



# **ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS**

**ASSET MAPPING**

**PIPER BOTT • SARIKA REGMI • PRAMISTHA JOSHI • TAHSIN TABASSUM • JACOB NEAL**





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# ASSET MAPPING



Asset Mapping: A map highlighting the people, places, events, organizations, businesses, and spaces that are life-giving to a community.

Definition taken from “240916\_Class”



Our asset map started with locations known to Google Maps (houses, businesses, spaces) and expanded to locally-known assets after speaking to Taft residents.



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Objective n° 1

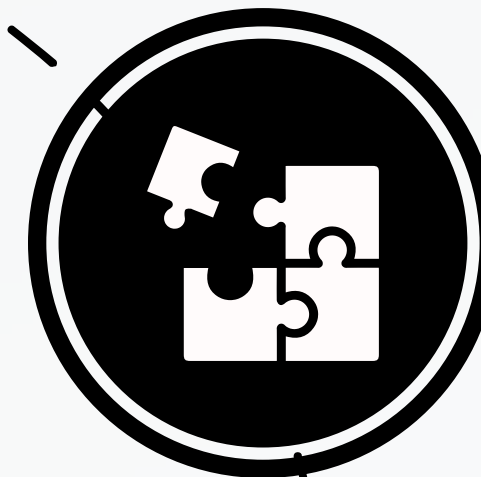
Our activity was intended to create a current map of all assets within Taft, OK. This began by first creating a map of all listed assets known on Google Maps (houses, businesses, amenities, public works).

## Objective n° 2

Our goal for the engagement activity was to update the created map with current assets. This was done through having residents identify locations throughout their town.

## Objective n° 3

Our next goal is to take the given asset data and create a zoning map that best reflects the current layout of Taft. Making use of the Taft-approved asset map will ensure that any created zoning will not conflict with existing assets.





# SPATIAL ELEMENTS

- Small town covering 1.5 square miles (960 acres), maintaining a unique small-town character.
- Significant population declined from 772 in 1940 to 250 today.
- The depreciated buildings and empty spaces reflect the decline of the town.

## Old Taft Road:

- Once the town's main commercial street, it is now largely abandoned after the construction of Highway 82.
- Also known as East and West M.L.K
- Most public spaces are near this road: The fire department, city hall, and Boot's Cafe.



Old Taft Road



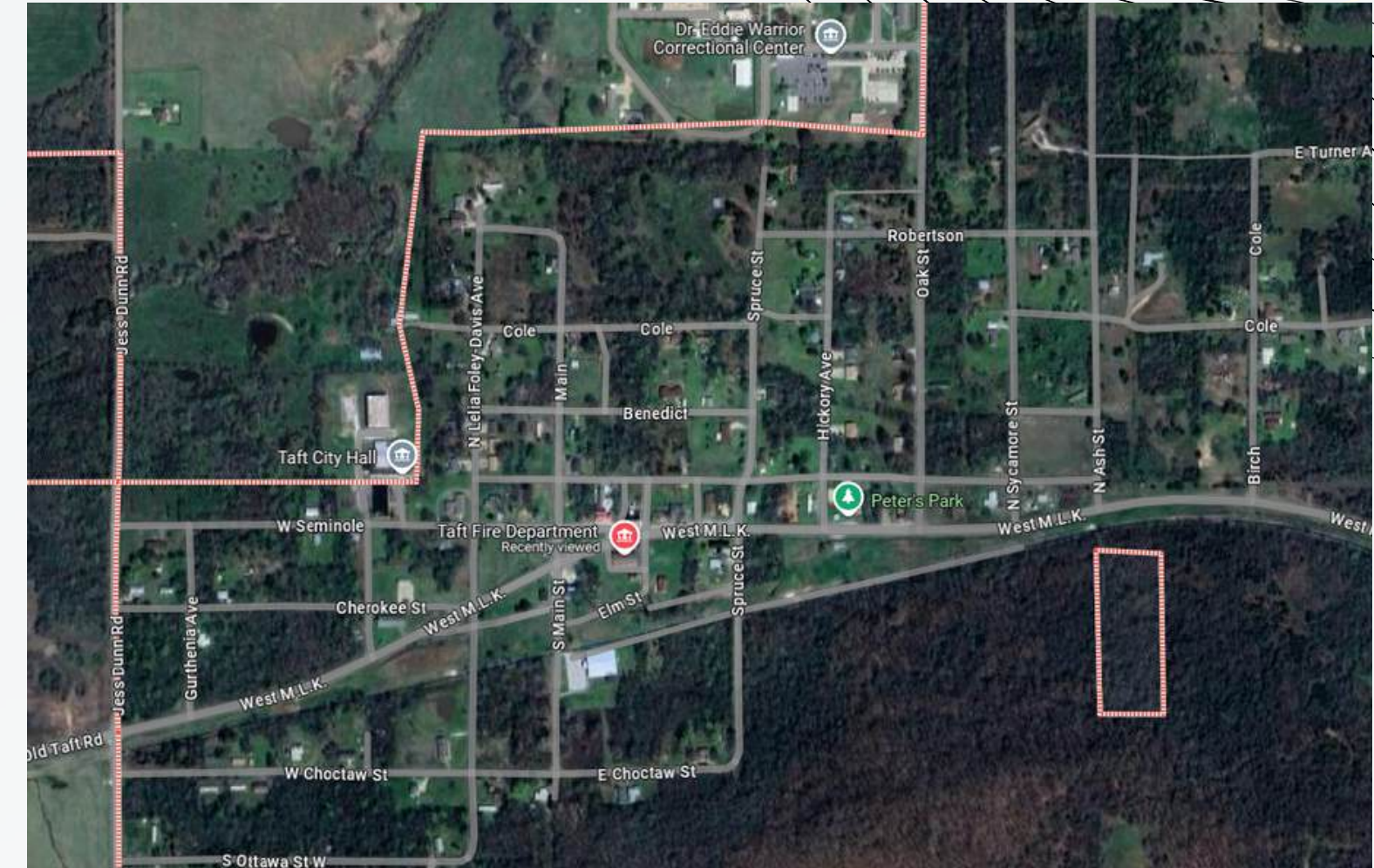
# SPATIAL ELEMENTS

## Downtown core:

- Primary infrastructure and services like City Hall, Taft Fire Department, and Peter's Park.

## Residential Clustering:

- Housing near downtown fosters social interaction.
- Limited housing also exists near the correctional center.



## Downtown Taft



## Peter's Park



## Panther Trail

## Key Gathering Spaces:

- Peter's Park, City Hall, and the Taft Fire Department provide venues for family gatherings and youth activities.
- The **Taft Walking Trail** spans one mile and currently houses an outdoor exercise activity.
- Some mentioned engaging in waterfront activities, listing the Arkansas River and the Taft Lakes.



# SPATIAL ELEMENTS



## *Negative Impacts*

### **Economic Dependence:**

- Limited local businesses drive residents to travel outside Taft for basic needs. This has led to a gap in the local economy.

### **Abandoned Spaces:**

- Old Taft Road and vacant buildings reflect past vibrancy but create a less dynamic environment today.
- There were mentions of buildings being owned by people who no longer reside within Taft, likely unaware of the state of disrepair their building have fallen into.

## *Positive Impacts*

### **Community Cohesion:**

- The proximity of homes to downtown encourages social interactions and easy access to community hubs.

### **Recreational Spaces:**

- Parks and lakes support community events and gatherings.
- Lack of formal gathering spaces has led personal homes into filling the gaps, with mentions of front porch gathering spots and home-based birthday parties when held in town.







# PATTERN SUMMARY

For our project, we performed a form of participatory mapping known as asset mapping. We asked the residents of Taft to use stickers to highlight important places in the community such as residences, park spaces, and more. The following slides will elaborate upon this more succinctly.





01

02

03

04

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**MAPPING**

We identified the key components of a community that the residents of Taft cherished the most besides their homes. For the citizens of Taft, many identified that recreational, community, and cultural spaces were significant.

**ENGAGEMENT**


Through our engagement activity, we learned the importance that economic growth and cultural identity has to the people of Taft as they look to the future.

**COMPILATION**

Through our interactions with community members and officials, we learned that the people of Taft all share a common goal: to make others see and love the community the same way they do through developmental means.

**ZONING**







By the end of the engagement activity, the most common answer we heard from Taft citizens was the need for commercial grocery space, and a close second was recreational green space.



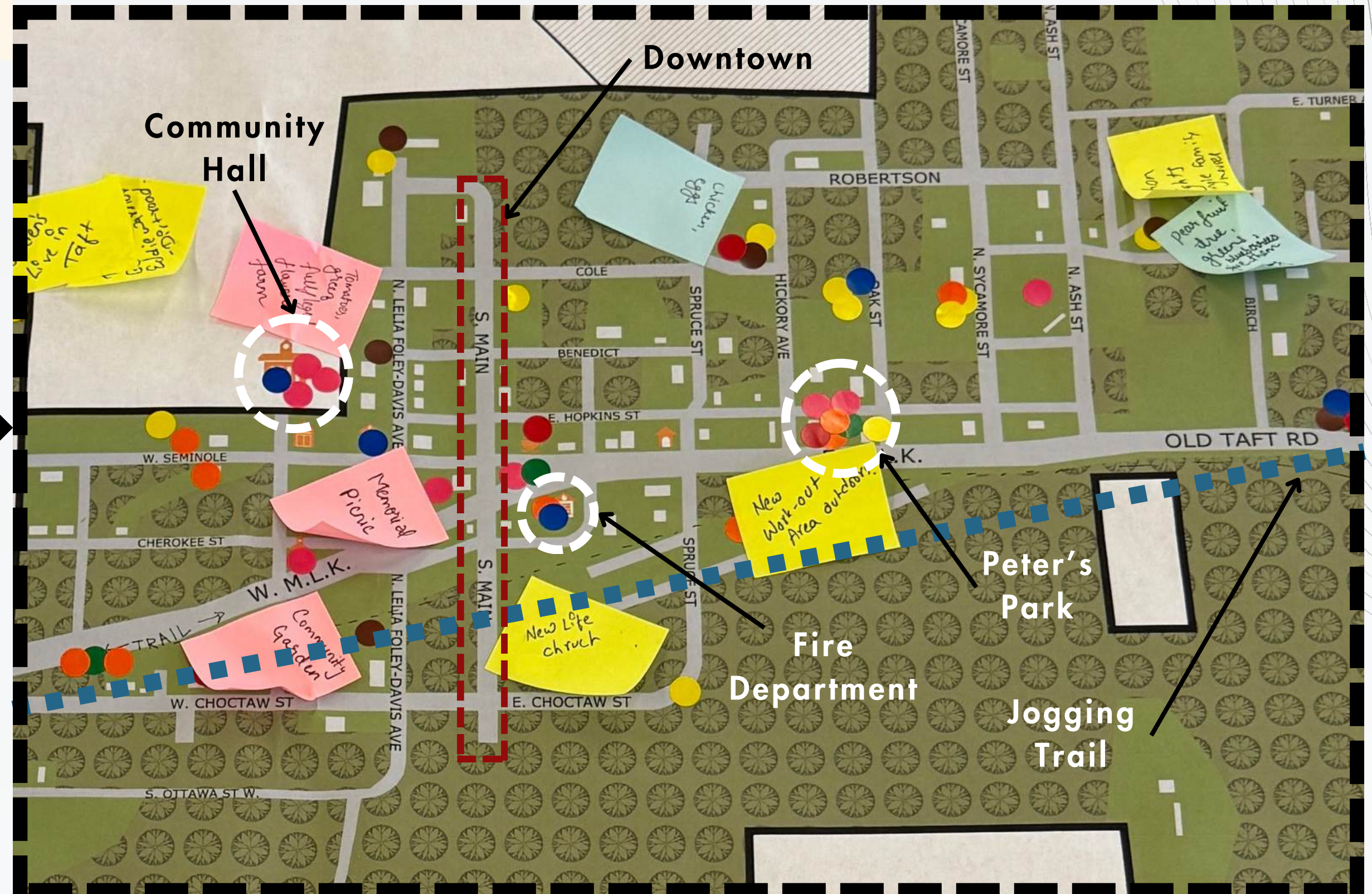


Place these stickers to identify the valuable assets of Taft!

Where you celebrate Juneteenth festival?  
Where do you hang out on weekends?

-  Festivals/Communal space
-  Residences
-  Green spaces/Parks
-  Agriculture/farms (private)
-  Work places
-  Hangout spot
-  Business/retail

# MAJOR THEMES



Gathering Space



# MAJOR THEMES

## CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

- Taft strongly emphasizes preserving its heritage, exemplified by its celebration of historical events, such as the rodeo culture and memorial dances on South Main Street. These traditions connect residents to the town's past and promote community pride.
- Festivals like the Fall Festival, Juneteenth Festival and Halloween gatherings offer opportunities for connection and cultural expression, bringing together residents and even attracting visitors from outside the town. Such events reinforce the town's identity and unity, providing occasions for joy and cultural continuity within the community.



*Taft people celebrating Juneteenth Festival*



# MAJOR THEMES

## COMMERCIAL SPACES FOR BASIC AMENITIES

- The economic fabric of Taft reflects a mix of small-scale entrepreneurship and community-driven markets. Residents engage in small-scale farming and home-based businesses, such as selling eggs, jams, and produce during festivals.
- The town's vision includes expanding these efforts, potentially establishing a farmer's market to boost local commerce and economic self-sufficiency. There is a clear aspiration for more essential services like grocery stores and gas stations to reduce residents' reliance on neighboring areas and foster a local economy rooted in community-driven commerce.



***Boots Cafe- The only cafe in Taft***



***Taft People selling food in Juneteenth Festival***



# MAJOR THEMES

## COMMUNITY SPACES AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

- Existing community gathering spaces include gardens, the fire department, and private homes, creating a close-knit but spatially limited layout. Investments like the jogging trail with an outdoor exercise area show a community-driven approach to enhancing wellness and safety.
- However, there is a need for more public spaces to support broader social gatherings, recreational activities, and community engagement. Improved public infrastructure can strengthen Taft's ability to connect, celebrate, and provide services within the community.



**Annual Fashion & Talent Show, Memorial Weekend - Taft,**

*Annual Fashion and Talent Show at the City Hall*



# MAJOR THEMES

## EDUCATION AND RECREATION

- Residents highlighted a lack of educational and recreational facilities, requiring children to travel to Muskogee for school and activities.
- There is a collective desire to bring these opportunities into Taft, creating a more self-reliant and family-oriented community. Initiatives like dance programs, sports, and youth events within Taft would enhance the town's vibrancy, meeting the needs of younger generations and fostering community cohesion through shared learning and play spaces.



*Children waiting for the Memorial Day Parade*



# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## 01

### EMPHASIZE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Developing local services that meet basic needs, such as grocery stores and educational facilities, is essential. This step toward self-sufficiency will reduce residents' reliance on nearby towns and encourage a sustainable, community-centered approach to development.

## 02

### PRIORITIZE MULTI-GENERATIONAL SPACES

Planning spaces that cater to both youth and seniors will bridge generational divides, offering inclusive places that strengthen social bonds and meet the needs of all age groups.

## 03

### SUPPORT CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Zoning that accommodates small businesses and supports cultural events will enhance economic resilience and preserve Taft's unique heritage. Integrating spaces that encourage entrepreneurship and celebrate local traditions can foster a vibrant community that attracts both residents and visitors.

**THANK YOU**

