Osceola Forward
2040 Comprehensive Plan

City of Osceola

Adopted: May XX, 2016
Resolution: 2016-XX

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Plan

This document contains the officially adopted Comprehensive Plan for Osceola, Arkansas.

The plan serves as an official policy statement of the City of Osceola for directing orderly growth and development within its city limits and planning area. A steering committee directed the preparation of the plan during a process which included careful study of the area. Areas of analysis include Osceola's history, demographics and projected population, topography, utility capacity, transportation systems, existing infrastructure, and surrounding land use.

The plan will help guide the decisions of both the Planning Commission and City Council during the planning period, estimated to be 25 years. The Comprehensive Plan serves all citizens and property owners within the planning area as well as others having a stake in the future of the city.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad guideline for orderly growth and development. It is not meant to direct land use arrangement precisely nor is it a zoning ordinance. It should serve as an instrument to blend public and private interests in a manner that will best suit the entire community. Citizens and business interests may look at the plan as a "constitution" for the City of Osceola. Unlike a national constitution, however, it may change more often to meet new challenges and growth issues.

The plan will remain flexible, allowing for necessary modification of land uses. It plots land usage areas according to long-term community needs, not short-term individual gains. Planning should also be based on sound development principles. The plan addresses pertinent community issues as a whole rather than treating isolated problems as they may arise.

1.2 Authority

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the provisions of Arkansas Codes, Annotated (A.C.A.), §14-56-403. This section requires that plans of a municipality be "… prepared in order to promote, in accordance with present and future needs, the safety, morals, order, convenience, and general welfare of the citizens." The statutes further state that plans may provide for, among other things, the following:

- Efficiency and economy in the process of development
- The appropriate and best use of land
- Convenience of traffic and circulation of people and goods
- Safety from fire and other dangers
- Adequate light and air in the use and occupancy of buildings
- Healthful and convenient distribution of population
- Good civic design and arrangement
- Adequate public utilities and facilities
- Wise and efficient expenditure of funds

1.3 The Planning Area

The Osceola Planning Area Boundary appears in graphic form on the plan map, planning area boundary map, and other maps used with this document. The Planning Area Map was prepared in accordance with statutes found in the Arkansas Codes, Annotated § 14-56-413. A copy is on file with the City Clerk and the Mississippi County Recorder.

The Osceola Planning Area Boundary comprises those areas surrounding the city that may likely grow to become part of Osceola in the future.

The Planning Area Boundary depicted on the Comprehensive Plan map includes those lands within the territorial jurisdiction of Osceola for which it may prepare plans, ordinances, and regulations. This area extends beyond the city limits to include those areas most likely to become a part of the city within a period of twenty-five years. The City of Osceola will, in accordance with A.C.A. § 14-56-422, file the plans, ordinances, and regulations as they pertain to the territory beyond the corporate limits with the county recorder of Mississippi County.

1.4 Relationship to the Land Use Regulations

The Arkansas planning statutes, in A.C.A. § 14-56-416 (a)(1) provide:

> *Following adoption and filing of the land use plan, the commission may prepare for submission to the legislative body a recommended zoning ordinance for the entire area of the municipality.*

The statutes further provide in A.C.A. § 14-56-417 (a)(1):

> *Following adoption and filing of a master street plan, the Planning Commission may prepare and shall administer, after approval of the legislative body, regulations controlling the development of land.*

These provisions, along with the modern history of planning since the landmark case of Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co., 272 U.S. 365 (1926), signify a strong relationship between the plan and its supporting regulations. In simple terms, a municipality first plans, then regulates. The primary supporting regulations consist of the zoning code and development (subdivision) regulations. As stated in A.C.A. § 14-56-412 (e):

> *In order to promote, regulate, and control development and to protect the various elements of the plans, the commission, after adoption of appropriate plans as provided, may prepare and transmit to the legislative body such ordinances and regulations as are deemed necessary to carry out the intent of the plans, or of parts thereof.*

Planners take these provisions literally and encourage municipalities to base decisions in land use and development upon adopted plans to the greatest extent possible. At the same time, it has been noted in court decisions in Arkansas that plans are not legal documents but rather broad statements of municipal policy. The legal force arises from the adopted regulations developed to support the plan. In order to reconcile these considerations, the Planning Commission will first determine if a proposal deviates from the spirit and intent of the plan. If it does, the Commission will then consider an amendment to the general plan before considering the proposal.

Chapter Two: Context

2.1 History

Resting along the Mississippi River, Osceola has a long and deep history which has been largely influenced by the great river. First inhabited by Mississippian cultures, the area was inhabited by the Quapaw at the time of the first European contact. In 1830, William Bard Edrington and John Price Edrington bartered with Native Americans and took possession of a small group of huts along the Mississippi River. By 1833, settlers had built log structures on the riverbank, which became a landing for travelers moving up and down the river. The settlement was established as Plum Point in 1837, and in 1853, with 250 residents and a half dozen businesses, it was incorporated as Osceola.

When steamboats made their appearance on the Mississippi River, the Delta was opened to expanded activity and commercialization, and Osceola became an important landing. Timber was cut from the dense forests to fuel steamboats, the rich Delta land was planted in cotton, and a cotton culture soon emerged. Planters from nearby Southern states brought their lifestyle with them as they settled the area.

Osceola actively supported Arkansas' secession from the Union in May 1861. Thousands of U.S. troops landed around Osceola in early 1862 in preparation for assaults on Fort Pillow and Memphis, but Osceola saw mainly skirmishes, guerrilla fighting, and raids. In May 1862, Confederate and Union naval fleets met in the Battle of Plum Point on the Mississippi River near Osceola.

Following the Civil War, Osceola and Mississippi County were under martial law from November 1868 until March 1869 because of general lawlessness and instability. Racial disharmony and the activity of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) peaked during the Black Hawk War in 1872, following the death of Sheriff J. B. Murray at the hands of "carpetbagger" Charles Fitzpatrick, president of the Mississippi County Board of Registration. After Fitzpatrick's actions went unpunished, tensions in the community exploded. A local KKK leader led a group of Klan members that killed a number of ex-slaves, presumably as a reprisal for the protection Fitzpatrick received. Fitzpatrick later left the area, having never been tried for the murder. The Black Hawk War was a local bloody example of the violence and instability seen across Arkansas during Reconstruction.

The golden age of steamboats on the Mississippi River came to an end as the last quarter of the nineteenth century approached. Small towns that were dependent on steamboats for their existence declined and died as railways took over. In contrast, Osceola, well positioned with both cotton and timber industries and with transportation by both river and rail, expanded. By 1890, Osceola began a sustained growth because of the industries and the river.

At the beginning of the century, Osceola was in a boom time. There were 953 residents, and downtown Osceola flourished with businesses that included an opera house, electric and water utilities, two ice plants, two bottling works, and a wagon factory. By 1913, Osceola was served by a Bell Telephone system and six daily passenger trains. Cotton was still the number-one crop, and farmland sold for $100 to $200 an acre. Many of the buildings constructed in that era are still used and are noted for their historic beauty. The 1912 Mississippi County Courthouse was built. Its solid copper dome and neo-classical architecture make it one of the finest courthouses in Arkansas. The Osceola Times Building, built in 1901, is still used for the Osceola Times, which was first published in 1870 and is the oldest weekly newspaper in eastern Arkansas.

The Mississippi River, so vital to Osceola's existence and growth, has been at times as much enemy as friend. The Floods of 1927 and 1937 brought vast devastation to Osceola. Hundreds of people lost their homes and belongings, and the cotton crops that were so important to the local economy were decimated. During both floods, thousands of refugees poured into Osceola, where Red Cross shelters were set up to receive and treat victims before their removal to Memphis. Comprehensive federal legislation was enacted as a result of the flooding, and extensive levee construction commenced. No main breech or overtop on the river has occurred since the 1937 flood.

By the middle of the twentieth century, Osceola was in an era of prolonged growth. The city had grown by 425% in 50 years, doubling in population every 20 years between 1900 and 1960. Cotton was still the number-one money-maker in Osceola, but by the early 1960s the city's industrial base began emerging. In 1961, American Greetings Corporation built a large manufacturing facility. Kagome Incorporated recently became the owner of Creative Foods,

which was founded in 1948 as Osceola Foods, the oldest surviving manufacturing company in Osceola. The Plum Point Energy Station began producing electricity in September 2010. In spring 2016, Big River Steel, a $1.3 billion steel mill open, further solidifying Osceola's reputation as a job's magnet.

As Osceola continues to write its history, it has deep roots on which to build. Those roots will serve a strong foundation for the city's continued progress and prosperity in the years and decades to come.

Adapted from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*

2.2 Regional Setting

Osceola is the dual county seat of Mississippi County, located in northeastern Arkansas along the Mississippi River. Resting near the center of the county, it is 54 miles southeast of Jonesboro, 55 miles north of Memphis and 62 miles southwest of Dyersburg, Tennessee. Other nearby towns include Luxora, Wilson, Keiser, and Burdette. It is also conveniently within commuting distance of both the Jonesboro and Memphis Metropolitan Areas.

The community is a hub of intermodal transportation. The city is home to a river port with a slack water harbor and rail barge terminal, a class 1 BNSF railway runs through the city connecting Memphis and St. Louis, and I-55 and U.S. Highway 61 runs through the city. The nearest airport with commercial service is 52 miles away at Jonesboro Municipal, which offers scheduled daily nonstop flights to St. Louis via Air Choice One. Memphis International Airport is located 64 miles from the city.

Osceola is home to Sans Souci Park along the Mississippi River in south Osceola. The park provides the only free public access to the Mississippi between St. Louis and Memphis.

Chapter Three: Trends

3.1 Population

TABLE 3.1.1
POPULATION HISTORY
OSCEOLA AND CARUTHERSVILLE, MISSOURI

Year	Caruthersville	Osceola
1960	8,643	6,189
1970	7,350	7,892
1980	7,958	8,881
1990	7,389	8,930
2000	6,760	8,875
2010	6,168	7,757
2014	5,975	7,320

TABLE 3.1.2
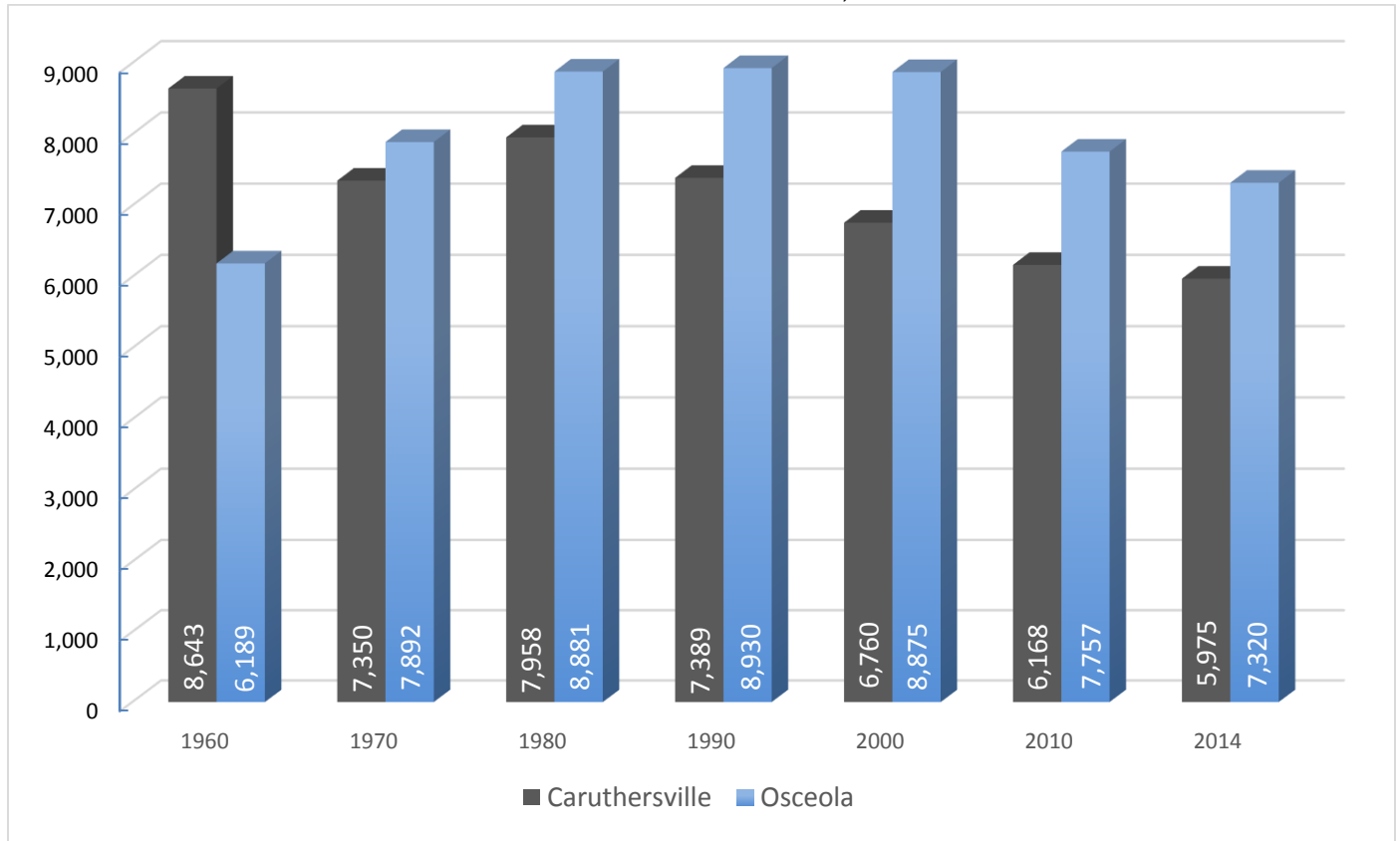RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS, 2013
OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

Race	Osceola	Mississippi County	Arkansas
White	43.9%	63.3%	78.3%
Black or African American	53.4%	34.2%	15.5%
American Indian	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%
Asian	0.4%	0.3%	1.3%
Two or more races	1.7%	1.6%	2.0%
Hispanic	0.4%	3.7%	6.6%

TABLE 3.1.3
AGE CHARACTERISTICS, 2010
OSCEOLA AND ARKANSAS

Osceola

Generation	% Male	% Female
Greatest Generation	0.3%	0.9%
Silent Generation	4.2%	5.9%
Baby Boomers	11.6%	13.5%
Generation X	8.3%	9.2%
Millenials	11.2%	9.8%
Generation Z	12.7%	12.2%

■ % Male   ■ % Female

Arkansas

Generation	% Male	% Female
Greatest Generation	0.6%	1.2%
Silent Generation	5.8%	7.0%
Baby Boomers	12.7%	13.4%
Generation X	9.4%	9.4%
Millenials	10.4%	10.1%
Generation Z	10.5%	9.9%

■ % Male   ■ % Female
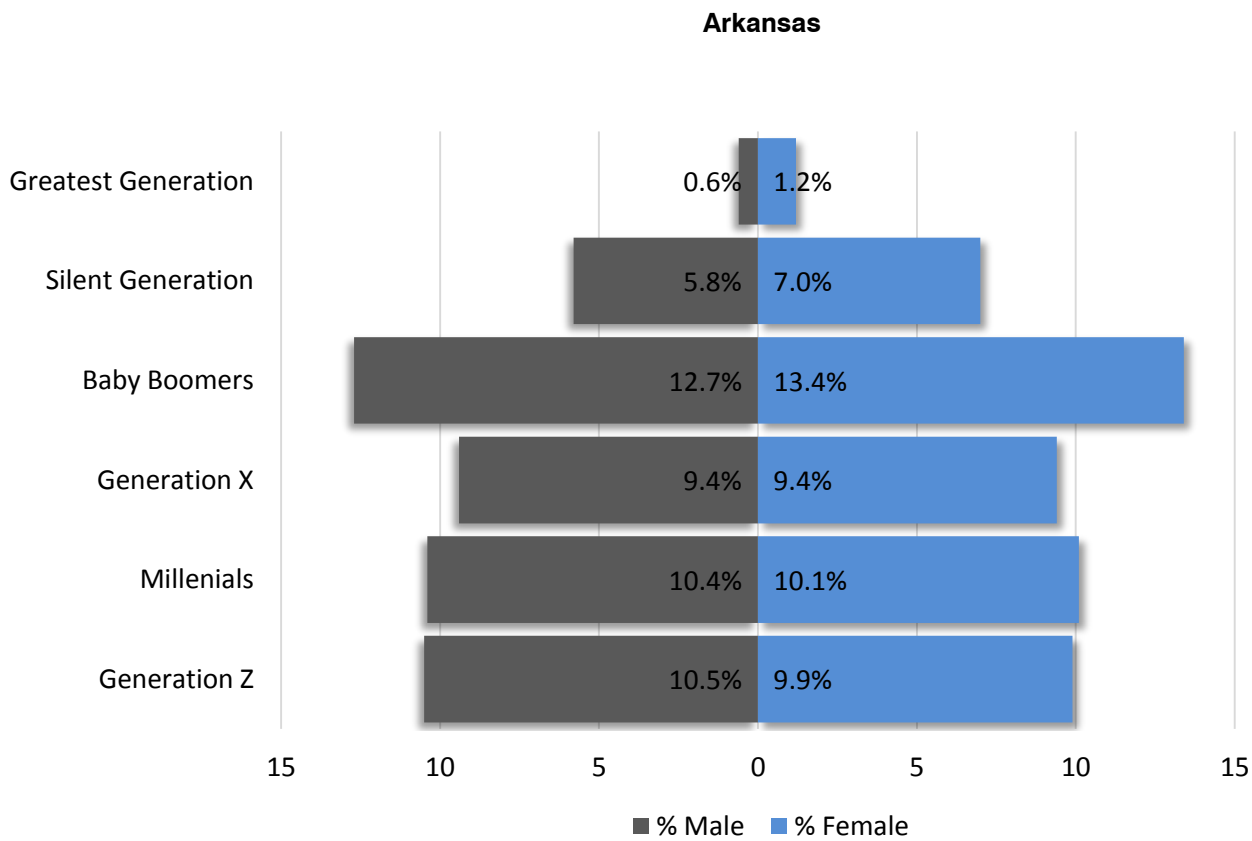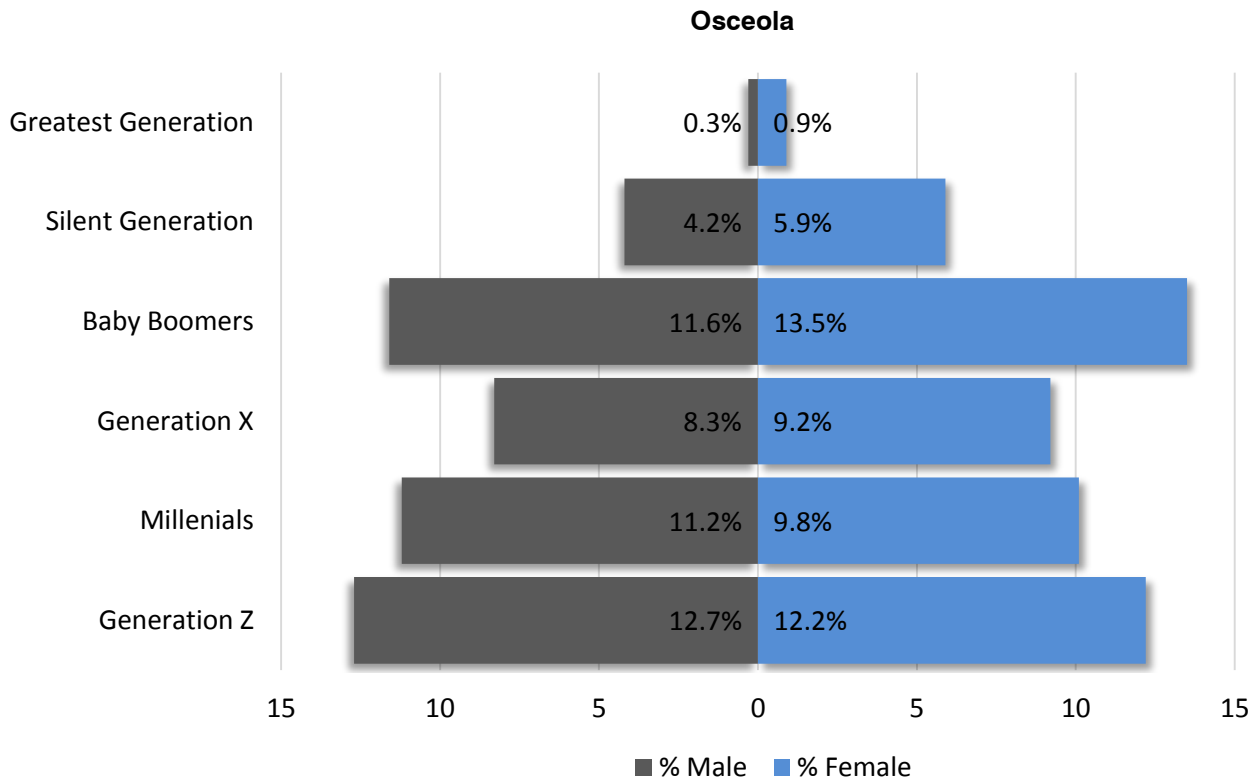
3.2 Education

TABLE 3.2.1
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT RATES, 2000-2013
OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES
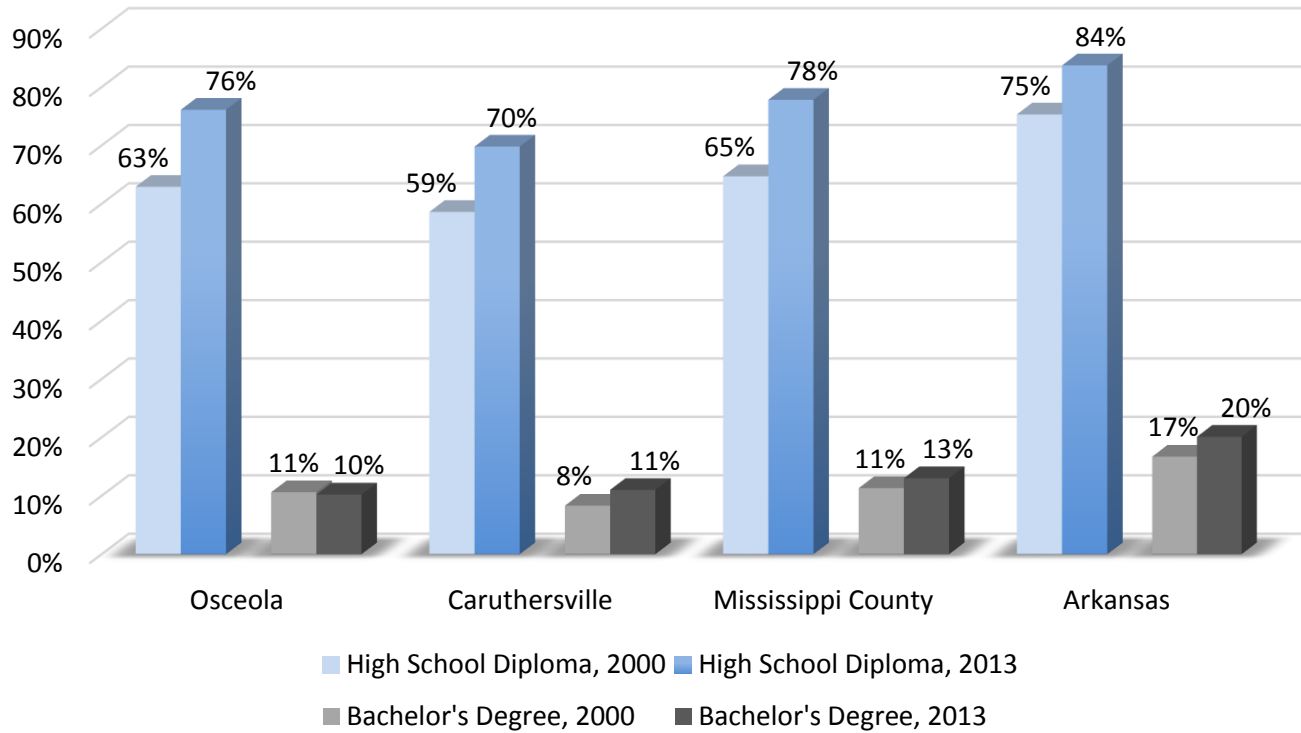
3.3 Income

TABLE 3.3.1
PER CAPITA INCOME (2013 DOLLARS)
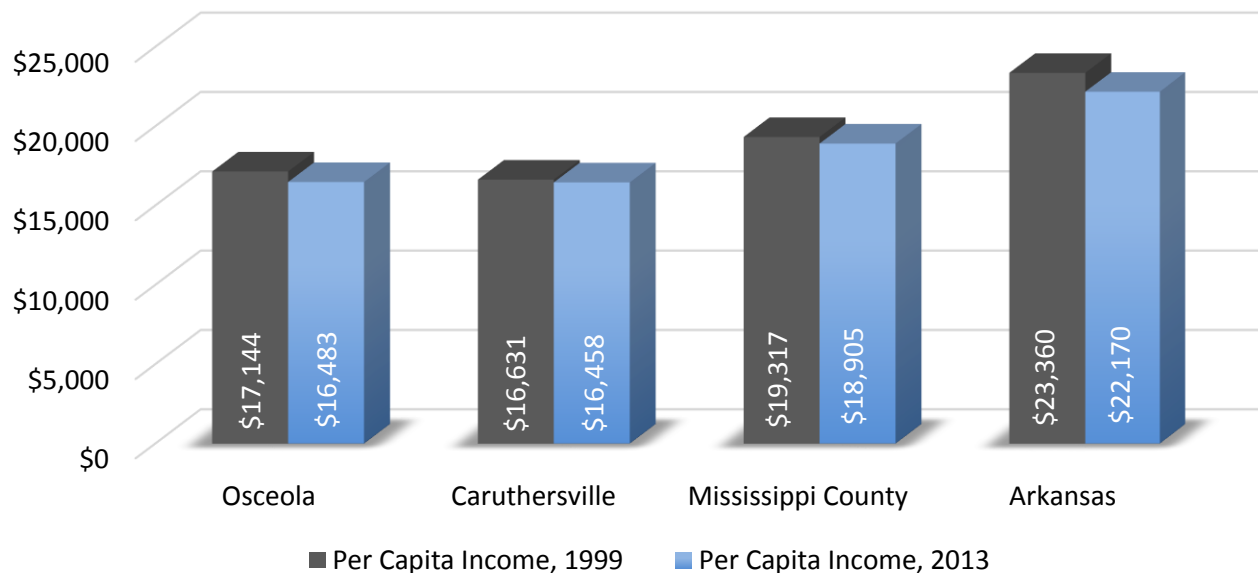OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

TABLE 3.3.2
HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2013 DOLLARS)
OSCEOLA

Legend:
- Less than $10,000
- $10,000 to $24,999
- $25,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $74,999
- $75,000 to $99,000
- $100,000 to $199,999
- $200,000 or more
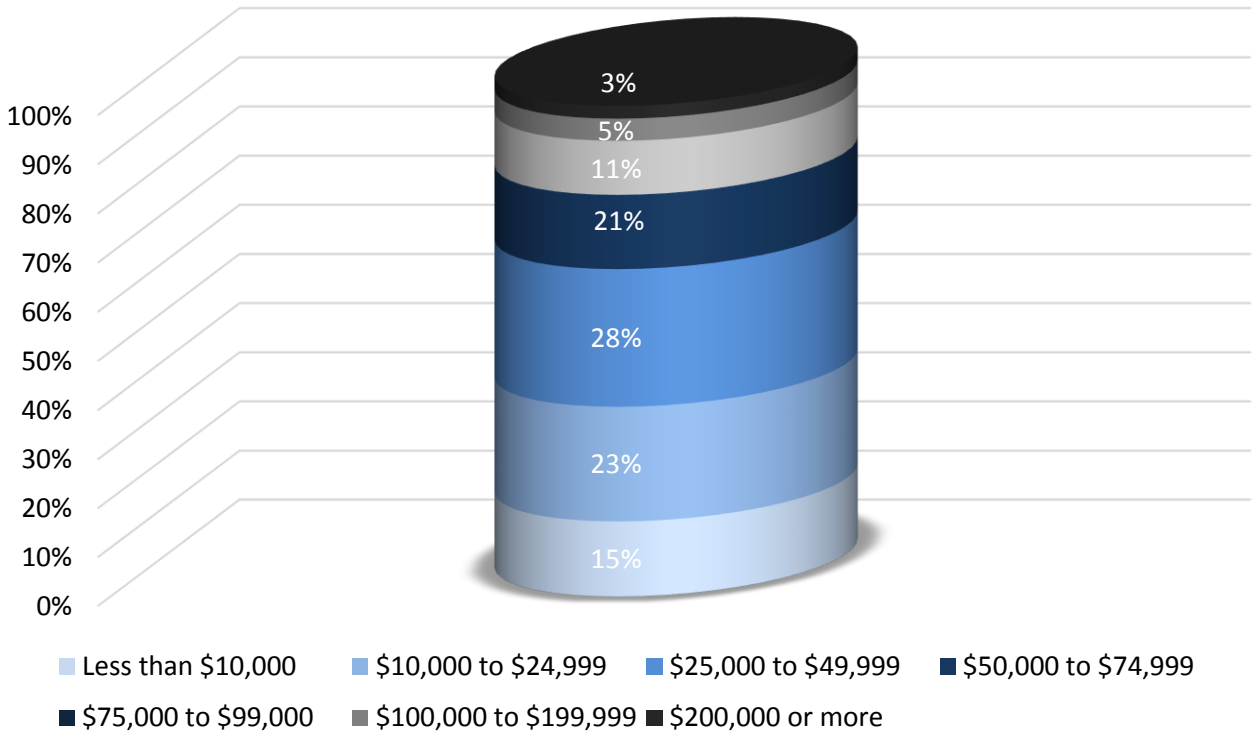
TABLE 3.3.3
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2013 DOLLARS)
OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

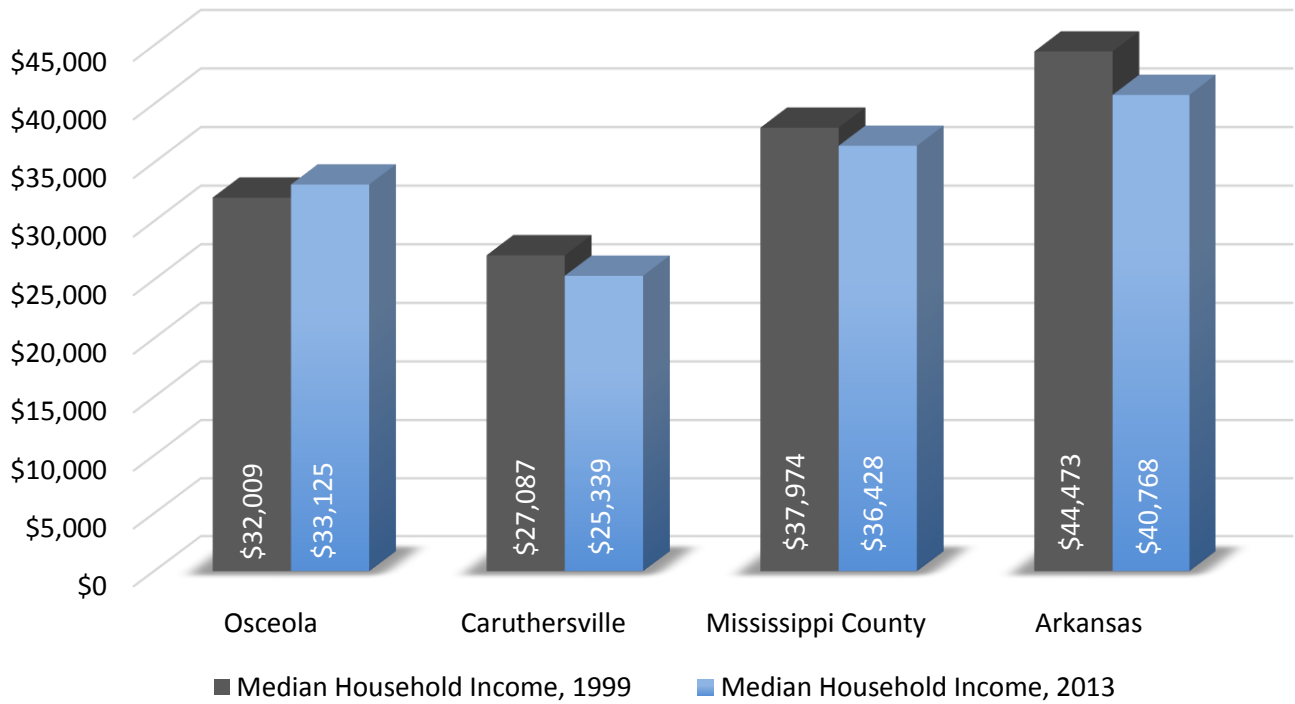|	Osceola	Caruthersville	Mississippi County	Arkansas
Median Household Income, 1999	$32,009	$27,087	$37,974	$44,473
Median Household Income, 2013	$33,125	$25,339	$36,428	$40,768

TABLE 3.3.4
POPULATION RATES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL, 1999-2013
OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

Poverty Category	Osceola	Caruthersville	Arkansas
Individuals below poverty level, 1999	29.5%	35.7%	15.8%
65 years and older	25.7%	23.4%	13.8%
Under 18	41.1%	50.6%	21.8%
Individuals below poverty level, 2013	39.4% ⬆	37.1% ⬆	19.2% ⬆
65 years and older	29.6% ⬆	16.8% ⬇	10.8% ⬇
Under 18	50.2% ⬆	62.7% ⬆	27.9% ⬆
No High School Diploma	56.1%	37.5%	28.4%
Families below poverty level, 1999	26.0%	28.1%	12.0%
No husband present	45.7%	55.5%	34.7%
Families below poverty level, 2013	30.5% ⬆	30.1% ⬆	14.4% ⬆
No husband present	65.7% ⬆	68.1% ⬆	38.4% ⬆
Married Couples	8.6%	4.2%	7.2%

3.4 Housing

TABLE 3.4.1
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY RATES, 2013
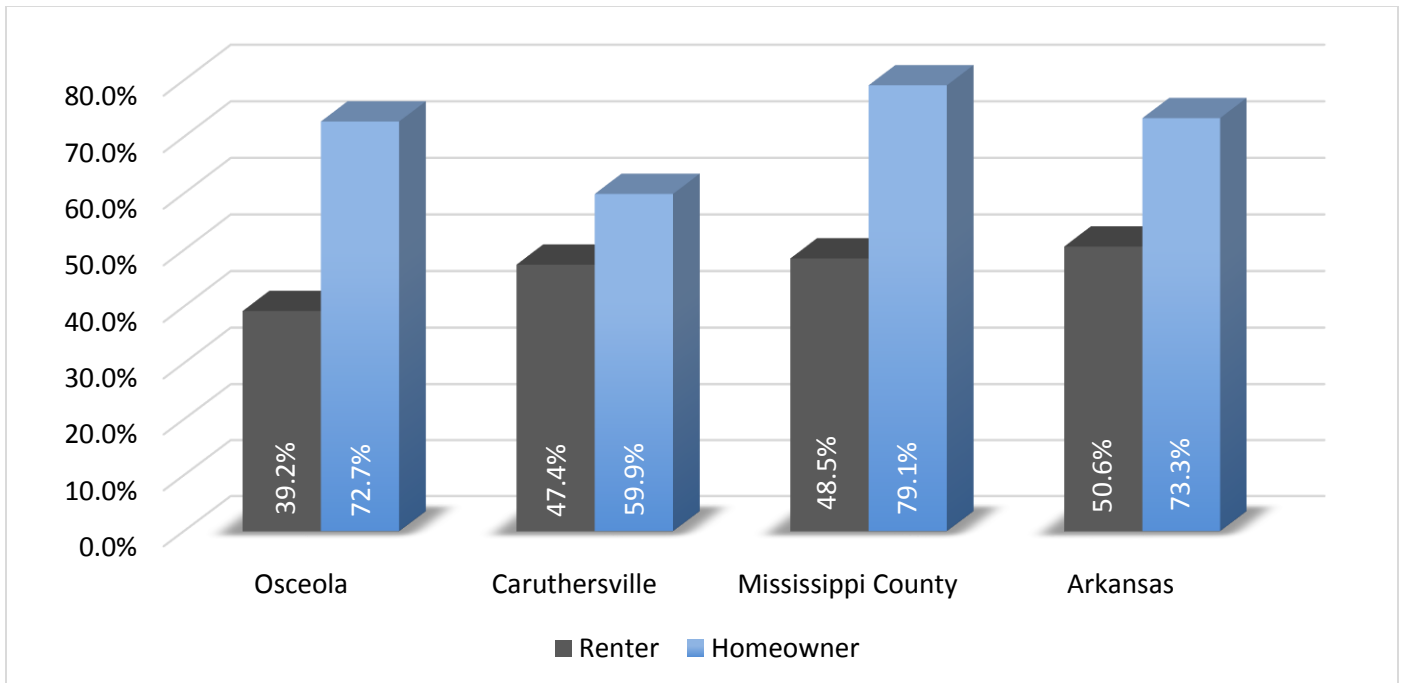OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

TABLE 3.4.2
HOUSING INVENTORY RATES, YEAR BUILT, 2013
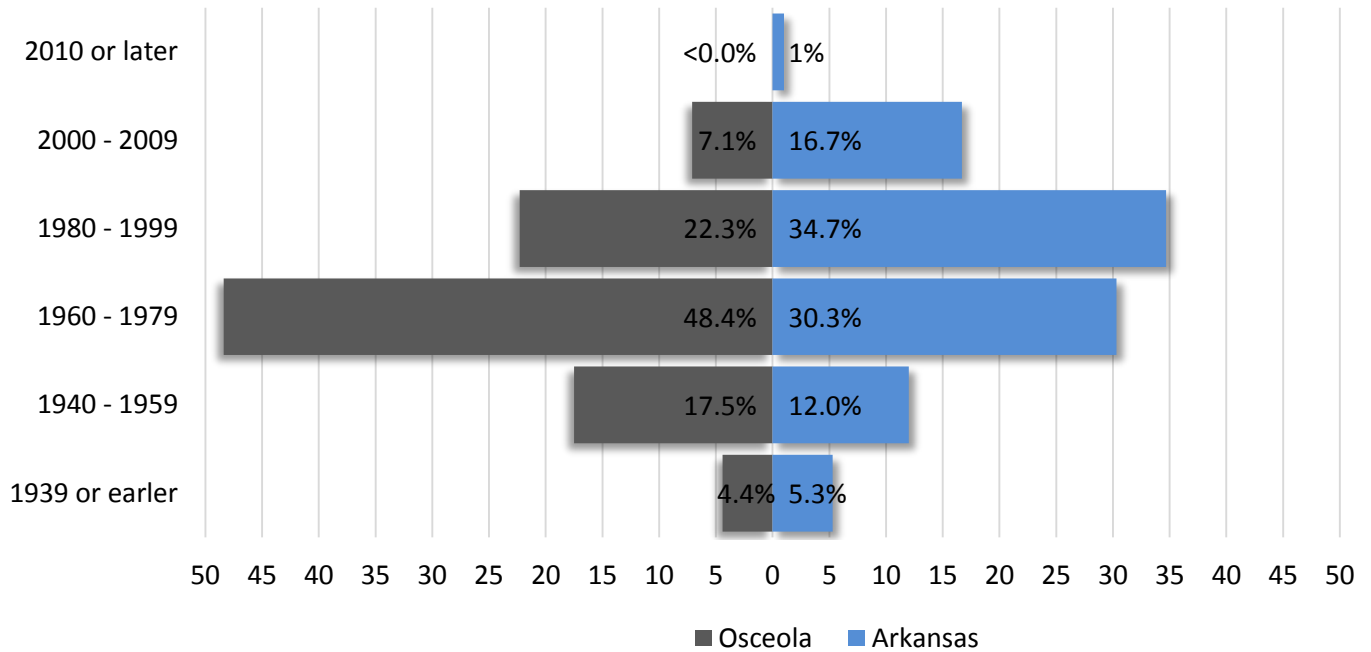OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

	Osceola	Arkansas
2010 or later	<0.0%	1%
2000 - 2009	7.1%	16.7%
1980 - 1999	22.3%	34.7%
1960 - 1979	48.4%	30.3%
1940 - 1959	17.5%	12.0%
1939 or earler	4.4%	5.3%

TABLE 3.4.3
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 2000-2010/2013
OSCEOLA

Housing Type & Characteristics	Osceola 2000	Osceola 2010/2013
Total Housing Units	3,551	3,328 ⬇
Single-Family	68.0%	77.5% ⬆
Multi-Family	23.4%	18.2% ⬇
Mobile Home, trailer, or other	8.7%	4.4% ⬇
Occupied Units	89.6%	88.6% ⬇
Owner Occupied	51.0%	48.0% ⬇
Renter Occupied	49.0%	52.0% ⬆
Vacant Units	10.4%	11.4% ⬆
Median Monthly Mortgage (2013 Dollars)	$858	$824 ⬇
Median Value of Owner-occupied Units	$72,571	$75,400 ⬆
Median Rent (2013)	$522	$664 ⬆

3.5 Employment

TABLE 3.5.1
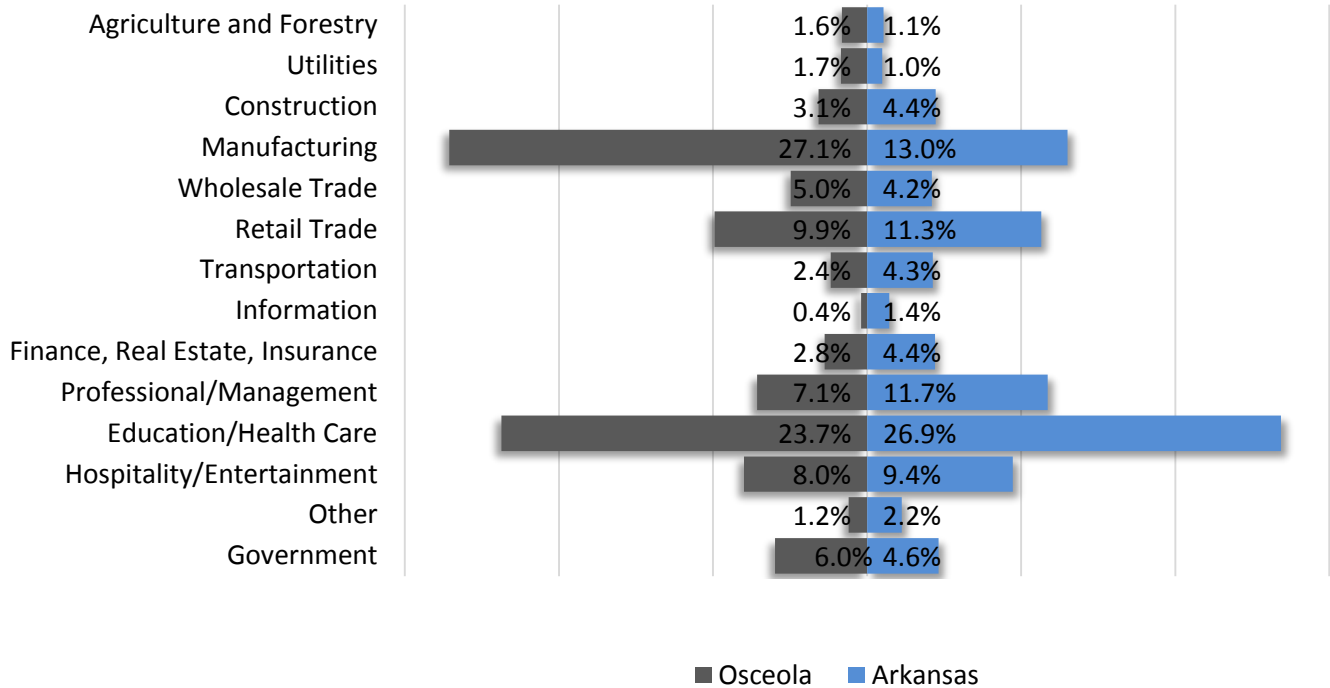EMPLOYMENT RATES OF RESIDENTS BY INDUSTRY, 2013
OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

Industry	Osceola	Arkansas
Agriculture and Forestry	1.6%	1.1%
Utilities	1.7%	1.0%
Construction	3.1%	4.4%
Manufacturing	27.1%	13.0%
Wholesale Trade	5.0%	4.2%
Retail Trade	9.9%	11.3%
Transportation	2.4%	4.3%
Information	0.4%	1.4%
Finance, Real Estate, Insurance	2.8%	4.4%
Professional/Management	7.1%	11.7%
Education/Health Care	23.7%	26.9%
Hospitality/Entertainment	8.0%	9.4%
Other	1.2%	2.2%
Government	6.0%	4.6%

■ Osceola   ■ Arkansas

TABLE 3.5.2
EMPLOYMENT RATES OF WORKERS BY INDUSTRY, 2013
OSCEOLA AND SELECTED ENTITIES

Industry	Osceola	Arkansas
Agriculture and Forestry	1.0%	1.1%
Utilities	3.8%	1.0%
Construction	2.7%	4.4%
Manufacturing	30.5%	13.5%
Wholesale Trade	1.1%	4.2%
Retail Trade	13.2%	11.2%
Transportation	0.4%	4.5%
Information	0.1%	1.4%
Finance, Real Estate, Insurance	3.4%	4.3%
Professional/Management	2.4%	11.7%
Education/Health Care	26.7%	26.6%
Hospitality/Entertainment	6.5%	9.3%
Other	1.7%	2.2%
Government	6.4%	4.6%

■ Osceola   ■ Arkansas
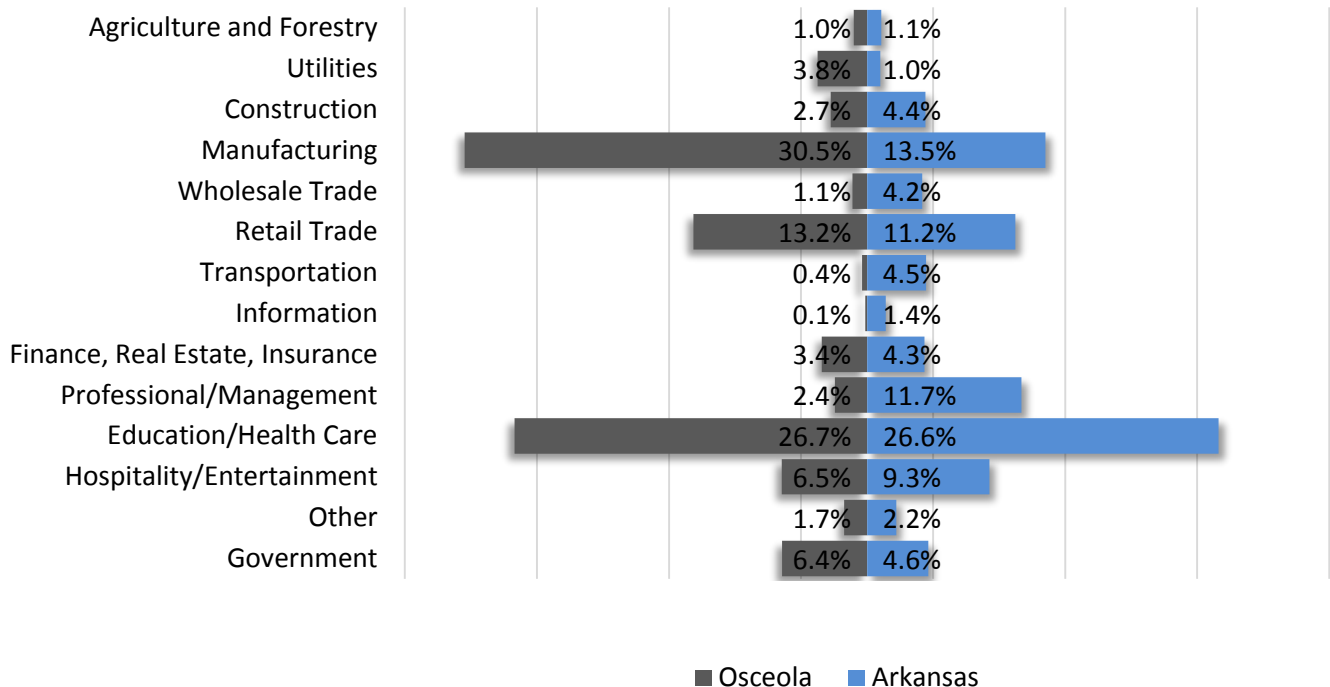
TABLE 3.5.3
PLACE OF WORK, 2013
OSCEOLA

Distance Home to Work	Osceola Residents	Workers in Osceola
Less than 10 miles	53.5%	40.7%
10 - 24 miles	16.1%	27.6%
25 – 50 miles	16.9%	16.0%
More than 50 miles	13.5%	15.7%

TABLE 3.5.4
WORKER INFLOW/OUTFLOW, 2013
OSCEOLA

Worker/Home Location	
Worker Lives Outside Osceola	1,863
Worker Lives in Osceola	1,011
Resident Works Outside Osceola	1,804
Daytime Population Change	+59

All data sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau unless otherwise noted.

3.6 Demographic Conclusions

Population
- The city is experiencing a decades long trend in population decline that is occurring across rural Arkansas.
- Osceola has a very small Hispanic population despite growth seen in the county and state.
- The city has a healthy age distribution of its population that indicates the city could grow if outmigration can be slowed.

Education
- The city has a declining number of college graduates. This trend should be reversed. Having college educated talent is important to the city's education, health, and professional job sectors. Quality of life improvements are important in attracting more college educated talent.
- The city has seen dramatic improvement in its share of the adult population with at least a high school education.

Income
- Osceola is experiencing part of a nationwide trend in declining personal wages (when adjusted for inflation).
- There appears to be an increasing number of two income households, as median household incomes haven't dropped while per capita income has. This means quality early childhood education programs will be important.
- Almost 40% of Osceola households earn over $50,000. A fact which many retailers may not be aware of.
- Poverty rates are over 50% for children, single female householders, and those without a high school diploma. High poverty rates for children could be highly detrimental to Osceola's future.
- Schools, churches, and community institutions should work hard to encourage married, two-parent households. Doing so will increase social stability, reduce poverty, and help maximize the human capital of Osceola's future generations.

Housing
- Osceola likely has a housing shortage for quality multi-family housing as it appears much of the city's rental stock are single-family homes.
- The city has seen declining home building activity inside the city in recent years.
- There appears to be a large gap between the economic fortunes of homeowners and renters in the city.
- The city is seeing an increasing number of vacant housing units.
- With declining homeownership rates, community institutions should work to encourage home ownership.

Employment
- SMC Regional Medical Center and Osceola Schools are very important assets to the local economy.
- Education, manufacturing, and healthcare account for over 50% of the city's economy
- The city has a diverse economy, despite being dominated by the industry sectors mentioned above.
- The city has more workers commuting into Osceola than those commuting out of Osceola.
- Most individuals that work in Osceola but live elsewhere, commute from within Mississippi County. This means Osceola's primary market to attract new residents should be from the immediate local area.

3.7 Population Change Scenarios

In 2000, the population of the City of Osceola was 8,875, a net loss of 55 people from 1990. Since 2000, the city has seen a net loss of 1,555 persons for a total population of 7,320 in current estimates. Going forward, it's unclear whether Osceola's population will resume growing or continue shrinking. It is almost certain that Mississippi County as a whole will continue its 75 year trend of losing population, but Osceola is becoming an economic development magnet due in part to its location. Economic forecasts from Woods and Poole show long term economic stability for the county, likely driven by Osceola and Blytheville. This could translate into population growth. Projections based on data from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock Institute for Economic Advancement, however, have the population declining by 174 persons over the next 35 years to 7,146. Such projections can be unreliable as the factors affecting local population can be very volatile and difficult to predict. Because of this uncertainty and lack of reliability in projecting local population changes, it is important to utilize alternative scenarios.

The first scenario, already provided, based on data from UALR on Mississippi County would present minor population loss over the next 35 years, yielding 7,146 people by 2050. A second scenario based on long-range economic forecasts from Woods and Poole projects a stable population with 7,566 in 2050. A final scenario assumes slow continued annual growth of 1%. This scenario would yield a population of 10,368 by 2050. These three scenarios present a range of future growth and decline possibilities for the city. The likelihood of any of these scenarios occurring rests both within and outside the control of the city and its residents. It is possible that over the course of the next 35 years, Osceola may experience population change resembling each of the scenarios.
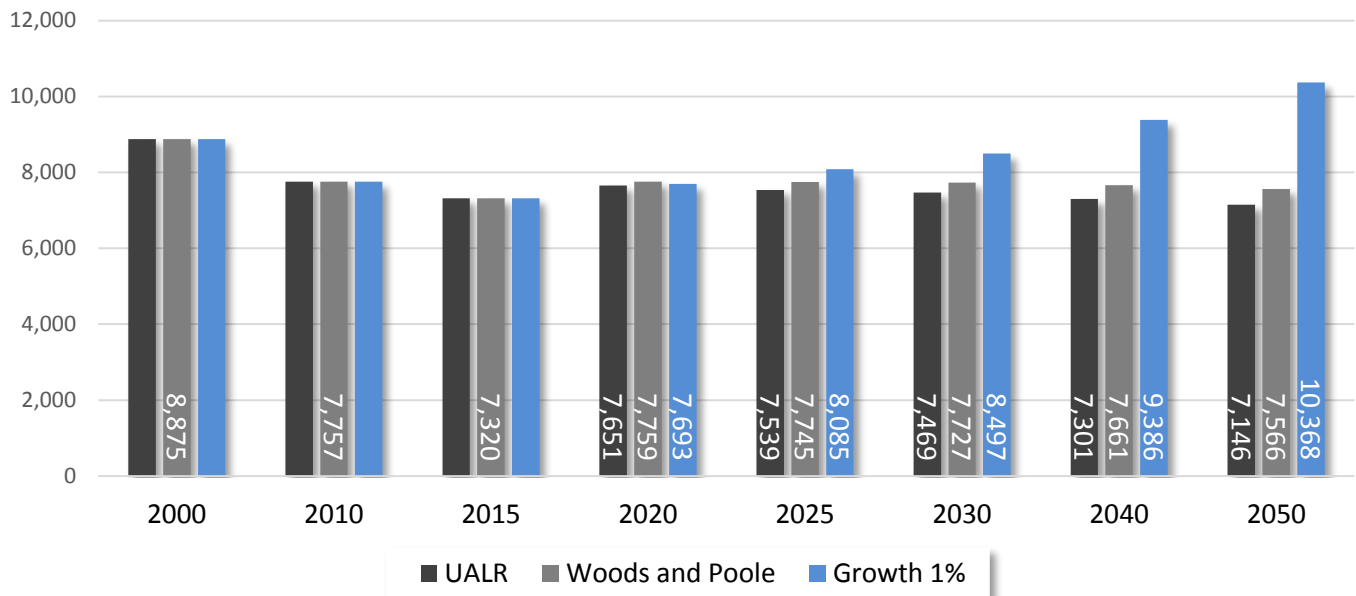
3.9 Housing and Land Use Potential Demand

Over the next 35 years, a net population change for the City of Osceola is expected to be approximately between a 174 loss and 3,048 gain. If the population increases, it will generate demand for new housing, though new housing will be needed regardless. Assuming a standard growth density pattern of three units per acre, it is estimated that up to 406 acres of new development will be required to meet residential housing demands for the city, if historical growth patterns continue. That figure equates to approximately at the upper range, 1,219 new homes over the next 35 years. Taking into account residential land use absorption represents approximately 75% of all areas converted (25% for other supporting services: commercial expansion, industrial developments, schools, churches, parks, open space, streets, and other land use activities) it can be determined that up to 541 gross acres will be demanded and likely converted from rural, vacant, or agricultural use to urban purposes within the next 20 years.

With regards to future land use needs, Osceola' future growth may require future annexation to accommodate potential growth. Both infill development and conversion of vacant agricultural/forest land will likely occur to absorb development demands for the city. It is also likely new subdivisions and multi-family development may be needed.

Chapter Four: Goals and Policies

4.1 General

This section sets forth the goals, objectives, and policies which will guide the development of the comprehensive plan. They are based on the history, trends, geography, and issues facing the city. The goals are the end toward which the plan is directed and represent the overall vision of the city. The objectives are the means to achieving this end. Policies represent specific actions and stances the city will take in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

The main purpose of this plan is to influence community change; however, there are several other issues the city should address before tackling growth issues. First, the city should focus on fixing the basics, such as addressing abandoned and dilapidated housing. Next, the city should focus on building on assets that already exist in the community. Then, the city should focus on creating a community of choice with a high quality of life. These areas stress that a city which is growing in population may not be as important as a city which is growing in quality. Such quality can be measured in terms such as median income levels, educational outcomes, employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, and quality neighborhoods. Addressing these areas first will help ensure Osceola is a sustaining community that is competitive in the 21st Century.

4.2 Fixing the Basics

GOAL 4.2.1: To build and maintain a solid foundation for community growth and development.

Objective 1: To be aware of current city trends, maintain the comprehensive plan, and use it to guide future growth.

Policies - It is a policy of the city that:
1. The planning commission will conduct annual reviews of its comprehensive plan and land use regulations to ensure they remain applicable and up-to-date.
2. The city's land use regulations will be consistent with and designed to carry out the provisions of the comprehensive plan.
3. Future street construction will conform to the transportation component of the comprehensive plan.
4. Development proposals will be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with the comprehensive plan.
5. All development or re-zoning requests must conform to the comprehensive plan.

Objective 2: To regulate land use and buildings in a way that builds a better community.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Provide and carry out land use and building regulations that protects the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
2. Use land use and building regulations to create a community that future generations will be proud of.
3. Find ways to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures, especially within downtown.
4. Explore and use innovative regulatory tools designed to specifically address community problems.

Objective 3: To use code enforcement as a means to enhance the community.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Use city resources to enforce the city's zoning and subdivision regulations.
2. To focus code enforcement efforts on neighborhoods where blighting influences could serve to destabilize property values.
3. Use a collaborative approach with property owners in addressing code enforcement violations by helping property owners in need identify resources to assist them.
4. To use the provisions of Arkansas law such as the "City Cleanup Tools" Act and other laws to address nuisances and unsightly, unsafe, and unsanitary conditions on private property.

5. Use the condemnation process as a means to remove abandoned and dilapidated structures that serve to harm the city's neighborhoods.

Objective 4: To provide decent, safe, and affordable housing for all Osceola residents.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Encourage infill housing development in existing built-up areas.
2. Encourage development of market rate rental housing.
3. Encourage home ownership as a means of long-term community investment.
4. Work with community organizations to make residents aware of programs that assist in creating home owners.
5. Permit housing types that provide options for residents throughout all life phases.
6. Permit a diversity of housing types to provide affordable options for all of the city's population.

4.3 Building on Assets

GOAL 4.3.1: To build on existing physical assets within the community.

Objective 1: To enhance the city's appearance.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Provide welcoming gateways into the community that will provide a positive first impression for visitors.
2. Work with community organizations to encourage and develop programs aimed at community beautification.

Objective 2: To preserve, protect, and enhance downtown.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Use zoning and building codes to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.
2. Leverage public resources and infrastructure investments to encourage private investment in downtown.
3. Encourage the coordination and joint-marketing of downtown businesses.
4. Promote and assist in providing regular and seasonal events and programming for downtown.

GOAL 4.3.2: To coordinate land use planning, growth, and utilities in the most efficient and effective manner.

Objective 1: To provide all areas within Osceola with adequate sanitary sewer and water distribution facilities and to assure the availability of utilities for the growth of the city.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Control the extension or provision of utilities in order to carry out the provisions of this plan.
2. Ensure that no proposed development will result in a reduction in the adopted level of service for utilities.
3. Require all developments within the Planning Area Boundary to be served by central water and wastewater services if technically feasible.
4. Require all developments to install public utilities and become annexed to the city as a condition of tying onto city utilities.
5. Require all future development plans to have adequate public utilities before being approved by the Planning Commission.

GOAL 4.3.3: To provide a functional and efficient transportation system.

Objective 1: To maximize roadway capacity and preserve corridors to allow for future roadway construction.

Policies - It is a policy of the city that:
1. Residential streets will be designed to provide good access to abutting properties while also discouraging use by through traffic.
2. Collector streets shall be designed in such a manner as to minimize traffic speeds near residential areas.
3. Site plans reflect the fact that controlling access points to arterials results in fewer accidents, increased capacity, and shorter travel time. Access Management shall protect the roadway capacity by requiring the

property owner to limit entrances on the street. Where possible, regulations controlling access points along streets classified as collector and above will be established and enforced.

4. Subdivision regulations include the provisions required for the attainment of all necessary right-of-ways at the time of subdivision approval.

4.4 Creating a Community of Choice

GOAL 4.4.1: To create a community with a high quality of life.

Objective 1: To create residential neighborhoods that are functional and offer easy access to work centers, commercial areas, and community facilities such as parks and schools.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Promote compatible infill development of the city's existing neighborhoods.
2. Promote development of market rate rental housing.
3. Reinvest in the infrastructure of the city's existing neighborhoods.
4. Encourage new neighborhoods that are planned to combine a variety of design elements, uses, densities, and housing options.

Objective 2: To preserve, protect, and enhance the environment.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Encourage new developments that are designed to be compatible with the natural and built environments of the surrounding area.
2. Encourage public green space.
3. Work to preserve the city's existing floodplains from intrusion of new development that may alter existing drainage patterns.
4. Consider drainage in the development review process.

Objective 3: To preserve Osceola's small-town atmosphere.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Reinforce community identification, pride, and cohesiveness by supporting neighborhood and community activities and providing opportunities for community members to volunteer in city events or improvement projects.
2. Ensure new development is compatible with existing patterns of development.
3. Work to encourage compatible infill development within existing neighborhoods.

Objective 4: To enhance recreational opportunities and create a walkable community.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Ensure sidewalks run along streets, making pedestrian transportation both functional and safe.
2. Ensure sidewalks and bike paths form a safe, uninterrupted connection between the home, office, and retail areas.
3. Install traffic calming devices where appropriate in order to slow traffic speeds and make streets more inviting and safe for pedestrians.

GOAL 4.4.2: To manage development in a way that will maintain community stability and prosperity.

Objective 1: To assure that residential properties develop so that the values of adjacent properties do not suffer and the character of residential property is not affected by the encroachment of non-residential uses.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Protect existing neighborhoods from intrusions of adverse land uses and commercial developments.
2. Promote infill development to maximize the potential of underutilized property within the city.

3. Review all proposed developments in relation to specific and detailed provisions which at a minimum:
    - Regulate the subdivision of land.
    - Regulate the use of land in accordance with this Plan and ensure the compatibility of adjacent land uses.
    - Regulate areas subject to seasonal and/or periodic flooding.
    - Ensure safe and convenient traffic flow on- and off-site and accommodate vehicle parking needs.
    - Ensure that developments do not result in a reduction in any adopted level of service for infrastructure.
    - Protect against adverse impacts to the environment.
    - Ensure the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development.

GOAL 4.4.3: To maximize the use of land.

Objective 1: To achieve well-planned developments that feature a maximum use of the land, good traffic circulation, convenient access and egress, and a pleasant environment for the residents and to reduce per capita cost of municipal services.

Policies - It is a policy of the city to:
1. Promote higher density development in areas served by wastewater utilities.
2. Promote a balance of infill development and new development.

Chapter Five: Plan Elements

5.1 Land Use Standards

Many land use plans focus on the separation of different types of land uses. This approach often fails to take into account whether or not proposed land uses actually create any adverse influence on one another. In other words, the strict separation of land use types becomes an end in itself and not an element of the urban design process. In departure from this approach, this plan emphasizes the nature of land uses. Thus, the size, use intensity, traffic generation, and the overall impacts of a development become more important than the actual activity conducted on the property.

These land use standards directly correspond to the Future Land Use Categories depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map and describe the intended future character for each area.

Downtown Commercial

Character: Area intended to serve as the city center of Osceola. A mix of uses is allowed as one might find within a downtown environment. All development should enhance the visual aesthetic of the city. This area is intended to be the city's heart and historic center. New structures should continue the existing pattern of development.

General uses: General Commercial, Office, Entertainment, Second-story Residential in mixed-use structures
Density: N/A
Lot size: N/A
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: C-1

General Commercial

Character: Area intended for a variety of commercial uses with an intensity compatible with adjacent residential. Uses generally don't include the outdoor display of retail goods. All development should enhance the visual appearance of the city. Special regulations for design, signage, and landscaping may apply. Alternatives to simple "strip" commercial development are encouraged.

General uses: Retail, office, etc.
Density: N/A
Lot size: Minimum 10,000 square feet
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: C-2

Highway Commercial

Character: Area intended for the city's primary commercial streets. Commercial uses may generally be of a greater intensity than those found within the general commercial district. All development should enhance the visual appearance of the city. Special regulations for design, signage, and landscaping may apply. Alternatives to simple "strip" commercial development are encouraged.

General uses: Retail, office, heavy commercial, outdoor display retail
Density: Not applicable
Lot size: Minimum 10,000 square feet
Utility requirements: Sewer and water service intended
Appropriate zoning: C-3

Light Industrial

Character: Designation allotted for medium and large-scale industrial uses operated within an enclosed building. Uses within the district should not present a nuisance to adjoining property owners by way of the creation of excessive noise, vibration, odor, smoke, toxic substances, and/or hazards harmful to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. This district is often found in proximity to residential areas.

General uses: Light manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, assemblage
Density: Not applicable
Lot size: Minimum 10,000 square feet
Utility requirements: Sewer and water service intended
Appropriate zoning: I-L

Heavy Industrial

Character: Area intended for heavy and intense industrial uses on large parcels of land. Uses within the district should not present a nuisance to adjoining property owners by way of the creation of excessive noise, vibration, odor, smoke, toxic substances, and/or hazards harmful to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

General uses: Heavy manufacturing, warehousing, power generation, metal working
Density: Not applicable
Lot size: Minimum 1 acre
Utility requirements: Sewer and Water Services needed
Appropriate zoning: I-H

Agricultural/Open Space

Character: Area intended for a variety of rural uses including large and small-scale farms operations and single-family residences on large lots. If sewer service becomes available, the land should be changed to higher intensity land use designation.

General uses: Single-family residential, small-scale commercial, and agriculture
Density: 1 unit per 5 acres
Lot size: Minimum 5 acres
Utility requirements: None
Appropriate zoning: Outside City / A-1

Low Density Residential

Character: Area reserved for single-family homes following development patterns similar to the majority of existing residential development within the community.

General uses: Single-family homes
Density: < 6 units per acre
Lot size: Minimum 6,000 square feet
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: R-1, R-1S

Medium Density Residential

Character: Area intended for single-family homes, townhouses, and duplexes. This area is intended to provide residential housing at medium densities, offering a greater diversity of housing choice.

General uses: Single-family, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes
Density: < 9 units per acre
Lot size: Minimum 8,000 square feet for single-family
Minimum 11,000 square feet for multi-family
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: R-2

Apartment Residential

Character: Area designed for high intensity residential uses that include four-plexes, apartments, retirement centers, etc. This category is intended to provide for a greater diversity of housing choice and provide affordable housing options. These areas should be adequately served by a collector level street or higher.

General uses: Multi-family dwellings, retirement centers, etc.
Density: < 15 units per acre
Lot size: Minimum 6,000 for one unit
Minimum 9,000 square feet for multi-family
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: R-3

Manufactured Home Residential

Character: Area intended for single-family homes, manufactured homes, and manufactured home parks. These areas provide a maximum diversity of housing choice and incorporate a mix of densities and residential uses following a more generally scattered pattern of land use.

General uses: Single-family homes, manufactured homes
Density: < 8 units per acre
Lot size: Varying Requirements
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: R-MH

Institutional

Character: Area allocated for public uses that otherwise are not wholly compatible with other districts in this land use plan. These developments should be handled on a case-by-case basis. This district is specifically set aside for schools, jails, airports, campuses, and other similar uses.

General uses: Schools, jails, airports, campuses
Density: Not applicable
Lot size: Not applicable
Utility requirements: Sewer and water services
Appropriate zoning: All districts

Utility

Character: Area allocated for public uses such as roads, railroads, utilities, etc. These lands are primarily to be held in public hands, but may also be held in private ownership. Areas no longer in use for rights-of-way or utilities are intended to revert to ownership of adjacent property owners or be used for new public purposes such as recreational trails.

General uses: Roads, utilities, etc.
Density: Not applicable
Lot size: Not applicable
Utility requirements: None
Appropriate zoning: All districts

Recreational

Character: Intended solely for recreational uses. Areas currently designated for recreational use are listed on the future land use map. Potential future recreational areas are specifically denoted. It is expected that as the city grows, additional areas will be given the recreational designation due to the addition of new park s.

General uses: Parks, Golf Courses, Trails
Density: N/A
Lot size: N/A
Utility requirements: None
Appropriate zoning: All zones

5.2 Housing and Code Enforcement

Like many rural communities, housing is an important issue for Osceola. The city has many historic homes with charm and character, but an increasing number of the city's homes are becoming vacant, abandoned, or dilapidated. Despite a drop in the size of the city's overall housing inventory since 2000, the city's number of vacant housing units has seen increases. With some 70% of the city's housing stock over 30 years old, this issue threatens the community's stability in the long term.

Since 2000, the city's number of abandoned houses has increased. Abandoned homes are problematic for a number of reasons. They serve as a blighting influence on neighboring properties, serve to decrease property values, discourage community and financial investment, and make selling surrounding properties more difficult. This makes working to eliminate dilapidated and abandoned houses a top priority for the city.

Economics are also exerting force on the local housing market. It is common in Osceola to see houses sell between $50 and $60 per square foot, a value below the cost of new home construction. This creates an obstruction for active home builders, and can make the building of new subdivisions a difficult challenge. It may be a reason why the city has seen so few houses built in the last 10 years.

Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement

Property maintenance is and should continue to be a main priority of the city. Simple factors such as tall grass or broken windows can change the perception of an area, and, in turn decrease property values and lead to blight and increased crime. The city should enforce codes uniformly and strictly. A community where codes are well-enforced provides certainty for property owners and encourages additional investment, and is absolutely essential to creating a community of choice that is competitive in the 21st century. The city should be commended for its continuing work in code enforcement including work to demolish and remove a large number of vacant, blighting structures.

The city might also consider adopting a property maintenance code. Often a city has a patchwork of various ordinances used for ensuring good property upkeep. Sometimes these ordinances conflict or create a confusing set of differing procedures for different types of property violations. A property maintenance code can be used to consolidate these various ordinances into a single document, fill in gaps in existing ordinances, and create a uniform procedure for handling violations. Code enforcement can be a difficult task, and a tool that makes it easier is worth considering.

Housing Choice, Community Character, and Multi-Family Development

One way to address the housing problem would be to encourage greater housing choice in the city. Although the current housing market may make new single-family housing construction a greater challenge, its likely multi-family housing would be more economically feasible and provide more housing options. It is important to note, however, that much of the city's existing stock of multi-family housing is not market rate, leaving a segment of the housing market woefully underserved. Additional market rate multi-family could provide a place for a recent college graduate to move back home to, provide transitional housing for workers moving to Osceola until they can purchase a home, or provide opportunities for the city's elderly population to age in place without the worry of home and yard maintenance. As such, this plan recommends zoning additional areas for multi-family development.

As Osceola grows, it will be important to ensure that community's identity and character are not lost. So, how is it possible to accommodate growth and housing choice while maintaining Osceola's identity? New development in the city's existing neighborhoods should continue in the same patterns as they historically have. If a neighborhood has historically been single-family residential, it should remain as such unless suffering from a lack of investment. In such areas, new development like duplexes can help discourage blight and provide a positive form investment in the neighborhood. However, large multi-family developments should be directed to new growth areas where development patterns have not been established, or should be developed along major corridors where they can be more easily accommodated. Following this path, Osceola will be able to accommodate growth without destroying its historic identity.

Homeownership

The community must also work to encourage homeownership. Osceola has a 10-year downward trend in homeownership rates. Though rental property serves an important role in every community, homeownership is important to maintaining community stability. Many studies have shown homeownership encourages neighborhood investment and accrues many long-term benefits for the homeowner and community.

The city could take a proactive step in encouraging greater home-ownership by working with a community organization like Osceola School District to host home ownership education seminars. These seminars could be used to connect potential homeowners to resources available to rural homebuyers such as the programs provided by the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America and USDA Rural Development. Additionally, the seminars could be used to educate attendees about city utilities as well as the codes enforced by the city. While a seemingly small step, relaying this type of information is important because few people are aware of these resources.

The plan also recommends community organizations and local banks explore the creation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) or a Community Land Trust. The CDC would be a non-profit organization devoted to acquiring vacant property and developing affordable housing in the city. As an example, the CDC could work with the city in acquiring property that was relinquished as a result of a condemnation, contract with a homebuilder to construct an affordable house or renovate an existing home, and assist the homebuyers through the purchasing process by coordinating financing. Funds from the house sales could be used to acquire more property and more houses. As such, the CDC could become a self-sustaining entity. An example of a model organization is the Argenta CDC in downtown North Little Rock.

The model of a Community Land Trust could also be used. This model is similar to that of a CDC, but the land trust would retain ownership of the land on which the house rests. This can serve multiple purposes. It's often set up to reduce the overall cost of the home that is sold, but is also often tied to an option on repurchase of the home should it be sold in the future. This allows the land trust the ability to ensure the homes it builds remain in a pool of affordable housing for disadvantaged home buyers, preventing future conversion to rental.

Using a CDC or land trust is one example of many paths the community could follow. However, the important point is that the community as a whole should look to take an active role in addressing the community's housing needs. Doing so may generate greater private sector interest in addressing market shortfalls and kick start other community improvement.

Recommended Actions

1) Continue working to condemn and demolish or repair existing dilapidated and abandoned housing.
2) Continue to use code enforcement to address maintenance and safety issues on neglected properties.
3) Consider the creation of a unified property maintenance code.
4) Work to encourage infill development of existing neighborhoods in addition to new housing at the city's edge.
5) Promote greater housing choice for Osceola residents by permitting multi-family residential development in additional areas of the city.
6) Work with community organizations to encourage and promote home-ownership.
7) Explore the creation of minimum design standards for residential structures.
8) Encourage compatible infill development in existing neighborhoods such as single-family in stable neighborhoods and duplex residential in transitional neighborhoods.
9) Explore the creation of a Community Development Corporation or Community Land Trust to provide affordable homeownership opportunities.

5.3 Quality of Life

Recreation

Recreational opportunities in the form of parks are a key component to providing the type of high quality of life that attracts and retains residents. This is in large part because proximity to a job is sometimes a secondary concern in deciding where to live within a metropolitan area. This places Osceola in a position where it must compete against

Investments in parks and recreation should be seen as economic development tools for the city, as they can attract new residents.

communities throughout Mississippi County and the area for new residents. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the adequacy of the city's existing park system against commonly used standards for municipal park systems.

From a review of the current recreational facilities provided in Osceola, it appears the city has more than adequate land area devoted to recreational uses. As a general rule of thumb about 10 acres of park space is needed for every 1,000 people. With the city's population at 7,320, the city would generally need about 75 acres. Osceola currently has over 155 acres of park space with approximately an additional 40 acres planned.

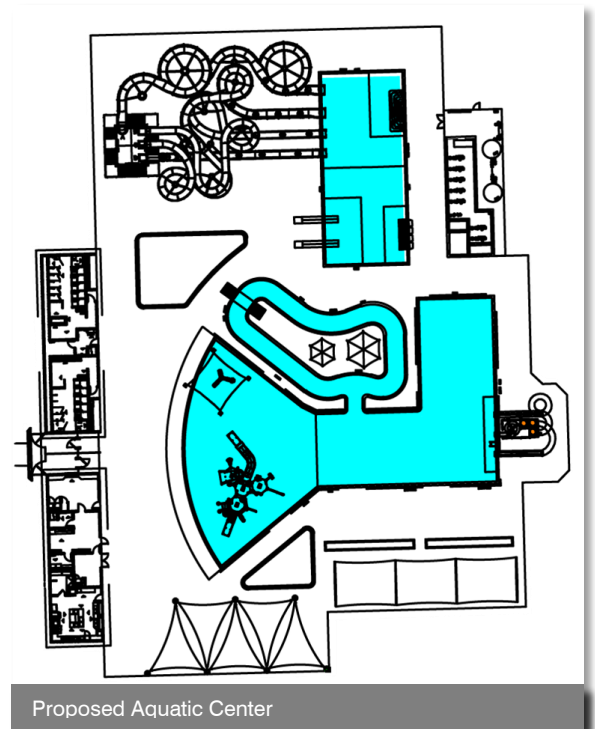The city's current facilities include several parks/recreational facilities. These parks include:

1) Florida Park: Playground, 3 lighted tennis courts
2) Rosenwald Park: Outdoor basketball courts, playground, and pavilion
3) Irma Belcher Park: Splash pad, playground, and two basketball courts
4) Sans Souci Park: Largely undeveloped access to the Mississippi River featuring boat ramps and 3 pavilions. The park is the only public access to the Mississippi River between St. Louis and Memphis
5) Osceola Community Center: Indoor basketball court, workout and weight rooms, walking track, racquetball court, massage chairs, ballfields
6) Municipal Golf Course: 9-hole, par 72 course; driving range

The plan proposes several additional improvements included as part of the community's Parks Master Plan. These improvements are slated as an expansion and improvement of the park area surrounding the Osceola Community Center.
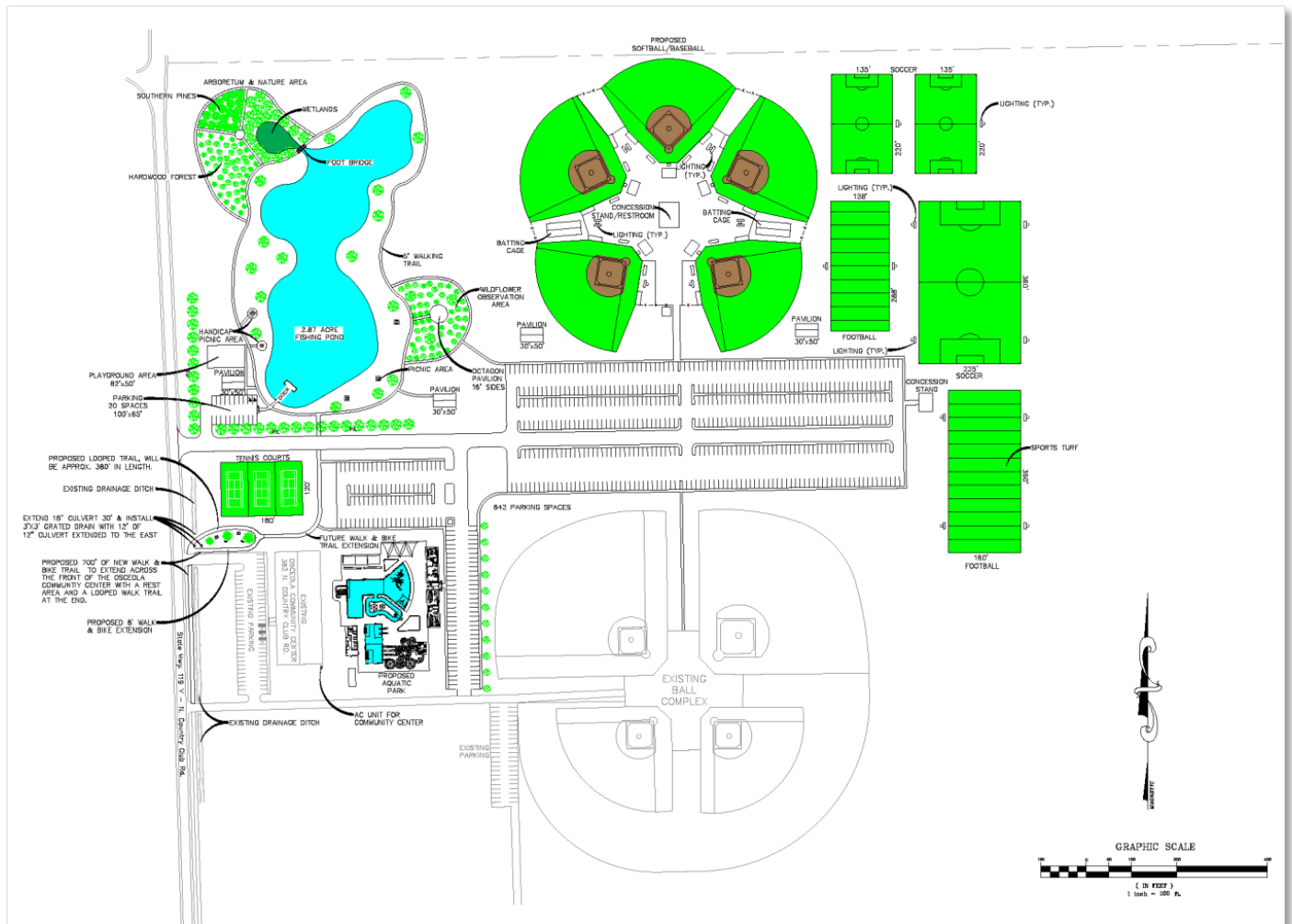
Improvements include:

1) New Aquatic Center
2) 2.87 acre Fishing Pond
3) Arboretum and Nature Area
4) Walking Trail
5) Playground Area
6) Tennis Courts
7) New Softball/Baseball Complex with Batting Cages
8) New Soccer Field
9) 2 Half-size soccer fields
10) 2 football fields
11) Wildflower Observation Area
12) Expanded Parking Areas

Proposed Aquatic Center

Future development of other parks and other recreational opportunities in the city should be closely tied to new development. The city should consider parks during the development review process for the new subdivisions. Often times, many developers are willing to construct park facilities at their own expense and deed these properties over to the city. Exploring these options could allow the city to significantly expand recreational opportunities without incurring great expense. However, the city must evaluate each proposal objectively, and only accept those that would benefit the city and its residents long term.

Neighborhood Reinvestment and Beautification

Another way to increase quality of life is to encourage greater neighborhood reinvestment. The city can take a lead in this area by improving infrastructure in existing neighborhoods. This may come in the form of street repairs, utility line improvements, sidewalk projects, etc. These types of investment are a sign to the community that the city is committed to neighborhood improvement and encourages residents to also reinvest. However, reinvestment may not always take the form of hard infrastructure. It might include soft-scape improvements like landscaping and beautification.

Continuing reinvestment in older neighborhoods can help stem blight, instill greater community pride, and encourage private investment.

City beautification can instill community pride and make a community more attractive to visitors. However, beautification projects often enjoy much success when the community is engaged and committed. In order to gain community support for beautification projects, the city should work to get the community involved in the effort. If residents have invested their time in beautification projects, they are more likely to support continued efforts by the city. The plan recommends that the city support and help organize community beautification projects to get residents involved. These might include neighborhood clean-up days, Adopt-a-Street programs, a community garden project, or other programs.

Recommended Actions

1) Maintain and enhance the city's existing parks.

2) Expand the city park system as the city grows.
3) Implement the planned improvements contained in the city's Parks Master Plan.
4) Work with community organizations to encourage and develop programs aimed at community beautification.
5) Reinvest in the infrastructure of existing neighborhoods.
6) Work to develop programs such as adopt-a-street and neighborhood cleanup days that use community volunteers to beautify the city.

5.4 Downtown

Like all cities, Osceola is a dynamic place where among other elements, economic and cultural changes greatly affect the community. The community that exists today is not the same community that existed thirty years ago or the one that will exist thirty years from now. As such, it is important to carefully and responsibly identify and plan for areas of potential change.

Osceola's downtown is the "heart" of the community in many senses. The central business district serves as a governmental, cultural, and institutional hub for the community. In a literal sense it is also the heart of Osceola, being located at a key intersection in the community. However, as in so many other small communities, the role of Osceola's downtown as a retail center has changed.

The vibrancy and vitality of downtown is an indicator of a community's pride and economic health.

The plan encourages continued redevelopment of downtown. Plan goals and objectives recognize the role of downtown as becoming a district of diverse uses. This diversity should include a wide array of uses including governmental offices, churches, banks, loft apartments, professional offices, shops, restaurants, and boutiques. What ties these uses together is the urban fabric of downtown, the uniqueness of its buildings, and its pedestrian-friendly scale. Future development and redevelopment in downtown should carry forward the unique and historic character of downtown.

A key in maintaining downtown Osceola, will be maintaining its status as a hub of the community. This will mean working to keep community institutions such as professional offices, churches, and government offices in the city's downtown. These institutions drive traffic to downtown, and are critical to providing a foundation for supporting businesses to thrive. For example, keeping government offices in downtown means other supporting professional offices will remain downtown. With a critical mass of government uses and offices, other downtown uses are more viable. For example, a downtown restaurant supported by government uses and offices can bring additional traffic that helps support retail businesses. As you can see, a virtuous cycle of economic growth can result from retaining important community institutions downtown. Thus, their presence is critical to ensuring the longevity and vibrancy of downtown.

Though downtown has faced many changes, the only certainty is that it will likely face more changes. Meeting these challenges will require a steadfast commitment to downtown by not only the city, but the entire community. The comparative health of the city center remains a key element by which visitors and potential investors will judge the community. A strong downtown will help make a strong Osceola for the future.

Preservation of Buildings

Also key in maintaining downtown Osceola will be the preservation and maintenance of its historic structures. Downtowns often suffer the death of a thousand cuts when structures go unmaintained, dilapidate over time, and are eventually torn down. Often when a structure is lost, it is never replaced. As structures are lost, the downtown slowly dies from the gradual loss of what makes it unique: historic buildings. This makes the preservation of downtown's structures vitally important. The tear down of any historic building in downtown should be avoided if possible without creating an eminent threat to the health and safety of the public. Because much of downtown lies within a National Register of Historic Places district, property owners can have access to state and federal tax credits that can make otherwise unfeasible building projects feasible.

Downtown Projects

Listed below are several projects and programs that could be used to build a stronger downtown:

Downtown Entrance – The South Walnut entrance into downtown could use improvement to provide an appealing and welcoming downtown gateway. The intense commercial and quasi-industrial nature of the uses along the corridor detract from the visual appearance and aesthetic of the gateway. This is due in part to the corridor being one of the city's older auto-oriented commercial corridors. Many of the buildings have limited potential for re-use except for blighting quasi-industrial uses. The city should pursue selective demolition of structures along this corridor and encourage redevelopment with lower intensity uses including multi-family development. The city should also explore obtaining state Transportation Alternatives Program funding to provide street-scaping that would improve the corridor's aesthetics.

Programming and Events – Downtown should be the de facto location for community events and festivals. Holding regular events and programming is key to having a successful downtown. They generate pedestrian traffic, which creates the vibrancy and activity that is the lifeblood of a downtown. Regular events such as a Farmer's Market, seasonal celebrations, festivals, and monthly or weekly special events are recommended by this plan to keep downtown healthy. Events like the Farmer's Market that are held elsewhere should be encouraged to relocate to downtown.

Recommended Actions

1) Work to realize Osceola's tourism potential through the development and promotion of downtown.
2) Establish a Farmer's Market downtown.
3) Improve and enhance the entrance to downtown at U.S. Highway 61.
4) Encourage the location of retail ventures such as antique stores, coffee shops, and boutiques within downtown.
5) Draft a zoning code that allows mixed-use of multi-story structures.
6) Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of the city's historic structures.
7) Leverage public resources and infrastructure investments to encourage private investment in downtown.
8) Encourage the coordination and joint-marketing of downtown businesses.
9) Promote and assist in providing regular and seasonal events and programming in downtown.
10) Seek Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for community projects in downtown.
11) Encourage the retention of existing community institutions in downtown, and the relocation of new government and community institutions to downtown.

5.5 Commercial and Economic Development

Commercial Uses

As Osceola grows, the city will see additional commercial development. Where this new development is placed will have a significant impact on the community's image. If the city allows unchecked commercial development to occur, it will risk jeopardizing existing commercial corridors. This leads to blighting cannibalization of one commercial corridor by another.

Such effect has already been seen in the community over time as it has grown farther to the west. However, much of W. Keiser Ave. has remained healthy over time. Because of this effect, the city should be very careful in granting new commercial rezonings. This plan calls for commercial development and redevelopment to occur first within existing commercial areas. Other areas planned for new commercial development are W. Keiser Ave. west of Country Club Dr. Commercial development in this area should be limited until additional residential growth is realized within that area.

In working to attract additional commercial development within the city, economic leaders should focus on emphasizing facts which site selectors for local and national retailers and commercial businesses may not realize. These include the large size of Osceola's employment base, including the almost 2,000 employees that commute to

Osceola on a daily basis. This also includes the fact that some 40% of the city's population, over 3,000 people, have a household income of over $50,000 per year.

Medical Center

The healthcare industry employs roughly a quarter of Osceola's residents. This makes the South Mississippi County Regional Medical Center highly important to Osceola as a health service, but also as a local economic engine. The city has a campus of medical related uses that are dependent upon the South Mississippi County Regional Medical Center. The plan supports the continued growth of the medical industry in Osceola, and the continued development of medical services offered through the medical center. Maintaining a healthy hospital will be important to Osceola's economic future.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

In 2013-2014, the city of Osceola worked with EAPDD to develop an economic development strategic plan. This plan identified a set of strategies including: attracting government funding, business cultivation, business recruitment, business retention and expansion, cultural tourism, downtown development, education development, and infrastructure development to encourage and foster greater economic development within the city. The Osceola Comprehensive Plan supports and encourages continued effort in implementing these strategies toward Osceola's future growth.

Recommended Actions

1) Encourage redevelopment of the city's existing commercial areas.
2) Encourage new commercial development along W. Keiser Ave. east of Country Club Dr. until additional residential growth is realized west of Country Club Dr.
3) Actively market the city's strong points in working to attract additional commercial development.
4) Encourage continued growth of the city's medical campus.
5) Continue implementation of the Osceola Economic Development Strategic Plan.

5.6 Infrastructure and Growth

Utilities

Good water and sewer treatment systems are foundational city services. They control the possibility for future growth, and are essential to public health. As such, addressing infrastructure is critical to this plan.

A strong utility system will be essential to ensuring Osceola continues to attract industrial development and new community growth.

Considering the city's utility systems as it relates to growth, Osceola is in an excellent position to absorb new growth with sewer service being available to most of the city's growth areas. The system has adequate capacity to absorb new growth, including additional industries. The city additionally has surplus capacity for its water system. This excess capacity could allow residential or industrial growth, and should be adequate for the city for the foreseeable future.

The city does have an area for concern. The sewer system has problems with inflow and infiltration in many older areas of the city. Inflow and infiltration is caused by either improper connections to the sewer system as can be found in older combined storm and sanitary sewer systems, or are the result of degradation of the sewer system over time by penetration of sewer lines. These penetrations, often by tree roots, allow large quantities of water to flow into the sewer mains during rain events. Because inflow and infiltration reduces system capacity intermittently, it can be a frustrating problem. If the issue is left unaddressed, the problem will inhibit future growth over time. Fortunately, the city has been taking steps to repair inflow and infiltration issues in an effort to prevent the problem from reducing system capacity in the future.

The city has additional sewer issues in some of the city's older eastern neighborhood. Many of the sewer lines in this are original to the sewer system. As such many are constructed of unstable materials such as clay, wood, or concrete. These pipes have aged over time and are often prone to the inflow and infiltration issues discussed previously. These old lines limit development capacity. As such, high intensity residential uses must be selectively located to prevent major, costly infrastructure improvements. Because of this the plan limits the density of residential development in many areas within the neighborhood east of downtown.

The city should consider developing a master plan for its water and sewer utility systems. These plans forecast the areas anticipated to be served by city utilities in the future, aligning with the city's land use plan as the community builds out. Necessary improvements are planned based upon these forecasts. Such plans also often assess the city's existing service areas to determine where reinvestment and repair is necessary. These improvements can often improve capacity or forestall more expensive improvements to the city's water or sewer treatment plants over the short to mid-term.

High intensity development should be encouraged in areas where access to existing sewer service is available or sewer service can be easily and efficiently provided by sewer lift stations servicing a large area. For example, these include areas surrounding the lift station on Earl Quinn Rd. and the property in close proximity to Walmart on W. Keiser Ave. In areas where additional lift stations will be required, the city should consider partnering with developers to build large capacity lift stations in order service large areas, saving on long-term maintenance costs for the city.

Stormwater Management

Though often ignored, proper stormwater management is an important component to guiding future urban growth. Communities often do not take the issue seriously until drainage problems create localized flooding or degrade water quality in nearby streams, rivers, and municipal water supplies. Localized flooding generally occurs due to irresponsible land development of commercial sites and residential subdivisions. Poor development practices disrupt the natural hydrological functions of land by pushing stormwater off a property onto another faster or in greater quantities. If these irresponsible development practices become common place, the problems only magnify as more water is quickly pushed off more and more properties creating greater flood hazards.

Proper development practices seek to slow the run-off of stormwater by proper grading and retention on-site. This prevents flooding from excess run-off at drainage choke points downstream. To ensure responsible development practices occur, the city should carefully consider drafting stormwater regulations. While potentially unpopular, such regulations will save money and heartache for both the city and its residents in the long run.

Annexation

Municipalities in Arkansas may annex adjacent land by one of three methods. The first method is by direct election determined by a majority of the qualified electors voting on the issue, i.e. the voters of the municipality and the voters of the area proposed for annexation. Section 14-40-302 of the Arkansas Code, Annotated, sets forth the authority.

The second method of annexation deals with land surrounded by a city's boundaries. These "islands" may be annexed by the passage of an ordinance calling for the annexation of the surrounded land in accordance with A.C.A. § 14-40-501 et. seq.

The third method of annexation is by the petition of a majority of the real estate owners of any part of a county contiguous to and adjoining any part of the city. The process must conform to the provisions set forth in A.C.A. § 14-40-601 et. seq.

> *Annexation will not be necessary to accommodate Osceola's future growth for the foreseeable future.*

Of these methods, annexation by petition is the most common and generally the least controversial. Continued reliance on this method, however, tends to produce irregular corporate limits. Such irregularity can, in turn, cause problems providing public safety and other municipal services. A common misunderstanding is that annexation by petition is done by one property owner. In reality, a majority of owners of the majority of a given area may secure a petition for annexation without the agreement of other property owners in the given area.

Annexation by election allows the municipality to select the configuration it feels is suitable for urbanization. It gives the city the greatest control in deciding which lands should be annexed for which the city can provide effective and efficient delivery of public services. Furthermore, strategic use of this annexation method enables the city to grow in a rational manner in terms of land area.

The city should carefully examine all annexation requests using cost-benefit analyses, and only accept those that may strategically benefit the city. These analyses should consider both those economic considerations that can be measured and political considerations which cannot be as easily measured. Such examinations should provide cost outlays for additional city service provision and/or potential sales tax revenue increases as well as acknowledge the long-term political ramifications for an annexation. Using these types of analyses would allow the city to see the impacts of annexation in a more transparent way.

There is already enough vacant land in Osceola to accommodate all future growth in the next 20-30 years. The city has completed major annexations in the past that have greatly expanded its corporate limits toward the west. The annexed territory includes all of the city's major potential growth areas. The city's proactive step should relieve the city from having to worry about annexation for the foreseeable future.

Recommended Actions

1) Encourage growth in areas where the development can be most economically and efficiently served by public utilities.
2) Develop a long-term utility master plan for the development and improvement of the city's utility system.
3) Continue work in addressing issues with inflow and infiltration in the city's sewer system.
4) Establish formal utility service boundaries and file them with the Mississippi County Recorder and Arkansas Natural Resources Commission.
5) Control the extension and provision of utilities as a means of carrying out the provisions and goals of this plan.
6) Require that all developments within the Planning Area Boundary be served by central water and wastewater service, if technically feasible.
7) Require all developments within the Planning Area Boundary that request city utilities to become annexed as a condition of providing city utilities.
8) Consider developing regulations to control storm water drainage.
9) Explore developing mid to long-term plans for annexing areas to the city's north and west.

5.7 Transportation System

Master Street Plan

On the Comprehensive Plan Map is contained the city's Master Street Plan. This plan indicates the location of proposed new roads as well as those streets that should be widened in the future. The street classification system is broken down into three types: local, collector, and arterial streets. Overall, a street system should represent a well-planned network operating like a circulatory system.

Local – Local streets have the lowest speed and carrying capacity, and filter traffic to collector streets. Local streets also are primarily designed to permit access to abutting property. Washington Avenue is an example of a local street.

Collector - Collector streets allot for more traffic and higher speeds, and serve as primary connections to arterial streets. Collector streets are designed to balance access to abutting property and providing sufficient traffic flow to permit greater mobility within the city. Ermen Lane serves as a collector street.
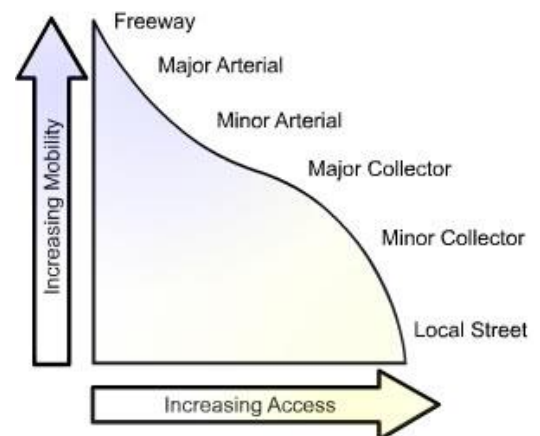
Arterial - Arterial streets have the highest carrying capacities and primarily serve to permit through traffic and connect the city to outside destinations. These roads are typically designed around permitting unimpeded traffic flow, and are not primarily designed to provide high property access. Drive spacing requirements and access limitations are common to arterial streets. Keiser Avenue is an example of an arterial road.

These street classifications correspond to the street cross sections shown in the Chapter Six of this plan document. These cross sections dictate the standards of how new streets should be constructed. They also dictate the standards for how existing streets should be improved.

While the plan proposes the construction of numerous roads, it is intended that most of these road projects be built and constructed as property is developed. In this way, existing residents and the tax payers will not be burdened with handling costs for these road projects. Rather, those costs will be borne by the developers that create the necessity for the new roads and which stand to gain from their construction. However, circumstances may arise where it is advantageous for the city to be proactive in widening or constructing roads to meet the needs of the community and help direct growth in an orderly manner.

Future Roads and Projects

Overall, a street system should represent a well-planned network operating like a circulatory system. To achieve this, a number of road projects are proposed as a part of this plan. These projects include street widening and the construction of new streets. As has been stated previously, it is anticipated that some, if not most, of these projects are intended to occur and be paid for by developers as new development is built where these projects are proposed.

As a general policy, the city plans to extend its existing street grid into undeveloped areas of the city. The gridiron street system has numerous inherent advantages including the dispersion of traffic, reduced need for wider streets, and increased mobility. However, one of the primary reasons is to allow for orderly future growth. As the city grows, extending streets like West Semmes will allow for long-spanning corridors that will open land to development and move traffic across the city without funneling it all to Keiser Ave. or other major corridors.

The following contains a list and description of some of the proposed road projects:

West Semmes Extension – This project would involve extending West Semmes Avenue to tie in with Denso Road. The project would provide an important east-west connection parallel to Keiser Ave. As such, it would ease school traffic as the city grows to the west. However, more important than providing traffic relief, the corridor would continue the city's existing grid pattern and the efficient and orderly way the city has grown. This project would likely be funded by private development.

Earl Quinn Extension – The plan recommends construction of a connector road between W. Keiser Ave. and Highway 119 along an extension of Earl Quinn Road. The roadway would continue the city's existing grid pattern and the efficient and orderly way the city has grown. The connector would provide alternate access to the Osceola's industrial base on the south side of town from traffic coming from Highway 119 on the north side of town should the Highway 119 crossing ever be converted to an interstate exit. Additionally, the connector would accommodate growth on the city's west side. This project would likely be funded through private development.

Ermen Lane Widening – Ermen Lane exists as a stretch of city roadway between Highway 325 to the north and U.S. Highway 61 to the south. This roadway is currently a narrow two-lane road, and serves as a north-south cut through in the middle part of the town. The plan calls for minor widening of the roadway including the addition of shoulders and turn lanes at Ford Ave. and at Hale Ave. to accommodate left hand turns in both locations. This project would likely be funded through public means.

Mississippi 732 Improvement – Mississippi 732 west of the NEACCC facility turns into a dirt road. It would be constructed through public means. This roadway is planned as an important east-west connector on the south side of the community. The plans calls for this roadway to be improved and extended to Mississippi 439. This roadway would extend the city's existing street grid west as the city develops, but would more importantly provide traffic relief

due peak periods to the workers coming and leaving from the city's employment base on the south side of Osceola. This project would likely be funded through public and private means.

Sidewalks and Trails

Although providing adequate roadways for automobiles is very important, it is also necessary to adequately provide for the needs of pedestrians. Sidewalks and trails are often overlooked within many cities' transportation systems. This can leave many people in the city without safe means of getting from their homes to school, to work, or to shop. As such this plan recommends further development of the city's sidewalk system.

The city currently has few sidewalks throughout many portions of the city. Where sidewalks exist, many are old and beginning to deteriorate. Continued maintenance of existing facilities is important, and reinvestment in these sidewalks should continue to take precedence over the building of new sidewalks. This type of reinvestment also sends a positive message to property owners that older neighborhoods remain an important part of the city's fabric and can lead to further private investment.
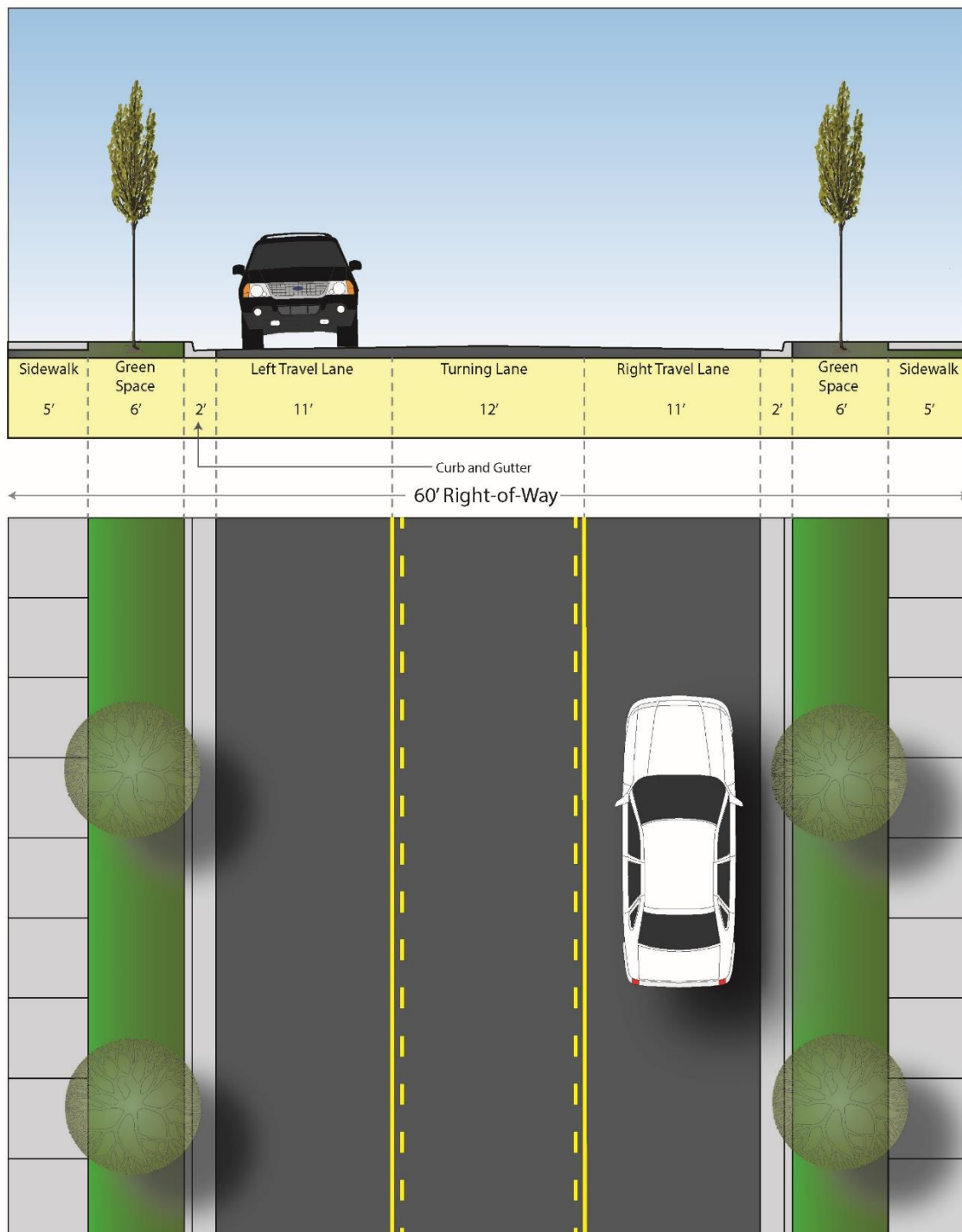
Recommended Actions

1) Utilize the Master Street Plan component of this plan to direct the improvement and construction of streets in the city.
2) Adopt revised Subdivision Regulations to carry out the provisions of the Master Street Plan component in this plan.
3) Use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide in evaluating all development proposals to ensure compliance with the Master Street Plan.
4) Use city resources to expand and repair the city's street network.
5) Develop a city trail system.
6) Invest in infrastructure that will protect and encourage pedestrian activity.
7) Seek funding for trail/sidewalk projects via grant programs managed by AHTD.
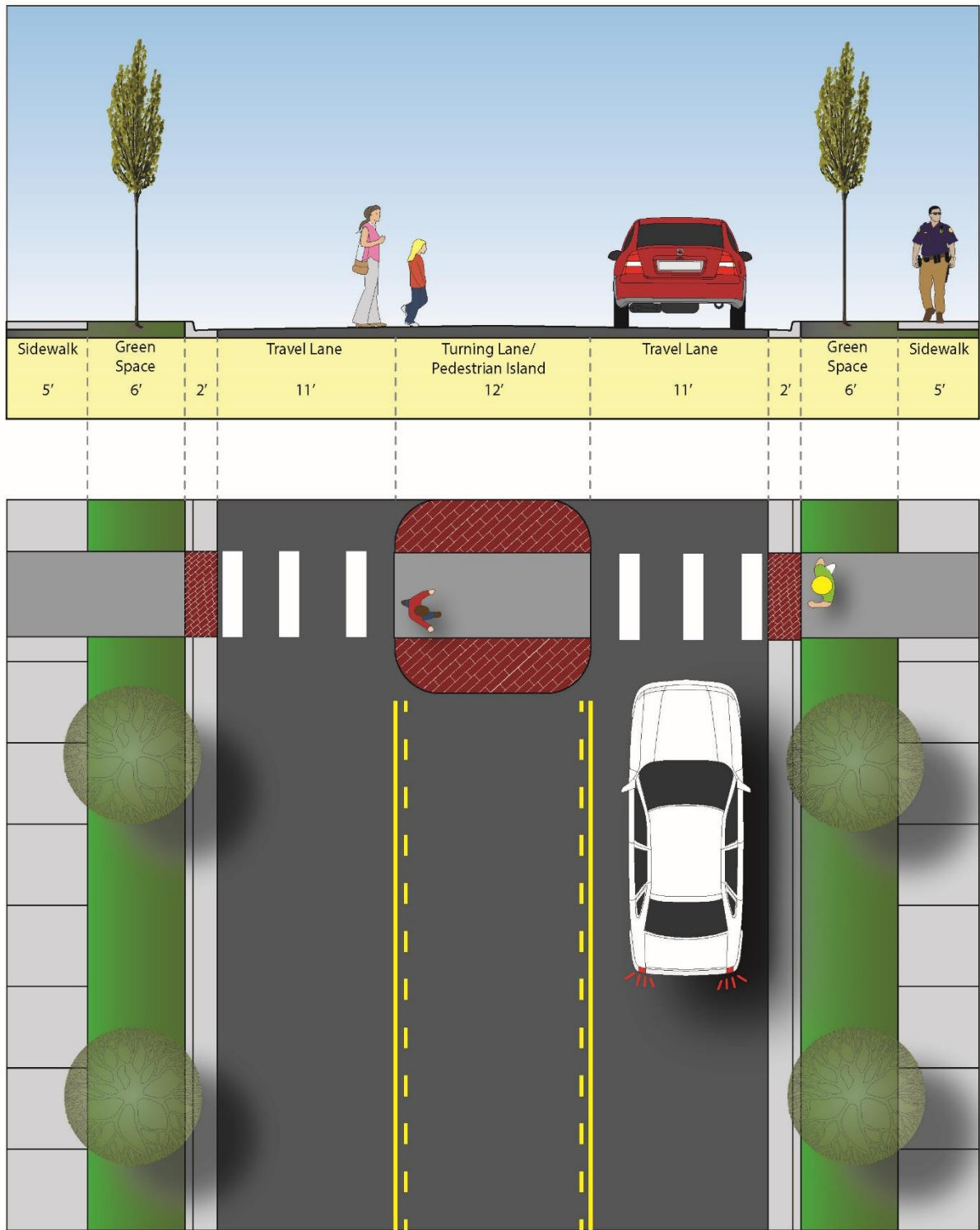
Chapter Six: Street Standards

All arterial streets are state-managed highways and shall be constructed to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department's standards. Any state highway deemed a collector shall also be constructed to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department's standards.
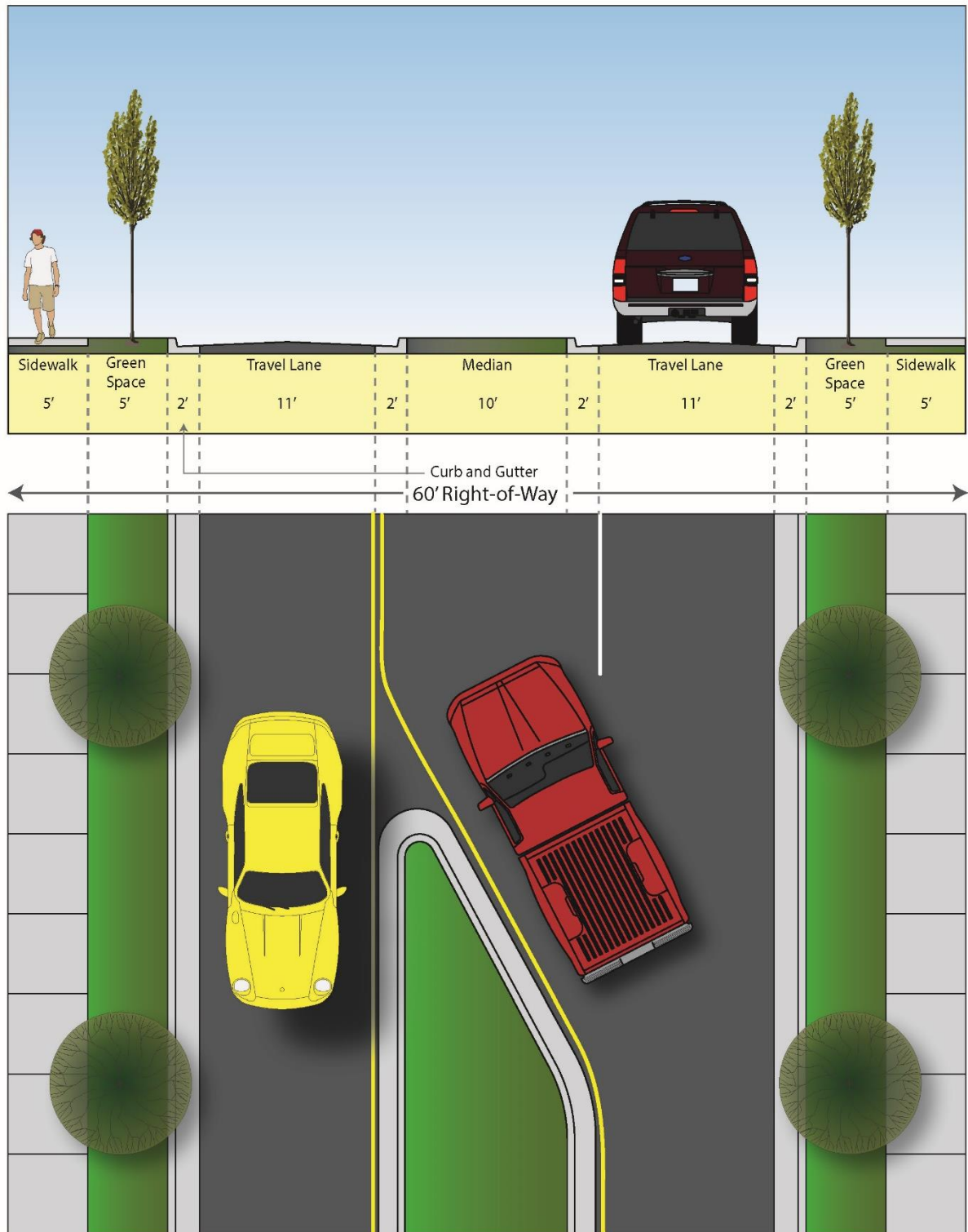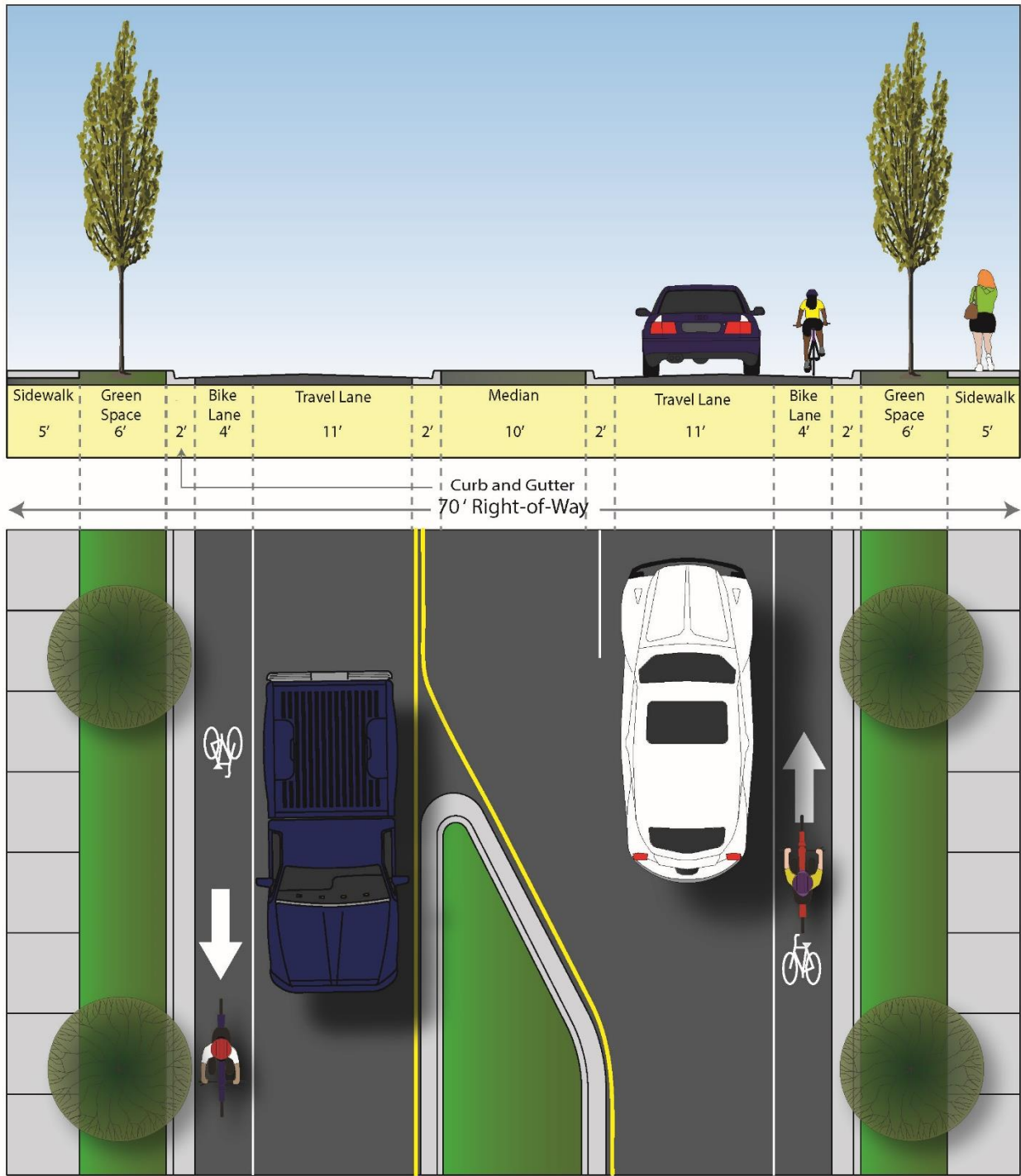
C1.0 – Collector

C1.1 – Collector with Mid-Block Crossing
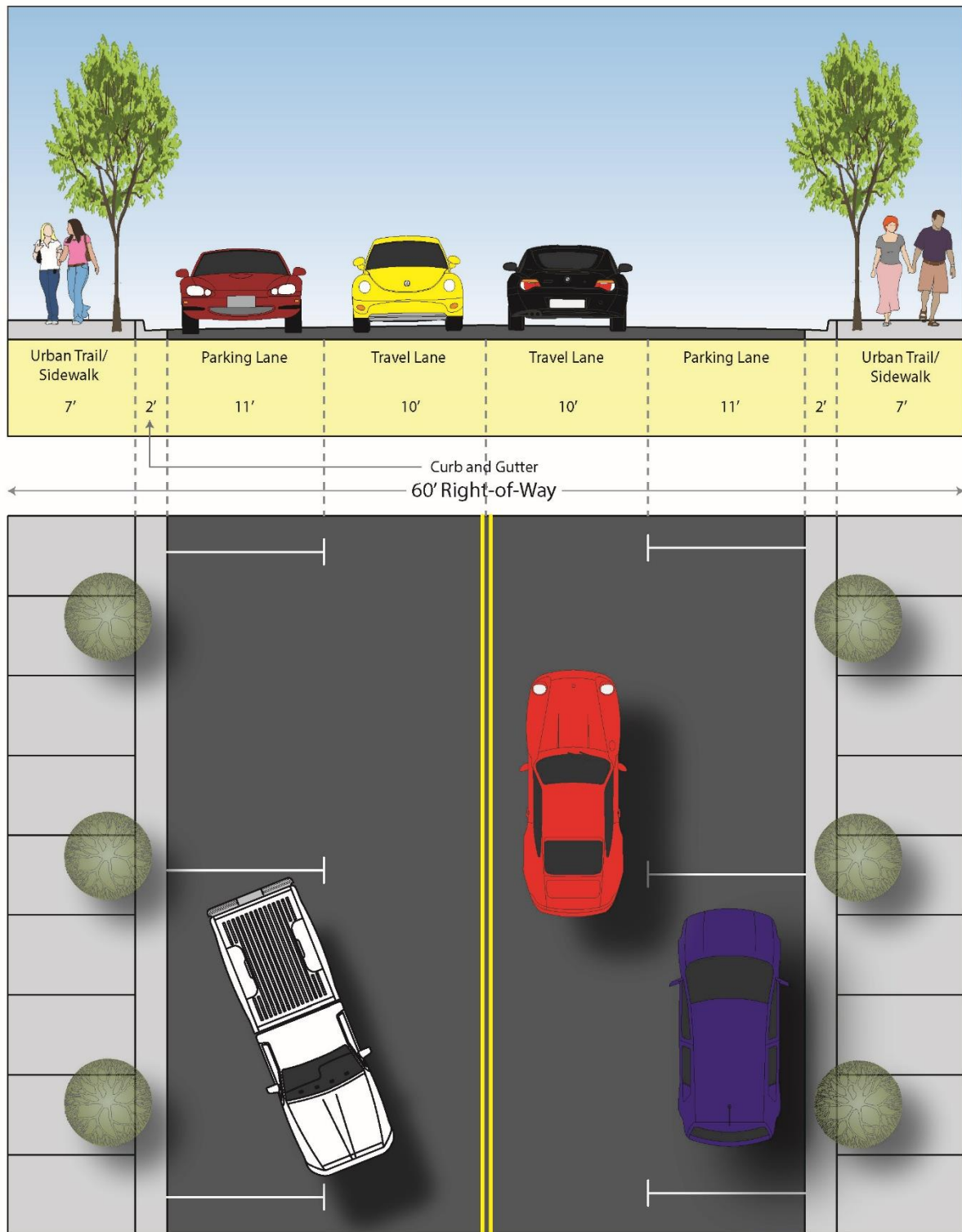

Sidewalk	Green Space		Travel Lane	Turning Lane/ Pedestrian Island	Travel Lane		Green Space	Sidewalk
5'	6'	2'	11'	12'	11'	2'	6'	5'

C2.0 – Collector Boulevard

C2.1 – Collector Boulevard with Bike Lanes

Sidewalk	Green Space		Bike Lane	Travel Lane		Median		Travel Lane	Bike Lane		Green Space	Sidewalk
5'	6'	2'	4'	11'	2'	10'	2'	11'	4'	2'	6'	5'

Curb and Gutter

70' Right-of-Way

C3.0 – Urban Collector

Urban Trail/ Sidewalk		Parking Lane	Travel Lane	Travel Lane	Parking Lane		Urban Trail/ Sidewalk
7'	2'	11'	10'	10'	11'	2'	7'

Curb and Gutter

60' Right-of-Way
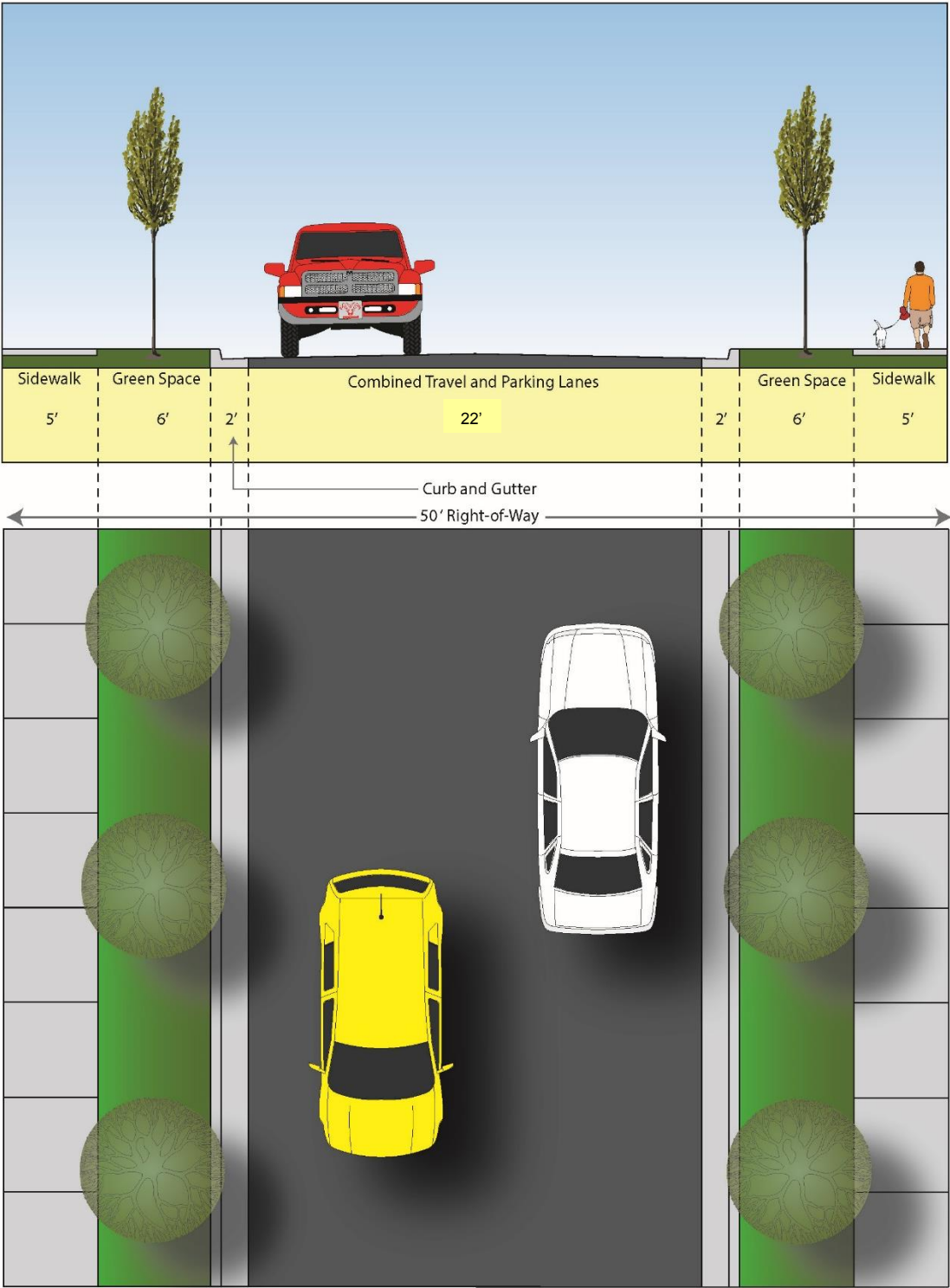
L1.0 – Local Street

L1.1 – Local Street with Trail
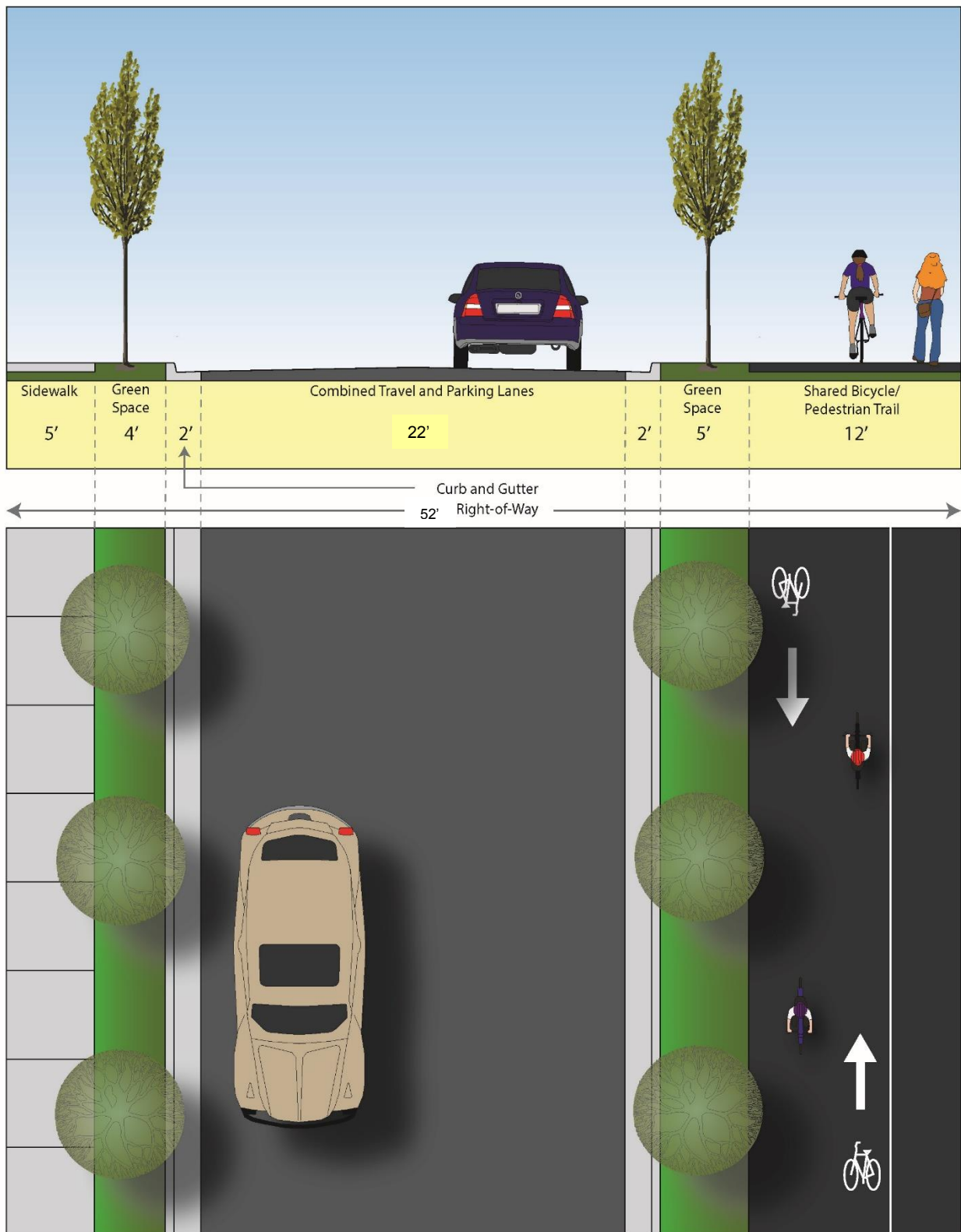
L1.2 – Local Street with Bike Lanes

Sidewalk	Green Space		Bike Lane	Combined Travel Lanes	Bike Lane		Green Space	Sidewalk
5'	4'	2'	4'	20'	4'	2'	4'	5'

Curb and Gutter

52' Right-of-Way
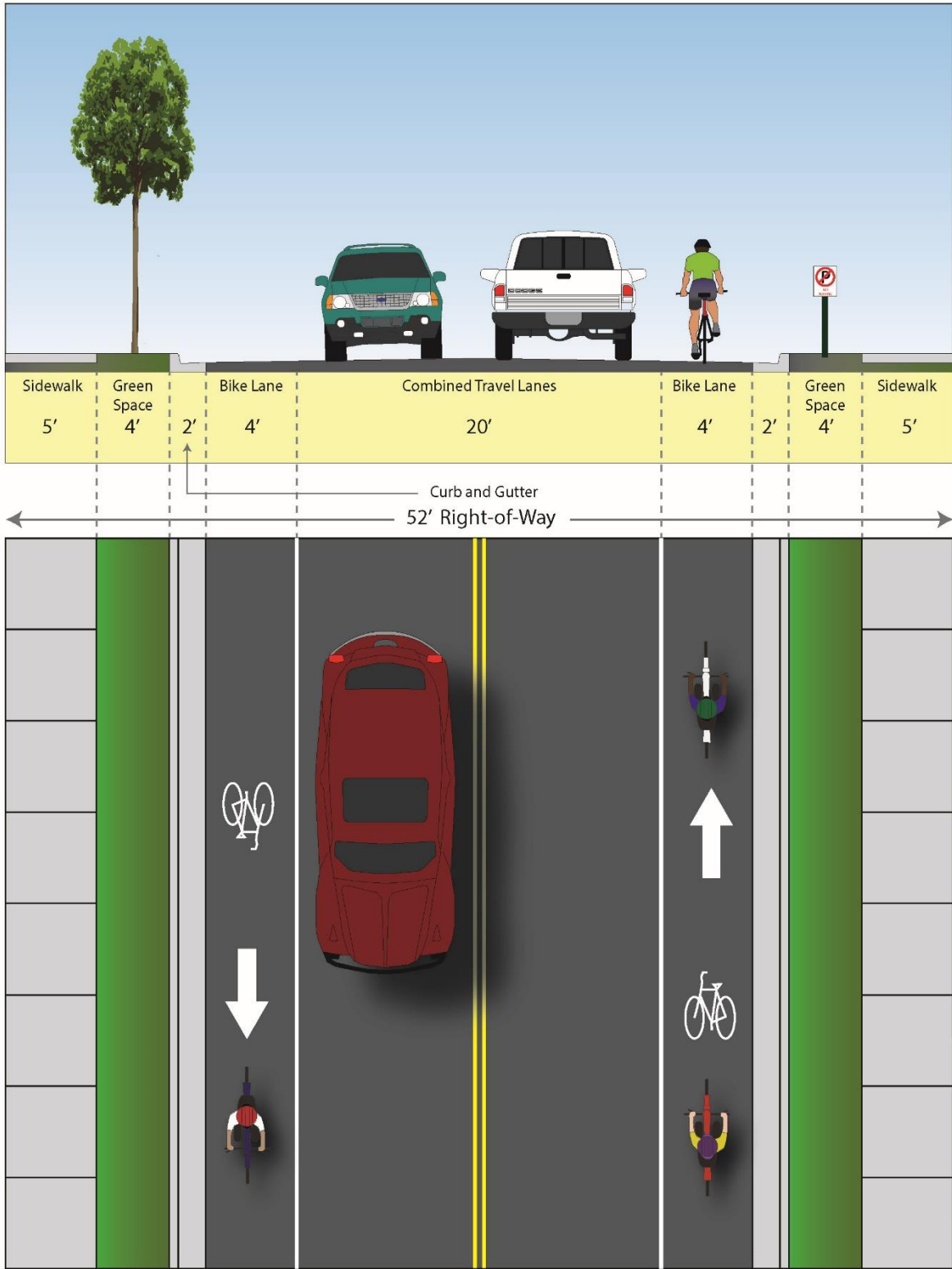
L2.0 – Local Street with Parking Lane

Sidewalk	Green Space		Travel Lane	Travel Lane	Parking Lane		Sidewalk/ Urban Trail
5'	4'	2'	10'	11'	9'	2'	7'

Curb and Gutter
50' Right-of-Way
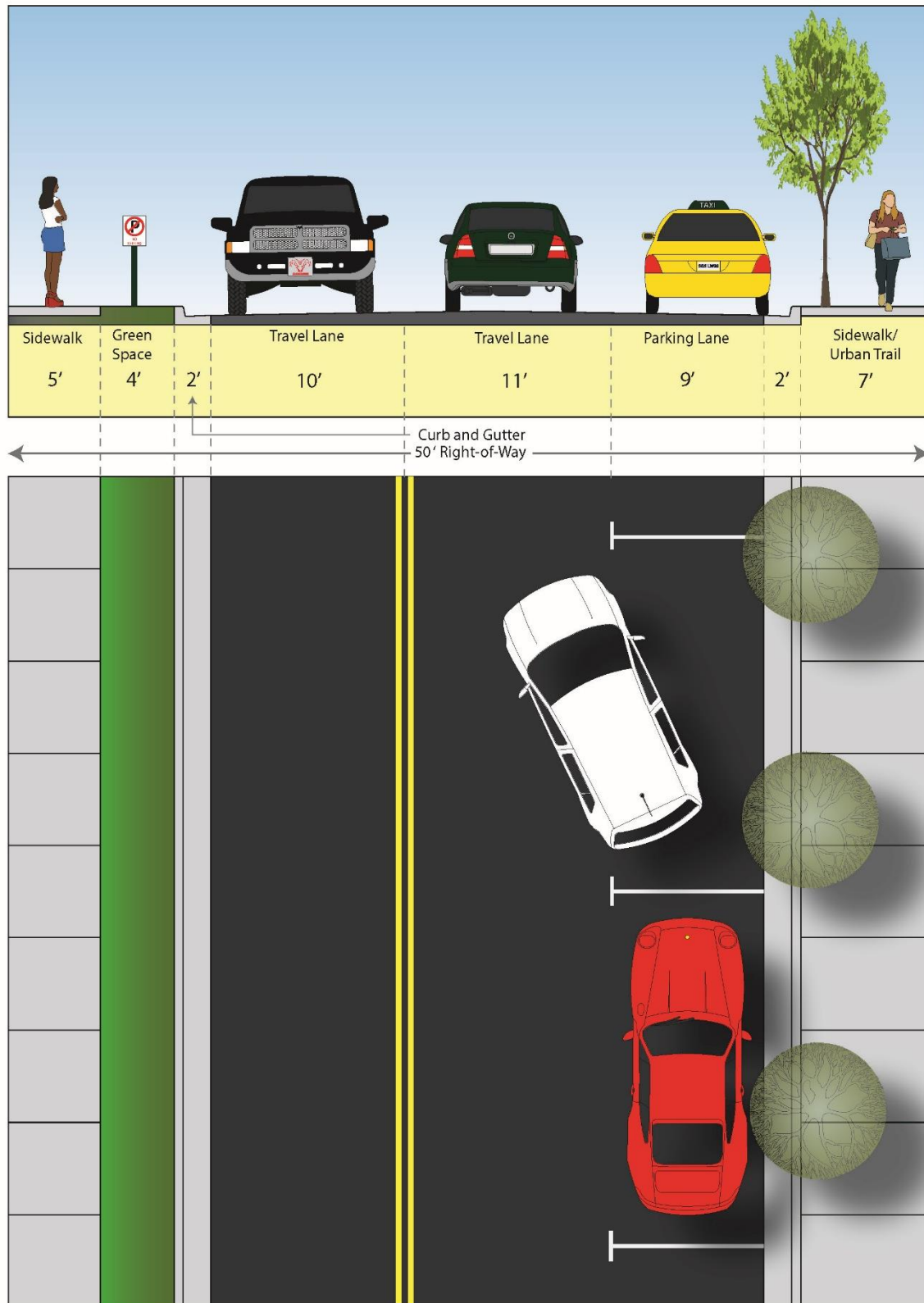
L3.0 – Local Street – No Curb and Gutter

Chapter Seven: Plan Map