

CHAPTER 4: WORKING

Economic development planning is a significant part of comprehensive planning. Job creation and economic well-being are a part of planning for the future for any community. Participants in the comprehensive planning process's first community meeting designated "economic development," tied with water and sewer infrastructure, as Noble's Top Need. Planning strategies for economic development can help in taking economic liabilities and making them assets for the community. The goals of this chapter are to highlight specific assets and liabilities in Noble and to provide a framework to make decisions about Noble's economic future.

The chapter reviews the key dynamics of Noble's workforce, including income and education. It then pays special attention to existing and future commercial development opportunities and the state of industrial land uses. The chapter concludes with a discussion of cultural resources as an economic resource. It inventories the cultural resources of Noble and discusses the benefits that may accrue if Noble includes their planning and management in the city's economic development strategy.

Income, Education and Workforce

As presented in Chapter 2, Noble's economy is inextricably linked to that of the larger region. The occupations and industries of most employed Noble residents appear, in the short run at least, to be in the stable or growth sectors of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area economy. Noble's strength in construction employment and establishments also, in the short run, appears to match well the areas of the region's economic growth. Noble also has a large percentage of small business establishments and relatively few large employers. The Noble Public Schools is the city's largest employer, with 300 employees.

Noble's population, by and large, does not work in Noble. In 2000, Noble's employed population numbered 2,615, while private sector employment in the Noble zip code numbered 1,051. Noble's population earns, in terms of median household income, more than the state figure, but less than the county figure. However, in the 1990s, Noble pulled even further ahead of the state median income and gained on the county median income. Noble's poverty rates also declined in the 1990s and the city posts the lowest poverty rates among its comparison communities, even given its higher percentage of female householders and female householders with children. While Noble's household income may be more modest than surrounding communities, its level of poverty is also less severe. Higher standards of economic development are often associated with higher levels of

personal income. A community with an increasing income, per capita, will show an increase in its ability to purchase more goods and support more business.

Income levels typically correlate with educational levels and the higher the educational attainment, the more qualified and able the workforce. An educated workforce plays a key role in the quality of jobs in the area along with the ability for the workforce to contribute to the local economy. The city of Noble has seen an increase in education attainment over the past years (see Chapter 5). From 1990 until 2000, there has been an increase in high school diplomas but the percentage of the adult population with college degrees has remained stable. A number of educational institutions in the county and surrounding areas provide opportunities for maintaining and increasing the skill level of Noble's workforce.

Other institutions that aid the economic development of a locality include business organizations, chambers of commerce and local development organizations. The Noble Chamber of Commerce is active in the promotion of local business and aids the efforts of local economic planning through relationships with local business owners.

The Noble Chamber of Commerce and the city of Noble, together, worked to make Noble eligible to be a registered Century Community with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. Registering with this program is a statement of the strategic economic vision for the city and its future. The program requires a community to conduct a self-assessment and then to initiate the necessary changes in the community to strive for the standards of economic improvement identified in the self-assessment. There are numerous tangible benefits to this process such as positioning the city to attract new businesses, increasing community pride and heightening awareness of the economic improvements that need to take place. Overall, membership in this program shows the desire of the community and its leaders to move forward in developing Noble's economic future.

Commercial Development

Locations for Commercial Development

Commercial development is part of a community's economic development. Commercial areas should be well connected to their markets -- the adjacent residences and surrounding communities. They should have high visibility and be appealing to both those accessing them via motor vehicles and to pedestrians. Such areas that are ideal for commercial development may be in limited supply, so that without planning ahead, they could be consumed by other land uses. Even ideal locations may not reach their full potential if access is compromised by lack of attention to the transportation component.

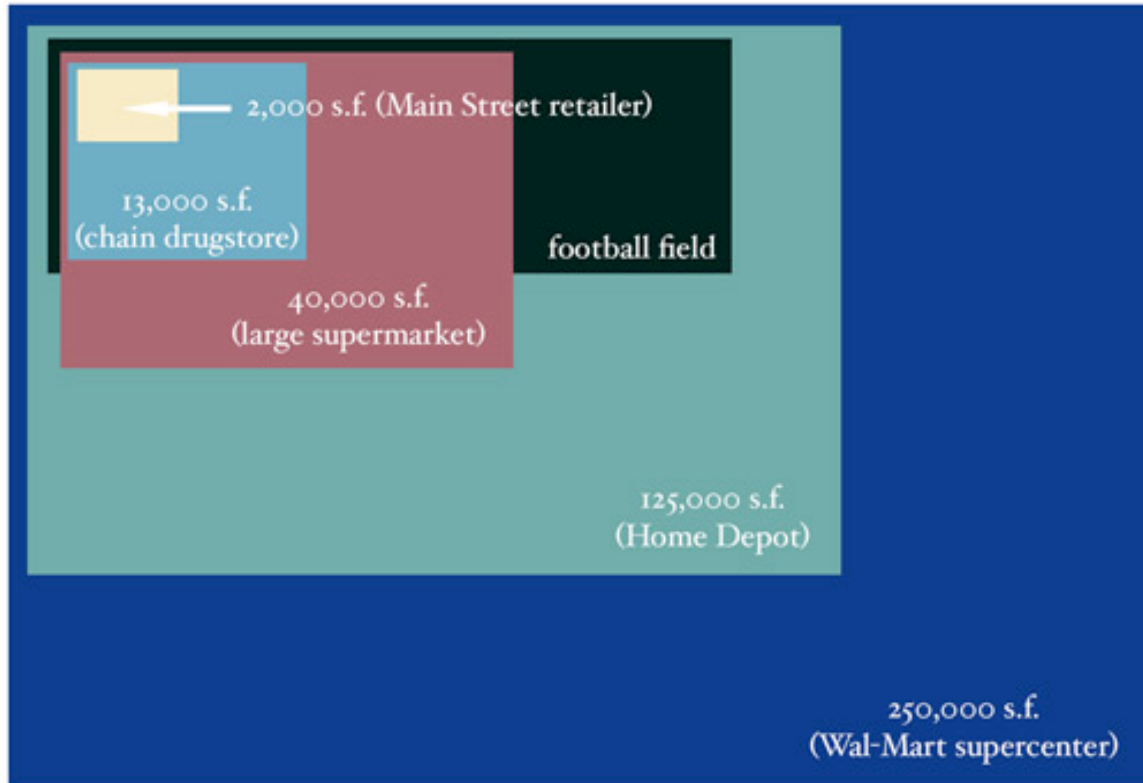
Noble's commercial development is concentrated on Main Street, which is the segment of US 77 that runs north-south through the city. The "Old" Main Street segment, Noble's traditional downtown, has 30 businesses lining the street. These businesses are made up of restaurants, barber shops, law firms, insurance agents and gift shops to name several. At the time of the study, "Old" Main Street has nine vacant buildings abutting the street, which is 972 ft. in length. On Main Street north of the traditional downtown is a growing commercial strip with fast food restaurants, shops, a grocery store and other businesses. (For more on the "Old" and "New" Downtown and US 77's potential for additional commercial development, see the study's appendices.)

Maintaining a sufficient supply of commercial land is important to the stability of the local economy and attracting new businesses. Main St./US 77 has the accessibility and visibility that has made it attractive in the past, and will continue to make it attractive in the future, for commercial development. However, in the older developed areas, lots fronting Main St./US 77 may not accommodate modern commercial uses that require more land. Figure 4.1 gives an idea of the differences between the size of the buildings inhabited by a typical "Main Street" retail establishment and other modern types of commercial development. The largest developments would also have acres of parking around them. In planning land along US 77 for future commercial development, consideration of adequate parcel-size needs to be made. This may present itself, however, as making sure that new residential neighborhoods that access US 77 via a neighborhood's collector street are set far enough back from US 77 to leave adequate space for commercial strip development along the highway in the future.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation's plan to widen the segment of US 77 starting south of Noble's downtown presents an important opportunity for Noble (see Appendix 4 for more details on ODOT's plans for US 77). The land adjacent to the corridor south of Noble's downtown to Noble's southern border (and beyond) may become more attractive to commercial development. The expanded highway will accommodate increased traffic flows, in effect increasing the visibility for commercial areas in the entire Main St./US 77 corridor in Noble. To the extent, however, that the traffic is headed only through Noble, traveling to Norman or taking US 9 to the interstate, the pressure may increase to make Noble a "pass through" place, not a destination. Design of the transportation corridor will affect how well it serves potential new commercial development and existing development. The plans and designs for access to the expanded corridor, operational characteristics such as speed limits and stop lights throughout the entire corridor, and measures to accommodate the increased traffic in the traditional downtown area without significantly disturbing its function as a traditional downtown will all affect how successful the entire Main St./US 77 corridor is for commercial development. It is also possible that the potential "new" areas for

commercial development will compete with the already existing commercial development in the corridor. Providing a specific vision for the types of commercial development in each segment (for example, for the traditional downtown area versus new development to the south) can mitigate this to some extent.

Figure 4.1: Size Comparison for Types of Commercial Buildings



Source: Institute for Self-Reliance (www.newrules.org).

Maintaining the Appearance of All Commercial Areas

Concerns about Noble's appearance, previously discussed in Chapter 3 for housing in the original town plat, apply to its commercial development as well. Respondents to the Noble Community Survey rated Noble's appearance as very to extremely important to their quality of life. At the same time, "Clean Up" Noble and "Appearance" both appear on the Top Ten List of one thing respondents to the Noble Community Survey would like to change. Main St./US 77 is how most enter Noble and may also be the only part of Noble that those who pass through see. It makes Noble's first impression and, for some, Noble's only impression. The "Vibrant Downtown" goal in Noble's Century Community strategic plan recognizes maintenance and rehabilitation of the downtown buildings and infrastructure as actions that need to be taken. The aging and vacant buildings in Noble's downtown are part of its appearance and its identity; so too are the suburban style commercial developments north of downtown.

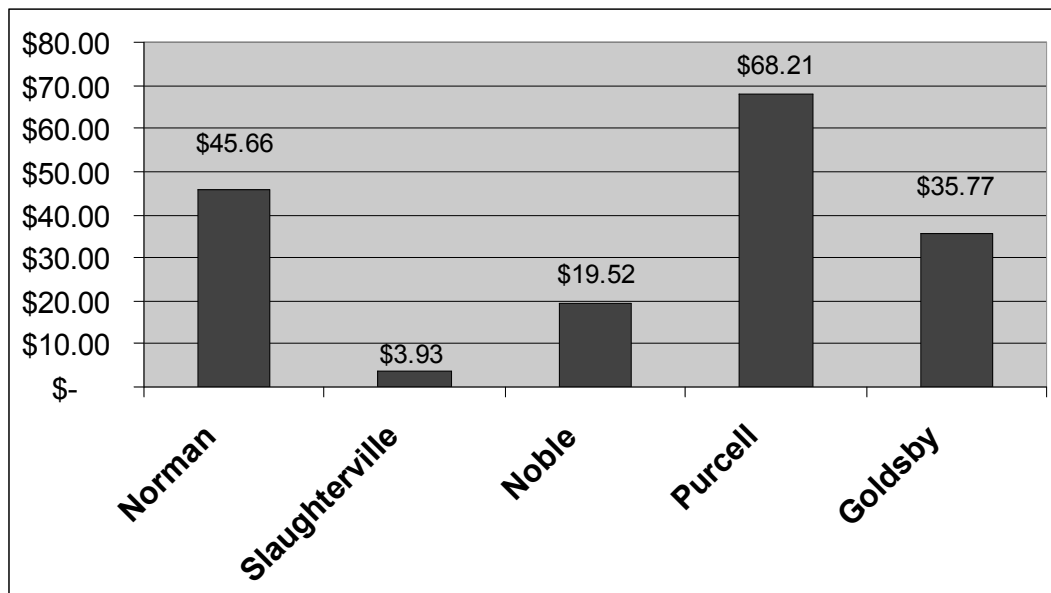
Neighborhood Commercial Development

As noted before, commercial development in Noble is concentrated on Main Street. Noble's population is growing to a point where additional, small commercial areas, away from Main St. might be successful at serving neighborhood needs and expanding the city's commercial tax base. Intersections of the section line roads in Noble's interior, if provided the proper infrastructure, could be attractive to future neighborhood commercial development. Support for neighborhood commercial development at key intersections developed during the second community meeting, where participants identified alternative locations on maps.

The zoning ordinance in Noble allows for multiple types of zoning categories to accommodate different types of commercial development. Restricted Commercial, Planned Shopping Center, Community Commercial and General Commercial are the commercial zoning categories allowed in the city of Noble. Other commercial zoning categories that allow more interaction between residential zoning and commercial are useful for commercial sites that have low volumes of traffic and suit daily needs of residential areas. Noble currently does not have a commercial zoning category that particularly isolates the neighborhood and commercial interaction. The restricted commercial zoning category offers many services that could be integrated with neighborhoods or residential developments, but an even more restrictive zoning category may be more appropriate for locations near apartment complexes or residential neighborhoods.

Commercial Development and Sales Tax Revenue

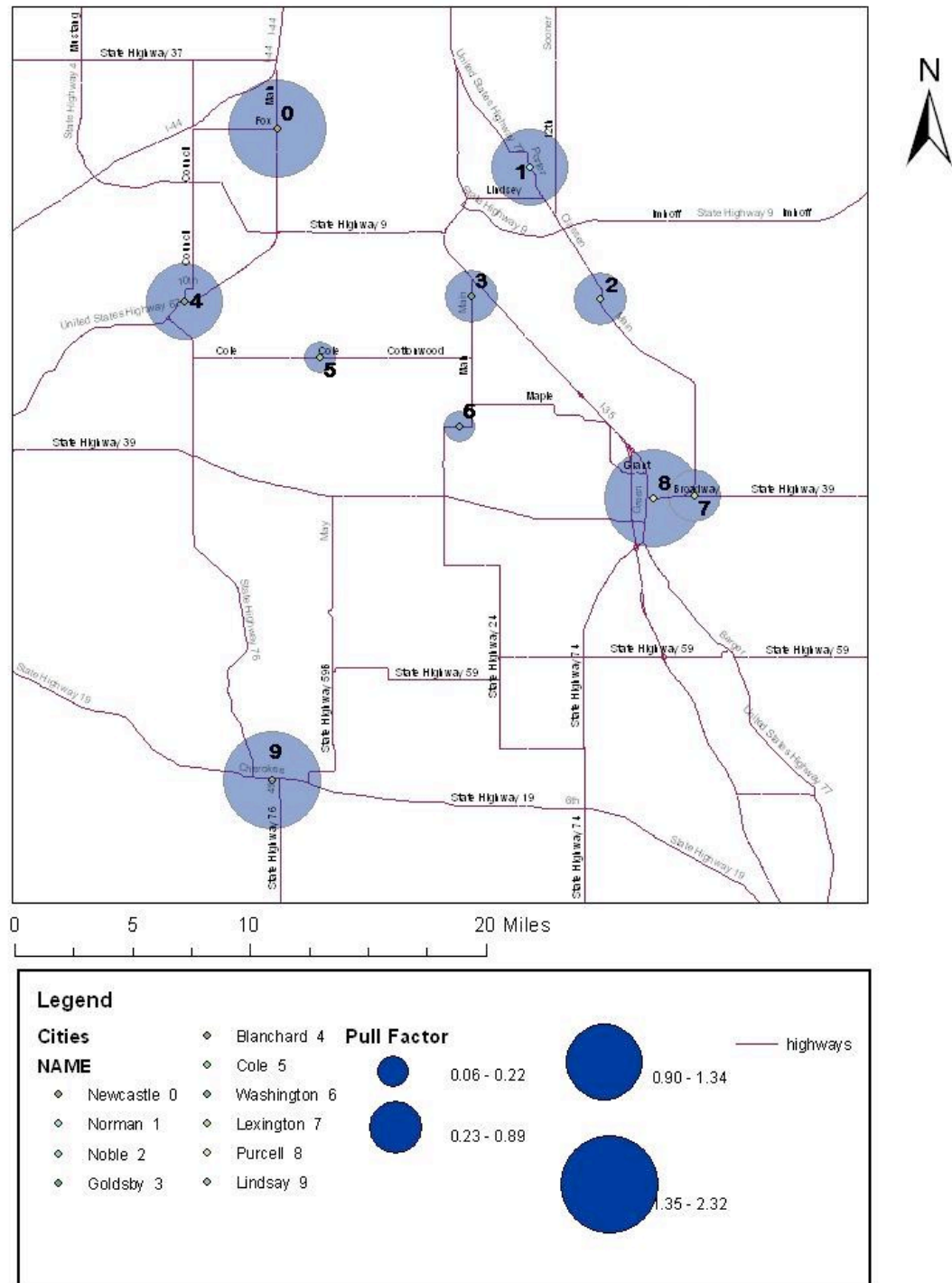
Commercial development is doubly important for Oklahoma municipalities because of their high level of dependence on the sales tax for municipal revenue. Sales tax revenue makes up one-third of Noble's municipal revenue (see Appendix 8). Noble's proximity to Norman and the Oklahoma City metropolitan area is recognized by Noble community members as a key asset for the city, but one with some negative side effects. Norman, with a significantly higher population than Noble, has more commercial development. Even further north of Norman in Oklahoma City there are many businesses competing for the metro area sales. Noble residents, many of whom leave Noble daily to work, have the opportunity to shop in surrounding cities. When residents decide to make purchases outside of Noble, this influences Noble's sales tax revenue.

Figure 4.2: Sales Tax Generated Each Month Per Person

Source: Oklahoma Tax Commission, 2006.

The larger the sales tax per capita each city receives directly relates to the dollars each city is capturing from their population expenditures. As seen in Figure 4.2, Noble fairs poorly in generating sales tax revenue per person compared to its neighboring communities.

There are two broad options to generating more sales tax revenue for a “donor” city like Noble. One is to provide more opportunities for local residents to shop locally. The second is to provide commercial opportunities that attract residents from outside Noble. One analysis tool for exploring at what level cities are attracting purchases from outside is to calculate the trade pull factor for the community. A trade pull factor of one indicates that a city is generating retail sales as if all of its residents made all their purchases within the city boundary. A pull factor greater than one indicates that a city is attracting purchases, and purchasers, above the rate generated by its own population. A pull factor below one indicates that city residents are making purchases outside the city. See Figure 4.3 for the results of the study’s pull factor calculations for July 2006 retail sales in Noble and nearby cities. The formula for this calculation is provided at the end of this chapter.

Figure 4.3: Pull Factors for Noble and Surrounding Communities


Type of Commercial Development

When the Noble Community Survey asked the open-ended question, “If you could change one thing about the city of Noble, what would it be?,” respondents most frequently identified more shops and restaurants. Of the Top Ten “One Thing Change” responses, this number one answer was the only one directly related to economic development. To get a more detailed picture of the purchasing patterns of Noble community members, the Noble Community Survey asked respondents *where* they purchased or participated in a list of sixteen goods, services or activities. The choices were “In Noble,” “Outside of Noble,” “Both In and Outside of Noble” or “Do Not Use.” “Outside of Noble” exceeded “In Noble” for every single listed good, service or activity, typically by large margins. “Both In and Outside of Noble” did exceed “Outside of Noble” for three items: Play Sports/Recreate Outdoors, Buy Groceries, and Eat in Fast Food Restaurants. And “In Noble” exceeded “Both In and Outside of Noble” for four items: Banking, Financial or Accounting Services, Personal Care (hair salon, dry cleaning, etc.), Fill Prescriptions, and Recycle Household Trash. Tables 4.1-4 present the top five items for each choice of location.

Interpreting this data can be tricky. Goods and services showing the highest use in Noble may be areas where Noble is relatively well served already or may indicate items that Noble community members place a high value on purchasing or participating in locally, either for convenience’s sake or for other reasons. Presumably, goods or services showing the highest use outside of Noble show potential areas where Noble community members are underserved locally. It may be, however, that this list represents the types of services that can only be provided by large organizations unlikely to locate in a small city. This may be particularly true for certain types of medical care. Goods or services showing the highest use both in and outside of Noble show categories of goods or services that Noble community members already show a tendency to purchase or use locally, at least some of the time, but also areas where they may be underserved, since they seek the good or service outside of the city as well. By the same token, the “Do Not Use” category may indicate goods or services that Noble community members do not desire or that they desire to use locally, but do not wish to travel for.

Table 4.1: Community Survey Results – Good, Services or Activities Purchased or Used In Noble

	Good, Service or Activity	No.
1	Banking, Financial or Accounting Services	135
1 (tie)	Get Personal Care (hair salon, dry cleaning)	135
3	Fill Prescriptions	123
4	Buy Groceries	74
5	Play Sports/Recreate Outdoors	65

Table 4.2: Community Survey Results – Good, Services or Activities Purchased or Used Outside of Noble

	Good, Service or Activity	No.
1	Buy Clothing	383
2	Get Insurance or Legal Services	341
3	Eat in More (than fast food) Upscale Restaurants	322
4	Buy Books, Music, Gifts or Novelty Items	320
5	Visit the Doctor, Dentist or Other Medical Services	318

Table 4.3: Community Survey Results – Good, Services or Activities Purchased or Used Both In and Outside of Noble

	Good, Service or Activity	No.
1	Eat in Fast Food Restaurants	298
2	Buy Groceries	268
3	Buy Furniture, Hardware and Household Goods	160
4	Play Sports/Recreate Outdoors	117
5	Banking, Financial or Accounting Services	99

Table 4.4: Community Survey Results – Good, Services or Activities Not Used at All

	Good, Service or Activity	No.
1	Go to Sports Bars or Other Adult Gathering Places	216
2	Recycle Household Trash	192
3	Play Sports/Recreate Outdoors	164
4	Play Sports/Recreate Indoors	127
5	Eat in More (than fast food) Upscale Restaurants	30

To help clarify these competing interpretations, the Noble Community Survey asked whether more of each of the sixteen goods, services or activities was needed in Noble. The results are displayed in Table 4.5. The table includes a separately ranked list for respondents living outside of Noble, because this identifies areas where Noble might be able to capture outside tax dollars. Some issues are clarified: Noble community members do not use sports bars or other adult gathering places, nor do they appear to want them very badly. On the other hand, they are seeking places locally to play sports or recreate indoors and outdoors and to eat in more upscale restaurants.

Noble Community Survey respondents, including respondents living outside of Noble, want more places locally at which to purchase clothing, books, music, gifts, novelty items, hardware, furniture and household goods. Despite existing purchase patterns that indicate these items are mostly purchased outside of Noble, there appears to be an unmet demand for local purchase options. The existing relatively higher use of local fast food restaurants and grocery stores does not indicate service saturation, but a potential for growth in areas where Noble community members have a proven track record of shopping locally.

On the other hand, Noble community members indicate that the levels of local service for their banking and financial needs and for prescription medicines are currently adequate. For legal, insurance and medical services, the Noble Community Survey seems to indicate that most Noble community members prefer to seek these services from organizations located in larger cities.

Table 4.5: Community Survey Results – Ranking of Additional Services and Businesses Desired in Noble

All Respondents			Respondents Living Outside of Noble		
1	Upscale Restaurants	66	1	Recycling	10
2	Fast Food	64	2	Furniture, Hardware stores	9
3	Recycling	55	3	Clothing stores	8
4	Play sports/recreation outdoors	53	4	Books, Music, Novelty stores	8
5	Play sports/recreation indoors	53	5	Fast Food	7
6	Clothing stores	53	6	Upscale Restaurants	7
7	Books, Music, Novelty stores	48	7	Play sports/recreation indoors	6
8	Furniture, Hardware stores	47	8	Play sports/recreation outdoors	5
9	Grocery stores	36	9	Grocery stores	5
10	Sports Bars/Adult Venues	28	10	Personal Care (dry cleaning, hair salons, etc.)	5
11	Car Maintenance	26	11	Car Maintenance	5
12	Personal Care (dry cleaning, hair salons, etc.)	22	12	Fill Prescriptions	4
13	Doctor Medical	21	13	Insurance/Legal services	3
14	Fill Prescriptions	18	14	Banking/Financial services	3
15	Insurance/Legal services	13	15	Sports Bars/Adult Venues	2
16	Banking/Financial services	12	16	Doctor Medical	2

Distinguish between Types of Commercial Development

As discussed earlier, certain cities have greater pull factors than others in part because certain stores have greater pull factors than others. For example, stores that sell large items such as furniture, washers, dryers, lawn equipment, cars, etc. have a

greater pull factor for a community because purchasers of these items are willing to travel greater distances to purchase these goods. Surveying the types of businesses in other communities may be helpful when Noble considers which new businesses to attract. By creating a new market in the local economy through businesses that are not present in the surrounding areas, a local economy can exploit regional purchasing. Economic development strategies that build on the regional “pull” of local businesses will have a double benefit, over just focusing on increasing local purchasing. Local residents purchasing locally in Noble, though, will remain a key component of sales tax revenue generation for the city.

Industrial Development

The 2004 US Census County Business Patterns database shows three manufacturers in the Noble zip code area (see Chapter 2 for more details). Land used for industrial purposes is primarily located along US 77 and the railroad line that runs parallel to the highway to the west. The industrial site on Maguire Road is not in this corridor. (See the existing land use map for Noble’s industrial sites.) The companies that are present on these sites are significant companies in Noble and in the Oklahoma economy. IronWolf manufactures large components for earth moving machines. In 2006 the company received the governor’s award for excellence in exporting. Similarly, Morris Latex Products is a lead manufacturer of latex products, primarily for the medical industry. Both of these companies provide jobs for the Oklahoma City area and important stability for the economy in Noble.

Attractive sites for industrial land use designations are typically located in an area far from residential or areas of public activity. These sites should have relatively easy access to major transportation arterials for movement of heavy machinery or trucks (Grunkemeyer, 1996). Entrances to industrial sites for trucks or machinery should not cause significant traffic delays and should be located in areas that are not susceptible to traffic congestion. The terrain of the site should be flat and with soil characteristics that are suitable for an industrial building (Grunkemeyer, 1996). If utilities are not already extended to the site, utility extension should be relatively easy. Proper zoning of these lands is useful for preventing present and future land use conflicts with surrounding developments.

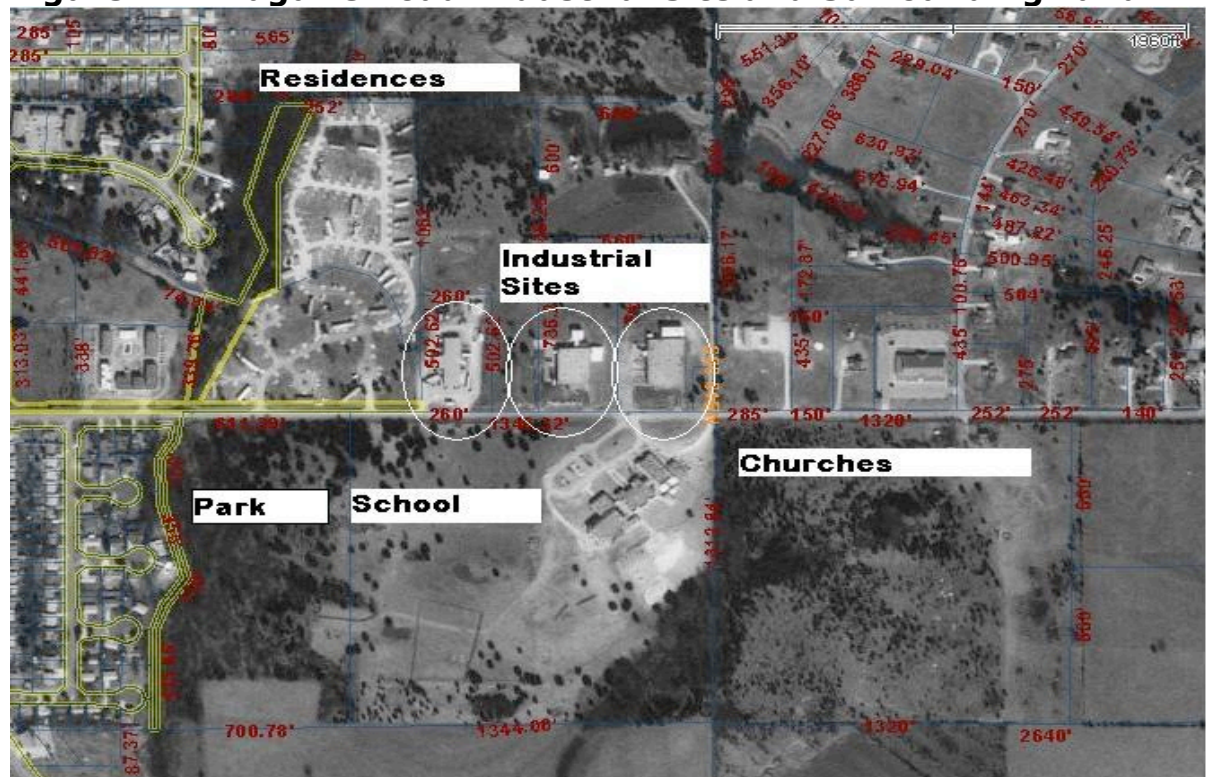
Noble’s zoning ordinance uses several categories to accommodate different industrial uses:

- Custom Manufacturing
- Light Industrial
- Light Industrial-Restricted
- Medium Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Hazardous Industrial

Only the Light Industrial category is used on the current zoning map (see zoning map).

Conflicts between industrial sites and adjoining tracts can occur when the nearby uses are disturbed by the noises, smells, pollutants or traffic that industrial land uses may produce. One industrial land use site in Noble, located on Maguire Road, has residential, park and school properties surrounding the site (see Figure 4.4). The industrial site includes three lots zoned industrial (circled in white). In the second community meeting for the Noble comprehensive planning effort, where participants were asked to discuss land uses and mark desired changes on an aerial map, a number of residents identified the industrial site as a nuisance to the surrounding properties. Chiefly the smell was discussed as a nuisance to the residences, school and park area. This tract is currently zoned light industrial, but in the past business activity outside of a light industrial category has reportedly occurred. Thus, the current negative impression may be heavily influenced by past memories.

Figure 4.4: Maguire Road Industrial Site and Surrounding Land



Source: Cleveland County Assessor

In order to mitigate the potential conflicts generated by industrial land uses many cities, like Noble, have provided multiple zoning categories for industrial uses, such as light industrial, medium, heavy and hazardous. This allows matching the

industrial land uses with higher potential for conflicts with appropriate sites during the planning and zoning process. The Maguire Road site's Light Industrial zoning, however, has not alleviated the perceived negative impression of this industrial location. A more restrictive industrial zoning category may be in order. Another option is to require all industrial land uses within a certain distance of parks, schools or residences to obtain a conditional use permit that specifies acceptable activities before beginning operation. If the specific problems (smell, etc.) on the Maguire Road site that has caused conflicts with its neighbors have been or can be discontinued or mitigated, it is possible that the perceived negative impression of this industrial location may dissipate with time.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the dynamics or aspects of a community that give meaning to its identity for its inhabitants and for visitors. A cultural resource may be a special park or an unusual natural feature. Historic buildings or landscapes are other typical cultural resources. Areas or buildings that are representative of the social, economic or ethnic heritage of a community may also be cultural resources. Community members' skills or a community's heritage in any of the arts – language, visual and performance arts included – are also cultural resources. Of cultural resources, the National Park Service writes that it is their “ability to connect one generation to another that gives them their most valued attribute: an inherent capacity to mold and reinforce our identities as social creatures.”

Recently, cultural resources have begun to be recognized for their role in promoting the economic development of a community. Building cultural resource “capital” may help to define a community in positive terms and refine its sense of place. Developing a positive identity and having a strong sense of place are steps to building pride in a community. A strong sense of pride in the community helps maintain the desire of current residents and businesses to remain and may also entice potential residents and business owners. In addition, awareness and appreciation of and exposure to a community's cultural resources may enhance community members' quality of life. To the extent that cultural resources may be used to develop a unique identity for a community or place, utilizing cultural resources may help a community become a destination for visitors and new residents. Noble recognized the importance of cultural resources in its Century Community strategic plan in the goal to “revive and create quality cultural activities and recreation.”

Inventory of Noble's Cultural Resources

Given the growing importance of cultural resources to community development planning, the study sought to develop an understanding of Noble's current and potential cultural resources. The list below and the discussion that follows are not

meant to be inclusive of all cultural resources in and around Noble, but they give a flavor of how cultural resources may be utilized in future economic and social development planning.

- Small Town Feel
- Noble's "Land Run" Status and Original Town Plat
- Rose Rocks, the Rose Rock Museum and the Rose Rock Festival
- Historic Buildings, Noble Historical Society and Museum
- Parks, the Library and a Future Community Center

Small Town Feel

The Noble Chamber of Commerce website begins with the tagline "Experience small town living ... experience Noble!" "Small town feel" was designated the Top Asset by participants at the first community meeting for the comprehensive planning process, anticipating "small town feel" earning the *number one spot*, by a wide margin, on the Noble Community Survey's Top Ten List of the Three Things respondents Like about Noble.

Exactly what someone means when she says "small town feel" is hard to pin down in a simple survey. Clearly, it's related to the size of the city, and in the metropolitan context, it is also probably related to Noble's identity as a separate, distinct place that is not just another appendage of Oklahoma City or Norman. Noble "feels" different from a big city and its suburbs. Some of the other items making the Noble Community Survey's Top Ten List of Three Things respondents Like about Noble, such as the community's Friendliness (no. 4), that it is "Quiet/Peaceful" (no. 5) and has Less Crime (no. 7), also probably influence what "small town feel" means to Noble community members.

"Small town feel," therefore, is part of Noble's social culture and is already recognized for its potential to attract residents and businesses. The anticipated growth represented in the 2025 future growth scenarios is not so large that, by itself, it threatens to compromise Noble's "small town feel." Maintaining a distinct identity for the city, however, as it and Norman grow closer together may become important.

Noble's "Land Run" Status and Original Town Plat

Because Noble was founded and platted during the land run, its 160-acre original town plat has a distinctly different development pattern from the majority of the development that happened in Noble, in Cleveland County, and indeed nearly everywhere in the United States after about 1960. While few of the buildings may be historic -- most were built in the 1960s -- the landscape made up of the narrow platted lots and the small-scale, walkable grid of streets arguably is an historic or *cultural landscape*. This area is anchored by what the study has called the "Old" Main

Street, an area of commercial development where the buildings often share walls and front Main St. This segment of Main St. is lined with on-street parking and sidewalks. In other words, what most Americans culturally imagine when they think of a traditional small town downtown. Moreover, the Main Street commercial corridor is within one mile of most of the residential development in the city. While the “Old” Main St. commercial core is the most readily identifiable part of this cultural landscape, the entire context is important. The residential streets and the institutional uses – city hall, the post office, the schools and churches contained within the original town plat – make up an encompassing package that defines small town development patterns in the early decades of the 20th century, before the advent of the more auto-oriented development patterns commonly called “sprawl.”

Although it is difficult to know for sure from the results of the Noble Community Survey, it is highly likely that Noble’s original town plat and its traditional development pattern contributes to the “small town feel” that Noble community members value so highly. Visually, it signals to Oklahomans: “small town.” It helps Noble distinguish itself and its residential areas from all the other housing additions being developed in the southern areas of Norman and southeastern Cleveland County. Its high visibility, because of the transportation importance of Main St./US 77 to the region, combined with its close proximity to Noble’s residential areas and the important traditional value it represents may also help explain the strong concern expressed in the Noble Community Survey for Noble’s appearance and to “clean up” Noble.

One specific concern about the residential areas within the original town plat is an apparent inconsistency between the typical residential lot size and the current R-1-D (Noble Code Section 12-405) zoning designation. The R-1-D zoning district requires a minimum lot width of 60 feet at the front building line, which is wider than the typical lot width in the area. The concern is that this inconsistency may be discouraging people from building anew or rebuilding in the downtown neighborhood. Noble’s Board of Adjustment could issue variances of this requirement in response to specific applications for residential development in this area. Noble could also adopt a set of residential zoning regulations that recognize the lot dimensions in the original town plat. Many land run cities in Oklahoma have similar areas of narrow residential lots. Researching how they have addressed this situation may be helpful. The small lots themselves, however, are part of the cultural landscape. Replatting the area to make it consistent with the zoning ordinance, even if feasible, would detract from what helps distinguish it from more contemporary (post 1960s) residential development.

Rose Rocks, the Rose Rock Museum and the Rose Rock Festival

Unique to Noble and the nearby surrounding area is the Oklahoma state rock, the rose rock. According to Wikipedia,

Rose rocks are barite (barium sulfate) crystals whose iron content gives them a reddish hue. It is also known as a barite rose. It is not a sedimentary rock but is often found in sedimentary sandstone. Rose rocks consist of reddish-brown sandy crystals with petal-like clusters resembling roses, hence their name.

Noble celebrates its status as the “Rose Rock Capital of the World” with a festival the first weekend in May. In 2006, this four-day festival included among its many activities a carnival, craft fair and art show, a parade and live music. Approximately 10,000 people attended the 2006 Rose Rock Festival.

Rose rocks are also the main theme at Noble’s Timberlake Rose Rock Museum, established in 1986 by Joe and Nancy Stine. The museum showcases Rose Rocks and metal art with Rose Rocks as the centerpiece. The museum has attracted visitors from as far away as Europe.

Historic Buildings, Noble Historical Society Museum and Historical Society

Because of the numerous fires in Noble’s first two decades and because Noble lost out to Norman as the county seat, and thus remained small, there are few historic buildings in Noble. The oldest buildings in the original town plat date to 1909-1910. Noble has no buildings or sites on the National Register of Historic Places. The Noble Historical Society is a fledgling entity. The society is poised to create a stronger presence in the future, including developing a Noble Historical Society Museum.

Parks, the Library and a Future Community Center

Noble’s recently refurbished Riley Park is an example of how to incorporate historic assets into modern functions and to build on a cultural resource. The old railroad bridge, a photograph of which graces the cover of this study, is integrated into the park’s trail system. The city is currently in the process of planning the development of Dane and Kenneth King Parks. There is an opportunity to incorporate elements into the parks’ design that may become a cultural resource or cultural asset for future generations. By the same token, Noble’s new public library and any future community center can also become, if designed and used as such, assets on Noble’s cultural resource inventory. More information on park planning, the new library

and the community's desire for a community center can be found in Chapter 5 and Appendix 7.

Discussion

Additional Opportunities for Commercial Development

US 77/Main St is the obvious location for designating additional areas for commercial development in Noble. The corridor contains Noble's traditional downtown and a suburban-style commercial strip to the north of downtown. It is also Noble's most highly traveled street. One of the challenges of expanding commercial development in this area is finding sites of adequate size to host modern commercial development. The expansion of US 77 to four lanes south of Noble's downtown provides an opportunity for expanding the commercial strip to the south. The expansion may, however, put additional stress on the traditional "Main St."-type retail in Noble's downtown core, as there will be more through traffic and parking may be lost. Potential new areas of commercial development in the corridor may also compete with existing commercial development. Improving the appearance of commercial development in the entire corridor may also enhance commercial development.

Providing for neighborhood commercial uses at key intersections outside of the US 77/Main St. corridor may also provide additional opportunities for expanded commercial development.

Commercial Development Expands the Sales Tax Base

Currently, Noble residents spend their consumer dollars to a large extent outside of Noble. Noble earns far less, per capita, on sales tax revenue than most of the surrounding communities. Providing for additional commercial development that keeps sales tax dollars in Noble will help the city to provide for municipal services desired by the existing population and to expand existing services to meet the needs of an expanding and aging population.

Types of Commercial Services Noble Community Members Desire

Noble community members want more shops and restaurants. It was the most frequent response to the Noble Community Survey's open-ended question asking community members about one thing they would like to change about Noble. Specifically, they would like to see more upscale restaurants, more fast food restaurants, more clothing stores and shops selling books, music, novelties, furniture and hardware. They see local banking, financial, and personal care services as currently adequate and appear to prefer to acquire their legal, insurance and many of their medical services outside of Noble.

Keeping Industrial Development Compatible with Surrounding Land Uses

Noble's industrial land, according to input from the community, appears adequate to meet future needs. Community members expressed concern about the location of Noble's industrial land uses, as some are located near residences, school and park areas. Conflicts between these residentially focused land uses and the industrial land uses may increase as the park areas develop and attract more users. The city may have to consider additional regulatory measures to address these conflicts.

Incorporating Cultural Resources into Noble's Economic Strategy

Incorporating cultural resource development into a comprehensive plan is a way to increase the quality of life for Noble's existing residents and to attract new visitors and residents to the Noble community. Noble's "small town feel;" Noble's Land Run history and original town plat; Noble's Rose Rocks, the Rose Rock Museum and the Rose Rock Festival; Noble's historic buildings and the Noble Historical Society Museum; and Noble's parks, library and a future community center are all potential cultural resources for Noble.

Sources of Information

Bernstein, R. A. *A Guide to Smart Growth and Cultural Resource Planning* (www.wisconsinhistory.org) visited 23 October 2006. Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Cleveland County Assessor Website (www.clevelandcountyassessor.us). Accessed 12/14/06.

Daniels, T. et al. 1995. *The Small Town Planning Handbook*. Chicago, IL. American Planning Association

Grunkemeyer, Bill. "Community Development Fact Sheet". Ohio State University Extension. CDFS-1525-96. Columbus: 1996.

Institute for Self-Reliance. *The New Rules Project: Designing Rules as if Communities Mattered* (www.newrules.org). Accessed January 7, 2007.

National Park Service. NPS- 28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/nps28/28contents.htm). June 11, 1998. Accessed on January 7, 2007.

National Park Service. *National Register of Historic Places* (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/). Accessed January 6, 2007.

Noble Chamber of Commerce (nobleok.org).

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Oklahoma State University. "Analysis of Retail Trends and Taxable Sales for Cleveland County". Oklahoma State University: Norman, Sept. 2006

"Rose Rocks." *Wikipedia* (en.wikipedia.org) visited 23 October 2006.

Trade Pull Factor Calculation:

$$TAC_C = \frac{RS_C}{\frac{RS_S}{P_S} \times \frac{PCI_C}{PCI_S}}$$

Where:

TACc=Trade Area Capture by city,
 RSc=Retail Sales by city,
 RSs=Retail Sales for the state,
 Ps=State Population,
 PCIC=Per Capita Income by county, and
 PCIs=Per Capita Income for the state.

$$PF_C = \frac{TAC_C}{P_C}$$

Where:

PFc=City Pull Factor, and
 Pc=City Population