

## 5.0 Summary

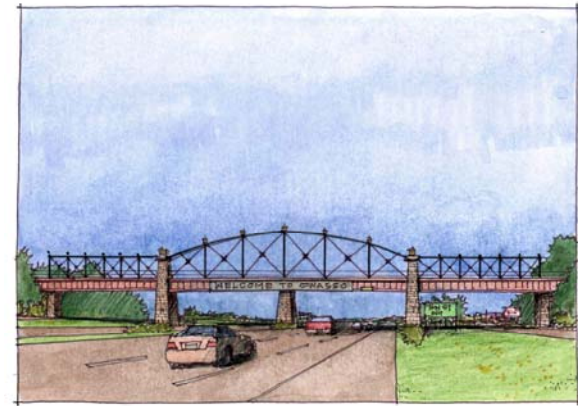
## 5.1 Next Steps

A bold Quality of Life Initiative would be a community investment that would pay off almost immediately – and well into the future. *The continuous growth of the community and the aging of existing facilities require taking action soon to make Owasso an attractive place to live and for business investment.* Owasso's comprehensive and long-range quality of life plan must provide the basis for the future development of amenities. Without adequate planning, quality of life improvements may not be given the appropriate priorities, may not be properly located, or may not even be realized; Owasso may never have that "wow" factor.

Owasso's next generation depends on today's leaders to continue to lay a strong base for their future. A bold approach to improving quality of life by providing attractive public amenities also works in establishing a sound financial position for the city. Just like a business or a home, a city must reinvest in order to maintain the soundness and value of the original investment.

The decision for a city to reinvest is difficult because of the political and financial risk involved. Owasso, like every city or family, has an abundance of needs and limited resources to apply to those needs. So, it is only natural that when faced with a decision to invest tax dollars into projects that provide solutions to meet short and long term needs, there will be discussion about whether or not the decision is a good one.

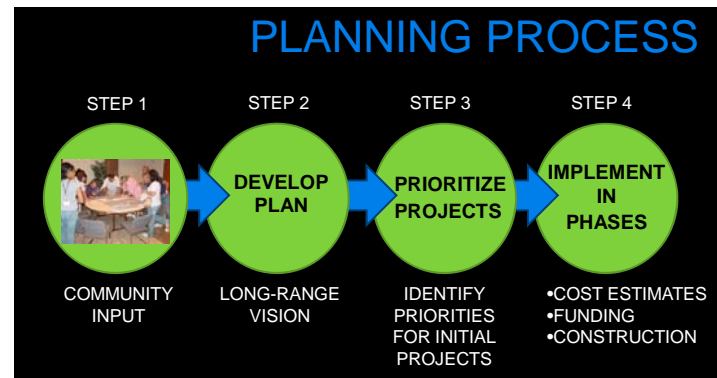
*Over the years, Owasso's leaders have recognized the need for reinvesting in facilities and infrastructure. The strategy of reinvesting in infrastructure has a demonstrated history of success. By any measure, the citizen-taxpayer has received a good return on his investment in Owasso. As the city continues to grow in the coming years, there will be significant needs to*





improve streets, utilities and other essential elements. This plan recommends implementing quality of life elements within a balanced strategy that includes basic infrastructure improvements as well as enhancements and amenities. It is now important for a city that values the investment of its residents to remain vigorous and make wise decisions concerning quality of life. A sound reinvestment strategy is critical to the long-term livability and fiscal stability of Owasso.

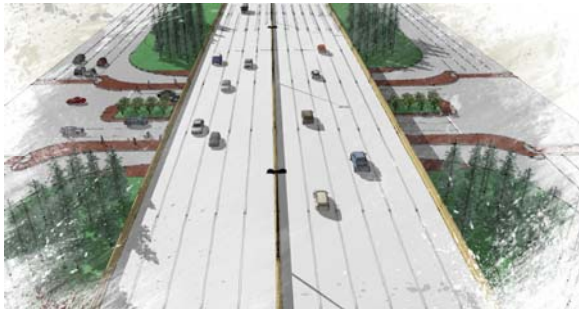
As illustrated in the diagram below, planning for Owasso’s future growth and quality of life is a long-term process, with a number of steps to be accomplished in the right sequence. As described earlier in this study, an important first step for this project has been to create opportunities for meaningful input from citizens regarding their goals, desires and concerns. The second major effort has been the creation of a long-range vision for proposed quality of life enhancements, which has been included with section 4 of this study. There are also several important tasks that will need to be completed by the community as an ongoing effort. The third step involves the establishment of priorities, from the broad range of proposed elements, to create a phased implementation strategy. This effort should be done as a partnership between Owasso citizens and city leaders. The development of priorities should also be done in coordination with the Capital Improvements Strategic Plan that is currently underway.



Following the development of priorities for both short and long-term quality of life projects, the final step is to fund and implement specific improvements. This step involves a number of tasks that generally include preparation of cost estimates, funding, development of detailed project designs / construction plans, and construction / implementation. To assist with the preparation of an accurate project budget, which is essential in the efforts to fund specific improvements, it may be necessary to complete more detailed plans for quality of life elements that have been proposed. These preliminary plans would develop site specific drawings for the individual elements that were included in the previous section of this study. A significant benefit of these plans will be the ability to do accurate cost estimating from scaled plans for specific projects. Additional planning may include the preparation of a Recreation Plan, which would specific enhancements for existing parks as well as locations and elements for new parks. A detailed Greenbelt / Trails Plan and a Streetscaping Plan can also provide useful guidance for identifying and implementing phased projects.

Once individual projects have been prioritized and project budgets have been established, potential funding sources can be determined that best fit the specific projects. Depending on the nature of the project, funding may include a combination of sources (private, public, grants, non-profit foundations, etc.) Public funding may include a combination of city, county, state and federal sources. Many of the proposed quality of life elements are either low cost or no-cost, with programs and initiatives that encourage citizen participation in creating a better community. It is also important to note that proposed community features include a number of elements that would be privately funded, such as the creation of a pedestrian-oriented mixed use development. Partnerships between the public and private sectors should be pursued where possible. Success in obtaining project funding will require persistence, creativity and pursuing all possible sources.





## 5.2 Keys to Success

The proposed elements that comprise the Owasso Quality of Life Initiative are ambitious, and reflect “The City Without Limits” spirit and the goal to become a great community. What will it take to succeed? The following discussion outlines several essential keys to implement this long-range vision for Owasso.

### Community Consensus

Long-term success in enhancing the city’s quality of life will require true consensus within Owasso including citizens, city leaders, and the business community. It will take a real partnership, with all stakeholders working together to reach a common goal and shared vision. An important step in the planning process for the Quality of Life Initiative has been a major civic engagement campaign, with residents being able to voice their desires early in the project. As a result, the ideas and priorities of Owasso’s residents have been a very important element in the creation of proposed community features. Ultimately, the Quality of Life Initiative will only be successful if there is true buy-in from the community: this must be Owasso’s plan.

### Committed Leadership

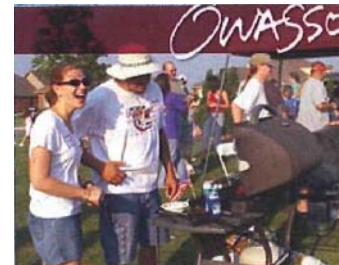
As a long-range plan that identifies proposed enhancements for the city, this initiative will require on-going and dedicated leadership. This leadership must include all segments of the community: City representatives, business leaders, civic groups, and the community at large. Effective leadership will take a long-range focus, persistence, energy and passion to help Owasso reach its full potential.

### Citizen Involvement and Community Pride

Successful implementation of the Quality of Life Initiative will only be possible through community-wide action and pride. It is important for Owasso's citizens to individually and collectively take ownership in the desire to make Owasso a better community today than it was yesterday. Many of the recommendations that are part of this study are initiatives and programs that simply involve participation from citizens in helping Owasso become a sustainable community that values the environment, neighborhood vitality, and healthy lifestyles. Citizens can also join with their neighborhood, church, school or civic group to become actively engaged in implementing quality of life features. Owasso residents have already demonstrated their willingness to get involved with their community; one of the best examples is the planning and construction of Funtastic Island in Owasso's Sports Park. In a weeklong process, families, neighbors and friends came together to build a large-scale play area that has become a popular recreational destination. The creativity and teamwork that made this effort a success can become a model for repeating this type of community action on future enhancement projects

### Flexibility

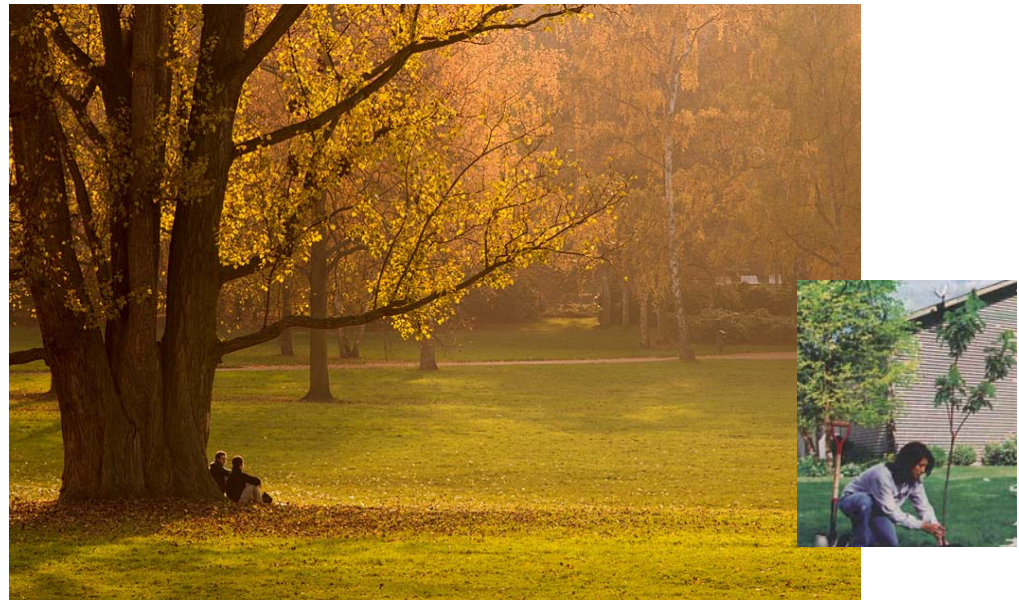
Because our society is changing so rapidly, it is essential to re-evaluate this plan on a regular basis. The recommendations and proposals that are relevant today must be updated in the years and decades ahead to ensure that they meet the changing needs of Owasso's citizens.





### Visible Success

Building and maintaining momentum for any long-term project is important, and the Quality of Life Initiative is no exception. As projects are completed - one by one - the community will be energized by seeing tangible signs of positive change. Completion of larger projects provides instant recognition that improvements and enhancements are occurring that add to the enjoyment of living in Owasso. It is equally important to recognize that no step forward is insignificant. Progress can be as simple as a homeowner planting a small tree that years from now will provide wonderful shade and clean air. Or, a school child who runs home to tell his parents about new ideas for healthy eating or fitness. It can be as simple as a neighborhood beautifying their entry, a civic group adopting a mile of highway to pick up litter or a business that is adding jobs because they like what is going on in Owasso. Every household that makes a commitment to recycling or composting helps to make a more sustainable community.



## Conclusion

The goals that the City has already achieved have been reached by focusing on the future and recognizing how the community can be even better tomorrow than it is right now. The Owasso of today has many very good things: community spirit, neighborhoods, schools, churches, parks and places to shop. But, the Owasso of tomorrow has opportunities for *greatness!* The proposed quality of life elements and strategies are intended to become the “building blocks” for Owasso to reach its full potential in the future. The plan is based upon the foundational idea of building upon the existing community strengths to add the missing elements that would create an attitude of “*why would you want to live anywhere else?*” The Owasso Quality of Life Initiative was also designed to create a community that will be just as good an investment 20 years from now as it is today. Creating this type of community will take leadership and commitment. It will take an investment of time and resources. But, the results will be very worthwhile.

*Quality of life has now become an issue that deserves major focus and attention. It is time to work together to make Owasso a community that its children and grandchildren will be proud to call home. A true city without limits!*

