



City of Bentonville, Arkansas

# General Plan

The General Plan is a constitution that guides the future of the City by providing direction to City leaders as they make decisions. It states the City's vision for its future, outlines the goals and policies needed to achieve the vision, and describes how growth should occur. The General Plan is an important mechanism for the preservation of the city's urban form, the timely provision of public facilities and services, and the adoption of equitable funding mechanisms to pay for the public costs that new growth brings.

This General Plan is a result of a year-long process guided by a Steering Committee made up of concerned citizens facilitated by Planning Works, a planning consulting firm. A non-scientific citizen survey was distributed in utility bills and made available online to gather public opinion. Several public workshops, public meetings, and joint meetings between City Council and Planning Commission provided the direction for plan development.

## The General Plan is:

- The only formal unified overview of life in Bentonville;
- An ongoing status report on the community's performance;
- A statement of Bentonville's view of itself;
- City officials' most basic statement of public policy;
- A description of how the City should act to achieve its desired future;
- A means to inform the public and all stakeholders; and,
- A tool to assist in the management and stewardship of Bentonville.

The General Plan and Future Land Use Map are on the city website at [www.bentonvillear.com](http://www.bentonvillear.com).

Building a Better Bentonville

## Plan Outline

- I. Background Assessment (Where we are now):** An evaluation of where the City is today that identifies community issues, defines growth trends and projections, establishes levels of services and projects future needs.
- II. Scenarios Analysis (Where we could go):** Explores growth management alternatives evaluated on fiscal, economic, environmental costs and opportunities together with the necessary legal tools to carry out the alternative.
- III. Smart Growth Elements (Where we want to go):** Goals and policies that provide guidance for decision making that will enhance citizen's quality of life.
- IV. Implementation Program (How we will get there):** Key strategies used to accomplish the plan's goals and policies that establishes a time frame, describes action tools, and identifies responsible entities.

## Future Land Use Map

The foundation for future community development is the **Future Land Use Map** showing the desired location for each land use as the City continues to grow and develop.

Several workshops, public hearings, and a detailed analysis of three growth scenarios concluded with a preferred pattern of growth. The selected growth alternative is a combination of infill development in the core city area with mixed-used centers dispersed in other areas to accommodate surrounding residential uses.

City officials use the Future Land Use Map as a guide for land use and development decisions.



## Land Uses Categories

- Agricultural
- Residential Estate
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use
- Downtown Mixed-Use Residential
- Public / Semi-Public
- Open Space

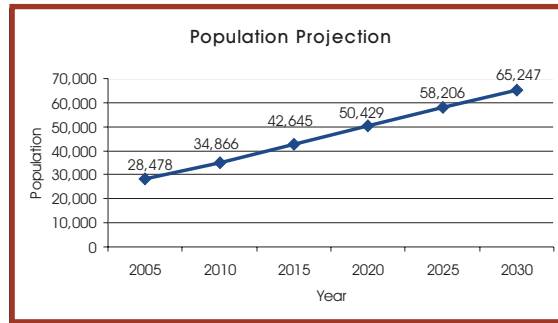
*"Bentonville has a hometown atmosphere while offering big city services."*

- Response from citizen survey

## Projections

The Future Land Use Map and General Plan are based on the following projections for 2030:

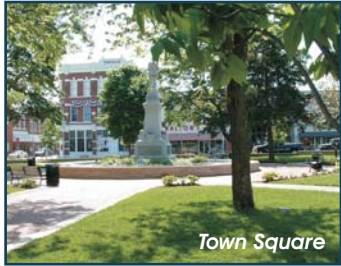
Population: 65,247 persons  
Employment: 75,509 persons  
Housing: 27,630 units  
Residential: 3,804 acres  
Non-residential: 203 acres



Source: Planning Works, 2006

## Goals

**Land Use:** Foster a safe, convenient, attractive, compatible, and fiscally responsible land use pattern that includes a variety of housing, recreational, and commercial opportunities while respecting unique community assets.



**Community Design:** Maintain the small town environment that is Bentonville's hallmark while recognizing the unique characteristics of existing neighborhoods, continuing to develop the cultural amenities that draw residents / visitors to the City.

**Physical Environment:** Ensure that development decisions minimize degradation of natural resources, preserve existing tree canopies,

and promote a clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing environment for current and future citizens.

**Public Facilities:** Ensure that public services, facilities, and utilities support community life in a safe, effective, and efficient manner, while justly allocating the costs of providing these public goods.

**Transportation:** Provide and maintain a transportation system that includes multiple modes and emphasizes connectivity, safety, and cost effectiveness while supporting the preferred land use pattern.

**Intergovernmental Coordination:** Work cooperatively to protect the region's natural assets, support regional planning efforts, and improve the quality of life throughout the region.

**Economy:** Sustain the strong local economy that provides varied employment and trade opportunities built upon efficient and equitable use of Bentonville's cultural, natural, built, and human resources.



# Key Concepts

## Conservation Subdivisions:

Described as golf course developments without the golf course, where residential lots abut common open space. Open space preservation is achieved by allowing increased development densities.



## Development Agreements:

A contract negotiated between project proponents and public agencies that govern land uses, design elements, and open space amenities of a project; especially for large annexations and land of more than 20 acres with contiguous ownership.

**Area Plans:** Plans for areas at the intersection of two arterial roads to identify preferred uses, access management to the arterials, internal circulation and design criteria. Affected property owners and interested developers play a critical role in the planning process guided by City staff.

**Stormwater Management:** Techniques and methods that prevent the liabilities of flooding while building on the amenities of greenways and other features that assist in managing stormwater to prevent the negative impact of stormwater runoff.

**Green Infrastructure:** An interconnected, multi-purpose network of protected land and water in the parks and trails system that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources and contributes to the health and quality of life.

**Access Management:** Limiting and consolidating access to and from land developments on arterial streets creating a roadway system that is efficient and safe. Techniques include proper signal spacing, median treatments, two-way left-turn lanes, and controlling driveway number, placement and design.

**Low-Impact Development:** A more sustainable land development pattern created from a site planning process that identifies critical natural resources, including wetlands, soils, and water protection areas, to identify appropriate building envelopes that will preserve the natural hydrology of the land.

**Transfer of Development Rights:** Development rights are transferred from one district that has sensitive natural resources (sending district) to another district more suitable to development (receiving district) in order to preserve those resources while maintaining overall community development potential.

# Guiding

# Policies

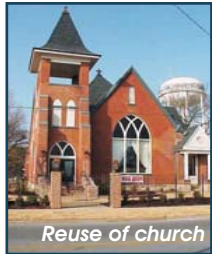
## Land Use

**Future Land Use Map.** Land use planning, development and rezoning decisions shall be guided by the Future Land Use Map and the goals and policies of the General Plan; a method for amending the future land use map will be adopted.

**Mixed-use Centers.** Encourage mixed-use centers, development that blends medium-density residential, commercial and office uses with open space and public amenities in nearly equal measure, creating a center of land uses that support each other and designed with the pedestrian in mind; minimizing traffic congestion and creating new neighborhoods.



**Infill.** Promote the context-sensitive reuse of property and buildings, taking advantage of the inner-core's existing assets and features, such as infrastructure, that results in a mix of uses and incomes creating a vibrant urban environment.



**Housing.** Monitor housing inventory to ensure a mixture of housing types to meet the needs of residents throughout their lives while encouraging affordable housing options.

## Community Design

**Public Art.** Capitalize on Crystal Bridges Museum and increase and maintain pedestrian, cultural and artistic amenities to attract additional residents and visitors.

**Design Standards.** Establish design standards for non-residential uses; encourage development that is safe; create incentives for conservation subdivision design and infill development; and encourage pedestrian-scale development that facilitates walking, bicycling and transit use.



**Neighborhood Plans.** Target unstable or declining neighborhoods for revitalization by identifying policies and strategies to improve infrastructure and other conditions that encourage development and improve the livability of the area for current residents; creating partnerships between the City, housing and development agencies, and private property owners.

## Physical Environment

**Natural Resources and Features.** Mitigate development impacts on natural resources, including surface and ground water contamination, soil erosion or contamination, air quality degradation and loss of vegetation; integrate green infrastructure as part of the park and trail system; and encourage low impact development (LID) techniques in new developments.

**Stormwater Management.** Minimize the effects of human activity on the quality of surface and groundwater; favor natural or landscaped drainageways; monitor development on floodplains; and encourage sensitive site design.

**Tree Preservation.** Integrate trees and natural vegetation into the built environment to beautify, buffer and shelter structures; maintain street trees; use protective measures during construction to preserve trees that are intended to be saved; and encourage the preservation of mature trees and those having historical or cultural significance.



## Public Facilities

**Concurrency.** Ensure that the facilities needed to serve new development are available at the same time that the new development creates demand for facilities.

**Infrastructure.** Encourage development that uses existing facilities and is adjacent to existing facilities; maintain a capital improvements program; and ensure water and wastewater facilities are designed to meet projected demand.

**Emergency Services.** Increase public safety by planning and providing for appropriate police and fire protection services to meet the needs of businesses and residents; participating in inter-jurisdictional police and fire efforts; and involving the public in crime prevention.



**Parks and Open Space.** Maintain and update the City's Parks Master Plan and design parks and recreation facilities in accordance with the plan.

**Municipal Airport.** Protect the function of the municipal airport and regulate land uses surrounding the airport to ensure the safety of long-term airport operations.

# Guiding Policies

## Transportation

**Master Street Plan / Master Trail Plan.** Use the Master Street Plan as a standard and guidance for functional classifications and design standards; review the Master Street Plan to revise design standards to accommodate turn lanes; encourage construction of trails according to the Master Trail Plan as new development occurs; and use the plans for Capital Improvement Project planning and budgeting.



**Mobility and Accessibility.** Develop a street network that supports the land use policies of smart growth; encourage connectivity; monitor access management; and seek the timely repair and improvement to existing transportation facilities.

**Livability and Safety.** Take a multimodal approach to travel to overcome congestion on the streets by accommodating both motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation; improve roadway safety by monitoring crash statistics to locate high accident areas; support regional transit plans and systems; and encourage streetscape design that incorporates trees, landscaping, street furniture and lighting.

**Administration.** Develop a template for efficiently prioritizing roadway projects; coordinate street improvements with other public facility improvements; and ensure consistency and coordination with regional and state transportation plans and policies.



## Intergovernmental Coordination

**Annexation.** Establish a fiscally responsible annexation program to establish criteria for voluntary and involuntary annexations; pursue annexation of contiguous areas where municipal services are already being provided; and prepare annexation plans with a cost and benefits analysis for annexations of 40 acres or more.

**Intergovernmental Agreements.** Make arrangements with adjacent jurisdictions to coordinate plans, policies, budgets and capital improvement programs to address and resolve regional issues of mutual interest. Plan for coordination with schools, libraries, transportation, parks, cultural institutions, trails, environmental protection, public safety, and sewer and water facilities.

## Economy

**Local Economy.** Create an atmosphere attractive to new and existing businesses to strengthen the area economy; encourage the location of employment opportunities within mixed-use centers; partner and support the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Bentonville, Inc. in their efforts to retain and expand business opportunities; coordinate public investment in capital facilities projects with related economic opportunities; and encourage the recruitment and retention of retail and commercial businesses.



**Agriculture.** Support economic development initiatives that promote value-added activities and the direct marketing of agriculture products, such as farmer's markets, "pick-your-own" operations, and farm stands; encourage consumption of locally produced agricultural products; and allow non-agricultural land uses that directly support agriculture, such as agri-tourism and farm-related industries.

**Tourism.** Continue to make public investments in parks, trails, open space amenities, public art and downtown targeting those investments to support tourism-related development; continue the partnership with *Building Bentonville* to maintain and promote the Bentonville brand; and create a way-finding signage program.



### Implementation Program

Successful implementation of the Plan results from many individual actions by the City, other jurisdictions and service providers and private decision-makers over the course of many years. The implementation program has three components to help identify the tasks needed to accomplish the Plan's goals and policies:

**Ongoing Staff Tasks:** These tasks are performed by staff on a regular basis to support the achievement of the Plan's goals and policies.

**Annual Work Plan:** The most dynamic component of the plan, it is developed and reviewed on an annual basis to identify the previous year's accomplishments and to modify tasks.

**Strategies Matrix:** The matrix prioritizes specific actions recommended to achieve the Plan's goals and indicates the related budgetary impacts.