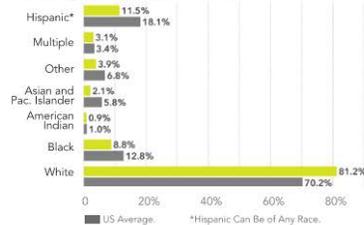
Median Age: 39.0 US: 38.2

Indicates US

Male / Female

RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

Diversity Index: 46.8 US: 64.0

Group	Segment	US Average
Hispanic*	11.5%	18.1%
Multiple	3.1%	3.4%
Other	3.9%	6.8%
Asian and Pac. Islander	2.1%	5.8%
American Indian	0.9%	1.0%
Black	8.8%	12.8%
White	81.2%	70.2%

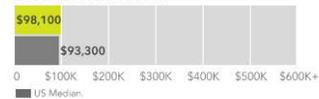US Average. *Hispanic Can Be of Any Race.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income

$51,800
$56,100

0 $100K $200K $300K $400K $500K $600K+

Median Net Worth

$98,100
$93,300

0 $100K $200K $300K $400K $500K $600K+

US Median.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.

Category	Index
Housing	77
Food	78
Apparel & Services	76
Transportation	78
Health Care	80
Entertainment & Recreation	78
Education	76
Pensions & Social Security	77
Other	79

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350

OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Residents take advantage of convenience stores for fueling up and picking up incidentals.
- Watching television is a common pastime; many households have more than four TVs.
- Favorite programming ranges from Freeform, A&E, and TNT to children's shows on Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel.
- Residents are connected; entertainment activities like online gaming dominate their internet usage.
- Favorite family restaurants include Applebee's, Arby's, and Texas Roadhouse.
- Radio dials are typically tuned to classic rock stations.

HOUSING

Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.
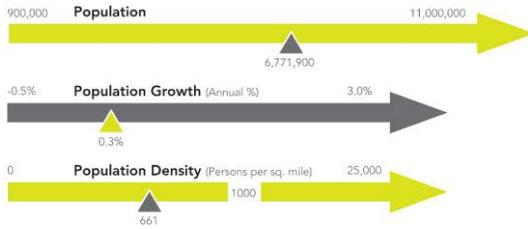
Typical Housing:
Single Family

Median Value:
$123,400
US Median: $207,300

Own 71.2%
Home-ownership
US Percentage:
62.7% Own
37.3% Rent
Rent 28.8%

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total population, average annual population change since Census 2010, and average density (population per square mile) are displayed for the market relative to the size and change among all Tapestry markets. Data estimated by Esri.

Population
900,000 — 11,000,000
6,771,900

Population Growth (Annual %)
-0.5% — 3.0%
0.3%

Population Density (Persons per sq. mile)
0 — 25,000
661 / 1000

ESRI INDEXES

Esri developed three indexes to display average household wealth, socioeconomic status, and housing affordability for the market relative to US standards.

Wealth Index
0 — 70 — 350

Socioeconomic Status Index
0 — 49.4 — 100

Housing Affordability Index
0 — 194 — 350

SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Rustbelt Traditions* Tapestry Segment by households.
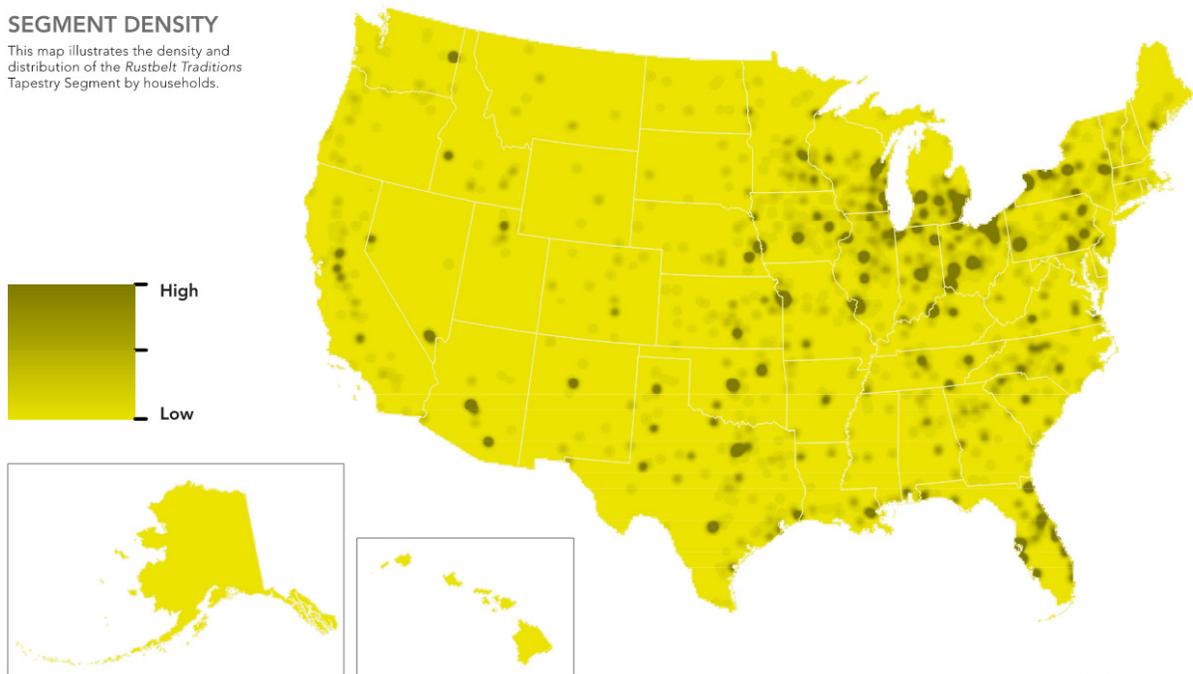
High
Low

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THE SCIENCE OF WHERE

Front Porches

8E

Households: 1,960,300

Average Household Size: 2.57

Median Age: 34.9

Median Household Income: $43,700

WHO ARE WE?

Front Porches is a blend of household types, with more young families with children and more single households than average. More than half of householders are renters, and many of the homes are older townhomes or duplexes. Friends and family are central to *Front Porches* residents and help to influence household buying decisions. Households tend to own just one vehicle, but it is used only when needed.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Nearly one in five homes is a duplex, triplex, or quad; half are older single-family dwellings.
- Just over half the homes are occupied by renters.
- Older, established neighborhoods; three quarters of all homes were built before 1980.
- Single-parent families or singles living alone make up almost half of the households.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Composed of a blue-collar workforce with a strong labor force participation rate.
- Price is more important than brand names or style to these consumers.
- With limited incomes, these are not adventurous shoppers.
- They would rather cook a meal at home than dine out.
- They seek adventure and strive to have fun.
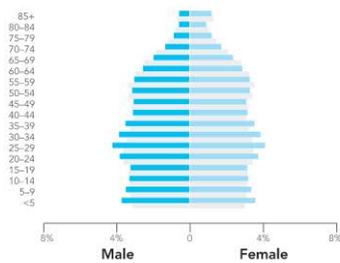
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

Median Age: 34.9 US: 38.2

Indicates US

Male   Female
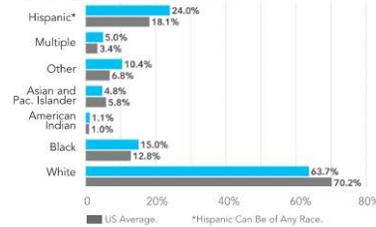
RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

Diversity Index: 72.7 US: 64.0

Group	Segment	US Average
Hispanic*	24.0%	18.1%
Multiple	5.0%	3.4%
Other	10.4%	6.8%
Asian and Pac. Islander	4.8%	5.8%
American Indian	1.1%	1.0%
Black	15.0%	12.8%
White	63.7%	70.2%

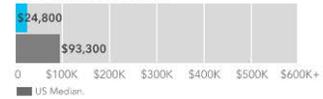US Average.   *Hispanic Can Be of Any Race.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income

$43,700
$56,100

0 $100K $200K $300K $400K $500K $600K+

Median Net Worth

$24,800
$93,300

0 $100K $200K $300K $400K $500K $600K+

US Median.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.

Category	Index
Housing	74
Food	71
Apparel & Services	71
Transportation	69
Health Care	66
Entertainment & Recreation	69
Education	75
Pensions & Social Security	68
Other	68

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350

OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Median Earnings / Workers (Age 16+)

Production, Food Preparation And Serving Related, Transportation And Material Moving, Sales And Related, Office And Administrative Support

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Go online for gaming, watching movies, employment searches, and posting pics on social media.
- Prefer cell phones over landlines, and use their mobile devices for entertainment such as streaming movies and music.
- Drink energy and sports drinks.
- Participate in leisure activities including sports, playing board games and video games.
- Watch Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, and PBS Kids Sprout.

HOUSING
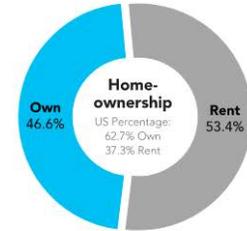
Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Typical Housing:
Single Family;
Multi-Units

Average Rent:
$913
US Average: $1,038

Own 46.6%

Home-ownership
US Percentage:
62.7% Own
37.3% Rent

Rent 53.4%

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total population, average annual population change since Census 2010, and average density (population per square mile) are displayed for the market relative to the size and change among all Tapestry markets. Data estimated by Esri.

900,000	**Population**	11,000,000
	5,116,500	
-0.5%	**Population Growth** (Annual %)	3.0%
	0.6%	
0	**Population Density** (Persons per sq. mile)	25,000
	1000	
	2,090	

ESRI INDEXES

Esri developed three indexes to display average household wealth, socioeconomic status, and housing affordability for the market relative to US standards.

0	47	350
	Wealth Index	

0	41.6	100
	Socioeconomic Status Index	

0	123	350
	Housing Affordability Index	
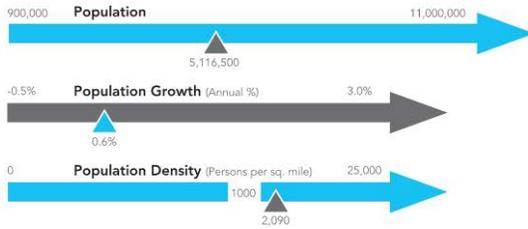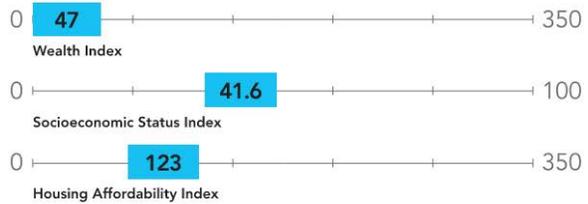
SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Front Porches* Tapestry Segment by households.
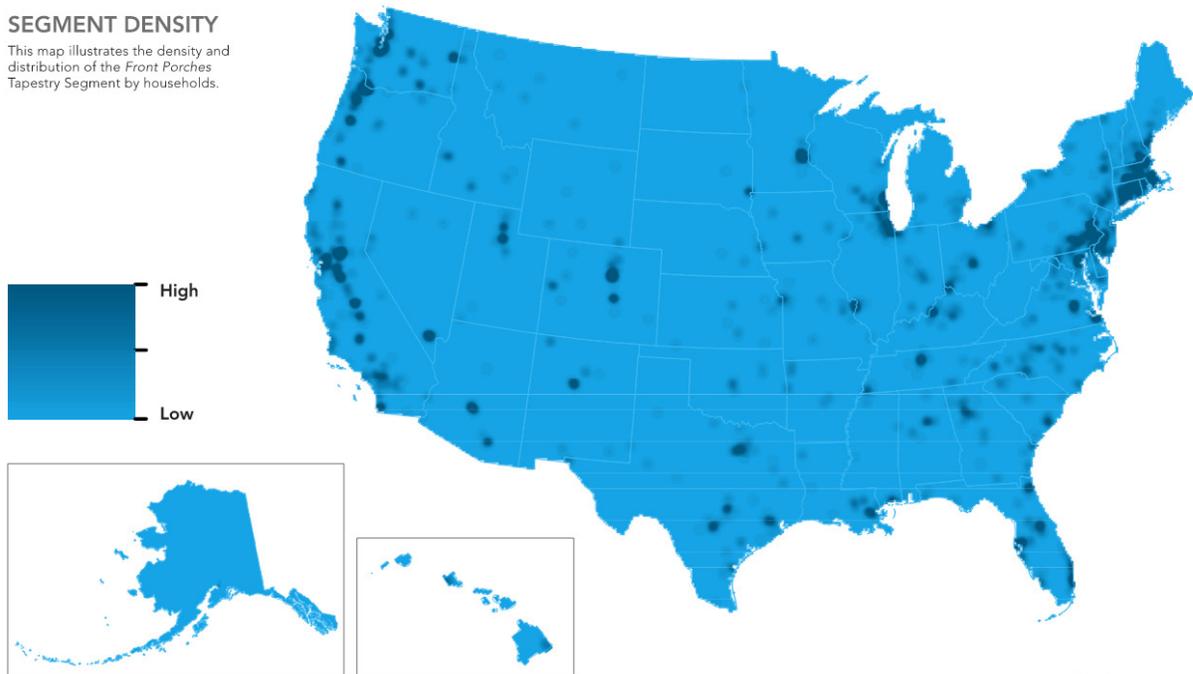
High

Low

For more information
1-800-447-9778
info@esri.com
esri.com

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Liberal residents over the age of 16 and employed are primarily represented in the manufacturing industry – approximately 24.6%. This ratio is twice the statewide average of 12.3%. Other primary employment industries include educational services, health care, social assistance, agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, and mining. Liberal has fewer residents employed in the professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management, finance, insurance, and real estate sectors compared to the State as a whole.

INDUSTRY	LIBERAL	KANSAS
Manufacturing	24.6%	12.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	20.4%	24.7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	11.1%	3.1%
Retail trade	10.8%	10.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6.3%	7.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.7%	5.5%
Construction	4.4%	6.0%
Public administration	3.9%	4.4%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management	3.7%	10.3%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	3.4%	6.7%
Other services, except public administration	3.0%	4.6%
Wholesale trade	1.9%	2.3%
Information	0.8%	1.6%

RETAIL DEMAND BY INDUSTRY

The Spending Potential Index (SPI) compares average local expenditures to U.S. levels. The SPI value for the U.S. is 100. If, for example, the SPI value for a geographic area is 70, this implies that average spending by consumers in the geographic area is likely to be 30 percent less than the U.S. average.

The SPI for the City of Liberal for retail trade is 68, and 70 for food services and drinking places. Translated, this means Liberal households are expected to spend 32% less that the average U.S. household on retail trade and 30% less on food services and drinking places.

Liberal households are expected to spend $15,985 annually in the retail trade sector and $2,814 annually on food services and drinking places. Kansas households are expected to spend approximately $5,062 more annually in the retail trade sector than Liberal households, and $660 more on food services and drinking places.

The following table breaks retail trade and food services/drinking places into subsectors for more granular analysis.

INDUSTRY SUBSECTOR	SPI	LIBERAL HOUSEHOLD	KANSAS HOUSEHOLD
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	69	$1,958	$2,669
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	67	$653	$869
Electronics and Appliance Stores	69	$208	$263
Building Material, Garden Equipment, Supplies	69	$982	$1,348
Food & Beverage Stores	67	$3,583	$4,679
Health and Personal Care Stores	68	$502	$679
Gasoline Stations	74	$2,115	$2,599
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	70	$800	$994
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical, Book Stores	70	$290	$375
General Merchandise Stores	68	$2,820	$3,699
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	65	$371	$550
Nonstore Retailers	66	$1,702	$2,322
Food Services & Drinking Places	70	$2,743	$3,474

COMMUTE TIME

The percentage of commute times less than 20 minutes is significantly higher in Liberal than what is experienced by the average Kansas commuter. Approximately 83.3% of all commutes in Liberal are less than 20 minutes compared with 57.7% statewide. Further, approximately 40.6% of all Liberal commutes are less than 10 minutes compared to 22.4% statewide.

83.3%

57.7%

LIBERAL

KANSAS
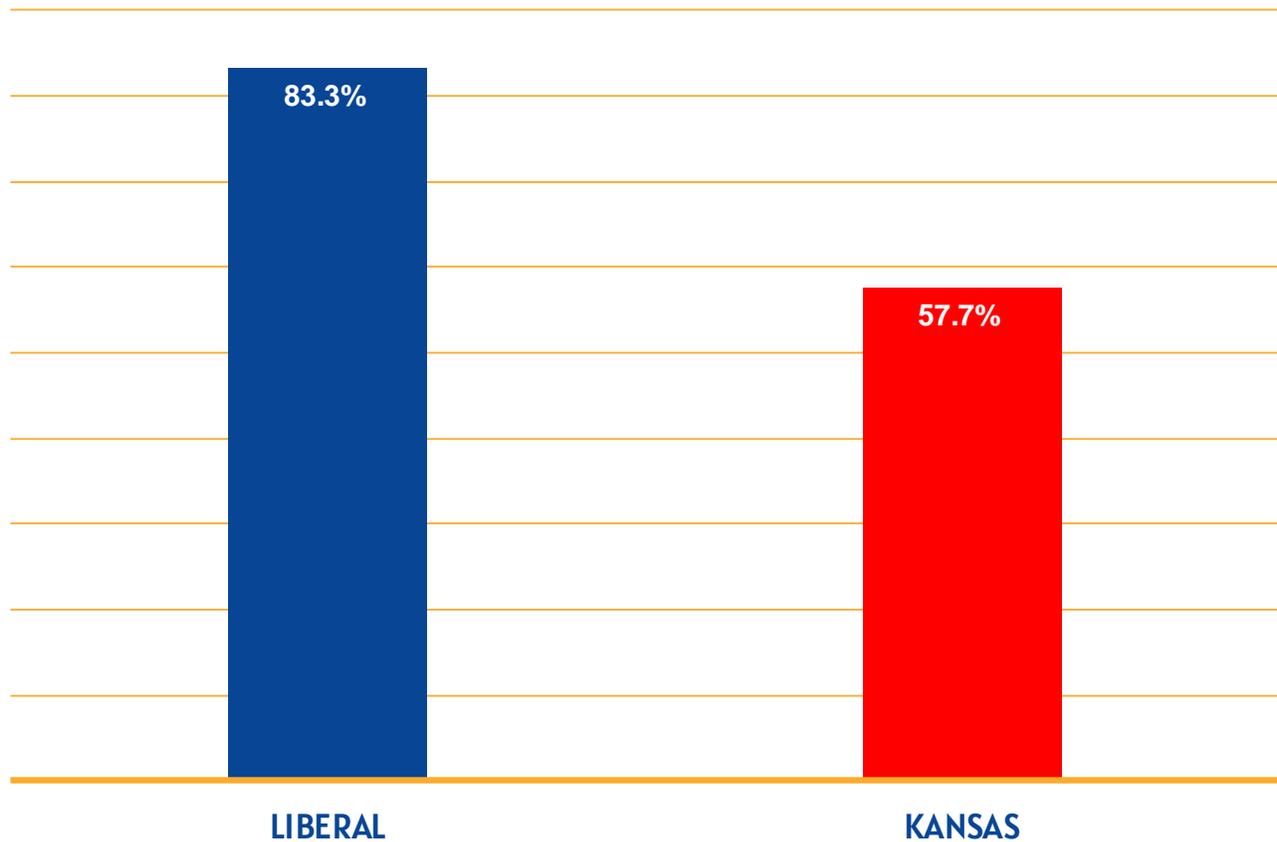
COMMUTES LESS THAN 20 MINUTES

Liberal residents that commute to work predominantly choose to drive alone (73.7%). Although the Liberal percentage is lower than the State (79.3%), driving alone is the dominant choice for both. Notably, the percentage of Liberal residents that carpool to work is over two times the statewide average. The number of employees that choose active transportation for their work commutes (walk and bicycle) is approximately 2.0% compared to 2.5% for the State.

TYPE	LIBERAL	KANSAS
Drive Alone	73.7%	79.3%
Carpooled	18.6%	8.6%
Work at Home	3.5%	8.1%
Walk	2.0%	2.2%
Other	1.8%	0.8%
Public Transportation	0.3%	0.4%
Bus	0.1%	0.4%
Motorcycle	0.1%	0.1%
Taxicab	0.0%	0.1%
Bicycle	0.0%	0.3%

KEY FINDINGS

45% of Liberal residents are employed in the manufacturing, education, health care, and social services sectors. Not surprisingly, based on a comparison of household incomes between the City and State, the expected annual household spending within the retail trade sector is notably less for households in Liberal than for the average Kansas and U.S. households. The largest discrepancy by index between the City and U.S. is in the Miscellaneous Store Retailers subsector (65), which includes such groups as florists, office supplies, stationary, gift stores, and used merchandise stores. The smallest discrepancy by index is in the Gasoline Stations subsector (74).

Commuters in Liberal experience notably shorter commutes than the average Kansas commuter. With this reduction in commute times, other modes of transportation may be more represented, specifically walking and bicycling. However, the number of Liberal commuters choosing to walk or bike to work (2.0%) is less than the statewide average (2.5%). This, combined with the advantage of a dominant conventional grid street network, may indicate that the built environment is actively dissuading active transportation as a viable alternative. Lastly, the most favorable comparison in Spending Potential Index residing in Gasoline Stations may indicate that other retail trade spending is being negatively impacted by the reliance on personal vehicles for required commutes. In addition to numerous other benefits, providing active transportation alternatives may reduce the amount of household income that is being dedicated to commuting and can thus be reallocated to other subsectors.

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT PLANS & STUDIES

Appendix B summarizes other plans that impact the built environment of the City.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002

The 2002 comprehensive plan identified a community that was growing at a tremendous pace over the previous ten years. Between 1990 and 2000, Seward County added approximately 3,767 people of which 3,080 were in Liberal. The plan projected the City to add approximately 3,325 people by 2020. In addition to population growth, the plan identified a large shift in the racial characteristics of the City. In 2002, 43.3% of the City's residents were of Hispanic origin, more than half of which came to the City during the 1990's. The median age identified during this plan was 28.9 years – much lower than the State and National averages at the time of approximately 35 years. Changes in the age brackets during the analysis indicated that families with young children were moving into the City resulting in a recommended emphasis on schools, family-oriented services, housing, and retail opportunities. Further, the analysis indicated that the 35-44 age group were moving away from the City. The plan identified the out migration possibly being related to the search for different jobs, better housing, and better schools. The plan charged the City with addressing potential concerns for this age group.

The 2002 plan identified housing as a concern for the City. The analysis identified a high percentage of rental units, low vacancy rates, and a relatively high monthly rent. The approximate 20% growth in population compared to the 5.3% growth in housing units led the plan's authors to identify a potential lack of affordable housing options.

The plan tasked the City will adjusting services and infrastructure to support the increased and diversified population, promote more service-oriented jobs, and provide areas for retail business opportunities. The plan also advised the City to analyze education and housing issues, and their potential impact on influencing certain age groups to move from the City.

Based on the assessment of demographics and existing conditions, and the public engagement process, the 2002 plan identified three primary issue categories facing the community: 1) Land Use & Infrastructure, 2) Quality of Life, and 3) Economic Development. A general description of each issue category and the top five issues identified for each are shown in the following table.

ISSUE CATEGORIES	TOP 5 ISSUES
LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE Issues related to the planning for and funding of infrastructure improvements and the enforcement of City codes in and around Liberal.	1. Improve Street Quality and Connectivity 2. Enforce Street, Curb, and Sidewalk Standards 3. Improve Code Enforcement 4. Hire a City Engineer 5. Complete the 8th Street Sports Complex
QUALITY OF LIFE Issues that influence the beautification of Liberal and portraying a positive image to potential residents and businesses.	1. Improve Community Appearance 2. Provide Cultural/Recreational Centers & Facilities 3. Improve Public Safety 4. Improve Governmental Image and Community Pride 5. Tourism
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Issues related to attracting and providing services to existing commercial and industrial developments.	1. Establish and Use a Fair Tax Abatement/Deferment Policy 2. Assume a Reasonable/Low Risk Approach to Incentives 3. Evaluate Opportunities to Reduce the Cost of Housing Construction and Create Affordable Housing 4. Attract Higher Paying Jobs/Professionals

The plan also developed a future land use map that established seven categories for the City's use during implementation of the plan - shown on the following page.
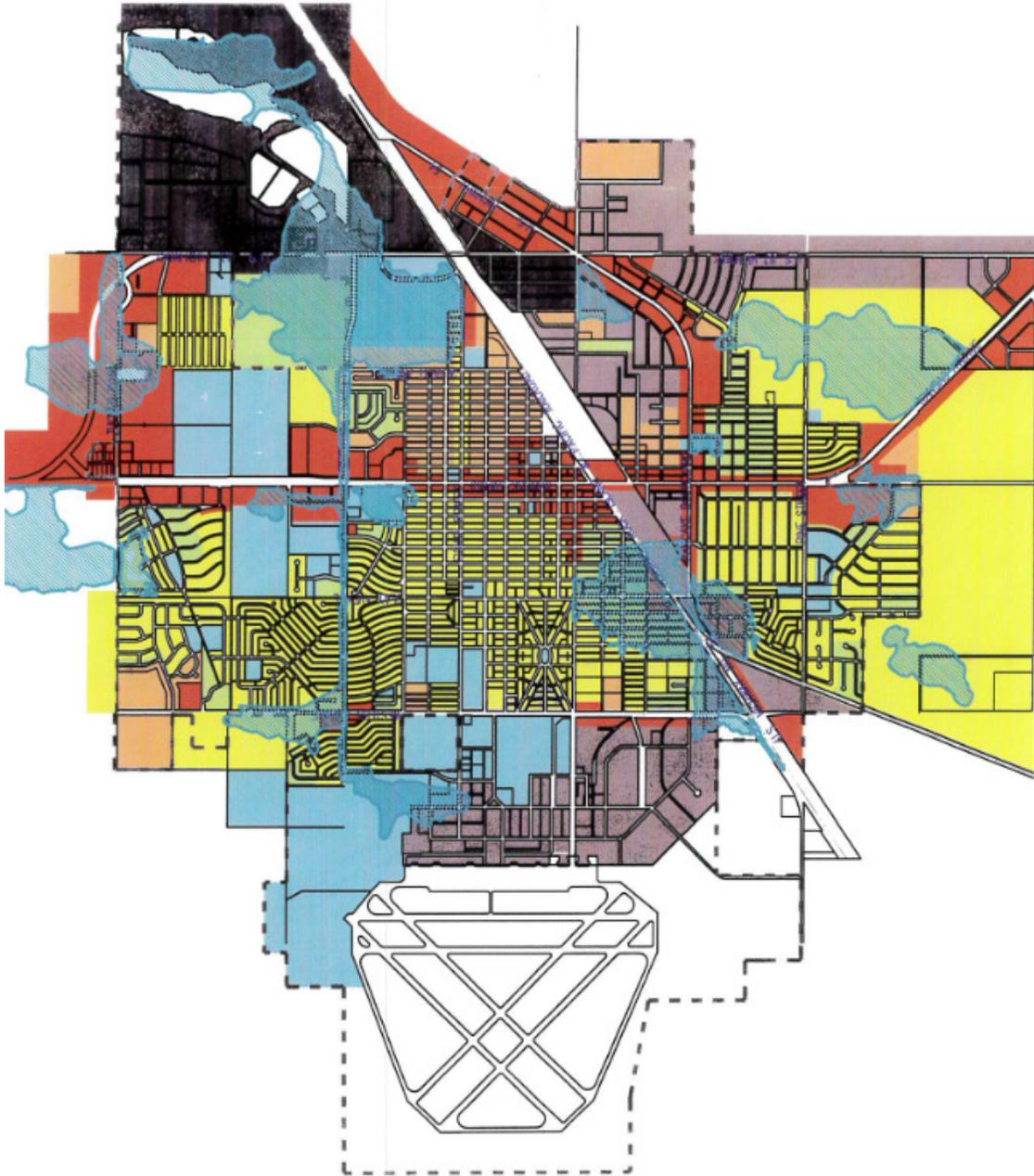
FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND

ROADS
CITY BOUNDARY
Single Family Residential
Low Density Residential
High Density Residential
Public/Quasi Public
Other Commercial
Light Industrial
Heavy Industrial
100-Year Floodplain

NORTH

BUR BUCHER, WILLIS & RATLIFF CORPORATION

7920 Ward Parkway ◊ Kansas City, Missouri 64114 ◊ www.bwrcorp.com
816.363.2696
BWR 2001-035
July 2002

BIKE & PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

The goal of the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was to provide direction for future non-motorized transportation planning by prioritizing sidewalk, trail, and on-street facility projects to help increase the safety and accessibility of Liberal transportation users. A major component of the Plan was to educate the community on why non-motorized transportation should be a priority. It discussed impacts on health and healthcare costs, reduced transportation costs, economic development, and general quality of life. Based on a demographic analysis, the Plan found:

- 5% of Liberal households had no vehicle available to them. Improvements to walkability and bikeability would provide these households with increased access to healthy grocers, employment, education, and opportunities to lead healthy, active lives.
- 3% of Liberal employees walked to work. The Plan identified this as an opportunity to encourage more non-motorized commuting through additional pedestrian amenities.
- Approximately 17% of Liberal residents between the ages of 18-64 and 8.2% of residents 60 years and over live below the poverty level. AAA estimated that the average annual cost to own and operate a small sedan in 2017 was $6,354. The Plan concluded that decreasing residents' reliance on vehicles by providing more and better non-motorized transportation options would provide needed assistance.

The Plan made improvement recommendations across four categories: 1) Sidewalks, 2) Trails, 3) Crosswalks, and 4) Bicycle Lanes. The total estimated costs for identified projects by category are presented below.

CATEGORY	ESTIMATED COST
Sidewalks	$3,520,000
Trails	$1,960,000
Crosswalks	$103,000
Bicycle Lanes	$469,500
TOTAL	**$6,052,500**

Ultimately, based on total estimated costs, the Plan recommended nine priority projects for the City of Liberal. Total estimated costs for these projects were approximately $1.14 million.

PROJECT	SIDEWALK	TRAIL	CROSS-WALK	BICYCLE LANE
Pine Street from Western Avenue to just east of Nick Avenue	X			
8th Street from Western Avenue to National Beef	X			
National Beef Park to National Beef – North Side Only	X			
Blue Bonnet Loop Trail		X		
North Country Estates Road & Jacobson Drive			X	
Country Estates Road – Highway 54 – Bluebell Road – 2nd Street			X	
Pancake Boulevard & Western Avenue			X	
11th Street from Western Avenue to Calvert Avenue				X
Clay Avenue from 15th Street to South Street				X

City of Liberal Priority Projects

STEVENS ST
W TUCKER RD
WIND RIDGE DR
E TUCKER RD
WILDCAT CT
TRAILMOBILE RD

Walmart Supercenter

PARKWAY BLVD

LONG AVE
RIDGE RD
NORTH HOLLY DR
CHEYENNE RD
CANNA LN
ZINNIA LN
ASTER LN
N GRANT AVE
CENTENNIAL BLVD
HIGHWAY 83

Country Club Acres Park

MacArthur Elementary School

Eisenhower Middle School

SOUTH HOLLY DR
VIOLET LN
TULIP LN
DAHLIA LN
ROSE LN
ZINNIA LN
LILAC DR

CORTEZ ST
NORWOOD AVE

Oliver Brown Park

E 20TH ST
N KANSAS AVE

E 20TH ST

BELLAIRE AVE
N CAIN AVE
N ROOSEVELT AVE

COUNTRY CLUB DR

Seward County Community College

N COUNTRY ESTATES RD
MCCOID RD

NEVADA DR

Southwest Medical Center

E 18TH ST
N LINCOLN AVE
COTTONWOOD LN

TUCKER CT
TULANE CT
TERRACE AVE

Brookdale Liberal Springs

COUNTRYSIDE DR

NELSON AVE
N TULANE AVE
N CARLTON AVE

W 15TH ST

Light Park

Dillons

Meadowlark Elementary School

National Beef Family Park

National Beef Packing Co LLC

W 11TH ST
FAIRGROUND LN

W 11TH ST

E 11TH ST

N GRANT AVE
N KANSAS AVE

JOHN JACOBSON DR

HIGHWAY 54

Cottonwood Intermediate School

N PURDUE AVE

Walmart Neighborhood Market

North Blue Bonnet Park

W 10TH ST
W 9TH ST
W 8TH ST

E 10TH ST
E 9TH ST

E 8TH ST

Mahuron Park

W 7TH ST
Liberal High School

N WESTERN AVE
N CAIN AVE
N CALHOUN AVE
N WEBSTER AVE

W 6TH ST
W 7TH ST
W 5TH ST

Senior Citizens Center

N PROSPECT AVE
N PERSHING AVE
N SHERMAN AVE
N LINCOLN AVE
N WASHINGTON AVE
N OKLAHOMA AVE
MISSOURI AVE

E 7TH ST
E 6TH ST
E 5TH ST

E 7TH ST
E 5TH ST

MAPLE BLVD
N TULANE AVE
HARVARD AVE
MAPLE BLVD

Harrison Circle Park

Tobias Park

E 4TH ST
E 3RD ST

COMMERCIAL AVE
INDUSTRIAL AVE

ELM BLVD

W 3RD ST
W 2ND ST

E 2ND ST

BLUEBELL RD

ARK AVE

W 1ST ST
OHIO ST

S CALHOUN AVE
S ROOSEVELT AVE
S JORDAN AVE
S PROSPECT AVE
S PERSHING AVE
S SHERMAN AVE
W 1ST ST

TRAIL ST
E RAILROAD ST

PARK ST
E OAK ST

E CEDAR ST
E PANCAKE BLVD

FREEMAN ST
KELLY AVE
SHOOK AVE

S WESTERN AVE
S PURDUE AVE
OHIO ST
ACADEMY AVE
S CAIN AVE
LOCKE ST

S WASHINGTON AVE
S PENNSYLVANIA AVE
S NEW YORK AVE
BAUGHMAN ST
VIRGINIA AVE
ZEIGLER AVE

GRIFFITH AVE
E PANCAKE BLVD
S COUNTRY ESTATES RD

SAGE RD

SUNNYSIDE DR

HANCOCK ST

W PANCAKE BLVD

COOLIDGE ST
W HICKORY ST
WILSON ST

Mary Frame Park

E HICKORY ST

Seymour Rogers Middle School

HOTEL DR

W WALNUT ST

S KANSAS AVE
S E WALNUT ST

Prairie View Elementary School

S WEBSTER AVE
S JORDAN AVE

Bright Start Pre K

HOOVER ST
W SPRUCE ST
W CURTIS ST
W PINE ST

S LINCOLN AVE

E SPRUCE ST
E CURTIS ST

SEWARD AVE
VIRGINIA AVE
WARREN AVE

S CAIN AVE
S CALHOUN AVE
POPLAR ST

Sunflower Intermediate School

E PINE ST

STARLIGHT DR
NOTTINGHAM LN
ARLINGTON DR

Southlawn Park

McCray Park

MCCRAY BLVD
HAROLD BLVD
LINN BLVD

S OKLAHOMA AVE
Leete Park

BIRCH ST

SYCAMORE ST
S PERSHING AVE
S GRANT AVE
MISSION BLVD
PIONEER DR

LARRABEE RD

SOUTH ST

N

City of Liberal Priority Projects

- 🚶 Crosswalk Recommendations
- —— Bike Lane Recommendations
- —— Sidewalk Recommendations
- ▪▪▪▪ Trail Recommendation: North Blue Bonnet Trail Loop

HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL SUMMARY

From 2022 to 2023, the City utilized the Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) available through the Kansas Department of Commerce to gather and analyze data on their housing inventory, partner with relevant stakeholders, and develop priorities for local housing investment. The Kansas Department of Commerce provides communities with this tool to encourage data-driven decisions when addressing local housing investment opportunities.

An analysis of housing conditions completed during the project focused on three neighborhoods in the east, south, and northwest sides of Liberal. 657 total housing units were assessed representing approximately 8% of the total housing stock in the City.

41%	59%	97%	3%
SATISFACTORY TO GOOD RATING	**DETERIORATED TO DILAPIDATED RATING**	**OCCUPIED UNITS**	**VACANT UNITS**

Following the data analysis and public input stages of the planning process, objectives and priorities for housing were identified.

NEEDS	
YOUNG PROFESSIONAL HOUSING	This category is meant to cover both the single individual moving to town for a job as well as the young family looking for more space. Both groups are looking for quality rentals and a first-time home.
NEW CONSTRUCTION & REHABILITATION	In 2022, 9 permits were issued in the City for new single-family homes. This level of activity will not support the existing population in Liberal nor will it allow the City to grow its population. The City should continue to work to support the development community in bringing more homes to the market, but the City should simultaneously encourage rehabilitation of the existing housing stock as well.
LAND AVAILABILITY	The City needs to find ways to make usable land easier to develop. The Tool identified working with FEMA to review maps to look for revision opportunities. Another option would be to dedicate housing funds from the 1 cent sales tax to support development projects. Lastly, an update to the comprehensive plan was suggested to assess where new housing developments should go.
ASSETS	
JOBS & EMPLOYMENT	Key Liberal industries are growing and economic projections for the region are strong. There is not enough labor availability to meet employment demand.
CODE & INFRASTRUCTURE	Code enforcement activities and investments in storm sewer infrastructure, wastewater treatment plant improvements, and the maintenance of local parks were praised during the planning process.
HOUSING DEMAND	With fewer than ten homes on the market throughout the previous year of the planning process, the existing stock of units is insufficient to meet the demands of those wanting to buy homes or move into quality rentals.

A PATH FORWARD: THE PLAN TO RENEW THE 1-CENT SALES TAX

The City established a 1-cent sales tax in 1993. Since its inception, the Focus on the Future Committee has worked in a variety of ways with the Liberal City Commission to provide public feedback and input on how to effectively utilize this funding in the City's efforts to make the community a better place to live, work, and play.

During the lead up to the tax expiring in 2021, the Committee began an effort to engage the community on the structure and use of the funding in 2019. This process resulted in the following recommendations.

MAINTENANCE CATEGORY ADDITION	The people would like to see a maintenance category added to the list of eligible uses for the funding. This "fund" was recommended to be 5% of the sales tax proceeds and would be used to maintain the projects created using the sales tax as opposed to increasing property tax burdens for maintenance.
SHARING THE INVESTMENT	The people believe that the sales tax is a fairer way to fund community enhancement rather than relying on property taxes alone.
CATEGORIES	The people support the category and percentage-based system currently utilized with the addition of a Maintenance category. Other existing categories include Beautification, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Crime, Drug & Alcohol Prevention, and Housing.
PUBLIC NOTICE	The people expressed a desire to be better informed about the use of the sales tax funds. Potential methods may include mailers, local media updates, social media postings, and signage at projects.
PRIORITIES	The people support a system of priorities determined by the public to guide use of the funds. When priorities change, they would like to be consulted through the Focus on the Future Committee.
EMERGENCIES	Should a public emergency arise that is to be addressed using these sales tax funds, the people expect these funds to be returned to the proper fund should reimbursements be provided from other sources. Emergencies need to be clearly identifiable and not manufactured through the budgeting process.

As a result of the process leading up to the potential 2021 renewal, priorities were established for each category. These priorities were established using input from the public, the professional community, and in conjunction with City staff. 147 priorities were included. The following table depicts the top 5 priorities for each category.

BEAUTIFICATION

1. Develop a plan to enhance the East Entrance to Liberal.
2. Develop a plan to enhance Downtown Liberal.
3. Work with residents to develop a program for dead tree removal.
4. Develop neighborhood clean-up plans to include hauling debris to landfill.
5. Develop plan to paint Dorothy statues or remove completely.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Work with internet providers to expedite development of high-speed internet access.
2. Develop plan to present to prospects the possibility of distribution center facilities.
3. High priority on recruitment of industry.
4. Develop strategy to revitalize Downtown Liberal.
5. Promote Liberal to those traveling through.

HOUSING

1. Maintain first-time home buyers housing program.
2. Create a lot development fund.
3. Develop a plan for housing in northeast Liberal.
4. Enforce codes on landlords.
5. Educate public on home fortification.

CRIME, DRUGS, & ALCOHOL PREVENTION: LIGHTING/STREETS

1. Fix flickering lights.
2. Enhance lighting in East Liberal.
3. Enhance lighting at the junction of Highway 54 and Eighth Street.
4. Add more LED streetlights.
5. Add lights to walking trails.

CRIME, DRUGS, & ALCOHOL PREVENTION: OTHER

1. Support truancy program.
2. Help fund homeless shelter.
3. Reopen/relocate gun range.
4. Develop indoor recreation space for winter activities.
5. Expand public safety program.

INFRASTRUCTURE: DRAINAGE

1. Address flooding on 11th Street.
2. Flooding from Pershing to Clay.
3. Flooding at Third and Clay.
4. Flooding at Fourth and Sherman.
5. Flooding in the Cattleman's area.

INFRASTRUCTURE SIDEWALKS & WALKING TRAILS

1. Develop sidewalk on west side of Kansas Avenue for business in front of SCCC.
2. Expand sidewalk and streets.
3. Provide a walking path or sidewalk on overpass.
4. Improve trails at Arkalon Park.
5. Develop sidewalk from Meadowlark School to Kansas Avenue.

INFRASTRUCTURE: ROADS, GUTTERING, & LIGHTING

1. Widen Stadium Road from Activity Center to 15th Street.
2. Fix potholes, rough roads.
3. Improve Pine Street.
4. Improve Tucker Road similar to 15th Street.
5. Improve Western Avenue.

INFRASTRUCTURE: SIGNAGE

1. Enhance all street signs to same style.
2. Improve signage on Pershing, Grant, and Sherman Avenues.
3. Enhance signage at 15th Street and bypass.
4. Repair/replace stop signs where needed.
5. Revisit traffic control light at 8th Street and Washington.

INFRASTRUCTURE: PARKING

1. Provide hard surface lots for soccer fields and ball diamonds.
2. Develop program for hard surface improvements for business parking including mall.
3. Develop program to replace gravel drives on Pancake Boulevard, South Liberal.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Re-stripe all streets so they are visible.
2. Fix potholes in mobile home parks.
3. Cover Can Creek.
4. Fix ditch from 15th Street to bypass.
5. Implement speed bumps.

MAINTENANCE

1. Use 5% of the proceeds to maintain projects initially funded by the sales tax.

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The most effective long-range plans are developed with the community not just for it. This Plan was able to collaborate with the community that ultimately became the recommendations found within this Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Community engagement is paramount in all comprehensive planning processes. Throughout the planning process, the planning team engaged the Liberal community with a variety of in-person and digital engagement activities. All ages were included, using creativity and inclusivity to make engagement in the project as convenient and enjoyable as possible. The results of this engagement provided both qualitative and quantitative information to help build consensus.

The plan's engagement strategy utilized four phases. Each phase, and the activities conducted therein are depicted in the following table:

PHASE	ACTIVITY	DATE
PHASE 1: VISIONING	City Leadership Work Session #1	April 2, 2024
	Community Survey	April 3, 2024 - May 22, 2024
	Steering Committee & Core Team Visioning Workshop	May 16, 2024
	Pop-Up Event: Yellow Brick Road Car Show	May 18, 2024
	Stakeholder Meetings	May 17, 2024 - May 31, 2024
PHASE 2: PLANNING	Steering Committee & Core Team Planning Workshop	September 12, 2024
	Pop-Up Event: Duck Festival	September 14, 2024
PHASE 3: REVIEW	Steering Committee & Core Team Review Workshop	April 3, 2025
	City Leadership Work Session #2	April 16, 2025
	Public Review of Draft Document	June 16, 2024 - June 30, 2025
PHASE 4: ADOPTION	Planning Commission Public Hearing	July 10, 2025
	City Commission Adoption	August 12, 2025

PHASE I: VISIONING

Between April 2nd and May 31st, 2024, the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan carried out the initial engagement phase of the planning process. Through facilitated conversations and engagement activities, stakeholders from the City, County, and State government, K-12 and higher education, real estate, development, private sector, civic organizations, and interested residents took part in exercises intended to characterize the community's vision for the coming years. In combination with these specialized groups of stakeholders with unique interests, the Launch Liberal 2035 Steering Committee met to take part in the visioning programming.

Visioning is a practice that enables the community to talk honestly about where it views itself today and where it views itself in the future – while giving voice to the opportunities and challenges that could impact the future of the community. The first phase of engagement in the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan was designed to establish a baseline of visioning input and feedback. While the audiences and formats changed slightly across sessions, each group or session largely received the same framework for visioning exercises. The objective was to understand not only what the themes of the future vision are for the community – but how they vary or remain consistent across differing stakeholders within the community.

Over the eight-week period, feedback and input on the vision for Liberal was gathered through a variety of formats. Large group workshops, small group stakeholder sessions, in addition to a pop-up engagement activity held during a large public event. Participants were asked to provide feedback in open discussions, work in small group settings, and share individual views in writing.

The engagement programming was designed to capture a continuum of visioning feedback.

First, each session aimed to gather a snapshot of where people feel Liberal stands today. Simply put, the goal was to assess what residents feel is working and what roadblocks exist in the community, currently.

Next, the programming asked respondents to identify their priorities for the community over the coming decades. From housing and community character to mobility and economic development, a selection of prompts and priority descriptions were provided to give examples, and respondents were asked to order their top three priorities as a community.

With these priorities in mind, participants in the engagement sessions were asked to identify the policies, ideas, attitudes, or strategies that needed to be amplified, created, or eliminated to achieve the priorities they named as essential to the community's future success.

Finally, in each engagement session – respondents were asked to envision Liberal in 2035 through the eyes of three specific personas. Individuals were asked to document what they believe will make Liberal an appealing place to live in 2035 through the eyes of a small business owner, a family with school-age kids, or someone entering the workforce from high school or college.

PHASE 2: PLANNING

In September of 2024, the Planning Phase of community engagement was carried out. A meeting was held with the Launch Liberal 2035 Core Team and Steering Committee, and a pop-up event took place at the 2024 Duck Festival. Kudos to Miguel Esparza, whose duck took first place.

The Planning Phase allows for more granular ideas to be gathered from the public and takes conversations to a more concrete level. For instance, stakeholders are presented with draft values and goals for Liberal that were formed based on feedback gathered in Phase 1 and asked to respond to them. Additionally, the first phase of engagement revealed that stakeholders want to see more development in Liberal and want an identity the City can be proud of. Based on this, Phase 2 asked several questions about development and placemaking in the City, among other topics. While Phase 1 provided a vision for Liberal, Phase 2 starts the planning process for how to get there.

PHASE 3: REVIEW

Review of the Plan was completed in the Spring and Summer 2025. A review workshop was held with the Core Team and Steering Committee followed by the same for the City Leadership group. Finally, once revisions were completed based on these workshops, the full draft plan was made available for public review and comment on the project webpage.

The purpose of the Review Phase was to gather final feedback and insights from key stakeholders on critical components of the draft plan. This phase involved reviewing and discussing major sections such as the Land Use & Growth Framework, Quality of Life, and Value Statements & Goals, along with evaluating four draft maps: the Future Land Use Map, Access Map, Aesthetics & Character Map, and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Priority Areas Map. Through workshops and breakout sessions, participants provided detailed feedback to refine the plan, ensuring it reflects community priorities and supports informed decision-making for Liberal.

PHASE 4: ADOPTION

The Planning Commission was presented the final draft plan at their regular meeting held on July 10, 2025. After hearing a presentation from the PEC team and discussing the plan, the Planning Commission held a public hearing. At the conclusion of the presentation, discussion, and public hearing, the Planning Commission unanimously adopted the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

A similar presentation was delivered to the City Commission at their regular meeting scheduled for August 12, 2025. Their task was to officially adopted the Launch Liberal 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

PHASE I: VISIONING

SUMMARIZED KEY THEMES

PARKS & RECREATION

The city's parks were often cited as a strength of the community. The number, accessibility, and diversity of park options were seen very positively by the citizens. Maintaining this asset for the community should be continued.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Residents indicated that while the existing industries of the community are strengths, **growing the number and types of businesses in Liberal should be a priority.** There is a general desire to diversify the industries located within the city. This could involve attracting a new major employer and/or a more robust business ecosystem that allows small to medium-sized businesses to flourish.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Creating more commercial development in Liberal was expressed in almost every engagement session. Shopping, dining, and retail activities were frequently mentioned as needing improvement, with support for more options downtown. The community consistently chose commercial development as one of the top priorities in engagement sessions, and **the survey respondents were most willing to pay for investments in commercial development.**

HOUSING DIVERSITY & AVAILABILITY

Housing was the most critical issue facing the city in the next ten years according to the survey. The need for more housing, and affordable housing, was often mentioned in engagement sessions. More robust and better planned neighborhoods, more options for renters, and infill housing developments (including downtown) were commonly mentioned issues. Participants did not indicate a desire to annex large amounts of land, indicating **infill development strategies are more in line with the community than greenfield development.**

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT

Existing codes and regulations were frequently mentioned as barriers to development, especially commercial. While some identified zoning and subdivision regulations as the source of these issues, others indicated there may be misunderstandings or impractical proposals. There is a desire to ease regulations and subsequently increase clarity about the new policies.

DIVERSITY

Liberal's diversity was mentioned often as a strength and source of pride. However, there needs to be better strategies to communicate with the Hispanic and Latino/a populations. 66% of the community identifies as Hispanic/Latino, yet only 26% of survey respondents indicated the same. Additionally, a greater percentage of Hispanic and Latino/a residents were dissatisfied with the availability of information from the city than non-Hispanic and Latino/a residents.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

One of the most often mentioned strengths was Liberal's people, the character of the community, and how safe people feel. At the same time, **one of the most frequently mentioned areas for improvement was the image, identity, and morale of the community.** This was expressed in a variety of ways, some of which include: the visual aesthetic of the built environment, the relative lack of commercial options, and the lack of a clear unifying "identity" of the community.

CURRENT STRENGTHS & ROADBLOCKS

City Leadership Work Session #1 opened by asking participants to document, in writing, their individual responses to what they perceive to be the community's current strengths and roadblocks.

STRENGTHS	ROADBLOCKS
- Hard working community - Very family oriented - Viewed as very friendly - Young population - Generous - Diversity - Job Availability - Code enforcement is working - Interest in direction of growth - People - Open minded commission - Town hall meetings - Generosity of the community - Overwhelming attitude of wanting to improve as a community - Current diverse population - A lot of land potential, despite the inconsistent appropriate use of land. The current comp. plan doesn't relate to the visions of the younger community. Most come from immigrant families and seek to live a better quality of life than the one we grew up in. - Strong industrial – but could be expanded on, such as industry that could support what is already here - Employment is good but limited. Need more choices besides manufacturing.	- Some subdivision rules are restrictive for growth - There is a need for imaginative incentives for development - Lack of policies to help - Lack of networking - There is a perception that there are roadblocks, but in reality there are people who believe they should be able to build whatever they want without meeting codes - Zoning ordinances - City ordinances - Governmental entities aren't working together in a cohesive direction. Each entity "doing its own thing" is counterproductive and not the wisest use of taxpayer resources. - Policy approach needs to become adaptive and help bring new values to the present community - The public sometimes imposes roadblocks on themselves - Not enough public involvement in city issues - Abundance of knowledge - The general attitude is our biggest problem – the current view citizens of Liberal have towards the government is negative, because they see only the drain from the government (high taxes, unseen use of funds). We need to change that perspective.

- Young age median – The people are at a time and place in life with more than average disposable income. The location of the city helps with people taking trips to some major and minor cities being at about equal time. I would consider Liberal a tourist town and we need to take advantage by focusing on the current trends of travel and online commerce. We are so behind that but are ahead of the curve.
- Our strengths are the people, small size, and diversity
- Diversity in community leadership
- Rec Center
- School expansion (USD 480)
- SCCC expansion addition
- Collaborative (taxing entities)
- City commission willing to make bold decisions
- Professional leadership
- Community as a whole
- Leadership
- Open to a new vision for the city
- Bond within the community – we work together
- Leadership in place to help the town expand and move forward
- Open area to expand into
- Better coordination with other taxing entities
- Leadership position diversity is becoming more reflective of community makeup
- More progressive ideas expressed towards doing something "different" – economic development, retail development, etc.
- Willingness to learn
- Openness to listen to community needs/wants
- Resources for new/starting businesses
- Agriculture
- Regional
- Hospital
- Water
- Workforce culture

- There are too many regulations that are not found anywhere else. The idea that we do it on purpose to stop growth has some value. Letting a standard regulation also found in other places will help.
- Not a published path for growth
- Money – taxes, fees, overinflated values
- Fairly stagnant pursuit of grants
- Unwritten "policy" of not getting involved for fear of backlash
- Expanding parks and housing development
- Procedures to be less ruling or demanding
- Consistency in the community
- Antiquated code
- Antiquated zoning
- Anti-Mexican/Guatemalan/Salvadorian sentiment
- Self-interest above community
- School district
- Possibly some of the old building codes and zoning codes
- Update old rules and regulations
- Listening to the loudest voices when making decisions isn't allowing us to grow and expand especially in economic development/retail
- Outdated zoning regs and some city codes create cumbersome processes for new business development
- We don't have a clear short-term strategic plan – kind of just float from one idea to the next in terms of development vs. pursuing specific opportunities
- Some regulations and strict rules are keeping business owners from opening their dream businesses
- Sometime long-term community members don't like the idea of certain businesses coming to town
- Too many regulations and special requirements (higher business license cost for certain types of businesses)

Participants were then challenged to think about Liberal over the next 10 years. In small groups of 4-6, they were asked to work together to identify policies, attitudes, or strategies that the community needs to act on through one of three ways.

Amplified: What exists today that needs to be lifted up, celebrated, or supported to achieve the goals we set as a community?

Created: What is missing in our community that can be created to support our vision for Liberal?

Eliminated: What exists today that needs to be eliminated or removed to pursue the goals and priorities we have as a community?

GROUP	AMPLIFIED	CREATED	ELIMINATED
Group 1	• Cooperation - among all residents • Communication - getting better • Approachability - community leaders	• Resiliency • Adaptive • Participation • Momentum - in leadership and the community	• Isolationist attitude (Regional) • Tribalism (Local)
Group 2	• Transparency - "MWTM" / Radio Int. • Outreach - presence/ accessibility • Documenting	• Community trust • Taxing entity cooperation	• Perception - customer service
Group 3	• Community leadership - "boldness" • Communication access • Paint the town	• Job types • Industries • Work-style • Technology jobs	• Eliminate inconsistent implementation • Old ideas
Group 4	• Senior programming • Pace of housing development	• Who we are • Commits • Self Esteem • Identity • Pride	• Avoid regression • Attitude of obstacles
Group 5	• Networking/lobbying - intergovernmental • Professionalization of staff • Grants - need to improve	• Diverse opportunities - housing, entertainment, employment	• Restrictive policies regarding business

Participants then were asked to take part in an exercise that asked them to consider the community in the future through the eyes of unique personas.

1. **A family with school-aged children.**
2. **A small business owner.**
3. **Someone entering employment after high school or college.**

The responses were gathered in an open group format and documented through facilitation.

Responses:
- Education is not a concern
- College
- You can walk around in the park anytime and not worry
- Safe, quality childcare
- Built – more physical space that reflects variety
- Qualified workers capable of being managers in our businesses
- Not focused on specific aesthetic
- Enough doctors and facility to handle population
- Don't have to leave for retail selection
- Good options for housing
  - Not just purchasing single-family
  - Apartments/duplexes
- Maintained the parks
- Anywhere connected by sidewalk
- Connected/accessibility - wheelchairs
- Graduate sees a future
  - Doesn't have to leave for experience
- Healthcare destination (regional) with local control
- Commission guided by comprehensive plan
- Infrastructure rejuvenation
- Water/electricity/etc.

CURRENT STRENGTHS & ROADBLOCKS

City Leadership Work Session #1 opened by asking participants to document, in writing, their individual responses to what they perceive to be the community's current strengths and roadblocks.

GROUP	STRENGTHS	ROADBLOCKS
Group 1	• Education opportunities • Cooperation between government entities (right now) and the willingness to cooperate • We have a blank slate - we can be whatever we want	• Low public self-esteem • Isolated from natural amenities • We are a blank slate - we don't know who we are
Group 2	• Variety of entities working collaboratively • Business friendly - local • City median age is low (25-28)	• Available workforce • Housing • Academic achievement levels from local schools
Group 3	• Clean and beautiful • Parks and recreation • People and hospitality are great and the college	• Occupy downtown buildings • Train issues/delays • Stores and restaurants come and go
Group 4	• Approachable • Empathetic • Accessible	• Image • Bad past decisions • Lack of deep pocket investors
Group 5	• Collaborating as entities • Ethnic blend • Recognizing our assets and resources	• Ready workforce • Budget and taxes • Education with constituents getting plugged in
Group 6	• Beautiful parks and walking paths – walkability has really improved • We are a young community, comparatively speaking • Having SCCC is a huge community resource	• Lack of affordable housing • Lack of employable citizens • Lack of eco/devo careers – career and eco diversity

Following the evaluation of present-day conditions – the group was asked to think about the future. A set of community priorities were presented on boards across the room, and each individual was provided with three sticky notes of three different colors, each color represented a different ranking. Individuals were asked to select their top 3 priorities for the community, in order, from the following selection:

1. Housing – Strong communities feature quality housing, a robust housing market, and provide a diversity of housing types to accommodate buyers and renters at all stages of life.

2. Mobility – Strong communities provide a transportation system that supports all residents' ability to navigate freely and safely regardless of age, physical ability, and income.

3. Community Image, Character, and Identity – Strong Communities embrace what makes them unique, and use these differentiators to create, maintain, and progress a cohesive identity.

4. Community Connections – Strong communities are places where residents feel safe and welcomed, and where neighbors know each other.

5. Parks and Recreation – Strong Communities provide opportunities for all ages to be active to encourage physical and emotional well-being.

6. Business, Services, & Economic Development – Strong communities have an business environment that provides essential goods and services for residents and visitors and is an important aspect of the local, regional, and state economy.

PRIORITY	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Community Connections	2	1	6	9
Parks & Recreation	0	0	7	7
Business, Services, & Economic Development	14	9	0	23
Housing	8	12	3	23
Mobility	1	1	2	4
Community Image, Character, & Identity	4	6	11	21

Participants were then challenged to think about Liberal over the next 10 years. In small groups of 4-6, they were asked to work together to identify policies, attitudes, or strategies that the community needs to act on through one of three ways.

Amplified: What exists today that needs to be lifted up, celebrated, or supported to achieve the goals we set as a community?

Created: What is missing in our community that can be created to support our vision for Liberal?

Eliminated: What exists today that needs to be eliminated or removed to pursue the goals and priorities we have as a community?

AMPLIFIED	CREATED	ELIMINATED
• Cooperation between public and private entities (2) • Ease of doing business • Communication "wins" • Professionalism among taxing entities • Expansion (physical) • Benefits of small-town living • Hometown feel, big hearts • History of community • Parks and paths • Economic incubator • City communications/engagement • Cross-cultural communication – language	• Representative outreach/ engagement • Inclusion (focus) • Downtown revitalization • Overpass project • Momentum • Understanding actual majority • Implementing the plan • Define identity/image • Growing/keeping/"boomerang" workforce • Incentivizing returning workforce • Community vision • Community leadership "champion" • Creative positive image (within) • New sense of culture	• Vacant buildings (2) • Negative community morale (3) • Old/blocks – outdated policies and procedures (2) • Apathy (property ownership) • Old mindsets related to government role (2) • Personal agendas • Cultural misunderstandings • Underrepresentation of all communities

Participants then were asked to take part in an exercise that asked them to consider the community in the future through the eyes of unique personas.

1. **A family with school-aged children.**
2. **A small business owner.**
3. **Someone entering employment after high school or college.**

A FAMILY WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN	A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER	SOMEONE ENTERING EMPLOYMENT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE
• A supportive customer base • Consistent regulations • Supportive community – shop local • Available locations to open shop • Full-service business resources • A large region to pull a customer base • Services geared to the elderly • A trained and educated workforce • Incentives • Homegrown owners • Easy to find possibilities • Support from the county • Incentives to start • Open markets • A culture of positive competition and excitement for new business owners coming in, rather than negativity – "there's room for all" • Strong local support • Lots of young families with disposable income • A robust supply of quality workers • A community with variety of incentive options • Thriving community • Need to reach all cultures • Expand the business • Community growth • Being able to make business grow • Unpacked possibilities • Income stability • Unlimited resources to business opportunities and overcome road blocks • Same benefits as big businesses (ex. tax breaks)	• A supportive customer base • Consistent regulations • Supportive community – shop local • Available locations to open shop • Full-service business resources • A large region to pull a customer base • Services geared to the elderly • A trained and educated workforce • Incentives • Homegrown owners • Easy to find possibilities • Support from the county • Incentives to start • Open markets • A culture of positive competition and excitement for new business owners coming in, rather than negativity – "there's room for all" • Strong local support • Lots of young families with disposable income • A robust supply of quality workers • A community with variety of incentive options • Thriving community • Need to reach all cultures • Expand the business • Community growth • Being able to make business grow • Unpacked possibilities • Income stability • Unlimited resources to business opportunities and overcome road blocks • Same benefits as big businesses (ex. tax breaks)	• Diverse career opportunities • A place to live • Choices • Competitive job opportunities • Entertainment • A good paying job/career • Lots of options for competitive, locally-involved internships (college partnerships necessary) • Housing for rent • Incentives to buy a house • Quality of life to want to build a life here • Competitive pay and low cost of living • Short certificate programs lead to employment • The chance to be whatever you want to be • More job opportunities • Having job opportunities with the possibility to grow with the job • Affordable housing • Better job opportunities • Wide selection of opportunities • Opportunities for a balanced lifestyle • Mentoring or skill training • Higher paying technical jobs • Affordable housing/starter homes • Opportunities to have different jobs and upward movement • Housing • College and career ready • Opportunities to participate in "grow your own" programs that are directly tied to the job market

Between May 17th and May 31st, six meetings were held at the Randall Girl Scout Building at Light Park. Of the six meetings, three were comprised of specific stakeholder groups, and three were open to members of the community not affiliated with any particular civic, private, or public organization.

Included in the three community meetings was a session conducted for Spanish-speaking stakeholders. The questions and responses were translated in real time. Documented responses during this session were written in Spanish and translated during transcription for documentation in this report.

CURRENT STRENGTHS & ROADBLOCKS

The meetings opened by having participants work together in groups to identify strengths and roadblocks present in the community today. The groups were asked to think collaboratively to determine the responses, and they were shared with the group and recorded.

MEETING	STRENGTHS	ROADBLOCKS
Seward County Community College	• Infrastructure • Growth opportunity • Educational opportunities	• Limited workforce • Affordable housing • Environment – community perception/ esteem

MEETING	STRENGTHS	ROADBLOCKS
Rotary & Kiwanis Clubs	• Parks and Recreation – system, equipment • Good internet service to some parts of the community • Pancake Day – example of community events and groups working together (Food Truck Fest) • Recreation for children/youth activities • Local businesses for children/youth activities • Organized sports • Library • Community is very friendly • Cultures blend nicely • Melting pot • Public safety • Law enforcement • Medical response (EMS) • Education option – a good one, too • Diversity • Welcoming community	• Affordable housing – reality of costs • Geography • Transportation • Healthcare – affordable • Affordable housing for middle income people • Business website • Good internet service presence for entire community • Transportation for children • More involvement for our elderly • Industry employment options • Follow-through of medical care
Realtors & Development Community	• Recreation department • Youth programs/sports • Open minded city commission and city manager – forward thinking • Thriving community college • Location – we are with two major highways • Park and recreation opportunities • We have a commission who wants to make Liberal better • Seward County development cooperation • Good cooperation between city and county • New schools • Low debt of Seward County	• Figuring out what to do with Mainstreet • Figuring out how to get people to be able to afford a house • Getting people involved • Location – we are far from most civilization • We are too reliant on one industry • Closing businesses and not enough restaurant diversity • Not many healthy food options • Agriculture business that isn't being taken advantage of • Zoning issues • More industry to create jobs
Community #1 & #2	• Water resources • Location • Willing leaders • Strong employment • Public awareness that community needs growth and wants growth. • Willingness to attend workshops and discussions to develop growth plans • Accessible (major highways and railroad) • Resilient economy • Post-secondary education • Airport Rotary Park	• Low population size • Zoning laws prevent developing economic sites. • Beautification and walkability (2) • Lack of infrastructure • Lack of developable ground • Projects always run over time • Some neighborhoods/areas are not planned out
Community #3 (Spanish Language)	• Underground utilities • Food trucks • Pool • Library services • Schools	• Not enough entertainment for youth. • No family activities. • Few movies in Spanish • Few activities for older people. • No accessible gymnasium for youth and the elderly. • No support for disabled individuals in hot summers and cold winters

Following the evaluation of present-day conditions – the group was asked to think about the future. A set of community priorities were presented on boards across the room, and each individual was provided with three sticky notes of three different colors, each color represented a different ranking. Individuals were asked to select their top 3 priorities for the community, in order, from the following selection:

1. Housing – Strong communities feature quality housing, a robust housing market, and provide a diversity of housing types to accommodate buyers and renters at all stages of life.

2. Mobility – Strong communities provide a transportation system that supports all residents' ability to navigate freely and safely regardless of age, physical ability, and income.

3. Community Image, Character, and Identity – Strong Communities embrace what makes them unique, and use these differentiators to create, maintain, and progress a cohesive identity.

4. Community Connections – Strong communities are places where residents feel safe and welcomed, and where neighbors know each other.

5. Parks and Recreation – Strong Communities provide opportunities for all ages to be active to encourage physical and emotional well-being.

6. Business, Services, & Economic Development – Strong communities have an business environment that provides essential goods and services for residents and visitors and is an important aspect of the local, regional, and state economy.

SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Community Connections	0	0	1	1
Parks & Recreation	0	0	0	0
Business, Services, & Economic Development	3	2	3	8
Housing	2	1	1	4
Mobility	0	0	0	0
Community Image, Character, & Identity	0	1	0	1

ROTARY & KIWANIS CLUBS	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Community Connections	1	1	0	2
Parks & Recreation	0	0	1	1
Business, Services, & Economic Development	5	1	0	6
Housing	0	2	1	3
Mobility	0	2	1	3
Community Image, Character, & Identity	1	0	1	2

REALTORS & DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Community Connections	0	0	1	1
Parks & Recreation	0	0	0	0
Business, Services, & Economic Development	3	3	0	6
Housing	1	1	2	4
Mobility	0	0	0	0
Community Image, Character, & Identity	0	0	1	1

COMMUNITY #1 AND #2	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Community Connections	0	0	2	2
Parks & Recreation	0	0	0	0
Business, Services, & Economic Development	1	5	2	8
Housing	6	1	0	7
Mobility	1	0	0	1
Community Image, Character, & Identity	0	2	4	6

COMMUNITY #3 (SPANISH LANGUAGE)	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Community Connections	0	0	5	5
Parks & Recreation	2	1	0	3
Business, Services, & Economic Development	3	0	0	3
Housing	0	3	0	3
Mobility	0	1	0	1
Community Image, Character, & Identity	0	0	0	0

Participants were then challenged to think about Liberal over the next 10 years. In small groups of 4-6, they were asked to work together to identify policies, attitudes, or strategies that the community needs to act on through one of three ways.

Amplified: What exists today that needs to be lifted up, celebrated, or supported to achieve the goals we set as a community?

Created: What is missing in our community that can be created to support our vision for Liberal?

Eliminated: What exists today that needs to be eliminated or removed to pursue the goals and priorities we have as a community?

MEETING	AMPLIFIED	CREATED	ELIMINATED
Seward County Community College	- Community events - PCD Ozfest, Air show, Fair - Walking access - Highlighting the successes of our businesses and community members - Can-do attitude – resources, educational opportunities - Educational opportunities for career advancement - Quality of life	- Competition and division between various groups – "mine is better than yours" "Settling" mentality - Housing shortage - Perception of poor hospital and primary education	- Opportunities in lumber companies - Pro-Liberal message - Affordable housing - Opportunities for the whole town, not just the North "We can't" mentality

MEETING	AMPLIFIED	CREATED	ELIMINATED
Rotary & Kiwanis Clubs	• Public forums to understand and get feedback on spending or creating new positions, etc. • Quality healthcare • Primary sources of information of activities, events, important community decisions, etc. (newspaper circulation is greatly reduced, radio is in the moment and there is nothing sitting around to refer to, there are at least two community pages on Facebook) • Recruiting and being receptive to more industry • Home building – single family, lofts, apartments, multi-family, container homes • Animal control • SVC industries – plumber, electrician • Local business association by SWDC resources • Awareness	• Term limits for government positions – elected officials eliminate the stagnation on the table • En-roads for self-help houses • Grants • Incentives for rent • Letting the community know about what programs are there – such as the paint program • Opportunity for old high school – housing, nonprofits, business incubator • More open and accepting/ receptive attitude • Dog parks • Opportunities down South	• Negative conservation leading to negativity of community • Transportation issues – by adding Pershing overpass, more transportation for youth and elderly • Eyesores – businesses as storage, unkept properties, overgrown yards, etc. • The system of education that is not teaching anything • The overspending on all levels – local, county, educational
Realtors & Development Community	• Airport – more than one destination upon arrival and vice versa • Public transportation • Arkalon Park – best kept secret • Community atmosphere	• Hub for rail freight • Promote agriculture business industry • More things to do for families • Create a downtown area where people want to come to and spend time in the evenings/weekends • Create a shopping area and business area in an around the airport – move the oil field businesses out and make it more of a destination spot	• Train crossings that get blocked • Some of our regulations or red tape we have on businesses • Delays on the railroad • Stigma that the North part of town is better than the South • The stigma that the only reason we are Liberal is because we have National Beef
Community #1 and #2	• Efforts and incentives to attract new business and industry • Economic development • K-12 education outcomes • Remodel fairgrounds • Community pool (480, SCCE, City, Co.)	• A recreation center to attract outside residents (indoor rodeo) (2) • Programming in the libraries (2) • Developable property (commercial and residential) (2)	• More "glass full" mentality • Social divide • Roadblocks for development. Streamline, modify, and review existing regulations. • Unused buildings • Poor self image

MEETING	AMPLIFIED	CREATED	ELIMINATED
Community #3 (Spanish Language)	• Water Park • Mid-America Air Museum • More opportunities to work	• Housing • Overpass (train delays) • Sidewalks	• High Seward Hospital prices • Homeless population • High food costs

Participants then were asked to take part in an exercise that asked them to consider the community in the future through the eyes of unique personas.

1. **A family with school-aged children.**
2. **A small business owner.**
3. **Someone entering employment after high school or college.**

MEETING	A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER	A FAMILY WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN	SOMEONE ENTERING EMPLOYMENT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE
Seward County Community College	• Lack of competition for a start up • Support of other businesses and community leaders • Locations availability • Market (i.e. community demand) • Major lumber company	• Safety • Recreation options • Improved healthcare and quality of life • Education options • Daycare • More certified teachers • Better street lighting	• Internships • Affordable housing • Daycare • Job opportunities • Bang for your buck • Educational opportunities • Wage to cost of living
Rotary & Kiwanis Clubs	• Mentor programs to help navigate • Daycare • Local healthcare • Less competitive • Where do I get my employees? • Community events to showcase shops • More networking opportunities • Central point of communication to announce sales, etc.	• Central point of communication • Daycare (2) • USD 480 off the accreditation "naughty list" • Improved healthcare (2) • Safe school environment • Catholic school • Enough space for all students	• Prior opportunities to shadow, internships • Options of job – tech, fast food, service • Houses within the price range • Networking • Daycare (2) • Modern living options – lofts, downtown apartments • Recreation • Non-work distractions • Affordable housing • Healthcare options • Locally owned business opportunities • Small business support group

MEETING	A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER	A FAMILY WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN	SOMEONE ENTERING EMPLOYMENT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE
Realtors & Development Community	• Business owners have the support and encouragement from the community to frequent there, rather than going out of town to shop and eat • Active and engaging downtown area • Have an intelligent workforce • Location, location, location • Taxes • Street camera for businesses so business owners can feel safe	• Activities for kids • Strong Recreation Department and youth sports • Housing close to schools • Ranking of schools • More private schools • Better curriculum • Afterschool programs with art in them • Less awards to last names, more support to actual hard workers • The education system is good, and people don't feel the need to homeschool	• Affordability in all aspects – housing, groceries, a year-round farmers/local market • Economic development • Retail and restaurant hub • Affordable multi-unit housing • Salary • Housing • Have kids that hopefully know how to do something
Community #1 and #2	• Opportunities to open new businesses. • Have more stores so money does not go to Garden City. • Lots of making money • Robust entrepreneurial support organization	• Amplify Head Start programs. • Childcare programs for working parents. • Better grades for K-12 • Great schools and wholesome activities	• More opportunities for bilingual students • Ample job openings for skilled trades • Nightlife restaurants and good job • Good paying job with room for advancement • More help for students to achieve their goals (2)
Community #3 (Spanish Language)	• More businesses and trade • More shops in town and more jobs • Spanish movie theaters to target that population	• Nutritious and varied breakfasts in schools. • More affordable breakfasts in summer for all children • More attention paid on students • Get the bridge finished so kids are not late to school.	• More jobs with vacation. • Affordable housing (3) • Jobs for parents • Parks • Recreation programs (2)

Held during the "Yellow Brick Road Car Show" at Light Park, Pop-Up Event #1 included a table centrally located at the event, where hundreds of residents from Liberal and surrounding communities gathered to take in a day of classic and custom cars, trucks, and motorcycles.

In the fast-paced environment of the public event, the engagement activity focused on the community priorities used during other Phase 1 engagement activities – with a goal of taking a snapshot of attitudes among the public.

As people stopped to learn more about the comprehensive planning process underway in Liberal, they were offered the opportunity to review the priorities presented on large boards. Each respondent was provided one pushpin and asked to select their top priority for the community over the coming 10 years. The selection of priorities was consistent with those presented during other engagement events.

1. Housing – Strong communities feature quality housing, a robust housing market, and provide a diversity of housing types to accommodate buyers and renters at all stages of life.

2. Mobility – Strong communities provide a transportation system that supports all residents' ability to navigate freely and safely regardless of age, physical ability, and income.

3. Community Image, Character, and Identity – Strong Communities embrace what makes them unique, and use these differentiators to create, maintain, and progress a cohesive identity.

4. Community Connections – Strong communities are places where residents feel safe and welcomed, and where neighbors know each other.

5. Parks and Recreation – Strong Communities provide opportunities for all ages to be active to encourage physical and emotional well-being.

6. Business, Services, & Economic Development – Strong communities have a business environment that provides essential goods and services for residents and visitors and is an important aspect of the local, regional, and state economy.

In this engagement activity, the respondent was not involved in the full review of current landscape, or the persona-visioning exercise. This quick interaction is designed to engage people quickly in a neutral environment and gather an unscientific view of the priorities people feel the community must elevate in future planning.

As a part of the exercise, respondents were also provided a QR code and information on how to submit a formal response to the public survey conducted in tandem with the visioning exercises of the first phase of engagement.

PRIORITIES	VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Community Connections	5	4.9
Parks & Recreation	9	8.9
Business, Services & Economic Development	51	50.4
Housing	14	13.8
Mobility	13	12.8
Community Image, Character, & Identity	9	8.9

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

Cruise by to share your ideas for Liberal!

Yellow Brick Road Car Show
Saturday, May 18th
8 a.m - 3 p.m. at Light Park

Event hosted by: Billy's AYR LANES

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) and Core Team (CPCT) met the evening of September 12, 2024 to provide input on Liberal's value statements, goals, and several development-oriented questions. The committee was split into groups and given 5-10 minutes at each board, shown below. They were able to place colored dots and sticky notes discussing their thoughts, and as a group decided on one priority per board. These priorities are shown on the 'Group Priorities' sheets shown below.

Committee members were asked to place orange dots near their place of residence and green dots near their place of work. Additionally, they were presented with a statistic from the community survey: 72% of survey respondents said they are willing to put their community above personal interest, but 76% didn't think their fellow community members would do the same, and were asked how Liberal's residents should help improve the town.

The committee members present at this meeting primarily live north of the train tracks and west of Kansas Avenue and work north of the train tracks along Kansas Avenue. Notably, no employees of the National Beef Packing Company were at the table to give feedback, even though it is the largest employer in town. There were members who work for Seward County Community College, but none who work for Liberal High School or the Southwest Medical Center. When seeking thoughts on the citizens' role in improving the town, respondents noted more people should take the survey, and residents need to trust one another.

Participants were presented with a draft version of potential value statements and goals for the city of Liberal and asked to note if they agreed, disagreed, or had anything to add.

The committee members agreed with the current draft of value statements and goals presented by PEC. Comments on things that were missed will largely be included in the strategies that support these value statements and goals.

Respondents were asked to place blue dots in areas Liberal should grow, and pink dots where Liberal should not grow.
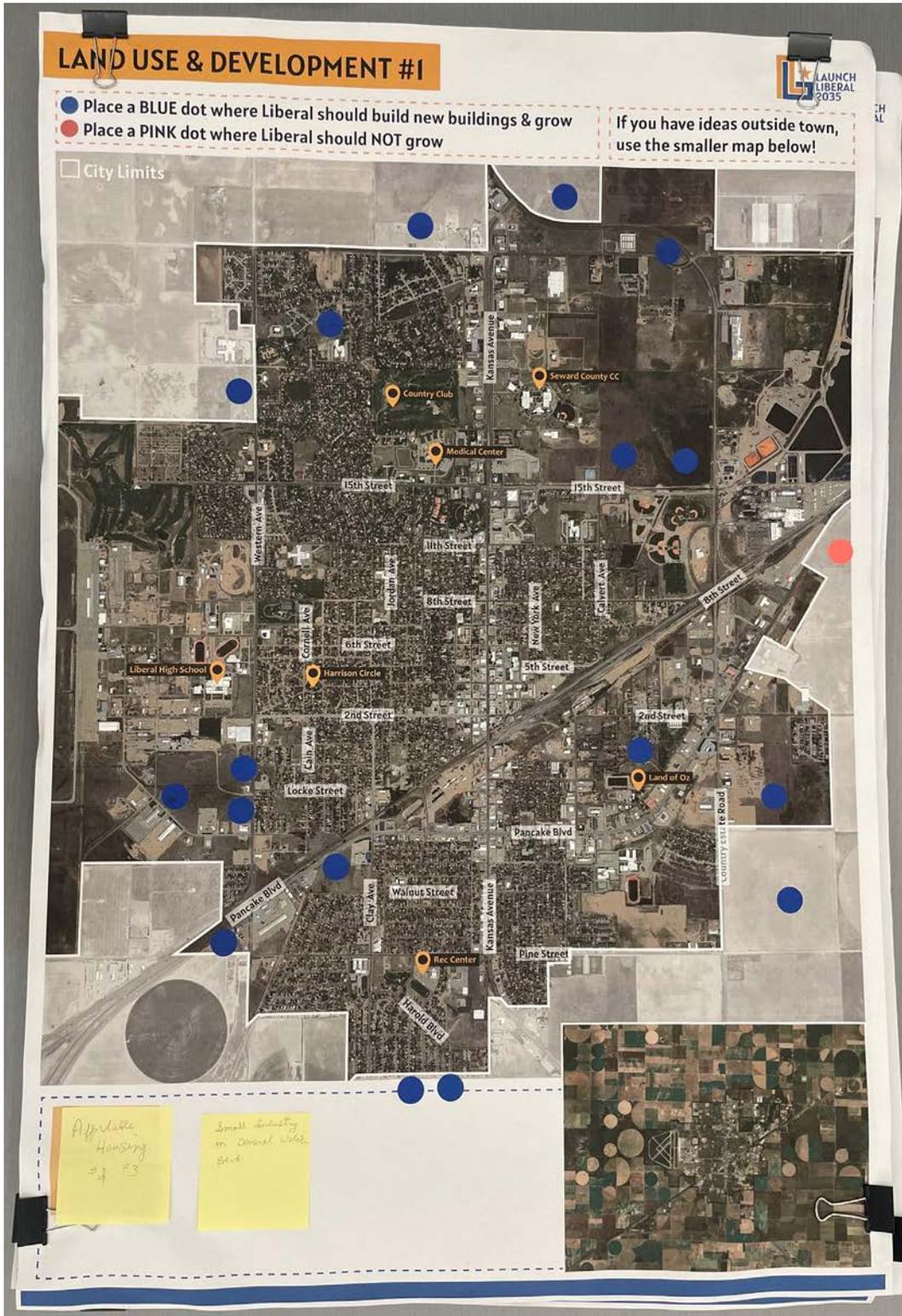
The only area noted for non-growth was just east of the City limits along the train tracks. Respondents were open to many areas for new growth, particularly along the edges of the City, both within and outside of City limits.

Respondents were asked which types of developments they wanted to see in town and told to place colored dots in the applicable locations.
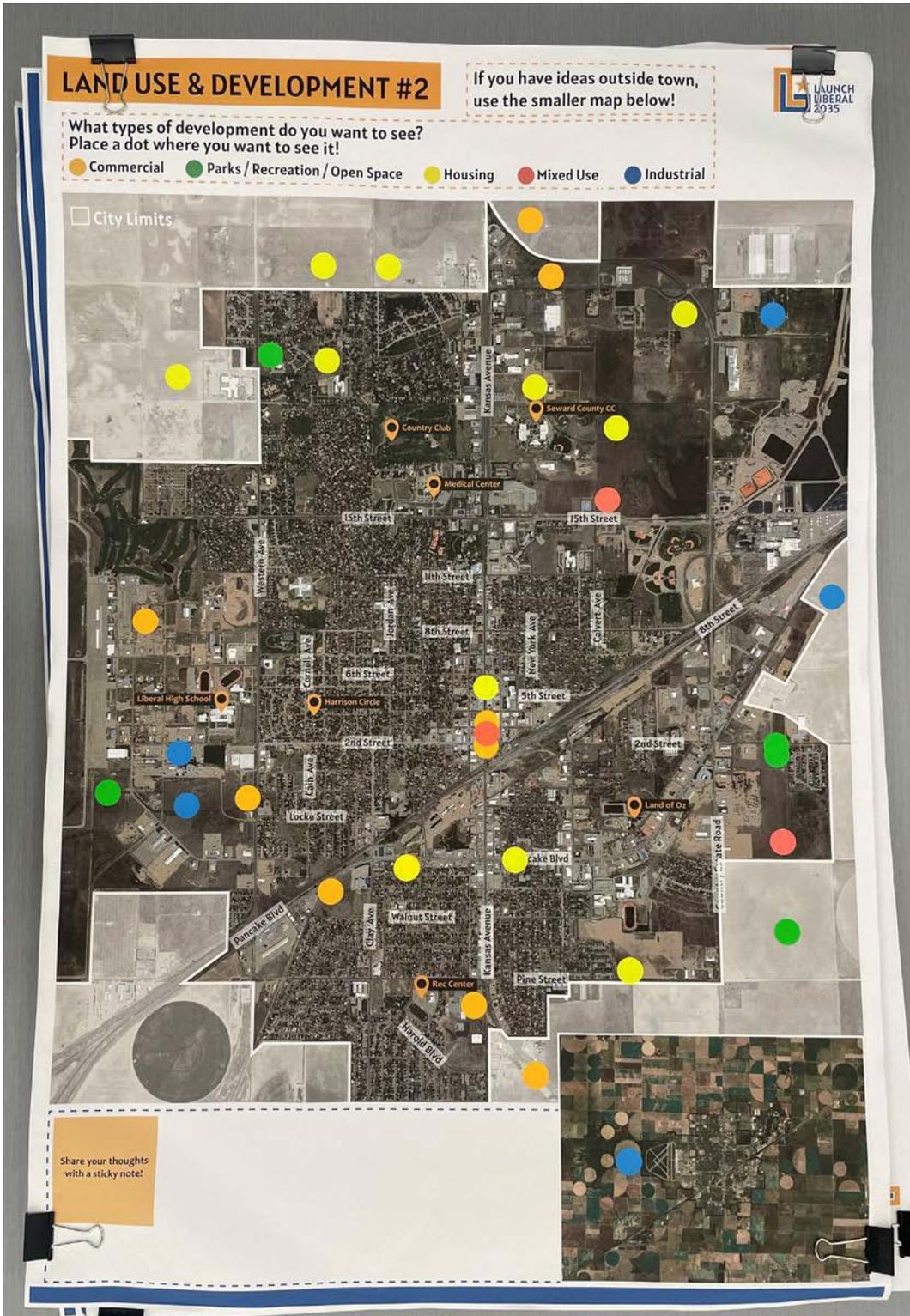
Notably, respondents largely avoided placing new developments in the neighborhoods most of them live in. However, there is a desire for more housing in many parts of the City, even along main corridors. Downtown is especially poised for more commercial and mixed-use development. Industrial land uses were placed along the edges, some near the high school. The addition of a park in the southeast corner would match an area of need for the City.

For the final land use board, residents were asked to indicate where infill vs. greenfield development should take place.

Committee members were open to infill development, especially in the downtown area. Opportunities for greenfield development were noted within and outside of City limits.

Members were asked to note where they find it difficult to walk or bike in town, where they wish they could walk to, and where they have safety concerns while traveling in town. They were also asked to draw green lines where new sidewalks should go, and black lines where new roadways should go.

There were several issues noted along Kansas Avenue north of 15th Street, near the Community College, and near the National Beef Family ball parks. Some mobility safety concerns were noted near schools, which should take high priority. The overpass was noted as an issue on several boards. Places indicated for new sidewalks include Country Estates Road (Highway 83), South Pershing Avenue, Pancake Boulevard, and Clay and Kansas Avenues. A new road was proposed east of Seward County Community College.

Respondents were asked to note where the community had good aesthetic design with green dots, where aesthetic improvements were needed with orange dots, where code enforcement was needed with yellow dots, and to indicate gateways to the city with pink dots. If a member had a specific idea, they could number their dot and a sticky note the same number and write out their thoughts on the sticky note.

Liberal's parks were mostly noted as having good design, which aligns with previous feedback about the strength of the City's parks. Places for improvement and code enforcement were mostly noted downtown. An insightful comment mentioned code enforcement should prevent downtown buildings from acting as storage. Gateways were largely indicated as the main car entry points into the City.

Committee members were asked to note what new amenities or attractions they would like to see in Liberal, and where they would like to see them. Members wrote corresponding numbers on their dots and sticky notes to provide space to explain their ideas.

Many attractions were grouped in the downtown area. Focusing on downtown seemed to be a consensus among the group, and many ideas surfaced including adding street trees, slowing traffic, and bringing new amenities.

The following images are priorities each group decided on for each board.

GROUP PRIORITIES

Decide on one prioritiy as a group after you complete each board. Write it down on a sticky note and place them in the corresponding box!

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

VALUE STATEMENTS AND GOALS	GET TO KNOW THE GROUP / WHAT ROLE SHOULD LIBERAL'S RESIDENTS PLAY IN IMPROVING THE TOWN?	LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #1	LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #2
Overpass Missing – Industry #1 Mixed Housing	We need to better assess who is for & against community initiatives.	No wrong answer to growth	Identify Industrial Park area Extend Calvert from 15th to Tucker

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #3	MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY	CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #1	CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #2
Focus on new development	Safety / Sidewalks Students from SCCC (Cross walk across Kansas)	Enhance downtown	Poll Community to find out what to do. They say "There's nothing to do."

GROUP PRIORITIES

Decide on one prioritiy as a group after you complete each board. Write it down on a sticky note and place them in the corresponding box!

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

VALUE STATEMENTS AND GOALS	GET TO KNOW THE GROUP / WHAT ROLE SHOULD LIBERAL'S RESIDENTS PLAY IN IMPROVING THE TOWN?	LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #1	LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #2
		Grow to South east	Mixed use 1st

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #3	MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY	CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #1	CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #2
start with Main thoro fares			

GROUP PRIORITIES

Decide on one prioritiy as a group after you complete each board. Write it down on a sticky note and place them in the corresponding box!

VALUE STATEMENTS AND GOALS

Safe & Affordable Housing

GET TO KNOW THE GROUP / WHAT ROLE SHOULD LIBERAL'S RESIDENTS PLAY IN IMPROVING THE TOWN?

More Engagement
More feedback
Meet people where they are

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #1

Work on the Empty lots & businesses along Pancake / 54 Ave

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #2

We would like to see 60% focus on Redevelopment 40% Greenfield

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #3

First priority is housing development. 2nd is Commercial

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Concrete plan to improve the walkability & bikeability of the community

CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #1

Downtown area needs improvement

CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #2

Fill existing Buildings & focus on adding family friendly Activities

---

GROUP PRIORITIES

Decide on one prioritiy as a group after you complete each board. Write it down on a sticky note and place them in the corresponding box!

VALUE STATEMENTS AND GOALS

Housing for elderly.

GET TO KNOW THE GROUP / WHAT ROLE SHOULD LIBERAL'S RESIDENTS PLAY IN IMPROVING THE TOWN?

Take the survey

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #1

Affordable Housing #2 & #3

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #2

Downtown Development Housing over businesses

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #3

Convert old high school to senior living.

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Sidewalks on Pancake Ave.

CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #1

Code enforcement on downtown businesses that use buildings for storage.

CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #2

Make Pancake more attractive with trees and landscaping.

Decide on one prioritiy as a group after you complete each board. Write it down on a sticky note and place them in the corresponding box!

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

VALUE STATEMENTS AND GOALS

GET TO KNOW THE GROUP / WHAT ROLE SHOULD LIBERAL'S RESIDENTS PLAY IN IMPROVING THE TOWN?

Engage and Contribute rather than complain

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #1

Nowhere is too sacred for potential development

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #2

Where will the new Schools go?

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD #3

Chart looked good

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Sidewalks Spider-webbing out from Schools

CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #1

Utilize Growth Projects to Improve the Entrances

CITY CHARACTER & QUALITY OF LIFE BOARD #2

STAR Bond Project

At this community event, Wichita State hosted a booth with boards asking passers-by what they wanted to see developed in Liberal. They were presented with a map of the city and given five different colored dots, each representing different types of development. Orange for commercial, green for parks and open space, yellow for housing, pink for mixed use, and blue for industrial. Due to large crowds, two boards were used.

From the boards on the following pages, we see the community is very interested in developing the land around Seward County Community College. Mixed use, housing, commercial, and parks space were all commonly placed in this area. Additional park space was scattered throughout town, while industrial uses are preferred on the edges. Mixed uses in the downtown area were preferred on one map, which aligns with feedback from other engagement sessions. Development around the high school was indicated on these boards more intensely, with a mix of every development type being present. The neighborhoods east of Kansas Avenue and north of the railroad, as well as south of the railroad, are prime for infill development and this was aptly noted on these boards, with all development types represented. This was particularly true south of the railroad and east of South Virginia Avenue.

Waddle over to see us & share your ideas for Liberal!

DUCK FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, SEPT. 14
LIGHT PARK
10A–2P

Liberal
from generosity to prosperity

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT #2

If you have ideas outside town, use the smaller map below!

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

What types of development do you want to see? Place a dot where you want to see it!

Commercial · Parks / Recreation / Open Space · Housing · Mixed Use · Industrial

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT #2

If you have ideas outside town, use the smaller map below!

LAUNCH LIBERAL 2035

What types of development do you want to see?
Place a dot where you want to see it!

Commercial — Parks / Recreation / Open Space — Housing — Mixed Use — Industrial

City Limits

The final Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Workshop took place over Microsoft Teams in early April of 2025 with the primary objective of reviewing the results of the Planning Phase of the project. Twenty-two members of the committee were present. At this meeting, Sections 3 and 4 of the plan were reviewed – Land Use & Growth Framework and Quality of Life. Four draft maps were presented - the Future Land Use Map, Access Map, Aesthetics & Character Map, and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Priority Areas Map. After each presentation, the group utilized Teams Breakout Rooms to discuss in small groups and receive feedback. Feedback received is presented on the following pages.

Consider converting or expanding Tucker Road into a four-lane or three-lane with a turning lane. More street lighting needed.

Extra emphasis on aesthetic improvements and placemaking efforts.

With the realignment of US-83, this area might develop into a new corridor. A residential development is currently proposed in the area.

Consider making Pine Street a Neighborhood Corridor comparable to Tucker Road.

This area in particular could benefit from beautification efforts.

LEGEND

- LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- PARKS & RECREATION ASSET
- TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
- CITY NEIGHBORHOOD
- NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR
- CITY CORRIDOR
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- CITY CENTER
- INSTITUTIONAL & EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- INDUSTRY & LOGISTICS CENTER
- RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

TUCKER RD

15TH ST

WESTERN AVE

KANSAS AVE

2ND ST

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

PINE ST

54

83

Maxar

MAP 3.2 | FUTURE LAND USE

0   0.5   1
Miles

MAP 4.2 | PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PRIORITY AREAS

Emphasis on West Street, Tucker Road, and 8th Street for bikes as well.

Liberal could be very walkable/bikeable.

This road is well-traveled, and there is interest to add shoulders.

Bike safety should be a priority - impediment to them being used currently.

Need pedestrian access from mobile home park to National Beef and nearby schools.
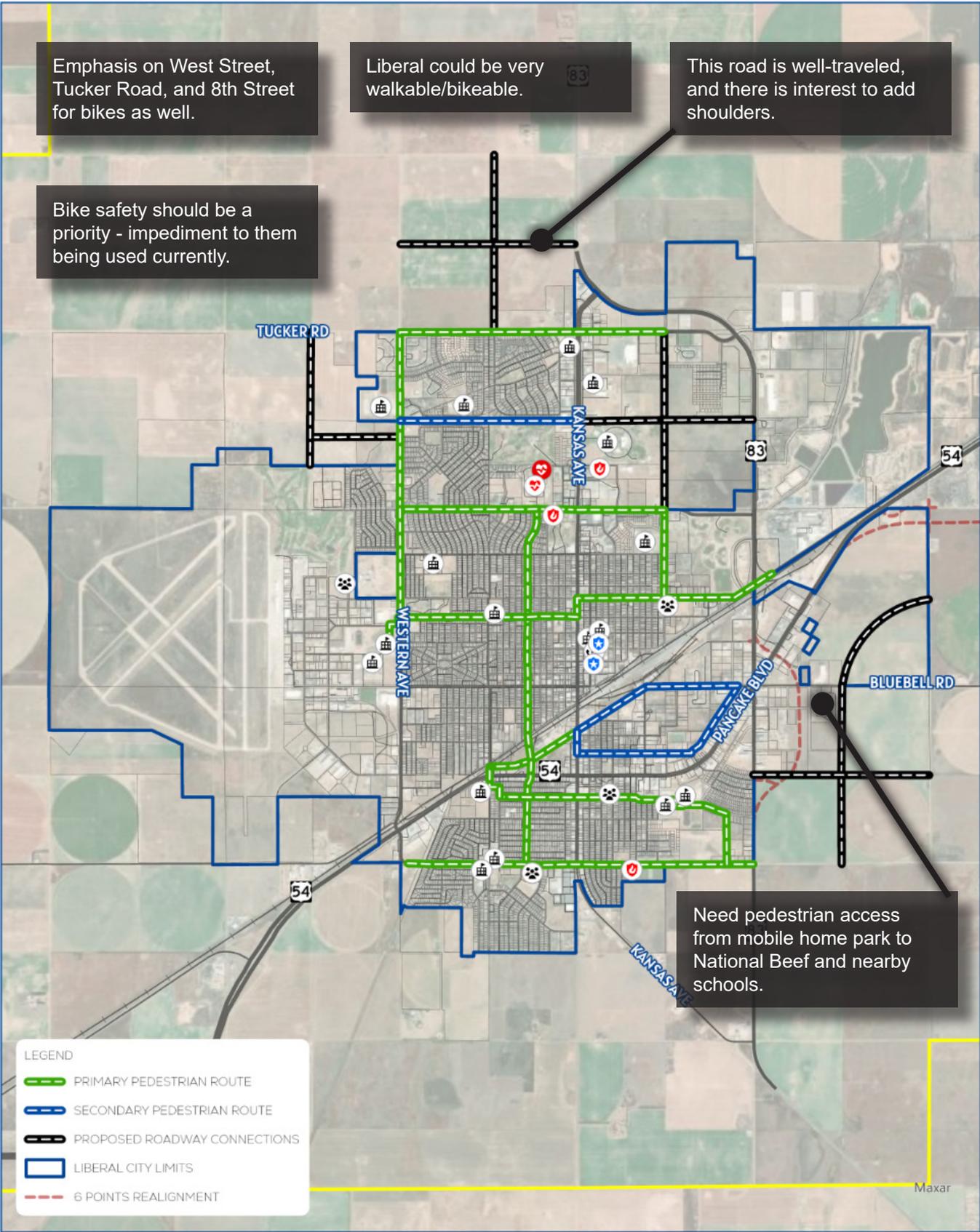
TUCKER RD

KANSAS AVE

WESTERN AVE

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

KANSAS AVE

83

83

54

54

54

54

LEGEND

PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE

SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE

PROPOSED ROADWAY CONNECTIONS

LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

6 POINTS REALIGNMENT

Maxar

MAP 4.4 | PROPOSED ACCESS

0   0.5   1
Miles

Be careful with bulb-outs. There have been some bad experiences in town over the years.

Change parallel parking to angled parking downtown.

Prioritize downtown redevelopment. Anything we can do to increase foot traffic will be beneficial, and there is momentum.

Intersection improvements needed.

Focus on getting a sidewalk in and out of here.

Gateway here.

LEGEND

✳ PRIMARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

✳ SECONDARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

● PRIMARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

● SECONDARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

━ PRIMARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

━ SECONDARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

▢ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

MAP 4.5 | AESTHETICS & CHARACTER

0   0.5   1   Miles
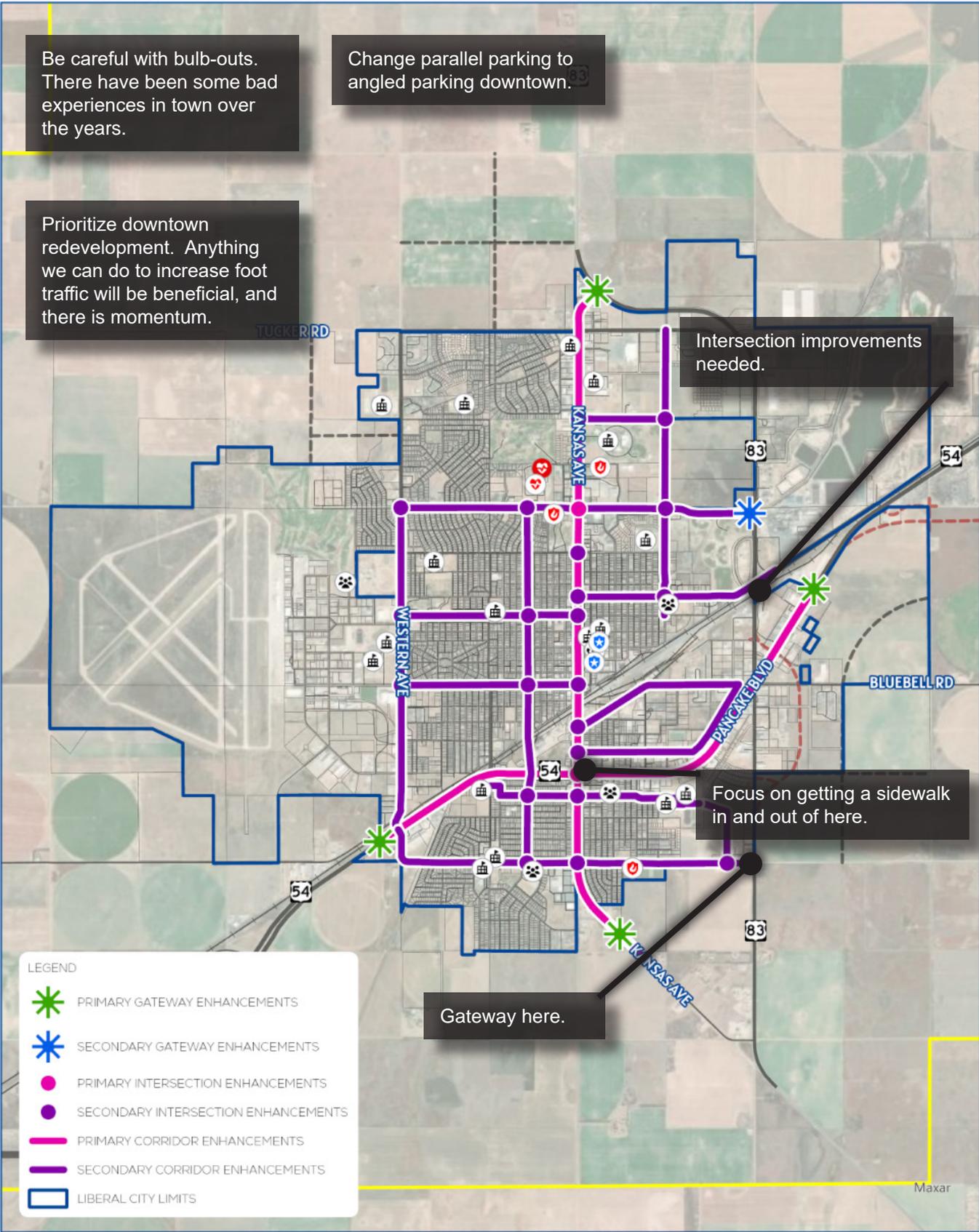
CITY LEADERSHIP WORK SESSION #2 | APRIL 16, 2025

The entirety of the City Commission and Planning Commission, including several members of senior City staff, met on April 16, 2025 for the project's final City Leadership Work Session. Following the results of the Steering Committee Workshop earlier in the month, City Leadership was tasked with reviewing Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Plan - Value Statements & Goals, Land Use & Growth Framework, and Quality of Life. In addition to the draft Value Statements & Goals, four draft maps were presented - the Future Land Use Map, Access Map, Aesthetics & Character Map, and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Priority Areas Map. After each presentation, each small group discussed on their own and provided feedback. Feedback received is presented on the following pages.

VALUE STATEMENTS & GOALS

🟢 Add **GREEN** dots next to value statements and goals you support.
🔴 Add **RED** dots next to value statements and goals you disagree with.
🟡 Add **YELLOW** dots next to value statements and goals you are unsure of.

Liberal will have safe and attainable housing for residents at all stages of life.

Goal #1: Revitalize existing vacant and/or dilapidated housing

Goal #2: Eliminate barriers to encourage a mix of quality housing options within the community

Goal #3: Amplify the creation of a local development community that is responsive to local housing needs

Liberal will be a connected community providing an efficient, safe, functional, and pleasant experience for all transportation users.

Goal #1: Continue to emphasize the development of multi-modal transportation options for all citizens

Goal #2: Assess, improve, and maintain the existing roadway system to support current and future needs

Goal #3: Increase the safety of vehicular traffic in the community

Liberal will feature unique and identifiable places and spaces that further community pride.

Goal #1: Emphasize and embrace the cultural identity of Liberal as a source of pride

Goal #2: Support placemaking efforts that enhance the community character of Liberal

Goal #3: Encourage growth at key activity centers and corridors that enhance the appearance and character of Liberal

Liberal will be a community of great and connected park spaces with enjoyable recreation options.

Goal #1: Emphasize the maintenance of existing parks and expand current amenities

Goal #2: Offer recreation opportunities that address a variety of community interests

Goal #3: Improve access for all residents to public park spaces

Liberal will have a strong economic base with a diverse business community and a vibrant downtown.

Goal #1: Encourage growth of commercial, retail, office, and industrial uses

Goal #2: Expand workforce development and employment opportunities for all individuals, especially young adults

Goal #3: Activate Downtown through the investment in public spaces, infrastructure, and events

What did we miss?

Share your thoughts with a sticky note!

1. More emphasis on marketing for 1% housing grants.
2. More partnerships with state housing grant opportunities (KHRC).
3. Develop a Sumner County Development Commission for housing.
4. We need more covered bus stops.
5. Better traffic control around schools, especially Prairie View.
6. NBP soccer fields need more improvements (parking, bathrooms)
7. Blue Bonnet Park needs more ADA access.

Park & Recreation Asset.

Neighborhood Center.

Neighborhood Corridor.

Less residential focus along this corridor.

Ultimate park location to be determined based on the potential residential development's layout. Generalize park location at intersection.
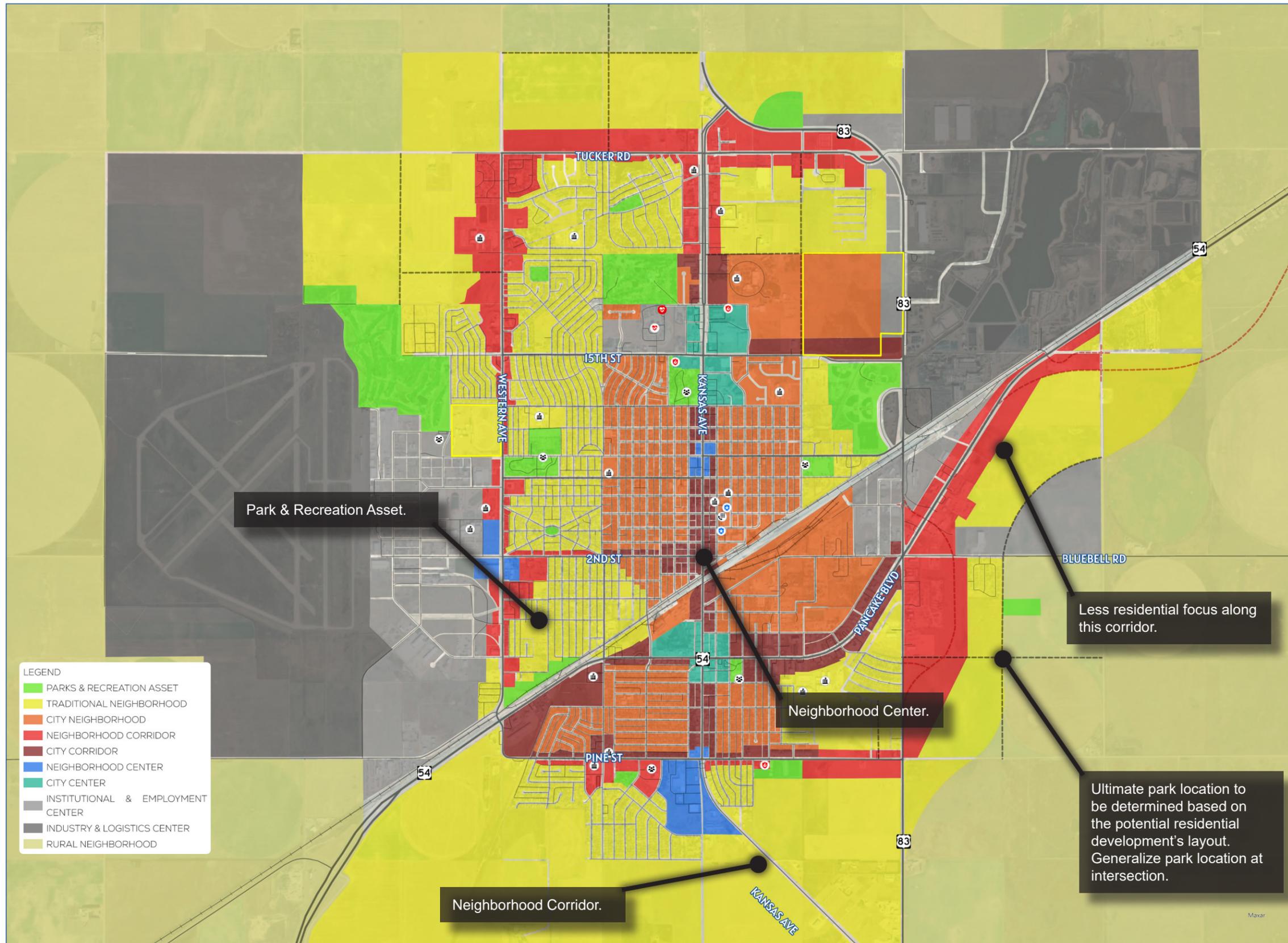
LEGEND
- PARKS & RECREATION ASSET
- TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
- CITY NEIGHBORHOOD
- NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR
- CITY CORRIDOR
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- CITY CENTER
- INSTITUTIONAL & EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- INDUSTRY & LOGISTICS CENTER
- RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

MAP 3.2 | FUTURE LAND USE

0   0.5   Miles

MAP 4.2 | PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PRIORITY AREAS

Need playground next to soccer fields.

Potential STAR Bond site.

Reclaim current landfill property for hiking trail/ park.

Potential park need.

Potential park need.

LEGEND
- LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- EXISTING PARK
- MODERATE PRIORITY
- HIGH PRIORITY
- VERY HIGH PRIORITY
- 10-MINUTE WALK SERVICE AREA

TUCKER RD
15TH ST
WESTERN AVE
KANSAS AVE
2ND ST
PINE ST
PANCAKE BLVD
BLUEBELL RD

0   0.5   Miles

New roadway would need to coordinate alignment with potential cemetery expansion.

Unsure the feasibility of a pedestrian connection here.

TUCKER RD

15TH ST

WESTERN AVE

KANSAS AVE

2ND ST

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD

PINE ST

KANSAS AVE

83

54

LEGEND
- - - PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- - - SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- - - PROPOSED ROADWAY CONNECTIONS
▭ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS
- - - 6 POINTS REALIGNMENT

Maxar

MAP 4.4 | PROPOSED ACCESS

0   0.5   Miles

Potential gateway location.

Western Avenue from 15th Street to Tucker Road should be a Secondary Corridor Enhancement.

Kansas Avenue from 15th Street to Tucker Road and 15th Street from Kansas Avenue to US-83 are especially important to enhance.

TUCKER RD.

15TH ST.

WESTERN AVE

KANSAS AVE

2ND ST.

PANCAKE BLVD

BLUEBELL RD.

PINE ST.

KANSAS AVE

LEGEND

* PRIMARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS
* SECONDARY GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS
• PRIMARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS
• SECONDARY INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS
— PRIMARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS
— SECONDARY CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS
☐ LIBERAL CITY LIMITS

MAP 4.5 | AESTHETICS & CHARACTER

0   0.5   Miles

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

Appendix D is the full report of the community survey that was prepared and administered as part of the planning process.

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

LIBERAL

PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT CENTER

James Roberts, Strategic Initiatives Manager

Isabel Ebersole, Research Project Manager

Liberal
from generosity to prosperity

Launch Liberal Community Survey Results

September 2024

Contents

Disclaimer

This study was conducted by the PPMC at Wichita State University. The PPMC is an independent research body unaffiliated with the City of Liberal. This report was prepared by the research team, and data was collected from external sources. PPMC's findings are based on the assumption of data accuracy received from internal and external sources. The findings represent the findings, views, opinions, and conclusions of the research team alone. The report does not express the official or unofficial policy of Wichita State University.

Introduction

An online community survey was open for responses between April 3 and May 22, 2024. During that time, 695 people engaged in the survey which was available in English and Spanish. Community members were encouraged to take the survey through:

- Social media
- In-person engagement sessions and a pop-up event
- English and Spanish radio interviews
- An onsite visit to the largest employer
- Listserv messages to City employees, the community college, school district, hospital, County, and the Chamber of Commerce

After cleaning the data, 521 responses were included in the analyses in this report. The purpose of the survey was to learn about the community:

1. Satisfaction with City services
2. Priorities for investment
3. Willingness to pay for those investments

With an adult population of 13,700[1], the survey garnered a 5 percent response rate. It is important to note that this survey was open to the public, not sent to a targeted sample to collect representative responses. Appendix 1 contains all the information about the demographics of survey respondents. However, before presenting the findings, it must be said that, compared to census data about the general Liberal population, survey respondents are:

- More female
- Higher educated
- Less Hispanic or Latino
- Whiter
- More likely to own their home
- Wealthier

The City was curious to know where there were notable differences in how Hispanic/Latino respondents answered the survey. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Liberal has a Hispanic/Latino population of 68 percent. However, only a quarter of survey respondents (26 percent) identify as Hispanic/Latino. Generally, there were very few differences in how Hispanic/Latino respondents answered the survey when compared to all other demographic groups. The report will specify the few areas in which they did differ in the findings below.

While the results are not representative of all community residents, they can provide some insights into community satisfaction, priorities, and willingness to pay. The following are descriptive and significant[2] findings from the community survey.

Understanding Commitment to Community

Essential services provided by local governments depend on continued support and investment from residents. Local government leaders and other stakeholders must decide how to best use their resources when providing these essential services. Including residents in the decision-making process is key to a strong community. A community survey is one way for local government to include residents in the decision-making process.

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[1] U.S. Decennial Census, 2020.
[2] A statistically significant difference (< .05) is a technical calculation. When something is statistically significant, it means we can be very confident that the results are not likely due to chance.

This survey is designed to get respondents thinking about their commitment to the community before asking about their satisfaction with and priorities for City services. Understanding commitment can provide useful insights for decision-makers, informing communications and engagement strategies.

The Public Interest

Communities are faced with the ongoing battle between people's self-interest and the public interest, especially when investment decisions are made. Communities are made up of individuals driven, to some varying extents, by self-interest. Individuals are likely to prioritize their well-being as they face personal challenges, economic or other. While a natural response, prioritizing personal well-being over the public interest can have implications for the community at large which relies on resident support and funding. Communities and their leaders must be careful to balance self-interested concerns with the public interest.

Backed by 25 years of research, the four statements in Table 1 are used to help gauge resident commitment to their community and support for the public interest.

Table 1: Public Interest

	Agree	Disagree
I am willing to put community interests above personal interests	72%	28%
Most people are willing to put community interests above personal interests	24%	76%
I am willing to make personal investments to improve the future of Liberal	73%	27%
Most residents are willing to make personal investments to improve the future of Liberal	32%	68%
n = 474 - 487, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.60		

Balancing Self and Community Interests

The first two statements in Table 1 measure a conflict we all face — balancing self- and community interests. Personal circumstances drive our behavior; however, how we anticipate other community members will act can also affect our behavior. Consistent with previous research, respondents hold a paradoxical belief that:

- They are willing to put community above personal interests (72 percent), but
- Their fellow community members would not do the same (76 percent).

Balancing the Well-being of Current and Future Generations

The second two measures in Table 1 consider another conflict we and our communities face — balancing the interests of current and future generations. Community sustainability depends on the commitment of current residents to make investments to improve the well-being of future generations. Respondents hold a similarly paradoxical belief that:

- They are willing to make personal investments to improve the future (73 percent), but
- Their fellow community members would not do the same (68 percent).

Public Interest Index and Classification of Respondents

Each respondent has been assigned a Public Interest Index score based on the four measures just discussed. Respondents are classified by their level of commitment to the public interest (Low=4-7, Moderate=8-12, High=13-16). Respondents with High levels of commitment to the public interest are more likely to act in ways that promote the well-being of the community. Conversely, those with a Low level of commitment to the public interest are less likely to act in ways that promote the well-being of the community, instead prioritizing self-interested concerns. The largest group of respondents, 85 percent, have a Moderate commitment to the public interest.

> Respondents to this survey have the following Public Interest Indices:
> **8% Low**
> **85% Moderate**
> **7% High**

Moderate respondents present the greatest opportunity for improvement. Since these respondents are neither strongly nor weakly committed to the public interest, investment decisions can affect how they view themselves and their community's commitment to the public interest. Interestingly, there are no significant relationships between any demographic groups[3] and their commitment to the public interest.

The following findings will frequently refer to the Public Interest Index score to offer a deeper understanding of how different groups of respondents perceive their community, their satisfaction and prioritization of City services, and their willingness to pay for future investments.

Connections to Community

Understanding why respondents choose to live in Liberal can be helpful in decision-making. Respondents overwhelmingly agree (84 percent) that most people choose to live in Liberal because of their connections to family and friends. Over three-quarters of respondents (78 percent) agree Liberal is a safe place to live. Over half of respondents (67 percent) expect to be living in Liberal five years from now. These findings can inform future investment decisions in areas like education, family support, public safety, housing, and infrastructure.

Table 2: Connections to Community

	Agree	Disagree
Most people choose to live in Liberal because of connections to friends and family	84%	16%
Liberal is a safe place to live	78%	22%
I expect to be living in Liberal five years from now	67%	33%
n = 485 - 487		

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[3] See Appendix A for the demographic variables considered.

There are strong significant differences in responses to these three statements depending on whether respondents had Low, Moderate, or High public interest scores. Respondents with Moderate and High commitment to the public interest are more likely to agree people live in Liberal because of their connections, that Liberal is a safe place to live, and expect to be living in Liberal five years from now. Further analysis shows that respondents' level of commitment to the public interest has a medium effect size[4] on whether they agree with the three statements. Notably, the largest effect size[5] was between each respondent's public interest index score and whether they expect to be living in Liberal five years from now.

Satisfaction and Priorities

Understanding respondent satisfaction with City services and how they think about prioritizing them can be useful when deciding how to make strategic investments. Respondents were asked about their general satisfaction with the City before moving on to specific investment areas.

Overall Impression

According to Table 3, respondents are most satisfied with the quality of City services. However, over half of respondents (62 percent) are dissatisfied with the value received in exchange for their tax dollars and the image of the City (66 percent). Respondents are split (50 percent) on whether they are satisfied with the quality of life in Liberal.

Table 3: General Satisfaction

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Quality of City services	73%	27%
Value received for your tax dollars*	38%	62%
Image of the City*	34%	66%
Quality of life in Liberal*	50%	50%
n = 514 - 515		

[4] Effect size suggests what practical significance the relationship between variables or groups has. For the purposes of this report, effect size was calculated as Cohen's d (small effect size = 0.2, medium = 0.5, large =0.8).
[5] d = *0.704*

There are strong significant differences between respondents' levels of satisfaction with the four items in Table 3 and their public interest index score. Three out of the four items had medium effect sizes with the public interest. This means there is a practical significance between respondents' level of commitment to the public interest and how they perceive the value of their tax dollars, the City's image, and quality of life. For example, 53 percent of respondents with High levels of commitment were very satisfied with the quality of life in Liberal, compared to 6 percent of respondents with a Low level of commitment.

Specific Areas

Respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with specific items in five investment areas. After satisfaction, respondents were asked to rank items that deserve the most attention from leaders in the next two years for three of the investment areas.

Community Development

Table 4 shows respondent satisfaction levels with each community development item. Notably:

- Most respondents (81 percent) are satisfied with the accessibility of public amenities from their neighborhood.
- Most respondents (85 percent) are dissatisfied with the diversity of shopping and retail options.

Respondents are split (nearly 50 percent to 50 percent) over satisfaction with City planning for residential development, the walkability/bike-ability in the City, and placemaking characteristics.

The top four community development priorities for respondents are:

1. City planning for new commercial development
2. Diversity of shopping and retail options
3. City planning for new residential development
4. Availability of desirable employment opportunities

Table 4: Satisfaction with Community Development

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
City planning for new residential development	53%	47%
City planning for new commercial development	27%	73%
City redevelopment of already developed areas	35%	65%
Walkability and bike-ability in the City (sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, bike lanes, etc.)	47%	53%
Placemaking characteristics (landscape, streetscape, street trees, benches, planters, public art)	55%	45%
Diversity of shopping and retail options	15%	85%
Diversity of dining options	29%	71%
Availability of desirable employment opportunities	38%	62%
Accessibility of shopping and dining options from your neighborhood	37%	63%
Accessibility of public amenities (schools, parks, library) from your neighborhood	81%	19%
n = 448 - 455		

Transportation

Overall, respondents are satisfied with transportation items, especially safety while driving a vehicle and public transportation options. Respondents are most dissatisfied (45 percent) with active transportation infrastructure and safety while walking or biking.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Transportation

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Overall traffic congestion/flow	67%	33%
Active transportation infrastructure (sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, etc.)	53%	45%
Safety while driving a vehicle	78%	22%
Safety while walking or biking	55%	45%
Public transportation options	84%	16%
n = 406 - 411		

The top three transportation priorities for respondents are:

1. Overall traffic congestion/flow
2. Active transportation infrastructure (sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, etc.)
3. Safety while driving a vehicle

City Maintenance

Respondents are generally satisfied with City maintenance. The three areas where the City could improve the most are neighborhood streets, sidewalks, and street lighting.

Table 6: Satisfaction with City Maintenance

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Maintenance of major City streets	70%	31%
Maintenance of neighborhood streets	47%	53%
Maintenance of sidewalks	51%	49%
Adequacy of street lighting	52%	48%
Mowing and trimming along City streets, parks, and other public areas	83%	17%
Overall cleanliness of City streets and other public areas	70%	30%
n = 396 - 400		

The top three City maintenance priorities for respondents are:

1. Maintenance of major City streets
2. Maintenance of neighborhood streets
3. Adequacy of street lighting

Respondents who live in Liberal report being less satisfied (47 percent) with the maintenance of neighborhood streets compared to respondents who do not live in Liberal (70 percent). Hispanic/Latino respondents are significantly less satisfied (62 percent) with the adequacy of street lighting compared to non-Hispanic/Latino respondents (43 percent).

Code Enforcement

Table 7 shows respondent satisfaction with a handful of code enforcement items. Overall, respondents are satisfied, especially with the mowing of commercial (76 percent) and residential (64 percent) property. Respondents were most dissatisfied with the maintenance of commercial and residential structures.

Table 7: Satisfaction with Code Enforcement

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Litter, trash, and debris cleanup	57%	43%
Mowing of residential property	64%	36%
Mowing of commercial property	76%	24%
The maintenance of residential structures	50%	50%
The maintenance of commercial structures	58%	42%
n = 385 - 387		

Hispanic/Latino respondents are significantly more satisfied (77 percent) with litter, trash, and debris cleanup compared to non-Hispanic/Latino respondents (54 percent).

Communication

Respondents were divided in their satisfaction with the City's communications efforts and the availability of information.

Compared to all other respondents, Hispanic/Latino respondents are less satisfied with:
- The availability of information about City programs and services.
  - Hispanic/Latino respondents: 68% dissatisfied
  - Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents: 52% dissatisfied
- The City's efforts to keep you informed about local issues.
  - Hispanic/Latino respondents: 61% dissatisfied
  - Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents: 50% dissatisfied

Table 8: Satisfaction with Communication

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
The availability of information about City programs and services	46%	54%
The City's efforts to keep you informed about local issues	47%	53%
City efforts to involve the public and receive input from residents	51%	49%
The quality of the City's website, www.cityofliberal.org	61%	39%
n = 371 - 378		

Willingness to Pay

Altogether, over half of respondents indicated they were "definitely" or "probably" (58 percent) willing to pay for specific investments compared to "probably not" and "definitely not" (42 percent). Table 9 highlights their willingness to pay for specific investments. Respondents were most willing to pay for investments to:

- Increase the amount of shopping, retail, and dining options
- Improve the condition of the City's neighborhood streets

Respondents indicated they are least willing to pay for investments to improve public transit options and increase code enforcement.

Table 9: Willingness to Pay for Specific Investments

	Definitely Willing to Pay	Probably Willing to Pay	Probably Not Willing to Pay	Definitely Not Willing to Pay
Improve the overall visual image of the City (placemaking, streetscaping, landscaping, street trees, planters, lighting, signage, benches, public art, community identity)	12%	42%	32%	14%
Improve the City's active transportation infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes, trails)	13%	45%	30%	12%
Increase the amount of shopping, retail, and dining options	27%	44%	18%	10%
Improve the condition and accessibility of the City's parks and recreation facilities	16%	43%	30%	12%
Improve/expand the City's recreation program offerings	15%	43%	27%	14%
Improve public transportation options	6%	33%	42%	19%
Improve the condition of the City's major streets	12%	49%	27%	12%
Improve the condition of the City's neighborhood streets	18%	50%	24%	9%
Improve street lighting	19%	42%	27%	12%
Increase code enforcement service (litter, debris, mowing, property maintenance)	14%	28%	40%	18%
Promote housing rehabilitation and development and expand housing options	20%	42%	23%	14%
n = 358 - 364				

When asked about the specific maximum monthly amount respondents would be willing to contribute towards their priority investment areas, responses were evenly distributed across the different options.

Table 10: Maximum Monthly Amount

Amount	
Nothing	17%
$1 - 4 per month	19%
$5 - 9 per month	22%
$10 - 14 per month	25%
$15+ per month	17%
n = 339	

Table 11: Maximum Monthly Amount by Public Interest Index Score and Living Expectations

	Public Interest			Expect to Be Living in Liberal 5 Years from Now	
	Low	Moderate	High	Agree	Disagree
Nothing	21%	79%	0%	49%	51%
$1 - 4 per month	6%	90%	3%	65%	35%
$5 - 9 per month	7%	88%	5%	74%	26%
$10 - 14 per month	1%	90%	9%	82%	18%
$15+ per month	7%	79%	14%	78%	22%
n = 331				n = 336	

Respondents with a Moderate to High commitment have a higher propensity to pay something per month, compared to respondents with a Low commitment to the public interest. Respondents who expect to be living in Liberal five years from now are also more likely to indicate a willingness to pay more per month compared to respondents who do not.

Appendix 1: Open Survey Respondent Demographics

Connection to Liberal
(Select all that apply)

I live in Liberal	91%
I shop in Liberal	83%
I work in Liberal	81%
I own a business in Liberal	20%
Other	11%
n = 323	

Years Living in Liberal
(If "I live in Liberal was selected)

0 - 4 years	7%
5 - 9 years	9%
10 - 14 years	10%
15 - 19 years	10%
20+ years	64%
n = 292	

One Way Commute Time
(If "I live in Liberal was not selected)

1 - 10 miles	63%
11 - 20 miles	17%
21 - 30 miles	13%
31 - 40 miles	7%
n = 30	

Voter Registration Status

Yes	94%
No	5%
I don't know	1%
n = 321	

Total Household Income

Less than $20,000	3%
$20,000 - $39,999	9%
$40,000 - $59,999	12%
$60,000 - $79,999	18%
$80,000 - $99,999	15%
$100,000 or more	42%
n = 314	

Age

Below 18	0%
18 - 24	6%
25 - 34	19%
35 - 44	24%
45 - 54	22%
55 - 64	17%
65 - 74	10%
75+	2%
n = 321	

Gender

Female	56%
Male	39%
Non-binary	0%
Prefer not to say	5%
n = 322	

Education

Did not finish high school	0%
High school graduate or equivalent (GED)	11%
Some college credit, no degree	24%
Associate's degree	20%
Bachelor's degree	25%
Graduate degree	20%
n = 322	

Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity

Yes	26%
No	74%
n = 308	

Race

American Indian or Alaska Native	2%
Asian	1%
Black or African American	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%
White	85%
Other	10%
n = 310	

Housing Status

Own	83%
Rent	12%
Other	4%
n = 317	

Household Size
(Including the survey respondent)

1 person	13%
2 people	35%
3 people	17%
4 people	18%
More than 4 people	17%
n = 314	

Household Makeup
(Select all that apply)

Immediate family (parents, siblings, children)	59%
Couples without children	22%
Families with children	10%
Single adults (living alone)	8%
Other	3%
Extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins)	2%
Intergenerational (multiple generations living together)	1%
n = 387	

Appendix 2: Themes from Open-Ended Questions

Where should Liberal focus on new growth?

Response	Number of mentions
Directional	
South	50
North	29
West	7
East	4
Northwest	3
Southeast	1
General Areas	
Downtown	66
Walmart area	25
Highway(s)	25
Near the high school	16
Western Ave.	15
Tucker Road	12
Pancake Blvd.	9
Near SCCC/15th Street	9
Anywhere/everywhere	8
Kansas Ave.	6
Near the middle school	4
Near train tracks	4
5th street	2
Country Estates	2
Neighborhoods	2
Airport	2
In town	1
Other Investments	
New businesses	10
Affordable housing	10
Shopping center	6
Sidewalks	6
Home updates/repairs	4
Family events	4

Business district	3
Old buildings	3
Pool	2
Roads	2
Flooding	2
Industrial park	2
Safety from police	1
Lighting	1
Cost of living	1
Neighboring farmland	1

Where should Liberal focus on the revitalization of already built areas?

Response	Number of mentions
Directional	
South	24
East	8
North	1
General Areas	
Downtown	79
Southgate Mall	13
Neighborhoods	12
South of 2nd between Western and Kansas	12
Kansas Ave.	11
Older, residential areas of town	10
Highway 54	10
Pancake Blvd.	9
Airport	6
Mahuron area housing, East side of Kansas Ave	6
Business districts	6
Trailer parks	5
Southern residential neighborhoods	5
Schools	3
Other Investments	
Empty buildings	14
Roads, streets	9
Visuals – local art, murals, trees	8
Entrance to town, first impression	7
More businesses	6
Old Walmart neighborhood market	6
City-owned property	5
Affordable housing	5
Sidewalks	5
Public shelters	4
Parks, handicap accessible	4
Swimming pool, water park	3
Western Ave.	3
Anywhere	3
Lighting	2
Liberal Plaza	2
Old high school	2
Dunham's	2

Parking	2
Apartments	2
Cost of living	2
Local activities	2
Train	1
Industrial park	1
Code enforcement	1
Animals	1

When considering Liberal's future over the next 10 years, what are critical issues facing the City?

Response	Number of mentions
Housing	72
Employment opportunities, quality, good pay	60
Growth, risk	38
More retail, shopping	38
Lack of businesses	28
Safety	21
Value for tax dollars, tax spending	21
Kid- and family-friendly activities, support	15
Need more industries, risk with National Beef being the business employer	15
Visual appeal	13
Entertainment, recreation	13
Cost and quality of living	11
Restaurant diversity	11
Population loss	10
Economic development	9
Traffic congestion	9
Attracting residents, visitors	8
Leadership	8
Infrastructure	7
No reason for people to stay, participate in town	7
Community pride	6
School system, education quality	6
Support for local businesses	6
Streets, roads	6
Retaining youth	6
Water	5
Code enforcement	5
Healthcare, doctors, substance abuse	5
City buildings, services, operations	4
Animal control	4
Lighting	4
Inclusion	4
Downtown	4
Daycare	3
Public transportation	3

The way Liberal is perceived	3
Retaining retirees	3
Bigger high school	2
Investors	2
Innovation, creativity	2
Teacher shortage	2
Historically neglected areas	2
Support homelessness services	2
Airport expansion	1
Outdoor spaces	2
Smell from landfill and National Beef	1
Electric vehicle charging	1
Sidewalks	1
Immigration	1

Hispanic/Latino respondents had the same top four themes of critical issues facing the City as all other respondents.

What is the one thing you like *the most* about Liberal?

Response	Number of mentions
The people	55
Community culture, diversity	40
Size, small-town feeling/living	35
Safety	25
Family and friends	25
Parks, rec center, activities	24
Quiet, peaceful	20
It's my home, familiar	16
Physical location, access	12
Not sure anymore, nothing	10
Family environment	7
City leadership	6
Food and dining	6
SCCC	5
Church	5
Growth potential, opportunity	5
Community organizations/services	4
Cost of living	4
Basic needs met	4
Work	2
Air museum	2
Community history	2
Good public spaces	2
Schools	1
Climate	1
Our animal shelter	1
The appearance	1
Low-income housing	1
National Beef	1

Compared to other respondents, more prominent themes among Hispanic/Latino respondents were that the City is quiet, peaceful, and safe.

What is the one thing you like *the least* about Liberal?

Response	Number of mentions
Lack of shopping and dining	64
Not much to do, lack of activities	41
Appearance	28
Taxes (amount, use)	22
Schools, education, youth	16
Negative community perception, lack of community pride, engagement	14
City leadership, staff	14
Traffic, roads	13
Train	12
Lack of housing, home improvement	11
Division, politics, racism	10
Stray animals	10
Lack of business opportunities, support for small businesses	9
Smells	9
Lack of good paying jobs, career opportunities	8
Lack of family activities	8
Changes, growth	6
Lack of healthcare	6
Police department, ineffective	5
Lack of planning	5
Crime, unsafe	5
Need to leave town to shop, activities, etc.	5
General lack of opportunity	3
Lack of parks and facilities	3
National Beef, being the largest employer	3
Noise	3
Parking (downtown, in yards)	3
Cost of living	2
Landfill	2
Accessibility (parks, transportation)	2
Climate	2
Downtown	1
Language barriers	1
The homeless	1

"Not much to do" and a lack of activities, shopping, and dining ranked as the top two themes for all respondents and Hispanic/Latino respondents specifically. For Hispanic/Latino respondents, lack of growth, the train, and the City's appearance were in the top five themes.