

# ***AGENDA***

**FORT SMITH BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
STUDY SESSION**

***October 25, 2011 ~ 12:00 NOON***

**FORT SMITH PUBLIC LIBRARY  
COMMUNITY ROOM  
3201 ROGERS AVENUE**

1. Report on the Comprehensive Plan implementation schedule including participation from Fayetteville Forward ~ *Inclusion of Fayetteville Forward requested at the September 6, 2011 regular meeting ~*
2. Discuss City's request for franchise utility companies to not install overhead utility lines along newly constructed street corridors ~ *Resolution removed from agenda of the September 6, 2011 regular meeting pending further discussion ~*
3. Review reapportionment of city wards
4. Review preliminary agenda for the November 1, 2011 regular meeting

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Ray Gosack, City Administrator  
**From:** Wally Bailey, Director of Development Services  
**Date:** October 20, 2011  
**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan

The Board of Directors identified the comprehensive plan as a topic for future discussion and study during their retreat earlier this year. The following description was developed from their work at the retreat:

## **Vision 2025 Plan**

1. Assess progress of implementing the existing comprehensive plan
2. Incorporate newer components – TIP strategies report, riverfront opportunity analysis, beautification
3. Learn from other cities' experiences
4. Develop game plan

Include economic health tied to distribution center (RITA) and tourism (marshals museum), make downtown happen, quality of life/place issues to attract younger citizens/jobs, knowledge-based jobs/young professionals

## *What is a Comprehensive Plan?*

*The Comprehensive Plan is primarily a physical plan for the growth and development of the City over the next 20 years. It is designed to guide the City's day-to-day activities within the context of a long-range future vision, so that actions occur in a coordinated, efficient, and effective way. (Fort Smith Comp Plan Introduction)*

The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of Directors on November 5, 2002. The Plan was adopted after an extensive public process that included suggestion boxes at events and in all libraries, steering committee members speaking at civic and other organizational meetings, City's Focus newsletter, a store front at Central Mall, and public service announcements. A broad based Steering Committee was appointed by the Board of Directors. The Steering Committee met monthly between April 2001 and October 2002 (19 months). Between the start of the planning process in April 2001, through the Summer of 2002, more than 100 meetings and presentations were held.

I have enclosed a copy of the Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary and information from the Plan that explains the process and plan summary. The complete copy of the Comprehensive Plan is on the City website at:  
<http://fortsmithar.gov/Planning/files/Complete.pdf>

To assist the Board with their analysis of the existing comprehensive plan the staff has prepared a summary of the existing Comprehensive Plan. The attached spread sheets are from the Comprehensive Plan Section 6 - Priorities Matrix with a Status column added. The status column shows some items completed, some work items have been done but do not necessarily reflect the item as completed, and some items have not been addressed due to a lack of resources or time available to address the items. City staff will be at the study session to assist with any questions about specific line items within the Priorities Matrix.

As we analyze the existing Priorities Matrix and the Plan, the Board has three options to consider:

- ◆Develop a new Comprehensive Plan. Preparation of a new plan will be more than the staff can do without the assistance of a professional planning consultant. The current Comprehensive Plan was prepared with the assistance of Gould Evans Associates, LLC. The City paid \$332,805.86 to Gould Evans for their work assisting the City and preparing the Plan.
  
- ◆Amend the existing Comprehensive Plan and the Priorities Matrix. Any plan that is effective needs to be reviewed and kept current. A statement from the Plan Purpose says *"As the City changes and priorities shift, the Plan may be adjusted so that it remains "living" or dynamic in nature reflecting the evolving City vision."* The amount of work required to amend the current document may require assistance of a consultant. It is possible that many ideas for amendments to the plan may actually fit within the existing goals of the Comprehensive Plan and simply require an amendment to the Priorities Matrix.
  
- ◆Continue with the existing plan and its priorities matrix. There are still several items in the priorities matrix that need to be addressed many which will require significant time and resources.

Additionally, Julie McQuade, Community Outreach Coordinator with the City of Fayetteville, will be in attendance at the October 25<sup>th</sup> study session. Ms. McQuade will be sharing Fayetteville's experience with visioning and community involvement as they developed their Fayetteville Forward plan.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

# SECTION 1

## *Introduction*

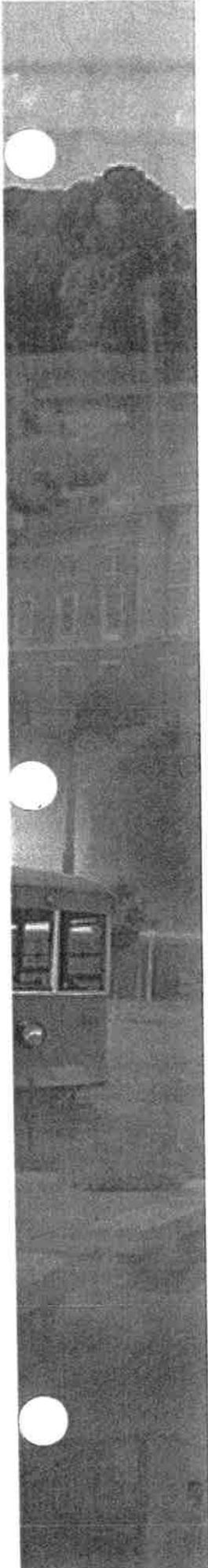
*The Comprehensive Plan is primarily a physical plan for the growth and development of the city over the next 20 years. It is designed to guide the City's day-to-day activities within the context of a long-range future vision, so that actions occur in a coordinated, efficient, and effective way.*

While Fort Smith has had long range plans within government departments, and has a comprehensive development code (zoning, subdivision and building regulations) in place, the City has never adopted a comprehensive plan that combines all aspects of the community's development. The Fort Smith Board of Directors recognized this

need during a January 1999 planning retreat. In October of 1999, the Fort Smith Board of Directors, Planning Commissioners and the City Staff held a retreat that concluded with the authorization to begin the comprehensive planning process. The retreat identified 27 community issues that needed to be addressed.

### **Factors That Stimulated The Need For A Plan Included:**

- Fort Chaffee de-militarization and subsequent planning, development and negotiated annexation of 7,000 acres of land on the southeastern edge of the City.
- Development of tourism and service industries around the Convention Center which opened in 2001.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) initiatives and investment of more than a million dollars a year.
- The major downtown and riverfront initiatives that led to funding and development of the Convention Center and Riverfront Pavilion and Amphitheater.
- A strong and active CBID - Central Business Improvement District - ready to act and needing an overall plan for the downtown.
- A Chamber of Commerce that works to keep the economy strong, and through those efforts, the land use, traffic and look of the City are affected.
- The need for a fully staffed parks and recreation department to serve growing demands, while seeing to the responsibilities of planning, maintaining and running programs, facilities and expansions.



## *Introduction*

- Growing interest and activities by both the public and private sectors for infill and redevelopment of housing alternatives in the older, original sections of town.
- The evolution of Westark Community College into the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, can and will change the dynamics and image of the City. This evolution will more directly effect the land surrounding it, and have impacts on the larger community as a partner in education, culture, arts, entertainment, and business activities.
- While history and historic preservation have long been valued by city residents, many structures, neighborhoods and historic cultural resources have been lost. A city policy and plan of action are needed to preserve the historic resources that remain.
- Zoning and land use decisions and actions have occurred on a case-by-case, ad hoc basis, leading to many incompatible activities and loss of land value for one or more neighboring parties. These actions have also led to the inability to plan appropriate infrastructure and transportation facilities.

The lack of focus or common direction of so many independent task forces, committees, institutions, individuals and organizations has not stopped movement forward. However, it has caused inefficient use of scarce resources, people working at cross purposes (often towards similar and compatible goals), higher risk development and investment, and constantly changing roles and responsibilities for city staff already overburdened with the day to day business of providing citizen services.

## 1.1 PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan provides goals, policies, and land planning principles for guiding the future development of the City. It is used to assist the Planning Commission, the Board of Directors and City Staff as they make decisions on land use and zoning issues, capital improvement programming, transportation, and coordination efforts with other jurisdictions and agencies. It also serves as a guide to creating the future Fort Smith envisioned by the community as a whole.

*Arkansas municipalities have "the power to adopt and enforce plans for the coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality" (A.C.A 14-56-402). In addition, they shall "promote, in accordance with present and future needs, the safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the citizens."*

Among the specific issues that a city's plans may address to accomplish these goals are:

- *"Efficient economic development;*
- *Appropriate and best use of land;*
- *Convenient traffic circulation of people and goods;*
- *Safety from fire and other dangers;*
- *Distribution of population;*
- *Adequate public utilities and facilities; and,*
- *Wise and efficient expenditures of funds." (A.C.A. 14-56-403(b) )*

### **The Plan Is:**

**Long-range:** addressing future needs, while taking into account short-range, or current issues.

**General:** showing the general location, character, desired community improvements, development patterns, and the relationship of these elements.

**Comprehensive:** addressing the physical, social and economic factors affecting the future development of the community.

**Living:** Through land use ordinances, budgetary activities, and other legal and policy actions the Plan will be implemented. As the City changes and priorities shift, the Plan may be adjusted so that it remains "living" or dynamic in nature reflecting the evolving City vision.



## 1.2 PROCESS

In 2001, a broad based citizen oriented Steering Committee was appointed by the City Directors to work with consultants and staff in developing the first comprehensive plan for the city. Members were asked to give their time to this effort based on many factors:

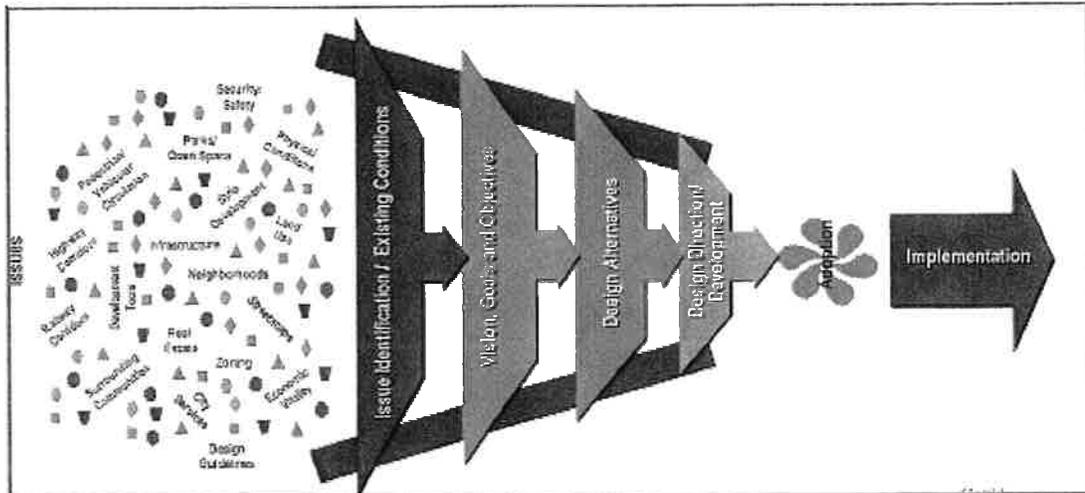
- diverse representation in perspective, experiences and neighborhoods,
- past and current participation and dedication to the community,
- being results oriented, and,
- their demonstrated ability to listen, be fair and open minded and reach consensus.

Orientation of the Steering Committee began in April 2001. The Committee met on the third Saturday of each month between April 2001 and October 2002. They followed a basic process of: information gathering; issue identification; goal setting; exploring alternative solutions; developing a preferred plan alternative; and, mapping out obstacles and steps to implement the plan.

*Public Participation*

## 1.2 PROCESS

### Planning Process



Early on the Steering Committee reached consensus on the issues they would like to see the city and this plan address:

- Transportation and the current Street Plan
- Access and uses along the river
- Neighborhood revitalization and preservation improvements
- Commercial corridor development and improvements
- Downtown revitalization and Convention Tourism
- Historic Preservation
- Fort Chaffee Annexation
- City / County planning coordination
- Parks and open space planning
- Coordinated economic development
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation
- Increased housing opportunities
- Creating a Vision and “Look” for Fort Smith
- Controlled (orderly) growth
- Annexation Policy and Procedures
- Adequacy of the current zoning code
- Development of Urban Design Standards
- Street and drainage improvement plans
- The provision of municipal services inside and outside of the city

It was decided early in the Spring of 2001, that community input and support were critical to both their comfort in proceeding with their efforts, as well as ensuring that they had community consensus and support for their ideas and issues of concern. A very aggressive effort was made, beginning with the summer concert series to get citizen input.

More than 100 cards and comments were received through outreach events and from library input boxes placed in all City libraries. Steering Committee members spoke at organizational meetings, and the City's *Focus* newsletter, sent to every household, continued to summarize concepts and progress. In the fall it was decided that a storefront would provide a constant opportunity for people to participate on an on-going basis. From November 2001 through February 2002, storefront open houses were held, and public service announcements invited participation. Between the start of the planning process in April 2001, through the Summer of 2002, more than 100 meetings and presentations were held (see appendix for full listing). The Comprehensive Plan is a reflection of this extensive public process.



## 1.3 PLAN SUMMARY

The Plan is organized around the major issues, goals and policies developed through this process. Where ever possible a numbering system has been used for easy reference, however in most cases the numbering system does not indicate a priority ranking, unless indicated. Section 2 is devoted to the conditions that exist in the city today (2000-2002), and establishes benchmarks that the subsequent sections of the Plan will address. While this is primarily a physical plan document, the social and economic aspects of the City are addressed to some extent, with Section 2 outlining the social and economic make-up of the City at the time of the 2000 Census.

*Steering Committee Worksession*



*Storefront - Central Mall*

Section 3 outlines the thought process and investigations into alternative growth and development scenarios that the Steering Committee went through in order to establish the preferred Plan Framework. This is included so that an understanding of the values and alternative scenarios that the City has to choose from can be referenced.

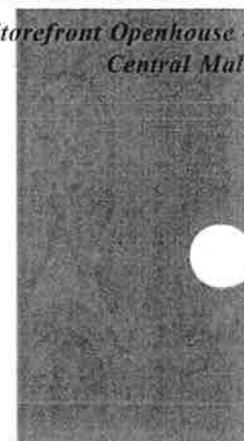
Section 4 is devoted to the Plan Framework, and the policies and recommended actions that will make the City of Neighborhoods a reality. This section is broken into the main goals and issues that the Plan is focused on resolving. This is the heart of the document and establishes the context for Section 6 on Plan implementation.



*Storefront Openhouse - Central Mall*

Section 5 focuses on specific land areas of concern and change; the downtown, the riverfront, development of Fort Chaffee and land outside of the existing city limits, the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

Section 6 is the action section of the Plan. It sets forward recommended actions, a generalized time frame and areas of responsibility. Through the Priorities Matrix, direction is given to implement the City of Neighborhoods vision for Fort Smith.



City of Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan (CompPlan) Timeline:  
Meetings & other Activities

**2001**

March	Steering Committee (SC) appointed
April 7 to meet	First official meeting. Introductions and orientation. The SC decides the third Saturday monthly
April 28	All-day orientation to city staff & department, issues and resources
May 19	SC meeting
June 16	SC meeting
July 4	CompPlan display and public comment boxes set-up at River Park Amphitheatre during the Mayor's Fourth of July event
July 21	SC meeting
July 21	CompPlan display and public comment boxes set-up at Fort Smith Park during the Old Fort River Festival
August 18	SC meeting
September 18	CompPlan presentation to the Manufacturing Executive Association
September 25	CompPlan presentation to Lion's Club
September 29	SC meeting (rescheduled from 9/15/02)
October 5	CompPlan presentation to Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
October 19	CompPlan presentation to Noon Exchange Club
October 20	SC meeting at new 'home'-Central Mall Storefront Official ribbon cutting by the Chamber of Commerce. Photo of such is published in their October 2001 newsletter
October 20 & 21	Open House at Central Mall storefront. Public invited (press releases to local media)
November 16 & 17	House at Central Mall storefront. Public invited (press releases to local media)
November 17	SC meeting
December 13	University of Arkansas-Fort Smith Leadership Presentations
December 14 - 16	Open House at Central Mall storefront. Public invited (press releases to local media)
December 15	SC meeting
December 29	CompPlan public service announcement (PSA) distributed to run on local broadcast & cable media.

**2002**

January 15	CompPlan discussed on local TV station, KPOM, public affairs program: Polly's Show
January 18 & 19	Open House at Central Mall storefront. Public invited (press releases to local media)
January 18	Investors and Developers Presentation and Discussion
January 19	SC meeting

City of Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan (CompPlan) Timeline:  
Meetings & other Activities

February 6	CompPlan presentation to League of Women Voters. CompPlan (PSA) distributed to run on local broadcast & cable media.
February 7	CompPlan presentation to Leadership Fort Smith.
February 15 - 17	Open House at Central Mall storefront. Public invited (press releases to local media)
February 16	SC meeting
March 12	Parks & Recreation Work Group Orientation
March 13	Downtown Work Group
March 14	Neighborhood Development Work Group
March 14	Transportation Work Group
March 14	CompPlan Public Meeting held at Fort Smith Convention Center. Public invited (press releases to local media)
March 15	Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Work Group
March 16	SC Meeting
April	City of Fort Smith quarterly newsletter, 'Focus' publishes CompPlan summary. Newsletter is mailed to all Fort Smith residences.
April	CompPlan (PSA) distributed to run on local broadcast & cable media.
April 11	CompPlan presentation to the Life Underwriters Association
April 17	Riverfront Work Group
April 18	ETJ Work Group
April 18	Neighborhood Development Work Group
April 18	Multi-Cultural Center Presentation and Discussion
April 18	CompPlan Public Meeting held at Cavanaugh Senior Activity Center. Public invited (press releases to local media) & PSA
April 19	Commercial Corridors Work Group
April 19	Downtown Work Group
April 20	SC meeting
May 15	CompPlan presentation to Bancorp South
May 16	CompPlan Public Meeting held at Tilles Elementary School. Public invited (press releases to local media)
May 16	Neighborhood Development Work Group
May 16	ETJ Work Group Meeting
May 16	Downtown/Riverfront Meeting
May 17	Parks and Recreation Work Group
May 17	Transportation/Commercial Corridors Work Group
May 17	Airport Board Presentation and Discussion
May 17	Fort Chaffee-Chaffee Crossing Presentation and Discussion
May 18	SC meeting
June 11	Retreat - CompPlan presentation to City's Board of Directors, Planning Commission and City staff. First draft of CompPlan distributed
June 13	ETJ Work Group
June 13	Transportation Work Group

City of Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan (CompPlan) Timeline:  
Meetings & other Activities

July 9	First draft CompPlan
July 16	SC Draft Plan Workshop
July 17	Transportation Work Group
July 17	Zoning Workshop - Board, Planning Commissioners and others invited
July 17	SC Draft Workshop
July 18	Investors and Developers Presentation and Discussion
July 18	ETJ Work Group
July 20	SC meeting
July 30	CompPlan presentation to Southside Rotary Club
August 9	Second draft of CompPlan distributed SC for review and editing
August 13	Board Study Session on Draft Plan
August 14	Transportation Work Group
August 14	SC Work Session
August 15	ETJ Work Group
September 3	Second draft CompPlan revisions
September 19	ETJ Work Group Meeting
September 19	Steering Committee Draft Worksessions
September 20	Transportation Work Group
September 20	Open House - 424 Garrison Avenue
September 21	SC meeting
September 21	Retreat -CompPlan presentation to City's Board of Directors, Planning Commission and City staff.
September 24	Public hearing & comment period Planning Commission
October 1	Board of Directors Public Hearing
October 8	Board of Directors Study Session on Draft Plan
October 8	Planning Commission Adoption and recommended approval to Board of Directors.
Reveiw and comment period on Final Draft Plan	
November 5	Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Dircetors



# FORT SMITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*Executive Summary*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE CITY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This is a general summary of the Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is primarily a physical plan for the growth and development of the city over the next 20 years. It is designed to guide the City's day-to-day activities within the context of a long-range, 10-20 years, vision, so that actions occur in a coordinated, efficient, and effective way. It will be used to assist the Planning Commission, the Board of Directors and City Staff as they make decisions on land use and zoning issues, capital improvement programming, transportation, and coordination efforts with other jurisdictions and agencies.

## THE CHALLENGE

While Fort Smith has had long range plans within government departments, and has a comprehensive development code (zoning, subdivision and building regulations) in place, the City has never adopted a comprehensive plan that combines all aspects of the community's development. In October of 1999, the Fort Smith Board of Directors, Planning Commissioners and the City Staff held a retreat that concluded with the authorization to begin the comprehensive planning process.

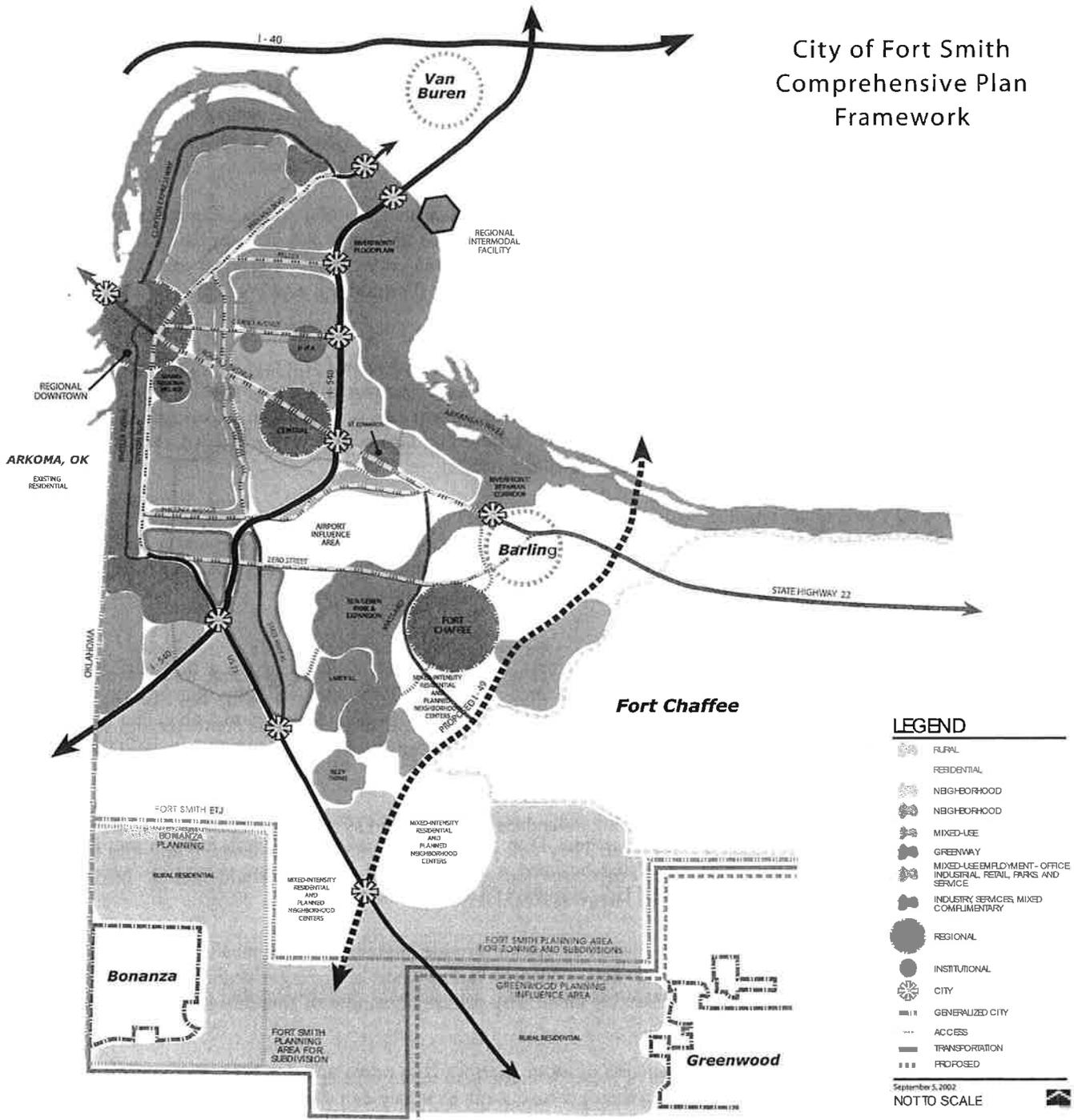
The Plan is organized around the major issues, goals and policies developed through this process. While this is primarily a physical plan, the social and economic aspects of the City are addressed as well. Because this is the City's first Comprehensive Plan, it can not lay out parcel specific proposed changes throughout the city. Rather, it is the first step in creating a proposed land use plan that shows a preferred development pattern for tomorrow. Policies and actions state how existing and future land use patterns need to be addressed, to implement the plan. The City of Neighborhoods provides both a physical framework and a policy framework that work together.

Many policies are city wide in nature and do not address specific land uses or areas of the city, while others are more specific to uses, activities, and locations. Several actions and policies overlap, achieving multiple goals. Specific land areas addressed include; the downtown, the riverfront, development of Fort Chaffee and land outside of the existing city limits, Extra-territorial Jurisdiction Planning Area (ETJ).

The City of Neighborhoods requires implementation of policies, changes to the development code and specific area plans to be created. Planning for a small area of the city differs from the comprehensive plan in that it is parcel specific and much more detailed. Area, Sector, District, Corridor, Neighborhood and Center Plans can be any size, but are focused on meeting a distinct purpose. They are usually triggered or needed when; disinvestment occurs, there are significant and/or constant changes occurring, when public improvements are needed or planned, when redevelopment opportunities arise and when large developments are on the horizon. These conditions are present along all the major corridors and throughout many of the core neighborhoods of the city. Because of the smaller scale of area plans, property owners, tenants and community groups can work together to make the area more successful.

# CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS WITH ETJ PLANNING

City of Fort Smith  
Comprehensive Plan  
Framework



## LEGEND

- RURAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- MIXED-USE
- GREENWAY
- MIXED-USE EMPLOYMENT- OFFICE INDUSTRIAL, RETAIL, PARKS AND SERVICE
- INDUSTRY SERVICES, MIXED COMPLIMENTARY
- REGIONAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- CITY
- GENERALIZED CITY
- ACCESS
- TRANSPORTATION
- PROPOSED

September 5, 2002  
NOT TO SCALE

## LEGEND AND LAND USE

### FRAMEWORK

The development framework sets the physical guidelines for how Fort Smith will evolve in the next 10-20 years. It provides a structure and guidelines for land use, transportation and zoning actions. While the areas indicated are general in nature, it is the first step in unifying the land use plan with new zoning and subdivision regulations. This framework is the basis for a land use plan.

**Centers or "Neighborhoods"** are concentrated areas of pedestrian oriented, mixed land use. They offer a variety of daily services that are more people than car oriented, and provide a focal point, or pocket of activity, within an area for meeting people, shopping and accessing public services. They will occur in a variety of scales, serving different, distinct and complementary needs for the people of the city and larger region.

**Regional Centers** offer the highest density and diversity of employment, culture, services, shopping, housing and entertainment to the region as a whole. Walkability within these centers is key to their design and function. There is a need to limit the number of regional scale centers based on complimentary services and function within the region. There are three primary Regional Centers: Downtown, Central Mall and Fort Chaffee each serving a distinct need.

**Institutional Centers** specialize in community service, and have a high priority for regional transportation access with service equal to that of regional villages. Emergency access, commuter and visitor parking should be part of an overall circulation plan. Complementary services need to be provided within walking distance, as these areas can be 24-hour communities. There are three primary Institutional Centers: University of Arkansas-Fort Smith; St. Edward Mercy Medical; and, Sparks Regional Health System.

**Neighborhood Centers** are small in scale and designed to meet the immediate needs of people living or working within close proximity. Generally, they provide a collection of shops, services and/or recreation that are a focal point of the neighborhood, offering the needs of daily living. Walking and bicycling should be safe options to access these areas. Kids and people of all ages should feel safe and comfortable.

#### The Road Network

**Residential Corridors** are roadways through primarily residential and institutional areas that may have been classified as arterials in the adopted 1991 Master Street Plan. Over time, they have become heavily used for through traffic. Special design considerations are needed in order to protect the residential character and values along them. As residential streets, they may be reclassified as Primary Collectors. Examples include portions of Old Greenwood Road, Jenny Lind Road, and, Free Ferry Road.

**Boulevards** - By partially restoring, or newly creating, a landscaped boulevard system, the roadway will function at a higher capacity through improved chanelization. They will provide an attractive path through and into town and increase the visibility and viability of the businesses located along them. These would include Midland Boulevard, portions of Towson Avenue, and U.S. Highway 71/71B South.

**Commercial Corridors** - The majority of arterials in Fort Smith provide the commercial space in the City. In the future, these areas will be designed to reduce auto conflicts, consolidate shopping entrances, reduce sign confusion and increase the viability of businesses on them. The primary example of this designation is Rogers Avenue.

**Transportation Corridors** - The main function of these facilities is to move vehicles between major destinations or through town. Land access is secondary to their purpose; examples include I-540 and U.S. Highway 71 South.

**Gateways** - The major entry points into the city that creates a visitor's first impression. Arrival and departure indicators, views of the city, view corridors, and way finding need to be addressed at these major points.

**Planned Mixed-Use Development**

**Mixed-use Residential** - A compatible mix of housing types and commercial and institutional services characterize mixed-use residential areas. The primary theme of these areas is to increase the compatibility of a mixture of activities through better planning and design. Many areas of the city currently have a mixture of housing types and commercial uses, but they are not very visually or functionally compatible with each other. This category can be applied to neighborhood centers or to roadways. New areas will emerge, such as west Phoenix Avenue, Kelley Highway and Massard Road south, fall into this category.

**Mixed-use Employment** - These areas are characterized by a complementary mix of industrial and office uses that can combine parking, circulation, security, employee amenities and services. These are major employment destinations that can benefit from close proximity to each other. In addition, employees benefit by having services in close proximity.

**Residential**

**Neighborhood Preservation** - These are existing, predominately residential areas whose character and value need to be protected, enhanced and/or restored.

**Neighborhood Revitalization** - These are existing, predominately residential areas whose character and value are to be enhanced and restored through proactive measures and perhaps with both public and private assistance. These neighborhoods have deteriorated through abandonment of structures and/or encroachment of industrial and commercial uses that have negatively affected the value of residential property for residential use. In some cases, these areas may have a high percentage of renters to owners, and may have many structures in poor repair, boarded up or vacant.

**Residential** - Indicated on the Plan Framework, these are new and developing housing developments at a variety of densities and styles, not identified yet as either an area of revitalization or preservation. These areas are still defining themselves and have the opportunity to expand and more solidly form their character.

**Rural Residential** - Rural land areas are only indicated in the area outside of the existing City limits. Rural development is very low density, reflecting a desire to have few neighbors and a love of the land. Lot sizes are typically, 5 -25 acres in size, unless a cluster method of development is used to maximize open space.

**Parks, Open Space & Trails** - These uses are a primary theme of the plan, taking advantage of the lush environment that makes Fort Smith a great place to live. Passive and active recreation, habitat and bird sanctuary spaces, wetlands and regional trail systems, represent the high quality of life that is an intrinsic part of the "Look of Fort Smith".

**Floodplain, Bluffs & Natural Resources** - Wetlands, floodplains, and riparian corridors flow into the Arkansas and Poteau Rivers, making land areas unsuitable for most development (regardless of historic zoning). The Ozark geology also creates pockets of natural gas and rock formations that restrict most forms of development. These areas need to be studied and identified in detail.

**Extra-Territorial Planning Influence Area** - This area is currently in agriculture and rural residential use within Sebastian County, and does not have planning, zoning, subdivision, or building permit requirements to govern development. By state law, the city needs to work with the county on planning for these areas, so that development occurs in a way that is compatible and economical. The Plan proposes a process to work with all affected parties to adequately plan for these areas.

## GOAL I      ACHIEVE A COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PLAN.

**Approach:**    *Develop a transportation plan that reserves land in future corridors, prioritizes available funds, functions consistently with the land use plan, and capitalizes on assets such as the public transportation system, river, and highway network. Emphasis should be on connectivity, flexibility (choices of transportation modes), and aesthetic and environmental impacts.*

### **Critical Recommended Actions Include:**

- Revise and adopt Master Street Plan for City and ETJ
- Implement access controls and reduce visual clutter on arterials
- Reroute through truck traffic in CBID and concentrate industry at high access locations
- Establish corridor specific plans and develop strong public/private partnerships for improvements

### ***The Street Network***

**G1.1 Policy:** Land development should be compatible with the design function and capacity of the roadway and not place burdens on it that render it unsafe or degrade its function, and conversely, road design should not negatively impact its planned use.

**G1.2 Policy:** Make major destinations, highly accessible by all modes of transportation.

**G1.3 Policy:** Minimize the growth in vehicular miles as the city grows through a variety of locational and programmatic measures.

**G1.4 Policy:** Address improvements to the existing street network by first optimizing access and circulation through better design and utilization of existing right-of-way, in cooperation with property owners.

### ***Neighborhood Streets***

### ***The Regional Transportation Network***

**G1.5 Policy:** Promote development of regional highway connections and improvements that will benefit trade, commerce (and ease of movement).

**G1.6 Policy:** Protect residential neighborhoods from excessive through traffic, where feasible.

**G1.7 Policy:** Enhance pedestrian, bicycle, transit, service vehicle and emergency circulation.

**G1.8 Policy:** Ensure that sufficient, well designed and convenient on street and off-street parking is provided to serve land uses.

**G1.9 Policy:** Provide attractive, safe and continuous detached sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities.

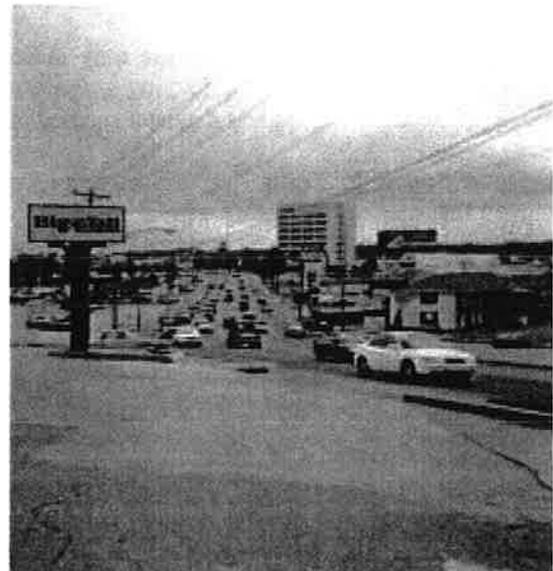
**G1.10 Policy:** Improve traffic flow and integrate safe pedestrian and bicycle travel into the transportation network, particularly at key intersections of high commercial and employment activity.

### ***Bicycle***

**G1.11 Policy:** To provide for the public's interest, safety and general welfare by encouraging and offering a well planned, safe and efficient bikeway system that will interconnect neighborhoods and provide access to both neighborhood and city-wide destinations.

### ***Transit***

**G1.12 Policy:** Promote and maintain a public transit system that is safe, efficient, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of residents.



### ***Air***

**G1.13 Policy:** Preserve and enhance the air transportation system provided by the Fort Smith

Regional Airport, while protecting the public from airport related noise and safety hazards.

**Freight**

**G1.14 Policy:** Ensure that business and industry have sufficient transportation infrastructure to support freight operations and business communications, including rail, air, highways, telecommunications, and pipelines.

**G1.15 Policy:** Provide convenient, reliable connections between industrial zones and regional highways to facilitate truck traffic that also minimize noise and traffic conflicts with other users.

**G1.16 Policy:** Work with the railroad industry in better service through the region and city.

**G1.17 Policy:** Support the continued improvements to the Port of Fort Smith and development of the Van Buren regional intermodal facility.

**G1.18 Policy:** Continue to balance water and port activities with environment and watershed improvements in cooperation with the Corps of Engineers and other interested organizations.

consideration in any project and protected where possible. Lot configurations also should be considered in roadway design, access, land use, zoning and corridor planning. Corridor plans are designed to manage access, safety, economic viability and attractiveness, and will include:

- Road facility function and purpose
- Access management
- Design and aesthetics
- Service and truck access
- Parking and building set-backs
- Land uses, activities and density
- Storm water management
- Lighting and signage



## GOAL 2 IMPROVE THE FUNCTION AND AESTHETICS OF COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS.

**Approach:** Create, adopt and implement plans for long-term improvement of commercial corridors addressing both the function and aesthetics of prime commercial corridors.

**Critical Recommended Actions Include:**

- Establish a set of access management principles to be incorporated into the Master Street Plan, Subdivision Regulations, and Zoning Ordinance.
- Adopt landscaping, lighting, setback, signage, Floor Area Ratio, and other site design standards for lands along the most visible corridors in the city.

**Corridor Plans** are linear by definition and boundaries of these planning areas usually are a block deep on both sides of the street. Residential land use and values along arterial and collector roadways should be a major

- Focal points, intersection improvements and cross streets
- Landscaping, maintenance, transit service amenities, and landscaped medians and turn islands
- Appropriate bicycle, pedestrian and transit circulation plan element.

## GOAL 3: DEVELOP A COORDINATED, CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

**Approach:** Initiate proactive steps in cooperation with area Chambers of Commerce, Northwest Arkansas, Eastern Oklahoma, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith and other institutions for targeted economic development.

**3.1 Policy:** Grow the employment base by retaining existing jobs, assisting business expansion and start-ups, and attracting new and diverse businesses.

**G3.2 Policy:** Organize all economic efforts into a well-coordinated organizational structure.

**G3.3 Policy:** Establish standard policies for the use of economic development incentives that Measure the performance of city investments with a cost benefit analysis of the actual long-term economic and quality of life benefits to the city and region.

## **GOAL 4 PRESERVE, PROTECT AND IMPROVE FORT SMITH'S EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS**

**Approach:** *Create friendly but stringent development ordinances rigorously applied throughout the City to protect existing neighborhoods and to create strong new ones*

**G4.1 Policy:** Improve and encourage maintenance of structures, prevent vagrancy, structural damage, theft, and fire hazards, by providing education, incentives and programs for structural maintenance, particularly in areas designated Neighborhood Revitalization.

**G4.2 Policy:** Improve public participation in the revitalization process through the establishment of neighborhood associations and other organizations recreation centers, schools, medical care, and public transit.

**G4.3 Policy:** Maintain housing opportunities in urban areas by renovating and revitalizing existing housing and promoting infill development of vacant land within the corporate limits.

**G4.4 Policy:** Provide quality affordable housing by actively promoting construction of a variety of sizes and types of housing through zoning and subdivision regulations and other incentives.

**G4.5 Policy:** Provide convenient safe, connections between neighborhoods and important destinations such as downtown, employment centers, schools, parks, shopping areas, and neighborhood services.

**G4.6 Policy:** Plan for senior housing and other special population needs by locating diverse housing opportunities accessible to shopping, parks, community centers, schools, medical care and public transit.

**G4.7 Policy:** Require new subdivisions to develop through public streets.

**G4.8 Policy:** Increase public awareness, education and knowledge of the historic district and historic architecture throughout the city.

### ***Belle Grove Historic District and Historic Preservation***

**G4.9 Policy:** Encourage revitalization of the Belle Grove historic district and downtown historic buildings.

## **GOAL 5 EXPAND CITY PARKLAND AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO REFLECT OR EXCEED NATIONAL STANDARDS.**

**Approach:** *Take advantage of underutilized space, create a variety of recreation opportunities, and continue to pursue, expand, and implement current park plans.*

### **Plan Elements**

#### ***Regional Facilities***

**G5.1 Policy:** Promote and establish regional support for Fort Smith Parks and Recreation through agreements, user fees, programs and grant applications with counties and neighboring towns.

#### ***Neighborhood Parks***

**G5.2 Policy:** Develop neighborhood parks amenities within walking distance to residents.

#### ***Greenways and Trails***

**G5.3 Policy:** Develop greenways and trails that serve to connect the city

#### ***Recreation Programming***

**G5.4 Policy:** Plan recreation facility land, space and programming needs with other service providers in order to meet community needs and national standards.



## GOAL 6 PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES AND REDUCE THEIR WASTE AND OVERUSE.

**Approach:** *Inventory and establish goals for resource protection, conservation and waste reduction.*

**G6.1 Policy:** Investigate and pursue a cooperative regional water supply arrangement with neighboring jurisdictions.

**G6.2 Policy:** Develop and manage watershed programs to minimize pollution from storm water runoff and other sources.

**G6.3 Policy:** Preserve wildlife habitats.

**G6.4 Policy:** Improve air quality by encouraging responsible industry practices and reducing sources of air pollution.

**G6.5 Policy:** Enhance and promote Fort Smith's recycling and reuse programs.

## GOAL 7 ADOPT DESIGN STANDARDS AND CITY SIGNATURE LOOK FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

**Approach:** *Take advantage of current momentum in creating the "look of Fort Smith" and translate community support for quality urban design into consistent, enforceable design standards that leverages public and private investments as incentives for more investment in quality design.*

**G7.1 Policy:** Preserve and protect Fort Smith's historic and architectural resources.

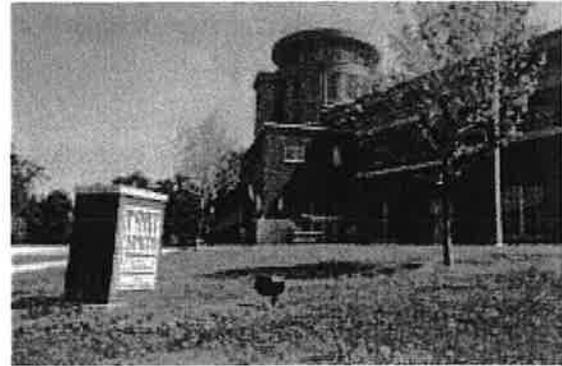
**G7.2 Policy:** Encourage the inclusion of public art and plazas with new public facilities and major private development.

**G7.3 Policy:** Enlist the vision and support of the arts community and seek partnerships with the University, convention center and other interest groups to advance opportunities for visual and performing arts within the region.

**G7.4 Policy:** Establish a public museum of art and an interactive children's museum

**G7.5 Policy:** Improve gateway features, commercial corridors and scenic views within the City.

**G7.6 Policy:** Implement programs to enhance landscaping and tree preservation.



**G7.7 Policy:** Integrate existing commercial activities within residential neighborhoods by enforcing quality urban design, and prohibiting further commercial and industrial uses in neighborhoods.

## GOAL 8 REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN INTO A MULTIPURPOSE ACTIVITY CENTER.

**Approach:** *Create an AM/PM activity center with a consistent image and strategy for redevelopment. Identify opportunities for public participation, and establish incentives and market niche strategies.*

### ***Housing***

**G8.1 Policy:** Increase the number and type of residential opportunities in and around downtown.

### ***Access & Circulation***

**G8.2 Policy:** Improve the accessibility of downtown by increasing public transit access, implementing an efficient parking plan, and creating safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycle connections within downtown and between adjacent neighborhoods.

### ***Economics & Marketing***

**G8.3 Policy:** Retain and expand existing job base in downtown by developing strategies that support existing businesses, and by directing specific economic development actions to downtown.

**G8.4 Policy:** Concentrate available resources to encourage job creation and population growth in the downtown and riverfront area.

**G8.5 Policy:** Develop and promote niche markets that distinguishes downtown from other retail and entertainment options and reinforces downtown's position as a destination.

**G8.6 Policy:** Locate cultural activities, entertainment options, service-related businesses, and public, private, or institutional programs in downtown.

### ***Design & the Look of Fort Smith***

**G8.7 Policy:** Improve the aesthetics of private buildings and public areas in downtown

### ***Management & Coordination***

**G8.8 Policy:** Establish full-time CBID marketing and management position in cooperation with city, CBID, Chamber and other property and business owners, who sole task is revitalizing downtown.

## **GOAL 9 REGAIN CITY ACCESS TO THE ARKANSAS RIVER FRONT.**

**Approach:** Acquire the necessary property and create specific planning actions to make the river front accessible to the citizens of Fort Smith.

**G9.1 Policy:** Integrate the Arkansas River frontage with new and existing development.

**G9.2 Policy:** Comprehensively plan access and development along Clayton Expressway to reflect passive and active recreation, pedestrian, bicycle and tourist activities.

**G9.3 Policy:** Provide recreation activities and access to the Arkansas River while preserving and protecting the natural environment, watershed and critical wildlife habitats.

**G9.4 Policy:** Integrate unified design and construction standards that complement downtown and city design elements, yet provide a symbol language distinct to the riverfront.

**G9.5 Policy:** Land development within the river district needs to reflect uses appropriate to the 100-year flood plain and adjacency to the downtown and residential neighborhoods.



## **GOAL 10 COORDINATE AND PLAN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS.**

**Approach:** Develop better relationships with the neighboring cities, counties, and property owners to ensure compatible development patterns both inside and outside of the City limits, and mitigate or eliminate physical and economic barriers that may create inefficient land use and development patterns.

**G10.1 Policy:** In recognition of the impacts of uncoordinated growth and development, the City of Fort Smith will exercise its extra-territorial jurisdiction over land in Sebastian County.

**G10.2 Policy:** The City will annex land under any of the following circumstances:

- The extension of city water/sewer or roads is a requirement for the development of the land.
- A more logical service area boundary would be created.
- The elimination of an existing County "island" would occur.
- A more efficient provision of all urban services would be the result.
- Issues of health and safety and general welfare would be addressed.
- A neutral or positive fiscal impact to the city would result.

**G10.3 Policy:** Subdivision of land within the 5 mile ETJ will comply with city subdivision and infrastructure guidelines as revised to address rural and estate development.

**G10.4 Policy:** The city will take a leadership role in:

- Working with the County, private developers, land owners and school districts;
- Ensuring consistent and compatible development patterns, both inside and outside the existing city limits; and,
- Mitigating or eliminating any physical or economic barrier that may create unsuitable land use and development patterns.

**G10.5 Policy:** Protect rural lands from premature growth.

**G10.6 Policy:** Ensure adequate, well-maintained infrastructure and public facilities for all development and plan infrastructure and service provision ahead of development.

**G10.7 Policy:** The City will consider a variety of options in its exercise of the ETJ, and will propose a long-term growth and development plan that embraces the City of Neighborhoods philosophy while addressing the preferences of existing county residents for a rural lifestyle.

## NEXT STEPS

Implementation of a Comprehensive Plan does not happen over night. It requires that activities occur on many fronts simultaneously, over many years. The tools, priorities and actions that need to occur for this plan to be implemented are simple. Re-orienting and reordering individual efforts into a work plan for the city is more difficult. The essential steps that begin the plan implementation process are as follows:

- Organize and staff to accomplish the mission;
- Set priorities for actions and funding;
- Establish the partnerships and process to achieve success;
- Communicate effectively with the community and affected parties;
- Establish benchmarks and check-points to monitor progress; and,
- Establish an outside monitoring entity, a continuation or modification of "the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee".

### Actions that need to occur include:

- Revisions to the zoning and subdivision regulations
- Writing, adopting and enforcing a housing code
- Revisions to the Master Street Plan and classification system
- Corridor, neighborhood, center and district plans



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Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Revise Zoning Code and map to ensure consistency with Plan, and create and consolidate new zones as needed	Completed - Ord 36-09	PD	X		
Revise Subdivision Code and implement the policies of and ensure consistency with the Plan, zoning ordinance and Master Street Plan	Completed - Ord 36-09	PD, E, T	X		
Develop & adopt land use plan	Completed - Ord 9-05	PD	X		
Adopt ETJ Land Use & Zoning Plan	Completed - Ord 28-03 and Ord 29-03	PD	X	X	
Adopt Housing Code	Completed - Ord 7-07	PD, CE	X		
Revise Project Review Process to enable staff, BD, PC, and the public adequate review	Completed	PD, E, CA	X		
Revise Master Street Plan	Completed - Adopted - Master Street Plan, Ord 18-05 and Amended Ord 11-11 - E	T, PD, E	X		
Refine & Adopt Downtown Plan	A typical downtown plan does not exist, however, downtown design guidelines exist and have recently been updated. The CBID monitors activities and regularly meets to discuss and establish goals and objectives for the CBID.	CB, CD, PD	X		
Refine & Adopt Riverfront Plan	A plan was proposed but not adopted. An opportunity analysis by Cushman Wakefield was prepared. The CBID is continuing to study and has recommended infrastructure improvements to help attract a corporate office headquarters. A current goal is to attract a corporate headquarters as an anchor.	TF, PD, CB, PR	X		

Overall Land Use Plan

<p>Establish Neighborhood Associations working in conjunction with schools, churches, and other organizations</p>	<p>Ongoing - Working with Fort Smith Neighborhood Coalition to provide assistance to Neighborhood Associations. Currently, 24 neighborhood associations exist on file.</p>	<p>CD, PD, P, F, CE</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Develop Corridor Plans that address access management, land use, design, internal parking and circulation</p>	<p>Ongoing - Adopted UDO Ord 36-09 addresses access management and internal parking and circulation - E</p>	<p>PD, T, E</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Develop Area and Neighborhood Plans</p>	<p>Lack of Resources - Planning Ongoing - Currently in process reviewing the plan for the purpose of amending/updating plan</p>	<p>CD, PD, P, F, CE</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Conduct Plan review and revise as necessary</p>	<p>Annually review actions undertaken to implement the Plan, and incorporate into the CIP</p>	<p>PD, CA</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Create and adopt Center Plans using the Section 4.1 guidelines</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>PD, CA, E</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Hire Parks and Planning Staff</p>	<p>Lack of Resources - Planning Lack of Resources - Planning and Parks</p>	<p>PD, TF PR, CA</p>	<p>On-going X</p>

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Revise and adopt Master Street Plan per Comp. Plan policies	Completed - Adopted - Master Street Plan, Ord 18-05 and Amended Ord 11-11 - E	T, E, PD	X		
Develop Corridor Plans	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T	T, PD, TF, E	On-going		
Rogers Avenue	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T			X	
Towson Avenue	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T				X
Midland Boulevard	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T				X
West Phoenix Avenue	Lack of Resources - PD, E		X		
Kelley Highway	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T Lack of Resources - E Overlay Completed - Ord 77-08 - PD		X		
Zero East Street	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T Lack of Resources - E Overlay Completed - Ord 77-08 - PD			X	
Jenny Lind	Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T Lack of Resources - E Overlay Completed - Ord 77-08 - PD		X		
Massard Road	Lack of Resources - PD, E		X		
U.S. 71 South	Lack of Resources - PD, E				

Transportation

<p>Zero West Street</p> <p>Wheeler Avenue</p> <p>Greenwood Avenue</p> <p>Develop and adopt Access Management and incorporate into Master Street Plan, Subdivision and Zoning</p>	<p>Lack of Resources - PD, E Fixed Route - T</p> <p>Lack of Resources - PD, E</p> <p>Lack of Resources - PD, E</p> <p>Completed - UDO - Ord 36-09</p>	<p>T, PD, E</p> <p>X</p>		
<p>Adopt ETJ Master Street Plan</p>	<p>Completed - Adopted - Master Street Plan, Ord 18-05 and Amended Ord 11-11 - E</p> <p>Ongoing - Truck Route Established, Code Sec 24-72 - E</p>	<p>Sub task</p> <p>T, PD, CC, E</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>Define and apply truck street plan</p> <p>Require all high trip generating uses to be located on principal arterial and all new high truck generating uses to be located within a mile of city interstate access points</p> <p>Rezone land along corridors to reflect Corridor Plans</p>	<p>Ongoing - UDO requires certain street classification for specific zones.</p> <p>High generating uses are locating in Chaffee Crossing</p> <p>Corridor plans not adopted - PD</p>	<p>PD, E</p> <p>PD</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	
<p>Establish priority funding areas for bicycle, transit and ped hubs, links and routes</p> <p>Develop and adopt Downtown Circulation Plan</p>	<p>Completed - R-145-08 Transfer Station, In Process - Shelters- Ord 69-09 ARRA Grant, Transit Implemented Downtown Shuttle - T</p> <p>Lack of Resources - E</p>	<p>T, TF</p> <p>CB, T, PD, E</p>	<p>X</p>	

Adopt a Traffic Impact Statement and mitigation program for developments that would generate more than 100 peak hours trips	Completed - UDO - Ord 36-09	T, PD, E			
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Economic Development

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
<p>Establish public/private partnerships on significant revitalization projects Create and maintain a data base of industrial and commercial lands information</p>	<p>Ongoing - Streetscape Projects. Chaffee Crossing Industrial Developments. CDBG, FS Housing Authority and others developed housing projects (e.g. North Pointe) Completed by ITS and Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>PD, T, E, CC, CB PD, CC, CA, IT</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>Establish incubator space for small business enterprises</p> <p>Work with University and School District to support non-traditional education and continuing education programs</p>	<p>Completed - Created Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center with the Chamber and UAFS Completed - Western Arkansas Technical Center educated high school students at UAFS. Ongoing - Phoenix Village Mall Redevelopment, Chaffee Crossing, Target Pavillion.</p>	<p>CC, OC, CD SD, CC, OC</p>		<p>X X</p>	
<p>Promote redevelopment of underutilized and/or abandoned land and facilities through public/private underwriting Establish a strategic approach to locate key employers in order to create commercial centers of concentrated activities rather than at dispersed locations</p>	<p>Completed by FCRA and Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>CA, CC CC, CA</p>	<p>X X</p>		
		<p>PD Planning Department P Police Department F Fire Department T Transportation E Engineering TF Task Force CC Chamber of Commerce U Utilities CD Community Development CE Code Enforcement CB CBID PR Parks and Recreation CA City Administration OC Other Community Organizations</p>			



Neighborhoods

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Adopt housing code	Completed - Ord 7-07	PD, CD	X		
Develop a self-supporting rental housing inspection program	No action	CD, CE		X	
Hire additional building inspectors as identified by code enforcement in partnership with police, fire, Eng., CD and other departments	Hired two Neighborhood Services Inspectors since 2002	CA, CE		X	
Promote the creation of Neighborhood Associations through Focus Newsletter, church, schools and other organizations	Ongoing - Fort Smith Neighborhood Coalition formed to act as unified voice for neighborhood associations.	CD, TF	On-Going		
Establish city staff and list of services for neighborhood support	Neighborhood Conferences in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2010 Ongoing - Police Department held Problem Solving Meetings for different neighborhoods as requested by residents	CA, OC, PD, P CD, SC, OC	X		
Establish target areas of need and NAP's					
Neighborhood Area Plans	Ongoing - Police Department held Neighborhood Problem Solving meetings that helped identify citizen issues; Lack of Resources to complete - PD	PD, CD		X	X
Inventory historic resources city wide	Ongoing - Citywide Preservation Plan	OC, SD		X	
Create neighborhood and housing demonstration projects	Ongoing - Clayton Park Phase I & II; North Pointe Phase I & II; Stonebrook Park;	CD, CC, OC	X		
Map school walking zones	Lack of Resources - E	T, TF, E, IT	X		
Adopt street parking plans	Lack of Resources - E	T, TF, E	X		

<p>Map and prioritize drainage and utility issues</p> <p>Identify and map zoning issues in conjunction with neighborhood plans</p> <p>Identify park and program opportunities and gaps</p> <p>Identify and map neighborhood centers</p> <p>Identify neighborhood unique partnerships</p>	<p>Completed and reviewed annually</p> <p>Lack of Resources - Planning</p> <p>Assessment Completed 2005</p> <p>Lack of Resources - Planning Fort Smith Neighborhood Coalition, POA/HOA's</p>	<p>CD, E, U</p> <p>CD, PD, CD, TF</p> <p>PR, CD</p> <p>CD, PD, TF</p> <p>CD, TF</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>
<p>Lack of Resources - E</p> <p>City has partnered with groups such as the Fort Smith Housing Authority, Lend-a-Hand, and Crawford Sebastian Community Development Council to provide streets, utilities, and other assistance through CDBG. - CD, PD</p>	<p>Lack of Resources - E</p> <p>City has partnered with groups such as the Fort Smith Housing Authority, Lend-a-Hand, and Crawford Sebastian Community Development Council to provide streets, utilities, and other assistance through CDBG. - CD, PD</p>	<p>PD, CA, CD, E</p>	<p></p>
<p>Adopt an incentive program for appropriate infill development</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

- PD Planning Department
- P Police Department
- F Fire Department
- T Transportation
- E Engineering
- TF Task Force
- CC Chamber of Commerce
- U Utilities
- CD Community Development
- CE Code Enforcement
- CB CDBG
- PR Parks and Recreation
- CA City Administration
- OC Other Community Organizations
- SB School Districts & University
- S Sanitation

Parks and Recreation

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Hire Recreation Director	Completed 2004	CA, PR	X		
Develop dedicated funding source	No action, needed to meet goals	CA, PR		X	
Develop city-wide greenway and trails plan that extends into Fort Chaffee and the ETJ	Completed - Ord 67-04	PR, PD, TF		X	
Design riverfront regional recreation facilities	Completed - Financing plan rejected by voters in 2006	PR, TF		X	
Assess neighborhood recreational gaps and create strategic action plan	Partial completion 2005	PR, CD	X		
Incorporate dedication of land or pay in-lieu-of fees toward the provision of parks to offset projected impacts on the public park system	Denied in UDO 2008	Subdivision revision PR, PD	X		
Establish measurable priority system for the acquisition and development of facilities	Partial completion 2005 with neighborhood plan	PR		X	
Organize for both recreation and open space planning, construction and maintenance	No action	PR, CA		X	
Consider use of city's open zone for rezoning all park land	Pending	PR, PD, CA	X		
Utilize and plan a "rail to trails" program in conjunction with the RR industries abandoned lines, including the already abandoned line from MLK park to Creekmore Park	First phase of RR trail completed 2010	PR, CA		X	

PD - Planning Department  
 P - Police Department  
 F - Fire Department  
 T - Transportation  
 E - Engineering  
 TF - Task Force  
 CC - Chamber of Commerce  
 U - Utilities  
 CD - Community Development  
 CE - Code Enforcement  
 CB - CBID  
 PR - Parks and Recreation  
 CA - City Administration  
 OC - Other Community Organizations  
 SD - School District & University  
 S - Sanitation

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Adopt water conservation policies and goals for residential, commercial and industrial uses	Ongoing - Water conservation policies exist as adopted by city ordinances - U	U		X	
Adopt Stream Valley protection, drainage and retention pond standards that increase the health of the watershed system	Completed - Drainage Standards, Adopted by Ord 79-11 and Fill/Grading Standards, Adopted by Ord 54-11 - E	E, PR, PD		X	
Revise grading ordinance standards to address erosion and sediment control both during construction and in final site design	Completed - Drainage Standards, Adopted by Ord 79-11 and Fill/Grading Standards, Adopted by Ord 54-11 - E	E, PR, PD	X		
Review and update City's Disaster Response Plan	Completed	CA		X	
Revise zoning ordinance and map to address flood-hazard and mineral resource areas	Flood Damage prevention ordinance adopted by Ord 8-10 addresses flood hazard areas - E	With zoning rewrite	X		
Complete EPA Phase II Stormwater Management Plan that address BMP's and criteria for road, yard, and on and off-site even flooding	Completed - Drainage Standards, Adopted by Ord 79-11 and Fill/Grading Standards, Adopted by Ord 54-11 - E	E, PR, PD	X		
Ensure City complies with Federal and State floodplain requirements and maintain the City's eligibility under the National Flood Insurance Program	Flood Damage prevention ordinance adopted by Ord 8-10 addresses flood hazard areas - E	PD, E	X		

Natural Environment

<p>Coordinate AEOG permitting with city land use planning and zoning to protect existing residents from hazards, noise, and light pollution</p>	<p>Ongoing - UDO addresses commercial and industrial lighting issues; Ord 78-11 adopted residential lighting issues; Ord 92-09 adopted noise ordinance</p>	<p>CA, OC</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Establish and publicize city recycling goals for household hazardous waste, and business, industry, government, and residential regular programs</p>	<p>Ongoing-when the current recycling contract expires in 2011 Sanitation will be working to establish recycling goals</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Adopt tree planting and preservation policy and annual program</p>	<p>Tree City status obtained, annual tree planting, Urban Forester hired, public education</p>	<p>OC, CA, PR</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Adopt land use plan and zoning for airport noise impact area overlay</p>	<p>Currently coordinate with airport during permit review - P</p>	<p>OC (Airport), PD</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Adopt and enforce city noise and light ordinance addressing negative impacts on residential areas</p>	<p>Completed; Lighting - UDO, Noise - Police</p>	<p>With zoning rewrite CE</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Establish a comprehensive development and building permit review checklist that addresses environmental concerns</p>	<p>No action Completed - The Drainage Standards adopted by Ord 79-11</p>	<p>With process revisions</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Prepare and communicate design standards for stormwater detention basins that address depth, shape, slopes, landscape, plant materials, multi-use concepts and pollution filtration</p>	<p>address stormwater detention basins - E</p>	<p>E, CA</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Include hillside and ridgeline development standards within the subdivision and building code that address densities based on slope, street, utility and building-site grading, erosion and sediment control, surface and subsurface drainage and vegetation requirements</p>	<p>Drainage Standards, Adopted by Ord 79-11 and Fill/Grading Standards, Adopted by Ord 54-11 address erosion and sediment control and surface drainage - E</p>	<p>With subdivision revision</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Complete Lake Fort Smith water supply project</p>	<p>Water supply complete; treatment plant under construction; transmission line ongoing - U</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>X</p>

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Continue to identify crime patterns and develop innovative approaches	Undertaking training in crime analysis; addressing "hot spots" with Street Crimes Unit and Patrol	P	On-going		
Incorporate advanced technology systems and automation	Use of CrimeReports.com and crime analysis software applications	P, F	On-going		
Monitor and maintain emergency response times	We monitor this and conduct a beat analysis every three years.	P, F	On-going		
Support neighborhood crime watch and bicycle patrols	Ongoing, supplemented by neighborhood problem solving meetings.	P, CD	On-going		
Develop a community safety manual that addresses fire hazards, community crime, household security, and neighborhood watch	F - The fire department believes developing a safety manual is no longer cost effective. We also believe other technologies exist to do the same thing more effectively at a much lower cost. P - The department has many stand alone documents and booklets addressing these topics. Also see attached booklet.	P, F, CD		X	
Develop Fort Chaffee stations as development occurs	Chaffee Crossing fire station in planning phase. Sales tax reelection to fund construction bond planned for Spring 2012. - F Would like to partner with Fire Department to occupy an office in future station. - P	F, P			X

Downtown

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Refine district concepts into plan that include building scale, desired mix of uses, public gathering spaces, parking and circulation	Design guidelines adopted in 2010 - CB	CB, PD	X		
Establish ground floor design guidelines	Completed - CB	CB, PD	X		
Develop existing building inventory	Created and Updated Regularly - CB	CB, CC	X		
Develop existing business inventory	Created and Updated Regularly - CB	CB, CC	X		
	Lack of Resources - E				
	Ongoing - Park at Grand Ave and North 10th and 11th; Pendergraft Park, Streetscape at Garrison and Towson Avenue - CB	CB, PD, CA, E		X	
Design and build gateway features	Completed - CB	OC		X	
Complete historic resource inventory	Ongoing - Historic Route guided by Transit - CB	CB, CC	X		
Establish and promote tourist routes	Implemented Downtown Shuttle - T				
	Lack of Resources - E	CB, T, PD, E		X	
Design and adopt all-mode downtown circulation plan	Ongoing - Residential numbers tripled since 2005; Still working on employment numbers- CB				
Quantify jobs and housing goals	Ongoing - Bass Reeves Monuments; Historic Markers; Convention Center Art; and Mayor's Art Commission CB	CB, PD, CA, CC	X		
Establish public art program ptnsp.	Commission CB	CB, OC, CC			X

Recommended Tasks	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2- 5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Adopt land use and design concept	Ongoing - Land use and design concept developed in 2009-10, but not adopted by principal landowner	CB, CA, PD	X		
Complete river trail development	Funding source needed - PR Lack of Resources - E	CA, PR, E		X	
Re-designate Clayton Expressway to Parkway	Completed - Renamed to Riverfront Drive in 2011	E, CB		X	
Rezone land as appropriate	Zone property as land uses are presented	PR, CC, PD		X	
Redesign "P" street facility	Completed - U	E, PR, U	X		
Work with Corps of Engineers on floodway/plain land use and mitigation	Ongoing - May Branch Drainage project and levy improvement and certification - E	E, PD, CD	On-going		
Form regional and corporate partnerships for regional sports facilities	Ongoing - Continue to develop opportunities with potential partners	PR, CA, CC, SD	On-going		

- PD Planning Department
- P Police Department
- F Fire Department
- T Transportation
- E Engineering
- TF Task Force
- CC Chamber of Commerce
- U Utilities
- CD Community Development
- CE Code Enforcement
- CB CBID
- PR Parks and Recreation
- OC City Administration
- Other Community Organizations
- S School District & University
- Sanitation

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

	Status	Responsibility	Short Term 0-2 Years	Near Term 2-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years
Recommended Tasks Prepare a land use plan	Completed - Ord 28-03	PD	X		
Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect ETJ issues	Completed - Ord 29-03	PD	X		
Assess existing infrastructure and services including police and fire	Master Street Plan, Adopted by Ordinance 18-05 and Amended Ord 11-11 reserves street corridors - E Fire Dept has identified station locations - F Water and sewer extensions identified - U	PD, CA, P, F, E, U	X		
Develop and adopt long-range plan for infrastructure and service provision	Master Street Plan, Adopted by Ordinance 18-05 and Amended Ord 11-11 reserves street corridors - E Water and Sewer Master Plan - U	PD, CA, P, F, E, U		X	
Develop annexation policy in regards to land in ETJ that discourages "leap-frog" development and rewards residential development adjacent to existing city limits	Annexation Policy Discussion with Board - Jan 2006. No action by Board Ongoing - working with neighboring jurisdictions on land use plan - PD	PD, CA, P, F, E, U	X		
Establish regional review with neighboring jurisdictions	Sebastian County has completed some trail work. Park land dedication not included in UDO - PD Considered by Board - No action taken	PD, CA, OC		X	
Incorporate regional trail and park planning in ETJ plan		PD, PR		X	
Establish representational process for residents/owners in ETJ		PD, CA		X	

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

<p>Establish staffing and administrative process for permits within ETJ</p>	<p>Completed - No staff was added and an administrative process was established</p>	<p>PD, CA</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>Define areas of high and low growth potential</p>	<p>Completed with Utilities System Planning - U Adopted Master Land Use Plan Ord 28-03 - PD</p>	<p>PD, TF</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>Develop school and water district service plans with effected entities</p>	<p>Completed Water Plan - U School boundaries established by state law - no further action contemplated</p>	<p>SD, E, OC, U</p>			<p>X</p>

Matrix

PD	Planning Department
P	Police Department
F	Fire Department
T	Transportation
E	Engineering
TF	Task Force
CC	Chamber of Commerce
U	Utilities
CD	Community Development
CE	Code Enforcement
CB	CBID
PR	Parks and Recreation
CA	City Administration
OC	Other Community Organizations
SD	School District & University
S	Sanitation

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Ray Gosack, City Administrator

**From:** Stan Snodgrass, P.E., Director of Engineering 

**Subject:** Discussion of City's request for franchise utility companies to not install overhead utility lines along newly constructed street corridors

**Date:** October 20, 2011

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We are beginning to see plans for proposed development along sections of the newly constructed Chad Colley Boulevard south of Massard Road. Franchise utility service in this area is primarily non-existent, and installation of new franchise utility lines to serve development along this corridor will be required. This would include but not be limited to electric, phone and cable TV.

The September 6, 2011 regular meeting of the Board of Directors included a resolution requested by the Board of Directors urging the franchise utility companies to not install overhead lines within these types of street corridors. This would be in an effort to maintain the more aesthetically pleasing appearance along the street right of way corridor.

This item was tabled at the September 6, 2011 meeting to allow for further review at a Board study session. Representatives from Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative Corporation and Oklahoma Gas & Electric Energy Corporation will present information on this issue at next Tuesday's study session.

## MEMORANDUM

October 21, 2011

**TO:** Mayor and Board of Directors

**FROM:** Ray Gosack, City Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Ward Reapportionment

After a census count, the city must examine the population totals in its 4 wards to ensure there's equal representation for each ward. Attached is a letter from the legal staff which explains when ward reapportionment must occur.

Based on 2010 census figures, the city isn't required to re-draw its ward boundaries to achieve population balance. However, the board may find it desirable to do so. There's a nearly 12% population difference between ward 2 (20,775 persons) and ward 3 (23,204 persons). Below is a discussion of the advantages of each option and considerations should the board decide to re-draw ward boundaries.

- Leaving ward boundaries unchanged means that no precinct has to be moved from one ward to another. This results in no confusion that changes in ward boundaries might create.
- Fort Smith's continued growth to the south and southeast will worsen the imbalance between wards 2 and 3. The population imbalance among wards has been increasing over the last 20 years as shown on an attached spreadsheet. If the imbalance isn't addressed now, the changes needed after the 2020 census will likely be more substantial.
- If ward boundaries are re-drawn, they should be done so that each ward is as **geographically compact** as possible, **follows voting precinct boundaries** so that precincts aren't divided into multiple wards, involves **moving as few precincts** between wards as possible, and achieves the **greatest equity in population distribution**.

If the board desires to leave ward boundaries unchanged, it will need to pass a resolution confirming that the current ward boundaries will continue in effect. If the board desires to adjust ward boundaries, the staff has prepared a map (attached) which meets the criteria discussed above. This map keeps the population of all 4 wards within 2% of the average population per ward and reduces the largest variance between wards from 11.7% to 3.1%. It results in moving only 3 voting precincts from one ward to another.

Any changes in ward boundaries don't require a public hearing. However, the board may find it desirable to allow for a period of public comment before any ward map is considered for adoption.

The staff recommends that a ward reapportionment occur as shown on the attached map and spreadsheet. The disparity in populations between wards has increased over the last 20 years, and will continue to become more disparate as Fort Smith grows to the south and southeast. A reapportionment made now will also avoid the need for a more extensive ward reapportionment when the 2020 census is taken. If there's any questions or a need for more information, please contact Sherri Gard or me.

*Ray*

#### Attachments

cc: Jerry Huff, Sebastian County Election Coordinator

NOTE: Sebastian County was required to re-draw precinct boundaries to comply with the state's legislative re-districting which occurred earlier this year. The city's re-districting of wards is based on these new precinct boundaries. These new precinct boundaries have some slight variations from the previous ones.



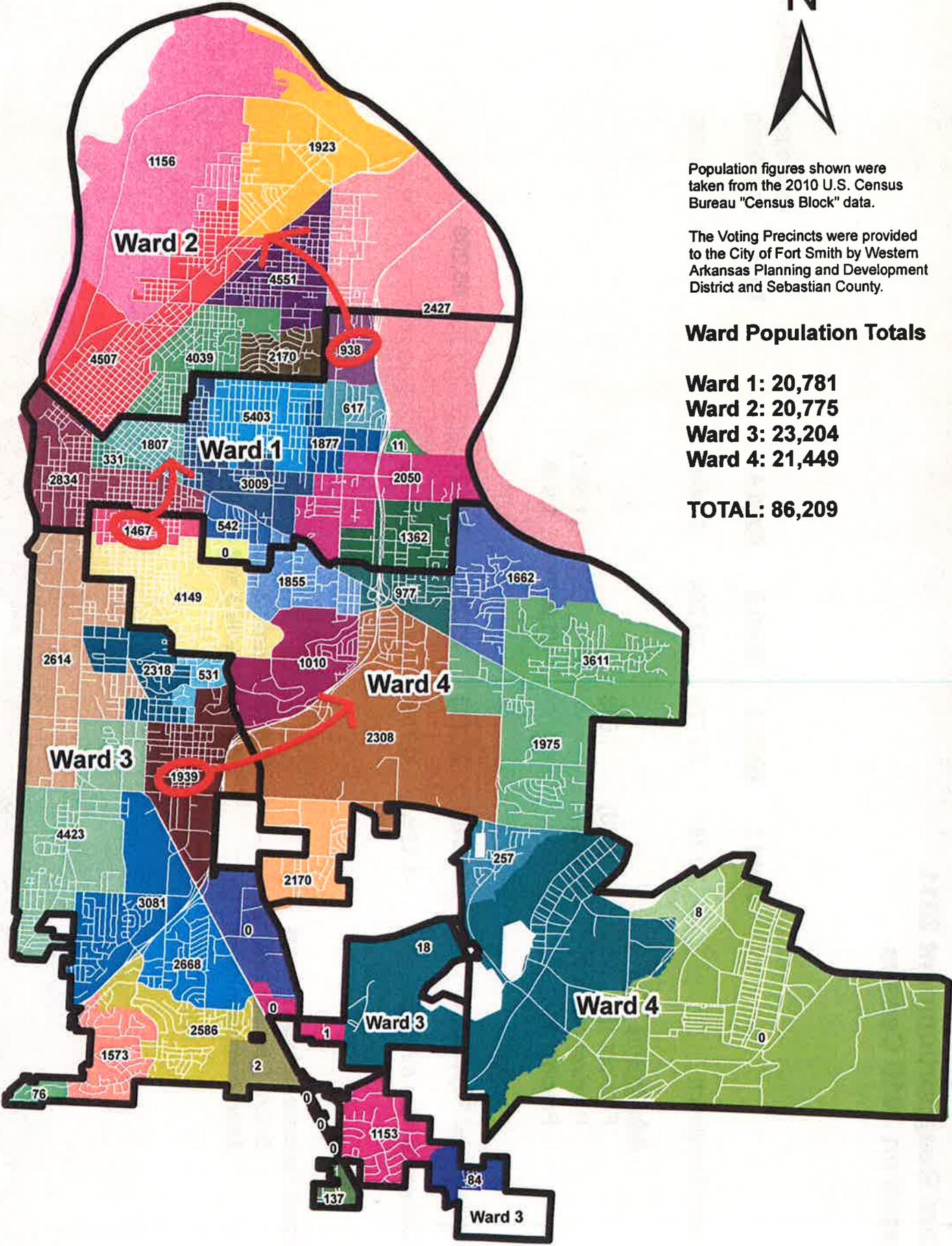
Population figures shown were taken from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau "Census Block" data.

The Voting Precincts were provided to the City of Fort Smith by Western Arkansas Planning and Development District and Sebastian County.

### Ward Population Totals

- Ward 1: 20,781
- Ward 2: 20,775
- Ward 3: 23,204
- Ward 4: 21,449

**TOTAL: 86,209**



**City of Fort Smith  
Ward Reapportionment 2011  
Based on 2010 Census**

	<u>Ward 1</u>	<u>Ward 2</u>	<u>Ward 3</u>	<u>Ward 4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average Population Per Ward</u>
Current Population	20,781	20,775	23,204	21,449	86,209	21,552
<u>Adjustments</u>						
Precinct 1B	(938)	938				
Precinct 4C	1,467		(1,939)	(1,467)		
Precinct 3C				1,939		
Reapportioned Population	21,310	21,713	21,265	21,921	86,209	
% Difference from Average	-1.12%	0.75%	-1.33%	1.71%		
<u>Largest Variance Between Wards</u>						
Before Reapportionment		11.69%	(wards 2 and 3)			
After Reapportionment		3.08%	(wards 3 and 4)			

# City of Fort Smith Population by Ward 1990-2010

	<u>Ward 1</u>		<u>Ward 2</u>		<u>Ward 3</u>		<u>Ward 4</u>		<u>Average</u>	
	Total	% Diff. from Average	Total	% Diff. from Average						
1990 Census	18,139	0.33%	18,225	-0.14%	18,065	0.74%	18,369	-0.92%	72,798	18,200
2000 Census	20,333	-1.31%	19,197	4.53%	19,939	0.64%	20,799	-3.52%	80,268	20,067
2010 Census	20,781	3.71%	20,775	3.74%	23,204	-7.12%	21,449	0.48%	86,209	21,552

## Largest Variance Between Wards

1990	1.68% (wards 3 and 4)
2000	8.35% (wards 2 and 4)
2010	11.69% (wards 2 and 3)

# DAILY & WOODS

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† Also Licensed in Oklahoma

March 29, 2011

Mr. Ray Gosack  
City Administrator  
623 Garrison Avenue  
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Re: Apportionment Among the Wards

Dear Mr. Gosack:

As you are aware, the federal census has just been completed. A.C.A. § 14-48-107(c)(1) (Repl. 1998) provides:

The board of directors of the city under the city administrator form of government shall review the apportionment among the wards after each federal census in the city or in the event there is an imbalance in population among the wards in excess of fifteen percent (15%).

(Emphasis added.) The statute goes on to note that, “[t]he board of directors may reapportion the wards to maintain substantially equal population in each ward whenever they deem necessary.” Id. at (c)(2)(A) (emphasis added).

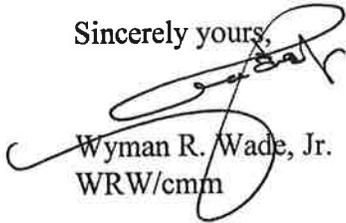
In Abate v. Mundt, 403 U.S. 182 (1971), the United States Supreme Court acknowledged that “[i]n assessing the constitutionality of various apportionment plans, . . . [the US Supreme Court has] observed that viable local governments may need considerable flexibility in municipal arrangements if they are to meet changing societal needs . . . and that a desire to preserve that integrity of political subdivisions may justify an apportionment plan which departs from numerical equality.” 403 U.S. at 185 (citation omitted). In so stating, the Supreme Court recognized that the particular circumstances and needs of a local community as a whole may sometimes justify departures from strict population equality. Id. In Abate, supra, the U.S. Supreme Court found that, though the reapportionment plan involved in that case did show a total deviation from equality of 11.9%, the plan did not contain a built-in bias tending to favor particular political interests or geographic areas and that the circumstances before the Court did not indicate the reapportionment plan violates the Constitution.

The recent federal census reveals variations of less than 10% among several Fort Smith wards, with

the greatest deviation being 11.6% vis-à-vis wards 2 and 3. Where, as here, the increase in population in ward 3 seems to be attributable to recent housing development in that area of the City, and thus the resulting deviation not attributable to built-in bias favoring particular political interests or geographic areas, it is our opinion that the ultimate question of redistricting at this time becomes a policy matter for the Board of Directors. We believe that were a court to review the existing deviation between wards 2 and 3, it would find that the present deviation of 11.6% is not violative of equal protection. As a caveat, however, it is to be noted that, if population growth continues in any one or more wards as compared to other wards, the issue of redistricting should be revisited.

If you have questions about this opinion, let us know and we will attempt to respond further.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wyman R. Wade, Jr.", written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Wyman R. Wade, Jr.  
WRW/cmm

# **AGENDA** ~ *Summary*

## **FORT SMITH BOARD OF DIRECTORS STUDY SESSION**

***October 25, 2011 ~ 12:00 NOON***

### **FORT SMITH PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM 3201 ROGERS AVENUE**

1. Report on the Comprehensive Plan implementation schedule including participation from Fayetteville Forward ~ *Inclusion of Fayetteville Forward requested at the September 6, 2011 regular meeting ~*  
*The board concurred to update the existing comprehensive plan and urged increased public involvement.*
2. Discuss City's request for franchise utility companies to not install overhead utility lines along newly constructed street corridors ~ *Resolution removed from agenda of the September 6, 2011 regular meeting pending further discussion ~*  
*The board agreed to forgo consideration of the resolution but encouraged utility companies to install underground utility lines when possible.*
3. Review reapportionment of city wards  
*The board conveyed no opposition to the proposed realignment of city ward boundaries. A public comment period will be held, with consideration of an ordinance authorizing same tentatively scheduled for the December 6, 2011 regular meeting.*
4. Review preliminary agenda for the November 1, 2011 regular meeting