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## **CHAPTER 1: USING THIS DOCUMENT**

This chapter describes the origins of *Noble 2025* and provides a summary of its contents. It recommends that most readers begin with Part II: The Plan and consult Part I: Data and Analysis and the Appendices as interests dictate. It concludes with a discussion of the different uses and users of a comprehensive plan.

### ***Introduction***

In August 2006, the city of Noble partnered with the University of Oklahoma's Division of Regional and City Planning (RCPL) to conduct a comprehensive planning study. This fulfills a "Smart Growth" objective identified in Noble's 2005 Century Community strategic plan: "Collaborate with the University of Oklahoma to develop a comprehensive plan to include transportation, zoning, lighting, signage, landscaping, main arteries, and business corridors." The resulting comprehensive planning study builds on the goals outlined in Noble's 2005 Century Community strategic plan, which includes a commitment to culture and recreation, education, smart growth, and a vibrant downtown. During the fall semester, the city worked with the OU Planning Team, made up of graduate students enrolled in RCPL's comprehensive planning studio course.

*Noble 2025: A Community Development Plan for Noble, OK*, contains the results of the four-month long study process. The study is in two parts. Part I consists of the analysis and findings of the OU Planning Team. Part II contains the OU Planning Team's proposed Vision and Action Statements that, once adopted by the Noble City Council, express the city's official community development policies. Part II also describes steps the city can take to make the Vision Statement a reality.

Please note: the OU Planning Team is solely responsible for any errors and omissions in the chapters and appendices that follow.

### ***Getting Started with Noble 2025***

*Noble 2025* can be read cover to cover, which will provide readers with a thorough grounding in the information that the OU Planning Team used to make the findings that form the basis of the plan recommendations. For most plan users, however, *the place to start is Part II*. Review the Summary of Findings found in Chapter 6 and read Chapter 7's Vision and Action Statements. The maps for analysis and planning purposes are also contained in Chapters 6 and 7. For topics or issues of greater individual interest, refer to the relevant chapters in Part I or to the Appendices.

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Part I is organized around topical chapters and contains the data and analysis gathered from governmental sources on population, housing, infrastructure, land use, economic conditions and environmental characteristics. (Sources of information for the data and analysis can be found at the end of each chapter.) The comprehensive planning study's public involvement process, consisting of the Noble Community Survey, three community meetings, and briefings with a steering committee, also provided valuable data that helped form study results. The presentation of data and analysis in Part I includes the results, by topic, of the various public involvement processes. Detailed documentation of the public involvement processes and the Noble Community Survey can be found in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

The following summarizes the content of Part I.

- ❖ Chapter 2: Noble's Past, Present and Future describes Noble's land development history, the existing and future trends in population, and the existing and future trends in the economy. It introduces the 2025 Future Growth Scenarios based on twenty-year population projections.
- ❖ Chapter 3: Living describes Noble's housing, including its age, value, and affordability. It includes a special analysis looking at housing in the original town plat. It concludes with an analysis of land consumption for housing under the 2025 Future Growth Scenarios.
- ❖ Chapter 4: Working begins with a review of Noble residents' income, education and workforce. It discusses Noble's commercial development and industrial development. It concludes with a discussion of how cultural resources can be used as an economic development tool.
- ❖ Chapter 5: Experiencing covers Noble's natural, physical and social infrastructure. It begins with a discussion of Noble's natural infrastructure focusing on the city's ecoregions and water bodies. It highlights Noble's park and recreational resources and opportunities in a special section on "Playing." It includes sections on Noble's transportation, water and sewer infrastructure. It concludes with a study of social infrastructure: education, social services, police and fire, and health care.

Part II summarizes the findings discussed in Part I of the document and presents the OU Planning Team's recommendations.

- ❖ Chapter 6: Summary of Findings summarizes the major points discussed in the aforementioned chapters.
- ❖ Chapter 7: Vision and Action Statements provides the *Noble 2025* vision statement and the policies and actions that are recommended by the OU Planning Team as of January 2007. An editable computer file of this chapter has been provided to the city of Noble in order to allow the city to amend the proposed plan as needed before official adoption.

- ❖ Chapter 8: Getting There describes steps that implement the Vision and Action Statements including potential funding sources.

### *Vision and Action Statements*

Out of the data analysis and with input from the public involvement processes, the OU Planning Team drafted the proposed Vision and Action Statements. Together with the plan maps, the policies in the Vision and Action Statements provide a framework for making decisions related to land use and infrastructure. They also provide a working guide for elected and appointed officials and for the residents, business owners, and others with a stake in Noble's future.

### *Getting There*

The policies in the Vision and Action Statement Chapter are intended to be implemented through the voluntary acceptance and use of the plans by private individuals and through the administration of the municipal codes relating to urban development, the subdivision regulations governing land development, the zoning ordinance which provides standards for land use and the intensity of land developments, the building code covering materials and structural characteristics of construction, and the housing code which establishes minimum standards for residential developments. Recommendations for these elements are mentioned in the "Getting There" chapter of the document.

In addition to regulatory suggestions, municipal finance and funding opportunities are examined in this portion of the plan.

### *Appendices*

The appendices to *Noble 2025* contain detailed descriptions of the planning process and public involvement methods. They also contain special studies of topics of interest to the planning effort, but outside the scope of a typical comprehensive plan. The special studies cover the US 77 expansion plans, landscape designs for two segments of Noble's Main St, including Noble's downtown, and park design ideas for Dane and Kenneth King Park. The final appendix reviews Noble's municipal finances.

## ***Role of the Comprehensive Plan***

A comprehensive plan serves as an educational tool, a general policy statement and a development guide. *Noble 2025*, as a comprehensive plan, is designed with certain qualities -- it is comprehensive, general and long-range by nature. Comprehensive planning has historically addressed the physical development of a community, but

this plan addresses more than just physical variables affecting the community. An identification and analysis of relevant social and economic factors present in the environment, and an understanding of their impact on one another is a major feature of this plan. The comprehensiveness of this plan also means that it is able to address different scales of problems and analysis. Some of the issues can be addressed immediately; others will develop over the entire twenty-year planning period. An explanation of the planning process can be found in Appendix 1.

*Noble 2025* is also general in nature to address the fact that physical, social and economic conditions change periodically. To compensate for change, the plan is an amendable document. The plan, however, is not so general that it is vague, as some plans are; its general physical design proposals are clear and firm so that there will be no question as to what the council's policies signify.

Finally, *Noble 2025* is long range. Proposals and subsequent policies for the physical development of the city utilize a time frame of twenty years. In this sense, the plan becomes a guide to which the city can refer when contemplating short- and medium-term proposals and plans.

This document is meant to inform Noble's residents, municipal staff and future elected and appointed officials about the critical land development issues facing the community. Subsequent land development decisions should be informed by data presented in this document. Community members will play an important oversight role in encouraging, even requiring, municipal decision makers to act in concert with the visions in their adopted comprehensive plan. Continuing community involvement helps such visions become reality.

### ***Who Uses Noble 2025?***

Because the comprehensive plan covers a wide spectrum of subjects and participants, it is helpful to define the roles and responsibilities of each participant. The participants include the city council, the planning commission, all municipal departments, outside governmental agencies, civic groups, general interest groups, and the citizens at large.

#### **Public Officials**

Noble's public officials will be the most frequent users of *Noble 2025*. Noble's City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment and city staff are among the prevalent users of the plan.

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### *City Council*

As the public policy-making body, the Noble City Council has final responsibility for the physical development of the city. The vision set forth in the plan should, therefore, be the current official policy of the Council.

The City Council should use Noble 2025 as a guide for legislative decisions and as a reference to indicate needed policy changes. The City Council has final responsibility for adopting the policies that make up the plan and for amending the policies as changing circumstances dictate.

### *Planning Commission*

The role of the Planning Commission is to direct technical staff in the preparation of the comprehensive plan and other development plans for the community, to review all findings, and to recommend to the City Council the plans and land use regulations that should be adopted for guiding the growth of the community. It is solely the responsibility of the Council to accept or reject the recommendations and to substitute its own judgment about planning decisions as it desires.

### *Board of Adjustment*

The Board of Adjustment uses the plan to ensure that any granted zoning variances, administrative appeals and other decisions are in conformance with the vision and action statements in the plan.

### *City Staff*

The comprehensive plan provides a guide for all municipal departments to use in the planning of capital improvements, providing municipal services, and other program activities. The City Manager, City Engineer, City Clerk and Public Works Department are involved in day-to-day administration of growth and development activities. *Noble 2025* helps ensure that all the various groups within Noble's government have unified, common goals.

### **Outside Agencies**

*Noble 2025* also provides information useful to other units and agencies of local, state and federal governments that will permit coordination of their planning and development programs. For example, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) could be encouraged to use *Noble 2025* in order to coordinate projects with the vision in this plan.

### **Existing and Future Noble Community Members**

*Noble 2025* provides residents and members of the business community with information to facilitate planning for future development, to protect existing development, and to indicate new areas of opportunity for private action.