Steering Committee Meeting
Friday, Nov 8, 2024
Bentonville Public Library Community Room
405 S Main Street Bentonville, AR 72712

Zoom Meeting: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81577728486

View the Draft Future Land Use Map:
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f9e87a219121473e9feef54b557e983c#ref-n-YRjj3q

Meeting Purpose: Buy-in on proposed plan for adoption.

Desired Outcomes:

- Identify necessary adjustments based on Oct. 29 public meeting.
- Recommendation to Planning Commission and City Council on Future Land Use Map
- Recommendation to Planning Commission and City Council on Ch. 2 & Ch. 4
- Shared understanding of interim code adjustments
- Shared understanding of adoption schedule.
- Direction Forward on Public Engagement for the Code Phase of Plan Bentonville

Meeting Agenda:

9:00 am	Welcome and agenda review
9:05 am	Staff to present public comments from Oct. 29 public meeting
9:15 am	Committee to determine need for adjustments based on public comments
9:30 am	Committee to make a recommendation on adoption of Proposed Future Land Use Map
9:35 am	DPZ to present new Ch. 2 & Ch. 4 for Community Plan
10:00 am	Committee to make recommendation regarding adoption of Ch 2 & Ch. 4 of Community Plan
10:15 am	Staff to share interim code adjustments
10:30 am	Staff to review adoption schedule
10:35 am	Committee to Discuss Public Engagement for the Coding Phase of Plan Bentonville
11:00 am	Adjourn

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A community growth and development initiative.

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Overview

- Where have we been?
- What are we working on?
- Where are we going?

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Plan Bentonville

A year-long community conversation on how and where we want to grow.

PHASE 1

Future Land Use Map

Phase 1: Update Chapter 4 of the *Community Plan* to reflect current conditions and aspirations, then produce a new Future Land Use Map to visualize those goals.

PHASE 2

Zoning Code Update

Phase 2: Update our zoning code to ensure that the development we want is the development we get.

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Engagement Timeline

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September 2023

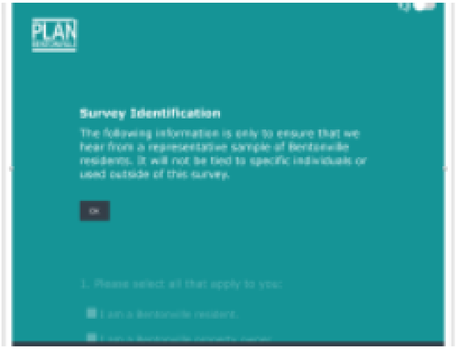
Plan Bentonville Website Launches

October 2023

Plan Bentonville kicks off with Department Meetings, Steering and Technical Committee Meetings, and 1-on-1 interviews with community members.

Fall 2023-Winter 2024

Project survey collects 2,095 responses, reflecting our community's diverse opinions on growth.



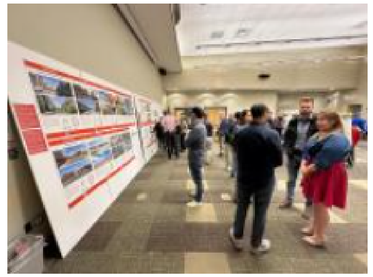
Phase 1: Initial Input

Pop-Ups

The team hosted Pop-Ups at Market @ the Record, Scott Family Amazeum, Creekside Park, Airship at the Pumphouse, 8th Street Market, Bentonville High School, Bentonville Community Center, Bentonville Public Library, NWACC, and the Walton Family Whole Health and Fitness Center, where we heard from over 600 residents over the course of the week.

Monday Open House

Over 100 Bentonville area residents turned out **Monday, February 26**, for the first of Plan Bentonville's two Design Week Open House events. Awaiting them were city staffers and a consultant project team presenting a series of display boards covering everything from demographics and housing types to potential growth scenarios and the economic realities that come with them.



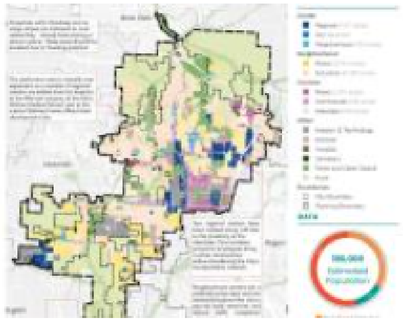
Phase 2: Design Week

Thursday Open House

Thursday, February 29, marked the second of two Plan Bentonville Design Week open houses, drawing a curious and enthusiastic crowd of 227 neighbors and bringing the total number of residents engaged thus far – through surveys, personal interviews, pop-up input sessions, open houses, community and stakeholder meetings, website visits, and emailed comments – into the thousands.

Design Week Summary

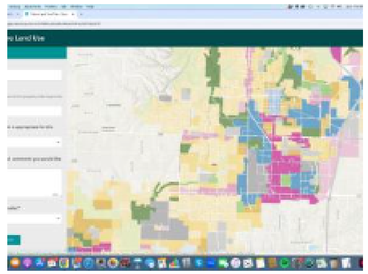
On **March 1, 2024**, the design team presented a full summary of design week, including a wrap-up presentation and growth scenarios presented throughout the week.



Phase 2: Design Week

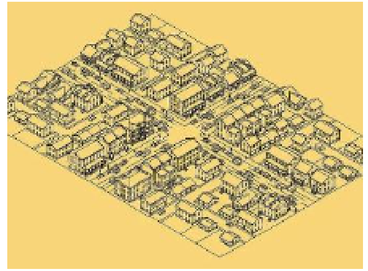
Online Mapping Portal

On **July 18**, our team launched an online engagement portal, which allowed the community to interact with the proposed place type and make comments on the proposed Future Land Use Map on a parcel-by-parcel basis. By the end of Phase 3, we received over 1,500 comments on the map.



Office Hours

Office Hours allowed the opportunity for in-depth, 1-on-1 discussions with city staff regarding the proposed plan. Between **July 19 and August 2**, city staff hosted 18 hours of open availability on Mondays and Fridays.



Pop-Ups

The team hosted pop-ups at Airship at the Pumphouse, Farmer's Market, the Ledger, Creekside Park, and 8th Street Market to meet our community where they're at.

Phase 3: Proposed Map Review

Open Houses

Open Houses were drop-by opportunities for the community to review and provide feedback on these proposed future land use plans. Each Open House featured displays explaining the project purpose, descriptions of the place types, and the presentation of the Future Land Use Plan with opportunities for comment. Open Houses were held on **July 18 and July 29 at Thaden Fieldhouse and Fire Station 1.**

Phase 3: Proposed Map Review

Future Land Use

Public Survey

Parcel ID:*

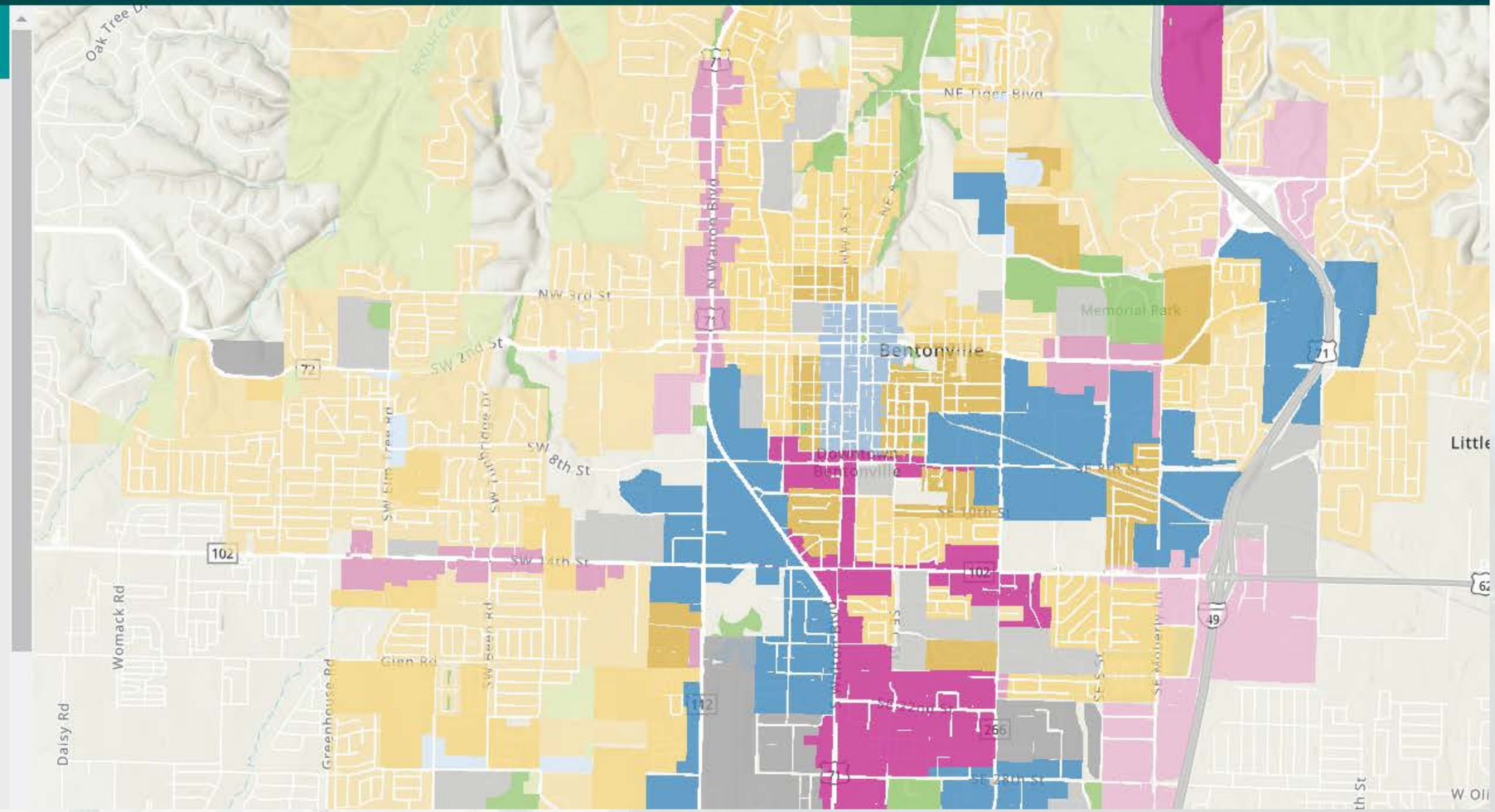
Proposed Place Type:*

This is the Proposed Place Type shown for this property in the map to the right

What Place Type do you think is appropriate for this property in the year 2050?*

-Please select-

Please provide any additional comments you would like the team to consider:



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Plan Bentonville – Public Engagement Results

Table | Dashboard

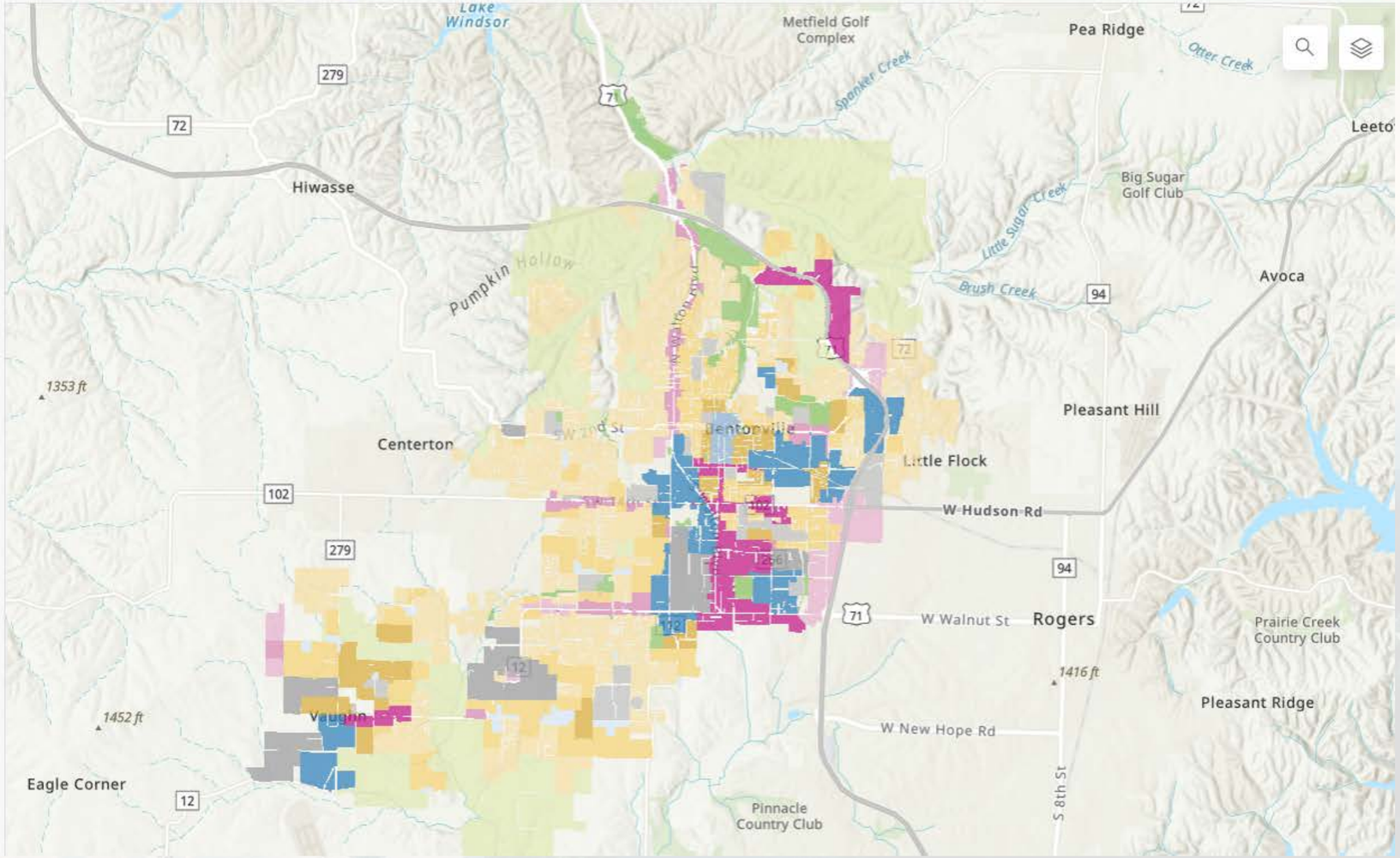
1.2k

Total # of submitted responses

Search...

Parcel ID:	01-00289-000
Proposed Placetype:	Center-Regional
Suggested Placetype (public input):	Appropriate as mapped
Public Comment:	Please ensure pedestrian connections to NE Harbour Dr are required when developed
Bentonville Resident?	Yes
Staff Comments:	There is a strip of POA property that would require future development to coordinate with Woods Creek for this type of connection, but it's a good idea.

Parcel ID:	01-00289-000
Proposed Placetype:	Center-Regional



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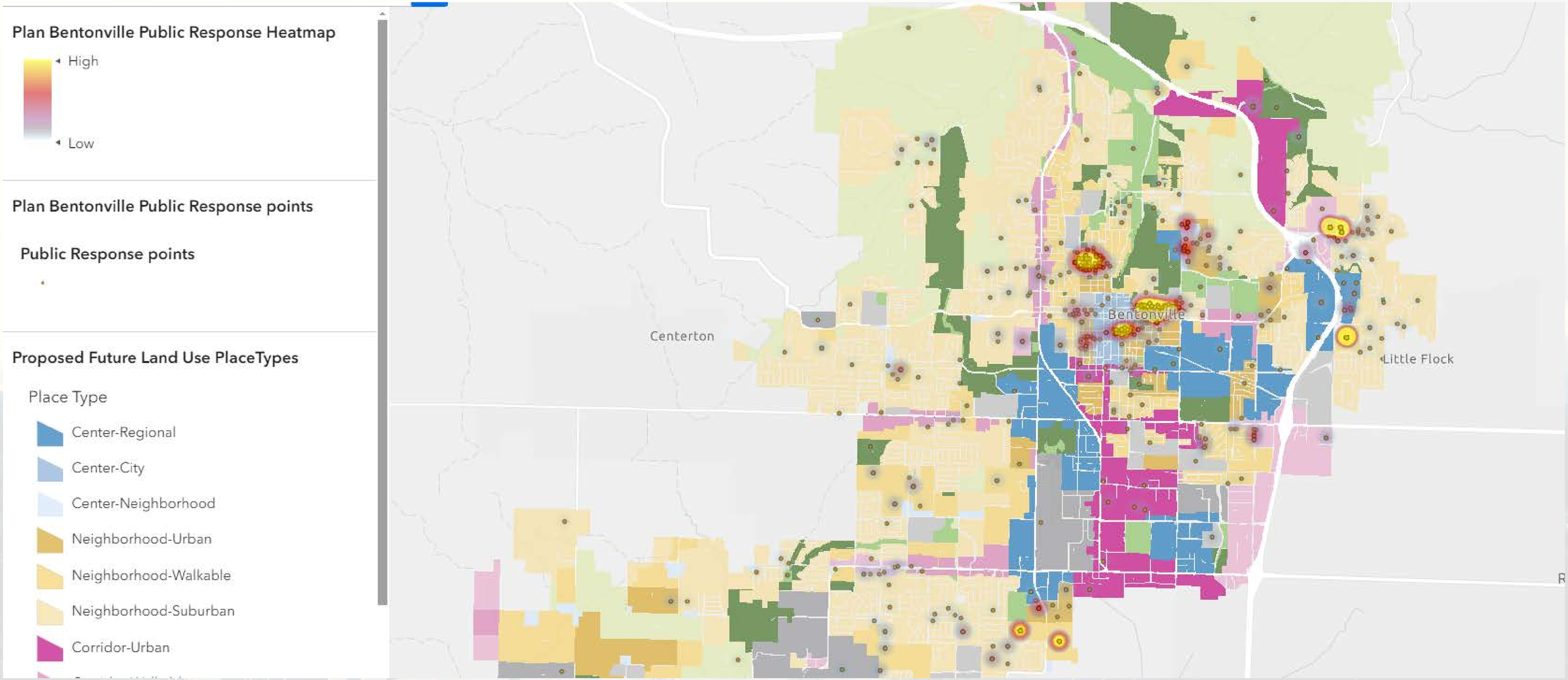

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1,272

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

Phase 4: Final Map Review and Adoption

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OCTOBER 29
Planning Commission
Special meeting for public comment

NOVEMBER 19
Planning Commission
Public hearing

DECEMBER 3
Planning Commission
Public Hearing & Recommendation

DECEMBER 10
City Council
Adoption

www.planbentonville.com

Chapters 2 and 4 of the Community Plan

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The Place Types

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Future Land Use Map

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What’s Next?

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OCTOBER 29
Planning Commission
Special meeting for public comment

NOVEMBER 19
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Public hearing

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Adoption

Short-term Code Updates

- Land Use and Zoning Alignment
- Alleys and Blocks
- Zone Transitions
- Downtown Neighborhood/Cottage Court Adjustments
- Commercial Zoning Adjustments

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Land Use and Zoning Alignment

- With a new Future Land Use Map, we need to adjust our zoning district and land use alignment policies to use the new plan.
- Informed by a Code Diagnostic prepared by Placemakers, LLC and local knowledge of the zoning and development code
- Recommendation: Codify the zoning and future land use alignment chart and codify a process for Future Land Use Map amendments

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Zoning Districts Allowed in Place Types														
Place Type	**A-1**	**R-E**	**R-1**	**DN-1**	**DN-2**	**DN-3**	**DN-4**	**DE**	**DC**	**C-1**	**C-2**	**C-3**	**I-1**	**I-2**
Centers														
Regional Center							SR	SR	SR			SR		
City Center							SR	SR	ER					
Neighborhood Center							SR	SR		SR		ER		
Neighborhoods														
Urban Neighborhood					SR	SR	SR	ER						
Walkable Neighborhood				SR	SR	SR	ER							
"Downtown" Neighborhood				SR	ER									
Suburban Neighborhood			SR	ER										
Corridors														
Urban Corridor								SR				SR		
Walkable Corridor							SR			SR		ER		
Suburban Corridor										SR	ER			
Other Place Types														
Industry and Technology											SR		SR	ER
Rural and Estates	SR	SR												
Civic and Institutional	Any													
Parks and Public Spaces	Any													
Outdoor Entertainment	Any													
Open Space	Hazard Overlay													

SR= Districts likely to create the place type and thus subject to Standard Review by the Planning Commission and City Council

ER= Districts which may create the place type and thus subject to both Standard Review and Enhanced Review by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Blank= Will not create the place type envisioned by the Plan and thus will not conform to the Future Land Use Map. Such districts will not be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council unless and until the Future Land Use Map and Code are amended accordingly.

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Alleys and Blocks

- We heard concerns during the engagement process surrounding walkability and bikeability.
- Our current block length maximum is 1,500 feet, which means if a four-sided block were built to its maximum, someone would need to walk over one mile to walk the full perimeter
- Best practice is for block lengths to be between 200 and 600 feet and total perimeters to be a maximum of 2,000 feet.
- Recommendation: Codify a block perimeter maximum of 2,000 feet

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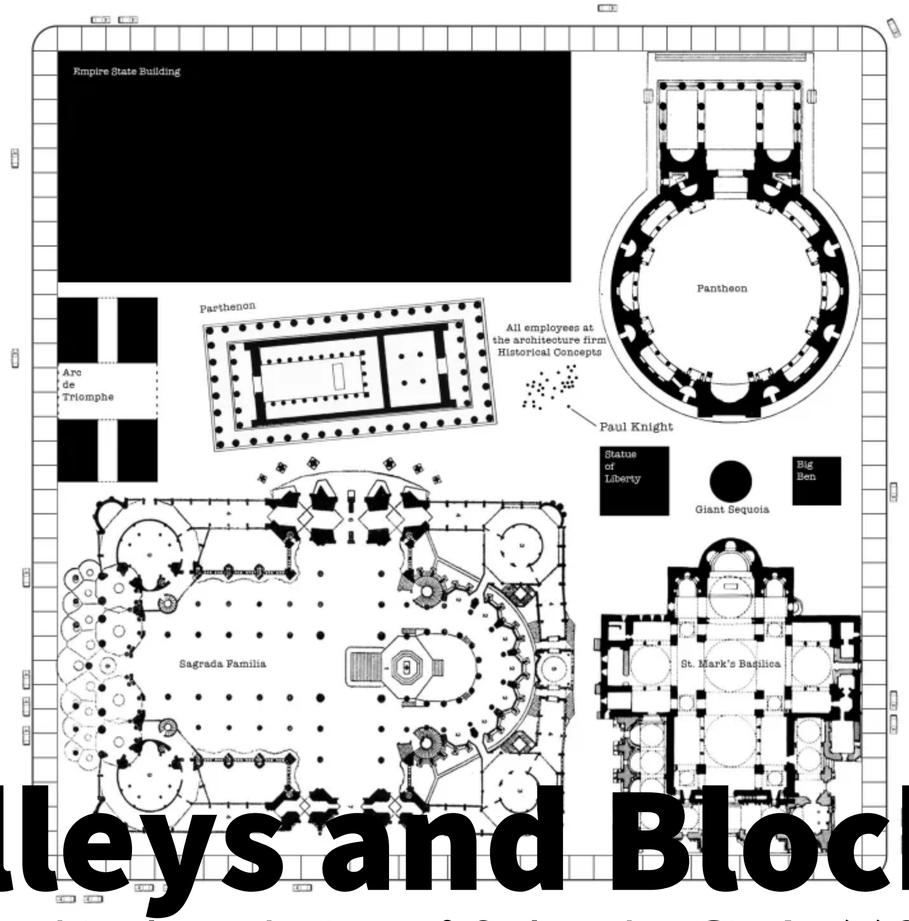

Alleys and Blocks

Graphical rendering of Salt Lake City's 660 by 660-foot block structure.

https://urbanformstandard.com/archives/86

Alleys and Blocks

- In many areas of the Code, we encourage or require alley loading for developments, but we have not had good language surrounding the construction of alleys.
- Recommendation: Codify standards clarifying alley construction requirements, allowing for improvements to be proportionate to impacts.

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Zone Transitions

- Height was a consistent concern we heard from neighborhoods throughout the process.
- We need clearly defined transitions when zoning districts or place types butt up against each other.
- Recommendation: Codify height transitions where when different zoning districts abut one another, the more intense district may only be approximately one story greater within 40 feet of the property line and two stories greater within 60 feet of the property line.

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Zone Transitions

We’re trying to avoid this

Zone Transitions

We're trying to avoid this

Downtown Neighborhoods

- We have heard a lot of feedback, both during Plan Bentonville and recent Planning Commission cases, from our downtown neighborhoods.
- We have already taken several steps through this latest FLUM Draft to address these concerns with more in the works.
- Height Transitions, Traditional Neighborhood Place Type, Refinements to DN-2 and Cottage Courts, Potential for Downtown Neighborhood Overlay

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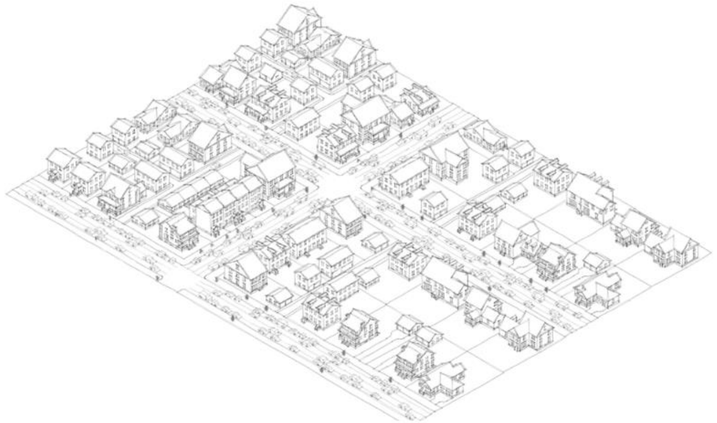
Downtown Neighborhoods

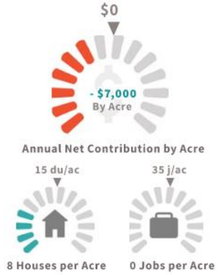
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD



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.



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Downtown Neighborhoods

- Refinements to DN-2 and Cottage Courts will be discussed in detail at our next meeting
  - Create consistency and predictability for neighborhoods and developments by looking at the allowable unit counts for townhome and cottage court developments
- Downtown Neighborhood Overlay would be focused on our historic downtown areas and would introduce standards that would require new development to conform to the average heights and setbacks along the block.

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Commercial Zoning Adjustments

- C-3 has excellent potential to introduce mixed-use development in areas outside of downtown, but some aspects of the district make it incompatible with its intent statement.
- Recommendation: Remove uses from C-3 that make it incompatible with surrounding residential uses such as restaurant, drive-in or drive-through, or gas station.
- Other adjustments?

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Themes from 10/29/24 FLUM Public Hearing:

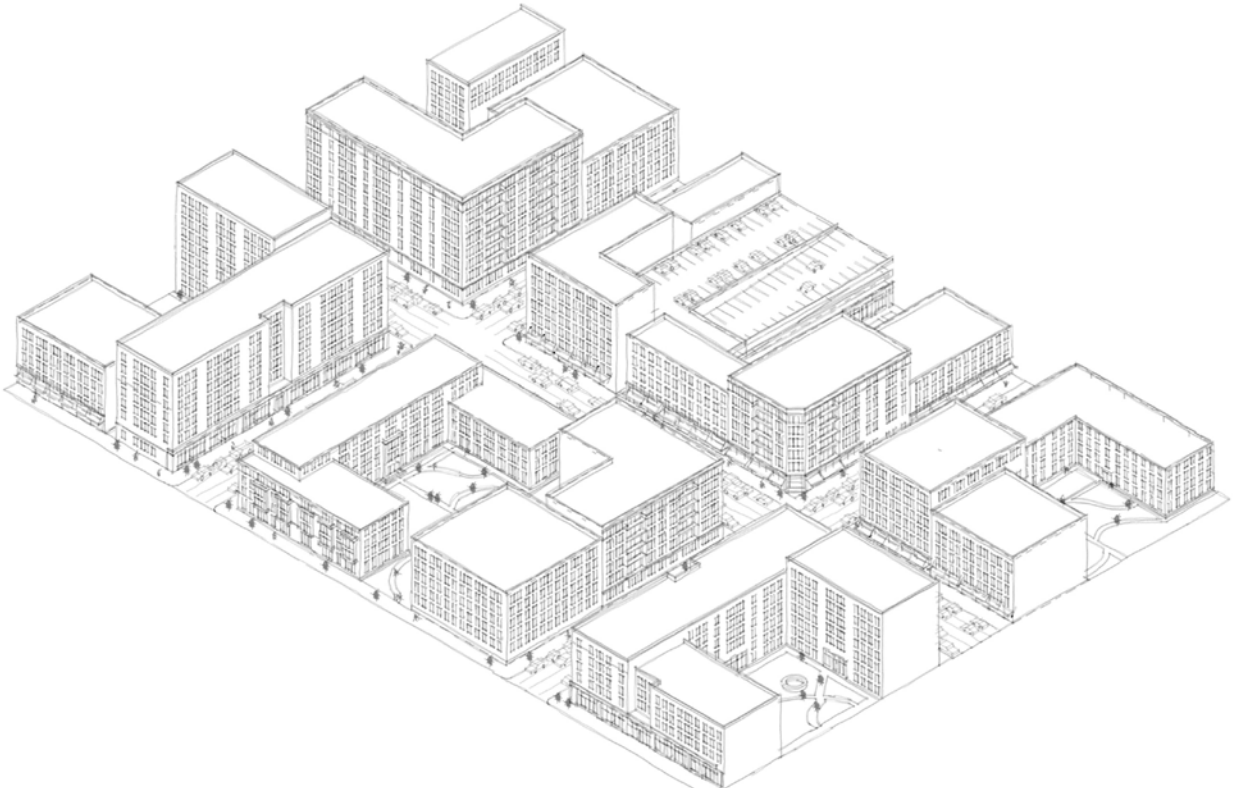
Further review for map:

- Need to add street names to pdf.
- Make it easier to locate the interactive map.
- Need more definition in the Traditional neighborhood around town homes and apartments sizes – needs more differentiation and clarification from Walkable neighborhood.
- Blueberry heights specifically concerned about being a "walkable neighborhood" – Alison/Thereas Thompson
- Concerns about 4th St (Jeff Smith)
- Transitions to be at the street and not between sides of the block.
- Consider more transitions between extreme place types.

Zoning Considerations:

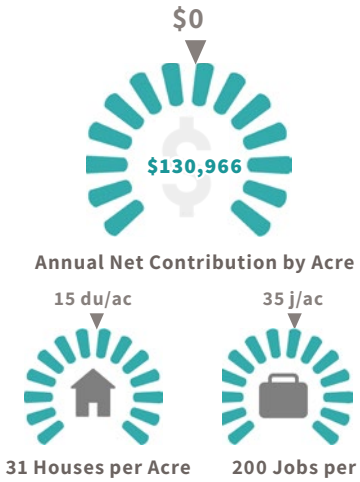
- Be sure to think through the heigh transitions and the impact that has related to current zoning and undue restrictions it may cause.
- Be wary of downsizing through zoning.
- NW 5th St – concern about height in adjacent place types
- No commercial on SE 3rd St – protect the single family homes
- Traffic and how it is addressed through the plan.
- Compared the future population as 40% more dense than Austin.
- This plan helps set the standard for active transportation – other cities have proven that car-centric designed communities fail.
- Consider how these changes impact people that are in the process of planning and developing their property based on the current plan?
- Be context sensitive.
- People don't want the growth until the infrastructure is addressed.
- Who is the "we" in our log – what "we" want
- Review building setbacks, height transitions, and impacts of utilities.
- How will short-term rentals be addressed? (Cindy Walter, NW 5th St)
- Maybe need a special use district for gas stations and drive throughs
- Asked about size of lodging and commercial
- Look at removing bars and taverns in C3/C1

REGIONAL CENTER

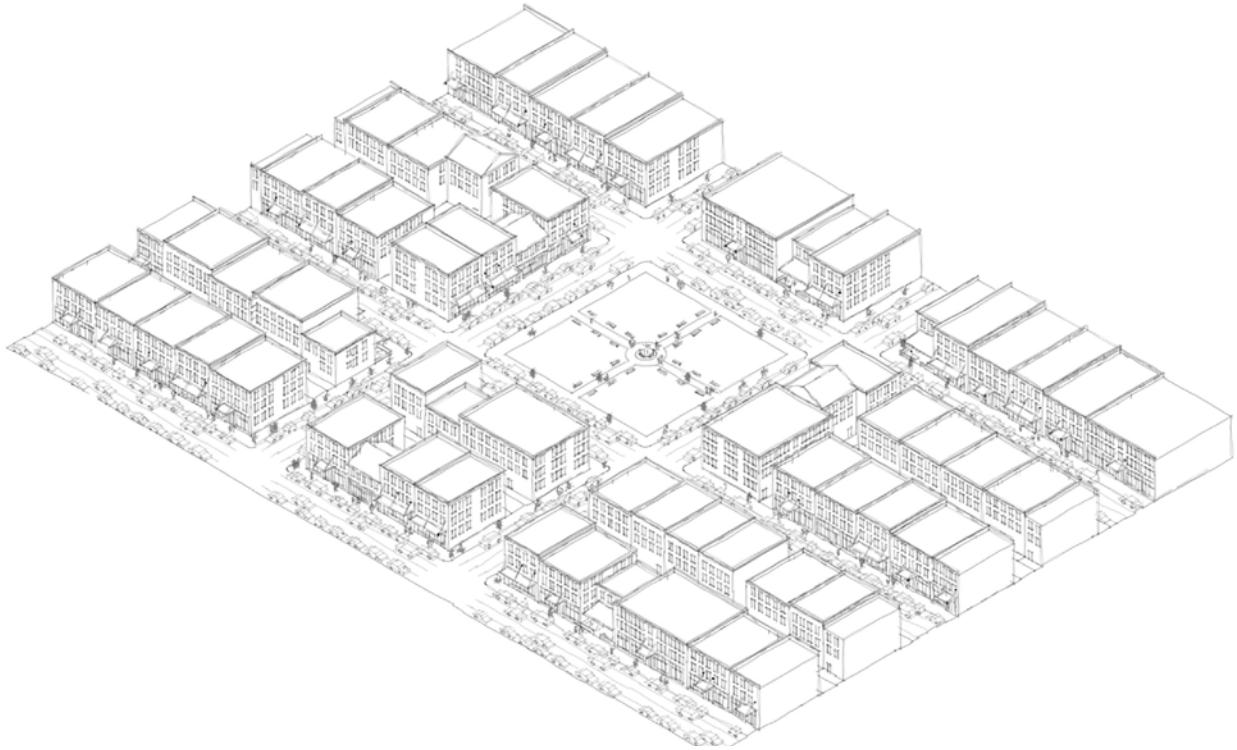


Regional Centers are typically hubs of concentrated white collar employment, together with the smaller businesses — like restaurants, office supplies, and other services — that support them.

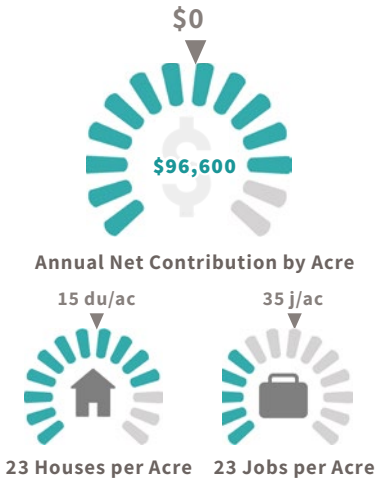
They are also a good place for more concentrated housing in close proximity to abundant jobs. Walmart's emerging corporate campus is one example, Uptown Rogers is another. Delivering the city's highest financial performance, these areas play an important role in generating the money that local residents use to pay for housing and goods, and also support a robust economy of complementary businesses.



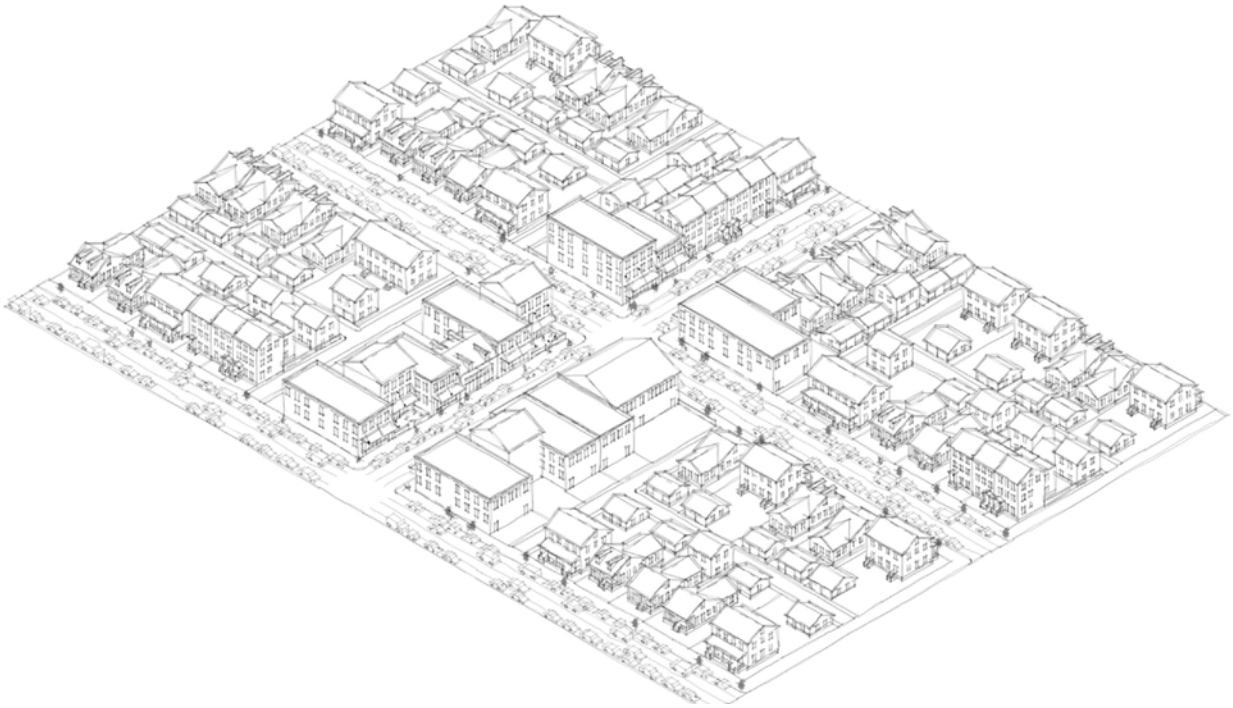
CITY CENTER



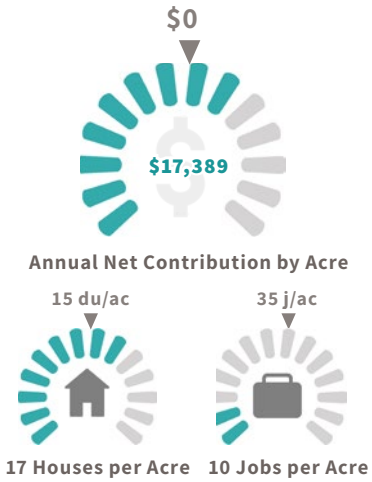
City Centers are places like the Downtown Bentonville Square and its surrounding blocks, consisting of jobs, entertainment, convenience retail, daily services, and housing at a variety of scales — from single story shops to office and residential buildings. This combination of types and uses, from sidewalk-lining 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.



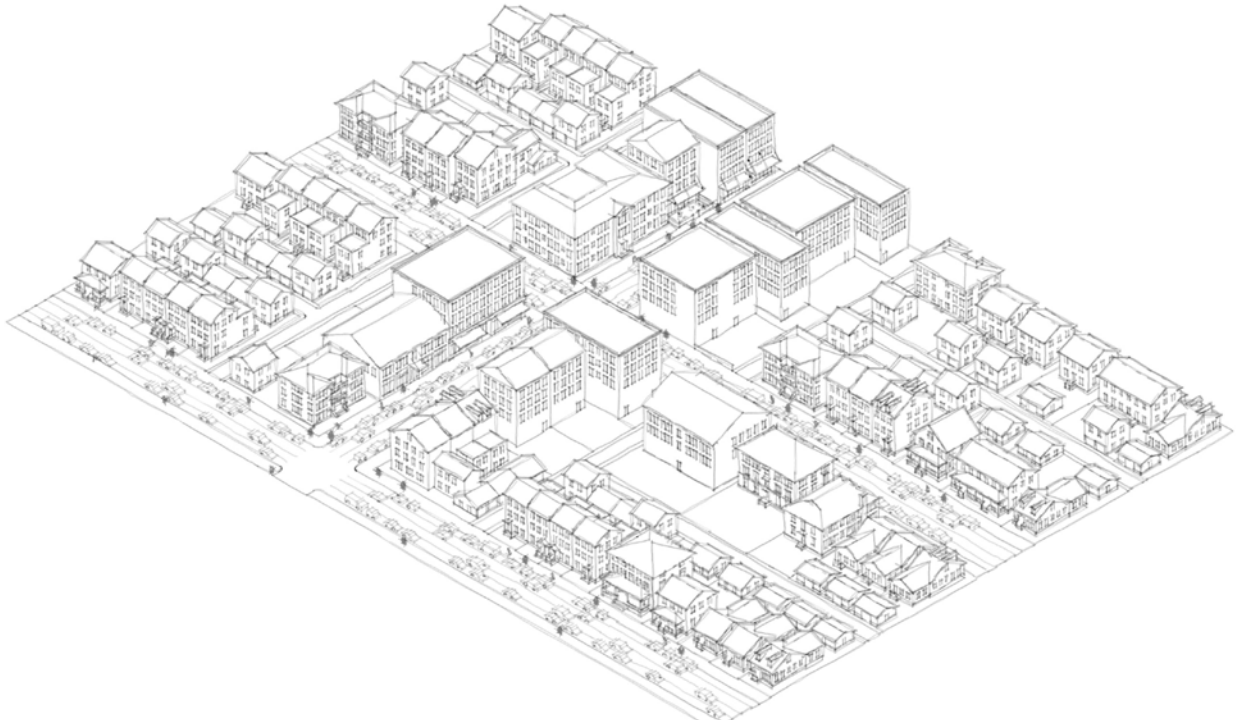
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



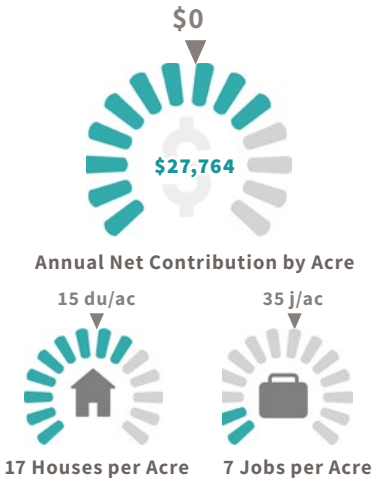
Neighborhood Centers serve as the physical glue between neighborhoods — providing a human-scaled destination where surrounding neighbors can walk or bike, gather in fellowship, dine out, or pick up basic daily needs. Small, local businesses typically provide a variety of entry-level jobs, a sense of 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.



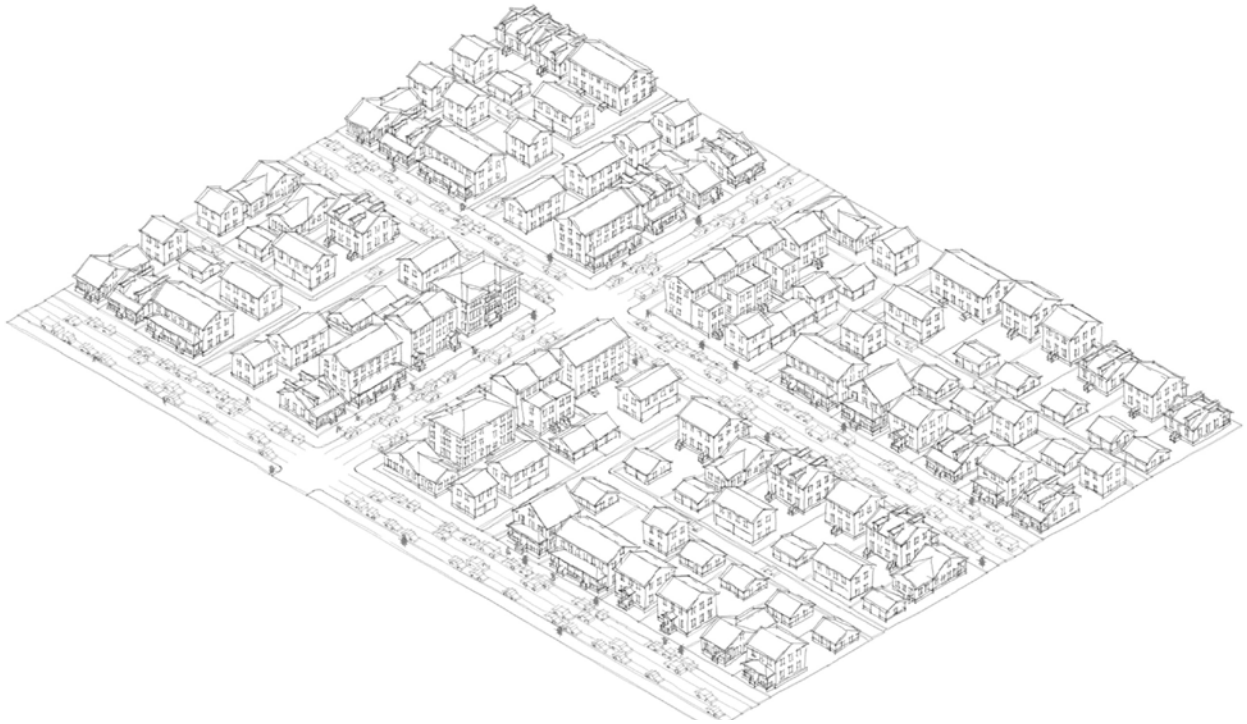
URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD



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.



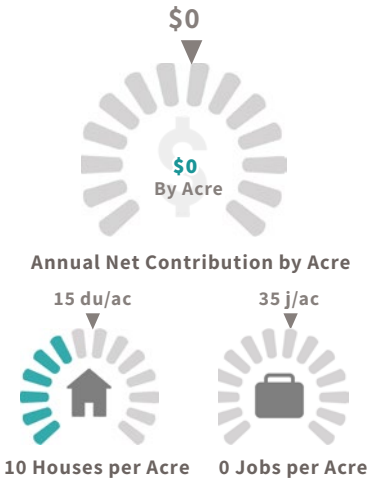
WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD



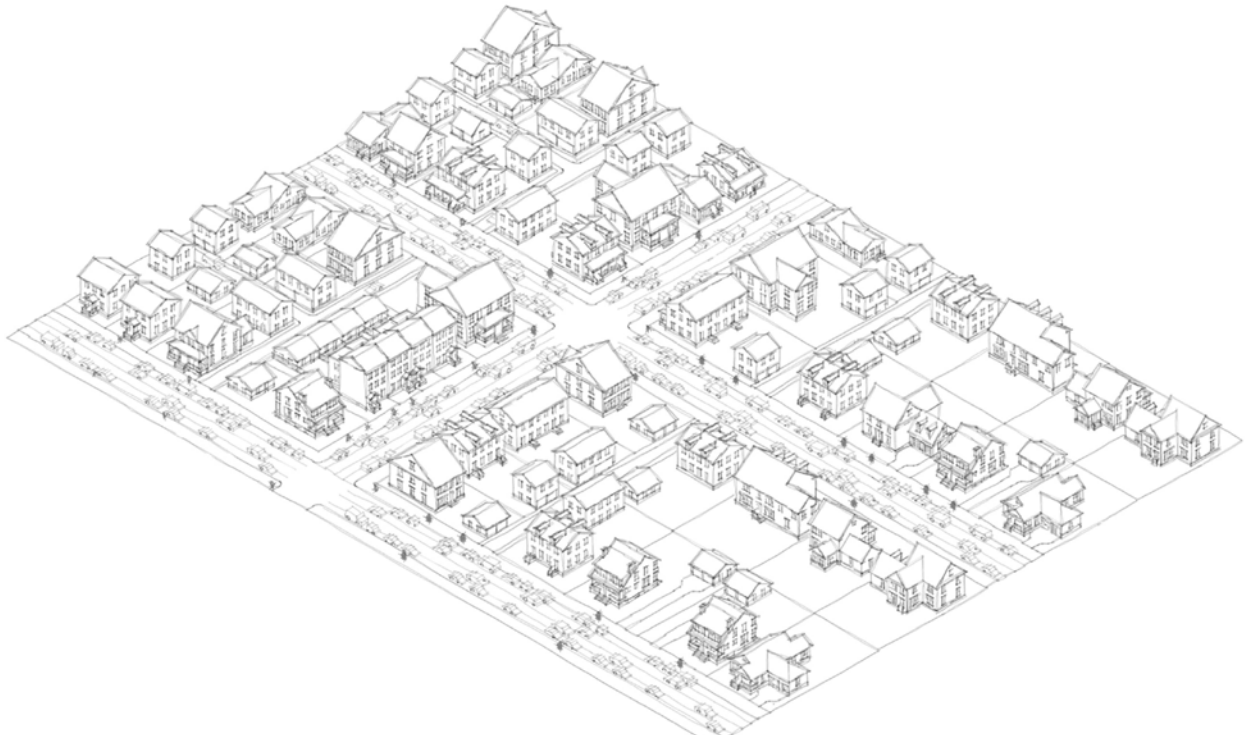
Walkable Neighborhoods combine compatibly-scaled single family homes, townhomes, and apartment buildings in a neighborhood setting.

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



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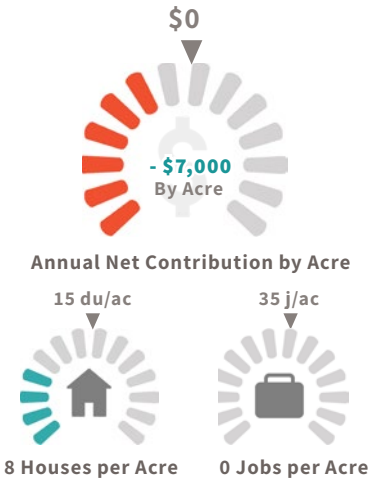
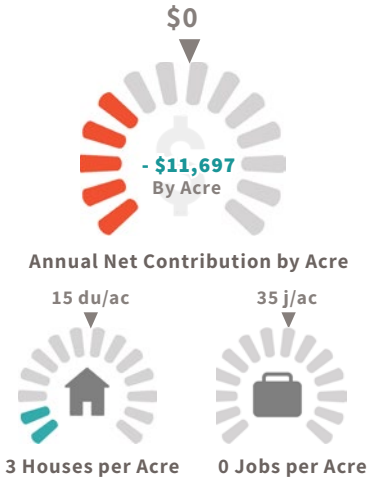


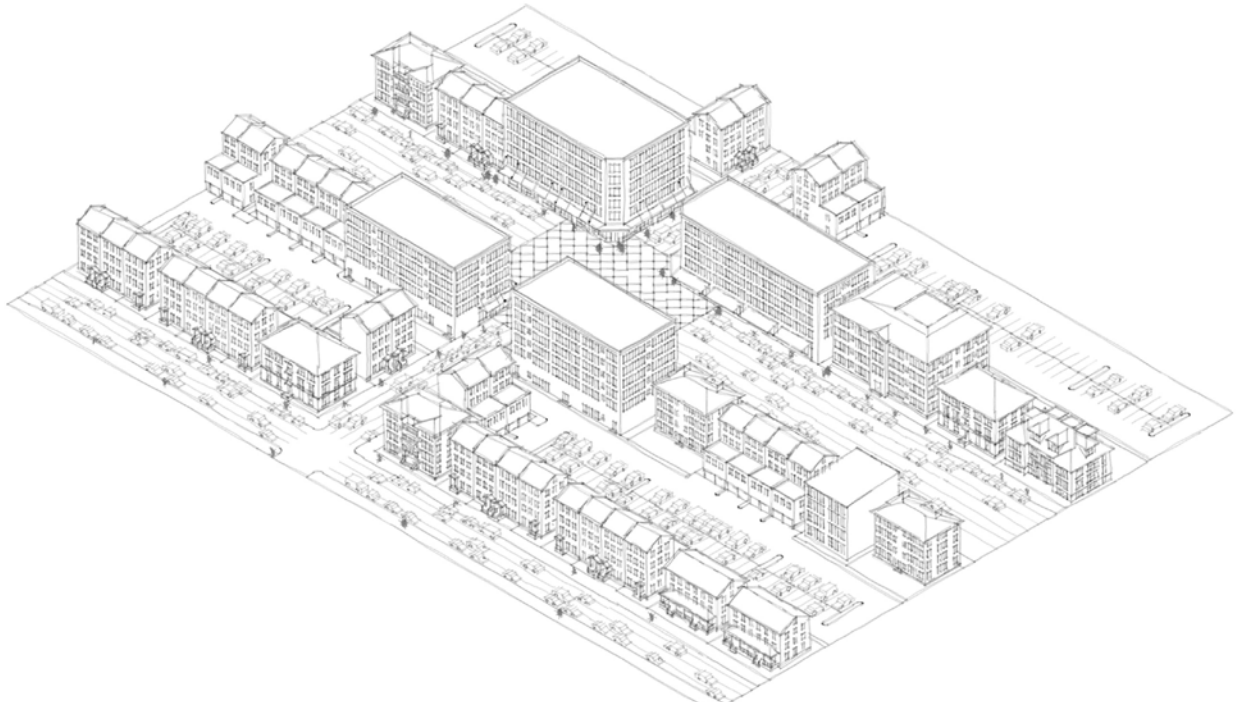
SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

Suburban Neighborhoods, often referred to as subdivisions, consist mainly of single family homes on comparatively larger lots. 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.

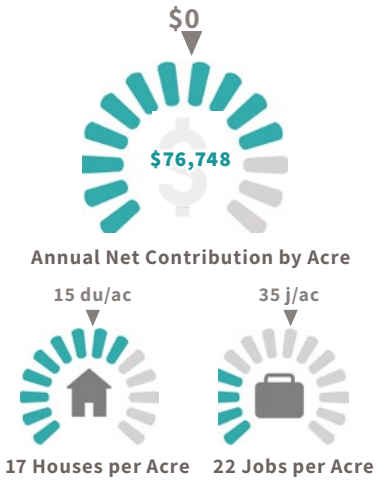


URBAN CORRIDOR

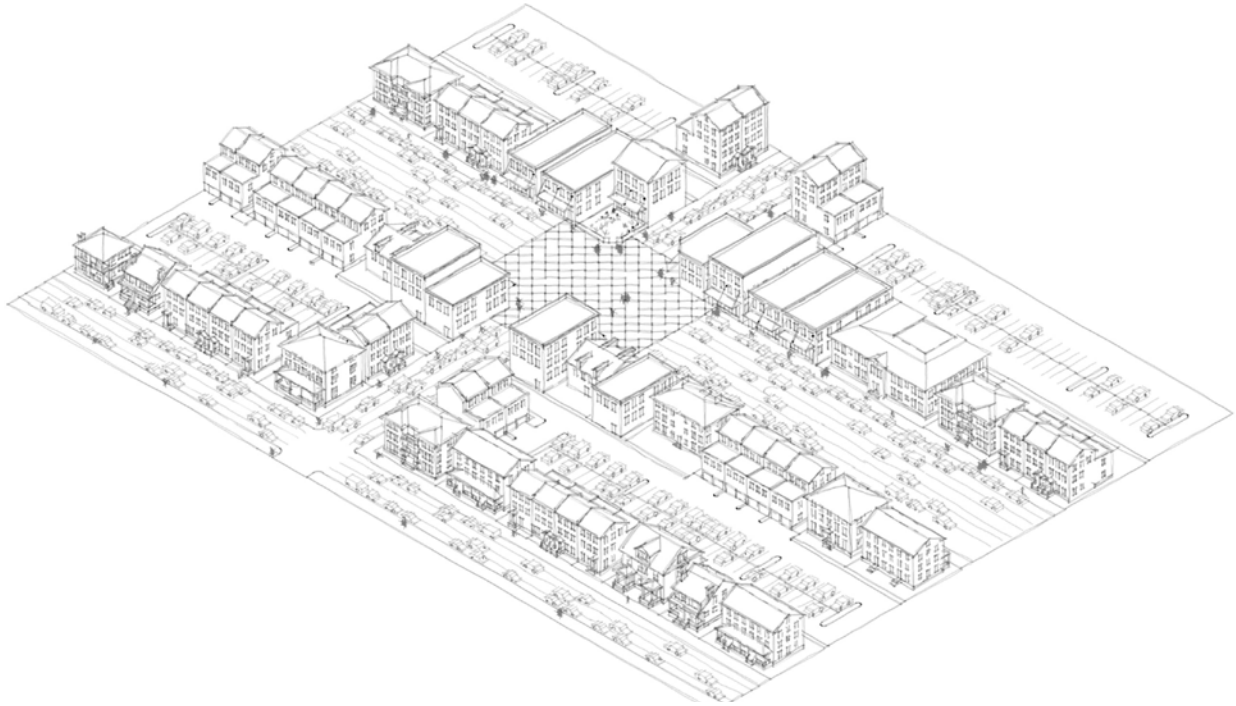


Urban Corridors are primary thoroughfares fronted by larger multi-family and office buildings interspersed with neighborhood-serving commercial uses. They feature development on unbuilt properties as well as new uses added to properties only partially built out.

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.

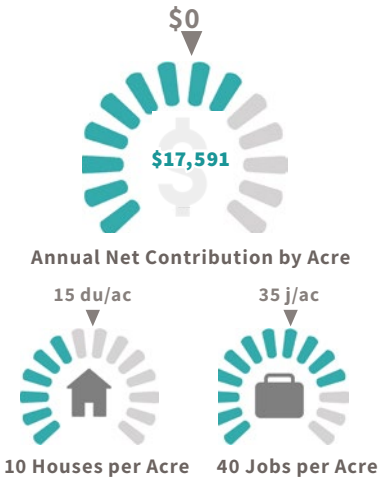


WALKABLE CORRIDOR

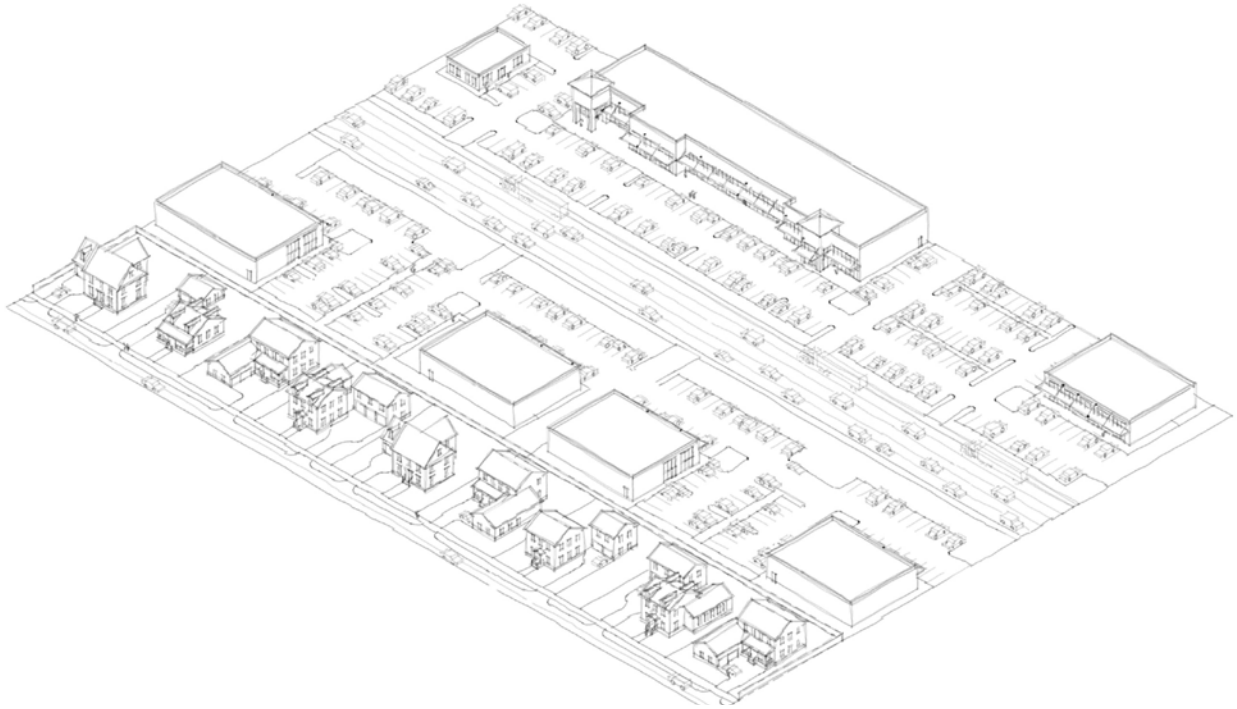


Walkable Corridor refers to areas that once were large arterial roadways lined by strip-commercial uses but maintain the potential to become a sort of Neighborhood Center in linear form; a more human-scaled, connected destination where adjacent neighbors can safely walk or bike to retail and services. 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.

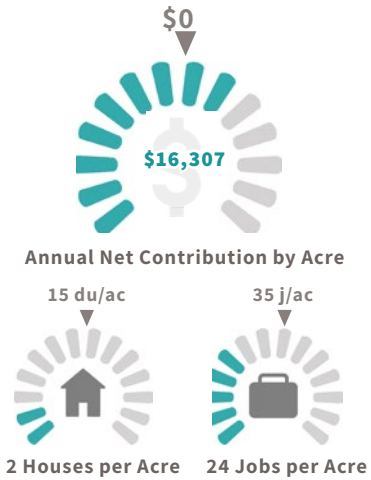
Financially, Walkable Corridors perform better than Suburban Corridors as an alternative land use along arterial roadways.



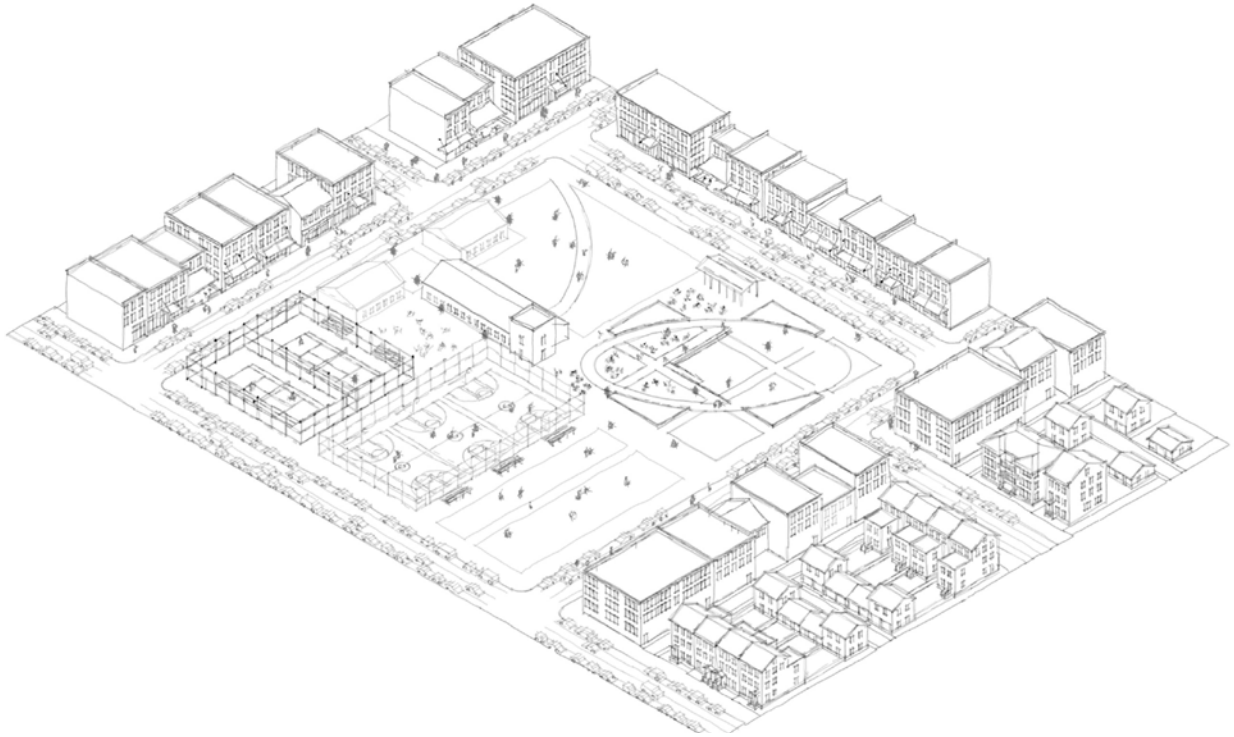
SUBURBAN CORRIDOR



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.

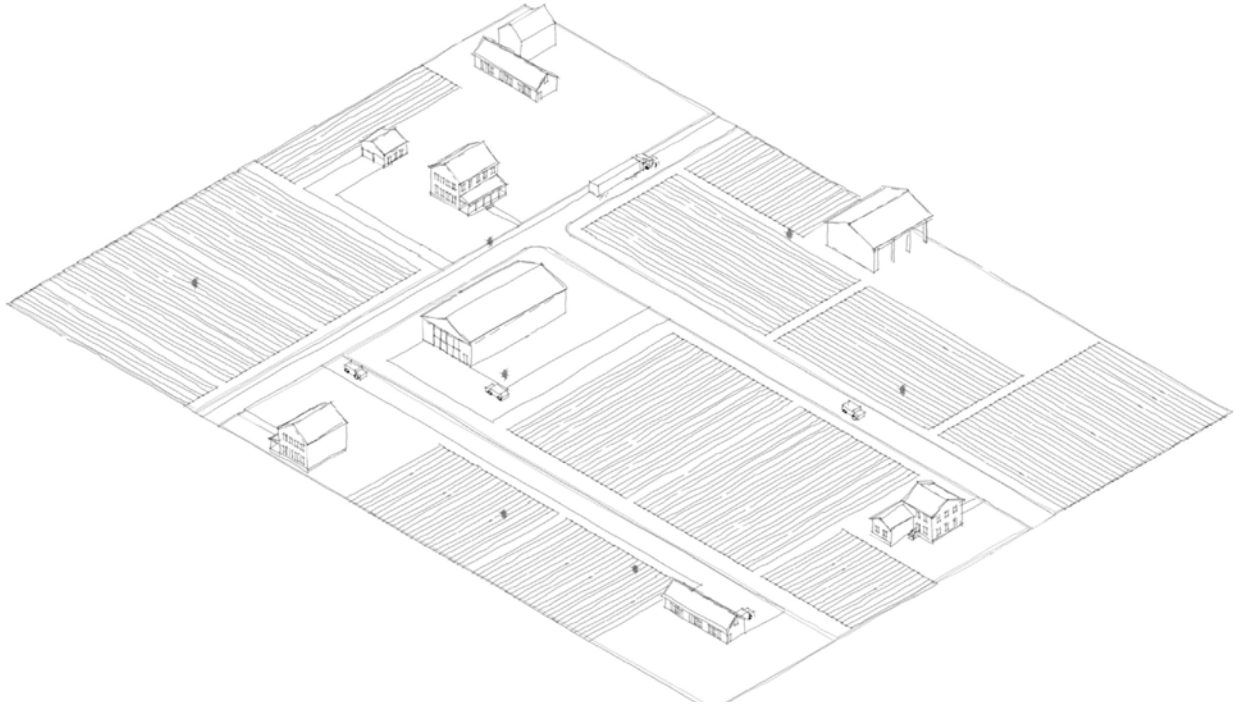


RECREATION

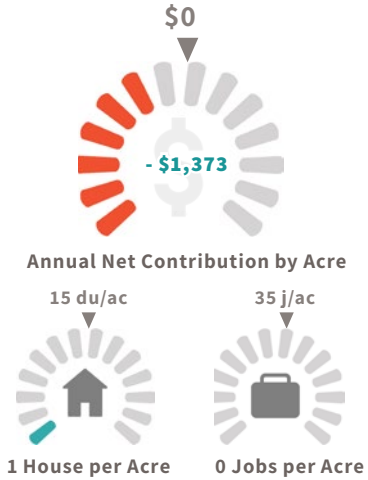


Parks and Public Space refers to both public and privately owned properties that contribute to community enjoyment and well-being. This includes the city's parks and recreational amenities, gathering spaces, bike trails, and museums.

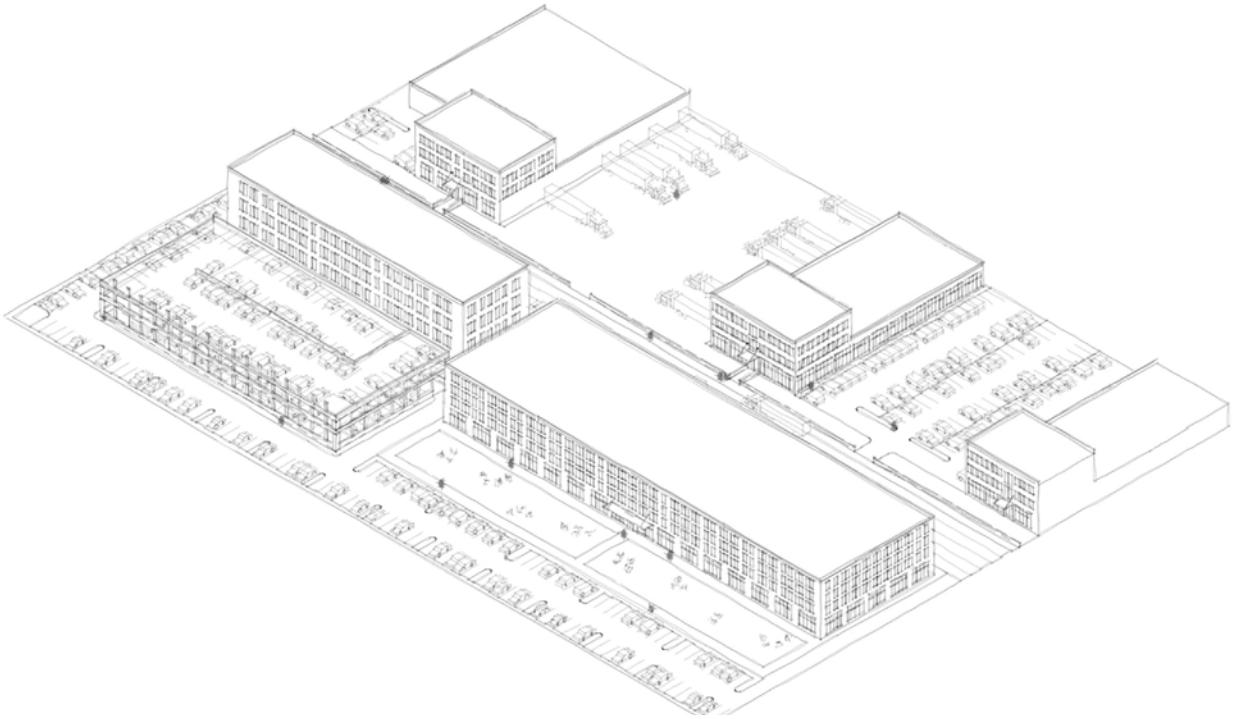
RURAL AND ESTATES



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.

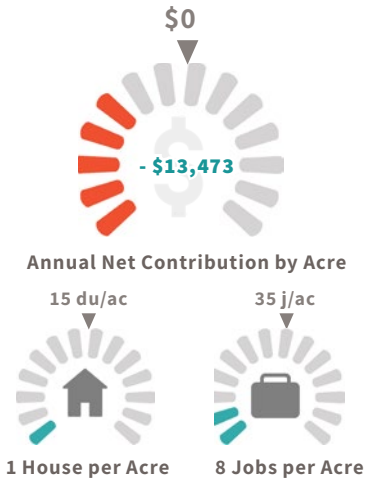


INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

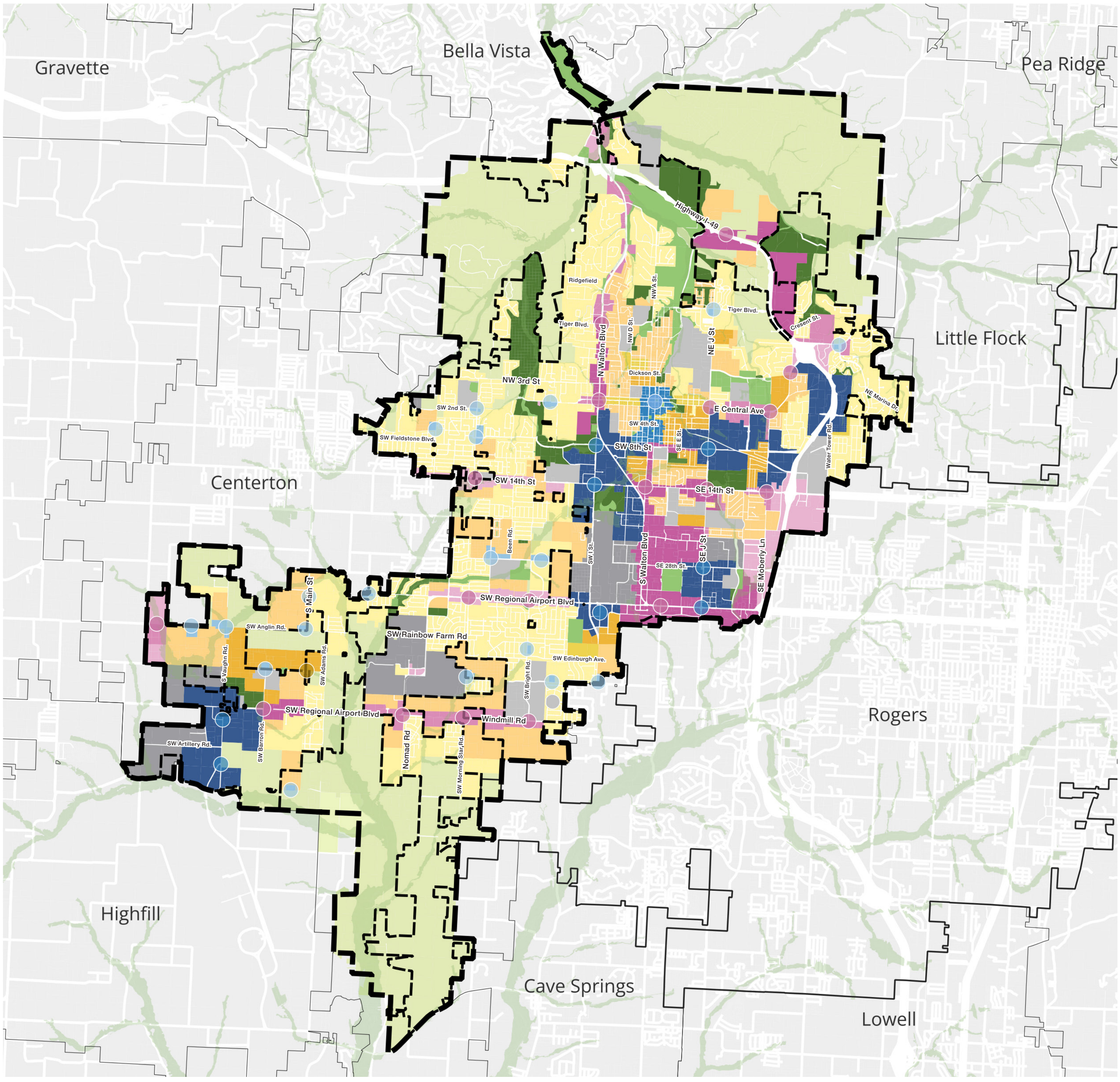


Industrial and Technology refers to areas that, in earlier times, were characterized as light industrial. Today these areas feature all aspects of the maker economy — technology startups, light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, art galleries, artisans, craftspeople, and other made-by-hand 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.



Future Land Use Map



Centers
- Regional *(1,866 acres)*
- City *(110 acres)*
- Neighborhood *(130 acres)*

Neighborhoods
- Urban *(720 acres)*
- Walkable *(3,070 acres)*
- Traditional *(127 acres)*
- Suburban *(5,806 acres)*

Corridors
- Urban *(1,248 acres)*
- Walkable *(562 acres)*
- Suburban *(770 acres)*

Recreation
- Outdoor Entertainment
- Parks and Public Spaces

Other
- Rural and Estates
- Industry & Technology
- Civic and Institutional

Boundaries and Overlays
- Hazard Overlay for Floodways
- City Boundary
- Planning Boundary

$0

56,798,525

Annual Net Contribution by Acre

15

12 Houses per Acre

15

10 Jobs per Acre

PLAN BENTONVILLE

2

AT A GLANCE

Bentonville's Regional Role

Population Growth

People

Housing

Jobs

Community Outreach

Past Plans and Studies

COMMUNITY PROFILE

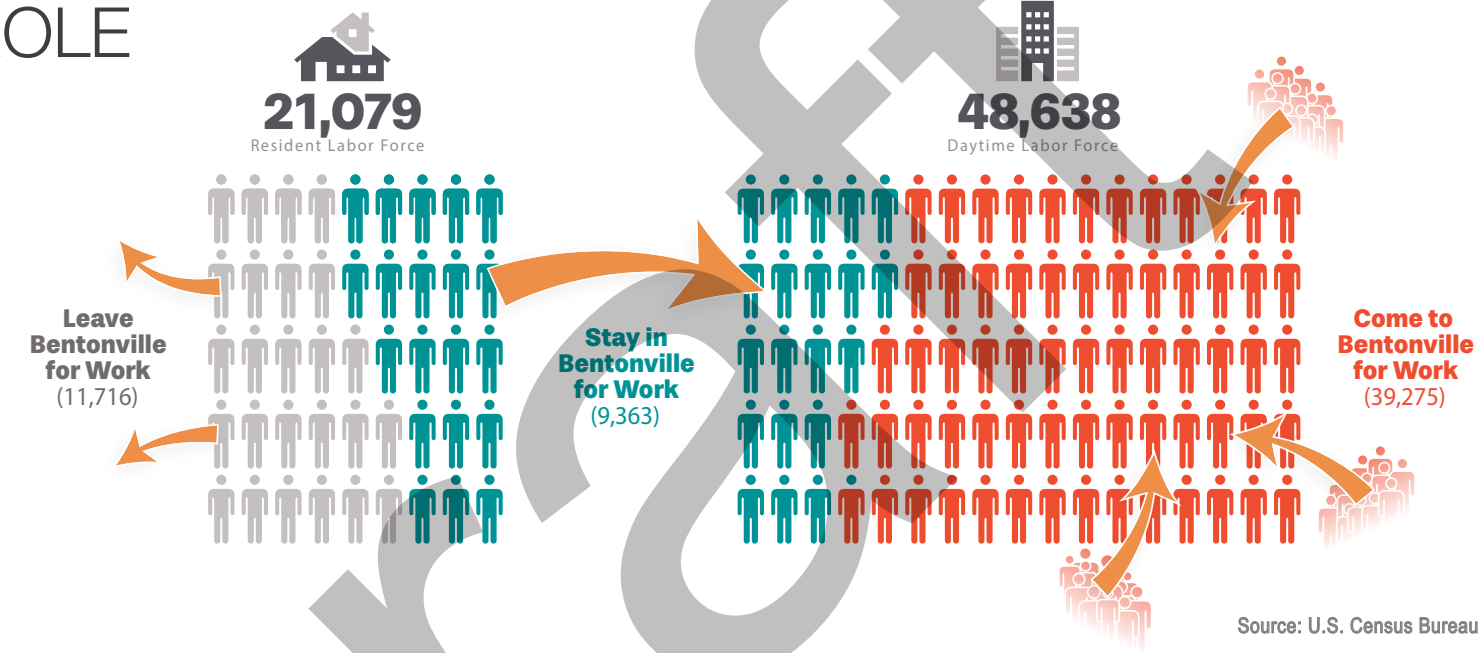
Over the past decade, Bentonville has seen an unprecedented rate of growth, transforming the city and positioning it for further expansion and economic diversification. This concentrated growth in Bentonville—within a rapidly expanding Northwest Arkansas—has outpaced the development of housing, transportation, 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.

Draft

BENTONVILLE'S REGIONAL ROLE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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 over 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.

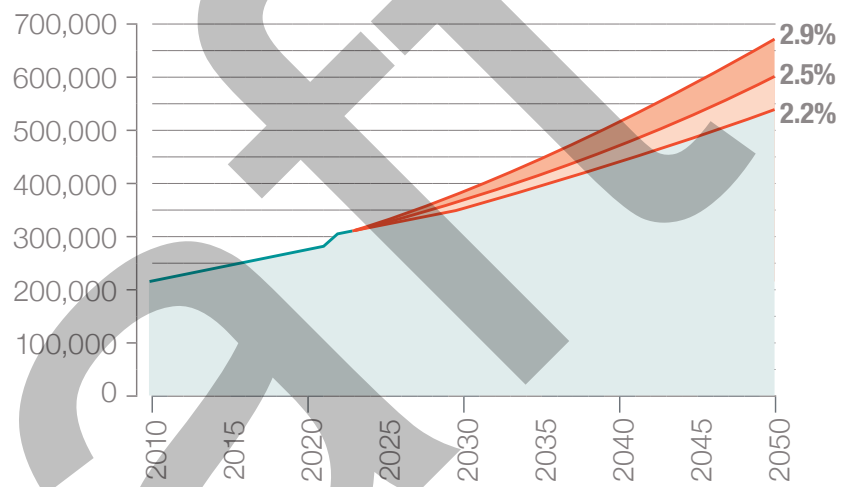
Draft

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

Draft

POPULATION GROWTH

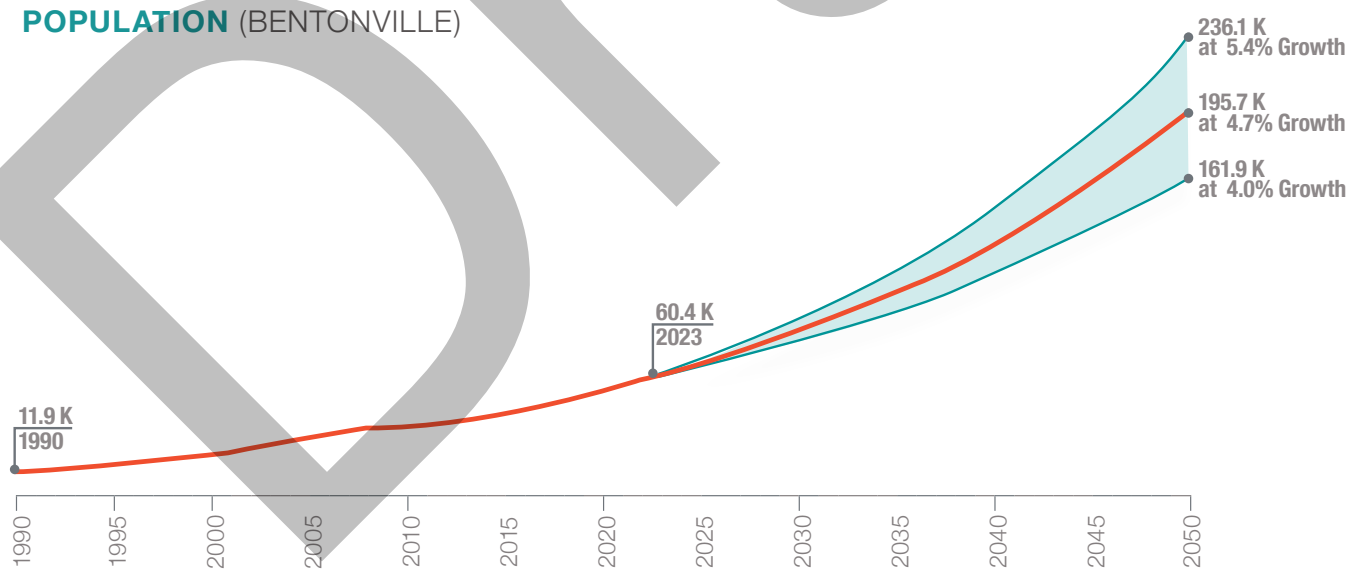
BENTONVILLE'S SCALE

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, 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 regional traffic 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.

POPULATION (BENTONVILLE)



Source: U.S. Census, LandUse USA

Draft

PEOPLE

EVOLVING POPULATION

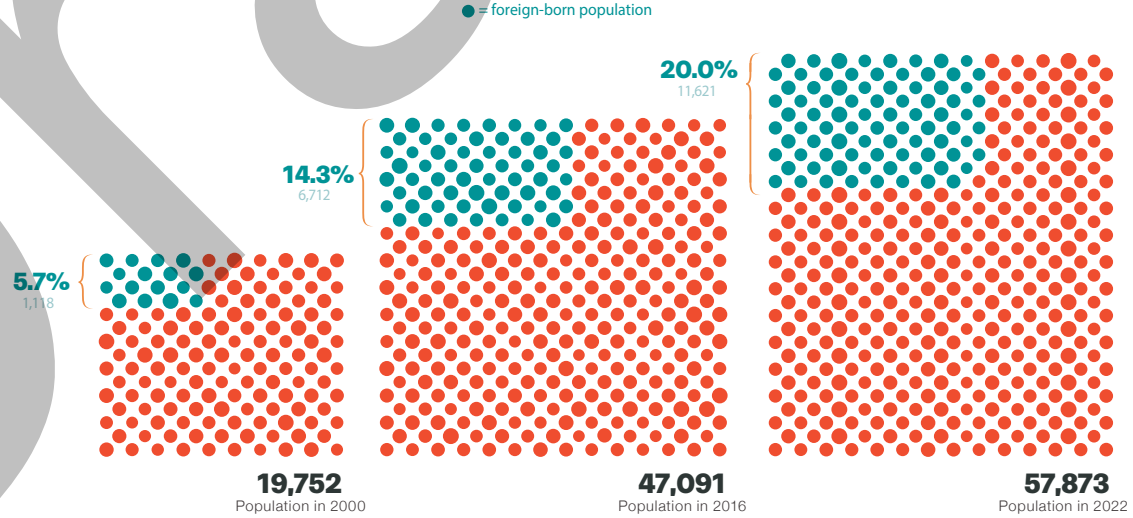
Bentonville's demographic landscape is rapidly evolving, particularly with respect to its foreign-born population. According to the American Community Survey, the proportion of foreign-born residents from India has risen significantly, from 38.7% in 2010 to 53.2% in 2021, while the percentage of immigrants from Mexico has decreased from 28.2% to 11.9% during the same period.

Additionally, notable groups include those from South and Central America (17.0% combined) and East Asia (11.7% combined), reflecting a growing diversity in the city. This demographic shift, along with an influx of residents from other U.S. states, particularly Texas, Missouri, and Oklahoma, contributes to increasing housing demand and influences local city services, reshaping Bentonville's cultural fabric. Bentonville also boasts a relatively young population, with a median age of 33.5 in 2023, projected to increase slightly to 33.7 by 2028.

This youthful demographic, combined with rising incomes—an estimated median household income of $94,100 in 2023 expected to rise to $105,600 by 2028—positions Bentonville favorably compared to regional and national trends. Furthermore, over half (51.9%) of residents aged 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher, significantly above both the regional (37.2%) and national (34.3%) averages.

These factors underscore Bentonville's attractiveness as a desirable place to live and work, contributing to its economic growth and the establishment of a skilled workforce, while also necessitating responsive urban planning to address the diverse needs of its residents.

GROWING DIVERSITY



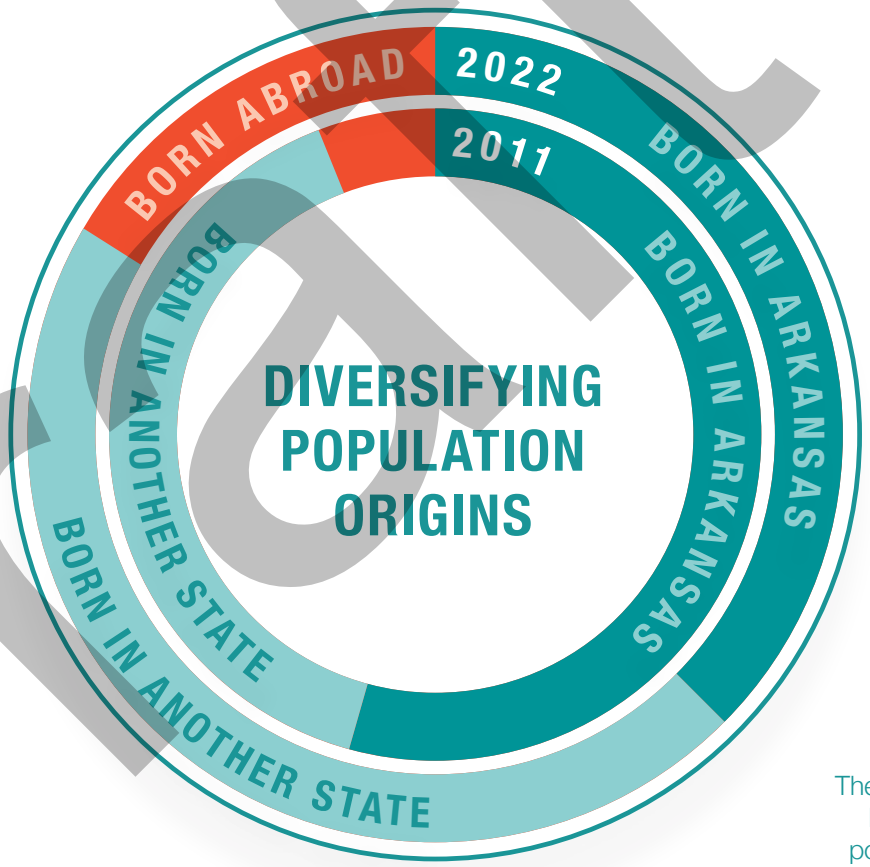
Source: American Community Survey

Draft

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 multicultural fabric.



63%
The percentage of Bentonville's population born outside of Arkansas

Source: U.S. Census, LandUse USA

Draft

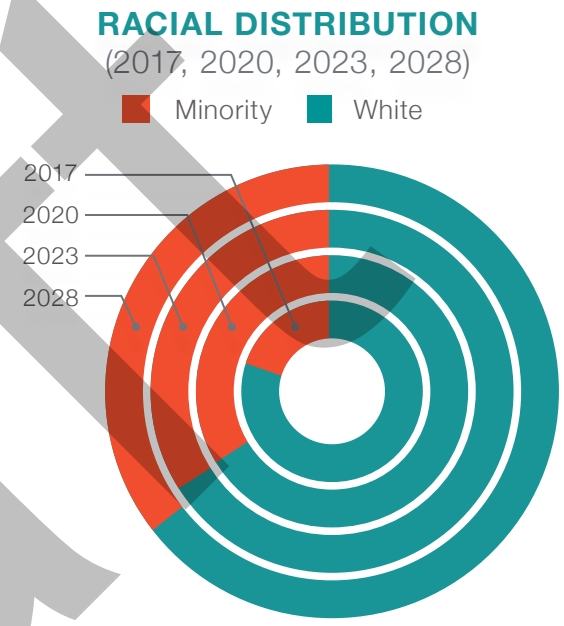
Race. Bentonville is more racially and ethnically diverse than the surrounding region. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 67% of Bentonville's population identifies as exclusively White or Caucasian, which is lower than the figures for Benton County (72%) and the State of Arkansas (73%). 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%.

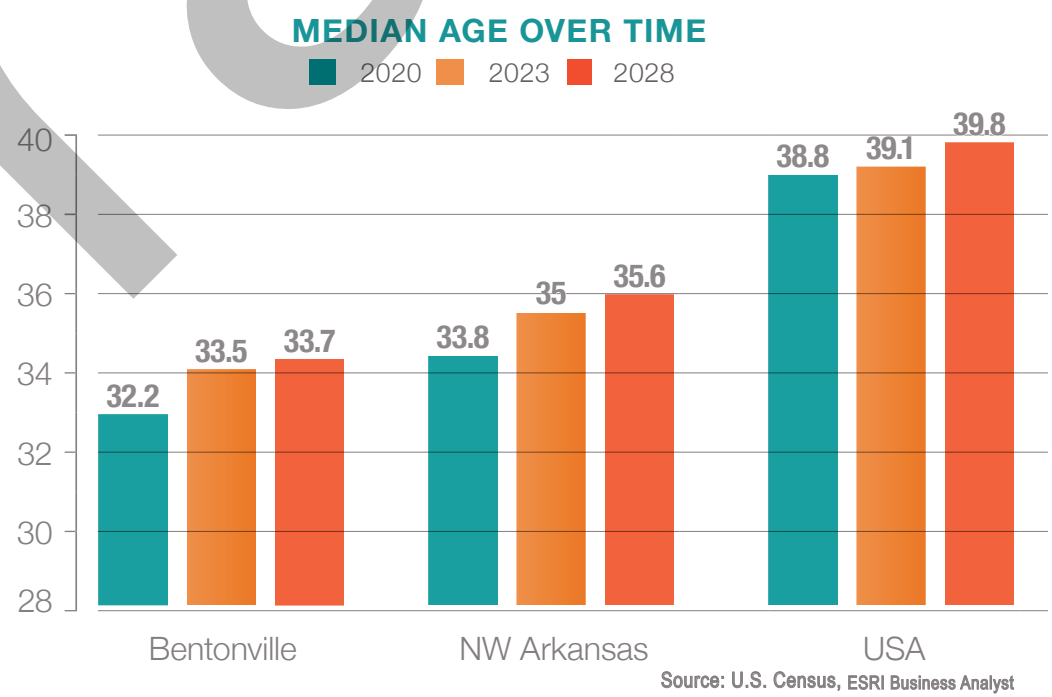
In contrast, Bentonville has a notable Asian population, with 10% of residents identifying as Asian Indian and another 3% identifying with other Asian nationalities, totaling 15%. This combined percentage is particularly high compared to Benton County (5%) and the state average (3%).

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.





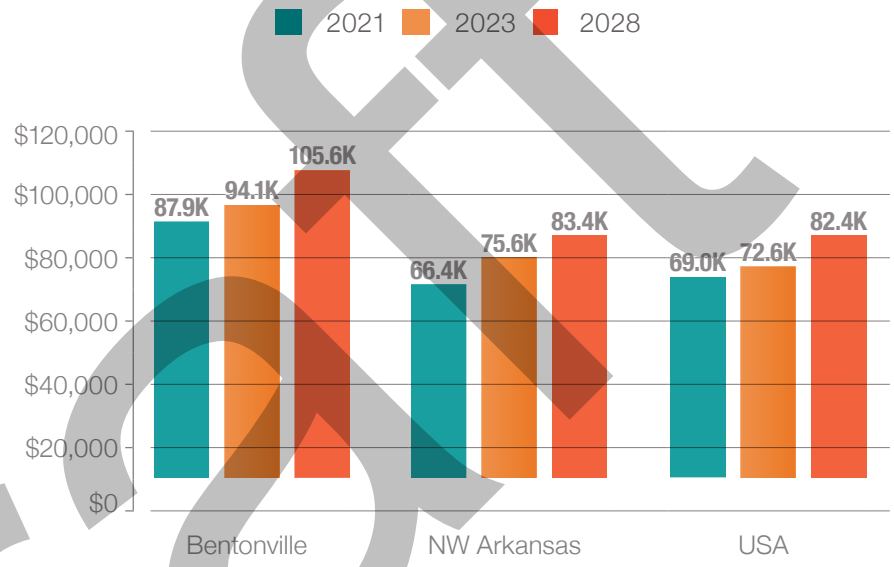
Draft

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)

$21,427

Actual increase in the median household income

GROWING AFFLUENCE (2022-2030)

$30,977

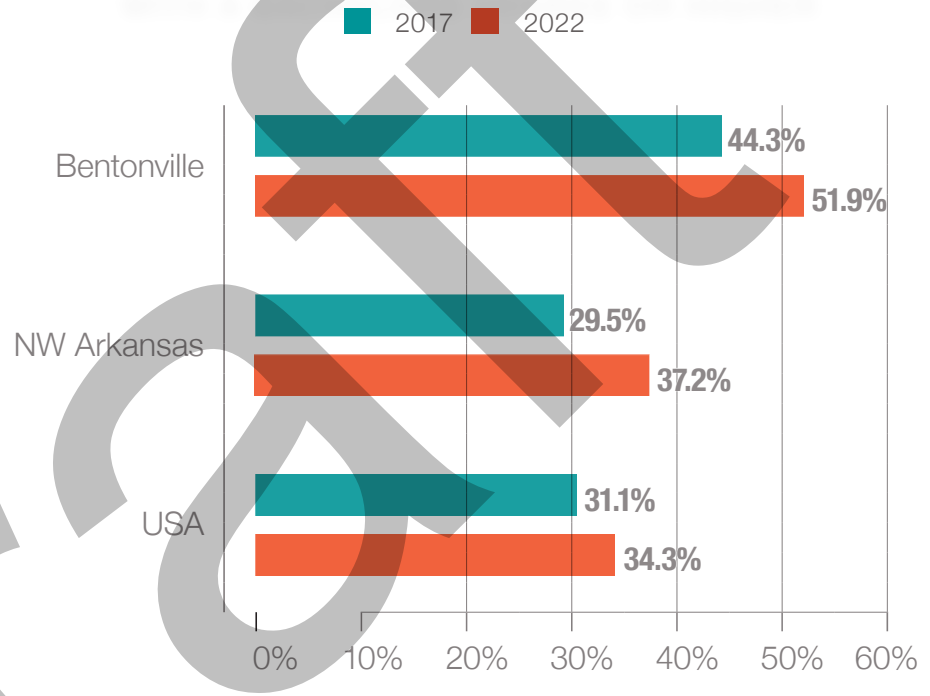
Projected increase in the median household income

Source: American Community Survey

Draft

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

Draft

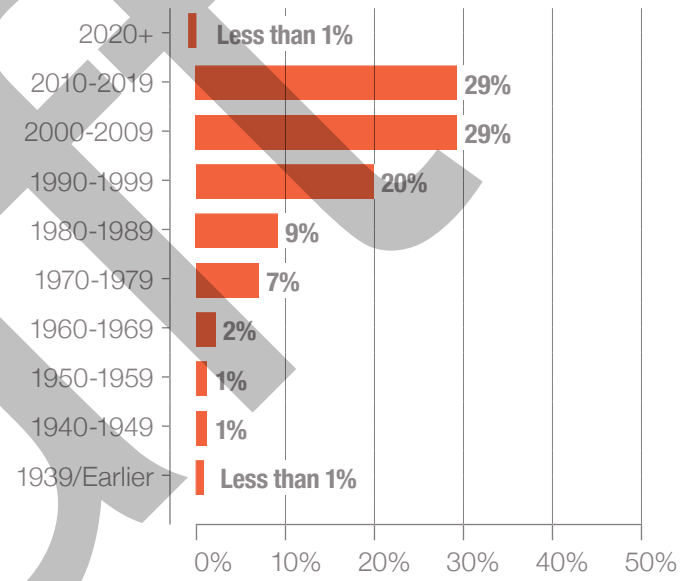
HOUSING

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.

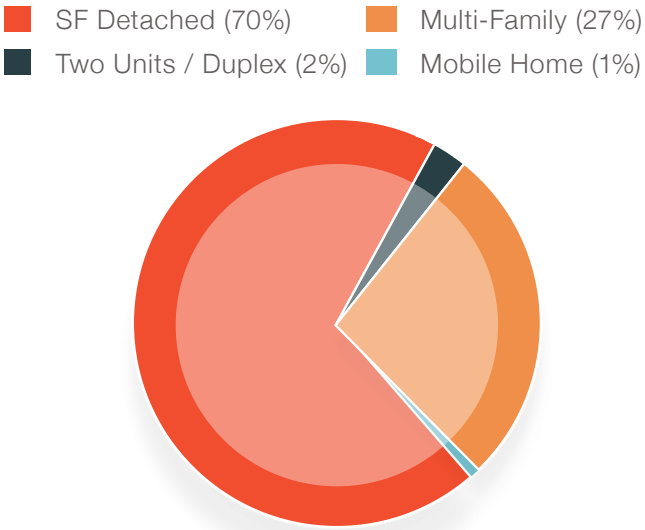
The shift towards more multi-family units and townhomes in many cities reflects broader trends in housing preferences, particularly among younger generations who prioritize walkability and proximity to amenities. In Bentonville, however, the relatively lower percentage of multi-family units suggests 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)



Source: American Community Survey

HOUSING TYPE (2019-2022 AVG.)



Source: American Community Survey

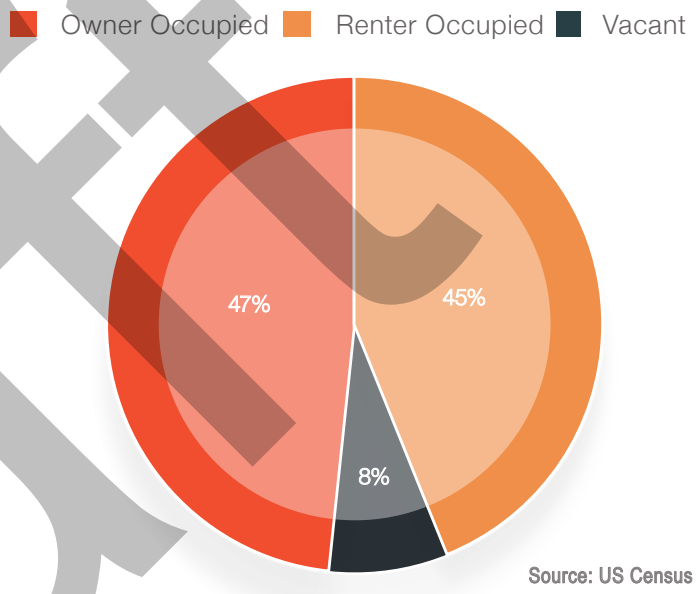
Draft

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.

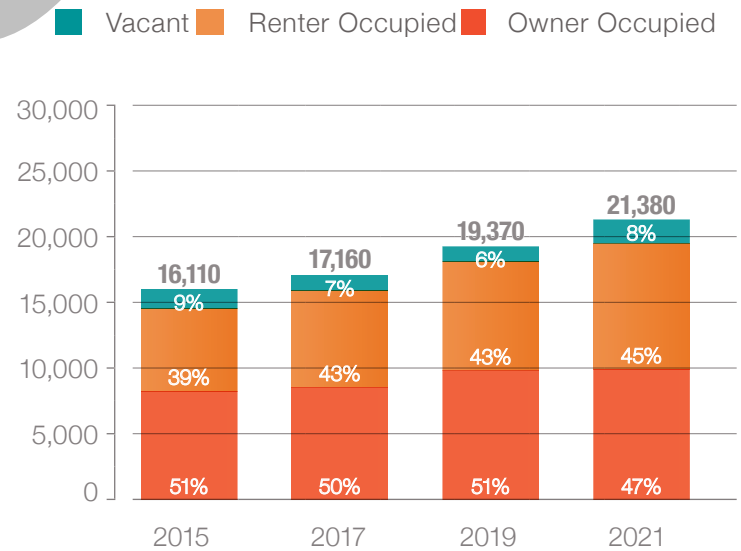
Overall, Bentonville's occupancy statistics highlight the city's appeal to both homeowners and renters, but they also suggest a potential opportunity for expanding housing diversity to meet evolving demographic needs, consistent with broader trends observed across the country.

HOUSING BY TENURE (2021)



Source: US Census

HOUSING UNITS BY OCCUPANCY



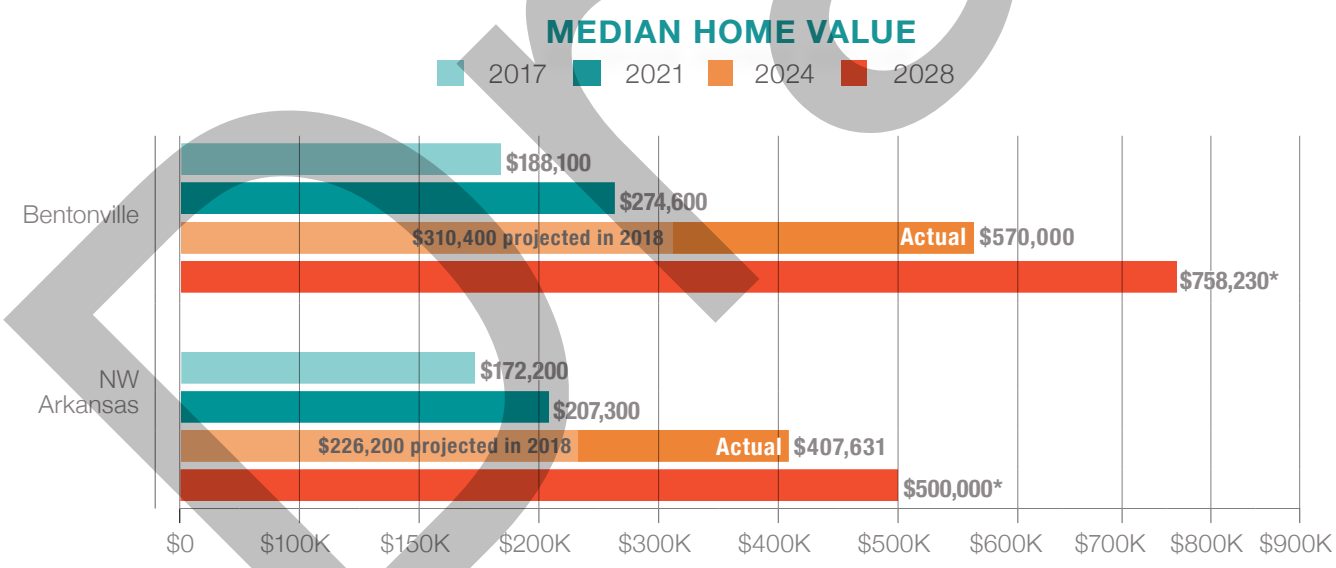
Source: US Census

Draft

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.

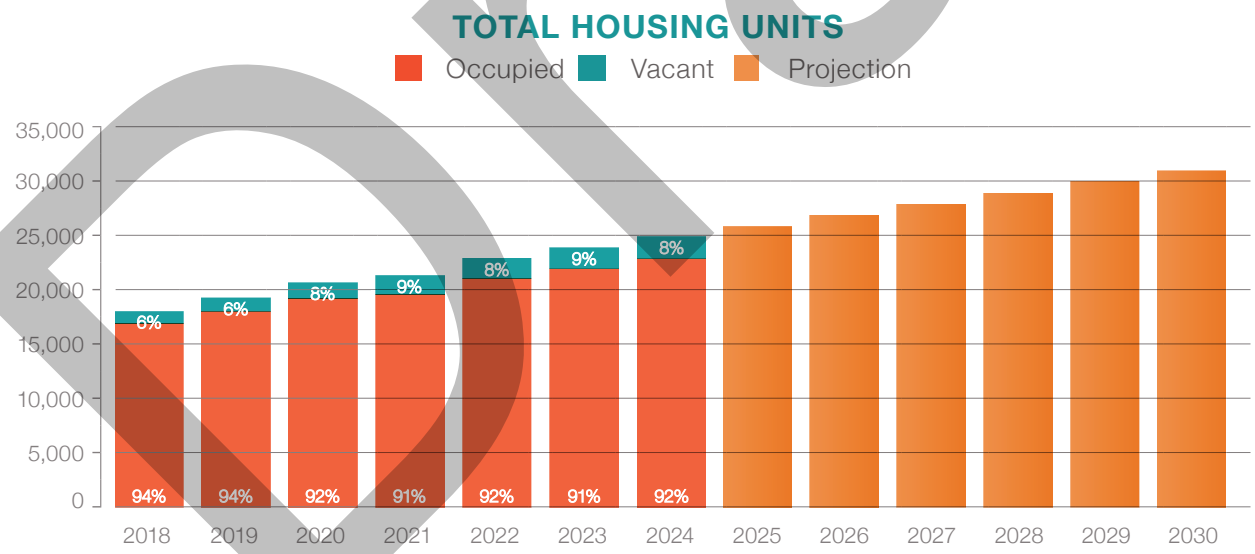


Source: Houseal Lavigne Associates, ACS, ESRI Business Analyst
*Most optimistic scenario

Draft

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

Draft

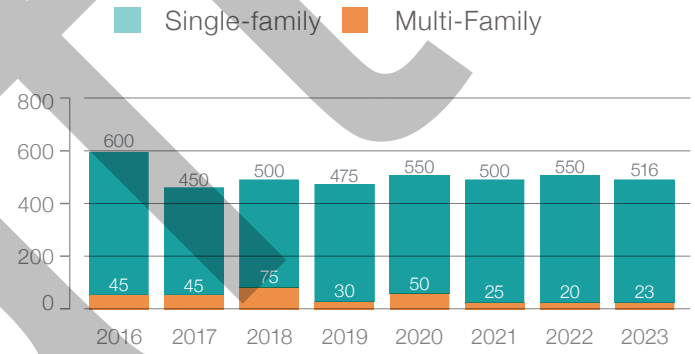
DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Overview of Building Permits. Residential construction remains strong, with new single-family and multi-family units regularly being permitted. In 2016, more than 600 single-family homes and over 40 multi-family units were permitted, while in 2018, this continued with over 500 single-family homes and 70+ multi-family units permitted. This pace of construction reflects Bentonville's rapid growth trajectory, though the city is still working to balance its residential mix to better meet the diverse housing demands of its population.

Residential Permits. In 2023, the total lots platted experienced a significant decline compared to 2022, with final plats decreasing by 12.5% and preliminary plats dropping by 48.8%. Nevertheless, single-family developments continued to progress, with 322 units incorporated into large-scale projects. Multi-family construction saw a notable increase, with planned multi-family units up by 67.4%, amounting to 914 new units. This surge includes 168 townhomes and 746 multi-family residences, signaling the city's commitment to expanding housing variety amid rising demand for more affordable and flexible housing options. *Comparison to National Trends:* Across the U.S., demand for multi-family housing has grown steadily, fueled by rising home prices, the shift toward urban and suburban apartment living, and the changing preferences of younger generations and remote workers. Many cities, like Bentonville, are responding to this demand with increased multi-family developments, aiming to create a balanced housing market that offers diverse options at different price points.

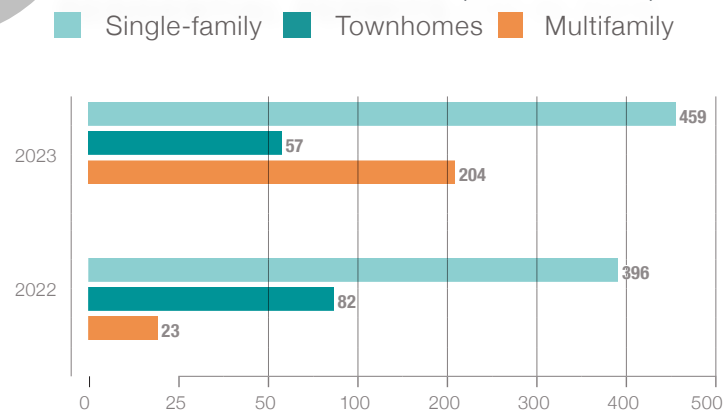
Commercial Permits. While Bentonville issued 156 commercial and nonresidential permits in 2023, representing only a slight decrease from 2022, the value of these permits dropped considerably by 41.9% — from approximately $493 million in 2022 to $286 million in 2023. However, the number of completed commercial projects increased by 19% over the previous year, showing that while new construction may have slowed, existing projects continue to reach completion at a healthy pace. *Comparison to National Trends:* Nationwide, commercial real estate saw similar trends with a slowdown in new permit values, driven by economic uncertainties, higher interest rates, and changes in office demand. Many cities are shifting their commercial construction focus from new builds to enhancing existing spaces, aligning with Bentonville's increased rate of completed projects but slower rate of new permit value growth.

PREVIOUS BUILDING PERMITS



Source: City of Bentonville

RESIDENTIAL PERMITS (720 IN 2023)

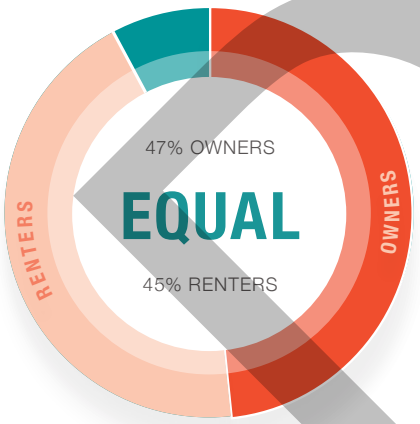


Source: City of Bentonville

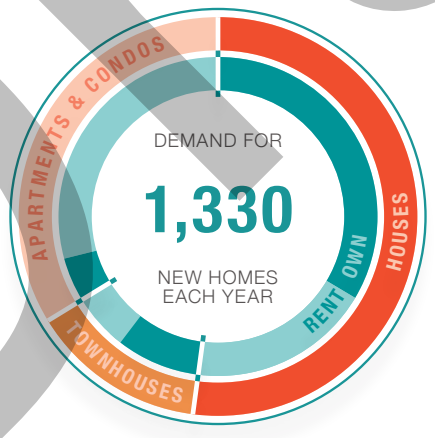
Draft

BALANCING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

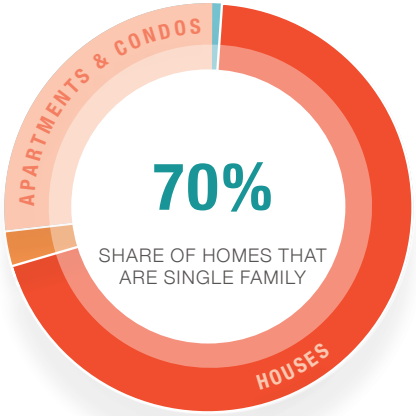
Bentonville's housing demand remains robust, with especially high interest in both single-family homes and apartments from prospective renters and buyers. This demand reflects a diverse spectrum of housing needs in the community: some residents are attracted to the rural tranquility outside the city 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 such a broad selection 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, and apartments. 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

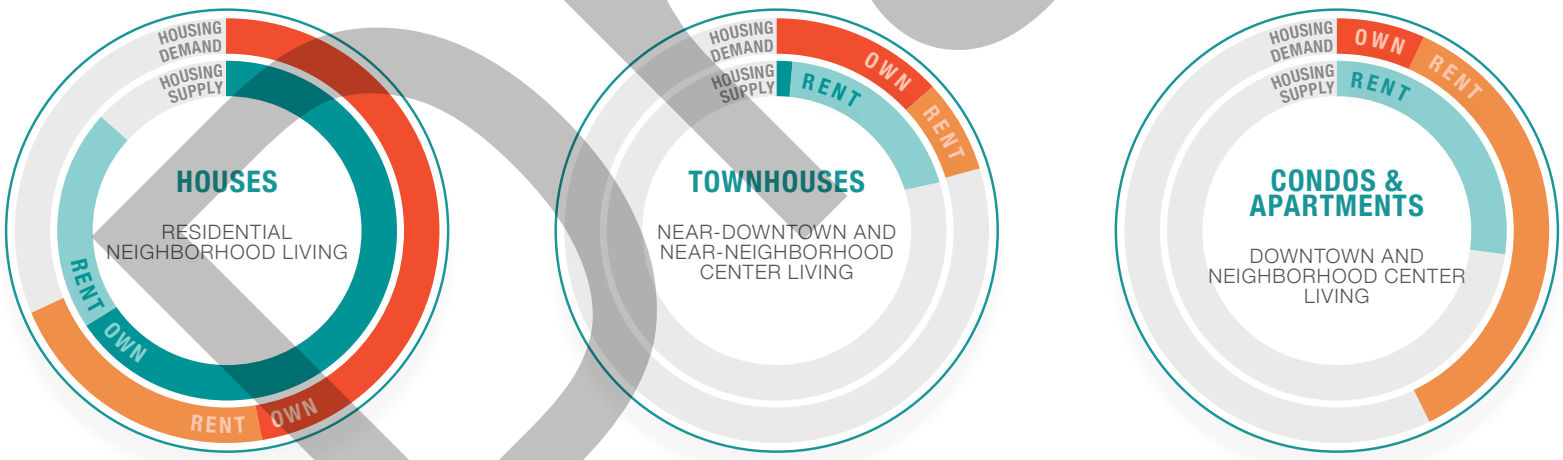
Draft

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

Draft

JOBS

Bentonville's economic growth is driven by a strong network of large corporations, robust healthcare services, and expanding educational institutions. The presence of Walmart's global headquarters anchors Bentonville's economy, with an outsize impact on job distribution: management roles connected to Walmart and its supplier network account for nearly 50% of primary jobs (across a number of sub-categories). In contrast, no other sector, including healthcare and education, comprises more than 10% of total jobs in the area, underscoring the region's dependency on corporate-driven employment.

Efforts are underway to broaden Bentonville's economic base, particularly through the development of the I-Street Corridor, a targeted growth area that aims to attract high-tech, manufacturing, and other industries. This initiative represents a strategic shift toward a more diversified economy, which could make Bentonville less reliant on corporate management roles and increase employment stability. Emerging sectors such as technology, logistics, and advanced manufacturing are viewed as potential anchors that could complement the existing corporate ecosystem.

Bentonville also experiences a substantial daily influx of commuters, with around 48,600 employees traveling into the city for work. These commuters present a valuable economic opportunity, as they contribute to local businesses and services, particularly in the bustling downtown and surrounding areas. Encouraging more of these employees to live locally could capture greater economic benefits, increase residential diversity, and reduce the environmental and infrastructure pressures associated with commuting. Expanding housing options, particularly diverse and affordable housing types, may further incentivize these workers to relocate within Bentonville, thereby deepening their contribution to the local economy.

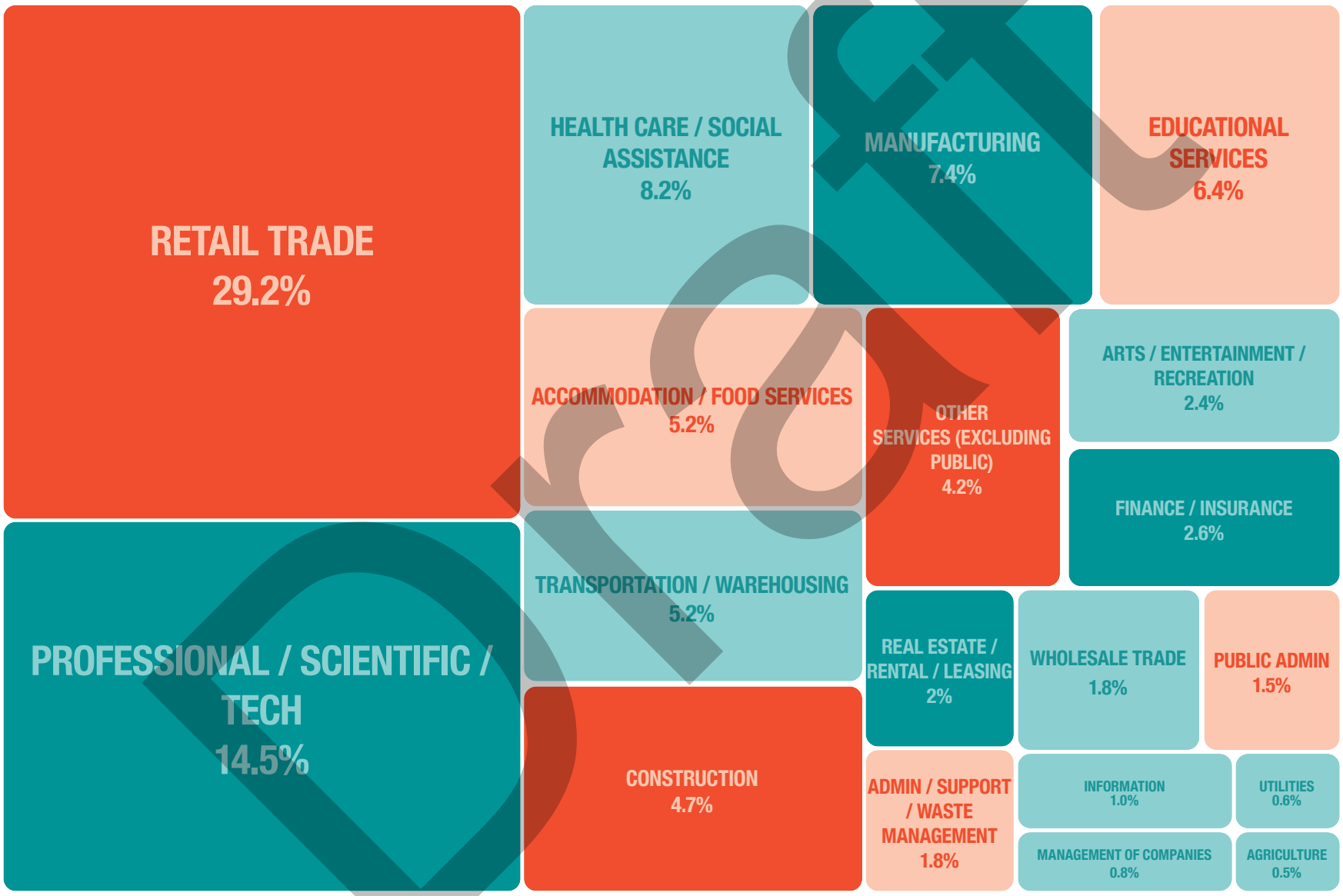
This focus on both job diversification and residential development aligns Bentonville's strategy with broader national trends in small cities, which increasingly emphasize balanced, resilient economic ecosystems supported by varied industries and a stable, engaged workforce. The Community Plan supports these efforts with a future land use framework promoting housing, major employers, emerging sectors, and local small businesses.

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

Draft


RETAIL TRADE
29.2%
HEALTH CARE / SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
8.2%
MANUFACTURING
7.4%
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
6.4%
ACCOMMODATION / FOOD SERVICES
5.2%
OTHER SERVICES (EXCLUDING PUBLIC)
4.2%
ARTS / ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION
2.4%
FINANCE / INSURANCE
2.6%
PROFESSIONAL / SCIENTIFIC / TECH
14.5%
TRANSPORTATION / WAREHOUSING
5.2%
REAL ESTATE / RENTAL / LEASING
2%
WHOLESALE TRADE
1.8%
PUBLIC ADMIN
1.5%
CONSTRUCTION
4.7%
ADMIN / SUPPORT / WASTE MANAGEMENT
1.8%
INFORMATION
1.0%
UTILITIES
0.6%
MANAGEMENT OF COMPANIES
0.8%
AGRICULTURE
0.5%
Draft

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

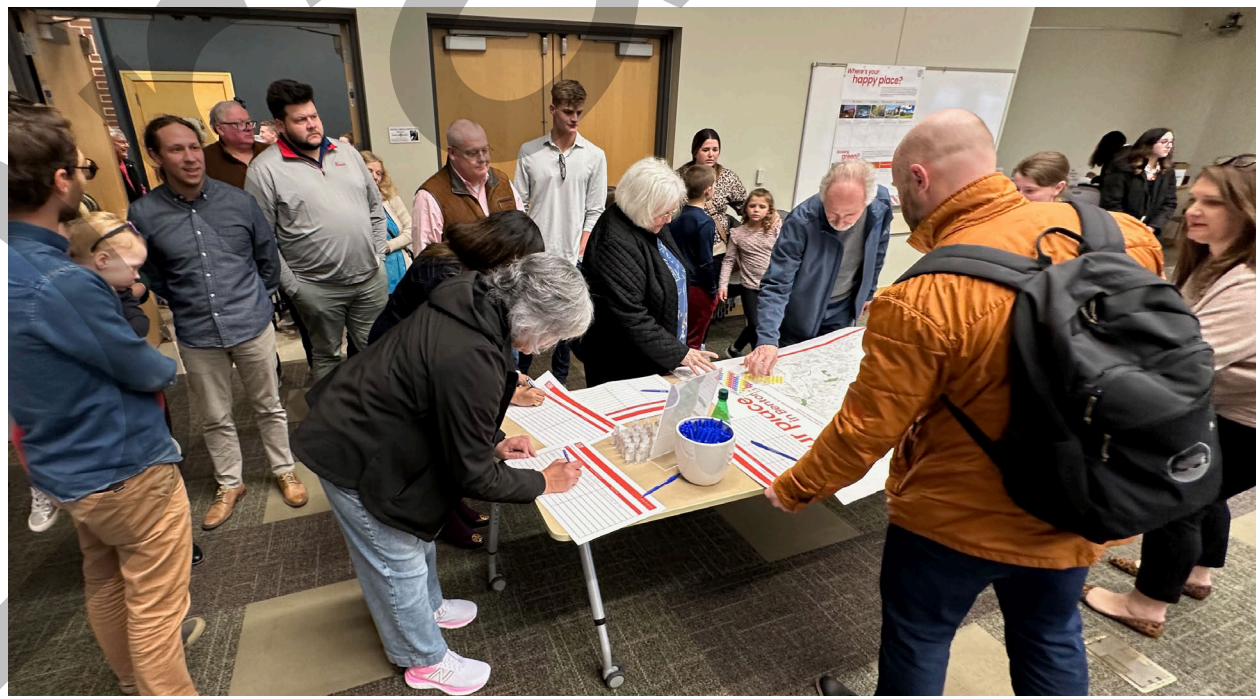
2024 UPDATE

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 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.



Draft

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.

Draft

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.

Draft

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

1,169

parcel-level comments on interactive Future Land Use Map

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

Social media advertising

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

DRAFT

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 dependency on cars.

2. Compact Development for Economic and Environmental Benefits

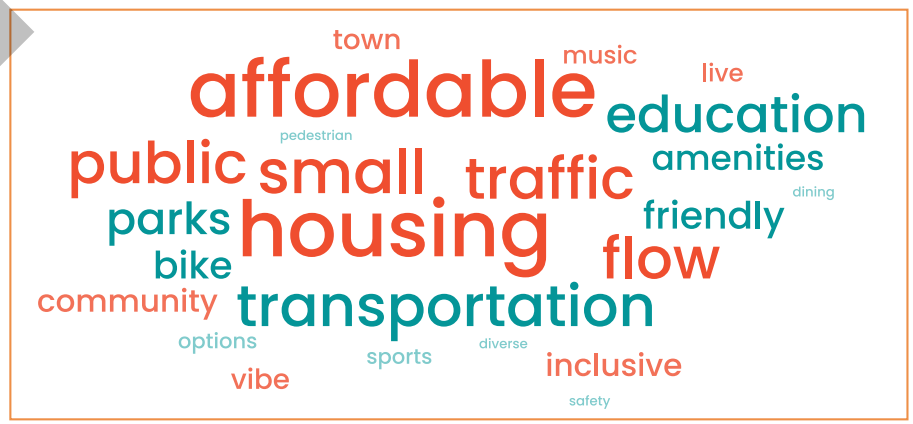
Participants consistently emphasized the importance of affordability and their hope for compact, higher-density development as a means of preserving natural lands, supporting local businesses, and optimizing infrastructure. This approach resonates with the economic benefits of walkability and environmental 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.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT BENTONVILLE?

WHAT WOULD MAKE BENTONVILLE EVEN BETTER?



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4. Housing Diversity and Affordability

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.

5. Enhanced Connectivity and Transportation Choices

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.

6. Support for Local Character and Community Identity

Bentonville residents value the town's unique character, and they want new development to respect and enhance this identity. Maintain local architectural and landscape styles, with codes that will encourage distinctive and contextual development.

7. 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.

WHAT ARE THE HURDLES TO MAKING A HOME HERE?

WHAT WORRIES YOU ABOUT BENTONVILLE'S FUTURE?

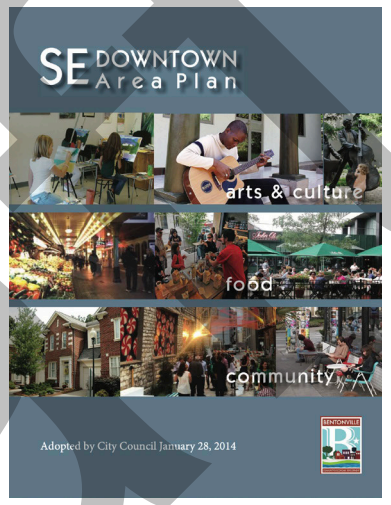
Draft

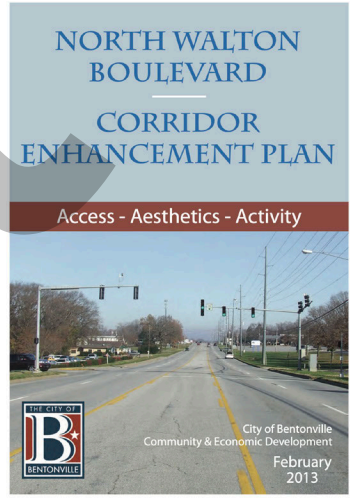
PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

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)





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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.

Draft

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.

Draft

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

Draft

4

LAND USE and STRATEGIC GROWTH

AT A GLANCE

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 a create a more livable, desirable, and fiscally sustainable community with the following key objectives:

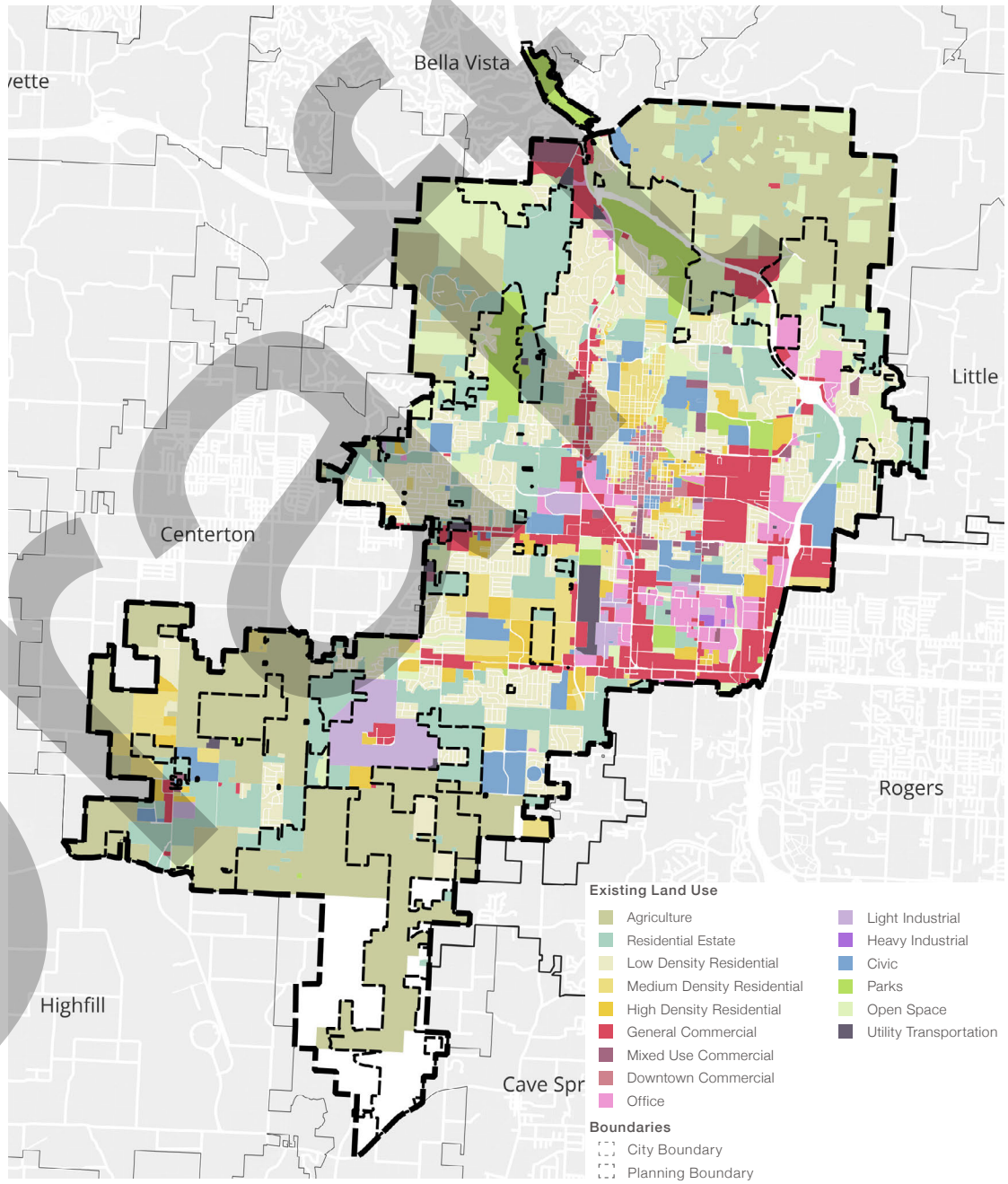
- Optimize for market-based development
- Grow in a fiscally responsive manner
- Enhance community character and cohesion
- Guide strategic investment
- Strengthen a sense of place

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.

Draft

EXISTING LAND USE

Bentonville's current land use showcases a complex mix of policy-driven and organic growth, resulting in a distinctive yet uneven urban environment. Much of the city's commercial development has been concentrated along major arterials, creating vehicle-dependent corridors of shops and businesses. Residential growth, on the other hand, has been more fragmented: new suburban neighborhoods are frequently isolated from one another, while redevelopment has reshaped several areas near downtown. Downtown Bentonville has evolved from a quiet central district into a vibrant hub of dining, arts, and entertainment that draws visitors from throughout the region. This transformation has enhanced its role as the city's cultural and social center, but also highlights a reliance on downtown as a focal point, resulting in pressures for redevelopment, parking, and supportive infrastructure like roads and power.



Draft

The imminent completion of Walmart's new headquarters underscores Bentonville's position as a corporate hub, further amplified by ongoing efforts to attract additional industries to the I-Street Corridor. However, growth pressures have stretched beyond the downtown and central areas, particularly into the city's southwestern quadrant. Here, development is advancing rapidly, often outstripping infrastructure capacities such as roads and sewer systems.

Philanthropic investments in parks, trails, and cultural sites, largely concentrated around downtown, have enhanced Bentonville's recreational and social appeal, making this area the city's primary cultural hub. However, the lack of comparable amenities and connectivity in newer, outlying neighborhoods increases demand on the city center as Bentonville's main social and entertainment destination. The expansion into peripheral areas, along with limited street connectivity, has contributed to traffic congestion, particularly in heavily traveled corridors like 14th Street from Centerton. Simultaneously, low-density commercial and industrial areas are seeing redevelopment, intensifying land use within these zones.

Although the 2018 Community Plan prioritized infill, Bentonville's growth has inevitably encompassed both infill and peripheral development. This updated Community Plan aims to address the impacts of this growth pattern, including connectivity challenges and housing demand, by better balancing residential and commercial development city-wide and supporting thoughtful expansion that eases pressure on the downtown core.

Draft

MUNICIPAL BUDGET

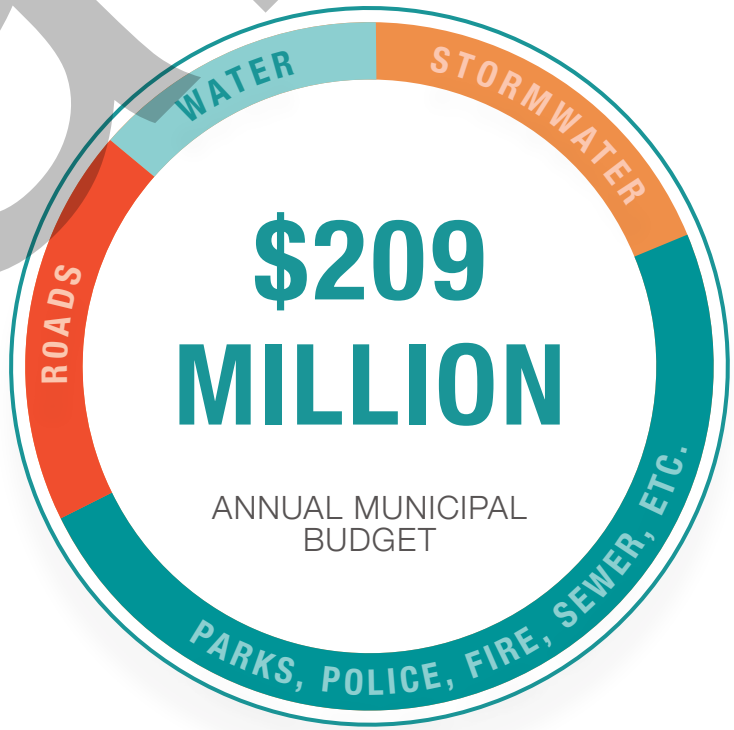
Operating and maintaining the City of Bentonville is set to cost $16,824 for every acre of land currently developed in 2024. As the city grows in area and in programs and services, this cost will also increase. The city budget pays for parks, trails, police, fire, roads, water, sewer, stormwater, community events, city administration, equipment, facilities, and other things required to run a city.

The current $209 Million budget is paid for in part by sales tax, property tax, impact fees for new development, and utility fees. However, this budget does not address a number of unmet demands for both current residents and future growth, which are also not fully addressed through service or impact fees, including:

- Water and sewer capacity;
- Power capacity, including anticipated electric vehicle growth;
- Traffic and non-vehicular transportation;
- Regional stormwater; and
- Additional parks and community programming.

The city's balance sheet is directly affected by land uses and their distribution. Bentonville currently controls 22,500 acres of land, half of which have been built upon already. As the city chooses a path for growth, that choice affects its ability to pay for infrastructure and services.

Individual properties as well as neighborhoods that do not sufficiently pay for themselves must be offset by others that pay in excess.



Source: City of Bentonville

Draft

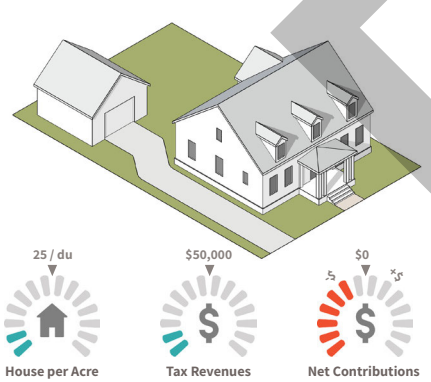
New growth is often considered to be an opportunity to charge today for a lack of fiscal responsibility in the past, in the form of impact fees. However, saddling each new development of homes and businesses with both past and future needs exacerbates costs for new residents and business owners. Rather than levee restrictive fees for new development, which slows that development and increases issues like traffic congestion as a result, growth in Bentonville should be designed to pay for its own fiscal demands, including within existing areas.

In the recent past, growth in Bentonville has been subsidized with public infrastructure in the form of streets, sewers, parks, fire stations, and schools, without regard for the ability of that development to contribute. For many years, the region has operated on the assumption that residential development cannot pay its own way, and that it must rely upon sales tax to fund infrastructure and services, no matter how efficiently commercial development uses land. While all single family homes require fiscal support from other types of development, townhomes, multi-family housing, mixed-use, and commercial developments all typically contribute more than they use. Growth that balances different types of development can both cover its own costs and contribute to the funding gap created by the existing low density of development.

As the city is set to quadruple in population, the current trajectory of subsidized, low density residential growth is not a fiscally sustainable path. The form of growth and land use affect the municipal budget and ability to provide residents with needed and desired services. The Community Plan focuses on the form and fiscal performance of growth, producing a future Bentonville that is both a wonderful place to live and a fiscally resilient city.

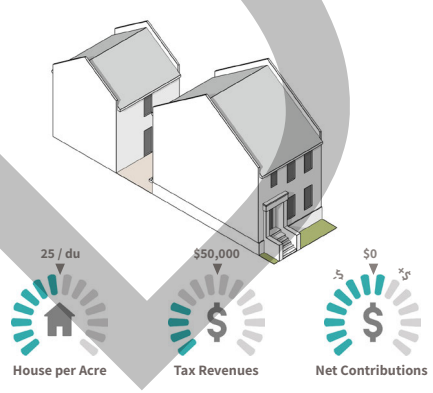
DETACHED HOUSE ON A MEDIUM PROPERTY

Average property size of 6,000 sq. ft.



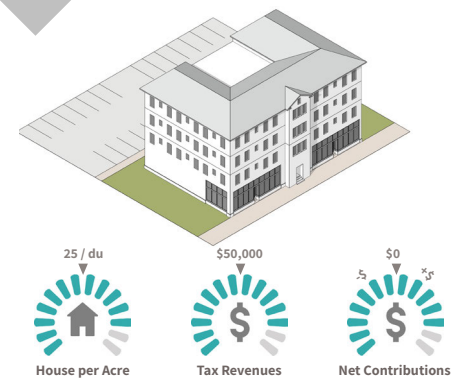
TOWNHOUSE ON A SMALL PROPERTY

Average property size of 2,000 sq. ft.



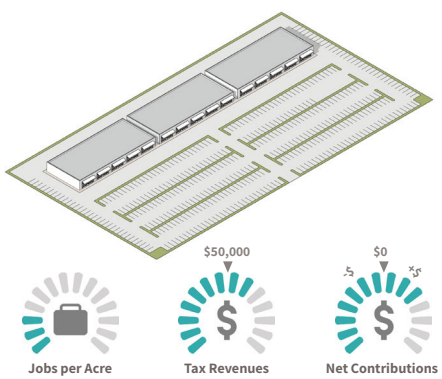
MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL (4 STORIES)

Average property size of 22,000 sq. ft.



STRIP COMMERCIAL

Average property size of 260,000 sq. ft.



Draft

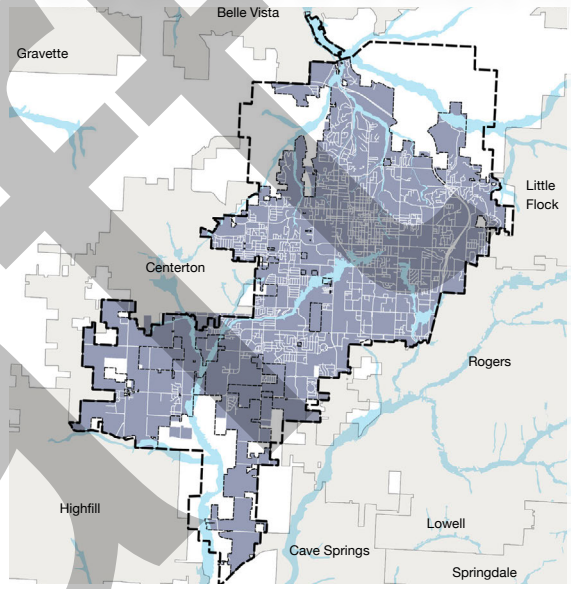
THE COST OF GROWTH

Bentonville's future growth can take multiple paths, each impacting the city's character, land use, and financial stability in different ways. Planning for 2050, the city's development density—specifically, the number of homes per acre—will play a crucial role in determining infrastructure demands, costs, and the availability of open space. Building more homes per acre of land helps minimize infrastructure costs and preserve open space, while lower-density growth requires extensive infrastructure investments and consumes more land.

The infrastructure and cost projections for various densities of new growth are as follows:

- **16 Homes per Acre:** At this level of density, Bentonville would need an estimated $407 million to develop 474 miles of infrastructure, leaving 2,329 acres of land undeveloped.
- **12 Homes per Acre:** With 12 homes per acre, costs rise to $543 million for 632 miles of infrastructure, leaving only 246 acres undeveloped.

NEW GROWTH AT 16 HOMES PER ACRE



16
Homes per Acre

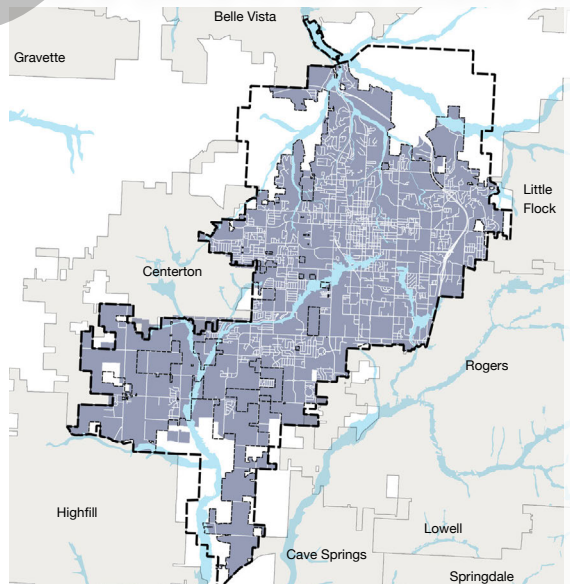
28,824
Acres of Town Developed

2,329
Acres of Town Undeveloped

474
Miles of New Infrastructure =

+$407
Million

NEW GROWTH AT 12 HOMES PER ACRE



12
Homes per Acre

30,906
Acres of Town Developed

246
Acres of Town Undeveloped

632
Miles of New Infrastructure =

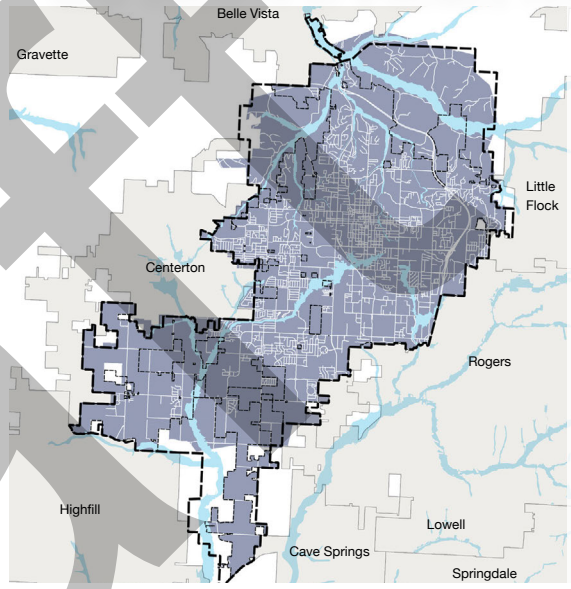
+$543
Million

Draft

- **8 Homes per Acre:** At this density, the cost reaches $815 million for 948 miles of infrastructure, fully utilizing Bentonville's current land and requiring an additional 3,919 acres beyond city limits, further increasing traffic congestion.
- **4 Homes per Acre (close to Bentonville's current average density):** Expanding at this density would require $1.6 billion for 1,896 miles of infrastructure, exhausting city land and demanding an extra 16,413 acres from surrounding areas.

Currently, Bentonville averages around 4.5 homes per acre in its developed areas. These scenarios underscore that compact new growth can significantly reduce infrastructure costs and maintain open spaces, while lower-density expansion increases financial and spatial demands. The city's growth strategy will need to balance these considerations to provide a range of housing options, such as single-family homes, townhomes, and apartments, while ensuring fiscal sustainability. A strategic approach to density can help Bentonville meet the needs of its growing population, maintain fiscal health, and preserve the city's natural and open spaces.

NEW GROWTH AT 8 HOMES PER ACRE



8
Homes per Acre

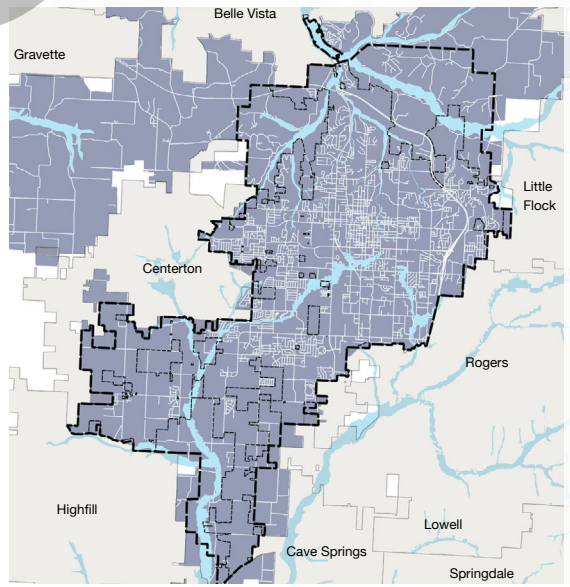
30,906
Acres of Town Developed

+3,919
Acres Developed Outisde of Town

948
Miles of New Infrastructure =

+$815
Million

NEW GROWTH AT 4 HOMES PER ACRE



4
Homes per Acre

30,906
Acres of Town Developed

+16,413
Acres Developed Outisde of Town

1,896
Miles of New Infrastructure =

+$1.6
Billion

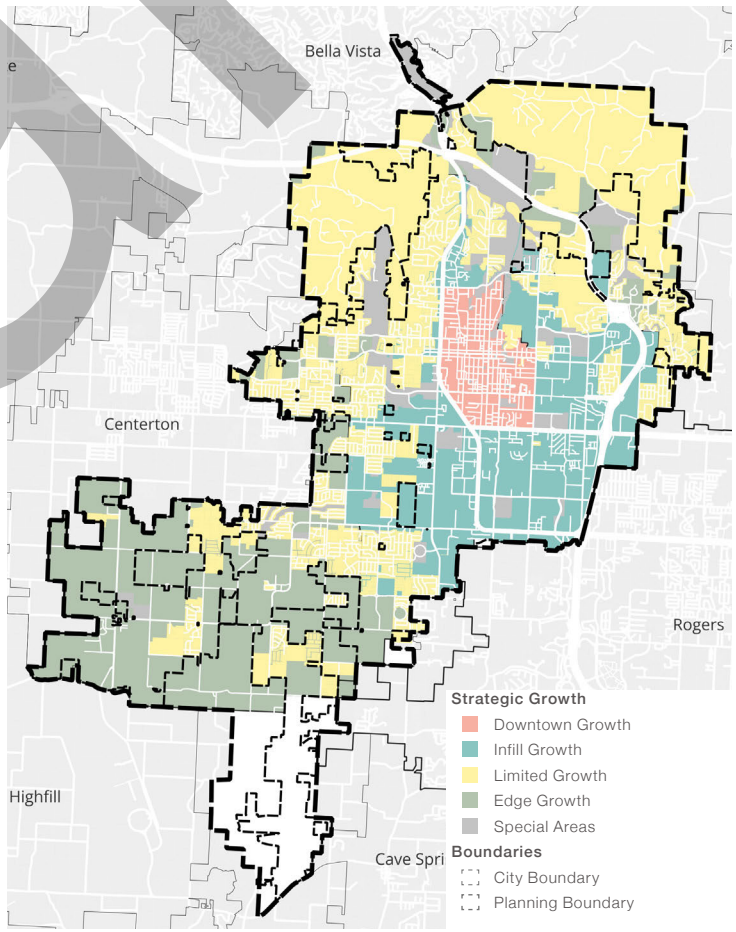
Draft

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.



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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.

Draft

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:

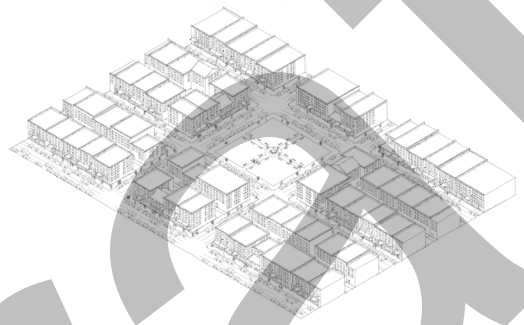
Centers: Designed as mixed-use hubs, Centers incorporate retail, business, and residential spaces. These range from high-activity Regional Centers—featuring the tallest buildings and lively public areas—to more localized Neighborhood Centers that offer essential services and smaller-scale amenities for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

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

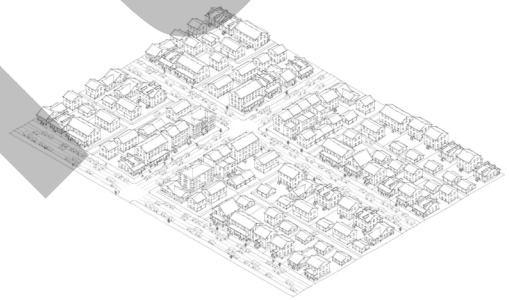
Corridors: Major thoroughfares such as 14th Street and Regional Airport Boulevard primarily serve commercial functions today but are envisioned to evolve. Some Suburban Corridors will retain their low-scale, car-oriented character due to existing constraints, while Walkable and Urban Corridors will incorporate mixed-use, higher-density developments to improve walkability and connectivity.

Recreation: 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.

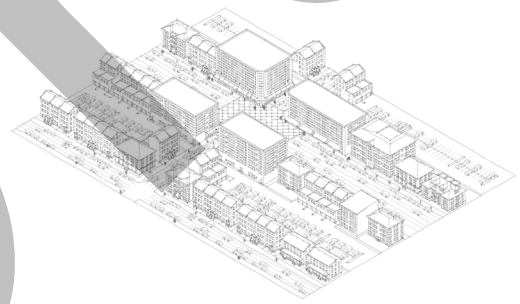
CENTERS



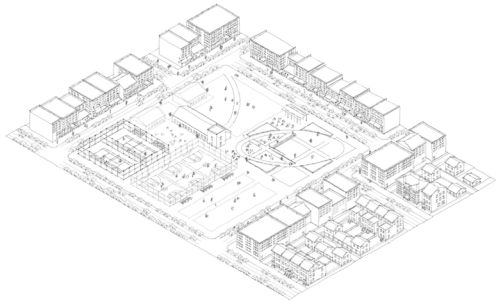
NEIGHBORHOODS



CORRIDORS



RECREATION



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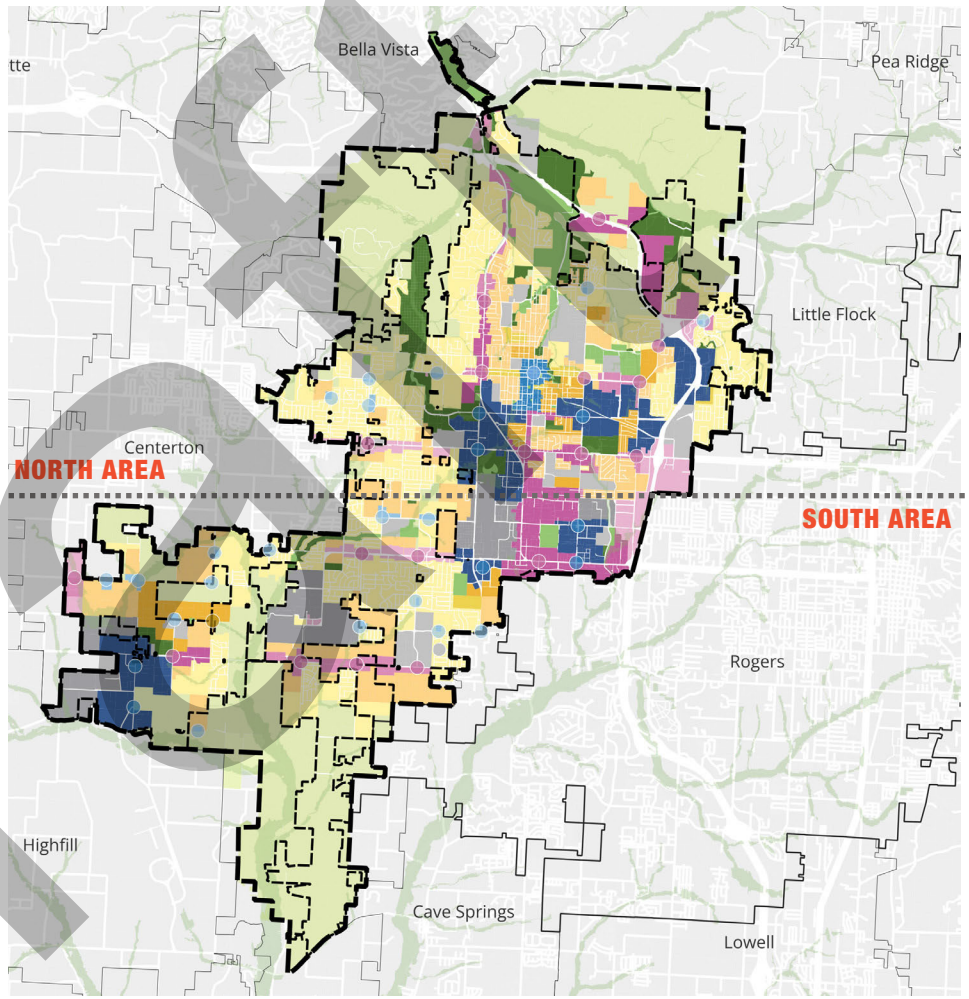
Additional Place Types include rural and industrial areas and institutional campuses that serve specialized functions within the city's overall land use framework.

To reduce the pressure on downtown and support walking and biking, the plan designates multiple activity hubs beyond downtown, including a major future employment center near Northwest Arkansas National Airport. These Regional Centers are intended to contribute to the city's economic base with spaces for cultural and entertainment venues, as well as higher-density housing, except in areas close to the two airports. Within residential zones, small-scale Neighborhood Centers provide nearby access to retail and gathering spots, encouraging a network of community-focused amenities.

Strategically planned infill development and compact growth aim to bolster Bentonville's fiscal stability by minimizing infrastructure expenses and generating a budgetary surplus. This surplus can be reinvested in city services, infrastructure improvements, and recreation, enhancing overall community quality. With the projected growth of over 230,000 residents across the city and surrounding areas, the Future Land Use Plan addresses Bentonville's fiscal health by managing the balance between growth density and housing diversity.

Balanced growth, as outlined in the plan, ensures a sustainable fiscal outlook, reduces congestion in the downtown core, and supports alternative travel options while diversifying the housing mix to meet evolving demands. Each Place Type uniquely contributes to Bentonville's economy, housing, and identity, illustrating the importance of comprehensive, balanced growth to sustain the city's quality of life and accessibility for future generations.



Centers
- Regional *(1,866 acres)*
- City *(110 acres)*
- Neighborhood *(130 acres)*

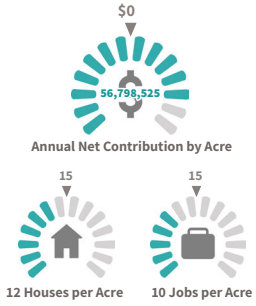
Neighborhoods
- Urban *(720 acres)*
- Walkable *(3,070 acres)*
- Traditional *(127 acres)*
- Suburban *(5,806 acres)*

Corridors
- Urban *(1,248 acres)*
- Walkable *(562 acres)*
- Suburban *(770 acres)*

Recreation
- Outdoor Entertainment
- Parks and Public Spaces

Other
- Rural and Estates
- Industry & Technology
- Civic and Institutional

Boundaries and Overlays
- Hazard Overlay for Floodways
- City Boundary
- Planning Boundary



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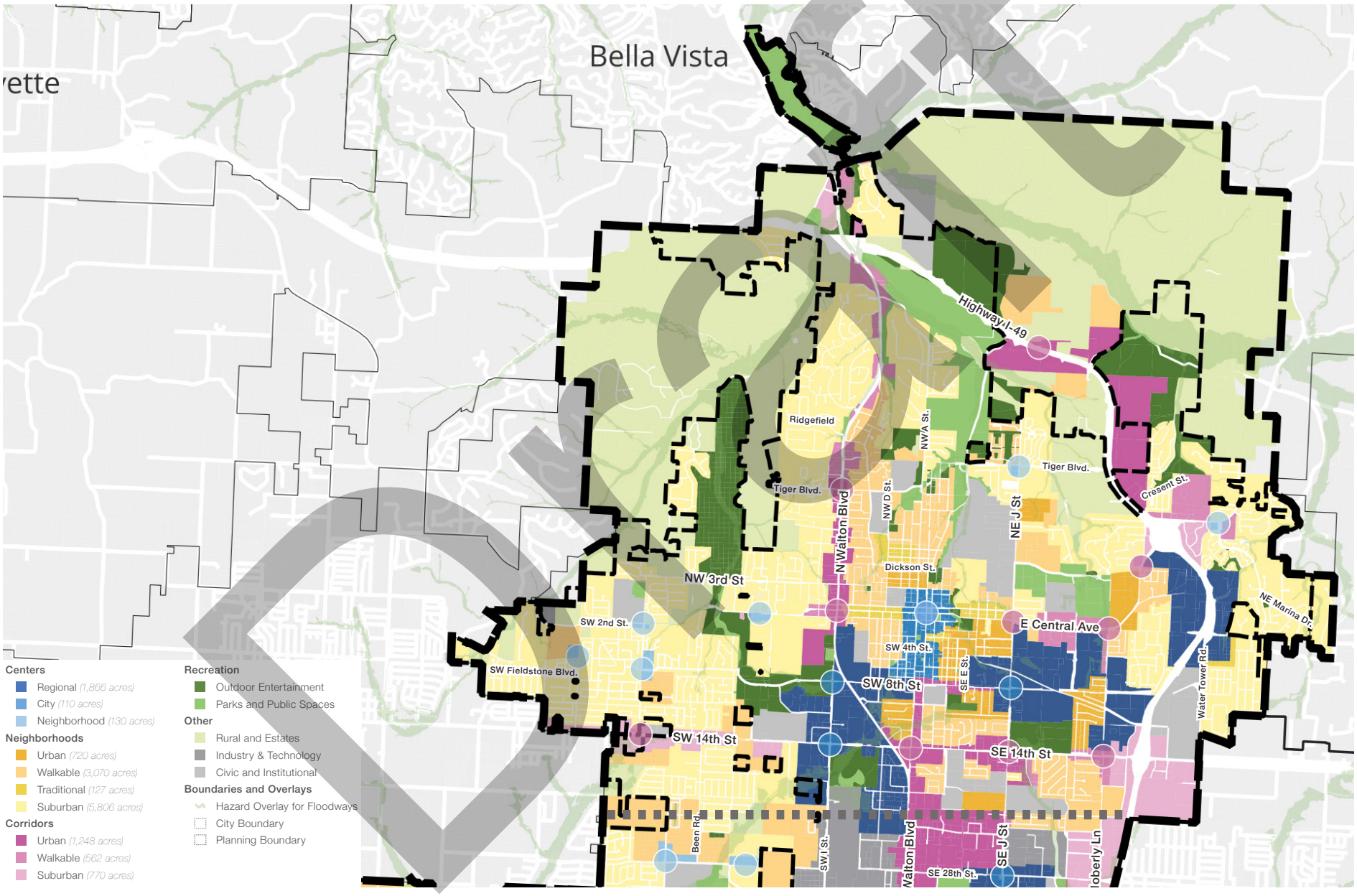
NORTH AREA



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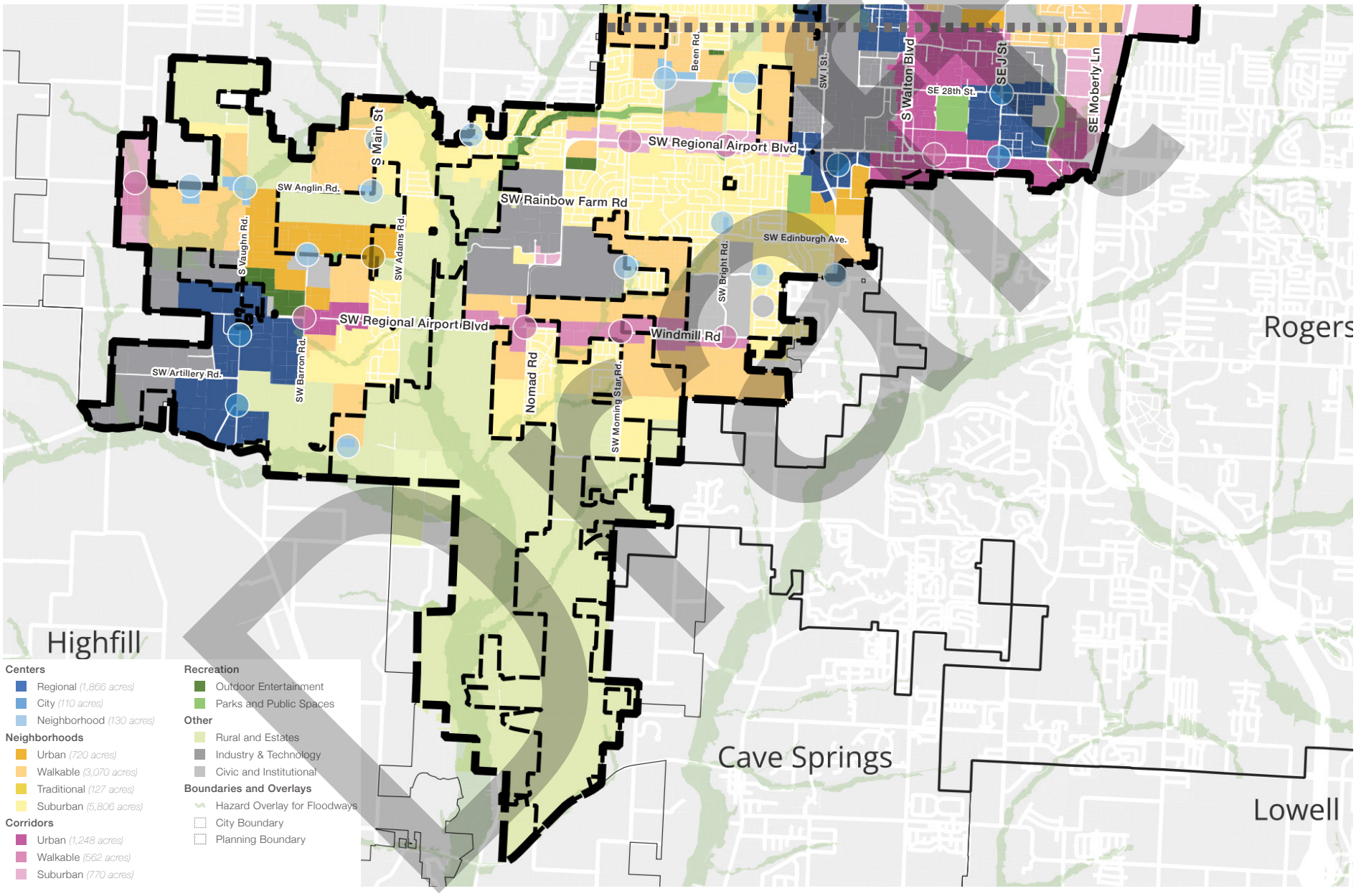
SOUTH AREA


SW Regional Airport Blvd
SW Rainbow Farm Rd
SW Anglin Rd.
S Main St
S Vaughn Rd.
SW Adams Rd.
SW Edinburgh Ave.
SW Bright Rd.
Been Rd.
SW I St.
S Walton Blvd
SE 28th St.
SE J St
SE Moberly Ln
SW Regional Airport Blvd
Windmill Rd
SW Artillery Rd.
SW Barron Rd.
Nomad Rd
SW Morning Star Rd.
Rogers
Highfill
Cave Springs
Lowell
Centers
Regional (1,866 acres)
City (110 acres)
Neighborhood (130 acres)
Neighborhoods
Urban (720 acres)
Walkable (3,070 acres)
Traditional (127 acres)
Suburban (5,806 acres)
Corridors
Urban (1,248 acres)
Walkable (562 acres)
Suburban (770 acres)
Recreation
Outdoor Entertainment
Parks and Public Spaces
Other
Rural and Estates
Industry & Technology
Civic and Institutional
Boundaries and Overlays
Hazard Overlay for Floodways
City Boundary
Planning Boundary

FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING

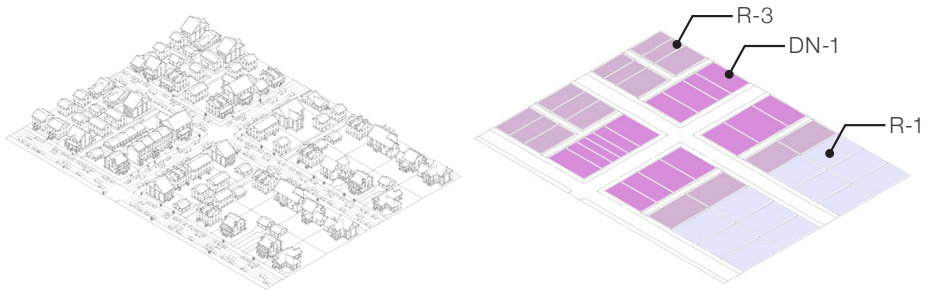
Future Land Use and zoning are interconnected yet distinct components of city planning. While the Community Plan does not directly change zoning, it provides a vision for the city's development by defining Place Types—a set of intended characteristics for each area of the city, including land uses like 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.

Place Type	Zoning
Regional Center	DC, DE, DN-4
City Center	DC, DE, DN-1, DN-4
Neighborhood Center	DE, DN-4, C-3
Urban Neighborhood	DN-2, DN-4, C-3
Walkable Neighborhood	DN-1, DN-4
Traditional Neighborhood	DN-1, R-3, R-1
Suburban Neighborhood	R-1, R-3
Urban Corridor	DE, C-E
Walkable Corridor	DN-4, C-3, C-1
Suburban Corridor	C-1, C-2
Industry & Technology	C-2, I-1, I-2
Rural and Estates	A-1, RE
Civic and Institutional	Any
Parks and Public Space	Any
Outdoor Entertainment	A-1, C-3
Open Space	Hazard Overlay

REGIONAL CENTER

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD



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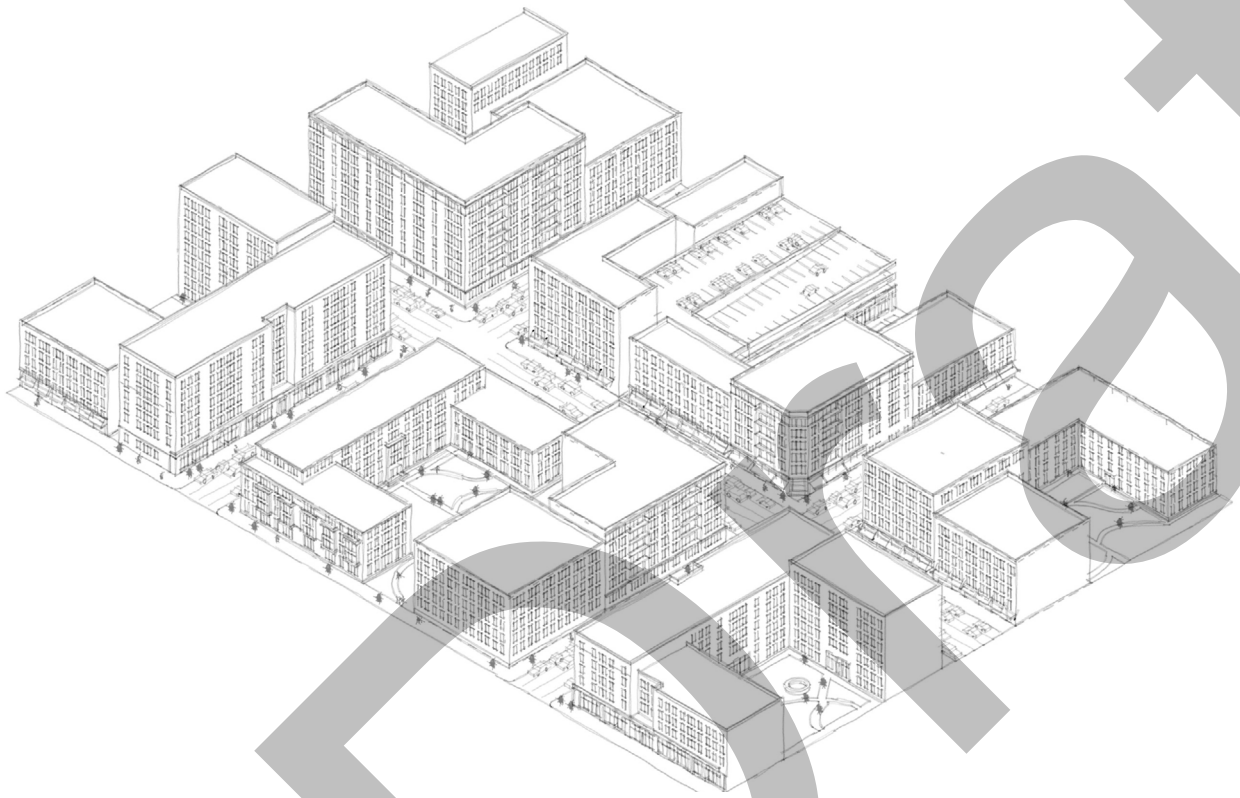
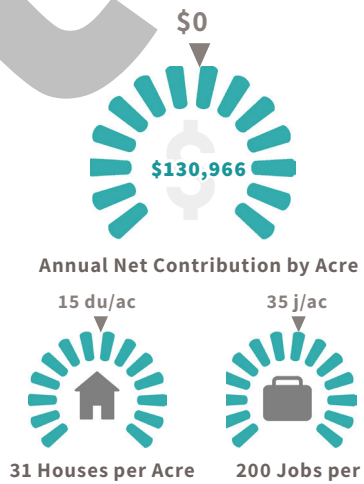
PLACE TYPES

REGIONAL CENTER



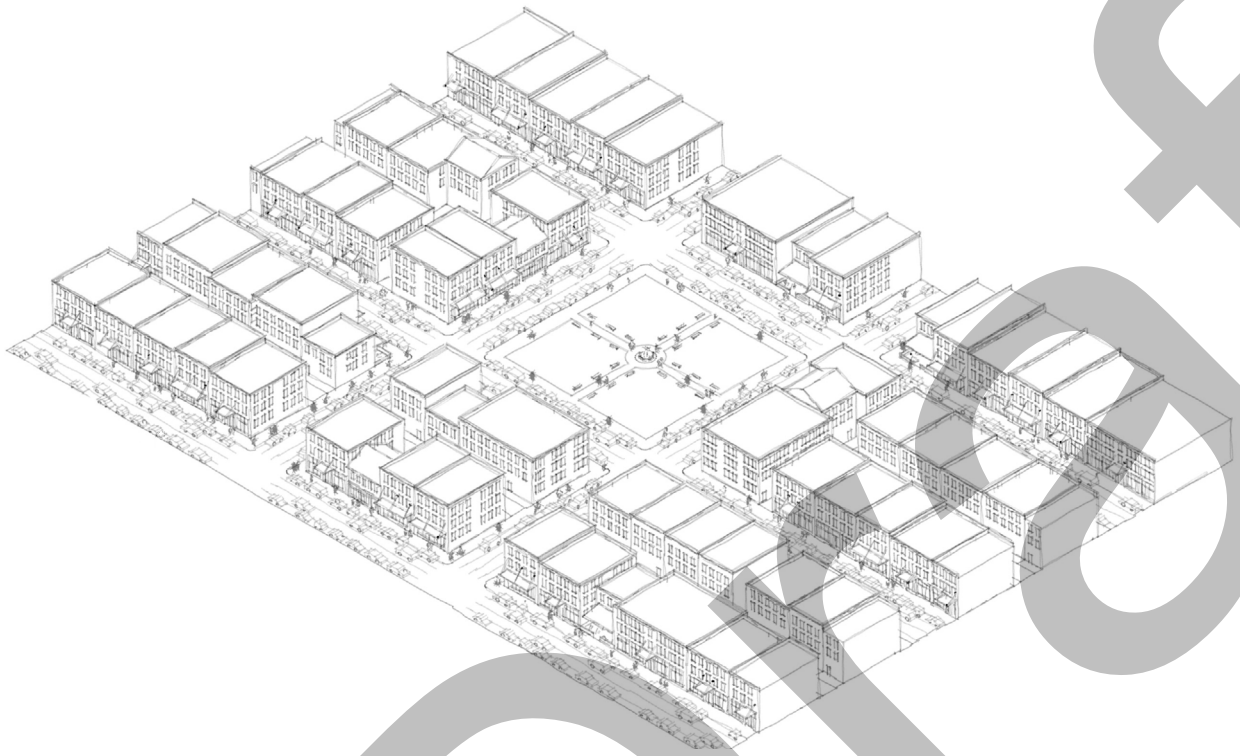


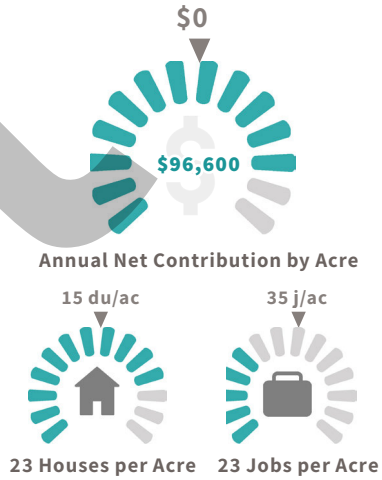
Anticipated building height:
6-8 stories

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.

Draft

CITY CENTER



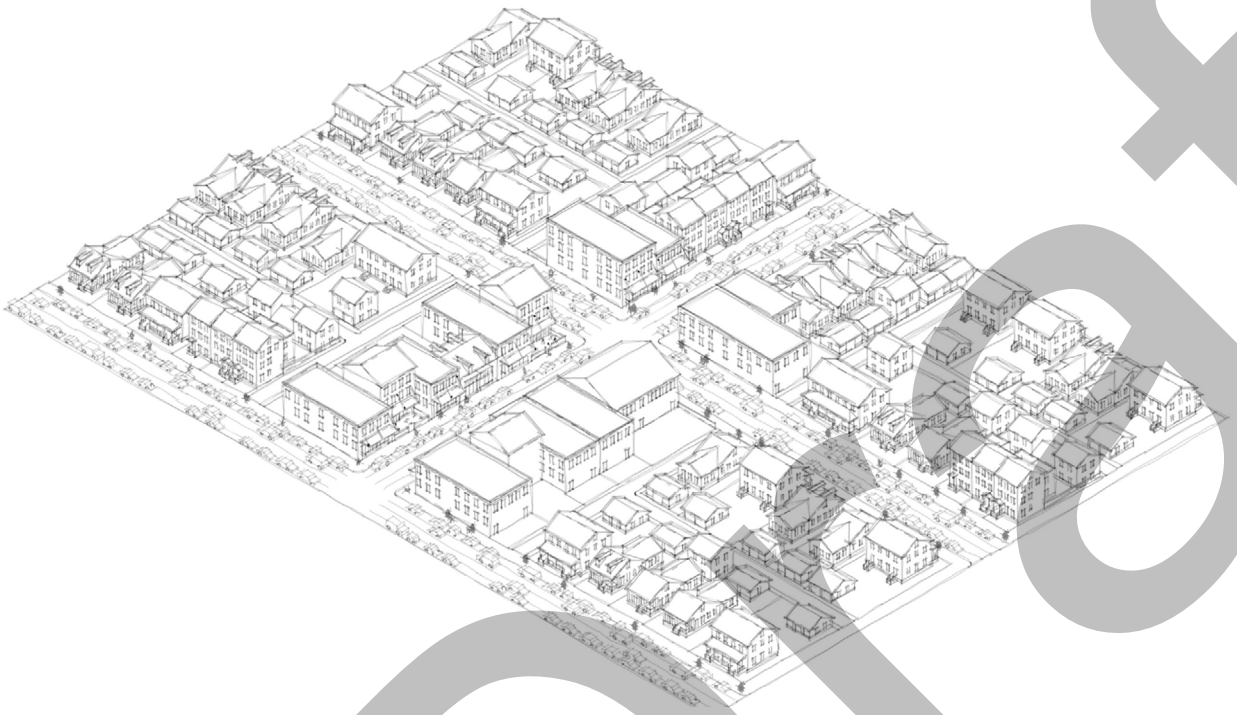


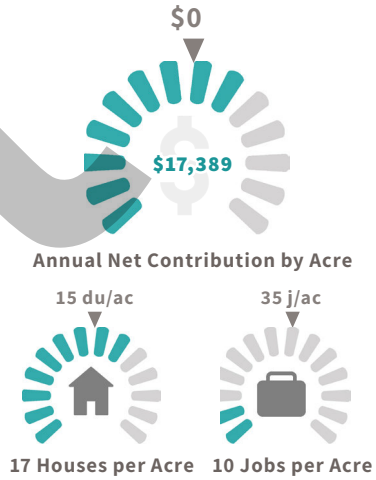
Anticipated building height:
4-6 stories

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.

Draft

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER





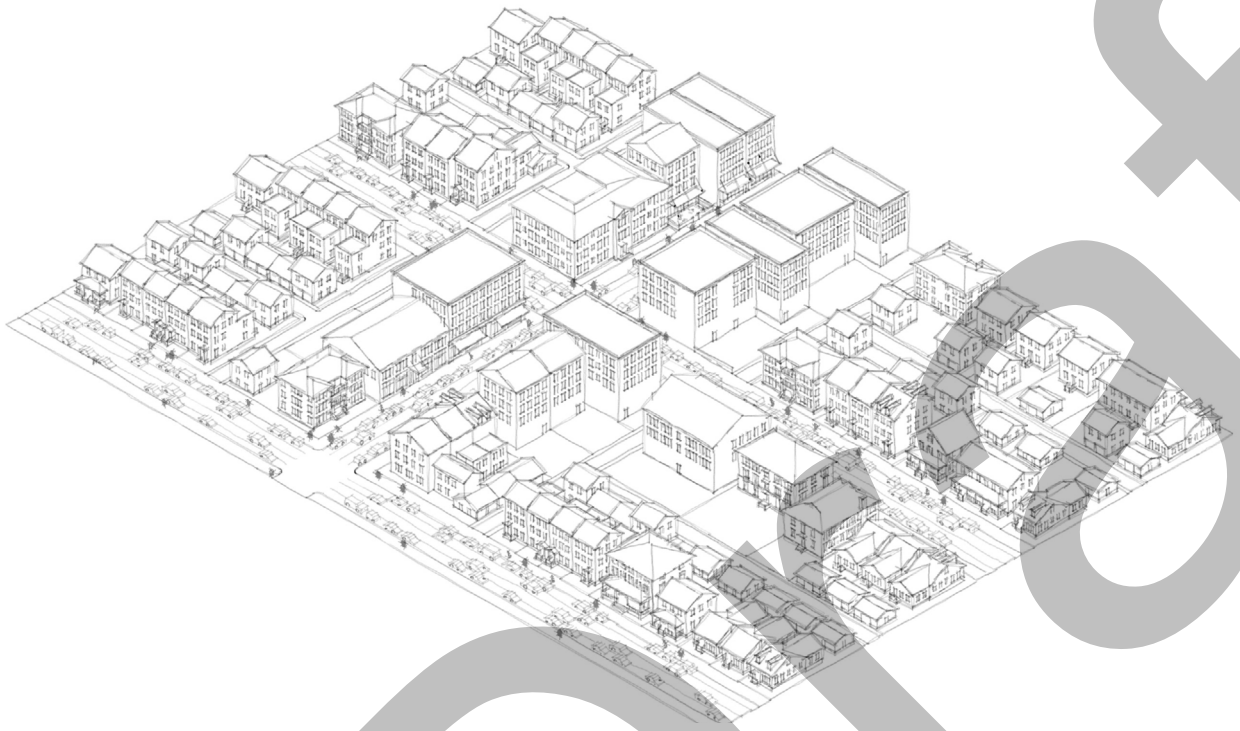
Anticipated building height:

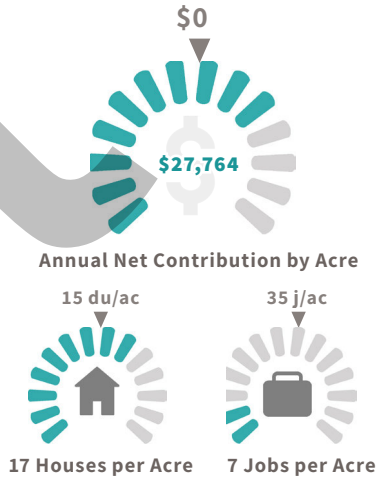
3-5 stories

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.

Draft

URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD





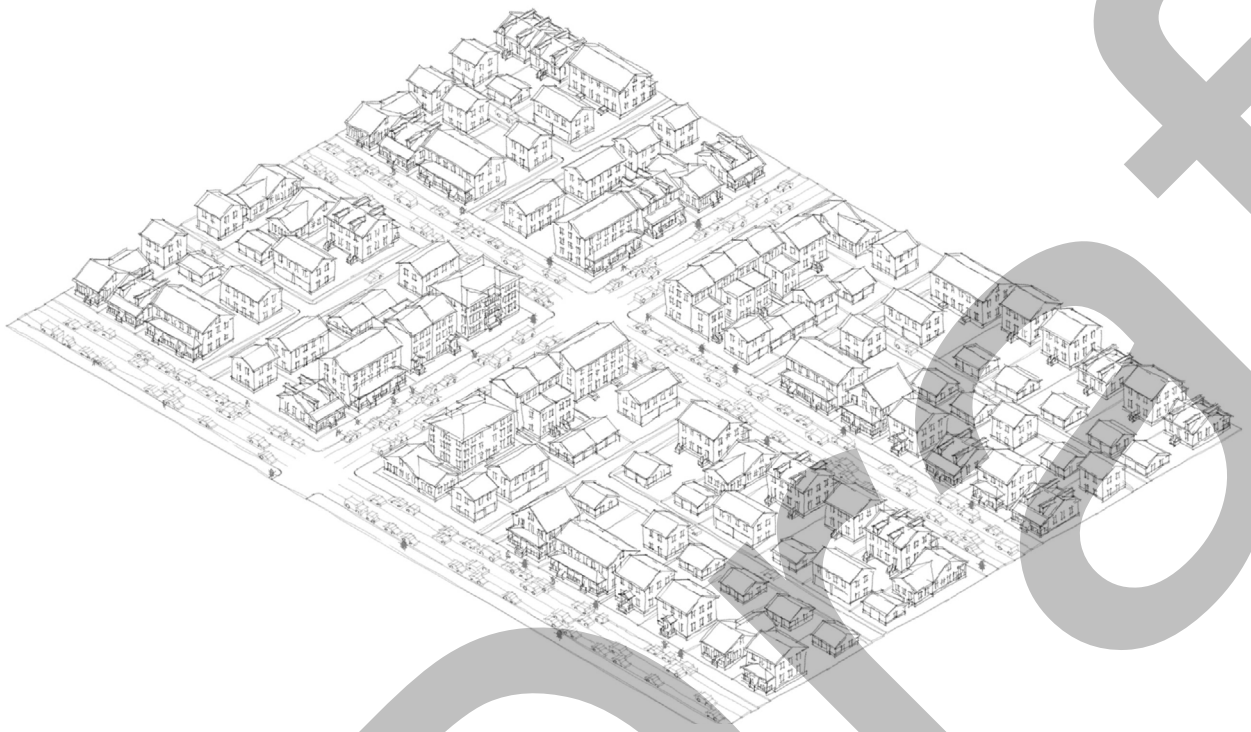
Anticipated building height:

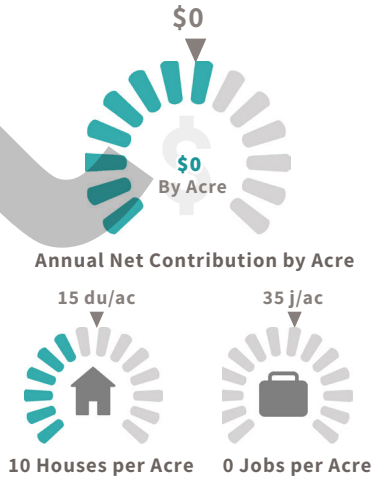
3-5 stories

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.

Draft

WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD





Anticipated building height:

3 stories

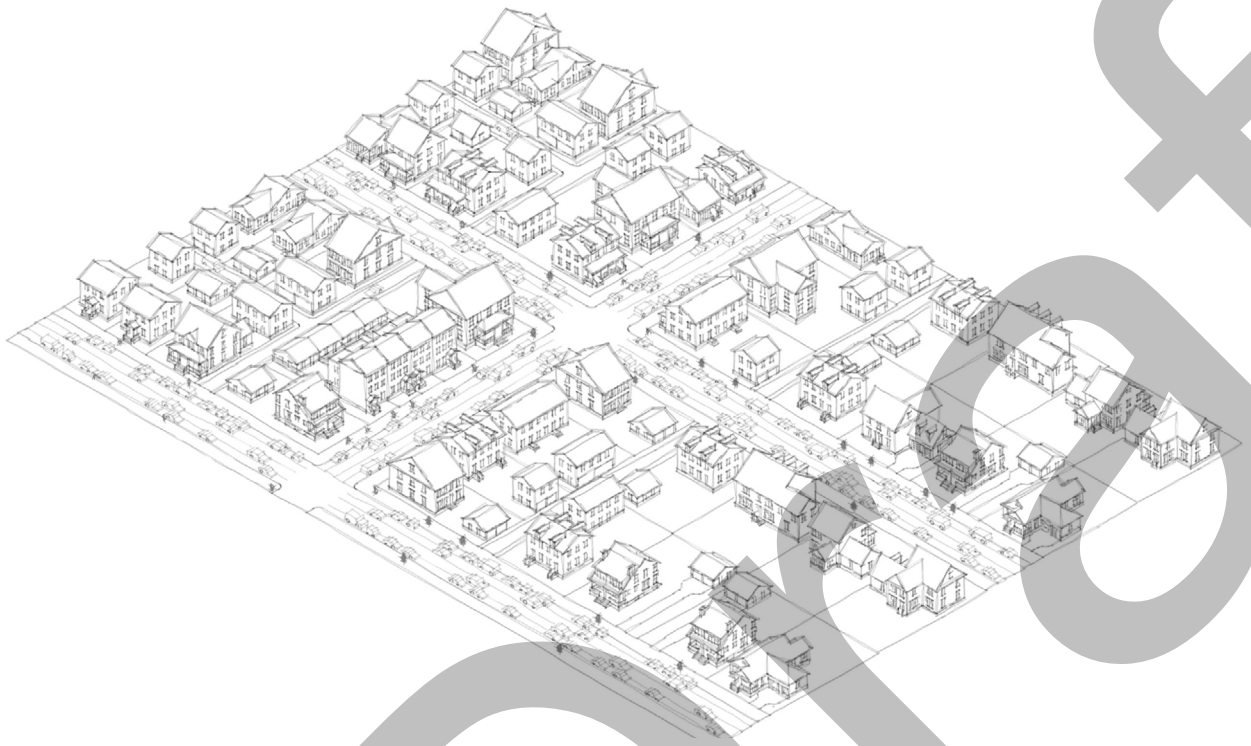
Walkable Neighborhoods combine compatibly-scaled single family homes, townhomes, and apartment buildings in a neighborhood setting.

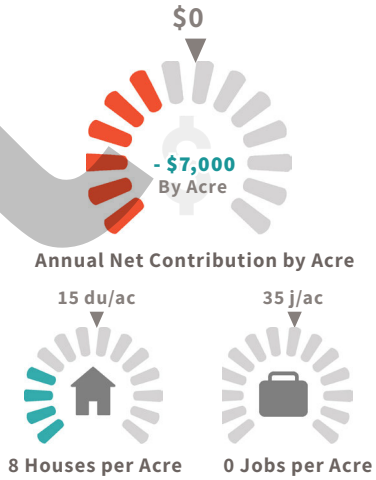
They provide a high degree of housing diversity, allowing for more people of different circumstances to share the same neighborhood. They also support some small neighborhood shops and are often near Neighborhood Centers and parks, making it easy to walk and bike for frequent trips.

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.

Draft

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD





Anticipated building height:

2.5-3 stories

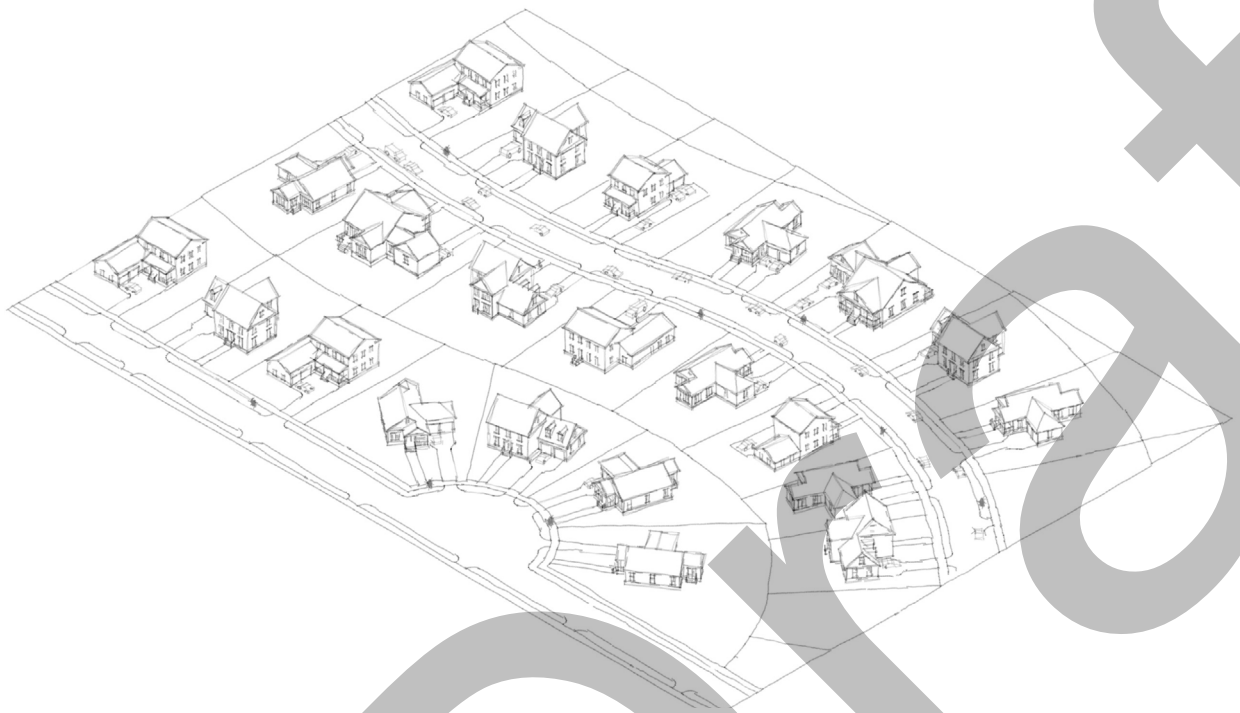
Traditional Neighborhoods serve as a bridge between denser, more mixed-use Walkable Neighborhoods and more dispersed and automobile-oriented Suburban Neighborhoods. As such, they merge features of both.

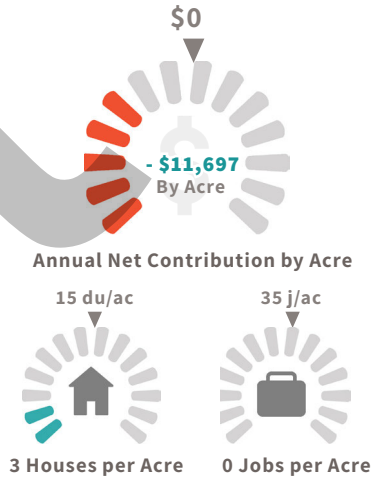
Characterized by gridded, walkable blocks of single family homes, townhomes, and small-scaled apartment buildings, they provide diverse housing opportunities while easing the way towards areas of single family homes only.

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.

Draft

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD





Anticipated building height:

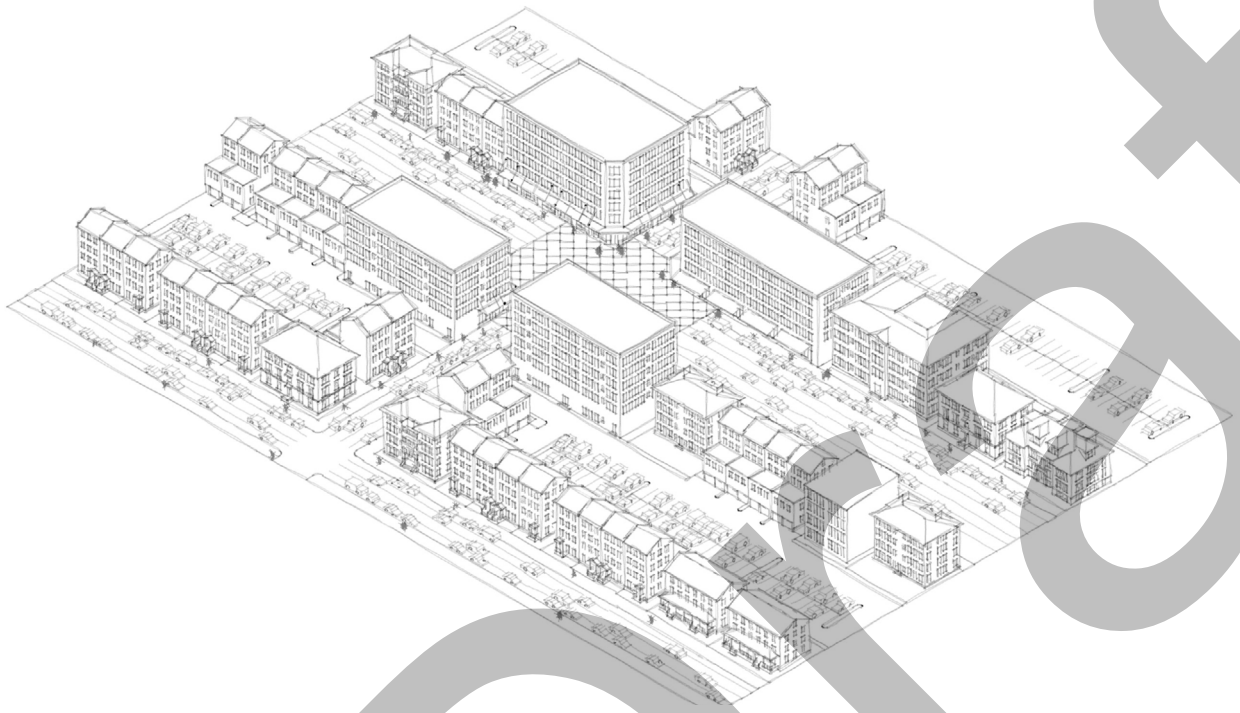
2.5-3 stories

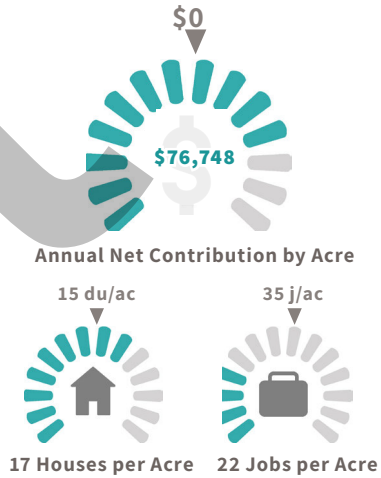
Suburban Neighborhoods, often referred to as subdivisions, consist mainly of single family homes on comparatively larger lots. They are generally quiet areas more removed from most commercial amenities. Family-oriented, often with large concentrations of children, suburban neighborhoods are often preferred 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.

Draft

URBAN CORRIDOR





Anticipated building height:

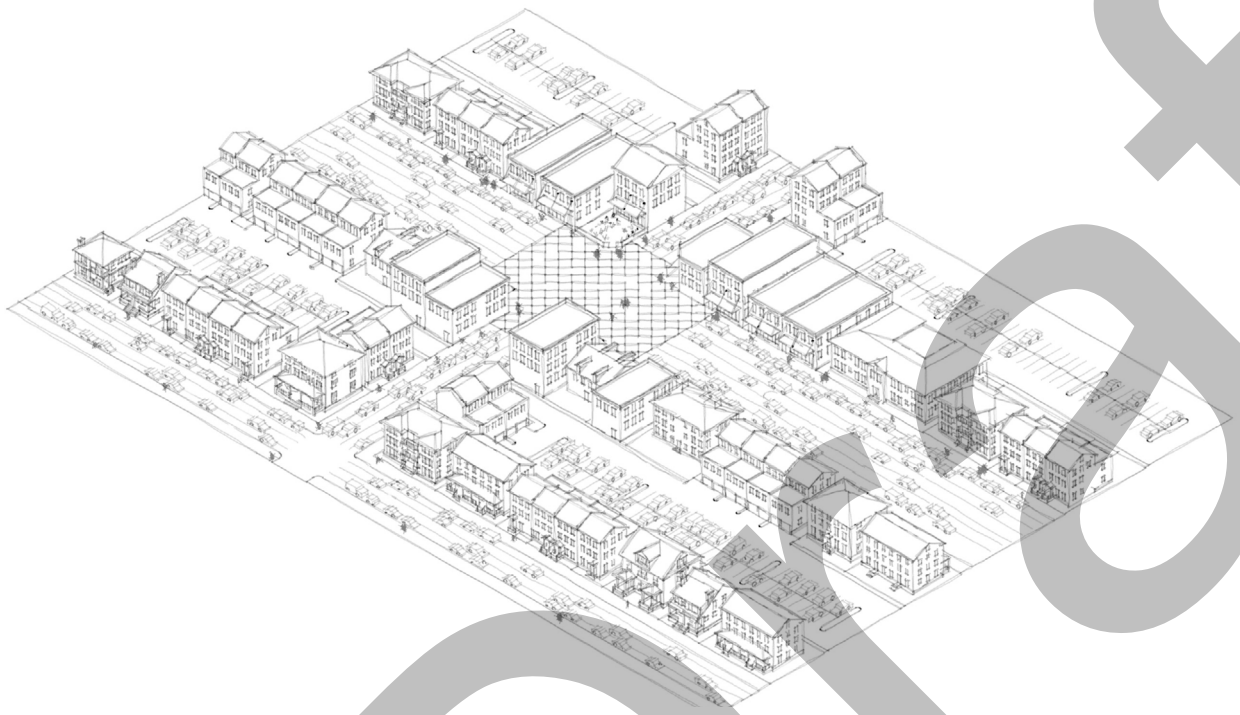
3-5 stories

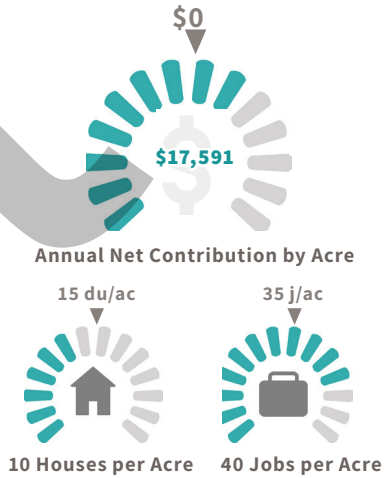
Urban Corridors are primary thoroughfares fronted by larger multi-family and office buildings interspersed with neighborhood-serving commercial uses. They feature development on unbuilt properties as well as new uses added to properties only partially built out.

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.

Draft

WALKABLE CORRIDOR





Anticipated building height:

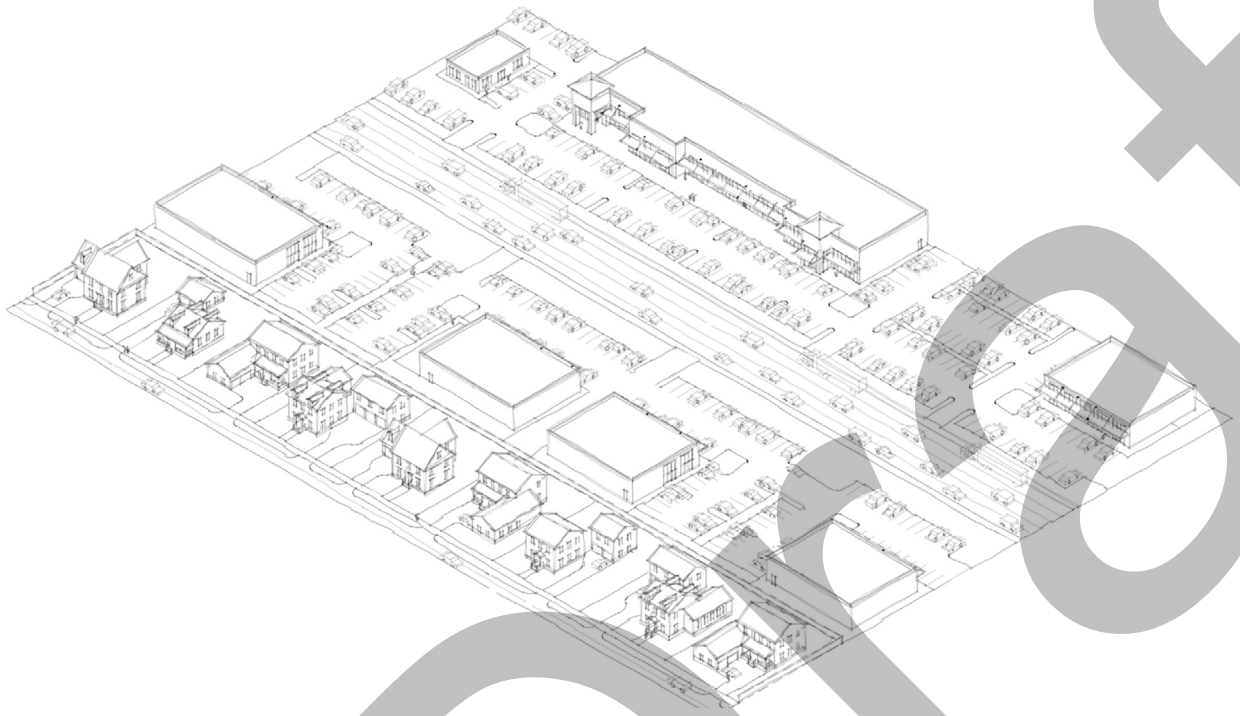
3-5 stories

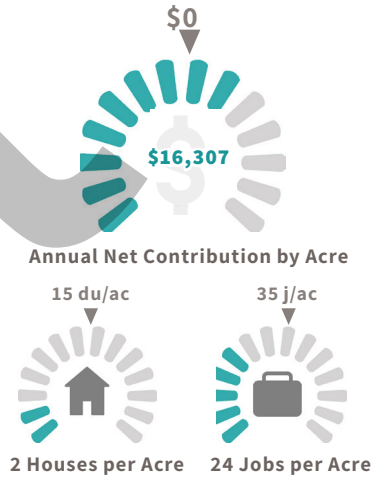
Walkable Corridor refers to areas that once were large arterial roadways lined by strip-commercial uses but maintain the potential to become a sort of Neighborhood Center in linear form; a more human-scaled, connected destination where adjacent neighbors can safely walk or bike to retail and services. 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.

Draft

SUBURBAN CORRIDOR





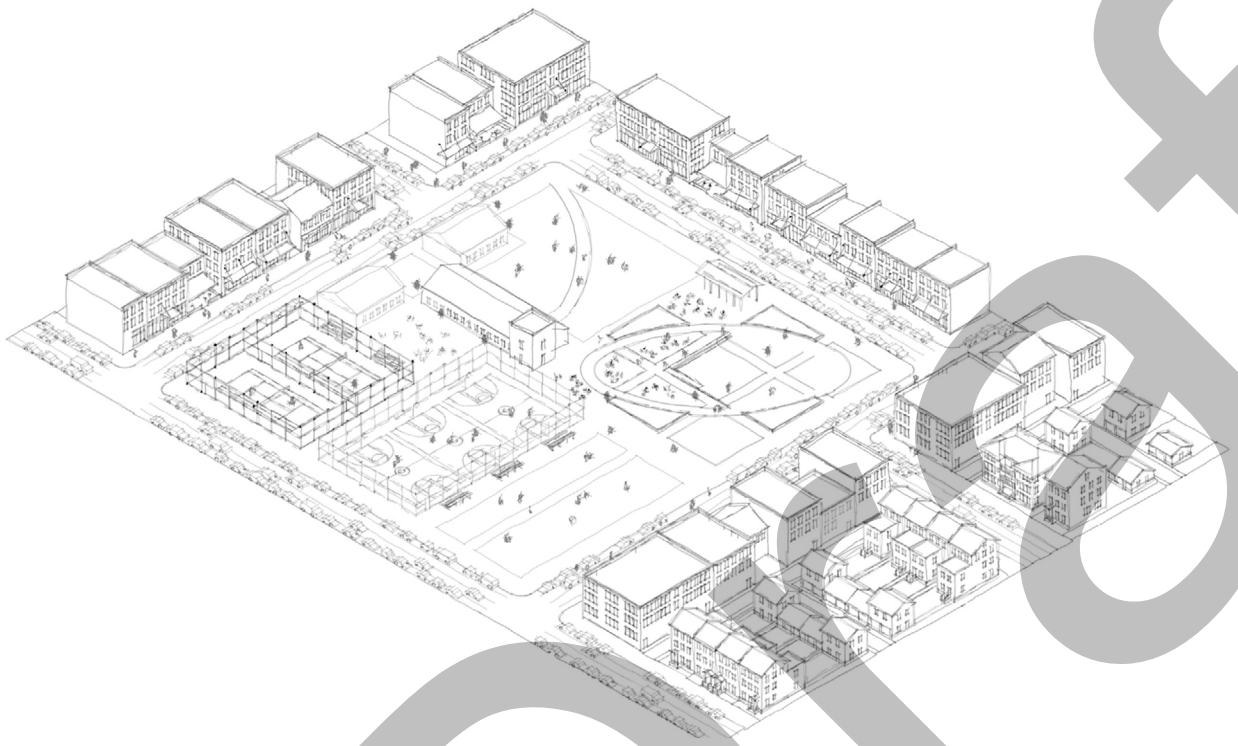
Anticipated building height:

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.

Draft

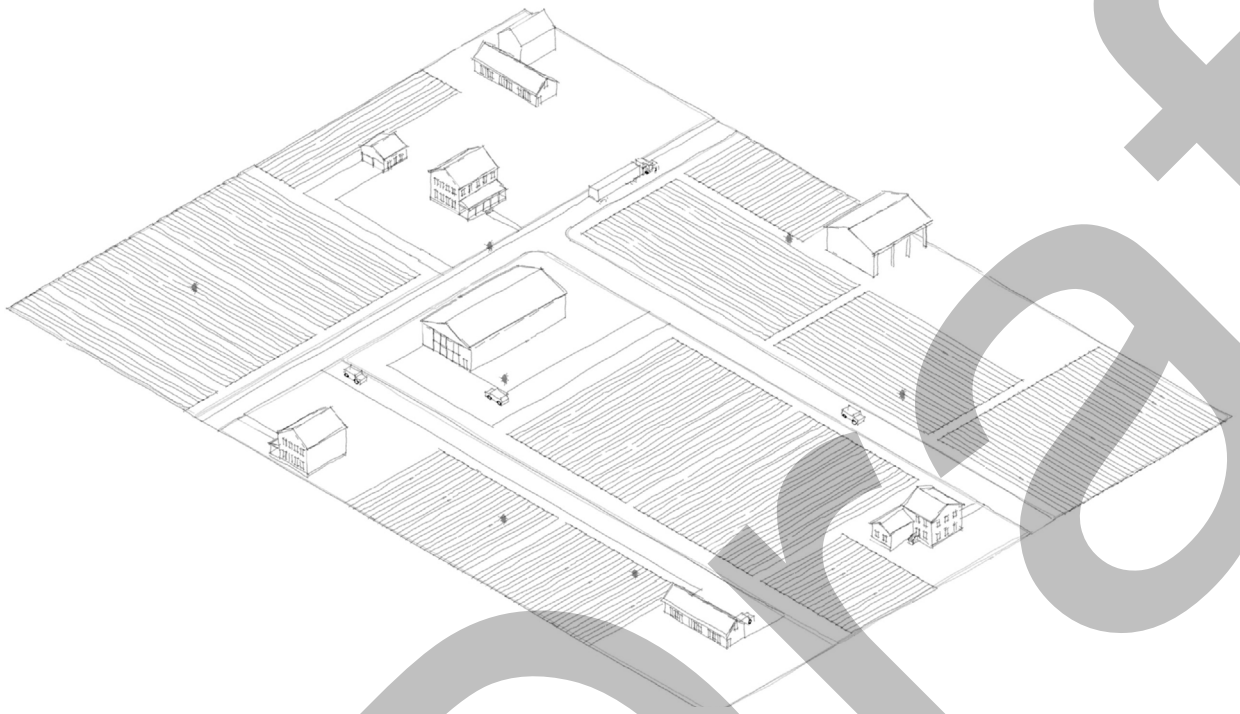
RECREATION

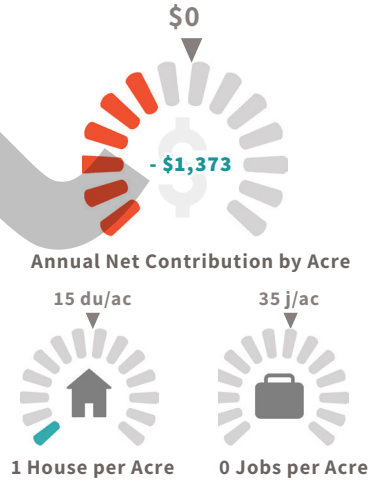


Recreation is defined by two categories: Parks and Public Space and Outdoor Entertainment. Parks and Public Space refers to both public and privately owned properties that contribute to community enjoyment and well-being. This includes the city's parks and recreational amenities, gathering spaces, bike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

Draft

RURAL AND ESTATES





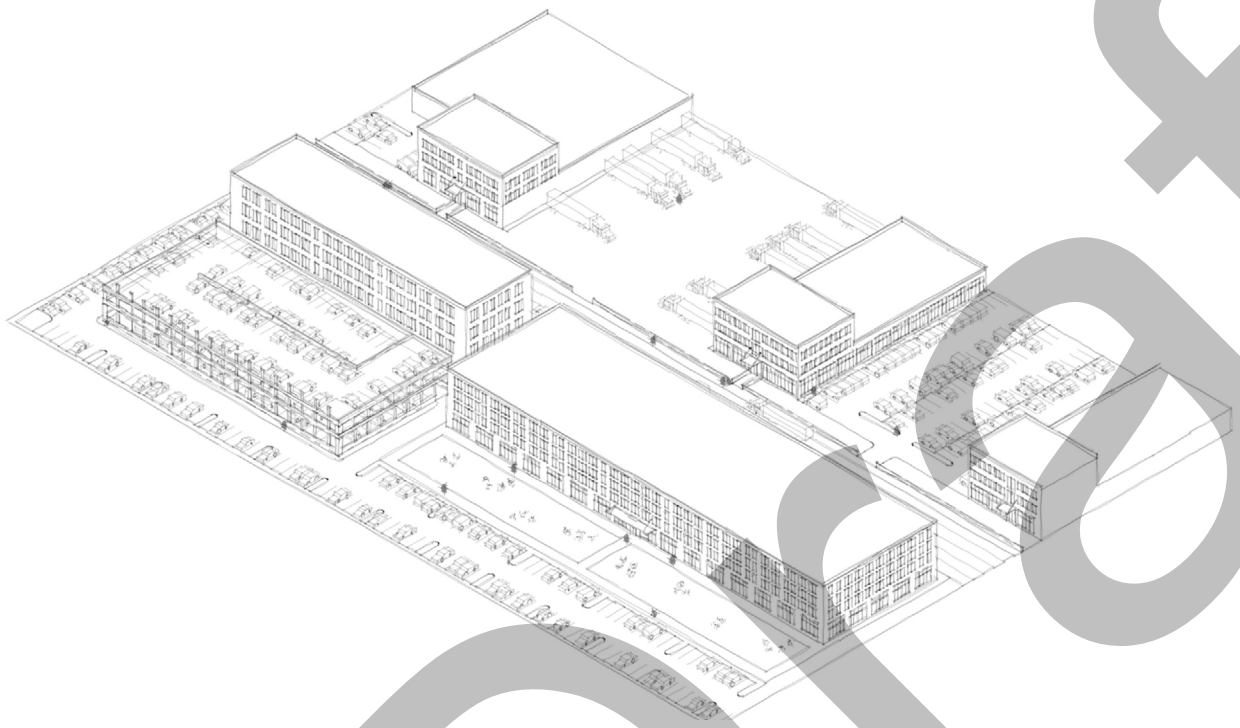
Anticipated building height:

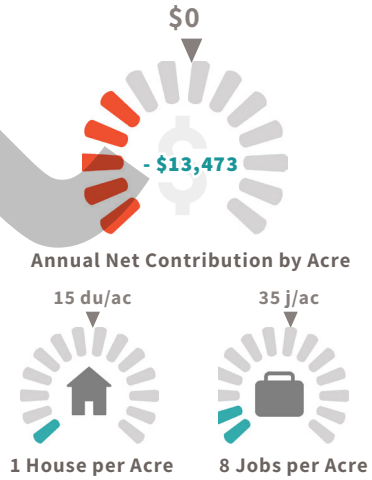
2.5 stories

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.

Draft

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY





Anticipated building height:

60 feet or 5 stories

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.

Draft

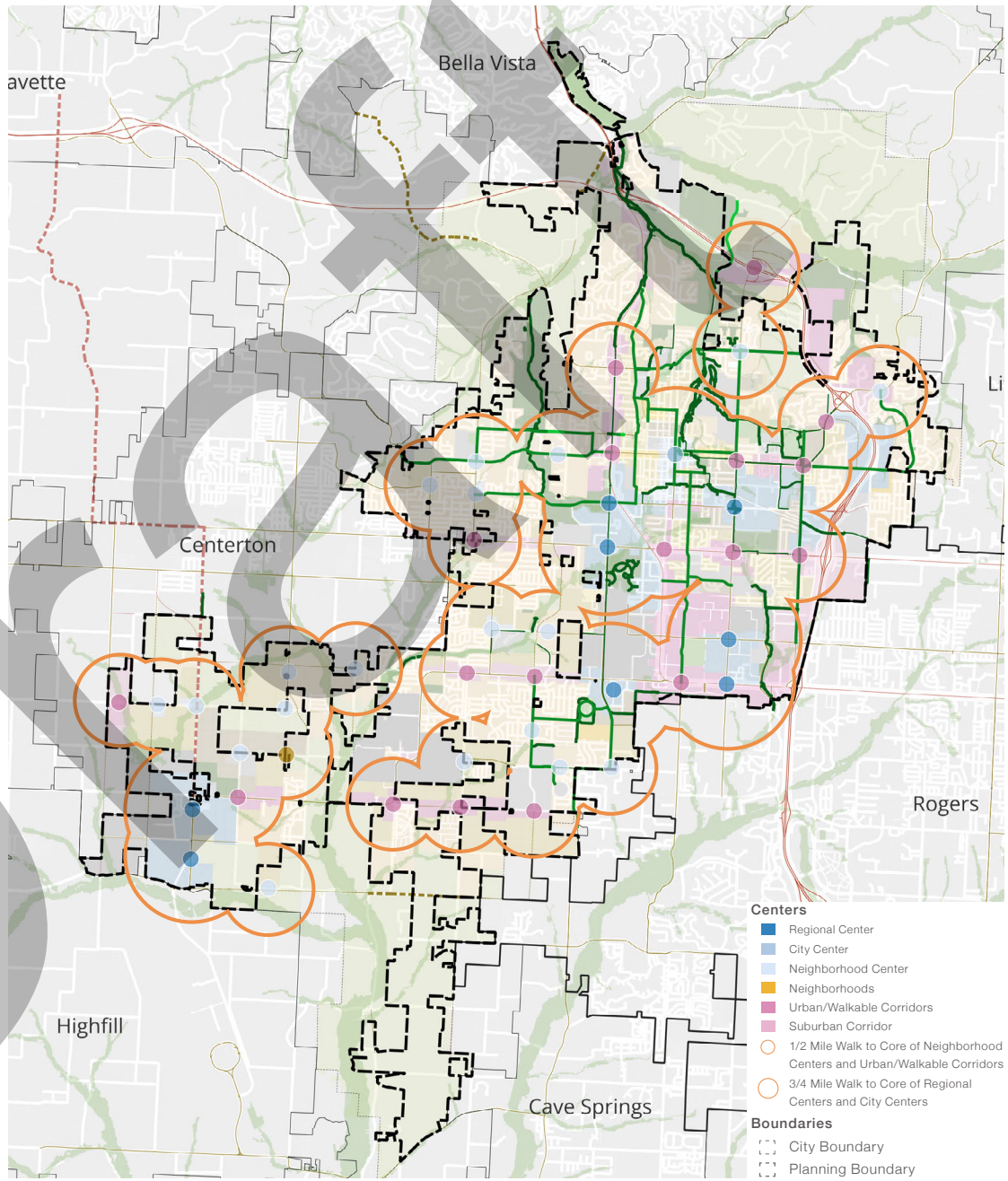
CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL

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.

Draft

GETTING AROUND BENTONVILLE

Bentonville faces several transportation challenges that have been intensified by rapid growth, a robust employment sector, and limited housing availability. Congestion is a particular issue during peak commute times and around midday, with heavy vehicle traffic that constrains movement across the city. Pedestrian activity remains limited outside the downtown area, highlighting the need for better walkable connections. While Bentonville has invested in numerous road projects, ongoing construction—especially near the downtown core—can further contribute to traffic delays, particularly as the area draws substantial daily visitors and workers. As the city expands, a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to transportation will be essential to meet mobility needs, including a better distribution of land use, expanded pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and multi-user street design.



Draft

COMMUTING

Nearly 50,000 people commute into Bentonville daily—a figure that nearly matches the city's entire population. The resulting traffic congestion affects all residents, with many citing new development as a concern due to its impact on traffic. While expanding road capacity by adding lanes might seem a straightforward solution, research consistently shows that increasing road capacity often leads to "induced demand," where the added lanes attract more drivers and ultimately do little to relieve congestion. This particular traffic issue cannot be fully addressed by simply expanding roadway capacity. A more sustainable approach includes increasing the city's housing options, redistributing employment and entertainment hubs, and enhancing alternatives to car-based travel. This would allow more residents to reach work, schools, and everyday needs without relying solely on cars. For those who will still drive daily, a network of additional routes can provide greater choices and distribute traffic across a wider array of streets rather than overloading a few major corridors. These combined strategies offer a more balanced, long-term solution to Bentonville's transportation challenges.

JOBS AND HOUSING BALANCE

If more of the tens of thousands who currently commute into Bentonville daily had the option to live within the city, traffic congestion could decrease significantly. At present, many employees live outside Bentonville, either by choice or due to limited housing availability or affordability within the city. Expanding and diversifying Bentonville's housing stock would allow more people to live closer to work, schools, and services, offering a range of commute options beyond driving alone.

While shorter commutes alone won't solve congestion, they could help distribute traffic more evenly throughout the city and at varying times of the day. Locating housing near employment centers also enables residents to consider biking, walking, or using public transit, if available, further easing pressure on roads. Additionally, when Bentonville's workforce resides outside city limits, their property tax contributions go to neighboring cities, even as they rely daily on Bentonville's infrastructure, roads, and city services. The Community Plan encourages substantial housing growth within Bentonville, helping to alleviate commuter demand and create a more balanced and diverse transportation network.

Draft

DISTRIBUTED DESTINATIONS

Currently, most residents rely on Bentonville's downtown area for jobs and entertainment, while often traveling to other parts of the city for schools and essential services. This concentration of single-destination activities results in increased congestion and travel delays. To address this, the Community Plan introduces a network of distributed Regional Centers and Neighborhood Centers. Regional Centers are strategically positioned throughout Bentonville to provide hubs for employment, entertainment, and retail, while Neighborhood Centers focus on local businesses and essential services within residential areas.

By distributing these centers, the plan reduces traffic density in any one location, allowing for a more balanced traffic flow across the city. This also brings a greater variety of amenities closer to residential neighborhoods, enabling residents to walk, bike, or enjoy local options, such as nearby coffee shops or banks, rather than commuting longer distances. This decentralized approach supports both mobility and accessibility, fostering a community where people can easily access daily needs and leisure options near their homes.

BIKING AND WALKING

Expanding individual mobility options by making biking and walking viable alternatives to driving offers numerous benefits, especially for older adults, young people, and families who may lack sufficient vehicles to meet their needs. Walking, in particular, requires a network of well-distributed destinations for shorter trips, alongside streets with sidewalks, shade, and safe pedestrian crossings. Biking, on the other hand, can support both short and long-distance travel but requires varied infrastructure to suit different trip lengths and accommodate riders of all confidence levels. For instance, long-distance facilities like the Razorback Greenway provide a regional example of effective bike infrastructure.

Within Bentonville, a range of bike accommodations can support different commuter needs, from protected lanes to shared routes. The new Walmart Home Office, for instance, has set a goal for 30% of commutes to be by bicycle, a target that would reduce car traffic and offer safer, more convenient biking options for the entire community. Supporting this goal with comprehensive bike infrastructure benefits all residents—whether they are cyclists who enjoy the option to commute by bike or drivers who experience reduced road congestion. Safe, accessible biking and walking routes can collectively improve mobility across the city, helping to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance community connectivity.

Draft

BEING READY FOR TRANSIT

Public transit options in Bentonville, as in many U.S. cities, are currently very limited. Planning for a future where transit is a viable alternative to driving may seem challenging, yet the way a city grows and distributes its land uses can either foster or hinder future transit potential. A key barrier to effective transit is the lack of both concentrated populations and clustered destinations.

For transit systems to be efficient, they require sufficient ridership within walking distance of each stop. Similarly, transit thrives near diverse destinations, like downtown areas and neighborhood centers, where people can fulfill multiple needs without additional car travel. The Community Plan aims to create a transit-supportive city by promoting higher-density housing around Regional and Neighborhood Centers, where varied destinations provide natural hubs for potential transit routes. Through this strategy, Bentonville can build a foundation for future transit that maximizes accessibility, making transit a more viable and sustainable option in the years to come.

CONNECTING MORE STREETS

Bentonville's rapid growth has led to a fragmented street network, resulting in limited connectivity between roads. This disconnection forces drivers to funnel onto increasingly congested major roadways, creating traffic bottlenecks and reducing the number of available routes to any given destination. As a consequence, reliance on these major thoroughfares becomes necessary, which further exacerbates congestion.

To alleviate these issues, both new municipal roads and streets within new developments must prioritize additional connections. Establishing a more interconnected street network will effectively distribute traffic and lower volumes across various routes, enhancing overall mobility. Furthermore, improving connectivity is essential for supporting walking and biking, as these modes of transportation thrive on direct and accessible pathways. Enhanced street connections will facilitate safer and more convenient travel options, ultimately contributing to a more balanced and efficient transportation system within Bentonville.

By investing in a comprehensive approach to street connectivity, the city can mitigate congestion and promote active transportation choices, fostering a more sustainable urban environment.

Draft

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE STREET DESIGN

The design of streets plays a crucial role in achieving the city's transportation goals. Streets represent the largest public space in Bentonville and serve a multitude of functions beyond mere vehicle movement. They are vital for local businesses, where the quality and design of the street can significantly impact economic success. Likewise, residential areas adjacent to streets can experience varied effects on the quality of life for their residents, depending on the street's characteristics.

To meet the diverse needs of all users—drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users—street design must strike a careful balance. These needs can vary significantly based on land use, which is closely aligned with the designated Place Types. For example, Corridors should prioritize the movement of people, including cyclists, while Centers should accommodate high pedestrian traffic.

The design approach for streets within each Place Type must reflect their specific context, whether they serve as bustling commercial hubs or serene residential neighborhoods. This contextual responsiveness helps minimize conflicts among different users and supports the city's Vision Zero initiative, aimed at eliminating traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

In summary, a well-balanced street network that adapts to the unique character of each area is essential for fostering a vibrant, safe, and efficient urban environment. Prioritizing comprehensive street design can enhance connectivity, encourage active transportation, and support the overall well-being of Bentonville's community.

Draft