



## Imagine Durant Thought Leaders Dialogue Participants

### **Citizens**

Libby Callicoa  
Hal Johnson  
Phyllis Elrod  
Fran Mickle

### **Business**

Greg Massey – CEO First United Bank  
Ahmad El-Katib – Choctaw  
Development Fund Manager  
Seth Fairchild – Executive Director of  
Chahta Foundation  
Greg Phillips – State Farm Insurance –  
Chief Volunteer Officer for Boys &  
Girls Club  
David Burrage - Attorney

### **Civil Society**

Taylor Downs – Elementary Teacher  
Nancy Farris – 3 Valley Museum  
Jon Hazell – High School Teacher  
Riley Russo Coker - Oklahoma  
Shakespearean Festival  
Stacy Shepherd – Executive Officer of  
Member Services for Choctaw Nation  
Ryan Spring – Director of Historic  
Preservation Dept. for Choctaw Nation  
Robee Tonubbee – Library Director

Larry Paschall – Program Director of  
Boys & Girls Club  
Janie Umsted – Artist, Director of  
SOSU Art Gallery

### **Civic Managers**

JJ Wilson – City Projects Manager  
Duane Merideth – Durant Public  
Schools  
Sean Burrage – SOSU President  
Valerie Crabtree – Principal of NWH

### **Imagine Durant**

Sean Burrage, Imagine Durant  
Director  
Kara Byrd, Imagine Durant Executive  
Director  
Sandra Jones, Scribe  
Russell Jones, Photographer  
Greg Massey, Imagine Durant Chair

### **Integral City Team**

Marilyn Hamilton, Ph.D., Team Leader  
Scott Moore, Principal Community  
Builder

## Day 1: Imagine Durant Convenes Dialogue 8



Imagine Durant, a community-based initiative for creating a unified vision and the strategies to implement it, convened a dialogue for local Thought Leaders on October 28 -29, 2016. Along with Marilyn Hamilton, Ph.D., and her team from Integral City, the dialogue set out to expand upon the 2015 and 2016 momentum of 7 previous dialogues exploring the Economy & Community and Health & Environment, in a process of civic engagement with a strategic purpose of thinking about Durant. Participants came from the four voices of the city – Citizens, Civic Managers, Civil Society and Business – plus the Choctaw Nation – and were taken through a series of exercises in order to gather ideas for expanding the Big, Long Term and Global thinking of the community moving forward.

The diversity of the participants ranged from fourth generation residents, like Janie Umstead, including many with Choctaw heritage, to those with shorter histories as Durant citizens, such as Elizabeth Callicoat who has lived in Durant for four months. It is this combination of contributors that make dialogues and discoveries so rich and varied.

The group gathered together Friday evening over a meal at the SOSU Visual & Performing Arts Center. Executive Director, Kara Byrd began the evening with sharing her passion for Imagine Durant and its purpose. She then introduced Sean Burrage, President of Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Director of Imagine Durant. He reflected on the venue being a bowling alley years past and

remarked on how things change. He followed this up about a story of how changes can happen to a city but if the city doesn't have a plan for those changes, necessary infrastructure improvements down the road will be much more costly. He then went on to thank Mr. Greg Massey and Chief Gary Batton for being the founders of Imagine Durant.

**“Imagine Durant owes its existence to Chief Gary Batton and Greg Massey.”**

***President Sean Burrage***

Imagine Durant began three years ago, as the result of a conversation over lunch between Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton and Greg Massey, CEO, First United Bank. Massey expressed his passion for Imagine Durant and how it takes everyone in the community to come together and work together to develop the right plan.

**“[It is amazing] the power you have when you have a strategy. A strategy helps you grow in the right way. When you can integrate all parts and pieces of the community working together to create a unified vision, the community becomes stronger.”**

***Greg Massey, Chair Imagine Durant***

The intentions of the Imagine Durant Dialogue series are to:

- Create interpersonal connections across the diversities of the city – age, gender, students, workers, employers, ethnicity, race, etc.
- Create connections between people's perspectives of the city's potential
- Discover common ground to build on and respect differences that make a difference
- Imagine how we can improve the quality of Durant's wellbeing in a way that is supportive of all over the next 30 years and find next steps to make that possible

### **We Tell Stories of Culture and Learning Education**

After dinner, participants were asked to share a brief story about a specific time when they experienced a remarkable learning experience or cultural moment that connected them to Durant.

Scott Moore, Blue Star Integrated Studio and Integral City Team Member, began by expressing how important story telling is because it carries over generation to generation. The stories told will manifest in the plans and buildings of Durant for years to come.

**“There is a strong connectivity in the city and that is the true power and beauty of Durant.”**

***Scott Moore***

Many stories revolved around the culture of people believing in each other and helping others in the community.

Seth Fairchild, Choctaw Nation, recalled a time when he was interviewing a Choctaw elder and the elder told a story of having hope despite the hard times. The story illustrated the innate positive attitude that is in Durant.

**“No matter good times or bad times, we always overcome.”**

***Seth Fairchild***

Phyllis Elrod, Texoma Arts Association, further echoes the story of a helping community by the culture she observed here when she moved to Durant from Tulsa. Her mother and father in-law owned a grocery store and many times people were unable to pay but they would still allow them to get groceries. Those times of giving were not forgotten because remarkably in later times, some of the children of those who had received the benefit returned to pay off the long-ago debt.

**“Education is important, heritage is very important.”**

***Phyllis Elrod***

Education stories were also heard around the room. Many stories told of Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) being the driving force of coming to Durant, but the culture is what made them stay.

Kara Byrd, Imagine Durant Director, came to SOSU from Atoka. Her father graduated college 8 years before she did and was the first person in her family to do so. Her grandmother’s biggest dream was for her grandchildren to graduate from college and it was the driving force for Kara to continue with her education.

**“I never thought Durant would feel like home but it does.”**

***Kara Byrd***

Taylor Downs, Elementary Teacher, weaved together the themes of culture and

education by telling how he now teaches right next door to his own 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher and how it means something to know the people in your community. Education plays a vital role and teachers must be a positive influence for their students and the community.

**“The culture of Durant tells the story of a tight knit community”**

***Taylor Downs***

Valarie Crabtree, Principal of Northwest Heights Elementary School, echoed Downs’ tight knit community sentiment by stating her family has had many opportunities to live elsewhere but they keep coming back to Durant. The community offers so much and is so supportive that they have chosen to live here. Education (isn’t all about information but it) all comes back to the relationships you build.

**“The culture of Durant is that we all support each other”**

***Valarie Crabtree***

Jon Hazell, High School Teacher, and Oklahoma Teacher of the Year 2016, further illustrated the idea of culture and education being a blended concept. He plays a big part in helping local children to experience a happy Christmas by coordinating the program, *Give a Kid a Christmas*. Last year, he had a record number of 114 students show up to give their time and energy to shop for local children in need. Hazell says that it proves what his father always told him about the attitude of people.

**“Things change and get difficult but the hearts of kids don’t change. They are waiting on someone to give them the opportunity to work outside themselves.”**

***Jon Hazell***

## **Day 2: A New Story Emerges**

Participants were seated in a circle as they gathered together on day two to collect ideas for improving the culture and learning environment of the city.

The intention of the circle was to remind everyone of the unity needed for a successful dialogue. Those present were encouraged to be open and share, while also being aware of their role and responsibility to the community and each other.

Guidelines were shared for a generative dialogue:

- **Listen compassionately**
- **Honor and respect each other's contributions**
- **Speak from your own experience**
- **Avoid criticism and persuasion and agree to disagree**
- **Be aware of how often and how long you speak**
- **Seek to understand and learn**
- **Make sure everyone has a chance to speak**

### **An Interactive Panel: Scans Learning/Education, Culture & Future Trends**

The day began with participants receiving a folder with the ESRI analysis of Durant's top seven socio-economic population profiles (see Appendix B for Page 1 of 3 of each Profile Summary) and descriptions of its key educational institutions.

Four professionals then shared their expertise about the culture and education of Durant: Duane Merideth, Sean Burrage, Ryan Spring, Nancy Farris

#### ***Duane Merideth, Superintendent Durant Public Schools: Learning & Education Scan***

Duane Merideth began by stating that the success of Durant schools is due to the staff and the excellent job they are doing. He then went on to discuss the background of the district and how it is growing by 30 to 40 percent each year. This growth presents a problem for Durant schools as it looks to how it can provide space for the growing number of students with its current infrastructure and ever continuing state budget cuts. Merideth also praised the community of Durant for passing needed bond issues that allow the school to make improvements to the district, as our schools continue to grow.

The population of the Durant campuses include:

- North West Heights Elementary – 627
- Robert E Lee Elementary – 262
- Washington Irving – 629
- Intermediate (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade) – 759
- Middle School – 491
- High School & Vision Academy – 951



**“As educators, we find a way to make it work and our kids don’t suffer because we have great, resourceful folks.”**

***Duane Merideth***

Merideth then went on to praise the students of Durant by comparing the ACT Composite Scores for Durant Public Schools at 22.3, to the State score of 20.4 and the National score of 20.8

**“We feel very blessed that our school district is supported by our great community.”**

***Duane Merideth***

***Sean Burrage, President SOSU: Learning & Education Scan***

Sean Burrage began by giving a background of how SOSU started and how fortunate Durant is to have a university. Many cities were competing to have a university established in their town and Durant was chosen. In 1909, SOSU began as a “normal school” - an institution to teach people how to be teachers, indicating the deep roots Durant has for education.

According to Burrage, changes in education are pointing towards more flexible learning such as more demand for online classes. In fact, one-third of all classes are available online. Masters programs are shorter because people no longer have 2 years to dedicate solely to earning a degree. Our population demographics demand that people continue to work full time while also earning a degree. Because of this, by August of 2017, all Masters of Education programs will be completely online.

**“People want a more efficient means to earn a Master’s degree. Things are changing in higher education.”**

As of August 2016, SOSU freshman enrollment has climbed 9% and graduate enrollment has also seen an upswing by 10%.



## ***Ryan Spring, Choctaw Nation: Culture Scan***

From a Choctaw perspective, culture has been passed down for many generations.

- Culture – Education is important to be invested in. Since 1818, the Choctaws have been sending tribe members to get educated and come back to the tribe and community to benefit them. As a forward-looking culture, Choctaws are always looking to sustainability in the environment and education. Making sure the Choctaw people and community are successful is important. Actions speak louder than words and the tribe has shown some great actions to supporting the community. (The story of the Choctaw donating to the Irish in the 1848 Irish Potato Famine was repeated.)

**“We firmly believe in faith, family and culture. Part of Choctaw culture is investing in education.”**

***Ryan Spring***

- Family – is important. The focus is on the youth and the elders because the elders will pass on the wisdom to the youth.
- Faith – is the most important part. Faith is the foundation of our success and of who we are. God granted our values and our way of life to us including our leadership style and our mentality for the way we do business. This is the most important part that ties everything back together. It’s that culture that makes our community great.



***Nancy Farris, Three Valley Museum: Culture Scan***

What is culture? It is the shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterize a group.

But, before talking about culture we must first understand our history. Durant has long tried to look for a theme for our city and how we market our culture and heritage. We've used magnolia trees, our farming history of cotton and the world's largest peanut, ranching and our Choctaw cultural pride. SOSU boasted teachers from Juilliard – the most prestigious art school in New York.

**“Education became an integral piece that shaped our culture.”**

***Nancy Farris***

All of these influences developed our community into a melting pot similar to a stew with the ingredients co-existing and flavors complementing each other, but it takes organizations like Imagine Durant, Durant Main Street and others who work tirelessly to perfect this creamy sauce.

**“I see our culture [is] a delicious blend of many different spices – each bringing that certain individual zip to the palate by working together to perfect the stew.”**

***Nancy Farris***



## Small Group Dialogue: Current & Future Assets, Needs Hopes for Learning/Education & Culture

As participants rotated through a series of small groups, they focused their attention on assessing the current state of Durant's culture and learning/education, as well as what it might look like to have a vibrant cultural life and vibrant learning and education community in 30 years.



### ***Walking the Halls of Learning: Current State of Learning Education***

Many positive attributes came out of these discussions included possible partnerships between the education systems. The Durant School System, along with Southeastern Oklahoma State University are seen as bringing world class learning opportunities to our students. Durant schools have a large percentage of teachers with a Master's degree and the longevity of teachers in the system all point to indicators of excellence.

An area of opportunity in our current education is to change the perception of Kiamichi Technology Center by encouraging entrepreneurship in the trades. Many students are not destined to be a college student and the Technology Center is an excellent source of alternative learning.

Other facets named in relation to the current state of learning and education of Durant, as well as needs that arose include:

#### **CURRENT LEARNING & EDUCATION ASSETS**

- Vision Academy
- Public Library with its computer lab
- The technology available at the high school

- 54% of SOSU grads are the first in their family to receive a degree
- SOSU ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation of most Native American graduates
- 27.9% of high school students are enrolled concurrently at SOSU
- A school system that offers everything from K-12, Technology Center, and a University

#### **CURRENT LEARNING & EDUCATION NEEDS**

- Leaving behind the economically disadvantaged
- Getting the current generation interested in education
- Teaching students soft skills such as responsibility, perseverance, work ethics, independence, confidence and creativity
- The current cost of college
- The stigma to the Technology Center

#### ***Setting the Scene: Current State of Culture***

Thinking in terms of what is unique to the current culture in Durant, the idea of the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, which appeals to not only the younger generation but to also adults, is certainly unique to our culture. Durant also has a blending of the Choctaw culture with the Oklahoma culture and the rich history of Agriculture.



Then the question turned to, “Who are we leaving behind culturally?” Similarly to the learning and education needs, the answer was the economically disadvantaged.

Other facets named in relation to the current state of culture of Durant, as well as needs that arose include:

#### **CURRENT CULTURE ASSETS**

- OKLAHOMA SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL
- Choctaw tribal culture
- Small community
- Access to DFW
- Caring community

#### **CURRENT CULTURE NEEDS**

- Education is not seen as “culturally” important to everyone
- Parents are not aware of the Oklahoma Promise which allows students whose families earn \$50,000 or less annually, and who meet academic and conduct requirements to earn a college tuition scholarship.
- Spanish speaking residents
- No “central” news provider

#### ***Moving from Today to Tomorrow***

In terms of what could be done to correct the inequities of both the current culture and learning and education was to connect others together in the community through various channels such as healthy living groups, faith groups, clubs, farmer’s markets and similar interest groups. Bringing awareness of programs through a centralized communication source was also mentioned as a viable tool.



#### ***Winning Performance: Future Learning & Education***

Participants were asked to envision a vibrant, learning & education community in 30 years and how we can generate and nurture culturally active, engaged and adaptive learners. Thought leaders imagined that in 30 years, there would be – multiple modes of learning (traditional and online or a blended model of both) with increased accessibility where high school students would be similar to college students, in that they could pick and choose where they want to go. There would be expanded curriculum with business planning, finance and civil politics being offered.

**“A positive education experience is needed and we should consider a holistic view of a child’s learning needs”**

***Seth Fairchild***

Other Learning & Education images in 30 years:

- Career Technology would be elevated to the status of universities because important skills and trades are needed.
- A lifelong learning experience would be cultivated where those individuals who are retired are still learning.
- Every demographic is included
- Education is accessible and affordable
- Tap into elders’ wisdom as teaching to create unique opportunities to collaborate, like a village
- Travel to new cultures would be encouraged

### ***Stealing the Show: Future Culture***

Next, participants were asked to envision a vibrant future for Durant’s culture in the next 30 years. Ideas generated centered around bringing the arts and education together to generate citizens to the town:

- Loft living with coffee shops downtown, restaurants, downtown theatre
- Better parking structure downtown
- Downtown store with SOSU and DHS merchandise with student entrepreneurial workers running the store
- Integrate art with the university
- Green spaces bringing recreation and dog parks
- Bicycling/ walking downtown
- Businesses/community services would be less territorial and more willing to share resources
- Internships between businesses and education so that kids connect things to do with their education experiences



**“The more you can develop downtown with theatre and arts, now you have a synergy coming downtown and it starts building on itself.”**

*Greg Massey*

- Retain a small-town atmosphere
- Provide facilities for events and sports
- Shops/Businesses stay open later (such as 8:00 pm)
- Generate and nurture culturally active citizens
- Create internships between businesses and education so that kids connect things to do with their education experiences
- Create family friendly night life. Family oriented activities kids can do together and feel safe.
- Bring elderly together.
- Integrate Durant & Choctaws more by connecting on a government to government level
- Create art on overpasses similar to those on I40 with art etched into the structure
- Create a food forest where anyone can come in and eat healthy foods. It would be worked by non-profits, 4-H, FFA, Boys/Girls club, etc. and could even be used to bring the elderly and young together.

### **Synthesizing Discoveries: Creating SOAR Presentations**

**During the afternoon session, participants were asked to synthesize their SOAR discoveries of strengths, opportunities, assets and resources, into four different theme presentations.**

#### ***Current Learning & Education - Storyboard***

Participants were asked to develop a storyboard describing the current state of Durant Learning and Education in terms of a storyboard for a YouTube video.

The purpose of the video would be to encourage and promote community wide involvement and investment. This would be accomplished by outlining all Durant offers in terms of learning:

- Great Public Schools
- Private Schools
- Choctaw programs
- Career Technology
- SOSU
- Library Services

- Cosmetology School
- Massage Therapy School
- Music Lessons
- Art Lesson
- OSU Extension office
- Health Department
- Three Valley Museum
- Pregnancy Center
- First United Bank Financial Literacy program

A-Durant

HOW		WHAT CURRENT STATE OR EDUCATION?	WHY	INSTRUC. THROUGH IDENT. GROUP?	OF CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATION?	LEARNING IN DURANT										
Great Public Schools	Private School	CHICKEN	Current Tech	Summer School	LIBRARY	Cosmetology School	Massage Therapy	Music Lessons	OSU EXTENSION	HEALTH DEPARTMENT	3 VALLEY MUSEUM	PREGNANCY CTR	FUB			
1000 STATE COLLEGE	CHRISTIAN DUND K-12	SUMMER PROGRAM	ADULT FINANCIAL	3000 STUDENTS	CHILDREN PROGRAM	2 IN TOWN	1 IN TOWN	SUMMER SCHOOL	PRIVATE	HEALTH EDUCATION	HISTORICAL	PRENATAL	FINANCIAL LITERACY			
A=K K-3 1978		FAMILY READLINE	H.S. EDUCATION	OK. SINGING	LITERACY PROGRAM			DAU/MOT								
4-6 75		HEAD START	CAREER TRAINING	BOOKING & ARTS	CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM											
7-8		GED		BOOKING & ARTS	ADULT TECH EDUCATION											
NOT 213 BUT SQUAD		CHRISTIAN U		PROVIDING ONLINE COURSE	STEM SCIENCE PROGRAM											
		POSSE SUMMER PROGRAM		PROVIDING ONLINE COURSE	COMPUTER											
BRAND				RENTAL ECU	GENEALOGY											
SUMMER PROGRAM				J. P. MUSEUM	VA ASSISTANCE											
ADULT FINANCIAL LITERACY				FINANCIAL LITERACY												
ADULT FINANCIAL LITERACY				ADULT FINANCIAL LITERACY												

The immediate outcome of this exercise was eye opening for the participants who were not aware of all the learning opportunities currently offered in Durant. One such example is the public library, which is an underutilized but rich resource. The library offers a wide range of services including a Children’s Program, Literacy Program, Citizenship Program, Adult Technology Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Program, V.A. (Veteran’s Affairs) Assistance, and Genealogy services and genealogy books.



### ***Future Learning & Education - Sports Play***

Participants in this group were asked to envision the future of learning and education using a sports playbook. Thought leaders imagined they were building a fantasy football team, using members of the community for each facet.

### **Line Up**

1. Team = SOSU, Public citizens, Technology Centers, Choctaw Nation, Child Care & Senior Care
2. Special Teams = Boys & Girls Club, Sports, Arts, Theatre, Library, Churches
3. Cheerleaders = Imagine Durant & Businesses
4. Coaches = Duane Merideth, Sean Burrage, Chief Gary Batton and Greg Massey.
5. Free Agent = Would like to sign a long contract with Kiamichi Technology Center as a running back
6. Opponents = Status Quo, Ignorance
7. Fans = Citizens of Durant



**“To win the game to put us in a better position 30 years from now will take Collaboration between team members and the fans. Collaboration is the hardest part!”**

***Ahmad El-Katib***

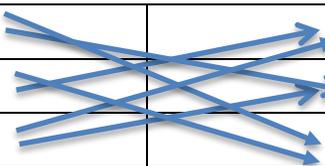
### ***Current Culture – Visual Art***

This group was given various items and asked to create a visual art piece depicting the current culture of Durant. The thought leaders developed a scene with agriculture, arts, theatre, downtown, schools and Choctaw culture all having a place on the board.



### ***Future Culture – 6 Word Play***

Participants in this group were asked to develop a 6 Word Play describing how they see the future culture of Durant. Thought leaders chose potent words with polarities that cross connected and challenged assumptions about the future: “Unknown opportunities + collaborative information = models success”.

<b>Unknown</b>		<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Collaborative</b>		<b>Information</b>
<b>Models</b>		<b>Success</b>

**“There are a lot of opportunities that are hidden. Not everyone sees things from the same perspective. While one of you is looking at one place, someone can see what you can’t see because you’re in it. Everyone needs to participate because everyone’s got an answer and something to give to the group and when you collaborate and share that information you’ll be able to model success”**

***Jon Hazell***



## Moving to Action: 2016 Signs of Progress & 2046 Early Wins

The afternoon sessions continued with participants asked to identify 2016 Signs of Progress that could move Durant to action for both Learning & Education and Culture. Working together the small group discussions also discovered Early Wins that could lead to successes in the future for 2046 Learning & Education and Culture. (See Appendix A for Small Group Discussion Notes). The groups were then asked to choose the most important items for action as set out below.

### **2016 Signs of Progress - Learning & Education**

Top votes for 2016 Signs of Progress in Learning & Education included these resources, strengths and assets:

1. School Development Projects (High School, Vision Academy)

**“Businesses look at school districts first before coming into a community because they want a good education for their children”**

*Duane Merideth*

2. Army of Volunteers

**“This is huge because without this, nothing happens”**

*Duane Merideth*

3. Expansion of Infrastructure/Services (Bypass, Library, Museum)
4. New Residents – Fresh Perspectives become realities
5. New Businesses (CMC, Cardinal Glass, Big Lots, Choctaw Development)



## **2016 Signs of Progress – Culture**

Top votes for 2016 Signs of Progress in Culture included:

1. Continued growth through teaming with Choctaws
2. The new Lodge being put in by the Chickasaw Nation will pull traffic through Durant area as they come up from Dallas/Ft. Worth – used to bring in 3-5 million visitors a year
3. Choctaw Nation moving to downtown in historic courts building – catalyst for downtown growth
4. Official designation for Durant Arts District (possibly at 9th street) requires city stakeholders to work out details with zoning and streets
5. 27.9% increase in concurrent enrollment of SE University by high school students seeking pre-collegiate credit hours
6. City needs to rework side streets to improve traffic flow (for example: tear down houses and widen these to increase circulation). Look at Evergreen and Arkansas streets
7. Airport expansion to new terminal
8. Imagine Durant has created a space for the community to have open dialogue and sharing of ideas. This increases collaboration and partnerships around common vision
9. Supportive environment for small business growth through education and training increases local community vibrancy
10. Volume of money invested and reinvested in the community Ex: Believe in Buy Local, Think Local



## **2046 Story of Early Wins – Learning & Education**

Top votes for 2046 Early Wins in Learning & Education that we can nurture today included:

1. Collaboration with Communication Outlets (social media, marketing, local newspaper, Times Square Style Marquees on old theatre, Community Theatre billboard, Food Forest)
2. Make OKLAHOMA SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL World Class drama event – Community Theatre – Dinner Theatre. Joining with Choctaw and Cultural Center with their Amphitheatre
3. Food Forest -  
Open sourcing of food for the community.  
Elders giving knowledge to younger people wanting to learn how to grow their own food.



## **2046 Story of Early Wins – Culture**

Top votes for 2046 Early Wins in Culture that we can amplify today included:

1. Use Solar Energy – Electronic Marquees on Main Street– similar to Times Square in NYC and Electronic Marques on ramp to city (the sails coming/going out of the city)
2. Develop and maintain list of Events on Local News – Still a lot of disconnected news sources (people’s own websites, newspapers)
3. Connect 100% Citizens on Internet (big Businesses donate depreciated equipment so all citizens are connected with a computer/ Internet). Can be used to get information out to all citizens.



## **Collaborations**

The group was then challenged to imagine the collaborations that could be formed that would make these envisioned Signs of Progress and Early Wins become strengthened and take root. Not surprisingly the collaborations involved bringing together the 4 Voices of the Community – with key initiatives for Learning, Action, Culture/Family and Business working together (as summarized in the table below).



<b>Top Potential Collaborations</b>	<b>Faith</b>	<b>Learning/ Education</b>	<b>Sports / Action</b>	<b>Culture/ Family / NFP</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>City / County</b>	<b>Choctaw</b>	<b>Environ- ment</b>
1. OKLAHOMA SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL & Choctaws – Cultural Center		X					X	
2. Arts & Theatre & Downtown & SOSU		X		X	X			
3. Art Community (Art Corridor on 9th St) & City				X		X		
4. Choctaw Nation & SOSU & City & Arts & Education		X					X	
5. Schools (K-12, SOSU, Kiamichi) & Businesses & City		X			X	X		
6. Food Forest & Restaurants & Farmer's Market & Community Garden & Health Department & Choctaw Green House				X	X	X	X	X
7. Sports Complex & Food Trucks			X		X			
8. Lake Texoma & Choctaw & Chickasaw					X		X	
9. Colton's Run & Walking Trail (Nowa Oka)			X	X				X
10. Eco Park & Watershed & Trails			X	X				X

11. Green Spaces & Schools & Health Department		X				X		X
12. Non-Profit Organizations pool together				X				
13. Immigration families & schools & social services & businesses	X	X	X	X	X			
14. Newcomers Society & Community & Churches & Chamber of Commerce	X			X	X			
15. Sister City Collaborations						X		

### Burning Questions Can Ignite Action

At the end of the day, participants returned to the plenary circle and were asked to consider how the potential actions that they had identified might be blocked by think about the burning questions that still remained. Most questions implied the answers that could generate even greater potential for igniting the Action Ideas and Collaborations they had already set out.

Their questions clustered into themes related to Generations/Heritage, Collaboration, Funding and Strategic Process.

#### **Generations, Heritage**

1. What is our **plan to involve youth** in this dialogue? We have some very intelligent high school students that have voices that need to be heard. YAB – Youth Advisory Board have a voice in what goes on and gets scholarships
2. What are the **situations with our senior citizens** in 30 years? Especially, home bound, handicapped without family help – needy.
3. Will **immigrants and our citizens from other cultures** be disenfranchised or feel a vital part of the community?

#### **Collaboration**

4. How do we **continue to collaborate with all citizens**?
5. How do we **collaborate with all non-profits**?

#### **Funding**

6. How does the **city better develop and sustain its funding streams** – 4 primary sources for – water, sanitation, sales tax, code violations, or grants. How to get more funding

7. How do we **gather short term resources to get the city maps updated**
8. How do we **develop strategic plans set to budget** for next year?

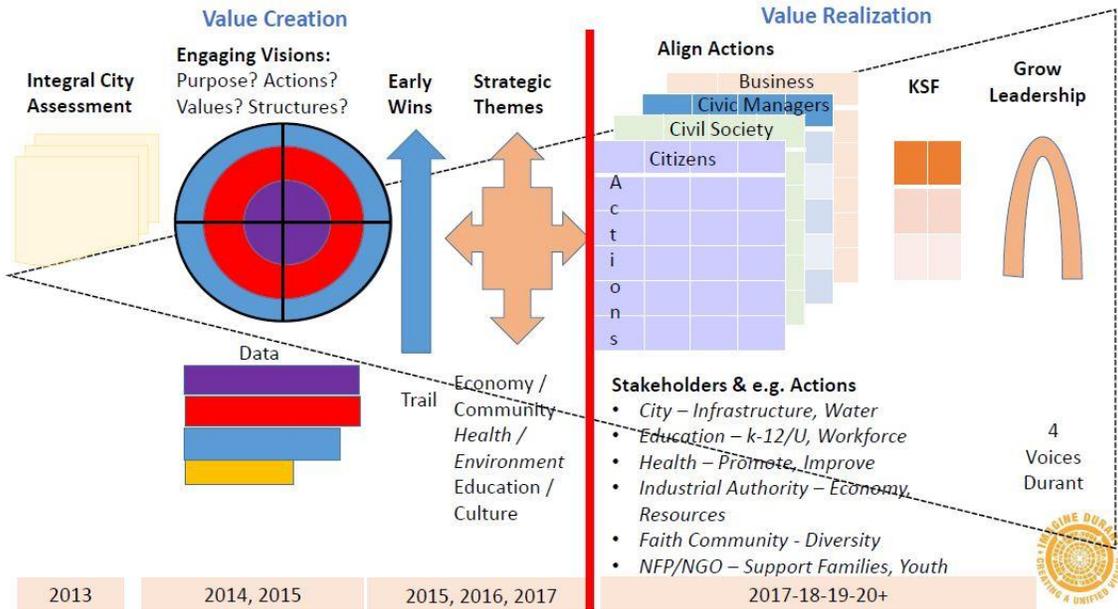
### **Strategic Process**

9. Why did we not talk today about the **school district boundaries** today and when will we do that?
10. How do we **create a volunteer database so others can utilize and** we can access the army of volunteers?
11. Who are the most **important actual decision makers, most powerful well respected people who can make some our ideas happen** and who is actually doing long range planning in our community/urban development?
12. How do we **activate the signage/marquees**?
13. How do we regulate the number of **nonprofits or combine** them?
14. What are our **biggest roadblocks to our success**?
15. What's **next step in this process**?
16. Where does this **info go from here**? How does it get acted upon?

### **Conclusion**

Imagine Durant is committed to connecting those with passion for creating a unified vision and connecting those who can develop the strategies to implement it and help make change happen. The next engagements in early 2017 will bring together all 3 Rounds of Dialogue to build the bridge from the Visioning and Values Creation phase to the Strategizing and Values Realization Phase.

Imagine Durant City Process Overview



## Appendix A: Small Group Notes from Signs of Progress and Early Wins

### Dot Votes & Other Thoughts

(yellow highlights show top choices for Dot Votes)

### Signs of Progress Learning & Education- Red Dots (A)

5 – School Development Projects (High School, Vision Academy)

4 – Army of Volunteers

3 – Expansion of Infrastructure/Services (Bypass, Library, Museum)

2 – New Residents – Fresh Perspectives

1 – New Businesses (CMC, Cardinal Glass, Big Lots, Choctaw Development)

Other thoughts (no dot votes)

- New high school
- New families
- Main Street Durant & Imagine Durant
- Expanded services to the community – food bank, Families Feeding Families
- Vision Academy / Virtual School
- Nonprofit groups – examples:
  - Boys/Girls Group
  - Pregnancy Center
  - Art Groups
- Levels of Excellence – Recognized as Leaders
  - Jon Hazell – OK State Teacher of the Year
  - Kara Byrd
  - Greg Massey
  - Chief Batton
- Career Planning – K through College
  - Teachers as Advisors
  - Direction for each student
  - Concurrent Enrollment
  - State pays tuition
  - Job Shadowing
  - Cooperation between SOSU and Grayson Community College

### Signs of Progress Culture - Blue Dots (B)

4 – Continued growth through teaming with Choctaws

3 – The new Lodge being put in by the Chickasaw Nation will pull traffic through Durant area as they come up from Dallas/Ft. Worth

2 – Choctaw Nation moving to downtown in historic courts building – catalyst for downtown growth

1 – Official designation as Arts District (possible at 9<sup>th</sup> street) and still need to work out details with zoning and streets

1 – 27.9% increase in enrollment of SE University by high schoolers seeking pre-collegiate credit hours

1 – Need to rework side streets to improve traffic flow (example: tear down houses and widen these to increase circulation). Look at Evergreen and Arkansas streets

1 – Airport expansion to new terminal

1 – Imagine Durant has created a space for the community to have open dialogue and sharing of ideas increases collaboration and partnerships around common vision

1 – Supportive environment for small business growth through education and training increases local community vibrancy

1 – Volume of money invested and reinvested in the community by the “Big Three” (i.e. Choctaw, First United and SOSU). Ex: Believe in Buy Local, Think Local

Other thoughts (no dot votes):

- Downtown still expanding (e.g. farmer’s market, arts, main street) connected to education/arts
- Increased partnerships/collaborations between the City and the Schools.  
Examples:
  - Kids use city property (ex: park) for outdoor classroom for sciences, biology, etc.
  - Older students interning at city to help while also learning
- Cross country track (\$400k grant) to be constructed near/at SOSU that connects to wider trails systems
- Increase in vibrancy of arts/culture in Durant will continue to increase a pool of families moving here seeking more
- Continual additions of course offerings at KTC is expanding education opportunities (example: bio med classes are new)
- Increased \$ investment re: improvements to existing historical buildings, streetscapes, etc., especially downtown.
- Choctaw entertainment is bringing in huge, world class performers.
- Moving arts into bigger museum location on SE University campus
- Food forest/food sovereignty initiative (Beacon forest) at Choctaw Nation.  
Expand the Beacon Forest by joining forces with SE University and FUB and pull in restaurants and schools to provide fresh, healthy foods plus teach cooking/prep
- Having access to business development assistance and entrepreneurial trainings through Choctaw Business Development, SBDC, etc.
- New Leadership! (New Chief, New Mayor, New City Manager, new (younger) City council, etc.)
- Completing of the ID Dialogues will set a path forward that has been sorely needed/long overdue
- Consistent Branding/Identity/Messaging would be a sign of progress...but it still needs to be brought to a point of solidity for Durant to claim this to be really true headed into the future.

### **Early Wins 2046 Learning & Education – Yellow Dots (C)**

5 – Collaboration with Communication Outlets

- a. Social Media
- b. Marketing
- c. Local Newspaper
- d. Times Square Marquees on old Theatre

5 – Make OKLAHOMA SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL World Class drama event – Community Theatre

5 – Food Forest

Other thoughts (no dot votes):

- Marquees near “sail boats” coming into town with activities. Also near Green Spray as a central processing point to post activities and list events.

### **Early Wins 2046 Culture - Green Dots (D) \*\*\*This group did not use all their dots\*\*\***

2 – Solar Energy – Electronic Marquees on Main Street– similar to Times Square in NYC

1 – Solar Energy – Electronic Marquees on ramp to city

1 – List of Events on Local News

1 – 100% Citizen Connected Internet (Big Business' donate depreciated equipment so all citizens are connected with a computer/ Internet

Other thoughts (no dot votes):

- YouTube Channel for the community
- Commercials
- Phone Calls/Text message you subscribe to of community events
  - Once a week – not overwhelming
- Rooftop Garden that teaches younger generations how to grow and live sustainably
- Maximizing and increasing current City/Downtown Resources
- Building computers for those without one/Free city Wi-Fi
- Multi Language City

## Appendix B: ESRI Tapestry Profiles: Summary & Page 1 (of 3)



esri

### Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile

Durant, OK  
Geography: ZIP Code

Prepared by Ahmad El-katib

#### Top Twenty Tapestry Segments

Rank	Tapestry Segment	2016 Households		2016 U.S. Households		Index
		Percent	Cumulative Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent	
1	Old and Newcomers (8F)	19.5%	19.5%	2.3%	2.3%	841
2	Set to Impress (11D)	15.6%	35.1%	1.4%	3.7%	1,120
3	In Style (5B)	14.6%	49.7%	2.3%	6.0%	647
4	Southern Satellites (10A)	11.4%	61.1%	3.2%	9.2%	360
5	Hardscrabble Road (8G)	11.1%	72.2%	1.2%	10.4%	903
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>72.2%</b>		<b>10.4%</b>		
6	College Towns (14B)	6.5%	78.7%	0.9%	11.3%	687
7	Traditional Living (12B)	5.9%	84.6%	2.0%	13.3%	303
8	Salt of the Earth (6B)	5.5%	90.1%	2.9%	16.2%	190
9	Heartland Communities (6F)	5.2%	95.3%	2.4%	18.6%	220
10	Rustbelt Traditions (5D)	3.6%	98.9%	2.2%	20.8%	163
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>26.7%</b>		<b>10.4%</b>		
11	Rooted Rural (10B)	1.0%	99.9%	2.0%	22.8%	48
12	Down the Road (10D)	0.1%	100.0%	1.1%	23.9%	8
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.1%</b>		<b>3.1%</b>		



LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

## Old and Newcomers

8F

Households: 2,774,000

Average Household Size: 2.11

Median Age: 38.5

Median Household Income: \$39,000

#### WHO ARE WE?

This market features singles' lifestyles, on a budget. The focus is more on convenience than consumerism, economy over acquisition. Old and Newcomers is composed of neighborhoods in transition, populated by renters who are just beginning their careers or retiring. Some are still in college; some are taking adult education classes. They support environmental causes and Starbucks. Age is not always obvious from their choices.

#### OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Metropolitan city dwellers.
- Predominantly single households (Index 14B), with a mix of married couples (no children); average household size lower at 2.11.
- 54% renter occupied; average rent, \$800 (Index 8B).
- 45% of housing units are single-family dwellings; 44% are multiunit buildings in older neighborhoods, built before 1980.
- Average vacancy rate at 11%.

#### SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Unemployment is lower at 7.8% (Index 91), with an average labor force participation rate of 62.6%, despite the increasing number of retired workers.
- 30% of households are currently receiving Social Security.
- 28% have a college degree (Index 99), 33% have some college education, 10% are still enrolled in college (Index 12A).
- Consumers are price aware and coupon clippers, but open to impulse buys.
- They are attentive to environmental concerns.
- They are more comfortable with the latest technology than buying a car.



Note: The index represents the ratio of the concentration to the US rate multiplied by 100. Certain segments are excluded from the US rate.



LifeMode Group: Midtown Singles  
**Set to Impress**

11D

Households: 1,657,000  
 Average Household Size: 2.10  
 Median Age: 33.1  
 Median Household Income: \$29,000

**WHO ARE WE?**

Set to Impress is depicted by medium to large multiunit apartments with lower than average rents. These apartments are often nestled in neighborhoods with other businesses or single-family housing. Nearly one in three residents is 20 to 34 years old, and over half of the homes are nonfamily households. Although many residents live alone, they preserve close connections with their family. Income levels are low; many work in food service while they are attending college. This group is always looking for a deal. They are very conscious of their image and seek to bolster their status with the latest fashion. Set to Impress residents are tapped into popular music and the local music scene.

**OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

- Apartment complexes represented by multiple multiunit structures are often nestled in neighborhoods with either single-family homes or other businesses.
- Renters make up nearly three quarters of all households.
- They're found mostly in urban areas, but also in suburbs.
- Single-person households make up over 40% of all households.
- It is easy enough to walk or bike to work for many residents.

**SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS**

- Residents are better educated and mobile.
- Unemployment is higher, although many are still enrolled in college (Index 144).
- They always have an eye out for a sale and will stock up when the price is right.
- They prefer name brands, but will buy generic when it is a better deal.
- Quick meals on the run are a reality of life.
- They're image-conscious consumers that dress to impress and often make impulse buys.
- They maintain close relationships with family.



Note: The index represents the size of the segment as a % of all households in the US. Certain preferences are assumed for use by CMR.



LifeMode Group: GenXurban  
**In Style**

5B

Households: 2,675,000  
 Average Household Size: 2.33  
 Median Age: 41.1  
 Median Household Income: \$66,000

**WHO ARE WE?**

In Style denizens embrace an urban lifestyle that includes support of the arts, travel, and extensive reading. They are connected and make full use of the advantages of mobile devices. Professional couples or single households without children, they have the time to focus on their homes and their interests. The population is slightly older and already planning for their retirement.

**OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

- City dwellers of large metropolitan areas.
- Married couples, primarily with no children (Index 112) or single households (Index 109); average household size at 2.33.
- Home ownership average at 69% (Index 108); more than half, 51%, mortgaged (Index 112).
- Primarily single-family homes, in older neighborhoods (built before 1980), with a mix of town homes (Index 133) and smaller (5-19 units) apartment buildings (Index 110).
- Median home value at \$213,500.
- Vacant housing units at 8.8%.

**SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS**

- College educated: 46% are graduates (Index 162); 75% with some college education.
- Low unemployment is at 5.6% (Index 65); higher labor force participation rate is at 68% (Index 106) with proportionately more 2-worker households (Index 112).
- Median household income of \$65,600 reveals an affluent market with income supplemented by investments (Index 143) and a substantial net worth (Index 179).
- Connected and knowledgeable, they carry smartphones and use many of the features.
- Attentive to price, they use coupons, especially mobile coupons.



Note: The index represents the size of the segment as a % of all households in the US. Certain preferences are assumed for use by CMR.



LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts  
**Southern Satellites**

10A

**Households:** 3,775,000  
**Average Household Size:** 2.65  
**Median Age:** 39.7  
**Median Household Income:** \$44,000

**WHO ARE WE?**

Southern Satellites is the second largest market found in rural settlements but within metropolitan areas located primarily in the South. This market is typically nondiverse, slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Almost two-thirds of the homes are single-family structures; a third are mobile homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

**OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

- About 79% of households are owned.
- Married couples with no children are the dominant household type, with a number of multigenerational households (Index 112).
- Most are single-family homes (65%), with a number of mobile homes (Index 523).
- Most housing units were built in 1970 or later.
- Most households own 1 or 2 vehicles, but owning 3+ vehicles is common (Index 146).

**SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS**

- Education: almost 40% have a high school diploma only (Index 137); 41% have college education (Index 72).
- Unemployment rate is 9.2%, slightly higher than the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.7%, slightly lower than the US.
- These consumers are more concerned about cost rather than quality or brand loyalty.
- They tend to be somewhat late in adopting technology.
- They obtain a disproportionate amount of their information from TV, compared to other media.



Note: The index represents the ratio of the segment to the US rate multiplied by 100. Greater percentages are marked with a + sign.



LifeMode Group: Middle Ground  
**Hardscrabble Road**

8G

**Households:** 1,489,000  
**Average Household Size:** 2.64  
**Median Age:** 31.7  
**Median Household Income:** \$26,000

**WHO ARE WE?**

Hardscrabble Road neighborhoods are in urbanized areas within central cities, with older housing, located chiefly in the Midwest and South. This slightly smaller market is primarily a family market, married couples (with and without children) and single parents. Younger, highly diverse (with higher proportions of black, multiracial, and Hispanic populations), and less educated, they work mainly in service, manufacturing, and retail trade industries. Unemployment is high (almost twice the US rate), and median household income is half the US median. Almost 1 in 3 households have income below the poverty level. Approximately 60% of householders are renters, living primarily in single-family homes, with a higher proportion of dwellings in 2-4 unit buildings. This market is struggling to get by.

**OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

- Renters: About three-fifths of households.
- Primarily family households, married couples with or without children, single parents (Index 203), and multigenerational households (Index 137).
- Primarily single-family homes (61%), with a higher proportion of dwellings in 2-4 unit buildings (Index 225).
- Older housing, built before 1960 (62%), with a higher proportion built in the 1940s (Index 211) or earlier (Index 252).
- Four-fifths of owned homes valued under \$100,000 (more than 3.5 times the US).
- Higher percentage of vacant housing units at 17% (Index 147).
- Most households with 1 or 2 vehicles (71%), but 18% have no vehicle (Index 202).

**SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS**

- Education completed: 38% with a high school diploma only (Index 133); 25% with some college or an associate's degree (Index 86).
- Unemployment rate is higher at 16.6%, almost twice the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is lower at 57.4%.
- Wages and salaries are the primary source of income for 71% of households, with contributions from Supplemental Security Income for 10% (Index 242) and public assistance for 7% (Index 280).
- These cost-conscious consumers purchase sale items in bulk and buy generic over name brands.
- They tend to save money for a specific purpose.



Note: The index represents the ratio of the segment to the US rate multiplied by 100. Greater percentages are marked with a + sign.



LifeMode Group: Scholars and Patriots

## College Towns

14B

**Households:** 1,104,000

**Average Household Size:** 2.12

**Median Age:** 24.3

**Median Household Income:** \$28,000

### WHO ARE WE?

About half the residents of *College Towns* are enrolled in college, while the rest work for a college or the services that support it. Students have busy schedules, but make time between studying and part-time jobs for socializing and sports. Students that are new to managing their own finances tend to make impulse buys and splurge on the latest fashions. This digitally engaged group uses computers and cell phones for all aspects of life including shopping, school work, news, social media, and entertainment. *College Towns* are all about new experiences, and residents seek out variety and adventure in their lives.

### OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- These are nonfamily households with many students living alone or with roommates for the first time.
- This segment is a mix of densely developed student housing and dorms with local residences.
- Off-campus, low rent apartments comprise half of the housing stock.
- Over three-quarters of the households are renter occupied, with one in ten remaining vacant.
- One-third of homes are single family; mostly occupied by local residents who own their homes.
- This market is bike and pedestrian friendly.

### SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Their limited incomes result in thrifty purchases.
- They do not eat the healthiest foods, nor do they see a doctor regularly.
- They dress to impress with the latest fashions of the season.
- They prefer environmentally friendly products and vehicles that get good gas mileage.
- They're heavily influenced by celebrity endorsements and trends in magazines.
- They feel anything that can be done online is easier than in person.
- They have liberal political views.



Note: The index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are measured from data by QMR.



LifeMode Group: Hometown

## Traditional Living

12B

**Households:** 2,369,000

**Average Household Size:** 2.50

**Median Age:** 34.8

**Median Household Income:** \$37,000

### WHO ARE WE?

Residents in this segment live primarily in low-density, settled neighborhoods in the Midwest. The households are a mix of married-couple families and singles. Many families encompass two generations who have lived and worked in the community; their children are likely to follow suit. The manufacturing, retail trade, and health care sectors are the primary sources of employment for these residents. This is a younger market—beginning householders who are juggling the responsibilities of living on their own or a new marriage, while retaining their youthful interests in style and fun.

### OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Married couples are the dominant household type, but fewer than expected from the younger age profile and fewer with children (Index 79); however, there are higher proportions of single-parent (Index 146) and single-person households (Index 112).
- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.50.
- Homes are primarily single family or duplexes in older neighborhoods, built before 1940 (Index 183).
- Most neighborhoods are located in lower-density urban clusters of metro areas throughout the Midwest and South.
- Average commuting time to work is slightly shorter (Index 88).
- Households have one or two vehicles.

### SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Over 70% have completed high school or some college.
- Unemployment is higher at 10.9% (Index 127); labor force participation is also a bit higher at 64.6%.
- Over three quarters of households derive income from wages and salaries, augmented by Supplemental Security Income (Index 122) and public assistance (Index 149).
- Cost-conscious consumers that are comfortable with brand loyalty, unless the price is too high.
- Connected and comfortable with the Internet, they are more likely to participate in online gaming or to access dating websites.
- TV is seen as the most trusted media.



Note: The index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are measured from data by QMR.