

# 2

## AT A GLANCE

Bentonville's Regional Role

Population Growth

People

Housing

Jobs

Community Outreach

Past Plans and Studies

# EXHIBIT B: COMMUNITY PROFILE

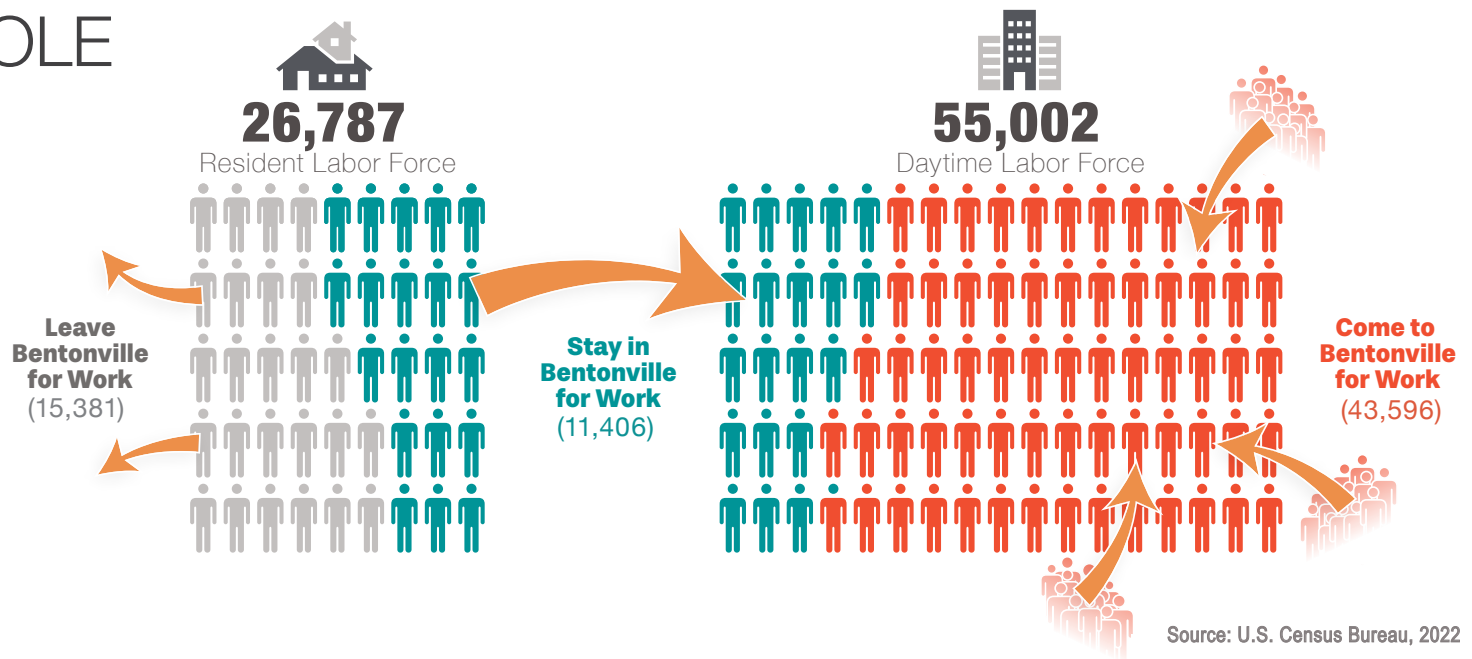
## 2024 UPDATE

Over the past decade, Bentonville has seen an unprecedented rate of growth, transforming the city and positioning it for further expansion and economic diversification. This concentrated growth in Bentonville—within a rapidly expanding Northwest Arkansas—has outpaced the development of housing, transportation, and essential infrastructure, leading to challenges such as traffic congestion, limited sewer capacity, and escalating housing costs. Bentonville's unique small-town charm remains an important community value, and preserving this quality amid urbanization requires new residential and commercial developments that relieve pressure on the city center while supporting fiscally responsible growth.

At this pivotal moment, the Community Plan has been updated to better address Bentonville's evolving needs and capitalize on the opportunities presented by regional growth. The updated plan takes into account Bentonville's current demographic trends, housing needs, job market, and community feedback to guide strategic land use and transportation decisions. This growth trajectory presents a significant opportunity to diversify the regional economy, broaden housing choices, and improve quality of life through thoughtful placemaking initiatives and the conservation of nearby rural and natural areas.

This chapter outlines the key factors influencing the Community Plan, including a detailed analysis of demographics, employment, housing, and input from Bentonville residents. Together, these components serve as a foundation for the plan's strategic recommendations—found in the following chapters—that aim to support Bentonville's development in a way that aligns with the city's values, meets the needs of a diverse and growing population, and ensures a vibrant future for the community.

# BENTONVILLE'S REGIONAL ROLE



## A CHANGING REGION

Over the past two decades, Northwest Arkansas has transformed from a largely rural area into a dynamic, economically diverse region with increasing national recognition. Bentonville, in particular, has evolved from a quiet town centered around Walmart's headquarters to a vibrant economic, cultural, and social hub. This evolution has brought numerous benefits, including a strong job market, world-class recreational and cultural facilities, and a growing selection of diverse dining and entertainment options. Regionally, Bentonville serves as a destination for both employment and entertainment and is gaining recognition as a national hotspot for recreation and culture.

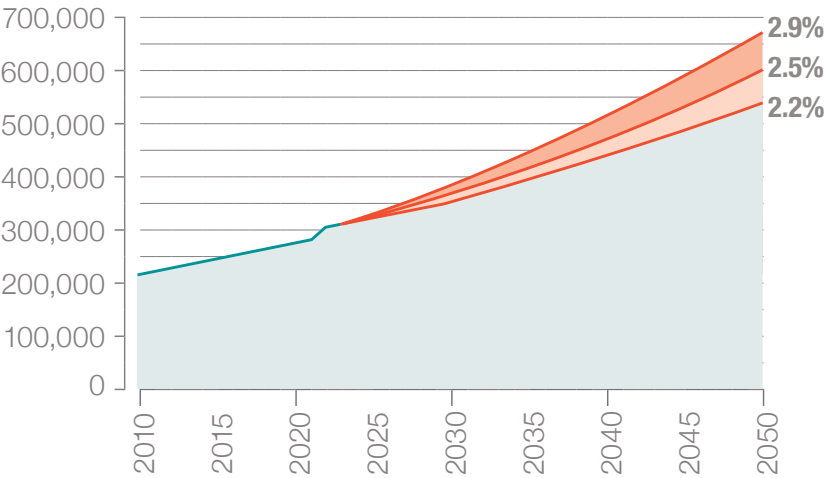
Bentonville's position as a regional employment leader has created significant transportation pressures, with 80% of the city's workforce commuting daily from surrounding areas, leading to congestion on city streets. The pace and spread of regional growth have outpaced transportation infrastructure, with future facilities needing better regional coordination. As Bentonville continues to expand, addressing transportation challenges will be critical to maintaining the city's quality of life.

As a center for entertainment, recreation, and culture, Bentonville attracts visitors from far and wide. It's common to hear various languages around the town square and to see mountain bike riders throughout downtown. While the tourist sector has been bolstered by high-quality attractions, an expanding food scene, and increasing flight options, there remains a shortage of lodging and transportation resources. The resulting rise in short-term rentals has added pressure to the already high-demand housing market.

Bentonville's growth is part of a broader regional trend. Nearby cities like Rogers have developed housing, retail, and office spaces that are deeply connected to Bentonville's economy and weekday population. The surrounding cities of Centerton, Bella Vista, and Pea Ridge have also expanded, offering residential options to support the Bentonville-Rogers economic hub. To the south, Springdale and Fayetteville form another economic and cultural pairing, driven by the University of Arkansas and a mix of office, retail, and housing developments. Together, this regional growth, along with strong economies and emerging cultural assets, is accelerating overall expansion, as reflected in optimistic growth projections.

The Community Plan is designed to meet Bentonville's unprecedented growth and increasingly diverse population and economy. As the region continues to develop beyond previous expectations, Bentonville must actively manage this growth to preserve its unique character, reduce strain on downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, and foster an environment that supports long-term economic resilience and vitality.

**POPULATION** (BENTON COUNTY, AR)



Source: U.S. Census, LandUse USA

# POPULATION GROWTH

## BENTONVILLE'S SCALE

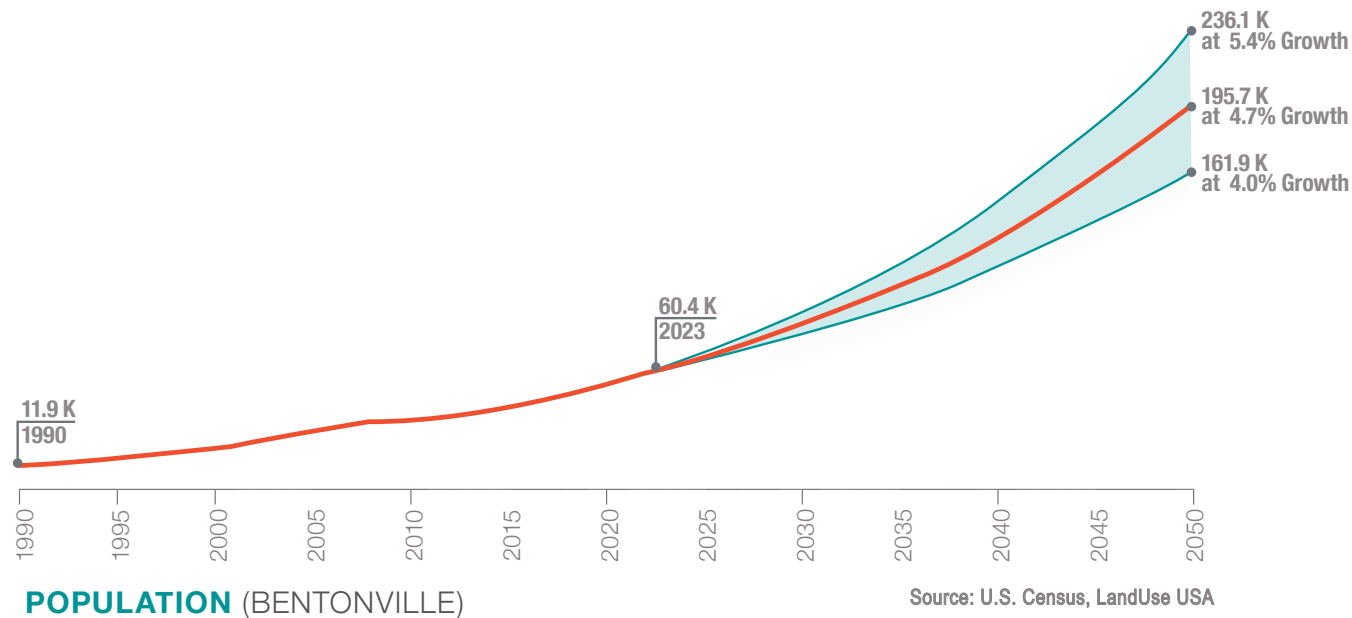
Recent unprecedented growth has raised a central question: just how much will Bentonville expand in the coming decades?

To guide planning, three growth scenarios have been developed, each offering a long-term population forecast. In a moderate growth scenario, current rates would slow to about 4.0% annually, with the population reaching approximately 161,900 by 2050. If recent growth trends hold steady at 4.7%, Bentonville's population could approach 195,700 by 2050. In an accelerated scenario of

5.4% annual growth, a rate that Bentonville has recently experienced, the population could surge to nearly 236,100 by 2050. Even at the conservative 4% growth rate, projections suggest a population over 230,000 by 2060, indicating that Bentonville may quadruple in size within the next few decades.

The Community Plan outlines strategies to accommodate a city four times its current size. Limiting growth within Bentonville would likely shift demand to surrounding communities, worsening traffic congestion and straining resources.

To meet these challenges, Bentonville must proactively manage its expansion, directing growth to meet the city's fiscal needs while enhancing quality of life for its residents. The city should align its policies to enable a fast pace of development to accommodate a diversity of demand for housing and for economic expansion. Both should consider cost and the growing lack of affordability - for places to live and for new businesses to establish.





# PEOPLE

## EVOLVING POPULATION

Bentonville's demographic profile is shifting rapidly, with a notable increase in foreign-born residents, especially from India, and an influx of newcomers from other states like Texas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. These trends are diversifying the community and driving demand for housing, varied recreational facilities, and culturally relevant services. Bentonville also has a relatively young, affluent, and well-educated population. With a median household income projected to reach \$105,600 by 2028 and over half of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher, the city stands out as an attractive hub for economic activity and skilled labor.

The following actions represent some of many ways the city can advance its programs, policies, and partnerships to support an evolving population.

### Culturally Inclusive Community Services:

Develop parks, libraries, and community centers that reflect the city's diverse population, with multilingual materials, cultural programming, and event spaces that celebrate different backgrounds.

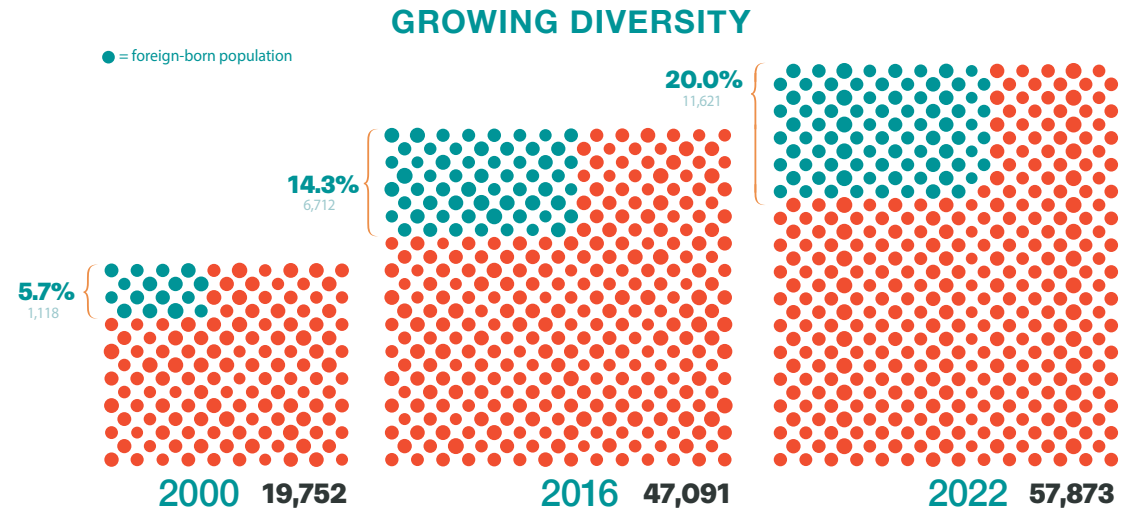
**Housing Diversity:** Create policies to promote a range of housing types, from affordable homes for young professionals to larger residences for families, meeting the varied needs of a multicultural population.

**Support for New Residents:** Enhance orientation programs and support services tailored for newcomers, including international residents, to ease integration into the community and familiarize them with local services.

**Youth and Senior Programs:** Expand resources for both younger families and the city's slowly aging population by developing programs that address intergenerational needs, including family-friendly facilities, as well as age-friendly infrastructure and services.

**Education and Workforce Development:** Strengthen ties with local educational institutions and employers to attract and retain a skilled workforce, focusing on programs that bolster lifelong learning and career development.

**Economic Opportunity and Small Business Support:** To harness the city's affluence and professional talent, encourage entrepreneurial activity through small business incentives and culturally inclusive economic programs, supporting Bentonville's growth as a diverse, prosperous community.



Source: American Community Survey

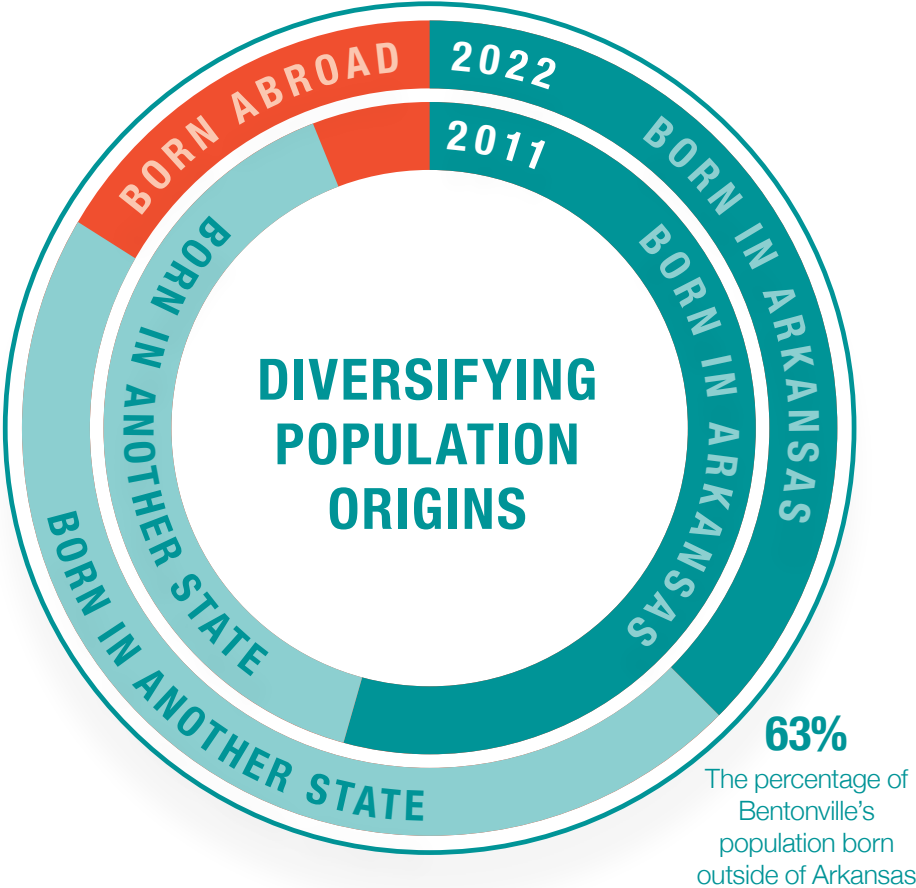
**Origins of Foreign Born.** According to the American Community Survey, the majority of foreign-born residents moving to Bentonville are from India, a proportion that has increased significantly over the past decade, rising from 38.7% in 2010 to 53.2% in 2021. In contrast, immigrants from Mexico represent a much smaller share and have been declining over time, dropping from 28.2% in 2010 to 11.9% in 2021. Other notable groups include immigrants from South and Central America (17.0% combined) and East Asia (11.7% combined), reflecting a growing diversity in Bentonville's population.

This increased diversity includes both foreign-born individuals and those relocating from other U.S. states, collectively contributing to rising housing demand, shifting lifestyle preferences, and influencing city services such as parks and libraries. Together, these demographic changes are

reshaping Bentonville's cultural and social landscape, underscoring the city's need for responsive planning and community services.

**Movement.** According to IRS tax filing data, most new households migrating into Benton County each year are relocating from neighboring Washington County, with over 3,500 people moving annually between 2016 and 2020. When residents leave Benton County, they are just as likely to move back to Washington County as they are to other counties within Arkansas. Additionally, new residents

are arriving from neighboring states, particularly Texas, Missouri, and Oklahoma, each contributing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people annually. International migration is also notable, with around 1,400 households moving from abroad. This influx of foreign-born residents has significantly enriched Bentonville's diversity, adding to the area's multi-cultural fabric.



Source: U.S. Census, LandUse USA

**Race.** Bentonville is more racially and ethnically diverse than the surrounding region. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 67% of Bentonville’s population identifies as exclusively White or Caucasian, which is lower than the figures for Benton County (72%) and the State of Arkansas (73%). Additionally, just 5% of Bentonville’s residents report being Black, African American, or identifying as two races with one being White. While this is higher than Benton County’s average of 3%, it remains significantly below the state average of 16%.

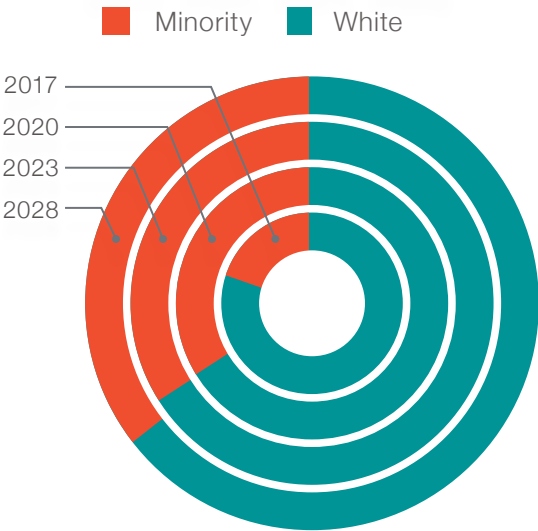
In contrast, Bentonville has a notable Asian population, with 10% of residents identifying as Asian Indian and another 3% identifying with other Asian nationalities, totaling 15%. This combined percentage is particularly high compared to Benton County (5%) and the state average (3%).

Regarding ethnicity, 10% of Bentonville’s population identifies as Hispanic, Latino, or Latina, which is lower than Benton County’s rate of 17% but slightly higher than the state average of 8%. These statistics highlight Bentonville’s unique position within the broader demographic landscape of the region, showcasing its growing diversity.

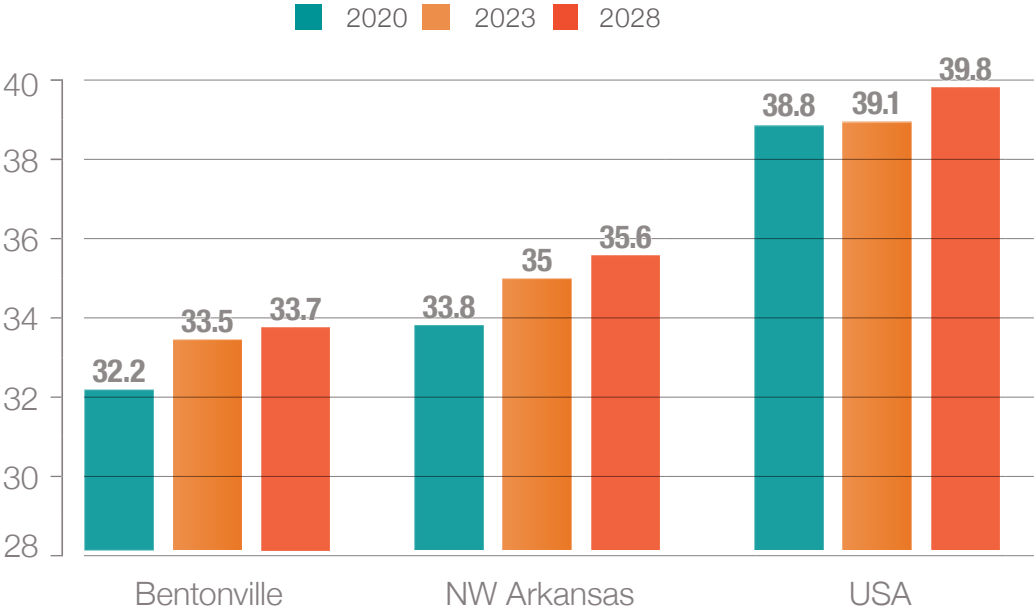
**Age.** Bentonville’s population is aging, yet it remains relatively young, with a median age of 33.5 in 2023, projected to rise only slightly to 33.7 by 2028. Compared to the broader region and the country, Bentonville is experiencing a slower aging process, indicating an increasing proportion of younger residents relative to both the region and the nation.

This demographic profile suggests a vibrant, working-age population with the potential for continued growth and economic development. However, it also highlights the need to address the demands of an aging population while catering to the preferences of young professionals and balancing housing services effectively. This dual focus can help ensure that Bentonville remains a dynamic community capable of meeting the diverse needs of its residents.

**RACIAL DISTRIBUTION**  
(2017, 2020, 2023, 2028)



**MEDIAN AGE OVER TIME**

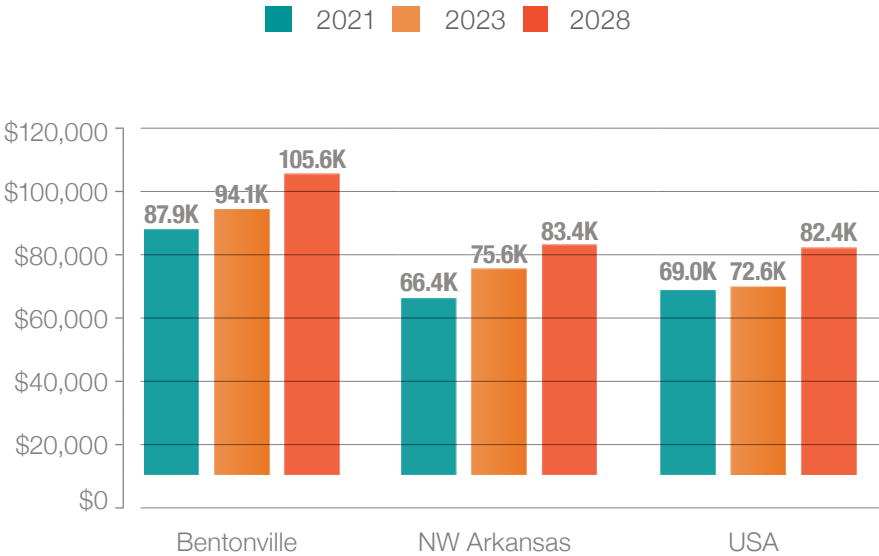


Source: U.S. Census, ESRI Business Analyst

**Income.** Incomes in Bentonville are on the rise, with households in the city demonstrating greater affluence compared to those in the surrounding region. As of 2023, the median household income in Bentonville is estimated to be \$94,100. By 2028, this figure is expected to increase by nearly \$11,500, reaching approximately \$105,600. This projected growth surpasses that of the region, where median household incomes are anticipated to rise from \$75,600 in 2023 to \$83,400 in 2028. In comparison, the national median household income was estimated at around \$74,580 in 2023, with projections suggesting an increase to approximately \$81,000 by 2028. This indicates that Bentonville's growth rate not only reflects local economic strength but also positions it as an attractive area relative to national trends.

Overall, these income trends underscore Bentonville's appeal as a desirable place to live and work, contributing to its growing reputation as a hub for economic activity and quality of life.

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

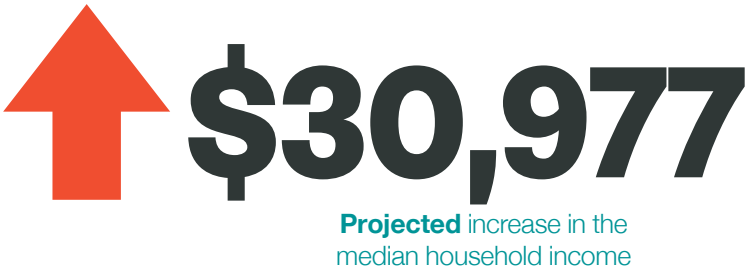


Source: U.S. Census, ESRI Business Analyst

**GROWING AFFLUENCE (2017-2022)**



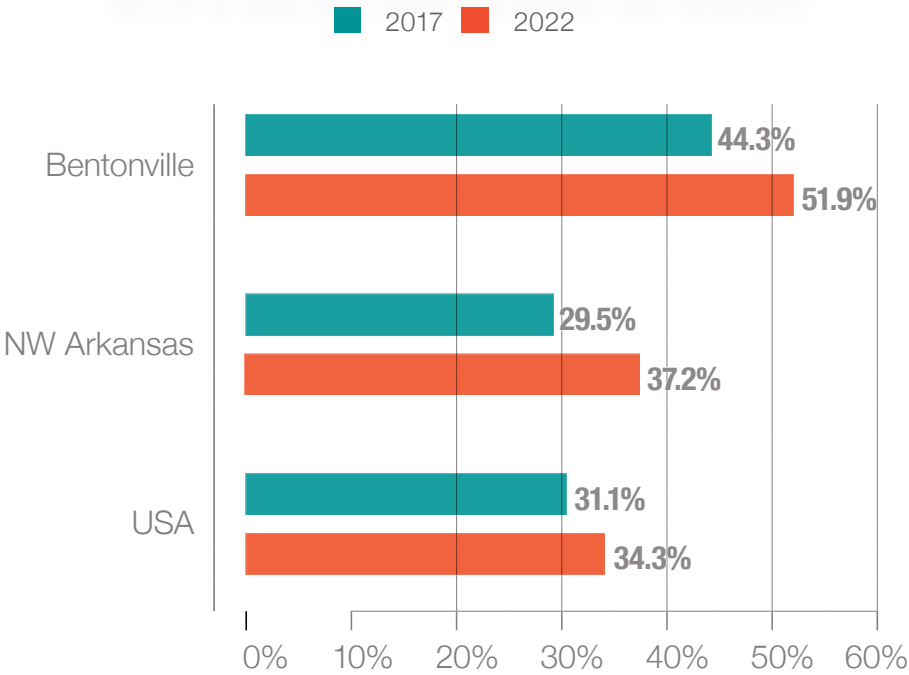
**GROWING AFFLUENCE (2022-2030)**



Source: American Community Survey

**Education.** Bentonville residents are notably well-educated. As of 2022, 51.9% of individuals over the age of 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher, significantly surpassing both the regional average of 37.2% and the national average of 34.3%. This emphasis on education contributes to Bentonville's competitive edge, as it attracts affluent households and skilled professionals, further bolstering local businesses and services. Overall, Bentonville outpaces the broader Northwest Arkansas region in both income and educational attainment. This demographic advantage plays a critical role in driving economic growth and establishing the city as a desirable location for businesses and a skilled workforce.

**PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION (25 YEARS.+) WITH A BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER**



Source: Houseal Lavigne Associates, ACS

# HOUSING

## CRITICAL HOUSING NEEDS

Bentonville's housing landscape, characterized by a modern stock mostly built between 1990 and 2019, currently reflects a strong emphasis on single-family homes, which make up 70% of all units. Multi-family housing constitutes only 27%, with duplexes at just 2%, which falls below the national average for multi-family units and may limit options for young residents or those seeking more affordable living arrangements. Additionally, the city has experienced rapid home value appreciation, with the median home price soaring from \$170,000 in 2010 to \$570,000 by 2024. This rapid price escalation indicates a housing market under high demand, with values projected to rise even further by 2028, potentially reaching \$750,000. With Bentonville's growth expected to surpass 30,000 housing units by 2030, there is an urgent need to expand housing diversity to meet the evolving preferences and needs of its growing population.

Addressing these conditions requires programs and policies encouraging change such as the following:

### **Diversify Housing Types**

- **Expand Multi-Family Housing:** Encourage multi-family developments and townhomes to increase affordable housing options. This can support younger residents, those seeking rental options, and first-time homebuyers.
- **Incentivize Duplex and Townhome Construction:** Offering incentives for developers to build duplexes and townhomes will diversify the housing stock and provide affordable entry points in a competitive market.

### **Adopt Affordable Housing Policies**

- **Through City Council or an Affordability Task Force** explore ways to counter rapid price growth and keep homeownership accessible, establishing and adopting policies to incentivize affordable housing.

### **Public-Private Partnerships**

- **Partner with Developers for Mixed-Income Housing:** Collaborate with developers on

mixed-income housing projects to ensure affordable units are available within larger developments.

- **Leverage Nonprofits for Affordable Housing Solutions:** Partner with nonprofit housing organizations to create affordable rental and ownership opportunities, especially for essential workers.

### **Sustainable Growth:**

- **Promote Walkable, High-Density Developments:** Align housing growth with broader city goals by focusing on transit-oriented, walkable developments, especially near employment centers and public amenities.

### **Data-Driven Approach to Short-Term Rentals**

- **Implement a Short-Term Rental Monitoring Program:** Collect accurate data on short-term rentals and assess their impact on housing affordability and availability. This data can inform policies to regulate and manage these units without reducing long-term rental options.

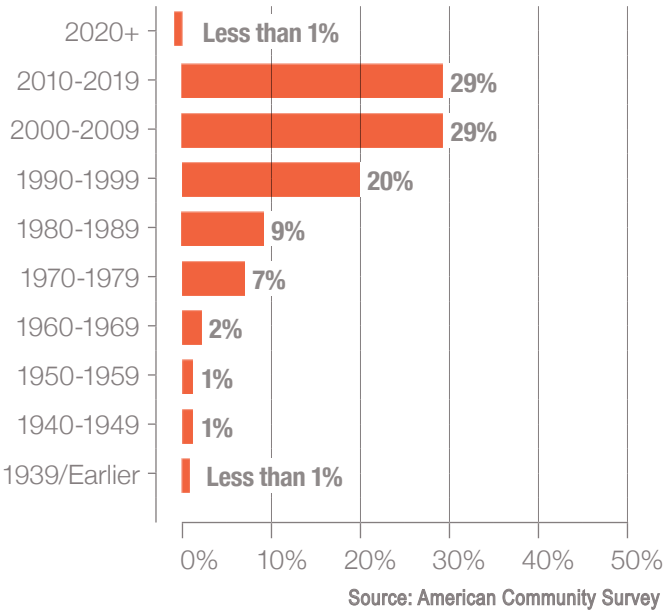
**Units by Age.** The majority of housing units in Bentonville were constructed between 1990 and 2019, with less than 20% built prior to 1980 and fewer than 1% added after 2020. This age distribution reflects a relatively modern housing stock, yet to accommodate projected population and household growth, Bentonville may need to focus on developing new housing options. This is particularly important given the rapid pace of growth in the region, which necessitates a proactive approach to housing development.

**Units by Type.** In Bentonville, 70% of housing units are single-family detached homes, 27% consist of multi-family units or townhomes, and only 2% are classified as duplexes. Nationally, the high share of single-family homes is also prominent but varies significantly by region. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 61% of all housing units in the United States are single-family homes, while multi-family units account for about 29% of the housing stock. Bentonville's ratio of single-family

homes is slightly above the national average. In contrast, many small and mid-sized cities across the country tend to have a higher percentage of multi-family housing, which is increasing in response to a growing demand for more affordable housing options.

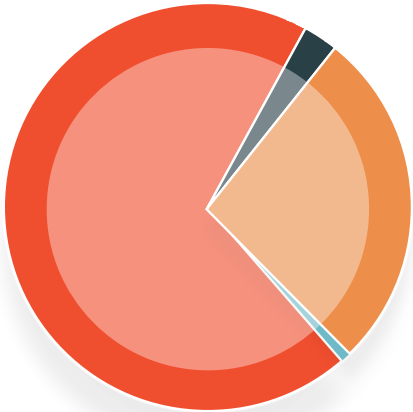
The shift towards more multi-family units and townhomes in many cities reflects broader trends in housing preferences, particularly among younger generations who prioritize walkability and proximity to amenities. In Bentonville, however, the relatively lower percentage of multi-family units suggests that while the city remains attractive for families, there may be a missed opportunity to accommodate younger residents and those looking for more affordable living arrangements. This imbalance underscores the need for Bentonville to diversify its housing options to meet the evolving demands of its growing population, aligning with national trends that increasingly favor a mix of housing types to support various lifestyles and economic backgrounds.

**HOUSING UNITS BY AGE (1939-2021)**



**HOUSING TYPE (2019-2022 AVG.)**

- SF Detached (70%)
- Multi-Family (27%)
- Two Units / Duplex (2%)
- Mobile Home (1%)



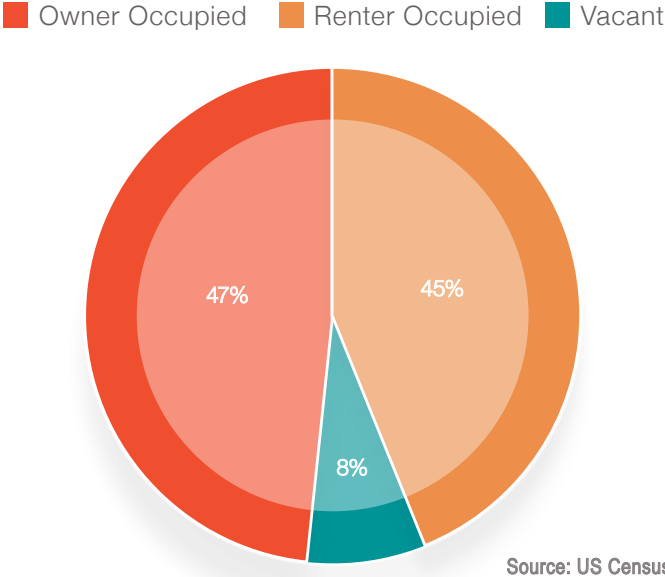
**Units by Tenure.** In Bentonville, approximately 47% of housing units are owner-occupied, while 45% are renter-occupied, and only 8% remain vacant. These figures indicate a relatively balanced housing market, with a slight preference for homeownership. Notably, the data does not account for short-term rentals, for which accurate local measurements are currently unavailable.

Comparatively, national trends reflect a different landscape in residential occupancy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national average for owner-occupied housing units stands at around 65.4%, while rental occupancy accounts for approximately 34.6% of housing units. This suggests that Bentonville’s rental market is

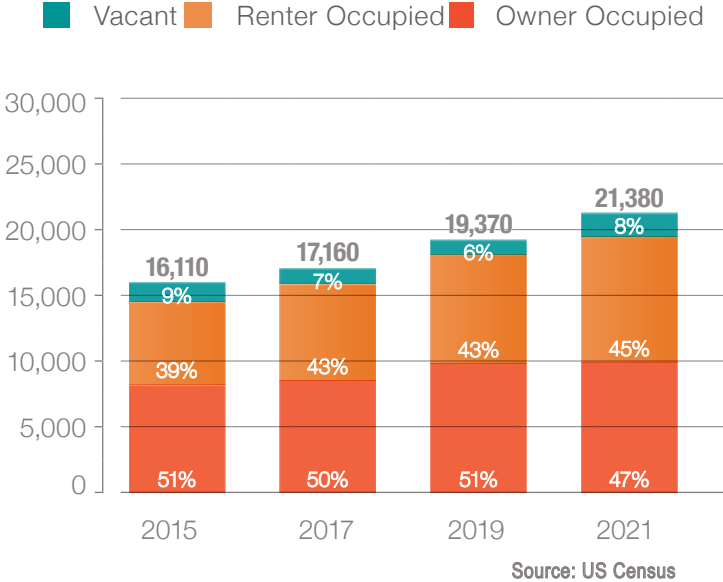
more pronounced than the national average, potentially indicating a greater demand for rental options, particularly among younger populations and those seeking flexible living arrangements. The lower vacancy rate in Bentonville may also reflect a strong demand for housing, further emphasizing the need for continued development to accommodate growth.

Overall, Bentonville’s occupancy statistics highlight the city’s appeal to both homeowners and renters, but they also suggest a potential opportunity for expanding housing diversity to meet evolving demographic needs, consistent with broader trends observed across the country.

**HOUSING BY TENURE (2021)**



**HOUSING UNITS BY OCCUPANCY**

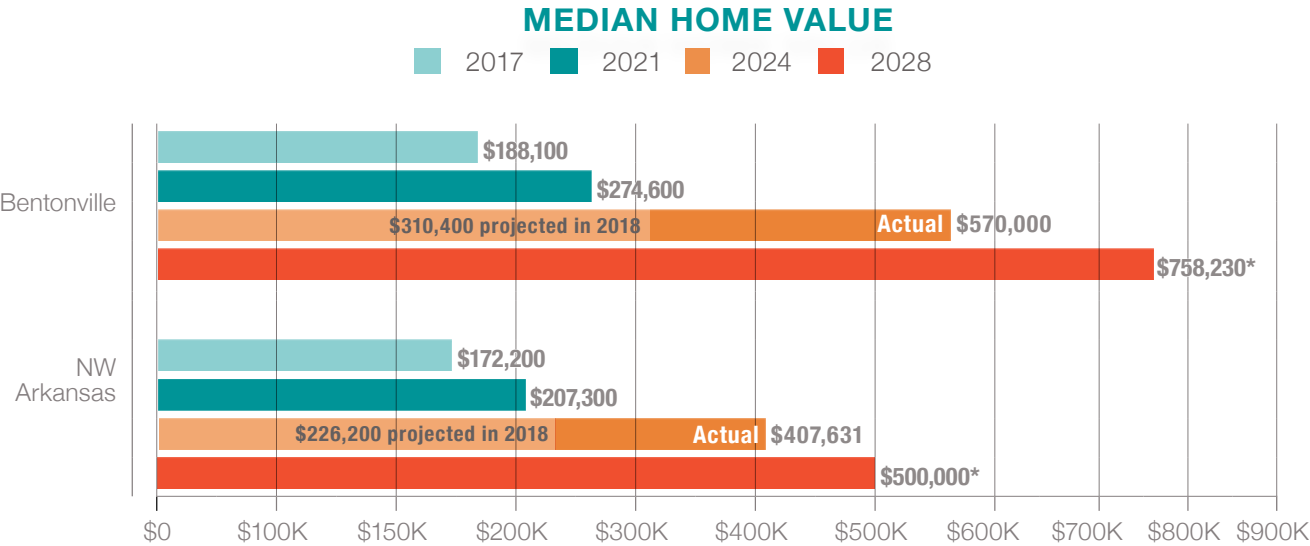




**Median Home Value.**

In Bentonville, the median home value for owner-occupied housing units surged from around \$170,000 in 2010 to \$274,600 by 2021. This rapid growth reflects Bentonville’s booming market, with property values climbing much faster than previously anticipated. By 2024, the median home value had reached \$570,000, significantly exceeding earlier estimates and underscoring the city’s high demand. Based on current trends, projections suggest that by 2028, the median home value in Bentonville could exceed \$750,000, driven by ongoing population growth, economic expansion, and limited housing supply.

Nationally, median home values have also seen consistent growth, although at a slower rate compared to Bentonville. As of early 2024, the U.S. median home price hovered around \$417,000, with markets in smaller cities and high-growth areas like Bentonville showing sharper increases due to demand outpacing supply . Many markets nationwide are responding to the dual pressures of limited housing inventory and heightened demand, particularly in regions experiencing economic and job growth. However, Bentonville’s accelerated price growth stands out, highlighting its appeal as an attractive, economically vibrant destination while reflecting broader national trends of appreciating home values.

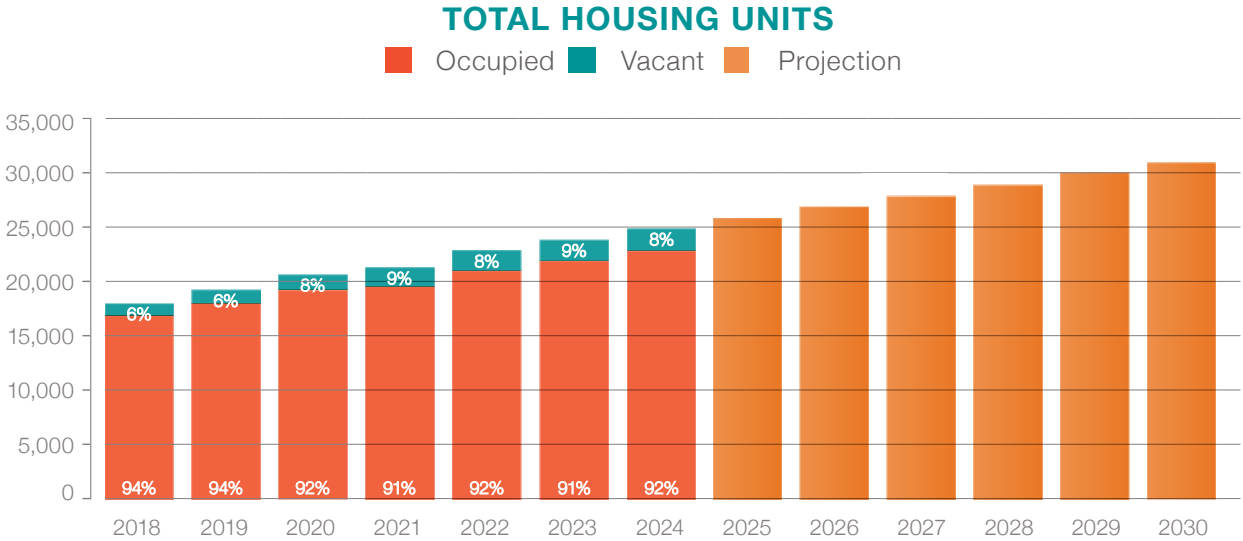


Source: Houseal Lavigne Associates, ACS, ESRI Business Analyst  
\*Most optimistic scenario

**Total Housing Units.**

Bentonville’s housing stock expanded significantly from over 13,000 units in 2010 to more than 20,000 units by 2020. With population and economic growth driving further demand, the city is on track to exceed 30,000 housing units by 2030 if growth continues at a similar pace. This trend reflects broader national housing dynamics where rising demand is fueling growth in both single-family and multi-family housing. Nationally, the percentage of multi-family units has been growing in response to

a shift in housing preferences, especially among younger generations seeking affordability, urban amenities, and more flexible living arrangements. Bentonville’s multi-family housing share, while traditionally stable, has also seen recent increases as local demand adapts to these broader lifestyle trends. This shift aligns with many U.S. markets, where multi-family developments are a key part of meeting diverse housing needs in growing cities.



Source: U.S. Census, LandUse USA

# DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Bentonville's housing market increasingly favors multi-family and townhomes, reflecting national trends driven by rising home prices and remote work. The commercial market also follows national patterns, focused on completing existing projects over initiating new development.

## Residential Development.

Bentonville's housing market has shifted, with multi-family and townhome construction outpacing single-family development. In 2016, 549 single-family homes were permitted compared to 314 multi-family units. By 2018, single-family permits stayed steady at 487, while multi-family surged to 1,032. Although the pace slowed during the pandemic, multi-family permits rebounded to 585 in 2023. That year, total lots platted declined, with final plats down 12.5% and preliminary plats down 48.8%. Still, multi-family construction rose 67.4%, totaling 914 planned units, including 168 townhomes and 746 multi-family residences, compared to 322 single-family units. Bentonville's housing production continues prioritizing townhomes and multi-family housing, reflecting market demand.

**Comparison to National Trends:** Nationally, multi-family housing demand is growing, fueled by rising home prices, preferences for apartments, and the remote work trend. Bentonville reflects this shift to diversify housing options and address affordability challenges.

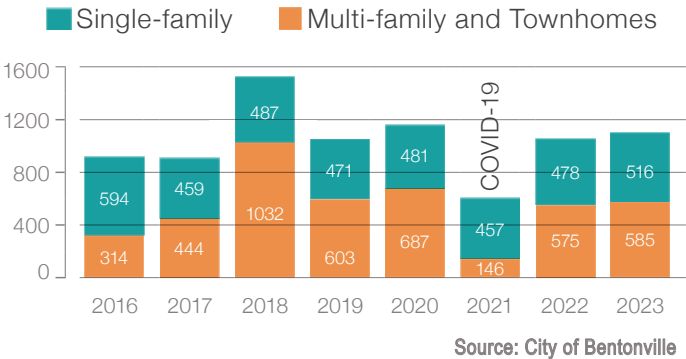
## Commercial Development.

Bentonville's commercial sector showed mixed results in 2023. The city issued 156 commercial permits, a slight decline from 2022, but permit values dropped 41.9%, from \$493 million to \$286 million. Despite this, completed commercial projects rose 19%, showing a focus on finalizing developments. This shift underscores a move away from initiating large projects toward completing and upgrading existing spaces to meet demand.

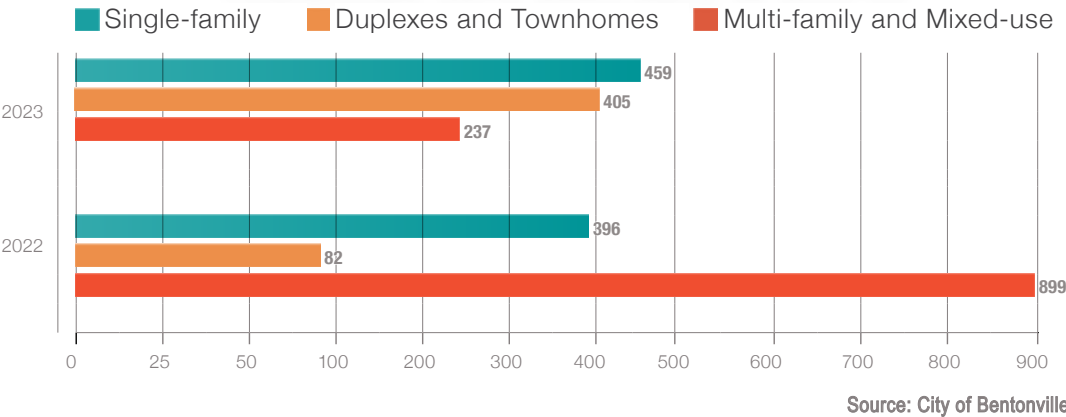
**Comparison to National Trends:** Nationwide, commercial real estate saw similar patterns, with reduced new permit values due to economic uncertainties, rising interest rates, and declining demand for office spaces. Like other cities,

Bentonville's market emphasizes completing projects and enhancing infrastructure, reflecting a broader trend toward adaptable, efficient commercial development.

## RESIDENTIAL UNITS BUILT



## TOWNHOME DATA AVAILABLE IN 2022-23



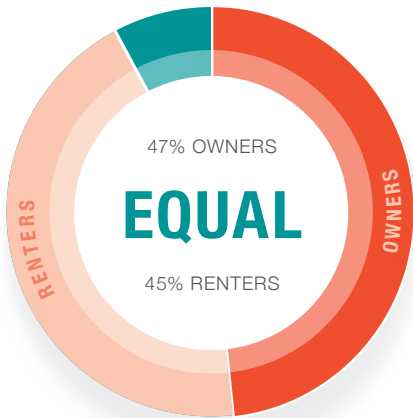
# BALANCING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Bentonville’s housing demand remains robust, with especially high interest in both single-family homes and apartments or condos from prospective renters and buyers. This demand reflects a diverse spectrum of housing needs in the community: some residents are attracted to the rural tranquility outside the city center, while others prefer the vibrancy of downtown. Similarly, some residents seek large homes with spacious yards, while others prioritize smaller, low-maintenance options. This range of preferences highlights the importance of a variety of housing options—both ownership and rental opportunities—to meet different lifestyle needs, economic circumstances, and personal preferences.

Providing a broad selection of housing supports a dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits from a mix of residents across backgrounds and life stages.

However, Bentonville’s housing supply has not kept pace with this growing demand, resulting in gaps that affect both renters and owners. The city’s current housing mix, dominated by single-family homes, does not fully align with demand: many renters occupy single-family homes due to limited apartment options, and prospective homeowners often face a shortage of townhomes and condos.

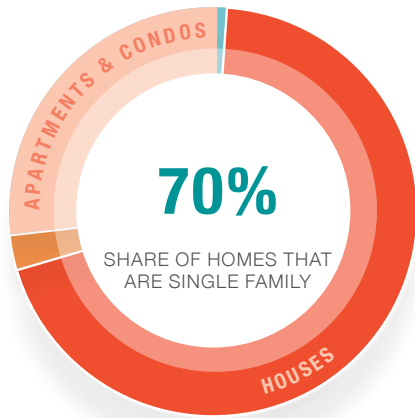
To better match demand, the city could benefit from increasing the supply of diverse housing types, including single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, and condos. This approach would promote a balanced market, allowing smaller households to avoid occupying larger homes and helping families find affordable space, which could help moderate housing costs across the city.



HOME OWNERSHIP RATE



NEW HOME POTENTIAL



EXISTING HOME SUPPLY

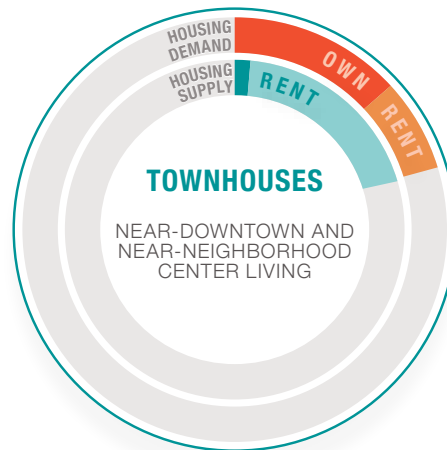
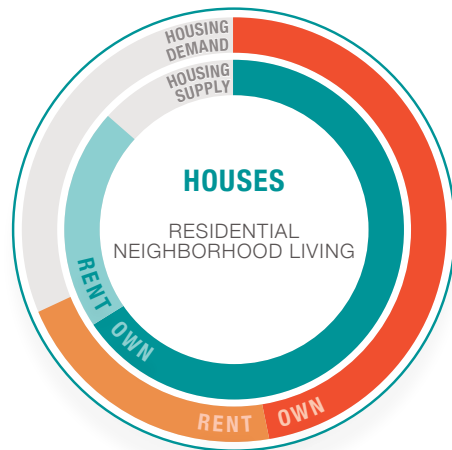
Source: LandUse USA

**Single-Family Homes:** Demand for all types of single-family homes is strong in Bentonville, and in a variety of settings. However, current housing production may over-saturate this segment over time. Adjusting new construction to include more condos, townhomes, and small homes near urban areas would help address shifting demands and support a broader mix of residents.

**Townhomes:** Townhome construction has largely kept up with demand, and demand for this type of housing is expected to remain steady. However, there are more townhomes available for rent than for sale, highlighting a gap in options for buyers. To sustain this demand, additional areas suited to townhome living—close to, but not in the middle of, vibrant activity centers—would enhance Bentonville’s offerings.

**Apartments and Condos:** Apartment availability is limited, with a high unmet demand for condo living as well. Increased construction of both apartments and condos is necessary to meet lifestyle preferences, especially for those who seek an active, low-maintenance urban environment. Along with new construction, developing more areas with a downtown-like atmosphere outside of the current downtown would support demand for apartment and condo living and provide more options for residents seeking a lively, connected community.

**Community Plan.** The plan guides housing growth toward a diverse mix of types and settings, from bustling urban areas to quiet neighborhoods. This balanced approach will help align the city’s housing market with demand, contributing to a vibrant, sustainable local economy and a well-served, thriving population.



## SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR HOMES BY TYPE AND OWNERSHIP

Source: LandUse USA

# JOBS

## Bentonville is a Regional Employment Hub

Bentonville is an anchor for Northwest Arkansas’s economy, supported by major corporations like Walmart, J.B. Hunt, and Tyson Foods. These companies attract talent and supplier networks, driving regional growth and fostering economic development. Building on this success, Bentonville aims to diversify its role as an employment hub by fostering new industries and reducing reliance on corporate anchors.

## Economic Diversification and Workforce Growth

Bentonville is focused on attracting high-tech, advanced manufacturing, and logistics companies. The I-Street Corridor exemplifies this effort, creating opportunities to establish regional corporations that enhance long-term stability. Encouraging entrepreneurship and small business growth in tourism, retail, and hospitality bolsters economic resilience.

Partnerships with educational institutions and technical training programs will prepare residents for jobs in emerging industries. Supporting incubators, expanding workforce training, and investing in technology infrastructure strengthen Bentonville’s ability to attract forward-thinking companies and a skilled workforce.

## Placemaking to Attract and Retain Talent

Placemaking is central to attracting and retaining talent. Cultural and recreational assets like Crystal Bridges Museum, a dynamic culinary scene, and world-class biking trails create an appealing urban lifestyle. Expanded parks, plazas, and public spaces enhance livability and foster community connection. Bentonville’s ability to offer vibrant cultural experiences recruits top talent and builds long-term commitment among residents and workers.

## Housing and Infrastructure for Growth

Expanding diverse and affordable housing options encourages workers to live near their jobs, reducing congestion, improving environmental outcomes, and fostering stronger community ties. Investing in transit, bike networks, and road improvements ensures accessibility for residents and visitors, supporting sustainable growth and reducing strain on infrastructure.

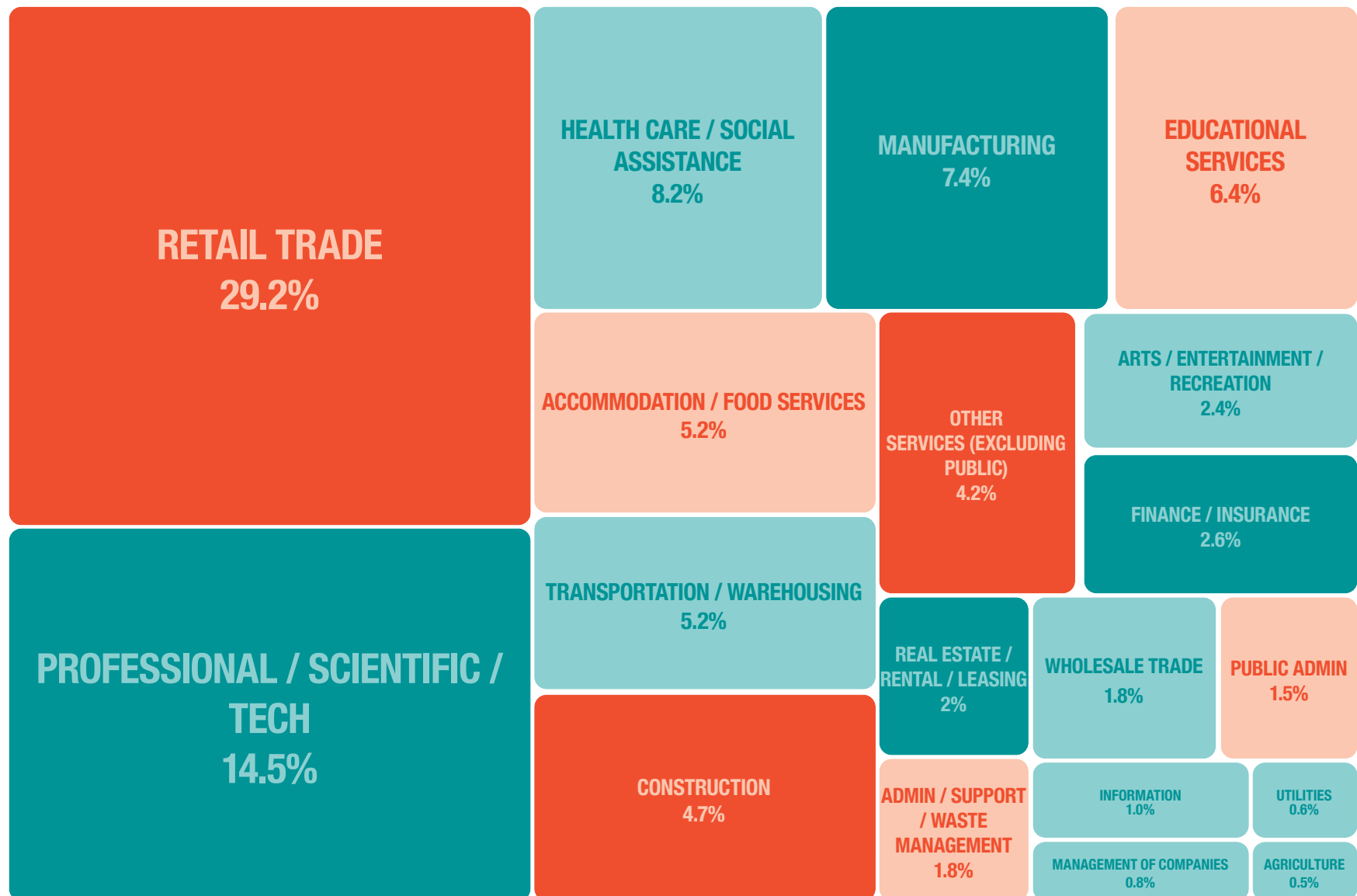
## Leadership and Innovation

Bentonville drives business growth by supporting startups, public-private partnerships, and incentives for emerging industries. Balancing its corporate strengths with new industries enables a dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive economic future for Bentonville and the Northwest Arkansas region.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (2023)

Industry	30,966	100%
Retail Trade	9,044	29.2%
Professional/Scientific/Tech	4,495	14.5%
Health Care/Social Assistance	2,552	8.2%
Manufacturing	2,279	7.4%
Educational Services	1,982	6.4%
Transportation/Warehousing	1,616	5.2%
Accommodation/Food Services	1,605	5.2%
Construction	1,465	4.7%
Other Services (Excluding Public)	1,293	4.2%
Finance/Insurance	800	2.6%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	754	2.4%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	630	2.0%
Wholesale Trade	548	1.8%
Admin/Support/Waste Management	556	1.8%
Public Administration	468	1.5%
Information	295	1.0%
Management of Companies	261	0.8%
Utilities	171	0.6%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	151	0.5%
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas	1	0.0%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst





# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## 2024 UPDATE

In 2024, the City of Bentonville embarked on Plan Bentonville, an expansive process to reaffirm and fine-tune the community input received during development of 2018's Community Plan, and to leverage those contributions in the creation of a Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

Launch of [www.planbentonville.com](http://www.planbentonville.com) in the fall of 2023 marked the start of what's become the most extensive community planning process in Bentonville history, with over 11,000 unique visitors to the project website viewing nearly 36,000

pages of news and information.

Throughout the process, the Bentonville community was tasked with sharing input and insights, assessing ideas, and providing feedback to help fine-tune emerging proposals.

Opportunities were promoted across all city communications channels, including banners, flyers and posters, emails, newsletters, press releases, promotional give-aways, and tens of thousands of views on social media.

Along the way, residents and other community stakeholders engaged directly with the process through:

- Project website
- City department head meetings
- City Council and Planning Commission presentations and updates
- Technical Advisory Committee meetings
- Open houses





- Surveys
- Stakeholder interviews
- Pop-up sessions
- One-on-one interactions with city staff
- Online review of work-in-progress

During 15 hours of community meetings, 22 hours of pop-ups, and 33 hours on one-on-one interviews and conversations, nearly 1,300 people turned out to contribute. 2,100 more completed surveys. And nearly 1,200 people helped fine-tune the draft Future Land Use Map with nuanced perspectives on individual parcels.

The first phase of outreach and community engagement occurred leading up to and including Design Week — six days of growth-related community input, February 24-29, with an on-site design team making real-time revisions to their work-in-progress.

That input fueled a subsequent round of recommendations and proposals subjected to community review and comment a second time in July and August. Over the course of two weeks, residents and other stakeholders were engaged through a series of open houses, pop-up booths, and one-on-one conversations with city staff.

Finally, recommendations on how to better regulate land development, together with a draft of the Future Land Use map, were posted online in an interactive Story Map. Over 9,700 visitors reviewed the materials with nearly 1,200 parcel-level comments

provided.

Participation throughout the process reflected a wide diversity of Bentonville residents sharing all manner of viewpoints: lifelong residents, new residents, elected officials, Planning Commission, State Representatives, county judges, Board of Adjustments, affordable housing advocates and providers, schools administration, Walmart Active Mobility, small entrepreneurs, builders/developers, banks, grassroots conservatives, social services providers, the local Indian community, accessibility advocates, and Downtown area neighbors.

The Plan Bentonville process was an illuminating exercise in what's possible when the community takes an active role in determining its future. Taken collectively, the contributions made were instrumental in shaping the Bentonville Future Land Use Plan and setting the foundation for a future zoning code update to align with and entitle its vision.



# 1,272

residents engaged in-person via open houses, pop-up events, and staff office hours

# 33

hours of  
1-on-1 conversations  
expressing a wide range of  
perspectives on growth

# 22

hours of  
pop-up events  
in popular destinations  
spread across town

# 2,095

community surveys completed

# 15

hours of  
in-person meetings  
Public open houses and  
topic-specific discussions  
with local officials in  
infrastructure, utilities, land  
use, transportation and  
economic development

# 11,428

unique website visitors  
viewing 35,780 pages

# 9,767

views of place type StoryMap overview

## Viewpoints represented:

Lifelong residents, new residents, elected officials, Planning Commission, State Representatives, County Judge, Board of Adjustments, affordable housing advocates and providers, schools administration, Walmart Active Mobility, small entrepreneurs, builders/developers, banks, grassroots conservatives, social services, Indian community, accessibility advocates, and downtown area neighbors

# 1,169

parcel-level comments on interactive Future Land Use Map

## Social media advertising



332,446 impressions, 100,577 viewers reached, 53,422 engagements, 265 likes, 287 comments, and 87 shares



## BENTONVILLE SPEAKS

Throughout the engagement for Plan Bentonville, several key themes have resonated deeply with the community:

### 1. Mixed-Use and Walkability

Strong support emerged for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods that blend residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. The community values places where people can live, work, and play within walking or biking distance, reducing car dependency.

**2. Compact Development for Economic and Environmental Benefits** Participants emphasized the need for compact, higher-density development to preserve natural lands, support local businesses, and optimize infrastructure. This approach aligns with economic benefits of walkability and environmental sustainability.

### 3. Preservation of Natural and Rural Areas

The community expressed a strong desire to preserve Bentonville's natural and rural areas, especially around its outskirts, while focusing development inward. Limit lower density, dispersed development patterns to protect green spaces and agricultural land.

### 4. Preservation of Current Single Family

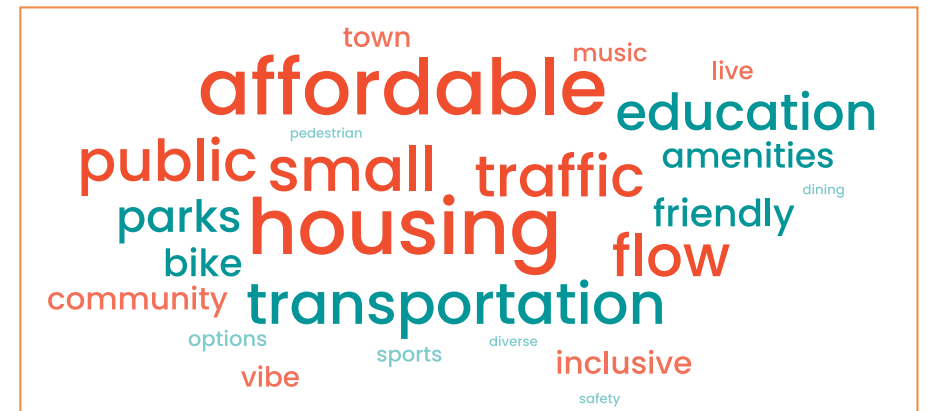
Many residents wish to protect existing single-family neighborhoods while supporting diverse housing growth in new parts of the city.



## WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT BENTONVILLE?



## WHAT WOULD MAKE BENTONVILLE EVEN BETTER?



Affordable housing and a range of housing options were top concerns, with participants urging more diverse housing types (like townhomes, apartments, and small lot single-family homes) to meet the needs of a growing population across different income levels and life stages.

Feedback consistently highlighted the need for a more connected transportation network that supports various modes—walking, biking, transit, and cars — and emphasizes multi-modal corridors and connecting neighborhoods to key destinations.

Bentonville residents value the town's unique character, and they want new development to

## 8. Sustainable Infrastructure and Resilience

Community members expressed a forward-thinking perspective on resilience, advocating for infrastructure that supports sustainable water and energy use, stormwater management, and resilient building practices.

In making itself heard, the Bentonville community is ensuring that its future growth aligns with a collective vision for a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable city.



traffic housing affordable infrastructure losing overpopulation crime loss issues political gentrification sprawl concerns businesses transport public spaces flood green environmental local zones charm political

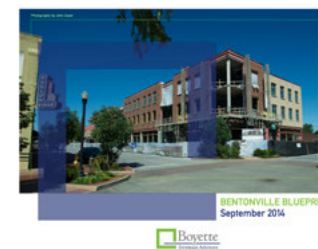
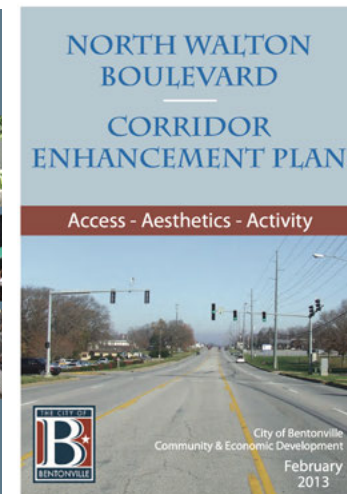
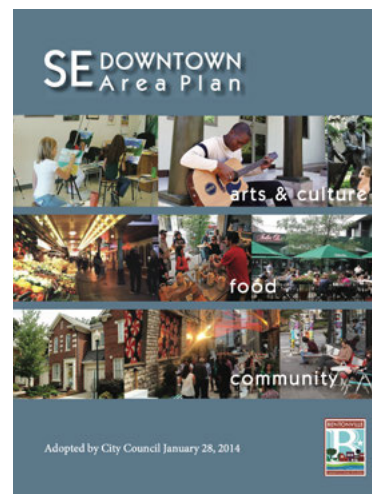
# PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

As the Community Plan was developed, a review process took place to analyze a series of plans and studies covering multiple aspects of community life including: Downtown Development, Parks and Recreation, Greenways and Natural Resources, Economic Development and Land Use, Infrastructure and Transportation, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility. Additional one-on-one interviews were conducted with key staff from various city departments, further informing the city's current programs and initiatives, as well as emerging needs and opportunities.

The plan studies reviewed include:

- City of Bentonville - Downtown Bentonville Master Plan (2004)
- City of Bentonville - General Plan (2007)
- City of Bentonville - Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2007)
- City of Bentonville - Master Street Plan (2021)
- Walton Family Foundation - Northwest Arkansas Greenway Design Study (2010)
- City of Bentonville - North Walton Boulevard Corridor Enhancement Plan (2013)

- City of Bentonville - Bentonville Blueprint (2014)
- City of Bentonville - SE Downtown Area Plan (2014)
- Bentonville Schools 10-Year Plan (2022)
- Connecting Bentonville - Bentonville Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan (2021)
- Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission - Transportation Alternatives Analysis Study (2015)
- Northwest Arkansas Open Space Plan (2016)
- City Wide Traffic Study (2014)
- ARDOT - Arkansas Department of Transportation - Annual Report (2023)
- Bentonville Community Plan - Public Input (2018)





## PUBLIC INPUT TO THE 2018 COMMUNITY PLAN

Public outreach and community engagement is part of the foundation for comprehensive planning. It is essential. Throughout the planning process, the Bentonville community was asked to provide important input, feedback, and insight into the community, regarding the issues, opportunities, priorities, and aspirations for the next several years. This input and community stewardship helped shape the Bentonville Community Plan. Community residents and stakeholders were engaged throughout the process and given several opportunities to let their voice be heard.

In total, over 1,700 participants (4% of population) generated thousands of comments, ideas, and insights for consideration. Accounting for unique visits to the project website, roughly 25% of the population had awareness or involvement in the planning

process. Outreach included face-to-face engagement as well as extensive online engagement, and included small group, one-on-one, and large group settings.

A detailed list and summary of all outreach activities and feedback is included in the Existing Conditions Report, on file with the Community and Economic Development Department. This level of interest and involvement was pivotal in creating a responsive, detailed, and effective plan for the Bentonville community.

Outreach activities undertaken as part of the planning process included:

- City department head meetings
- City Council workshops and updates
- Planning Commission workshops and updates
- Comprehensive Plan Advisory

Committee (CPAC) meetings and workshops

- Community workshops
- Business workshops
- Public comment cards
- Stakeholder interviews
- Student workshops
- Developer and property owner workshop
- Community visioning workshop
- An interactive project website that included online questionnaires for residents and businesses, a student/teacher portal, and map, social, an online community mapping tool.



Collectively, the community outreach and feedback identified a wide range of issues considered most important to residents and stakeholders. While thousands of issues, concerns, priorities, and aspirations were identified by participants throughout the process, several areas/categories of concern rose to the top as being the issues most frequently identified by stakeholders.

### Land Use Development.

- There are barriers preventing the development of affordable housing, which is becoming a bigger need in Bentonville. There is also a need for senior housing and workforce housing, and there ought to be more neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.
- Neighborhoods around the Downtown should be allowed to transform into denser areas.
- Zoning regulations and procedures need to be aligned with development and more flexible.

- There is concern over rapid growth and sprawling development. Growth ought to be more sustainable, including natural preservation, solar farms on vacant land, and awareness of open space and environmental issues.
- Infrastructure is aging, especially in the city's older neighborhoods and downtown, where drainage is an issue.
- The Bella Vista Lake represents an opportunity for new recreation. The dam ought to be made safer.
- Downtown lacks affordable retail space.
- There is a need for additional entertainment and recreation venues.

### Transportation and Mobility.

- Downtown connectivity, congestion, and parking is an issue. Parking decks are needed to support businesses.
- Walmart employee traffic creates congestion in the southern portion

of Downtown, employee schedules ought to be staggered.

- Traffic signals should use technology to manage traffic better.
- Better public transportation is needed, including an expanded bus system and a shuttle to Downtown.
- Pedestrian improvements or roundabouts should be installed at key intersections.
- The bike network should be expanded and cyclists should have access to education and awareness programs.
- Neighborhoods need better infrastructure, including curb and gutter, lights, and sidewalks.
- Airfare to XNA is not affordable.



### **Economic Development.**

- The economy needs to be more diverse and not rely on one employer or sector.
- We need to work to retain existing businesses and not just worry about new businesses.
- The City should have a low-cost business registration program as a way of having better information about what types of activities are going on.
- There ought to be a regional training program for small businesses.
- Tourism and hospitality are important aspects of the future economy.

### **Image and Identity.**

- Bentonville needs a strong and distinctive identity to distinguish it from other parts of the region.
- There is a need for incentives to get the Arts District fully developed.
- We need to preserve historic buildings and balance the small-town past with a bigger future.
- Preserve Central Avenue as a historic corridor.
- Walton Boulevard needs to be beautified through streetscaping and new development.
- Bentonville should continue to be a very welcoming and diverse community.
- Zoning should not over-regulate design, but rather allow appropriate flexibility to

### **Health, Safety, and Education.**

- There is concern over the disparity in the quality of schools in different parts of the community.
- The Library is running out of space as the population grows and demand for meeting spaces increases.
- The City should offer better recycling systems and provide greater awareness for residents, businesses, and students.
- There are certain groups in Bentonville, such as seniors with disabilities, who need better services.
- Residents need better local health care services and preventative health information





# 4

# LAND USE and STRATEGIC GROWTH

## AT A GLANCE

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Existing Land Use

Municipal Budget

The Cost of Growth

Strategic Growth Areas

Future Land Use Plan

Future Land Use and Zoning

Place Types

Getting Around Bentonville

Bentonville's projected population growth and land needs will drive demands for transportation, infrastructure, open space, and community services.

This chapter outlines a vision for responsible growth, building on Bentonville's history of growth and charting the course to be both a great place to live and be fiscally responsible.

The Future Land Use Plan aims to create a more livable, desirable, and fiscally sustainable community with the following key objectives:

- Optimize for market-based development.
- Grow in a fiscally responsive manner
- Enhance community character and cohesion.
- Guide strategic investment.
- Strengthen a sense of place.

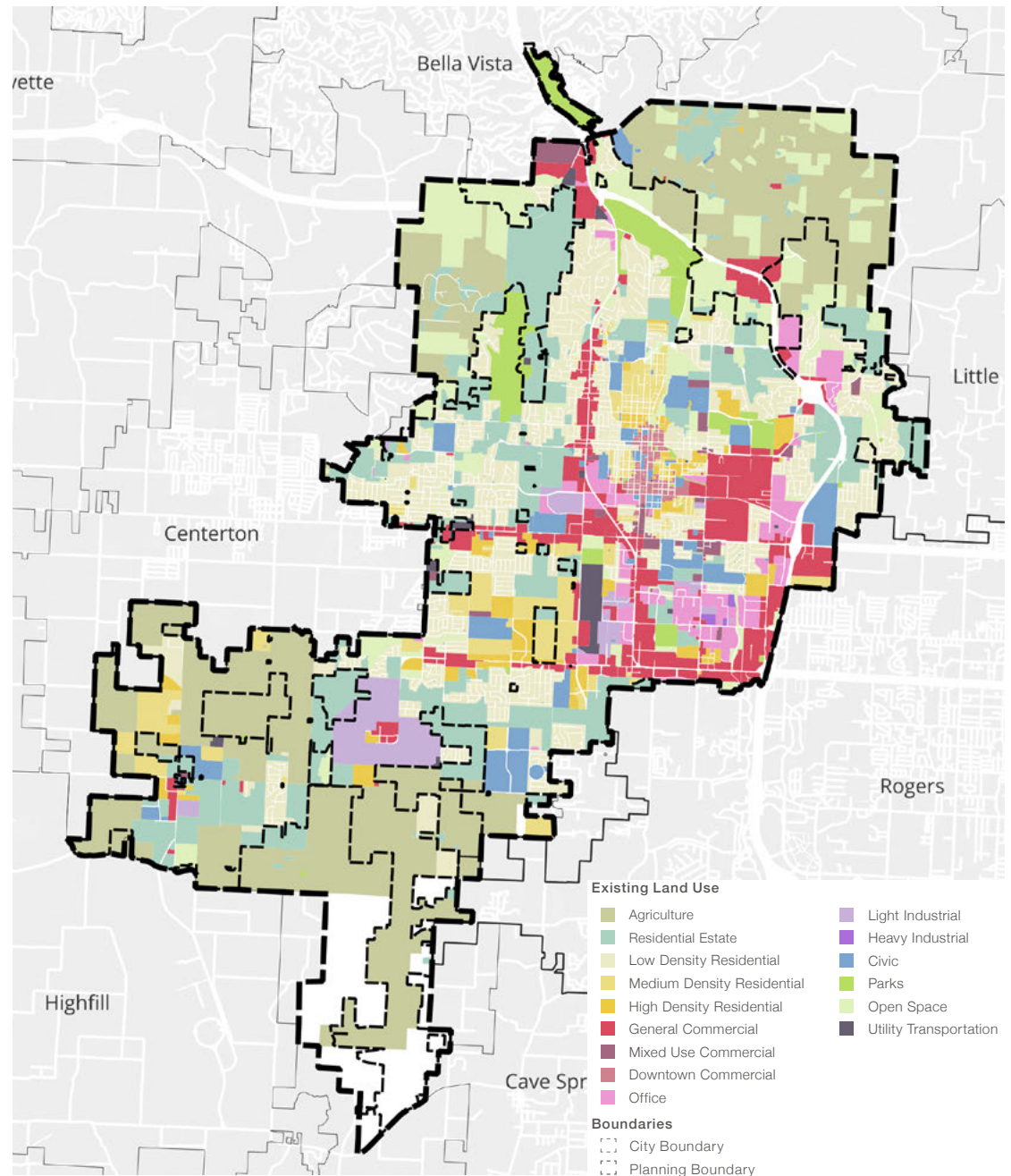
Through Place Types, the Plan focuses on how the character of future growth can create places - neighborhoods, centers of activity, and the connections between - distributed in a manner that provides opportunity throughout the city. Most existing areas are not planned for growth, rather to preserve their current character. A balance between growth and preservation is necessary to achieve the Plan's key objectives.

# EXISTING LAND USE

Bentonville's land use represents a blend of planned initiatives and organic growth, creating a vibrant yet uneven urban environment. The city's commercial development is largely concentrated along major arterial roads, resulting in vehicle-dependent corridors with limited walkability. Meanwhile, residential growth has been fragmented, with suburban neighborhoods often isolated due to insufficient street connectivity. This disconnection challenges cohesive community development and makes it difficult for the city to accommodate future growth effectively.

Downtown Bentonville has evolved into a thriving cultural and economic hub, attracting visitors with its diverse dining, arts, and entertainment options. While this revitalization has bolstered the city's core, it has also led to an over-concentration of activity downtown compared to other parts of the city. Combined with a lack of housing options to meet growing demand, many workers are forced to live farther from their jobs, increasing traffic congestion and placing strain on infrastructure and quality of life.

To sustain growth, Bentonville must prioritize balanced land use policies that promote housing availability across all income levels, enhance neighborhood connectivity, and diversify economic and cultural activity beyond the downtown core. These measures are crucial to alleviating congestion, supporting the growing workforce, and fostering a more integrated



urban environment. The completion of Walmart’s new headquarters highlights Bentonville’s role as a corporate center, while ongoing efforts to attract additional industries to the I-Street Corridor further enhance the city’s economic prospects.

However, development has spread beyond downtown, particularly in the southwestern quadrant, where growth is outpacing infrastructure capacities such as roads and sewer systems. While philanthropic investments in parks, trails, and cultural sites have increased Bentonville’s recreational and social appeal, the concentration of these amenities around downtown has resulted in a lack of similar resources in newer, outlying neighborhoods. This has led to heightened demand for the city center as Bentonville’s primary social and entertainment hub.

Expanding peripheral areas and improving connectivity are essential to alleviating pressure on the downtown core. Increased traffic congestion, particularly along routes like 14th Street from Centerton, can be mitigated by improving infrastructure and addressing low-density commercial and industrial areas through redevelopment. While the 2018 Community Plan prioritized infill development, Bentonville’s expansion has encompassed both infill and peripheral growth. The updated Community Plan aims to balance residential and commercial development across the city, address connectivity challenges, and support expansion that relieves pressure on the downtown area, creating a more sustainable and accessible Bentonville for all residents.

## MUNICIPAL BUDGET

### Managing Growth for Fiscal Sustainability

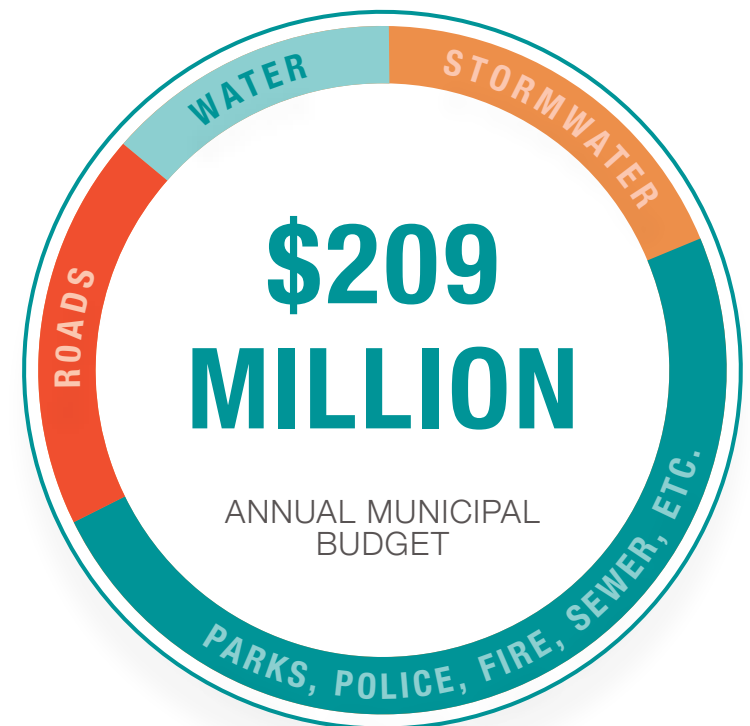
Operating Bentonville in 2024 costs approximately \$16,824 per developed acre, a figure that will rise with continued growth. The \$209 million budget funds critical services like public safety, infrastructure, parks, and utilities. However, existing revenue streams—sales taxes, property taxes, utility fees, and impact fees—are insufficient to address current and future demands, such as:

- Expanding water, sewer, and power capacity.
- Alleviating traffic congestion and supporting active transportation.
- Addressing regional stormwater challenges.
- Funding additional parks and community amenities.

Bentonville’s long-term fiscal sustainability hinges on managing growth and land use efficiently to support services without overburdening the budget. Historically, subsidizing low-density residential growth with infrastructure investments—roads, sewers, parks, and schools—has stretched resources thin. These patterns assume residential developments cannot pay their way and rely on sales tax contributions. In contrast, townhomes, mixed-use, multi-family housing, and commercial developments typically contribute more

than they consume in resources, offering a path to bridge funding gaps.

As the city prepares for substantial population growth, the current trajectory of subsidized low-density expansion is unsustainable. To ensure a fiscally resilient future, Bentonville must adopt strategies to balance land uses, support self-sustaining growth, and generate surplus revenue to fund unmet needs.



Source: City of Bentonville

## Fiscal Strategies for Sustainable Growth

### 1. Prioritize Balanced Land Use

Encourage diverse development types that contribute positively to the budget. Mixed-use, commercial, and denser residential developments offer higher returns per acre and reduce per capita service costs compared to traditional suburban growth patterns.

### 2. Ensure Growth Pays Its Way

Rather than burdening new developments with excessive fees that could deter growth, focus on policies that align development with its fiscal contributions. Growth within existing infrastructure areas should be prioritized, as it minimizes costs compared to expanding into undeveloped areas. Development fees may be necessary but they are secondary to both the location and net contributions of new growth.

### 3. Align Housing Policies With Fiscal Needs

Promote denser housing forms like multi-family units and townhomes to reduce infrastructure costs while increasing property tax revenues. Addressing the housing shortage will also reduce traffic congestion by enabling workers to live closer to jobs, lowering strain on roads and utilities.

### 4. Invest in Cost-Effective Transportation

Expand active transportation networks, including bike paths and sidewalks, to lower road maintenance costs and reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Transit-oriented development can enhance accessibility while improving fiscal performance.

### 5. Leverage Parks and Recreation as Economic Drivers

Strategically invest in parks and trails to boost property values in underutilized areas and attract tourism. Recreation amenities can stimulate

secondary economic activity, contributing to the city's budget.

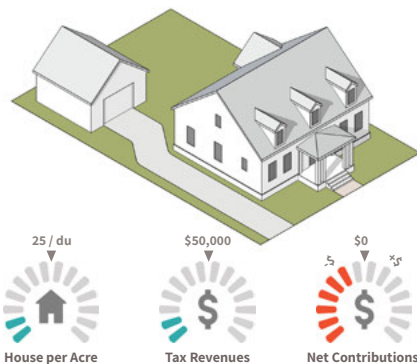
### 6. Embrace Economic Diversification

Attract high-value industries like technology, advanced manufacturing, and logistics to increase commercial tax revenues. Supporting small businesses further diversifies the tax base, enhancing economic resilience.

By focusing on fiscally sustainable growth and land use practices, Bentonville can address the financial challenges of expansion, reduce reliance on inefficient development patterns, and invest in services that enhance the quality of life for residents. This approach will position Bentonville to remain a thriving, well-resourced community.

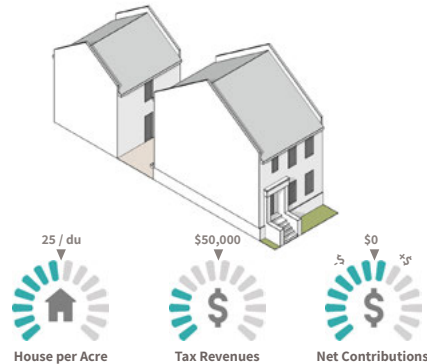
#### DETACHED HOUSE ON A MEDIUM PROPERTY

Average property size of 6,000 sq. ft.



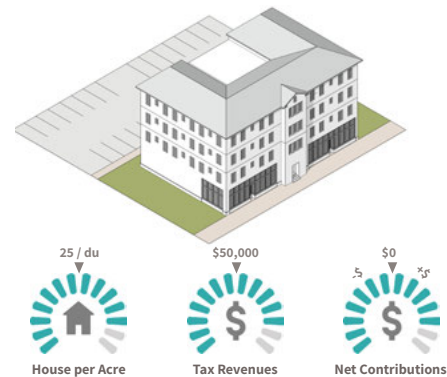
#### TOWNHOUSE ON A SMALL PROPERTY

Average property size of 2,000 sq. ft.



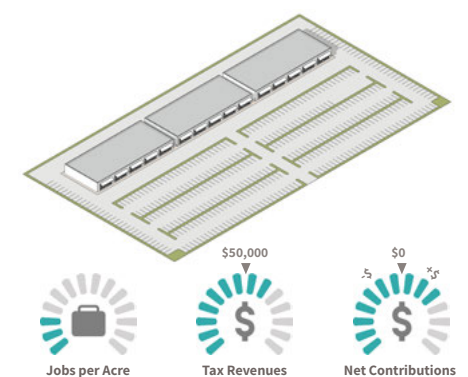
#### MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL (4 STORIES)

Average property size of 22,000 sq. ft.



#### STRIP COMMERCIAL

Average property size of 260,000 sq. ft.





# THE COST OF GROWTH

Bentonville's growth strategy must weigh the cost implications of various densities, balancing community character, fiscal sustainability, and land use efficiency. Growth patterns will significantly influence infrastructure costs, land consumption, and the city's long-term financial health. A thoughtful approach is essential to manage the trade-offs between outward expansion and higher-density development while preserving Bentonville's quality of life.

## Infrastructure Costs and Land Consumption

Bentonville's current average density of 2.5 homes per acre is financially unsustainable for future growth. Expanding at nearly double this density at 4 homes per acre would require \$1.6 billion to develop 1,896 miles of infrastructure, consuming all available land and an additional 16,413 acres beyond the city's limits. This outward growth drives up infrastructure costs, disrupts rural character, and exacerbates traffic congestion as people commute longer distances.

By contrast:

- 16 Homes per Acre:** Requires \$407 million for 474 miles of infrastructure, leaving 2,329 acres undeveloped.
- 12 Homes per Acre:** Costs \$543 million for 632 miles of infrastructure, leaving 246 acres undeveloped.

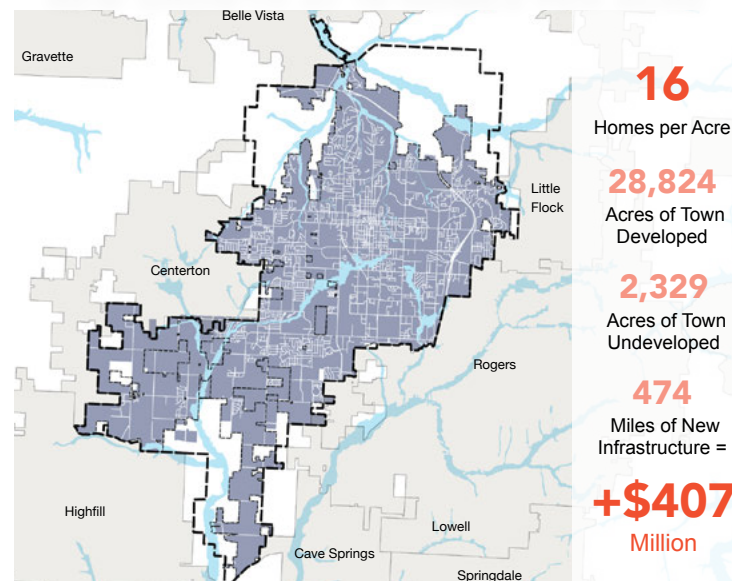
- 8 Homes per Acre:** Increases costs to \$815 million for 948 miles of infrastructure, requiring an additional 3,919 acres beyond current city limits.

Moderate densities—such as 8-12 homes per acre—balance infrastructure efficiency with housing diversity, offering a path to accommodate growth while reducing land consumption and fiscal strain.

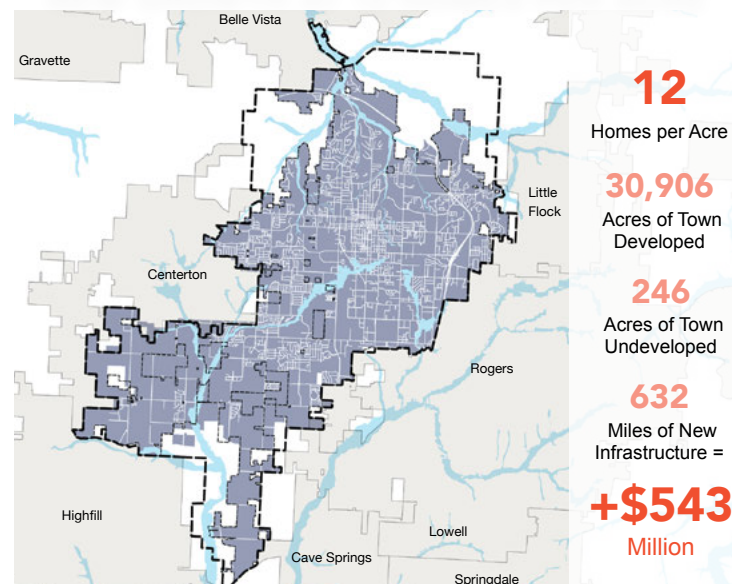
## The Fiscal and Land Use Case for Moderate Density

Moderate-density development provides a fiscally responsible approach, reducing infrastructure costs per household while preserving rural land and character. Higher-density housing options like townhomes, duplexes, and apartments typically contribute more in property tax revenue relative to their infrastructure demands. This supports the city's long-term financial stability while meeting diverse housing needs. Accommodating moderate densities also includes single family homes on small, moderate, and large lots alongside townhomes and other higher-density options. This moderate, blended density can meet the demand present in the housing market and also provide a solid fiscal foundation for city finances.

## NEW GROWTH AT 16 HOMES PER ACRE



## NEW GROWTH AT 12 HOMES PER ACRE



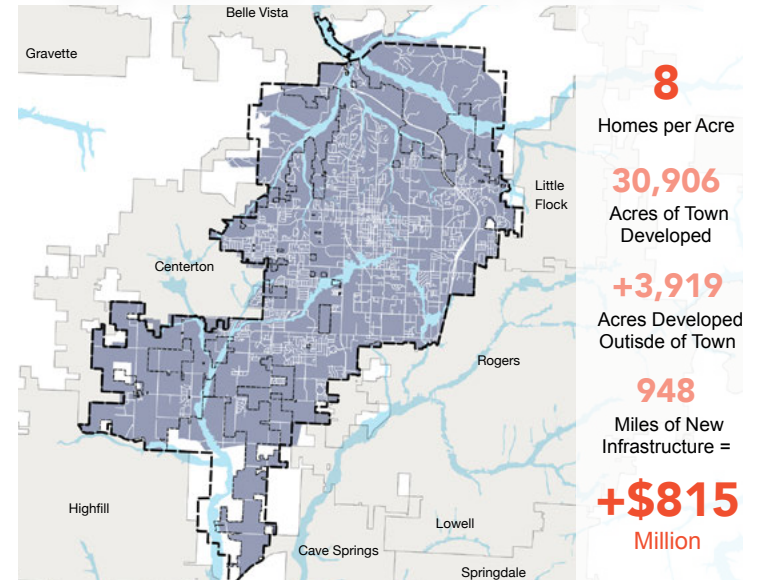
## Growth and Fiscal Sustainability Strategies

1. **Optimize Land Use for Cost Efficiency:** Encourage densities that balance housing supply and infrastructure costs, reducing the need for extensive outward growth.
2. **Preserve Rural and Natural Areas:** Limit low-density growth to protect rural land and agricultural spaces, conserving the character of Bentonville's surrounding areas.
3. **Grow Compactly:** Promote walkable, connected neighborhoods with a mix of housing types that require less extensive infrastructure.
4. **Support Active Transportation and Connectivity:** Invest in bike paths, sidewalks, and transit-supportive designs to reduce traffic congestion and lower road maintenance costs.
5. **Expand the Tax Base Strategically:** Encourage mixed-use and commercial developments throughout the community to generate surplus revenues that offset the costs of low-density growth.
6. **Plan for Resilient Infrastructure:** Integrate infrastructure costs into land-use decisions to ensure that future development contributes positively to the city's budget.

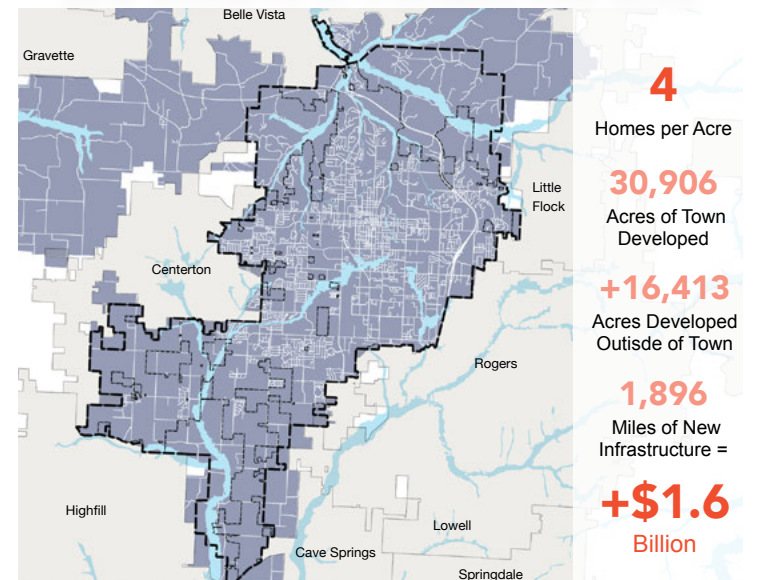
## Balancing Density, Community Character, and Costs

While overly dense development could challenge Bentonville's small-town character, moderate-density growth represents a fiscally and socially balanced solution. By avoiding excessive outward growth, Bentonville can preserve open spaces and rural character while managing costs effectively. This approach supports a thriving, inclusive, and financially resilient city capable of meeting future demands without compromising its identity.

## NEW GROWTH AT 8 HOMES PER ACRE



## NEW GROWTH AT 4 HOMES PER ACRE

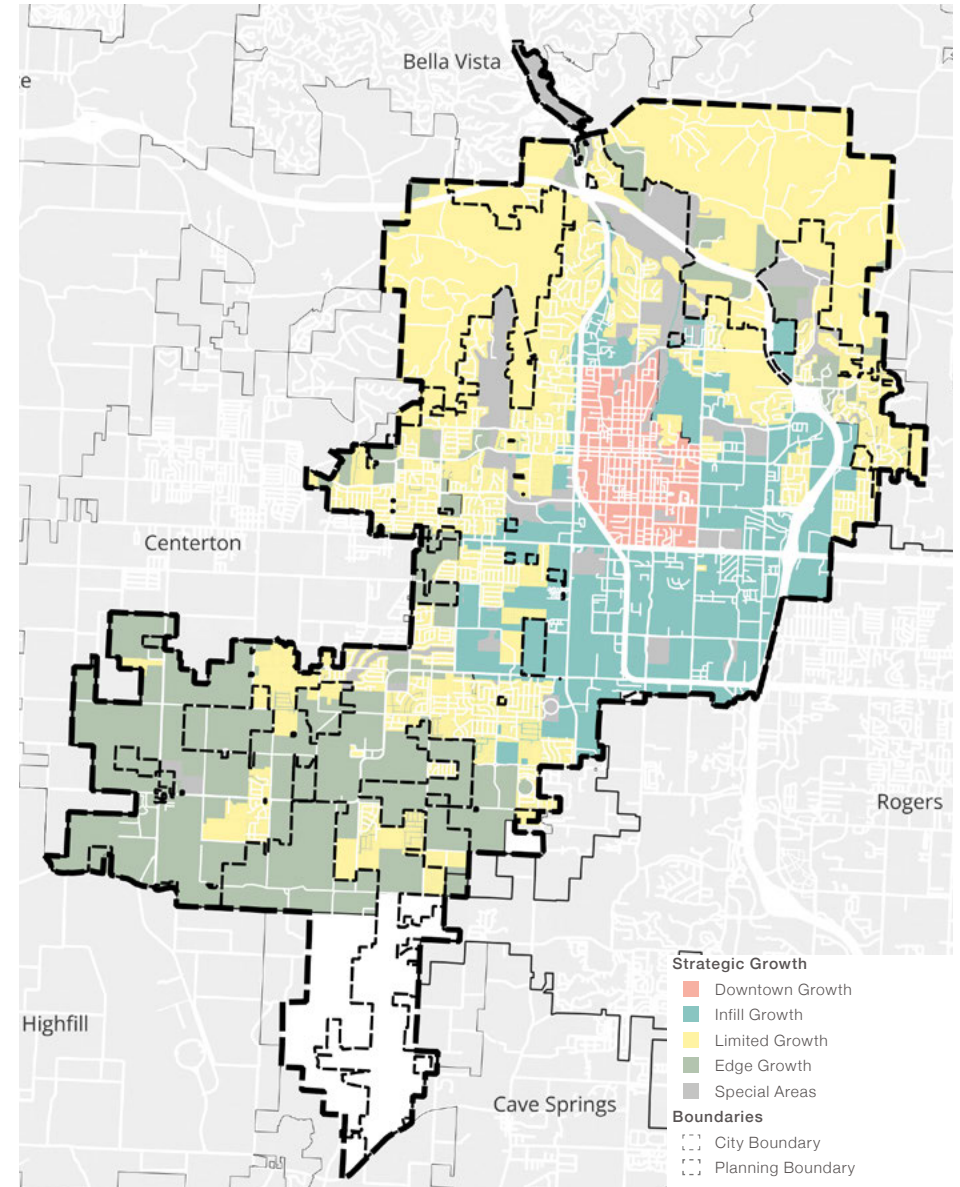


# STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS

As Bentonville's growth continues, the form and approach to development vary significantly across the city, with different areas needing tailored strategies. Recent growth has shown that multiple areas will continue to see development concurrently: redevelopment within the core downtown area, infill within less developed areas near downtown, and growth at the city's periphery.

## **Downtown Growth.**

Bentonville's downtown has seen remarkable growth over the past decade, evolving into the city's central hub for business, dining, and entertainment. As it continues to grow, following existing plans and policies, the area will remain the focal point for economic and cultural activities. However, infrastructure limitations—particularly for parking, transportation, and utilities—pose ongoing challenges. Enhanced pedestrian and cycling options aim to ease parking demand and traffic, making downtown more accessible and reducing reliance on cars. Supporting development in other parts of Bentonville will help to ease the intensity of growth downtown, distributing housing and commercial expansion more evenly across the city. This strategic approach will allow downtown to sustain balanced growth while maintaining its character as the city's vibrant core, accommodating new residential and business needs without overburdening infrastructure.





**Infill Growth.**

The areas surrounding Bentonville's downtown include both nearby residential neighborhoods and opportunities for redevelopment along commercial corridors and former light-industrial zones. Growth in these infill areas needs to be carefully scaled to transition smoothly into adjacent low-intensity neighborhoods, maintaining a balance between development and existing community character. Expanding and preserving street connectivity is essential to improve access and manage traffic flow, even as these areas contend with limited infrastructure for utilities like power, sewer, and transportation. In underdeveloped commercial and light-industrial zones, there is potential for more intensive redevelopment, which can absorb significant demand for growth, thereby reducing pressure on the downtown core. By thoughtfully concentrating higher-density growth in these areas, Bentonville can better accommodate its expanding population while supporting infrastructure and transportation needs across the city.

**Limited Growth.**

These areas are characterized by relatively low-density development and typically have limited street connectivity. Because of their established character, they are more sensitive to further infill or densification than other parts of Bentonville. Additionally, many of these neighborhoods are newly built, making significant change or redevelopment less likely. The growth occurring in other parts of the city can serve to support these established areas, but substantial changes within

these limited-growth zones should be minimized to preserve their existing qualities and avoid overburdening the infrastructure.

**Edge Growth.**

The city's outer areas are anticipated to see growing demand for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods that blend diverse housing options—such as single-family homes of various sizes, townhomes, and apartments—with accessible commercial spaces. This approach fosters a balanced housing market that bolsters Bentonville's fiscal sustainability while creating vibrant, interconnected communities. New developments in these peripheral areas should prioritize street connectivity, safe biking routes, and pedestrian-friendly pathways to ease traffic congestion and encourage active transportation. Strategically placing larger commercial centers and neighborhood-focused retail within these zones can help reduce downtown congestion and make walking and biking viable options for nearby residents. Thoughtfully planned growth should enhance accessibility, support community cohesion, and contribute to Bentonville's long-term economic and social resilience.

**Special Areas.**

These are locations where growth is expected to occur in nontraditional or highly specialized ways. Many of these areas, such as parks and recreational spaces, are intentionally preserved and are not intended for further development. Other uses may evolve in unique formats, such as educational campuses and research institutions, which follow tailored growth trajectories aligned with their specialized functions. These areas enhance Bentonville's character and provide essential services, recreational opportunities, and cultural amenities, adding diversity to the city's built fabric. Their preservation and careful, purpose-driven development are integral to Bentonville's balanced growth and community identity.

Together, these growth strategies aim to balance Bentonville's expansion with infrastructure capacity, connectivity, and preservation of community character. By addressing each area's unique needs, the city can foster a cohesive yet diverse built landscape that supports quality of life and economic resilience.



# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan envisions Bentonville's growth through 2050 and beyond by employing "Place Types" to delineate the purpose and character of different city zones.

The Place Types guide development in several main categories:

## **Center Place Types**

Designed as mixed-use hubs, Centers incorporate retail, business, and residential spaces. These range from high-activity Regional Centers—featuring the tallest buildings and lively public areas—to more localized Neighborhood Centers that offer essential services and smaller-scale amenities for nearby residents.

## **Neighborhood Place Types**

Primarily residential, Neighborhoods are characterized by a mix of housing densities to meet diverse community needs. They include Suburban neighborhoods with low-density housing, Traditional neighborhoods with a mix of historic homes and new development, Walkable neighborhoods with moderate-density housing, and Urban neighborhoods with higher densities, fostering a varied residential landscape.

## **Corridor Place Types**

Major thoroughfares such as 14th Street and Regional Airport Boulevard primarily serve commercial functions today but are envisioned to evolve. Some Suburban Corridors will retain their

low-scale, car-oriented character due to existing constraints, while Walkable and Urban Corridors will incorporate mixed-use, higher-density developments to improve walkability and connectivity.

## **Recreational Place Types**

Encompassing parks, open spaces, and outdoor venues, these areas provide recreational opportunities for both residents and

visitors. Recreation areas may be publicly or privately managed and are designed to enhance the city's livability and offer varied amenities.

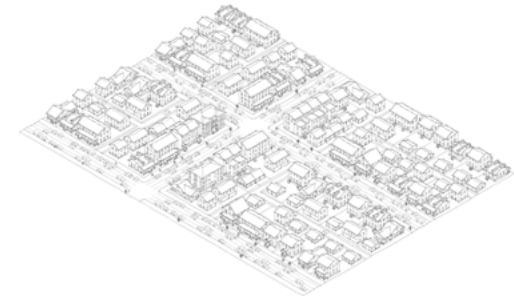
## **Specialized Place Types**

Additional Place Types include rural and industrial areas and institutional campuses that serve specialized functions within the city's overall land use framework.

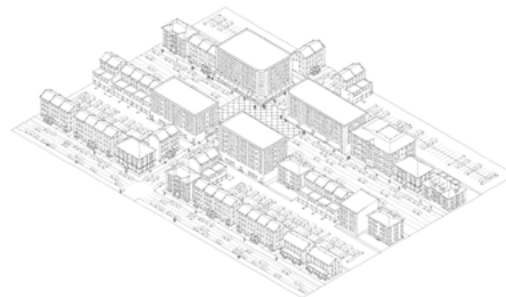
### **CENTERS**



### **NEIGHBORHOODS**



### **CORRIDORS**



### **RECREATION**



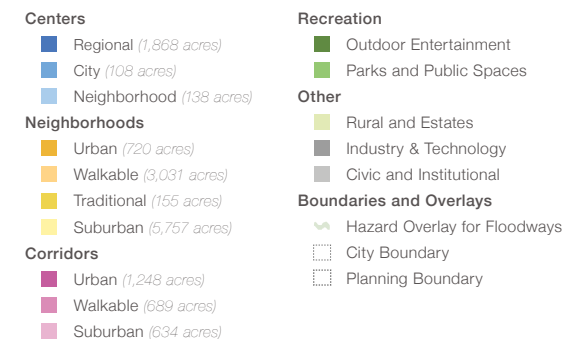
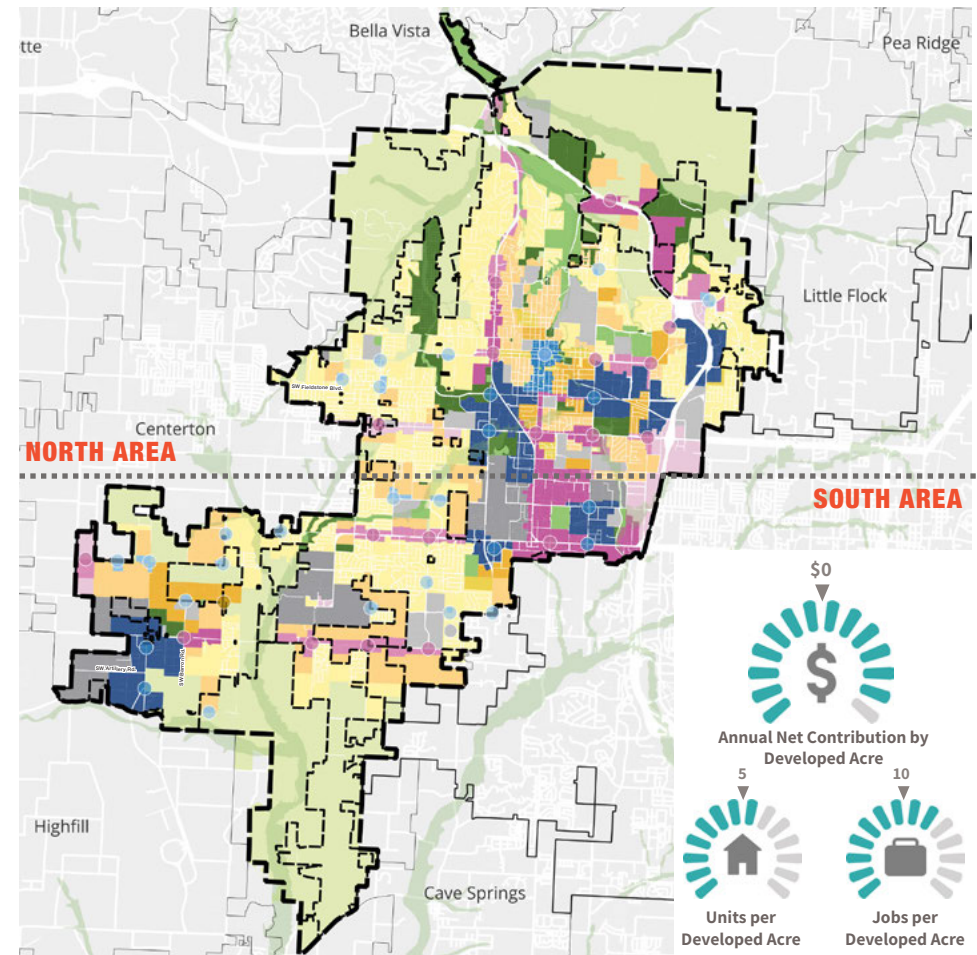
## Strategic and Balanced Growth

To ease pressure on downtown and encourage walking and biking, the plan establishes multiple activity hubs, including a major future employment center near Northwest Arkansas National Airport. These Regional Centers will boost the city's economic base with spaces for cultural venues, entertainment, diverse jobs, and higher-density housing in areas away from the airports. Within residential zones, smaller Neighborhood Centers provide convenient retail and gathering spots, fostering a network of community-focused amenities within easy walking, biking, and driving distance for most residents.

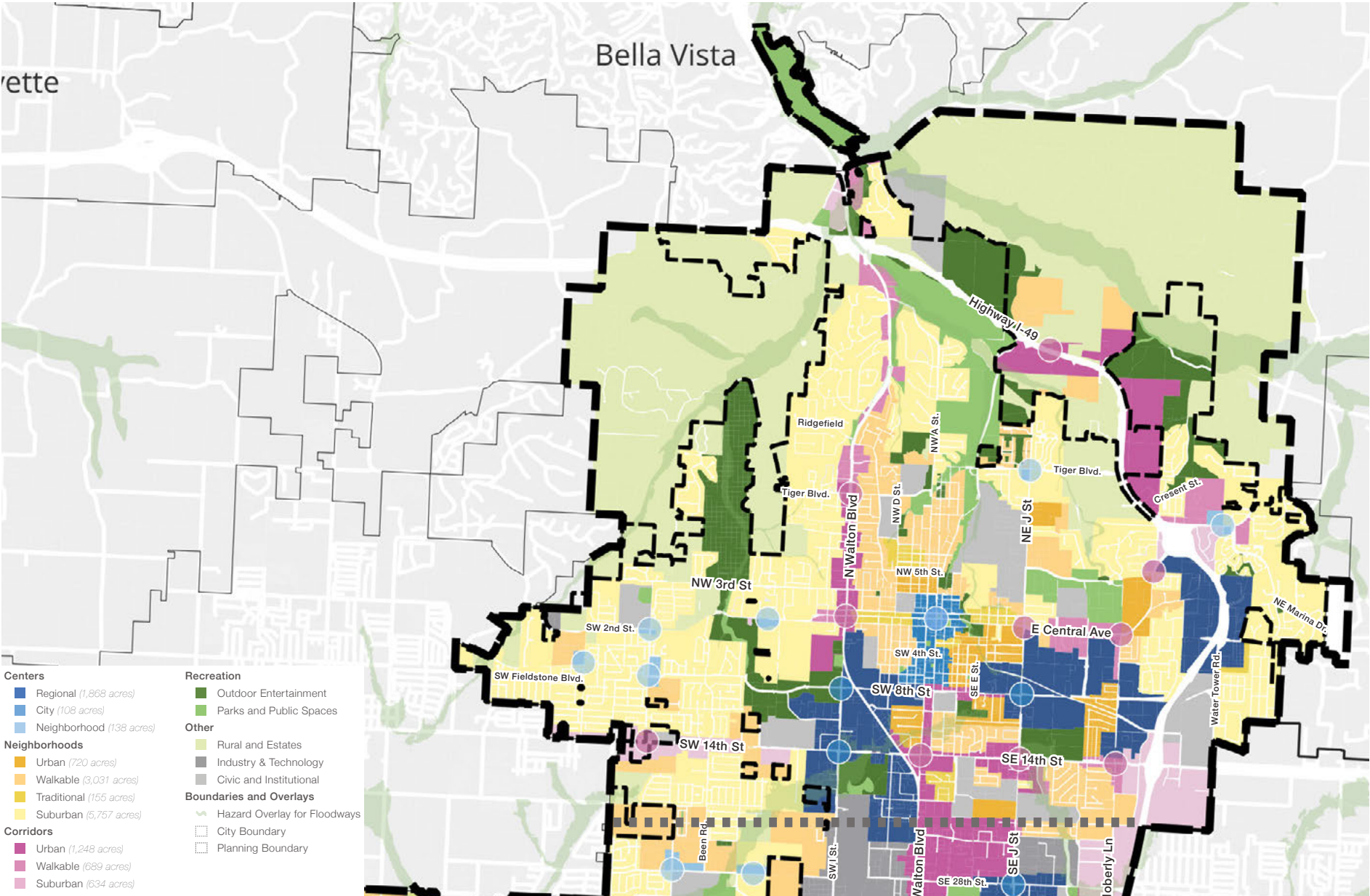
Strategically planned infill and compact growth in new areas aim to enhance Bentonville's fiscal health by minimizing infrastructure costs and creating a budget surplus to reinvest in city services, infrastructure, and recreation. With projected growth nearing 220,000 residents, the Future Land Use Plan addresses fiscal sustainability by balancing growth density and housing diversity.

Balanced growth, as outlined in the plan, supports a sustainable fiscal outlook, reduces downtown congestion, promotes alternative travel options, and diversifies housing to meet demand. The Community Plan targets an average new growth of about 13 units per acre, blended between new, high-density places like Regional Centers, medium-density places like Urban Corridors, and low-density places like Walkable Neighborhoods, while discouraging growth in Suburban and Traditional Neighborhoods and Rural areas. Each Place Type contributes to the city's economy, housing, and character, underscoring the need for comprehensive, balanced growth and a diversity of environments for residents, providing a high quality of life and accessibility to housing, jobs, and mobility for future generations.

Preserving rural character remains a key priority. The plan encourages relatively higher-density development within the city's core and hubs, reducing the need for outward expansion. While the plan can accommodate population growth beyond current projections, compact, fiscally responsible growth ensures Bentonville retains its rural surroundings and strong fiscal outlook, meeting population demands while staying adaptable to future challenges.

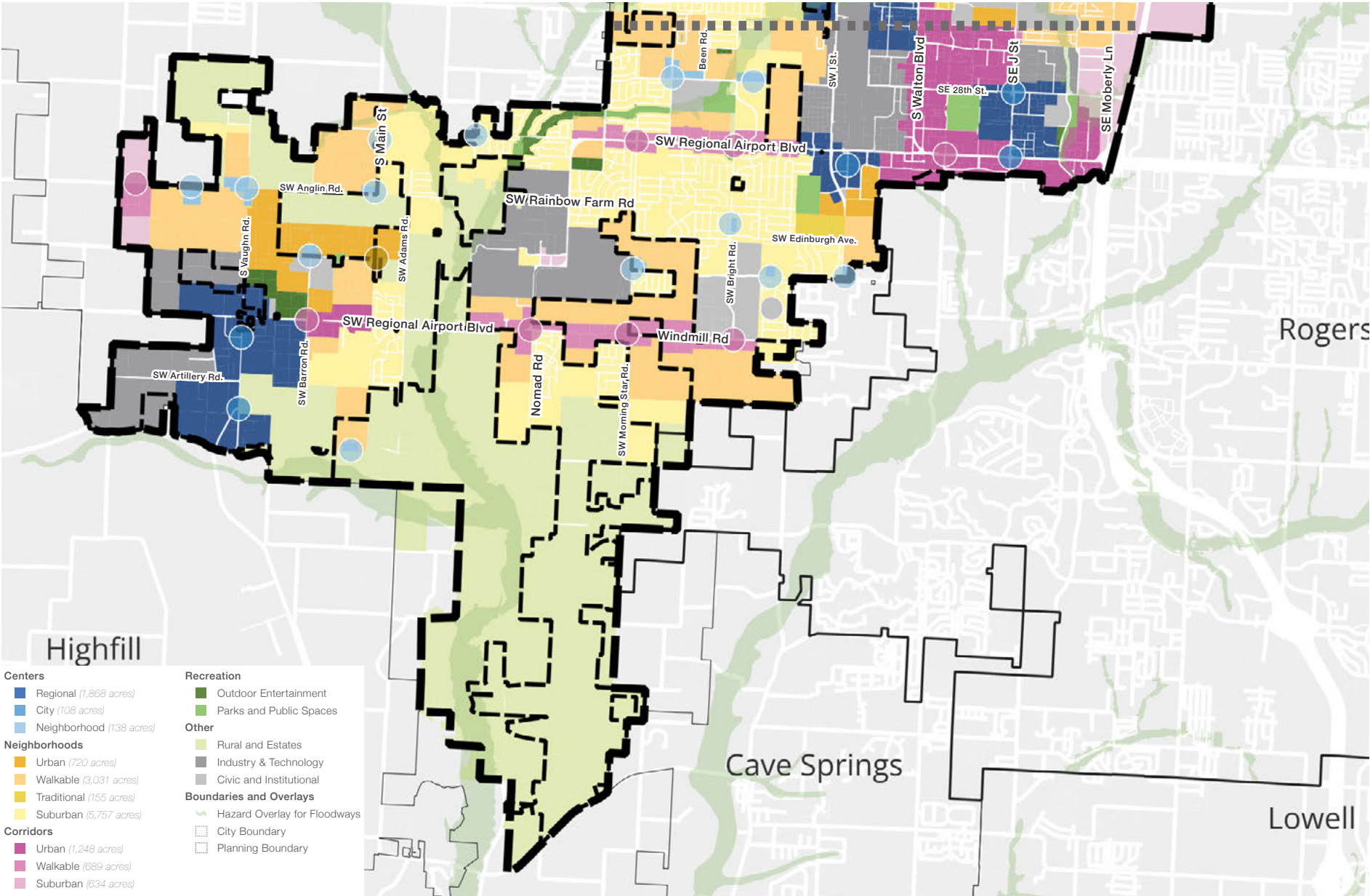


NORTH AREA





SOUTH AREA

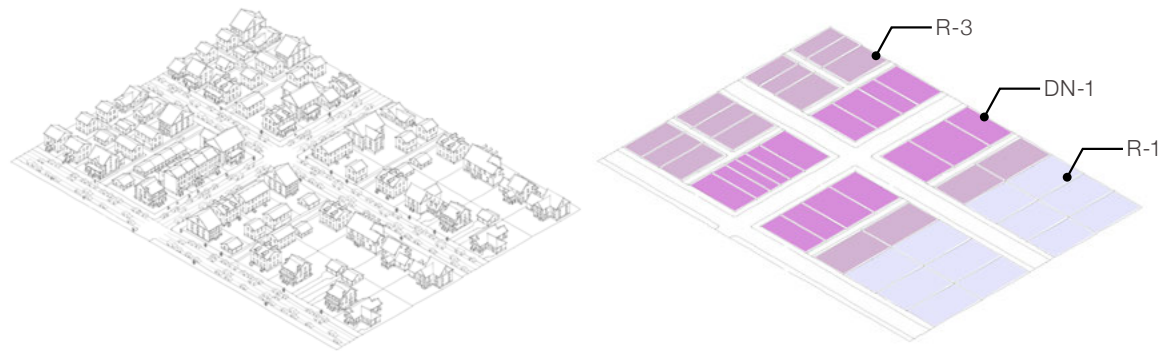


# FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING

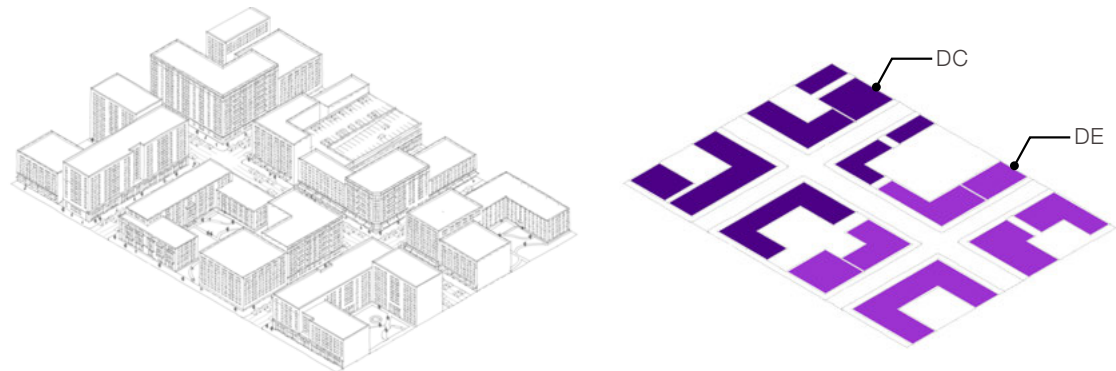
Future Land Use and zoning are interconnected yet distinct components of city planning. While the Community Plan does not directly change zoning, it provides a vision for the city's development by defining Place Types—a set of intended characteristics for each area of the city, including land uses like residential, commercial, or mixed-use, typical activities, and building scale. Each Place Type can incorporate several zoning districts, and property owners may request rezoning as needed. These requests are assessed in light of the Community Plan to ensure they align with the Place Type's objectives. The Future Land Use Plan provides a structured framework that guides zoning decisions by outlining the intended characteristics and uses within each designated Place Type and by suggesting compatible zoning categories. Decision-makers use this framework in conjunction with the Zoning Alignment Table, which identifies existing Zoning Districts compatible with each Place Type. For example, the Suburban Neighborhood Place Type might align with R-1 and R-3 zoning, while Parks and Public Spaces may allow for broader zoning compatibility. However, all developments should meet the specific character and functional goals set forth for each Place Type to maintain the area's intended purpose and appearance.

Future Land Use assignments can be changed by request of the property owner. Such requests are evaluated once each year, holistically, to ensure they support the goals of the Community Plan and other city goals and policies.

## TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD



## REGIONAL CENTER



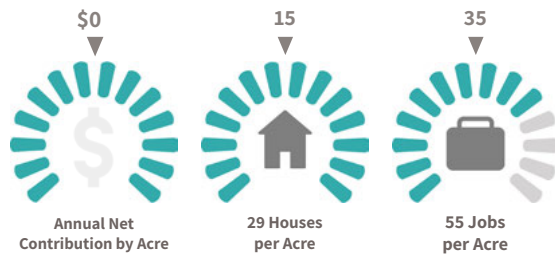
Examples of Place Type correlation with zoning districts. Place Types typically include multiple zoning districts.

*Note: Rezoning requests should be reviewed in accordance with the city's most recently adopted Future Land Use Map and Zoning Alignment Policy.*



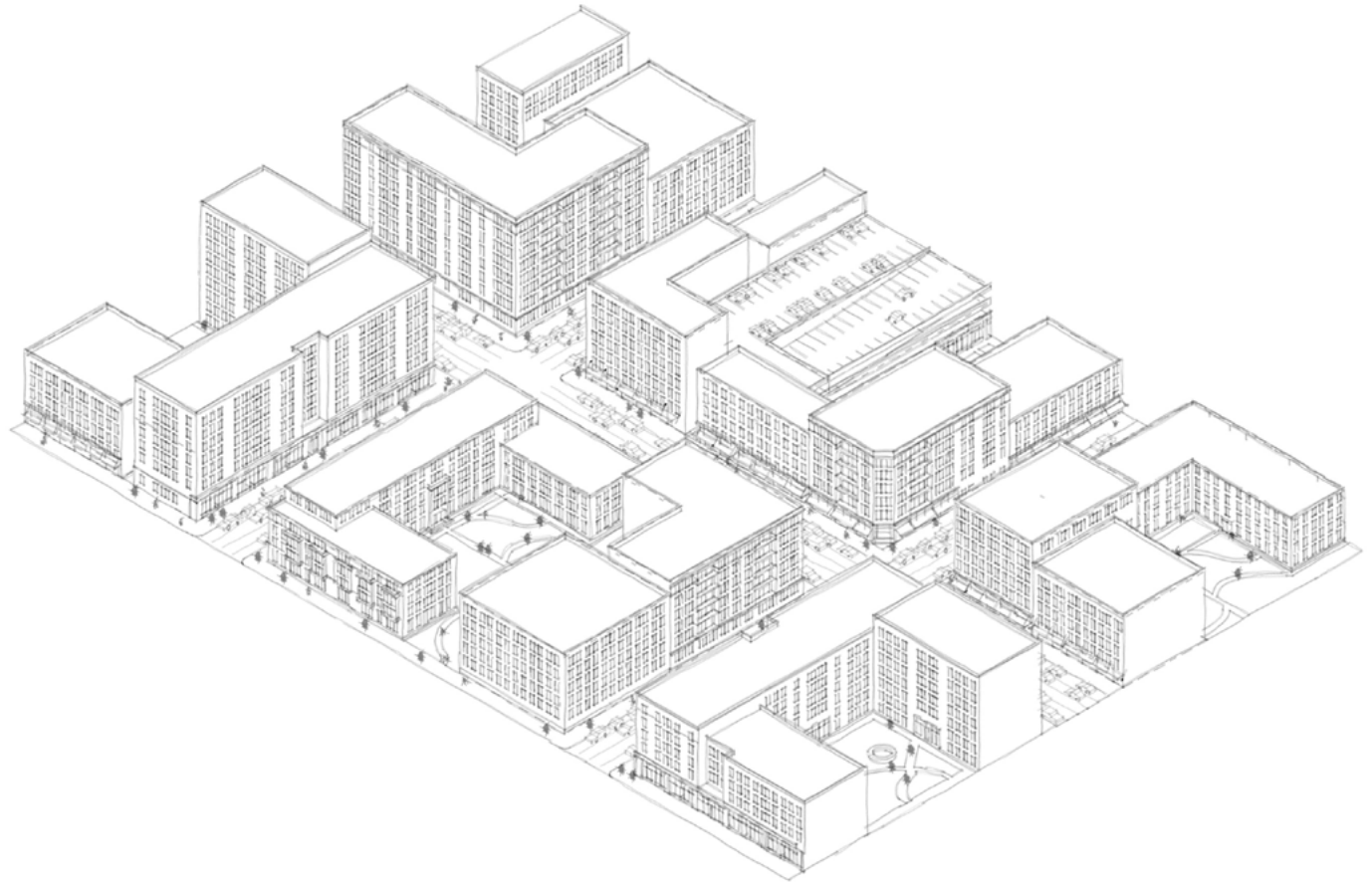
# PLACE TYPES

## REGIONAL CENTER

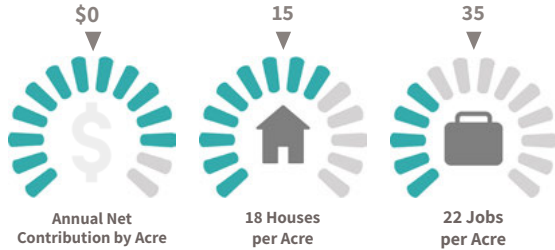


Anticipated building height: 6-8 stories

Regional Centers are typically hubs of concentrated white collar employment, together with the smaller businesses — like restaurants, office supplies, and other services — that support them. They are also a good place for more concentrated housing in close proximity to abundant jobs. Walmart's emerging corporate campus is one example, Uptown Rogers is another. Delivering the city's highest financial performance, these areas play an important role in generating the money that local residents use to pay for housing and goods, and also support a robust economy of complementary businesses.

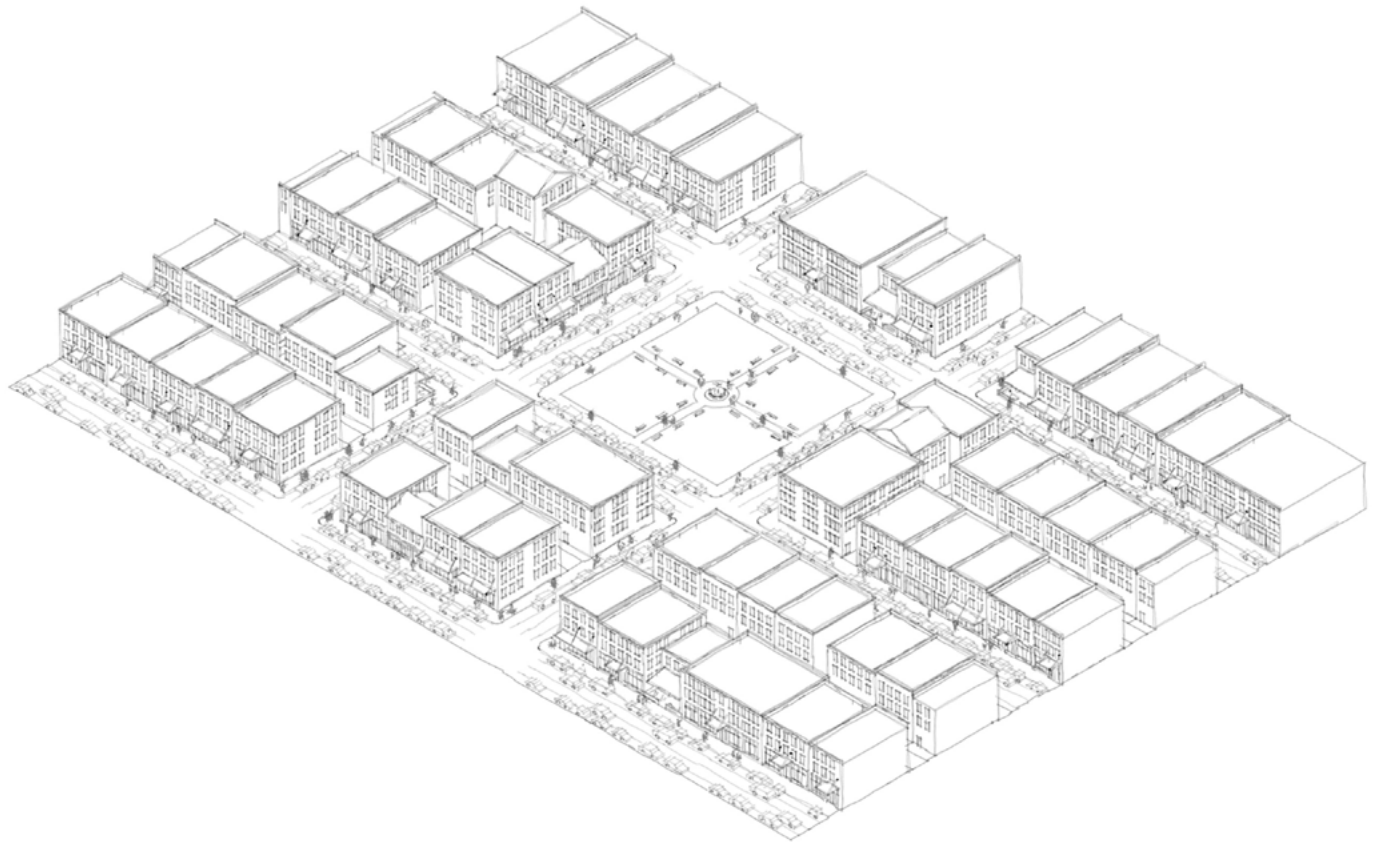


## CITY CENTER

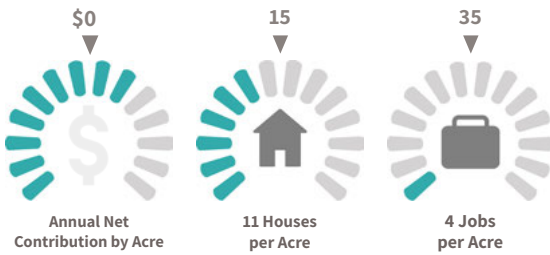


Anticipated building height: 4-6 stories

City Centers are places like the Downtown Bentonville Square and its surrounding blocks, consisting of jobs, entertainment, convenience retail, daily services, and housing at a variety of scales — from single story shops to office and residential buildings. This combination of types and uses, from sidewalk-lining buildings to civic institutions like churches and city hall, to apartments, condos, and townhomes, makes for the city's most active, compact and walkable space. In the future there may be more than one City Center providing convenient access to additional amenities, particularly in the southwest, and reducing the growth pressure around the city's beloved heart. With a high concentration of commercial along with housing, City Centers contribute substantially to the city's budget.

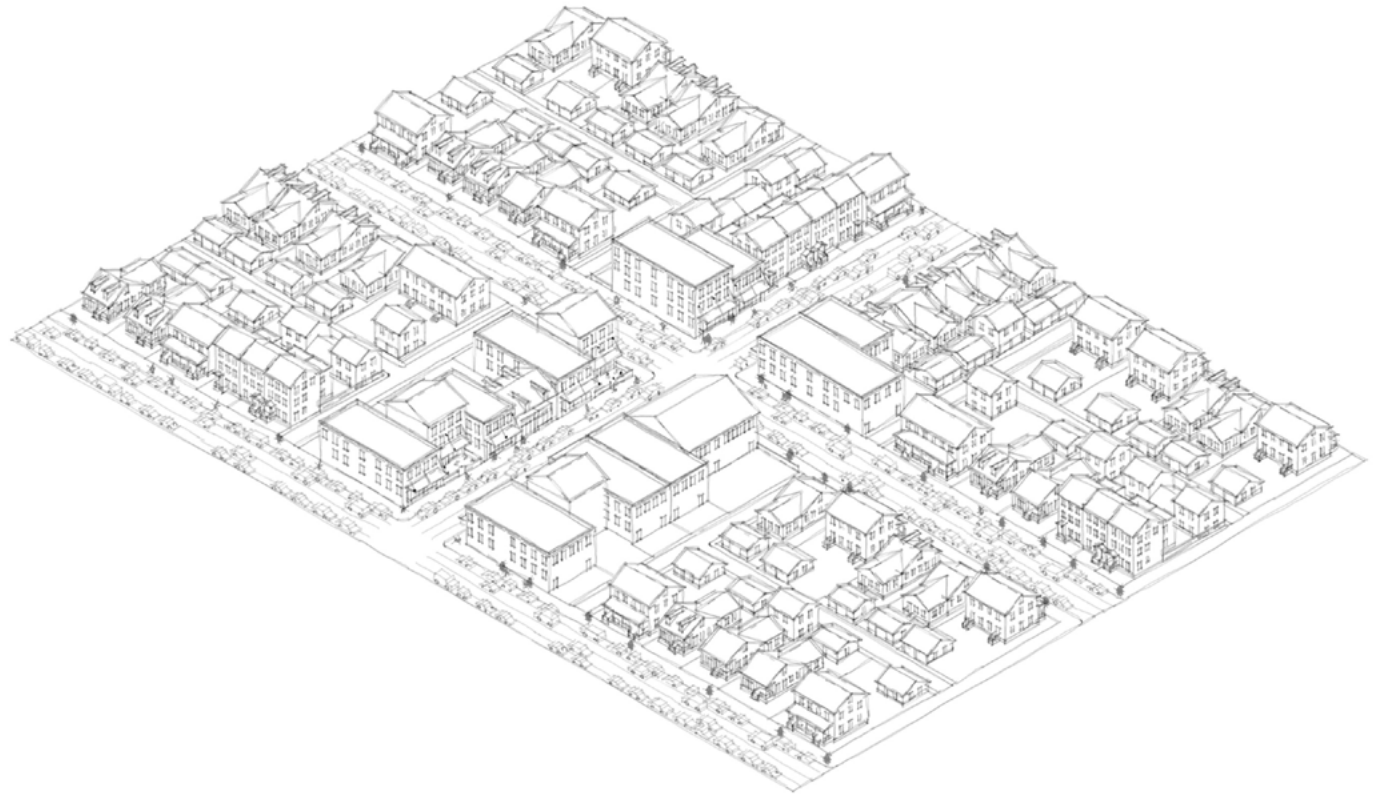


## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

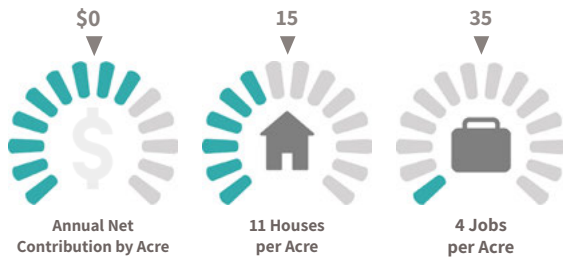


Anticipated building height: 3-5 stories

Neighborhood Centers serve as the physical glue between neighborhoods — providing a human-scaled destination where surrounding neighbors can walk or bike, gather in fellowship, dine out, or pick up basic daily needs. Small, local businesses typically provide a variety of entry-level jobs, a sense of increasing independence for area youth, and an opportunity to support more home-grown businesses. They usually also include nearby townhomes, small apartment buildings, and small homes transitioning in scale and activity to less concentrated surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood Centers contribute sales tax and concentrated property tax to the city's budget, balancing nearby neighborhoods.

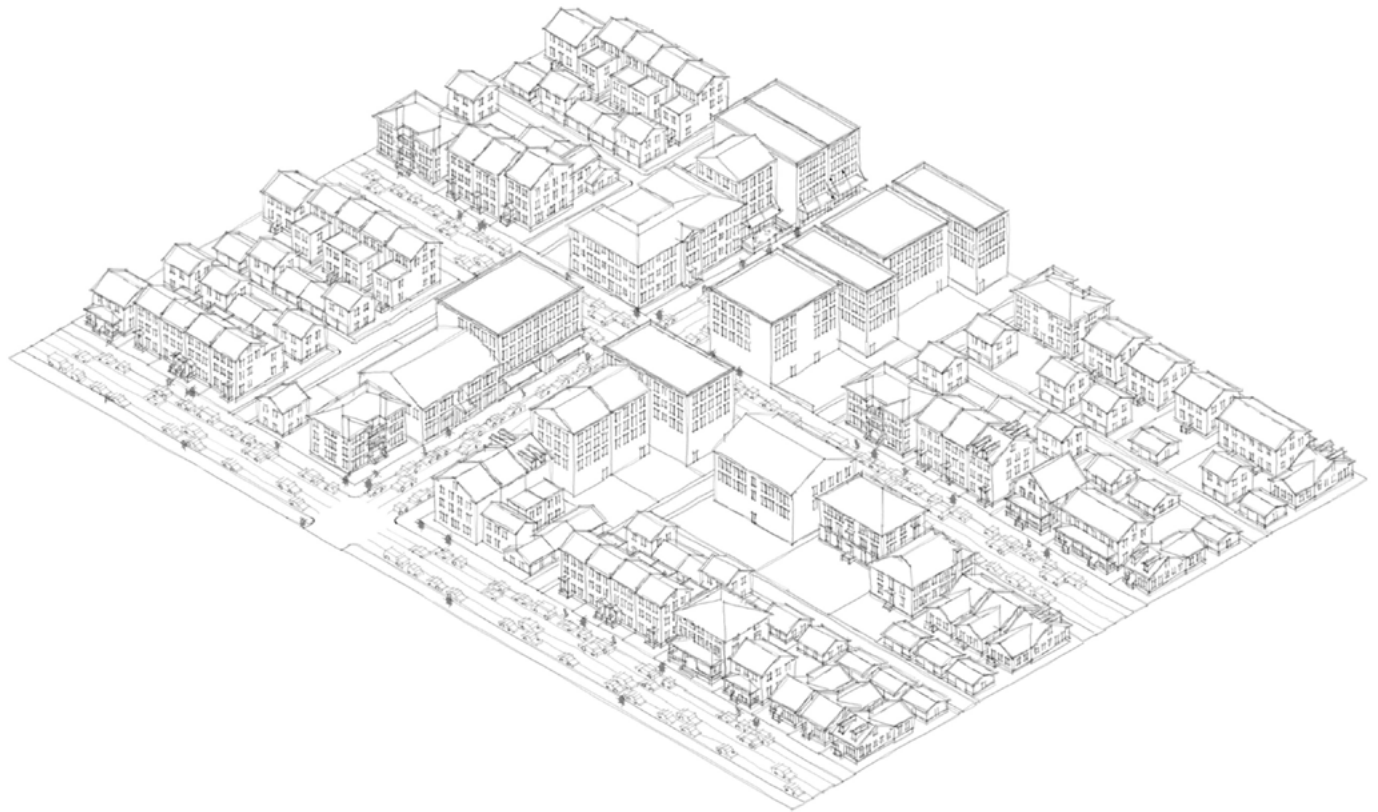


## URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD



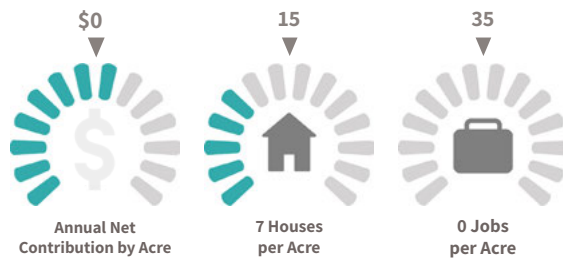
Anticipated building height: 3-5 stories

Urban Neighborhoods are the city's highest intensity neighborhoods, defined primarily by multi-family buildings and townhomes but with some single family and smaller commercial uses mixed in. Catering to those seeking more flexible, lower maintenance lifestyles, they provide considerable housing in a relatively small footprint and support walking and biking as viable transportation alternatives. Financially, Urban Neighborhoods are net positive and significantly reduce the amount of land needed for growth.





## WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

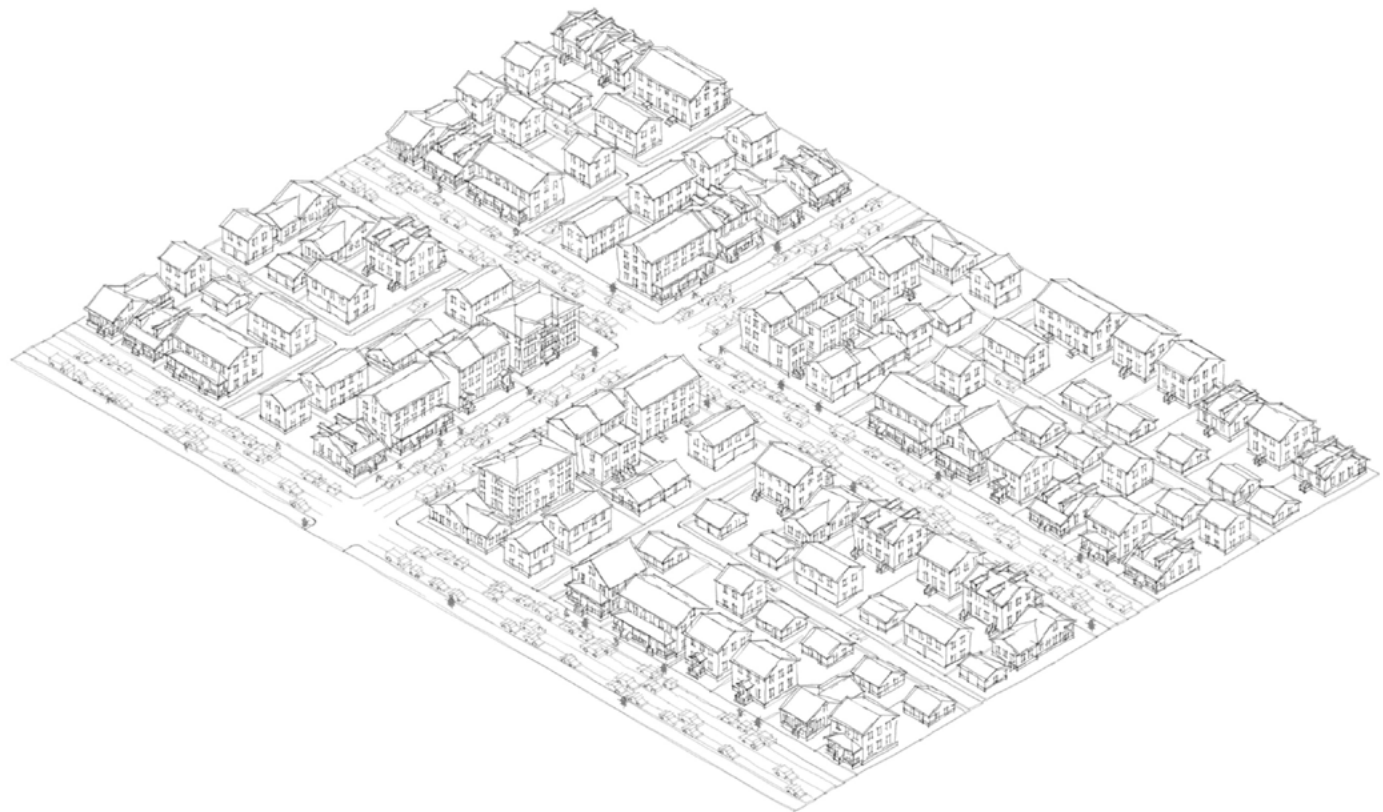


Anticipated building height: 3 stories

Walkable Neighborhoods combine compatibly-scaled single family homes, townhomes, and apartment buildings in a neighborhood setting.

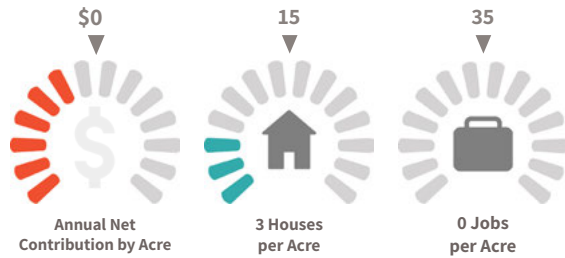
They provide a high degree of housing diversity, allowing for more people of different circumstances to share the same neighborhood. They also support some small neighborhood shops and are often near Neighborhood Centers and parks, making it easy to walk and bike for frequent trips.

Financially, mixed neighborhoods don't fully cover their costs, but by providing housing in a compact footprint, they reduce the amount of land needed for growth.





## TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

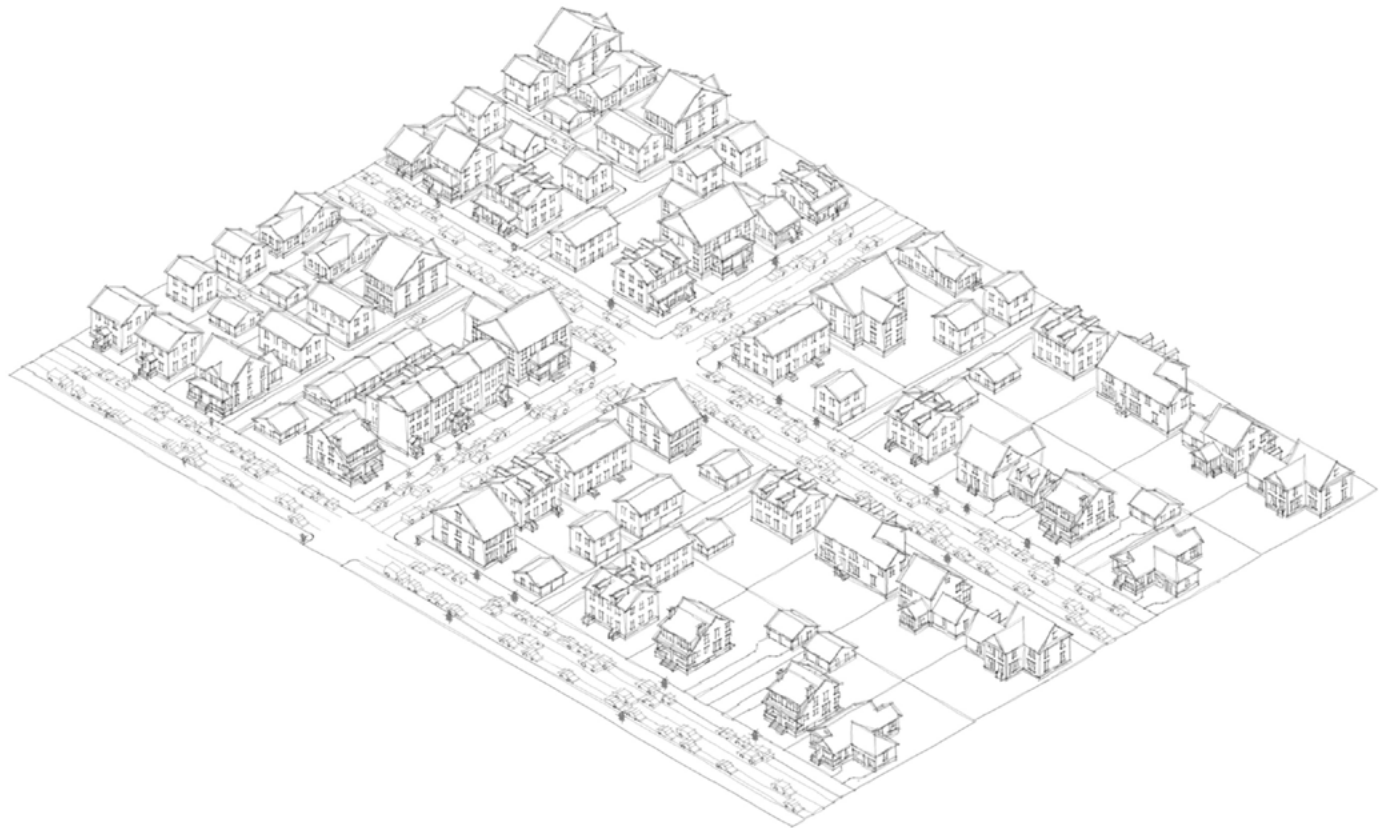


Anticipated building height: 2.5-3 stories

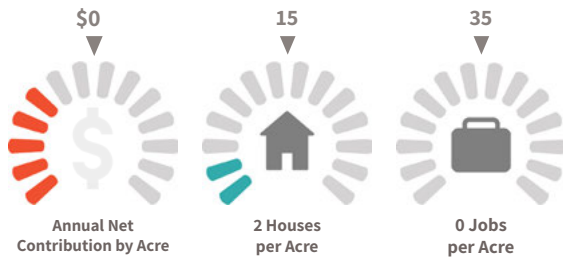
Traditional Neighborhoods serve as a bridge between denser, more mixed-use Walkable Neighborhoods and more dispersed and automobile-oriented Suburban Neighborhoods. As such, they merge features of both.

Characterized by gridded, walkable blocks of single family homes, townhomes, and small-scaled apartment buildings, they provide diverse housing opportunities while easing the way towards areas of single family homes only.

Lots are formally structured but grow incrementally larger as you move outward, maintaining the viability of walking and biking for many trips while contributing to a more relaxed residential character.

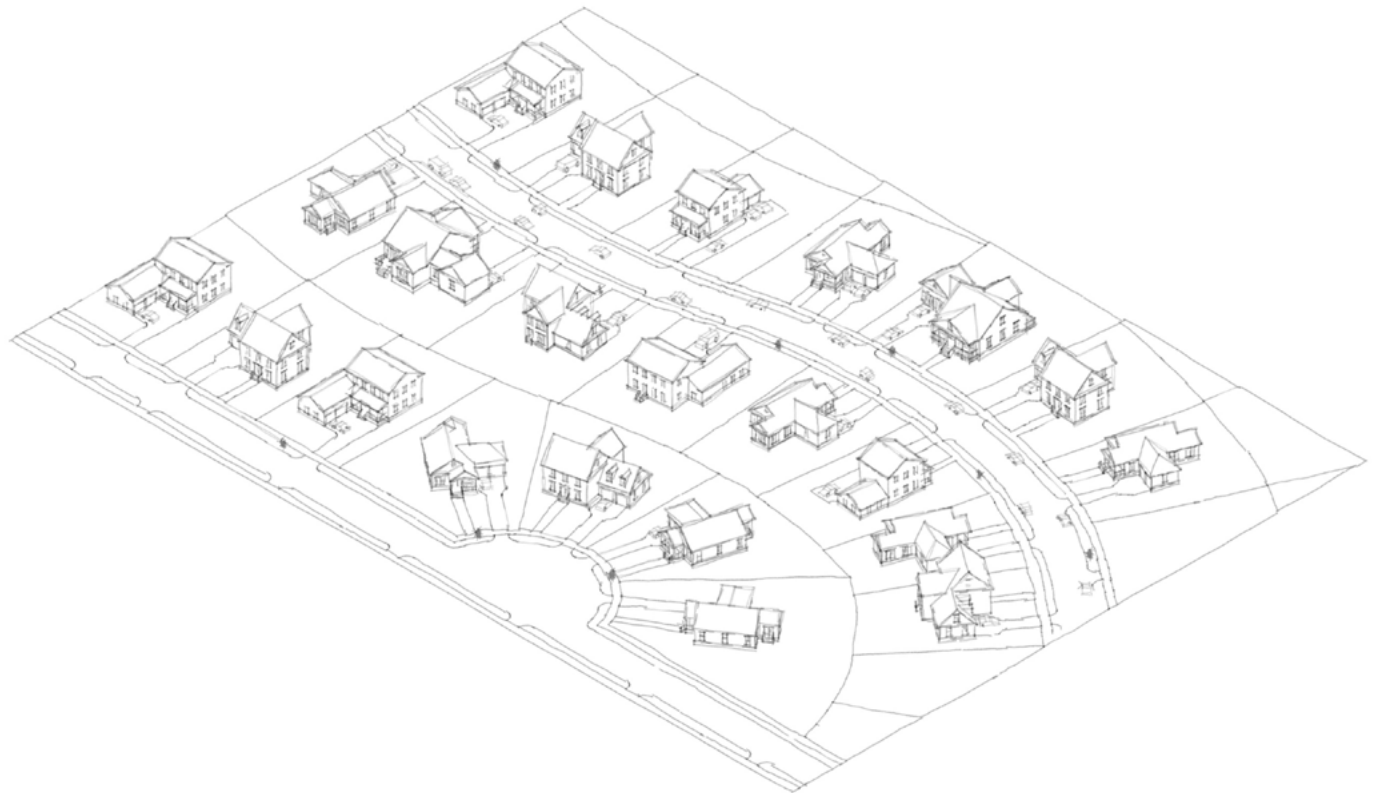


## SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

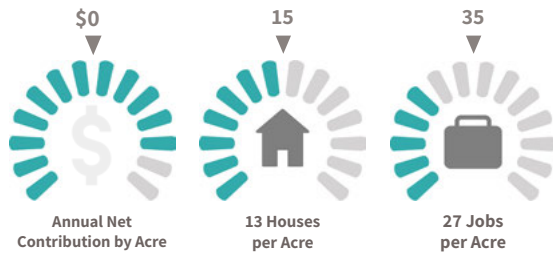


Anticipated building height: 2.5-3 stories

Suburban Neighborhoods, often referred to as subdivisions, consist mainly of single family homes on comparatively larger lots, some including accessory dwellings within the main house volume or in a detached building. They are generally quiet areas more removed from most commercial amenities. Family-oriented, often with large concentrations of children, suburban neighborhoods are often preferred by growing families. Because houses are on larger properties, buildings are more spread out and car trips are required for most needs. Suburban Neighborhoods don't cover their own costs, but they provide housing needed for a large segment of the community, including families raising the next generation of Bentonville residents.

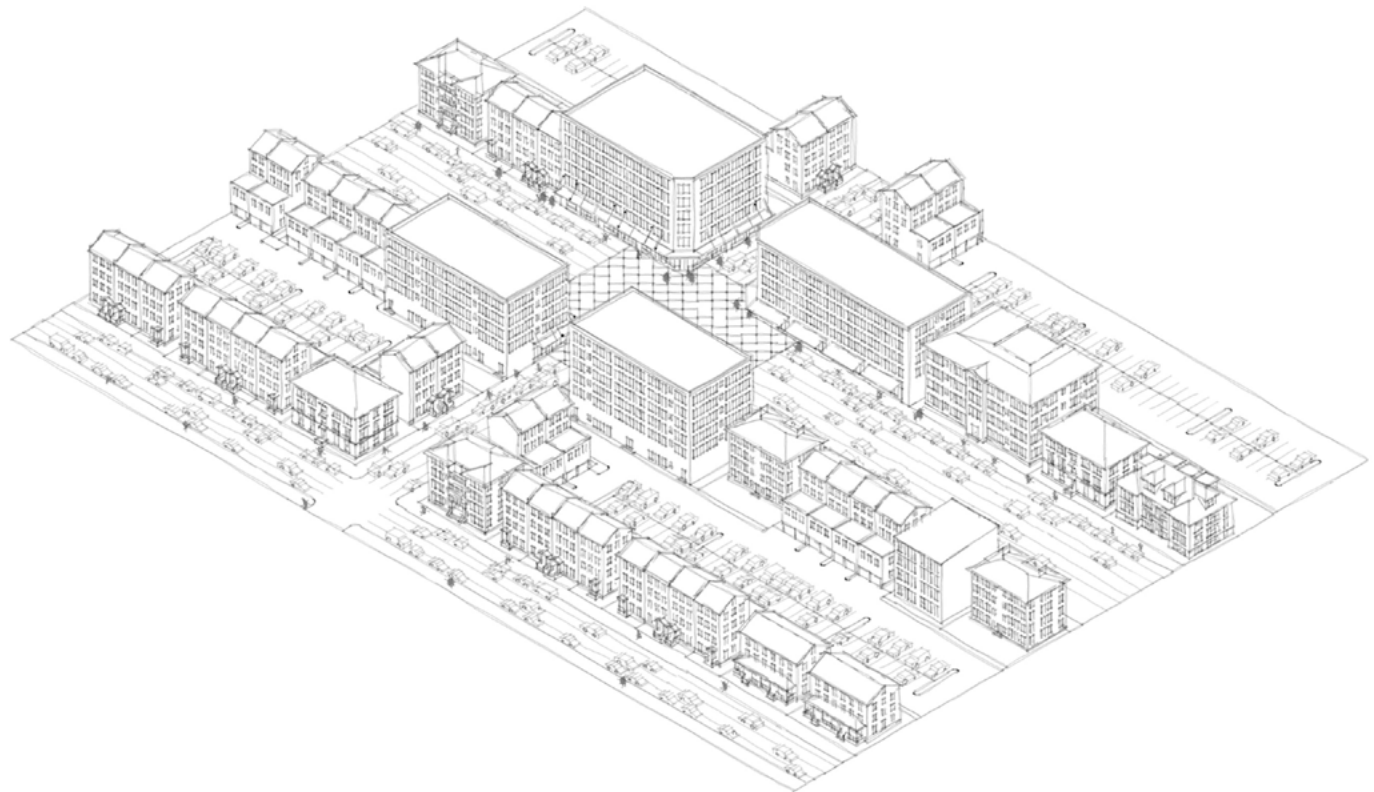


## URBAN CORRIDOR

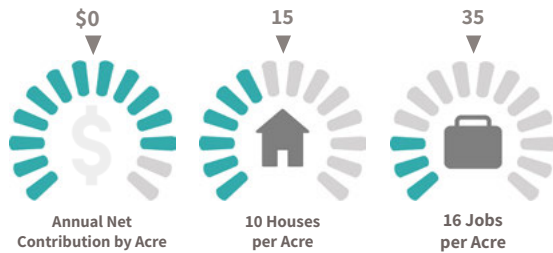


Anticipated building height: 3-6 stories

Urban Corridors are primary thoroughfares fronted by larger multi-family and office buildings interspersed with neighborhood-serving commercial uses. They feature development on unbuilt properties as well as new uses added to properties only partially built out. Comparable to but more intense than Walkable Corridors, they allow for large numbers of people to safely walk or bike to jobs and daily needs. Urban Corridors are strong tax contributors, outperforming all other place types except Regional and City Centers.



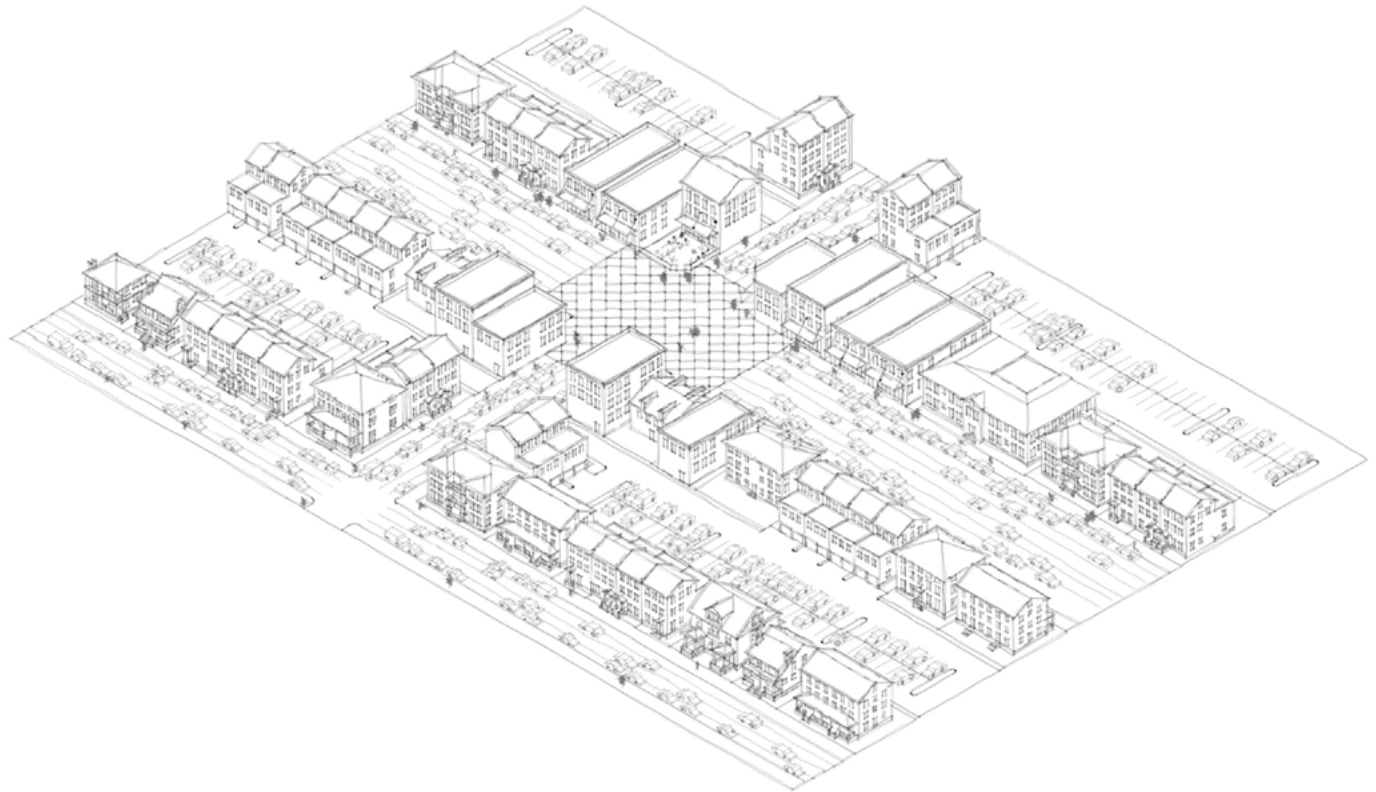
## WALKABLE CORRIDOR



Anticipated building height: 3-5 stories

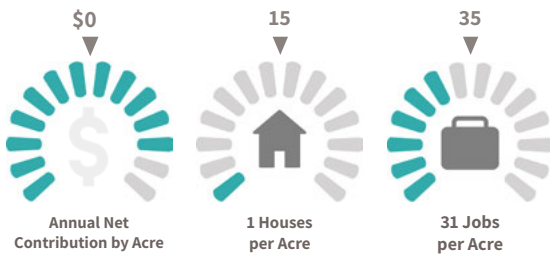
Walkable Corridor refers to areas that once were large arterial roadways lined by strip-commercial uses but maintain the potential to become a sort of Neighborhood Center in linear form; a more human-scaled, connected destination where adjacent neighbors can safely walk or bike to retail and services. They consist of mixed-use developments, apartments, and townhomes on unbuilt properties and new uses added to properties only partially built upon. Together they support more businesses and residents in close proximity.

Financially, Walkable Corridors perform better than Suburban Corridors as an alternative land use along arterial roadways.



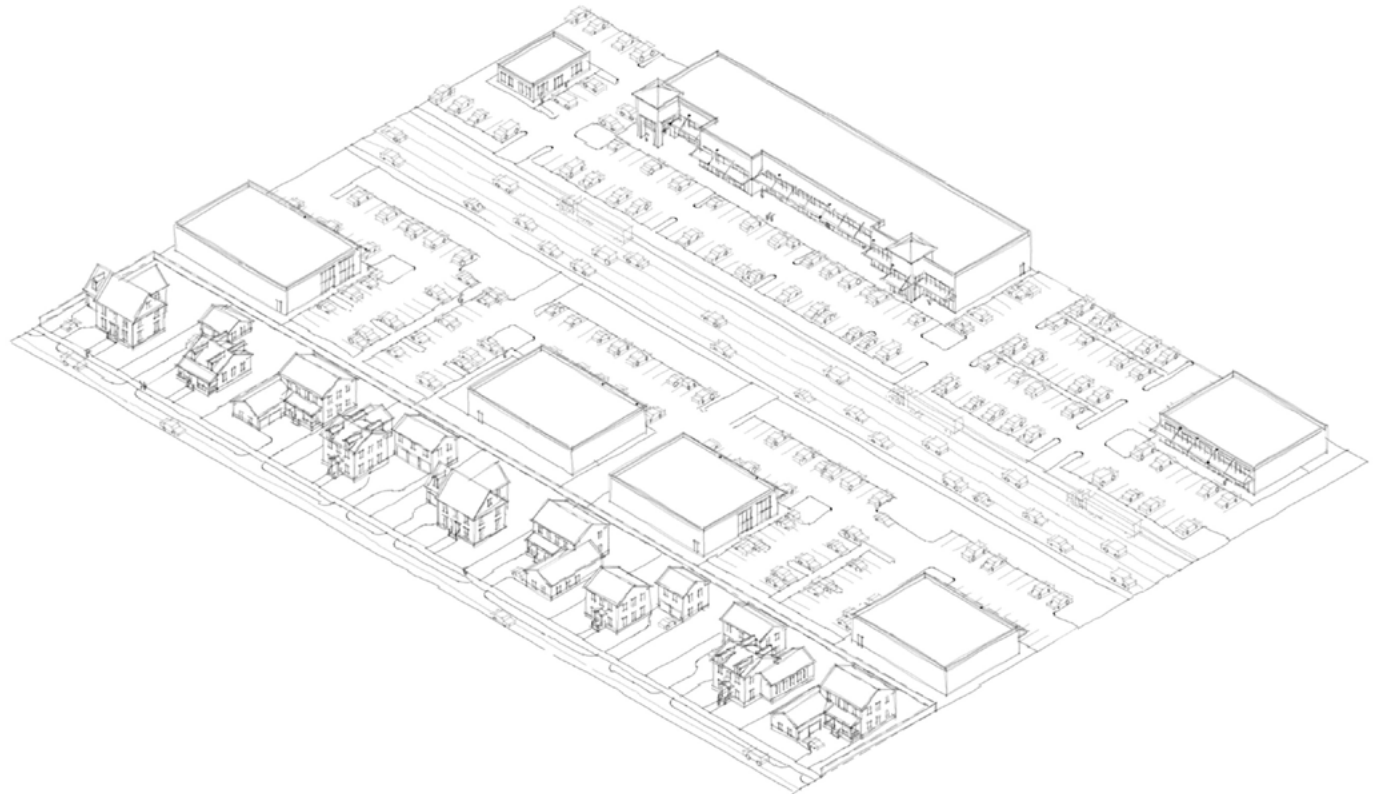


## SUBURBAN CORRIDOR



Anticipated building height: 2-4 stories

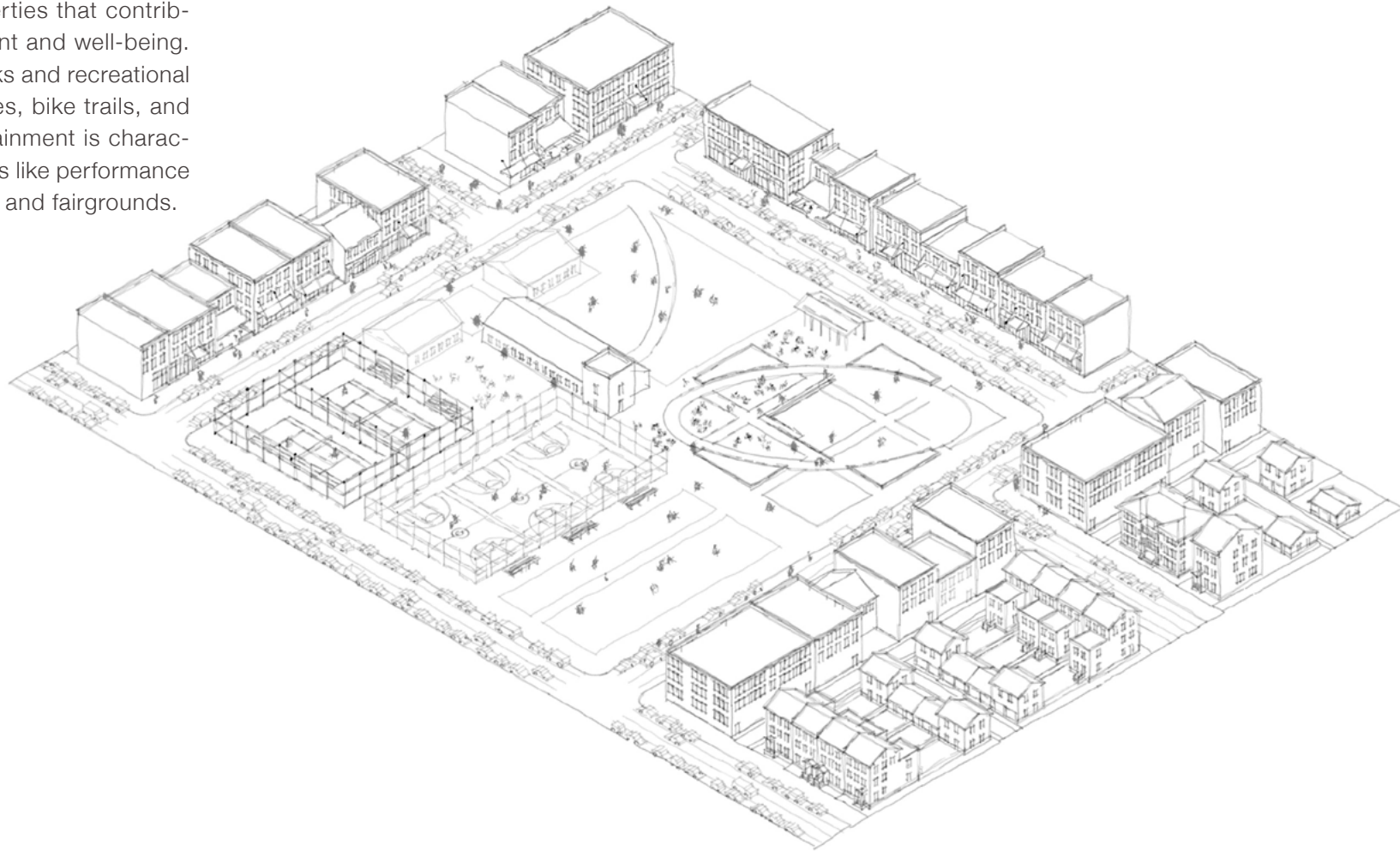
Suburban Corridors are areas comprised of large format retail environments like big box stores, shopping malls, car sales, and large industrial facilities, as well as residential developments serving regional commuters. Because these areas cater to those traveling primarily by car, they feature large parking areas and related drainage which limits their financial performance. Nonetheless, largely through sales tax revenue, Suburban Corridors generate more than their associated costs.



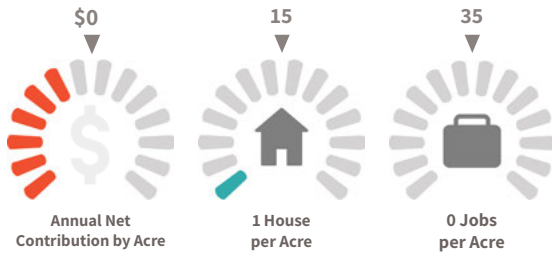


## RECREATION

Recreation is defined by two categories: Parks and Public Space and Outdoor Entertainment. Parks and Public Space refers to both public and privately owned properties that contribute to community enjoyment and well-being. This includes the city's parks and recreational amenities, gathering spaces, bike trails, and museums. Outdoor Entertainment is characterized by larger format uses like performance venues, amusement parks, and fairgrounds.

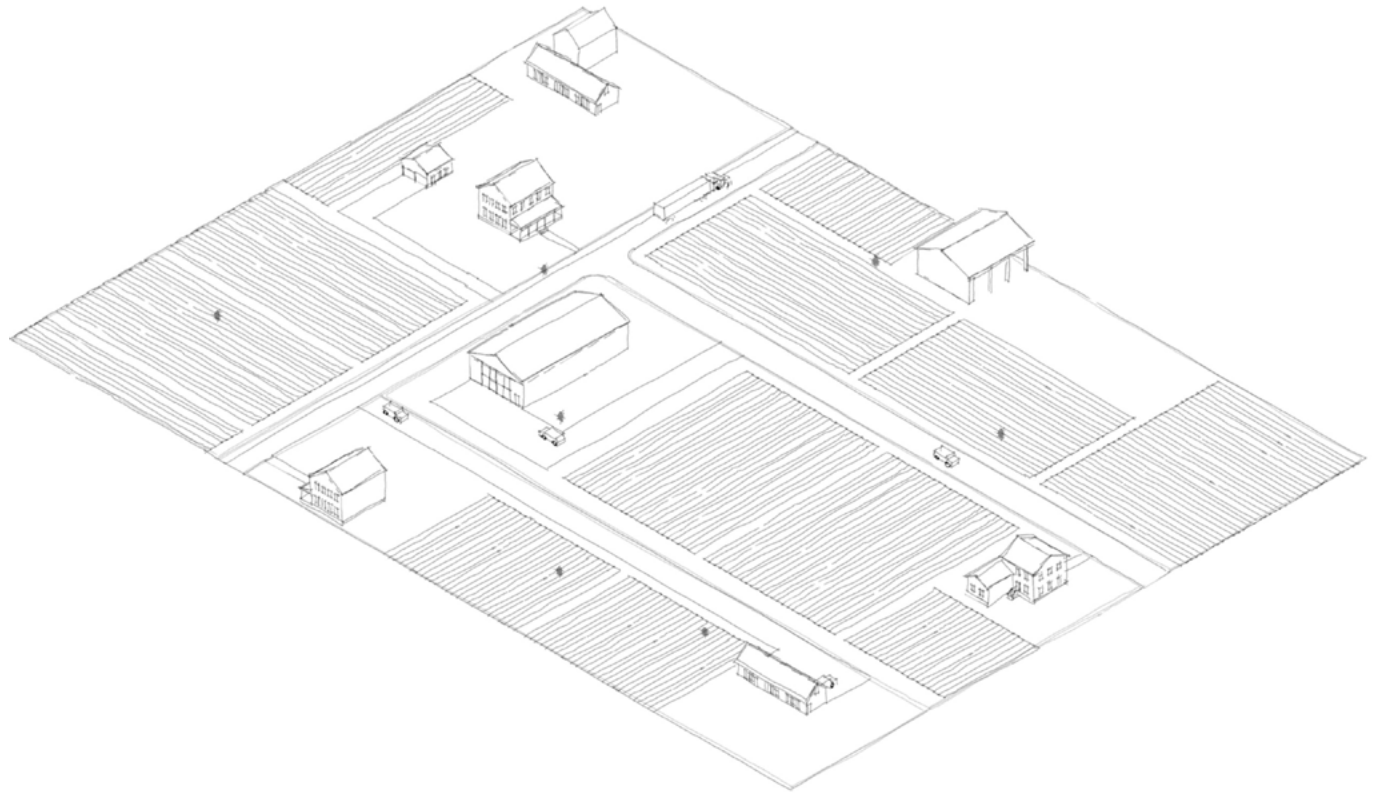


## RURAL AND ESTATES

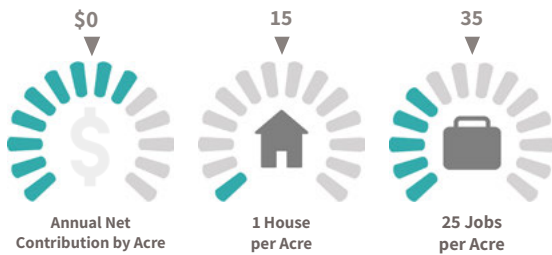


Anticipated building height: 2.5 stories; and taller structures for agricultural operations

Rural and Estates areas, with their low population densities and wide open spaces, put the country in “town and country.” Characterized by agricultural uses, natural landscapes, and dispersed residential on large lots, they offer a tranquil sense of retreat from more vibrant place types but also require driving for most needs. Economically, these areas come very close to covering their own costs, largely due to their limited infrastructure and public amenities.



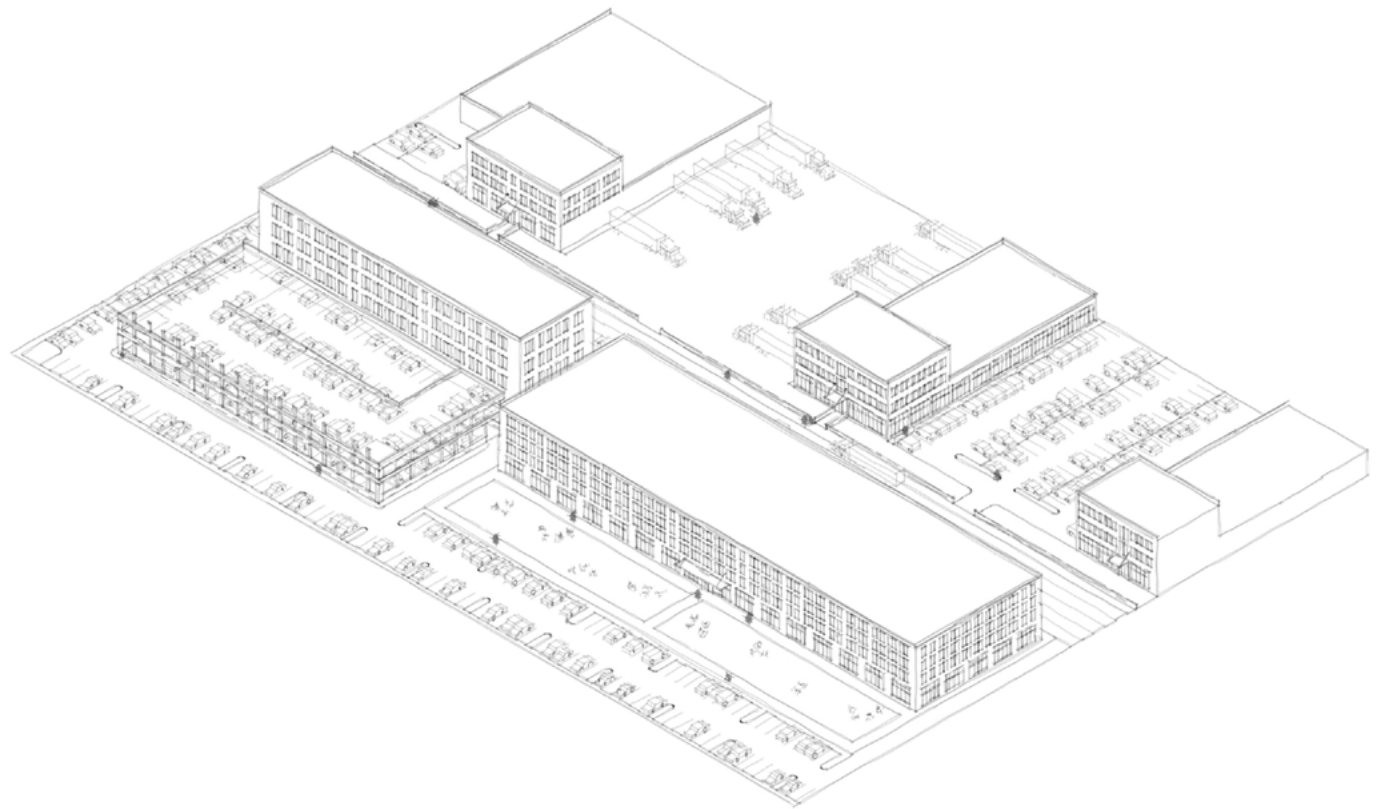
## INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY



Anticipated building height: up to 5 stories or 60 feet

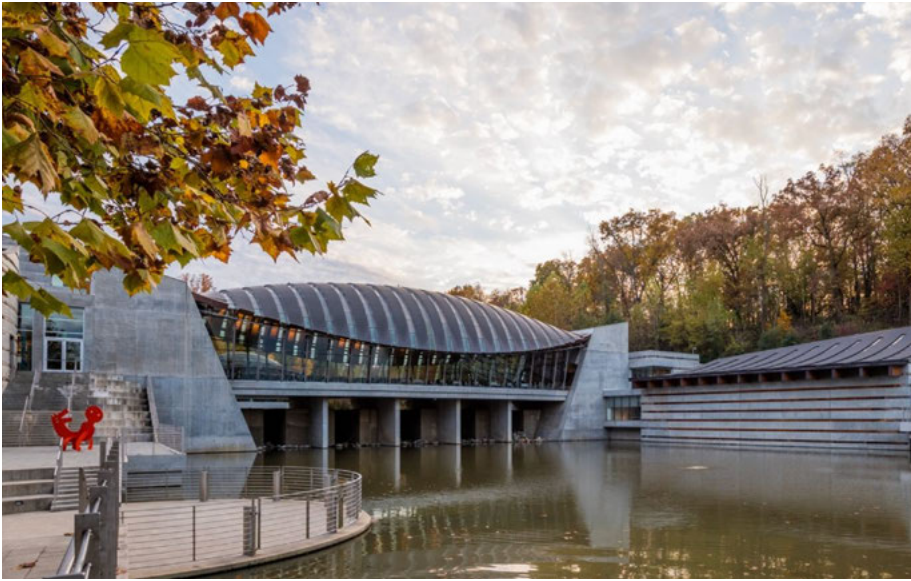
Industrial and Technology refers to areas that, in earlier times, were characterized as light industrial. Today these areas feature all aspects of the maker economy — technology startups, light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, art galleries, artisans, craftspeople, and other made-by-hand enterprises. Such areas play an important role in accommodating and concentrating non-corporate employment, providing space for start-up businesses and businesses that support the larger local and regional economy. Because of the format of buildings and general lack of housing, they don't cover their costs.

However Industrial and Technology place types play an important role in the employment ecosystem which indirectly contributes to sales and property taxes.





## CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL



Civic and Institutional areas are typically designed with a campus-like layout, which distinguishes them from other Place Types structured around a traditional street and block system. These areas may vary widely, encompassing uses such as hospital campuses, research institutions, and cultural centers, each with unique features that support their primary function, like housing and services for students or employees. Some Civic and Institutional areas may be dense, with few open spaces, while others, particularly cultural sites, may include substantial green spaces or natural areas. Civic and Institutional areas serve an essential role in the local economy, driving tourism,

fostering new businesses, attracting research initiatives, and providing educational opportunities. The campus format means that building design, green space, and circulation within each area are highly specialized to its purpose, resulting in unique layouts. Although many Civic and Institutional campuses are nonprofit and don't directly cover municipal costs, they support the employment landscape and stimulate the local economy, indirectly contributing to property and sales tax revenue.

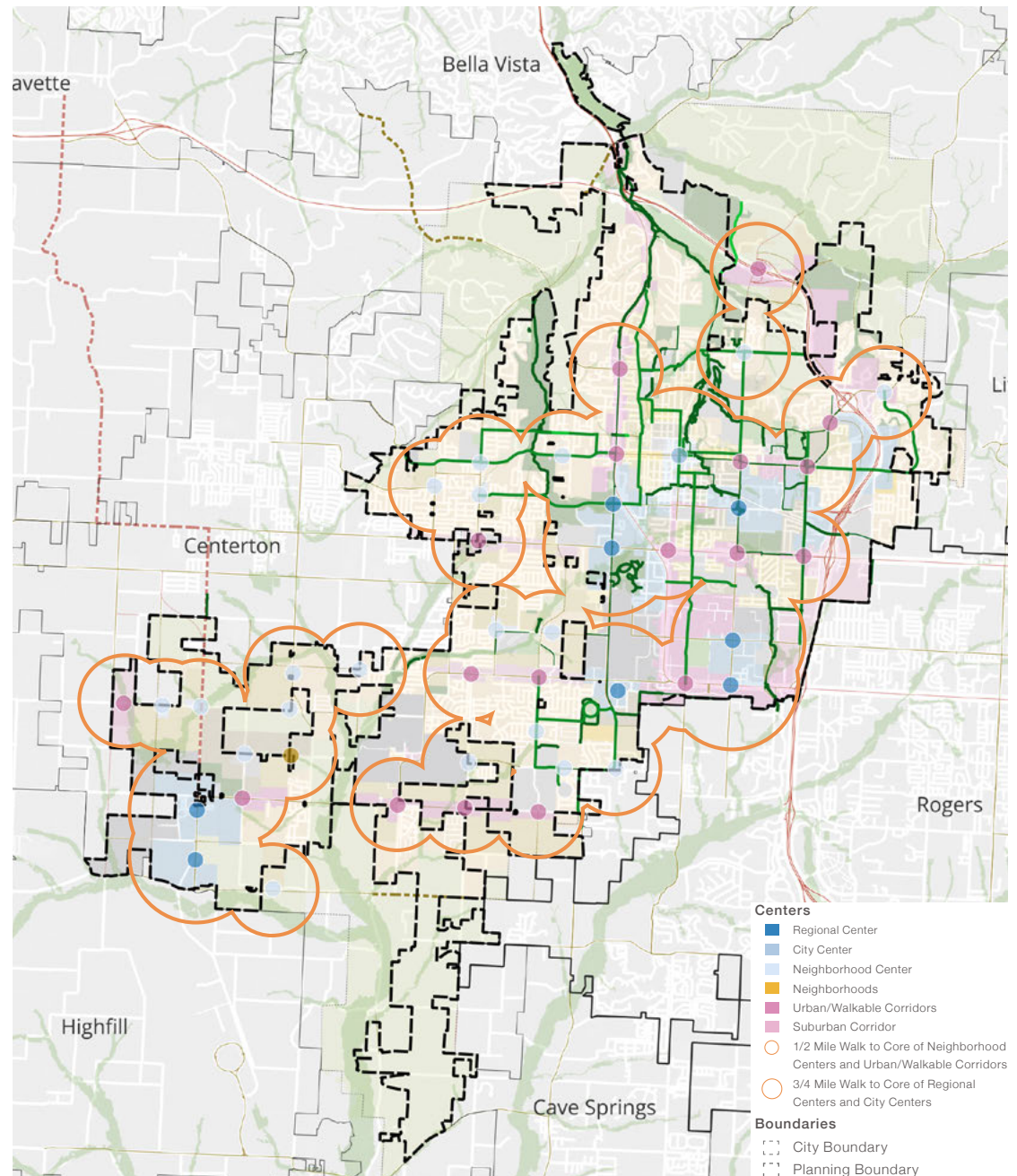


# GETTING AROUND BENTONVILLE

Bentonville's rapid growth and increasing population necessitate a mobility strategy that provides practical, efficient, and accessible options for all residents and visitors. The city's current transportation network, shaped by car dependency, faces challenges such as congestion, limited connectivity, and unequal access to alternative travel modes. The Community Plan focuses on land use strategies designed to support enhanced mobility choices across cycling, walking, and public transit while optimizing road systems to ensure seamless travel for all users. By diversifying transportation options and improving infrastructure, Bentonville can create a balanced, user-friendly network that serves a dynamic, growing community.

Future policies and mobility investments should:

1. **Expand mobility options:** Develop infrastructure that prioritizes walking, biking, and supports current and future transit alongside road networks.
2. **Improve connectivity:** Create well-connected networks for all modes of transportation, connecting more streets, bicycle ways, and sidewalks, enabling direct and convenient travel.
3. **Ensure equity:** Provide access to multiple mobility options for all community members.
4. **Foster economic growth:** Support businesses, employment hubs, and recreational areas through strategic mobility planning by providing convenient access for customers and employees across all modes.





### **Cycling Infrastructure: Expanding Options for Riders**

Create a citywide cycling network that serves commuters, recreational riders, and visitors.

Bentonville has become a national leader in cycling, yet significant opportunities exist to further develop its infrastructure. Expanding protected bike lanes, integrating cycling with land use planning, and enhancing connections to major destinations will encourage more people to choose biking as a primary travel option. Strengthening programs like bike-sharing and providing wayfinding signage can make cycling more accessible for casual users and tourists.

### **Pedestrian Connectivity: Supporting Walkable Neighborhoods and Districts**

Build a pedestrian-friendly city with safe, direct, and comfortable walking routes to essential services and amenities.

Walking offers a practical, low-cost mode of transportation for short trips. However, Bentonville's pedestrian network is concentrated in downtown areas, leaving many neighborhoods underserved and connections between districts difficult. Expanding sidewalks, ensuring safe crossings, and connecting walking paths and trails to schools, parks, and commercial centers will allow residents to travel safely and conveniently without a car.

### **Commuting Solutions: Diversifying Travel Modes**

Reduce peak-hour congestion by promoting alternative commuting options and optimizing traffic flow.

Nearly 45,000 daily commuters travel to Bentonville, approaching the city's entire population. Expanding housing options near employment centers can shorten commutes and reduce dependency on cars. A multimodal approach—including cycling, walking, and carpooling—can distribute traffic and alleviate pressure on main corridors. Adding secondary routes and improving road efficiency will provide drivers with more options and smoother travel.

### **Future Transit: Planning for Regional Access and Future Transit Routes**

Lay the foundation for future public transit systems by clustering development and creating natural transit hubs.

While Bentonville lacks a robust public transit network, thoughtful land use planning today can set the stage for future systems. Locating higher-density housing and employment centers near potential transit corridors ensures efficient service when transit becomes viable. Transit-ready development, paired with active transportation options, can provide residents with choices beyond driving.

### **Street Network Connectivity: Enhancing Mobility Through Direct Routes**

Develop an interconnected street network that improves access for all transportation modes.

Fragmented street layouts force reliance on major roads, leading to congestion and limited mobility. By prioritizing a grid-style network in new developments and retrofitting connections in existing neighborhoods, Bentonville can create more travel options, reducing traffic concentration along the city's more significant roadways. A connected street system also supports active transportation by offering direct, safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Complete Streets: Balancing Street Design to Serve All Users**

Design streets that balance the needs of drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

Complete Streets principles ensure that streets cater to diverse travel needs, balanced according to differing user demands across the community. Adding bike lanes, pedestrian amenities, and safe transit stops makes streets accessible for all while reducing conflicts between modes. Designing streets to suit their surrounding Place Types ensures each area receives appropriate features, whether for busy commercial corridors or quiet residential zones.

### **Biking and Walking Integration: Enabling Mobility Modes Other Than Driving**

Make biking and walking practical alternatives for everyday travel.

Walking and biking are essential to reducing congestion and broadening mobility options. Investments in mixed-use developments, pedestrian-friendly streets, and enhanced biking infrastructure encourage active transportation as a daily habit. Major projects like the Walmart Home Office's goal for bike commuting demonstrate how private initiatives can align with city goals, reducing overall traffic while increasing transportation equity.

### **Equitable Mobility: Meeting Diverse Needs**

Ensure transportation options accommodate all community members, regardless of age, ability, or income.

A successful transportation network addresses the needs of all users, including children, seniors, and those without access to a car. Adding accessible pathways, affordable bike-share programs, and safe pedestrian crossings can ensure mobility equity across Bentonville's neighborhoods. Targeting underserved areas with improved infrastructure builds a more inclusive and resilient community.

### **Key Priorities for Bentonville's Mobility Future**

- **Accessibility:** Ensure all transportation modes are available and convenient for every resident.
- **Efficiency:** Reduce travel times through well-designed routes and integration of multiple transportation options.
- **Safety:** Minimize vehicle speed and accident severity through placemaking, complete street design strategies, improved connectivity, and traffic-calming measures.
- **Community-Centered Design:** Align mobility strategies with the needs of Bentonville's growing population and local businesses by prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists, especially within hubs of community and commercial activity.

By focusing on expanding mobility options and improving connectivity, Bentonville can address its transportation challenges while enabling growth and supporting successful business and cultural communities.