

# Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan

## City of Russellville, Arkansas

### INTRODUCTION

Preparing for the future... the City of Russellville Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan identifies major issues facing the City's continuous growth and development. It also provides a graphic guideline for official public policy to facilitate the orderly growth and development of the City's emerging urban area.

The Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan is a comprehensive and long-range physical growth plan for the City and the immediately surrounding area. The Plan represents desired land use patterns throughout the City in response to citizen input, projected population growth, utility service area, and various physical constraints imposed by the existing natural physical features of the area. The Plan is a graphic guideline for shaping the City's future and provides a foundation for managing the City's development. The Plan is represented by a graphic two-dimensional illustration that evolved from an 18-month process involving numerous meetings with city officials, planning commission members, various citizen groups and interested individuals. The Plan provides a consensus of Russellville's desires relative to urban expansion for the City, the predominant types of land uses that should emerge.

For a detailed discussion of the technical elements of the Russellville Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan, the following technical reports are available:

- *Existing Land Use and Capacity Analysis*
- *Development Trends and Demand Analysis*

### AUTHORITY AND PLANNING BOUNDARY

The Planning authority for the City of Russellville to provide comprehensive planning is authorized by Arkansas State Statute Act 186 of 1957 as amended. The City's jurisdiction for planning extends up to five miles beyond its corporate limits and can be used for the purpose of subdivision regulations. Zoning or the restriction of the "use " of land for any purpose is authorized by law only for properties within the corporate limits.

For the purposes of the Russellville 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan, the City has established a planning area that extends one mile outside its corporate jurisdiction. The planning area encompasses 23,000 acres or 36 square miles, of which the City comprises roughly two-thirds of the land area. In general, the planning area included within the study extends west to the Arkansas River, north roughly one mile past Interstate 40, east to the City of Pottsville and south to Highway 247.

## REGIONAL SETTING

The City of Russellville, located in the central northwest portion of the State of Arkansas, occupies a unique geographic location along and east of the Arkansas River midway between the cities of Fort Smith and Little Rock, The City is traversed by Interstate 40 and is located in an area of scenic beauty. Arkansas Highway 7, a scenic highway, passes through Russellville. The City is also situated between the Ozark National Forest to the north and the Ouachita National Forest to the south. The Arkansas River is contiguous to the corporate limits for a distance of roughly 12 miles along the southern and western boundaries. Further enhancing the City's natural beauty, is Lake Dardanelle that provides a scenic vista on the western edge of the City. Russellville is also served by the Union Pacific Railroad, which traverses the City east to west and is the carrier's main line.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Russellville Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan incorporates the desires and wishes of the citizenry through a community participation process undertaken throughout this planning effort. With the initiation of the Comprehensive Development Plan, the Burnham Group developed a media plan for involving the public, reviewed local planning initiatives undertaken through a community-wide visioning effort, and held a Planning Kick-off Meeting. The activities were followed by one-on-one interviews with 45 community leaders and Issues Workshops held in four locations within the City. Following on the heels of the Issues Workshops, was the Community Goals Setting meetings and Concept Plan discussions identified the City's commitment and direction for the future growth and development of the City. During the series of community meetings and workshops, a total of nearly 300 people attended and participated in the process.

## MAJOR PLANNING ISSUES

The community involvement component contributed greatly to gaining a balanced view of what is important to Russellville. The following are major issues seen as potential challenges that needed to be addressed by the Plan, and resolved within the framework of public policies. As such these issues included:

- *Over abundance of undeveloped, commercially zoned land throughout the City, much within flood prone areas.*
- *Impact of truck traffic through the City.*
- *At-grade crossing conflicts between rail and vehicular traffic.*
- *Adoption of a "master street plan" to facilitate movement of traffic throughout the urban area.*
- *Annexation policies with respect to fringe areas to be annexed over the next 20 year in a cost-effective manner.*

- *Means to effectively develop fringe areas in an equitable cost-sharing manner between publicly provided services and private development contributions.*
- *Urban encroachment of the US Corp of Engineers' designated drainage flowage easement and other flood-prone areas of the City.*
- *Reservation and dedication of adequate right-of-way for the proposed eastern/southern bypass around the City and cooperation between the cities of Pottsville and Russellville on the location and eventual implementation of road and possible rail improvements within this transportation corridor.*
- *Potential relocation of the City's municipal airport and the need to develop land use controls surrounding the airport.*
- *Inadequate rail service to a proposed multi-modal center and the new airport.*

## **URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS**

The City of Russellville is impacted by a series of physical features that have been incorporated and are graphically represented in the development of the Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan. These development constraints are:

### **STEEP TERRAIN/EXCESSIVE GRADES**

The potential for urban growth is severely limited when topographic grades approach 20%. Such areas inhibit ordinary urban development due to the increased costs for basic municipal services and utility infrastructure (i.e. streets, water, sewer, gas, electric, etc.). Housing likewise is very costly due to additional access and foundation costs. Landmasses where steep slopes exist generally accompany rocky terrain and shallow bedrock further adding to lot development costs. Land development for all practical purposes should be precluded and discouraged in areas where grades approach or exceed 20%.

### **FLOOD PRONE AREAS**

The most prevalent undeveloped area within the current city limits is located in the northwest quadrant of the City west of the Arkansas Tech campus and north of West Parkway. This is the US Corps of Engineers backwater drainage flowage easement for Lake Dardanelle and the Arkansas River. This easement is within the identified 100-year flood plan, which extends southward into the center of Russellville. Floodplains are a major impediment to development and buildings of all types should be discouraged in such areas. Loss of life and property can accompany flooding if it should occur.

## **MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES**

The shape of a community is often formed by the surrounding natural physical features. Russellville's urban form has evolved by the limitations placed on it by the nearby mountainous terrain, the Arkansas River, soil and sub-surface conditions, and the

drainage courses of the area. Each of these natural features presents a dominant constraint to future development opportunities; however, when incorporated with a sensitive and visionary land use plan, such features can make the City a more desirable and visually enticing place to live.

## **UTILITY SERVICES**

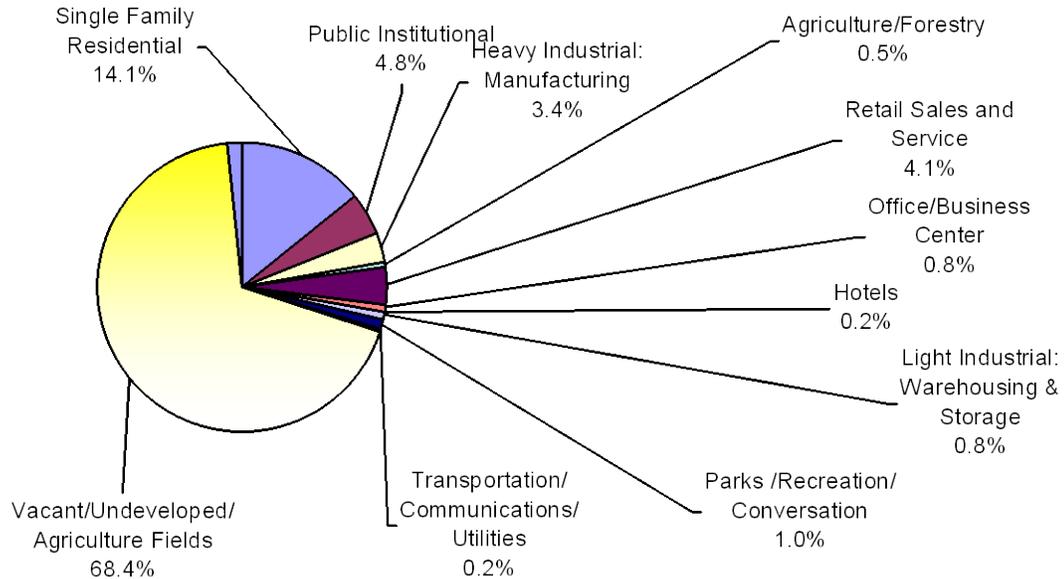
The most influential factor in determining the direction of urban growth is the availability of municipal services. Citicorp, a privately held, publicly sponsored company provides utility service throughout Russellville and much of the unincorporated area adjacent to the City. Since the City of Russellville has a close working relationship with the privately run company, extension of water and sewer services can be accommodated and planned to meet anticipated growth in a coordinated and cost effective manner. Based on recent upgrades to the newest sewerage treatment facility and plans for additional capacity, utility capacity appears in place to accommodate the most optimistic growth projections.

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

A land use survey of all properties within Russellville and the surrounding one-mile planning area was completed in early 1998. The land use survey categorized all developed properties under one of the following classifications: Agriculture/Forestry; Single Family Residential; Mobile Homes; Multi-Family Residential/Apartments; Retail Sales and Service; Offices/Business Centers; Hotels; Light Manufacturing; Warehousing & Storage; Heavy Industrial: Manufacturing; Public/Institutional; Parks/Recreation/Conservation; and Transportation, Communications, and Utilities.

Of the 23,000 acres within the planning area, 7,270 acres are developed and 15,730 remain either vacant or in agricultural use. Of the developed land area, about 3,650 acres are residential uses (single family, multi-family and mobile homes); over 1,100 acres are public and institutional uses (churches, schools, government); 230 acres are dedicated to parks and recreation uses; another 940 acres are retail commercial uses; and nearly 1,200 acres are industrial land uses. The following chart shows a percentage breakdown of how land within the planning area is currently being used.

## Existing Land Use



Of the 15,700 acres of vacant, undeveloped and agriculture land within the planning area, approximately 8,300 acres are within the City of Russellville and 7,400 acres are within the unincorporated one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction.

## LAND CAPACITY

Land capacity is an estimate of how much future development can be accommodated within the undeveloped land area (including agricultural acreage) of the Russellville planning area. The capacity of land is simply a measure of potential for undeveloped or agricultural lands to accommodate new residential development and new commercial and industrial square footage. This development potential is based on how the land is presently zoned or may be zoned, and development constraints such as severe slopes, floodplains, and the provision of water and sewer services.

Of the 15,700 acres of vacant, undeveloped and agriculture land within the planning area, 12,950 acres are unencumbered by floodways and floodplains or slopes over 20%. If urban development were restricted to land outside these environmentally sensitive areas, the planning areas has the physical capacity to accommodate upwards of 31,500 new dwelling units (a potential new population of 82,500), 10.7 million square feet of new commercial square footage and 10.7 million square feet of new industrial square footage. If the commercial and industrial development potential were further restricted by the existing availability of public sewer and water service, commercial and industrial development potential would be reduced to 2.9 and 5.2 million square feet, respectively.

A detailed discussion of the capacity analysis is provided in the *Existing Land Use and Capacity Analysis Technical Memorandum* published June 1998, by the Burnham Group.

## LAND DEMAND

An assessment of past, present and future population and employment growth is the foundation for projecting the amount of land the City of Russellville needs over the next 25 years for new residential, office, commercial and industrial uses. This assessment of the City's socio-economic profile, projects that the City's population will increase from 23,600 persons in 1995 to 39,000 persons by the year 2020. This growth will increase the number of households within the City from 9000 to 15,000 by year 2020. To accommodate this growth in population, it is projected that 4760 single family units, 360 duplexes and 1460 multifamily units will be needed over the next 25 years. In turn, this housing demand is anticipated to absorb approximately 3,460 net residential acres or the equivalent of roughly five and one-half square miles of undeveloped land.

Russellville has enjoyed a healthy employment track record in office, commercial, and industrial employment, garnering three-fourths of Pope County's jobs. In 1995, the City's private and public employment was estimated at 22,770 employees. Employment projections through 2020, anticipate that the City will add 8130 employees, bringing the total number of employees to 30,900. It is projected that these new jobs will absorb 750 acres in the planning area, 50 acres for offices uses, 260 acres for commercial development, and 440 acres for industrial development. Translating these absorption rates into square footages, it is projected that there will be a demand for 500,000 square feet of offices, 1.3 million square feet of commercial, and 2.2 million square feet of industrial space over the next 25 years. A detailed discussion of the land demand analysis is provided in the *Development Trends and Demand Analysis Technical Memorandum* published June 1998, by the Burnham Group.

### GRAPH SHOWING POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD GROWTH, 1995 - 2020

### TABLE SHOWING NEW LAND USE ACREAGE DEMAND, 1995 – 2020

## CAPACITY VERSUS DEMAND

In comparing the acreage capacity of the Russellville planning area to absorb new development demands, it is clear there is substantial amount of undeveloped land available for future development. This is particularly true given the moderate growth rate of the planning area's population and employment. It is projected that there is a demand for 3460 acres of residential land and 750 acres of office, commercial and industrial land. Currently, there are approximately 13,000 acres unencumbered by floodways and floodplains or slopes over 20%. If future development were restricted to land outside these environmentally sensitive areas, the Russellville planning area has sufficient vacant land to accommodate three times the projected land demand expected to occur through year 2020.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The establishment of goals, objectives and strategies for the Russellville Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan frames the general statement of intent for the future growth and development of the City and serves as the basis for more specific land use recommendations. The following are the goals, objectives and strategies addressing land use and development; housing and neighborhoods; economic development; public facilities; community design; environmental quality; and parks and recreation.

### GOAL 1 – LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Goal Statement:

- *The City of Russellville will promote and encourage a wide variety of commercial, office and industrial development that is well planned, attractive and environmentally sensitive within the Downtown area, with designated commercial areas, and within industrial parks.*
- *The City of Russellville will encourage new residential development to locate in and around existing developed areas.*

#### Objective 1 – Encourage and direct growth in appropriate areas of the community.

#### Strategies:

- *Adopt a comprehensive plan that accommodates a projected year 2020 population of 40,000 people in a fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner.*
- *Guide development into locations where the land is most cost-effectively served by urban level services (i.e. accessible to water, sewer and the urban road network).*
- *Promote development that combines residential, commercial and office development into a cohesive and compatible “mixed-use” development.*
- *Promote development that is accessible to the disabled population.*
- *Develop an annexation plan that extends the city limits into unincorporated areas that can be reasonably served by city services.*
- *Discourage residential development from occurring on or immediately adjacent to land that is planned for industrial uses.*

#### Objective 2 – Preserve and enhance the Downtown and University areas.

#### Strategies:

- *Promote the Downtown as the heart of the community in terms of cultural, governmental and historical resources with supportive commercial activities.*
- *Encourage additional retail shopping and restaurants in the downtown.*
- *In cooperation with Arkansas Tech University and affected neighborhoods, fully integrate the growth and development of the University with the community.*

### **Objective 3 – Enhance the City’s planning and zoning process.**

#### **Strategies:**

- *Employ sufficient staff and provide the necessary facilities to properly perform the planning functions.*
- *Revise and update the City’s Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Utilize “development impact statements” to insure that issues such as traffic, parking, noise, open space, flooding, drainage etc. are addressed.*
- *Ensure that the Planning Commission represents the community.*
- *Enforce regulations with consistency and present adequate justification that variances when granted are in the best interest of the community.*
- *Maintain working relationships with groups within and outside the City to provide ongoing input into the City’s Comprehensive Planning initiatives.*
- *Develop a plan for extending zoning into the extraterritorial planning area of the City.*
- *Develop a long-term plan for appropriate and compatible development of West Main Street and West Parkway.*
- *Discourage efforts to create more commercial zoning that can be reasonably absorbed by future commercial development.*
- *Develop a system to evaluate progress towards accomplishing the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Adopt a procedure for amending the Land Use Map separate from rezoning.*

## **GOAL 2 – HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

#### **Goal Statements:**

- *The City of Russellville will encourage a wide variety of housing types and price ranges thereby affording all citizens safe and sanitary places to live.*
- *The City of Russellville will encourage harmonious residential development within and in close proximity to existing neighborhoods and accessible to neighborhood commercial services.*

### **Objective 1 - Facilitate development of single-family housing within affordable price ranges.**

#### **Strategies:**

- *Revise subdivision and zoning requirements to reduce excessive lot areas, lot widths and setbacks.*
- *Promote codes and ordinances that provide more flexibility in site design and layout.*

- *Utilize quality design in affordable housing development.*
- *Encourage housing development in areas currently served by water and sewer.*

**Objective 2 – Encourage more innovation in neighborhood development.**

**Strategies:**

- *Encourage downtown development that combines commercial businesses on the first floor with residential units on the second floor.*
- *Encourage single-family residential infill development in neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown.*
- *Promote the use of planned unit developments (PUDs) to build innovative projects that are responsive to the community's diverse housing needs.*
- *Promote residential cluster development that provides common green space (smaller lots with balance of area reserved in common open space).*
- *Support Arkansas Tech University's development of on-campus student housing.*
- *Permit home offices in residential zones that do not distract from the residential character of the neighborhoods.*
- *Provide for churches and day care centers in residential zones but with performance standards such as access onto major roads and adequate set backs from residences.*
- *Develop design standards for multifamily development.*
- *Encourage programs that disperse assisted housing throughout the community.*
- *Adopt "traditional neighborhood design" guidelines that.*
  - *Orient homes close to the street,*
  - *Encourage provision of front porches,*
  - *Incorporate pedestrian pathways,*
  - *Reduce the neighborhood street's importance as a thoroughfare,*
  - *Provide public gathering places, and*
  - *Have conveniently located local shopping.*

**Objective 3 – Promote the revitalization of existing older residential neighborhoods.**

**Strategies:**

- *Undertake a housing conditions and neighborhood character survey to identify critical issues impacting older residential areas of the City.*
- *Support initiatives that encourage housing rehabilitation and greater home ownership in neighborhoods with high proportions of rental housing in poor condition.*
- *Develop standards for property maintenance.*

**GOAL 3 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Goal Statements:**

- *The City of Russellville will work with REDPI to develop and maintain high quality industrial sites and to attract a variety of technologically-based industries that can provide higher paying jobs for all citizens.*
- *The City of Russellville will strive to make its future economy more diverse by building on a base of not only large industry, but smaller service and technology-based concerns to meet the challenges of the 21-century.*

**Objective 1 – Promote a base of technology within the community to support all types of businesses.**

**Strategies:**

- *Develop a technology plan for linking government, business, education, and health care using technological infrastructure such as fiber optics and the Internet.*
- *Structure economic programs around technology-driven business development.*
- *Educate the community in understanding the benefits of having the latest technology and a community that supports it.*
- *Promote technologically-based skills within the community's labor force.*

**Objective 2 – Develop new, while maintaining existing, industrial facilities and jobs within the community.**

**Strategies:**

- *Utilize REDPI as the vehicle for industrial promotion and development.*
- *Concentrate future industrial development within industrial parks located east and southeast of the City.*
- *Develop a new industrial park on the existing airport site upon relocation of the airport to the south of the City.*

**Objective 3 – Promote small and medium size business development.**

**Strategies:**

- *Provide information to small businesses on future land use plans, zoning requirements, transportation access issues and available utilities.*
- *Encourage the development of new manufacturing firms by local entrepreneurs.*

**Objective 4 – Promote viable commercial establishments throughout the community.**

**Strategies:**

- *Encourage development of high quality retail facilities.*
- *Encourage small-scale neighborhood commercial development in appropriate locations within the community.*
- *Promote and encourage more dense development in the Downtown, specifically mixed-use development.*
- *Encourage businesses to design facilities that are accessible to the disabled.*

**GOAL 4 – PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**Goal Statement:**

- *The City of Russellville will have modern and efficient infrastructure that supports economic and neighborhood development with particular emphasis on transportation, utilities, schools, health care, public safety and other community facilities.*
- *The City of Russellville, working with City Corp, will use the Comprehensive Plan to determine areas for future utility extensions.*
- *The City of Russellville will use infrastructure as a tool to guide the locations of future growth.*

**Objective 1 – Coordinate with local utilities to ensure that water, sewer, electric, gas and telecommunications services keep pace with a growing and changing population without dramatically increasing rates.**

**Strategies:**

- *Expand infrastructure only in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Coordinate with City Corp in implementing the water and sewer plans to expand service into currently unserved and growing areas of the community based on the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Create an escrow account for life-cycle facility planning, especially for streets and drainage.*

**Objective 2 – Cooperate with the school districts to meet educational needs of our future**

**population.****Strategies:**

- *Ensure school facility improvement keep pace with development in the community.*
- *Develop a multi-use auditorium that can be used by both the school system and the community for a variety of activities.*
- *Expand the Adult Education Center.*

**Objective 3 – Develop new and maintain existing traffic circulation system in order to eliminate congestion within the community.****Strategies:**

- *Develop additional north/south and east/west routes within and through the City.*
- *Improve access to the interstate system through upgrading existing interchanges and providing additional interchanges at key locations within the system.*
- *Develop a southern/eastern by-pass to serve as a new truck route around the City and to encourage additional industrial development.*
- *Where appropriate, continue to extend the grid-pattern street network to interconnect streets throughout the City.*
- *Consider instituting strategies that reduce the speed of traffic within the Downtown and residential neighborhoods.*
- *Work with the Arkansas Highway Transportation Department (AHTD) to develop a train rail/grade separation plan.*
- *Adopt a Major Thoroughfare Plan and include accessibility issues related to the disabled population of the community.*
- *Require internal street systems within multi-family development to enhance circulation.*
- *Design parking and circulation routes within commercial centers as distinct streets with landscaped sidewalks, shade trees, small public gathering spaces and short-term curb parking.*
- *Reduce points of conflict on public streets through driveway and intersection separation requirements.*

**Objective 4 – Provide alternative methods of transportation for persons who do not want to or cannot use an automobile 100% of the time.****Strategies:**

- *Develop a system of biketrails, bikeways and pedestrianways and ensure accessibility issues are addressed for persons with disabilities.*

- *Increase the availability of sidewalks in older neighborhoods, in the Downtown, in other commercial areas and within new subdivisions.*
- *Increase public transit service for students, the elderly and the disabled to facilitate access to schools, shopping, restaurants, recreation, jobs and housing.*

**Objective 5 – Enhance the multi-modal capability of the community.**

**Strategies:**

- *Continue working with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to implement the multi-modal study that will link with truck and rail traffic to improved river port facilities.*
- *Develop an airport facility close to the Arkansas River to form a Four-Way Intermodal Exchange.*

**Objective 6 – Modernize City-owned buildings to meet the growing needs of the community.**

- Take steps to improve existing facilities, especially city hall, fire and police facilities.
- Incorporate American with Disabilities Act design provisions in all renovations or new construction of City-owned facilities.
- Develop a plan for improving City Hall facilities within the downtown.
- Promote design excellence in public buildings.

**Objective 7 – Continue to encourage quality health care services that keep pace with the growth and development of the community.**

**Strategies:**

- *Work with local health care providers to plan facility expansions into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*
- *Consider development of neighborhood health care facilities.*

**GOAL 5 – COMMUNITY DESIGN**

**Goal Statement:**

- The City of Russellville will create a community that is attractive and aesthetically pleasing in terms of commercial, office and residential development.

**Objective 1 – Institute design standards to preserve and enhance the positive physical features of Russellville.**

**Strategies:**

- *Apply newly-emerging community planning and design principles that define the community as one of human-scale, mixed-use neighborhoods with each built around a central public space and linked to one another by public transit, pathways or local streets.*

- *Consider establishing historic districts in the community.*
- *Consider improving the visual appearance of the community by addressing issues such as*
  - *Overhead utility lines and poles in front of buildings and along roadways,*
  - *Unscreened dumpsters and outside storage yards,*
  - *Green space between I-40 and adjacent development.*
  - *Buffers between commercial and residential development, and*
  - *Landscaping along commercial corridors and businesses.*
- *Increase green space and landscaping throughout the community.*
- *Invest in unifying elements such as sidewalks with handicap accessible curbs, and landscaping by utilizing street trees and shrubbery and other landscaping to create a buffer zone between sidewalks, streets and parking lots.*
- *Working with the business community, develop a city-wide sign ordinance to address such matters as portable or temporary signs, banners and excessive sizes, numbers and heights.*

**Objective 2 – Provide mechanisms to ensure that more landscaping, trees and greenways are included in the City as it grows and develops.**

**Strategies:**

- *Develop a landscape ordinance that addresses parking lots, commercial strips, public areas along roadways and public entryways or thoroughfares.*
- *Increase the number of trees along City streets.*
- *Create entryway landscaping and other improvements at major points of entry into the City.*

**Objective 3 – Continue to preserve the aesthetic quality of the Downtown.**

**Strategies:**

- *Encourage preservation, renovation and maintenance of historic structures in the Downtown.*
- *Continue to use design guidelines within the Downtown area.*
- *Continue to support the Downtown program.*
- *Encourage historic building renovations that include access improvements for the disabled.*

## **GOAL 6 – ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

### **Goal Statement:**

- *The City of Russellville will ensure that the natural environment continues to be a major asset of the community.*
- *The City of Russellville will ensure that future development does not cause harm to the natural or built environment.*

### **Objective 1 – Protect the natural environment of Lake Dardanelle and the Arkansas River.**

#### **Strategies:**

- In cooperation with the Corps of Engineers, define Lake Dardanelle as a specially-protected zone to make the “bestuse” of the limited lakefront and enhance it as a community-wide benefit to the City.
- Work with state and federal agencies to manage the shoreline along the lake and river in order to preserve its natural beauty.
- Set back buildings and paved parking areas a minimum of 100 feet from the Arkansas River and Lake Dardanelle, and 50 feet from streams and creeks; provide a non-disturb area 25 feet along each bank of any flowing water course.

### **Objective 2 – Promote environmentally sensitive development.**

#### **Strategies:**

- *Guide development away from areas subject to flooding, susceptible to slope erosion or in designated wetlands by extending public utilities into areas more suitable for development.*
- *Encourage hillside development that minimizes site clearance and substantial excavation.*
- *Prior to preparation of a site for development, require a plan to be submitted that illustrates how the development will address environmentally sensitive areas, slopes and existing natural vegetation.*
- *Promote clustering of development to remove improvements from within areas that are subject to flooding.*

### **Objective 3 – Create a drainage plan that addresses the current and future needs of the community.**

#### **Strategies:**

- *Implement the recommendations of the Master Drainage Plan.*
- *Prohibit development that creates downstream drainage problems.*
- *Develop standards for minimizing impervious surface areas in construction of residential and non-residential development.*

## GOAL 7 – PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM

### Goal Statements:

- *The City of Russellville will capitalize on its great location near a variety of natural areas by developing a first class parks and recreation system and tourism market.*
- *The City will encourage the creation of more greenways in order to make the community more livable.*

### Objective 1 – Develop and enhance the parks and recreation system of the community.

#### Strategies:

- *Work with the Arkansas River Valley Tourism initiatives to develop Russellville as a “destination” attraction.*
- *Encourage the Recreation Department to develop more passive recreation facilities.*
- *Develop a program for preserving undeveloped land within the City and within the planning area jurisdiction as natural areas or greenways that can be utilized as parks or greenways in the future.*
- Continue development of the Prairie Creek Trail.
- Develop “Depot Park” to serve as a centrally located multi-use gathering place with numerous activities.
- Support the expansion of recreational opportunities at Lake Dardanelle Park.
- Investigate the feasibility of expanding public golf course facilities within the City.
- Identify methods for new development to provide adequate open space in the form of neighborhood parks, greenways or unstructured play areas.
- Provide more sidewalks and bikepaths in the community.
- Make recreation facilities accessible to the disabled.

## YEAR 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Russellville Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan is based on the goals and objectives of the Plan and encompasses the three main statutory requirements: the *future land use plan, the transportation plan, and recommended public facilities*. The following narrative summarizes the Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan brochure:

- **The Plan** identifies the predominate type of land uses for all properties within the planning area most likely to be urbanized over the next two decades.

- **The Plan** discourages uncontrolled and random development and strives to achieve a balance between compatible land uses in all sectors of the City.
- **The Plan** distinguishes the southeastern portion of Russellville (south of East Main Street along and south of the Union Pacific Railroad) as the most advantageous location for industrial development. This location is suitable for industries based on existing industrial land use patterns in the immediate area, remaining undeveloped industrial sites, flat buildable/undeveloped terrain, railroad access, proximity and convenient access to state highways and Interstate 40. This corridor should be reserved and protected from land uses that are not compatible with industrial uses.
- **The Plan** reflects the distribution of commercial zones through the City with the concentration of retail and highway commercial development in several existing and predominant locations. Commercial infill is anticipated east of South Elmira Avenue and north of Highway 331 in proximity to Interstate 40. East Parkway (west of Weir Road) is expected to be developed for less intense uses ranging from professional offices to multi-family residential. A significant part of this area is anticipated to remain undeveloped due to the existence of the 100-year flood plain. Commercial development is expected along the Arkansas Highway 7 corridor north of the Arkansas Tech University Campus to roughly ½ mile north of Interstate 40. In the central and southern part of City, commercial activities are expected to be concentrated within one block of Highway 7. No commercial development is planned adjoining Highway 7 through the Arkansas Tech University campus. This major entryway to the City of Russellville is expected to continue as a scenic landscaped entranceway to the Central Business District. However, the University may in the future develop its properties east of Highway 7 for a technology-based business park.
- **The Plan** also locates outlying convenience neighborhood commercial services in areas now sparsely developed but within the path of anticipated urban growth. These “nodes” of commercial neighborhood convenience services are expected to consist of less than 20,000 sq. ft. total combined retail commercial space. These nodes are located at the junction of extended collector and/or arterial roads at the City’s fringe. The Plan reflects three reasonably spaced locations appropriate for such convenience services.
- **The Plan** recognizes the existing zoning districts and evaluates the types of desirable uses, which may likely occur based on market support, established located criteria and the public interest.
- **The Plan** more than accommodates the 3460 acres of residential land demand projected through the year 2020. The additional acreage shown for residential growth is predicated on the opportunity for private developers to seek out alternative locations, the City’s policies for infrastructure improvements, the likelihood of lower overall development densities, and potential population growth beyond the year 2020 time frame.
- **The Plan** identifies a number of public facilities to support population growth including general locations for parks, schools/playgrounds, fire stations, and public recreation areas.

- **The Plan** notes environmentally sensitive areas to be protected from urban encroachment such as the US Corps of Engineers' flowage easement north of West Parkway and the 100-year flood plain areas.
- **The Plan** encourages the clustering of development adjoining open spaces or natural physical features to compliment the use of existing and proposed greenways/trailways.
- **The Plan** reflects a linkage between the current pedestrian pathway system of the Prairie Creek Trail with planned trailways adjoining drainage easements with public easements. These trails may also utilized the rugged hillside open spaces and major utility easements located primarily on the west side of town.
- **The Plan** shows four additional public parks to compliment the existing park system. These parks include: (1) a linear riverfront park on the Arkansas River linking the US Corps of Engineers lock and dam park site to the Lake Dardanelle State Park and marina; (2) a combined public park and golf course complex located south of Bernice Road in the southern part of the City near a flood prone area on property used for a former land fill operation; (3) a park north of the existing airport near I-40; and, (4) a park north of Interstate 40 to provide recreational opportunities to the emerging residential neighborhoods to the north.
- **The Plan** also identifies several sensitive areas likely to urbanize or convert to intensive land uses as special planning area. These areas require special attention and are referred to as "planned unit development" (PUD) district. These PUD areas exhibit special land conversion potential as well as potential problems if not individually planned in a professional manner. These areas are deemed appropriate to be planned as a whole for a single use or a variety of compatible and uses. They should be planned and designed by a professional team of architects, land planners, engineers, and other professional disciplines through a PUD application. Piece-meal rezoning and/or redevelopment in these areas is strongly discouraged.

PUD designated areas will require the coordinated effort of both the public and private sectors in the extension of public services, utility infrastructure, and especially the timing of street extension and perimeter road improvements. The areas on the Plan identified for PUD development includes:

- The land area surrounding and accessible to the proposed Weir Road / I-40 interchange. This location for PUD development is predicated on the assumption that an interchange will be built at this location. Without direct access to I-40 properties south of the interstate and along Weir Road are felt to be unsuitable for commercial development. Absent the assurances of the interchange being built development along Weir Road should be restricted to a residential PUD.
- An area north of I-40 Bradley Cove Road interchange adjoining Hob-Nob Road and the proposed frontage road.
- An area in the northwest quadrant of the City north of West Parkway and east of the new junior high school is deemed appropriate for an unscale residential PUD.

Such location, once road connections are in place, provides an excellent site for a variety of residential uses with its proximity to the Central Business District, Arkansas Tech University and the natural area of the U.S. Corps of Engineers' flowage easement.

- A large undeveloped parcel south of West Main and near the existing regional hospital appears very suitable for development of medical-related purposes as a PUD medical office and/or office residential complex.
- An area just south of the intersection of West Main, the railroad tracks and West Parkway consist of several vacant parcels which when assembled could be most appropriately redeveloped as a higher density residential area. Proximity to local commercial services, good access, and scenic views made this location desirable for development.
- A site at the intersection of Jimmy Lile Road and South Knoxville is a suitable location for a mixed use PUD. Appropriate land uses may consist of mini-warehouse storage, office/warehouse storage, residential apartments, and limited commercial services.

## TRANSPORTATION PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Transportation Plan will play a major role in the City of Russellville's future land use patterns. Transportation improvements must be dealt with in a clear, collective, and comprehensive manner. The impact of transportation facilities must be measured against the future costs and benefits of road and facility improvements. The following narrative highlights the recommended transportation plan improvements.

### INTERSTATE INTERCHANGES

Currently, the City is served by two Interstate Highway 40 interchanges (exits 81 and 84) north of the City. One is located at the junction of Arkansas Highway 7. The other is at the intersection of Bradley Cove Road. These interchanges are spaced roughly four miles apart. The transportation plan, an integral part of the Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan, recognizes the need for additional points of ingress and egress to the interstate system to more efficiently move people to the various employment centers within the City. Also, the need of a southern and eastern highway bypass around the City to divert through truck traffic impacting the City has been identified as the number one transportation issue.

**Interchange Modifications:** Future modification of Interstate 40's partial interchange west of Russellville to a full interchange is deemed a high priority to facilitate travel from east to west on one of Pope County's major employment centers, Entergy's Nuclear One Power Plant.

**New Interchange:** A new interchange is proposed at Weir Road (midway between Exits 81 and 84) to allow improved access to the emerging residential areas north of Interstate 40. Also, a new interchange location is suggested immediately north of the City of Pottsville. This access into the interstate system is intended to serve as a truck bypass

function east and south of the City of Russellville to Arkansas Highway 7 and the Arkansas River Bridge, as well as to serve emerging industries in the predominate industrial corridor on the east side of Russellville.

### **FRONTAGE ROADS**

In conjunction with the proposed new interchanges along Interstate 40, a series of frontage roads linking existing and proposed interchanges are recommended. Such frontage roads on the north side of Interstate 40 are proposed between Exit 81 and Exit 84 and extending to the proposed interchange north of Pottsville. Because of current physical restrictions and existing urban development patterns on the south, it is advised that a frontage road on the south side of Interstate 40 be built only between Exit 81 and Arkansas Highway 124 adjacent and along the northeast perimeter of the Arkansas Tech University campus.

### **STATE HIGHWAYS**

Throughout the urban area, several major highways serve the City of Russellville. U.S. Highway 64 traverses the City east-west and was the primary highway artery prior to the construction of Interstate 40. Arkansas Highway 7 traverses the City north-south and is identified as a statewide scenic corridor. The widening of Arkansas Highway 7 within the Russellville urban limits, while moving traffic in a more efficient manner, has caused serious impacts on adjoining neighborhoods, particularly between Interstate 40 and downtown Russellville. Areas south of Arkansas Tech University have seen an erosion of quiet residential and quiet office neighborhoods to more intrusive retail commercial establishments. Additionally, the highway-widening program has an adverse effect on the streetscape with the encroachment of traffic and parking area once utilized predominantly by pedestrians. Major landscape and pedestrian improvements should be considered along Highway 7 and Highway 64.

### **ARTERIAL STREETS**

The Transportation Plan incorporated within the Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan suggests a continuation of arterial roads (both major and minor arterials) throughout the area as a means to improve circulation across the City both east-west and north-south. Several areas have been suggested within the overall development plan where the extension of arterial roads will accommodate improved traffic flow by completion of the network of streets.

### **COLLECTOR STREETS**

The primary function of a local collector street is to take traffic from predominantly residential neighborhoods and direct them to an arterial network. As such, collectors serve a useful purpose in collecting, distributing, and dispersing traffic away from residential areas. It is important to design collectors so they will not function as continuous through streets, but will serve to collect traffic and place it onto perimeter arterial type roads.

Throughout the Russellville urban area several collector-collector intersection and collector-arterial intersections are misaligned. Many streets have significant offsets that impede the smooth movement of traffic and makes traffic signalization at these

intersections most warranted for realignment and /or reconfiguration. The Plan also identifies where the network of collector streets should be continued as property develops, particularly in the western portion of the City.

### **MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITY**

A very important long range objective for the City of Russellville is providing adequate and appropriate multi-modal transportation service that would link rail service to the proposed airport site and the potential industrial port area along the Arkansas. A new railroad alignment around and east of the urban area of Russellville servicing these major transport facilities would appear to be one option for further study. Extending the existing D & R rail spur line, which now serves a limited number of industries in the south part of the City, is a second option. However, such an extension appears to be more complicated, disruptive and less conducive to existing urban patterns than an entirely new rail corridor on the City's eastern urban edge.

### **RAIL-GRADE SEPARATION**

The future transportation of goods and services throughout Russellville and the City's industrial corridor must be provided. Currently, the City of Russellville is served by a single main line of Union Pacific Railroad that traverses the urban area east to west and divides the City into two separate urban areas. At the present time, Union Pacific Railroad generates a sizable number of runs per day through the City with noticeable disruptions to local vehicular circulation.

There currently exist two rail-grade separations: one at U.S. Highway 64 in the western portion of Russellville; and the other at Main Street within and immediately east of the central business district. No existing grade separation exists on the eastside of Russellville. The Year 2020 Comprehensive Development Plan proposes three additional grade separations to provide and ensure the general public's health, safety and general welfare. Rail-grade separation will further assist traffic movement and provide emergency vehicles an opportunity of uninterrupted traffic flow during emergencies throughout the urban area of Russellville.