

# THE OGALLALA PLAN

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## A Comprehensive Development Plan For Ogallala, Nebraska

Prepared With The City of Ogallala  
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# **THE OGALLALA PLAN**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE OGALLALA PLAN**

Ogallala is a strong community strategically located for future growth. Its location on Interstate 80 and along the Union Pacific mainline provides it with strong transportation resources, while its adjacency to Lake McConaughy provides important quality of life and recreational benefits.

This document is designed to communicate the vision of the community regarding its future. It is a future that is based on taking actions that will position the city to take full advantage of its growth prospects.

Ogallala has encountered many changes during its history of over 125 years. The city has grown from a way station for the Union Pacific to a regional hub along Interstate 80, changing from a colorful cattle town to a mature community and economic and recreational center along the nation's busiest interstate highway.

Ogallala's government, recreation, transportation, and economic assets place it in a position to capture future growth. Converting these assets into growth has been one of the city's greatest challenges over the last twenty years and will continue to be so. It will be important for this plan to identify these challenges and opportunities.

## **THE ROLE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This comprehensive development plan for Ogallala has two fundamental purposes. Under Nebraska State Statute, a comprehensive plan provides an essential legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision control. Secondly, a modern comprehensive plan presents a unified and compelling vision for a community, derived from the aspirations of its citizens; and establishes the specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision.

### **The Legal Role**

Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans for legal purposes. Nebraska State Statutes enable cities to adopt zoning and subdivision ordinances to promote the "health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community." Land use regulations, such as zoning ordinances, recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality and its extraterritorial jurisdiction.

However, under Nebraska law, a city may not adopt land use ordinances without first adopting a comprehensive development plan. This requirement derives from the premise that land use decisions should not be arbitrary, but should follow an accepted and reasonable concept of how the city should grow. Under state statutes, a comprehensive development plan must address, at a minimum, the following issues:

- Land use, or the planned distribution of activities and uses of land in the community.
- Transportation facilities
- Community facilities, including recreation facilities, schools, public buildings, and infrastructure.
- Annexation, identifying those areas that may be appropriate for annexation in the future.

The Ogallala Plan provides the ongoing legal basis for the city's authority to regulate land use and development, and to grow through annexation.

### **The Community Building Role**

A comprehensive development plan has an even more significant role in the growth of a community. The plan establishes a picture of Ogallala's future, based on the participation of residents in the planning of their community. This vision continues to be crucial, as challenges related to population loss and county growths begin to affect the character of Ogallala. Beyond defining a vision, the plan presents a unified action program that will implement the city's goals. The plan is designed as a working document - a document that both defines the future and provides a working program for realizing the city's great potential.

## **THE PLANNING PROCESS**

The Ogallala Plan is a culmination of a planning process that involved citizens of the city to define its future. This process was coordinated by a Planning Coordinating Committee, representing a wide variety of interests in the community. The first part of the process involved a three-part strategic planning program, designed to assess the city's current position; establish visions and goals for Ogallala's twenty-year future; and consider an action program necessary to achieve that vision. Members of the community were invited to participate in the strategic planning process through community workshops.

### **Assessment**

Participants in the planning process were asked to define the most important issues and quality of Ogallala.

#### **• Identification of Major Issues**

In assessing the city's situation, participants defined the most important issues that would face Ogallala within the next five to ten years. Participants identified the following issue areas as most crucial to the city:

- *Economic and commercial development*, including attraction and retention of businesses, job creation and downtown revitalization.
- *Growth and development*, including issues related to affordable housing, lake development and population loss.
- *Transportation and infrastructure*, including maintenance, water quality and stormwater management.
- *Government and public services*, including leadership and a need to broaden the tax base.
- *Quality of life*, including issues relating to an aging population, appearance of private property and the recycling center, availability of retail goods, public utilities and social services.
- *Education and Youth*, including retaining young people.

### • Identification of Community Strengths and Weaknesses

Participants in the planning process rated important community services and facilities, which are rated using a one-to-five scale. Service with an aggregate score of 3.0 or above is viewed favorably; those with scores below 2.5 represent areas for additional attention.

In addressing these vital issues, participants in the planning process identified the following as key community strengths:

- The parks and recreation system
- Infrastructure systems
- Elementary education
- Ogallala's people
- Senior services

On the other hand, participants identified the following issues as important liabilities or problems:

- Job creation and growth
- Ability to retain youth
- Effectiveness of economic development efforts
- Consensus about community direction
- Availability of housing.

Participants were also asked to identify their favorite and least favorite places in Ogallala, and the most important goals and projects for the next ten years.

### • Identification of Key Focus Areas for the Plan

The community assessment and visioning process led to the identification of three specific issue areas, including:

- Growth, Transportation, Infrastructure and Land Use
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life and Human Services

These specific issues became guiding factors in the development of the Ogallala Plan. Specific priorities, goals, and actions for each of these broad issues areas were outlined, to provide the foundation for this detailed comprehensive plan document.

## THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: APPROACH AND FORMAT

The comprehensive plan takes a thematic and goal-oriented approach to the future development of Ogallala. The plan establishes ten development themes for the city, corresponding to its most important strategic issues. The traditional sections of a comprehensive plan, such as land use, housing, infrastructure, and transportation, are

organized as components to these interdisciplinary themes. This enables the plan to tell the story of the city's future development and presents an integrated program for the city's growth.

Each development theme for Ogallala makes up one chapter of the comprehensive plan. These chapters include:

### **1. Population and Growth Context**

This theme considers Ogallala's population characteristics and growth, its role in the region, and its emergence as a vital center for government, services, residential development and recreation. Through population and land use analysis this theme considers the future growth and development needs of the city.

### **2. Ogallala for a New Century**

This chapter examines the patterns and relationships that make Ogallala special and considers challenges to its distinctive sense of place. The chapter identifies "Development Principles," the general principles and ideas that guide the more detailed elements of the plan.

### **3. Growth and Land Use**

This theme considers one of Ogallala's most critical issues - how to capture growth and in what direction that growth should occur. It provides a detailed strategy to guide future growth in new development areas.

### **4. Access for the Community**

This theme considers one of Ogallala's needs to assure that growth occurs in beneficial ways, supporting the building of community. By uniting the north and south side of the interstate and linking future and existing development, Ogallala can create a community whose whole is greater than the mere sum of its parts.

### **5. A Recreation Lifestyle**

This theme describes Ogallala's parks and sports facilities and outdoor recreation as a part of the regional recreation opportunities available to Ogallala residents. It presents improvement plans for new and existing parks and trails to be integrated into the city's growth, housing, and regional tourism efforts.

### **6. Quality Public Services**

This theme examines the quality of public facilities and infrastructure within Ogallala. Important facilities discussed in this chapter include the public safety facilities serving fire protection and law enforcement. All of the city's facilities are vital to the city's ability to support growth and serve present and future residents. It includes a detailed assessment of each public facility and provides specific programs for infrastructure and facility development.

### **7. Housing and Neighborhoods**

This theme examines housing demand characteristics and presents strategies to assure that each area maintains a state of health. Important issues include the preservation of the city's older and historic housing stock, and provisions for additional rental and affordable housing opportunities.

## **8. Downtown Ogallala**

This theme proposes an innovative development program for the city's vital town center, a distinctive place that remains an active mixed use center. This theme analyzes downtown, and presents a multi-faceted downtown development program that include the public environment, redevelopment opportunities, and management strategies designed to improve the district's already historic environment. It is designed to create opportunities for additional business, and to improve the functioning and financial success of the district.

## **10. Implementation**

This theme draws together the analysis and policies of the plan into a program for implementation. It summarizes the recommendations and development policies of the plan, and presents an Implementation Schedule, listing proposed projects and the time frame for their completion.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Population and Growth Context

One of Ogallala's greatest assets is its exciting history. The city has grown from a famous trail head on the cattle drives north into a strong community along one of the nation's major east/west arterials.

From its origin as a small way station on the Union Pacific, Ogallala developed an image virtually synonymous with the frontier west of the late 1800s. In 1873, two of the town's founders organized Keith County and moved a house from Brule to Ogallala to serve as the courthouse. But Ogallala's turning point came in the summer of 1874, when the Union Pacific Railroad built a cattle pen and loading chute just west of town. By 1876, over 100,000 Texas cattle were driven into Ogallala. The growing town became the northern terminus of the Western Trail, which replaced the Chisholm Trail. Ogallala's heady cattle days ended quickly in the 1880s, when settlement in western Kansas and Nebraska shut down the cattle drives. However, farmers and settlers soon arrived to purchase cheap land through the railroad.

The community continued to prosper as a hub in a transcontinental transportation system. Ogallala's location on the historical Platte River Road meant that the city received excellent over the road access, first by the Lincoln Highway and then by Interstate 80. The city became an agricultural service and industrial center, and experienced steady growth until the 1980s. The depressed agricultural economy of this pivotal decade caused many rural residents to move to larger urban areas, and resulted in an unprecedented population decline for the community. During the 1990s, Ogallala's population declined slightly, while growth occurred in rural areas of the county and the areas around Lake McConaughy.

In the new century, Ogallala faces new opportunities. The city is challenged to reverse two decades of population decline, and take advantage of its location and quality of life attributes to restore growth. This Comprehensive Plan for Ogallala is designed to establish and guide a vision of prosperity and growth that propels the community into the coming decades. However, to develop an agenda for the future, it is important to understand current population and economic trends. This chapter provides a snapshot of Ogallala and quantifies probable growth and development needs during the next twenty years.

### GOALS

To enhance its status as a leading community within the region, Ogallala should:

- **Strive to capitalize on growth opportunities.**

Ogallala has experienced population decreases during the last twenty years. Restoration of historic economic and population growth is a critical community priority. To reverse this trend Ogallala must take advantage of opportunities afforded by the interstate corridor and access to Lake McConaughy. Transportation access can help Ogallala market itself as a good industrial location with easy access to one of the largest railroad centers in the nation. Lake McConaughy has attracted significant residential development during the last ten years, a trend that will continue assuming adequate water levels. Ogallala's ability to position itself as a lake-related commercial

and service center and an attractive small town living environment can help it capitalize on potential lake-related growth.

- **Increase the amount of retail and service development in Ogallala.**

Ogallala's traditional downtown has been the heart of commercial development throughout its history. More contemporary commercial development has largely been limited to sites adjacent to the interstate interchange and consists largely of traveler services. To some degree, major commercial development in nearby North Platte attracts consumer spending from Ogallala and has slowed the city's retail growth. Yet, commercial development remains an area for future growth with population increases in lake and rural areas that identify strongly with the city as a principal service center.

- **Provide additional opportunities for industrial and small business growth.**

Ogallala has struggled to attract significant industrial development in the last twenty years. However, growth within the North Platte area and excellent transportation access provide the city with an opportunity to grow. The city should parlay these important resources into additional jobs and businesses. The city may use its convenient location to become an attractive, balanced center for both working and living.

Ogallala's land use policy provides adequate opportunities for further industrial development. In addition, it should work to provide both regional and internal transportation systems that support business development without having an adverse effect on residential life.

- **Create a context for future growth.**

Ogallala, as it develops in a balanced, self-sufficient way, can grow as a sustainable community if development:

- Accommodates expansion in a compact and efficient way.
- Provides both auto and pedestrian alternatives to destinations throughout the city.
- Preserves natural resources and integrates green spaces and special environments into the fabric of the community.

## ***EXISTING POPULATION AND LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS***

This section examines existing population, demographic and land use characteristics.

### **Population Characteristics**

Population and population characteristics help to explain the condition of a community. An analysis of the characteristics and dynamics of Ogallala's population helps define the directions of future policy.

- **Ogallala grew steadily from 1900 to 1980. Since 1980, the city has seen a 13% drop in population.**

Ogallala saw its largest increase in population during the 1930s, when its population increased by 1,528. Steady growth continued for the city until the 1980s. During the 1980s the population decreased by 9.6% and by another 3.3% during the 1990's. Overall the city has lost 708 people over the last twenty years.

Table 1.1 exhibits historic population growth in Ogallala, compared to other regional communities.

TABLE 1.1: Population Change: Ogallala and Communities									
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1960-1980	% Change 1980-2000	Total Change 1960-80	Change 1980-2000
Ogallala	4,250	4,976	5,638	5,095	4,930	33%	-13%	1388	-708
Paxton	566	503	568	536	614	0%	8%	2	46
Brule	370	423	438	411	372	18%	-15%	68	-66
North Platte	17,184	19,447	24,509	22,605	23,878	43%	-3%	7325	-631
Sidney	8,004	6,403	6,010	5,959	6,282	-25%	5%	-1994	272
Alliance	7,845	6,862	9,920	9,765	8,959	26%	-10%	2075	-961
McCook	8,285	8,404	8,112	8,112	7,994	-2%	-1%	-173	-118

• **Ogallala’s population pattern over the last twenty years is similar to many other communities in the region.**

Since 1980 only Paxton and Sidney have gained population. Many of the communities continued to lose population throughout the 1990s or were unable to recover fully from population loses experienced during the 1980's. This trend is common to many western Nebraska communities.

Three factors account for population change in Ogallala and other communities:

- *A comparison of births and deaths.* A surplus of births over deaths causes the population of that community to increase. A city with a younger population (particularly of people in child-bearing or family formation years) will experience a higher birth rate, measured as the number of births per 1,000 people.
- *Migration Patterns.* The balance of people moving in or out of a city affects population; if a city has positive migration (more people coming to the city than leaving), its population will tend to increase.
- *Annexation.* In addition to internal population change, a community can grow by incorporating populated areas within its boundaries.

One can analyze population trends during the 1990s, by comparing the city’s expected population based on natural change (the balanced of births and deaths) with the actual outcome of the 2000 census. In the absence of major annexations, the variance between predicted and actual population represents pattern of migration. Table 1.2 below summarizes the results of this analysis. These projections are based on the following assumptions:

- A cohort-survival forecast method is used to forecast population. This method “ages” a five-year age range of people by computing how many of them will survive into the next five year period. Cohort survival rates used were developed by the National Center for Health Statistics (1992).

- Projected birth rates for the population developed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

TABLE 1.2: Predicted and Actual Population Change, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Change	%
<b>Predicted Population</b> (based on survival and birth rates)	5,095	5,092	-3	-0.1%
<b>Actual Population</b>	5,095	4,930	-165	-3.2%
<b>Predicted Male Population</b>	2,421	2,435	14	0.6%
<b>Actual Male Population</b>	2,421	2,321	-100	-4.1%
<b>Predicted Female Population</b>	2,674	2,658	-16	-0.6%
<b>Actual Female Population</b>	2,674	2,609	-65	-2.4%

Source: RDG Crose Garnder Shukert, 2003

Projections are approximations that may not fully represent real behavior. However, it is clear that Ogallala's population in 2000 was smaller than that predicted by natural change, reflecting continued out-migration. Natural population change predicted a loss of less than one percent, while the city actually lost over 3% of its population. Tables 1.3 and 1.4 break these patterns down by specific age groups.

**TABLE 1.3: Predicted and Actual Age Cohort Change, All Residents 1990-2000**

Age Group	1990 Actual	2000 pred.	2000 Actual	(Actual - Pred.)	% variance: Actual/Pred
Under 5	374	262	291	29	11.1%
5-9	442	276	338	62	22.5%
10-14	389	373	408	35	9.4%
15-19	351	441	395	-46	-10.4%
20-24	198	387	204	-183	-47.3%
25-29	365	348	250	-98	-28.2%
30-34	387	196	283	87	44.4%
35-39	352	361	370	9	2.5%
40-44	301	382	405	23	6.0%
45-49	301	346	304	-42	-12.1%
50-54	254	293	269	-24	-8.2%
55-59	269	287	263	-24	-8.4%
60-64	251	234	242	8	3.4%
65-69	244	236	250	14	5.9%
70-74	200	206	202	-4	-1.9%
75-80	155	179	191	12	6.7%
80-84	137	128	137	9	7.0%
85+	125	158	128	-30	-19.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,095</b>	<b>5,093</b>	<b>4,930</b>	<b>-163</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

• **Young adults ages 15-24 accounted for the largest out-migration during the 1990's.**

Table 1.3 compares predicted and actual population change for each age group in the city. The predicted population projects how many people should be in each age group in 2000 if the city had experienced neither migration nor population increases caused by annexation. The variance percentage shows how well this prediction agrees with reality, or in other words, whether people in a given group tended to move in or out of Ogallala.

One of the largest increases in population over projections occurred for people between ages 30-44. This age group is very important to the future growth of the community, and the stability or growth in these groups is a healthy sign. These cohorts have entered their child-bearing years which helps explain a positive variance between predicted and observed populations in children under the age of 14. The loss of young adults ages 15 to 24 is very common for communities like Ogallala. These cohorts often leave a community to attend college and begin careers. The fact that Ogallala was able to attract residents over the age of 30 means that some of these residents were returning to the community to begin families and careers in the community.

The data also shows significant out-migration of individuals in their thirties and forties in 1990, who would be between the ages of 45 and 59 in 2000. This suggests some movement of mature earners out of the city, potentially to rural or lake areas or to other parts of the county. It will be important for Ogallala to provide career

and housing opportunities for those entering their high income years. During the same period, Keith County (excluding Ogallala) saw an increase of 140 persons between the ages of 50 and 54. This could indicate that many of Ogallala’s residents within these cohorts were establishing residents outside the city limits and around the Lake area.

• **Ogallala’s population aged slightly during the last ten years.**

Table 1.4 reviews the makeup of Ogallala’s population by age group in 1990 and 2000, as well as median age for each of these years. The median age of Ogallala’s population increased by 3.6 years during the 1990s, from 35.6 to 39.2 in 2000. This gradually aging population may create a need for additional senior services in the future. Ogallala should also work to retain its youth or at least attract them back to the community once they have completed college or are ready to begin families. In 2000 16% of the population was ages 10 to 19. Many of these individuals will move out of the city during the next ten years, challenging Ogallala to compensate for this loss.

**TABLE 1.4: Age Composition as a Percent of Total Population, 1990-2000**

Age Group	1990 Pop	2000 Pop	Change 1990-2000	% of Total 1990	% of Total 2000
Under 5	374	291	-83	7%	6%
5-9	442	338	-104	9%	7%
10-14	389	408	19	8%	8%
15-19	351	395	44	7%	8%
20-24	198	204	6	4%	4%
25-29	365	250	-115	7%	5%
30-34	387	283	-104	8%	6%
35-39	352	370	18	7%	8%
40-44	301	405	104	6%	8%
45-49	301	304	3	6%	6%
50-54	254	269	15	5%	5%
55-59	269	263	-6	5%	5%
60-64	251	242	-9	5%	5%
65-69	244	250	6	5%	5%
70-74	200	202	2	4%	4%
75-80	155	191	36	3%	4%
80-84	137	137	0	3%	3%
85+	125	128	3	2%	3%
<b>Median</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>39.2</b>			

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

Analysis of Ogallala’s population suggests that:

- Ogallala experienced its largest out-migration among young adults. People in their late 20’s accounted for 38% less then would have been predicted by natural population change.
- Ogallala has proven attractive to families in household formation years, experiencing both significant in-migration and some population gains in specific age groups.

- Ogallala should seek to stabilize its middle aged population and look for new ways to continue to attract young adults back to the community.
- At least some of the city’s more affluent population of middle-aged and older adults may be moving to rural or lake-related residential areas.

## **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

### **Employment**

Ogallala is both economically independent and strongly influenced by North Platte, only 53 miles away. While the city provides many traveler services and a stable retail market, residents are often attracted to the mall and regional shopping opportunities of North Platte. However, most residents work within the community and find their day to day needs easily met.

- **Ogallala and county residents are likely to be employed in sales and office or management and professional occupations.**

Table 1.5 compares the employment composition of Ogallala’s residents with those of the county as a whole for 2000. The table indicates that Ogallala residents are more likely to be employed sales and office occupations. Almost 30% of the city’s 2000 workforce was employed in these areas. A slightly greater number of county residents were employed in management and professional occupations. Ogallala residents were least likely to be employed in farming and production/transportation occupations.

**TABLE 1.5: Employment by Occupation, Ogallala and Keith County**

	Ogallala		Keith County	
	Total	%	Total	%
Total Employed	2,475	100.0	4,443	100.0
Management and professional	650	26.3	1,284	28.9
Construction, extraction & maintenance	277	11.2	488	11.0
Sales & office occupations	737	29.8	1,188	26.7
Service	414	16.7	697	15.7
Farming	30	1.2	159	3.6
Production & Transportation	367	14.8	627	14.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

- **Since 1990, retail and manufacturing employment has declined significantly, while growth has occurred in the service and education sectors.**

Table 1.6 compares employment by industry between 1990 and 2000. Employment by occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job, as opposed to the type of industry an individual works in, which relates to the kind of business conducted by a person’s employer. Table 1.6 indicates that a greater number of Ogallala’s residents are employed in service and educational related industries then in 1990, with a combined gain of 320 residents. On the other hand, despite strong national growth in retailing during the 1990s, retail employment in

Ogallala decreased by about 316 residents. While retail trade remained the city’s largest area of employment in 2000, this serious decline may be symptomatic of the regional retail dominance of North Platte and the likely export of local consumer dollars to that larger market.

**TABLE 1.6: Employment by Industry, 1990 to 2000**

Industry	1990	2000	Difference
Total Employed	2,543	2,475	-68
Agriculture/Mining	107	108	1
Construction	117	155	38
Manufacturing	357	199	-158
Transportation/Communications	150	174	24
Wholesale Trade	106	82	-24
Retail Trade	782	466	-316
Finance, Insurance, Real estate	130	158	28
Information*	-	40	40
Services	205	402	197
Education	282	405	123
Professional	210	183	-27
Public Administration	97	103	6

\* New Category in 2000  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

**•Ogallala’s median income is slightly less than the statewide median, and comparable to the county as a whole.**

Table 1.7 displays 2000 income distributions for Ogallala, Keith County, and the State of Nebraska. Ogallala’s median income of \$32,141 is up from \$23,165 in 1990, an annual growth rate of about 3.33%. This is moderately ahead of the nation’s inflation rate during the 1990s, reflecting some gain in real income. About 16% of Ogallala’s households made less than \$15,000 a year. The largest percentage, 20.7%, of households earned between \$15,000 and \$24,000. Compared to the county and state Ogallala had fewer low- and high-income residents than the county as a whole. The large number of Ogallala residents employed in service and sales occupations may account for the large percentage of the population in the moderate to lower income ranges. It will be important for the city to expand the higher wage job market while at the same time expanding the retail base.

**TABLE 1.7: Income Distribution by Percentage**

	Under \$10,000	\$10,000-14,999	\$15,000-24,999	\$25,000-34,999	\$35,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	Over \$75,000	Median HH Income
Ogallala	9.6	6.7	20.7	16.8	19.3	16.9	9.8	\$32,141
Keith County	9.1	7.9	20.5	15.5	20.1	17.1	9.7	\$32,325
Nebraska	9.8	7.4	14.9	19.9	18.1	19.4	16.5	\$38,126

Source: US Bureau of the Census

## **Commuting Patterns**

In 2000 the average travel time to work for Ogallala residents was 14 minutes, up from 9 in 1990. This would indicate that a majority of residents worked within the community, however a growing number were finding jobs outside the city. Almost 10% of residents carpooled and another 8% walked to work or worked at home.

## **Conclusions**

The economic analysis of Ogallala indicates that:

- Most Ogallala residents work within the city in sales and office related occupations.
- Fewer residents work in retail trade than in 1990 and a greater number of residents work in service and education related fields.
- The city's median income is slightly below that of the state as a whole but 46% of the households earn more than \$35,000 a year.

## ***LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS***

This section describes land use characteristics and trends that will help determine the amount of land needed to accommodate future development in Ogallala.

### **Existing Land Use**

The Existing Land Use (Map 1.1) and Table 1.8 summarize current land uses in Ogallala and its jurisdiction based on a detailed 2001 field survey. In addition to providing acreage and percentage breakdowns by general land use categories, the survey provides detailed information on specific uses. Table 1.9 makes comparisons to similar communities. The comparisons include Madison, Seward and Waverly; two of these communities are also located along the I-80 corridor.

**TABLE 1.8: Ogallala's Land Use Distribution, 2001**

Land Use Category	Ogallala		Jurisdiction	
	Acres	% Of Developed Land	Acres	% Of Developed Land
<b>Residential</b>	521.07	26.7%	113.75	20.8%
Rural Residential	80.60	4.1%	77.36	14.2%
Single-Family	367.74	18.8%	23.07	4.2%
Duplex	3.36	0.2%	6.76	1.2%
Multi-Family	15.97	0.8%	-	0.0%
Mobile Home	53.40	2.7%	6.56	1.2%
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>140.55</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>150.12</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
Office	1.31	0.1%	0.62	0.1%
Downtown	6.24	0.3%	-	0.0%
Retail and General Commercial	122.34	6.3%	149.50	27.4%
Auto Services	10.66	0.5%	-	0.0%
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>111.20</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>259.06</b>	<b>47.5%</b>
General Industrial	96.22	4.9%	103.52	19.0%
Light Industrial/Warehousing	5.34	0.3%	1.93	0.4%
Salvage	1.33	0.1%	-	
Resource Extraction	8.31	0.4%	153.61	
<b>Civic</b>	<b>206.16</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>22.76</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
School	23.68	1.2%	-	0.0%
Public Facilities and Utilities	21.05	1.1%	22.76	4.2%
Other Civic Uses	161.43	8.3%	-	0.0%
Parks and Rec.	86.45	4.4%	-	0.0%
<b>Road Right of Way</b>	<b>888.75</b>	<b>45.5%</b>		<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Total Developed Land</b>	<b>1,954.18</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>545.69</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Agriculture and Open Space	1,050.40			
Vacant Urban Land	215.64			
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>3,220.22</b>		<b>545.69</b>	

• **Residential Uses**

Most of Ogallala’s residential land is in single-family use. Single-family homes comprise almost 23% of all developed land in the city, a smaller proportion than typical for Nebraska communities. In most cities, about 35% to 40% of the developed land area is in single-family use. Waverly, a growing community between Lincoln and Omaha, has 36.8% of its land in residential use (Table 1.9) while Seward, west of Lincoln, has 27.1%. Seward and Waverly also had higher residential densities than Ogallala.

The next largest residential category is mobile homes. Ogallala has over 10.2% of its residential land dedicated to mobile home and mobile home parks. The largest concentration of mobile homes is in the northern section of the city. Duplex and multi-family comprise the smallest percentages of housing in the city.

• **Commercial Uses**

Over 7% of Ogallala's developed land is in commercial or office uses, or about 140.55 acres. Ogallala has a relatively large percentage of land devoted to commercial use compared to the other communities. Part of this relatively large commercial area results from Ogallala's role as a regional service center and a major stop along the Interstate 80 corridor. Interstate-related commercial uses are particularly space-intensive. Indeed, a significant amount of the community's commercial area is in retail or visitor services.

- *Industrial Uses*

Ogallala had over 111 acres or 6% of its land dedicated to industrial use. This was comparable to the other communities in Table 1.9. Madison, with a large meat packing industry, had the largest amount of land in industrial use at 10%. A majority of Ogallala's industrial development lies along the Highway 30/Union Pacific corridor east and west of Spruce Street. Some additional development is also located south of Interstate 80.

- *Civic/Parks and Recreation*

Ogallala has almost 293 acres of land dedicated to civic and parks/recreation development. Compared to the communities considered in Table 1.9, Ogallala has the smallest percentage of land dedicated to civic uses.

Ogallala provides 1.75 acres of park and recreation area per 100 people, approximating the traditional national standard of 1 acre per 100 people. Many communities (including Seward and Madison in this sample) exceed this minimum standard. Park and recreational services are important quality of life features that attract new residents. Indeed, Ogallala's Western Diamonds sports complex has proven to be an important community asset.

Compared to other communities, Ogallala displays a relatively low-density development pattern, partially the result of the open character of its countryside. The city also has a very large percentage of land in transportation uses, of which the Union Pacific mainline and Interstate 80 make up major parts. If transportation is removed from the overall comparison, Ogallala displays a development density much more typical of Nebraska communities.

**TABLE 1.9: Comparative Land Use in Ogallala and Other Communities**

% of Developed Area				
	Ogallala	Madison	Seward	Waverly
Residential	26.66%	31.97%	27.11%	36.82%
Commercial	7.19%	3.12%	2.49%	4.59%
Industrial	5.69%	10.04%	5.53%	7.77%
Civic	6.13%	18.50%	11.70%	19.04%
Parks/Rec	4.42%	2.41%	31.43%	8.05%
Transportation	45.48%	33.97%	20.74%	23.73%
<b>Total Developed Area</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Acres Per 100 People				
	Ogallala	Madison	Seward	Waverly
Residential	10.57	11.57	6.88	9.53
Commercial	2.85	1.14	0.63	1.19
Industrial	2.26	3.63	1.4	2.01
Civic	4.18	6.69	2.97	6.6
Parks/Rec	1.75	0.88	8.23	2.08
Transportation	18.03	12.29	5.27	6.14
<b>Total Developed Area</b>	<b>39.64</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>25.39</b>	<b>25.89</b>

## **POPULATION AND LAND USE PROJECTIONS**

### **Ogallala’s Future Population**

Projecting the future size and composition of Ogallala’s population helps predict the future demographic character of the town. This in turn can help guide the city’s planning and policy decisions regarding future investments and growth.

Future population for Ogallala is forecast by:

- Basing population forecasts on 2000 Census statistics for age distribution. As before, the cohort survival method is used to project population, utilizing birth and death rates developed by the Bureau of the Census and the National Center for Health Statistics.
- A migration model has been utilized to demonstrate what likely occurred during the 1990’s. Table 1.10 displays this model with a base (0% migration) population forecast and a -3% migration scenario, similar to what actually occurred during the 1990’s.
- An annual growth rate is applied to the 2000 population that is not dependent on the composition of existing cohorts.

During the 1990s, Ogallala was able to attract residents in key family formation cohorts, despite an overall loss of population. If the city provides opportunities for new growth, desirable residential sites, and high quality education and medical support services, it should be able reverse these past trends. For this reason a goal of 0.5% annual growth rate is used to project Ogallala’s future population. Table 1.10 illustrates this scenario, which would produce a 2010 population of 5,182 and 5,447 by 2020. However, a continuation of current trends produces continued population declines, leading to a 2020 population forecast of 4,589. Clearly, these alternative futures drive home the high stakes that the city faces during the next two decades.

Potential growth in Ogallala could also exceed estimates. Ogallala may grow at a faster rate because of its environment, the amenity of its “small town” qualities, and the successes of its employers and the local economy. The continued growth of commercial and industrial development may produce additional employment opportunities. Under such an alternate future development scenario, the city’s future population growth could accelerate. The Ogallala Plan’s land use concept accommodates this potential by designating growth centers both north and south of the interstate.

**TABLE 1.10: Ogallala Population Projections, 2000-2020**

	2000 (Census)	2010	2020
-3% Migration	4,930	4,708	4,589
0% Migration	4,930	4,852	4,875
0.5% Annual Growth Rate	4,930	5,182	5,447

## Ogallala’s Future Land Use Needs

- *Residential Land Use Projections*

While Ogallala experienced no population growth during the 1990s, opportunities do exist for future development and growth. A 2020 projected population of 5,447 and existing land use ratios are utilized to determine the future needs of the community, based on a growth-oriented policy. Table 1.11 presents the projected twenty-year housing demand based on these statistics. The analysis is based on the following methods and assumptions:

- The basic method used in projecting annual demands is to compare the number of units needed in a given year (number of households plus projected vacancy rate) with the number of units available during that year (housing supply during the year less the units that leave the housing supply and must be replaced). Twenty-year demands are based on multiples of the five year population demands.
- Household size in Ogallala is expected to decrease slightly during the twenty-year period from 2.35 in 2000 to about 2.25 people per household in 2020.
- The city’s non-household population (people in institutions, group quarters, or nursing homes) does not produce a demand for conventional housing. These forecasts project that the non-household population will remain at its 2000 rate of 1.99% of the city’s population.

•Ogallala’s current vacancy rate is a high 11.32%. Part of this may be the result of a relatively high percentage of mobile homes, which often experience relatively high vacancy. The city should work to eliminate substandard housing and to fill existing vacant units in an attempt to lower the vacancy level of approximately 6% by 2020. This still provides a healthy selection within the market for future and existing residents.

• Loss of existing units will average approximately 1 per year through conversion and demolition. Though most of Ogallala’s housing units are in good to excellent condition.

**TABLE 1.11: Projected Housing Development Demand**

	2000	2000-2010	2010-2020	Total
Population at the End of Period	4,930	5,182	5,447	
Household Population at End of Period	4,832	5,079	5,339	
Average People/Household	2.35	2.30	2.25	
Household demand at End of Period	2,056	2,208	2,373	
Projected Vacancy Rate	11.32%	8.82%	6.32%	
Unit Needs at End of Period	2319	2,422	2,533	
Replacement Need	--	10	10	20
<b>Cumulative Need</b>	--	<b>113</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>234</b>

**TABLE 1.12: Required Residential Land 2000-2020**

2000-2010	% of Demand	Units	Gross Density (units/Acre)	Land Needs	Designated Land (x2)
Single Family Deattached	60%	68	3	22.6	45
Single Family Attached	15%	17	6	2.8	6
Multi-family	25%	28	12	2.4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>		<b>27.8</b>	<b>56</b>
2010-2020	% of Demand	Units	Gross Density (units/Acre)	Land Needs	Designated Land (x2)
Single Family Deattached	60%	73	3	24.2	48
Single Family Attached	15%	18	6	3.0	6
Multi-family	25%	30	12	2.5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>121</b>		<b>29.7</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Total 2000-2020</b>		<b>234</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>115</b>

The projections reinforce a cumulative demand of 234 units for Ogallala during the next twenty years. These projections are utilized to estimate the amount of land that will be needed to accommodate growth during the next twenty years.

Based on a desirable standard, approximately 75% of the new units will be in a single-family configuration and 25% in multi-family. On the average, urban single family development will have a density of three units to an acre; attached units, 6 units per acre; and multi-family development, 12 units to an acre. As a standard, the plan recommends the land provided for residential development over a twenty-year period be equal to twice the area that new growth actually needs. This is necessary to preserve competitive land pricing and accommodate individual decisions about land availability. Table 1.12 presents the amount of new area that will be required for additional development, based on these assumptions. Annual actual absorption of residential land will be in the range of 3 acres annually. Using the rule of designating land at a rate of two times the “hard demand”, this suggests a total reservation of land for residential development of about 115 acres over the twenty year period. This will provide adequate selection for the market.

• **Commercial Development Projections**

This plan does not include a comprehensive retail market analysis. However, probable development needs and the plan’s overall policy of encouraging appropriate development suggests that Ogallala will require new commercial space during the next twenty years. Two methods can be used to help project commercial land needs:

- *A population service relationship.* This method relates commercial growth to population projections. It assumes that the absolute amount of commercial land per 100 people will grow in proportion to population growth. In Ogallala’s case, this proportion will remain fairly constant over the next twenty years.
- *Residential use proportion.* This assumes a constant relationship between the amount of land used for residential and commercial purposes. It relates commercial growth directly to residential development rates.

This analysis indicates a need for 16 acres of commercial land over the next twenty years. In the case of commercial development a rule of designating land at a rate of one and a half times the “hard demand” would suggest a total reservation of 23 acres.

**TABLE 1.13: Estimated Commercial Land Requirements, 2000-2020**

	2000	2010	2020	Conversion Need	Designated Land (x1.5)
<b>Population Proportion Method</b>					
Projected Population	4,930	5,182	5,447		
Comm Use/100 res.	2.85	2.85	2.85		
Projected Commercial Use (acres)	140.55	147.69	155.24	14.69	22.04
<b>Residential Use Proportion Method</b>					
Residential Land (acres)	521.07	548.90	578.64		
Commercial/Residential Ratio	0.2697	0.2697	0.2697		
Projected Commercial Use (acres)	140.55	148.06	156.08	15.53	23.29

• *Projection of Industrial Development*

The amount of future industrial expansion is dependent upon the city’s desire to accommodate more industrial land uses, as well as market demand for available land. Industrial land needs are difficult to predict because of the opportunistic nature of industrial land needs. A single large industrial development could demand more land than the city has seen in years.

The same forecasting methodology that was used for commercial development has been utilized for projecting industrial space. Results are indicated in Table 1.14. Based on a designation of about 3 times the hard demand for industrial space suggests that the plan reserves about 36 acres for industrial use. This reservation should remain flexible enough to accommodate greater demand if market forces and community leaders determine a need. Alternately, the demand may be accommodated on a regional basis, specifically along the I-80 corridor.

**TABLE 1.14: Estimated Industrial/Business Park Land Requirements, 2000-2020**

	2001	2010	2020	Conversion Need	Designated Land (x3)
<b>Population Proportion Method</b>					
Projected Population	4,930	5,182	5,447		
Industrial Use/100 res.	2.26	2.26	2.26		
Projected Industrial Use (acres)	111.20	116.89	122.86	11.66	34.99
<b>Residential Use Proportion Method</b>					
Residential Land (acres)	521.07	548.90	578.64		
Industrial/Residential Ratio	0.21341	0.21341	0.21341		
Projected Industrial Use (acres)	111.20	117.14	123.49	12.29	36.86

**Summary of Population and Land Use Projections**

- Despite an overall population loss during the 1990’s Ogallala should strive to achieve a .5% annual growth rate over the next twenty years. At this rate, Ogallala should achieve a population of 5,182 by 2010 and 5,447 by 2020.
- A population over 5,447 will generate a need for an additional 234 units. Dividing these units into 60% single family detached, 15% single family attached, and 25% multi-family requires approximately 58 acres. However, to assure a variety of choices in the market the Ogallala plan should designate at least 115 acres.
- To meet the growing city’s commercial and industrial demand the Ogallala Plan should designate roughly 23 acres of commercial land and another 36 acres of industrial land.

## CHAPTER TWO

### OGALLALA FOR A NEW CENTURY

Ogallala is Keith County's largest community and a civic leader in its region. Part of this leadership grows from its position as the county seat but also from important economic and educational opportunities and lifestyle amenities. In its early history, Ogallala's strategic location along the South Platte River and the railroad corridor helped it flourish. Today location still plays a significant role in Ogallala's continued success and future opportunity. A location along Interstate 80, proximity to Nebraska's "inland sea" and the open vistas created by the river valley and the rolling Sandhills continue to make Ogallala an attractive location. A colorful and rich history, combined with regional recreation and a heritage of good community design have created a special setting that can be parlayed into greater economic growth and attraction for investment.

Ogallala can use these key resources as a lever for major community growth. Despite recent population (see [Chapter One](#)) declines, its community environment can attract future growth. The city's vitality grows from a sense of intimacy and pride, and has produced both entrepreneurial and civic investment. Ogallala's challenge for the next century will be to use its resources to encourage growth and investment and, in the process, to sustain and enhance its character.

Future growth strategies should grow from two primary environmental attributes:

- *Natural and built environment.* Ogallala's location in the South Platte River Valley and its nearness to Lake McConaughy create opportunities for outdoor recreation. Its distinctive built environment, including a distinctive town center and historic Front Street, complement these environmental attributes.
- *Location.* Ogallala's location on Interstate 80 and the Union Pacific mainline provides opportunities for both commercial and industrial development. At the same time, adjacent Lake McConaughy attracts residents looking for by the recreation and scenic amenities of the Lake, convenient services of the city and small city environment. The combination of interstate access and outdoor features makes the city particularly attractive to the Colorado recreational market.

The best plans are those that grow out of the character of their environments. This section establishes a development vision and concept for Ogallala that grows out of its inherent characteristics. It includes three sections:

- *Patterns of Development*, considering the physical patterns and settings that make the city distinctive.
- *Challenges and Opportunities*, considering physical development issues that Ogallala faces.
- *Development Principles*, establishing overall relationships and directions that guide the more detailed sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

### PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

This section considers patterns and characteristics that contribute to the unique character of Ogallala. They include:

- **THE RIVER AND FLOODPLAIN**
- **THE PLATTE RIVER ROAD**

- **TWO-LEVELED TOPOGRAPHY**
- **THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD**
- **LAKE MCCONAUGHY**
- **THE CITY PLAN**
- **INTERSTATE 80**
- **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

## **THE RIVER AND FLOODPLAIN**

Ogallala lies in the valley of the South Platte River and is just south of the North Platte River, impounded by the Kingsley Dam to create Lake McConaughy. The Platte system was the “superhighway” of the nineteenth century, forming the broad avenue west that accommodated the famous emigrant trails. West of Ogallala, the trails made their difficult passage from the South Platte to the North Platte valleys, negotiating Windlass Hill and recovering at Ash Hollow. The river’s broad valley further hosted more contemporary transportation arteries – the Union Pacific, the Lincoln Highway, and Interstate 80. The South Platte and the aquifer that shares its name with the city are equally important for providing an irreplaceable and increasingly precious water resource that irrigates farmland, provides habitat for wildlife, and creates recreational opportunities.

The river and its corresponding floodplain have also influenced access and the layout of the city. With only one river crossing, the northern and southern sections of the city have historically been separated by high waters. The floodplain also led many early residents to build new homes on the north side of the river where the terrain begins to rise and offers protection from rising waters. Today the interstate and railroad corridors limit the floodplain but the flat contours of southern Ogallala still influence drainage and development.

## **THE PLATTE RIVER ROAD**

From Nebraska’s early history the Platte River has been a transportation corridor. Early Native Americans and more recent western settlers used the river valley as the main transportation corridor across the plains. The national transportation system naturally looked to this river corridor when connecting the east and west coast, and the construction of the transcontinental railroad led to the initial development and early growth of Ogallala. The railroad provided economic opportunities that came with being a major stop along the line. Later, development of Interstate 80 in the same historic corridor has strengthened Ogallala’s economy and made it a major visitor service center.

## **MULTI-LEVELED TOPOGRAPHY**

Ogallala lies on the divide between two drastically different topographies. The South Platte River separates the flatter, fertile soil of southern Keith County and the rolling Sandhills of northern Keith County. The transition between these two geographies defines Ogallala’s natural environment. The South Platte River valley and its corresponding floodplain dominate Southern Ogallala, while the Sandhills formation emerges along an escarpment north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Commercial development flourished in the southern part of the city, responding to the transportation corridors that followed the floodplain. Later residents established their homes in the higher ground and rolling hills above the floodplain.

New development in the Williams Park area on the north extension of the city is similarly separated topographically from the traditional town. The intervening rugged sandhill and ravine environment brings the countryside into the city and helps merge the urban and rural landscape. Ogallala’s Western Diamonds sports complex makes effective use of parts of this scenic area, while a multi-use trail extending from North Park to Williams Park has successfully unified these two levels of the city for pedestrians and bicyclists.

## **THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD**

The Union Pacific Railroad and the cattle pens that developed around it north of the South Platte River dominate Ogallala's early history. During the days of the cattle drives, Ogallala was the point of interchange between cattle drive trails and the Union Pacific, the major conveyance to the emerging markets of Omaha and Chicago. The location of cattle pens further pushed the development of the community to the northern side of the river. Today the railroad still plays an important role in the region. Its main lines follow the river and divide southern and northern Ogallala. Together with the interstate corridor, the UP provides excellent transportation service to existing and future industry.

## **LAKE McCONAUGHY**

Ogallala is the "headquarters" city for Lake McConaughy, which plays a significant role in the future growth of the city and the continued development of the rural countryside. As the closest commercial hub and gateway to the lake from Interstate 80, the city ultimately serves every Lake resident or visitor. Accelerating lake development in the past few years has induced some residents to move out of the city to live along the Lake. The growth of higher-end development on the rugged but scenic southern shore of the lake, more difficult to develop but closer to Ogallala, is likely to continue this trend. The recent construction of Bayside Golf Course will also attract additional residents to the area. The city should capitalize on the commercial potential of this expanding Lake population. The Lake also provides an attractive recreation feature to current and future city residents.

As of 2003, persistent drought has dramatically reduced water levels at the reservoir. This plan assumes that, in the long term, the lake will return to historically normal levels, assuring the reservoir's continued value as a recreational and environmental resource. In the meantime, the city should support policies that maintain reasonable water levels, and balance the sometimes conflicting goals of irrigators and recreational, environmental, and economic interests.

## **THE CITY PLAN: EAST-WEST LINEARITY AND GRIDS IN COLLISION**

Ogallala originally was platted on the surveyors' section line grid, rotated to parallel the Union Pacific Railroad. Newer development west of West H Street and east of East G Street reverted to the orthogonal grid, creating corrections along those two streets. These "correcting" grids diminished east-west street connections in many parts of the city. For example, the city lacks east-west continuity north of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street between East A Street to East O Street, forcing most traffic to use 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Future development should provide an additional east/west collector street to support additional northern development.

## **INTERSTATE 80**

The Interstate 80 corridor is both a lifeline and a barrier for the City of Ogallala. The corridor links the city to the rest of the nation while also dividing development to its north and south. With one access point across the interstate and river, the "main" city is relatively separated from the newer development south of these two corridors, and linear development occurs south along the Highway 61 corridor toward Grant. The interstate contributes powerfully to the economy of the city, providing both access to wider markets and business niches for visitor services and hospitality. The combination of good transportation and quality of life amenities can accommodate both expanding businesses and new entrepreneurs.

## **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The architectural and landmark characteristics of Ogallala's buildings lend another dimension to the interaction of land and layout in defining the character of the city. One of Ogallala's most visible architectural landmarks is the Ogallala U.S. Post Office, with its Depression-era mural, part of the New Deal's effort to provide jobs to artists and make art accessible to the general population. Also listed on the National Register of Historic Places is the Leonidas A. Brandhoefer Mansion ("Mansion on the Hill"), located prominently atop North Spruce Street. The Brandhoefer Mansion was one of Ogallala's earliest homes and is close to the historic Boot Hill Cemetery.

The Front Street commercial development on 1<sup>st</sup> Street captures the old west history of Ogallala, recalling the city's history as a cattle boomtown. The district attracts thousands visitors a year with shopping and entertainment along the old Lincoln Highway. Ogallala also is graced by an unusual collection of quality neighborhoods and attractive homes.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The previous discussion described features and relationships that over time have made Ogallala distinctive. Yet, the forces that have changed town building and community development patterns in contemporary times also challenge Ogallala's traditional character. These challenges include:

- **DEMOGRAPHICS AND ATTRACTION OF NEW POPULATIONS**
- **TWO SIDES OF THE TRACKS**
- **STREET CONTINUITY**
- **PROSEPTS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH**
- **I-80'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY**
- **REGIONAL ATTRACTION AND RECREATION**
- **WIDE OPEN SPACES VERSUS TOWN**
- **TOWN CENTER CHARACTER AND DIVERSITY**

### **DEMOGRAPHICS AND ATTRACTION OF NEW POPULATIONS**

Chapter One discussed some of Ogallala's demographic challenges. The city has experienced a population decline during the last two decades, along with an aging population. Between 1990 and 2000, the median age of an Ogallala resident increased from 35.6 to 39.2 years. As the largest portion of the population moves out of their child-bearing years the overall population will tend to decline. During the 1990s, the city attracted residents in their early 30's, a key population group for future growth. The city must continue to attract residents in their late 20's and early 30's to encourage population growth and economic development.

### **TWO SIDES OF THE TRACKS**

Ogallala is a physically divided city -- divided by the Union Pacific, the South Platte River and Interstate 80. Because most of the city has developed north of the railroad, areas to the south appear somewhat disconnected from the center of the community. A plan concept should overcome or at least minimize this division, uniting existing and future development through both vehicular and pedestrian links. The city should provide access to city services such as parks and schools for all parts of a united community.

## **STREET CONTINUITY**

Ogallala's original grid south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street offers a variety of circulation options. However, incremental development patterns and topographic constraints have prevented development of east-west connecting streets north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street. No single street links both the east and west edges of the city from this point. It is important to protect key transportation links, particularly when development occurs in relatively small plats.

## **PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Economic development is a critical issue in Ogallala. The city finds itself in a paradox – greater economic choices are required to attract new population, but new populations are also necessary to generate additional economic options. The city has a large amount of available industrial land and has attempted to attract large employers to a site that is located off Interstate 80. On the other hand, the community is home to several medium-sized employers who have successfully utilized a location convenient to employees and transportation. Prophet Systems, a developer of software technologies, has provided an important model for local entrepreneurship. An economic growth strategy for Ogallala should focus on entrepreneurial activity and attracting smaller but growing employers, encouraged to locate or expand in the city because of its attractive features.

## **I-80'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY**

Interstate 80 is a critical national artery and has encouraged major economic development in cities along its way. Development around the interchange has included major visitor-related commercial growth, along with some industrial uses. However, this development is separated from the rest of the city by the South Platte River. In addition, Ogallala's earlier industrial park, near the airport west of the city, lacks direct interstate access, even though the US 26 truck route serves it. Integration of commercial and industrial development that is attracted to locations along Interstate 80 should be encouraged by future planning.

## **REGIONAL ATTRACTION AND RECREATION**

Ogallala is the center of an area rich in current and potential recreational attractions, including Lake McConaughy and the South Platte River Valley. Ogallala also lies along the transcontinental American Discovery Trail. These features can help the city to develop as a stronger tourist destination and visitor service center. Ogallala should strengthen its connection to the lake and leisure community in the region, in turn expanding business niches in the city.

## **WIDE OPEN SPACES VERSUS TOWN: RESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES**

During the 1990s the rural areas of the county experienced a 16.4% increase in population. The increasing population within the rural areas of the county indicates an increasing demand for larger tracts of residential land. Many people move to the area because of wide-open views and the vistas and attractions of lake living. This challenges the city because rural and lake residents often depend on such city services as parks and recreational programs. Urban residential developments that combine "country" amenities with easy access to services and commercial opportunities will help the city attract a greater share of regional growth. In addition, increased consumer spending in town from rural and lake residents, encouraged by an enhanced retail community, creates sales tax revenues that can help support vital city services.

## **TOWN CENTER CHARACTER AND DIVERSITY**

Reinforced by a successful Main Street program, Downtown Ogallala has sustained itself from both retail and office perspectives. However, many residents believe that the district should have greater diversity and a clearer sense of identity. Downtown Ogallala remains a vital center of activity for the community, a location with substantial investment of both funds and community equity. Ogallala participates in the Lied/Nebraska Main Street Program and has an active and effective Main Street organization. This has resulted in successful organizational and promotional efforts to market this district throughout the region. However, Ogallala's town center is a relatively small district, with a limited amount of available space. It is sharply separated by 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30 and 26), effectively creating two one-block main street districts with a busy, truck-laden arterial between them. A one-way traffic patterns, which route people around the Main Street district along East A Street on their way to the lake also creates a visibility problem.

## **DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

The previous discussion defined patterns of the built environment that make Ogallala distinctive, and described challenges that can affect its character and future. Growth can radically change the quality of the community's environment. This has produced considerable debate in Ogallala over such questions as:

- How should the community encourage and at the same time manage growth?
- What should Ogallala look like in the future?
- What impact will various infrastructure and land use decisions have on the economic strength of the city and its ability to support necessary public services?

Ogallala must both encourage growth and carefully plan for it. A failure to encourage development may well cause the city to stagnate and prevent it from attracting the new population and investment so key to its future. Yet, accepting any development indiscriminately and failing to plan for growth will ultimately force Ogallala to pay a higher price for infrastructure, and can result in poor or discontinuous circulation, commercial and residential deterioration, and a less liveable and more fragmented community. This will degrade the quality of community life valued by the city's residents, and will not serve the city's long-term interests. Where growth takes a major effort, cities often feel compelled to lower their standards to attract any investment. Ogallala's future lies in leveraging a high standard of quality community life into significant residential and economic development. Its planning and community development policies should continue to encourage a combination of development and quality.

This section presents principles that should guide measures to improve Ogallala and to help channel development momentum. These principles include:

- **AN AMENITY CITY**
- **TRANSPORTATION CROSSROADS**
- **CONCENTRIC GROWTH**
- **UNIFIED COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK**
- **OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS SYSTEM**
- **ENTERPRISE CORRIDORS**
- **VITAL TOWN CENTER**
- **CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC OGALLALA**
- **AN ECONOMY FOR THE FUTURE**

- **APPROPRIATE ZONING**
- **COORDINATED CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING**

## **AN AMENITY CITY**

*Ogallala should offer a quality of life sufficient to retain its young, reward its old and attract people and businesses to its amenity-rich location*

Ogallala is a special and distinctive community, with numerous regional amenities, but has experienced steady declines in population (See Table 1.1). Some similarly-sized Nebraska towns (including Lexington and Schuyler) have experienced growth because of industries that attract new immigrant populations. Unlike these towns, however, Ogallala does not have large food processing industries. Its future growth depends on its ability to attract new residents by creating significant quality of life and economic opportunities. Ogallala’s overall and mutually reinforcing two-pronged strategy should be to:

- Create an amenity structure that competes successfully with neighboring settings for people; and
- Create economic opportunities that attract new residents.

Major elements in the creation of an amenity-rich community include:

- *Recreational opportunities and outdoor life.* Lake McConaughy and the city’s park and recreation system provide a solid recreational base. To take full advantage of the lake, the city should provide more connections between the city and the lake’s recreational features. Creating a sense of connectedness with the lake can bring a major recreation destination to the residents of Ogallala and Lake visitors into the city.
- *Community design.* People measure the quality of a community by its physical appearance. Thus, issues such as the appearance of community entrances and corridors, the quality of residential neighborhoods, and the condition of public spaces can be important to people or businesses as they make investment decisions. Of special importance are the First Street (US 30) and East A/Spruce Street corridors, as well as the continued positive image of the town center. Additionally, Ogallala’s Interstate 80 gateway must draw at least some travelers into the city.
- *Town Center Life and Activity.* In addition to being the center of a community’s image and spirit, downtown districts are frequently markers of a community’s condition. A downtown that is full of life and alive with events attracts consumers and ultimately new residents. Ogallala has completed some of the streetscape for a lively downtown and has an effective Main Street organization. It now must concentrate on filling that downtown with activities and bringing it to life, and addressing some functional and transportation problems that restrict its growth and ultimate prosperity.
- *Community character.* A community’s image and character should be reinforced by its built environment and connections between its amenities. Development of a strong sense of character facilitates the creation of interesting communities that attract existing and future residents.
- *Youth involvement in planning and programming.* Young people are the future of the city. Many of Ogallala’s talented young people will inevitably leave the city, bound for college or bigger cities. However, an environment that considers the ideas and needs of young people establishes positive associations that may bring them back to establish their households; and may attract other young families

looking for distinctive and sympathetic living places. In addition, youth involvement makes the city and its people better, and injects both life and commitment that can be of great benefit to Ogallala's competitive position.

- *Image and community marketing.* Ogallala must establish a regional image, in effect viewing itself as a brand or product, sold through effective marketing techniques. Many people in the region have two images of Ogallala. The first is as the "Cowboy Capital of Nebraska" and the second is as the home of Lake McConaughy. Both of these are positive and intriguing images, allowing the city to market its brand to the greater region and potential urban markets in Nebraska and Colorado.

## **TRANSPORTATION CROSSROADS: GATEWAY TO THE LAKE**

*Ogallala should capitalize on its location as the transportation interface between Interstate 80, Lake McConaughy, and western Nebraska.*

Visitors come through Ogallala for a variety of reasons: some are driving across the country on Interstate 80, going skiing in Colorado, cutting through the city on the way to Scottsbluff, visiting historic Oregon Trail sites, or spending a weekend or season at Lake McConaughy. Ogallala's gateways and corridors are important in attracting these visitors to spend more time in the community. Policy directions to capitalize on Ogallala's strategic position as the gateway to the Lake and the North Platte Valley from the Interstate include:

- *Spruce and East A Street Urban Corridor.* Both Spruce and East A Streets are one-way streets that appear to encourage relatively high speeds, particularly on East A northbound from the viaduct. Certain design features should be utilized to slow down traffic and improve the function and quality of these corridors. Recent traffic studies indicate that good landscaping and streetside amenities actually slow traffic.

Northbound traffic is routed on one-way East A Street, required primarily by the geometrics of the recently built viaduct over the Union Pacific. This causes travelers arriving in Ogallala to miss "main street" by one block. Without restoration of two-way traffic, wayfinding information and hardscape improvements will be necessary to link the town center to the adjacent highway.

These two corridors also host a variety of uses and urban settings within a relatively short distance. This mixed land use quality and relatively fine scale makes a mixed use urban corridor zoning district appropriate. Such a district should provide standards that encourage a variety of development types while respecting the corridor's scale and residential character in some areas. Along their major commercial segments Spruce and East A should include pedestrian accommodations (including a wider "sidewalk trail" on one side), landscaping, and attractive lighting.

- *US 26 Truck Route/Linkages to the City.* The Highway 26/61 truck route moves much of the heavier truck traffic away from the heart of the city. However, Highway 30 and 5<sup>th</sup> Street connect the city to Highway 26. Additional connections between the truck route and the city will open areas up to new development and incorporate the Highway 26 corridor more successfully into Ogallala. These linkages should encourage development perpendicular to the corridor, but should avoid strip development along the highway. Linear development will compromise the function of the truck route and eliminate its reason for being.
- *Interchange Development.* The construction of the Highway 26/61 truck route has diverted a significant amount of traffic away from the Spruce and East A Street corridors. Much of this traffic is headed to the interstate creates traffic problems and conflicts as it proceeds east along 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor. Construction

of a second interchange, west of the existing interchange, would divert much of the traffic away from the heart of the city, while visitors traveling to the Lake would still move through the commercial center of the city. A new interchange could also open up areas to industrial and commercial development both north and south of the interstate, and provide excellent transportation access to the airport area.

## **CONCENTRIC GROWTH**

*Residential development should occur concentrically around the center of town.*

Ogallala should focus its residential development in areas adjacent to existing development. These areas should offer character and features that compete favorably with Lake and rural development. Specific areas include:

- *Fox Haven and Western Diamonds.* This area is located on the northwest edge of the city and would link together existing development within the area. Much of the terrain on the northwest side would be difficult to develop because of the topography of the area. The Fox Haven development would fill in an area north of Searle and Parkhill Subdivisions.

- *Northside east of Spruce.* This area includes the hospital and some newer residential development within Lee Acres. This area is also constricted by topography but provides a significant area for development, including 236 acres of low density residential and 50 acres of medium-density residential development. A key aspect of this development will be the construction of the Ogallala Parkway, a collector linking Spruce and East O Streets.

- *West.* Development in western Ogallala would be an extension of existing development out to the Highway 26/61 truck route. The development would surround the Ogallala Cemetery and would provide 34.48 acres of medium density and 216.6 acres of low-density residential development.

- *“South Bank”.* Sections of the South Bank area would include a lake-related development south of Interstate 80. Central to this concept is a lake connecting the Country Club area to the commercial and mixed use development areas related to Interchange 126. This development would include a full range of housing choices between existing commercial development along the highway and Country Club Estates, furnishing about 250 acres for development. South of County Road East 80, new development should include both low-density residential and rural residential development.

## **UNIFIED COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK**

*Ogallala, through its comprehensive plan, should establish a framework of future streets and open spaces.*

In small cities like Ogallala, development occurs in small increments. As a result, developments occur in the form of self-contained pods that have few connections with one another. Indeed, street continuity north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street is a development issue for the city. This plan recommends a variation of the “Official Map” process, which guided the initial development of traditional towns. The plan’s development concept identifies a web of new streets that provides developers with the framework for incremental development. Establishing this network helps to assure street connectivity among new neighborhoods. Of particular importance will be reserving a new east/west collector street north of Valley View Drive and avoidance of dead end streets.

Access between neighborhoods and community destinations should not be relegated to cars only, but the city should also provide pedestrian linkages. New developments should be linked into existing and proposed parks throughout the city.

## OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS SYSTEM

*The natural environment and its relationship to the city should be signatures of the city's quality, with the power to recast the community's image.*

Open space and outdoor life are fundamental to Ogallala. As part of this plan a trail system is proposed that would link the river and lake environments together along with existing and proposed neighborhoods. Connections to these open spaces and future neighborhood parks should include the use of the drainageways and swales on the north side along with the city's street network. Together these should all form a continuous system of trail loops and connections. (See Maps 4-1 and 5-1)

Major elements of this park and open space system include:

- *A Central Commons.* The core of Ogallala's park system is the excellent string of parks and public facilities formed by Progress School, the swimming pool, North Park, and Western Diamonds, linked together by the Ogallala Trail. The trail extends north and links Williams Park into this system. The role of this chain of parks as the city's central open space should be reinforced.
- *River and lake environments.* While Lake McConaughy is very important to the city, it is not Ogallala's only water-related resource. The scenic South Platte provides the possibility of greenway and nature study development, and already includes Ogallala's Nature Park on the south side of the river. Additionally, a chain of gravel pit lakes west of Highway 61 along the north bank of the river include substantial public properties. These features together can create an important urban open space resource.
- *Neighborhood parks.* Williams and North Park demonstrate the value of open spaces in the range of 3 to 5 acres that serve the needs of residents in adjacent neighborhoods. New residential growth areas in Ogallala should similarly incorporate neighborhood open spaces.
- *Drainageways and swales.* The landscape of Ogallala includes a drainage system that generally flows from the northwest to the southeast. These drainageways can sometimes carry torrents of water in extreme storms, such as the ten-inch rain of 2002. Development planning should maintain the open character of these drainageways, using them as greenways that serve both recreational and stormwater management needs. Retention basins, designed to manage and delay discharge of drainage, can also be incorporated into the open space system.
- *Continuous trail loops and connections.* The city's park system should include a system of loops and connections that link city parks and neighborhoods together, and integrate the urban park system into the surrounding environment.

## ENTERPRISE CORRIDORS

*Ogallala should view the Spruce Street, First Street, I-80, and southern part of the US 26 truck route as focuses for significant development.*

Ogallala's principal urban corridors represent significant places for business and economic growth. Development policies should reinforce the roles of these important community corridors, which include:

- *Spruce Street/East A Street.* This mixed use corridor represents the most direct connection between Interstate 80, Downtown Ogallala, and the lake. It will accommodate a mix of main street and other

commercial uses, office and civic development, and residential uses. Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the scale of these streets is relatively urban, including uses with a strong orientation to the street and, in many cases, relatively small buildings. North of 11<sup>th</sup> Street, at the top of the escarpment, Spruce Street takes on a highway scale, with development that accommodates a mix of office, commercial, public, and higher-density residential uses. A commercial and business park use is proposed around the city's wellfield site southwest of the US 26/Nebraska 61 intersection with Spruce Street (generally referred to as the Wye).

- *First Street.* First Street (Highway 30) includes a variety of commercial uses, and becomes more industrial in character on both the east and west edges of the city.
- *Interstate 80.* The east-west Interstate corridor is largely oriented to highway-related commercial uses, including Ogallala's primary concentration of visitor services. Undeveloped areas along the interstate east and west of Highway 61 provide excellent industrial and business park possibilities.
- *Intersection of Highway 30 and 26.* The southern part of the US 26 truck route boasts good transportation access, including adjacency to the municipal airport. As such, it sustains industrial and business park uses. This corridor would be further strengthened by an interchange at Highway 26 and continuation to County Road 80.

Actions to support these enterprise corridors include:

- Public improvements, including good lighting, road access, and landscaping.
- Designation as enterprise zones under state legislation.
- Assembly of land or financing assistance through tax increment financing for appropriate projects.
- Infrastructure financing for master-planned business and industrial park facilities.
- Development of incubator facilities.
- Extension of the County Road West 80 and development of a new west interchange at the US 26 truck route.

## **A VITAL TOWN CENTER**

*Ogallala's Main Street district is of special importance to the city and must continue to be a vital retail and service center for residents and visitors.*

Ogallala's downtown occupies a place of particular importance within the community. As the heart of the city's retail and civic environment Ogallala's downtown is a unique environment that cannot be found in any other community, and is a unique commercial center for the surrounding region. Downtown has benefited from active participation in the Lied/Nebraska Main Street program. The downtown district has installed some streetscape improvements, including diagonal parking and nodes on Spruce Street, and panels interpreting aspects of the history of the city.

However, the district faces several other challenges, including:

- The routing of northbound traffic (to the lake) on East A Street, one block east of Spruce, the district's "main street."
- A relatively small amount of building area.
- A division of the main street district into north and south segments by First Street (Highway 30).

- Some difficulty in motorist perception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce corner node, that aligns southbound traffic around diagonal parking on the west side of the street.

Revitalization efforts in the main street district should continue, and may include:

- Maintaining Ogallala’s Main Street office as a management and marketing structure for Downtown.
- Developing a strong Downtown entrance and presence on A Street.
- Improving directional information into the district.
- Establishing a building rehabilitation and maintenance program.
- Making it easier for pedestrians to cross 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and otherwise slowing through traffic in the district.
- Enhancing promotional and branding campaigns.
- Continuing to upgrade traffic circulation and pedestrian safety

Improvements to the downtown should all be done in an effort to create a quality downtown experience. Chapter 8 “Downtown Ogallala” discusses this process in greater detail.

## **CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC OGALLALA**

*Ogallala should place a high priority on maintaining the quality of its existing urban neighborhoods.*

Ogallala’s residential neighborhoods and housing stock are vital community assets and in generally good condition. Conservation of these assets are especially important to the city. Yet, some parts of the city (particularly in the southeastern part of the community) do suffer from condition problems, and all established neighborhoods need careful maintenance and attention to maintain their quality.

Recommended neighborhood conservation actions include:

- *Continued development of new affordable housing on infill lots, led by a nonprofit developers or the housing authority, with adequate capability and capitalization to develop affordable housing.* The city has operated such a program in recent years.
- *Continued encouragement and incentives for rehabilitation and home improvements.*
- *Monitoring of neighborhood building and site conditions, supported by code enforcement efforts coupled with programmatic incentives to prevent incipient deterioration.*
- *Buffering neighborhoods through zoning that encourages residential conservation by preventing encroachments of incompatible uses.*

## **ECONOMY FOR THE FUTURE**

*Ogallala should implement economic development programs that parlay local talents and resources into growing businesses.*

In many cases, economic development efforts attempt to hit “home runs,” attracting a single large employer that will change the economic personality of the city in one stroke. Despite this understandable desire, a better policy is to play for the future by pursuing a patient, methodical approach to the development of new enterprises. In many cases, these businesses involve identifying and taking advantage of the talents of local people or people in the region – establishing Ogallala as an economic opportunity center and, as a result, attracting the self-starting

entrepreneurs who can become the future leaders of the city. Indeed, Ogallala has benefited in recent years from exactly this kind of local innovation.

An economic development strategy predicated on attracting new entrepreneurs should:

- Capitalize on the attractive quality of the city’s unusual environmental and recreational assets.
- Reinforce these assets by enhancing both the city’s physical environments and maintaining a high quality of life.
- Implementing a comprehensive and innovative economic development program, oriented to making Ogallala an attractive location for new businesses.

Economic development approaches may include:

- Identifying and developing quality business sites.
- Implementing a Talent Search program, involving a competitive regional talent search for people with business ideas, talents, and reasonable management skills. Winners would receive technical and financial assistance to establish new business starts.
- Providing moderate-cost incubator space to provide locations for the development of new business along with supporting services.
- Training and technical assistance partnerships that would utilize proven talent within the community and the capacities of Mid-Plains Community College.
- A business capitalization program, providing initial venture capital for new starts or expansions of existing businesses.

## **APPROPRIATE ZONING**

*The future land use map and plan policies should provide both guidance and flexibility to decision-makers in the land use process.*

The Future Land Use Plan laid out in the preceding chapter is a vision to guide decision-makers in the process of building their community. It cannot anticipate the design or specific situation of every rezoning. For this reason a location criteria table and compatibility guide are laid out in **Chapter 3**.

The Future Land Use Plan also proposes new concepts with the mixed-use district and business park district. Under the Euclidean land use pyramid style of zoning each higher intensity district allows every use permitted by the lower intensity districts. This single use style allows a specific group of uses that is precisely defined for its area, such as a commercial district that only allows commercial uses. On the other hand, mixed-use zoning allows a continuum of reasonably compatible or consistent uses, based on similar impacts. This type of district could permit high-density residential, office, and lower-intensity commercial uses. The business park district would allow a range of light industrial commercial and office uses. A mixed use continuum approach can provide more flexibility in making land use decisions, reinforcing policies that encourage development in planned enterprise corridors, and opening new sites to development.

## **COORDINATED CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING**

*Ogallala and Keith County should continue to coordinate planning policies and administration.*

The city and county have strong common interests coordinating planning policy. As the county's seat and largest population center, the health of the city is very important to the county. Conversely, many of Ogallala's most attractive resources are regional, and are located in the county's jurisdiction. This comprehensive planning effort, initiated in 2001, involved coordinated plans for both the city and county. Both jurisdictions maintain professionally staffed planning offices as well, unusual in Nebraska. Continued coordination of planning and development policies will be important, assuring that:

- Ogallala maintains its economic viability and role as the county's principal commercial center.
- The county provides a variety of residential and commercial settings, ranging from lake residential and rural development to a variety of quality urban environments.
- Utility and infrastructure services are provided efficiently and for the benefit of all county taxpayers.
- The quality of both the city and county environments is protected – good business because of their importance in attracting future investment and development.

## CHAPTER THREE

### GROWTH AND LAND USE

The previous chapter of the Ogallala Plan considered the factors that have helped create the form and character of Ogallala. It also discussed factors that present challenges to the management of growth and the preservation of this character. Finally, it presented development principles, to establish basic policies that guide the more detailed sections of the Ogallala Plan, helping the city encourage growth that remains true to the best features and potential of Ogallala.

#### GOALS

Chapter One considered existing land use characteristics in Ogallala and projected the amount of additional land that will be needed to achieve the target population of about 5,500 within twenty years (See Table 1.10). This chapter will identify the growth areas that will experience significant development during the next twenty years. In considering land use needs, Ogallala should:

- **PROVIDE ADEQUATE LAND FOR PROJECTED AND POTENTIAL GROWTH**

Land use projections should anticipate future growth needs and permit a reasonable amount of flexibility to accommodate possible changes in trends and provide adequate choice to developers. Land use planning should neither designate too little land for development, thereby inflating land costs, nor too much land, resulting in a loss of control over utility and infrastructure extension costs and the development process.

- **ASSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT CREATES THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES FOR BUILDING THE COMMUNITY**

New growth areas should be designated which will provide maximum advantages to all parts of the city. Growth should be guided to create excellent new residential environments, and also help improve the city's existing residential and business neighborhoods. Development directions should enhance positive features of the city, rather than create new patterns that turn away from the existing fabric of the city.

- **ENCOURAGE THE CONSERVATION OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK**

Residential growth includes measures to rehabilitate and conserve Ogallala's supply of older homes. Ogallala is distinguished by good residential neighborhoods and a generally high quality supply of housing. However, some single-family homes in the community need some type of rehabilitation. These homes represent a substantial housing resource that cannot be easily replaced at current construction costs. Moreover, the conservation of these units is vital to the health of traditional neighborhoods. In some cases, new housing development can support these rehabilitation efforts by making available to lower income persons the opportunity to secure "move-up" housing in better quality units. The community must expand housing opportunities for all by preserving its housing supply of affordable units.

- **ENCOURAGE ECONOMICAL EXTENSIONS OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

Efficient growth patterns conserve limited public funds. A compact urban form helps accomplish this goal by using existing public facilities, gravity flow sewers, and incremental extensions of existing public utilities. Incremental utility extensions reduce development costs, long-term maintenance and capital expenses, and tax burdens; make housing more affordable to buyers; and enable the city to annex new developments in a timely manner. If infrastructure is financed by the city, incremental extensions also mean that new development creates a larger return on public investment.

## OGALLALA LAND USE PLAN

The land use plan implements the Development Principles presented in the previous chapter, showing the geographic distribution of uses that accommodate Ogallala's target population of about 5,500 within the next twenty years (See Table 1.10). In applying the principles, the Future Land Use Plan is intended to:

- **Provide adequate land for projected and potential growth.**

The land use projections presented earlier should anticipate future growth needs and permit a reasonable amount of flexibility to accommodate possible change in trends and provide adequate choice to developers. Land use planning should neither designate too much or too little land for development, thereby inflating land costs or resulting in a loss of control over utility and infrastructure extension costs and the development process. The land use concept should accommodate at least:

- *About 120 acres or about twice the "hard demand" for residential absorption during the planning period. The "hard demand" for land accommodates an increase in population of 517 people between 2002 and 2022; therefore the total area designated actually accommodates an additional 500 people, or a total population of nearly 6,000. This assumes a net density of about 3.7 units per acre in new growth areas with urban services.*

- *About 30 acres of commercial land*

- *About 36 acres of industrial or business park area.*

- **Assure that new development creates the greatest advantage for building the community.**

New growth areas should be designated that will provide maximum advantages to all parts of the city. Growth should create excellent new residential environments, and help to improve the city's existing residential and business neighborhoods. Most importantly, the land use plan should impart a sense of structure and unity to the city.

- **Relate land use to transportation, infrastructure, and open space frameworks.**

The principles of access, scale and connectedness require a land use plan that unifies major features, thus new residential areas should be served by parks and conveniently connected to commercial areas and other activity centers. Industrial and commercial areas should have adequate access to serve them without undue congestion by establishing networks of streets. The land use plan, by furnishing a relatively compact form, effectively uses existing public facilities and incremental extensions of public utilities to serve growth areas.

- **Develop a city that is a pleasure to live in, and becomes a community of choice for western Nebraska.**

We often think about the utility and functionality of planning but do not often enough think that plans should help lead to delightful places that people find rewarding and life-enhancing. But cities should offer an excellent quality of life and land use policies should reflect this principle. While quality of life usually is taken to mean cultural and recreational resources, it also includes the ability for people to walk along a pleasant route to school, shops, or activity centers; to meet one's neighbors on an attractive street; and to live in neighborhoods that provide access to opportunities.

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Ogallala should balance and guide its new residential growth to create better neighborhoods and improved mobility. The development principles presented in Chapter Two are designed to accommodate necessary growth while strengthening the overall community character. These principles can be realized by viewing new growth

areas as unified neighborhoods, developing incrementally but according to a long-range plan. Each of these neighborhoods requires community investments and features that create desirable living environments. Amenity features that must be provided in each growth center include:

- A mixture of housing types and lot sizes
- Organization of new neighborhoods around traditional street patterns, including a community parkway that links civic, educational and park facilities.
- Dedication of new neighborhood parks and trail links, designed as central open spaces for each neighborhood.

The elements of these systems are woven throughout the themes of this plan.

The three primary growth centers include:

- *North Ogallala.* This area includes existing developments west of Spruce Street, including the Fox Haven and Western Diamonds area. The area also has some of the city's most rugged topography. The drainageways and ravines of this area limit design and connectivity between developments, particularly true for those areas east of Spruce. As a result, collector street connections are especially important. These growth areas will also support trail and open space development that will benefit both future and existing residents.

Components of the North Ogallala Growth Center include:

- Completion of the Fox Hill subdivision, north of Fox Hill Road and east of West H Street. Most development in this area will be single-family detached residential.
- Mixed or medium density residential development north of 24<sup>th</sup> Street and west of West A Street. This includes areas south of the Hillcrest Mobile Home Park, which also could be potentially redeveloped in the future.
- Low-density conservation development north of Fox Hill to 24<sup>th</sup> Street and east of West H Street. Conservation development features lot clustering concepts that maintain fragile hillsides as open space.
- A northeast development area, north of Ogallala Community Hospital. This area includes commercial and mixed use development along North Spruce Street, with a major commercial opportunity at the "Wye." Residential development would occur to the east of the mixed use corridor, served by a collector street loop made up of 24<sup>th</sup> Street and East G Street.
- A central east development area featuring an east-west parkway that would extend from Spruce Street to East D Street. This parkway would provide badly needed street continuity in the east part of the city and serves several potential pockets of residential development. Prairie Ridge Avenue would also be extended east from its current terminus. Greenway trails would serve this growth area, following drainage corridors.

Together, these areas provide up to 267 acres of low-density residential development, and 100 acres of mixed density residential development, capable of meeting Ogallala's development needs well into the future.

- *Western Ogallala.* This area incrementally extends existing development into western sections of the city. Development of this area will need to be closely monitored to ensure compatibility with the Highway 26 truck route corridor and future business park development along the highways. Its major east-west corridors are 5<sup>th</sup> Street and an extension of Fox Hill Road (11<sup>th</sup> Street). The west growth center features a new community park at about 5<sup>th</sup> and West P Street and a trail link along 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The area provides up to 216 acres of low-density residential development and 34 acres of medium density residential development.

- *South Bank.* This area includes two separate areas. A first development area occurs within a corridor bounded by County Road East 80 and East 85, between West Wind Golf Course and East D Street. The development concept for the site features an artificial lake as a central feature, surrounded by housing and a trail, and connecting the golf course with the interchange-related commercial corridor. The site also includes neighborhood commercial development along County Road East 80. The project concept is intended to provide a high amenity, signature development that combines convenience to city services, a substantial water feature, and access to golf. It provides about 75 acres of low-density development, 130 acres of medium-density and 43 acres of high-density residential development.

The second South Bank area includes low-density residential and rural residential developments south of County Road East 80.

## COMMERCIAL FOCUSES

*Ogallala's new commercial development should be located within well-defined nodes or districts, each with a unique and complementary role. Commercial uses are important both as economic engines and as centers for community activity. In order to maximize its twin business and city-building roles, commercial growth should occur in specific nodes or districts, each with a specialized function.*

Unlike residential and industrial land uses, commercial strategies are linked less to projected absorption rates than to the function that different commercial areas should fill in the community. This plan envisions commercial areas that have distinct roles to play. Growth of each area will result from a combination of new construction, public improvements, changes to land and building use, conversions and redevelopment, and improved zoning and subdivision processes and regulations.

### Commercial Nodes

*Downtown Ogallala.* Downtown Ogallala will continue to be the flagship mixed use district for the city, combining retail, office, and civic sectors in a vital city center. The city should develop a specific downtown plan and should include:

- Development of trail and greenway links that connect Downtown to other city amenities.
- Strengthen organizational and marketing efforts.
- Complete key physical development projects.
- Adopt zoning policies that encourage the location of civic, financial, entertainment, local service and specialty retail, and personal services uses in the city center.
- Encourage residential development on upper levels of downtown buildings.
- Create a strong downtown entrance for northbound (lakebound) traffic on East A Street.

*Highway 30.* This is the principal commercial corridor of Ogallala. To guide mixed-use development of this area the city should review the current zoning of the corridor to ensure compatibility with the city's overall goals. Improvements to the public environment should also be completed and would include sidewalks and sidewalk trails, along with improved lighting and landscaping

*North Spruce Street.* The North Spruce Street corridor will include more intense commercial development around the Highway 61 "wye", mixed-use north of the intersection and business park development within the wellfield area. Development of this area should guard against strip development that deteriorates the look of the corridor. The city should work with developers to ensure high quality development that creates a welcome entrance into

the community. A circulator system should be included within the North Spruce node to control access from the adjacent highways.

*Interchange 126.* Much of this area has developed in service business related to travelers and “big box” retail. This area will likely remain in larger-scale commercial development and businesses that provide visitor services.

*5<sup>th</sup> Street and US 26 Truck Route.* This emerging corridor will eventually require commercial services. Currently 5<sup>th</sup> Street is the only through east/west street to the truck route. Commercial development in this area will likely focus on neighborhood commercial uses.

*US 26 Interchange.* Construction of a second interchange that links to the US 26 truck route will create an ideal location for future commercial development. Much like the existing interchange commercial development in this area will focus on visitor services and convenience commercial developments.

*North US 26.* The intersection of Highway 26 and 61 on the north side of the city is a significant distance from the existing city. However, high traffic volumes along the two highway corridors and easy access to the Lake area make this a prime location from convenience commercial development, especially related to Lake McConaughy.

## **BUSINESS/INDUSTRIAL FOCUSES**

Ogallala should provide attractive sites for future industrial and business park development. Economic development efforts in the city should take maximum advantage of the community’s primary assets -- its quality of life and good regional and national transportation access. The land use plan proposes expansion of Ogallala’s existing patterns of industrial development.

Major industrial and business park corridors are proposed for:

- *Wellfield.* While inappropriate for heavy industrial use, the city’s new wellfield is an ideal location for business park development, including a range of light industrial, commercial and office uses. This site combines good regional service with excellent access to Lake McConaughy. An open space easement above the major transmission line through the wellfield can provide a central greenway that organizes the business park plan.

- *North Spruce.* This includes commercial and limited industrial developments and expansion of existing uses along the corridor. The recent Ogallala Community Hospital provides a strong anchor for development in this part of the corridor.

- *US 26/30.* Easy access to the truck route, downtown and the possibility of additional interchange at I-80 and the US 26 truck route creates an opportunity for commercial/industrial type development. This area enjoys good access to the airport and, with an additional interchanges, excellent connections to I-80.

- *Interstate South.* Easy access to the interstate system and abundant land appropriate for large industrial tracts make this area an ideal location for more general industrial development.

Special attention should be given to the design and appearance of these development areas. Good landscaping and sign standards should be implemented to create quality business environments without burdening individual businesses.

## **DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK**

A Future Land Use Plan provides a development vision for the city that guides participants in the process of community building. However, it cannot anticipate the design or specific situation of every rezoning application. Therefore, the plan should not be taken as a literal, lot-by-lot prescription of how land is to be utilized. Rather, it

provides a context that helps decision-makers, including city administrative officials, the Planning Commission, and the City Council, make logical decisions which implement the plan’s overall principles.

The Land Use Plan establishes a number of categories of land uses, some of which provide for single primary uses while others encourage mixed uses. Two tables are included in this section to help approving agencies interpret the intentions of the land use plan. Table 3.1 presents and defines the various categories proposed in the plan and establishes criteria for their application. Table 3.2 presents a land use compatibility guide which assesses the relationships between adjacent land uses and provides a basis for review of land use proposals based on their surroundings. These tables together form a framework for findings by the Planning Commission and City Council that provide both needed flexibility and consistency with the plan’s overall objectives.

**TABLE 3-1: Land Use Plan Categories and Use Criteria**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Agriculture and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally in agricultural or open space use.</li> <li>• Agriculture will remain the principal use during the planning period.</li> <li>• Extension of urban services is unlikely during the foreseeable future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These areas should remain in primary agriculture use. Urban encroachment, including large lot subdivisions, should be discouraged.</li> <li>• Primary uses through the planning period will remain agricultural.</li> <li>• Typical zoning would be Agricultural (A-1).</li> </ul>
Urban Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally in agricultural or open space use.</li> <li>• Areas may be in the path of future urban development after the planning horizon contained in this plan.</li> <li>• Very low density residential uses may be located in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These areas should be reserved for long-term urban development.</li> <li>• Primary uses through the planning period will remain agricultural.</li> <li>• Any interim large lot residential development should avoid obstructions to future urban development.</li> <li>• Typical zoning would be Agricultural Residential (A-2).</li> </ul>
Rural Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing and open space.</li> <li>• Civic uses may be allowed with special use permission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes area that have developed to low densities, but utilize conventional subdivision techniques.</li> <li>• Applies to areas where conventional large lot subdivisions have been established.</li> <li>• Most houses use individual wastewater systems and are unlikely to experience extensions of urban services.</li> <li>• Gross densities will generally be less than one unit per acre.</li> <li>• Typical zoning would be Agricultural Residential (A-2)</li> </ul>
Low-Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive land uses, emphasizing single-family detached development, although unconventional single-family forms may be permitted with special review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary uses within residential growth centers.</li> <li>• Should be insulated from adverse environmental effects, including noise, smell, air pollution, and light pollution.</li> <li>• Should provide a framework of streets and</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.</li> </ul>	<p>open spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical densities range from 1 to 6 units per acre.</li> <li>• Typical zoning would be Residential, Low Density (R-1) or Special Low Density (R-1S).</li> </ul>
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**TABLE 3-1: Land Use Plan Categories and Use Criteria**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Medium-Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing.</li> <li>• May incorporate a mix of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhouse uses.</li> <li>• Limited multi-family development may be permitted with special review and criteria</li> <li>• Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to established neighborhoods of the city that have diverse housing types, and in developing areas that incorporate a mix of development.</li> <li>• Developments should generally have articulated scale and maintain identity of individual units.</li> <li>• Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services.</li> <li>• Tend to locate in complexes, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community.</li> <li>• Typical maximum density is 6 to 12 units per acre.</li> <li>• Innovative design should be encouraged in new projects.</li> <li>• Typical zoning would be Residential, Medium Density (R-2).</li> </ul>
Mobile Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodates mobile homes which are not classified under State law as “manufactured housing.</li> <li>• Single-family, small lot settings within planned mobile home parks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services.</li> <li>• Tend to locate in complexes, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community.</li> <li>• Typical maximum density is 8 units per acre.</li> <li>• Typical zoning would be Residential, High Density (R-3). However, this should be reviewed to provide more detailed regulations for the development of mobile home facilities.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 3-1: Land Use Plan Categories and Use Criteria**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Community Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes a variety of commercial uses.</li> <li>• Establishes larger buildings and parking facilities than Limited Commercial uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be located at intersections of arterials or other major streets.</li> <li>• Should avoid a “four corners” configuration.</li> <li>• Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal traffic flow.</li> <li>• Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited.</li> <li>• Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained.</li> <li>• Good pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided into surrounding residential service areas.</li> <li>• Buffering from surrounding uses may be required.</li> </ul>
Downtown/Main Street Mixed Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional downtown district of Ogallala.</li> <li>• Includes mix of uses, primarily commercial, office, upper level residential, and warehousing/ industrial uses.</li> <li>• Primary focus of major civic uses, including government, cultural services, and other civic facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes mixed use pattern in the traditional city center.</li> <li>• Recognizes current development patterns without permitting undesirable land uses.</li> <li>• District may expand with development of appropriately designed adjacent projects.</li> <li>• New projects should respect pedestrian scale and design patterns and setbacks within the overall district.</li> <li>• Historic preservation is a significant value.</li> </ul>
Commercial Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Industrial provides for uses which do not generate noticeable external effects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies most directly to the Highway 30 and 26 corridors.</li> <li>• Commercial industrial uses may be located near office, commercial, and, with appropriate development standards, some residential areas.</li> </ul>
Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business parks may combine office and light industrial/research uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially includes new wellfield area.</li> <li>• Strict control over signage, landscaping, and design is necessary for locations nearer to low intensity uses.</li> <li>• A new zoning district for business parks, including office and office/distribution uses with good development and signage standards should be implemented.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 3-1: Land Use Plan Categories and Use Criteria**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
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Industrial/General Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General industrial provides for a range of industrial enterprises, including those with significant external effects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General industrial sites should be well-buffered from less intensive use.</li> <li>• Sites should have direct access to major regional transportation facilities, without passing through residential or commercial areas.</li> <li>• Developments with major external effects should be subject to Planned Development review.</li> </ul>
Civic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes schools, churches, libraries, and other public facilities that act as centers of community activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas.</li> <li>• Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management.</li> </ul>
Public Facilities and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes facilities with industrial operating characteristics, including public utilities, maintenance facilities, and public works yards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial operating characteristics should be controlled according to same standards as industrial uses.</li> <li>• When possible, should generally be located in industrial areas.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 3-2: Land Use Compatibility Guide**

Proposed Land Use	Existing Adjacent Land Use					
	Residential Units/Acre	Rural Residential	Low-Density Residential	Mobile Home Park	Medium-Density Residential	High-Density Residential
Rural Residential	<1	5	5	3	3	2
Low-Density Residential	1-6	4	5	4	3	2
Mobile Home Park	< 8	3	4	5	4	4
Medium-Density Residential	6-12	3	3	4	5	4
High-Density Residential	>12	2	2	4	4	5
Business Park		2	2	3	3	3
Limited Commercial		1	2	3	3	4
Community Commercial		1	2	2	3	3
Commercial Industrial		1	2	2	2	2
General Industrial		1	1	1	1	1
Civic		3	3	3	3	4
Utilities		2	2	2	2	2

  

Proposed Land Use	Business Park	Limited Commercial	Community Commercial	Commercial Industrial	General Industrial	Civic	Utilities
Rural Residential	2	1	1	1	1	3	2
Low-Density Residential	2	2	2	2	1	3	2
Mobile Home Park	3	3	2	2	1	3	2
Medium-Density Residential	3	3	3	2	1	3	2
High-Density Residential	3	4	3	2	1	4	2
Business Park	5	5	5	4	3	4	2
Limited Commercial	5	5	5	4	2	3	2
Community Commercial	5	5	5	4	3	3	3
Commercial Industrial	4	4	5	5	5	2	4
General Industrial	3	2	3	5	5	1	5
Civic	4	3	3	2	1	5	2

Utilities	2	2	3	4	5	2	5
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**Compatibility Rating Key**

5: Identical to pre-existing land uses or totally compatible. Development should be designed consistent with good planning practice.

4: The proposed use is basically compatible with the pre-existing adjacent use. Traffic from higher intensity uses should be directed away from lower intensity uses. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development.

3: The proposed use may have potential conflicts with existing adjacent uses, which may be remedied or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower-intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be employed to minimize negative effects. A Planned Unit Development may be advisable.

2: The proposed use has significant conflicts with the pre-existing adjacent use. Major effects must be strongly mitigated to prevent impact on adjacent uses. A Planned Unit Development is required in all cases to assess project impact and define development design.

1: The proposed use is incompatible with adjacent land uses. Any development proposal requires a Planned Unit Development and extensive documentation to prove that external effects are fully mitigated. In general, proposed uses with this level of conflict will not be permitted.

**ANNEXATION PROGRAM**

*Ogallala should implement an annexation program that will create opportunities for new development and facilitate the goals of the future land use plan.*

As Ogallala continues to grow the city will need to create opportunities for new development and reserve land necessary to carry out the goals of the future land use plan. To do this the city will need to annex adjacent territory and expand its extra-territorial jurisdiction. The City’s annexation program should:

- *Control Future Fringe Development.* In order to allow the city to guide its growth and development more effectively, fringe development will need to be managed. Through annexation, a city can extend its zoning ordinance to adjacent areas and thus guide development in a direction that will provide safe and healthy environments.

- *Protect and Enhance the City’s Tax Base.* Those living in fringe developments benefit from the city’s parks and recreational facilities, streets, utilities, and other facilities and programs without contributing to the tax base.

- *Avoid Jurisdictional Confusion.* Squaring off the city and county boundaries can aid in providing services by establishing an orderly and logical boundary.

- *Increase In Size and Population.* An increase in the city’s physical size and population can mean an increase in its level of political influence and attractiveness for commercial and industrial development. Annexation may force new development to occur in the city, and therefore increase jobs and the tax base. It may also increase the city’s ability to attract grant assistance.

The Annexation Plan map (Map 3-3) illustrates those areas around the City of Ogallala that should be considered for annexation. The areas are categorized into four phases based on the estimated urgency for incorporation into the city. Phase 1 the most urgent and Phase 4 being the least urgent. The following is a description of the issues

associated with each phase as illustrated on the Annexation Phasing Map. Within each phase areas are delineated by their relevance regarding the need for annexation and the services the city will need to provide to the area.

**Phase One.** *Location and associated issues warrant the immediate consideration of annexation.*

**Section 1a.** Section 1a is located east of Spruce Street and is bounded by the existing city limits on both the north and south sides. Recent changes to the city's ordinance should facilitate annexation of this site, providing a continuous boundary.

**Section 1b.** Section 1b is the County Fairgrounds. It has recently been discovered that this area has not been annexed. This area is completely surrounded by the city and receives city services. To avoid further confusion this area should be annexed immediately.

**Phase Two.** *Opportunities exist to warrant future consideration of annexation within the twenty-year life of the Ogallala Plan. These areas should be evaluated for annexation within the next five years.*

**Section 2a.** Section 2a is located north of Highway 61. The area has some retail development at the intersection of Spruce and Highway 61. Easy access to city services and Lake McConaughy will make this area a likely location for future development.

**Section 2b.** Section 2b is located east of the Spruce Street corridor. The rough terrain of the area could be very appealing to those looking for a more secluded residential environment with easy access to the city. Access to infrastructure running along Spruce Street could also encourage development in the area.

**Section 2c.** Section 2c is located south of the interstate and east of the existing city limits. The area is adjacent to the golf course and some existing residential development. A planned development on this site would benefit from annexation.

**Section 2d.** Section 2d covers the Highway 61 south of County Road 80. The area has seen some commercial development and is a prime location for future commercial and residential development. The area also has easy access to city water. Growth within these far southern areas should be monitored closely and annexation should only occur when all city services, including fire and police protection, can be reasonably supplied.

**Section 2e.** Section 2e lies on Ogallala's western boundary and would extend the city limits to the Highway 26 truck route corridor. This could be a prime location for commercial and industrial development and could be facilitated by a second interchange that would connect to Highway 26. Development in the area should be monitored closely to ensure that it does not occur in a strip pattern that takes away from the free-flow pattern of the truck route.

**Phase Three.** *These areas are situated beyond the expected growth areas of the city. Conditions exist that may bring about the need for annexation of these areas. Annexation will not be necessary until well beyond the life of the Ogallala Plan, however they should be reevaluated within six to ten years.*

**Section 3a.** Section 3a is located east of Spruce Street and the hospital. The area is currently in agricultural use. Its development will follow growth along the Spruce Street Corridor. Easy access to city services and a break in the rougher terrain both north and south of the area could make the area a prime location for development during the planning period.

**Section 3b.** Section 3b lies between the Union Pacific Railroad and the South Platte area. The lakes and likeness for flooding may make the area difficult to develop but should be preserved for park and recreation development.

**Section 3c.** Section 3c is located in southeastern Ogallala and includes the West Winds Golf Course. The area has seen some residential development with additional lots available. Contiguous development to the west will need to occur to make annexation of the area feasible.

**Section 3d and 3e.** Sections 3d and 3e lie to the east and west of the Highway 61 corridor in southern Ogallala. The area has seen some large lot development and has easy access to the city. Improvements to County Road 80 could also facilitate development within the area. Much of the area should experience residential development, except for a small section along County Road 80.

**Section 3f.** Section 3f is located south of the Interstate and north of County Road 80. The area is a prime location for industrial development if improvements to County Road 80 and an additional interchange are constructed. These improvements will open the area up to industrial development with easy access to transportation and a location away from the heart of the city and residential development.

**Section 3g.** Section 3g is located north of the South Platte River and south of the existing city limits on Ogallala's western end. The area is unlikely to see significant development beyond expansion of existing industrial uses. However, if expansion does occur the city will want to consider extending the city limits.

**Section 3h.** Section 3h is located on the western edge of the Highway 26 truck route and would include part of the airport. Easy access to the airport, highway and railroad could make this a prime location for industrial and commercial development. The city will want to monitor development closely to ensure it meets the city's overall goals for the corridor.

**Section 3i.** Section 3i is located in western Ogallala and will likely see residential development. The areas adjacency to existing residential development and easy access to city services and Highway 26 could make this an ideal location for residential development.

**PHASE FOUR.** *These areas are situated beyond the expected growth areas of the city. Annexation will not be necessary until well beyond the life of the Ogallala Plan. Rural development will likely be an end use in many of these locations, as urban development will likely occur nearer the current urbanized area. These areas should be reevaluated in approximately 10 years.*

**Section 4a.** This area is unlikely to experience development but its visibility from the Highway 26 corridor could push development within the next twenty years.

**Section 4b.** These areas are unlikely to see development but should be reserved for future urban development with easy access to city services.

**Section 4c.** Section 4c is beyond the city's twenty-year planning period but Highway access and development of the Lake McConaughy corridor could to push development of the area.

**Section 4d.** Section 4d is located between the Highway 30 and the Interstate corridors on Ogallala's eastern edge. Some of this area has already developed and should only be annexed with the annexation of the area to the west.

## CHAPTER FOUR ACCESS FOR ALL

Transportation and land use are related systems and their interaction helps determine the development future envisioned by the Ogallala Plan. In any community, the transportation system fills many functions - as a lifeline for business and industry, a tool for economic self-sufficiency and human dignity, a form-giver to the city, and an amenity and vital service for residents. Transportation helps determine the direction of land use, and, historically, encouraged the growth of the city. Conversely, development also creates demand for transportation facilities. In addition, the transportation system increasingly has quality of life implications. Facilities that promote pedestrian and bicycle access supplement the road system, increase mobility throughout the community, and provide valuable recreational resources. This chapter examines Ogallala's transportation system, and proposes a circulation network that supports the land use and development objectives identified in the previous two chapters.

### GOALS

This chapter recommends a transportation system that fills a variety of roles in Ogallala. The overall assumption of this chapter is that land use policies and major transportation improvements in Ogallala must:

- Address transportation issues that result from Ogallala's position in the regional traffic system.
- Provide enhanced movement around the city; and
- Link neighborhoods and community features together.

Ogallala's transportation system should:

#### ● **PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE AND CONVENIENT MOVEMENT OF ALL RESIDENTS OF OGALLALA.**

In order to provide a safe environment the city should:

- Provide alternative routes that move traffic effectively and create a safe and efficient system.
- Anticipate and plan for future problems.
- Integrate pedestrian and bicycle transportation into the overall system and provide safe facilities for these non-motorized users

This chapter will address these concerns, provide solutions for identified problems and suggest direction for future needs that will emerge from community change.

#### ● **ASSURE THAT THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS ADEQUATE TO MEET THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT.**

Overall the city's system has development in a continuous fashion. However, heavier traffic volumes on Spruce, East A Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Street have created some unsafe conditions. A major goal of the plan must be to create an overall system that reduces or eliminates these conflicts or pressures.

The transportation plan should also look at limited cost solutions that can also increase the system's ability to serve the city's needs. For example, management strategies that eliminate local problems and hazards can economically increase the capacity of existing streets.

- **USE THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO SUPPORT DESIRABLE PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

Transportation systems do more than move people from one place to another. They also form the structure of the community and are a very important implementation tool in the comprehensive planning process. In the case of Ogallala, transportation “balance” also means opening new areas to development. This, over the long term, will load the traffic system more equally and assure that streets effectively serve an increasing population and renewed industrial and business base. A future transportation system for Ogallala should also anticipate functional needs and potential conflicts created by various types of traffic. Thus, an effective system will provide trucks and other industrial traffic with routes that avoid existing and developing residential areas; and will support land use patterns that respect the needs and environmental characteristics of various development types.

- **PROVIDE MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT USING AUTOMOBILES.**

Ogallala’s physical layout and size makes traveling around the city by means other than cars a possibility. The city’s pedestrian system should provide good access to major features in the city. In addition, bicycles are a functional form of transportation in Ogallala for recreational, shopping, and even work trips. The city has recognized the potential role of non-motorized transportation by largely completing a continuous trail system that links Williams Park in the extreme northern part of the city with major commercial development south of Interstate 80.

In addition, some of Ogallala’s residents suffer from mobility impairments. For example, elderly residents are increasingly transportation-disadvantaged because the city provides few alternatives to the use of cars. Many senior citizens can no longer drive or feel uncomfortable about using automobiles. For its residents, and for the sake of reduced traffic congestion, Ogallala should work to increase transportation options and mobility for all its citizens.

- **USE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES TO INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Economic growth is vital to Ogallala’s future and the city’s transportation facilities are major assets toward this goal. Interstate 80 and the Union Pacific Railroad provide the city with the ability to reach distant markets. However, internal transportation improvements should build on these assets and provide direct and efficient service to potential employment centers.

- **ENCOURAGE A BALANCED GROWTH PATTERN THAT DISTRIBUTES TRAFFIC IN WAYS THAT SAFEGUARDS THE CITY’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

In order to realize the full benefits of the planned transportation system, growth in Ogallala must be evenly distributed. The proposed network is designed to promote growth contiguous to the existing city, and continue the city’s overall balanced traffic system.

Ogallala’s land use policies and decision making must reinforce the long-term city development concepts. The result will be a community that is more balanced physically and more economical to serve and operate. In addition, a balanced development pattern will guard against future failures of the city’s transportation system.

## **ANALYSIS**

This section examines important elements of the transportation system that will assist in developing specific projects and policies. It discusses the structure of the city’s street system and the role that its individual parts play.

### **The Structure of the Street System**

Ogallala's street system originally grew from the "surveyor's grid," rotated slightly to parallel the Union Pacific Railroad. The city expanded in an east-west direction, constrained by the South Platte on the south and rugged hills to the north. West of West H, and east of Spruce and north of 6<sup>th</sup>, the street pattern changed to follow the ordinal grid in place of the rotated grid oriented to the railroad. Initially, Spruce Street provided the city's primary crossing over the Union Pacific, connecting limited development south of the tracks with the main city, and proceeded south of the city to Grant. Ultimately, the construction of Interstate 80 resulted in an interchange with Highways 26 and 61, forming the principal vehicular gateway into the city. This arterial crossed over the South Platte channel and included a grade separation over the Union Pacific, reconstructed during the 1980s. Stagecoach Trail developed as a frontage road serving commercial services on the north side of I-80, while a grid of service streets generally bounded by County Road East 80 and 85 served major development south of the interstate. Development to the north of the original grid extended along the Spruce Street corridor.

The resultant pattern includes:

#### *North-South Circulation*

- A major north-south arterial, the Spruce/East A system. Northbound traffic entering Ogallala from the south follows a one-way northbound East A Street, which jogs a block west to the Spruce Street alignment at 7<sup>th</sup> Street. North of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Spruce Street continues as a two-way arterial. Southbound traffic continues south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street along one-way Spruce Street, and is routed eastbound for a block on 1<sup>st</sup> Street (US Highway 30) to the viaduct. The new viaduct aligns with East A Street.
- A potential north-south corridor along West H Street, parallel to and one-half mile west of Spruce Street. West H extends from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the former Highway 26 north of the city. However, continuity along West H is broken south of Foxhill Road.
- Relatively good north-south local street connections between West K Street and East O Street. Street continuity is best in the traditional city grid between West H and East D Streets. East G Street and East O Street are the major north-south links east of Spruce. East G serves the High School and Goodall Recreation Center, while East O serves Prairie View Elementary School. A regular grid of local streets serves the west side of the city west to West H. This grid breaks into a more curvilinear street pattern in the Smith's and Elliott's Subdivisions west to West Park.
- The Highway 26 truck route. In 2000, Highway 26/61 was relocated from Spruce Street to a new alignment 1.5 miles west of Spruce. This road passes Ogallala Municipal Airport and intersects US Highway 30. Highways 26/61 are now routed along 1<sup>st</sup> Street (US 30) to the East A viaduct, and south to Interchange 126.

#### *East-West Circulation*

- A major east-west arterial corridor along 1<sup>st</sup> Street (US Highway 30), parallel to the Union Pacific. First Street is a four-lane section through the city.
- An east-west corridor along West 5<sup>th</sup> Street between East A and the US 26 Truck route. West 5<sup>th</sup> serves as the principal local arterial for traffic on the west side of the city. East-west local street continuity on the west side is good in the traditional grid area to West H, but depends entirely on West 5<sup>th</sup> west of West H.
- Fair east-west street continuity east of the East A/Spruce Street corridors. Fourth and Sixth Streets serve as the primary local circulation routes. These two streets converge at East O Street. East-west circulation becomes much more indirect north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- An east-west circulation corridor in the upland area along West 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

## Street Classification

The Street Classification Map displays the city's existing TEA-21 system with federal functional classifications. A street segment must be designated part of the Federal Aid system to be eligible for Federal funding assistance for major improvements.

Major streets and roads are placed into four functional categories:

*Interstate/Expressways:* Expressways are restricted access, free-flow roads, designed to carry high traffic volumes at high speeds with minimum friction. All traffic movement is lane-separated by flow direction, and all intersections with local and regional roads are made with grade-separated interchanges. Interstate 80 is an Expressway.

*Major Arterials:* These roads serve regional needs and connect major activity centers. They usually serve the highest traffic corridors and are designed to accommodate relatively high speeds (usually above 40 miles per hour in urban areas). These streets often use access control devices such as raised medians to reduce traffic conflicts.

Major arterials include:

- First Street (US Highway 30)
- Highway 26/61 south of First Street to Interstate 80
- Highway 61 south of Interstate 80
- Highway 26/61 West Truck route
- East-west Highway 61
- Spruce Street
- East A Street south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Congestion and safety problems emerge when major arterials mix local and regional traffic in relatively tight quarters. These conditions emerge from adjacent land use patterns or a lack of a local street web requires residents to depend on major arterials for intra-city trips.

*Other Arterials:* These major streets connect with and complement the major arterial system by linking major activity centers and connecting various parts of the city together. Unlike expressways, other arterials usually provide access to adjacent properties and generally accommodate extensive left-turn movements and curb cuts. These major streets are designed for speeds of 40 mph or below. As a rule, these streets are spaced at 0.5 to 1.0 miles in developed urban areas and 2.0 miles in fringe areas. Ogallala streets in this classification include:

- East G Street
- West O Street
- West 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 6<sup>th</sup> Street

*Collectors:* The collector system links neighborhoods together and connects them to arterials and activity centers. Collectors are designed for relatively low speeds (30 mph and below) and provide unlimited local access. Collectors run within residential areas and distribute trips from arterials to their ultimate destinations. They also collect traffic from a neighborhood's local streets and channel it to arterials. Examples of collectors in Ogallala's current system include:

- West H Street
- West E Street
- East D Street

- East O Street
- 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 6<sup>th</sup> Street (east of East G Street)
- Prospector Drive
- Stagecoach Trail

*Local Streets.* Local streets serve individual properties within residential or commercial areas. They provide direct low-speed access for relatively short trips. Local streets may include cul-de-sacs, which should not exceed 300 feet in length only in exceptional circumstances. Ogallala has few cul-de-sacs and should continue to provide the well established network of streets.

## **Traffic Volumes and Capacity Analysis**

The 1999 Average Daily Traffic count conducted by the Nebraska Department of Roads indicates traffic loads on major segments of Ogallala’s street system. It indicates the following:

- The heaviest loads in Ogallala’s street system occur along 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30) between West B and East D Streets, with average daily traffic (adt) between 7,475 and 8,525. These peak rates are located within the downtown district of the city. The impact of these volumes is increased by local movements into access driveways.
- The second most heavily traveled corridor is Spruce Street. Traffic volumes along Spruce Street peak at its merger with East A Street traffic on the north side of the city. Traffic volumes here reached 5,720 adt. Volumes remain over 4,000 adt north of this intersection.
- Paralleling Spruce Street, East A Street also receives heavier volumes of traffic and peaks just north of 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30) in downtown Ogallala.

### **Capacity Analysis**

A capacity analysis compares the traffic volumes on a street segment with the design traffic capacity of that segment. The ratio of volume over capacity (V/C) corresponds to a “level of service” (LOS), which describes the quality of traffic flow.

### **Measures of Levels of Service (LOS)**

System performance of a street is evaluated using a criterion called the “level of service” or LOS. LOS is qualitative measure that examines such factors as speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom of maneuvering, safety, convenience, and operating costs of a road under specific volume conditions. A ratio of volume to capacity (that is how much traffic the street carries divided by how much traffic the street was designed to carry) provides a short method for determining LOS. LOS categories are described as follows:

- LOS A: This describes free-flowing operation. Vehicles face few impediments in maneuvering. The driver has a high level of physical and psychological comfort. Minor accidents or breakdowns cause little interruption in the traffic stream. LOS A corresponds to a volume/capacity ratio of 0 to 0.60.
- LOS B: This condition is reasonably free-flowing operation. Maneuvering ability is slightly restricted, but ease of movement remains high. LOS B corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.60 to 0.70.
- LOS C: This level provides stable operation. Traffic flows approach the range in which increases in traffic will degrade service. Minor incidents can be absorbed, but a local slow-down of traffic will result. In urban settings, LOS C is a good level of service to work toward. It corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.70 to 0.80.

- LOS D: This level borders on an unstable traffic flow. Small traffic increases produce substantial service deterioration. Maneuverability is limited and comfort levels are reduced. LOS D represents a V/C ratio of 0.80 to 0.90. LOS D is frequently used as a compromise standard in dense urban settings.

- LOS E: LOS E represents typical operation at full design capacity of a street. Operations are extremely unstable, because there is little margin for error in the traffic stream. LOS E corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.90 to 1.00.

- LOS F: LOS F is a breakdown in the system. Such conditions exist when queues form behind a breakdown or congestion point. This condition occurs when traffic exceeds the design capacity of the street.

### **Street Performance Evaluation**

Table 4-1 uses the volume/capacity ratio method to compute the LOS offered by each major street segment in the city, utilizing 1999 traffic volumes. Based on this analysis Ogallala has a highly functional street system. Drivers have numerous options and are not continually forced on to the city's major streets to move around the city. This means that none of the city's arterials or collectors are performing at ratings higher than an LOS A level.

**TABLE 4.1: Traffic Capacity Analysis for Ogallala**

Roadway Name	Segment	Volume	Capacity at LOS C	Absolute Capacity	V/C	LOS
West O Street	South of West 5th St.	680	8,400	10,500	0.06	A
West H Street	North of Highway 30	1,510	6,500	8,125	0.19	A
	North of 5th St.	1,010	6,500	8,125	0.12	A
West E Street	North of 5th St.	510	6,500	8,125	0.06	A
Spruce Street	North of 3rd St.	4,370	8,450	10,563	0.41	A
	North of 6th St.	4,180	9,350	11,688	0.36	A
	North of 8th St.	5,720	9,350	11,688	0.49	A
	North of N. Hillcrest Dr.	5,080	8,400	10,500	0.48	A
	North of Skyline Dr.	4,180	8,400	10,500	0.40	A
East A Street	North of Highway 30	4,905	8,450	10,563	0.46	A
	North of 4th Street	4,270	8,450	10,563	0.40	A
East D Street	North of Highway 30	1,510	6,500	8,125	0.19	A
	North of 6th St.	1,400	6,500	8,125	0.17	A
East G Street	North of Highway 30	1,070	8,400	10,500	0.10	A
	South of 6th St.	1,575	8,400	10,500	0.15	A
East O Street	South of 6th St.	775	6,500	8,125	0.10	A
	North of 6th St.	770	6,500	8,125	0.09	A
10th Street	West of West E St.	1,190	6,500	8,125	0.15	A
	East of West E St.	1,330	6,500	8,125	0.16	A
	West of Spruce St.	1,930	6,500	8,125	0.24	A
	East of Spruce St.	1,295	6,500	8,125	0.16	A
6th Street	Spruce to East A St.	785	7,500	9,375	0.08	A
	East of East D St.	1,885	8,400	10,500	0.18	A
	East of East G St.	1,380	8,400	10,500	0.13	A
	West of East O St.	425	8,400	10,500	0.04	A
5th Street	East of West O St.	1,025	8,400	10,500	0.10	A
	West of West H St.	1,945	8,400	10,500	0.19	A
	West of West E St.	1,840	8,400	10,500	0.18	A
	West of Spruce St.	2,175	7,500	9,375	0.23	A
	Spruce to East A St.	1,735	7,500	9,375	0.19	A
1st Street/ Highway 30	West of West O St.	2,285	23,300	29,125	0.08	A
	East of West O St.	3,620	23,300	29,125	0.12	A
	West of West H St.	5,090	23,300	29,125	0.17	A
	East of West H St.	6,240	23,300	29,125	0.21	A
	West of West B St.	7,860	23,300	29,125	0.27	A
	East of East A St.	8,525	21,000	26,250	0.32	A
	East of East D St.	7,475	21,000	26,250	0.28	A
	East of East G St.	5,500	23,300	29,125	0.19	A
	East of Poplar St.	1,785	23,300	29,125	0.06	A

### Cautions about the LOS System

While the level of service concept provides a way of “grading” traffic flow, it is important to remember that it is primarily based on the speed at which traffic can travel. In urban situations the costs and benefits of providing high speed and undelayed traffic movement versus effects on adjacent neighborhoods must be weighed. In some situations a poor LOS may be desirable from an urban or economic point of view. In downtown areas, for example, the need for pedestrian movement and safety, parking, and commercial visibility supercedes the need

for a low LOS. Thus, while LOS is a useful measurement too, it should not be used to the exclusion of other values. The transportation system should serve, rather than dominate, the overall city environment.

## Functional Transportation Issues

Ogallala clearly has few transportation issues relating to capacity and congestion. However, the city does have some functional issues that require future consideration. Major areas of concern include the following:

- *Functioning at the “foot” of the East A viaduct.* The curving design of the East A Viaduct over the Union Pacific responded to serious constraints, involving routing a four-lane, contemporary overpass in a way that minimized impacts on the cityscape, while aligning with the city’s north-south arterial system. The overpass design also must clear the Union Pacific tracks while landing at grade at the 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersection. This creates difficult, although unavoidable, vertical section issues.
- The East A viaduct lines up with northbound East A Street; the southbound Spruce Street member of the pair is one block to the west. Highway 26 and 61 are now routed west along 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the west Truck route. These conditions together generate a number of left-turn truck movements within a relatively short distance in the center of the city. The conflicts between trucks, through and lakebound traffic, local traffic, and pedestrians created by this difficult traffic pattern represent Ogallala’s leading transportation challenge.
- *Local and through movements along Highway 30.* First Street is the city’s principal east-west corridor (other than I-80) and includes a number of local service commercial uses. These create some traffic conflicts between through and turning movements along the four-lane, undivided segment in the center of the city.
- *Traffic speed along the East A and Spruce Street corridors.* These two-lane, one-way corridors tend to move traffic at relatively high speed through the center of the city. This is an issue because of adjacent uses, such as the Middle School at 6<sup>th</sup> and East A. In addition, southbound Spruce Street traffic should slow as it enters the downtown district at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. This situation has been helped somewhat by traffic signal installation at 6<sup>th</sup> and Spruce.
- *“Dead-ends” and lack of local street continuity.* The street grid in Ogallala tends to break down at the base of the escarpment forming the north edge of the traditional town. As a result, several north-south streets terminate in dead-ends, and east-west connections are lacking. Other developed sections on the edge of the city similarly lack interconnections.
- *Design versus desirable speed.* Much of Ogallala’s street system experiences traffic volumes well below design capacity, tending to speed traffic on both local and through streets. Current development standards require wide streets, that also tend to encourage fast traffic through residential areas. Techniques that tend to calm traffic may be desirable where these conditions become severe.

## Street Condition Evaluation

The Street Condition Map (4-2) displays the condition of the streets in Ogallala. The evaluation consisted of four categories, including:

- **Good.** A good street typically has only minor problems with cracking, potholes or rutting. The street can be old and still rated good.

- **Average.** An average street typically has approximately 25% of the street experiencing cracking, potholes or rutting.
- **Poor.** A poor street typically has approximately 50% of the street experiencing cracking, potholes or rutting.
- **Gravel.** Gravel streets are unpaved roads covered in loose rock and soil.

Streets in Ogallala are constructed of various materials including:

- **Concrete.** Strong building material made by mixing cement and mineral aggregates (such as sand and gravel) with water, causing the cement to set and bind the entire mass.
- **Asphalt.** Black tar-like substance mixed with sand or gravel and used for paving.
- **Gravel.** Gravel roads generally consist of loose rock over compact earth.

Overall, Ogallala's streets are in generally good condition. Very few streets are considered poor, needing repair. Streets in poor condition, particularly in high traffic areas, present hazardous conditions. The following streets should be rehabilitated to improve safer passage:

- East F Street, south of 5<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street, between West A Street and Spruce Street.

Several other streets need repair, but are not critical to the transportation network. Various intersections where grading materials abut each other, such as concrete against asphalt, need improving. For example, East B and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets are in good condition. However, the change of paving from asphalt to concrete at the intersection will eventually need improvement.

## Other Transportation Modes

### Sidewalks

Ogallala maintains a relatively complete sidewalk system within its traditional grid. However, this system breaks down in outlying development areas, suffering from some of the same discontinuities as the local and collector street system. Gradual adaptation of major pedestrian corridors to full accessibility will be an important priority for Ogallala's pedestrian system.

### Trails

Ogallala includes a trail sequence that is significant for both its recreational and transportation benefits. This initial system includes:

- The Ogallala Trail, connecting the city's swimming pool and North Park at 7<sup>th</sup> and West B Streets with Williams Park at 24<sup>th</sup> and Spruce Streets. This trail serves the Western Diamonds recreation complex and follows beautiful and interesting terrain in the northern part of the city.
- A roadside trail that begins at 1<sup>st</sup> Street at the Highway 26/61 viaduct, continues on the west side of the viaduct, and extends as a 10-foot wide facility along the west side of the road to the Pamida store on Highway 61 south.

This system has a gap between 7<sup>th</sup> and West B and 1<sup>st</sup> and East A.

## Conclusions

This analysis suggests that:

- Ogallala enjoys a reasonably well-connected street network in its traditional grid. However, this connectivity breaks down around the edges of the community, and particularly needs better east-west local connections in the northern part of town.
- Generally, the city's street system operates well below capacity. This can generate relatively fast moving traffic along both local streets and major corridors.
- The city's major traffic problem involves traffic conflicts and congestion around 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the Highway 26/61 viaduct, encompassing some of the city's central business district.
- Ogallala has made some accommodation for bicycle transportation, and provides a good north-south route through the city. However, this system has a gap in the center of town. In addition, pedestrians and bicyclists use West 5th Street frequently, although it lacks facilities.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

In Ogallala, a transportation program should meet current and future mobility needs without compromising the character of the city's urban environment. This general policy includes:

- Reducing traffic friction and safety conflicts along major corridors, including Spruce, East A Streets, and First Street.
- Reducing congestion and turning conflicts at the foot of the Highway 26/61 viaduct.
- Providing routes and alternative modes for local trips to improve the safe functioning of major arterials.
- Using transportation to encourage desirable land use patterns.
- Developing a continuous network to accommodate non-automobile transportation.

The components of this program include:

- **WEB OF COLLECTOR STREETS**
- **WEST H CONTINUITY**
- **OGALLALA PARKWAY**
- **TRUCK ROUTE INTERCHANGE**
- **HIGHWAY 26/ROAD 80 SOUTHSIDE LINK**
- **DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC CIRCULATION**
- **PEDESTRIAN AND TRAIL SYSTEM**
- **COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS**

### **WEB OF COLLECTOR STREETS**

*A collector street and parkway system in developing areas should be designated ahead of development and dedicated as growth takes place.*

In a town like Ogallala, residential and commercial development tends to occur on an incremental, project-by-project basis. As a result, developments provide for their own internal circulation needs, but rarely anticipate the cross connections and linkages necessary to create an integrated transportation network. This creates a "pod"

type of development pattern, by which most traffic exits a development onto key streets, where it comes into conflict with through and regional traffic.

This pattern is evident in some of Ogallala's contemporary residential areas, and has resulted in relatively discontinuous east-west access and a number of "dead-end" streets. The circulation network that connects different neighborhoods together will not develop by chance. Instead, these important links should be pre-designated through this comprehensive plan. As projects develop, their design should incorporate a framework of connecting streets, reserving the required collector routes and dedicating their rights-of-way. The actual alignments of the collector network may differ somewhat from those proposed in the plan. However, the general web of collector streets should be maintained. In some cases, the city may pre-develop a street segment to create necessary linkages. Planned links in a collector system could include:

- *Northern Loop.* A collector loop north of the Highway 26/61 "Y" would provide additional access to the highway and provide alternatives to the "Y" intersection. Highway design standards and good practice discourage front access to these major arterials.
- *32<sup>nd</sup> Street Extension.* Thirty-second Street should be extended to the east as a collector street for future development on the east side of Spruce Street.
- *24<sup>th</sup> Street Upgrades.* Twenty-fourth Street should be upgraded to a paved road between West H Street and the Highway 26/61 truck route on the west end of town.
- *Foxhill Road Extension.* The extension of Foxhill Road west of West H Street would provide an additional link to the Highway 26/61 truck route and move traffic around the city more effectively.
- *Ogallala Parkway.* The Ogallala Parkway would provide access between Spruce Street and East O Street in northern Ogallala. Because the terrain of northern Ogallala makes it difficult to provide a connected street grid, providing key linkages to moving residents around this area of the city will be especially important.

## **WEST H CONTINUITY**

*West H Street should be upgraded to an arterial street north of Foxhill Road and developed between Foxhill Road and West 11<sup>th</sup> Street to provide an addition link between the heart of the city and Highway 61*

Currently, Spruce Street is the only continuous connection between central and northern Ogallala, creating conflicts between local and regional traffic. Further development in the North Spruce corridor and the anticipated growth of a business park on the city wellfield site will increase potential conflicts and produce inconvenient travel routes. Ogallala should develop another north-south through route to encourage development in the northwest quadrant of the city and provide alternative travel routes.

West H Street is the logical alternative route. The street should ultimately be improved from Foxhill to Highway 61 as demands emerge, and is designated in this plan as an arterial street. In addition, the street should extend south of Foxhill Road to connect with dedicated right-of-way south of 12<sup>th</sup> Street, closing a gap in right-of-way south of Foxhill.

As this corridor develops, Ogallala preserve open spaces along the corridor. Certain sections of the corridor will be difficult to develop because of drainage patterns and steep terrain. These areas should be preserved as part of Ogallala open space system. Conservation development techniques can cluster lots in more buildable parts of the quadrant, while preserving steep slopes, erodible soils, and water features as common spaces.

## **OGALLALA PARKWAY**

*A northern collector street should provide access between Spruce and East O Street, designed to complement the existing landscape.*

Ogallala lacks connected east-west access north of West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and east of Spruce Street. This places most traffic on East 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets and discourages potential residential development in desirable areas north of Valley View Drive. To address these issues, the plan recommends an “Ogallala Parkway,” a new collector route extending at the foot of the hills between North Spruce Street and East O Street. This scenic parkway will run along the edge of some of the city’s steep terrain and provide access to future development in northern Ogallala. The landscape within this area is a transition from the flat plain of the South Platte River valley in southern Ogallala and the parkway should complement this terrain and its beautiful vistas.

Ogallala Parkway opens a number of areas to residential development, including small projects that can be developed incrementally in cul-de-sacs off the parkway. The street should be designed as a parkway, with good landscaping and a parallel multi-use trail. The parkway should be dedicated by adjacent developments as those areas are platted; or may be developed in advance of growth by the city.

## **TRUCK ROUTE INTERCHANGE**

*Ogallala should work with the Nebraska Department of Roads to develop a second interchange from Interstate 80, connecting the Interstate to the Highway 26/61 Truck route.*

Ogallala’s primary traffic problem is the difficult movement of trucks, visitor traffic, regional traffic, and local users through the East A and Spruce Street intersections along 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The current routing of Highway 26, the principal route to the Nebraska Panhandle, takes heavy truck traffic into the center of town and requires a left turn from the viaduct onto 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The grade and physical constraints at this location make it difficult to do a great deal to solve this problem through intersection redesign. However, many groups would benefit from the diversion of some of this heavy, slow-moving traffic away from the town center. The West Highway 26/61 Truck route was developed to remove much of this traffic from the mixed use Spruce and East A corridors. However, it still must maneuver through the 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersections at East A and Spruce Street.

Development of a second interchange with I-80 at the Highway 26 truck route intersection would address this problem and ease heavy vehicle access through and around Ogallala. A new interchange would make it unnecessary for truck traffic to travel through the center of town and would open the west side to expanded commercial and industrial development. The interchange would also provide direct access to Ogallala Municipal Airport. A new project would include a grade separated crossing over the Union Pacific and a Platte River bridge.

Policies must also be in place to protect existing commercial development at Exit 126. These policies should include:

- Land use control to limit the amount of commercial development at a new interchange.
- Directional signage identifying Exit 126 as the primary gateway to Lake McConaughy.
- Extension of County Road West 80 to the new interchange, as discussed below.

## Highway 26/ROAD 80 SOUTHSIDE LINK

*County Road East 80 should be extended and upgraded to connect to a new Interstate 80 interchange.*

To realize the full benefits of a new interchange, County Road West 80 should be extended from its western boundary to connect with a new western interchange. This important road already functions as a county collector road and would encourage industrial development on the south side of the interstate. The extended road would also permit truck and regional traffic to use services at Exit 126, while providing a route around the center of the city.

## DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

*Ogallala should consider modifications and actions on Downtown streets to slow traffic and increase ease of use in the district for pedestrians.*

The successful functioning of a downtown district depends on two-sided shopping – the sense that pedestrians feel safe in crossing the main street to visit stores on both sides. Yet Downtown Ogallala has two streets that tend to inhibit this desirable pattern – Spruce Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and First Street, separating the main part of downtown from the 1<sup>st</sup> to Railroad Street block of Spruce Street.

Several actions can help address these problems and improve the pedestrian-friendliness of Downtown. These include:

- *Installing an all-way stop at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce, and more clearly defining the crosswalks at this intersection.* An all-way stop slows traffic through a business district dramatically, and creates automatic breaks in traffic that even people with reduced mobility can navigate. Crosswalk definition can include more obvious striping, or the use of contrasting paving materials.
- *Defining crosswalks at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce.* The development of an interchange at the Highway 26 truck route and construction of the County Road West 80 connector will reduce the impact of regional truck traffic on downtown. However, 1<sup>st</sup> Street will remain a busy arterial. Crosswalk demarcation and in addition to the existing pedestrian signals will help pedestrians get across 1<sup>st</sup> Street and help unify the two sides of downtown Ogallala.

## TRAFFIC CALMING

*Ogallala should institute traffic calming measures on selected streets to reduce the speed of traffic and bring “design” speeds and “desirable” speeds into accord.*

Despite speed limit signs and traffic regulations, traffic in a street system often moves at the “design” speed of a roadway. Typically, a wide, open corridor will encourage motorists to drive faster, regardless of the posted regulation. This disparity between design speed and desirable speeds in residential and pedestrian-oriented areas is a significant transportation issue in Ogallala in the following contexts:

The one-way Spruce/East 1<sup>st</sup> Street pair provides two free-flowing lanes and encourages relatively fast traffic movement. This is a problem because of adjacent land use, including the middle school, Keith County Courthouse, and adjacent commercial, office, and residential development; and the sharp jog for northbound traffic at 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Also, wide local streets often encourage traffic to move through residential areas at excessively high speeds.

The city should consider the following concepts to address these issues:

- Along Spruce and East A, develop landscaping and streetscape concepts that will tend to slow traffic. Recent research indicates that landscaping and street details tend to slow down and reduce accident rates. An all-way stop may also be appropriate at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce. A “neck-down” may be used at 6<sup>th</sup> and East A, oriented to north bound traffic, to reduce speeds. This device installs landscaped nodes that extend to the depth of the parking lane along the street. While they do not reduce the width of moving traffic lanes, they perceptually seem to narrow the street, causing traffic to slow. Street geometrics will require continuation of the one-way pair on these two streets, but these measures can help calm traffic through the center of the city.
- Consider reducing street width requirements in new development from 42 feet to 32 or 36 feet. This can both reduce speeds through residential areas and significantly reduce the cost of street construction and street maintenance.
- On existing local streets, consider the use of calming devices such as intersection roundabouts and neckdowns.

## PEDESTRIAN AND TRAIL SYSTEM

*Ogallala should maintain a continuous pedestrian network to complement the street system.*

Ogallala has developed successful trail links between Williams Park and the swimming pool; and between 1<sup>st</sup> and East A to Pamida, in the process safely navigating the I-80 interchange. Both of these facilities are very well-designed and demonstrate both the transportation and recreation values of trails. The trail aspects of the system are described in more detail in Chapter Five of this plan. The system includes several levels of facilities:

- *Off-Street Trails*, providing exclusive paths separated from parallel streets. Ogallala has the opportunity to develop an extensive off-street trail system through the drainage ways and open spaces similar to the existing Ogallala Trail.

Other possible off-road trail linkages include:

- *A South Platte River Trail* that would follow the north side of the South Platte River and include access points along Highway 26/61 and a new western interchange. This trail would continue east under the Highway 26 bridge through public and semi-public property, weaving through a chain of gravel pit lakes east of the highway. This trail would continue east along Highway 30, crossing under the highway and railroad along a drainageway east of the town.
- *A North Trail system* that connects with the South Platte River Trail, extending back along Highway 30 and following drainageways north to a proposed neighborhood park in the North Growth Center adjacent to Ogallala Community Hospital.
- *A greenway through the planned wellfield business park on top of the planned water transmission line.* This corridor extends from West H Street and Highway 61 to about 32<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce Street. A north-south connection would continue south to Williams Park, and connect to the existing trail.
- *A South Lake Trail*, through the proposed lakefront development between County Road East 85 and East 80. This link connects the roadside trail along Highway 61 with West Wind Golf Course, and is integrated into a proposed residential growth area. to Nature Park a should also be included.

- *Roadside Trails*, providing trail facilities separated from but parallel to streets and highways. The existing trail connecting Pamida to 1<sup>st</sup> Street is an example of a roadside trail. In Ogallala, these roadways provide important opportunities for trail development. Roadside trails are proposed for:

- West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, between the Ogallala Trail at Progress School and the West Truck Route. Pedestrians and bicyclists already use this corridor frequently.
- Highway 26/61 Truck route, connecting from the wellfield business park to the South Platte River Trail. The truck route currently has paved shoulders that accommodate experienced road bicyclists.
- Ogallala Parkway, connecting the North Trail to Spruce Street and the Ogallala Trail at Western Diamonds.
- The existing roadside trail from 1<sup>st</sup> and East A to Highway 61 and Country Road 80. This should be extended to include a link along Chuckwagon Road to Nature Park.
- County Road East 80, from Spruce to the West Truck Route. This continues the South Lake Trail and ties into a circumferential system.
- A new collector loop system in northern Ogallala. This serves a planned mixed use area at the “Y.”
- Highway 61 to Lake McConaughy. This is a key regional and recreational trail link, connecting Ogallala to Kingsley Dam and the lake district. Highway 61 currently has paved shoulders that accommodate experienced road bicyclists. However, a roadside trail would permit a variety of users to enjoy scenic views and can reduce vehicular impact on the lake area. This trail is also included as part of the Keith County Comprehensive Development Plan.

- *Share-the-Road segments and sidewalks*, including designated routes for pedestrian and bicycle use. Where possible, these routes should include painted bike lanes, and generally should feature “Share-the-Road” signage. Potential STR routes include:

- 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- West H Street
- West E Street
- West B Street
- East B Street.

A particularly significant STR segment would link the highway trail from the foot of the viaduct at East A and 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the Ogallala Trail at Progress Street. A recommended route would use East A Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street; 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to East B Street; and East B north to the trailhead.

“Share-the-road” designation should not relegate bicycles to specific routes. However, they do help direct bicyclist to certain routes and notify motorist that bicycles are likely to be in the area. This proposed system links many of the major activity centers and features of Ogallala to residential neighborhoods.

Trails are an important amenity that many future residents look for in a community. However, during a time of economic slow down communities must look for alternative funding sources for construction of trail systems. Some of these sources include the federal TEA-21 program and grants through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

## COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS

*Ogallala should maintain the design quality of its major community corridors, allowing them to serve as attractive gateways into the town and positive business and community environments.*

Principal corridors that link the center of Ogallala to Interstate 80 and other regional links provide major gateways into the community, as well as providing critical functional links in the city's transportation system. These key auto-oriented corridors include Highways 30, 26, and 61. A program to maintain the attractive character and good functioning of these key corridors should include:

- Directional signage to pull travelers off of Interstate 80 and bring them into the community.
- Improvement of sidewalks and improved, glare-free lighting.
- Upgrade of Spruce Street in order to attract lake visitors into the city.
- Definition of community entrances with community signs and features at the entrance interchanges and the corporate limits.

Transportation and land use are related systems and their interaction helps determine the development future envisioned by the Ogallala Plan. In any community, the transportation system fills many functions - as a lifeline for business and industry, a tool for economic self-sufficiency and human dignity, a form-giver to the city, and an amenity and vital service for residents. Transportation helps determine the direction of land use, and, historically, encouraged the growth of the city. Conversely, development also creates demand for transportation facilities. In addition, the transportation system increasingly has quality of life implications. Facilities that promote pedestrian and bicycle access supplement the road system, increase mobility throughout the community, and provide valuable recreational resources. This chapter examines Ogallala's transportation system, and proposes a circulation network that supports the land use and development objectives identified in the previous two chapters.

### GOALS

This chapter recommends a transportation system that fills a variety of roles in Ogallala. The overall assumption of this chapter is that land use policies and major transportation improvements in Ogallala must:

- Address transportation issues that result from Ogallala's position in the regional traffic system.
- Provide enhanced movement around the city; and
- Link neighborhoods and community features together.

Ogallala's transportation system should:

- **PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE AND CONVENIENT MOVEMENT OF ALL RESIDENTS OF OGALLALA.**

In order to provide a safe environment the city should:

- Provide alternative routes that move traffic effectively and create a safe and efficient system.
- Anticipate and plan for future problems.
- Integrate pedestrian and bicycle transportation into the overall system and provide safe facilities for these non-motorized users

This chapter will address these concerns, provide solutions for identified problems and suggest direction for future needs that will emerge from community change.

**• ASSURE THAT THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS ADEQUATE TO MEET THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT.**

Overall the city's system has development in a continuous fashion. However, heavier traffic volumes on Spruce, East A Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Street have created some unsafe conditions. A major goal of the plan must be to create an overall system that reduces or eliminates these conflicts or pressures.

The transportation plan should also look at limited cost solutions that can also increase the system's ability to serve the city's needs. For example, management strategies that eliminate local problems and hazards can economically increase the capacity of existing streets.

**• USE THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO SUPPORT DESIRABLE PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

Transportation systems do more than move people from one place to another. They also form the structure of the community and are a very important implementation tool in the comprehensive planning process. In the case of Ogallala, transportation "balance" also means opening new areas to development. This, over the long term, will load the traffic system more equally and assure that streets effectively serve an increasing population and renewed industrial and business base. A future transportation system for Ogallala should also anticipate functional needs and potential conflicts created by various types of traffic. Thus, an effective system will provide trucks and other industrial traffic with routes that avoid existing and developing residential areas; and will support land use patterns that respect the needs and environmental characteristics of various development types.

**• PROVIDE MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT USING AUTOMOBILES.**

Ogallala's physical layout and size makes traveling around the city by means other than cars a possibility. The city's pedestrian system should provide good access to major features in the city. In addition, bicycles are a functional form of transportation in Ogallala for recreational, shopping, and even work trips. The city has recognized the potential role of non-motorized transportation by largely completing a continuous trail system that links Williams Park in the extreme northern part of the city with major commercial development south of Interstate 80.

In addition, some of Ogallala's residents suffer from mobility impairments. For example, elderly residents are increasingly transportation-disadvantaged because the city provides few alternatives to the use of cars. Many senior citizens can no longer drive or feel uncomfortable about using automobiles. For its residents, and for the sake of reduced traffic congestion, Ogallala should work to increase transportation options and mobility for all its citizens.

**• USE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES TO INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Economic growth is vital to Ogallala's future and the city's transportation facilities are major assets toward this goal. Interstate 80 and the Union Pacific Railroad provide the city with the ability to reach distant markets. However, internal transportation improvements should build on these assets and provide direct and efficient service to potential employment centers.

**• ENCOURAGE A BALANCED GROWTH PATTERN THAT DISTRIBUTES TRAFFIC IN WAYS THAT SAFEGUARDS THE CITY'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

In order to realize the full benefits of the planned transportation system, growth in Ogallala must be evenly distributed. The proposed network is designed to promote growth contiguous to the existing city, and continue the city's overall balanced traffic system.

Ogallala's land use policies and decision making must reinforce the long-term city development concepts. The result will be a community that is more balanced physically and more economical to serve and operate. In addition, a balanced development pattern will guard against future failures of the city's transportation system.

## **ANALYSIS**

This section examines important elements of the transportation system that will assist in developing specific projects and policies. It discusses the structure of the city's street system and the role that its individual parts play.

### **The Structure of the Street System**

Ogallala's street system originally grew from the "surveyor's grid," rotated slightly to parallel the Union Pacific Railroad. The city expanded in an east-west direction, constrained by the South Platte on the south and rugged hills to the north. West of West H, and east of Spruce and north of 6<sup>th</sup>, the street pattern changed to follow the ordinal grid in place of the rotated grid oriented to the railroad. Initially, Spruce Street provided the city's primary crossing over the Union Pacific, connecting limited development south of the tracks with the main city, and proceeded south of the city to Grant. Ultimately, the construction of Interstate 80 resulted in an interchange with Highways 26 and 61, forming the principal vehicular gateway into the city. This arterial crossed over the South Platte channel and included a grade separation over the Union Pacific, reconstructed during the 1980s. Stagecoach Trail developed as a frontage road serving commercial services on the north side of I-80, while a grid of service streets generally bounded by County Road East 80 and 85 served major development south of the interstate. Development to the north of the original grid extended along the Spruce Street corridor.

The resultant pattern includes:

#### **• North-South Circulation**

- A major north-south arterial, the Spruce/East A system. Northbound traffic entering Ogallala from the south follows a one-way northbound East A Street, which jogs a block west to the Spruce Street alignment at 7<sup>th</sup> Street. North of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Spruce Street continues as a two-way arterial. Southbound traffic continues south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street along one-way Spruce Street, and is routed eastbound for a block on 1<sup>st</sup> Street (US Highway 30) to the viaduct. The new viaduct aligns with East A Street.

- A potential north-south corridor along West H Street, parallel to and one-half mile west of Spruce Street. West H extends from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the former Highway 26 north of the city. However, continuity along West H is broken south of Foxhill Road.

- Relatively good north-south local street connections between West K Street and East O Street. Street continuity is best in the traditional city grid between West H and East D Streets. East G Street and East O Street are the major north-south links east of Spruce. East G serves the High School and Goodall Recreation Center, while East O serves Prairie View Elementary School. A regular grid of local streets serves the west side of the city west to West H. This grid breaks into a more curvilinear street pattern in the Smith's and Elliott's Subdivisions west to West Park.

-The Highway 26 truck route. In 2000, Highway 26/61 was relocated from Spruce Street to a new alignment 1.5 miles west of Spruce. This road passes Ogallala Municipal Airport and intersects US Highway 30. Highways 26/61 are now routed along 1<sup>st</sup> Street (US 30) to the East A viaduct, and south to Interchange 126.

## • East-West Circulation

- A major east-west arterial corridor along 1<sup>st</sup> Street (US Highway 30), parallel to the Union Pacific. First Street is a four-lane section through the city.

- An east-west corridor along West 5<sup>th</sup> Street between East A and the US 26 Truck route. West 5<sup>th</sup> serves as the principal local arterial for traffic on the west side of the city. East-west local street continuity on the west side is good in the traditional grid area to West H, but depends entirely on West 5<sup>th</sup> west of West H.

- Fair east-west street continuity east of the East A/Spruce Street corridors. Fourth and Sixth Streets serve as the primary local circulation routes. These two streets converge at East O Street. East-west circulation becomes much more indirect north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

- An east-west circulation corridor in the upland area along West 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

## Street Classification

The Street Classification Map displays the city's existing TEA-21 system with federal functional classifications. A street segment must be designated part of the Federal Aid system to be eligible for Federal funding assistance for major improvements.

Major streets and roads are placed into four functional categories:

• *Interstate/Expressways*: Expressways are restricted access, free-flow roads, designed to carry high traffic volumes at high speeds with minimum friction. All traffic movement is lane-separated by flow direction, and all intersections with local and regional roads are made with grade-separated interchanges. Interstate 80 is an Expressway.

• *Major Arterials*: These roads serve regional needs and connect major activity centers. They usually serve the highest traffic corridors and are designed to accommodate relatively high speeds (usually above 40 miles per hour in urban areas). These streets often use access control devices such as raised medians to reduce traffic conflicts.

Major arterials include:

- First Street (US Highway 30)
- Highway 26/61 south of First Street to Interstate 80
- Highway 61 south of Interstate 80
- Highway 26/61 West Truck route
- East-west Highway 61
- Spruce Street
- East A Street south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Congestion and safety problems emerge when major arterials mix local and regional traffic in relatively tight quarters. These conditions emerge from adjacent land use patterns or a lack of a local street web requires residents to depend on major arterials for intra-city trips.

• *Other Arterials*: These major streets connect with and complement the major arterial system by linking major activity centers and connecting various parts of the city together. Unlike expressways, other arterials usually provide access to adjacent properties and generally accommodate extensive left-turn movements and curb cuts. These major streets are designed for speeds of 40 mph or below. As a rule, these streets are spaced at 0.5 to 1.0 miles in developed urban areas and 2.0 miles in fringe areas. Ogallala streets in this classification include:

- East G Street
- West O Street
- West 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 6<sup>th</sup> Street

*Collectors:* The collector system links neighborhoods together and connects them to arterials and activity centers. Collectors are designed for relatively low speeds (30 mph and below) and provide unlimited local access. Collectors run within residential areas and distribute trips from arterials to their ultimate destinations. They also collect traffic from a neighborhood’s local streets and channel it to arterials. Examples of collectors in Ogallala’s current system include:

- West H Street
- West E Street
- East D Street
- East O Street
- 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 6<sup>th</sup> Street (east of East G Street)
- Prospector Drive
- Stagecoach Trail

*Local Streets.* Local streets serve individual properties within residential or commercial areas. They provide direct low-speed access for relatively short trips. Local streets may include cul-de-sacs, which should not exceed 300 feet in length only in exceptional circumstances. Ogallala has few cul-de-sacs and should continue to provide the well established network of streets.

## **Traffic Volumes and Capacity Analysis**

The 1999 Average Daily Traffic count conducted by the Nebraska Department of Roads indicates traffic loads on major segments of Ogallala’s street system. It indicates the following:

- The heaviest loads in Ogallala’s street system occur along 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30) between West B and East D Streets, with average daily traffic (adt) between 7,475 and 8,525. These peak rates are located within the downtown district of the city. The impact of these volumes is increased by local movements into access driveways.
- The second most heavily traveled corridor is Spruce Street. Traffic volumes along Spruce Street peak at its merger with East A Street traffic on the north side of the city. Traffic volumes here reached 5,720 adt. Volumes remain over 4,000 adt north of this intersection.
- Paralleling Spruce Street, East A Street also receives heavier volumes of traffic and peaks just north of 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30) in downtown Ogallala.

## **Capacity Analysis**

A capacity analysis compares the traffic volumes on a street segment with the design traffic capacity of that segment. The ratio of volume over capacity (V/C) corresponds to a “level of service” (LOS), which describes the quality of traffic flow.

### **Measures of Levels of Service (LOS)**

System performance of a street is evaluated using a criterion called the “level of service” or LOS. LOS is qualitative measure that examines such factors as speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom of maneuvering, safety, convenience, and operating costs of a road under specific volume conditions. A ratio of

volume to capacity (that is how much traffic the street carries divided by how much traffic the street was designed to carry) provides a short method for determining LOS. LOS categories are described as follows:

- LOS A: This describes free-flowing operation. Vehicles face few impediments in maneuvering. The driver has a high level of physical and psychological comfort. Minor accidents or breakdowns cause little interruption in the traffic stream. LOS A corresponds to a volume/capacity ratio of 0 to 0.60.

- LOS B: This condition is reasonably free-flowing operation. Maneuvering ability is slightly restricted, but ease of movement remains high. LOS B corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.60 to 0.70.

- LOS C: This level provides stable operation. Traffic flows approach the range in which increases in traffic will degrade service. Minor incidents can be absorbed, but a local slow-down of traffic will result. In urban settings, LOS C is a good level of service to work toward. It corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.70 to 0.80.

- LOS D: This level borders on an unstable traffic flow. Small traffic increases produce substantial service deterioration. Maneuverability is limited and comfort levels are reduced. LOS D represents a V/C ratio of 0.80 to 0.90. LOS D is frequently used as a compromise standard in dense urban settings.

- LOS E: LOS E represents typical operation at full design capacity of a street. Operations are extremely unstable, because there is little margin for error in the traffic stream. LOS E corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.90 to 1.00.

- LOS F: LOS F is a breakdown in the system. Such conditions exist when queues form behind a breakdown or congestion point. This condition occurs when traffic exceeds the design capacity of the street.

#### • **Street Performance Evaluation**

Table 4-1 uses the volume/capacity ratio method to compute the LOS offered by each major street segment in the city, utilizing 1999 traffic volumes. Based on this analysis Ogallala has a highly functional street system. Drivers have numerous options and are not continually forced on to the city's major streets to move around the city. This means that none of the city's arterials or collectors are performing at ratings higher than an LOS A level.

**TABLE 4.1: Traffic Capacity Analysis for Ogallala**

Roadway Name	Segment	Volume	Capacity at LOS C	Absolute Capacity	V/C	LOS
West O Street	South of West 5th St.	680	8,400	10,500	0.06	A
West H Street	North of Highway 30	1,510	6,500	8,125	0.19	A
	North of 5th St.	1,010	6,500	8,125	0.12	A
West E Street	North of 5th St.	510	6,500	8,125	0.06	A
Spruce Street	North of 3rd St.	4,370	8,450	10,563	0.41	A
	North of 6th St.	4,180	9,350	11,688	0.36	A
	North of 8th St.	5,720	9,350	11,688	0.49	A
	North of N. Hillcrest Dr.	5,080	8,400	10,500	0.48	A
	North of Skyline Dr.	4,180	8,400	10,500	0.40	A
East A Street	North of Highway 30	4,905	8,450	10,563	0.46	A
	North of 4th Street	4,270	8,450	10,563	0.40	A
East D Street	North of Highway 30	1,510	6,500	8,125	0.19	A
	North of 6th St.	1,400	6,500	8,125	0.17	A
East G Street	North of Highway 30	1,070	8,400	10,500	0.10	A
	South of 6th St.	1,575	8,400	10,500	0.15	A
East O Street	South of 6th St.	775	6,500	8,125	0.10	A
	North of 6th St.	770	6,500	8,125	0.09	A
10th Street	West of West E St.	1,190	6,500	8,125	0.15	A
	East of West E St.	1,330	6,500	8,125	0.16	A
	West of Spruce St.	1,930	6,500	8,125	0.24	A
	East of Spruce St.	1,295	6,500	8,125	0.16	A
6th Street	Spruce to East A St.	785	7,500	9,375	0.08	A
	East of East D St.	1,885	8,400	10,500	0.18	A
	East of East G St.	1,380	8,400	10,500	0.13	A
	West of East O St.	425	8,400	10,500	0.04	A
5th Street	East of West O St.	1,025	8,400	10,500	0.10	A
	West of West H St.	1,945	8,400	10,500	0.19	A
	West of West E St.	1,840	8,400	10,500	0.18	A
	West of Spruce St.	2,175	7,500	9,375	0.23	A
	Spruce to East A St.	1,735	7,500	9,375	0.19	A
1st Street/ Highway 30	West of West O St.	2,285	23,300	29,125	0.08	A
	East of West O St.	3,620	23,300	29,125	0.12	A
	West of West H St.	5,090	23,300	29,125	0.17	A
	East of West H St.	6,240	23,300	29,125	0.21	A
	West of West B St.	7,860	23,300	29,125	0.27	A
	East of East A St.	8,525	21,000	26,250	0.32	A
	East of East D St.	7,475	21,000	26,250	0.28	A
	East of East G St.	5,500	23,300	29,125	0.19	A
	East of Poplar St.	1,785	23,300	29,125	0.06	A

- Cautions About the LOS System

While the level of service concept provides a way of “grading” traffic flow, it is important to remember that it is primarily based on the speed at which traffic can travel. In urban situations the costs and benefits of providing high speed and undelayed traffic movement versus effects on adjacent neighborhoods must be weighed. In some situations a poor LOS may be desirable from an urban or economic point of view. In downtown areas, for example, the need for pedestrian movement and safety, parking, and commercial visibility supercedes the need

for a low LOS. Thus, while LOS is a useful measurement too, it should not be used to the exclusion of other values. The transportation system should serve, rather than dominate, the overall city environment.

## Functional Transportation Issues

Ogallala clearly has few transportation issues relating to capacity and congestion. However, the city does have some functional issues that require future consideration. Major areas of concern include the following:

- *Functioning at the "foot" of the East A viaduct.* The curving design of the East A Viaduct over the Union Pacific responded to serious constraints, involving routing a four-lane, contemporary overpass in a way that minimized impacts on the cityscape, while aligning with the city's north-south arterial system. The overpass design also must clear the Union Pacific tracks while landing at grade at the 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersection. This creates difficult, although unavoidable, vertical section issues.

- The East A viaduct lines up with northbound East A Street; the southbound Spruce Street member of the pair is one block to the west. Highway 26 and 61 are now routed west along 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the west Truck route. These conditions together generate a number of left-turn truck movements within a relatively short distance in the center of the city. The conflicts between trucks, through and lakebound traffic, local traffic, and pedestrians created by this difficult traffic pattern represent Ogallala's leading transportation challenge.

- *Local and through movements along Highway 30.* First Street is the city's principal east-west corridor (other than I-80) and includes a number of local service commercial uses. These create some traffic conflicts between through and turning movements along the four-lane, undivided segment in the center of the city.

- *Traffic speed along the East A and Spruce Street corridors.* These two-lane, one-way corridors tend to move traffic at relatively high speed through the center of the city. This is an issue because of adjacent uses, such as the Middle School at 6<sup>th</sup> and East A. In addition, southbound Spruce Street traffic should slow as it enters the downtown district at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. This situation has been helped somewhat by traffic signal installation at 6<sup>th</sup> and Spruce.

- *"Dead-ends" and lack of local street continuity.* The street grid in Ogallala tends to break down at the base of the escarpment forming the north edge of the traditional town. As a result, several north-south streets terminate in dead-ends, and east-west connections are lacking. Other developed sections on the edge of the city similarly lack interconnections.

- *Design versus desirable speed.* Much of Ogallala's street system experiences traffic volumes well below design capacity, tending to speed traffic on both local and through streets. Current development standards require wide streets, that also tend to encourage fast traffic through residential areas. Techniques that tend to calm traffic may be desirable where these conditions become severe.

## Street Condition Evaluation

The Street Condition Map (4-2) displays the condition of the streets in Ogallala. The evaluation consisted of four categories, including:

- *Good.* A good street typically has only minor problems with cracking, potholes or rutting. The street can be old and still rated good.

- *Average.* An average street typically has approximately 25% of the street experiencing cracking, potholes or rutting.

- *Poor.* A poor street typically has approximately 50% of the street experiencing cracking, potholes or rutting.

- *Gravel*. Gravel streets are unpaved roads covered in loose rock and soil.

Streets in Ogallala are constructed of various materials including:

- *Concrete*. Strong building material made by mixing cement and mineral aggregates (such as sand and gravel) with water, causing the cement to set and bind the entire mass.

- *Asphalt*. Black tar-like substance mixed with sand or gravel and used for paving.

- *Gravel*. Gravel roads generally consist of loose rock over compact earth.

Overall, Ogallala's streets are in generally good condition. Very few streets are considered poor, needing repair. Streets in poor condition, particularly in high traffic areas, present hazardous conditions. The following streets should be rehabilitated to improve safer passage:

- East F Street, south of 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

- 5<sup>th</sup> Street, between West A Street and Spruce Street.

Several other streets need repair, but are not critical to the transportation network. Various intersections where grading materials abut each other, such as concrete against asphalt, need improving. For example, East B and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets are in good condition. However, the change of paving from asphalt to concrete at the intersection will eventually need improvement.

## **Other Transportation Modes**

### **• Sidewalks**

Ogallala maintains a relatively complete sidewalk system within its traditional grid. However, this system breaks down in outlying development areas, suffering from some of the same discontinuities as the local and collector street system. Gradual adaptation of major pedestrian corridors to full accessibility will be an important priority for Ogallala's pedestrian system.

### **• Trails**

Ogallala includes a trail sequence that is significant for both its recreational and transportation benefits. This initial system includes:

- The Ogallala Trail, connecting the city's swimming pool and North Park at 7<sup>th</sup> and West B Streets with Williams Park at 24<sup>th</sup> and Spruce Streets. This trail serves the Western Diamonds recreation complex and follows beautiful and interesting terrain in the northern part of the city.

- A roadside trail that begins at 1<sup>st</sup> Street at the Highway 26/61 viaduct, continues on the west side of the viaduct, and extends as a 10-foot wide facility along the west side of the road to the Pamida store on Highway 61 south.

This system has a gap between 7<sup>th</sup> and West B and 1<sup>st</sup> and East A.

## **Conclusions**

This analysis suggests that:

- Ogallala enjoys a reasonably well-connected street network in its traditional grid. However, this connectivity breaks down around the edges of the community, and particularly needs better east-west local connections in the northern part of town.
- Generally, the city's street system operates well below capacity. This can generate relatively fast moving traffic along both local streets and major corridors.
- The city's major traffic problem involves traffic conflicts and congestion around 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the Highway 26/61 viaduct, encompassing some of the city's central business district.
- Ogallala has made some accommodation for bicycle transportation, and provides a good north-south route through the city. However, this system has a gap in the center of town. In addition, pedestrians and bicyclists use West 5th Street frequently, although it lacks facilities.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

In Ogallala, a transportation program should meet current and future mobility needs without compromising the character of the city's urban environment. This general policy includes:

- Reducing traffic friction and safety conflicts along major corridors, including Spruce, East A Streets, and First Street.
- Reducing congestion and turning conflicts at the foot of the Highway 26/61 viaduct.
- Providing routes and alternative modes for local trips to improve the safe functioning of major arterials.
- Using transportation to encourage desirable land use patterns.
- Developing a continuous network to accommodate non-automobile transportation.

The components of this program include:

## **WEB OF COLLECTOR STREETS**

**WEST H CONTINUITY**

**OGALLALA PARKWAY**

**TRUCK ROUTE INTERCHANGE**

**HIGHWAY 26/ROAD 80 SOUTHSIDE LINK**

**DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC CIRCULATION**

**PEDESTRIAN AND TRAIL SYSTEM**

**COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS**

## WEB OF COLLECTOR STREETS

*A collector street and parkway system in developing areas should be designated ahead of development and dedicated as growth takes place.*

In a town like Ogallala, residential and commercial development tends to occur on an incremental, project-by-project basis. As a result, developments provide for their own internal circulation needs, but rarely anticipate the cross connections and linkages necessary to create an integrated transportation network. This creates a “pod” type of development pattern, by which most traffic exits a development onto key streets, where it comes into conflict with through and regional traffic.

This pattern is evident in some of Ogallala’s contemporary residential areas, and has resulted in relatively discontinuous east-west access and a number of “dead-end” streets. The circulation network that connects different neighborhoods together will not develop by chance. Instead, these important links should be pre-designated through this comprehensive plan. As projects develop, their design should incorporate a framework of connecting streets, reserving the required collector routes and dedicating their rights-of-way. The actual alignments of the collector network may differ somewhat from those proposed in the plan. However, the general web of collector streets should be maintained. In some cases, the city may pre-develop a street segment to create necessary linkages. Planned links in a collector system could include:

- *Northern Loop.* A collector loop north of the Highway 26/61 “Y” would provide additional access to the highway and provide alternatives to the “Y” intersection. Highway design standards and good practice discourage front access to these major arterials.
- *32<sup>nd</sup> Street Extension.* Thirty-second Street should be extended to the east as a collector street for future development on the east side of Spruce Street.
- *24<sup>th</sup> Street Upgrades.* Twenty-fourth Street should be upgraded to a paved road between West H Street and the Highway 26/61 truck route on the west end of town.
- *Foxhill Road Extension.* The extension of Foxhill Road west of West H Street would provide an additional link to the Highway 26/61 truck route and move traffic around the city more effectively.
- *Ogallala Parkway.* The Ogallala Parkway would provide access between Spruce Street and East O Street in northern Ogallala. Because the terrain of northern Ogallala makes it difficult to provide a connected street grid, providing key linkages to moving residents around this area of the city will be especially important.

## WEST H CONTINUITY

*West H Street should be upgraded to an arterial street north of Foxhill Road and developed between Foxhill Road and West 11<sup>th</sup> Street to provide an addition link between the heart of the city and Highway 61*

Currently, Spruce Street is the only continuous connection between central and northern Ogallala, creating conflicts between local and regional traffic. Further development in the North Spruce corridor and the anticipated growth of a business park on the city wellfield site will increase potential conflicts and produce inconvenient travel routes. Ogallala should develop another north-south through route to encourage development in the northwest quadrant of the city and provide alternative travel routes.

West H Street is the logical alternative route. The street should ultimately be improved from Foxhill to Highway 61 as demands emerge, and is designated in this plan as an arterial street. In addition, the street should extend south of Foxhill Road to connect with dedicated right-of-way south of 12<sup>th</sup> Street, closing a gap in right-of-way south of Foxhill.

As this corridor develops, Ogallala preserve open spaces along the corridor. Certain sections of the corridor will be difficult to develop because of drainage patterns and steep terrain. These areas should be preserved as part of Ogallala open space system. Conservation development techniques can cluster lots in more buildable parts of the quadrant, while preserving steep slopes, erodible soils, and water features as common spaces.

## **OGALLALA PARKWAY**

*A northern collector street should provide access between Spruce and East O Street, designed to complement the existing landscape.*

Ogallala lacks connected east-west access north of West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and east of Spruce Street. This places most traffic on East 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets and discourages potential residential development in desirable areas north of Valley View Drive. To address these issues, the plan recommends an “Ogallala Parkway,” a new collector route extending at the foot of the hills between North Spruce Street and East O Street. This scenic parkway will run along the edge of some of the city’s steep terrain and provide access to future development in northern Ogallala. The landscape within this area is a transition from the flat plain of the South Platte River valley in southern Ogallala and the parkway should complement this terrain and its beautiful vistas.

Ogallala Parkway opens a number of areas to residential development, including small projects that can be developed incrementally in cul-de-sacs off the parkway. The street should be designed as a parkway, with good landscaping and a parallel multi-use trail. The parkway should be dedicated by adjacent developments as those areas are platted; or may be developed in advance of growth by the city.

## **TRUCK ROUTE INTERCHANGE**

*Ogallala should work with the Nebraska Department of Roads to develop a second interchange from Interstate 80, connecting the Interstate to the Highway 26/61 Truck route.*

Ogallala’s primary traffic problem is the difficult movement of trucks, visitor traffic, regional traffic, and local users through the East A and Spruce Street intersections along 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The current routing of Highway 26, the principal route to the Nebraska Panhandle, takes heavy truck traffic into the center of town and requires a left turn from the viaduct onto 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The grade and physical constraints at this location make it difficult to do a great deal to solve this problem through intersection redesign. However, many groups would benefit from the diversion of some of this heavy, slow-moving traffic away from the town center. The West Highway 26/61 Truck route was developed to remove much of this traffic from the mixed use Spruce and East A corridors. However, it still must maneuver through the 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersections at East A and Spruce Street.

Development of a second interchange with I-80 at the Highway 26 truck route intersection would address this problem and ease heavy vehicle access through and around Ogallala. A new interchange would make it unnecessary for truck traffic to travel through the center of town and would open the west side to expanded commercial and industrial development. The interchange would also provide direct access to Ogallala Municipal Airport. A new project would include a grade separated crossing over the Union Pacific and a Platte River bridge.

Policies must also be in place to protect existing commercial development at Exit 126. These policies should include:

- Land use control to limit the amount of commercial development at a new interchange.
- Directional signage identifying Exit 126 as the primary gateway to Lake McConaughy.
- Extension of County Road West 80 to the new interchange, as discussed below.

## Highway 26/ROAD 80 SOUTHSIDE LINK

*County Road East 80 should be extended and upgraded to connect to a new Interstate 80 interchange.*

To realize the full benefits of a new interchange, County Road West 80 should be extended from its western boundary to connect with a new western interchange. This important road already functions as a county collector road and would encourage industrial development on the south side of the interstate. The extended road would also permit truck and regional traffic to use services at Exit 126, while providing a route around the center of the city.

## DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

*Ogallala should consider modifications and actions on Downtown streets to slow traffic and increase ease of use in the district for pedestrians.*

The successful functioning of a downtown district depends on two-sided shopping – the sense that pedestrians feel safe in crossing the main street to visit stores on both sides. Yet Downtown Ogallala has two streets that tend to inhibit this desirable pattern – Spruce Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and First Street, separating the main part of downtown from the 1<sup>st</sup> to Railroad Street block of Spruce Street.

Several actions can help address these problems and improve the pedestrian-friendliness of Downtown. These include:

- *Installing an all-way stop at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce, and more clearly defining the crosswalks at this intersection.* An all-way stop slows traffic through a business district dramatically, and creates automatic breaks in traffic that even people with reduced mobility can navigate. Crosswalk definition can include more obvious striping, or the use of contrasting paving materials.

- *Defining crosswalks at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce.* The development of an interchange at the Highway 26 truck route and construction of the County Road West 80 connector will reduce the impact of regional truck traffic on downtown. However, 1<sup>st</sup> Street will remain a busy arterial. Crosswalk demarcation and in addition to the existing pedestrian signals will help pedestrians get across 1<sup>st</sup> Street and help unify the two sides of downtown Ogallala.

## TRAFFIC CALMING

*Ogallala should institute traffic calming measures on selected streets to reduce the speed of traffic and bring “design” speeds and “desirable” speeds into accord.*

Despite speed limit signs and traffic regulations, traffic in a street system often moves at the “design” speed of a roadway. Typically, a wide, open corridor will encourage motorists to drive faster, regardless of the posted regulation. This disparity between design speed and desirable speeds in residential and pedestrian-oriented areas is a significant transportation issue in Ogallala in the following contexts:

The one-way Spruce/East 1<sup>st</sup> Street pair provides two free-flowing lanes and encourages relatively fast traffic movement. This is a problem because of adjacent land use, including the middle school, Keith County Courthouse, and adjacent commercial, office, and residential development; and the sharp jog for northbound traffic at 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Also, wide local streets often encourage traffic to move through residential areas at excessively high speeds.

The city should consider the following concepts to address these issues:

- Along Spruce and East A, develop landscaping and streetscape concepts that will tend to slow traffic. Recent research indicates that landscaping and street details tend to slow down and reduce accident rates. An all-way

stop may also be appropriate at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce. A “neck-down” may be used at 6<sup>th</sup> and East A, oriented to north bound traffic, to reduce speeds. This device installs landscaped nodes that extend to the depth of the parking lane along the street. While they do not reduce the width of moving traffic lanes, they perceptually seem to narrow the street, causing traffic to slow. Street geometrics will require continuation of the one-way pair on these two streets, but these measures can help calm traffic through the center of the city.

- Consider reducing street width requirements in new development from 42 feet to 32 or 36 feet. This can both reduce speeds through residential areas and significantly reduce the cost of street construction and street maintenance.

- On existing local streets, consider the use of calming devices such as intersection roundabouts and neckdowns.

## **PEDESTRIAN AND TRAIL SYSTEM**

*Ogallala should maintain a continuous pedestrian network to complement the street system.*

Ogallala has developed successful trail links between Williams Park and the swimming pool; and between 1<sup>st</sup> and East A to Pamida, in the process safely navigating the I-80 interchange. Both of these facilities are very well-designed and demonstrate both the transportation and recreation values of trails. The trail aspects of the system are described in more detail in Chapter Five of this plan. The system includes several levels of facilities:

• **Off-Street Trails**, providing exclusive paths separated from parallel streets. Ogallala has the opportunity to develop an extensive off-street trail system through the drainage ways and open spaces similar to the existing Ogallala Trail.

Other possible off-road trail linkages include:

- A *South Platte River Trail* that would follow the north side of the South Platte River and include access points along Highway 26/61 and a new western interchange. This trail would continue east under the Highway 26 bridge through public and semi-public property, weaving through a chain of gravel pit lakes east of the highway. This trail would continue east along Highway 30, crossing under the highway and railroad along a drainageway east of the town.

- A *North Trail system* that connects with the South Platte River Trail, extending back along Highway 30 and following drainageways north to a proposed neighborhood park in the North Growth Center adjacent to Ogallala Community Hospital.

- A *greenway through the planned wellfield business park on top of the planned water transmission line*. This corridor extends from West H Street and Highway 61 to about 32<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce Street. A north-south connection would continue south to Williams Park, and connect to the existing trail.

- A *South Lake Trail*, through the proposed lakefront development between County Road East 85 and East 80. This link connects the roadside trail along Highway 61 with West Wind Golf Course, and is integrated into a proposed residential growth area. to Nature Park a should also be included.

• **Roadside Trails**, providing trail facilities separated from but parallel to streets and highways. The existing trail connecting Pamida to 1<sup>st</sup> Street is an example of a roadside trail. In Ogallala, these roadways provide important opportunities for trail development. Roadside trails are proposed for:

- West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, between the Ogallala Trail at Progress School and the West Truck Route. Pedestrians and bicyclists already use this corridor frequently.

- Highway 26/61 Truck route, connecting from the wellfield business park to the South Platte River Trail. The truck route currently has paved shoulders that accommodate experienced road bicyclists.
- Ogallala Parkway, connecting the North Trail to Spruce Street and the Ogallala Trail at Western Diamonds.
- The existing roadside trail from 1<sup>st</sup> and East A to Highway 61 and Country Road 80. This should be extended to include a link along Chuckwagon Road to Nature Park.
- County Road East 80, from Spruce to the West Truck Route. This continues the South Lake Trail and ties into a circumferential system.
- A new collector loop system in northern Ogallala. This serves a planned mixed use area at the “Y.”
- Highway 61 to Lake McConaughy. This is a key regional and recreational trail link, connecting Ogallala to Kingsley Dam and the lake district. Highway 61 currently has paved shoulders that accommodate experienced road bicyclists. However, a roadside trail would permit a variety of users to enjoy scenic views and can reduce vehicular impact on the lake area. This trail is also included as part of the Keith County Comprehensive Development Plan.

• *Share-the-Road segments and sidewalks*, including designated routes for pedestrian and bicycle use. Where possible, these routes should include painted bike lanes, and generally should feature “Share-the-Road” signage. Potential STR routes include:

- 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- East 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- West H Street
- West E Street
- West B Street
- East B Street.

A particularly significant STR segment would link the highway trail from the foot of the viaduct at East A and 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the Ogallala Trail at Progress Street. A recommended route would use East A Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street; 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to East B Street; and East B north to the trailhead.

“Share-the-road” designation should not relegate bicycles to specific routes. However, they do help direct bicyclist to certain routes and notify motorist that bicycles are likely to be in the area. This proposed system links many of the major activity centers and features of Ogallala to residential neighborhoods.

Trails are an important amenity that many future residents look for in a community. However, during a time of economic slow down communities must look for alternative funding sources for construction of trail systems. Some of these sources include the federal TEA-21 program and grants through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

## COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS

*Ogallala should maintain the design quality of its major community corridors, allowing them to serve as attractive gateways into the town and positive business and community environments.*

Principal corridors that link the center of Ogallala to Interstate 80 and other regional links provide major gateways into the community, as well as providing critical functional links in the city’s transportation system.

These key auto-oriented corridors include Highways 30, 26, and 61. A program to maintain the attractive character and good functioning of these key corridors should include:

- Directional signage to pull travelers off of Interstate 80 and bring them into the community.
- Improvement of sidewalks and improved, glare-free lighting.
- Upgrade of Spruce Street in order to attract lake visitors into the city.
- Definition of community entrances with community signs and features at the entrance interchanges and the corporate limits.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A RECREATION LIFESTYLE: PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES AND POLICIES

Active use of outdoor recreational facilities is central to the quality of life in Ogallala and a distinguishing characteristic of the community. Residents enjoy access to one of Nebraska's signature recreational facilities, and to good city and regional parks. Yet, in order to continue to enhance its strategic position as an excellent living environment, Ogallala should continue to invest in its existing parks and provide for the addition of new parks as the community grows. A clear parks plan helps the City set priorities for high quality park and recreation services and evaluate new development proposals.

Park needs in Ogallala include both active and passive recreation. This plan envisions a balance of nature and recreation, along with a basic connectedness among the city, its existing green spaces and the regional recreational system. In Ogallala, park and open space development is more than an amenity. It is the central component in the quality of life available to residents of Ogallala.

#### GOALS

The development of a quality park and open space system will directly address several issues raised in the Strategic Planning Process. These include:

- Encouraging a distinctive community with a special sense of place.
- Preserving open space and vital environmental resources.
- Creating transportation options.

To enhance its current facilities, begin to use its open space system as a central element contributing to community quality, and insure the development of a quality park system as the community grows, the City of Ogallala should:

#### • **CREATE A LINKED PARK NETWORK OF GREENWAYS AND CIVIC STREETS THAT CONNECT OPEN SPACES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ACTIVITY CENTERS.**

Such a network can help define the city and provide convenient access to its park and open space resources. The development of a linked park system has several benefits, including:

- Accommodating recreational activities that display some of the highest levels of participation, including bicycling, walking/hiking, skating, and cross-country skiing.
- Increasing safe access to recreational facilities by non-motorized modes, and increasing the service coverage of existing outdoor recreation facilities.
- Linking various parts of Ogallala as the city grows.
- Linking the city with recreational opportunities in the Lake McConaughy area.

#### • **PROVIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NEWLY DEVELOPING AREAS.**

In growth areas, Ogallala should provide both neighborhood and community parks and other recreational experiences, such as nature interpretation, resource conservation, trail systems, and other passive activities. It is vitally important to set aside quality parkland/open space during planning stages of new residential

developments. Planning of these neighborhood parks should ensure safe, convenient, and desirable pedestrian access from neighborhoods to parks. In addition, parks should fit within the framework of the greenway concept.

- **DISTRIBUTE ACTIVE RECREATION USE ACROSS THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF THE CITY, GUARDING AGAINST OVER-CONCENTRATION OF PARK RESOURCES IN ANY QUADRANT OF THE CITY.**

The adequacy of park services is measured in both numbers and by geographic distribution. Parks that are inaccessible to neighborhoods prevent easy access and provide a lower level of service. Neighborhood parks, in particular, should be evaluated in terms of service radii standards to insure appropriate distribution of facilities.

- **PROVIDE AN EQUITABLE MECHANISM FOR ESTABLISHING SERVICE STANDARDS IN GROWTH AREAS AND FINANCING PARK ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.**

The reservation and development of new park and open space areas in developing areas is a major challenge for a city. The establishment of service standards was once based on national norms, but is increasingly predicated on levels of local service. This analysis evaluates current local levels of service in light of published national standards. Established local levels of service then establish a basis for park dedications and assessments in developing areas. Park system finance should be based on a benefit principle, apportioning costs based on who benefits from specific projects.

- **BALANCE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE OF OGALLALA**

The City should maintain a balance between active and passive recreation. Preservation of the drainage areas and development of trails through these areas can balance active recreational facilities in other parts of the growing city. Development of a greenway system in Ogallala will also encourage usage of proposed community parks.

- **USE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES TO ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT AND TO HELP TO REINFORCE OGALLALA'S URBAN FORM.**

Parks and open spaces can help to provide structure for a growing community. In traditional towns, the green or commons was a focus for both civic life and community amenity. Park development can have equal value for contemporary development, adding a public aspect to life in new residential areas.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Park facilities are evaluated in four ways:

- *Facilities by Classification.* Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they serve.
- *Facilities Relating to Overall population Service Standards.*
- *Geographical Distribution.* The service radius of each facility is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in service.
- *Park inventory and assessment.* Improvement needs are noted for each city-owned park.

## Facilities by Classification

In order to systematically analyze the park system, Ogallala's major recreation and open space areas are classified as follows.

*Overall Park Space:* Ogallala's public park system, as summarized in Table 5-1, contains approximately 80 acres. Traditional park area standards recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggest ten acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. With a 2000 Census population of 4,930, Ogallala's ratio of 16.22 acres per 1,000 residents is well above the standard. Based on this standard, Ogallala should designate parks in new developments to maintain this level of service through the planning period.

The park classification system developed by the NRPA is used to classify the facilities in Ogallala's system. These categories include:

*Mini-Park:* Mini-Parks generally address specific recreation or open space needs. Generally, these parks are usually less than one acre in size and have a service radius below 0.25 miles. Because of maintenance difficulties with multiple small sites and their small service area, most cities discourage the development of mini-parks. Ogallala currently has no city owned mini-parks. However, Saint Luke's small park functions in this way. The city should not plan for any future mini-park development nor accept mini-park dedications because of maintenance issues.

*Neighborhood Parks:* Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of a city's park system and provide a recreational and social focus for residential areas. These parks desirably provide space for informal active and passive recreational activities. The typical service radius for neighborhood parks is usually 0.25 to 0.50 miles. Neighborhood parks adequate in size to accommodate the requisite facilities usually contain about five acres, although they can grow as large as ten acres in some communities. Most of Ogallala's five neighborhood parks have between 3 and 4 acres. Site selection criteria include ease of access, neighborhood location, and connection to greenways. Map 5-1 indicates Ogallala's current neighborhood parks and their 1/2-mile service radii.

NRPA standards call for 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 people. Ogallala currently has a total of 19.5 acres of neighborhood parks, representing about four acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 people. While this exceeds the NRPA rule-of-thumb, it also represents Ogallala's accepted local level of service. This level establishes the city's standard and should be applied in determining new neighborhood park needs in growing areas.

*School Parks:* School parks combine the resources of schools and city agencies to provide joint social and recreational facilities. Location is based on criteria for school site selection. School park facilities can help to meet neighborhood park needs, particularly when located in an area not served by a neighborhood park. Since Ogallala exceeds the national standard, school facilities represent added amenities to neighborhoods. Map 5-1 also identifies existing Ogallala schools.

*Community Parks:* These typically include areas of diverse use and environmental quality. Such parks meet community-based recreation needs, may preserve significant natural areas and often include areas suited for intense recreation facilities. Typical criteria for community parks include:

- Adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks, but with space for additional activity.
- A special attraction that draws people from a larger area, such as a swimming pool, pond or lake, ice skating rink, trails, special environmental or cultural features, or specialized sports complexes.

Community parks generally contain between 30 and 50 acres and serve a variety of needs. The typical service radius of a community park is approximately .5 to 3 miles. Traditional NRPA guidelines for community park areas call for 5 to 8 acres per 1,000. While Ogallala lacks large community parks, many major services are located in the

neighborhood park system. Western Diamonds encompasses about 40 acres but functions as a sports complex rather than as a multi-use community park. Continued community growth may create a future need for community parks, including a need for a facility to serve residents south of the river.

*Natural Resource Areas.* These include lands that preserve important natural resources, landscapes, and open spaces. Nature Park along Chuckwagon Road provides a natural environment with little development.

*Greenways.* These open spaces tie park system components together to form a linked open space environment. Greenways follow either natural environments, such as drainageways, or man-made settings, such as railroad corridors, parkways, and other rights-of-ways. Greenways may also be pre-designated as part of development design. The drainage way running north to south parallel to Western Diamonds is an example of an existing greenway within the city’s open space system.

*Special Use Parks.* These cover a variety of facilities oriented to a single use, including cultural or social sites, or specialized facilities. Western Diamonds recreation complex and the private West Wind Golf Course are Ogallala’s leading examples of special use open spaces. The Boot Hill historical site is a special use area oriented to cultural and historical value.

Table 5.1 summarizes Ogallala’s park system by type of park and available facilities.

TABLE 5.1  
PARK SYSTEM ANALYSIS

Park Facilities in Ogallala	Acres	Playground Areas	Playing Fields	Courts	Special Facilities
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>					
<i>Generally 5 to 10 acres; may be smaller or larger depending on the nature of the site and facilities. Basic unit park system. Provides recreational and social focus for neighborhoods. Focuses on informal active and passive recreation. Typical service area is 0.5 mile if uninterrupted by barriers.</i>					
<b>West Park</b> West Lawn Drive & West L St.	3.1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Port-a-Potty Picnic shelter
<b>North Park</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> Street	3.4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Picnic shelter
<b>Searle Park</b> West 10 <sup>th</sup> & West A	3.8	No	No	Yes	Boys Scout Cabin Band Shell Port-a-Potty Picnic Shelter
<b>Collister Park</b> East H Street	4.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Port-a-Potty Roller-Blade Hockey, Picnic Shelter
<b>Williams Park</b> North Spruce & West 24 <sup>th</sup> St.	4.7	Yes	No	No	Restrooms, Picnic shelters, Frisbee Golf
<b>TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>	<b>19.5</b>				
<b>SPORTS COMPLEX</b>					
<i>Generally a minimum of 40 acres. Consolidates heavily programmed athletic</i>					

*fields and facilities to a large site. Is strategically located.*

<b>Western Diamonds</b> North Spruce Street	<b>39.6</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Restrooms, Picnic shelter, Concession/An- nouncer booth,
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## Level of Service Analysis and Future Park Needs

As outlined in Chapter One, a moderate growth scenario for Ogallala would generate a city population of about 5,500 residents by 2020. The development concept lays out proposed land uses in Ogallala for the next 20 years to accommodate this future population. Table 5-2 identifies the future park needs based on national standards and current community standards. The city exceeds the national standards by almost 30 acres. This level of services is a standard that many residents have come to expect within the community, therefore the city should base future park land needs on its current level of service. However, based on this methodology the city will need an additional 8.39 acres. However, geographic considerations must also be factored into a calculation of future park needs.

**TABLE 5.2:**  
**Future Parkland Needs for Ogallala**

Park Type	Existing Acreage	Existing Acres	2002 NRPA	
		Per 1,000 Residents	Standard Acres	Total 2020 (City Standard)
Neighborhood/Mini Parks	19.5	3.96	4.93	21.54
Community Parks/Sports Complex	44.2	8.97	24.65	48.84
Social Use/Greenways	1.8	0.37	N/A	1.99
Natural Resources	14.5	2.94	N/A	16.02
<b>Total park and Recreation Area</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>16.23</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>88.39</b>

## Facilities by Geographical Distribution

As previously indicated, neighborhood parks comprise the basic unit of a park system. Geographic neighborhood park service can be evaluated using the NRPA standard of ¼ to ½ -mile service radius for neighborhood parks, as seen in Map 5.1. A ½-mile radius standard indicates that a neighborhood park will serve about a section of land, while a ¼-mile radius standard requires a neighborhood park for each quarter section. These standards indicate that all parts of Ogallala enjoy neighborhood park access with the exception of areas south of the river and Interstate 80.

The actual service area of a park is also defined by natural and man-made barriers, which can prevent safe access to parks. South Ogallala is separated from neighborhood park service by both distance and the barriers presented by the Interstate, river, and railroad. As a result, south residential growth will generate an additional geographic demand for new neighborhood park area. In order to provide the same level of service to residents south of the interstate and to maintain current levels in new growth areas on the north side, the city should identify future park locations.

Map 5-2, Parks and Public Facilities, indicates the proposed parks, greenways and trails system. The concept recommends significant open space development within the South Platte River floodplain. Trail access between neighborhoods on the south side and existing and future park sites is an important part of the concept. An

additional greenway south of the interstate would buffer future development from the interstate and provided added protection from the floodwaters of the Platte River basin.

### Facilities in Relation to Population Service Standards

An evaluation of the community’s recreational facilities based on quantitative national and State standards is summarized on Table 5.6. This analysis needs to be tempered by the fact that national standards generally apply to cities larger than Ogallala. For example, while standards for running tracks and football fields indicate that Ogallala is too small to need such facilities, most similarly-sized towns will consider such facilities vital to community life and school-based athletic programs. With this caveat in mind, this analysis, combined with local input, leads to the following conclusions:

- Ogallala exceeds national standards in all areas.
- With population growth the city will experience a need for additional regulation soccer fields and baseball/softball fields. Often local standards exceed national standards for soccer fields. Ogallala soccer fields also provide a regional service.
- Despite meeting the overall needs, the city should establish a program to replace aging playground equipment within the park system.
- As a regional center Ogallala should consider additional regulation baseball and softball fields in order to host larger tournaments.

**TABLE 5.3: Park and Recreation Services Related to Population**

Criterion	Standard	Existing Facilities	Comments
Baseball Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 diamond per 3,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala requires 2</li> </ul>	Ogallala has one official Legion Field and 3 shared softball and baseball fields.	The community is meeting the need for baseball fields. However if the city wishes to host large tournaments additional fields would be required.
Softball Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 field per 3,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala requires 2 softball fields</li> </ul>	Ogallala has 5 softball fields: - 1 at North Park - 4 at Western Diamonds.	Ogallala is adequately served by softball fields
Football Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 field per 20,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala would not require any</li> </ul>	Ogallala has one field located at Ogallala High School.	Ogallala is adequately served by football fields.
Running Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 track per 20,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala would not require any</li> </ul>	Ogallala has one track located at Ogallala High School.	Ogallala is adequately served by tracks.
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 per 2,000 population</li> <li>• Ogallala requires 2 to 3 playgrounds</li> </ul>	The city has 4 playgrounds: - 1 at West Park - 1 at North Park - 1 at Collister Park - 1 at Williams Park	Ogallala is adequately served by playground areas. However, southern Ogallala is located well outside the service radii of these parks.
Soccer Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 field per 10,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala would not require any</li> </ul>	Ogallala has 2 soccer fields located at Western Diamonds.	Ogallala is adequately served by soccer fields, but local demand may require that this standard be exceeded.

Volleyball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 court per 5,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala requires 1 volleyball court</li> </ul>	Ogallala has one sand volleyball court at Western Diamonds and hard courts at Ogallala High School and Middle School.	Ogallala is adequately served by volleyball courts.
Basketball Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 court per 5,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala requires 1 basketball court</li> </ul>	Ogallala has 5 courts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 at West Park</li> <li>- 2 at North Park</li> <li>- 2 at Collister Park</li> <li>- Indoor courts at the High School and Middle School</li> </ul>	Ogallala is adequately served by basketball courts
Tennis Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 court per 2,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala requires 2-3 tennis courts</li> </ul>	Ogallala has 5 courts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 at West Park</li> <li>- 4 at Searle Park</li> </ul>	Ogallala is adequately served by tennis courts
Swimming Pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 50-meter pool per 20,000 population</li> <li>• 1 25-meter pool per 10,000 population</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala does not require any swimming pools</li> </ul>	Ogallala has one indoor pool at the Ogallala Recreation Center and one outdoor pool south of North Park.	Ogallala is adequately served by swimming pools.
Golf Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 9-hole standard per 25,000 population.</li> <li>• Based on standard, Ogallala does not require any golf courses</li> </ul>	One courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- West Wind Golf Course (18-hole course).</li> </ul>	Ogallala is adequately served by golf courses

## **PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

This section describes strategies designed to enhance the park system’s status as a leading community feature. The overall concept:

- Envisions a linked park system, molding Ogallala’s future open space system into a green network that unites the community and makes each major park the territory of everyone.
- Allows the park system to grow with the city.
- Proposes new centers for recreation, which are integrated into a greenway system.
- Provides recreational facilities needed to meet community priorities.

The components of this program include:

- **LAKESIDE PARKS IN THE CITY**
- **WESTSIDE AND NORTHEAST PARKS**
- **DRAINAGEWAY CONSERVATION**
- **CONNECTED TRAIL LOOPS**
- **SOUTH PLATTE CORRIDOR**
- **PARKSITE IMPROVEMENTS**

### **LAKESIDE PARK IN THE CITY**

*Ogallala should develop a new southside lake as part of a major residential development to extend lakeside recreation into the city.*

Ogallala is the home of Lake McConaughy, the state’s largest lake. The city has an opportunity to capitalize on this title and create an important recreational attraction for the citizens of Ogallala. The plan’s development concept envisions the future development of a residential amenity community between County Roads East 80 and 85. This concept incorporates a significant lake, forming an open space spine that connects West Wind Golf Course and the

Country Club subdivision with the south Highway 61 mixed use corridor. This lake should include significant public access to meet neighborhood park needs for this potential growth center.

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*Ogallala should develop new neighborhood and community parks as residential and population growth demand.*

As the community grows to the west and north additional park land will be needed. The Development Concept proposes a community park on the west side of the city. This park would be developed on currently vacant land between West 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Ethel Drive along West P Street. This would provide the city's first true "community park," and would be fully integrated into the city's trail system by way of a 5<sup>th</sup> Street roadside trail. An expansion of Western Diamonds to include multi-use community open space can also help meet community open space needs. The city's new community parks should provide both active and passive recreational opportunities.

Only Williams Park, an attractive facility that meets current city needs, currently serves Northern Ogallala. However, additional north side growth will create significant service gaps on the east side of North Spruce Street. The busy Spruce Street arterial also becomes a barrier for future residents on the east side of the highway. The park concept identifies a ten-acre neighborhood park site adjacent to the Ogallala Community Hospital on an extended 24<sup>th</sup> Street. This park would be connected into the proposed North Trail system, serving all parts of the northeast growth center.

## **DRAINAGEWAY CONSERVATION**

*Ogallala should maintain its major drainageways as greenways, with development limited to trail construction.*

Drainageways and ravines and the beginning of the Sandhills environment are characteristic of Northern Ogallala. Soil conditions and topography complicate development of these areas. A major flood in 2002 again demonstrated the volatility of these drainageways, which remain dry much of the year and then quickly fill during extremely heavy rainfalls. These drainage corridors should be protected, while providing green corridors that form the framework of the city's trail system. The Ogallala Trail through Western Diamonds demonstrates the value of such greenway preservation. A similar system is proposed on the east side of Spruce Street, connecting the hospital and proposed northside neighborhood park with Prairie View School and the proposed South Platte River Trail.

## **CONNECTED TRAIL LOOPS**

*A looped trail system should be developed to connect the city's parks into a unified system and link the city to Lake McConaughy.*

Connecting the city's existing and proposed parks with greenways and trails increases access to parks from all neighborhoods and creates a true citywide system. Ogallala's existing trails also demonstrate the importance of trails as both transportation and recreational assets. Chapter Four describes a trail system that serves both recreation and transportation functions, and is fully integrated into the planned community park system.

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*The South Platte River is a key community asset, and should be used as a major recreational and open space resource.*

Typically, people associate water, environment, and Ogallala with Lake McConaughy. Yet, the South Platte River, with its unique ecology, variable flows, and vegetation, is also a major water-related open space asset. Ogallala should utilize the South Platte River as a greenway corridor to extend park services to isolated areas of the city, recalling its historical role as a transportation corridor. Other efforts to enhance public use of the corridor include:

- Development of the "chain of lakes" open space on the north bank of the river.

- Repair of flood damage, continued enhancement and nature interpretation at Nature Park, including linkage of the park to the community trail system.

Keith County's Comprehensive Plan similarly calls for preserving major environmental and ecological corridors along the South Platte, with opportunities for nature study, environmental interpretation, and passive recreation. City and County coordination can assure responsible public use and enjoyment of this important river corridor.

## **PARKSITE IMPROVEMENTS**

*Ogallala should implement a regularly budgeted incremental program of park site improvements and upgrades at its existing parks.*

An analysis of specific facility types indicates Ogallala's existing facilities generally meet standards for most active recreational facilities. While a detailed park analysis would be based upon user surveys and is beyond the scope of this plan, preliminary needs or issues at each city park are identified below.

### **West Park**

Overall the park is in excellent condition, specific areas to be addressed include:

- New tennis courts and basketball courts
- Removal of 2 elm trees and replacement plantings.
- New backstop

### **North Park**

Planned and completed upgrades include replacement of the outfield fence, backstop, and light pools. Additional improvements that could be made at the park include:

- Picnic shelter
- Concrete sidewalk from northeast corner to basketball courts
- Concrete pads around bleachers and benches
- Removal of 1 elm tree with additional plantings.

### **Searle Park**

The facility is in good condition with plans for replacement of the Boy Scout Cabin. Needed improvements include resurfacing the tennis court and new fencing around the courts.

### **Collister Park**

Improvements to Collister Park include:

- Removal and replacement of two elm trees
- Three new backstops
- New basketball court or resurfacing for basketball and roller hockey
- Larger picnic shelter.

### **Williams Park**

Overall this park is in excellent condition, improvements needed include reshingling the three shelters and exterior improvements to the bathrooms.

### **Nature Park**

Before the July 2002 flood the park was in excellent condition with only a need for some additional tree plantings. However, the flood caused serious damage to trees and other plantings and destroyed the wood chip path. Flood relief funds are available for replacement of the trail but additional funding will need to be identified for replacing plantings.

### **Boot Hill**

Boot Hill is a historic sight with no active recreational activities. The site is in good condition except for the statue and historical sign, which will need to be replaced during the planning period.

### **Western Diamonds**

Western Diamonds is the city's heavily used sports complex. It too was heavily damaged during the July 2002 flood and many of the fields will need work and time to return to their previous status. Additional work that was needed included:

- Completion of the field house
- Resurfacing of the fields with Diamond Pro to improve handling of significant rainfalls. This improvement would help the city attract larger tournaments.
- Stairs from the parking lot to the lower soccer field
- Additional tree plantings.
- Windscreen and fence guard
- Crushed limestone on warning track.
- Additional bleachers.

Other improvements that would enhance the complex could include paving the parking lot, additional field maintenance equipment, ice machine in the concession stand, and additional bleachers.

### **Legion Field**

Improvements to the Legion Field include:

- Upgraded infield surface.
- Crushed limestone for the warning track
- Replacement of the outfield fence.
- Improvements to the batting cage.
- Installing a windscreen.

The city should also consider the establishment of a campground that would cater to I-80 travelers. Travelers could be offered one night free, making Ogallala a destination on a cross-country trip. This could be one method for capturing this market and attracting them to spend money in town.

## ***PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES AND POLICIES***

Active use of outdoor recreational facilities is central to the quality of life in Ogallala and a distinguishing characteristic of the community. Residents enjoy access to one of Nebraska's signature recreational facilities, and to good city and regional parks. Yet, in order to continue to enhance its strategic position as an excellent living environment, Ogallala should continue to invest in its existing parks and provide for the addition of new parks as the community grows. A clear parks plan helps the City set priorities for high quality park and recreation services and evaluate new development proposals.

Park needs in Ogallala include both active and passive recreation. This plan envisions a balance of nature and recreation, along with a basic connectedness among the city, its existing green spaces and the regional recreational system. In Ogallala, park and open space development is more than an amenity. It is the central component in the quality of life available to residents of Ogallala.

## **GOALS**

The development of a quality park and open space system will directly address several issues raised in the Strategic Planning Process. These include:

- Encouraging a distinctive community with a special sense of place.

- Preserving open space and vital environmental resources.
- Creating transportation options.

To enhance its current facilities, begin to use its open space system as a central element contributing to community quality, and insure the development of a quality park system as the community grows, the City of Ogallala should:

- **Create A Linked Park Network Of Greenways and Civic Streets That Connect Open Spaces, Neighborhoods, and Activity Centers.**

Such a network can help define the city and provide convenient access to its park and open space resources. The development of a linked park system has several benefits, including:

- Accommodating recreational activities that display some of the highest levels of participation, including bicycling, walking/hiking, skating, and cross-country skiing.
- Increasing safe access to recreational facilities by non-motorized modes, and increasing the service coverage of existing outdoor recreation facilities.
- Linking various parts of Ogallala as the city grows.
- Linking the city with recreational opportunities in the Lake McConaughy area.

- **Provide Recreational Facilities To Meet The Needs Of Newly Developing Areas.**

In growth areas, Ogallala should provide both neighborhood and community parks and other recreational experiences, such as nature interpretation, resource conservation, trail systems, and other passive activities. It is vitally important to set aside quality parkland/open space during planning stages of new residential developments. Planning of these neighborhood parks should ensure safe, convenient, and desirable pedestrian access from neighborhoods to parks. In addition, parks should fit within the framework of the greenway concept.

- **Distribute Active Recreation Use Across The Geographical Area Of the City, Guarding Against Over Concentration Of Park Resources In Any Quadrant Of the City.**

The adequacy of park services is measured in both numbers and by geographic distribution. Parks that are inaccessible to neighborhoods prevent easy access and provide a lower level of service. Neighborhood parks, in particular, should be evaluated in terms of service radii standards to insure appropriate distribution of facilities.

- **Provide An Equitable Mechanism For Establishing Service Standards In Growth Areas and Financing Park Acquisition and Development.**

The reservation and development of new park and open space areas in developing areas is a major challenge for a city. The establishment of service standards was once based on national norms, but is increasingly predicated on levels of local service. This analysis evaluates current local levels of service in light of published national standards. Established local levels of service then establish a basis for park dedications and assessments in developing areas. Park system finance should be based on a benefit principle, apportioning costs based on who benefits from specific projects.

- **Balance Active and Passive Recreation Opportunities For All People Of Ogallala.**

The City should maintain a balance between active and passive recreation. Preservation of the drainage areas and development of trails through these areas can balance active recreational facilities in other parts of the

growing city. Development of a greenway system in Ogallala will also encourage usage of proposed community parks.

- **Use Parks and Open Spaces To Encourage Neighborhood Investment and To Help To Reinforce Ogallala's Urban Form.**

Parks and open spaces can help to provide structure for a growing community. In traditional towns, the green or commons was a focus for both civic life and community amenity. Park development can have equal value for contemporary development, adding a public aspect to life in new residential areas.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Park facilities are evaluated in four ways:

- *Facilities by Classification.* Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they serve.
- *Facilities Relating to Overall population Service Standards.*
- *Geographical Distribution.* The service radius of each facility is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in service.
- *Park inventory and assessment.* Improvement needs are noted for each city-owned park.

### **Facilities by Classification**

In order to systematically analyze the park system, Ogallala's major recreation and open space areas are classified as follows.

- *Overall Park Space:* Ogallala's public park system, as summarized in Table 5-1, contains approximately 80 acres. Traditional park area standards recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggest ten acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. With a 2000 Census population of 4,930, Ogallala's ratio of 16.22 acres per 1,000 residents is well above the standard. Based on this standard, Ogallala should designate parks in new developments to maintain this level of service through the planning period.

The park classification system developed by the NRPA is used to classify the facilities in Ogallala's system. These categories include:

- *Mini-Park:* Mini-Parks generally address specific recreation or open space needs. Generally, these parks are usually less than one acre in size and have a service radius below 0.25 miles. Because of maintenance difficulties with multiple small sites and their small service area, most cities discourage the development of mini-parks. Ogallala currently has no city owned mini-parks. However, Saint Luke's small park functions in this way. The city should not plan for any future mini-park development nor accept mini-park dedications because of maintenance issues.

- *Neighborhood Parks:* Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of a city's park system and provide a recreational and social focus for residential areas. These parks desirably provide space for informal active and passive recreational activities. The typical service radius for neighborhood parks is usually 0.25 to 0.50 miles. Neighborhood parks adequate in size to accommodate the requisite facilities usually contain about five acres, although they can grow as large as ten acres in some communities. Most of Ogallala's five neighborhood parks have between 3 and 4 acres. Site selection criteria include ease of access, neighborhood location, and connection to greenways. Map 5-1 indicates Ogallala's current neighborhood parks and their 1/2-mile service radii.

NRPA standards call for 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 people. Ogallala currently has a total of 19.5 acres of neighborhood parks, representing about four acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 people. While this exceeds the NRPA rule-of-thumb, it also represents Ogallala's accepted local level of service. This level establishes the city's standard and should be applied in determining new neighborhood park needs in growing areas.

*School Parks:* School parks combine the resources of schools and city agencies to provide joint social and recreational facilities. Location is based on criteria for school site selection. School park facilities can help to meet neighborhood park needs, particularly when located in an area not served by a neighborhood park. Since Ogallala exceeds the national standard, school facilities represent added amenities to neighborhoods. Map 5-1 also identifies existing Ogallala schools.

• *Community Parks:* These typically include areas of diverse use and environmental quality. Such parks meet community-based recreation needs, may preserve significant natural areas and often include areas suited for intense recreation facilities. Typical criteria for community parks include:

-Adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks, but with space for additional activity.

-A special attraction that draws people from a larger area, such as a swimming pool, pond or lake, ice skating rink, trails, special environmental or cultural features, or specialized sports complexes.

Community parks generally contain between 30 and 50 acres and serve a variety of needs. The typical service radius of a community park is approximately .5 to 3 miles. Traditional NRPA guidelines for community park areas call for 5 to 8 acres per 1,000. While Ogallala lacks large community parks, many major services are located in the neighborhood park system. Western Diamonds encompasses about 40 acres but functions as a sports complex rather than as a multi-use community park. Continued community growth may create a future need for community parks, including a need for a facility to serve residents south of the river.

• *Natural Resource Areas.* These include lands that preserve important natural resources, landscapes, and open spaces. Nature Park along Chuckwagon Road provides a natural environment with little development.

• *Greenways.* These open spaces tie park system components together to form a linked open space environment. Greenways follow either natural environments, such as drainageways, or man-made settings, such as railroad corridors, parkways, and other rights-of-ways. Greenways may also be predesignated as part of development design. The drainage way running north to south parallel to Western Diamonds is an example of an existing greenway within the city's open space system.

• *Special Use Parks.* These cover a variety of facilities oriented to a single use, including cultural or social sites, or specialized facilities. Western Diamonds recreation complex and the private West Wind Golf Course are Ogallala's leading examples of special use open spaces. The Boot Hill historical site is a special use area oriented to cultural and historical value.

Table 5.1 summarizes Ogallala's park system by type of park and available facilities.

## **Level of Service Analysis and Future Park Needs**

As outlined in Chapter One, a moderate growth scenario for Ogallala would generate a city population of about 5,500 residents by 2020. The development concept lays out proposed land uses in Ogallala for the next 20 years to accommodate this future population. Table 5-2 identifies the future park needs based on national standards and current community standards. The city exceeds the national standards by almost 30 acres. This level of services is a standard that many residents have come to expect within the community, therefore the city should base future park

land needs on its current level of service. However, based on this methodology the city will need an additional 8.39 acres. However, geographic considerations must also be factored into a calculation of future park needs.

### **Facilities by Geographical Distribution**

As previously indicated, neighborhood parks comprise the basic unit of a park system. Geographic neighborhood park service can be evaluated using the NRPA standard of ¼ to ½ -mile service radius for neighborhood parks, as seen in Map 5.1. A ½-mile radius standard indicates that a neighborhood park will serve about a section of land, while a ¼- mile radius standard requires a neighborhood park for each quarter section. These standards indicate that all parts of Ogallala enjoy neighborhood park access with the exception of areas south of the river and Interstate 80.

The actual service area of a park is also defined by natural and man-made barriers, which can prevent safe access to parks. South Ogallala is separated from neighborhood park service by both distance and the barriers presented by the Interstate, river, and railroad. As a result, south residential growth will generate an additional geographic demand for new neighborhood park area. In order to provide the same level of service to residents south of the interstate and to maintain current levels in new growth areas on the north side, the city should identify future park locations.

Map 5-2, Parks and Public Facilities, indicates the proposed parks, greenways and trails system. The concept recommends significant open space development within the South Platte River floodplain. Trail access between neighborhoods on the south side and existing and future park sites is an important part of the concept. An additional greenway south of the interstate would buffer future development from the interstate and provided added protection from the floodwaters of the Platte River basin.

### **Facilities in Relation to Population Service Standards**

An evaluation of the community's recreational facilities based on quantitative national and State standards is summarized on Table 5.6. This analysis needs to be tempered by the fact that national standards generally apply to cities larger than Ogallala. For example, while standards for running tracks and football fields indicate that Ogallala is too small to need such facilities, most similarly-sized towns will consider such facilities vital to community life and school-based athletic programs. With this caveat in mind, this analysis, combined with local input, leads to the following conclusions:

- Ogallala exceeds national standards in all areas.
- With population growth the city will experience a need for additional regulation soccer fields and baseball/softball fields. Often local standards exceed national standards for soccer fields. Ogallala soccer fields also provide a regional service.
- Despite meeting the overall needs, the city should establish a program to replace aging playground equipment within the park system.
- As a regional center Ogallala should consider additional regulation baseball and softball fields in order to host larger tournaments.

## ***PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICIES***

This section describes strategies designed to enhance the park system's status as a leading community feature. The overall concept:

- Envisions a linked park system, molding Ogallala’s future open space system into a green network that unites the community and makes each major park the territory of everyone.
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- New backstop

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- Windscreen and fence guard
- Crushed limestone on warning track.
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- Upgraded infield surface.
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- Replacement of the outfield fence.
- Improvements to the batting cage.
- Installing a windscreen.

The city should also consider the establishment of a campground that would cater to I-80 travelers. Travelers could be offered one night free, making Ogallala a destination on a cross-country trip. This could be one method for capturing this market and attracting them to spend money in town.

## CHAPTER SIX PUBLIC SERVICES

Ogallala's public services and infrastructure systems are basic to the city's current operation and future growth. These systems operate quietly and provide the basic municipal support for the lives of Ogallala residents. This section of the plan looks at the city's existing facilities and discusses how they can be improved to continue the city's high level of service.

In continuing to provide good municipal services to its taxpayers and users, Ogallala should:

- Maintain the quality of Ogallala's public services in the most economical way possible.
- Support new development with adequate, economical infrastructure.
- Provide for the greatest possible efficiencies in the development and operation of facilities.
- Assure the adequate rehabilitation of aging infrastructure to maintain the quality service levels expected by residents.

The following sections examine the current condition of Ogallala's vital infrastructure and public service systems. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 examine two basic components: the city's public facilities, those structures and resources which provide the home bases of major municipal operations; and its infrastructure systems, including sanitary sewers, stormwater management, and water distribution.

### Public Facility Priorities

Table 6.1 examines the city's public facilities. From this analysis specific priorities were identified. These priorities include:

1. Completing the Police Department space needs plan
2. Constructing a new public works facility on existing land.
3. Upgrading and expanding existing hangers at the Searle Field.
4. Completing and implementing a space needs plan for the library, potentially requiring its expansion.

**Infrastructure Priorities**

Table 6.2 analyzes the city’s infrastructure systems. The following priorities emerge from this analysis:

1. Construct wells at the city’s new wellfield, acquired during 2002 southwest of the “Y” intersection of Spruce Street and Highway 61.
2. Complete master plan for water system and replace remaining 4-inch lines in the downtown.
3. Establish a program for replacement of sewer lines that have settled and are experiencing inflow problems.

**TABLE 6.1: Public Facilities Analysis and Actions**

<b>City Hall</b> 411 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Ogallala City Hall was built during the late 1970s. It is a one-story brick building with parking on the east side of the building. The building includes offices for the city clerk, city manager, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), handi-bus, building and zoning, and community development director. The building is accessible however the bathrooms are not ADA accessible.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The building is in good condition. However it requires some improvements to increase the energy efficiency of the building. Most important are upgrades to the heating and cooling systems.  Currently the basement of the building is used for storage. This area should be reconfigured for more efficient storage of material.
<b>Policies</b>	Continue routine maintenance.  Plan for upgrade of the heating and cooling system during the planning period.  Work with departments to organize storage within the basement.
<b>Ogallala Police Department</b> 410 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	The Ogallala Police Department occupies a one story brick building that was originally built for the city offices and police department. During the late 1970s, the police department took over the entire building and city offices moved into a new building across the street. The building includes a lobby area; meeting room; vault; 3 office spaces for the secretary, chief and lieutenant; storage/file area, briefing room, and kitchenette.

<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Overall the building is in good condition.</p> <p>Additional space and security needs are the department’s major concerns. Issues include a need for more secure rooms for conducting interviews and under use of spaces like the old jail cells. The heating and cooling system should also be upgraded from the existing boiler and compressor system. The department could also use a garage facility to store and repair vehicles.</p> <p>The department is currently completing a needs assessment.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Complete needs assessment and create action plan based on study.</p> <p>The former community hospital is a possible location for an expanded police facility. The city should also consider a cooperative effort with the county to create a joint law enforcement center. Any decision should be based on a completed needs assessment.</p> <p>If the department remains at the current facility projects include resurfacing the parking lot, adding a garage, updating the heating and cooling system and remodeling the interior to meeting security and space needs.</p>

**TABLE 6.1: Public Facilities Analysis and Actions**

<b>Ogallala Fire Department</b> 411 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	<p>The Ogallala Fire Department is located to the west of the City Hall. The west half of the building was built in 1955 and the east half in 1971. The building has 8 bays, a meeting room and kitchen, and offices for the chief and assistant chief.</p> <p>Equipment includes 2 grass trucks and a tanker that are all owned by the rural department, and a pumper and command car that are co-owned by the city and rural departments. The city equipment includes an aerial, pumper, personal van, 2 ambulances and a dive rescue truck.</p> <p>The department has 30 volunteers and a full time fire chief and assistant fire chief.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The building is in good condition and meeting the department’s needs. The city is scheduling to replace two of the original 1955 doors and the warranty will be expiring on the roof.</p> <p>The most pressing needs in the coming years will be replacement and upgrade of equipment and vehicles. One ambulance /rescue truck was supposed to be replaced in 2001. Also needing to be replaced during the planning period will be the ladder truck, bunker equipment, and pumper truck. The department should also consider purchasing a second command vehicle as long as they have two full-time members.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Continue routine maintenance on the building.</p> <p>Establish a routine replacement program for vehicles and equipment.</p> <p>Begin planning for replacement of equipment that will require large capital outlays including replacement of the ladder truck and pumper.</p> <p>Establish recruitment program to attract additional volunteers to increase the overall number and replace retiring volunteers.</p>

**TABLE 6.1: Public Facilities Analysis and Actions**

<b>Goodall Library</b> 203 W. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street City	<p>The library building was constructed during the 1920s and used for a variety of civic uses, including a school. In 1953 the building was purchased by the Goodall family for use as the library. The brick, split entry building was remodeled in 1972, 1976 and in 1991. The children’s collection is located in the lower level with the remaining collection on the upper level.</p> <p>The upper level of the building is accessible through an east side entrance. Staff parking is located on the east side of the building. Most customer parking is located on the street and some parking to the south.</p> <p>The library has a 28,000-piece collection with a circulation of 68,000 pieces per year. Public computers include 6 on the upper level and 4 in the lower level.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The building is in good condition but filled to capacity. Currently the library is unable to expand its collection without removal of some materials. The lack of space also makes it difficult to provide additional adult services. A feasibility study was completed and recommended either expansion to the east or moving to a new building.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Identify expansion plan. If a new facility is considered the new site should have easy access to the downtown and the school system.</p> <p>Identify fundraising process to move ahead on expansion plans.</p>
<b>Searle Field/Ogallala Municipal Airport</b> Highway 26/61	<p>Searle Field, Ogallala’s airport, is located on the western edge of the city. The airport has two runways, 26/08 and 31/13. Runway 26/08 is 5,100 feet by 75 feet and runway 31/13 is 3,700 feet by 50 feet. The airport includes a terminal building, two hangers, and two additional buildings occupied by the Nebraska State Patrol and KEL LLC.</p> <p>The terminal building consists of a lobby, administrative office, meeting area, pilots lounge, accessible bathrooms and a maintenance area.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The terminal building is in good condition and should meet the city’s needs.</p> <p>Two hangers are in deteriorating condition and will require significant upgrade and possible expansion.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Continue routine maintenance on the terminal building.</p> <p>Budget for upgrade and expansion of existing hangers.</p> <p>Additional property will need to be acquired for a future clear zone.</p>

**TABLE 6.1: Public Facilities Analysis and Actions**

<b>Ogallala Cemetery</b> West 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	<p>The Ogallala Cemetery covers 25 acres of land, 17 developed and 8 undeveloped acres. The main building at the facility includes an office, shop area and restrooms. The older section of this building is approximately 60 years old with an addition added during the late 1990’s. There is also a small pump house and metal shed. The recent purchase of additional land will provide room in the cemetery until approximately 2050 to 2060.</p>
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<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The buildings are all in good condition.</p> <p>Replacement of the sprinkler system is part of the 5-year capital improvement plan. The city should also plan for expansion in to the northern section of the cemetery by 2007.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Complete 5-year improvements including replacement of sprinkler system and expansion into newer northern section.</p> <p>Replace damaged trees and plant new ones in eastern section of the cemetery.</p> <p>Update directory to a computerized system.</p> <p>Establish routine replacement program for equipment, specifically mowers.</p> <p>Continue routine maintenance on buildings and grounds.</p>
<b>Ogallala Public Schools</b> 205 East 6 <sup>th</sup> Street	<p>There are five school facilities within the Ogallala school system. The Ogallala High School is located at 602 East G Street and had a 2001-02 enrollment of 403 students in grades 9-12. The Ogallala Middle School is located at 205 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and had an enrollment of 283 students in grades 6-8. The city has three elementary schools that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prairie View elementary (801 East O Street)</li> <li>- Progress Elementary (200 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street)</li> <li>- West 5<sup>th</sup> Elementary (420 West H Street)</li> </ul> <p>These three schools combined for a total enrollment of 438 students in grades K-5. A \$1.2 million addition was recently completed on the High School.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The buildings are all in good condition and meet the current needs to the city. The recent addition to the High School should meet the city's upcoming needs.</p> <p>Major issues for the school district include decreasing state aid with increasing cost. A declining student enrollment over the last five years has also hampered funding.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Evaluate funding alternatives.</p> <p>Plan for the inclusion of students from surround rural districts that are no longer able to support their own schools. An increase in enrollment will mean additional funding from the state and additional local support.</p>

**TABLE 6.1: Public Facilities Analysis and Actions**

<b>Goodall Recreation Center</b> 505 East G Street	<p>The Goodall Recreation Center is a twenty-five year old brick building. It includes an indoor pool and workout area/weight room in the former lobby.</p>
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<b>Evaluation</b>	The building is in good condition but needs additional room. Additional room would allow the center to provide a greater number of programs. The pool is in good conditional but does need a new sand filter. Recent improvements include refurbishing the showers and tile, painting and a new air/humidity system. The roof will need to be replaced and the parking lot resurfaced. The city should also consider improvements to make the pool more accessible to disabled users.
<b>Policies</b>	Continue routine maintenance. Replace Roof and filtering system. Resurface parking lot. Complete space needs analysis.
<b>10<sup>th</sup> Street Park Shop</b>	The 10 <sup>th</sup> Street Park Shop is a metal, 50x50 building that was moved from the sewer plant in 1990. The building has two bays and is used for routine maintenance and parks department offices. The shop is handicap accessible.  A second building is also located at the site. This older wood frame building has one bay and heated. The building does contain bathrooms but they are not open to the public. The building is used for storage.  Paulson Cement Company currently allows disposal of trees and grass clippings. The city has no composting program.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The building is in good condition and meeting the city needs. An additional computer is need for the offices.  The older park shop is in poor condition and needs new siding and the roof replaced.  There is a specific need to composting material and mulch for the city. The city should establish a composting program at the new Public Works site.
<b>Policies</b>	Continue routine maintenance.  Replace siding and roof on older park shop.  Establish routine replacement program for equipment.
<b>Fred Arturburn Youth Cabin</b> Searle Park	In 2002 the process of replacing the existing youth cabin in Searle Park was initiated. Plans for the new structure which will function as a community building include a large meeting room, storage area and restrooms. Construction of the new building was initiated by the Boys Scouts and School District with eventual maintenance being handled by the city.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Construction of the building was taken on as a project for a High School shop class. Since construction began the School District has lost funding for the class leaving the building partially completed.
<b>Policies</b>	Work with local service organizations to identify funding for completion of the building.

**TABLE 6.2: Infrastructure Analysis and Actions**

<b>Streets Department</b>	The street shop is located in the public works building east of the city hall. The building houses the public works office, water office, and a maintenance area. The shop area is approximately 50x125 feet. A sight in southern Ogallala has been selected and purchased for a new public works facility. The streets department stores salt at the sewer plant and
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	trucks at a third location.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The building is in fair condition but is excessively over crowded.
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Construct a new public works facility and consolidate storage and maintenance of city equipment.</p> <p>Equipment needs during the planning period will include a new mowing tractor, pick-up, dump-truck, road grader, lift truck, and sweeper.</p>
<b>Ogallala Wastewater Treatment Plant</b> East Riverdale Drive	<p>Ogallala’s wastewater treatment plant is located on the north side of the South Platte River at the end of East Riverdale Drive. The 1985 plant is a two-stage trickling filter plant with anaerobic digestion. The plant is designed to handle 1.5 mgd and averages around 700,000 gd. Recent upgrades have included the activated sludge treatment, the ability to remove ammonia, an aeration blower building, two section aeration basins and two 15-foot final clarifiers.</p> <p>The department also maintains one lift station on the south side of the river.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The facility is in good condition.</p> <p>Future growth in the southern sections of the city will require expansion of the existing lift station.</p> <p>As part of the 5-year capital improvement plan the department will clean the digesters and replace secondary digester cover.</p> <p>The city will need to continue to closely monitor the need for nitrate removal.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	Continue routine maintenance and annual upgrades as needed.

**TABLE 6.2: Infrastructure Analysis and Actions**

<b>Sewer System</b>	Ogallala sewer system consists of lines ranging in size from 6 to 24 inches. The system is constructed of clay, PVC and some iron in the oldest areas of the city.
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<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Overall the system is in fair condition with some problem areas. There are some inflow and settling problems throughout the city, specifically within the older areas and in the southern section of the city where grades are much flatter. Much of the southern half of the city is at the same grade as the plant. So far the city has not needed to install lift stations.</p> <p>The city has a contract for routine cleaning and for emergencies.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Continue routine cleaning and review options for purchasing jetting and televising equipment.</p> <p>Continue to upgrade older lines that have settled.</p> <p>Complete overall sewer study to determine priority areas and scheduling.</p> <p>Extend services into newly annexed areas as needed.</p> <p>Run parallel 8-inch line north adjacent to existing line servicing the hospital.</p>
<b>Water Supply</b>	<p>The city's existing well field is located south of Highway 61. The four wells at this site were drilled in 1995 and all average approximately 400 feet. The city also has 3 older wells located within the city. The oldest two wells were drilled in 1964 and one 1968 and are all approximately 300 feet. Two are located north along Highway 26/61 near the Ogallala nursing home and a third is located south of the river near the south water tower on Highway 61. Together, the city's wells have a capacity of 6.4 million gallons per day.</p> <p>Land was recently purchased for an expanded well field southwest of the Highway 26/61 "Y". The area is currently planned for an additional three wells with construction beginning in 2003.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The wells are rotated during the winter months to minimize wear on the wells. One well is refurbished every year for a seven-year cycle on each well. This pattern will continue with the addition of the new wells.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Continue routine maintenance.</p> <p>Move forward with plans for additional well field. The city should also consider construction of an additional storage tank at the new well field. The tank would position the city to begin treatment if federal regulations change. The storage tank would also provide the capacity to support additional lake development on the south side.</p>

**TABLE 6.2: Infrastructure Analysis and Actions**

<b>Water Storage</b>	<p>The City of Ogallala has 3 storage tanks, 2 elevated and 1 ground storage. The 500,000 gallon elevated storage tank north of Western Diamond sports complex was constructed in 1985. The 200,000 gallon elevated tank along south Highway 61 is the oldest reservoir built in 1968. The ground storage tank is located along north Spruce Street and was constructed in 1995.</p>
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<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The reservoirs are inspected tri-annually and are all in good condition. Some exterior painting is needed on the elevated tanks.</p> <p>A recent study completed by Jacobson-Helgoth indicated a shortage of water storage. The study recommended an additional 1 million gallon storage facility.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Implement recommendations laid out in the city's water study.</p> <p>Continue routine maintenance and repairs.</p> <p>Plan for routine exterior painting of elevated towers.</p> <p>Evaluate the need for an additional tank at the new well field.</p>
<b>Water Distribution System</b>	<p>The city's water mains range in size from 4 inch in the downtown area to 18 inch with one 24-inch transmission line.</p> <p>The oldest lines are pit cast iron and ductile iron while the newer lines are all PVC. In the downtown the city has installed new valves and hydrants.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>The system is in good condition but some problem areas exist.</p> <p>Pressure and flow problems in the downtown are an issue and can be resolved with the upgrade of the remaining 4-inch lines.</p> <p>Approximately 50 miles of line will need to be replaced with PVC.</p> <p>The city has approximately 25 dead end lines, many of them to the city's fire hydrants.</p>
<b>Policies</b>	<p>Replace remaining 4-inch lines in the downtown with 8-inch lines.</p> <p>Establish PVC replacement program for remaining older lines.</p> <p>Identify areas that should be looped for provide a more efficient and secure system.</p> <p>Continue to work with developers to service development within the newly annexed areas.</p>

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **HOUSING FOR OGALLALA'S FUTURE**

**Every neighborhood in Ogallala should provide a positive living environment for its citizens.**

Ogallala's residential areas are one of the city's most important resources. The community's housing stock is its largest single capital investment. In addition, residents generally measure their satisfaction with their community by the quality of their neighborhoods. However, the flooding that occurred during the summer of 2002 left many Ogallala residents looking for safe, secure and affordable housing. The existing and future housing stock in Ogallala is an essential foundation for the city's future growth and development. This chapter looks in detail at Ogallala's existing and future housing needs. It then develops policies for assuring housing opportunities for all residents of Ogallala.

#### **GOALS**

This section presents the basic goals on which housing policies for Ogallala should be built. In working to strengthen its housing resources, the community should work to:

- **PRESERVE OGALLALA'S EXISTING SOUND HOUSING STOCK.**

In a community like Ogallala, with a large stock of aging housing, preservation is an important priority for the community. Ogallala's most significant affordable housing resource is already on the ground and is virtually impossible to replace. Making these housing units available became even more critical after numerous families were displaced from flooding.

- **CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN OGALLALA THAT OFFERS BETTER HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.**

While Ogallala's vacancy rate was over 11% in 2000 it has not met the potential demand for new affordable housing. Providing new housing to serve a range of people, including young families, professionals moving into the city, low-income households, and seniors, is important to the city's ability to attract business and retain young people. Ogallala must continue to work to meet the needs of all in order to prosper.

- **CREATE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THAT WILL UNITE NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE CITY.**

Strengthening cooperation and involvement of residents throughout the city must include the creation of physical connections that develop subdivisions into neighborhoods of the city. Community streets, parks, and public facilities can work to strengthen the city and its identity to residents. New areas, when they develop, must be integrated into the existing fabric of the city, rather than existing as enclaves. This can be a particular challenge as development occurs in the hills to the north and in areas south of the South Platte River and Interstate 80.

- **ASSURE THAT EACH NEIGHBORHOOD IN OGALLALA REMAINS HEALTHY.**

The success of a community depends upon the ability of its neighborhoods to achieve a wholeness that provides a good living environment. A neighborhood's public facilities and services must be readily available to all sections of the community. In addition, access to retail services and other private amenities are also important in defining the quality of wholeness. Neighborhood policies and strategies must address both public and private sector service issues if the city is to provide complete living environments.

- **ASSURE THAT EACH NEIGHBORHOOD PROVIDES A GOOD RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS RESIDENTS.**

A good community provides high quality schools, churches, day-care facilities, parks, and cultural facilities to support the city's living environment. One of the most fundamental services a city can provide is the protection of housing areas from major intrusions and hazards. Deteriorated streets, traffic problems, poor property maintenance, poor pedestrian circulation, and code violations can diminish the living quality that a community offers. These conditions interfere with resident's enjoyment of their own property, reduce property values and make neighborhood rejuvenation more difficult. Thus, community policies must accentuate the positive aspects of a neighborhood, and seek to reduce negative or deteriorating influences.

## ANALYSIS

### **HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS IN OGALLALA**

This discussion will examine housing value and physical characteristics of Ogallala's housing stock.

#### **Housing Occupancy and Tenure**

Table 7.1 compares changes in Ogallala's housing occupancy between 1990 and 2000. The table indicates:

- Overall the city saw an increase of 38 housing units. At the same time, the city's vacancy rate also increased to 11.32% from 10.19% in 1990.

- The 60-unit increase in owner occupied units and the 52-unit decrease in renter occupied units would indicate a significant shift in housing trends within the city. This would appear to be something unique to Ogallala compared to the state as a whole.

- The median contract rent in Ogallala increased by almost 100% between 1990 and 2000. However, the city's median rent of \$409 is lower than the state's level of \$491.

- The median value of an owner occupied unit increased by \$26,300. Compared to the statewide median of \$88,000 Ogallala's median of \$67,600 remains fairly low.

**TABLE 7.1: Change in Key Housing Occupancy Indicators**

	Ogallala				State of Nebraska			
	1990	2000	Change 1990-00	% Change 1990-00	1990	2000	Change 1990-00	% Change 1990-00
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2,276	2,314	38	1.67%	660,621	722,668	62,047	9.39%
<b>Owner Occupied Units</b>	1,372	1,432	60	4.37%	400,394	449,317	48,923	12.22%
<b>% Owner Occupied</b>	60.28%	61.88%			60.61%	62.17%		
<b>Renter Occupied Units</b>	672	620	-52	-7.74%	201,969	216,867	14,898	7.38%
<b>% Renter Occupied</b>	29.53%	26.79%			30.57%	30.01%		
<b>Vacant Units</b>	232	262	30	12.93%	58,258	56,484	-1,774	-3.05%
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	10.19%	11.32%			8.82%	7.82%		
<b>Median Value</b>	41,300	67,600	26,300	63.68%	50,000	88,000	38,000	76.00%
<b>Median Contract Rent</b>	205	409	204	99.51%	348	491	143	41.09%

### Construction Activity in Ogallala

Table 7.2 illustrates the city's building permit activity since 1992. During this ten-year period 104 housing units were developed in Ogallala. The vast majority of these have been single-family units. Construction activity for single-family units peaked in 1997 with the construction of 13 new housing units. The lack of rental development and the overall loss of 52 renter occupied units during the 1990s likely indicates a significant need for rental housing both for the young and seniors.

**TABLE 7.2: Housing Development in Ogallala, 1992-2002**

Year	Single Family	Multi-family	Total
1992	4	0	4
1993	5	0	5
1994	10	0	10
1995	6	0	6
1996	10	0	10
1997	13	2	15
1998	4	0	4
1999	9	0	9
2000	7	0	7
2001	12	0	12
2002	6	16	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>104</b>

### Housing Costs and Affordability in Ogallala

Table 7.3 presents an Affordability Analysis, relating household income ranges with housing cost categories. This affordability analysis is based on owner occupied units value being two to two and a half times a household's total income and affordable rental units being approximately 20% of a household's monthly income excluding utilities. In Table 7.3 a positive balance indicates a surplus of housing within the affordability range of each income group, while a negative balance indicates a shortage.

The analysis indicates that Ogallala is experiencing a shortage of market rate or higher income housing units. Based on 2000 Census data the city has a shortage of 360 units that cost more than \$100,000 or have rents above \$800.

As seen in Table 1.6 the city's median household income is approximately \$32,000. For those within this income range, the need for affordable housing is being met. However this is not true for those making more than the city's median. For those households earning between \$50,000 and \$75,000 a year there is a shortage of 211 units. This shortage would indicate that the city lacks "move up" housing. It is likely that much of this need is being met with new construction that is occurring on the south side of Lake McConaughy.

**TABLE 7.3: Housing Affordability Analysis, 1990**

Income Range	% of County Median	% of Households	Number of Households in Each Range	Affordable Range for Owner Units	Number of Owner Units	Affordable Range for Renter Units	Number of Renter Units	Total Affordable Units	Balance
\$1-25,000	0-78%	37.04	760	\$0-50,000	409	\$0-400	483	892	132
\$25-49,999	79-156%	36.11	741	\$50-99,999	832	\$400-800	137	969	228
\$50-74,999	157-233%	16.91	347	\$100,000-149,999	136	\$800-1,250	0	136	-211
\$75-99,999	234-311%	6.14	126	\$150,000-200,000	31	\$1,250-1,500	0	31	-95
\$100,000+	Over 311%	3.80	78	\$200,000+	24	\$1,500+	0	24	-54

Source: US Bureau of the Census

### Housing Development Needs

Table 7.4 presents the current estimated income distribution (by percent of households) of Ogallala, paired with affordable monthly housing costs for each income range. In Table 7.4 affordable monthly housing costs include utilities and are approximately 30% of a household's monthly income. These target costs are matched to strategies that can deliver housing affordable to each income range. For example, programs that are most appropriate to families earning between \$25,000 and \$35,000 can produce housing with monthly costs between \$625 and \$875, including utilities, corresponding to houses with mortgages in the range of \$50,000 to \$80,000. Strategies that can deliver housing in this price range include rehabilitation of existing housing, manufactured housing, and affordable single-family development using financing devices such as deferred second mortgages.

**TABLE 7.4: Housing Income and Price Matrix for Ogallala, 2000**

<b>Income Target</b>	<b>Number of Households 2000</b>	<b>% of Households</b>	<b>of Affordable Monthly Housing Costs (including utilities)</b>	<b>Price Ranges for Ownership Housing</b>	<b>Appropriate Housing Types and Strategies</b>
<b>Under \$15,000</b>	336	16.3	0-375	Less than \$27,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Public housing</li> <li>•Section 8 certificates</li> <li>•Section 42 tax credit rentals</li> <li>•Existing housing rehab</li> </ul>
<b>\$15,000-24,999</b>	426	20.7	375-625	27,500-52,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Section 42 tax credit rentals</li> <li>•Mobile home/manufactured housing</li> <li>•Existing housing rehab</li> <li>•Acquisition with rehab</li> </ul>
<b>\$25,000-34,999</b>	346	16.8	625-875	50,000-80,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Existing housing rehab</li> <li>•Market rate rentals</li> <li>•Affordable single-family development</li> </ul>
<b>\$35,000-49,999</b>	397	19.3	875-1,250	80,000-110,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Market rate rentals</li> <li>•Affordable single-family development</li> <li>•Subdivision development with infrastructure assistance</li> </ul>
<b>\$50,000-74,999</b>	348	16.9	1,250-1,875	110,000-170,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Market-based single-family</li> <li>•Subdivision development with infrastructure assistance</li> </ul>
<b>\$75,000+</b>	204	9.8	1,875+	Over 170,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Market-based single-family</li> <li>•Subdivision development through special assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,057</b>	<b>100.0</b>			

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2000

Table 7.5 presents a ten-year housing development and pricing program for Ogallala, based on the city's relative income distribution. The program provides production targets for various cost ranges of rental and owner-occupied units. The development program is based on the following assumptions:

- New development in Ogallala will be about 70% owner-occupied and 30% renter-occupied housing. This represents the 2000 owner/renter distribution of occupied housing.

- Owner-occupied housing will be distributed generally in proportion to the income distribution of households for whom ownership is a realistic strategy. Some of the market for lower-cost owner-occupancy may be shifted toward market rate rentals.
- Lower-income households will generally be accommodated in rental development.

The analysis indicates a need for about 45 owner-occupied units with prices below \$125,000 and 24 units with effective rents below \$625 in current dollars, a total of 69 “affordable” units. Therefore, a housing program for Ogallala should establish an average annual production target of about 6 to 7 units. These numbers are dependant on Ogallala meeting its growth goals laid out in Chapter 1 and could be further influenced by actions that could expand Ogallala’s market. These include:

- Major employment expansions.
- Housing developments that can attract people from surrounding regions, such as substantial senior housing developments.
- Relocation from major redevelopment activities.

The flood of July 2002 also had a significant effect on the need for affordable housing. Many of the lost units were more affordable mobile home units, likely increasing the overall need for affordable units from what is estimated in this chapter. The city will need to continue to work with state and national agencies to address these needs.

**TABLE 7.5: Ten Year Housing Development and Pricing Program, 2000-2010**

	2000-2010
<b>Total Need</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Total Owner Occupied</b>	<b>79</b>
Affordable Low: \$60-90,000	20
Affordable Moderate: \$90-125,000	25
Moderate Market: \$125-190,000	22
High Market: \$190-250,000	10
High End: Over \$250,000	4
<b>Total Renter Occupied</b>	<b>34</b>
Assisted: Less than \$400	14
Affordable: \$400-625	10
Market: Over \$625	11

## HOUSING POLICIES

Preservation of existing housing and development of new housing to support new growth and existing demand are vital elements of Ogallala’s community development strategy. While land use and community investment strategies are important to housing planning, specific efforts are needed to address housing priorities. This section considers initiatives that, if combined with existing programs, can help address these major priorities.

The city’s primary housing challenges include:

- Maintaining the structural integrity of older homes and the quality of Ogallala’s existing housing supply.
- Developing an effective, multi-faceted neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation program.

- Establishing an effective method of financing subdivision development, particularly for mid-level housing development.
- Increasing the quantity and quality of rental housing available to Ogallala’s present and prospective residents.

Programs initiated by the West Central Joint Housing Authority include downpayment assistance, first time homebuyers education program and a rehabilitation program. Funding was also secured through Nebraska Department of Economic Development for downpayment assistance to 7 low-income families that were displaced by the 2002 flood. Formed in 1995, Keith County Housing Development Corporation was formed to undertake additional housing initiatives. It has recently developed 8 duplexes for low-income families. This agency along with existing low-income housing in the city should help meet the needs for affordable housing within Ogallala.

Unlike many communities Ogallala’s greatest challenge will be capturing the higher income markets. In the past ten years many of these residents have found their housing needs met in the Lake area instead of within the City of Ogallala. The city will also need to ensure a high quality of affordable housing within its existing housing stock.

Policies that address these issues include:

- **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS PROGRAM**
- **HOUSING CONSERVATION**
- **SUBDIVISION FINANCING FOR AFFORDABILITY**
- **SENIOR HOUSING**

**PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS PROGRAM**

OGALLALA SHOULD FACILITATE HOUSING CONSERVATION THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS.

The best conservation programs combine increased demands and awareness of the need for reinvestment with the tools to finance home repairs and rehabilitation. The strategy begins with a Property Maintenance Standards Program, an effort that encourages voluntary compliance with community standards while also establishing a legal basis for code enforcement. Components of this program include:

- *Preparing and distributing a Property Standards Manual.* This should be a friendly, clear, engagingly written document that sets out the expectations that Ogallala as a community has for individual building and property maintenance. It can also help to provide useful information, such as sites to dispose of or recycle unwanted household items.
- *Organizing voluntary efforts through church and civic groups to assist seniors and disabled people with property maintenance, including fix-up items, painting, routine repairs, and disposal of trash and other items.*
- *Develop a Property Maintenance Ordinance,* assuring that the ordinance clearly addresses those items that have the greatest impact on life safety, visual quality, and preservation of community maintenance standards.
- *Creating a code enforcement mechanism capable of administering city ordinances.* A staff person administering maintenance codes should be a helper as much as an “enforcer” – that is, the position should involve finding ways to assist people with voluntary code compliance without resorting to legal action.

- *Retain adequate staff to administer code enforcement programs.* Currently, a number of agencies including the Housing Authority, Department of Health and Human Services, the city, the county, and the Board of Health, all perform individual inspections. Consolidation of these inspecting functions could produce efficiencies with adequate funding to promote effective code enforcement.
- *Backing up the property maintenance standards program with rehabilitation financing.*

## HOUSING CONSERVATION

OGALLALA SHOULD EXPAND EXISTING REHABILITATION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS INTO A COMPREHENSIVE, MULTI-FACETED REHABILITATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

### *Comprehensive Rehabilitation Programs*

A significant percentage of Ogallala's housing units require at least moderate repairs or rehabilitation. A coordinated rehabilitation strategy, operating on a reliable, multi-year basis, is vital to ensure preservation of the area's critical supply of existing housing. A comprehensive rehabilitation program, appropriate to the respective needs of individual residential areas and towns, should include three program types. These include:

- *Direct rehabilitation loan programs.* This program would make direct forgivable loans and grants to homeowners from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The program is most appropriate to homeowners with low incomes who are not otherwise bankable.
- *A leveraged rehabilitation loan program.* This approach leverages private loan funds (often through the FHA Title I Home Improvement Loan program) by combining private loans with CDBG or other public funds to produce a below market interest rate for homeowners. The program works most effectively in moderate-income neighborhoods with minor rehabilitation needs and some demand for home improvements. It is effective in expanding the amount of work completed by a fixed amount of public funding. The experience of local lenders with FHA Title I can help expedite implementation of this program.
- *Acquisition and rehab programs.* Acquisition and rehabilitation programs are particularly useful in adapting older houses to the preferences of contemporary, moderate income buyers. These programs can take two forms:
  - A program for homebuyers that combines home purchase and rehabilitation into a single mortgage loan. This concept is similar to the FHA 203k mortgage insurance program. The FHA program has received criticism for overly complex procedures. A local program may involve the cooperation of lenders active in the city and funds that can be leveraged by the Keith County Housing Development Corporation.
  - A program by which a the Keith County Housing Development Corporation purchases and rehabilitates existing houses, selling them at moderate price to new homebuyers. Primary funding for this type of program would come from Community Development Block Grants (CBDG) or HOME funds, administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

### *Rental Rehabilitation*

A single-family rehabilitation program should be augmented with a rental rehabilitation program. This should provide financing for the improvement of sound rental properties in need of rehabilitation on an area-wide basis.

The rental rehabilitation program should operate through a leveraged rehabilitation program. Mechanically, the foundation of a rental rehabilitation program should be private financing. An individual institution or a lenders' consortium should take a leading role in marketing the availability of rehabilitation loans to small rental property owners. A reservation of HOME funds could be secured and utilized by the city to assist with blended loans when some form of subsidy is needed. In some cases, unit rehabilitation may be paired with Section 8 certificates, to help provide adequate cash flow to meet debt service.

#### **SUBDIVISION FINANCING FOR AFFORDABILITY**

#### **OGALLALA SHOULD DEVELOP A MECHANISM THAT ENCOURAGES SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT FOR MODERATE COST HOUSING.**

Subdivision development and its front-end costs and risks complicate the problem of providing an adequate inventory of available, improved lots. The high risk/low profit probability discourages development or encourages development in rural areas, which do not require full urban improvements. Even devices like special assessments, which provide front-end public financing, create costs, which can place housing beyond the means of moderate or middle-income buyers.

Tools to provide financing assistance for public improvements such as sewer extensions, intersections, major streets, and other necessary facilities are important to an effective housing strategy. The cost of providing infrastructure and site improvements typically accounts for \$10,000 to \$12,000 of a house's cost. Financing tools can help to lower this initial cost to a buyer, or lessen the initial financing burden to a developer.

Potential financing tools include:

- **Tax Increment Financing.** Within a TIF district, the tax basis of a site is frozen at pre-development levels. The added taxes created by development are then used to repay publicly-issued revenue bonds that financed public improvements. Thus, the future taxes created by a residential development pay for improvements, allowing a pass-through of the savings directly to homeowners or indirectly to renters.

TIF diverts taxes that would go to all jurisdictions, including the school system, to help finance a specific project. Therefore, the technique should be used in a focused, targeted way, with an emphasis on developments that serve low and moderate-income people.

- **Infrastructure Banking.** The use of special assessments enables subdivision development by reducing the heavy front-end risks to private developers. While this works effectively for higher cost subdivisions, with buyers who are less sensitive to these added monthly costs, it can place housing costs beyond the reach of buyers of more moderate means.

An "Infrastructure Bank" should be considered to finance public improvements in subdivisions that provide middle moderately priced owner-occupied housing. The infrastructure bank concept works as follows:

- The city – or the city in combination with another financing entity or program – provides front-end financing for public improvements on the lot. Let us assume that these costs are \$10,000 per lot on a house that otherwise costs \$70,000.

- The infrastructure financing is written as a deferred second mortgage loan, with no requirement for repayment until sale of the house. The second mortgage is a participatory loan – that is, its value appreciates along with the

value of the house. In our example, the second mortgage makes up 12.5% of the home value (or \$10,000 of a total cost of \$80,000).

- When the house is sold (or refinanced), the infrastructure mortgage is repaid, with a face value that represents this same proportion of the transaction. If the house sells for \$100,000, the Infrastructure Bank is repaid 12.5% of those sales proceeds, or \$12,500. This money may then be used to replenish the Infrastructure Bank's capitalization.
- *Special Assessments.* Special assessments are appropriately used for higher-cost subdivisions.

## SENIOR HOUSING

### OGALLALA SHOULD ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS.

Ogallala provides a superior environment for seniors with a small town atmosphere and excellent health services. However, the city experienced a population loss for those over the age of 65, mostly because of a loss among those over the age of 85. Despite the city's amenities local seniors are not finding their needs met. Transportation and health services beyond the hospital could likely be reasons for this out migration. Affordable housing that meets seniors needs could also be a challenge for retired Keith County residents looking to move or even stay in the city.

Affordability problems are often most severe among low-income elderly renters. Developments in Ogallala, including Ogallala Village and units managed by Ogallala Housing, currently provide housing assistance to low-income seniors. As the city's population continues to age and in order to attract seniors to the area, Ogallala should support the development of continuing care facilities. This should be done through regulations that permit flexibility for these facilities in a variety of settings, including residential neighborhoods.

#### **Senior Housing With Ownership Transition Program**

Development of moderately-priced senior housing may be one of the programs provided by the new Keith County Housing Development Corporation (KCHDC). This program could include a Senior Housing with Ownership Transition Program in which seniors would be able to move into a newer home while their older home would be refurbished and put on the market. Here, KCHDC in its role as a Community Housing Development Organization would partner with the City of Ogallala and local banks to build one or two-bedroom attached units, with a target cost of (for example) \$80,000 per unit. The KCHDC agrees to purchase the senior resident's current home at \$50,000. The senior then purchases the new attached unit, using the sale proceeds of the house as a substantial downpayment. The balance is amortized, with an approximate monthly cost of \$300. Assuming that additional costs for maintenance and utilities is \$125 per month, the new housing setting costs the senior household \$425 per month. The senior's older home is then rehabilitated and resold. If the rehabilitation cost of the house is an additional \$25,000, total sale price for a substantially new house may be \$80,000. Although the senior may not have had a mortgage on their older home, rehabilitation might be outside of their means. This program would provide the senior with affordable housing and maintain the city's older housing stock.

Every neighborhood in Ogallala should provide a positive living environment for its citizens.

Ogallala's residential areas are one of the city's most important resources. The community's housing stock is its largest single capital investment. In addition, residents generally measure their satisfaction with their community by the quality of their neighborhoods. However, the flooding that occurred during the summer of 2002 left many

Ogallala residents looking for safe, secure and affordable housing. The existing and future housing stock in Ogallala is an essential foundation for the city's future growth and development. This chapter looks in detail at Ogallala's existing and future housing needs. It then develops policies for assuring housing opportunities for all residents of Ogallala.

## **GOALS**

This section presents the basic goals on which housing policies for Ogallala should be built. In working to strengthen its housing resources, the community should work to:

- **Preserve Ogallala's Existing Sound Housing Stock.**

In a community like Ogallala, with a large stock of aging housing, preservation is an important priority for the community. Ogallala's most significant affordable housing resource is already on the ground and is virtually impossible to replace. Making these housing units available became even more critical after numerous families were displaced from flooding.

- **Create An Environment In Ogallala That Offers Better Housing Opportunities For All.**

While Ogallala's vacancy rate was over 11% in 2000 it has not met the potential demand for new affordable housing. Providing new housing to serve a range of people, including young families, professionals moving into the city, low-income households, and seniors, is important to the city's ability to attract business and retain young people. Ogallala must continue to work to meet the needs of all in order to prosper.

- **Create Community Connections That Will Unite Neighborhoods Of The City.**

Strengthening cooperation and involvement of residents throughout the city must include the creation of physical connections that develop subdivisions into neighborhoods of the city. Community streets, parks, and public facilities can work to strengthen the city and its identity to residents. New areas, when they develop, must be integrated into the existing fabric of the city, rather than existing as enclaves. This can be a particular challenge as development occurs in the hills to the north and in areas south of the South Platte River and Interstate 80.

- **Assure That Each Neighborhood In Ogallala Remains Healthy.**

The success of a community depends upon the ability of its neighborhoods to achieve a wholeness that provides a good living environment. A neighborhood's public facilities and services must be readily available to all sections of the community. In addition, access to retail services and other private amenities are also important in defining the quality of wholeness. Neighborhood policies and strategies must address both public and private sector service issues if the city is to provide complete living environments.

- **Assure That Each Neighborhood Provides A Good Residential Environment For Its Residents.**

A good community provides high quality schools, churches, day-care facilities, parks, and cultural facilities to support the city's living environment. One of the most fundamental services a city can provide is the protection of housing areas from major intrusions and hazards. Deteriorated streets, traffic problems, poor property maintenance, poor pedestrian circulation, and code violations can diminish the living quality that a community offers. These conditions interfere with resident's enjoyment of their own property, reduce property values and make neighborhood rejuvenation more difficult. Thus, community policies must accentuate the positive aspects of a neighborhood, and seek to reduce negative or deteriorating influences.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS IN OGALLALA**

This discussion will examine housing value and physical characteristics of Ogallala's housing stock.

#### **●Housing Occupancy and Tenure**

Table 7.1 compares changes in Ogallala's housing occupancy between 1990 and 2000. The table indicates:

- Overall the city saw an increase of 38 housing units. At the same time, the city's vacancy rate also increased to 11.32% from 10.19% in 1990.
- The 60-unit increase in owner occupied units and the 52-unit decrease in renter occupied units would indicate a significant shift in housing trends within the city. This would appear to be something unique to Ogallala compared to the state as a whole.
- The median contract rent in Ogallala increased by almost 100% between 1990 and 2000. However, the city's median rent of \$409 is lower than the state's level of \$491.
- The median value of an owner occupied unit increased by \$26,300. Compared to the statewide median of \$88,000 Ogallala's median of \$67,600 remains fairly low.

#### **Construction Activity in Ogallala**

Table 7.2 illustrates the city's building permit activity since 1992. During this ten-year period 104 housing units were developed in Ogallala. The vast majority of these have been single-family units. Construction activity for single-family units peaked in 1997 with the construction of 13 new housing units. The lack of rental development and the overall loss of 52 renter occupied units during the 1990s likely indicates a significant need for rental housing both for the young and seniors.

#### **Housing Costs and Affordability in Ogallala**

Table 7.3 presents an Affordability Analysis, relating household income ranges with housing cost categories. This affordability analysis is based on owner occupied units value being two to two and a half times a household's total income and affordable rental units being approximately 20% of a household's monthly income excluding utilities. In Table 7.3 a positive balance indicates a surplus of housing within the affordability range of each income group, while a negative balance indicates a shortage.

The analysis indicates that Ogallala is experiencing a shortage of market rate or higher income housing units. Based on 2000 Census data the city has a shortage of 360 units that cost more than \$100,000 or have rents above \$800.

As seen in Table 1.6 the city's median household income is approximately \$32,000. For those within this income range, the need for affordable housing is being met. However this is not true for those making more than the city's median. For those households earning between \$50,000 and \$75,000 a year there is a shortage of 211 units. This shortage would indicate that the city lacks "move up" housing. It is likely that much of this need is being met with new construction that is occurring on the south side of Lake McConaughy.

#### **Housing Development Needs**

Table 7.4 presents the current estimated income distribution (by percent of households) of Ogallala, paired with affordable monthly housing costs for each income range. In Table 7.4 affordable monthly housing costs include utilities and are approximately 30% of a household's monthly income. These target costs are matched to strategies that can deliver housing affordable to each income range. For example, programs that are most appropriate to

families earning between \$25,000 and \$35,000 can produce housing with monthly costs between \$625 and \$875, including utilities, corresponding to houses with mortgages in the range of \$50,000 to \$80,000. Strategies that can deliver housing in this price range include rehabilitation of existing housing, manufactured housing, and affordable single-family development using financing devices such as deferred second mortgages.

Table 7.5 presents a ten-year housing development and pricing program for Ogallala, based on the city's relative income distribution. The program provides production targets for various cost ranges of rental and owner-occupied units. The development program is based on the following assumptions:

- New development in Ogallala will be about 70% owner-occupied and 30% renter-occupied housing. This represents the 2000 owner/renter distribution of occupied housing.
- Owner-occupied housing will be distributed generally in proportion to the income distribution of households for whom ownership is a realistic strategy. Some of the market for lower-cost owner-occupancy may be shifted toward market rate rentals.
- Lower-income households will generally be accommodated in rental development.

The analysis indicates a need for about 45 owner-occupied units with prices below \$125,000 and 24 units with effective rents below \$625 in current dollars, a total of 69 "affordable" units. Therefore, a housing program for Ogallala should establish an average annual production target of about 6 to 7 units. These numbers are dependant on Ogallala meeting its growth goals laid out in Chapter 1 and could be further influenced by actions that could expand Ogallala's market. These include:

- Major employment expansions.
- Housing developments that can attract people from surrounding regions, such as substantial senior housing developments.
- Relocation from major redevelopment activities.

The flood of July 2002 also had a significant effect on the need for affordable housing. Many of the lost units were more affordable mobile home units, likely increasing the overall need for affordable units from what is estimated in this chapter. The city will need to continue to work with state and national agencies to address these needs.

## **HOUSING POLICIES**

Preservation of existing housing and development of new housing to support new growth and existing demand are vital elements of Ogallala's community development strategy. While land use and community investment strategies are important to housing planning, specific efforts are needed to address housing priorities. This section considers initiatives that, if combined with existing programs, can help address these major priorities.

The city's primary housing challenges include:

- Maintaining the structural integrity of older homes and the quality of Ogallala's existing housing supply.
- Developing an effective, multi-faceted neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation program.
- Establishing an effective method of financing subdivision development, particularly for mid-level housing development.
- Increasing the quantity and quality of rental housing available to Ogallala's present and prospective residents.

Programs initiated by the West Central Joint Housing Authority include downpayment assistance, first time homebuyers education program and a rehabilitation program. Funding was also secured through Nebraska Department of Economic Development for downpayment assistance to 7 low-income families that were displaced by the 2002 flood. Formed in 1995, Keith County Housing Development Corporation was formed to undertake

additional housing initiatives. It has recently developed 8 duplexes for low-income families. This agency along with existing low-income housing in the city should help meet the needs for affordable housing within Ogallala.

Unlike many communities Ogallala's greatest challenge will be capturing the higher income markets. In the past ten years many of these residents have found their housing needs met in the Lake area instead of within the City of Ogallala. The city will also need to ensure a high quality of affordable housing within its existing housing stock.

Policies that address these issues include:

- **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS PROGRAM**
- **HOUSING CONSERVATION**
- **SUBDIVISION FINANCING FOR AFFORDABILITY**
- **SENIOR HOUSING**

### **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS PROGRAM**

*Ogallala should facilitate housing conservation through the development of property maintenance standards.*

The best conservation programs combine increased demands and awareness of the need for reinvestment with the tools to finance home repairs and rehabilitation. The strategy begins with a Property Maintenance Standards Program, an effort that encourages voluntary compliance with community standards while also establishing a legal basis for code enforcement. Components of this program include:

- *Preparing and distributing a Property Standards Manual.* This should be a friendly, clear, engagingly written document that sets out the expectations that Ogallala as a community has for individual building and property maintenance. It can also help to provide useful information, such as sites to dispose of or recycle unwanted household items.

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- *Backing up the property maintenance standards program with rehabilitation financing.*

### **HOUSING CONSERVATION**

*Ogallala should expand existing rehabilitation and code enforcement efforts into a comprehensive, multifaceted rehabilitation and neighborhood development program.*

- **Comprehensive Rehabilitation Programs**

A significant percentage of Ogallala's housing units require at least moderate repairs or rehabilitation. A coordinated rehabilitation strategy, operating on a reliable, multi-year basis, is vital to ensure preservation of the area's critical supply of existing housing. A comprehensive rehabilitation program, appropriate to the respective needs of individual residential areas and towns, should include three program types. These include:

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#### **SUBDIVISION FINANCING FOR AFFORDABILITY**

*Ogallala should develop a mechanism that encourages subdivision development for moderate cost housing.*

Subdivision development and its front-end costs and risks complicate the problem of providing an adequate inventory of available, improved lots. The high risk/low profit probability discourages development or encourages development in rural areas, which do not require full urban improvements. Even devices like special assessments, which provide front-end public financing, create costs, which can place housing beyond the means of moderate or middle-income buyers.

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- The infrastructure financing is written as a deferred second mortgage loan, with no requirement for repayment until sale of the house. The second mortgage is a participatory loan – that is, its value appreciates along with the value of the house. In our example, the second mortgage makes up 12.5% of the home value (or \$10,000 of a total cost of \$80,000).

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- **Special Assessments.** Special assessments are appropriately used for higher-cost subdivisions.

## SENIOR HOUSING

*Ogallala should encourage construction of independent living residential development for seniors.*

Ogallala provides a superior environment for seniors with a small town atmosphere and excellent health services. However, the city experienced a population loss for those over the age of 65, mostly because of a loss among those over the age of 85 (see Table 1.3). Despite the city’s amenities local seniors are not finding their needs met. Transportation and health services beyond the hospital could likely be reasons for this out migration. Affordable housing that meets seniors needs could also be a challenge for retired Keith County residents looking to move or even stay in the city.

Affordability problems are often most severe among low-income elderly renters. Developments in Ogallala, including Ogallala Village and units managed by Ogallala Housing, currently provide housing assistance to low-

income seniors. As the city's population continues to age and in order to attract seniors to the area, Ogallala should support the development of continuing care facilities. This should be done through regulations that permit flexibility for these facilities in a variety of settings, including residential neighborhoods.

- **Senior Housing with Ownership Transition Program**

Development of moderately-priced senior housing may be one of the programs provided by the new Keith County Housing Development Corporation (KCHDC). This program could include a Senior Housing with Ownership Transition Program in which seniors would be able to move into a newer home while their older home would be refurbished and put on the market. Here, KCHDC in its role as a Community Housing Development Organization would partner with the City of Ogallala and local banks to build one or two-bedroom attached units, with a target cost of (for example) \$80,000 per unit. The KCHDC agrees to purchase the senior resident's current home at \$50,000. The senior then purchases the new attached unit, using the sale proceeds of the house as a substantial downpayment. The balance is amortized, with an approximate monthly cost of \$300. Assuming that additional costs for maintenance and utilities is \$125 per month, the new housing setting costs the senior household \$425 per month. The senior's older home is then rehabilitated and resold. If the rehabilitation cost of the house is an additional \$25,000, total sale price for a substantially new house may be \$80,000. Although the senior may not have had a mortgage on their older home, rehabilitation might be outside of their means. This program would provide the senior with affordable housing and maintain the city's older housing stock.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT DOWNTOWN OGALLALA**

Downtowns occupy a particular place of importance within cities and towns. They are a unique expression of the individuality of a town - no downtown looks exactly like any other downtown. Because of this relationship, people measure the health and growth of their town by the health of their downtown.

People often look at a downtown through the prism of nostalgia. Ogallala's traditional town center along Spruce Street traces its origin from a time when the city was a "Cowboy town" along the Union Pacific's mainline. The downtown district retains a human scale and intimacy that mark it as a special place. This distinctiveness has been reinforced by important public projects, including special signage to mark the historic nature of the downtown and the city itself. Because of its significance to the city, Downtown Ogallala is a place of special events and special magic, as when it is filled with children during the annual Halloween parade.

At the beginning of the new Century, Ogallala's Downtown remains an area of particular civic and commercial importance. In spite of peripheral commercial development, particularly south of the interstate, it remains the city's largest commercial concentration and, to a large degree, its success is the success of the city's entire retail sector. It is also a center of community life, including such public resources as the Post Office and Library. Major government centers such as the Court House and City Hall, are outside of, but still relatively near, the central district. Ogallala has been a successful participant in the Lied Nebraska Main Street program and has made significant investments in its downtown streetscape. It also enjoys a relatively low first floor vacancy rate.

As a generally busy and active center, Downtown can take advantage of significant opportunities, most notably the ability to serve as the "hometown" for the seasonal recreational community associated with Lake McConaughy. Comparably situated town centers (such as Ashland, Nebraska near the Mahoney State Park/Strategic Air and Space Museum complex and Pella, Iowa near Lake Red Rock) have successfully positioned themselves as centers for both services and recreational shopping. Ogallala has accomplished this to

some degree, and hosts a variety of interesting shops and eating places. However, some significant challenges for the district include:

- Its relatively small size and limited room for expansion.
- The impact of east-west highway traffic and, to some extent, north-south through traffic on the pedestrian quality of the district.
- The large proportionate amount of downtown space occupied for non-retail purposes.

This chapter addresses Downtown Ogallala, then, and identifies strategies that can help the district maintain its place as both a good place to do business and an asset that contributes to the overall quality of life in the city.

## Goals

A program for Downtown Ogallala should be outcome-related; that is, it should provide strategies that stand the rigor of investment analysis and create conditions that can increase markets and economic strength of the district. A downtown program should:

- **STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN OGALLALA'S ROLE AS A "FLAGSHIP" DISTRICT FOR THE CITY.**

Downtown Ogallala is a psychological focus for the city. For visitors coming to the Lake McConaughy area from Interstate 80, Downtown (or its edge along A Street) is their first real contact with the community. Downtown's image is linked closely with that of the entire community. The downtown can capitalize on this identification by reinforcing it as a source of pride and vitality, a center that people in the city and around the region like to visit for enjoyment, commerce, and cultural enrichment.

- **CREATE A MIX OF USES AND ACTIVITIES.**

The dramatic changes in retailing that have created shopping malls and large discount stores, and the mobility that made these large-scale centers possible, have eroded the central retail role that downtowns once held in American communities. Thus, more distant places like North Platte and even Denver command a significant share of the local market that Ogallala once owned. This does not mean that Downtown Ogallala is declining. It means rather that it is evolving and will continue to do so, creating a new and equally valid environment. For example, Downtown Ogallala has proven to be a fertile incubator for Prophet Systems, the a major employer and a home-based success story. Downtown will continue as a place that provides for many kinds of activities, including, but not limited to, the traditional focus on general retailing. A Downtown Ogallala effort should continue to build on the intrinsic character of the district – strengthening what is good, improving what no longer works well.

- **STRENGTHEN THE DOWNTOWN RETAIL ENVIRONMENT.**

In many communities, the role of the downtown has changed from one of primary retailing in pre-auto era days to one of specialty retailing, small business, and service activities. Downtown Ogallala has many of these small enterprises, yet it still includes significant general retailing. Further improvements in the public environment can elevate the districts business environment and strengthen its attraction for shoppers and other users.

- **INCREASE THE ECONOMIC REWARDS OF BUILDING OWNERSHIP IN DOWNTOWN OGALLALA.**

Any investment must provide a reasonable rate of return to its investor. This rule is equally relevant to Downtown properties. Older buildings are often fully amortized, avoiding debt service costs that tend to increase rents. However, upper levels are frequently vacant or bring very limited revenue. As a result, property owners receive a relatively low return on investment. In addition, further investment, involving rehabilitation,

adaptive reuse, or bringing structures into compliance with contemporary codes or federal regulations, may seem unattractive to building owners.

When owners can expect a good return on downtown property, investment similarly increases. Therefore, the downtown development strategy must provide reasonable economic rewards to the districts property owners. This strategy relies on making productive use of currently underused upper levels of buildings and increasing the overall value of the district.

- **IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE INTENSITY OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITY IN DOWNTOWN OGALLALA.**

Downtowns are made of people and community life as surely as they are of buildings. Downtown Ogallala must be alive with people and activity. Some aspects of this life are physical – the district must provide an attractive and pleasant environment for its users; and should provide settings for events and programs. Other aspects are programmatic – providing attractions that attract people to the area.

Together, these methods can make visiting or shopping in Downtown Ogallala an experience – a place to enjoy, to see people, to understand the life and beauty of an American community. Maintaining a mixture of retail, service and office uses is particularly important in Ogallala because of the growing office uses and expanding retail environment south of the Interstate. This focuses considerable attention on use of existing vacant buildings and second floor utilization.

- **STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN’S ROLE AS A HOMETOWN FOR THE LAKE McCONAUGHY RECREATION MARKET.**

Downtown Ogallala can prosper by helping to attract some of the many of the lake’s summertime visitors into town. Many contemporary town centers have done well by complementing the offerings of recreational settings – becoming attractive recreational features in their own right. This means that Downtown should take actions that increase the attractiveness and friendliness of the environment and create features and events that complement the leisure experience. In a way, importing additional retail dollars in this way compensates for the exporting of consumer spending that a smaller market like Ogallala experiences when located near a larger commercial center.

## **Downtown Ogallala: An Analysis of Conditions**

This section examines important features of Downtown Ogallala. It analyzes the occupancy characteristics of Downtown Ogallala; the quality of the Downtown environment; and the adequacy of support facilities. The detailed tables in the analysis will concentrate on an area generally defined by West A to East A and 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Railroad Street.

### **Downtown Occupancy**

Table 8.1 reviews building occupancy in the Downtown and covers a study area that is bounded by West A, East B, Railroad Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Downtown Ogallala is a diverse district that provides over 464,000 square feet of building area. About 89% of this floor area is on the first floor, reflecting the one-story character of the district. The 6.2% first floor vacancy rate is relatively low for a downtown district; service businesses and offices account for the largest share of this space. Downtown Ogallala also has about 110,000 square feet of occupied retail space, representing about 26% of available first-floor area, a healthy amount for a community of about 5,000.

Unlike many downtowns, Ogallala has a fairly low percentage of civic and public facility uses. Most of the city’s major public facilities including city offices, the police station, and the county court house are located on the periphery of the downtown with easy access to the district.

As mentioned above, first floor vacancy is a manageable 6.2%, with about 25,000 square feet of available space. The second floor vacancy rate in Downtown Ogallala is significantly higher, representing about 43% of all second floor space, or just under 23,000 square feet. While second floor vacancy is an economic challenge for Downtown, it also provides opportunities for future development.

**Table 8.1: Building Occupancy (square feet), Downtown Ogallala, 2002**

	First Floor		Second Floor	
	Square Feet	Percentage	Square Feet	Percentage
Vacant	25,425.71	6.2%	22,772.67	43.4%
Residential *	21,842.67	5.3%	4,606.00	8.8%
Restaurant/Entertainment	21,059.45	5.1%	4,889.40	9.3%
Services/Office	182,163.59	44.2%	16,511.56	31.4%
Retail	109,206.73	26.5%		0.0%
Automotive	13,787.65	3.3%		0.0%
Civic Uses	38,527.66	9.4%	3,727.95	7.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>412,013.46</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>52,507.58</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Excludes Single Family Residential

### Land Use Patterns in Downtown Ogallala

Downtown Ogallala exhibits a development pattern characteristic of a traditional mixed-use community center, incorporating commercial, industrial and civic uses. The focus of this study area is dominated by commercial uses but the periphery of the area includes some of the city’s most important civic destinations and an industrial corridor parallel of the U.P. Railroad line south of Railroad Avenue. The Spruce Street corridor, the heart of the downtown, anchors the traditional grid pattern of the downtown.

A description of the “personality” of Downtown Ogallala’s streets and sub-districts follows:

- *Spruce Street:* This street, the central north-south axis of the traditional downtown, became the “main street” of the commercial district. Most of the downtown’s commercial development occurred between the Union Pacific Railroad and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The four-block main street pattern includes one- and two-story commercial buildings generally built along the street property lines. The mixed use development pattern continues at lower densities north of 4<sup>th</sup>, and includes the County Court House block between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The Spruce Street corridor has also experienced changes. The primary main street retailing district, which once extended between Railroad and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, has contracted to the two block section south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. With the exception of the Prairie Theater, most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street block has been converted to office uses, largely occupied by Prophet Systems. The success of Prophet Systems and its demand for space have undoubtedly kept overall vacancy rates low in the town center.

To the west of Spruce Street the West A Street is dominated office space and downtown parking. This area also includes the city’s Library and downtown’s only apartment building. The city has also developed a new public parking lot on the southeast corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and West A. Second Street east of Spruce extends the main street commercial pattern to East A Street.

- *East A:* East A Street is the northbound half of the Spruce/East A one-way pair, and directly aligns with the Union Pacific viaduct. In contrast to Spruce Street, East A’s development pattern is more oriented to the automobile than the pedestrian. Building setbacks and free traffic flow encourage traffic to move more rapidly along this street. Office and financial uses, usually with their own parking, predominate along East A. The character and fast traffic stream of East A allows many visitors to bypass Downtown entirely on their way to the lake and other destinations.

- *First Street:* First Street (US Highway 30) divides the two retail blocks of Spruce Street and introduces a highway environment into the downtown area. While some of the retail buildings address First Street, their primary frontages are along Spruce Street. Because of this, the relatively narrow sidewalks, and the four-lane section of the highway, the street presents a relatively poor pedestrian environment. East and west of the A Streets, First exhibits a highway commercial development pattern. First Street traffic includes relatively high truck volumes, and is controlled by signals at First and Spruce Streets.

**Building Condition**

Table 8.2 provides a block-by-block recap of buildings for a focused area of downtown that is bounded by Railroad Avenue on the south, 4<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, West A on the west and East B on the east. Each building was rated on the following conditions:

- *Excellent* – A new building with no discernible deficiencies.
- *Sound* – An older building, which is well maintained with three or fewer appearance deficiencies.
- *Minor deficiencies* – A building that is structurally sound, but has four or more appearance deficiencies.
- *Deteriorating* – A building that has no more than one structural deficiency and possibly some appearance deficiencies.
- *Dilapidated* – A building that has at least two structural failures and is judged beyond repair.

Downtown Ogallala’s building stock is generally sound. About 67% of the district’s buildings are in excellent or good condition. Most of the rest are considered to have minor deficiencies and no buildings in the downtown are considered to be dilapidated. Several of the buildings in the traditional commercial center have been “modernized,” with metal facades covering the original building face. The rehabilitation and improvement of buildings with minor deficiencies, including evaluation of historic facades and their restoration when possible, should be an important element of commercial revitalization in the city’s historic town center.

**Table 8.2: Building Condition in Downtown Ogallala, 2002**

Location	Total	Excellent	Minor		
			Sound	Deficiencies	Deteriorating
East A-East B; Railroad - 1st	4			2	2
East A-East B; 1st - 2nd	4		3	1	
East A-East B; 2nd - 3rd	3	1	1	1	
East A-East B; 3rd - 4th	2		1	1	
Spruce-East A; Railroad-1st	8		4	3	1
Spruce-East A; 1st-2nd	12		8	4	
Spruce-East A; 2nd-3rd	11		11		
Spruce-East A; 3rd-4th	4	1	2		1
West A-Spruce; Railroad-1st	8		6	2	
West A-Spruce; 1st-2nd	11		5	5	1
West A-Spruce; 2nd-3rd	8	1	5	1	1
West A-Spruce; 3rd-4th	4	2	2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>

**Circulation and Parking**

*Traffic Flow*

Downtown Ogallala is located along the busy East A and 1<sup>st</sup> Street one-way pair. East A, which aligns with the Highway 26/61 viaduct over the Union Pacific, carries northbound traffic, while Spruce, with its main street development pattern, is one way southbound. South of 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Spruce Street reverts to two-way movement. First Street is designated as U.S. Highway 30 and is a heavily traveled alternative to Interstate 80. Current traffic

volumes at the intersection of East A and 1<sup>st</sup> Street are the heaviest in the city, substantially affecting the ability of the district to work as a pedestrian precinct.

The completion of the Highway 61/26 truck route has diverted some of the traffic away from the Spruce and East A Street corridors but the levels along 1<sup>st</sup> Street have increased. US 26 traffic is now routed from the foot of the Union Pacific viaduct along 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the truck route, about 1.5 miles west of Spruce Street. The truck route has helped relieve the heart of the downtown from truck traffic, although 1<sup>st</sup> Street continues to create a significant boundary between businesses on the north and south retail blocks.

East A provides a direct link to the Lake McConaughy area and is still the primary route for those moving between Interstate 80 and the Lake. Although some of the regional traffic is diverted away from the corridor by the truck route a significant amount of traffic still moves back and forth between the Downtown and the Lake along East A and Spruce Streets.

During the 1990s, Ogallala executed a streetscape project along Spruce Street that provides diagonal parking on the west side of the street, while removing parking from the east side. This project involved the construction of a corner node at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce that shifts the traffic flow slightly to the east. A smaller node at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce also sets off the diagonal parking. These nodes are surfaced with concrete and are landscaped by flower pots. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce Street also includes an interpretive historical panel. South of 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Spruce provides diagonal parking on the west and parallel parking on its east side. The street continues south over the Union Pacific over a grade crossing, and curves east to Highway 26/61 south of the railroad.

Other streets in the Downtown district provide local traffic functions. In general, these streets provide a quieter more pedestrian atmosphere. The grid pattern of the downtown makes the district highly accessible from the north, east, and west. Access from the south is provided by the Highway 26/61 overpass, landing at 1<sup>st</sup> and East A; and along River Road and Spruce Street via a grade level crossing over the railroad.

### *Parking*

The availability of Downtown parking is important to businesses and civic uses in Ogallala. Public parking lots at 1<sup>st</sup> and West A, 2<sup>nd</sup> and West A, and along the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between East A and Spruce Street provide good access to main street retailers. Additional off-street customer parking is also provided on each block except the Prairie Theater block. Each of the business district's streets also provide some on-street parking to. Diagonal parking is provided along the west side of Spruce Street between Railroad and Second Streets, while other streets provide parallel parking. The downtown parking supply appears to be generally consistent with demand. However, the difficulty pedestrian crossing of 1<sup>st</sup> Street compartmentalizes the parking supply, making it difficult for people parked on one side of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor to walk to businesses on the other side.

### **Summary and Issues**

This analysis of Downtown Ogallala establishes that:

- The entire Downtown Ogallala study area contains about 465,000 square feet of building area. About 6.2% of street level floor area is vacant, a noticeable but still manageable rate. About 43% of all upper level building area is either vacant or used for storage. Ogallala has a relatively low first-floor vacancy rate for similarly sized downtowns. The high occupancy of Downtown buildings for office uses in general and Prophet Systems in particular contributes to this high level of occupancy.
- Service/office uses are the dominant building uses in the Downtown. These uses account almost 198,675 square feet in total occupancy. However, Downtown includes about 130,000 square feet of occupied space for retailers and eating and drinking establishments – a healthy occupancy for a city of Ogallala's size.

- Downtown Ogallala's structures are in good condition, and 67% of its building stock requires minor or no rehabilitation. Single-story buildings predominate in the district.
- Ogallala's transportation system provides good access to the traditional downtown. Like the rest of the city, access is limited from the south by the railroad, interstate and river. The Highway 30 corridor also divides the two primary blocks of the retail district.
- Downtown parking appears adequate to meet existing demand. The district has made reasonable provision for off-street parking, and does not depend on on-street parking to meet parking demand. This is partially because the principal north-south corridors, Spruce and East A, until recently, carried major highway routes.

### **Major Development Issues for Downtown Ogallala**

Downtown Ogallala is a basically strong district, benefiting from relatively high occupancy, an effective Main Street management organization, and good transportation access. Yet, it also faces challenges, which, if successfully addressed, can increase its regional retail role and improve its climate as both a place to do businesses and as an asset for the community. These challenges include:

- *The district's ability to attract visitor traffic and serve as the "hometown" for a larger visitor and recreational region.* The district's local market has reached a plateau during recent years, and its retail base has declined. Fortunately for building occupancy, space built originally for retailing has been occupied by offices, most notably Prophet Systems. Yet, Downtown should generate at least a moderately growing and renewing retail and entertainment base, most effectively built by tapping into the substantial visitor market generated by the lake. Downtown Ogallala should be part of the recreational experience, and should complement the virtues of lake recreation.
- *Development and availability of new retail space.* Spruce Street, with a retail district limited to two blocks, has relatively little space available for new retailing. While space occasionally comes available as businesses close, the district should have the ability to increase its offerings. Most of the Spruce Street frontage north of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is now in non-retail uses.
- *First Street as a barrier.* Despite good transportation access, major highways also have a negative impact on Downtown. First Street in particular divides the Spruce Street retail blocks into a north and south block. With heavy truck traffic traveling between the Interstate and the US 26 truck route, this arterial makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross between blocks. In business districts, we frequently think of the necessity to be able to shop freely on both sides of the street, requiring a relatively easy crossing across one street. First Street, bisecting the Spruce Street retail district, compounds this problem.
- *The truck route factor.* Northbound traffic bound from the interstate to the lake travels along East A Street. Because Downtown Ogallala only slightly touches this corridor, it is easy for visitors to bypass the district completely, and be virtually unaware that it exists until they return on the way home. The Visitors Center at the Chamber of Commerce office at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A is strategically located to take advantage of this travel pattern. Yet, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street does not provide the "main street" environment that might be able to intercept northbound travelers.
- *Upper level building development.* While Downtown Ogallala is primarily a single-story district, upper level space is still significant and almost half of it is unoccupied. Making better uses of these spaces can inject more activity and investment into the district.

### **A Plan for Downtown Ogallala**

This section presents a concept and strategy designed to help Ogallala's Downtown maintain and expand its role as a quality mixed use center for the town and the surrounding region. The overall concept proposes to:

- Increase the visibility and usability of Ogallala’s central retail district.
- Build on the momentum of the recent streetscape improvements to make the district friendlier to pedestrians and, as a result, encourage multi-destination shopping.
- Increase the appeal of the district to recreational visitors, who will see Downtown Ogallala as the “main street” of the lake region.
- Strengthen the downtown management system, to coordinate and implement additional downtown improvements and to provide a unified marketing and promotional effort.

The components of this program include:

- **SECOND STREET ENTRANCE**
- **CROSSING FIRST STREET**
- **NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**
- **DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING**
- **DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**
- **ADDITIONAL STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**
- **WAYFINDING**

Each of these elements is discussed below.

### ■ **SECOND STREET ENTRANCE**

*Second Street from Spruce to East A should serve as an extension of the main retail district and as a clear entrance to Downtown from East A Street.*

Northbound traffic headed for the lake region can easily bypass the downtown district. This problem can be addressed by treating 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as an extension of the Spruce Street district. Some retail buildings are oriented to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the city’s Visitors Center is located at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A. The following techniques can help take the retail district to this main northbound corridor and make certain that travelers to the lake area and the region north of Ogallala are at least aware of its business district:

- Developing a gateway feature at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A, including a clearly visible and possibly lighted vertical element.
- Modifying the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street section to provide diagonal parking on the north side of the street, while maintaining parallel parking on the south side. This should include a corner node at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A, accommodating the gateway feature, landscape, and street furniture.
- Providing additional landscaping, street furniture, and special lighting along East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Encouraging a possible retail building along the south side of the street, on the site now used for municipal parking. Providing diagonal parking along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street compensates for lost stalls.

- Redeveloping the IOOF Building on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce and providing additional storefront windows and space oriented to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

## **CROSSING FIRST STREET**

*The 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce Street intersection should be made more crossable for pedestrians in order to help unify the north and south sides of the retail district.*

While 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30) introduces a significant amount of traffic into downtown, it also divides the business district into north and south blocks and makes it difficult for pedestrians to use all parts of the district. The pedestrian environment is made less comfortable by limited visibility between traffic and pedestrians. Because 1<sup>st</sup> Street must retain four traffic lanes, the street section cannot be changed to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians. However, techniques that can add to pedestrian safety and comfort include:

- Defining crosswalks with a contrasting paving surface such as stamped or patterned concrete.
- Considering a “scramble” crossing cycle at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce. In this cycle, all intersecting streets have red signals, and pedestrians can cross in all directions, including diagonally.
- Increasing pedestrian crossing signage on 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

## **NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**

*Downtown should provide opportunities for new retail development.*

While the central district has a good supply of storefront commercial space, retail space in the two Spruce Street retail blocks is very limited. Much of the building area that was once designed for retailing is now in corporate use. This use is extremely important, and both maintains a good real estate market and places customers in the heart of Downtown. However, because of this, Ogallala should consider opportunities for new retail development.

New main street commercial buildings are rarely developed in Nebraska communities for both economic and market-based reasons. Yet, if Ogallala can successfully expand its markets, it may well generate a demand for new retail space.

The primary site for new retail development is the frontage along the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between East A and Spruce. This site is owned by the city and is used as a municipal parking lot. Spaces lost to potential development can be replaced by diagonal parking on the north side of 2<sup>nd</sup>, recommended above, and by redesign and expansion of parking on the rest of the block.

A Second Street retail building would reinforce this street as an extension of the retail district and would strengthen the status of 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A as a downtown gateway. The site is also highly visible and would have parking adjacent to it. Other options, much less attractive from a market perspective, is a portion of the new city parking lot on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> between Spruce and West A.

Development of a commercial building may be a project for Ogallala’s economic development corporation, which will have greater access to potential grant funds than a conventional private developer. A project subsidy is

likely, because market rents will probably be less than those required to experience satisfactory cash flow. The project may gain additional feasibility by adding second level apartments over a retail first floor. Financing should utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF), CDBG funds, and a write-down of the value of the land.

## **DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING**

*Downtown Ogallala should maintain an organizational structure to manage and promote the commercial district.*

Ogallala is a participant in the Lied Nebraska Main Street Program, and has an effective Main Street management structure in place. The Main Street organization has initiated the reuse of a gem of a former gas station at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Spruce, and has helped to organize events and marketing efforts. The continuation of a Main Street management organization is indispensable and should be institutionalized as part of the downtown scene. In a way, an organization offering enhanced, central marketing and management fulfills some of the roles of a shopping center manager. These roles include the preparation and distribution of promotional materials, development of programs, management of improvement projects, and the recruitment of businesses into Downtown.

Other initiatives that Downtown Ogallala's management group could implement include:

- An expanded program of activities and events, providing an ongoing series of attractions that bring people into the center. This type of program can be particularly effective during tourism season, as a way of attracting multi-day recreational visitors into the district.
- Marketing and management programs – developing and gaining wide distribution of advertising materials to add the district to the region's list of significant visitor attractions. Materials marketing Downtown Ogallala and its "hometown" qualities should be placed at strategic visitor locations if possible, such as the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Lake McConaughy Visitors Center, Ash Hollow, and various facilities at the state recreation areas, as well as area restaurants and businesses. Ashland, Nebraska very successfully placed downtown marketing materials at Mahoney State Park, and successfully rejuvenated town center as a service and amenity center for park visitors.
- Recruitment of targeted retailers. An effective technique is identifying successful retailers in other communities and targeting them to open a branch location in Ogallala.
- Establishing uniform service standards and store hours – establishing a uniform service mission for Downtown Ogallala, defining the district as an area in which customers can expect personalized, knowledgeable attention.
- Forming a spin-off development corporation to catalyze significant projects such as upper-level building reuse and additional retail development.

## **■ DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**

*Ogallala should take advantage of strategic housing opportunities within the Downtown district.*

Ogallala's downtown is primarily made up of one-story buildings. However, the district has several substantial two-story buildings that offer opportunities for upper-level housing development. The attractively maintained apartment at the southwest corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and West A demonstrates a market for housing in or near the city center. Indeed, downtown housing is an effective mechanism for increasing investment and activity in traditional business districts. Housing can make Downtown Ogallala an extension of the city's neighborhood fabric, as well

as a business and civic district. The compact character of the city, and the nearness of the North Park/pool/Western Diamonds complex, grocery shopping, and other conveniences can make downtown an excellent residential setting.

The best opportunity for upper-level adaptive reuse is the IOOF Building at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce, assuming that the second level is available. The building's dimensions are very appropriate for apartment development. These developments can use a variety of financing mechanisms, including tax increment financing; equity financing, utilizing the low-income housing tax credit; historic tax credits; and the use of CDBG/HOME funds. The city should utilize a rehabilitation code, such as the Uniform Building Code's model conservation code, that maintains high life safety standards while recognizing the exigencies of rehabilitation of older and historic buildings.

## ■ STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

*Ogallala should continue its program of streetscape improvements, improving the quality of the district's public environment.*

Ogallala has implemented a street and streetscape redesign program, focusing to date on the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street block of Spruce Street and on attractive and informative interpretive panels throughout the district. While these have been significant improvements, other incremental projects could further enhance the district's quality and friendliness to users. These projects include:

- Completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street gateway project, discussed above.
- Improved landscaping and street furniture on the two existing nodes along Spruce Street. A streetscape design on the northernmost node could also enhance traffic safety by making the node more visible to southbound traffic.
- Similar nodes on at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce on the south side of the street.
- Transition the curb line along the west side of Spruce to align at the corner with the node on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Improvement of the east-west alley between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> as a promenade connecting the public parking lot directly to Spruce Street.
- Visitor information kiosks and information features, such as pedestrian-scaled directional graphics.

## ■ WAYFINDING

*Ogallala should institute a system that helps lead travelers to Downtown and other major community features.*

Communities are exhibiting increased interest in directional graphics system that direct both residents and visitors around the community. Such a system is especially important in a city with extensive visitor potential like Ogallala, with major destinations that are slightly off major trafficways. The fact that Spruce and East A, two major arterials, are no longer on the state highway system may provide additional flexibility in design of the system.

This system should be oriented to major gateway routes, including Spruce, East A, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and, if possible, 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Highways 26, and Highway 61. The system should orient travelers to a limited number of very important destinations, which in Ogallala include:

- Downtown and Front Street
- Lake McConaughy
- Western Diamonds

Downtowns occupy a particular place of importance within cities and towns. They are a unique expression of the individuality of a town – no downtown looks exactly like any other downtown. Because of this relationship, people measure the health and growth of their town by the health of their downtown.

People often look at a downtown through the prism of nostalgia. Ogallala’s traditional town center along Spruce Street traces its origin from a time when the city was a “Cowboy town” along the Union Pacific’s mainline. The downtown district retains a human scale and intimacy that mark it as a special place. This distinctiveness has been reinforced by important public projects, including special signage to mark the historic nature of the downtown and the city itself. Because of its significance to the city, Downtown Ogallala is a place of special events and special magic, as when it is filled with children during the annual Halloween parade.

At the beginning of the new Century, Ogallala’s Downtown remains an area of particular civic and commercial importance. In spite of peripheral commercial development, particularly south of the interstate, it remains the city’s largest commercial concentration and, to a large degree, its success is the success of the city’s entire retail sector. It is also a center of community life, including such public resources as the Post Office and Library. Major government centers such as the Court House and City Hall, are outside of, but still relatively near, the central district. Ogallala has been a successful participant in the Lied Nebraska Main Street program and has made significant investments in its downtown streetscape. It also enjoys a relatively low first floor vacancy rate.

As a generally busy and active center, Downtown can take advantage of significant opportunities, most notably the ability to serve as the “hometown” for the seasonal recreational community associated with Lake McConaughy. Comparably situated town centers (such as Ashland, Nebraska near the Mahoney State Park/Strategic Air and Space Museum complex and Pella, Iowa near Lake Red Rock) have successfully positioned themselves as centers for both services and recreational shopping. Ogallala has accomplished this to some degree, and hosts a variety of interesting shops and eating places. However, some significant challenges for the district include:

- Its relatively small size and limited room for expansion.
- The impact of east-west highway traffic and, to some extent, north-south through traffic on the pedestrian quality of the district.
- The large proportionate amount of downtown space occupied for non-retail purposes.

This chapter addresses Downtown Ogallala, then, and identifies strategies that can help the district maintain its place as both a good place to do business and an asset that contributes to the overall quality of life in the city.

## **GOALS**

A program for Downtown Ogallala should be outcome-related; that is, it should provide strategies that stand the rigor of investment analysis and create conditions that can increase markets and economic strength of the district. A downtown program should:

- **Strengthen Downtown Ogallala’s Role As A “Flagship” District For The City.**

Downtown Ogallala is a psychological focus for the city. For visitors coming to the Lake McConaughy area from Interstate 80, Downtown (or its edge along A Street) is their first real contact with the community. Downtown's image is linked closely with that of the entire community. The downtown can capitalize on this identification by reinforcing it as a source of pride and vitality, a center that people in the city and around the region like to visit for enjoyment, commerce, and cultural enrichment.

- **Create A Mix Of Uses and Activities.**

The dramatic changes in retailing that have created shopping malls and large discount stores, and the mobility that made these large-scale centers possible, have eroded the central retail role that downtowns once held in American communities. Thus, more distant places like North Platte and even Denver command a significant share of the local market that Ogallala once owned. This does not mean that Downtown Ogallala is declining. It means rather that it is evolving and will continue to do so, creating a new and equally valid environment. For example, Downtown Ogallala has proven to be a fertile incubator for Prophet Systems, the a major employer and a home-based success story. Downtown will continue as a place that provides for many kinds of activities, including, but not limited to, the traditional focus on general retailing. A Downtown Ogallala effort should continue to build on the intrinsic character of the district – strengthening what is good, improving what no longer works well.

- **Strengthen The Downtown Retail Environment.**

In many communities, the role of the downtown has changed from one of primary retailing in pre-auto era days to one of specialty retailing, small business, and service activities. Downtown Ogallala has many of these small enterprises, yet it still includes significant general retailing. Further improvements in the public environment can elevate the districts business environment and strengthen its attraction for shoppers and other users.

- **Increase The Economic Rewards Of Building Ownership In Downtown Ogallala.**

Any investment must provide a reasonable rate of return to its investor. This rule is equally relevant to Downtown properties. Older buildings are often fully amortized, avoiding debt service costs that tend to increase rents. However, upper levels are frequently vacant or bring very limited revenue. As a result, property owners receive a relatively low return on investment. In addition, further investment, involving rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, or bringing structures into compliance with contemporary codes or federal regulations, may seem unattractive to building owners.

When owners can expect a good return on downtown property, investment similarly increases. Therefore, the downtown development strategy must provide reasonable economic rewards to the districts property owners. This strategy relies on making productive use of currently underused upper levels of buildings and increasing the overall value of the district.

- **Improve The Quality Of The Physical Environment and The Intensity of Community Activity In Downtown Ogallala.**

Downtowns are made of people and community life as surely as they are of buildings. Downtown Ogallala must be alive with people and activity. Some aspects of this life are physical – the district must provide an attractive and pleasant environment for its users; and should provide settings for events and programs. Other aspects are programmatic – providing attractions that attract people to the area.

Together, these methods can make visiting or shopping in Downtown Ogallala an experience – a place to enjoy, to see people, to understand the life and beauty of an American community. Maintaining a mixture of retail, service and office uses is particularly important in Ogallala because of the growing office uses and expanding

retail environment south of the Interstate. This focuses considerable attention on use of existing vacant buildings and second floor utilization.

- **Strengthen Downtown’s Role As A Hometown For The Lake McConaughy Recreation Market.**

Downtown Ogallala can prosper by helping to attract some of the many of the lake’s summertime visitors into town. Many contemporary town centers have done well by complementing the offerings of recreational settings – becoming attractive recreational features in their own right. This means that Downtown should take actions that increase the attractiveness and friendliness of the environment and create features and events that complement the leisure experience. In a way, importing additional retail dollars in this way compensates for the exporting of consumer spending that a smaller market like Ogallala experiences when located near a larger commercial center.

## **DOWNTOWN OGALLALA: AN ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONS**

This section examines important features of Downtown Ogallala. It analyzes the occupancy characteristics of Downtown Ogallala; the quality of the Downtown environment; and the adequacy of support facilities. The detailed tables in the analysis will concentrate on an area generally defined by West A to East A and 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Railroad Street.

### **Downtown Occupancy**

Table 8.1 reviews building occupancy in the Downtown and covers a study area that is bounded by West A, East B, Railroad Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Downtown Ogallala is a diverse district that provides over 464,000 square feet of building area. About 89% of this floor area is on the first floor, reflecting the one-story character of the district. The 6.2% first floor vacancy rate is relatively low for a downtown district; service businesses and offices account for the largest share of this space. Downtown Ogallala also has about 110,000 square feet of occupied retail space, representing about 26% of available first-floor area, a healthy amount for a community of about 5,000.

Unlike many downtowns, Ogallala has a fairly low percentage of civic and public facility uses. Most of the city’s major public facilities including city offices, the police station, and the county court house are located on the periphery of the downtown with easy access to the district.

As mentioned above, first floor vacancy is a manageable 6.2%, with about 25,000 square feet of available space. The second floor vacancy rate in Downtown Ogallala is significantly higher, representing about 43% of all second floor space, or just under 23,000 square feet. While second floor vacancy is an economic challenge for Downtown, it also provides opportunities for future development.

### **Land Use Patterns in Downtown Ogallala**

Downtown Ogallala exhibits a development pattern characteristic of a traditional mixed-use community center, incorporating commercial, industrial and civic uses. The focus of this study area is dominated by commercial uses but the periphery of the area includes some of the city’s most important civic destinations and an industrial corridor parallel of the U.P. Railroad line south of Railroad Avenue. The Spruce Street corridor, the heart of the downtown, anchors the traditional grid pattern of the downtown.

A description of the “personality” of Downtown Ogallala’s streets and sub-districts follows:

- *Spruce Street*: This street, the central north-south axis of the traditional downtown, became the “main street” of the commercial district. Most of the downtown’s commercial development occurred between the Union Pacific Railroad and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The four-block main street pattern includes one- and two-story commercial buildings generally built along the street property lines. The mixed use development pattern continues at lower densities north of 4<sup>th</sup>, and includes the County Court House block between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The Spruce Street corridor has also experienced changes. The primary main street retailing district, which once extended between Railroad and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, has contracted to the two block section south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. With the exception of the Prairie Theater, most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street block has been converted to office uses, largely occupied by Prophet Systems. The success of Prophet Systems and its demand for space have undoubtedly kept overall vacancy rates low in the town center.

To the west of Spruce Street the West A Street is dominated office space and downtown parking. This area also includes the city's Library and downtown's only apartment building. The city has also developed a new public parking lot on the southeast corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and West A. Second Street east of Spruce extends the main street commercial pattern to East A Street.

- *East A:* East A Street is the northbound half of the Spruce/East A one-way pair, and directly aligns with the Union Pacific viaduct. In contrast to Spruce Street, East A's development pattern is more oriented to the automobile than the pedestrian. Building setbacks and free traffic flow encourage traffic to move more rapidly along this street. Office and financial uses, usually with their own parking, predominate along East A. The character and fast traffic stream of East A allows many visitors to bypass Downtown entirely on their way to the lake and other destinations.

- *First Street:* First Street (US Highway 30) divides the two retail blocks of Spruce Street and introduces a highway environment into the downtown area. While some of the retail buildings address First Street, their primary frontages are along Spruce Street. Because of this, the relatively narrow sidewalks, and the four-lane section of the highway, the street presents a relatively poor pedestrian environment. East and west of the A Streets, First exhibits a highway commercial development pattern. First Street traffic includes relatively high truck volumes, and is controlled by signals at First and Spruce Streets.

## **Building Condition**

Table 8.2 provides a block-by-block recap of buildings for a focused area of downtown that is bounded by Railroad Avenue on the south, 4<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, West A on the west and East B on the east. Each building was rated on the following conditions:

- *Excellent* – A new building with no discernible deficiencies.
- *Sound* – An older building, which is well maintained with three or fewer appearance deficiencies.
- *Minor deficiencies* – A building that is structurally sound, but has four or more appearance deficiencies.
- *Deteriorating* – A building that has no more than one structural deficiency and possibly some appearance deficiencies.
- *Dilapidated* – A building that has at least two structural failures and is judged beyond repair.

Downtown Ogallala's building stock is generally sound. About 67% of the district's buildings are in excellent or good condition. Most of the rest are considered to have minor deficiencies and no buildings in the downtown are considered to be dilapidated. Several of the buildings in the traditional commercial center have been "modernized," with metal facades covering the original building face. The rehabilitation and improvement of buildings with minor deficiencies, including evaluation of historic facades and their restoration when possible, should be an important element of commercial revitalization in the city's historic town center.

## **Circulation and Parking**

- *Traffic Flow*

Downtown Ogallala is located along the busy East A and 1<sup>st</sup> Street one-way pair. East A, which aligns with the Highway 26/61 viaduct over the Union Pacific, carries northbound traffic, while Spruce, with its main street development pattern, is one way southbound. South of 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Spruce Street reverts to two-way movement. First Street is designated as U.S. Highway 30 and is a heavily traveled alternative to Interstate 80. Current traffic volumes at the intersection of East A and 1<sup>st</sup> Street are the heaviest in the city, substantially affecting the ability of the district to work as a pedestrian precinct.

The completion of the Highway 61/26 truck route has diverted some of the traffic away from the Spruce and East A Street corridors but the levels along 1<sup>st</sup> Street have increased. US 26 traffic is now routed from the foot of the Union Pacific viaduct along 1<sup>st</sup> Street to the truck route, about 1.5 miles west of Spruce Street. The truck route has helped relieve the heart of the downtown from truck traffic, although 1<sup>st</sup> Street continues to create a significant boundary between businesses on the north and south retail blocks.

East A provides a direct link to the Lake McConaughy area and is still the primary route for those moving between Interstate 80 and the Lake. Although some of the regional traffic is diverted away from the corridor by the truck route a significant amount of traffic still moves back and forth between the Downtown and the Lake along East A and Spruce Streets.

During the 1990s, Ogallala executed a streetscape project along Spruce Street that provides diagonal parking on the west side of the street, while removing parking from the east side. This project involved the construction of a corner node at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce that shifts the traffic flow slightly to the east. A smaller node at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce also sets off the diagonal parking. These nodes are surfaced with concrete and are landscaped by flower pots. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce Street also includes an interpretive historical panel. South of 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Spruce provides diagonal parking on the west and parallel parking on its east side. The street continues south over the Union Pacific over a grade crossing, and curves east to Highway 26/61 south of the railroad.

Other streets in the Downtown district provide local traffic functions. In general, these streets provide a quieter more pedestrian atmosphere. The grid pattern of the downtown makes the district highly accessible from the north, east, and west. Access from the south is provided by the Highway 26/61 overpass, landing at 1<sup>st</sup> and East A; and along River Road and Spruce Street via a grade level crossing over the railroad.

#### • *Parking*

The availability of Downtown parking is important to businesses and civic uses in Ogallala. Public parking lots at 1<sup>st</sup> and West A, 2<sup>nd</sup> and West A, and along the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between East A and Spruce Street provide good access to main street retailers. Additional off-street customer parking is also provided on each block except the Prairie Theater block. Each of the business district's streets also provide some on-street parking to. Diagonal parking is provided along the west side of Spruce Street between Railroad and Second Streets, while other streets provide parallel parking. The downtown parking supply appears to be generally consistent with demand. However, the difficulty pedestrian crossing of 1<sup>st</sup> Street compartmentalizes the parking supply, making it difficult for people parked on one side of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor to walk to businesses on the other side.

### **Summary and Issues**

This analysis of Downtown Ogallala establishes that:

- The entire Downtown Ogallala study area contains about 465,000 square feet of building area. About 6.2% of street level floor area is vacant, a noticeable but still manageable rate. About 43% of all upper level building area is either vacant or used for storage. Ogallala has a relatively low first-floor vacancy rate for similarly sized downtowns. The high occupancy of Downtown buildings for office uses in general and Prophet Systems in particular contributes to this high level of occupancy.

- Service/office uses are the dominant building uses in the Downtown. These uses account almost 198,675 square feet in total occupancy. However, Downtown includes about 130,000 square feet of occupied space for retailers and eating and drinking establishments – a healthy occupancy for a city of Ogallala’s size.

- Downtown Ogallala’s structures are in good condition, and 67% of its building stock requires minor or no rehabilitation. Single-story buildings predominate in the district.

- Ogallala’s transportation system provides good access to the traditional downtown. Like the rest of the city, access is limited from the south by the railroad, interstate and river. The Highway 30 corridor also divides the two primary blocks of the retail district.

- Downtown parking appears adequate to meet existing demand. The district has made reasonable provision for off-street parking, and does not depend on on-street parking to meet parking demand. This is partially because the principal north-south corridors, Spruce and East A, until recently, carried major highway routes.

### **Major Development Issues for Downtown Ogallala**

Downtown Ogallala is a basically strong district, benefiting from relatively high occupancy, an effective Main Street management organization, and good transportation access. Yet, it also faces challenges, which, if successfully addressed, can increase its regional retail role and improve its climate as both a place to do businesses and as an asset for the community. These challenges include:

- *The district’s ability to attract visitor traffic and serve as the “hometown” for a larger visitor and recreational region.* The district’s local market has reached a plateau during recent years, and its retail base has declined. Fortunately for building occupancy, space built originally for retailing has been occupied by offices, most notably Prophet Systems. Yet, Downtown should generate at least a moderately growing and renewing retail and entertainment base, most effectively built by tapping into the substantial visitor market generated by the lake. Downtown Ogallala should be part of the recreational experience, and should complement the virtues of lake recreation.

- *Development and availability of new retail space.* Spruce Street, with a retail district limited to two blocks, has relatively little space available for new retailing. While space occasionally comes available as businesses close, the district should have the ability to increase its offerings. Most of the Spruce Street frontage north of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is now in non-retail uses.

- *First Street as a barrier.* Despite good transportation access, major highways also have a negative impact on Downtown. First Street in particular divides the Spruce Street retail blocks into a north and south block. With heavy truck traffic traveling between the Interstate and the US 26 truck route, this arterial makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross between blocks. In business districts, we frequently think of the necessity to be able to shop freely on both sides of the street, requiring a relatively easy crossing across one street. First Street, bisecting the Spruce Street retail district, compounds this problem.

- *The truck route factor.* Northbound traffic bound from the interstate to the lake travels along East A Street. Because Downtown Ogallala only slightly touches this corridor, it is easy for visitors to bypass the district completely, and be virtually unaware that it exists until they return on the way home. The Visitors Center at the Chamber of Commerce office at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A is strategically located to take advantage of this travel pattern. Yet, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street does not provide the “main street” environment that might be able to intercept northbound travelers.

- *Upper level building development.* While Downtown Ogallala is primarily a single-story district, upper level space is still significant and almost half of it is unoccupied. Making better uses of these spaces can inject more activity and investment into the district.

## **A PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN OGALLALA**

This section presents a concept and strategy designed to help Ogallala’s Downtown maintain and expand its role as a quality mixed use center for the town and the surrounding region. The overall concept proposes to:

- Increase the visibility and usability of Ogallala’s central retail district.
- Build on the momentum of the recent streetscape improvements to make the district friendlier to pedestrians and, as a result, encourage multi-destination shopping.
- Increase the appeal of the district to recreational visitors, who will see Downtown Ogallala as the “main street” of the lake region.
- Strengthen the downtown management system, to coordinate and implement additional downtown improvements and to provide a unified marketing and promotional effort.

The components of this program include:

- **SECOND STREET ENTRANCE**
- **CROSSING FIRST STREET**
- **NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**
- **DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING**
- **DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**
- **ADDITIONAL STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**
- **WAYFINDING**

Each of these elements is discussed below.

## ▮ **SECOND STREET ENTRANCE**

*Second Street from Spruce to East A should serve as an extension of the main retail district and as a clear entrance to Downtown from East A Street.*

Northbound traffic headed for the lake region can easily bypass the downtown district. This problem can be addressed by treating 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as an extension of the Spruce Street district. Some retail buildings are oriented to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the city’s Visitors Center is located at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A. The following techniques can help take the retail district to this main northbound corridor and make certain that travelers to the lake area and the region north of Ogallala are at least aware of its business district:

- Developing a gateway feature at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A, including a clearly visible and possibly lighted vertical element.
- Modifying the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street section to provide diagonal parking on the north side of the street, while maintaining parallel parking on the south side. This should include a corner node at 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A, accommodating the gateway feature, landscape, and street furniture.
- Providing additional landscaping, street furniture, and special lighting along East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Encouraging a possible retail building along the south side of the street, on the site now used for municipal parking. Providing diagonal parking along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street compensates for lost stalls.

- Redeveloping the IOOF Building on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce and providing additional storefront windows and space oriented to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

### **CROSSING FIRST STREET**

*The 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce Street intersection should be made more crossable for pedestrians in order to help unify the north and south sides of the retail district.*

While 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Highway 30) introduces a significant amount of traffic into downtown, it also divides the business district into north and south blocks and makes it difficult for pedestrians to use all parts of the district. The pedestrian environment is made less comfortable by limited visibility between traffic and pedestrians. Because 1<sup>st</sup> Street must retain four traffic lanes, the street section cannot be changed to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians. However, techniques that can add to pedestrian safety and comfort include:

- Defining crosswalks with a contrasting paving surface such as stamped or patterned concrete.
- Considering a “scramble” crossing cycle at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce. In this cycle, all intersecting streets have red signals, and pedestrians can cross in all directions, including diagonally.
- Increasing pedestrian crossing signage on 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

### **NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**

*Downtown should provide opportunities for new retail development.*

While the central district has a good supply of storefront commercial space, retail space in the two Spruce Street retail blocks is very limited. Much of the building area that was once designed for retailing is now in corporate use. This use is extremely important, and both maintains a good real estate market and places customers in the heart of Downtown. However, because of this, Ogallala should consider opportunities for new retail development.

New main street commercial buildings are rarely developed in Nebraska communities for both economic and market-based reasons. Yet, if Ogallala can successfully expand its markets, it may well generate a demand for new retail space.

The primary site for new retail development is the frontage along the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between East A and Spruce. This site is owned by the city and is used as a municipal parking lot. Spaces lost to potential development can be replaced by diagonal parking on the north side of 2<sup>nd</sup>, recommended above, and by redesign and expansion of parking on the rest of the block.

A Second Street retail building would reinforce this street as an extension of the retail district and would strengthen the status of 2<sup>nd</sup> and East A as a downtown gateway. The site is also highly visible and would have parking adjacent to it. Other options, much less attractive from a market perspective, is a portion of the new city parking lot on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> between Spruce and West A.

Development of a commercial building may be a project for Ogallala’s economic development corporation, which will have greater access to potential grant funds than a conventional private developer. A project subsidy is likely, because market rents will probably be less than those required to experience satisfactory cash flow. The project may gain additional feasibility by adding second level apartments over a retail first floor. Financing should utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF), CDBG funds, and a write-down of the value of the land.

### **DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING**

*Downtown Ogallala should maintain an organizational structure to manage and promote the commercial district.*

Ogallala is a participant in the Lied Nebraska Main Street Program, and has an effective Main Street management structure in place. The Main Street organization has initiated the reuse of a gem of a former gas station at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Spruce, and has helped to organize events and marketing efforts. The continuation of a Main Street management organization is indispensable and should be institutionalized as part of the downtown scene. In a way, an organization offering enhanced, central marketing and management fulfills some of the roles of a shopping center manager. These roles include the preparation and distribution of promotional materials, development of programs, management of improvement projects, and the recruitment of businesses into Downtown.

Other initiatives that Downtown Ogallala's management group could implement include:

- An expanded program of activities and events, providing an ongoing series of attractions that bring people into the center. This type of program can be particularly effective during tourism season, as a way of attracting multi-day recreational visitors into the district.
- Marketing and management programs – developing and gaining wide distribution of advertising materials to add the district to the region's list of significant visitor attractions. Materials marketing Downtown Ogallala and its "hometown" qualities should be placed at strategic visitor locations if possible, such as the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Lake McConaughy Visitors Center, Ash Hollow, and various facilities at the state recreation areas, as well as area restaurants and businesses. Ashland, Nebraska very successfully placed downtown marketing materials at Mahoney State Park, and successfully rejuvenated town center as a service and amenity center for park visitors.
- Recruitment of targeted retailers. An effective technique is identifying successful retailers in other communities and targeting them to open a branch location in Ogallala.
- Establishing uniform service standards and store hours – establishing a uniform service mission for Downtown Ogallala, defining the district as an area in which customers can expect personalized, knowledgeable attention.
- Forming a spin-off development corporation to catalyze significant projects such as upper-level building reuse and additional retail development.

## **DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**

*Ogallala should take advantage of strategic housing opportunities within the Downtown district.*

Ogallala's downtown is primarily made up of one-story buildings. However, the district has several substantial two-story buildings that offer opportunities for upper-level housing development. The attractively maintained apartment at the southwest corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and West A demonstrates a market for housing in or near the city center. Indeed, downtown housing is an effective mechanism for increasing investment and activity in traditional business districts. Housing can make Downtown Ogallala an extension of the city's neighborhood fabric, as well as a business and civic district. The compact character of the city, and the nearness of the North Park/pool/Western Diamonds complex, grocery shopping, and other conveniences can make downtown an excellent residential setting.

The best opportunity for upper-level adaptive reuse is the IOOF Building at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spruce, assuming that the second level is available. The building's dimensions are very appropriate for apartment development. These developments can use a variety of financing mechanisms, including tax increment financing; equity financing, utilizing the low-income housing tax credit; historic tax credits; and the use of CDBG/HOME funds. The city should utilize a rehabilitation code, such as the Uniform Building Code's model conservation code, that maintains high life safety standards while recognizing the exigencies of rehabilitation of older and historic buildings.

## **STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**

*Ogallala should continue its program of streetscape improvements, improving the quality of the district's public environment.*

Ogallala has implemented a street and streetscape redesign program, focusing to date on the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street block of Spruce Street and on attractive and informative interpretive panels throughout the district. While these have been significant improvements, other incremental projects could further enhance the district's quality and friendliness to users. These projects include:

- Completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street gateway project, discussed above.
- Improved landscaping and street furniture on the two existing nodes along Spruce Street. A streetscape design on the northernmost node could also enhance traffic safety by making the node more visible to southbound traffic.
- Similar nodes on at 1<sup>st</sup> and Spruce on the south side of the street.
- Transition the curb line along the west side of Spruce to align at the corner with the node on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Improvement of the east-west alley between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> as a promenade connecting the public parking lot directly to Spruce Street.
- Visitor information kiosks and information features, such as pedestrian-scaled directional graphics.

## **WAYFINDING**

*Ogallala should institute a system that helps lead travelers to Downtown and other major community features.*

Communities are exhibiting increased interest in directional graphics system that direct both residents and visitors around the community. Such a system is especially important in a city with extensive visitor potential like Ogallala, with major destinations that are slightly off major trafficways. The fact that Spruce and East A, two major arterials, are no longer on the state highway system may provide additional flexibility in design of the system.

This system should be oriented to major gateway routes, including Spruce, East A, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and, if possible, 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Highways 26, and Highway 61. The system should orient travelers to a limited number of very important destinations, which in Ogallala include:

- Downtown and Front Street
- Lake McConaughy
- Western Diamonds

## CHAPTER NINE

### IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The previous chapters, with their narratives and maps, are the core of the Ogallala Plan. This section addresses the scheduling of plan implementation by both public agencies and private decision-makers.

These key areas include:

- **Development Policies and Actions.** This section summarizes the policies and actions proposed in the Ogallala Plan, and presents projected time frames for the implementation of these recommendations.
- **Plan Maintenance.** This section outlines a process for maintaining the plan and evaluating Ogallala's progress in meeting its goals.
- **Plan Support.** This section outlines possible funding sources for projects identified within the Ogallala Plan.

#### **Development Policies and Actions**

The table following in this chapter presents a concise summary of the recommendations of the Ogallala Plan. These recommendations include various types of efforts:

- *Policies*, which indicate continuing efforts over a long period to implement the plan. In some cases, policies include specific regulatory or administrative actions.

- *Action Items*, which include specific efforts or accomplishments by the community.
- *Capital Investments*, which include public capital projects that will implement features of the Ogallala Plan.

Each recommendation is listed as part of its section in the Ogallala Plan. In addition, a time frame for implementing recommendations is indicated. Some recommendations require ongoing implementation. Short-term indicates implementation within five years, medium-term within five to ten years, and long-term within ten to twenty years.

## Implementation Schedule

Growth and Land Use	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
Provide adequate land for projected and potential growth.	Policy	•			
Assure that new development creates the greatest advantage for building the community.	Policy	•			
Relate land use to transportation, infrastructure and open space frameworks.	Policy	•			
Develop a city that is a pleasure to live in, and become a community of choice for western Nebraska.	Policy	•			
<b>Residential Development Areas</b>					
Provide a mixture of housing types and lot sizes.	Policy	•			
Organization of new neighborhoods around traditional street patterns, including a community parkway that links civic, educational and park facilities.	Policy	•			
Dedication of new neighborhood parks and trail links, designed as central open spaces for each neighborhood.	Policy Action	•			
<b>Commercial Focuses</b>					
Downtown Ogallala	Capital			•	
- <i>Development of trail and greenway links that connect Downtown to other city amenities.</i>	Action		•		
- <i>Strengthen organizational and marketing efforts.</i>	Capital		•		
- <i>Complete key physical development projects.</i>	Action		•		
- <i>Adopt zoning policies that encourage the location of civic, financial, entertainment, local service and specialty retail, and personal services uses in the city center.</i>	Policy	•			
- <i>Encourage residential development on upper levels of downtown buildings.</i>	Capital			•	
- <i>Create a strong downtown entrance for northbound (lakebound) traffic on East A.</i>					
Highway 30 Corridor	Policy		•		
- <i>Review current zoning of the corridor to ensure compatibility with the city's overall goals for a mixed-use area.</i>	Capital				

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- *Improvements to the public environment, including sidewalks and sidewalk trails, along with improved lighting and landscaping*

●

### Implementation Schedule

Commercial Focuses	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
North Spruce					
- <i>The city should work with developers to ensure high quality development that creates a welcome entrance into the community.</i>	Policy	●			
- <i>A circulator system should be included within the North Spruce node to control access from the adjacent highways.</i>	Policy Capital			●	
Interchange 126 will remain in larger-scale commercial development and businesses that provide visitor services.	Policy	●			

Commercial development of 5 <sup>th</sup> Street and US 26 Truck route will focus on neighborhood commercial uses.	Policy				●
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The Northern intersection of Highway 26 and 61 should develop with convenience commercial development related to the Lake.	Policy			●	
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**Business/Industrial Focus**

Wellfield	Policy	●			
- Ideal location for business park development, including a range of light industrial, commercial and office uses.	Policy	●			
- Provide an open space easement above the major transmission line through the wellfield to provide a central greenway that organizes the business park plan.	Action				

North Spruce development would include commercial and limited industrial developments and expansion of existing uses along the corridor.	Policy	●			
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US 26/30 interchange should develop with commercial/industrial type development.	Policy			●	
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Reserve the area south of Interstate 80 for general industrial tracts.	Policy	●			
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**Annexation Program**

Ogallala should implement an annexation program that will create opportunities for new development and facilitate the goals of the future land use plan.	Policy	●			
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**Implementation Schedule**

Access For All	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
A collector street and parkway system in developing areas should be designated ahead of development and dedicated as growth takes place.	Policy	●			
West H Street should be upgraded to an arterial street north of Foxhill Road and developed	Action			●	

between Foxhill Road and West 11 <sup>th</sup> Street to provide an additional link between the heart of the city and Highway 61.					
A northern collector street should provide access between Spruce and East O Street, designed to complement the existing landscape.	Capital				●
Ogallala should work with the Nebraska Department of Roads to develop a second interchange from Interstate 80, connecting the Interstate to the Highway 26/61 Truck route.	Action				●
County Road East 80 should be extended and upgraded to connect to a new Interstate 80 interchange.	Capital				●
Ogallala should consider modifications and actions on Downtown streets to slow traffic and increase ease of use in the district for pedestrians.	Capital	●			
Ogallala should institute traffic calming measures on selected streets to reduce the speed of traffic and bring “design” speeds and “desirable” speeds into accord.	Capital	●			
Ogallala should maintain a continuous pedestrian network to complement the street system. Including:	Policy				
- A South Platte River Trail	Capital			●	
- A North Trail System	Capital			●	
- A greenway through the planned wellfield business park on top of the planned water transmission line.	Capital		●		
- A South Lake Trail	Capital				●
- Roadside trails along designed roads throughout the city.	Capital	●			
- Share the road segments and sidewalks	Capital	●			
Ogallala should maintain the design quality of its major community corridors allowing them to serve as attractive gateways into the town and positive business and community environments.	Policy	●			

### Implementation Schedule

Public Services	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
Public Facility Priorities					
- Complete the Police Department space needs plan.	Action		●		
- Construct a new public works facility on existing land.	Capital				
- Upgrade and expand existing hangers at Searle	Capital		●		

<i>Field.</i>	Capital			●
- Complete and implement a space needs plan for the library, potentially requiring its expansion.	Capital Action	●		
<b>Infrastructure Priorities</b>				
- Construct wells at the city's new wellfield.	Capital	●		
- Complete master plan for water system and replace remaining 4-inch lines in the downtown.	Capital	●	●	
- Establish a program for replacement of sewer lines that have settled and are experiencing inflow problems.	Policy Capital	●	●	

### A Recreation Lifestyle

Ogallala should capitalize on existing water resources and develop a new southside lake as part of a major residential development to extend lakeside recreation into the city.	Capital				●
Ogallala should develop new neighborhood and community parks as residential and population growth demand.	Policy Capital	●			
Ogallala should maintain its major drainageways as greenways, with development limited to trail construction.	Policy	●			
A looped trail system should be developed to connected to the city's parks into a unified system and link the city to Lake McConaughy.	Capital		●	●	
The South Platte River is a key community asset, and should be used as a major recreational and open space resource.	Policy	●			
Ogallala should implement a regularly budgeted incremental program of park site improvements and upgrades at its existing parks.	Policy Capital		●		

### Implementation Schedule

Downtown Ogallala	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
Second Street and Spruce to East A should serve as an extension of the main retail district and as a clear entrance to Downtown from East A Street.	Policy Capital	●	●		
The 1 <sup>st</sup> and Spruce Street intersection should be made more crossable for pedestrians in order to help unify the north and south sides of the retail district.	Capital		●		
Downtown should provide opportunities for	Policy	●			

new retail development.		
Downtown Ogallala should maintain an organizational structure to manage and promote the commercial district.	Action Policy	●
Ogallala should take advantage of strategic housing opportunities within the Downtown district.	Action	●
Ogallala should continue its program of streetscape improvements, improving the quality of the district's public environment.	Capital	●
Ogallala should institute a system that helps lead travelers to Downtown and other major community features.	Capital	●

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### Housing For Ogallala's Future

Ogallala should facilitate housing conservation through the development of property maintenance standards.	Policy	●
Ogallala should expand existing rehabilitation and code enforcement efforts into a comprehensive, multifaceted rehabilitation and neighborhood development program.	Policy	●
Ogallala should develop a mechanism that encourages subdivision development for moderate cost housing.	Policy	●
Ogallala should encourage construction of independent living residential development for seniors.	Policy	●

### Plan Maintenance

The scope of the Ogallala Plan is both ambitious and long-term. Each of the many actions and policies described in the plan can contribute to the betterment of the city. Yet, presenting a twenty-year development program at one time can appear daunting. Therefore, the city should implement an ongoing planning process that uses the plan to develop year-by-year improvement programs. In addition, this process should also evaluate the plan on an annual basis in relation to the development events of the past year.

Such a process may include the following features:

- *Annual Action and Capital Improvement Program.* The Planning Commission and City Council should use the plan to define annual strategic work programs of policies, actions, and capital investments. This program should be coordinated with Ogallala's existing capital improvement planning and budgeting process, although many of the plan's recommendations are not capital items. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include:

- *A specific work program for the upcoming year.* This program should be specific and related to the city's projected financial resources. The work program will establish the specific plan recommendations that the city will accomplish during the coming year.

- *A three-year strategic program.* This component provides for a multi-year perspective, informing the preparation of the annual work program. It provides a middle-term implementation plan for the city.

- *A six-year capital improvement program.* This is merged into Ogallala's current capital improvement program.

In addition, this process should include an annual evaluation of the comprehensive plan. This evaluation should occur at the end of each calendar year. Desirably, this evaluation should include a written report that:

- *Summarizes key land use developments and decisions during the past year and relates them to the comprehensive plan.*
- *Reviews actions taken by the city during the past year to implement plan recommendations.*
- *Defines any changes that should be made in the comprehensive plan.*

The plan should be viewed as a dynamic changing document that is used actively by the city.

The .previous chapters, with their narratives and maps, are the core of the Ogallala Plan. This section addresses the scheduling of plan implementation by both public agencies and private decision-makers.

These key areas include:

- **Development Policies and Actions.** This section summarizes the policies and actions proposed in the Ogallala Plan, and presents projected time frames for the implementation of these recommendations.
- **Plan Maintenance.** This section outlines a process for maintaining the plan and evaluating Ogallala's progress in meeting its goals.
- **Plan Support.** This section outlines possible funding sources for projects identified within the Ogallala Plan.

## **Development Policies and Actions**

The table following in this chapter presents a concise summary of the recommendations of the Ogallala Plan. These recommendations include various types of efforts:

- *Policies*, which indicate continuing efforts over a long period to implement the plan. In some cases, policies include specific regulatory or administrative actions.
- *Action Items*, which include specific efforts or accomplishments by the community.
- *Capital Investments*, which include public capital projects that will implement features of the Ogallala Plan.

Each recommendation is listed as part of its section in the Ogallala Plan. In addition, a time frame for implementing recommendations is indicated. Some recommendations require ongoing implementation. Short-term indicates implementation within five years, medium-term within five to ten years, and long-term within ten to twenty years.

## PLAN MAINTENANCE

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