



CHAPTER EIGHT

CITY OF SHAWNEE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GROWTH CAPACITY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Shawnee is enjoying a period of steady growth. In fact, Shawnee is the rare community that currently seems to have control over its destiny. The combination of two universities, a technology center, a general aviation airport, proximity to Oklahoma City, and location along Interstate 40 coupled with a strong sense of small town character make Shawnee a community that could be appealing to most Americans. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to build upon these resources, enhance overall quality of life and, if the community so desires, allow for growth.

With growth and demand comes the need to address supply and capacity. From a resident's perspective capacity is the difference between feeling safe and unsafe, inconvenienced or inconvenienced, healthy or unhealthy. Capacity is the ability to adequately provide available land, an appropriate balance of uses, a quality street network, water and wastewater service, ample park space, and adequate health and safety services for both existing and new residents and businesses.

The Growth Capacity Element specifically responds to four important questions:

- ◆ What are current conditions?
- ◆ What stands in the path of growth?
- ◆ What is the preferred method of growth?
- ◆ How does the City get there?

To some degree, growth capacity has been addressed by prior chapters. A vision has been established. Issues related to land use, transportation,

housing and image have been discussed and solutions for future development have been established. The Growth Capacity Element summarizes the various resource and policy decisions already discussed throughout the Comprehensive Plan related to growth. It also describes the state of additional resources such as water and wastewater that are important to continued development. At the same time it examines local constraints on growth such as floodplain and the need to increase household income. Finally, the element presents strategies for creating a formal growth policy for the City of Shawnee.

KEY GROWTH CAPACITY ISSUES

Sufficient resources and revenue. As discussed, the ability to grow hinges upon the ability to successfully meet land use, housing, transportation, water, wastewater and other needs that impact quality of life. The majority of resources are met by the public sector, particularly the City of Shawnee. Providing quality amenities requires an adequate stream of revenue that is generally derived from the local tax base. Increasing the quality of amenities cannot occur without added cost. Therefore, the City of Shawnee will be left with three alternatives. The community can opt to shift resources between programs or projects, which will result in reducing the quality of other amenities or services. Raising taxes to increase revenue is a relatively unpopular activity. A third alternative is to increase the tax base by increasing the income and buying power of the average Shawnee household and by attracting additional businesses to the community.

Existing development constraints. Location of the City of Shawnee and the historic development pattern of the community result in several physical constraints that impact the extent and pattern of growth. Floodplains, for example, are an item that can be addressed through flood improvements. At the same time, waterways add a distinctive feature to a community that could serve as a marketing and quality of life tool. The presence of railroads impact the community in both negative and positive ways, depending upon adjacent land uses. The lack of water and wastewater impacts lot sizes and development potential. At the same time, strategically limiting the availability of infrastructure can limit sprawl.

Growth policies. The policies enacted by the City of Shawnee and surrounding governments, including the tribal nations, have a direct impact upon the ability to adequately provide services and ensure that growth occurs in a desired manner. Several goals, objectives and action statements have been established throughout the Comprehensive Plan that impact the intensity and pattern of growth in and around Shawnee. Promoting infill development, for example, is a policy that impacts the inner city,





but also effects new construction and the location of development. Improved or new roadways can trigger land speculation, redevelopment and new development. At the same time, planning for growth requires other important choices regarding annexation, the need for adequate facilities, and the level of growth that is desirable.

GROWTH CAPACITY GOALS

Description of all of the goals related to growth capacity would, in effect, include nearly all of the goals discussed throughout this Comprehensive Plan. Rather than duplicate each of these, the Growth Capacity Element features goals that compliment those previously discussed throughout the document.

Regarding additional plans for growth, Shawnee should be recognized as a community that focuses upon:

- ◆ A healthy living environment that includes revenue streams sufficient to meet community needs;
- ◆ Adequate, quality services, facilities and programs to serve existing and new development; and,
- ◆ Strategic management of growth to encourage healthy, sensible, appealing, and cost effective development patterns.

GROWTH CAPACITY OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Goal One: A healthy living environment that includes revenue streams sufficient to meet community needs.

POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Enhance the buying power of Shawnee residents and households.
- ◆ Increase the number of residents and employees contributing to the local tax base.
- ◆ Encourage new development and redevelopment in the community.
- ◆ Expand the amount of visitors to the community as well as their general length of stay.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- ✓ Conduct an assessment of existing buying power in Shawnee as well as the community's role as a regional commercial and employment center.
- ✓ Examine and revise existing economic development strategies to incorporate and implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Create new development opportunities through adaptive reuse and by redeveloping economically unproductive

sites. Similarly, consider methods of enhancing or redeveloping marginally productive sites.

- ✓ Increase opportunities for entrepreneurship particularly in areas such as downtown where specialty services are most appropriate.
- ✓ Enhance coordination between the local education network, including the public school system, Seminole Junior College, Gordon Cooper Technology Center, OBU, and St. Gregory's and area business and industry.
- ✓ Consider research and development opportunities as an additional bridge between Gordon Cooper Technology and local industry, as well as a means of attracting additional business.
- ✓ Develop a modular housing initiative between local builders, the modular housing industry and Gordon Cooper Technology Center including a location to develop modular housing in Shawnee.
- ✓ Build upon the resources of the community, including the Expo Center, as a means of increasing areawide events and establishing a stronger tourism market.

ADEQUATE RESOURCES & SERVICES

Goal Two: Adequate, quality services, facilities and programs to serve existing and new development.

POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Ensure adequate land is available for growth, particularly in areas where growth is desired or anticipated.
- ◆ Provide services and facilities that exceed needed capacity as well as expectations of the general public.
- ◆ Coordinate with regional entities to improve communication and protect the future interests of the City of Shawnee.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- ✓ Establish criteria for annexation that will allow area residents and businesses to understand the reasons for annexation as well as the conditions under which a request for annexation may occur.
- ✓ Strategically annex areas of anticipated growth as well as those sites that impact the physical, visual and economic well-being of Shawnee, including areas east of the city where residential growth is likely to occur and locations along Interstate 40.
- ✓ Establish adequate public facilities requirements in coordination with discussion of impact fees.
- ✓ Incorporate a variety of municipal services and facilities into discussion and criteria for determination of adequate public facilities including water, wastewater, storm drainage, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency health, parks, and libraries.





- ✓ Maintain capacity for water and sewer above the required limits in order to ensure room for growth and also as a tool to encourage quality growth by surrounding jurisdictions seeking agreements to use Shawnee's resources.
- ✓ Continue in efforts to build coordination between the City of Shawnee and surrounding sovereign Native American tribes to enhance fire and police service.
- ✓ Consider a growth capacity summit between Shawnee, the sovereign tribes, and other relevant entities to build awareness, establish communication and ensure that efforts are made to ensure quality growth throughout the region.
- ✓ Research and promote proven and cost effective alternative methods of providing services such as wastewater and storm drainage where such alternatives will improve the network.

SENSIBLE GROWTH

Goal Three: Strategic management of growth to encourage healthy, sensible, appealing, and cost effective development patterns.

POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Appreciate the constraints facing Shawnee and, when possible, utilize them to the community's advantage.
- ◆ Adopt and implement the various actions throughout the Comprehensive Plan that assist in maintaining the capacity for future growth.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- ✓ Protect and utilize open spaces, particularly those where development activity is restricted such as floodplains and the Air Approach Zones, as natural and possibly recreational resources.
- ✓ Examine current parks plans to determine if local floodplains are proposed to be fully utilized as greenspaces connecting the community.
- ✓ Implement the actions discussed throughout the Comprehensive Plan as a means of improving area quality of life while also better utilizing resources.
- ✓ Inventory existing gaps in development that may be improved, if necessary, and marketed for use or reuse.
- ✓ Examine best practices throughout the country to determine if they are applicable for use in Shawnee including infill incentives, development techniques and other methods that improve capacity.
- ✓ Provide incentives to encourage development within proximity to the existing urban area and within areas of preferred development, including added density or assistance with infrastructure development.

CONSTRAINTS TO GROWTH

Constraints to development exist in every community across the country. In some cases, the constraints are severe. For example, The City of Midwest City is virtually landlocked with a significant amount of potentially available land restricted to preserve the AICUZ (Air Installation Compatible Use Zone) for Tinker Air Force Base. The City of Shawnee, on the other hand, enjoys relatively few constraints. Surrounding land is relatively available. The infrastructure system is in sound condition with no major limitations. Topography is not an obstacle and proximity to Oklahoma City ensures a ready supply of incoming residents or businesses.

Market constraints have been addressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Constrictions in the housing market that could potentially cause an increasing problem have been recognized and addressed. General land use has been analyzed to ensure that adequate space and a mix of uses is available in coming decades. The future mobility system proposes improvements to address continued movement of Shawnee to the east as well as an anticipated stretch of new development along Interstate 40. Actions are also proposed to ensure that the image of Shawnee is enhanced to increase marketability and quality life.

Following are constraints for consideration in discussion of growth capacity and development patterns. *Figure 8.1, Development Constraints*, exhibits the two physically obvious obstacles to development in Shawnee – floodplains and the Airport Approach Zones for the Shawnee Municipal Airport. While these and other issues facing Shawnee should not be considered insurmountable, they should be appreciated for their potential impact on the fabric of the community.

FLOODPLAIN

Several areas within the City of Shawnee as well as the surrounding planning area are within the 100 year floodplain, primarily as a result of proximity to the North Canadian River and its tributaries. Floodplain along the riverway is most pronounced along the southern boundary of Shawnee, as well as areas outside of city limits to the east and west. Tributaries create some flooding opportunities within the urban area of Shawnee as well as to the north in an area separating Shawnee Mall from local industry. Areas immediately adjacent to the Twin Lakes are likewise within the floodplain.

The presence of floodplains is considered to be a physical constraint to development. Local policy restricts platting within the floodplain. Elimination or major reduction of floodplain is possible, but in most areas, the environmental impact may make





significant changes difficult. Two channel modifications have occurred in the last two years in an effort to address overgrown vegetation rather than eliminate floodplain.

Recent national development trends suggest that the presence of floodplain, long considered an area with little value, can be a marketable asset. Today, many developers consider the presence of the protected natural areas to be a visual amenity. Floodplains provide a marvelous recreational opportunity that can connect neighborhoods and districts of the community. Thus, while the presence of floodplains may be a physical limitation, proximity to the natural area can also be viewed as an asset.

AIRPORTS & RAIL LINES

Shawnee Municipal Airport provides a valuable service to residents and business owners in and around Shawnee. From the standpoint of business, the airport is an obvious amenity with substantial opportunity for expansion and enhancement. Similarly, the community benefits from several rail lines that provide resources to local industry. The presence of rail and air service increase the capacity for growth in commercial and industrial development. The airport may further enhance the capacity of higher education and medical sectors by offering private air service otherwise unavailable in many similarly sized communities.

On the other hand, physical proximity to the airport and local rail lines can be considered a constraint in discussion of residential growth. Both are considered to be uses generally incompatible with housing development, although construction techniques can reduce the most glaring issue – sound. Airport approach areas directly north and south of the airport that extend in a cone shape outward from the runway are expected to remain free of new development for safety reasons.

INCOMPATIBLE USES

Generally, incompatibility between land uses exists as a result of the impacts that each use has upon the other. Farmers, for example, enjoy the option of selling land for residential development as a means of retirement or investment while homeowners enjoy the temporary agrarian surroundings. However, residents eventually begin to complain of odors, slow and heavy machinery blocking traffic and odd hours of operation while farmers become unhappy with additional trash on their property, increased pets straying into fields and irate motorists. The relationship between heavy industries, such as those along Wolverine and residential activity are even more pronounced. In each case, the capacity for growth suffers as a result of real and perceived impacts brought on by surrounding development.

This issue is primarily addressed in *Chapter 4, Land Use*, including creation of a Future Land Use Plan that promotes mixing compatible land uses while maintaining space between those that may prove problematic. In several instances, such as near the Shawnee Mall, along Harrison Street and in downtown, uses are proposed to be actively mixed between the commercial, residential and public sectors. However, in most instances, uses with an opportunity to negatively impact each other have been addressed much differently, including separation when possible.

WATER

Infrastructure is absolutely essential to quality growth in and around Shawnee. While it is entirely possible to develop without municipal water and wastewater service, it is generally inefficient, adds private maintenance and increases the risk of localized problems such as a change in the water table.

The availability of water is important for two major reasons. Most obvious is the need to meet daily water demands by area residents and businesses. However, water capacity is also based on the need to fight a major fire event.

The City of Shawnee utilizes surface water from the Twin Lakes, an area within city limits but far west of the majority of Shawnee. A recent survey conducted by city engineers indicates that the two lakes combine to provide a total of 30,701 acre feet of capacity for the City of Shawnee. Additional resources are available in surrounding reservoirs if needed, including the Wes Watkins Reservoir owned in partnership with Pottawatomie County.

The City of Shawnee has a current total water treatment capacity of approximately 13.1 million gallons per day (MGD). This is largely due to an expansion of facilities at 801 South Kickapoo in 2002 adding approximately 9.0 MGD. The original plant has a capacity of more than 4 MGD but is currently not in service and may be decommissioned.

Annually average daily usage is approximately 4.4 MGD for water service provided by the City of Shawnee. In times of peak usage, water requirements have exceeded 7.5 MGD. In both cases, usage is well within the limits of the existing water treatment and supply system.

Availability of sufficient water to address a major emergency appears to be a topic of continuing discussion by local leaders. The City currently utilizes one 1,000,000 gallon water tower, three 500,000 gallon towers, and maintains a clear well with a capacity of 1,000,000 gallons at the water treatment plant. A generator is available to provide additional water in the event that





electrical power fails. However, differences in interpretation of state requirements have resulted in discussion of whether the existing program is sufficient.

Existence of water service, like wastewater service, is considered highly desirable for healthy growth at urban or suburban densities. The absence of water or wastewater service could be considered a constraint, particularly if potential development is located an extended distance from existing urban areas.

WASTEWATER

Like water, the presence of adequate wastewater facilities is critical to healthy growth. Outside of municipal services, residents and businesses are forced to utilize individual systems that require unnecessarily large lots or use of storage systems.

The City of Shawnee operates two wastewater treatment plants with a current capacity to provide service to approximately 46,000 residents, significantly more than the current population. The Northside Wastewater Treatment Plant operates with a total capacity of approximately 3.0 million gallons per day and is expected to address large portion of new growth in Shawnee in coming years. The facility serves all of Shawnee north of a ridge dividing the city near Federal Street. Currently, the Northside Wastewater Treatment Plant processes approximately 1.4 MGD.

The Southside Wastewater Treatment Plant provides service to the remainder of Shawnee with the exception of one area within city limits that remains without municipal wastewater service. This facility serves the majority of the residential area of Shawnee as well as downtown. The facility has an operating capacity of approximately 3.1 MGD, but experiences an average daily rate of only approximately 2.0 MGD.

PREFERRED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Constraints facing the City of Shawnee have been compared to development principles applied throughout this Comprehensive Plan to determine a preferred growth scenario for residential development. The preferred scenario serves two purposes. First, it provides a glimpse into the areas deemed most appropriate for residential growth through a formal analytic process. Second, it serves as a source of comparison and validity against areas designated for residential use in the *Future Land Use Plan* featured in *Chapter 4, Land Use*. As shown in *Figure 8.2, Residential Growth Capacity*, results of the analysis are fairly similar to those of the Future Land Use Plan.

Figure 8.2, *Residential Growth Capacity* is not a measure of the space needed to accommodate growth anticipated in the immediate future. Rather, it is a glimpse at areas that offer the most capacity to support residential development given specific conditions. Figure 8.2 divides space within the City of Shawnee and the surrounding planning area into four distinct categories ranging from preferred sites for development to those that should be avoided.

Restricted from Residential Development. Areas within this category include all property estimated to be located within the 100 year floodplain; existing nonresidential areas such as St. Gregory's University and the Shawnee Mall; as well as sites reserved for future nonresidential use. Areas within the Air Approach Zone of the Shawnee Municipal Airport are also included. For purposes of incompatibility, health and safety it is recommended that residential development be strongly encouraged to locate in more appropriate areas of Shawnee.

Limited Residential Growth. For the most part, sites that offer limited residential growth capacity include remote rural areas, locations with sporadic residential development, and the area surrounding Twin Lakes. In nearly all cases, the area lacks water or sewer service and is located sufficient distance from the urban area that providing services would be costly. If residential development is necessary in this area, it is encouraged to follow the Conservation Subdivision techniques proposed for rural hamlets in *Chapter 4, Land Use*.

Recommended for Development. Sites that are recommended for residential development are not necessarily the *preferred* location for homes, but a sound alternative. The majority of this area does not include water or wastewater service, although the majority exists within current municipal limits. At the same time, areas recommended for future development are within close proximity to existing services making the provision of infrastructure and other municipal services a stronger long term investment for the residents of Shawnee. Common sense suggests that certain areas within this category have better development potential than others. The most likely candidate for near term residential development includes land located to the west of existing neighborhoods and represents an extension of recent development trends. On the other hand, the area located between Farral and River Roads is also adjacent to an existing railway and less likely to see immediate activity.

Preferred Residential Growth. In Shawnee, preferred residential growth is proposed to occur within the existing urban area through infill activity, including continued incorporation of residential units in downtown. Infill activity is among the priorities





established in *Chapter 4, Land Use* as a means of maintaining and improving existing neighborhoods throughout the community. Infill development benefits from the existing presence of infrastructure and ready access to the amenities of urban Shawnee.

SENSIBLE GROWTH

Capacity is critically impacted by the manner in which growth occurs. For example, the impact of a redevelopment project in downtown Shawnee will have a substantially different impact on the long term costs of capacity than a project located in the rural areas surrounding Twin Lakes. Both may require similar services, but the downtown project will likely already have available infrastructure. Police and fire protection will be nearby, as well as parks, medical facilities and other resources.

Development patterns and behavior are shaped by growth strategies and requirements enacted by community leaders. Those patterns and behavior directly impact the short and long term capacities of the community for growth, ranging from the availability of land to provision of services and facilities. Sensible growth requires an understood direction in which the community would like for development to occur in order to effectively manage resources. It is not an attempt to apply onerous regulations to development or restrict growth. Rather, it encourages creative, quality development within a framework determined to be in the best interest for all of Shawnee.

Chapter 4, Land Use, discussed several strategies for growing sensibly, including use of infill, redevelopment, adequate public facilities requirements, planned unit development, and annexation. Other chapters continued that discussion through neighborhood revitalization strategies, appropriate location and design of mobility systems, and creation of a strong sense of place. In terms of capacity, these issues with in coordination with provision of needed infrastructure and other resources, as well as the availability of land.

COST EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Statistics indicate that the water and wastewater systems in Shawnee can support new construction. However, new construction comes with cost. Water and wastewater lines must be installed. Depending upon slope, lift stations may be necessary. Site runoff is certain to increase without the provision of stormwater detention and drainage. Each system is expensive to construct as well as maintain and while the initial cost of construction is often the responsibility of the developer, the long range maintenance rests with the City of Shawnee. This may not impact the immediate capacity of the existing system, but the cost

of maintenance may create a financial burden for the community over the long term.

Over the *short term*, the cost of adding capacity can be “reduced” by use of impact fees. Through impact fees the cost of adding water and sewer capacity is passed on to the buyer in an assessed fee. The fee is generally based upon the cost of any additional capacity that is required as a result of the development. Impact fees have been adopted by numerous cities throughout the country as a means of charging the cost to only those individuals that created the added demand.

Two methods can be utilized to reduce the *long term* cost of infrastructure:

Require development to occur in proximity to existing services. The primary long term expense of infrastructure is ongoing upkeep and improvement, including the numerous pipes required to move water, wastewater and storm drainage from one point to another. Development in proximity to existing urban activity does not have the extended cost of stretching service from existing lines to the new development. Project and maintenance costs are reduced. Communities have utilized a number of methods to require development within proximity to the existing urban area. In most extreme cases, an urban growth boundary is established to limit growth to within a designated area. Others simply apply a requirement to locate within a specific distance of existing services.

Utilize alternative treatment systems. The standard approach to water, wastewater and storm drainage are truly works of engineering prowess that have proven to be effective in virtually all conditions. However, a combination of new technology and natural techniques have proven to be equally capable of meeting needs in a manner that may be more effective and cost efficient, less maintenance intensive and environmentally friendly. Storm drainage, for example, is designed to quickly move stormwater to a detention area or to a waterway for dispersal. Combined with large impervious surfaces and manicured lawns, the process ensures that relatively little local stormwater permeates on site or is allowed to filter contaminants prior to entering the waterway. However, in Prairie Crossing, a development in Grayslake, Illinois, the developer utilized a “water management system” designed to improve on site permeation and infiltration. Using native grasses, a natural swale system and wetlands, the developer successfully reduced runoff by 65 percent and the amount of contaminants by 85 to 100 percent.

Similar examples exist for a variety of infrastructure alternatives. In each case, the intent is not to eliminate traditional





infrastructure systems, but to reduce required capacity or service in appropriate situations.

HEALTH, SAFETY & OTHER AMENITIES

Often forgotten in discussion of capacity are services such as fire protection, law enforcement, recreation, health services, education, and other services and facilities. Location and patterns of development have a direct impact on the ability to adequately provide services. Unfortunately, many of the individuals that move to areas such as the lease lots along Twin Lakes, do so with the expectation for the same level of fire and police protection as they enjoyed while living in a Shawnee neighborhood.

Sprawl is particularly burdensome for provision of adequate services and facilities. Communities that spread with decreasing density find that financial capacity is stretched and services increased with little gain in tax revenue, particularly sales tax revenue. One obvious solution to this issue is development at increased density and in close proximity to existing development.

A second alternative is development of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). This permits growth to occur in any area, but only after services and facilities have been made available for the area. An APFO requires all applicants for new development to demonstrate that facilities and services will be available to serve the project at the time the development is available for occupancy. Utilizing this system, Shawnee could adopt a level-of-service standard to be used as criteria for approving or denying applications. An APFO could be used for any particular public facilities or services including water, wastewater, recreation, law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency health.

ANNEXATION PLAN & POLICIES

Annexation is very rarely a popular item; however, it is one of the most powerful tools available to cities for directing and influencing growth. Annexation allows Shawnee to extend its municipal services, regulations, voting privileges, and taxing authority to new territories. The city annexes to provide municipal services to developed and developing areas and to exercise regulatory authority necessary to protect public health, safety and general welfare. It is also a means of ensuring that residents and businesses that benefit from access to municipal facilities and services share in the burden of constructing and maintaining those resources.

Annexation is also a means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. In the various elements of the plan, goals, objectives and action statements propose recommendations that could involve annexation. *Chapter 4, Land Use*, makes a number of land use

recommendations in areas outside of current municipal limits, particularly along Interstate 40 for commercial and residential activity as well as to the east of Shawnee where continued residential development is expected. *Chapter 7, Image & Design*, discusses beautification of corridors and creation of gateways into the community.

Annexation regulations are being modified across the nation as state legislatures respond to increasing public debate over annexation. Recent changes in state law in Oklahoma now require strip annexation that surrounds three sides of a parcel to have a minimum width of 300 feet. Additionally, notification is required to all persons adjacent to the strip being annexed, as well as those that are directly impacted. Fortunately, only a single area in western Shawnee is impacted by the new legislation.

Based upon findings throughout the Comprehensive Plan, recommendations for annexation policy include:

- ◆ Consider landowner-initiated annexation requests, taking into account the projected fiscal impact and less tangible “pros” and “cons” of each potential annexation.
- ◆ Establish clear guidelines within which annexations may be proposed such as potential limits on the number of acres or households, capital expenditures required to extend services, or distance from municipal limits.
- ◆ Utilize annexation to extend Shawnee’s jurisdiction in areas of anticipated growth in which the city prefers control prior to development. Areas should include “gateways” into the community and anticipated areas of residential growth to the east.
- ◆ Consider applying fiscal impact analysis techniques to assess the estimated costs of providing services against potential benefits.
- ◆ Examine the possibility of acquiring sites through annexation that may be “less than favorable” if unique health, safety, environmental, and public welfare issues are proven to be at stake.
- ◆ Extend jurisdiction to encompass critical public facilities which require protection and management through Shawnee’s development ordinances, infrastructure standards and other regulatory powers, as has been done to protect the Twin Lakes.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

As previously discussed, building capacity is also a matter of having the resources needed for expansion, including finances, equipment, materials, and well-trained staff. Without adequate





resources, the existing system of infrastructure and services is difficult to maintain or expand.

In Shawnee, capacity is literally tied to the tax base – specifically, the sales tax base. For capacity to increase, the amount of sales tax received by the City must increase. Certainly increasing taxes is an option. However, a better approach is to increase consumption. Three approaches are available to increase consumption, including:

- ◆ Enhanced buying power of local residents and employees;
- ◆ Increased economic development and redevelopment activity; and,
- ◆ Expanded consumption by tourists and others outside of Shawnee.

ENHANCING LOCAL BUYING POWER

Household income is relatively low in the City of Shawnee. As a result, the ability to consume is likewise limited. This is termed as “local buying power” – the fiscal capacity of local households to consume, including home payments, car payments and other major expenditures. Enhancing local buying power is a matter of economics and opportunity. Higher wage jobs must be introduced into the job market. At the same time, the labor pool must be sufficiently trained to successfully fill new jobs.

The best resource for enhancing the local labor pool is Gordon Cooper Technology Center. The center is the only school in Shawnee designed to enhance the skills of the local labor pool without the need for full, four year degree. Seminole Junior College also provides opportunities, but is located outside of the community. Programs at the Gordon Cooper Technology Center are often crafted in coordination with local industries and businesses in order to provide an appropriately trained labor pool. A unique example of coordination includes a program with Tinker Air Force Base in which students are trained to become aircraft mechanics. The program is based upon a need to train new staff in light of a potential shortage as current mechanics approach retirement age. In this program, students are guaranteed employment following the completion of course work.

Other opportunities for enhancing the skills of local employees and creating job opportunities should be actively encouraged. For example, in an interesting and innovative approach to addressing housing and economic development issues, the Plan Advisory Committee proposed a unique partnership between local builders and the Gordon Cooper Technology Center. While the committee found the possibility of supporting modular housing as a midrange, affordable housing option appealing, many were concerned that an influx of modular housing could result in a loss

of area construction jobs. As an alternative, the committee suggested development of a modular unit construction facility in Shawnee that could build modular housing at any desired price range and in coordination, rather than competition, with local builders. Involvement of Gordon Cooper Technology Center would allow craftsman to be trained to work in the facility. Additionally, the facility could be utilized for research as a means of improving modular housing technology.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT

Building capacity requires creating jobs. New development and redevelopment will be extremely important to any effort to expand the community's tax base. In addition to higher wage, higher skill jobs, the presence of new jobs increases sales tax revenues through sheer volume. Shawnee has dedicated a number of areas to commercial and industrial activity with the intent of attracting new businesses and convincing existing businesses to expand.

Economic development efforts in Shawnee are assisted through the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce and the Shawnee Economic Development Foundation, as well as other organizations in the community. The Economic Development Foundation offers assistance through a number of activities and programs including:

- ◆ Labor surveys specific to need;
- ◆ Local and state sales and ad valorem tax abatement;
- ◆ Double investment tax credits (if located within an Enterprise Zone);
- ◆ Shared ownership of industrial facilities; and,
- ◆ Support for a number of financing programs, including a revolving loan fund.

THE OUT OF TOWN DOLLAR

The local economy can also be improved by looking to capture more revenue from people living *outside* of the community. From this perspective, Shawnee is in a very desirable position to increase sales tax from outside revenue by enhancing its role as:

- ◆ a regional destination for nearby residents;
- ◆ a stop for travelers on their way to another destination; and,
- ◆ a daytrip or cultural tourist attraction.

While this plan is not designed with a direct focus on economic development, many of the various action statements throughout the Comprehensive Plan can result in attracting more people from outside of the area and inviting them to spend time and money. Enhancement of the small town atmosphere of the community





and continued redevelopment of downtown Shawnee can increase the appeal of the community. Enhancing the area surrounding the Shawnee Expo Center could increase the community's attraction for hosting annual events and ensure that the visitor's experience is convenient and enjoyable. More activity near the Shawnee Mall, particularly if designed as a destination district rather than a strip of isolated commercial developments, could allow Shawnee to further become a regional alternative to traveling into Oklahoma City.

CITY PLANNING, REGIONAL THINKING

The City of Shawnee appears to be fortunate to be surrounded by land available for growth. Municipal limits are currently only limited by the boundaries for the City of Tecumseh to the south. However, in this case looks are somewhat deceiving. While few municipalities bar the city's opportunities for growth, other entities do. Rural water districts in surrounding areas provide water service. The sovereign tribal nations of the Sac & Fox, Absentee Shawnee, Pottawatomie and Kickapoo spread across the immediate area. In both instances the City of Shawnee is free to annex property; however, their abilities to provide services and collect revenue are reduced. In the case of property within sovereign tribal land, the City may not collect any revenue or exert legal authority. In areas under jurisdiction of a rural water district, the city cannot provide water service or otherwise compete with the district.

Thus, while appearances indicate a nearly clear opportunity for growth, reality is that Shawnee is not entirely in control of its ability to expand. To address this, the city must be able to begin to think beyond the scope of municipal limits or the planning area to a more regional scale. Decisions made by area rural water districts, the sovereign tribes, Pottawatomie County, and the City of Tecumseh regarding growth or development policies can have a positive or negative impact upon Shawnee. For example, rural water districts, initially created to provide adequate service to area farmers, could permit poorly designed subdivisions to be developed. As a result, a tool initially designed to protect the interest and viability of farmers has become a mechanism for promoting urban sprawl.

The Growth Capacity Element recognizes the need for regional planning as led by the City of Shawnee. Regionalism does not mean that each jurisdiction give up its sense of independence. Rather, regionalism recognizes that the actions of one entity in an area have the ability to impact surrounding entities. In some cases, the impact can be positive. However, other decisions may negatively effect the surrounding area or present the region with long term consequences.

One of the most effective forms of regionalism is respect for each jurisdiction's right to independently act in the best interest of its constituents. Each entity agrees to communication and open dialog with the intent of keeping neighbors informed of local activity and seeking ways in which activities can be conducted to everyone's mutual benefit.

The City of Shawnee is currently coordinating with surrounding entities on a variety of proposed activities. The tribal nations, for example, do not necessarily have the capacity to construct a large scale water or wastewater system. In this, the sovereign tribes seek service from the City of Shawnee. The Absentee Shawnee are currently working together with municipal leadership to extend sewer service nearly six miles to the east of city limits for the purposes of building a new casino. The pressurized line will further bolster wastewater capacity in the area and may well hasten residential development in areas suggested by the Comprehensive Plan as recommended locations for expansion. In another example, the City of Shawnee has discussed the possibility of working with the Sac and Fox Tribe for purposes of construction and use of a new fire station. The Tribe would agree to provide the land and construct the facility if the City of Shawnee would be willing to operate the site.

